

NFL EXTRA

Week 10

Segment	TRT
NFL Super Pro	7:00
Takeo Spikes	7:52

01:28:20 - NFL SUPER PRO

I USED TO COLLECT COMIC BOOKS AS A YOUNGSTER. NOT NOW BECAUSE PEOPLE MAKE FUN OF ME. BUT, MY FAVORITE SUPERHERO IS SUPERMAN.

FOOTBALL PLAYERS LOVE THE MAN OF STEEL. ON SUNDAYS, THEY TOO DON COLORFUL COSTUMES AND DO EXTRAORDINARY THINGS.

RADIO – I’LL TELL YOU WHAT. HE IS SUPERMAN RIGHT NOW.

HEY, WHAT’S THAT ROMO MEAN ON YOUR BACK? WHAT’S THAT MEAN? SUPER MAN.

SOMETIMES, **WE ALL** WANT TO BE SOMETHING MORE THAN WE ARE. BUT NOT EVERYONE WITH SUPERPOWERS GETS TO BE...

1, 2, 3, SUPERMAN!

TAKE ME - BEFORE I WAS GIVEN SUPER-STRENGTH AND SPEED, I WAS AN NFL LINEBACKER. SO HOW'D A GUY LIKE ME END UP IN A PLACE LIKE THIS?

I HAVEN'T BEEN ON **THAT** SHELF IN A LONG TIME. IT'S BEEN 20 YEARS SINCE THE NFL AND MARVEL COMICS PARTNERED UP AND MADE ME THE LEAGUE’S OFFICIAL SUPERHERO. NOW I SPEND MY TIME IN THE BARGAIN BIN, RUBBING ELBOWS WITH NICK FURY AND NIGHT NURSE.

THIS IS ME. NAME'S PHIL GRAYFIELD - YOU CAN CALL ME NFL SUPERPRO. MY RUN LASTED ONLY 12 ISSUES BACK IN THE EARLY 90’S – BUT MY INFAMY HAS LASTED FAR LONGER, THANKS TO SOMETHING CALLED “THE INTERNET.”

I’M NOT SURE IT WAS TAKEN ALL THAT SERIOUSLY BY COMICS CONSUMERS. IT WAS CONSIDERED SORT OF A JOKE BY A BUNCH OF PEOPLE.

A JOKE? DUMB? IS IT **DUMB** TO DROP FOOTBALL-THEMED ONE-LINERS ON BAD GUYS I PUNCH IN THE FACE? LIKE THIS ONE TIME I SAID, “HOW ABOUT A PERSONAL **AUTOGRAPH?!?**” AND THIS OTHER GUY, HE WAS ALL, “OK, I GIVE!” AND I SAID, “NO, YOU **RECEIVED** - A POUNDING, THAT IS.”

I WAS JUST TRYING TO FIND OUT WHO WROTE THIS...IT’S RIDICULOUS!

MY NAME IS FABIAN ___. I HAVE WORKED ON A VARIETY OF TITLES RANGING FROM BEING THE WRITER OF X-MEN WHICH WAS THE HIGHEST SELLING TITLE IN THE EARLY 90'S. I'VE WRITTEN SPIDERMAN. AT D.C. I'VE ALSO HANDLED BATMAN TITLES, SUPERMAN TITLES, JUSTICE LEAGUE TITLES. I'VE SOLD OVER 75 MILLION COMICS AS A WRITER. I HAVE BEEN ATTACHED TO THIS THING IN AN INGLORIOUS SORT OF WAY. MARVEL WAS IN DISCUSSIONS WITH THE NFL. ASKED ME IF I COULD HELP OUT WRITING THE INITIAL ORIGIN ISSUE OF THE CHARACTER. IT WAS ABOUT MY TRUE LOVE FOR MARVEL COMICS THAT I SAID, "CAN I GET SOME JETS TICKETS OUT OF THIS? CAN I GET TO GO TO A FOOTBALL GAME?" I JUST SORT OF PLAYED AROUND WITH THE PUZZLE PIECES A BIT. ADDED A BUNCH OF MY OWN STUFF AND NFL APPROVED IT.

