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A NEMESIS ROGUE PRODUCTION
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Year End Wrap Up

2007 has been something of a long strange journey. Lots of interesting (and some quite unpopular) twists and turns in the comics industry. There were good and not-so-pleasing creative team changes. There were impressive story arcs (Sinestro Corps War) and poorly conceived and even more poorly executed arcs (One More Day). And then there was everything in-between.

On my own side of things, here is a brief list of my 2007 zines:

placebo (January) - Year In Review (that sounds familiar), mailing comments, presentation of an interview (originating from comicbookresources.com) with X-Men writer Mike Carey, and a cover gallery from Spider-Man Loves Mary Jane.

placebo (February) - mailing back cover featuring Ultimate Kitty Pryde (I completely forgot I did that one), comic reviews, and mailing comments.

placebo (March) - 206 Zombie Awards ballot, mailing comments, and presentation of an article (originating from newsarama.com) on Marvel's Mystic Arcana event.

Bobo the Wonder Monkey Reviews 2006 - the 2006 review zine from Bobo (editing credit).

placebo (April) - movie and comic reviews, mailing comments, and I also had a couple of pieces in Laurie's 13th annual Guest Artist Extravaganza.

placebo (May) - mailing comments, thoughts on the first two issues of *Might Avengers* (with a couple of pages reproduced) and the makeup of the team, and one comic-style page for the Free Comic Book Day sampler.

placebo (June) - update on comics read/purchased since the beginning of the year and mailing comments.

placebo (July) - superhero relationships, movie and comic reviews (with pages from *Empowered* and *Mice Templar*), and mailing comments.

placebo (August) - Comic-Con news (originating from various on-line sources) and mailing comments.

placebo (September) - beginning of football season, movie review, and mailing comments.

Horror Show (October) - selection of articles (originating from various on-line sources) on scary political aspects.

placebo (October) - thoughts on One More Day rumors, movie and comic reviews, and mailing comments.

placebo (November) - One More Day debacle (delays and costs involved), comic reviews, and mailing comments.

Secret History of the Impending War with Iran that the White House Doesn't Want You to Know About (December) - presentation of an article (originating from esquire.com)

placebo (December) - Q&A session, movie, anime, and comic reviews, and mailing comments.

This is the section that virtually no one else in the group cares about, but it is my zine so I'm including it anyway. You may remember from my September zine (though most likely you don't because you probably skipped over that part) when I talked about the beginning of the football season, including noting that my favorite team in the universe (Michigan Wolverines) had opened the season with a crushing loss (to a team they had no business losing to) and that I wasn't overly pleased with the team I put together for fantasy football. Well, the Wolverines lost their following game (to a quality opponent this time) to start the season 0-2 (both losses at home to boot). They ran off 8 straight wins after that, only to lose their final 2 and finish up the regular season at 8-4. And then two games after the last game, their head coach of 13 years announced he was retiring (though he would be coaching them in their bowl game). It was a very, very depressing season to say the least. I am especially disappointed the coach is leaving on

such a sour note (there had been very high hopes for the season but those went down in flames following the two early losses). The players did him a disservice by not playing as well as they absolutely should have such that they could have sent him out on a positive note. On the fantasy football front, I endured my third straight injury-plagued season. Last year I was able to persevere and managed to get my team to the championship game (which I lost unfortunately, but it was still a very positive season overall), but this year my team was completely derailed by all the injuries. It was just too many at the most inopportune times (not that there are ever really any good times to have a player injured) and I wasn't able to overcome them. As such, I finished in last place for the first time in the ten years I've been playing. It has just been a horrid season of football as far as I'm concerned. With the failings of the Wolverines (they are most likely going to lose their bowl game against Florida and finish the season 8-5), the missteps by the Houston Texans (they finished 8-8, which is their best record in their six years of NFL existence - but they had some really embarrassingly bad performances in a few of those losses), the stumbles of the Houston Cougars (they had a chance to go back to their conference championship game and got blown out by the team that eventually represented their division in said conference championship game, and then they lost their fifth bowl game in five years --- they haven't actually won a bowl since 1980), and the execrably horrendous finish by my fantasy team, you can see why this has been the least enjoyable football season in recent memory for me.

