

**PARAGONS AND MORTALS**

By

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**BLACK**

And a teenage boy's voice. Loud and full of frustration.

TEENAGE BOY'S VOICE (V.O.)  
Is this thing on? Testing. Testing.  
1-2-3. Oh, come on...

A loud, CRUNCHING SOUND takes us to:

EXT. FIELD-DAY

CAMERA'S POV:

As we find the TEENAGE BOY in an open field. Dark eyes. Dark, messy hair. 17 years old.

The boy points over to a jalopy, a Beetle by the looks of it.

*We're not sure who's filming this.*

TEENAGE BOY  
(To camera)  
Much better...Beginning tape #1.  
The powers have gotten stronger. It  
all started with moving small  
objects around, mentally. Like the  
camera. But this is waaay  
different.  
(Beat)  
You won't believe this.

He grabs the Beetle-- *lifting it over his head!*

TEENAGE BOY (CONT'D)  
...*Ta-da!* I said you wouldn't  
believe it! Cool, isn't it? A major  
improvement, but I'm just getting  
warmed up...

The Boy hurls the car, effortlessly, several feet to the other side of the field where

THE BEETLE

Crashes into the grass, leaving a fairly large CRATER with the bent frame of the car protruding out of the ground.

The Boy turns to the camera with a look of excitement on his face.

The video cuts off. And we-

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

EXT. SAINT'S HAVEN-DAY

Drifting over a vast city...

Known as *Saint's Haven*. A series of skyscrapers can be seen in the city. These immovable giants of concrete and steel boasts the city's prosperity to the world.

ON THE STREETS BELOW

We see a small flock of PEOPLE going to and fro along the sidewalks. It's a cross-section of the entire city headed to various destinations.

The sound of everyday life in Saint's Haven is immediately interrupted by another sound, the sound of GUN FIRE--

EXT. NEW HORIZON FINANCIAL-CONTINUOUS

-- Originating at New Horizon Financial. It's large. Modern. The premier bank of Saint's Haven.

Today, it's ground zero for a war between the POLICE and a group of BANK ROBBERS.

The bank robbers block the entrance to the bank. Ski-masks. Tactical gear. Heavily-armed. They take cover behind cars in the parking lot, while FIRING at those meant to protect and serve.

The Police take cover behind squad cars which are quickly becoming RIDDLED with bullets.

One of the officers, 40's, is seen behind a squad car impatiently waiting for help to arrive. This is CAPTAIN STEVENS. He's drenched in sweat.

As he continues to hide from the shooting, he yells to a fellow OFFICER-- who crawls over.

CAPTAIN STEVENS  
(Shouts; To  
officer)  
What's the ETA on SWAT?

OFFICER

They're en route so it could be anywhere from ten to fifteen minutes.

CAPTAIN STEVENS

Any idea on the hostages?

OFFICER

We don't have a clue as to how many hostages are in the bank, but eyewitness reports indicate that the men are with Richard Gray.

CAPTAIN STEVENS

The guy behind the bombing nearly a year ago? We better call bomb squad as well.

INT. NEW HORIZON FINANCIAL-CONTINUOUS

It's quiet inside the bank. We see a room full of HOSTAGES. They're terrified, yet silent so as not to arouse the anger of the BANK ROBBERS.

More criminals are seen binding hostages while another is seen aiming his machine gun at a nervous teller who fumbles, while trying to load a bag with money.

Two SECURITY GUARDS lie dead next to a FAMILY, who are huddled together as more thugs guard the bank's exit points.

The criminals begin carrying bags of money towards the back of the bank. Their leader, RICHARD GRAY, emerges to give further instructions.

He's got some stubble. 30's. Cold, menacing eyes. The kind of look that practically screams evil. Gray's clad in tactical gear.

In his hand is a remote detonator. We see explosives at the corners of the bank's interior.

Gray walks over to his HENCHMAN, who's standing guard.

GRAY

(To Henchman)

How long until the van arrives?

HENCHMAN

About five minutes away. The guys outside are still holding off the police. Things'll get crazy if SWAT shows up.

GRAY

I know. SWAT won't be a problem thanks to our little bargaining chip, here-

Gray raises a remote detonator, showing it off to his henchman, while other "associates" of his are placing more bombs in the bank.

GRAY (CONT'D)

(Re: Detonator)

-The charges are set to this detonator.

(Primes detonator)

If SWAT shows up, they can play around with this. Let me know when the van makes it.

The henchman nods, as Gray makes his way to another part of the bank.

EXT. DECREPIT BUILDING-DAY

A run-down commercial building stands before us.

It's surrounded by a fence with a sign reading "*WARNING! PRIVATE PROPERTY. NO TRESPASSING*". This solitary building looks deserted--

INT. DECREPIT BUILDING- CONTINUOUS

-- Yet inside it's a completely different story. It's well lit and has walls that look as if they have been newly built.

A police scanner sits on a table, next to a map of Saint's Haven.

INSERT- THE MAP

It is extremely detailed with a list of gangs in certain parts of the city as well as the types of crimes prevalent in that part of the city.

BACK TO BUILDING

In the same area is a set of schematics for a costume with what looks to be a prototype costume in a nearby corner.

A TV/VCR combo sits at a table not far from the map. There's a lot of tapes, but what stands out are three in particular.

INSERT-TAPES

One labeled "*Home Movies: Bullet Test*" the other "*Home Movies: First Flight*". A final cover is labeled "*Home Movies: Beetle Test*".

BACK TO BUILDING

There's a large, cabinet. It's open with what looks to be a COSTUME of sorts.

There's a TV playing-- *Breaking News*.

REPORTER (O.S.)

This is Channel 9 news reporting live at New Horizon Financial which has become the stage for a massive shoot-out between the police and bank robbers who are heavily armed. It's not clear how many there are but reports indicate that they are holding several people inside the bank hostage. Additional reports indicate one Richard Gray is involved, who became infamous after a bombing that killed 100 people in Saint's Haven nearly one year ago...

A HAND

slips on a long, black sleeve. The material looks to be like rubber and is so shiny that nearby light is reflected off its surface.

The rest of the suit is put on with the top being made of the same material. It is black along the edges but is also dark gray around the torso of the suit.

In the center of the chest area is a symbol of an ORB. It's white in color, almost as if it were glowing with a white light. *Remember this.*

A pair of hands slip on a black boot as we...

PULL BACK TO REVEAL A SUPERHERO in costume. The fairly tall figure is slender yet built, almost chiseled to physical perfection.

We don't see his face as he stands facing a large window with the sun and skyscrapers in the distance.

Our hero starts levitating slowly, hovering over the floor.

He lunges forward-- *flying out of the window heading--*

OUTSIDE

-- Where the hero, in flight, increases his speed to the point that he's nothing but a dark blur...

... darting towards the sea of skyscrapers in the distance.

EXT. PARKING LOT, NEW HORIZON FINANCIAL-DAY

The police continue to take cover behind their cars, which are now RIDDLED by a hail of bullets.

Suddenly the gunfire CEASES. Officers peek out, spotting the criminals staring in AWE as the BLUR darts past skyscrapers at amazing speeds.

The blur comes to a complete stop. Hovering over the bank, then DESCENDS rapidly.

Both the criminals and the cops take cover behind their respective cars as...

THE SUPERHERO

Slams into the parking lot, leaving behind a fairly large CRATER from his impact.

One look at him and we realize the truth: It's the kid from the video we saw earlier. Now 30's. *Whoa*.

He may look comic-book perfect in costume, however, you can tell he's got some mileage on him. His expression hardened.

HENCHMAN #1  
(To Henchman #2 and #3)  
Didja see that?

HENCHMAN #2  
(Re: "Superhero")  
That's the hero everyone's  
been talking about.

HENCHMAN #3  
(Aiming gun)  
Take him out-- NOW!!!

The criminals begin firing, wildly.

The hail of bullets PING off our hero. The criminals panic.

The Superhero moves toward the bank's entrance. The thugs continue their desperate, yet futile shooting.

HENCHMAN #1

grabs an RPG launcher from a nearby weapons cache. Loads it. Then fires. We see a faint trail of smoke as

THE PROJECTILE

RACES toward our hero at blinding speed, yet he continues to walk directly TOWARD it. He makes no effort to fly out of its path or to even side-step it, but rather walks calmly to the entrance of the bank.

*The air surrounding our hero begins to RIPPLE and PULSATE as...*

The shell explodes, enveloping him in smoke and fire.

For a moment, the criminals begin to celebrate the apparent demise of our hero, until... a silhouette is seen moving in the smoke.

The Superhero emerges without a scratch. He leaves behind a small trail of smoke, and yet his costume isn't even singed.

The bank robbers continue firing.

We see our hero. The face that launched a thousand bullets. An expression of burning rage.

SUPERHERO

(Ticked)

HEY, MORONS! IF EXPLOSIVES DIDN'T  
KILL ME, WHAT MAKES YOU THINK MORE  
BULLETS WILL?

The Superhero stretches his hands halfway out. Focusing intensely.

*The air in the center of his palms pulsates and distorts.*

He raises both hands, making a SHOVING motion-- generating a powerful, concussive blast-- knocking the criminals to the ground. Hard.

The blast causes nearby cars to careen into each other. Denting frames. Shattering windows.

After a beat, the police pop up from their cars-- finding the criminals subdued and the crime fighter heading to the bank. Captain Stevens calls out.

CAPTAIN STEVENS

(Re: "Hero")

Whoever you are, there are more of  
'em in the bank. They've got  
hostages as well. We need you to  
FINISH this!

Our hero nods and rockets into the sky. He swings laterally making his way--

EXT. BEHIND NEW HORIZON FINANCIAL--CONTINUOUS

-- Where he spots the get-away-van pull up.

THE SUPERHERO

Lunges toward the van below as some of Gray's men carry bags into the van.

One of the bank robbers looks up, PETRIFIED, as do the other criminals but it's too late as--

INT. LOBBY, NEW HORIZON FINANCIAL--CONTINUOUS

-- A loud CRASH is heard from outside. Hostages are ducking for cover, while Gray's men are on high alert with their guns drawn.

Gray directs one of his men to check out what caused the noise.

HENCHMAN #4 makes his way to the window slowly, gun raised.

He makes his way to the window, eyes widening as he sees:

*The getaway van has been turned over with a massive DENT in its frame.*

HENCHMAN #4

You're not going to believe this,  
Gray: The van's destroyed.

GRAY

What about the rest of the guys?

HENCHMAN #4

No sign of them at all.

GRAY  
 (To all henchman)  
 Brace yourself, boys. If this is  
 who I think it is, we'll need  
 leverage.

Gray pulls out a small device with a red button resembling a remote. A detonator. Arming it.

Henchman#4 continues to look out the window, when without warning...

A HAND

BURSTS through the window , grabbing the criminal, pulling him through the window as he lets out a loud SCREAM.

Gray takes several steps back while the other two henchmen aim their guns toward the window. A beat. Nothing happens.

The men continue aiming at the window. Hostages freak out amidst the chaos.

HENCHMAN #5  
 (Panicked)  
 We gotta get outta here! That  
 superhero's showed up.  
 (Urgent)  
 Gray-- forget the money. Let's  
 bail!

GRAY  
 We ain't going anywhere. We're in  
 control, remember. We've got the  
 hostages and...

Before he can finish his sentence, we hear the sound of a SONIC BOOM as...

... Our hero BURSTS through the window. In flight. RACING towards one of his goon-squad.

HENCHMAN#5 tries to fire, but the Superhero SNATCHES him up, carrying him through the other window.

As Gray looks around to assess the situation, a SCREAM is heard. He turns, finding the Superhero engaging HENCHMAN#6.

HENCHMAN#6

Lunges at our hero with a knife. Stabbing. The Superhero raises a hand. The knife shatters against flesh of steel.

With a simple shove, the hero hurls him into a nearby wall-- knocking him out instantly.

He turns, facing Gray, who shows no sign of fear. Gray's somewhere between impressed and defiant.

