EXHIBIT VV

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Interview with Stan Lee (Part 1 of 5)

June 26, 2000

IGN FilmForce interviewer Kenneth Plume recently had an opportunity to talk to comic book legend Stan Lee.

In his 60-year career in the comics industry, Lee has co-created some of the most popular comic book characters ever made, including The Fantastic Four, The Incredible Hulk, Spider-Man, The X-Men, Daredevil, Dr. Strange, and the Silver Surfer, all of which are planned to be made into movies (with **The X-Men** being released first, on July 14). Recently, he has branched out onto the Internet, with StanLee.net, creating new characters and stories such as The 7th Portal and The Accuser.

In his five-part conversation with Ken, Lee discusses his start at Timely Comics, the creation of the super-hero comics, creating the Marvel attitude, moving on from the day-to-day operations at Marvel, working at the Marvel Animation studio, his impressions of the movies and TV shows based on Marvel properties so far, the creation of Stan Lee Media, his deal with DC Comics and more.

Check back tomorrow for the second installment of Kenneth Plume's interview with Mr. Lee.

PLUME: If you were to sum it up, what was your introduction into the comics industry?

LEE: Well, I applied for a job in a publishing company... I didn't even know they published comics. I was fresh out of high school, and I wanted to get into the publishing business, if I could. There was an ad in the paper that said, "Assistant Wanted in a Publishing House." When I found out that they wanted me to assist in comics, I figured, "Well, I'll stay here for a little while and get some experience, and then I'll get out into the real world." In those days, it just didn't seem like comics was the kind of field that anybody would want to make a career in. They were the absolute bottom of the cultural totem pole. Nobody had any respect for comic books in those days.

PLUME: So this is, what, the early '40's?

LEE: It was either 1939 or '40 when I started... I can never figure out which year it was.

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Date: _____*12-8-10*_____
Reporter: A. Kate, CSR 11897

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Interview with Stan Lee (Part 2 of 5)

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CLICK HERE to access the first installment of the interview.

PLUME: At the height of your involvement, what was the number of books you were writing per month?

LEE: About 12.

PLUME: How did you juggle writing 12 books per month?

LEE: Well, it wasn't that hard. I had found this system, where I wouldn't write a full script – like the way you would write a screenplay or a television show – but I would discuss the story with the artist. I would tell the artist the story that I was hoping for, and then I told the artist to draw it any way he wanted. When the artwork came in, I would then add the dialogue and the captions. I did that in the beginning as a method of exigency. I was keeping a lot of artists busy, and they were all freelancers – so if they had nothing to do, they weren't making money.

Let's say I was writing a story for Jack Kirby, and then Steve Ditko came to me and said, "Stan, I'm ready for my next story." But I hadn't finished Kirby's yet... I couldn't let Ditko stand around with nothing to do, so I would say, "Look, Steve... Here's the idea I want for the next story. You go ahead and draw it any way you want to and bring it in." So then I was still finishing Kirby's story – and Ditko was busy – and then Don Heck would come in, and I would tell him the same thing... And John Romita, and John Buscema.

I did it just because it was the only way to get the books out and keep all our artists busy, but later on I realized that it was the best way to do it. Our artists were really good at story themselves – they were great visual story tellers – and they would lay it out the way they saw best. Nobody can do layouts better than the artists themselves, so I would get the best of their thinking – and then when the artwork came to me, all I had to do was add dialogue that went as smoothly and perfectly as possible with the drawings that they had drawn. It made it much more enjoyable for me and much more enjoyable for them, and I think it made the stories better.

PLUME: I find it interesting the way you describe the working relationship. I was doing some research, and there seems to be an opinion out there that you take more credit than people feel you deserve, especially in regards to the contributions of the Marvel artists. I don't seem to see any of that in the description you just gave me, so I was wondering what your thoughts are on why these opinions seem so prevalent?

LEE: I have no idea. Every time that people talk about "creating the characters," I always say I co-created them. I co-created Spider-Man with Steve Ditko. I co-created The Fantastic Four and the Hulk with Kirby. I co-created Iron Man with Don Heck. Very often, when people would write about us in the newspapers or the trades, they would say, "Stan Lee – Creator of Spider-Man," and that would get Ditko angry – but I had nothing to do with that! I have no control over what journalists write.

PLUME: What was the easiest book for you two write? Which character's voice was closest to yours?

LEE: I've got to be honest with you – they were all equally easy or equally hard. I never had a feeling like, "Aww gee, I hate having to write this one, because it's tougher to write." Or, "Gee, I'm glad I'm writing this one, because it's easier." I never could tell that there was any difference. I wrote them all in the same amount of time and I enjoyed them all equally, really.

PLUME: Was it palpable at the time – in the early '60's – that there was this shift going on in comics? DC started aping the Marvel style to some extent, didn't they?