



SMASH!

STORY BY
CHRIS BAKER
WITH
STEVE ALMANZI

**THIS
SUMMER,
THE WORLD IS
SEEING GREEN**



**THE
GAME**
PG 80
UNLEASH
THE MONSTER
ON YOUR PS2!



**THE
MOVIE**
PG 84
THRILL TO
UNIVERSAL'S
SMASH HIT!



**THE
HISTORY**
PG 86
EXPERIENCE
WHAT OUR HERO
IS ALL ABOUT!

Massive exposure to gamma radiation causes death in normal human beings. But Bruce Banner is no normal human being. When the blast from an experimental gamma bomb hit the brilliant scientist, it didn't kill him—it only made him stronger. Now, when Banner

gets mad, you'd better hope he stops at just getting even. He gets big. He gets mean. He gets green. He becomes the Hulk. Trust us. You wouldn't like him when he's angry.
Or maybe you would.
Since 1962, the beast fueled by Banner's rage has enthused fans of superheroes (make that

super-*ant*heroes) all over the world. A little bit Frankenstein's monster and a little bit Mr. Hyde, the Hulk has stood the test of time as a genuine icon of American pop culture. A staple in the Marvel Comics lineup for hundreds of issues, he has also starred in several cartoon series and one of the best superhero-

based shows in television history. And he's just getting started.
This summer, Universal Pictures introduces the Jade Giant to the silver screen in *The Hulk*, a film certain to rank among the year's biggest blockbusters. Not to be outdone, Universal Interactive's new PS2 release of the same name offers

gamers a chance to relive scenes from the movie while experiencing the character's comic-book roots.
Never before has the character created by writer Stan Lee and artist Jack Kirby enjoyed such prominence.
There's really only one word for it: incredible.

THE HULK



THE GAME

It's a good thing Bruce Banner isn't a gamer. We all know what happens when he gets angry—and the disappointing quality of games thus far that star his alter ego would definitely set off the beast that lies within, quite possibly sending the Hulk on a rampage throughout the videogame industry.

Luckily, fans of the green-skinned behemoth now have a

chance to see their hero star in a game worth playing. Universal Interactive's *The Hulk*, based in the same universe as Universal Pictures' soon-to-be-a-smash movie (check out page 84), is a PS2 game developed with one thing in mind: "We

wanted to make this character feel like the Hulk," says Jeff Barnhart, the game's producer. "Giving him abilities and game mechanics that are like, 'Wow, I could only ever do this if I was the Hulk.'"

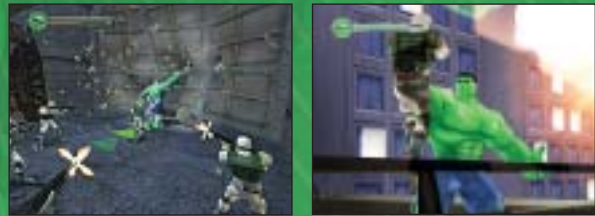
With this mindset, the development team at Radical Entertainment focused its thoughts on how it could make you feel as green-skinned and gamma-irradiated as possible. As a result, nearly anything you've ever seen the Hulk do is something you can

accomplish in the game. Beyond the typical punching and kicking prevalent in *The Hulk's* beat-em-up genre, the character's trademark moves, like the Thunder Clap and Ground Stomp, prove crucial to your success.

These particular moves grow even more outstanding when coupled with Rage Boosts, a gameplay element designed to emulate the fact that as the Hulk gets angrier, he also gets stronger. "As you're taking damage, it's taking away your life," says Barnhart, "but the Hulk

gets angrier and angrier, so then, you've got access to these special moves. Slam your hands into the ground and it's one of those things that makes you go, 'Wow, I'm the Hulk! I just shook the ground here and 10 guys flew up in the air. And things that were surrounding me blew up, and the walls got knocked down, and cars flew across the room.'"

The really neat part about the flying debris? It all reacts in a manner that would please even a physicist like Banner. "Because the Hulk is going to



THE LEADER



ORIGIN: Who would have thought a high-school dropout like Samuel Sterns could come so close to taking over the world on multiple occasions? Sterns' accidental exposure to gamma radiation

yielded a result totally opposite Banner's: Instead of turning him from a genius into a dim-witted, muscle-bound monster, the gamma rays changed him from a moron into Earth's most brilliant criminal mastermind. Now, with a cranium five times its original size (plus some really nasty boils), the Leader seeks nothing less than world domination.