The two trade glares for a long beat.

SUPERHERO

I suppose you're Richard Gray, correct?

GRAY

You Suppose right. So you've heard of my work?

SUPERHERO

Of course, mastermind of the bombing that killed alotta people a year ago. Got a rap-sheet a mile long. In and out Juvie at 16. Ran a cult in your 20's.

(Beat)

And now: wannabe bank robber. Pretty pathetic.

GRAY

A man's gotta get paid somehow -- I'm mean we can't all run around in spandex *playing superhero*.

Our superhero laughs (almost conceding the point), then advances on Gray who raises the detonator, stopping the hero in his tracks.

GRAY (CONT'D)

Don't even try it.

(Re: Detonator)

I press the magic button and

(Mimes explosion)

This whole place goes up in smoke.  
Since you know about the bombing, you know I'm serious.

SUPERHERO

(Make my day)

Go on-- press the button-- I'll survive it. Your boys already tried that. Yet here I am.

(Smirks)

So make a move, Mad Bomber. Blow us all up.

*Checkmate.* Gray's confidence begins to fade a bit. Puts up a facade.

GRAY

I'll pass-- I'll walk outta here with the money instead.

SUPERHERO

You'll walk out, alright. *Without* the money, though. How you leave is up to you: Surrender and you leave here unharmed. Refuse, and...well, you know the rest.

As our hero is talking to Gray, we see him pull a knife (that he acquired from one of the henchman) slowly from behind.

GRAY

Like I'm scared of a freak-- do your worst!

SUPERHERO

Your call...

The Superhero stomps on the floor-- *With a force powerful enough to fracture the tiles on the floor.*

Gray becomes unbalanced, staggering.

Immediately, our hero throws the knife at full speed which flies and plows through Gray's right arm.

Gray lets out a BLOOD-CURDLING SCREAM, dropping to his knees, as the super-hero closes in rapidly.

EXT. PARKING LOT, NEW HORIZON FINANCIAL-LATER

The chaos has ended. Hostages and cuffed criminals file out of the bank. Our hero, is seen leading a wounded Gray to police officers eagerly waiting to arrest the criminal.

SUPERHERO

Officers, I give you Richard Gray. One-time terrorist turned bank robber.

GRAY

Why all the interest in me? Did I kill a loved one of yours like it always happens in comic books?

A beat. Our hero reflects on these words...

INSERT CUT: We see a young, beautiful woman in a building. Panicking with others. The Building explodes, enveloping everyone in a smoke and fire.

As Gray laughs, our hero's face muscles clench and his eyes focus on the criminal with a *murderous* gaze. The man who could deflect bullets and survive a grenade, has been wounded by these words more than any weapon could ever deliver.

The hero attempts to compose himself as Gray smirks.

SUPERHERO

(Changes subject)

I've spent quite a while tracking you down. It's good to see all that hard work finally paid off.

GRAY

You wouldn't be so tough without powers-

SUPERHERO

-And you wouldn't be so tough without flunkies stupid enough to follow you-- so why don't we call it even. Your reign of terror failed.

(Off Gray's look)

Why it failed is a question that you are more than welcome to *ponder* on your way to prison.

GRAY

I don't need to "ponder" anything, FREAK. Just know this-- This ain't over by a damn sight.

(Ominous)

We'll meet again.

Our hero smirks at this-- *You guys always say that.*

SUPERHERO

I doubt it.

(Makes "flying" motion)

That is unless you get powers like me and fly out of prison...

GRAY

(Off his look)

You'll wish we never crossed paths.

SUPERHERO

That's not gonna happen. Not unless  
you plan on getting *The Sinister*  
*Six* as backup.

(Off his look)

Or are you a *Brotherhood of Evil*  
*Mutants* kinda guy?

The hero gives Gray a slight shove in the direction of the  
officers who immediately cuff him.

SUPERHERO (CONT'D)

You have a nice day.

POLICE OFFICER # 1

You have the right to remain  
silent. Anything you say can be  
used against you in a court of  
law...

The officers lead Gray away, while the Superhero heads over  
to a small crowd of officers and hostages-- both awed at the  
sight of this real-life Superman.

Captain Stevens approaches.

CAPTAIN STEVENS

Thanks for your help back there.  
We would've been dead if it hadn't  
been for you.

SUPERHERO

Don't mention it, just part of the  
job. Sorry about the damage to the  
bank.

ACROSS THE STREET

A small CROWD OF PEOPLE begin pulling out camera-phones,  
filming our hero.

EXT. PARKING LOT, NEW HORIZON FINANCIAL--CONTINUOUS

Our hero sees this-- shifting uncomfortably at their  
collective gaze. Faces the Police.

SUPERHERO

...Was there something else?

CAPTAIN STEVENS

Nothing-- it's just that we've all  
heard stories about you, but we  
didn't think you were real.

(MORE)

CAPTAIN STEVENS (CONT'D)

(Beat)

You have a name?

SUPERHERO

Call me *The Paragon*.

The Superhero-- now known as The Paragon-- begins walking away until one of the OFFICERS stops him. He faces the officer.

POLICE OFFICER # 1

What if we need your help again,  
will you be around?

THE PARAGON

I'm always around, but just in case-

The Paragon hands the officer a card with a phone number written on it.

THE PARAGON (CONT'D)

(Re: Card)

-This is a number that you can  
reach me in case of an emergency.  
Don't even think about tracking me,  
though. The phone's *untraceable*.

(Off their look)

Later, folks.

The Paragon rockets into the sky leaving the crowd behind.

And we-

CUT TO:

EXT. NELSON-WHITLEY ADVERTISING GROUP-DAY

A large building stands before us. Modern. In the center of a sea of neatly cut grass.

Near the entrance of the building is a stone sign reading "NELSON-WHITLEY ADVERTISING GROUP".

A CROWD OF PEOPLE pass by it on the way in.

MANAGER (PRE-LAP)

Well folks I've got good news, and  
even better news...

INT. BOARD ROOM-CONTINUOUS

We see the firm MANAGER. 40's. Dressed to impress. Standing in front of a set of charts and graphs. Excited.

In the room with the Manager is a small crowd of EMPLOYEES. Seated.

MANAGER

...Company profits are up 30% from last years number. In this economy, those numbers are fantastic...

Among the employees is a MAN. Late-20's. Professionally dressed. This is MARTIN WALKER. He's seated next to another employee, ANDREW.

MANAGER (CONT'D)

...A lot of our success is due to the work we did for *Lincoln Pharmaceuticals*. Our sales department rocked on that one.

(Re: Martin)

Thanks to Martin and his team.

Applause. Martin, however, is distracted a news headline. It reads "*WORLD'S FIRST SUPERHERO EMERGES*". After a beat, he looks up, acknowledging.

MANAGER (CONT'D)

...In two weeks, though we've got a big project for *Aegis Medical Tech*. Their CEO, Amanda Summers will be here in two weeks to discuss a new line of medical devices. We need to make this happen. Martin, you're our point man on this one. Bring your A-game. You have two weeks. If you can pull this off, you'll be our own personal superhero.

Martin nods, confident.

INT. LOBBY, NELSON-WHITLEY FINANCIAL-LATER

We see a small group of PEOPLE. EMPLOYEES. CLIENTS. Heading for the exits, after a long day.

The only one remaining in the very lavish lobby is a RECEPTIONIST who's working the phones.

Martin leaves the office. Followed by Andrew.

ANDREW

Man, Aegis Medical is big league stuff. But we'll be Ready, right?

MARTIN

I've already started my research. Shouldn't take too long to put something together.

ANDREW

Two weeks isn't long. If we pull this off, it could pay off big for us in the firm.

(Off his look)

Me and the guys are off to "Renegade" Dave's for a few drinks. And to trade notes. You interested?

MARTIN

(Indicates watch)

No-can-do. Maddie's cooking dinner. I've got about 30 minutes to get home. Later, Android.

The two men part ways as the head to the employee parking lot. And We-

CUT TO:

EXT. SAINT'S HAVEN-DAY

A blue 4-DOOR SEDAN races down a lonely street--

INT. 4-DOOR SEDAN-MOVING

-- While inside Martin's at the wheel, fiddling with the radio when...

Up ahead, he sees a group of GANGBANGERS in their early 20's. They're a ragged bunch. Tatoos.

They push a MAN to the ground, and proceed to beat him, as two of them film the beating, amused.

Martin's first instinct...

MARTIN

Hey, leave him alone!

GANG MEMBER#1, forty in hand, hears. Sees Martin. Reaches for something.

GANG MEMBER#1  
 Mind your business.  
 (Pulls out gun)  
 Or get shot!

Martin hits the accelerator as GANG MEMBER#1 waves the gun at him. GANG MEMBER#2 throws a BOTTLE at his car, laughing.

Martin sees the men laughing in the rear view mirror. Looks away, ashamed.

EXT. STREETS-CONTINUOUS

The Gangbangers continue the assault until...

THE PARAGON

Descends to the street, making a slight crack in the Sidewalk. Turns to the criminals.

THE PARAGON  
 Hey!  
 (Off their look)  
 Try *me*.

Off the thugs' terrified reactions:

EXT. SUBURBIA-20 MINUTES LATER

Welcome to suburbia. The pinnacle of Middle-class America. A row of houses with perfect lawns line both sides of the housing sub-division. PEOPLE are walking. CHILDREN play in their backyards. FAMILIES relax on their porches.

Imagine a scene from a Rockwell painting set in the 21st Century and you're there.

Martin's sedan pulls into the sub-division--

EXT. WALKER RESIDENCE-CONTINUOUS

-- Making his way into the driveway of a fairly large brick home (The only feature that distinguishes it from the other houses in suburbia). Martin emerges.

Martin heads for the door. Entering.

INT. LIVING ROOM, WALKER RESIDENCE-CONTINUOUS

It's spacious in the living room. Modern. Like walking into an *IKEA* or *Sharper Image* catalogue.

A cluster of awards lines a nearby shelf-- all belonging to Martin. Pictures of family and friends line a living room table.

Martin enters. Puts his briefcase down on a table.

INT. DINING ROOM, WALKER RESIDENCE-LATER

Martin and his wife MADELINE, mid-20's, in a lavish dining room. Seated. Madeline's **stunning**. She has a look that's domesticated, yet elegant.

A savory pot roast and vegetable dish is in the center of the table. They eat.

MADELINE

So how was your day?

MARTIN

It was the same as usual, Maddie. The firm's got a new client. A medical device company. I've got a presentation for them due in two weeks. What about you?

MADELINE

Nothing much. Went shopping with Sis-- for her bachelorette party. On the way home-- we heard there was a robbery at New Horizon Financial. The guy behind the bombing a year ago was involved.

MARTIN

I heard about that-- what happened?

MADELINE

He was caught by someone called "The Paragon"-- That superhero everyone's been talking about.

A beat. Martin stops eating, excited.

MARTIN

You mean he's real?! I've read up on him in newspapers. Tabloids. Eye-witness accounts of a "flying man".

MADELINE

No he's real. Someone showed us a recording of him at the bank.

(Off Martin's look)

You should've heard Sis and the others go on-and-on about how hot he is. Like a bunch of schoolgirls.

MARTIN

Must've been cool to see that. A real-life superhero. That's gotta be a pretty cool gig.

(Off Madeline's look)

What, you don't think so?

MADELINE

Not with all the crime in this place-- not to mention the danger for his loved ones.

Madeline goes back to eating. Martin's perplexed at this.

MARTIN

Guy's trying to make a difference. To make things better. I mean, I'm not the strongest guy, myself.

(Reflects)

Or the bravest. But hearing about a guy like The Paragon is inspiring. If I had powers like that, I'd probably be doing the same thing.

MADELINE

Yeah, but not everyone can be like him. We all have our lot in life. Things we're good at. It makes sense for him to be doing that. Because of the powers. I couldn't picture you fighting crime-- at all.

(Beat)

you're not equipped for that kind of thing, and that's okay. It's okay for the same reason we probably won't see him working in advertising firms. Nothing wrong with that.

