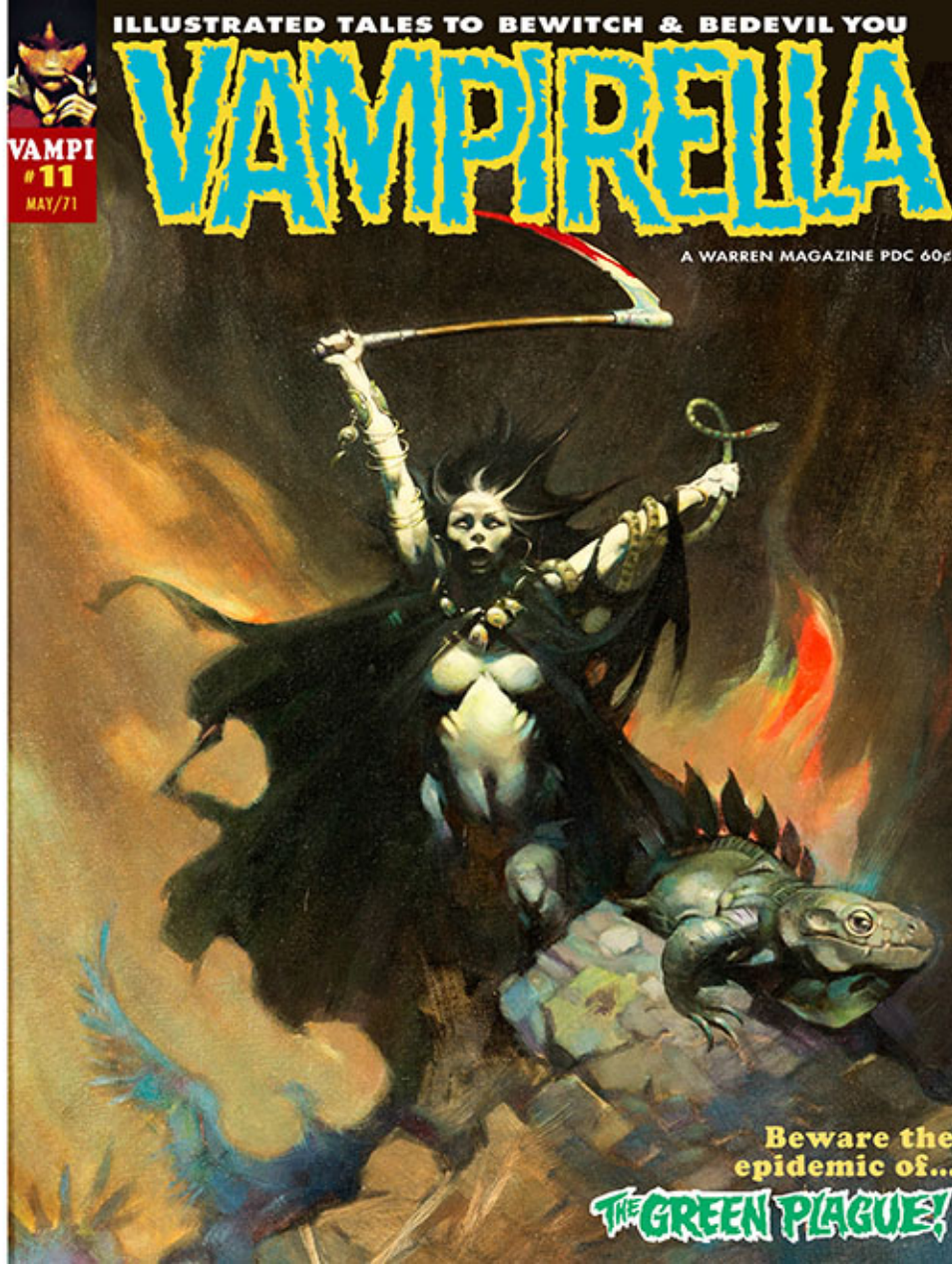


initial response was nearly there, Warren, however, asked for jet black hair rather than blonde. Gradually *Vampirella* was taking form but Warren was still unhappy with her costume. It was while Warren was in the middle of telling yet another wannabe contributor just how much their art sucked, that his musings were interrupted by a call from Frazetta. The artist at the receiving end of Warren's homily was none other than Trina Robbins, who divined exactly what the problem was as Warren attempted to explain to Frazetta how the velvety vixen's costume should appear. Robbins drew an image of *Vampirella* in her attire and handed it across the desk. The net result was that Frazetta's call was handed over to Robbins who proceeded to guide the artist through the intricacies of *Vampirella*'s costume.

