

THE MASKED RIDER
EPISODE 1 - "THE CYCLONE-JOKER'S WILD, PART 1"

Written by
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THE MASKED RIDER - "THE CYCLONE-JOKER'S WILD, PART 1"

PRE-TITLES 1. EXT. VILLE VENTEUSE CITYSCAPE- EARLY MORNING

EST. SHOT of the Louisiana skyline. TILT DOWN to the bustling cityscape, surrounded by tall windmills and dotted with other ones of various shapes and sizes all throughout. We are treated to a MONTAGE of shots of different areas of the city - streets, markets, parks and others.

RENÉ
(V.O.)

Welcome to Ville Venteuse, the biggest burg on the banks of the Mississippi, all of its power comes from the wind, that's the deal with all the big old pinwheels. Some people call it 'the Windy City.' I just call it 'home.'

PRE-TITLES 2. EXT. STREET- CONTINUOUS

RENÉ appears from around the corner on his black-and-green motorcycle. He is a man in his mid 20s, with shaggy hair, dressed in a monochromatic suit and a black fedora with a green band.

RENÉ
(V.O., Cont'd)

My name is René Sisko. I'm a private dick by trade, among other things. I've lived in Ville Venteuse just about my whole life, sure enough.

He pulls up by the pavement, parks the motorcycle and ascends the steps to the porch of a four-storey white-brick building. The sign on the outer wall reads:

NATASHA FONTAINE'S SCHOOL OF DANCE
SISKO & SISKO: PRIVATE EYES (Second floor)

PAPERBOY
(O.O.S.)

Hey, mister!

RENÉ looks up. The PAPERBOY cycles past and chucks a newspaper. RENÉ catches it and looks down at it. There is a blurry photograph of an armoured figure - THE MASKED RIDER - riding an identical motorcycle to his own down a street. The headline reads:

HIGH-SPEED VIGILANTE - NEW THEORIES ARISE

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PRE-TILES 3. INT. RECEPTION AREA- CONTINUOUS

RENÉ walks into the small foyer, which is in good need of a tidying up. He walks past the reception desk, presently unmanned. He glances at it then continues along his way towards the stairs, veering rather quickly away from the two lifts.

PRE-TITLES 4. INT. 2ND FLOOR CORRIDOR- MOMENTS LATER

RENÉ finishes climbing the stairs and continues down the corridor.

RENÉ
(V.O.)

Never trusted the elevators, had a nasty incident in one when I was nine. Besides, a little exercise never did no-one no harm. It was a cool September morning, about 5 o'clock, give or take 30 minutes, and like a lot of stories...

He stops at a door with 'SISKO & SISKO - PRIVATE EYES,' printed on the opaque glass window. He pulls a key out of his waistcoat pocket and is about to unlock it, only to hear the sound of footsteps. He looks up in time to see a WOMAN approaching him.

RENÉ
(V.O., Cont'd)

It started with a woman.

(ROLL OPENING TITLES)

1. EXT. SISKO & SISKO OFFICE- DAWN

EST. SHOT of the office door.

TITLE CARD: "THE CYCLONE-JOKER'S WILD, PART 1"

2. INT. SISKO & SISKO OFFICE- CONTINUOUS

RENÉ is sitting behind the desk in the small, slightly cramped office. There is another door in the far wall and a settee positioned beneath the one wide window. A showcase above the desk displays a torn up white fedora with a black band. The WOMAN - a young, well-dressed youth named DAISY CRANE - is in the chair on the other side of the desk with one leg crossed over the other and her face is sombre. The clock on the wall tick-tocks and the ceiling fan whirrs.

RENÉ

So, what can I do you for, *cher*?

DAISY

The name's Daisy. Daisy Crane. I need you to find somebody, Mr Sisko.

RENÉ

You from San Fortuna?

DAISY

I am. How'd you know?

RENÉ

Your accent.

DAISY

I don't have an accent.

RENÉ leans back in his chair with a knowing expression.

RENÉ

Trust me, *cher*. I'm a detective. I notice these things. Now, why not tell me who I'm supposed to be looking for?

