

CIVIL WAR

Here is the first document written by Mark Millar outlining his initial ideas for CIVIL WAR. This was done immediately after the creator conference at which the initial ideas for CIVIL WAR were thrown around, and you'll see Mark make reference to some of those conversations herein.

Also, the version I've chosen to upload has notes incorporated into the body of the text from both Joe Quesada and myself, so you can get a sense as to our immediate reactions to the specifics of what Mark was proposing. Joe comments are labeled **JQ**, and my comments are labeled **TB**.

-- Tom Brevoort.

FAO Tom Brevoort, Editor

The Marvel Civil War

12-Part Maxi-Series

Mark Millar and Steve McNiven

Covers by Michael Turner

16th September 2005

INTRO:

Okay, this is the skeleton structure, but I need to see the bones before I can hang the meat. This is a tight breakdown of where I see this going, the characters I'd like to use and some suggestions about where we go from here as a company. Any comments would not only be welcome, but very much appreciated. If anything doesn't smell right let me know because you guys know all the smaller characters much more than I do. I'd rather hear about an inconsistency or a repeated idea here than on a message-board ten months down the line. Be as picky as you like.

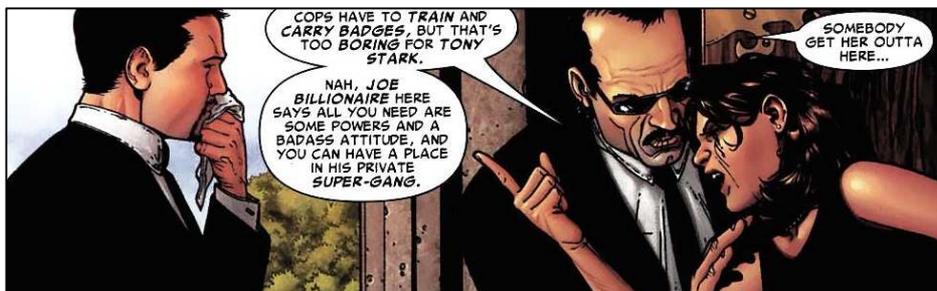
THE PLOT:

The issue opens, as discussed, with a small-scale superhero involved into a big action set-piece where all the jokes and the acrobatics get punctured by a stray bullet going right through a little kid. At the moment I'd like the hero to be Speedball and the kid in question, if such a kid exists, should be the son of Tony's buddy Happy Hogan.



[JQ - You sly BASTARD, that's brilliant. You just made Tony's point justified. BRILLIANT. Mark, what you do need in the opening is something that recaps the world and tells us of the building tensions so that this can have impact. Perhaps a panel by panel recap of events as a news cast only to pull out to see Happy Hogan and his son at some sort of theme café in Time's Square, perhaps the ESPN Café since they would have a thousand screens and possibly the news. They go for a cheerful father and son outing all the while you're intercutting between them and a simple bank robbery about to be foiled by Speedball. Cripes this kid is your Sue Dibny except his insignificance in Marvel continuity and his connection to Tony is that tiny hole in the dike that starts the flood. Did Tom B give you this? Because no way you're that smart.]

[TB - It's a nice thought, but it's been pretty clearly established that Happy and Pepper don't have any kids. They do feel like the right characters, though, so maybe there's some way to do this. Having them have adopted a kid that we're only going to kill a minute later seems crass. Would it work if we killed Happy himself, or maybe Pepper?]



Cap's argument for civil liberties is very compelling, but I wanted to beef up Tony's involvement on the other side and a superhero's carelessness causing the death of his Godson seems like the perfect emotional turning point for him. The reader can absolutely empathize with why he wants his friends registered and licensed after this.

Anyway, the big opener is followed by a double page title spread and we move quickly into the reaction from the media and the politicians. This is the straw that broke the camel's back and we quickly follow up all the recommendations about the registration act as the kid's mother camps outside the White House asking for justice.

