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# **Flash Gordon**

Flash Gordon is the hero of a space opera adventure comic strip created by and originally drawn by Alex Raymond.<sup>[1]</sup> First published January 7, 1934, the strip was inspired by and created to compete with the already established Buck Rogers adventure strip. [2][3][4]

The Flash Gordon comic strip has been translated into a wide variety of media, including motion pictures, television and animated series'. The latest version, a Flash Gordon television series, appeared on the Syfy channel in the United States in 2007 -2008.

#### **Flash Gordon**



The first Flash Gordon comic strip

#### Publication information

Publisher	King Features Syndicate
First	January 7, 1934
appearance	(comic strip)
Created by	Alex Raymond
In-story information	
Team	Dale Arden (love
affiliations	interest),
	Dr. Hans Zarkov
	(scientist)
	Defenders of the
	Earth

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### Creation

000 The Buck Rogers comic strip had been very commercially successful, spawning novelizations and children's toys,<sup>[5]</sup> and King Features Syndicate decided to create their own science fiction comic strip to compete with it.<sup>[2]</sup> At first King Features tried to purchase the rights to the John Carter of Mars stories by Edgar Rice Burroughs; however, the syndicate was unable to reach an agreement with Burroughs.<sup>[6]</sup> King Features then turned to Alex Raymond, one of their staff artists, to create the story.<sup>[3][5]</sup> Raymond's first samples were dismissed for not containing enough action sequences. Raymond reworked the story and sent it back to the syndicate, who accepted it. Raymond was partnered with ghostwriter Don Moore, an experienced editor and writer.<sup>[5]</sup> Raymond's first Flash Gordon story appeared in January 1934, alongside Jungle Jim. The Flash Gordon strip was well received by newspaper readers, becoming one of the most popular American comic strips of the 1930s.<sup>[2][3][5]</sup> Like Buck Rogers, the success of Flash Gordon resulted in numerous licensed products being sold, including pop-up books, colouring books, and toy spaceships and rayguns.<sup>[7]</sup>

### Comic strip characters and story

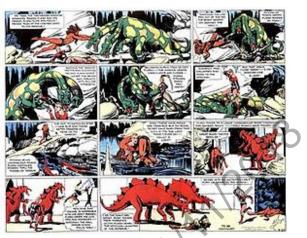
The comic strip follows the adventures of Flash Gordon, a handsome polo player and Yale University graduate, and his companions Dale Arden and Dr. Hans Zarkov. The story begins with Earth threatened by a collision with the planet Mongo. Dr. Zarkov invents a rocket ship to fly into space in an attempt to stop the disaster. Half mad, he kidnaps Flash and Dale and they travel to the planet. Landing on the planet, and halting the collision, they come into conflict with Ming the Merciless, Mongo's evil ruler.<sup>[1][2][8]</sup>

For many years, the three companions have adventures on Mongo, traveling to the forest kingdom of Arboria, ruled by Prince Barin; the ice kingdom of Frigia, ruled by Queen Fria; the jungle kingdom of Tropica, ruled by Queen Desira; the undersea kingdom of the Shark Men, ruled by King Kala; and the flying city of the Hawkmen, ruled by Prince Vultan. They are joined in several early adventures by Prince Thun of the Lion Men. Eventually, Ming is overthrown, and Mongo is ruled by a council of leaders led by Barin.<sup>[1]</sup>

Flash and friends return to Earth and have some adventures before returning to Mongo and crashing in the kingdom of Tropica, then reuniting with Barin and others. Flash and his friends travel to other worlds and return to Mongo, where <u>Prince Barin</u>, married to Ming's daughter <u>Princess Aura</u>, has established a peaceful rule (except for frequent revolts led by Ming or by one of his many descendants).<sup>[1]</sup>

In the 1950s, Flash became an astronaut who travelled to other planets besides Mongo.<sup>[1]</sup> The long story of the Skorpii War takes Flash to other star systems, using starships that are <u>faster than light</u>.

In addition to Ming and his allies, Flash and his friends also fought several other villains, including <u>Azura</u>, the



Alex Raymond's *Flash Gordon* (February 25, 1934)

Witch Queen; Brukka, chieftain of the giants of Frigia,<sup>[1][8]</sup> the <u>fascistic</u> Red Sword organisation on Earth; and Brazor, the tyrannical usurper of Tropica.<sup>[1][9]</sup> After Raymond's tenure, later writers created new enemies for Flash to combat. Austin Briggs created Kang the Cruel, Ming's callous son.<sup>[1]</sup> Prince Polon, who had the power to shrink or enlarge living creatures, the unscrupulous Queen Rubia, and Pyron the Comet Master were among the antagonists introduced during Mac Raboy's run.<sup>[9]</sup> The Skorpi, a race of alien shape shifters who desired to conquer the galaxy, were recurring villains in both the Mac Raboy and Dan Barry stories.<sup>[1]</sup> The Skorpi spacefighter <u>ace</u> Baron Dak-Tula became a periodic nemesis of Flash in the late 1970s stories.<sup>[9]</sup>

