

Crunch

A Super-Hero Story

T. J. MILLER

Crunch : A Super Hero Story

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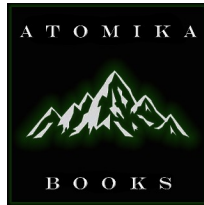
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Introduction

For many years I've wanted to write a Super-Hero book, but for the life of me, I could never figure out how I should do it. I was initially inspired by the first round of Marvel movies, but then they just kept making them, and I abandoned the idea for years because there were just so many Super-Hero movies around that I couldn't see how you could make one that was totally unique and original.

Finally, I came up with an idea.

There were a few movies that helped spurn the idea that follows. The first was a single line from *The Incredibles 2*. Mr. Incredible is working with another Super-Hero, and in the movie, Mr. Incredible asks this other hero if he can undo what he just did. The other Super-Hero looks at him and says with a confuzzled look:

"Can you un-punch somebody?"

I heard the line and thought to myself . . . hmm. I think there might be an idea.

The other movie that contributed to this book was a Disney Movie called *Sky High*.

It's a unique movie about a Super-Hero school, and in the movie (to make a long story short) all the people at this party get turned into babies for a short while.

Ever since I've seen that movie, I've thought to myself, '*Man, they could have an interesting movie if they did it just a little bit different.*'

You'll understand what I mean later.

Then as I got thinking more seriously about the idea, I wondered what normal everyday life would look like for a Super-Hero. And if you were to have a Super-Hero tell you his life story, what would he tell you? The result is a satirical comedy, and I certainly hope you enjoy it!

Furthermore, I've always wanted to write a book from the perspective of a first-person narrative. It was a bit of work but a lot of fun to write.

Also, I would like to thank my wife and kids who were always able to help me come up with funny things to put in the story.

So without further ado, I present to you Walter Braymend, or as you'll soon know him a Super-Hero named, 'Crunch'.



Chapter 1

Life for me has been different. Really different. Imagine the strangest life you've ever heard of, and then multiply that by ten and you might come close to the life that I've lived. It's not a bad life, don't get me wrong, just unusual.

You know what, let's back up and start again because I got this totally wrong.

Okay, here we go . . .

Hi, my name is Walter Braymend. I'm now 40 years old. I have a wife and seven kids.

That was better, right? Probably doesn't sound too freaky, which is good. I know some people reading are like, holy crap! Seven kids. Just wait. It gets better.

(Side note: seven kids has been really fun.)

Okay, sorry. Won't get distracted again, at least I'll try not to.

I'm Walter Braymend, and I am a Super-Hero.

Now before you go and start thinking—*Oh, that's so cool! A Super-*

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Hero! A real-life Super-Hero!—it's not all it's cracked up to be, and it is nothing like the movies or comic books. Those shouldn't even be allowed to be published.

Ah! They're just embarrassing.

I figure (for starters) it's only fitting if I explain a little bit about what *actual* Super-Heroes are like, compared to what you've probably seen in movies and comic books. We'll start with some true things.

Firstly, the code names are real. It only makes sense right? Protects our identity. However, we don't get to choose our names. When we graduate from Super-Hero school, we are brought before a large council called *Super-Hero Association of Naming Council Tactical Innovation Offensive Nuances*. It's quite a mouthful, but it's an acronym. (Our government loves acronyms, too.)

It's lovingly referred to as S.A.N.C.T.I.O.N. That's partially because not too many people even know what the acronym stands for, or even care. The council is made of up 937 Super-Heroes. And there is always a select member of the Super-Hero community that is kept in reserve in case they should come to a tie.

I'm not sure under what circumstances 937 people would 'tie' a vote on anything . . . mathematically it's impossible.

But rules are rules!

The point is that this council (made up of 937 Super-Heroes) looks at your file and your abilities, and then they choose your name. They do take suggestions from friends and family, but those are rarely accepted. S.A.N.C.T.I.O.N. usually insists on unique names.

So, sometimes you get a cool name like Ice Man or Rocky; then there are other times you get named after the dumbest things you've done.

For example . . .

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I knew a guy whose name was Mac. His code name was 'Cheese'. His power didn't even have anything to do with cheese. But still, he was called Cheese for the rest of his Super-Hero days. I don't know how he put up with it. I would find that rather embarrassing, and no pun intended, it would be very 'cheesy'.

Okay, the pun was totally intended. How could it not be? 'Hey! Can we get some *Cheese* on that pizza?' 'Hey *Cheese*, are you from Wisconsin?' The possibilities are endless.

Sorry, staying focused.

Other notable names that are funny: Skid-Mark. Gopher. Soxs. My personal favorite in the funny category was Mr. Bubble Butt. Named so because, during his sophomore year at his Super-Hero school, he attempted to jump off a building, with a large roll of bubble wrap taped to his butt.

