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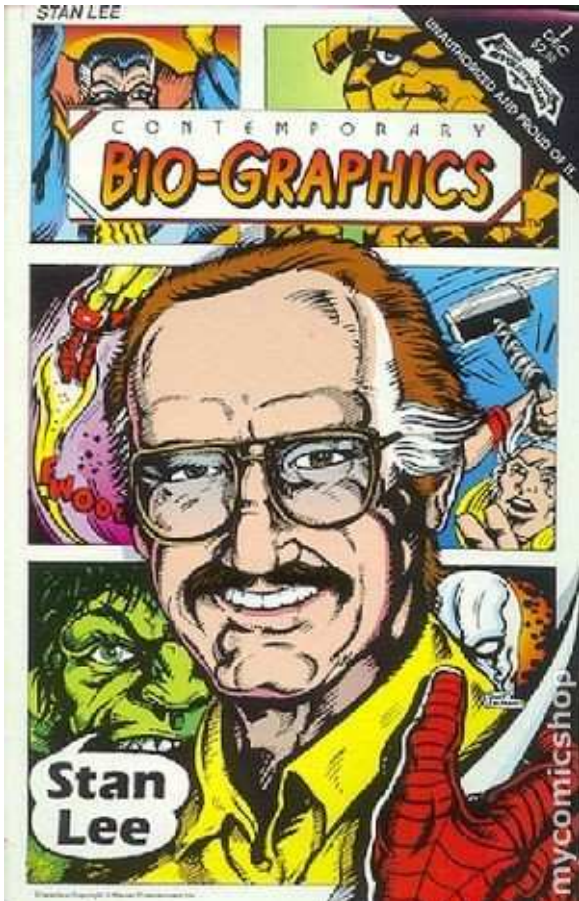
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## How I Avoided Stan Lee Punching My Face

[Jay Allen Sanford](#), June 15, 2012

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Before I agreed to write the unauthorized biography of Marvel Comics figurehead Stan Lee, co-creator of Spider-Man and the Hulk, I should have thought about the fact that Lee and I would likely come across each other on the comic convention circuit, promoting our respective endeavors.

My bio raised a lot of still-open questions about who really "created" Marvel's best known characters, scripter Lee or illustrators like Jack Kirby and Steve Ditko who dispute their former boss' recollections as to who deserves the most credit, not to mention compensation, the bulk of both having long since been claimed by Stan Lee.

This revisionist look at the foundation of Marvel's eventual empire caused a lot of discussion and controversy in both the mainstream and comic industry trade press.

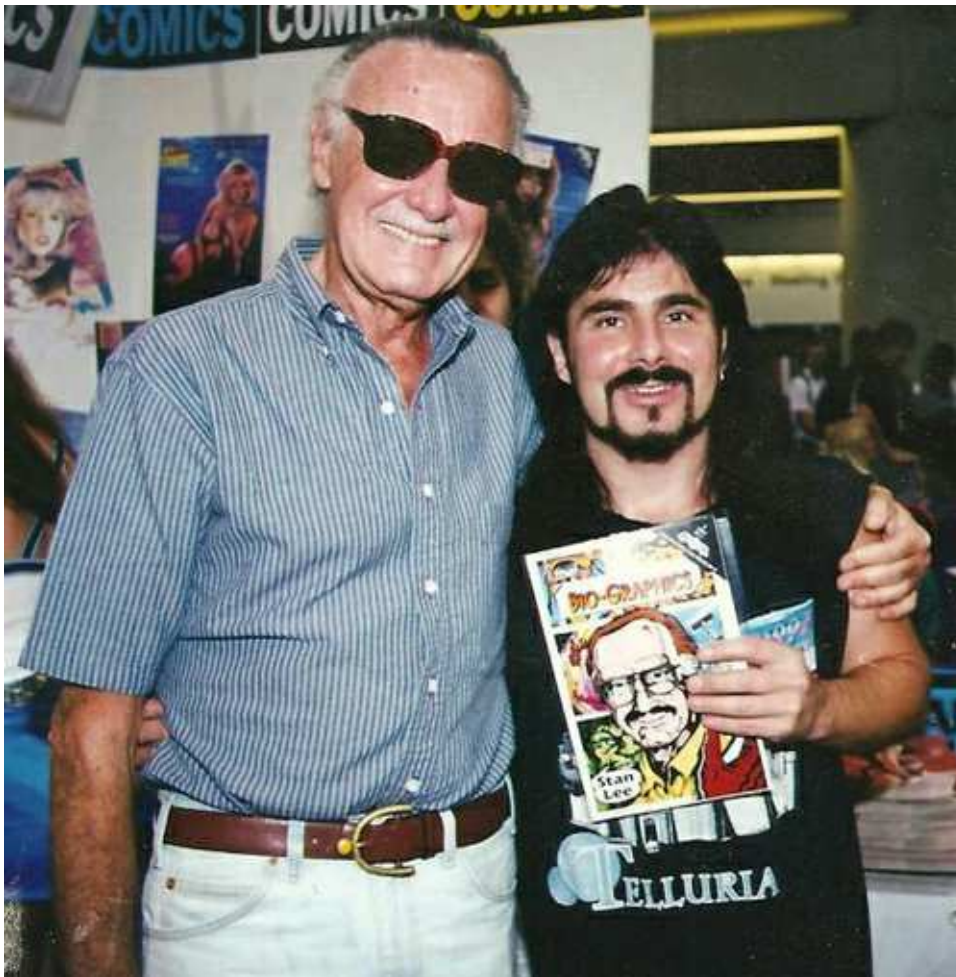
Sure enough, Lee and I ended up scheduled side by side, signing autographs at the San Diego Comic-Con. A small crowd gathered as I was introduced to him as the author of his unauthorized bio.