WHAT HAPPENED WAS THIS. I WAS AN ALL-AMERICAN AT NOTRE DAME, AND THE EAGLES MADE ME THE FIRST PICK IN THE DRAFT. THEN I HURT MY KNEE... THEN I HURT MY KNEE AGAIN... ANND, AGAIN. MY CAREER WAS OVER, SO I BECAME A SPORTS REPORTER.

I WAS DOING A STORY ON RUDY, A RECLUSIVE INVENTOR AND NFL MEMORABILIA COLLECTOR - YOU KNOW THE TYPE. HE'D BUILT A FIVE MILLION DOLLAR FOOTBALL UNIFORM. BULLETS COULD BOUNCE OFF THIS THING. JUST THEN, THIEVES BROKE IN TO STEAL RUDY'S MEMORABILIA. THEY TOOK HIM, TIED ME UP, LIT A MATCH AND LEFT ME FOR DEAD.

THE BAD GUYS TIED HIM UP IN OLD FILM REELS OF FOOTBALL GAMES. THEY NEVER REALLY SAID THAT THAT WAS IMPORTANT TO WHY HE GOT SUPERPOWERS OR NOT. HE WAS DOUSED WITH FLAMES AND CHEMICALS. IT'S A VERY COMMON CONCEIT FOR CREATING SUPERPOWERS. MOST PEOPLE HAVE TRIED IT AT HOME IT HASN'T GENERALLY WORKED. BUT, FOR THE MOST PART, IT'S GUARANTEED FIRE, CHEMICALS TOGETHER EQUAL SUPERPOWERS.

IF IT WAS NFL FILMS' FILM, THAT MIGHT BE THE REASON WHY HE GOT SUPERPOWERS INSTEAD OF JUST BURNING TO DEATH HORRIBLY.

I NOW HAD SUPER-STRENGTH AND SPEED, AND AN NFL SUPER-SUIT. I PUT IT ON, SAVED RUDY AND KICKED SOME BAD GUY BUTT. TURNS OUT, I WAS GOOD AT IT.

HE WENT FROM SACKING QBS TO TACKLING CRIME. I WANT TO SAY THAT I WAS NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR THE COVER COPY.

AS NFL SUPERPRO, I BATTLED THE HEADHUNTERS, WHO KIDNAPPED LAWRENCE TAYLOR IN THE MIDDLE OF A GAME.

THEN THERE WAS A GANG THAT WENT AROUND BEATING UP EAGLES FANS AND DESTROYING THEIR MERCHANDISE. IS THAT EVEN A CRIME?.

THERE WAS QUICK KICK, A LINEBACKER-TURNED-NINJA. AND THEN THERE WAS INSTANT REPLAY.

INSTANT REPLAY WAS AN ASSASSIN WHO CAN SHIFT THROUGH TIME SLIGHTLY, JUST A LITTLE BIT AT A TIME. THAT WAS PRETTY CLEVER BY THE WAY. INSTANT REPLAY.

THERE WAS ONE VILLAIN I COULDN'T DEFEAT – DIMINISHING RETURNS.

SALES AT FIRST WERE PHENOMENAL. THEY WERE GREAT. I DISTINCTLY REMEMBER GETTING A WONDERFUL CHECK FOR NFL SUPERPRO. THE FIRST ISSUE SELLS HIGH AND THEN IT GOES DOWN FOR ISSUE 2. THEN DOWN FOR ISSUE 3. MARVEL STOPPED THE BOOK AFTER 12 ISSUES AND EVERYBODY SAID THAT WAS A GOOD TRY, THANK YOU. HAVE A GOOD DAY. I GOT TICKETS TO 1 JET GAME. THEY LOST. IT SUCKED. ... GETS TO GO TO A SUPER BOWL. THE POOR SLAVE-DRIVEN CREATIVE TALENT DOESN'T GET TO GO. I STARTED TO LOOK AROUND TO SEE IF THE NHL WAS DOING ANYTHING WITH US SO I COULD GO TO A RANGER GAME INSTEAD!

