

THE LITTLE ANDROID THAT COULD: A HISTORY OF

RED TORNADO™

by Rob Kelly



FlashBack!

Androids have a tough time in comics. Often as not, they are introduced into stories to serve as a contrast to their human creators; to make a grander point about how when mortal man plays God, it can go so horribly wrong. If things go really badly, the android is destroyed, reduced to a pile of crumpled metal and burnt-out circuitry, its very existence having taught us all a Lesson About Life. And no android has had it tougher than the Red Tornado.

"THE JUSTICE SOCIETY'S PET ANDROID"

Created by legendary writer Gardner Fox for his last story in the pages of *Justice League of America*, #64 (Aug. 1968), a being calling itself "Red Tornado" shows up unannounced in the headquarters of the Justice Society of America, claiming to be a longtime member. Despite having no memory of this, the JSAers take him along on a mission to stop some faceless crooks from robbing a museum. Red Tornado's troubles start here, just a few pages into his existence: In a desperate attempt to prove himself, he tries to use his tornado powers to stop the bad guys, only to get in the way and inadvertently put his erstwhile teammates in harm's way. After taking off in shame, he finds himself drawn to a remote hideaway, the home of his creator, T. O. Morrow!

Morrow, your prototypical comic-book mad scientist, created Red Tornado upon the instructions of his super-computer, which predicted that the only way to stop the JSA from defeating him was to add a new member to bring down the team from within. Turning on his creator like a Frankenstein Monster, Red Tornado attacks Morrow, just in time for the JSA to show up and forgive him for his earlier screw-up. The battle eventually spreads to Earth-One and includes (of course) the Justice League of America. By the end of *Justice League of America* #65, Red Tornado has helped the JLA stop Morrow once and for all, and is accepted as the JSA's newest member. While he is pleased with the turn of events, he professes he wants more than that, much more: "I want to be somebody! I want a face ... a identity I can call my own!"

A few issues later, Red Tornado shows up at the JLA's Secret Sanctuary. Trying too hard to sound confident, he ends up bursting through the floor, destroying the team's newly built statue to the recently departed Martian Manhunter. The JLAers mock poor Reddy to his still-featureless face, telling him to stay behind while they respond to an alarm signal from Hawkgirl. In fact, Reddy ends up being sidelined for over two weeks, sitting on his hands and waiting for the JLA to hear him out. When they finally deign to listen, the JLA learns that Earth-Two is under attack from a cosmic baddie named Aquarius, and that his plan has been advancing all this time. "I—I tried to make you listen!" Reddy pleads.

Reddy for Teamwork

Detail from Nick Cardy's cover to *Justice League of America* #106 (July-Aug. 1973), where writer Len Wein welcomes Red Tornado into the JLA—whether they want him there or not.

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Trying to Fit In
 (left) Red Tornado punches his way into the Justice Society in *JLA* #64 (Aug. 1968). Cover by Dick Dillin/ Jack Abel. (right) "John Smith" stumbles into a life outside the League in this sequence from issue #106. By Len Wein/Dillin/ Dick Giordano.

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Even though Aquarius is defeated (leading to the death of Larry Lance, husband of Dinah [Black Canary] Lance, and Black Canary leaving the JSA for the JLA), it left Red Tornado with an even greater feeling of insecurity, so much so that in *Justice League of America* #82, Reddy takes off for outer space (how his tornado powers work in airless space is something left to the imagination), where he is summarily captured by some aliens. They use his body as a conduit between Earth-One and Earth-Two, controlling events on both worlds (similar to an even bigger baddie would do 20 years later, but we're getting ahead of ourselves). Reddy is later discovered by the Earth-One Green Lantern ("Great Guardians! The Red Tornado ... the Justice Society's pet android!" he thinks to himself) and eventually freed when the aliens are beaten by the two teams. As of *Justice League of America* #100 (the first part of that year's JLA/JSA team-up), he was back with the Justice Society. But just when you think everything might be okay with the Red Tornado, he decides to go on a kamikaze mission, sacrificing his life by carrying an exploding Nebula Rod into space and the heart of a giant hand set to explode (don't ask). The rod goes off, destroying Reddy and the threat, leaving both teams to mourn their brave friend and admire his selflessness. So that was the end of the Red Tornado, right? Wrong!

