

Steve's Short Story
Proudly Presents

(From the Brilliant Creative minds of Kevin Eastman and Peter Laird)

T.M.N.T.#2: Baxter Stockman

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(A Steve's Short Story retelling)

It was a cloudless blue sky day, the rays of light illuminated from the sun and shone brightly upon the busy streets of New York City. The mayor was outside city hall with another man, standing roughly six feet tall, slim build, long curly dirty blonde hair, white man with glasses holding onto a small two-foot tall robotic device during a press conference. Hundreds of people were in attendance, including the one infamous channel six news reporter April O'Neil.

The mayor announced with much enthusiasm. "And with my great pleasure, the genius behind the rat infestation solution, Doctor Baxter Stockman." The audience applauded as the man holding the tiny robot came forward, in front of the microphone.

He had a snivelling tone to him as he spoke. "Thank you. My Mobile Offensive Underground Excavation Search and Retrieve Sentries, or as some now refer to them as, Mousers, are programmed to sniff out a rat up to a mile away..." April interrupted as her cameraman stuck his camera in the good Doctor's face.

"I hope these robots don't harm the poor rats, after all, they don't mean harm..."

Stockman glared at the reporter and remarked. You could tell he didn't like people in his personal space nor had experienced people in that said space. "No, I can assure all you animal protesters out there; my Mouser's simply trap the rodent in their mouths and bring them back to my lab. They were primarily created to dig into collapsed tunnels and rescue prone victims. But the city of New York has requested I handle the rat problem." He demonstrated by setting the robot down onto its bipedal feet. He nodded over to his assistant who then pulled out a rat from their pocket and held the vermin in the palm of their hand. He then pulled out a radio transmitter from his lab coat and pressed a few buttons, the robot then turned on. "Watch and understand, please," As the Mouser began to track the rodent and walk over, the assistant lowered the rat to the ground, it scurried about as the Mouser then quickened it's movement, caught up to the rat, opened its metallic jaw and trapped the rat inside.

"Once the rodent is trapped inside, the Mouser is programmed to bring it back to me." Baxter explicated as the robot turned right around and headed back to its creator. "So you see Miss O'Neil, safe and sound." He let loose a stuttering, sniffing chuckle as the Mouser released the rodent into the palm of his hands. "Any more biased remarks?"

April shook her head. "No, thank you Doctor." She then turned to face the camera. "Well, there you go folks, rat problem will be solved. I for one will be satisfied, creepy vermin. I am April O'Neil from channel six, here at City Hall signing out, night folks, sleep soundly tonight."

Cameraman stuck out his thumb and replied. "And that's a rap, thanks April." He turned the camera off and began packing up the van, with the young fervent reporter by his side.

"I smell a story here Frankie, I know it."

"What, some geeky scientist with little rodent eating robots, I guess that's why you're the reporter I'm just the cameraman, I don't see it." He then pulled out a cigarette and lit it. "Besides aren't you still working on that masked vigilante thing?"

"Guys a ghost after he took out the Purple Dragons, yeah, some say they see him, but nothing more than purse snatching or petty crimes really." April seemed down in her demeanour, she was sad, sad that there were no big stories like she imagined she'd be reporting when she was just a small girl. "I wish something big would happen, you know?"

"No, I don't know because I don't want it to. Come on, you got your big story last month; they don't happen every day you know."

A frown and a pouty lip were now on her face, "I know this isn't as glamorous as I imagined as a child, that's all."

“Seriously, you’re still young, you’re well known and you work for one of the best news stations in New York, what more do you want?”

April arrived back at her news station and sat down in her chair at her desk, Irma, with a giant smile smeared on her face jumped up from her seat, surprising the unaware reporter. “April, glad you’re back!”

A spark in her eye lit, “What is it Irma?”

“Finally, after what, a month of pictures, comparing, long strenuous hours, I think I finally know who he is.” Irma could barely keep her composure she was so excited with her information.

Eye’s bulged out, eager to hear what her friend found out, she placed her finger over her mouth, signalling for Irma to lower her tone. “Calm down, you did? Come on, tell me.”

She slapped down a photo on April’s desk. “It was hard, and I think I got it.”

“I hope so, the last nine times were failures.” She grinned as she examined the photo, it was a rookie picture of Casey Jones; she then looked displeased with what she was staring at “Seriously? This bum, I think you’ve been spending too much time inside. Maybe you should ask Verne to a movie or something, get out a little.

“Look here,” She pointed down at his background. “He was a rookie on the Ranger’s but blew out his knee and never played again...”

“So, he’s a wash up; I’m not seeing a masked vigilante here.”

“Hear me out, I did some background checking on this guy, father died in a drunken car crash, mother was burned alive, his grandfather who was his legal guardian passed away several years ago, who was in the military, so he probably raised the boy to fight...”

April cut her overzealous friend off. “So what, how’s that prove anything? Where’s the connection, why did he do what he did?”

“I was getting to that, ok.” Irma tossed some more papers on April’s desk. “His mother owned a shop in this neighbourhood, look familiar?”

“That’s where the Purple Dragons first started out like fifteen years ago...”

Irma smiled, knowing her friend was finally seeing the big picture now. “So I’m thinking, his mother was murdered.”

“He sought revenge and his grandfather gave him the tools and skills do it!” April fit the pieces to the puzzle together.

“Exactly” Irma now all thrilled then asked. “So, what’s our next move? We go live in twenty and make this publically know or?”

April quickly responded with. “No, Irma, we must keep this info between us. This guy is going out there and preventing crime, if we reveal his identity, the cops will seek him out, arrest him and we’ll be back where he started...”

“Plus, he did save your life.” Irma added and grinned. “Plus, he’s cute, for a ruggedly grungy looking guy.”

A few days had past, it was bright and early, clear skies were looking like the forecast of the day; April was woken up by her cell phone ringing off of the hook, she groaned, rolled over and answered it, “Hello?”

“April!” A stern male tone beckoned her name, sounded like her boss, “Where are you?”

She looked at the time; the lock read seven in the morning. “Just about to wake sir, it’s just seven now.”

“Well, get dressed and meet Frankie at the second national bank, there has been a robbery, I want you there to report it.”

A weary toned April, still rubbing her eyes replied. “Can’t someone else cover it sir?”

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“I figured you might want the biggest story of the month, sorry. My police connection informed me it’s not your typical break in; the vault wasn’t open, no explosive residue, looks like they tunneled their way from underneath it.”

April’s adrenaline hit her now, that information is all she needed to her to get her day started. “Ok, sir, I’m up and will be there within the hour.”

April and Frankie were on the scene at the second National bank, police presence was surrounding the area, a giant crowd of curious pedestrians stood watch, waiting for answers on what was happening. April ducked under the “Do not cross” tape and snuck over to one of the officers standing guard.

She smiled and greeted the cop who just saw her. “Eddie, what is going on here?”

The cop smiled back, they appeared to be friends. “You didn’t hear it from me.”

“Never squeal on my contacts, you know that.” She gave him a playful wink.

“Whoever did this was good, and I mean good April. Must have been half a dozen from what the CSU’s can figure. Some speedy digging, the surveillance cameras were remotely shut off as they broke through.”

“So they dug a tunnel” she processed the information in her head and then inquired more “so where does that lead to?”

The unsure cop shrugged “The sewers, but it’s weird...”

Hanging off of every word she curiously asked “Why do you say that?”

The cop explained further “The hole isn’t very wide, whoever dug it, wasn’t very tall or big... They had to have some real Intel of the city; the hole was perfectly created too, like a machine did it. And the tool they used to pry open those safety deposit boxes... Some high end people have their secrets hidden in that vault...”

Casey, hidden well in the darkest of shadows in the alleyway across the street from the scene, peering his intrusive eyes towards the entrance and saw her, the reporter he saved from the burning warehouse. “When will she learn to keep her nose out of trouble?” Under his mask, he let loose an endearing smirk. “Guess I can look forward to saving her again.”

Down in the drenched infested sewers, the Mouser’s were on the loose and doing their job, once they snagged a rodent or two, the robot then hauled it back to the laboratory where Baxter was typing away at his giant super computer, snickering manically to himself.

Back in the lonely sewers, a tall muscular looking man, with short blonde hair, wearing old dirty torn clothing and had a bandaged-up face investigated around, seeking something out. He stuck his head in the grungy water, stuck his hand in holes, kicked over rocks, muttering to no one it seemed but himself. Until a rat popped out from a small hole in the brick wall and looked straight at him.

“You see anything?” The man, with a raspy tone, asked the rat. The rat, surprisingly, stood up on its hind legs, looked right at the crazy man and shook its head. “Damn, where are our brothers and sisters?”

A determined looking April left the bank and headed for the van with a confused Frankie right behind her “We not doing the story?”

“I got some leads that I’m going to investigate. Could be dangerous, you coming?”

“As long as there’s no crazy masked man that’s going to jump out and attack me, I’m in.”

She smiled as she started the van “Good, because we’re headed for the sewers, no one’s down there.”