The resulting cover and the wash studies that Frazetta created for *Vampirella* provided the look that Warren had been seeking and while editorially it would take another two years to get the contents of the

**RIGHT & FACING PAGE:**

Frazetta's work for *Vampirella* reveals an artist at the top of his game. With an open brief from Warren, he could paint whatever he wanted with scripters following his visual lead.



ILLUSTRATED TALES TO BEWITCH & BEDEVIL YOU  
**VAMPIRELLA**  
 #11  
 MAY/71

ILLUSTRATED TALES TO BEWITCH & BEDEVIL YOU  
**VAMPIRELLA**  
 A WARREN MAGAZINE PDC 60¢

Beware the epidemic of...

**THE GREEN PLAGUE!**





## The story of one of the greatest (and most opinionated) exponents of comic art to ever enter the halls of Warren Publishing

By 1964 ALEX TOTH WAS SOMETHING OF A LEGEND within the comics industry, like his contemporary Steve Ditko he was a fiercely independent thinker and his manifest talent was backed up by an uncompromising attitude towards his craft. In short, he didn't suffer fools gladly and, when it came to it, would not shrink from pointing out to editors their shortcomings and was equally blunt with fellow artists. Hence the string of broken relationships that was to dog his latter years. After ending his stint with DC Comics he moved to Los Angeles, eventually settling in Burbank which was a perfect location for an artist that now had animation studios accounts on his books—in particular Hanna Barbera.

His odyssey from New York to the West Coast had been precipitated as much by his inability to tolerate mediocre art direction as it had been career advancement. The fact that he could royally piss people off and still remain employed was a reflection of his outstanding talent. Born in New York in 1928 to Sandor and Mary, Elizabeth Toth, immigrants from Hungary, he grew up savouring the environs of New York. While his father, Sandor, eked out a living as a housepainter, music was his passion and he was a talented singer as well as a producer and writer of radio plays. His restless energy was evidently inherited by his son and it was this drive that was to underpin Alex's ascension to superstardom in the annals of graphic storytelling.

His first published work appeared in *Famous Funnies*, he was fifteen at the time. However his work was curtailed by a paper strike and it was via connections with Irwin Hasen that

ABOVE: Frazetta was able to return Krenkel's favour by inviting him to assist with generating concept ideas for Creepy cover paintings, most notably the covers to issues 6 and 7.

FACING PAGE: The cover to Creepy issue 6 transmogrified Krenkel's original sketches into something altogether darker and unsettling.



art:  
Alex  
Toth

SINCE WE'VE  
EAVES-DROPPED  
ON THE  
FIRST  
SESSION,  
LET'S ALL  
CURL UP

ON THE ANALYST'S  
COUCH, AND HEAR THE  
REST OF ALEX COLBY'S  
LITTLE TALE... GOT PAD  
AND PENCIL? BETTER  
TAKE NOTICE





Magazines' titled *Shock Illustrated*, *Terror Illustrated*, *Crime Illustrated* and *Confessions Illustrated*. Sadly, despite truly stellar art and scripts, particularly in the case of the Craig edited and illustrated *Extra* and some exquisite art in the Picto-Fiction Magazines, the titles all foundered. The only publication that did succeed was *MAD*, which had transformed from a wonderfully wacky comic book edited by Harvey Kurtzman to a brilliantly satirical black and white magazine under the editorship

of Al Feldstein (Kurtzman having been as unsuccessful as Moldoff when he tried to petition Gaines for a percentage of the action). *MAD* offered its readers a rich mix of comic strips and and illustrated satire. However it was not a milieu in which Craig's art would sit comfortably and he found himself adrift from the world of comics—which in 1955 was not a welcoming environment. In fact EC artists found themselves at the back of the queue such was the opprobrium heaped upon their heads as a result of their activities over the previous five years.

