

VIGILANCE: PILOT

Written by

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Based on, Characters created by Gabby Rico and Kieran C. Herman

Address  
Phone Number

EXT. EMPTY STREET. NIGHT

**TITLE: SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS. OCTOBER 30, 2012**

Two teenagers are seen walking together down an empty street, dressed as makeshift superheroes. Halloween decorations can be seen on the fronts and windows of closed stores as they walk.

JAMES (17), a heavier-set teenager leads the way, walking backwards. His costume looks reminiscent of Bat-Man mixed with The Winter Soldier.

GABBY (15), a petite-yet-curvaceous young woman lags further behind. Her costume resembles a Gothic-Lolita Bat-Girl.

JAMES

Troy is a dick. I swear to god the only reason he kicked us out is because I beat him at beer pong!

GABBY

They kicked you out, *Bucky*. And it might have had something to do with you flirting with his girlfriend.

JAMES turns around, leaning against a streetlight as he waits for GABBY to catch up with him.

JAMES

Oh, come on! You know I can't fucking stand Sarah.

JAMES turns around as GABBY reaches him, crossing the street and approaching a convenience store.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Hey, if you weren't kicked out, why'd you leave? You looked like you were having a great time hugging up on Damian!

GABBY rushes after him, pulling a small metal rod from her belt and playfully hitting him behind the knee with it, nearly causing him to fall over.

GABBY

No way! You know he's gay, right?

She replaces the metal rod and playfully steps ahead of JAMES

JAMES

Bullshit!

JAMES playfully taps his temple, as if gesturing to his brain.

JAMES (CONT'D)  
I have excellent Gay-dar; And it  
doesn't go off when my brother  
walks into the room!

GABBY  
Trust me, he's gayer than a San  
Francisco parade. Besides, I  
couldn't let you walk home alone.  
Not this late.

JAMES smiles as they reach the door of the convenience store,  
pushing the door open before GABBY can reach it.

The pair enter:

INT. CONVENIENCE STORE. NIGHT.

As the two investigate the aisles, CLERK emerges from the  
bathroom, wiping his hands on his shirt. He passes JAMES and  
GABBY and steps behind the counter, glaring into the security  
mirror in the corner of the shop.

JAMES  
You know, modern society dictates  
that you aren't *allowed* to be  
concerned for my wellbeing.

CLERK noisily slams a bold-printed plastic sign down on the  
counter.

-"PLEASE REMOVE ANY MASKS UPON ENTERING"  
-"WE APPRECIATE YOUR UNDERSTANDING"

GABBY and JAMES look over their shoulders and ignore the  
sign. GABBY walks off to the bathroom as JAMES walks over to  
the drink cooler and begins viewing the selection of energy  
drinks. As the bathroom door opens, GABBY tells JAMES:

GABBY  
Fuck modern society.

CRIMINAL enters the convenience store through a door opposite  
the one GABBY and JAMES entered from. His head facing  
downwards as he approaches the counter. CLERK ignores him  
initially, playing on his phone before taking notice. CLERK  
scrambles to put his phone away.

CLERK

Shit, sorry man. How may I help you?

CRIMINAL

Fill up on 10.

CLERK pulls the Pump Control panel from under the counter and holds his thumb over the button, turning to look out the window. There are no cars in the lot. All pumps are empty. CLERK pulls his hand off of the button and turns to face CRIMINAL, who now has his gun pointed at CLERK and a makeshift ski-mask obscuring his face. He pulls off his messenger's bag with his free hand and drops it on the counter.

CRIMINAL (CONT'D)

I want all of it. The register and the safe.

CLERK tries to put his hand below the counter. CRIMINAL reaches over the counter and grabs CLERK's hand, holding it against the counter and slamming the bottom of the grip of his gun against it. CLERK shouts in pain.

CLERK

Oh, Fuck!

CRIMINAL lets go of CLERK's hand and brings the gun closer to CLERK's chest.

CRIMINAL

The register and the safe, let's go!

CLERK

Look man, we only got like 50 bucks in the register, I already made the drop.

CRIMINAL

Did I fucking ask how much was in there?!

GABBY slowly sneaks out of the bathroom. JAMES rests his back against one of the aisles, keeping himself obscured from CRIMINAL's vision. GABBY mouths the words "What the fuck?" To which JAMES mouths "Robbery." In response.

CLERK

Only the manager can get into the safe! I don't have the keys!

CRIMINAL waves the gun at CLERK, bashing him aside his face with the weapon.

CRIMINAL  
You are the manager, fuck face!  
It's on your name tag!

CRIMINAL grabs CLERK's collar and pulls him closer to the counter to keep him standing.

CRIMINAL (CONT'D)  
Now shut the fuck up before someone  
calls the cops!

GABBY walks down the hallway, past the bathrooms and into the back stock area. JAMES cautiously follows.

INT. BACK STOCK AREA. NIGHT

Once hidden behind a stack of boxes, GABBY whispers to JAMES

GABBY  
He's gonna kill him if we don't do  
something!

JAMES  
Grab your phone, I left mine at  
Troy's house. We'll call the cops.

GABBY shakes her head

GABBY  
My phone has been out for like a  
month. I left it at home.

JAMES  
Shit!

JAMES slumps against the cinder-block wall and sighs. After a moment, his eyes focus on the breaker box. There is a Master Cut-Off switch attached to the side.

JAMES (CONT'D)  
When I say "Go", pull that switch  
down, open that back door, and run.

INT. CONVENIENCE STORE. NIGHT.

CLERK is bent over the safe, emptying the contents into CRIMINAL's bag. Suddenly, the power to the entire convenience store cuts out, bathing everything in near total blackness.

Several things happen simultaneously.

-The two entrances lock down

-The security shutter around the counter drops down.

-CRIMINAL accidentally fires his gun twice. When the security gate drops down, and then the gate hits his arm. He misses CLERK.

-JAMES swings GABBY's metal rod, attached to his boot lace, at CRIMINAL, knocking him unconscious.

JAMES then grabs the unconscious CRIMINAL and drags him to the back of the store, locking him in the cold stock area before fleeing out the back door.

EXT. PARKING LOT. NIGHT.

**TITLE: SOME TIME LATER**

GABBY and JAMES, now dressed in street clothes, their makeup washed off, watch the commotion at the convenience store from afar.

JAMES  
I can't believe I did that.

GABBY  
I can't believe I missed all the fun.

JAMES  
You're kidding, right? I could have died. Me and that poor kid behind the counter!

GABBY  
But it was fun, wasn't it?

JAMES  
No fucking way!

GABBY  
You're an adrenaline junky. I know you, James.

JAMES pauses for a moment.

JAMES  
It wasn't fun, it was... exhilarating.

GABBY

And you want to do it again...?

GABBY smiles mischievously. JAMES laughs to himself, shaking his head.

JAMES

(Older, V.O.) And we did. Again, and again. At first, it was because we lived for the thrill. It wasn't until years later that we realized we were doing it because we wanted to make a difference.

As V.O. Begins, cue montage. We see JAMES and GABBY's vigilante career as it spans 5 years.

MONTAGE

-Newspaper Headline: Masked Vigilante Stops Robbery

-JAMES and GABBY defend a woman from a trio of muggers.

-GABBY fights off two gunmen with a long metal baton.

-JAMES pulls a father and his son out of a truck after a hit-and-run collision.

