

cereal:geek[®]

animation of the eighties



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editorial

Welcome to issue three of **cereal:geek**, which according to this magazine's quarterly status should've had a cover date that read: third quarter 2007!

As some of you may know my original plan was to publish issues three and four before the end of 2007, but this proved to be a financial impossibility, although a bulk of the work had already been completed. Thus what you hold in your hands is the first issue in the first quarter of 2008! My aim this year is to (of course) publish four issues. I can assure you all that issue four will be out sooner than expected...

It is incredibly hard maintaining a good balance of eighties cartoons when making this magazine. Now I love pretty much every eighties cartoon, but being a fan of *He-Man* and *She-Ra* it is incredibly hard for me not to have the magazine revolve around them. So I balance out the magazine with the other heavy hitters (*Transformers*) and the not-so-heavy hitters (*Galaxy High School*). However, one thing I notice when looking back over the previous two issues has been brought up by many an email: Why the lack of *G.I. Joe* in **cereal:geek**?

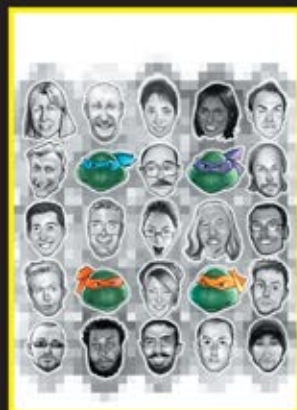
Let me explain. *G.I. Joe* never really made it big over here in the United Kingdom. The toys (as *Action Force*) were a hit, but only a few episodes of *G.I. Joe* (again, as *Action Force*) were released straight to home video. As a result the series went pretty much undetected over here. But don't get me wrong, I know how popular the animated series was overseas! I guess what I'm trying to assure you all is that you'll see more *G.I. Joe* from now on (actually issue four I can confirm will feature articles, illustrations, AND storyboards).

While I'm at it, I just want to thank all those who give feedback about the magazine. You see? I do pay attention!

This issue's theme is **evolution**, discussing how certain shows and characters evolved over the course of a series. A prime example is *The Real Ghostbusters*; an animated series that started life as a wonderful extension of the feature film, but by the seventh season had lost much of what had made it such a hit. Of course there's also the *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* series, which by its tenth season was still enjoying the same success as its first season. Speaking of the *Ninja Turtles* let me address the cover. As this issue's theme discusses evolution, I thought it would be appropriate to have the "evolved" *Ninja Turtles* amongst the humans. And yes, it's slightly self-indulgent, as the people on the cover are people I know...

See you in issue four!

James "Busta Toons" Eatock



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If you have any **comments**, or if you would like to **contribute** the next issue please send an email to:

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VOICE ACTOR SPOTLIGHT

LINDA GARY



One of the truly indispensable mainstays of Filmation series in particular, Linda Gary's voice-acting career began in the 1970s, where early work included voice-only roles in various live-action movies.

Towards the end of the decade however, was Linda's first work for Filmation in 1978, where she portrayed the title character in Filmation's copyright-straining super-hero series *Webwoman*, part of the *Tarzan/Batman* and the *Super 7* assortment of shows. Created partly to capitalize on the success of Marvel Comics' *Spider-Man*, it would prove to be a harbinger of Linda's future voice roles. The first of these came in 1981, where Linda played the famous part of Peter Parker's Aunt May, in Marvel Productions' debut series, simply entitled *Spider-Man*. It was in this series that Linda really started showing off her incredible range of female voices, by turning in a memorable and convincing performance as Spider-Man's aged aunt, with the episode "Arsenic and Aunt May" affording her the opportunity of a rather touching performance for an early 80s series. Although like the majority of the series' cast, she would not graduate to NBC's *Spider-Man* and *His Amazing Friends*, her performance in this early *Spider-Man* series would eventually lead to her participation in a later Marvel Comics-based animated series...

1981 also saw Linda returning to Filmation to play Mara, one of the resourceful companions of the titular hero Blackstar. In keeping with the smaller number of voice actors on many shows of the time, Linda's involvement in *Blackstar* was not limited to playing Mara, and she could be heard in many different roles spread throughout the series. After also playing in Hanna-Barbera's *Smurfs* as Dame Barbara, Linda's next participation in a Filmation series would prove to be by far her most memorable.

