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NO PURCHASE NECESSARY. Contest begins at 02:00:00 p.m. ET on 01/03/08 and ends at 11:59:00 p.m. ET on 03/15/08. To enter, you must be a legal U.S. resident of the 48 contiguous United States or the District of Columbia, who is 6-15 years of age. Contest is void elsewhere and where prohibited by law. Limit of one successful online entry per person and per parental/guardian email address per calendar day. You may enter as often as you like by mail. However, there is a limit of one mail entry per outer envelope and each addressed envelope must be hand-written. Online entries must be received by 11:59:00 p.m. ET on 03/15/08. Mail entries must be postmarked by 03/15/08 and received by 03/19/08. Grand Prize winner must be able to travel on designated dates in late April 2008 or on other dates specified by Sponsor, or winner will be disqualified. For official rules (including a description of the methods of entry, prizes and the odds of winning) and full details, visit the www.marvelkids.com website. Many will enter. Few will win.

FANTASTIC FOUR #108: KIRBY'S WAY

BY JOHN MORROW

***Fantastic Four #108* has quite a history behind it.**

It was originally meant to be #102, but Stan Lee apparently felt that Jack Kirby's story, as submitted, wasn't dialogueable. So Stan ran the story intended for FF #103 (which Kirby turned in along with his resignation from Marvel in 1969) in #102, and put the rejected art on the shelf for a few months. The Bullpen eventually chopped Kirby's originals up, rearranged panels, had John Buscema add some filler art, changed the ending, sent the whole thing to Joe Sinnott to ink, and published it (not so coincidentally) the same month Kirby's *New Gods* #1 came out at DC Comics. The end result was a real mess that, quite frankly, didn't make much sense.

But just how bad was Kirby's original story? Judge for yourself. Presented here is my attempt to put the story back into its original form, using the Kirby art that didn't make the cut. Comic art dealer Mitch Izkowitz came across many of the discarded pencils in the Marvel files a few years ago, and had them returned to Jack. A few panels are still missing, and you'll see those indicated by question marks. Since Kirby's original story and the published version had major differences, I deleted the published dialogue and page numbers to avoid confusion. In quotes (" ") accompanying the pencil panels are Jack's original margin notes for Stan Lee to dialogue by (these are numbered to coincide with the panel numbers). With just the few margin notes here to accompany Kirby's powerful art, it's easy enough to get an idea of the story he set out to tell originally.

Some of the later pages were renumbered more than once during the alterations, making reassembly a difficult task (apparently, the hatchet job went through several revisions). One thing that helped immensely in reassembling this story was the fact that Kirby worked on a grid. By simply following his standard FF grid from this period, you can usually tell if panels were falling in the right place on a given page.

There were some major differences in the two versions. Just what is going on in the introduction on page 2 is unclear, and maybe this confusion at the opening of the story is the reason Stan decided it was unusable. Unlike the published version of this story, Kirby's version dealt with a force called Mega-Power, not Nega-Power, and had nothing to do with the Negative Zone. And the villain Janus didn't die in the end (a plot twist that I always thought seemed very un-Kirbylike).

This story didn't break any new ground, but there are some really nice bits that got left on the Bullpen floor; those simple, down-to-earth touches like Reed and Sue's casual clothes on page 2 and the Thing's sweater on page 8, and Sue taking baby Franklin from Crystal on page 2. These seemingly minor details make the FF seem like real people, and were a big part of the sense of family fans felt reading the comics of the Lee/Kirby era. The very lack of this type of storytelling detail is one of the reasons the FF has never reached the heights it attained while Kirby was on it.

But rather than dwell on the negative, let's celebrate the end of the classic Lee/Kirby run on *Fantastic Four* by enjoying this look at one of Jack's final efforts on the FF, as he originally intended it to be seen.

John Morrow is editor and publisher of The Jack Kirby Collector, a quarterly magazine about Kirby's life and career that is currently in its 14th year of publication. His company, TwoMorrow's Publishing, launched in 1994 and is the industry's leading publisher of books and magazines about comics artists and comics history. Find out more at www.twomorrow.com

1. "Famous archeologist has dug up statue of twin god Janus--wants to verify its date with Reed Richards' equipment--"
2. STAN LEE BORDER NOTE: "Art dealer--why did Alicia do that strange statue?"
3. STAN LEE BORDER NOTE: "Reed--it represents one of our greatest cases."
4. "One face of statue is calm--wholesome. Other face is evil--savage."
5. "Why should statue have been unearthed at this particular time? Strange."



