

## Zap #4 true 1st printing question

### McDope

I need some advice....I recently picked up what was supposed to be a 1st printing Zap #4 with the heavier stock. What I received is a thin stock...possibly a 2nd or 3rd printing IMO. I have a true 1st printing Zap #3 with the heavier stock.... you can see and feel the difference. Am I correct in assuming that the Zap #4 1st printings should at least be equal to my Zap #3 1st with the heavier stock.....as far as being similar? Thanks for any advice on this as I'm trying to return it and I want to make sure I am correct before doing so.

### 50Cent

The 1st printing of #4 did not have heavier stock covers, you have to go simply by staple placement.

### McDope

Thanks 50, I was under the impression that the Zap 4's had a heavier stock. What should one look for as far as staple placement goes?

### 50Cent

I believe the top staple should be about 2 1/3" from the top.

### bdcues

top staple 2 5/16" from the top on 1st and top staple 2 11/16" on 2nds for both #3 and #4.

### oldmilwaukee6er

I have heard from other collectors that supposedly there is a slightly heavier cover stock, but that the difference is just not as stark as with #3 (or perhaps #2, right?). I have never had one slabbed with CGC, so i don't know their criteria.

I once compared a known donahue 2nd with a suspected donahue 1st (with the donahue staple placement) & there MAY have been slight difference...but it was very very subtle that i don't really trust it. Once, in Athens GA, I pulled out & compared about 4 50c copies side by side & bought the one I thought to be slightly stiffer, slightly more dull green (sometimes there seems to be a way in which the ink absorbs in scans, but that would be like an n=3 scenario). The staple ended up being like  $<1\frac{5}{16}$ , perhaps an anomaly. Basically, I save all my Zap #4s right now except a couple I bought as 2nds from donahue that had the 11/16 placement & the cover stocks were typical comic book & very pliable & glossy.

### McDope

The 2 copies I checked both measure in at 2 2/16 from the top of the comic to the staple. I'm using a fairly accurate commercial art ruler.... I think?

It sort of lands between the 2/16 & 3/16.....very very close....2 1/3 would work for me. 5/16 and 11/16 are not adding up on mine. I'll go with 50 cent please. ;)

### bdcues

$2/16 = 1/8$ .  $3/16 = 25\%$  less than  $1/4$ .  $5/16$  is  $1/16$  more than  $1/3$ . So,  $5/16$  is closer to  $1/3$  than either  $2/16$  or  $3/16$  by about 50%. lol

### **bdcues**

Lets make it easier  $2/16$  or  $1/8 = .125$

$3/16 = .1875$

$5/16 = .3125$

$1/3\text{rd} = .3333$

So,  $5/16$  is about .020 or 20 thousands of an inch less then  $1/3$ "

I have a #4 that the top staple is 1.5" and one that is  $1\&13/16$ " from the top. Any ideas on what print they would be? I got the  $5/16$ " &  $11/16$ " numbers from a longtime underground collector/book store owner.

### **McDope**

I hear you loud and clear. I too came to this conclusion the more I looked at it. It's tricky stuff for sure. I still don't know what I have. I really was under the impression that there was a heavier stock like the Zap #3's....if I had known that Zap #4 was a staple placement issue I would not have picked this up....It was advertised very confidently as a 1st with the heavier stock. Heavy stock triggered a response from me as I do have a Zap #3 with the heavier stock and in most of the comic book references I have, state that there is a heavier stock on 1st printings of the Zap #4's....Kennedy's, Fogels'...etc. Like oldmilwaukee I'll hold onto them all for now.

### **over40artist**

I have 12 Zap #4s with 50-cent covers and no copyright (so, all are first or second printings) and there are 6 noticeably different staple placements:

1  $1/8$

1  $1/2$

1  $5/8$

2  $3/16$

2  $1/3$  (one of which is a Donahue 1st)

2  $11/16$

The covers of all the books measure .0037 to .0040 inches thick. The ones with  $2\ 1/3$  inch staple placement measured .0040, but so did several of the others (including  $2\ 11/16$ ). I know Donahue swears by staple placement, but I'm afraid I just don't trust it. It's kind of hard to believe that the first print staple placement was ALWAYS  $2\ 1/3$  inches but that the second print had at least 5 different staple placements from  $1\ 1/8$  to  $2\ 11/16$  inches.

The stiffness of the paper can be very misleading. 2 cover stocks can be the same thickness yet one can be noticeably stiffer (could be grain direction or the brand of paper).

