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The #1 Interview
Artist Robert Nicholls

Walking With
Dinosaurs LIVE!

The Lost 1930 Interview
With Charles R Knight



Harness the Power?

by Ted Neos

Rescuee? Rescuer? Or worse yet... who could forget Dino-Riders, the popular TV series from the late 80s that combined dinosaurs and futuristic weaponry? But wait a minute... where are the weapons and figures? And what's up with the odd color schemes? In fact, if you take a closer look, you will soon discover that these weren't Dino-Riders at all but rather remarkably similar knockoffs.

Growing up, I have always been a huge fan of

things up.

As of this writing, there are knockoffs of only three different dinosaurs—Tyrannosaurus, Triceratops, and Brontosaurus. All three are very close to and nearly indistinguishable from their genuine counterparts. However, a closer examination reveals clear differences that enable a collector to tell a knockoff from the real McCoy. The most noticeable difference is the lack of any weapons, accessories, or figures that accompany the real toys.



With the knockoffs, all you get are the actual dinosaurs themselves. Still, it should be noted that they are in close to size to the real toys that they can be fully equipped with Dino-Rider weapons and accessories. Although these knockoffs are battery operated, they do not work as smoothly as the real toys and they are not AA batteries instead of one C battery. The knockoffs also emit a constant sound effect and have eyes that light up red, compare looking on the real toys. Finally, most white edges that a particular toy is a knockoff are small speaker holes on the side that give off the beeping sound and visible screws that hold the toy together.

In addition to the general differences between the knockoffs and the real toys, there are also differences unique to each dinosaur. For example, the head of the Triceratops knockoff is a solid piece attached to the body and does not extend back and forth as it walks like the real Dino-Riders Triceratops. The Triceratops knockoff also lacks the small bump on the back of the spine that the real version has. Similarly, the Stegosaurus knockoff is slightly bulkier than its real counterpart and has a different head shape. The Stegosaurus knockoff has a head like that of a mammoth but it does not properly belong on a Triceratops. The



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spots by far the biggest difference from its genuine counterparts. Although the knockoff is strikingly similar to the real Brontosaurus, it's much smaller and is unarmored. The knockoff is roughly the same size as the Stegosaurus and Triceratops and is even smaller than the Dino-Rider Triceratops.

Although there are only three different dinosaur types, there are several different color variations of each, presumably made by different toy companies. The similarity of the toys suggests that there is probably only one company responsible for them and it is likely that several different toy companies were used for purposes of marketing potential legal variations. Still, because there are so many variations out there, it is helpful to divide them into different company lines. Nicholls' "Action-Dino" line of knockoffs have odd schemes that most closely resemble the genuine Dino-Riders. The Stegosaurus is dark grey and red, the Triceratops is dark green and red, and the Brontosaurus is dark brown with pale yellow and grey highlights. Nicholls' "Evolution" "Dino-Tops" line of knockoffs features a dark reddish-brown and green Stegosaurus and a white/grey and brown Triceratops. Perhaps most unique are the knockoffs made by CVCR Bright Toys which feature wild color schemes in each contrast with the more subdued and realistically accurate genuine Dino-Rider pieces. For example, the Brontosaurus is light grey with bright purple highlights and the Stegosaurus is purple green and bright yellow. In addition to the color variations, there are other slight variations amongst the knockoffs. For example, the grey and purple Brontosaurus from CVCR Bright Toys has a possible rock utility in its back compartment which has a weak mode of one solid non-potential piece. Additionally, there are some instances of subtle corrections to the Triceratops from the "Dino-Tops" line from the other versions.

Aside from what has been written here, little else is known about these knockoffs. It is unclear when they were released and although they logically should have been released around the same time as the Dino-Riders line (i.e. early 1980s), it is more likely that they were released relatively recently given the fact that they have only begun to appear over the past few years. What is certain is that more and more knockoffs are introduced every few months and I am making an ongoing effort to document all known pieces. You can find out more information on these new and unique Dino-Rider knockoffs at www.dinoriders.com.

Dino-Riders.com is a fully comprehensive Dino-Rider resource. The site carries anything and every-



thing Dino-Riders related, including the website, the cartoon, and the merchandise. The site also features a Free Content section that contains pictures of fans' toy collections and one of a Dino-Riders Theater where visitors can watch the first four minutes of each cartoon episode, an exclusive section with never before seen prototype pictures and early design sketches, and a Forum where Dino-Riders fans from all over the world can discuss the toys and request spare toy parts. There is even a free playable game of Dino-Riders: The Video Game and other downloadable content. In short, if there's anything to do with Dino-Riders, you can find it at www.dinoriders.com.

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