

THE MASKED RIDER
EPISODE 5 - "BENEATH THE SURFACE, PART 1"

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THE MASKED RIDER - "BENEATH THE SURFACE, PART 1"

PRE-TITLES 1. EXT. BURNING HOUSE- NIGHT

EST. SHOT of the house, which stands on a hill in the city's upper class district. It is engulfed in an inferno. FIREMEN are preparing their hoses. Two of them head for the front door.

CAPTION: 8 Years Ago...

1ST FIREMAN

Move it! There are still people in there!

PRE-TITLES 2. INT. BURNING HOUSE- CONTINUOUS

A rafter collapses, blocking the doorway that a mother, MIRANDA MOLYNEAUX and her 10-year-old daughter ASHLEY were about to go through. ASHLEY cries out and MIRANDA pulls her away from the blaze and into a tight embrace.

ASHLEY

Mama, I'm scared!

MIRANDA

It'll be okay, Ashley, Mama'll keep you safe.

VOICE (O.O.S.)

Miranda! Ashley! Where are you?!

MIRANDA

Gregor!

ASHLEY

Daddy!

GREGOR MOLYNEAUX, whose features are mostly obscured by the flames and shadows, comes into the room and kneels down by MIRANDA and ASHLEY.

GREGOR

Don't worry, the firemen are coming. Are you two all right?

MIRANDA

We're fine, but the door's blocked.

GREGOR stands up and looks at the fallen rafter blocking the doorway. He runs over to it and grabs it in both hands. The fire catches his suit but he does not waver, putting all his strength into it.

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ASHLEY

Daddy!

MIRANDA

Gregor, what are you doing?!

GREGOR growls as he moves the rafter. He struggles to hold it up with his shoulders, ignoring the fire engulfing him.

GREGOR

Both of you, move! Now!

MIRANDA

But-

GREGOR

DO AS I SAY!

MIRANDA scoops up ASHLEY and runs through the opening. As they pass GREGOR, ASHLEY makes direct eye contact with him for a split-second.

GREGOR (Cont'd, V.O.)

See you on the other side, Ashley.

PRE-TITLES 3. EXT. BURNING HOUSE- NIGHT

The 1ST FIREMAN has finished chopping down the door with his fire-axe just as MIRANDA and ASHLEY topple out and into the cool night air.

1ST FIREMAN

Get them into the truck! Put them both on oxygen masks! Pronto!

(To Miranda) Don't worry, miss, we've got you. You and your daughter are safe now.

MIRANDA

Thank you, but my husband's still in there.

ASHLEY sits on the grass, staring into the inferno. A 2ND FIREMAN picks her up and carries her towards the awaiting fire engine but her eyes remain fixated on the house.

We see a faint silhouette of GREGOR staggering about inside before disappearing in a swirl of fire.

ASHLEY

(Whispers) Daddy...

(ROLL OPENING TITLES)

1. EXT. SISKO & SISKO OFFICE- DAWN

EST. SHOT of the office door.

TITLE CARD: "BENEATH THE SURFACE, PART 1"

FADE TO:

2. EXT. PLACE D'MAIGRET- MORNING

EST. SHOT of the Place d'Maigret, a grand park roughly the size of a city block. In the centre of the park is a black statue of a mounted soldier perched on a stone pedestal in the middle of a huge, decorative fountain.

CAPTION: Present Day...

A massive crowd of CITIZENS and JOURNALISTS is gathered around a podium, on which stands MAYOR MIRANDA MOLYNEAUX, addressing them. To her right is an easel. SUITED BODYGUARDS and even a few POLICEMEN are stationed on and around the podium as protection.

RENÉ (wearing a black waistcoat over a blue shirt and white tie) and PHILIP (wearing a beige hoodie over a black-and-white shirt) are sitting on fold-out chairs in front of the podium. RENÉ looks bored as MIRANDA continues jawing.

RENÉ (V.O.)

You're probably wondering what Ville Venteuse's finest private eyes are doing here, right? Playing bodyguard to a suited civil servant? Well, I'll tell ya...

FLASH TO:

3. INT. SISKO & SISKO OFFICE- DAY (FLASHBACK)

RENÉ is sprawled over the sofa against the wall with his hat over his face while PHILIP paces about while reading.

