

= Forbidden Zone =

Forbidden Zone is a 1980 American musical fantasy comedy film directed and produced by Richard Elfman . Co @-@ written by Elfman and fellow Mystic Knights member Matthew Bright , the film is based upon the stage performances of the Mystic Knights of the Oingo Boingo . Originally shot on black @-@ and @-@ white film , the story involves an alternate universe accessed through a door in the house of the Hercules family .

The composing debut of Richard Elfman 's brother Danny , the film stars Hervé Villechaize , Susan Tyrrell , and members of the Mystic Knights of the Oingo Boingo , and features appearances by Warhol Superstar Viva , Joe Spinell , and The Kipper Kids . Villechaize kicked his cheque back into the production and even painted sets on weekends . The only actual paid actor was Phil Gordon , who played Flash ; all the other SAG actors kicked their cheques back into the show .

The film was made as an attempt to capture the essence of The Mystic Knights of the Oingo Boingo 's live performances on film , and also as a means for both Richard Elfman to retire from music to work on film projects , and to serve as a transition between Oingo Boingo 's former cabaret style and a new wave @-@ based style . Amid negative reactions to content in the film that had been perceived as being offensive , the film was screened as a midnight movie , received positive notice , and developed a cult following . In 2004 , the film was digitally restored and released on DVD , and in 2008 , the film was colorized .

Richard Elfman is currently working on a sequel that is in pre @-@ production . He has also licensed Forbidden Zone as an intellectual property for manufacturers to produce collectibles based on the film 's characters .

= = Plot = =

The film begins on " Friday , April 17 " at 4 pm in Venice , California . Huckleberry P. Jones , local pimp , narcotics peddler and slumlord , enters a vacant house that he owns . While stashing heroin in the basement , he stumbles upon a mysterious door and enters it , falling into the Sixth Dimension , from which he promptly escapes . After retrieving the heroin , he sells the house to the Hercules family . On their way to school , Frenchy Hercules and her brother Flash have a conversation with Squeezit Henderson , who tells them that , while being violently beaten by his mother , he had a vision of his transgender sister René , who had fallen into the Sixth Dimension through the door in the Hercules ' basement .

Frenchy returns home to confide in her mother , and decides to take just a " little peek " behind the forbidden door in the basement . After arriving in the Sixth Dimension , she is captured by the perpetually topless Princess , who brings Frenchy to the rulers of the Sixth Dimension , the midget King Fausto and his queen , Doris . When the king falls for Frenchy , Doris orders their frog servant , Bust Rod , to lock her up . In order to make sure that Frenchy is not harmed , Fausto tells Bust Rod to take Frenchy to Cell 63 , where the king keeps his favorite concubines (as well as René) .

The next day at school , Flash tries to convince Squeezit to help him rescue René and Frenchy . When Squeezit refuses , Flash enlists the help of Gramps instead . In the Sixth Dimension , they speak to an old Jewish man who tells them how to help Frenchy escape , but they soon are captured by Bust Rod . Doris interrogates Flash and Gramps and then lowers them into a large septic tank . She then plots her revenge against Frenchy , relocating all the denizens of Cell 63 to a torture chamber . She leaves the Princess to oversee Frenchy 's torture and execution , but when a fuse is blown , the torture is put on hold and the prisoners from Cell 63 are relocated to keep the King from finding them .

After escaping the septic tank , Flash and Gramps come across a woman who tells them that she was once happily married to the king , until Doris stole the throne by seducing her , " even though she 's not my type " . The ex @-@ queen has been sitting in her cell for 1 @,@ 000 years , and has been writing a screenplay in order to keep her sanity . Meanwhile , Pa Hercules is blasted through the stratosphere by an explosion caused by improperly extinguishing his cigarette in a vat of highly flammable tar during his work break at the La Brea Tar Pit Factory . After re @-@ entry , Pa falls

through the Hercules family basement and into the Sixth Dimension , where he is imprisoned .

