

The Rise and Fall of the Boom Squad

Issue #1: A new team is born?

With the ability to unlock superpowers rapidly spreading throughout the world four corporations decide to join together to sponsor themselves a new super team. While the four companies each recognize the benefits of pooling their resources in this new venture it remains to be seen just how cohesive this alliance truly is. Each corporation brings it's own superhero to the team. There's Boom-Shakalaka, the Scryer Screens hotshot with the power to emit sonic booms from his hands. The freakish looking Beetle-man from Presto Pesto Inc. with the strength, armor, mandibles, and appearance you'd expect from a beetle/man hybrid. There's the wind manipulating martial artist Galeforce from Air-Tec. And last, but not least, The Foundry from Techna Corp with his fancy suit and ability to control metal around him.

With a roster like that it's understandable why the, yet unnamed, superhero team would feel a little cocky going into their first assignment. It sounded fairly straightforward. Someone attempting to rob Venture City Ventures, a banking firm with ties to various corporate accounts. Splitting into two groups BS and Galeforce did battle with some super-strength powered henchmen. Outnumbered and overconfident Galeforce was nearly pulled in half and Boom Shaklaka's face was, literally, pounded into the floor. On the bright side, the two did distract the henchmen long enough for the civilian hostages to run away. Meanwhile Foundry and Beetle-man faced off against an unknown villain named Blip, whose teleporting power gave him a huge advantage over the duo. Their failure to work together resulted in Blip escaping with an unknown amount of financial data from the VCV mainframe. Luckily Blip made such quick work of the two they were able to show up in time to help save Boom and Galeforce.

Will the team heed this warning and learn to work together before they get into a fight they can't walk away from? Let's find out in Issue #2 of Venture City Stories!

Issue #2: K-Town Beatdown

After the partial success of their first mission the team looks for a problem to tackle next. Their Corporate sponsors have tasked them with the security detail during the annual Venture City Earth Day parade, but that's two weeks away and a couple of news reports have caught the attention of the team. The first is a story about a bunch of mental patients escaping from the Soothing Gardens mental hospital in the night. Soothing Gardens insures the public that the patients are not dangerous, but then go on to say not to approach them if sighted. Could be worth looking into. The second story is one that strikes home for Boom Shakalaka. His home district of K-Block is currently caught in the middle of a gang war. The Golden Grillz boys are defending their turf from attempts by the Gorilla Gang to take over. The Gorilla Gang's logo is the same as the one on the jackets of the goons that beat up Boom Shakalaka and Galeforce at the bank. The team decide those mental patients can wait. It's time for some payback.

The team head to K-Block and meet up with one of Boom's old "friends", Gustavo, who is now running the Golden Grillz. Unsurprisingly Gustavo is more than happy to point the team in the direction of the Gorilla Gang, some of whom have holed up in the old community rec center. The team manage to clean out the rec center after Boom Shakalaka uses his powers to smash most of the syringes of super-drug before the Gorillas can "juice up". They even managed to capture the man who was running things at the rec center, but let him go after he gives them information on where the super-drug is coming from. A crate in the back of his car points the finger at Frooma Inc. How deep does the connection between Frooma Inc and the Gorilla Gang go? Find out in a future issue of Venture City Stories!

Issue #3: Out with the old, in with the new

With the addition of Global Media Group (GMG) to the list of corporations sponsoring the Boom Squad came a new hero. Chris Kramer, otherwise known as Mirage, with the power to create illusions. It didn't take long for him to prove his worth by making Beetle-Man a little easier on the eyes. While on their way to meet with Dinah Volt to get the skinny on possible threats to the Earth Day parade (of which there were plenty of possible threats but few specific) the Boom Squad come across one of the escaped mental patients from Soothing Garden. Somehow the man has acquired a motor vehicle and is in the process of dangerously driving on sidewalks, into oncoming traffic, and way above the posted speed limit. During the car chase which ensues Boom manages to almost (but not quite) destroy his newly acquired convertible, Mirage learns that slow and steady doesn't always win the race, Beetle-Man discovers his new calling as a helicopter, and Galeforce manages to stop the speeder by causing a spectacular crash which somehow didn't kill him. After a brief bomb scare and a demand to talk to a Dr Lachowicz the mental patient, Archie, was subdued.