RENÉ (V.O., Cont'd)

It'd been days, no, weeks since our last case and money was starting to get a little thin. Philip was on-edge and I was just starting to get a little depressed. Then...

There is a knock at the door.

RENÉ

It's open.

The door opens and BELINDA walks in carrying a plastic bag.

BELINDA

Hey, how're my two favourite boys today? Brought you something, Philly.

She takes a wrapped package out of her bag and throws it to PHILIP, who catches it in one hand. He peaks inside, licks his lips and sits down behind the desk. While PHILIP eats, BELINDA hunkers down in front of RENÉ and takes his hat off his face. They talk inaudibly.

RENÉ (V.O.)

Belinda told us that the Mayor was looking to hire some temporary bodyguards for some big public event. The money wouldn't exactly be tops, but it'd still be enough.

FLASH TO:

4. EXT. PLACE D'MAIGRET- PRESENT

RENÉ yawns and then bows his head, tipping the brim of his hat down over his eyes. An 18-YEAR-OLD GIRL walks past him.

MIRANDA is still talking.

MIRANDA

And now, ladies and gentlemen, it gives me great pleasure to present the object of my proposal..

She reaches for the top sheet of the easel and flips it up, revealing an intricately drawn picture of a massive tower with several rings of propellers around it and numerous tubes leading from its lower sections into the ground. The CROWD sounds its awe as PHOTOGRAPHERS start snapping pictures.

MIRANDA (Cont'd)

The Molyneaux Tower, named for its architect, designed to store wind-generated electrical energy on a much bigger scale than our regular generators and pump it to every corner of the city. When it proves to be a success here, these towers will be erected all over the world, furthering our efforts in making pollution a thing of the past!

PHILIP leans over towards RENÉ.

PHILIP

Sounds exciting, doesn't it, dear-heart?

RENÉ

I'll believe it when I see it.

PHILIP sighs and leans back in his chair, lifts the book in his lap and starts reading.

RENÉ'S eyes shift at the sound of a, 'CLICK!' He leaps to his feet and swings his chair around just in time to deflect an oncoming bullet. MIRANDA ducks down. PEOPLE IN THE CROWD scream.

RENÉ (Cont'd)

Phil, get the Mayor to safety!

PHILIP

Take this, just in case.

PHILIP holds out the belt. RENÉ smiles and takes it.

RENÉ

Merci, mon frère.

He deflects a second bullet with the chair, then a third.

RENÉ (Cont'd)

Now move it!

PHILIP nods and runs up to the podium. MIRANDA is hiding behind the easel as her BODYGUARDS look around futilely for the assailant. A fourth bullet clips one BODYGUARD'S kneecap and he drops in pain.

Among the police is CAPTAIN CHARBONNEAU, who is standing by his patrol car and speaking into the radio.

CHARBONNEAU

Situation at Place d'Maigret, unknown assailant shooting at citizens, probably after Mayor Molyneaux! I need more guys! Now! Whoa!

He ducks behind the car just in time to avoid a fifth bullet. He pulls out his own gun as RENÉ appears beside him.

RENÉ

And just who are you planning to shoot, Toussaint?

CHARBONNEAU

Why aren't you protecting Mayor Molyneaux?

RENÉ

It's fine, Phil's with her. Can you get your boys to set up a barrier around the park? I'm going to find who's shooting at us.

CHARBONNEAU is about to protest but RENÉ is already leaping over the bonnet of the patrol car. CHARBONNEAU scowls and picks up his radio again.

CHARBONNEAU

That boy's gonna be the death of me.

RENÉ races across the Place d'Maigret through a rain of bullets. CITIZENS and JOURNALISTS flee as the POLICE try to shepherd them to safety.

RENÉ clips the belt on and pulls the green and black Rider Keys from his trouser pockets, unaware that the 18-YEAR-OLD GIRL is watching from her hiding place in the bushes.

RENÉ

Ride up!

He plugs the Keys into the chambers on the belt.

BELT'S A.I.

Cyclone-Joker!

CRASH ZOOM IN on the belt as the Keys crackle with power. CRASH ZOOM OUT to show RENÉ in the armour, somersaulting into the air.