He seemed a tad befuddled since he had no idea what she knew, “The sewers?”

She informed him. "That's where the tunnel leads back to. Whoever broke in might have left us a clue. And I want to beat the cops there."

Frankie seemed still confused by the situation, he asked "Well, they can just head down the..."

April cut him off knowing what he was going to say. "Nope, the tunnels too small to crawl through."

"Too small, well what the heck went through it then?"

April giggled as she retorted. "That's what we're going to find out silly." Little did April know, Casey Jones was hot on her trail, he knew if he wanted answers himself, then follow the young reporter and see where she goes.

The news van turned down an alleyway and came to a stop, both April and her trusty cameraman Frank got out, April in the lead and the first to stand over the manhole leading down to the infamous New York sewer system.

"Well Frankie, it's not going to lift itself huh." The reddish brunette playfully winked at him, he bent over, stuck his fingers through the holes, looking for a good grip and gave it a gently pull. He barely moved the manhole from its resting place, she smiled while asking, "Where's the muscle?"

"You see this," He pointed down to his non-athletic built body. "This wasn't made by lifting weights and strong bones." After several struggling attempts, Frankie planted his bottom on the nearby street curb, exhausted, catching his breath. Meanwhile, an impatient Casey jumped down, surprising the two stranded news people.

"Having troubles Miss O'Neil?" He asked teasingly as he used his famous gritty tone, he strutted slowly over to the woman standing over the manhole.

"No, we were just assessing the situation here."

Jones smiled, he walked right up to her, never leaving eye contact through his mask, he got right up in her hopeful face, she shivered; the sensation of having a dark mystery man up close and personal to her moved her in ways she hadn't felt in some time. Casey, smelling her seductive scent, the same scent he fell in love with when they first met, soothed him.

"Allow me," He broke the contact by bending over and with one hand, lifted the cover and flipped it over, revealing the entrance down into the retched tunnel system below. "Now I must warn you, could be dangerous for a little lady to go" He turned and stared at Frankie for a few seconds, then back at April "alone you know."

"Don't be foolish." She gleamed as she pulled out her flashlight and mace bottle.

Casey, sarcastically nodded when she showed him the spray, "Yeah, I see." He then began to warn them both. "You shouldn't worry about muggers and other normal instances. It's the psycho homeless bums and plague carrying rats I'd worry about." He reached for and took from her, the can of spray "Neither affected by your pepper spray."

She placed her hand on his chest, trying to seduce him into helping them. "Well, that's why we have you here now, to protect us, right?"

Casey looked down the hole, leading into the close confined space down below, it brought chills and worry to him, he at first, couldn't explain why, but the more he thought about it, the more it made him sick to his stomach. "Umm, I'll have to take a rain check here, beside's" trying his best to change the subject now "I got some law breakers heads to bash in, remember?" He then turned around and began to slowly walk towards the shadows until April shouted out.

"Please, I beg, you, we're investigating the bank robbery." She revealed their plans to him, in hopes that he'll change his mind. "So, you will be in fact stopping some law breakers."

The vigilante stopped dead in his tracks, he knew deep down, his judgment was clouded by his tremendous feeling he had for the young beautiful reporter; he turned his head ever so slightly around, glaring through his protective mask towards the hole he didn't want to explore. "You drive a hard bargain Miss O'Neil." A smile of relief and affection ran across her face, but she tried her best to mask it when he turned fully around.

April began to slowly climb down the rusty old ladder leading into the festering rotting stench belonging to the sewers. With her head the only thing visible, she stopped and looked up at both men hovering over her "The things us reporters will do for a story."

"And the things good cameramen will do to keep their jobs." Frankie was next to descent down, leaving Casey standing there for a few seconds, contemplating the situation at hand, smelly confined spaces brought a shiver to the back of his mind.

"And the things I go through to keep people safe." He started, very slowly down, cringing with every step down the ladder, but trying his best to keep his weakness to himself. He hit the bottom, a few inches of dirty soggy swampy water slowly seeping through the sewer system. "What is that smell?"

April took several deep breaths inhaling the retched fumes; then shrugged her shoulders. "I don't smell anything out of the ordinary." Appalling both men with her comments, she grinned playfully and changed the subject. "This way to the bank, hopefully also where the tunnel leads."

April was out in front with the flashlight shining as bright as it could, illuminated a small beam about ten feet in front. Frankie also had a light, which was attached to his camera; he had it out, taping their journey through the damp dark gutter tunnels. Casey had the rear, ball bat firmly gripped in the one hand, ready to strike at any rat that thought about poking its disease ridden head out, looking for something to nibble on.

"So," April broke the silence. "Following me or just in the neighbourhood?"

"I guess you can say a bit of both. Been slow since we last saw each other, I figure the bank robbery might be exciting."

"Where have you been? Having heard much about you since that day?"

Casey seemed angered by that question. "Of course, you don't hear about the small petty crimes. But I do and besides, I have been doing some thinking and developed a new justice system I've been working on."

Both parties seemed quite pleased and intrigued. "Oh, please explain."

"Yeah, I've been giving thugs a break, I see them once I just smash them with the bat once; I come across them a second and third time I send them to the hospital. I was thinking of a good punishment for a fourth, but I having seen any after the third time..."

"Probably because they're still recovering in the ICU," Frankie answered with a grin.

Casey shrugged his shoulders, "Probably right" and then pondered. "Aren't we worried about the law being down here?" Casey finally asked the question he overlooked since he wasn't thinking right up above. But now that his paranoia has settled in, his judgment was coming back to him.

"Not quite yet. They're still investigating the vault, my source told me, since they can't fit through the tunnel themselves, they were going to send a camera down, but it hadn't arrived yet and was going to take some time. Hence why we're here now and trying to hurry." She shined the light slightly up ahead and found the area where the tunnel seemed to start. "There we go, we're here."

"Good, I have a bad gut feeling about all this," Casey looked behind them and then turned back to see April kneeling over, sifting through the sewage and gunk in front of the small hole. "Hope you brought some sanitizer with you."

"Frankie, are you getting this?" April had her arm up to her elbow in the thick gooey water as her loyal cameraman focus with the lens for a close up. She pried out a small piece of metal that seemed to have broken off of something, but they couldn't figure it out.

Casey chuckled at first. "A scrap piece of metal, come on Miss, that's not weird, not for down here."

She stood up, holding the small object and gazing at it, trying to figure out where it might have come from. Casey pointed out. "You know, that is evidence tampering; the crime scene wimps might want to take a look at that too."

"But if they're men, like you, they could just bypass it and think of it as nothing."

A pessimistic Casey remarked. "It is just a worthless chunk of metal lying next to rotting meat and other waste."

"You're right, it is probably nothing, but could be the answer we're looking for. Since I don't see anything else around here that looks like this, I'm holding on to it. So until we prove otherwise, it's the clue we're going with."

"You do that, ok; you found something, now let's get back up top before the pigs get down here."

"I agree," She stared at the object in her filthy grasp. "Not to mention, I am hungry." Both Casey and Frankie dry gagged quickly to her grotesque response, while gagging, she calmly walked by them and headed straight back to the open manhole.

Casey was the last to climb out of the manhole and he tossed the lid back on, "So, now where do we go from here?"

"Research and..."

He didn't want to hear more, he cut her off. "I got it, listen, I'm not the sit down and go online kind of guy."

A smirk came across her face then she teasingly retorted with. "I didn't think of you like that, I'll do the reporter thing and get back to you, sounds good?"

Casey, with a manly nod, "Yeah, I can do that, your place in a few hours?" She nodded back, Frankie put the equipment back in the van in the mean time, "Ok, I'll go do, what I do until then..." He graciously bowed before the exquisite intrepid reporter and scurried off, up on top of the nearby roof and deep into the shadows.

While wiping her hands clean, staring at the clue before her, an idea popped in her mind, excited, she stumbled over her words, anxiously trying to get Frankie's attention. "Oh, my, I think it is."

Frankie, almost stunned by her loud tone, fumbled with the equipment, almost dropping the camera "What is it April?"

"You got that news footage from the other day, with that nerdy scientist guy, oh, what was his name?"

"You mean Doctor Stockman?"

A relieved happy look was now on her face. "Yes, him. Do you still have it?"

The man nodded while replying. "I always keep a copy of everything I shoot in the van, just in case for moments like this."

"Oh I love you, great." She then hurried over. "Quick, get it up on the TV."

Frankie bustled about, setting up the footage and typing away, then up on the screen as the brief interview with the sniffing shy doctor and his incredible rat solving solution.

"There!" April pointed at the screen, towards the little robot. "Can you zoom in on that?"

Frankie, still confused on where she was going, did what was asked of him, "There?"

"Yes, doesn't that look like this?" She held the little piece of metal up against the screen; it did resemble it; after all, both were made of metal.

He thought it through carefully, closely examining the screen. "Hard to tell really April, both are made of metal..."

"But remember the hole size, perfect match for one of those things, wouldn't you say?"

