

CAPTAIN MANIC

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FADE IN:

EXT. STEAM CITY - BANK - DAY

A bank on a corner of a block in a city where steam rises across the whole horizon. A run-down former factory town that has descended into a steam-punk hell-scape.

INT. BANK - DAY

Tellers and clients go about their business. Present day, but the bank has a 1950s feel-- a vestige of days past still in pristine condition.

GARY (O.S.)

They call people who know what's going to happen next clairvoyants, like Nosferatu-- no that's not right-- Nostradamus. Anyway, if you tell them what's going to happen next, people think you have supernatural powers, or powers from God, or the devil-- but sometimes you've just seen the same fucking thing too many fucking times.
"Okay, everyone, hands up and on your head!"

The front doors BURST OPEN.

THREE GUYS, mid-20s, tats, crash in, guns drawn. Trying to look tough, they're more like extras who didn't make the cut from "Machete." CUSTOMERS nonetheless gasp.

GANG LEADER

Okay, everyone, hands up and on your head.

GARY (O.S.)

Case in point. Match and set.

No one moves.

SECOND RATE MACHETE EXTRA

You all deaf?

FEMALE CUSTOMER

E-ex-cuse me, do you want us to put our hands up or on our heads?

The Guys look at each other. One waves his gun. The Second Rate Machete Extra looks at the Gang Leader.

SECOND RATE MACHETE EXTRA

Up?

The Gang Leader points his gun sideways, but at no one.

GANG LEADER

Up, Simon fuckin' says up. Simple
Simon says up, Simon Cowell says
up, Simon LeBon, too. Fu-ck-ing-Up!

All hands go up. A SECURITY GUARD touches his holster.

SECOND RATE MACHETE EXTRA

Oh, hells no!

The Second Rate Machete Extra fires. Totally misses. The Security Guard draws and fires. He misses and hits a hanging lamp. It comes crashing down. Idiots.

GANG LEADER

Goddamn it, Rodney.

The Gang Leader takes aim.

GARY (O.S.)

Okay, enough.

A SUPERHERO swoops down from his vantage point on an ornate marble balcony.

It's THE LORIS-- like the animal you find in Southeast Asia if you look hard enough. A combo of a raccoon, sloth and man in a costume trying to look all superhero-y.

GANG LEADER

Loris!

Freeze on his face. The Loris stands before him.

GARY (V.O.)

Let me back up.

FLASHBACK - EXT. INDIAN RAINFOREST - DAY (YEARS EARLIER)

GARY GANDERS, 30s, khaki field outfit, happily hacks his way through the jungle with a machete. He's not bad looking.

GARY (V.O.)

You have to give it to me. Back then, I was a good looking guy. Well, at least I looked like a guy. Now, remember that big chemical "mishap" in India.

EXT. INDIAN CHEMICAL PLANT - DAY

A big industrial plant belching toxic smoke. It EXPLODES.

EXT. INDIAN RAINFOREST - DAY

Gary chops through the dense rain forest.

GARY (V.O.)
That one. Well, shit flows down
river and so does chemical waste.

Gary sees a loris, cute, furry, giant eyes, in the shadows
licking some bubbling, neon pink slime. Gary smiles.

GARY (V.O.)
There she was. What brought me
here. And she was gorgeous.

The loris looks at him. Gary extends his hand. A beat. The
loris bites him. Gary winces in pain.

GARY (V.O.)
...and a bitch. Not the last one
you'll see. This is a loris.

SUPER: A PHOTO OF A LORIS.

The screen fills with text about Lorises. Their habitats,
eating habits, mating habits, pooping habits. The print gets
smaller and smaller and then reduces into a box in the lower
right corner of the screen.

GARY (V.O.)
Oh, did I mention this film has
footnotes? See I'm an academic.
Well, I was. Tenure track. Not
sure you can read all that, but I
can. Because I have EYES THE
FUCKING SIZE OF HALF MY HEAD.

CLOSE ON GARY'S FACE as it turns into the Loris.

LORIS
I'll keep the footnotes to a
minimum. You fuckers can't even be
expected to read the warning that
says "don't drink the Clorox."

INT. GARY'S TENT - NIGHT

Gary rolls on his cot, sweating, delirious. He rises. Drinks water. Looks in the mirror. He's a loris. He blinks. He's Gary.

INT. GARY'S TENT - DAY

Gary eats a pouch of trail mix. Was it just a fevered dream?

A NATIVE GUIDE enters, sees Gary, SCREAMS and runs out.

Gary looks in the mirror. He's a giant loris. He shakes his head. Back to Gary. Once more, loris.

END FLASHBACK.

INT. BANK - DAY

The Gang Leader's frozen face stares at the Loris.

GARY (V.O.)

Superman has x-ray vision. Peter Parker has his spidey-sense. Gary Ganders is a Loris. You get what you get, and you don't get upset. Well, I'm still a little upset.

The Gang Leader unfreezes and takes a shot at the Loris, who unlike a loris, moves fast and dodges it.

The Second Rate Machete Extra takes a shot. The Loris deflects it with his bullet proof cape.

The Loris pulls out a meteor hammer, swings it about his body and ensnares and knocks out the Second Rate Machete Extra.

A THRID RATE MACHETE EXTRA comically charges. The Loris leaps and avoids him. The thug hits a wall.

Without turning or looking, the Loris kicks backwards, smashing him into the wall to make sure he's knocked out.

The Gang Leader seizes the Female Customer and puts his gun to her head.

GANG LEADER

I'll smoke her.

LORIS

"Smoke her"? Really?

The Third Rate Machete Extra staggers up and points a sideways gun at the Loris. The Loris turns his head sideways.

THE LORIS'S P.O.V.

The gun is now straight. It turns back sideways as the Loris straightens his head.

LORIS
Sideways, like it's still 1994.
What's next the Rachel and a flip
phone?

The Gang Leader gets all cocky.

GANG LEADER
What are you going to do about it,
Panda Eyes?

ON THE LORIS

He snaps his hand. A claw shoots out and nails the Gang Leader right in his forearm. He winces and passes out.

The Loris spins and knocks the gun out of the Third Rate Machete Extra's hand.

LORIS
Didn't think a loris had those
moves, huh?

The entire front wall of the bank breaks apart, dust and debris fly everywhere.

A black armored vehicle bursts through. More gang members? No, the vehicle bears the not-merely-vaguely fascist Steam City police logo.

Jackbooted, heavily body-armored COPS stream out of it.

The phalanx of Cops part. Lieutenant OSMAN GEARLAP, mid-30s, appears. His greasy looks match his greasy personality, like the fry-o-later at Sonic-- no, worse.

The Loris' enormous eyes meet Gearlap's squinty ones.

Gearlap raises his hand. The Cops open fire, obliterating the Third Rate Machete Extra. But the fire power is excessive.

The Loris instinctively protects the Female Customer, wrapping her in his bulletproof cape and then tossing her aside to safety. Then a leap to the balcony and out.

Blood on the balcony ledge, where the Loris made his exit.

GARY (V.O.)
It wasn't always like this. It
wasn't ever like this...

MONTAGE - THE GLORY DAYS OF SUPERHEROES

- The Loris breaks up a drug cartel firing blow darts from an antique weapon in every direction.

- The Loris stops a truck hijacking.

- A SUPERHERO WHO LOOKS LIKE A MOTH shoots silk from his rump over a bad guy robbing a couple.

- A Venusian ship destroys a Steam City neighborhood with a salvo of lasers. A MUTANT-LIKE SUPERHERO turns a building corner, drawing the ship's attention.

- A GI JOE ON STEROIDS with a neutron bazooka comes from behind blowing it apart. It's downed in a river. Steam rises from the wreck as it sinks with a loud BUBBLING.

The BUBBLING continues, but not quite the same as before.

GARY (V.O.)
You should have seen it, beautiful.

... coughing...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. LONETTE LOLANGE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Bong smoke. It's Gary coughing. He takes another long hit and exhales his cloud into the cramped apartment full of mismatched furniture.

LONETTE LOLANGE, late 20s, African American, very fit, in a lavender t-shirt and black leggings, works on his wound.

GARY
There wasn't a bar where I couldn't
drink for free. There wasn't a
restaurant where I'd have to wait
and always...

LONETTE
...the best table.

GARY
Are you saying I'm a broken record?

LONETTE
Broken for sure. What's a record?

Gary winces at the antiseptic she's not too gently applying.

LONETTE
So what's the deal going it alone?

GARY
A bullshit bank robbery.

LONETTE
That's what the Human Tornado
thought when he blew his last wind
at First National Savings.

Gary offers her the bong. She pushes it away.

GARY
He was killed by a human squid
hybrid engineered by a guy with two
brains. You just don't see that
caliber of villain in Steam City
any more. Lucky for you.

LONETTE
What? You think I can't handle
myself? So that's why you never
take me with you.

GARY
It's not that. It's--

LONETTE
Yeah?

GARY
Your name. What if we're in the
throes of battle, and I have to
call your name? Bird of Ill Omen?
By the time I got it out the bad
guys would be in Tijuana. A supe
name's gotta be short, punchy.

Lonette scoffs.

GARY
 How about Ill Omen? Or
 (taking a bong hit and
 exhaling)
 BOIO. I like that.

LONETTE
 BOYO? I'm a girl.

GARY
 No, not with an i. It's a y. But
 how about just Bo? Like Diddley.
 Or Donaldson. Or Derek. A lot of
 Ds there. Wait, move, this is my
 favorite part.

A flat screen TV plays the last scene of "Gone With The
 Wind." Rhett delivers his line. Gary reacts to it.

GARY
 Outstanding.

Lonette shrugs.

GARY
 What? This is a great fucking
 movie, and that last line!

LONETTE
 Forgive me if I don't go bat shit
 crazy about a movie that gives me a
 career choice of Prissy or Mammy.
 And that's not the last line. The
 last line is Scarlett's-- "Tomorrow
 is another day."

GARY
 Because women always have to have
 the last word. Why do you think
 Rhett left? Ouch, easy.

Lonette gives him a little discomfort on finishing up his
 bandage. She smiles. Gary puts on his shirt and gets up.

LONETTE
 Are we going somewhere?

GARY
 The me part of we are -- is.

Lonette HARUMPHS. Gary bends to kiss her. She turns away.

GARY
 Okay, fine. I can't do this now.
 I've got a thing and
 (stressing it)
 Tomorrow is another day.

Gary LAUGHS and heads to the door.

INT. STEAM CITY ARENA - NIGHT

A heated basketball game. All elbows.

Through the players, at floor seats by the home team, we see Gary and his wife, ALEXANDRA, mid 30s, a tasty blond in a tasteful pants suit, pearls and gold earrings.

Alexandra has the type of style that comes naturally from a lifetime of wealth and privilege. Bored with the game, she looks at her phone.

Gary takes a swig of his stadium beer. Not to his liking. He pours some bourbon from a flask into the beer. He takes a shot before returning it to his blazer breast pocket.

GARY
 (yelling)
 Come on, defense for Christ sake.
 Aggressive, aggressive.

The PLAYERS glare at Gary. One in particular, OWENS, 20s, African American, drills Gary with his eyes. Alexandra looks up from her phone.

ALEXANDRA
 What are you getting so excited about?

GARY
 Owens, step it up. Earn that bonus.

Owens flips him the bird.

OWENS
 I did. You should try it some time. You can't marry everyone's daughter.

Alexandra doesn't even look up from her phone.

ALEXANDRA
 He's got you there.

Gary steps on the court, stopping the game.

GARY
What did you say?

Owens and Gary are toe-to-toe, almost center court. HOOTS and HOLLERS all around.

OWENS
I said be a good boy or Daddy-In-Law will take away those fancy seats, and
(looking at Alexandra,
blowing her a kiss)
Maybe I'll take something else.

She smiles a smile of pure sex. Gary loses it. He grabs Owens. Both benches empty.

INSERT - SMART PHONE SCREEN

The basketball brawl plays out.

INT. GARY AND ALEXANDRA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

A huge bedroom, floor to ceiling windows look out over the Steam City skyline. Sprawled on the bed, Gary watches the brawl on his phone. Alexandra sits by her art deco vanity in a silk night gown, very Rita Hayworth.

GARY
If that ref hadn't pulled me off, I woulda beat the shit out of him.

ALEXANDRA
Yeah, he's only got a foot and a half and sixty pounds on you.

She points to Gary's crotch.

ALEXANDER
And at least 6 inches.

Alexandra slinks over with a hand mirror. She leans over Gary to see the video. She snorts a line of coke off the mirror.

GARY
Daddy didn't teach you to share?

She hands him the mirror. He does a line.

ALEXANDRA

Did I hurt your masculinity?

She takes another snort. So does Gary.

GARY

Getting close to the line, Alex...

ALEXANDRA

Close enough to snort it, eh? What does a naturalist do anyway?

GARY

Probably as much as a rich guy's daughter who lives off of daddy's money and bitches about him but never manages to strike out on her own.

Alexandra leans in to kiss Gary, but spits in his face.

Gary grabs her, flips her over and straddles her, grabbing her throat and moves closer. She bites his lower lip and smiles. She kisses him deeply. His left hand massages her crotch over the silk night gown. She MOANS.

FLASHBACK - INT. TEDDY'S LUAU TIKI BAR - NIGHT (YEARS AGO)

The prototypical Polynesian bar. Bamboo everywhere, tables made of barrels, backlit signs showing beach scenes, drinks with little umbrellas in mugs with tiki faces.

GARY (V.O.)

Ah, Teddy's Luau Tiki Bar. Always packed with supes and their groupies.

A la Goodfellas, the CAMERA TRACKS past the booths, thatched bar and costumed SUPERHEROES, HOT WOMEN, ALIENS and OTHER WEIRDOS. As Gary speaks, we see the people he notes.

GARY (V.O.)

There was me, the Human Match...

A man scratches his head on the bar, it goes up in flames.

The Bartender, TEDDY LUAU, 30s, big Samoan guy in a yellow and white Polynesian shirt, douses The Match Head with seltzer. Everyone laughs.

