This is a story about a true-life hero, who only wants to do good in the world. It’s based on a real person, a Navajo child named Zaadii, who was tragically killed by a distracted driver. His greatest joy in life was superheroes, and at three years old he was given a cape, and decided he was a superhero himself.

We agree.

Our hope is that Zaadii’s message, and memory, will live on through this book. This is his Unfinished Story.
For me, the ripples started when I was just three years old, seeing my favorite hero every week on TV.

If you dip your fingers into a pool of still water…

…it creates ripples.

Little concentric circles, radiating outward.

Creating patterns that go on and on, until they hit the shore and return, crashing into each other in beautiful symmetry.
THE IMAGES WE SEE AS CHILDREN, OFTEN LINGER WITH US OUR ENTIRE LIVES.

CACKLIN’ CORROSIVE, GREY FALCON!

LOOKS LIKE WE’RE ABOUT TO BE MELTED FOR SURE THIS TIME!

WE DIP OUR FINGERS IN…

THE FALCON CLAW IN MY COLORFUL GAUNTLET.

WISH ME LUCK, CHUM!

ROLlickING RICOCHET, GREY FALCON! YOU GOT IT!

I’M GLAD TO SEE YOU’VE BEEN PAYING ATTENTION IN CHEMISTRY CLASS, SPARROW!

AS THIS IS INDEED A CAUSTIC CONUNDRUM!

WELL, IT WAS A PLEASURE FIGHTING CRIME WITH YOU, GREY FALCON!

NOT SO FAST, MY YOUNG CHUM.

FOR YOU SEE, THE HEINOUS HANGMAN FORGOT ONE CRUCIAL DETAIL.

LAST WEEK!

OUR HEROES HAVE BEEN HUNG BY THAT HARROWING HEEL, THE HANGMAN!
I know because I’ve seen this one. I’ve seen them all. Let’s not congratulate ourselves yet, chum! Not until we find and fell our notorious nemesis! "Grey Falcon and Sparrow" was mind-blowing. Will our daring duo corral and capture the hideous hangman in time to save Liberty City? They do. I know because I’ve seen this one. I’ve seen them all.
...Man, I wanted that car.

My name is Zaadii Tohzon.

It was chosen by my grandmother and tribal elders, after much discussion.

In the Navajo language of my father, it means, “speaks with the power of gentle water.”

It’s who I am, who I was meant to be.

But it’s only one name I carry with me.

To the innocents of this city and the bad guys who try to hurt them... I have another name.

And corny or not...
they call me
and I am a
protector!
PLEASE. JUST LEAVE ME ALONE.

DON'T WORRY, PAL. THIS ISN'T GONNA TAKE LONG.

WE JUST WANT TO, YOU KNOW, HAVE A LITTLE DISCUSSION.

SEE, THE THING IS, THIS GUY, HE PAID US MONEY.

TO GET YOU PROTESTOR TYPES TO MAYBE RECONSIDER A LITTLE.

YOU FEEL ME?

AND HE SAID, IF YOU DIDN'T WANNA COOPERATE, IF YOU WANNA BE UNFRIENDLY...

... THAT MAYBE WE SHOULD BE UNFRIENDLY RIGHT BACK.

TALON. ENCUMBER. TARGET ONE.

FIRE!

HEY, WAIT. WHAT?

I DON'T REALLY WANT TO HURT ANYONE, NOT EVEN THESE GUYS.

TALON, SNAP RETRACT.

GET THE FREAK!

UCCCCHH!
OF COURSE, PERHAPS A LITTLE LESSON IN GOOD MANNERS IS CALLED FOR, HERE.

TALON, DISENGAGE.

GUHH.

I MEAN...

I MEAN...

...IT'S ONLY GOOD CMICS.

...IT'S ONLY GOOD CMICS.

NO, GOOD SIR. YOU MOST CERTAINLY DO NOT.

NO, GOOD SIR. YOU MOST CERTAINLY DO NOT.

OOOF.

UM.

UM.

GET OUT OF THE WAY, I GOT HIM. I GOT HIM!

