

THE HEINLEIN JOURNAL

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CALL FOR PAPERS

The Heinlein Journal is published twice each year. Papers addressing any area of Heinlein Studies are welcome. We also welcome submissions from a new generation of Emerging and Independent Scholars.

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EDITOR

Dr. C. Herbert Gilliland

FOUNDING EDITOR

William H. Patterson, Jr.

DESIGNER / MANAGING EDITOR

Mark Bult

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Heinlein in the Comics

by John Tilden

Even though I've been involved with Heinlein fandom for some years now, I have resisted doing anything scholarly for the *Journal* given my thought that I didn't have any expertise. Editor-in-Chief Herb Gilliland gently pointed out to me that anyone who has been reading and collecting comics as long as I have could produce a review of a comic—a graphic novel. I have gone a little further with this article to provide some basic information about comic books produced from Heinlein's work so far to “put it all in one place” for someone interested in an overview.

♦ ♦ ♦

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

John Tilden is a hopeless fan of comic books, having amassed a collection of over 15,000 issues. He is a charter and lifetime member of The Heinlein Society and is pleased that he found a way to bring two of his main interests together.

Twentieth Century Adaptations

Destination Moon

Fawcett, 1950 · 28 pages

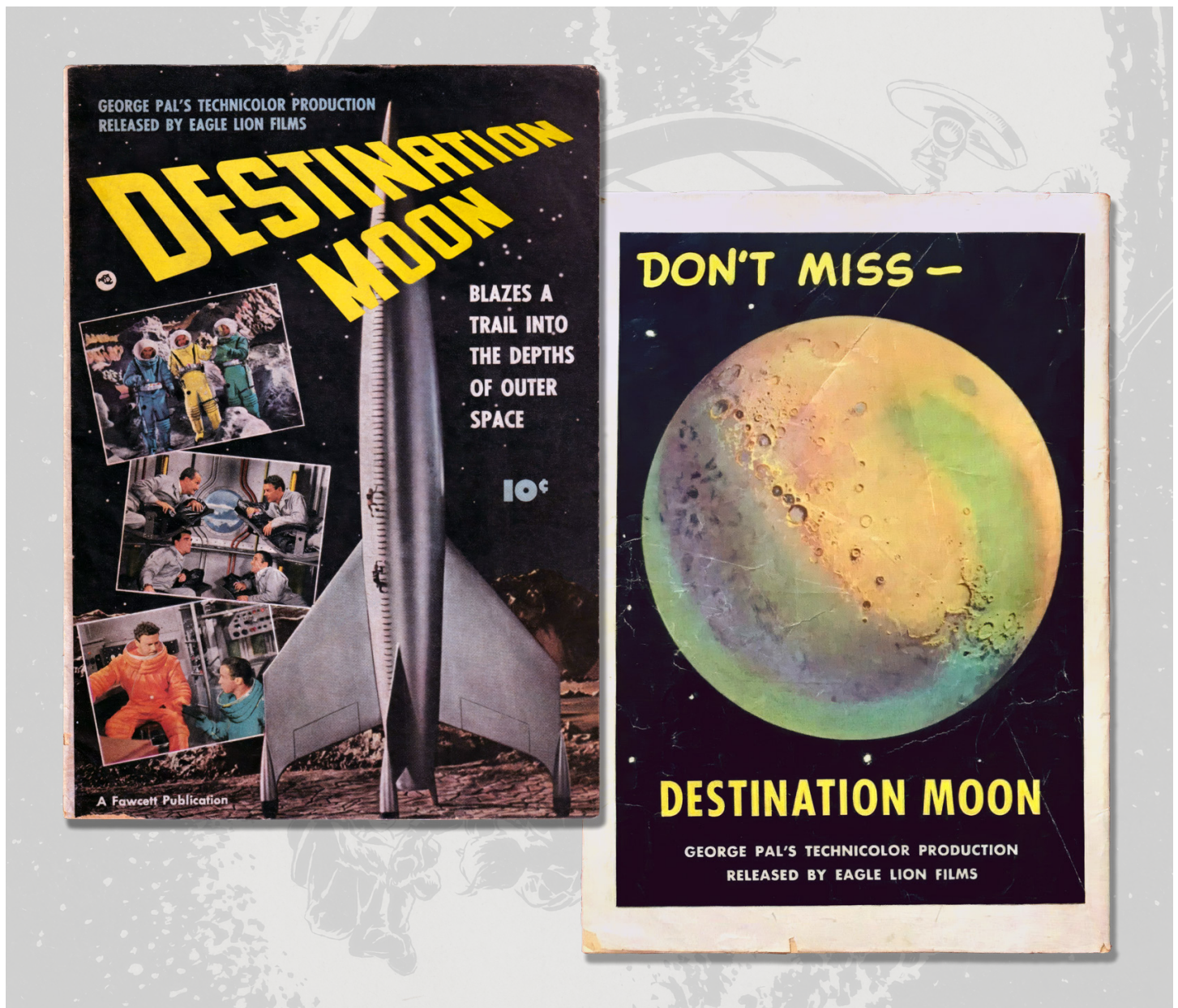
Written by Otto Binder

Art by Dick Rockwell

Inks by Sam Burlockoff

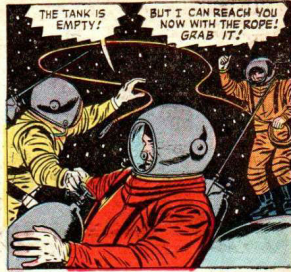
This adaptation of the movie is fairly straightforward and moves briskly along. Many of the science lessons of the movie are preserved, including the Woody Woodpecker cameo. I was surprised to learn that Otto Binder was the writer as he is

quite famous for his work on “Captain Marvel” but since he was working for Fawcett Comics at the time it makes sense that he also got the serialization work. The amount of exclamation points used throughout the dialogue seemed excessive to me, but in looking at the last script, “Script #5,” reprinted in the Virginia Edition volume 44 (*Screen Writing of Robert A. Heinlein Volume 1*) I saw that the script presented a lot of dialogue in that way! The inside front and back cover pages of the issue contain black and white stills from the movie while the cover has color stills inset against the moon rocket.





LET'S PRAY THAT THE OXYGEN HOLDS OUT! WE'RE AIMED A LITTLE CROOKED AND IF IT STOPS, WE'LL FLOAT PAST THEM!



THE TANK IS EMPTY? BUT I CAN REACH YOU NOW WITH THE ROPE! GRAB IT!



SAFE! QUOTE--"WHEW"--UNQUOTE!



But once back on the ship... THAT WAS CLOSE! BUT FORGET IT NOW! WE'RE NEARING THE MOON! PREPARE FOR LANDING MANEUVERS!



THE MOON! AIRLESS, LIFELESS, UTTERLY DESOLATE! THE LANDING IS GOING TO BE DANGEROUS, AMONG THOSE JAGGED MOUNTAINS AND CRATERS!



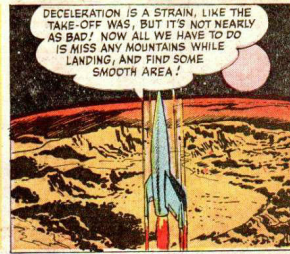
FIRST, I'LL SHIFT THE GYROSCOPE WHICH POINTED US TOWARD THE MOON DURING THE TRIP! HANG ON, EVERYBODY!



THE SHIP IS SWINGING AROUND IN A HALF CIRCLE, SO THAT THE BACK OF THE ROCKET WILL POINT TOWARD THE MOON! OH, MY STOMACH! BUT WHY ARE WE TURNING, PROFESSOR?



SO THAT THE ROCKETS WILL ACT AS A BRAKE AND SLOW US DOWN AS WE LAND ON THE MOON! ROCKETS ON!



DECELERATION IS A STRAIN, LIKE THE TAKE-OFF WAS, BUT IT'S NOT NEARLY AS BAD! NOW ALL WE HAVE TO DO IS MISS ANY MOUNTAINS WHILE LANDING, AND FIND SOME SMOOTH AREA!