GARY (V.O.)

Teddy Luau, he owns the place.
Rockhead, Ladderman, Pickleboy, the
Blimp, Joe the Gasser, Pufferfish,
Johnny Three Eyes-- we called him
that cause he had four eyes, funny,
right? The Terrible Tiki-- he fit
right in...

That one's face looks just like the mug of the drink he's
guzzling.

GARY

Of course, there were the aliens.
Venutians, Marsians-- they hate
being called Martians, don't ask me
why, and the groupies-- oh, the
groupies.

A bunch of Penthouse Rejects mob the Supes. The scene fades
into...

INT. TEDDY'S LUAU TIKI BAR - PRESENT DAY

The place has seen better days. If you squint real hard and
turn the fake tiki torch electric lamps down, you see its
former glory. Now, mostly empty with a few patrons.

GARY (V.O.)

Things are, well, different, now.

WE CLOSE IN ON TEDDY.

GARY (V.O.)

At least Teddy's still here. He's
put on a little weight. But he's
got a heart as big as that Samoan
body. I don't mean that
metaphorically. His heart is very
likely enlarged and made of pure
Spam.

Gary's slumped at the bar with a bourbon. Teddy looks at
Gary's phone with wild eyes.

TEDDY

Was Alex pissed?

GARY

We worked through it.

TEDDY
But howzit with her old man?

Teddy hands Gary his phone.

GARY
He wasn't there when we worked it
out. That would have been awkward.

Gary shudders at the thought.

TEDDY
Surprised you not went full Loris
on da kine.

GARY
Teddy, I'm not an amateur.

TEDDY
Just busting your Loris balls.
Lorisi got balls, right?

GARY
The plural of loris is lorises.

They LAUGH. Gary looks around.

GARY
Love what you've done with the
place.

TEDDY
No point. Most of the supes long
gone. There not even any aliens.

GARY
Neptunians.

TEDDY
(smiling)
Venusians.

GARY AND TEDDY
Alien sex.

They high five.

TEDDY
And now this guy.

Teddy motions to a 1980s wood tone consoled TV above the bar.

INSERT: STEAM CITY HALL - EARLIER

On the steps, surrounded by reporters, OSMAN GEARLAP drones away. GRAPHIC: "Lieutenant Osman Gearlap Steam City P.D."

GEARLAP

Crime continues to fall to unprecedented levels. And we're managing to do so despite the interference from so-called "superheroes." Let it be known. Superhero justice is over. The days of true justice are here.

GARY

Putz.

TEDDY

And look, the Mayor's behind him.

Gary focuses on MAYOR BREYER, 50s, whiter-than-white, staring at the camera and nodding.

EXT. PODIUM IN FRONT OF CITY HALL - EARLIER THAT DAY

We see what happened after the press conference.

The Mayor stops Gearlap as he exits the area.

MAYOR

Osman, about what you said back there, I understand the Loris had a lot to do with stopping that robbery today.

GEARLAP

You're afraid I hurt your furry friend's feelings?

MAYOR

It's not that. But there's a place for the supes.

GEARLAP

Lots of places: museums, the history books, the morgue.

EXT. MAYOR'S MANSION - NIGHT

Police patrol the grounds around the stately building. The shadow of the Loris passes behind them, unnoticed.

INT. MAYOR'S MANSION - BEDROOM - NIGHT

The Mayor and his WIFE, 60s, dyed blond hair, matronly nightgown, get into bed.

PPFFFT. The Mayor's Wife feels her neck. A small dart. She wobbles and looks like she might pass out on the bed, but she falls backwards banging her head on the floor. She's out.

The Mayor looks up and sees the Loris, blow gun in his mouth.

MAYOR

Oh, come on.

LORIS

I thought she'd fall on the bed.

The Loris bounces up and down on the bed a bit.

LORIS

Nice and soft.

The Loris pats the bed for the Mayor to sit. The Mayor does and looks down at his Wife.

MAYOR

She's going to be pissed.

LORIS

I'm pissed. Your boy almost killed me. I thought we had a thing.

MAYOR

We haven't had a thing for some time. Why not hang up the suit?

LORIS

Because... crime.

MAYOR

Gearlap's got that under control.

LORIS

He doesn't even have himself under control. He looked at me like he wanted to kill me.

MAYOR

I don't think he wants to kill you. He just doesn't want you to exist.

LORIS

That's a fine distinction.

MAYOR

He thinks you're an anachronism.

LORIS

Yes. Ahead of my time.

MAYOR

No, the other way. Like a--

LORIS

Clock in Shakespeare.

MAYOR

No, the other way. Like an outhouse.

LORIS

He's the outhouse. And, by that, I mean full of shit.

MAYOR

He's got all this fancy gadgetry and look what you're using-- what is that thing?

LORIS

Don't diss the blowgun.

The Loris points at the Mayor's Wife.

LORIS

The tribes of the Mapuche have been using this for centuries.

MAYOR

Like I said, old and dated.

LORIS

Tried and true. Got me out of a lot of jams

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

It bears a striking resemblance to the Pool Room of the Four Seasons but in its early 1960s Don Draper golden era. Osman Gearlap sips a Martini. He squeezes a lemon rid into it as Alexandra enters, wearing a tasteful but sexy black dress.

GARY (V.O.)

Yeah, that's about right.

The WAITER pulls out a chair. Alexandra slides into it. Gearlap points at his martini, suggesting one for Alexandra.

ALEXANDRA
Yes, but with an olive for
Chrissake.

Gearlap motions to the Waiter to fetch it.

ALEXANDRA
So why the dinner?

GEARLAP
Curiosity.

ALEXANDRA
About.

GEARLAP
Various and sundry.

The Waiter brings her Martini. Alexandra sips it.

GEARLAP
Bitter enough?

ALEXANDRA
Me or the drink?

GEARLAP
(sipping and ogling)
To figure that out, I'd have to
taste both.

ALEXANDRA
If I want bad Raymond Chandler
dialogue, I'll talk to my husband.

GEARLAP
You two even talking after that
basketball fiasco?

ALEXANDRA
Oh, we talked.

Alexandra takes a sip and pushes away from the table.

GEARLAP
Wait... I'm going to announce a run
against Mayor Breyer. Word is
you're smart and know how to get
things done. I need a campaign
manager like that.

ALEXANDRA
Is it me or my father you want?

GEARLAP
Direct, I like that. Yeah, you
being his daughter helps. And he's
got no love lost for Breyer, right?

ALEXANDRA
I honestly don't know what he has
love for.

GEARLAP
So let's find out.

ALEXANDRA
You want him. Try your act on him.

INT. LONETTE LOLANGE'S BEDROOM - ONE NIGHT A WEEK LATER

Sprawled on the bed watching TV, Gary hears the apartment
door open. Lonette comes in from work. Her clothes are the
exact opposite of Alexandra's, jeans and a functional blouse.

GARY
(dragging on a joint)
How was work, dear?

LONETTE
Why do you care?

GARY
I don't.

LONETTE
At least you're honest. But then
why do you even ask?

GARY
Thought it might get me sex.

LONETTE
That's a big leap.

GARY
Lorises can leap 15 times their
height.

LONETTE
Is that true?

GARY
Nope. They can't leap at all.
They just crawl hand over hand.

Gary crawls towards Lonette. She lies back beneath him and kisses him, long, deep.

Gary puts his hands on her neck. It's bordering on violence, but she's okay with it. She feels safe in the danger. She closes her eyes, feels the pressure: it makes her come alive.

Lonette rips Gary's shirt off. She starts to lick his chest. She moves towards his underarm.

GARY

Not the underarm.

LONETTE

Too kinky?

GARY

It's a Loris thing. I'll tell you some time when you have an empty stomach or at least we're near a bucket you can throw up into.

(into camera)

But I'll tell you. Footnote time.

A string of text and scientific data and pictures streams across the screen and then reduces to the bottom of the screen on Gary's last line.

GARY

The flexor surface or the ventral side of the loris' elbow has a slightly raised swelling known as the brachial gland. When agitated the loris secretes a foul-smelling viscous fluid as exuded sweat from this gland. It then bends its head beneath its raised forelegs, and licks its brachial gland regions. This provides a toxin that it injects into an open wound in an attacker via its sharp upper teeth and lower dental comb inducing anaphylactic shock in... have I lost you? A loris leaks poison sweat from its armpit, licks it, bites you and spits.

INSERT: THE TV ON THE WALL

A Steam City News exclusive.

REPORTER

Rising Star of Steam City P.D.
Osman Gearlap went supernova today
announcing a run for Mayor. Gearlap
vows to eradicate crime and drive
out what he calls the relics of the
dark age of superheroes.

END INSERT.

The remote control flies at the TV.

GARY

What kind of newspeak horse-shit is
this?

Lonette picks up the remote and turns off the TV.

LONETTE

Easy on the TV. Some of us need
money for more than rolling it up
to snort coke.

GARY

This doesn't piss you off?

LONETTE

Lots of things piss me off. But
I'm not competing with the cops.
I'm trying to help them. We all
want the same things.

GARY

They want us gone. You know that?

LONETTE

If there was no need for us, that
would be a good thing, wouldn't it?

GARY

And then what would I do? I'm not
going to work some thankless job
like you.

LONETTE

I actually get thanks in my job.
Anyway, what choice do I have?
Marry rich and end up like you?

GARY

And what does that say about your
self-respect being with me?

LONETTE

Fuck you.

Gary calmly gets up, walks over, kisses her on the forehead.

GARY

Not tonight you won't.

He leaves. Lonette fumes. Again.

EXT. WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

Very battered in a very run-down, industrial part of town.

INT. WAREHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

GUYS with guns. Guys at lab tables cutting drugs. Guys loading up a truck. A lot of Guys.

Bird of Ill Omen crashes through a skylight and rappels down. She looks like a superhero should, stunningly muscular, sleekly sexual. Her costume inspires a foreboding awe.

The Guys are stunned. She does a back flip, knocks the gun out of one guy's hand and flattens him.

A spin and a round house kick to another.

ONE GUY grabs her, she flips him over, stomp to the face.

INT. WAREHOUSE - LOADING BAY - CONTINUOUS

A Steam City armored car smashes in the door. Cops pour out.

POLICE BODY CAM P.O.V.

Guns firing, cartel bodies falling.

GEARLAP (O.S.)

Good job.

INT. WAREHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Gearlap approaches the Cartel Leader on the ground. He's wounded. Gearlap kicks him in the wound.

GEARLAP

Get him out of here.

Gearlap sees Bird of Ill Omen in a combat stance. Two COPS grab her from behind. It seems she'll make quick work of them, but they both tase her and she goes limp. Gearlap approaches.

GEARLAP
It's time your kind left the crime
fighting to the professionals.

BIRD OF ILL OMEN
(catching her breath)
As soon as I see some.

GEARLAP
You know what I hate about you
vigilantes? The snappy one-liners.

BIRD OF ILL OMEN
Fuck you.

Smiling, he punches her stomach, leans in and cups his ear.

GEARLAP
What was that?

BIRD OF ILL OMEN
You need a hearing test?

Gearlap grabs one of the cops tasers and shocks her again.

COP
Lieutenant, isn't that enough?

GEARLAP
Did I ask your opinion?

COP'S BODYCAM P.O.V.

Bird of Ill Omen is still doubled over.

COP (O.S.)
Yeah, but--

A finger points into the camera. Gearlap walks to the Cop.

GEARLAP
There's something on your lapel.
Let me get it.

The footage goes to static.

INT. WAREHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Gearlap turns and walks back to Bird of Ill Omen. He cups her cheeks in his hand, squeezes to purse her lips.

Behind her back, Bird of Ill Omen's gloves spout claws. They dig into the wrists of the Cops holding her.

They loose their grips. She leaps to a nearby table, then to a hanging light fixture and swings herself to a broken window out of the warehouse. The Cops turn to give chase.

GEARLAP

Let her go.

EXT. LONETTE LOLANGE'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Gary and Lonette sit on the couch. She works at a laptop. Gary shakes his leg impatiently.

LONETTE

I was supposed to get this grant proposal out last night.

GARY

Who told you to take on a drug dealers? Or drugs--
(mimicking Don Corleone)
A harmless vice denied to people by the pezzonovanti of the church.

Gary does a line of coke.

LONETTE

Take a walk around my neighborhood if you want to see how harmless they are.

GARY

This neighborhood? I'm a superhero, but I'm not invincible.
(again mimicking)
Anyway, in my family, we would keep it with the darker people. They have no soul, so let them lose their lives.

LONETTE

Gary!

GARY

Lonnie, you know I'm just kidding.
But drug pushers, not even a
cartel: it's not crime for supes.

LONETTE

So now you get to decide what
crimes are bad enough to merit your
attention? Drugs are a problem.

GARY

I agree. They cost too much.

Gary wipes the coke off his nose. Lonette gives Gary a look.

GARY (V.O.)

If looks could kill.

INSERT:

Gary's Loris head explodes.

INT. STEAM CITY P.D. RIFLE RANGE - DAY

Gearlap takes aim at another Loris head down range with a
jazzy, new weapon and fires again. The head explodes.
Gearlap hands a police sergeant the gun.

GARY (V.O.)

You'd think I'd slept with this
guy's wife, or at least his sister.

GEARLAP

How many of these can we get from
the army?

COP

Twenty-five thousand, but I don't
think we need that many.

GEARLAP

Of course we do. Remember,
superheroes don't keep people safe.
Guns do. In the right hand.

Gearlap takes aim down range. Fires. Bird Of Ill Omen's
head explodes. He tosses the gun to his left hand and
obliterates another Loris head.

GEARLAP

Left hand works, too.

GARY (V.O.)
 This guy's fucked up. Did I ever
 tell you about how I met Teddy?

FLASHBACK. - EXT. GRIMY ALLEY - NIGHT (YEARS AGO)

Three TOUGH GUYS back Teddy up against a wall. One grabs
 Teddy's Polynesian shirt collar

TEDDY
 Is this a hanging offense?