The 18-YEAR-OLD GIRL looks astonished. She pulls out a small handy-cam and aims it.

CAMERA'S P.O.V. shows RENÉ dodging a bullet. One strikes the camera and it cuts to static.

RENÉ rolls along the ground. A bullet hits him in the shoulder and spins him onto his side, but does not do any harm to him. He ducks behind the bullet-ridden remains of the now empty podium.

RENÉ

I can't work out where the heck he's shooting from...but if he wants to play, 'Dirty Harry,' that's fine with me. Only if I don't know where I'm aiming, I might do more harm than good.

He quickly ducks out of the way.

RENÉ (Cont'd)

Man, I'm getting sick of running!

He replaces the black Rider Key with the silver one and stands up.

BELT'S A.I.

Cyclone-Metal!

He rolls across the podium and stands again as his left side changes from black to silver and his quarterstaff appears on his back. He draws the staff and starts swatting away bullets until they stop coming. He looks about cautiously. The only sounds are the wind and the gentle spinning of pinwheels around the park.

RENÉ

Hmm...no, he's still here somewhere.

He dashes OFF-SCREEN.

The 18-YEAR-OLD GIRL pulls the mini-D.V. tape out of her handy-cam and angrily chucks the damaged machine away before chasing after RENÉ.

5. EXT. PLACE D'MAIGRET HYDRO-ELECTRIC PLANT- DAY

RENÉ runs in from around the corner. He hesitates to look around and then keeps running.

6. EXT. PLACE D'MAIGRET HYDRO-ELECTRIC PLANT ROOFTOP- DAY

RENÉ emerges onto the rooftop and looks around frantically. He runs to the edge of the rooftop, overlooking the waterways that feed the plant. There is no sign of the shooter and no more bullets.

RENÉ

Great, guy got away. *Mais*, maybe we can at least do something with this.

He opens his right hand, revealing one of the bullets. It is a shimmering blue-and-purple colour and covered with small indentations. He pulls his Rider Keys out of the belt, dismissing his armour, and pockets them along with the bullet.

VOICE (O.O.S.)

Ah-ha!

RENÉ gasps and turns around. The 18-YEAR-OLD GIRL is standing there, tossing the mini-D.V. cassette into the air and catching it on its descent.

18-YEAR-OLD GIRL (Cont'd)

I knew there was something strange about you, Masked Rider.

RENÉ

What?! Wait, did you follow me?

18-YEAR-OLD GIRL

Actually I showed up about three seconds ago but thanks for confirming my suspicions, mister.

RENÉ puts his palm to his face and groans.

RENÉ

Look, little mam'selle, I barely got enough money to feed me and my brother so if you're gonna blackmail me-

18-YEAR-OLD GIRL

(Interrupting) I'm not going to blackmail you. I want to hire you, and by the way, the name's Ashley Molyneaux. Your office is...that way, right?

She marches off before RENÉ can stop her. After a moment he shakes his head and follows.

ASHLEY (Cont'd)

By the way, where did you send my mom?

RENÉ

Uh, back to your home I guess.

ASHLEY

Hers, not ours.

RENÉ

Oh, *pardonnez-moi*.

They both descend the stairs and disappear from view. A SHADOWED FIGURE appears at the edge of the frame and clenches its slimy fist. It growls and swiftly takes its leave.

FADE TO:

7. EXT. BAYOU- DAY

The deepest region of the bayou, where the swampy mist is so thick it appears to be a place of complete doom and gloom, despite the visible rays of sunlight breaking through the heavily hanging canopy. The sounds of insects clicking and buzzing, alligators growling and other horrid things permeate the air. In the middle of the river itself is a large building on stilts. It is too large and complex to be a mere house, with two waterwheels and rows of pinwheels for generating power and criss-crossing wooden walkways leading to four other buildings on the opposing shores. A sign sticking out of the mud reads:

*'PROPERTY OF TORRANCE ENTERPRISES.
TRESPASSERS WILL BE PERSECUTED.
SURVIVORS OF PERSECUTION WILL BE SHOT.'*

An airboat is moored at the main complex.

FADE TO:

8. INT. MAIN FACTORY COMPLEX- CONTINUOUS

The room is dimly lit. Three conveyor belts are lined up parallel to one another, carrying blank grey Keys. The machines are being manned by MASQUERADE TROJANITES; figures in black suits and skeletal masks. The door at one end of the factory floor opens and DIAHNNE walks in with a slightly nervous BERNARD.