GET OUT OF THE WAY, I GOT HIM. I GOT HIM!

I'M OKAY, SIR?

I'M OKAY, SIR?

YOU SAVED MY LIFE.

YOU SAVED MY LIFE.

HEY, YOU'RE Z-HAWK, RIGHT? YOU PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT!

HEY, YOU'RE Z-HAWK, RIGHT? YOU PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT!

SOMEONE TRYING TO SHUT DOWN PROTEST WITH VIOLENT METHODS.

SOMEONE TRYING TO SHUT DOWN PROTEST WITH VIOLENT METHODS.

AND I HAVE A PRETTY GOOD IDEA WHO.

AND I HAVE A PRETTY GOOD IDEA WHO.

TYSON ARVELL GARDNER.

CEO OF MAMMOTH TECHNOLOGY.
I already have a car.

You all right, man? Nothing broken?

Good, because I'm gonna cuff you and call the police.

Listen, I feel like I owe you something.

You need a ride somewhere?

That's nice of you, sir.

But, see—

Z-Runner. Non-collision homing mode, now!

I already have a car.

The Z-Runner. All electric, self-drive.

Every hero's gotta have a great ride, right?
my dad woulda been so proud of you.

When I’m not wearing a cape, I’m just plain Zaadii Tozhon.

My friends say I’m an “activist lawyer.” But the people I go after call me names that are much less nice.

Zaadii, I mean Z-Hawk?

This is my best friend Tony Reese. We took over his father’s prestigious law practice.

Even with a rich dad, he practically lived at my house. He and his dad, they never got along, somehow.

It’s okay, Tony. The blocker’s on, no one can hear us.

Okay, right. Listen, shouldn’t you get some rest?


He’s right. Z, take the rest of the night off. That’s an order.

No one fights for just causes like Margaret.

I couldn’t have done all this without them.

We get the decision on our injunction against Mammoth tomorrow, remember?

No one fights for just causes like Margaret.

And here’s the third partner in our practice, and the only person aside from Tony to know my secret ID, Margaret Reeves.

I couldn’t have done all this without them.

We get the decision on our injunction against Mammoth tomorrow, remember?

It’s okay, Tony. The blocker’s on, no one can hear us.

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It’s okay, Tony. The blocker’s on, no one can hear us.

Okay, right. Listen, shouldn’t you get some rest?


And Zaadii?

All right. Good luck to all of us tomorrow.

My dad woulda been so proud of you.

And Zaadii?
THERE’S A LOT GOING ON, I KNOW.

THANKS, TONY.

BUT IF IT WORKS, ALL OUR FAMILIES WILL BE PROUD OF US.

AND FOR A GOOD TWO HOURS?

I TAKE THAT ADVICE.

AND LIKE ALWAYS I DREAM OF A HAWK.

ZZZZZZZ

MY MOTHER SAYS HAWKS HAVE ALWAYS BEEN IN THE SKY DURING MY MOST SIGNIFICANT DAYS.

SO I TOOK THAT AS MY HERO NAME.

UNFORTUNATELY, I SLEPT THROUGH THE ALARM.

ZAAD!!

DO YOU KNOW HOW LATE YOU ARE?

NO...

TERIBLE, DID YOU SLEEP?

A BIT, SEE...

DID YOU EAT ANYTHING?

NEVER MIND, EAT THIS.

AND FOR HEAVEN’S SAKE, STRAIGHTEN YOUR TIE.

...IN LIGHT OF COMPELLING TESTIMONY REGARDING THE POTENTIAL DAMAGE TO THE SURROUNDING ECOSYSTEM, I AM GRANTING COUNSEL’S MOTION TO SUSPEND ALL OPERATIONS AT THE FACTORY SITE...

...UNTIL SUCH TIME AS THE LEGITIMACY OF THE ORIGINAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT CAN BE FIRMLY AND OBJECTIVELY ESTABLISHED.
you think you can stop progress? you did it. zaadii, you did it. thank goodness.

well, kat, i want to thank my team, but i also want to thank these amazing friends we’ve made during this long trial…

you think you’ve won, don’t you? excuse me?

you think an insignificant little paper pusher like you can stop tyson gardner? you think you can stop progress?

mr. tozhon, to what do you attribute this incredible victory in court this morning?

so for now, at least, the sound of blasting in the iron mesa will be silenced, making these folks very happy indeed.

kat wilson, channel four news.