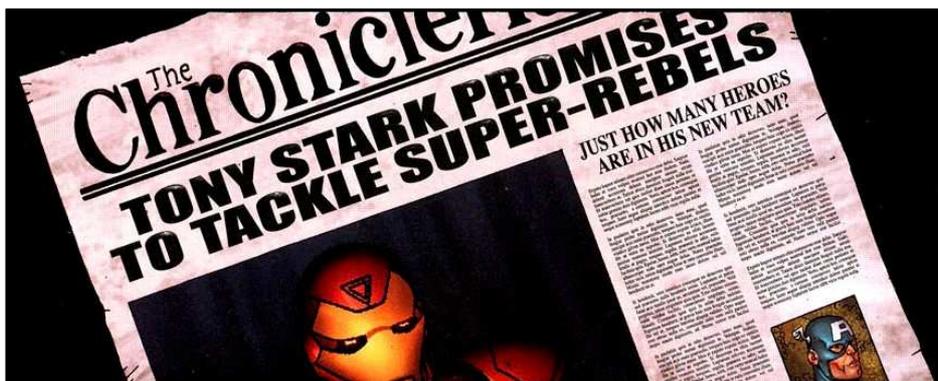


[JQ - YES!]

Villains are on a register and cops are on a register. They're accountable for their deeds. Why should so-called good-guys be anonymous when they can do anything they like, etc., etc.? The first issue, which is filled with set-pieces, ends with the surprising revelation that the heroes have 28 days to unmask and register themselves or else they're going to be hunted down and imprisoned.

[TB - I think I'd avoid saying "imprisoned" at this point. They're going to be hunted down as criminals—that should be enough. More evokes concentration camps more than is good this early in the game, I think.]

Public safety is suddenly a number one priority.



Second issue kicks off with a lot of these guys stepping up and unmasking. They aren't being punished and in some ways life looks better for them now. They're registered and, providing they work for the government, they're receiving a salary and a pension plan. They're no longer rogue vigilantes. They're respectable. The only thing is that many of the heroes aren't coming forward and SHIELD is becoming very concerned. Nick calls Cap to the Heli-carrier and we get a great scene where we have one of those lovely big Marvel view-screens with all the heroes up there, most of whom haven't registered yet. Nick wants Cap to assemble a

team and track these guys down once the 28 days are up and Cap surprises everyone by saying no. The registration act, he insists, endangers superheroes and their families. That's why they need to wear masks. Nick says the IDs will be kept secret, but Cap still refuses. Guns are raised, tense moment, but Cap takes everyone out with superhuman accuracy and leaps off a bridge within the Heli-carrier, landing on a jet as it comes through. In a single movement, he cracks open the glass, ejects the pilot and nicks the jet, flying it out the other side of the Heli-carrier. Cap is loose. The most dangerous man alive is now undercover and helping the superheroes who are refusing to come forward. This leaves Nick Fury in a weird spot because the superhero community is split right down the middle with nobody to lead the guys who back the registration. Step forward Tony Stark. It's basically Iron Man Vs Captain America as the Marvel Civil War begins.



[JQ - Mark, to give Cap's argument weight, I say that one of the heroes that registered has his family killed by a villain. This way when Fury tells Cap it's all going to be confidential, Cap calls him on it, anything can be leaked.]

[TB - I agree. My feeling when I got to this part of the outline was that there didn't seem to be enough of a reason for Cap to suddenly go rogue otherwise.]

Issue Three is where they start to assemble their own teams. Tony is putting his guys together and their objective is very simple. They want to bring in all the unlicensed super-people, give them a chance to register and, if they insist they're staying rogue, they're getting locked up in a new maximum-security prison beside Speedball.



[TB - What's the deal with Speedball? Was he arrested, or did he turn himself in? Either way, it's a bit hypocritical for Tony & Co to condemn him for innocents getting caught in the crossfire when it's happened to Iron man multiple times. Something to think about and finesse—each character can have a slightly different shading on the events.]