And back to comics for my final comments (this month at least) on One More Day. I just read the final issue of that detestably appalling heinous abomination of a story arc.

You obviously know my thoughts on the dissolution of the marriage of Peter and MJ. I was against it since the beginning of the rumors of this arc and have certainly not changed my mind. As far as the story in question, the first two issues were at least passable in terms of the writing. The last two issues were just horrible though. It is one thing to start with a horribly conceived idea (which is what Joe Quesada did here) and another thing to then deliver a dreadfully bad product on top of that. The final two issues were literally two of the worst written comics I've ever had the displeasure of reading (and that is outside of my dislike of the actual plot). It was laughable. I can't believe someone involved with this project and look at the arc (and those two issues especially) and feel proud of the work they've done. It was almost like reading some hokey comic from the 60s with the way the dialogue and narration read. I can understand why J. Michael Straczynski wanted to distance himself from the arc. I wouldn't want my name associated with that garbage either. And to add insult to injury, they charged \$3.99 for each of the four issues, so fans had to pay an additional four dollars to read this dreck. That extra money could have been used to purchase a comic that is actually worth reading (one could get two issues of Casanova or a single issue of The Vinyl Underground or Fables). It was a crap sandwich, pure and simple, and Joe Quesada expects fans to eat it with a smile on their face.

And here is something else to contemplate. I've mentioned this previously on a message board but I haven't seen anyone else pick up on it. Regardless of how badly this story arc is received and how many fans drop Spider-Man from their buy list, the sales numbers are not going to reflect the dissatisfaction. And here is why. Marvel (at Joe Quesada's behest) canceled their other two monthly Spider-Man titles and are now going with a single (regular Marvel Universe) Spider-Man title (Amazing Spider-Man) which will be published 3 times per month. The reason given is that sales on Amazing Spider-Man have always been significantly higher than the other Spider-Man titles, so rather than continue to dilute those overall sales, they are consolidating

everything under one banner. I'm sure you can see where I'm going here.

Lets assume the sales number pre-OMD were somewhere in the following range (I saw some number several months back and I think they were in this neighborhood):

Amazing Spider-Man 100K

Spectacular Spider-Man 45K

Friendly Neighborhood Spider-Man 45K

So that was 190K Spider-Man titles sold (to the direct market) every month. That will give approximately 2.28 million Spider-Man titles sold per year (again, this is just the regular Marvel Universe Spidey, those numbers exclude Ultimate Spider-Man and any limited series and annuals).

Now, fast forward past OMD. We'll assume that with Amazing Spider-Man going to a 3 issues per month cycle, the title is going to lose a few readers. I base this on the sales of the other two Spider-Man titles being less than half of ASM, so we know a good portion of the ASM readers are not buying those other two titles (for whatever reason). So I'll go with a conservative 15% drop. That takes each issue of Amazing Spider-Man (post OMD) to 85K. Now lets also say that 20% of that original 100K fan base is so disgusted with OMD that they actually decide to drop Spider-Man. 20% is not a conservative estimate at all (I believe the number of people who actually drop the title based on what happened in OMD is going to be significantly less than that - it will probably be somewhere in the range of 10-12% at best). So using that 20%, we're talking about subtracting another 20K from each issue of ASM. We've already subtracted 15K (based on the 3 times monthly publication) and now we're taking an additional 20K. That is 35K total, bringing the number of copies sold (to the direct market) down to 65K per issue.

But remember, ASM is being published 3 times per month now. So that means that 65K is getting produced 3 times each month. So the number of copies of Amazing Spider-Man sold to the direct market each month is now 195K (65K x 3). And again, I dropped a pretty good number of copies off that print count (35% of the pre-OMD numbers --- that is A LOT and I very much doubt the numbers are going to fall that far). But using the numbers I've just laid out as a basis, you can see

that post-OMD Marvel is selling more (regular Marvel Universe) Spider-Man titles than they were prior to their canceling the other two books and consolidating everything under the Amazing Spider-Man banner. So what I'm saying is ... no matter how unhappy fans may be with OMD and how many might actually stop buying Spider-Man, Joe Quesada is going to show his bosses sales numbers that show (regular Marvel Universe) Spider-Man titles are more popular than ever.

