

Flag on my Backpack

Tim Holtorf



Jean Pierre's Story

Rockin' In The Free World

This, my friend, is not a short story. It has a long history, and so it will take me a while to describe in detail, but I assure you that you will be satisfied with the outcome.

Anyone who has a daughter or a son will know the horror and worry that fills a parent when they discover something that leads them away from the road of innocence. As a father, I had hoped that my daughter Dominique would remain the curious, free spirited young girl forever. In some ways, I should not worry, because she still is that curious and free spirited young woman at the age of twenty-three. I know that many will ask why I have such deep worry for my daughter, for both my daughters. The answer is actually quite simple. At least in my eyes.

My name is Jean Pierre Turgeon. I am an aid to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Ottawa. I have been blessed over the years that no matter what political figure rises to power, that I have retained my position. Many see me as a non-partisan person who puts country ahead of himself. To a point, that is true. When parliament is not in session, or when my office does not have need of me, I am at home in Montreal with my lovely wife Monika, and our two daughters, Dominique and Chloe.

Chloe is my youngest daughter. She has had a fortunate life that has allowed her to open many doors, one of which was her entrance into the world of fashion. She has her close circle of friends who enjoy the Montreal night life, although I have my beliefs that many of her friends associate with her because of her time in Paris, where she learned to be a fashion model as well as continuing her high school education. Chloe, as I see her, is a polar opposite of Dominique.

Dominique is the aforementioned curious and free spirited young woman, who at the age of twenty-three, is pursuing her career in music. Her dream is to be a session

guitarist, having spent her time learning everything about the guitar that she possibly could. From Geddy Lee to Liona Boyd, Dominique listened to everything, trying her hardest to replicate music that she heard. Currently, she attends McGill University on a musical scholarship with the hopes to begin studies in Toronto at the Royal Conservatory of Music. Until that time, she continues in her role as lead guitarist for the Montreal Indie rock band, Blanc Noir, a band that hits many of the night clubs in the city. Dominique and her friends, all from high school, have the distinction of being one of a few bands to be allowed into several of Montreal's night spots when they were younger than the legal drinking age.

Their lives may seem rather plain when I describe what I really worry about. I have no worries that Chloe does not pay attention to those who think that fashion models should be thin waifs. I have no worries that Dominique's night life is filled with music, and not the other samples that are associated with rock and roll. In Dominique's case, it is something else. Another activity that I helped her obtain. One that only our immediate

family knows about.

Along with the rock band, as well as her studies, and her job at a coffee shop in Montreal, she has another duty that she attends to. It was only my own fault for hanging onto old things like trophies that should have been thrown away years ago that caught Dominique's eye. I have no one but myself to blame. But it is the reason why my oldest daughter leads a double life, dressed in a red and white uniform with a maple leaf on her chest and calls herself Canadiens.

I suppose I have left more questions than answers for you. In that case, I should enlighten you. Before Dominique was born, even before Monika and I were married, we were a young couple in Montreal attending university. I was taking classes at McGill, furthering my own studies in political science and law. Monika was an art student, having always been creative and dreaming of opening a gallery of her own. Neither of us was very financially well off, but we made ends meet. It was Monika who kept us going with the words that the love we

had would carry us through. Those words hold just as true today as they did so many years ago.

But those years were so very violent, and so very much filled with fear. I had just turned twenty and Monika was only nineteen when the first news was released that a terrorist group had begun to make threats. It was the October Crisis. They were called Front de libération du Québec, and they had a violent, hate filled message for Canada. I had made my decision well before the Crisis began, only days after they bombed the Montreal Stock Exchange. I had no idea that the entire nation would be watching my every move, that people from all walks of life would become unified by my actions and by the name I had taken to call myself.

It was Monika would designed the uniform, taking it from the recent design of the Canadian flag. Simple red and white with a red maple leaf on the chest. Red gloves and boots and a white mask to hide my face. While Monika designed the uniform, I was the one who stated that I shouldn't be doing it for fame and glory, but for what was right. By distancing myself from Canadiens, I was

able to protect our home life that we had worked so hard to make. I had no idea at the time that I would be called a super hero. I had no super powers like the comic book equivalent that I had branded myself after. I merely had determination, and my instruction in martial arts didn't hurt either.

I had saved enough money to purchase a small Radio Shack transistor radio, and managed to purchase a scanner. Monika had made certain that the uniform she designed would even have body armour, as she managed to put together a few things to strengthen the material by researching at the local library. It was also warm, though during the summers in Montreal it did get a little too warm. And to be honest, at times I felt a little silly. But it is amazing how a mask will embolden the spirit of anyone who has a goal and a wish to do the right thing. That is just what I wished to do.

