

coverstory
BY GEORGE DICKIE



"Marvel's M.O.D.O.K." premieres Friday on Hulu.

'Marvel's M.O.D.O.K.' proves that even evil megalomaniacs can have their problems

He may be a Mental Organism Designed Only for Killing, but the title character in a stop-motion animated Marvel series upcoming on Hulu is really just an insecure little boy at heart.

In "Marvel's M.O.D.O.K.," premiering Friday, May 21, we are introduced to M.O.D.O.K. (voice of Patton Oswalt), a canister-shaped, clearly immature megalomaniac who floats around in his hover chair and vaporizes any who get in his way. He's the head of A.I.M., short for Advanced Idea Mechanics, whose motto is "settling for nothing less than conquering the world."

But the reality is A.I.M. is in trouble. Years of producing hair-brained tech toys like a Fitbit for pets and a cerebral cortex manipulator have left the firm in dire financial straits and even his right hand Monica (voice of Wendi McLendon-Covey) thinks he should step down. Worse, the search engine GRUMBL has designs on a buyout.

Things at home aren't much better. Wife Jodie (voice of Aimee Garcia), a social media star, has had it with her husband's selfish, self-involved behavior and offspring Lou and Melissa (Ben Schwartz, Melissa Fumero) don't have much of a relationship with him, either.

So with his company and his family life in ruins, M.O.D.O.K. is in for fight of his life.

The series was created by Oswalt and Jordan Blum and is based on the character from the Marvel Comic universe.

"There's this humor already built into the character of this megalomaniacal supervillain with a huge ego," Blum explains,

"who has this self-doubt that kind of creeps through. And it drives him, and it makes him want to be taken seriously and want to be seen as something more. So having this as the basis of who this character was in the Marvel comics and then being able to explore that, you know, with his family and how he's seen at work, it kind of just lent itself to this type of show."

"We went back and looked at the original 'M.O.D.O.K.' comics," adds Oswalt, a longtime Marvel fan, "and he ... wasn't meant to be comedic, but he's so over-the-top rageful that a lot of (the scenes are) very unintentionally funny, I think. He is truly his own worst enemy. And as far as the blood and gore, we decided to take it to just Monty Python level so it doesn't feel offensive or disturbing. It's hilarious. We just said, 'Let's go way over the top with it.'"

Oswalt, who has an extensive voice-acting resume that includes the TV series "BoJack Horseman," "Spider-Man" and "American Dad" and the feature films "Ratatouille" and "The Secret Life of Pets 2," says he had no problem coming up with the voice of a childish megalomaniac.

"I hate to say this because he's such a twisted, damaged character," he says, "but M.O.D.O.K.'s voice is just an amplified ... more treble-y version of my own voice. It's me when I'm at my most whiniest and angriest and petty. So that's all I had to do, was sort of crank it up that way. He was very, very fun to vocalize."

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