

The Techni-Crusader #7 - "The Wrath of Zahn"

Written by Steven Bland

In a city, on the planet Radon, in the Alpha Centauri galaxy, an alien criminal named Zhan was fleeing through a crime scene by leaping very far and high. Hot on his heels was a young Radonian police officer named Troy. Both Zhan's and Troy's leaps were three yards at a time. Each wore a special bracelet on his right wrist. Each bracelet was a small but powerful direct energy weapon which had a very powerful energy cell that allowed unlimited ammunition and was activated by the user's thoughts.

"Give it up, Zahn," Troy exclaimed as he fired his weapon at his quarry, who dodged each shot. "You can't run from me forever!"

Troy was clad in a form-fitting futuristic version of a police officer's uniform with a helmet. Zahn, who was a burly man, had wild untamed hair and was clad in a blood-red T-shirt and black pants and boots.

"My weapon will stop you, Troy," said Zahn, firing an armor-piercing ray blast from his gun at the Radonian policeman.

"It would have to hit me first," Troy said as he managed to dodge it and catch up to Zahn.

The Radonian police officer disarmed and then apprehended the alien criminal.

*Steven
Bland*

The Techni-Crusader #7 - "The Wrath of Zahn"

Troy, having confiscated Zahn's weapon bracelet, placed the criminal's hands behind his back. With Zahn's palms touching and his fingers entwined in a "prayer" position, Troy placed the cuff restraints around the criminal's wrists. The captured Zahn was then taken by Troy to his spacecraft as a prisoner. Once they were inside the craft, the doors closed.

After he strapped Zahn into a seat, Troy took his place at the ship's helm and belted in. Soon, the spaceship started traveling through outer space on their journey to Rykulus-1.

After all these months, I've finally caught you, Zahn! You're wanted for murder on three planets," Troy told his prisoner. "Once I get you to Rykulus-1, the prison planet, you won't be menacing anyone for many years to come."

"You got lucky, Troy," Zahn growled as he struggled. "But, *one day*, I'll get even with you! I swear it!"

"Maybe, Zahn, but *not today*," Troy said as he continued to pilot the craft.

Zahn dug deep in his right back pocket for a small, thin object which resembled a paper clip from the planet Earth. Finding the object he sought, the alien criminal took it out of the pocket.

Leaning forward as best he could, Zahn, managing to use both hands, straightened out the metal of the clip and bent its tip.

Placing the bent tip into the keyhole of his cuff restraints, Zahn bent the metal backwards.

Steven

Bland

The Techni-Crusader #7 - "The Wrath of Zahn"

After inserting it into the keyhole, the alien criminal twisted the "key" in different directions until it lifted the locking device and clicked the cuffs open.

"You're wrong, Troy," Zahn said as he unstrapped himself from his seat and rose up attracting Troy's attention. "TODAY IS THAT DAY!"

"ZAHN," Troy exclaimed as he quickly activated the automatic pilot and unfastened his safety belt.

"I don't know *how* you got free, and I don't care," Troy said as he attempted to once again restrain the alien criminal. "I've subdued you *once*, I'll do it *again*."

"Not now, Troy, and not ever again," Zahn said as he overpowered and knocked out the Radonian police officer.

"UNGGHH," Troy exclaimed, before losing consciousness.

"Nighty night," a smug Zahn said as he reclaimed his weapon bracelet, which the Radonian police officer had confiscated earlier. The alien criminal also took Troy's weapon bracelet and put it on his left wrist.

The alien criminal then went to the controls and set a new course.

"Hah, all I gotta do is set course for an oxygen-based planet in another galaxy, and I'm home free," Zahn crowed.

Steven

Bland

The Techni-Crusader #7 - "The Wrath of Zahn"

Soon, the spacecraft approached the planet Earth and entered its atmosphere.

"Oh, *yeah*," Zahn crowed. "Planet Earth! I'm free!"

"And I'm gonna make sure I *stay* that way," the alien criminal said as he fired his weapon bracelet at the engines. The ship started plummeting toward a hilltop far from New York City.