TOUGH ONE
 Shut-up.

TOUGH TWO
 Yeah, shut up.

TEDDY
 Spirited repartee.

Tough One smacks Teddy in the nose. It begins to bleed.

TOUGH THREE
 Give him a break. It's the first
 time he's had a chance to talk
 without a cock in his mouth.

They all laugh.

TEDDY
 Shoots. Let's talk.

TOUGH ONE
 Shut up, faggot. We don't want you
 prancing around our neighborhood.

TEDDY
 I'm tend to gambol more.

Tough One punches him. Teddy goes down. Gary appears.

GARY
 Leave him alone.

TOUGH TWO
 You want some of this? You queer,
 too?

GARY
 Not exactly.

The two move on him. Gary turns into the Loris. They're stunned. So is Teddy.

The Loris makes quick work of them. He offers Teddy a claw.

END FLASHBACK.

INT. TEDDY'S LUAU TIKI BAR - NIGHT

At the bar, Gary, Teddy and a middle-aged, out of shape PLUTONIAN, mid 350s but he doesn't look a day over 206. Teddy snorts a line of coke.

GARY (V.O.)

From that night, I knew Teddy would have my back. Not because he owed me. I didn't think that way back then. I just knew I could trust him. It wasn't until I met Lonette that I'd have that again.

TEDDY

(manic from the coke)
And this guy, this guy,
(kissing Gary)
saved my ass for it to get fucked
another day.

The Plutonian speaks in his language, which sounds like nails on a blackboard played through blown speakers. But Teddy and Gary understand it.

TEDDY

I know you heard the story before.
But still, Mahalo for your kokua.

GARY

Humanukunu to you, too.
(looking at the Plutonian)
Ed, what the fuck happened to you?
I remember that time, fifteen years
ago, you almost killed me, now you
can't make it off the bar stool.

Ed does a line. He REPLIES. It hurts the ears.

GARY

The cops are more armed than you.
But is that any excuse for
(indicating Ed's physique)
this.

Ed REPLIES.

TEDDY

He got a point. Driving Uber, how fit do you need to be?

Ed TALKS. Gary does a line of coke.

GARY

Happy wife. Happy life. Understood. Tell that to Alex.

TEDDY

Strife on the home front?

Teddy pours them all a shot of Don Julio.

GARY

And points south. Lonette's on me about being a responsible superhero. Drugs are bad, not just the cartels, blah, blah, blah bah buh deh blah. Bullshit, am I right?

They agree by downing the shots then doing a coke chaser. Teddy refills them. Ed SPEAKS.

TEDDY

Gearlap, yeah, that guy on a power trip. He's going to finish crime.

GARY

And fucking finish us.

They down the shots. Ed SPEAKS. They burst out LAUGHING.

TEDDY

Gearcrap, hilarious.

GARY

Such word play. Hard to believe you're not a native speaker.

TEDDY

Maybe you should teach night school?

Gary does another line like a fucking Dyson.

GARY

Night school, fucking night school, listen to you. He's an archvillain. He doesn't teach night school. He takes over the night school and threatens to blow it up if he doesn't get his ransom.

Ed SPEAKS.

GARY
Right, I forgot you did that.

TEDDY
It must have been where I got the
idea. Still has merit.

Teddy does a line.

GARY
Merit, merit, merit.

TEDDY
Hana hou! Hana hou! Say it again!

GARY
Merit. Merrrrrrrrrrrit!

They all LAUGH. Teddy pours another shot.

TEDDY
To merit.

They down it and slam the glasses on the bar. Ed SPEAKS.

TEDDY
If this was twenty years ago, yeah,
you could be the archvillain to
boost crime.

GARY
Yeah, yeah-- Wait! What if there
was an archvillain? One that we
could control to work for us?

TEDDY
Gary, you can't do that to Ed. It
would kill him, and we'd be a joke.

GARY
Not Ed, no offense, Ed. Me.

TEDDY
What?

GARY
It's perfect. I cause the crime.
I fight the crime.

TEDDY
I'm cutting you off, brudda.

Teddy pulls away the coke mirror only to do a line.

GARY

I'm fucking serious. Give me one reason I shouldn't do it. What's the risk? It doesn't work-- I stop. But if it works... I'm a superhero again. I need a name-- a short, punchy one.

Ed lets out a short but EXCRUCIATING SOUND.

TEDDY

No, can't be too short either.

Gary does a line of coke. He paces manically.

GARY

Thunder Cloud.

TEDDY

Too Native American, too sympathetic.

GARY

Could be a good thing. Revenge for the whole genocide thing. Plus I'd look good with a bow and arrow.

TEDDY

Gearlaps's got like Hydrodynamic munition launchers.

GARY

The Embalmer?

TEDDY

Very WWE. Maybe you can carry a folding chair to brain someone with. And it's handy to sit on if you have to wait around for an armored payroll truck or something, you know, if there's traffic.

GARY

It's easy to criticize.

Teddy does a line.

TEDDY

(thinking)
Something military.

GARY
Sergeant-- No-- Colonel.

TEDDY
Colonel Clink. Because you put
people in the clink. Funny Nazis.
I loved that show. Rear Admiral!

GARY
You and the rears. But that's too
high up there. Captain... yeah,
Captain. Captain!

Teddy starts to pace around. Ed SPEAKS.

TEDDY
We're not manic, Ed. We're
thinking, focused.

GARY
That's it.

TEDDY
Captain Focus. Yeah, like a
camera. Captain Kodak. Better.
They're out of business so you
won't have a trademark problem.
It's all digital now.

Ed nods, agreeing.

GARY
Stop with the camera thing. No,
Captain Manic.

They all pause to think about it.

TEDDY
Yeah, I like it. Says it all.
Captain Manic to bring the command
of chaos to Steam City.

Teddy pours a final round of Don Julio. They down it. One
final shot glass slam on the bar top.

GARY (V.O.)
That was it. The placenta dropped,
mommy shit herself and Captain
Manic was born.

EXT. PLAYGROUND - DAY

It's seen better days. Still there's a happiness that only comes from kids before they realize the deck is stacked against them.

Gary plays with a Hispanic Girl, GEMMA, 6. She expertly swipes up a bunch of jacks. Lonette watches from a distance.

GARY

Wow!

Gemma does it again, swiping even more.

GARY

You like to shoot pool for money,
Eddie?

Gemma laughs not knowing why, as kids do. She hands Gary the ball. He makes a pass at the first round. He fails at the second. She holds out her hand.

GARY

You hustled me, kid.

Gary hands her a candy bar. Lonette approaches.

LONETTE

What did I say about not taking
anything from strangers?

GEMMA

Gary's not a stranger. He's the
strangest.

Gary acts wounded.

LONETTE

Okay, Gemma, lunchtime.

Gemma runs off.

LONETTE

(calling after)
And the candy bar after.
(to Gary)
Are you really that good with kids,
or is it just to get back with me?

GARY

Can't it be both?

Lonette slowly walks to the building to which Gemma ran. Gary follows apace.

LONETTE
That's what worries me.

GARY
Is that so bad? People can be many things.

LONETTE
Then why can't we be a team?

GARY
We can be. A major league professional sex team.

LONETTE
I mean as supes. Look at what Lady Nightshade and the Nuclear Kid did in Russia.

GARY
It was called Chernobyl.

LONETTE
No crime there now.

GARY
And no squirrels that don't glow. But seriously, I'm just better alone.

LONETTE
So why'd you get married?

GARY
Lonnie--

LONETTE
It's a logical question.

GARY
It's just-- I couldn't bear anything happening to you.

LONETTE
I've been taking care of myself my whole life.

They reach the door of the building.

GARY
You're right. I know.

LONETTE

When I hear that I hear "shut up, bitch."

GARY

The 'you're right' is shut up. But the 'I know's more like 'sweetie.'

LONETTE

We don't have to stay here. There are plenty of places that need us.

GARY

Please. Some town where superheroes get fifteen percent off instead of five at the Olive Garden? This is Steam City.

LONETTE

This was Steam City. You say it yourself: the cops have it under control.

GARY

Things can change.

LONETTE

Only if you make the change, Gary.

Lonette reaches for the door.

Gary holds her back from entering.

GARY

I agree with you on the make the change thing.

LONETTE

That's good, I guess.

GARY

It is. And you'll see. It'll be great.

She kisses him on the cheek.

GARY

Tell Gemma double or nothing next time.

INT. TEDDY'S LUAU TIKI BAR - STORAGE ROOM - NIGHT

Gary rides an old mechanical bull. In reading bifocals with a missing arm, Teddy types on a computer by his desk.

The place is filled to the ceiling with over twenty five years of accumulated stuff.

Gary flies off the bull and falls into some boxes. He LAUGHS.

Gary dusts off and looks at the stuff he just toppled.

GARY

Teddy, when are you going to get rid of this shit?

TEDDY

It may still have use.

Gary opens a box and pulls out a bunch of fly swatters with the Luau Tiki logo on them.

TEDDY

It seemed like a good marketing idea at the time.

GARY

Were you expecting a malaria epidemic?

Gary walks over to the desk.

GARY

What gives, slim?

TEDDY

Not cool. You know I'm sensitive about my weight.

GARY

I don't know why. Those shirts take all the attention away from it. You might consider big slimming horizontal stripes.

Gary looks at the screen.

TEDDY

I'm looking for Captain Manic's uniform.

GARY

On Ebay?

TEDDY
Any better ideas?

Gary nods yes. He opens a coke vile, puts some between his thumb and index finger and snorts.

TEDDY
Gary, focus.

GARY
Okay, what should Captain Manic look like?

TEDDY
He's a captain. The guy who did Muskrat Love with his wife was a captain. He wore that cool cap.

GARY
Great song. But Captain Manic needs to have his face covered.

TEDDY
Right, because you need to be Loris for the super power. He needs gloves because of the claws.

GARY
Half gloves. We make it a wolverine type of deal.

TEDDY
That guy, what a dick. He'd come in the bar, drink all night, leave a shit tip and carved his name in every fucking booth. And he couldn't even spell it. Do you want to go with a military theme?

GARY
Seems kind of on the nose.

TEDDY
Spandex?

GARY
Seems kind of gay. All due respect. No offense. Pardon my French. If you know what I'm driving at. Nuff said.

TEDDY
Leggings, then.

GARY
Can he talk?

TEDDY
Why not?

GARY
He'll have a voice like the Loris.
Can't have my voice recognized.

INSERT:

Gary has on a helmet with a voice synthesizer. It looks like the worst aspects of Boba Fett's and the best of Dementor's from "Jingle All The Way".

GARY
(sounding like a Chipmunk)
I am Captain Manic
(sounding like an old
Yiddish man)
I'm Captain Manic hands up over
that verkochte head.
(in Spanish)
Mi nombre es Capitán Maníaco.

INT. TEDDY'S LUAU TIKI BAR - STORAGE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

From the manic pacing, both have been doing coke, but now losing steam. They're gonna crash soon.

TEDDY
Not quite sold on the voice
synthesizer. Maybe just don't
talk.
(snaps his fingers)
Your actions speak volumes.

GARY
A Gary Cooper type of villain?

TEDDY
Yes. You know, people say High
Noon was his best, but I like *The
Fountainhead*.

GARY
Meet John Doe?

TEDDY
Of course. Wanna watch it?

GARY
Sure, we're ahead of schedule.

Teddy calls the movie up on the computer. They begin to watch.

GARY
Barbara Stanwyck, I'd still do her.

TEDDY
I still want to be her. Smoldering sex meets style.

GARY (V.O.)
And that's how it went for the next few weeks. It's amazing we got it done.

INT. TEDDY'S LUAU TIKI BAR - STORAGE ROOM - NIGHT

Gary appears in his Captain Manic gear. It's just as you would imagine based on their brainstorming, the apogee of functional.

Gary holds an old model neutron rifle. It's pretty dinged up.

GARY
(voice synthesizer to Spanish)
Qué piensas.

TEDDY
Es la bomba!

Gary switches off the synthesizer.

GARY
Sorry.

TEDDY
I liked the Spanish touch.

GARY
No.

Gary walks to the mirror.

GARY
It'll do.
(holding up the rifle)
(MORE)

GARY (CONT'D)

But this is Captain Manic's
firepower? Is he an officer in
George Washington's army?

TEDDY

Says the guy who still uses an
aboriginal blow gun. It's all I
could get on short notice. Just
use your Loris skills.

GARY

Only if I have to. I can't risk
being recognized.

(looking at the gun)

Does this relic even work?

Gary points it at a wall stacked with boxes. It barely even
moves them.

Teddy walks over to inspect them. He pops a hole through one
of the dents the rifle made.

TEDDY

See. Still has some firepower.

GARY

Yeah, but I'm not gonna be fighting
boxes of old junk.

Teddy smells something and looks back at the box. It's now
on fire.

Teddy and Gary scramble to put the flames out as it catches
other boxes on fire.

EXT. STEAM CITY ARSENAL - NIGHT

An armored personnel carrier smashes through the front.

At the helm, Teddy in a Betty Davis mask.

Captain Manic stands in the top gun turret opening.

He opens fire with one of Gearlap's new military guns.

Cops stream out, guns blazing. They scatter. Too much
firepower.

TEDDY

(smacking the steering
wheel quoting Betty
Davis)

(MORE)

TEDDY (CONT'D)
But ya ah in the wheelchair,
Blanche, ya ah. Fucking beautiful!

 CAPTAIN MANIC
 (using his Spanish voice
 synthesizer)
El capitán maníaco está aquí para
inducir miedo. Gearlap vete a la
mierda.

They speed off down and around the corner.

INT. BACKSTAGE HILTON - DAY

Gearlap readies for a campaign event. A POLICE SERGEANT
huddles with him.

 GEARLAP
What do you know?

 SERGEANT
Someone new. He may be Spanish.

 GEARLAP
MS-13?

 SERGEANT
Hard to determine. We're still
trying to put it together

Gearlap shoots him a look.