-Magazine Headline: Wave of Masked Vigilantism hits US.

-DAMIAN, JAMES's brother, sits in front of a 4-monitor computer setup. Multiple police radio scanners are set up beside him. DAMIAN is calmly speaking into a headset.

-Newspaper Headline: San Antonio's Guardian Shadows.

-JAMES, now fit and heavily muscled, carries two policemen from a burning building.

-The police catch GABBY in the act of attacking two gangsters. She calmly drops her weapons and turns around, placing her hands behind her back and lowering herself onto her knees. As two officers begin to cuff the two fallen criminals, a third officer helps her to her feet and hands her the weapons she dropped, shaking his head as if to say "Don't worry. We have your back."

-Newspaper Headline: Congress To Write Restrictions On Legal Vigilantism.

-PHOENIX, a new, high-tech vigilante, fights side-by-side with JAMES and GABBY during a police raid on a drug operation.

-Newspaper Headline: Councilman Earnst on New Wave of Vigilantism: "The presence of a badge need no longer restrict the just from the pursuit of justice."

-GABBY falls to the ground in a large warehouse. Two fresh gunshot wounds bleed out from her left leg. PHOENIX and JAMES rush to her aid as police swarm the building, apprehending several suspects as more scatter. The pair drag GABBY, who is in shock, into a dark alleyway behind the warehouse, removing anything that could identify her as a vigilante. They leave her in her boy shorts and an undershirt, before leaving her leaning against the side of a police cruiser. PHOENIX and JAMES watch from the rooftops as she is discovered and loaded into an ambulance. PHOENIX rests his hand on JAMES' shoulder as they watch her being driven towards the hospital. JAMES holds her bloodied clothes in his hands.

EXT. PARKING GARAGE ROOF. NIGHT

**TITLE: DECEMBER 28, 2021**

JAMES (26), in costume, stands on the roof of a large parking structure, overlooking the city. His hair is long, and his face is unshaven. He lifts one leg onto the ledge and pulls out his old Motorola Razor. His eyes are focused on one area of the city. After pressing a few buttons, he lifts the phone up to his ear, removing his lower-face mask so that he can speak freely. The screen is visible for a moment.

- "CALLING: D"

The phone rings for a moment before a quiet voice picks up.

DAMIAN  
Hello?

JAMES  
Hey, D.

DAMIAN  
Who is this?

JAMES  
Sorry, new number. It's James.

DAMIAN  
Oh, fuck. How have you been, man?

JAMES

Good. I've been working.

There is a tense silence for a moment.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Legitimate work. I've been fitting sprinkler systems for about a year now.

DAMIAN

Good to hear it, bro. How's Gabby?

James pauses, his breathing tenses.

JAMES

She's missing. I think she might have gotten geared up, I can't find any of her shit at the apartment.

DAMIAN

Get your ass to my house. Now.

The line clicks dead. JAMES slowly puts the phone down. The phone rings out for a second. JAMES checks the screen to see he has a message from D.

He checks the message to see that it is DAMIAN's address.

EXT. LOW INCOME NEIGHBORHOOD. NIGHT

JAMES, now dressed in his civilian clothing, sits in an old, beat up white truck, looking at the screen again. He is parked opposite an old off-white house in a lower-income part of the city. He sits there a moment before sliding out of the passenger door and shutting it behind him. The window drops into the body of the door. JAMES looks behind him, confused and agitated.

JAMES

Jon told me he fixed that fucking thing...

JAMES turns around and walks slowly towards the house, dreading the conversation ahead. As he hesitates to knock on the door, DAMIAN (24) opens it. His slender frame standing in stark contrast to JAMES.

DAMIAN

Come on. We'll talk in the kitchen.

INT. DAMIAN'S HOUSE. NIGHT.

The two are silent as DAMIAN leads JAMES into the kitchen. The walk is short, but to JAMES, it feels like an eternity.

DAMIAN  
What happened?

JAMES leans against the kitchen counter and looks down.

JAMES  
I had been working out of town for the past three weeks. When I got home last night, she wasn't at the apartment.

DAMIAN  
You said she geared up.

JAMES  
She might have. When I was looking around for her, I could hear the police scanner in the bedroom. I suspected the worst. I went to check the safe and all of her gear was gone.

DAMIAN  
You kept it?!

JAMES  
Yeah. We did.

DAMIAN  
You stupid son of a bitch! Did you not fucking think that maybe, she wasn't ready to give up that life?

JAMES  
Our identities are as much a part of us as our DNA. Do you know how hard it is to throw something like that away!?

DAMIAN  
Fuck you!

DAMIAN throws a punch at JAMES, who effortlessly counters, flipping DAMIAN over his hip and onto the kitchen table. The table collapses under his weight. JAMES and DAMIAN stare each other down for a moment before the pair start laughing.

DAMIAN (CONT'D)  
You flipped me on my ass! You dick!

JAMES helps DAMIAN to his feet.

JAMES  
I'll buy you a drink later. How  
much did the table cost?

DAMIAN  
Doesn't matter. It was your table.

JAMES laughs with his brother for a moment before opening the freezer, pulling out a bag of peas and tossing it to DAMIAN.

JAMES  
Here. For your ass. How did you end  
up with my table anyway?

DAMIAN reaches across the counter and grabs his laptop,  
setting the peas into the sink.

DAMIAN  
Should have kept track of your  
shit. I've had that for like two  
years now.

DAMIAN begins typing into his laptop.

DAMIAN (CONT'D)  
You're lucky.

JAMES  
What?

DAMIAN  
I've been backlogging.

JAMES  
You're fucking kidding me, right?

JAMES hurriedly rushes over to DAMIAN and peers over his  
shoulder. They are looking at a DOS screen, detailing recent  
entries into an unknown directory.

JAMES (CONT'D)  
After that fucking spiel about  
getting rid of all my shit?

DAMIAN  
Mine isn't dangerous...

JAMES  
Fuck you, dude. Seriously. What is  
this shit anyway?

DAMIAN  
I've been receiving and archiving  
911 calls, emergency dispatch. The  
works.

JAMES  
See if there's any mention of  
vigilante assistance, or of a woman  
matching Gabby's description.

DAMIAN shuts his laptop and turns to face JAMES.

DAMIAN  
Well, I'd love to. But we'd have to  
set up my old station to check in  
on any of it. The only thing I get  
on here is whenever an entry gets  
made in the server.

JAMES  
Then where's all the gear for your  
rig?

DAMIAN  
Basement. It was all practically  
useless for anything other than  
monitoring the team, so I stored it  
all away.

JAMES  
How long has it been down there?

DAMIAN  
Like two and a half years. Give or  
take.

JAMES walks downstairs towards the basement.

JAMES  
Time to write up that damage  
report.

DAMIAN follows JAMES, leading him towards the back of the  
room.

JAMES (CONT'D)  
All that?

DAMIAN  
All that.

JAMES  
Shit. Let's get going then.

DAMIAN  
Server is upstairs, so we'll have  
to lug everything up there and hook  
it up.

JAMES  
You're an ass, you know that?

DAMIAN and JAMES begin carrying large tote bins full of  
electronic equipment up the stairs. DAMIAN struggles with  
their weight, while JAMES can lift them effortlessly.

JAMES (CONT'D)  
Hurry up, bitch, we got work to do.

DAMIAN  
Hey. Fuck you.

