Super Crime



By James Byng

Prologue

The late eighteen hundreds marked a change for the entire world: Germany was in the process of unification, the United States was in the midst of a civil war, colonial powers set their eyes towards Africa and Asia, and individual people began to display abilities that only ten years prior would be considered hoaxes or witchcraft. Reports varied from an African American male who was reported to be able to move the ground with his mind, a Native American woman who could make dead bodies fight for her, a Prussian man with the strength to stop a train, a Congolese man who could fly, and an English woman who could breathe fire. Many discounted these sightings that occurred much more frequently over the course of 1864 to 1882 ignoring any evidence presented. Then in 1885 a group calling themselves the Unification Company emerged claiming to fight for those who can’t defend themselves.

The Unification Company fought for all Americans regardless of their skin color, gender, sexuality, or nationality. They promoted equality under the law, general welfare for all citizens, and protection for the weak. Many large corporations came under attack by the Unification Company in response to monopolistic empires growing and making it difficult for citizens to compete in the market. Some industrialist such as John D. Rockefeller wished to work with or buy out the Unification Company to further the company’s agendas. While others, like Cornelius Vanderbilt, used their political influence to have the government crackdown on the Unification Company. Independent of the bribes from corporations, the federal government grew increasingly worried that the vigilante justice Unification Company could cause individuals to take the law into their own hands and the authority of the government. This led to mass arrests of anyone who happened to possess superhuman abilities or who attempted to mimic the Unification Companies vigilante action.

Across the Atlantic, the European empires had taken a route to incorporate superhumans into their aristocracy in return for military loyalty to their empires. In Africa, superhumans fought against their colonial rulers. In Asia, the Chinese Qing Dynasty kidnaped superhumans from across the continent to increase their military power. Despite the rise of superhumans, their numbers in total were miniscule in comparison to the normal humans that occupied much of the world.

With the First World War, many of those in the United States who were arrested for being superheroes had the opportunity to receive a full pardon if they fought against the Central Powers. The conflict in Europe led to mass casualties for both those who were powerless and superhumans, but those who survived stayed to help enforce the newly created League of Nations. Not even twenty years later, Adolf Hitler had convinced many of the superhumans working for the League of Nations to join his Nazi party while those who refused were killed by their former comrades. As World War 2 spread throughout Europe and Asia, many superhero teams from the United States that avoided arrest in the twenties and the great depression such as the New England Enforcers, Alaskan Ace Squadron, and many others united into one group called the Golden Goliaths.

With the newly formed Golden Goliaths battling against the Nazi’s, six other heroes went to battle the imperial Japanese army in the pacific: these heroes and their families would eventually become known as the Six Great Super Families. World War Two came and went, and in return the United States adopted a new social outlook upon super powered vigilantism. Superheroes were able to operate with almost no legal checks in place and it remained this way from 1948 to 1971, when the Indochina Crisis began.

The former member of the Golden Goliaths, Space Man, gathered up soviet superhumans to invade Indochina. The group ended up destroying Moscow during one of the multiple conflicts across Asia and Europe that occurred from the invasion of Indochina. This led to the fall of the Soviet Union mere days before Space Man and his group was stopped by the newly formed Justice Corps. The actions of Space Man led to a fear against superhumans in the United States leading to the creation of the Bureau of Hero Affairs. An uneasy relationship between the BHA and the superhuman community persisted for years, until one event in 1984 changed that relationship.

Chapter 1

Lander, Wyoming

July 3rd 1984

A brown steer bucked with all of its might in an attempt to throw off the rider who clung to the bull. Despite the power the horse put into its attempt at freedom, the skill of the rider was able to overcome the might of the animal. Peter Joseph was set on his goal of staying on the strongest bull the longest. With his pride, home and livelihood on the line, Peter had all of his strength coming out in this one moment. It all rested upon whether or not he could stay onto this creature long enough.

Despite the city of Lander’s small population of less than 8000, almost all of the populace would come to the annual Pioneer Days Parade and Rodeo. Police from surrounding counties were called in just to make sure no disturbances of the peace occurred during the event. Even with the increased presence of law enforcement, gambling was high on this particular rodeo. With the strongest horse, Old Iron Side, retiring after this rodeo, bets were high if the upcoming horseback rider could tame the mighty steed.

“We know you can do it Peter!” screamed Peter’s mother along with his father and sister. With his entire family watching he knew that failure was not an option. Peter’s left hand gripped on even tighter to the saddle while his right hand waved his hat in the air inciting cheer from the crowd.

“This looks like it could be Peter’s big break! Will he be able to hang on long enough to Old Iron Side or will he succumb to his brutal strength?” The rodeo announcer hollered over the loud speakers to roaring crowd. With sweat dripping off Peter’s forehead, only fifteen seconds remained until he would win enough money to finally go to college and become a teacher.

Within the crowd, a man in burgundy shorts and a button up flower shirt watches Peter from afar smoking a cigarette. Walking away from the large crowd into a restroom, he takes out a small device and puts it in his ear with the voice of a Bureau for Hero Affairs agent on the other side.

“This is Agent Foxtrot reporting in from Lander and so far nothing out of the ordinary, like I said no one will do anything in Wyoming.” Foxtrot said as the agent sighed in annoyance.