## International versions of the comic strip

King Features sold the *Flash Gordon* strip to newspapers across the world, and by the late 1930s, the strip was published in 130 newspapers, translated into eight foreign languages, and was read by 50 million people.<sup>[10]</sup> In the 1930s and 1940s, several newspapers in Britain carried *Flash Gordon*, including the Scottish <u>Sunday Mail</u>.<sup>[11]</sup> In France, his adventures were published in the magazine <u>Robinson</u>, under the name "Guy l'Éclair". Dale Arden was named Camille in the French translation.<sup>[12]</sup> In Australia, the character and strip were retitled *Speed Gordon* to avoid a negative connotation of the word "Flash".<sup>[13]</sup> (At the time, the predominant meaning of "flash" was "showy", connoting dishonesty.)<sup>[14]</sup>

However, events in the 1930s affected the strip's distribution. Newspapers in <u>Nazi Germany</u> were forbidden to carry the *Flash Gordon* strip, while in <u>Fascist Italy</u> it was restricted to two newspapers.<sup>[10]</sup> In 1938, the Spanish magazine *Aventurero*, the only publication in the country to carry *Flash Gordon*, ceased publication because of the Spanish Civil War.<sup>[9]</sup> The outbreak of <u>World War Two</u> resulted in *Flash Gordon* being discontinued in many countries. In <u>Belgium</u>, artist <u>Edgar Pierre Jacobs</u> was therefore asked to bring the current *Flash Gordon* story to a satisfactory conclusion, which he did.<sup>[15]</sup>

After the war's end, the strip enjoyed a resurgence in international popularity. Flash Gordon reappeared in Italy, Spain and West Germany, and was also syndicated to new markets such as Portugal and the Irish Republic.<sup>[9]</sup> From the 1950s onward, countries such as Spain, Italy and Denmark also reprinted Flash Gordon newspaper strips in comic book or paperback novel form.<sup>[9][16]</sup>

### Strip bibliography

- Sunday, Alex Raymond, 1934–1943
- daily, Austin Briggs, 1940–1944
- Sunday, Austin Briggs, 1944–1948
- Sunday, Mac Raboy, 1948–1967
- daily, Dan Barry, 1951-1990
- daily, Harry Harrison, writer, 1958-1964
- Sunday, Dan Barry, 1967–1990
- Sunday and daily, Ralph Reese & Bruce Jones, Gray Morrow, 1990-1991
- Sunday and daily, Thomas Warkentin & Andrés Klacik, 1991 -1992
- Sunday, Richard Bruning, Kevin VanHook, Thomas Warkentin & Andrés Klacik, 1992–1996 ICUI
- Sunday, Jim Keefe, 1996 2003

Unofficial

- L'Avventuroso (Italy) Guido Fantoni, 1938
- Bravo (Belgium)- Edgar P. Jacobs, 1941

## **Critical reception and influence**



A young corporal of the Home Army reading a Polish edition of one of Flash Gordon ("Błysk Gordon") graphic novels during the Warsaw Uprising of 1944

Flash Gordon is regarded as one of the best illustrated and most influential of American adventure comic strips. <sup>[1][17]</sup> Historian of science fiction art Jane Frank asserted that because of his work on *Flash Gordon*, "Raymond is one of the most famous science fiction artists of all time, although he never contributed an illustration to any science fiction magazine or book".<sup>[18]</sup> The science fiction historian John Clute has stated that "The comics version of Flash Gordon was graceful, imaginative and soaring" and included it on a list of the most important American science fiction comics.<sup>[19]</sup> In an article about Raymond for The Comics Journal, R. C. Harvey declared that Raymond's Flash Gordon displayed "a technical virtuosity matched on the comics pages only by Harold Foster in Prince Valiant".<sup>[17]</sup> The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction stated that Flash Gordon's "elaborately shaded style and exotic storyline" made it one of the most influential comics, and that its art emphasised a "romantic baroque".<sup>[2]</sup>

Flash Gordon (along with Buck Rogers) was a big influence on later science fiction comic strips, such as the American Don Dixon and the Hidden Empire (1935 to 1941) by Carl Pfeufer and Bob Moore.<sup>[3]</sup> In Italy, Guido Fantoni drew Flash Gordon in 1938, after the prohibition by the fascist regime.<sup>[20]</sup> In Belgium, Edgar P. Jacobs was commissioned to produce a science fiction comic strip in the style of Flash Gordon. Jacobs' new strip, Le Rayon U ("The U-Ray") began serial publication in *Bravo* in 1943.<sup>[15]</sup> This version had text boxes which described the action and the dialogue, in the style of many Belgian comics of the time, similar to Hal Foster's version of Tarzan and <u>Prince Valiant</u>. In 1974, Jacobs reformatted *Le Rayon U* in order to include speech bubbles. This version was published in <u>Tintin</u> magazine and in book form by <u>Dargaud-Le Lombard</u>.<sup>[15]</sup> The British comic <u>The Trigan Empire</u>, by Mike Butterworth and Don Lawrence, also drew on *Flash Gordon* for its artistic style.<sup>[21]</sup>

*Flash Gordon* was also an influence on early <u>superhero comics</u> characters. <u>Jerry Siegel</u> and <u>Joe Shuster</u> based <u>Superman</u>'s uniform of tights and a cape on costumes worn by Flash Gordon.<sup>[22][23]</sup> <u>Bob Kane</u>'s drawing of <u>Batman</u> on the cover of <u>Detective Comics</u> No. 27 (the first appearance of the character) was based on a 1937 Alex Raymond drawing of Flash Gordon.<sup>[24]</sup> <u>Dennis Neville</u> modeled the comics hero <u>Hawkman</u>'s costume on the "Hawkmen" characters in Raymond's *Flash Gordon* comic strip.<sup>[25]</sup>

### Films

Most of the Flash Gordon film and television adaptations retell the early adventures on the planet Mongo.

