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## A Trip to Blockbuster Turns Into a Poem

Philip Fullman

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## A Trip to Blockbuster Turns Into a Poem

PHILIP FULLMAN

I wish I was creative.  
Like I was as a kid.  
When I was a kid,  
I had a great imagination.  
I could create anything.  
Like a small god  
whose powers were limited  
to wearing costumes  
and playing with dolls.

Today they are Action Figures;  
back then they were dolls  
*With movable parts  
to let you pose them  
in ready for action positions  
Each 8 in. with an authentic costume.*  
According to the ad.

I had one,  
sometimes two of each  
Superman—Batman and Robin  
Green Arrow—Supergirl—Batgirl  
Wonder Woman—  
both the 8 in and the later 12 in.  
based on Lynda Carter—  
Shazam—Aquaman—Joker  
Penguin—Riddler and Catwoman  
Spock  
(I wanted Captain Kirk,  
but Woolworths was out)  
Spider-Man—Hulk—Iron Man—  
Two of the Fantastic Four—  
Falcon—Green Goblin  
and Fonzie.

I had the Batcave  
but never did get the Hall of Justice.  
I did however, have a nice-sized box  
my dad made up to be the Hall of Justice.

There was G.I. Joe  
12 in. tall  
life-like hair and beard,  
scar on his cheek.  
He would say something like  
*Take cover  
Run like hell  
or Oh shit!*  
When you pulled the string on his back.

Even had the 11 in.  
Colonel Steve Austin  
Astronaut  
a man barely alive  
with Bionic Eye—  
which was a hole in the back of his head  
with a small magnifying glass—  
Bionic Arm  
with a rubber skin sleeve over it.  
You rolled it up to work on his arm  
after he wore it out lifting  
the plastic engine block he came with.  
If you wanted to change him  
out of his red sweat suit and sneakers  
you had to buy his leisure suit separately.  
Same with the Bionic Woman.  
Fortunately Colonel Austin  
and Ken wore the same size clothes.

m



**ME** BRANDON SPARKS

My mother  
decided that with all the fighting I had going on,  
someone would need a doctor-  
Dr. Ken and Nurse Barbie.  
Ken never did do much.  
Barbie was always in some type of danger:  
kidnapped  
dangled from over the ledge of the kitchen counter  
spending time under G.I. Joe.

I didn't know anything about sex  
other than there was kissing  
and you were probably naked.  
I figured a lot of that out when mom  
got the new Charlie Rich album  
and played "Behind Closed Doors"  
over and over.

Joe and Barbie did it in front of the couch  
in the den,  
the couch being a mountain in the woods.

The living room was usually the desert  
with the sofa a mountain  
and the boomerang coffee table a ledge.  
I had zip lines everywhere  
from the Green Stamp bookshelf to the end table  
and from the piano/  
heliport/bad guys' hideout  
to the other end table.

My toy room—  
that is a converted garage to hold toys  
for a child with no siblings in the house—  
Had string hanging from the ceiling  
so Batman and Robin could swing  
from one end of the room to the other as the story dictated.

I would spend hours coming up with a storyline  
plotting out movements  
and directing the action.  
All the figures in their places.

Then I would begin playing  
acting out the story  
just as I created it in my head.

Fonzie and Barbie were out doing something-  
nothing that involved them being naked.  
—Barbie was 11 in. Fonzi only 8 in.  
G.I. Joe was 12 in. and could whip The Fonz's ass.  
While out they stumble on The Joker and Green Goblin  
robbing a bank.  
They try to get word to the Hall of Justice  
but the Riddler knocks them out before they can.  
They're taken to the piano  
where Penguin is waiting.  
There he reveals his plan:  
what they're going to do with the money  
and they're never going to escape  
because the Super Heroes don't know where they are.

Two of the Fantastic Four and Green Arrow  
go to look for them, as they should have been back  
with lunch hours ago.

They take G.I Joe's jeep from the toy room,  
stopping in the den to see if Colonel Austin has seen them,  
which he hasn't but runs at Bionic speed to the kitchen  
to look for them.

Two of the Four and Arrow proceed to the living room  
where they are spotted by Riddler from the top of the piano  
and shot at by a missile.

It narrowly misses.

Before the radio goes out the Invisible Woman  
is able to let Spock know their location.  
It went on like this until justice prevailed.

I would spend more time setting up,  
trying to come up with scenarios  
and making zips lines  
than I would actually playing.

Just like a movie:  
six months work  
for an hour and a half film.