DAISY reaches into her handbag and retrieves a photograph of a young man - DENNIS CRANE - and hands it to RENÉ. He inspects the photo as DAISY explains.

DAISY

My younger brother Dennis. He came down to this city a couple of years back to study at the university.

RENÉ looks up from the photo.

RENÉ

Study what?

DAISY

I don't think that's really relevant, Mr Sisko.

RENÉ props up the brim of his hat with his thumb and leans across the desk on his elbows.

RENÉ

Now, look-`e-here, Mam'selle Crane, I can't find your brother if I don't know where to go, and I can't know where to go if I don't who to go to.

DAISY

(Sigh)

He moved down here to study engineering. He wanted to work on boats.

RENÉ

And he thought being close to the Muddy Miss would be perfect, huh? About when did you discover he'd disappeared?

DAISY

Dennis kept in contact through voice chat every Saturday evening without fail. Then one day, he wasn't on. At first I thought he was busy, but a whole month passed without a word from him. That's when I decided something was wrong and came down here.

RENÉ

You checked his dorm?

DAISY

Of course I did. His housemates said they hadn't seen much of him. They said he got himself a real nice-paying job, no details though, but none of them have seen him in weeks.

RENÉ

Mais, I will do my best.

FADE TO

3. EXT. 2ND FLOOR CORRIDOR- LATER THAT MORNING

RENÉ is leaning in the open doorway, looking at a business card. DAISY is long gone.

RENÉ
(V.O.)

She gave me her card so I could contact her. Turned out the sheba was a model. Nothing fancy. Mainly posing on cars and stuff, but hey, everyone's got to make a living, right?

He slips the card into his trouser pocket, adjusts his hat and walks back into the office.

4. INT. SSKO & SSKO OFFICE- CONTINUOUS

RENÉ walks to his desk and opens a drawer, retrieving a notebook and pen from inside.

RENÉ
(V.O., Cont'd)

I was just about to decide my first move when...

NATASHA
(O.O.S.)

Hey, Sisko!

RENÉ looks up.

CUT TO

NATASHA FONTAINE is standing in the doorway with her arms crossed over her chest - she is a woman between 26 and 30, with her dark hair tied back and wearing a red top and white track suit bottoms.

RENÉ
Ms Fontaine, what a pleasant surprise!

NATASHA
Don't even try it, boy. You're almost a month behind on the rent.

RENÉ walks over and puts one hand on her shoulder.

RENÉ
Oh, sweet Natasha, you worry your pretty little head for nothing. I have a case.

NATASHA nods.

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NATASHA

All right, you get one more chance, but you'd better pay up, René, or you'll have to set up somewhere else, and most landladies in this city ain't as understanding as me.

RENÉ

Mais, be still my heart, Ms Fontaine, you got the patience of a Saint.

NATASHA

Don't I know it? Get your rear in gear, gumshoe. Tell your brother I said 'hi.'

NATASHA walks away. RENÉ waves after her.

RENÉ

Don't you fret, I will.

(V.O.)

She's not so bad, is Ms Fontaine. Little grouchy but a good girl at heart. With the threat of eviction looming, I got to work.

He stuffs his notebook and pen into his pocket and pulls the door shut.

5. EXT. STREET- MORNING

RENÉ walks over to his motorcycle and swings one leg over it. He pulls on his helmet and starts the bike up and drives away.

6. EXT. ANOTHER STREET- CONTINUOUS

PROFILE VIEW of RENÉ driving.

RENÉ

(V.O., Cont'd)

I reckoned our boy's housemates would be getting ready for classes now, so my first stop...

7. EXT. VILLE VENTEUSE SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING- DAY

RENÉ pulls up in the university car/bike park. The building itself is a tall, glass-and-metal structure with its logo bared proudly on the front. A few students are making their way across the courtyard to the revolving front doors.

RENÉ
(V.O., Cont'd)

..Would be the Ville Venteuse School of Engineering.

8. INT. UNIVERSITY RECEPTION AREA- MOMENTS LATER

RENÉ walks up to the desk in the slightly crowded reception area. The RECEPTIONIST is typing at her computer.