By October of 1970, Prime Minister Trudeau had enacted the War Measures Act in Canada. On the streets of Montreal, at the very least, tanks and soldiers rolled down the streets, along with RCMP and Montreal Metro

Police. We knew the attacks were serious already, thanks to the deaths that had stacked up since 1963 from FLQ bombings. Tensions grew early in 1970, when the FLQ failed in an attempt to kidnap an Israeli diplomat. Unknown to the media, and kept quiet by the police at my own request, I helped with the effort in stopping the attempted kidnapping. The worst, however, was yet to come.

I was in the minority in my beliefs of this country in Quebec. Many people my age were in support of the FLQ, and saw them as revolutionaries. I saw them as terrorists and murderers. This was the twentieth century, after all, we no longer had to use acts of violence in this country to make changes that needed to be made. At least, that was the philosophy that worked in theory. I stood quietly in my support of Trudeau when he spoke the words 'just watch me' in reference to the FLQ and government's invoking of the War Measures Act. As Canadiens, I managed to gain support, showing people that what the FLQ stood for was not necessarily what all of Quebec stood for. Dressed in that uniform, I went out

of my way to announce that I am a Quebecer, just as much as I am a Canadian. To a point, my fight was just as much political as it was about survival.

That changed a great deal when the FLQ successfully kidnapped James Richard Cross, a British Trade Commissioner. Soon after, they issued demands, and shortly after those demands were rejected, Pierre LaPorte, the Minister of Labour and the Vice-Premier was kidnapped. LaPorte was murdered days later. The race to secure Cross' safety had begun in earnest. The FLQ, while knowing they were dangerous, had just brought that message home loud and clear. While my own name as Canadiens never made the front page news, I was there on the front lines with the police.

By December of that year, the crisis was all but over. The FLQ had failed, and life would eventually return to normal. At first, Monika and I both thought that was the end of Canadiens. I never knew that the police would still ask for me. I kept up the guise for many years after, and it even gave me the opportunity to travel the country. I learned a great deal during that time. Just as I

learned that my wife, was very patient. In 1980, I finally retired Canadiens, sending an anonymous letter to the Montreal Gazette, after talking with the Montreal Metro Police chief at the time. I asked him to confirm the letter, and let the country know that Canadiens had retired.

There was a great deal of irony that the date I retired, police arrested and charged Nigel Barry Hamer with kidnapping. He was a British radical socialist, and FLQ sympathizer. His charge stemmed from his involvement in the Cross kidnapping. He was the sixth to be arrested in relation to the incident.

I had all but forgotten what we had gone through in those years by the time Dominique was born. The only thing I had thought of was how much I wanted my little girl to grow up knowing she was safe, and knowing she could become anything in the world that she wanted to be. It was 1985, and we were living in Laval, Quebec. When Dominique came into the world, everything seemed right. Sure, we had new responsibilities, but we had such joy because she had been so special. Dominique was that one

bright moment when I knew that this was what my entire life had been for. The joy I received when I held her for the first time. Each moment with Dominique was precious. Her first steps, her first word, everything she did, I remember as clearly today as though it had happened only yesterday.

In a way, even though it scares me, there is a small amount of pride that Dominique has taken up the legacy that I began. We both struggle in silent vigilance, combating the evils of the world as they would affect the country that we have grown up in, found love in, found family, and found home. I mentioned before how I remember clearly each moment from Dominique's life as she grew up. In truth, I remember each moment in both Dominique and Chloe's life. One moment sticks out in my mind very clearly, however. That was the first moment that Dominique found the old trappings in the attic, mementos that I had long forgotten about. Newspaper clippings, commendations from the police and the government of Canada, quietly accepted for a duty that I felt was right.

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And a red and white uniform with a red maple leaf
on the chest, bold and bright.

Test For Echo

I guess it would make a lot of sense that Dominique's heroes in this world would be much different than the ones I grew up with. Admittedly, she does view many musicians with high regard, surprisingly though, most are those that I used to listen to when I was her age. Even those that were popular when she was born. Still, there are some she looks to today that perform. Her dream is to have a jam session with Jim Cuddy, Tom Cochrane and Joni Mitchell. Or at least just to talk to them, and learn from their own experiences. That day may come.

But she also has her own political view points, as she has taken a great awareness of the world she lives in. Even with the technology of today, Dominique will step away from the screen of a computer to go be a part of the world. She learns about her environment, she takes certain things very seriously, like recycling and renewing the land. So it makes sense that when she sees a program

with Doctor David Suzuki, she hangs onto his every word.