Cameras flashed and onlookers seemed to be expecting (or at least hoping for) fisticuffs to erupt any moment, such was the public animosity the book had stirred.

Lee reached out, shook my hand, and told me "I'm sorry."

I was mystified. Why was HE apologizing to ME? Was he sorry to have met me? Sorry the bio exists? I asked what he meant.

"I'm sorry," he said, "that I didn't lead a more interesting life, because perhaps then your book about me would have been more interesting."



This gentlemanly way of telling me that he didn't think much of my work came accompanied with a diplomatic smile that stayed plastered coolly on his face the whole time we posed for photos together.

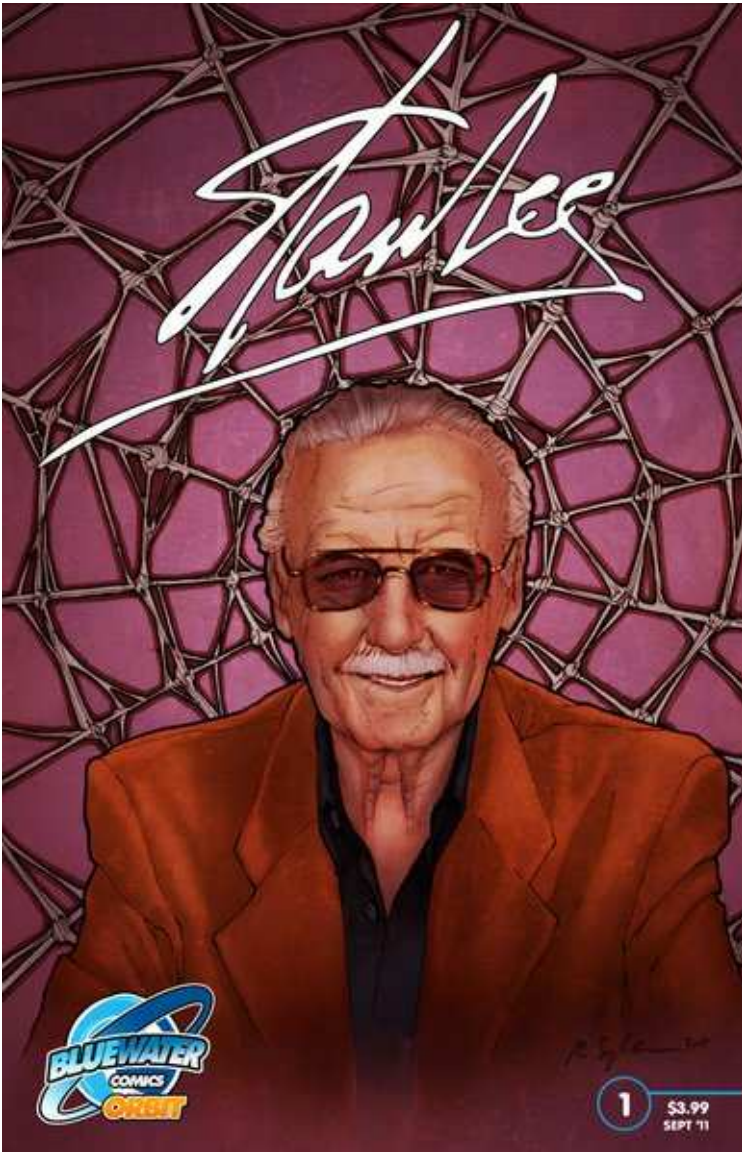


I'd come prepared with a copy of the bio in question, which I pulled from my briefcase and asked if he'd autograph. Hey, it's Stan "The Man" Lee, okay? And I figured if his hands were busy signing my unauthorized biography then he couldn't punch me in the head.

He graciously did the deed (signing, not punching), we mugged for a few more snapshots with me holding up my prize and then we parted, never to cross paths again.

