

CRASH AND BURN

Written by

Adam Korenman

Story By

Adam Korenman
Sherry Berg
Dustin Loomis
Sean Puglisi

Thinking With Fire Studios
Go Go Guppy Studios

FADE IN:

EXT. STREET CORNER -- NIGHT.

A deserted street corner in a bad part of town. No, you're not picturing it right. This is a bad street in a bad corner of a bad town. This is the birthplace of all crime in a city.

A NEWSPAPER KIOSK is illuminated by a flickering streetlight. The headline on the paper reads: CRASH AND BURN PREVENT THE PIPER'S PLOT. The image shows a muscular superhero, CRASH, and his spunky little sidekick, BURN. The PIPER, a lanky villain, is hogtied between the heroes.

SFX: Tires squealing.

The kiosk EXPLODES, newspapers flying in every direction, and a beat up car races through the intersection, followed closely by police. A chase!

INT. POLICE CRUISER.

Two POLICE OFFICERS pursue the criminals ahead. They duck from incoming fire and shout into the radio. The windshield is already pockmarked with bullet holes.

POLICE 1
Central, this is car 104. Where the hell is our backup?

A shot from the bad guys takes out the left side-view mirror.

CENTRAL (RADIO)
All cars are responding to emergencies around the city, 104. Maintain pursuit and we will get you help as soon as available.

POLICE 1
That won't be enough. I need a Code Charlie.

There is a pregnant pause. It's gonna be triplets. Police 2 looks at his partner, worried.

POLICE 2
Are you sure?

POLICE 1
(into radio)
Get the signal lit. These aren't normal criminals. It's...

EXT. CITY STREET.

As you can imagine, streets in the bad part of town don't see many visits from the department of public works. Take a paintbrush, dip it in a bucket of potholes, and apply liberally.

ON the criminal's car. The roof opens and a man rises out, holding a violin case. He looks like a combination of Crispin Glover and Clint Howard, and as dressed in a fine tuxedo.

POLICE 1 (O.S.) (CONT'D)
The COMPOSER!

The COMPOSER, a musically talented madman, opens the violin case to reveal an assault rifle. He cackles and fires at the police. When he shoots, he makes sure to keep a rhythm that is downright toe-tappingly good.

WE RISE away from the chaos on the streets to the rooftops above. The silhouette of SANTA ANGELO seems almost peaceful at night, save the sporadic flashing of emergency lights.

Suddenly, a BEACON appears in the sky. It is a spotlight casting a circle on the low lying clouds. In the center of the circle is a large C.

INT. HERO GUILD, LOCKER ROOM.

Inside the prestigious Super Hero Guild, our intrepid paragons prepare to pulverize the pretentious prat. (Sorry, alliteration does it for me, and a narrator has to get his jollies somewhere.)

CLOSE UPS ON:

1. Yellow gloves pulled on a woman's hands.
2. Red women's boots laced up.
3. A utility belt cinched into place.
4. A blue cape swirls over shoulders. Blonde hair drops down over the cape.
5. A busty chest turns toward the camera. A large B in a yellow circle obscures the cleavage tastefully.

HERO SHOT: Meet BURN (20), a superhero's best sidekick. She is pretty, in a girl-next-door way. She looks pretty awesome in her outfit, and is proud to be a hero.

WIDE SHOT of Burn standing in her pose while CRASH (28), a strong and handsome hero, slowly gets dressed.

Burns glances at Crash, getting antsy.

BURN
How's it going over there?

CRASH
Just getting my boots on.

BURN
You should leave them unlaced.
Makes getting dressed so much
faster. Look at me! Five seconds,
ready to go.

CRASH
Not all of us have super speed.

BURN
I'm just saying, you shouldn't kick
them off after a fight. It's adding
a step, Crash.

CRASH
In a minute. Why are you always in
such a rush?

BURN
Because it's time to help people!

Crash finishes with his boots and sighs. He stands up slowly, reaching for his gloves. His suit shows off a strong physique, and a large C sits in a circle on his chest.

BURN (CONT'D)
No cape?

CRASH
You know, I really don't like it
anymore. I never understood why I'd
want a cape. I don't fly. I hit
things.
(puts on gloves)
Capes are stupid.

Burn plays with the corners of her cape.

CRASH (CONT'D)
Sorry. Okay. Let's do this, Burn.

BURN
WOOHOO! Fighting Crime!

Burn takes Crash's hand and they disappear in a blur of speed. Burn is SUPER fast.

