

The Lone Ranger
issue 1: Origin

By

Who was that masked man?

Based on the original story,

The Lone Ranger

by

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FADE IN:

EXT. MOUNTAIN ROAD - DAY

A battered, dirty black and white Dodge Charger rests off road near a high bush, hidden to oncoming vehicles.

Barely visible amidst the red dust clouds sweeping up alongside each door is the logo for the Texas Rangers.

INT. CHARGER - DAY

In a centralized seat, JOHN REID (35), black, rugged, unshaven, licks his dry lips while playing hologram solitaire with cards projected from the digital windshield.

The windshield otherwise depicts a high resolution virtual view of everything outside.

 TONTO (VO)
 Your body is registering
 dehydration.

A smaller screen, up and to the left of Reid's head, pulses with a blue sound wave as Tonto speaks.

Reid groans and waves the solitaire game away.

 REID
 I almost had that.

 TONTO
 Wanna play chess?

 REID
 Yeah, right.

Reid chuckles.

 TONTO
 I'll use my lowest setting.

Reid pulls a plastic bottle half filled with water out of a holder and slowly unscrews the cap.

 REID
 Nothing wrong with a bit of self
 control.

Reid takes a small sip and replaces the cap.

A kit car, a mishmash of scrapped vehicles, fitted with a powerful engine, races past. One of the occupants throws a bottle of water out.

Reid stares at the bottle as the remaining contents spill into the dirt.

He gets out, picks up the water bottle, saving a few mouthfuls, reseals the cap, and gets back in the car.

REID

Tonto, let's go see what these
idiots are doing.

Reid clips on a seatbelt and secures both water bottles in holders as the car self-drives onto the road.

EXT. MOUNTAIN ROAD - DAY

Plasma strips surrounding the rim of the Charger emit red and blue pulses as it accelerates quickly.

INT. CHARGER - DAY

Distance and speed readouts display on the bottom right of the windshield.

Ahead, the kit car comes into view.

TONTO

Running recognition scans.

Thousands of faces a second run through the silhouette of an empty avatar on the windshield.

TONTO

They're using SHIELD.

REID

Can you hack in?

The faces stop flicking through the silhouette and the empty avatar disappears from the windshield.

TONTO

No.

REID

Scout mode.

TONTO
Scout mode operational.

Heat patterns from the kit car's eight tailpipes glow red, leaving a trail.

REID
Numerous pollution violations.

A readout indicating credits versus prison time scroll as the offenses mount.

REID
(whistles)
Ten K or six months in county and mounting.

INT. KIT CAR - DAY

An old-style digital radio pulses red and blue sound waves across its two dimensional screen.

RADIO HOST (VO)
So, the President says we should give Texas back to Mexico. Jed, line one.

Driving, KYLE CAVENDISH (21), hair in pink spikes, clad in leather and denim, sucks on a chem pen - a vape filled with narcotic chemicals.

JED (VO)
He's got a point. Ain't see no rain here for three and a half years now. It's getting hotter, and drier.

On the back seat, TROY MALONE (35), holds AMELIA (14), dirty, dressed in rags, in a tight headlock. She's distressed and can't stop crying.

TROY
Why don't you just pull over? What's he gonna do?

RADIO HOST (VO)
So, we just give it back to Mexico because we don't need it no more?

KYLE
We're incognito. What do you think Pa will do to you?

JED (VO)
Pretty much, yeah.

TROY
 (shrugs)
 It's just a beating.

RADIO HOST (VO)
 (chuckles)
 OK, Vera, you're on two.

Kyle meets Troy's eye in the rearview mirror.

KYLE
 For me. Yeah. I'm kin. A darn good
 hiding sits about right. But, you?
 You who ain't kin.

VERA (VO)
 I was raised believin' that you
 make your own bed. Once it's made,
 you got no choice but to lie in it.
 Texas is an American tragedy and
 I'm glad we got out like most
 others before it got too bad.