In 1983's *He-Man and the Masters of the Universe*, Linda played the regular characters Evil-Lyn, the Sorceress, and Teela, Captain of the Royal Guard and daughter of fellow regular Man-at-Arms. Affording her the opportunity of yet more effective and emotive voice-acting, it was only five episodes into the series that the true origins of Teela

were revealed to the audience, and Linda's performances as both Teela and the Sorceress were more than up to the task at conveying the incredibly bittersweet events of "Teela's Quest", a true highlight of the entire series. As well as providing wonderfully different and appropriate voices for both the heroic Teela and elegant Sorceress, Linda's performance as Evil-Lyn also made the character easily the most memorable villain of the series aside from understandably Skeletor himself, with the two-hander between Teela and Evil-Lyn in "The Witch and The Warrior", being another undeniable series highlight. Not only limiting herself to these regular roles, Linda also played a variety of other parts throughout the series, most notably various boys seen in the show. Her success on *He-Man* assured her more new parts to play in the follow-up series, 1985's *She-Ra Princess of Power*, and so it was that Linda played the dynamically-opposed parts of the idealistic Glimmer of the Great Rebellion, as well as the unspeakably evil Shadow Weaver of the Horde, the latter having a particularly fitting nightmarish voice for a female animated character.

During this affluent time for syndicated animation, Linda's voice could also be heard in fellow syndicated series, such as *The Transformers*. Other contemporary series featuring Linda included Filmation's *Ghostbusters* and DiC's *The Real Ghostbusters*, as well as Disney's *DuckTales* and, at the beginning of the 1990s, *TaleSpin*.

Even with Filmation's closure by this point, Linda's animation roles were not abated, and she even found herself cast in the voice-only role as God in none other than *Pink Panther* director Blake Edwards' *Switch* in 1991. Other 1990s series Linda worked on included *Darkwing Duck*, *The Little Mermaid*, *The Pirates of Dark Water* and *Swat Kats*. The true litmus test of her abilities as a voice actor was her being cast in 1992's *Batman: The Animated Series*, well-noted for its attention to detail on virtually every aspect of its production. Here, Linda's most notable role was as Dr. Nora Crest, the psychiatrist who ultimately proves powerless to stop the creation of the villain Two-Face.

Not long afterwards, Linda was cast as a regular in another comicbook-based series, 1994's *Spider-Man: The Animated Series*, once again playing Peter Parker's Aunt May, although this time being able to emote much more effectively in the 1990s' more mature climate for action animation. Linda would play Aunt May from the series' beginning up to partway through the series, when she sadly had to withdraw from acting in the series, despite producer John Semper's best efforts to make sure she could be paid for the following season's work no matter how small the line, due to her contracting cancer. Linda Gary sadly died in October 1995, but she leaves behind a vastly entertaining body of work, and after having been in the wilderness for far too long, her unforgettable performances in *He-Man* and *She-Ra* are now entertaining a new generation of audiences.

WHY I DISLIKE...



by **Tristan Huw Jones**

When someone says "Ghostbusters", what does it bring to mind? Slimer? The Marshmallow Man? A gorilla named Tracy? If you're in the extreme minority that does link primates to paranormal pests, chances are you're not going to like the next few hundred words (there's a great article after this one, so jump forward to that!).

I'm sure most of you reading this are aware of the reason the animated spin-off of Ivan Reitman's classic film *Ghostbusters* is called *The Real Ghostbusters*, so I won't go into the particulars here. Let's just say it was a move to trump garbage like this: Filmation's *Ghostbusters*.

Filmation have always been a bit hit and miss with me. I, like most of the readers and writers of the magazine you currently hold, grew up with *Masters of the Universe*, *She-Ra* and *Bravestarr*, but I couldn't really care less about *Fat Albert*, *Blackstar* or *Gilligan's Planet*. They just weren't that interesting to me and the animation didn't appeal at all. Adding to this problem was the fact that there were so many animated shows that had such superior animation, stories and most importantly, characters, that these shows didn't stand a chance. *Ghostbusters* was another story all together. Even I knew at that young age that Filmation's *Ghostbusters* was a stupid move. Why release a show that has nothing to do with the blockbuster movie of the same name, that already has a successful animated show of its own? At the time, I certainly knew nothing about the live-action TV show it was based on (which had debuted on American television nearly ten years before the animated series kicked off), and I doubt many other kids of the eighties did either. Besides simply existing and attempting to compete against *The Real Ghostbusters*, Filmation's *Ghostbusters* (or as they touted them "The ORIGINAL Ghostbusters") committed a number of other sins that thankfully came to a sudden end after its one year lifespan.

