

nanotech

THE BASICS.

MIKE NANO seems like a normal college guy. He misses classes, gets awkward around girls, and plays more video games than he should. He seems normal. But he's not.

He is a human swarm of nanobots. Every cell in his body is both biological and technological, and can float around independently. He doesn't know why. He was born that way. What he DOES know, thanks to comic books and TV, is that this is exactly the sort of thing you fight crime with. So, with the help of his scientific genius stepfather, JIM VAN BRAUN, he starts his fledgling superhero career, and discovers his own secret origin, taking us, the audience, along with him.

Also, once and a while, he gets a flash of one of his dead father's memories, which sounds weird, but will make sense by the end of this synopsis.

ISSUE ONE.

We meet Mike as a 10-year-old, sitting in science class, bored out of his mind. He squints, turns into a particle cloud, and floats out the window. He reforms on the lawn out front. “Freedom!”

At home, Mike surrounds himself with the comic book he's making about “Particle Man”, an obvious grown-up stand-in for himself. He's wearing an adult leather jacket and aviator sunglasses. His mom, KAREN, walks in. She tells him to stop skipping school all the time, and asks him what he's wearing. “I don't know...Dad stuff.” He never knew his dad. She asks if she ever told him the story of that jacket. He tells her the story, with an unsettling amount of detail. It scares her. He gets upset that she's upset, and flies out another window.

Mike pouts on a swing set. He hears shouting. Across the park, three bullies are picking on nerdy girl SADIE SUZUKI. Mike runs over and insults them with lame 10-year-old one-liners. He starts out taking out the bullies one by one, demonstrating his powers to us in the process. One of the bullies gets a lucky shot in. Mike's powers only work when he's paying attention. He can be punched in the back of the head. They all gang up on him. The fear makes him lose control. Electricity starts building up around him, until it explodes, destroying the playground, and injuring the other kids. He is eventually contained by a pink force field, belonging to Van Braun.

Back at Mike's house, Van Braun explains his extensive scientific credentials (while simultaneously flirting with Karen), and offers to train Mike.

10 Years later, Mike sits on a rooftop, wearing his dad's sunglasses, listening to a police radio. He hears a call about a bank robbery, and leaps into action.

ISSUE TWO.

Bro 1 and Bro 2, two giant twins with mullets, are robbing a bank. Mike slips in under the door, and tries to stop them, using his powers. He generally makes a mess of the whole thing, getting an old woman shot and causing extensive property damage, but in the end the Bros are, of course, defeated. As they're taken away by the police, they threaten Mike with their big brother. “He's watching you. He's always watching.”

After that's all over, Mike is interviewed by DET. JENNIFER GRANT. She asks if the government is

after him. Running gag. Everyone asks if the government is after him (they're not). She tells him to involve her next time he wants to stop a crime, before he goes in wrecking up the place and putting lives in danger.

Mike flies to class, at CTT Tech in downtown Chicago, IL. We find him there, fast asleep. The professor wakes him up, and mid-chewing him out, realizes Mike isn't wearing shoes. Mike tends to lose clothes, being a swarm of particles half the time. The professor insists Mike come see him tomorrow morning.

Mike leaves class with his only friend, RYAN LINICH. They talk about Mike's lack of shoes, and their mutual love of video games. They walk past Sadie Suzuki, all grown-up, walking with her friend GEOFFREY. She tries to chase Mike down, but loses him in a crowded hallway.

Back at home, Mike talks to Van Braun. Mike thinks he should wear a costume to disguise his identity, since the cops are on to him. Van Braun thinks he should be out in the open. He also thinks Mike could call him “Dad”. Mike gets a flash of one of his father's memories: Van Braun holding a big syringe intimidatingly. He's not comfortable calling this guy anything.

In the police station, Bro 1 and 2 are broken out by their BIG BROTHER, a little bald man in a suit, who can travel through televisions and video cameras. They insist upon revenge.

ISSUE THREE.

Big Brother busts his little brothers out of prison. Mike trains with Van Braun in his basement. Van Braun tries to have a fatherly conversation, maybe bond with Mike a little. It doesn't work.

Mike arrives at his meeting with his professor to find Sadie and Geoffrey, teacher's assistants, building a robotic exoskeleton (their graduate thesis). Sadie's VERY happy to see Mike. Geoffrey, not so much. He's had an unrequited love thing going on with Sadie for years, and he can sense the immediate chemistry between the other two. Sadie informs Mike that she'll be tutoring him.

On his way home, Mike is jumped by Bro 1 and 2, and chased into an old TV repair shop: the perfect place for Big Brother to destroy him. They fight, Big Brother going in and out of TVs, Mike struggling to stop being hit. It goes poorly for Mike, until, delirious from all the blows to the head, he gets a flash of memory and calls Big Brother “Gordy”. Big Brother is startled. Mike uses the moment, knocking Big Brother out of the TV he's leaning out of, snagging one of the Bros' guns, and destroying all the TVs. The shop owner threatens to sue Mike for the damages.

ISSUE FOUR.

Mike is being sued for \$30,000 by the TV shop owner. Mike is feeling guilty. His mom is freaking out. Van Braun is very cool about it, telling Mike exactly what he needs to hear to feel better. Mike calls him Dad.

Geoffrey, all gussied-up, finally works up the courage to ask Sadie out on a date. It's awkward. She's not interested, but she turns him down as nicely as she can. Even so, he's devastated.

Sadie shows up at Mike's house to tutor him. Van Braun and Karen are excited. Mike's never brought a girl over before! He drags her upstairs as fast as he can. Just as they're about to start the tutoring, Mike gets a call from Grant, saying he's needed at a jewelry store downtown. Sadie insists on coming with. Mike can't say no, because she's pretty.

