

SUPERMAN TODAY



CHAPTER ONE THE MAN OF STEEL

ORIGINAL ADAPTATION BY
JEFF CALLAWAY

BASED ON SUPERMAN BY SIEGEL & SHUSTER & FLEISCHER & BATES
& S! MAGGIN & MOORE & LOEB & BYRNE & DINI & TIMM & BURNETT
& EVERYBODY ELSE WHO EVER WROTE SUPERMAN

Dedicated with respect and admiration to
ELLIOT S! MAGGIN
who helped inspire a generation to want to *be* Superman

SUPERMAN and traditional Superman logo TM DC Comics
New Logo Design © Jeff Callaway

First Printed 7/24/2004
Registered WGA-E: I21754
Revised 4/20/09

TITLE AGAINST BLACK:

S U P E R M A N

FADE IN UNDER TITLE:

Created by Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster

The deep, booming voice of an ANNOUNCER intones over the following images:

A BRILLIANT FLASH OF LIGHTNING parts black clouds with a thunderous ka-BOOOM!!!!

ANNOUNCER

Faster than a streak of lightning!

A giant wave CRASHES against a rocky shoreline.

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)

More powerful than the pounding surf!

Palm trees bend as a hurricane UPROOTS them.

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)

Mightier than a roaring hurricane!

A brilliant, sizzling FLASH OF SPARKS descends.

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)

Who is this amazing stranger? What incredible being could possess such remarkable powers? Who is this <<GONG!!>> Mystery Man!?

A semi-familiar CAPED PROFILE appears: backlit and in complete silhouette, we can't make him out at all.

A montage of appropriate news footage follows behind the ANNOUNCER VOICE OVER.

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)

Dateline: Mount Monokoa. Last month this long-dormant volcano erupted, threatening the resort of San Isidore

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)

with sudden destruction when, seemingly
out of nowhere came a miracle.

CUT TO INTERVIEW:

Field footage is interspersed during a brief interview with
a FIELD GEOLOGIST standing before the now calm volcano.

FIELD GEOLOGIST

We were completely cut off, and I mean
we were goners, then all of a sudden
this... "wind"... comes out of nowhere,
like from way up high and somehow
FREEZES THE LAVA!! So this wall here
forms and channels the flow right into
the ocean. (holds up binoculars) And
all I could see, way up in the clouds,
was this, well, it looked like a... a
GUY... in a red cape.

He then looks directly at the camera and shrugs, throwing
his hands in the air.

CUT TO:

A map of the U.S. appears with mentioned states HIGHLIGHTED
with appropriate TORNADIC ANIMATION.

ANNOUNCER

Dateline: Tornado Alley. U.S.
Meteorologists report unprecedented
decreases in tornado damage over the
last eight months in Oklahoma, Texas,
Arkansas, Mississippi, and Tennessee.

CUT TO INTERVIEW:

METEOROLOGIST

It's not that there's fewer tornadoes,
it's just that... somehow... they seem
to be... doing less damage.

INTERVIEWER

Do you have any explanation for this?

METEOROLOGIST
 (shaking his head incredulously for
 several beats) No!!!!

CUT TO:

Spectacular video footage plays as described behind the
 Voice Over.

ANNOUNCER
 One possible explanation? Here outside
 Oklahoma City, this monstrous F-Four
 twister bearing down on a local news
 crew somehow miraculously dissipates in
 only seconds.

Slow-mo replay shows only a BLURRY STREAK OF RED AND
 BLUE moving in opposition to the dissipating storm.

CAMERAMAN
 You got me dude. I mean, I shot it, I
 saw it, and I got no freakin' idea.

CUT TO:

A BLACKENED AIRPLANE with ONE WING sits smoldering on a
 runway.

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)
 Dateline: Pakistan. Over two hundred
 passengers aboard this aging airliner
 escaped certain death after an engine
 exploded at fifteen thousand feet,
 ripping the wing from the fuselage.

CUT TO INTERVIEW:

A Pakistani pilot is describing his experience as we hear
 the voice of a BBC FEMALE TRANSLATOR.

FEMALE TRANSLATOR
 We were in a violent tailspin, just
 about to crash when we... the plane
 somehow leveled out gently, like
 nothing was wrong. Minutes later we
 approached a small airfield, but

instead of a normal landing we just...
floated down, like a feather.

The pilot then looks directly into camera and speaks in thickly-accented English.

PILOT

It was the damndest thing I've ever
seen.

CUT TO:

THOUSANDS OF FISH flop about on the ground in rural African desert villages as people dance for joy, arms raised to the sky.

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)

Dateline: Somalia. In this famine-torn,
most desperate corner of the Earth,
starving thousands rejoice as a rain of
fresh, living fish miraculously falls
from the sky, providing enough food to
temporarily avert a human disaster of
staggering proportions.

CUT TO:

We see footage of FRENCH CROOKS (dressed as MIMES) hanging from Parisian STREETLAMPS.

ANNOUNCER

Dateline: Paris. A daring, daylight
bank heist was uniquely foiled when
French police found the would-be
robbers dangling from city
streetlights, their weapons
mysteriously melted into a mangled mass
of metal.

CUT TO:

A montage of SCENIC SHOTS OF METROPOLIS accompanies the VO.

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)

Although no corner of the globe appears
immune from these strange visitations,
more than half the sightings have

occurred here in Metropolis, gleaming city of the future. Already home to many world-famous landmarks and structures including the new LexCorp Tower, soon to reclaim the title of world's tallest building...

Several QUICK CUTS of blurry home footage of RED/BLUE STREAKS through the CLOUDS and a two very bad and inaccurate ARTIST'S RENDERINGS appear.

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)

...Metropolis and its citizens seem to be reaping the benefits of their new caped marvel.

Witnesses briefly appear in succession.

OLD LADY

My 'partment was on fire, and he flew me right out the window! Flew! Right through the air!

CUT TO:

MIDDLE-AGED GUY

So we got this burglar, right? Then all of a sudden this other guy just shows up outta nowhere, like magic or somethin', and then WHOOSH!! They're both gone!

CUT TO:

LITTLE GIRL W/KITTEN

He was a big blue angel with red wings!

There's a brief insert of her INACCURATE CRAYON DRAWING.

LITTLE GIRL W/KITTEN (CONT'D)

He got my kitty down from way up there!! (points upward)

The camera TILTS UP to the top of the TALLEST OAK we've ever seen.

CUT TO:

A WINO who's obviously seen better days is standing in a downtown alley.

WINO

I saw him! He flew right down over there! Scared the <<BLEEP>> out of me! I ain't lyin'!! But that ain't right! That ain't natural! Like to scared me to death!!

He takes a swig from a brown paper bag.

As the newsreel concludes, we PULL BACK from the HI-DEF PROJECTION SCREEN we've been watching.

ANNOUNCER

For now, the question remains: Who or what is this... MYSTERY MAN!?

As the final image dissolves into co-logos reading "WGBS-THE METRO-STATION" and "A Division of GBC-GALAXY BROADCASTING AND COMMUNICATIONS," we WHIP-PAN 180 DEGREES TO REVEAL:

INT:DAILY PLANET OFFICES-SCREENING ROOM

A darkened screening room, illuminated only by the projection beam, full of several FIGURES, all in various degrees of silhouette and shadow. In the center of the room PERRY WHITE, editor of a great metropolitan newspaper, begins his tirade in back-lit cigar smoke.

PERRY

What a steamin' pile of crap!!

GUY

Come on, Chief!

GUY 2

It's not that bad.

PERRY

(waving under his nose)
Peeee-uuuw!!

GUY 2

Chief...

PERRY

The stuff in the middle was okay, but that whole intro... all that "Mystery Man" crap! Who did that?

In our foreground, a DESKLAMP CLICK illuminates LOIS LANE, struggling reporter.

LOIS

Sorry Perry.

PERRY

We gotta work on that unhealthy penchant for alliteration, too.

LOIS

Yeah, well it's better than what the TV boys sent over.

PERRY

Now see, that's what I've been talkin' about!! WHY IS GALAXY COMMANDEERING DAILY PLANET WRITERS WHEN--

MORGAN EDGE, president of WGBS and owner of the Daily Planet, rises, still obscured in shadow.

EDGE

Now Perry, we've talked about this, we're all a team here--

PERRY

Team-schmeam Edge, I just wanna know why nobody from the greatest newspaper in the greatest city in the world can find out who the blue blazes this guy is??

In the back of the room, motionless and silent but visible all along, CLARK KENT ventures a meek opinion.

CLARK

Well... he does seem pretty quick.

PERRY

Aaaaaahhhh!!!!!!!!!!!!

CLARK

Calm down, chief, your pulse is racing,
I'm going down for a coffee, can I get
you something?

PERRY

Aaaaaaahhhhh!!!!!!

Clark turns to leave.

LOIS

Oh Clark, be a dear and get me a double
latte, please??

CLARK

Sure thing, Lois.

As soon as he's gone, the wisecracks begin.

GUY

Geez, what a loser.

GUY 2

You said it.

GUY

Is he for real?

GUY 3

What a goober.

GUY 4

He's a real nut-less Mary isn't he?

LOIS

Hey, lay off my coffee-boy, will'ya?

Everyone, including Lois, is laughing until Perry cuts them
off. Somebody opens the window, filling the room with
sunlight, allowing us to see everyone for the first time.

PERRY

You buncha smug so and so's-- So what
if he's a little on the milquetoast-ey
side? Clark Kent is a DAMN fine
investigative reporter, a fabulous

writer, the fastest typist I've ever seen and I'll betcha nine-to-nothin' he gets closer to a Pulitzer before any of you smarmy, half-talent little wanna-be's even...

Lois' eyes roll on the word "Pulitzer." As Perry's diatribe continues...

EXT:OUTSIDE DAILY PLANET BUILDING

...we track with his words, traveling with the sound waves through the open window, moving quickly down multiple stories across the beautiful, Art Deco facade of the DAILY PLANET building, down to a street vendor on the corner, where CLARK KENT impossibly stands, smiling as he receives his two coffees.

CLARK
(to himself)
Thanks, chief.

But suddenly a scream rings out; now he and everyone else on the street look up in shock as we WHIP-PAN to see...

A MASSIVE TIDAL WAVE, RISING HUNDREDS OF FEET, towering above the skyline as it rises out of Metropolis harbor, bearing down on the city with an incredible RUMBLE. Everywhere, dockworkers, tourists, businessmen and women crouching under biting wind look up into the sky at this unbelievable sight, causing instant shrieks of panic from everyone.

LADY
Oh my God!!!

MAN
Oh NOOOOOO!!!!!!

OTHER MAN
RUN!!!!!!!!!!!!

OTHER LADY
It's gonna KILL US ALL!!!!

AGING YUPPIE
Oh God, WE'RE ALL GONNA DIE!!!

As pandemonium breaks out, Clark runs back inside the Planet front door, then a second later we TILT UP to see a STREAK OF RED AND BLUE rocket out a stairwell window several floors above with a HIGH-PITCHED WHISTLE, moving at impossible speed.

INT:DAILY PLANET-SCREENING ROOM

Upstairs at the Planet offices, the screaming has drawn everyone to the open window.

GUY
What's goin' on?

GUY 2
I don't... LOOK!!

He points toward their impending doom.

GUY 3
That can't be...

GUY 2
What do we...?

GUY 4
Up in the sky...look!

GUY
Is it a...?

LOIS
It's HIM!

PERRY
Cameras! Roof!! NOW!!!!

Suddenly they remember their jobs and scatter.

Outside, our point of view is just like every other confused citizen of Metropolis. We see action from street level, news-chopper angles, and from the decks of the doomed ships in the harbor. The killer wave roars toward the city, but seemingly in a few seconds, the following happens; several "heat-blasts" hit the front of the wave creating billowing steam, followed quickly by a whistling

WHOOOOM as the violet streak makes full contact with the brunt of the wave, leaving the slightest, almost-human-sized groove along the length of the wave. After a half-second of silence, ka--BOOOOMM!!! the SUPER-SONIC BOOM trailing the streak slams into the wave. The loudest sound ever recorded in Metropolis causes the wave's forward momentum to actually shudder to a stop; but before it can collapse on itself, a GIGANTIC WHIRLPOOL appears at its base, then begins to RISE UP from the harbor water, rotating counterclockwise. The mountain of water flattens and spreads into the shape of a dish as FASTER and FASTER, HIGHER and HIGHER, the wave and whirlpool rise like clay spinning against the hands of some unseen potter. The OCEAN RISES, a giant swirling cylinder of water heading into the sky.

EXT:ROOF OF DAILY PLANET

Perry, Lois, and the others burst from the stairwell onto the roof; their muffled "Whoa!"s and "Oh my God"s indicate they're uniformly stunned by the miracle they're witnessing. After only a second, Lois recovers first, enough to a click a few shots of...

WHIP-PAN 180 TO:

EXT:SKIES OVER METROPOLIS

A GIGANTIC, SWIRLING CYLINDER OF WATER is somehow rising into the sky over the harbor. Now completely clear of the water's surface, immeasurable gallons rise impossibly skyward when suddenly-- SEVERAL BRILLIANT, POWERFUL FLASHES OF LIGHT, brief, yet somehow unnatural fire through the heavens above where the massive waterspout has just risen-- then strange, steam-like HISSING echoes down from the newly-forming CLOUDS now appearing over the harbor. Just as suddenly as it happened, the harbor is now quiet, the city safe, everything seemingly as before save for the new, curious-looking clouds suspended in the sky above.

INT:DAILY PLANET-SCREENING ROOM

Back at the Planet, the confused reporters are returning from the roof.

GUY

Geez, what was that, what just happened?

GUY 2

I don't know man, that was really weird, I mean, that's the weirdest thing I've...

PERRY

You people call yourselves reporters? Some kind of freaky... act of God happens and all we've got is what, pictures of clouds??

Clark enters, carrying two coffees.

CLARK

Act of God? What happened chief? Did I miss something?

Everybody in the room groans and leaves without a word, except Perry.

PERRY

Get out there and find out what the Sam Hill just happened. Lois?

LOIS

Yeah Perry?

PERRY

(to Edge as he's leaving) Morgan, hang on, I'll be with you in one second. (to Lois) With all this hullabaloo, I almost forgot, that artsie-fartsie "Cirque-de-Whatever's" in town and Shirley's still out 'til Monday so I need you to cover it for the weekend edition.

LOIS

Perry, please! You promised!

PERRY

I know, I know.

LOIS

You said no more entertainment stuff!
I'm trying to...

PERRY

I know, I know it's not front page but
I'm in a pinch and it won't be that
bad, they say they got some kind of...
big, super gorilla... or something
crazy like that.

LOIS

Chief...

PERRY

Now look Lois, if you can't get me
your... "Mystery" fella, the least you
can do is get me a picture of a giant
monkey?! All right??! Now that's all I
ask.

Perry storms out before she can reply, leaving Lois and
Clark alone.

LOIS

Big monkey! I'm trying to make the
front page and I get stuck at the
sideshow!

CLARK

Oh I don't know, the circus sounds kind
of fun.

LOIS

Fun? Geez, Clark, we just witnessed an
absolute... miracle, and you just
seem... I don't know, "bored."

CLARK

Do you judge every book by its cover?

LOIS

Do you use clichés like that in your
writing?

CLARK

If you'd read any, you'd know, wouldn't you?

LOIS

(beat, softer) Gim'me my coffee.

CLARK

You're welcome.

LOIS

Thank you.

CLARK

Lois, why are you so upset? You're fine, I'm fine, everything's fine...

LOIS

Everything is NOT fine! People's freak-out meters are starting to red-line around here and I don't blame them.

CLARK

But every time something-- happens, hasn't it been for the better? Lives saved, disasters averted? Doesn't seem too scary to me...

LOIS

Clark, people are always afraid of the unknown, don't you know that?

CLARK

Hmmm... I guess maybe you're right. You're not afraid, are you Lois?

LOIS

Hmmphh! Afraid of what? Dying of boredom at the big monkey show tonight?

CLARK

Oh come on now, doesn't sound so bad. Maybe I'll tag along; it might remind me of home.

LOIS
Yeah, it sounds right up your alley,
Mister "Small-town" U. S...

CLARK
Small-"ville".

LOIS
What?

CLARK
I'm from Smallville. (beat) Kansas?

Beat as Lois doesn't care.

CLARK (CONT'D)
Population Nineteen-hundred thirty
eight.

She turns and leaves.

CLARK (CONT'D)
As of the last census.

Clark, alone in the room, chuckles to himself, then turns and looks out the window, almost squinting as if he's noticed something. In the distance, high above the city we
ZOOM IN RAPIDLY TO:

EXT:LEXCORP ROOF-HELIPAD

A SLEEK LEXAIR HELICOPTER is landing on the LEXCORP ROOF HELIPAD. As the craft comes to rest, LEX LUTHOR exits quickly, turning to survey the quiet harbor below him, shaking his head. (camera remains over-his-shoulder POV on the roof, obscuring his face) MARIE, one of his super-sexy workers approaches him with a printout.

MARIE
Here's everything we have, Mr. L.

LEX
The evacuation's cancelled?

MARIE

Yes sir, the reactor's shut down and everyone's here, but Mr. L, that wave was... so big. If it had hit...

LEX

Yes Marie, Metropolis seems fortunate today; it's our tomorrow that concerns me.

INT:LEXCORP ROOFTOP COMPLEX

Lex and Marie enter the ROOFTOP COMPLEX of LexCorp, moving through a series of several sleek, air-tight openings that lead down a large ramp into the GIANT SUNKEN BOARDROOM, where TWENTY MEN AND WOMEN are seated around the FUTURISTIC GIANT OVAL TABLE that dominates the room. They all stand as Lex enters. He motions for them to sit while he grabs a remote and hits a button, activating the FLOOR-TO-CEILING VIEWSCREENS behind them all. MULTIPLE CAMERA IMAGES continue to replay the tidal wave, surrounding them with imagery as Lex coolly begins.

