

Home-Made Heroes
Issue #5
Days Gone By

FLASHBACK #1

The first boy was tall and dark haired, just one or two years older than the second younger boy who had blonde hair. Both ran through the woodland laughing and joking loudly the older one being chased by the younger.

“Come on James...you’ll catch me one day”

“Your...too...fast...Edward...you’re...always...too...fast”

Panted the younger boy.

As the two boys ran happily through the woods with twigs and small branches snapping under their shoes, the sound of a car horn being sounded echoed around them.

“FATHER!”

Both boys exclaimed as they quickened their pace.

The 1924 brand new V-63 Cadillac Coupe was driven along the gravel pathway which led to the large country estate, by a well set square jawed figure of a man aged in his mid thirties. Strong faced, a rugged looking, no nonsense man born and bred from pioneer stock, successful in business but never one to forget his humble past.

The two boys called out to their father the closer they got to the house through the now ever thinning wood.

On sighting the two youngsters running towards him the man’s hard, no nonsense face melted away and a broad smile appeared.

They ran out of the trees and across the short cut grass and onto the gravel driveway sliding into the arms of the smiling man. He bent down and wrapped his tree trunk like arms around the pair of them and held the two of them tightly.

“How are my two boys?”

“We’re Great father”

Replied the eldest.

“We missed you so very much,”

Answered the younger boy.

NOW:

The wheels of the hospital wheelchair squeaked along the corridor floors as the white gowned patient was pushed along by the nurse.

“How are you feeling today Mr Cody?”

“Fine thank you nurse...just fine, but please call me Edward”

He found the hustle and bustle of the hospital disorientating there seemed to be people everywhere he looked, people crying, people shouting, people running from one place to the next sometimes banging into others and not even having the time to say sorry he couldn't remember having seen so many people before.

“Will your brother be coming to visit you today?”

“No he can't make it”

“Oh I'm sorry Mr Cody...does it have something to do with those stories on television and in the newspapers?”

“No...no it doesn't...and I wouldn't believe what you read in the papers these days especially going on what I've seen in the ones I've looked at”

The nurse came to a halt by the side of a private room door, which was closed and had the name EDWARD CODY printed on the door.

“Here we go Mr Cody”

The nurse swung the wheelchair around and banged it into the door using the wheelchair it's self to open the door.

Edward was driven over to the bed.

“Will you need some help today?”

“No I can manage”

The nurse locked the wheels of the wheelchair.

“Well in that case I’ve got a spare five minutes, so if it’s ok with you I’m going to sneak out for a quick cigarette...ok?”

“Sure”

“And could you do us a favour...if anyone asks where I went, tell them I went out to get you a bed pan or something...yeah?”

Edward smiled.

“No problem”

“Thanks and tell you what I’ll bring back one of them chocolate bars you love so much...the ones they say you shouldn’t have”

“Cheers”

The nurse shot out of the room leaving Edward Cody alone, which he didn’t mind, it was the first time in hours that he didn’t have someone trying to stick something in him or up him.

He took a hard grip onto the armrests of the wheelchair and pushed himself up slowly and staggering slightly turned himself round and sat on the edge of the bed.

FLASHBACK #2

James Cody ran. He didn’t know how long he had been running his face was beginning to redden and he felt his heart pounding hard in his chest as if at any moment it would start working it’s way up into his throat but he knew he couldn’t stop, because if he did he would be caught all alone by the three bigger boys chasing after him fast. How long had it been now he didn’t know but it had all started down by Beggars Bridge.

Why the three had decided to pick on him was a mystery he never caused them any harm in fact he had never noticed them before now. He was quiet and kept himself to himself reading his books or trying to catch the butterflies as they danced from leaf to leaf. Never the less today they had come into his world and turned it upside-down with threats of violence and beatings, so James Cody made the choice but that didn’t stop these three because for them the thrill of the chase was part of the fun.

“WHERE’S YOUR BIG BROTHER NOW?”

Called out one of the boys as he ran after James.

“NOT SO TOUGH NOW ARE YEAH?”

Cried out another.

“WHERE GONNA GET YAH SOONER OR LATER...JAMES”

By now James found himself running along a stream. The stones beneath him making the getting away much harder and slower. Suddenly he slipped, falling hard on the cold wet stones of the streams banking.