SO THAT'S HOW I ENDED UP HERE... AND HERE.

MOST OF THE PEOPLE WHO CRITICIZE IT NEVER READ A SINGLE ISSUE, AND I'M FINE WITH THAT BECAUSE I'M INCREDIBLY SECURE IN MYSELF. SO I CAN GIVE A RAT'S! DID I MENTION THAT THE ROYALTY CHECK WAS REALLY REALLY GOOD?

I DON'T THINK THE COMIC'S COMMUNITY, EVEN NOW, TAKES THAT CHARACTER VERY SERIOUSLY. BUT, YOU DON'T HAVE TO TAKE EVERYTHING SERIOUSLY. IT'S COMICS.

MAYBE I AM ONLY GOOD FOR A LAUGH. MAYBE WHEN MEN CAN DO THINGS LIKE THIS, THE GAME DOESN'T NEED A GUY LIKE ME.

YOU WATCH SOME OF THE PLAYS WHERE SOMEBODY JUST BARELY CATCHES THE BALL DOWN IN THE END ZONE AND YOU'RE LIKE, "WOW, THAT WAS AMAZING." YOU DON'T NEED TO GIVE THEM A CAPE...OR A SUPER SUIT.

THIS IS A GAME WHERE PASSION IS POWER ENOUGH TO SUMMON SMOKE AND FLAME...

WHERE SHROUDED WIZARDS CAN MOVE EVEN THE MIGHTIEST OF MEN...

AND A BAG BOY CAN RISE FROM HUMBLE ORIGINS TO SUPER BOWL FAME.

IT'S A GAME FULL OF SUPERMEN.

AND IF IT EVER NEEDS ONE MORE HERO, YOU KNOW WHERE TO FIND ME.

01:35:31 - TAKEO SPIKES

IF I WAS TO ASK MYSELF ONE QUESTION...AFTER SO MANY YEARS OF PLAYING. THAT QUESTION WOULD BE WHAT DRIVES YOU?

ONCE AGAIN FROM THE...! HEY YOU! WHAT YOU GOT FOR ME? I'VE BEEN WAITING ALL YEAR FOR THIS HERE!

I'VE SEEN THE HIGHS.

RADIO – BOBBLED! SPIKE PICKS IT UP! THE 49ERS HAVE THE BALL!

THE LOWS.

RADIO - TOUCHDOWN!

DAMN MAN!! MORE LOWS THAN HIGHS.

RADIO – LOOKS LIKE HE’S HAVING TROUBLE PUTTING ANY WEIGHT AT ALL ON HIS RIGHT LEG. TAKEO SPIKES WITH ASSISTANCE FROM THE TRAINERS.

BUT WHAT DRIVES ME IS WANTING TO BE GREAT.

RADIO – TAKEO SPIKES. PLAYMAKER MAKES ANOTHER ONE. TAKEO SPIKES! TAKEO SPIKES! UNBELIEVABLE! TAKEO SPIKES MAKES A HUGE PLAY. HOLY MACKEREL!

I WAS BORN IN AUGUSTA GEORGIA. THE PRIME MINISTER OF JAPAN WAS ON THE NEWS AT THE TIME. HIS NAME WAS TAKEO MAKI. MY MOTHER, SHE BELIEVED IN POWER NAMES AND FOUND OUT THAT IT MEANT GREAT WARRIOR.

DOES IT FIT YOU WELL? YEA, IT FITS ME WELL. I DON’T LIKE WHEN PEOPLE COME UP AND SAY, “YOU KNOW WHAT? I NAMED MY DOG AND CAT AFTER YOU.” I’M LIKE, “DO I SUPPOSED TO FEEL GOOD ABOUT THAT?”