LEX

Ultimately, this is about control, which by definition, cannot be exerted upon the unknown. Which means "this" unknown can no longer be tolerated. And yet, here we sit, the brightest assemblage of talent my fortunes can buy, wallowing in a sea of ignorance while sitting front-row center at the biggest miracle since Moses hit the Red Sea! (short beat) Lex Luthor does not tolerate the unknown; he masters it. (beat) The biggest threat to the control exerted globally through LexCorp somehow REMAINS unknown, despite six months of your efforts, DESPITE today's demonstration literally under your noses, and this is all you've got?

He tosses the readout away; it flutters to the floor, the only noticeable noise in the room.

LEX

So what's red and blue, goes Mach 10,
and can stop a tidal wave?

A long beat as no one makes a sound.

LEX (CONT'D)

That's not a rhetorical question.

Longer beat as they begin to fidget, squirm, and cough.

LEX (CONT'D)

Six months. All of you, supposedly the
"best" in your fields; six months of
bloated salaries and insane resource
allocation; six months when your one,
only, and sole mission has been to
explain this... to solve this...
Anybody?

TERRANCE

It's too fast!

LEX

At last! Someone else! Please,
Terrance, anything?

While speaking, TERRANCE plugs a sleek MICRO-DATA STORAGE DRIVE into a built-in DATA PORT in front of him, which Lex accesses by remote.

TERRANCE

Mr. L, we mounted eight of the fastest
cameras in the world on various
rooftops around town, and look...

BLURRY STILLS and ULTRA-SLOW-MOTION footage fill the screens behind them.

TERRANCE

Nothing. Bupkus. What can we do?

LEX

We can spend your salary this afternoon
over at LexTech inventing something
useful, like a ten-thousand frame-per-
second excuse-stopper! Someone else?

DR. JULIA

We know most eyewitness accounts describe him as appearing humanoid, male, black hair, between six and six-and-a-half feet...

LEX

Don't forget the cape.

DR. JULIA (CONT'D)

...but that doesn't rule out anything; he could be a genetic mutant, some inter-dimensional being, he could be an alien, he could be...

LEX

Could be's no longer interest me, people. Metropolis is MY city, whether it knows it or not. Your livelihoods now depend on how rapidly you transmute the "unknown" into useful information or else...

LOIS (OS)

Clark? Clark?

INT:DAILY PLANET SCREENING ROOM

Instantly we are back at the Planet, where Lois has discovered Clark still standing there, looking out the window.

LOIS (CONT'D)

Hey, Smallville, you day-dreaming about wheat fields?

CLARK

Actually, I was just thinking about that offshore nuclear plant that LexCorp bought a few months ago.

LOIS

(beat) Go on.

CLARK

Well, if Lex cranked up an old, inefficient reactor like that beyond

capacity, he'd create a giant pocket of super-heated water out in the North Atlantic.

LOIS

That explains broiled lobster, not freak tidal waves.

CLARK

Remember that earthquake last week in Greenland?

LOIS

Must have missed it.

CLARK

Not much to miss. No real damage; just some of the western glacier collapsed into the sea.

LOIS

I don't see the connection.

CLARK

Well, ships have been dodging that ice all week as it drifted south through the shipping lanes.

LOIS

How do you know all this?

CLARK

I read the wire.

LOIS

What, all of it?

CLARK

Sure.

LOIS

Every day?

CLARK

If that much ice floated into the boiling seawater around a white-hot

breeder-reactor, the ocean could suffer
a trauma great enough to...

LOIS

...to explain our freak wave. (long
beat) That's quite a theory,
Smallville.

Someone outside tells Lois that she has a phone call.

LOIS (CONT'D)

We can discuss it tonight at the
circus; it'll give me something to do
besides play with the monkeys.

LAP DISSOLVE TO:

EXT:LUNA PARK AND CIRCUS-NIGHT

An OLD-FASHIONED CALLIOPE plays CARNIVAL MUSIC in the background as a Daily Planet headline reads "MIRACLE MONDAY!!" "DISASTER AVERTED AS MYSTERIOUS TIDAL WAVE DISAPPEARS" "PUBLIC MYSTIFIED." A GUST OF WIND blows the paper out of view to reveal LUNA PARK, which glows vibrantly on the Metropolis waterfront like the ghost of Coney Island of old, bustling with activity. We PAN OVER to the "CIRQUE DE METROPOLIQUE", an almost-gaudy, flashing, wildly-designed big-top circus tent. We DOLLY PAST amazing posters of the circus acts inside, coming to rest on a spectacular poster of "GIGANTO-THE WONDER APE", who towers above the tiny humans fleeing in panic before him. The nasal hawking of a CARNIVAL BARKER accompanies us.

BARKER (OS)

Step right this way, folks, you're only
seconds away from sampling the single
most spectacular specimen of simian
strength ever seen in the civilized
woild...

Suddenly the poster is illuminated by a PHOTO FLASH, followed quickly by a HIGH-PITCHED SQUEAL; we TILT DOWN as a tiny MONKEY, dressed in ORGAN GRINDER COSTUME and a TINY HAT runs into frame just below the poster. Another PHOTO FLASH, and he runs away, terrified. We hear a LAUGH, and WHIP-PAN OVER TO...

Clark is laughing at Lois as she lowers her camera.

LOIS
Sorry lil' fella.

CLARK
Fine thing, ace newspaper woman scares monkey.

LOIS
Ace newspaper "person" reviews circus.
What an assignment.

CLARK
Ahh, cheer up Lois, the night's still young. Plenty of time left for a robbery or murder.

LOIS
Why Clark Kent, I think that's the first joke I ever heard you make!

CLARK
Hmmm. (leans in, quieter) Maybe it's just the first one you caught.

The CARNIVAL BARKER interrupts the moment.

BARKER (OS)
Hurry, hurry, step right up, ladies and gentlemen and children of all ages. Please step into the Big Top as the show's about to commence... Step this way...

CLARK
That's your cue.

LOIS
You're not coming?

CLARK
Nah, I feel like a little target practice, I'll catch you later.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT:CIRCUS TENT-NIGHT

The circus is raging, the band's playing, kids are laughing, and Lois is bored out of her skull. A UNIFORMED ATTENDANT opens the MAIN CURTAIN for the next act, the ELEPHANT DANCERS, who parade into the tent. He notices the SQUEALING MONKEY (from before) who darts backstage; he follows and tries chasing it away, succeeding only in running the creature out of reach underneath the nearest cage. As the exasperated attendant goes back to work, the little monkey notices a SHINY RING dangling from a CHAIN and starts to play with it, but is startled by a FIERCE ROAR-- a REALLY BIG SHADOW moves; the now terrified monkey SHRIEKS and RUNS AWAY, pulling the CHAIN in his haste-- QUICK TILT UP TO-- the CAGE LOCK is released. The door to the cage slowly swings open.

CUT TO:

Inside the big top, the little MONKEY runs right in the middle of the tent, SCREAMING his head off, to the delight of several CHILDREN. We see a GIANT SHADOW slowly rise from behind the CENTRAL CURTAIN-- WHIP PAN to the kids, who stop laughing only when they hear a VICIOUS ROAR!! QUICK REACTION CUTS OF: stunned clowns dropping props; elephant trainers halting in mid-routine, Lois' EYES WIDE OPEN in surprise. You can hear a pin drop as everyone and everything under the big top focuses on GIGANTO, a massive 15' tall SILVERBACK GORILLA, who stands center stage. He cuts loose with another ROAAARR!!! which triggers INSTANT MASS PANDEMONIUM AND HYSTERIA!!

All hell breaks loose as the riot begins. People scatter, elephants break loose, Lois fumbles for her camera, two kids fall over the rail onto the sawdust floor in the panic as a DOZEN OR SO MEN rush forward with ropes to try and lasso the escaped ape, who flings them away like rag dolls. Lois has found her camera and is FLASHING AWAY as the men all turn and run for their lives. Giganto lifts a large CAGE overhead, then HURLS IT across the tent towards the retreating men where it lands in a FIERY EXPLOSION as it crashes into the MAIN SOUND AND LIGHT PLATFORM, knocking out half the lights, starting a FIRE and CRACKING a major tent support post in one fell swoop.

EXT:CIRCUS MIDWAY-NIGHT

The rapid, tell-tale metallic "ting, ting, ting" we hear indicates Clark is wearing out the target range.

CARNEY

Geez mister, doncha' miss? What are you, the Lone Ranger or somethin'?

CLARK

(laughing)

Okay buddy, I'll take one of those...

Screams from the circus stop him, causing him to look away.

CLARK (CONT'D)

Hang onto it, I'll be right back.

He runs toward the commotion.

CLARK

Lois! Lois!

He runs behind a fence; backlit, we see the shadow of ONE FIGURE IN A FEDORA moving against the escaping tide of humanity.

CUT TO:

INT:CIRCUS TENT-NIGHT

Lois, still taking photos despite the danger, suddenly stops in shock as she sees a CRYING LITTLE GIRL, desperately trying to climb back into the seats in a vain attempt to escape the APPROACHING APE, who is moving towards her. Lois leaps onto the circus floor, dropping her camera as she runs toward the little girl.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT:OUTSIDE CIRCUS-NIGHT

Clark "sees" Lois do this as he runs through the crowd. Suddenly the silhouette of a ROARING ELEPHANT appears, rearing up on its hind legs, tossing its handler into the air, and knocking over both the LION and JAGUAR CAGES,

allowing several of the ROARING CATS to escape. In seconds our Fedora-clad shadow reaches up, grabs the elephant's rope, pulls the beast back to earth, quickly secures the rope, and zips away. A moment later, the shadowed figure removes his hat and jacket, a CAPE BILLOWS for the briefest of seconds before a GIANT BLACK JAGUAR pounces from behind, surprising him. The shadows struggle for a few seconds, then the jaguar suddenly finds itself held by arms of steel before it somehow ends up back in its nearby cage.

Nearby, the two snarling LIONS are on the rampage, but before they can spring on a few terrified onlookers, a SWOOSH of red and blue appears, and somehow the animals are quickly gone, caged several feet away to the surprise of both cats and would-be victims.

Outside the main tent, it's a full-blown panic as screaming people flee. A BLONDE LITTLE BOY, crying for his mama, turns and to his horror sees a STAMPEDING ELEPHANT headed straight for him, but as he screams, somehow the beast RISES INTO THE AIR and flies right over him with a surprised ROAR; we PAN 180 as the boy follows the impossible sight just as his frantic parents find him.

MOM

Oh my God Charlie, where were you? We were so scared!!

CHARLIE

Mama, mama, the el-fant flew! It flew in the air!! Look! Look!

Unnoticed behind his disbelieving parents, another large pachyderm trumpets as it takes unexpected flight in the shadows farther behind them.

Inside the big top, Giganto has chased Lois up a ladder to the TRAPEZE PLATFORM. As Lois starts to scream, almost instantly, our CAPED FIGURE zips into the now poorly-lit tent and SUPER-LEAPS up to the platform. He gives Giganto a quick push and turns to Lois (now collapsed from smoke inhalation), but as the ladder falls backwards, the plummeting ape grabs a handful of RED CAPE, pulling our hero off the platform away from Lois, slinging him backwards into the MAIN LIGHTING RIG, causing a HUGE EXPLOSION of sparks and fire. As the ape CRASHES to the ground, the explosion creates ANOTHER, QUICK-SPREADING

FIRE, which threatens Lois's perch above. Below her the giant ape and caped figure grapple in the light of the flames— the TRAPEZE POST begins to crack— suddenly a MASSIVE UPPERCUT knocks Giganto into the air and into the TRAPEZE NETTING, which in two seconds is somehow wrapped around the gorilla like some great spider web but then— CRAAAACK!! The post has given way, the platform topples. As Lois falls off the collapsing structure, she's PLUCKED OUT OF THE AIR at the last second by a flying caped silhouette, who whisks her outside the COLLAPSING INFERNO of the tent.

Lois is still groggy as she lies on the ground outside the still-smoldering tent. A tall figure stands in shadow over her; suddenly his eyes GLOW with a GOLDEN TRANSLUCENCE.

KAL-EL

You'll be all right.

With that he LEAPS STRAIGHT UP INTO THE CLOUDS. We continue tracking as Lois gets to her feet, trying in vain to follow him through the skies as Clark appears a few moments later from around the corner of the target range where he was before, carrying something behind his back. He spots her and rushes over.

CLARK

Lois! Are you okay?

LOIS

Boy you're not going to belie... My camera! Where's the camera? I dropped my...

CLARK

Is this it?

LOIS

How did...? He must have grabbed...?

CLARK

You seem a little out of it, Lois. Did I miss anything?

They both turn toward the grunting GIGANTO, helplessly snared in the trapeze net, laying on the ground several yards away.

CLARK

Hmm. Oh, by the way, I won this for you.

He hands her an oversized, stuffed gorilla.

LOIS

(laughing sarcastically)
Thanks, I got one already.

SPINNING NEWSPAPER WIPE TO:

INT:DAILY PLANET OFFICES-DAY

The Daily Planet headline screams "TERROR ON THE MIDWAY" "MYSTERIOUS STRANGER SAVES THE DAY--THEN DISAPPEARS" by Lois Lane". There are 2 great pics of Giganto; one in roaring action, one looking helpless in the net. Perry slides the morning edition across the table at Lois, who is flanked by Clark.

PERRY

And you didn't want to go to the circus?

LOIS

What can I say? A girl's gotta make the best of her opportunities around here.

CLARK

Those are great photos Lois.

LOIS

(semi-sarcastic)
Thaaanks, Clark.

CLARK

Good thing your "Mysterious Stranger" saved your camera, too, huh?

LOIS

Hmmph! Well he was a lot more help than you were.

PERRY

Lois, it's a great story, AND a great picture of a giant monkey...

CLARK

Actually he's not a monkey, he's...

PERRY (CONT'D)

...but you were RIGHT THERE!! WITH HIM!! What happened, how could you...?

LOIS

Chief, I'm sorry, I dropped my camera when...

PERRY

Aaaahhhh!!!!

He turns and storms out, leaving excuses behind.

CLARK

When what?

LOIS

Nothing. I just couldn't help it.

CLARK

(smiling)

I wouldn't worry about it, Lois. With your luck you'll probably get another shot real soon.

INT:LEXCORP BUILDING-LEX LUTHOR'S OFFICE

Once again, the Daily Planet's front page ("Terror on the Midway") fills our view, until it is lowered by a frustrated Lex Luthor, sitting at his desk in his opulent office. He folds the paper, thinks for a moment, then punches his intercom.

LEX

Nicole?

Almost instantly, NICOLE, another leggy super-babe, enters the office.

NICOLE

Yes, Mr. L.?

LEX

Call Cruz; tell him Project B.D.L. is green. Understand?

NICOLE

Yes sir. At once.

Instantly, she disappears.

LEX

(to himself)

This calls for some "real" working capital.

LAP DISSOLVE TO:

EXT:TRAIN STATION-OUTSKIRTS OF METROPOLIS-DAY

A Daily Planet headline reads "BILLION DOLLAR LIMITED" "50 Billion Headed From Metropolis Mint to Fort Knox" "Security Tight for Largest Transfer of Gold Ever." A GUARD'S SHADOW moves across the paper; we slowly PULL BACK AND PAN to see first one WATCHFUL GUARD, then DOZENS MORE, all armed to the teeth with MACHINE GUNS as SEVERAL ARMY PERSONNEL finish loading the gold bars aboard a sleek train. We CONTINUE PANNING back to the Press Caboose, where Lois and Clark are approaching their checkpoint. Clark is fumbling through his pockets.

CLARK

Hmm, now where's my-- Say Lois, you don't have my press pass, do you?

LOIS

Why would I have your pass, Clark?

CLARK (TO HIMSELF)

Hmm, why indeed?

Lois flashes her pass and is allowed on the train by a GUARD.

GUARD

I'm sorry sir, I can't let you onboard without proper credentials.

LOIS

Sorry Smallville, looks like you'll have to sit this one out. Tough luck, but I'll manage.

Clark turns away, appearing distracted as he continues to fumble through his pockets.

CLARK

Yeah, tough luck. Now, where did I put it? It's got to be here somewhere.

Lois smiles and waves goodbye to Clark through her window as she takes her seat onboard.

INT:PRESS CABOOSE-DAY

LOIS

Poor Clark, too bad he "lost" his pass.

She pulls Clark's pass out of her pocket and puts it in her purse.

EXT:TRAIN STATION-OUTSKIRTS OF METROPOLIS-DAY

As the train pulls away, Clark just smiles and shakes his head as he leaves the platform, but then hears the faintest TIRE SQUEAL. He scans the area, then notices a SLEEK, FUTURISTIC ARMORED CAR speeding along a road that parallels the train tracks.

CLARK

Hmmm, looks like Lois might need some help after all.

He darts away, entering a PHONE BOOTH at the edge of station platform.

EXT:SKIES OVER METROPOLIS

A graceful AERIAL TRACKING POV SHOT of the train is rudely interrupted as a SUPER-SLEEK BULLET COPTER lowers into our view, DESCENDING RAPIDLY on the train from directly above. As the copter gets closer, several FUTURISTICALLY-COSTUMED MASKED BANDITS begin to repel out of the craft. The bandits are all holding MAGNETIC CLAMPS, which allow them to safely

ATTACH THEMSELVES to SEVERAL DIFFERENT PLACES along the roof of the train.

INT:PRESS CABOOSE-DAY

Lois is typing away on her laptop, but then seems to be the only one who notices a faint "CLUNK" coming from the roof of their car. She looks out the window and notices the ARMORED CAR tailing the train in the distance. She quickly rushes to the front of the press cab where an ARMED GUARD mans his post.

