

cereal:geek[®]

animation of the eighties



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editorial

After numerous delays I present for your entertainment issue five of **cereal:geek**. Of course this issue (like the first four) has a theme. However, that wasn't always going to be the case. My original plan was that issues five to eight would have no theme whatsoever.

Believe it or not I began production on issue five back in September of 2008! I sent out an email to all the writers who had contributed to the first four issues and encouraged them to write about whatever they wanted (a "free-for-all" I called it) with regards to the cartoons of the eighties; in turn I would commission artists to illustrate accompanying pieces.

The idea was that I would assemble a vast library of material, which I would access when it came to putting an issue together. I envisioned myself randomly plucking articles and illustrations from this vast library and throwing them together (in a loving way) to create each new issue.

However (and this is no detriment to the writers) contributions suddenly dwindled. One of the writers explicitly told me that they preferred the theme because they felt it brought the articles throughout the issue together, which was an inspiration to write in itself. I still pursued the idea of a themeless issue though.

Long before issue four went on sale Rod Hannah had expressed a desire to write an article about Marvel's Star Comics; the line of comics that showcased their licensed properties based primarily on eighties cartoons (*Care Bears*, *Defenders of the Earth*, *Heathcliff*, *Masters of the Universe*, *ThunderCats*, *Visionaries*, etc.). The article always sounded most appealing, and when he submitted the document it was clear that it could actually spawn a theme of its own. Thus after a few conversations with Rod the theme of this issue suddenly became about **comics**. A simple theme, yes, but with an incredible amount of depth that I didn't think was possible. From this theme each and every talented writer has come up with ridiculously in-depth articles about how comic books related to our favorite animated shows from the eighties. It soon became apparent that this theme could run for a good while, as articles began arriving thick and fast!

And so, as many of you may know, this **comics** theme is going to continue in issue six and more than likely show up in issue seven as well! If your favorite cartoon of the eighties' comic book isn't showcased in here, trust me, it will be!

Now, let's just hope I can get issue six out the front door before the end of the year!

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:

cerealgeek@googlemail.com



The cover of **cereal:geek** issue five was illustrated by **Makoto Ono**.

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March 12, 1986

FROM: The GHOSTBUSTERS Story Editors

TO: The Freelance Writers (We Know Who You Are, We Saw What You Did)

RE: Story update

As with any series, the first part of the first season gets all the obvious stories. Now that we've received all of those, and now that we've racked up a fair number of certain kinds of stories in general, it seemed only right to give you some indication of what we DON'T want to see any more of.

So: don't give us any of the following

The Evil Twin/Double/Ghost In Disguise of a Ghostbuster.
The containment unit goes BLOOEY!, and

things get out

things get big

someone's called in to clean up their mess.

A Ghostbuster falls in love with a ghost.

Revolutionary war stories.

Animated dinosaur stories.

Possessed computer stories.

Somebody's aunt/uncle/parents show up.

One or more of the Ghostbusters quits.

Stories where the Ghostbusters make problems worse.

Stories that belong to, or take us off into, other genres:

sword & sorcery with problems solved with magic.

spy stories.

time-travel stories.

flying-saucer stories.

Dream stories.

Ghosts disguised as con men/mayors/landlords/rival ghostbusters.

The Ghostbusters being evicted.

Ghostbusters leaving to set up individual operations.

Stories in which Ghostbusters go globe-trotting or into space.

What does this leave? Lots of stuff. Again, we prefer stories that grow out of character, or a unique situation. We get a lot of stories that are retreads of other series. "Two ghosts disguised as card-players trick Peter into betting his ownership of the Ghostbusters." Aside from the illogic (no one really OWNS the Ghostbusters), you could change this to "Men of Frost, working for Ming, disguise themselves as gamblers to trick one of the Defenders of the Earth out of a crucial piece of equipment." If it works for them, it won't work for us.

Ditto for stories that are simply incident piled upon incident, stories that reflect the author's unique ideas about the construction of the afterlife ("the several levels of the astral plane are out of alignment," saith one writer), and dead animal stories. (One writer suggested that all the chickens Colonel Sanders had killed come back -- and boy are they mad.)

(Though, admittedly, the idea's so crazed that we had to force ourselves not to pursue it further.)

And so on.

Finally, attached to this, you will find some of the very best premises and outlines we've had so far. These will give you some indication of the direction we're proceeding in, the style of presentation needed, and the sort of story construction we like.

Oh, yeah . . . and in your process of coming up with ideas, bear some truisms about fantasy writing in mind:

1) If you remove the magical/supernatural element, and the story remains the same (as in the con-men premise), it's not for us.