His Super-Power was reversing physics, so he could stop himself before he actually hit the ground if he wanted to. He was never actually in *that* much danger. Or in any danger, if you think about it. However, that being said the bubble wrap reacted differently to his Super-Power than he intended, and he sent himself soaring nearly three hundred feet into the air . . . and into a power line.

Therefore, on his name day, he became Mr. Bubble Butt, and the rest of us never get tired of those jokes.

Never.

I actually have a pretty decent name, all things considered. My name is Crunch because I can crunch stuff. That's my Super-Power. Crunching things. If it won't fit, ask me.

I'll make it fit.

Oops, did you measure your door wrong? The dishwasher won't fit?

Crunch

Let me at it. Two seconds later it'll be the size of a Monopoly dice.
Problem solved.

At least partially.

I've never quite mastered how to crunch things and have them be lighter. When I was fifteen I was out on the town with some friends, and they dared me to crunch a semi-truck . . .

So I did.

It looked like a Hot Wheels car. It was pretty awesome. But I couldn't pick it up for the life of me. At the time it was the most frustrating thing because you know someone's going to notice that a semi-truck just went missing, and all you're trying to do is put it in your pocket, so you can put it on your shelf as a trophy.

That day I learned there are some limits to 'crunching' things. For one, they retain the weight of the un-crunched item. So back to the whole dishwasher scenario, (which may or may not have happened.) It might be the size of a dice, but it still has the weight of a full-sized dishwasher.

Okay, it was our neighbor's dishwasher and I 'accidentally' crunched it.

It was a couple of weeks until they talked to us again.

I bought them a new one.

They like us now. Mostly.

I know most of you are thinking, just 'un-crunch the item!'

Sorry, I don't un-crunch things. That's not my specialty. I . . . I just don't do that.

Not that I won't do it, because that just makes me sound lazy, but .

. .

Okay, so here's the thing with Super-Powers; they have their limits. I can crunch stuff, but I *can't* un-crunch stuff. No matter how hard I try I will never be able to un-crunch something. You might be

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saying to yourself 'Well that's lame.'

It totally is, but that's how God made me.

You see, unlike what you see in movies, there are two sides to every 'save the day moment.' There are crunchers like me, and there are un-crunchers. When you graduate you are paired with a person whose Super-Power is the opposite of yours. It's mostly done this way to hide the fact that we were there at all.

Let's face it, people get pretty upset at you if you come in and destroy all their things. Sure you may catch the bad guys, but you just leveled thirty-nine buildings in the process.

Good for you.

See you in court.

The insurance companies also would be pretty upset with us.

If Superman was actually real he would have gotten his butt sued so much in court that even his spandex would refuse to show itself in public ever again. For which, this half of the world would say 'Thank you!'

I've never been a fan of 'Superman' but that's probably okay because he's not . . . real. It's a movie. Seriously he has, like, every Super-Power you could ever think of, and still he destroys everything and . . .

I'm getting off track.

Back to my point, that's why there's always two. A cruncher and an un-cruncher. However, in my case, I was never actually paired with an un-Cruncher, but that's getting ahead of the story.

Where was I?

Myths about Super-Heroes. Right.

Along with Code-names, we do have Super Suits. They are really uncomfortable!

Crunch

You're basically wearing industrial-strength spandex. It feels like you're walking around in a suit of armor that's skin-tight.

We don't get to choose the color of those, either. Regrettably. That's left up to S.A.N.C.T.I.O.N. So 'Cheese' naturally had a suit that looked like it was covered in slices of cheddar cheese. Bubble Butt had a super suit-

You know, you don't need to know what his suit looked like . . .

It might have had bright red dots on the butt . . . might have.

Whoever designed my super suit, must have been color-blind because it's bright yellow. I look like a flippin' school bus, and then if that wasn't enough to make you cringe, I have a dark purple "C" written on the front and back of the suit. It's really hard to sneak into any place with a suit like that, but hey, when I have it on, people know it's me who's there to save the day . . . so I guess it's okay.

But still, yellow?

Why couldn't it have been black or deep blue? I'd even settle with a maroon red? But, no, yellow.

The next true thing, based on what you've seen of Super-Heroes, is that the stupid, pointless disguises actually *do* work.

Somehow in the movies, the very fact that Clark Kent can wear glasses and nobody recognizes him is true. I, for example, have a mustache that I wear. I'm usually a clean-shaven guy because my wife can't stand facial hair. But when I'm in my super suit, I have a big bushy mustache that goes on as well.

For one of my Super-Hero friends, whose name is Plug, the only thing he does is put on a different T-shirt. I've never figured out how that works because it's the same color T-shirt! He always (and I do mean always!) wears a black T-shirt.

Never a different color.

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He claims he has two, one for work and one for casual. He will carry the other shirt around on a hanger with him, literally everywhere (so it doesn't get wrinkled). When he gets the call, he slips on the *other* shirt, and before he's even in his super suit, (which conveniently was designed so his t-shirt is visible) everyone recognizes him.

