

Eddie, The Senior Year

Braden's Ass Kicking

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Mr. Crum is not the only one who got an unwanted Christmas present this year. During the last week of classes before Christmas break, Chuckie and Goldstein conspire together to drag Braden across the street and kick the shit out of him off school grounds. The problem is that Chuckie cannot keep his mouth shut, and the word has gotten out that Braden will get his ass kicked after school today. Braden, of course, can't wait to see how this will go down. Neither can half the students in the school who have made plans to attend the event.

The final bell of the day rings, and Mark asks Braden, "are you ready to get your ass kicked, bro?" Braden replies, "let them bring it on! Ain't no one gonna kick my ass!" Eddie comically informs Braden, "I don't know about that, bro. There's two of them and one of you." Braden replies, "that don't matter none! Ain't no one kicking my ass! No, wait. What did I just say? What I meant to say is ain't no two kicking my ass!" As the tribe walks out the front door to the school, Eddie tells Braden, "good luck, bro. We'll be across the street if you need us." Braden walks down the sidewalk as Eddie and the rest of the tribe hang out on the grass, waiting to see what happens.

Mark mentions to Eddie, "it looks like half the school came out to watch the fight." Eddie replies, "I see that. I guess the word really got around." Mitchell mentions, "Mr. Zunde said he's even going to stop by and watch." Mark replies, "that's really kind of funny."

Rushing out of the bushes, Goldstein and Chuckie approach Braden, with Goldstein telling him, “hey! You’re coming with us!” Braden laughs, and replies, “and, what if I don’t?” Goldstein replies, “yeah. Well, we’ll kick your ass. Yeah, yeah. That’s coming down anyway. We’re kicking your ass.” Braden is willingly escorted across the street by Chuckie and Goldstein, where Chuckie and Goldstein plan to get even with Braden once and for all.

Walking up to the tribe, Mr. Zunde asks, “have I missed any of the action?” Eddie replies, “nope. They just rushed out of the bushes, and taking Braden across the street right now.” The tribe and Mr. Zunde walk a little closer to the street to get a better view. And, just in case, the tribe can take matters into their own hands should Chuckie and Goldstein have something unexpected up their sleeves.

Across the street, Goldstein tells Braden, “it’s time for your ass kicking. Yeah, yeah. I hope you’re ready.” Braden replies, “you might not want to do that.” Chuckie tells Braden, “shut up. Don’t tell us what to do.” Expecting someone to deliver the first punch, Braden is not surprised when Goldstein shoves Braden in his shoulder. Chuckie quickly steps in and attempts to punch Braden in his mid section, which Braden blocks. The tit for tat session continues for a few minutes, giving Goldstein and Chuckie a false sense of security. Messing with Chuckie and Goldstein for a while, Braden feigns a position of weakness before he lets the hammer down.

Mr. Crum waddles up to Mr. Zunde, exclaiming, “what’s going on here?” Mr. Zunde replies, “if I had to guess, I’d say that it appears that Andrew Goldstein and Charles Black are starting a fight with Axel Braden.” Mr. Crum exclaims, “aren’t you going to break it up?” Mr. Zunde replies, “no. The fight is off school grounds. I just came out here to watch. Perhaps you should call the police.” Not wanting the police called out, Mr. Crum yells out to Braden, Chuckie, and Goldstein, “hey, you guys! Break it up! All of you! Get to my office right now!”

Realizing that he now has limited time, Braden hurls Chuckie into a patch of Poison Ivy. Goldstein comes up

from behind, and feebly punches Braden in his shoulder. With Chuckie out of commission, Braden lifts Goldstein high into the air, tossing him onto Chuckie as if he were trash. Goldstein yells out, “shit! This shit is Poison Ivy! Yeah. That’s what this shit is!” Hearing the news, Braden decides the fight is over, for he does not want to come into contact with two people who have just landed in Poison Ivy.

Across the street from the action, Eddie comments, “it looks like Braden is winning.” Now getting angry, Mr. Crum asks Eddie, “what do you have to do with this?” Eddie replies, “nothing, unless Braden is losing. Then, I’ll step in and kick the shit out of the Chuckie and Goldshit. But, it looks like Braden is winning.” All of a sudden, Mark exclaims, “well, that didn’t exactly go as planned.” As Braden steps back, the spectator group watches as a pack of three dogs attack Goldstein and Chuckie. Not wanting to be part of a dog fight, Braden casually walks across the street.

Seeing Braden approach, Eddie yells out, “it looks like you won, bro!” Not caring that Braden won the fight, Mr. Crum exclaims, “someone! Do something!” Mr. Zunde asks, “what would you like us to do?” Mr. Crum yells out, “somebody, call the dog catcher!” Mr. Zunde tells the tribe, “will one of you please go inside and have the secretary call animal control and the paramedics.” Johnson replies, “sure. I’ll do that.” Johnson jogs back to the school, clearly giving everyone the impression that he could run a lot faster than he is.