“Continue observation as planed and report back every hour.” The other agent chimed as he closed the communication line. Exhaling a great deal of smoke, Foxtrot walked out from the restroom to see the clock ticking down to seven seconds until Peter would break the record. With Five seconds left on the clock and Peter could almost smell his victory, and with one second left Peter could smell soot coming from above.

Looking up, figures clad in grey spandex were falling from the sky with military grade weapons firing upon the crowd. With gunfire spooking Old Iron Side, the horse rode off at top speeds the opposite direction of the falling men with Peter’s boot stuck on the horse’s saddle.

Peter attempted to cry for help but could not utter the words as he was launched off of Old Iron Side and onto the pavement. With gunfire deafening the city, police attempted to restore order only to be attacked by something worse than bullets. Before the police could react to the men with guns, they saw another figure in grey sitting on the roof of a building extend his arm as it transformed into a small artillery cannon, blasting the police force from above. As armed citizens came in support of the police, potshots were fired at the men in spandex only for the bullets to be stopped midair. As the armed citizens franticly attempted to reload their weapons, another figure raised his arms towards the citizens sending them flying back with the force of a speeding car.

Finally regaining his senses, Peter got up and ran as fast as he could away from the carnage, kicking off his boots and throwing off his hat. Jumping behind an empty dumpster near a convenient store, he let out a quiet prayer for anyone to come and save him. Sitting perfectly still, Peter felt the dumpster begin to move slightly but he dared not look behind him being petrified with fear.

“We both know I can see you.” The figure in grey spandex whispered as he swiped his hand in a downward motion crushing Peter under the trash can. “Not even a scream?” The figure in grey spandex said as another one of the figures motioned for him to return to the main group.

“Come on, the easy part is over and it’s time for the hard work to begin.” The other grey figure said as a bullet went through his shoulder. Agent Foxtrot opened fire on the figures in grey as one of the figures raised his hand stopping the bullets midair. Before the bullets could go flying back at Agent Foxtrot, a quick press of a button on the gun that fired the bullets caused them all to explode with the force of a grenade. As the shrapnel went flying, Agent Foxtrot dashed backwards avoiding the shrapnel and firing pot shots at the figures only to feel a force smash into the back of his head. Lying on the ground, Agent Foxtrot could feel his consciousness slipping away as he saw a hand morph into a gun pointed at his face.

Chapter 2

Huntsville Hilton Hotel, Huntsville, Alabama

July 4th 1984

The presidential limo rolled up to the hotel in Huntsville as the night sky lit up with Independence Day fireworks. President Ronald Regan stepped out of the vehicle surrounded by secret service agents who had already secured the hotel from any potential threats. Hotel workers were thoroughly background checked and a temporary situation room had been established in a meeting room at the hotel. While the nation was celebrating with hotdogs and hamburgers, the situation in Lander was being kept under a media blackout.

“The hotel is secure Mr. President,” A secret service agent said to the President. Regan walked in with secret service escorting him into the situation room to be met by the leaders of the six great super families. Surrounding a conference table was William Fitzgerald AKA Fighting Fitzgerald the leader of the Freedom Family, Marcus Might AKA Might Man Mark the leader of the Might Family, Sophia Sinclair AKA Mother Scientific the leader of the Science Family, Peter Doe AKA Americana the leader of the American Family, Adam Blake AKA General Cosmo leader of the Space Family, and Theodore Morris the leader of the Magic Family. Also within the room was director Ryan Jones of the BHA, the Bureau of Hero Affairs, Vice-President George Bush, and leader of the Justice Corps Sol Man. The tension in the air was high as the most powerful figures in America all stood together in one room.

“So, I understand that there is a situation up in Wyoming?” President Regan asked as Mother Scientific waved her hand and a holographic 3D map of the siege of Lander appeared over the table.

“Yesterday, a group of vigilantes clad in grey outfits overran the small city of Lander Wyoming. After looking through our records we have a few ideas of who’s behind the attacks.” Fighting Fitzgerald told the President who watched the carnage that occurred upon the city folk.

“Vigilantes? Are you sure they are not just supervillains?” Vice President Bush asked as Mother Scientific waved her hand again bringing up holographic images of five different men.

“Not to our knowledge sir, the location of their attack has no strategic advantage or any resources to be useful but Wyoming have had a…rough history with superhumans in the past.”

“What does that mean?” Vice President Bush asked.

“Well to put it simply, these vigilantes would gain more by displaying their version of justice in a place they view as inherently unjust.” Fighting Fitzgerald continued with the information about the men’s abilities appeared next to their holograms. Intangibility, telekinetic force manipulation, dirt clone creation, mustard gas secretion, and weapon creation, all of these abilities are dangerous on their own, when together they could cause major damage. “These five men began in an army unit together back during the Indochina Crisis and their powers activated during the Battle of Da Lat. They had gone missing shortly after returning to the United States.”

“So these veterans return out of nowhere and attack a random city in Wyoming?” President Regan inquired as Might Man Mark cleared his throat.

“Their motivations are still a mystery Mr. President, but with your orders the seven of us can enter into the city and eliminate the threat before it is known to the public.” Might Man Mark spoke as President Regan continued to look at the holographic recreation of the battle.

“I don’t think that will be necessary, a BHA agent is currently occupied there, is that correct Director Jones?” President Regan asked as Director Jones nodded his head.