EXT. CITY STREET.

The Composer's car is stopped at a dead end. The police cruiser has him blocked in. The officers hide behind their vehicle, weapons drawn.

The Composer prances between the two cars, holding a violin.

POLICE 1

Drop it! Get your hands in the air!

COMPOSER

Drop it? This is Guarneru del
Gesù's Il Cannone. It's worth a
small fortune.

(fumes)

How dare you threaten such an
artifact? Treble! Clef! Please
escort these two lawmen off this
mortal coil.

Two MASSIVE men emerge from the Composer's car. TREBLE and CLEF are henchmen for the Composer and look the part. They are dressed in matching suits, and their ties are covered in musical notes.

The henchmen lumber toward the policemen, but stop halfway. They shudder as a shadow falls over their brutish faces.

ON CRASH, standing in front of the police cruiser, looking intimidating as fuck. A BLUE BLUR swirls around him.

CRASH

Composer. I should have known you'd
be behind the theft at the Music
Hall.

COMPOSER

(sheepish)

Was it...not clear? I left a lot of
clues. Musical terms on the walls,
sheet music stuffed in guard's
mouths. Honestly, I know we need to
fight now, but I would love some
notes at the end of this.

(a pause, now menacing)

Now, Crash. I've written a dirge
for you. More accurately, it's a
funeral march.

The Composer tosses the violin aside to Treble. The villain draws a pistol and fires at Crash. The hero doesn't move, but the blue blur swirls brighter and faster. The bullets seems to disappear.

COMPOSER (CONT'D)

What? That's impossible. I composed your death song perfectly.

The blue blur stops, revealing Burn. She holds out a hand and drops all of the bullets on the ground, grinning wildly.

BURN

The only song you'll be singing is prison blues, Composer.

CRASH

That was awful, Burn.

BURN

It was not. You get to say all the good lines. I don't get a single line?

CRASH

You can have one, just make it good.

COMPOSER

ENOUGH! Treble, Clef, dispose of these inharmonious heroes.

Treble and Clef advance. Crash and Burn meet them head on. Burn moves too fast to be caught, easily dispatching Clef. Treble and Crash trade blows, but Crash is the superior muscles. A few thumps to the chest followed by a right cross puts the henchmen down for the count.

The Composer backs away, but Crash catches him by the collar.

CRASH

It's over, Composer.

COMPOSER

What an awful tune, Crash. You sound a bit...SHARP.

The Composer pulls a KNIFE from behind his back. Burn sees it first. Time SLOWS TO A CRAWL as Burn casually walks over, takes the knife, and tosses it aside. TIME RETURNS TO NORMAL and the Composer's fist strikes Crash ineffectually. They both look at the villain's empty hand, confused.

CRASH
And you sound flat.

Crash brings his free hand overhead and hammer-fists the top of the Composer's noggin. The villain crumples into a heap.

Crash turns to Burn, smiling appreciatively.

CRASH (CONT'D)
(weary)
Great fight today, Burn.

BURN
I know! We're getting better every time.

CRASH
A good one to end on.

BURN
You're done for the night? We just got started!

Crash drags the Composer over to the police officers and drops him at their feet. He continues, on foot, back home.

BURN (CONT'D)
Crash! Where are you going? There's crime to fight out there. We can't just abandon our post.

CRASH
I'm tired, Burn.

BURN
So? We'll get some coffee. A little java. Some hot joe. Get you up and running again.

CRASH
No. I'm just...I'm tired. You go on ahead. You're allowed to stop crime too, you know.

BURN
Sure, muggings and purse snatchers, but where's the fun in that?

CRASH
Where's the fun in any of this?
What's the point of any of this? We stop one bad guy, a dozen more take his place. It never ends.

Crash touches his stomach, where a knife almost went.

CRASH (CONT'D)
Aren't you tired of being beat up?
Or stabbed? Or shot at?
(beat)
I'm going home, Burn.

BURN
But...you know what? Okay. You're
having an off night. No problem.
One and done is fine. We'll pick it
up tomorrow.

CRASH
Yeah. Maybe.

Burn doesn't have an answer. She watches Crash walk away,
shocked speechless.

EXT. BURN'S APARTMENT, BEDROOM. -- NIGHT.

Burn, still in costume, nears her cute two-story walk-up. She
seems in a trance.

INT. BURN'S APARTMENT.

Burn opens the door and switches on the light. The studio
apartment isn't messy, but it sure ain't clean. This isn't a
home as much as an extended closet with a mattress. Burn
shuts her door and pulls off her mask.