### Film serials

Flash Gordon was featured in three <u>serial films</u> starring <u>Buster Crabbe</u>: *Flash Gordon* (1936), *Flash Gordon's Trip* to Mars (1938), and *Flash Gordon Conquers the Universe* (1940). The 1936 *Flash Gordon* serial was condensed into a feature-length film titled *Flash Gordon* or *Rocket Ship* or *Space Soldiers* or *Flash Gordon*: *Spaceship to the Unknown*;<sup>[26]</sup> the 1938 serial into a feature-length film entitled *Flash Gordon* the *Purple Death from Outer Space*.

The first Flash Gordon serial remains copyrighted, but the compilation made of the second serial, and the third serial itself are in the public domain.<sup>[27]</sup>

### Flash Gordon 1980 film

In the 1970s, several noted directors attempted to make a film of the story. <u>Federico Fellini</u> optioned the *Flash Gordon* rights from <u>Dino De Laurentiis</u>, but never made the film.<sup>[28]</sup> <u>George Lucas</u> also attempted to make a *Flash Gordon* film in the 1970s. However, Lucas was unable to acquire the rights from De Laurentiis, so he decided to create <u>Star Wars</u> instead.<sup>[28][29]</sup> De Laurentiis then hired <u>Nicolas Roeg</u> to make a *Flash Gordon* film. However, De Laurentiis was unhappy with Roeg's ideas, and Roeg left the project.<sup>[29]</sup> De Laurentiis also discussed hiring <u>Sergio</u> <u>Leone</u> to helm the *Flash Gordon* film; Leone declined because he believed the script was not faithful to the original Raymond comic strips.<sup>[30][31]</sup> Finally, De Laurentiis hired <u>Mike Hodges</u> to direct the *Flash Gordon* film.<sup>[29]</sup>

Hodges' 1980 *Flash Gordon* film stars former <u>*Playgirl*-centerfold</u><sup>[32]</sup> <u>Sam J. Jones</u> in the title role. Its plot is based loosely on the first few years of the comic strip revising Flash's <u>backstory</u> by making him the <u>quarterback</u> of the <u>New York Jets</u> instead of a <u>polo</u> player. Raymond's drawings feature heavily in the opening credits, as does the signature theme-song "<u>Flash!</u>" by rock band <u>Queen</u>, who composed and performed the entire musical score.<sup>[33]</sup>

Riding the coattails of <u>Star Wars</u>, <u>Superman</u>, and <u>Star Trek: The Motion Picture</u>, Flash Gordon was not a critical success on release. <u>Melody Anderson</u> co-starred with Jones as Dale Arden, alongside <u>Chaim Topol</u> as Dr. Hans Zarkov, <u>Max von Sydow</u> as Ming, <u>Timothy Dalton</u> as Prince Barin, <u>Brian Blessed</u> as Prince Vultan, <u>Peter Wyngarde</u>

as Klytus and <u>Ornella</u> <u>Muti</u> as Princess Aura. Produced by <u>Dino De</u> <u>Laurentiis</u>, with ornate production designs and costumes by <u>Danilo</u> <u>Donati</u>, the bright colors and retro effects were inspired directly by the comic strip and 1930s serials.<sup>[33]</sup>



Alex Raymond's *Flash Gordon* (March 4, 1934). Flash and Thun rush to stop the wedding of Ming and Dale.

<u>Brian Blessed</u>'s performance as the Hawkman <u>Prince Vultan</u> lodged the veteran stage and screen actor into the collective consciousness for the utterance of a single line – "GORDON'S ALIVE?!" – which, more than 30 years later, remained the most repeated, reused, and recycled quotation from both the film and Blessed's career.<sup>[34][35][36]</sup>

The film's cult-status led it to feature heavily in the 2012 summer blockbuster <u>Ted</u>.

#### **Unofficial films**

In 1967, a low-budget Turkish adaptation of the comic was made, called *Flash Gordon's Battle in Space (Baytekin – Fezada Çarpisanlar* in Turkish). Hasan Demirtag played the title character.<sup>[2][37]</sup>

In April 2013, Robb Pratt, director of the popular fan film <u>Superman Classic</u>, announced plans to make <u>Flash</u> <u>Gordon Classic</u>. The traditionally animated short features the characters Flash Gordon, girlfriend Dale Arden, sidekick Dr. Hans Zarkov, antagonist Ming the Merciless, and Princess Aura.<sup>[38]</sup>

### Possible future films

In 2010, it was announced that <u>Breck Eisner</u> had signed on to direct a 3D film version of Flash Gordon. "The film's story is in place and the screenplay is now being worked on."<sup>[39]</sup> On April 22, 2014 *The Hollywood Reporter* had a report that <u>20th Century Fox</u> was developing the *Flash Gordon* reboot with J.D. Payne and Patrick McKay writing the film's script.<sup>[40]</sup> On April 15, 2015, *The Hollywood Reporter* reported that <u>Matthew Vaughn</u> is in talks to direct the film.<sup>[41]</sup> On January 15, 2016, Mark Protosevich was hired to rewrite the film's script.<sup>[42]</sup>

## Television

### Flash Gordon (1954–55 live-action)

<u>Steve Holland</u> starred in a 1954–55 live-action <u>television series</u> which ran for 39 episodes.<sup>[4]</sup> The first 26 episodes had the distinction of being filmed in <u>West Berlin</u>, <u>Germany</u> less than a decade after the end of <u>World War II</u>. This is notable, given that some episodes show the real-life destruction still evident in Germany several years after the war. The final 13 episodes were filmed in <u>Marseille</u>, <u>France</u>.

