

Judith Morel's Page of The Drink Tank Numbered 80

OK, I'm fairly certain that we can all agree that Chris isn't in the best of moods right now. He's been through a lot, and when I briefly saw him this weekend, he was in a mood that I call edgy Chris. We heard Cher's Half-Breed and he obviously started thinking about the song and how it relates to him. Believe it or not, even though letting Cher get to you in that way only happens to guys who have other issues, Half-Breed pretty much applies to Chris...in the weirdest way.

Chris wrote a thing about the last few days of his father's life that he has me working on turning into a real piece and he's doing the same for me with a piece about my Dad's death. In the thing that'll show up in The Drink Tank issue about families, he talks about seeing that part of his family for the first time in years and noticing that he was a Mexican...but only to a point.

I'm not sure how best to put this, and it only half-way comes across in the article, but Chris' cousins are all Half-Mexican in the same way as Chris, but all of them are the children of full-blooded Mexicans who lived life the way you hear about on the news. Except for Chris' Dad and David, the second oldest, all the brothers and sis-



ters have done some time, have done their drugs, have made mistakes that would make a person suspect that they were sabotaging themselves. They all have the same racial make-up, they're all half-breeds, but Chris is the only who broke out.

Chris graduated High School.

Chris graduated college.

Chris has had a steady job for nearly a decade.

Chris has even won these strange little awards that mean nothing.

Chris has managed to get into trouble with little things (**saving for one FBI issue-CG**) and has always managed to get out of it. He's separated from his family by something that is really insurmountable: he's not a fuck-up.

That's why Half-Breed made Chris misty: instead of having to face the fact that people had dozens of negative preconceptions of what it meant to be Cherokee/Armenian, Chris's got all of the positive stereotypes of being a white guy and none of the negatives of what it means to be a Mexican.

And takes him further away from the rest of his family than anything.

M Lloyd's Page of The Drink Tank Issue 80

I've discovered that sex is what The Drink Tank is all about. Even in the issue where it's all about us covering for Chris when he needs a little time to do nothing but layout, I need to bring a little sex to the proceedings.

I was talking with a bunch of Ex-Pats about things we missed about the US. Most folks mentioned things like American TV, good BBQ or Mexican food. I had my answer: slutty college girls.

Now, everyone pointed out that there were plenty of slutty European chicks who dressed even more provocatively than the Jersey girls who show garters and high milky inner-thighs. While I gave them that point, I had to make mention that there was a significant difference between those European skanks and the ones that populate most of the major college towns.

You see, the European girls are just trying to get laid, just planning on having a good night's fun while fucking a semi-stranger. The American college slut, she's a different bird, she's trying to kill something with her fishnets and same-sex face sucking.

She's trying to revenge her father, she's trying to make up for all that time in high school when she could have been sleeping with multiple partners. She's trying to do all of it by taking her life into that hole that everyone in the US says is the filthiest. She gives in to the sex, to the dirty, to the fucking. It's violence. In Europe, she's just planning on entertaining her moist places, in America, she's trying to bring about something much different.

When we talked about this more, everyone wanted to tell their story of that girl who was obviously trying to make it all happen. I told them how I would search those girls out and take advantage of their rebellion. I was good at it, still am if I give it a shot, but the others had some fun stories too.

Larry had discovered a good way to gather womanfruit. He would go to a bar and say that he was a psych student and he would do a brief in-bar analysis. She'd tell him things and he'd give back answers meant to drive her into bed.

Larry was an Art History major. He's a genius.



The Continuing Adventures of Frank Wu and Guidolon

This Week's Installment: MANAGING 50 LEAD

5/15/06

I've learned a lot about leadership in the last few months. Encouraging people to be creative, yet keeping them more or less on the path of the overall vision of the film. But now, as time grows short, now I must Direct. Which means sometimes making decisions people don't like.

Yesterday we had our first group meeting, and the first showing of a rough cut of the film. BenniiD, who's animated probably three-fourths of it, just about killed himself to put things together in time. I had a BBQ at my place, and about half of the 25 or so people who've worked on this showed.

One of voice actors, our music guy (Dave Fleminger, whose work makes this piece fly), and most of the army of artist/animators. The night before I had brought the piece - about 6 or 7 minutes - and a portable personal DVD player for people to see at the World Horror Convention up in the city. I had one set of headphones, so people sat in a corner and watched it. And from across the room, I watched them, to see if they laughed, if they squinted and leaned into the screen. Over the weekend, I heard a wide range of opinions from "Great" and "Better animation than four or

five shows now on Adult Swim" to "The characters need to be re-designed and re-animated" and "The voices just don't work."