Seeing that Goldstein and Chuckie are no match for the dogs, Mr. Zunde walks across the street and, blowing his whistle, quickly gets the dogs attention. Mr. Zunde blows his whistle a second time, and points down the road to the direction from which the dogs came. Obeying Mr. Zunde, the three dogs take a graceful jog down the street wagging their tails, perhaps thinking to themselves that they were glad they could help out Braden.

Mr. Crum angrily asks Mr. Zunde, “how come you didn’t stop the dogs before?” Mr. Zunde replies, “shut up, Crum. Why don’t you go across the street and see how the two

students are?" Mr. Crum hastily replies, "I was just going to do that!" Eddie comments with the highly sarcastic, "waiting." Mr. Crum walks across the street, where he will be more interested in finding out why Braden supposedly started a fight as opposed to the condition of Goldstein and Chuckie.

As Mr. Crum walks through the patch of Poison Ivy and attends to the injured parties, Mr. Zunde asks Braden, "what exactly happened?" Braden explains, "they came out from behind the bushes. Then, they told me that they were gonna kick my ass. So, I let them take me across the street. I didn't even get started on kicking their asses! Those dogs stepped in and kicked their flimsy asses for me!" Mr. Zunde replies, "dogs sense fear. They knew whose aid to come to and who to go after." Eddie comments, "it looks like the dogs are smarter than the Chuckie and Goldshit."

Mr. Zunde tells the group, "well, Mr. Crum seems to have this under control. It looks like it's time to go home." As the group heads back toward the school, Mr. Zunde informs the group, "don't be too surprised if Mr. Crum calls you to his office tomorrow. But, there's nothing he can do about it. All of this happened off school grounds." Mark replies, "we'll be waiting." Mr. Zunde and the tribe head home for the day, leaving Mr. Crum to clean up the mess.

Oddly, for the rest of the semester, neither Braden nor the rest of the tribe get called to Mr. Crum's office. Chuckie and Goldstein, all mangled up from the dogfight, are absent from school for a few days. And, Mr. Zunde and Mr. Frazier are quite happy not to deal with an irate Mr. Crum right before Christmas break.

One of the ways Mr. Crum disrupts the athletic programs is to carefully time his disciplinary action to coincide with tryouts, meets, and divisional competitions. The issue at the end of last semester between Braden and his two adversaries, Chuckie and Goldstein, is no different. On the first day back from Christmas break, during second period, the announcement is made over the loudspeaker, "will Axel Braden, Edward Bogenskaya, Mark Svoboda, Gary

Mitchell, Eric Johnson, Robert Bradshaw, Charles Black, and Andrew Goldstein please report to room 103.”

In the gym, Mr. Frazier asks Mr. Zunde, “do you know what this is all about?” Mr. Zunde replies, “I suspect it’s about the fight between Braden and those two clowns at the end of last semester. I’m going to see what Crum is up to.” Mr. Frazier replies, “track tryouts begin tomorrow. We can’t afford to have those guys getting suspended.” Mr. Zunde tells Mr. Frazier, “Crum’s timing certainly is impeccable.” Mr. Frazier replies, “I can’t argue with that.”

Mr. Zunde and Mr. Frazier arrive at room 103, seeing Braden and the tribe comfortably seated in the choice seats near the window. Sitting far away, at the other side of the room, is Chuckie and Goldstein, who dare not infringe upon the tribe’s territory.

Not seeing that Mr. Crum has arrived yet, Mr. Zunde asks, “okay. Who here kept a library book checked out over Christmas break?” Braden replies, “it couldn’t have been those two asses on the other side of the room. Their flimsy asses can’t read.” Goldstein yells back to Braden, “hey! Shut your ass.” Braden laughs, and replies, “what’s your fat ass gonna do about it, anyway?” Goldstein yells back, “I’m gonna kick your ass. Yeah. You just wait. Yeah, yeah.” Braden laughs and replies, “I’ll just sic my three guard dogs on your fat asses again.”

Mr. Crum briskly walks into the room, exclaiming, “that’s enough! Everyone, quiet down! I’m running this meeting!” As expected, three voices coming from the window seats reply, “waiting.” Mr. Zunde replies to the tribe’s comments, telling Mr. Crum, “so am I. What is this all about?” Mr. Crum tells Mr. Zunde, “I’m running this meeting, not you!” Mr. Zunde replies, “don’t let me stop you. Go ahead. Get started.” Quietly taking note of Braden’s statement regarding dogs, Mr. Crum smiles, knowing he now has more evidence stacked upon the sham evidence he already has.

