

## HELLION FOR HIRE #2: A TALE OF TWO CITIES

by Billy Tucci

Hello all. This week and next we will explore the twin epicenters of my career - my studio and the Marvel offices.

Vis-à-vis Bayport (pop. 8,000) and the Big Apple (pop. 8,000,000).

### Part One - Caught in the Act!

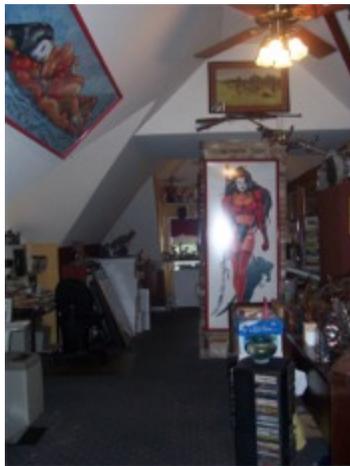
I heard the little bugga drawing away at my desk. I snuck downstairs and returned with a camera and Gotcha! The startled William had no idea I was sneaking up from behind. But no worries, I had just returned from Fed Ex and sending off the latest pages of **Heroes For Hire** to Tom Palmer.

William's playroom is perpendicular to my studio (it used to *all* be mine!) but like an illegal alien, he doesn't care much for the sovereignty of borders.



Since last week's column, I've received a bunch of requests to see the studio that William and I danced oh so professionally in. At first I was hesitant, because save for my writing desk, it's a mess. But then again IT'S ALWAYS A MESS. Now I like a clean office like the next guy (I'll show you the immaculate Marvel offices next week), but truth be told, I don't have time to give it a good straightening up.

So why not just show you my simple flippin' cartoonist's studio as it really is?



First, if I may, a bit of history. Since moving back to Long Island from Queens nine years ago, I purchased a very nice little building to house the Crusade offices in the next town of Sayville. But with the birth of William in 2002, I decided it would best to sell the building (hell the market was great!) and set up shop on the top floor of the house. This was a way for me to be home with my family and move from a corporate mentality to a more creative one. My wife Deborah has her own home office (where all the good equipment is) but I've got the cool part of the house, Quasimodo's sanctuary of solitude. Only thing that sucks are the slanted walls. It's a very time consuming pain hanging the 20 or so framed-posters I still have hanging around onto said slants, but I'll get to them SOMEDAY.

Anyway, as you can see that almost four years later, my studio is still littered with boxes from the building (you've got to see our storage and my closet!) that hopefully don't contain any government cheese. But they do serve as nice launching pads for William's test flights.

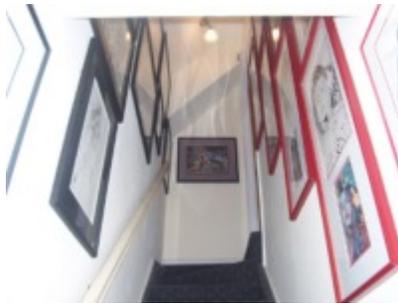


As you can see I like to collect military toys and memorabilia. I've got about 70 Dragon and BBI Action figures (today's GI Joe's suck, don't they?), most of which are still in boxes above the deer mounts and Winchester. I've also sectioned off the studio into the Pacific (where I draw) and the European (where I write) theatres of the Second World War. There Spitfires tangle with Stukas and Bf 109's in Battle of Britain Sector, while above the skies of Germany a P-51D Mustang chases an obviously doomed Focke-Wulf 190D. You might also notice the lone F4U Corsair pilot patiently waiting for me to buy a Japanese Zero for him to tangle with above my art table. I actually need two 1:18 scale Zeros, a P-40 and a 1:32 scale Me 262. Interestingly enough, many of the models hanging were a gift from Marvel's editor in chief Joe Quesada and were lovingly constructed by his dad. I've also acquired prints from aviation artist John Shaw complete with the signatures of the original Flying Tigers and Tuskegee Airmen (some of whom I've had the honor to meet personally).

There's the model 1915 Springfield shotgun that belonged to my grandfather and yes that sure is an actual 1898 Krag-Jorgenson carbine. It's a gift from my father-in-law, Andrew, and is the very same weapon carried by Theodore's Rough Riders up Kettle and San Juan Hill (see the Remington print) during the "splendid little" Spanish American War. Only 20,000 were constructed so who knows? Before you call the police, all firing pins have been removed from the weapons.