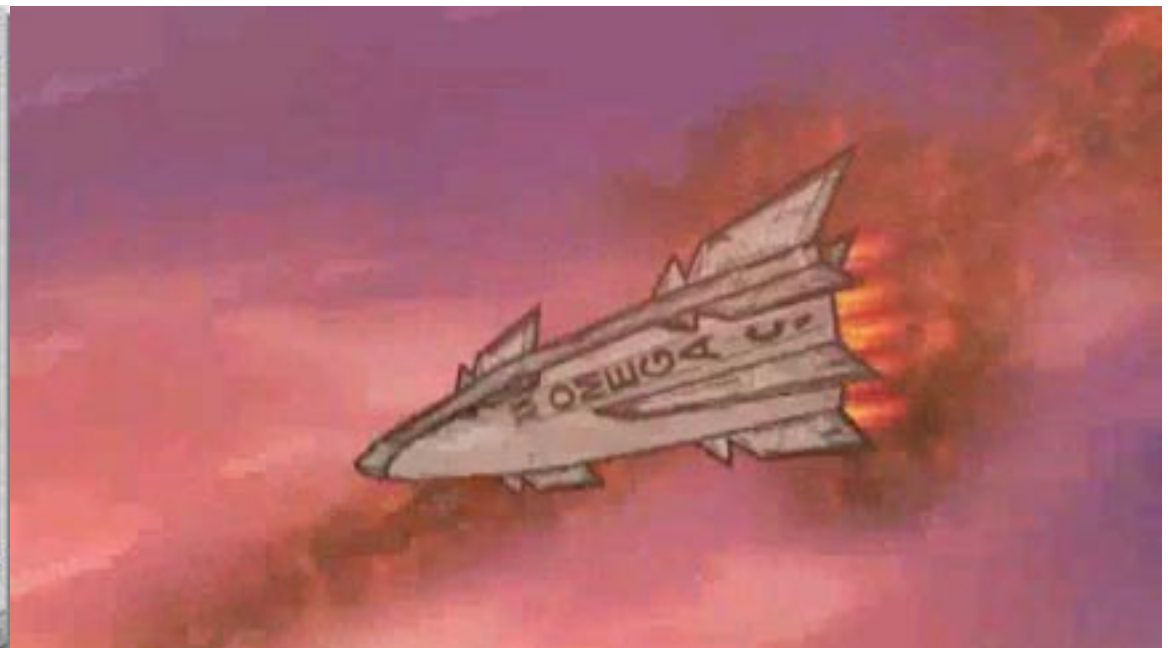
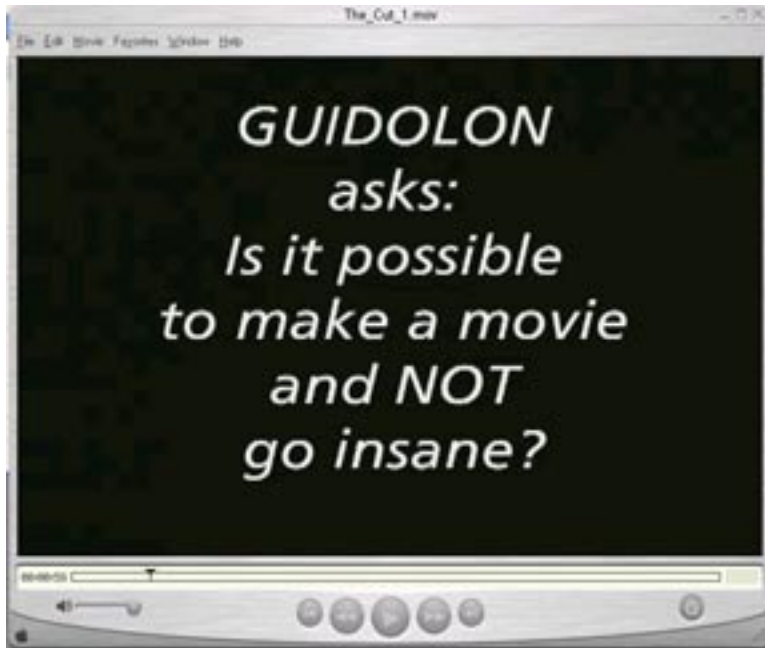
Curiously, almost all the positive feedback was at World Horror. And all

the negative feedback was at the party.

At World Horror, the folks who saw it were mostly writers (but also a few artists), and perhaps they were just being encouraging, or perhaps they understood (as I explained before



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I showed it), that it was perhaps 75% done. It was at the party that I heard all the specific things that were wrong, which was of course disconcerting and disappointing. We have essentially two weeks to finish production before we have to make copies of this before I get on a plane to New York and try to sell this at the trade show June 20-22.

But, oh the comments!

I stopped taking notes after 4 pages.

The general consensus was that the Production Assistant - a teddy-bear-like male ingenue who arrives on the movie set cheerful, but leaves embittered by Guidolon's monomania - has to go. The transitions between scenes - just about all of them - don't work. Many of the shots are

too complicated. For example, Todd Tennant's image of Guidolon's trailer - which appeared on the cover of Drink Tank #76 - is great as a fanzine cover, but too complex to just flash on the screen for four seconds. (The solution - start in tight on one spot, like Guidolon's name, and then zoom out). There are too many talking scenes. The zooms are discontinuous. Cap'n Takao's lips are too red.