JAMES and DAMIAN connect and set up a multi monitor, multi  
tower computer setup to a large server sitting in the corner  
of an upstairs office.

DAMIAN sits down in front of the completed rig and begins to  
tamper with the system. JAMES is visibly tired, leaning  
against a wall, his eyes closed.

DAMIAN (CONT'D)  
You can sleep on the couch  
downstairs.

JAMES  
What are you doing?

DAMIAN  
Making sure we can actually use  
this shit. You go sleep, you're  
exhausted.

JAMES nods and walks away, feeling the wall to keep himself  
upright.

DAMIAN (CONT'D)  
Oh, and make sure to go see Phoenix  
tomorrow. We might be able to use  
his help on this. He's still  
active, right?

JAMES ignores him and continues downstairs.

INT. PHOENIX TECHNOLOGIES HQ. DAY.

A large crowd is gathered inside of the Phoenix Technologies building in downtown San Antonio. There are computer parts set out for display, as well as completed builds. Several reporters are gathered around the many displays giving their comments and predictions about the press conference.

JAMES walks into the lobby and sits down on one of the couches. He has groomed and is dressed in more expensive clothing than before. PHOENIX, dressed in a bespoke suit steps up to the podium and clears his throat.

PHOENIX

You know, I do that because when I was in high school, I had a teacher tell me "Successful people don't clear their throats before every speech. They just go for it."

PHOENIX clears his throat again, gesturing to tell the audience "one moment".

PHOENIX (CONT'D)

So that was me clearing my throat. This is me giving you the finger, Mr. Eaton. And this is me giving my speech.

JAMES laughs out loud. Several of the reporters seem unamused. PHOENIX notices JAMES and gestures towards him.

PHOENIX (CONT'D)

One moment. Hey, you, with the long hair! James! Get up here!

An assistant escorts JAMES up to the podium.

PHOENIX (CONT'D)

This is a little treat for any of you who've read my autobiography. This guy here is the reason I started this company to begin with! It means a lot to me that you've even bothered to show up today. You see everything on display in this room? I love this guy so much, he's getting all of it. Free. I take that back, He's getting two of everything. Free. Alright, now get down there in the front row and praise me.

ASSISTANT escorts JAMES off away from the podium and into the front row. JAMES stealthily gives PHOENIX the finger. PHOENIX smiles and gives him a thumbs up.

PHOENIX (CONT'D)

Most executives would come up here and give you some long winded speech about how our product is going to change the world, and what lead to us developing this line in the first place. Well that's all fine and dandy but let's see if I can cut that time down a bit. Our product is going to change the world because it's better. Simple as that. Even simpler, We developed this line because we wanted better. We wanted you to have access to better.

PHOENIX looks at his watch, amused.

PHOENIX (CONT'D)

Well, since I've got so much time left, how about a little demonstration?

The crowd cheers him on as he walks over to a working computer set up near the podium. The screen is projected behind him.

PHOENIX (CONT'D)

So, for the past two years, Michael Fuller, Director and Producer of the upcoming film "Edge Storm" has been working with prototype and final builds of computers created with out new line of components. Here, they have been so kind as to give us an exact duplicate of the contents of their editing server.

PHOENIX moves through editing program on the computer.

PHOENIX (CONT'D)

Here, we've got VFX, SFX, SEX. Everything. As you can see here, they've already got more than 95% of it rendered out on here.

PHOENIX navigates through a menu, which prompts

"Are you sure you wish to delete rendered content?"

You will have to re-render your project in the future."

He clicks yes. The crowd is shocked.

PHOENIX (CONT'D)  
Now, I've deleted everything.  
Months worth of rendering to be  
done, and I just ruined everything.  
Well, not quite.

PHOENIX navigates through another menu and rests the cursor on an option. He clicks it, and is given another prompt, he selects high quality export settings. 120fps, 4k resolution, etc.

He then clicks the "export button" and is immediately met with a prompt, "Export Successful."

PHOENIX (CONT'D)  
With the power of the new Ambition  
line of computers and components,  
Phoenix Technologies has reinvented  
the 'industry standard' of  
performance. I just rendered over  
One Million, Five Hundred Thousand  
frames at One Hundred and Twenty  
frames per second, 4K resolution.  
It took less than a second.

He stands up from the podium, bearing a more serious expression on his face.

PHOENIX (CONT'D)  
Two years ago, if you were to try  
to render this quality on a single  
computer, it would have taken you  
Three Thousand, One Hundred years.

JAMES listens intently to PHOENIX's speech.

PHOENIX (CONT'D)  
With the basic understanding that  
this level of technological  
superiority won't be inexpensive by  
any rights, our engineers have  
worked hard to assure that our  
products can and will be compatible  
with most top-of-the line, pro-  
sumer components currently on the  
market. If that doesn't sell you on  
the Ambition line, then I might  
want to close down shop.

INT. PHOENIX'S OFFICE. DAY.

JAMES and PHOENIX sit inside a well-furnished, penthouse office. PHOENIX is reclining in an expensive leather office chair, JAMES is sparring with a heavy punching bag in the corner.

PHOENIX

I haven't seen you in, what? 2 years?

JAMES

Give or take.

PHOENIX

You weren't really here to support my launch, were you?

JAMES

I didn't plan my visit for that, but I did get dressed up nicely for you.

PHOENIX

You shouldn't have.

JAMES

You know you like it.

PHOENIX stands up and walks over to JAMES, patting him on the shoulder. JAMES' instincts kick in, he reaches over to counter PHOENIX, who already has his free hand resting on JAMES's throat.

PHOENIX

We're not on the battlefield, bro. You can let your guard down here.

JAMES

I can't let it down anywhere. Not now.

PHOENIX

What's going on...?

JAMES steadies the punching bag and takes a few steps away from PHOENIX.

JAMES

It's GABBY. She's missing. I...I think she might have geared up and gone out. Maybe something happened to her, I don't know.

PHOENIX steps back and sighs audibly.

PHOENIX  
I'll take the case.

JAMES  
No.

PHOENIX takes on an expression as if to say "Excuse me?"

JAMES (CONT'D)  
I've already geared up for it. I'm  
not gonna sit around.

PHOENIX  
I get it. She was your partner,  
your lover, and your friend. You  
don't want her to be hurt. You want  
to find out she has just been with  
her mother the whole time. That she  
sold her gear and moved on.

JAMES  
No. I'm not backing down from this.

PHOENIX  
Then we're working this one  
together. You're too close to this  
one to tackle it by yourself.

JAMES  
Looks like we're getting the band  
back together.

JAMES smiles, trying his best to stop from breaking. PHOENIX  
pats his shoulder again, unable to smile.

JAMES' phone rings. He checks it.

"INCOMING CALL FROM D"

He answers it.

JAMES (CONT'D)  
You got something?

DAMIAN  
Yeah. You coming back, or do you  
want me to head over there?

JAMES  
Head over. He's on board.

INT. PHOENIX'S OFFICE. DAY.

JAMES and PHOENIX stand behind DAMIAN, who is sitting at PHOENIX's desk. DAMIAN brings up a short list of logs detailing dates and times within the past two weeks.

DAMIAN

I've got about six logs a night detailing vigilante assistance. But three days after you left town, that number jumps to eighteen a night.

PHOENIX

Your girl was working overtime.

JAMES

We don't know all of those were her.

DAMIAN

Odds are, it is, but we really have no way of knowing which vigilantes are associated with which logs.