Oh, and just so you know there are three classes of Super-Heroes. They are officially called A, B, and C class, but those are boring names and nobody really uses them.

At least most don't.

Okay, I don't.

First and foremost, there is the 'Class A' Super-Heroes, which I affectionately call 'Freaks.'

Some of them have, like, twenty-seven Super-Powers. Who needs that many Super-Powers?

Now naturally, the people who have that many Super-Powers are sent to another school and don't need to have someone else with them on assignments, so they get first dibs on all the really cool missions . . .

I'm a little bitter about that.

I've only met one Class A Super-Hero who didn't have an ego the size of a building, and that was a guy whose name was 'Snake King'. He was a huge guy, plenty scary to look at. He had tattoos up and down his arms, muscles coming out of everywhere! Freaky-looking hair, and he wore a tank top and bandanna.

Oh, and he had an eye patch!

I've wanted to get an eye patch for a while, but my wife says I don't need one.

That might be true, but don't you think that just gives your persona a bit of an edge? Makes you look tougher?

Crunch

Anyway, the Snake King was a cool guy, because although he looked tough, you know what he did for a day job?

Worked in a greenhouse.

His parents had been big on gardening, and it rubbed off on him.

His wife thinks it's great, too, because they get discounted prices on all the plants she could ever want. They have the biggest garden you've ever seen.

So, yeah, he's cool, because he works a normal job, and is actually a very soft-spoken guy, but when he needs to be he can turn himself into a fire-shooting, mind-piercing, acid-trailing snake that will strike terror into bad guys everywhere.

Next, there are 'Class B' Super-Heroes. This is the class I'm in, so naturally I think it's the best.

People like me have only one Super-Power. Hence, my crunching. So we go to a special school to better learn how to use our one Super-Power and are trained to be completely efficient in that one Super-Power.

Also, I should explain that there is a difference between Super-Strength and Crunching. Super-Strength you can pick up items of immense size, rip cars in half, things of that nature.

I can't do that.

I crunch them, so I literally fold them in on themselves using mostly my mind. So I suppose when I use my power, I look like I'm Luke Skywalker using the force.

After that, there is the 'Class C' Super-Heroes, and they are usually referred to as 'Tinkers'. They also have only one Super-Power, but it's usually deemed a pretty useless Super-Power. They're still trained to be efficient in it, but they're unlikely to see any serious 'action'.

An example of a 'Class C' Super-Power would be a guy named "Lever."

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He's very, very good at making one thing . . . levers!

He can make them out of anything, and he has even been on a few high-profile jobs, but mostly he sits at home and practices making levers.

Now it is important to note that just because you are a Class C Super-Hero does not mean you will always be Class C. Sometimes your ability is in high demand or the situation calls for it. Sometimes, you become so good at your ability that you get upgraded.

For example, there was a guy named "Buttons." He was very good at making buttons. Not like the buttons on your shirt, but like buttons on a control board. It took him about ten years for him to learn how to attach them to an existing circuit board, but he eventually did.

As a result, he got upgraded to a Class B.

How better to turn off a nuclear reactor than being able to make a button that's connected in such a way that you can actually turn it off.

Pretty handy, if you ask me.

Another misconception of Super-Heroes is that we somehow have gained our power, by divine intervention or something of the sort.

Couldn't be further from the truth. We're not aliens, we're not gods, we're not super freaks or lab experiments. We are just like you . . . except cooler.

I'm just kidding.

But seriously, it does all come down to inheriting the 'super' genes. If there's a Super-Hero in your family tree anywhere, then you are carrying the super gene, and any one of your descendants could become a Super-Hero.

I let you know that because it's a common myth that if you don't have direct Super-Hero parents then you're never going to be a Super-Hero.

Crunch

So, I know you're going to have heard various movie characters having a super serum like *Captain America*. But it's all not true.

Now, just to dispel the murmurs I hear going through your mind right now . . . there is one case that may fit with what you see in movies.

My wife was the daughter of missionaries in the Philippines. They have no known family history of being in the line of Super-Heroes, yet she gained Super-Powers.

How?

That's the real question, isn't it?

In the official intake report it is written (and she will swear by the truth of the statement) that she was bitten by a Cordellian Spider Snake . . .

Have you ever heard of a Cordellian Spider Snake?

I haven't.

For years, I've looked up everything I can find on weird animals, but I've never found anything on the existence of a Cordellian Spider Snake!

What is Cordellian? Let alone a Spider Snake?! Is it a snake with legs?

Is Cordellian some long lost Latin word for . . . I'm not even sure what it would stand for.

Correction?

Cordially?

Lian?

Between you and me, I think she made it up.

But whether she did or she didn't get bit by a Cordellian Spider Snake, or she has some ancestor way, way back who had the super gene, who really knows? It doesn't prove your theory and it doesn't quite prove mine, but it could be either . . .

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Although my theory is a little more likely.
There! You have the basics, now let's move on.