And those were but some of the minor, easily-fixed problems.

Some of the other suggestions - which would involve huge amounts of work - were simply untenable. A lot of discussion centered around the visualization of Guidolon himself.

A small but vocal contingent really wanted Guidolon to be cutesified ("neotenous" in Rachel Forbes' apt words). When I enlisted Rodney Artiles and Eugene Sheshenin to do sculptures of Guidolon, I gave them free reign to modify Guido - to show that the character had flexibility. To show that he would still be recognizable despite minor changes. But some of the artists said that their friends first thought Guidolon was "ugly" or "scary," whereas others kept saying, "He's perfect - he's cute."

I am Captain Kirk, with Spock and McCoy on either side, arguing for their viewpoint.

But I alone must decide.

I will direct and I decide that

Todd Tennant's original Guidolon design is Guidolon. He will look like what he looks like now. (Partly this is a practical decision - there is simply not enough time to re-design and re-animate all his scenes.) But more importantly, I like the way he looks. What he lacks in beauty he makes up for in personality. He is suspended in that no-man's land between cute and ugly, between friendly and scary, between enthusiastic and crazy.

I will never create a character (or do a painting) which 90-100% of the people like. I am not out to do "Friends." I want Guidolon to be a little scary (he is a giant monster, after all). And I want him to be a little cute.

Guidolon is both sweet and sour. Some folks said they didn't like



Chris Garcia's voice.

No. I am the director and I say that Chris Garcia is Guidolon. His crazed personality, his inflection - he is Guidolon, and if he fails to appear so, the fault is in my directing.

No, I am director, and Guidolon will appear as he appears, and Chris Garcia will be his voice.

Guidolon's appearance must be marked by as specific locus on the visual landscape. If that locus were too close to Cutesy-land, then there would be no room for pushing the design one way or the other. If he were too anthropomorphized, then his animal nature would be out of reach. As it is, precariously balanced between cute and ugly, his cutesified or anthropomorphized versions can

appear in future dream sequences or similar. Or toys.

Rodney Artilles did have an excellent idea (one of many). He suggested that I assemble "scrapbook binders" (he used a different term). These would be to show the Cartoon Network execs the complete script, along

with piles of sketches and rejected character designs and pencil scribbles and finished backgrounds - a slew of images to show the huge amount of effort behind this creation. To prove that we are the Hardest Working Artists in Show Business. And in the binder will appear the cutesified versions of Guidolon.

The question is prioritizing what desperately needs to be done over the next few weeks. So many voices. So many suggestions. Only a few of these can be implemented.

Yes, as was said at the party, perhaps the wings flap too much. Yes, perhaps the deerie boppers cycle through the same set of motions too many times. But the priority must be fixing the transitions and the huge gaps of undone animation.

I think about the flurry of opinions expressed. I am glad they were all said, because they bring up issues that will need to be dealt with. And, yes, I should have done the complete soundtrack before doing a single frame of animation. And I should have had this meeting a month ago.

Oh well.

I also know that artists are most critical of their own work. And that many of the people in the room are desperately hoping that this project will sell. They want full-time jobs. They are rightfully worried about their

own careers and want this animation, which will appear on their resumes, to be the best-darn animation ever. The thing, though, is that it won't be. And it doesn't have to be. There is a charm in the flaws, in the feeling that something is homemade. I love the fact that, during the final battle scene in Curse of the Were-Rabbit, you could see a thumbprint on the side of Gromit's nose. In Japanese art, nothing is beautiful unless slightly imperfect.

"Slightly" is the operative word.

Yes, the most glaring artistic atrocities will be fixed, but not all of them. And that's ok.

The animation - by Jonah Gray (who did incredible work on the opening sequence and the electrocution scene, among others), the aforementioned BenniiD, and now Priya Gopalan - is overall really, really good. But even if it sucked, Guidolon will ultimately sell or not sell because of...

Guidolon.

Either the Cartoon Network execs will be amused by the idea of a giant space chicken or not. Too much wing flapping or deerie-bopping will not change their minds.

They'll like Trisuron the giant space Triceratops or they won't.

And Jerora the giant space jellyfish.

And Octuron. And Fribugus.

One last thing that encourages me a lot is Sealab 2021. The first season DVD includes the trailer shown to Cartoon Network. The voices are whiney, especially when the (male) creators fake the female voice, the plot is non-existent, the jokes lame. The only thing that rocked was the theme music. But it concludes with a title card that says, yeah, we can't believe they bought it, either.

But they did.

And maybe - despite any flaws that we don't have time to fix - maybe they'll like Guidolon, too.



SC, That's another Drink Tank

I want to thank Frank, M and Judith for their writing. I'm doin' OK while I'm making headway into the whole cremation process and getting Dad's place cleaned out.

Next week will see another regular issue and then...BAYCON!!! There's gonna be a lot of BayCon coverage and I'll be writing about it for SF/SF and The Drink Tank and likely for Claims Department.