“Agent Foxtrot is still alive according to his heart monitor but we have not heard back from him since the incident.” Director Jones confessed as President Regan took out a cigarette and a secret service agent lit it.

“While I appreciate the seven of you coming all the way out here to help us fix this problem, I think the BHA and the government can handle this on our own.” President Regan added as he continued to smoke and the seven super heroes looked annoyed.

“As you wish Mr. President, just keep in touch in case things get out of hand.” Fighting Fitzgerald uttered as the seven superhumans left the meeting room. As they left George Bush and Director Jones looked at the President who was looking at the ceiling.

“This just had to happen on an election year,” President Regan complained, exhaling smoke only to quickly take another deep breath of his cigarette. “Even worse that I have to run against a superhuman this year.”

“Mr. President, I believe the BHA has the man perfect for the job to solve this situation fast and without any citizens finding out about this incident.” Director Jones stated as the President and Vice-President looked at the man as he took out a manila folder and moved it over to the two. Inside were mixtures of black and white photos in addition to more modern pictures of a man doing astounding actions throughout history. “This is Ed Walter, son of New York man and a widowed Chinese immigrant, he joined the army at 18 and in 1916 he was the first person to be given super human abilities without being born with them.” Director Jones said as President Regan looked at him in confusion.

“This man should be in his retirement now, can someone this old really be of any use, and if so why have I never heard of him?” President Regan inquired.

“Walter may be 94 but has the body of a superhuman in his mid-thirties as the process that granted him his abilities have greatly slowed his process of aging and you’ve never heard of him because he only leaves his farm in North Dakota when the Bureau of Hero Affairs calls upon him which was happened last in the Indochina Crisis.” Director Jones added as President Regan put out his cigarette in the ashtray.

“Alright let’s send Mr. Walter in but I want to send in someone to go with him and see what the situation is really like.” President Regan said as Director Jones looked confused.

“Mr. President the situation in Lander is an incredibly dangerous situation, Mr. Walter won’t be able to ensure his safety for whomever…” Director Jones began to say as President Regan cut him off.

“If this situation gets out to the public the public needs to see that this is done by the government and not some random super hero taking action into his own hands.” President Regan said clearing his throat. “Send for Mr. Walter and I’ll have my team figure out who to go with him.”

“…As you wish Mr. President.” Director Jones said leaving the room.

Chapter 3

US Highway 30, Wyoming

July 5th 1984

The summer heat rained upon the speedy police car as it raced down the highway. In the driver’s seat, Sergeant Alexander Jones continues tapping his left ring finger against the steering wheel. As he continues to drive down the highway, his younger brother Matthew kept his face buried into the map of the state, acting as a navigator to both get them away from Lander and to have his mind distracted from what happened two days ago. In the back of the car Matthews’s wife Meredith and their two children Isaac and Elaine are in a deep slumber, the latter two oblivious to the events that had transpired.

“We’re here Matthew, should we wake them up?” Sergeant Alexander asked his younger brother.

“No they can sleep for another hour or so, I’d rather push off telling them what happened in Lander as long as possible.” Matthew responded as the two men stepped out of the car. Parked at a gas station in the city of Rock Springs, Matthew walked into the store to purchase gas while Sergeant Alexander just breathed in deeply.

“Lander huh, not many people come to Rock Springs from there,” a young man pointed out sitting in a char on the porch of the gas station. “Mind if I ask what brings you over here?”

“Just passing through.” Sergeant Alexander replied.

“The names Harold, reporter at Rock Springs Rocket, mind if I ask you a few questions?”

“Look this is really not the best time.” Sergeant Alexander said attempting to walk away from the reporter.

“I have an insider claiming that Lander banned superhumans from entering the city, is this true?” Harold said moving forward closer and closer towards Sergeant Alexander while taking out a pen and notepad.

“Like I said I’m…”

“Is it also true that Lander Police Department attempted to arrest a teenage superhero who was working for the BHA?”

“Listen buddy I don’t have time…”

“One last question and try to answer this one, what happened in Lander two days?”

“Excuse me?”

“A faint radio signal was sent out yesterday claiming that Lander was under attack and to send help urgently, shouldn’t a police man be protecting his city if what the message said is true?”

“You want a story? Then let me give you a story,” Sergeant Alexander said taking Harold’s pen and notepad. “Two days ago these damn superhumans popped out of nowhere and starting killing people in the street, within minutes the entire police force and a group of armed citizens were dead.”

“Killing people in the street, don’t you think that could have been averted if superhumans were allowed in Lander to begin with?”

“You just don’t get it do you?”

“Get what?”

“It’s the superhumans that are the problem, ever since they arrived is when the world went down the wrong path.”

“The wrong path, what do you mean by that?”

“What I mean is that our American values are going down the toilet, super villains, natural disasters, increased crime, it all goes back to them!”

“You don’t think that superhumans prevent all of those things?”

“That’s what the media will tell you, but the truth is far from that simple.”

“Is everything ok Alex?” Matthew asked coming out of the gas station to see his brother and the reporter together.

“Everything is fine, I was just giving this fine gentleman some truth about the world,” Sergeant Alexander said to his brother. “We should get going Matthew.”