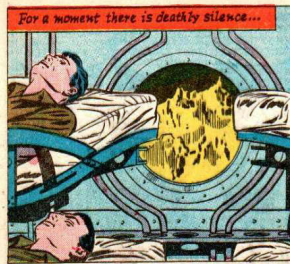
LOOK OUT --- MOUNTAINS! WHEW! JUST MISSED 'EM!



IT'S ALL RUGGED AROUND HERE, UNLUCKILY! THE ONLY SMOOTH PLACE IS THE FLOOR OF THIS GIANT CRATER! GOT TO LAND HERE! READY FOR LANDING! IT'LL BE ROUGH!



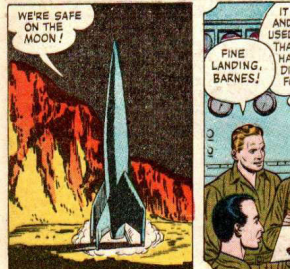
OOF! UGH! OHH! THUMP!



For a moment there is deathly silence...



LANDING SUCCESSFUL! CUT GYROS! JACKS DOWN!

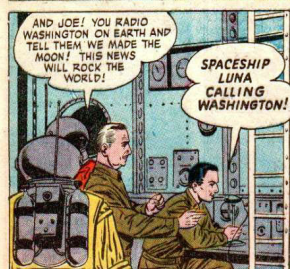


WE'RE SAFE ON THE MOON!

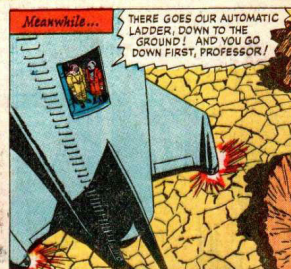


IT WAS A BAD ONE AND YOU KNOW IT! WE USED MORE FUEL THAN WE SHOULD HAVE! HOPE IT DIDN'T SHORT US FOR THE TAKE-OFF LATER!

FORGET THAT RIGHT NOW! WE'RE ON THE MOON, MEN! PROFESSOR, YOU AND BARNES PUT ON YOUR SPACE SUITS! YOU'LL HAVE THE HONOR OF FIRST STEPPING OUT ON THE MOON!

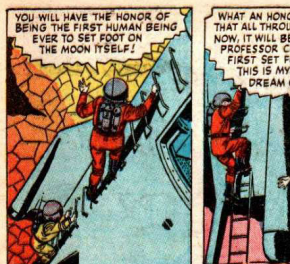


AND JOE! YOU RADIO WASHINGTON ON EARTH AND TELL THEM WE MADE THE MOON! THIS NEWS WILL ROCK THE WORLD!

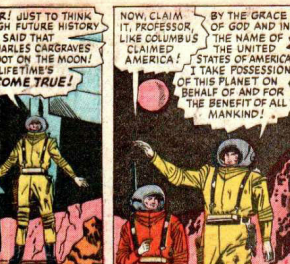


Meanwhile... THERE GOES OUR AUTOMATIC LADDER, DOWN TO THE GROUND! AND YOU GO DOWN FIRST, PROFESSOR!

SPACESHIP LUNA CALLING WASHINGTON!



YOU WILL HAVE THE HONOR OF BEING THE FIRST HUMAN BEING EVER TO SET FOOT ON THE MOON ITSELF!



WHAT AN HONOR! JUST TO THINK THAT ALL THROUGH FUTURE HISTORY NOW, IT WILL BE SAID THAT PROFESSOR CHARLES CARGRAVES FIRST SET FOOT ON THE MOON! THIS IS MY LIFETIME'S DREAM COME TRUE!

NOW, CLAIM BY THE GRACE OF GOD AND IN THE NAME OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, I TAKE POSSESSION OF THIS PLANET ON BEHALF OF AND FOR THE BENEFIT OF ALL MANKIND!



PROFESSOR! WASHINGTON CAME IN! THERE'S TERRIFIC EXCITEMENT ON EARTH! THEY'VE HOOKED UP ALL THE NETWORKS AND THEY WANT TO HEAR YOUR VOICE! GO AHEAD! I'VE HOOKED YOUR HELMET INTERCOM INTO THE CIRCUIT! ALL EARTH IS LISTENING -- GO AHEAD!



HELLO, EARTH! YES, WE ARE ON THE MOON! IT'S AN UTTERLY BARREN WORLD, DESOLATE AND SILENT! I CAN'T BEGIN TO DESCRIBE THE WEIRD MOONSCAPE, AND EARTH ITSELF, LOOKING LIKE A GIANT MOON, IS A BEAUTIFUL SIGHT FROM HERE!



A WORD FROM JIM BARNES TO YOU, TOO!



HERE COME THE GENERAL AND JOE SWEENEY WITH A SCHMIDT TELESCOPIC CAMERA TO TAKE PICTURES!

Between Planets

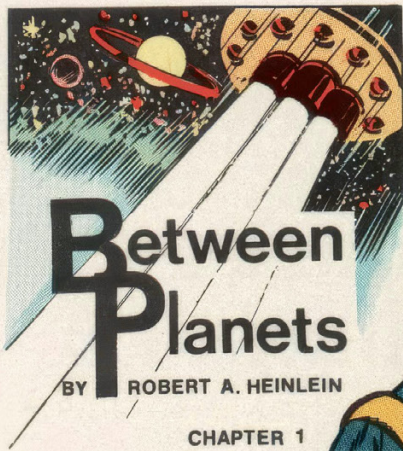
Boys' Life magazine · Serialized between April 1978 and September 1979 · 19 pages

Writer and Artist unknown, presumed to be a Boys' Life staffer. It was likely done at least in part by Alfred B. Stenzel who is listed as the "Cartoon Features" Contributing Editor and who produced many of the Boys' Life cartoons for decades.

I remember reading this when it was first published; my older brother was a Scout and it was

right when I joined Cub Scouts, so we had the magazine in our house each month. As an adult I look at the named location changes to the story as silly but given our changed knowledge of the solar system between the book publication and cartoon adaptation it makes some sense that the locations were changed to Alpha Centauri. Publicized as a "space cartoon" it can be forgiven its shortcomings, even if the name alterations throughout are puzzling!





Between Planets

BY ROBERT A. HEINLEIN

CHAPTER 1

SIXTEEN-YEAR-OLD DHON HARPHY ENTERS THE HEADMASTER'S OFFICE AT GYMNASIUM ALEGRA ON CADARACHE.

THIS MESSAGE JUST CAME FOR YOU, DHON.

THANKS, MR. REYVES.

"SON: PASSAGE LEMURIA RESERVED ON STARSHIP VALKYRIE TOMORROW. SEE UNCLE DAUDLY BEFORE LEAVING. LOVE, MOM AND DAD."

WHY THE SUDDENNESS? SPRING TERM ENDS NEXT MONTH!

PROBABLY THE WAR NEWS, DHON!

"FIGHTING BETWEEN HSIA AND CADARACHE COULD START ANY DAY, DHON. YOUR QUESTIONABLE CITIZENSHIP COULD PUT YOU IN A TOUGH SPOT!"

"BECAUSE MY MOTHER WAS BORN ON HSIA TO COLONIAL PARENTS..."

"...AND MY FATHER IS A NATIVE CADARACHE CITIZEN?"

"LEMURIA PROMISES TO REMAIN NEUTRAL, AND YOUR PARENTS WANT YOU WITH THEM, DHON. HERE YOUR LOYALTY MIGHT BE SUSPECT!"

WHO WOULD QUESTION MY LOYALTY? I'M A CITIZEN OF THE SYSTEM!

I THINK YOU'D BETTER PACK YOUR THINGS AND BE OFF TO SEE YOUR UNCLE.

AFTER A SHORT FLIGHT, DHON LANDS AT NU SHIKACO SHUTTLE PORT AND PLACES A VIDEO CALL.

HI, UNCLE DAUDLY, THIS IS DHON. I'LL GRAB AN AIR CAB AND BE RIGHT THERE!

NEXT MONTH: SHADOWED!

Tom Corbett, Space Cadet

1950s

There was a run of *Tom Corbett, Space Cadet* comics in the 1950s, but those did not include any Heinlein story adaptation and he didn't think much of it; Heinlein had given up his rights for a single

option payment with the television show. According to Heinlein, he was "satisfied to take my thirty pieces of silver and remain anonymous."



