

A firefighting squad receives a special surprise when the victim of a car accident is revealed to be an indigenous lawyer. This brings curiosity on both sides where they learn about each other.

A New World

Firetruck No. 57 is packed with a bull and his six-man squad conversing happily and laughing amongst themselves while patrolling the sector along a stretch of highway. Another normal day for the local firefighters.

Sitting in the passenger seat next to the driver, Taurus is happily engrossed in their conversation, though at the same time the bull is alert, keeping a sharp eye out for anything that may be suspicious. What they didn't realize was that a potential situation is practically right on top of them.

The bull's attention is suddenly drawn to what appears to be a wrecked Aston Martin in the middle of the road, so he signals to the driver to stop and be on guard. Turns out, the bull has nothing more to say when he notices someone inside, slumped over. Immediately, the bull rushes to the disabled car while signaling for his squad to assist him.

One of the firefighters, a gray wolf, takes a moment to observe the surroundings when he notices shards of broken glass littering the street, as well as skid marks, collision spots, and other debris. He breathes to himself, "Holy smokes... he must have lost control, ricocheted, and rolled over. How can anyone survive that??"

While Taurus and his men work on freeing the trapped figure, another firefighter, a brown wolf, notices something is off. The smell of fluid is strong, and it isn't coming from them. He alerts the team, "Does anyone else smell brake fluid? There's a pretty good reason why this guy crashed."

"I'm with Randy on this one. Check out the braking system underneath this car. You'll see what we're talking about." Another firefighter informed them.

Taurus radios to call for a paramedic while stepping away to take a breather and recover. The bull returns to the scene, just in time to witness the right driver side door get pried open, followed by the unconscious driver, a lynx, being carefully removed from the car. Frowning at what his teammates have said, Taurus inquisitively marches over to the two wolves to check out the theory for himself. What he sees, or just barely notices, confirms their suspicion.

Underneath the Aston Martin is a small puddle of brake fluid, along with what appears to be a severed brake hose above it. Somehow, the driver realized the problem with the car when attempting to slow down or stop. However, in

the heat of the moment, he didn't alert the cops. So he intentionally caused himself to wipe out, thus earning himself a trip to the hospital. Because of the airbag and his seatbelt, the lynx escapes with a concussion. The ambulance later arrives to transport him to the hospital.

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Having been comatose for a while, the lynx is lying in a hospital bed, hooked up to a monitor. A couple members of the fire squad, plus Taurus himself, is present in the room with him. They're wondering if the lynx will wake up. They soon get their answer when they hear a groan from the hospital bed.

Cracking his eyes open, the lynx stirs and shuffles around with a light groan. Clutching his head, the lynx coughs, "Where am I...?"

"You're in the local hospital. You were pretty banged up inside that car." To the right of the lynx sits Randy, who informs the feline of his new whereabouts as well as his condition and what happened. Just then, the lynx's eyes widen in realization and he plops backwards onto the bed. With a chortle of disbelief, the lynx croaks, "Man, I can't believe I survived that! I think someone sabotaged my car."

Now the firefighters grow inquisitive, wondering who this stranger really is. And they ask one simple question. "Who are you??"

The lynx introduces himself, "My name is Ronnie Romulund. I am a tribal lawyer and an indigenous native, myself. I am a warrior of the Loren lynx tribe."

The three firefighters exchange stunned glances at each other, which draws Ronnie's confusion, "What??"

"You're a tribal native?" One of the firefighters whispered. "What's that like?"

Ronnie blinks at the question, frowning. "Come again?"

The black wolf firefighter reinstates his question and Ronnie only shrugs in reply. Ronnie insinuates, "It's like any other lifestyle, except that we're more primal and natural - more in tune with nature."

“Well, how would you like to join us on a little Ride-Along as a volunteer?” One of the firefighters suddenly jumps the gun in offering the recovering lynx a chance at a special experience. Taurus warns him, “George, aren't you going a little too fast with this??”

The black wolf firefighter, George Harris, brushes off Taurus' concern. But when he is about to reply, the black wolf reconsiders his offer. Ronnie, however, welcomes the invitation. “You guys want a lawyer to join your ranks as a volunteer?? I'm in! I'll just have to inform my chieftain that I may not be present during my tribal duties.”

“Sounds good with us!” Taurus agreed.

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Three days later, Ronnie is finally discharged from the hospital with a clean bill of health. And he decides to take up the firefighters' offer as a volunteer. So after donning some new clothes, the lynx begins to leave his tribal home and make his way to the city district in hopes of meeting the firefighters. Along the way, Ronnie makes a quick phone call to his wife, detailing her on his condition and the trip he is taking. He hangs up the call with a smooching kiss directed towards her.

Before long, Ronnie arrives at the local fire station, met with the sight of a familiar sextant of servicemen crowded around a firetruck of their own in maintenance. Upon spotting the big red vehicle, the lynx jogs towards it out of curiosity and squeaks, “So this is your firetruck?? That is huge!”