LOIS

Hey, I think someone's back there!

GUARD

What?

LOIS

Back there! You're being tailed! Look!

As the guard rushes to the back of the car, Lois quickly opens the FRONT DOOR of the cab and darts into the next train car. Just as she closes the door, a MASKED BANDIT drops from the roof and quickly DISCONNECTS THE PRESS CAB, which gently rolls away from the speeding train.

Inside the next car, Lois sees FOUR ARMED SECURITY GUARDS, all crowded in the front, looking out windows. As their attention is diverted, Lois slowly sneaks her way behind them, eventually hiding under a seat just a few feet behind them.

GUARD 1

I swear, I heard something!

GUARD 2

Can you see anything?

GUARD 3

Nothing. Hey!!

A very loud CLANG comes from the rear of the car.

GUARD 1

Back there! C'mon!!

Before they can reach the back of the car, several TEAR GAS CANNISTERS come crashing through the windows from both sides. Lois immediately bolts through the front door as the guards are all overcome behind her.

The car is empty as Lois enters, but as the FRONT DOOR BEGINS TO OPEN she quickly ducks under a seat again. Two more MASKED GUNMEN enter the car, moving quickly toward the rear.

GUNMAN 1

You set that timer right?

GUNMAN 2

You got less than a minute to find out.

GUNMAN 1

That's all I need to hear. C'mon!

As soon as they exit the rear, Lois quickly crawls out and races forward, but this time as she moves to the next train car, she finds herself suddenly confronted by another MASKED BANDIT, wielding a machine gun.

BANDIT

Sorry babe. Wrong place, wrong time!

As he open fires, SWOOOSH!! Faster than a speeding bullet, SUPERMAN finally makes his proper entrance, CRASHING THROUGH THE ROOF, then shielding Lois completely from a HELLISH MACHINE GUN VOLLEY. As the bewildered gunman lowers his weapon in shock, Superman turns to an equally stunned Lois, and hands her a warm bullet.

KAL-EL

I think he meant this for you.

GUNMAN

What the...

He's reloaded, but before he can fire, his gun TURNS RED AS IT MELTS in his hand. He drops the useless blob with a howl of pain and falls to his knees, grasping his blistered hand.

BANDIT (CONT'D)

AAAAAAARRRRGGGHHHHHHH!!!!!!!!!!!!

Lois looks on, still stunned as in 3 seconds Superman rips out a metal, floor-to-ceiling PASSENGER SUPPORT POST, wraps it around the wailing ex-gunman like cooked spaghetti, then attaches/melts both loose ends to the wall of the train with quick HEAT-VISION BLASTS. He turns nonchalantly to Lois.

KAL-EL

Are you all right, ma'am?

LOIS

I'm-- I'm-- sure, I (gasps) Wait!
There's a bomb!

KAL-EL

I know, I saw it.

He picks her up, then SWOOSH flies her through the new hole in the roof.

EXT:SKY OVER TRAIN

Superman X-rays the locomotive, eyeing the bomb's timer, which reads "00:11" seconds.

KAL-EL

(to himself)

Gonna be close...

He zips back down to the front passenger car, gently drops Lois on the exterior front platform with a calm...

KAL-EL

I'll be right back.

...and flashes forward to the locomotive. We see him KARATE-CHOP the connecting pin to the engine, then...

From Lois' perspective, the charging engine RISES OFF THE TRACKS INTO THE AIR in front of her as Superman, more powerful than a locomotive, hauls this massive load high into the sky before HURLING it towards the harbor, where it EXPLODES in a harmless, spectacular fireball.

Before the engine-less train can slow down, Superman zips back, grabbing the front car where Lois is and begins to pull the train himself. But moments later, the trailing

ARMORED CAR pulls along the tracks with more MASKED GUNMEN, who open fire. Superman quickly covers Lois with his cape, shielding her as he flies to the back of the train. Several quick bursts of HEAT VISION blow the car's tires, then a BLAST OF SUPER-BREATH blows the armored vehicle off the road.

EXT:ROOF OF TRAIN

Superman lands as quickly on the train's roof as he took off; Lois lets out a little girly squeal when they land.

LOIS

Wait, what about...AAAIIEEEEE!!!

She hasn't noticed that the barreling train is seconds away from entering the SUB-METROPOLITAN TUNNEL, which travels under a large portion of downtown Metropolis beginning near the Daily Planet building. Before she can even get a good scream started, Superman SUPER-LEAPS at the last second, gracefully clearing the roof of the newspaper in a single bound.

KAL-EL

I'm afraid I've got a little more work to do...

He carefully places Lois on the Observation Deck, never fully stopping himself.

KAL-EL

...but I'll be back in a few minutes, if you don't mind waiting.

And WHOOOSH! He dives back toward the train, now exiting the opposite end of the tunnel. Lois runs to the edge, peering over, trying to see the action. She sees the train, which has slowed significantly, then with a CLANG, RATTLE, RATTLE, the train moves forward yet again.

In a very brief montage, we see Superman "run" the train through multiple scenic settings all the way to Fort Knox, then WHOOOSH is gone.

Lois is waiting impatiently on the roof. Superman flies up quietly behind, surprising her.

KAL-EL
 Hope that wasn't too long?

LOIS
 Oohh! You're back! Did you...

KAL-EL
 Mission accomplished.

LOIS
 You mean you went... you took that
 train... you just went to Fort Knox and
 back??

He just nods.

LOIS (CONT'D)
 How long did that...

KAL-EL
 Eleven minutes, thirty-three seconds.

LOIS
 Elev... min...

KAL-EL
 I could have gone faster, but I didn't
 want to melt the wheels.

LOIS
 Melt...?

KAL-EL
 Friction, you know.

LOIS
 Oh... sure... of course.

KAL-EL
 Are you sure you're all right?

LOIS
 Oh yeah, no, I'm fine, really, thank
 you, thank you so much, you saved my...

KAL-EL
 You're very welcome.

He flies off, but she continues blurting out after him...

LOIS
Wait... Just a minute, hey! (beat) COME
BACK HERE!!

She's startled as instantly, he's behind her, smiling.

KAL-EL
Yes?

LOIS
How...? (beat) Who...? (longer beat) Is
that an "S"?

KAL-EL
Actually it's my family crest.

LOIS
Oh.

KAL-EL
It was the custom on my home world.

LOIS
Home world, so you're not from...?

She manages to fish a small pad out of a pocket and begins to scribble notes.

KAL-EL
I'm from a planet called Krypton.

LOIS
Oh, so is that how you...? How do
you... do... what... you do?

KAL-EL
Well, simply put, my powers actually
come from the Earth and the Sun.

LOIS
(beat) What?

KAL-EL
You see, Krypton was several times
larger than Earth, but our sun Antares

is a red giant, much weaker than yours. So the combination of Earth's weaker gravity and the Sun's stronger yellow radiation combine to give me powers and abilities, well, let's say far beyond those of normal men.

LOIS

Really? Like what?

KAL-EL

Everything. Strength, speed, vision, hearing, taste, smell, thought...

LOIS

Wow. So there's nothing you can't do?

KAL-EL

Well, almost. (beat) Off the record?

LOIS

Okay.

KAL-EL

I have a little problem seeing through lead. But that seems to be it, so far.

LOIS

Okay, but why off the...

KAL-EL

Don't want the bad guys to take advantage.

LOIS

Bad guys? That would imply you're one of the good guys?

KAL-EL

Miss Lane, if you're still trying to figure that out, you're not much of a reporter, are you?

LOIS

(huffy, yet apologetic)
Well, we didn't know...

KAL-EL

Then know this, and tell the world.
Your planet welcomed and sheltered me
as an infant, and I've adopted it as my
home. As a visitor, I refuse to take
sides in your politics or disputes,
only to save life whenever possible. My
pledge to the people of Earth is to
protect them as best I can.

Lois is still frantically scribbling.

KAL-EL

(softer)

Is that okay with you?

LOIS

(smiling)

Best news I've had in a while.

KAL-EL

If you hurry you can still make the
Bulldog. Can I give you a lift?

LOIS

Really? Would you mind?

KAL-EL

Not at all.

He grabs her around the waist and they gently rise off the
roof.

LOIS

(checking him out)

Hmm. Looks like a big red "S" to me.

As they float/descend to the street below, Lois gives a few
mild "Woo!"s and "Oh My!"s as she tries to make sure her
skirt doesn't blow up in her face, drawing the ever-so-
slightest chuckle from her Kryptonian elevator. She looks
at his chest again, then looks puzzled.

LOIS

Wait, you said "was" the custom?

KAL-EL

Yes. (beat) Krypton was destroyed;
apparently I'm the only survivor.

LOIS

Oh no, that's...

KAL-EL

That's a story for another time, I'm
afraid.

They come to a rest just beside the PLANET OUTDOOR CAFE,
causing quite a stir among the patrons.

LOIS

Of course, and thank you, but please,
what's your name?

KAL-EL

Well, I'd rather not say. Never really
cared about seeing my name in the
papers.

LOIS

Oh, of course... but, what should we
call you?

KAL-EL

You're a clever girl, I'm sure you'll
think of something.

SWOOSH!!! He zips into the air and is gone, causing quite a
buzz among the patrons, including Joe and Jerry.

JOE

Whoa, did you see that dude!!
That's that dude from TV, man! He's
like, super-fast, man!

JERRY

He's like, super-strong, man, he's
like...

LOIS

SUPERMAN!

SPINNING NEWSPAPER WIPE TO:

The largest headline in the Daily Planet's history screams
 "SUPERMAN-THE MAN OF STEEL".

HARD CUT TO:

EXT:METROPOLIS STREET

Someone reads out loud to a cop on the beat and their
 mutual hot dog vendor.

SOMEONE
 "Faster than a speeding bullet!" Geez
 he catches bullets!

HARD CUT TO:

EXT:METRO EL-TRAIN STATION

MAN WAITING FOR TRAIN
 "More powerful than a locomotive."

A train races by, ruffling his newspaper.

MAN WAITING FOR TRAIN (CONT'D)
 Whoa!

HARD CUT TO:

EXT:CORNER OUTSIDE DAILY PLANET BUILDING

An attractive, urban African-American wife reads aloud to
 her husband.

WIFE
 "Able to leap tall buildings in a
 single bound!"

They both crane their necks skyward as we TILT UP to the
 Saturnian-capped roof of Metropolis' world-famous landmark.

HUSBAND
 (in an almost reverential
 whisper)
 Damn!!!

HARD CUT TO:

INT:CHINATOWN-DIM SUM PALACE

Everyone in the packed restaurant is reading the paper, including the proprietor and her husband.

CHINESE WIFE

"This amaaazing visitor from the panet Kwip-taun."

CHINESE HUSBAND

Kryp-tun!

CHINESE WIFE

Kwip-taaaun!

CHINESE HUSBAND

Kryp--tnnn!

Behind them, through the take out window in the extreme rear, Clark should be almost unnoticeable as he smiles and pays for his take-out.

HARD CUT TO:

EXT:CONSTRUCTION SITE HIGH OVER METROPOLIS

An ironworker whose beat-up hard-hat almost reads "I-R-O-N-S" is on his coffee break high above the city's skyline. The briefest streak of red flashes unseen silently behind him through the clouds as he reads.

JOHN HENRY

"Superman. The Man of Steel!" (nods)
Yeah, that's cool, I like that!

HARD CUT TO:

EXT:STREETS OF METROPOLIS

Clark Kent walks down a bustling Metropolis sidewalk by himself, anonymous in this sea of humanity. He wears the slightest of smiles, craning his head ever-so-subtly this way and that, like he's trying to listen to everyone at once. It seems as if everyone on the street is either reading Lois' article or talking to someone else about it. As we SNEAK IN on his SUPER-HEARING

--we begin to make out VOICES, first two or three, then several, (not just English, either) then DOZENS, then HUNDREDS of them, all HUMMING, PULSING, WAVE-LIKE, crashing together like some un-conducted human symphony of language: we make out snippets of the article and the excited observations it elicits, but then SNEAK BACK OUT as Clark continues towards work, when suddenly...

ALARM BELLS CLANG as GUNFIRE ERUPTS across the street at the METROPOLIS NATIONAL BANK. Three MASKED GUNMEN loaded with bags of cash race into their GETAWAY CAR, idling in front of the bank. Clark "telescopically" glances in all directions; the Police are all too far away. He pretends to be afraid of the gunfire, ducking down some stairs below street level and as soon as he's out of sight--SWOOSH!! Our red/blue streak is off to work.

INT:GETAWAY CAR-STREETS OF METROPOLIS

CROOK 1

I'd say that went without a hitch, huh?
So what's it look like, boys? How'd we do?

CROOK 2

Well boss, I think we--

Suddenly, their car's progress stops as the rear of the vehicle is lifted several feet off the ground.

CROOK 3

What the...?

They are all dumbfounded by the Man of Steel, who holds the car aloft by the rear bumper.

KAL-EL

Gentlemen, I suggest you exit the vehicle now.

CROOK 1

(stunned beat) Blast 'em!!

As the robbers open fire, Superman drops the car to catch ALL the bullets with super-speed. The car squeals away, but only for a second; before they can even turn their heads the car CRASHES into the Man of Steel, now in front of the

vehicle. He remains unmoved as the car's front end is totaled.

KAL-EL

I told you.

The driver is unconscious; the other three bail out of the car, splitting up. The nearest one pulls a SCREAMING FEMALE HOSTAGE from an adjacent car and puts his gun to her head.

CROOK 2

Back off, or she's dead, get it?!

KAL-EL

You don't really want to do that...

In a wink, he's behind the crook.

KAL-EL (CONT'D)

...do you?

He pinches the gun barrel closed and thumps the robber in the forehead, knocking him out cold.

KAL-EL

Ma'am, would you mind waiting here for the police, I'm sure they'll want to speak to you.

She's so stunned she can't even form words.

LADY

Ohh-- ohh-- kay??

Farther down the street, the two remaining robbers carjack a PT Cruiser from a frightened family.

CROOK 1

GET OUT!! NOW!!

DAD

Please don't hurt us, don't--

WHACK! The crook clubs the driver over the head, causing his DAUGHTER to start crying.

CROOK 1

Shaddup and get out before I give you something to cry about!!

He levels his gun at her and she runs away, screaming. The two robbers get in the car, but before they can make their escape, the ENTIRE CAR IS LIFTED OFF THE GROUND by Superman, who holds the vehicle over his head.

KAL-EL

You really shouldn't yell at kids.

Suddenly, Superman notices a FLASH BULB going off in the crowd, and we enter SUPER-TIME: where everything (except Superman's thoughts) go into LIGHTNING QUICK OMNI-DIRECTIONAL ULTRA-SLOW-MOTION. He notices the light rays bouncing back to the camera held by a red-headed guy who can't be more than twenty. The camera's iris opens--

KAL-EL (VO)

Hmm, maybe I should...

--CLICK--as the film's exposed he "sees" the negative image of the photo that's just been snapped.

KAL-EL (VO)

Wow, that's a great shot, Mister...

He scans the photographer's wallet and "reads" his driver's license.

KAL-EL (VO)

...James B. Olsen. Hmm, resourceful, quick thinking...

A brief THERMAL SPECTRUM SCAN shows the young man radiating a GREENISH-BLUE aura in contrast to the PULSING, REDDISH-ORANGE GLOW that emanates from the dozens of frightened on-lookers surrounding him.

KAL-EL (VO)

...and no fear at all. Good job kid, keep it. I'll see you in a minute.

BOOM. Suddenly we're back in real time. Supes FLIPS THE CAR 270 DEGREES and shakes it like he's after the last drop of

ketchup, eventually dislodging the two occupants, who fall roughly onto the street. He puts the car down.

KAL-EL

Had enough?

The boss hasn't; he EMPTIES HIS GUN at the caped hero, who shows the criminal his HANDFULL OF SMOKING BULLETS before gently tossing them at his feet.

KAL-EL

Don't you guys read the papers?

Then SWOOSH!! In a flash our hero grabs both crooks by their collars and gracefully FLIES AROUND THE CORNER OF THE BANK to the "Oooh"s and "Aahh"s of the crowd. We PAN OVER to Jimmy Olsen, who's talking to no one in particular.

JIMMY

Oh my gosh, I got him! I got him! I can't believe it, I actually got...

CLARK (OS)

Got what?

From out of nowhere, Clark Kent appears at Jimmy's side.

JIMMY

I got him! I mean- his picture! I got Superman's picture!

CLARK

Wow, that's great, Mr.--?

JIMMY

Olsen, Jimmy Olsen.

CLARK

Nice to meet you Jimmy, I'm Clark Kent.

JIMMY

Clark Kent? Holy Smokes, you write for the Planet, right?

CLARK

That's right, how did you...?

JIMMY

Oh, I read your stuff all the time.
That was a great piece on the LexComm
merger.

CLARK

Well, thanks Jimmy. Do you do this for
a living? I mean, you know,
photography?

JIMMY

I wish! I mean, not really, I've gotten
some freelance stuff published, but
nothing--

CLARK

How'd you like a job at the Planet?

JIMMY

Wow, the Daily Planet! Gosh Mr. Kent,
you really think they'd hire me?

CLARK

(laughing)
With those photos, I guarantee it.

SPINNING NEWSPAPER WIPE TO:

INT:DAILY PLANET OFFICES

The Daily Planet headline screams "SUPERMAN IN ACTION by
Clark Kent" "Photos by Jimmy Olsen" The article is
accompanied by a giant, half-page photo of Superman holding
the Cruiser over his head (eerily reminiscent of the cover
of Action Comics #1.) Lois slides the paper across the desk
in frustration at Clark, who is busy typing away.

LOIS

Lucky, lucky, lucky!

CLARK

Don't be bitter Lois. I'm just trying
to keep pace with the girl that named
Superman.