20
 ART DEALER -
 WHY DID ALCIA DO THAT
 STRANGE STATUE?
 REED -
 IT REPRESENTS ONE OF
 OUR GREATEST CASES
 WHY SHOULD STATUE
 HAVE BEEN UNearthed
 AT THIS PARTICULAR
 TIME?

P.F. MAY 70
 #102
 FAMOUS ARCHEOLOGIST HAS DUG UP STATUE
 OF TWIN - D JANUS - WANTS TO VERIFY ITS DATE
 WITH REED RICHARDS' EQUIPMENT

ONE FACE OF STATUE IS CALM--WHOLESDOME
 OTHER FACE IS EVIL--SAVAGE
 WHY SHOULD STATUE BE
 UNearthed AT THIS
 PARTICULAR TIME?

1. "Even ancients pondered problem that still plagues man today." 2. "This radiation test will prove date conclusively."
3. "The rays react." 4. "This intensity meter places statue at 4000 B.C." 5. "That fierce face--thank goodness we've progressed today." 6. (From FF #108, Page 1. The panel was cropped when published.)



PAGES
3-5

(As published in FF #108, pages 2-5.)



1. "This gives intruder temporary strength of Thing--he bops Ben hard." 2. "Then like beast he hammers away without mercy." 5. "Torch comes to meet Ben--instead finds shambles." 6. "I don't know how you did all this--but it's over!"

FANTASTIC FOUR #104



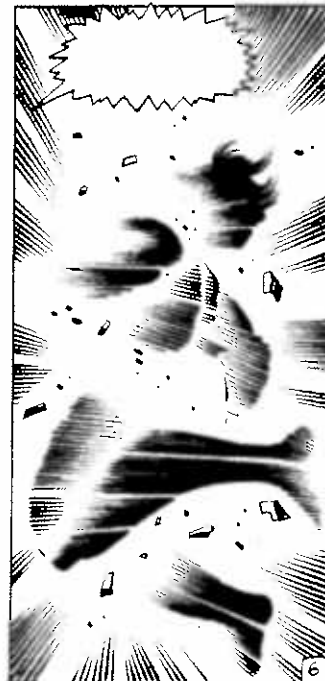
7. "The
Torch
comes
to meet
Ben--
instead
finds
shambles."



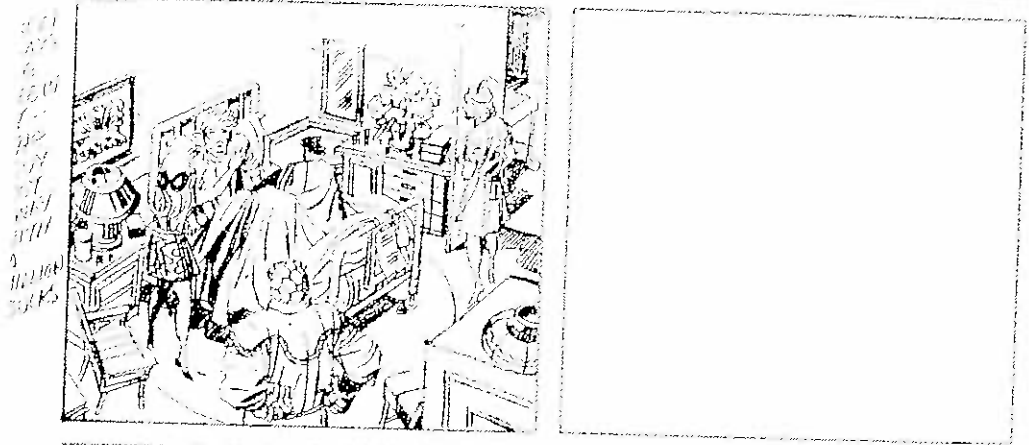
5. "Torch comes to meet Ben--
instead finds shambles."

6. "I don't know how you did all this--
but it's over!"