The cover thickness of Zap #3 was easily measurable, but not for #4. Frankly, I think we should do away with the first print designation for Zap #4 and call any 50 cent cover with no copyright a 1st/2nd print. We already do that with at least a dozen comix, including Tuff Shit, Insect Fear #2 and Dr. Atomic #2. Doing the same with Zap #4 would hurt the value of "true" first printing designations a little bit, but it would eliminate a whole lot of doubt in underground collectors' minds.

## **McDope**

As far as staple placement, I totally agree with the inaccuracies of it all. I worked in the printing business for 8 years and they have a few black and white copiers that could staple a book for you with consistency but basically those are new and I always used a manual saddle stapler which allows for use of guides but one can also sit and staple thousands of books without using the guides. They are there if one needs them but typically one gets use to placement without using the guides which would lead to inconsistent staple placement.

Just my 2 cents.

## **over40artist**

*[quote=McDope I have a true 1st printing Zap #3 with the heavier stock....you can see and feel the difference. Am I correct in assuming that the Zap #4 1st printings should at least be equal to my Zap #3 1st with the heavier stock....as far as being similar?]*

My 1st prints of Zap #3 measure about .0060 inches, considerably thicker than the Zap #4 "first."

## **bdcues**

For my part, I would rather there was a 1st print and a 2nd print and not 1st/2nd. For one thing, depending on where you look, a 1st print is worth about 3 times what a 2nd print is. Second, as with Zap #1 4th prints, when you're worried about making a 5th print a true 4th because a 4th print 50 cent does not exist, why would you then be willing to say there is no true 1st print #4 just because, once again, the guides are not totally accurate? Third is, you're making a wiki to show what's really going on, why not make it as accurate and as full of the best information you can instead of making the info less accurate? Make it right, not easy.

## **mrbillscmix**

That's confusing as hell. I grabbed 6 Zap #4s, no copyright, and have staple placement all over the place like over40 has.

1 3/16 = 2 copies  
1 1/2 = 1 copy  
1 5/8 = 1 copy  
2 11/16 = 2 copies

So, from what I grasp here, all these copies are 2nd prints. The only true 1st print has the top staple at 2 5/16. I know I don't have any Zap 4s with a real heavy cover. All of them are very close. Is Fogel willing to change the guide to show that staple placement, not cover stock weight, is the true difference in printings? I know it's too late for the upcoming book but if he produced another book, would it be in there?

## **over40artist**

*[quote=bdcues For my part, I would rather there was a 1st print and a 2nd print and not 1st/2nd ... Make it right, not easy.]*

I don't disagree with your sentiment, bdcues. I even think it is possible that the 1st print always had the same staple placement while the 2nd print has staple

placements all over the map. But it seems clear to me that cover stock thickness is NOT a factor in determining print edition. Without some other tell, that only leaves staple placement as a determining factor. It just makes me a bit uncomfortable to proclaim that 2 5/16 is a first print but 2 3/16 is a second print.

If the goal really is to make it right, maybe we need to approach it with more logic and let go of some beliefs that, on the surface, just don't seem logical.

### **bdcues**

Maybe someone needs to pry more info out of Donahue? Particularly, why are there so many staple placements and why so many different paper thicknesses? Were there more than 2 printings? Was the second printing stapled by more than one person, using more than one type of stapler? Who helped? Was anyone not all fucked up while doing it and still has half a chance of remembering any details??? I emailed Don about 3 weeks ago about something else and still have had no reply. I will try again about this tomorrow.

### **50Cent**

Don didn't actually print these printings, so I don't think he will have more info. Your assumption that there was more than 2 50-cent printings is correct, there was a lot more (probably about a half dozen or more would be my guess). This would explain your questions.

I think we should stick with what we know for now, that the 1st print has a 2 5/16" (about 2 1/3") top staple placement, give a take a small fraction. The other 50-cent printings should be grouped together into a 2nd-? printing and then the 50-cent printing with the copyright I found a few months ago as the 3rd printing, then .75, etc.

### **50Cent**

Here's a little more info. on what I believe the 1st prints are:

Total length of comic - 9.75", upper staple 2.37" from top, lower staple 2.37" from the bottom, 4.0" in between staples.

Does any/everyone else's 1st print copies comply?

### **over40artist**

Zap Comix was long gone from Apex Novelties by the time #4 was printed by Print Mint, so Don's viewpoint on this issue would be "limited" by his general expertise of underground comics printed in that era (which is considerable).

50c, I will try to check on my copies soon regarding the staple placements.