Finding a phone , Flash calls Squeezit and again asks for his help . Finally , Squeezit agrees to go into the Sixth Dimension to help rescue Frenchy and René . There , he is captured by Satan , with whom he makes a deal to bring him the Princess in exchange for Satan 's help freeing René and Frenchy . Squeezit accomplishes this task , but has failed to include himself in the deal to rescue his friends , and the devil has him decapitated . Queen Doris sends Bust Rod to keep an eye on the king , and to ensure he doesn 't find out where she 's hidden Frenchy .

Fausto catches Bust Rod and forces him to lead him to Frenchy and René , whom he orders to leave the Sixth Dimension to avoid the Queen 's wrath . However , en route to safety , René is stricken with pseudo @-@ menstrual cramps , and they are again captured by the frog . Squeezit 's head , which has now sprouted chicken wings , finds the king and informs him of what has happened .

While preparing to kill Frenchy , Doris is confronted by the ex @-@ queen , and the two engage in a cat @-@ fight , with Doris eventually coming out as the victor . Just as she is about to kill Frenchy , Fausto stops her , explaining that Satan 's Mystic Knights of the Oingo Boingo are holding the Princess hostage , and will kill her should anything befall Frenchy . Flash and Gramps arrive , and Flash is knocked down by Gramps . Ma Hercules enters and , seeing a seemingly dead Flash , shoots Doris . Fausto mourns Doris , then marries Frenchy .

The surviving characters look toward a great future as they plan to take over everyone and everything in the Galaxy .

= = Cast = =

Hervé Villechaize as King Fausto of the Sixth Dimension
Susan Tyrrell as Queen Doris of the Sixth Dimension / Ruth Henderson
Gisele Lindley as The Princess
Jan Stuart Schwartz as Bust Rod
Marie @-@ Pascale Elfman as Susan B. " Frenchy " Hercules
Virginia Rose as Ma Hercules
Ugh @-@ Fudge Bwana as Huckleberry P. Jones / Pa Hercules
Phil Gordon as Flash Hercules
Hyman Diamond as Gramps Hercules
Toshiro Boloney as Squeezit Henderson / René Henderson
Danny Elfman as Satan
Viva as The Ex @-@ Queen
Joe Spinell as Squeezit 's Father
The Kipper Kids as Themselves
Kedric Wolfe as Miss Feldman / Human Chandelier
Herman Bernstein as Mr. Bernstein , the Old Yiddish Man

= = Musical numbers = =

" Forbidden Zone " - Danny Elfman and The Mystic Knights of the Oingo Boingo
" Some of These Days " - Pa Hercules , Frenchy , and Ma Hercules
" Beautiful Dreamer " (Excerpt) - Ma Hercules
" Witch 's Egg " - Queen Doris
" Bim Bam Boom "
" Pleure " - Frenchy
" Alphabet Song " - Miss Feldman , Flash , Squeezit , and Chorus
" Queen 's Revenge " - Queen Doris , Frenchy , The Princess , René , and Chorus
" Pico and Sepulveda " - Pa Hercules and Chorus
" Squeezit the Moocher " - Squeezit , The Princess , Satan , and The Mystic Knights of the Oingo Boingo

" Yiddishe Charleston " - Mr. Bernstein and Queen Doris

" Finale " - Frenchy , King Fausto , Queen Doris , The Ex @-@ Queen , The Kipper Kids , The Mystic Knights of the Oingo Boingo , Flash , Gramps , René , Squeezit , Huckleberry , and Company

= = Production = =

= = = Development = = =

The Mystic Knights of the Oingo Boingo were formed in late 1972 by Richard Elfman , as a musical theatre troupe . As Richard 's interest shifted to filmmaking , he passed leadership of the band to younger brother Danny Elfman , who had begun to lose interest in musical theatre , and had gained interest in other musical styles such as ska , and had become " sick of lugging around so much stuff with the theatre troupe . Towards the end " , Elfman remembers , " it was a big production ... there was , like a semi full of stuff . And that was becoming burdensome . So , for me , the idea of being a band that can fit all their gear into a van and set up in a club , and an hour later be playing , became a goal . "

Production began during a transitional period when the group was moving from its cabaret style towards a more pop / rock format ; by the time the film was completed , the band had shortened its name to Oingo Boingo .

