

THE UNHAPPY HOUR

By

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FADE IN:

INT. TREASURE CHEST GAMING CENTER - DAY

DAN WILSON -- late 40's but whose face appears ten years older, thinning dark hair, slender build except for a slight paunch, and an expression of tired resignation -- pushes a large, wheeled refuse container (*Toter*) through clouds of CARCINOGENIC SMOKE.

Bodies are plopped in front of about every other slot machine. The next chair on Dan's left is taken up by a YOUNG MALE GAMBLER. The guy stares at his cell phone while shaking his head in amazement. He looks up from phone.

YOUNG MALE GAMBLER
Hey, you gotta check this out.

DAN
What's going on?

YOUNG MALE GAMBLER
NFL.com just reported the entire
Washington Redskins offensive line
is being held hostage.

Dan stops pushing his *Toter*. He leans over to see what's on the cellphone screen.

DAN
You're shitting me.

YOUNG MALE GAMBLER
I shit you not, cleaner man. Some
weirdo calling himself the 'Doctor
of Dismay' claims responsibility
for the kidnapping.

DAN
That is crazy.

YOUNG MALE GAMBLER
And check out this video from
YouTube.

INSERT C.U. OF CELLPHONE SCREEN

Five really large men (20's) clad in only jock straps sit in metal cages suspended from steel cables. CAMERA PANS down below the cages. A swimming pool with three feet of water is filled with snapping alligators.

DOCTOR OF DISMAY (O.S.)
Gators have not eaten for a week.
I'm surprised, pleasantly
surprised, that they aren't
attacking each other. But if I
don't get what I want, the
alligators will have one big-ass
meal.

BACK TO SCENE

DAN
What is wrong with people?

YOUNG MALE GAMBLER
Either he's a really loyal,
desperate fan or he's got serious
jing riding on the Cowboys.

DAN
Or both.

Guy nods.

YOUNG MALE GAMBLER
Good point, cleaner man.

Dan resumes his trudge down the aisle.

Two machines farther down on his right, five empty beer bottles and three empty cocktail glasses surround an overflowing ashtray. The slot machine's user, a BLONDE WOMAN (55) with a Botox-enhanced face and cigarette-induced slender frame, is halfway through another heater.

Wilson swoops in, corrals the beer empties, tosses them into a recycling bucket hanging from the Toter, comes back for the ashtray and dumps it into the yawning chasm of the Toter. He quickly wipes out the ashtray's bottom. He grabs the cocktail glasses and puts them in a container marked BAR. He sets the ashtray back down next to the slot machine.

Dan pushes onward. He empties three more ashtrays and scoops up assorted collections of refuse and tosses in Toter. At the end of the aisle, he turns hard right.

Dan uses ID badge to gain access into a janitor's closet.

INT. CASINO - JANITOR'S CLOSET - CONTINUOUS

He closes the door behind him. Dan reaches for the nearest shelf, moves two bottles of cleaner and extracts a pint of 100 proof vodka.

He grabs a clear plastic casino cup and pours in three fingers of the heady liquid. Before he can drink it, his cellphone DINGS at him. Dan sees there's a new text message:

INSERT C.U. OF CELLPHONE SCREEN

A bunch of us r hitting happy hour at Wild Bill's Saloon. U in, dude?

BACK TO SCENE

Dan LAUGHS, gulps down half of the vodka and sets the cup down. He texts back:

INSERT C.U. OF CELL PHONE SCREEN

Hell yeah. I'll be there but sans the bells. It makes me look like a girly man.

BACK TO SCENE

He picks up the cup and grimaces down the rest of the vodka.

Dan moves two cases of cleaning supplies to the side. Taped on the wall are two yellowed newspaper clippings. One headline reads "Mysterious, Super Fast Man Saves Despondent Woman From Jumping Off Roof of Skyscraper". Underneath the headline is a PHOTOGRAPH of a towering office building.

Next to those clippings is another one with the headline, "Superhumanly Fast Man Frees Hostages Held By Satanic Cult".

DAN
(To self)
Ah, the good old days.

He regards the empty glass.

DAN (CONT'D)
(To self)
Oh what the hell, hop on board.
The ship of fools is setting sail.

He pours another three fingers of vodka into the glass.

INT. WILD BILL'S SALOON - NIGHT

Dan sits at a booth with THREE MALES (40'S). Three empty beer pitchers and a plate piled with gnawed on chicken bones are strewn about the table. The four men wear boozy grins of numbness.

DAN

Shit, all that beer is making me feel like bloated. We gotta switch to the hard stuff, boys.

A pear-shaped man with two days of graying stubble and black framed glasses -- TOMMY FANNING -- WAVES toward the bar at their server.

TOMMY

Hey, we're like Jesus on the cross. We're dying over here. Can you help a brother out, actually four brothers, out?

DAN

Gentlemen, don't look now but I do believe the ship of fools is on the high seas.

Dan WHOOPS it up. He drains rest of the beer from his mug.

DAN (CONT'D)

(To Waitress)

Beer mistress, I need multiple shots of tequila and I need them now.

INT. POLICE STATION HOLDING CELL - NIGHT

The cell is unoccupied one second before the door opens. Dan Wilson is DUMPED unceremoniously into the cell. He STUMBLES, nearly falls but manages to stay upright.

DAN (SLURRING)

Hey, I'm an American citizen. I got rights too, you know? Just because I'm not wearing a fucking badge and carrying a firearm doesn't mean I don't deserve to be treated with respect.

Officer answers by walking away, the SOUND of the boots hitting the concrete floor ECHOING, taunting Dan with their freedom.

DAN (CONT'D)

Hey, moron police dude, back in the day, my crime-fighting abilities would put your puny policing skills to shame. I was really something to behold, let me tell you.

The officer's footfalls are no longer audible. Dan plops onto the metal cot. He leans back against the cell block wall.

DAN (CONT'D)
(To Self)
Life bites.

INT. POSH MANSION - DAY

BOBBY BELTON -- brooding, intense, muscular, late 30's -- sits in a comfortable chair in the house's spacious library. He reads Dante's "Inferno". A bottle of top-shelf vodka and a tumbler with ice sit on a small table adjacent to the chair.

A tricolored Rat Terrier named ERNEST HEMINGWAY snoozes serenely in front of a blazing fireplace. Bobby's butler -- REGINALD (REGGIE) MCFARLAND, late 20's, clean shaven, sweater vest over short-sleeve shirt, designer stone-washed jeans -- BURSTS into the room.

REGGIE
I'm sorry to bother you but there is a situation that begs your attention.

BOBBY
What is going on?

REGGIE
The governor of Minnesota is being held captive at Undersea World at the Mall of America. An extremely disgruntled ex-employee is threatening to toss his old boss into the shark tank.

BOBBY
That qualifies as a situation requiring my attention. Thanks, Reggie.

Reggie nods emphatically at the bottle of vodka.

REGGIE
I would be more than happy to drive you to the crime scene, sir.

BOBBY
That won't be necessary, Reggie. I will handle things from here.

REGGIE

I hate to be an alarmist. However,
I feel compelled to remind you of
your father's will.

Bobby peers at him.

BOBBY

What about it?

REGGIE

It clearly states that you, as the
eldest son, are to inherit this
home, all its contents, the
property upon which it stands and
seventy-five percent of all bank
account balances as of the time of
death.

Bobby polishes off the rest of his drink.

BOBBY

Yes, I'm well aware of that. What's
your point?

REGGIE

And you do recall the provision in
the will about relinquishing your
inheritance if within three years
after the date of your father's
death, there is verifiable evidence
of a failure to address your
addiction to alcohol?

Bobby WAVES OFF the idea.

BOBBY

I've had only a couple, maybe
three, drinks. I'm fine to drive.

REGGIE

Really? You're sure?

BOBBY

Yes. Now if you'll excuse me, I
have a governor to save from the
sharks.

EXT. DRIVEWAY OUTSIDE MANSION - DAY

Garage door opens. A black, customized *Ferrari* shoots out with Bobby, who wears MIDNIGHT BLUE and BLACK BODY ARMOR and face shield with a demonic face covering every square inch of the surface except for the eyes, is now VENGEANCE, sitting behind the wheel. Car veers off course and flattens the neighbor's mailbox. The NEIGHBOR -- 38, busty blonde, Nike work-out suit -- emerges shaking her fist at him.

NEIGHBOR (Yelling)
That's the third mailbox you've
ruined this year.

INTERCUT EXT. STREETS OF BLOOMINGTON/INT. BOBBY'S CAR

The Ferrari, tinted windows, sleek, license plate reading "nomercy", oozing speed and money, flies through Twin Cities suburbia.

INT. BOBBY'S CAR

Vengeance sees a T-intersection fifty yards away. He hits the brakes and swings the car into the other lane. Speedometer drops from 60 MPH to 50 MPH, then 40 MPH, finally 35 MPH.

Vengeance cranks the wheel hard right. The car SLIDES into the other lane as Bobby makes the turn. Car BOUNCES OFF the curb. Bobby's in the wrong lane for several seconds but eventually gets back on the right side of the road.

VENGEANCE
God, I hate that turn.

EXT. CITY STREETS OF BLOOMINGTON

The Ferrari speeds along the street, a golf course on the left, sprawling houses on the right. The car crosses the center line several times. A MALE JOGGER (27) and leashed BROWN LAB plod along the left-hand lane. The black Ferrari strays across the center line and is headed for the man and dog. The jogger yanks on the leash while taking a hard left to dodge the car.

The Ferrari whizzes past them, a mere two feet separating them from the speeding car. Vengeance slows the car down. He makes a right turn onto a major thoroughfare but SKIDS over into the other lane for several beats before correcting course.

A Bloomington Police Department squad car cruises along the same street going in the opposite direction. After the out-of-control Ferrari zips past the squad car, it brakes hard and does a U-TURN. The LIGHTS on top of the squad begin FLASHING.

INT. BOBBY'S CAR

Vengeance glances in his rear-view mirror. He sees the flashing lights.

VENGEANCE

Fuuuuuck.

INT. POLICE STATION HOLDING CELL - DAY

The door to Dan's cell opens. OFFICER NELSON -- muscular white male with an attitude -- strides into view.

OFFICER NELSON

Rise and shine, my friend.

Dan manages to open one eye.

DAN

What's the occasion?

OFFICER NELSON

You have a visitor.

DAN

Other than your tough-guy self, I don't see any visitor.

OFFICER NELSON

He's in a conference room down the hall, funny guy.

Nelson grabs Dan's left wrist and YANKS him to his feet. The officer pulls the groggy prisoner along as they leave the holding cell.

DAN

Easy there, big fella. That's my drinking hand.

INT. POLICE STATION CONFERENCE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Officer Nelson drags Dan into a small, undecorated room. AGENT JESUS DURAN -- 33, navy blue pinstripe suit and white tie with black question marks all over it -- sits in one of the two chairs that stand on opposing sides of a small rectangle of wood.

He NODS a thank you at the officer while indicating for Dan to have a seat.

AGENT JESUS

Mr. Wilson, it's a pleasure to meet you.

DAN

Same here, Mr., ah...

AGENT JESUS

Agent Jesus Duran of the National Security Agency, better known as the NSA. And although my name is really pronounced Hay-zeus, given your situation you can call me Jesus.

Dan laughs derisively.

DAN

And why, pray tell, is that?

AGENT JESUS

Because I am going to, with your faith in me, save your sorry ass.

DAN

Ah, well, all right then.

AGENT JESUS

Now get the hell up and I'll show you to my *Lexus*.

Dan, looking confused but grateful, slowly rises out of his chair.

EXT. POLICE STATION PARKING LOT - DAY

Police car pulls into the nearest open space to the main entrance. A dejected Vengeance sits in the back seat of the squad car. Just as the cop car comes to a stop, a black Lexus pulls alongside the squad car.

INT. TOP SECRET AREA OF NSA - NIGHT

Agent Jesus, now wearing his government-issue NSA ID badge, PACES in front of Bobby and Dan as they sit at a small circular table. He stops pacing.

AGENT JESUS

Gentlemen, you two were, and if you don't cooperate with me, are still in deep shit. However, if we work together, if you decide you're ready to get your shit together, that deep shit of the past will be flushed away.

DAN

You're full of shit analogies, aren't you?

Agent Jesus smiles.

DAN (CONT'D)

Not that I want to look a gift horse in the mouth but I am curious. Why would the government rescue me from multiple-DWI hell? What's in it for the NSA?

AGENT JESUS

Mr. Wilson, Dan, or shall I call you LaserFast Guy?

DAN

Oh my god, no one's called me LaserFast Guy for, ah, really, really long time.

AGENT JESUS

We here at the NSA know it's been a long time since you've done anything remotely heroic.

Agent Jesus pulls out an iPhone, touches the screen several times and runs a finger across the screen.

AGENT JESUS (CONT'D)

Twenty years, four months, five days and

(checking his watch)

Twenty-two hours, eleven minutes and a couple odd seconds.

DAN

Holy shit, you guys keep detailed records.

AGENT JESUS

You should read the dossier we have on you two. Anyway, the US of A needs all the heroes we can get. Over sixty four percent of known superheroes have gotten out of the crime-fighting business in the last three years.

DAN

No way! That's almost two thirds.

AGENT JESUS

That's right. They're writing books or acting as consultants for movies about their superhero days, or have decided it's become too damn dangerous. Obviously it's always been a dangerous gig but with far flung terrorist cells and advanced technology, it's become more volatile than ever.

DAN

So they're either greedy or scared. Or both.

AGENT JESUS

Basically yes. So if you're a little rusty in defeating villains and henchmen, and if the tights are a little snug around the waist, don't sweat it.

DAN

Hey, I never did the tights thing. I wore body armor, zupas and a mask.

AGENT JESUS

Sure, sure, you're old school. Macho tough guy,
(grabs his crotch)
Big set of cajones, I get it.

BOBBY

Can we cut out all the bull shit and get to the point?

AGENT JESUS

Bobby, Mr. Belton, aka. Vengeance --

Dan bolts up from his chair.

DAN

You're Vengeance?

Bobby nods 'yes'.

BOBBY

Yeah. So what?

DAN

Ah, well, never mind. It's nothing. It's just, you know, the Internet story about you foiling a caper, the suspected criminal goes missing from the crime scene. He surfaces later tied up in a back alley behind the cop shop with both legs and both arms broken and the suspect gagged and bound so he can't scream in excruciating pain he had to have been feeling --

BOBBY

Did the media also mention the 'King of Losers' was a pedophile and abused all four of his young, underage daughters?

DAN

That I didn't hear about.

BOBBY

Well he did. Officially, should any law enforcement or judicial official ask, I don't know anything about the alleged abduction and return of said scumbag to the authorities.

AGENT JESUS

I can assure you we're not here to investigate that particular incident, Mr. Vengeance, ah, I mean Belton.

BOBBY

Good. Whatever noble, vigilante soul captured the guy, should have been smart and really done the right thing.

DAN

Which is what, exactly?

BOBBY

I won't get into the specifics. I will just say the scum-sucking sicko pervert shouldn't have been seen again. Ever. At least not breathing.

Dan shakes his head in disagreement. He sits down.

AGENT JESUS

Alright, let's get back on track here.

BOBBY

Great idea.

AGENT JESUS

Gentlemen, I realize you're in different stages of your superhero careers.

(Looks at Dan)

You're approaching middle-age, you're a little paunchy, and you haven't been in the business for over two decades --

DAN

Hey man, you're as young as you feel, this T-shirt is the wrong size, it just makes me look a little chubby.

AGENT JESUS

Points taken.

The NSA agent looks at Bobby.

AGENT JESUS (CONT'D)

And you, although physically you're in your prime, your personal wealth has enabled you to buy the best and most cutting-edge crime-fighting tools in the world and practice makes perfect, you have all the signs of a lifelong alcoholic --

BOBBY (IN DENIAL)

I'm no god damn alcoholic.

AGENT JESUS

Who'd inevitably kill himself and others, one way or the other, with booze.

DAN

Plus the guy has serious anger management issues.

Bobby's right hand SHOOTs OUT and wraps around Dan's wrist. He YANKS hard.

BOBBY

You're in a room with a guy for ten minutes and you got a diagnosis already? Spare me your armchair analysis, Dr. Fucking Freud.

He loosens his grip and SHOVES Bobby's wrist toward its owner. Dan MASSAGES his returned wrist.

DAN

You don't need a decade's worth of schooling and years on the couch to see this guy's a couple bubbles off.

AGENT JESUS

My point is although you're different, you both have something, namely the capacity to be a superhero, which the federal government wants very badly. In exchange for becoming recovering alcoholics and getting your sobriety back, the NSA is saving you from sure jail time.

BOBBY

Another armchair psychiatrist. Listen pal, I'm not an alcoholic. I work hard, I train hard, and I play hard. It's a lifestyle choice. I don't need to explain to anybody, especially the government.

DAN

Yeah, and it's been so long since I've been in the superhero game, as you pointed out, and I'm too old for this shit, as you also pointed out --

AGENT JESUS

Both of you shut the hell up. For the next two minutes, or however long it takes me to finish what I'm going to say, my voice will be the only one heard in this room. If either one of you says a word, the deal's off and you'll be back in jail before it gets dark outside. Understood?

Both men nod OK.

AGENT JESUS (CONT'D)

Mr. Tough and Strong Silent Type here, Vengeance, I.E. Bobby Belton, you wanted me to get to the point. So I got to the point, right?

Bobby nods 'yes'.

AGENT JESUS (CONT'D)

But you guys don't seem to be going into this with the right attitude.

Agent Jesus strides over to the table where Bobby and Dan sit. He bends over and sticks both palms on the table. He STARES first at Bobby and then at Dan.

AGENT JESUS (CONT'D)

I don't personally care if you jokers get your act together or not. But this project is bigger than a bunch of individuals. It's about making our society better and safer. Specifically, we help with a new supper villain named the Doctor of Dismay. If you're not interested, fine. Your sorry superhero asses are going to prison.

Agent Jesus straightens up.

AGENT JESUS (CONT'D)

So what's it going to be, gentlemen? Are you with us or against us?

Bobby STARES at the floor. Dan looks away from the NSA agent, then at the floor.

DAN

Oh fuck it, I'm sick of waking up wondering if I did something really stupid or worse the night before. Count me in.