IN THE GAME: Masterminding a plot to take over the world, the Leader confronts you near the end of the game. Without

giving away too much, know that it takes both Banner and the Hulk to bring him down. The fighting methods you've perfected up to this point should serve you well in defeating the big-headed psycho. But just because you beat the Leader doesn't mean the game is over....

FIRST APPEARANCE:
Tales to Astonish #62

interact with so many things, you can't just have canned animations for how things are going to react," says Barnhart. "This is what the entire game is about, so you have to have physics for things getting knocked back according to how hard the Hulk hits them, and where he hits them, and what he hits them with. If the Hulk's gonna pick up an object and throw it into another object, you need real physics for how those things are going to react."

A physics engine like *The Hulk's* truly enhances the experience. As Barnhart says, "The level can happen in different ways every time you play it. Like that opening level where you're at the gas station [in the desert]—I think every time I play that level, I do it in a different way. One time, I'll go for the helicopters right away, and another time I'll pick up a car and swipe soldiers with it. There's so much stuff to do!"

The Hulk doesn't end with ruthless destruction, either. A few games, like *Batman: Vengeance* or *Superman: Shadow of Apokolips*—and even the not-so-incredible 16-bit *Hulk* games—feature the occasional level with a Bruce Wayne or Clark Kent. But never before has such prominence been given to a superhero's alter ego as it is in the stealth missions of *The Hulk*.

"All the smashing and destruction can wear you out!" laughs Barnhart. "[The stealth gameplay] is always changing

things up and changing the way you're thinking about the game. And it's another way to deliver what this character is about.

"The Hulk has always been very two-sided, right?" he continues. "You've got Banner trying to repress his rage and cure himself, and then the Hulk side where it's all about rage and destruction. In every good story-based thing I've ever read or watched, one thing that sucks me in the most is when I'm following the story for one character and it really has me interested, and it gets really exciting and goes onto another chapter, and then they cut to another character. It's like—boom!—another story. So it's kind of the same thing with this game, where I think it's another hook for the player to get all excited about the Bruce Banner gameplay. You turn on the game—boom!—you've got a great Hulk level. And just when you can't get enough of it, here's Bruce Banner stuff. And then you're like, 'Oh man, I can't wait till I get back to another Hulk level.' Then you start playing Banner and you're like, 'Oh, this is really fun. I can't wait to see what the next Bruce Banner level is.' And then—boom!—it's another Hulk level. It's kind of teasing you overall—you want to play both things. It makes the experience more rich,

FLUX AND GENERAL RYKER

ORIGINS: "He don't officially exist," Sgt. Nick Fury once told the Hulk of Gen. Ryker. "He's involved in some nasty, nasty stuff. The worst kind of psycho—one with resources. He sees himself as Ahab, an' you're the big white whale." Ryker's fascination with the Hulk rests not in wanting to destroy Banner's alter ego inasmuch as wanting to learn from it

so he can make his own monstrosities—monstrosities like Flux, a less-powerful, deformed version of the Hulk created by Ryker after he subjected Pvt. Benjamin Tibbetts to gamma radiation.

IN THE GAME: You don't actually fight Ryker, but he is featured prominently in the story, and you do hear him bark orders to Flux during a boss fight. Much of your fight with Flux comes down to straight brawling ability [just like other



bosses, walk away once you've knocked him to the ground], but you'll have a much easier time if you manage to destroy all of the consoles in the room and throw Flux into the middle. This is easier if you can coerce him to throw his grenades in the vicinity of a console.



FIRST APPEARANCE:
The Incredible Hulk [vol.3] #17

FIRST APPEARANCE:
The Incredible Hulk [vol.3] #14

INCREDIBLE TIMELINE

Compiled By Steve Almanzi, webmaster of *The Lair of the Grey Hulk*: <http://www.geocities.com/lairofthegreyhulk>

May 1962: *The Incredible Hulk* #1

The first appearance of the Hulk may catch you off guard—Bruce Banner's monstrous form actually has gray skin. Writer Stan Lee didn't like the way the color turned out—by Issue #2, the Hulk was green.