Troy averts his gaze and pulls tighter at Amelia's neck.

Kyle turns off the radio.

KYLE
 I built this car with my own hand.
 Ain't no way some electric shit
 heap is going to keep up with good,
 hard American muscle.

Kyle flips a nitro switch

INT. CHARGER - DAY

Reid watches as the kit car accelerates away with a burst of
 blue flames from its eight tailpipes.

REID
 Jesus.

Analysis of the road ahead pops up on the windshield:

- Smoke velocity, wind direction.
- Tire marks, age of wear.
- Estimated speed: 176 MPH

REID
Can we catch it?

TONTO
Although they have the edge on
speed, it's... well, it is a human
driving.

REID
(chuckles and pats the dash)
Then let's go get 'em.

EXT. MOUNTAIN ROAD - TWISTS AND TURNS - DAY

The kit car screeches around the tight angles, its wheels barely making it, often drifting over the edge.

Following closely behind, the Charger sticks neatly to the road, saving valuable time with less braking.

INT. KIT CAR - DAY

Troy looks through the back window.

TROY
Electric shit heap's doing well.

Angry, Kyle opens the glove box and removes a laser pistol.

KYLE
You charged?

Troy pats a laser gun on the seat next to him.

TROY
Always.

KYLE
Talk first. Then we shoot when he's
not expecting it, OK?

TROY
(doubtful)
Sure.

Kyle nods and screeches to a stop in the middle of the road.

INT. CHARGER - DAY

Tonto stops a hundred yards away.

Reid watches the virtual display as Kyle steps out.

REID
Tonto?

TONTO
High intensity, capable of ten five
second bursts.

REID
ID?

EXT. MOUNTAIN ROAD - DAY

Kyle grins as Reid stands in front of the Charger.

KYLE
What's up?

REID
Big ticket.

KYLE
Your stupid Tonto given you my name
yet?

Reid touches an earbud embedded in his ear.

REID
Anything?

TONTO (VO)
Kyle Cavendish. Bartholomew --

Reid taps the earbud, silencing Tonto.

TROY (OS)
(yelp of pain)
Fuck! Bitch!

Amelia scrambles out of the rear door and runs.

Kyle turns and fires a bolt of light that punches a hole
straight through her.

Amelia's face registers brief surprise and she falls face
first into the dirt.

Turning fast, Kyle fires at Reid.

Anticipating the shot, Reid rolls behind the cover of the Charger and pulls his laser pistol.

Troy jumps out of the car and walks toward the charger, firing shotgun bolt after bolt into the engine until it catches fire.

KYLE

Shoulda just minded your own
business.

Kyle motions for Troy to go one way and they split up to pincer the Charger.

They ambush the back of the Charger at the same time, but Reid isn't there.

At the side of the road, from behind a large rock, Reid fires a three-second laser beam through Kyle's head.

Troy fires toward the rock, but his gun overheats. He drops the shotgun and reaches for a pistol in his waistband.

Reid fires three one-second shots into Troy's chest - that burn but do not penetrate deeply enough to kill - knocking him onto his back.

Reid kicks the pistol away and aims at his head.

TROY

(laughs in pain)
You just killed Butch's boy.

Reid applies hand and leg cuffs to Troy then moves to his Charger, reaches inside and pulls out an extinguisher that he uses to put out the fire.

REID

Tonto, you OK?

Tonto's voice comes as electronic pulses and beeps from inside the car.

Reid double-taps his earbud.

REID

Tonto?

TONTO (VO)

The cavalry is on the way.

Reid examines Amelia's body and peers into her glassy eyes before standing and looking into the distance.

Heat waves ride high, like water.

Reid licks his dry, cracking lips, pulls the water from his Charger and slowly unscrews the cap.

INT. BART'S MANSION - WORKSHOP - DAY

Mellow electronic beats emanate from an old, digital radio.

An overhead plasma bulb illuminates blood-stained walls and rows of small metal cages filled with CATS, RATS, and RABBITS. Other rows of larger cages contain DOGS, CHILDREN and the odd, emaciated ADULT.