Mr. Crum tells Mr. Zunde and Mr. Frazier, “this has nothing to do with athletics. So, just why are you two

here?" Mr. Zunde replies, "for the same reason we're always here. There are six athletes seated in this classroom. Track tryouts begin tomorrow, so we're making sure you don't suspend any of them, not to mention the free entertainment." Mr. Crum smugly informs Mr. Zunde, "fine. But, remember. I'm running this meeting." Mr. Zunde replies, "don't let me stop you. Go for it."

Johnson asks Mr. Crum, "why are we here, and not in your office?" Before Mr. Crum can answer, Braden replies, "because he ain't got his piece of shit desk that Eddie's father busted up fixed yet." Offering his opinion, Mitchell replies, "he's just afraid a fight will break out in his office, and there's no emergency exit." Johnson tells Mitchell, "it's six of us against two half asses. So that would make it six against one. We won." Shuffling a few papers, Mr. Crum tries to ignore the tribe's commentary, but it is clear that he is getting hot under the collar.

Opening the meeting, Mr. Crum orates, "a very serious incident occurred at the end of last semester after school." Interrupting Mr. Crum, Mark asks, "why am I here?" Mr. Crum yells back at Mark, "please don't interrupt me again!" Mr. Crum then continues, "as I was saying, at the end of last semester a very serious incident occurred after school. It is my understanding that Axel Braden dragged Charles Black and Andrew Goldstein across the street and started a fight. I called this meeting to get to the bottom of it. I want to know exactly what happened."

Braden interrupts, "they're full of shit. They dragged my ass across the street, and said they were gonna kick my ass." Addressing Braden, Mr. Crum sarcastically tells him, "since you want to talk, why don't you go ahead and tell me what happened?" Braden replies, "I just told you what happened. They dragged my ass across the street, and said they were gonna kick my ass. So, I let them take me across the street. Then, I was gonna kick their fat asses, but a dog pack stepped in and kicked their asses for me." Repeating what Braden said, Mr. Crum eloquently says, "a dog pack stepped in and kicked their asses for you." Mark tells Mr. Crum, "you shouldn't be using profanity in school." Mr. Crum exclaims, "that's enough! I'm running

this meeting, not you! And, I'm asking the questions here! I'll get to you in a moment!"

Mr. Crum again addresses Braden, telling him, "explain to me why you decided to get involved in a fight." Braden explains, "they wanted to kick my ass, so I wanted to see what they got. And, they ain't got much." Mr. Crum asks Braden, "would you care to explain to me how your three dogs managed to show up at school and join the fight?" Braden replies, "they ain't my dogs. I don't know why those dogs showed up. Maybe it was dinner time." Mr. Crum asks, "so, those three dogs are not your dogs?" Braden replies, "that's what I said. They ain't my dogs." Mr. Crum, trying not to show his anger, asks Braden, "do you really expect me to believe that those dogs were not yours?" Mark interrupts, telling Mr. Crum, "Braden doesn't have any dogs." Mr. Crum asks Mark, "and, just how would you know?" Mark replies, "because I've been over at his house a hundred times. He doesn't have any dogs." Mr. Zunde suggests to Mr. Crum, "I think we've established the fact that Axel Braden does not have a dog. If you still have your doubts, you can call Braden's parents. I'm sure they can clear up the issue for you. So, let's move on."

Not wanting an argument with Mr. Zunde at the moment, Mr. Crum turns to the rest of the tribe, and asks, "and, how were the rest of you involved?" Eddie replies, "we weren't. We just came by to watch, like everyone else in the school." Mr. Crum stupidly asks, "do you expect me to believe that?" Sounding a bit like Kathy, Eddie replies, "no. You only believe what you want to believe. So, no. I don't expect you to believe that, or anything else I say." Mr. Crum boldly informs Eddie, "if I hear any further remarks like that out of you, I'll suspend you immediately!" Eddie replies, "that's your whole goal here anyway. We all know that. In about fifteen minutes you're going to say, 'I've decided to suspend everyone in this room.' Then, Mr. Zunde is going to tell you that you're not, because the ass kicking was off school grounds."

As Mr. Crum continues to interrogate Eddie and the rest of the tribe, Mr. Zunde whispers to Mr. Frazier, "Eddie even has Crum figured out." Mr. Frazier whispers back, "I

see that. He's obviously trying to prevent these guys from trying out for the team." Mr. Zunde whispers to Mr. Frazier, "that's certainly a new angle. I wonder if Crum thinks that, if the guys can't attend tryouts, they can't be on the team." Mr. Frazier whispers back, "I'm not aware of any rule that prohibits me from putting them on the roster." Mr. Zunde whispers to Mr. Frazier, "that's because there is no such rule. And, Crum is going nowhere with this, and he knows it. I'd put an end to this right now, but he hasn't mentioned detention or suspension yet."