[the disappointing part of all this is they could have just done the same thing without OMD, consolidated everything under the Amazing Spider-Man banner, and they probably would have sold in the neighborhood of 240K copies of Amazing Spider-Man every month - but the stockholders will never know that Marvel is leaving a lot of money on the table because of Joe Quesada's asinine vision]

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Been A Long Time Since I Rock-and-Rolled

A couple of years back I received a compilation CD (featuring a number heavy metal bands represented by Napalm Records) when I bought a couple of CDs produced by a few bands I like from Napalm Records' online store. I actually made extra copies of the compilation CD (since it is essentially a selling tool for Napalm Records and not a typical CD that they and the bands profit direction from) and included it in one of the mailings back in (I think) 2005 (might have actually been earlier). Anyway, I was listening to the CD many months back after attending a concert that happened to feature, as an opening act, Leaves Eyes (who had a song on that CD). It is a CD that I had listened to many, many times in the past because there were several bands I enjoyed that appeared on it. After having seen Leaves Eyes live and being fairly impressed with their collection of songs, I decided to dig around and see if I could find more music from some of those other bands on the CD. I actually found quite a few videos available on youtube.com for several of the bands. After checking out a fair number of videos/songs, I decided to purchase a CD from one of the bands - Visions of Atlantis. I was rather pleased with it after I

received and listened to it. And when I discovered they were touring in the United States (they are from Austria) and were going to perform a show in Houston, I had to go. They were opening for a band called Epica (www.epica.nl and www.myspace.com/epica), whom I had no familiarity with. So another trip to youtube.com got me up to speed on Epica (who is from the Netherlands) and I decided I was even more impressed with them. So naturally I bought one of their CDs and was actually looking forward to seeing them more so than Visions From Atlantis. Which in a way sort of turned out to be a good thing. On the day of the concert, I showed up about an hour later than the posted time because I'd been to that particular venue on a few previous occasions (the show with Leaves Eyes for one) and the shows always started about an hour later than what showed on the ticket. Well, this time around the show apparently did start when it was supposed to. So I actually ended up missing Visions of Atlantis entirely and I probably missed at least a song or two from Epica. I wasn't overly disappointed though because I was very pleased with Epica's performance. They were even better than I expected. And they're coming back in April (this time to open for a band called Symphony X - who I was supposed to see in concert several years back but unfortunate circumstances led to that show never actually being performed) so I'll get a second chance to see them.

In November another group that I'm somewhat a fan of, Amon Amarth, a 'Viking' metal band that hails from Sweden, came to town. They headlined a show that was supposed to feature 3 other bands as well. However, it only ended up being three bands altogether because one of the members of one of the other bands was in an accident so they had to cancel their portion of the tour. I wasn't familiar with any of the other bands going in (I can't even remember the name of the band who had to bow out now). The opening band was Sonic Syndicate (also from Sweden) and I was thoroughly impressed with their set. The other band, Himsa, wasn't all that appealing. Amon Amarth had a good set. They were pretty much what I was expecting, nothing spectacular but a solid all

around performance (though since I haven't purchased any of their recent CDs, I didn't recognize many of the songs they played). The members of the group were tall (the lead singer from Himsa was joking that they were giants) - I would say the lead singer was at the very least 6' 6" and the other members were close to that same height. Sonic Syndicate (www.sonicsyndicate.com and www.myspace.com/sonicsyndicate) definitely had the most appealing sound of the three and I had never even heard of them prior to seeing the show. They didn't have any CDs available at the show (unlike Amon Amarth and Himsa), but I ordered one through Amazon.com the next day. And it was excellent. So I ordered their other one a couple of days later and it was also great.

So what does all this have to do with anything? I just thought it was interesting that I found a couple of new bands I like quite a bit by attending shows I went to in order to see the other bands who were playing. And of course, you might have noticed that all of the bands I discussed are from Europe. That is because the American music scene is pretty much a joke. When the most popular focal point of music is America Idol ... well that should tell you all you need to know about music in the United States.