(As published in FF #108 Page 6)



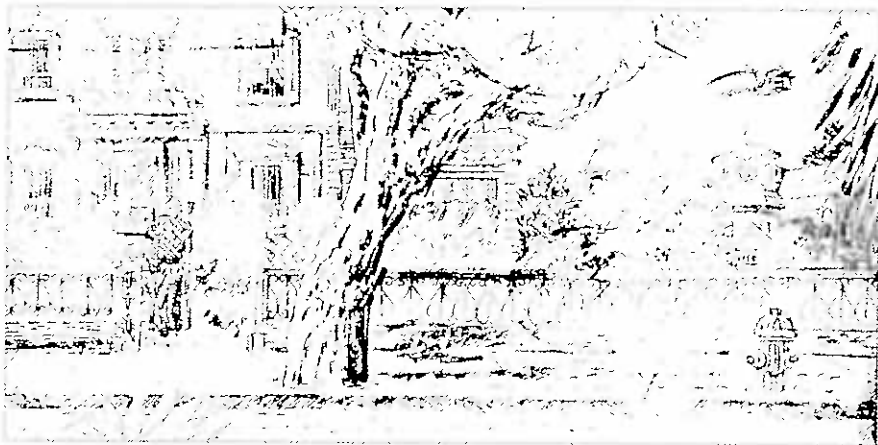
- 1. "Torch whirrs in _____ nightmare." (From FF #108, Page 7, Panels 1-3) 2. "_____ like bad dream."
- 3. "Torch wakes up in _____" 4. "Ben says we blew it--the guy got away with a million bucks" 5. (missing panel)
- 6. "Yeah--he's now number one--on the ten most wanted felons!"
- 7. "We can't stay here! Let's get him--" "Reed says cool it--he's following a lead"



CALL - HE'S THE NUMBER ONE
GUY ON THE TEN MOST
WANTED FELONS!

REED SAYS COOL
IT--HE'S FOLLOWING
A LEAD

1 From FF #108 page 15 panel 4) 2-5. (Missing Panels, probably showing Sue planting a Mini-Camera In Janus' house



1 2. (Missing Panels, probably showing Sue planting a Mini-Camera In Janus' house.) 3. "Reed is amazed at mildness of Prof, who is complete opposite of Ben's description." 5. "Meanwhile, the Prof's evil brother has been watching--he says Richards must be flabbergasted." 6. "Prof says--why did you have to come after all these years?" "Because you're a perfect cover, brother--"



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1. "I've been away perfecting Mega-Power. Now--I'll gain money-power." 2. "You won't talk. The town won't talk-- or it's curtains!" 3. "Stick with me. With Mega-Power--I may even help you walk again." 4. "Right now I'm gong to be busy in lab. Richards didn't go away without bugging the house." 5. "I've got instruments to trace his bugs and destroy them. Now leave me." 6. "Yes--my plans don't stop here--I'll empty that whole city of its money." 7. (From FF #108, Page 7, Panel 6.)

THE FEEL AWAY
PROFESSOR ALCO-POWER
NOW THE GAIN MONEY-POWER

YOU WON'T TALK
THE TOWN WON'T TALK
OR IT'S CURTAINS!

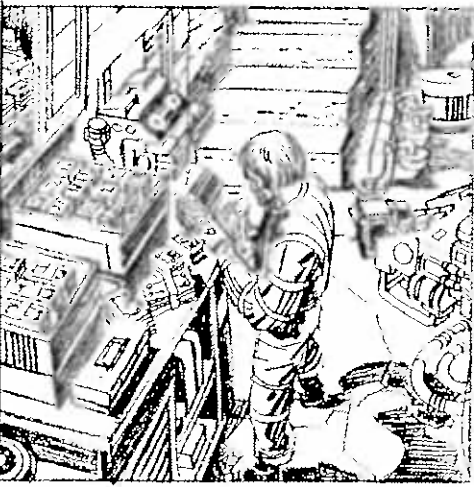
STICK WITH ME
WITH MEGA-POWER
I MAY EVEN HELP YOU
WALK AGAIN!