BERNARD

This place gives me the creeps.

DIAHNNE

Easy, honey. If I've got to tell you not to be so nervous one more time I'll feed you to a 'gator, got it?

BERNARD gulps. DIAHNNE smiles dangerously.

DIAHNNE (Cont'd)

Just joking, if you're lucky. Anyway, since you're going to be hitting the big time soon, thought I'd show you just where we get our lovely little toys from.

She waves her Trojanite Key in his face for emphasis. BERNARD smiles and relaxes - something about DIAHNNE just does that to him - and he jabs his thumb in the direction of the MASQUERADES.

BERNARD

So what are they? Oompa-Loompas?

DIAHNNE

Very funny. Those are Masquerade Trojanites, poor suckers who gave us low money and so got low quality products in return. Usually they're jobless creeps who wind up working for us to pay back their debts. You've been with us long enough, darling, you should know by now that we Torrances keep track of what we're owed.

BERNARD

Then those things coming out of the machines are...?

DIAHNNE

The vessels we use to create Trojanites. They have to be built to very specific standards before they're sent down here...

DIAHNNE holds her Key towards the door. The metal surface ripples as a wave of red light washes over it, then it swings open to reveal a downward staircase.

BERNARD

Whoa. How did...?

DIAHNNE

We Torrances are also very good at keeping track of security. Come on, toot-sweet.

She heads down the stairs with BERNARD in tow. The door closes itself behind them.

9. INT. FACTORY FURNACE ROOM- CONTINUOUS

The room seems to have been hollowed out from a cavern. The only illumination is from the intense heat coming from the pit in the centre of the room. A conveyor belt comes from the wall, carrying the new Keys from upstairs and dropping them into the molten liquid below. HEFTY MASQUERADE TROJANITES are toiling away down here, lifting the glowing Keys from the pit with iron tongs and dropping them onto anvils where they are hammered into shape. DIAHNNE watches with satisfaction while BERNARD stares with amazement.

BERNARD

A forge?

DIAHNNE

Of a sort, though Daddy likes to call it, 'Transmogrification Central.' After all, we're not just making horseshoes here. We're giving evolution the kick-start it needs.

BERNARD continues to stare, almost mesmerised, by the sparks belching out of the rim of the pit. A HEFTY MASQUERADE TROJANITE lifts up a finished Trojanite Key in his gloved hand. It is black and marked with the word, 'SKULL.'

10. INT. SISKO & SISKO OFFICE- DAY

The door flies open as ASHLEY enters with RENÉ close behind. PHILIP, who is sitting behind the desk, looks up from his book.

PHILIP

You took your time.

RENÉ

I was fighting the forces of evil and all that.

PHILIP

Um...

RENÉ

Forget it. She knows. Take a seat, Ms Molyneaux. Phil, is the Mayor safe?

PHILIP

Captain Charbonneau escorted her home and has set up a patrol around the house.

RENÉ

Yeah, the cops were *real* useful at the park. Anyway, Phil, I've got a job for you. See what you can make of this.

He holds out the bullet. PHILIP stands up and takes it from him carefully.

PHILIP

Excellent. It would have been a bad idea to leave it with the police lab, I do not think they completely understand the versatility of Trojanites.

RENÉ

This thing looks more like a tooth than a bullet. Maybe you can work out what kind of Trojanite we're dealing with, *oui*?

PHILIP salutes and clicks his heels.

PHILIP

Yes, sir-ee.

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He marches to the door leading down to the workshop and walks through it. RENÉ sets his hat down on the desk and sits down.

RENÉ

So, Ashley, right? What exactly can I do you for?

ASHLEY

I don't know much about, 'Trojanites,' since I've been out of Ville Venteuse for a while, but I think I know who might have orchestrated the attack on my mother.

RENÉ looks genuinely interested.

RENÉ

Really? Well, that's great. Tell me.

ASHLEY slaps a newspaper down in front of him. On the front page are several City Hall-type BIG-WIGS at some kind of public event. One of them - a square-jawed Hispanic man with slicked back hair and glasses - has been circled with a red felt tip marker.