Jesus nods a 'welcome to the right side'. He turns to Bobby. Bobby shrugs.

BOBBY

It's a no brainer. I don't want to go to jail and lose my vast inheritance. So there's only one choice. Sign me up for rehab NSA style.

Jesus points first at Dan and then at Bobby.

AGENT JESUS

Your asses are mine for the foreseeable future. Get used to being around the Jesus.

INT. SPRAWLING MANSION IN COUNTRY - NIGHT

In front of the three-story country dream house is a sign: FOR SALE, FORECLOSED PROPERTY, REDUCED SALE PRICE - CALL 888-234-5678.

INT. SPRAWLING MANSION IN COUNTRY - CONTINUOUS

The inside of the home seems huge because there's no furniture in any of the eight bedrooms, bar-sized living room, library, or rec room. The only pieces of furniture are a coffee-stained metal desk and two folding chairs in the kitchen. A LAPTOP COMPUTER sits on the edge of the table.

Sitting in front of the glowing computer screen is the DOCTOR OF DISMAY -- his face is a hideous landscape of out-of-control acne and puss-filled boils on the verge of exploding. A transparent space-suit-like configuration covers his entire body. The only openings are over his ears and mouth. His legs are metallic prosthetics. Scenes from "The Inferno" and hell itself are portrayed in sweeping, detailed tattoos across both the front and back of his torso.

Sitting in the other chair is his right-hand man, FRANK OLIVER -- 33, too modest and self-assuming to realize how overqualified he is for the job, steel-rim glasses, *Metallica* tee-shirt.

Frank is focused on counting the neatly bundled stacks of money in front of him. He enters another number into his cellphone calculator.

FRANK

Okay, it's all here. Including the other four duffel bags of bills, we've got three million dollars.

DOCTOR OF DISMAY

And it's all unmarked?

FRANK

Yes. Our money-laundering guy confirmed it.

DOCTOR OF DISMAY

Sweet.

FRANK

So when are you going to release the last hostage?

DOCTOR OF DISMAY

You mean the all pro center, Christian Jones? You know, I've been thinking about that. It's possible the Cowboys and Redskins could play each other again this season.

FRANK

You mean in the playoffs?

DOCTOR OF DISMAY

Exactly.

FRANK

So what?

DOCTOR OF DISMAY

So I'm thinking in order to improve the chances of Dallas winning the Super Bowl, and me winning my two-million-dollar bet on them winning the Super Bowl, we need to get rid of Washington's best offensive lineman.

FRANK

Get rid of as in...

The Doctor of Dismay nods, his carnival-show face beaming with malevolent glee.

DOCTOR OF DISMAY

Feed his big old black ass, and the rest of his body, to the gators.

He jumps up.

DOCTOR OF DISMAY (CONT'D)

I need to replenish the supply of psychedelic mushrooms coursing through my system. Where are you growing them?

FRANK

In the top shelf of the hall closet.

DOCTOR OF DISMAY

All right, while I re-shroom up, you find the finances file on this computer. Put in the three million we just got and do that quarterly projection thing that you do.

He glides out of the room. Frank moves several stacks of money and sets the computer in front of him. He finds file, enters the three million into the INCOME section.

The Doctor returns. He grimaces as he chews the mushrooms.

DOCTOR OF DISMAY (CONT'D)

God, these are disgusting. But hell, it's like sushi but a helluva lot more fun.

FRANK

I have the report ready.

DOCTOR OF DISMAY

Let me see it.

Frank sets the computer back in front of the Doctor. He swallows the shrooms.

DOCTOR OF DISMAY (CONT'D)

This is a positive number, right?

FRANK

Yes. After you pay off the old gambling debts and past-due henchmen payroll plus independent contractors like the exotic animals salesman, you're going to over five-hundred thousand in the black.

DOCTOR OF DISMAY

Holy fucking shit, that rocks. All right, that clinches it. Let's go out to the pool to visit our guest.

INT. POOL HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Doctor of Dismay and Frank stare up the lone occupied metal cage suspended above the deep end of the pool. A makeshift brick wall divides the deep and shallow parts. The shallow side is empty.

A *Skyjack* stands next to the edge of the pool. The MAN IN THE CAGE is CHRISTIAN JONES -- 28, over six feet and three-hundred pounds, wears only jock strap, muscles and sweat all over body, anger and fear radiates from him.

CHRISTIAN

When are you going to let me go?
I'm ready to get back in the game.

Doctor climbs onto *Skyjack* and presses the UP button. The car slowly moves upward.

DOCTOR OF DISMAY

You're not getting back in the game of football. But you will shortly be thrown into the Game of Life and Death. The stakes are raised in this game. I hope, for your sake, you're up to it.

CHRISTIAN

You're not really going to drop me into that pool of alligators.

DOCTOR OF DISMAY

Actually I am.

Doctor hits the STOP button. He's now even with the suspended cage.

DOCTOR OF DISMAY (CONT'D)

Are you a Christian man? I mean I know you're a man named Christian but are you a Christian man?

CHRISTIAN

Yeah. Why?

DOCTOR OF DISMAY

Well then, in the bible, Daniel survived amongst all those lions.
(MORE)

DOCTOR OF DISMAY (CONT'D)

Maybe you can so likewise with the alligators. But if you can't, would you do me a favor?

CHRISTIAN

What?

DOCTOR OF DISMAY

Send me a text message describing what the afterlife is like. I've always been curious. Not curious enough to kill myself to find out but you know, curious nonetheless.

CHRISTIAN

You are a sick sonofabitch.

The Doctor of Dismay waggles his finger at him.

DOCTOR OF DISMAY

Ah, ah, ah, good Christians don't use foul language no matter how bad and hopeless their situation is. Didn't you learn anything in Sunday school?

CHRISTIAN

Please, man, you don't have to do this.

Doctor reaches over to unlock the cage. He sticks key into the slot.

DOCTOR OF DISMAY

No, I don't have to. That's the beauty of America. Freedom of choice.

He looks down at Frank.

DOCTOR OF DISMAY (CONT'D)

Ready with the webcam?

FRANK

Yep.

Doctor reaches over and grabs the key.

DOCTOR OF DISMAY

Any last words?

CHRISTIAN

May God forgive your unforgivable, wretched self.

DOCTOR OF DISMAY

My feelings exactly. As my dear old sister once said to me at the end of a phone conversation, bye bye.

He turns key. The cage doors swings open. Christian doesn't both to grab the sides of the cage. His giant, nearly naked frame drops onto the back of a sleeping alligator. It's awake and coming for his face in an instant. The other five ravenous predators attack Christian.

Two latch onto his right arm, one chomps on his left arm, the one attacking his face chews on his left cheek, one rips into his stomach and the last tears into his right thigh.

Screams mix with desperate please to God.

DOCTOR OF DISMAY (CONT'D)

You are getting all this on video, right?

FRANK

You bet.

Christian somehow frees his right arm and pushes the gator away from his face. A quarter of his face is in the gator's jaws. Alligator bites off three fingers. Christian doesn't have time to panic over the loss of digits as another killer aquatic rips off his left arm from the elbow down.

Christian falls into the shallow water, now a crimson color. Body parts and black patches of skin litter fly everywhere.

The screams give way to the sounds of chewing, ripping and swallowing.

From above, the Doctor stares at the fresh corpse.

DOCTOR OF DISMAY

Remember what I said about texting from the afterlife. I'm really curious.

He looks over at Frank.

DOCTOR OF DISMAY (CONT'D)

And cut! That's a wrap, Frank.

FRANK

Okay.

DOCTOR OF DISMAY

I want it posted to that site you sent up.

Frank takes the webcam away from his face.

FRANK

You are fucked dot com, right?

The Doctor giggles madly, his acne-strewn face overtaken by the psychedelic mushrooms.

DOCTOR OF DISMAY

That's a great name for a site.
Sometimes I kill me. Actually,
sometimes I kill other people.

He lowers the Skyjack. Doctor steps out of the box.

DOCTOR OF DISMAY (CONT'D)

Frank, I'm going for a walk in the
moonlit countryside so I can
contemplate the deeper realities of
life.

FRANK

Uh, okay.

DOCTOR OF DISMAY

Hold all my calls.

FRANK

You have your own phone.

Doctor grabs cellphone from his pocket and throws it at Frank. Frank snares it out of the air.

DOCTOR OF DISMAY

Now you can hold my calls.

He cracks up, then strolls toward the door leading into the back yard.

INT. BRAVE HOUSE PARKING LOT - DAY

Agent Jesus, Bobby and Dan climb out of the black Lexus. They stand thirty yards from the front entrance.

The two-story brick building, christened Brave House by the NSA, is missing bricks in several places. Paint on the window sills has peeled so much that there's more unpainted than painted wood. The Dumpster to the left of the building overflows with refuse. A YELLOWED fridge leans against the Dumpster.

DAN

Nice.

BOBBY

This is where we're supposed to give up booze and turn our lives around?

AGENT JESUS

Don't let appearances deceive you. The most important part of rehab isn't the physical structure. It's the staff support, an organized, life-affirming, and scientific recovery plan and most of all, your own attitudes.

Bobby ROLLS his eyes.

DAN

Yeah, I suppose you're right.

Agent Jesus strides toward the entrance. The two sometimes superheroes hesitate. The NSA agent turns around.

AGENT JESUS

Come on in. The recovery waters are warm.

Bobby and Dan forge ahead.

EXT. YMCA PARKING LOT - DAY

A white SUV comes to a stop. Agent Jesus, the driver, jumps out. AGENT SMITH -- 28, muscular male, chiseled features, black hair with a smattering of gray and wearing dark colors and a NSA baseball cap-- climbs out of the back.

Dan, Bobby, and four other recovering superheroes, all clad in sweats or similar clothing, file out of the vehicle. With Agent Jesus leading the way and Agent Smith bringing up the rear, they plod into the YMCA.

INT. YMCA - CONTINUOUS

Jesus leads them into a gym. A high school game of pickup is played on half of the basketball court. The other half is unused. Agent Jesus turns to address the guys.

AGENT JESUS

Alright, I know it may be awhile since some of you have done something like this.

(MORE)

AGENT JESUS (CONT'D)

But one of the cornerstones of recovery is increasing your energy level by adopting a healthier lifestyle. And you might even have some fun if you're not careful.

AGENT SMITH

We have the gym for ninety minutes. So let's move.

INT. YMCA GYM - DAY

The six recovering superheroes sprint across the wooden basketball court. Dan catches a bounce pass from TRAVIS LINDEMAN, whose alter ego is ULTRA-ACROBATIC MAN -- 27, slender, lithe, stringy-muscled man. Dan takes the ball, glances at his two teammates. They're both covered. He drives into the lane toward the hoop. A step after reaching the paint, Dan starts his patented, twisting 180-switch-the-ball-to-the-left-hand move.

A fit of COUGHING aborts the maneuver and brings Dan to his knees.

DAN

(Cont'd) (Between Coughs)
Shit.

More COUGHING. Dan shakes his head.

DAN (CONT'D)

(To Self)

Fuck.

While still on his knees, Dan rides out the coughing fit. The other five men stare at him with concerned expressions. Dan HOLDS up his right hand.

DAN (CONT'D)

I'm okay here. No problem. I just haven't played ball for awhile. Actually I very, very long while.

He stands up, takes a step and is seized by another fit of COUGHING. More cursing ensues.

INT. BRAVE HOUSE - NIGHT

Dan and COUNSELOR BOB, The senior chemical-dependency counselor -- 58, tan, stocky, deep-set wrinkles and sparkling emerald eyes -- sit in the counselor's office. A GOLD CROSS hangs from a silver chain around his neck.

COUNSELOR BOB

As admirable a goal and improvement to your health as quitting smoking is, I must stress how difficult it can be for a person to give up more than one addiction at a time.

DAN

Yeah, I have heard that said before. But as LaserFast Guy, I can't smoke anymore because it leaves me with no lung stamina. And sprinting laser-fast for God knows how long, if I don't have good lung capacity, I'm screwed with a capitol F. The talisman provides some extra stamina but not that much.

Counselor Bob nods thoughtfully.

COUNSELOR BOB

Yes, I see your point. Although I'm more versed in alcohol and drug addictions, I do know something about the tobacco arena too.

DAN

I was hoping you'd say that.

COUNSELOR BOB

You begin with the baseline, that is, the number of cigarettes you currently smoke per day, and reduce that by one each day until you are down to one cigarette.

DAN

What about the cravings?

COUNSELOR BOB

That's where a smoking-cessation device comes in. I cannot recommend a particular brand at this point. Tell you what, I will conduct some research and give you a recommendation in a couple of days.

DAN

Hunky flipping dory. This could really suck for awhile. I can't drink and I can't smoke. It's enough to drive a man to drink and smoke.

Counselor Bob barely cracks a smile.

COUNSELOR BOB
I would advise you not to do that.

DAN
Have you ever smoked?

COUNSELOR BOB
Heavens no. It is a vulgar, hideous habit.

DAN
Yeah well so is drinking, which is why I'll be happy to give it up.

COUNSELOR BOB
Precisely. Good luck with everything, Mr. Wilson. I will let you know what I discover about the smoking-cessation products.

Dan flashes a THUMBS UP as he stands. He strides toward the door. Dan turns around just before putting his hand on the doorknob. Counselor Bob reaches for his coffee mug.

DAN
No smoking or drinking. Man, the next thing you know I'll have to give up masturbating.

Counselor Bob SPITS UP his decaf. He fumbles around in search of something to clean up the spilled coffee.

He GLARES at Dan.

COUNSELOR BOB
Good night, Mr. Wilson. And don't ever do that to me again.

Still smirking, Dan turns and leaves the office.

INT. BRAVE HOUSE - NIGHT

Dan enters the lounge area. One half of the left-hand wall is taken up by reading materials: books, magazines and both major Twin Cities daily newspapers. A flat screen TV stands next to the reading material. Three vending machines are spread across the back wall. Six tables are scattered throughout the space.

Bobby sits alone at the most distant table. A plastic cup filled with coffee and a vending machine pastry sit in front of him. His FOREST-GREEN polo shirt has very short sleeves. The tip of a DRAGON'S TAIL TATTOO unfurls on his right arm.

DAN

So what do you think of Brave House?

BOBBY

It's a step above prison, I guess.

DAN

I'd say more than one step.

BOBBY

All right, a step and a half.

DAN

Mind if I join you?

BOBBY

Have a seat.

Dan sits down at Bobby's table. Bobby PEERS at Dan.

DAN

What's wrong? Do I have food crumbs on my face?

BOBBY

No. I'm trying to figure out if we've met somewhere before.

DAN

Have you figured out the answer?

Bobby gives Dan another squinty-eyed look.

BOBBY

Now I remember. Your appearance was a lot different back then. We met by chance in a Daytona Beach bar a little over twenty-two years ago.

DAN

It's not ringing a bell yet. Of course, that's a long time and a helluva lot of quadruple-strength cocktails with beer chasers ago.

BOBBY

I was there on spring break with three of my college buddies.

(MORE)

BOBBY (CONT'D)

On that particular day, they went to Disney World or Busch Gardens, some shit like that. But I was so hung over I told them I'd pass.

Bobby dips the Danish in his coffee and takes a bite.

BOBBY (CONT'D)

Got up a little after noon. Hanging out in the hotel room all by myself didn't have much appeal. So I hit the hotel bar. There were plenty of open bar stools so --

Dan SNAPS his fingers. He POINTS at Bobby.

DAN

And you took the bar stool two down from me. I was pounding down a bar-pour tequila with Corona chasers and shooting the shit with the bartender.

BOBBY

And smoking like a chimney.

DAN

Damn right. No self-respecting nicotine lover goes on a public binge without his cigs.

BOBBY

I wouldn't know.

DAN

Yeah, you weren't shy about introducing yourself.

BOBBY

That was odd. I guess I was feeling a little lonely and deserted by my friends, even though it was me who turned them down about going with them to Disney World or wherever. I normally don't strike up conversations with total strangers.

Dan hops up and makes for the vending machine.

DAN

And I asked you what a handsome young guy like you was doing all alone in a bar or some shit like that. We talked about sports, women and the biggest binges we'd ever been on.

BOBBY

Eventually we got around to discussing what I wanted to do for a living.

Dan returns to the table with a soda.

DAN

You told me you were majoring in criminal justice but were having second thoughts about being a cop or highway patrolman like your brother.

BOBBY

Yeah and you suggested I consider a position outside the system. Your term was *official vigilante do-gooder with special powers*.

DAN

Official vigilante do-gooder with special powers -- man, I was in rare form that day.

BOBBY

And of course, at first I had no idea what that meant. But you explained the concept with flair and slurred speech.

DAN

Yeah, and you obviously took it to heart because you became Vengeance.

Dan sips from the can of soda. He shakes his head in curiosity, frowning while setting the can down.

DAN (CONT'D)

But why so dark?

Bobby looks away, STARES out the middle window at the moonless night. Slowly and with much resistance, like the Wheels of Justice, Bobby returns his gaze to Dan.

BOBBY

Daily sessions at the tanning booth.

DAN

Very funny. You know what I mean. You can be a freelance crime fighter without maiming or killing the bad guys.

BOBBY

You do it your way, I'll do it my way.

INT. BRAVE HOUSE - DAY

In a meeting room, Bobby, Dan, Travis (Ultra-Acrobatic Man), and three other superheroes -- SUPER EQUALITY WOMAN (Barbara Smith), 42, curly brown hair, fit but lacking serious female curves, NATURE CHILD (Tom Feinstein), 26, intense violet eyes, Mr Universe-like build, and THE MASTER ILLUSIONIST (Nate Stevenson), 32, six feet tall, handsome, chiseled features, profuse, 1980's Rod Stewart-like hair -- discuss what led them to the path of addiction. While Bobby and Dan are their normal selves, the others have assumed their alter egos.

The Master Illusionist slowly, without anyone noticing, gradually CHANGES his hair to strawberry blonde, then to a full-fledged auburn.

His eyes, sparkling emerald green, change to forest green, then olive and finally to a shade halfway between olive and black.

THE MASTER ILLUSIONIST

I suppose the ultimate irony is that I was deceived by the illusion that in order to be happy, I had to be buzzed off my ass on speed or meth. I was fooling myself instead of sticking to fooling others to bring more justice to the world.