Well, other than the personalized letter of rejection I later got when I applied for job at his [since failed] internet company Stan Lee Media, signed "Tough luck, True Believer!"





My Stan Lee comic was recently reprinted by Bluewater Productions, as the first issue in their new *Orbit* line of biographical comic books about pop culture icons. Once again, it caused a bit of a ruckus on comic book blogs and news sites.

By now, tho, I'm sure someone as cool and legendary as Stan "the Man" Lee isn't gonna have a cow over it...



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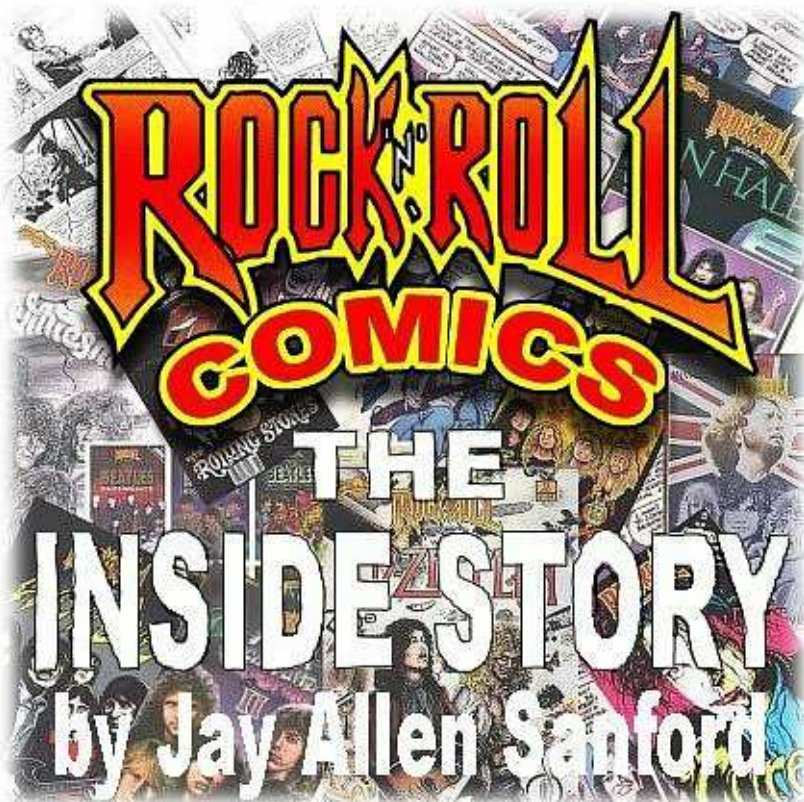






THE COMPLETE KISS KOMIX KRONICLES - Comprehensive collection of stuff I've done about working with Kiss on a comic book series, along with a bunch of never-before-seen artifacts from the Kiss Komix archives AND an article by Kiss comic author Spike Steffenhagen, offering his own very-different take, ala Rashomon, on the same events I describe in my essay...