The film was originally conceived as The Hercules Family , a 16mm musical that consisted of twelve musical numbers and a story loosely constructed around them . But as the project grew to 35mm and the storyline evolved , Richard Elfman found himself re @-@ shooting many of the original scenes to fit the new film . Two sequences from the original 16mm footage were featured on the 2004 DVD release : one of Danny Elfman , as Satan , performing " Minnie the Moocher " (later reshot with visual elements borrowed from the original 16mm sequence and alternate lyrics) , and another of Marie @-@ Pascale Elfman , singing " Johnny " . The sequence with Elfman as Satan , and members of the Oingo Boingo as his minions , came from live shows , in which the band would perform Cab Calloway tunes like " St. James Infirmary Blues " in the same costumes .

Marie @-@ Pascale Elfman , at the time of shooting , was married to director Richard Elfman . She designed the film 's expressionistic sets and starred in the film . Actor and former Mystic Knight Gene Cunningham helped fund the film . When Cunningham and Elfman ran out of money during production , Richard and Marie @-@ Pascale Elfman helped finance by selling houses , before Carl Borack put money into the production in order for Elfman to complete the film . According to Elfman , he had originally intended the film to be screened in color , stating that the original plan was to ship the film to China , where each frame would be hand @-@ tinted , but that this plan was not practical within the production costs .

= = = Casting = = =

Actor Hervé Villechaize was a former roommate of co @-@ writer and co @-@ star Matthew Bright , Villechaize had previously dated co @-@ star Susan Tyrrell , but the two had already broken up by the time production on the film began . According to Richard Elfman , Tyrrell and Villechaize fought periodically throughout the production . The Elfmans ' grandfather , Herman Bernstein , also appeared in the film , and Richard Elfman 's accountant appeared under the name " Hyman Diamond " because Elfman had no idea whether or not he wanted to be credited . Others who worked on the film include The Kipper Kids (Brian Routh and Martin von Haselberg) , Joe Spinell , and former Warhol superstar Viva .

= = = Writing = = =

Forbidden Zone featured Bright 's first work on film , and his only work as an actor (under the name

" Toshiro Baloney ") . A founding member of the Mystic Knights , Bright later became a screenwriter and director in his own right . Bright 's credits include Freeway , Ted Bundy , and Tiptoes . Bright and director Richard Elfman 's only dispute during the screenwriting process was over a scene in which his character , Squeezit , was originally to have been beaten up for eight minutes and having the walls wiped with his blood . Another scene cut from the script would have had Squeezit being castrated . According to Bright , " I didn 't have any sense of limits or balance then , at the time , I ... you know , I was just , didn 't know what I was doing . I needed reining in . " During filming , Bright was sitting on the set in costume when a lighting stand fell onto his head , cracking his skull , and he had to be rushed to the hospital . When Bright returned to work the next day , he had a mild concussion and whiplash , but he continued with filming .

= = = Directing = = =

Richard Elfman had never gone to film school when production started , and " I didn 't know what I was getting into . " The production , from its original 16mm roots to its finish , took three years . Cast and crew members would sleep on the film 's stage , wearing spare gorilla suits to stay warm . Among the film 's artistic influences included 1940s big band and jazz music and Max Fleischer cartoons of the 1930s (such as Betty Boop) . Some of the film 's cast was made up of non @-@ professionals cast off the street . In one scene , Richard Elfman brought in a young man to mouth the words of " Bim Bam Boom " , but when he was put in front of the camera , he stood there as the scene was shot . Elfman left the scene in the film by editing in Bright 's lips over the actor 's face . Another scene featured homeless men .