Even as a child she used to sit glued to the television when the Nature of Things would come, even if it was past her usual bed time. At least it was something educational. And at least she learned from it. Over the years, Dominique became very active in the awareness of the environment, recycling and buying less in order to waste less. Thanks to Dominique, our home became the first to become environmentally friendly on our block in the small Montreal suburb we lived in. Of course, this all happened between practise with her band.

It helped, mind you, that her band mates were just as equally conscious about the environment. Michelle Villeneuve was a friend that Dominique had made quickly when she began Grade 7. They stayed friends, even after finding new groups and fashions and ideals. It may have been the common goals they each had in life, but I believe in truth it was the fact they just enjoyed each other's company. Even if they were completely different.

Whereas Dominique would often wear semi ratty clothing, often jeans with patches sewn into the knees (a

choice of her own, mind you), Michelle began to enter Montreal's goth scene. Monika and I were worried at first, never having experienced that scene, but as we soon discovered, Michelle was in no fear at all. As I learned, it was more a poet's society, but Michelle took to heart the entire thing. That is, without dying her hair black, which her blonde hair was in sharp contrast to her black clothes and black makeup. I have learned over the years never to judge someone based on appearances, and Michelle was one of those.

Michelle would often invite Dominique to some of the gatherings, and soon Dominique's own writing ability began to grow. She even would take her guitar and take poems she'd write and set them to music. As Michelle described it, Dominique was the scene's grunge hippie who fit right in.

Not long after Dominique and Michelle became friends, the two met Yves and Jacqueline Manderville. Yves and Jacqueline were first generation Canadians, their parents escaping the political hardships of Haiti. A young couple that arrived in Montreal in the early 80's and had

Yves, then Jacqueline not long after. Yves was the charmer, a trendsetter who always thought he was a bit of a ladies man, but always treated his close friends with respect. Ever since the day Dominique rushed home crying on her sixteenth birthday, Yves has also been her biggest defender and somewhat of a fan.

Jacqueline was a bit quieter and seemed much more humble than her older brother. But then, she would let her feet speak for her. A gifted sprinter, she was always at the forefront of track and field events throughout the country. And while the Olympics was something that she had often strived to achieve, it was not something disappointing to her if she did not compete at that level. Not only did she have track, she also raced on the ice oval, and became an accomplished speed skater.

Those four have been almost inseparable. Probably the reason why they formed their band, Blanc Noir. Each had their own musical talent; Michelle had been a drummer in her school band and did percussion on her own time. Jacqueline had learned to play the cello and bass guitar. Yves was an accomplished pianist and could

sing very well. Dominique was the lead guitarist, a position she was naturally fit to be in. They began at an early age, as well, practising in the garage when they were all just fourteen years old. To say they were perfect from the start would be a stretch. They went through some trying times, but worked hard and long. Eventually they saw it all pay off.

To say they have achieved success can be taken in different ways. They haven't exactly made the riches and fame that many superstars from the United States have. You know, the extremely popular stars that make tabloid headlines. As a father, I am very glad that they have not made it to the cover of a tabloid newspaper. As Yves once told me, as long as they have enough money for gas, food and a little bit extra then they are happy.

One thing that the four of them do together as a band is try to attend events and protests that are trying to bring about awareness of some societal plight. They'll usually contact the organizers and have a free stage set up. As a part of the call for peaceful protests, they engage

people with songs filled with meaning. Some are cover tunes from artists who have written poetic verse about the society while others are songs of their own creation. They even sell their own compilation CD's at each venue in order to make the gas money and money for food when they go out. Monika is trying to convince them to save up some money and get a professional CD released, as right now it's all recorded in Michelle's parent's garage. They continually say that the sound comes out pure when they record in there.

You might wonder how a lead guitarist who moonlights as a costumed crime fighter can lead the dual life. Well, as it turned out, not very easily. Dominique tried, very hard to keep it a secret, to keep it from her friends, but that came to a halt one night when Yves, Jacqueline and Michelle all confronted her about how tired she looked and how she seemed to be making mistakes when they practised. I was there, I heard and saw the whole thing.

“What is wrong with you, Dom?” Yves asked her, his own frustration showing. “Dis is not like you usually

are. It's like... sorta... like you playin' for de firs' time 'gain.” Dom remained quiet, seemingly like an animal trapped in a corner. I could see the hesitation in her face, the worry that had crept into her being. She wanted to explain everything, but worried what would happen. Finally, I stepped forward.

“Dominique,” I said with a calm and quiet voice as I reached into her duffel bag. I knew she always kept the suit there, and that was what I pulled out as I spoke. “Maybe you need to tell them.” I held the suit out to her, she took it with a heavy sigh. At the same time, I could tell there was a great weight that had been lifted from her shoulders, but at the same time she was incredibly nervous. Everyone had seen the news stories that Canadiens had come back, this time as a young woman. Dominique had kept it quiet, even from her friends.