**CUBIST BOY** BRANDON SPARKS



**I AM WHO I AM** THOMAS ISAAC

I mostly played alone;  
 The other kids wouldn't play right.  
 Their idea of a fight was to bang  
 Spider-Man and the Penguin together 20 times  
 say "ouch" a few times, and Spider-Man is victorious.  
 This drove me insane.  
 Spider-Man is much stronger than Penguin.  
 and faster.  
 He would just have to cover him in a web  
 courtesy of mom's hair net,  
 and the fight's over.  
 If there was a fist fight,  
 I would choreograph the punches and kicks,  
 with the good guys always victorious,  
 unless one of the bad guys cheated  
 or sucker punched them.

Rob was the kid who lived across the street.  
 I played with him more than any other kids,  
 thereby making him my best friend.  
 Rob understood Super Heroes.  
 He knew Batman didn't have super powers  
 and played accordingly.  
 Even so,  
 after playing with him for about an hour  
 I was ready for him to go home  
 and be by myself.

I wasn't playing with my Super Heroes  
 or G.I. Joes as much when I turned eight.  
 Once I saw *Star Wars*.  
 These weren't the same dolls I grew up with.  
 These were 3 in. plastic figures  
 with clothes painted on  
 and no bendable joints.  
 The arms moved only at the shoulder  
 and the legs at the hip-  
 perfect for goose stepping.

Eventually, they made some 11 in. figures  
 with actual costumes.

It was soon after that Luke Skywalker  
 first met G.I. Joe and Hulk.

I would make up the same type of stories  
 and imaginary danger for my action figures  
 as I had for my dolls.

At three inches it's easier to lose them when  
 they're hiding from a scout team in the sofa.

For the past three years

I had been making up my own *Star Wars* stories,  
 Creating my own version of what happened  
 at the end of the first film.

It was 1980:

the *Empire Strikes Back* was coming out  
 and I couldn't wait.

Mom was watching the 700 Club,  
 like she did every day,

waiting on her word of knowledge from Pat.

Before he could speak a word  
 to the bitter old woman with a bad hip  
 who alienated her kids and  
 smoked a pack and a half  
 of Tarrington 100's a day,  
 Pat had a guest.

This guest said Darth Vader was Satan  
 and Yoda a demon,  
 and if you really loved Jesus  
 and your children,  
 you wouldn't take them to see *Empire*.  
 Not only that, you would get rid of anything  
 in your house related to *Star Wars*.

I don't know how many action figures  
 the Millennium Falcon  
 an X-Wing fighter  
 a Tie Fighter

Land Speeder  
 Posters—Sheets  
 Burger King collectable glasses  
 a board game—cards—  
 All gone  
 Sold to my brother's  
 wife's  
 sister-in-law's  
 adopted son  
 for \$50.  
 Jesus just wanted them out of the house.  
 He didn't care if you sold them to heathens  
 to recoup some of your investment.

Soon after, my mom recalled  
 Adam West as Batman  
 going into a trance  
 and Superman hypnotizing someone—  
 Both of which are Satanic activities  
 if you read your Bible and  
 squint hard enough.  
 No one wanted to buy Superman  
 or Spider-Man or G.I. Joe,  
 so they ended up in a garbage bag.  
 Four actually.  
 How G.I. Joe ended up in there I don't know;  
 all he did was defend his country.  
 Perhaps because once I learned more about sex  
 he and Barbie started hooking up more often.  
 The wages of sin.

After that  
 I started watching a lot more television.  
 I almost never read  
 Before I read comic books,  
 but they'd all been thrown out.  
 So I just sat in front of the TV.  
 No thinking.  
 No creating.  
 I just watched.

Occasionally I'd wonder if Kimberly Drummond  
 would go out with me,  
 or how Valerie Bertinelli and that other girl  
 could be sisters when they looked nothing alike.  
 Then I got an Atari 2600  
 and there went the rest of my imagination.

I think it was Cinco De Mayo 1999-  
 Maybe it was just the weekend.  
 A bunch of friends were going out  
 but I was strapped for cash.  
 I think Step One is admitting you have a problem;  
 Pawning your TV, VCR and Super Nintendo  
 for beer money  
 may qualify under number one.  
 I never could afford to get my stuff out of hock,  
 So with nothing else to do in my apartment  
 I picked up a book,  
 One of the ones I said I'd read but never did.  
 After a while you don't miss TV.

Now I see these crappy movies at the video store  
 and wonder how they ever got made.  
 Who thought that sounded like a good idea?  
 And wish I was still that creative,  
 That I had an idea for a movie.  
 Something where Superman—  
 Batman and Robin—Wonder Woman  
 Green Arrow—Supergirl—Batgirl  
 Spider-Man—Two of the Fantastic Four  
 Iron Man—Falcon—Hulk and the Fonz  
 take on Joker-Penguin-Riddler and Catwoman.  
 They enlist the help of G.I. Joe and his  
 Adventure Team.  
 But not the Lone Ranger and Tonto.  
 That would be silly.