LOIS

That's "woman" to you, bub.

CLARK

Besides, you can't have every front page story.

LOIS

Why not?

Clark just laughs when he realizes she's not joking.

LOIS

Seriously, Smallville, not only do you just happen to be at the right place at the right time, but also notice a kid with a camera in the middle of a chaotic crowd of hundreds of people?

CLARK

What can I say? I've got a nose for news.

LOIS

Thank you, cliché boy.

CLARK

That's cliché man to you.

LOIS

Hmm, maybe you're not the rube hayseed you pretend to be.

CLARK

Thanks. (beat) (softer) I think.

Beat as she notices how fast Clark is typing.

LOIS

Damn, how fast do you type, anyway?

CLARK

Oh, I don't know, eighty, ninety words a minute?

LOIS

What's the matter, no hobbies?

CLARK

You mean besides taking abuse from you?

LOIS

Trust me pal, I haven't even started...

Perry White enters behind them.

PERRY

Now, now, you two kids need to learn to play nice, 'specially tonight; you'll both be in the same sandbox.

LOIS

Perry, what are you babbling about?

PERRY

I mean you're both coverin' Luthor's big schmoo on the Sea Queen tonight.

CLARK

Thanks, Perry!

LOIS

Yeah chief, thanks a lot!

PERRY

Look, you both been workin' on LexCorp stories from different angles for months now; I want to see what happens when you two put your heads together. Just try not to bump skulls, huh? Here's your credentials, you can't get onboard without 'em.

Lois makes a grab for both passes.

LOIS

I'll take those.

CLARK

Uh-uh, not this time, Lois.

Clark heads her off and grabs a pass from Perry. Lois is obviously getting frustrated.

LOIS

Perry, I don't need a chaperone!

PERRY

Well Hell's Bells, call it a date, for all I care.

CLARK

A date? Gosh, I'll have to break out my good suit. Should I pick you up, Lois?

LOIS

Ooohhhh!!!!

She storms away in a huff. Perry also leaves.

CLARK

(laughing to himself)

This might be fun.

INT:LEXCORP LIMOSINE-REAR FLAT PANEL DISPLAY

A LexComm/WLEX logo fills our screen as a FEMALE ANNOUNCER begins. Super-snazzy graphics accompany the intro.

ANNOUNCER

From the station more Metropolitans trust, LexComm and WLEX present "Metropolis Now!"

Music and graphics go crazy.

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)

Bringing you the unique, inside perspective on Metropolis news and events that only LexComm can provide. With tonight's top story, here are correspondents Kiki Taylor and Lauren Prescott.

KIKI and LAUREN appear on the MetroNow! stage. Both are as articulate as they are beautiful.

KIKI

Yes, Metropolis is buzzing tonight, as LexCorp C.E.O. Lex Luthor does it again, this time rescuing a priceless American icon from foreign ownership; tonight he triumphantly returns this

artistic treasure to America, where it belongs.

LAUREN

Yes, Kiki, yet this amazing philanthropic gesture is just the latest in a series of stunning accomplishments for the man often called "Mr. Metropolis," Lex Luthor. Before we go to the Sea Queen for a live report, Margo McNeil brings us an inside look at the unparalleled, meteoric rise of one of the world's most powerful men.

A VIDEO MONTAGE of appropriate images intersperse shots of Margo during her report.

MARGO

Lauren, many feel he's the greatest success story in American history. Scientist, engineer, inventor, entrepreneur, financier, stock maven, maverick genius, iconoclast, multi-billionaire, and now, growing philanthropist: the list of Lex Luthor's accomplishments is seemingly endless. Ever since stunning the world at 22 with the invention of the revolutionary LexWing Aircraft...

A seemingly endless text-roll of company titles (LexOil, LexComm, LexAir, LexChem, LexTech, etc.) float across the screen.

MARGO (CONT'D)

...Luthor's stock has literally soared through the roof, last year passing both MicroComp's Bill Bates and Gotham City billionaire Bruce Wayne on his way to becoming the wealthiest man in America; meanwhile LexCorp continues to push the envelope of cutting-edge technologies, successfully vying against Gotham's WayneTech and Metropolis' own S.T.A.R. Labs for lucrative government defense contracts-

CLICK! A female hand enters the frame, shutting off the LCD screen we've been watching. We pull back to see Lois and Clark sitting in the back of a LexCorp limo.

LOIS

That's enough of that crap!

CLARK

You don't share their glowing opinion of "Mr. Metropolis?"

LOIS

Please, that guy's dirtier than last week's underwear.

CLARK

There's a nice picture. At least he sent us this spiffy limo.

LOIS

Luthor never gives anything away; he's got something up his sleeve. Fortunately, so do I.

EXT:METROPOLIS HARBOR-NIGHT

Their limo arrives at the Harbor Docks near the massive ship docked nearby. Lois and Clark exit the vehicle.

LOIS

By the way, nice suit.

CLARK

Hey, this suit cost me two hundred dollars!

LOIS

I take it back, you are a hayseed.

The reporters present their credentials to LexCorp guards as they board the SEA QUEEN, Lex Luthor's luxurious ocean liner docked in Metropolis Harbor.

CLARK

Isn't it illegal for a ship this large to be docked so close to shore?

LOIS

Somehow, I don't think "Mr. Metropolis"
is getting a parking ticket tonight.

As they board the ship, a LexCorp ATTENDENT approaches them.

ATTENDENT

Ms. Lane, Mr. Kent, if you'll please
follow me, Mr. L's expecting you.

All three make their way through the gigantic, opulent ship, finally entering the SUPER-SWANK MAIN LOUNGE where several guests have already congregated. A GORGEOUS WAITRESS with a drink tray provides them with refreshments.

LOIS

Wow, this tub's as big as the Q.E.2.

ATTENDENT

Actually ma'am, it's quite a bit larger. Mr. L. likes to have the biggest and best of everything. If you'll excuse me, I must attend to some of the other guests.

CLARK

Well, his people sure seem friendly.

LOIS

Yeah, the cobra smiles just before he bites you, too. I wonder where the big man is? Off giving the robber barons lessons?

LEX (OS)

I'm right here.

Enter LEX LUTHOR, billionaire, scientist, evil genius, sporting a full head of wavy red hair, looking like a billion bucks.

CLARK

Hi Lex!

Luthor ignores Clark, shoving past him like he's a dozing cow.

LEX

Miss Lane, is it?

LOIS

Ms. Lane, actually.

LEX

Sorry to have kept you waiting, I've been experiencing some problems with LexOil's Venezuelan holdings, but I wanted to meet the woman responsible for introducing the world to our new, "alien demigod."

LOIS

Nice to meet you, Mr. Luthor.

LEX

It's Lex. Why, I wouldn't be surprised if the "woman who named Superman" started receiving attention from the Pulitzer Committee any day now. May I freshen your drink, Lois?

LOIS

As I said, it's Ms. Lane, and no I'm fine, thank you.

CLARK

Actually, I could use some more club soda Lex.

Luthor looks Clark up and down for a moment like a squashed bug on the windshield, then lifts his arm out of his way, casually spilling his drink on a bystander.

LEX

Nice suit, Kent.

CLARK

Gee thanks, Lex.

LEX

Sale at the Flea Market? (to Lois) Ms. Lane, can I get you anything else? Caviar? Diamonds? A villa in the Pyrenees?

LOIS

So why do you suppose Mr. Kabayashi resigned so suddenly just before his accident?

LEX

Mr. who?

LOIS

Shogiro Kabayashi. Late CEO of the Yamayagi Hotel Corporation from whom you purchased the Whistler you're unveiling tonight.

LEX

Ah, Mr. Kabayashi. Unfortunate business, that.

LOIS

And how is it you were able to repurchase the Whistler from Yamayagi for less than half what they paid for it at auction just two years ago?

LEX

I never released that information. You have no idea what I paid for--

LOIS

A covenant of the museum sale to the Japanese provided that the work never be insured for less than its market value, Mr. Luthor. Lloyd's of London says you paid eight-point-two-five million dollars.

LEX

And other valuable considerations.
(beat) It's on the sales contract.

LOIS

So what did you have on Kabayashi, Luthor?

LEX

(long beat) Eight-point-two-five million dollars, and other valuable considerations.

Lex and Lois share a long, unbroken stare. A brief contest of wills seems to ensue, until finally Lex takes a breath, smiles, and raises his voice slightly to address the nearby listeners.

LEX (CONT'D)

As well as a chronic desire to return an American treasure to America. Perhaps next I'll liberate Whistler's Mother from the Louvre.

The crowd laughs nervously; Lois and Clark don't join in as YVETTE, one of Luthor's attractive female aides approaches him.

YVETTE

Mr. L., the Mayor and his party have arrived; we're now underway.

LEX

Thank you, Yvette. Ms. Lane, if you'll excuse me, Mayor Berkowitz needs my attention.

Lex turns to leave.

CLARK

See you, Lex.

Luthor gives him an over-the-shoulder glance that could burn through lead. As he leaves, Lois turns and heads in the opposite direction toward the outside deck.

CLARK

Lois, where are you going?

LOIS

Too much hot air in here, I need to catch my breath.

EXT:SEA QUEEN OUTER DECK-NIGHT

Just as they exit the lounge and enter the main outer deck, they run into FOUR ARMED TERRORISTS, three male, one female, all wielding MACHINE PISTOLS and RIFLES.

TERRORIST 1

So sorry, senorita, I must insist you stay.

Clark rushes in front of Lois, acting as a human shield.

CLARK

Lois, get back!!

TERRORIST 1

Don't move, gringo!

FEMALE TERRORIST

You capitalist pigs are now our prisoners! Get back in there!

CLARK

Now just a minu--UNGH!!

CRACK!! The lead thug hits Clark over the head, "knocking him out."

TERRORIST 1

I warned you, estudpido!

LOIS

CLARK!!

The female thug grabs Lois roughly by the hair and puts a gun to her temple.

FEMALE TERRORIST

Shut up hermanita, or you're next!
Diego, Carlos, feed that gringo to the fishes.

TERRORIST 2

(picking up Clark's body) Here feeshy feeshies, have some deener.

Two of the thugs pick up Clark (one of them mutters something in Spanish about how heavy he is) and unceremoniously dump him overboard; he lands in the ocean with a SPLASH far below as Lois looks over the side in horror.

LOIS

Clark!! Oh my God! (beat, much softer)
Oh my God.

FEMALE TERRORIST

Move along, get in there with the others.

She tugs at Lois, who remains clenched to the railing.

FEMALE TERRORIST

I said MOVE IT!!

Outraged, unyielding and completely unafraid, Lois spins on her attacker.

LOIS

You murdering, two-bit piece of...

She stops as the gun is stuck right in her face, but then continues, softer but resolute.

LOIS (CONT'D)

You picked the wrong people and the wrong town to mess with, I promise you!!

The main hijacker grabs her roughly and laughs as he drags her back inside.

TERRORIST 1

Senorita, please, the first sign of Policia of any kind, and we start wasting hostages...

Now inside the lounge, he leans in and whispers in her ear.

TERRORIST 1

(softer, with menace)
...and I promise, you'll go first.

He roughly tosses her toward the other huddled party guests. She approaches MAYOR FRANK BERKOWITZ, who's standing with his WIFE and several dozen OTHER GUESTS.

LOIS

Mr. Mayor.

MAYOR BERKOWITZ

Miss Lane, we all saw what happened, but there was nothing we could do. I'm so sorry about Mr. Kent.

LOIS

Not as sorry as these punks are gonna be.

MAYOR BERKOWITZ

Where the devil is Luthor?

TERRORIST 1

Listen, you swine; we are holding you Americanos right here until your government... huh?!

Suddenly, the deck of the Sea Queen begins to RAPIDLY TILT as the ship's nose rises upward.

TERRORIST 4

What's happening!!

TERRORIST 1

What is it? Some kind of storm?

TERRORIST 3

Madre de Dios, WE'RE IN THE AIR!!

EXT:OPEN SEAS-NIGHT

We see the Sea Queen gracefully, impossibly RISE INTO THE AIR at somewhere near a 30 degree angle, completely clearing the water's surface. The massive ship begins to make a giant U-turn in the air back towards Metropolis.

INT:SEA QUEEN-MAIN LOUNGE

Most of the party guests are able to steady themselves by grabbing onto the floor-bolted furniture, while the

terrorists (who were standing in the middle of the room) stumble backwards toward the rear of the lounge. Like a place-kicker's 50-yard game-winning attempt, Lois KICKS the leader SQUARE IN THE BALLS, then grabs his gun and CLUBS HIM IN THE HEAD like a baby seal.

LOIS

That's for Clark Kent!!

She steadies herself on a support column in order to aim at the other thugs.

LOIS (CONT'D)

And here's something else to remember him by!!

Lois OPEN FIRES, spraying the back of the room with bullets as the would-be hijackers cower and scramble for cover.

LOIS (CONT'D)

You MURDERERS!!!

The rear of the Sea Queen lounge takes quite a beating as mirrors, walls, and chandeliers feel the wrath of Brigadier General Sam Lane's daughter.

LOIS

Mr. Mayor! Look over the side! Is it HIM!?

MAYOR BERKOWITZ

I can't see from here, Miss Lane, but...

EXT:METROPOLIS HARBOR-NIGHT

We see SUPERMAN CLOSE-UP, supporting the weight of the massive ocean liner as he flies through the air.

MAYOR BERKOWITZ (OS)

...who else could it be!?

We RAPIDLY PULL BACK as Superman gradually, gently eases the vessel back into the water of Metropolis Harbor, not far from their original pier.

INT:SEA QUEEN-MAIN LOUNGE

Lois has the three male thugs under control, but behind her, unseen, the female terrorist is silently getting to her feet. Just as she's about to shoot Lois, Superman zips in and places himself between them. She looks into her EMPTY HAND, then at Superman, who crushes her gun like a beer can.

FEMALE TERRORIST

You wouldn't hit a lady, would you?

Lois tries, but Superman stops her, then slowly walks over to her and with a smile gently removes her glasses.

KAL-EL

A lady? No...

In less than two seconds, he THUMPS her forehead (knocking her out), moves at SUPER-SPEED to catch her as she falls backward, then removes a GIANT WAD OF DYNAMITE from under her trench coat.

KAL-EL

But then I've never met a lady that carries dynamite, either.

His eyes FLASH RED as connective wires on the bomb melt, rendering it useless.

MAYOR BERKOWITZ

Superman to the rescue!

KAL-EL

Well... I think Miss Lane did pretty well herself.

MAYOR BERKOWITZ

Yes, but I hate to think of what would have happened without your intervention; your distraction afforded Miss Lane the opportunity to act.

KAL-EL

Thank you, Mr. Mayor. I'm pleased to have been of help.

Luthor shows up from out of nowhere holding a slip of paper.

LEX

You were much more than that, Superman.
You've earned every penny of this.

He hands Superman a check.

KAL-EL

A check for twenty-five thousand
dollars? I don't think...

LEX

It's a retainer, Superman. You're on my
payroll now. Enjoy!

KAL-EL

I'm very sorry Mr. Luthor, but my
services are not for hire.

LEX

Nonsense! Everyone who's anyone in
Metropolis works for me. You're far too
valuable a resource to leave
undirected. Not that you were really
needed here, of course.

Several green-and-purple uniformed members of LexCorp's
SECURITY TEAM enter the room and continue the mop-up work,
handcuffing and removing the terrorists.

LOIS

What! Where the Hell were they all this
time?

LEX

Waiting in the wings, just in case. I'd
received intelligence that something
like this could happen, so I beefed-up
security.

MAYOR BERKOWITZ

Beefed-up?? Then why did they wait so
long to act?

LEX

I ordered my men to hold back if "he" showed up, in case they somehow... got in his way; and also, so we could see what this "Superman" was truly capable of.

KAL-EL

You can't mean that! You risked the lives of all these people just to see what I could do?

LEX

Of course not! No one was really at risk with my men ready to act at any moment, but I wasn't about to believe all those wild stories about your exploits without some proof. I'm too smart a businessman for that.

LOIS

You're also an accessory to murder! Those goons killed poor Clark Kent!

KAL-EL

Actually Ms. Lane, Mr. Kent's fine. I took care of him; I'm sure he appreciates your concern.

MAYOR BERKOWITZ

Nevertheless, by his actions, Luthor's opened himself to a charge of reckless endangerment! As Mayor of this city, I hereby appoint you a special deputy, Superman. I want you to arrest this man!

LEX

(laughing)

Don't be absurd, Frank. You can't arrest me, I'm the most powerful man in Metropolis!

MAYOR BERKOWITZ

Not any more, Lex. Superman-- DO YOUR DUTY!

Superman looks at Lex; Lex scowls at Superman, who grabs Luthor by the shoulder--

CUT TO BRIEF MONTAGE:

Several brief cuts of: FLASHBULBS POPPING as Luthor's MUG SHOTS are taken; a smirking FEMALE POLICE OFFICER fingerprints him; a burly POLICE SERGEANT escorts him (past Jimmy Olson) into a JAIL CELL; when his door shuts with a CLANG he grimaces as another FLASHBULB POPS in his face. The shot FREEZES as it transitions into...

EXT:OUTSIDE METROPOLIS POLICE HEADQUARTERS

The front page of the Daily Planet shows Lex glowering under the headline "LEX LUTHOR ARRESTED" "BILLIONAIRE BUSINESSMAN BEHIND BARS" "Mayor, Dignitaries Threatened by Terrorists; Planet Reporter Survives Savage Attack" "by Lois Lane". The paper lowers, revealing JIMMY OLSEN standing next to Lois amid an excited THROG OF REPORTERS gathered on the steps outside the Metropolis Police H.Q.

JIMMY

Miss Lane, there's not much in here about Mr. Kent's injury. Are you sure he's okay?

