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Scott Markewits said, "Shane showed us that there are few limits to what you can imagine and do on skis, and he always did it with a smirk, reminding us with his humor that above all skiing is fun and should not be taken seriously." Shane's death impacted the whole ski community but his legacy will live on. There are many heroes around the world. In the ski world, Shane McConkey is one of the ultimate heroes. Shane McConkey has a unique outlook on life, a huge sense of humor, and a whole lot of talent.

Shane McConkey made every day count like he was going to die tomorrow. Shane said "If you don't do it, you will be one year older when you do." He lived his life everyday with that quote. "Shane had packed 10 lifetimes into a short brilliant one," Scott Gaffney says. Many people watch Shane McConkey fly off thousand foot cliffs on skis, jump off buildings, ski down huge peaks on water skis, and soar through the air in a wing suit, and think he's crazy! But Shane had passion in what he did and nothing could stop him from doing it. Not even the thought of dying. He risked his life every day, but it was his way to show the world anything is possible if you put your soul into it. Shane McConkey said, "I have had 6 season-ending injuries over the last 10 years, people always ask me, is it worth it, getting hurt that much? The answer is yes, I would do it all over and have 6 more season-ending injuries over the next 10 years in order to keep doing what we do, there's nothing better than sliding down snow and flying through the air." "Shane's positive persona was as unbreakable as it was infectious"-Scott Gaffney. He

would never come away from a crash cursing at the world or smashing his poles. He was always stoked to ski and made the best of everything.

Shane McConkey always won people over his personality. Whether he was moonwalking on snowblades as saucer boy, slashing off limbs in the lift maze, hucking naked spread eagles off 40' cliffs, or rapping the whitest of white lyrics atop his Subaru (Matchstick Productions).

Whoever spent one minute with him would walk away with a story. For over 15 years Shane and Saucer Boy performed for movie audiences, trade shows, magazines, and newspapers. Saucer Boy was his goofy character with an 80s one piece, climbing ropes, carabineers, snow blades, bike glasses, a harness, a saucer, and always a bottle of Jack Daniels. Shane McConkey was not an act. On a regular basis Shane McConkey would hang up the phone mid-sentence, sneak rocks into another's pack prior to a hike, or secretly tie other skiers skis to a rope just as patrollers were about to open an untouched goldmine of powder. Shane was really just a teenager wrapped in a 39 year old body.

Shane was the greatest all around skier ever. He tried about every type of skiing and always came out on top. He competed in skier cross against the world's best and won, won pro mogul tours, was the king of free skiing and big mountain, was a decent snowboarder, won the first ever snowblade Chinese downhill, shredded big mountain on snowblades, took first in numerous pond skimming events, invented terrain park tricks, and could backflip a mono ski! According to JT Holmes "Shane came out on top, when it came to actually living while alive, he had already won." In the rare instance Shane tumbled, he'd typically laugh it off, say, "I suck," and head right back up and stomp something never done before (Matchstick Productions). Shane McConkey revolutionized skiing! "Shane watched a friend water skiing and stared from the back of the boat at the water ski slicing through the WATER, and he had an epiphany: "Powder is

more like water, than it is like snow!" He mounted 2 water skis with ski bindings, went powder skiing, discovered the easiest turns he had ever made, and then talked K2 into producing rockered skis. With the release of the Pontoon in 2006, K2 made Shane's vision of the perfect ski a reality," said JT Holmes. Shane McConkey also coined the term "Freeskiing". "I preached long and hard to everyone that this new movement in skiing we were all part of should be called freeskiing and not extreme skiing. Extreme skiing is a specific type of skiing and only one part of what we were doing. The term was not accurate. What we were doing was free form skiing, free of rules and most any kind of boundaries. Whether it was steep, extreme descents or new freestyle what we were doing was freeskiing, free to ski our own style on our own terms," Shane McConkey once explained.

Shane McConkey has many legacies. Many people think it's his rocker technology for a new powder experience, others feel it was his gift of humor, his inspiration, and some think it was his perception on life. No one is wrong; he impacted all of our lives in many different ways. Shane McConkey made us say "sick" and "oh my god" over and over. He made our skin tingle when we watched him throw his hands in the air or fist pump because for a moment we felt we were witnessing pure exhilaration (Scott Gaffney). Scott Gaffney says, "I like to think that if we were all told we had 24 hours to live, in an effort to get just a taste of that absolute euphoria, a great percentage of us would want to rush out to do the kinds of things Shane did on a daily basis. He was probably the most influential freeskiier in history, and definitely the most beloved. The death of him shook the world. Even the people who didn't know them had felt they had lost a true friend.