REDDY FOR A COMEBACK

Reddy shocks everyone by returning at the end of #105, having saved the JLA's collective bacon in secret during a mission that was the Elongated Man's first with the team. The League grills Red Tornado, and they demand

to know how he survived. Reddy claims not to know, except for being found by a blind sculptor living in the mountains, who was kind enough to finally give the android a face. Unable to pierce the dimensional divide between the two worlds, Red Tornado is stranded on Earth-One. Superman nominates Reddy for membership, and he responds with, "I will accept—I have nowhere else to go!" Way to make lemons from lemonade, Reddy!



Len Wein took over writing *Justice League of America* with the aforementioned #100. When asked if the plan all along to bring Reddy back to life and eventually into the League, he says, "Absolutely. I always thought there was a lot of untapped potential in Red Tornado, and I wanted to play with that every month and not just once a year."

Unbeknownst to Reddy and the JLA, the android's Justice League membership is all another plot of

T. O. Morrow, who again is using his creation to destroy the team. When minions of Morrow's show up, the JLA grows suspicious that both Morrow and Reddy would reappear at the same time. Disgusted, Reddy storms off, landing in New York.

It's here that the story of Red Tornado really kicks into gear. In his human guise, he shows up at an employment agency, where he meets the young, beautiful Kathy Sutton. He is unprepared for the standard questions, and has to answer them on the fly. He gives his real name as "John Smith," and professes to feeling like "the oldest man alive." When he responds to Kathy's question about previous employment with "freelance law officer," she thinks this is all a joke. But when Kathy looks into his eyes, she sees ... something.

Taking pity on the stranger, she takes "John" for a decent meal, even finding him an apartment.

This sequence, done in a series of small panels as Reddy and Kathy trade lines, was one of the most charming bits of character development JLA had seen up to this point. I asked Len Wein if he laid this scene out or if it was the work of longtime penciler Dick Dillin: "Though Dick was one of the great, unsung artists in the history of this business, the pacing of the copy on that scene was entirely my own, I have to say." Seeing an opportunity, Wein decided to give us a JLA member's backstory, something rarely seen in that book's pages: "Since so many of the JLAers had their own strips, I thought it would be fun to have at least one character I could do with as I was inclined."

Morrow's plot is found out and he is defeated, which ends with him being obliterated out of existence. The JLA apologizes to Reddy for not trusting him, and he forgives them, heading back to Earth to see if "an android is vulnerable to—love!"

THE JLA WELCOMES THE RED TORNADO

At this point, Red Tornado became a member in good standing of the JLA, appearing regularly in the book and benefiting from its reflected glory. He made his first appearance outside *Justice League of America* in *Action Comics* #443 (Jan. 1975), as part of the team squaring off against the Queen Bee and a Legion of Doom-esque gang of supervillains. He also helped judge Wonder Woman during her series of trials to rejoin the JLA (in *Wonder Woman* #218), and had the privilege of being drawn by the legendary Alex Toth during a quick appearance with the team in *Limited Collectors' Edition* #C-41 (the "Super Friends" issue).

The early-to-mid-1970s was time when *Justice League of America* was being written by a roundtable of scripters, with no real development for Red Tornado after Len Wein had done so much in #106. In issue #129, Reddy sacrifices himself again, posing as Hawkman to take on a "solar prominence"-created villain, Nekron. Programmed to kill Hawkman on sight, the prominence blows up Red Tornado, leaving his JLA teammates to watch helplessly on their satellite viewscreens. The issue ends with Wonder Woman being back on the team, and Reddy's empty uniform left to float in space as a memorial to their fallen member. But even in death, his human comrades can't help underlining how different he is. When talking about their ersatz memorial, one of them says: "Even though Reddy was an emotionless machine, I got a feeling he'd like that!"