Visually, Filmation's *Ghostbusters* left a lot to be

desired. A LOT. The biggest test of any animated series; failed from the word go. Filmation were notorious for reusing footage over and over again, and while it became a staple of some of their shows, such as He-Man's transformation sequence, the long-winded "gearing-up" sequence in *Ghostbusters* chewed up a ridiculous amount of time and was so completely unnecessary. When the Real Ghostbusters got a call to a job, they didn't waste any time, they suited up, threw on their proton packs and sped off in the car. Filmation's *Ghostbusters* dawdled about on some kind of interdimensional elevator made of bones, before being picked up by a gigantic hand and thrown into a massive spider-web (which seemed to exist solely to burn the clothes from their bodies). Then they'd kick back for a while on a seemingly endless conveyer belt (again, made of bones) where some kind of bizarre bio-mechanical machine would dress them in their uniforms (which were more suited for big game hunting in the heart of Africa) and then drop them down a slide (more bones) where they would land on a fold-out bed (if that damned dirty ape were there to ready it for them) and bounce down yet another chute to land in their cantankerous "Ghost Buggy", which always seemed to cough and sputter and go into some kind of bizarre spasm that would not only chew more time, but would indicate to me that it was probably time to reassess whether or not a possessed vintage car might be in need of replacement. It was such a needless waste of time and it happened over, and over, and over again. Even *He-Man* started skimping on the transformation sequences after a while!

The animation itself looked and felt like something from a bygone era. It was comparable to something from the seventies (at least in terms of American animation standards). The whole design and style of animation just could not compete with the visual excellence of other shows of the time, and it certainly didn't hold a candle to its main competition, even when it went through that "love it or hate it" Slimer period.

Perhaps the greatest things about most cartoons of the eighties were the villains. *The Real Ghostbusters* was great in that it had such a versatile rogues gallery. Every episode featured a new and interesting villain, with a couple coming back every now and then for a revenge bout, and the great thing about that happening was that when a demon did decide to come back, it had seemed as though he or she had learnt a thing or two since their last encounter and used it against them. Filmation's *Ghostbusters* fell into that unfortunate category of having a pretty lackluster cast of villains. Prime Evil suffered from "Skeletor syndrome", in that he was essentially the only villain, and would use the same group of idiots to do his dirty work, occasionally bringing in outside help. Only he was nowhere near as insidious as Skeletor and certainly nowhere near as interesting visually. He was a pretty boring looking character and got real old, real quick. Actually, looking back at these bad guys, hardly any of them were actual ghosts!

Ultimately, the biggest problem with Filmation's *Ghostbusters* was its complete lack of originality. Sure, *The Real Ghostbusters* was based on a movie, but at least every episode was something new - it took the characters established in the movie and pushed them into new areas, pitted them against new creatures and situations and involved a wonderful amount of character development. Filmation seemed to take bits and pieces from everywhere to create a patchwork monstrosity of a cartoon that failed to work on just about every level. Refreshed and dated animation, generic protagonists, annoying little sidekicks, a talking animal pal, a talking car (something that Hanna-Barbara had flogged to death by this point), and a substandard array of cut-out villains who were anything but threatening.

Actually, now that I think about it, the lack of originality isn't the biggest problem. The biggest problem was the fact that they called this show *Ghostbusters*. I probably could have tolerated this show to some degree (although the aforementioned traits would probably still have bugged me) had it been called something else. Watching it as a kid, I looked for anything to potentially bridge this atrocity to the film and cartoon series I held so dearly, but there was nothing. That, my friends, along with my earlier gripes, is why I don't like Filmation's *Ghostbusters*, and though I tried to give them a second chance, watching them again for the sake of this article was a painful, painful experience.



illustration by **Sean Hartter** - colors by **James Eatock**

WHO WILL WIN?!

Illustration by Franchesco! - colors by Nathan Baertsch

VANESSA WARFIELD
VS
JANINE MELNITZ





JANINE WINS!

by Martin Smith

"I'm sorry ladies, but we've double booked your appointments." Simple, yet tragic words, uttered nervously by the receptionist of Loving Locks Hair Salon to Vanessa Warfield, terrorist-for-hire, and Janine Melnitz, secretary and personal aide to the Ghostbusters. Wisely, she backed away as the two women faced each other. "Thief!" cried Janine. "Harlot!" screamed Vanessa.

Vanessa lunged at Janine; her hands tightening around the secretary's neck fiercely. Struggling to free herself, Janine raked her sharp, red nails across her assailant's face. As she fell to the ground, Vanessa rolled away from Janine, pulling out a small smoke grenade and throwing it towards her opponent. The smoke made Janine's throat burn and her eyes sting.