In this series, Flash, Dale (<u>Irene Champlin</u>) and Dr. Zarkov (Joseph Nash) worked for the Galactic Bureau of Investigation in the year 3203. The actual timeline was established in one episode, "Deadline at Noon", in which Flash, Dale and Dr. Zarkov went back in time to Berlin in the year 1953. The GBI agents traveled in the Skyflash and Skyflash II spaceships.

The series was syndicated, appearing on stations affiliated with the long-defunct <u>DuMont Network</u>, and many other independent stations in the United States. It was recut into a movie in 1957.

#### Flash Gordon animated (1979–80)

In 1979, Filmation produced an animated series, often referred to as *The New Adventures of Flash Gordon*, though it is actually titled *Flash Gordon*. The expanded title was used to distinguish it from previous versions. The project was originally designed as a TV film but NBC decided to change it into an animated series.<sup>[4]</sup>

### Flash Gordon: The Greatest Adventure of All (1982)

Filmation produced this successful animated television movie, written by *Star Trek* writer <u>Samuel A. Peeples</u>, before they began their Saturday morning series, but the TV-movie did not actually air until 1982. It was critically well-received, and is considered one of the best film versions of Flash Gordon, though it would never be rebroadcast following its premiere.<sup>[43]</sup>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flash Gordon

This movie has yet to be commercially released in the United States, although some sources indicate that off-air bootlegs are prevalent. The only known commercial releases were by VAP Video in Japan (catalog #67019-128), in 1983, in both laser disc and NTSC VHS videotape formats; and in Bulgaria, where it was released on VHS "Van Chris" and "Drakar". The movie also aired numerous times on "Diema" Channel in the late 90s. In the Japanese release it is presented uncut with the original English voice track, with Japanese subtitles added for its intended audience. At the end of the movie is a trailer for the <u>De Laurentiis</u> live-action movie, as well as trailers for other titles from the VAP Video library at the time. The covers for both versions feature comic-strip panels, using stills taken from the movie.

#### Defenders of the Earth (1986)

In the 1986 cartoon <u>Defenders of the Earth</u>, Flash teamed up with fellow <u>King Features</u> heroes <u>The Phantom</u> and <u>Mandrake the Magician</u> in 65 episodes. This series took extreme liberties with all the characters, revealing that Flash and Dale Arden had conceived a son, Rick Gordon, who is in his mid-teens when the series begins. Dale has her mind torn from her body by Ming in the first episode and is preserved in a crystal, which Rick is able to recover and give to his father. Dale is reborn on Earth as Dynak-X, the strategic super-computer based in the Defenders' Headquarters.

#### Flash Gordon (1996)

In 1996, Hearst Entertainment premiered an animated *Flash Gordon* television series. In this version, Alex "Flash" Gordon and Dale Arden are hoverboarding teenagers, who become trapped on Mongo after stopping Ming's attempt to invade Earth.<sup>[44]</sup>

### Flash Gordon (2007–08 live-action)

The <u>Sci-Fi Channel</u> premiered its new *Flash Gordon* series in the <u>United States</u> on August 10, 2007. On January 12, 2007 at the <u>Television Critics Association</u> tour, it was announced that the live-action series would comprise 22 one-hour episodes, produced in Canada in early 2007. Under an agreement with <u>King Features Syndicate</u>, the series was produced by <u>Reunion Pictures</u> of Vancouver with <u>Robert Halmi Sr.</u> and <u>Robert Halmi Jr.</u> of <u>RHI</u> Entertainment serving as Executive Producers.

The characters of Ming, Dale Arden and Dr. Hans Zarkov were drastically altered. <u>Eric Johnson</u>, best known for his earlier work on the WB's <u>Smallville</u>, played the title character of Steven "Flash" Gordon. <u>Gina Holden</u> (who has appeared in *Fantastic Four* and *Aliens vs. Predator*) played Dale Arden, <u>Jody Racicot</u> (<u>Night at the Museum</u>) played Dr. Hans Zarkov, and John Ralston portrayed the arch-villain, Ming.

Advertisements featured a cover version of <u>Queen</u>'s "<u>Flash's Theme</u>" (from the 1980 film) performed by the band Louis XIV. The song was not present in any episode of the show. The show was officially canceled in early 2008.

### **Radio serials**

Starting April 22, 1935, the strip was adapted into *The Amazing Interplanetary Adventures of Flash Gordon*, a 26-episode weekly radio serial.<sup>[4]</sup> The series followed the strip very closely, amounting to a week-by-week adaptation of the Sunday strip for most of its run.

Flash Gordon was played by <u>Gale Gordon</u>, later famous for his television roles in <u>Our Miss Brooks</u>, <u>Dennis the</u> <u>Menace</u>, <u>The Lucy Show</u> and <u>Here's Lucy</u> (the latter two with <u>Lucille Ball</u>). The cast also included Maurice Franklin as Dr. Zarkov and Bruno Wick as Ming the Merciless.<sup>[45]</sup>

The radio series broke with the strip continuity in the last two episodes, when Flash, Dale and Zarkov returned to Earth. They make a crash landing in <u>Malaysia</u>, where they meet <u>Jungle Jim</u>, the star of another of Alex Raymond's comic strips.