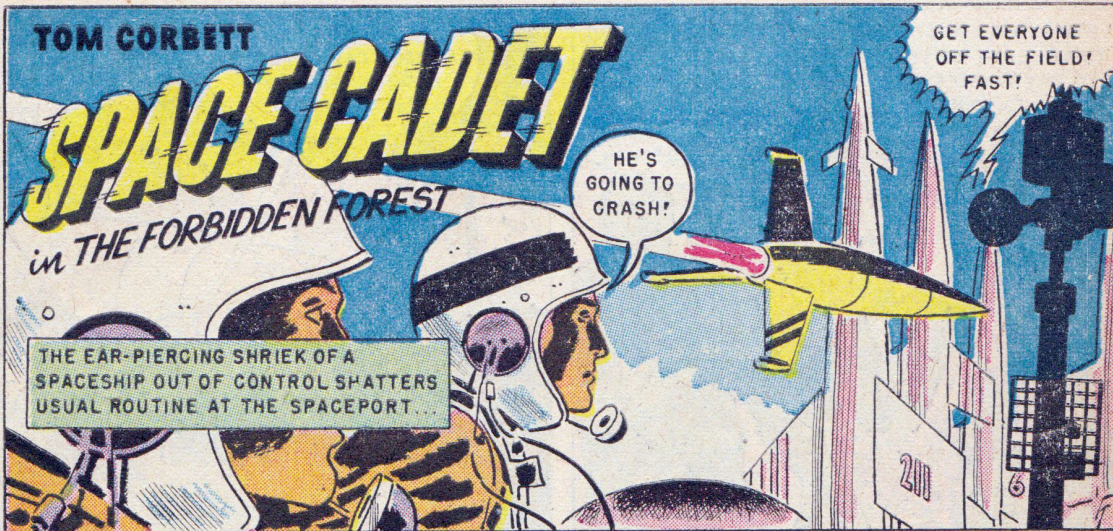
SPACE ACADEMY the university of the planets

There is no letup in the training of the Cadets of Space Academy. Intense physical training develops the bodies of Space Cadets to stand up under the severe strain of space travel. Continuous classroom study trains their minds for the great problems that flight through the cold distances between the stars presents. Constant practice with complicated machinery and controls develops instinctive dexterity in handling the giant spaceships.

And finally a day comes when Space Cadets are trusted to take a space cruiser off the earth without the strict supervision of an officer of Space Academy!

Here, Tom, Astro and Roger are at the controls of the *Polaris* — as they blast spaceward, for the first time on their own!

TOM CORBETT, SPACE CADET, No. 11, Sept.-Nov., 1954. Published quarterly by Dell Publishing Co., Inc., 261 Fifth Ave., New York 16, N. Y. George T. Delacorte, Jr., President; Helen Meyer, Vice-President; Albert P. Delacorte, Vice-President; Single copies, 10 cents. Authorized edition. Copyright, 1954, by Videofeatures Company. World Rights reserved. Designed and produced by Western Printing & Lithographing Co. Printed in U.S.A.



TOM CORBETT

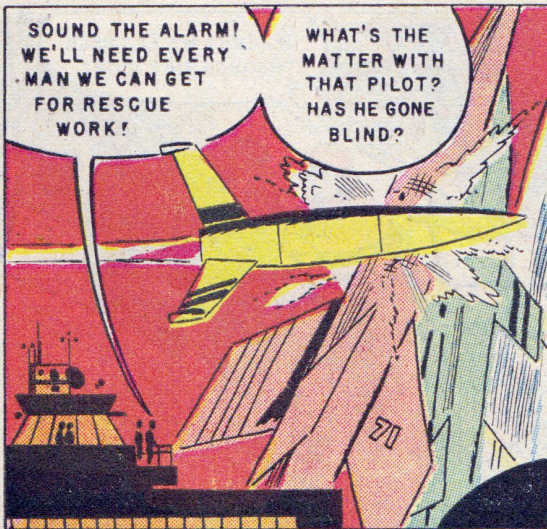
SPACE CADET

in THE FORBIDDEN FOREST

GET EVERYONE OFF THE FIELD! FAST!

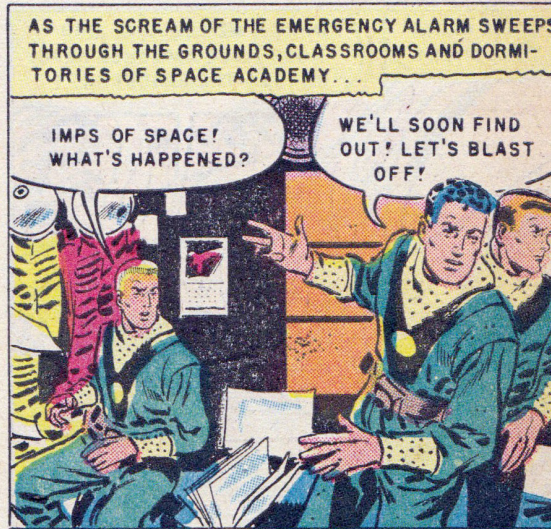
HE'S GOING TO CRASH!

THE EAR-PIERCING SHRIEK OF A SPACESHIP OUT OF CONTROL SHATTERS USUAL ROUTINE AT THE SPACEPORT...



SOUND THE ALARM! WE'LL NEED EVERY MAN WE CAN GET FOR RESCUE WORK!

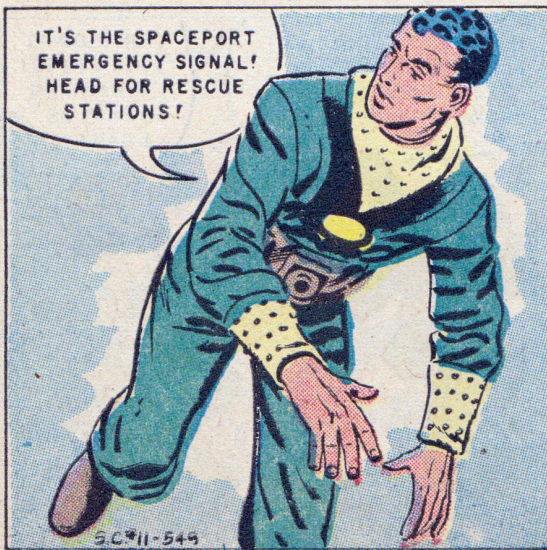
WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH THAT PILOT? HAS HE GONE BLIND?



AS THE SCREAM OF THE EMERGENCY ALARM SWEEPS THROUGH THE GROUNDS, CLASSROOMS AND DORMITORIES OF SPACE ACADEMY...

IMPS OF SPACE! WHAT'S HAPPENED?

WE'LL SOON FIND OUT! LET'S BLAST OFF!



IT'S THE SPACEPORT EMERGENCY SIGNAL! HEAD FOR RESCUE STATIONS!

SC 11-545



THERE'S YOUR ANSWER, ASTRO! A SPACESHIP JUST BLEW UP AT THE SPACEPORT!