PHOENIX hurriedly grabs the phone off of his desk and dials in a number.

JAMES

Process of elimination. We'll attach what we can to PHOENIX, and then we'll investigate the rest of the logs until we can determine which ones were her.

PHOENIX

No. There's an easier way.

JAMES

What are you doing?

PHOENIX

I'd like to speak to Agent Marty Mulder, in the Vigilante Division. Phoenix Tao. Like the mythical creature? P-H-O-E-N-I-X. T-A-O. Yes. Thank you.

JAMES and DAMIAN stare at PHOENIX expectantly.

PHOENIX (CONT'D)

Law enforcement are legally required to document every instance of vigilante assistance they encounter. This information is then passed along to the FBI, who then assemble a profile of each vigilante, and determine whether they are "within proper state of mind, and pursuing a just course of action".

JAMES

And all this information goes through Marty Mulder?

PHOENIX nods as a voice comes over the phone.

PHOENIX

Yes, this is Phoenix. Sorry to bother you on such short notice. We're going to need access to your Vigilante files for the greater San Antonio area. Yeah, there's a "we". I'm aware of how much info you've got. Don't worry about it, I'll cover you. Alright, see you then.

PHOENIX hangs up the office phone and continues his explanation.

PHOENIX (CONT'D)

Part of the Vigilante Division's original purpose was to identify vigilantes so that they could be properly brought to justice, before the "Free Justice Act" was passed. Mulder was assigned to my case. He managed to identify me. I was able to convince him to withhold that information, and instead focus on the more effective catalogue and profile projects that the division runs.

JAMES

So you got him to lend us all of his SA files?

PHOENIX

He'll be here tomorrow night to drop it off. We're to meet him, geared up, at a predetermined location.

JAMES

We have to gear up?

PHOENIX

Due to the incompetence of the general public, an FBI agent passing classified information off to a member of said idiotic public is an outrage, swap out one citizen for one vigilante, and it fits nicely into the many cases of vigilante assistance already on the board.

DAMIAN

You mean to tell me that the FBI has an entire collection of files prefaced with "VD."?

EXT. PARKING GARAGE BASEMENT LEVEL. NIGHT.

MARTY is sitting next to an expensive rental car smoking a cigarette. He impatiently checks his watch before taking another drag from his cigarette.

The power to the parking garage cuts out. MARTY drops his cigarette and reaches for his gun. Footsteps approach, MARTY draws his gun, only to be disarmed by an unknown assailant. The 'assailant' is revealed to be PHOENIX and JAMES, in costume.

PHOENIX

Why so jumpy, deep throat?

MARTY

Well aren't you just a pile of pop culture references, bird boy?

PHOENIX

I'll let you be the pot this time, but you know I hate being the kettle, right? Where are my Files?

MARTY

Where's my gun?

PHOENIX

You'll have to ask the big guy standing behind you.

PHOENIX gestures over MARTY's shoulder. MARTY turns on a dime to see JAMES standing behind him, holding the gun tightly by the muzzle. MARTY strains his eyes to focus.

MARTY  
Holy shit! Shade? We thought you  
were dead!

JAMES remains silent, keeping his grip on the gun.

PHOENIX  
He's come out of retirement.

JAMES  
I'm not the only vigilante to 'come  
back from the dead' recently, am I?

JAMES hands the gun back to MARTY, who walks towards the  
trunk of his car, opening it to reveal one file box.

MARTY  
You'll have to check the files  
yourself. You folks pop in and out  
every day.

MARTY Pulls the box out of his trunk and sets it down on the  
floor. PHOENIX shuts the trunk for him.

MARTY (CONT'D)  
You've got everything physical and  
digital. I'll be back in three days  
to pick up the paper files.

MARTY opens the door to his car and sits down.

PHOENIX  
I'll send you the pickup location  
in three days then. What's with the  
quickdraw earlier, Marty? Something  
got you spooked?

MARTY  
There's a possible serial killer on  
the loose. Local PD. Is calling him  
"The Dead Man". I wasn't planning  
on being his next, bird boy.

PHOENIX  
They called in FBI?

MARTY  
Violent Crimes should be here  
within the next day or so. If you  
want in on this case, you better  
grab it now.

PHOENIX

Keep in touch. I'd love to make an X-Files joke, *Agent Mulder*, but the only thing *spooky* about you is your choice in ties.

MARTY shuts the door and puts the key in the ignition. The power comes back on. JAMES, PHOENIX, and the box are nowhere to be seen.

EXT. PARKING GARAGE ROOF. NIGHT

JAMES transfers the content of the box into a large pouch attached to his belt. PHOENIX hangs up his cell phone and walks over to JAMES.

JAMES

What are you, the fashion police?

PHOENIX

Why do you think *I* look like Nightwing's sexier cousin while you look like a budget *Bucky Barnes*?

INT. PHOENIX'S OFFICE. NIGHT.

The contents of the box are spread out over PHOENIX's desk. JAMES and PHOENIX scan documents while DAMIAN manages the files.

PHOENIX

I put another call in to Marty after we left. He's arranging for the files on the "Dead Man" investigation to get copied over and sent my way. Won't be able to get them until tomorrow morning though.

JAMES

You don't think...?

PHOENIX

Nah. I just want to solve the case before the FBI can.

JAMES

You really are a dick, you know that?

PHOENIX

But you love me.

DAMIAN

All the information on the last three weeks is logged in. But we've still got a lot of "Vigilante Unknown" on the list.

JAMES

Phoenix, you're the psychology major. See if you can match any of the cases to these profiles.

PHOENIX

On it.

PHOENIX walks over to the desk. DAMIAN stands up. JAMES grabs a duffel bag from near the desk and enters an office bathroom. He emerges a moment later in his normal clothes. PHOENIX withdraws a silver credit card from his wallet and sets it on the corner of the desk.

PHOENIX (CONT'D)

Do me a favor and go shopping for us? Grab the usual.

JAMES

Don't worry about it. I've got money.

PHOENIX

Just take the damn "All access pass", will you? If we're using my office as home base, I'm paying.

JAMES reluctantly grabs the card and heads out the door.

PHOENIX walks over to a polished black filing cabinet and withdraws a large folded document; An enlarged map of the city.

PHOENIX (CONT'D)

While I work on these profiles, You start charting out every case for the past three weeks.

DAMIAN

Why?

PHOENIX

If I can't identify all of them positively, we're gonna want some visual reference. Cross reference it with CI tips, police reports in those areas.

DAMIAN  
And establish any visual patterns.

PHOENIX  
Yup. You got this.

PHOENIX pats DAMIAN on the back, then slides into his desk chair. DAMIAN pins the map to the wall and goes to work.

A pattern emerges among the unknown vigilantes. Most of the unknown calls are clustered among the same area of the city.

DAMIAN  
Hey, you got a list of our old  
informants lying around anywhere?

PHOENIX  
Uh, yeah. Red cabinet, bottom  
drawer. Why?

EXT. DOWNTOWN STREET. NIGHT.

JAMES sits down in his truck and tosses the keys on the dash, then closes the door. He reaches out the open window and adjusts his mirror, then reaches for his keys, cutting his hand on a swiss army knife. The corkscrew is extended.

JAMES  
Ow, fuck.

JAMES opens his glove box, the door falls off, landing on the floorboards. The contents spill out; Mostly loose papers and receipts.