RENÉ
Pardon me, miss.

The RECEPTIONIST looks up from her computer.

RECEPTIONIST
Can I help you, sir?

RENÉ
I'm looking for these people.

He takes out the photograph of DENNIS, which also has his two housemates in it. The RECEPTIONIST ponders the photograph, then looks to the left and points.

RECEPTIONIST
There they are, Sam Savoy and Matthias Boulle.

RENÉ tips his hat to the RECEPTIONIST.

RENÉ
Thank you kindly.

He slips the photograph back in his pocket and turns in the direction she pointed.

CUT TO
Two youths - SAM SAVOY and MATTHIAS BOULLE - are talking when they notice RENÉ approaching them.

RENÉ
(Cont'd)

Morning, boys!

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SAM

Ah...hi?

MATTHIAS

Who are you?

RENÉ

René Sisko, I'm investigating the disappearance of your friend, Mr Dennis Crane? Do you mind if I ask you a few questions?

SAM

Okay, I guess we can give you maybe ten minutes before we have to get to class.

RENÉ

Much obliged. *Mais*, first thing's first. When did you both see him last?

SAM

Couple of weeks ago, on the 18TH, yeah.

MATTHIAS

He left early in the morning.

RENÉ

He do that often?

SAM

Not since he got kicked out.

RENÉ pauses.

RENÉ

Wait...he was kicked out?

MATTHIAS

It was a set-up, man. Mr Merou, the old codger running the course never liked him, looked for any excuse to get rid of him.

RENÉ

So what happened?

SAM

Well...

FADE TO

9. INT. UNIVERSITY BALCONY- DAY (FLASHBACK)

A huge crowd of students are flooding out of the rooms. Among them are DENNIS, SAM and MATTHIAS. They are talking inaudibly to one another.

SAM
(V.O.)

It was a Friday, classes were over, and three of us had a tradition, you see...

10. INT. UNIVERSITY BAR- MINUTES LATER (FLASHBACK)

DENNIS, SAM and MATTHIAS enter the bar. A few others are there, chatting, drinking or playing cards.

SAM
(V.O., Cont'd)

We always went to the student bar on Fridays. Had done ever since we started. All peaceful, like. Drink and company was good.

MATTHIAS
(V.O.)

Dennis was a bit of a ladies man though, and this girl caught his eye.

DENNIS walks up to a GIRL and starts talking to her.

MATTHIAS
(V.O., Cont'd)

How was he to know she had herself a boyfriend already?

A BRUISER grabs DENNIS by the shoulder, turns him around and punches him in the stomach, launching him across a table. The whole bar falls silent. The BARTENDER reaches for a baseball bat beneath the counter but a 2ND BRUISER whacks him across the back, flooring him. DENNIS struggles to his feet.

SAM
(V.O.)

The thing is, Dennis had a mighty foul temper.

DENNIS roars and runs at the 1ST BRUISER, tackling him to the floor and they start fighting viciously. SAM and MATTHIAS try to pull DENNIS away but he breaks free and the fight continues. Eventually, DENNIS breaks a bottle across the 1ST BRUISER'S face and he collapses. DENNIS stands up, short of breath, and shouts something at the 1ST BRUISER, who is holding a wound on his cheek.

SAM

(V.O., Cont'd)

Boy was great, you know? The guy deserved it. Small problem...

PAN LEFT to the door of the bar. An old man - MR MEROU - is peeking around the frame with a smug smile on his face.

SAM

(V.O., Cont'd)

Merou saw the whole thing...

FADE TO

11. INT. UNIVERSITY RECEPTION AREA- DAY

RENÉ is jotting down SAM'S story in his notebook.

RENÉ

And that's how he got expelled? I thought universities handled that sort of thing differently.

MATTHIAS

They do. Dennis was the smartest of us, and while he had a short fuse, it didn't go off so often. We knew Merou had a lot of swing but we suspected something else was up, so we tracked those two thugs down...

FADE TO

12. EXT. BACK OF THE UNIVERSITY BUILDING- DAY (FLASHBACK)

The BRUISERS are smoking behind the university.