An awkward beat. Martin fiddles with his food. Dejected. Something about this rubs him the wrong way.

INT. BASEMENT, WALKER RESIDENCE--LATER

A casually dressed Martin head downstairs into the basement. Newspaper in hand. Turns the light on.

Martin goes over to a crevice between a wall and a table. Pulls out something covered. Pulls off the cover revealing:

A LARGE COLLECTION OF NEWSPAPER CLIPPINGS

All devoted to our hero. *Less like a collage and more like a Shrine.* Martin begins cutting another heading out. It reads: " 'WORLD'S FIRST SUPERHERO' FOILS BANK ROBBERY! "

Martin stares at the clippings for a long beat. Reflecting.

INSERT CUT: We see an earlier scene where Martin drives away from the thugs, ashamed.

He then takes a pair of scissors, cutting a picture of himself. Takes part of the picture-- taping it to another.

Martin places the clipping on a marker-board next to still images of our hero. Martin leaves the basement.

It takes us a moment to realize what he put up-- A picture of a hero with his face taped over the body.

INT. LIVING ROOM, WALKER RESIDENCE--LATER

Martin is on the couch. Working on some paper-work. He turns on the TV. We see NIGHTLY NEWS.

NEWS REPORTER (ON TV)

This is Channel 9 news reporting from New Horizon Financial, which was the scene of a bank robbery. A robbery involving the suspect: Richard Gray. A primary suspect in the bombing of Baxter Financial bank over a year ago. The robbery was foiled by a hero known as *The Paragon*. This makes the first *confirmed* sighting-- As there have been multiple unconfirmed reports of heroics within the last two years.

Martin looks up from his work, fixated.

## NEWS REPORTER (ON TV) (CONT'D)

The entire city is buzzing and we found no shortage of people who have all kinds of opinions on the hero...

The NEWS REPORTER is seen with two INTERVIEWEES. A male and a female.

## MALE INTERVIEWEE (ON TV)

Paragon, huh? I think he's some kind of government experiment. A super-soldier kinda thing. Probably not the only one. Makes sense with wars and terrorism.

## FEMALE INTERVIEWEE (ON TV)

I dunno. Maybe he's the next step for us as a species. You know, *adaptation*. Replacing us the way we replaced the caveman. He's probably just the beginning. On an unrelated note, I think he's kinda hot.

(Mimes phone)

Call me.

## NEWS REPORTER (O.S)

Not everyone had a favorable opinion of the real-life superman, though...

The NEWS REPORTER stands in front of a GRUNGY LOOKING MAN. The guy carries a sign, and clearly looks a little nuts.

## GRUNGY LOOKING MAN (ON TV)

The guy's an *alien*. About a year ago, hikers said something fell from the sky into the woods. Said they saw glowing shards of metal-- in a crater.

(Looks into camera)

Now, we got a "superhero" flyin' around. Catching bad guys. The guy's an alien. The first of many. A menace. You've been warned.

On Martin, considering this...

## EXT. GRAVEYARD, SAINT'S HAVEN-NIGHT

Tombstones protrude from a sea of grass. A MAN moves among the graves. The Paragon-- In civilian clothes, carrying roses.

As he makes his way to a particular tombstone, his phone RINGS.

His phone reads: "DAVID'S PHONE". He puts it on SILENT.

The Paragon, whom we now know as DAVID, makes his way over to a head stone that reads "JULIANNE REESE. 1980-2014. YOU WILL ALWAYS BE LOVED".

DAVID

I got'em, Jules-- the man that killed you. It won't bring you back. But maybe I can get some peace of mind.

(Laying roses on grave)  
I'll always love you.

David looks in both directions making sure that no one spots him as he starts levitating.

After a beat, he flies into the night.

EXT. DAVID'S HOUSE-MINUTES LATER

There's a house on a large plot of land. Gated. Secluded. We see the shadow of a figure HOVERING over the house. We already know who it is. The shadow DESCENDS near a window--

EXT. BEDROOM, DAVID'S HOUSE-CONTINUOUS

-- Where we find David GLIDING into his bedroom from the window with an ease that suggests this isn't his first time making such an entrance.

He turns on a light switch and we see a wall lined with newspaper clippings with headlines.

INSERT-HEADLINES

*"COUPLE KILLED IN CRASH, LEAVES BEHIND SON"*

*"DEADLY BOMBING IN SAINT'S HAVEN; 100 KILLED"*

*"WORLD'S FIRST SUPERHERO?"*

BACK TO BEDROOM

On a nearby table we see pictures.

INSERT-PICTURES

We see David seated next to a woman with dark brown hair, light green eyes, and a captivating smile. In the background are the words "HAPPY BIRTHDAY, JULES".

There's also a picture of David's parents with a MAN in a lab coat. Celebrating.

BACK TO BEDROOM

David Makes his way over to a mirror, staring at it for a beat. We see *faint, ripples in the air surrounding his hair.*

CLOSE IN ON DAVID'S HAIR: As it *becomes* sloppy. Messier than his superhero alter ego.

After a long beat, the rippling dissipates.

David heads over to an answering machine, indicating a message has been left. Presses the button. The voice of a woman, SHARON, can be heard.

SHARON (V.O.)

*David, It's Sharon. We met two weeks ago at that restaurant down on 5th street. I don't know if you still have my number, so I wanted to give it to you again so we could get in touch. It's 867-3486...*

David writes her number on a "post-it" note, then opens a drawer.

Inside the drawer, are several other notes with phone numbers similar to Sharon's. Lots of numbers.

As David begins picking through the drawer, we see why he never followed up on them:

*We see a set of sketches for a costume, among news headlines related to Gray. David stares at the phone numbers. Hard. Then heads off into the living room.*

INT. LIVING ROOM-LATER

A nearby digital clock reads 11:50, as David is seen on the couch. Relaxing. Remote in hand, searching. Something catches his eyes-- The nightly news.

ON THE TV

Is a panel with MALE AND FEMALE PUNDITS, debating (Think *Crossfire*).

MALE PUNDIT (ON TV)

In our lighting round segment, we discuss the #1 hot topic sweeping across the country and the world: The *Man of Tomorrow* is real and his name is "The Paragon". I think it's great-- Our brave men and women in uniform could use a little help fighting dangerous criminals.

(To Female Pundit)

Your thoughts?

FEMALE PUNDIT (ON TV)

Couldn't disagree more. The police are the *only* ones who should be fighting criminals because they answer to us. The taxpayers. The voters.

(Beat)

We can't have vigilantes taking matters in their own hands...

The TV continues to play...

... As David has fallen asleep. And we-

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

INT. BASEMENT LAB- DAVID'S DREAM

The door to the lab OPENS and a figure turns on the light: YOUNG DAVID. He looks around making sure no one is around. Then enters--

THE LAB

-- Finding walls covered with schematics. There's a nearby table. Cluttered. More schematics. They mention something known as "THE ORB".

David spots a sphere-shaped object on the table. THE ORB. He eyes it carefully.

INSERT- THE ORB

It's shiny. Mechanical. Like something right out of a science-fiction novel.

BACK TO LAB

David presses a button on the sphere.

The ORB immediately begins to produce a faint, otherworldly glow.

The light intensifies. A nearby digital clock shorts out. The light begins flickering...

As David continues to hold the ORB, a faint electrical current (resembling energy from the device) is seen traveling through his arms. He staggers, clutching his head.

Nearby tools begin levitating around him, as if they were orbiting him.

David sees this, stunned. Immediately, he makes several of the objects move, telekinetically, with just a flick of his wrist when...

THE DOOR OPENS

And a MAN emerges. A man we'll come to know as DR. JOSEPH GATES. *The man we saw earlier on the picture.*

GATES AND DAVID

Trade baffled looks as objects continue to float around the kid.

A faint BEEPING sound can be heard. Growing LOUDER by the minute until--

INT. LIVING ROOM, DAVID'S HOUSE--MORNING

-- David wakes up from the couch. Groggy. The TV's still on. We hear the source of the beeping: An alarm clock reading 8:00.

David looks at a nearby wall, seeing a map of the city and his costume.

He gets up, grabbing the suit, and heads out of the living room. And we--

CUT TO:

INT. BEDROOM, WALKER RESIDENCE--MORNING

Martin gets up around the same time, as Madeline is starting to wake up as well. He stretches for a few minutes before heading out of the bedroom.

EXT. WALKER RESIDENCE- 20 MINUTES LATER

Martin leaves the house. Kissing Madeline. Folders in one hand, Coffee in another. He DARTS over to his car, pulling out of the driveway. And we-

BEGIN MONTAGE:

1. We see David, as The Paragon, on a ledge surveying the city.
2. Martin's at work with colleagues, working on a presentation.
3. A construction worker fall off of a scaffold, only to be caught by The Paragon at the last minute.
4. Martin and his colleagues from earlier present several charts and graphs to their boss, who looks very pleased.
5. The Paragon lowers the construction worker to the ground to a crowd of cheering onlookers, before taking off again.
6. The Paragon's patrolling the city from above. He checks his phone. It reads "1 MISSED CALL: SHARON". He starts dialing, when he sees a shoot out between cops and gangs. He goes to handle it, instead. Not Pleased.
7. It's closing time for Martin. He's the last one to leave. He heads out to his car, which doesn't start. Car trouble. He's ticked.

Our montage comes to an end. And we-

CUT TO:

EXT. PARKING LOT, NELSON-WHITLEY FINANCIAL-LATER

Martin is still seen fiddling with his car, as he makes a phone call.

MARTIN

(On Phone)

I'm having some car trouble. I'm fine-- but the car's gonna have to stay here for the night. No-- I won't need to be picked up. I'll take the bus. I love you too, Maddie. Bye.

He begins leaving the company, spotting a bus puling up in the distance.

EXT. PARKING LOT-LATER

There's a small group of GANGBANGERS huddled together. Cuffed.

The Paragon leads an enraged GANG LEADER to the POLICE, who already have a set of hand-cuffs waiting on the criminal.

GANG LEADER  
GET YOUR DAMN HANDS OFF ME!!!  
(To officers)  
Yo, pigs! You see'in this?! This is  
assault. Battery.  
(Pleading)  
Come on, protect and serve.

Silence. The officers clearly aren't complaining.

GANG LEADER (CONT'D)  
(Re: The Paragon)  
You didn't even read me my rights!

THE PARAGON  
Do I look like a cop to you?  
(To officers)  
He's all yours.

Our hero gives Gang Leader a slight shove towards the police. Turns away.

GANG LEADER  
Punk ass bastard. That's right--  
I'm talkin' to you...

The Paragon turns to Gang Leader, glaring.

GANG LEADER (CONT'D)  
(Re: Super-suit)  
...Wolverine called. Said he wants  
his costume back.

Our hero stares blankly at him-- *No this dumbass didn't!!*

The Paragon smiles-- *firing a small, concussive blast which  
knocks Gang Leader to the ground !!!*

The other thugs' mouths drop. Officers blanch. Face-palm.

THE PARAGON  
(To officers)  
What? Looks like he fell to me.  
Later.

The Paragon takes flight.

EXT. SAINT'S HAVEN-LATER

A large transit bus darts down the highway--

INT. TRANSIT BUS-MOVING

-- While inside, we see an older BUS DRIVER, gunning it. PEOPLE, seated. Martin is seen in the back, reviewing paperwork.

Martin glances out the window Spots something:

The Paragon streaking through the sky. An ethereal sight.

The Bus Driver continues gunning it, while checking his watch. While--

OUTSIDE

-- We find the bus, wobbling. Almost CAREENING into other drivers...

INSIDE THE BUS

The driver continues to race along the freeway until he spots a pile up in the distance.

And begins to hit the brakes. Nothing. The brakes go all the way down to the floor.

Commotion from the crowd. A MAN calls out.

MAN

Hey buddy, whaddya trying to do?  
Kill us?

The bus driver turns towards the curb to evade an accident while--

IN THE SKY

-- Something hovers in the clouds high above the city: The Paragon.