Counselor Bob nods knowingly and smiles at him.

COUNSELOR BOB

Indeed, another word for fooling oneself into believing one does not have a problem with alcohol or substances is pride.

(MORE)

COUNSELOR BOB (CONT'D)

And of the Seven Deadly Sins, an alcoholic's or drug addict's mostly deadly is pride.

BOBBY

You got that right. My wife Anne was a big-time alcoholic. She committed a slow suicide via alcohol. She never admitted she had a problem.

He STARES down at the floor, tears almost forming. Bobby shakes his head in a hopeless back and forth motion.

BOBBY (CONT'D)

Even after five trips to the hospital for pancreatitis and another five-month stay for third-degree burns all over her body after she got smashed at a party and fell into the bonfire, she wouldn't admit she was an alcoholic.

The Master Illusionist now sports steel-rim glasses and a David Niven-like mustache. Ultra-Acrobatic Man has migrated from his chair and now does STRETCHING EXERCISES in a corner of the room. Nature Child has MORPHED into a wolverine-shark-human hybrid. Super Equality Woman wears a T-shirt that reads, "Don't Ever Forget Helen Reddy".

COUNSELOR BOB

Did you express to your wife how much her drinking concerned you? I mean I assume her drinking worried you.

Bobby stares forlornly into his lap, shaking his head while barely holding back tears.

BOBBY

Sure I was concerned. I loved her. But I couldn't preach to her about addressing her drinking problem. It would have been too hypocritical because I was seriously boozing it up too.

COUNSELOR BOB

Sure. It sounds like a classic case of spouses enabling each other.

(MORE)

COUNSELOR BOB (CONT'D)

She saw you drinking so that gave her the green light to keep drinking copious amounts of whatever it was she drank. And the other way around. If your wife could drink everyday, why couldn't you?

Bobby nods 'yes'. Dan, who sits immediately to Bobby's right, speaks up.

DAN

Hey, you can't blame yourself for what happened to your wife. Anne had to want to quit. Even if you did the intervention deal and dragged her kicking and screaming into detox and rehab, the second she was released, her first stop would have been a liquor store.

Bobby whips around to face Dan.

BOBBY

What in the hell do you know about her? You never met her. You don't know what kind of psychological and emotional hell she went through.

DAN

Hey, I'm sorry, man, but you need to start holding her accountable for her actions. She was a big girl. You can't blame yourself for the rest of your life if a depressed, alcoholic adult, even one you loved dearly, wasn't willing to try to get help. If you don't let go of the guilt, you'll no doubt relapse. Then boom, alcohol ruins your life too. Score: Booze 2, you and the wife 0.

Bobby shoots to his feet. He GRABS Dan by the T-shirt and yanks him to his feet. The two stand nose to nose.

BOBBY

Don't you ever talk like that again about my sweet Anne. You do and you will have a seriously larger problem than drinking.

Bobby uses his bulging arms to drive Dan backwards. Dan TOPPLES onto his ass halfway across the room.

Bobby strides toward him. The other four superheroes and Counselor Bob step in.

COUNSELOR BOB

Mr. Belton, Bobby, Vengeance, you will scale back your anger and resume acting in a civil, peaceful manner. Otherwise I will call security and write up this act of aggression in my daily report.

Vengeance/Bobby GLARES at the counselor, his entire body taunt, the legion of muscles itching to launch into action. He darts right. Nature Child's wolverine talon wraps around Bobby's left wrist.

A GROWL from Nature Child, then a SNARL from Bobby. The latter shoves the powerful talon away. Nature Child is back and right on top of Bobby despite the other three superheroes trying to keep him back.

Nature Child's mouth is that of a shark -- impossibly wide and tall and full of larger and more teeth than any other predator on the planet.

NATURE CHILD

Take another step, tough guy, and I'll be chowing down on one or maybe both your hands. Or hell, maybe just one complete limb.

BOBBY

Funny, I don't hear any theme music.

COUNSELOR BOB

That is quite enough. Break it up now or security will be here within two minutes.

Bobby, whose demeanor is closer to Vengeance, sizes up the crowd between himself and Dan. He turns around and returns to his seat.

INT. BRAVE HOUSE - DAY

Dan KNOCKS on Counselor Bob's open office door. Bob WAVES him in.

COUNSELOR BOB

Daniel, Mr. Wilson, LaserFast Guy, welcome. Please, have a seat.

Dan takes the chair in front of the CD-counselor's desk. Counselor Bob reaches over and slowly picks up a plastic bag with CORNER DRUG - WE CARE AS MUCH ABOUT YOUR HEALTH AS YOU DO on it. He DANGLES it between the two of them.

COUNSELOR BOB (CONT'D)

I've done the research I promised. I was going to give you the results and leave it up to you to actually purchase the product --

DAN (Interrupting)

But you were just so darned excited about me getting the nicotine monkey off my back that you bought it for me.

COUNSELOR BOB

Sure, step on my dramatic announcement. Ruin a poor senior chemical dependency counselor's only chance at excitement for the entire day.

DAN

Sorry.

COUNSELOR BOB

I was just kidding. I mean about ruining my only chance at excitement. I get excited about all kinds of things while doing my job.

DAN

I'm sure you do. Alright, hand them over.

Bob withdraws the bag.

COUNSELOR BOB

Not so fast, LaserFast Guy. I just want to remind you of the challenges of quitting multiple addictions simultaneously.

DAN

Hey, it doesn't count with quitting cigarettes because I'm not doing it cold turkey and I've got an artificial aid.

COUNSELOR BOB

Interesting line of reasoning.
Alright then, I have done my duty
with the warning and caveat about
quitting more than one addiction.

He hands the bag to Dan. Dan extracts the box from the bag.
He PEERS at the label.

DAN

Cigs-Be-Gone? I've never heard of
this brand. Are you sure this is
the best one?

COUNSELOR BOB

Yes. I have done the research and
conducted a thorough and meticulous
analysis. This is the stuff for
you.

DAN

I hope you're right.

COUNSELOR BOB

Just makes sure you read the
manual. It explains the system. It
is not simply a matter of popping a
piece of gum into your mouth and
throwing all your cigarettes away.

DAN

Oh really? Well, yeah, I guess that
would be too easy.

COUNSELOR BOB

Basically their system is what I
described in our first conversation
about you quitting smoking.
Combined with the gum, you slowly
cut back on the number of
cigarettes smoked each day.

Dan hops up, Cigs-Be-Gone in hand.

DAN

Thanks, big guy. If this works,
I'll come back and kiss you smack
dab on the lips.

Bob makes a face.

DAN (CONT'D)

Hey, at least I won't have
cigarette breath when I do it.

Dan makes for the door while pulling out the manual from the box.

INT. BRAVE HOUSE - NIGHT

Dan plops down on his bed. He grabs a remote, points it at the DVD player underneath a 32" HDTV. Both spring into life.

On the screen, a homemade video of Counselor Bob plays.

ON TV SCREEN

Counselor Bob is dressed in royal regalia, complete with a scepter and fake jewel-studded gold crown. He smiles big at the camera. Bob walks slowly closer, the big man growing even bigger on the screen.

BACK TO SCENE

Dan jumps off the bed and hustles across the room. He KNEELS on one knee in front of the big screen.

ON TV SCREEN

Counselor Bob dramatically extends the scepter toward the camera and by extension, toward Dan's left shoulder.

COUNSELOR BOB

Mr. Dan Wilson, also known as LaserFast Guy, it is my utmost privilege and honor to dub you Sir Used To Smoke A Lot.

BACK TO SCENE

DAN

A thousand thank yous to you and your royal court for bestowing this most coveted and prestigious honor upon me. I will do everything in my power to live up to my new title. Only one cancer-causing cigarette will be pressed to my lips during any 24 hour period.

ON TV SCREEN

Counselor Bob glances at his watch. He silently counts to three.

COUNSELOR BOB

Alright then, I trust you shall indeed live up to your new title.
(MORE)

COUNSELOR BOB (CONT'D)

Should you fail in your quest to reduce your smoking habit to one a day, the Cigarette Smoking Relapse Police Squad will seek you out, bring you in for confinement and do unbelievably unpleasant things to you.

Counselor Bob takes two steps back. He sets the scepter down on a nearby table. Counselor Bob STARES into the camera.

COUNSELOR BOB (CONT'D)

That is all. God's speed.

The TV screen goes black.

BACK TO SCENE

DAN

To you as well, your royal, ah, royalty.

Dan reaches over, extracts a *Camel Wide* from the pack, and brings it to his nose. He closes his eyes while sucking in the aroma.

DAN (CONT'D)

Ahhh, the sweet smell of addiction on the run.

He grabs a lighter, lights it and puts the flame across the *Camel Wide*.

INT. BRAVE HOUSE - DAY

Dan, Bobby and Travis (Ultra-Acrobatic Man) are in the computer area. The three superheroes scrunch together among five computer work stations.

Dan JUMPS up from his chair. The other two stare at him.

DAN

I found it and Lord help me, it's on e-fucking-Bay.

TRAVIS

What are you talking about?

DAN

The talisman. My talisman. I lost it in a poker game in, ah, hell, the late 1980's? It marked the end of my superhero days.

BOBBY

You lost the most important item a superhero can have in a poker game?

DAN

That's right. Hey, I had four Queens, four damned Queens. Everyone else folded except that bastard Murphy. He raised so I threw in my talisman.

BOBBY

What'd Murphy have?

DAN

Four fucking Kings. I've hated male royalty ever since.

Dan sits back down. He leans over to obtain a better view of the talisman's image on the screen.

DAN (CONT'D)

I lost it but now it's back within reach.

TRAVIS

What's the buyer asking for it?

DAN

That's the odd thing. Under the selling price, he's got interested parties must contact seller in person to negotiate price.

TRAVIS

That is weird. Where does this dude live?

DAN

Daytona Beach. Back in my old stomping, and drinking grounds.

BOBBY

Yeah well that leaves you out of luck. This is an inpatient alcohol and drug rehab program.

DAN

Yeah well I say rules are made to be bent and occasionally broken.

Bobby laughs.

BOBBY

What are you going to do, go AWOL to retrieve the talisman?

DAN

Hell no. Well not unless I absolutely have no other choice. First I use the old silver tongue to get what I want.

INT. BRAVE HOUSE CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Dan is back in Counselor Bob's office.

COUNSELOR BOB

Sure, with the proper supervision, I see no problem with that.

DAN

Come on, man. I mean Counselor and Vice Conquering Guru Bob. I have to get my talisman back. Without it --

COUNSELOR BOB (Interrupting)

I said fine, you can do it.

DAN

Oh. Ah, er, well, thank you very much. I was all jazzed up to unleash my silver tongue but you said yes. I was sure you wouldn't want me to leave Brave House until after I'd finished the thirty days.

COUNSELOR BOB

Listen, I realize that you need your talisman to regain your old form. The deal is you will have a NSA agent with you at all times. When you go to the bathroom, he goes with you. Got it?

DAN

Yes sir. Thank you, thank you, thank you.

Dan reaches over and hugs the big guy.

COUNSELOR BOB

Just don't try to kiss me.

EXT. DAYTONA BEACH STREET OUTSIDE STRIP CLUB - NIGHT

Agent Jesus and Dan, handcuffed together, stand on the sidewalk. Jesus studies the pink neon sign: JAKE'S GENTLEMEN'S CLUB - CENTER OF THE EXOTIC AND EROTIC DANCING UNIVERSE

DAN

Call me skeptical but I highly doubt their claim about being the center of exotic and erotic dancing is legitimate. I've been to some kick-ass clubs around this area. I mean back in the day.

AGENT JESUS

Sure, I understand. The past couple of decades you've been a regular beacon of moral integrity.

DAN

I'm sensing some sarcasm in that last statement.

AGENT JESUS

Yeah, maybe a little *more* than some. Be that as it may, we have arrived at the destination. I'm going to unlock these handcuffs in a moment.

DAN

Oh my God, really? I thought I was going to have to trot out my silver tongue and vast array of verbal persuasion skills.

AGENT JESUS

I work for the federal government but I'm not completely out of touch with how life really works. But if you try anything stupid like making a run for it or consuming alcohol, you'll be seriously sorry.

A TRIO OF MEN (early 20's), loud with booze and anticipation, almost run over them while rushing toward the strip club's entrance.

COLLEGE STUDENT #1

Hey, two guys handcuffed together. Kinky!

The other two LAUGH uproariously. They STAGGER up the steps and disappear into the guts of the club.

AGENT JESUS

Don't forget there is another NSA agent watching the rear entrance. I'll be outside watching the main entrance. If you fail to return in a timely fashion, I will come in and get your sorry ass.

DAN

Got it.

AGENT JESUS

If there is a complication, you remember what to do, correct?

DAN

I text you with the special cell phone you purchased just for this occasion, and which will be disposed of after I complete the purchase and return to your custody.

AGENT JESUS

You got it.

Agent Jesus unlocks the HANDCUFFS. Dan rubs his wrist. He walks up the stairs toward the main entrance.

AGENT JESUS (CONT'D)

Mr. Wilson, one more thing.

Dan stops and turns around.

DAN

Yes?

AGENT JESUS

Remember, Jesus sees everything.

DAN

Whatever.

He WHIRLS AROUND and takes the steps TWO AT A TIME.

INT. JAKE'S GENTLEMEN'S CLUB - CONTINUOUS

Dan is met at the door by MARK MURPHY -- 51, skinny but with beer belly, faded cutoffs, auburn hair liberally dotted with gray, cigarette dangling from mouth, and a T-shirt with sleeves cut off that reads LIFE'S A BEACH AND THEN YOU GET SCREWED OVER IN THE DIVORCE SETTLEMENT.

MURPHY

Holy shit, it is you. Saw e-mail was signed Dan Wilson.. Didn't think it was *thee* Dan Wilson from twenty damn years ago.

DAN

In the aging flesh. All right, how much do you want for the talisman?

MURPHY

Whoa, hold on, there, big guy. It ain't that simple. Yah see, oh hell, come on. We need somewhere more private. Follow me, old hoss.

He leads Dan past a bar with a glass wall behind it that displays over a hundred different kinds of liquor. A male barely of legal age with an earring in his left ear, wearing a bar-issued black T-shirt, pours a tall beer for a blonde waitress waiting at the bar.

Dan checks out the action on the stage a hundred yards to his right. Two young, stacked women, an Asian and African American, wear only napkin-sized sky blue thongs. The Asian rubs her crotch against the other stripper.

MURPHY (CONT'D)

Come on, killer. Ain't no time for ogling the ladies. We got a poker game to get to.

DAN

What are you talking about?

MURPHY

I'll explain in a minute. Just follow me.

Murphy leads him to a wooden door with a sign reading EMPLOYEES ONLY. A bouncer named GONZO -- 32, resembles a NBA center and NFL lineman hybrid -- stands next to the door. The giant pulls it open.

INT. JAKE'S GENTLEMEN'S CLUB POKER ROOM - CONTINUOUS

They're inside the room. Murphy turns to Gonzo.

MURPHY

Thanks. Make sure we're not disturbed for the next coupla hours. Your next paycheck depends on it.

GONZO

Yes sir, Mr. Murphy.

The room is a combination storeroom, office and employee break room. Cases of beer, liquor and wine take up the left side of the room. Two Coke machines and a vending machine with chips and candy bars surround a round table and four folding chairs in the middle section of the space.

On the right, a computer work station circa early 1990's sits in the midst of an explosion of paperwork on an olive metal desk. A dot-matrix printer is hooked up to the computer.

A Stephen Hawkins-thin man with a plastic green transparent visor reading SHOW ME WHAT YOU GOT -- DEALER DONNY -- practices a one-handed shuffle. He perks up when he sees Murphy and Dan.

MURPHY

This here is Donny. He's gonna be the house in a three-handed game of poker. Don't want to make it too easy on yah. Have a seat, big guy.

Dan frowns while shaking his head.

DAN

What's the deal? Why can't you just sell me the damn talisman?

MURPHY

Cause I'm torn about sellin' the damn thing. Over the years, it's brought me really good luck -- I met Wanda, the love of my life the day after I won it from you. But it's also brought me horrible luck too -- lightning striking a branch of a tree next to our home and the branch crashed through the window. It struck my beloved wife and left her in a coma.

DAN

Oh my Lord, that's terrible. What happened with your wife?

MURPHY

She lived but the blow to her head left her in a coma for three weeks. She came out of the coma but she don't remember me or any of our four beautiful children.

DAN

That is big-time sad.

MURPHY

There's more good and bad luck but I'll spare yah the gory details. The point is I've prayed and thought about what to do with the talisman for months. Finally decided that I'll let the gods of fate decide. If I beat you in a game of poker, that's God's way of telling me to keep the talisman. If I lose, He's tellin' me to get rid of the damn thing.

DAN

That sort of, kind of, makes sense.

.

Murphy lights up a cigarette as he takes the chair across the table from Dan. Murphy offers one to Dan. He gulps, grimaces and shakes his head. Murphy TILTS THE PACK at Dan.

DAN (CONT'D)

No thanks. I'm trying to quit.

MURPHY

Good for yah all. Well I'm sure you haven't given up drinking. Donny, get old Dan here whatever he wants.

DAN

Just a Diet Coke. Or no, make that an ice water.

MURPHY

What the hell is goin' on? Yah all buckin' for sainthood?

DAN

No, it's just that, well, ever since I lost that poker game, most of my life has been an alcohol-induced blur. The stuff I do remember, like DWI's, serving time in jail, falling down stairs and really hurting myself, and panicking because I was almost out of booze, are things I'd rather forget.

MURPHY

To each his own. Donny, I'll take the usual.

DONNY

Yes sir.

He hops up to fetch the drinks.

MURPHY

Well that's real commendable what yer doin' with quittin' the booze. I'm sure yer liver is happy about that. My own is probably gettin' ready to strangle me. But luckily livers don't have hands.

Dan chuckles. Donny hustles back. He sets a TUMBLER OF WHISKEY on the rocks in front of Murphy, an ICE WATER in front of Dan and a BOTTLE OF HEINEKEN for himself.

Murphy and Dan nod their thanks at Donny. Murphy sips the whiskey. He follows it up with a puff from his cigarette

Dan LICKS HIS LIPS as he watches Murphy take another puff from his heater and drink of whiskey.