Suddenly, a beam of energy snapped through the smoke cloud towards her. Janine nimbly dived to the floor, taking shelter against a sink. Quickly, she reached into her own handbag and produced a small whistle. She blew into it silently. A babbling blur of green ectoplasm rushed into the salon. Instinctively coming to his friend's aide, Slimer flew straight at Vanessa's head, covering her Whip mask in slime. Recoiling in revulsion, Vanessa tried to fire off another shot, but the green goop had blocked the firing hole. She screamed as the mask backfired, issuing smoke and sparks from its vents, before she fell over unconscious.

"Well, I guess she'll be needing a wigmaker, not a hair dresser now," Janine quipped as she stood up and dusted herself down.

VANESSA WINS!

by James Eatock

When a purple Nissan and a pink Volkswagen collided at a red stop sign, each driven by female redheads, both drivers inevitably saw red!

Vanessa wasted no time in putting on her Whip mask, as her well-documented anger built. As Janine exited her car she found her feet bound with an energy lasso and subsequently fell to the ground.

Staring up at her opponent Janine warned, "Here's what we learnt on the streets of Brooklyn!" Janine reached for her grocery bag and began to throw a variety of items at Vanessa. However the items were effortlessly repelled as Vanessa activated her mask.

In a desperate last effort Janine tossed her clipboard at Vanessa, knocking her mask off. Thinking her opponent defeated Janine got back in her vehicle. Crawling back to her car, Vanessa activated the vehicle's front end missile launches. The last thing Janine saw in her rear view mirror were three missiles approaching her car...



SEVEN SEASONS OF GHOSTBUSTING!

by Ross May

illustrations by Ken Steacy

Colors by Nathan Baertsch

Last issue of cereal:geek I discussed how the movie *Ghostbusters* made the transition from the big screen to a Saturday morning cartoon show. Now let us take a look at how *The Real Ghostbusters* (RGB) changed over its impressive seven season run.

SEASON ONE

A good place to begin would be to mention J. Michael Straczynski, who was hired as the series' head writer at its start in 1986. Straczynski showed a commitment to keeping the essence of the movie alive, just toned down for a children's audience. Interestingly, it was not the ghosts that needed to be tamed all that much, but rather the human characters with their smoking, swearing, and sexing now absent. But Straczynski and the other writers made sure to keep the group dynamic that was present in the movie along with the methods to busting ghosts.

I will talk about the animation right now to get it out of the way because, unlike some shows that have noticeable changes over time, RGB did not significantly improve or deteriorate. Animation was done overseas and you can in brief moments catch anime-influenced shots, mostly on human characters' faces. Some scenes are also choppy, but that is par for the course for an eighties cartoon and the crazy ghost designs and dazzling proton streams make up for it during the sometimes mediocre animated action sequences. The only other bit about the artwork that really needs addressing are the later *Slimer!* and *The Real Ghostbusters* seasons, but let us leave that alone that until we get to those years.

The first season alternated between big threats and stories that gave insight into the characters. The pilot "Knock Knock" was not aired until season two, and while it is a great episode it is also basically a rehash of the movie. An other-worldly door that is meant to remain closed until doomsday is opened, and the Ghostbusters must use their proton packs in a suicidal maneuver to save the world. On a side note, this episode happens to share the same name as the first *Woody Woodpecker* cartoon. Another episode with a big threat is "Killerwatt," which features a generic electricity-based monster. "Troll Bridge" shows a troll who runs away from its brethren, but the troll clan wants him back so badly that they charge the Ghostbusters with returning him. It is a great tale and the first of several where the heroes must rely on

their ingenuity as the ghostbusting equipment, even if readjusted, is not enough to save the day.

As for more character-driven tales, "X-Mas Marks the Spot" was a Christmas story that cleverly made use of Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* and the spirits in it. It also gave the first hint to what Peter Venkman's childhood was like, indicating that his father was absent much of the time. "Look Homeward Ray" and "Janine's Genie" delved into Ray Stantz and Janine Melnitz respectively. A real standout is "The Boogieman Cometh." In this episode, two kids hire the Ghostbusters to investigate the mythical being that haunt children's bedrooms at night. It is soon revealed that Egon was tormented by the creature as a child and these nighttime encounters later spurred him to study the supernatural.

The Boogieman, with its giant joker-like face and goat legs proved to be one of the best monsters on the show. The Boogieman was one of only two evil spirits that would make return appearances (not counting a few others as cameos). The other was Samhain, the unliving embodiment of Halloween who has a frightening jack-o-lantern for a head. In "When Halloween Was Forever" Samhain attempts to create a permanent Halloween that will give spooks and goblins dominion over the world.