Troy slowly regained consciousness as Zahn quickly headed for the spacecraft's escape pod.

"UHH," the Radonian police officer moaned groggily. Then, he looked around and saw Zahn getting inside the pod.

"ZAAHHNNN," Troy shouted.

"Goodbye, Troy," Zahn crowed from inside the pod. "I'll let the crash finish you off for me!"

The escape pod, carrying Zahn, soon left the craft.

"ZAAHHNNN," screamed Troy.

Troy looked at the damaged engines.

Zahn did this, he thought. Then, he turned his attention to the window.

I'm on another planet, Troy thought. The ship's careening toward that hilltop below. I'm only seconds away from impact! Can't slow down in time!"

Troy immediately radioed for help.

"Crash landing imminent! Mayday! Mayday!" Troy announced.

Steven

Bland

The Techni-Crusader #7 - "The Wrath of Zahn"

Troy's spacecraft crash-landed on the hilltop.

The Techni-Crusader, who had just returned from answering a distress call, soon arrived at the hilltop and found Troy's spacecraft. The armored hero went inside to investigate.

"Hello? Is anyone in here?" He asked. Soon, he found Troy injured.

It's an alien, the Techni-Crusader thought as he checked for a heartbeat.

He's still alive, but he's in really bad shape. I'd better ask Zimbor and Barylen to provide me with assistance.

Wasting no time, the armored hero used his helmet's communication technology to contact Zimbor and Barylen.

"Zimbor, Barylen," the Techni-Crusader called.

"Yes, Kevin?" Zimbor asked.

"I found a damaged spacecraft on this hilltop far from New York City," the armored hero answered. "So I went inside to search for any survivors and found only one occupant, the ship's pilot. He's still alive. His heart's still beating, but he's in really bad shape."

"Barylen and I will open a portal to your location," Zimbor said. "It will transport you and your passenger here to Zartron, where Barylen and I will examine and tend to him."

A portal soon opened for the Techni-Crusader and the armored hero passed through it, carrying the injured Troy with him.

Steven

Bland

The Techni-Crusader #7 - "The Wrath of Zahn"

In an instant, the Techni-Crusader and Troy arrived at Zimbor and Barylen's lab on Zartron.

"Can you and Barylen help him, Zimbor?" The Zeotronix-armored hero asked.

"We shall do our best. Place your guest on the examination table and we will begin examining him," Zimbor told the armored hero, who complied.

Meanwhile, Zahn's escape pod landed in the middle of Times Square and the alien criminal soon emerged from it. He looked around.

"Aaahhh," Zahn said with a smile. "Freedom never felt so good."

Soon, the alien criminal saw a nearby automated teller machine and a person getting money out of it.

"Hmm, a machine that gives money to people," Zahn mused. "How convenient."

He walked up to the ATM, smashed through it, and took out wads of cash.

"Nice," Zahn said smugly. "Like taking candy from a baby."

And with my powers and weapons, the criminal thought. I can become *king*.

Yeesss, he thought. I think I *will* become king.

Using his superhuman abilities, Zahn leapt to City Hall in only minutes.

Upon his arrival at City Hall, Zahn went inside and headed for the mayor's office. Reaching his objective, the villain busted in.

Steven

Bland

The Techni-Crusader #7 - "The Wrath of Zahn"

"WHO ARE YOU?" The mayor asked. "AND WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?"

"I am Zahn," the alien criminal answered. "As to what I'm doing here, I'm here to proclaim myself - -"

"*KING*," Zahn added with a sinister smile.

Meanwhile, Troy opened his eyes and found himself on a lab table hooked up to computer monitors in the antiseptic confines of a well-equipped high-tech laboratory. He noticed he wasn't wearing his helmet, which was on a nearby table. Troy had short reddish-brown hair. By his side was the Techni-Crusader. At the computer monitors were Zimbor and Barylen who were checking his vital signs.

"Your bone density is amazing. It's unlike anything I've ever seen before," Zimbor told Troy.