March 1963: *The Incredible Hulk* #6

The last issue in the first run of *Incredible Hulk* books is published. Who's to blame? The punk kids who spent their 12 pennies on *The Amazing Spider-Man*, *The Mighty Thor*, and *The Fantastic Four* instead.

March 1963: *The Fantastic Four* #12

Madness ensues when Gen. Ross mistakes the Thing of the *Fantastic Four* for the Hulk. Along with the FF's appearance in *Amazing Spider-Man* #1, this marks the first character crossover in Marvel history.

Sept. 1963: *The Avengers* #1

The Avengers superteam is formed, incorporating the Hulk as a founding member along with Thor, Iron Man, Ant-Man, and the Wasp.



THE HULK

because you have access to so much more stuff."

In order to grant you more gameplay access, Radical used some access of its own. "[The Universal Pictures] guys were like, 'We want the game guys involved from day one,'" says Barnhart. "So two years ago, when they had their early scripts and storyboards, they were working hand in hand with the Radical guys, saying, 'Come on down to the lot. Come check out what we have.'"

What they had was pretty much everything a game developer could want. The movie's art director granted the team access to a whole trailer full of art being used in the film, including

maquettes, concept art, and storyboard. The game's opening cut-scene proves as much. "If you've seen the trailers, you'll probably recognize when Banner goes up into the bathroom and washes his hands and the Hulk comes through the mirror," says Barnhart. "We got those storyboards when Universal Pictures originally had them. We took the storyboards and made the game from them, and they took them and made the film."

Universal Pictures also granted Radical an on-site look at the film's sets. "We'd walk around and take photos," says Barnhart, who goes on to describe a certain mission in which Banner [voiced by the

character's onscreen persona, Eric Bana] disguises himself as a guard. "When you go up that level's final elevator, that was a set where we just walked around taking photos. When I was walking around there in the game, it was just so weird 'cause it was like virtual reality. I was actually there! When people play the game and see the film or see the film and play the game, they're going to totally recognize that and be like, 'Oh wow! How cool.' And yet it's going to take place in a different timeframe."

The Hulk picks up a year after the events of the movie, yet manages to incorporate settings from the film in a

way that makes sense within the context of the story.

It's with this story that Radical's good relationship with Marvel Enterprises came in especially handy. With Radical, Marvel, and Universal all working hand in hand, "it was kind of like this nice little Triforce of joint collaboration to get this thing to work," recalls Barnhart.

The team, whose lead designers Barnhart describes as "so hardcore fans of the *Hulk* comics," was able to choose any villains from the Hulk's rogues gallery, eventually deciding on Ravage, Half-Life, Madman, Flux, and—most diabolical of them all—the

Leader. (Not familiar with these guys? Check out their bios throughout this feature.) "What made us decide on which ones to pick was all about gameplay," informs Barnhart. "We chose great villains that fit into our story well but that also made each boss fight kind of unique."

In the story, the Leader allies himself with a team of Hulk foes with a mind [a *big* mind] to—you guessed it—take over the world. Using the very same gamma orb that transforms Ravage into a Hulk-like being—and has the power to cure Banner of his curse—the Leader aims to create an army of gamma soldiers. Starting in the



desert (a flashback), the Hulk and Banner find themselves visiting other locales from the film, such as San Francisco and the military base. The game ends aboard the Leader's ship with a plot twist of sorts when both Banner and the Hulk confront the big-brained megalomaniac.

The comic-book influence on *The Hulk* strongly influenced the game's beautiful mix of realistic and cel-shaded graphics. "We thought, 'what a cool way to kind of bring all that together, by creating this new version of cel-shading,'" Barnhart tells us. "You cel-shade it in a way that doesn't make it feel cartoony, but makes it look like kind of a combination of realism from the film and a comic look. And then we're like, 'Gosh, not only does this kind of bring these two universes together, but—wow—this looks really cool!' There're no other games that do that type of cel-shading."