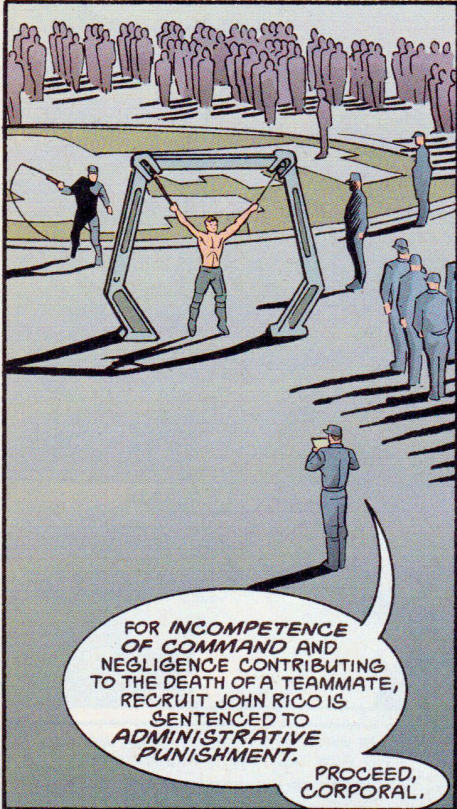
Starship Troopers

1990s – 2000s

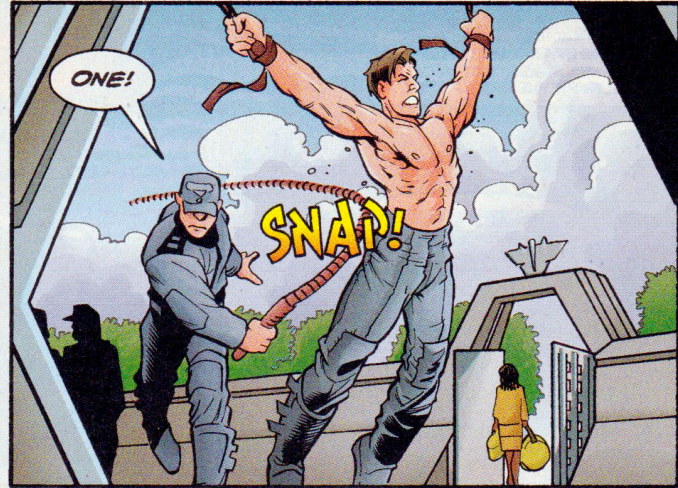
For completeness' sake I will mention that there was also an adaptation of the movie *Starship Troopers*, and six other short-run series that dealt with more stories in the movie universe or the Rough-

necks animated branch of stories. Much like with Tom Corbett, I have heard anecdotally quoted that Mrs. Heinlein was satisfied with how the check cashed, whatever the deal may have been.

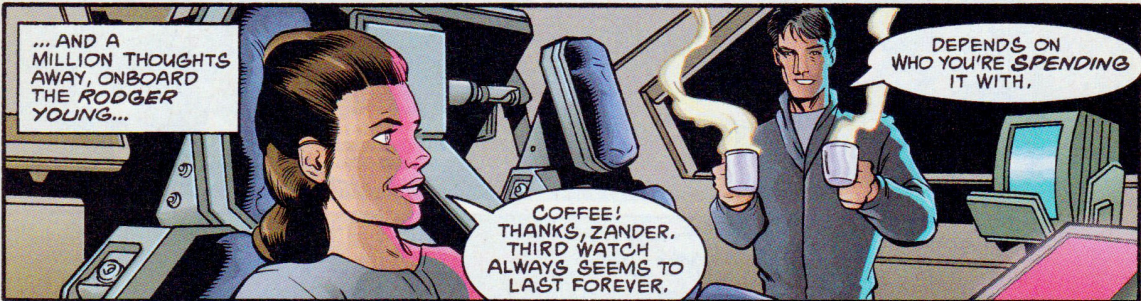




FOR INCOMPETENCE OF COMMAND AND NEGLIGENCE CONTRIBUTING TO THE DEATH OF A TEAMMATE, RECRUIT JOHN RICO IS SENTENCED TO ADMINISTRATIVE PUNISHMENT. PROCEED, CORPORAL.



SO JOHNNY TOOK HIS LICKS, BUT STAYED ON, WHILE DJANA'D TOOK THE ENDLESS WALK DOWN WASHOUT LANE...



... AND A MILLION THOUGHTS AWAY, ONBOARD THE RODGER YOUNG...

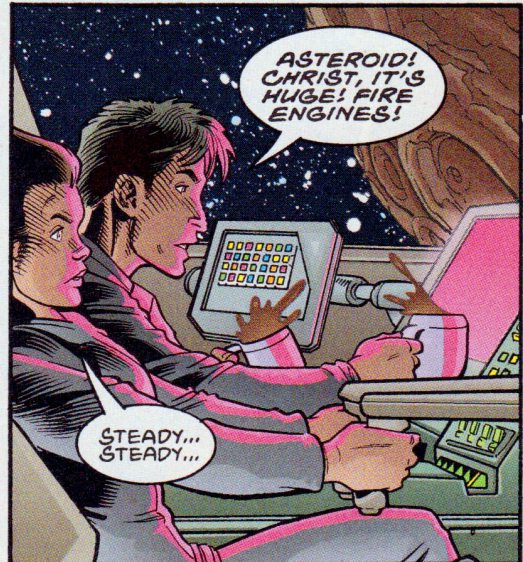
COFFEE! THANKS, ZANDER. THIRD WATCH ALWAYS SEEMS TO LAST FOREVER.

DEPENDS ON WHO YOU'RE SPENDING IT WITH.



YOU KNOW, CAPTAIN DELADIER THINKS WE MAKE A GOOD TEAM. I CONCUR--

HOLD IT! MY GOD, ZANDER-- LOOK!



ASTEROID! CHRIST, IT'S HUGE! FIRE ENGINES!

STEADY... STEADY...

Twenty-First Century Adaptations

Each of these adaptations were funded with pre-publication support via the money-raising service Kickstarter. Hardcover options were initially available as well as digital editions. The only edition to be reprinted to date is *Citizen*, with three individual issues sold through comics shops and a trade paperback issued by IDW Publishing. Page counts are for story pages, as each Kickstarter edition had additional material included. I will note that I was a Kickstarter supporter for each graphic novel.