 SERGEANT
Got it and on it, sir.

 GEARLAP
Is that it?

Silence.

 SERGEANT
The new arms shipment was stolen.

 GEARLAP
You let a wet back steal 25,000
guns from our armory?

 SERGEANT
It was unexpected, sir.

 GEARLAP
Anyone can deal with expected
crime.

(MORE)

GEARLAP (CONT'D)

The fucking Loris can stop expected crime. My whole campaign is about eliminating all crime. Now what can we pivot to? I know: eliminating your pensions. Or you can fix this.

The Sergeant nods and walks off with resolve.

Gearlap steps through the curtain...

INT. BALLROOM - DAY

... and into his public personality, smiling, taking his position at the podium under a banner that reads, "Junior League Law & Order Luncheon".

Gearlap looks over the women. The spotlight is on him. His smile widens even more.

GEARLAP

Women of the Junior League, I believe in justice. I'm running for mayor. And I want your vote.

They CLAP.

EXT. LARGE JEWELRY STORE - NIGHT

We HEAR THE HORN of the General Lee.

The armored personnel carrier appears and breaks through the store's glass front. Gary as Captain Manic and Teddy, wearing his Betty Davis mask, jump out.

IN THE STORE

They quickly smash and grab at the jewelry. They run to the back to find a huge vault door. They look at each other.

INT. JEWELRY STORE - BACK ROOM - CONTINUOUS

THE VAULT DOOR

It explodes. Smoke and debris everywhere.

As it clears, Captain Manic and Teddy lie on the ground. They get up, a bit dazed.

TEDDY
That was unexpected.

 CAPTAIN MANIC
Yeah, but dramatic.

 TEDDY
Point taken.

Captain Manic and Teddy scoop up the precious goods.

 TEDDY
Tag it up, bro.

Captain Manic uncaps a can of a spray paint. "Captain Manic, your nightmare was here."

EXT. JEWELRY STORE - NIGHT

The armored personnel carrier barrels out, turns on to the street and around the corner. It's met by several police cars.

Teddy speeds up.

Captain Manic pops out of the turret and lets loose a barrage from his gun.

The Cops scatter as the carrier crashes through and over the cars.

Captain Manic turns and fires.

 CAPTAIN MANIC
Captain Manic wird Steam City
besitzen.

The carrier speeds off amid bewildered cops.

INT. TEDDY'S LUAU TIKI BAR - NIGHT

Teddy and Gary share a joint at the bar. Teddy has the Captain Manic helmet on, filled with weed smoke.

 TEDDY
How do you manage this?

 GARY
(with the Betty Davis mask
on)
You get used it.
(MORE)

GARY (CONT'D)

That voice chip makes it worth it.
You see those cops' faces?

TEDDY

Ja, das habe ich wirklich gesehen.

They laugh. Gary takes off the Betty Davis mask and takes a drag on the joint. He looks at the mask.

GARY

I had you figured for more of a
Joan Crawford type.

TEDDY

Maybe the young Joan, but not when
she was on the board of Pepsi, Joan
the Crone.

GARY

Yeah, those eyebrows. What was
with that?

TEDDY

Like I'm supposed to know?

GARY

Don't you gay guys live for all
that arcane Hollywood shit?

TEDDY

(taking back the joint and
toking)

Ah, no.

GARY

If you went with a Joan mask, we
could get you like deadly wire coat
hanger to wield. Mommy Fearest.

TEDDY

No, Mommy Fiercest.

They glance up at the TV. A news story about Captain Manic.

GARY

Turn it up.

Teddy complies.

NEWSWOMAN

And Captain Maniac has--

GARY

Hey, I'm manic, not a maniac.

Teddy gives an "if the shoe fits" look.

 TEDDY
 Say, what are we going to do with
 all this shit?

Teddy gestures at the piles of jewelry all around. It literally would be easier to measure it by the pound than a dollar amount.

 GARY
 Fence it and spend it!

 TEDDY
 That gotta be against some
 superhero code.

 GARY
 Are you a superhero? Plus, we
 worked for it. The store has
 insurance. If they don't, fuck 'em.

 TEDDY
 Gary, that's lolo.

 GARY
 (reluctantly)
 Okay, we'll fence it and give it
 to... yeah... have Captain Manic
 donate it to charity.

 TEDDY
 Fuckin' a. Like, like, like, like--

 GARY
 Yeah?

 TEDDY
 Tom Joad.

 GARY
 Tom Joad didn't do that. He killed
 a rude deputy sheriff. I swore you
 were going to say Robin Hood.

 TEDDY
 I was actually thinking Jean
 Valjean, but he stole a piece of
 bread. I'm not sure he gave it to
 anyone.

Gary nods. Teddy's eyes light up. He begins to sing The Confrontation from *Les Mis*. So does Gary. Back and forth into the night.

INT. STEAM CITY PRECINCT HOUSE - DAY

Gearlap walks with the PRECINCT SERGEANT MINKOWSKI, 40s, to the roll call room.

MINKOWSKI
We ran facial recognition.
Nothing.

GEARLAP
Nothing.

MINKOWSKI
Sir, it just happened.

GEARLAP
And you have nothing. You know what you get paid when you don't have a job. Nothing. You know what you eat when you can't afford food. Nothing.

Minkowski nods.

MINKOWSKI
Nothing doesn't sound very good.

GEARLAP
You picked up on that.

INT. ROLL CALL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Gearlap at the podium. Minkowski's behind him.

GEARLAP
Officers, Captain Manic, suggestions?

Silence.

GEARLAP
(to Minkowski)
Nothing again.

MINKOWSKI
Speak freely, no bad ideas.

COP ONE
He seems to speak a lot of languages.

COP TWO
Yeah, maybe a linguist who snapped.

GEARLAP

A psychotic language professor. I see. But if he's that good, he probably has tenure.

The Cops look at each other.

GEARLAP

I mean he wouldn't want to risk that, right?

Silence, confusion.

GEARLAP

Do you think he might just have a voice chip translator? I'm going to give you a simple imperative. Get Captain Manic. I don't care how. I don't care what you have to do. How does this sound? Sergeant, no limits on over time.

The Cops like that. LOUDLY.

GEARLAP

You people get him. Verstehen? And until you do, put the word out on the street to villains, superheroes, even aliens, if you find any still here, justice is in the hands of those who were sworn to uphold it, us, to serve and protect. Do I make myself clear?

They CLAP and CHEER. He has them motivated.

EXT. ANOTHER STEAM CITY ARSENAL - NIGHT

Gary as Captain Manic runs out with a backpack.

Cops run after him, shooting.

Gary reaches in the backpack, pulls out a grenade and lobs it behind him.

Huge explosion.

Gary escapes in a cloud of smoke.

MONTAGE

- Various charities across Steam City receive envelopes stuffed with cash.

- The Steam City Herald headline: "Captain Manic: Arch Villain or Benefactor?"

- At her desk, Lonette opens a Captain Manic envelope of cash. She's not buying it. Her superhero sense tells her something's wrong.

INT. GEARLAP'S OFFICE - DAY

At his desk, Gearlap calmly puts a tablet down. Then picks it up and flings it against the wall, frustrated with the Captain Manic coverage.

INT. BIRD OF ILL OMEN'S LAIR - NIGHT

In the style of a giant birdcage, but goth creepy.

Lonette, in her Bird of Ill Omen get up, looks at a bank of monitors scanning through databases of arch villains and aliens trying to match a grainy photo of Captain Manic.

She initiates a cross-match of superheroes.

BIRD OF ILL OMEN

Maybe one of you supes tangled with him?

On another monitor, she calls up the security footage of Captain Manic's two heists of police arsenals.

She smiles at Captain Manic's voice chip.

BIRD OF ILL OMEN

At least you have a sense of humor.

GARY (V.O.)

Lonette always got it.

A third monitor brings up Steam City News Network, SCNN. Osman Gearlap is the guest.

INSERT: GEARLAP ON "TALK ACTION"

HEATHER BLAKE

You're running for Mayor but in your own precinct there's been an uptick in crime due largely to Captain Manic. You say Mayor Breyer is incompetent. How are you different?

GEARLAP

That's why I've come here, Heather. You ask the questions that keep us in public life accountable. In my precinct, statistics show crime is still well below other areas of Steam City. But crime isn't about numbers. It's about people. I've told my officers to be proactive and that means...

BIRD OF ILL OMEN

I'll take Black People are fucked for \$500 Alex.

Bird of Ill Omen switches it off.

The database notification rings for a match of arch villains.

It's Captain Manic and the Loris. She reacts by abandoning the keyboard.

BIRD OF ILL OMEN

So much for technology.

GARY (V.O.)

She just didn't want to believe it.

INT. OSMAN GEARLAP'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

On the wall, the Blind Faith Album cover, framed, also Roy Lichtenstein's Drowning Girl.

On the bed, Gearlap is sprawled out, king of all, or at least his bedroom.

GEARLAP

(talking to the direction of the bathroom)

This Captain Manic business, I've been looking at it all wrong. I'm going to make it work for me.

(MORE)

GEARLAP (CONT'D)

The tough on crime cop is going to get even tougher. Like you said, it's my brand. I'm going to own it.

Alexandra exits the bedroom in only panties. She dresses and puts on the finishing touch, earrings. She walks over to the bed.

ALEXANDRA

What I want to know is did you fuck Heather Blake?

She kisses him and heads to the door.

GARY (V.O.)

I didn't see that one coming. I thought she was just into black guys.

GEARLAP

Recently?

Alexandra slams the door.

INT. GARY AND ALEXANDRA'S BATHROOM - DAY

Gary showers.

GARY

(singing badly)

Roxanne, you don't have to put on the red light... those days are over. You don't have to sell your body to the nigh...

The shower doors slide open. There's Alexandra, naked.

ALEXANDRA

(smiling)

You called.

She slides in and slides down. Her head bobs up and down.

Gary leans his head back and smiles.

GARY

(belting it out)

Roxanne!

We move back allowing the shower and bathroom to be engulfed in a fog of steam.

INT. GARY AND ALEXANDRA'S KITCHEN - DAY

Gary eats a bagel with smoked salmon and capers.

Ready to head out, Alexandra blends up a vegetable drink.

GARY

I don't know why you'd want to work for that guy.

ALEXANDRA

I don't know why you don't want to work?

GARY

Maybe I'll volunteer for Mayor Breyer's campaign.

ALEXANDRA

Please do. It'll ensure Gearlap wins.

GARY

What about superheroes?

ALEXANDRA

What about them?

GARY

He calls them obsolete. They're not.

ALEXANDRA

Call them what you want, we don't need them. Actually, I guess that means he's right. Call them obsolete. Like a buggy whip.

GARY

How can you say that? The tradition they had.

ALEXANDRA

Buggy whips? I guess. But it wasn't easy on the horses.

GARY

No. Supes-- superheroes. The crime they stopped? That tradition.

ALEXANDRA

When did you ever give a shit about tradition?

(MORE)

ALEXANDRA (CONT'D)

Traditionally, a man works and pays the bills. There's a tradition you might get behind.

She heads to the door.

GARY

Remember to work hard and get the nice tough on crime man elected to stick it to Daddy.

As she leaves, Alexandra flips him the finger from behind.

EXT. TEDDY'S LUAU TIKI BAR - BACK PARKING AREA - DAY

Gary as Captain Manic waits with two crates. A black M class Mercedes with tinted windows pulls up.

Three CARTEL MEMBERS exit.

CARTEL LEADER

Los tienes?

CAPTAIN MANIC

What?

CARTEL LEADER

(louder like Gary's deaf)

Tienes las armas?

CAPTAIN MANIC

I don't understand.

CARTEL LEADER

What? You speak Spanish. I heard you.

Captain Manic fiddles with his helmet.

CAPTAIN MANIC

(in Igbo)

Ndo, ana m ekwu ya, mana aghotaghi m ya.

Captain Manic bangs the helmet.

CARTEL LEADER

Never mind. You got the guns?

Captain Manic opens the top crate to reveal the guns he stole from the first arsenal heist.

The Leader inspects them.

The other Cartel Members approach. They like what they see. They start to take them. Captain Manic slams the lid shut on their hands. They step back and shake their hurt hands.

CAPTAIN MANIC
You have the money?

The Second Cartel Member unzips a duffle bag full of cash. The Leader nods and hands it to Captain Manic.

The Cartel Members carry the crates to the back of the SUV.

Teddy comes out with a plastic trash can. They're startled and pull guns on him.

CAPTAIN MANIC
He's okay.

They keep their guns up.

CAPTAIN MANIC
I said he's okay.

They put their guns down and continue to load the crates.

CAPTAIN MANIC
I expect a cut of what you sell and what you steal. And if you try to fuck me, I will find you.

They get in the M Class and drive away.

TEDDY
You lost it, pal?

They begin to walk into the back the storage area.

CAPTAIN MANIC
We need a crime wave for the Loris to fight, right? Captain Manic can't do it alone.

They enter...

THE STORAGE AREA

Cluttered box-filled area. Gary removes his helmet.

TEDDY
This is not what we talked about, arms dealing?

GARY

Teddy, after the donations, what we fence from our heists isn't enough to get buzz. We don't need fuck you money to get Gearlap and his cops. We need fuck everyone money.

TEDDY

I don't know, Gary.

GARY

Please. Captain Manic.

Gary smiles again puts on the Captain Manic helmet. He hands Teddy two huge stacks of bills from the duffle bag.

TEDDY

What's this?

GARY/CAPTAIN MANIC

To fix up the place.

TEDDY

No.

GARY/CAPTAIN MANIC

Then give more of it to charity from Captain Manic.

GARY (V.O.)

Maybe Teddy was right. But what's wrong with enjoying a little?

EXT. ANOTHER BANK - DAY

An ALARM GOES OFF. SCREAMS. Two Cartel Members flee the bank. Bird Of Ill Omen steps out.

BIRD OF ILL OMEN

Give it up.

They let thunder reign with their new fire power.