RIGHT NOW I'M BUSY
IN LAB
RICHARDS
DIDN'T GO AWAY
WITHOUT BUGGING
THE HOUSE

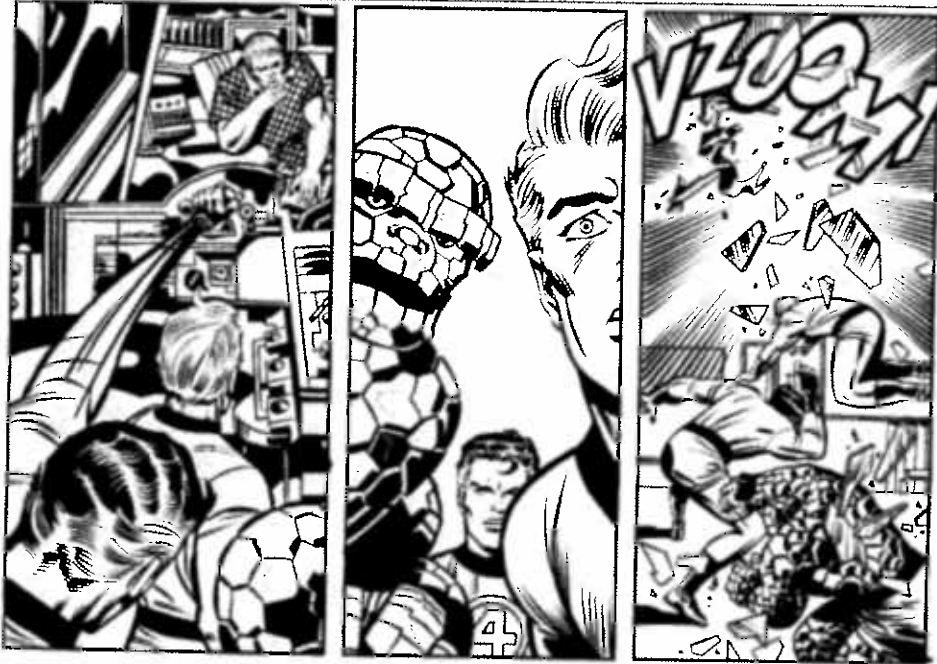


RIGHT NOW I'M BUSY
IN LAB
RICHARDS
DIDN'T GO AWAY
WITHOUT BUGGING
THE HOUSE



PAGES
12-13

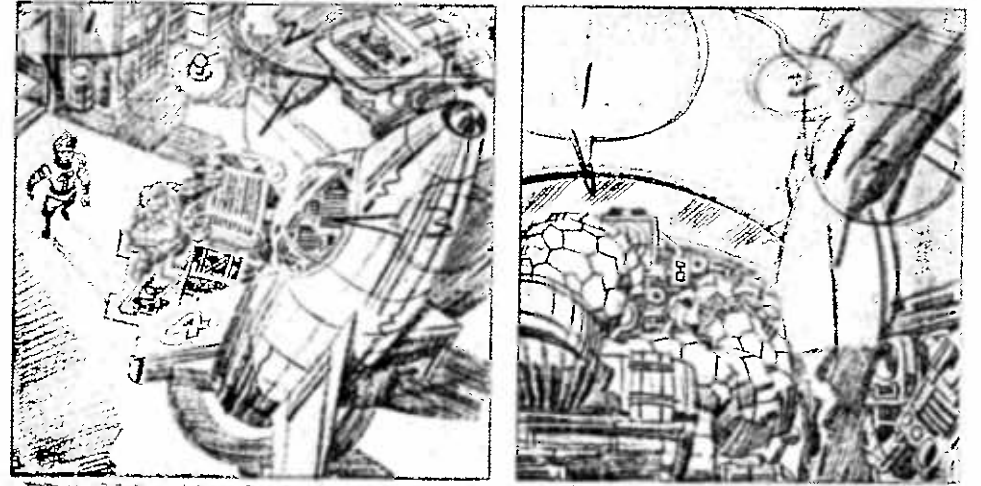
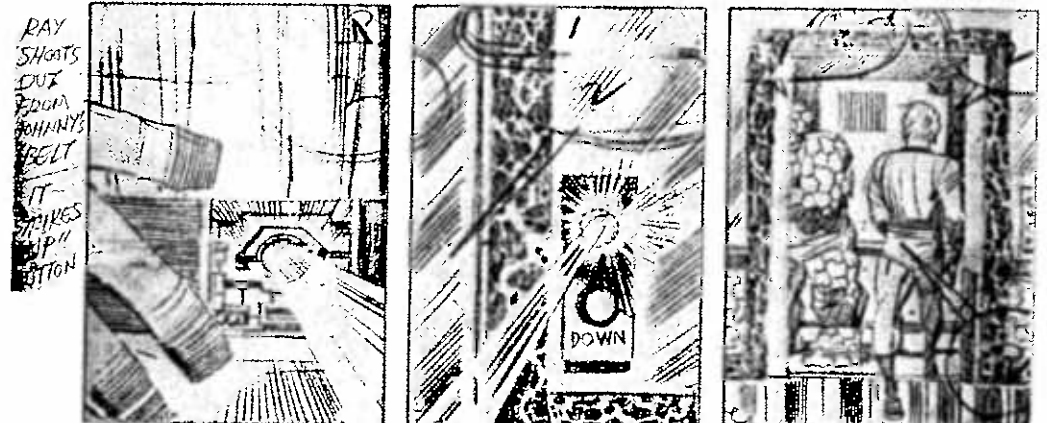
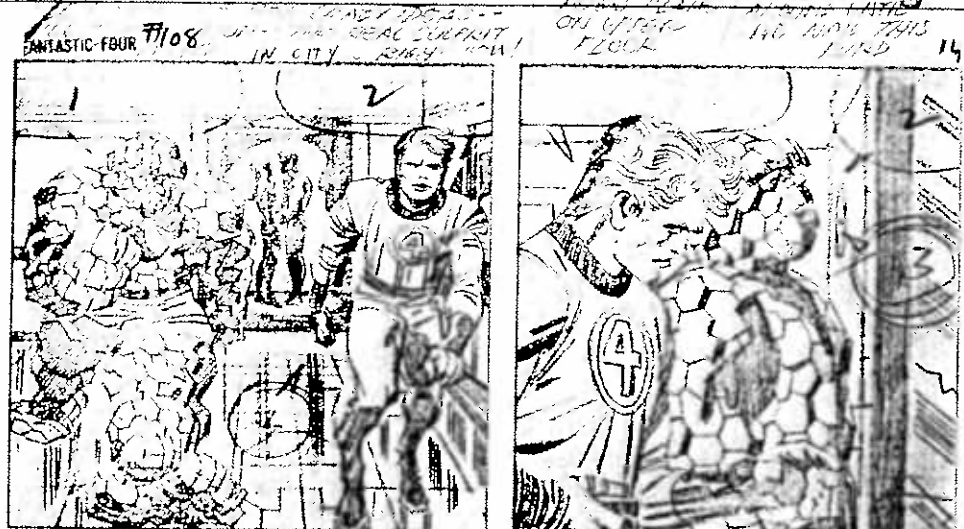
This page would have been split into two half pages, with ads running under them--A practice that got a 20-page story out of only 19 pages of art. 1-2. (From FF #108, Page 8, Panel 2 and 3.) 3. (From FF #108, Page 8, Panel 6.) 4. _____ with mini-camera (From FF #108, Page 9, Panel 1.) 5. "What Happened?" "Ben says--Reed's mini-camera blew up in our faces--that's what!" 6. "That was no malfunction--that was Mega-Power. Listen Sue--I have a nutty idea--"