"We're grasping here, why would he create rat catchers and then use them to break into bank vaults?"

Grasping at straws she said the first thing that came to mind. "Maybe because no one would trace it back to him?"

Frankie pointed out. "But he just got like a thirty million dollar grant to finance his robot shop and..."

"He's not just catching mice with these things." April thought very confidently she had figured it all out, "Do you know where Stockman's lab is located?"

"Nope" Frankie delivered the bad news. "But Irma could probably tell you."

April nodded in agreement as she pulled out her cell phone. "Hey, Irma, I got another favour, could you figure out where Baxter Stockman's laboratory is located? Yeah, we have a hunch and want to investigate." She waited, impatiently but trying her best to stay calm as Irma worked her magic over the phone, typing away on her computer. "You got it, awesome, thanks, I'll keep you in the loop, bye for now." She then hung up and smiled at her cameraman, "Ready for some overtime?"

Frankie frowned, knowing it was going to be a long night. "Not really, but like I have much choice." They pulled out of the dark alleyway and onto the busy streets of the Big Apple; then proceeded towards their destination, the factory belonging to the good Doctor.

In his giant leather office chair, Baxter sniffled and chuckled to himself as he, through the monitors, watched as his robotic minions chased down several small helpless rodents and bring them back for him to play with. Once a Mouser showed up with some specimen's to work with, Baxter immediately tossed the rodents in a maze type cage.

"Let's see you get through my maze of death." He snorted happily as he watched the rats scurry though the maze, take a wrong turn and a quick sharp blade shot out and sliced one in half, blood gushed out all over, covering the other rodent. "Let's see how fast they learn, does he continue on, thinking now it might be safe, or turn back and search for another path?" The rat cowered back against the wall, the Doctor grew impatient "Choose you damn vermin" He hit a button and released a snake, it slithered about and once it was in the same tube as the rat, struck out and devoured it whole. "Just play my game." He continued to laugh maniacally until a red light started to go off. "What now?" He stumbled over to his main computer, his a few buttons; the monitor shined on and on screen were Miss April O'Neil and Frankie scouting out the outskirts of the building.

He pushed a button, giving him audio April's voice filled the room. "I just know Baxter is up to something, we need to find a way in, help me."

"Come on, this is madness, what if he catches us huh, what do you think he'll do?"

"Meddlesome intruders, I'll deal with you." Baxter didn't seem thrilled that he had trespassers snooping around on his property, he typed a few commands. "My Mouser's will make sure you don't squeal to anyone about this." A dozen, obedient Mouser's began to march out of the room the mad scientist was in and quickly made their way over towards the two prowlers.

Seeing an open lit window close to gain access to, April began to climb towards, as Frankie heard the metallic footsteps of a patrol making a bearing for their direction. "April we have company."

"Distract them for me will you?" She struggled to gain a hold of the wall; the Mouser's turned the corner to target on the both of them.

"Umm, April, this looks bad." The Mouser's began to run, rather quickly on two feet, Frankie tried to flee, but the robots caught up to him, two of them bit down on his legs and tripped the man so he was flat on his face. While another came by and clamped down on his right hand. None of the robots took off limbs; they had his restrained and dragged his helpless body away as he screamed.

April stunned to see the Mouser's taking him away, used the chance to flee herself, gaining some distance and quickly got into the van. She frantically searched the steering column for the keys but remembered that Frankie always had them. The Mouser's had caught up, thinking she was safe in the van she took a minute to catch her breath, but while sitting there, the metallic creature's began to chew through the metal and easily penetrated the cheap van door, getting closer to capturing their target.

Wasting no time and not wanting to be apprehended, she climbed into the back, avoiding the mouths of the Mouser's and escaping through the back and running scared for her life, screaming and calling for help every breath she could. She found an open sewer grate and climbed in, hoping the Mouser's would lose track of her.

Blindly running through the dark damp trenches of the sewers, the Mouser's gain distance on her, while looking back, she tripped and fell, hitting her head in the process, rendering herself unconscious for the time being. The Mouser's were quickly closing the gap between her and them...

In an isolated section of the sewers, four unique brothers were finishing up an extensive training session, consisting of a hard workout, several weapon kata's and full contact sparring. These brothers weren't your regular folks, beside's residing in the filthy sewers, this group of four feels more at home down below here, then any place up above. These four brothers are mutant humanoid turtles, transformed long ago by some unknown substance and made them the creatures they are today.

The one wielding the nun-chucks stopped suddenly when he felt a disturbance in his growling belly. "I don't know about you bro's, but my stomach could sure use a savoury bite of New York's finest slice of pizza." He had a goofy surfer tone to the way he talked.

"You know the rules Michelangelo, first we workout, then we eat." The tallest turtle, with sheathed swords, more like ancient Japanese katana's, replied in a stern, strict obedient tone.

The broadest looking one, standing alone in the corner, holding a Sai in either hand, attacking a makeshift wooden dummy, spoke next. "I don't see the point in working out and practicing if we aren't allowed to use our skills to do anything." He had a dry-tough guy tone in his demeanour whenever he talked along with a slight Brooklyn accent to go along with it.

Michelangelo chuckled. "Raph's right, we should be helping that masked vigilante dude out."

"Master will let us when we are ready Raphael, trust me."

The one that was in a sparring match with Michelangelo spoke up next, he sounded rather educated and spoke with an upper class tone. "Beside's, that masked maniac brutally punishes his opposition, I am not positive that is the kind of reputation we are seeking when we are finally ready."

The screaming of a damsel in distress alarmed the turtles and they, wasting no time, went to her aid. Arriving at the scene just in the nick of time, seeing the young female reporter lying helplessly on the ground as the robot was about to capture her.

"Bout time dudes, some damsel is in need of rescuing!" Mikey cried out as he lunged forward and while spinning his nun-chucks out, smashed down and destroyed two Mousers' nearby the helpless victim.

The Turtles made short work of the easily destroyed robots and stood over the human, still not conscious. "Well, that was fun." Raph spun around his weapon of choice while kicking one of the machines.

"Whoa, what were those things Donnie?" Michelangelo curiously asked as he watched his smarter brother bend over and poke his bo-staff at the robot.

"I'm not quite sure, some rendition of a robot from my first hypothesis."

"What about the woman? We can't just leave her here." Raph inquired about the reporter as Mikey joined Leonardo's side, when he looked down, he recognized her right away.

"That's the news babe I was telling you dudes about."

Raphael picked her up. "Oh right, I didn't recognize her through the dirt and sewer grime."

Leo then asked. "Does anybody know where she lives?" The other three turtles shrugged as Donatello gathered some of the salvageable parts. "Hmm, can't leave her, guess we'll just take her back to the den and see what Master Splinter suggests."

A bored Raphael suggested. "We could always use the old yellow pages and look her up."

His nerdy brother cringed to that thought and offered a solution. "Or, we can go online and Google her and I can use the yellow pages dot com site to locate her home."

"I sure miss the old ways."

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"I'm starting to dig them dude, the online pizza site, you can choose everything about your pizza, kind of crust, sauce, toppings, gooey cheese..." Michelangelo then began to daydream about filling his empty belly full of good Old Italian New York style pizza.

They headed back, leaving the mess there as they navigated the sewers perfectly as they made their way back to their very well hidden, very isolated hideout/home. Inside was well furnished, a television, they had power, lights were on, they had a complete kitchen, everything. The minute they got home, Michelangelo walked over to the payphone and began to dial a number.

"Hey dudes, should I order an extra, we've never had company over before?"

Leo quickly shut the idea down. "Not now, we must speak with Master first before making decisions." Just after Leonardo replied, a commotion came from another room.

"My sons, you're home early." A proud sounding father figure announced as he entered the room, it was Splinter, a slightly over five-foot tall humanoid rat with brownish, greying fur, slowly walked in, using a cane in his right hand to aid him in his footing. His eyes widened when he saw the person lying on their couch, "And what did you bring home?"

"She was in danger Master and we didn't want to leave her there, in case her attacker sent more of them." Leonardo knelt down before Splinter as he tried to explain.

"She was in danger then?" He waited to see his head nod. "Her attacker would send more, more what?"

Leo looked over towards Donatello, waiting for him to explain that part; Donnie held the Mouser head up, to show his Master. "These things, I believe it's a bipedal artificial intelligent android, the metal alloy in which encases its body is remarkable. All in all it is quite peculiar Sensei."

Splinter nodded; then asked. "Were any of you injured?"

Raphael chuckled, radiating confidence. "Nah, we took those things out with ease. Rather disappointing if you ask me."

"And who is she, do we know?"

Leo replied. "We think its April O'Neil Master, a young reporter..."

Splinter was baffled, he, in a stunning tone yelled. "Get her out of here, now immediately, we cannot have a reporter here, she will expose us." He got up and took several steps back. "My sons take her home, now."

"But I just ordered the pizza," Mikey sounded a wee bit upset.