Dominique expected anger, hatred, shouting, everything negative from her friends. That she had lied to them, kept secrets from them. But it was Michelle that first set the tone.

“You mean,” she began quietly. “You mean you a

costumed super hero!” she exclaimed with a grin. Almost as though Dominique had just launched into the status of rock star like she'd always wanted.

“Not exactly super, Michelle,” Dominique replied with a small smile. “I only have my martial arts defence class to go with.”

“You mean you beat up crooks?” Yves asked, a slight tinge of worry in his voice. He stepped closer to Dominique and took her hands in his own. “You gonna hurt your hands.” There was a small chuckle that came from Jacqueline, as she knew Yves only response would be worry over whether or not Dominique could play. Worry or not, at least now she did not have to worry about her friends anymore. “I t’ink I’m gonna write a song about dis,” Yves said with a grin.

“Only if it got a heavy guitar riff,” Dominique replied with a smile. “I wanna rock.”

I did mention that I would tell you that day when Dominique found that uniform, hidden away in the attic among other odds and ends long forgotten. It pained me

in a way, but it also helped. Pained, because I wanted to leave that life behind me, it was in the past and something that I did not need to burden my children with. It also helped, because it gave my daughters a lesson in history, things that happened in the past. It was former Prime Minister John Diefenbaker who said the man who does not remember the past can not live in the present and will do nothing for the future.

So, even though I did not wish Dominique to know of this past, I really had no choice. Instead of chastising her for sneaking into the attic and rooting through old things, I sat down with her, and read each clipping to her. She asked many questions, questions which came again when Chloe was older and Dominique read them to her. It was a passing fancy, at the time. Just something that they thought was their little secret.

I never knew that when Dominique turned sixteen, that it would become more than just a passing fancy. July first was her birthday, sixteen was a milestone in any person's life. We had planned a big party with her friends. But something happened that would change things forever.

Dominique came home alone, crying. She ran up to the attic, with me right behind her trying to get answers from her. As she grabbed the old uniform and thrust it into my arms, I began to realize what had happened.

“They beat him up,” she said through her tears. “Those ... baiseurs! They have to pay for what dey did to Yves. Jus' because he black. They beat him up jus' for dat.”

“Dominique,” I said in a calm voice, holding back my own worry as I tried to keep her calm. “Yves was hurt?”

“He's in the hospital,” she said as the words came out between choked gasps. “Michelle an' Jacqueline an' me, we already talk to the police. You put dat on,” she said pointing to the uniform. “You put dat on, an' make dem pay for what dey did.”

She had fallen to her knees, her tears taking control of her. I knelt down beside her and held her close. Yves was a good friend, and it did not surprise me that she was so emotional. I did my best to comfort her, and eventually Monika and I took her to bed. It would not be for another

week that we would celebrate her sixteenth birthday, after Yves had gotten out of the hospital.

It was shortly after that, Monika and I began to discuss what Dominique had kept trying to convince me.

“I don't think she's going to stop, Jean Pierre,” Monika said one night as we prepared for bed. “She's dropping small hints that you should go out and find the ones who did this to Yves.”

“I'm not a young man anymore,” I said with a sigh. “I have other responsibilities to take care of. And this is a job for the police, not some man in a costume.”

“I know this,” she replied with a nod. “And you know this. But all Dominique sees is that three men got away with a crime. Against a friend of hers no less.”

“Just how long do you think she'll keep this up?”

“You remember when she wanted to get that eight hundred dollar Fender?” she asked with a small smile. “It was a year, from the time she was twelve to the time she was thirteen before you finally sat her down and told her that if she wanted it, she had to earn it. An' then a year after that she finally had the money to get one.” I nodded

with a sigh, smiling slightly as I remembered.

That smile changed a bit as I realized Monika's example. "You aren't saying that we should..."

"Do you think she's going to stop?" she said as she interrupted my train of thought.

Monika was right, as she usually was. Dominique was going to have to earn this, however, just like the guitar. But unlike the guitar, she had to understand that there were two things she needed to realize. This was not a game, it was very dangerous. She would have to take care of herself and always be on the defensive. She also had to realize that she could not do this for revenge, being Canadiens was not about revenge. It was something much more.

While I did not wish to admit it at the time, my wife and I had decided to set Dominique's path on the road to becoming Canadiens.