2) No matter how wild the premise, there must be internal logic and consistency. Only this will make the really bizarre stuff work.

3) In the best of all possible worlds, when the protagonists are confronted with a technical problem, and an emotional dilemma, resolving the first should resolve the second, and vice-versa. (The troll-bridge story is an excellent example of this -- the technical problem, common to all stories, is the imminent destruction of property. The emotional dilemma is the troll who doesn't want to be forced to return. But both are resolved simultaneously, creating a nice logical loop -- and a nifty story.)

That's it for now.

Columbia Pictures Television
Ivan Reitman
D.I.C. Enterprises, Inc.



Character

Date 6/16/8

Description

MAIN



ANIMATION NATION

DIC Animation



Greek Legends and Gold

One of the most prolific producers of animation throughout the 1980s, DIC Entertainment were responsible for a wide number of successful series that assured their place as one of the most important names of children's television in the 1980s and beyond.

DIC (Diffusion, Information et Communication) was originally founded in 1972 in Luxembourg as DIC Audiovisuel by Jean Chalopin. Whereas some other animation companies tended towards a particular demographic, DIC's output covered a wide variety of genres, with a noticeably large number of high-profile licenses from both toy companies and feature films. The company's first animated series was *Archibald le Magicien*, produced in 1980, and as the punning name suggests, featuring an anthropomorphic canine magician. The series was successful enough to establish DIC as a very capable production company, and in 1981, along with the Japanese studio TMS, DIC developed an ambitious science-fiction update of the ancient Greek legend of Odysseus with *Ulysses 31*. Featuring a fairly mature tone along with intricate design work and animation, the series was very successful in Europe, and was the earliest DIC work to be later translated and distributed in English.

As a follow-up to *Ulysses 31*, DIC began another co-production, this time with Studio Peirrot of Japan. Like *Ulysses*, this would be another blending of old concepts coupled with science-fiction overtones. Unlike *Ulysses*, these concepts would be joined together in a more literal way, and so the saga of *The Mysterious Cities of Gold* was made. In contrast to their past two productions, *Mysterious Cities* was a serialized production, allowing the writers to create even more developed and morally ambiguous characters than had ever been seen in *Ulysses*. While producer Jean Chalopin and director Bernard Deyriès had grand plans for a continuation, lackluster ratings in Japan put a stop to any sequel. As with *Ulysses*, the series was also subsequently dubbed into English.

The American Adventure

In 1982, the company opened up a U.S. office in California, with Andrew Heyward being brought on board. With the company's two most marketable series so far being dubbed into English, and the company's new U.S. presence, it wasn't long before

DIC started work on an ambitious project to create an original English-language series for U.S. syndication. Debuting in September 1983 as one of the two first 65 episode long syndicated animated series (the other being Filmation's *He-Man*), *Inspector Gadget* would prove to be one of the company's biggest hits. The series featured former *Get Smart* star Don Adams as the bumbling Inspector himself, and Frank Welker as the forever-unseen Dr. Claw of MAD, and like *Ulysses* and *Mysterious Cities* before it, also featured Japanese-produced animation from the likes of Toei and TMS. A popular series, it lasted three years in its original incarnation, with multiple sequels made in later years. 1983 also saw DIC's first U.S. networked series with *The Littles*, based on the John Peterson books, which ran on ABC for three seasons.

1984 saw DIC's roster of series grow as they began to take on work for various licensees. *The Get Along Gang* on CBS, following a pilot episode by Nelvana, was based on a line of greetings cards from American Greetings, and would be the first of several greetings card characters to be the basis of a DIC production. Also for CBS that year was the more action-oriented *Pole Position*, which due to the nature of the series, took a more than a little inspiration from *Knight Rider*. Both series lasted for a single season of 13 episodes each. Retaining their Japanese connections, DIC even produced a short-lived live-action Japanese-U.S. co-production entitled *Photon*, although it was not particularly successful. Much more successful was the company's second first-run syndicated series, *Heathcliff and The Catillac Cats*, which ran for the next three years. As a sort of follow-up to the Ruby Spears *Heathcliff* series, DIC's version also made use of the incomparable Mel Blanc as the voice of Heathcliff himself.

