

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

## T.M.N.T. #1: Casey Jones

(A Steve Antonette retelling)

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After a drenching rainstorm, the mean streets of the city that never sleeps became busy once again. An elderly couple just got out of a taxicab and slowly walked down the puddle infested streets, innocently window shopping and enjoying the fresh moist air. A few teens, in raggedy filthy clothing were observing the old married couple since they disembarked from the cab.

"Listen, when they cross, we'll get them." The older teen whispered to the other, who looked scared. He could tell someone was odd with him. "Roy, what's wrong man, did you hear the plan?"

Roy nodded as he shivered in his response, and it wasn't due to the cool wet weather. Something was obviously bothering the teen. "I'm just worried about the crazy hockey masked man."

The older one burst into a quiet chuckle. "He's just a rumour dude, he's not real. You a chicken now, scared of some punk in a mask?" He talked the scared out of the other teen and they both got ready.

As the couple innocently strolled by the entrance to the alley, both teens jumped from the shadows. The older one snagged the old man's gold-plated pocket watch while the other snatched the old lady's purse. Together they ran further down the street, towards Central Park.

"Help muggers!" The old couple cried out but no one listened nor cared.

Well except for one man. He was overlooking the entire scene. The dark mystery figure hopped from one rooftop to the next, following the perpetrators to their safe spot, in the bushes in the big park.

Both boys found what they thought was great cover in the deep brush and wasted no time to open the purse and revealed their reward. Inside for the taken was a wallet with a wad of cash, some loose jewellery, silver necklace, some rings and several credit cards. As they were rifling through, the dark figure landed quietly behind them. They were too busy overwhelmed with glee and patting each other for a job well done to notice.

In a deep gritty stern tone, the dark figure announced his presence hoping to spook the two teens. "That purse doesn't go with the rest of that dumb punk look you got going."

And it seemed to work, they seemed startled by the shock of being found. The younger boy holding the purse jumped back, fell and dropped the handbag. "Oh crap!"

The elder adolescent, was surprised, but kept his composure a little better than his friend. He saw the dark figure, but only in shadows. He couldn't quite tell what he was holding, except it was long, kind of shaped like a hockey stick. "Step back man," he pulled out a switch blade from his back pocket. "Or I'll gut you."

The mysterious dark figure slowly approached the criminals. The light from the moon shined bright, revealing a scuffed up old hockey mask. The man had shoulder-length dark hair, a ripped-sleeve shirt, a golf bag filled with a small selection of various sports equipment, jogging pants, boots and fingerless biker gloves. He had an authoritative presence, it was a frightful sight to witness if you knew the kind of reputation this figure illuminated.

In a deep calm angry tone he told them. "Time out, I'm gonna give you dumb punks a chance." He made a firm grip of his old well-used wooden hockey stick, simply for intimidation purposes, but ready for when the time came to strike. "Put the ladies belongings and the watch back in the purse and give it back. You got ten seconds to do what's right."

The petrified adolescent quickly obliged, stuffing the goods he pulled out back into the purse. While the older teen with a shocked look at his friend and still holding the knife towards the vigilante denied his obedience. "Screw you dude, you know how much cash this is?"

Standing there in silence, the vigilante finally spoke. "And that's ten, well looks like I'm going for a Hail Mary play." He then lunged forward and took a swing with his weapon in hand.

A long time ago:

New York City: The big apple, the city that never sleeps, high crime, crooked cops and heroes can be born or made... Before the Foot, before the Ninja Turtles, one man stood up against not only the crime, but the corrupt politics and police that poisoned the streets and against vigilantism. He silently spoke for

those who couldn't speak for themselves. In the shadows, he fought for those who couldn't defend themselves because his hatred for crime was far greater than anyone had ever seen...

A single mother and her ten year old son just finished moving in to a low class two-bedroom apartment and were getting ready to go to school for him and work for her.

"Come on Honey, you're going to be late for your first day."

A scrawny pale from lack of sun ten year old boy slowly, like he was dying, came into the kitchen. "I don't feel so well."

"Come on now, I let you off with that excuse yesterday, but you eventually have to go."

"But it's such a great excuse. I don't need school anyways. I got a talent drawing. Da Vinci didn't go to no school to be taught to paint or invent."

"Drawing won't always be there, plus school isn't just about learning."

Casey sighed, taking a deep breath. "Yeah it's also good for big dumb bullies to show us scrawny guys how strong they are." He walked back to his room and began to get changed, since he knew he lost the battle with his mom.

"Not just that either dear, besides I start work at the flower shop today remember? So I won't be here to take care of you."

"You shouldn't have to work, not after what we've just been through."

She hugged her little man, a tear began to set in her left eye. "I know, but the case was dropped, nothing we could do..."

"That's horseshit mom..."

"Watch your mouth Casey..."

He separated himself from his mother and ranted on. "I'm not going to be silent anymore; if that drunk driver that killed dad wasn't a cop, it'd be a different story, we'd would have had a settlement and the driver would be in jail. But no, the system doesn't work like that."

The mother was in tears, using her sleeve to wipe them away. "I'm sorry baby, I'm trying here. You know what, take today off too. But I have to go in; the bills need to be paid."

Casey went to his room. "Nah, I'll go. Got to face the demons someday right?"

At lunchtime at Casey's new school: In the lunchroom, Casey sat alone, eating his PB and jam sandwich, minding his own business, concentrating on his picture he was drawing. It was of the view coming the outside the window next to where he ate.

A couple of older kids were whispering amongst themselves, pointing at the lone kid. One of the bullies walked by and purposely knocked over all of Casey's books, but not before shouting out, "Oops!" With some sarcasm behind it.

Casey, angered but didn't show it, got out of his chair, bent over and picked up all of his things. Once he placed the last book back on the table, the bully smiled and knocked them to the floor once more. Casey, taking a deep breath as all the other kids laughed at his misfortune. This time, instead of gathering them on top of the table, he placed them in his knapsack; trying to out-clever the bully. Once the last thing was in the bag, he placed it back on the surface of the table, where the bully was patiently waiting to strike once again.

"Oh, I'm sorry." The bigger kid pushed not only the bag, but Casey to the ground.

Little Casey just laid there, pretending to cower, avoiding any trouble since, it didn't seem to be any adult supervision around to come to his aid and he knew if he got up again, he'd be just knocked back down. So why repeat the vicious cycle, he thought to himself.

Casey just kept his head down and walked down the hall towards his class once lunch ended, which he couldn't find, but there seemed to be a lack of adults present in the hallways as well as the cafeteria. Another bigger kid, a few grades higher than Casey and at least twice his size, purposely bumped into

him and since Casey was too busy looking at the room numbers and not where he was walking, it caught him off guard and sent him flying back landing on his rear. All the kids once again laughed at Casey's misfortune.

A raged fuelled Casey got to his feet quick, looked at the kid, calmed right down and apologized. "Oh, I'm sorry, I didn't see you there."

The tough kid responded with "its cause I wasn't, I put myself there so I could knock you over fool." He then let out a chuckle and saying "Wimp." And pushed him back to where he landed before.

Casey knew he couldn't take this guy; he was just hoping that a teacher or an adult would hopefully come by and stop this nonsense. After getting up and being shoved back down for the fifth time in a row, Casey lost his cool head. "This is justice?"

While still on his butt on the ground he tried to reason with the much larger boy, knowing he didn't have the brawn to stand up to him, maybe some reasoning would work. "Listen Troy I'm going to get back up, this game is stupid. I'd be so happy if you just stop or else I'll have to go tell a teacher."

All the kids started to laugh even harder, while some yelled out, "tattletale, loser, and even little baby." Casey went to get back up, only to be shoved back down once more.

"Thank school for a knapsack full of books." He muttered as he went to get back up once more. But this time, when the bully went to go push him, Casey stepped to the side and swung his bag around and hit him square in the head. The weight and force of the knapsack sent the big boy backwards, landed on his back and rendering him unconscious. "Try reading a book you bully, might learn something."

The hallways of kids was quickly silenced, a teacher came rushing over to attend to the injured student.

The teacher soon asked. "Who did this?" he looked all ways, as all the kids in the area pointed towards Casey, the adult stopped, stared at Casey and bellowed out. "You did this? That's it, to the Principals office, now."

"But he started it, he was shoving me and..."

"I don't want to hear it, go now." The adult pointed towards the office as they helped the dazed bully back to consciousness.

Casey grabbed his bag and marched away as he clearly stated. "So much for justice in this crappy school."

In the principal's office: Casey sat in the chair across from the head of the school, who just sat there, scowling at the child.

"I don't like children that take matters into their own hands Mr. Jones."

Casey tried to defend his actions. "Well, what was I suppose to do, keep getting shoved by some dumb bully, there was no teachers around, just like in the..."

The Principal obviously didn't want to hear excuses. "There's always an alternative to fighting, I'm going to have to make an example out of you aren't I?"

At Casey's home later that day:

"So, you're first day, not even an hour after lunch, you get suspended for a week. Great Casey, what am I suppose to do here huh?"