= = = Animation = = =

The film 's animation was created by then @-@ unknown animator John Muto . Because of the film 's low budget , Muto created all of the film 's animation sequences himself . Muto made frequent use of airbrush techniques to establish for himself a distinctive style . For sequences in which live @-@ action and animation were combined , the actors were photographed in tight head @-@ on and profile shots , and the photos were cut out and pasted into the animation in a style recalling Terry Gilliam 's work on Monty Python 's Flying Circus . Muto also credits The Fleischer Brothers as another inspiration .

= = = Music = = =

Forbidden Zone was the first film scored by Danny Elfman , who would eventually score , among other films , Batman , The Nightmare Before Christmas , and Charlie and the Chocolate Factory . The song Witch 's Egg was written by Georg Michalski and Tyrrell . In some scenes , characters lip synch to old records , including recordings by Cab Calloway , Josephine Baker , and others .

The alphabet song performed in a classroom scene was inspired by the " Swinging the Alphabet " song from The Three Stooges short Violent Is the Word for Curly .

For the " Yiddishe Charleston " scene , Richard Elfman had shot the sequence with him lip @-@ syncing to an old recording of the song , but was later unable to acquire the rights to the recording , and had to record a new version of the song while attempting to sync the new recording with the footage .

= = Release = =

Forbidden Zone was given limited distribution during its initial theatrical release , and not well received by critics . Some of the film 's sequences and characters led to director Richard Elfman being accused of racism (because of its satirically surreal use of blackface) , and even anti @-@ Semitism . According to Elfman , " I was attacked on every level . [...] We were kicked out of theaters ; there were arson threats . " However , the film has since been rediscovered , and has

gained new life as a cult film .

On review aggregator website Rotten Tomatoes , the film has an 88 % score based on 8 reviews , with an average rating of 7 @. @ 1 / 10 .

The film 's soundtrack has also become popular , and its theme song was eventually reused by Danny Elfman , who rearranged it as The Dilbert Zone for use as the theme for the television series Dilbert .

= = Home media = =

The film was released on VHS in the late 1980s and on DVD by Fantoma in 2004 for Region 1 viewers , and in 2006 for Region 2 by Arrow Film Distributors Ltd. with a region @-@ free Blu @-@ ray release by Arrow in 2012

In 2008 , the film was colorized by Legend Films . This version of the film is being sold as a download and on DVD from RiffTrax .

= = Legacy = =

= = = Sequel = = =

In June 2009 , it was revealed that a sequel was in pre @-@ production .

= = = Stage show = = =

In 2010 , Forbidden Zone was performed as a live stage show with the support of Richard Elfman . It is a production of the Sacred Fools Theater Company , and premiered there in Los Angeles on Friday , May 21 , 2010 .

= = = Mixed media = = =

Richard Elfman entered into a licensing deal with the creative resource company , PANGEA , to provide licensees with the opportunity to create merchandise based on the cult film . According to articles that appeared in the media on May 3 , 2016 , the arrangement calls for content to be created that will include a Storyboard Book of the original film , featuring commentary and anecdotal notes from director . Shot glasses and sculpted pieces were among the list of immediate items that would be released . A fantasy novella series was also noted as being under development .

Rocky Horror " shadow cast " companies have begun performing screenings of the film . Elfman sometimes participates in these live performances . He enters in a clown suit and beats a big bass drum that is accompanied by a Brazilian percussion ensemble ? reminiscent of his former group , the Mystic Knights of the Oingo Boingo .

The Syfy Channel has run a teaser piece musical number , " Princess Polly " from Forbidden Zone 2 : The Forbidden Galaxy on its show Monster Man , starring Cleve Hall . Elfman opens the Forbidden Zone shadow cast shows (after the march in) with Erin Holt singing Princess Polly live in front of her screened ? monster ? image on stage .