And Barnhart doesn't deny the Hulk-sized pressure associated with pleasing fans who are tired of their only good gaming experience with the Jade Giant coming courtesy of Capcom fighting games. "It's humongous!" he admits. "It was very overwhelming—something that was a huge challenge. But very fun at the same time."

Yes, fun...not unlike the game itself. If Bruce Banner ever decides to take up gaming, *The Hulk* might not be a bad place for him to start. ■ ■ ■

HALF-LIFE

ORIGIN: Tony Materson is dead. When a gamma bomb exploded a little too near the Colorado-based English teacher, the blast killed him instantly. Or did it? At night, Materson rises from his grave in the form of Half-Life, an undead being who feeds off the energy of others simply by touching them. He may not have the Hulk's power, but he easily bests the Jade Giant in quickness—and if the Hulk touches Half-Life, the zom-



bielike being can weaken our hero and grow stronger with the life energy he has drained. **IN THE GAME:** "Half-Life makes you fight so differently," says Barnhart of the energy vampire. "You can't touch him." Instead, your best bet is to use the environment to your advantage. Once you smash the generators in the area, you can use the rods on the ground as

base-ball bats as you attempt to whap your ultraquick foe into the electricity for megadamage. Throwing crates, forklifts, and other heavy things also proves effective, and you might even want to risk losing a bit of energy with a powerful punch from the air.

FIRST APPEARANCE: *The Incredible Hulk* [vol. 2] #334

MADMAN

ORIGIN: In graduate school, Phil Sterns (who just so happens to be the Leader's younger brother) struggled through the same nuclear physics class as Bruce Banner, whom he idolized from afar. As years passed, Banner became a prominent scientist while Sterns barely managed to pay his bills. He did keep tabs on Banner, however, and eventually learned of his hero's monstrous secret. Sterns then submitted himself to gamma radiation, hoping for

similar results. He got them—in the form of Madman. The only problem: His smarter, more aggressive, redder alter ego soon took over, complete with stamina and durability similar to the Hulk's. **IN THE GAME:** Madman wants to turn Betty into a gamma beast, and only the Hulk can stop him. "Try to destroy the machine and then fight him one-on-one," hints Barnhart. So, focus your attention first on destroying the four consoles. Then, be sure to dodge Madman's long-range



attacks (not to mention the pesky guards out to get you). He's no faster than you, so you shouldn't have much trouble grabbing him with Circle or slamming down hard on him from the air.

RAVAGE

ORIGIN: When Bruce Banner was studying physics as an undergrad at Desert State University, Dr. Geoffrey Crawford took the brilliant student under his wing. Years later, Banner rekindled his friendship with Crawford, who claimed to have found a cure for his Hulk transformations. As Banner soon found out, though, the wheelchair-bound professor had other ideas in mind. By deceiving his pupil, Crawford became a Hulk-like creature of his own, freeing

himself from his crippled state. As Ravage, Crawford maintains his intelligence yet uses his gamma-fueled powers with evil intent. **IN THE GAME:** Ravage may be the first villain you encounter, but don't expect to fight him until later. Perhaps more than any other boss fight in the game, this is a true grudge match. Just like Hulk, Ravage slams the ground hard, causing stalactites and other debris to fall on you. "That's also his Achilles' heel," says Barnhart.

"You can just pick those things up and throw them—that's what hurts him the most."



FIRST APPEARANCE: *The Rampaging Hulk* [vol. 2] #2

Sept. 1964: *Tales to Astonish* #59

The Hulk battles Giant-Man in this monthly Marvel series. In the following issue, his own stories are told for half of each book. Namor the Sub-Mariner takes Giant-Man's place beginning with *TTA* #70.

Aug. 1965: *Tales to Astonish* #70

For the first time, Bruce Banner maintains his intellect while in Hulk form.



Jan. 1967: *Tales to Astonish* #87

For the first time, the Hulk publicly changes back into Bruce Banner, revealing his secret at last. Significantly present at this scene are Betty Ross, "Thunderbolt" Ross, and Glenn Talbot.

April 1967: *Tales to Astonish* #90

Hulk's most powerful foe, the Abomination, debuts. Covered with lizardlike scales, he's smarter, bigger, stronger...and uglier.



