



By Trent Drake

This Week: The Guyver!

Allow me to get something off my chest. I love overdone fight scenes, badly dubbed Japanese superhero movies, and giant transforming robots. What does this mean? Two things: First, I'll probably spend eternity in hell watching re-runs of *MightyMorphin' Power Rangers*; and two, this is a lousy segue into this week's review.

The *Guyver* is based on a decent Japanese superhero comic that became a bad direct-to-video cartoon series that transformed into a really horrible movie. The comic and cartoon follow the adventures of Sho, a high school student, who becomes a victim of capricious plot devices and ends up as the Guyver, a cool-looking superhero with powers that'd make Voltron cringe. And it's lucky for him that he does, because the owners of the Guyver unit are giant, short-tempered alien monsters called Zoanoids. He fights them, blows up the corporation that made them, and lives happily ever after.

The movie, however, takes the original premise and transports it two thousand miles across the Pacific to America. Our hero, Shawn, is a handsome, muscular, All-American weenie. Almost everyone either hates him or feels sorry for him. Even his karate teacher picks on him. But Shawn's life is transformed for the worse when he investigates the mysterious death of his Japanese girlfriend's scientist father. In the heat of night, at the scene of the crime, like a streak of light, he gets caught just in time!

As the Zoanoids close in, Shawn opens a freaky-looking lunchbox and gets an alien hubcap stuck to his forehead. This is the Guyver unit, an alien symbiote that takes Shawn as its host and turns him into a fin-headed, steam-blasting, seven-foot tall suit of walking blue death!

Things get ugly quick for the new hero on the block. Kronos, the corporation that found the Guyver unit, wants it back. They dispatch team after team of Zoanoid soldiers to capture Shawn. After a couple of good fight scenes, the aliens manage to rip out Shawn's control medallion; this allows the alien suit to eat him alive. Shawn's girl is kidnapped by Kronos as an afterthought.

But all is not lost! Shawn and the Guyver are recreated by the control medal, the bad guys reveal their plans, Mark Hamill turns into a cockroach and zam-powie! The credits roll.

Acting (or Lack Thereof): Horrible acting all the way around. Jack Armstrong (Shawn) is bad, Vivian Wu (the girlfriend) is whiny and annoying, and Mark Hamill (who had a career,

once... but that was before *Star Wars*...) looks incredulous and hung-over throughout the film. But the drumstick actor goes to the anonymous black Zoanoid: not only does he turn into a silly-looking, big-lipped reject from *Grease*, he also does rap numbers before beating people up. Stereotypes, anyone?

Technical Stuff: Good fight scenes. The blue Guyver has a very cool-looking design; I dare you to find a better superhero suit with more attitude. The transformation sequences are disturbing (how would you like to be wrenched apart by giant earthworms and spat out on plates?), but are well done and fun to watch. By comparison, the rest of the special effects are pretty mediocre.

I'd also like to mention that the acting of the nice, disgusting suits. Even if they are around like rejects from *Power Rangers*, at least they look at least like they're trying.

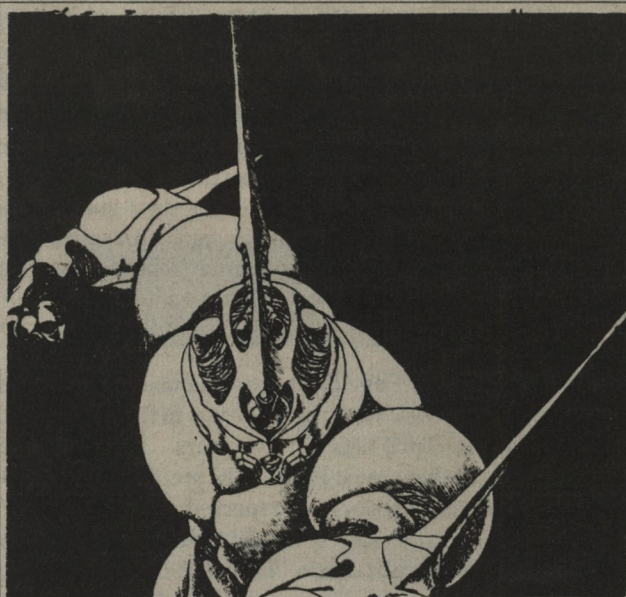
Fans of the comic book version of the Guyver might be disappointed in this version of the hero. The Guyver is without a sure cannon, fin laser, or remote control, and the original Shadow Guyver does a much better appearance. And the Guyver's head fin: it's a liability that tends to wobble at inopportune times.

Stuff to Watch For: Fights. Transformation sequences. Skywalker turning into a cockroach. Sentence fragments. Acting. Fun monsters. Poor grammar.

Stuff to Fast Forward Past: Any scene without Shawn, generally not worth the trouble of watching, though be careful near the end. If you go too fast, you miss the bad guy giving away his plans. And beware the black guy, my son, with claws that catch and lips that kiss! The only thing about him is that he actually survives the movie!

Bottom Line: It's horribly acted, pays no attention to the original story and has stupid jokes throughout. I love it as a great way to fry a few brain cells and get a few laughs (though I don't recommend watching it on any kind of mind-altering substance). If you're interested in a more accurate version of the character, try looking up the original comic book or the dubbed Guyver cartoon series. It's equally bad acting but a much cooler Guyver unit... and Guyver, to boot!

Available at: Co-op Foods, Oak Tree Place. The Guyver is available locally unless your friends are anime fans.



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