“Yep, it's the standard firetruck in our arsenal. Our common fire engine.” Standing close to Ronnie is a cougar firefighter, who gently knocks his knuckles against the vehicle itself. “It's also quite durable too - not too many crashes are reported with the fire department.”

“I see... huh... what are those four vehicles doing over there??” After running his eyes over the large firetruck, the lynx's attention is later drawn to four different cars nearby in a separate garage, all side by side. Decked out in the same livery as the fire equipment, these four cars have light bars on them, as well as push bars. From left to right: BMW M3 (E92), Chevrolet Corvette Z06 (C6), Nissan 370Z (Z34), Mitsubishi Lancer Evolution X.

“Ever since that shooting incident where we were being fired upon during a rescue mission, we've been granted some fire police staff for assistance, force protection, and escort service.” The cougar firefighter noted.

Ronnie clenches his hands into fists, learning of the situation but later relaxes, claiming, "Left up to me, I would prosecute those responsible for the incident. I heard about it on the news. The goons that did this to you were killed by police, weren't they?"

The cougar nodded grimly, "Yeah. Two shooters; both of them dead by police. It's still baffling to this day."

Ronnie shrugs, "Well, your guess is as good as mine, so even I wouldn't know as to why some nut would target a group of firemen like you guys."

The conversation is cut short when an alarm sounds overhead followed by a distress beacon regarding an accident on a local junction near Nevada Highway.

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Racing down the road en route to the accident scene, one of the fire police cars leads the way followed by a fire department ambulance, the main firetruck, and a fire police car in back. Both police cars are providing backup and escort service.

Inside the firetruck, Ronnie is actually having trouble with staying still, being seated next to Taurus. Though the many tiny bumps in the road, Ronnie jitters, "Is this normal for you people??"

"We're used to it. You're too tense, Ronnie. You gotta relax, partner." Taurus attempts to settle Ronnie down when the lynx suddenly perks up with a sense a deja vu, a flashback suddenly running through his mind from the earlier crash incident. Finally he comes around after being settled down and mentions to the group, "I remember this section! This is where I had that rollover accident!"

"We can talk about that once we're done with the current mission!" Driving the main fire engine is a black wolf firefighter, reminding the others about the urgent emergency at hand.

Upon arrival, Ronnie immediately senses that something is completely off. The accident scene close by consists of three smoking cars - a white Lexus LS400, a bright red Dodge Caliber R/T, and a dark green Infiniti G20 - each of them moderately damaged. One of them is on its roof.

Soon as the firefighters and their fellow volunteer begin disembarking, Ronnie suddenly bolts away from the scene and towards the junction. The firefighters notice their lynx volunteer bailing and immediately express their disappointment when one of them notices a lone straggler wielding some kind of weapon - and it looks like a hatchet!

“Everyone, focus on the accident victims! I’ll try and help our assistant!” Even the fire police assist Ronnie in taking down the armed straggler, and Taurus later charges over to assist, helping the lynx subdue the lone perp while awaiting the arrival of local or tribal law enforcement.

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Of the accident victims, none of them died. There was a family of four in the Lexus LS400 - all survived with minor injuries thanks to their seatbelts. Two people were in the Dodge Caliber R/T - both were transported to a hospital with minor injuries. Five people were in the Infiniti G20 - they were also transported to a hospital with non life-threatening injuries. As for the hatchet-wielding straggler? He was arrested for assault with a deadly weapon, landing him at least 10 years in the slammer.

Following their job well done, the firefighters can now rest easy. They were all curious about Ronnie even more. However, Ronnie left the station to change clothes and a few minutes later, the lynx is back wearing his tribal attire. Fortunately, it is downtime for everyone, so anyone is free to do as they please.

Back at the topic at hand, Ronnie begins to explain to the firemen, “As you can see, I am a tribal native, hence the attire. So, I can answer whatever questions you guys may have.”

One of the firefighters immediately pops a question to the lynx, “What’s being an indigenous native like?”

Ronnie blinks at the question. However, he responds, “Being indigenous has a distinctively different culture than normal, but we’re still normal citizens like everyone else.”

The lynx draws a breath and later remarks, “Our culture and tradition is different, yet we’re branded as savages - evil, crazy people with no sense of direction.”

“You’re no savage, Ronnie. In fact, you saved our lives earlier.” The cougar fireman meets Ronnie and squeezes him in a warm embrace. The cougar also adds, “In fact, you’re a hero yourself!”

“Awww, I’m no hero. I’m just doing what my instincts told me to.” Ronnie blushed. “Perks of being a tribal warrior, of course.”

“Tribal warrior? Isn’t that like being a police officer?” Another firefighter alludes to Ronnie’s rambling in his own question to the lynx.

“Those two fields are different.” Ronnie answers after a brief pause in realization. “Tribal warriors patrol their territory and defend their lands from intruders or rival tribes looking to pillage their lands. Tribal Police are a whole different story. They do have some powers as local law enforcement, but not as much. You may have to ask someone else about that. I tried explaining it as best as I know how.”