By North American standards, we live in an old house. It was built in 1847. It's got a lot of character but most of my things don't really match the Victorian décor so the result is "Billy's Playroom." At least that's how our non-comic book friends refer to it and, of course, they don't think I work at all because drawing comics all day is easy, isn't it? But that's what's great about doing what we do, sure the deadlines and hours can stress you out, but the results are unequal. Besides, I don't have to wear a suit or make believe that buying "toys" is for kids. Hell, I can see it in the faces of my friends who ALL state that they wish they "could have this stuff". Very sad isn't it? Life's too short to be an ass. Fan-boy up!



own.

I guess what I'm saying is how incredibly lucky I am that every morning I get to walk upstairs past incredible originals by great names like Lee (Jae and Jim), Perez, Conner, Hughes, Palmiotti, Darrow, Pearson and many more. In seconds, I'm sitting at my desk in horrifically miss-matched shorts and shirt while listening to anything I want. Hell, I can even have a beer or glass of wine while working to Pavarotti and Bocelli (after cocktail hour, of course). But this seems to be frowned upon by my perplexed editor Mark Paniccia and Tom Palmer who keep wondering why I'm sending them William's art instead of my

At the main art table (the other two are always full of crap) you notice comics I use for reference. I'm sure I don't have to tell any of you just what awesome storytellers and draftsmen Steve McNiven and Khari Evans are! Their work has been my guiding light through **Heroes for Hire**. Since I prefer drawing from 3D objects, I'm always turning to my Hajime Sorayama statues and the wonderful Spider-man 2099 model for reference.

<http://www.newsarama.com/general/Hellion/02/Hellion02.html>

Well, have a look and you'll see what I surround myself with -you might notice the Shi merchandise and, yes, that is a baby monitor at my art table. All of it is inspiring to me and gets me through the day as I secretly gaze out to all the preppy people down on that idyllic, tree-lined street who are wondering just who the hell is butchering "Nessun Dorma."

"Of course! It's that dancing idiot you never works - again!"

Next week -- Power lunches, power players and the real reason we all love comics so much. I'll show you images and give a tell all of how a motorcycle-riding, Indy guy invades the Marvel offices!

I've also included a page for Newsarama poster "Black Cat Guy" and the entrance of Felicia Hardy. If any of you yearn for more studio pics and rants please join our message boards at [www.williamtucci.com](http://www.williamtucci.com).





Hope you enjoy and Tally Ho!  
Billy



her name is Heather Harris

<http://www.newsarama.com/general/Hellion/02/Hellion02.html>



Discussion thread: <http://forum.newsarama.com/showthread.php?t=73839>



06-15-2006, 10:40 AM #2 [ERMurrow](#)

Thanks for the tour Billy. I love this behind the scenes stuff.

06-15-2006, 12:13 PM #3 [AlexLothos](#)

Very cool tour inside. How DO you hang stuff on slanted walls? Glad I'm not the only one with lamps on both sides of the art table (but it does avoid those nasty shadows).

06-15-2006, 12:45 PM #4 [Billy Tucci](#)

Alex,  
You buy "safety hangers" or whatever they're called. They're not expensive (hell I've got a bunch of em') but it's a time consuming process.  
Billy

06-15-2006, 12:54 PM #5 [pmpknface](#)

Very cool Billy! Love the "playroom."

Random question - ever think of looking at Bowen Designs statues/busts for reference? Not that your work isn't looking fantastic already.

Thanks! Looking forward to HfH! 😊

06-15-2006, 01:27 PM #6 [samnoir](#)

Very much looking forward to Heroes for Hire! The page with the Black Cat looks great.

06-15-2006, 02:29 PM #7 [EvilEric](#)

"Besides, I don't have to wear a suit or make believe that buying "toys" is for kids. Hell, I can see it in the faces of my friends who ALL state that they wish they "could have this stuff". Very sad isn't it? Life's too short to be an ass. Fan-boy up!"  
greatest thing ive ever read and sooo true....

06-15-2006, 02:31 PM #8 [Vito\\_A](#)

Was on the fence about getting this, but that Black Cat drawing got me.

06-15-2006, 02:55 PM #9 [LunarDaydreamer](#)

Not so sure about the Stags, but otherwise a cracking room. 😊

06-15-2006, 03:38 PM #10 [sll01](#)

Boy I am torn. As to who looks hotter your Black Cat or this new Tarantula.

I can not wait for this to come out.

By the way great photos over at <http://www.williamtucci.com/>

06-15-2006, 03:42 PM #11 [Not From Around](#)

Quote: Originally Posted by **LunarDaydreamer**

*Not so sure about the Stags, but otherwise a cracking room.* 😊

I'm guessing he has an understanding wife.