MATTHIAS

(V.O.)

We caught them by surprise...

SAM and MATTHIAS creep behind them and clock them over the heads. MATTHIAS knocks the 2ND BRUISER to the ground and straddles him with one hand on his throat and the other raised to punch while SAM pins the 1ST BRUISER up against the wall.

MATTHIAS

(V.O., Cont'd)

And forced the truth out of them.

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SAM says something to the 1ST BRUISER, who responds somewhat shaken.

MATTHIAS
(V.O., Cont'd)

Turned out Merou had caught them robbing someone's house, and in exchange for not reporting them to the cops, they agreed to attack Dennis in the bar.

FADE TO

13. INT. UNIVERSITY RECEPTION AREA- DAY

RENÉ looks up from his notebook.

RENÉ

Was Dennis working for a certain company before he was expelled?

SAM

Yeah, but only part-time, never told us *who* he was working for, but pretty much the day after Merou gave him the boot, he started full-time.

MATTHIAS

Actually, I heard him on his cell-phone once, talking with someone named Mr Gervais, sounded like he could be his boss.

RENÉ jots it down and tucks his notebook back into his pocket. He tips his hat to the boys.

RENÉ

I appreciate the help, boys. I won't take up any more of your time.

SAM

Hey, uh, Mr Sisko...if you find Dennis, let us know how he is, okay?

RENÉ

Count on it.

14. EXT. VILLE VENTEUSE SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING- LATER

RENÉ is leaning against his motorcycle and talking into a red-and-black mobile phone.

RENÉ

...Come on, come on, pick up...ah, Philip, howdy. Yeah, I need you to look something up for me.

15. INT. PHILIP'S WORKSHOP- CONTINUOUS

The workshop is a basement illuminated by blue lights on the ceiling. A door leads down a set of stairs to a metal catwalk. At the other end of the catwalk is a desk with a laptop on it and a large whiteboard behind it. A row of metal tubes extend from one wall and curve down into the floor about twenty feet below. PHILIP - a man in his 20s with very soft features and a considerably feminine appearance - is walking back and forth on the catwalk with an open book in one hand and his mobile phone pressed against his ear.

PHILIP

Gervais, you say? A businessman, you say? I will see what I can do, Dear-heart.

He sits down at the laptop and starts typing inhumanly fast. Within seconds, a list of results comes up.

PHILIP
(Cont'd)

First result; Julien Gervais, regional manager of *Windscale Motors*, aged 40, height 5'6", weight 220lbs.

RENÉ
(Over phone)

Windscale, huh?

PHILIP

Would you like the address?

16. EXT. VILLE VENTEUSE SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING- CONTINUOUS

RENÉ is now swinging his leg over the seat of his motorcycle and is still talking into his mobile.

RENÉ

Nah, I know the way. Thanks, Philip. See you later.

He hangs up and slides the mobile into his pocket. He reaches for his crash helmet and dusts it off.

RENÉ

Next stop, *Windscale Motors*...

The ground beneath RENÉ starts shaking. He grips the motorcycle's handlebars for stability as behind him, people either stare in shock or run in fear. He looks over his shoulder and watches with amazement as one corner of the university starts sinking into the ground, the pavement around it bubbles and melts into boiling magma. Flames lick the outer walls.

1ST STUDENT

Look up there!

2ND STUDENT

Oh my God!

RENÉ looks up to see MR MEROU hanging out of a fourth-storey window, hanging onto the edge for dear life. RENÉ jumps off his motorcycle and races towards the building, leaping over the magma stream to reach the doors.

17. INT. UNIVERSITY STAIRWAY- MOMENTS LATER

RENÉ charges up the stairs, past rushing students and staff alike.

RENÉ

Go on! Move it, move it, move it! Head for the doors and jump for your life!

18. INT. MEROU'S CLASSROOM- MOMENTS LATER

The room is at such a dangerous tilt that everything - tables, stools and equipment - is sliding downward and smashing through the windows, toppling towards the increasing pool of magma. Fortunately none of it seems to strike MR MEROU. Standing over MEROU is the MAGMA TROJANITE. MEROU is absolutely terrified. The door of the room slams open and RENÉ enters. He sees the MAGMA TROJANITE and is surprised.