She ducks behind a building just in time, a piece of it flies off from a round. These guns are powerful.

BIRD OF ILL OMEN

What the fuck?

Steam City SWAT Team arrives.

They stream out.

A big gun fight. Shooting and running. Mayhem. The cops are doing as much damage as the Cartel members.

The Cartel Members make to it their SUV down the street. They screech off.

A WOMAN steps off the curb oblivious, buried in her phone.

Bird of Ill Omen grabs her just in time, barely not getting hit. The phone crashes to the ground, destroyed.

The SUV careens away. Cops fire, with little regard for people or property. They're really shooting away. After all, this is about unlimited overtime.

Bird of Ill Omen and the Woman exchange disbelieving looks.

WOMAN

To serve and protect, my ass. Hey, you broke my phone.

Bird of Ill Omen reacts to the ingratitude.

INT. TEDDY'S LUAU TIKI BAR - NIGHT

It's pretty clear that Teddy didn't give his share to charity. The place looks the way it must have been in its golden age. Superheroes and others party.

Gary jokes with a table of superheroes. At the bar, Teddy sees him and smiles a conflicted smile. Lonette approaches.

LONETTE

Your rich uncle die?

TEDDY

My uncle worked in the Spam factory. Crime pays, at least for me. All these supes want to see what's up.

Gary walks over. He kisses Lonette.

GARY

You gotta try the spam satay. Teddy's uncle sent a case that fell off the truck.

LONETTE

Even the spam is stolen.

Gary takes out a wad of cash.

GARY

A round of drinks for the bar.
What the hell, the whole house!

He tosses the wad in the air. Big CHEERS.

LONETTE

If I didn't know better, I'd say
you've gone gangsta. Teddy says
Captain Manic is good for business.

GARY

Who are we to judge?

LONETTE

We're the people who know that
arming drug gangs with high grade
weapons is a bad thing.

GARY

How do you know he's doing that?

LONETTE

I'm a supe. You ought to try it.
We do things like trying to stop
bank robberies. I was at one last
week. Same guns.

GARY

I heard about that.

LONETTE

How?

Gary does a line. Teddy is drawn back over, like a coke magnet.

GARY

It was on the news. They didn't
say any supes were there.

LONETTE

I was outgunned.

TEDDY

How'd you get away?

LONETTE

I had to duck.

TEDDY

(laughing)
Duck of Ill Omen. Quack.

LONETTE

It's not funny. You just as easily could be toasting my passing here.

GARY

Now, that's just plain wrong.

LONETTE

Ya think, Gary?

GARY (V.O.)

I needed to downplay. But Lonette was right. Something had to be done.

EXT. WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

Gary as Captain Manic enters the open loading dock doors and confronts three Cartel Members.

CAPTAIN MANIC

My cut from the heist.

The Cartel Leader walks to the SUV and comes back with a duffel bag.

He hands it to Gary. Just as he is about to reach out, the Cartel Leader drops it.

CAPTAIN MANIC

I guess I don't have to count it because it's all there.

CARTEL LEADER

Like we agreed.

CAPTAIN MANIC

For the arms you resold and the bank heist?

SECOND CARTEL MEMBER

We didn't agree on the a cut from the heist.

The Cartel Leader holds up his hand to calm his friend.

CARTEL LEADER

The terms have changed. The risk was all ours. We had to shoot our way out.

CAPTAIN MANIC

Not my problem.

THIRD CARTEL MEMBER
Yeah, it was ours, and that's our
pay.

CAPTAIN MANIC
Fair enough. There was a supe
there. You shot at her?

THIRD CARTEL MEMBER
So?

CAPTAIN MANIC
Supes are not fair game.

CARTEL LEADER
Superheroes are cops. They want to
get us. We get them first.

CAPTAIN MANIC
(stressing it)
Superheroes are not cops.

CARTEL LEADER
Pigs are still pigs if you put 'em
in tights.

Captain Manic pulls out a gun from his back.

We freeze on the Cartel Leader's surprised face.

GARY (O.S.)
I know what you're thinking. Isn't
this where Loris should start
fighting crime? Before this next
part, I'd like to show you a few
things about Lorises.

A video of a loris appears in the upper left quadrant of the
screen. A cute loris sucks a lollipop.

Upper right quadrant: A loris holding a cocktail umbrella.

Lower left: A loris getting tickled

Lower right: A loris eating a rice ball.

GARY (O.S.)
Cute, right? Very deceptive.
Lorises are still fucking
dangerous. You buy one as a pet,
which you can do in Indonesia, they
come with a fucking book full of
warnings.

Warnings in Indonesian fill the screen and drop into an on screen footnote.

GARY (O.S.)

I told you there'd be footnotes.
You know, a loris's first defense
to a dangerous situation is
passiveness. But, when that
doesn't work...

Under Captain Manic's helmet: he's full blown rabid fanged, bulge-eyed Loris, but the Cartel Members can't see.

Unfreeze, Captain Manic shoots the Cartel Leader. He falls to the floor. Captain Manic swings the gun to each Cartel Member. They jump back, shocked.

CAPTAIN MANIC

Looks like you need a new leader.
Anyone volunteering?

Second Cartel Member shakes his head.

THIRD CARTEL MEMBER

No, bro.

GARY (V.O.)

Did you catch that? That was the
turning point, the Rubicon. That
was when Captain Manic became a
captain, or manic. I could
bullshit you. But it just felt so
fuckin' good for one of me to be in
charge-- I mean for him to be in
charge-- me to be in charge. Just
watch.

CAPTAIN MANIC

Lucky me. I guess I'm it. So I'll
be getting a cut from any gun sales
and heists.

They nod. Captain Manic shoots the Cartel Leader again.

CAPTAIN MANIC

And no more fucking with supes
either.

CARTEL MEMBER

Bro?

CAPTAIN MANIC
 I mean if anyone's going to fuck
 with supes, it's going to be me.
 And only me, see?

Seeing Captain Manic waiving his gun, finger on the trigger,
 they hop in their SUV and speed off.

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

Ed, the out of shape, chain smoking, alien, drives his Uber
 with a FEMALE PASSENGER in the back. He's talking, and
 smoking. She ignores him.

Police lights in the rearview. Ed looks and pulls over.

PASSENGER
 Shit, I hope this isn't going to
 make me late?

The cops walk over to Ed, both on his side. They cover their
 body cams. Ed SPEAKS.

COP ONE
 Did I ask you for your license?

COP TWO
 Get out of the car (beat) alien.

Ed reluctantly gets out.

GIRL
 Shit, I'm going to be late. I'm so
 giving you no stars.

COP ONE
 Why were you speeding?

Ed SPEAKS.

COP ONE
 Don't talk to me like that.

COP TWO
 We're going to have to take him in.

Ed SPEAKS more animated.

COP TWO
 What did you call me?

He smacks Ed, who falls. The Cops go Rodney King on him.

COP TWO
Fuckin' alien.

COP ONE
Try to be civil, and they talk shit
to us.

The Passenger aims her cell, capturing the mayhem.

EXT. PLAYGROUND - DAY

Gary sees Lonette watching over the kids. He notices a new swing set and slide from his last visit. Lonette sees him. He approaches.

LONETTE
Slumming?

GARY
I'm on my way to visit Ed.

LONETTE
I heard about that, sorry.

GARY
Fucking cops are out of control.

LONETTE
They're reacting to Captain Manic.

GARY
You? Defending cops?

LONETTE
I'm not defending them. I'm
stating the reason.

GARY
Gearlap running for mayor has
nothing to do with this?

Gary points to the new playground items.

GARY
I guess Captain Manic is good for
something.

LONETTE
It's not like this neighborhood is
a priority on getting grants.

GARY

So you don't have a problem with where he gets his money?

LONETTE

Gary, I don't want to fight.

GARY

Don't tell me you haven't noticed a difference since Captain Manic showed up. Look at Teddy's. Can't remember the last time his place was happening like that.

LONETTE

They're here out of morbid curiosity, like you slow down driving by a car accident. The cops have all of the crime locked down. The only thing Captain Manic is doing is getting more innocent people hurt or killed.

GARY

You forgot the new teeter-totter.

Gemma and a girl start to fight. Lonette and Gary run over.

LONETTE

Gemma, we don't fight. We talk.

GEMMA

Kendra started it.

KENDRA

She said she called being Captain Manic first.

GEMMA

I did.

KENDRA

Didn't.

Kendra pushes Gemma.

LONETTE

Stop, you two.

GARY

You like Captain Manic?

KENDRA

Yeah, he's cool. And if Gemma is Captain Manic, I have to be the superhero. Superheroes suck.

Lonette looks at Gary.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Ed's in bed in pretty bad shape. He's got tubes, hoses and IV lines all over, but not necessarily in the places you'd expect. He is an alien after all.

Sitting bedside, Teddy holds Ed's flipper-like hand.

Gary enters and looks Ed over.

GARY

I guess that GQ cover shoot's gonna be postponed.

Ed laughs and winces.

TEDDY

Fucking cops are out of control.

GARY

How long you have to be here?

Ed SPEAKS.

GARY

A month, shit.

TEDDY

And he can't even drive after that.

GARY

He couldn't drive before.

They laugh. Gary hands Ed a paper bag. Ed opens it, a huge wad of cash.

GARY

Buy yourself a new seat warmer.

Ed SPEAKS.

GARY

Okay, okay. I forgot about your body temperature. One of those beaded seat covers then.

(MORE)

GARY (CONT'D)

Those feel good on the back,
especially when your kidneys have
been bruised. You have kidneys,
right?

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Gary and Teddy walk out.

TEDDY

Man, you gotta be careful, giving
Ed that sack o' cash.

GARY

Stop being so paranoid.

Teddy points to a security camera on the ceiling. Gary flips
it the finger.

TEDDY

You are getting way too into this
villain thing.

GARY

Teddy, I'm just having a little fun
and helping Ed out. I'm down with
the plan, but we're gonna tweak it
a bit. Loris will defeat Captain
Manic and Gearlap; the cops are
done.

GARY (V.O.)

And it seemed as easy as just
saying it... at the time.

INT. GARY AND ALEXANDRA'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

On the sofa with a bourbon in hand, Gary watches TV.

Alexandra enters from the bedroom, set to go out.

GARY

Leaving?

ALEXANDRA

Work meeting.

GARY

At 9 o'clock at night?

ALEXANDRA
 Captain Manic works around the
 clock. So we have to, too, to keep
 ahead of him.

Gary smiles at that.

GARY
 You could quit.

ALEXANDRA
 Not in my DNA.

GARY
 I never knew work was in your DNA.

ALEXANDRA
 You've given me shit for taking my
 father's money for years, but all
 you've done is taken it from me.

GARY
 You've given me plenty of shit
 about that.

ALEXANDRA
 My being able to do this-- I'd like
 to think that maybe it shows you
 could also find something you're
 good at.

GARY
 I'm good at bourbon and boning.

ALEXANDRA
 I'd also like to think you would be
 happy for me.

The TV shows SCNN: The graphic "Uber Girl: Citizen
 Journalist" is under the Passenger's footage of Ed being
 beaten.

GARY
 Happy that you're associated with
 this? A guy who endorses cops
 beating aliens.

ALEXANDRA
 Gearlap endorses keeping crime
 under control. You can't judge him
 based on two bad cops.

GARY
 Save the talking points, Alex. The cops are just the tip of this shitberg. And Gearlap is the submerged heap of dung. I don't want you working for him any more.

ALEXANDRA
 Excuse me?

GARY
 You heard me. Quit.

Alexandra laughs, picks up her phone and heads out the door.

INT. GEARLAP'S OFFICE - DAY (EARLIER)

The two Cops who beat Ed sit opposite Gearlap.

GEARLAP
 You know, I'm going to take the shit for this.

COP ONE
 Yes, sir.

GEARLAP
 (gesturing out the window)
 They want your badges. Maybe even to charge you.

COP TWO
 No excuses, sir. We'll abide by your decision.

GEARLAP
 The decision isn't mine.

Gearlap walks from behind his desk and leans on the corner next to them.

GEARLAP
 I started as a beat cop, too. I know what it's like out there. The lack of respect.

COP ONE
 He was mouthing off to us.

GEARLAP
 You mean you could actually understand him?

Gearlap smiles. The Cops laugh.

GEARLAP

That's no excuse. Okay, two weeks suspension, and I have to reassign you out of my house.

The Cops are relieved.

GARY (V.O.)

Two weeks, it wasn't even as long as Ed would be in the hospital.

They get up. But before they reach the door.

GEARLAP

Next time, officers, remember. It doesn't help to do this...

Gearlap covers their bodycams with his hands.

GEARLAP

...if there's a witness with a fucking cellphone. But cellphones can easily get broken in the commotion of trying to keep people safe.

They smile and leave.

EXT. LUXURY HOTEL FRONT - NIGHT

A very Plaza looking hotel.

Alexandra meets Gearlap. They exchange greetings, very business-like. As they go in, he stealthily puts his hand on her ass. She doesn't remove it.

Teddy watches the scene squeezed in his Smart car across the street. He shakes his head.

GARY (V.O.)

Looking back, I felt worse for Teddy than I did for myself.

INT. LUXURY HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Gearlap and Alexandra enter. She's all over him.

GEARLAP
(pushing her back)
Do you want me for my campaign or
my body?

ALEXANDRA
Body, now. In ten minutes,
campaign.

GEARLAP
Ten minutes, gee, thanks.

He kisses her. Her hand moves to his crotch.

TEN MINUTES LATER

On the bed, Alexandra looks at the Uber beating footage on
her tablet.

ALEXANDRA
What are you going to do about
this?

GEARLAP (O.S.)
I already did it.

ALEXANDRA
The news hasn't picked up on any
firing.

Gearlap exits the bathroom with a mirror and coke.

GEARLAP
I gave them a suspension and
rotated them out of my precinct.

ALEXANDRA
Are you fucking crazy? Do you know
the shit the campaign is in for?

Gearlap sits on the bed.