LOIS

He sounded pretty groggy on the phone, but he swore he was fine, said it was just a slight concussion.

JIMMY

You haven't seen him?

LOIS

I'm going to as soon as- there's Luthor! C'mon!

Luthor exits Police HQ only to be faced with the mob of frantic media. Lois gets the first question in.

LOIS

So, Lex Luthor, what's it like to spend a night in the slammer?

LEX

Lois, good to see you, as well as your other esteemed colleagues in the media. (beat) I think when this is all straightened out, we'll find it to be nothing more than a mere misunderstanding, and soon I, like the good citizens of this city, will put this unfortunate little episode...

He (alone) notices Superman observing the proceedings from a rooftop across the street.

LEX (CONT'D)

...behind me.

As he snaps his fingers, a ROPE LADDER drops from above; everyone looks up to see a LEXCORP STEALTH COPTER hovering quietly overhead.

LEX (CONT'D)

Now if you'll excuse me, I have work to do.

Lex grabs the ladder and RISES INTO THE AIR, smiling and waving to the crowd. He's eventually pulled into the hovering craft by one of the FLIGHT CREWMAN.

CREWMAN

Good to see you, Mr. L. We'll have you home in no time.

LEX

Not soon enough.

The copter heads for the LexCorp Building. As Lois looks up, she spots Superman from his rooftop perch. A worried look crosses her face.

LOIS

Jimmy, did you catch the look on Luthor's face?

JIMMY

Boy, was he pissed!

LOIS

No, it was more than that.

Superman flies off, disappearing into the clouds.

LOIS (CONT'D)

I hope Superman knows what he's gotten into.

JIMMY

Aww, what's Luthor gonna do about it, Miss Lane? I mean, Superman's... well, gosh... "super!"

LOIS

Yeah, I hope he's "super" enough.

INT:LEXCORP BUILDING-LEX LUTHOR'S OFFICE

Lex enters his office, followed by DIANA, another supermodel-esque assistant.

DIANA

Mr. L., you've been flooded with calls all morning...

LEX

Not now, Diana.

DIANA

But sir, the press, the Mayor, the banks, they're all--

LEX

I said NOT NOW!!

DIANA

(meekly)

Yessir.

She turns and practically runs out of the room. Lex moves to his private bar and pours a large snifter of cognac, then downs half the glass as his intercom buzzes.

LEX

Dammit, I said...

DIANA
Sir, it's Clark Kent. He's here.

LEX
(long beat) Fine. Send him in.

Lex finishes his drink, then rubs his eyes in obvious frustration as the elevator's DING indicates Clark's arrival. He enters Lex's opulent office wearing a bandage around his head.

CLARK
Hi Lex. Thanks for seeing me.

LEX
If you're here about a lawsuit Kent, forget it. I'll not be held responsible for international acts of terrorism, no matter what our "mayor" thinks.

CLARK
I'm fine Lex, thanks for asking.

LEX
What do you want, Kent?

CLARK
Well, honestly, I'm worried about you, Lex.

A beat, then a genuine gut-laugh from Lex.

LEX
Good ol' Clarkie-boy, still the Smallville putz. That knock on the noodle really scrambled your eggs, huh?

CLARK
I'm serious, Lex.

LEX
Oh, please Kent, when were you ever not serious?

Lex moves back to the bar and pours another drink.

LEX (CONT'D)

And don't tell me it's too early,
either. It's five o'clock somewhere.
But please "Specs", enlighten me. Why
in the world would a nothing like you
be worried about the most successful
man on Earth?

CLARK

Because I know you, Lex.

LEX

You don't know jack, junior!

CLARK

I know you're probably the smartest,
most creative human on the planet...

LEX

Probably??!!

CLARK

I know you operate on levels most
people can't even comprehend, and that
gulf prevents you from connecting to
them. I know you've already forgotten
more than most men will ever know, and
I know that for you, it's not about
success or money, it's about control.

Lex is now silent as Clark hits close to home.

CLARK (CONT'D)

You've always been that way, Lex. I
mean, nobody could blame you, the way
your father...

Lex explodes, standing up and pointing straight at Clark in
a fury.

LEX

YOU DON'T EVER GET TO MENTION MY FATHER
TO ME!!!

CLARK

Lex, I'm sorry, I didn't mean to--

LEX

You wouldn't have lasted a day at my house!! You'd have gone running home crying to ol' cornpone Johnny Kent. But I made it! I survived, I thrived in SPITE of what that...

Long beat of uneasy silence between them.

LEX (CONT'D)

So you came down here to dispense some two-bit psycho-babble huh, is that it? Let me clue you in to a little secret, pally. The year I spent in that podunk, hick town was the longest, worst year of my life. And out of all the rednecks and yokels, you were the only one with any potential. You were the only one who could keep up, the only one who could have really been something. And day after day, week after week, I watched you avoid every conflict, constantly underachieve despite obvious talent, hide your intelligence from people that weren't a tenth your equal, and generally take abuse from every moron and idiot in town! I watched someone who could have been close to an equal somehow dilute himself into a... spineless blob of snot. You think I'm this way because my dad slapped me around? (beat) The day I left Smallville, I swore that no matter what happened, no matter what the world dished out over the course of my life, I would never, EVER, take it like that sniveling, gutless little puke Clark Kent.

Just then, ALARMS SOUND as Lex's intercom buzzes. He turns away from Clark.

LEX

What is it?

DIANA (VO)

Sir, there's an emergency in Eighteen, Dr. Chen's afraid there might--

A muffled KA-BOOM rocks the building slightly. Lex bolts for the exit.

LEX
We're done, Kent!

But his office is now empty.

LEX (CONT'D)
Figures!

INT:LEXCORP BUILDING-LAB 18

DENSE, BLACK SMOKE billows past FLASHING RED ALARMS above a sign that reads LAB 18-SPECIAL PROJECTS-MAXIMUM SECURITY. People in white lab coats race out the door to safety as Lex enters the chaotic lab.

LEX
Where's the sample!?

He grabs DR. CHEN, head of Lab 18.

LEX
The sample, Chen!?

Dr. Chen can only cough and point back into the smoke filled lab.

LEX
Dammit!

Lex pulls an OXYGEN MASK off an escaping technician's face and heads back into the lab. As he dons the mask, we close in on his covered face, his eyes FOCUS ON--(IN SEMI-SLO-MO)

In the rear of the lab, a tiny vial of GREEN LIQUID contains a BRILLIANT, TINY GREEN PARTICLE no larger than a grain of sand which sparks and glows as it's bombarded with unknown radiation from a strange-looking device; the PULSING GLOW around the vial increases as Lex approaches until it violently EXPLODES virtually in his face, producing a noxious-looking GREEN CLOUD which envelops him before knocking him backwards several feet through the air. As Lex lands roughly, he looks up to see the GREEN CLOUD SPARK as it reacts with the BLACK SMOKE, causing a GIANT FIREBALL to erupt. As we move to SUPER-TIME (VERY SLO-MO)

we see Lex's EYES WIDEN as the inescapable ROLLING FIREBALL approaches, as he instinctively raises his hands to his face, he is covered by a SWOOSH OF RED as ARMS OF BLUE scoop him gently from the floor; we PAN UP to Superman's face as he turns his head toward the fireball and without stopping his forward motion INHALES THE ENTIRE FIREY EXPLOSION. As the last bit of smoke and fire enter his mouth, his EYES WIDEN IN SURPRISE-

BACK TO NORMAL TIME-- Lex is dumped not-too-gently on the floor surrounded by his evacuated personnel a safe distance from the lab; they react first in surprise to Lex's sudden appearance, then as we WHIP PAN to the sudden HOLE IN THE WALL, providing an unexpected view of the cityscape as well as fresh ventilation. Lex coughs while removing his oxygen mask as his workers crowd around him, buzzing with concern.

LEX

What the...!?

As he wipes the sweat from his head, his eyes WIDEN IN HORROR as he notices LARGE CLUMPS OF HIS OWN HAIR sticking to his sweaty palms. His mouth opens, as if to scream.

EXT:SKIES OVER METROPOLIS

A faint scream echoes in the background as a lone human figure rises above the rooftops of Metropolis belching smoke and flying erratically. We ZOOM IN on Superman as he spasms, coughing uncontrollably before he PLUMMETS DOWNWARD, landing roughly with a CRASH on the roof of a skyscraper below. He finally manages to stand, his face showing genuine confusion. Using combined X-Ray and Microscopic vision, he quickly scans the dissipating SMOKE TRIAL left behind him, noticing several strange CHAINS OF MOLECULES with concern.

KAL-EL

Good Lord, Lex! What have you gotten into?

Quickly and efficiently, Superman uses his HEAT VISION to fully incinerate the remainder of the drifting chem-trail before using a blast of SUPER-BREATH to safely dissipate its remnants. After several more DEEP, POWERFUL COUGHS, his eyebrows furrow in concern before he launches himself straight up from the roof.

INT:344 CLINTON ST.-CLARK KENT'S APARTMENT

The constant DOOR KNOCKING is the only sound that fills Clark Kent's empty apartment, but a FIVE-SECOND PAN from open balcony to front door reveals: SUPERMAN arriving, landing on the balcony in a blur, using SUPER-SPEED, he races to the bathroom, changes out of his costume, dons a puffy, oversized white terry bathrobe, wraps a bandage around his head, checks himself in the mirror, then heads for the door.

CLARK
(weakly)
Hello?

Clark opens his door revealing Lois, in an obvious state of agitation.

LOIS
Geez, Clark, I've been knocking for ten... (gasps) Oh my God, you look terrible!!

CLARK
Thanks. Nice to see you too.

She barges in, ushering him to a seat with genuine concern.

LOIS
Are you okay? You look so pale? You told me you were feeling better?

CLARK
I think I had a relapse.

LOIS
And what were you thinking, jumping in front of that goon like that?

CLARK
I was trying to protect you.

LOIS
I can take care of myself.

CLARK

So I noticed.

LOIS

Seriously Smallville, it was very sweet of you, and I do appreciate it, but next time, leave the heroics to Superman, okay. You're a great guy, but you're just not cut out for it.

Clark coughs (genuinely) several times.

LOIS (CONT'D)

Clark, are you sure you're all right? Maybe you better see a specialist or something.

CLARK

I was just thinking the same thing.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT:S.T.A.R. LABS

The sleek, futuristic S.T.A.R. LABS complex gleams in the sunlight on the banks of Metropolis' West River.

INT:S.T.A.R. LABS RECEPTION LOBBY

We DOLLY IN on AMANDA, an attractive receptionist at the front desk who sits beneath a large sign reading SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCED RESEARCH LABORATORIES; her eyes are down as she's buried in calls and work.

AMANDA

Star Labs, how may I direct your call? Thank you. Star Labs, how may I—I'm sorry, she's not available right now, I'll connect you to her voice mail. Star Labs, yes Dr. Montgomery, no I'm sorry they're not here yet, I'll let you know as soon as they arrive...

KAL-EL (OS)

Excuse me, I was hoping to see Dr. Faulkner?

AMANDA
 (laughing)
 Do you have an appointment?

KAL-EL (OS)
 No, but I was hoping she could squeeze
 me in?

This ridiculous suggestion finally causes her to raise her
 glaze from her computer screen.

AMANDA
 You were hope—

Her eyes widen in surprise as Superman stands before her.

AMANDA (CONT'D)
 You know, I'll bet she can!

INT:S.T.A.R. LABS-KITTY FAULKNER'S OFFICE

Superman stands in front of a large window which affords
 him a spectacular view of downtown Metropolis as DR. KITTY
 FAULKNER rushes anxiously into her own office to greet her
 visitor.

DR. FAULKNER
 Superman! What a surprise, when my
 assistant told me... I'm Dr. Karen
 Faulkner, but you can call me Kitty.

KAL-EL
 Nice to meet you, Dr. Faulkner.

DR. FAULKNER
 What can we do for you?

KAL-EL
 I'm afraid I've run into something I
 can't identify, and I was hoping you
 could help.

DR. FAULKNER
 Of course, certainly, whatever we
 can...

KAL-EL

Do you have a microscopic scanner?

INT:S.T.A.R. LABS-SCANNING ROOM

Superman, Dr. Faulkner, and two female assistants in lab coats (MANDY and QUONG PEI) stand before the biggest DARK FIELD ELECTRON MICROSCOPE ever seen.

KAL-EL

This should do nicely.

DR. FAULKNER

Do you have a sample?

Superman discreetly but powerfully COUGHS INTO HIS HAND, then places his upturned palm on the lighted SCANNING PLATE in front of him. After a brief beat of surprise, Dr. Faulkner and her assistants begin the scanning process, quickly providing several different monitors of data.

DR. FAULKNER

Good night! This is in your lungs?

KAL-EL

I'm afraid...

DR. FAULKNER

Mandy, go get some TC-85 right now. We've gotta get you cleaned up. Quong Pei, we need a clean suit, please. I'm going to have to ask you to change clothes for me, you're carrying enough contaminants to... oh good (Mandy hands her the sample) we need a vaporizer, this needs to be heated to precisely 320 degrees before you inhale it-

KAL-EL

I think I can handle that.

He takes the sample from her and cups it in his hands in front of his mouth, then pauses.

KAL-EL

Should I ask what this is?

DR. FAULKNER
Don't argue with your doctor.

KAL-EL
Yes ma'am.

He smiles as he uses his HEAT-RAY VISION to gently incinerate the sample before breathing the small, reddish cloud deeply into his lungs.

DR. FAULKNER
Try to hold it in for at least 5 seconds.

Superman nods, then for the requested 5 seconds tries to suppress a cough, finally turning his head opposite Dr. Faulkner before POWERFULLY COUGHING several times, blowing several stools and an empty portable lab table to the back of the lab.

KAL-EL
Wow, that tickled.

DR. FAULKNER
I'm glad your mom taught you to turn your head when you cough.

INT:S.T.A.R. LABS-CORRIDOR TO DE-CON CHAMBER

Dr. Faulkner escorts Superman (now wearing a STAR clean suit) down a corridor towards their DE-CONTAMINATION CHAMBER.

DR. FAULKNER
Now that we've got your insides clean, we'll burn off any remaining molecular residue.

They arrive at the chamber's door.

DR. FAULKNER (CONT'D)
I'm assuming of course, that you can survive temperatures around 5000 degrees Kelvin?

KAL-EL
Never been a problem before.

He steps into the chamber.

KAL-EL
What about this suit?

Dr. Faulkner closes the chamber door.

DR. FAULKNER
Don't worry, they're disposable. It'll
burn off.

She nods to Quong Pei, who activates the controls, causing the chamber to instantly ignite into a FIREY, HELLISH MAELSTROM. The three women take turns trying to peer into the door's tiny observation window as Superman's suit burns off, his figure standing impossibly unscathed amid the oven's inferno.

INT:S.T.A.R. LABS-DR. FAULKNER'S OFFICE

Superman (now back in costume) confers with Dr. Faulkner amid a bank of display screens.

DR. FAULKNER
Both you and your suit should be clean now, we've identified every contaminant you brought in except one.

A strange, GREENISH, BROKEN CHAIN OF MOLECULES comes into view.

DR. FAULKNER (CONT'D)
We can't tell what this was. You say the sample was solid before it destabilized?

KAL-EL
Yes, but it was tiny, I'd say smaller than a grain of sand.

DR. FAULKNER
Without knowing the exact method or type of forces Luthor was subjecting it to, we can't reconstruct or even determine its nature, but I'm sure it was radioactive, except that its signature is so different from

anything... (beat) I can't identify this substance, but I'm fairly sure it's what caused your symptoms.

KAL-EL

Are you sure?

DR. FAULKNER

Well, you had enough benzene, argon, and xenon remnants in your lungs to kill a herd of cattle and you're still here, I'm betting on the unknown radical. Whatever this is can hurt you, and the amount you inhaled was microscopic; if you were ever to be exposed to a real sample of the substance, there's no telling how you might be affected.

KAL-EL

Any idea what effect it could have on humans?

DR. FAULKNER

I wouldn't want to get near an aerosolized version like you experienced, I imagine the dermal trauma could be severe enough to cause permanent damage.

KAL-EL

Uh oh.

Superman turns his head toward the LexCorp tower, and using his combined X-ray and Telescopic vision, "sees"...

FX TRANSITION TO:

INT:LEXCORP TOWER-EXAMINATION ROOM

...Lex Luthor sitting in an examination bed, surrounded by a phalanx of doctors and equipment, bald as an egg, raving like a lunatic. He ZOOMS IN on Lex's SCALP; his hair follicles looked like burned-out tractor tires buried under three feet of sand.

DR. FAULKNER (OS)
Are you...?

KAL-EL (OS)
Just a moment, Doctor.

His vision ZOOMS OUT of Lex's scalp back to a view of the whole room, and using SUPER-HEARING tunes in to the conversation.

LEX
Permanent!! What do you mean "It's permanent!!"

DR. CHEN
Mr. Luthor, please!! You're lucky you're alive at all!

LEX
LUCKY!! DOES THIS LOOK LUCKY TO YOU!!!!
I want EVERYTHING! Every scrap ever written, every ounce of data, EVERY SINGLE...

FX TRANSITION BACK TO:

INT:S.T.A.R. LABS-DR. FAULKNER'S OFFICE

Superman shakes his head.

KAL-EL
This is bad.

DR. FAULKNER
Was anyone hurt?

KAL-EL
Worse.

INT:DAILY PLANET-SCREENING ROOM

CLOSE-UP on the display screen, as MUSIC and GRAPHICS EXPLODE DRAMATICALLY.

ANNOUNCER
WLEX presents a special report: Tragedy at LexCorp Tower!

A literal EXPLOSION fills the screen, which dissipates into TERESA, another leggy, fabulous babe.

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)

Here now with the latest is Teresa Scanlon.