Casey looked at her and asked. "Don't you want to hear my side of the story?"

"Don't tell me, he was pushing you right. He's just a bully, what you did was wrong."

Casey defended himself. "But Grandpa told me not to take any shit from bullies."

"Watch your mouth and Grandpa told you; figures."

They sat down for dinner; mom broke the awkward silence by cheerfully asking her son. "So, how do you think you should spend your time off?"

"Drawing and reading comics?" he sarcastically replied with an innocent tone to it, he knew that wasn't the answer, but he was trying to lighten the mood.

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She gave him the look that she wasn't impressed. "No, Miss Bradley and I need someone to help move boxes, guess what you'll be doing for the next week?"

"Lucky me."

Casey went to the local library and searched for some books on self defence and do-it yourself Karate lessons. He signed several books out and headed to an abandoned construction site and began his training, a few hours later, he biked back home to help his mother with her heavy lifting at the shop.

Casey was in the back room, moving boxes, being helpful to his mom with the shop, when the big bell, signalling a customer was entering, made a little jingle sound. In entered three men, in their early twenties, late teens, dressed in black clothes, with purple bandanas, one went to the rear of the shop, one stayed near the entrance and the third, approached the counter, where Casey's mom was.

"A nice quaint little place you have here Madam, would be a shame if some thugs came in here and trashed the place, wouldn't you say?"

Casey's mom looked scared, but she nodded her head to agree.

"Aw, glad to see we both agree." The man smiled, you could see a partial tattoo on his neck, the tail of some serpent monster it looked like "See, my friends and I are what you might call, a protection agency for the area, you pay us and we see to it nothing happens to your nice shop, don't pay and... well a demonstration perhaps?" He then turned to face the other two guys in the store; both nodded and began to knock over several shelves. "See, that will happen."

Casey just watched, his rage level rising, but he knew it would only make matters worse if he tried something.

"We'll be in touch, have a nice day." And they three thugs left the store.

Casey came out to comfort his panicked mom, "It's going to be ok mom."

His mom turned to Miss Bradley, an elderly lady and asked. "Why don't we just go to the cops?"

"The police in this neighbourhood are as corrupt as they come, they won't do anything, never have."

Several weeks had gone by, Casey would train in his secret spot after school, come home for dinner and then to the flower shop to help move boxes. But he didn't just move boxes. Secretly he was using them all as weights to gain muscle and strengthen his core. At school, he walked with more confidence, the bullies left him alone it seemed; life was going for the better for right now.

One night near closing time, the three thugs came to collect a day early. "We're here to collect Misses Jones."

She was obviously surprised; it was a day in advanced, "I'm sorry, we're a little short this week..."

The main thug was not impressed; he became angry real quick and Casey was in the back when he heard the commotion. He came to the front to take a peek at what was happening. He saw the main thug backhand his mom; she fell to her knees and began to cry.

"You don't want to upset me again, we'll be back tomorrow night, make sure you have the money." And then they left, the other two made sure to knock a few pricy things over first though. Casey came running to his mother's aid, helping her to her feet.

"We can't live like this mom."

She looked into his eyes and, with no hope she responded "What else can we do?"

"Something..."

The next night, without his mother's knowledge, Casey snuck out of work early and in the shadows of the alleyway; dressed in a ski mask and mostly black attire and waited to see what was going to happen. Closing time came to and his mother searched everywhere she could for Casey. After checking the entire store, she assumed he went home early and forgot to tell her. So she came outside to close up shop like she does every night and just like the one thug said, they came back.

"So, you have our money?"

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She was hesitant to reply, she knew the answer would upset the three men, "I'm sorry..." The thug wanted nothing to hear of it, he didn't want excuses; he slapped her across the face.

"Well I know a few ways you can pay us." He reached for his pants zipper.

Casey, full of rage grabbed a nearby garbage can and before anyone knew what happened, he hit the one thug undoing his pants and knocked him clean out.

"Time to take out the trash." A young Casey stood there, trying his best to intimidate the two, much larger thugs.

Both men laughed at the small barely five foot tall boy "Seriously kid, a ski mask?"

"Hey, he did take out Ryan" The other one brought up.

Casey glared at the mocking taking place and decided to get the upper hand by performing a poorly executed front karate kick he had just learned. The one on the right grabbed a hold of the leg, tripped the masked kid and kicked him several times in the ribs.

The other thug stomped on the kid's chest a few times and after they were satisfied with the severe beating they dished out, they picked him up just as Ryan regained consciousness. "You dumb little punk, you're dead meat." Ryan pulled off the ski mask, revealing Casey's identity. The three thugs laughed "The stock boy?" Casey's mom, in tears looked up with shock.

Ryan pieced it together, "Oh I see, this is your mommy." He then punched Casey in the stomach, not once, but twice. The kid coughed in pain as the bullies took a few more freebie shots to his belly.

Ryan walked back towards the store and performed a perfect jump kick and busted the store door open. He grabbed the mother by the hair and dragged her behind him as the other two brought the boy inside. Ryan released the mom for a moment while he focused more on Casey and the garbage can that struck him from behind. He was about to deliver a deadly blow until the mother pleaded.

"Please spare him; I'll do whatever you want." Ryan, shrugged his shoulders, grabbed Casey and tossed him over the counter and behind the cash register. Casey remained there for a few to soak in the damages to his body.

"Well screw it boys, light the place." Ryan said as he took his frustration out on the mother, beating her and then took her to the back room, where the screams were silenced, the other two came back into the shop with several cans of gasoline and began to poured it all over.

The single match was struck and flicked from Ryan's fingers and soared through the air, once it hit some gasoline, fire erupted and quickly spread all over, covering everywhere. The three thugs laughed and left the shop.

Casey smelt the fire and got to his feet, dazed from the wounds, he frantically search about for this mother and attackers, he saw neither, assuming they made it outside, he bailed. Eventually the fire trucks came, the police and paramedics, attending to Casey's wounds, the fire was finally put out as the fire-fighters motioned for the police to come take a look.

They found her body and the coroner placed her body in a body bag, laid her on the gurney, brought her on the ambulance and drove away, leaving Casey all alone and having to answer police questions.

The following day at the funeral: A distraught kid pale white except for his face, it was red from the crying, but wiped the tears wiped away as he sat alone during the wake, random family members and friends came by to give their condolences, he just remained quiet, trying not to break down and cry more. Then a hand rested on the shoulder of the tear-dripping child, it belonged to an elderly man, his grandfather. The seasoned Vietnam hero was about six-one, a small beer belly, but in great shape, grey hair, chiselled features on his face, he always squinted, but swears he never needs glasses, it was just how he looked, his tone of voice was always like he wanted to kick your ass, but didn't, like he was angry even when happy. "I'm sorry son for your loss."

Casey burst into tears and hugged the old man “Yours too Grandpa.” Grandpa remained strong, knowing he wanted to cry, but stayed strong on the outside for the poor boy. “What’s going to happen to me now?”

“You’re going to come stay with me, outside of town.” Grandpa quiet replied, not wanting to disturb the wake. “I already talked to your principal, you got a week off of school, but she’s sending me work through that email so you won’t get behind. Then maybe we’ll transfer you to somewhere closer.”

The following week at Grandpa’s was quiet, Casey stayed mostly in his room, studying or drawing and would come down to eat and see his Grandfather watching the television. Sometimes he would stand there and watch what was on, just hockey and baseball, Grandpa didn’t talk much either, he figured Casey still needed some time to cope and he needed to as well.

About a week later, Casey was silently standing there watching his Grandpa on the chair, a tear running down his cheek, he was still feeling the guilt of getting his mother killed, the old man looked over, he knew he had to do something to get this boy out of the funk he was in. In a deep gritty tone, he stared straight into the child’s eyes “You going to ball there like a girl, or come in here and learn how to be a man?”

“Sorry...” Casey began to walk in, but his Grandpa got out of the chair and came over, stopping him from entering the living room.

“Sorry what?”

“Sorry...” Casey thought for a moment and then remembered what his Grandfather taught him about respect “Sir.”

The old man grinned and rubbed Casey’s hair, purposely messing it all up “That a boy, come the game starts soon.”

“Game?” Casey seemed confused.

The man’s jaw dropped, he was astounded “You don’t know about the big game, Ranger’s versus the Leafs, for the spot in the playoffs, what did my daughter teach you.” He sat back down and motioned for Casey to sit in the empty chair next to him.

“I’ll just go to my room and draw Grandpa, I don’t really watch sports.”

At first, it looked like Grandpa had a heart attack, he was stunned by this kid, taken back, “No, come on now, come watch a game, maybe you’ll learn something.”

Casey smirked “Learn what, grown men that beat up each other for a trophy at the end, no thanks.”

The old man shook his head, “You got a lot to learn here kid, that’s for damn sure.”

Casey sat down in the other recliner chair, in the living room also was an end table in between them and a wall of pictures from him in the war, another wall full of family photos and a giant screen television on the last wall. Grandpa turned the volume back up, the puck was just dropped and the hockey game begun. “Watch and learn with me will you.”