April 1968: *The Incredible Hulk* [vol. 2] #102

Namor and the Hulk say good-bye to *Tales to Astonish*, as the newly dubbed *The Incredible Hulk* continues *Tales*' numbering and dedicates all its pages to its green-skinned namesake.

March 1970: *The Incredible Hulk* [vol. 2] #125

The Absorbing Man, who can absorb the physical properties of anything he touches, becomes one of the Hulk's deadliest, baldest foes.



July 1971: *The Incredible Hulk* [vol. 2] #141

Out of curiosity, Dr. Leonard Samson irradiates himself with gamma-particle energy drained from the Hulk. He gains 200 pounds of muscle, fights Hulk, and later becomes one of Banner's great friends.

THE HULK



THE MOVIE



Photo illustration by 2Face

Sam Raimi wowed moviegoers with *Spider-Man*. Bryan Singer's *X-Men* films are only getting better. Now, it's Ang Lee's turn to debut one of Marvel Comics' most iconic superheroes on the big screen. And based on the buzz behind Universal Pictures' biggest summer blockbuster, the respect Raimi and Singer have paid to their respective franchises may not hold a gamma ray to Lee's dedication to *The Hulk*.

"The Hulk is the first Marvel creature in the comic-book world that is a mixture of monster and superhero," says Lee, whose attention to detail has reportedly resulted in the likes of two-hour discussions on how a certain major character might eat a chicken wing. "I think it's possible to do a mixture in a very emotional way. We all have that Hulk inside of us—that alter ego."

No one shows that side of his personality to the world in quite the same manner as that poultry connoisseur himself, Dr. Bruce Banner, played by Eric Bana (*Black Hawk Down*). "There's so much soul-searching in this character," Bana tells us. "He's a somewhat confused individual. On the surface is a scientist and that kind of thing—underneath, there's a dark past. He isn't completely in touch with what has occurred and why. As the movie progresses, he gets closer to discovering those dark secrets and repressed memories."

Hot off *A Beautiful Mind* (and, well, just plain hot), Oscar-winner Jennifer Connelly plays Betty Ross, whose attraction to Bruce is based largely on trying to figure him out. "Betty Ross finds herself in love with somebody. She doesn't know who or what he is," Writer/Co-producer James Schamus told *USA Today*. "Her quest to find the truth is also a quest to fully realize her love."

Nick Nolte's (*48 Hours*) role as Bruce's abusive father, David, factors heavily into his son's disturbed psyche. Also a scientist, David may have instilled much more in Bruce than inner rage and resentment. "I improved on nature, a million times more powerful!" he boasts in the film.

After a gamma-radiation experiment goes awry, we know

exactly what Bruce's pop means. Complicating matters, the military doesn't take kindly to green muscle-bound freaks on a rampage. Major Glenn Talbot (Josh Lucas, *Sweet Home Alabama*) and Betty's father, General Thaddeus "Thunderbolt" Ross (Sam Elliott, *We Were Soldiers*), lead the charge to bring down the Hulk, who is brought to life by incredible computer imagery courtesy of Industrial Light & Magic.

Lee may treat his virtual actor with more care and precision than his real ones. In fact, daily supervision by the man best known for directing *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* ensured that ILM created a realistic-looking Hulk, complete with facial hair, pores, and muscles that respond to movement in an anatomically appropriate manner.

Acting alongside a 15-foot synthespian who wasn't actually there for the shooting proved unsettling for Connelly. "I'm looking at pieces of pink tape on the cutout head," she recalled to *Vanity Fair*. "There's nothing there! It's a little humiliating."

It didn't take long for Connelly to get used to her situation, however, and the onscreen result should exemplify what Lee values to an even greater degree than CGI (or even proper chicken consumption): a thrilling yet serious, emotional story.

Nolte was skeptical before he accepted his role. "I wasn't interested in just doing a cartoon," he told *DarkHorizons.com*. "Ang came to the house and said, 'Look, Nick, I don't know how to do a cartoon. But I do know how to make a Greek tragedy.' So I said, 'If we go for a Greek tragedy, I'll go for it.'"

Marvel producer Avi Arad applauds Lee for going the extra three-mile leap to shake the "just a comic movie" stigma. "Usually, a director like Lee reacts to a story he can tell," he says. "Audiences should think of *The Hulk* as an art film with amazing action and a big budget."

