

The Peter David-Todd McFarlane Debate

Topic: Has Image Comics/Todd McFarlane been treated fairly by the media?

Transcribed by Gary St. Lawrence

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Todd McFarlane participation © 1993 Todd McFarlane.
George Pérez participation © 1993 George Pérez.

Prologue: Moderator George Pérez (who filled in at the last minute for the ailing Don Thompson) dictated the rules of the debate as they applied to the debaters — and the rules for the audience against disruption, interruption, and behavior. Introducing the debaters to the standing-room-only crowd, Pérez explained the history behind the organization of the debate, events which led to it, and the format for the debate.

Pérez: One thing I'd like to note is that I was asked to be the moderator for this debate, because Don Thompson, who was originally scheduled to be here, couldn't make it because of illness. For those of you who don't know who I am, my name is George Pérez. [Audience applause.] I was asked to be the moderator from a list provided by Todd McFarlane which Peter David OK'd, as were the three judges who will be presiding over this debate.

This is a debate. It's not an audience participation sound-off. The reason I was asked to be here was to try to keep it as much like a debate. There is some flexibility that has been agreed to by both sides. Any time that you in the audience take away from the people who are answering their questions is irretrievable to them. And if somebody's heckling another person, that person will be ejected. We have people here around the room who will eject anyone disrupting the debate. People came here to hear two creators who've had disagreements in other forums who want to set the record straight.

There will be three questions provided by each of the debaters. Each of them were submitted to me. They were supposed to be submitted 24 hours in advance. Unfortunately, in the case of Mr. McFarlane, I just received his questions when I checked in today [audience laughter]. So there may be a little bit of a slight rewording, but the questions have been OK'd.

Now, the first question will be addressed from Todd McFarlane to Peter David, who will be allowed three minutes to respond, timed from the moment he begins speaking. Then Mr. McFarlane will have two minutes for rebuttal. And Mr. David will have one minute to reply and summarize. Then the next question will be addressed from Peter David to Todd, and the same rules will apply. In all cases, I will be the one asking the actual questions for each of the respective debaters.

After the actual debate, there will be closing statements at three minutes apiece. The first speaker will be Peter David and then Todd McFarlane. Now, one of the concessions made is that, during the answers to the questions, it's fairly no-holds-barred. How the question is to be answered, whether it be verbally [or with] visual aids is strictly up to the debaters.

But, again, because it is the debaters who are rebutting, I don't want the response to be from the audience. If the response causes people in the audience to go crazy, the time is going to be taken away from the person who is speaking. So you won't have accomplished anything as far as getting the debate going, and you'll have basically ruined the debate as far as being a debate. I don't want this to be a circus.

When I took on this responsibility, it was reluctantly. It was kind of a sting to think of a convention appearance of get-

ting a lot of people coming to a convention thinking they're going to see a bloodbath. This is a convention: Ostensibly we love the comics, we love the media that we're all in, and we're all trying to produce something that we like. There are bound to be disagreements. There's no reason for it to become a riot.

So, with that said, I'd like to introduce our three judges. As far as what the judges are going to do — to tell you the truth, I'm not sure and I don't know if they are, either. The judges are: from Wizard Press, William Christensen; from *Hero Illustrated*, John Danovich; and from *Comics Buyer's Guide*, Maggie Thompson.

As if you don't know who they are, I'll introduce our two debaters. [Throughout the introduction, McFarlane is visibly undressing behind his podium and donning yellow boxer shorts and a bathrobe, slinging a towel so that it completely covers his head and shoulders.] I'll do it alphabetically. He is the writer of *The Incredible Hulk* and *Sachs & Violence* and, more germane to this particular debate, the writer of the regular weekly column in *Comics Buyer's Guide*, *But I Digress*, Mr. Peter David. [Audience ovation]

And [Pérez eyes McFarlane's new state of dress, including covered face] — This isn't a rebuttal yet! This wasn't the three minutes you were talking about, are they, Mr. McFarlane? [McFarlane doesn't respond.] And, if words don't fail me now, I guess visuals will have to. OK, the creator of *Spawn* and co-founder of Image Comics, and easily one of the more influential people in this business, Mr. Todd McFarlane. [McFarlane turns on a boom box, which fails to play. He sits back down, without a word.]

OK, now, there will be opening statements by the two debaters to discuss the question at hand to be debated: "Image/Todd McFarlane: Have they received fair treatment from the media?" That is the topic to be discussed. The opening statements will be five minutes apiece again, pretty much to be done with as the debater wishes. First up will be Mr. Peter David.

David: Hi, thanks a lot for coming. Sorry about the game last night. Better luck next time.

Image Comics/Todd McFarlane: Have they received a fair shake from the media? Hell, no. Because "fair" means even-handed, 50-50. The fact is that the vast, vast publicity about Image Comics has been uniformly positive, ranging from blurbs saying that the next Image book is going to be a hot collectible, to press releases or interviews originating from the Image creators.

And then there is my column, *But I Digress* — a column that was started by fan request, a column that readers have been following and trusting for over three years. And that is the reason I'm here today. Because I didn't want Todd McFarlane's posturing or insinuations to give anyone out there the thought that I was betraying that trust.

I do not consider trust to be silly. I don't think of it as humorous. And I don't think of it as something to be disposed of when you no longer need it. Now, out of 175 columns I have written, how many have focused on Image and Image personnel? The answer is, less than 4%. And some of it was positive. But it was this minuscule negative coverage, this one dot in the vast Seurat painting that is the Image bandwagon, that is being challenged here today. Because any negative viewpoint must be found and squashed immediately. Now, I have watched Todd work audi-



Peter David

ences, and he is good. He is very, very good. Today he might go for the humble approach: [imitating McFarlane] "Hey, we're just out to produce Image Comics and do the best comics we can, and what's wrong with that?" As if having good intentions means that criticism is never fair or warranted. That line never works for Tom DeFalco [Audience erupts in laughter], never works for Bill Clinton. It's not going to work for Todd.

He may just try to annoy me. Now, the man who quit Marvel Comics because [imitating Rodney Dangerfield] he don't get no respect, is well-known for pushing and shoving people and calling them condescending little nicknames like "Petey," or "Johnny" and so on. Now, if you think that's funny, go ahead and laugh. Oh, and if you also think it's funny when he slams creators who trusted Image to do right by them, laugh at that, too, if you're not uncomfortable with it.

Or he may just say whatever it takes to make me look bad. In the most recent *Comics Buyer's Guide*, he warned me ungrammatically, "You aren't going to control this event the way you did during our year-and-a-half on *The Incredible Hulk*. Sorry, but I don't have to listen to your orders any longer." Now, you can ignore the mangled syntax, but you cannot ignore the insinuation. But if you're not going to ignore that, you should also not ignore what he told *Comics Journal* several years ago, and I apologize for the language. Quote: "The first time you accept any advice or criticism or whatever I have about your writing, I have to reciprocate and say that you can now change my artwork. And unfortunately, I'm not big enough of a man to have some [expletive deleted] writer change my artwork. So I go, no, I don't tell you how to write, and I'll be [expletive deleted] if you tell me to redraw a panel. And it worked. It worked for two years with Roy Thomas and for two years with Peter David."

Oh, and he also told *Comics Interview* that writers always came to him for opinions.

Those are the kind of facts that Todd is going to do everything he can — tricks, bells, whistles, props, whatever — to get you to ignore.