JAMES (CONT'D)  
Son of a bitch!

He digs through the papers, withdrawing a small band-aid box, removing one and covering his wound. He then starts the truck and drives off.

INT. SHOP. NIGHT.

JAMES is standing in line at a large department store. Several customers are shooting odd looks his way as he lays the contents of his basket onto the belt.

-A socket wrench set.

-A socket set.

-Several first aid supplies, supplements, and an assortment of Over The Counter medicines.

-Several USB storage devices

-Multiple packs of dry-erase markers of assorted color.

-Multiple spools of fishing line of assorted thickness.

-Multiple leather belts.

-Multiple containers of Lighter Fluid and Starter Fluid.

-Multiple Mason Jars.

-Multiple small light bulbs.

- Three large containers of plastic BB's.

JAMES notices a rack of Butane lighters on sale near the register. He grabs the entire display. A young CASHIER rings up his items.

CASHIER

Having a party or what?

JAMES

No, just picking up some things for a few friends.

CASHIER

Alright then. We going with cash or credit?

JAMES

Credit.

JAMES reaches in his pocket and removes PHOENIX's card. He then switches it out with his own card, handing it to CASHIER.

CASHIER

Wait, is that a voucher in your hand?

JAMES opens his hand to reveal two small slips of paper.

"6'x4' Dry-Erase Board"

"4'x4' Cork Bulletin Board"

JAMES

Yeah, two, actually.

JAMES hands the vouchers to CASHIER, who rings them up.

CASHIER  
That everything?

JAMES  
Yeah.

CASHIER  
Alrighty then. We'll get someone to help you with those. Just pull around front.

JAMES  
Thanks.

CASHIER swipes the card and turns the digital touch-pad towards JAMES to sign. They complete the transaction. A woman watches JAMES intently from a distance.

INT. PHOENIX'S OFFICE. NIGHT.

JAMES enters the office, pulling the Dry Erase and Bulletin boards behind him. DAMIAN and PHOENIX are discussing excitedly.

PHOENIX  
Most of our old CI's didn't trust the cops to begin with.

DAMIAN  
I know that! What I'm saying is-

JAMES  
Does anyone want to help me out?

PHOENIX  
Sure, I'll have someone bring the rest up. It's in the bed of the truck, right? In the mean time, get your ass over here.

JAMES  
Find anything out?

JAMES sits down on an expensive leather couch, sighing audibly. PHOENIX types a message out on his computer

PHOENIX  
Yeah. I've managed to attribute most of the unknowns to myself, Rip Tide, and Gabby.

JAMES

Who?

PHOENIX

Gabby. Your girlfriend?

JAMES

No, Jackass. Before that.

PHOENIX

Rip Tide? He's new. One of his 'calling cards' is setting off a buildings fire suppression system.

JAMES

Why the fuck would he do that?

DAMIAN

You make it dark, other people make it rain.

PHOENIX

Yeah. Same shit.

PHOENIX walks over to the map. Informants have been added to the map. PHOENIX gestures towards the cluster.

PHOENIX (CONT'D)

I was able to identify about 10 of these as Gabby. It's a safe bet to say that the rest were her as well.

He gestures towards the informants.

PHOENIX (CONT'D)

All of these guys were your old informants. Now, they don't trust the cops, so we can't drop a tip to the PD. And come out with anything. They sure as hell won't tell me anything.

JAMES

And your point is?

PHOENIX

We've got to get your name out there. Make sure people know you're back.

JAMES

And how do you suppose we do that?

PHOENIX

Same way we always have. I'm gonna set 'Visier' over there up with a new rig. We're gonna scan emergency frequencies, dispatch, the works, and you're gonna respond.

JAMES

Then you investigate the unknowns. We don't have time to waste.

PHOENIX

Sounds like a plan. You buy me anything?

JAMES

The usual.

Two assistants open the double doors of the office and carry in the rest of the goods. PHOENIX begins to sort through the contents of the bags, smiling.

PHOENIX

Should be enough to get us started. But first, we've got to update that Halloween costume you've got.

JAMES

What's wrong with my costume? It's a hell of a lot better than your leather and spandex skinsuit.

PHOENIX

You need to look scarier. More imposing. Criminals need to piss themselves when you show up.

JAMES looks defeated. He stands up and begins setting up the boards next to the map.

JAMES

Any ideas then?

PHOENIX

Oh, I've got something, alright.

PHOENIX walks off towards the elevator, gets inside.

JAMES

While we wait for him, help me out here. I want to put profiles of any Vigilantes currently in the SA area on one side of the bulletin board.

(MORE)

JAMES (CONT'D)  
We'll put informants on the other side.

DAMIAN  
Got it.

DAMIAN stands up, helps JAMES set up the bulletin board. Some time later, PHOENIX throws open the double doors.

PHOENIX  
You two, this way!

DAMIAN  
In a minute.

PHOENIX  
No, Now! We're taking this operation downstairs.

JAMES  
Downstairs.

DAMIAN hurriedly sets his papers down on the desk, then walks over to PHOENIX.

DAMIAN  
Shit, I'm not missing a chance to see the Bat Cave.

JAMES  
The Bat Cave?

PHOENIX  
The sanctum sanctorum, the sub basement, the fortress of solitude. Point is, we're setting up shop down there. And I've got something to show you.

INT. ELEVATOR. NIGHT

DAMIAN, JAMES, and PHOENIX ride the elevator down. PHOENIX is facing JAMES and DAMIAN. He holds out a black key-card to each of them.

PHOENIX  
Consider this your backstage pass. You walk in, security scans it, and your good. Those will give you access to every room and department in the building, including my office, penthouse, and S.H.I.E.L.D. HQ.

JAMES and DAMIAN take the cards. DAMIAN puts his in his back pocket. JAMES keeps his in his palm. As the elevator reaches the final basement floor, PHOENIX swipes his card near the control panel. A computer voice is heard.

A.I.

Secure area ahead. Three individuals detected. Please provide Identification and credentials.

PHOENIX

Override. System Admin, Phoenix Tao.

A.I.

Override accepted. Proceeding.

The elevator begins to descend once more, soon reaching the bottom.

INT. HEADQUARTERS. NIGHT.

The door opens to reveal a brightly lit room. Glass cases line three of the four walls.

Left: Previous iterations of GABBY's costumes.

Right: Previous iterations of JAMES' costumes.

Front: Previous iterations of PHOENIX's costumes.

PHOENIX leaves the elevator. JAMES and DAMIAN follow.

PHOENIX

We'll set your rig up near the left of the elevator, D. I should have it down here tomorrow.

JAMES eyes the left and right sides of the room intently.

JAMES

The empty cases are for our current costumes... aren't they?

PHOENIX

Yeah. She gave me the rest for safe keeping way back when you took on your current ones.

JAMES

Then what's in the cases on the ends?

PHOENIX

New suits. I designed them a while ago, right before you went inactive. They were gonna be a sort of Christmas present, and then we botched that drug raid.

The room is silent for a moment.

JAMES

Let's check it out, then.

DAMIAN gets a phone call and excuses himself to the elevator.  
JAMES and PHOENIX walk over to the new costume.

PHOENIX

The entire thing is armored, head to toe. Also fire and spill proof. Pretty damn good insulator as well. Ultra low reflective Vantablack material keeps you practically invisible in the pitch darkness. The lenses in the eyes, IR, Thermal, Night Vision, the works. Of course comes with your standard bag of tricks, and that's armored too. The Vantablack on the vest costs over \$100,000. So - If you put a hole in it, It's coming out of your salary.

