

# **A bird? A plane? An Ozzie mozzie zapper!**

Kerry Cue

*Herald Sun* 14 JUL 2004 also *The Advertiser* (SA)

You may think I'm merely a mild mannered reporter. But, dear reader, I have fought a 'superhero' battle. It all began years ago when I wrote a book for kids titled 'How to save the world before breakfast'. Subtitle 'A magazine for young superheroes'. To cut a long story super-short, D.C. Comics kindly explained to my little Aussie publisher that they owned the word 'super heroes' and we could, to cut through the legal jargon, bugger off.

I immediately imagined the D.C Comics legal team was comprised of escapees from Krypton who, having discovered a loophole in the rights to escape rockets, had re-established themselves on the planet Legalon producing a race of Super Lawyers who were taking over our Solar System by suing the pants of every creature in the Universe.

Suffice to say, a barrister-type friend who, in his legal regalia in a high-wind did look quite Batmanish, pointed out that D. C. Comics were right. They owned the words 'super heroes'. It was not a copyright matter. It's a trademark!!!! So my publisher pulped the first book cover and I changed the subtitle to 'The hilarious first addition of the Superkids Magazine'. And so the book, which gave advice on 'How to select the right cape for you' and 'How to keep your hair neat in a cyclone', was eventually published.

But now I realise I went about this superhero thing the wrong way. All I had to do was become world-famous and ask nicely. According to The Times, London, John Cleese has been given permission by D. C. Comics to write a Superhero novel. This time Superman's little rocket ship from Krypton doesn't land in America but in England producing a rather pale and weedy sort of superhero, I guess, who studies poetry at Oxford, drinks warm beer and likes cricket. So I thought this time I'd write to Marvel Comics.

'Dear Marvel Comics,

I seek permission to write about an Aussie Spiderman. Peter Parker (Parkie) and his mates Davo and Gazza, are on a road trip through Maralinga when Parkie gets bitten on the bum in an old dunny by a Redback Spider. But the spider has been nuked and, after a rough night in the tent, Parkie wakes up with superpowers.

Parkie finds the web handy getting beer out of the esky and daking his mates. Impressed, his mates try to think up a name for the new superhero. 'I reckon Redback Man' says Davo. 'Nah! Sounds like I sell beer' says Parkie. 'How about Arachnidman?' enthuses Davo. 'Sounds too National Geographic Channel' complains Parkie. 'I know. Peter the Super Person?' suggests Gazza. 'You're a Super Idiot' says Davo. Parkie just zaps him and strings him up in the nearest gum tree. 'How about Couldn't-Give-A-Stuffman' says Davo 'or better still 'Super Dick'. Parkie zaps him too.

Later, driving his V8 ute back to town, Pete and his mates contemplate the whole superhero concept. 'Aren't ya meant to fight evil or somethin'?' asks Davo. 'Like wha?' queries Parkie. 'Collingwood' suggests Gazza. 'Nah!' says Parkie. 'They'll have a rule banning superheroes for sure. But I could get a suit in St Kilda colours. Red, white and black. Cool.'

'Well, ya gonna hafta fight evil megalomaniacs!' insists Davo. 'Like who?' asks Gazza. 'Parking Officers' suggests Davo. 'Nah!' says Pete. 'It sounds a bit unfair: me with super powers and them with a bit of chalk.' 'I've got it' exclaimed Gazza. 'You can zap Speed Cameras'. 'YEAH!' they all agreed.

But little does our superhero, who assumes the name Spiderbloke, know there is an evil megalomaniac out there thinking evil-type thoughts, Turbo Okker. He zooms about on jet-powered thongs zapping his enemies with supersonic streams of beer from his supply of hi-tech tinnies.

Fortunately, he is lazy for a megalomaniac. He isn't that keen on world domination in the footy season and takes summers off. Meanwhile, Spiderbloke lives a fairly unhassled life as a superhero.

He gets a job cleaning high-rise windows. The pay is good and he gets the weekends off to spend time with his girlfriend, Shazza. Although, Shazza gets annoyed when he zaps her so she can't nag about 'doing somethin' proper with his superpowers like goin' on *Australia you've got Talent*'.

Overall, Spiderbloke finds his superpowers handy. He can zap the barking dog next door. He zaps mozzies at friend's bbqs and he gets to take his mates for free bungee jumps. He lives happily ever after.

The End'.

**Addendum:** Today, just 10 years on, I suspect Spiderbloke would spend his time texting, drinking boutique beer, up-loading Youtube videoclips of himself swinging from skyscrapers, posting selfies with other Superheroes on Facebook and keeping up his Twitter feed at #spiderblokethebigswinger. There'd be no time at all for good works. That's modern life for you.