Donnie spoke up next. "I was going to figure out if I can rebuild this contraption, attempt to reconstruct said device and see if it will direct us back to where it came from, before dinner arrived of course."

"That's ok; I can escort the young lady back home." Raph volunteered his services.

Splinter nodded. "Ok, but be careful my son, the outside world can be, a very strange place."

"Relax," Raphael picked up April's body. "How dangerous and strange can it be, I've watched those reality shows?" He then collaborated with Donatello by the computer, located her home and then carried the woman out and headed back to her place.

Casey just finished foiling a few petty crooks poor attempt at robbing a liquor store. He tied them up and checked his sports watch. "Hmm, almost time to visit her." He grumbled to himself, leaving the law breakers there just as the police sirens were getting closer. He made his way from rooftop to rooftop towards his destination.

The crazy bandaged up man, with a few rat's hanging off of his shoulders, was investigating the small tunnel leading up to the bank vault, skirmishing through the same area April had previously looked at. "Hmm, what weird thing did this?" He looked at the one rodent on his left. "Follow the tunnel, tell me where it leads." The rat nodded and then jumped off of the shoulder and scurried up the tiny hole.

About an hour since Raph left with April to return her home safe and sound, Donatello came into their living room with the Mouser intact. "I believe I finally managed to rebuild it back to a relatively functional working order you guys."

Both Leo and Mikey jumped with joy, "Way to go Bro, now what do we do?"

Donatello explained. "Well, if my calculations and hypothesis are correct, this little guy should lead us back to where he was created."

Leonardo seemed pleased with his brother's success. "Ok, let's get moving."

Splinter heard the commotion and came into the room. "What is going on my students?"

"Donnie's got the robot thing working."

"Yes Sensei and I believe we can use it to track whoever it may be that created it and attacked April." Donatello explained the thought further.

"Just be careful." Splinter was saying as Donatello set the Mouser down and turned it on. It performed a primary scan, searched the perimeter and located Splinter, a rat. It quickly ran over towards the giant rat and tried to bite him, but Splinter sidestepped the attack while Leo kicked the Mouser back towards Donnie.

"What the heck is it doing?" Leo stood in-between his Master and the robot. While Donnie shut it down and opened up the head compartment.

"Must have been a malfunction; so sorry Sensei." He pulled out a screwdriver and began to tinker away.

Raphael had set April down in her bed and left her room, upon leaving through the living room balcony, the same way he came through while looking around her home, admiring all the little knick-knacks lying about, Casey entered.

Seeing a dark figure roaming in the dark in April's apartment, only enraged the masked vigilante. "Law breaker!" Casey wasted no time; he drew his baseball bat and took a swing at Raphael, who hadn't quite noticed the vigilante yet. The wooden bat bounced right off of the shell of the soon-to-be-confused turtle.

"What the..." Raph noticed the hit, but didn't faze him. He swiftly dodged the next swing that was aimed for his head. "Settle down there buddy."

"You picked the wrong place to rob punker." Casey then swept tripped kick Raph, causing him to fall flat onto his shell. The moonlight shined onto the turtles head, revealing his reptilian features, it baffled Jones. "What are you, some sort of weird freak?"

Raph, losing his already short temper, flipped up to his feet. "I'm the freak? Who's calling the kettle black here pal?"

Casey then drew another ball bat. "How about a little school yard rules?"

A baffled Raphael took a defensive stance and asked. "Umm, what are those?"

Casey took several swings before answering, missing each time. "There are no rules." He clipped the turtle in the shell once again, doing nothing. "Seriously, what are you, some costume wearing furry, but with scales?"

"I'm impatient..." Raph replied and in an angered moment, grabbed Casey by the shirt and hip tossed him across the room, into the couch, knocking it over.

The three brothers followed shortly behind as the Mouser continued to strut through the sewers back to where it last recalled. Upon its return, the Rat King was there, observing the piles of metal scrap the turtles before had left behind. He heard the Mouser coming up from behind and turned to face the machine just as the turtles jumped out to surprise whoever was inside the room.

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“Get him guys.” Leonardo shouted out, the Rat King at first, was mystified by the five and a half foot tall, humanoid turtles, but quickly defended himself when they started to attack.

His combat abilities matched their ancient technique of ninjutsu as he was able to fend off most all oncoming attacks made by the brothers. “I don’t have time for this.” The Rat King muttered as he pulled out a smoke bomb from his belt and threw it to the ground, smoke quickly engulfed the room, causing to turtles to cough and choke until it dissipated.

“Bummer,” Mikey coughed up while rubbing his eyes.

“Hey, where did the little robot go?” Donatello asked once the smoke cleared and they were able to see again. The bandaged up man was also nowhere to be seen.

“Who was that man, he had some training.” Leo questioned and mentioned. “The way he looked, I don’t think he was the one that created that machine either.”

“You’re perhaps right, but at this juncture, it is in his possession and our trail has run out.”

Mikey brought up. “You know, there are some leftover slices back home.”

Leo banged his fist with frustration “Yeah, maybe Raph found something.” They headed back to their lair; the Rat King was close in the shadows.

In a low whisper he bent over to a single rat nearby. “Follow them, see where they go.” The rodent nodded and proceeded to follow the turtles all the way back to their home.

The lone Mouser returned back to Stockman’s lab with two rodents in its mouth, both happy and surprised, he welcomes the robot back home graciously. He saw a few scuff marks on the Mouser and noticed the slight modifications and adjustments made.

“My pet, someone has tampered with you. I am amazed, they figured out how to fix you. Hmm, a genius he must be.” He then picked the Mouser up and brought it over to his computer, “Show me who fixed you...” The screen was fuzzy and unclear; Baxter slammed his fist down on the keyboard with frustration.

Raph took a thrown ball bat in the back of the head, dazing him for a few while Casey got to his feet “Who said the game was over?”

Raph, who was going to let the man go unharmed, became quite agitated and a scowl ran across the turtles face; turned around to face him “Ok slugger, you want to play, let’s play.” He bent over and picked the bat up; Casey held out both hands and smiled, enticing his foe to play ball.

Raph quickly approached Casey as he took a swing; Jones just ducked in time as the bat swung over his head and broke a nearby lamp “Strike one there punk.” Raph, out of patience, took another angry swing, missing the target once again and knocking over a plant in a vase “Strike two there slick.”

Raph then outwitted the masked man; he looked beyond his prey and hollered out “April?” Causing the curious Casey to turn around to look behind him to see if in fact, the young reporter was there, unaware of Raph’s true intentions, he took a third swing and this time, connected. He struck the back of Casey’s head, sending him flying forward; mask flew off and landed hard on the ground.

“Homerun, Raphael wins, one, to zip!” The turtle cheered as he tossed the ball bat to the ground. As Casey checked his wound, staggered to get up and stare down his opponent who was holding up a satisfied looking grin, “You had enough?”

Casey erected a smirk, this mysterious figure wasn’t going to get the best of him “The day a punk in green make-up beats me, is the day I hang up my gear...” Casey pulled out a polo mallet and a ball from his pouch “New game?”

Raph shook his head as he muttered. “Croquet, you serious?”

Casey looked down at the mallet, “It’s polo actually...”

“Polo?! What a terrible sport, you don’t even have a horse...” Casey wasted no time, he dropped the ball, as it descended down towards the ground, Casey wound up the mallet, and right before the ball hit

the ground, the mallet swung and struck the ball. The ball soared through the air and hit Raph directly in the chest, winding him.

With haste and opportunity, Casey charged forward, crying out “don’t knock,” Swung the mallet up and hit the injured turtle under the jaw, “Polo!” Raph flew backwards through the air and crashed into the wall, leaving a shell imprint in the drywall.

Using the chance to get away and back to his mission, Casey gathered his stuff and headed out the balcony window. “That’s match point, so long freak!”

Raph managed to pull himself free while bickering, “Damn!” He left as well, trying to locate the vigilante on the rooftop, but when he couldn’t figure out his bearings, he headed back to the old sewer den.

A Mouser reported back directly to Baxter and he was desperately typing away at his keyboard, he looked down at the robot, and in a grumpy tone “What is it?” He held out his hand, the Mouser opened its mouth and dropped a woman’s purse into his grasp. “Oh, does this belong to the other intruder we had earlier? Excellent” He rummaged through the purse, pulled out the wallet, grabbed her driver’s license “April O’Neil, oh, that obnoxious reporter from the other day” He searched her up online and found lot’s of information about her, more importantly, where she lived “so sorry Miss O’Neil, but I can’t have the press knowing what I am doing.” He programmed a few Mouser’s for a new mission “Capture and bring in, Miss April O’Neil.” The Mouser’s stormed out and made their way, through the sewer system towards their new target as Baxter sat comfortably in his leather chair, laughing uncontrollably to himself, it echoed all throughout his building.

The little brown furry rodent scurried back to his King, who was patiently waiting close by, “Well?” The rat chirped a few words in rat talk, the blonde hair muscular man nodded, understanding the critter speaking. “Really, a big rat you say?” He had a joyful gleam expression now as he constructed a most devious revenge plot.