JAMES

I don't get paid a salary. I'm a sprinkler fitter.

PHOENIX

You do now, and not anymore. You think I would give High-Sec clearance to someone that didn't work for me? Welcome to Phoenix Technologies. You're my new bodyguard, D's my new personal assistant. Moving on.

JAMES

When did this happen?

PHOENIX

Ran your information through the system while you were out shopping, had your key cards printed on the spot.

JAMES

You really want your office back,  
don't you?

PHOENIX

Pretty much.

DAMIAN returns from the elevator, carrying the shopping bags. The boards are behind him in the elevator, the map is folded up beneath his arms.

PHOENIX (CONT'D)

How did you get back down here?

DAMIAN

You forgot to shut off your  
override.

PHOENIX

Fuck!

JAMES

Let's get to work filling that bag  
of tricks, shall we?

DAMIAN

He's got everything here you'd need  
for flash bombs, smoke bombs, knock  
out gas grenades. "The Usual".

DAMIAN sets the bags and map down on a steel table in the center of the room, then returns for the boards. PHOENIX reaches under the table and opens a metal drawer, revealed to be filled with many tools.

Cue montage:

-JAMES removes the metal ends from the light bulbs and cleans out the contents.

-PHOENIX begins mixing the Over-The-Counter medicines and lighter/starter fluids into separate glass beakers.

-DAMIAN removes the ignition mechanism from the butane lighters, then sets the remaining pieces aside.

-JAMES removes the ink cartridge from a few of the black dry erase markers and squeezes it inside the gutted bulbs, swirling the contents around the coat the inside.

-DAMIAN fills the empty bulbs with plastic BB's

-PHOENIX Wraps colored electric tape around the 'neck' of the bulbs. The color indicates which kind of bomb they are making.

-JAMES pours the contents of the beakers into the bulbs, then attaches the ignition mechanism to the inside of the neck, sealing them with a rubber shank washer.

-PHOENIX attaches watch batteries to buttons, then wires them into the ignition mechanism.

-DAMIAN sprays the sealed bulbs with a thick layer of "Plasti-Dip" to seal and strengthen them.

-JAMES is securing clips to the leather belts, then removes the buckles and sets them aside.

-PHOENIX pulls "Cobra" style belt buckles from another drawer and begins attaching them to the belts.

-JAMES sets the completed bombs aside, then picks up the belts.

-DAMIAN strings the fluid reservoirs on the butane lighters together around two leather watch bands.

-PHOENIX straps one of the watch bands around his own wrist, then feeds tubes from each lighter, meeting in the center of his palm.

-PHOENIX attaches a rotating ring to the rig, wearing it on his index finger.

-DAMIAN attaches a valve to the ring, then attaches an ignition mechanism to the valve.

-PHOENIX wears the new mechanisms, he turns the ring with his thumb, which opens the valve. The gas is ignited, sending a column of blue flame outwards.

-DAMIAN attaches a bottle of an unknown substance to the watch band, feeding a line into the valve. He tests the flame, it now burns a bright orange/red.

-JAMES stands in the center of the room, wearing the new suit. He has the three belts secured to his waist, each bearing three bombs of a different type. He holds his mask in his hands, staring into the interior.

PHOENIX  
Looks good on you.

JAMES puts the mask on, the SpiderMan-esque lenses glare in the light.

PHOENIX walks over to the main control panel and presses a few buttons. The power cuts off. JAMES can not be seen.

INT. CONDEMNED WAREHOUSE. NIGHT.

WOMAN 1 is peering in through a window. She can barely make out the outlines of two men carrying an unconscious woman further into the warehouse. She is talking on her phone.

DISPATCH

(V.O.) 911, What's your emergency?

WOMAN 1

A woman is being kidnapped... I can see it happening. There are two men.

DISPATCH

(V.O.) Ma'am, can you tell me your location?

WOMAN 1

I'm standing outside... In front of a warehouse. They took her inside...

DISPATCH

(V.O.) Ma'am, can you please tell me your location? Any street signs, landmarks, anything that might help us determine where you are?

WOMAN 1

East Houston street. I'm standing on East Houston street. Right behind the music venue.

Several street lights cut off. WOMAN 1 gasps.

DISPATCH

(V.O.) Ma'am? Are you alright?

WOMAN 1

Yes. I'm fine. The street lights turned off. It scared me a little.

DISPATCH

(V.O.) Ma'am, officers are on the way now. Can you get somewhere safe?

Through the window, we can see JAMES' costume lenses, eerily glowing in the distance. One of the men takes notice and drops the unconscious woman. He draws his gun, aims at JAMES.

WOMAN 1

Oh my god! There's someone else in there!

MUGGER 1 fires at JAMES, narrowly missing. JAMES ignites his flamethrowers, revealing his imposing stature. MUGGER 2 throws the woman aside, drawing his gun. JAMES is nowhere to be seen.

MUGGER 1

What the fuck, man!?

MUGGER 2

Fuck her! I'm leaving her ass here, I don't care how much I'm getting paid!

JAMES' glowing eyes can be seen in the distance, behind the men. MUGGER 1 turns to see that the unconscious woman is now missing. The pair hear JAMES' footsteps and turn around, pointing their guns at him.

JAMES swings a baton on a rope towards the muggers, knocking their guns from their hands and knocking one of them backwards, then pulls a knock-out bomb from his belt, then tosses it towards the muggers. He ignites his flamethrowers, causing the bomb to explode midair. Plastic BB's pour out, knocking the muggers to the ground as a thick cloud of smoke billows outward and fills the area.

Two officers enter the area, guns drawn.

The officers slow to a stop. The muggers from earlier are lying unconscious, on their chests. Their arms are zip-tied together behind their backs. Around them, a Black Sun is painted on the floor. OFFICER 1 speaks into his radio.

OFFICER 1

Dispatch, we're gonna need someone from the VDU. Down here.

DISPATCH

(V.O.) Are we logging "Vigilante Assistance" on this one?

OFFICER 1

That's correct.

EXT. WAREHOUSE ROOFTOP. NIGHT.

JAMES, in costume, stands on the edge of the roof, looking down at the police as they interview WOMAN 1 and the previously unconscious woman. PHOENIX steps up behind him.

PHOENIX

Well, it's a start, but we can't wait around for the VDU. to attach your profile to this case. You gotta keep up if you don't want to lose all the good ones.

JAMES

Are there really that many vigilantes out there now?

PHOENIX

Time was, you, Me, and Gabby were the only ones working with the P.D. To keep things straight in this city.

DAMIAN's voice picks up over a bluetooth device in JAMES and PHOENIX's ears.

DAMIAN

(V.O.) We've got another one.

INT. DAMIAN'S HOUSE. NIGHT.

DAMIAN sits behind his computer rig at home, transcripts from several police scanners and emergency frequencies are appearing on the screens.

DAMIAN

Drive-by shooting near Alamo Plaza.  
Suspects are driving a Blue Sedan.  
Heading your way.

EXT. WAREHOUSE ROOFTOP. NIGHT.

PHOENIX and JAMES run off towards Alamo Plaza, demonstrating impressive parkour abilities as they leap over the gaps between buildings. PHOENIX is ahead by a good amount.