A flustered Casey sat next to the old man, who was intently watching every moment; he explained to the young adolescent boy “You see, this isn’t just a game, not just a bunch of men with sticks and hitting one another. Truly appreciate how much dedication, skill and talent, and then, and only then, will you truly understand.”

Casey focused more on the game, watching it, but, to him, it was just as he first thought, he frowned, he began to recall the other night, his Grandpa saw his lack of motivation “You see lad, everyone on the team has a job, and if they do not perform, they let the rest down, so a team is like a family, you encourage each other and make sure everyone is doing what they are suppose to be doing. Sports will teach you all you need to know to become a man, trust me, I played hockey, football, baseball and excelled in all.”

Casey was impressed to hear, his Grandfather carried on “You will learn sportsmanship, hard work, coordination, appreciation, team play, skills you will use on the field and in the real world, you can trust

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me on that.” He directed his attention to his grandchild, he pondered for a moment while rubbing his unshaven face “Now, which sport should we get you in?”

“Huh?” Casey was bewildered, didn’t know what to say.

Grandpa clarified what he meant “Your new day, you will start boot camp, go to school, study, homework and play on a team, you will work hard and you’ll thank me in the end.”

“Um, ok...” A confused boy replied, didn’t know what to make of all that was happening.

Grandpa turned the TV off and gazed at him “Ok what?”

“Sir” The TV was turned back on and they spent the remainder of the night watching the game, with his grandpa, commentating it every step of the way to help young Casey understand.

The next morning: Grandpa barged into a sleeping Casey’s room at five in the morning and blared the air horn, startling the unaware boy, causing him to jump up and fall out of bed.

“Rise and shine recruit, time for boot camp.” He sounded more like a drill instructor this morning. “A two mile run followed by my homemade obstacle course, then the showers, followed by bacon and eggs then to school to start your day. Afterwards I have you signed up for hockey, hope you can skate. Now, let’s move.” He then left the room, Casey, speechless, looked at the clock muttered nothing that made sense and closed his eyes.

Minutes later, Grandpa walked by, shook his head when he saw the lazy bum still napping on the floor, curled up in his blanket, he smiled and walked away. Not too long after he came running in with a pail in hand stood over his sleeping victim and dumped ice cold water over the face and head of Casey. The freezing cold shock was enough to ensure that Casey wasn’t going back to sleep and the heart racing ensured he was up and ready to go.

“Outside you bag of bones, move!” His Grandpa shouted, Casey did what he was told, he marched quickly down the stairs “Backyard, on the double!” The young lad picked up the pace and made it to the giant backyard.

The backyard was a military obstacle field, complete with a cargo net over water, barbed wired with a mud pool, a giant wall, old tire footpath and other various courses.

“You got twenty minutes to finish.”

Casey’s eyes bulged out of their sockets “Twenty minutes to finish that?”

Grandpa shook his head “That? No...” Casey seemed somewhat relieved until Grandpa finished “No, you have twenty minutes to run around the yard, twice.” Grandpa then pulled out a stopwatch from his pocket. “Ready, set, go!”

“Is he serious” Casey muttered under his breath as he started to slowly move along, a slow jog, knowing he was incapable of completing this entire track not only in the deadline set by his Grandpa, but his endurance wasn’t going to last long enough and he knew he’d pass out before the first lap was completed.

“Come on, stop prancing and start hoofing it! Are you a man or a chick?!” The grizzly old war veteran encouraged his young grandchild, Casey was a quarter done the first lap and was slowly way down, his heart was pumping hard, his breaths were heavily and wheezy, ten more steps and the jogger fell flat on his face and passed right out.

Grandpa rushed over and held the boy in his arms “Wake up, come on now.” He gently slapped him across the face until Casey awoke.

“Sorry sir, I’m not in shape.”

Grandpa smiled, and in a deep tone “Soon, you will be.”

Three months later: Casey was running the perimeter of the backyard, making excellent timing, he had gained twenty or so pounds of muscle, he finished the run “Nice, you’ve beaten your previous time by five seconds.”

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“That’s all?” Casey then proceeded to do all the obstacles without rest, after completing them all in a great time, his Grandfather smiled.

“I’m so proud of you son.”

Casey smiled back, “Thanks Sir, and I’m M.V.P. on the hockey team; coach says some scouts will be at the next game.”

“Oh, I know you’ll do us proud. And all you’ve done in three whole months, you should be very proud with yourself.”

“I owe it all to you.”

Nine years later: Casey was now nineteen years of age, he was at a funeral with several other people, it was raining, he was soaking wet, staring down at the grave. He held his Grandfather’s dog tags in his fist as he stated “I will not disappoint you Sir.” He placed the tags around his neck, kissed them and tucked them away. He then walked away from the grave site as they began to bury the casket.

6 months later: Casey Jones was a right winger on the third line of the New York Rangers; it was the last game of the season, 1 point short of a playoff spot, third period, less than 4 minutes to go, and the game was tied 2-2. Casey’s line was on the ice. The puck dropped, the centre man of the opposing team, they got it down to the rangers end. But a lucky stick from a defenseman and a great pass to Casey gave him an opportunity of a lifetime, a breakaway, Casey skating hard and stick handled beautifully, deking out the goalie, an angered opposing player, knew he couldn’t catch up, took his stick and swung, aiming to injury the young hotshot, connected to his kneecap, shattering the cartilage, as Casey went down his skate twisted and he came falling down weird, tearing his knee ligaments apart.

The whistle blew, Casey was down, holding his wound as the helmet flew off and he held his knee, crying. “I’m sorry Sir, I couldn’t do it.” The referee gave the attacker a two minute penalty for slashing as the paramedics took Casey off of the ice and to the hospital. “A distraught Casey heard the call and unjust sentence given he muttered on the gurney.

In the hospital: Casey laid in the bed, with his leg in cast, elevated over his body, the Doctor came in, not looking too thrilled with the situation.

Casey, seeing the expression asked bluntly “Just give it to me straight Doc, no sugar coating, when will I be able to play again?”

“Good news, the tissue and ligaments will heal, but it won’t be like new again. I’m afraid; you’ll never be able to play professionally again.” The Doctor then hit him with some, ok news “But you could probably play in the minors, or coach.”

“Minors are for pussies and coaching is for old players.” Casey shook his head “And I already been told, the ass responsible, just got two minutes for slashing, that’s it. So much for justice anywhere it seems.”

Few years later: Casey was back in the big city and had his own repair shop, since he was handy fixing things, his apartment was upstairs. He made a decent living, repairing cars, toasters, radios and computers. He kept up with the news, not only for the stories on the high crimes, but because he had a crush on the news reporter, April O’Neil.

He had the paper delivered to his shop every morning and cut out all the stories on crime, more importantly, the unsolved ones in the area. On the desk next to where he usually worked, was a half empty bottle of rye, that he periodically would take a swig from, time to time. Every night was the same to him, he would fix things while watching hockey until he drank too much and pass out. Then wake up to the paperboy at the door, turn the TV on to the news and begin working while eating leftover Chinese food; yeah life was looking fairly boring and repetitive for the once rising star.

One late night, drunk and passed out in his office; from the open window, a woman's cry for help staggered him awake. "Ugh muggers, somebody really needs to do some..." He looked over to the corner of his office; there stood his old hockey stick he used in the pros. Then he looked up at an old photo of his Grandfather, smiling back at him with the thumbs up; a spark when off in his eye, he got up, grabbed the stick, an old hockey mask and stormed out of the office.

Down the dark alley: The woman continued to call for help as she ran down, pulling the handles on a few locked doors and found that there was no exit to the end of the alleyway. The two muggers caught up with her and smiled, as they slowly approached the lone female.

"Calm down baby, we promise we'll take good care of you." She crouched down into the fetal position; she knew she was overwhelmed, she prayed for a miracle. The first man was just about to grab her when, out of nowhere, a hockey stick hooked him and pulled him away. Both muggers turned to see the masked man standing there wielding a hockey stick blocking off their exit.

A peering Casey, with a deep gritty tone stated "Offside punks, why don't we faceoff!"

Both men laughed, the second guy pulled out a knife and charged Jones, Casey spun the stick around and took out the muggers knee, sending him onto the ground, prone "Two minutes for charging." He then looked at the; now obviously scared mugger, "Just you and me scuzzbucket."

He placed his hands into the air "Whoa man, calm down, I give." The woman got up and ran down the alley, past Casey.

"Thank you so much." Casey nodded back, acknowledging her gratitude, she continued to run off and was now long gone.

The man with his hands in the air spoke once more, "See, no harm done."

Casey gripped the hockey stick tighter, he then quickly thought, he did let her go, I guess... Then flashbacks began to rapidly spark in his mind, reviewing all the unjust that had happened to poor Casey throughout the years, filling his inner rage even more. Reminiscing over everything that has occurred in his life, just made the man thirsty for true justice, he glared back at the criminal and with a cold dark tone he responded with "Well, not yet, game misconduct for roughing..." He then swung the stick and struck the unarmed man over the head, the man on the ground he took a few swings at him as well.