But here are three facts that I would like you to remember:

Number One: I have criticized Marvel and DC as frequently as I have Image. So any contention that I have singled Image out, for whatever nonsensical reason they will fabricate, is completely ridiculous.

Number Two: Todd implied that it takes no bravery to write an opinion

column. Hey, I criticized my bosses, in print, where I know they'll read it! Todd and his brave band waited until they were gone from Marvel before bravely striking out at their former employers. Or at least writing critical essays and having the guts to sign their names to them. [Audience oohs and aaahhs.]

Third: Todd has questioned the sources for my columns. Who have my sources been? Todd McFarlane, Rob Liefeld, Erik Larsen. All I did was hold up a mirror to them and they didn't like the image they saw. [Audience oohs and aaahhs.] Their own words have made them look bad.

Now, if they don't like they're coming across in public, then may I humbly suggest that they try giving some thought to what they say? And if they can't do their readers and their fans that small service, then maybe they might do us all a favor and shut the hell up. [Audience ovation.]

Pérez: And now to open with his opening salvo, Mr. Todd McFarlane. [Audience applause, Image-contracted Dallas Cowgirl cheerleaders cheering.]

McFarlane: OK, let's dispel the first rule here. First off, Peter's gonna beat me to death here that I'm not a writer and that I don't know how to put syntax and grammar together and whatever else. That's not much of a debate, I don't think, and it's not much of an argument on his point. That'd be like me being a [base]ball player and Peter being a football player and me debating that he can't hit a curve ball as well as I do.

I'm an artist first. I'm a husband, you know, a friend to people, and a writer. Of all the things I do, I don't think that maybe my writing will ever catch up to where my art has maybe brought me to at this point. I think people have a little bit of a tough time separating Todd McFarlane the writer and Todd McFarlane the artist. But we are, in essence, two separate people.

Todd McFarlane, the guy who does *Spawn* comic books is also different from Todd McFarlane who is a co-founder of Image Comics.

There seems to be a misconception about how Image Comics is run. When I talk in the public, I talk — unless the question is directly asked about Image Comics — I'm giving a Todd McFarlane response to the question. I'm not speaking for Image Comics. I don't have the right to speak for Image Comics. I can give my opinion, if I was in charge of Image Comics. But, ultimately, I'm just giving my opinion on what I have to say.

That I present it in an overzealous way — Yes, what the hell. I'm standing here in my shorts. Now, that doesn't mean that what I have to say has no value.

But let me also tell you this, I'll also dispel the biggest thing right now. Some of the interviews that he pulled out, the *Comics Journal* one, those are ghost personas that I put out there. [David raises an eyebrow and shakes his head in his hand.] I don't think that Peter was gullible enough to buy that, that there's two or three personas of Todd McFarlane out there and I'm amused at the professional community — not my young crowd out there that buys it, nor the young at heart, but at the professional community — who have not been able to cipher that the kid is just a freak of nature.

He's A) a hawbone; B) He just likes to have fun up there, or C) He's just mentally deranged up there.

I'm telling you right now: I've been in this business now for almost 10 years — I. (DEBATE, Page 98)

DEBATE

(From Page 92)

am doing exactly what I set out to do. When I broke into comic books, when I was 23 years old, I said I want to get in because I like super-hero comics and I want to have a hell of a time. And you know what? I still do super-hero comics and I'm still having a hell of a time."

And you know what the problem is — the problem is that we as an industry have forgotten to laugh at ourselves. We're concerned about market shares. There's an explosion. There's a glut of stuff out there. We've got stock markets to answer to. We've got so many things to answer out there that people are not laughing at themselves any more.

And if I've got to be the example out there, guys, if I've got to stand out here and tell you guys we've got to keep laughing — and if we still don't get it, you know what? The kids are getting it, because the kids are laughing along with me. And if I don't sign my name to an opinion column, well, if Petey — excuse me, Peter — if Peter had done his homework and had not just —

My biggest gripe with Peter is that he doesn't phone us. He has never once informed us or me personally on an opinion about Image. He hasn't phoned the office. I find it rather amusing that a professional journalist can do a story and not actually contact the sources themselves and ask them a direct question. That, that, I'm out there.

Yes people, I'm sorry that I'm a little bit arrogant at times. Maybe I'm a little bit crazy, whatever. But you know what? The people who say yes in this world do not change the system.

Now, whether you agree whether the system has been changed, there is free agency right now. There are new companies out there that are giving chances to Peter and many other people because, in a small way, of the existence of Image Comics.

Image Comics would not exist, if I'd said yes, if I'd played the way I was supposed to, if I'd dressed the way I was supposed to, if I drew the way I was supposed to. When I started Spider-Man, they beat me down because I had to conform to the look of that book. And I said: No, fire me before I change that to the way that you want me to do it. But I've said no my whole life. I'm gonna continue to say no.

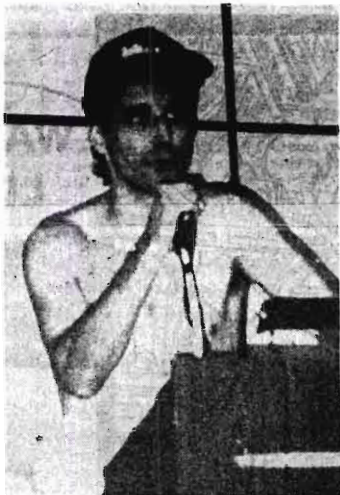
Now, I'm a crazy and I'm a kid. Go ask my kindergarten teacher. She'll tell you that I was a crazy kid and a hyperactive kid, too. But I, I want to tell you right now, I'm here and ready to debate Peter on whatever question he wants to give. But I'll tell you right now: I have a passion for comic books. I believe in comic books.

Is this to draw attention? No, this is for the good of comic books. We have a lot of panels and a lot of comics conventions out here. They're boring. I'm sorry, a lot of them are boring, if you've been to them. We've got a full room. We've got cameras here over a debate.

You know what? I don't see that that's a bad problem. And I'm gonna continue to keep doing that. Thank you.

Pérez: [Repeating debate rules.] Now, these questions are provided, as I said before, are provided by the debaters themselves. And the first question will be from Todd McFarlane to Peter David, and he will have three minutes to respond. And then, as I mentioned, two minutes for rebuttal for Mr. McFarlane and then final reply and summarization from Mr. David. And the question, from Mr. McFarlane: **How do you get your information as media, and do you contact the people you write about?**

David: What I write is an opinion column. *But I Digress* has been and always will be something that is purely reactive. I



Todd McFarlane

see something that's out there and I comment on it.

Now, when Image puts forward an opinion, what I'm doing is responding to that opinion. When they say, "We're going to do this," then I say, "If this, then that." When Erik Larsen writes, "Well, up until now, we've been holding back," I'm perfectly free to write a column that says, "What the hell do you mean by that? What have you been doing up until now, dogging it?"

Now, since I'm an opinion columnist and not a news writer, there's no onus upon me to pick up a phone and say, "You know, Erik, this makes no sense. Would you care to explain what the hell you meant?" No, the people who wrote the press releases for them should have done that. Erik should have done that.

What I do is I see the public face that they are presenting and I interpret it and I try to see if it holds up under logical scrutiny, which I'm sure is unfortunately what has probably confused my esteemed opponent. [Audience laughter.]