TERESA

Disaster was narrowly averted today, as Metropolis' most beloved figure and favorite son Lex Luthor nearly lost his life while helping evacuate fellow workers from a dangerous lab explosion.

Highly edited versions of lab security-cam footage seem to confirm the narration.

TERESA (CONT'D)

Despite his injuries, Mr. Luthor heroically addressed the media earlier today.

We CUT TO Lex addressing the media, dressed casually but smartly in a navy blazer and grey turtleneck, bald but still unbowed.

LEX

As you can see, I have suffered permanent damage from the explosion, although it's a small price to pay in exchange for the safety of my valued and trusted personnel. But most surprising and disturbing to me is Superman's role in all this.

A BUZZ OF QUESTIONS escapes from the reporters.

WLEX REPORTER

Are you saying Superman caused the explosion?

LEX

(pauses) I find it highly questionable that not only can we not ascertain the cause of the explosion, but most of the security footage of the event was somehow "conveniently" erased...

CLICK. The newscast abruptly ends as we WHIP-PAN TO:

Lois, Clark (with his head still bandaged), and Ron Troupe sit before Perry White and Morgan Edge.

EDGE

Well?

RON

You don't expect us to scoop a story that happens *at* LexCorp, do you?

EDGE

That's not what I mean, I mean the whole "Superman versus Luthor" angle.

CLARK

I don't think it happened like that.

EDGE

What!?

CLARK

I have a very good source that says it didn't happen like that.

EDGE

I don't care what happened!

CLARK

But it's an excellent source.

LOIS

Mr. Edge, I hope you're not suggesting we stoop to the libel and slander tactics Luthor uses?

EDGE

Of course not, Lois! People love Superman, they don't want to believe all this negative crap, but right now LexComm is killing us, we've got to provide a substantive alternative.

CLARK

I'm glad to hear that.

EDGE

Which is where you come in. Now, all our numbers show that you three rank the highest in reader trust-ability...

LOIS

Is that an actual word?

EDGE (CONT'D)

...Well-deserved, I might add, so what we're proposing is a cross-platform approach that'll leave the competition in the dust!

Beat of silence as no one understands what he means.

EDGE (CONT'D)

I mean we're putting you three on TV.

All three reporters react (at the same time) with various degrees of questioning.

EDGE (CONT'D)

You'll keep your same by-lines, you'll still do the same reporting for the Planet, we'll just use mobile units to do daily remotes on the stories you're already covering... unless of course, Superman shows up somewhere nearby.

RON

Does that mean we get raises, too?

EDGE

You get me Superman, you won't have to worry about that, I promise you!

CLARK

I don't want to be on TV.

Beat as everyone else stares at him.

EDGE

What!!??

CLARK

Don't get me wrong, Mr. Edge, I'm flattered and appreciate the vote of confidence, but I've cultivated so many anonymous sources already that are invaluable to my reporting, I feel... my relative anonymity allows me to be a better reporter, and I think an increased visibility would only lessen my value to both WGBS and the Daily Planet.

A beat as the room absorbs Clark's statement.

EDGE

I'm impressed, Kent. That's the most cogent, logical, analytical thing I've ever heard you say. In fact, I'm prepared to agree with everything that just came out of your mouth.

CLARK

Thank you, sir.

EDGE

Here's why I don't care. For some reason, our numbers show that you are the most trusted reporter in Metropolis, by a fair margin.

LOIS

What!!?

EDGE

Don't worry Lois, you'll have plenty of chances to catch up; I'm not putting Kent on camera until that head tumor clears up...

CLARK

Thanks...

EDGE (CONT'D)

...but you two start field reports tomorrow, got it?

LOIS

(to Perry) You're awfully quiet? I can't believe you're okay with this?

PERRY

'Fraid I got out-voted on this one, as long as your newspaper reports aren't affected, we play ball.

EDGE

Don't worry Perry, my people are convinced the new exposure will significantly increase daily sales revenue. Let's just all bear in mind that from now on, in Metropolis, our business, the news business IS the Superman business. Got it? We're done.

As the reporters leave the room, Clark mutters to himself.

CLARK

I think my life just got a lot more complicated.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT:LEX LUTHOR'S BEDROOM

CLOSE-UP: A Metropolis Star headline reads "WHO IS SUPERMAN? THE REAL UN-TOLD STORY" just before it's crumpled and tossed away with a frustrated growl by Luthor, who lies in bed convalescing, surrounded by (seemingly) every article written about Superman so far. He angrily picks up a copy of Lois' original article and re-reads it. We move into EXTREME CLOSE-UPS between Luthor's eyes and key phrases in the article-- "red giant"; "location"; "undisclosed".

LEX

She knows... which sun! He told her...

More CLOSE-UPS; "practically no limits"; EXTREME CLOSE-UP ON: "practically"

LEX (CONT'D)

She's holding something out.

He grabs his cell phone and dials a number.

LEX (CONT'D)

Hemmingway? Lex Luthor. I believe your grant is up for renewal soon, isn't it? How would you like to insure your academic future for the next, say, ten years? I thought so. No, of course not, nothing illegal at all, just a bit of field research regarding your position on the board...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT:LOIS LANE'S APARTMENT

A persistent KNOCKING is finally answered as Lois opens her front door to find an academic-looking visitor, MICHAEL HEMMIGWAY.

HEMMIGWAY

Miss Lane?

LOIS

Yes?

HEMMIGWAY

I'm Michael Hemmingway from the Pulitzer Committee, we spoke earlier?

LOIS

Yes, Mr. Hemmingway, yes, please come in. Hemmingway...?

HEMMINGWAY

Yes, with two m's, no relation, I'm afraid.

LOIS

I see, well, what can I do for you, Mr. Hemmingway with two m's?

She laughs nervously at her own bad joke, trying too hard. He glances about her apartment almost nervously, rubbing his ear distractedly.

HEMMINGWAY

My, what a lovely place you have..., oh yes, well, you see Miss Lane...

LOIS

Would you care for some tea?

HEMMINGWAY

Hmm, yes, what, oh yes, that would be lovely, thank you.

As she heads for the kitchen, he continues looking around, then winces, as if hearing something loud. We CLOSE IN near his ear; we hear BUZZING that eventually turns into LEX LUTHOR'S VOICE broadcast into a MICRO-TRANSMITTER worn by Hemmingway.

LEX'S VOICE

(filtered)

The box! Look in that big box on the desk while she's gone!

Hemmingway quickly moves to the desk and opens the lid of a prominently displayed HEAVY, METAL BOX; electronic images of the box's contents (a solitary volume marked DIARY) are intercut so we can tell Hemmingway's GLASSES also contain a MICRO-CAM.

LEX'S VOICE

(filtered)

A journal? What the... close it, close it, get away.

LOIS

I was wondering, are personal visits like this... the norm?

HEMMINGWAY

What? Oh, no, actually, I'm here in an un-official capacity, you see what with the advent of an Earth-changing story such as that of Superman, it's an almost foregone conclusion that he'll be the subject of all the nominees, much less the winner. Due to the unprecedented amount of coverage he's received in such a short time, the

Committee, that is, certain elements of the Committee, felt we should take the unprecedented step this year of a brief, informal interview for potential nominees. I hope you don't mind?

LOIS

Why not at all, I'm flattered... does this mean I'm nominated?

HEMMINGWAY

Not yet, I'm afraid, but just between us, I feel that's only a formality.

LOIS

Really?

LEX'S VOICE

(filtered)

Get on with it! The Suns, get to the suns!

HEMMINGWAY

You know, Miss Lane, this year I'm also on the Science Committee, and I can't tell you how excited all my colleagues in the scientific community are, they're usually so stuffy and stodgy--

LOIS

You don't say?

HEMMINGWAY

--they've even gone so far as to construct a betting pool concerning Superman's home sun. For example, I chose Aldebaran--

LOIS

Sorry, you lose.

HEMMINGWAY

Oh well, let's see, Dr. Osterman chose Betelgeuse-- (Lois nods the negative) Hmm, Dr. Nagano thinks it's Arcturus?

LOIS

Well, just between us? (he nods anxiously) Whoever picked Antares should win your pool.

HEMMINGWAY/LEX'S VOICE

(filtered)

Antares...

LEX'S VOICE

(filtered)

Well, that's something at least.

HEMMINGWAY

That is something indeed, isn't it?

LEX'S VOICE

(filtered)

We need something else... ask her about the box!

HEMMINGWAY

Miss Lane, I'm sorry, not to change the subject, but I'm also something of an antiques aficionado, I couldn't help but notice that magnificent piece on your desk over there...

LOIS

(smiling)

Oh, I just bought that a few days ago...

HEMMINGWAY

Really? It's simply marvelous, it seems so heavy?

LOIS

Yep, it's really great, solid lead from top to bottom.

CUT TO:

INT: SURVEILLANCE VAN OUTSIDE LOIS' APARTMENT

CLOSE-UP on LEX'S EYES as he processes Lois' last statement.

LEX

(softly)

Why... would she keep a diary... in a
lead... box!

His eyes WIDEN in sudden realization.

LEX (CONT'D)

So... HE... can't... read it!! You're
done, Hemmingway, get out of there,
I've got what I need. (punches button)
Frank, stop what you're doing
immediately; you have a new, full-time
project. You are to procure, buy, beg,
borrow and/or steal every single scrap
of lead you can get your hands on,
understand? I don't care... I don't
care if the price triples, pay it or
take it, I don't care. Your sole
mission in life is to obtain ALL THE
LEAD you can find, got it? (pause)
Well, at least enough to build a new
skyscraper, dammit. (pause, then to
himself) I think it's time to fully
explore what big blue can really do.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT:METROPOLIS SKYLINE-MORNING

The tranquil, orange sunrise over the Metropolis skyline is briefly blocked from view as SUPERMAN flies past and zips around the corner of a nearby building. On the street, crowds of people crane their necks this way and that, hoping for a glimpse of their new hero. As he FLIES INTO THEIR VIEW, cheers erupt, fingers point upward, and everybody waves. From above, he gives a friendly wave in return before flying past a giant electronic billboard which alternates between "WELCOME TO METROPOLIS: HOME OF SUPERMAN" and "THE CITY OF TOMORROW WELCOMES THE MAN OF TOMORROW." As he flies off into the distance, we move into the OPEN WINDOW of corner apartment, where a woman sits in her bathrobe watching RON TROUPE on TV.

RON

Apparently Superman had quite a busy
day yesterday. According to global

reports, he was spotted in 15 different countries over a 24-hour period, including Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Guatemala, Ukraine, New Zealand—

We MOVE OUT an opposite window, moving toward the street while PANNING to reveal another e-board that alternates between "TONIGHT ON WLEX" and "LEX LUTHOR: METROPOLIS' REAL SUPERMAN." As we reach street level, we PAN BACK and DOLLY PAST various storefronts full of people: MAGGIN'S PIZZA offers the "Superman Deluxe" that appears diamond-shaped, ELLIOT'S TATTOOS features a black & white version of Superman's symbol in their window (as well as a diamond around the "S" in the sign), the DINI'S DELI menu reads "Try Our New SUPERMAN-WICH: TWICE THE BEEF!!", at TIMM'S T-SHIRT HUT window is full of a dozen different Superman designs, we finally coast to a stop in front of JEPH'S COPHEE where LOIS and CLARK (finally sans bandage) sit in the outdoor café while attended to by their WAITRESS, who wears a small Superman pin.

WAITRESS

Would either of you like to try our new "Super-Brew"? It's got twice as much...

LOIS

I'll just have a double latte, please.

CLARK

Do you have orange juice?

WAITRESS

Fresh squeezed.

CLARK

Oh goody, I'll have a triple, please.

WAITRESS

You got it.

LOIS

Easy killer, don't hurt yourself.

CLARK

I love fresh orange juice.

LOIS

You're a man of great passion, Clark.

CLARK

It's *really* good.

LOIS

Clark! (beat) Do you know how to get in touch with Superman?

CLARK

Superman? Well, sometimes...

LOIS

Sometimes...??

CLARK

Well... not really.

LOIS

Not really. Me neither. Last night, I went up on my roof and actually tried to call him.

CLARK

Really? Did it work?

LOIS

(beat) If it worked, would I be asking you?

CLARK

Oh, right. (smirks) How long did you try?

LOIS

Not long enough, apparently.

CLARK

Why do you need to see Superman?

LOIS

I want an interview, what do you think?

CLARK

Hmm, join the club. I don't think he likes interviews. Maybe he's shy.

LOIS

We watch like children while he does all these... amazing things, but we still don't know anything at all about him. Nothing! Does he sleep? What does he eat? Does he eat? Does he like orange juice?

CLARK

I bet he does.

LOIS

And look at all of this... crap! He can't be happy about this...

The waitress wearing the Superman pin brings their order.

LOIS

All these people trying to make a buck off him...

CLARK

Not like you and me, right? (beat as Lois smirks) Well, what can he do about it?

LOIS

If we knew what he thought or felt about, just... the most basic things, It could make a huge difference in how people act. I don't care if he is shy, he needs to understand that if he doesn't fill in the blanks, someone else like Luthor will.

CLARK

Gosh, that's kind of a scary thought.

LOIS

"Kind of?"

CLARK

By the way, how's your arms smuggling piece coming along?

She quickly collects her belongings.

LOIS
I'm headed for the docks right now.
Gotta run. See you, Smallville.

EXT:METROPOLIS FREEWAY

Lois cruises along in her convertible distractedly, until she notices SUPERMAN flying high above her in the distance.

LOIS
Hey!! HEY!! SUPERMAN!! HEY, DOWN
HERE...

She SWERVES, almost hitting another car. As she regains control, she looks up again, but he's gone.

LOIS
HEY SUP--? Where'd he go?

KAL-EL (OS)
Car trouble, Miss Lane?

Lois SHRIEKS in surprise as SUPERMAN seemingly appears directly above her. He matches her speed perfectly, appearing to float over her as she speeds down the highway.

LOIS
Oohhh! Don't do that!

KAL-EL
You bellowed?

Lois SWERVES AGAIN, trying to see both him and the road.

KAL-EL (CONT'D)
Eyes on the road, please?

He ADJUSTS HIS FLIGHT so she can see (from her perspective) both his upside-down face and the highway.

LOIS
Look, I don't care if you're shy, I
don't care if you're a hermit, I don't
care what you say, you need to do an
interview as soon as possible, because
if you don't...

KAL-EL

I think that's a wonderful idea.

LOIS

You do?

KAL-EL

Can I call you later to set it up?

LOIS

Oh, sure, my number's...

KAL-EL

I know your number, Miss Lane.

LOIS

You do?

KAL-EL

I read the phone book; I know everyone's number.

WHOOSH!! He TAKES OFF straight up into the clouds, disappearing from her sight.

LOIS

He read the phone book.

Lois continues down the highway, DISSOLVING INTO:

INT:LOIS LANE'S APARTMENT

Lois and Superman are seated in her apartment. (The CAMERA MOVES and EDITING indicate we've joined mid-interview, montage style.)

LOIS

Can I ask you about your parents?

KAL-EL

I feel lucky to have two sets; a lot of other orphans aren't as fortunate. My Kryptonian parents saved my life when they sent me here, and my human parents saved me by adopting me and treating me like their own son.

LOIS

What were your human parents like?

KAL-EL

(pause) They taught me there's a right and a wrong in the universe, and the difference isn't that hard to tell.

LOIS

Now, there's something I've been dying to ask you...

We DISSOLVE INTO a Daily Planet headline reading "SUPERMAN SPEAKS by Lois Lane", which DISSOLVES INTO MULTIPLE IMAGES OF: people everywhere, in coffee shops, offices, and on the street, all either reading or talking about Lois's article. We DISSOLVE INTO: a close up of LUTHOR sitting at his desk, lowering the headline with a scowl. In front of him sits a MAP OF METROPOLIS with THREE RED X'S marked as far apart on the map as can be. This DISSOLVES INTO: Lex watches three separate monitors, all showing SECURITY VIDEO FEEDS of three separate banks, ALL BEING ROBBED. One by one, the screens show a blur removing the ROBBERS from view, as Superman makes his way to each of the banks in a matter of moments. Lex grimaces and throws his cell phone across the room, which DISSOLVES INTO: Perry White smiles as he sits with his feet on his desk reading a PLANET HEADLINE that reads SUPERMAN-3 ROBBERS-0 SIMULTANEOUS TRIPLE-HEIST FOILED while in the background RON TROUPE appears on TV.

RON

--well now it's official, the "Superman Speaks" edition of the Daily Planet has now become the highest-selling single newspaper issue in history, with readers already demanding a part two as presses continue to roll--

We DISSOLVE INTO: Lois is interviewing Superman again; we can't hear them, but a few sideways glances, smiles, and some laughter indicates Lois appears to be quite smitten. We DISSOLVE INTO: A Planet headline reads "SUPERMAN REVEALED-THE LOIS LANE INTERVIEWS PART 2" which DISSOLVES INTO: many more people are reading this new issue of the Planet, which DISSOLVES INTO: a family watching Angela Chen on WLEX (along with separate video of Lois and Superman.)

ANGELA

--which is generating increased questions concerning the nature of their relationship. According to multiple, reliable sources--

DISSOLVE TO: A DAILY STAR headline spins into view, reading "LOIS LANE-SUPERMAN'S GIRLFRIEND??" which DISSOLVES INTO: a METRO INQUIRER cover with Superman and Lois's images inside a BIG, PINK HEART with the headline "MR. & MRS. SUPERMAN??" which FINALLY DISSOLVES INTO:

INT:DAILY PLANET NEWSROOM

In the Daily Planet newsroom, Clark and Ron are both seated at their desks, their faces obstructed by the "MR. & MRS. SUPERMAN??" headlines as Lois approaches. From behind his paper (and to the tune of "Miss America") Ron belts out...

RON

There she is... Mis-sus Superman!