The team's victory was cut short by a call from Irwin informing them that he had found The Foundry (who was missing that morning) at a nearby hospital. The Foundry was in critical condition with a face looking like one big bruise, a plethora of broken bones, and a coma he may never wake up from. The team vowed to find out who had done this to their teammate, even Mirage who had never even met Foundry, but unfortunately have as of yet been unable to turn up much to go on. Will the Boom Squad manage to find The Foundry's attacker? What will go down at the annual Earth Day Parade? Find out in a future issue of Venture City Stories!

Issue #4: Duo Defuses Dangerous Drugstore

With Mirage and Galeforce busy elsewhere it was left up to Boomshakalaka and Beetle-Man to hold down the fort. They kicked around some theories about what might have happened to the Foundry, ultimately concluding that a member of the Gorilla Gang disguised as a prostitute lured Foundry into that alley. With the knowledge that the GG's superdrug came from Frooma Inc Boomshakalaka does some poking around a local Frooma sponsored gym, not learning much beyond the fact that Frooma makes a mean smoothie. Next on the agenda is Beetle-Man's costume. After asking others to design a costume for him wasn't working BM finally sought out a tailor to commission his own. Next some thought was given to security for the fast approaching Earth Day parade. A call to Greg Montezuma insured the team would have use of Stryer Screen's traffic cameras to keep an eye on the parade, but BoomShakalaka turned down the offer of a support staff to help monitor the footage believing the team could do it all on their own.

The duo's planning session was interrupted by breaking news of a hostage situation at a drugstore. Some more escaped mental patients bungled a robbery and wound up trapped inside the store with 20 hostages. This seemed like a job for the Boom Squad (or half of it anyway). The Boom Duo managed to save the day at the cost of: pissing off a news helicopter by boom jumping off it, brutally blasting a man through a wall (he'll live), a hostage being shot (he'll live) when Beetle-Man failed to prove he was faster than a speeding bullet, and one of the mental patients escaping into the sewers with a bag of drugs. All in all some good publicity after Irwin made some calls and got the news to focus on the "nobody was killed" angle.

Issue #5: Trouble in Paradise

After watching the humiliation of Boomshakalaka on the late night talk show “Hero or Zero” the team (minus Mirage, who was off doing his own thing) was eager to prove themselves. It was at this time that Leo Attwood, CEO of Air-Tec contacted them with a job. The destruction of the prototype AFTV had set the project back and Air-Tec was in need of outside help to get the AI working in time to meet their deadlines. It just so happened that world renowned artificial intelligence genius Dr Arthur Monroe had retired to a private island off the coast of Venture City. The team didn’t understand why a team of superheroes was needed for such a mundane task. That’s when Leo pointed out that Dr Monroe was always a bit of an eccentric and nobody really knew what he had been doing on his private island for the last 10 years. Leo made it clear that he didn’t care how the team got Dr Monroe back to the city as long as he was alive.

It was little surprise to anyone that Dr Monroe didn’t take kindly to visitors. Not wanting to risk the private jet Leo had loaned them the team chose to skydive onto the island. Missiles were dodged and robots were destroyed as the team moved further and further towards the center of the island. Attempts at peaceful negotiation with Dr Monroe was ruined when a drunk Boomshakalaka destroyed the buzzsaw shaped robot Galeforce was using to talk to the old man. Eventually the team would make it to the home of Dr Monroe. A mansion built atop a large slab of rock suspended over a lava lake built inside a volcano. At this point communication was reestablished with Monroe, who made it clear that he would not share his technology with the world. In his eyes the introduction of sophisticated artificial intelligence would lead to mass destruction. Countries would go to war at the drop of a hat, no longer having to field armies of flesh and blood. Politicians would drop like flies as robot assassins were sent to eliminate them without any way of tracking them back to the source.