BURN
Maybe?

She shuffles toward her bathroom, shedding clothes.

INT. BURN'S APARTMENT, BATHROOM.

Burn brushes her teeth.

BURN
Maybe?

INT. BURN'S APARTMENT, BEDROOM.

Burn pulls up the covers to her chin. Before she shuts out
the light, she giggles.

BURN
(shaking her head)
Maybe. Yeah right.

Burn shuts off the light.

CUT TO:

EXT. BURN'S APARTMENT -- MORNING.

The street looks beautiful and safe in the light of day.

TV ANCHOR (O.S.)
--taking you right now to the
developing situation outside City
Hall. Santa Angelo correspondent
Terry Martinez is on scene. Terry?

INT. BURN'S APARTMENT.

Close up on Burn's face. JESUS, girl! Did you sleep on a rake? Her hair is splayed in every direction, her eyes are red, and she looks to be the definition of terrible.

Burn holds a bowl of cereal in one hand. A spoon hovers near her mouth, but she is frozen.

TERRY MARTINEZ (TV)
Thank you, Shelby. The rumors are
true, and the world is shocked.
Crash, the legendary hero of Santa
Angelo, is retiring his colors.
Take a look at the press conference
held just a few minutes ago.

ON THE TELEVISION. Crash, still in uniform, stands behind a podium in front of City Hall. He is surrounded by the CHIEF OF POLICE, the MAYOR, and RED RABBIT (30), leader of the Super Hero Guild. Red Rabbit wears his metallic signature suit and rabbit helm.

CRASH (TV)
It's not a decision I made lightly,
but my time with the guild is over.
As of today, I am stepping down
from the hero guild to pursue a
life of peace and quiet.

The image cuts back to Terry standing in front of a now empty City Hall.

TERRY MARTINEZ

Crash went on to say that he is proud of his years of service, and hopes to have inspired others to take up the mantle of hero. Red Rabbit, speaking for the Guild, assured the crowd that the city would not face obliteration now that its champion has retired. Until a suitable replacement can be found, Santa Angelo's toughest district will be turned over to Vim and Vigor, a dynamic duo all the way from Romania.

(beat)

No word yet on the fate of Crash's sidekick, Burn, but the Guild law on the subject is pretty clear. Without a hero, her powers will be summarily revoked.

ON BURN. Her eyes bulge out. She disappears in a blur. The cereal bowl and spoon crash to the floor in the now empty apartment.

INT. CRASH'S MANOR, LIBRARY.

Inside Crash's millionaire home.

A shirtless Crash paints on a large canvas. He faces the audience, so his art is not yet visible. Classical country plays.

Burn speeds into the room, appearing next to Crash.

BURN

What the hell!

CRASH

JESUS!

Crash jumps in the air. His face reddens and he wheels on Burn.

CRASH (CONT'D)

How did you get in?

BURN

I have, like, five keys.

CRASH

Since when?

BURN

Always. Don't change the subject.
What the hell, Crash?

Crash returns to his painting.

CRASH

It was time. I was gonna tell you,
but we got caught up with fighting.
I figured you wouldn't care.

BURN

Why would I not care? This is huge.
This is terrible.

CRASH

It's not terrible, Gertie. It's
great. We've been living in the
fast lane for too long. You can't
sustain that forever. Eventually
someone is going to cut you off,
and it all ends in flame. This way,
we get to have these memories
forever, and be alive to enjoy
them.

BURN

I don't the memories of fighting
crimes. I want to fight crime--
wait, you called m Gertie.

CRASH

Yeah. That's your name. Gertrude.

BURN

I haven't gone by--I'm not Gertie!
I'm Burn. You're Crash, and I'm
Burn. It's who I am.

CRASH

It's who we were. I'm gonna go by
Steve now.

BURN

Steve is like the WORST NAME EVER!

Crash shoots a mean look her way.

BURN (CONT'D)

I'm sorry. I'm a little stressed.
You see, I went to bed a
superhero's sidekick, and now I'm
waking up as Gertie the sales
clerk?

Burn's phone chimes. She checks it and groans.

BURN (CONT'D)
And she is late to work.

CRASH
Again? That's the fifth time this week. That's the whole week.

Burn's phone chimes again. She gulps.

BURN
Well, they noticed that too. I'm fired.
(beat)
Now I'm Gertie and I'm unemployed.