GEARLAP
Not as much as the shit I would get
if I canned them. Alex, cops vote;
the law and order crowd votes;
skells and aliens don't.

Gearlap does a line of coke. Offers it to Alexandra, she
snorts it up to keep him company.

ALEXANDRA
 (shaking her head)
 The polls are too close.

GEARLAP
 I wanted to talk to you about that.
 I think it's time to make the call.

She looks a little down. He cups her chin in his hand, very gingerly.

GEARLAP
 I know it bothers you. But it's
 the right move. Tell me different.

ALEXANDRA
 Okay. But this is going to cost
 you, Mr. Mayor.

She grabs him, pulls him down and straddles him.

INT. LUXURY HOTEL LOBBY - NIGHT

Teddy enters with purpose and heads to the desk.

TEDDY
 (looking at his watch)
 Candidate Gearlap is going to kill
 me for missing this strategy
 meeting. He's in 1115?

DESK CLERK
 2114.

TEDDY
 Right, dyslexia.

INT. LUXURY HOTEL - 21ST FLOOR HALLWAY - NIGHT

Teddy stands outside Room 2114. He hears Alexandra and Gearlap making love. His suspicions are confirmed. Crestfallen, he walks away.

INT. GARY AND ALEXANDRA'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Gary in his Captain Manic get up.

His cell phone rings. It's Teddy. INTERCUT between the two.

CAPTAIN MANIC
 You on Gearlap?

TEDDY

Yeah.

CAPTAIN MANIC

What's wrong? Grindr suspend your account again?

TEDDY

Gary, I didn't want to tell you. But as a friend, I have to. Gearlap is with Alex.

CAPTAIN MANIC

They're working.

TEDDY

No, she's "with" him.

CAPTAIN MANIC

How do you know?

TEDDY

Don't ask me that. Just take my word that I know, for sure, without doubt.

CAPTAIN MANIC

Fine, fine. Just stay focused. Stay on him.

TEDDY

I'll stay on him, but it's Alex who's really on him, if you know what I mean. Are you okay?

CAPTAIN MANIC

Don't worry. I'm fine. But he won't be after tonight.

Gary takes off his helmet and does a line of coke.

INT. YET ANOTHER WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

Captain Manic stands in front of a group.

CAPTAIN MANIC

This night, and all nights forever forward, belong to us. We are the future. Tonight, Captain Manic will take possession of Steam City.
WE OWN IT

Captain Manic addresses the surviving two Cartel Members and a dozen others. They are all in Captain Manic outfits and chant.

CROWD

Captain Manic owns the city.

CAPTAIN MANIC

Go, get what's ours.

They put on their Captain Manic helmets. It looks like an incredibly menacing army.

One of the group hits his helmet and starts chattering in Swahili. They all start babbling in different languages and all obsess about their helmets, fiddling with them.

CAPTAIN MANIC

Ahem.

CUT TO:

MONTAGE - CAPTAIN MANIC MANIA

- Steam City is laid siege by Captain Manics.
- Banks, jewelry, stores: nothing is safe.
- Steam City PD gets to one scene then a call comes in from another. The firepower against them is equally daunting.
- It's Gary's Steam City Guernica. With all of the Captain Manics, it's difficult to distinguish which one is Gary. Maybe it doesn't even matter.

GARY (V.O.)

It's was beautiful. It was chaos.
It was master strategy. For that
night, I did own Steam City.

INT. LONETTE LOLANGE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Lonette wakes to the TV. She turns on the light.

Even before total consciousness comes, she knows what this is. It's been repeated several times.

She gets up, dressed in sweat pants with a Howard logo and a loose fitting t-shirt.

INT. LONETTE LOLANGE'S LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Gary's on the couch. The flat screen on and loud.

An empty Kristal bottle sits on the table in front of him beside an unopened one. A few lines of cocaine on a mirror.

He pops the second bottle. The cork flies across the room. Lonette appears and instinctively grabs it, a superhero "no bullshit" maneuver.

GARY

That's my Bird of Ill Omen, though
I'm leaning toward Ill-O. Think
about it.

LONETTE

Gary, I'm tired. And a key doesn't
give you all hours access. Go
home.

GARY

Come on. It's a celebration.
Look.

Gary indicates the TV showing the mayhem of Captain Manic.

LONETTE

Shouldn't the Loris be fighting
this?

GARY

Shouldn't Ill-O?

LONETTE

Gary, I'm tired.

Gary does a line of coke.

GARY

That's okay. They'll be plenty of
time to fight crime. This is the
beginning.

LONETTE

Gary.

GARY

You can't deny what's happening.
Those cops were routed. And you
saw the superheroes at Teddy's.
You'll be able to write your own
ticket. Say good-bye to this
shitty neighborhood.

Gesturing around.

LONETTE

You know, Gearlap has the numbers,
the firepower. Captain Manic is an
exception. See things for what
they are.

GARY

You can't admit when you're wrong.

Gary takes a swig of Kristal from the bottle. He offers it
to Lonette. Pass.

LONETTE

Fine. I'm wrong. Now, you hate
this neighborhood so much, go home.
To your wife.

GARY

Not this again.

Lonette gets up and walks around the couch on her way to open
the apartment door.

Lonette sees a duffel bag. It's got a Captain Manic helmet
and cash sticking out, although she doesn't see that. She
heads to it. Gary gets in her way, grabs and zips the bag.
He heads to the door.

LONETTE

So that's it. You're leaving?

GARY

You told me to.

LONETTE

(dead calm)

I did. Great. You know I got a
call from a recruiter for a real
supe gig. And I can't believe I
was actually thinking about not
taking it.

GARY

(getting up)

What? Where? You can't leave.
I'm doing this for you.

LONETTE

Doing what?

He doesn't answer.

LONETTE

Get out.

GARY

Come here.

LONETTE

Don't order me. Get out.

Gary throws the Kristal bottle at Lonette. She ducks, no problem at all. He lunges and grabs her by the throat.

Gary turn into the Loris. His hands become claws. She's pinned against the wall his claws around her throat. She looks calmly at him.

LONETTE

Go ahead, do it,
(dripping with scorn)
superhero.

The Loris becomes Gary. He looks at her, picks up his duffel bag and quietly skulks out the door.

INT. ALEXANDRA'S FATHER'S OFFICE - DAY

Old school, dark wood, burgundy tufted leather sofa and chairs.

Alexandra sits in front of a large oak desk. Her father, GOVERNOR FORREST, imposing, sharp-angled, sits behind it in a high back chair.

Behind him, a large print of the execution of Nguyen Van Lem next to a reproduction, presumably, of Edward Hopper's Nighthawks. We know who has the leverage.

GOVERNOR FORREST

Lexi, why change horses? The Mayor knows where the bodies are buried and knows not to dig them up. Why would I put my influence behind a cop? And an incompetent one at that.

ALEXANDRA

He's not just a cop. The unions are behind him. Everyone is. What do you mean incompetent?

GOVERNOR FORREST

Christ, what happened last night? Almost as bad as alien riots.

ALEXANDRA
I'm handling it.

GOVERNOR FORREST
Oh, you're handling it.

ALEXANDRA
Don't be dismissive. I hate when you do that.

GOVERNOR FORREST
I'm not being dismissive. I'm being practical. You're not a cop. How are you handling it? Some bullshit PR campaign?

ALEXANDRA
Those two cops with the alien Uber driver. Kept them on the force with just a suspension. Gearlap didn't have a major drop in the polls. That was all me!

GOVERNOR FORREST
Something you wouldn't have to do if you just worked for me.

ALEXANDRA
And have everyone say I'm daddy's girl?

GOVERNOR FORREST
Aren't you? Isn't that why you're here begging me for help?

ALEXANDRA
I'm not begging.

The intercom sounds.

SECRETARY (O.S.)
Governor, you're one o'clock is here.

This is going nowhere. She kisses him and leaves.

MONTAGE OF CAPTAIN MANIC AND THE LORIS

- Gary executes his plan to have Loris take back Steam City.
- A CEO walks to a limo. Two thugs try to kidnap him. The Loris to the rescue.

- A gang tries to rob a bank. The Loris rappels down from the balcony.

GARY (V.O.)
It was working.

- The police chase Captain Manic. He narrowly escapes behind a corner. The Loris takes off his mask panting.

- The Loris rescues a woman about to jump off the Steam City bridge. He helps an old lady cross a street.

GARY (V.O.)
Yeah, can you believe I did that?

- A truck smashes through loading bay doors. The same truck pulls into another warehouse to inspect the haul. The gang spills out.

The gang unloads goods under the direction of two leaders. One is a cartel member from earlier. The other is Captain Manic.

CARTEL MEMBER
Great haul. Big cut for you.

Silence.

CARTEL MEMBER
What? You not happy again? How many times do we have to go through this. You want more?

Silence. Gary takes off his helmet. He turns into the Loris.

CARTEL MEMBER
What the fuck?

The Cartel Member tries to pick up his gun. The rest of the members react.

The Loris kills them all with a combination of gunfire and his sharp nails. He does it savagely.

The Loris stands alone, bodies around him, in the large warehouse. We close in on his face.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. TEDDY'S LUAU TIKI BAR - NIGHT

The Loris's face turns into Captain Manic then to Gary. He's seeing the reflections change in a coke mirror. Gary stares up vacantly, looking up at Teddy behind the bar.

TEDDY
You okay?

GARY (V.O.)
What was I? I didn't know any more. But the one thing I knew was that I wasn't okay.

GARY
Yeah, I'm okay.

CLOSE ON GARY'S CATATONIC FACE.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. MAYOR'S MANSION - BEDROOM - NIGHT

ON THE LORIS'S CATATONIC FACE

LORIS
You're giving them more firepower?

We see the Loris sits on the bed next to The Mayor. His wife is on the floor, drugged again.

MAYOR
What choice do I have? Crime is rampant. Gearlap's coming after me.

LORIS
But giving him more firepower is going to make him more popular.

MAYOR
If people know I control Gearlap, I'll get the credit.

LORIS
That's not control. It's extortion, fear.

MAYOR
Point taken. Now what's wrong with you?

The Mayor hands the Loris a beer. The Loris snaps off the cap with a claw.

LORIS

Wrong? What? Nothing. I mean everything's wrong. What could do you mean wrong? What could be wrong?

MAYOR

I don't know, you seem a little... manic.

EXT. CITY PARK - DAY

Gearlap holds a campaign rally. Judging from the crowds, he's doing well. Maybe he doesn't need the Governor's endorsement. He's on a gazebo with campaign bunting.

GEARLAP

The era of uncontrolled crime in Steam City is over. The era of justice has begun. Your police is here for you, to keep you safe.

The crowd cheers.

GEARLAP

Organization, methodical procedures, scrupulous review and implementation of the latest techniques and advances in law enforcement. Gone are the days of random costumed anachronisms sneaking around rooftops making a mockery of justice.

A voice from the crowd. "The only justice being mocked is from your speech." It's Captain Manic. No voice chip this time. The crowd reacts.

GEARLAP

Nothing to fear, citizens. This is a ghost talking, a curio, a relic of the past, I'd say antique, but those are usually worth something.

CROWD MEMBER

Fuck off, Maniac.

CAPTAIN MANIC

It's Manic, you idiot.

Captain Manic smacks the Crowd Member. The crowd reacts. He's not winning them over.

BIRD OF ILL OMEN
 Maybe you should pick on someone
 your own size.

The crowd parts as Bird of Ill Omen approaches.

CAPTAIN MANIC
 I don't see anyone like that, so
 I'll just have to pick on you.

The two go at it. It's a rageful affair. The crowd CHEERS like they're at fight.

Captain Manic pins Bird of Ill Omen. His fingers clench around her neck. Bird of Ill Omen closes her eyes. She's felt this before. She opens her eyes. She knows.

Bird of Ill Omen becomes hyper-violent, tearing at Captain Manic, unleashing every move and weapon.

Gearlap has seen enough. He makes a subtle motion. Cops flood from everywhere. Captain Manic and Bird of Ill Omen have no choice but to retreat followed by the phalanx of police.

GEARLAP
 (calming)
 Everything is under control thanks
 to our men and women in blue and
 your next Mayor.

The crowd now cheers Gearlap.

CHANTING CROWD
 Gearlap, Mayor. Gearlap, Mayor.

Gearlap extends both arms up in victory and smiles.

INT. ALLEY WAY - CONTINUOUS

Gary as Captain Manic and Bird Of Ill Omen lean up against a wall. It was a close call. They're spent from having to lose that army of cops.

GARY
 Never knew you had those kind of
 moves.

BIRD OF ILL OMEN
 You don't count my apartment?

GARY

I mean I never fought you. Look--

BIRD OF ILL OMEN

Don't, Gary, okay? How can you be doing this? You--

GARY

If you would just let me finish, I was going to say, I want us to be a team.

BIRD OF ILL OMEN

I'm not joining you. I think I should be killing you.

GARY

You saw what happened there. They were cheering.

BIRD OF ILL OMEN

Gary, they were hoping to see some blood, bones, brain. Don't delude yourself.

GARY

So you're still going to take the gig?

BIRD OF ILL OMEN

I won't do this anymore. Now I have to fight you? And this, this theater for these knuckle draggers. No, I'm going where I'm needed. Where I can do good.

GARY

"Love is like a faucet. It turns on and off."

BIRD OF ILL OMEN

Billie Holiday isn't going to cut it.

GARY (V.O.)

She knew all my moves. But I did mean it, as much as I could.

BIRD OF ILL OMEN

It doesn't have to be. Take a stand. Come with me? What's here?

GARY

I don't abandon things.

BIRD OF ILL OMEN
Your wife, cocaine. You don't
abandon anything. Except
apparently being the good guy.

GARY
Hey, I'm the Loris.

BIRD OF ILL OMEN
Sometimes.

She walks off.

INSERT - VIDEO OF CAPTAIN MANIC AND BIRD OF ILL OMEN FIGHTING
AND THE CROWDS CHEERING LIKE THEY'RE AT A WWE EVENT.

