

April 16th, 2011, Friday, 8:47 PM.

When the first explosion went off only a couple of blocks away, I almost had a heart attack. I immediately thought that somehow, we had missed another of String Theory's bombs, from years ago and that it had finally exploded. I found out this wasn't the case with a series of breaking news stories that had taken over the internet and a bunch of TV stations soon after. An entire day later there were *still* bombs being set off occasionally, and every time I heard another explosion, I found myself becoming more pissed off.

There was a parahuman laying waste to Brockton Bay, again, just how many tinkers were related to bombs exactly? Was Swallow going to go off the deep end next and go on a rampage? The individual explosions were tiny in comparison to the one that String Theory had used years ago. It appeared they subscribed to the idea of quantity over quality, at least that's what I had initially thought before I had actually seen the insane effects some of these things were causing.

Bakuda was apparently a quantity *and* quality kind of girl.

With Lungs detainment, Oni Lee and Bakuda had clearly come to some sort of arrangement. There was a short clip of her taking credit for the explosions playing on repeat while the newscaster spoke in a solemn voice. The first bomb was thought to have detonated yesterday at 6:05 PM, it was followed by about twenty others in quick succession. They had slowed down a great deal by this point, but they were still at least one going off every couple of hours all over the city.

The thing that made this bomber scary was that each of the bombs had some strange secondary effect. There was a video that was being played on the news that had been recorded with someone's mobile phone, the vertical framing was truly awful. It showed a twisted spire of ice that originated from a building, the part of the building that had been inside of the blast radius had been *transformed* into ice and not just covered in it. You could tell because when the ice had started to melt, so had the *building*.

Another of the videos showed a café that had a massive sphere cut out of the front of the shop. Everything was simply missing where it had exploded, with a perfectly clean line, I repressed a shiver at the damage it looked reminiscent of the type of explosion that had killed Belle. I turned on my computer at some point and was checking half a dozen news sites for more information. I also had my apartment window open so that I could keep an ear out in just case I had to go outside and show Bakuda why it was a bad idea to come near my apartment.

There was a link that had begun to show up with increasing frequency on forums and chatrooms, it had been condensed into a short URL with no identifying information. But once you clicked on it, it was obviously Leet and Ubers live streaming page. I clicked the play button and it showed an entirely one-sided fight between them and the Undersiders. Bakuda had made a dramatic appearance afterward, along with half a hundred other people, seemingly normies, but by then the Undersiders had beaten the two unconscious already.

I replayed it to get an idea of how Bakuda did things, I couldn't really get a good read on how the Undersiders fought, they were mostly running away. Bitch and her three mammoth dogs weren't present either. The Undersiders managed to fight their way free of the ambush and ran from the deranged woman. Bakuda was initially following them on foot, but at some point, she started riding in a jeep while taking shots at them with a grenade launcher. I checked the time code and found it started around 5:57 PM with Bakuda showing up around 6:00 PM.

The upside was that I was certain that if it weren't an ambush that left me debilitated or dead, I was absolutely sure I could wreck her shit if it came down to it. I wondered why Coil didn't contact me, this was literally what he had hired me to do after all. The video was replaying the part where the Undersiders, as if in slow motion, ran away from an explosion before they hit an invisible barrier. As soon as they hit it, they shot forward at normal sprinting speed before the camera feed abruptly blacked out and the stream ended. It was possible that Coil didn't know that this had happened until afterward, it was an ambush after all. Maybe the Undersiders didn't have time to contact him while they were running for their lives.

I took my phone out and immediately called Coil, I had best make sure, he picked up the call after about three rings.

"Urchin," Coil said sounding harried.

"Dude I just watched the Undersiders get destroyed by Bakuda, Leet, and Uber." I said bemused, "What on earth is going on?"

Coil paused for a moment before replying in a strange tone.

"You *saw* them fighting?" Coil asked accusingly and I was confused for a second as I tried to figure out the problem.

Oh, he thought I had watched them get wrecked and done nothing.

"The Livestream that Leet and Uber have?" I offered an explanation, "I just saw it online, what should I be doing?"

"Oh, of course." Coil sighed audibly, I had never heard him this emotive. "I currently have no tasks for you."

Like hell, people were getting fucking murdered outside and he didn't have anything for me to do?

