

= Static Shock =

Static Shock is an American animated television series based on the Milestone Media / DC Comics superhero Static . It premiered on September 23 , 2000 , on The WB Television Network 's Kids ' WB ! block programming . Static Shock ran for four seasons , with 52 half @-@ hour episodes in total . The show revolves around Virgil Hawkins , an African @-@ American boy who uses the secret identity of Static after exposure to a mutagen gas during a gang fight gave him electromagnetic powers . Part of the DC animated universe , the series was produced by Warner Bros. Animation from a crew composed mostly of people from the company 's past shows but also with the involvement of two of the comic 's creators , Dwayne McDuffie and Denys Cowan .

Static Shock had some alterations from the original comic book because it was oriented to a pre @-@ teen audience . Nevertheless , the show approached several social issues , which was positively received by most television critics . Static Shock was nominated for numerous awards , including the Daytime Emmy . Some criticism was directed towards its jokes ? which were said to be stale and too similar to Spider @-@ Man style ? and animation , which was said to be unnatural and overdated . The series also produced some related merchandise , which sold poorly ; McDuffie cited the low sales as one of the main factors behind the series ' cancellation . In spite of it , its popularity revived interest in the original Milestone comic and inserted McDuffie in the animation industry .

= = Plot = =

Virgil Hawkins is a fourteen @-@ year @-@ old African American who lives with his older sister Sharon and his widowed father Robert in Dakota City . He attends high school with his best friend Richie Foley , and has a crush on a girl named Frieda . He also has a dispute with a bully named Francis , nicknamed " F @-@ Stop . " A gang leader named Wade recently helped Virgil , hoping to recruit him , but Virgil is hesitant , as he knows his mother died in an exchange of gunfire between gangs . Wade eventually leads Virgil to a restricted area for a fight against F @-@ Stop 's crew , but it was interrupted by police helicopters . During the dispute with the police , chemical containers explode , releasing a gas that causes mutations among the people in the vicinity (This event was later known as " The Big Bang ") . As a result , Virgil obtains the ability to create , generate , absorb , and control electricity and magnetism ? he takes up the alter @-@ ego of " Static " . The gas also gives others in the area their own powers , and several of them become supervillains . The mutated people become meta @-@ humans known as " Bang Babies " , and their mutations apparently spread to other people around them .

= = Characters = =

Virgil Ovid Hawkins / Static (Phil LaMarr) ? A high school student in Dakota City . As a result of accidental exposure to an experimental mutagen in an event known as the Big Bang , he gained the ability to control and manipulate electromagnetism , and uses these powers to become a superhero named " Static . " Countless others who were also exposed also gained a wide variety of mutations and abilities , and Static spends much of his time dealing with these " Bang Babies " , many of whom use their abilities in selfish , harmful , and even criminal ways .

Richard " Richie " Osgood Foley / Gear (voiced by Jason Marsden) ? Virgil 's best friend and confidant . At first , he merely provides support for his friend , making gadgets for him and helping to cover for Virgil to protect his secret identity . In the third season , it is revealed Richie 's passive exposure to the Bang Gas gave him enhanced intelligence , which enabled him to easily invent rocket @-@ powered boots and " Backpack " , a highly intelligent multipurpose device worn on the back capable of surveillance and other semi @-@ independent activity . With this equipment , he adopted the superhero identity " Gear " and becomes Static 's full @-@ time partner in crime @-@ fighting .

Robert Hawkins (Kevin Michael Richardson) ? A social worker who runs the Freeman Community Center as head counselor . He is a widower and the single father of two teenagers ? Virgil and

Sharon . He dislikes gangs and the destructive attitudes of most Bang Babies , and his work at the community center is motivated by a desire to counteract their bad influence on young people .

Sharon Hawkins (Michele Morgan) ? Virgil 's older sister , Sharon attends college , but she still lives at home . She volunteers at a hospital , and counsels young people at the Freeman Community Center . While they do argue frequently , Sharon and Virgil really do care about each other and are quick to come to the other 's defense if one of them is in danger . After their mother died , Sharon took it upon herself to act as the woman of the house after , mostly when it comes to doling out chores between her and her brother and the cooking (which , at least according to Virgil , Sharon is not good at) .