Getting nowhere with the tribe after ten more minutes of interrogation, Mr. Crum focuses his attention to Chuckie and Goldstein, asking, "Charles, please tell me what happened." Chuckie replies, "last month, Braden was telling everyone all day that he was going to take us across the street and beat us up. We were scared all day long. And, that's what he did." Goldstein adds, "yeah, yeah. I heard it. That big guy over there was telling everyone that he was going to kick our ass after school. Yeah. I heard it."

Mr. Zunde interrupts, and asks Goldstein, "may I ask if you heard that you were going to be involved in a fight, why you didn't bring it to the administration's attention before hand?" Mr. Crum dare not question Mr. Zunde's motive for asking such a question, for it is the next logical question in the sequence. Goldstein replies, "I really didn't think he was going to do it. Yeah, yeah. That's it. Me and Charles didn't really believe him. Yeah." Braden laughs, exclaiming, "that ain't what happened. Ask anybody in the school!"

Mr. Crum paces the floor, not knowing how to proceed. Drawing no definitive conclusions, Mr. Crum announces, "I don't know what happened out there, but I do know this. Axel Braden was involved in a fight with Charles Black and Andrew Goldstein at the end of last semester. I also suspect that the others in this room were somehow involved. So, I am going to suspend Axel Braden for a period of one week. Charles Black, Andrew Goldstein, and everyone else in this room will get one-week of detention, starting tomorrow."

Braden asks Mr. Crum, "why do I get suspension and those two assholes get detention?" Mr. Crum replies, "because, Axel, it is clear that you instigated the fight." Braden replies, "that's a bunch of bullshit! Ask anybody in the school! And, I'm gonna tell your fat ass this! If you suspend my ass, next time, I'm gonna drag their flimsy asses so far off school grounds ain't no one gonna hear them scream for help! You might not never find them again!" It is clear to everyone in the room that Braden is now beyond upset, and very angry.

Mr. Zunde steps in, informing Mr. Crum, "Crum, you are not suspending anyone unless it's Charles Black or Andrew Goldstein. If you had done your homework, you would have found out, just as Mr. Frazier and I found out, that Charles Black and Andrew Goldstein were boasting the entire day of the upcoming fight and how they were going to kick Braden's ass. In case you hadn't noticed, half the students in the school showed up to watch the fight, including a few teachers. Many of the students even missed their busses to see the entertainment. I'm surprised the news never made it to your office. And, not to mention, the incident occurred off school grounds, so it was completely out of your jurisdiction." Mr. Crum replies, "nevertheless, Mr. Zunde, the incident began on school grounds." Mr. Zunde replies, "while I understand that, Mr. Crum, I witnessed the entire incident. What I saw was that Andrew Goldstein and Charles Black initiated the fight." Mr. Crum asks, "then, why didn't you stop it?" Mr. Zunde replies, "it was out of my jurisdiction, just like it is out of yours. If the fight were on school grounds during school hours, I might have taken action."

Pacing the floor, Mr. Crum exclaims, "nevertheless, Mr. Zunde, there was a fight, and something has to be done about it!" Mr. Zunde replies, "I completely agree. There were over a hundred witnesses to the altercation. Perhaps you should call the police department and have them begin an investigation. I'm sure they can call all the students and teachers who witnessed the incident to the auditorium and get their statements." Mr. Crum replies, "I don't think we have to go to that extreme!" Mr. Zunde boldly informs

Mr. Crum, “then, you’re done here. You have no case, and you know it. So, send everyone back to class.”

Realizing that he truly has no case, Mr. Crum decrees, “I am not done with my investigation. I am still going to get to the bottom of this. This was just a preliminary meeting to discover what exactly happened. For now, everyone can go back to class. But, I have my eyes on every single one of you.” Mark asks, “if this was a preliminary investigation, then why were you going to send me to detention?” Mr. Crum replies, “I’ve had enough out of you, already.” Mark asks, “does that mean I can leave now?” Mr. Crum brashly replies, “yes! Get out of here. Get back to class.” Johnson asks Mr. Crum, “where’s our late passes?” Mr. Crum angrily replies, “stop by the office and pick them up.” The tribe gets up and walks out, heading back to class.

On the way back to the gym, Mr. Zunde tells Mr. Frazier, “I don’t know exactly what he thought he was doing back there, but he’s obviously after everyone this year.” Mr. Frazier replies, “I see that. This is going to be a really rough season.” Mr. Zunde responds, “this is the second time those two clowns have been after our guys. Something’s up.” Mr. Frazier replies, “hopefully, this is the end of it for a while.” Neither Mr. Frazier nor Mr. Zunde believes this is the end of the trouble for this year, but they are nevertheless hopeful.