

The difference between a fool and a hero.

FARMER JACK, a plastic giant in bib overalls and a straw hat, watched over the parking lot from where he was affixed above the doors of his new name-sake store on Detroit's Warren Avenue. The store was a godsend to residents of that urban food desert, an oasis of fresh meats and produce, a variety of choices, and low costs.

Codell clattered his empty cart over the asphalt of the Farmer Jack parking lot. He was but 150 feet from the store when a dark-clothed man clutching a black satchel bolted out of the doors. Simultaneously, serendipitously, two of Detroit's finest were in the lot and getting out of their squad car. The dark-clothed man saw the cops and started sprinting in the opposite direction. The officers were on it. Leaving their car doors open, they took off after the dark-clothed man. Codell froze. A few parking spot away, a paunchy guy in a Detroit Lions Charlie Weaver jersey also froze. The dark clothed man was headed right between Codell and the Lions fan.

The Lions fan sprang to life. He jumped in front of the running man and stuck both arms out as if he were about to hug someone. The running man swerved right; the Lions backer lunged left; the running back spun; the Lion backer tackled the running back and clung to one leg; the running back kicked free, his heel hitting the linebacker's lower face; the running back stumbled; the linebacker collapsed, clutching his jaw; the running back pitched forward; the police officers closed in; the running back regained his balance, tucked the satchel under one arm like a football and broke loose; one of the officers chased him but couldn't keep up. Two more Detroit cherry tops whipped into

the parking lot. One of the new officers knelt to help the Lions fan, laid flat out in a handicapped parking space.

“I think my jaw’s broken,” the Charlie Weaver wanna-be mumbled through a mouthful of blood.

The officer daintily picked up two teeth on the blacktop. “These must be yours. You didn’t need to put yourself in harm’s way,” he chastised. “That was foolish, my man.”

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Let’s play that tackle again, Charlie, and see what might’ve been.

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“I think my jaw’s broken,” the Charlie Weaver wanna be mumbled through a mouthful of blood.

The officer daintily picked up two teeth on the blacktop. “These must be yours. You didn’t need to put yourself in harm’s way,” he lauded. “You’re a hero, my man.”

Codell clattered his empty cart toward the store. High above the doors, Farmer Jack wore an impossibly happy smile.

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