

INSIDE

THE SIX MILLION DOLLAR MAN

Superman came from Krypton. Spider-Man was bitten by a radioactive spider. Wonder Woman came from some weird, far out island. . . . Super-heroes are born, not made, right? Wrong! This is 1975—we don't have to get our super-heroes from other planets anymore—we can create them ourselves through the miracle of science. Ladies and gentleman, we give you Steve Austin—the six million dollar man—today's kind of

superman. His strength is 10 times that of a normal person. All right, so he can't leap tall buildings in a single bound—but really, who needs to fly in this day of supersonic jets? And besides, Steve Austin wouldn't be caught dead in that silly cape. Yes, folks, the six million dollar man is something new in the world of super-heroes—because he is part machine.



As any fan of ABC-TV's The Six Million Dollar Man can tell you, Steve Austin was once just an ordinary run-of-the-mill astronaut. Then an accident nearly wiped him out altogether. Nearly, but not quite. A team of top-secret doctors supplied him with bionic (that means mechanical) legs, one bionic arm, and a really nifty bionic eye that can see in the dark and even has a zoom lens! When he became a real "live wire" with superhuman strength and speed, he became the perfect top-secret government agent.

Ever since The Six Million Dollar Man was introduced to TV viewers, people have been fascinated by the idea of the show. "I think it's the idea of a man/machine," Lionel Siegel, the producer of the show said. "People today have a weird thing about machines. They're fascinated by them and maybe a little afraid of them. Austin is like the perfect combination of a man and a machine. He's a person, so he cares, he's brave, he's reasonable. And like a machine, he can do all sorts of difficult things. He's powerful, fast, and strong."

Lee Majors is the lucky actor who gets to

be this super super-hero every week. Before becoming Mr. Machine, he was on Owen Marshall, where he played a lawyer. Before that, all his acting had been in westerns.

"The change to playing a lawyer on Owen Marshall was a big one," Lee said. "I didn't really feel too at home with all that courtroom talk. On the westerns mostly I said 'yep' or 'nope.' When I heard about being on Owen Marshall, I asked if it was a 90-minute show. I hoped it would be, because I figured it would take me 45 minutes to deliver that speech that lawyers have to give at the end of a trial.

"Seriously, I loved doing westerns. I found them easy to do, and I liked being outdoors every day. On westerns, when you have a little time between scenes you can take a ride on your horse. But there was one good thing about being on Owen Marshall. I learned how to tie a tie." Lee laughed at his joke.

"The Six Million Dollar Man is fun because there's action," Lee went on. "After sitting in a courtroom, it's nice to be outside doing something again."

Lee does all his own stunts—which isn't





hard for him, because he's always been very athletic. In fact, when he was in college, the St. Louis Cardinals football team wanted to draft him, but he decided to take up acting instead. Now he does calisthenics, rides horses, and plays golf and touch football to keep in shape. Still, he admits that playing the six million dollar man takes a lot out of him. The first show, for example, took place in the Arizona desert. "It seemed like I was always running through and over sand dunes. Whew!" Lee remembered.

Lee explained that being part machine has its drawbacks too. "The bionic arm that Steve Austin wears is something the UCLA Medical Center is working on. When it's perfected, it will be used by people who have lost an arm."

Since Lee has both his arms, his right arm has to be strapped behind his back when he wears his bionic arm.

"It is very uncomfortable after about 15 minutes and after 45, the circulation gets cut off. Luckily, now everyone knows about Steve Austin's arm, so I don't have to wear it much anymore, which is fine with me."

What does Lee Majors think of Steve Austin? "Well, for one thing, I think it's terrific that we have a hero on a TV show who isn't a cop! I like the idea that some of Steve Austin's powers are pretty weird and a little funny. I liked one scene in the first show where Steve broke the chains around him-

self and another prisoner. The guy asks, 'How did you do that?' And he says, 'Vitamins.'"

It takes more than vitamins to keep a TV show on the air... and The Six Million Dollar Man was in need of a shot at the beginning of the season. That's why ABC changed its Friday night schedule and put Kung Fu on before The Six Million Dollar Man. ABC hoped that the reason The Six Million Dollar Man had started to slip in the ratings was that Kodiak (you don't remember Kodiak?—that was the problem!) was not exactly winning popularity prizes. Or maybe the problem was that The Six Million Dollar Man is really popular with kids but not as popular with older people who are the ones who buy the tires, toothpaste, etc. that is advertised on TV. Only time will tell. In the meantime, Steve Austin has to use his 60-mph speed, his infra-red vision, and his super strength to keep atom bombs from falling into the wrong hands—to rescue kidnapped scientists, to capture deranged criminals and spies. "Ho hum, it's all in a day's work," sighs Steve Austin. "Quick, pass the vitamins!" says Lee Majors.

Can we really build a six million dollar man? Can we create machine people? Dynamite found out the truth! Quick, read on!