…in this seeming david and goliath story, three lawyers from a small environmental concern have put the brakes on a massive new factory concern…

…that they say infringes on the land and water rights of a local tribe.

of course, we’ve picked up an enemy or two along the way.

kat wilson, channel four news.
WE'LL RESUME FULL OPERATIONS TOMORROW.

IT'S CHEAPER FOR ME TO PAY THE FINES THAN HALT THE WORKERS, MR. TOZHON.

AND DO YOU KNOW WHAT?

I LOOK FORWARD TO PAVING OVER YOUR LITTLE MESA.

WELL, I LIKE MOST PEOPLE. I DON'T HATE ANYONE.

BUT, I'VE GROWN TO ACTIVELY DISLIKE THAT MAN.

OHH, HE'S A BAD ONE. YOU HAVE TO STOP HIM. HE'LL DO IT.

DO I KNOW YOU, WISE MOTHER?

STOP HIM, DEAR CHILD.

NOT IN THAT SUIT.

IN YOUR OTHER ONE, DO YOU SEE?

I...

I WILL.

I SWEAR BY MY ANCESTORS.

I WILL.

END CHAPTER ONE!
There's no choice, Tony. We have to have evidence that they're polluting the water basin to stop them now.

I understand, but Zaadi, be careful. Gardner's not fooling around.

He's mean and he's tricky.

Yeah well. I have a few tricks, too.

Z-runner.

Hydrofoil!

Oh, how nice. Our guest has arrived. Best make him feel welcome.

What the...?

Warning. Proximity mines detected.

Warning. Proximity...
zaadi!

what's wrong?

the runner's not responding.

zaadi!

I'm coming!

I'm on my way right now!
why not just save time?

TSK TSK TSK.
THIS WON'T DO.

I suppose it falls to the Decimator to save this lump from drowning.

I am so utterly unappreciated!

On second thought...

...why not just save time?
I know, decimator. But not nearly as much--

Doesn’t matter. The point is, we’re all better off.

What’s happening?

One less do-gooder in the world, right? Or is it two less, since I’ve turned heel?

What’s that? Are you trying to mumble something, do-gooder?

Can’t quite hear you, you see.

Stronger than he looks!

Talon.

Wing target, wound mode!

What?

Oh. That stings, birdboy!

Don’t worry, decimator. But not nearly as much--
and do you know what else? I bet.

yes, yes. do you know, the bad guys are always better with the quips, don't you find?

...why... because I don't like your kind, hawkguy. I don't like that you stand in the way of almighty progress.

thinking everyone owes you something.

well, no more.

the hydro-electric dam, holding in the reservoir you cherish so much?

I'm going to blow it up. flood you out.

and do you know what else?
I've got Margaret. She's going to have simply the best view. From right atop the blast zone.

Stop me if you can, "hero."

Margaret? He's got Margaret? He knows. He knows who I am.

And for a minute, maybe many minutes... My body gives up. I lose consciousness.

I've got Margaret.

Soon... Decimator has all the cards.

And he took me down without even trying. Cars destroyed.

I can... can barely stand after that voltage. And it's starting to rain.

Pick the lock.

Talon.

Doesn't matter.

Decimator?

I'm coming.

No matter what.
I know, mags, I know.

Margaret?

Margaret, are you here?

Z-Hawk!

Dude, you're all right.

I was monitoring... thought you could use back up.

You shouldn't have come, Tony, this guy...

He likes to hurt innocent people.

But I'm glad you're here, find Margaret.

I'll handle the bad guy.

Margaret!

Zaadd! The decimator! He's... He's...

I know, ma'am, I know.
He’s Tony.

Oh, that’s right, Zaadii. My “brother.” You caught me.

You stinking, ridiculous do-gooder!

Tony. You know where my talon tagged your arm.

Why, Tony?