The series ended on October 26, 1935 with Flash and Dale's marriage. The next week, *The Adventures of Jungle Jim* picked up in that Saturday timeslot.

Two days later, on October 28, *The Further Interplanetary Adventures of Flash Gordon* debuted as a daily show, running five days a week. This series strayed further from Raymond's strip, involving Flash, Dale and Zarkov in an adventure in <u>Atlantis</u>. The series aired 74 episodes, ending on February 6, 1936.<sup>[46]</sup>

### Stage

In 1989, Lee Ahlin and Gary Gordon wrote a musical for children, *Flash Gordon*, based on the comic.<sup>[47]</sup> The musical premiered in 1989 in <u>Oak Hall Performing Arts Theater</u> in <u>Gainesville</u>, *Florida*. *Flash Gordon* starred <u>Brian LeDuc</u> as Flash, <u>Kim Ehrich</u> as Dale Arden, John Pelkey as Ming, and Julie Hamric as Princess Aura.<sup>[47]</sup>

### **Comic books**

Over the years, several publishers have produced *Flash Gordon* comics, either reprints or original stories.

- David McKay Publications King Comics #1–155 (1936–1949) [strip reprints]
- Dell Comics Four Color Comics #10, 84, 173, 190, 204, 247, 424, 512; Flash Gordon #2 (<u>1945–1953</u>) [first 2 strip reprints]
- Harvey Comics #1–5 (1950) [strip reprints]
- Gold Key Comics #1 (1965) [reprints FC #173]
- King Comics #1–11 (1966–1967) (also in Phantom #18–20)
- Charlton Comics #12–18 (1969–1970)
- Gold Key Comics #19–27 (1978–1979); under their "Whitman Comics" #28–37 (1980–1982)

Several issues of the King Comics series were drawn by <u>Al Williamson</u>, who won the 1966 <u>National Cartoonists</u> <u>Society</u> Award for Best Comic Book for his work on the series.<sup>[48][49]</sup> Williamson later said, "I was paying homage to Alex [Raymond], you know. I tried to treat his creation with respect and dignity and tried to do it to the best of my ability. I find that other artists who have done Flash Gordon just don't seem to get the feeling of the strip, you know. Flash is a noble guy and it's kind of nice to have that kind of a hero."<sup>[50]</sup> King also released a comic version as a part of their Comics Reading Library in the 1970s.

Williamson provided artwork for a Western Publishing adaptation of Dino De Laurentiis' *Flash Gordon* film, written by Bruce Jones. It was released by Western Publishing in both hardcover and softcover formats to coincide with the film's release, and was also serialized in three issues of Whitman's Flash Gordon comic book, #31-33, March–May 1981.

In <u>1988</u>, <u>Dan Jurgens</u> wrote a modernized version of the comic strip as a nine-issue <u>DC Comics</u> miniseries. It features Flash as a washed up <u>basketball</u> player who finds new purpose in life on Mongo, Dale as an adventurous reporter who is just as capable as Flash, and a gray-skinned Ming who is less of an Asian stereotype. The series ran for the planned nine issues and was left with an open-ended conclusion. Though Mongo is not a threat to Earth in this series, Ming had every intention of conquering Earth once he coerced Dr. Zarkov into designing the needed ships.

In <u>1995</u>, <u>Marvel Comics</u> published a new two-issue series, written by Mark Schultz with art by Al Williamson, in the style of the *Flash* comics Williamson had produced for King and others.

A new comic book series was released by Ardden Entertainment in August <u>2008</u>, though with inconsistent release dates for subsequent issues. The series was written by Brendan Deneen and Paul Green and debuted in 2008, with the first arc entitled "The Mercy Wars". The initial story arc concluded in mid-2009 with an open door to an announced new story arc to begin fall 2009.<sup>[51][52]</sup> These were followed by further storylines. Ardden also published a Flash Gordon anthology entitled *The Secret History of Mongo*. Ardden's second Flash Gordon arc is titled *Invasion of the Red Sword* (2010). Two other arcs were completed.

A reprint of all of Al Williamson's *Flash Gordon* comic books in black and white was printed by Flesk in 2009.<sup>[53]</sup>

In 2010, <u>Dark Horse Comics</u> began an archive reprint series in hardback, starting with the original comics published by Dell. The second volume covers the comics published by King Comics, the third covers the comics published by Charlton Comics, the fourth covers the comics published by Gold Key, and the fifth covers the comics published by Whitman.

In 2011, <u>Dynamite Entertainment</u> began a new series called *Flash Gordon: Zeitgeist*. The series is written by Eric Trautmann (Vampirella, Red Sonja), from a story and designs by <u>Alex Ross</u> (Kingdom Come, Marvels, Project: Superpowers) and illustrated by Daniel Lindro.<sup>[54]</sup> The company also produced a spinoff miniseries, *Merciless: The Rise of Ming*, in 2012, with story and art by <u>Scott Beatty</u> and Ron Adrian.<sup>[55]</sup> Following a crossover miniseries called *King's Watch* (where, much like *Defenders of the Earth*, Flash Gordon teamed up with Mandrake and the Phantom), Dynamite launched a new Flash Gordon ongoing series in 2014, with story and art by <u>Jeff Parker</u> and Evan "Doc" Shaner.<sup>[56]</sup> In 2015, Dynamite followed this run with another *Flash Gordon* miniseries as part of their "King:Dynamite" series. This series was written by Ben Acker and Ben Blacker and illustrated by Lee Ferguson.<sup>[57]</sup>