ASHLEY

This man.

RENÉ

Gabriel Garza? Are you serious, *cher*? He's the District Attorney, what makes you think he's-?

ASHLEY

(*Interrupting*) Are you calling me a liar?!

RENÉ

No! No, not at all, it's just...well, what's his motive? It can't be monetary or anything, the D.A. probably rakes in the dough.

ASHLEY

You're right. It's not money. Garza has a vendetta against my family. He and my dear departed daddy go way back.

RENÉ

Departed? I'm sorry for your loss.

ASHLEY

Don't be. It was 8 years ago. I'm convinced Garza had something to do with his death, and I'm positive he wants to finish the job.

RENÉ ponders this. His eyes are cast down towards the newspaper and he is stroking his chin with his thumb thoughtfully.

RENÉ (V.O.)

Could the D.A. be the Trojanite we're looking for? I don't know. Something about this doesn't feel right. The girl could be right about this and it's a vendetta, but I need to know more.

ASHLEY

So, will you take the case, detective?

RENÉ

I'll see what I can do, but getting close to Garza's going to be hard...may have to charge a mighty fee.

ASHLEY

How about I don't go telling everyone your secret identity? The camera might have been damaged in the fight but I still have the tape in working order.

RENÉ

Now that there's just plain mean!

ASHLEY

(Grins) Easy there, Ragin' Cajun. I'm the Mayor's daughter, meanness is in my bones.

RENÉ

I hope that's all you got from your mother.

ASHLEY

Don't worry, looks like these come custom-made.

RENÉ

If that was meant to be a pass at me, girl, maybe you should wait until you've grown a few inches...and a couple of other things.

ASHLEY

(Scowls) Sharp, aren't you?

RENÉ

Like a fresh dagger.

ASHLEY reaches into her pocket and retrieves the mini-D.V. from her pocket, waving it tauntingly in his face.

ASHLEY

Keep up the banter, boy, and you'll end up with a few daggers in your back as well as on your tongue. Now, let's get to work.

RENÉ stares at the cassette and sighs in defeat.

FADE TO:

11. EXT. BELINDA'S- SOON AFTER

EST. SHOT of the café. RENÉ'S distinctive motorcycle is parked outside.

RENÉ (V.O.)

Mais, how about we start from the beginning, then?

12. INT. BELINDA'S- CONTINUOUS

It appears to be a slow day with only a few PATRONS. BELINDA is serving coffee to someone. RENÉ is sitting in his usual booth opposite ASHLEY. He is sipping a *café au lait*. She has a Coke.

ASHLEY

Garza and my dad were at school together. They'd known each other since they were kids, but Daddy was always the go-to guy, you know? You wouldn't think it now but in the pictures I've seen, the D.A.'s kinda scrawny. Like you.

RENÉ

Hey, do you mind if we keep this professional? And for your information I'm not scrawny, I'm snake-hipped.

ASHLEY

(Continues, ignoring him) Garza was always envious of Daddy. He was the one with the drive and the ideas. When he decided to go to university so he could learn to be an architect, that clod clung to him like a leech for a year.

RENÉ

So what happened next?

ASHLEY

My mother did.

FLASH TO:

13. EXT. UNIVERSITY CAMPUS- DAY (FLASHBACK)

It is the 1970s, and the clothes worn by the STUDENT BODY is evident of the period; bright, cartoon-y colours, big boots, plastic belts and funny hats. Amongst the fabulously dressed freak-show are the YOUNG GREGOR MOLYNEAUX and YOUNG GABRIEL GARZA. They appear to be talking to each other. Suddenly, YOUNG GARZA stops and stares ahead. YOUNG GREGOR looks in the direction he is staring in and also comes to a halt.

The YOUNG MIRANDA walks across their path, dressed in the height of fashion.

ASHLEY (Cont'd, V.O.)

My parents met at the university, and both Daddy and Garza were making eyes at her. My old lady had them both, hook, line and sinker, and being typical guys..

14. INT. UNIVERSITY CAMPUS- DAY (FLASHBACK)

WHACK! YOUNG GREGOR'S fist hits YOUNG GARZA straight in the jaw, flooring him. YOUNG MIRANDA, along with several OTHER STUDENTS, look on in a mix of confusion and surprise.