In 1985, DIC produced a short syndicated season of *Care Bears* episodes, based on the greetings card and toy characters, subcontracting the actual production to Nelvana, who later continued with the series themselves. Such light-hearted fare would also form the direction of DIC's first two feature-length productions, the *Here Come the Littles* prequel movie, and *Rainbow Brite and the Star Stealer*, another greetings card-based production. Catering to the other end of the market with more action animation, DIC produced two 65 episode series for syndication to compete with the growing number of similar series from other companies. *Jayce and the Wheeled Warriors*, boasting Japanese animation coupled with established writers such as J. Michael Straczynski, was launched in conjunction with Mattel. In this instance however, the toy company's support was inadvertently the reason why the series never achieved greater popularity, as the synergy between the toys and series was non-existent. Far more successful was *M.A.S.K.*, based on the toys from Kenner. Again featuring Japanese animation, along with noted anime designer Shinji Aramaki from anime production house Artmic, the series held its own against the competition, even managing a second season, unlike many contemporaries. Unfortunately an almost complete change in the series' direction from new writers resulted in the second season being only 10 episodes long.

Outside Influences

With a number of high-profile series under the company's belt at this point, Andrew Heyward

bought DIC Entertainment in 1986, at the same time establishing the U.S. office as the base of operations. The change in ownership resulted in some future DIC series being based on live-action productions, with the first one appearing the same year. Two of DIC's higher-profile series from 1986 were the syndicated *Dennis the Menace*, like *Heathcliff*, also based on a classic comic-strip character, and the networked *Popples*, based on another topline. DIC's most high profile series of the year was *The Real Ghostbusters*, based on the Ivan Reitman film from two years earlier. In an unprecedented move, indicating the studio's faith in the series, different episodes of the series were produced simultaneously, 13 for ABC and 65 for first-run syndication. *The Real Ghostbusters* was one of DIC's most successful productions next to *Inspector Gadget*, and the darker tone of the series as developed by script editor J. Michael Straczynski made it stand out from the crowd. The series was revamped and targeted more towards younger audiences as *Slimer! and the Real Ghostbusters* in 1988, but this was not as well received, although the series was buoyed by a second live-action movie and ultimately lasted until 1991 with a very respectable five-year run.

DIC tried their hand at two other another toy-based animated series in 1987, one of them being *Starcom: The U.S. Space Force*, although a failed launch of the toys in the U.S. itself ironically led to the line and series' failure after 13 episodes. More successful was *Sylvanian Families*, based on the successful toys from Tomy. Produced to coincide with a big European marketing push, the series was shown on ABC for a single season. *Dinosaucers*, as the company's latest 65 episode syndicated series, was originally developed to be marketed alongside a topline, but the line was never released. Among others, this series featured noted *Star Trek* novelist Diane Duane as one of its writers. A third major series that year was *ALF: The Animated Series*, based on the then-popular live-action sitcom. Like its live-action progenitor, the animated series was also popular and even had a spin-off of its own, *ALF Tales*. As a late entry to the 1980s explosion of 65 episode syndicated action animation, DIC produced *C.O.P.S.* in 1988, and based on a Kenner topline. Uniquely in this case, the series actually had 66 episodes, rather than the standard 65. Featuring animation from TMS, it was one of DIC's final series targeted towards the usual action animation demographics that dominated the 1980s. That year also saw DIC distribute the live-action *Hey Vern, It's Ernest!*, featuring the famous Ernest P. Worrell character as portrayed by Jim Varney.

Videogame Nation

By 1989, a new force had clearly made its mark with the children of the 1980s, with the emergence of the phenomenally popular home games consoles of Nintendo and Sega, and DIC were the first company to take the initiative and produce series based on such games. Although Ruby-Spears had produced the *Saturday Supercade* strand six years earlier, based on arcade games, the more intimate and wide-spread nature of home gaming made DIC's entries to the genre far more successful. *The Super Mario Brothers Super Show*, based on the successful *Super Mario* games from Nintendo, lasted 65 episodes in first-run syndication, and was popular enough to produce two network spin-offs for NBC with *The Adventures of*





Super Mario Bros. 3 and *Super Mario World*, together lasting until 1992. At the same time, DIC also produced series based on Nintendo's *The Legend of Zelda*, paired with the *Super Mario* series, and *Captain N: The Game Master* for NBC, loosely based on the Captain N character appearing in the *Nintendo Power* magazine. The latter series in particular was an unashamed advertising vehicle for a multitude of Nintendo games, and later the portable Game Boy itself, with the console being introduced as an actual character voiced by Frank Welker.

A more traditional series came in the form of a single season of *The Karate Kid* for NBC, based on the famous trilogy of martial arts movies, and the extremely short-lived series *Ring Raiders*, based on the similarly short-lived toyline from Matchbox. A more assured success was DIC's continuation of *G.I.*

Joe, following on from the Marvel Productions/Sunbow series and movie. The new *G.I. Joe* series began with a five part story in 1989, and two further seasons, finally ending in 1991, ultimately with a more mixed reception than the original series.