So that had to be the end of the Red Tornado, right? Wrong again! Reddy returned to the land of living in *Justice League of America* #145 (Aug. 1977), just in time for the team to admit Hawkgirl as a new member (Reddy seems to appear or disappear whenever there's a membership change). Once again, though, he was merely the pawn of a bad guy, this time the culprit being the Construct, a malevolent lifeform that lived inside the world's electronic machines. The JLA is dubious about Reddy, but it takes new member Hawkgirl to look into the android's soul and declare that, once and for all, this Red Tornado is the real deal. Reddy erases all doubts when they watch him defeat the Construct almost singlehandedly.

In *Justice League of America* #150 (Jan. 1978), the team meets a new hero named the Privateer, a sort of Batman/Green Arrow combo, who impresses the team so much they openly consider asking him to join the team. This only underscores Reddy's already-shaky

sense of self, and he watches the Privateer skeptically. That pays off when it's Reddy who figures out that the Privateer is secretly a bad guy whose plan was to betray the JLA from within (a nice inversion of what T. O. Morrow's plan was back in *JLA* #106).

Prolific comics writer Gerry Conway assumed the writing of *Justice League of America* with the following issue, and didn't waste any time developing one of the few characters he had completely at his disposal, Red Tornado! In issue #152, he introduced the war orphan Traya, caught in the middle of a battle between the JLA and Major Macabre, whose supervillain career lasted all of this issue. Red Tornado rescues Traya, feeling so protective that he adopts the young girl, bringing her back to America.

Like Len Wein, Conway took advantage of the opportunities for character development he had when writing *Justice League of America*: "The goal was to help myself as a writer of *Justice League*. The book was composed of characters whose backstory and ongoing story I wasn't really able to affect. I couldn't do stories that would invoke real emotional challenges to characters like Superman or Green Lantern, because they had their own books. So I was interested in working on developing the characters who did not have their own separate features, and I felt that a character like Red Tornado provided me with both that opportunity and,

Honorary Super Friend

Writer E. Nelson Bridwell and artist Alex Toth (the designer behind TV's *Super Friends*) added this Reddy cameo (with other JLAers) in the "Super Friends" special in 1975's *Limited Collectors' Edition* #C-41.

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Spinning Off
Beginning in the late 1970s, Red Tornado began to appear outside of *Justice League*, including (left) this Superman team-up in *DC Comics Presents* #7 (Mar. 1979, cover by Dillin and Giordano) and (right) his own backup series, starting in *Detective Comics* #493 (Aug. 1980, cover by Aparo).

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as a character in his own right, was very interesting and very rich, for my purposes as a storyteller. So I was interested in giving him more depth and connecting him to characters outside the core Justice League membership."

YOUR DEMAND IS OUR COMMAND

Around this time, *Justice League of America* was in a "Giant" format, featuring extra-length stories (it seemed there was no upper limit to how many pages Dick Dillin could put out in a month) and an extended letters column. In issue #152, DC ran the results of a poll asking people to rank their favorite members. Despite having only been back with the team less than a year, Red Tornado placed squarely in the middle of the pack, beating out more established members like Aquaman, Elongated Man, and the Atom and receiving more first-place votes than Green Arrow, Black Canary, and Hawkman. Not bad for a guy who was dead for almost two years!

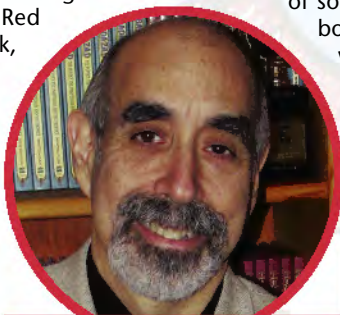
Perhaps in response to this surprising show of popularity, DC had Reddy make a series of guest-appearances outside of *JLA*: He showed up in the Robin segment of *Batman Family* #20, got to co-headline with Superman in *DC Comics Presents* #7, and then with Batman in *The Brave and the Bold* #153, making 1978–1980 banner years for our hero. He even got to star in his own Hostess Cupcakes ad, squaring off against the Vacuum Vulture, a typically pathetic Hostess-only bad guy.