Adam Evans / Rubber @-@ Band Man (voiced by Kadeem Hardison) ? A meta @-@ human whose body structure consists of shapeable rubber . He is the younger brother of Static 's archenemy , Ebon . Rubber @-@ Band Man first appears a tragic villain when he goes after an opportunistic record producer who stole one of his songs . He subsequently breaks out of prison but decides not to pursue a criminal career , however . He and Sharon eventually start dating , with Sharon helping Adam turn over a new leaf . He and Virgil initially clash , but Virgil comes to accept Adam 's relationship with his sister and they become allies in crime @-@ fighting , with Adam even becoming like an older @-@ brother figure to Virgil .

Ivan Evans / Ebon (voiced by Gary Sturgis) ? The head of a large group of Bang Babies called " The Meta @-@ Breed " and the series ' main villain . Ebon is an unusually powerful and strong meta @-@ human ; a living shadow and inter @-@ dimensional portal able to hide within , control and manipulate pure darkness and shadows , as well as transport others to various locations of his choice .

= = Production = =

The series was produced by Warner Bros. Animation based on the Milestone Media / DC Comics character Static . Its supervising producer was Alan Burnett and Scott Jeralds was the main producer under the executive production of Jean MacCurdy and Sander Schwartz . The production team was mostly composed by people who were involved with Batman : The Animated Series and Superman : The Animated Series , but also included Static 's co @-@ creator Denys Cowan . Although the show hired the comic series creator Dwayne McDuffie as story editor and writer , McDuffie had no direct involvement on the development of Static Shock . The idea of a Static cartoon first emerged with DC 's editor @-@ in @-@ chief Jenette Kahn during the time McDuffie was working for Milestone under Kahn . She proposed to adapt some of Milestone comics ; in 1993 , Burnett was hired to write a pilot episode for a X @-@ Men @-@ esque series with Milestone superheroes called The New Guard . After attemptings on producing several other Milestone projects , Static was eventually the series " they went for " . By the time Milestone and DC drafted their contract over DC distributing Milestone comics , the characters were from separate fictional universes . However , when crossovers between Static Shock and other DC animated series were suggested , it was established that they were from the same DC animated universe ? " rather than having to muck around with multiple dimensions , or whatever . "

Although McDuffie stressed that the show remains loyal to " the spirit and the tone " of the comic book , some changes were done because of its timeslot and target audience of pre @-@ teens . For example , guns appeared less frequently , Richie is not portrayed as a homosexual , and he is Virgil 's confidant instead of Frieda . Virgil is also younger in the animated series , his costumes and use of his powers are different than the original , and his mother is dead in the show despite she is alive in the comics . The latter change was done because producers had the intention " to focus on a strong , complex relationship between an African @-@ American father and son . " Nevertheless , McDuffie was concerned by the change because he originally intended to oppose the stereotype of black people not having a complete nuclear family . However , McDuffie said " that [it] worked out okay " as the crew could use the absence of Virgil 's mother to create a " couple of great stories " . Virgil 's father , Robert , " for all intents and purposes , is a new character " , as he was reconceptualized as a social worker . The same goes for Richie , who is described as an amalgam

of different characters from the original comic . For the villains , Hotstreak was reused from the Static comics , Edwin Alva was brought from another Milestone 's series ? Hardware ? , and the group Meta @-@ Breed was created for the TV series .

The third season of the show saw some of the biggest changes ; in addition of Richie 's superhero powers and a new opening , Static changed his costume . Cowan stated that the change was done to give his clothes a " feel of the comic book " , while McDuffie said it represented a growth that Virgil was passing through . This maturation made possible to " explore some of the darker places in his world , " to have more varied conflicts , as the villains have also become more mature . He described it is as " a natural outgrowth of all that , as is the new , more naturalistic look of the show . " This change was followed by the second season premiere ? " The Big Leagues " ? when Static meets Batman and Robin . Burnett said , " after that show , everybody went , ' Let 's go in that direction . ' " Writer John Semper , Jr. commented , " of course , I always lean toward the dramatic ... But the same old light @-@ hearted Static spirit is still there . " Richie gains superhero powers because it was becoming hard to fit him into the story and the producers wanted to keep the " chemistry " between voice actors LaMarr and Marsden . There was also a positive response from children in focus groups so " [t] he answer seemed pretty obvious . "

The series ' music director was Richard Wolf , while he , Stanley Clarke and Max Gousse were the composers , and Kennard Ramsey was the orchestrator . For action sequences , Wolf wanted to use " real adrenaline @-@ pumping beat " of 125 beats per minute ; however , hip hop music usually only reached 110 beats . The predominant score was electronica with some hip hop @-@ type and DMX @-@ type vocals . R & B and classic hip hop melodies were also used depending on the scenes , and each character had a specific theme . Wolf composed the opening theme for the first two seasons . Starting from the third season , the show had a new opening theme , written by Master P and Lil ' Romeo (and performed by the latter) .