After delivering quite a beating to those two muggers, a satisfied Casey made his way back to his shop with a giant smile of relief on his face. "Justice served" He looked at the photo "I know my place in the world now Sir," He took a grip on those dog tags around his neck "I must punish those the justice system won't touch, protect the people, I must deliver my own brand of justice."

He then rushed up to his room apartment, searched through all the sports clutter and began pulling out random things, things that can be used to protect him and used to hurt others. He used what he found to construct a costume and battle wear. He stood in front of the mirror, standing there; he was wearing a vintage old hockey mask, which was resting in a nice glass display case mounted up on the wall...

Casey sat next to his Grandpa while in front of the television watching the final playoff game for the Rangers of the season. His grandpa was holding onto the mask tight in his left hand while reminiscing over his old glory days. "A great defence lies with the goalie, you have an outstanding man between the pipes, you got a great chance of making and winning the Stanley cup, you understand?"

"Yes Sir I believe I do Sir." Casey, around the age of fourteen, sat and intensely listened to his Grandfather's stories.

"We never used to have to wear masked when I played, but, I decided to when they came around, this was the mask I wore and took us to the finals. A lot of fond memories this mask has for me, saved me from pucks, I can't even remember how many" He chuckled a bit afterwards...

Casey shed a tear from the memory, then looked further on with his attire, making sure he needed every little bit, he wore also a baseball catchers chest protector, one shoulder pad over his left shoulder, an unbuttoned shirt with ripped sleeves, fingerless biker gloves with built in brass knuckles, ripped jogging pants, knee and shin pads, an umpire pouch around his waist, complete with a golf bag strapped to his back, stuffed with several well used sports paraphernalia.

“Don’t I look good?” He grinned, but was blocked by the mask. “I’d shit myself if I saw me coming after me for a crime.”

The next night: Casey assembled the vigilante attire and headed out when the sun set, alleyway sneaking, rooftop hopping, looking for lawbreakers to serve his new justice too. And in this area of the city, lots of crime takes place every night, he came across a mugging, a pickpocket, a burglary, car theft and a purse snatching, all of whom he delivers a brutal beating, sending each perpetrator to the emergency room. By time he delivered the last bit of justice, it was getting rather late and he knew the cops would eventually come around this area, so he vanished into the shadows like he was trained and headed home.

After several nights like this, the crime rate hit a record breaking low, grabbing the attention of local reporter, itching for a big story, April O’Neil. She was your average height, reddish brown hair down to her shoulders, slim athletic build, very attractive in her skirt and blouse. She and her news station met up with Police Chief Sterns for an unscheduled press conference. Casey grabbed the remote and turned the volume up while fixing a toaster.

“Chief Sterns, any comments about the low crime rate?” April practically shoved the microphone in the Chief’s face.

Sterns glared into the camera and answered like he was talking directly to Casey himself “No one can take the law into their own hands. This vigilante will come forward and will be held accountable for his actions, these brutal beatings he serves is unwarranted.”

“But Chief Sterns, he has made New York’s crime rate in this area alone, a record breaking low. Doesn’t that mean something to you?” an inquisitive April asked, angering the Chief.

“The results aren’t the issue, his delivery of punishment is, even criminals have rights Miss O’Neil.”

“Hey I was beaten when I did something bad” Casey laughed poking a screwdriver in the toaster “what a moron and God, she sure is a babe, glad she seems to be on my side. Maybe she’ll want an “exclusive” with the masked man.”

April continued on “So since the cops aren’t out getting it done, and he seems to be doing an efficient job, just because he’s hurting the criminals he’s being punished, come on now Chief.” Others kind of cheered after April made her comment, agreeing with her.

Sterns totally ignored her comment and continued on with his message “If you’re out there listening Vigilante, mark my words, if you do not turn yourself in within twenty four hours, we will conduct a city wide manhunt. And we will find you.”

Casey dropped the toaster “You kidding? You’re not going to find me pig. You’ll be up to your nose with donuts as I stop crime, and walk right on by.”

The next night: Casey patrolled his old neighbourhood, hoping to find the men responsible for the death of his mother and he got lucky, a few thugs just came out of a local store, holding a wad of cash.

“The Hun is going to like this, customers that pay.” The thug in the middle told the others while flipping the cash.

“Think I’ll be turned into a member when we get back with the good news?”

“I’m sure of it...”

Casey jumped down in front of them, startling the three thugs “Game’s not over yet punks.”

The non member looked at the other two and quickly asked “Who’s this joker?”

The main thug laughed with his response “That masked vigilante the cops are looking for.”

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“I wonder if they’ll give us a reward for bringing him in.” The last thug brought up as he pulled out a long heavy chain. The middle one pulled out a knife and the main thug drew his pistol.

Casey, noticing the gun “Illegal equipment” and quickly pulled out from the umpire bag, a hardball, throwing it with haste, hitting the thug holding the pistol directly in the nose, breaking it and knocking the mugger out. “You’re out!”

The chain gang member whipped the chain, hooking Casey’s leg and giving it a good yank, tripping the vigilante. “Go, gut him will ya.” The thug with the knife jumped on Casey’s chest and brought the weapon up, ready to strike down. Casey, wasting no time, knowing his gloves had brass knuckles, punched the thug square in the jaw, cracking the bone and pushing the now prone man off of him. He grabbed the chain; unwrapped it from around his ankle and gave it a tug.

“Aw, tug of war; let’s see what you’re made of scuzzbucket.”

Before the draw could happen, the goon dropped his hold of the chain, threw his hand up “I give man, chill.” And ran off the other way, leaving his unconscious gang member and new recruit alone.

Casey shook his head “No honour among punks.” He looked over at the one with the broken jaw; blood was just oozing from his mouth “You should go see a Doctor.” And he went over to the other body, bent over to pick up his baseball when he saw the tattoo, the same tattoo of the punks that raided his mothers store years ago.

“So it is you punks.” He tied the hands of the unconscious man up, threw him over his shoulder and left, in the shadows just as the sirens and lights flashed down the alleyway.

Off near Casey’s shop, on a roof, he had the thug tied up to a pole and a baseball launcher set up about ten feet away on the rooftop, pointed at the punk’s direction. He slapped the man hard until he finally came too. “Good, you’re awake, makes interrogating easier.”

“Well too bad, cause I’m not telling you shit.” He replied as he spat towards the vigilante but missed. Casey shook his head with disappointment.

“Sorry to hear that” He then went over to the machine and turned it on, “Or am I?” A ball fired, not too fast, and hit the prone man directly in the chest, he cringed in pain. “Feel that? That’s on low setting too. When you refuse to speak or tell me what I want to know, I’ll crank the dial to speed the ball up, like so.” He cranked the knob all the way to fast, the ball came out and before you saw it, it hit the man directly in the chest, winding him; he coughed in pain several times. Casey turned it back to slow, “So, that tattoo on you, what gang do you belong to?”

“The biggest most powerful gang in town and you’re a dead man.” Another ball soared through the air towards the man’s chest, hitting it hard.

“Hmm, I need a name.” Casey turned the knob, speeding up the next ball. “You’re bosses name would be nice also.”

The thug laughed gleaming with confidence “I’ll tell you that, no problem. We’re the Purple Dragons, led by the Hun.”

Casey nodded, liking the fact that he’s spilling the beans, another ball shot from the machine and hit the target again in the chest. “Ok, I like what I’m hearing.”

The victim, obviously in a load of pain “So, are we done?”

“Done, we’re just getting started. Are you not enjoying this conversation?” He cranked the knob further, speeding up the ball. Another one flew out and hit him in the gut, the tied up man coughed hard several times.

“Dude, seriously, what else do you want to know?” He was feeling the pain from the welts and bruises now.

Casey thought extensively about the next question, as a ball fired from the machine, dealing more damage to the man’s body “Besides robbing small businesses, what else do you scum do for cash?”

“What do you think man, drugs, weapons, girls, slave labour; you think of it, we do it.”

Casey nodded, soaking in all the information “Ok, now just tell me everything else, where you do the deals, the crooked cops on your payroll...”

“Please, I tell you that, and I’m a dead man for sure.” Another ball rocketed out and struck the man, he began to cough up blood. “Come on, have a heart. I can’t tell you!” The man screamed out, he was desperate; sirens of the police cruisers were getting louder.

“There’s my sign to leave.” Casey nodded at the thug and headed for the fire escape.

“Whoa, whoa, man hold up.” As another ball fired and hit him in the gut he managed to cough up “You’re not just going to leave me here are you?”

Casey shrugged his shoulders and then nodded “Yeah I was, is there a problem?” He began to ascend down, “It’s not like you don’t deserve it, plus, the cops will be here at any moment, suck it up until then.”