LILLIE SPIKES GAVE HER SON TAKEO HIS IDENTITY. IN THE CHALK MINES OF GEORGIA, JIMMY SPIKES INSTILLED HIS ETHICS.

I REALLY THINK HE TOLD THOSE GUYS TO GIVE ME THE HARDEST, NASTIEST, FILTHIEST JOB EVER, JUST TO LET ME KNOW I DON’T CARE HOW HARD IT GETS OUT THERE IN AMERICA, YOU DON’T WANT TO BE DOING THIS FOR THE REST OF YOUR LIFE. AND IT WORKED. AND I TOLD HIM. I SAID, “DAD, WHEN I MAKE IT YOU DON’T HAVE TO DO IT NO MORE. THE DAY THEY CALL MY NAME, YOU AIN’T GOTTA DO IT.”

COMM. TAGLIABUE - WITH THE 13TH PICK OF THE 1ST ROUND, THE CINCY BENGALS SELECT LINEBACKER FROM AUBURN, TAKEO SPIKES.

INSTANTLY, SPIKES BROUGHT CINCINNATI A SURGE OF ENERGY.

AND EVERY SUPERHERO HAS THAT TRADEMARK OF WHAT THEY LEAVE BEHIND. MY T.K.O. I LIKE TO CHOP IT UP OUT THERE ON THE FIELD. IT’S A FORM OF EXPRESSION, CELEBRATION. IT’S GOOD.

BUT CINCINNATI’S SUPERHERO WAS NOT ON A SUPER TEAM. IN FIVE SEASONS WITH THE BENGALS, SPIKES AVERAGED OVER 100 TACKLES PER YEAR WHILE WINNING ONLY NINETEEN GAMES...LEAVING THE “GREAT WARRIOR” WITH LITTLE GLORY.

REGARDLESS OF WHAT YOU MAY DO ON THE FIELD, EVEN IF YOUR STATS CAN STAND AGAINST ANYBODY ELSE, IF YOU’RE NOT WINNING, PEOPLE ARE NOT SEEING; AND IF PEOPLE ARE NOT SEEING, PEOPLE ARE NOT BELIEVING.

TIME TO GO PUT IN SOME WORK, BABY. TIME TO GO PUT IN SOME WORK. THERE’S NO OTHER PLACE IN THE WORLD I WOULD RATHER BE RIGHT NOW THAN RIGHT HERE ON THIS FIELD.

SPIKES SIGNED WITH BUFFALO IN 2003 AND IMMEDIATELY EARNED PRO BOWL HONORS. IN 2004, HE FACED HIS FORMER TEAM IN A GAME WITH STAKES MUCH LARGER THAN SPIKES VS. BENGALS.

WE WERE FIGHTING FOR A WILDCARD SPOT. I WANTED TO MAKE A MARK, AND I HAD TO IN ORDER FOR US TO WIN.

RADIO - THERE HE GOES! IT'S TAKEO SPIKES! HE'S AT MIDFIELD AT THE 30, AT THE 20, AT THE 15, 10, 5. TOUCHDOWN TAKEO; AND THE BILLS TAKE AN EVEN BIGGER LEAD OVER THE BENGALS.

THAT GAME WAS ONE OF MY MOST MEMORABLE MOMENTS.

SOON FOLLOWED...BY ONE OF HIS WORST.

RADIO – 25 SECS. LEFT. THE BILLS CANNOT STOP THE CLOCK. THE BENCHES FLOOD ONTO THE FIELD AND THIS ONE IS ALL BUT OVER.

THE ONLY THING WE HAD TO DO WAS TO BEAT THE STEELERS AND WE WAS IN THE PLAYOFFS; AND THEY PULLED THEIR STARTERS. THAT'S WHY I WAS SO..I WAS SO HOT. AND WE COULDN'T DO IT. THAT GAME HURT MORE THAN ANY OTHER GAME IN MY CAREER.

RADIO - TO HAVING IT COME DOWN TO 1 GAME TO GET IN AND...THERE'S ALWAYS NEXT YEAR.