INT. GEARLAP'S OFFICE - DAY

With Alexandra over his right shoulder, Gearlap watches the
video on his tablet sitting at his desk.

GEARLAP
Look at them. Give them a show and
they're happy.

ALEXANDRA
It was good for us.

GEARLAP
Superheroes fighting super-
villains, so fucking cliché. It
doesn't even work in a comic book.

ALEXANDRA
Politics is performance.

Gearlap puts down the tablet. Alexandra goes around the desk
and sits down.

GEARLAP
No, politics is influence. Any
word on the Governor?

ALEXANDRA
He's thinking about it.

GEARLAP
Your job is to make him commit to
it.

ALEXANDRA

I push him: he'll just resist. But the latest polls show we're up. He might be extraneous.

GEARLAP

He's insurance. And that influence could be used against him later, the passing of the scepter.

ALEXANDRA

I wouldn't do that.

GEARLAP

He can't be Governor forever. New man replaces old man, especially when the old man brought him in.

The comment blindsides Alex.

EXT. OUTSIDE OF GEARLAP'S PRECINCT - DAY

Alexandra and Gearlap descend the precinct house stairs to a waiting black car.

GEARLAP

Alex, I need to know you're with me. I pay a fair price for loyalty.

ALEXANDRA

I have no problem killing the cow for the steaks.

Reaching the car.

GEARLAP

My little butcher. I'll take you at your word. I pay a fair price for loyalty, but exact a fair cost for betrayal.

ALEXANDRA

Yeah, yeah. Failure harvests blood. I know.

GEARLAP

What? Never mind.

(looks at his Patek
Phillipe)

I've gotta get to this \$1,500 a plate rubber chicken dinner fund raiser.

A WOULD BE ASSASSIN runs up. He pulls a gun. He shoots twice. One shot totally misses. The second hits a wall next to Alexandra.

Gearlap's BODY GUARD COPS quickly shoot the Assassin down. Alexandra is shaken. Gearlap seems unmoved.

GEARLAP
This your work?

Alexandra tries to steady herself and forces a smile. Cops have rushed out.

GEARLAP
I'm fine.
(motioning to body)
Take care of this. And give Ms. Forrest an escort home.
(to Alexandra)
Cheer up. You're not dead.

Gearlap gets in his car and is driven off.

INT. MAYOR'S MANSION - BEDROOM - NIGHT

The Mayor comes out of the bathroom to see his Wife with a hypodermic in her neck, held by a HENCHMAN of Governor Forrest, who stands nearby.

The Henchman tries to gently place the Wife on the bed, but she slides to the floor with a THUNK. The Governor looks at the situation and shrugs.

MAYOR
What do you want?

GOVERNOR FORREST
I'm here to help you.

The Mayor points at his wife.

MAYOR
You call that helping?

On cue, the Henchman vanishes out the French doors. The Mayor sits on the bed.

MAYOR
All right, you have my attention.

GOVERNOR FORREST
You're losing.

MAYOR

What?

GOVERNOR FORREST

Gearlap, didn't I tell you to fire him? Ambition is dangerous, but it's even more dangerous when it's given a shot of success. Remember what Caesar said.

MAYOR

The die is cast?

GOVERNOR FORREST

He said that, but I'm think Yond Gearlap has a lean and hungry look. Such men as him are dangerous.

MAYOR

You're saying he can't be stopped?

GOVERNOR FORREST

Oh, anyone can be stopped. But it's harder to stop a tank than a Volkswagen.

MAYOR

He's not a tank yet.

GOVERNOR FORREST

That's what I wanted to hear. Because if he becomes a tank, I may have no choice but to climb in.

INT. PAWN SHOP - DAY

A portly Captain Manic runs out.

Two middle aged Asian women chase portly Captain Manic with baseball bats.

Across the street, the Loris shakes his head and laughs, one of the few light moments he's had.

INT. TEDDY'S LUAU TIKI BAR - DAY

Behind the bar, still in his Captain Manic costume, Teddy pours himself a shot of Patron Gran Platinum. Gary sits opposite.

GARY
Treating yourself to the good
stuff, and you don't share?

Teddy pours Gary a glass. His hand shakes. They down it.

TEDDY
I'm done.

GARY
C'mon. We just need to work out
the kinks.

TEDDY
Me almost getting killed isn't a
kink. It's a huge fucking bowel
obstruction.

Teddy pours another shot and downs it.

GARY
Teddy, you're being a little over
dramatic. They were two middle
aged Asian women with baseball
bats.

TEDDY
And baseball's big in Japan. They
know how to hit.

GARY
I think they were Chinese. You of
all people should be able to tell
the difference. Look, I thought
you'd be able to handle it. I
cased the joint before.

Gary LAUGHS.

TEDDY
Listen to you, Gary, casing joints.
What are you?

Silence.

TEDDY
I'll tell you what you are: out of
control.

Gary takes the tequila bottle and pours himself a shot. He
downs it.

GARY
I'm in total control. I have total control. Total control of crime, and I, Captain Loris, can turn it on and off, not the cops.

TEDDY
Captain Loris?

GARY
Loris. The Loris.

TEDDY
Sorry, buddy, you're going to have to do this without me.

GARY
Fair enough, Teddy. I don't want you to do something you can't get behind.

TEDDY
You're not going to guilt me into this.

GARY
Wouldn't dream of it.

GARY (V.O.)
At least I still had Teddy on my side.

EXT. FRONT OF GARY AND ALEXANDRA'S BUILDING - NIGHT

Gary exits. When he hits the sidewalk, two LARGE GUYS DRESSED IN SUITS approach. He tries to step by. They stop him. Tries again, the same.

SUIT ONE
Everybody's doing a brand new dance now.

GARY
Look, I don't want any trouble.

Gary tries again. Blocked.

SUIT TWO
You're saying we do? That's presumptuous.

Gary scoffs. They manhandle him and force him to walk along with them.

SUIT ONE

You think we wouldn't know words like that?

SUIT TWO

We know 'em all. Presumptuous, arboreal, melancholic, ratatouille.

They LAUGH.

GARY

All right, you know words. Well, you know what I know?

SUIT TWO

What?

GARY

Karate.

Gary stops next to a black limo with tinted windows and jumps into a fighting stance. They burst out LAUGHING.

The door to the limo opens. It's Governor Forrest.

INT. LIMOUSINE - NIGHT

Gary sits next to his father-in-law, uncomfortably.

GOVERNOR FORREST

I never approved of Lexi marrying you.

GARY

The course of true love, train wreck to some, Hindenburg to others.

GOVERNOR FORREST

I didn't even raise a protest when you refused to sign a pre-nup.

GARY

Love is blind, and lovers cannot see, the pretty follies that they themselves commit.

GOVERNOR FORREST

Shut up, you damn bug collector.

GARY

Naturalist. An entomologist is a bug collector, cataloguer would be more correct though.

GOVERNOR FORREST

Greyhound shit, poodle shit, it's all dog shit.

Gary opens the door. Suit One slams it closed.

GOVERNOR FORREST

Alex is in way over her head with Gearlap.

GARY

Him being Mayor a threat to you?

GOVERNOR FORREST

(chuckling)

Him being Mayor to me is about as troubling as gnat shit in pepper.

GARY

You really like these shit analogies.

GOVERNOR FORREST

Gearlap wants to be Mayor so he can use the police force to control crime.

GARY

I get it. Crime control.

GOVERNOR FORREST

Not that kind of control. He wants to run it. To be the biggest syndicate in Steam City.

The Governor offers Gary a drink from the bar. Gary, reluctant at first, takes it.

GARY

Gearlap's a Xenophobe, a borderline fascist. But dirty? No way. And Alex? She's his moll?

GOVERNOR FORREST

What does Alex want more than anything?

GARY
 (realizing he's right)
 To break away from you. But look,
 your suspicions aren't enough.

The Governor opens a tablet. He hands it to Gary.

An email chain between Gearlap and Alex. As Gary scrolls through, words jump out "who would expect cops", "control crime", "Mayor", "perfect move", "co-opt gangs" "use office to consolidate power under guise of law and order", "the most powerful syndicate, "eradicate the supes."

GARY (V.O.)
 Reading it, part of me admired Alex. The other part wanted to kill her. And here, here I was with a guy who hated me giving it all to me, the way for superheroes to take back Steam City. And he didn't even know.

The Governor takes back the tablet.

GOVERNOR FORREST
 Now you see why I can't let Gearlap become Mayor, and why Alex could end up in a very bad position.

GARY
 And you expect me to help? My wife is fucking a wanna be crime boss of Steam City and an accomplice to it. Fuck her and fuck you, too.

GARY (V.O.)
 But I couldn't be too eager.

GOVERNOR FORREST
 I'm a realist, Gary, but I'm also a father, and a Governor.

GARY
 A puppet, a pauper, a pirate, a poet, a pawn and a putz.

The Governor pulls out a flash drive and hands it to Gary.

GOVERNOR FORREST
 Leak this to the press. Take down Gearlap. I'll protect Alex. She'll do time in some Club Fed. For that, I'll make you CEO of my holding company.

GARY
A no show job. I'm really good at that.

Gary looks out the window.

GOVERNOR FORREST
Don't be stupid, for once, or less stupid.

The Governor motions to the two Cops outside.

GOVERNOR FORREST
You'll get a huge payday. You can even leave Alex for that whore you're fucking. Deal?

The Governor grabs his arm. The scene freezes for a second.

GARY (V.O.)
How could I doubt someone who would sell out his own daughter?

GOVERNOR FORREST
But remember, success reaps bountiful rewards. Failure harvests blood.

GARY
Sure it does.

INT. TEDDY'S LUAU TIKI BAR - NIGHT

TIGHT SHOT ON GARY'S FACE.

GARY
I love this place!

Gary stands over a table of superheroes and aliens.

SUPERHERO ONE
I never thought this place would be happening again.

GARY
Steam City, baby.

SUPERHERO ONE
No, this place. Steam City is done.

SUPERHERO TWO
The cops have it.

GARY
That's going to change. And
Superheroes are going to do it.

They don't go along.

GARY
You don't see things out there?

SUPERHERO TWO
On the news, I saw a fat Captain
Manic running.

They LAUGH.

SUPERHERO ONE
My supe-sense smells a scam.

SUPERHERO THREE
Say that 5 times fast. But even
the Loris could smell that.

They LAUGH.

GARY
Hilarious, that's no scam. That's
copycats. That means work for us.

They still don't buy it. Gary ignores it.

GARY
What do you call that green shit
between an elephants toes? Slow
running aliens.

ALIEN
That's not funny.

SUPERHERO TWO
It is if it's an Orolian.

ALIEN
(laughing)
Good point.

GARY
See, good times.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Two men in suits circle Alexandra. It's eerily similar to what happened to Gary in front of his father-in-law's limousine. But these guys have flashier suits and are Latin, not the white Wehrmacht cops of the governor.

From Alexandra's look, she knows. She tries to scream.

One guy grabs her from behind and picks her up. Her legs flail. A silver G-Wagon pulls up.

The other guy opens the door. She's shuffled in. They screech off.

EXT. WAREHOUSE DISTRICT - NIGHT

Perched watching the front of a building, Bird of Ill Omen sees two ENFORCER TYPES standing guard with AK - 47s.

On top of the building TWO OTHER ENFORCERS looking very SWAT with .50 caliber guns.

Bird of Ill Omen glides down the fire escape from her viewpoint and to the corner of the building where the enforcers stand guard.

ENFORCER ONE

You like the break over the shoe?

Enforcer Two puts his left leg forward to focus on the cuff break of his pants.

ENFORCER TWO

It gives it more of a continuous line.

ENFORCER ONE

I see that. But I'm still not sold on cuffs. I always worry about them snagging on my heels.

ENFORCER TWO

You need the right tailor. I'll give you my guy's name.

Bird Of Ill Omen shakes her head at this sartorial talk. Enforcer Two pulls his suit collar up.

ENFORCER TWO

Goddamn bone chilling. Why do we always get the shit detail?

Enforcer One motions to the building snipers.

ENFORCER ONE
 Guess we don't have the pull. You
 think this kidnap thing will work?

ENFORCER TWO
 The boss thinks so.

ENFORCER ONE
 Daddy Dearest is going to fork over
 two million.

ENFORCER TWO
 That's like a sawbuck to him.
 Besides how will it look if the
 Governor's daughter ends up parcel
 posted to five different zip codes.

ENFORCER ONE
 Still, he's a cheap fuck

Enforcer One blows into his hands. Bird Of Ill Omen is
 piecing it together. It's time to act. A plan. She runs
 up. They ready their guns.

ENFORCER ONE
 What do you want, supe?

BIRD OF ILL OMEN
 (out of breath)
 Isn't this Crowbar?

ENFORCER TWO
 Crowbar, that's four blocks over.

ENFORCER ONE
 You headed there?

BIRD OF ILL OMEN
 I was supposed to be there a half
 hour ago. I'm working a bachelor
 party.

ENFORCER ONE
 Really? You the entertainment?

BIRD OF ILL OMEN
 Yeah. With crime down, I need this
 gig.

ENFORCER TWO
 What do you do?

BIRD OF ILL OMEN
(flirtingly)
What don't I do?

They look at each other.

Bird of Ill Omen commences a lascivious dance but mid-sashay she springs into action. She pops Enforcer One in the neck, crushing his wind pipe.

Before Enforcer Two can react, she kicks him in the stomach, deftly moves behind him and snaps his neck.

BIRD OF ILL OMEN
(stepping over them)
You should see my second show.

INT. BUILDING HALL - CONTINUOUS

A freight elevator and stairs. Bird Of Ill Omen quietly climbs the stairs to the second floor.

INT. BUILDING SECOND FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

Bird of Ill Omen makes her way down the hall to a loft opening.

She sees Alexandra tied to a chair, a gag in her mouth. A single work lamp hangs over her. Their eyes meet. Alexandra smiles.