Now, when Image first came out, the thing that they would all have you forget, is that when there was a gap in my knowledge about Image, namely the deal that was set up between them and Malibu, I called Dave Olbrich. I had a half-hour phone conversation with him to make sure that I got everything right, and I quoted him extensively, attributing it all to Dave. That is one of the, as I said, less than 4% of columns that I've written about them. Everything else is stuff that was taken from their own words. That is pretty much all I have to say on that, because I'd like to think that that is something which you can pretty much all grasp. It seems fairly straightforward to me.

McFarlane: You know, Peter, I don't really care that you want to put your opinions out there. We all give our opinions, some of us a little louder and some of us a little more helter skelter. [David laughs mockingly.]

What I have a problem with is that some of the opinions, from my perspective, are lies. So that, if we don't check with our sources and we don't have to see if any of the stuff is right and we can hide behind the skirt that it was just an opinion, then what's the point of that opinion column, anyway? If you're gonna give an opinion of whether you like the Mets, then I think that's a solid opinion. But if you're gonna give an opinion on Doc Gooden, then somewhere along the line, you have to assimilate some of that information.

In the beginning of your column here — I didn't have to do that much research in some of your stuff because you, in your last couple of columns to the [Comics

Buyer's Guide], you open up saying, "It would appear that I, who should have known better, have made the same foolish mistake that so many others have — I took Todd McFarlane at his word."

Now, maybe I'm a little simple and I might have read too much into this. But I read that as that you're calling me a liar. You're saying that I've out and out lied to people in this business.

Now, again, there is miscommunication on every level, and depending on what we say, there is two sides to the story. Unfortunately, whoever I've lied to, you obviously haven't got the other side of the story, or I've just out and out lied.

Now, what's today, Friday or something like that? OK, here's what I'm gonna do Petey — excuse me, Peter — I'm gonna go on record, we've got the cameras here: I'll put down \$5000 that'll go to the [Comic Book] Legal Defense Fund, so it'll go to a good charity here, if, other than Larry Stroman, who I had to tell a little fib to, if you can bring somebody in the next seven days that I've lied to in this business — boldface lied to, then you can take collect that \$10,000 and give it to the Legal Defense Fund [Audience laughter] — What'd I say? Who? — \$5000, what the hell.

You bring that person, you let me give the other side, and if it comes up that I straight-out lied to that guy, you can have the money, because, you know what? I didn't lie to anybody out here. And if you can show them, that if, that if I — I got a problem with the way you word your opinion. So if we're just gonna start to give opinions. [Pérez intervenes, as time has expired.]

Pérez: Peter, obviously you have extra time to make your reply.

David: When I'm talking about telling lies — and, by the way, I should note that the piece that you're talking about in *CBG* ran after you issued the challenge for the lies I'd supposedly been telling. So I find it interesting that the best evidence you can pull out is something that happened after the challenge had already been issued.

In terms of lies, what I'm essentially referring to is — oh, let's see, for example, Todd McFarlane and his description of what he wants from life and what he expects out of comics. This, I would tend to think, relates to what the non-creators — non-originators, I should say — of Image heard when they got their books.

In *Comics Journal*, Todd said, "All I have to do is sell 5000 copies of a comic and I would be happy because I'm doing comics." In *Hero Illustrated* #1, Todd said, "I knew we only had to sell 30,000 copies and we'd make a living." *Wizard* #27, "I'd rather have 100,000 copies of the books put into the right hands than have a million copies in the wrong people's hands." The numbers start to escalate, and yet, mysteriously, at the Chicago ComiCon, when asked about the criteria for the reason those guys were let go, he stated, "We set a standard for ourselves in that the books had to sell 150,000 copies. And you know what? That's a great-selling book for any other company. We don't want their books."

Which brings us full circle to his *Comics Journal* question posed by Gary Groth: How do you measure success? And he responded, "It ain't in the number of copies I sell, I guarantee you."

I'm talking about internal logic. [Audience ovation, whistles, etc.]

Pérez: The next question is from Mr. David to Mr. McFarlane, which basically is going to follow the discussion we just had here. **Mr. McFarlane, please tell us your definition of a lie, as opposed to an opinion you don't agree with, giving one example of each from *But I Digress* to illustrate.**

McFarlane: My definition of a lie is probably not that far from most of the

people in here, that a lie is the deliberate — the deliberate telling of something else that's not the truth.

Now, do people word things sometimes differently than they should? Yes. Is there mass miscommunication in the world? On every level.

That a person intentionally knows that the color of something is blue and goes out of his way to tell somebody that that's red: that's what I consider a lie.

If you want an example from *But I Digress* — because obviously I carry them on me at all times [Audience laughs as David holds up several of his columns, offering them to McFarlane, who ignores him.] — I'll see if I can pull it out right here, because I actually have them in memory.

You made mention that the way we let go of the people, and more importantly, our reasons for letting go of those people. One of the reasons why we let go of those people, and one of the reasons why we banded together, was over the issue of money. Now, I'm here to tell you people, whether you want to believe it or not — which is fine because, I mean, I've got a clear conscience — what I did and how I left Marvel comic books and what we do, it has nothing to do with money.

You know why? Because when I quit Marvel comic books, I'm telling you right now, I was the best-paid guy in this country. Now, if it was money, the stupidity of it would say: Why would the guy making the most money leave? Now he's saying the reason that we left Marvel comic books was over money and saying that we got dissed by Marvel Comics to the tune of six figures.

His attitude says that, because the world pays you a lot of money, you should take it. And I'm telling you: I don't care how much money they pay you; you don't have to take it. And you know what? Michael Jordan just proved that to me the other day. They paid him \$26 million over the next three years, and it wasn't enough for him.

So, from your opinion of that we left for the money, I don't know where you based any of that, but I consider that a lie and not an opinion. Thank you.

David: I would really not want my esteemed opponent to go to the grave believing that — umm —

How many people have seen *The Fugitive*? Remember when Kimble says, "I didn't kill my wife," and Gerard says, "I don't care!" Todd has frequently, over and over again, stated that they didn't leave Marvel Comics for the money. *I don't care.* I have never said that you left purely because of money. Maybe in the Bizarro World column, I said it [Audience laughs], but not in this one.

And, to those of you who have been genuinely paying attention and have realized that what Todd said, in fact, made little to no sense, I can cite specific lies that Todd has said about me:

No. 1 — He said that I've been spreading lies about him. That's not true.

No. 2 — He stated that John Byrne and I were psychotic. [Audience laughter.] Now, I assume that he could try and have lots of factual evidence to back this up, but I tend to think not.

If you're gonna slam people with psychological terms, here's the kind of thing you should do: Paralogical thinking — paralogia: false, illogical thinking found particularly in schizophrenic reactions. Paralogical thinking may take many forms. A patient who is preoccupied with his own subjective thoughts and fantasies may give answers to questions that are either wrong or beside the point. [Audience erupts in hysterical laughter.] His interest in intentional analogous thinking becomes unrealistic and restricted.

DEBATE

(From Page 98)

Another characteristic of paralogia is its false, dream-like logic. In his study of schizophrenic thinking, Mueller, 1911, cited a patient who was convinced that he was Switzerland. [Audience erupts in laughter again.] Such a false logic could not be entertained by the normal mind. But this patient's thinking followed the line: Switzerland loves freedom. I love freedom. I am Switzerland.

Ladies and gentlemen [pointing to McFarlane] — Switzerland! [Audience roars with laughter.]

Pérez: [Suppressing his laughter.] Mr. McFarlane?

McFarlane: He's good. [Audience laughs.] Not even Rob Liefeld would have had a better chance.

