I don’t know of any great painting that didn’t start with what they called thumbnail sketches. Wash drawings. Preliminaries. They’re always smaller, and sometimes they’re on the side of the canvas; that’s really the proper way to do it.
These are not so much sketches as drawings that appear in the finished piece, in a style so different from the rest of the story that I felt it was important to do. But without seeing the whole story, it’s hard to imagine how they fit into it.

They fit as kind of vignettes. There’s a technique that’s been used in illustration where, essentially, you find old photographs, trace them and turn them into illustrations, then make a kind of montage out of them to make a symbolic point.

The idea was to draw Indian scenes that weren’t specific, but told the story; in effect, to give a background to the story being told. I made a design and chose photographs that would fit, did a series of drawings based on or over the photographs, then pasted them up as a design. I took pieces off, put pieces back on, more or less like Bob Peak used to work, in order to create designs I was happy with.

It was more of an exercise in tracing photographs than an illustration; most of "Holocaust" was. The whole story was like little vignettes of reference this, photograph that, and then a little chance to draw. It was an exercise in patience and research.
There are people who will say, of the things that they like about my work, they like the intensity of the closeups and the camera angles and the emotion of the things. And I think I got that from doing a syndicated strip; I certainly got that from watching movies.

Early in my career as a syndicated strip artist, I learned how to take a conversation and turn it into a thing to be read by the nature of the drawing of the people talking. You want people to read the panel that is a conversation, and if there’s nothing about it that’s interesting, nothing about it that carries the reader through, then it’s not going to be read, and the story won’t be followed.

This is also true in comic books. So what you do as an artist, even though there’s nothing really going on in the panels except talking heads, is to make those heads monolithic, imposing, and truly interesting to look at, so that you want to read what they say. It’s not the easiest thing in the world to do.

Just as in a movie, when you want a conversation to be listened to between two actors, you either have to get an incredibly good cameraman or incredibly good actors, or both. In order for the audience to pay attention to the conversation. There are certain directors who will give you that camera angle that will add so much to the emotion of the moment. That’s part of what I try to do in the comic book work that I
Various things enter into a drawing as you move it along in its stages, some of them subtle, some a matter of opinion, some a matter of passion. How much shading can you afford to put on before you actually lose the idea of the drawing? How far to go? Once you lay it down, you can sit back and say, “Have I gone too far? Can I go further?” And that’s where the sketch really helps you. It allows you to think more.

This is not even a good drawing—I wish I had done it better. A sketch isn’t perfect—it isn’t intended to be. It’s an artist’s thinking, good, bad or indifferent. I think this is a very exciting failure.
W're all at different stages of the evolutionary process of "the punch." We're either out floundering, trying to find a new way, or we're redoing Gil Kane's old work—he's done all the punches you can do. Since there's not much left for the rest of us to pick up, it becomes interesting, then, to find different ways to do punches. I've experimented a lot with the punch you never actually see. I enjoy coming up with a new punch, a new approach to an action you typically see.

This was kind of an experimental drawing. I was looking to make an action sequence, looking to bundle up a figure and make it bulky like a block, and put everything inside of the figure. Normally if you do a blow, you have the fist or kick or whatever go outside of the figure and stretch it. I thought, "That's the way everybody does it. I wonder if it's possible to use dimensionality?" I had the thing come toward us, and impact the blocky figure within itself, and not allow anything to come out, and still get across power. To some extent, the sketch is more successful than the finished piece. The blockiness is there more in the sketch than it is in the finished piece.