Bird of Ill Omen enters. She makes it fifteen feet until the cat walks above open with gun fire. Bird of Ill Omen, retreats.

Alexandra looks at her. Bird of Ill Omen tries again. It's a curtain of lead. Again, she just can't. Off Alexandra's look...

CUT TO:

INT. BUILDING FRONT

Bird of Ill Omen runs out, actually panting this time. All this fire power. The .50 Caliber guns rain on her from the building top.

Chunks of street and building blow up around her as she barely makes it to the corner and off she runs.

But there's a blood trail.

VIDEO FOOTAGE

Alexandra, tied to a chair as before. The Cartel Leader steps into frame.

CARTEL BOSS

Governor Forrest, my message is simple. Two million dollars in three days. And you'll stop all anti-crime legislation, which shouldn't be that difficult for a man of your considerable influence. How would voters feel come election time if you couldn't even protect your daughter from violent crime?

He turns the camera back on Alexandra. The video footage stays frozen, ominously. We see it's on a screen.

IN THE TALK ACTION STUDIO

Behind Heather Blake who is interviewing Governor Forrest.

HEATHER BLAKE

To be clear Governor, you won't pay the two million dollar ransom to free your daughter?

GOVERNOR FORREST

Heather, while I'm concerned about my daughter's well-being, I'm an elected official. I was empowered to lead by example. As a father, I would give everything I have. But that will only embolden these animals and invite them to do whatever they want to the people of Steam City. As Governor, no, I can't allow that.

HEATHER BLAKE

Your daughter may perish.

GOVERNOR FORREST

Heather, I have every confidence in the Steam City Police Department. They are working diligently to find these cowards and bring them to justice.

INT. LONETTE LOLANGE'S LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Lonette has been watching the Governor on TV.

Her eyes drift to a bureau covered with framed photos. It's a picture of Gary and Alex flanking Lonette on a red carpet. They all have forced smiles.

FLASHBACK - INT. ELEGANT BALLROOM - TWO YEARS EARLIER

Tables are set with expensive floral arrangements, china and flatware. The chairs are covered with fabric matching the table clothes.

The social elite and power brokers of Steam City have gathered for the annual "Spring Into Action" charity event.

Gary wears a tuxedo. Alexandra models a tasteful couture ball gown, the same as in the photo.

She spots Lonette from across the room. She's dressed in a simple black dress that is not Chanel, but she makes it work, also like the photo.

Alexandra sees Lonette admiring a floral centerpiece. She approaches. Gary dutifully follows.

ALEXANDRA

I think we'd probably raise more for charity if we just donated the money from the floral arrangements.

LONETTE

You're reading my mind. But they are pretty.

ALEXANDRA

Yes. And this is how the game is played. People want to feel important.

GARY

And what could make them feel more important than things we killed and laid on the table. Just like the filet mignon that's coming later.

Alexandra holds out her hand.

ALEXANDRA

Alexandra Forrest.

LONETTE

Oh, I know. Lonette Lolange.

Alexandra shakes her hand.

ALEXANDRA

I know. We love your work with needy children. This is Gary Ganders, my husband.

GARY

(already tipsy)

I kept my maiden name for professional reasons.

ALEXANDRA

Are you staying for the auction? Gary's in it.

GARY

(grabbing a glass of wine from a passing waiter's tray and drinking)

I'm being sold in the market like a sla--

Alexandra pokes him in the ribs.

ALEXANDRA

He's donating a naturalist walking tour of Steam City Park. Well, I have to keep mingling. Let me see if I can get my father to allocate more grant money your way. Kids only get one shot at childhood.

Alexandra looks at Gary.

ALEXANDRA

Although some people try to make it last a long, long time.

INT. COAT CHECK AREA - NIGHT

Lonette picks up her coat. Gary approaches with an empty martini glass. He hands his ticket over to the Coat Check Girl.

LONETTE

I'm guessing you're not the designated driver.

GARY

If I am designated, I will not run.

Gary offers Lonette his olives on a cocktail skewer. She eats them, somewhat sensually.

LONETTE

So how will I get home?

GARY

Click your heels three times and say "there's no one like Gary."

Lonette smiles at that.

The Coat Check Girl hands Gary his coat. She offers Alexandra's coat. Gary looks back at the room. Alexandra socializes with the jetset. Gary hands Alexandra's coat back.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BIRD OF ILL OMEN'S LAIR - NIGHT (BACK TO PRESENT)

A tight shot on Bird of Ill Omen's face as she recalled the first time they all met, a look of sadness, longing and guilt all at once.

Back to business. She tries a few combat moves, kicks, spins. She falls off balance. Her leg is still not up to superhero form. She calls Gary. It goes to voice mail.

BIRD OF ILL OMEN

I can't let Alex stay there. I know you don't agree with me. You don't understand, or maybe you do, and just don't want to. I hope it's not that, for your sake. Anyway, good-bye, Gary.

INT. WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

Two GUYS guard Alexandra, still gagged and tied to a chair.

She tries to work her wrists free. Nothing. She continues to squirm.

GUY

Stop with the fidgeting. You're not going anywhere.

GUY 2
...for now at least.

Alexandra continues to squirm and tries to talk.

GUY
Shut the fuck up.

GUY 2
Maybe she has to pee.

GUY
I'll get the camera.

GUY 2
Come on. Be decent.

He removes the gag. Alexandra bites his hand. She won't let go. He's in pain. He finally gets free. He's about to hit her but stops.

Alexandra SCREAMS. They struggle to get the gag on.

GUY
Guess she doesn't have to pee.

GUN FIRE APPROACHING. They get ready.

INT. GARY AND ALEXANDRA'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Gary sees the missed call from Lonette and the voice mail. He listens to it.

Gary remembers scenes from their past. Her smile and laugh. The time with Gemma in the playground. Their fight when she found out he was Captain Manic. It ends with her final "Good-bye, Gary".

INT. WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

GUNFIRE, very close. The Thugs brace themselves.

GUY
Stay sharp.

GUY 2
What? You think I'm fucking gonna fall asleep?

GUNFIRE LOUDER AND CLOSER.

GUY

Shit.

Gearlap and his handpicked elite enter. They make quick work of the two. They're past tense. Alexandra smiles at him. He smiles back.

INT. GARY AND ALEXANDRA'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Gary does a line of coke. He becomes the Loris. Eyeballs bigger than ever. Especially the pupils.

INT. WAREHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Gearlap takes off Alexandra's gag.

ALEXANDRA

What took you so long?

GEARLAP

I like making an entrance. You don't look so bad. Yet.

Gearlap trains his gun on Alexandra's forehead.

ALEXANDRA

Not funny.

GEARLAP

Not meant to be. I know you've been working with your father, Alex.

ALEXANDRA

Osman, that's insane.

GEARLAP

He wants to control all the crime, and you want to be right by his side.

ALEXANDRA

Stop fucking around. Untie me.

GEARLAP

You Forrests are all the same. Greedy, can't share a thing.

Gearlap cocks his gun.

Bird of Ill Omen slides on a rope from the catwalk.

She does her best to fight Gearlap's cops, using every superhero maneuver. Mid flight gliding swiftly on her wings, she's unstoppable, taking out skulls left and right.

But Gearlap's men are able to set them ablaze with a flamethrower. She drops and rolls to put out the flames, but she's grounded.

Still, she manages a tough fight, hand to hand, chop for chop, blow for blow, and it seems to be working. Until they find her weak link. Her leg. She's on the ropes.

The Loris bursts through the door. He flanks the Cops.

The tide again turns.

GARY (V.O.)

Bet you saw that coming.

The last Cop falls. Gearlap is alone.

GEARLAP

I never thought I'd be happy to see supes.

LORIS

Don't move.

Bird of Ill Omen still in combat stance, ready for anything.

GEARLAP

The governor, her, they're all trying to take over crime, make it one big syndicate.

ALEXANDRA

You spineless shit.

BIRD OF ILL OMEN

We'll take you both in and let the D.A. sort it all out.

Bird Of Ill Omen unties Alexandra.

ALEXANDRA

Thanks. I was working with my father to set him up.

LORIS

Dubious.

BIRD OF ILL OMEN

Like I said. It's not for us to dec--

Bird of Ill Omen is never able to finish her sentence. A SHOT from behind.

Another from above spins her around. She slumps a bit, dazed. Then, she crumbles, mortally wounded.

The Loris runs to her. A new brigade of Cops scale down from the catwalk and stream in through the door. They part. Governor Forrest enters.

LORIS
What did you do? What did you do?

The Cops seize Gearlap.

GOVERNOR FORREST
Take him away. For now.

They drag Gearlap off.

The Governor approaches Alexandra.

GOVERNOR FORREST
Very good work.

She smiles.

ALEXANDRA
Looks like we own crime in Steam City.

GOVERNOR FORREST
A brief but beautiful partnership.

The Loris picks up Bird of Ill Omen's limp body.

LORIS
Lonnie, Lonnie.

Governor Forrest trains his gun on Alexandra's forehead. She realizes what is going to happen. He fires. The back of her head blows off. She falls.

GOVERNOR FORREST
(over her body)
And now a sole proprietorship. I couldn't have any leverage over me. Sorry, pinkie.

Governor Forrest looks at the Loris. Will the same fate befall him?

GOVERNOR FORREST
 Don't worry. I still plan to honor
 my deal with you, Gary.

Wait, what? Forrest knows Gary is the Loris? For how long?
 When?

The Loris charges at Governor Forrest. The Cops shoot him
 with high tech Loris piercing dart.

From the Loris' point of view everything gets fuzzy/out of
 focus. He sees the Governor, Alexandra and finally Lonette.

It all goes black.

Gary, no longer in Loris form, is taken away.

INT. MAYOR'S MANSION - BEDROOM - NIGHT

The Mayor again exits the bathroom. He sees his wife
 apparently passed out on the bed. He looks up and sees
 Forrest's Henchman.

MAYOR
 Oh come on, if you keep drugging
 her--

The Mayor looks. Blood flows onto the pillow. He knows.
 It's too late. The Henchman fires a bullet into the Mayor's
 head.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - AN UNSPECIFIED TIME IN THE FUTURE

Stark, barren and clinical, an aluminum desk and chairs with
 fluorescent lights above that give off a low hum.

Gary tells his story to two GENERIC SUPERHEROES who stand in
 front of a one way mirror.

BEHIND THE MIRROR

Two DOCTORS watch and listen.

INTERCUT between the interrogation room and the Doctors'
 vantage point.

During this exchange, Gary turns from the Loris and back as
 he becomes animated.

SUPERHERO ONE
 Can we go over it again?

GARY/LORIS

You don't think I've done that in all the time I've been here. I keep asking how, how? What could I have done? How can she be gone? Lonette, I killed her.

SUPERHERO TWO

We understand. That's why we're here to help. So you think you're an arch-villain? Captain Manic?

GARY/LORIS

Yes, I mean no. It was just to get crime on the rise in Steam City. What have I been telling you?

SUPERHERO ONE

For you to fight, as a superhero?

GARY/LORIS

Yes!

SUPERHERO ONE

But you killed people as this Captain Manic.

SUPERHERO TWO

And took graft.

GARY/LORIS

It's not that simple. I gave it to charity.

SUPERHERO TWO

But not all of it?

GARY/LORIS

No. Do we have to go over this again? What are you doing to stop the Governor? Let me talk to the Mayor.

SUPERHERO TWO

The Mayor's dead.

GARY/LORIS

You see. This is out of control. You need my help.

Gary tries to get up. The Superheroes move on him.

Gary sits. He's not the Loris now. He needs to be rational for them to believe him.

GARY

Sorry, it's just... I... Lonette...

SUPERHERO ONE

We definitely need your help-- in good time though.

SUPERHERO TWO

You just rest. We'll talk again soon.

INT. DOCTORS' OBSERVATION AREA - CONTINUOUS

Behind them, through the glass, Gary paces.

DOCTOR ONE

What do you think?

SUPERHERO TWO

Severe.

DOCTOR TWO

But treatable?

SUPERHERO TWO

I think so.

SUPERHERO ONE

You were right to bring us in.

DOCTOR ONE

We've had some experience with this. But our thinking was only a superhero would be able to deal with another superhero.

SUPERHERO ONE

Not any superhero. We've been trained in this type of what we call "break behavior."

SUPERHERO TWO

If you're fine with it, we'd like to push it up to a five day treatment.

DOCTOR ONE

Yes.

DOCTOR TWO

By all means.

SUPERHERO TWO
Tomorrow, we'll start the real
work. Good night, then.

As the Superheroes leave, Gary silently paces in the
interrogation room turning to the Loris and back as he tries
to figure all of this out.

CUT TO:

INT. CLINIC HALLWAY - DAY

The Superheroes walk out.

SUPERHERO ONE
It's going to take a lot of work.

SUPERHERO TWO
There giving us time and latitude.

SUPERHERO ONE
I still don't know.

SUPERHERO TWO
If it doesn't work, he's here. If
it does, though, the rewards will
be immense... for future research
alone.

EXT. FRONT OF STEAM CITY PSYCHIATRIC CENTER - DAY

The Superheroes walk to a black limousine. One of the cops
who approached Gary earlier opens the door.

GOVERNOR FORREST
Well?

SUPERHERO TWO
It's doable.

GOVERNOR FORREST
You can convince him to be Captain
Manic?

SUPERHERO TWO
Yes.

GOVERNOR FORREST
But I need him to have no
conscience, to be ruthless.

SUPERHERO ONE
We'll just need time.

GOVERNOR FORREST
Fine. Just be sure to succeed.
There's a lot of crime to control
in this country and a lot of money
to be made from it. But I can't do
it from the Governor's Mansion. I
prefer a house that's more white.

He smiles.

SUPERHERO ONE
We understand.

GOVERNOR FORREST
We have a saying in my family:
Success reaps rewards. Failure
harvests blood. Even green blood
like yours.

The Cop closes the door. The limo drives off.

IN GARY'S CELL

Gary licks his underarm.

FADE OUT.