David: Don't worry. He could've just repeated what you were saying... [Pérez interrupts David, reminding him of the rules.]

McFarlane: I don't know where you got that I said John Byrne or Peter David was psychotic. Obviously you're misreading into something or looking a little bit deeper. Every person that's named Petey or Johnny — obviously, you're paying far too close attention to what I'm doing out there. If you want to call me the psychotic, I'll be the psychotic. I'll be the bad guy in this. I'll be the guy who can't write. I'll be the guy who doesn't stand up for what he believes in. I'll be whatever you want me to be, Peter.

But I'm just saying that, in a crowd of a lot of professionals right now, you're standing here at a table with a guy that was at least stupid enough, I guess is the word, to debate somebody who I knew was gonna be able to use \$5 words that probably I wouldn't be able to understand half of them. I mean, talk about me being able to play the audience; you're doing a great job, buddy.

And then, I'm just — I feel that I will put my neck out at any time when, as a company person, you can't. I think somewhere along the line, we have to acknowledge that at least, where we stand, and where I stand right now, I can at least give an opinion, even though I'm part of a company, where a lot of people right now are not entitled to that. But because of that, I'm allowed to be attacked. And I enjoy it. I bring it upon myself, and I thank you for disseminating what you have to to the crowd.

Pérez: The following question is from Mr. McFarlane to Mr. David. This should be interesting [Audience laughs]: What changes could Image, and, more importantly and specifically, Todd McFarlane personally, can they do today to satisfy you? Keep in mind that Image and Todd McFarlane are two different entities.

David: In order to satisfy me, make sense.

Thank you.

No. If you're waiting for me to put forward a list of things: Ship books on time; do this; do that; do the other thing, it's not for me to say. That is not what *But I Digress* is about. And since I'm here supposedly doing a column of *But I Digress* because Todd said he wanted this to be one of my columns, it's not for me to tell you guys what to do. What it is for me to do is wait and see what you do and then react to it and say this sounds cool or this doesn't.

However, I would really, strongly suggest, as I said in my opening statements, that what you try and do is give thought to what you're saying. Give thought to the way people are going to be reading it.

And try this: When you talk, or I should say before you talk, picture in your mind what it's going to look like on paper. And take it along those lines.

I learned this 10 years ago when I was

sales manager at Marvel, where I made a thoughtless remark about retailers that sounded OK when I said it, but I got pilloried in *CBG*. And I said, "Oh, God, I better not do that any more."

Now, I've been pointing out that Image has been saying dumb things for a year and a half now, close to two years, and you still haven't gotten the hint. Now, if you wish to separate it, fine. I've criticized Todd. I've criticized Rob. I've criticized Erik. I never took a shot at Jim Lee. Why? He didn't say anything dumb!

Try it! Thank you. [Audience laughs and applauds.]

Pérez: Gee, this is turning out to be more fun than I thought it was going to be. [Audience laughs.] Mr. McFarlane, your reply now?

McFarlane: In terms of Jim Lee, may I tell you that all the rest of us ride Jim pretty much on a weekly basis, because he is so liked in this industry. We don't feel that to break out and to change the rules and to stand against a lot of the things that the system stands for, that they should actually like you. I don't think you're doing your job if the system that you hate now, that you want to break down and you want to change completely from head to toe, likes you.

He doesn't have to, really, for the most part, because he knows that, when we go to conventions, that Todd for the most part will go up there and make an idiot of himself, or Rob will make an idiot of himself, or somebody else. So he can stand it. That's his prerogative. He at least stands behind the convictions that we have and behind the opinions that we have.

Now, do you want me to get the books out on time? I don't have control over those books, Peter. I have control over my book. Is my book perfectly on time? No, I've never stated that it was.

Would I like to see those books out on time? Sure, I would. Would I like to see 15 books or hardly any late books? Sure I would.

But, unfortunately, again the misconception is that Todd McFarlane has some kind of muscle pull on Image Comics. I have muscle pull on the *Spawn* comic and that's all that I can control. I can't control the other stuff.

But I can now be a better human being and present myself in a better way? Peter, I'm never going to do that. I say no to everything, and it's a bad attitude on my part. But it's probably I don't have that many people surrounding me.

One of the reasons why I didn't expand and I've only got *Spawn* and not 12 spin-offs [is that] I know my own idiosyncrasies and I've accepted those idiosyncrasies. But given that I know that I can't huddle around the people, I've been able to come up with enough friends around me that will stand by and say that the system that we fight against should not like us, and I hope the system never does like me, because then I know that I'm doing my job. [Audience applause.]

David: Ahh, the cuckoo clocks are chiming in Switzerland. Only at Image could being liked be something that's a downer.

Possibly the reason that Jim is liked by the people is because he's courteous. Courteous does not require being an idiot.

You're not a fool, if you're not nasty to people. It's not that people react badly to Rob Liefeld and Todd McFarlane and Erik because they're saying no and taking strides and that kind of thing. They're reacting that way because you're saying and doing things that show a complete and total arrogance and disregard for anyone who is not you. And that is what is annoying people and that is what is upsetting people. You might try acting with that thing which you so stridently said in



George Pérez

CBG that you believe in — respect. Thank you.

Pérez: The following question is from Mr. David to Mr. McFarlane: Please explain what you expected from the non-founder titles, the Image non-founder titles, in terms of quality and sales.

McFarlane: Uhh, we expected from them, the non-founders — our satellite books or what did you mean?

Pérez: The ones done by the artists that weren't the actual founders of Image: Jerry Ordway, Larry Stroman, Mike Grell —

McFarlane: What we expected was, we started out a company and we took on all the responsibilities, and whether that was right or wrong, that was a lot for us to handle. That our books started coming out late, and that people started going off in different directions, was just part of the process. Some of us reacted a little better than others, but for the most part, we all had troubles.

What we expected when we hired these people was that they'd come in there and be the anchors, because nobody was putting down any anchors for the company. We were floating around. We were putting out a mini-series here and something out there and trying to feel our way around. We knew that we couldn't do it at that time, because we were trying to handle the whole publishing, printing, advertising, and everything else.

We then said we have to bring in a couple of books that will then anchor us down and at least be, quote unquote, our *Iron Mans*, *Captain Americas*, and *Thors*. What we wanted from them was not just good-looking books. What we wanted from them was on-time books, because, as we told them, we turn out, I feel, some of the best late books in the business. So we don't need any more good-looking late books. We do plenty of those books.

We expected on-time performance from them and we expected a certain sales level, and, from non-founder books —

(Because, unfortunately, can Todd McFarlane still sell 5000 and not get fired? Yes. You know why? Because unfortunately, Peter, in most businesses, the bosses can't get fired. We own the company. We can't fire ourselves. We've now just recently put in rules where we can fire ourselves. [Audience laughs.] So, you know, stay calm, because we now feel that it's somewhat hypocritical that we should be attentive.)

But there are different rules to us. But they also have a bad attitude? I don't care if they have a bad attitude and they sell a

million comic books, I will not put up with a guy out there who's using our name, using our reputation, as good or bad as it is, and sitting there saying we're going to take your cash, we're gonna take everything you've done. You guys stuck out your neck, and, but we're not gonna perform. We're gonna promise you a monthly book; but we're not gonna do it. We're gonna promise you this, and we're not gonna do it.

We had to lay some ground rules, and the people who didn't fit in the ground rules, unfortunately, got the ax. I'm sorry, but they didn't follow the rules. They got the ax.