I didn’t. At first, I was so sure you were Gardner.

But you flinched when I touched your bicep.

All my father cared about was his causes. Deep inside, he knew I resented those... those covetous, grasping people he helped. Hated them.

You most of all.

He wanted someone like you to be his son, not his own flesh and blood.

And now, when I hit this button, I undo his work, and destroy his name!

No, Tony. You won’t.
I'm a protector. Not a destroyer.

Talon, Target Detonator.

FOR A MOMENT, I ALMOST LET HIM FALL.

NOT WHO MY FAMILY, MY TRIBE, MY FATHER, RAISED ME TO BE.

NOT WHO MY HERO WOULD WANT ME TO BE.

RIPPLES IN THE WATER.

BECAUSE I'M NOT A DESTROYER.

I'M A PROTECTOR.

END
Zaadii always wanted to protect the environment, even at a young age. I know this, because the character you’ve just been reading about was based on a real person: my son. My name is Rachel, and I am Zaadii’s mother.

Zaadii was born eleven days late, at 11:22, the eleventh day of the eleventh month of the year 2011.

And everyone knew, somehow, without discussion...

His grandmother and other tribal elder women gave him his name.

Our son was born in a hospital on a reservation.

"Zaadii Tozhon."

“Gentle water?” doesn’t that make him sound kind of weak?

"Gentle water has the power to move mountains and carve canyons."

"Zaadii Tozhon, he became."

...he loved SUPERHEROES.

"Speaks With the Power of Gentle Water."

"Mr. Eleventy."

We called him, “Mr. Eleventy.”

Zaadii’s father is Navajo.

...he was a wonder.

Zaadii’s grandmother explained.

He was raised in a family with a love for fantasy and science fiction books and comics.

And above all...

Zaadii’s mother explained.

And everyone knew, somehow, without discussion...
Zaadii was full of life and joy.

His older sister, Bahazhoni, got a cape from her favorite movie. Zaadii would always take it and run off with it.

This led to some EPIC sibling warfare.

And it was time for Zaadii to get a cape of his own.

But ANOTHER costume entirely caught his eye.

But ANOTHER costume entirely caught his eye.

His parents bought him SUPERHERO movies, and he watched them ENDLESSLY.

Of course, that meant sometimes IMPROVISING when it came to getting the costume CLEAN again.

And even into his dreams.

And that changed EVERYTHING. He'd found his hero.
On February 22, 2015, Zaadii, his 8-year-old sister, and myself were in a crosswalk, when a distracted driver ran her vehicle into us. She had been distracted, her mind wasn’t on the road and as a result, she was driving the wrong way.

Zaadii passed from his injuries at the hospital. I’m told he felt no pain. He was three years old. He was wearing his superhero cape. This comic asks: what could life have been for my son, had the driver not been distracted? He loved heroes, and he loved nature. I imagine he would have gone on to fight for the environment.

He might have become a hero. This story helps him achieve that purpose. In it, he becomes the hero he wanted to be, and his memory lives on. Beyond that, I hope you’ll think of him when you drive, and keep your eyes and mind on the road so he really can protect us all.

This story was never mine to tell. It was always Zaadii’s. It’s the perfect way to honor him in the medium he loved most.

My family wants to thank you for sharing Zaadii’s unfinished story with us. And thank you from Zaadii, who spoke with the power of gentle waters.
Let’s End Distracted Driving

Each day, seven people are killed by distracted drivers,* their stories left unfinished. What could have been, had the driver not been distracted?

In 2018, Travelers launched the Unfinished Stories campaign. We worked closely with Zaadii’s family to imagine what could have been for him, had he not been killed by a distracted driver. His story serves as a powerful reminder of the responsibilities we all have behind the wheel. The Travelers Institute® Every Second Matters℠ distracted driving initiative recognizes that every driver, passenger, cyclist and pedestrian has a role to play in changing social norms around distraction.

For more information about the Travelers distracted driving efforts, visit travelers.com/distracteddriving

ZAADII
THE LEGEND OF Z-HAWK

ILLUSTRATION BY JEFFERY VEREGGE