"Coil," I said with forced calm. "I'm not sitting back and doing nothing while this crazy cape is blowing up my city. Do we know where she is, where *any* of the ABB is?"

Coil didn't say anything for a long while, I would have thought he had hung up if not for the continued sound of quiet breathing.

"That fight was at the trainyards," I continued quietly into the silence. "Do the ABB have a base there?"

"We don't know where Bakuda is currently located." Coil finally replied.

It was like a punch in the gut.

"So, we do nothing then?" I asked miserably.

This was bullshit, there had to be something I could do, maybe I should just go out in costume and starting looking for members of the ABB.

"I am currently organizing a meeting of the minds to take place a week from now," Coil said distractedly, "I will be attending it in person, I require you to do so as well."

A meeting of the minds? I wondered what that meant exactly, we had also done all of our job stuff over the phone, I hadn't actually met Coil in person since that first time with Gaston.

"Who's going to be there?" I asked quietly, mostly to distract myself from the painful thoughts.

"The entire villain population of Brockton Bay, if I can manage it," Coil said drily. "We will address the threat that Bakuda and the ABB pose to the city."

All of the villains, huh? At least we were actually doing something about it, after all, I just had to wait an entire week before we made a move, couldn't we speed that up at all? That was a long-ass time to wait with this crazy woman blowing shit up.

"Anything I can do to speed that up?" I offered hopefully, "Get in contact with people for you? Extend the olive branch?"

There was another long pause, and I heard some muffled noises in the background, but I couldn't make it out, I was pushing him pretty hard, I know but I *needed* to do something.

"I have something for you after all," Coil said distractedly. "I have been trying to get in contact with Purity, a former member of the Empire, but she has been non-responsive."

Fuck yeah, here we go, put me in coach, I'm ready.

"You want me to get her on board?" I said outwardly calm, but inside was an entirely different story.

Recruiting Purity, this sounded like it would spice things up, looks like the Full Frontals were going to be making a glorious resurgence.

"It would be good to have her at the meeting." Coil replied distantly, his attention still elsewhere.

"Alright," I said excitedly, "Where are we meeting?"

Coil told me he would send me a message with the details later and then abruptly hung up. I didn't care at this point; my mind was racing as I put together everything I knew about Purity. She would probably be a tough nut to crack, she had ditched the Empire at some point, for reasons that I didn't know. That had to of taken some balls, they were the largest group of capes in the city, and with dangerous members like Hookwolf. If she walked away from that without any trouble she might not want to join my squad.

Eh, what's the worst that could happen.

April 17th, 2011.
Saturday, 9:30 PM

It had been raining almost non-stop for the entire week, and grey clouds still covered the sky as if the city were in mourning. It wasn't raining right *now*, but it certainly had the potential to start again at any moment, it was just a matter of when. It certainly made it easy to spot Purity as she streaked across the sky every now and again. For whatever reason, she had been super active the last couple of weeks, which was pretty convenient for me.

I had seen her at least three times over the last two days alone, which happened to be when I started looking for her. I was currently seated on the top of a skyscraper, watching the skyline for more appearances slowly building up a mental map of where she frequented. All three of the sightings so far had been on the south side of downtown. I made sure to keep a low profile on the rooftops and eventually I spotted her again. Purity blasted straight up into the sky from in between a cluster of buildings, she stopped on a dime, hanging in the air for a moment before zipping straight across the city and stopping again before diving down into an alleyway.

Purity was unbelievably fucking fast, but there was no way she could fight at that speed, I refused to believe it. Velocity, the fastest cape in Brockton Bay was even faster than Purity, but *his* power did something to allow him to actually interact with the world because otherwise, all sorts of strange shit would happen. There *had* to be a distinction between her movement speed and her actual combat speed.

Purity seemingly only stuck to moving in straight lines when she was going super-fast, and she only seemed to do it when the area was clear of obstructions. I wondered if she could actually track anything at that speed, or if it all blurred together, I had seen several videos of her fighting other capes, but she had never used that kind of ridiculous speed mid-fight, she only used it to travel or escape.

When I went my maximum speed, everything blurred around me and it made it impossible to see anything close to me or use it in a fight. If I tried I would have been crashing into things and constantly testing how strong my armor was. I would be completely out of control and without the ability to react to anything around me, I was almost positive that she would have the same problems.