BART CAVENDISH (45), a thick black beard his only claim to hair, a blood-stained apron covering denim jeans and a T-Shirt pulled tight over a fat, muscular torso, brutally yanks a dog out of its cage.

Bart easily pins the dog with one hand to a long, metal table that has rivets to allow for blood draining, and reaches for a cleaver with the other.

It takes a few hacks to decapitate the dog. He pushes the head to one side, then takes a knife and guts it, throwing the insides into a bucket brimming with innards.

A cough makes him look up to see LACKEY (18), tall, pale, skinny, haunted, standing in the doorway.

Bart picks up the bucket of dog innards and moves around the cages throwing each one a morsel.

Lackey watches as a CHILD ravenously eats some intestine then catches Bart's expectant eye.

LACKEY

It's Kyle.

Bart drops the bucket, wipes his hands on his apron, and examines Lackey's now terrified face.

BART

It ain't your fault.

Bart pops on a well-worn stetson and wraps a gun belt holding two ornate laser pistols and twelve refrigerated energy backups, around his waist.

INT. BART'S MANSION - HALLWAY - NIGHT

ELLEN (42), shapely, plastic surgery, figure-hugging frock, vapes nervously as Lackey and Bart walk past her to the front door.

Bart stops, turns, considers saying something but thinks better of it and follows Lackey outside.

Ellen flinches as the front door slams. She listens to the electric hum of a car powering up. The gentle whistle as it drives away.

EXT. MOUNTAIN ROAD - PULLOVER SPOT - DAY

Three Ranger's vehicles and an ambulance pulsate blue and red light off the rocks and dirt.

CAPTAIN DECKER (67), short, mirrored shades, calmly sips a coffee from a reusable mug. Next to him, DEPUTY JONAH (26), tall, slim, looks nervous as he spots something approaching.

REFLECTED IN DECKER'S SHADES:

A white limousine, with gold and silver plasma strips along the sides, pulls to a stop nearby.

INT. LIMOUSINE - DAY

Full leather interior. Individual holographic displays.

Lackey sits on one of the side seats trying not to look at Bart who lounges in a veritable throne while staring at a representation of the view ahead on a large holographic display offset to his right.

CAR AI (VO)
We have arrived.

BART
Look at them. Useless.

BART
Open the door.

The door slides open.

Bart slams a hand into Lackey's chest, indicating that he should remain, then climbs out.

EXT. MOUNTAIN ROAD - PULLOVER SPOT - DAY

Decker and Jonah, greet Bart.

BART
Close the door.

The limousine door closes.

DECKER
Guess you already heard.

BART
Show me.

Decker nods and heads toward the ambulance. Bart and Jonah follow. Decker waves at the PARAMEDIC.

The Paramedic opens the ambulance door, presses a button and a hover-gurney floats out with Kyle's body lying on it.

Bart contemplates Kyle's dead face for a time.

BART
He was a good boy.

Bart pats Kyle's thigh.

BART
Bring him to my house.

Bart looks inside the ambulance, sees another covered body.

BART
That the girl?

Decker nods.

BART
Her too.

Jonah frowns at Decker. Decker gives him a look that says he best change the way he looks.

Bart looks around then lands his gaze on Decker. Jonah straightens up like he doesn't have any problem.

BART
Well?

DECKER
He's on his way. The ah --
(drifts off uncomfortable)

DECKER
The Ranger that did this dropped
him straight into county.

Bart grabs Decker's throat and squeezes.

DECKER
They used SHIELD, Ranger Reid
couldn't have known.

BART
Call him. Call, Ranger Reid.

DECKER
And say what?

BART
Like you said. This was an
accident. Accidents happen.

A Ranger vehicle pulls up as Decker makes the call. Troy
jumps out of the back and shuffles solemnly to Bart.

Bart punches Troy in the face, knocking him to the ground.

TROY
I needed the creds.