THE PARAGON

Lies horizontally with his feet up-- as if he were lying on a hammock-- except the hammock is made entirely of air and the force that levitates him.

His eyes are closed. Oblivious to all surroundings. Mp3-player in ears. Finally relaxed.

The Paragon opens his eyes-- *seeing the bus flail down the highway.*

And he's off-- bursting through a mass of clouds in the heavens, making his way to the chaos below as --

EXT. HIGHWAY (OVERPASS)-CONTINUOUS

-- The bus BURSTS through the curb of the overpass-- falling off the overpass in a 15 or 20 ft. drop!

FROM THE SKY

The Paragon rockets towards the bus at blinding speed --

INT. TRANSIT BUS-MOVING

-- As passengers SCREAM in panic. A small family huddles together. Three other passengers, including Martin, hold on to the seats, bracing themselves for impact.

Our bus driver clutches onto anything for dear life, fearfully.

Other passengers follow suit as they prepare for oblivion, however...nothing happens.

*The bus has seemingly come to a halt.*

As the confused passengers trade looks with each other, Martin looks out the window to find the bus hovering to a gradual ascent.

UNDER THE BUS

We see the source of the bus' newfound levitation: The Paragon.

Our hero lifts the bus over his shoulders much like Atlas holding up the globe. Beads of sweat begin to form on his head as he and the bus ascend--

EXT. HIGHWAY, SAINT'S HAVEN-CONTINUOUS

-- Onto the highway to safety.

The Paragon carefully lifts the bus on to a road packed with ONLOOKERS.

After a beat, relieved passengers begin making their way out of the bus.

**LATER**

OFFICERS are talking to the nervous bus driver. EMTs are present helping passengers, while The Paragon is surveying the scene.

Martin heads out of the bus, spotting our hero. Stunned. He makes his way to our hero. This catches The Paragon's attention.

MARTIN

(Re: The Paragon)

You...saved my life...our lives back there. Thanks.

THE PARAGON

Don't mention it.

Martin continues to stare at our hero. An awkward beat.

THE PARAGON (CONT'D)

Anything else?

MARTIN

...I just didn't think you were real.

THE PARAGON

I get that a lot. See you around.

The Paragon leaves, preparing to fly.

MARTIN

...How 'bout a beer?

A beat.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

My treat.

THE PARAGON

...Sure, why not?

The two head off.

INT. BAR-LATER

The Paragon and Martin are seated. Beers in hand.

ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE BAR

PEOPLE are observing. Some are recording the sight with camera-phones-- *Something that clearly irks our hero.*

THE PARAGON

(Re: Beer)

Hopefully I won't get plastered.

(Off Martin's look)

*Flying under the influence* may not be a good idea.

MARTIN

(Laughs)

It must be pretty cool to fly.

THE PARAGON

It's different. Pure freedom is what it is.

(Taps forehead)

90 percent of it is the powers. Other ten's taking into account of things like wind. Speed. Elevation. Fly too low and you're slamming into buildings. Too high, and you'll freeze to death. It's about balance. But you're right, it's pretty cool.

MARTIN

What's it like being a superhero?

A beat. Our hero's putting some thought into this one.

THE PARAGON

It's the best and the worst all at once. You don't get one without the other.

(Beat)

It's the rush you feel when you've stopped a bank robbery. It's the disgust you feel when you return from a village where a local warlord has slaughtered his people, and you weren't fast enough to stop it.

(Taking another sip of beer)

It's the look of relief in a mother's eyes when you've saved her child. It's also the look of contempt you get from criminals as you're handing them over to the police. The look of one who thinks you've interfered with the natural order of things.

(Off his look)

(MORE)

## THE PARAGON (CONT'D)

I know you thought I was gonna say  
 "It's cool"-- At one time I  
 would've.

(Beat)

Call it the optimism of youth given  
 way to the cynicism of age.

## MARTIN

Wow-- your first reveal to the  
 public and you're already jaded?

## THE PARAGON

I've been at this a lot longer than  
 that. Stopped my first mugging at  
 17.

(With a smile)

Almost got arrested too.

## MARTIN

So why do it, then. Why not just  
 quit?

A beat.

## THE PARAGON

It's not like I hadn't considered  
 it.

(Beat)

Thing is-- if I just quit-- I'd  
 have a hard time looking at myself  
 in the mirror.

(Recalls)

Someone once told me "It's about  
 responsibility. About using what's  
 empowered in you to create the  
 world that should be, instead of  
 settling for the world that is".

(Beat)

Not easy living up to that.

Martin eyes the symbol on his uniform.

## THE PARAGON (CONT'D)

(Re: Symbol)

Symbol's just a reminder. Of where  
 I came from. Of where I'm *going*.  
 Nothing more.

(Changes subject)

Well enough about me. What's going  
 on in Martin's world?

MARTIN

Not much to tell. Been married for three years to a beautiful woman. I've got a good job here. The firm says I'm the glue that holds them together.

(Off his look)

Sometimes I feel like I'm pulled in a million directions at once. That I don't care for.

THE PARAGON

Trust me, if there's anyone who knows how you feel... I do.

The two finish their drinks.

EXT. PARKING LOT, BAR-LATER

The two head out to the parking lot.

THE PARAGON

Well, it's time for me to head off.

(Shakes Martin's hand)

Thanks for the beer.

MARTIN

Don't mention it. Thanks again for saving my life.

A beat. Martin pulls out his business card. Hands it to our hero.

THE PARAGON

(Re: Card)

So, you're an *Ad man*?

MARTIN

Yeah. I've also done a little PR. You ever have a *downward spiral* and need help with a comeback, don't hesitate to call. No charge.

Our hero's impressed. He likes this guy's style.

THE PARAGON

(Laughs)

Thanks-- I'll keep that in mind.

The Paragon rockets into the sky, leaving an awestruck Martin behind.

EXT. WALKER RESIDENCE-LATER

Martin makes his way to the front door, knocking. After a beat, the door opens: Madeline emerges.

They talk, though we don't hear what's said (we don't need to). They embrace, affectionately.

INT. BASEMENT, WALKER RESIDENCE-NIGHT

Martin descends into the basement. Carrying a box. Sets it down on a table.

Martin opens it-- revealing a police scanner. Places it on the table. Turning it own.

The sounds of POLICE DISPATCH fills the basement.

Martin hangs up a map of the city.

**LATER**

Martin's at his desk, seated. Drawing for a long beat. Then finishes.

He holds up the drawing, staring appreciatively at it.

INSERT-DRAWING

We see a detailed sketch of what looks to be a utility belt.

BACK TO BASEMENT

Martin heads over to an old box. Pulls out cans of pepper spray. Pulls out a baton.

Finally he pulls out an old belt. Putting it on the table.

And we-

CUT TO:

INT. BAR-NIGHT

Martin and Andrew are seated at the bar. Drinks in hand.

ANDREW

You mean you saw the guy?

MARTIN

Yeah. The bus that almost went off the over pass-- I was on it.

(MORE)

MARTIN (CONT'D)

(Then)

He saved our lives.

ANDREW

Oh, man-- well I'm glad everyone's okay. Still that's way too much power for one man to have.

(Off Martin's look)

There outta be some type of check on him-- in case he becomes a problem.

On Martin, considering this.

ANDREW (CONT'D)

Anyway, how's it going on the presentation. Did you get my notes?

MARTIN

Yeah. I'm putting a presentation together. They'll like it.

ANDREW

Great-- let's meet back here to work on the pitch.

Martin nods. They finish their drinks.

EXT. BAR--MOMENTS LATER

Martin and Andrew make their way to the parking lot. When:  
They hear a noise originating from--

EXT. ALLEY--CONTINUOUS

-- Where we find a FAMILY being mugged by TWO THUGS.

EXT. BAR--CONTINUOUS

Martin sees the mugging. Heads over... only to be stopped by Andrew.

ANDREW

What are you doing?

MARTIN

(Re: Mugging)

Don't you see? They're being attacked-- I'm gonna go help.

ANDREW

You're no cop-- and you're  
certainly not that hero you've been  
going on about.

Martin stops in his tracks, glaring. Meanwhile--

EXT. ALLEY-CONTINUOUS

-- Flickering RED and BLUE lights fill the alley. The Police.  
TWO COPS emerge-- pursuing the fleeing thugs.

EXT. BAR-CONTINUOUS

ANDREW

See? It's handled.

(Beat)

Leave it to those that can *actually*  
make a difference.

Martin glares daggers at Andrew. And we-

CUT TO:

EXT. SKIES OVER SAINT'S HAVEN-NIGHT

The Paragon soars through several cloud banks. Done for the  
night.

Unbeknownst to our hero, something emerges from the clouds--  
following him... A predator drone.

ON THE STREETS BELOW

Is a nondescript van. Parked. Tinted windows. Close by.

EXT. SKIES OVER SAINT'S HAVEN-CONTINUOUS

THE DRONE

Continues to pursue our hero, recording. Transmitting a live  
feed--

INT. VAN-CONTINUOUS

-- Into the van where we find THREE MEN. *Men In Black* types.  
At monitors. Government by the looks of them. While--

EXT. SKIES OVER SAINT'S HAVEN-CONTINUOUS

-- Our hero spots his house in the distance. He turns, spotting the drone. Stops.

The Paragon raises a hand-- *telekinetically crushing the drone in the sky*. Then flies away --

INT. VAN-CONTINUOUS

-- As the agent's monitors go blank. We one of the pounding the desk. Shouting MOS. Meanwhile--

EXT. SKIES OVER SAINT'S HAVEN-CONTINUOUS

-- The Paragon flies towards his house below.

OMITTED

INT. BATHROOM, DAVID'S HOUSE-NIGHT

David's standing in front of a mirror, applying shaving cream. After a beat, a razor begins LEVITATING. Ascending rapidly as if it were orbiting David.

David grabs the razor, and begins shaving...

**LATER**

We find David. Dressed. Clean-shaven. Inspecting himself, as he heads--

INT. LIVING ROOM, DAVID'S HOUSE-CONTINUOUS

-- Into the living room.

With a wave of his hand, a nearby remote ASCENDS from the table. David makes a "yanking" motion, pulling it towards him. Turns on the TV.

VARIOUS TV REPORTERS

It's been two weeks now as rebels continue to clash with the regime in the province of...

(Changes channel)

...The bodies of a couple were found on Tuesday. Police are ruling it a double homicide...

(Changes channel)

(MORE)

## VARIOUS TV REPORTERS (CONT'D)

...The Department of Defense announced today that it has signed a lucrative contract with *Meridian Robotics* the development of...

David turns the TV off. Goes to a drawer. Pulls out a gift-wrapped box.

David heads for the door when...

We hear a loud RINGING throughout the house.

On a nearby wall we see a cell-phone in a shelf marked "WORK PHONE".

David stares at the phone for a beat-- *Don't I ever get a break?* Then leaves.

## EXT. DAVID'S HOUSE

To our surprise, David pulls out of his driveway in a sedan. Takes off...

## EXT. DR. GATE'S HOUSE-NIGHT

We see a FAIRLY LARGE house. Brick. Very little sets the home apart from others in Suburbia.

David pulls up, makes his way to the door. Knocks.

## THE DOOR OPENS

And a man emerges. 50's. Khakis and Polo shirt. Dr Gates.

## DR. GATES

Come in David.

David enters.

## INT. LIVING ROOM, DR. GATE'S HOUSE-CONTINUOUS

It's a lively sight as Dr. Gates is surrounded by FAMILY and FRIENDS. A large banner is in the b.g. It reads: "HAPPY BIRTHDAY JOSEPH". There's a large cake with candles.

Gates blows out his candles. David hands him the box. Gates opens it-- seeing a set of fishing lures.

Everyone begins getting a piece of cake.

**LATER**

Everyone's gone. Except for David and Gates.

DR. GATES  
Thanks for the lures, kiddo.

DAVID  
I'm glad you like 'em, Joseph.  
(Off his look)  
We should try them out on the lake  
sometime.