The three pursuers quickened their own paces when seeing the wounded James lying on the stones and, before James knew what was happening, the three boys had him surrounded.

“YOU THINK YOU’RE BETTER THAN US JUST COZ YOU LIVE IN A BIG HOUSE AND YOU’RE DAD DRIVES A FANCY CAR RICH BOY”

Spat out one of the youths grabbing James by his coat suddenly, pulling him up and punching him in the stomach and again James fell to the ground.

“DID YOU WANT TO TRY THAT WITH ME?”

Came a call from behind the three lads.

The packs of boys turned themselves around and at the same time James himself looked up.

Standing a little way up the stream the older taller figure of Edward Cody watched.

“I SAID DID YOU WANT TO TRY THAT WITH ME?”

Edward Cody slowly started to walk towards the group which backed away slightly looking at each other as they moved.

“You ok James?”

Asked the ever-closer moving Edward.

“I’m ok”

Replied the wounded James as he began to pick himself up from the ground as the other boys watched

Edward reached James and held out his hand towards him, James took his brothers hand and Edward helped James get to his feet.

“Which can be more than said about these three...right James?”

The two Cody brothers glanced at each other for a moment, a smile formed on the face of Edward and they turned their attention over to the three boys, who now all looked at each other and then quickly turned back to Edward and James.

“Yes!”

Replied the younger Cody, also with a smile on his face and with that the two brothers started to make their way towards the three bullies.

NOW:

The moonlight beamed in strong and pale through the hospital room windows giving Edward Cody the only light in the room, as he lay awake in his bed staring up at the ceiling.

Silently the door of the room was opened and a hushed voice spoke from behind the blaze of light from the hospital corridor outside.

“So how do you feel?”

Edward didn't respond.

“Mr Cody...Mr Cody I asked how do you feel?”

Edward remained silent.

The next morning the sullen figure of Edward Cody sat in his wheelchair in the book filled office, which also housed the occasional piece of doctor's equipment. Sitting opposite Edward behind a large oak desk, was a middle aged slightly podgy, yet well suited Doctor.

“Mr Cody PLEASE...how do you feel?”

Edward suddenly woke from within his daydream.

“Sorry Doc I was a million miles away”

“That's ok Edward...where were you?”

“I'm not too sure”

“Well then, how do you feel?”

“Fine I guess...a little foggy in the head is all”

“Understandable”

The doctor got up from his leather chair and walked around from behind his desk. He pushed some papers and other small objects to one side and perched himself on the edge of his desk.

“I know you didn’t want to come here, I know you didn’t want to see me and my kind of Doctor Edward but don’t worry, not many people do...my job is to make sure you’re getting the best treatment and in due course make a full recovery”

Edward looked up at the doctor.

“I know doc and really I feel fine, honest...and I’m ok with this”

The doctor let himself slide off the desk he had perched himself on and walked back around to his chair pausing for a moment before sitting back down.

“The thing is Edward you have undergone what can only be described as an amazing transformation to say the least, you have been...been”

Edward finished the doctor’s sentence for him

“Someone else”

“YES...and you were that person most of your adult life. You thought differently, acted differently you were once Edward Cody...a brother, a son and then Dark half a powerful, evil figure. But now you have returned to that previous state of being, missing out on a whole world which has now changed from when you knew it last... and what I want you to tell me is, at this very moment, how do you feel?”

“What do you mean?”

“Well do you feel happy, sad, confused?”

“Empty”

“Empty...how?”

“I can remember things, places, and people events from my past”

“Such as?”

“When me and James followed this girl at our school down to Beggars Bridge, we always liked going there specially James, he was always down there in the summer. Anyway she was a few years older than the pair of us and we liked watching her take her clothes off and swim in the river. But one day James lost his footing and snapped a twig and she looked up saw us and we started running and running and we never did

stop running until we got home...But I can't remember anything past a certain time until when I woke up here in the hospital and from what I've seen looking around me the world is so very different to what it was before for me...it's too different, it's strange"

"What is your last memory?"

"The day me and James went through the tests for Project Seven together"

FLASHBACK #3

The two naked figures of the Cody brothers stood side by side, almost as young now in the past as they looked in the present. Both were strapped vertically to a very Jack Kirbyisque machine with wires and electrodes running off of their bodies and into banks of other Kirbyisque machines and back again to them. The machines giving off a low humming sound in the background as the power flowed through them.