Shane died on March 26, 2009 in the Dolomite Mountains of Italy. He and JT Holmes were doing a segment for Matchsticks movie "In Deep". Atop of a 2000-foot cliff, both had their

skis, parachutes, and wing suit. Filled with adrenaline Shane McConkey glides off first. Rotating once then twice, finding his skies failed to release. Valuable seconds whisked away as he tried to manually deploy his tangled skies. There were no seconds left, he impacted the snow and died instantly. The day after Shane McConkey's death someone stomped out R.I.P. Shane in a bowl in Whistler on a powder day. Ski areas all over the world renamed runs in memory of Shane McConkey. Skiers ran racecourses on pontoons. Saucer Boys suddenly flooded ski areas. Two guys' hucked naked spread eagles off Squaw's Palisades like Shane had done so many years before. People went skiing for Shane McConkey going a little harder and going a little bigger than they normally would, inspired by a man who gave and taught us so much (Matchstick Productions)! R.I.P Shane McConkey.

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### What Makes a Hero?

Super Bowl XLV was well underway. Quarterback Tom Brady who only six weeks ago was the back-up quarterback for the Patriots was now leading them to their first super bowl in franchise history. Obviously the patriots were the underdogs but Brady would never look at it that way, he would always play with a chip in his shoulder. He showed great poise as he led his team down the field to set up a potential game winning field goal. Sure enough he got the victory, and out of the shadow raised another hero in sports.

While Sports are full of many great heroes, Tom Brady far exceeds them all simply because he is hard working, a leader, and a winner. He may not be the typical superhero who wears a cape and mask but he sure does everything else that superheroes do.

Working hard is something that anyone can learn to do, to a certain extent; it takes a lot of dedication and motivation to do so and it is fair to say that Tom Brady has mastered this. According to Charles P. Peirce, "Tom was never born with great talents; he would always have to earn it through hard work and dedication" (3). Many athletes and many superheroes are already born with their athletic abilities or their superpowers, but not Tom Brady, no sir, he had to work for and earn every bit of greatness that he is today. Tom is one of those amazing people who no one would have ever thought of him to be great, he was the only person that knew his potential, and it was his destiny. "Still today he is the first person to arrive at the facility [of the New England Patriots] and is the last to leave", says Coach Bill Belichick (1). Brady is always

willing to sacrifice anything in order to give his team an advantage to win on Sundays, even if that means studying film until 2:00 a.m. the night before the game.

Leadership is something that Tom Brady seemed to be born with, or he at least acquired it at a young age. His leadership may very well be his most important superpower because not only does it make him better, it makes his teammates better as well. According to Peter King, "Tom is the ultimate teammate on and off the field; he is the perfect family man, player and teammate. Tom builds relationships and camaraderie with his teammates that are simply unbreakable, and will last forever" (5). Tom Brady is truly a super hero because he will put others before himself without a slight hesitation; this is why his name will be remembered forever. Leading is far from easy, especially at this level of play. In my opinion Tom's leadership is what really separates him from the others.

Competition is what makes superheroes what they are. If they had no competition (or someone to fight against) then the concept of a hero would be pointless. Being competitive is what makes Tom Brady such a lethal weapon in the eyes of many. His competitiveness alone may not be what makes him such a great superhero but the outcome of what his competitiveness brings to him is why he is the all-time greatest because Tom Brady knows how to win! According to Austin Griggs, "Tom is the definition of a winner, he is one of only three quarterbacks in NFL history to win three super bowls in four years, he also holds the record for most touchdowns thrown in a single season as well as the only quarterback to go 16-0 in the regular season" (2). Superheroes always win, in fact losing isn't even a term they are familiar with and that's why Brady is considered a hero.

Brady is always fighting against evil, evidentially every Sunday. The minute he slaps on his shoulder pads and helmet and laces up those cleats, everyone knows we're in for a fight. You may ask how is Tom Brady an NFL quarterback, a hero? The definition of a hero according to Dictionary.com is, 1. A man of distinguished courage or ability, admired for his brave deeds and noble qualities. 2. A person who, in the opinion of others, has heroic qualities or has performed a heroic act and is regarded as a model. He is a hero because he saves us men (and occasionally women as well) through his *heroic qualities* from being bored out of our minds with nothing to do on Sundays. He gives us something to look forward to on Monday and Thursday nights. He is the master of entertainment and although technically he may not have a cape or mask or be immortal, he will always be remembered as a hero.