RENÉ

Well, I'll be danged, a Trojanite!

The MAGMA TROJANITE turns to RENÉ and grunts warningly. The floor under its feet bubbles and starts to give way, spreading out in a semi-circle that encloses around the spot where MEROU is holding on. The floor starts to break apart.

MEROU

Don't just stand there! Help me!

RENÉ

On my way, sir!

He skids down the sloping room. The MAGMA TROJANITE steps in his way.

RENÉ

(Cont'd)

Urk! That looks hot!

He drops onto his back and slides between the MAGMA TROJANITE'S legs. The TROJANITE grunts in confusion and bends down to look. MEROU screams as the chunk of floor gives way and he starts falling towards the bubbling pool far below. RENÉ grabs a loose overhanging power cable in his right hand and stretches out his left. A grappling claw on a thin metal wire shoots out of his sleeve and clamps down on MEROU'S belt.

RENÉ

(Cont'd)

Got you!

MEROU clutches the wire in both hands for security. RENÉ struggles to maintain his grip as the wire retracts, pulling MEROU back up towards him. MEROU'S eyes widen and he points over RENÉ'S shoulder.

MEROU

Look out!

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RENÉ looks back over his shoulder. The MAGMA TROJANITE has both fists raised to smash him over the head.

RENÉ

Oh...this is awkward.

He looks towards the inside pocket of his waistcoat but with both hands occupied, he cannot reach into it. The TROJANITE prepares to deal the killing blow when a resounding 'CRACK!' rings out. The floor beneath the TROJANITE and RENÉ melts and all three people start falling. MEROU screams like a madman. RENÉ detaches the grappling claw and grabs the older man's hand in his own.

RENÉ
(Cont'd)

Hold on!

He fires his grappling claw again, this time catching the overhanging ledge of an otherwise undamaged floor. He swings down and lands nimbly on his feet. He lets the shaking MENOUE drop to his knees, kissing the ground and muttering to himself. RENÉ retracts the claw and looks up towards the building with a sombre look. He turns to the crowd.

RENÉ
(Cont'd)

Somebody call the authorities. Now!

19. EXT. WOODS BEHIND THE UNIVERSITY BUILDING- MEANWHILE

The MAGMA TROJANITE stumbles through the foliage until collapsing, exhausted, at the foot of a tree. Up in the branches, a YOUNG WOMAN watches with a displeased expression on her face.

WOMAN

Hmm...

PHILIP
(V.O.)

A Trojanite, you say?

CUT TO

20. INT. PHILIP'S WORKSHOP- LATER THAT DAY

PHILIP is standing at the whiteboard, scribbling on it without hindrance even though his eyes are on his book. RENÉ is sitting on the metal stairs between the catwalk and the door.

RENÉ

Right. They've been silent the last three months, looks like they're active again.

PHILIP

Three months, two days, ten hours, five minutes and 16 seconds to be precise.

RENÉ is about to say something but decides against it.

PHILIP
(Cont'd)

I searched 'magma,' to discern its properties, and accumulated 200,000 results. In relation, 'silicon dioxide,' accumulated 150,870 results. Of those I've filtered through 142,650 with only minimal non-recurring factors. Set against the averages, this leads me to assume that its abilities are based around inducing structural instability through extreme heat.

RENÉ

So it melts things. Phil, you're not telling me anything I don't already know.

PHILIP

Did you know this, Dear-heart? When a volcano erupts, it spews ash and smog into the air. If the Trojanite reaches its critical stage, it is only sensible to assume it could do the same, resulting in heavy pollution to Ville Venteuse.

RENÉ jumps to his feet and walks over to PHILIP at a brisk pace.

RENÉ

Then we have to track it down and stop it before that happens.

PHILIP

I will keep a vigilant eye out for it. I thought you'd like to know that I have also opened up a few more transport tubes beneath the city so there will be more checkpoints at your disposal. Now, didn't you say you were going to *Windscale Motors*?