Boomshakalaka and Beetle-Man, finally realizing that they were sent here to kidnap an innocent old man, decided to just walk away. Galeforce didn’t care about the old man’s concerns. One way or another she was bringing him back to Air-Tec. Leaving the Boom Duo behind Galeforce took off on her own and fought through the robot guards in Dr Monroe’s mansion as she searched for wherever the old fart was hiding. Ultimately the Boom Duo decided to stop Galeforce, they all found Dr Monroe, Dr Monroe chose death over sharing his technology and ordered his robots to shot him when Galeforce took him as a human shield, and the team fled the volcano.

Will Boomshakalaka and Beetle-Man return to working for the corporations? Will Galeforce rat them out as being ‘rogues’? How will the team even get off the island?! Find out on the next issue of Venture City Stories!

Issue #6: Galeforce Down

Dr Monroe proved to be a wedge which would drive the team in two. With the island starting to fall apart after a series of loud rumblings (did Monroe's robots have something to do with it?) both team's sought a way off the island. Boomshakalaka and Beetle-man, angry at Galeforce for "betraying them" by choosing to complete the mission to take Monroe back to Venture City, made their way towards the beach to build a raft. Once the raft was completed they would get the hell of this island and figure out what to do when they got back to Venture City. Galeforce, feeling betrayed by the team she was just happy to be a part of, also made her way towards the beach. Unlike the others though she was looking for whatever device shot the goo filled missiles at the team upon their arrival to the island. She found a missile silo and through some clever engineering (a rock and pulling random wires) she was able to get the missile to activate. She managed to catch up to the missile in the air and grab on. The plan? Ride the missile back to Venture City. It'll have enough fuel for that right? Unfortunately when she was messing with the wires she didn't disable the targeting computer. The missile's last targeting parameters? Track down the three intruders to the island. It just so happens the missile has locked on to Beetle-Man, walking along the beach carrying a giant tree trunk.

Boomshakalka, convinced that Galeforce was guiding the missile at them as some sort of attack (which to be fair, she was) pointed her out to Beetle-Man. Using the tree trunk that was going to become the duo's raft (one log is still a raft right?) Beetle-Man got ready to practice his batting skills. Galeforce tried to steer the missile around the tree-sized baseball bat, but was unable to counter the surprising quickness of Beetle-Man's attack. The tree slammed into the missile causing it to detonate and incase Galeforce in a thick casing of rapidly hardening goo. The Boom Duo, satisfied that Galeforce would no longer be a threat, hopped on their log and boomed away. With the island continuing to fall apart, the ground rumbling, geysers of steam shooting up into the air, Galeforce was left alone, on a beach, her claustrophobia causing her to break into tears after being tightly encased in the goo.

The Boom Duo eventually met up with Mirage a short ways off Monroe Island. Mirage had spent the weekend in his room at Boom Squad HQ trying to track down his birth parents (a task which has caused him many sleepless weekends). Somehow nobody went to tell him about the mission to Monroe Island. At some point he left his room and ran into Irwin, who tasked Mirage with chartering a boat to the island to pick up the team after the jet returned without them. Hiring a boat was easy enough when you have the power to turn scraps of paper into million dollar bills. Together they all watched Monroe Island sink into the sea before heading back to the city.

Over the course of the next few days a series of events shake things up even further for the Boom Squad. The failed mission is blamed on Galeforce, Air-Tec pulls their funding from the team, The Founrdy comes out of his coma, Techna Corp is convinced to resume funding the Boom Squad, Boomshakalka makes a powerful enemy out of Leo Attwood (CEO of Air-Tec), and the team finalize their plans for the fast approaching Earth Day parade.