DAN

Okay, let's set sail to this ship of fools.

Donny SHUFFLES THE CARDS. Dan subtly slips his phone out of his pocket. He types in a text message:

INSERT CLOSE UP OF CELL PHONE SCREEN

Seller won't sell talisman outright. He insists on playing game of poker. Winner gets talisman. Will take at least an hour for the game. Probably more.

BACK TO SCENE

Dan hits SEND. Donny deals the first hand.

Dan's phone DINGS.

INSERT CLOSE UP OF CELL PHONE SCREEN

I'll give you 75 minutes. If you're not in my visual range by then, I'll come inside to get you.

BACK TO SCENE

Dan finds the clock on the wall behind Murphy: it reads 7:37 p.m.

MONTAGE OF IMAGES FROM POKER GAME

A) Donny deals hand while Dan and Murphy sip their drinks.

B) Dan studies his cards intently then looks at the pile of chips in pot and sees raise.

C) Dan smirks while raking in pile of chips.

D) Murphy smiles as he pulls in a mound of chips.

E) Donny brings himself another beer and Murphy another whiskey.

F) Dan steps away from the boozy and smoky table to get another ice water.

G) Dan checks the clock: 8:02.

H) Murphy NODS at his whiskey and then nods at Dan.

I) Dan shakes his head; Dan checks clock: 8:27.

J) Dan and Murphy each PUSH chips into the center of the table several times.

K) Dan checks clock: 8:34.

BACK TO SCENE

MURPHY

I'm all in.

DAN

I still have almost a thousand left.

MURPHY

I can see that.

DAN
If you throw in the talisman, I'll
consider myself all in. Deal?

Murphy frowns as he sucks on another cigarette.

MURPHY
Deal.

DAN
Whaddya got?

Murphy drains the rest of his drink. He RUBS the face of his
heater in the ashtray. Murphy tries in vain to siphon more
happy juice from his glass.

Murphy sets the cocktail glass down. He peers at it for a
couple of seconds. He finally lays down his cards.

Four Jacks. Dan WHISTLES long and loud. He nods in apparent
admiration. Donny leans forward, his Heineken forgotten for
now.

DAN (CONT'D)
That's a really nice hand.

(Two beats)
But I like my hand even better.

He lays down four Queens.

MURPHY
Well I'll be damned. That's a
helluva hand. It's the same hand
you had when you lost the talisman.

DAN
What can I say? Consistency has its
rewards.

Dan checks the clock: 8:44.

DAN (CONT'D)
After I lost that first game to
you, my running joke was that I
hated male royalty. Now I don't
mind them so much.

MURPHY
Good for you all, And good for me
too.

(MORE)

MURPHY (CONT'D)

You winnin' was God's way of
tellin' me` that damn numbered
necklace has turned from a good-
luck charm into a cursed thing.

Dan reaches for the talisman.

DAN

Thanks for giving me the chance to
win this back.

Murphy grabs Dan's right wrist.

MURPHY

Not so fast, pardner. We're gonna
have us a drink to celebrate your
stirrin' victory.

DAN

Thanks but I've really got to go.

MURPHY

Don't be silly. There's always time
for a drink or two to celebrate
special moments like this. I won't
take no for answer

Dan grabs his glass of ice water.

DAN

Okay, I've got my drink right here.

Murphy turns to Donny.

MURPHY

Go get that special bottle of
tequila, the one that salesman
dropped off last week.

DONNY

I'm on it, boss.

Donny hustles over to the desk with the ancient computer on
it. He pulls out a bottle of *Zorro's Premium Reposado*. A
STYLIZED Z slashes across the front label. Donny brings it
over to the card table and sets it in front of Murphy.

Dan leans over, his GAZE squarely on the bottle of tequila.

MURPHY

And Donny, you can tell Gonzo he
can relax now. In fact, tell the
big guy to come on in. He can have
a shot too.

DONNY

Yes sir.

MURPHY

One more thing: we need three glasses with a few ice cubes in 'em. You're havin' a shot or two with us. Forget that damn beer. It's time for a real man's drink.

DONNY

Twisted my arm, boss.

Donny crosses the room, opens the door and disappears from view.

DAN

Really Murphy, this isn't necessary.

MURPHY

You're havin' a shot or two, maybe more, of the good stuff. You'll have to give up bein' a saint or Nobel Prize winner for a night. You beat me fair and square. Everybody in this room is gonna toast your success.

Donny returns to the room. Gonzo DUCKS DOWN to avoid hitting his head as he follows right behind Donny.

Clock behind Murphy reads 8:49. Dan quickly sends another text message.

INSERT C.U. OF CELL PHONE SCREEN

Good news: I won the talisman. Bad news: Murphy won't let me go before having at least one drink to celebrate my victory. Will leave as soon as I can.

BACK TO SCENE

Gonzo plops down immediately to Dan's right as Donny fills four glasses almost to the top with tequila.

DAN

Holy shit, that's like three shots worth!

MURPHY

That's all right. We got two bottles in reserve.

Dan looks around. Gonzo sees him looking around. Dan smiles at the giant. Gonzo flashes a mostly toothless smile back at Dan. His cell phone DINGS.

INSERT C.U. OF CELL PHONE SCREEN

You have until 9:02. If I don't see you by then, my partner and I are coming in.

BACK TO SCENE

Dan pockets cell phone.

MURPHY (CONT'D)

All right gentlemen, it's time for a toast. Grab your glasses.

They do.

MURPHY (CONT'D)

Here's to Dapper Dan here. God bless him for beatin' the pants off me in poker. May the curse on my family and myself be lifted with the passing of the talisman to my old friend.

The others, except Dan, drink up immediately. Dan pauses with his glass an inch from his lips. He smells the tequila, sighs, closes his eyes and tilts the glass back. He knocks off a fourth of the booze-filled glass.

DAN

Man, that is smooth. I'm used to the stuff that requires serious grimacing.

MURPHY

Hell old buddy, yah might as well follow that drink up with a smoke.

DAN

No thanks, I'll just enjoy the second-hand smoke.

MURPHY

Suit yourself.

To Gonzo)

Whaddyua think, big guy?

GONZO

This beats the hell out of the gut rot I usually drink. Could get used to this shit in a real hurry.

Clock reads 8:57. Dan knocks off the rest of the tequila. Murphy refills Dan's glass.

DAN

I really shouldn't. Oh hell, why not?

He nods at Murphy before taking another drink.

The door CRASHES open. The two young strippers seen earlier on stage stumble into the room. Both women have drunken smiles splayed across their faces.

Gonzo JUMPS up from his chair.

GONZO

All right girls, you gotta get out of here.

MURPHY

That's all right, Gonzo. Let 'em stay for a bit.

GONZO

Okay boss.

Murphy gets out of his chair. He walks toward the women.

MURPHY

Don't be shy, girls. Just make believe y'all are on stage. I'll make sure there's a bonus in your next paycheck.

The two young women STARE at each other. The Asian shrugs and then grabs the black woman by the hips. The African-American woman smiles hesitantly, then reaches around and grabs the Asian's ass cheeks.

MURPHY (CONT'D)

There yah go. Now you're gettin' the idea.

Clock reads 9:02.

Dan snaps up the necklace, quickly spins the numbers so they read 73737 and drapes it around his neck. His eyes flash a fiery red. A GLOWING BLUE energy field surrounds his body. Dan is LaserFast Guy again.

LaserFast Guy shoots across the room, throws open the desk drawer with the tequila in it, yanks the bottle out, and is gone.

MURPHY (CONT'D)

What the hell?

(To Gonzo)

Catch that guy. He stole a bottle
of my best tequila.

Gonzo and Donny RACE out of the room.

INT. JAKE'S GENTLEMEN'S CLUB - CONTINUOUS

Dan as LaserFast Guy blows past and around confused customers and strip-club staff. GABRIEL FISHER -- 52, female server, chunky blonde -- stands with hands on hips studying the blur that is LaserFast Guy.

GABRIEL

What in the hell was that?

RICH MARIN -- 25, strapping, virile stud and coworker of Gabriel's -- comes up behind her. He slips a studly arm around her.

RICH

You mean *who* in the hell was that

GABRIEL

Whatever.

LaserFast Guy, moving at the speed of sound, catches his right foot on a chair leg. Now AIRBORNE, he 's more like Superman than LaserFast Guy.

LASERFAST GUY

Damn it.

When he hits the floor twenty feet later, the tequila bottle SHATTERS.

LASERFAST GUY (CONT'D)

Double damn it.

Donny and Gonzo close to within five feet when LaserFast Guy struggles to his feet. The furiously fast superhero avoids Gonzo's super-long each by no more than six inches. Donny is right behind Gonzo.

GONZO

You're fast, alright, but I've the longer arm of the unlawful on my side.

DONNY

Yeah, we're gonna tear you a new asshole after we a get hold of your sorry lush superhero self.

LaserFast Guy breaths too hard to carry on a conversation. He just keeps his feet FLYING across the strip club floor.

LaserFast Guy is twenty yards from the front entrance when he sees two more Gonzo-sized goons.

LASERFAST GUY (To self)

Ah shit.

Seeing no viable option, he keeps running at top speed.

GOON #1

Where do you think you're goin', pal?

GOON #2

You might move faster than a speeding bullet but us two are the brick wall all that stops you dead in your tracks.

LASERFAST GUY

We'll see about that.

He kicks his speed up a notch. He's headed right at the two giants. Two feet from the men, LaserFast DUCKS DOWN. Like a croquet between the wickets, LaserFast Guy zips between Goon #1's legs. He straightens up and SHOVES the door open.

EXT. OUTSIDE JAKE'S GENTLEMEN'S CLUB - CONTINUOUS

LaserFast Guy is back out in the Daytona Beach night air.

He pauses for a second to catch his breath but now there's four guys -- the two bouncers, Gonzo and Donny -- after him.

He hightails down to street level. Agent Jesus POINTS to his watch as LaserFast Guy zips into the Lexus.

AGENT JESUS

I was about to come looking for you. It's about damn time.

LASERFAST GUY

I'd love to sit here and have a long and detailed discussion about the night's proceedings.

(MORE)

LASERFAST GUY (CONT'D)

However, those four goons rushing straight for your vehicle want to catch me and undoubtedly hurt me. So if we --

Jesus needs no further explanation. He jams on the gear shifter and barges his way into traffic.

INT. BRAVE HOUSE CONFERENCE ROOM - NIGHT

Agent Jesus, Assistant Director Donovan and Director Pitts sit patiently in front of their computers as the superheroes shuffle out of the room.

DIRECTOR PITTS

I think we're doing a damn fine job based on the meeting just now and the daily staff reports I've seen from Brave House staff.

A.D. DONOVAN

In general, yes, I would agree. But this Vengeance character concerns me. He doesn't seem to have come to grips with the reality of his drinking problem.

COUNSELOR BOB

I would say that of all the program participants, Mr. Belton appears to be the least enthusiastic about bringing sobriety back into his life.

DIRECTOR PITTS

Isn't he the one whose wife died from liver failure due to excessive drinking?

COUNSELOR BOB

Yes sir. She died a little over six months ago. He's blaming himself for her death because he didn't do more to help her deal with her drinking problem.

A.D. DONOVAN

Sounds like he was too caught up his own alcohol problems to help her with hers.

DIRECTOR PITTS

Yes, and given Belton's over-the-top approach to vigilante justice, the old eye-for-an-eye approach, I'm not sure Vengeance is the type of player we want on our team.

A.D. DONOVAN

Given the intense scrutiny, scope and speed with which news and gossip travel, I mean with Internet blogs, chat rooms, twenty-four seven cable news stations and good old-fashioned print like *The National Enquirer*, it doesn't take long for people around the world to know if one of NSA's crime-fighting partners goes off on a suspected criminal and maims him for life before that individual has gone to trial.

Director Pitts nods in agreement.

DIRECTOR PITTS

I think it's time we forget we ever offered Belton and his alter ego a deal in the first place.

A.D. DONOVAN

You mean throw his overly gung ho ass into the criminal justice system and let the drunks fall where they may?

DIRECTOR PITTS

Something like that.

Agent Jesus JUMPS UP from his chair.

AGENT JESUS

Hold on just a damned minute. That's not right...

(sees glare from Pitts)

Sir.

(Looks at Donovan)

And Ma'am. Forget that it's ethically wrong to go back on our word like the U.S. Government has been doing with the Native Americans for years. We need heroes, superheroes, like Vengeance.

(MORE)

AGENT JESUS (CONT'D)

Without guys like him, every two-bit terrorist with a burnt American flag and a pair of exploding underwear or sociopathic psycho whose dad used his face for a punching bag has no fear of retribution.

Pitts, Donovan, and Counselor Bob appear amused but skeptical.

AGENT JESUS (CONT'D)

Think about it. Every successful organization has assets it needs to protect. What do popular nightclubs have at the door?

DIRECTOR PITTS

Bouncers?

AGENT JESUS

Exactly. They're a very visible presence that tells all the customers they're free to have a great time. But they don't have unlimited freedom. The bar, like a country, has rules. You break our rules, you're going to be dealt with in no uncertain terms.

DIRECTOR PITTS

Great, so now the U.S. is a giant bar with the NSA and similar agencies acting like bouncers. That's a real nice metaphor for a rehab center full of recovering alcoholics.

Jesus smiles sheepishly.

AGENT JESUS

Alright, maybe that wasn't the perfect metaphor. Hey, I'm not a damn English teacher. Just a man who wants the best for his country.

DIRECTOR PITTS

That's all we can ask for.

Jesus SNAPS his fingers.

AGENT JESUS

I've got it. Guys like Vengeance are the teeth behind the watchdogs who guard the house of America. You try to steal our valuables or harm the owners, you got a mouthful of kick-ass superheroes who are gonna mess your ass up.

DIRECTOR PITTS

I knew we made the right decision when we hired you. Alright, Vengeance stays for now. We'll re-evaluate next week.

INT. BRAVE HOUSE LOUNGE - NIGHT

Bobby enters the lounge. Dan stands at Counselor Bob's table. Bobby approaches Counselor Bob's table as Dan grabs a stack of papers from Bob and walks away from the table.

COUNSELOR BOB

Ah, Mr. Belton , i.e. Vengeance. Congratulations. I have a plethora of recovery literature. Take as much or little as you wish. I have sheet of web sites if you'd rather go green, as they say.

BOBBY

Yeah, give me the web addresses.

Counselor Bob does just that. Dan and Director Pitts chat in the middle of the room. Dan shakes hands with Pitts. Dan sees Bobby. He STRIDES over to him.

DAN

Hey, I'm sorry about what I said about your wife. I've been such a drunken maniac over the years that I haven't been sober long enough to develop any kind of long-term, serious relationship with a member of the opposite sex. I'm not qualified to have any kind of opinion about someone I never met.

BOBBY

Don't worry about it. I feel bad enough about her death for the both of us.

DAN

So I imagine you've got a home to go back to, right?

Bobby nods 'yes'.

DAN (CONT'D)

I'll be staying at the Halfway House right next door. Hopefully I can find gainful employment before too long so I can move into an apartment or something.

BOBBY

Yeah well good luck.

DAN

Same to you. Hey, if you ever want to or need to talk, here's my phone number.

He hands Bobby a folded piece of paper. Bobby unfolds it. He gets his cell phone and enters Dan's number. Dan's phone RINGS. He smiles while answering it.

DAN (CONT'D)

Hello.

BOBBY

And now you can add my number to your contacts list.

DAN

And I will do that. Bye bye.

BOBBY

Sure.

INT. HALFWAY HOUSE - DAY

Dan sits in the living room on the couch along with Travis (Ultra-Acrobatic Man) and Steve Thompson (The Master Illusionist). A large-screen TV shows a pre-game show that replays highlights from the Minnesota Vikings' and Dallas Cowboys' season.

DAN

Man, it's going to be weird watching a football game without an alcoholic beverage in hand.

TRAVIS

I can see why so many people in recovery gain like fifty or sixty pounds. Not that I'll have that luxury. You can't be ultra acrobatic with a gut hanging over your belt.

DAN

Or laser fast. Well, with my talisman I could still be laser fast but I'd be seriously sweating and out of breath after I stopped running.

Steve loads up his plate with pepperoni slices, three types of cheese, barbecued chicken wings and chips.

STEVE

I, on the other hand, can just suck in my stomach as needed.

INT. HALFWAY HOUSE - NIGHT

Dan, Steve and Travis sit on the couch.

INSERT IMAGES ON TV

Vikings and Cowboys jog off the field and toward the locker room. Camera PANS to a SCREAMING, CHEERING crowd. Score: Cowboys 14, Vikings 10.

BACK TO SCENE

Dan snaps up more crackers and dip from the food table nearby. He opens a mini-fridge and extracts a soda.

DAN

Anybody want anything from the fridge?

Other two shake their heads no. Dan shuts the door. He returns to the couch. As he sets the soda on the end table, there's a DINGING from his right-hand jeans pocket.

STEVE

Sounds like you have an incoming text message.

Dan reaches into his pocket and grabs his phones.

INSERT C.U. OF CELLPHONE SCREEN

Sorry to bother you during the big game but this is the Doctor of Dismay with an important message. If you are truly a Vikings fan, get your laser-fast butt down to the Metrodome. NO COPS OR SIMILAR LAW ENFORCEMENT TYPES. I'm a big Cowboys fan and I dare you to stop me from being the 12th man on the field on a critical play.

BACK TO SCENE

Dan, confused, shakes his head while staring at the phone.

DAN (To self)
How did he get my cell number?

STEVE
How did who get your cell number?

DAN
Some guy calling himself the Doctor of Dismay. You guys heard of him?

STEVE
Sure haven't.

TRAVIS
Man, that sounds kind of familiar but something's not right. I helped the FBI with a hostage situation four, maybe five years ago. The abductor was a criminal who called himself the Dispenser of Dread. So it's along the same lines but not exactly the same.

Dan sticks the soda back in the fridge.

DAN
Agent Jesus said the Doctor of Dismay was one of the main reasons he recruited me and Vengeance. But he never said anything more about him. I know he was responsible for the Washington Redskins O-line kidnapping. Sorry but I gotta leave.

TRAVIS
What's going on?

