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*-like The Onion, but shittier!*

**IT'S BEEN**

JFK Jr. Reborn

**DAYS SINCE OUR  
LAST SHITSTORM!**

## Fabled "Writer's Block" Found in Desert in Utah

### *Brick House*

Last year, researchers in the remote desert in Utah caught sight of a strange glimmer from their helicopter, shining off of an odd monolith standing amidst the rocks. Upon investigating, they discovered a large triangular metal pillar, standing about ten feet tall and with no engravings, inscriptions, or plaque of any kind to help identify the nature or source of the monument, leading to much speculation.

One group in particular came forward with their theory on the source of this monolith. Writers claimed that the pillar was the feared and fabled "Writer's Block", the bane of many a bored and unmotivated artist's experience.

Most people think that "writer's block" is just an expression for not being able to come up with any good ideas for writing, or facing lack of motivation. But, in writing circles, it is known as in fact a literal block, a legendary object that, through its very existence, emanates lack of motivation, sleep depravity, and obstacles to imagination to all creators around the globe. They say it turns up every couple decades, in different spots around the globe, and as soon as it is discovered it is only a matter of time before it disappears and reappears somewhere else, to be found by the next team of hapless explorers.

When this monolith in Utah was discovered, writers were among the many people flocking to the desert to see it.



However, they didn't come just to sight-see. Armed with various tools and knowledge gained from many an NSA-arousing Google search, they sought to destroy the Writer's Block once and for all. A surprising number got through the TSA, which were too busy detaining hydrogen fuel cells and toothpaste in slightly too large of containers to notice the assortment of makeshift and off-the-shelf tools that were being carried in check-bags to Utah. Some writers had large orders of fertilizer prepared to drop off near the location, to fashion explosives. Others, circular saws and jackhammers. One even just brought a really big hammer. However, many disappointedly left and went home after the monolith had disappeared soon after being first sighted. The hunt for the legendary "Writer's Block" continues, they say. Writers vow that, one day, they will find the block and destroy it, ridding the world of its evil. Until that day, they will remain vigilant and always on the lookout.

# Was Lego Mars Mission: Crystalien Conflict: the G.O.A.T.?

## Power Miners Fan

It's been almost a year since Adobe Flash player died, and its loss has been mourned for many moons. As we cast our fond memory back to the days before many of our favorite flash games became unplayable, we remember some of our favorites: *Line Rider*, *Jacksmith*, *Storm the House*... and even more niche but phenomenally done games such as *Siegius*, *Excavate!*, and *Plasma Burst II*. But sites like Armor Games, Ad-dicting Games, Cool Math Games, Kongregate, and all the other places you'd find ways around the school web blockers to get to never quite matched the pure, simple, magical feeling of one of the greatest and most enjoyable websites of all time: LEGO.com.

LEGO.com was the perfect combination of toy marketing and games, with genuinely good quality games that were designed to bring kids to the site to sell the toys, but ended up themselves being more popular than the toys they were trying to market. As glitchy, buggy, simple and graphically insulting many online LEGO games were, they were free to play and provided hours of entertainment at absolutely no cost. LEGO.com was many kids first foray into free-to-play online flash games, and amidst the many mediocre LEGO City, Space Police, Power Miners and Agents games, there was one that stood out far above all the rest: LEGO Mars Mission: Crystalien Conflict.

Crystalien Conflict was a Command and Conquer parody game in the style of the LEGO Mars Mission sets. The game was centered around the conflict between native Martian aliens and the Mars Astronauts sent to mine the energy crystals found on the planets surface. The main campaign (yes, there were multiple campaigns) had the player on the Astronauts side, with an impressive selection of buildings and units to choose from, ranging from infantry to jetpackers to Claw Tanks and Trikes, of which the aliens had parallels to. After completing that campaign, the player could play as the Aliens, with a new, harder and completely different missions and levels. Once both campaigns had been beaten, a special mission campaign opened up for both factions, which introduced new units that were amazingly fun to play with. By the time you beat all four of these campaigns, you were ready to go back and play them all over again.

Of all the games on LEGO.com, Crystalien Conflict was one of the few that gained a significant fan following. When the Mars Mission sets were discontinued, the game was removed from LEGO.com. Fortunately, a group of fans worked together to form the Crystalien Redux Project (<https://crystalien-redux.com/>) where, if you have Flash Player, the game lives on to this day. They even performed some bug fixes and added some extra features to the game, and it was updated as recently as May 2020. Also online you can find the cheat codes to enter into the game to make it easier or jump to a specific level ("n00b" gives extra armor, "moneypenny" gives you like a bajillion dollars to start).

So, if the game is basically just Command and Conquer, why does it deserve the title of G.O.A.T.? Because for a free, online flash game, it is hard to find any other with so much love, time, effort, community support, and creativity put into it. Between the sound design, graphics, mechanics and level design, it's hard to find any F2P game that can be its equal and can rival the number of hours I sank into it over the years. And, as an added bonus, there's no microtransactions or ads before your game, meaning it is well and truly free to play. Rest in Peace, Adobe Flash Player, and Rest in Peace, LEGO Mars Mission: Crystalien Conflict, the greatest flash game of all time.

### This weekend, in Fisher 135:

*Cruella*

11/05: 5:30 8:30 11:30

11/06: 5:30 8:30 11:30



Tickets are \$3, concessions are \$1 each for soda, popcorn, and candy.

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*Hi, my name is Big Al, and I approve this message*