Chapter 4

Blaine County, Idaho

July 5th 1984

The moonlight shined down upon a lone house in the middle of an expansive field. Wheat stretched as far as the horizon and a single man walked through the fields carrying bushels upon bushels of wheat atop his back. As he moved towards his home, the man whistled a tune that his father whistled when he was a young child. The tune was lost to all people aside from the man, but it was quickly overpowered by the sounds of helicopter blades moving in rapid movement. A spotlight shined down absorbing any light the moon was giving off on the house as the man looked up.

“Bound to happen eventually,” The man sighed to himself as he put the bushels of wheat down next to him. The helicopter began to descend right in front of the man and his house. The man spit out a piece of chewing tobacco he had in his mouth, as Director Jones stepped out of the helicopter holding a set of papers in his hand. “Where am I being sent off to this time Jones?” The man stated bluntly as Director Jones kept his neutral demeanor swatting a fly away from his face.

“Good to see you to Ed, we have a situation in Wyoming that the President would like you to deal with.” Director Jones said handing the papers to Ed. The two of them stepped back onto the helicopter as Ed saw another man, skinny as a pole, wearing a suit looking at the two of them.

“Who’s this?” Ed asked as the skinny man twirled a pen looking nervously at Ed.

“This is Peter Harris; the president wants him to accompany you into the hot zone.” Director Jones acknowledged with Ed looking at the skinny man. “Peter, this is Edward Walter, first super soldier and veteran since World War One.”

“You sure he can handle himself in a dangerous situation?” Ed asked as Peter stood up quickly as would a soldier to a superior officer.

“No need to worry about me sir! I’ve got a knack for avoiding danger!” Peter assured saluting his elder albeit incorrectly. Chuckling, Ed sat down in the seat next to Peter.

“Don’t salute me or call me sir when we work together, and take a seat.” Ed said as he grabbed bottled water from the cooler underneath his seat. “What’s the situation Jones?”

“Basically these five men rolled up into Lander Wyoming and you need to knock them down a level.” Director Jones ordered handing a small notebook containing information on the vigilantes to Ed. “We suspect that they wish to enforce some twisted form of justice upon the citizens of Wyoming, so just take care of them how you view best.”

“Sounds simple enough, what’s the catch?”

“The catch is, while the president wants you to handle it as you view best, he also wants this to be handled quickly and quietly so no backup can be provided.” Director Jones continued as the helicopter began to take off into the distance.

“What’s your super power?” Peter asked quickly and quietly, not making eye contact with Ed.

“What?” Ed asked not being able to hear the quiet man.

“What is your super power? Can you fly or move things with your mind?” Peter asked finally gaining the will to look at Ed. Despite being 94 and having no hair, Ed’s thick white goatee stood out along with his emerald eyes.

“Oh, here I’ll just show you.” Ed said right before winking at Peter. Within an instant, Ed disappeared and Peter jumped backwards into his seat even further. “I’m right here.” Ed said from behind Peter, holding Peters watch in his left hand.

“You can teleport?” Peter asked as he caught his watch that Ed had thrown back at him.

“Not exactly, whenever I blink at someone who is making eye contact with me they fall asleep for less than a second or up to thirty seconds depending on how long we keep eye contact prior to my wink.” Ed said as he took out a small bottle of eye drops. “Only problem is it dries my eyes faster than is pleasant.” Ed said putting the eye drops into his eyes.

“Oh, how long was I out?”

“Maybe one second, I’m incredibly fast to boot.”

“Do you think you can beat these guys? I mean if you can make people fall asleep it would be impossible to beat you right?”

“I’m a little rusty in terms of fighting, but I should be able to take care of them.” Ed said looking out the window of the helicopter. “Just to let you know, we are going to have to make a quick pit stop to Denver before we hit Lander.”

“What do we need to get there?”

“You’ll see.”

Chapter 5

Lander Outskirts, Wyoming

July 5th 1984

“This’ll be easy!” A large man in a cowboy hat said looking down at the city of Lander from a telescope, the moonlight reflecting off of the metal casing. “Like I already knew this was going to be easy, but 99% of their forces are literally made of dirt!”

“Don’t get cocky Sheriff Brand,” A large anthropomorphic bull interjected as he took the telescope from the man in the cowboy hat. Looking into the city, dirt clones patrolled the borders while the other figures were missing. “The five who attacked were able to demolish this entire city in a span of 47 minutes.”

“Have you ever fought local police departments? It is barley a warm up to anything fun,” Sheriff Brand pointed out as he cracked his neck. “Besides I told you to just call me Barry when we are not in hostile zones Bull!” Sheriff Brand protested to Bull only to fall on deaf ears.

“If we want to get a jump on them when it’s dark out let’s get a move on buckaroos!” A young man wearing said before whistling to conjure up five horses made of solid clouds. The group saddled up onto the horses and began racing towards the city.

“Not so fast Carl!” Sheriff Brand screamed to no avail as the horses in less than a second, arrived at the city. Despite the city being miles away, the speed of the horses combined with the durability of the Farm Fighters allowed them to arrive in mere moments.

“No one can stop the Farm Fighters!” The young man proclaimed as the group of five smashed through dirt clones with their horses.

“Light it up fighters!” Sheriff Brand hollered to the Farm Fighters as dirt clones exploded with bullets flying through them. All of the farm fighters jumped off of their horses and faced the dirt clones that stood before them. Before the remaining dirt clones could fire back, a lasso wrapped around multiple clones proceeding to twirl them in the air. Before the clones were destroyed, they crumbled apart onto the ground.

