



BUSTED RIBS AND BROKEN ENGLISH

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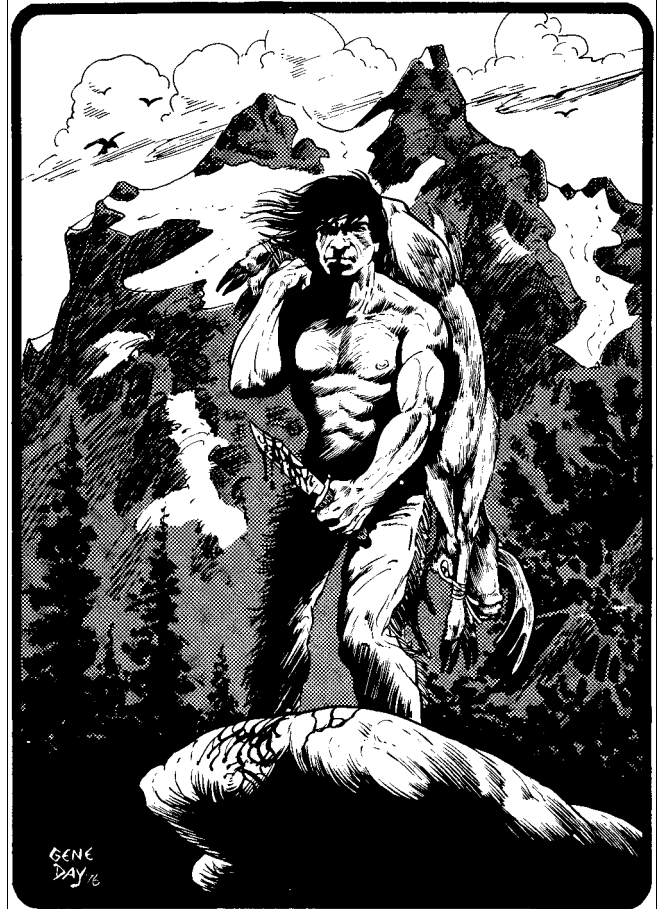
Images of Elkins

I've been preparing a detailed, page-by-page review of Rusty's *A Short Biography of Robert E. Howard* from Cross Plains Comics (and it is Rusty's bio, despite Roy Thomas getting equal billing for writing a 2 page intro). I should have posted it to the REH-fans mailing list by the time you read this. During this process, one image in particular struck me; the "Sailor Steve Costigan" drawing by Rafeal Kayanan. What struck was not the quality of the piece (which I do like), but that it was about as far from my mental picture of Sailor Steve as could be. It is a dark, brooding view, somber and menacing.

This immediately brought to mind Gene Day's "Breckinridge Elkins" drawing from *Fantasy Crosswinds* #1. I love Gene's work, and certainly admire the composition of the piece, but to me it fails completely to capture the feel of Howard's Breck. I'll reproduce it here.

So this got me thinking about the original pulp illustrations for Breck. While much of the art from *Weird Tales* which illustrated Howard stories has since been reprinted, most of his western and boxing stories had illustrations as well, and this has been very rarely reproduced. So herein I'm reproducing some of the Breckinridge Elkins art from *Action Stories*. As you can see, several artists depicted Breck in the first few stories.

The first two are essentially realistic scenes. No humor, no character.



Then we move to a style which was to recur periodically: the skinny youth with the coonskin cap. While the age and the cap are accurate, this person is far too small for Breck. At least the artist seemed to understand the humor of the stories.

Next we have a couple of pieces which (to me) finally hit the right balance. The horse in "The Road to Bear Creek" looks like it *could* be Cap'n Kidd. And "The Haunted Mountain" strikes me as the best of the bunch.



"Mountain Man"
Action Stories, March-April 1934



"A Gent From Bear Creek"
Action Stories, October 1934



"The Road to Bear Creek"
Action Stories, December 1934



"Guns of the Mountain"
Action Stories, May-June 1934



"The Haunted Mountain"
Action Stories, February 1935



"The Scalp Hunter"
Action Stories, August 1934

Too soon the end...

Yep, another pathetically short 'zine from me. All of my REH time this round was sucked up doing (gratis) proofing and text prep for Joe and Marcelo. I hope the quality of my results there will allow you to forgive my shortcomings here. Getting quality REH in print is priority #1.