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# From Aargh! to Zap!: Harvey Kurtzman's Visual History of the Comics

*Harvey Kurtzman, J. Michael Barrier*

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**Harvey Kurtzman, J. Michael Barrier : From Aargh! to Zap!: Harvey Kurtzman's Visual History of the Comics** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised From Aargh! to Zap!: Harvey Kurtzman's Visual History of the Comics:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Harvey KurtzmanBy CustomerCame in great condition. Thanks.

By Michael Barrier: This oversized book, which combines text with an abundance of illustrations, was the product of my collaboration with Kurtzman in the early nineties. Harvey had gathered material for such a book over many years-a number of comic-book artists had filled out questionnaires for him-but he had never been able to knuckle down and write it. When he was fatally ill (he died in 1992) and anxious to complete the book, I was enlisted to help him. We spent an afternoon in March 1990 talking about comics with a tape recorder running, and I combined material from that long interview with bits and pieces from other sources-articles by Kurtzman, interviews with him, miscellaneous stuff from his research files-to come up with the text. For those parts of the book for which no source material of any kind existed, I had to imagine what Harvey would have thought about a particular artist or comic book, if he had ever paid any attention to them. (He was very much a dry hole where recent superhero comic books were concerned.) Harvey reviewed everything I wrote, and revised or approved it as he saw fit. The resulting book, "by Harvey

Kurtzman with Michael Barrier," is thus in Harvey's voice, but the writing is mostly mine. An interesting book, if not the definitive history that many people hoped that Harvey would write.

From Library Journal That this is Kurtzman's history is significant; the entire book is colored by his tastes and perceptions. Kurtzman spends an inordinate amount of time on his own work: Mad magazine and the true-life war comics, both of which he created for Entertaining Comics (EC) in the 1950s; the short-lived Mad-like magazines he did after parting ways with EC; and his Little Annie Fanny strip in Playboy . Yet he is denigrating to the creators of Superman and Batman and to the underground cartoonists of the 1960s, and his look at contemporary comics tilts a bit too often toward the commercial. The illustrations are uneven--some are reproduced beautifully, others are almost illegibly fuzzy. Despite the book's size (11 15), many reproductions are very small (4 6) and hence difficult to read. Recommended only as a supplement to other comics histories; this work is neither objective, nor academic, nor complete.- Keith R.A. DeCandido, "Library Journal" Copyright 1991 Reed Business Information, Inc.