They arrive to find the police being terrorized by VAC-MAN, a jewel thief with a big vacuum for an arm. Mike is reluctant to face him. He's a particle cloud. Suction is his kryptonite. Eventually, he is forced into action to save Grant, and is promptly sucked into Vac-Man's backpack.

Sadie gets a phone call. It's Mike. He wants to know how vacuums work. She guides him to what he needs to break. Vac-Man's arm explodes, and Mike reforms, victorious, and naked. Sadie sees. Embarrassment.

Karen, laundry basket in hand, stumbles upon a secret room in the basement, filled with comatose pregnant women in stretchers. Van Braun finds her. “This isn't what it looks like.”

ISSUE FIVE.

Geoffrey, alone in his and Sadie's office, smashes up the place. He sees Mike's file on the floor. He looks up at the exoskeleton. Lightning strikes outside the window.

Mike sits in Ryan's couch, venting his problems (mostly Sadie seeing him naked) while Ryan plays video games. Ryan gives him VERY questionable advice. Mike leaves, a blue light from the video game system glows in Ryan's eye. (This, by the way, is set-up for a potential second arc.)

Mike arrives at home. His mom isn't there. Van Braun isn't there. He goes in the basement, and finds the room full of comatose women. He freaks out, losing control of his powers again. He destroys half the basement before he contains it. He calls Grant, and tells her to come over.

He gets that flash of Van Braun with a syringe. He stands there, trying to remember more. The doorbell rings. It's Geoffrey, wearing the exoskeleton. He's trying to intimidate Mike into staying away from Sadie. Mike doesn't have time for this. He decks Geoffrey, taking him out with one punch.

Mike flies to Sadie. He tells her everything. He asks her to help him access his father's memories, buried deep in his subconscious.

Grant enters Mike's house, finds the pregnant women, and finds another, much larger hidden room beyond the one with the coma women. In that room, Van Braun is telling Karen why they can't tell Mike what's going on. Van Braun sees Grant, and takes her out with a force field.

Sadie hooks Mike up to what is essentially a big computer, with jumper cables hooked to Mike's ears, transferring data recollection software into Mike's brain electronically. She isn't sure about this. Mike trusts her. She turns it on. Big burst of electricity. Mike lays there, smoking, apparently dead.

ISSUE SIX.

Sadie cries on Mike's chest. Suddenly, Mike gasps, and we are taken into his mind as he remembers his own origin story through his father's eyes.

FRANK NANO, Mike's father, forgets his own anniversary. Karen is pissed. Apparently, Frank does this sort of thing all the time. He's a bit of a self-centered dick.

While fixing an elevator at the Pelican Corporation (where he works as a building engineer with Gordy, aka Big Brother), the pulley supporting him breaks, cracking Gordy in the back of the head, and dropping Frank 30 stories down, into the darkness.

Frank wakes up, mortally wounded. Jim Van Braun, who also works for Pelican, offers him an experimental nano-technological formula: a cure for his injuries. Frank agrees, and Van Braun stabs

him in the neck with it.

Frank wakes up again. Van Braun puts a mirror in front of him. Not only are his injuries gone, he's also *ripped*. Frank can't thank Van Braun enough.

Frank goes home, and apologizes to Karen. They make up SO much that Mike is conceived. Over the next seven months, Frank pulls his life together, taking care of his pregnant wife, getting a promotion at work. Everything's terrific. One morning, at the office, he gets a call. Karen's having the baby. Frank goes to leave, but one of his arms stays attached to the phone, dropping off his body. He screams.

Frank goes to Van Braun. Van Braun explains that his body is rejecting the formula, and he has about an hour to live. Van Braun is sad. He didn't think Frank was like the rest of them. What rest of them? How many people has Van Braun killed with this formula? It turns out...quite a few. Frank decks him with his severed arm.

Frank struggles to get to the hospital as Karen has the baby. His body slowly falls apart, bit by bit, and he dissolves into a pile of gray mush, right at the hospital entrance. Karen gives one good push, and Mike is born.

Mike throws up, having just seen his own birth. He's out of the flashback, coherent. He's also in that secondary hidden room in his basement, having been captured by Van Braun. Grant and Sadie are there too, trapped in one of Van Braun's patented pink force fields.

ISSUE SEVEN.

Mike lashes out. Van Braun killed his father. He goes to attack Van Braun. Van Braun flips a switch, and Mike is splattered onto a large electromagnet.

Van Braun explains everything. After the Pelican Corporation found out about Mike, they sent Van Braun to become part of his family, to study him. Apparently the formula needed to be combined with human DNA in order to maintain stability. The comatose women were impregnated with artificial nano-sperm, based on Mike's birth. The ultimate goal is to have Mike lead the army of nano-children, which Pelican will sell to the highest bidder. Van Braun insists that he truly loves Mike as a son, and that this is just his job, and that being the general of a nano-army is actually a pretty good career path. Karen agrees with Van Braun. Mike is incredulous.

Mike escapes. He and Van Braun battle, Mike with his powers, Van Braun with his force fields, trading emotionally-charged dialogue. Van Braun wants Mike to understand where he's coming from. Mike's pure anger. All the while, Sadie is taking apart hers and Grant's cell phone, as well as whatever else she can get to inside the force field, and is building some sort of device.

Mike makes a crack about Van Braun stealing Frank Nano's family out of jealousy, killing him for it. Van Braun gets mad, fighting harder. It looks like he might kill Mike.

Sadie slaps her device on the force field, dissipating it. Grant shoots Van Braun in the head.

Outside, when it's all over, a dozen stretchers (the pregnant women AND Van Braun) are piled into ambulances. Up on the roof, Mike and Sadie kiss for the first time.

Across the street, watching them, is Frank Nano, looking like hell, but not dead.

TO BE CONTINUED!