

entertainment

Geek Corner: 'Sock Baby', baby

By JAMES COUCHE
STAFF WRITER
JTC5101@PSU.EDU

It is no secret that the Internet is beginning to surpass television. The wealth of content that it provides is miles ahead of every other medium; it is more outlandish, more plentiful and more original than anything on television or radio.

The perfect example of such content is "Sock Baby," a series so delirious it could only exist on the Internet.

"Sock Baby" is the creation of Doug TenNaple, the man who created the hit video game "Earthworm Jim."

The story follows the misadventures of '70s style kung fu fighting Ronnie Cordova and his cybernetic friend Burger. The whole thing starts off simply enough with Ronnie and

Burger setting out to get something to eat with a small sock baby in tow.

No sooner do they step out the front door then they are attacked by evil Greys: ghoulish warriors in black suits. What ensues is three episodes of Ronnie and Burger fighting to defend sock baby using everything from kung fu to origami creatures that turn into CGI monsters.

Absolutely nothing about "Sock Baby" seems to make sense. The dialogue is beyond bizarre and the performances are very over the top. Ronnie Cordova is decked out in a 1970s style leisure suit, a gold medallion and aviator sunglasses. Burger looks like a patchwork cyborg with swimming

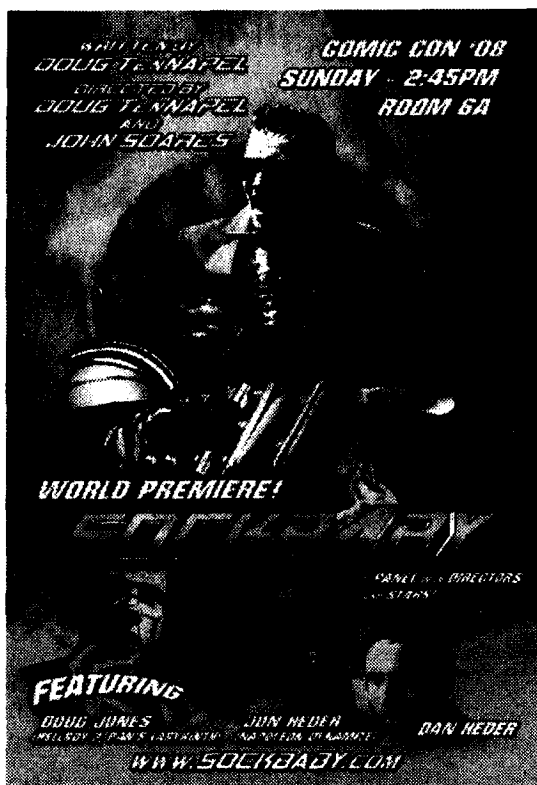


Photo courtesy of Sockbaby.com
"Sock Baby" is one of a growing number of TV-like shows on the internet

goggles and hair that is literally drawn onto his head with a sharpie marker.

The whole series has a very no-budget look to it since all of the wild action happens in front of someone's (the director's) house in the middle of the suburbs.

Do not let this fool you into thinking that the series is low quality. The production is quite slick with great costumes and special effects and the fight scenes are as good as anything coming out of Hollywood.

"Sock Baby" has an incredible amount of energy and never has a chance to get boring. Either people are fighting to the death or they are saying things that are so ridiculous it will make your jaw drop. It also helps that the episodes are only about 10 minutes long at best.

Shows like this are rare on television outside of programs like "Adult Swim" (which gets much of its content from the Internet). Most networks would not know what to do with a show about people fighting over a talking sock puppet while going out to "food up."

That is the beauty of Internet series like "Sock Baby." They represent something that only the Internet and independent producers can provide — innovation mixed with insanity.

TenNaple and company are free to let their imaginations run wild and the show will go on for as long as they want it to. "Sock Baby" has drawn a lot of attention since the release of the first episode and it has attracted Hollywood actors as a result. The recently released fourth episode features both Jon Heder ("Napoleon Dynamite") and Doug Jones (Abe Sapien of "Hellboy").

'Gossip Girl' as farfetched, entertaining as gossip itself

By ALLISON MILLS
STAFF WRITER
MXA932@PSU.EDU

The CW's hit series "Gossip Girl," which boasts about being every parent's nightmare, combines the beautiful and the unrealistic to create a drama about high school teenagers.

The show revolves around the lives of trust-fund children and the Paris Hiltons of the fictional world. We watch along with their peers in New York City as they fall in love and make mistakes. Not entirely revolving around the rich, however, Gossip Girl also follows the struggles of a Brooklyn family trying to fit into the world of Manhattan's elite.

The beautiful cast includes Blake Lively as the passionate and genuine Serena van der Woodsen, and Leighton Meester as the scheming and controlling Blair Waldorf. Kelly Rutherford is Serena's mother, Lily van der Woodsen. The rich boys include the brooding and sensitive Nate Archibald played by Chace

Crawford and the devilish and manipulative Chuck Bass is portrayed by Ed Westwick. On the other side

of the bridge, Matthew Settle is Rufus Humphrey, who sacrificed to send son Dan (Penn Badgley) and daughter Jenny (Taylor Momsen) to the exclusive private school of the very smart and very rich.

In this series we see friends have sex with their best friends' lovers. We see the teens use drugs and drink alcohol. And it is portrayed as

glamorous. No wonder parents don't approve.

Yet I don't think parents need

to worry if their children enjoy watching "Gossip Girl" because it is unrealistic. It may give them

unrealistic expectations about sex, but chances are that there are enough pregnant kids in their class to keep them disenchanted.

Perhaps it is an accurate portrayal of life as spawn of the very rich, but since most viewers have no links to that world, there is no way to know for certain. While totally unbelievable to the point of being distracted, it is a fun show to watch because it's easy to enter that world.

Television doesn't have to be realistic; it only has to be entertaining to the viewer. While many shows entertain by depicting realistic scenarios, "Gossip Girl" is so farfetched that it becomes very easy to be intrigued by the crazy plot. Like a soap opera, viewers watch to be entertained and do not concentrate on the realities of the situations. Then when the Gossip Girl blogger narrating the show says in every episode, "You know you love me," viewers nod because they know they love the show, even against their better judgment.



Photo courtesy of The CW / Andrew Eccles (c) 2007 The CW Network, LLC.

The CW network's "Gossip Girl", based on the best-selling book series, has quickly become the latest teen-drama show to capture young girls' hearts.