Citizen of the Galaxy

VE Publishing Company · 2014 · 72 pages

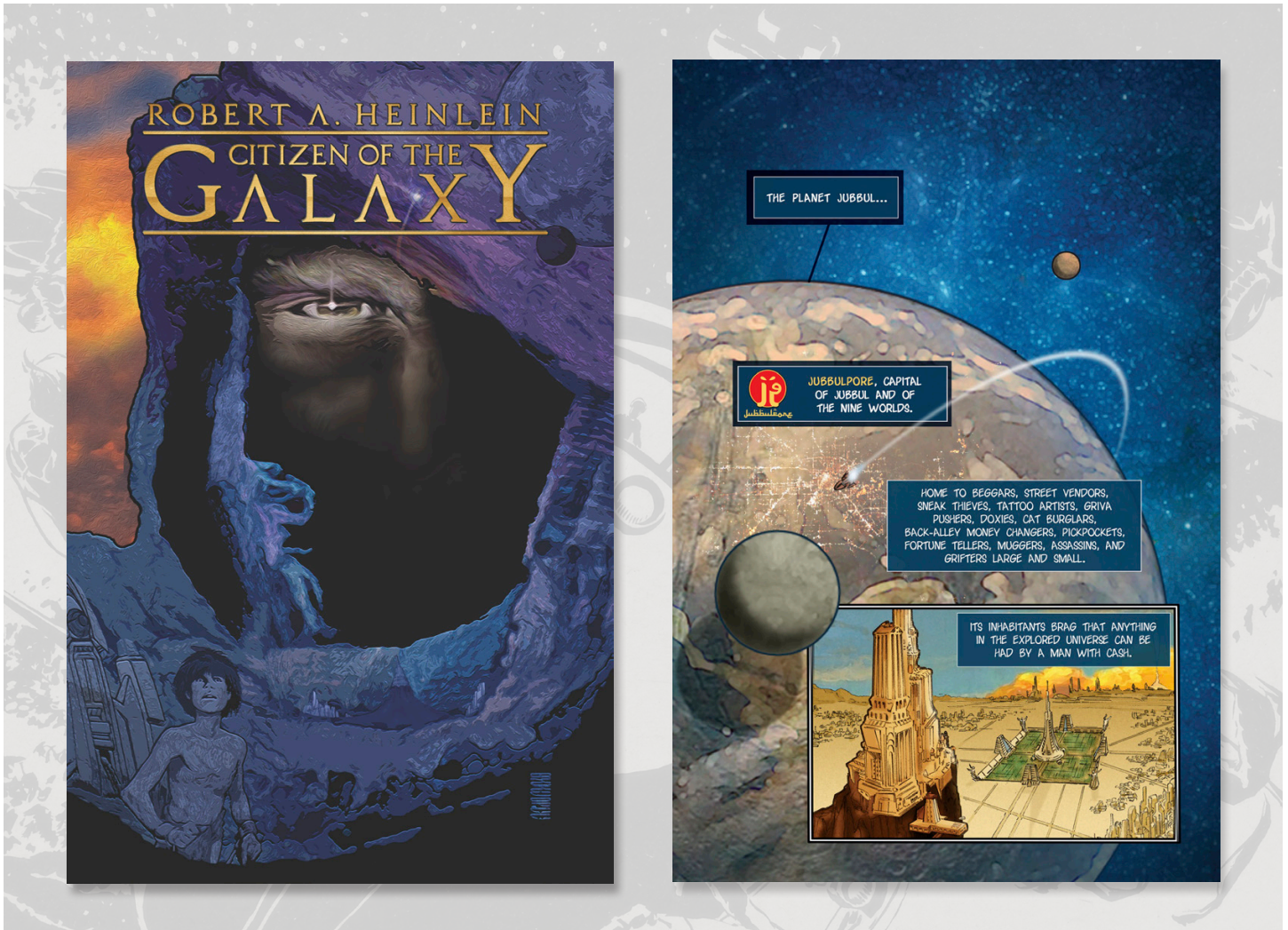
Script by Robert Lazaro and Eric Gignac

Pencils by Steve Erwin

Ink/Color by Eric Gignac

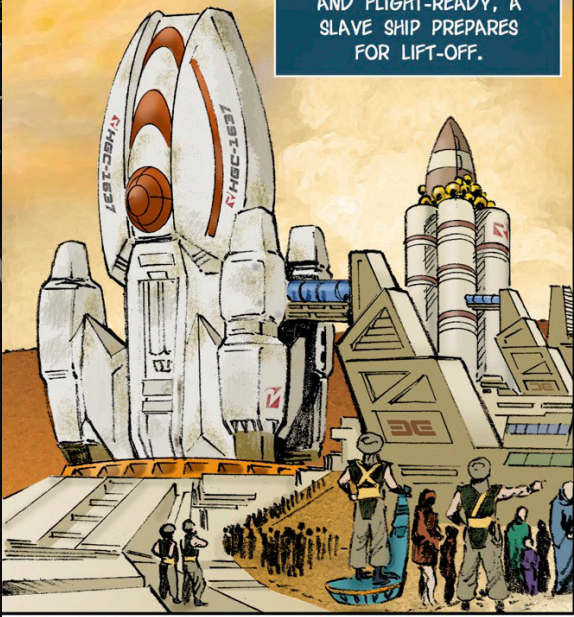
The story is broken into three Acts. The IDW version has the dialogue captions redone and there are minor changes in wording between the original Kickstarter version and that published by IDW. I was initially disappointed by the lackluster printing of the art in my copy, but the IDW versions fixed that and are much clearer.

The script is adapted very closely to the novel. Act I is the time of slavery, Act II covers the Free-Traders and Guard, and Act III shows Thorby's return to Earth.



SARGON SPACEPORT

CARGO DELIVERED, FUELED AND FLIGHT-READY, A SLAVE SHIP PREPARES FOR LIFT-OFF.



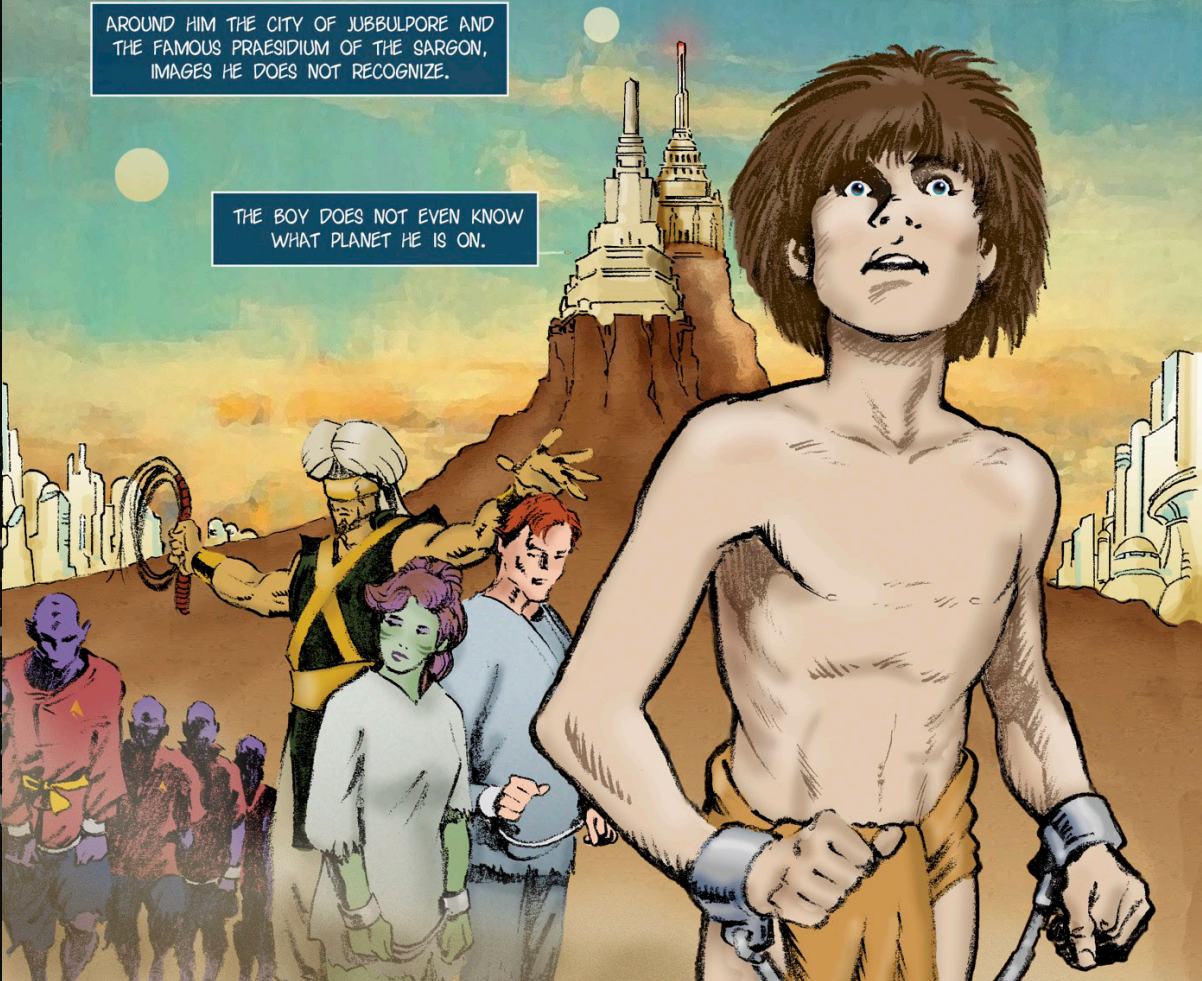
AMONG THE CARGO EXITING THE SHIP A YOUNG BOY IS CUFFED AND PRODDED INTO LINE.

DIZZY AND HALF SICK, THE BOY CARRIES WITH HIM THE STINK OF ALL SLAVE SHIPS, A REEK OF CROWDED UNWASHED BODIES, OF FEAR AND VOMIT AND ANCIENT GRIEF.



AROUND HIM THE CITY OF JUBBULPORE AND THE FAMOUS PRAESIDIUM OF THE SARGON, IMAGES HE DOES NOT RECOGNIZE.

THE BOY DOES NOT EVEN KNOW WHAT PLANET HE IS ON.



