

# Scooterthief and Scootie's Triumphant Return

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Many of you may have noticed a lack of scooter in the paper recently. That's mostly because I've been without my precious scooter, Scootie, for the past couple months: it was scooter-napped in early October.



WHERE THE  
HELL IS  
WAYNE, ME

It all happened on a Tuesday, October the 16th. I was late, I had overslept, so I took my fair scooter to class. The trek to the Filene Music Building took only minutes. I was so accustomed to the slight nuances of campus pathways, and so adept at the subtleties of scooter handling that I arrived nearly on time. I was so fast my hair looked like Joe Bravo.

After disrupting class, I settled in my seat, and once said class had finished, I went about my way. It was only later I realized my dreadful error.

I'd left my precious scooter, with its adorable Ben-Kessler-wobble and stylish SkidNews sticker, leaning in the doorway of that damned 12:40. When I returned home that evening, the handlebar clasp to my precious Scootie was pinned to my door like a god-damned severed ear.

There were emails. The first, which I received that night, gave a transcript of the severing of Scootie's handlebar clasp, the unknown scooter-napper laughing maniacally as my poor scooter pleaded "Not my thingy!" The next, dated Oct. 16, was a simple message from Scootie. "Your Scooter: Help me!" it said. Both emails originated from a scooterthief@hotmail.com. Tricky. Very tricky.

I tried to fake the scooter-napper out, responding, "As of this moment, a massive search and rescue mission is underway. This deed will not go unpunished. Read the personals in this weeks issue of the Skidmore News."

"On October 15th the Scooter affectionately called 'Scootie'," I wrote in the October 18 edition of the Skidmore News, "was brutally and deliberately kidnapped from Filene. Whoever you are, I will find you and destroy you."

He mocked me. In that very same issue, he took out a persona ad, writing "CHRIS LADD'S SCOOTER TO THE HIGHEST BIDDER!!!" He was anything if not persistent. I received an email October 19 that read,

"YOU'RE ALL TALK, CHRIS. WHAT ARE YOU ACTUALLY GOING TO DO TO GET YOUR PRESCIOUS 'SCOOTIE' BACK?"

Maybe he was right. Maybe I was all talk. I decided then that it was time to brainstorm.

I pulled in my top advisors, and we poured over the facts Math-net style until we were left with just one name: Luke "Mung" McCormick. No one else any of us knew had the smarts, the cunning, or the courage to pull off a scam of this magnitude. There was another thing: Luke, though he doesn't drink or do drugs, is a smoker. An avid one.

On October 23 I got another email from scooterthief, and this time it was a ransom note. "Here's the deal guy," he wrote. "I want the two packs of cigs (parliament lights) in a brown paper bag hidden well behind the soda machine in Penfield. Hide it well guy, I won't be making the pickup for about a week to ensure no funny stuff from you. Once i have acquired the cigarettes i will send an email providing you with the location of your precious scootey. [sic]"

He finished with a threat. "And remember: no funny stuff. Sincerely yours, the scooter thief."

In a rage I responded. "I don't think you understand," I wrote.

"Right now it's gone farther than that. Both the SSPD and the SCPD are working in conjunction with the FBSSI (federal bureau of stolen scooter investigation) in a joint effort to find you and the scooter and bring to justice you and anyone who helped in the theft."

Catching my breath, I continued. "No ransom will be paid. No cigarettes will be bought. You will never see your blood money. As of yesterday your location was pinpointed at Skidmore College, Saratoga Springs, NY. If I were you I'd run, and run like the wind. Wherever you go, no matter how far you make it, they will always catch you. The FBSSI has a flawless record. Flawless."

"Without the 'thingy', as you so obscenely called it, the scooter is worth next to nothing on the open market. Colder weather also brings to a close the 'scooter season' so aptly titled for it's luxurious warm afternoons and snowless sidewalks. You'll never move goods that hot. Never."

Grinning, I penned the last nail in scooterthief's coffin. "Oh, and by the way," I penned. "I know who you are. Sucker."

My next step was to confront this Luke character. I coolly followed him to his room under the guise of "hanging out," and casually inspected his room while he wasn't looking.



Alas, there was no scooter. I confronted him directly. He was cool as a cucumber in November. Maybe it wasn't this 'Luke' as I'd once thought. I sighed, and headed home.

I got another email. "yOu WiLL cOmPLY," it said. "i cAn kEeP yOuR ScOotEr fOrEveR..." A few days went by, and I received one final message. "Gentle Christopher," it s t a r t e d . "01001001001011000010000001001100011010101101011011001010010000001001101011000110100001101101110111001001101010110100101100011011010"

After that I kind of lost interest. Without my scooter for a couple weeks, I went about my days more or less unconscious of my POW scooter. I forgot about it. Forgot until last weekend.

Sitting in the back row in the Filene Recital Hall, Scootie was very nearly the last thing on my mind. I'd put the pain and misery and heartache of losing a loved one in my past. It hit me in matter of seconds.

The program. Nicknames. Luke. Scooterthief. McCormack. It was him.

It all made sense. I was right all along. My eyes narrowed as those Bandersnatcher Boys made their way before the crowd. After a couple of numbers, most of the group cleared from the center, and Luke stepped off-stage, only to return with...

Scootie! He carried it like a trophy buck above his head and raised his free hand to silence the mumbling crowd. I jumped to my feet, and ran towards the stage.

"STOP!"

Eleven Bandersnatcher fingers pointed and yelled and halted my progress halfway down the stairs. Frozen, I screamed, "You, Sir, have stolen my Scooter."

Luke talked. He talked of the theft, and de-thingifying of Scootie, of ransom notes and confessions. "I confessed perfectly in binary code," he said, "but Chris was just a little slow to pick up on that."

We would wrestle for it, he said. We would tug of war with Scootie, and to the victor went the scooter. It began. He wisely took the wheeled end, without the 'thingy' as Luke called it, the handlebars are shaky at best. I grabbed the front wheel and pulled, hard, like Arthur tugging on the very hilt of Excalibur.

The day was mine. Scootie and I are back together now, and I'm getting reacquainted with that cute little wobble. As for Luke, the FBSSI turned the case over to the NYSBSSP (New York State Bureau for Stolen Scooter Prosecution). He's facing two to five years at Pixar Penitentiary, the maximum sentence allowable by law. You wouldn't want to know what inmates do to each other with Scooter handlebars there. I shudder at the very thought.