ASHLEY (Cont'd, V.O.)

..They fell out over it.

YOUNG GARZA wipes blood off his lips, staggers to his feet and charges at YOUNG GREGOR, who flips him over his shoulder and drops him in the nearby fountain. YOUNG GARZA splashes about desperately for a little while and then drags himself out. He stands in front of everybody present, soaking wet.

ASHLEY (Cont'd, V.O.)

And got his butt handed to him in front of the whole university. He was probably used to people laughing at him, but the fact he was humiliated in front of her...I guess he couldn't take it.

YOUNG GARZA looks pleadingly at YOUNG MIRANDA. Unsure of what she is supposed to do, she simply turns away and walks into the CROWD. YOUNG GARZA'S expression is one of heartbreak.

FLASH TO:

15. INT. BELINDA'S- PRESENT

RENÉ sets his cup down and jots something in his notebook.
ASHLEY looks out of the café window as she finishes her story.

ASHLEY (Cont'd)

Wasn't too long before they were told he'd dropped out
and moved away from the city to study law in Pearson
Tripp.

RENÉ

That's all the way on the west side of Texas. Heck of a
long way to run.

ASHLEY

Sometimes running is all you can do, Mr Sisko. Garza
wasn't seen again in Louisiana until he got the job of
District Attorney. He'd already made a name for himself
in Texas and a few other States. His track record's not
perfect, but it was good enough to get him the job.

RENÉ

Revenge for a fight over a girl? That's petty, as far as
motives go.

ASHLEY

I'm not hiring you to--

RENÉ

You're not, 'hiring,' me at all, remember?

ASHLEY

Fine. I don't want you to be judgemental about this, I
want you to investigate Garza and find the evidence of
his guilt.

RENÉ

Uh-huh. And what would you do with this evidence?

ASHLEY

I don't think that's really your business. Just find me
what I need, I'll get rid of the photographs and our
relationship ends there.

RENÉ frowns a little.

16. EXT. STREETS OF VILLE VENTEUSE- DAY

RENÉ rides through the streets on his motorcycle.

RENÉ (V.O.)

I didn't like where this was going. The girl wasn't very good at hiding her true nature, which was quickly proving to be *trés indigne*, if you know what I mean. I've never been the type to take bullying lying down, but I couldn't risk her blowing my cover. I've stirred up far too much trouble in the mask. Stood on too many toes, and if I went to jail, who'd look after Phil?

His pocket vibrates as Buggy rings.

RENÉ pulls up at the curb outside a shop, takes off his crash helmet and pulls out the mobile phone, putting it to his ear.

RENÉ (Cont'd)

Talk to me.

PHILIP (Over the phone)

René, it is Philip. I went over that bullet and I found something you might find interesting.

RENÉ

Lay it on me, Phil.

17. INT. PHILIP'S WORKSHOP- CONTINUOUS

PHILIP is walking up and down the metal cat-walk, holding up the bullet in one gloved hand while talking into his phone.

PHILIP

You were right about it being a tooth. Specifically, it's from the mouth of an underwater predator called the, 'anomalocaris.'

18. EXT. STREET- CONTINUOUS

RENÉ looks incredulous as he listens.

RENÉ

Ano-mucky-what?

PHILIP (Over the phone)

A very big, very nasty prehistoric shrimp. Its mouth was powerful enough to crush the tough shell of a trilobite, its main source of prey. One breed grew to about a yard long.

RENÉ

(Whistle) Doesn't sound too shrimp-y for me.

PHILIP (Over the phone)

Well things were bigger back then, René. How goes the search for the culprit?

RENÉ

Kid's certain it's Gabriel Garza, but something don't smell right. Something's fishy.

PHILIP (Over the phone)

Was that a joke?

RENÉ

If it was, I'm playing to a dead crowd. Thanks for the help, Phil. Is the Mayor still under police protection?

PHILIP

Last time I checked.

RENÉ

I'm heading over to her place now. I'll keep you posted.

He hangs up and slips the phone back into his pocket. He pulls on his crash helmet and starts up his motorcycle, riding off down the street.

RENÉ (Cont'd, V.O.)

Underwater. Of course!