Red Tornado guested again, this time with Hawkman, in the *Winged Wonder's* strip running in *World's Finest Comics*, written by J. M. DeMatteis at the dawn of his comics writing career. DeMatteis would become an important figure in Reddy's history, since just a few months later he was the writer for Reddy's first-ever solo outing, in *Detective Comics* #493 (Aug. 1980). This story proved to be a most unusual Red Tornado story—rather than facing some cosmic entity or costumed supervillain, Reddy gets mixed up in a turf war going on in a forgotten corner of Gotham City. He is shocked and saddened by

some of the deplorable conditions some people are forced to live in, and even though it ends with him heading back to the JLA Satellite, he promises to try and keep more in touch with the humans he has sworn to protect.

This led directly to a regular solo feature back over in *World's Finest*, written by DeMatteis, where Reddy was once again menaced by T. O. Morrow, who by this point had morphed into a giant, domed half-human/half-monster calling himself the Future Man. In his identity as John Smith, Reddy moves into New York's Greenwich Village, where he becomes the neighborhood's local superhero of sorts. In a creepy sequence, the Future Man switches bodies with Reddy, and then returns to his apartment, where RT's longtime girlfriend Kathy Sutton is waiting for him. Kathy notices Reddy's newfound assertiveness, and even admits she kind of likes it, responding to a particularly passionate kiss. Luckily for all involved, this ruse is discovered, ending with Morrow being defeated once again, and Reddy restored to his android body.

When asked how he got the Red Tornado assignment, DeMatteis says, "one of the writing samples I first brought to Paul Levitz when I was trying to get in the door at DC was a Red Tornado short ... and it was Paul who later suggested I flesh that sample script out into what I believe was the very first RT solo story. I think that story was meant as a standalone, but then someone, probably Paul, decided to make it a series and we went from there. Could be that my one-shot story was actually an audition for the ongoing feature, but I didn't know it." Reflecting on what it was like writing a "non-human" character, he says, "I think the android characters—whether it's Red Tornado, the Vision, or Data from *Star Trek*—are actually great doorways into the human condition. They allow you to stand outside human behavior and analyze it, comment on it. Also, RT very much wanted to be human, have a human life, even if he didn't fully understand what that meant; so that also opened the door for deeper exploration."



J. M. DEMATTEIS

Both J. M. DeMatteis and Gerry Conway walked through that door. In the Conway-written *Justice League of America* #189 (Apr. 1981), Reddy, Kathy, and Traya go on a picnic with fellow JLAer Wonder Woman. Kathy helps the Amazing Amazon see her teammate in a new light: "We don't judge a human being by how much his or her body is flesh and blood—look at the men who came back from Vietnam as paraplegics. Are they any less human, any less worthwhile because they've been hurt? To me, John is a human being. He cares, he has needs. And I love him." When you consider how commonplace it is now to see people with prosthetic limbs (whether they be members of the Armed Forces or Olympic runners), this piece of dialogue from Conway is a couple of decades ahead of its time.

Conway took over the writing of the Red Tornado strip with *World's Finest* #269 (June–July 1981), but the greatest developments to the character continued in *Justice League of America*, with Reddy's solo stories continuing to be more plot-driven. Turns out this was on purpose by Conway: "My thinking when I was working with Red Tornado in the original JLA was to have a character that I could use as a story and emotional anchor in JLA that was not connected to his own ongoing stories, so there was an inherent conflict—once he had his own ongoing series [in *World's Finest*], how much do I want to take away from my own best interests in *Justice League*? So ironically, I sort of flipped it and ended up treating the Red Tornado series the way I was treating the main characters in *Justice League*."