Pérez: Mr. David?

David: You said that a number of times in past meetings that you did this, and you produce late books, and that's easy. You know. So why do you need these guys to do it for?

The thing that you were missing, Todd, is that you sent a message, a signal, a sign, to fellow creators in the industry. What you said to you was: At Image Comics, we will take our time to get the books right. That was the message you sent to them. It doesn't matter at this point whether late books are good or bad. Nobody's going to say late books are good. But you have to take responsibility for having sent that message out to the creators.

And they take Image, believing that they were going to get the same kind of equal treatment that they were going to be promised by you guys. They thought that your respect column applied to them, and it didn't. You didn't just fire them, Todd. You betrayed them.

McFarlane: Peter, I see it, see, but, you're, you're not there, and that's your opinion and I appreciate that.

But I see it quite the opposite. We put the word out that we wanted people to come. The people who said, "Todd, we want to do a mini-series and it'd take us 90 days between each issue." A) They either, we said, yeah, good. You got 90 days. We'll hold it back. Or B) We go, no, 90 days isn't good enough. We want to try and get monthly."

So the people whose stuff we accepted didn't come to us saying, "Todd, you just want to put out a book; let us print it." They came up to us promising they would turn out regular monthly books. That's the promise they made to us.

Once they made that promise to us, we told them even — because we are pretty tough guys — between monthly books, you have 42 days between monthly books to get in the next issue. So we gave them six weeks to hand in a monthly book. Again, all of them failed to do that.

Did we do that? Yes, like I said, we just laid in the rules to be able to start to fire us. But they were the first ones who came to us who said, "We will give you a monthly book. We will do this. Let us join." And, when we let them join, they were the ones who betrayed us, because they didn't come and give us what we contracted out to them to do, which was a book and a book on a monthly basis.

And, when they didn't give it to us and they went past the 42 days, we got rid of them. I don't see where that's betrayal. I see that as they promised us something and they didn't deliver. [Audience applauds.]

Pérez: This question is from Mr. McFarlane to Mr. David. I'm going to have to alter it a little. Otherwise it's going to be a little hard to get out. What is wrong with the writing of Todd McFarlane and with *Spawn* in general that you would suggest be changed?

David: I'm not quite sure what the hell this even remotely has to do with whether Image has received fair treatment or not. But, since you asked, I don't generally read *Spawn*.

DEBATE

(From Page 102)

Now, you will notice that never in my columns have I criticized *Spawn*. I think that Todd's writing, based on what he did in *Spider-Man*, was fairly poor. I base that on several combinations of structure and characterization.

If I'm really going to talk about writing, I do seminars that run about three to four hours. Three to four minutes is not going to cover it.

What I would like to see in Todd's work, should I ever really sit down and read it again, is story structure having to do with first- and second-act turning points, having hills and valleys, and building ideally to a climax with the concept of what anti-climax is like.

I'd like to see characters that ring true, that build some sort of central core, that relate to the real world and relate to me, that I care about.

Now, unfortunately, I'm not Todd's target audience. Because Todd's target audience is 12-to-14-year-olds. This is not a slam. This is what he said, and that's fine. Anybody can write to a particular target audience. However, I think even 12-to-14-year-olds certainly have the right to well-constructed stories.

I really don't want to stand here and describe the Peter David way of writing. I certainly would like to see more of a sense of humor. I would like to see a sense of things being thought out properly. Things never seem to be, in a lot of comic books, really thought out.

It really puts me in the mind of a book that Scott McCloud did some years back called *Destroy!* How many people remember that one? Now, *Destroy!* was this great big book involving this great big character who smashes everything in sight until the book ends.

When it first came out, this was funny! Now it's typical.

Everybody's going "Ooooooh." This isn't particularly aimed just at Image. That is aimed at the vast majority of stuff that we see coming out. Quality story lines that really hang together, that have a beginning, middle, and end, are too few and far between.

It can be done! Superman's line has certainly proven that. It can be done. I would just like to see it done a little bit more. I'd like to see more thought and more intelligence put into things. That's pretty much it. [David begins to sit, but stands again.]

Oh, I'm sorry. I should have mentioned this, also: And read! I see people who say they want to be writers, and they don't read. I'm not just talking about reading comic books. I'm talking about reading books, novels, histories, anthologies, biographies — things to be drawn from the real world. That's at least how I would do it. Because once you bring that real-world feeling to a comic book, it then rings true to the reader and makes them more involved in what's going on. It feels right.

McFarlane: OK, Pete. I'm going to do all that and then we'll be going head to head in the *CBG* awards for the writers. Thanks, you just gave it to me. That's all I need. [Audience laughs.]

The writing part that I do, again, like I said, is, it was a trial period for me to do. Now, I guess it can be argued, and I've heard it stated before by you, that if you were to become an artist, you'd have to hand in art samples. It only follows logic then, that as a writer, you should have to hand in writing samples.

I ended up building a bit of a reputation with my editor, Jim Salicrup, on *Spider-Man* and, through the years that I spent with him and discussing ideas back and forth, he was willing to give me a chance to try and prove whether I could do some-

thing. That it wasn't so much that I thought that I could write the books *per se*. But it was that I wanted to visually draw the stories that I had in my head.

Now, we did go back and forth saying, "Todd, why don't you just plot them, and why don't we get a scripter in there?" We thought about that long and hard and for a short time there was actually going to be a scripter on the *Spider-Man* stuff. The only reason we didn't go to it was, again, because knowing my idiosyncrasies I knew that, after five or six months, I was going to get frustrated again.

Whether that was the writer's fault or that was my fault, I would sit there and go, "Awww, I would've put this. I would've put that. Duh duh duh duh duh."

So Jim and I then came to the conclusion that the best thing to do was cut out the middle step. He gave me a ball and he said, "Here it is. Go play with it. And I hope that you bounce it the right way."

I tried, at the beginning — and, yes, it was a weak effort from the very beginning. But I think that, again, maybe you should go and read some of the comic books that I've done. I don't think, I don't think that, that the opinion you probably heard, from the peers, that it's actually the worst comic book out there. I don't think it's the best. But I think it's probably somewhere in between.

If you guys was to give me a little bit of insight, instead of just saying, "Todd, why don't you do this? Why don't you do that?" I'm always open. But one of the things that never happened at Marvel or from any of my peers isn't, "Todd, as a writer, why don't I give you some advice?"

Me, as an artist, when I have people coming up to me, showing me their portfolios, I'm always giving artistic opinions. I'm always trying to help people on how to do something and giving them an opinion. But I've yet to have a writer come up to me, though, and say, "Todd, as a friend to you, let me see if we can't correct some of this." Some of the writers I've worked with on *Spawn*, luckily, have done that. And I'm hoping to improve on this. Thank you.

David: Well, Todd, considering that at several times in several different places you've said repeatedly that you don't want people telling you what to do — Now, I don't know whether that was the "Ghost Todd" or the "Real Todd" or the "Space Todd" or whatever it is we're dealing with.

The problem is that you've gone on record as saying that "I didn't let a little thing like not being able to write stop me." Now, this doesn't set up a tremendous venue in terms of an exchange of ideas. You have said repeatedly that that's not the help you want.

As a matter of fact, you said that, after three issues of *Spawn*, your wife quit as editor because you wouldn't listen to what she said. [Unless] you really will take from what I have to say more strongly than [from your] wife, I think we have a slight problem. Thank you.