DR. GATES  
Definitely. Though you could just  
use your powers-- and yank the fish  
outta the water.

David laughs... But there's a hint of sadness in his eyes.

DR. GATES (CONT'D)  
What's on your mind, kiddo?

DAVID  
I caught Gray.

DR. GATES  
I heard all about it. The whole  
town's talking about "The Paragon".  
(Beat)  
Do you feel any better about it?

DAVID  
No.  
(Off his look)  
I keep thinking she shouldn't have  
left for work that day-

DR. GATES  
-You'll drive yourself crazy  
dwelling on that. We can't change  
the past. You got 'em-- that's what  
counts.  
(Places hand on David's  
shoulder)  
Now you can move on.

DAVID  
Can I?  
(Sad-smiles)  
This Paragon thing was only  
supposed to be temporary-- Now I'm  
the glue holding this town  
together.  
(Beat)  
(MORE)

DAVID (CONT'D)

It's like the more I become *The Paragon* the more I start to lose *David*. If I had known what I was getting into when I found the ORB, I'd-

DR. GATES

-It was bound to happen, David. I knew you we're headed for this the moment I found those tapes of yours.

As for the ORB-- it has other functions that haven't been fully explored. That's a work in progress, though.

(Beat)

I'll tell you more about it someday.

David raises an eyebrow at this, but doesn't question it. His "work" phone goes off, again. David rises.

DAVID

I've got to be going. I'll come back again.

David exits. After a beat, Dr. Gates puts away the lures. Pulls a folder out of a drawer, opening it.

Inside the folder are a set of schematics.

INSERT-SCHEMATICS

A diagram of the ORB-- followed by dense, scientific jargon.

BACK TO LIVING ROOM

Gates rises, heading toward his lab. And we-

CUT TO:

EXT. SAINT'S HAVEN-MORNING

The sun rises over the vast city.

EXT. ROOFTOPS-CONTINUOUS

The Paragon's on a rooftop. Perched. Surveying the city.

AN EXPLOSION OF SOUND, Gunshots. Pandemonium.

EXT. SAINT'S HAVEN-DAY

Takes us to the streets of Saint's Haven, as CRIMINALS have a gun battle with GUARDS, before stealing an armored car.

One of the criminals shoots the last of the guards. Then drives off.

FROM THE SKY

The Paragon is closing in on them--

INT. ARMORED CAR-CONTINUOUS

-- While inside, we see the criminals. Triumphant. Rifling through bags filled with large amounts of cash. When:

**Suddenly...**

The car ASCENDS. The thugs literally watch the getaway car lift off the street!

They trade panicked looks with each other. The armored car SHAKES, throwing the men around. They begin bracing themselves.

After a long beat, the car begins DESCENDING. Then comes to a complete stop.

The criminals look around. Then make their way out of the van, guns raised. Making their way...

OUTSIDE THE CAR

... Where they find themselves in front of the--

EXT. POLICE PRECINCT-CONTINUOUS

-- Facing a small army of OFFICERS. Their guns aimed at the goons.

The would-be criminals look up spotting...

THE PARAGON

In the air, waving at them. Then flies off.

Off the criminals' reactions:

EXT. PARK-LATER

It's a slow day at the park. A small crowd of PEOPLE are walking. Sitting. Conversing.

Martin's at a table, going over some paperwork. When:

THE PARAGON

Descends to the ground, making his way to a bench. The whole crowd stares in awe.

Our hero pulls out a flask. Begins drinking. He notices Martin. Heads over.

THE PARAGON

Martin, what's going on?

MARTIN

Well, if it isn't the city's own personal *Superman*.

(Re: Flask)

Rough day at the office?

THE PARAGON

Not really. Armored car. Guys shot a couple of guards.

MARTIN

You'd think they'd get a clue at this point-- with you and all.

THE PARAGON

Well you know, wise man say "No cure for fools". Just another day in the life of "The Paragon".

(Sad-smiles)

All I need now is a few super-villains to come out of the woodwork-- And this gig will be complete.

(Re: Paperwork)

Looks important.

MARTIN

Very. A major presentation for a potential client. It's a lot of work-- but It pays great.

(Beat)

It'd be nice to do something else for a change, though.

THE PARAGON

I know what you mean. Defending this town's steady work. I may be *super*, but I'm still a *man*. I do my best, but even I can't be everywhere at once.

MARTIN

Why not take a break? Let the cops handle it.

THE PARAGON

No-can-do. The powers would be a constant reminder that I could've done something-- if I did.

MARTIN

Powers, huh? We'll maybe you'll lose them someday.

The Paragon stares. Not sure what to make of that.

THE PARAGON

(Beat)

Anyway-- I guess it's the nature of things. A "heavy is the head that wears the crown" kinda thing.

Martin considers this. The Paragon goes back to drinking.

INT. BEDROOM, DAVID'S HOUSE-NIGHT

David glides into the bedroom via the window. He tosses his costume on a nearby chair. Then crashes on the bed.

The lights go out. Meanwhile--

INT. BEDROOM, WALKER RESIDENCE-CONTINUOUS

-- We find Martin and Madeline in their bed room. Madeline's fast asleep, while Martin's reading at a nearby light.

He reflects for a beat. An idea forms. Martin pulls out a note pad as well as a pencil. Begins sketching.

After a long beat, Martin finishes his sketch. Looks extremely pleased.

We immediately see what it is: **A detailed sketch of a superhero costume.**

Martin turns off the light. And we-

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

EXT. SAINT'S HAVEN-MORNING

It's cloudy today. Bits of sunlight peek through.

INT. DECREPIT BUILDING-MORNING

David's in his lair. Suiting up. On the phone.

DAVID

(On phone)

Really? You told them you weren't interested? That's good. This place is important to my *job*. Well it's your property-- they can't make you sell it to them.

(Beat)

No, Joseph-- I'm not putting up cameras. Cameras at an abandoned building will draw attention to the place. The best way to stay hidden is in plain view.

(Checks watch)

Gotta make my rounds. Later.

David hangs up. Makes his way to the map on the wall. Draws a circle around an area of the map.

INT. BASEMENT, WALKER RESIDENCE-DAY

The sound of POLICE DISPATCH fills the basement as Martin highlights the same area on the map. Then leaves.

EXT. SAINT'S HAVEN-DAY

We see Martin, jogging. Water-bottle in hand. He comes to a halt as he spots something in the distance:

The Paragon flying in the distance. Landing on top of a building. Martin follows.

**LATER**

He finally catches up, tired.

Another MAN approaches. Unshaven. Grungy. We'll refer to him as LONE NUT.

LONE NUT is waving a hand-made sign reading "*THE END IS NIGH!*"

It takes us a second to realize that it's *the wacko from the man-on-the street interview.*

He's saying something inaudible, while pointing above where we find...

THE PARAGON

Perched on a rooftop, scanning the neighborhood. He spots Martin, waving (Though surprised to see Martin). Then jumps off the ledge...

... To the ground. Martin makes his way over to the superhero.

THE PARAGON

Martin... We meet again.

(Off his look)

You're not stalking me, are you?

MARTIN

No-- Just out for a jog.

An awkward beat.

THE PARAGON

Uh-huh. Been on any more buses, lately?

MARTIN

(Laughs)

Not at all. What brings you to this neck of the woods?

THE PARAGON

It's part of my patrol, now. I'm out here so the local gang-bangers don't get any ideas. I was...

Lone nut begins making a ruckus.

LONE NUT

(Yelling; Pointing)

THERE'S THE ONE I WARNED YOU ABOUT!  
THE ALIEN. DON'T TRUST HIM FOLKS!

MARTIN

(Re: Lone Nut)

I saw that guy on the news.  
What's his problem?

THE PARAGON

Other than he's crazy, I wouldn't know. He's been out here every day. Babbling about how I'm gonna bring about the apocalypse. Fool's even said he's gonna save the world.

(Shrugs)

Wrap your head around that one.

MARTIN

That reminds me. I've heard a lot of rumors around here about you. Some say you're an alien. You know, "The last of your kind". Others say a top-secret government experiment. Just between friends, which one's true?

THE PARAGON

(Laughs; A beat)

They're saying all of that?  
Good. Keep'em guessing. Gotta leave something to the imagination.

(Changes subject)

But you didn't come over just to talk about rumors, so what's on your mind?

MARTIN

I was thinking about our talk at the park, and had an idea.

(Beat)

What if you had some help? I could go on patrols with you-

THE PARAGON

-Thanks, but that wouldn't be a good idea. Too dangerous.

(Off his look)

Bullets bounce off me, and I've survived explosions without even getting singed.

(Beat)

My point is I'm *suited* for this kinda thing, you're not. It's not safe for you or your family.

Martin's expression darkens.

In the distance, an explosion RIPS through a local bank. Three or four police cars are seen approaching the bank as masked men flee, firing at cops.

The Paragon sighs-- *Another robbery, what a surprise.*

THE PARAGON (CONT'D)  
 ...I've gotta go handle that.  
 We'll talk again, Martin.

The superhero FLIES off into the distance toward the bank, leaving a sullen Martin behind.

EXT. PRISON-DAY

We see a massive prison. Gloomy. High walls. Armed guards.

Welcome to *Saint's Haven Correctional Facility*. The home of every specimen of criminal. A "Department of Corrections" van pulls up to a checkpoint-- where a GUARD gives the green light.

INT/EXT. PRISON YARD-CONTINUOUS

High above the prison walls, we see GUARDS. Watching. Rifles in hand to discourage trouble while--

ON THE PRISON YARD BELOW

-- It's a lively sight. INMATES lift weights. Play cards. Play basketball.

Others are just soaking in their "free-time" before heading back to lockdown.

There's a familiar face among the inmates: Gray. Sporting a splint for his arm. He's seated at a bench with two others from the foiled bank robbery.

GRAY  
 How you boys holding up?

GRAY'S MAN #1  
 Ready to get outta this hellhole.  
 (Then)  
 I got word that some of the boys  
 have ran out on us.

GRAY  
 Cowards. They'll get theirs.

GRAY'S MAN #2

You know-- that superhero said he spent some time hunting you down.

(Off Gray's look)

Why's he so interested in you?

GRAY

No clue. Never seen the guy 'til the bank. All I know is he'll pay for it soon enough.

GRAY'S MAN #1

How are we going to do that? Nothing works on the guy. Bullets. Bombs. Nothing.

(Beat)

Even if we could kill him-- how do we do it behind bars?

GRAY

Don't worry about that. I got a plan in place. Some of the boys are working on it as we speak.

GRAY'S MAN #1

You mean the thing at *Meridian Robotics*?

GRAY

Yeah.

The Alarm sounds. Inmates stop their activities and officers arrive, signaling for them to disperse.

The inmates file out of the yard. Gray and Co. begin leaving.

GRAY (CONT'D)

(Rising)

We'll talk more about this later on, tonight.

And we-

CUT TO:

EXT. SAINT'S HAVEN-NIGHT

Night reaches Saint's Haven. A nondescript van travels down the street.

INSIDE THE VAN

We find a group of MEN-- Gray's men-- loading guns. MAN#1 pulls out camera jamming equipment. He places it in a duffle bag, while MAN#2 is reading a map with a location marked reading "MERIDIAN ROBOTICS".

MAN #1

(To others)

We're not too far from the lab.

(To Man#2)

How solid is this the Intel? I don't want us going after a wild goose chase.

MAN #2

Intel's *rock* solid. Gray said as much. Before he got locked up. The *prototype* is under surveillance.

(Loads gun)

we'll need to get in and get out, fast. Make sure we've got the gear.

Man#2 looks out the window and sees *Meridian Robotics in the distance*.

The men don ski-masks, silencing their weapons.

INT. SECURE ZONE, MERIDIAN ROBOTICS-LATER

Inside the secure zone is a spacious room. A laser grid forms a barrier around a large cube with markings.

INSERT-CUBE, which reads:

"PROPERTY OF DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE" and "MERIDIAN ROBOTICS MR-001 SENTRY".