Issue #7: Earth Day Calamity

The time had finally come for the Boom Squad's first big mission. The defense of the 10th annual Venture City Earth Day parade. So far during their short time as a superhero team they had managed to not foil a bank robbery, get a hostage shot, destroy a TV show, sink an island, and kill both an old man and their teammate Galeforce. Earth Day was their shot to show the people of Venture City that the Boom Squad had what it takes to hero with the best of them. The Squad's defense plan was simple. Bobbie and two of his friends would monitor the parade via the Scryer Screens traffic cameras set up along the route. Meanwhile the rest of the squad would take their place on a Foundry built parade float. From there the Boom Squad would simply wait for camera crew to spot trouble before making their move. The plan also called for Mirage to use his illusions to give the illusion that the Boom Squad had actually gone through the effort of hiring an army of security personnel (though this later morphed into a single intimidating robot).

Unfortunately, in true Boom Squad fashion their 'perfect' plan quickly fell apart. While defending one man's right to litter Boomshakalaka got in a fight with 'Recycle Rex' a pro-recycling robot that was favored by the crowd. Next the flaw with the traffic camera system became evident. The camera crew wasn't able to identify real crimes from mundane parade activities. What looked like a group of violent rioters turned out to be a group of drunks simply having a good time. Men dropping mysterious backpacks on the ground couldn't be located after moving off the cameras limited view angle. It didn't help that half the Boom Squad had misplaced their cellphones and couldn't be contacted by Bobbie. The final nail in the coffin of incompetence the Boom Squad found themselves in came when Recycle Rex was knocked on top of the Squad's parade float, bursting the kegs of poison gas Beetle Man had stashed inside it. Speaking of Beetle-Man, as a panicked crowd fled from the cloud of poison gas he decided to stage a fight with his ex-girlfriend Black Widow, because everyone likes a good fight!

Things only got worse when a mysterious man took over the parade speaker system to rant about how fear was mankind's biggest weakness and that by conquering one's fear anything could be achieved. His unwelcome speech was followed up by the destruction of various parade balloons, which began leaking a strange purple colored gas. The crowds of people exposed to the gas began to hallucinate, forced to face their worst nightmares. But the mysterious man had a solution for them. Bags full of guns had been littered around the area! All the people had to do was arm themselves fight their fears (literally)! This resulted in a bloodbath as the armed and hallucinating masses began gunning themselves down. Boomshakalaka was forced to use his powers against civilians. Mirage beat a man into a coma after being exposed to the fear gas. Galeforce was forced to watch the carnage from a rooftop unable to do anything to stop it. At least Beetle-Man managed to come out ahead by apprehending two men distributing bags of guns and popping the balloons.

Find out what happens to the Boom Squad in the aftermath on the next issue of Venture City Stories!

Issue #8: Hero or Monster?

In the aftermath of the Earth Day tragedy the Boom Squad's spirits were at an all time low. Worse than that time they were beat up by the Gorilla Gang and humiliated by Blip. Worse than when they learned the Foundry had been beaten into a coma while (allegedly) hooking up with a prostitute. Worse even than when they left a helpless Galeforce behind on a sinking island to drown. Boomshakalaka, depressed by the realization that his powers turned him into a monster, blames Scryer Screens for giving him his powers in the first place. Now's the time for him to set off on his own and make things right! He convinces Beetle Man to join him by promising that together they could find a cure for his condition. The Boom Duo then seek out a drunken Mirage. Mirage had spent the time since Earth Day coping in his own way. Hopping from bar to bar buying as much booze as he could with fake money. Eventually he wound up in a biker bar and in his drunken state his funny money looked a little to funny. The Boom Duo arrived in time to carry him away after his beating.