Craig stepped back from comics altogether and worked in advertising becoming an Art Director with one agency and Art Director and Vice President for an agency in his home state of Pennsylvania. He stuck with the job for some seven or eight years but eventually went back to working on a freelance basis. It was around this time that he connected with Warren Publications. The bulk of his work, which involved scripting and art, was credited to Jay Taycee so that there would be no conflict of interest with his advertising clients. Stories such as







comic books and magazines. It was via a box of comics awaiting the ministrations of Shapiro's shears that Sutton encountered a copy of *Famous Monsters of Filmland*. Setting aside whatever thoughts he might have entertained of setting the world of contemporary art ablaze, he sat down and created a veritable tour-de-force in the form of the self-penned "The Monster From One Billion BC." Across eight glorious pages Sutton unleashed a sequence of images redolent of the golden age of horror comics, a soupçon of Davis here, a hint of Woody there—all melded together to present a hugely entertaining tale. Warren evidently loved it and paid Sutton, featuring the story in *Eerie* issue 11 which hit the stands in September 1967. Timing-wise it was a smart move as it marked the beginning of the era of uncertainty as Goodwin departed from the titles he was editing, reprints abounded and artists and scripters that would never have been granted a platform by Warren in more propitious times were recruited to fill the gaps at lower rates. Sutton's work positively shone in contrast.

Flushed with this accolade from the world of New York comic publishing, Sutton cobbled together a folio of the newly published "The Monster From One Billion BC" and some of his *Johnny Craig* daily strips and headed off to the offices of Marvel Comics. He was ushered into the office of Stan Lee who was crouched on top of his desk with a dictaphone working through a routine with Spiderman and Doctor Octopus. Reconnecting with the here and now, Lee scanned the contents of Sutton's folio and stuffing some blank Bristol paper and a couple of *Rawhide Kid* scripts in his folio instructed him to go away and draw him a couple of Westerns with the added afterthought: "have fun".

The work for Warren continued, as well as work for Marvel, DC, Charlton Comics, Topps Candy, whatever assignments he could blag. Sutton would delegate a different drawing table to each job he had underway at any given time, commuting between up to four drafting tables as he crunched out the deadlines. Despite the tempestuous relationship with Warren, he poured himself heart and soul into the work he undertook for the publisher.

But there was the matter of the miserly page rates. Sutton could earn more working for Marvel, Warren in contrast wanted top quality with washes, zipatone and any other effects required to elevate the art into something



THE TWO MAD SCIENTISTS WORKED FEVERISHLY ON THEIR BLASPHEMOUS PROJECT. TIME WAS RUNNING OUT FOR THEM, FOR THE MONSTER WAS GETTING RESTLESS. FRANKENSTEIN DEMANDED A MATE!!

THAT LITTLE HUNCHBACKED HORROR, FRITZ, BROUGHT THEM A WARM FEMALE HEART, THEY WERE TOO BUSY TO INQUIRE WHERE HE GOT IT, OR PERHAPS THEY PREFERRED NOT TO KNOW!



he regarded as worthy of inclusion in magazines which, in all honesty, were no longer the apotheosis of comic art. For Sutton, the Warren work was creatively fulfilling but the low page rate (\$40.00) and intermittent workflow was a continuing source of frustration. When, in 1972, Sutton asked for a page rate increase of \$10.00 he received the following response from the publisher:

"This represents a 25 percent increase over the \$40.00 per page rate you are now receiving. I am confused. Does this mean that the work you now want to give us will be 25 percent better? Or will this work contain 25 percent more detailing?"

When Sutton questioned Warren's intransigence, the publisher responded with typical irascibility:

"Tom, if you don't believe me, that means that you know far more about Warren Publishing than Jim Warren, our Board of Directors, our entire

accounting firm and everyone concerned with the business aspects of our company. And if this is so Tom, then I invite you to talk to our Directors—and maybe you can get them to give you a job running the Company.

The pay may not be great, the hours are long, the pressures are immense, the competitive factors are overwhelming, and you might have to