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RENÉ palms his face, then quickly runs off towards the door.

RENÉ

I plum nearly forgot! See you later!

He slams the door shut behind him with enough force to rattle the catwalk. PHILIP sighs and goes back to his research.

21. EXT. WINDSCALE MOTORS AUTO SHOW ROOM- DAY

EST. SHOT of the auto show room. Beautiful (and expensive) cars are lined up attractively both outside and within, seen through the huge windows. JULIEN GERVAIS - a tall, well-built man with salt-and-pepper hair and wearing a neat dark suit - is talking to a CUSTOMER while stroking the bonnet of a particular car. RENÉ pulls up on his motorcycle and parks it outside, climbs off and walks onto the lot and towards GERVAIS, who ends his conversation and faces RENÉ.

GERVAIS

Ah, good afternoon, sir, how can I be of service to you?

RENÉ

Likewise, and I'm looking for Dennis Crane. I heard he worked for you.

GERVAIS

Ah, yes. Bright boy, always punctual. He's not in any trouble is he?

RENÉ

Sure hope not, sir. I won't take long...I'm a friend of his sister, you see.

GERVAIS nods and leads him into the shop.

22. INT. WINDSCALE MOTORS AUTO SHOW ROOM- CONTINUOUS

DENNIS is cleaning the bonnet of a car when GERVAIS and RENÉ walk on behind him.

GERVAIS

Dennis, boy!

DENNIS stands up and turns to the two newcomers.

DENNIS

Oh, Mr Gervais, hello. Oh, and uh, hello to you too, Mr...?

RENÉ

Sisko. I know your sister. Mind if we talk?

DENNIS

Oh, sure. Mr Gervais, do you mind if...?

GERVAIS

Oh, don't you let me get in the way. Take five, kid.

GERVAIS leaves.

RENÉ

I'm sorry for bothering you at work, *mon ami*, but Daisy's mighty worried about you. Says you used to talk all the time over the web, then you disappeared.

DENNIS groans and leans on the car, putting one hand to his forehead.

DENNIS

Should've guessed she'd come looking...

RENÉ

Mais, if I can make an educated guess, you didn't want her knowing you lost your place on the course, right?

DENNIS

Please don't tell her! It'll break her heart!

RENÉ

I'll leave that to you, then. By all accounts I've solved the case your sister hired me to do, but there's something else bothering me. I'm told you have a nasty relationship with one Mr Merou.

DENNIS clenches his fist, struggling to keep his temper.

DENNIS

That old coot's hated me since I first showed up in this city, and you know something? I never found out what he had against me! Hell, I'd hire you if it meant I'd find out.

RENÉ

I'll do it as a service to your sister. I need to speak with Mr Merou anyway. You heard about what happened at the university building?

DENNIS

I did.

RENÉ

You don't seem too cut up about it.

DENNIS shrugs.

DENNIS

Oh, I took it as seriously as anybody, Mr Sisko. I'm just not prone to crying over spilt milk.

RENÉ retrieves DAISY'S card from his pocket and gives it to DENNIS.

RENÉ

I see...here, your sister scribbled the number of the hotel she's staying at on the back. Give her a call. Be seeing you.

He tips his hat and walks out, leaving DENNIS alone, staring forlornly at the card.

23. EXT. WINDSCALE MOTORS AUTO SHOW ROOM- SECONDS LATER

RENÉ emerges from the building and walks towards his waiting motorcycle.

RENÉ

(V.O.)

I was sure of it. I could tell how worked up the kid got when I mentioned the old man, but there was one more piece to this puzzle...why did Merou want him off the course in the first place?

He climbs onto the motorcycle, puts on his crash-helmet and revs the engine. He drives away from the show room.

24. EXT. STREET- CONTINUOUS

PROFILE VIEW of RENÉ driving.

RENÉ

(V.O., Cont'd)

If I wanted the answer, I had to get to him before the Trojanite. Thankfully I got his address from Philip. That boy has his uses, let me tell you.

25. EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING- CONTINUOUS

RENÉ pulls up in the car/bike park outside the building, climbs off and looks around. On the other side of the lot, MEROU is getting out of his car. RENÉ walks towards him.

RENÉ

Excuse me, *monsieur*!

MEROU looks in his direction, but before he can speak, a lump of molten metal strikes the roof of his car. The people in the park run away in fright. RENÉ stumbles backwards, holding his motorcycle for support.

CUT TO

The MAGMA TROJANITE is walking slowly towards them. MEROU ducks back into his car and tries to start the engine but it fails.

MEROU

No, no, no, don't do this to me you piece of junk!

The TROJANITE starts pounding on the roof of the car, melting the metal. MEROU barely dodges being hit by a bubbling string of it.

RENÉ

Stop!

The TROJANITE grunts and looks at RENÉ as MEROU cowers.

RENÉ

(Cont'd)

Please. You don't have to do this. Don't let the Trojanite power control you. What would your sister think, Dennis?

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The TROJANITE tilts its head and growls lowly. It shoves the car aside with ease. It bangs into a lamppost and MEROU'S head hits the steering wheel, rendering him unconscious. The TROJANITE advances towards RENÉ, its skin glowing white hot. Sloppy globs of rock and lava drip from its fists, cooking the pavement beneath it.

RENÉ
(Cont'd)

He's going critical. If I don't stop him now, it'll be too late.

(Sigh)

I didn't want to do this, Dennis.

He opens his mobile phone, hits a button and puts it to his ear.

RENÉ
(Cont'd)

Philip, send the belt. You got my location?

26. INT. PHILIP'S WORKSHOP- CONTINUOUS

PHILIP is walking along the catwalk with his phone to his ear and holding a large, maroon belt buckle with two translucent slots on the front. His laptop displays C.C.T.V. footage of the area outside the apartments.

PHILIP

Yes, and most fortunately one of the new travel-tubes leads to right where you're standing. You should really carry this around with you, Dear-heart.

RENÉ
(Over phone)

I got to keep you on your toes somehow, don't I?

PHILIP opens one of the brass pipes on the wall and slips the belt buckle inside. It disappears with a loud 'WHOOSH!'

PHILIP

Incoming.

27. EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING- SECONDS LATER

The MAGMA TROJANITE continues advancing towards RENÉ. A panel in the ground in front of him pops open and the belt buckle flies out. The TROJANITE pauses and grunts in surprise. RENÉ catches the buckle in mid-air and attaches it to his belt. He reaches into opposite sides of his waistcoat and pulls out two U.S.B. data-sticks; the one on his right is green and marked with a 'C,' while the one on his left is black and marked with a 'J.'

RENÉ

Ride up!

He slams the two data-sticks into the slots and clicks them into place, forming a 'W,' on the front. The BELT'S A.I. rings out with an enthusiastic cry.

BELT'S A.I.

Cyclone-Joker!

CRASH ZOOM IN on the buckle as the data-sticks crackle with power. CRASH ZOOM OUT to show RENÉ clad in a suit of armour that is black on his left and green on the right. A long silver scarf flaps behind him and his helmet's red eye-pieces flash. The pinwheels and windmills dotting the city blow harder, fanning the flames leaking out of the MAGMA TROJANITE, causing it to groan in discomfort. RENÉ does a sweeping arm movement as his eye-pieces flicker again.

RENÉ

I...am the Masked Rider!

He charges forward into battle and right jump-kicks the MAGMA TROJANITE, followed up with a left high-kick and a series of alternating spin-kicks, drawing sparks from the TROJANITE, who barely has enough time to defend itself. The vicious opening assault ends with a powerful kick to the TROJANITE'S face, sending it flying across the battle-field. The TROJANITE staggers to its feet and roars angrily, spewing fireballs from its body that rain down on the ground around RENÉ, who jumps, bobs and weaves, then raises his arms to block as the fireballs start hitting him.

RENÉ

(Cont'd)

He's going to blow...I've got to end this now or never!

He pulls the green data-stick from his belt and shoves a yellow one marked with an 'L,' into the slot.

BELT'S A.I.

Lunar-Joker!