Once Mirage had sobered up the Boom Duo confronted him on whether he wanted to join them or continue on as a corporate toadie. Having no real loyalty to GMG (why do the corporations give these people powers again?) Mirage chooses to stick with the Boom Squad. The offer of assistance in locating his birth parents only sweetens the pot. The trio consider contacting The Foundry but decide not to bother. As far as they are concerned the rich business boy is perfectly happy working for his mommy. Believing that someone from the corporations will know of their rogue intentions (thus trying to have them killed) the Squad decide to flee the city. Attempts to worm another favor (use of his boat) out of Captain Ahab fail. Leader of K-Block's Golden Grillz gang, Gustavo, refuses to help the team find a place to lay low unless they fetch him the case of Gorilla Gang serum he asked for earlier that month. The team agree to get Gusatvo the serum.

An elaborate plan is used to sneak back into the HQ (believed to now be off limits to them). Disguised, Mirage and Beetle-Man walk in through the front door (they have the key). They break into the storage vault (little more than a closet). They easily talk their way past Bobbie (who doesn't seem alarmed to see them there). All that's left is to walk the crate back outside where Boom Shakalaka will have cleared a path for their escape. That's when the shit hits the fan. Due to a communications breakdown Boomshakalaka has spent the last hour making very loud noises in a subway tunnel (to clear all the people out). Unfortunately for Boom his distinctive sound has attracted some unwanted attention. Meanwhile, back at the Boom HQ a battle breaks out between Mirage, Beetle-Man, and a super-juiced prisoner taken on Earth Day (blame Bobbie).

In the chaos that follows Beetle-Man is injected with the super-serum by Mirage and goes berserk, attacking Mirage. Mirage dangles from the skids of a Five-Oh (private security) helicopter as it spins precariously out of control. Boomshakalaka tries to escape heavily armed security soldiers trying to apprehend him (is this related to Senator Jim Crackhorn's anti-superhero speech? Earth day?). Five-Oh deploy a christmas tree smelling gas that inhibits superpowers. And finally the Boom Squad are captured, beaten, and awake in prison cells.

Issue #9: The End of the Boom Squad?

After their capture by Five-Oh the Boom Squad awake in individual prison cells. They are informed that they have been deemed a danger to society and will be held here until such time as they can be reintegrated into society. Such a time, it turns out, is not in the near future for the Boom Squad. The Squad spend the next year trapped in their small, windowless, christmas tree smelling cells. Their only contact to the outside world is via a tv monitor which occasionally displays news reports and the guy who wheels the food trolley past them twice a day.

After a year in captivity, numerous escape attempts (courtesy of Boomshakalaka), and being forced to undergo strange (sometimes bizarre) rehabilitation exercises the team is finally presented with a small ray of hope. Bobby (yes that Bobby) has managed to get a job as one of the food trolley operators thanks to his friend Pat Tony (aka Fat Tony). Unfortunately getting the job was about as far as Bobby's plan went. He spends the next few weeks playing it cool and smuggling the team information about the facility they are in. Information such as: the facility is underground, other heroes have been brought here including the Omega Team, the facility is a few miles outside of Venture City, and that superhero numbers have slowly been dwindling over the course of the year.

Finally the day comes when Bobby tells the team that he enlisted the aid of his only other friend (proving that when it comes to friends, quality over quantity), Akmed, to help with getting the Boom Squad out. It turns out Akmed has some friends of his own who specialize in this kind of thing. The team use specially prepared mashed potatoes (extra butter) to clog up the vents pumping the power inhibiting gas into their cells and manage to escape before passing out from lack of oxygen. An explosion rocks the facility, lights dim, alarms sound, it's chaos!

The team fight through security guards, fellow heroes, and villains to get out of the facility. They manage to rescue Bobby, Pat Tony, and a handful of other heroes in the process. Together, with the help of Solar Man, they all fly off into the horizon inside a (magic?) school bus.

Where will the Boom Squad go now? What fate awaits them? Will Boomshakalaka's mouth ever write a check his sonic fists can't cash? Will Beetle-Man ever find love or a cure to his terrible condition? Will The Foundry return home to his mother or put his past behind him and embrace the future? Will Mirage get to cover a new war? Alas, we may never know.

The End