## Flash Gordon Strange Adventure Magazine

In 1936, one issue of *Flash Gordon Strange Adventure Magazine* was published by <u>Harold Hersey</u>, featuring a novel about Flash Gordon, entitled *The Master of Mars*.<sup>[4]</sup> It was written by little-known author James Edison Northford. The saddle-stitched novel was based (more or less) on the comic strip story lines, and included color illustrations reminiscent of Alex Raymond's artwork. On the back pages a second installment, *The Sun Men of Saturn*, was promised, but it never saw print. Even though the series did not gain in popularity, the lone issue of *Flash Gordon Strange Adventure Magazine* has become a much sought-after item for pulp magazine collectors.<sup>[7]</sup>

### Novels

The first novel based on the strip, *Flash Gordon in the Caverns of Mongo*, was published in 1936 by <u>Grosset & Dunlap</u>. The credited author was Alex Raymond, but Doug Murray claims the novel "was almost certainly ghost-written".<sup>[7]</sup> Like the pulp magazine of the same year, it failed to launch a series.

In 1973, Avon books launched a six-book series of adult-oriented Flash Gordon novels: *The Lion Men of Mongo*, *The Plague of Sound*, *The Space Circus*, *The Time Trap of Ming XIII*, *The Witch Queen of Mongo* and *The War of the Cybernauts*.<sup>[58]</sup> Although the books were credited to Alex Raymond, the first three were written by SF writer <u>Ron Goulart</u>, (under the "<u>house name</u>" "Con Steffanson") and the other three novels were by <u>Bruce Cassiday</u> (the first under the "Steffanson" name, and the latter two under the pseudonym "Carson Bingham").<sup>[58]</sup>

In 1980, Tempo books released a series by <u>David Hagberg</u>: *Massacre in the 22nd Century, War of the Citadels, Crisis on Citadel II, Forces from the Federation, Citadels under Attack* and *Citadels on Earth*. Except for the names of the hero and his co-stars of <u>Dale Arden</u> and Dr. <u>Hans Zarkov</u>, this series had little to do with any other version of Flash Gordon.

### 1939 World's Fair

The name "Flash Gordon" was emblazoned on the proscenium of a ride at the <u>1939 New York World's Fair</u>. An article in <u>Popular Science</u> (March 1939) described how 150 people could enter a ride designed to resemble a rocket ship with a motion picture screen and vibrating seats for a simulated trip to another planet. The ride was located "at the opposite end of the amusement zone from the parachute tower". Fairgoers walked around a simulation of Venus as a jungle planet, inhabited by mechanical dinosaurs to enter a "Martian Headquarters", where "weirdly costumed Martians and mechanically animated models of giant beasts enact[ed] episodes from the adventures of Flash Gordon". The ride's Martians did not look like those in the 1938 serial, nor did the rocket ship.<sup>[59]</sup>

### Reprints

Raymond's work, particularly his <u>Sunday strips</u>, has been reprinted many times over the years by many publishers, most notably Nostalgia Press, Kitchen Sink Press and Checker Book Publishing Group.<sup>[4]</sup>

Some of the Austin Briggs dailies were reprinted by <u>Kitchen Sink Press</u>. The <u>King Comics</u> run of *Flash Gordon* reprinted one Alex Raymond story and two Mac Raboy ones in 1967.<sup>[60]</sup> The <u>Mac Raboy</u> Sundays have been reprinted by <u>Dark Horse Comics</u> in black and white, while Kitchen Sink began to collect both the Dan Barry and Austin Briggs daily strips. The Dan Barry dailies have never been entirely reprinted, but the Barry stories written by noted author <u>Harry Harrison</u> were reprinted in <u>Comics Revue</u> magazine, published by <u>Manuscript Press</u>. <u>Tempo Books</u> published six <u>mass-market paperbacks</u> reprinting Dan Barry strips from the 1970s in the 1980s. Two stories from the Dan Barry dailies, D2-133 "Baldur Battles Skorpi" (February 24 to May 10, 1986) and D2-134 "The Bear" (May 12 to August 21, 1986), were reprinted in an oblong format, 6.5 by 10.5 paperback edition with two strips per page by Budget Books PTY of Melbourne, Australia in 1987 under the title *The New Adventures of Flash Gordon*, <u>ISBN 0-86801-795-7</u>. A reprint of all of Al Williamson's *Flash Gordon* comic strip and comic book work was released in 2009.

- Flash Gordon on the Planet Mongo (1934–35), Nostalgia
- Flash Gordon into the Water World (1935–37), Nostalgia
- Flash Gordon Escapes to Arboria (1937–39), Nostalgia
- Flash Gordon vs Frozen Horrors (1939–40), Nostalgia

