

DUKE: REAL AMERICAN HERO NOTES

- **Working Titles:**
 - o *Duke: Before the Call*
 - o *Duke: Real American Hero*
- **Premise:** This origin story for Conrad Hauser a.k.a. Duke will be featured as a one-hour special that will premiere in theaters for one week before being released on whatever streaming service the 80's CU inevitably finds itself on 30 days after the theatrical release. It will premiere during Year 2 of our 80's CU release schedule, coming out in theaters 4-6 weeks before the first *G.I. Joe* film. This 60-minute film will be the audience's entry into the grounded modern world setting of Earth in the 80's CU and feature the rise of a new breed of warriors – the G.I. Joes! Plus, as a form of marketing synergy, there will be a teaser trailer for *G.I. Joe 1* that will play at the end of the special. The one-hour special will introduce Duke, Hawk, Clutch, Stalker, Rock 'N Roll, the V.A.M.P., the Pit, Destro, the Baroness, Major Bludd, M.A.R.S. Industries, and the Iron Grenadiers. Cameo of Scarlett at the end. This *Duke* special works as a great lead-in to *G.I. Joe 1*, especially for fans who want early emotional investment in Duke's story arc. This special will offer more screentime to show his leadership qualities, regrets, and moral code, setting him up as the "Captain America" figure of the 80's CU. Plus, if someone skips this special, *G.I. Joe 1* still reintroduces him effectively for new viewers so that no homework is involved on their part to enjoy the already established characters and factions in *G.I. Joe 1*. But, if they do watch the *Duke* special, then they're even more attached to him going into the new movie.
- **Inspirations and Influences:** Based on the *Duke* issues published by Skybound Comics, this one-hour special will be referenced by *Fugitive, 24, Top Gun: Maverick*, and *Captain America: The Winter Soldier* since it'll be a character study mixed with a military drama (think *Saving Private Ryan* meets *Jack Ryan*). Rather than have Starscream be the futuristic enemy that Duke encounters, it will be one of M.A.R.S. Industries' early prototypes of a war drone (what will eventually become the B.A.T.), which ultimately puts Duke on the search for answers as he seeks justice for the loss of his partner and wingman.
- **Official Synopsis:** When an experimental war drone slaughters his partner and a squad of innocents, Special Forces Captain Conrad "Duke" Hauser goes rogue to uncover who built it. His search leads him into the shadows of M.A.R.S. Industries and its masked arms dealer, Destro – forcing Duke to become the kind of soldier the world will one day call a G.I. Joe.
- **Casting:** Scott Eastwood would be my #1 choice to play Duke, Alan Ritchson being my second pick. Stalker would be played by Mehdad Brooks, who played Jaxx in the 2021 *Mortal Kombat* reboot. Destro would be played by Kevin Greivoux.
- **M.A.R.S. Industries:** Scrap-Iron is a criminal and fugitive who is secretly one of Destro's designers and engineers. The war vehicles utilized by M.A.R.S. are:
 - o Aircraft = Despoiler & A.G.P.s (Anti-Gravity Pods)

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- Tank = D.E.M.O.N. Tanks & Dominator Tanks
 - Heavy Assault Vehicle = Razorback
 - Motorcycle = Evader
- **Destro:** Inspired by Skybound Comic's take on Destro, this version of the character that will appear in the 80's CU will be something of a cross between Lex Luthor and Tony Stark. Let me explain. So, the traditional backstory for Destro will remain the same. His ancestor was a Scottish arms dealer who sold weapons to both sides during the Wars of the Three Kingdoms and was caught by Commander Cromwell. As punishment, Destro's ancestor had his steel mask that he wore as a disguise seared to his face, thus prompting the future generations of the Destro clan to wear their own masks as a tradition and symbol of pride. In the modern day, the Destro clan have disappeared and gone underground. Some believe they have died out, but in truth, the Destro clan has just updated their way of doing business. They've evolved into a multibillion-dollar corporation known as M.A.R.S. Industries, with James McCullen running the company as its CEO. Unbeknownst to many, McCullen operates under a separate identity as a notorious arms dealer known simply as "Destro". My fan cast for this version of Destro would be Kevin Greivoux, as I imagine Destro basically being a black man with Scottish blood in him, hence why he would have a slight Scottish accent while delivering his classic baritone voice.
- **Destro's Gear:** Destro's mask and Warmaster gloves are both made of beryllium steel. But I want his mask to come with a neckpiece as well that completely covers the wearer from the neck up. This way, the wearer's skin - and therefore their identity - is entirely concealed. The mask will come with a voice modulator, like Batmans' cowl in the Snyderverse, that filters the wearer's voice and prevents anyone from recognizing it. The mask and gloves will be mostly bulletproof, with the mask being an advanced piece of machinery. The helmet can fold and unfold onto the wearer's head like Iron Man's armor in the MCU, allowing Destro to carry it with him in a suitcase and essentially suit up at a moment's notice. I want the mask to basically be smart tech, where it can automatically sense the dimensions of the wearer's face and shift its plates around to be form-fitting and mold to its wearer's face. Plus, because the mask will be so detailed, it will also allow the wearer to be very expressive. Unlike similar styles of masks like Dr. Doom's, this mask is not stagnant. It's dynamic, and it will not hide any of the actor's facial animations as they perform. Basically, it would be similar to how a Transformer's face is animated in the live-action films. (The mask would obviously have to be brought to life for the big screen with motion-capture). The mask comes equipped with its own AI system, allowing Destro to essentially view the battlefield in the same way that Iron Man does. Destro's helmet and Warmaster gloves will be his greatest assets amongst the arsenal of M.A.R.S. tech he utilizes, being partly inspired by Mandalorian gauntlets and Iron Man's weaponry. The Warmasters will be prototypes that Destro designed himself and he keeps the schematics to his gloves and mask close to his chest, unwilling to sell those particular secrets to anyone. These little gadgets will be Destro's secret weapons. Like Iron Man's gauntlets, the Warmasters are bulletproof, but each glove is equipped with different gadgets and weapons. The idea is that with each film, Destro's tech receives upgrades as new

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models are designed thanks to the influence of advanced alien tech. The left arm can have a taser, a flamethrower and a one-time-use gas canister that emits clouds of smoke, while the right arm has a laser and a single-use rocket launcher like Iron Man's gauntlets. But as the films go by, Destro will add modifications to the Warmaster gloves, like sonic cannons, energy shields, wrist blades, etc. He can even have a collection of Warmaster gloves that each come with different abilities, similar to Peacemaker's collection of helmets in the *DCU*. At first, I think Destro can start off with having a knife in his boot that later becomes his hidden blades in his Warmasters. But his primary weapons should be his own personal firearms, like his heavy pistol and hand-to-hand combat training. I also think it would be cool if Destro occasionally strapped on a M.A.R.S. Industries jetpack and used it in tandem with an automatic rifle, raining down suppressing fire from above the battlefield. Last but not least, the final piece I would like to add to Destro's armament would be a futuristic version of his family's ancestral claymore sword, where the crossguard folds closed when sheathed on his back and when he draws the blade, the crossguard pops open and is ready for action. Perhaps for the *G.I. Joe/Transformers* crossover, Destro will have a compartment in his Warmasters where he can disperse a swarm of Insecticon drones for espionage.