While whistling a bizarre tune, he slowly and with a cocky posture, approached the turtle’s secret den with dozens of rats following close behind. Inside the home, Leonardo was the first to hear the catchy tune being whistled from a close proximity.

“What the heck?” He got up from reading his novel, “Michelangelo, that you?” Donnie entered the room from the garage, he too, overheard the soft tune, Mikey soon joined them from the kitchen.

“Yo Bro’s what’s with the tunes?” Then the wooden door to their den was kicked straight off of the hinges and in scurried countless rats. “Totally bizzarro dudes.”

In entered the Rat King that fled the fight scene earlier, the turtles took a defensive stance as Leo declared. “You came into the wrong sewer den friend. We’re going to have to ask you to leave.”

Splinter entered the room; looking completely mesmerized, as he slowly walked in between the two parties and stood there. A baffled Leo looked directly at his master and asked. “You ok Master?”

“I am fine my students, I beg you to just surrender now, or else...”

“Like, what’s going on here man? Splinters acting weird,” Mikey pulled out his weapons and prepared himself for a showdown.

The Rat King stood behind the giant rat, continuing to hum the same old tune, Leo unsheathed his trusty weapon, “Last chance.” The mystery man smiled as he continued to carry the tune, the turtles made their move, Leo lunged forward, attacking the Rat King with his sword, but Splinter intervene with a karate chop to the wrist, hurting the young turtle, causing him to release his weapon. “Master?!” as Splinter spun around and round housed kicked a baffled Leonardo in the side of the head, sending him back on his rear, beside his brothers.

Donatello and Michelangelo looked confused at one another, “You next?”

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“Same time?” both turtles nodded and jumped forward, trying to avoid their Sensei and strike the apparently prone figure behind him. Splinter defended the attacks on The King with ease, tossing and kicking both turtles back to where they came from.

Mikey caught his breath. “I’m sure glad he’s normally on our team huh.”

Splinter didn’t waste another moment, he took the advantage and approached his sons, attacking each one several more times, injuring them significantly until they were all unconscious and the den was a total mess. He then stopped before he caused anymore damage and made his way back over in front of a smiling Rat King. “Excellent now, I can use a rat with your skills to help me find my people.” Along with all the rodents on scene, both Splinter and the Blonde man left the turtles helpless and back to the rat lair.

April woke up in her bed, dizzy and confused; he sat up and panned the area. “How did I make it home?” She rubbed her head and tried her best to reminisce the past few hours through her mind, “Oh no, Frankie!” She worriedly searched for her purse, nowhere to be seen, April reached for her home phone by her bed and dialed Frankie’s number. Several unanswered rings later, it reached his voicemail; she hung up. “What happened?” She asked herself...

“Hello folks, tonight, I am here with Doctor Stockman, the brilliant robotics scientist behind the solution to the enormous rat infestation here in New York.” Both the anchorman and Baxter were seated comfortably in the glamorous, well furnished news set up, in front of several tech support and camera crew, filming an exclusive interview, the newsman continued on, addressing the guest. “Hello Baxter.”

The nervous slim nerdy man waved at the camera and sniffled. “Hello Dick, and world.”

“Baxter, I’m going to get to the first question of the night, the one I’m sure viewers at home are also interested about,” He carried on. “Why this fixation with rats, do you hate them that much?”

“Well Dick, I’ll tell you. Long ago when I was just a boy, I loved pets, pets of all sorts. I had turtles, dogs, cats, hamsters and for my twelfth birthday, my mom bought me two pet rats for my collection.” Baxter continued to explain. “I loved those rodents; I used to let them wander free, on my bed and on my body.”

“Sounds wonderful, then what happened?” The anchorman listened to every word, hanging off of every word.

“The one day, for no reason I can recall, Sammy, the one rat, bite me. I became quite ill; they called it the Rat Bite Fever. Bacteria in the rodent’s saliva that gave me, *Streptobacillus Moniliformis*, curable sure, but the next few weeks were hell to me. Joint pains, chills, high fever and after that, I developed a mental disorder and couldn’t trust any animal again. I even made my mom take all of my animals to the local shelter and that’s probably when my hatred for rodents started.”

“Wow,” He was still stunned to the tragic tale. “I’m sorry to hear that.”

“Good thing we caught it in time too, death rate for untreated Rat bites are like 25 percent, something extreme like that.”

An angered Raphael marched through the drenched sewers back to the old den, once he was close; he saw that the door had been kicked open. He drew both weapons out and now took a cautious approach, looking over his shoulder as he got closer to the crime scene. In a low tone, he cried out “Donnie? Mikey? Leo?” Each name called out, with only seconds of time in between each. He cautiously peeked his bald green-skinned head around the corner to see the living area a complete mess, he with extreme paranoia, entered his home and that was when he saw his brothers just barely waking up, sore and confused as well.

Raph gave aid as he asked several questions in the meantime. “What happened here guys?”

"We got our butts kicked," The shortest one of the bunch admitted.

"It was Splinter." Leo spat out while cringing in pain. "Some guy in rags and torn clothing came in here and, I don't know how to explain it, Donnie?"

"I'll debrief him; my assumption has concluded that this man has an affinity with rodents it would clearly appear since he had Sensei under some mystical mind spell." Donatello fixed the upside down couch. "And in a result, forced Splinter to unwillingly combatant us."

"He's an old rat, and he whipped your butts. Hey Leo, guess you're right, we do need practice." It appeared that the one brother didn't believe his other siblings, "So seriously now, where's Splinter and what really happened here?"

The three brothers remained quiet, fear had hit them, the first time, since they became who they are; they were without their beloved father, mentor and Sensei. Raphael quickly realized that his brothers were not playing a prank and Splinter was indeed missing.

With a more serious attitude Raph then asked. "Ok, so, this Rat man, which way did he go?"

A still hazy April washed the dry blood and dirt from her face and came into her destroyed living room, perplexed by what could possibly have happened, she began to clean up. Casey returned when the time for their meeting was and saw the lone woman, cleaning up the mess that he had made. Feeling guilt and concern, he entered her apartment. "Miss O'Neil?"

Startled at first, but then she recognized the familiar sound of the vigilante's voice; it then soothed her and made her feel safe, "You made it." A relief in her tone as she spoke those words.

When she turned to face him, he instantly saw her scrapes and bruises; he asked. "What happened? You ok? Who did this?"

She tried to slow him down. "Please, one question at a time." She tried her best to recall. "Frankie is missing; last place I remember was being in a sewer, running from something."

"You went off without me?" Casey punched himself in the palm of his hand. "I wish you waited, you could have been killed."

"How did I get back here is what I'm wondering, if it wasn't you, then who?"

Casey then recalled the mysterious green figure that was here earlier, maybe he was returning April to her home. "Do you remember a short green looking guy?"

Baffled by Casey question, she retorted with. "What, a green guy, like an alien?"

"Yeah, I stopped by earlier and found an intruder in your living room," He panned the messy room "Yeah, we did this, sorry." Distraught and still in some pain, April remained silent, which made Casey nervous, since he's never seen her like this before. "Tell you what, I'll go scout the area you last remember and see if I can't find Frankie, ok?"

A tear seeped down along her cheek, he hands began to tremble, Casey grabbed a hold of them and held her close to him, "I'm so sorry," She began to cry. "We should have waited."

Casey held her tight, trying to calm her down. "Shh, we can't undo the past, tell me where he is and I will rescue him, you hear me, I promise you April."

"I'm afraid."

"Don't be, now, where did you last see him?"

She took a deep breath; Casey wiped her tears away and told him. "Stockman's lab."

A surprised Jones replied. "Stockman, you mean that dweeb that made those expensive mouse traps? What does he have to do with this?"

"His Mousers don't just seek out rats, he's secretly using them to break into bank vaults and stealing God knows what."

"Fine," Casey got up. "Bout time this nerd met the ultimate bully... me."

Casey headed for the balcony window; April jumped up and grabbed a hold of his arm tight. "Please Casey, don't go, I don't want to lose you too." She slipped up, she accidentally said his name.

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Stunned that she knew his real identity, Casey stood there in silence for a split moment, then retorted with. "Casey? Who are you talking to Miss O'Neil, you got the wrong guy."

She smiled, "Do I? I understand why you do what you do."

He took a deep breath; his cover had been blown, "So I can expect to see my name smeared on the front page of tomorrow's paper?"

"No, I swear, I won't tell a soul, your secret is safe with me." She then lifted his mask just above his nose, still concealing most of his face; she leaned closer and gave him a good luck kiss. "Just come back in one piece, please?"

Casey gave her that cocky man grin, followed by a wink. "You know it toots." And before she could reply, he jumped out the window and hopped to the next rooftop.

Glaring as she watched him leave, "Did he just call me toots?"

Then a loud noise came from just outside her front door, the intrigue reporter went to investigate, upon reaching her door to take a peek through the peephole, the bottom half of the door caved in and in marched several Mousers. April took several staggering steps backwards until she tripped over a side table next to her couch and fell over.