RENÉ'S right side changes from green to yellow and his eye-pieces flash yet again. The fireballs continue coming towards him, but he suddenly snaps out his right arm, which extends like rubber, whipping the burning projectiles aside. The MAGMA TROJANITE grunts in confusion. RENÉ'S arm shrinks back to its normal length.

RENÉ

Is that really the best you've got, *mon ami*?

The TROJANITE launches more fireballs, but once again they are deflected harmlessly by RENÉ'S elastic arm. He grabs hold of the TROJANITE'S face and pulls himself towards it, using the momentum to shove it backwards. He does a frontal flip and extends his leg for a drop-kick, then jumps diagonally, slapping the TROJANITE with his foot three times, and finally jumps diagonally in the opposite direction for two more attacks. RENÉ leaps forward and plants both feet into the TROJANITE'S chest, knocking it to the ground.

RENÉ

(Cont'd)

You'll thank me for this later, Dennis.

He takes out the yellow data-stick and replaces it with the green one again, returning to his standard form.

BELT'S A.I.

Cyclone-Joker!

He takes out the black data-stick and clips it into an external slot on the right side of his belt. There is the sound of thrusters powering up as he is lifted into the air.

BELT'S A.I.

(Cont'd)

Rider Kick!

The thrusters kick up a powerful gust of wind, throwing plants and plastic chairs and tables around and pelting the struggling TROJANITE. RENÉ descends in a double dropkick, but halfway down he divides down the middle, with his black half impacting on the MAGMA TROJANITE'S chest, followed half a second later by his green half. RENÉ re-fuses and lands on the other side of the TROJANITE as it explodes in a column of flames. When the fire disperses, a HOODED FIGURE topples to the ground. A blood-coloured data-stick with a skeletal design lands beside him and shatters.

The Masked Rider
Episode 1: "The Cyclone-Joker's Wild, Part 1"

The FIGURE stares in bewilderment at RENÉ, who is rapidly approaching him. RENÉ bends down and takes hold of the FIGURE'S hood.

RENÉ

Now, you've got a lot of explaining to do, Den-

He pulls the hood back to reveal the 1ST BRUISER underneath. RENÉ back-pedals with a shocked gasp.

RENÉ
(Cont'd)

Who...?

The entire ground starts to shake violently. RENÉ loses his balance and falls on his posterior. A crack opens in the pavement and something resembling the fossilised head of a Tyrannosaurus Rex bursts out. It roars and grabs the screaming 1ST BRUISER in its jaws.

RENÉ

Hold on!

He runs towards the Tyrannosaurus Rex but the monster's tail also emerges and swats him into a metal fence. By the time he recovers it is already disappearing back into its tunnel with the captive 1ST BRUISER, who is still screaming and squirming. RENÉ pulls out his mobile phone and presses a series of buttons on what looks like a secondary keypad.

RENÉ
(Cont'd)

Philip, bring the Reckoning.

28. INT. PHILIP'S WORKSHOP- CONTINUOUS

CLOSE-UP of PHILIP with his mobile, he is smiling with a hint of malevolence.

PHILIP

I get all goose-pimply when you ask for that.

He lowers the phone and walks towards us.

CUT TO

Behind PHILIP as he leaps down from the catwalk and lands nimbly on the floor far below. He holds out a remote control and presses a button on it. A 'beep-beep,' sound emanates and two red lights like giant insect eyes turn on in the dark depths.

CUT TO

The Masked Rider
Episode 1: "The Cyclone-Joker's Wild, Part 1"

EXTREME CLOSE-UP of the RECKONING'S two left front tyres. An engine bellows to life and the hefty vehicle launches forward.

29. EXT. RIVERSIDE TUNNEL- CONTINUOUS

The RECKONING, a giant, eight-wheeled tank with two cockpits (the red eyes are in fact canopies) races out of the tunnel.

30. INT. THE RECKONING'S RIGHT COCKPIT- CONTINUOUS

PHILIP is seated inside the cockpit, which is illuminated by an eerie green light. He is surrounded by different gears and levers and his gentle but confident smile remains.

TO BE CONTINUED...