- Flash Gordon Joins the Power Men (1940–41), Nostalgia
- Flash Gordon: A New Kingdom (1939) Pacific Comics Club/Club Anni Trenta, 1977 (limited edition for collectors)
- Flash Gordon: The End of Ming (1940) Pacific Comics Club/Club Anni Trenta, 1977 (limited edition for collectors)
- Flash Gordon: Return to Earth (1941) Pacific Comics Club/Club Anni Trenta, 1977 (limited edition for collectors)
- Flash Gordon: A New War (1941) Pacific Comics Club/Club Anni Trenta, 1977 (limited edition for collectors)
- Flash Gordon: The Usurper (1942) Pacific Comics Club/Club Anni Trenta, 1977 (limited edition for collectors)
- Flash Gordon: Gundar the Hawk of Tropica (1942-1943) Pacific Comics Club/Club Anni Trenta, 1977 (limited edition for collectors)
- Flash Gordon: The End of Brazor (1944). Pacific Comics Club/Club Anni Trenta, 1977 (limited edition for collectors)
- Mongo, Planet of Doom (1934–35), Kitchen Sink Press ISBN 0-87816-114-7
- Three Against Ming (1935–37), Kitchen Sink Press ISBN 0-87816-120-1
- The Tides of Battle (1937–39), Kitchen Sink Press ISBN 0-87816-162-7
- The Fall of Ming (1939–41), Kitchen Sink Press ISBN 0-87816-168-6
- Between Worlds at War (1941-43), Kitchen Sink Press ISBN 0-87816-177-5
- Triumph in Tropica (1943–44), Kitchen Sink Press ISBN 0-87816-199-6
- Flash Gordon, Dead or Alive! : Daily Strips 5/27/40 to 8/26/40 by Austin Briggs. Pacific Comics Club, 1981 (limited edition for collectors)
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- Flash Gordon: The Dailies by Austin Briggs 1940–1942 Volume 1, Kitchen Sink Press ISBN 0-87816-172-4 (strips from 1940)
- Flash Gordon: The Dailies by Austin Briggs 1940–1942 Volume 2, Kitchen Sink Press ISBN 0-87816-187-2 (strips from 1941)
- Flash Gordon The Complete Daily Strips 1951–1953, Kitchen Sink Press ISBN 0-87816-035-3
- Flash Gordon Star Over Atlantis, Dan Barry, Manuscript Press, 2007, <u>ISBN 0-936414-16-2</u>, <u>ISBN 978-0-936414-16-4</u>, dailies 1953–1954.
- Flash Gordon: Volume 1 (1934–35), Checker Book Publishing Group (https://web.archive.org/web/20080522194359/http://www.checkerbpg.com/books\_vintage/fg1\_gn.php) ISBN 0-9741664-3-X
- Flash Gordon: Volume 2 (1935–36), Checker Book Publishing Group (https://web.archive.org/web/20080522194404/http://www.checkerbpg.com/books\_vintage/fg2\_gn.php) ISBN 0-9741664-6-4
- Flash Gordon: Volume 3 (1936–37), Checker Book Publishing Group (https://web.archive.org/web/20080522194410/http://www.checkerbpg.com/books\_vintage/fg3\_gn.php) ISBN 1-933160-25-X
- Flash Gordon: Volume 4 (1938–40), Checker Book Publishing Group (https://web.archive.org/web/20080522194415/http://www.checkerbpg.com/books\_vintage/fg4\_gn.php) ISBN 1-933160-26-8
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- Flash Gordon: Volume 7 (1943–45), Checker Book Publishing Group (https://web.archive.org/web/20080522194430/http://www.checkerbpg.com/books\_vintage/fg7\_gn.php) ISBN 1-933160-20-9
- <u>Mac Raboy's Flash Gordon</u>, Volume 1, Dark Horse Comics <u>ISBN</u> <u>1-56971-882-2</u> (Sundays, 1948–1953 S32-S45)
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- Mac Raboy's Flash Gordon, Volume 3, Dark Horse Comics ISBN 1-56971-978-0 (Sundays, 1958–1962)
- Mac Raboy's Flash Gordon, Volume 4, Dark Horse Comics (Sundays, 1962–1967)
- The Amazing Adventures of Flash Gordon, Volume 1 Tempo Books ISBN 0-448-17349-2 (S132/D2-097 -S135)
- The Amazing Adventures of Flash Gordon, Volume 2 Tempo Books ISBN 0-448-17348-4 (D2-081, D2-082)
- The Amazing Adventures of Flash Gordon, Volume 3 Tempo Books ISBN 0-448-17347-6 (S114-S118)
- The Amazing Adventures of Flash Gordon, Volume 4 Tempo Books ISBN 0-448-17155-4 (D2-105, D2-107)
- The Amazing Adventures of Flash Gordon, Volume 5 Tempo Books ISBN 0-448-17208-9 (D2-098)
- The Amazing Adventures of Flash Gordon, Volume 6 Tempo Books ISBN 0-448-17245-3 (D2-102, D2-109)
- Al Williamson's Flash Gordon: A Lifelong Vision of the Heroic, Flesk ISBN 1-933865-13-X
- Flash Gordon: On the Planet Mongo: The Complete Flash Gordon Library 1934–37, by Alex Raymond. Titan Books ISBN 0-85768-154-0
- Flash Gordon: The Tyrant of Mongo: The Complete Flash Gordon Library 1937–41, by Alex Raymond. Titan Books ISBN 0-85768-379-9
- Flash Gordon: The Fall of Ming: The Complete Flash Gordon Library 1941–44, by Alex Raymond. Titan Books ISBN 0-85768-688-7
- Flash Gordon: The Storm Queen of Valkir: The Complete Flash Gordon Library 1944-48, by Austin Briggs. Titan Books ISBN 1-78276-286-8
- Flash Gordon: The City of Ice: The Complete Flash Gordon Library 1951-1953, by Dan Barry. Titan Books ISBN 1-78276-683-9
- Definitive Flash Gordon and Jungle Jim Volume 1: 1934-1936 IDW Publishing ISBN 1-61377-015-4
- Definitive Flash Gordon and Jungle Jim Volume 2: 1936-1939 IDW Publishing ISBN 1-61377-220-3
- Definitive Flash Gordon and Jungle Jim Volume 3: 1939-1941 IDW Publishing ISBN 1-61377-580-6
- Definitive Flash Gordon and Jungle Jim Volume 4: 1942-1944 IDW Publishing ISBN 1-61377-917-8

