Bad Grammar Zebra:
The Origin Story

By Ethan Tomlinson
Now Wallace O’Kelly was the brightest student in his fifth grade English class at Bob Huggins Elementary. He disliked all grammatical errors but burned with anger whenever anyone would mess up the apostrophe in his last name. Wallace was a scrawny lad with no basketball abilities, which prevented him from becoming very popular at his school. Also, his chocolate hair had an odd white streak running down the left side of his head, which did nothing to help his popularity status.
One day, his math teacher made a grammatical error in a story problem on a test. In the next class, his Spanish teacher incorrectly conjugated a verb.

In the last class, his physical education teacher told him, “Wallace, go put some wind in the football. There’s no wind in it.” Wallace scowled as he silently followed the miserable instructions.
On the bus ride home that day, classmates’ grammatical errors abounded. George told the story about how his mom dragged him to “get his picture tooken.” Then Greg bragged, “Me and my friend went to the movies last night.”

That was the last straw.

Wallace exploded. “It’s my friend and I went to the movies.”

Greg said, “You went to the movies too?”

Wallace stomped off the bus at his stop and stormed into the house. He locked himself in his room, without greeting his parents.
Wallace sat on the floor of his room plotting his revenge on the grammatical ineptitude of the world. He looked through his old costume box, uncovering the perfect thing—a zebra mask resembling his own hair. He found a green silken cape, which he fastened beneath the neck of the zebra mask.

Then he sat down to compose his theme song for his new secret identity: The Bad Grammar Zebra.

The lyrics read:

Bad grammar, bad grammar, bad grammar alert!
You have bad grammar and it's going to hurt.
Your grammar's so bad, you'll go to jail.
Since you don't have a job,
You can't pay your bail.
So never have grammar so stale!
With lyrics in hand, Wallace leaped from his bedroom window, and slid down the gutter, where his cape briefly got caught. He tumbled down into the bushes, but then emerged with a new energy no one had ever seen before.

A fire burned bright in his eyes as his passion for grammar expanded.
As the sun began to sink below the horizon, he climbed the fire escape of the nearest skyscraper. Pulling a bullhorn from under his cape, he proclaimed his lyrics above the city of Morgantown.

Since then, every single night, he has denounced all who oppose his scholarly grammar by reciting the Grammar Taps over the horizon. He hopes to instill fear in those who make a mockery of the English language with their bad grammar. Thus, this is the origin of the Bad Grammar Zebra.