A stream of blood pours from Troy's nose.

BART
How much?
(points at Amelia's corpse)
To steal from me?

TROY
Two kilos of heroin. Pure. China
white. Kyle said --

BART
Don't speak ill of the dead.
Specially not my kin. This is all
on you now.

Troy drops his head.

Decker approaches, double taps his earbud.

DECKER
I don't know if he went for it.

BART
Then reassure him.

Bart taps the limousine roof and the door slides open. He motions for Troy to get in and he does so reluctantly.

Decker gives a polite wave as Bart gets inside the limousine and the door slides closed.

BART (OS)
Home.

Decker watches the limousine pull away. Jonah joins him.

JONAH
What do you think he will do?

DECKER
You ain't that stupid, are yuh?

JONAH
It don't sit right with me. He's one of ours.

DECKER
Well, all of this shit should teach you a valuable lesson, son.
(off Jonah's questioning glance)
Don't fuck up.

EXT. REID'S STREET - DAY

Most of the houses boarded up, looking run down.

Reid's Charger parks on the small drive of his house.

Reid sits for a while, his eyes drift to --

- His half dirt, half grass lawn.

- Birthday balloons with '35 TODAY' printed on them in white bold font adorn the outside edge of the front door.

- Pathetic flowers in window boxes, ache for water.

- Through the main window, JESSICA REID (37), long, curly dark hair, a natural beauty, lays the dining table. She feels eyes on her and looks through the window, catches Reid's gaze. She smiles and waves him inside.

As though that was what he was waiting for, Reid climbs out of the car and walks in through the front door of the house.

INT. REID'S HOUSE - LIVING/DINING ROOM - DAY

Jessica runs into Reid's arms.

JESSICA

I thought you wouldn't make it.

REID

Nothing could stop me.

JESSICA

Oh yeah.

(taps Reid's nose playfully)

Don't make me bring up the past.

REID

(playful)

Past? What past?

Random digital photos display on multiple holoscreens that pop up around the house. Most depict Jessica, Reid, and their four children, ETHAN (10), ELLIE (9), EMMANUEL (6), and AMBER (5).

ETHAN (OS)

Happy birthday, Dad!

Reid turns to find Ethan leading with Ellie, Emmanuel, and Amber not far behind.

ELLIE/EMMANUEL/AMBER

Happy birthday, Dad!

All of them are wearing Lone Ranger eye masks, Ranger badges pinned to their chests, stetsons, and have six-shooter toy laser pistols in holsters on their hips.

Ellie offers an eye mask to Reid.

JESSICA

(putting on her own eye mask)

We have to wear them apparently.

REID

(chuckles)

Well, OK then.

Reid takes the mask and puts it on.

JESSICA

Take a seat. Jello and ice cream.

REID
(as the kids cheer)
Now that's what a birthday's all
about.

Reid takes a seat at the table and a worried look crosses his face as he peers out of the window.

INT. BART'S HOUSE - WORKSHOP - DAY

Bart points at a small BOY in one of the cages.

Lackey smirks as Troy yanks the Boy out of the cage and drags him to Bart.

BART
Hold him down.

Troy pins the Boy flat on his back on the table.

Bart sharpens a knife on a stone and then without hesitation grabs the Boy by the hair and cuts his throat.

Boy gargles as he drowns in his own blood.

Bart pushes Troy away and watches the Boy's desperate struggle to cling to life.

BART
Watch.

Bart points the knife at Boy's face.

BART
There. Look.
(grins)
He's gone.

Boy's eyes look glassy, lifeless.

Bart laughs and wipes the knife on his apron.

BART
I want his every agony recorded. I
want to see the look on his face
when everything he loves is taken
from him.

TROY
I'll do a good job, Bart.

BART
(to Lackey)
Make sure evil goes with you.

EXT. DESERT - NIGHT

Heavily armed with automatic laser rifles and pistols, Troy and Lackey join twenty similarly armed HENCHMEN and climb aboard, black, AI-controlled, electric motorcycles.