BUT THE YEARS CAME AND WENT. NEW CITIES...DIFFERENT TEAMMATES...SAME RESULT. NOT A SINGLE PLAYOFF APPEARANCE.

TODAY, TAKEO SPIKES IS IN SAN DIEGO – THE NFL'S MOST TENURED PLAYER WHO HAS NEVER APPEARED IN THE PLAYOFFS...ON A TEAM THAT STRUGGLES WHEN IT GETS THERE.

WE HAVE A BUNCH OF GUYS THAT ARE HUNGRY BUT WE JUST HAVEN'T QUITE HAD THAT GLUE TO HELP US GET OVER THAT HUMP. AND, HOPEFULLY, THAT'S WHAT HE'S GONNA BRING TO US.

LET'S GO!!!

YOU CAN SEE THAT PASSION. THAT BURNING DESIRE. 14 YRS. IN THE LEAGUE AND HE STILL HAS THAT FIRE IN HIS EYES.

I FEEL LIKE IT'S A PERFECT COMBINATION FOR WHAT WE BOTH WANT. AN THAT'S, MAN, THAT'S THE HARDWARE. AND I'M NOT GONNA COMPROMISE THAT FOR NOBODY, NO ONE.

THEY DON'T SCORE! THEY DON'T SCORE!

SPIKES' REFUSAL TO COMPROMISE IS NOTHING NEW.

HEY, DON'T LET UP BABY. WE AIN'T LETTING UP ON THAT. LET'S GO HERE. KEEP PUSHING THEM DOWN.

BUT AS A FREE AGENT ENTERING THE 2008 SEASON, HIS CONVICTION COST HIM.

I GOT A CALL FROM MIKE TOMLIN BUT I DID NOT WANT TO ACCEPT THE ROLE AS A BACKUP BACKER. BECAUSE I KNEW I HAD MORE TO OFFER THAN THAT. I KNEW THAT. I KNEW THAT DEEP IN MY HEART.

TOMLIN AND THE STEELERS WON THE SUPER BOWL THAT SEASON. SPIKES FINISHED 7-AND-9 AS A STARTER IN SAN FRANCISCO.

EVERYTHING THAT THEY'RE GETTING, WE'RE GIVING IT TO THEM!

STRUGGLING IN THE NFL ISN'T EASY...(LET'S GO!!) BUT SPIKES FINDS PERSPECTIVE THROUGH HIS PASSION.

LET'S GO TO WORK!! I LOVE THIS GAME MAN! LET'S GO MAN! HE SAID HE LOVES THE SUNDAYS! HE SAID HE LOVE THE ...HE DON'T EVEN PRAY! IT'S A PRIVILEGE DOG!

I MEAN IT IS A PRIVILEGE. IT'S NEVER RIGHT. I WISH MY FATHER WAS STILL ALIVE TO THIS DAY. HE HAD A HARD UPBRINGING COMING UP, AND THAT'S THE REASON WHY HE STAYED ON US SO HARD; BECAUSE HE DIDN'T WANT US TO GO THROUGH WHAT HE WENT THROUGH. BECAUSE NOT ONLY THAT I SAW IT BUT I LIVED IT. THAT'S WHERE I KNOW MY WORK ETHIC CAME FROM.

WHAT DO YOU WANT OUR IDENTITY TO BE AFTER THE END OF THIS GAME?! EVERY GREAT TEAM HAS AN IDENTITY. LET'S MAKE IT BE ESTABLISHED TODAY!

TAKEO SPIKES' IDENTITY WAS BESTOWED AT BIRTH. FITTINGLY, THE "GREAT WARRIOR" ...IS STILL FIGHTING.

RADIO – WRAPPED UP THERE! SPIKES AGAIN! 11TH TACKLE OF THE GAME.

I'M JUST DETERMINED MAN. SOMETHING GOOD IS GONNA HAPPEN. DIDN'T HAPPEN ON THE TIME THAT I WANTED IT TO HAPPEN. SO, WHY NOT NOW?

(END)