Pérez: We're getting a little short on time. So we're going to get a little more strict on the time limits here. OK, the question from Peter David to Todd McFarlane: How do you claim the moral high ground in your landmark column about respect? Please explain how the treatment of free-lancers by Image is appreciably superior to that of Marvel. [Audience oooohs and aahhhs.]

McFarlane: If you read the column and read my opinions on why I quit Marvel Comics, I'm gonna tell you guys right here, because, again, obviously, you've missed the point. It wasn't money.

As a creative person, you want to create. You want to do comic books and you see them in a vision of your own. When you start to get people around you all of a

sudden saying, "Todd, here. Or Bill, here. Or John, here. Here's a book. It's not selling very well. Go and do whatever you want." There's minimal amount of interference on that book. Because as creative people, we like to take an underdog approach.

So we take a book and, as we build the momentum on the book, at some point the companies want to jump on and start to guide that train. It was only going five miles an hour when you jumped on it. They didn't care about it. But as soon as you get it going up to 100 miles an hour, all of a sudden they want to become the conductor. That's why I ended up quitting.

The, the, *Spider-Man*, the popularity of *Spider-Man* became the status quo. Don't mess with it. You can't do this with it. You might offend people.

Your audience is so big now, Todd, that you might say something wrong. So that, all of a sudden, I have to be guilty of my success. [David, Pérez, and much of the audience look extremely confused.]

The people who were coming up to Image Comics, I can guarantee you to the person: Jerry Ordway? I've never had one conversation with the man to tell him anything about how to do his work. We said, "Here's your deadline. Here's the book. Here's where the printer's gotta be. We've gotta get the book." I've never given him one word to say this is how you have to draw. This is how you have to fit into Image. This is how you've gotta do that.

Al Gordon — not one.

Bill Loeb — not one.

Sam Kieth — not one.

What we have given is not a haven to run helter-skelter on deadline. But a haven for those who will play and have a bit of an attitude and have a good attitude about it — is a haven to create as you see fit completely, from beginning to end, on that book, that fits into the Image universe, and, and, as a book that we don't have a problem with.

And we're never going to tell you, Peter, if you do a book for Image, how to do anything on your book, other than to get it on time. Thank you.

David: What is really kind of unfortunate, in my opinion, about the way Image is set up is that you've totally dismissed the notion that perhaps an outside eye or another opinion can sometimes improve a book. Not always. It's a system that cuts both ways. Sometimes it can hurt a book, as well. But a certain amount is owed to the readers, to try to get the best product out there as possible.

Now, the problem is that you can say as much as you want, "Oh, we won't tell people how to do a book." That's great. That's fine. Sometimes, they might need the help. But even so, if they don't, that's fine, too. They should feel bound to do whatever they want, within limits. And, apparently, the limits you have set are within the confines of the Image universe.

I'm sorry, but I find that to be slightly contradictory: that, if you're going to say to someone, "You can do whatever you want," then let them do whatever they want. If you're going to say, "You can do whatever you want, within the confines of the Image universe," you're not allowing them the freedom they're entitled to as creators. You can't have it both ways.

McFarlane: Peter, we never asked for it to be both ways, bud. We've opened up the doors, even to Mr. Pérez here. We made the offer to him long ago. And one of his reasons for not joining Image was he wanted to be able to blow up the planet.

Nobody has come up to us — [Pérez mugs to the audience, eliciting laughter.] We wanted him to be able to blow up the plane, but not kill our guys. And our response was back then, as it is ultimately,

was you can blow up the planet. *Legends* is now doing that. You can have your own little universe. What we're looking for is that little emblem up in the corner.

What ended up happening wasn't so much that people were going, "I don't want to play in my own universe," and now all of a sudden, we're saying, "No, you've got to play in the universe." They came to us specifically saying, "We will do a monthly book, and we want to interact with *WildC.A.T.S.* We want to interact with *Spawn*. And we want to interact with this stuff."

Getting into the book, all of a sudden, they started going into different directions — and, actually, it wasn't even so much the content again, Peter. It came down to the promise they made to us of bringing an anchor to us and giving us some stability that they reneged on.

Pérez: Thank you. New we're going to have the closing statements from each of the debaters. I want to thank the audience for really showing an incredible amount of control [Audience laughter.] and to the two debaters who actually did keep this running smoothly and within the confines of a debate, with a few little flourishes added in to make it nice and spicy.

The first closing statement will be from Mr. Peter David.

David: *Sachs & Violens #2* is going to be a couple of weeks late. [Audience roars with laughter.]

Now, George and I signed a contract with Marvel Comics and Epic. They didn't take us to the cleaners. They could cancel the book. They could demand money back. They could do all kinds of horrible things to us. Instead, what Marie Jenkins said to us was, "Look, just get the book out as soon as you can. We believe in the quality of the book, and we want to see the best job possible. And, if it takes an additional week or two or three, get it done, and have it come out when it's ready."

That is the cherished respect for freelancers that Todd McFarlane put forward so many months ago in *CBG* and which, to a very large extent, Image has not really been able to live up to.

They may have set goals that were too high for themselves. That's not a crime. There's no crime in that.

What is a crime is to state that I have been putting forward lies and rumors about them and, when asked point-blank to name one, ultimately, Todd couldn't. That is what you should be concentrating on here today: that the reason for this debate is a non-existent one. There is no reason for everyone to be here.

I'm glad that you had a good time. I'm glad you enjoyed it. But I, personally, don't like having my veracity put on the line, in print, and then, when asked to present any serious challenge to it, we get: nothing.

Nothing.

I, personally, am just a touch offended by that.

I would also like to thank the judges for showing up and doing this silly job. And George Pérez for standing in at the last moment. And all of you. I certainly hope that the Phillies do the job for you.

OK, seventh game of the championship series, bottom of the ninth, four to three, Phillies down, Dykstra at the plate, bases loaded, two outs, three and two, pitch in the dirt. Dykstra swings at it. [Audience laughs.]

Now, do you sit there in the audience and say, "Well, you know, he had really had good intentions?"

Or do you say, "Dykstra, you moron!"

And — if he's there in the evening on the TV news saying, "You know, I really went out there and I had the best of intentions, and it's tough out there and — Gee,

DEBATE

(From Page 108)

I don't see why everyone's picking on me" — would you say, "He's got a point"? Or would you say, "My heavens, what a mewling, spewing little cry-baby"? Thank you. [Audience ovation.]

Pérez: I had no idea where he was going with that.

And now, for the last words: Todd McFarlane.

McFarlane: OK, using the Lenny Dykstra.

OK, we'll be Lenny Dykstra and we swing at the ball in the dirt. But the point is: At least we got to the point where we're in the play-offs.

Now, I find that what happened was, when I first started to think about Image Comics with Rob Liefeld and Erik Larsen, we were the three spearheads. My idea was that we wanted to have a union. I just felt that the working conditions, in terms of both pay, the way that we were giving information to the companies, the way that they asked for information from us, was not right.

When we went into the office with Terry Stewart that fateful day in December to quit, his opinion and his quote to us was, "It's an entertainment business, and this is how it's always been. We exploit you and it will always be that we will exploit you." And for Tom DeFalco, "What was good enough for me, why shouldn't it be good enough for you?"

Using that mentality, folks, we would still have people of the black persuasion in the back of the bus. You know why? Because it would have been easy for us to say, "That's the way it is. That's the way it's always gonna be."