DAN
I can't say anything right now. But I promise to fill you in after it's over.

Dan zips out of the Halfway House.

EXT. OUTSIDE HALFWAY HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Dan hits three buttons on his cell phone. He sticks the phone up to his right ear.

DAN

Bobby? Hey, It's Dan, Dan Wilson. I really didn't expect to be calling you so soon but this situation came up in a hurry..

EXT. STREETS OF MINNEAPOLIS - NIGHT

REGGIE is behind the wheel of the custom black Ferrari. Bobby, now Vengeance, scowls while sitting in the passenger's seat.

The traffic light a quarter of a block ahead turns YELLOW. A DARK BLUE, late model *Saturn* ten yards ahead of them slows down.

VENGEANCE

Make this light.

REGGIE

Too late for that. But we'll pretend we did.

VENGEANCE

I didn't see anything.

REGGIE stomps on the accelerator, gunning the black streak over into the left lane. Ferrari zips around the Saturn, cuts in front of a new *Cadillac*. Driver of caddy lays on the HORN as Ferrari blazes through the RED light.

Through the window the top of the Metrodome is visible in the distance. Vengeance looks at his watch.

VENGEANCE (CONT'D)

Can't you drive any faster?

REGGIE

Not without A) giving me a heart attack and B) crashing this black beauty. We're almost there, boss.

Vengeance makes a SOUND that sounds like a growl. Seventy-five yards away, the traffic light turns YELLOW.

VENGEANCE

Take the next right.

REGGIE

I know how to get to the Dome.

VENGEANCE

Make this light.

REGGIE

That's my plan, boss.

Reggie guns the gas, swings the car out wide into the next lane and SKIDS through a right turn. Ferrari SLAMS off the curb.

REGGIE (CONT'D)

Sorry, boss.

Vengeance WAVES the thought away. He's got his sights on the looming Metrodome.

EXT. SIDEWALK OUTSIDE METRODOME - NIGHT

Vengeance jumps out of the Ferrari. Dan, now LaserFast Guy, stands on the sidewalk, red-faced and out of breath. He points upward. Vengeance frowns as he peers toward the roof of the arena.

VENGEANCE

What are you trying to say?

LASERFAST GUY (Between ragged breaths)

The bad guys are on the roof.

VENGEANCE

How do you know that?

LASERFAST GUY

Hey, I'm LaserFast Guy, remember?
So I got here way ahead of you. And I buzzed around the outside of the Metrodome - no Doctor of Dismay and band of henchmen in sight. Same for inside the Dome.

VENGEANCE

Yeah, so?

LASERFAST GUY

So by the process of elimination, since they're not outside the Metrodome and they're not inside the Metrodome, and since there's no basement, they've got to be on top of the Metrodome. I have no idea how we're going to get our super heroic asses up there.

VENGEANCE

I'll take care of that.

He produces an *iPhone*-like device. Vengeance touches an icon, then frowns.

VENGEANCE (CONT'D)

What's the latitude and longitude of the Metrodome?

LASERFAST GUY

Boy, that's something I'll never know no matter how many years of sobriety I have.

VENGEANCE

Never mind. I'll get it from the web.

He touches an icon, taps letters on a mini-keyboard and watches the small screen.

VENGEANCE (CONT'D)

The site is busy. Damn.

LASERFAST GUY

I'm not completely sure how this all works but doesn't that thing have a built-in GPS something or other? Can't you just have whoever go to the location that electronic box shows?

Vengeance stares down LaserFast Guy.

VENGEANCE

Amazingly enough, you're right.

He touches another icon, and then navigates through two more screens.

VENGEANCE (CONT'D)

Okay, that should do it.

FIVE obviously DRUNKEN MEN, (20'S) STAGGER and LAUGH their way down the sidewalk. They see the two superheroes in their masks and body armor plus LaserFast Guy, who has a pair of *Zubas* on.

DRUNK #1

Get a load of these two. Hey, losers, Halloween is like ten months away.

LASERFAST GUY

Actually we're celebrating last year's Halloween. Our invitations got lost in the mail.

DRUNK #2

Wow, you're a pretty fucking funny guy. So what are you, a comedian or superhero?

LASERFAST GUY

I'm just a superhero with a sense of humor. Got a problem with that?

DRUNK #2

Hey, whatever trips your trigger,

A third member of the party pulls a pint of *Jim Beam* out of his jacket pocket.

DRUNK #3

Hey, you wanna snort?

LASERFAST GUY

What do I look like, a pig?
(To Vengeance)
Come on, time's a wasting.

LASERFAST GUY (CONT'D)

Let's find a less conspicuous spot to begin our ascension.

He leads Vengeance away from the quasi-crowded sidewalk.

EXT. SIDEWALK OUTSIDE METRODOME - NIGHT

The two superheroes stand halfway between gates I and J. The only people in sight other than them are an OLDER COUPLE (70's) walking hand-in-hand away from them. Standing at the base of the inflatable dome, LaserFast Guy peers upward toward the top edge of the structure.

He turns toward Vengeance.

LASERFAST GUY

So where are...

He jerks his head toward the SOUND of HELICOPTER BLADES. At fifty yards away and closing are eight flying, ROBOTIC GARGOYLES, each with a beanie-cap rotor blades SPINNING around.

LASERFAST GUY (CONT'D)

That's cool but I don't see a door for the passenger compartment.

VENGEANCE

I'll get them into position. Just watch me and do what I do.

The gargoyles, part-human, part-animal hybrids, descend out of the air. They HOVER five yards in front of Vengeance.

VENGEANCE (CONT'D)

(To robotic gargoyles)

Units one, two, three and four, assume human transport readiness position.

Four of the gargoyles form a TIGHT SQUARE right in front of Vengeance, each of the units HOVERING a foot and a half above the ground. Vengeance lies face down right underneath them.

VENGEANCE (CONT'D)

(To robotic gargoyles)

Unit numbers five, six, seven and eight, assume human transport readiness position adjacent to unit numbers one through four.

The robotic gargoyles obey the command. Vengeance nods toward the ground underneath units five through eight. LaserFast Guy follows his partner's lead.

VENGEANCE (CONT'D)

Units one through eight, secure your passengers and begin vertical ascent.

Each one of the robots reaches down with both metallic hands and wraps them around the human limb beneath it. The flight begins.

LASERFAST GUY

Holy shit, can you slow these guys down? I think part of my stomach is still down there.

VENGEANCE

You're the one who said time's
wasting.

EXT. EDGE OF METRODOME ROOF - HIGHT

Robotic gargoyles drop superheroes gently onto Teflon-coated
Fiberglass surface.

VENGEANCE

(To robotic gargoyles)

Wait here for your next command.

Vengeance and LaserFast Guy turn their attention toward the
hordes of black-clad henchmen massed on the middle of the
roof.

LASERFAST GUY

Good God, there's gotta be at least
a hundred of them.

VENGEANCE

I'd say closer to a hundred and
fifty.

LASERFAST GUY

Didn't anyone tell them to take it
easy on the poor recovering
alcoholic superheroes? I mean I
like challenges as much as the next
guy but --

Vengeance grabs LaserFast Guy's wrist.

VENGEANCE

(Interrupting)

We have backup if we need it.

He nods at the gargoyles.

VENGEANCE (CONT'D)

But I doubt we will. I feel like
inflicting some major hurt on a
whole lot of hopeless, morally
bankrupt criminal types, most of
whom don't even deserve to live.

LASERFAST GUY

Well, when you put it that way,
yeah, let's do it.

They run full-speed at the enemy.

LaserFast Guy naturally reaches the front line of the henchmen first. He stops long enough to throw a series of lightning-fast rights to the jaws of three henchman. They fall UNCONSCIOUS onto the Metrodome roof.

Four more henchmen close in on LaserFast Guy. He ducks and DODGES the punches of the first attacker, then counter punches him into oblivion. A flurry of KICKS and PUNCHES ensue but LaserFast Guy evades them all. He launches a flurry of blinding KICKS and PUNCHES of his own. The remaining four writhe in pain or lay unconscious seconds later.

LASERFAST GUY (CONT'D)

Hey, that was kind of fun.

Vengeance joins the fight. Six of the burliest henchmen surround him. A nearly seven-foot giant with a pair of numchucks comes at Vengeance. Right behind him is a knife-wielding Arabian-looking man.

The giant grabs Vengeance's right wrist and starts to twist it. GRIMACING and GROWLING, Vengeance knees his adversary in the crotch. As he crumples to the ground, Vengeance launches a KICK at the knife wielder that misses. Knife guy puts both hands on the knife's hilt and swings for Vengeance's face.

Superhero jumps to his left, avoids getting slashed across the face but the knife rips through body armor on Vengeance's left shoulder. BLOOD spurts from the wound.

VENGEANCE

Ahhhh, damn it. That hurts.

Arab looks away, pauses to admire his work. Vengeance lashes out with his right foot, the kick blasting into the opponent's rib cage. Sickening CRUNCH of breaking of bones is followed by agonized moan as Arab falls face first onto Metrodome roof.

The giant with numchucks grabs Vengeance's right foot. Vengeance places lightning fast punch to the attacker's larynx. Shot leaves him DAZED and GASPING for air. As giant strains to regain breath, Vengeance grabs the Arabian's sword. Giant man looks up just in time to see sword blur through the air and slice his head off. Geyser of BLOOD spurts from the headless body.

LaserFast Guy knocks out another henchman, and then glances over toward Vengeance. He sees the CONVULSING BODY of the beheaded man on the roof.

LASERFAST GUY

What in the hell are you doing?

VENGEANCE

Defending myself and taking care of the enemy.

LASERFAST GUY

We're not in fucking "Nam or I-fucking-raq. You don't need to kill the bad guys.

VENGEANCE

You do it your way, I'll do it my way. Hey, I let my wife drink herself to death over several years. Death happens but you have to know who deserves death and who doesn't.

LaserFast guy pivots just in time to see two henchmen, each with a spiked club, bearing down on him. Spoked clubs whoosh through the air toward superhero's face. LaserFast Guy ducks, zips between the legs of the attacker on the right. Before they can turn around, he karate chops both of them on the back of the neck. They fall to the dome's roof.

INTERCUT TO METRODOME ROOF - NIGHT

LaserFast Guy and Vengeance have plowed through three quarters of the henchmen. While LaserFast Guy's opponents are knocked out or semiconscious, Vengeance's MOAN in agony with broken bones or dead.

Twenty or so henchman separate the superheroes from the DOCTOR OF DISMAY. The master villain's Doctor of Dismay smiles while pointing at himself.

DOCTOR OF DISMAY

What's the matter? Haven't you two ever seen tattoos before?

LASERFAST GUY

(Between ragged breaths)

Real nice - who's the artist, Lucifer on one of his down days?

DOCTOR OF DISMAY

My my, you sound a bit winded, LaserFast Guy. Perhaps you should not have hibernated in that cave of tequila-induced intoxication for over two decades.

LaserFast Guy points at the villain but cannot catch his breath. Finally he's able to speak.

LASERFAST GUY

We all make mistakes, don't we? You must have been wasted when you got those hideous tattoos done.

DOCTOR OF DISMAY

No, I was quite sober then. It was the driver of the car who did this to my legs who had a blood-alcohol level in excess of .025.

LASERFAST GUY

That is sad but we all have our own cross to bear. Not that this isn't all very interesting but we have some unfinished business to take care of. Like just what in the hell are you and your cronies doing up here during the NFC Championship game?

The remaining henchmen, including Frank, STAND AT ATTENTION, following every word intently.

DOCTOR OF DISMAY

As I said in my text message, I am a big Cowboys fan. I am going to my part to help them on to victory. Plus there is the matter of the three million dollars I have riding on the game.

LASERFAST GUY

Holy shit, that's a lot of dough. You must have a helluva lot of confidence in your ball club.

DOCTOR OF DISMAY

It's a combination of belief in my team and a need for funds to keep my operation going.

LASERFAST GUY

What are you talking about?

DOCTOR OF DISMAY

I'm talking about having money to pay my staff (he gestures to the henchmen) and pay for all the essential equipment a demented anti-hero like myself needs.

The villain MOTIONS to Frank, who hands the Doctor of Dismay a laptop computer. Bemused but concerned, he shakes his head.

DOCTOR OF DISMAY (CONT'D)

Oh my, the game is going right down to the wire. My precious Cowboys are leading 27-23 but those bothersome Vikings are driving. Thankfully there's only thirty-three seconds left and they are out of time outs.

Vengeance takes a couple steps towards the Doctor. Five henchmen close the invisible net a little tighter around the superhero.

VENGEANCE

If you're up here, outside of the Dome, I don't see how you can do anything to help your team.

The Doctor MOTIONS at Frank. He hands his boss a BAZOOKA-LIKE GUN.

DOCTOR OF DISMAY

This laser cannon won't so much help my team as it will hurt your team. I dare say a well-timed blast through the Metrodome roof would be quite a distraction to an offense, even one led by a future Hall of Fame quarterback.

LASERFAST GUY

You can't be serious.

DOCTOR OF DISMAY

Unless I'm in shroom mode, I'm not in the habit of joking around. Plus, I can use the weapon to reap revenge on someone who crippled me for life.

LASERFAST GUY

What in the hell are you --

Doctor of Dismay FIRES the laser cannon at LaserFast Guy. An instant before being hit, LaserFast Guy DIVES to the left.

Meanwhile Vengeance STRIDES toward nearest henchman.

Henchman with a three-foot long metal pipe comes after Vengeance. The superhero sneers as the pipe comes at his face. Vengeance intercepts the pipe as two other henchmen run towards him. Superhero twists and gets control of the pipe just in time to SHATTER the nose of the first of the other two attacking henchmen.

As that lackey CRIES OUT in pain, Vengeance quickly KNEES the original wielder of pipe in the crotch and elbows him in the stomach. As he falls to the roof, Vengeance SWINGS the pipe at and connects with the right kneecap of the third henchman.

Other lackeys BACK AWAY after seeing the crazed glow of fury from their opponent's eyes.

LaserFast Guy sees everyone GAZE AT Vengeance. He shifts into hyper-fast mode and STREAKS toward the Doctor of Dismay. Five cronies form a CIRCLE around their leader. LaserFast Guy pulls up just short of the circle of henchmen.

DOCTOR OF DISMAY

Nice try, old sport, but it's not like the old days when extraordinary speed and quickness was all you needed. It is like in major league baseball - the book on you is out. You are too one-dimensional

LaserFast Guy DARTS IN, lands a KICK to the middle henchman's gut, and withdraws before anyone can hit him back. He does the same with two more cronies.

On Vengeance's side, TWENTY HENCHMEN, all wielding a mace, machete, numchucks or similar weapon, close in on the scowling superhero.

The nearest five henchmen PULL TO within two strides of their target. Vengeance presses a button on his iPhone-like device. A MIDNIGHT-BLUE SMOKE issues from his gloved fingertips. The smoke becomes so thick that neither the twenty cronies nor Vengeance can be seen.

Vengeance emerges from the cloud, now closer to the Doctor of Dismay but still separated from the arch villain by five SUMO WRESTLER BODYGUARDS (late 20's) holding GLEAMING Samurai swords.

The SUMOS move closer to each other. They form a solid mass of Asian flesh.

DOCTOR OF DISMAY (CONT'D)

Oh my, the Vikings are making it interesting. Their last pass play not only got them to the Dallas five-yard line but the receiver stepped out of bounds. The clock is stopped with five seconds left.

The Doctor POINTS the laser cannon at the Metrodome roof.

DOCTOR OF DISMAY (CONT'D)

I could say I was hoping not to do this but that would be a lie.

The Doctor's pet snake is all over its owner. The PYTHON pauses to stare him down through the transparent covering.

DOCTOR OF DISMAY (CONT'D)

We have been looking forward to this for quite some time, haven't we?

The snake resumes its journey over its master's body; LaserFast Guy DARTS IN, THROWS a flurry of jabs on the henchman farthest to his left and zips around him.

The clear path to the Doctor is suddenly BLOCKED by two more henchmen.

LASERFAST GUY

You guys are really starting to get on my flipping nerves.

He races up, DUCKS their punches and kicks and launches an attack of his own. The lightning fast barrage leaves final two henchmen unconscious.

Doctor of Dismay frowns at the computer monitor.

DOCTOR OF DISMAY

Oh my, the quarterback and head coach of the Vikings have finished their discussion. The wily, grizzled veteran is trotting back on the field It is time for the 12th man to step forward.

The Doctor of Dismay grabs puts both hands on the laser cannon. He shuts one eye while staring at his intended target about ten feet away.

Vengeance stalks toward the Sumo wrestling types. He zeroes in on the middle one. The other four Sumos separate from and move away to give the one in the middle room to battle Vengeance. The Sumo stares at Vengeance for one full second and then brings the sword above his head. The giant Japanese man SLASHES VIOLENTLY downward, the blade aimed at the middle of Vengeance's forehead.

Superhero jumps to his left but is a split second late. Blade slices through edge of Vengeance's right shoulder. BLOOD spurts out of the wound. An agonized, PIERCING SCREAM of pain cuts through the air.

An instant later, Vengeance THROWS a vicious elbow into the Sumo's jaw. Vengeance yanks the sword out of the stunned giant's hands, turns the blade around so it faces the Sumo and thrusts the bloody point squarely in the middle of the protruding stomach. Vengeance keeps JAMMING the blade until virtually all the blade is out of sight.

The other four Sumo wrestlers rush at Vengeance. The dark superhero, with both hands still on the handle, uses the buried sword for leverage to execute a combination CARTWHEEL and FLIP OVER the top of the falling, freshly killed Sumo wrestler.

The remaining four Sumos look up toward the sky just in time to see the eight robotic gargoyles drop a giant net over them. Once the net entangles them, the gargoyles fly around in a circle, the net tying the four into one big bundle of humanity.

Vengeance RUSHES toward the Doctor of Dismay while LaserFast Guy does the same from his angle.

Too late. The Doctor of Dismay LAUGHS at the giant hole in the Metrodome roof. Arch villain grabs a cable from the commandeered *Met Life* blimp that passes slowly overhead. Frank is already twenty feet up the cable

DOCTOR OF DISMAY (CONT'D)

(To Frank)

Tell what's his face in the blimp
to pull us up now!