Toyless Times

With the dawn of the 1990s, and a severe reduction in the number of toy-based animated series, DIC's subsequent series would concentrate on the remaining sources of ideas such as video games and the odd live-action production. *Swamp Thing* from 1991, was unusually enough the company's first foray into comic book-based animation, although like *Ring Raiders* the series' production was troubled, lasting only 5 episodes, which were shown on FOX as a mid-season replacement. In 1993, DIC was acquired by ABC/CapCities, and by this point, two of DIC's popular series from the early 90s were the syndicated *The Adventures of Sonic the Hedgehog* for syndication, and *Sonic the Hedgehog* for ABC, both debuting that year. Although produced at the same time like *The Real Ghostbusters*, they were for all intents and purposes, different series, with *Sonic the Hedgehog* being played noticeably darker than its syndicated companion. Taking inspiration from Saban's *Power Rangers*, DIC came up with the live-action *Superhuman Samurai Syber-Squad* for ABC in 1994, and partly based on the Japanese *Gridman* series, although this was not a success.

1995 saw the company become a subsidiary of the Walt Disney Company and this year they also produced *Gadget Boy and Heather*, a loose spin-off of *Inspector Gadget*, which despite featuring a totally different art style, nevertheless featured Don Adams as the voice of Gadget Boy to reinforce a connection. That year, DIC tried their hand at another, more traditional comicbook-based series with *Ultraforce* for UPN, although like many of their other networked series by this point, it didn't last long. A more popular series in 1995 was their acquisition of the Japanese anime series *Sailor Moon*, although several liberties were predictably taken with the source material, alienating a certain subset of fans. The same fate would befall another anime acquisition with *Knights of the Zodiac* in 2003, the long-delayed English adaptation of Toei's *Saint Seiya* from 1986.

Modern Times

With the company being bought back from Disney by 2000, recent years have seen DIC look towards the past for inspiration, with *Gadget and the Gadgetinis* from 2001 being a more faithful spin-off from *Inspector Gadget*. 2001 also saw *Alienators: Evolution Continues*, the company's second Ivan Reitman-based animated series. In 2006, the company produced its first feature film for almost 20 years with *Strawberry Shortcake: The Sweet Dreams Movie*, and in a similar vein, began the *Care Bears: Adventures in Care-a-Lot* series in 2007.

DIC's legacy as an extraordinarily prolific production company is one that shows no sign of abating, and their vast library of incredibly diverse animated series is one that has brought pleasure to a wide array of audiences from across the board.







Confusing many a child in the eighties this beautiful illustration of *The Real Ghostbusters* was the first official image of the show released to the public by DIC. Illustrated by **Gabi Payne** and painted by **James Gallego** this image features Gabi's original character designs with their movie-inspired jumpsuits and equipment (as seen in the animated promo) chasing **Slimer**, who himself was still the villain of the piece. Interestingly shortly after the character designs were more or less finalized this poster was edited so that both **Peter Venkman** and **Ray Stantz** were given heads that looked a lot closer to their actual animated appearances. Still, as a child it was hard to fathom why the characters here looked different when compared to their cartoon counterparts.

VOICE ACTOR SPOTLIGHT MAURICE LAMARCHE



Present at the start of the 1980s animation syndication boom and lasting to the present day, Maurice LaMarche's body of work covers a wide variety of roles and series. Born in Canada, Maurice moved to Los Angeles as a young man in order to launch a prospective stand-up career. He would later regret this move, wishing he had gone to New York in order to strengthen his comedic performances. Regardless, Maurice's career in stand-up assured him of five years' professional growth, with appearances on *An Evening at the Improv* and *The Merv Griffin Show*. During this time, Maurice's vocal dexterity enabled him to undertake many impersonations, including his famous Orson Welles impression.

Maurice began his actual voice acting career in the late 1970s while still in Canada, most notably with the films *Easter Fever* and *Take Me Up to the Ball Game*. However, it would be another few years of becoming firmly established in the US before he started regularly performing on animated series. The first of these series Maurice lent his talents to was one of the 1980s most popular, DIC Entertainment's *Inspector Gadget*. As one of the first two 65 episode series made for syndication, *Inspector Gadget* became an enormous success that ran for many future installments. Maurice's main role in the series was that of the hapless Chief Quimby, forever an unintended victim of the good Inspector's clumsiness. For the next few years, Maurice's main body of animated work was done for DIC, also initially including the eighties' version of *Dennis the Menace*.