"We had stepped up and into the Human Accelerator Unit or what ever the hell it was called by the guy's in the white coats and just waited for them to turn on the juice I can recall one of the doctors who was behind a protective screen saying TODAY IS THE DAY THAT WILL CHANGE YOUR LIVES FOREVER...and then BANG the sparks really flew and the world went blank until this week and I guess he wasn't kidding!"

FLASHBACK #4

James and Edward strained against the power which flowed in them, around them and from them but suddenly without warning there was a huge surge in power, the metal of the Human Accelerator Unit started to buckle as it glowed red and then white hot, the power built up and was eventually released in a massive explosion. Doctors and medics ran about the room in panic as the lab was filled with thick black smoke.

As the smoke started to clear, two figures could be seen hunched over on the floor. Both James and Edward Cody had been thrown by the force of the explosion and laid smouldering their bodies bigger, muscular, yet unharmed.

James Cody looked normal apart from the change in his physic, his skin tone, hair and eye colour where unchanged. But Edward Cody was very different, his skin was like black marble, his features were missing, only a broad outline of a mouth, nose, and ears visible. His eyes were very much different from what they once were for now, through the grey whispering smoke, Edward Cody's eyes burnt blood red.

NOW:

The newly returned Edward Cody sat slumped in his wheelchair after reliving the memories in his mind to the doctor who sat back in his leather chair.

“And what have you been told?”

“Things I wished I hadn’t been but I suppose they were things I needed to hear...I was briefed that Project Seven was only half a success, that James and myself were transformed into super powered people but where my brother was lucky and turned into a hero, I was not so lucky. James has become a symbol of good, a symbol for our country but I became a force of evil, a super powered menace...that I fought my own brother for years and battling against him caused many deaths and so much destruction”

“So he told you about the after effects as well, the abilities you had as Darkhalf to stay away the effects of ageing, that as the rest of the world moved on, those around you grew old and died you lived on as the same, never losing out to time”

“YES...and I must say things do look strange”

“You know what happened to you, you know what you had become, and you know what you did...how does that make you feel?”

“I...truly can’t remember anything from being that other person...that other me, It’s like I am him, but I’m not him, he is me but also he isn’t me and not just like a different part of my subconscious...or my whatever you call it...psychology but just a completely different person, as different as you are to me”

“Hmmm”

Replied the doctor staring downwards at Edward as the room filled with silence, which was broken after a few moments by the high pitched beeping sound of the doctor’s pocket pager.

The doctor fumbled around in his pockets as he sat there suddenly finding the pager in one of them. He turned off the beeping sound and looking at the message.

“I’m sorry Edward I’m going to have to cut today’s session short”

“That’s ok doc I’ve got a lot to think about”

The doctor got up from behind his desk and started to pack his briefcase with various documents and papers.

“The nurse will take you back to your room”

Edward Cody was wheeled back to his room through the hustle and bustle filled hospital corridors by the young nurse who had wheeled him along before.

“How’d it go today then Edward?”

“Fine”

“Has your brother been to see you yet?”

“No...I guess he’s got his plate full”

“Oh...well here we go”

The young nurse turned the wheelchair to face the door to Edward’s single room

“I can take it from here nurse”

“You sure...I don’t know if I should let you, you’re still not fully stable on your feet”

Edward turned his head around to face the nurse.

“I’ll be fine”

“Ok Edward, whenever you’re ready”

The nurse looked around first then bent down and locked the wheels of the wheelchair.

Edward grabbed hold of the chair’s arm rests and slowly pushed himself up; the nurse watched him nervously as Edward shuffled his feet along the floor and staggered up to the door.

The nurse stepped by Edward and held the heavy hospital room door open for him.

“Oh...there was a parcel delivered for you today, I’ve put it on your bed”

Edward stood for a second in the doorway looking into the room, sitting on top of the newly made bed sheets sat a large square brown papered covered parcel.

“I’ll stop by and check on you later ok”

Stated the nurse as Edward shuffled slowly inside, the nurse closed the door behind him and Edward was alone. He methodically shifted his feet along the floor dropping himself on the bed when he reached its edge, falling down next to the parcel.

He straightened himself up on the edge of the bed, once done he leaned over and picked the parcel up it was heavy and whilst still in his weakened state he struggled with its bulkiness. He tore at the covering paper dropping strips of the wrapping onto the floor revealing a very worn and well-used photo album.

