



BIG AL

Guess Who?

As the fair winds down, the Bikester booth has a surprise visitor. It's Bo, just stopping by to give them a hard time! Terry isn't around, so he decides to concentrate on Nitro. Bo knows it won't do him any good to hassle Nitro. Nitro's just too quick for him. As Nitro says, "When I play word games with Bo, I feel like I'm in a battle of wits with an unarmed opponent."

But Bo knows how to get to Nitro. He takes a Polaroid out of his pocket and hands it to Nitro. Without saying another word--just a laugh--wanders off to check out the fair. After Bo's left, Nitro checks out the Polaroid and it stops him in his tracks (just like Bo knew it would).

Bo has written "DragMonster" under the picture. And it is! From the front, it looks very much like a normal AA/Fuel dragster, but behind the driver everything changes. Two supercharged fuel hemis sit in it side by side, and knowing the kind of engines Bo builds, each one most likely produces at least five thousand horsepower. Behind the engines across the back of the car are four drag slicks, each over twenty inches wide. Bo is right. This is truly the "Mother of all dragsters!"

Nitro instantly realizes that racing against this monster with SuperBike is out of the question. The only way they beat Bo the last couple of races was by running SuperBike right on the ragged edge, and even then Terry had to come up with a trick or two beyond that to pull it off!

They could easily beat this new car with RocketBike, but that wouldn't count--it has to be an internal combustion-powered, wheel-driven vehicle, not a rocket or jet that is propelled by thrust. And of course, Nitro wants to beat Bo with a bike, which is going to be a pretty tall order. But after all, they are the 'Bikesters', and as TK likes to say, "Bikesters rule!"

Super Challenge

Nitro has to think about this for a minute or two, then his brain goes to work full-tilt, dredging up an idea he had back when they had major traction problems during the first round of the Phoenix match race with the "Dangerous Dan Jones Funny Car".

Terry returns and, after seeing the photograph that Bo left, reacts by saying, "Ugh! It's ugly, but it

looks BAD!”

Nitro runs his idea by Terry and draws a quick sketch. It's SuperBike with two slicks, which kind of turn it into "SuperTrike", but will put a lot of rubber and, ultimately, a lot of power on the ground. Terry looks at it and rolls his eyes, and says, "I don't know, I kinda like SuperBike the way it is."

Terry instinctively knows that this will turn SuperBike into just something to put power on the ground, a bludgeon, rather than the beautifully balanced, engineered-to-perfection single purpose vehicle it is right now. Riding SuperBike is truly an art form and Terry loves being the artist that gets to do it. He loves being able to run right on the edge of traction and stability. Being able to feel the bike's every twitch and having to be right at the very top of his game, ready to react and compensate to make the perfect run. Nerissa would say, "It's like riding a fast stallion over jumps!"

Nitro takes notice of the way Terry looks at his drawing of a new, improved SuperBike. Actually he's not too crazy about making changes on the bike himself. When you can create something mechanical and get it to work as close to its maximum potential, as SuperBike does, you really don't want to take a chance on losing the combination and messing it up. So he's back to trying to think of a way to beat the "DragMonster." And thinking... and thinking...

Going Home

After an extra day in Texas to get everything packed up, they're back on the road: first to California to drop off TK (and also Celeste, who has some tee shirt business to take care of in LA), then home.

Terry's riding back with them this time because they're only three days from home. He's still really charged up from the excitement of flying every day, and coming along to share the driving will give him a chance to wind down. Flying RocketBike is the best thing ever, and he finds himself looking forward to it even more than he looks forward to racing.

Seeing the picture of Bo's new car hasn't yet inspired him to have something to beat it with. Not the way it's fired up Nitro, who isn't saying much. Terry knows that what Nitro must be thinking about is what he can build to "smoke" Bo's new dragster with. As he drives, Terry's just thinking about flying again.

And Terry's right. Nitro is thinking about what it's going to take to beat Bo. That's all he's thinking about. He's running different ideas and plans through his head. By the time they get home, something will be coming together. Nitro always rises to a challenge, especially one from Bo!

They stop at Jim Truesdale's to drop off TK and Celeste. They also unload the Tracker. Celeste will use it in LA, and then drive it home.

Then they turn north. Sure enough, by the time they pull in the driveway at the farm, Nitro has a pretty good idea of what it will take to do battle with Bo's "DragMonster".

What Now?

As they pull to a stop the twins come running up. Terry's promised to take the girls and Nerissa cruising in the San Juan Islands for the next two weeks and they're ready to go--right now! But they'll have to wait until the morning.

Nitro disappears into the shop and, except for taking the pickup and running to the warehouse to pick up some stuff, is out there all night.

In the morning, after getting the van loaded with all the gear they're taking with them, Terry goes out to the shop to see what Nitro's up to and to let him know that they're leaving for the boat.

MegaBike

Now Terry sees what Nitro went to the warehouse to pick up last night. And he's astounded by what he's creating. Sitting in the middle of the shop is the huge Allison V-12 that he dragged home from Sun Tool a couple of years ago. Over 1700 cubic inches of overhead cam, aluminum mega-engine, it's sitting sideways like the hemi V-8 in SuperBike. Nitro has placed one wheel five or six feet out in front of the engine and he has two of the big drag slicks they use on SuperBike side by side behind it. Down low in front of the engine are two gigantic turbochargers, each one big enough to fill a five-gallon bucket. "This is scary! It makes SuperBike look like a kid's toy!" On the four-foot long dull black valve covers, Nitro has stenciled a name, "Big Al!"

Terry doesn't even want to think about this. He goes back out to the van and, along with Nerissa and the girls, heads for the boat. Right now he would much rather spend a couple of weeks in the islands with his family than deal with the latest creation of the "Mad Doctor Nitro!"

A couple of hours later, Nitro looks out the shop window and sees Nail's truck and trailer coming down the driveway. He made good time, considering that Nitro just called him when they left Texas, four days ago.

Nitro knows that Nail is the ideal person to help with this project. He has just the right attitude for what this bike is going to be: no chrome, nothing fancy. A ground-pounder, something capable of putting over seven thousand horsepower on the ground. A very efficient 'blunt instrument' that will get the job done.

And with that, the mad inventor--creator of SuperBike and RocketBike, Father of the Bikesters--casually picks up his favorite, bluntest, wrench and goes back to work on the newest, biggest and baddest beast of them all.

At that same moment, passing by the beach below the bluffs is "The Boat", carrying Terry and his little family as they head for the Islands. They are looking towards the shore as what appears to be a huge white bear emerges from the surf and heads for the path that goes up the bluff towards the shop. The girls say in unison, "Spirit Bear!!" Terry looks and doesn't see anything, however he does see the 'Silver Eagle' soaring above them. Nerissa just nods seeing it all....