Wild In The Streets

I remember vividly what protest marches look like. In my own youth, I participated in a few, and was swept away in the sea of madness that others became. So it is not without some fear in heart when I watch the news and see Dominique involved in a protest. She and her band mates will often take part in a cause or a movement that they feel is right, and often I'll see them performing at some free stage for those that wish to protest peacefully. These times are not the times I am fearful. The times I am fearful are when I see news reports and recognize the red and white uniform in confrontation with those that would wish violence in what began as peaceful.

I look to the recent meetings in Toronto for the G8 and G20 conferences with the world leaders. Dominique and her friends were there, playing on free stages in both Toronto and Huntsville, entertaining the crowd and giving a louder voice to those causes that they supported.

Dominique explained that their plan was to go to Toronto, stay for the duration of the conferences, and then return home. There was talk that they would try to attend the arrival of the Queen, mostly at Michelle's request.

In the first week of the conference, however, I watched the news from the safety of my office at our home in Montreal. On the third day, Monika and I watched closely, filled with worry to one news report. It was describing the anarchist movement called the Black Block. A loose group of individuals, many of the supposed members would actually march peacefully with others during protests. But with any group made up of loose affiliation, there are always those that have negative thoughts. There was even a rumour that police had planted officers to appear as Black Block members, and see if they could start something.

Monika and I watched the news, as the camera man focused on one confrontation. A Black Block member, identified by the black clothing and mask he wore, swinging a staff violently at anyone around him. Slowly approaching him, we saw our daughter. To the rest

of the country, she was Canadiens, a second generation champion for the people of Canada. For Monika and I, that was our daughter, stepping forward with fists clenched as she faced against this violent protestor. Already it had been reported that he had injured four people, and Dominique was going to try to stop him. I knew in my heart that she had the ability to defend herself, but I had never seen her nor did I ever hear of her speak about facing someone with a weapon.

We could not pull ourselves away from the news report as we watched, all of it a live feed from Toronto offices of the CBC. The protestor lashed out, swinging the staff he held at Dominique. She dodged and ducked, but did not back away. She stared him down, stepping closer and closer to him. Tension filled us both as we watched, and all I could think about was being there to protect my daughter.

It was only a few minutes, but to us it seemed to last forever. The ordeal ended peacefully, fortunately. We did not hear the full details until after Dominique and her friends returned to Montreal.

Both Monika and I were not completely happy until Dominique had returned home. Even as she and her friends sat in our living room, there was still worry that they had been hurt while in Toronto. Even Chloe hung on their words as all four of them described the free stage, the mood of the protests and all of the activities that surrounded the G8 and G20 summit. Michelle even joked that she may have accidentally run into President Obama, but it was only something to make us all laugh and ease some tensions. We knew security would have been extremely tight during that time.

The discussion ended with Dominique's own experiences, coupled with Michelle, Jacqueline and Yves' own observations. They'd never seen Dominique in person in the uniform before, only on the news or pictures in the newspapers, so this was a very different thing for them.

“We just finish gettin' our equipment loaded into de van, you know, an' police were makin' sure dat all we had was instruments,” Dominique explained in her usual

manner. “An' we were jus' 'bout to get in the van when Michelle say she hear a window smash in.”

“Oui, it was 'bout maybe half a block away from where the free stage was set up,” Michelle added without hesitation. “We all look down the street an' Dom say 'Wait 'ere'. An' she runs off down an alley.”

“I 'ad to be quick,” Dominique continued. “Protestors all over the place, an' police. An' some o' the people we seen were wearin' black clothes an' had black masks on. I didn't think that anybody'd be tryin' to hurt somebody, dat maybe dey were jus' goin' with the flow an' lootin' store fronts. Some were, but after I toss one guy to de cops for tryin' ta steal iPhones, I notice dis guy with a staff, swingin' it at protestors an' at photographers.”

“We saw Dom come outta de alley,” Yves added with a nod. “She 'ead straight down de street toward dis guy with the staff. Police runnin' past us, some askin' us what we doin'. We show 'em de permits for our equipment an' de free stage an' dey just let us go. One cop say to go now, an' I mention 'bout de guy with the staff, an' dat Canadiens is goin' after 'im.”

“At first de cop didn't believe 'im,” Jacqueline added. “Den one o' the other officers shouted out 'bout it, an' it seem de police jus' leave us alone.”

“Was de guy all nuts?” Chloe asked, voice holding some excitement as she'd never heard Dominique talk about her adventures. “Like swingin' the staff an' hittin' people?”

“No,” Dominique replied as she shook her head, looking from Chloe, to Monika and then to me. “He just swung it kinda weak at people, hit a couple, but nothing they couldn't block or it weren't very hard. I get up ta him an' he look me right in de eyes. I can see his eyes, an' he look tired. He start threatenin' me, swingin' the stick 'gain an' thrustin' one end at me. But I just keep movin' in. I watch him as I came up, he didn't look like he was gonna do much. An' when I saw his eyes, I knew right away dat he'd back down.