LACKEY
You ridden one of these before?

TROY
Just because you're sucking his
dick don't make you my better.

LACKEY
Just because I suck his dick it
don't make me a pussy neither.

Troy sneers and pushes the button, starting the engine on his bike.

TROY
Let's go to work.

INT. REID'S HOUSE - LIVING/DINING - NIGHT

The remnants of a birthday cake on the dining table. Plates filled with half-eaten food.

The kids play a game in the background, laughing and joking.

Her Lone Ranger eye mask dangling around her neck, Jessica clears plates away.

His eye mask still on, Reid frowns while on the phone, and disconnects when Jessica gets near.

JESSICA
You've been distant all night.

Reid checks to make sure the kids are out of earshot.

REID
Something happened at work today.
An accident.

Jessica frowns as she looks past Reid, through the window.

Reid turns and sees the Charger ablaze outside.

His gaze moves to his pistol in his gun belt hanging over the coat rack.

REID
Get the kids and hide upstairs.

JESSICA
John?

REID
Now.

Reid reaches for the pistol.

Jessica hurries the Kids upstairs.

The front door explodes into smithereens.

Reid covers his eyes from the wooden splinters and opens fire as the front doorway is filled with black.

Somebody fires back, a red laser bolt hits Reid in the shoulder, knocking the pistol from his grip.

Lackey grins at Reid and moves past him, slowly up the stairs.

REID
This has nothing to do with them.

Troy faces Reid.

TROY
All you had to do was leave it.

Troy pistol whips Reid, knocking him unconscious.

EXT. CLIFF EDGE - NIGHT

The Kids cry as they are forced to their knees.

Jessica, also on her knees, attempts to reassure them but is pistol whipped by a Henchman.

Troy sucks on a vape.

TROY
Let's get this done.

A Henchman slaps Reid - still wearing the eyemask - into consciousness.

Lackey records Reid's face, then that of the terrified kids, and finally Jessica.

TROY

In order of the ones you've known
the longest.

Troy puts a laser pistol to Jessica's head and pulls the trigger, blowing her brains into the dirt. Her lifeless body slumps ungraciously to one side.

Lackey excitedly films every second of Reid's anguished scream. The look of pain as he realizes Troy isn't finished - that he's moving to Ethan.

Troy dry swallows, but self preservation eventually outweighs any ethical concerns. He puts the pistol to Ethan's head and pulls the trigger.

In so much emotional pain it becomes physical, Reid struggles weakly while being held down by two Henchmen.

The sound of Troy's laser pistol fires another three times. By the end, Reid is in so much pain, the Henchmen no longer need to hold him down.

TROY (OS)

Get him up.

Heavy hands lift Reid to his feet.

TROY

This was you. You did this.

A Henchman forces Reid's to look at his dead family.

TROY

OK. That's enough.

The Henchmen force Reid to his knees.

Lackey records as Troy aims the pistol at the back of Reid's head and opens fire.

Reid slumps forward, blood pours from his head.

TROY

Now we can all go home and you --
(to Lackey)
Can go back to sucking dick.

Lackey sneers as Troy gets on his bike.

LACKEY
You're forgetting something.

TROY
What's that?

LACKEY
You're still a thief.

Lackey aims a laser pistol at Troy and shoots a three second beam through his chest.

The impact lifts Troy from the bike and throws him to the ground.

Lackey taps an earbud.

LACKEY
Job done.

INT. BART'S MANSION - SITTING ROOM - NIGHT

A vape pen in hand, Bart reclines in a high back leather chair next to a large digital open fire. He exhales a long, thick stream of vapor.

From the doorway, Ellen watches him draw on the vape pen.

ELLEN
How can you sit there like that?

Bart shoots her a glance.

BART
(while exhaling vapor)
It's done.

ELLEN
And that's going to bring our son back?

BART
Ain't nothing gonna do that.
Certainly not none of your whining.