They make a last-ditch grab at the mad Doctor, Each superhero's fingers brush the bottom of the Doctor of Dismay's feet.

LASERFAST GUY

You piece of super villainous shit.

The superheroes watch the culprit make his escape.

LASERFAST GUY (CONT'D)

I thought that went pretty well
right up until the very end.
Then it went to shit.

Vengeance doesn't hear. He is glued to the broadcast of the game on the mobile computer standing thirty yards from the hole in the roof.

INSERT TV IMAGES

Vikings head coach argues with the head referee while the PURPLE and GOLD clad players mill around the field in confusion. Cowboys players and coaching staff DANCE around and HUG each other on their sideline.

PLAY BY PLAY ANNOUNCER

Well folks, we're as confused up here in the booth as everyone else is. I can't tell you what caused the massive, thunder-like noise that came at exactly the wrong time for Minnesota and the right time for Dallas. But this much I can tell you: The Cowboys have won the game and are going to the Super Bowl.

COLOR ANALYST

While you were so succinctly summing up an incredibly bizarre, chaotic moment in NFL history, I was studying the Metrodome roof.

PLAY BY PLAY ANNOUNCER

Really? And what did you see?

COLOR ANALYST

Whatever punctured the hole in the roof has caused the roof to begin collapsing. I don't believe it will collapse entirely but it's plain to see the middle portion of the roof is sagging.

BACK TO SCENE

Vengeance looks over at LaserFast Guy.

VENGEANCE

Went to shit is a serious fucking understatement.

INT. NSA CONFERENCE ROOM - NIGHT

Agent Jesus, Director Pitts, LaserFast Guy (now Dan Wilson) and Vengeance (now Bobby Belton) sit at a large rectangular table. Dan's face is BRUISED and PUFFY. Bobby wears a BANDAGE across on his right shoulder.

Jesus and Pitts split their time between questioning the superheroes and frowning at their mobile computer screens. Pitts talks into his cell phone.

He sets the phone next to the computer keyboard. Pitts tents his fingers on the table on the other side of the keyboard

DIRECTOR PITTS

All right gentlemen, exactly what happened up there on the roof? We know the basics. The Doctor of Dismay succeeded in pulling off his caper, which means you two failed your mission. That puts you behind the eight ball. If you fail to foil the next caper, you fail rehab and you will have to serve jail time for your multiple DWI's.

AGENT JESUS

That's right. In football terms, you're in the playoffs but if you don't win the next game, your season, and your freedom to live life as you'd like to, is over. You'll be spending considerable time behind bars.

DAN

That's okay. I prefer bars to off-sale anyway.

The two NSA men GLARE at him. Dan holds up both hands palms out.

DAN (CONT'D)

Come on, lighten up. It was a joke. Retract those claws.

Agent Jesus cracks the barest hint of a smile while Pitts shakes his head in amusement.

DAN (CONT'D)

That fucking Doctor of Dismay will not hose up my freedom.

(MORE)

DAN (CONT'D)

I don't care what it takes but from this point forward, failure is not an option. I'm so damn sick of living life either behind bars or on the other side of the fence from sobriety.

BOBBY

If I ever see the Doctor of Dismay, he is going to be in the most serious world of pain imaginable.

Both Jesus and Pitts type furiously on their keyboards.

DAN

Oh I get it. There's no tape recorders or secret bugs in the room but the NSA wants a record of what the lush superheroes say.

DIRECTOR PITTS

Gentlemen, that is correct. You two, by your life of drunkenness and irresponsibility, have given up certain freedoms and a degree of privacy. Buddhists call it bad karma. Christians call it the wages of sin. Until you've truly turned your life around, get used to it.

AGENT JESUS

Anyone got anything else?

Silence.

DIRECTOR PITTS

I think we're done here.

EXT. BRAVE HOUSE PARKING LOT - DAY

Reggie has the customized black Ferrari parked in the closest spot to the main entry. Bobby emerges from the building. He sees the car and strides toward it.

Bobby gets into the passenger seat in front.

REGGIE

Hi boss. I read about all about it on espn.com, msn.com and of course, cnn.com. Holy shit, I can't believe someone could be that creative and ballsy to pull off something like that.

BOBBY

I'm not in the mood for an in-depth analysis of this wacko's stunt. I just want to get the hell home.

Reggie shifts into 'reverse' and a second later, he backs the Ferrari up.

REGGIE

Got it. It'll be great to have you back. The mansion is huge but it seems twice as big when it's just me -

BOBBY

(Interrupting)

We do need to make one quick but very important stop.

REGGIE

Sure boss. Where?

BOBBY

I'll let you know after we get closer.

EXT. MINNEAPOLIS STREET - DAY

Ferrari with Reggie behind the wheel idles in a parking space next to a brick building. Reggie texts on his cell phone while SWING MUSIC from the top-of-the-line stereo system fills the car.

Reggie sends the text message. He looks up. Bobby approaches the car with a case of top-shelf vodka. The butler frowns and sadly shakes his head.

Bobby MOTIONS for Reggie to open the trunk. He does. Bobby loads the booze in and shuts the trunk. Bobby opens the door and gets into the car.

REGGIE

Are you sure you want to do this?

BOBBY

I was when I went in but now, hell, I don't know. Booze killed Lisa. Trying not to think about losing her by drinking is probably not the smartest thing to do.

REGGIE

Hey, you haven't opened the case yet. It's not too late to return it. I'll be happy to do it for you.

Bobby looks away, assuming a Rodan-like expression. He turns back to Reggie.

BOBBY

If I get busted by the NSA during one of the random urine analyses, I'm screwed. Alright, bring it back.

Reggie does what the boss says.

INT. HALFWAY HOUSE - DAY

Dan trudges into the living room. Steve and Travis play cards. Each one has a glass of liquor on the rocks and a beer chaser in front of them.

Steve grabs his glass with one hand and MOTIONS with the other hand for Dan to join them.

STEVE

Hey Dan old buddy, come on in. The water's warm.

DAN

The water's warm and the booze is ice cold. No thanks.

TRAVIS

Come on, man. Having the Metrodome mission blow up in your face like that. That's gotta suck. Have a drink or eight. You'll feel better.

DAN

I used to think drinking made me feel better but it just made me feel nothing. I'm sick of being an emotional zombie. So thanks but no thanks.

Dan turns around. He heads for the door.

TRAVIS

You're not going to say anything to the NSA about this, are you?

DAN

No, I'm not getting involved. What you do and don't do is between the NSA and you.

He grabs the doorknob and turns.

DAN (CONT'D)

All I know for sure is that I've got to get out of here.

EXT. MINNEAPOLIS STREET - DAY

Dan PEDALS his bike down the street. He glances left. There's a park with two tennis courts, two basketball hoops, a horseshoes pit, and six picnic tables. A bike path winds through the space.

Dan looks right. A parking lot separates the stores in a strip mall from the street. A Starbucks and bagel shop bookend a dry cleaners, Chinese restaurant, pizza place and liquor store.

DAN

(To self)

Ah hell, join the crowd.

Dan takes a right into the parking lot. He hops off the bicycle and sets it on pavement about seven feet from the front door of the liquor store.

Dan looks around. There's no one loitering in the parking lot who might have decided to swoop in and steal his bike. He hustles inside the store.

Dan scans the different sections of the store. His face LIGHTS UP he sees a TEQUILA SIGN.

DAN (CONT'D)

(To self)

Sweet.

He STRIDES down the aisle and goes right to Don Julio's. A college-aged guy wearing a 'U of M' coat and Minnesota Wild baseball-style cap stands nearby. He peers at the *Jose Quervo* rows. Dan grabs two bottles of *Don Julio's* anejo.

DAN (CONT'D)

Hey, if you're going to alter your state-of-mind with intoxicants, you might as well do it in style.

MALE CUSTOMER

Only if you have the jing to do it.
College students are on a budget.

DAN

I know what you mean. I was in
college a long time ago in a
distant galaxy.

Dan heads for the cash register with his tequila.

MALE CUSTOMER

Have a good one, man.

DAN

The same to you, friend.

He reaches the register. A TRIO OF MEN (early 20's) are
buying a keg of beer and a case of assorted liquors. Clerk
hands sets a form in front of the first man.

STORE CLERK

Alright, I gotta have you fill this
out. State law requires us to have
all this information about every
keg of beer we sell.

Guy begins filling it out.

STORE CLERK (CONT'D)

(Over intercom)

I need a 16-gallon keg of *Bud* and a
tub to Register 3.

Dan ROLLS his eyes.

DAN (To self)

Red tape in a liquor store. What
the fuck is this world coming to?

He taps his right foot while waiting for the keg customers to
finish their transaction. Dan glances at the entrance. A
junior-high-aged boy approaches the entrance. He sees the
unlocked bike lying on the ground. The boy grabs Dan's bike.

DAN (CONT'D)

You piece of shit!

Everyone in the store STARES at Dan. He sets the bottles of
tequila on the counter of the closest closed cash register
and RACES toward the door.

Dan shoves the glass door open just as the kid PEDALS AWAY on
his bicycle. He gains ground as the kid gets up to speed.

Dan almost catches up but the young hooligan moves faster. The bike starts to pull away.

DAN (CONT'D)
Not so fast you Son of a Bitch.

Dan DIVES at the bike. His fingers bounce off the youth's back side and then onto the seat. His fingers slide down the bicycle seat. Before losing contact with the seat, Dan jerks it violently to the right. The bike and rider TUMBLE to the sidewalk.

The boy jumps up and RUNS OFF while Dan hops up and RUNS after him. Twenty yards later, Dan stops running.

DAN (CONT'D)
(To self)
Why am I running? I got my bike back.

He heads back to his bike. By the time Dan reaches it, the teen thief is out of sight. Dan turns toward the liquor store. He approaches the entrance. Dan puts his right hand on the door handle. He freezes.

DAN (CONT'D)
(To self)
What am I doing? This is how I've wasted most of my adult life. This is not who I am.

He takes his hand off the door handle. He turns around and marches away from the liquor store, hops on his bike and PEDALS away.

INT. LUTHERAN CHURCH IN MINNEAPOLIS - DAY

An AA meeting is in session. Bobby sits in the midst of around twenty-five men. They take turns reading from The Big Book.

RONN P. -- male, 47, balding, overweight, wire-rim glasses -- takes the book from group leader JEFF T. - 52, fit, tan and wearing *Minnesota Twins* sweatshirt. He begins reading.

RONN P.
Rarely have we seen a person fail who has thoroughly followed our path...

INT. LUTHERAN CHURCH IN MINNEAPOLIS - 20 MINUTES LATER

Everyone has set their Big Books down.

JEFF T.

Let's start at the beginning. Step one is admitting you're an alcoholic and that your life has become unmanageable. You have to be willing to be perfectly honest with yourself. Many alcoholics aren't willing or able to be honest.

BOBBY

Yeah well I wasn't honest with myself for eight, maybe nine years. And because I didn't admit and own up to my own addiction to alcohol, that paved the way for my wife Lisa to slowly kill herself with the same poison.

JEFF T.

I'm sorry. How was old your wife?

BOBBY

Thirty-eight years, ten months and fifteen days.

RONN P.

Almost everyone in this room probably has either had a similarly tragic experience or knows a friend or relative who's had one. It sounds like you and Lisa were enabling each other's obsession

BOBBY

We sure were. If I would have had the guts to look myself in the mirror and see myself for what I'd become, and done something about my alcoholism, Lisa might have addressed her problem.

RONN P.

You don't know that. Maybe she would have, but odds are she wouldn't have. I didn't know your wife but statistically speaking, most alcoholics don't admit they're addicted to alcohol.

JEFF T.

If you keep coming back to meetings, Bobby, you will quickly learn the Serenity Prayer: God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.

Bobby's eyes have taken on a FARAWAY appearance.

BOBBY

I remember the day Lisa was transferred from the ICU to the nursing home. That was the hospice and the doctors' way of saying she was beyond hope. Intellectually I knew that.

Bobby pauses to CLEAR HIS THROAT.

BOBBY (CONT'D)

But on the second day she was in the nursing home, which was Thanksgiving Day, I had two tall beers and two vodkas on the rocks at a nearby bar before going to visit her. I figured Lisa would understand. It was right around noon, lunchtime for most folks but Lisa was past that.

He pauses, closes his eyes, blows out a long breath and goes on.

BOBBY (CONT'D)

So despite the developing buzz, when I stepped inside the front doors, I saw a sign had been taped to the door of Lisa's room. I walked numbly down the hallway. It said to see the charge nurse before entering Lisa's room. The nurse told me Lisa had died during the night but her body was still in the room. So I slowly opened the door, walked over to her bed and kissed her on the forehead. There was so much I wanted to say but what was the point? Lisa couldn't hear me.

JEFF T.

I'm sorry, Bobby. But she's in God's hands now.

BOBBY

A lot of fucking good that does me

Bobby JUMPS UP and STOMPS out of the room.

EXT. MINNEAPOLIS BIKE TRAIL - DAY

Dan PEDALS his bicycle over a paved trail that circles a frozen lake. The snow has been plowed off the trail but patches of ice pop up sporadically as Dan cruises with headphones on. Through the headphones we HEAR Beck's lyrics:

I GOT TWO TURNTABLES AND A MICROPHONE. WHERE IT'S AT, I GOT TWO TURNTABLES AND A MICROPHONE..

DAN

(To self)

I got two turntables and a microphone, ow! Where it's at...

Dan is so into the song he doesn't see a MALE JOGGER (28) approaching from the opposite direction. Jogger has to take evasive action to avoid being hit by Dan, who has strayed into the wrong lane.

JOGGER

Watch where the hell you're going!

Dan sees where he's at and VEERS quickly back into the proper lane. He slows way down.

DAN

Hey, I'm a recovering alcoholic superhero so it's okay for me to stray a little ways off the bike path as long as I don't stray off *thee* path.

Jogger STARES at Dan like he's a lunatic.

JOGGER

Uh, yeah, whatever you say, dude.

Dan POINTS to his eyes, then at the jogger.

DAN

You better watch your step cause I'm gonna be watching for you.

INT. NSA OFFICE - DAY

Agent Jesus surfs the Internet between shuffling papers and writing reports. He reaches the nfl.com site. There's video and AUDIO of the NFL commissioner.

INSERT IMAGES AND AUDIO FROM JESUS' COMPUTER

The Commissioner holds a hastily arranged news conference. Dressed impeccably as usual in a dark suit and tie, he proceeds to the podium.

NFL COMMISSIONER

Ladies and gentlemen, I have a historic announcement to make. Due to unforeseen, catastrophic facility failure, the last thirty seconds of the NFC Championship Game must be replayed.

About twenty reporters and football analysts RAISE their hands and VOICES at the same time.

BACK TO SCENE

Agent Jesus shakes his head in amazement.

AGENT JESUS

Is that crazy or what? Makes you wonder if the old commish is taking some money under the table by organized crime or maybe just some staunch Vikings fan, to pull something like this.

His next-door neighbor, RALPH GREGORY -- 28, overweight, thick glasses, overly bright tie -- SQUINTS over at him.

RALPH

You're so paranoid. To you, everything can be explained by a conspiracy.

Director Pitts is at Jesus' desk. He POINTS at the computer screen.

DIRECTOR PITTS

I know of two recovering, alcoholic superheroes who'll be glad to learn about this.

RALPH

Who's that?

DIRECTOR PITTS
LaserFast Guy and Vengeance. They
just might get another chance to
save the day for the home team.

EXT. BIKE TRAIL - NIGHT

Dan BIKES over a snowy trail. He hits an unseen icy spot and
wipes out.

DAN
Shit.

He pulls himself up. His cell DINGS at him. Dan checks the
text message. It's from the Doctor of Dismay.

INSERT SCREEN IMAGE FROM CELL PHONE

I did it once. I'll do it again. Think u can stop me? This
time I'm acting before the game even starts.

BACK TO SCENE

Dan GLARES at the phone.

DAN (CONT'D)
We'll see about that.

He makes a phone call.

BOBBY (O.S.)
Yeah.

DAN
We're going to get another chance
at the Doctor of Dismay.

BOBBY (O.S.)
How do you know that?

DAN
I just got another text from the
psycho. He says he's going to do
something to affect the outcome of
the game. Only he says it'll be
prior to the game.

BOBBY (O.S.)
Makes sense. I mean the game is
only going to be thirty seconds
long.

DAN
Yeah, that's true.

BOBBY (O.S.)
What do you think he's going to try
this time? If he is doing something
before the game, he won't shoot a
hole in the Metrodome again.

Another bicyclist approaches.

DAN
Tell you what, let me kick this
around for a few minutes.

BOBBY (O.S.)
Don't take too long. The game
starts tomorrow at noon.

DAN
I'll brainstorm on my ride home.
I'll call you in thirty minutes.

BOBBY (O.S.)
I'll have my phone on.

Dan JUMPS ON the bicycle and is off.

EXT. MINNEAPOLIS STREET - NIGHT

Dan, with his BIKE HEADLIGHT on, pedals along in city
traffic. The traffic light fifty yards ahead turns YELLOW. He
slows the bike down. While waiting for the light to turn
green, Dan straddles the bike. His eyes light up. Dan SNAPS
his fingers.

DAN
(To self)
Shit, that's it!

He rustles up cell phone and makes a call.

BOBBY (O.S.)
Yeah?

DAN
I got it. He's going to hurt or
kidnap the star player from the
Cowboys' opponent.

BOBBY (O.S.)
So that's who, the quarterback?

DAN
Fred Barr, that's right.

A rusting aqua Ford Escort CLIPS Dan's left handlebar.

DAN (CONT'D)
What the hell?

He's back on the pavement again.

DRIVER OF ESCORT
Get the hell out of the way, buddy!

Dan FLIPS OFF the driver as he climbs to his feet. He DRAGS the bicycle onto the sidewalk.

DAN
Fred Barr has the same routine the night before every home game.

BOBBY (O.S.)
And what's that?

DAN
He and his lovely wife Anita dine out with another couple, have a few cocktails, and call it a night between eight and eight-thirty.

BOBBY
Same restaurant every time?

DAN
Yep. They'll be at Rudolph's by six o'clock.

BOBBY (O.S.)
Then we need to kick ass. It's almost eight now.

DAN
See you there.