Purity's powerset was supposed to be a variety of Blaster/Mover, she absorbed light from a bunch of sources, she could shoot that light as a beam attack that hit with kinetic force, she could also fly and it was the reason she was occasionally talked about in the same breath as Legend. There was nothing that had ever been mentioned about enhanced reflexes, or super perception or anything of the like.

Either way, I would be finding out soon.

I had already decided on a game plan if I ended up having to fight her or possibly run away. I would stay at a medium-range, create a bunch of wire panels, and keep them between us. Purity had no great durability feats of note and zero strength feats, if I could manage to snag her in wires, I could hold her. I would have to make sure her hands weren't pointed at anything important, so I would make sure that if I had to capture her I would point her hands straight up into the sky.

In the videos I had studied, she tended towards strafing runs while remaining at a distance, which made a great deal of sense given her powers. If somebody got close to her she could make some distance instantly with a burst of speed in any direction that was clear of obstacles. I felt like, if I could take her by surprise, I could beat her with ease. If Purity ganked me instead, I would be completely screwed for the same reasons, she had enough firepower to level buildings and that would really ruin someone's day. If I got hit head-on, I would be down instantly.

Fortunately for us both, I wasn't here to fight at all, I was simply going to pop in and give her a recruitment pitch. If she did say no then it would become a pain in the ass, as I would have to beat her up. Making her join the Full Frontals by force wasn't ideal, but I had my marching orders. I'm sure that wouldn't happen though, we would have a nice discussion, she would agree to join, and I would be on my way.

What could go wrong?

April 17th, 2011.
Saturday, 10:47 PM

Purity was quite the busy little bee this dark and stormy night, rushing across the city, flickering across the sky, not unlike a flash of lightning. I had seen her a bunch more times in the last hour, and not a single cape tried to take her on at that time, not that surprising. I was hoping that she would soon call it a night because this was starting to become really boring, really quickly.

I spotted her streaking up into the air again, before angling back towards where she had started the night off earlier. I had over the course of the night moved closer to that cluster of buildings, hoping that she would head back there once she finished her patrol, and it looked like I was in luck. I stood still on the roof as she streaked across the city, stopping briefly above me, but she couldn't see in my hiding place.

I remained still in the shadows.

Purity shot towards the ground to land in the alleyway below, the bright light that surrounded her form abruptly vanishing and leaving a short figure behind in a clean white bodysuit, her shoulders sagged noticeably, she must be pretty have been tired after all that.

I slipped silently off the roof touched down behind her.

"Hey, Purity!" I shouted from right behind her. "Join my team!"

Purity jumped about a foot in the air before letting out a shriek of fright. I started laughing at her reaction and then everything exploded into light. I yanked myself back up to the roof as a blast of light smashed into the wall underneath me. The now shining white figure that stood with her hand pointed up at me attacked again. I juke to the right to avoid it before pulling myself back to the left again and dragged myself over the roof. Another burst of light smashed into the lip of the roof and showered me in debris. If I hadn't purchased my brand-new anti-Purity tinted ski-goggles I would probably be blind as fuck right now, as it was, it was still hard to look at her at all.

"Wait!" I said still laughing, diving to the side as she cleared the roof.

Purity unleashed another blast and it barely missed me before it left a crater in the roof of the building.

"Hang on!" I yelped in alarm.

I fell backward to avoid another blast before yanking myself across the roof with a wire.

"Who are you!?" Purity shouted furiously. "Why would you come after me here?"

Purity was *still* shooting at me, maybe I should have done this differently? It seemed like it would be funny at the time, but she seemed pretty mad.

"Stop-fucking-shooting-at-me!" I yelled while jerking myself away from each deadly shot. "and I'll answer you!"

Purity paused for about a second and as soon as I stopped moving to explain, she fucking shot me again.

This, bitch.

The blast clipped my shoulder, but my amour held, the force still spun me to the ground in a dizzying spiral, I reeled myself away again before bringing up some shield-wires between us.

"Hold your fucking horse's lady!" I demanded angrily. "Calm down or I'm going to spank you!"

I created some hands that spread out behind my shoulders and made aggressive chopping motions in the air. Purity stopped for realises this time, no doubt upon seeing all the random shit I had just pulled out of nowhere.