"*WHO ARE YOU? AND WHERE AM I?*" A startled Troy exclaimed as he quickly rose up. He quickly grabbed his helmet from the table and put it on.

"Calm yourself, we won't harm you," Zimbor assured him. "My name is Zimbor."

"And I am Barylen, Zimbor's assistant," Barylen said.

"And I'm the Techni-Crusader," the armored superhero told the Radonian police officer.

The Techni-Crusader #7 - "The Wrath of Zahn"

"I saw your spacecraft on a hilltop, far from New York City," The Techni-Crusader added.

"Your ship was damaged, so I went to investigate and see if there were any survivors. I found you hurt and unconscious."

"And he brought you here, to our laboratory," Zimbor said. "Where Barylen and I restored you to health."

"You've only suffered a mild concussion and several bruises and lacerations," Barylen told the recovering Troy. "Thankfully, your injuries didn't seem to extend beyond that. What's your name? And where are you from?"

"My name is Troy. I'm a police officer from the planet Radon," Troy told Zimbor, Barylen, and the Techni-Crusader. "I was on my way to transport Zahn, a dangerous criminal I had finally managed to capture just recently, to the prison planet, Rykulus-1. He managed to free himself from the restraining cuffs I had placed on his wrists. Then, he knocked me unconscious. When I came to, my spacecraft was plummeting toward the hilltop the Techni-Crusader mentioned. I examined the engines of my craft and saw that Zahn had blasted them with his weapon before he escaped, confident that the crash would finish me off."

"Luckily, it didn't," the armored superhero said.

"Zahn's still out there and I must find him again," Troy said.

"No," the Techni-Crusader told Troy. "You stay here and rest. *I'll* find Zahn for you."

Steven

Bland

The Techni-Crusader #7 - "The Wrath of Zahn"

"Thank you," Troy said, before pulling out a small device and handing it to the Zeotronix-armored superhero.

"What's this?" The Techni-Crusader asked.

"This is a Neural Neutralizer. It's a small Radonian device that, when applied to the base of a criminal's neck, pinches the pressure point, rendering the criminal unconscious for a few hours," Troy answered. "It can be magnetically attached to anywhere on your armor, so that you don't have to worry about carrying it."

"Thank you," the Zeotronix-armored superhero said as he attached the small Radonian device magnetically to his right hip.

"Zimbor, Barylen, is there any way we can find where Zahn is now?" The Techni-Crusader asked his Zartronian friends.

"Yes," Zimbor said. "Let's go to the viewing monitor."

Zimbor, Barylen, and the Techni-Crusader did exactly that, and they used the device to look for the alien criminal. They soon found him.

"He is located in Carl Schurz Park, at East End Avenue and 88th Street in the Yorkville neighborhood of Manhattan," Barylen said.

"Gracie Mansion, of course," the Techni-Crusader said before turning to Zimbor.

"Zimbor, can your Omni-Key get me to Gracie Mansion?" The armored superhero asked.

Steven

Bland

The Techni-Crusader #7 - "The Wrath of Zahn"

"Yes. I shall open a portal for you immediately," Zimbora answered.

Using their Omni-Key, Zimbora and Barylen opened a portal for the Techni-Crusader. The portal led to Gracie Mansion in New York City.

"Good luck, Techni-Crusader," Barylen said.

"Thanks," the armored superhero said before entering the portal.

The Techni-Crusader arrived at Gracie Mansion where he found Zahn sitting on a throne and forcing many of the citizens to pay him tribute. Zahn was less than satisfied with what was offered to him.

"Bah," a disdainful Zahn said. "You'll have to do *better* if you wish to earn *my* favor!"

"LEAVE THEM ALONE," the Techni-Crusader called out, attracting Zahn's attention.

"*WHO DARES TO DEFY ME?*" An angry Zahn asked.

"*I DARE,*" the armored superhero answered. "THE TECHNICAL-CRUSADER!"

"You fool! I'll blast you out of the sky," Zahn said as he fired his direct energy wrist blasters at the Techni-Crusader, who blocked the deadly beams with his energy shield.