The prone thug took several more balls to the chest region, screaming out after each hit, hoping to assist the cops in finding his whereabouts sooner. The cops finally found the man, about ten balls later, the one cops shut the machine down as the other one cut the rope.

“What took you two so long?” The thug grabbed the rope that bound him and tossed it to the side. He grabbed a hold of some of the baseballs “Take these to your station, get them fingerprinted, I’m sure the Hun will want to know who this vigilante is.”

“The boss wants to know what you told him.”

The thug replied “Nothing he wouldn’t figure out on his own, trust me, I wouldn’t jeopardize the shipment. Now let’s get back and tell him what we know.”

Casey snuck back inside his shop, tossed the equipment off and grabbed one of the newspapers “Hmm, Drugs, weapons smuggling, whores and slavery, this is bigger than I thought.”

The next night, April was with her cameraman roaming in the news van, searching for some news on the masked vigilante “Come on Frankie, it’s the only way.” She begged her driver to follow her plan. “It’s for the story of the century; you know it’ll be worth it.”

“Yeah, look at it in my perspective, you want me to fake mug you.”

April, bewildered to where this was going “Yah, so, it’s more believable for a man to mug a girl.”

Frankie, sounding honestly scared “You see what this guy does to muggers, heck, even purse snatchers.” He drove the van down the road “He beats them to a bloody pulp, every criminal that’s faced him ends up in the ER.”

April chuckled “Come on silly, we’ll stop him long before he touches you.” She then pointed towards an alleyway “Turn down there, now grow some balls, you won’t be famous if you don’t take risks.”

Frankie pulled the van down the alley, taking a deep breath “You owe me April.”

She smiled “Just put it on my tab.” She then got out, Frankie as well; she set up the camera as her cameraman, put on the provided ski mask and grabbed a hold of her purse.

“Oh, help me, please help!” April, very poorly acting, cried out, trying to fend off her, so-called attacker. Frankie tugged and pulled, faking the act as best he could without actually dealing any significant damage.

“Come on lady, hand it over.”

Out from the shadows, an agitated looking Casey jumped in, wielding a ball bat in his left hand “That purse doesn’t suit you punk.” He then charged forward, a scared and panicked Frankie quickly released his grip on the purse and dropped to the ground in the fetal position.

He cried out like a little girl “Oh God, please don’t hurt me.”

April shook her head in disgust as she placed herself between Casey and her cameraman “Wait, please don’t hurt him!”

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Casey, a little befuddled looked around, he then saw the news van off in the distance and the camera set up on the tripod near the wall. "Ok, what's going on here, some sick snuff stuff?" He didn't quite recognize the reporter; after all, she was wearing a cheese ball disguise.

April aided Frankie to his feet as she explained. "No, I'm April O'Neil, channel six news, this is Frankie, my cameraman." Frankie waved as he sat down and caught his breath as she extended her hand for a friendly handshake.

Casey pieced together what they were trying to accomplish. "So, you set up a fake mugging to get my attention?" He paced around, looking for an ambush.

"You're quite the story; I just want five minutes for an interview." She went on revealing her plan, "What better way to get a vigilantes attention than to set up a fake mugging?"

"You know, setting up fake crimes is still illegal right?"

April defended herself "So is beating people near death."

Casey ignored her comment "Listen, I don't have time for make belief, go interview the people I save and ask them if the, punishment I dish out, is going too far."

April, trying to get the man to stay pleaded. "Sorry, I never said I was against it."

Casey was almost back in the shadows when he replied. "I just hope no one got seriously hurt while I was distracted here, shouldn't cry wolf Miss O'Neil, I might ignore the next time."

"Please, the police are calling you a criminal, saying you're taking justice too far, any comments?"

"Sure" He was now gone in the darkness. "At least my justice is being heard by the slime that tries to beat up innocent people." He then fled the scene and continued on his patrolling route.

April to Frankie she smiled. "Nice fall there Princess."

Frankie was disassembling the equipment. "Hey, he was going to kill me, I just knew it."

She now looked flustered "This is going to be a lot tougher of a story to crack than any other, this guy isn't searching for fame and glory, how are we going to get an interview?"

Off on the docks, in a giant warehouse, hundreds of men, teenagers gathered, the adults, all branding with the purple dragon tattoo on the left arm and shoulder, three men stood at the front of the herd, the main guy, bald, dragon tattoo covering his bald scalp, very muscular build, standing around six-four, dark tanned skin, he raised both hands in the air, signalling for everyone to be silent. Either side of him, were the two cops that saved the thug from Casey's torture chamber earlier.

"My fellow Dragons, we have a new enemy on our turf. I know none of us want to see this man bring us down, so I urge you to, seek him out, bring him back here, so we can all show him the true meaning of justice and power. And that no one can stop, the Purple Dragons!" Everyone in the warehouse cheered while chanting the Purple Dragon name.

Back at the Channel Six news building: April approached Irma at her much cluttered desk, as she was busy typing away on her story. "Irma, I need a favour." Irma was a tiny brunette, pinned up in a ponytail, with oversized pink glasses and wearing a blue wool turtleneck, a purple skirt, she talked like her nose was plugged and quite fast.

"I'm busy with my story." Irma continued to type and talk to April.

April lowered her tone "It's about the masked vigilante."

Irma stopped typing and turned in her swivelled office chair to face April "The biggest story, what can I do?"

"I think I know how to unmask him." She continued on, Irma listening inattentively all the way. "Remember that favour you owe me?" She then erected a nice innocent smile.

Irma, not liking where this was going "Yeah, but you don't need to cash it in, not for this. I just want credit too."

“Done, ok, I need you to look over some files.” She pulled out the best picture she had with her, it wasn’t a nice clear picture, it was dark out, grainy, some shadows and Casey was running in it. “From the height and other physical indicators, I figure we can figure out who this guy is.”

Irma seemed somewhat optimistic, nodded “Yeah ok, I’m on board, where should we start looking?”

“Well, there’s the good news, I believe he played professional at some point, I say recent since I don’t think he’s that old. So, look at rookie pictures...”

Irma cut April off in mid sentence “Photos from where, which team?”

“Try them all, how many can there be right?”

Irma then asked the final horrible question, one she sure she didn’t want to hear but had to ask “Ok, now which sport am I looking up?”

“I don’t know that one either, try the popular ones first and go from there.”

Irma, knowing she got herself in deep now “That’s going to take forever, I don’t know which sport is popular.”

April shrugged her shoulders “Neither do I, ask Verne, he’ll know. Maybe use those women skills and persuade him to help, any way I got to go, busy, busy!” April ran off before Irma could say another word.

Casey roamed the alleyways looking to feed his hatred for crime, fuelling every minute, he was thinking hard on what that thug from earlier had told him, when an upright business man, on his cellular phone, finished his chocolate bar and tossed the dirty wrapper down the lane where Casey stood and landed on his boot. “Litterbugs,” He picked up the wrapper “the worst kind of insect” and ran down the street towards the perp on the phone, picked him up from behind, startling the man, causing him to release his hold of the phone, stuffed the trash in his mouth, found the nearest garbage can, which wasn’t far, and tossed him in head first all the way so only his legs were dangling out. “This is where the litter goes bug.” He then wiped his hands as he heard a voice coming from the phone on the ground, Casey held it to his hear so he could listen better.

“Hello, Bob, you still there?”

Casey, in a deep granular tone replied “Littering 101, save the land, toss your trash in the can.” He then hung up the call and tossed the phone in the garbage where the owner of said phone was upside down, frantically trying to pull himself out. People on the streets backed away from the masked vigilante as he leapt back into the shadows, once they knew he was long gone, they then aided the poor man in the trash can.

The next day: April was on the news channel, so Casey turned it up to see what she was going to say. “Is he really here to help, or cause trouble, more on this masked vigilante tonight. Friend or foe, I say friend. With the police closing in on him, what will happen with the low crime rate? Well all I can say is with this masked hero behind bars, criminals will go back to what they do best, committing crimes. So, is it safer with this man behind bars, is his severe beatings of people victimizing others right? Please send us your thoughts and come down to the station to sign a, save the vigilante, protest.”

Casey smiled, “That a girl.” He then fixed the blender he had been working on “Of course, if these punks think she’s helping me, then she could be in danger...”

That night, April was walking through the parking lot towards her car, about to get in; the door slammed shut and standing in her way, were two Purple Dragon thugs. “Hello Miss O’Neil.” He then banged his fist into the other hand “We hear you’re doing a story on this, masked vigilante.”

Nervous, she took a step back and retorted “yeah, you can say that. I’m also doing a story on crime and in the city, comments?”

The thugs didn’t seem to share Miss O’Neil’s jokes “You think this is a game? You think we’re joking” He turned to the other one “I guess we’ll have to prove we mean business.”

The other thug smiled "I guess so."

Casey appeared behind the goons, he looked at each one, first thing he noticed, both men were tattooed with the same logo, the Purple Dragon. He decided to make his presence known "Penalty, too many men on the ice." Surprised and confused, both thugs turned to see who it was behind them, the one on the right was the first to see a hockey stick connected to the side of his face and render him unconscious, while the other used the lead pipe in hand to disarm Casey. Jones then took a professional boxer's stance.