LOIS

Oh, you can both just stuff it! I'm gonna sue the pants off those sorry sons of... Can you believe this crap!! Superman's Girlfriend!! I mean, really!! Of all the...

A beat as both men just smile at her.

CLARK

Hmm. Methinks the lady doth protest too much. Coffee? Coffee?

He gets up grinning, headed for the exit.

LOIS

Don't you quote Shakespeare to me, Kansas; just you remember-

With his head turned toward Lois, he fails to notice/bumps into CAT GRANT, super-foxy new gossip/entertainment reporter.

CLARK

Oh! Excuse me!! Sorry!

CAT
No problem, handsome.

CLARK
(beat) Hi. I'm... Clark Kent.

CAT
Cat Grant. So why aren't you on TV yet?

CLARK
Oh, just lucky, I guess.

Perry finally catches up to Cat.

PERRY
Oh Cat, there you are. Everybody, I
wanna introduce Cat Grant, this is Ron
Troupe, Lois Lane. You've met Clark? I
just hired her to beef up the
Entertainment Section.

LOIS
You mean the gossip column?

CAT
It's not gossip if it's true.

PERRY
Now Lois, I hired Cat to try and take
some of the heat off you regarding this
situation...

CAT
So are you Superman's girlfriend?

LOIS
I am definitely NOT his girlfriend!

CAT
So he's available?

As Lois gives her a look that could burn through lead, WALT
THE MAILBOY arrives, his arms full of the newsrooms mail.

WALT
Excuse me, I'm sorry Mr. White, I've
got something urgent for you right

here... (he struggles) Hey Clark, can you gim'me a hand here...?

CLARK

Oh, sure Walt.

He hands Clark the entire stack of mail, which reaches just below his glasses frames. As Walt searches the stack for Perry's delivery, suddenly Clark's EYES WIDEN as he suddenly WRETCHES SEVERAL TIMES, drops the entire stack of mail on the floor, then DOUBLES OVER IN AGONY, falling to his knees before finally VOMITING ON THE FLOOR in front of everyone. Confused, Clark looks up at the stunned, silent, concerned people surrounding him.

LOIS

Clark?

He tries to use his super-vision to scan the scattered mail on the floor around him, but his vision is BLURRY and JERKY; he can't focus! Suddenly he DOUBLES OVER AGAIN in agony.

LOIS

Clark! What's wrong?

He manages to scramble to his feet and staggers away toward the restroom.

CLARK

Sorry, everybody, I must be sick!

He escapes into the Men's Room.

RON

Duh.

INT:DAILY PLANET MEN'S ROOM

Clark staggers into the bathroom, breathing heavily and perspiring. He leans against the wall as several others in the restroom eye him warily before leaving. He splashes water on his face from the sink.

CLARK

What's wrong with me?

He tries his super-vision again, and is relieved when he can finally once again SEE THROUGH THE WALL to the scattered pile forty feet away. As Walt gingerly picks up the mail, Clark quickly scans through TEN, TWENTY, THIRTY ENVELOPES before seeing one addressed "To Superman's Girlfriend"; the note inside reads: "See how Big Blue likes this!" Below the words, affixed with clear tape, is a NEEDLE-SIZED SHARD of a GLOWING GREEN SUBSTANCE. His MICROSCOPIC VIEW reveals a molecular chain similar to that from earlier at S.T.A.R. Labs.

CLARK

That looks familiar.

He continues SCANNING both the PAPER and ENVELOPE; he finds no fingerprints or microscopic evidence of any kind.

CLARK

No prints... completely clean.

Perry enters the bathroom.

PERRY

Clark, are you all right? Lord son, you look like Great Caesar's Ghost!

CLARK

Sorry, chief, I think I must have food poisoning or something; I think maybe I should go home.

PERRY

Good idea, take the rest of the day, go home, get some sleep. Edge is making some noise about sending you out with a crew in the morning, but I'll see if I can hold him off a couple more days.

CLARK

Thanks, Perry.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT:CLARK KENT'S APARTMENT

Clark lies in bed in his bathrobe with eyes closed as we hear his VOICE OVER.

CLARK (VO)

I don't really require sleep, but sometimes I like to close my eyes for an hour or so and compose my thoughts in quiet before...

His tranquility is rudely interrupted as his phone RINGS LOUDLY. Clark opens his eyes, looking slightly put out, and answers it.

CLARK

Hello?

EDGE (OS)

Kent, did I wake you? Too bad.

CLARK

Fine, thank you, and yourself?

EDGE

It's Edge, Kent, and I called to tell you this could be the most important day of your career.

CLARK

Oh, sorry Mr. Edge did I wake you?

EDGE

Think now, Kent. Do you remember dialing?

CLARK

Oh, you called me, I'm sorry.

EDGE

Don't let it happen again. I want you to grab a pad and write this down, Kent. Do it before you fall back to sleep and forget about it. Got that?

CLARK

Just a second. I'll see if I can find a pencil.

EDGE

No, no, scratch that. Just get up and—

Clark drops the receiver of the telephone loudly between the night table and the mattress frame so that it dangles on its cord and continues to make noises in Edge's ear while he walks to the far end of the room, calling out—

CLARK

Just a second, Mr. Edge... be right there... no problem... I've got the pad...

Clark gently tosses a small chair into the night table. Using telescopic and X-ray vision, he "sees" Morgan Edge from several blocks away bite through his cigarette holder in frustration and slam-dunk his cigarette into the wastebasket. Satisfied, Clark finally picks up the phone.

CLARK

Sorry Mr. Edge, I guess I'm not quite awake yet. I knocked over a chair.

EDGE

Sounded like you knocked over the Seventh Fleet. Listen, Kent, forget the stupid note pad, I want you to get dressed right away. Drink some coffee. Better yet, swallow some instant out of the jar, it'll work faster. You go on the air today, no more arguments. The copter is on the way to the roof of your building. There are three major stories in town this morning and you're going to cover them yourself.

CLARK

Hold it, Mr. Edge. Excuse me. Three major stories? What are they?

EDGE

They all broke in the past hour. The pilot, what's-his-name's got your orders. Just go wherever he...

CLARK

I'd appreciate it if you told me what the stories were, sir.

EDGE

Fine, fine, where is that sheet of...
yes, hello, right here. Let's see...

Clark tries to "read" the list, but as Edge spins in his chair, something in the chair causes a blind spot.

EDGE (CONT'D)

Let's see now, a collapsed brownstone
on the Upper West Side.

CLARK

Yes. (he finds and scans the building)
What else?

EDGE

A subway derailment under Christopher
Circle on the D-line.

CLARK

I see. (He "sees" two mangled subway
cars amidst a shower of sparks.) And...

EDGE

Oh, there's a tramway car hanging by a
fraying cable over the Outerborough
Bridge.

CLARK

Oh, good Lord.

WHOOSH!! Clark's robe hangs empty for a second before
falling to the floor along with the phone receiver.

EDGE

Hello? Hello? Kent?

INT:WGBS NEWS COPTER COCKPIT-OVER SKIES OF METROPOLIS

Superman races past the WGBS NEWS CHOPPER, slowing enough so he
doesn't upset their flight path.

JOSH

Turn around! Turn around! There goes
Superman!

JAKE

But we're supposed to pick up Mr. Kent?

JOSH

Kent, schment, Superman's headed for the bridge, follow him! We'll get Kent later!

The helicopter bearing the decal WGBS FLYING NEWSROOM spins in the air, following the figure of a flying man approach a pillar of smoke hanging over the bridge in the distance. The cameraman turns on his recorder and lines up a shot.

JOSH (CONT'D)

Hope he doesn't mind waiting.

EXT:METROPOLIS-OUTERBOROUGH BRIDGE

A BURNING TRAM CAR hangs precariously by a single cable thirty meters above the Outerborough Bridge, all but two of its seven inhabitants overcome by the black, noxious smoke pouring from the units SMOKING TRANSFORMER on the roof of the car. As we PULL BACK from the tram, we see Superman closing from a distance, then ALL THE SMOKE around the car is BLOWN AWAY. Superman closes quickly and in a flash RIPS THE TRANSFORMER from the roof, stuffs it under his arm like a football, then SHOOTS UPWARD into the sky. As he releases the transformer (which continues to rise on its own momentum), the remaining frayed cable holding the elevated car aloft SNAPS IN A SHOWER OF SPARKS, releasing the tram car into free fall. From inside the car, one of the two conscious PASSENGERS manage to open the EMERGENCY EXIT WINDOW, allowing the smoke to quickly dissipate before he hears a CREAKING, METALLIC SOUND as their descent quickly slows. He looks at the ceiling and notices a HAND-SHAPED INDENTION in the metal above him.

As the assembled crowd at the corner of 59th St. and Polis Ave. watch Superman (with cable in one hand and holding the steel roof with the other) lower himself gently toward the sidewalk, somewhere half-a-kilometer overhead a TINY EXPLOSION occurs (sounding more like an extended rifle shot.) The sound of the explosion ECHOES off the walls of the nearest buildings, followed by SPLASHING as CHUNKS OF SHATTERED TRANSFORMER hit the river. With his hands full, Superman uses his SUPER-BREATH to divert the flight of THREE LARGE, SMOKING HUNKS OF DEBRIS headed for the crowded

bridge, BLOWING THEM into the river. Superman finally lands, depositing the tram gently on the sidewalk. He RIPS THE DOORS OPEN, then notices two ambulances with motorcycle escorts approaching through the morning rush. A glance skyward reveals the WGBS COPTER, hovering like a honeybee, getting all the action.

INT:WGBS NEWS COPTER COCKPIT

JOSH

Boy, did you see that? What a shot!

Superman flies off faster than they can follow.

JAKE

Well, there he goes! C'mon, let's go get Mr. Kent.

EXT:344 CLINTON ST.-ROOFTOP

As the WGBS helicopter lands on the roof of 344 Clinton Street, they find Clark standing in the shelter of the roof stairway door, lost in his massive overcoat, hopping on one foot, then the other. The rotors of the copter continue as the cameraman rushes out of the cab to Clark.

JOSH

Sorry we're late, Clark.

CLARK

What?

JOSH

Sorry we're late.

CLARK

I can't hear you, Josh.

JOSH

Did you have a long wait?

CLARK

Yes, I got out here late.

JOSH

Superman came by. We had to follow him. We got it all on tape for you.

CLARK

What?

JOSH

Superman's on tape.

CLARK

Whose cape?

JOSH

What?

CLARK

Is it heated in the copter?

JOSH

What?

CLARK

Then let's get out of the cold.

They climb into the copter, which lifts off.

INT:WGBS NEWS COPTER COCKPIT

The flying newsroom heads in the direction of the West Side. Clark uses his SUPER-VISION to view the damage at the collapsed building; there appear to be no serious injuries, only broken windows and minor damage. He shifts his gaze and re-focuses on the subway trains, full of people and crackling with deadly electricity.

CLARK

Not that way, Jake. Christopher Circle and the subway derailment first.

JAKE

That's not what Mr. Edge said, Mr. Kent.

CLARK

It'll be my responsibility. Christopher Circle is a more immediate story.

JAKE

How do you know?

CLARK

My nose for news.

JAKE

Okay, Mr. Kent, it's your call.

The helicopter changes course and heads toward downtown.

EXT:CHRISTOPHER CIRCLE-SUBWAY ENTRANCE

A crowd surrounds a police barricade keeping them back from the subway entrance. The WGBS helicopter lands, allowing Clark and his cameraman to exit.

CLARK

You can set up over there, I'll find some interviews. (to pilot) If you park it up there (points to nearby rooftop) we can get a better shot of the entrance.

JAKE

Okay, Mr. Kent, good idea.

As the assembled crowd all watch the helicopter lift off, no one notices Clark running at an agonizingly slow 35 MPH toward the nearest building.

INT:PARAMOUNT BUILDING-LOBBY

Clark enters the lobby at a brisk walk. Most people are leaving the building, while a few people sardine their way into an elevator that Clark approaches.

CLARK

Come on, down, please, go down.

The doors close, his X-RAY VIEW confirms the car is moving down. Just as the elevator car clears his floor, another X-ray burst trips the door latch, opening the doors to the elevator shaft. Clark DIVES UPWARD through the shaft, and before the door fully closes...

EXT:OVER PARAMOUNT BUILDING ROOFTOP

Superman bursts from the shaft's trap door fifty stories above, arcing gracefully before heading for the ground.

EXT:CHRISTOPHER CIRCLE-SUBWAY ENTRANCE

Josh the cameraman struggles to assemble his equipment until distracted by the teen girl next to him.

TEEN GIRL

Look! Up in the sky!

Suddenly, ZOOOMMM! Superman appears, flying directly into the subway entrance

CAMERAMAN

Aaaagggghhh! I missed him! I'm dyin' down here, Jake.

PILOT (OS)

(over radio)

Hang in there Josh, he's gotta come out sometime, right?

INT:METROPOLIS SUBWAY TUNNEL

Two SUBWAY CARS are locked together like mangled pieces of a 3-D jigsaw puzzle. Thirty-one people in the first car and forty-two in the second one suffer from varying degrees of terror; one woman lies on the floor, her sprained ankle swollen to roughly twice its normal size. Their CONDUCTOR, LUIS IZASA, standing near where the two train cars are "connected," continues to try and calm his passengers.

LUIS

Folks, please, please, try to stay calm, I'm sure that help is on the way.

He turns from the passengers and whispers into his radio, trying to hide his panic.

LUIS (CONT'D)

Naomi! Naomi! Can you hear me?

In the second car, CONDUCTOR NAOMI GREENSLEEVE is trying to hear Luis through the static.

NAOMI

Barely! These radios ain't worth a damn! I can't get nobody but you, and we in the same boat! (to passengers,

calmer) Ma'am, ma'am, you need to calm down, we'll be fine, just please be patient. (back to radio, agitated) Can't you get anybody on your radio?

LUIS (OVER RADIO)

No, nothing! Naomi, we gotta get out of here!

NAOMI

Fool, we can't go nowhere yet! Anybody touches the outside of these cars right now they'll get fried like crispy bacon! We gotta wait it out, keep 'em calm, Luis. (to passengers) People, please, thank you for remaining calm, if you'll just be patient for a little bit longer, I'm sure...

She notices that no one is listening to her, their attention is focused on the tracks behind her. Naomi slowly turns, her mouth opening in surprise as she and the other passengers hear the calmest, clearest voice ever.

KAL-EL (OS)

Ladies and gentlemen, please sit down and hold tightly to the nearest stationary object.

Standing on the tracks in front of them is a large human form, GLOWING WITH ELECTRICITY as white as fresh-blown snow. As he leaps to the roof of the derailed train, the passengers briefly see him without the blinding glow. Then passengers in both cars hear the sound of METAL PRYING FREE FROM METAL. Seventy-three people wrap white knuckles around chairs, armrests and standing bars while, gently, bit by bit, Superman works the two subway cars apart without damaging the interior insulation keeping the occupants from burning to ash.

As he manages to pry the cars free from each other, the second car rolls backward a few feet. Superman drops from the ceiling of the tunnel to the track and RIPS the misshapen front end off the rear car as though it were the top of a milk bottle.

KAL-EL

Conductor?

He continues folding up the double wall of steel like a sheet of scrap paper, which occasionally brushes against the electrified rail, showering him for those instants with white-hot energy.

NAOMI

Yes?

KAL-EL

Miss-um, Greensleeve, this car is no longer electrified, so as soon as I clear the track in front of you it will be relatively safe for you to lead your passengers along the tunnel to the Christopher Circle station. It's less than a block down the tunnel, but be careful to tell them how to avoid the third rail.

NAOMI

Uhh-huhh.

Naomi nods and turns around to face her passengers, who are nearly as awestruck as she. She swallows slowly.

NAOMI

He called me by name. Right? He said 'Miss Greensleeve.' You heard him, didn't you?

PASSENGER

Maybe you should have your first name legally changed to 'Miss,' eh?

Superman calls into the electrified car in front.

KAL-EL

Hold on tight now.

He lifts the rear end of the car up from its damaged truck, his body FLASHING and CRACKLING with light. A DEADLY WHITE HALO forms over his body as he hops between the truck and the elevated passenger container, LIFTS the body of the subway car over his head, then BALANCES it on his back

before FLYING FORWARD through the tunnel carrying the entire car.

NAOMI
He said my name!

INT:COLUMBUS CIRCLE SUBWAY PLATFORM

Superman flies into view carrying the subway car, gently depositing it on the platform before doubling back down the track.

INT:METROPOLIS SUBWAY TUNNEL

Superman appears, quickly moving the steel pieces of the broken truck against the tunnel wall, clearing a path for the remaining passengers. He's gone before Naomi can begin to help the passengers out of their wrecked car.

NAOMI
Come on y'all, it's safe now. Y'all come this way. (to herself) He said my name!

INT:COLUMBUS STREET SUBWAY PLATFORM

Clark Kent and his cameraman stand on the platform waiting as Naomi leads her passengers to safety. Clark begins his remote, speaking into the camera.

CLARK
Disaster was narrowly averted today here on the Metropolis D-Line as Superman once again seems to have saved the day.

Clark turns to help Naomi as she climbs onto the raised platform from the tracks below.

CLARK
Excuse me ma'am, can you tell us what happened Miss...uuh, Miss...

Clark squints like he can't read her name.

NAOMI

He said my name, I heard him. Tell the man he said my name!

CUT TO:

INT:LEX LUTHOR'S OFFICES

CLOSE UP on a display screen as we see electronic images of Clark's interviews with the survivors, as edited for broadcast.

LUIS

Oh man, it was so bad, I didn't know how they were gonna get us out of there. It was incredible! He picked up the whole car like it was nothing!

COLLEGE STUDENT

Dude, our car was like this, right? And here's the other one, (joins hand with fingers crinkled) and Superman just, like... (he makes scrunching noises as he pulls his fingers apart)

MAN

Holy geez, you shoulda seen it, he was lit up like the Fourth of July!