Prone and unable to react quickly enough, the Mouser's captured her with ease and dragged her away before anyone came to their doors to see what the commotion was all about.

The Rat King along with his main bodyguard, Splinter and his army of rats performed a long and thorough search of the sewers where the last spots he knew, some rats disappeared. While checking the one site, where The King was bent down, searching some evidence, a Mouser snuck up from behind and snagged one of the small rodents from under their noses.

The little vermin cried out for help, getting the attention of the man in rags, "Not again!"

Now seeing the machine, the Rat King and Splinter followed the metal beast back to Baxter's lab where they see it enter through a small hole, not big enough for the two big guys, but enough for his little minions to go.

"Hmm, maybe too dangerous for you my furry friends, since the man inside is seeking you out, we'll," motioning towards himself and Splinter and added, "Go in and find our friends."

With Splinter in the lead, both of them entered the lab with ease, through an open window to the side. Walking down the creepy plain white hallway, Rat King stopped dead in his tracks, "I don't like this; it's just too easy." Just as he looked over his shoulder to see if anything was behind them, the ground slide away and both Splinter and the King fell down, several feet until they hit hard on the ground. Getting up and rubbing his head, The Rat King took a look around, seemed like the same hallway they were just in.

Baxter's voice filled the hallway via speakers, "Hello my pets. You are in my giant maze of death, if you can navigate your way through safely, you live, if not..." He burst into a maniacal cackle and then added. "If you take a wrong turn however, the game is over."

The Rat King looked towards all four directions; they were in the middle of a junction of two hallways, both leading further down, with multiply doors and hallways leading from them. He turned to the hypnotized Rat next to him, figuring it would be best if he was thinking on his own; he stopped whistling, breaking the spell.

Splinter came too and was baffled, he knew what he was doing, but couldn't control his movements up until now, and he glared down the Rat King as he asked. "How did you take control of me?"

"It's my gift." The man continued to explain. "I have an affinity with rodents, and one day I began to whistle around them and I noticed they started to do what I wanted, obeyed my every command."

"So why did you let me free now?"

Rat King informed him. "Well, we've been captured by some crazy lunatic. My friends have been going missing lately and I discovered that this scientist Baxter created a device that will capture them all

and wipe out the rat community for good. I cannot have that, it's why I brought you here, but now we're stuck and I figured it be better if we were both thinking and we can both get out of here alive."

Splinter nodded as he then sat down; legs crossed and began to breath nice and slow, performing an old meditation technique. The Rat King grew weary. "We don't have time for this."

"An impatient man seeks only death. Where the patient man waits and sees all opportunities."

Jones was on the rooftop across the street from the directions given to him by April, he scouted the building out first, looked normal, until he saw a few of Baxter's Mouser dragging the young reporter's wiggling body through a small access tunnel leading further inside.

"Damn, does she ever stay out of trouble?"

Casey stealthy snuck into the laboratory and made his way down the plain hallway. The hallway was just a square tunnel with white walls leading straight down, under a door slid open next to a slowly, cautious moving vigilante. Surprised at first, he stopped, peeked in and shrugged his shoulders as he stepped through the obvious trap. Inside the room was also plain, a square fifteen by fifteen foot white metallic room, once he fully entered; the door sealed shut behind him. Pulling out his trusty ball bat, readying himself for a battle, he stood guard.

"Come on; give me your best play."

Baxter's voice once again filled the room via speakers, with a snivelling tone. "Oh I have a game for you Mister Vigilante, Batting practice. Beat the waves of my Mousers, you win. Fail, well, game over."

The adjacent wall from his position, a small half size door opened and in rushed dozens upon dozens of Mouser's who quickly began an attack on the lone hero. "Puny old appliances, I know how to fix them." Smashing and bludgeoning each small bipedal robot that got within batting distance, took one hit and was destroyed. The hockey masked man chuckled as he took out two more "This is just upping my batting average!" He continued to swing on, caving in the skulls or smashing off a leg, rendering it useless. More and more Mouser's charged through the opening and repeated attacked the soon to be exhausted man, each swing getting heavier and slower the more he energy he burned. Not to mention, the wooden bat itself began to crack and with one final hearty swing, snapped in two.

Taking deep heavy breaths, he dropped the bat and pulled out a hockey stick, just as several Mousers' jumped him and took him down, overwhelming the tired vigilante and dishing out some of their own brand of punishment. The cackling psychotic laughter of Baxter echoed throughout the room.

The Mouser's escorted April to Baxter's main computer room, where he was patiently waiting her arrival with a giant grin scattered along his face. "Aw, Miss O'Neil, nice for you to drop by."

"You're going to pay for all this Baxter."

Baxter stood up and mocked her as she spoke. "Yeah, yeah, blah, blah. I'm going to pay, I'm so scared." You could feel the sarcastic tone in his voice, brought shivers up your spine, "Please, you were the only one that was relatively even close to my master plan and you don't even know it... Do you?"

"Robbing banks and capturing rodents..."

"The rodent capturing is personal..." He glared down at the floor, they sheer mention of rats made the man angry, "No, that was just my cover to get the city to fund my, bigger, better plan."

"So, you got a few million dollar grant just to steal more money? How greedy are you?"

Baxter didn't appreciate her accusations. "Don't go assuming you know me or my plans, it's insulting to my rather high intelligence."

"Then why are you doing what you are doing?"

Baxter smiled, "In good time Miss O'Neil, I will let you know. I will let the whole city know." He then burst into another cocky laughter.

April tried her best to fight off her captives. "I wouldn't get too overconfident, he's going to stop you and beat you senseless."

A self-assured scientist stood tall "Oh, you mean your masked hero?" He pressed a button to pop up a display on the big main screen, in view for April to see. It was footage of Casey combating the hoard of little robots until he finally passed out due to exhaustion. "I hope you weren't relying on him to save the day."

The four brothers were at the scene where they last fought the Rat King, searching for any sign or clue to where he might have taken their master. Michelangelo kicked over the last rock they hadn't touched and commented. "Dudes, hate to be a bummer, but man, this is getting us nowhere and fast."

"Yeah, I don't see any forensic evidence that says Splinters even gone past here, no stray hairs, tracks, nothing." Donatello explained in more detail.

Leo replied, trying to motivate the group. "Well, they didn't just disappear, they have to be somewhere. And we're not resting until every inch of this sewer is checked."

Raphael's fuse of patience ran short; out of anger he punched a nearby plumbing drain. "Damn, we're never going to find him." Just then, a single rat ran up to the turtles feet and stopped at the toes. Tapping the turtle on the one toe, trying to get his attention, Raph looked down, saw the vermin and gently pushed it away. It came back and repeated the process. "Come on little guy, take the hint."

"Now hold on for a moment there Raph, I think he's trying to get your attention." Donatello looked down at the little rodent.

"That's just nice and all Donatello, but I don't have time for fetch. We have a Master to find."

Donatello remembered that he big brother wasn't with them during the fight with the Rat King, "No, the man we're searching for, seems to be able to communicate with rodents, so this can't be coincidence, I'm a scientist, we don't believe in them."

"So what are you thinking then, since my rat talk is a bit rusty?"

Donatello bent down to be closer to the rat, held out his finger and the rat sniffed it. "I think it wants us to follow him."

"Yo Donnie, he might be leading us into a trap dude."

Leo then spoke up. "Then let it lead the way, it's the only way we're going to find master Splinter." He drew one out of the two katana's he had sheathed to his back.

They followed the rat down the sewers as they tried to piece together what was happening, Mikey was the first to ponder. "Ok, so this Rat-dude made those killer robots for what bros?"

Donatello speculated. "I don't believe our rat friend is sophisticated enough to create and operate such a machine."

"Well, it did attack Master Splinter when you turned it on Donatello, maybe that wasn't a glitch." Leo pointed out, giving Donnie an idea.

"Yeah, so maybe these robots are targeting rats and capturing them..."

"That's where I've seen those things from." Mikey snapped his fingers, he explained. "Guys, when I was watching April just yesterday, she was interviewing some dweeb who invented a rat catching thingy."

"Did you get his name Michelangelo?"

He sadly confessed. "Sorry dudes, I had a major problem and had to take care of it."

A curious Raph gave him, what could it be look. "What was more important than you watching TV?"

"I ran out of pizza of course, so I went and made an order, time I got back, it was over."

The rodent lead them up to the surface, luckily, it was dark, so not a lot of people were on the streets. It brought them all the way to Baxter's property line and then stopped, looked back up towards them. Raph bent over and petted it. "Oh man, I wish I had a piece of cheese for you."

Leo pointed out what could only be described as the obvious. "So this must be where Splinter is."

“So like, do any of us have some sort of plan dudes?”

Raph smiled. “I figure knocking on the front door and asking was a good one.”

“A ninja’s best tool he can use is using his surroundings and stealth.” Leonardo mentioned as he scanned the building, looking for an opening.