The other side, led by Cap, have formed a new team and they're all wearing new stealth costumes (redesigns of their original costumes that can't be picked up by satellite or radar) and their objective is equally simple; they want to perform their superhero duties without being captured by the first time. They're a secret society. An underground movement. And they're being led by Captain America which means that nobody can touch them. The teams have broken down with Tony having Spidey



[TB - Does Spidey unmask to the government? If not, how is he part of Tony's guys?]

, Reed Richards and all the guys we discussed on their side. Dr. Strange, Black Panther and the X-Men are staying neutral, but Wolverine comes over to help because it's the right thing to do and both Ben Grimm and Sue Storm come over with Namor to Cap's side.

[JQ - According to JMS, Ben will actually leave the country as a conscientious observer. He can't be brought to fight his family so he will be in France for a few issues. This does give you that great moment in Planet Hulk when Ben comes back home because now it's gonna be a fun fight and we get some great Thing/Hulk pummeling. How great will it be when he can yell "it's clobberin' time," in French.]

I like the idea of some of the heroes publicly known (like Sue) having to adopt new secret identities (like they did in Byrne's FF) just so nobody can find them.



[TB - That's a pretty cool thought.]

All this stuff is pure gravy and will be a lot of fun to write.

The first big set-piece between the two teams is when Cap's guys (who still want to perform their superhero duties) attend what looks like a big accident. But when they get there what appears to be innocent people burning in a chemical plant blaze is actually black ops guys and the whole thing is a Stark-inspired trap where the other half of the super-community are lying in wait, Cap's crew get their asses kicked and half of them are hauled off to this big super-prison which gets a little more packed every day.



The whole situation is getting nuts and there's a clear war now going on between the superheroes, both equally convinced that they're doing the right thing. It all builds up to a big climax at the end of the fourth issue as Tony wakes up in bed to find Cap sitting on his chest and warning him to call off the dogs. He has to release these super-people from prison or Cap will have to take action. This is a last moment of sanity before all hell breaks loose in issue five and, since Tony believes with all his heart that they need licenses, he tells Cap to go fuck himself. Thus, the war is on and both sides are playing for keeps.

Issue five is our boldest set-piece so far as we see the super-secret place where the super-people are being banged up. It's a portal into the Negative Zone which is being used up like real-estate and home to dozens of heroes in sci-fi cells unlike anything we've ever seen before.



[TB - We should probably build on the prison we established in the Negative Zone in the FF: FOES limited series. If nothing else, it ties everything back to stuff we already have in place, and makes it all seem like a big overarching plan.]

This issue is a rollercoaster fight where Cap marshals his troops and does the most audacious raid on this place (all our guys wearing space-suits) and managing to free the bulk of them. There's been talk of some machinery recovered from Latveria after the Secret War and the SHIELD techies are building a half-finished device Doctor Doom was working on which

turns super-people into ordinary human beings. The plan is to humanize each and every one of these guys banged up in here, but Cap's raid means this is impossible and Tony is humiliated as Cap just completely outclasses him in military strategy. Issue five ends with him being berated by congress and they're telling him he's out on his ass, etc., before Tony pulls the ultimate rabbit-from-a-hat and says he has something he KNOWS can defeat these guys. Cut to literally hundreds of super-villains all wired up with Stark Tech.



These are the bad guys who have been fighting the heroes for years and they outnumber and outclass each of these good guys out there. Spidey is very uncomfortable about this, but Stark has designed tracking devices and so on to keep the guys in check. They're being watched at all times and anyone even THINKING about stepping out of line just gets zapped. The game is raised to a whole new level.

Issue six kicks off the action with the villains making short work of some of the heroes, bringing them in and banging them up. We have one scene in particular where a gang of baddies capture one of the heroes, kick the crap out of him and prepare to unmask him before a bullet tears through one of their heads. The others look around before they're all gunned down too. Huge shadow of a surprise ally picks up the hero and takes him back to base where we get a big, full-page picture of The Punisher standing here with the fallen hero in his arms.