CRASH
I'm sorry, Gertie.

BURN
Don't...I'm gonna lose my power, Crash. I don't want to go back to that. Back to...who I used to be.

CRASH
It's going to be fine. We'll adjust to a new life. A better one. Where we aren't always one slip away from death.
(beat)
If they put something in the contract about my co-pay for stitches, I wouldn't have ever signed up.

Burn's face brightens.

BURN
The contract!

She zips out of the room, appearing a moment later with a long contract paper.

BURN (CONT'D)
It's here! I knew it!

CRASH
What are you doing with that?

BURN
Chapter five, section eleven, paragraph three.
(MORE)

BURN (CONT'D)

In the event a hero retires from the service before the end of his contract date, the Guild will hold all powers for one calendar year. If in that time, the hero commits an act of great valor, the Guild will fully renew his or her to the original status.

(beat)

Don't you see. We stop one major crime, and we get to stay in!

CRASH

Great. Now go away. I'm retired.

BURN

But didn't you hear? It's not too late. Let's go foil a bank robbery or prevent a kidnapping. We can still do this.

CRASH

No, Gertie.

BURN

It's Burn.

CRASH

No, it's Gertie!

(shouts at her)

You're Gertrude Alice Solomon. A regular person now. Maybe we used to be something special, maybe we used to be heroes, but that's all in the past now. You need to accept it and move on.

BURN

But I need this.

CRASH

Well I don't. I don't need the hospital bills, I don't need the stress, and I sure as hell don't need a hyperactive sidekick trying to get me killed every other week. I don't need the guild, and I don't need you. Just leave me alone.

Burn stands in stunned silence. The only noise is a ticking grandfather clock. Finally, she nods. Tears well in her eyes.

BURN

Okay. If that's how you want it to be, Crash.

(beat)

Steve. I wish you good luck.

Burn walks slowly from the room. Crash watches her go, mad at himself for losing his temper. He turns back to his painting.

Now we see that Crash has been painting a masterpiece of a muscular black man reclining nude on a sofa. The MODEL, a muscular black man, blushes.

EXT. CITY STREET -- DAY.

Burn walks down the street, lost in thought. She bumps into pedestrians, but barely notices.

BURN

He can't just quit. I mean, he can. It's his life, and I respect him. But he can't just quit. This is the guild, this is being a superhero. Why would anyone want to give that up?

INT. BURN'S APARTMENT -- AFTERNOON.

Burn does crunches on the floor.

BURN (CONT'D)

I mean, sure. He's been hurt pretty bad a few times. Lost some teeth. A toe. The ability to taste cinnamon. But is that a reason to just give up?

INT. BURN'S APARTMENT, BATHROOM.

Burn sits in a bubble bath. She plays with a rubber duck that is dressed as a superhero.

BURN

He can't really mean it. This is just another phase, like when he swore off drinking after Vegas. He'll come around in a few weeks, and we'll be right back at it.

INT. BURN'S APARTMENT.

Burn lays on the bed, snuggled in a thick blanket. Only the lamp on her night stand illuminates the dark apartment. She looks vulnerable, unlike we've ever seen her before.

BURN

A couple of weeks. Two months tops.
Then he'll call me up and beg me to
come back. We'll stop a crime,
renew our contracts, and I'll Burn
again.

She shuts off the light. In the darkness, she snuffles.

BURN (CONT'D)

Please.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. BERNIE BAXTER'S BIG BUSINESS -- DAY.

A massive office building in the center of downtown Santa Angelo.

BURN (O.S.)

No, Claudia. I hear you. I hear you
perfectly. And I want you to know
that I'm not going to let you down.

INT. BERNIE BAXTER'S BIG BUSINESS.

A cubicle farm, as bland and lifeless as a graveyard.

POV moving slowly through the rows of cubes, looking in on
dead-eyed WORKERS going about their day. This is the exact
opposite of life in the fast lane. This is life in a parking
space.

BURN (O.S.)

What you have on your hands is a
bonafide emergency. The cops aren't
going to do anything. The National
Guard isn't coming around for this.
No. You made the right call by
coming to me. I'm here to help.

INT. BURN'S CUBICLE.

ON Burn inside her cubicle. She's done her best, decorating the grayish blue walls with pretty cartoon pictures of animals and newspaper clippings from her days as a hero. She wears a headset and a colorful business dress.

She puts on a brave face, but the spark in her eyes is gone.

BURN

Now let's see if we can't save you
a little bit more on your health
insurance.