Well, I'm here to say that that's wrong. That we can do things, and justify them on a business means, is completely wrong. That we now exist, and we are open now

to criticism. We're opened up to criticism, first and foremost, that we should at least have an acknowledgment that we even exist. That, that, there's the respect now that they get to hand out their books two weeks late?

I feel that, in some small way, is because of the response of the other companies — Defiant and Valiant and Image Comics and Legend and Dark Horse, that have now come out, and the Ultraverse — and have now ruined it for staying the same, that the creative people can now take back what is now rightfully theirs.

As far as some of the opinions that I give, and provement of your lies, Peter, you and your CBG columns (I don't carry those CBG columns, excuse me, I don't carry those CBG columns with me), that I am afraid, and shunned down on people who give their opinions and won't sign their names to it — if you'd made a phone call, you would see that I now have a column in the Wizard that's an opinion column not unlike your own. So that thing that you say that I dislike so much has now become something that I now do. So, once again, you jumped the gun without checking the facts, of telling me, "Todd, this is what you do," without ever checking exactly what it is that Todd McFarlane does.

As far as Image Comic books, from the union point of view: You know what, folks? The creative people, we found out, they didn't want to be saved. They were afraid. They believed the lies. They were brainwashed.

Come on, you can come out. You can come out of the game and survive. No, we don't want to come. We don't want to do it. We want you guys to go out there, stick your necks out, do it, see if you can survive, see if you get chopped or just get mildly bloody. And then, if you guys still survive, we would then love to come and join you.

Well, you know what? We're having a good time right now and we're not inclined now to slow down for those guys who didn't have the guts to come out and join us.

Some of the fringe players, like the Alan Moores and the Frank Millers, they've always been fighting for those rights. We have a good time and we see on the same level of trying to expand the market in terms of books like the Legends and having books that have their own copyright. And from that point of view, we have to acknowledge that the existence of our company now, Peter, has done the creative company that seemed to hate us more than anybody, a little bit of good in the free agent market.

Thank you.

Pérez: I'd like to thank Todd McFarlane and Peter David. Now, as was discussed in the organizing of the debate, we have three judges. Truth to tell, neither the judges nor I realize what the judges were supposed to do. So, by discussing with them, it's going to be very brief, and each judge has a statement to make, and from that I guess the consensus will be made. Since I introduced them alphabetically, I'll start backwards alphabetically, and I know Maggie hates that — Maggie Thompson of CBG.

Thompson: OK, we've heard two creators with different skills. They're both obviously entertainers. They've both obviously entertained us. We had a wonderful time. All the judges want to thank them for these great seats. [Audience laughs.]

The question was whether the media have treated Image and Todd fairly, and I think the media provide an ongoing process and this event is one of those processes. I think they've presented themselves the way they wish to be presented, and so that's fair.

Pérez: Now, you're going second, no

matter how it's handled, John Danovich, from Hero Illustrated.

Danovich: Unlike Maggie, I can't say I appreciated the view. [He sat directly behind George Pérez throughout the debate. Audience laughs; Pérez scowls.]

What we had here was a debate based on opinion for the most part. And opinion cannot be wrong. It is merely opinion. Peter's opinion cannot be wrong in the fact that it's his opinion. It can be misguided. It might be misinformed. Nonetheless, it's opinion.

On the other hand, a book like Sachs & Violen's getting the respect that wasn't there in the past is due in part to what Todd and Image have accomplished.

In this debate, I'd like to use Peter's example of the Phillies down, four to three, bottom of the ninth, Dykstra at bat, three-two count, pitch is in the dirt, and Dykstra swings.

Only in baseball, you can advance to first, the runner scores. It's a tie game.

Pérez: And to answer the question of have they received fair treatment from the media? [Audience laughs.]

David: Looks like the catcher picked up the ball and threw to first. [Audience roars.]

Danovich: The media [are] not being represented by an opinion column. If you're talking about the media and the facts, that is not what's been debated here. It's a tie; there is no winner.

Pérez: William Christensen from The Wizard Press.

Christensen: See, I came very unprepared for this. I was expecting the steel cage bloodmatch. And I came primarily to see Peter donning the shorts and gloves.

Pérez: Only Todd would really have looked good in the shorts. [Audience roars.]

(DEBATE, Page 116)

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DEBATE

(From Page 113)

David: Glass houses, sweetheart! [More laughter.]

Christensen: In terms of the media and whether they've treated Image, and Todd especially, fairly: Clearly, they've gotten lots of media coverage. And one of the best things about columns like Peter's is that we can see sometimes what is not necessarily clear to both sides. We get to see what other people think of what Image is actually doing. Part of that fairness of making sure that everyone knows everything they can about Image, and all the pros and cons, and what they're doing, is that we have people who will stand up and say, "Look, I don't like this and I think this is wrong."

And I think that Image has been treated fairly. And I think that part of that is due to people like Peter, who will stand up and put their neck out on the chopping block, like was done here today, and say that they think Image was wrong in something.

Perez: Basically, if we are to rely on the opinions of the judges, and that's what this whole thing was about, we'll have to agree that your opinion will always be your opinion.

You may think this was all a waste of time.

You may have had your opinions set before it started. You may have changed them, you may not have. That's your prerogative.

If we have to make any kind of judgment call, two out of three judges say that there has been fair treatment, because there has been both positive and negative treatment of Image in the media, of which the *But I Digress* column is [representative of] but one of many, many periodicals that are out there.

And, thus, media cannot be described or measured just by one column. And if you're going to be talking about the media, the consensus is "fair."

Again, thank you all for your decorum. Thank you all for making this debate a success.

[Peter David, Todd McFarlane, and George Perez all shook hands and mugged for cameras after the debate.]

In November, **Liam Sharp** is putting *Death's Head II* through the wringer. Sharp said that in *Death's Head Gold #1*, a quarterly title scheduled to ship Nov. 30 from Marvel UK, "I've stripped him down to six personalities, his fluid mortal arm isn't working at all, he's got all sorts of attachments to keep his legs moving, he's only got one horn, and one of his eyes is blasted out. He's not feeling too good." Sharp is also the artist for the issue, which retails for \$3.95.

Now Appearing

[Editors' Note: Items for this feature, which lists appearances in comics stores and lecture halls — not conventions — of writers, artists, and editors and should be submitted as far in advance as possible. They must be written (preferably typewritten and definitely not all in capital letters) — we cannot take these by telephone — and kept brief, preferably in the format used here.]

There is no charge, so give us a break and actually write it out instead of sending us an ad fier that mentions a signing along with dozens of other things. And please give us the store address; don't tell us where we can look it up.

Send to Don and Maggie Thompson, 700 E. State St., Iola, Wis. 54990 or fax it — to Don and Maggie Thompson (our names must be on the fax for it to reach us) at (715) 445-4087.

Messages sent to us through other departments will be ignored.

Send items as early as possible — when a fax is sent May 19 about a signing May 26 — no, we are not making this up, we did get such a fax — it benefits no one. We must receive the item more than a week before the signing in order to have a sporting chance of getting it in.

Our deadlines are inflexible — that's the only way to maintain a weekly schedule.

Special note: If your written or typewritten listing is barely legible, it will be totally illegible after it is faxed.

November 5

Melissa Moore (author of *Melissa Anne Moore: The Life of an Actress*) at Golden Apple, 7711 Melrose, Los Angeles, Calif. 90046, from 7 to 9 p.m.

November 6

Skip Williamson (creator of *Pighead*, *Halshead Street*, *Class War* comic, and *Snappy Sammy Smoot*) at Moondog's, 2301 N. Clark St., Chicago, Ill., from 2 to 4 p.m.