Without a doubt one of Maurice's most memorable performances was as bespectacled parapsychologist Egon Spengler in DIC's *The Real Ghostbusters*. In the series, Maurice, more than any of his fellow actors, provided a pitch-perfect interpretation of Harold Ramis' live-action version of the character, and would be one of only two of the series' regular voice

actors to remain in the same role throughout the series' five-year run. The series, like many future ones featuring Maurice, also afforded him an opportunity to use his Orson Welles impression, on this occasion in a ghostly homage to *Citizen Kane*. During this time Maurice also made his one and only appearance in *The Transformers*, as the similarly one-time appearing Autobot Six-Gun.

In 1989, Maurice made his most bizarre appearance in a DIC production up to that point, when he played the first live-action incarnation of Inspector Gadget, guest-starring on one of the live-action wraparounds for *The Super Mario Bros. Super Show!* Presciently, this would not be the last time Maurice played the role of Gadget.

Maurice would continue to utilize his voice acting talents for many acclaimed series in the 1990s, including *Batman: The Animated Series*, *The Critic*, *The Tick*, and *Freakazoid!* One episode of *The Critic* in particular served as a unique showcase for any voice actor's talents, as Maurice voiced nearly thirty characters in a single episode, at a rate of over one character a minute, including, once again, his famous Orson Welles voice. Maurice's uncanny ability to reproduce Orson Welles voices was also employed in the critically acclaimed Tim Burton movie *Ed Wood*, where the title character briefly meets up with Welles.

By now, Maurice's tones were also to be regularly heard as the diminutive prospective super-villain The Brain, initially appearing in the *Pinky and The Brain* shorts on *Animaniacs* from 1993, and then a full-fledged series that ran for three years from 1995 to 1998. To compliment this memorable character, Maurice reprised the role of an older Egon in 1997's *Extreme Ghostbusters*, as the only original Ghostbuster to remain a part of the new series' regular cast.

In 1999, Maurice joined the cast of Matt Groening's latest animated series, *Futurama*, where he played the hapless Kif Kroker. Also that year, Maurice inherited the role of Inspector Gadget from Don Adams, for which Maurice provided a typically identical rendition of Adams' voice for Gadget. With this initial performance, Maurice would remain as the new permanent voice of Inspector Gadget for all future animated productions. In 2006, Maurice also played a small voice-only part in the live-action series *Heroes*; he was the first actor to play the then unseen part of the super-villain Sylar.

Currently, Maurice remains as busy as ever, with some of his most recent performances being in the new *Futurama* feature-length productions. This in itself serves as a timely reminder that, while many other voice actors have seen their roles recast, he has remained dedicated to a notable number of parts over the years, despite the often protracted lengths of time in between projects. After all, there is only one Maurice LaMarche, and he is truly irreplaceable.

what if an episode were a comic cover?

PREMISE

Comic book covers are a wonderful thing. One single image can highlight a specific scene to the reader; foreshadow an event on the inside pages; summarize the entire story; the list is endless.

In truth they are there not only to convey and evoke emotion, but also (and more importantly) to get you to part with your hard-earned money! Not only are comic book covers eye-catching, but over the years many have gone on to become iconic. Just think of John Romita's classically striking cover to *Spider-Man* issue fifty.

In the eighties watching cartoons and buying comics were almost synonymous with one another. Some animated series made the transition to comic book form with some proving infinitely more popular than others.

I always wondered what certain episodes of specific animated shows would look like as comic covers, which brings us to this section...

Fernando Peniche

Artist

Darrin Moore

Colorist



EPISODE

The Real Ghostbusters was a show that deserved many a long-running classic comic book series, but this was sadly never the case. Many of the series' episodes dealt with supernatural events, and while "Egon on the Rampage" was no different, because of its inclusion of a news crew it was unique. The reporters, trying to create a sensationalistic story about the Ghostbusters, disrupt an experiment being conducted by Egon Spengler. In the process Egon's soul is sucked into another dimension as a demon takes possession of his body! The Ghostbusters have a very short space of time to save Egon and remove the reporters from their headquarters...

GUIDE

As this episode dealt with Egon Spengler turning into a large Hulk-like creature my first idea was to showcase his savage nature. However the news reporting element of the episode was so important that I thought it would be amusing if Sandy Van Sanders and Helen Shreck were actually presenting the events of the story, breaking the fourth wall at the same time. Fernando Peniche took a look at the references (and my incredibly rough sketch) and staged the action perfectly.



45
SEP
US \$1.50
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APPROVED
BY THE
COMICS
CODE
AUTHORITY

THE REAL GHOSTBUSTERS





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