<http://www.sandiegoreader.com/weblogs/bands/2007/sep/12/komplete-kiss-komix-kronicles>



In 1989, local Revolutionary Comics ("Unauthorized And Proud Of It") launched Rock 'N' Roll Comics, featuring unlicensed biographies of rock stars, most of which I wrote. Some performers, like Frank Zappa and Kiss, were supportive, while others like New Kids On The Block considered our comics akin to bootlegs and sued. In June 1992, publisher Todd Loren was found dead in his San Diego condo, brutally murdered. The story is the focus of the

2012 DVD release *Unauthorized: The Story of Rock 'N' Roll Comics*.

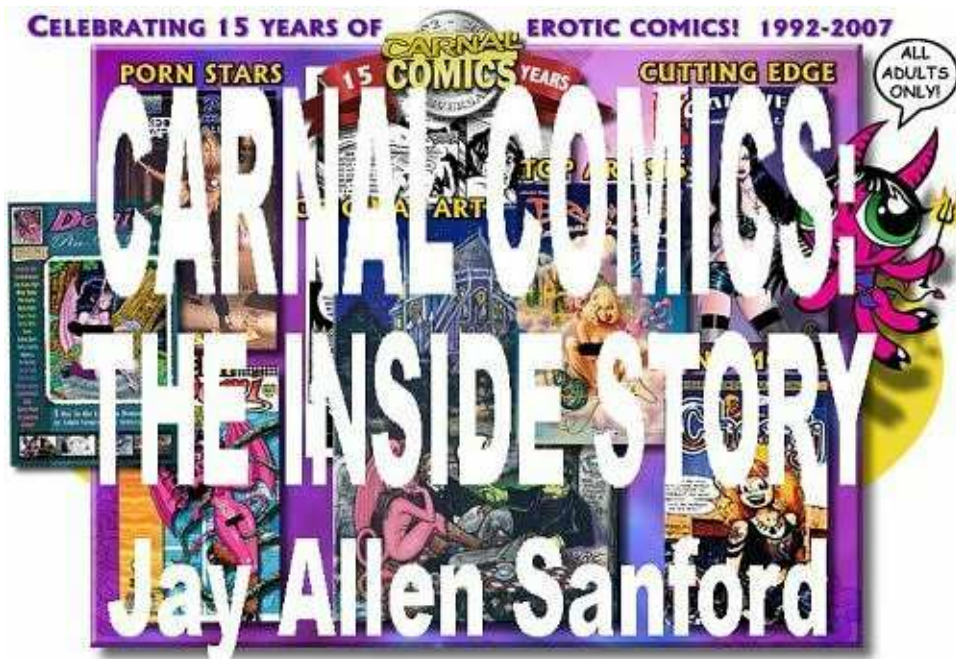
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NEW KIDS ON THE BLOCK VS REVOLUTIONARY COMICS - The inside story of how a hugely successful boy band tried to sue local *Rock 'N' Roll Comics* over an unauthorized biography of the group, sparking a court case that established, for the very first time, first amendment rights for comic books. Illustrated by comic superstar Stuart Immonen (Superman, etc.)...

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OVER A MILLION CARNAL COMICS ARE IN PRINT - Here's how and why we made some of the top-selling erotic comics of all time, right here in San Diego, including what Gene Simmons has to do with it all, backstage tales of porn stars, and more confessions of a comic pornographer...

<http://www.sandiegoreader.com/weblogs/bands/2007/sep/08/carnal-comics-the-inside-story-jay-allen-sanfor>



COMICS AND CENSORSHIP - DON'T BE AFRAID, IT'S ONLY A COMIC BOOK - A local-centric history of comic book censorship, and the fight for the rights of comic creators...

<http://www.sandiegoreader.com/weblogs/bands/2007/sep/06/comics-and-censorship-a-local-centric-illustrated>



TWILIGHT ZONE AND STAR TREK WRITER GEORGE CLAYTON JOHNSON PRESENTS - The inside story of a local horror comic book series featuring Robert Bloch, author of *Psycho*, plus sci-fi king Larry Niven, *Zap Comix* co-founder Spain Rodriguez, *Matthew Alice* artist Rick Geary, *Vampire Lestat* painter Daerick Gross, yours truly JAS, and many more...