### **McDope**

How does CGC grade Zap #4's? I tried to check their site as I thought at one time you could view graded comix, but I can't seem to find that now. I'm sure there are some Zap #4 1st printings out there graded by CGC.

### **bdcues**

Seems that now you have to sign up and pay at CGC to see the census now. Since I just got the only 1st prints I currently have from 50cent I will assume his

measurements are correct for the bottom staple placement. If there is no way to find out which staple placements come after the 2&11/16" then his idea to group them makes some sense.

### **bdcues**

I see the new Fogel supplement still lists 1st print as heavy stock paper, 2nd as lighter paper and 3rd with copyright.'

### **50Cent**

*[quote=bdcues I see the new Fogel supplement still lists 1st print as heavy stock paper, 2nd as lighter paper and 3rd with copyright.]*

You got a copy of the Supplement? This is news. You don't have to pay for the CGC census, but you do have to register. I checked the census last week.

### **bdcues**

I got an online abbreviated version that happens to show Zap the last time I asked Dan when it was coming out.

### **over40artist**

The real question is; what equipment did Print Mint use to bind and staple the early printings of Zap #4? If they used standard commercial stitching machines, then it would be easy to conclude that the staples always appear in the same place on the first printing. That would also mean that 50c might be right about there being another 4 or 5 printings between the traditional 1st and 3rd printings.

Before I agree with 50c, I have to say that somehow it still seems nuts that there would be so many printings with a 50 cent cover. Especially given the trouble that Zap #4 got into with obscenity trials: when Don Schenker hid 30,000 copies in his house for a year, I doubt that his printing company was printing tens of thousands more copies.

Of course, after the legal smoke cleared (near the end of 1970), the publicity helped Zap #4 sell like hotcakes. But did the Print Mint really need 5 more printings to satisfy market demand in the next two years? That seems rather short-sighted for the underground publisher with the most conventional business savvy. It also seems strange that Zap #4 would go through 6 printings or more before somebody thought of putting the copyright in the indicia.

But back to the staples: After studying a few Print Mint comics that I own multiple copies of, I am almost certain that the Print Mint was using a commercial-grade stitching machine, which would align the bound copies and staple them in the same place (more or less) every time:

*Bent* (1st print): 4 copies, all with the same staple placement. One second print copy with a very different staple placement.

*Insect Fear #1* (only printing): 4 copies, all with the same staple placement.

*Kukawy Comics* (only printing): 3 copies, all with the same staple placement.

*Lemme Outa Here* (only printing): 3 copies, all with the same staple placement.

It would appear, at least for the Print Mint, that staple placement would be a reliable method of determining print edition. But I must add that the examples I cited above did include minor shifts in placement, up to 1/16 inch or even a hair more.

Which brings us back to Zap #4. If staple placement is the only way to determine print edition with Zap #4, but the Print Mint stapling had a variance as much as 1/16th of an inch or more, can we be sure that 2 3/16 and 2 5/16 placements weren't both from the first printing? That's a 1/8 inch difference, but it does seem plausible that they could come from the same binding operation. If you look at MrBillsComix measurements and compare them to mine, they all align pretty well. The question is whether the 1 1/2 inch and the 1 5/8 inch placements are actually from the same printing, which would mean the 2 3/16 and the 2 5/16 could also be from the same printing.

Bottom line, without contradictory evidence, I have to agree with 50c that there may have been as many as 5 (or as few as 3) printings between the traditional 1st and 3rd printings of Zap #4.

It could also mean that anything within 1/16th of an inch of 2 1/4 inches is a first printing.

### **50Cent**

I believe that someone (Donahue?) told me once that these earlier comix from Print Mint was actually sent out to have the guts printed elsewhere and the covers were printed by Print Mint, the question we should get answered is were these then bound at the Print Mint or were the covers shipped to the place that printed the guts and bound by them? My reference to so many printings comes from the JK guide, see for example Zap Comix #4. "300,000 copies with 13 printing by April 1982" (and by 1982 there was only the .50, .75, and \$1.00 cover prices printed). Deductive reasoning is how I came up with my belief, also makes me think the earlier printings had smaller print runs and therefore more printings than the higher cover price printings later on.

### **over40artist**

Here's the thing, 50c: If Print Mint did send out the guts to be printed elsewhere, it was no doubt sent out to a larger printer than themselves, which almost guarantees that the bindery operation was done on "modern" machines that would staple the comic consistently.