THE TORNADO CHAMPION

In a fantastic two-part story, which ran in *JLA* #192 and 193 (penciled by the incomparable George Pérez), T. O. Morrow once again takes control of Reddy, who attacks his teammates aboard the satellite, showing a new-found viciousness (he breaks Batman's arm, and almost asphyxiates Wonder Woman). Superman and the Flash take Reddy apart, only to see his body blow up and reappear to attack again. This, of course, means that these are just duplicates of the "real" Reddy, who is busy having dinner with his family, not knowing any of this is transpiring.

Morrow peers into Reddy's mind, forcing his creation to come to him. Once and for all, Morrow has decided to try and figure out why the Red Tornado is so unique, why he can never be completely controlled. If he can't, Morrow promises, then he will dismantle Red Tornado once and for all. In the following issue, the truth about Reddy is revealed—buried inside all his circuits and microchips is the being known as The Tornado Champion, a sentient creature that wandered space and happened upon T. O. Morrow's creation Red Tornado. The coincidence being too good to resist, the Tornado Champion took over the android body, providing it with a true soul, meaning Red Tornado is, and always has been, alive!

With the help of Firestorm, the Tornado Champion is reunited with his former host, with Red Tornado having no memory of what happened. Firestorm, deciding that his friend deserves a true life of his own, plays dumb and together they head back to the JLA Satellite.

Conway continued developing Firestorm and Red Tornado's unexpected friendship, albeit briefly, in *Justice*

Reddy in Black and White

The Amazing Android in action—no, not *Action Comics*, but *Justice League of America*—in original art form, both pages courtesy of Heritage Comics Auctions. (left) Shrugging off a Starro encounter in *JLA* #190 (May 1981). Rich Buckler/Bob Smith art. (right) Doing the twist(er) with his teammates in #192. George Pérez/John Beatty art.

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Taste Twist

In 1981, Reddy made the “big time” by getting his own Curt Swan-drawn Hostess one-page ad!

Red Tornado TM & © DC Comics.
Hostess © Hostess Brands, LLC.

League of America and in *The Fury of Firestorm* #4 (Sept. 1982), where the JLA is forced to square off against Firestorm, whose temper gets the best of him during a confusing battle with Killer Frost. It ends up being Red Tornado, of all the JLAers, who manages to get through to him. As to why he chose the two to become buddies, Conway says, “It has to do with contrast of their personalities. Firestorm is this kind of bubbly, very emotional, very lighthearted sort of individual, and Red Tornado is very much weighed down by the oddities of his origin and his reality. So the two of them sort of play off well against each other. They’re also visually very dynamic—with Firestorm you have all the flame effects and so on, and with Red Tornado you have that terrific tornado that he’s able to bring into play, so it was sort of wind and fire working together. And in addition to that, you had the fact that these were characters who didn’t have (until Firestorm got his own book) appearances outside the JLA Universe, so their relationship could developed in those stories.”

Reddy’s solo strip ended with *World’s Finest* #272. He continued to make guest appearances throughout the DCU, but primarily appearing in *Justice League of*

America under Gerry Conway. Big changes were afoot, however, for both Reddy and the DCU—following the Martian invasion that took place in *JLA* #228–230, ol’ King Crankypants, Aquaman, decided to disband the team in favor of a more fulltime fighting force. Offered a chance to fully commit to the team, longtime members Green Arrow, Black Canary, Hawkman, Hawkwoman, Firestorm, and Red Tornado resign, unable or unwilling to give up their personal lives.

Soon after this, the universe-shattering event known as the Crisis on Infinite Earths took place, which found the being known as the Anti-Monitor personally plucking Red Tornado from Earth, using him as a pawn in his plan to destroy the universe. After seemingly exploding into nothingness, the remnants of Reddy’s body are found and brought aboard the JLA Satellite, where T. O. Morrow, Cyborg, and the Atom checked it out. During the examination, Reddy exploded (again!), this time seemingly forever.