FANTASTIC FOUR #108 12



- 1. "Let him give her crazy ideas--I'll take action--the real culprit must be in city _____ right now!"
- 2. "We'll take Pogo Plane on upper floor. We'll scout around until we nail this bird." 3. "Ray shoots out from Johnny's belt. It strikes "up" button." 6. "Ben says--you can't have girls tagging along all the time--Alicia's visiting _____"
- 7. "Boy--these controls feel great--did you know I was a World War 2 ace?"



BEN SAYS-- YOU CAN'T HAVE GIRLS TAGGING ALONG ALL THE TIME-- ALICIA'S VISITING

BOY-- THESE CONTROLS FEEL GREAT-- DID YOU KNOW I WAS A WORLD WAR 2 ACE?

- 1. "How's this for a takeoff--she handles great!" 2. "_____ friend's crummy craft! I'll take him like the Red Baron."
- 3. "You see what I see?" 4. "Flying debris from street below. Ripped out by Mega-Power! Let's go!"
- 6. "He sees plane! I can't leave without a parting shot--"

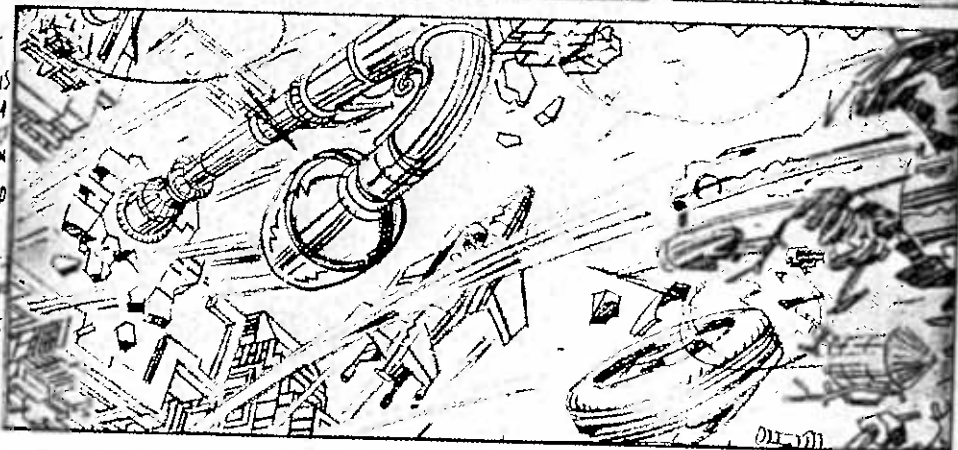
HOW'S THIS FOR A TAKEOFF--SHE HANDLES GREAT!

YOUR FRIEND'S CRUMMY CRAFT! I'LL TAKE HIM LIKE THE RED BARON!

YOU SEE WHAT I SEE!



FLYING DEBRIS FROM STREET BELOW RIPPED OUT BY MEGA-POWER! LET'S GO!

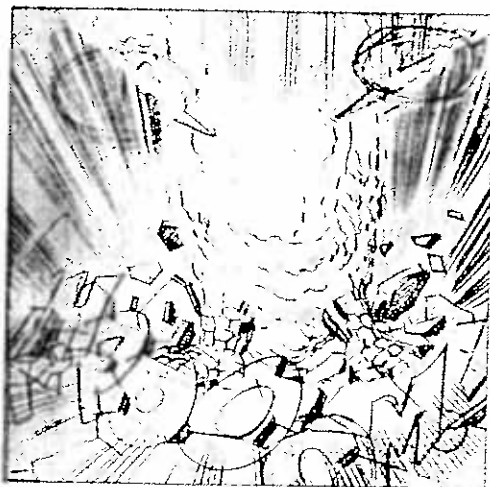
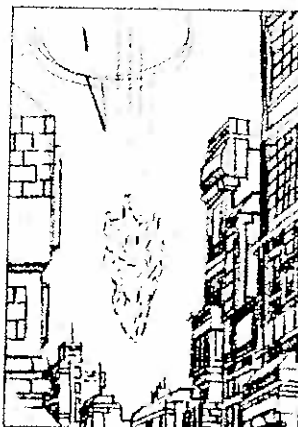


HE SEES PLANE! I CAN'T LEAVE WITHOUT A PARTING SHOT--

1-2. (From FF #108, Page 13, Panel 1-2. Originals were cropped.) 3. "Ben! The cockpit's frozen tight!
Ben says Flame On, kid. Get out! I can't control it." 3-7. (From FF #108, Page 14, Panel 1-5.)

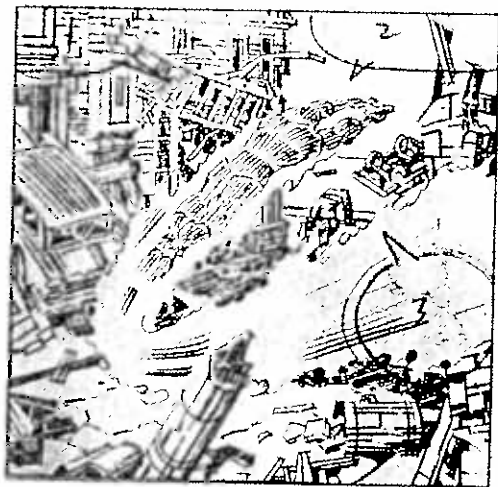


BEN!
THE
COCKPIT'S
FROZEN
TIGHT!
BEN
SAYS
FLAME
ON,
KID!
GET
OUT!
I
CAN'T
CON-
TROL
IT!