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE RUDOLPH'S - NIGHT

Vengeance sits behind the steering wheel of the black Ferrari. He gets out of the car just as LaserFast Guy SQUEALS to a stop on his BICYCLE.

VENGEANCE
A bike?

LASERFAST GUY

Hey, I was in a hurry and I also wanted to save energy for the battle ahead.

VENGEANCE

Okay, let's get the hell inside.

Vengeance STALKS across the street, barely avoiding two cars speeding in opposite directions. LaserFast Guy follows and quickly blows past his partner.

LaserFast Guy is twenty feet from the entrance when the door opens. FRED BARR -- 39, salt and pepper hair, engaging smile and looking fit but not overly muscular -- strides out.

He holds the door open. Out comes ANITA BARR -- 32, lovely blonde, dressed in a sequined purple, low-cut gown. It's his wife. Another couple about the same age as the Barrs follow.

Barr laughs at the two costumed superheroes staring at him.

FRED BARR

Hey, what's with the getups?

LASERFAST GUY

We're assisting the police and various other law enforcement agencies with prevention of a potential kidnapping or even murder of, well, you.

Fred LAUGHS again.

FRED BARR

What are you guys on?

LASERFAST GUY

We're on duty. You remember the guy who shot a hole in the Metrodome roof last Sunday?

FRED BARR

I never saw what he looked like so I don't remember him but I'll never forget the moment I heard the laser beam go through the roof.

LASERFAST GUY

Anyway, this psycho, who's dubbed himself the Doctor of Dismay, texted me earlier tonight.

(MORE)

LASERFAST GUY (CONT'D)

He didn't say it directly but we think he's going to try to harm or abduct the Vikings star player.

FRED BARR

I know I'm the best known Viking, it comes with the position, but the best player on our team is Peter Adonis.

LASERFAST GUY

Of course. Why didn't I think of that?

VENGEANCE

I've heard the name. What is he, a wide receiver?

LASERFAST GUY

Running back.

VENGEANCE

Do you know where he is right now?

FRED BARR

He almost always tweets at least once from whatever nightclub he goes to. Plus I have his cell number.

VENGEANCE

Call him.

Fred pauses.

FRED BARR

How do I know you're really legit? You could be a couple of weirdos stalking Peter.

Vengeance takes two steps toward the quarterback. His SHADOW from the streetlight engulfs Fred.

VENGEANCE

Listen Mr. Hot Shot quarterback, we left our superhero league member cards at home. You're just gonna have to trust us.

FRED BARR

Fine.

He produces his phone and calls Peter.

FRED BARR (CONT'D)

Hey, where you at?

(Three beats)

Uh huh. Okay, well I've two, ah, law-enforcement types here who think you might be attacked or kidnapped.

(Two beats)

I'm serious. I don't believe it but they do.

LaserFast Guy MOTIONS for the phone.

FRED BARR (CONT'D)

Hold on, I'm going to let you talk to one of them.

LaserFast Guy puts the phone to his ear.

LASERFAST GUY

Mr. Adonis, where are you?

LaserFast Guy pulls the phone away from his ear. He looks at Vengeance.

LASERFAST GUY (CONT'D)

He's at Freddy's place. It's on Nicollet and 15th. I've gotten sloshed there a couple times in the distant past.

He sticks the phone back to his ear.

LASERFAST GUY (CONT'D)

Alright, Mr. Adonis, you just sit tight. We'll be there in less than ten minutes. Hello, hello, you there?

He hits a couple of buttons, gets to the call log, finds the most recent dialed out number and calls it.

LASERFAST GUY (CONT'D)

Come on, answer the damn phone.

LaserFast Guy SIGHES while handing the phone back to Barr.

LASERFAST GUY (CONT'D)

(To Vengeance)

Screw it. We know where he's at. Let's cruise.

Vengeance WHIRLS AROUND and makes for the street. His partner hustles down the stairs. LaserFast Guy turns back to Barr.

LASERFAST GUY (CONT'D)
 Thanks. And by the way, in my book,
 you are the star of the team.

FRED BARR
 Thanks. My wife thinks so too.

INT. FREDDY'S PLACE - NIGHT

The two superheroes stand just inside the front entrance.
 They scan the space. LaserFast Guy frowns his frustration.

LASERFAST GUY
 Damn it, he's not here.

VENGEANCE
 Maybe he's in the bathroom.

LASERFAST GUY
 Possibly.

The bartender is MAX MALONE -- 22, chubby, pierced ear and a
 tattoo of giant beer on his right wrist. He CLEARS his
 throat.

MAX
 Can I help you, ah, guys?

LASERFAST GUY
 We're looking for Peter Adonis.

MAX
 You just missed him. He left like
 three minutes ago.

LASERFAST GUY
 He say where he's going?

MAX
 No but since it's a game day
 tomorrow, I'm betting he's calling
 it a night and going to his car.

VENGEANCE
 Where's the nearest parking ramp?

MAX
 Oh he never uses parking ramps.
 Even though he makes millions every
 year, he's a miser. He parks on the
 street. He tips like shit too.

VENGEANCE

Yeah well I guess that's your problem.

A customer YELLS for a refill.

MAX

Sorry, I gotta get back to work.

LASERFAST GUY

One more question: does he have a favorite parking spot around here?

MAX

He actually does. There's a little side street on the other side of Loring Park. Don't know the name of the street but it's right by the tennis courts.

LASERFAST GUY

Much obliged. Hey, I don't have cash on me but the next time I'm here, for a Diet Coke, no booze, I'll tip you very nicely.

MAX

I'll believe it when I see it.

He whirls around to wait on the thirsty patron. Superheroes are off to catch a super quick and talented running back.

EXT. LORING PARK - NIGHT

Adonis, wide receiver ROY MICKELSON (25) and two of their buddies (mid 20's) stroll through Loring Park. Out of the darkness comes the Doctor of Dismay.

ADONIS

Who in the hell are you?

DOCTOR OF DISMAY

The last person you see before you die.

ADONIS

You and what army?

The doctor's HORDE OF CRONIES storm into sight right behind their demented leader. The first henchmen is KRULL -- 6'7", smothered in satanic tattoos, bald and snarling.

ADONIS (CONT'D)

Yeah well the bigger they are, the harder they fall. I've run over guys bigger than you.

KRULL

Yeah well this time you're the one who's going to be trampled.

Krull SPRINTS at Adonis. The star player tenses up, ready for battle. At the last second, he DARTS to the left while simultaneously THROWING out his right foot to trip Krull. The giant henchman SCREAMS as he FLIES through the air.

Adonis LAUGHS. Then he sees a legion of henchmen, most of them at least as big and imposing as Krull.

ADONIS

Shit.

One of Adonis' buddies, KEVIN ERICKSON -- 24, black, handsome, muscular -- is surrounded by four other henchmen. He throws up his hands in surrender. No good. The henchmen rush in and PUNCH and KICK him repeatedly.

Adonis SCREAMS as he sprints toward his buddy. Kevin breathes his last breath just as the running back reaches him.

ADONIS (CONT'D)

(Yelling)

You pieces of shit!

He THROWS a punch at the giant henchman. Krull laughs while grabbing Adonis's fist.

KRULL

Nice try you pathetic fuck.

The giant squeezes hard. Adonis SCREAMS in pain. The running back strains to free himself.

It doesn't work. He KICKS Krull in the crotch. Krull yells out. Adonis THROWS a left that briefly stuns his opponent.

KRULL (CONT'D)

Prepare to die, loser.

Krull rears back to punch Adonis' lights out.

LASERFAST GUY

Not so fast, big guy.

The speeding superhero covers the park's expanse in less than two seconds. Breathing hard, LaserFast Guy comes up to Krull. He catches his breath.

LASERFAST GUY (CONT'D)
Nice haircut.

He throws a FLURRY OF KICKS AND PUNCHES that brings Krull to his knees.

LASERFAST GUY (CONT'D)
How does that feel, baldy?

LaserFast Guy turns his gaze from Krull to the horde of henchmen.

LASERFAST GUY (CONT'D)
Fuck.

Vengeance runs up to him. He sees what his partner sees.

VENGEANCE
Now what?

LASERFAST GUY
Now we kick some serious loser,
villain-type ass.

The hordes of bad guys converge on the two superheroes.

VENGEANCE
This will be interesting.

Vengeance notices Krull straining to get up. He strides over to Krull and launches a KICK to the giant's solar plexus. Krull is incapacitated. LaserFast Guy takes on the second bad guy, a seven footer with a serious attitude.

HENCHMEN #2
Bye bye, little guy.

LaserFast Guy flashes the back of his hand.

LASERFAST GUY
Talk to the hand.

He punches the big guy ten times in less than two seconds. Before he can react, LaserFast Guy throws one last punch to the giant's jaw. Henchman #2 DROPS to the ground.

LASERFAST GUY (CONT'D)
Chew on that.

At least fifty more of the Doctor's army surround the two superheroes.

VENGEANCE

This should be fun.

LASERFAST GUY

That's the spirit.

Vengeance takes out the first attacker. LaserFast Guy follows up by punching out another henchman. Adonis, standing twenty yards away, is assaulted by another bald psycho.

ADONIS

Die scum bag.

He throws a punch, dodges a punch and unleashes a kick that knocks down his opponent.

LaserFast Guy BLAZES IN and steps in front of Adonis's next attacker.

LASERFAST GUY

Not tonight, my friend.

He THROWS a lightning-quick series of punches but the giant laughs off the blows.

HENCHMAN #3

You call those punches?

He reaches for LaserFast Guy's neck. LaserFast Guy reacts quickly enough so the big guy's beefy right hand doesn't choke him. However, the henchman gets hold of the gold chain around his neck. Henchman rips the chain in two. LaserFast Guy's talisman falls to the ground.

LASERFAST GUY

That's going to be a problem.

VENGEANCE

We're screwed with a capital F.

LASERFAST GUY

Not so fucking fast. I haven't worked this hard on my recovery to let a setback like this stop me.

LaserFast Guy takes a DEEP BREATH, centers himself and has just enough time to DUCK a roundhouse right from Henchman #3. Superhero THROWS a serious elbow to the bad guy's rib cage. Henchman #3 DOUBLES OVER. LaserFast Guy clobbers his opponent with a double-fisted blow to the back of the neck.

LaserFast Guy retrieves the talisman. He sticks it into the front right pocket of his Zubas.

Three more from the Doctor of Dismay's gang surround Vengeance. LaserFast Guy starts toward them. He's intercepted by three more henchmen.

LASERFAST GUY (CONT'D)

What the hell, is there a henchmen factory nearby?

INTERCUT TO VENGEANCE POV:

The dark superhero sees the three henchmen, all at least six foot six and 250 pounds, clad in executioner's garb, smiling at him. A guillotine, the BLADE raised to full height, stands next to one henchman. The other two converge on Vengeance, one carrying a straitjacket.

HENCHMAN WITH STRAITJACKET

Mr. Vengeance, we have a special tonight on straitjackets. The first and last one you'll ever need is free of charge.

OTHER CHARGING HENCHMAN

Yeah, people are dyin' to get 'em.

VENGEANCE

Don't give up your day job. Or is it night job?

Vengeance whips out iPhone-like device, presses screen three times, He APPEARS TO CHANGE into a seven-foot demon from the darkest reaches of hell. Both henchmen are momentarily frozen with fear. Vengeance takes the opportunity to KICK the one in the crotch. He drops like a sack of flour thrown off an apartment building roof. The one holding the straitjacket finally reacts.

Too late. Vengeance is around in back of him and puts him into the straitjacket.

Despite his bulk, Vengeance has little problem pushing him toward the guillotine.

HENCHMAN NOW WEARING STRAITJACKET

Hey, I was kidding. I wasn't really going to put this on you.

Vengeance smiles while SHAKING HIS HEAD.

VENGEANCE

I'm a dark superhero, not a dumb one.

The henchmen by the beheading device stands defiantly, chest out, hands on hips.

VENGEANCE (CONT'D)

Oh please.

In an instant, Vengeance grabs the straitjacketed henchman by the ankles and uses him as a human baseball bat. He knocks the other crony out with a BLOW to the forehead by a member of his own gang.

Vengeance DRAGS the KICKING and SCREAMING henchman over to guillotine, He positions his neck into the notch.

HENCHMAN NOW WEARING STRAITJACKET

You're not really going to kill me like this. You're one of the good guys.

VENGEANCE

I watched my wife Lisa commit a slow suicide by daily deluges of vodka. Witnessing her final moments were a nightmare. Watching yours is a different matter.

He YANKS on a ROPE connected the GLEAMING metal blade. The blade raises up and the tope connected to the guillotine meets another blade. Rope is cut. The KILLING BLADE PLUMMETS toward its victim.

A crimson fountain of BLOOD SHOOTs into the air. HEAD DROPS onto the ground.

VENGEANCE (CONT'D)

Give Lucifer my best. I'll be seeing him soon. But not tonight.

INTERCUT TO LASERFAST GUY'S POV

Superhero catches the rolling head out of the corner of his eye. He THROWS a series of lefts and rights that knocks out the last of latest wave of henchmen. LaserFast Guy, HUFFING AND PUFFING WITH SWEAT COVERING HIS ARMS AND FACE, peers through the gloom at Vengeance and the headless henchman.

LASERFAST GUY

(To Vengeance)

What the hell are you doing?

VENGEANCE

What are you talking about? I handled my portion of the loser bad guys in my unique fashion.

LASERFAST GUY (CONT'D)

Our mission is to safeguard the Vikings' star running back who was about to be abducted or maybe worse.

Vengeance MOTIONS to the two unconscious and one dead body.

VENGEANCE

I say these three are no longer imminent threats to abduct or harm anyone. Especially that guy.

LaserFast Guy throws up his hands.

LASERFAST GUY

I give up. You be like Frank Sinatra and do it your way. I disavow any knowledge of your bloodthirsty ways.

VENGEANCE

That's probably for the best.

LaserFast Guy and Vengeance walk slowly toward one another while alternating glancing between Adonis taking cover behind giant oak tree and back at the direction from whence came the previous hordes of lunatic criminal types.

LaserFast Guy stops, turns away from the Vikings player and peers into the darkness.

LASERFAST GUY

Alright, Doctor of Dismay, I know you can hear me. Get your demented, destructive ass out here so we can settle this once and for all.

The Doctor of Dismay, with his robotic legs and snake friends slithering over him, emerges from the shadows.

DOCTOR OF DISMAY

Ah, my dear old friend. We meet again so soon.

LASERFAST GUY

Tonight I'm getting all the breaks.

DOCTOR OF DISMAY

Indeed, you get them at the expense of others.

LASERFAST GUY

What are you talking about?

DOCTOR OF DISMAY

I'll get to that in a bit. First I want to introduce a very special member of my organization.

LASERFAST GUY

Special member of your organization? He's special because he's the only left in an upright position.

DOCTOR OF DISMAY

Touche. Actually it might appear that way but you'd be surprised.

He turns toward the grove of trees behind him.

DOCTOR OF DISMAY (CONT'D)

Frank, bring Leviathan out.

From the blackness, right-hand man Frank pushes a rolling cage that contains LEVIATHAN -- 27, seven and a half feet tall, pushing a quarter ton. A black loincloth is the only stitch of clothing on the massive, muscled frame. A single tattoo of a sea serpent covers ninety percent of his body.

LaserFast Guy's JAW DROPS. He snaps himself out of the spell and turns to Vengeance.

LASERFAST GUY (Softly to Vengeance)

Ah, er, you want to handle this one? I'm fast and quick but it's going to take some serious strength and balls to handle this behemoth.

DOCTOR OF DISMAY

Yes, we'll let the brawny types pummel each other while we handle the intellectually weighty issues.

LASERFAST GUY

Like what?

DOCTOR OF DISMAY

Hold on.

(To Frank)
(MORE)

DOCTOR OF DISMAY (CONT'D)

Let him out so he can take care of
business.

The Doctor POINTS at the tree behind which the running back
COWERS.

DOCTOR OF DISMAY (CONT'D)

You, Peter Adonis, get your sorry,
cowardly, Viking ass out from
behind that tree. Now.

Adonis SLOWLY CREEPS out into sight.

DOCTOR OF DISMAY (CONT'D)

Go over here.

ADONIS

No way. I'm not coming any closer
to your psycho self.

The villain produces a SMALL BLACK METAL BOX. A black metal
bar protrudes from the top.

DOCTOR OF DISMAY

If you do not comply with my
demands, I will detonate this bomb
and we all die in one glorious
instant of pain and heat.

ADONIS

You are one crazy Son of a Bitch.

DOCTOR OF DISMAY

I like to like of myself as someone
who thinks outside of the box.

He points at the bomb as he says it.

LASERFAST GUY

Come on, do as he says. I'd like to
live another day. How about you?

ADONIS

Hell yeah. We gotta beat those
losers from Texas. If I die, we
don't have a chance.

LASERFAST GUY

Alright then, do as he says.

Adonis walks over so that he's in between LaserFast Guy and
the Doctor of Dismay.

DOCTOR OF DISMAY
Now we get down to the big stuff.

INTERCUT TO VENGEANCE POV

He sees the muscular, tattooed giant striding toward him.

VENGEANCE
Bring it on, big boy.

He tenses, growls and launches a lightning-quick kick at the opponent's right knee. Leviathan deflects the attack with his right hand. The missed kick throws Vengeance off balance. Opponent uses opportunity to up end the superhero. Vengeance falls to the ground. Leviathan pounces on Vengeance but superhero rolls away a split second before Leviathan can fall on top of him.

Vengeance hops to his feet. Leviathan is on his feet a split second later.

LEVIATHAN
You will die shortly. Any last words?

The assassin sprints at Vengeance. Vengeance runs at him. They halt after they're within arms' reach of one another.

VENGEANCE
You won't believe this but I have a different opinion about that.

Vengeance feints with his left hand, then throws a right that makes it past Leviathan's defense. It connects solidly with his opponent's jaw. Leviathan smiles.

VENGEANCE (CONT'D)
What the hell?

LEVIATHAN
You call that a punch?

He LAUGHS deep and long.

VENGEANCE
That was just practice, asshole.

He starts to throw a punch. Leviathan is ready to block it. Vengeance pulls up short with the right hand. Instead he lashes out a BLURRY FAST KICK with his left leg. Vengeance lands the kick square to the side of the giant's inside left kneecap.