"You'll pay for that."

"We'll see" Casey was moving side to side, much like a boxer fighting, the thug took a swing with the pipe as Casey sidestepped the attack and delivered a perfect uppercut to the man's jaw "Rope-a-dope that scuzzbucket." He caused the attacker to drop his weapon, fall back on his ass and sit there dazed and confused. He then grabbed the goon by the collar, lift him up to his feet, so they were face to mask "I'm going to let you live, for now." He then, using his free hand, pulled out his ball bat and swung at the man's knee, fracturing the bone. The man quickly dropped to his knees and screamed out in pain, Casey then took one look at April "We better bail" He then grabbed her by the arm and took her into the alley's shadows.

On a nearby rooftop: April panicking about her recent attack and what she just witnesses "Ok, you said you were going to let him go, then you bashed his knee in..."

"No, I said I'm going to let him live," Casey, in a low tone of voice, as he peered over the ledge "I'm using him as a tool."

"Then why am I here still."

Casey looked at her, and with an innocent tone replied "I thought you wanted an interview."

April smirked, "Yeah, but not like this."

Casey revealed his true intentions for her sticking around "No, I read you did some stories a few months back now about the Purple Dragons. I was wondering, since you seem like a great reporter, how much do you know?"

"Like what exactly, I could dig for more info."

"I want to know where their HQ is, the crooked cops involved, I don't care what they're shipping or selling, for me, this is revenge."

April revealed one flaw in Casey's plan "Crooked cops, that'll be hard to dig up, might take some time."

"Oh, I got that covered," He peeked back over the edge to where he left his crippled foe, "I assume, he'll call for help and they'll send their cops to retrieve him."

And just as Casey predicted, the crooked cops eventually came to the thug's rescue, April's jaw dropped when she saw which two they were.

"Now way... Charles?"

Casey, assuming they knew one another, asked eager to know what she knew "What, what is it? You know this pig?"

April, upset from what she was seeing, nodded her head and replied "Yeah, we grew up together, and he was in my apartment a month back when I was researching the Purple Dragons. He gave me info on them for my story."

Casey was surprised to hear the corrupt cop gave out information "Really, I wonder why he would do that?" He then thought more into it "To set her up, love..." He then saw the goon get into the back seat and the police cruiser began to slowly drive away. Casey then ran for the fire escape, April sidestepped in his way.

"You saved my life, thank you."

Casey nodded as he continued around her "Don't mention it."

"Anything you need" She let him climb down, "Just ask, please, I want to help."

Casey stopped "Can I borrow a camera?"

April was now by the ledge as he reached the ground "Sure, in the van there."

Casey grabbed the camera and quickly followed the cruiser driving out of the alleyway; the cruiser then turned on the busy road and proceeded down it as Casey jumped in the back of a taxicab. "Follow that cruiser."

The cabbie was stunned when he looked in his rear-view mirror to see the masked vigilante in his backseat "Holy moley, the masked vigilante in my cab, this is too amazing."

"Great, I'm happy, follow that car." Jones was becoming impatient, the car was getting away.

"Can I get a picture for my kids?" The overwhelmed with joy man asked.

Casey gripped tightly, one of the bats in his golf bag "If you don't get moving, I'll sign your forehead with my bat." It was good incentive, the cabbie, took the hint and hit the gas. They caught up to the police cruiser before they went out of line of sight.

The police car went for a while, across town, eventually pulling into an alleyway near the docks, Casey told the cabbie to pull over, let him take his picture and got out. Using a stealthy approach, Casey used the shadows to stay hidden and make his way behind some crates and saw the two cops standing by the docks, alongside the thug talking to a few dockworkers with trucks nearby. He was within earshot now and heard everything.

"Hmm, foreign objects in the field." He muttered to himself as he got the camera ready.

Charles took a look around "This is the shipment we're been waiting for? Doesn't look like much to me, you sure it's all in there?"

"A dozen labourers and six weapon crates is all we could manage to sneak in this time." The dock man cautiously explained, he knew, making these people angry, meant bad things could happen to him "Securities getting tight and with this masked vigilante running amuck, my men are scared and refuse to work." Several other members of the Dragons appeared, handed the cops some money to, persuade the cops to shoot the vigilante first, ask questions later.

"Aw, they want me dead, feelings mutual." Casey took lots of pictures as the corrupt officers walked back to their cruiser. As they went to get in, Casey jumped the one on the passenger side, ramming his head into the door, knocking him out fast, and tossing his bat at the other one across the roof, hitting him square in the chops. He handcuffed both cops together, stuffed the money in their mouths and radioed for backup. "Yeah, these goons need some help at the docks, get here, quick." Some female voice tried to talk to Casey, asking for more specific details, but he tossed the radio back into the car and ran off, only to go kidnap and tie up, somewhere far away, another goon for the Purple Dragons.

This time, he had a golf tee set up and the random goon tied up a few yards away, Casey standing there, holding a nine-iron and, as the thug awoke, his eyes focused as Casey set up a ball on the tee. "Yo man, what are you doing?"

Casey then set up for the tee-off shot "Simple, I'm going to ask you the whereabouts of your headquarters and you're going to play tough guy, not tell me and I'm going to have to dish out some medicine."

"I ain't telling you spit, go ahead." The thug spat towards the vigilante as he smiled.

"See told you. Fore!" He swung, the club connected with the ball, sending it through the air at incredible speeds, the ball hit the man right in the private area, then bouncing away on the hard rooftop. "Hole in... one!"

"Listen fool" The thug cringed to talk, he was trying his best to mask the pain he was experiencing "I rather die than to spill the whereabouts to our lair, especially to you."

Casey was looking at the head of the iron club, he then placed it on the victims shoulder, "Listen punk, I want to keep this game much like golf, fewest strokes possible ok." He then swung the club and hit the thug in the kneecap, possibly breaking the joint. The man screamed out in sheer pain "Where were we, oh that's right, you were saying?"

“They’ll kill me if I tell.” Casey tapped the club on the same knee, causing more aggravating pain.

“Hmm, what do you think I’ll do?” Casey took a step back and had a quick thought to himself, he took a second look at the thug, grabbed his things and left. Across town at April’s apartment: It was a two story loft, nicely furnished, elegant, yet, warm and comfy too. She was in the shower when Casey opened her window the floor below and helped himself in. He searched thoroughly through her computer desk and files as she finished, put a towel around her body and came downstairs for something. She was humming to herself, with another towel over her face while going to the kitchen, grabbing a yogurt from the refrigerator, Casey, stopped, and just stood there like he was frozen, hoping she wouldn’t see nor hear him and continue back upstairs. She came over towards her desk, took the towel off from her face and saw the masked man in her apartment. She didn’t scream, he didn’t seem angry, well, until she remembered she was in a towel. “What are you doing in here?”

Casey put both hands in a defensive position, showing her he didn’t mean her no harm “Listen, don’t get angry...”

She noticed he wasn’t looking at her face, she glared at him “Turn around you pig” Casey obliged; she then asked “What do you want?”

Casey, talking to the wall “I was hoping you were able to find out the info I asked earlier?”

She stood there, going along with the conversation, replied “I did.”

“So, you were able to locate the base of ops?”

“We stumbled upon a few, took some investigating to figure out which one was the correct one. But the cops took most of them down...”

“Well, where is it?”

April walked over to her desk, pulled out a file “Hmm, I see you were rummaging through my desk” She reached under the keyboard tray, Casey, trying to be a gentleman didn’t take a peek, she pulled out he hidden file and walked back to where she stood before “Irma found this place out. Seemed fishy so she figured it had to be the right place, considering the cops didn’t hit this one because, supposedly, it’s out of their jurisdiction.”

Casey hit his palm, “But not mine, good, where is it?”

“Hold it hotshot, I’m coming with you, this is going to be the story.”

“Sorry, no girls allowed on my team.”

April shrugged her shoulders, she hated that answer but, played along “Fine, no girls on the team means I don’t have to tell you anything, have a good night.” Casey smirked while shaking his head.

“You think it’s that easy huh” He turned to face her; she stood there, holding what he wanted “What’s stopping me from coming over there and grabbing it off of you?”

She smiled back, “Nothing” She then waved the file in her hand and playfully commented “Here it is cowboy.” Jones, being all cocky, strutted over slowly, not liking the game being played on him, he reached for the file, but April quickly switched hands. Casey, taking a deep, impatient breath reached for the other hand, only to have April spin quickly around and trip the masked man flat onto his ass. “Got to have better moves than that” She then giggled.

Casey, while on his back, looked somewhat impressed with the trip kick “Nice moves.”

As he was slowly getting up to his feet, she replied “I took a self defence course a while back, to fend off muggers and ex-boyfriends.”

“I’m glad I’m neither.” He straightened his attire up, picking up random clubs and sticks that fell out “You’re not going to let me have those are you?”