BACK TO SECURE ZONE

Two security cameras are mounted along the room's corners.

A large, steel door begins *opening*. Man#1 and Man#2 emerge-- carrying the gear.

MAN#3 and MAN#4 are hiding the bodies of TWO SECURITY GUARDS.

Man#1 makes his way to a computer terminal, attaching a cord to a tablet-sized computer. The other end to the terminal. Begins typing.

After a long beat, the laser grid deactivates. The men advance towards the cube, cautiously...

MAN #1  
Okay, let's do this...

Man #1 inserts a key card into another terminal by the cube. A message is seen on the terminal-- *SECURITY CLEARANCE CODE: ACCEPTED!!!*

The cube begins DESCENDING into the floor revealing...

Something large. Bipedal. Mechanized. There looks to be a 50 Cal. Machine gun, mounted on the left arm.

We see THREE SPHERES, mounted on the back. There are gold rings around the spheres.

*[Note: This is a flight system. The ringed spheres are superconductors. Research Electromagnetic Formation Flight-- It's a REAL concept.]*

This is the MR-001 SENTRY... a **MECH SUIT**.

Man# 1 places his hands on the center of the "Sentry" and a hatch opens revealing a cockpit.

Man #1 hops in the cockpit. The others watch in awe.

Off the cockpit hatch closing as the mech powers up:

And we-

CUT TO:

INT. BEDROOM, DAVID'S HOUSE-LATER THAT NIGHT

David's fast asleep, when a loud RINGING fills the room: The "work" phone.

David awakens. Groggy. Ticked.

After a beat, he telekinetically flicks the phone out of his room, heading back to sleep.

EXT. DR. GATE'S HOME-NIGHT

A car pulls up into the driveway. Dr. Gates emerges. Heads inside.

INT. LAB- CONTINUOUS

We find Gates working on the ORB, in front of a set of schematics related to the device.

Gates adds something to its core that we can't make out.

After a beat, Gates presses a button on the device.

The ORB gives off a strange RED glow. Gates turns The ORB off. Continues working on the device.

**LATER**

We find Dr. Gates with the finished ORB. He goes over to a video camera. Turning it on. Addresses the camera.

DR. GATES  
(To camera)  
David, if you're listening to this  
message by now...

EXT. CEMETERY-LATER THAT NIGHT

A car pulls up to the cemetery. A familiar face emerges. Dr. Gates.

Gates grabs something-- placing it in a backpack. Heads for a large crypt in the distance. And we-

CUT TO:

EXT. SAINT'S HAVEN- MORNING

We drift over the vast city. A beautiful morning.

EXT. SAINT'S HAVEN-DAY

There's a fairly large building. Closed. It reads: "*BAXTER FINANCIAL*". There's another sign reading "*PRIVATE PROPERTY: NO TRESPASSING!*".

A fence seals off the property... A fence with a hole in it--

INSIDE THE OLD BUILDING

-- And we find out why... Gray's men are hiding. On the lookout. The mech suit lies on the ground, deactivated..

COCKPIT THUG emerges from the mech, concerned. THUG#2 approaches.

THUG#2  
No cops so far. All's clear I  
guess.  
(Re: Mech)  
(MORE)

THUG#2 (CONT'D)

Why not just bust out Gray with the robot?

COCKPIT THUG

Because it's overheating. According to the computer. Been that way since we left the lab.

(Closes cockpit)

Too big a risk.

Cockpit Thug spots some PEOPLE walking in the distance.

COCKPIT THUG (CONT'D)

(Ponders)

I gotta an idea...

Off the people walking in the distance:

EXT. WALKER RESIDENCE--CONTINUOUS

Martin leaves the house, briefcase in hand. Drives off to work.

EXT. DECREPIT BUILDING-- CONTINUOUS

The Paragon rockets out of the lair, taking flight. Reaching--

THE SKY

-- Where our hero flies to the highest point in the city: A radio tower in the distance.

EXT. STREETS, SAINT'S HAVEN--WITH THE POLICE

As they take cover behind their squad cars. Ducking heavy gunfire. While--

ACROSS THE STREET

-- A squad of GRAY'S MEN snatch up BYSTANDERS. Moving them into a van.

The Police are confronted by a large mechanical FORM-- *The MECH we saw earlier at the lab.*

INSIDE THE COCKPIT

Cockpit Thug works the controls, as...

EXT. STREETS-CONTINUOUS

... The mech a missile at the police. Scattering them.

The van darts off, leaving the MECH behind.

COCKPIT THUG (V.O.)

(To officers)

*Our demands are simple: Release Gray and the others, if you care about the hostages' lives. Once he's out and we confirm it, they're free to go. You have one hour to make it happen.*

The mech exits-- *blasting cop cars on the way out.*

Police officers trade baffled looks with each other.

And we-

CUT TO:

EXT. RADIO TOWER OVERLOOKING THE CITY- DAY

Our hero is seen perched on top of a radio tower, high above the streets of Saint's Haven. He pulls out a cellphone

THE PARAGON

(Leaving Message)

Hi, Sharon...It's David. I got the message you left some days ago and I just wanted to let you know I received it.

(Beat)

I haven't forgotten you. I've been recently swamped with work...

As he is finishing his call, his other phone rings. It's his "work" phone.

THE PARAGON (CONT'D)

I'll call you back, Sharon, bye.

(On work phone)

It's The Paragon...

CAPTAIN STEVENS (O.S.)

It's Stevens. Where were you?! We called a couple of nights ago. 'Bout a gang-war. And a break in at Meridian Robotics.

Silence.

CAPTAIN STEVENS (O.S) (CONT'D)

Anyway, we gotta hostage situation near the old Baxter Financial building on 8th and Elm street. Gray's men are behind it. They're demanding his release.

(Grave)

They stole some kinda prototype from Meridian. Hurry-- or this place'll turn into a war zone.

THE PARAGON

I'm on it.

Our hero shakes his head at the news-- *This again?*

THE PARAGON (CONT'D)

...No rest for the weary.

The Paragon leaps off the radio tower, plummeting fast to the ground below before coming to a complete stop.

He hovers for a beat. Then rockets to the scene of the crime.

ON THE STREETS BELOW

Martin's car trails after him.

INT. 4-DOOR SEDAN-MOVING

Martin's on the phone.

MARTIN

Andrew, it's Martin. I wanted to let you know I'm not feeling well. I won't be coming in today. Yeah thanks, I'll try to get better. Bye.

He speeds off in our hero's direction.

EXT. SKIES OVER SAINT'S HAVEN-WITH THE PARAGON

As he darts past the old Baxter building, searching.

ON THE STREETS BELOW

Our hero sees the wreckage of police cars, and an inferno of smoke and fire. A sight that troubles him greatly.

He continues looking for hostages when...

**BOOOOOOOOOOOM!**-He's blasted out of the sky!

Our hero falls landing in--

EXT. OLD BAXTER FINANCIAL-CONTINUOUS

-- Where he crashes into the ground.

He rises, unharmed but caught off guard. Cracks his neck ala' *Yojimbo* as he sees...

... The Mech suit towering over him. *This is gonna get ugly.*

THE PARAGON

(You gotta be kidding)

Great. It's not enough to deal with criminals-- Now I gotta worry about Decepticons, too?

INSIDE THE COCKPIT

Cockpit Thug sees our hero, smirking.

COCKPIT THUG

Not so super after all.

(On speaker)

Boys, stay outta this. I'll handle him...

EXT. OLD BAXTER FINANCIAL-CONTINUOUS

The Mech's machine-gun unleashes a hail of bullets at The Paragon-- who dodges the gunfire effortlessly.

The Mech turns, firing a missile which races after our hero, leaving behind a trail of smoke...

The Paragon puts up a barrier-- shielding himself from the blast...

... While returning fire with his signature *concussive blast*-- which knocks the Mech back... but does little to damage it.

AT A NEARBY PARKING LOT

Is Martin, exiting his car as the conflict ensues.

EXT. OLD BAXTER FINANCIAL-CONTINUOUS

The Mech continues its assault on The Paragon while...

... Its POWER PACK begin to glow, slowly. **Ominously.**

AT THE PARKING LOT

Martin spots two MASKED MEN guarding a nearby van. Makes his way over to them.

Martin grabs a board lying on the ground. Sneaks over to MASKED MAN#1, knocking him out then...

... Gets into a scuffle with MASKED MAN#2, barely knocking him out. He opens the van revealing SEVERAL HOSTAGES

Martin goes to help the hostages, tripping a small motion sensor on the way as...

EXT. OLD BAXTER FINANCIAL-CONTINUOUS

... The Paragon is knocked up against a wall-- **hovering instead of falling**-- before LAUNCHING towards the Mech, which fires wildly at him. While--

INSIDE THE COCKPIT

-- The Thug ZOOMS IN on Martin helping the hostages while--

EXT. OLD BAXTER FINANCIAL-CONTINUOUS

-- The Mech knocks The Paragon back, halting his attack.

COCKPIT THUG (V.O.)

(Re: Martin)

*So you brought a sidekick to help.*

*That's too bad...for the hostages.*

The Paragon sees Martin helping the hostages-- *Worst timing ever.*

The Mech fires another missile-- **In the direction of the hostages.**

AT THE PARKING LOT

Off Martin's reaction as he sees the approaching missile: Absolute terror. Meanwhile--

EXT. OLD BAXTER FINANCIAL-CONTINUOUS

-- It takes only a second for our hero to process what's going on, before he takes off in the direction of the missile. Becoming a BLUR.

The Paragon flies ahead of the missile, deflecting it into an abandoned car.

THE PARAGON  
Not in *my* house...

The power pack's glow intensifies, sparking slightly...

Our hero takes flight--

EXT. SKY-CONTINUOUS

-- Hoping to balance the terms of the fight. After a beat. His eyes widen in surprise as...

EXT. OLD BAXTER FINANCIAL-CONTINUOUS

... The ringed spheres glow. We hear a crackling sound- **CRACK!  
CRACK! BZZZZZZZZZZT!!!!**

The Mech ASCENDS, repelled from the ground. Small thrusters activate-- helping it gain altitude.

The Mech rockets into--

THE SKY

-- As The Paragon tries to fly away but...

... The Mech pursues our hero in flight-- *Blasting him out of the sky, again!!!*

INSIDE THE COCKPIT

Gray's thug watches a monitor read "WARNING!!! UNIT OVERHEATING!!! FLIGHT SYSTEM...DISENGAGING"

The thug begins BRACING himself as...

EXT. SKY-CONTINUOUS

-- The Mech begins to make a speedy descent to the ground, while...

The Paragon free-falls, plummeting--

EXT. OLD BAXTER FINANCIAL-CONTINUOUS

-- Onto an abandoned car. Destroying it.

After a beat, our hero rises. Staggering.

The Paragon PICKS UP THE CAR, hurling it at the Mech, which fires a missile at it causing it to EXPLODE...

THE PARAGON

Flies through the smoke-- ripping off the missile launcher.

INSIDE THE COCKPIT

Warning lights go crazy. Gray's thug panics as--

EXT. OLD BAXTER FINANCIAL-CONTINUOUS

-- Our hero bends the 50 Cal. with FREAKISH strength, then SHATTERS one of the Mech's legs, causing it to PLUMMET to the ground.

The Paragon RIPS OFF the cockpit door, pulling out the unconscious thug. Tosses him to the ground while--

AT THE PARKING LOT

-- Martin leads the hostages away to safety. Then heads in our hero's direction, as several police cars are approaching from a distance.

EXT. OLD BAXTER FINANCIAL-CONTINUOUS

The Paragon notices the glowing power pack.

INSERT-POWER PACK, Which reads:

*"WARNING!!! IF BATTERY UNIT OVERHEATS, ABANDON IMMEDIATELY! OVERHEATING MAY CAUSE BATTERY TO EXPLODE!"*

BACK TO OLD BAXTER BUILDING

The Paragon raises his hands over the power pack. The air around his hands RIPPLES and PULSATES as the battery BREAKS FREE from the fallen Mech.