The main difference between the first and later seasons is that here Slimer is definitely a sidekick and comic relief. It was not yet realised that he would become the breakout character of the show and eventually rival in popularity with the Ghostbusters themselves. Slimer is still prominent enough, even getting two episodes devoted to him ("Citizen Ghost" and "Slimer, Come Home") but aside from those two he is really a minor character with limited screen-time. Speaking of "Citizen Ghost," this is the episode that explains how Slimer came to be accepted by the Ghostbusters and is a real favourite with fans.

SEASON TWO

The pilot and first season brought the total number of episodes to fourteen, but season two cranked up the volume with over sixty new stories! Not surprisingly there is an increase of humdrum shows compared to awesome ones, but beyond this RGB remained the same. Notable episodes include "Ragnarok and Roll" where a depressed man tries to destroy the world. Another is "Egon's Ghost" where Egon is accidentally dematerialized and the others must quickly pull his corporeal form back to our world before he disappears forever. This story was originally going to actually have Egon being dead, but censors required this fact to be altered. An extremely bizarre episode, but perhaps the best in typifying what RGB is all about, is "Chicken, He Clucked." In it a man summons a demon to strike a bargain just like in the tale of Faust. The demon expects the man to wish for immortality, power or wealth, but instead is told that the man loathes chickens and wants them all to disappear from the Earth. This combination of dark supernatural elements - the selling of souls and being damned to hell are brought up in veiled terms - and absolute silliness is what makes RGB. The infusion of classic and popular ideas about the supernatural continue with "No One Comes to Lupusville" which features warring vampires and werewolves and "The Collect Call of Cthulhu" which is one great big homage to the work of horror author H.P. Lovecraft.



STEADY-

SEASON THREE

It is by season three that things start to change, including the replacement of Peter and Janine's voice actors. A story goes that Bill Murray was speaking to the show's producers and asked why his character Peter (voiced by Lorenzo Music) did not sound like him. It is thought that this remark resulted in Peter being recast with Dave Coulier. Fans find this story terribly ironic considering Music is the defining voice of Garfield the cat and Murray would later voice Garfield for movies. As for Janine, not only was her voice changed, but network consultants insisted her personality and appearance be altered to make her more "motherly." Head writer J. Michael Straczynski (see, I didn't forget about him) left due to the consultants' tampering, citing in particular the unnecessary changes in Janine from being a brash, witty and strong woman to a harmless mommy figure.

By this point Slimer was known to be incredibly popular with children and the stories now showed him going out on regular busts with the Ghostbusters for no good reason. Another change was the addition of the Jr. Ghostbusters, a trio of children who were the Ghostbusters' biggest fans who occasionally got into supernatural trouble and/or helped save the day. The theory behind the kids was that the young viewing audience would live vicariously through them and imagine having adventures with the Ghostbusters.

Today, most fans look at season 3 as the start of the show's decline, feeling particularly that the changes to Janine, the over-use of Slimer, and the addition of the Jr. Ghostbusters made the show more juvenile than they prefer. At the same time some well-loved episodes are present including "The Boogieman Is Back" and "Halloween II ½" which feature the returns of the Boogieman and Samhain respectively. Walter Peck (the villainous human from the first movie) even shows up in "Big Trouble with Little Slimer."

SEASONS FOUR AND FIVE

Slimer's popularity and the emphasis on RGB being "children's entertainment" resulted in the show being re-tooled as *Slimer! and The Real Ghostbusters*. The expanded show now featured a new introduction and two segments, one which continued the adventures of the Ghostbusters in much the same way as they had last season and a Slimer-centric story where the Ghostbusters played only minor roles. The *Slimer!* cartoons had a simpler and more childish look to them, and on the whole shared more elements with classic cartoons (slapstick, gags and chases) than anything to do with the movie *Ghostbusters*. Slimer was also given a large cast of newly introduced friends and foes, chief among them being Professor Dweeb, a wannabe Ghostbuster armed with a vacuum cleaner type of device.

As for the Ghostbusters proper, Arsenio Hall (voice of Winston) left the show and was replaced with Buster Jones. Starting with season five the meek and nerdy Louis Tully was added to the cast following the release of *Ghostbusters II*.

Many viewers complain that RGB was at its lowest point for these two seasons, being too geared towards children even in the non-Slimer segments. Even so, some striking episodes are present including

"Flip Side," where an alternate dimension showcases the Peoplebusters, freakish ghouls that resemble our heroes and go about trapping humans.