“So I come up to him, an' fist clench an' ready to block if he swing. I get five feet away from him an' I shout out 'Hey! You t'ink you all tough threatenin' people an' tryin' ta hurt dem. Causin' shit when people try to

protest'." Dominique paused as Chloe snorted a laugh, having rarely heard her curse in front of Monika or myself. "Anyway, I just stare 'im down, step close 'til I'm 'bout a foot in front o' 'im. He weren't real big, kinda short guy, so I maybe two 'r three inches taller 'en he were. An' I can see in his eyes, he startin' to get scared. I hear de police come up behind me, but I never turn to look, just keep starin' straight at dis guy. Finally, he just drop de stick an' take off."

"We were in Huntsville when rioters torched that police car," Jacqueline added. "Glad we weren't there that day, it woulda been a lot more tense den just some guy with a stick."

"I can't understand it," Dominique said after a short silence. "Why people gotta do t'ing like dat. Why dey gotta get violent."

"Because they feel they can," I tried to explain. "It's the mob mentality. All it takes is just one person to set it off. And people will do it just to see the reaction. Some do it with the intention of getting a message across. But as long as you protest peacefully, you are much

further ahead.” I sighed and filled up my coffee cup before I added one simple thing that I'd heard so many years before. “You can draw more attention with a whisper than you can with an angry rage.”

Later in the evening after everyone went home, Dominique and I spoke more about what happened. She still had several questions about why people do the things they do. I tried to explain as best I could, but I always brought things back to how you can never control what someone else does, but you can make sure your own actions are responsible ones. I also asked her how she felt when she faced the man with the staff.

“I didn't t'ink 'bout myself,” she said in a quiet voice. “I just t'ought dat I had to get him to stop, you know. Before he really hurt someone. An' I know I could hear the cameras flashin' an' everyt'ing. Dere was photographers all over de place. But I tried to focus on him. Make him stop.”

“That's the important thing, Dominique,” I said as I gave her a comforting hug. “If you hadn't been there, he

might have hurt someone. But you managed to end it peacefully.” I shrugged a bit and shook my head as I thought back to my own younger days when I used to do what Dominique did. “There are going to be times when you will have to fight. But fight to defend. Yourself and those around you. That's why I wanted you to take those karate classes, so you could fight back if you had to.”

Dominique nodded, understanding what I was say to her. “I know dat it better to end things without violence. But sometime I get so mad, I just wanna drill some o' those guys in the face.” She looked up and smiled softly as she looked at me. “I'm just glad I have a good teacher.”

I smiled and gave her a hug, watching as she went off to her room. Another full day and a good rest ahead of her. I also would sleep well, knowing that my daughter was more than capable of handling herself.

Bus Rider

What I'm about to describe now is rather odd, in some ways. Most people wouldn't really consider how a costumed vigilante gets around to be a big deal. However, with Dominique it became rather important. I didn't even know how she got around for two months into her activities. The resulting revelation was rather comical, to say the least.

It was during a warm mid September. Monika and I had decided to treat ourselves with a night on the town, and we decided to take things easy by taking the bus. We had no real destination in mind, and merely enjoyed our time together. The bus made it's stops, letting people on and off when need be. Some, we noticed, we dressed like comic book characters, which made sense, Montreal's Comic Book Convention was on. So seeing the oddly dressed people was of no surprise.

What did surprise us was at the fourth stop along

the route.

I looked up just as the door closed. To say I was shocked would be a bit of an understatement. There walking down the aisle was Dominique. Dressed in her uniform with her leather jacket on. She saw us, and stopped a moment, almost seeming that she didn't know what to do. Finally, she took a seat three in front of us. Far enough away that it didn't seem to anyone else that she would know anyone on the bus.

Think about this for a moment. There was my daughter, getting onto the bus, a normal activity for anyone wishing to commute in any metropolitan city. But in this situation, Dominique was not recognizable as herself. She was dressed in the uniform that many in Montreal and in Canada would recognize as Canadiens. A costumed crime fighter. Riding public transportation. Monika and I chuckled as the bus started up again, hearing some of the other passengers make comments to her. The comments were pleasing ones, as they came from people who obviously knew who she was. By that, I mean they knew she was Canadiens.

It was the conversation she had with one of the comic book attendees that both Monika and I had a difficult time keeping down laughter.

“Hey there,” we heard a young man, dressed in a green costume that looked like Robin Hood. “So you going to the comic convention? You a Cosplayer?”

“...um... a what?” I heard Dominique say in a quiet voice, seemingly surprised by the sudden conversation.