The Paragon removes the battery. Rockets into the sky--

OVER THE MOUTH OF THE RIVER

-- Carrying the power pack, which is now SMOKING. Sparks shoot out of it.

Our hero throws the power pack high into the air where it DETONATES safely over water. Our hero heads back.

EXT. PARKING LOT, SAINT'S HAVEN-WITH POLICE

As they are hauling the criminals away. Investigators are surveying the WRECKAGE that was the MECH.

ON A NEARBY ROOFTOP

We see a lone figure. Observing. A familiar face. *The "Men In Black" type from earlier.*

He watches the wreckage, disapprovingly.

EXT. PARKING LOT, SAINT'S HAVEN- CONTINUOUS

The Paragon surveys the scene as Martin walks triumphantly to the visibly irritated superhero.

The Paragon glares at Martin for a beat. Hard.

THE PARAGON

What were YOU doing out here?

MARTIN

(Off his look)

Show a little gratitude, I was only trying to help-

THE PARAGON

-I don't need any help, besides, you could have gotten yourself killed out here, not to mention the hostages.

(Beat)

Remember, you don't have powers.

Martin shifts defensively at this.

MARTIN

You don't have to remind me that I'm just a "mere mortal". I know all that. But you don't need powers to make a difference.

THE PARAGON

(Are you not getting this?!)

This isn't some kind of product pitch, Martin. And it isn't a comic book. It's a life-or-death situation. You intervening only makes things worse.

MARTIN

Hey, just because you've got powers  
doesn't make you better than anyone  
else-

THE PARAGON

-If the goal is not to get killed  
while fighting crime, I'd say it  
does!

MARTIN

Look, I don't need any of this. I'm  
outta here.

An angry Martin storms off, leaving our hero standing.  
Pondering.

The Paragon looks almost if he knows he could have/should  
have phrased that differently, yet realizing that the damage  
is already done.

After a beat, The Paragon walks away. And we-

CUT TO:

EXT. RENEGADE DAVE'S BAR AND GRILL-HOURS LATER

Martin makes his way to a large, brick building. A neon sign  
is seen overhead reading "RENEGADE DAVE'S BAR AND GRILL". He  
heads inside--

INT. RENEGADE DAVE'S BAR AND GRILL-CONTINUOUS

-- Where we find a large, smoke-filled bar. The walls are  
covered with trophies and pictures of the owner, "Renegade  
Dave", with various athletes and celebs with their respective  
autographs.

Martin heads over to the bar, where we see RENEGADE DAVE  
himself, cleaning glasses.

RENEGADE DAVE

What'll it be?

MARTIN

A beer.

"Renegade" Dave heads off as Martin makes himself  
comfortable. Watches the TV.

ON THE TV

Is nightly news. There's a FEMALE reporter, talking. She's clearly impressed with our hero.

FEMALE REPORTER (ON TV)  
 Is *The Paragon* going global?  
 Incoming reports indicate a terror plot in South Korea was foiled 3 hours ago by Saint's Haven's own crime-fighter. This comes a week after the hero is said to have apprehended a major African warlord in the region of Sudan.

Martin rolls his eyes at this.

FEMALE REPORTER (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
 The word paragon means "model of excellence" If this report is true, it seems like he's definitely living up to the name.

A small crowd of PATRONS are watching the news report. Everyone's clearly impressed.

"Renegade" Dave approaches Martin, beer in hand.

RENEGADE DAVE  
 Here's the beer.

RENEGADE DAVE (CONT'D)  
 I take it you're not a fan of the "World's First Superhero"?

RENEGADE DAVE (CONT'D)  
 Yeah, and a damned good one at that.

RENEGADE DAVE (CONT'D)  
 (Mocking)  
 Anyone, huh? Well why don't you put on your utility belt and cape and go "make a difference"...

MARTIN  
 (Re:TV)  
 Thanks. Would you mind changing that?  
 MARTIN (CONT'D)  
 The guy's nothing but a show-off, That's all.  
 MARTIN (CONT'D)  
 You don't need powers to do what he does. Anyone can make a difference. It just takes will power.

Dave walks off as Martin ponders this for a beat. An idea forms.

Martin finishes his beer, pays the bartender, and exits the bar. And we-

BEGIN MONTAGE:

1. Martin's at the police scanner, listening.
  2. Later, Martin leaves a hardware store with supplies.
  3. Martin's in his basement working on what looks to be a utility belt. His costume sketch is in front of him.
  4. Martin is practicing with the baton, repeatedly.
  5. Martin's filling the belt with pepper spray, an auto-baton, and a small pair of binoculars.
  6. Martin's in front of the mirror wearing the makeshift costume-- not like his drawing, but good enough.
  7. Martin's in front of a map of the city, searching.
- Our montage comes to an end. And we-

CUT TO:

EXT. "THE DECREPIT", SAINT'S HAVEN-LATER THAT NIGHT

It's a somber sight in this part of town. There's a cluster of ramshackle buildings. This is what lies beneath the veneer of prosperity that is the city.

A sign reading "WELCOME TO SAINT'S HAVEN" is sprayed over with the words "THE DECREPIT".

It's walls are covered with graffiti and all kinds of obscenities.

It's a place in need of a hero, yet not likely to find one.

A CAR PULLS INTO AN ALLEY

And a familiar face emerges from the car: Martin.

He's wearing all black with the make-shift utility belt (Imagine a budget version of Batman, and you've got it).

He scans his surroundings for a beat, before putting on a ski mask and slipping off into the darkness...

EXT. SAMUEL'S ELECTRONICS AND MORE-CONTINUOUS

Not too far from Martin is a store front known as "SAMUEL'S ELECTRONICS AND MORE". Closed for the night.

A BEAT UP TRUCK

Pulls up to the store, and a group of men emerge. MAN #1 cuts a cable to a security camera.

Two others, MAN #2 and MAN #3, SHATTER the glass window. Entering. MAN #1 stands guard.

Martin's in an alley, observing. He pulls out a baton, and after a beat, advances towards the scene of the crime...

MAN #1

Continues watching. Pulls out a cigarette and...

**BAM!!!**

...Is knocked out by Martin, and dragged to a corner.

As Martin advances, he stumbles, making a loud noise in the process.

Martin spies flashlight beams (from inside the store) pointed in his direction and hides behind a corner as...

MAN#2 and MAN#3

Emerge, spotting their fallen partner-in-crime.

MAN#2

(Re: Man#1)

The hell happened here?!

MAN#3

Who knows? He wasn't like this earlier.

(Beat)

You think he's here?

MAN#2

No clue. Never seen him here before-- but that don't mean he ain't here. They say nothing hurts the guy.

(Beat)

We better get outta here.

BEHIND THE CORNER

Martin pulls out pepper spray and a baton. Braces himself for a beat-- *Then lunges out at the criminals!!!*

MARTIN

Sprays MAN#2 with the pepper-spray. He goes down, screaming all the way. Before he can advance...

MAN#3

Sucker-punches the wannabe hero, catching him off guard...

Worse yet, Man#1 comes to. Stagger for a beat, then lays hold of Martin, as Man#3 unloads a fury of punches.

After a long beat, Martin goes down. Bloody. Beaten. Man#1 advances.

MAN#1

So you're the one who knocked our guy out.

(Off Martin's look)

We've got enough heroes around here, we don't need more.

(Draws gun)

You should have left this one to the *Flying man*. At least he wouldn't have ended up in the fetal position about to get shot-

MAN#1

Is about to blast Martin when he sees flickering blue lights in the distance: The police. Approaching. Fast.

MAN#1 and MAN#3

BOLT, leaving Man#2 behind. Martin staggers for a beat. Rises. Bolts as well heading--

BACK TO THE ALLEY

-- Where he gets into his car, speeding off. Out of sight, out of mind. And we-

CUT TO:

INT. BASEMENT, WALKER RESIDENCE- LATER THAT NIGHT

Madeline makes her way downstairs into the basement. Laundry basket in hand. Turns on a light.

She sits the basket of clothes on a table. Sees Martin's presentation. Aegis Medical brochures. She smiles in admiration.

She sees something sticking out from under the presentation. Pulls it out revealing:

MARTIN'S COLLAGE OF OUR HERO

Off Madeline's reaction...

**LATER**

We see Martin. Bloody. Dirty. Defeated. Sneaking in...

... Finding a concerned Madeline. "Collage" in hand. She heads towards her caught-off-guard husband.

MADELINE

Martin, what happened to you?  
Andrew said you called in sick.  
(Off Martin's look)  
Where've you been?

An Awkward beat. She eyes his ski mask and gear. Incredulous.

MADELINE (CONT'D)

(Re: "Gear")  
What have you been doing?  
(Re: Collage)  
Does *this* have anything to do with  
it?

Martin shifts nervously at this.

MARTIN

(Off her look)  
...There was this robbery-

MADELINE

-And you went out to play  
vigilante?! What were you  
thinking?! You could have gotten  
yourself killed. Or they could've  
followed you back here!

MARTIN

They didn't follow me back here.

MADELINE

That you know of...  
(Off his look)  
I saw your collection.  
(Beat)  
You're obsessed with this guy-- and  
you need to get that in check.

Martin glares at the news clipping-- "*WORLD'S FIRST  
SUPERHERO!*"

MARTIN

(Re: Collage)

I...I just saw *him* do it. He makes it look so easy...Why should he be the only one who can be a hero? Why is he the only one who can make a difference?

MADELINE

Because that's what he *does*. That's his purpose in life, if he has one.

(Beat)

You want to make a difference? Be the man I married. And be content with that.

Martin and Madeline trade looks for a beat. He knows she's right even if he won't admit it.

MADELINE (CONT'D)

Promise you'll stop this. I don't want anything happening to you. To *us*.

MARTIN

...I promise.

A beat. She can't stay mad at him any longer. They embrace.

EXT. SAINT'S HAVEN-NIGHT

Life slows down in the city, as night arrives.

INT. RESTAURANT-CONTINUOUS

We find David. Casually dressed. Wearing glasses. He's eating with a beautiful woman, SHARON.

The couple talks MOS against a romantic backdrop.

INT. CONVENIENCE STORE-CONTINUOUS

Inside the 711, a CASHIER is slumped over on a counter reading a news paper. We see a headline:

*"SUPERHERO OR SUPER-MENACE? ACLU 'TROUBLED' OVER ASSAULT ALLEGATIONS INVOLVING 'THE PARAGON'"*

A door bell RINGS as a MAN enters: Dr. Gates. He makes his way to the isles, looking around.

After a beat, TWO MEN enter. It takes us a moment to recognize them: ***The two men who tried to rob the electronics store.***

One of them stays behind, as the other MAN walks up to the Cashier, pulling out a gun.

The Cashier jumps up, panicked.

MAN  
(Re: Cash register)  
GIVE ME ALL YOUR MONEY! NOW!!

Dr. Gates ducks underneath one of the isles. Makes a noise. He looks at a mirror, seeing MAN #2 headed in his direction.

Off Dr. Gates reaction...

EXT. SAINT'S HAVEN-NIGHT

After dinner, David walks Sharon to her apartment. The two embrace. Then leave.

**LATER**

David walks down the street. As he continues his stroll, a small CROWD OF PEOPLE pass by.

A LADY among them eyes David. Hard. She approaches.

LADY  
Excuse me, mister...

David turns to her.

LADY (CONT'D)  
...I don't mean to bother you, but you look familiar. Like I've seen you around, before.  
(Beat )  
I know...You look like that *superhero*, who arrived here some time ago. What's he called?

DAVID  
The Paragon?

LADY  
Yeah that's it.

DAVID  
(Evasive)  
...More like he looks like me.

LADY

You wish.

She laughs, before walking off. David stares-- *Whew! Dodged that bullet!* As he leaves he sees a television in the window. The words "BREAKING NEWS". David races to it.

TV REPORTER (O.S.)

This is channel 9 reporting from the 711 on 4th and Cicero, which was the site of an armed robbery 10 minutes ago...