### Games

- The *Flash Gordon & the Warriors of Mongo* role-playing game was released by <u>Fantasy Games Unlimited</u> in 1977.
- Flash Gordon (pinball)

## **DVD releases**

Flash Gordon has been released to DVD under a variety of titles and in both edited and non-edited versions. The serials and 50s TV show have no shortage of public domain DVD releases.

### Film serials (1936–1940)

#### Flash Gordon (1936)

Flash Gordon: Space Soldiers. (245 minutes)

Flash Gordon: Spaceship to the Unknown. Hearst Entertainment, Inc., 2002. (edited to 98 minutes)

#### Flash Gordon's Trip to Mars (1938)

- Flash Gordon's Trip to Mars (2 discs). (299 minutes)
- Flash Gordon: O raio mortal de Marte. Hearst Entertainment, Inc., 2002. (97 minutes)

#### Flash Gordon Conquers the Universe (1940)

- Flash Gordon Conquers the Universe. (234 minutes)
- Flash Gordon: The Peril from Planet Mongo. Hearst Entertainment, Inc., 2002. (edited to 91 minutes

#### Flash Gordon (1954–55)

• Flash Gordon (3 Volumes). Alpha Home Entertainment (only 13 of the episodes have been released thus far).

### The New Adventures of Flash Gordon (1979)

US – BCI Eclipse

• The New Adventures of Flash Gordon: The Complete Series (4–Discs). 600 minutes

UK – Hollywood DVD LTD

- The Adventures of Flash Gordon Castaways in Tropica
- The Adventures of Flash Gordon Blue Magic

### Flash Gordon (1980)

On May 6, 1998, Image Entertainment released the 1980 film on DVD in North America for <u>DVD Region 1</u> territories through a contract with Universal, but it quickly went out of print.

Momentum Pictures later released it in the UK for <u>DVD Region 2</u> territories on October 10, 2005. This edition of the film, the "Silver Anniversary Edition", features an anamorphic widescreen transfer at the film's 2.4:1 aspect ratio, both Dolby Digital and DTS 5.1 audio, the original Queen theatrical trailer, an audio commentary by director Mike Hodges, a second audio commentary from actor Brian Blessed, an interview with Mike Hodges, a photo slideshow and an original 1940s Serial, episode one of *Flash Gordon Conquers the Universe*.

Universal released the film on August 7, 2007 in North America and Region 1 territories once again. The new disc, entitled the "Saviour of the Universe Edition", features a 2.35:1 anamorphic widescreen transfer and an English Dolby Digital 5.1 Surround track. Extras include an "Alex Ross on Flash Gordon" featurette in which world-renowned comic artist <u>Alex Ross</u> talks about the film and how it has inspired him in his life and work, a "Writing a Classic" featurette with screenwriter <u>Lorenzo Semple, Jr.</u> and a Flash Gordon 1936 serial episode (chapter one of Planet of Peril).

### Defenders of the Earth

US - BCI Ecplise

- Defenders of the Earth Complete Series Volume 1 (5 Discs) 33 Episodes
- Defenders of the Earth Complete Series Volume 2 (5 Discs) 32 Episodes (Spring 2007)

UK - Hollywood DVD LTD

Defenders of The Earth – The Story Begins

UK - Delta Music PLC

- Defenders of the Earth Movie (3 Discs)
- Defenders of the Earth Vol 1
- Defenders of the Earth Vol 2
- Defenders of the Earth Vol 3
- Defenders of the Earth Movie Prince Of Kro-Tan
- Defenders of the Earth Movie Necklace Of Oros
- Defenders of the Earth Movie The Book Of Mysteries

### Flash Gordon (1996)

11/1/2018 11/1/2018 Lion's Gate on September 21, 2004, released three 4-episode DVDs of Flash Gordon (1996) and Phantom 2040.

Flash Gordon: Marooned on Mongo – The Animated Movie (97 minutes)

### **Parodies**

Flesh Gordon is a 1974 American erotic science fiction adventure comedy film. It is an erotic spoof of the Universal Pictures Flash Gordon serials from the 1930s.<sup>[61]</sup> The screenplay was written by Michael Benveniste, who also codirected the film with Howard Ziehm. The cast includes Jason Williams, Suzanne Fields, and William Dennis Hunt.

The film had an MPAA rating of X, but was also re-edited for a reduced rating of R. It has an original runtime of 78 minutes, and the unrated "collector's edition" release runs 90 minutes.

The 1983 film A Christmas Story featured a deleted scene with Ralphie and his Red Ryder BB gun saving Flash (played by Paul Hubbard) from Ming (played by Colin Fox).<sup>[62]</sup> None of the footage from the scene survived.<sup>[63]</sup>

In the 2012 comedy Ted, Sam Jones appears in character both as himself and as Flash Gordon.<sup>[64]</sup> Jones reprised his role for the sequel, Ted 2.

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