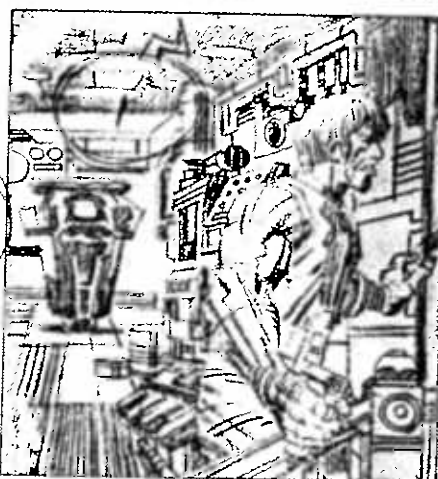
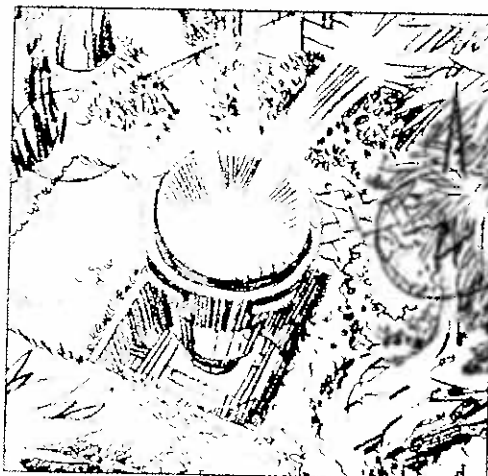


1-2. (From FF #108, Page 14, Panel 6-7.) 3. "Bruised people say--are we in his power? Can you stop him?"

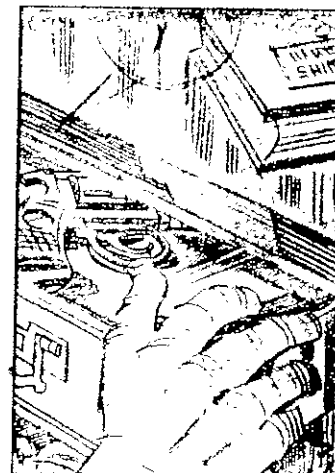
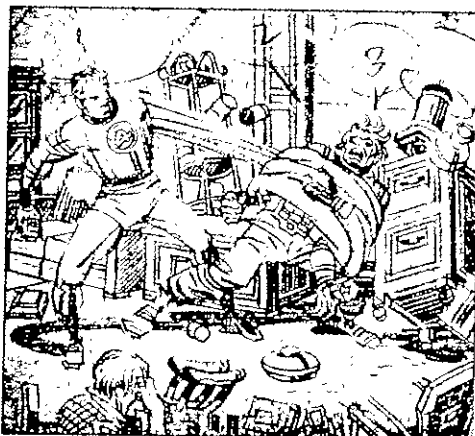
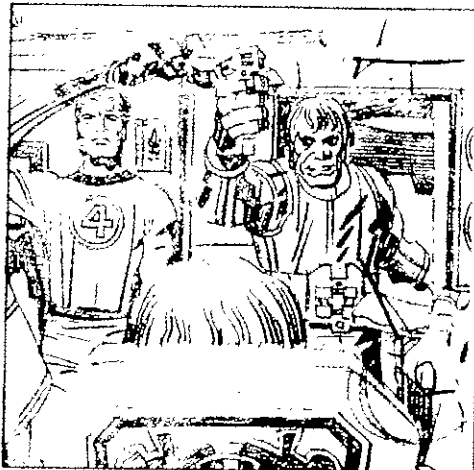
3-5. (From FF #108, Page 15, Panel 1-3.) 6-7. (From FF #108, Page 16, Panel 3-4.)



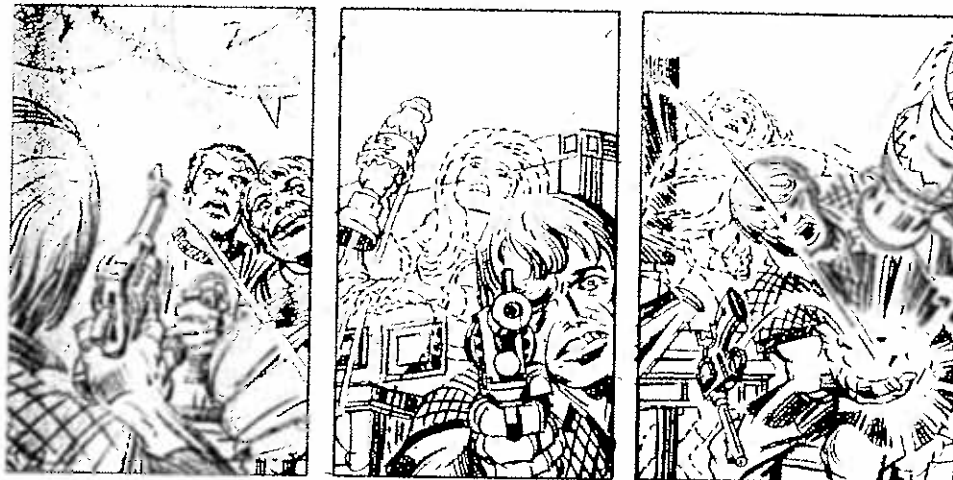
BRUISED
PEOPLE
SAY--
ARE
WE IN
HIS
POWER?
CAN
YOU
STOP
HIM?



