

Now you see him, now you don't

Since the subject of transparency is an important topic in this issue (see page 10, *Not Everything About Transparency is Apparent*, by prepress specialist Lerrick Starr), I thought I would seek out Adobe's new Transparency Evangelist, The Invisible Man, for some comments on the subject.

He warned me ahead of time not to be disturbed by the yards of bandages wrapped around his head. Not to worry, I replied, I've seen the old Claude Rains classic at least a hundred times.

So we met at a cozy little downtown bistro to chat over lunch. I couldn't help but notice that the other patrons were taking surreptitious glances in our direction as we took our places at a table in the dimly lit rear of the establishment.

Our conversation didn't get off on the best foot when I invited him to take off his black fedora, wooly scarf and dark glasses. He refused. So, without any prelude, I got down to the bare essentials.

"Why did Adobe ask you to be its spokesman on transparency?" I began.

"Are you a complete idiot?" was his retort. "Who else would appreciate the benefits of being able to make objects transparent better than The Invisible Man?"

This wasn't going to be an easy interview. Switching tactics, I tried again.

"Okay," I continued, "in that case, given that PostScript doesn't have the ability to deal with *Illustrator's* transparency effects in its native format, can you tell me how Adobe plans to educate designers and printers on using this new set of features?"

"Tell them to read the *!%@&!# manual," he growled.

"Okay," I replied. I decided to take a more positive approach, and, adopting a deferential tone, I said, "Lidka Schuch has written a glowing review of all the new features in *Illustrator 10* (see *Big, bold and beautiful to the web and back* on page 36). Do you expect to see designers incorporating more of *Illustrator's* transparency options into their page designs?"

"Is Rumsfeld looking for bin Laden?" came the unequivocal response.

Just then the waitress brought our appetizers, which thankfully gave me a chance to reconstruct my thoughts.

After a brief hiatus, while I watched him inhale his food through the black hole in his face bandages where his mouth would logically be, I attempted to make another foray.

"What can you tell me about Adobe's software development for Windows XP, and especially Mac OS X? Except for *InDesign*—which hardly anyone is using—and *Illustrator*, and even though *After Effects 5.5* for OS X has just been released, most of the major OS X native apps still aren't available. Where's *Photoshop 7*? How about *Acrobat* and *PageMaker* and *Premiere*? Why are there no plans for a version of ATM for OS X even though other developers like DiamondSoft and Extensis are upgrading their products? And why does Adobe say it won't be developing a native PostScript driver for OS X? How can the professional creative on a Mac think about upgrading to OS X without key applications and font management and printing?" I made passing reference to Bob Connolly's plea for OS X digital video



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PUBLISHER'S NOTES

editing software before he moves to XP (see page 30, *Will Windows XP make multimedia producers switch?*).

He cocked his head to one side, and as he did this I caught a glimpse of the dark eye openings behind his glasses. After a moment, he said, "Adobe will go after sales wherever they are. If that means building products for XP, we'll do it. But if that means spending gobs of dough on a sliver of the market using OS X, don't expect that to happen fast. We have shareholders to answer to, you know."

He went back to rapaciously devouring the main course that had just been served.

Figuring I had nothing to lose by forging ahead, I carried on.

"What about Corel? Corel has released OS X versions of most of its major applications—including *PhotoPaint* and *CorelDraw* and the *procreate* suite and *Bryce*." As I listened to his teeth grinding as he chewed, I could sense that I had touched a nerve—especially as I made a casual remark about the forthcoming *Bryce 5* essay by Ron Giddings in the December issue (page 16, *Where is Kai Krause?*).

"You're all Canadians. What do you know?," he grunted almost incoherently.

"But even Microsoft has *Microsoft Office* for OS X! Yet if you read the 'Adobe software and Mac OS X' section on the Adobe website, all you find are long lists of potential problems for using indispensable applications like *Acrobat* and *Photoshop* with OS X. Do the Corel and Microsoft software engineers know more than Adobe's developers? And speaking of Canadians, why did the Adobe Canada operations manager and marketing manager just get fired? Does this mean that in the Adobe universe Canada reverts back to being just another state—kind of like North Dakota or Nebraska, only bigger?"

I watched him carefully finish off the last morsels on his plate and sit back in his chair. Slowly he removed his fedora, his glasses and his scarf and began unwinding the bandaging around his head. Although I wasn't about to take my eyes off him, I could tell that other diners were starting to notice. As the last of his wrappings fell away to reveal empty space where his head should be, I heard a chorus of gasps escape throughout the room. He stood up, and in a series of quick motions, his clothes began falling to the floor until there was nothing but vacant air where a human form had once been.

"You Canadians don't know your eh from a hole in the ground!" he rasped. "And what's so bad about being the Microsoft of the graphics industry?"

It wasn't too difficult for me to plot his exit route out of the restaurant, clearly demarcated by the row of startled waiters being hipchecked into the laps of their customers. As he took his leave, I called after him, "Hey! You're not Bruce Chizen, are you?"

But The Invisible Man had vanished into the chilly autumn breezes like a transparent *Illustrator* layer in a PostScript 3 RIP.

No wonder he prefers to stay in California, I thought. 🍷

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