"You're that mercenary, Starfish or Crab-Man, something fish related!" Purity said angrily.

"I am *not* fucking Crab-Man, my name is Urchin!" I said annoyed. "I want you to join my team!"

Purity still hadn't lowered her hands at all, they were both still pointed threateningly at me.

"Why the *hell* would I want to join your shitty team?" Purity said harshly, taking a step forward aggressively.

Shitty team!?

"Excuse me," I said shocked, "You're one to talk, considering you were the one on the shitty-ass-bitch-boy-Nazi-team!?" She immediately shot me again.

Fuck this, we were going to do it the hard way.

I barely avoided the attack before moving a shield-wire in front of the next shot, it punched about a third of the way through my defense, shit. I thickened the other panels in response and then sent the arms up into the air to come down at her from an angle.

Purity strafed to the side of the attack and the wire-arms stretched endlessly after her, following her path closely. Purity avoided them with ease, moving in a serpentine path with brief bursts of straight-line speed to jaunt out of any of the traps, she continued shooting at me the entire time and her shots were getting stronger every time before they actually started puncturing *through* my reinforced panels. I thickened them again until they were about a foot deep but each of her attacks was still leaving great big dents in the metal.

Jesus Christ, one clean hit at that strength would one tap me easily.

I thickened my own Armor until I was surrounded by several spaced layers of meter-thick walls of metal. Purity immediately started hammering away at my fortress with massive bursts of light that dug scorching trenches in the metal. I increased the layers and the width again and slid down to the bottom left of the pyramid-like structure. I repaired the damage she was causing within moments and started flying the triangle-made-of-circles thing towards her aggressively. Purity started flying back towards her alleyway and heading lower to the ground, what was she doing? My pyramid of doom cleared the roof, looming over her before I started down towards her.

Purity touched down on the ground before she hit me with the strongest blast yet, it cut through the front five layers of metal panels and shot straight over my shoulder, before cutting halfway into the backside of the pyramid. I gaped at the melted hole, staring out at her in disbelief, she was now kneeling on the ground panting, back in her plain white costume.

What the fuck woman, that would have killed me. Exactly what type of fight did she think this was?

"Hey, asshole!" I yelled at her, angry for the first time. "That almost took my fucking head off!"

My fortress grew massive arms in an instant before I sent them tearing towards her, which caught her around the torso before lifting her into the air. Her arms were trapped at her sides with only her upper body and head still visible.

Purity struggled against the massive articulated metal fingers, and she flickered bright white for a second before she returned to her unpowered state again. I frowned down at her waiting for her to try and explode me again, but she eventually stopped struggling and just stared sullenly up at me.

"Don't tell me you just gave up?" I said angrily, waiting for the other shoe to drop.

Why did she go back to the ground anyway? She could have just flown away if she thought she was losing the fight, and as far as I could tell she was slapping me around for a while there. I couldn't catch her easily with obvious attacks, and she had been hammering away at me non-stop.

I moved closer until I could make out her features somewhat, she wasn't wearing a mask. Brown hair, brown eyes, short stature, she was probably in her mid-to-late twenties. I'd never seen her before in my civilian life, and it felt really strange that this pretty, but rather plain woman was a supervillain.

"Fuck off." Purity said resignedly. "I ran out of juice, idiot."

I had never heard of a cape that had a limit to how much they could use their power, I had certainly never felt *tired* after using mine or ran out of whatever strange energy powered my ability. I had run into *resistance*, before whatever strangeness had removed my width limiter.

Just who exactly was the weird one here? Me or her?

"That's okay sweetie," I said mockingly, "I hear that happens to a lot of women."

Purity snorted.

"You're an idiot." Purity said evenly, "Are you just going to keep me here forever?"

Purity jerked her head at the fingers of the massive hands that were holding her. I was thinking about it, I'm not going to lie. This exchange had gotten me a bit heated, and I was struggling to keep my anger down, it was probably the near-death part, but who could truly know?

"I'll hold you all night long, if that's what you want, babe," I said lecherously, waggling my eyebrows behind my mask.

"Uhuh," Purity said archly, "I'm sure a kid your age has plenty of experience with that right?"

Oof, she was a ruthless beast, I was turning eighteen in five days goddammit, cut me some slack.