PHOENIX

Come on, old man! Try to keep up!

JAMES

Yeah, keep talking, We can settle  
this 1-on-1.

PHOENIX

Nah, I'm good.

The pair stop, seeing a Blue Sedan speeding towards them. JAMES Pulls bombs off of his belt, holding the necks between his fingers. PHOENIX works his way down the side of the building, JAMES clenches his fist, pressing on the timer switch and then dropping the bombs, which explode as they impact the hood of the car, shattering the windshields and windows, forcing the driver to veer out of control.

PHOENIX begins pulling unconscious passengers from the wreckage. JAMES assists. One of the men comes to, grabbing his gun and pointing it at JAMES, the fires. JAMES quickly disarms him, then knocks him unconscious. PHOENIX drags the men away from the roadway, JAMES pushes the car into a nearby alleyway, then pulls several road flares from his belt and lights them, tossing them into the center of the road. Police sirens can be heard in the distance.

PHOENIX (CONT'D)

Leave your sign. I'll tie them up.

JAMES nods, and begins to spray paint his symbol on the brick wall nearby.

As the police arrive, PHOENIX and JAMES make their way up the side of another building, vanishing into the night.

JAMES grunts as they climb over the edge of the roof. PHOENIX helps him up.

PHOENIX (CONT'D)

You alright there?

JAMES

Maybe... If I'm not bleeding out.

PHOENIX

Did he shoot you?

JAMES unbuckles his vest and inspects it. There is a crushed bullet jammed into a dented part of the vest. JAMES gingerly rubs against his chest where the bullet impacted.

PHOENIX (CONT'D)

I told you it was armored.

JAMES

Well, I didn't expect to find out on my first night out. Start ticking off my salary.

PHOENIX

I've got like ten of those back at HQ. Don't worry about it.

PHOENIX looks over at the scene in the distance.

PHOENIX (CONT'D)

Buzz like that should be enough for now. Why don't we brief you in?

JAMES

Go for it. I'm gonna rest here for a while.

PHOENIX

Things have changed a bit since *Shade* and *Nightingale* started making waves way back in Twenty-Twelve. There are a few more rules than what the "Free Justice Act" put down eight years ago. Vigilantes are now forbidden from using firearms -

JAMES

Since the "Red-Jafari Incident of 2016, when a vigilante known as *Red* mistakenly shot and killed a restaurant owner who he believed was running away from the scene of the crime. In reality, Mr. Jafari was fleeing his own home, in the process of being burned down by the real culprit.

PHOENIX

So you've been doing your research?

JAMES

I've been watching the news since retirement. Keep going.

PHOENIX

After the "Jonas Swett Versus Vigilante *Rip Tide*" case, vigilantes are expressly forbidden from "saving, rescuing, or otherwise directly interfering in the lives of citizens who explicitly state their wishes to be left alone by vigilante on scene". That one's a bit vague, but you learn to work around it.

JAMES

Figures something like that would make its way to the books.

PHOENIX

Yeah, I know. I think the next big one I should tell you is -

Three loud gunshots ring off in the distance. JAMES stands up and hurriedly straps his vest on. PHOENIX taps his earpiece.

PHOENIX (CONT'D)

Visier, we have multiple gunshots nearby, do we have anything?

JAMES gestures in the direction of the gunshots, PHOENIX nods. The pair run towards the sound, leaping between the gaps of buildings, using parkour techniques to speed up their trek.

The pair land on the roof of a condemned apartment tenement. More gunshots are heard.

JAMES

Below.

PHOENIX nods in agreement.

PHOENIX

Give me a second.

PHOENIX drops down to his knees and withdraws a small snake-microphone from his belt, dropping the end down a ventilation shaft. He presses a button on the handle. JAMES and DAMIAN can hear the commotion in the building below them.

GUNMAN 1

Where the hell is she?

GUNMAN 2

She ran off that way. Check out the office.

(AUDIO ONLY) The GUNMEN walk slowly through the abandoned building, opening doors. Heavy breathing can be heard faintly.

(AUDIO END)

PHOENIX flips back a panel on the underside of his wrist, revealing a digital screen. PHOENIX presses a few buttons, the screen shows a digital recreation of the building based on the sound received through the vent. The GUNMEN are cautiously opening doors in the building as they make their way down the hallway.

PHOENIX

3rd floor. One of needs to check  
the other floors.

JAMES

You head down and cut the power to  
the block. I'll take that as my  
signal to move in. After that,  
start at the bottom floor and work  
your way to me.

PHOENIX nods and stands up, securing the mic to the vent grille, then repelling down. JAMES kneels near a roof hatch and carefully unlocks it. A moment passes, the power cuts out. JAMES swiftly opens the hatch and drops down, ignoring the ladder.

INT. TENEMENT. NIGHT.

JAMES lands in a small maintenance closet, the door is missing from the hinges. Only the faint glow of his lenses can be seen. He skulks through the building. His own movements can barely be heard by the microphone.

He rounds a corner, seeing the GUNMEN cautiously opening the door to what used to be the superintendent's office. Further down the hallway, a young girl (SADIE, 17) in a haphazardly assembled costume can be seen crouching near a staircase. JAMES gestures to her to keep quiet, placing his finger over his mouth. She nods.

JAMES approaches the GUNMEN from behind, SADIE picks up a broken piece of moulding and throws it down the hallway, past JAMES and the GUNMEN. GUNMAN 2 sees the debris move past him, and turns to face SADIE. GUNMAN 1 hears the debris hit the floor and turns towards it, facing JAMES.

GUNMAN 2 aims his pistol at SADIE, JAMES attempts to disarm him. GUNMAN 1 fires his gun into JAMES' armored torso. SADIE leaps towards the staircase as GUNMAN 2 Fires.

SADIE hits her head on the railing and is knocked unconscious, falling limp down the stairs. PHOENIX catches SADIE and rushes to help JAMES dispatch the gunmen.

JAMES reels back from the shot, grabbing GUNMAN 1's left shoulder, spinning him around, grabbing his right wrist, wrapping the arm around GUNMAN 1's neck, and using the leverage to dislocate both his wrist and shoulder. JAMES picks up the gun while GUNMAN 1 writhes in pain on the floor.

GUNMAN 2 is pointing his gun at PHOENIX, JAMES swiftly pistol-whips GUNMAN 2, knocking him unconscious. JAMES rushes over to SADIE, picking up her limp body.

PHOENIX

She only hit her head. Nothing else on her but a few scrapes.

JAMES

We need to get her to a hospital. She could have a concussion.

PHOENIX

She's one of us, James.

JAMES

I know that! Help me get her gear off!

PHOENIX assists JAMES in removing the costume from the girl, leaving her in an undershirt and leggings. JAMES removes his coat and wraps it around her, then picks her up. PHOENIX hurries to secure the GUNMEN for the police.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Visier, put in a 911 call to our location. There's a young woman outside, on the roof of the building, she's unconscious. She looks like she's been beaten.

DAMIAN

Got it.

The line clicks dead. PHOENIX begins dragging the GUNMEN down the stairs, towards the ground floor. JAMES carries SADIE up the ladder and lays her out of the wind, under an AC duct. Sirens wail nearby. PHOENIX rushes out of the roof hatch and past JAMES

PHOENIX

Come on, let's go! Po-Po hauled ass on this one!