Bart draws on the vape pen and holds down a coughing fit.

BART
(re: the vape pen)
You should try some. Numbs yuh.

ELLEN

What did you do?
 (off Bart's questioning
 glance)
 The Ranger?

BART

He took one of ours, so we took
 four o' his, his wife, and then his
 evil, goddamned self.

Ellen turns her back to absorb the shock without he seeing her face.

BART

That's your trouble, you leave all
 the hard decisions to me then
 complain about it afterwards.

Ellen walks into the hallway.

BART

That's it, off you go. Cry yourself
 to sleep. I'll just keep putting
 food on the table and keeping yuh
 in the life you're accustomed to.
 (mumbles)
 Bitch.

EXT. CLIFF EDGE - NIGHT

A heavy, full moon.

A shooting star leaves an arc of light in its wake as it falls into nonexistence.

The five bodies of Jessica, Ethan, Ellie, Emmanuel, and Amber, lie where they were executed.

A manly, groan of pain from below the edge.

EXT. CLIFF LEDGE - NIGHT

Blood from the hole in Reid's head soaks into the dirt and onto his eyemask as he grasps a large rock with one hand, trying to find the strength to stand.

In the distance, a coyote howls.

Reid rises to his knees and looks around.

The ledge is slim, a long way down, and impossibly far to climb back up without ropes.

A snake hisses and Reid snatches it up by the neck, stares at it eye to eye before biting off its head.

Reid gasps as he dribbles snake blood onto his tongue, then sucks on the neck like a Popsicle before discarding it over the edge.

The coyote's howls follow Reid as he climbs, finding precarious handholds, tree roots, to aid in the ascent.

EXT. CLIFF EDGE - NIGHT

Panting, Reid clambers to the top and rests on his hands and knees. Slowly, he turns his head and sees the five bodies of his family - all wearing their Ranger costumes, moonlight glints off their badges.

REID
(dry, raspy)
Tonto?

Reid's hand moves to his ear, but there is no bud.

Reid notices Troy's motorcycle, climbs on top of it and presses the ignition button.

An alarm shrills and a holograph warning flashes:

'PLEASE CONFIRM OPTICAL IDENTITY'

Troy's body catches Reid's attention.

Reid turns Troy over and looks at his face before searching his body - finding a metal-blade knife and an old gunpowder-based six-shooter hidden inside his jacket.

Reid straddles Troy's neck and gouges the knife into his face, cutting out his eyeball.

Holding the eyeball in hand, Reid sucks at the hole in Troy's head, drawing out what remaining blood he can.

Reid takes the eyeball to the motorcycle and dangles it over a small black holograph panel.

'IDENTITY CONFIRMED'

The engine whistles into life.

REID
Take me home.

The motorcycle moves off.

REID
Wait.

Reid looks back at Troy as the motorcycle slows and stops.

REID
Not home.

EXT. REID'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Reid parks the motorcycle next to his burned-out Charger and retrieves the Tonto console from inside.

INT. REID'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

A pile of Reid's electrical goods sit in the middle of the floor.

Shuffling from upstairs.

Quietly, Reid places the Tonto console onto the couch and creeps upstairs.

INT. REID'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Hands rustle through a drawer, snatching out jewelery with the briefest of examination. The hands stop as the owner becomes aware of another presence in the room.

The hands stop, slowly turn as they raise, revealing...

Captain Decker.

DECKER
Reid?

Decker dry swallows.

DECKER
(tries a smile)
I'm glad to see you're alive. I
was... looking for clues.

Reid aims the six-shooter at Decker's head.

DECKER

That thing even work? What's with
the mask?

REID

They're all dead.

DECKER

Who? Who're all dead?

REID

(screams)

You know.

DECKER

No. No I don't. Look, you're
clearly traumatized.

(frowns)

My God, is that a gunshot wound?

Face full of fake concern, Decker moves toward Reid.

Reid fires, blowing a bullet through Decker's face.

FADE OUT.