“Cosplayer,” the young man repeated. “Ya know, people who dress up and act out a scene. Kind of like some people do re-enactments of Star Wars or X-men or something like that.”

“Oh,” Dominique replied rather timidly. “Um.. no, I'm not a cosplayer. I'm Canadiens.”

“Well, I kinda figured you were a Canadian,” the young man replied with a chuckle. “I mean, me or my friends probably wouldn't think about wearing a costume like that. By the way, I'm Billy. Came up from Albany. And you are....?”

“Canadiens,” Dominique repeated. “As in, costumed vigilante Canadiens. You know, the crime

fighter?” She paused as she watched the young man for a moment, sensing that he didn't understand what she was saying. “Okay, you hear of the vigilante in Vancouver? The Mannekin?”

“Oh yeah!” Billy said with a grin. “I've seen him on the news. Kick ass, man that'd be cool to be him.”

“Oui, well, I don't send criminals to hospital,” Dominique replied with a sigh. I could tell her analogy wasn't exactly working. Comparing herself to a monster like the Mannekin, a dark figure who felt the best punishment for criminals was to break them in both body and spirit. I was very glad that I never met that man when I was Canadiens. I only prayed that Dominique would not either. “But, I do help the police catch crooks.”

“Cool! So you're a super hero.” Billy paused again as though he were considering something. “So, why are you riding the bus? Don't you have a car or anything?”

“No, I don't, actually,” Dominique replied with a sigh. “I figure dat Mannekin is probably got money, so he able to afford all o' his toys. I know a couple of other

crime fighters, Hawk's Scream bein' one, an' he flies. I don't fly.”

“So...” Billy began, sounding rather confused by the situation. “You have a regular day job?”

“Yes, I have a regular job,” Dominique explained with a nod. As I heard her speak, I believed she felt it was alright to state she worked at a coffee shop. Just a coffee shop, not mentioning it was a Tim Horton's coffee shop at all. “But whether I work at a coffee shop, or I'm a lawyer or a doctor or whatever, shouldn't matter at all. I don't do dis for money.”

“It just seems less than glamorous,” Billy stated.

Dominique just shrugged as she spoke. “I never seen dis as bein' glamorous. You want glamorous, maybe talk to a police officer, or maybe soldiers comin' back from Afghanistan. An' even den, dey probably say dat it not glamorous.” Dominique and Billy talked for a while longer, sharing small experiences from her adventures, and he asking all sorts of questions. It was twenty minutes for their entire conversation before Billy and his friends had to leave. I overheard Billy mention

that Dominique should go to the convention at some point, to which Dominique said she'd think about it.

Five minutes later, Dominique got off the bus, sneaking a peek in our direction, and smiling softly as she stepped off the bus. I smiled in return, and then looked to my wife. "I think, we should get her a vehicle."

My wife and I discussed the suggestion for a few days after seeing Dominique on the bus that one evening. We both agreed that it would be wise to get her a vehicle, but the question became what kind of vehicle. It was obvious that we couldn't get Dominique some gas guzzling car, predominantly because Dominique would remind us both the dangers of such vehicles to the environment and how economically hazardous they would be. She understood that often they were a necessary evil, but did not feel that such vehicles were necessary for small commutes. So, we had to focus our attentions in that direction.

We both agreed on a vehicle that would be fuel efficient, a good commuter vehicle and something that

could get Dominique around town quickly. We also decided to wait until Dominique's birthday before presenting it to her.

It was not only a celebration of her twentieth year, but also her second full year since she first went out onto the streets as Canadiens. So there was some butterflies when I took Dominique to the garage for her last surprise of the evening.

“Your mother and I thought about this for some time, Dominique,” I explained as I lead her over to a large crate in the garage. “Since that night we saw you on the bus.” I could tell Dominique was trying to remember, so I jarred her memory a bit. “The night you spoke to that young man from the comic convention.”

“Oh!” Dominique replied with a grin, suddenly remembering. “He were kinda funny, but it was cool to talk to someone about stuff I do without feelin' I had to hide anyt'ing.”

“Yes, that very night,” I replied as I motioned to the crate. “Your mother and I decided, after a very long discussion, that you should probably have something that

you can get around quickly in. And, something which would be in keeping with your own opinion on environmentally friendly vehicles.”

Dominique blinked a couple of times, surprised that I spoke so freely of this. I was about to open the crate, when she suddenly announced. “Dat’s a little small for a Smart Car, don’t you t’ink?”