Have Space Suit, Will Travel

VE Publishing Company · 2018 · 82 pages

Script by Eric R. Gignac and Robert Lazaro

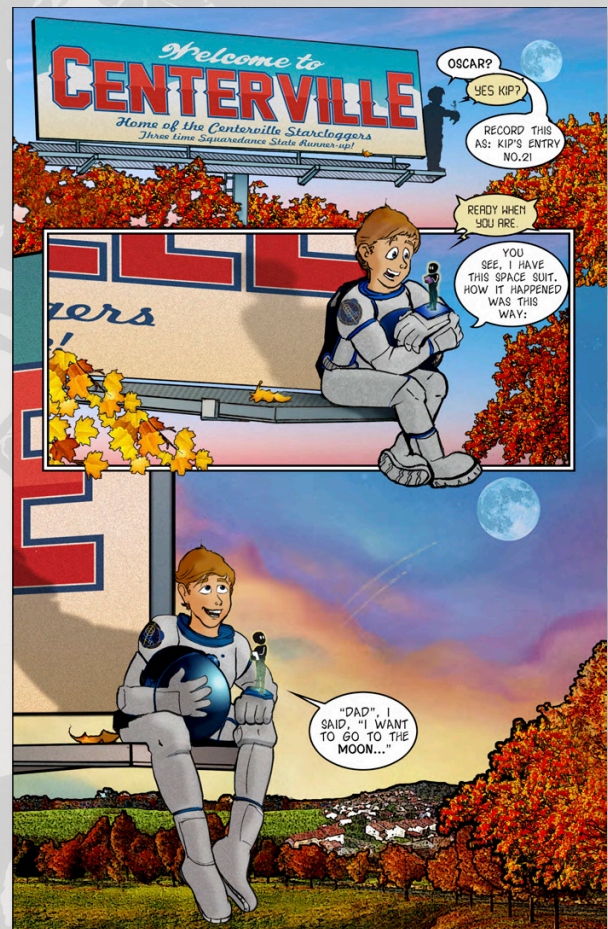
Pencils/Ink/Color by Eric R. Gignac with Soleil Gignac as Assistant Artist

When you look at *Have Space Suit* it's apparent that it's a higher-quality production. An embossed title on the hardcover with beautiful two-page spreads for the inside front and back cover pages. The back matter includes eleven pages of character studies and mock travel posters for book locations and an ad for Skyway soap.

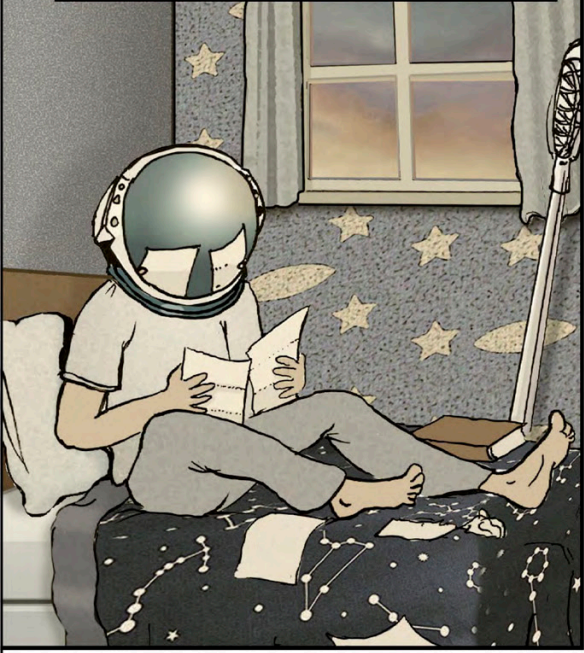
This story was adapted with changes to some parts. The largest change is that instead of "Oscar" becoming an anthropomorphic reaction with Kip

imagining responses, the story now has O.S.C.A.R. (Optimized Spacesuit Communication & A.I. Resource) being able to assist Kip and speak with him. This brilliant piece of updating allows the story to flow through explanations, keeping the pace moving without having to expose a lot of internal dialogue. With this conceit in place, the rest of the story plot points proceed much like the original novel.

Fandom is divided on how Gignac drew the Mother Thing based on his interpretation. It may be worth it to note that the VE Company also produced a limited-edition plush toy of the Mother Thing and that may have had something to do with her appearance.



I HAD JUST RECEIVED LETTERS FROM MY LAST TWO COLLEGE APPLICATIONS, TURNING ME DOWN ON THE SAME DAY! THE ONLY SCHOOL I WAS SURE OF GETTING INTO WAS STATE U. STATE U WASN'T THE BEST, BUT THEN AGAIN, NEITHER WAS I AND IT SEEMS THAT MORE DEPENDS ON THE STUDENT THAN ON THE SCHOOL.

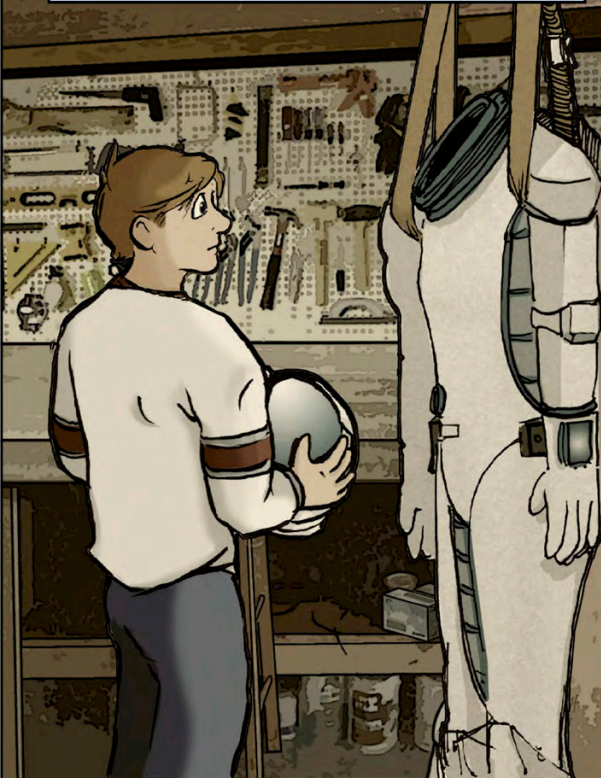


BUT EVEN STATE U TUITION COSTS WERE EXPENSIVE. SKYWAY OFFERED A BUY BACK POLICY ON THE SPACE SUIT AND I REALIZED GLUMLY THAT I WAS GOING TO HAVE TO SELL OSCAR TO GET THROUGH THE FIRST SEMESTER.

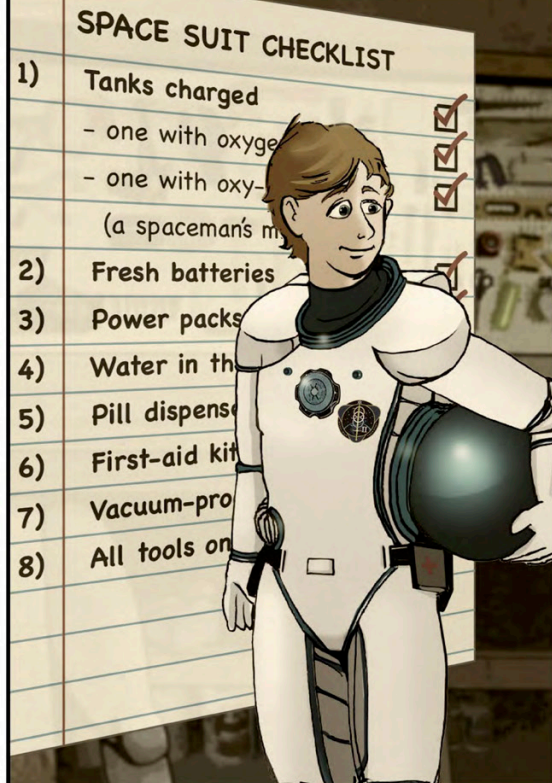


WHAT CHOICE DID I HAVE?!

WHICH BRINGS ME TO LAST NIGHT: MOTHER HAD GONE TO BED AND DAD WAS READING. I WAS IN THE BARN, INTENDING TO STRIP MY GEAR OFF OSCAR, PACK HIM INTO HIS CASE, ADDRESS IT, AND PHONE THE EXPRESS OFFICE TO PICK IT UP. HE WOULD BE GONE BEFORE I WOKE THE NEXT DAY. QUICK AND CLEAN.



I STOPPED. WHAT'S THE RUSH? I HAD UNTIL SEPTEMBER TO RETURN OSCAR. I DECIDED TO MAKE IT A DRESS REHEARSAL.