Cover prices of the Zap Comix run also give us a hint about what happened when. Just look at the cover prices of the first printings of subsequent Zap issues. According to Kennedy, Zap #4 was first printed by Print Mint in July, 1969, with a 50-cent cover price. The first printings of Zap #5 (May, 1970), Zap #6 (Jan. 1973), and Zap #7 (March, 1974) were all 50-cent covers. It wasn't until Zap #8 (Aug. 1975) that the cover price moved to 75 cents.

That means that the traditional 4th print of Zap #4 with the 75-cent cover probably wasn't printed until 1975, five years after the first print. The traditional 4th print might actually be the 7th, 8th or 9th print, which would mean Print Mint printed at least six 50-cent-cover printings between 1970 and 1975. Given the time frame,

that actually seems rather plausible (about once-a-year printings).

Amazingly, the details in the Kennedy guide actually provide *too little information* to determine what really happened. Without better documentation from someone who was inside the Print Mint company (and remembers a ton of obscure details), it is very difficult to say for sure how many 50-cent printings happened in the early '70s.

One of the biggest questions I still have: Who is the expert who determined that the 2 5/16 inches staple placement is the true first print? And how do they know for sure that the 2 3/16 inches staple placement is not from the true first print?

### **50Cent**

I believe Donahue stated that the 1st print is the 2 5/16". He probably knows this from either being around this when it happened and having copies of them from this time or from the Sidebottom's stock he purchased that probably have multiple copies of the first or early editions. Your info. about the years is basically what I figured when I was doing my research on the printings of Zap Comix #2, makes sense. If you look into the earliest printings of Zap Comix #0 and 1 you'll see the printings came fast and furious with some printings only a couple months apart.

All my copies I've got seem to show that I have many with the same staple placement for the 1st print as well as multiple copies of probable later .50 cent prints that don't have the same staple placements.

### **50Cent**

The heavy cover stock info. comes from the Kennedy guide, but I haven't ever seen anyone say they have a #4 that has a definite HEAVY cover stock (70#) like the #3 and #2 first prints. Think it was erroneous info.

### **mrbillscmix**

It seems really strange to me that they went through 5-6 printings of the 50 cent cover (with no copyright yet and then ran off another printing with copyright) and nobody raised the price?!?! I would have thought if the book was selling that quickly, the price would jump up a dime. Wasn't it the 4th printing before the price went up? Where did the info about the heavy cover stock for Zap #4 come from? Has anyone ever seen one?

### **over40artist**

*[quote=mrbillscmix It seems really strange to me that they went through 5-6 printings of the 50 cent cover (with no copyright yet and then ran off another printing with copyright) and nobody raised the price?!?! I would have thought if the book was selling that quickly, the price would jump up a dime. Wasn't it the 4th printing before the price went up? Where did the info about the heavy cover stock for Zap#4 come from? Has anyone ever seen one?]*

Well, there were plenty of other UG comics that went through several printings around that time without raising the price from 50 cents:

Young Lust #1: 6 printings at 50 cents.

Freak Brothers #1: 10 printings at 50 cents.

Home Grown Funnies: 11 printings at 50 cents.

Motor City Comics #1: 5 printings at 50 cents.  
Mr. Natural #1: 6 printings at 50 cents. Etc., etc.

Bear in mind, 50 cents was really an outrageous price for a comic book back in the early '70s, when mainstream comics were selling for 15 cents. After prices rose from 25 and 35 cents for the earliest undergrounds, the 50 cent cover was pretty much the standard until the mid-'70s, when prices crept up to 60 cents and quickly to 75 cents.

The heavy cover myth probably began with Kennedy's guide, since he listed it that way. But it wasn't the only error he had on Zap #4. He stated there were "an unknown number of printings and copies prior to the Print Mint's first printing in July, 1969." There weren't any. Print Mint was the only printer of the early editions of Zap #4 before Last Gasp took over for more recent editions.

None of my dozen 50-cent printings of Zap #4 has anywhere near as heavy a cover stock as the first printing of Zap #3.

**oldmilwaukee6er**  
amazing discussions!

**mrbillscmix**

That's interesting. Thanks for that info, over40... I knew 50 cents was a high price at that time for a book... I swore that I wouldn't buy new comics if they went to 35 cents back then. That oath didn't last long. I wonder how many got tagged with that damn sticker they put over the original price tag? I wasn't aware that there were that many of the same issue number on some of those other books without a price change. Don must have pulled aside that first print of Zap #4 to be sure of the staple placement. If all those other staple placements are different printings, I'm sure that may be one of the unsolved mysteries that even Leonard Nimoy can't solve.