The mounted bucks are the only part of the room that look like something one would likely see around here. Although here it would occasionally be the case that the lady of the house bagged them!

06-15-2006, 04:28 PM #12 [Radiate](#)

HA! What a great guy! Loved the surprised look on his kid lol! In 15 years time i bet you he'll rue the day that picture was taken when he becomes part of the industry! 😊

RADIATE!

06-15-2006, 04:43 PM #13 [Billy Tucci](#)

Quote:

Originally Posted by **pmpknface**

*Very cool Billy! Love the "playroom."*

*Random question - ever think of looking at Bowen Designs statues/busts for reference?*

*Not that your work isn't looking fantastic already. Thanks! Looking forward to HfH!* 😊

pmpknface --

I've got some of Randy's statues and use them too! But I'm always knocking things over, so I can't put them on the table. I do take photos of them for ref though.

Thanks you for the support!

Billy

Oh, here's another shot of the studio where you'll see his "Grendel" and I think he did the Doc Savage too, but I could be wrong:



06-15-2006, 04:45 PM #14 [Billy Tucci](#)

Funny thing is that my wife's father got me into hunting. No one thought I could do it and my wife and mother-in-law are pissed how he "created a monster." Because, I'm obsessed. Those bucks are actually my small ones (first whitetail, first mule deer). The big ones are in the family room!

06-15-2006, 04:48 PM #15 [BlackCatGuy](#)

Billy, thanks for the tour of your studio!

We have been uber-busy on base since returning from Philly, and seeing that Black Cat page just made my day! 🤖 INCREDIBLE!!

I hope you get that page after Tom inks it! Please let me know!

Loved seeing all your toys around the studio, kind of reminds me of my brother's house, only all his stuff is fire department related!

Thanks again for the look! (especially Felicia!!) (Oh, my challenge coin is now in my wallet!) 😊

06-15-2006, 04:48 PM #16 Billy Tucci

Quote: Originally Posted by **EvilEric**

*"Besides, I don't have to wear a suit or make believe that buying "toys" is for kids. Hell, I can see it in the faces of my friends who ALL state that they wish they "could have this stuff". Very sad isn't it? Life's too short to be an ass. Fan-boy up!"*  
*greatest thing ive ever read and sooo true....*

Oh yeah, you know they want to collect cool stuff SO BADLY. They're just wusses, trying to act "adult". But when we have parties all the kids and their dads hang out up here!

06-15-2006, 04:52 PM #17 Billy Tucci

**MORE STUDIO PICS**

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<http://forum.newsarama.com/showthread.php?t=73839>

I've been getting some email asking to see more pics so I hope you enjoy:



06-15-2006, 04:53 PM

#18 Billy Tucci



06-15-2006, 04:55 PM

#19 Billy Tucci



06-15-2006, 05:05 PM #20 [BlackCatGuy](#)

Billy, my brother in law in England has the same Spitfire print hanging in his living room!

And I love the Corsair model! 🇺🇸

06-15-2006, 08:01 PM #21 [RedRonin](#)

Man, Billy Tucci's room looks like my dream room when I was a kid. I'm so jealous.

■06-16-2006, 01:56 AM      **#22**    [beta-ray](#)

Love the models and toys. Thanks for sharing.

Nessun Dorma eh? You romantic!

■06-16-2006, 06:51 AM      **#23**    [Marchie77](#)

Billy, if you could send anyone who modelled for your versions of Black Cat, Misty, Colleen and Tarantula round my way asap, i'll buy you more airfix kits!!!! 🤖

this may have been covered already, but is this new tarantula ALL new, or has she been seen a lil bit before...? (definitely prefer her to the moustachiod merc!)

■06-16-2006, 08:52 AM      **#24**    [Billy Tucci](#)

Marchie -- I'll be posting my art process (with photos of the models) in a future column. I actually use diferent people for each one too!

This is an all new Tarantula and she's pretty hard and wicked. But you'll really get to know her after the Civil War issues (which are 1-3).

And Beta Ray, please don't tell anyone I'm a romantic!

Any way, here's my good friend Heather Harris who poses for Black Cat. I don't have any digitally pics of her from our photo session, but will scan them in and post with the article on working with models.

[PICTURE MISSING]

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■06-16-2006, 11:19 AM      **#25**      [richieboy](#)

Hey Billy,

Thanks for your articles, its really interesting to see the goings on in an artists head, and has given me a great interest in the comic your drawing as well!

Thanks,

Rich