Life-Line

Chile Graphix, LLC in cooperation with the VE Publishing Company · 2022 · 48 pages

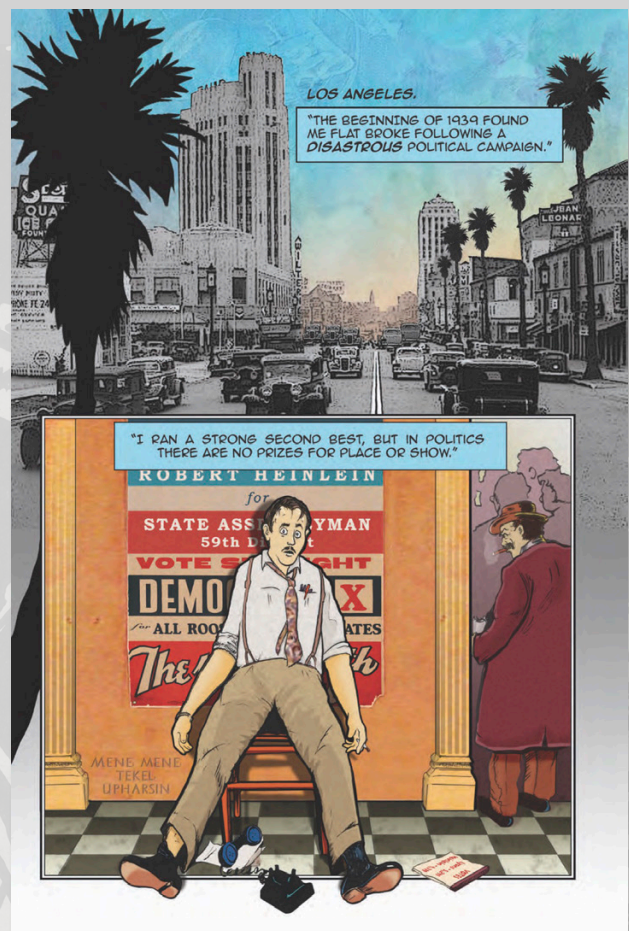
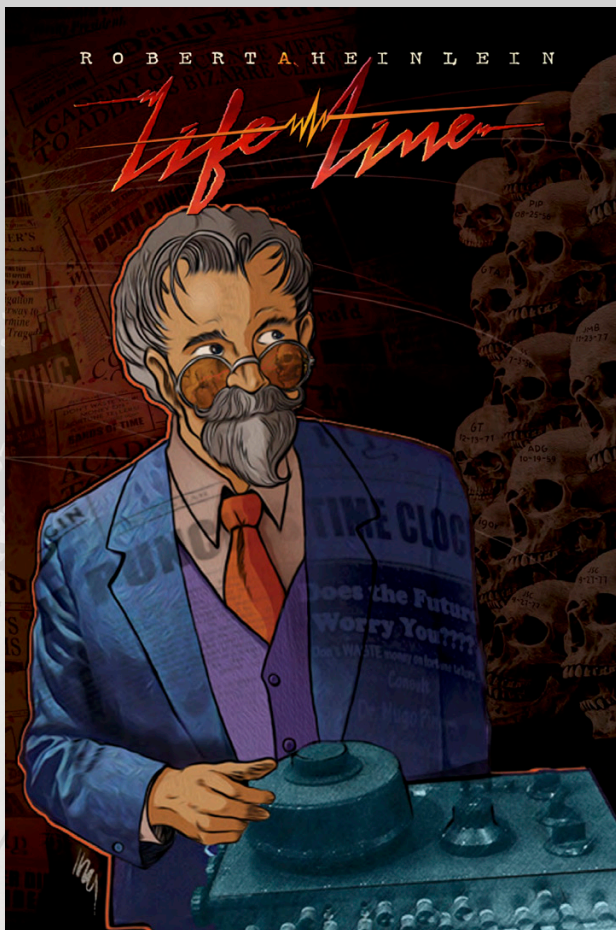
Script by Robert Lazaro and Eric Gignac
Pencils/Ink/Color by Eric Gignac

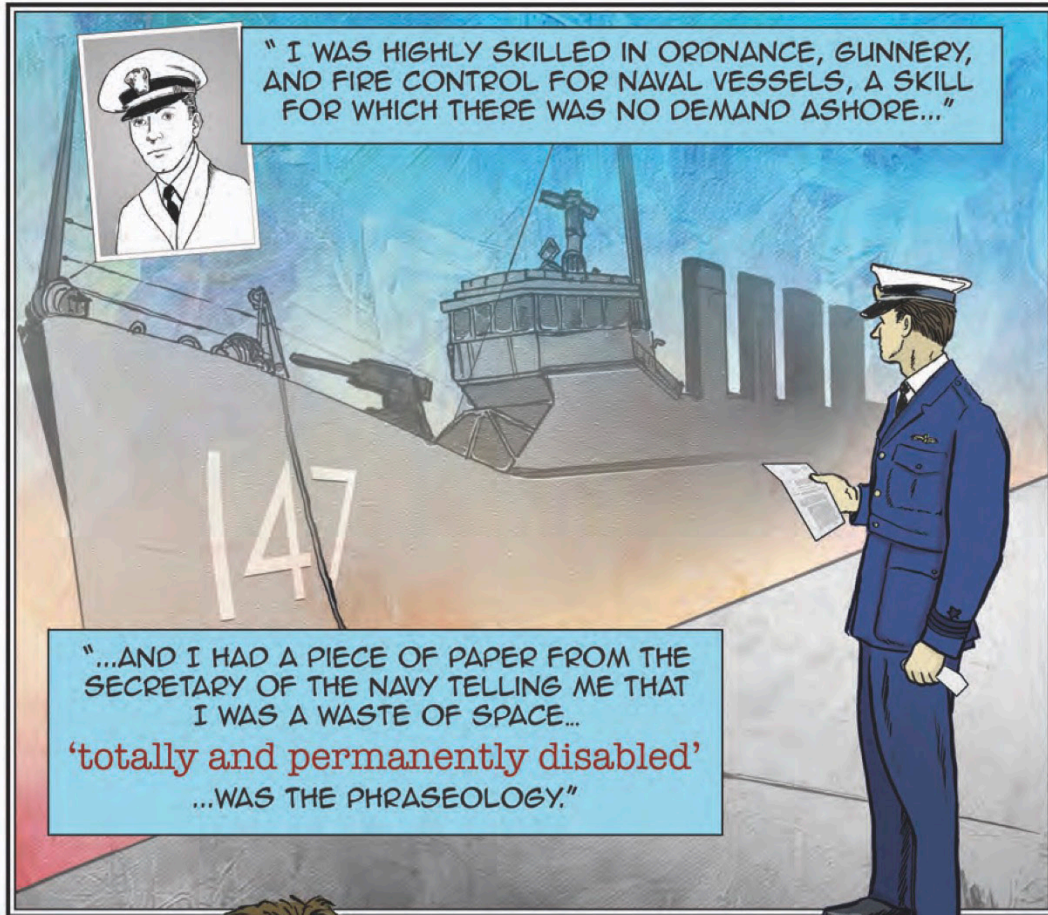
This hardcover doesn't have any bells-and-whistles with the cover or inside pages as *Have Space Suit* did. What it does do, quite interestingly, is adapt mostly from the 1939 *Astounding* version with the ending coming from Heinlein's unproduced 1953 screenplay. For good measure Gignac and Lazaro included a prologue describing the events from Pinero's brief mention in the 1941 story "Methuselah's Children".

With the understanding above where the story elements were pulled from, the graphic novel hews closely to the Heinlein plot.

Gignac and Lazaro use Heinlein's own words from *Expanded Universe* to describe his personal situation at the time he was moved to write "Life-Line" in five pages as an introduction, followed by the Prologue showing Pinero and Lazarus Long meeting in two pages. The story itself is adapted in forty pages.

Because this story also had a concurrent adaptation as a student film, Gignac uses some of the actors as models for the graphic novel but it's not something that is one-for-one.





"I 'OWNED' A HEAVILY-MORTGAGED HOUSE."



One interesting thing that Gignac and Lazaro have done in their three adaptations is to seed in-jokes and references throughout the stories. The only one I saw in *Citizen* was that the initial message Thorby passes for Baslim is to a space captain that looks a lot like Robert Heinlein! Also, several of the characters were visualized to resemble real people: Dr. Mader had Margaret Mead, anthropologist; Captain Krausa after Steven Fleming, a space venture capital investor; James J. Garsh was modeled after Art Dula, Heinlein Prize trustee. I also had missed that early in the story, Baslim holds a coffee cup with the logo of the Hansea, which was the spacecraft upon which Thorby was taken from his parents.