A MINISERIES ALL HIS OWN

Crisis on Infinite Earths ran concurrently with other DC books, and while Reddy was exploding all over the place in that series, he was also treated to something he had never gotten before: his own book! Cover-dated July 1985, the first issue of *Red Tornado* hit the stands, a four-issue miniseries written by Kurt Busiek and drawn by Carmine Infantino. In it, the first hint of relationship trouble is introduced—Kathy wants to spend some time with John alone, as a couple. But Red Tornado, so satisfied with the life he has, is unable to pick up the true meaning of what she’s saying, taking her comments as stinging criticism. To make matters worse, Reddy is accused by the news media of causing a deadly tornado that destroyed hundreds of homes. Regarding him merely as an android, they suggest he “malfunctioned” in an almost deadly manner. This is followed by a visit from his JLA pals, who say they are so troubled by Red Tornado’s spotty history as a hero that he must cease all activity—immediately, hitting Reddy right where he is weakest. He flies away, crushed, not realizing that his (former) friends are under the mind control of an old foe—the Construct!

The Construct—seething with rage all the years since he was defeated by Reddy and the JLA—concocts a plan to destroy the Red Tornado’s life, the first step being ruining his image with the public (mission accomplished!). Reddy receives a summons from Superman, which he assumes is an apology from the Man of Steel on behalf of all the superheroes who so cruelly dismissed him the day before. But no, Superman takes it one step further—ripping Red Tornado apart and dumping him in the ocean! Reddy quickly reassembles himself, but now, more than ever, he is convinced he has learned what his friends truly think of him. The second part of the Construct’s plan is to control the minds of every human who interacts with technology, which works so well even Traya turns against him. This sends Reddy over the edge, even rejecting Kathy when she tries to apologize to him.

Luckily, this doesn’t stop Kathy, and she takes it upon herself to track down T. O. Morrow, who she believes can help her find her “John.” Kathy finds it increasingly difficult to get away from all forms of technology—even her car and watch are under the control of The Construct. After setting off on foot, she discovers Red Tornado on a lonely mountaintop. He rejects her again, followed by Reddy being confronted by the Tornado Champion, which reveals itself and the truth about their co-existence.





Red Tornado, now fully aware of his humanity, returns to Kathy and swears to destroy the Construct.

Squaring off on another plane of existence—inside the mind of the Construct itself—Reddy defeats it, partly by making it face up to its own humanity, in full view of the entire world. His reputation restored, Reddy finds Kathy and Traya, but with a new lease on life: No longer insecure about his humanity, the new John Smith wants to embrace all of life, to the fullest. He even wants to change his name to something more colorful, and Red Tornado #4 ends with Kathy and Traya offering more exciting suggestions, such as “Peter Venkman,” “Gabby Hayes,” and “Townes Van Zandt.”

The future looked bright for the Red Tornado, in and out of the comics—not only did he headline his own series, which gave any future writer a new, more positive template to work from, but he was also appearing on toy shelves all across America. As part of Kenner’s second wave of action figures for the Super Powers collection, this was the first time kids had a chance to “play” Red Tornado.