FLASH TO:

19. EXT. PLACE D'MAIGRET HYDRO-ELECTRIC PLANT ROOFTOP- DAY
(FLASHBACK)

RENÉ emerges onto the rooftop and looks around frantically. He runs to the edge of the rooftop, overlooking the waterways that feed the plant.

CLOSE-UP of the waterways.

20. EXT. STREET- PRESENT

EXTREME CLOSE-UP of RENÉ, his eyes are visible through his crash helmet's visor.

RENÉ (Cont'd, V.O.)

That's why I couldn't find the guy when he was shooting at us. He was firing from under the waterways. Hoo-boy! These Trojanites are real slippery customers these days!

19. EXT. THE MAYOR'S RIVERFRONT ESTATE- DAY

EST. SHOT of the rather grand townhouse, which stands close to the riverfront. This is the house that was burnt down 8 years previous, fully restored to its original glory. RENÉ pulls up and gets off of his motorcycle, walking up the front stairs. CHARBONNEAU is standing outside the door, smoking a cigarette. He notices RENÉ.

CHARBONNEAU

I should be pretty steamed at you right now for running off back at the Place d'Maigret, Sisko.

RENÉ

But you can't, can you? I'm just too much of a precocious little scamp.

CHARBONNEAU

You're something, all right. Did you at least find the shooter?

RENÉ

Not in so many words, no, but I'm on the right track.

CHARBONNEAU

If you were on the right track, Sisko, you'd be tied up with a train charging towards you.

RENÉ

Aw, now why you got to be like that? I thought you and me were *amis*, huh?

CHARBONNEAU

We are, but that don't mean I've got to like you.

They share a brief laugh. CHARBONNEAU stubs out his cigarette.

CHARBONNEAU (Cont'd)

If you've got questions for the Mayor, she's right inside, but I warn you, she's got company. Real hob-knobby sort of people.

RENÉ

You didn't think to stop them? What if one of them was the shooter?

CHARBONNEAU

Yeah, like I'm going to tell the city elite to get stuffed. Besides, I doubt any of them could even hold a gun the right way, let alone fire it.

RENÉ

Excellent point.

CHARBONNEAU opens the unlocked front door and leads RENÉ inside. A portion of the river starts to bubble.

20. INT. THE MAYOR'S LIVING ROOM- CONTINUOUS

MIRANDA is surrounded by her HIGH-CLASS FRIENDS, all of whom are clucking away like smartly-dressed hens. She herself looks a little overwhelmed. Even with the presence of the BODYGUARDS and a few POLICEMEN, it feels more like a fancy wine-and-cheese party. A VALET is carrying a tray of finger-food. ASHLEY is leaning against the wall with a glass of some clear drink. CHARBONNEAU enters with RENÉ.

RENÉ (Cont'd)

(Whistle) You weren't kidding about the company, Toussaint.

ASHLEY

Hello, detective.

RENÉ

Ashley, pleasure to see you again.

ASHLEY

Don't be sarcastic. What have you found on Garza?

RENÉ

Still working on it. Your mama's looking a bit green around the gills, and I should know. So how about we get her a little fresh air?

ASHLEY

Good idea.

ASHLEY sets her glass down on a nearby table and goes over to MIRANDA, taking her by the hand.

ASHLEY (Cont'd)

Come on, Mom, let's you and me go for a nice walk, okay?

MIRANDA

Oh, yes, of course. Thank you, Ashley.

ASHLEY leads MIRANDA out of the room. CHARBONNEAU strokes his chin for a moment. He points to two BODYGUARDS, then to the door. The BODYGUARDS nod in understanding and all three of them follow. RENÉ catches CHARBONNEAU by the arm.

RENÉ

Where are you going?

CHARBONNEAU

I'm supposed to be keeping an eye on her, remember? Don't worry, I'll make sure those apes don't crowd her. Can't be too careful, am I right?

RENÉ nods and lets him go. CHARBONNEAU goes with the BODYGUARDS.

RENÉ

I'll let the old girl relax and question her when she gets back. *Garçon!*

The VALET approaches with the tray. RENÉ plucks a *Vol-au-vent* from it.

RENÉ (Cont'd)

Merci.

The VALET bends his knees in a half-bow and goes back to serving the other HIGH-CLASS GUESTS.