I stopped and looked at her a moment, then began to laugh. Not for what Dominique had said, but the sudden image of her driving to crime scenes in a Smart Car. And really, what she was getting was only a little bit better. Dominique just looked at me with a perplexed look upon her face. “I’m sorry, really. I just had this odd... Nevermind, it’s not important.” I smiled as I noticed a small smirk form on her lips. We’d had these kinds of conversations many times before, which usually ended up in either one or both of us poking fun at the other.

“As your mother and I discussed,” I told her as I pushed open the crate carefully. “You need something which is mobile, fuel efficient and small.” The packing from the crate fell away easily, and I caught a glimpse of

Dominique as she spied what was inside.

“You... you got me a Motorino!” she exclaimed.

“Custom made,” I said with a smile as the last of the packing revealed a sleek, red and white electric scooter. A motorcycle conversion to be precise. The Motorino Gth was completely electric. Something that I felt was well worth the money. A limited speed vehicle, Dominique would still need her license in order to operate it. But at least she had something better and easier to get around in than the bus. “Just one promise.”

“What is dat?” she said, stopping herself from moving forward in her excitement.

“No driving on the sidewalks.”

Givin' Away A Miracle

I could go on for a while telling different stories of Dominique's adventures. We have had arguments about her methods and disagreements on what is right and wrong, how she should not use the uniform as a political statement. But then she will remind me, that when I was younger and when I wore the uniform, I also used it for a political statement. In the end, she is right. My call for a unified nation was similar, yet so different to the way Dominique calls for a unified nation. Mine was a rally to defend our rights and freedoms as a nation. Dominique is a call to protect our country, treat it with respect and become a shining example for the world.

We have also had our victories together. Times when I have seen her on the news, in support of some cause, and quietly, I have been cheering her on with Monika. Dominique's victories have become our victories and hopefully the victories of this country.

Both my daughters have made me so proud in what they do. Yes, they have had their own trials they have faced. I remember on numerous occasions being called about problems with Chloe in her modelling career in Paris. Chloe is still young, and it does sadden me in a way that she feels embarrassed about her Quebecois heritage. But that may change, and I hope that Dominique can help with that.

Needless to say, while both of them have filled me with pride, I still feel a great deal of worry. I never wish for them to face some of the things I have seen in my own life, but I also know that sometimes you cannot protect your children from the evils of the world. But you have to trust in them to have the foresight and willpower to stand up for what they believe to be right.

I see them both as miracles, and in some ways, I am giving them away to the world. But what kind of father would I be if I beamed about how miraculous they were, and never let them see the light of day. I only hope that they can inspire others as they have inspired me.

Dominique's career as Canadiens may be less time

than mine, or it might be longer. At least she will have the chance to grow and to learn and to help others. Maybe this experience will carry on into whatever else it is that she does in her life.

Jean Pierre Turgeon set his coffee cup down carefully on the table as he chuckled to himself for a moment. He looked up across the table to the man seated across from him. “So now you know why there is a connection to the new Canadiens and the one that appeared over thirty years ago.”

Maurice Lefevre only smiled as he shook his head. “I thought that there might be a connection, Mr. Turgeon.” Lefevre began before catching himself. He was asked to call Jean Pierre by his full name, and not treat him as a diplomat in the employ of the Ministry of Foreign affairs. After all they had known each other for years as Chief Inspector Lefevre and Canadiens. “My apologies, Jean Pierre. There was a few times when I tried to investigate you. Back in the 70's. At first I thought you were a member of the FLQ.” Both men chuckled at this

comment.

“That would have been rather ironic,” Jean Pierre said with a smile.

“I can understand your worry, Jean Pierre,” Lefevre said with a nod as he studied the younger Jean Pierre. “She is probably only a few years younger than my own child, but even so I think a parent never stops being a parent, no matter how old you become.” He took a sip from his coffee cup and sighed heavily. “Is Dominique planning on telling anyone currently on the force?”

“Yes,” Jean Pierre quickly replied. “Officers Frechette and Kowalski.”

“Ah, yes,” Lefevre nodded as he recognized the names. “Frechette graduated from the academy three years ago, with hopes to join Sûreté du Québec. I was very pleased when she accepted her position with Montreal Metro. And Kowalski I had met years before, when he was still serving with the RCMP in Fredrickton. Both are good officers.”

“Plus, she also gets a lot of help from them,” Jean

Pierre added as he chuckled. “You never know, maybe there might be a possibility in law enforcement at sometime.”

Lefevre laughed and shook his head, trying to imagine the young woman he'd seen on television in an officers uniform. “She will at least have the experience, that is for sure.” Lefevre set his coffee cup down and leaned back in his chair as he studied Jean Pierre. “I suspect that things could have been much worse. That the paths our children take could have been down much darker paths. That my friend, is the true miracle.”