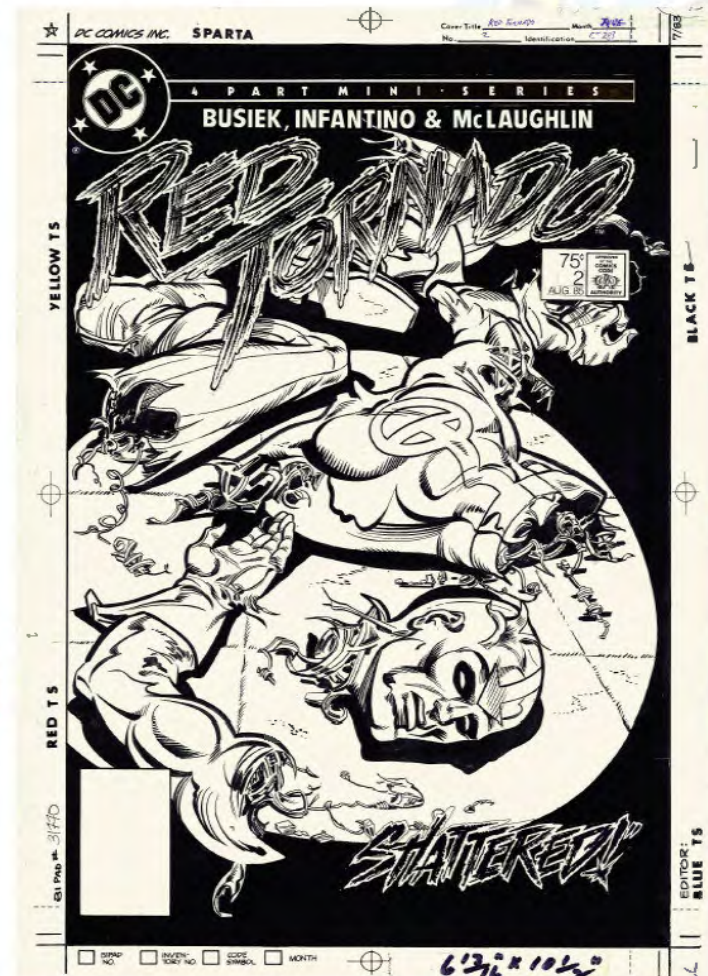
When asked about writing the *Red Tornado* miniseries, Kurt Busiek reveals that he was a “mild” fan of the character at the time. Asked by Dick Giordano to pitch a miniseries starring a member of the JLA, Busiek had ideas for Aquaman, Elongated Man, and a few others, all of whom were spoken for. Red Tornado wasn’t, so Busiek took on the opportunity to “examine [the Red Tornado],



KURT BUSIEK

get him going on a path that would make him more consistently interesting.” Focusing on Kathy Sutton as much as Reddy, Busiek thought this was a way to “explor[e] their relationship as a way to show who he was, and threatening it was a way to put him under stress. Making her a stronger character was important, both because I didn’t want her to be just an appendage, and I wanted them to have a strong relationship, a relationship of equals.”

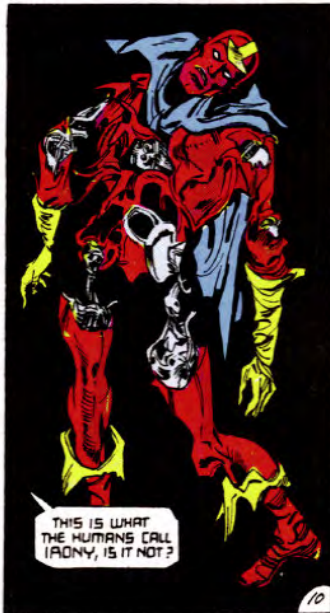
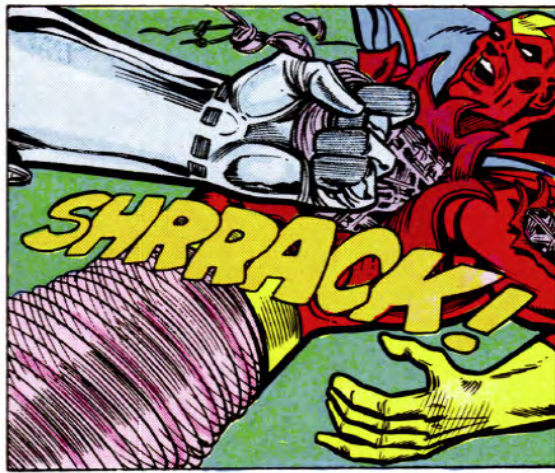
Sadly, that sunrise seen at the end of the *Red Tornado* miniseries quickly turned in to a red sky, the ominous warning sign of the *Crisis*. In one of the series’ many tie-in books, *Red Tornado* was the main character in *Justice League of America Annual #3*, which featured the Detroit-based version of the JLA as well as some former members (like Superman, Green Arrow, and Firestorm) trying to stop the Anti-Monitor from controlling Earth-One’s weather. Red Tornado’s body is found among wreckage of the long-abandoned JLA Satellite, and he is thought dead. But Kathy Sutton knows better—she starts receiving messages from him via electronic devices, telling her to travel to Gotham City. It is here that Reddy reveals that while his body has truly been destroyed, his unkillable spirit has survived, but is now a force of nature. Having begun to lose his connection to humanity, the Being Formerly Known as Red Tornado has decided that life on Earth must start anew, and the only way to do that, of course, is to wipe out humanity as it stands.



