

# EXHIBIT KK

# WOW-WHAT AN INTERVIEW!

A rare Italian interview from the 1970s, translated by Fabio Paolo Barbieri

Nessim Vaturi, an Italian fan, interviewed Jack Kirby during Jack's trip to Lucca, Italy in 1976. Before taping started, Kirby told Vaturi he was particularly happy about this interview because his Italian fanzine was called WOW! COMICS—similar to one of Kirby's own early titles. The interview was only published in Italian; the original is not available, so Fabio Paolo Barbieri re-translated it back into English. If anything sounds odd, remember: this is a translation of a translation.

NESSIM VATURI: You said earlier that early in your career you used to work for a book called WOW!

JACK KIRBY: Yes, it was the first magazine I worked for. Jerry Siegel and Will Eisner used to publish it. They were my bosses back then, and those were the first years of comics, and WOW-What A Magazine was one of the first comic magazines. Many of the artists who worked in it went on to create great features of their own, as we were to see. People call this the Golden Age of comics – I mean the Forties.

NV: Do you remember anyone?

KIRBY: Yes, I remember all the people who were there. There was Eddie Herron, who created Captain Marvel, and Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster. They worked for DC from the beginning, they came on the scene when everything had just been created and everyone ran around from one company to another. When Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster came along, they found their place at DC and stayed there. I was a nut... if another company offered me more, I went, so I leaped around like a fly; maybe this was a good thing after all, because it allowed me to work in different organizations, and meet different people.

NV: After working for WOW, where did you go?

KIRBY: I worked for Jumbo; I did a "part feature," one of the first sorcery strips, called "The Diary of Dr. Hayward." I've still got the book; my mother kept it. But I'm not a collector, a hobbyist or a specialist. I'm a doer; that's what you can call me. I do things and then forget about them. But mothers,

you know, they are proud, and I think if you did something like that, your mother also would store your stuff; that's how mothers are! In my neighborhood, you know, they didn't even know what an artist was; to be someone, you had to be a car mechanic, and so when I became an artist, people couldn't understand, they thought I was mixed up in something illegal.

NV: After Jumbo, what did you do?

KIRBY: After Jumbo, I started to gravitate towards more stable and secure magazines, that were just then coming out; things like Atlas Comics, which later became Marvel. And then of course I did some things for DC, and some things for a man named Victor Fox.

Victor Fox's name might have come out if you interviewed any artist my age who worked in the first years of comics. He was a publisher, he published

Weird Comics, and in general books with names like *Weird, Pow, Hit*. And there were publishers like "Busy" Arnold



In the mid-1960s, Jack had his personal Golden Age copies of Captain America #1 & 3-10 bound into a hardbound volume. For the occasion, he did four Cap-related pencil drawings and had them stitched into it; two inside the front cover, and two in back. All four are in this issue, and Barry Windsor-Smith was kind enough to ink this one for this issue's cover.

who had their own companies... many of those companies and groups have vanished: today only Marvel and DC are left.

NV: You have enormous experience. How are comics made in America? We know there is a staff work system.

KIRBY: What they did was to organize a way to share work among several people; you can have a letterer, an inker, then there is a colorist who puts in the color for the printers, and then of course you have the penciler, and he is the artist. If the artist had to do all those things, he would never get the time to do all the work, so all these people are necessary.

NV: Clearly the inker matters too.

KIRBY: Yes, sure, a good inker with an attractive style can make the artist's work look very good, but obviously the main element is the penciler. The penciler is the one who tells the story, who visualizes it. It's not a writer's medium, a letterer's medium, an inker's medium, it's just... the penciler tells the story, as I said; the writer could write his heart out, and be one of the finest writers in the world, but if he gets the wrong artist doing his story for him, it dies; that is, the decisive factor is the artist.

Take for instance your own magazine *WOW*. The first thing you see is the drawing, and that tells you what the product is. You remember *LIFE Magazine*? They used to have terrific writers in *LIFE*, but what used to sell the magazine were the photographs. The best photographers sold the magazine, the most striking pictures... it was that kind of product.

NV: How did you start to do comics?  
 KIRBY: I started out as an animator in the Max Fleischer studio; that is, not really an animator, but an "in-between-er." I say animator because it sort of gives an idea of what I worked on; but it's not really the right word, maybe. The animator is the guy who controls the entire production, while I, I was seventeen or eighteen at the time. I only worked on a light table and did in-between poses so the character could move on the board.

I did that for a bit, but then the studio decided to relocate to Miami and I stayed in New York and did other things. I used to work for a small newspaper syndicate that supplied 700 newspapers. I did sports cartoons, editorial cartoons and comic books. I think this experience gave me what I needed, a starting point to tell a whole story in comics, which I later did in comic books.

NV: Is there a special reason why you chose comics?

KIRBY: I don't know. I think none of us knows clearly why he is drawn to some things. I know I used to love story-telling. At least my mother loved it. She was a wonderful storyteller, she had come from "Frankenstein country"

and knew all these horror stories, and they used to make my hair stand on end; and this may have been decisive... I used to love doing that sort of thing, because you get a response from people; I think my mother wanted a response from me. In other words, if your mother wanted your attention for something, she might shout at you or box your ears; or she might tell you a story, like mine used to do with me.

NV: Maybe it's the best way.

KIRBY: I think so too.

NV: You have written your own stories, text and drawings?

KIRBY: Yes, that's what I always do and that's what I'm doing now.

NV: So nobody writes your scripts.

KIRBY: No, never.

NV: How do you feel about Italian comics?



Speaking of Barry Windsor-Smith, here are the original pencils from a page he inked in Jack's 1976 "Captain America's Bicentennial Battles" Treasury Edition.