"Something's Going Around" features a monster disguised as a doctor who hatches a plot to transform the Ghostbusters into ghosts themselves. "The Halloween Door" and "Future Tense" are both quality episodes, and "Partners in Slime" would be the only one to make direct references to the movie sequel.

SEASONS SIX AND SEVEN

The consultants who had insisted on all the changes to the program were proven wrong as ratings were down for *Slimer! and The Real Ghostbusters*. Mail from viewers voiced their distaste, including many from parents whose chief complaint was that Janine, once a strong role model for young girls, was now boring and meek. The show returned to its original title of *The Real Ghostbusters* and the kiddie *Slimer!* sections were dropped.

Producers were aware that low ratings were the result of the changes in the last two seasons and sought out Straczynski to pull the show from the hole they had dug themselves into. Straczynski had other work and could not return as the head writer, but he agreed to work as a freelancer on the condition that he could do as he pleased, and that included writing Janine as he saw her. In his story "Janine, You've Changed," it is shown that Janine's alterations were the result of an evil spirit posing as Janine's fairy godmother. Janine, desiring Egon's attention, magically altered her appearance and voice to get him to notice her, inadvertently also altering her personality. This provided a decent solution for the character, and the show proceeded from there.

Though the show was back to its old title and format, the last two seasons of RGB did not have any especially dark or standout episodes, instead sticking to lighter fare like doing parodies of the *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* ("Mean Green Teen Machine") and *The Simpsons* ("Guess What's Coming to Dinner").

WRAP-UP

The Real Ghostbusters spanned from 1986-1992, making it one of the longer running cartoon series that began in the eighties. From the merchandise it spawned, particularly the Kenner action figures, it was also one of the more profitable shows.

But let's talk quality. From a kid right to today I have always believed RGB to be one of the best cartoons of its time. Not particularly well animated, its premise was brilliant and so were most of its stories. I can't think of another show, book, comic, video game, or ancient grimoire with such a perfect blend of the supernatural and science fiction, action and comedy, or human characters and spooks. The first two seasons are particularly wonderful, and then things start getting mucked about with Slimer getting more attention, Janine morphing into a lousier character and the Jr. Ghostbusters just being there. I agree with most fans that the show declined, but I think it started from such a great point that there were still plenty of wonderful episodes in spite of this. The changes did not offer that much, but the cartoon got by on the same virtues it had from the start.

TOP TEN VILLAINS

The villains of the eighties' cartoons have managed to transcend their own timeslots and audiences the world over. Villains such as Skeletor and Megatron are known universally, even by those unfamiliar with the shows they originated from, and have, in some cases, gone on to become massive pop culture icons. So, after taking a look at some of the more popular shows of the eighties, here's a list of the ten baddest of the bad from back in the day...

10. HORDAK

Outside of having a name with a distinctively evil ring to it, Hordak earns his place in the Top Ten for a number of reasons. The first: this is the guy that taught Skeletor everything he knows. Skeletor probably wouldn't be half the bad-ass he turned out to be had Hordak not been around. The second: only one other villain on this list has the ability to (questionably) turn himself into a weapon, and Hordak certainly did it with a hell of a lot more style. Tanks, cannons, rockets... you name it and Hordak could probably turn himself into it. But perhaps the greatest act of villainy ever carried out by Hordak was his masterful deception against the royal family of Eternia. Hordak kidnapped Prince Adam's twin sister Adora when they were both infants and raised her in the Fright Zone as a Force Captain of the Evil Horde. He-Man's twin sister was ranked up there with other Horde greats such as Leech, Grizzlor and Mantenna! Of course, eventually Adora would become She-Ra and fight against Hordak, but still, kidnapping the good-guy's sister and brainwashing her to do evil is some Emperor Palpatine style evil right there.

9. VENGER

In the world of *Dungeons and Dragons*, if there was trouble, chances are this guy was behind it. Venger was the Darth Vader of the D&D world, relentless, merciless and, as all good villains were, a very snappy dresser. Few people, outside of the show's heroes of course, were game enough to stand up to Venger, and even the heroes would avoid confrontation with him whenever possible. Hell, if I found out my arch-enemy's only rival was a titanic amalgamation of all the five different species of dragons found in the world I was trapped in, I'd probably be trying to find every opportunity I could to stay the Hell away from him. It was this dragon,

Tiamat, that made Venger the relentless monster he was, as the only thing that seemed capable of destroying the dragon were the weapons bestowed upon the show's protagonists by Dungeon Master himself. To Venger, the children meant nothing, he just wanted power and dominance. Towards the end of the popular series it was discovered that Venger was actually the son of Dungeon Master, which cast a new and interesting light on the character, and in the scripted but unproduced finale, Venger was restored to his true and former self.