Even with talk of a sequel already making the rounds, based on his remarks to *Entertainment Weekly*, it sounds like Lee needs a break: "When this is over, anything green is going to make me want to Hulk out."

Nov. 1974: *The Incredible Hulk* [vol. 2] #181
Wolverine makes his first full appearance as a Canadian operative in pursuit of the Hulk!



Nov. 11, 1977: *The Incredible Hulk* TV pilot
The Hulk's live-action debut changes the comics. Bill Bixby plays Dr. David Banner (no Bruce), and a green-painted Lou Ferrigno takes over when he gets angry.

Feb. 1980: *The Savage She-Hulk* #1
The She-Hulk is born as a result of a blood transfusion Banner provides to save the life of his cousin, Jennifer Walters. Green chicks = hot.



June 1981: *The Incredible Hulk* [vol. 2] #260
Major Glenn Talbot pilots a plane trying to take down the Hulk. Hulk takes down the plane and Talbot is killed.

May 1982: *The Incredible Hulk* TV series, "A Minor Problem"
There's one major problem in this, the last, episode of *The Incredible Hulk*: It ends with a never-resolved cliffhanger!

1984: *QuestProbe Featuring the Hulk*
Computer gamers get a chance to take part in the Hulk experience in this text-based adventure. It's not exactly as visceral as Universal's game.

May 1986: *The Incredible Hulk* [vol. 2] #319
After a 24-year courtship, Dr. Robert Bruce Banner and Betty Ross are finally wed! (How do they stay looking so young?!)



THE HULK

THE HISTORY



THE MONSTER IS BORN

In 1961, Marvel Comics writer Stan Lee and artist Jack Kirby revitalized superhero comic books by creating *The Fantastic Four*. The duo hoped to continue that success the following year with a new project. Inspired since his youth by Boris Karloff's rendition of the monster in *Frankenstein*, Lee set out to create his own misunderstood monster with whom readers could sympathize. When he realized a cerebral side was also needed to keep the character interesting, he recalled Robert Louis Stevenson's classic novel *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*. "The idea of a character transforming from normal to monstrous and back to

normal again intrigued me," Lee writes in his foreword to *Hulk: The Incredible Guide*.

By January 1962, Lee's tragic tale had intrigued its own readers. Set at a desert facility run by the U.S. Department of Defense, the story opened with Dr. Bruce Banner preparing to test his much-ballyhooed "G-bomb," a gamma-radiation bomb created at the height of the Cold War in order to deter a nuclear attack. After weeks of setbacks—many caused by a frustrated Soviet spy named Igor Drenkov—Gen. Thaddeus "Thunderbolt" Ross grew impatient and ordered the countdown to begin. At the same time, Banner noticed a teenager named Rick Jones driving his car through the site on a dare. In an act of heroism, Banner rushed to rescue the teen and managed to throw him into a ditch moments before the bomb detonated. One problem, though—Banner didn't quite make it that far.

Miraculously, the brilliant scientist survived the blast, but he began to experience unbearable pain as gamma radiation flowed through his body. Banner suffered for the next several hours until night set in, at which point his body underwent an awesome, horrific, and incredible transformation: He became the monster known as the Hulk.

Soon after the events of his first comic, the Hulk began to adapt into his more traditionally known form. Because Lee and Kirby preferred the color green's look on the comic-book page, they changed the creature's original gray

hue. And rather than have the absence of daylight trigger Banner's transformation, the creators decided that strong feelings—like anger and fear—would provide the catalyst.

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST

Since page two of *The Incredible Hulk* #1, Betty Ross has been there. The daughter of Gen. Ross, she spent her early years as a military brat on the move. Then she met a shy, sensitive physicist named Bruce Banner—a sharp contrast to the tough-as-nails soldier types she'd grown accustomed to. From their very first meeting, Betty felt something special for Banner—but when the person you're in love with turns into a raging monster hated by the world, it tends to complicate matters.