He placed the photo album on top of the bed sheets and carefully opened its pages; its weakening spine creaking. Pasted inside were old browned newspaper clippings, the first one to catch Edwards's eyes read,

TEN CHILDREN DIE IN DARKHALF BUS CARNAGE

Edward sat and read the newspaper story.

Ten children tragically died yesterday during a super powered brawl between America's favourite son, Captain Cody and the super-villain menace known as Darkhalf. It was during this fight that Darkhalf picked up a school bus filled with children on their way home and as witnessed by people caught up in the horror, threw the bus at Captain Cody, who despite his valiant efforts, couldn't save all the children.

FLASHBACK #5

Darkhalf stood tall and menacing; the street around him was thrown into chaos Cody was just ahead of him kneeling down on the ground getting over a previous attack by Darkhalf who glided along over to a yellow school bus filled with panic stricken children.

Darkhalf picked up the school bus and held it up high above his head readying himself to throw it at Cody.

“DARKHALF...NO! DON'T DO IT”

Darkhalf built up the momentum he needed and then with one mighty throw sent the bus containing the school children in Cody's direction but the bus missed Cody and smashed to the ground and skidded itself along. Cody as quickly as he could jumped over to the bus grabbing hold onto it, his hands buckling the metal inwards until he managed to take hold of it but suddenly Cody was hit from behind by a solid mass of black mist emanating from out of Darkhalf's body.

Cody was knocked off of the school bus and sent smashing into the side of a nearby building, the school bus continued skidding along and eventually smashed into an office buildings lobby.

Edward Cody sat on the edge of his bed and turned the pages of the photo album finding another story about his former life.

150 BURN TO DEATH IN TRAIN FIRE

The picture underneath the headline showed the smouldering wreckage of a burnt out train carriage, with fire and ambulance crews attending the site.

Edward Cody sat and read the accompanying news story about his former self

The small town of Coopersville, Dakota will be in mourning today after a state long battle between super villain Darkhalf and Captain Cody yesterday took a disastrous and tragic twist when the two super powered beings crash into a passenger train. Derailing the train and sending it crashing down a mountainside. The super villain Darkhalf then furthered the horror and suffering of the passengers for his own gain by setting alight the train using his eye beams and escaping from the pursuit of Captain Cody. Fire investigators state that up to as many as 150 people could have been killed. Captain Cody, who saved as many people as he possibly could, gave the following statement...

FLASHBACK #6

Darkhalf and Captain Cody held each other locked in a face to face hold both pressing up and down on the other trying to force the other one to brake his grip, the small town which once stood around them now lay flattened.

“Give it up little brother”

“Not until you do”

“NEVER”

Suddenly Darkhalf fired his eye beams into Cody’s eyes and face, Cody screamed in pain and let lose his grip on Darkhalf, who glided up into the sky and let himself drift over the wrecked town, setting alight the remaining buildings.

Edward sat still on the edge of his hospital bed the photo album in front of him; he carried on staring at the photo for a few seconds then turned more of the worn and falling out pages again stopping when a news headline caught his attention.

1000 PEOPLE DIE AS DARKHALF TOPPLES BUSINESS BUILDING

A high-speed chase that had crossed the globe ended yesterday with the single most destructive loss in people and property so far during a super being battle when super menace Darkhalf purposely toppled a multi-story business tower onto a busy midday street below.

FLASHBACK #7

Cody was flying as hard and as fast as he could, a short way in front of him was Darkhalf.

Suddenly Darkhalf changed direction and headed downwards.

The suited and well dressed business men and women watched the fast moving dots high in the sky getting ever never, ever closer.

Looking over the speeding black figure ahead of him James Cody saw the target and shock appeared on his face he knew he had to be faster.

But it was too late the black bullet shaped figure of Darkhalf slammed into the bottom of the building, which trembled sending the people and objects inside falling. Cody landed himself on the street below in time to witness the building lurch forward as it started to topple towards him. He flew straight up and tried to fight back against the force, but gravity took hold of the building and it came crashing down on top of Cody and collapsed onto the street below sending mountains of wreckage and dust into the air.

Edward Cody, tears running down his face, continued to turn the pages.

END OF ISSUE FIVE