“You didn’t even smash them into the ground Rose, what gives?” Sheriff Brand asked the girl with the lasso that had retracted it into her arm.

“That wasn’t me Sheriff and I think we garnered their attention.” Rancher Rose expressed pointing up as the whizzing of a missile came from above.

“Farm Fighters get to cover!” Sheriff Brand screamed as the missile exploded in the air. Napalm emerged from the missile’s capsule flying right towards the farm fighters. A high-pitched whistle from Cowboy Carl summoned cloud horses to take the napalm for the Farm Fighters.

“That was close…” Bull panted as figures fell from above surrounding the Farm Fighters. What stood before them were four muscular figures each clad in a grey metallic spandex. Each individual spandex sported a different letter from the Greek alphabet. Alpha, Beta, Gamma, and Epsilon were on all of the grey spandex in a dark blue color that was almost invisible in the night.

“You folk must be the welcoming party to our new base of operations!” Sheriff Brand boasted approaching the figure with the Gamma letter on his spandex sticking his hand out. “Name is Sheriff Brand; the lovely people with me are Bull, Rancher Rose, Cowboy Carl, and Outlaw Otis.” Sheriff Brand said as the Gamma figure stuck out his hand, pointing at the Sheriff. The grey spandex began to turn into a mustard yellow color, and a gas shot out towards Sheriff Brand.

“Move out the way Sheriff!” Bull screamed pushing Sheriff Brand out of the way of the gas stream. As the small yellow cloud brushed on Bull’s left arm, it expanded encompassing Bull’s entire body. Blisters began to form upon every inch of Bull’s body as he screamed in agony.

“Is that mustard gas?” Rancher Rose said as Outlaw Otis reached his hands out turning them completely black as they absorbed the mustard gas into them.

“You’ll have to do better than that if you want to be able to beat the Farm Fighters partner!” Sheriff Brand said taking out his revolver and pointing it at the Gamma figure. Firing fifteen rounds towards the Gamma figure, the bullets curved in the air heading towards Outlaw Otis. “What in tarnation?” Sheriff Brand screamed as Outlaw Otis looked up only to see the fifteen rounds penetrate into his chest.

“That’s…not possible,” Outlaw Otis began to say as he collapsed onto the ground. “No one…has that fast reflexes…” Outlaw Otis murmured as his final breath left his lungs. The bullets that had gone into Outlaw Otis’s chest had flung out and floated above the hand of the Beta figure.

“The bullets were under my control the second they had left the guns chamber,” The beta figure proclaimed forming the bullets into multiple different shapes. “Maybe I’m not that fast, but if your power is to have unlimited ammo, then I doubt you’ll stand a chance against me.”

“How were you able to deduce my power so quickly?” Sheriff Brand asked firing another five shots at the Beta figure only to have them stop midair just as the fifteen before.

“It’s not rocket science that revolver is a six shooter and you’ve so far shot twenty rounds without reloading.” The Beta figure replied as Cowboy Curt raised his left hand to his mouth to attempt to whistle. Before the sound could let out, the Beta figure sent two bullets to sever both Cowboy Curt’s left thumb and pointer finger.

“Stop shooting rounds Sheriff!” Rancher Rose screamed as a closed hand emerged from inside her chest. As Rancher Rose looked down, the hand opened to reveal a still beating heart in its palm.

“We’re dead…” Cowboy Curt whimpered as he dropped to his knees right as Rancher Rose collapsed onto the ground motionless.

“Get up Cowboy Curt! The fight’s not over!” Sheriff Brand screamed as the Alpha figure whistled and the other three dispersed. “You think you can scare me?” Sheriff Brand said taking out another revolver and aiming both at the Alpha figure.

“I’m much more merciful than my companions are, if you leave now with the last living member of your team we can pretend this never happened.” The Alpha figure spoke calmly as a bullet hit his shoulder.

“Bite me, partner!” Sheriff Brand screamed spraying bullets in the direction of the Alpha figure. Before the second bullet could even reach the Alpha figure, the grey spandex wearing warrior had morphed the entire front of his body into rifle barrels and began to fire upon Sheriff Brand. As Sheriff Brands bullets were all shot down midair, bullets ripped the sheriff into pieces leaving him dead on the ground. Morphing his body back into normal proportions, the Alpha figure began to walk away as dirt clones appeared from out of the ground carrying the bodies of the dead Farm Fighters as well as the still shock Cowboy Curt away.

Chapter 6

July 7th 1984

Denver, Colorado

“I’ll take a double cheese burger, large fries and a large chocolate shake, what do you want?” Ed asked Peter while they stood in the front of the line at an U-Burger.

“I’m not really hungry; shouldn’t we be on our way to stopping the vigilantes?” Peter responded as Ed handed the cashier the exact cost of the order.

“I have not been in a fight since 64’ and I need to fuel myself with something I like if it could be my last meal,” Ed said straightening out his brown vest which had light reflected from his shiny blue and black track pants. “I also needed to get my lucky clothes that I left here also during 64’.”

“What happened in 64’?”

“Oh now that’s a story, so it all started…”

“You’re food is ready sir.” The cashier interrupted handing Ed the bag filled with greasy goodness.