The SNAPPING of bone and ligament is followed an instant later by Leviathan's HOWLS of pain as he CRUMPLES to the ground holding his injured knee.

VENGEANCE (CONT'D)

In case you were wondering, I call that a real kick. Any questions?

Leviathan is in too much pain to respond. Vengeance throws several quick lefts and rights to the assassin's face.

LEVIATHAN

Don't give up your day job to become a professional boxer.

Vengeance LAUNCHES a kick to Leviathan's larynx. The giant is rendered speechless. Now with one hand clutching his throat and the other around his shattered kneecap, Leviathan is helpless. Vengeance falls on him like an animal. He kicks Leviathan in the head repeatedly.

INTERCUT TO LASERFAST GUY'S POV

He glances and sees his partner kicking Leviathan into unconsciousness or worse.

LASERFAST GUY

Doctor, excuse me for a moment.

He GLARES in the direction of Vengeance and Leviathan.

LASERFAST GUY (CONT'D)

Hold on you Son of a Bitch, he's already subdued! You don't have to kill him, for Christ's sake!

Vengeance continues assault. LaserFast Guy shakes his head in resignation. He throws up his hands.

LASERFAST GUY (CONT'D)

I disavow any knowledge of my partner's psychotic behavior.

Peter Adonis sits halfway between the more civilized of the two superheroes and the villain. Vengeance remains off to the side. He sneaks a glance at Leviathan. The giant is not moving one bit. He returns his attention to the showdown between his partner and the Doctor of Dismay.

LASERFAST GUY (CONT'D)

Show me what you got, evil doctor.

DOCTOR OF DISMAY
You made me what I am today.

LASERFAST GUY
What does that mean?

DOCTOR OF DISMAY
You were the drunk driver who hit
and maimed me for life. That was
just over nineteen years ago.

LASERFAST GUY
That must be some kick-ass weed
you're smoking.

Doctor of Dismay shakes his head in condescending amusement.

DOCTOR OF DISMAY
Of course your addictive mind
migrates to a mind-altering
substance as the explanation.
No, my friend, I do not smoke
marijuana.

FRANK
(Chiming in from the shadows)
But you do eat psychedelic
mushrooms.

DOCTOR OF DISMAY
(To Frank)
Unless I speak to you, Frank, shut
the fuck up.

LASERFAST GUY
Again I'll ask: what in the hell
are you talking about?

DOCTOR OF DISMAY
I was so traumatized by the whole
ordeal that I was unable to recall
any details of the accident. But a
little over three months ago, I
summoned the courage to see a
hypnotist. She helped me break
through the mental barrier.

LASERFAST GUY
Does the phrase *full of shit* mean
anything to you?

DOCTOR OF DISMAY

You resided in the south Miami area
for a time back in the early
nineteen nineties.

LaserFast Guy scrunches up his face.

DOCTOR OF DISMAY (CONT'D)

And you drove a nineteen seventy-
eight olive-colored *Chevy Impala*
with a license plate number three
two nine DRK.

LaserFast Guy stands with both hands on his hips.

LASERFAST GUY

Well I don't recall the plate
number but the rest of it is right.
How do you know that?

DOCTOR OF DISMAY

A few Internet searches and calls
to the Miami DMV got me a listing
of all owners of that vehicle from
nineteen seventy-five and later.
According to the DMV, you were the
owner of the vehicle that hit me
before leaving the scene.

Taken aback, not accepting it, LaserFast Guy shakes his head.

LASERFAST GUY

There's gotta be a Statute of
Limitations. Come on, nineteen
years ago. And even though I owned
that car, there's no way to connect
me with your injuries.

DOCTOR OF DISMAY

There's nothing the police or the
courts can do now. That's why I'm
doling out my form of vigilante
justice.

LASERFAST GUY

Okay, I can see how you could
connect me to the vehicle but how
in the hell did you know I am
LaserFast Guy?

Vengeance casually produces the iPhone-like device and
presses three spots on the screen.

DOCTOR OF DISMAY

After I didn't see anything in the papers or on the Internet about your DWI arrest, I knew something weird was going on. So I had my private investigator, who's an ex-cop, get the lowdown from the arresting officers. He said a NSA agent took custody of you.

LASERFAST GUY

Good old Agent Jesus.

DOCTOR OF DISMAY

Yes indeed. I Googled NSA and there were sporadic references to NSA employing superheroes over the years. That's when I first suspected that Dan Wilson might have an alter ego.

LASERFAST GUY

But you didn't know for sure.

DOCTOR OF DISMAY

No but I hired a computer geek to hack into the NSA computer network. It took three days and a hefty fee but the young techy pulled it off. That's when I learned about Project SUPERDRUNK.

LASERFAST GUY

A fucking ha. But how'd you find out my cell number?

DOCTOR OF DISMAY

It was in the computer file. All the superhero participants' demographic info was there -- name, alter ego, address, birth date and phone numbers.

LaserFast Guy nods furtively. Peter Adonis' eyes tilt skyward. The Doctor of Dismay sees Adonis staring skyward. He looks up too.

Four robotic gargoyles HOVER twenty feet overhead.

DOCTOR OF DISMAY (CONT'D)

What in the hell --

LaserFast Guy SPRINTS at the Doctor of Dismay. He turns on the afterburners. The Doctor of Dismay sees LaserFast Guy too late. The speedy superhero snatches the bomb away from him.

DOCTOR OF DISMAY (CONT'D)

No, no, it can't be.

LaserFast Guy moves so fast that he fumbles with the bomb. The metal bar on top starts to go down. It's nearly at detonation level. LaserFast Guy grabs the bar. He stops its descent just in time to avoid blowing them all up.

Vengeance STRIDES toward the Doctor of Dismay from one side, LaserFast Guy, with bomb in hand, approaches from the other side.

VENGEANCE

Actually that's where you're wrong, psycho doctor.

LASERFAST GUY

Doctor, it's time to take your medicine.

He produces cell phone.

LASERFAST GUY (CONT'D)

This is LaserFast Guy. Vengeance and I are in Loring Park. We've got the Doctor of Dismay here.

(Two beats)

That's right. Now the Vikings game will be decided fair and square.

INT. METRODOME - DAY

Fred Barr fades back to pass. A Dallas defensive tackle breaks through the offensive line. He's about to sack Barr. The wily quarterback ducks down to avoid the tackle. Another Cowboys lineman closes in. Barr fires a swing pass to Peter Adonis.

Adonis CATCHES the ball, breaks two tackles and fakes out another defender. A defensive back stands goes for Adonis' knees. The running back launches himself toward the end zone. He SAILS right over the attempted tackle and into the end zone for the winning touchdown.

The crowd GOES MAD. The home team is bound for the Super Bowl.

INT. POSH MANSION - CONTINUOUS

Bobby Belton sits in the living room watching a theater style TV. His faithful dog, Ernest Hemingway, lays next to the chair. He's watching the Vikings game.

BOBBY

Way to go, Adonis.

He looks at the dog.

BOBBY (CONT'D)

Ernest Hemingway, you liked that play, right?

Dog perks up its ear. Bobby grabs a glass filled with ice and vodka. Bobby winces as he drains the rest of the drink.

INT. HALFWAY HOUSE - DAY

Steve, Travis, and Dan WHOOP and HOLLER in front of the living room TV.

TRAVIS

Holy shit, did you see Adonis fly through the air? He looked like Super Fucking Man!

NATE

He did a great impersonation of an airplane. That was incredible.

DAN

Super Flipping Bowl bound, that's what we are.

Dan drinks ice water. Travis hops up to fix another drink. Nate gets up and grabs another beer from the fridge.

NATE

Hey Dan, you sure you don't want a beer or something?

DAN

Very sure.

He JUMPS UP.

DAN (CONT'D)

I'm going for a ride. See you guys later.

ULTRA ACROBATIC MAN
We'll save you some vodka.

DAN
No thanks. You guys can have it
all.

Dan disappears through the door into the great outdoors.

INT. POSH MANSION - NIGHT

Bobby struggles to get out of the easy chair in front of the sprawling TV screen. On his feet, he staggers. He steps on Ernest Hemingway's left paw. Dog yelps and scampers away.

BOBBY
(Slurring)
Sorry, little guy.

He staggers over to the TV with drink glass in hand. Bobby bends over and grabs a DVD labeled WEDDING. With a shaky hand, he manages to insert the DVD into the player.

Bobby stands up, staggers over the bar and fixes himself another drink. Behind him on the big screen, a church full of dressed up people watch a tall, beautiful bride in a pink gown, LISA, slowly walk up the aisle.

Bobby finds the biggest bottle of Grey Goose he's got. He fills a tall glass with ice, pours in Grey Goose almost to the top, splashes Coke on top and starts for the easy chair.

Bobby stumbles, tries to catch his balance by grabbing the edge of the bar but can't keep from plunging face first onto the floor. Drink goes flying across the room. Ice cubes tumble out along with the boozy concoction.

BOBBY (CONT'D)
(Yelling)
Fuck.

An instant later, Bobby hoists himself up to fix another drink.

EXT. BIKE TRAIL - NIGHT

Flurries swirl around the frigid air. Dan rides along, headlights strobing a path in front of him. He meets the jogger he almost ran over earlier. Dan motions to his eyes and then to the jogger.

DAN
Still watching you, dude.

JOGGER
Whatever.

Jogger makes an extra wide arc to put extra space between him and Dan.

DAN
Don't worry, I'm not crazy. I'm
just conventionally challenged.

INT. POSH MANSION - NIGHT

Bobby, eyes glazed over from drink, peers at the TV screen.

INSERT IMAGES FROM TV

Bobby shoves wedding cake into Anne's mouth. She responds in kind. They LAUGH uproariously, as do the wedding reception guests.

BACK TO SCENE

Bobby is on the edge of the easy chair, TEARS inching their way down his face. He takes another drink of Grey Goose, then POINTS at the TV.

BOBBY
And then you drank yourself to
death and not only took your life,
you fucked up the rest of mine.

He tries to get up, falls drunkenly back into the easy chair. He tries again. Bobby's upright...barely.

He stalks to within five feet of the TV, rears back and hurls the drink into the TV screen. An EXPLOSION of glass, then the power button switches from blue (on) to amber (off).

Bobby GETS DOWN on his hands and knees. He grabs one of the shards of glass. While still on his knees, he slits left wrist cross ways. BLOOD FLOWS out of the wound.

Bobby LAUGHS.

BOBBY CONT'D)
(To self)
Oh shit, that's right. In order to
really kill yourself, you have to
cut vertically.

Reggie enters the room.

REGGIE

I heard a big commotion in here.
What the hell is going on?

Bobby doesn't look up. He slashes vertically down his left wrist with the jagged piece of glass, the motion carving a deep wound that produces an immediate BLOOD letting.

REGGIE (CONT'D)

Shit Bobby, what the hell are you
doing?

He RUSHES over to Bobby but it's too late. Bobby collapses into the midst of the shattered glass, a pool of BLOOD forming under his left wrist.

REGGIE (CONT'D)

Bobby, hey Bobby, can you hear me?

BOBBY

I can but it doesn't matter. I'm
going to join Lisa.

REGGIE

Shit man, Lisa would have waited
for you. You didn't need to do
this.

BOBBY

That's where you're wrong. I had
(BEAT) no (BEAT) choice.

Reggie has cell phone out. He dials 911.

REGGIE

My boss, my dear friend, slit his
wrist. He's bleeding pretty bad. He
needs help right away.

((Two beats)

Okay. Hurry.

Reggie rifles through Bobby's pockets. He finds his boss' cell phone. Reggie searches for a number.

REGGIE (CONT'D)

(To self)

There we go.

He dials the number.

DAN (O.S.)

Hey Bobby, how about that game,
huh? Vikings are going --

REGGIE

Dan, this isn't Bobby. It's Reggie,
Bobby's domestic assistant.

DAN (O.S.)

Uh, okay. So what's going on?

REGGIE

Bobby just tried to commit suicide.

DAN (O.S.)

What? How?

REGGIE

He somehow broke the big-screen TV
and used one of the jagged pieces
to slit his left wrist. I called
nine one one but...I don't know,
man. It may be too late.

DAN (O.S.)

All right, listen, hold tight. Make
a tourniquet out of a towel or
blanket, whatever. Stop the
bleeding. And Keep talking to him.
Hold his hand. Let him know there's
another human being who cares about
him. I'm coming over in LaserFast
Guy mode.

REGGIE

But what can you do?

DAN (O.S.)

Whatever I can.

INT. POSH MANSION - NIGHT

Bobby ties a torn bath towel around Bobby's left wrist.

REGGIE

Boss, hold on, all right? Help is
on the way.

Bobby MUMBLES something incomprehensible.

REGGIE (CONT'D)

Didn't catch that, boss, but that's
okay. You're still alive.

Doorbell RINGS. Reggie hops to answer it but Dan appears in the room.

LASERFAST GUY

Alright, is he still with us?

REGGIE

For now.

LaserFast Guy zips over to his partner.

LASERFAST GUY

Bobby, hey, it's Dan. Or LaserFast Guy if you prefer. Can you hear me?

BOBBY

Who?

LASERFAST GUY

Dan. I'm officially LaserFast Guy now but for your purposes, I'm just plain old Dan, another human being who cares about what the hell happens to his best friend.

BOBBY

No one should care for me. I let my wife kill herself with alcohol. I've endangered others by drinking and driving. I don't deserve to live.

LaserFast Guy takes off his mask and body armor. He leaves the Zubas on.

DAN

Listen Bobby, there's no sin so great that God won't forgive it. You've got to forgive yourself. You're focusing on the negative parts of your life. You've done a ton of great things for others. Including saving our asses last night with the Doctor of Dismay.

BOBBY

You did most of the work.

DAN

The hell I did. You took out Leviathan. I could never have done that. And you distracted the evil doctor with the gargoyles.

(MORE)

DAN (CONT'D)

Without that, we were, as you put it, screwed with a capitol F.

BOBBY

Maybe.

DAN

No maybes about it. It's the truth. Now you have to promise me you're going to hang on until the paramedics arrive. We're going to get you through this but you have to want to live.

BOBBY

I want to join my baby in heaven.

In the background, sound of WAILING SIREN.

DAN

Man, Anne will wait for you. Trust me. Spirit bodies got all the time in the world. When it's really your time to go, she'll be there. I promise you that.

BOBBY

She may have all the time in the world. I do not.

The doorbell CHIMES. Reggie RUSHES out of the room.

DAN

The calvary is here. Alright, we're agreed, right? Lisa will wait for you.

BOBBY

She won't have to (BEAT)wait (BEAT) any (BEAT) longer.

Bobby's eyes glaze over in a DEATH STARE.

DAN (YELLING)

No, Bobby, come on, man. Don't go. Bobby!

Paramedics burst into the rec room.

PARAMEDIC #1

How is he?

DAN

We just lost him.

PARAMEDIC #1

Let's see what we can do.

The paramedics begin administering to Bobby. Paramedic #2 shakes his head.

PARAMEDIC #2

No pulse, no heartbeat.

PARAMEDIC #1

Alright, let's try to revive him.

They get out electroshock gear. They shock him once. Bobby's body jumps but he's still dead. Another shock. Same result.

PARAMEDIC #1 (CONT'D)

Once more.

Paramedic #2 applies one more shock.

PARAMEDIC #1 (CONT'D)

Damn.

DAN

That's it? Nothing. We really fucking lost him?

Paramedics both nod 'yes' slowly. Reggie turns away.

DAN (CONT'D)

Bobby, you Son of a Bitch. Now I got no one to save my sorry ass in a tight spot. I'm gonna get you for this.

EXT. MINNEAPOLIS STREETS - NIGHT

Dan PEDALS along Nicollet Mall. An Irish pub, O'Shaunessy's, is coming up on the right. Dan veers off the street and gets off the bike. He locks it up to a street lamp post and ducks inside.

INT. O'SHAUNESSY'S - CONTINUOUS

Dan walks into a BOISTEROUS, rowdy atmosphere. Every table is full of ale and whiskey swilling patrons. Dan cuts through the crowd. There's a single stool open at the bar. He grabs it.

The bartender, 52, auburn hair, sweating and smiling brightly, sees Dan.

BARTENDER

Ah my friend, what'll it be? We've got a house ale for three seventy-five --

DAN

(Interrupting)

I would like a nice, tall glass of ice water. With a lemon, please.

The bartender stares blankly at him for a second.

BARTENDER

Ah, alright then, one cold glass of ice water with a lemon coming up.

A couple of nearby patrons sneak quizzical looks at Dan. He smiles brightly back.

Bartender returns with his order. Dan tosses a five-dollar bill at him.

DAN

Many thanks.

BARTENDER

Thank you.

He HUSTLES OFF to pour another ale.

Dan solemnly grasps the glass of water and raises his glass.

DAN

(Softly to self)

Here's to you, my friend. Thanks for everything. I am dedicating the rest of my life to your memory. And I vow to not never choose the death that is alcohol.

Dan opens his eyes and drinks up while the bar patrons around him regard him with curiosity, then look quickly away.

EXT. MINNEAPOLIS BIKE TRAIL - DAY

Dan PEDALS around the trail. He's wears a T-shirt that reads, "Vengeance is mine, says the Lord." He comes up on a trio of men all wearing T-shirts that say, "AIR - Alcoholics In Recovery. Proud members of the 7th Street AA Club".

The man in the rear is HANK BROWN, 53, ruddy complexion, steel-rim glasses, wearing bike helmet, and Lycra shorts. He sees Dan.

DAN

Hey, I thought you were supposed to be anonymous.

HANK

We keep all the other members' identities confidential. We three have chosen to make a statement. We hope that by making known our membership in AA, it will encourage other alcoholics to address their disease.

DAN

That's cool. I've been to a few AA meetings but the whole program seemed too complex for me. One of the AA members pointed out that compared to how complicated drinking makes your life, the AA plan is simple.

HANK

That's exactly right, friend.

They're almost to the end of the trail. The rider in front turns onto the cross street.

HANK (CONT'D)

You want to ride with us old reformed drunks?

DAN

I would be honored.

Dan rides off with the three men.

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END

(MORE)

DAN (CONT'D)