“Not until you let me in, you can trust me.”

Casey scratched his dark long haired head, “Listen, it’s not that I don’t trust you, I don’t want to see you get hurt.”

Outside of the reporter’s apartment, several Purple Dragon members gathered, they stood on the rooftop, out of sight, across the street, witnessing what was taking place. The lead goon then spoke up,

but in a whisper "So, the reporter and vigilante are in cahoots. You two," He pointed towards two random members near the back of the group "go back and let the Hun know, we'll snag her once he leaves and bring her back, see what she and he knows."

April handed him a wooden bat she picked up "As you can see, I can take care of myself rather fine."

"Yeah, like back there with the van, right?" He then smirked, she gave in and handed over the file, "Thanks, you can be on the team."

She blushed as she let loose a tiny smirk "Thank you."

Casey then added "Yeah, every team needs hot cheerleaders in skimpy skirts." And without a comeback, he ran swiftly for the same window he entered and hopped down the fire escape.

"He's lucky he's cute and a great story." She grabbed the loose towel and headed back upstairs and got changed, meanwhile, the Dragon goons, snuck into her apartment and began to knock everything over, the leader of the group, then lit a match and set the curtains on fire. April, unaware of what was happening, came back downstairs, and heard some commotion.

"You came back..." She then saw the fire, and before she could yell a weep, her mouth was gagged and she was tied up and carried out the window...

A few rooftops away, Casey stopped to look over the files a little better, a few thugs from the Dragon's had followed him and sneaking up from all sides. Casey, without a flashlight, was trying to see, in the dark, the lights from the streets weren't enough to read the words, "damn night sky" He held the paper up towards the moon hoping it's light could shine on his problem at hand. He then heard the sounds of sirens coming from fire trucks, ambulances and police, sounded like they were headed for a building in the area of April's place; he turned around just in time to see a Dragon member about to strike him from behind. "Attacking from behind huh, bad play." He sidestepped the attack, only to be struck by another thug from that direction, hitting Casey in the chest pad, not really hurting him. He took several steps back while drawing a golf club. The five thugs were now side by side, moving forward, ready to make a move.

Casey pulled out a golf ball from his pouch "Hold up, I got something to show ya." He then dropped the ball, but before it hit the ground, he whacked it back up, using the club. "Tiger woods' isn't the only one with game." He was keeping the ball in the air by whacking it constantly using just the head of the club; the five thugs were quite impressed. Distracted by Casey's skills, he took the opportunity to then swing the club around, striking the ball and sending it flying towards on one in the middle private region. "That trick always drives em nuts." He put the club away and pulled out the croquet mallet he had. The other four men able to move engaged in a brawl. Casey swung the mallet, hitting another thug square in the private area "Roquet! Bonus shot for me" As he brought the mallet up and hit the man in the jaw, knocking the victim out. Before Casey could react, another thug pushed him from behind, knocking him to the ground causing him to release his grip of the mallet. The thug was about to take action on the prone man, until Casey sweep kicked his attacker, tripping him to the ground as well.

He got back to his feet before the others had reached him as he pulled out a curling broom; his unimpressed reaction was quite humorous, "Ok, damn discount stores." He lunged forward and took a swing "Hurry hard!" as he broke the shaft of the broom over the head of the one thug, taking him out for the night. The next thug charged the unarmed man and took a swing, but Casey easily parried the attack as he pulled out a cue stick "How about some nine ball?" He punched the thug in the face, then, using the cue, he whacked the victim in the junk nine consecutive times; the ninth time broke the cue.

"That's one rack." As the thug dropped to his knees; groping his crotch praying for all that pain to go away. The next thug came forward as the masked man pulled out his trusty hockey stick, using both hands, he trusted the shaft forward, connecting the stick to the victim's chest, not only winding him, but knocking him clean onto his rear end as well.

“Before you try,” Casey stopped the final delinquent before he tried to attack him “Look around, I just whipped these hooligans butts, so, ask yourself one question, do I feel lucky?” He then heard some whispering coming from the side of the building, towards the staircase leading up to the roof.

“This way” Casey turned his head quickly, he still couldn’t see who it was, wasting no more time on the roof, he brought the stick around and the blade sliced across the last thug standing’s face, cutting just above the right eye and knocking him right over. Casey then ran over to the ledge, peered down to see two other police men, scaling the stairs, closing the gap between them.

“They said they were on this roof with him, we need to move.” The lead cop told the other “The Hun wants him alive, but if we have to, dead is ok too.”

Casey groaned to himself as he stepped back from the ledge “Great, the bias referee’s.” He turned around just in time, the goon he left just asking himself a question was sneaking up behind him, about to strike, when he noticed Casey turning and seeing his plan, he suddenly stopped, gave a half ass laugh and then bolted the opposite way. Casey quickly made his way to one of the unconscious bodies, picked the body up over his shoulder and hauled it over as fast as he could towards the fire escape where the cops were about to reach the surface.

Casey then lifted the body over his head and waited until he saw the whites of the policeman’s eyes and when they reached the top of the ledge, Casey hollered out, surprising both victims as he hurled the body down towards them “Blow your whistle on this!” The thug’s body collided with the shocked officers causing them all to tumble back down a few flights of stairs. Casey, wasting absolutely no time, ran off, jumping from rooftop to rooftop back towards April’s house.

Upon his arrival, the fire-fighters were already hosing the water at the giant flames engulfing her apartment; he knew he couldn’t get an inch closer without being seen. And he knew exactly who did this “Damn those lawbreakers, bringing a girl into the game.” He banged his fist into the other palm, Casey then left the scene and headed back to his repair shop and restocked on his weaponry.

Casey pulled the white dusty sheet covering his nicely restored Harley motorcycle, took a seat and started the engine up, it roared like a beast, the sound echoing in the repair shop, he hit the button for the automatic doors and once there was enough clearance, he hit the throttle and drove off, with the doors closing behind him. The drive from his place to the warehouse on the docks was a long drive, being spotted by the police along the way was a big risk factor, but Casey didn’t care, he hoped the cops followed him, as long as they were far enough behind so he can get April out alive and kick some lawbreakers behinds, he didn’t care.

When he reached a block away from the headquarters of the Purple Dragons, he stopped and turned off the bike. He hid it nice and well and went over to the phone booth, he dialled 911.

“Hello, 911, state your emergency.”

In a deep gritty tone Casey informed her. “Yeah, better get here as soon as possible, about four dozen lawbreakers are about to experience major league justice.” He then dropped the receiver, exited the booth and headed for the warehouse.

On the other end, the woman kept on repeating, “Hello, sir, you still there?”

The warehouse was an old beaten down factory, Casey wasn’t sure what for, but he knew it was big enough to house all of the Dragons extracurricular activities. The time it took for him to overlook the area, gaining knowledge of the safe spots and where everything was, several unmarked white vans had entered and left, their contents, unknown but assumed either drugs, weapons or slaves. Several goons patrolled the exterior perimeter, but not much sign of high-tech gear such as cameras and snipers in towers.

Casey hopped the fence unnoticed and made a stealthy jog to the wall of the warehouse where he heard, quite distinctively, footsteps treading through dirt, coming his way from around the corner. He pulled out a golf ball from his umpire pouch and gave it a hearty toss “Fore!” He yelled softly, gaining

just the attention of the goon rounding the corner. The thug heard, looked to see what made the subtle noise and last thing he saw was the ball hitting him square in the temple, knocking him clean out.

Not wanting to waste time or the opportunity, Casey climbed the ladder attached to the wall to get up to the roof before he raised further suspicion.

On the roof were several skylights, his access in. Since there were a total of three floors, Casey decided to start his investigation with the top figuring it was his best choice in finding April. He slowly opened the window panel, trying his best to not make a sound, as he saw five goons, standing guard on the floor below him. He set the fragile piece down gently, knowing full well, any aggressive nature to this item, will cause it to shatter and create lots of noise and alarm his prey down below, it remained in one piece as he drew his hockey stick, preparing himself for battle.

“Hmm, power play, guess I’m on the penalty kill, I like it.” He whispered in a deep tone, as he surveyed the group of five and he jumped down, landed in the middle of their circle. With a vast mighty swing, he made a three-sixty motion at head level, taking out three goons in the process; the remaining two were just barely able to dodge the surprise attack.

The thug to the right of Casey made a lunged forward, tackling the vigilante, but not knocking him over. The masked man was too big for him, both confused and unimpressed, Casey watched as the thug struggled to, “hug” him and bring him down. After a disappointed sigh, Casey elbowed him in the back of the head, knocking him right out. “Ok scuzzbucket, you’re going to tell me where the reporter girl is.”

“Screw you freak,” Casey, not liking the attitude, punched him in the jaw, slightly dazing him, grabbed a chunk of his Mohawk and dragged him over to the nearby wall.

“Ok punk, new game, you ever heard of whack-a-mole?” Casey, using that deep gritty tone he’s known for; smashed the goons head straight into the drywall, leaving a nice dent. “Now mole, spill your guts.” He didn’t wait for an answer as he bashed the head the Mohawk thug several more times. After a broken nose, several scratches scattered across his face; the victim spat blood out all over the wall and boasted.