Throughout the years, many factors prevented the couple from hearing wedding bells. Above all, Gen. Ross detested Banner's green alter ego. At one point, everyone believed Banner dead though the Hulk lived, so Betty married his rival, Maj. Glenn Talbot. Soon after, a supervillain named MODOK submitted Betty to gamma rays, transforming her into the evil birdlike Harpy—one of the few creatures who ever defeated the Hulk. Betty eventually reverted to normal, though, and divorced Talbot. By 1986, she and Banner wed, and despite their marriage's rocky points (including a miscarriage three years later), the two loved each other until Betty's tragic death at the hands of the Abomination in 1998.

GREEN AND GRAY

Although most people know the Hulk as a green-skinned, dim-witted beast incapable of constructing a proper sentence, Banner's alter ego actually takes many forms. When Banner was a child, his father abused him, leading to his multiple-personality disorder later in life. The gamma radiation he was exposed to simply unleashed the other beings within him, each manifesting itself as a different Hulk.

Several incarnations have presented themselves, but the green Savage Hulk (as opposed to Professor Hulk or Mindless Hulk) is the one you're probably most familiar with. His limited vocabulary, childlike nature, and need to be alone represent Banner's powerless inner child. Of course, being the strongest version, Savage Hulk is anything but powerless.

Though Gray Hulk resulted as a misprint of sorts from the first *Hulk* issue, writers in the 1980s resurrected him to add more complexity to the character. Very intelligent, but not as big or strong as Savage Hulk, Gray Hulk is still a brute—not someone you'd wanna mess with. Once, while the world believed the Hulk was dead, Gray Hulk managed to sequester his Banner side. Naming himself Joe Fixit, he worked as an enforcer for a Las Vegas casino owner—beating the crap out of people was part of his job, and he loved it. Eventually, however, Banner fought his way back as the dominant personality.



Wanna learn more about the Hulk's long (and confusing!) history? Check out Tom DeFalco's excellent *Hulk: The Incredible Guide* from DK Publishing or Marvel's own *Hulk Encyclopedia*.



Interested in reading *Hulk* comics but intimidated by the thought of jumping in with a limited knowledge of the character? We asked Marvel Comics Editor Axel Alonso to fill us in on the basics of what's going on now.

"The current *Hulk* story line (written by Bruce Jones) has broadened the audience for the series because it cuts to the heart of the character," says Alonso. "If you or I lose our temper, we break some fine china—if Bruce Banner loses his cool, he unleashes a force that can level a city. That's heavy stuff."

"The current *Hulk* is about anger-management issues, the uncontrollable id, the line

between man and monster," he continues. "Like the character from the TV show of old, our Bruce Banner is a man on the run for a crime allegedly committed by his alter ego. Unlike the TV show, he is being pursued not just by the authorities, but also by mysterious and seemingly sinister forces—forces with motives of their own. The backdrop is weird science; the vibe is pure thriller. This is not a superhero book."

Oct. 1986: *The Incredible Hulk* [vol. 2] #324
It's the first (return) appearance of the Gray Hulk since his 1962 debut with *The Incredible Hulk* #1 (which, until now, had been treated as a "mistake").

April 1987: *The Incredible Hulk* [vol. 2] #330
General "Thunderbolt" Ross dies. He mysteriously returns in later issues of the comic-book series. Wanna know how? So do we!

May 1987: *The Incredible Hulk* [vol. 2] #331
Writer Peter David begins his 136-issue run working on *The Incredible Hulk*. Most fans consider David's 11 years writing for the series to be the best Hulk era ever.

Sept. 1988: *The Incredible Hulk* [vol. 2] #347
Gray Hulk begins his stint as Las Vegas bodyguard Mr. Fixit. While in this role, he meets and dates Marlo Chandler, who later marries his pal Rick Jones in issue #418.

June 1991: *The Incredible Hulk* [vol. 2] #382
The Hulk joins the Pantheon. Assembled by a philanthropic immortal named Agamemnon, the superteam's goal is to prevent emergencies from happening.

Jan. 1993: *The Incredible Hulk: Future Imperfect*
This miniseries lands Hulk in a postapocalyptic future where he must confront himself. Driven mad by further nuclear radiation, "Maestro" rules with an iron fist.



July 1998: *The Incredible Hulk* [vol. 2] #466
Bruce Banner's wife Betty Ross is murdered by the Abomination, the result of gamma-radiation blood poisoning.