There are too many innocent people here, the Zeotronix-armored superhero thought as he kept deflecting the beams from Zahn's wrist blasters. They could get seriously hurt while we're fighting.

Steven

Bland

The Techni-Crusader #7 - "The Wrath of Zahn"

I've got to move quickly, the Techni-Crusader thought as he took the Neural Neutralizer off his right hip. However, before the armored hero could apply the device, Zahn quickly recovered.

The alien criminal lunged toward the Techni-Crusader, pushing him to the ground, stunning him.

"YOU'RE DEAD MEAT, TECHNI-CRUSADER," Zahn said as he grabbed the armored hero's neck.

"YOUR ARMORED SUIT WON'T STOP ME FROM SQUEEZING THE LIFE OUT OF YOU," the alien criminal said as he used his superhuman strength to strangle his opponent.

Can't - - give - - up," the Techni-Crusader thought as he struggled to apply the Neural Neutralizer to the base of the criminal's neck. In moments, the armored hero succeeded in his task.

The small device pinched Zahn's nerves and rendered him unconscious, much to the Techni-Crusader's relief.

It's over, the armored superhero thought. *At long last*, it's over.

"Zimbor, Barylen," the Techni-Crusader said over his helmet's communications system. "I've subdued Zahn."

An interdimensional portal opened up and the Zeotronix-armored superhero entered it, carrying the unconscious Zahn.

Steven

Bland

The Techni-Crusader #7 - "The Wrath of Zahn"

Instantly, the Techni-Crusader arrived at Zimbora and Barylen's laboratory on Zartron, where he was greeted by the scientists themselves, as well as a now-fully recovered Troy.

"I'm glad to see that you're better now, Troy," the armored superhero told the Radonian police officer.

"And I see that you have subdued Zahn, Techni-Crusader," Troy said. "Well done."

"Well, your Neural Neutralizer gadget certainly was a big help," the Techni-Crusader said as he handed the unconscious Zahn to the Radonian police officer.

"If my ship wasn't damaged, I'd take Zahn to Rykulus-1 like I was about to," Troy said.

"Troy, Barylen and I have a much *quicker* way," Zimbora told the Radonian policeman, who was slightly puzzled.

"You mean the Omni-Key, right?" Techni-Crusader asked.

"Yes," Zimbora answered with a smile, before using the Omni-Key to open a portal which led directly to the inside of Rykulus-1.

Troy entered the portal carrying the captive Zahn inside with him.

Soon, after being greeted by the prison planet's guards, Troy handed Zahn over to them.

"Keep an eye on him," Troy warned. "He can be a slippery one."

The Techni-Crusader #7 - "The Wrath of Zahn"

With Zahn in custody on Rykulus-1, Troy entered the dimension portal and was soon back in Zimbora and Barylen's laboratory. The portal soon closed behind the Radonian police officer.

"Zahn is being incarcerated right now, even as we speak," Troy said.

"Thank you again, Zimbora and Barylen, for healing my injuries," the Radonian police officer added as he shook hands with Zimbora and Barylen.

"And now, Barylen and I will fix your ship," Zimbora said.

Zimbora grabbed two tool kits while Barylen used the Omni-Key to open a portal to the hilltop where Troy's ship crashed.

Entering the portal, Zimbora, Barylen, the Techni-Crusader, and Troy were transported to their destination in an instant. Zimbora and Barylen soon got to work repairing the Radonian policeman's ship.

A few hours had passed, and the repairs to Troy's ship were finally complete.

"My - - ship," a pleasantly surprised Troy said. "It's as good as new."

"Thank you, my friends," Troy said as he shook hands with Zimbora and Barylen.

Troy then turned to the Techni-Crusader.

The Techni-Crusader #7 - "The Wrath of Zahn"

"And thank you, Techni-Crusader, for your aid," Troy said. "Hopefully, someday, I will return the favor. Farewell and good luck."

Troy left the three figures and headed for his newly-repaired ship.

Minutes later, outside, Zimbor, Barylen, and the Techni-Crusader watch as Troy's spaceship flies off into the sky.

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P

- 15 -

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