Tom Morgan (artist of *Punisher 2099*) at A&S Comics & Cards, 396 Cedar Lane, Teaneck, N.J. 07666, from noon to 5 p.m.

Steve Gerber (writer of *Sludge*), **James Hudnall** (writer of *Hardcase* and *Solution*), **Larry Welch** (inker of *The Strangers* and *Man of War*), and **Chris Ulm** (editor-in-chief of *Malibu* and creator/writer of *Rune* and *Dead Clown*) at Silver City Comics, 4671 Torrance Blvd. (at Anza), Torrance, Calif., from noon to 4 p.m.

Chris Bachalo (artist of *Shade*, the *Changing Man*, *X-Men Unlimited*, *Death: The High Cost of Living*, and *The Children's Crusade*) at Dungeon Comics, 4800 S. Maryland Parkway, Las Vegas, Nev. 89119, from noon to 5 p.m.

Rick Sternbach and **Michael Okuda** (*Star Trek* technical consultants and authors of the *Star Trek: The Next Generation Technical Manual*) will discuss the artistic design and scientific aspects of

Star Trek and *Star Trek: Deep Space 9* at the Academy of Television Arts & Sciences, 6200 N. Lankershim, North Hollywood, Calif., from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Call (818) 882-5599 for further information.

"**Spider-Man**" (Marvel Comics character) at Comic Attitudes, Staten Island Mall, Staten Island, N.Y., from noon to 6 p.m.

November 12

Olivia Berardinis (artist of *Let Them Eat Cheesecake*) and models **Susie Owens** and **Darla Crane** at Golden Apple, 7711 Melrose Ave., Los Angeles, Calif. 90046, from 7 to 9 p.m.

November 13

Bernie Wrightson (creator of *Captain Stern*) and **Shepherd Hendrix** (inker of *Captain Stern*) at Heroland Comics, 6963 W. 111th St., Worth, Ill. 60482, from 1 to 5:30 p.m.

Fabian Nicieza (writer of *X-Force*, *Cable*, *New Warriors*, and *Nova*) at Comi-con, 464 Commonwealth Ave. (Kenmore Square), Boston, Mass. 02215, from noon to 3 p.m.

Timothy Truman (writer-artist of *Turok*, *Dinosaur Hunter*) at The Comic Store, 28 McGovern Ave., Lancaster, Pa. 17602, from 1 to 4 p.m.

Wendy and Richard Pini (creators of *Elfquest*) at the Oxford Bookstore in Atlanta, Ga., from 3 to 6 p.m.

November 14

Stephen Platt (penciller on *Marc Spector: Moon Knight* #55-56) at One If by Cards, Two If by Comics, 1107 Central Ave., Scarsdale, N.Y. 10583, from 1 to 5 p.m.

James O'Barr (artist-writer of *The Crow*) at Golden Apple, 7711 Melrose Ave., Los Angeles, Calif. 90046, from 2 to 4 p.m.

Fabian Nicieza (writer of *X-Force*, *Cable*, *New Warriors*, and *Nova*) at Legends of Superheroes, 168 School St. (Everett Square), Everett, Mass. 02149, from noon to 3 p.m.

November 15

Pat Mills (writer of *Marshal Law*) and **Kevin O'Neill** (artist of *Marshal Law*) at Moondog's, 2301 N. Clark St., Chicago, Ill., from 7 to 9 p.m. **Postponed from an earlier scheduled appearance.**

November 16

Pat Mills (writer of *Marshal Law*) and **Kevin O'Neill** (artist of *Marshal Law*) at Moondog's, 1455 W. Schaumburg Rd., Schaumburg, Ill., from 6 to 8 p.m. **Postponed from an earlier scheduled appearance.**

November 17

Pat Mills (writer of *Marshal Law*) and **Kevin O'Neill** (artist of *Marshal Law*) at Cosmic Comics Inc., 14616 W. Center Rd., Omaha, Neb. 68144, from 4 to 6 p.m.

November 18

Pat Mills (writer of *Marshal Law*) and **Kevin O'Neill** (artist of *Marshal Law*) at Cosmic Comics Inc., 5400 S. 56th, Suite 4,

Lincoln, Neb. 68516, from 4 to 7 p.m.

November 19

Wendy and Richard Pini (creators of *Elfquest*) at The Silver Snail in Ottawa, Canada, from 4 to 7 p.m.

November 20

Doug Moench (writer of *Batman/Dark Joker: The Wild*) and **Kelley Jones** (artist of *Batman/Dark Joker: The Wild*) at The Comic Stop/Legends, Plymouth Meeting Mall, Plymouth Meeting, Pa., from noon to 3 p.m. and at The Comic Stop/Legends, Willow Grove Park, Willow Grove, Pa., from 4 to 7 p.m.

Val Semeiks (artist of *Lobo*, *Demon*, *Conan the Barbarian*, and *Batman*) at Earthworld Comics, 327 Central Ave., Albany, N.Y. 12206, from 1 to 4:30 p.m.

"**Vampirella**" (Harris Comics heroine) at Golden Apple, 7711 Melrose Ave., Los Angeles, Calif. 90046, from noon to 2 p.m.

Stan Sakai (creator of *Usagi Yojimbo*, letterer on *Groo the Wanderer* and *The Mighty Magnor*) at South Bay Comic Exchange, 2737 Manhattan Beach Blvd., Redondo Beach, Calif. 90278, from 2:30 to 4:30 p.m.

Joe Linsner and Joe Monks (creative team on *Cry for Dawn*) at Sarge's Comics Etc., 52 State St., New London, Conn. 06320, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., and at Sarge's Comics Etc., 325 Route 12, Groton, Conn. 06340, from 4 to 8 p.m.

Wendy and Richard Pini (creators of *Elfquest*) at The Silver Snail in Toronto, Canada, from 2 to 5 p.m.

November 21

Kurt Busiek (writer of *Marvels*, *Spectacular Spider-Man*, *Web of Spider-Man*, and others) at Zenith Comics & Collectibles, 18200 Georgia Ave., Olney, Md. 20832, from 1 to 4 p.m.

Stan Sakai (creator of *Usagi Yojimbo* and *Space Usagi*) at Golden Apple, 7711 Melrose Ave., Los Angeles, Calif. 90046, from 2 to 4 p.m.

Joe Linsner and Joe Monks (creative team on *Cry for Dawn*) at Sarge's Comics Etc., 783 Boston Post Road (Route 1), Old Saybrook, Conn., from noon to 4 p.m.

November 26

Dave Sim (creator-artist-writer-publisher of *Cerebus*) and **Martin Wagner** (creator-artist-writer-publisher of *Hepcats*) at Central City Comics, 1460 Bethel Rd., Columbus, Ohio 43221, from 3 to 7 p.m.

November 27

Tom Veitch (writer of *Star Wars: Dark Empire* and *Tales of the Jedi*) at Casablanca Comics, 778 Roosevelt Trail, Route 302, Windham, Maine, from noon to 4 p.m.

Ken Branch (inker of *The Second Life of Doctor Mirage*), **Dan Nakrosis** (artist of *Conservation Corps*), **Paul Whitmore** (colorist for *Superman* series) and **Paul Castiglia** (writer of *Conservation Corps*), at Four Color Fantasies, The Mall at Headquarters Plaza, Morristown, N.J. 07960, from noon to 4 p.m.

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