In *Have Space Suit*, Thorby's room has a poster for Jubbul. Rudbek Industries is the company that owns Skyway Soap. Kip's family library clearly has a Virginia Edition set. Kip's father has a Simon Jester coffee mug.

On the moon, Gignac hid several astronaut-signed golf balls, from Neil Armstrong, Buzz Aldrin, and Alan B. Shepard Jr. Gignac's father passed away during the making of the graphic novel and there is also a William Gignac ball as a tribute to a golf fan.

At the end of the story during the call to the head of the Rudbek Institute of Technology, Dr. Reisfeld states, "...give my best to Martha and your new son Thorby." This was Gignac's last subtle attempt to link *Have Space Suit* with *Citizen* and create a "Heinlein Juvenile Universe" even though the call is to "Dr. Creighton."

In *Life-Line* the newspapers shown all use Heinlein's pen names as the credited reporter names, and most of the text of the original story is used for the "articles" while some suggest the "Future History."

One of the auto license plates on the first page is "RAH777" while later Pinero's office is number 777. Strangely, the Academy of Science's logo contains the motto TANSTAAFL!

Also on the first page is a very subtle homage I had missed. A character resembling a young Heinlein is seen with a manuscript in hand, looking up at a sign that may or may not read, "Astounding Fiction."

In *Life-Line*'s first page of the Forward, we see the quote from Daniel 5:25-27 "MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN" which is loosely translated by Daniel as "God has numbered the days of your kingdom and brought it to an end. You have been weighed in the balances and found wanting. Your kingdom is given to the Medes and Persians." Gignac's reasoning was that the quote was used in a song featured in the pro-union musical *Pins and Needles* which premiered in 1937. I also note that the quote is the heading text for Chapter 2 of *Between Planets*, of which Gignac was not aware, but which confirms Heinlein's awareness of the verse.

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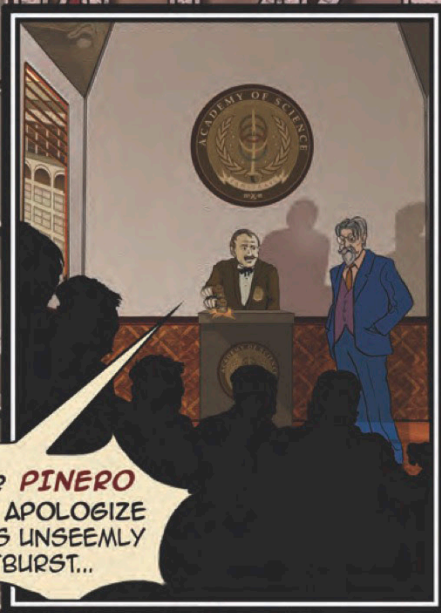
Heinlein has been represented reasonably well in the "sequential art" medium until now. I am hopeful that the Heinlein Prize Trust licenses more adaptations of Heinlein so that readers of a new generation can discover the stories and characters enjoyed by so many through the original written works. In many cases there are items of either science knowledge or Twentieth-Century U.S. culture that date the original works and those can be neatly updated for our current level of knowledge, as *Have Space Suit, Will Travel* proved.

◆ ◆ ◆

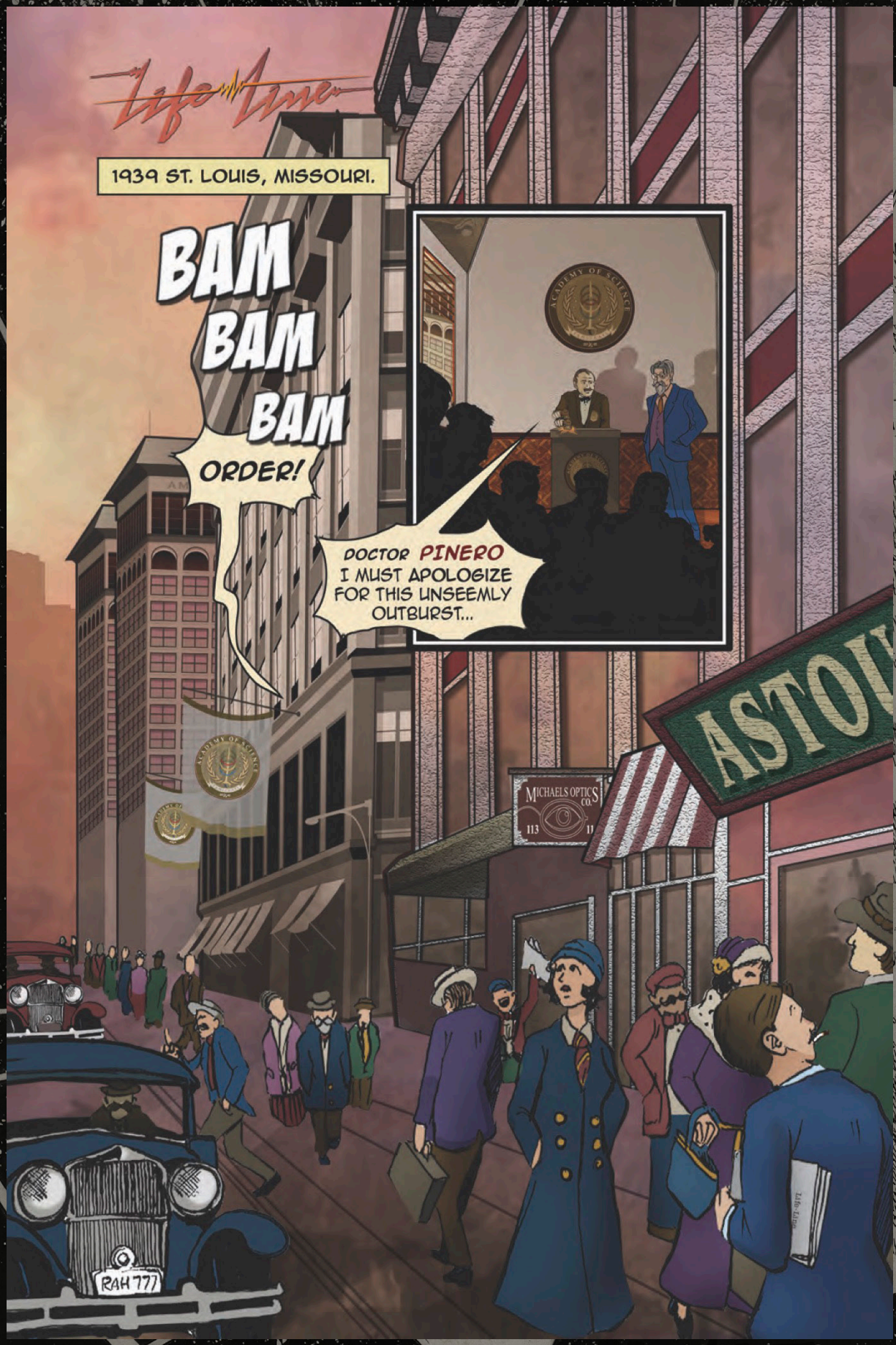
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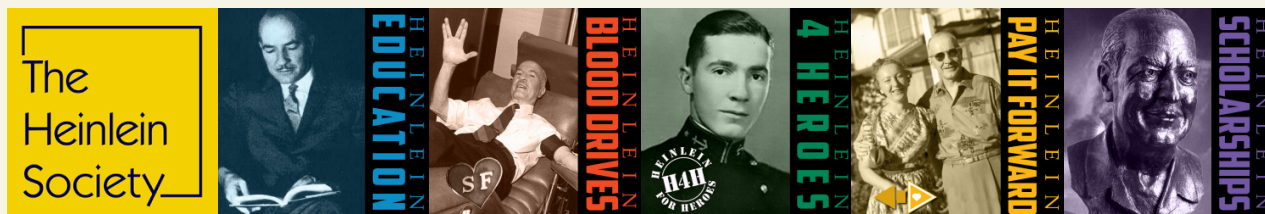
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