“Thank you son, let us move along Peter.” Ed said as the two men walked out of the store and into the crowded streets. Not even three steps out of the fast food joint, and a large being whizzed past the pedestrians on the street from above. “What the…” Ed said, patting his left pant leg only to find that his wallet was no longer there.

“Ha I’ve done it again!” the figure above chuckled as it stayed stationary holding all of the wallets. “I’m positive that no one can defeat the Polo Prowler!” the figure screamed as Ed looked up blocking the sun out of his eyes.

“Excuse me sir!” Ed screamed up causing the Polo Prowler to look down at the elderly man. “I’d very much appreciate it if you could come down here and give me and all of these fine people our wallets back.”

“You dare think that you can tame the Polo Prowler you feeble old man?” Polo Prowler exclaimed as Ed cracked his knuckles while sighing.

“Listen buddy, I don’t have all day to be goofing around.” Ed blurted out as a loud reptilian screech could be heard off in the distance.

“It can’t be! I destroyed you yesterday!” Polo Prowler screamed as the crowd turned towards the source of the screech. What they saw was a large man in a white t-shirt wearing a dinosaur mask.

“Yet here I stand Polo Prowler, you should know by know that you can never truly defeat Dinosaur Man!” the figure proclaimed as he leaped through the air tackling the Polo Prowler into the ground. With that one move the Polo Prowler was knocked out, and the crowd cheered for Dinosaur Man.

“It’s a little odd isn’t it?” Peter asked Ed.

“What’s odd?” Ed responded.

“That we are on our way to deal with superhumans that destroyed a town while watching a superhuman brings on the cheers of normal city folk.”

“Maybe, but people like one thing more than anything else.”

“What’s that?”

“A sense of safety. As long as it’s provided people will shut up about things,” Ed said watching the police haul the Polo Prowler away as Dinosaur Man walked towards Ed handing him his wallet back.

“Here you are good citizen.” Dinosaur Man said toward the elderly gentleman.

“Thanks, let’s go Peter we still have a long trip.”

Chapter 7

July 7th 1984

Lander Outskirts, Wyoming

“Jesus…” Peter said looking at the city of Lander from afar. Despite being surrounded by National Guard and a super soldier, the mostly destroyed city emanated a feeling of danger that Peter could not shake off.

“Five guys did this over the course of four days?” Ed asked one of the National Guardsmen who nodded his head.

“We started a blockade yesterday after a group of supervillains attempted to take the city from the guys who attacked it, but it seems like the destruction was all caused in the initial attack,” The National Guardsman sighed as he handed Ed a telescope. “If you look hard enough you can see the bodies of the supervillains.” He said with Ed looking at the city through the telescope.

Within moments he was able to spot the corpses of Bull, Sheriff Brand, Outlaw Otis, Cowboy Carl and Rancher Rose scattered across the city. Despite their bodies being readily visible, the five men who attacked Lander and killed the Farm Fighters were nowhere to be seen.

“What will it take for you guys to come in and help?” Ed asked the guardsman who smirked back.

“We don’t move unless we get a call from the president himself,” The national guardsman said pointing towards an empty street leading into the town. “I’d recommend going in that way, most of the activity has been farther north so that street will most likely be the safest way in.”

“Are we walking or can we borrow a vehicle?” Ed asked as a jeep pulled up beside the elderly super soldier. “Well thanks guys, come on Peter.” Ed said getting into the driver’s seat while Peter entered the front passenger seat. Taking off towards Ladner, Ed takes a small wooden box out of his pocket and puts it on top of the center console.

“What’s that?” Peter asked as Ed motioned for him to open it up. Inside was a small pink domino mask that Ed took and placed on his face with one hand.

“It fits just as well as the day I got it back in 64.” Ed said as the vehicle came upon the city. As Lander was not a large city in the first place, it was never a perpetrator of any form of noise pollution. After the attack however, the silence from the city was only broken by the footsteps of Ed and Peter moving through the city. The walls of most buildings were caved in from artillery shells that had pelted them while cars were destroyed or still on fire.

“This city is basically a small town, how could anyone do this much damage to such an isolated place?” Peter asked Ed who was looking at a gas station. Despite all of the damage done to the city, this gas station was practically untouched aside from the ruble of nearby destroyed buildings.

“That’s not a trap at all.” Ed said moving towards the gas station slowly with all of his senses heightened. Ed picked up one of the gas pumps and nothing happened for a moment, until the pump was suddenly shot out of his hand. Turning his head towards the gas station building, a heavier set man covered in bruises and burns held a rifle towards the two men.

“Don’t move another inch!” The man screamed before quickly falling over backwards with a thump.

“You made him fall asleep?” Peter asked as Ed approached the man kicking the rifle away and kneeling down towards him, placing his ear against the mans chest

“A good guess but no, I think he had a heart attack.” Ed said with Peter quickly running towards the man.

“You think he had a heart attack? We have to do something!” Peter screamed as Ed stood up and walked away.

“Do you know how long it’s been since I had to do something that was not hurting someone? The last time I gave any medical assistance was before the Soviet Union even formed.” Ed said moving further away from the two of them. “We can’t help him; let’s just hope we can clean this whole thing up before he dies.”

“So you’re just going to walk away?!?” Peter screamed at Ed to get no response. As Peter turned to scold Ed some more, the super soldier was nowhere to be seen. “Ed?” Peter called. A sudden sense of panic overtook Peter, and he ran towards the rifle that Ed kicked away.