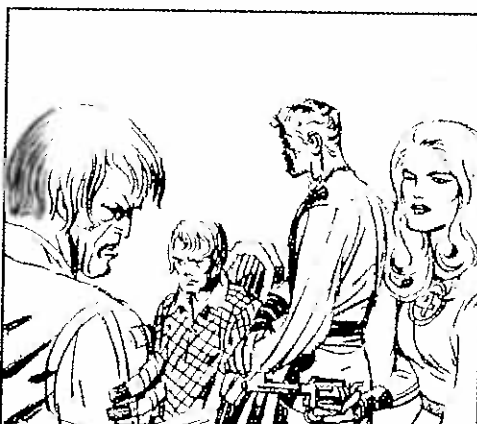
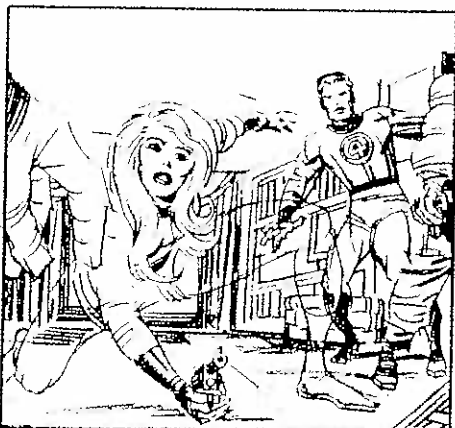
1-2. (From FF #108, Page 16, Panel 5-6.) 3-7. (From FF #108, Page 17, Panel 1-5.)



- 1. (From FF #108, Page 17, Panel 6.) 2-3. (No Margin Notes Visible.) 4. "She grabs gun before twin can reach for it." "Reed says-- use gun to cover bad twin, Sue!" 5. "Reed says to good twin--you're a fool you know. The criminal's path is no solution."
- 6. (Margin notes are erased.) 7. "Reed touches good twin's feet with trigger." (The page number "19" has been erased, but is visible.)



SHE GRABS GUN BEFORE TWIN CAN REACH FOR IT. REED SAYS-- USE GUN TO COVER BAD TWIN! SUB!



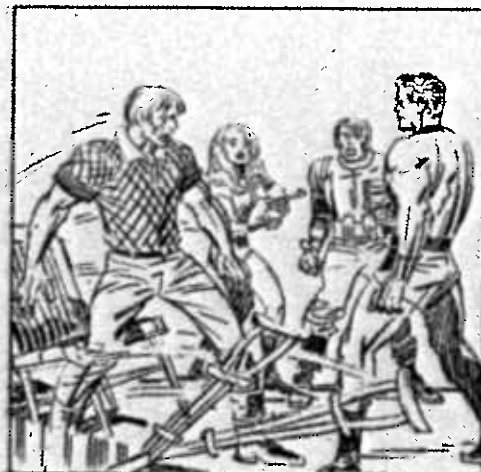
REED TOUCHES TWIN'S FEET WITH TRIGGER.

DANGER IN ROOM



REED TOUCHES TWIN'S FEET WITH TRIGGER.

1. (Margin Notes have been erased.) 2. "Who can tell what Mega-Power can do?"
3. "Don't trust him! Get him while you can! I'll handle the girl!" (Note the scalloped corners, indicating this was considered for a flashback scene in FF #108.) 4. (Margin Notes have been erased.) 5-7. (Missing Panels.)



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THE
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THE WORLD'S GREATEST COMIC MAGAZINE!

FANTASTIC FOUR

15¢ 108
MAR



Fantastic Four

EVEN THE F.F. ARE POWERLESS AGAINST THE NEGA-MAN!

**ACTION!
SHOCK!
MYSTERY!**
THIS ONE HAS 'EM--AND HOW!

IF WE DON'T STOP HIM--HE'LL DESTROY THE ENTIRE--
UNHH!

REED! HE WAS STRONG ENOUGH TO KNOCK OUT THE THING! HOW CAN WE--?
REED!



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