LITTLE BOY

That was awesome! Yeah, I was scared at first, but man that was awesome! Thank you, Superman!

NAOMI

He said my name, you tell him he said my name!

CLICK. Lex shuts off his TV and slowly reclines in his chair, letting out a long, labored sigh. He closes his eyes, rubbing his temples in frustration.

LEX

I need a new idea.

After a few moments, his EYES OPEN; he quickly grabs a SKETCH PAD, and after 5 to 10 seconds, starts to grin.

LEX

This is more like it.

We DOLLY AROUND to see his drawing; a HUMAN STICK FIGURE stands next to a sketch of a FUTURISTIC, WEAPONIZED ROBOT THREE TIMES THE SIZE of the human figure. Lex begins to laugh to himself.

FADE TO BLACK:

INT:CLARK KENT'S APARTMENT-DISPLAY SCREEN

The WGBS LOGO suddenly appears, with MUSIC and GRAPHICS.

ANNOUNCER

Welcome to this WGBS special report;
Miracle Monday: One Year Later. Here is
your host, Cat Grant.

CAT

Good Evening. Today marks one year
since Metropolis witnessed its first of
many miracles--

CLICK. The channel changes to WLEX's coverage.

ANNOUNCER

...with today's latest coverage is WLEX
Chief Anchor Angela Chen.

ANGELA

Hello Metropolis. Later on, we'll de-
construct the so-called myth of
"Miracle Monday", but first,
correspondent Mandy Larson brings us
our lead story tonight; Superman: The
Unknown Danger.

CLICK. The channel changes back to WGBS.

CAT

...as Metropolis' population has
continued to swell, growing by more
than one million inhabitants during the
corresponding time, the...

CLICK. Back to WLEX

EXPERT

...we have yet to fully understand the negative effect he's having, but it seems obvious, from the overcrowding to traffic congestion to the increasingly sickening commercialization and exploitation of his image...

CLICK. Another station, as a group of MOTHERS hold a petition.

SPOKESMOTHER

--and we feel that Miracle Monday should be an official holiday from now on here in Metropolis, so we want everyone to sign--

CLICK. Another station, a FAT WHITE GUY with BAD HAIR is wearing an ill-fitting blue sweatshirt with a laughably-bad "S" painted on his chest

SUPERGUY

--so remember, if you need super carpet, call Superguy. Superguy carpets. We'll save your life!

CLICK. Back to WGBS

CAT

--later tonight, don't miss Lois Lane's exclusive interview with the President aboard the maiden flight of the new space-plane Constitution--

CLICK. Back to WLEX

ANGELA

--at LexCorp's test facilities for a preview of the unveiling of the revolutionary Lex-O-Skell 5000. Tamela?

TAMELA

Yes, Angela, representatives from many world governments will gather here shortly as Lex Luthor continues to re-define the conception of what is and is not possible. After nearly six months

of research, a billion dollars worth of development and rumored to be a quantum leap forward in defensive technology, this new battle suit--

CLICK. Clark switches off the TV as Lois knocks on his door.

CLARK

Hi Lois, what a surprise. I thought you'd be on your way to the airport by now.

LOIS

I am, but I figured LexCorp's test range is on the way so I'd give you a lift. Are you ready to go?

CLARK

Sure, I mean, almost, give me just a second.

He heads for the bathroom, but after two steps, he spins around.

CLARK (CONT'D)

Say Lois, I was thinking, I've got two tickets for that new show, and I was wondering if maybe...

LOIS

Clark, please, you're one of the only guys at work I can stand, let's not ruin it, okay?

CLARK

Oh, sure. Hate to ruin a good thing...

He moves around the corner into the bathroom.

CLARK

So big day, huh? (beat) Are you more excited about interviewing the President or riding the new space-plane?

She is staring at Clark's framed copy of his SUPERMAN IN

ACTION story on the wall.

LOIS

Huh? Yeah, exciting. (beat) Have you seen Superman lately?

Clark pokes his head around the corner.

CLARK

Me? Well, I see him on TV everyday?

LOIS

Yeah, me too.

Clark disappears again.

CLARK (OS)

I heard he had dinner with Perry and his wife last night.

LOIS

Really? Maybe she's a better cook than I am.

CLARK (OS)

(laughs) I don't think so. Perry just wanted him to give his nephew a pep talk. You know, Arnold, the one that keeps flunking out of college?

LOIS

That's nice. I knew there had to be some sort of mission involved.

She's staring at Jimmy's picture of Superman.

LOIS

(softly, to herself)

Maybe if I adopted somebody really pitiful. Somebody with mange or rickets or something.

Clark comes out of the bathroom, fully dressed and ready to go.

CLARK

Excuse me?

LOIS
Never mind, Clark. Let's go.

Clark follows Lois out the door, grinning.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT:LEXCORP WEAPONS TEST SITE

REPORTERS, FOREIGN DIGNITARIES, and UNIFORMED MILITARY PERSONEL have assembled in an observation area overlooking the LexCorp Weapons Test Facility Target Range. Behind a central, empty podium sits a massive, TWENTY-FOOT HIGH METAL CRATE. Clark is interviewing a PAKISTANI REPRESENTATIVE nearby.

REPRESENTATIVE
As you can imagine, my government is most anxious to see the capabilities of this new defense system.

Clark turns his head and tries to "see" inside the box, but he can't see inside.

CLARK
Hmmm, you're not the only one. Thank you very much.

An ANNOUNCEMENT is made.

ANNOUNCER
Ladies and Gentlemen, introducing LexCorp Director of Media Relations, Macey Fulton.

MACEY FULTON steps to the podium located in front of the giant, metal crate.

MACEY
Ladies and Gentlemen of the press, honored guests, LexCorp is pleased to present the long-awaited debut of the next word in military defense--

Behind her, the EXPLOSIVE BOLTS fastening the crate DISCHARGE as the sides of the box fall away with a CLANG revealing...

MACEY (CONT'D)
the Lex-O-Skell 5000!

Through the smoke steps the LEX-O-SKELL, a walking, 18-foot tall, sleek and foreboding war machine. After a few steps forward, the unit turns and heads for the target range.

MACEY (CONT'D)
Constructed from a patented alloy, the Lexo suit is virtually indestructible: as you can see against these automated drones...

Three AUTOMATED ROBOT DRONES surround the Lexo suit and OPEN FIRE ALL AT ONCE.

MACEY (CONT'D)
...the Lexo suit stands up to heavy punishment...

The smoke clears revealing the undamaged prototype, which then FIRES its multiple weapons at the drones.

MACEY (CONT'D)
...and returns it in kind.

ALL THREE DRONES are DESTROYED with impressive alacrity and firepower. The suit walks back toward the crowd, then stops.

MACEY (CONT'D)
Controlling this suit is a single soldier, made more powerful than an entire battalion.

The suit "opens" as the operator exits the walking weapon, waving at the crowd.

MACEY (CONT'D)
And now, the man of the future responsible for this glimpse of our future, Lex Luthor!

LEX
Thank you all. I'd like to say that I view the Lexo suit not as an instrument of war, but an instrument to end war.

Suddenly three SMALL, FUTURISTIC AIRCRAFT (visible in the background for sometime) ATTACK the ceremony and OPEN FIRE on the crowd with TEAR GAS and SMOKE BOMBS. The largest of the three ships hovers over the empty Lex-o-Skell and lowers several MAGNETIC CLAMPS while the crowd scatters in a panicked frenzy. As Clark searches for somewhere discreet to change clothes, he notices Luthor leaving the scene; a quick SUPER-SCAN reveals his heart rate, breathing, and skin response appear much calmer than they should compared to everyone else around him.

CLARK

Hmmm, that's interesting.

He runs off in search of a changing room.

EXT:SKIES OVER METROPOLIS

The three ships flee the scene with the Lexo suit securely strapped to the hull of the largest ship.

HENCHMAN 1

Hey boss, you sure about this?

HENCHMAN 2 (OVER RADIO)

Yeah, this seems awful easy. Shouldn't he be here by now?

CORBIN (OVER RADIO)

Patience, gentlemen.

HENCHMAN 1

Here he comes!!

Superman approaches from a distance. In his cockpit, JOHN CORBIN smiles.

CORBIN

Right on cue.

He launches FOUR ADVANCED AIR-TO-AIR SEEKER MISSILES toward Superman, who dodges them with relative ease. The missiles travel skyward as Superman catches up to the lead ship, sinking his fingers into the fuselage near Corbin's cockpit window as if to rip the ship apart.

KAL-EL

You missed.

Corbin just smiles and nods his head "no", which confuses Superman for a moment; he turns his head and using his TELESCOPIC VISION "sees"—the FOUR SEEKER MISSILES as they close in on the SPACE-PLANE CONSTITUTION, now climbing high into the stratosphere.

KAL-EL

Oh no! Lois!

Instantly, he's gone like a shot.

INT:SPACE-PLANE CONSTITUTION CABIN

Lois moves opposite the President of the United States.

SECRET SERVICE AGENT

Ma'am we're still taking off, you need to put your belt on.

She nonchalantly fidgets with her seat belt.

LOIS

So Mr. President... How excited are you to fly into space like this?

PRESIDENT

Well you tell me, Ms. Lane, you're the one that gets to fly with Superman, how does it compare?

LOIS

Well, the thing is, you never know—

KAAA-BOOOOOOMMMM!!!! A SUDDEN EXPLOSION rocks the cabin violently, BLOWING A GIANT HOLE in the side of the ship just behind Lois, who is INSTANTLY SUCKED OUT OF THE PLANE with a SHREIK.

EXT:SKIES OVER METROPOLIS

Lois plummets through the air high above Metropolis, screaming her head off.

LOIS
HEEEELLLLPPPPP!! HELLPPP!! SUPERMA-

Instantly, she's cradled in his arms of steel.

KAL-EL
You called?

He quickly flies back toward the plane.

KAL-EL
If I get you back onboard, can you
manage to fasten you seat belt this
time?

LOIS
(beaming) Absolutely!

KAL-EL
(smiling back) Good girl.

INT:SPACE-PLANE CONSTITUTION CABIN

Amidst the shrieking turmoil and terror onboard the
Constitution, SUPERMAN APPEARS, carrying Lois in his arms.
(While briefly onboard, Superman appears as if he's shot by
STEADY-CAM, while the cabin and passengers appear in SHAKY-
CAM.) In a moment he places Lois in her seat, secures her
seat belt, then addresses the President.

KAL-EL
Mr. President, sir, I'll try to land
this plane, but I not sure I can
guarantee your personal safety. I don't
have time to evacuate everyone, but I
can get you to...

PRESIDENT
Go ahead, son, I trust you. You'll get
us all there in one piece!

KAL-EL
Thank you sir. If you tell your pilot
to cut the engines, it'll make my job
much easier.

WHOOSH!! He's off to work.

SECRET SERVICE AGENT

Sir, are you certain we shouldn't...

PRESIDENT

Morton, shut up, sit back and enjoy the ride. We're all about to survive the greatest photo-op in American Presidential history!

EXT:SKIES OVER METROPOLIS

Superman uses his SUPER-BREATH to FREEZE the burning, damaged left wing; as soon as the other engine stops, the spinning, plummeting craft begins to slowly, gracefully right itself, as Superman balances the entire plane on his back, gently turning the ship back towards the airport.

At Metropolis International Airport, DOZENS of FIRE TRUCKS, AMBULANCES, AND EMERGENCY VEHICLES line both sides of the runway as Superman approaches, carrying the Constitution piggy-back style. HUNDREDS OF MOUTHS DROP OPEN as the damaged plane floats toward them without a sound. As soon as the ship's landing gear safely touch down and the plane rolls to a gentle stop, HUNDREDS of the LOUDEST CHEERS EVER HEARD erupt. After several moments of euphoria, we CUT TO:

INT:DAILY PLANET OFFICES-PERRY WHITE'S OFFICE

WGBS VIDEO FOOTAGE matches what we were just watching.

LOIS (OS)

--in what must be considered the most spectacular rescue of his amazing career, Superman once again proved to be the Man of Steel as he--

An image of Superman shaking hands with the President is interrupted with a CLICK: we change to WLEX, where Lex is having a press conference.

LEX

No, of course I'm glad Superman was able to rescue the President and all aboard, but the fact remains that terrorists now have possession of the most deadly weapon on this planet, and Superman's the one that let them get away with it!!

CLICK. Perry turns off the monitor as Morgan Edge arrives at his door.

EDGE

Perry, you ready? Come on, I want you to see this.

He leaves and Perry follows.

INT:DAILY PLANET OFFICES-SCREENING ROOM

People are entering the screening room.

EDGE

I tell you Perry, we really nailed it this time, you're gonna love it. SUPERMAN TODAY. Every Sunday at 8. One hour of nothing but the big red "S".

PERRY

Who'd you steal from me to host it?

EDGE

Not sure yet, Lois says her book deal's all she can handle right now...

PERRY

Dammit Edge, if you don't quit tryin' to steal all my best people--

EDGE (CONT'D)

We asked Kent too, but he just flat-out refused. Wouldn't even consider it. Can you believe that?

PERRY

(laughs)

That sounds like ol' Clark all right. He's an odd bird, but I'm glad he's around.

GUY

We're ready!

EDGE

Here goes. Check this out. We used
Lois' copy.

Their screen is now our screen. A RED AND BLUE streak blurs
across with a WHIING!!

ANNOUNCER

Faster than a speeding bullet!

The wheels of a TRAIN are clearly visible.

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)

More powerful than a locomotive!

A spectacular image of the DAILY PLANET building appears.

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)

Able to leap tall buildings in a single
bound... This amazing visitor from the
planet Krypton... The Man of Steel...
SUPERMAN!

The silhouette from before is now replaced by a full,
gloriously-lit beauty shot of KAL-EL, LAST SON OF KRYPTON,
SUPERMAN.

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)

Possessing powers and abilities far
beyond those of mortal men, Superman
fights a never-ending battle for truth
and justice...

Suddenly our image fast-forwards, like video scanning
ahead. We pull back from CLARK'S HOME TV SCREEN, he and
Lois are sitting in his apartment in the afternoon.

LOIS

Hey, you're skipping it! I wrote that!

CLARK

But I really wanted to show you this.

Suddenly, the most inane, insipid, Japanese-flavored
nonsensical commercial ever seen blares from Clark's TV.

LOIS
You taped over--

It's impossible to tell what's being advertised; Lois is stunned.

LOIS (CONT'D)
What on Earth?

CLARK
It's funny.

Lois looks back and forth from colleague to screen dumbly.

CLARK
Well, you said I needed a hobby.

LOIS
A hobby? (beat) You're serious?!! (beat
as she gets madder) You save...
commercials... STUPID commercials and
call it a...

She's interrupted by an even worse commercial. Exasperated, she gathers her things and heads for the door.

LOIS (CONT'D)
Really Clark, that's just... of all
the...

CLARK
Come on, Lois, it's funny!

LOIS
I don't even know what to... Sometimes
you just... OOOWWWW!!! I can't BELIEVE
you taped over...

BLAM!! Lois slams the door behind her as Clark stands alone in his apartment, still at first, then slowly, gradually breaking into a chuckle that evolves quickly into full-blown, genuine gut-laughter.

CLARK
That's funny!

But suddenly, a BEEP sounds.

KAL-EL'S VOICE

System On!

In a FLASH the video wall is activated, he focuses in on a live report of an oil tanker in a typhoon in danger of being run aground off the Malaysian coast.

CLARK

This looks like a job for Superman.

He peels his robe open, revealing the "Big Red S", which moves toward us, then freezes as the PRODUCTION CREDITS roll, accompanied by Sammy Timberg's 1941 score from Fleischer's SUPERMAN (25 seconds). FINAL CREDITS roll over a medley of past SUPERMAN SCORES (50's TV, John Williams movie score, WB's new animated score, etc...), ending with the TRAILER FOR...

SUPERMAN: LAST SON OF KRYPTON

BLISTERING FAST MONTAGE INCLUDES SHOTS OF: Superman flying through Metropolis carrying Lois as BLASTS SURROUND THEM, Luthor beaming rays into space, a GIANT SPACECRAFT approaching Earth, BRANIAC arriving, lots of BEAMS AND BLASTS between him and Superman, LOTS OF ADVANCED, GIANT KRYPTONIAN MACHINERY attacking, SUPERMAN unconscious, carried away by Braniac, the BOTTLE CITY OF KANDOR, Braniac and Luthor together, Braniac's SKULL SHIP hovering over Metropolis observing GIANT, HIDEOUS PHANTOM ZONE MONSTERS ATTACK as people FLEE IN PANIC, and (finally) SUPERMAN in his NEW, DIFFERENT SUIT, SMASHING THROUGH some incredible barrier that FLIES INTO SCREEN, SPINNING to form the title SUPERMAN: LAST SON OF KRYPTON.

AUTHOR'S ACKNOWLEDGEMENT/NOTES ON SOURCE MATERIAL

Longtime Superman fans should hopefully recognize much of the pre-existing source material on which this adaptation is based, which in some cases is reproduced as closely as possible, in homage and deference to those most gifted writers who have contributed to the incredible canon of Superman's extensive mythology. Most notably, the early animated shorts produced by the Fleischer Brothers (*Terror on the Midway* among others), the comics and novels of Elliot S! Maggin (*Miracle Monday*, *Last Son of Krypton*, *Luthor's Gift*), Alan Moore's *Whatever Happened to The Man of Tomorrow?*, John Byrne's 1986 *The Man of Steel*, Jeph Loeb's 1999 *Superman For All Seasons*, and Alan Burnett, Paul Dini and Bruce Timm's work on the latest *Superman* animated series.



JeffCallaway.net

jjaysee@gmail.com