"Okay," I coughed awkwardly, "Moving on. Thank you for joining our team, the Full Frontals!"

I started to clap happily and gestured to her pointedly, but Purity just sighed before sagging a little inside the wires.

"What is the team for? What are its goals?" Purity asked quietly.

That's a great fucking question, I didn't say. I had no idea, Coil said we needed her on board for the ABB meeting, and rebuilding the Full Frontals was a step towards that. I hadn't really thought about what we would be doing other than that, or what my actual goals were. I guess it would just be an extension of my Mercenary job? Mercenary team? Yeah!

"We are pretty much here to kick everyone's asses," I said thoughtfully, before gesturing to her as an example of an ass I had just elegantly kicked, she looked annoyed at the reminder. "Next targets on the agenda are Lung, Bakuda, and Oni Lee."

Something changed in her expression at that, how interesting.

"Oh, interested are we?" I teased, "Primarily the Full Frontals are a Mercenary group, so we do jobs for money."

Purity just stared at me quietly, seemingly deep in thought.

"What say you, Recently-Defeated-Girl!?" I shouted, before sticking my finger in her face.

Purity narrowed her eyes at the jab before she looked away visibly struggling with the decision, she obviously disliked the ABB, I think I almost had her.

"The Full Frontals have three rules," I said seriously, "We always complete the mission, we always get paid, and no killing."

"Fine, I'll join your team," Purity said finally. "and you won't tell anyone who I am?"

I blinked at her from behind my mask, who the fuck even was she? Did she think I knew who every random person in this stupid city was? How arrogant of her to presume that I, the incredibly famous and daring Urchin would know who she was.

"You got yourself a deal," I said cheerfully.

I floated over to her and held out my hand, but she just stared at me with narrowed eyes, I stared back uncompromisingly.

"You've got my arms pinned, idiot!" Purity said in annoyance after I just continued to stare at her.

Oh right.

"Just testing you," I said nervously, before freeing her arms.

I watched her hands carefully as she shook my hand, half expecting her to blow my hands off, but she made no move to attack. I lowered her to the ground and vanished the wires from around her, we stood around awkwardly for a moment unsure what to do before I whipped out my phone.

"What's your number, Sparky?" I asked obnoxiously, before reaching out to elbow her in the arm.

Purity slapped my arm away.

"Don't call me that." Purity said annoyed, she glanced over her shoulder at the building behind her before sighing. "You already know who I am, what does it matter at this point?"

Purity pulled a phone from somewhere I couldn't see.

"Wow, that plus-one inventory space is coming in strong, huh?" I said impressed.

Purity just looked at me strangely.

"I have no idea what that means." Purity said confused. "What should I put you down as?" She motioned to her phone.

"I'll show you mine," I said gleefully, "If you show me yours!"

I snatched her phone with a wire, and she yelped in alarm before trying to snatch it back. I floated upside down out of her reach, quickly typing in 'Booty-Call#1' as the name of my contact in her phone. Purity was busy throwing a tantrum below me, so I tossed her my own phone instead. I clicked back onto the contacts and found a picture of herself with 'Kayden Anders' as the name, what a silly name, jokes totally incoming.

I glanced down to find that Kayden was still busy looking through my phone, I clicked onto the camera and then onto pictures, I quickly nosed my way through a bunch checking for the goodies, but there was none.

"It's the current year!" I said bewildered, before tossing it back to her. "Where is the god damned nudes?!?"

Kayden fumbled with the phone for a second before glaring up at me, she messed with my phone for a bit longer before holding it back out for me to take.

"Andy Bowman," Kayden said quietly. "You're not even worried that I might tell someone who you are?"

"Kayden Anders," I said easily, like a fucking cool-guy. "Consider it a trust-building exercise."

Kayden nodded hesitantly after a moment, probably thinking about how awesome I am.

"Besides if you fuck me over, I'll spell your name out in the sky in hundred-foot letters." I teased, before tugging off my mask.

I smiled at her, but she just sighed, the Full Frontals were back in action.

Author Notes(old)

There is number 18. I am a bit late with this one, I got married a couple of days ago, so I've been pretty busy, we are rebuilding the Full Frontals again, any guesses on the next team member?

Author Notes (11/05/2020):

Added a little bit of detail and fixed a lot of the sentence structure.