21. EXT. THE MAYOR'S RIVERFRONT ESTATE- CONTINUOUS

MIRANDA and ASHLEY walk together, talking inaudibly. CHARBONNEAU and the BODYGUARDS are several paces behind them. The river bubbles again a volley of bullets fire out of the river. MIRANDA, ASHLEY, CHARBONNEAU and the BODYGUARDS drop to the ground in order to avoid them.

22. INT. THE MAYOR'S LIVING ROOM- CONTINUOUS

Over the din of conversation and music playing in the background, nobody hears the sounds of the bullets firing, but RENÉ sees the whole thing through the window and quickly makes a dash for the door.

23. EXT. THE MAYOR'S RIVERFRONT ESTATE- CONTINUOUS

One bullet hits a BODYGUARD in the back of the leg while a second clips CHARBONNEAU'S shoulder, drawing blood but not embedding itself in him. RENÉ, now wearing his green-and-black armour, jumps in and slaps away two more oncoming bullets.

RENÉ

Get to safety! Now!

CHARBONNEAU bites back his pain.

CHARBONNEAU

Come on, let's go.

He and the BODYGUARD (with his PARTNER'S arm slung over his shoulders) usher MIRANDA and ASHLEY away as quickly as they can. RENÉ deflects a third bullet and starts running down the riverfront.

RENÉ

With all the cops this city's got, why's it always *me* having to catch the bad guys?

He comes to a stop and pulls out a blue Rider Key.

RENÉ (Cont'd)

Now I know where he's hiding...

He jams the blue Key into the belt's left chamber.

BELT'S A.I.

Cyclone-Trigger!

The left side of his armour changes from black to blue and a large pistol appears clipped to his chest. He detaches it and fires a round of swirling bullets into the water, generating miniature whirlpools that throw up the hidden monster - the ANOMALOCARIS TROJANITE, who flies screaming through the air and lands painfully on the riverbank. The TROJANITE struggles to its feet.

RENÉ

Let's make us a po'-boy out of this shrimp.

The TROJANITE spits out a stream of teeth. RENÉ retaliates with a burst of bullets that cancels out the attack, flooring the monster. The TROJANITE groans and releases a cloud of blackish gas.

RENÉ (Cont'd)

First thing we do is boil the sucker.

He holds out the red Rider Key in one hand and Buggy in the other. He inserts the Key into a slot on the back of the phone.

BELT'S A.I.

Heat!

He throws Buggy forward, which transforms into its beetle shape in mid-air before lighting up into a fireball and surging through the gas-cloud, landing multiple blows on the ANOMALOCARIS TROJANITE.

RENÉ replaces the blue Key with the black one.

BELT'S A.I. (Cont'd)

Cyclone-Joker!

The left side of his armour returns to being black. He moves the black Key to the slot on the right side of the belt. There is the sound of thrusters powering up as he is lifted into the air. The water in the river becomes choppy and violent.

BELT'S A.I. (Cont'd)

Rider Kick!

RENÉ

Then crack it.

RENÉ descends in a double dropkick, dividing in two halfway down. His black half impacts on the ANOMALOCARIS TROJANITE'S chest followed a split-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. RENÉ stands up and turns to face the FIGURE left over.

RENÉ (Cont'd)

Lunch is served.

The smoke dissipates. The FIGURE is a youngish man in glasses and a dishevelled white shirt, bowtie and suit trousers with braces.

RENÉ (Cont'd)

This isn't Garza!

The FIGURE groans. RENÉ kneels down to inspect the shattered Trojanite Key lying next to him on the ground. He lifts up a chunk of its exposed inner circuitry.

CHARBONNEAU (O.O.S.)

Mayor Molyneaux! Wait!

ASHLEY (O.O.S.)

Mom!

The Masked Rider
Episode 5: "Beneath the Surface, Part 1"

RENÉ looks up. MIRANDA is making her way down towards him with ASHLEY close behind her and CHARBONNEAU and the remaining BODYGUARD trying to catch up to both of them.

The river ripples as a second ANOMALOCARIS TROJANITE emerges and spits out a bullet straight at MIRANDA. RENÉ leaps to his feet.

RENÉ

Look out!

TO BE CONTINUED...