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Mailing Comments

December 234

Covers - No holiday themed images this month. Since we didn't have a jolly fat man in a red suit, I decided to go with a not-so-jolly man in a green suit as illustrated by Ivan. I figured it was a fitting end to my run. / No particular reason for the selection of the back cover by Steve. I just like the composition.

Eclectic - Dinah says hi. / Hope you find yourself back on the face of the Earth in the new year.

Farmer - Arthur says hello. / This should be an exciting time in comics for you. You've got Jonah Hex, Army@Love, Loveless, and several other similar projects that should see print in 2008. And maybe Jim Lee will finally put out work on something resembling a regular schedule.

Virus - J'onn sends greetings. / I hope the health situation shows a major turn for improvement this coming year.

Menshevik - Diana says hello. / Can we expect a Tales of the Twilight Menshevik spin-off to carry on from pre-OMD?

XING - Wally says hey. / Looking forward to more XING in 2008.

BRIDGE - Bruce says ... well Bruce never says much. But Clark says hello. / Glad you're back among the undead. I'm expecting big things from your corner this year.

WORKS - Jefferson says heya. / Now that you're knee deep in it, I'm interested in seeing how much of a regular contributor (beyond the standard CM notes and such) you'll be.

Shadow - Kendra says hi. / Keep churning out those stories. I thoroughly enjoy reading them.

THWIP - Roy says hey. / I hope to see you back marching among the undead this year.

Lucasverse - John says hello. / Is 2008 the year of the throwback in Mahaloland?

Rankinfile - Hal says hey. / I'm still working up the proposal (holiday season and other commitments put the brakes on it). Hopefully you'll have it even before you read this.

Everybody else - Mari says hi. / 2008 is the year to get in the game.

Well, that's about it for this month. I'm running behind already and the new year hasn't even started yet.

Next Month: My comic pull list for 2008.



Coming Soon to a Comic Shop near you:



Countdown to Adventure no. 8 (DC)



Justice League of America no. 19 (DC)



Raven no. 1 (DC)



Teen Titans no. 57 (DC)



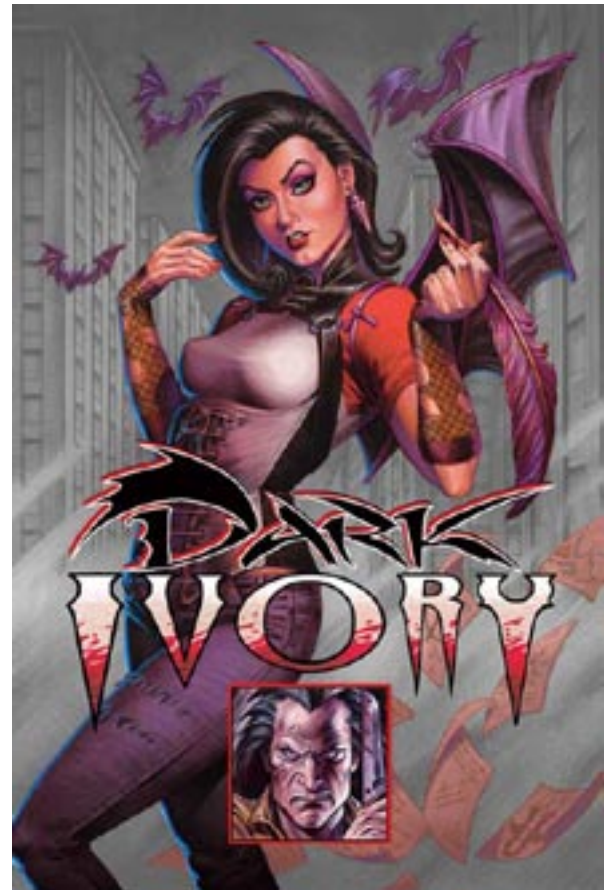
Wonder Woman no. 18 (DC)



Buffy the Vampire Slayer no. 12 (Dark Horse)



Red String volume 3 (Dark Horse)



Dark Ivory no. 1 (Image)



Mice Templar no. 4 (Image)



Sharkman no. 3 (Image)



Witchblade no. 116 cover a (Top Cow)



Witchblade no. 116 cover b (Top Cow)