“I wouldn’t do that if I were you.” A voice said from behind him as Peter had almost grabbed the rifle. “Turn around slowly or you may have a hard time breathing in a few moments.” The voice said with Peter freezing in a panic. Peter slowly began to turn around to see a man clad in grey spandex and a gamma symbol on his chest.

“Look, I’m not here to cause any trouble,” Peter said as he dropped to his knees, keeping his head down. “President Regan sent me to try and solve this problem in a peaceful manner.” Peter said as he got kicked in the chest.

“No you’re not.” The gamma figure said picking up Peter by the throat.

“Well,” Peter said as the gamma figure looked down to see a large pistol pressed against his stomach. “You had a chance.” Peter said with a loud boom following him pulling the trigger. When the gamma figure’s grip weakened and Peter escaped he rushed backwards as the gamma stumbled back as well. As Peter raised his gun towards the gamma figures head, the gamma figure let out a slight chuckle. The gamma figure put his hand over the area where he was shot, and removed the bloodless bullet.

“The bullets in that gun can’t break through this material,” The gamma figure said as Peter shot another round at the gamma figure. Moving towards Peter, the gamma figure’s spandex protects him from a shot in the neck that came from Peter’s gun. I told you, it’s…” The gamma figure began to speak as Peter pressed a button on the right side of his pistol. Within an instant the bullets in the gamma figures hand and neck turned red and exploded.

The material around the gamma figure ripped apart and Peter was sent flying backwards through one of the gas station windows. Before Peter was able to move, his entire body was lifted out of the rubble by a figure with a beta symbol on his spandex. Behind him were the beta figure’s allies with alpha and epsilon symbols on their spandex.

“Wait please don’t kill me!” Peter began to plead as the alpha figure transformed his left hand into a shotgun. “President Regan sent me here…” Peter began to say as the shotgun’s barrel was put in Peter’s mouth.

“If it didn’t work on our friend what makes you think it will work on us?” The alpha figure said as the shotgun pumped itself automatically. Peter closed his eyes hoping that the blast would give him a quick death.

“You’ve come a long way Gabriel,” Ed said to the alpha figure as all three of the figures in spandex turned around to see the elderly super soldier holding the figure with the delta symbol on his chest. “Do you still go by all of your names or have you morphed completely into whatever act you’re putting on here.” Ed asked as the alpha, beta, and epsilon figures took off their spandex. Gabriel took the shotgun out of Peter’s mouth and pointed it at Ed.

“I thought you died.” Gabriel said as Peter fell to the ground with all of the men focused on Ed.

“Close, but no cigar,” Ed said as he continued to put pressure on the delta figures throat. “You’d think that dirt clones on a massive scale with guns would be more effective working with the government not against them.”

“We work for the good guys; I doubt you would understand the importance of what we are doing here.” Gabriel said as he formed a riffle out of his left shoulder, aiming it at Peter who was reaching for his pistol.

“Well maybe you are right given that killing a small city in Wyoming definitely shows that you work for the good guys.”

“Their extermination was simply the first step towards a better USA,” Gabriel said as Ed moved closer towards him with the delta figure in tow. “If you could just let go of Michael we can have a more civil conversation.”

“He is my bargaining chip at the moment, so I assume you still are in charge of the two jarheads that are with you?” Ed asked as the beta figure moved toward Ed.

“We have names, old man.” The beta figure said raising his hand towards Ed.

“I know you have names Raphael, it’s just that…” Ed began to say as a loud boom emerged from Peter’s gun. The bullet went straight through Raphael’s unprotected head as Gabriel shot Peter in the leg with the rifle on his left shoulder. Before Gabriel could fire another shot, Ed squeezed the delta figures neck snapping it instantly.

“This could have been easy Ed.” Gabriel said turning the rifle towards Ed and firing. Ed rushed towards Gabriel dodging the bullet, as Peter shot another round towards the epsilon figure. The bullet phased through the epsilon figure while Ed smashed his left fist into Gabriel’s check.

“Take care of the bureaucrat Joseph!” Gabriel screamed as Ed grabbed Gabriel’s leg, throwing him into another building. Peter fired his pistol at Joseph, only to phase through the bullet again.

“You’re dead.” Joseph said as he reached down to phase through Peters heart, only to get hit in the head by a piece of debris. Looking up, Peter saw the building that Ed and Gabriel were fighting in had fully collapsed in on itself. Bullets penetrated through all of the debris and bounced off of nearby buildings. As Peter jumped into the gas station, a bullet caught him in the back of the head. He fell over to the ground, motionless as Gabriel flew out of the pile of rubble from the fallen building. Ed quickly jumped out of the rubble as well, staring down Gabriel who had transformed both of his arms into artillery cannons.

“I’m going to blow you back to World War One, old man!” Gabriel screamed as he fired two artillery shells at Ed. The blast from the two shells going off rocked the entire city, sending Gabriel backwards into a fallen building. Gabriel lay down on the ground; drained from creating so many weapons in such little time. Before he could fully rest, a rock came out of the dust cloud and hit him in the head. As the dust settled, Gabriel saw that Ed’s shirt had ripped and his shoulder popped, but he remained standing.

“Just give it up, you’ve lost.” Ed said popping his left shoulder back into place as he stared down Gabriel. “All of your allies are gone, and that hit you just delivered shows me that you have no chance in taking me out by yourself.”