“Batteries Not included”

Kurt Busiek scripted a four-issue *Red Tornado* miniseries in 1985, with art by Carmine Infantino and Frank McLaughlin. Presented here are (left) a DC house ad for the series and (right) the original art to the cover of *Red Tornado* #2 (Aug. 1985), courtesy of Heritage.

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TWISTS AND TURNS

Other than a brief, Crisis-related cameo in *All-Star Squadron* #53, the Red Tornado as the world knew him was gone forever after the *JLA Annual*. Of course, “forever” is a relative term in superhero comics—he soon returned in post-Crisis form in *Captain Atom*, eventually reclaiming his classic, heroic identity and membership in the JLA. In 2009, he headlined a second miniseries, a six-issue story called “Family Reunion” by Kevin Vanhook and José Luis García-López, and later played a major role in the *Young Justice* animated series. Along with the rest of the former DCU, Red Tornado was erased with the advent of the New 52 in 2011. But it seems another rise from the ashes is just around the corner: In *Justice League* #16 (Oct. 2012, written by Geoff Johns), T. O. Morrow appeared, talking about the “android weather machine” he has just created.

Red Tornado has not had it easy in the DCU: After years of insecurity and self-doubt, multiple personal explosions, and sneering derision, the android with a soul managed to finally carve out a happy, stable existence for himself, only to have it taken away by the Crisis. He fought his way back in the post-Crisis DCU, having it taken away all over again by the debut of the New 52. Thankfully, it seems that cooler heads have prevailed and it’s clear that Red Tornado will be allowed to resume the heroic mantle that he’s tried so hard to earn. Let’s hope that Kathy and Traya aren’t far behind!

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Scrap Heap Hero
 (left) Reddy’s in bad shape on this page from *Red Tornado* #4 (Oct. 1985), from the Busiek/Infantino team. Inks by Frank McLaughlin, colors by Tom Ziuko. (right) Our hero’s twistin’ action figure.

TM & © DC Comics.

His former friends think he has gone mad, but Red Tornado claims he has merely been “enlightened.” He offers Kathy a place at his side as he presides over the new, “cleansed” world. Appealing to the last shreds of humanity left in him, Kathy manages to talk Red Tornado out of his megalomania. Having reclaimed the bits and pieces of his former body, he returns to his Red Tornado form, ready to stand down from his apocalyptic plan. Unfortunately, before he can announce this, the Man of Steel Act-First-Think-Later blasts Reddy with his freeze-breath, followed by Firestorm transmuting the slab of ice into a metal block. This barely stops Red Tornado, who breaks free, now more out of control than ever. Accusing his former teammates—and Kathy—of betrayal, Red Tornado resumes his purest form and disappears into another dimension, promising that one day “there will be a reckoning.” All that is left behind are some storm clouds pierced by a rainbow, and with that, the quarter-century career of the Red Tornado came to a close. Bizarrely, this *Annual* was published between issues #2 and 3 of the *Red Tornado* miniseries, essentially negating everything that followed, including Kurt Busiek’s upbeat finale.

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