8. MUMM-RA

In the face of Skeletor, Mumm-Ra may not have seemed the most original of villains, but that didn't stop him from being probably one of the cooler villains the eighties had on offer. In his regular form, Mumm-Ra was pretty non-threatening, just a scary looking old dude wrapped in bandages with a fittingly scary voice, however it was his secondary form that earned him his place among the greats. Mumm-Ra was the chosen vessel for the Ancient Spirits of Evil on Thundera. They gave him immortality in exchange for his eternal servitude. Not a bad deal for Mumm-Ra, considering both he and the Ancient Spirits were both working towards pretty much the same evil goals. Anyway, each time he invoked the Spirits, Mumm-Ra would become Mumm-Ra, the Ever Living, and would bulk up the same way Prince Adam did whenever he shouted you-know-what. He could, and on occasion did, push the power of the Ancients further, to become the even bigger and scarier Mumm-Ra, the All-Powerful. Strength-based transformations aside, Mumm-Ra was also a pretty crafty mofo, being able to transform himself into various other guises and carrying out such devious acts as getting Lion-O to attack his own team-mates and break the Sword of Omens, and even getting Tygra hooked on an addictive fruit (gasp!)! Essentially, you've got a shape-shifting, unkillable zombie that could be trusted as far as you could throw Manhattan island who also dealt out illicit substances and led armies of mutants. Pretty bad-ass if you ask me.

7. KRULOS

Most villains had their little pets. Skeletor had Panthor, Mumm-Ra had Ma-Mutt, Dr. Claw had M.A.D. Cat, but Krulos had a Tyrannosaurus Rex, and a pretty pimped out one at that! You can tell simply by looking at the arsenal Krulos fitted his beast with that the guy was in for the kill. While other Rulons relied on laser cannons and the natural abilities of their dinosaurs to wreak havoc, Krulos fitted his Tyrannosaurus with massive buzz-saws, robotic pincer claws and firepower out the wazzoo! The Rulons themselves were all pretty bad-ass - six separate alien races, all clearly capable of running their own shows - but all completely subservient to, and living in total fear of, Krulos. None dared to oppose him (outside of the serpentine Rasp, but he, like Starscream and other insubordinates, was always dealt with as seen fit), in fact, each race would compete to win favour with the amphibian despot. While it was his main goal to harness the power of the Space-Time Energy Projector (a crystal energy source held by the heroic Valorians) to escape the dinosaur-filled planet they were stranded on, one can't help but wonder the damage Krulos could do if he did manage to get his hands on something that could bend the very fabric of space and time...

6. MOTHER BRAIN

Mother who? Few people seem to remember the exploits of Captain N, also known as The Gamemaster, the champion and saviour of Videoland, and fewer people outside of those familiar with the long running and highly acclaimed *Metroid* series of video games are likely to know who Mother Brain is. It's a shame too, because Mother Brain really was a very cool villain. Essentially a gigantic disembodied brain being kept alive inside a preservation chamber, Mother Brain assembled the best of the worst in her efforts to overthrow Videoland. Her plans were met with varying degrees of success, which was unusual for villains in those days. Still, like all villainous masterminds her choice of company was sometimes questionable. Eggplant Wizard and King Hippo weren't exactly the most threatening of thugs, and their idiocy would often push Bebop and Rocksteady territory. I'm pretty sure that if Mother Brain weren't so reliant on hired goons to carry out her plans she'd be reigning supreme over Videoland.

5. COBRA COMMANDER

I think his dossier summed him up pretty nicely. While most would-be dictators are hampered by the need to pretend they're pursuing some sort of noble cause or global greater good, Cobra Commander just doesn't give a damn. He's in it for money and power and will do just about anything to get it. Glancing over the guy's track record, you can see that, while a lot of his plans revolve around the kidnapping of top level scientists, he was also pretty inventive and clearly had a lot of fun being as supremely evil as he was. He cloned dinosaurs, put mini-troops inside Christmas presents, created monster plants; the guy even managed to replace the world leaders with synthoid replicants to cut funding to the G.I. Joe program sending his bothersome enemies into disarray! You've also got to give it to a guy who's clearly as insane as Cobra Commander, who can also assemble the world's most dangerous criminals like Destro, Zartan and the Baroness, and somehow keep them in line enough to stave off mutiny. Oh! And for those who may not be aware, it seems ol' Cobra Commander managed to outlive his enemies, appearing with another diabolical synthoid scheme under the guise of "Old Snake" in season three of *The Transformers*.