= = Broadcast and release = =

Static Shock aired on the Kids ' WB ! programming block of The WB from September 23 , 2000 , until May 22 , 2004 . The first African American superhero @-@ centered television series , it ran a total of 52 episodes . Reruns of the series were shown on Cartoon Network , starting from December 2001 , and on Disney XD from February 2009 . The first six episodes were released to DVD on September 28 , 2004 , in a single DVD volume entitled " The New Kid " . The complete first season was made available for download on iTunes on July 4 , 2011 .

Static Shock 's episodes handle a variety of issues , including gangs , gun violence , homelessness , bullying , racism , mental illness , bigotry , and drugs . Other episodes also featured the subject of Chanukah and Christmas celebrations . The series was also marked by several crossover episodes with characters from the DC animated universe like Superman , Green Lantern , the Justice League , and the Batman Beyond cast . Several episodes also featured guest voice actors , including basketballers (like Shaquille O 'Neal , Karl Malone , Yao Ming , Tracy McGrady and Steve Nash) and musicians , such as the B2K group , Lil ' Romeo and the Backstreet Boys ' A. J. McLean . Guest crew was also featured , including cartoonist Rick Hoberg as storyboard artist , and Paul Dini and John Ridley as writers .

Static Shock was an extremely popular show , granting its new renewal for a second season just a month after its debut . As of December 2000 , it was the highest @-@ rated pre @-@ teen ? from 2 to 11 years ? show among all networks on its timeslot , and the third best on the Kids ' WB ! lineup . From its debut to July 2003 , the show secured the second post among boys aged 6 to 11 years . Ratings increased after Richie 's character obtained superhero powers ; McDuffie affirmed that this is what secured the renewal for a new season . Indeed , the show 's third season was its most popular and was the second best @-@ rated Saturday morning program among boys aged 6 to 11 years , and tweens and male tweens aged 9 to 14 . From February to April 2003 , ratings regularly performed over the 4 @. @ 0 stake among the public aged 9 to 14 years ; it even reached the 6 @. @ 4 mark in May . Static Shock 's last season was only surpassed by the children 's anime Pokémon , and the show 's reruns on Cartoon Network were only surpassed by the adult animated

sitcom Family Guy . Static Shock was the only program on Cartoon Network to be among the top 30 most watched kids shows in a week of October 2004 . It was also the best rated program of the channel among kids on a week of January 2005 , and the best rated show on Cartoon Network 's Miguzi block as of March 2005 . For the 2004 ? 05 season , it was the 18th most watched Saturday morning children 's show of all networks . Static Shock was ultimately cancelled due to the low production of associated merchandising products .

= = Reception = =

= = = Accolades = = =

Static Shock 's episode " The Big Leagues " earned director Dave Chlystek a nomination for Outstanding Achievement for Directing in an Animated Television Production at the 2002 Annie Awards . This episode was also nominated for a Golden Reel Award for Best Sound Editing in Television Animation in 2003 . That same year , for the episode " Jimmy " , McDuffie and Burnett were awarded the Humanitas Prize in the Children 's Animation Category in 2003 . At the 30th Daytime Emmy Awards in 2003 , the show was nominated for Special Class Animated Program and Richard Wolf was nominated for Achievement in Music Direction and Composition . At the 31st Daytime Emmy Awards in 2004 , both the animated series and Wolf were again nominated for the same categories ? this time , Wolf won the award .