[JQ - How about over his shoulder in the fireman's carry or in the way Frank would carry a wounded Viet Nam vet, with his gun still poised against his shoulder.]

The moment they enlisted the crooks, the moment The Punisher couldn't stay neutral. Uncomfortable alliance with Cap and crew, but it works well and we get loads of high quality action leading up to a big smack-down between Cap and Punisher.

[TB -Another thing to keep in mind: there may be characters who are in neither Cap or Tony's camps—guys who either choose to go it alone, or who play each side against the other. Just a thought.]

Joe and I came up with this great scene where some of the baddies try to come over and volunteer to come over, but both end up getting their heads blown off by The Punisher. Cap gets nuts and we get a big smack-down, but the thing that excited us is that Cap would pretty much be the guy Frank Castle always wanted to be.



The only difference is that Cap was born in a great war and Frank was born in a failure of a war and so this fight, this slug-fest between them has Punisher just taking it and not raising a hand throughout, spitting out teeth at the end and asking Cap if that's the best he can do.

[JQ - When you really look at these two characters standing side by side, they really are our Batman and Superman Cap's almost an alien being, Christ figure while Frank is the man without powers who lost his family and what they share is two wars that couldn't be more different.]

Cut to a disturbing moment where a friend of Speedball lands himself in big trouble. The first issue had Speedball on the phone to a friend who was supposed to have been involved in a team-up that fateful night. But now he's scared and wanting credibility, which is why he passed his name and address to the SRA people and hoped for a whole new career. But his name got out there and an old villain found out and now his little kid has been snatched on the way home from school.



Everything superheroes wear a mask for is articulated here as a threat is sent out and this little superhero is told that, unless he kills an innocent, his kid is getting butchered and delivered home in pieces.

Such a series threat at the very heart of the whole argument, the reason they even wear these masks, takes the argument to a whole new level and Spidey, despite liking Stark, jumps sides as they all get out there and do what they can to find this kid.

[TB -I would think that Tony would as well—just because he believes that registering heroes is the right thing to do doesn't mean he wants to see a little kid get killed. So this could seem to be a unifying moment that really isn't.]

However, they're getting nowhere and the deadline is almost up and it's only when this guy blows his own brains out (thus killing an innocent) that the kid is released. Horrible, depressing end to the arc within the story, but it's a wake-up call to many of them as they solidify their positions.



The kid is safe, but nothing can ever be the same again. The whole thing erupts into the biggest battle of the series so far as the battle-lines are drawn and we have an amazing confrontation between the two sides as they beat the shit out of each other in the heart of New York City. This is just classic Marvel Hero Versus Marvel Hero stuff and a poignant moment where Cap, as he's pummeling Iron Man, starts getting trash thrown at him. The people are behind the other side. They recognize the more sensible argument and it's only at that precise moment that Cap realizes he no longer has the faith of the people.

[TB -Cool.]

And he's horrified. He represents America and yet now finds himself representing an eccentric elite who dress up in costumes and get involved in violent situations. It's heartbreaking for him as he rallies his troops and tells them all to fall back, leaving the city to Tony's team and disappearing underground forever.



He realizes his responsibility now and it's quite simple; they either unmask or they take these masks off forever. That's the decision at the end of the issue. Unmask or disappear.

[TB - Again, cool.]

The next issue opens with the new status quo as Tony and his guys are the only game in town. Everyone is legal and some of Cap's guys have even come over to join in. Everyone has a

license and Tony's applying his brilliant mind to the superhuman situation in a way we've never seen before. This is a wonderful chance for us to create new heroes and teams, redefining all the classics as Tony essentially updates the Marvel Universe. He creates a new team called The Champions for LA and these guys could get their own book, creates some guys for the south, Midwest and for Illinois. Superhero problems erupt everywhere and he stretches his forces out from New York, massively increasing the budget he developed in his trial run of Avengers back in the Stan and Jack days.

