

Ally Monts

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### The Whizzer

Superheros have been a source of entertainment for decades. Typically when one thinks of superheros, Batman, Superman, Captain America and Thor come to mind. However, there are superheros that people are not as familiar with because they never became immensely popular. The Whizzer is an example. The Whizzer was a superhero from the 1940s who had superhuman speed.

The Whizzer had one of the oddest ways of gaining his power. While on an expedition in Africa with his father, the Whizzer was attacked by a cobra<sup>3</sup>. Immediately following, a mongoose appeared and killed the cobra but was gravely wounded<sup>3</sup>. His father saved his son by giving him a transfusion of the mongoose's blood<sup>4</sup>. This blood activated his dormant mutant power, and he acquired superhuman speed<sup>3</sup>. Not only could he run up to 100 miles per hour, but he also had stamina, quick agility, and was skilled in unarmed combat<sup>4</sup>. After he recovered from this incident, he made his way back to the United States to fight crimes<sup>5</sup>. In human form, he was known as Robert L. Frank or Bob Frank<sup>4</sup>.

The Whizzer first appeared in *USA Comics #1* in August, 1941<sup>4</sup>. His creator is unknown, but he was drawn by Al Avison who also drew other characters such as Captain America<sup>2</sup>. The Whizzer appeared in most issues of *USA Comics* which later became *Marvel Comics*<sup>2</sup>. During War War II he appeared in the *Invaders* series<sup>4</sup>. The *Invaders* formed a group called the Liberty Legion<sup>3</sup>. The Whizzer and Miss America, his soon to be wife, fought with others to defeat Nazi

enemies like Red Skull<sup>3</sup>. In the World War II era, many American comic books featured scenes related to the war<sup>1</sup>. It was propaganda supporting the Allies and a part of total war<sup>1</sup>. Many superheroes died down when the war ended, and less violent comics books, like Archie, gained popularity<sup>1</sup>.

After the war was over, the Whizzer became part of the brief All-Winners Squad for a few years<sup>3</sup>. For a while after that he died down but then was reintroduced in 1974 by Roy Thomas in the *Giant-Size Avengers*<sup>4</sup>. He became part of the Avengers to help stop his son Nuklo, who was poisoned with radiation, from hurting people<sup>3</sup>. Unfortunately, in fighting an old foe, Isbisa, to help his son he died of a heart attack<sup>3</sup>. However, when the Whizzer died, his son was cured of radiation poisoning<sup>3</sup>.

Although most people have probably not heard of the Whizzer today, he was a stalwart character during the World War II era. Just as Pepsi is an archrival of Coke, I think Marvel created the Whizzer to compete with DC Comics' speedster Flash. Flash went on to gain greater fame, but the mongoose mutant nevertheless saved many. I thought it was interesting to see how much superheros and comics were involved in people's lives in the past. The Whizzer was an interesting character to research. Even though the Whizzer was not the most popular comic character, he survived several decades and made a comeback with the *Avengers* and *Invaders*.

## References

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