“Hey Taurus, how good is this guy at fighting?” One of the firemen taps Taurus’ side, betting on whether the lynx can hold his own in a fight or not. Taurus shakes his head in disapproval, “Don’t even think about it guys. Anyone can hold their own in a fight, no matter what they are.”

“Right. Any more questions you guys have?” Ronnie beseeched, asking around the group.

One of the other firemen poses a question to the lynx, “What led you to become a lawyer in the first place? Were you people stereotyped?”

With a sharp exhale, Ronnie grumbles, “That may be a challenging bit to answer but I wanted to become a lawyer to benefit everyone. I wanted to help the innocent and put the real culprits away. From personal experience, I’ve been the victim of a hate crime, myself, given my background. And yes, we were stereotyped, as you put it. But we are not savages and we are not weird, crazy, retarded cannibals or whatever. We are normal citizens just like you, but with a sort of lower distinction.”

“Hey Burne, this lynx is no joke. He really is one of us!” The cougar fireman turns his attention to Randy, having his attention shifted to the wolf’s statement. The feline then whispers back, “Just like us, rather. I like him already.”

Another one of the firemen suddenly argues, “If indigenous people are of a lower class than regular citizens, then why are tribal police on the same level as military police?”

“Honestly, that is a good question.” Ronnie wastes no time in addressing the question and lowering the anxiety throughout the room. Yet, the lynx simply points out, “It all comes down to one thing - jurisdiction. Tribal Police have

jurisdiction within their own communities the same way military police have jurisdiction within a military installation. Some of them share parts with local law enforcement, hence the dual partnership in some areas. It's like linking two different public transit systems onto one route.”

“You guys are sorely underappreciated.” Burne noticed. “There's a lot we can learn from you. You'd make an excellent teacher for a classroom.”

Ronnie's ears twitch at hearing Burne's comment and the lynx turns flushed at the compliment. “Thank you, but the public school system is not for me. I can't handle a bunch of rowdy school kids who have nothing better to do than strange events. And I don't want my own cubs being part of that either.”

Realizing what he just said, the lynx promptly covers his mouth. The firemen only laugh with him at this sudden revelation where Burne mentions, “You're a family man, too?? Wonderful! How many kids do you have??”

For safety reasons, Ronnie usually keeps his family matters confidential to prevent further harm to him and his family. In the short time he has known the firemen, he is trusting of them, and they are likewise of him. Warmed at the heart, Ronnie reveals, “I have two cubs - both of them are boys.”

“Will you let us meet your wife and kids? We'll be sure to behave ourselves.” One of the firefighters joked; this earns a few laughs from the other firemen, but Ronnie returns the gesture with a blank expression where he mumbles, “If I go feral, you have every right to kill me because any dangerous move you make towards my cubs - I will literally slice you apart. And if I was an actual savage, you have every reason to run or fight.”

“Guys, knock it off! Ronnie, you know he was only joking, right?” Taurus intervenes to ensure Ronnie's safety, to which the lynx assures the bull, “I know humor and sarcasm when I hear it. And I stand by what I said too...”

SHING!

“...about dangerous advances towards my wife and cubs.” Ronnie's expression remains blank even with the lynx simply holding his right hand up and revealing his sharp claws to the group. As sweet as he is, Ronnie can also be pretty dangerous when it comes to defending his own family.

“Point taken...” Burne gulped.

“Just so you know, Ronnie, us firemen aren't defenseless either.” The only one brave enough to stand alongside the lynx is Taurus, who motions for the lynx to follow him to the storage room where the bull retrieves a pickaxe and lights swings it around, demonstrating his use of the weapon. The bull acknowledges the lynx's threat and reminds him, in a humorous manner, “If you do start being a bad kitty, we'll just hose you down with a deluge hose until you're ready to give up.”

Ronnie almost giggled at the sarcastic, if not serious, threat. The lynx remarks, “Taurus, I like water but not in that way. If you do hose me down with that thing, you'll drown me before I even have a chance to squeak.”

“Just a little warning from me; we don't play games either.” Taurus responded in return. Then he links an arm around the tribal lynx, tickling his shoulder and heading back to his squad.

Back inside the room, Ronnie acknowledges, “You all still have the open opportunity to meet my family. It's still free! And it's all a huge thanks for you guys saving me back there.”

“No problem - just doing our jobs, y'know?” Burne acknowledges the incident, accepting Ronnie's thanks for the team, though the cougar later remarks, “That Aston Martin was completely totaled, though. The back of it was recognizable but the front was smashed to bits.”

Ronnie blushes and begins to consciously stretch his legs, absentmindedly concluding, “Seat belts do save lives, at least. And it did save mine. Speaking of, I believe someone sabotaged my car while I was making a quick errand run.”

“We got you covered, Ronnie. We'll leave it at that.” Burne winks at the tribal lynx, who meekly nods in understanding. Whatever surprise that is will come later on.