JAMES hesitates a moment, staring at SADIE. The writing on the tag of her undershirt can be seen, revealing her name. He pulls a patch off of his belt, bearing his symbol, and drops it near her. JAMES runs off with PHOENIX.

INT. HOSPITAL. NIGHT.

PHOENIX and JAMES walk into the hospital, in a hurry. The pair approach the registration booth and begin to question the nurse on duty, leaving her no room to respond.

PHOENIX  
I got a call that my niece was  
admitted here?

JAMES  
Is Sadie all right?

PHOENIX  
I was told they found her  
unconscious downtown?

JAMES  
Who did this to her?

PHOENIX  
Where is she?

JAMES  
Is she awake?

PHOENIX  
Can we see her?

JAMES  
Please, we need to see our niece!

NURSE 1  
Sirs, please, calm down. I can't  
help you if I can't understand you.

JAMES  
My brother got a call that our  
niece was found unconscious down  
town, and that she was admitted  
here.

NURSE 1  
I'm going to need a name, sir.

JAMES

Her name is Sadie, she's about 17.  
She's got brown hair, blue eyes,  
and a scar on her stomach from when  
she got her appendix removed.

NURSE 1

Sir, stay calm. I'm gonna need a  
last name.

JAMES

Sadie Tao?

NURSE 1

You aren't sure?

JAMES

My sister got knocked up by a guy  
she met at work. I don't know who's  
name is on the birth certificate.

NURSE 1

You don't know your own niece's  
last name? Sir, I can't let you  
through.

JAMES

I just met her a month ago! My  
sister came back to town and came  
to me for a place to stay!

PHOENIX

James, cool it. Look, ma'am,  
Miss... Christine, I'm sorry. We're  
both freaking out here. Anyone who  
got the same call we did would be.  
The police only called us about 10  
minutes ago.

The nurse sighs, then begins typing on her computer.

NURSE 1

You said Sadie?

PHOENIX

Yes.

NURSE 1

Floor 6, B wing, room B14.

JAMES

Thank you.

JAMES turns and begins walking towards the elevator. NURSE 1 calls after him.

NURSE 1  
Excuse me, sir?

JAMES  
Yes?

NURSE 1  
Harrison. Her last name is  
Harrison.

JAMES  
Thank you.

JAMES joins PHOENIX in the elevator.

PHOENIX  
Good lie.

Some Time Later.

JAMES is sitting in a chair in the far corner of SADIE's room. PHOENIX is standing by the door, looking in on her. PHOENIX gestures over to JAMES, who stands up and walks out of the room. A moment later, SADIE's parents enter the room in a panic. An SAPD officer escorts them. SADIE wakes up and groggily looks down at her clenched fist, opening it to reveal JAMES' embroidered patch.

INT. PHOENIX'S OFFICE. DAY.

PHOENIX sits in his desk chair, typing on his computer while speaking over the phone. The office is once again neat and orderly. The punching bag is absent from the corner.

PHOENIX  
We should be able to have your  
order shipped out in seven days.  
Well I understand that a week might  
seem far away, but you're asking  
for a massive order of parts that  
we only started manufacturing this  
morning. I'm putting several pre-  
orders on hold to fill yours. Thank  
you for understanding. Goodbye.

The phone beeps, PHOENIX presses a glowing button, DAMIAN's voice can be heard

DAMIAN  
(V.O.) There's a woman asking to  
visit you, sir.

PHOENIX  
Is she here for the internship  
position?

DAMIAN  
(V.O.) Yes, sir.

PHOENIX  
Alright, send her in.

The office door opens. A young woman wearing high heels and a tight-fitting dress walks in. She approaches the desk and sets something down in front of PHOENIX. PHOENIX presses the button on the phone again.

PHOENIX (CONT'D)  
D, Send James up to my office.

Some Time Later.

JAMES is standing behind PHOENIX. His hair is trimmed shorter and away from his face. SADIE sits in a chair pulled up to the desk.

JAMES  
So how'd you figure it out?

SADIE crosses her legs and swivels in the chair.

SADIE  
Hrmm, Let's see. I get rescued by  
SHADE, then find myself in the  
hospital with two men, you two, who  
I don't know whatsoever, watching  
over me.

PHOENIX  
When you put it like that, It  
really isn't that hard to put  
together.

SADIE  
Time to step up your game, Mister  
Tao.

JAMES  
How did you know to come here?

SADIE

I saw a computer commercial on TV  
at the hospital last night.  
Recognized your voice.

PHOENIX

I told you I'm unforgettable.

SADIE

Maybe it has something to do with  
being long-winded and egotistical.

PHOENIX

Ouch.

JAMES

Why are you here?

SADIE

Because you saved my life. Thank  
you.

JAMES

You're welcome.

PHOENIX

What else?

SADIE

I've got a lot to learn about this  
whole vigilante thing.

PHOENIX

No.

JAMES

Yeah, you do. You could have died.

PHOENIX

No.

SADIE

I know. I saw the deal go down, I  
figured I'd get those two and  
figure out who the supplier is. I  
only wanted-

JAMES

To be the hero. That's what gets  
you killed. Money doesn't keep Bat  
Man alive, being the world's  
greatest detective does.

PHOENIX

No.

JAMES

You don't get your gear back until I say so.

PHOENIX

Are you not listening to me? I said no.

JAMES

We'll hook you up with an internship here. Show up at 6:00pm every night, and be here at 3:00pm on the weekends. You'll patrol with me, after we get your gear fixed.

PHOENIX

And since I don't run this company anymore, I'll help the rest of the village raise this child.

JAMES lightly smacks PHOENIX upside the head.

PHOENIX (CONT'D)

I'll see about getting you a new suit made. No promises.

SADIE

Cool. Thanks.

JAMES

So what's your name, Sadie?

SADIE

My name?

PHOENIX

To put it bluntly, what's the name you want next to the blurry, unfocused amateur photography the newspapers are going to flaunt around?

SADIE

My monicker... I don't really have one.

PHOENIX

This is just great.

SADIE

I'm open to suggestions, if you've got any.

DAMIAN rushes into the office, holding a heavy box of reports and other documents referring to the "The Dead Man" case.

DAMIAN

Guys, Marty just dropped those files off to us.

JAMES

Well then, Visier, let me introduce you to the newest member of the team, Black Bird.

SADIE

Sweet!

PHOENIX swivels the TV wall mount over so that the four of them can see it. DAMIAN tosses a DVD case onto the desk.

DAMIAN

Marty said we needed to see this first, it's the most recent of the Dead Man Discs.

SADIE

Dead Man? What kind of shit are you guys into?

PHOENIX opens the case and puts the DVD into the drive of his computer.

PHOENIX

He's a serial killer. He's been secretly delivering these videos to the local PD showcasing the latest victim and where they'll be found.

PHOENIX presses play.

An empty warehouse can be seen. A young woman is tied to a chair, facing away from the camera. The screen begins to glitch as a large, lumbering figure walks onto the screen, turning her around, then walks off frame.

The woman is revealed to be GABBY (24), in costume. A red substance paints an odd design on her face. She is unconscious.

SADIE

Oh my god!

DEAD MAN

(V.O.) I've been told you're  
looking into my case, Mister Tao.

PHOENIX

The fuck?

DEAD MAN

(V.O.) You have 48 hours, and then  
this little bird will sing her last  
song.

The video ends, the final frame is a close-up of GABBY's  
face, unmasked.

END.