

Dave,

Thanks for starting a new podcast about Old Hornhead. I look forward to listening to the whole planned five-year project.

I just left a review on iTunes, and I think it is true: you do a great job at looking at the comic both from a broad point of view and in narrow focus. In particular, I am thrilled to hear you shift back and forth between the story and the art as you talk your way through the plot of each issue. I have not heard people do that much before. Art tends to go under-represented in discussion.

Earlier today, I caught your observation about Matt's lair, and I think it is a fair point that you make when you contrast Matt Murdock's relation to Daredevil and Bruce Wayne's relation to Batman. If I were pressed, I might put it like this: Daredevil is another means to an end for Matt besides practicing law, but Batman is a necessity for Bruce, and the persona is in some way a means to an end for Bruce, but it is also in some way an end. (I do not like saying that Batman is an obsession or a compulsion for Bruce, because I think that that does not do justice to his moral intent in donning the cape and cowl.) Maybe my talk of "ends" and "means" are not the most profitable terms to use in the comparison, but your talk of "coolness" and "distance" and the rest are just fine, and they sit on there very well.

In any case, your observation got me to thinking about why Daredevil is a second tier guy in terms of popularity. Daredevil is my favorite superhero, if I were forced to choose one, but I do think that his greatness as a fictional hero is under-represented by his popularity. (I hope that Blaine Dowler's "Daredevil's Advocate" podcast gets picked up out of his "pilot season"--his comments on the Aw Yeah podcast's Facebook page led me to you--but I do not think that it will.) Perhaps, now I venture, that secondary status is because of his more distant relation to the horns-and-clubs. I think that the coolness adds depth to his character in a way, but maybe it makes the actions that he takes in the suit less iconic, and with less iconic action comes less popular appeal.

Maybe I can elaborate. Bruce's reason for choosing a bat is perceptible from the street, where criminals and ordinary citizens might catch sight of him at night from afar--and so might readers who see him on the cover to a comic on a shelf from across the room. It is fearsome and has its desired effect on "the cowardly and superstitious lot." Matt's reason for choosing his imagery does not so readily translate to the wordless sight of his

costume. Children used to mock him with the name, "Daredevil," because he did not take part in their games, but then he takes the name for his vigilante identity later in order to "show 'em." Now, I think that his imagery--a graceful blood-red devil of a man who beats criminals to a standstill--is exquisite. (I, too, take the first yellow costume to be inferior to the second all-red one.) In my opinion, the artists have been using that imagery to great advantage for decades, but to my knowledge the writers have not (except insofar as they script the panels), neither showing criminals' and ordinary citizens' point of view on Daredevil, nor exploring Matt's point of view on himself.

I could be mistaken. Maybe Kevin Smith's "Guardian Devil," for example, shows that Matt wants to look like a devil because of how a devil looks. I read that storyline some time ago, and I do not remember it clearly.

Any reflections that you feel inclined to offer would be much appreciated, on the air or off. If you please, do not read my email on the air, but I do not mind at all if you paraphrase it. This email is a lot longer than I expected, for one thing, and in any case I am a little embarrassed to hear my writing.

Regards,
Edward