= = = Reviews = = =

In The Superhero Book , Andy Mangels praised Static Shock 's multicultural approach , while Emily Ashby from Common Sense Media lauded it for encouraging diversity . Mangels declared that " Static Shock provides solid superheroic entertainment and a role model and promotion of diversity for not only African @-@ American viewers , but for audiences of all colors and ages . " Writing for Entertainment Weekly , Monique Jones praised the series for a positive depiction not only of an African American superhero but of an African country ? Ghana . Jones also commended how the series incorporated social issues in " an easily digestible " way without having to " sugarcoat " them . Lynne Heffley of Los Angeles Times commented it " isn 't your typical Saturday @-@ morning cartoon series " , praising its themes and electing the episode " Jimmy " ? about gun violence ? as an example . Evan Levine , writing for Rome News @-@ Tribune , asserted that " the series is at its best when it confronts issue actually facing kids . "

Jones commended Virgil 's portrayal as an everyman teenager , while Ashby appreciated Virgil 's " relatable " character . Ashby was also positive to the fact that Virgil usually counted on dialogues before going into action ; this action was also praised by John Sinnott of DVD Talk , who said it is " something that most animated heroes never think to do . " Ashby also applauded Virgil 's " surprising depth of character " to not follow a gang but to use his powers for good . In addition to describing it as " a surprising and sometimes rewarding success " , Leonard Pierce of The A.V. Club considered it to be " the most kid @-@ oriented of all the [DC animated universe] franchise 's shows . "

October 2001 issue of Wizard listed the 100 best cartoon shows ever as selected by their readers , with Static Shock ranked at number 88 . Jonathon Dornbush , in a 2014 Entertainment Weekly article , included it among the nine best comics @-@ based animated TV series . He asserted , " Static Shock didn 't have quite the name recognition of its DC brethren when it debuted , but the show proved it could stand alongside the greats . " Charlie Jane Anders , for io9 , ranked it 91th on a list of the best science fiction and fantasy shows ; she commented , " amidst a glut of superhero cartoons , this is one of the most memorable . "

While Levine praised " its bright , cartoony visuals [that] are a notch above those of many other animated series , " Sinnott considered some of the animation to be " a little stilted . " Sinnott called it " a fun series overall " , but considered some jokes to be " a little stale " . Neil Dorsett of DVD Verdict

was generally disappointed ; he called voice acting " very standard " , and said that " artwork and animation are also both behind the times " . Dorsett also criticized Virgil 's one @-@ lines , which " invites , like many other elements of the series , comparison to Spider @-@ Man . " He , however , pondered that his opinion may come from a bad first impression : " Although there are lots of things to nitpick about the show , there 's not really anything wrong with it . " Both Sinnott and Dorsett compared it unfavorably to the original comic book .

Entertainment Weekly 's Ken Tucker questioned why The WB made a TV show based on a cancelled , poorly @-@ sold comic and criticized the " uttering tired , condescending lines " professed by Virgil . Nancy Imperiale Wellons from the Orlando Sentinel said " Virgil has a believable relationship with his family -- including a strong father figure -- but the show 's pacing lags . " Paul Schultz wrote for the New York Daily News that " Many of the characters -- the conservative , the annoying sister -- are cliches . " Thelma Adams criticized the show in the New York Post ; first she called it " formulaic but appealing " and ultimately dubbed it " lame " .

= = Legacy = =

The show 's popularity led to new demand for Milestone 's Static comics : the first four issues of it were reissued as Static Shock : Trial by Fire in 2000 and a miniseries , Static Shock ! : Rebirth of the Cool , was released between January and September 2001 . In May 2003 , Midway Games announced the production of a platformer video game based on the show for the Game Boy Advance . Although it was displayed at the Electronic Entertainment Expo , the game was later cancelled . For a period starting on July 4 , 2004 , Subway Restaurants released a series of toys based on the TV series to be offered in the United States and Canada . On September 1 , 2004 , Scholastic Corporation published two tie @-@ in children 's books written by Tracey West .

McDuffie 's work on Static Shock placed him in the circles of animated series , and he became a writer and producer for shows like Justice League , Teen Titans , Justice League Unlimited , and Ben 10 : Alien Force . McDuffie was responsible for diversifying the DC animated universe 's Justice League by including black and female characters . Moreover , Arie Kaplan credits McDuffie and his co @-@ writers for giving " a depth and complexity " the group was lacking since the 1970s . A future , older version of Virgil appeared in the Justice League Unlimited episode " The Once and Future Thing , Part 2 : Time , Warped " in January 2005 .