We also have some great set-pieces like Iron Man, Giant Man and so on capturing and taking down guys like the Ghost Rider. This should be shameless; every trick in the book. It should be a fan-boy orgasm and we should love every minute of it as the new Captain Marvel, etc., get a gold standard entry into a revitalized Marvel Universe.

Cut from here to all the super-people who went undercover living their normal lives. Cap, to our surprise, is enjoying normal life more than he expected.



[TB -I don't quite buy this. I don't think Cap would either surrender or retire—especially if that's going to be the payoff at the end of the series.]

We get all the stuff we talked about where Steve Rogers hasn't really had a chance to live since he first got the super-soldier serum and we get him here as a blue collar guy just doing his own thing and rediscovering who he really is. Ben Grimm has moved to Paris with Alicia and she's doing great on the art-house circuit out there with her sculptures. But the big, dramatic thing is the Doctor Doom weapon that's being used as a kind of superhero electric chair. This is being used on Speedball, the hero who kicked this whole thing off, and we see him stripped of his superpowers on live TV and returned to society. It should be an awesome moment and one the heroes watch with a certain amount of fear.

The big finale, the last three or four issues, comes on the back of Thor's return. Like I said, every trick in the book has been established here and the appearance of the mysterious new Thor should set pulses racing, especially as we only get hints to his amazing back-story. He can't believe what's happened to the superheroes and wonders what would have happened had he been around. He was always the third point in the Tony-Cap relationship and brought a real balance to the team between the futurist and the traditionalist. But it all comes to a head as the cliff-hanger from Planet Hulk neatly cuts into our own series. We just have to be

careful here because we're hoping for 300K on this thing and Hulk will probably do around 100K so we really have to seem quite self-contained. Another thing I'd like to suggest is completely rethinking the alien attacks thing discussed at the summit. We've seen aliens attack many times and varied types of aliens will only be confusing and a turn-off for the end of a big superhero series. For a summer event, the kids want Marvel characters and the conclusion to this should be the biggest Marvel character of all. I'd really like to see the Hulk attack Earth and bring with him small, five foot versions of the Hulk called Hulk Babies who are just as powerful and dangerous, but the spawn of the Hulk after he's bedded a hundred thousand alien chicks. They should all look the same and do enormous amounts of damage when they show up with Dad. This keeps it simple, looks more visually interesting and stops us falling into Star Trek or whatever. It also seems more like a superhero comic than a sci-fi thing and I think the fans would be more into it.



[JQ - Mark, I agree and disagree. I'm not crazy about the amoeba style aliens and I think we need to keep this clean and simple. I do believe that the sight of a giant Hulk in the middle of a double page spread wearing Roman Gladiator or Centurion armour surrounded by a legion of weird aliens in similar armour that are bigger than the Hulk is a pretty moment! I would avoid making the threat too complex, keep it to simple aliens that are designed to kick our heroes' asses. The fan boy moments come in watching how our heroes get back together.

SOME SPECIFIC COMMENTS ABOUT UPCOMING ELEMENTS OF WORLD WAR HULK DELETED HERE

So, basically, I see no problem with a simple alien invasion, remember, what makes this one cool is that it has the Hulk at its front line, leading it. It's just the incident that unites the heroes. It's that unification that needs to make the fanmen pee themselves.

By the way, I would save Captain Marvel for the Hulk War. We could use him on one of two ways. Most likely word will leak that Thor will be making his appearance in MCW, and we surprise people with the last page being a very Christ like Captain Marvel. Then an issue later Thor appears. Or we can have Thor appear first and then no one will expect Captain Marvel in the following issue.]