4. DR. CLAW

Dr. Claw remains, to this day, one of the universe's greatest mysteries. All you ever saw of him was his ominous, iron clad fist as it reached out from his looming chair to either stroke his morbidly obese and clearly very evil cat, or smash his desk in anger. His voice was perhaps the harshest of all the eighties' villain voices, and the second you heard it, there was no debating the dude's intentions! Dr. Claw was perhaps the most globally organised villain in animated history too, having agents and surveillance equipment seemingly placed all over the world. Claw's agents weren't exactly run of the mill either. These guys were all well trained and as calculating as their boss, but they, like their boss, could never count on the unpredictable nature of the arch-nemesis, Inspector Gadget. Where most villains failed through their own idiocy, the agents of MAD would often find themselves victims of their adversary's own buffoonery! If it weren't for the fact that neither Gadget nor anyone else ever seemed to know what was going to come

out of his hat next, Dr. Claw would probably be ruling the world right now.

3. SAM HAIN

Sam Hain makes it up here for a couple of very good reasons. Besides being the very essence of Halloween, he was one of the very few ghosts to receive a recurring role on *The Real Ghostbusters*. After being released from a five-hundred-year imprisonment, Sam Hain managed to completely overthrow New York City, halting time and releasing all the demons of the spirit world into ours, all of whom were completely subservient to him. Sam Hain would come back a second time, bigger and badder than before, not only managing to once again take over New York, but also transforming the Ghostbusters' firehouse into his own fortress of fear! He'd also learned a few things since their last encounter and managed to protect himself from both their particle throwers and beams of light (something that was ultimately used to defeat him the first time around). Their last battle saw the Ghostbusters having to destroy their own firehouse to defeat him, and even then, later episodes had the boys checking up on the demon, just to make sure he wasn't up to anything.

2. SKELETOR

The name is synonymous with villainy, and you just know anyone with a skull for a head is bad news. Few villains were as persistent or as bold as Skeletor. This was a guy who was willing to constantly take on the most powerful man in the universe, time and time again, regardless of failure, in order to overthrow the ominous Castle Grayskull. There were even odd occasions where Skeletor would just enslave minority races seemingly just for the hell of it! You know what else made this guy pretty hardcore? His laugh. Skeletor seemed to get off on villainy more than the Joker, giggling more often than a room full of eighth graders in a sex ed class and cackling maniacally at the drop of the hat, and not because he was insane either - no, no, no - because Skeletor was evil. Pure and simple. The guy revelled in causing his enemies strife so much that he actually found it hilarious. The other thing worth considering is that Skeletor was once the student of Hordak, and eventually betrayed his master by banishing him to another dimension so he could take over Eternia for himself. Anyone with the massive, blue balls to betray someone as evil as Hordak easily ranks as a force to be reckoned with.

1. MEGATRON

Everyone knew Megatron would be on this list somewhere, but there's one very good and simple reason as to why he's at number one. Sure all the villains here are cool, but how many of them actually killed their arch-nemesis? I hear some people saying "Well Serpantor killed Duke - why isn't he here?" Well, aside from the fact that Serpantor was a bit lazy when compared to the efforts of Cobra Commander, Duke actually sacrificed himself to save his brother from Serpantor. Serpantor just got lucky. Megatron on the other hand took down Optimus Prime in a one on one battle, doing that which no other villain has managed before - killing the hero with his bare hands. Megatron = Supreme Bad-Ass.

SIDEKICKS OF THE EIGHTIES

by James Eatock - illustration by Tim Kelly



• K E I I Y •

-SLIMER-

When the green ghost known as Onionhead appeared in the movie *Ghostbusters*, few could have predicted that within a few years he would become a multi-million dollar star! Starting life in the movie *Ghostbusters* Slimer made an immediate impact, quite literally, famously sliming Bill Murray's Peter Venkman character! During the development of *The Real Ghostbusters*, and as evidenced by the promotional footage, Slimer was portrayed in the same "villainous" role that he had been given in the movie. However when the series came to pass Slimer was now the Ghostbusters' sidekick, living with them in the firehouse. Voiced to perfection by the great Frank Welker, Slimer slowly became a prominent character in the series. But then in a move that surprised many, Slimer became the star of the show, and received top billing in *Slimer and The Real Ghostbusters*! What many fans see as the beginning of the end, Slimer went on to dominate the series, yet none could argue that the little green ghost had an odd charm about him. To this day Slimer is still one of the most recognizable parts of the *Ghostbusters* franchise, and products with his image on are still being produced. Orko, Snarf, they were popular sidekicks, but even they did not receive their own show!



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