

BILL GALVAN – CREATOR OF THUNDERBIRD

Interview by Dragon's Keep (www.dragonskeep.com) - June 2, 2005

Bill you have been involved with Scrap yard Detectives. Coming up you have "Thunderbird". However, before we talk comic projects, I wanted to ask, what motivated you to become a creator and break into the comic industry?

I've loved comics since I was a kid, particularly Superman books. It's a great medium where you can tell a story and draw just about anything. I love to tell a story with pictures, it's like making your own movie, only less expensive!

With Thunderbird" due to hit this year and in the June 2005 Previews. Share with us who are you working with on this project and how did it all come together?

Thunderbird was originally created by me as a comic strip when I was a student at Southern Utah University in 1992. After that, it became a regular black and white title for Newcomers Publishing in Orem. It ran bimonthly for 8 issues between 1994-96. For about 6 years, I worked in graphic design, did video game artwork, and web stuff. In 2004, I was contacted by my old friend James Watson with Atlantis Studios to see if I was interested in doing a relaunch of Thunderbird in full color. My friend Nathan Shumate had done a script treatment for a relaunch of the 'bird in 1997, and I contacted him to see if he would be interested in collaborating. We looked over the script, and fine-tuned some details, and started full production last October.

What can you tell us about "Thunderbird" and what is it about this project that gets you energized?

Thunderbird is a classic hero without any of the baggage of convoluted history. It's a lot of fun to create a hero from the ground up, and be able to do a lot of cool things to interpret his stories, from comics to 3D animated movies. I try to make the character as iconic as possible, from his origin to his powers and costume. But I also try to keep the character somewhat grounded in reality. There are not any other superheroes in his world. All the things we take for granted: a secret identity, a costumed identity, a relationship with the police, he has to figure out for himself. There's no comic books or other super's to look up to.

Who are the primary characters and when can fans expect to get a hold of "Thunderbird"?

Eric Siegel is Thunderbird. Eric is a brilliant young inventor who develops a flight suit for his company, SkyTech Industries. What he didn't know was that his design was co-opted by his boss and mentor, Nikos Ikaros, and made into a deadly weapon. When terrorists come to steal the suit, Eric must use it to stop them from escaping with their hostage, Amanda Trese, Ikaros' assistant.

You are also working on "The Scrapyard Detectives". What are some of the highlights of the "Scrapyard Detectives" project?

The Scrapyard Detectives is a comic book that's funded by a non-profit group called Smiles for Diversity. Their mission is to educate children about appreciating diversity, tolerance and teamwork. The Detectives solve mysteries in their community and are good role models for kids. The comics are free to schools, libraries and literacy programs that can use them. For more info, contact info@smiles-for-diversity.org. I co-created the series, and my friend Nathan wrote issue #2 and is working on issue #3 now.

I noticed in the latest Previews, the solicitation for "Thunderbird" #1. Is the series set to be an ongoing or limited/mini series?

It's a quarterly ongoing series.

What can you share with us regarding the newly formed Atlantis Studios?

Atlantis Studios is a great place for new talent to come together and produce work. James Watson is really good at placing talent together that can help each other out on their projects. He's also great at giving editorial advice and directions to help these projects reach their full potential.

What else can fans look forward to from Bill Galvan in 2005?

Besides the third issue of The Scrapyard Detectives, the Thunderbird website www.thunderbirdcomics.com will be featuring new content coming up. I've got some 3D images and animations on the site already, some 3D wallpaper images and posters, a preview of issue #1 and I'll be uploading some sketches from issue #2. Also, I try to update my blog every once in a while, with photos from my art desk and a progress report.

What are the tools or experiences that you put to use as a creator/artist/illustrator (books, sites, education, etc.) and how has this allowed you to develop/evolve as an artist/illustrator and creator?

One tool that has helped me immensely is my digital camera and the use of reference. I'm not one of those artists that can draw things out of his head flawlessly. If I'm having a hard time drawing hands or a pose, I'll take a pic of it, and use it to look at while I'm drawing. Also, for buildings and cityscapes, it's invaluable. I just got back from a trip to New York, and I filled up my camera with tons of shots. It's helped me a lot.

Bill, you have been working in the industry for a bit now. I believe in order to maintain a position in the industry, which I am sure is very competitive, a person needs to be doing things right, which you obviously have been able to accomplish. What's your work ethic?

I work during the day at my day job, and at night I draw. My family has been really supportive of my comic work, which can really take it's toll if you're chained to the art table from 7 to 10 pm. But I try to take a break every once in a while, so I don't get burned out. I try to do a page a day in pencils, but I've up the detail for issue #2, so it's taking a little longer. But I'm still on schedule.

In the future when the opportunity arises, what other professionals in the comic/entertainment industry would you hope to work with?

Of course, I'd love to see an Alex Ross version of Thunderbird, or a Jim Lee version.

Bill many of the people reading this interview are trying to break into comics or become some sort of artistic creator, what pointers or feedback would you share with them?

Draw all the time! Keep a sketchbook with you and just doodle, or go to a park and draw people you see. That kind of practice is invaluable. Also, use reference when you need it. If you need to draw a convincing car or gun, get a picture of it so it looks real. The internet is great for that.

Just want to say thanks Bill for taking time out from your schedule to chat with us. Before we go, is there anything we didn't touch base on that you'd like to share?

Thanks for the interview! THE 'BIRD IS BACK!!