



He-Man / Masters Of The Universe Interview (Part 2)

Part 2 of the interview:

He-Man.de: All of Mattel's attempts to establish a new MAF in the market were a failure. Did you ever go to your local Toys R Us to see what your predecessors created? I didn't like any of the newer MAF like Max Steel or Action Man. There seems to be no learning curve inside Mattel.

R.S.: You are absolutely correct in your above statements. I periodically visit Toys R Us and WalMart and look over all of the toys, in addition to male action figures. And, I particularly take notice of Mattel boys toys product. For a short time, from 1980 through 1987, the right factors and people came together to cause classic He-Man / Masters to happen. People are what make the difference, not company buildings or personnel structuring.

He-Man.de: The new He-Man movie is still a rumor, but a constant one. Would you like to be involved in the making of the film, maybe as a consultant in some way? Is there any actor you would like see as He-Man? How did you like Dolph Lundgren, would you have preferred another actor?

R.S.: I would enjoy being involved with any new He-Man / Masters phenomenon. But, even more, I would enjoy being involved in something even better and more powerful than anything on the market right now.

Concerning Dolph Lundgren as He-Man: I thought he was a fairly good choice. He was fairly big and fairly muscular. However, the original 1982 He-Man was very big and very muscular. I did a volumetric study of the 1982 first production He-Man. At 6 feet 1 inch tall, he would have weighed 750 pounds! And, he was half as wide across the shoulders as he was tall! In comparison, Arnold Schwarzenegger at his best as 1977 Mr. Olympia also was 6 feet 1 inches tall. Big, you say? He only weighed a puny 240 pounds! And, he was only one-third as wide as he was tall! Just like practically every male action figure in history. A person with the physique of the 8-time Mr. Olympia bodybuilding contest winner, Ronnie Coleman would be a better choice. Ron is 5 feet 11 inches tall and weighs 296 pounds - of ripped, fat-free, power-packed muscle! That's closer to how I envision He-Man. You have a Germany-area professional bodybuilder who is fairly close to Coleman in size - Gunter Schlierkamp. He is a handsome guy and might be a good candidate for the He-Man movie.

He-Man.de: But let's talk a bit more about the classic toys. Which one's do you still own today? Do you have a real collection or just some special pieces?

R.S.: I have two 1982 first production He-Men. Also, I have a Teela and a She-Ra.

He-Man.de: Back in the 80s the figures that I found disappointing were Evil-Lyn and Teela. They looked just poor, as far as I'm concerned. To me they were not feminine enough... Were there any alternative designs?

R.S.: I don't believe there were any alternative designs done at that time of Teela and Evil-Lyn. I would have preferred if the two females had been much larger in the chest area to go along with

their “thunder thighs”. I prefer sturdily-built, athletic-looking, well-endowed women. You can have this current crop of scrawny, semi-flat-chested starlets.

He-Man.de: That's funny. I guess I just chose the wrong words to express how I wanted the female characters to look like. I just wanted them to look more like a match to the male characters - with a better physique just like you explained.

R.S.: I understand you now. I agree that Teela and Evil-Lyn could have been more powerfully and athletically built than they were. However, Mattel Marketing, who often controls the general direction of toys, may have preferred to keep them weaker and more feminine, thinking that they might appeal more to little girls.

He-Man.de: The figures I liked the most, beside He-Man and Skeletor, were Trap Jaw, Whiplash and Ninjor. Congratulations to your great design! However, you haven't mentioned Ninjor. Could you tell his story?

R.S.: Thanks for the compliments. I originated the seed ideas of Trap Jaw, Whiplash and Ninjor. So, I know about their beginnings. I originally conceived Ninjor to be a bad guy, as he was a Ninja. And, they are reputedly bad guys - at least to their enemies. His simple, yet highly effective and highly playable feature was a hand with a giant metal glove attached to a spring-loaded arm so that he could Karate-chop an opponent into the pavement.

He-Man.de: I think you were confusing the very similar characters Ninjor and Jitsu. Can tell me more about Ninjor? By the way, Jitsu was a pretty cool guy, too. I remember him smashing a whole bunch of guys, his action feature was really great fun!

R.S.: Yes, you are correct that Jitsu had the enlarged Karate-chopping right hand with a spring-powered right arm. And, Ninjor had regular-sized arms, but both arms were spring-powered. Jitsu was brighter in color than Ninjor, who was largely black with red accents. To me, Ninjor was more evil looking. Ninjor was a figure done after the Jitsu figure. It was easy to adapt the existing single spring-loaded arm design of Jitsu to a new and different figure where both arms were spring-powered, change Ninjor's styling and thus get a different figure without a lot of new development on a mechanism.

He-Man.de: You also write about Buzz Off, a figure which I also liked very much. But as far as I know he was a good guy, whereas you regard him as an evil character.

R.S.: Here is another concept that I originated. You may know him as a good guy. But, I originally conceived him as a very bad guy. My reasoning is the following: Any scary, half-human bug guy with wings who could swarm around you lightning-fast, like a real yellow-jacket bee, and then instantly dart in and sting the life out of you, could not be a good guy. I had brutal personal experience in that area. I once was removing a bush from my yard. And, unknown to me a nest of yellow-jacket bees was in its base. When, I chopped at the bush with an ax, they swarmed all over me. And, as I ran off, I got stung several times! But, look what happens when marketing and / or others get hold of a concept! They make a baddie a goodie!

He-Man.de: Which figures had been the best-sellers of the line. Did Mattel had some kind of ranking of the best sold characters?

R.S.: I would assume that Mattel would have those numbers. Also, I would assume that He-Man

and Skeletor were the best-selling characters. But, I don't know for certain.

He-Man.de: Do you have any pictures that you might send me for the article?

R.S.: We did not use any documents or pictures in the Mastering The Universe book that David Wecker and I co-wrote. And, I cannot give you any pictures of He-Man / Masters product for the same reason we did not use any in the book. The reason is that Mattel owns the copyrights on He-Man / Masters documents and pictures. However, I can assure you that I have many He-Man / Masters documents and pictures including excellent photos of the He-Man Trio that brought He-Man, and thus Masters Of The Universe, into existence.

He-Man.de: Thanks a lot for taking the time to answer my questions, I really enjoyed reading and translating them! I think the fans here in Germany will be happily surprised to read the interview.

R.S.: You are welcome. I am glad you enjoyed reading and translating the questions and answers. I hope the German fans enjoy reading the interview.

He-Man.de: After releasing the article, some fans might have some additional questions to you. Would you be willing to answer some more questions?

R.S.: I would be glad to answer additional questions from He-Man / Masters fans.

If you do have further question for Roger Sweet, you can send them to via e-mail ulf@he-man.de! I will collect all adequate question and forward the to Roger.

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