Laughing alone while typing away in his spectacular laboratory, Baxter was sending a video transmission through to city hall and on every broadcast channel in New York City.

The recording played, it was a shadowy figure speaking to the camera. “Hello my fellow citizens of the Big Apple. While you are driving to work, or inside a tall building, remember this, underneath the structure my minions are currently chewing away on the foundation and making the buildings unstable. If my demands are not met, then they will continue to chew until the places I selectively chose will crumble, killing thousands of innocent civilians.” He continued on with his demands. “What I want, it’s simple really, half a billion dollars and credit for being one of the most brilliant minds of our generation.”

Baxter turned his office chair around to face a bound and gagged April, he calmly stated. “You see Miss O’Neil, the bank job, my Mouser’s didn’t steal anything, I was testing them to see how efficient and quickly they could excavate a building. But I had to cover my tracks so I made it look like your average bank heist to keep the police busy.” He rolled back around in his fancy leather office chair and continued to explain his diabolical ways. “See, just holding things for ransom, never succeeds, the city and America have made their voice quite clear on bowing down to terrorists, no, the real money is with corporate companies. Risk those wealthy pompous people, and they will keep writing zero’s on the cheque.”

The door to Baxter’s main room busted open and in jumped the four turtles, weapons drawn, ready for anything. A perplexed Baxter cringed with fear as he saw the giant amphibians standing before him. “Who or what are you?”

“We’re your Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles dude.”

“Sorry about the door, but it was locked.” Raphael apologized for kicking and smashing the door.

“Where’s Splinter?” A stern Leonardo demanded an answer.

“Don’t worry, you’ll be joining him soon enough.” The sniffing scientist responded as he pressed a button, summoning every last Mouser he had sticking around his laboratory and they quickly attacked the turtles. With ease, the brother’s bash and smashed the robots into a giant junk pile of wasted scrap metal.

While busy fighting the robots, Baxter tried to escape through a hatch, but once the door slide open, out piled hundreds upon hundreds of rats all jumping and clawing Baxter. He screamed out like a little child, frightened for his life. He fell to the ground in and was frozen stiff with shock that he came in close contact with the one thing that haunted his past.

“Donnie, can you jump on the computer and locate Splinter?” Leo hollered over to a bus Donatello who was fending off dozens of Mouser’s like the rest of them.

April stood and witnessed the bizarre events happening before her, weird giant turtles, talking and fighting off evil robots. Donnie sat in the chair and began to access the computer, he hit a firewall. “Damn, need the password.”

“Just hack it will ya?!” Raphael was becoming weighed down himself with the amount of robots surrounding him. Michelangelo had lost both of his Nun-chucks and was dodging and weaving to avoid being hit.

Donatello was able to get into the computer and open some files, he found out where everyone was being held and what Baxter was up to with his Mouser’s. “He sent his robots to popular places, why?” April tried her best to mumble words and make some noise, trying to get Donnie’s attention.

“Hey Donnie, I think April there is trying to tell you something.” Raphael mentioned as he collided two robots heads together, “See, two minds are greater than one.”

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Don hurried over and removed the gag, preventing April from speaking; she stared face to face with the giant mutant turtle and for a moment, stood in shock. Donnie lost patience. "Come on lady, we don't have time for you to be petrified."

Mikey jumped over and undid her bounds. "Listen bro, maybe if you were more charming like me, she'd be more helpful."

April snapped out of her daze and replied. "He's using his robots to dig under the buildings so they'll cave in; you have to stop them somehow."

Donnie jumped back into the chair and April and Mikey on either side as Leo and Raph fended off the remaining Mouser's leaving nothing but a pile of smouldering scrap metal. He also found where Casey and Frankie were being contained; April looked at the short turtle next to her.

"I think I know where that is, mind coming with me?"

"No problem Dudette, lead the way." The energetic turtle replied and then stuck out his hand. "I'm Michelangelo by the way."

"I'm April." She didn't hesitate to receive the gesture; they then headed off, down the hallway, along the way, April inquired more details. "So who are you guys, where did you come from..."

"Yeah, you probably are wondering all those questions huh." Mikey smiled. "Well, that's a long story, for later, over some delicious New York pizza. But for now, those are my bros, Leo is the tall one, the leader, Donnie's the one at the computer, Raph's the angry one and I'm the cool handsome one."

She smiled and retorted with. "Ok, sounds good, so you're good guys... err turtles."

"You know it," they had entered into the prison cell holding a beat up and unconscious Casey and a troubled cameraman.

"Frankie, you ok?"

A smile of relief hit his face, until he saw the giant reptilian beside her. "I was fine, but now I'm seeing things."

"No, he's here to help, one of the good guys." She seemed hesitant to say, but she was sure since the turtle was aiding her with the rescue and they did infiltrate the place to stop Baxter.

Mikey opened the cell doors; he went over and picked up Casey's unconscious body. "I assume this dude's coming with?" She nodded; they then headed back to the others to see what the next move was.

The Rat King's tolerance for sitting and waiting grew thin, he jumped up and growled. "Listen here, sitting here mediating and doing nothing is getting us nowhere."

"Patience, I can sense that a path will be presented to us soon."

The King, frustrated, peered towards the rat, he tightened his lips and began to blow, whistling the tune when all of the sudden, an entrance slide open from out of nowhere beside them, leading them out of the maze. "Huh?"

Splinter's eye suddenly opened up, he jumped to his feet and calmly headed for the exit, "See."

The Mouser's began to tunnel deep below several buildings, making them unstable and extremely dangerous for anyone inside. Meanwhile, Donatello frantically searched through Baxter's computer, looking for some command to disable the robots before it was too late.

An annoyed Raph grumbled under his breath, stormed over to a prone Baxter, cowering in a feeble state of mind in the corner, surrounded by rats keeping him at bay. He picked him up, lifting him in the air, Baxter began to panic and bellow out insanity. "Shut them down pal."

Baxter looked straight into the turtle's eye and in a conniving stammer he stated. "Do what you want to me, but my Mouser's will rip this city apart."

A worried April, in a concern manner asked. "Well, can we warn people, so they can evacuate the buildings? Minimize the death count maybe?"

Donatello shook his head. "No can do, these things can bring his city down within minutes, especially since we're still not sure on their location, so, they could be anywhere."

"Donatello's right, what are we going to do, warn the entire city and cause a massive panic? There has to be another way..." Leo explained as he and Mikey, began to rub their green reptilian skin chin, and began to ponder. While collaborating up a solution, Casey had awoken, rubbed his eyes as he sat up and saw three out of the four turtles along with a giant rat and a man in torn and dirty clothing circling around April.

At first, it might have looked like they had her pinned down so he began quite puzzled, he, trying not to be noticed, slowly pulled out his trusty hockey stick and swung it at ground level, tripping the closet target to him, which happened to be Michelangelo.

"Whoa!" Mikey fell flat on his back, while the others turned to see why he fell suddenly, Casey leapt to his feet.

"Damn freaks are multiplying!" He wasted no time as he used the stick to attack once more, hitting an unaware Leo, knocking him across the face, sending him down on the ground.

"You got to be kidding me right?" Raphael replied to the psycho in the mask as he was next in line of Casey onslaught. Jones missed with his two attacks on the turtle, he then faked with the third action and stood between him and April.

"Calm down pal, we're on the same damn side, Geesh."

Mikey rubbed his head. "Did anyone get the number of that freight train?"

April then switched places with Casey, putting herself in front of Raph, shielding him from Casey's attacks. "Stop it Casey!"

Before she could explain, a baffled Casey questioned her. "Are you nuts, get out of the way, these punks are..."

She then covered his mask where his mouth would be. "Let me explain, they're friendly and are trying to save the city, so relax."

Casey took a moment to assess the situation and then pointed with his head towards the Rat King. "Who's the guy that could seriously use that show, queer eye for that bum guy?"

April turned and looked at the man with confusion. "Umm, I actually don't know who he is." After saying that, Casey gripped his weapon tighter, she placed her hand on his shoulder, "But, he seems harmless."

"I'm with you guys, relax. Stockman here was capturing my people and I was getting to the bottom of it."

A confused Casey, trying to figure things out in his head asked. "You're people? Wasn't he capturing filthy diseased ridden rats?"

An insulted Rat King barked out with determination. "Watch your tongue human, those are my friends you are addressing."

"Human?" Casey took a step back and then leaned over to April. "He does know he's human too right?" After her subtle head nod, he turned back and replied. "Sorry to offend you and your.... rodent friends." Casey then moved on, walking up beside Donatello as he frantically tried to figure out a way to stop the Mouser's from chewing up major locations and causing massive damage. "So, what's going on here..?"

"I am scanning through, trying different key codes in hopes to enable myself to hack into the system's hard drive and prevent Doctor Stockman's robots from engulfing the city and slaughtering millions of innocent people."

"Can't we just bash the computer and it'll stop the signal?"