When the word Hero is brought to mind, Tom Brady is the first and only thing I can think of. He has all the traits required to be a hero, and more. He is and always will be the greatest hero of all time.



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### Dante

Greek gods, superheroes, magical beings, they all have a big part in life for the people in their world. Saving the humans and even sometimes having to save the whole world comes along with being a hero. Though there happen to be many heroes in anime, video games, and manga, Dante from *Devil May Cry* is the greatest because he saves the world from demons and death gods, he has a dark background but still manages to make smartass jokes, and he has his deadly weapons and his looks.

Saving the world from Demons and Shinigamis? Dante specializes in paranormal cases, preferably the ones that involve demons and Shinigamis because of his hideous background involving them. Little do they know how many dark doers run around in their everyday life, but thankfully Dante knows how to protect those helpless people from them. However, sometimes the types of death gods become hard even for someone as strong and skilled as Dante, and he needs help from power crystals. Not only is Dante skilled, he also enjoys fighting, as we can infer from when he says, "Though a fight every now and then does make life a little interesting, don't ya think?" (Yanagihara). Dante is immensely skilled and strong at defeating Shinigamis and Demons because he has trained years and he has special weapons from the underworld.

Everyone has a dark background, whether they admit it or not. Dante's deep and depressing background is a little hard to understand at first, considering the mixture of humans and demons. He is the second son of the demon Sparda and the human Eva, with a young twin brother named Vergil. Sparda was the demon knight that sided with the humans and drove thousands of demons back into their place, all to protect his love. Sparda died when Dante and Vergil had their eighth birthday, leaving Eva alone to take care of them. After Dante was eight years old, his whole family was attacked by demons. The mother ended up being killed and Dante and Vergil were separated; however, Dante was sure that his twin brother was dead. Eventually he found his brother, and they managed to become involved in a war of the underworld. His brother stabbed out Dante's eye, causing him to be blind in that eye which is why he covers it with his hair. During the whole series of the anime, manga, and video game he always states "Devil's never cry." He says this because when he cries, it reminds him he is human and that humans are sometimes "More dangerous than demons," (Itagaki) and that he will still suffer and not be perfect like other demons. A few years after all this happened and he came to this realization, he met a man named Enzo and ended up creating a demon and Shinigami hunting business under the fake name Anthony Redgrave. After that, and throughout his life, Dante is attacked by Hell Jailers and other demons sent from the Shinigami leader himself. However, he has grown a smartass sense of humor that makes his enemies hate him and his coworkers laugh. "Aheeeey... Do your job," He says as he is sitting on his couch eating pizza instead of paperwork (Suguro). Also, when fighting the frozen demon dogs he fights so much, he constantly makes jokes like "Freeze! You want crushed ice with that?" Before using Ebony and Ivory to make them literally crushed ice (Suguro, Itagaki, Yanagihara). Dante's love life has

never been completely active, considering the fact that his only love tried to murder him and eat his body, in which she was unsuccessful.

Dante's weapon and attire is all slightly shocking. This tall, muscular white haired man with deep ocean blue eyes is often seen wearing a deep red, almost burgundy colored trench coat. He inherits his white hair from his demon father and his mortal brother. His hair is simply brushed down in his face, his bangs parted in front of his right eye, from him not wanting it to be seen, and the blindness noticed. Dante always has at least three weapons on him at all times, and this includes Melee weapons and Firearms. Ebony and Ivory is Dante's firearm of choice, these weapons are twin handguns that never need reloading. "Meet my friends, Ivory and Ebony" (Suguro, Itagaki, Yanagihara) is a constant phrase he says. His Melee weapon he prefers to use is a giant demon sword named "Rebellion." Rebellion is a sword given to him by his father, which was later passed on to Vergil in which he blinded Dante in one eye with. He keeps his swords and guns and death scythes that he takes from his dead enemies and honorable reapers and puts them on display in his shop, showing the demons and Shinigamis what they are messing with. Dante has perfect agility and is a terrific fighter from being half demon and half mortal. Most of the demons resent him as he is a demon hunter, which means his demons friends are no longer on his side as well.

Dante's background is dark and somewhat depressing, but also has a bunch of meaning to it. He loves his brother even after all of the pain and suffering that has happened and his whole family is always in his heart. He has his smart remarks and his protecting of earth and humans, going on epic journeys constantly to make sure that the Earth is perfectly safe from the demons that murdered his family. He is the greatest hero because of his dark past, his successful business of demon hunting, and his weapons and looks.

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