“That’s all you got?” And then broke out laughing, as Casey patience grew thin. The thug added. “I heard you were scarier than this. If this is all you’ve got; then the Hun will surely kill you.”

Casey shrugged his shoulders saying, “Have it your way punk.” And with all his might, he shoved the goons head further imbedded into the wall, striking the wooden stud rendering the Mohawk man unconscious.

Casey marched forward, leaving no room on this floor unchecked. The final door Casey came to was locked; but a hefty boot kick opened it with ease. Inside was not April like he had hoped, but several dozen women and children in rags, beaten and scared to see such a commanding presence at the doorway. “Those monsters,” Casey saw the malnourished, severely injured foreigners who were too scared to make even the slightest sound. He held out his hand to a few of the adult women and in a soft, caring tone stated. “I’m here to help you, take my hand let’s go.”

But the prisoner’s didn’t budge, in fact they even cowered further into the corners of the room. Casey knew he wasn’t the best dressed man to convince them otherwise and was losing his already short patience. “Better choice, stay here, the law will come save you soon.”

Casey turned around and continued to search for April. He knew two things, the cops were on the way and at any moment, some straggler will be coming across the piles of unconscious bodies that were piling up and alert the rest. If he wanted to continue his search with ease, he had to move fast. He swiftly and silently made his way down the stairs, brought down a few unaware thugs along the way and found himself on the second floor.

The first door he opened revealed a giant meth lab which took up nearly half of the second floor. His presence alone frightened most of the scrawny scientists who were working. They all knew this man’s reputation and without question, scurried for the exits, not wanting to be part of this man’s wrath.

There weren't much of the way of drugs; one would assume they had just emptied their stash. But the equipment to produce was still there so, Casey took it upon himself to swing, with the ball bat and destroyed as much as possible. While knocking random vials and chemicals over he started a fire that, in this lab, quickly spread. With a wicked grin Casey exclaimed. "Adding fire, now it's an extreme sport!"

Some thugs entered the laboratory on the opposite side as Casey, all wielding random pistols and taking aim, firing off some sporadic shots, all missing as the masked man ducked and took some cover. Using the tables and fire to conceal his whereabouts, he quickly made his way over to the goons using firearms. From his pouch he pulled out several pool balls, peeked up over the counter and spotted some thugs who were looking the opposite way. So he used this advantage and hurled the hard balls while saying, "Two ball, corner pocket!" three out of the four balls struck their intended targets, knocking those men out.

With his weapon out, the remaining thug panicked and scanned in all directions searching for the man to shoot. Out of nowhere Casey appeared behind him and when the man eventually came around, Casey caught the arm holding the gun, knocked it out of the goons hand and stated, "Why don't you sit this out?" as he punched him in the face, breaking his nose and the thug blacked out.

Casey checked the rest of the floor, no signs of April or this Hun fellow everyone keeps mentioning. He made haste to the last floor, wasn't hard to find April, since she was sitting in a wooden chair, bound and gagged in the middle of the open area with no signs of anyone around.

The ceiling was now beginning to weaken and collapse due to the fire; thugs were evacuating the premise, only to be captured by the police who now were just arriving on the scene.

Casey, not wasting any time, ignored the obvious signs of a trap and not to mention, the subtle grunts coming from the gagged reporter, who was obviously trying to indicate something was amidst. So with his trusty hockey stick firmly grasped in his hand, he approached and started to unbind her.

Once the gag was removed, she warned him, "It's a trap!"

Casey nodded "Yeah, I still had to come..." And before he could finish, he was struck from behind. Standing over his dazed self, was when a dark figure who didn't hesitate to jump kick him when he managed to get to his feet. It sent Casey face first onto the ground.

The Hun was wearing just a black karate gee as he took a skilled martial art defensive stance and waited for his foe to get back up before making his next move. Radiating blissful sheer confidence, the Hun chuckled and asked. "This is the scary masked man I was warn about?"

"Listen here Martha Stewart; let's not get your potpourri all ruffled." Casey replied as he struggled to get back up. The Hun, not wasting any time, rushed the prone man and kicked him in the side, right in the ribcage. On one knee, Casey remarked. "I know girls that hit harder than..." A foot to Casey's face interrupted the next comment and his mask flew off, revealing his true identity. Underneath the mask was a dirty, tired and bloody face of a rage filled Casey.

The Hun aided his foe to his feet and delivered a devastating head butt which knocked him back down. The random sports equipment in the golf bag fell out and scattered all about. Once again, an irritated Casey got to his feet just as the Hun went for a palm strike but this time Casey was able to just duck under and retaliate with his own punch to the Hun's jaw.

Rubbing his sore jaw, the Hun remarked. "Nice moves, for a rookie." And then spun around and delivered a roundhouse kick to Casey, once again, sending his victim to the ground. The vigilante took a moment to shake off the daze and collect his bearings.

The Hun continued to cackle, feeling quite cocky with the situation even with his base of operations about to come crashing down at any given moment due to the fire around him. While prone on the ground, the Hun felt no guilt and took much pleasure as he proceeded to kick Casey in the side of the skull several times.

Seeing his foe motionless, the Hun used Casey's lingo against him. "Game over sport, you're going to lose here." From his belt, the Hun drew a knife and made his way over to a squirming April to finish her off. Casey all bruised, cut and beaten, managed to get back up as the blood dripped from his cut lip.

In his infamous deep stern tone, he said. "I didn't hear the bell Lawbreaker." With the Hun baffled as he turned, Casey lunged forth and was able to catch him off guard as he tackled him; both men landed hard on the ground.

Casey rolled on top and delivered a few rabid punches, each dealing a painful blow since he was wearing those brass knuckles gloves he made. After a few lucky shots, the Hun overthrew him and shoved him off.

With both men staggering to get back to their feet, Casey found his polo mallet and was facing the back of the Hun. Meanwhile, the Hun was frantically searching for his attacker as Casey hollered out, "Marco!" and waited until they were both face to face before swinging the mallet around and added, "Polo!" When the end of the mallet struck the side of the Hun's head the shaft cracked in half, cracked the Hun's jaw and rendered him unconscious.

In a rush, the building on the verge of collapsing on top of them, Casey stood a few paces behind the bound reporter and rubbed his sore wounds.

April sensed the battle was over and said. "Nicely done, now untie me before this place burns down and kills us."

"Stop bickering," Casey smiled as he recovered his mask to conceal his identity once more and made his way to April. He then released her from the duct tape and remarked. "There, now get going, and tell the Law whose just outside there are hostages on the second floor, I'm assuming their fleeing now, but you never truly know."

April began to run, but noticed he wasn't behind her, he was gathering his scattered weapons. "What about you?"

Placing them all back in the golf bag, he answered. "I'm not that crazy lady; that way is trouble for me. I'm going out the back, backdoor."

Both fled, the fire-fighters barged into the burning warehouse, the slaves by that point were running out of the smoky floor, paramedics came to their aid, Police arrested most of the Purple Dragons that were exiting the building as the fire-fighters hauled out the unconscious body of their leader. Police officers cuffed him immediately and tossed him away in the back of the paddy wagon.

A disgruntled Chief Stern's was on scene, looking at all the thugs being apprehended. "Is he here, where is he, I want answers."

The one thug, able to speak replied. "I think he got away." He then snickered; Stern pressed down on the thugs wounds.

"You think this is funny?" He then saw April being aided by some paramedics in the back of an ambulance, he rushed right over. "Miss O'Neil I know you have some answers for me."

"He did this Sterns, he took out the Purple Dragons; something the police couldn't do and have been trying for years. Excuse me; I have a story to report live in five." Frank, the cameraman was there, with the equipment all set up, ready to go when she was ready.

She had the microphone. "Hi, this is April live on scene here at the Purple Dragons secret location, where one man was able to infiltrate and stop their organization for good. With the Hun off the streets, most of the thugs locked up, you can be sure the streets will be a little safer tonight. And it's all thanks to that masked vigilante that the police so desperately want to stop."

The police was making its way back to the precinct when all of the sudden, an explosion flipped the van, two figures in total black ninja gee jumped from the shadows, tossed a shrunken at the officers in the front cab, blew open the locked door and pulled out the injured leader of the Purple Dragons. They

T.M.N.T.

brought him safely back to an undisclosed area, where he awoke in a small white room, in a metal chair and a light shining bright in his face.

“Good, you’re alive.” An ominous sounding voice greeted his victim.

The Hun, not bound to the chair, stood up, taking an authoritative stance, he was totally alone in the small room, and with a stern tone he asked. “Do you know who I am?”

The voice, radiating self-assurance and very smug sounding replied. “I know exactly who you are; why else do you think I recruited you.”

The Hun mockingly laughed at such a thought, “Recruited? I own my own clan friend, I don’t join others; they join me.”

“Not this time, welcome to the Foot...”

THE END