“Shut up…” Gabriel said as he changed his left hand from a baseball bat into a desert eagle, firing five shoots at Ed. While Ed dodged the bullets, Gabriel lunged towards him only to be kicked in the throat.

“Like I said,” Ed uttered as he smashed his fist into the back of Gabriel’s head. “Give. It. Up.”

“Grkk…” Gabriel said attempting to speak, but the kick to the throat left nothing but a crackling sound coming from his voice. Ed raised his foot to smash Gabriel’s head, but before he could do so the sounds of helicopters from the distance appeared out of nowhere. Placing his foot on Gabriel’s chest to hold him in place, Ed turned his head to see seven National Guard helicopters flying towards the two of them, surrounded by almost a dozen flying heroes.

“Keep quiet.” Ed said applying more pressure onto Gabriel’s chest as one of the flying heroes landed in front of Ed. “I was told that no backup was coming.”

“That was then, this is now,” The flying hero said waving his hand and placing Gabriel into a strait jacket he made appear. “You’ve done a good job, but we need to get Gabriel out of here before the media catches on.” The flying hero said as Gabriel’s eyes began to go bloodshot.

“Oh no…” Ed said as he began to run as fast as he could in the opposite direction of Ed and the heroes. Moving at 50 miles per hour, Ed was not able to hear the flying hero’s confusion as Gabriel’s body began to swell up. Despite Ed’s greatest attempt to escape, Gabriel’s body glowed a bright yellow as an explosion occurred form his heart. Within seconds, a nuclear blast encompassed the entire ruins of Lander, with the helicopters in the distance as well as the flying heroes all being enveloped in the atomic blast.

Epilogue

Century Plaza Hotel, Los Angeles, California

November 6th, 1984

“The numbers just got in, looks like the only place Rutherford was able to carry was D.C. and it was tight even there.” The new director of the BHA Samuel Kirkpatrick said to the reelected president Ronald Regan.

“The road was tough, but now that all of that vigilantism in Wyoming is behind us I think that a bright future is straight ahead between the superhumans and the government.” President Regan said, sipping champagne.

“You know that even with the public on our side, change will be slow,” Director Kirkpatrick said turning on the television. News stations were showing anti-superhuman protests flaring up across the nation in response to Landers destruction. “The Six Great Families still hold influence over the BHA, and the Justice Corps will be nearly impossible to limit.”

“We don’t want to completely control them Sam, we just want to make sure the people in the nation know who is in charge.”

“I suppose,” Director Kirkpatrick said shutting off the news. “Was this really all worth it sir?” Director Kirkpatrick asked as Regan looked up at the ceiling.

“I won’t lie and say that the death of all those civilians doesn’t weigh on me every day Sam,” President Regan said as he took a seat putting his feet on the table. “But at the end of the day, if something did not happen to sway the public to our side and the superhumans started thinking they could do more than just stop the bad guy,” President Regan said taking out a cigarette. “War would have been inevitable and I’m not sure we would have won, do you understand what I’m trying to say, Sam?”

“I fully understand sir; however we need a plan for these next four years if we want to keep the superhuman population controlled while still keeping them content.”

“Oh trust me I know Sam, as a matter of fact,” President Regan said as he grabbed a briefcase from under the table. The president waved his hand over the seal at the center of the briefcase, causing it to instantly open up. Inside the briefcase were manila folders with a red ink spelling out TOP SECRET stamped on the cover of each one. President Regan motioned for Director Kirkpatrick to take one of the folders to which he promptly did. As he opened them, papers showing a map of the United States, schematics for different buildings, and lists of experienced superhumans fell out of the folder.

“What is all this?”

“This, Sam, is how we are going to both control and train superhumans.” President Regan said as Director Kirkpatrick kept looking through the folders. Before Director Kirkpatrick could respond, a secret service agent knocked on the door before coming in.

“It’s time, Mr. President.” The agent said as President Regan stood up and began to walk out.

“That looks like it’s all the time we will have for tonight Sam, write down any ideas you have and I’ll send it to the eggheads to get them working right on it.” President Regan said walking out of the room leaving Director Kirkpatrick to look through the files alone.

“So you’re the one who replaced Jones,” Ed Walter said standing in an open window. Director Kirkpatrick fell out of his chair with the papers flying everywhere. “I have to admit, I’m not impressed.”

“How did you get in here,” Director Kirkpatrick said crawling backwards as Ed jumped into the room, his skin visibly scared with burns. “You were supposed to have died in Lander.” He said quietly in fear as Ed let out a small chuckle.

“I’ve survived worse than a weak nuclear explosion, but it was by no means pleasant,” Ed said cracking his neck and picking up one of the papers. “You want to build schools for superhumans?” Ed asked as Director Kirkpatrick remained silent. “Are you one of those weird silent types?” Ed asked as Director Kirkpatrick started to open his mouth.

“I’ll give you any info you want, just please don’t hurt me…”

“Oh please, if I wanted to hurt your or Regan security would already be dead and the two of you would be in a van heading towards the desert,” Ed said throwing the paper towards Director Kirkpatrick. “It’s not actually a bad idea, just make sure Regan knows to not contact me ever again.” Ed said as he gave a quick wink towards Director Kirkpatrick, and with that he disappeared.

