



Men of Tomorrow: Geeks, Gangsters, and the Birth of the Comic Book

Gerard Jones

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By the Eisner Award-winning author of *The Comic Book Heroes*, *Killing Monsters*, and scores of successful comic books and screenplays, *Men of Tomorrow* is the first book to tell the surprising story of the young Jewish misfits, hustlers and nerds who invented the superhero and the comic book industry. Among the characters in this vibrant panorama: ·

Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster, the goofy myopic creators of Superman, who sold the rights to the Man of Tomorrow for \$130 to...

Harry Donenfield, former pornographer and con-man, and his partner, Jack Liebowitz, founder of DC Comics, who went on to help build Steve Ross's legendary Warner Communications.

Batman's Bob Kane, who rose to fame and fortune in a career based entirely on lies and self-promotion.

Mort Weisinger, the ruthless editor of Superman, who suffered a nervous breakdown when he tried to be a superhero himself.

Plus Stan Lee, founder of a new kind of hero, including *Spiderman*, at Marvel Comics; Will Eisner, whose creation "The Spirit" has become a cult classic, and many, many more.

Springing unheralded out of working-class Jewish immigrant neighborhoods in the depths of the Depression, these young men transformed an odd mix of geekdom, science fiction, and outsider yearnings into blue-eyed chisel-nosed crime-fighters and adventurers who quickly captured the mainstream imagination. Within a few years their inventions were being read by 90% of American children and had spawned a new genre in movies, radio and TV that still dominates youth entertainment seventy years later. Drawing on exhaustive research, including interviews with friends and relatives of the creators, Jones reveals how the immigrant experience and the collision of Yiddish and American culture-forged in the crucible of two world wars-shaped the vision of the make-believe hero. He chronicles how the comics sparked a frightened counterattack that nearly destroyed the industry in the 1950's and how later they surged back at an underground level, to inspire a new generation to transmute those long-ago fantasies into art, literature, blockbuster movies and graphic novels. Animated by the stories of some of the last century's most charismatic and conniving artists, writers and businessmen, *Men of Tomorrow* brilliantly demonstrates how the creators of the superheroes gained their cultural power and established a crucial place in the modern imagination.

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