[TB - Let me say the obvious thing here: The Hulk War doesn't belong in this story, and it's only our own greed that keeps trying to force it in. I do think that the Hulk should play a role in this story, but right now this is the point where everything disintegrates into chaos, into

two big summer crossover stories smooshed together. It's not going to be accessible, it's not even going to make sense, and I don't think we should do it. Let PLANET HULK be PLANET HULK, and let CIVIL WAR be CIVIL WAR. Let's not chase the DC dollar on this. It's a sucker's bet.]

Anyway, as discussed, the new heroes like The Champions, the New Avengers, Captain Marvel, etc., go up against Hulk and the Hulk babies and much ass is kicked. Unfortunately, it's the ass off the good guys and in true Marvel style we learn that they need to all fight together to beat the baddies. Thus, a spine-tingling Avengers Assemble moment as Cap reappears and marshals all the undercover heroes to team up with the new guys and we get the biggest, most kick-ass fight ever as the threat is contained in the last couple of issues. But it doesn't end here. The senator behind the superhero registration gets him hands on the Doom tech and prepares to eliminate every superpower in the world.

[TB - Boy, a Senator feels like too small a fish for this role. Can we make him more important or resonant somehow? Is there an existing Senator we can use that'd make sense?]



It's right here we have Cap dropped into the situation as he heroically defends his fellow heroes, climbing inside and closing the whole thing down. Huge explosion and smoke everywhere followed by the awe on the faces of the heroes he saved as we see skinny Steve Rogers lying here stripped of his powers.

It would be too crass to just end the civil war with the situation being resolved by an external threat. And that's where the little kidnapped kid storyline kicks in again. Tony tells them that this changes nothing. That the superheroes still need a license, etc., but this little kid appears and explains how his Daddy died thanks to the act and how he's lost more than even Tony lost. This counter-balances the dead kid in the first issue and has Tony and tears and everyone in tears and the whole matter gets resolved.

[TB -How do we resolve it? Where do the pieces end up at the end? And if this conflict gets as personal as it really needs to along the way, it seems like a cheat to just put everything back the way it started.]

Cut to the epilogues and we basically set up the new Marvel Universe here with Bucky taking over as the new Cap,

[TB -I'm not convinced that Bucky is the right person for this role yet. Another option might be for the new Cap to be Hawkeye, Clint Barton, now back from the dead. Bendis was talking about bringing him back in a new guise, so maybe this is the way to do that]

a new status quo for Tony (which he needs), new teams set up across America, plus the emergence of this new Thor. All the core characters get a nice revamp spinning off into their own books before we close the whole thing with Nick Fury talking to the 97lb Steve Rogers in the closing pages. All the talk of secret identities and double-lives draws to a close, neatly tying everything up as he admits that, despite everything, he's kind of excited to get his life back again.



He's heading out to discover America and rediscover himself and Nick smiles. Steve hopes he isn't being selfish and Nick says no way. "One Hell of a tour of duty you just had, soldier", he tells Steve and Steve just smiles. They salute and Steve Rogers, skinny as a rake, walks off into the sunset like all the best heroes should.

THE UPSHOT:

Winter Soldier as Cap for a year before Steve gets the call and gets revitalized for the movie. Thor, Iron Man, Hulk, etc., all get a huge shot in the arm and we create an important moment in Marvel history where, for twelve glorious issues, the heroes do what Stan and Jack made them do best: Kick the living crap out of one another.

End.

[JQ - Mark, great stuff. We should sit and talk with our editors about what characters could use a lift. Arana, Runaways and Captain Marvel being just a few.

I love using this as a platform for launching teams like The Champions, but in order for it to make sense we have to decide what makes these teams different other than geography and name. This will make your selection of members have more sense.]

[TB -The biggest problem, as I see it, is that this storyline really should hijack just about every single title we're publishing for the duration, and it's not going to be able to (nor should it, given the sheer number of books we'd be talking about.)

Also, as Jeph (Loeb) said, we can't really have a Civil War without some genuine casualties, so we'd better start thinking about that seriously—and who we'd want to kill off or mutilate in this thing. If Speedball is the best we've got, it's time to pack it in.]