Donnie shook his head. "All that will do is prevent me from stopping them once I figure out the code."

Casey nodded his head, like he understood the turtle. "Can't you program some sort of virus thing and cause it to kill the system?"

"Coding a virus would take time, time we cannot afford unfortunately."

Casey rubbed his mask, pondering another solution, but nothing came to mind, his anger was overwhelming his brain, his patience was running thin.

April then spat out an idea. "How is the signal transmitting?"

Donatello typed away frantically at the keyboard before muttering out. "Sad, he's using a poor low tech radio frequency, hard to track mind you... But so simple for a self-appointed genius."

"So if we cut the power, won't that cut the signal?"

Donatello thought about it for a second before concluding with. "A quick hypothesis dictates a maybe, maybe's are not definite in science, concluded, if it doesn't then we're left with no other alternatives."

"This is going nowhere and fast." An agitated Casey spewed out, he then approached the cowering scientist and grabbed him by his long curly dirty blonde hair and dragged the unwilling man over to the computer for further questioning.

Raph interfered. "Yeah, I already tried to intimidate him man, it didn't go well."

Casey glared down the weak man, in a deep sinister tone. "Give the turtle the code pipsqueak."

Baxter, although quite shaken up, didn't give in. "Like I told the reptile before, do what you will to me, but my Mouser's will be successful."

Casey lifted the man up, off of his feet and brought him close to his mask. "And did he take you up on your offer?" Baxter, perplexed with the question, sniffled and shook his head, Casey smiled. "Too bad for him, but unfortunately for you, I will." He then grabbed him by the back of the head and before anyone could interject, he bashed his face against the keyboard, breaking the Doctor's thick prescription glasses, also, breaking his nose, causing it to bleed a tad.

Nervous and confused, Baxter whined. "Are you crazy, what's wrong with you?"

The others, shocked stepped forward Leo replied "Listen here friend, that's not how we do things."

"Pity, cause usually it works..." Casey looked directly at Baxter's bleeding red face, blood dripped off of his chin. "The code," he added with a touch of sarcasm, "Pretty please." The quivering man remained silent; an intolerant man pulled out his hockey stick with one hand and swung, taking out Baxter's right kneecap, leaving a fracture behind. Stockman winced as he dropped to the ground, holding and bracing his knee and cried out a few tears.

"I'll never give it to you!" The scientist cried out in pain.

Casey shrugged his shoulders. "Well, tough rocks pal..." He went for another strike, but Leonardo grabbed a hold of the shaft and prevented him from hitting his victim, "Hey, what're you doing?"

"I cannot allow you to do that; we don't condone that kind of behaviour and violence."

Raph replied under his breath. "Speak for yourself Leo."

"Listen here freak. This madman is going to destroy the city and since friendly words and being nice to him isn't working; maybe a little physical motivation is all he needs." He then yanked hard on his stick, prying it away from Leo's grasp that willingly let it go. "So since you don't want to be a part of it," motioning using the blade of the stick. "The door's over there."

"Just wait a moment, please, it's all I ask, Donnie's smart, I have confidence he'll figure it out before it's too late."

While frantically typing away, trying his very best, he muttered without his eye's leaving the screen. "I can't say I appreciate the tremendous increase of pressure Leo."

"And what if he can't? Sorry, I don't have confidence in an oversized talking turtle hacking into giant super computer built by a psychotic dweeb that hasn't been laid ever."

While waiting, tempers were getting thin, trying to keep his mind off of the seriousness of the situation, Casey turned to a prone, wounded Stockman. "While we're trying to outdo you here, mind telling me why you're doing this? I didn't see the ransom demands?"

"Yeah dude, from what I saw, the city gave you a butt-load of moo-lah."

"Pathetic and stupid fools, it's not about money..."

Raphael added with a gritty tone. "Oh, it's about power you guys."

Baxter snickered. "I don't need power either you creepy reptilian. No, if you must know, I did it for the irony. The city funded this project and I'm using them to tear it down." He continued to giggle while the others scratched their heads, trying to see his reasoning.

"So, you're doing this for the irony?" Casey rubbed his confused head. "And you're calling us stupid, you are completely nuts, you know that? I think someone needs to call a good hooker and get himself some action." He grew tired of hearing the man mockingly laugh at them; he spun his body around and lifted his leg, delivering a low round-house kick, knocking the scientist out cold while sarcastically saying, "Oops."

Then an idea hit April, "Irma!" She just blabbed out, startling the others, "I bet she can do it."

April grabbed her phone and called Irma. "Irma, great, you at work still? Awesome, got a mission for you, can you hack into Stockman's computer..." A pause, an upset April replied. "What do you mean you can't?"

"I mean I can't, some ingenious firewall he has up, you can only hack in through his computer at his lab, so good thing you're there. I have been looking into the man's past, doing some scoping. He was in the psycho ward after he had an incident when he was younger involving, get this, a severe rat bite. Yeah, he used to be a hardcore lover of pets, he had two rats, their names were Sammy and Benny..."

A light went off in April's head. "Umm, Donatello is it?"

Donnie gave her a, what is it look, "Yeah?"

"Try the password, Sammy and Benny, or along those lines, they were Baxter's pet rat's names."

Donatello seemed bewildered, "Why?"

"Well, his hatred with rodents started with them, figured, he probably use them to also end it."

Donnie nodded as he tried several combinations with the two names and when it was looking like that wasn't an option either, the Mouser's getting close to digging out the ground of some public areas, the password worked and he was inside and had full control of Baxter's super computer. "We're in!" Everyone cheered with joy and relief.

"Good, you know what to do first." Leo replied as they all had their eyes glued to the screen as Donatello worked his magic and stopped the Mouser's dead in their tracks. He sent the command to head to the police station downtown and give them up.

April then thanked Irma and had her inform the police to get over to the lab and apprehend the crazy scientist, he then hung up and address the others. "Well, thank you all for your help." The Rat King was nowhere to be seen, he snuck off when he saw that Donatello successfully hacked the computer and was stopping the robots.

"So, who and what are you guys?" An intrigued and excited reporter gathered the turtles around for an exclusive interview.

Raph waved his hands; he retorted with. "Listen lady, we don't want to be on the seven o'clock news."

Leonardo nodded. "Yes, sorry April, but we wish not to be known, you can understand, we're here to help, but we feel others will not see it that way."

"I understand totally, our heroes need their identities protected, it's just, well; I'm a reporter, keeping secrets sucks." She frowned and then released a playful giggle.

Casey pieced it together. "So when you were dropping her off at home, what was that?"

"We found her in the sewers with those Mouser's all over her," Leo explained as Mikey cut him off.

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“Listen dudes and dudette, let’s discuss this more over some hot and fresh pizzas, I’m starving after all this.”

“I’m going to snag a few things before we go, I think some of this stuff could come in handy in the future, hate to see it all go to waste when they shut the factory down.”

Leo agreed. “Good idea Don.” He then looked at the rest, “well, we better get out of here before the police show...”

“Will we ever see you again?”

They all turned to their Master, who was just sitting there waiting patiently, “Well, that all depends on you Miss O’Neil.”

Hanging off of his approval, she nodded. “What is it?”

With everyone impatiently waiting, Splinter let loose a big grin and replied. “How much do you like pizza?” The grateful brothers cheered, they all high-fived one another and they took their Master back home, while Casey, making sure she was safe, stayed hidden while the cops showed up.

Chief Sterns arrived on scene and looked around. “What happened here April?”

She smiled as she told him everything. “He saved us again Sterns. I tell you, the masked vigilante is a hero, not a menace like you believe. He, once again, single-handedly foiled Stockman’s devious plans and diverted the Mousers away before they chewed out the ground from underneath the buildings support structures.”

“Well, where is he? So we can congratulate him?”

April looked around mystified. “He was right here a moment ago, I can’t tell you Chief. Frankie?”

Her cameraman shrugged his shoulders; he was pretending to be just as confused as her. “I was getting the equipment set up, must have snuck out then.”

A grumpy Sterns walked away and over to an unconscious Baxter, signalling for two officers to come and take him to the van. “Get him out of here.”

During the trip back to the precinct, once again, an explosion went off from under the van, flipping the van over onto its side. Two figures dressed in black wears jumped out from the shadows, blew open the back door and pulled out the unconscious body of Baxter Stockman and took him away before rescue paramedics arrived.

In a disclosed location, once the crazy scientist awoke; he found himself in a small white room, in a metal chair and a light shining bright in his face.

Snivelling he asked, knowing someone was listening. “Fools, you won’t be able to keep me in here, you know who I am?”

The same radiating self-assurance toned voice from previous replied. “I know exactly who you are Doctor; why else do you think I recruited you.”

“Recruited?” Baxter was perplexed; he thought he was in a police interrogation room. “Who are you, where am I?”

“I broke you free so you can serve me. You are a brilliant man and I admire what you tried to accomplish. If you seek revenge, I want you to be with us, so, welcome to the Foot.”

Baxter erected a devilish grin, “Excellent.”

THE END