David takes this in, troubled. He heads over to a dark alley, looking around before entering.

As he enters, we see his silhouette, obscured by shadows, rocket into the sky.

EXT. 711 ON 4TH AND CICERO-WITH THE PARAGAON

As he DESCENDS onto the 711 from earlier, which is now a CRIME SCENE. Part of the entrance is sealed off. A couple of police are standing by.

An OFFICER approaches.

OFFICER

Captain Stevens said you were coming. Thanks for the assist.

THE PARAGON

Don't mention it.

OFFICER

Armed robbery happened 15 minutes ago. Suspects are still at large.  
(Off his look)  
We've got one victim...

The Paragon looks up to see an EMT taking a body away. Makes his way to the body, where we find what we feared most: Dr. Gates.

The Paragon's devastated. Recoils. He notices the officers and EMT's noticing his reaction. Attempts to keep composure. But he can't.

The officer looks as if he's going to say something. The Paragon stops him.

THE PARAGON  
 (Keeping composure)  
 Do we know what they look like? The  
 suspects?

CASHIER (PRE-LAP)  
 We've got surveillance both inside  
 as well as outside of the store.

INT. 711 ON 4TH AND CICERO-CONTINUOUS

The Paragon stands with the Cashier (Who's a little more  
 beaten up than we last saw him). Watching a security feed  
 from in the store.

CASHIER  
 (Re: Security feed)  
 These two guys--here. They walk in,  
 acting nervous. And before I  
 notice, one of 'em pulls a gun. I  
 tried to stop them. Got worked over  
 pretty good. The older man tried to  
 help. He put up a pretty good fight  
 until...you know the rest.  
 (Beat)  
 Makes no damn sense, killing  
 someone like that. I hope you find  
 them.

Our hero continues watching the security feed...

INSERT- SECURITY FEED#1

Clear. No sound. The Cashier tries to stop MAN #1, but gets  
 beaten by him. MAN #2 goes to assist, when DR. GATES rushes  
 into MAN#2, pushing him into some of the isles: MAN#1 goes  
 over and Shoots Dr. Gates. MAN#1 takes the money, while MAN#2  
 grabs a case of beer. The two leave, right before MAN#1  
 shoots the camera.

The feed cuts off switching to...

A SECOND FEED

... Where MAN #1 and MAN#2 get into a truck, storming off.

BACK TO CONVENIENCE STORE.

The Paragon fumes for a long beat. Then storms off.

EXT. SAINT'S HAVEN-LATER

A familiar jalopy of a truck darts down a lonely highway...

INSIDE THE TRUCK

MAN #1 is driving, while a drunken MAN#2 counts the money.  
The music is BLASTING.

The thugs are having a good time, until MAN#1 sees **The Paragon flying in the distance.**

Man#1 PANICS. Man#2 begins pulling out his gun.

The Truck merges off the highway, RACING over to an old parking lot.

AT THE PARKING LOT

The thugs pull over, waiting. After a long beat. Nothing.

All's clear, when something falls on the hood of the truck-  
***CRUUUNCH!!!***

The thugs panic, as they watch the front of their truck cave in. Worse yet,

They find The Paragon crouching on the front of their hood. Fuming. Like a predator who's cornered his prey.

Off their terrified reactions:

INT. POLICE PRECINT-LATER

Several POLICE OFFICERS are seated. Doing paper work. Booking SUSPECTS.

CAPTAIN STEVENS

Leaves his office. Heading home... when there's a LOUD thud at the door.

One of the OFFICERS goes to the door. Gun raised.

He opens the door revealing the criminals who robbed the 711.

They're bound. Conscious (surprisingly). Terrified. There's a note attached to Man#1.

INSERT- THE NOTE, which reads:

*"Officers,*

*These are the two punks that robbed the 711, earlier this evening. Check the security feed to verify.*

*-The Paragon"*

BACK TO PRECINCT

Captain Stevens approaches, seeing the letter.

Off his reaction:

And we-

CUT TO:

EXT. CEMETERY, SAINT'S HAVEN-DAYS LATER

It's a stark morning at the cemetery. The sky pregnant with rain...

David stands among a small crowd of FRIENDS AND FAMILY. They are in front of a fairly large CRYPT marked "JOSEPH GATES: REST IN PEACE."

In a single file, they begin laying flowers.

**LATER**

Some of the family members console David as he lays a wreath on the grave.

EXT. DR. GATE'S HOUSE-LATER

David leaves the house, carrying a box with him.

EXT. RADIO TOWER OVERLOOKING THE CITY-NIGHT

David sits on the radio tower, drinking. Depressed.

After a beat, David's "work" phone begins ringing.

David tosses the phone. It melts into the darkness thousands of feet below.

INT. DECREPIT BUILDING-NIGHT

David pulls down the map. Packs up the prototype costume.

**LATER**

David rifles through a box marked "JOSEPH GATES". He picks up a set of adoption papers with his name and Dr. Gates.

We also see photos of him with Gates.

David finds a large envelope. Sealed.

INSERT-ENVELOPE, which reads:

"TO: DAVID FROM: DR. GATES. TO BE OPENED AFTER MY PASSING."

BACK TO DECREPIT BUILDING

David opens it-- pulling out a tape and a set of written coordinates.

David places the tape in his VCR...

EXT. WALKER RESIDENCE-NIGHT

Madeline leaves the house. Bags packed. Martin helps her out the car.

MADELINE

Bye, honey. Me and the girls are going to the party for Sis-- I'll be back in a couple of days.

MARTIN

You know, the house will be a little lonely without you...

Madeline gives him a mischievous smile.

MADELINE

You'll toughen it out. It'll only be for the weekend.

MARTIN

I know. When you get back, I'm taking you to dinner to celebrate the presentation's success.

MADELINE

My, my...Someone's awfully confident.

MARTIN

Of course. The work's done. Everything just needs to be put together.

*(Off her look)*

Stay outta trouble.

MADELINE

(Smiles)

You do the same.

They kiss. Madeline drives off, leaving Martin behind.

EXT. LIVING ROOM, WALKER RESIDENCE—CONTINUOUS

Martin's on the couch. Relaxing. Turns on the TV.

VARIOUS TV REPORTERS

Police today are questioning a man  
linked to a *double homicide* in...

(Changes channel)

...Saint's Havens' Guardians  
dominates the Titans in the 4th  
quarter...

(Changes channel)

...A shoot-out with local gangs  
resulted in one officer being  
killed in the line of duty. This  
has been the second incident of  
gang violence in the last 48 hours.  
What's even stranger is the lack of  
response from The Paragon, who is  
usually present to intervene in  
these type of crimes...

Martin turns the TV off. Considers this for a beat. Then  
leaves.

INT. BASEMENT, WALKER RESIDENCE—MOMENTS LATER

We find Martin descending into the basement. Turns the lights  
on.

MARTIN

Heads over to a table that's covered up with a sheet. Pulls  
off the sheet revealing his ski-mask and utility belt.

Martin picks them up, examining them. Puts them into a  
backpack. He also packs a pair of binoculars.

As Martin prepares to leave, he pauses. Reflects.

MADELINE (V.O.)

*You want to make a difference? Be  
the man I married. And be content  
with that...*

... And with that, Martin heads out of the basement.

EXT. PRISON-LATER

From here, we see GUARDS on watch from prison towers. All seems quiet outside of the prison. However--

INT/EXT. PRISON YARD-CONTINUOUS

-- Utter pandemonium breaks out at the prison yard. Alarms go crazy. OFFICERS are escorting INMATES to their cells.

INT. CELL BLOCKS, PRISON-CONTINUOUS

We see more Officers talking MOS. Panicked. Pointing to empty cells as alarms go off.

EXT. PRISON-CONTINUOUS

A Department of Corrections van starting up.

INSIDE THE VAN

We find THREE CORRECTIONS OFFICERS. Seated. Quiet.

It takes us a moment to recognize them-- *It's Gray and his Henchmen from the bank!*

EXT. PRISON-CONTINUOUS

The van drives off into the night.

OMITTED

EXT. SAINT'S HAVEN-NIGHT

Life slows down as night hits the city. All's quiet.

Martin's car travels down a lonely street. Passed by a *Department of Corrections* van.

INSIDE THE CAR

Martin is looking around. Searching. Then pulls off into--

AN OLD PARKING LOT

-- Where he exits the car. On patrol.

Martin walks for a long beat-- until he spots something in the distance:

A WOMAN is being mugged by TWO THUGS in an alley. Martin races over--

EXT. ALLEY-CONTINUOUS

-- Where we see the Woman, terrified. Tries to run. The Two Thugs close in. Blocking her.

BEHIND A DUMPSTER

We find Martin. Crouched. Pulling on his ski mask. While--

BACK AT THE ALLEY

-- THUG#1 steals the Woman's purse. THUG#2 pulls out a knife when...

**WHAM!**

... And he's tackled by Martin into a wall. Knocked out.

THUG#2

Pulls out a knife. Races for Martin--who pulls out pepper spray. Fires a direct shot in Thug#2's eyes.

Thug#2 goes down-- screaming all the way.

Thug#1 tries to get back up and--**WHAM!**--is knocked out again by a baton-wielding Martin. Martin gives Thug#1 a kick to the gut. He screams.

EXT. SAINT'S HAVEN-CONTINUOUS

Not far from the scene are TWO BEAT COPS. On patrol. They hear the scream from the alley.

The Cops race towards the alley.

EXT. ALLEY-CONTINUOUS

Martin stands over the fallen thugs. Excited. Proud.

Martin picks up the purse. Hands it to the Woman.

MARTIN

Are you okay?

WOMAN

I...Uh..I'm fine-- Thank you.

MARTIN

Good.

BEAT COP#1 (O.S.)  
HOLD IT RIGHT THERE!!!

Martin turns to find the Two Cops. Closing in. He bolts...

... As the Cops approach. Beat Cop#1 peels off after Martin, while Beat Cop#2 stays behind.

BEAT COP#2

Continues his pursuit of Martin-- who makes it over to a fence. Jumping it. Barely losing Beat Cop#1.

Martin runs as fast as he can. Making his way back to--

EXT. OLD PARKING LOT-CONTINUOUS

-- Where he gets into his car. Driving off. Gone like the wind.

INT. 4-DOOR SEDAN-MOVING

We see Martin. Without the mask. Basking in his victory.

He spots a LARGE BUILDING in the distance. Pulls over to it.

**LATER**

We find Martin. Climbing a set of steps leading to the top of the building--

**MUCH LATER**

-- He's on the building's rooftop. Surveying the city.

If Martin's sanity wasn't in question before, it should be now.

INT. DECREPIT BUILDING-LATER THAT NIGHT

David turn off the TV. Ejects the tape. David has the coordinates in hand, hopeful. Resolved.

He goes to a nearby computer, when BREAKING NEWS comes on over the radio.

NEWS REPORTER (O.S.)

This is Channel 9 news reporting from the corner of 8th and Lincoln where firefighters are on the scene putting out a fire at the Gardencrest apartment complex.

David stops in his tracks.

NEWS REPORTER (O.S.) (CONT'D)

It's unclear how many tenants-- if any-- have been evacuated.

On David, considering this...

DAVID

(Quoting)

"It's about using what's empowered in you to create the world that should be...Instead of settling for the world that is."

(Beat)

One last time.

After a beat, David grabs his costume.

EXT. ROOFTOPS--CONTINUOUS

Martin's on a rooftop overlooking the city. Binoculars in hand. Searching. We can see the fire in the distance.

Martin's phone goes off. It's Andrew. He checks the message.

ANDREW (V.O.)

(Voice mail)

*Martin, it's Andrew. I wanted to remind you about our presentation. If you manage to get this message, let me know. We can go to Renegade Dave's and trade notes...This could be our big break, we need to bring our A-game on this one. Later, Man.*

Martin puts the phone away and continues searching when he spots something in the distance...

The Paragon rockets out of his lair. Heading towards the fire.

Martin picks up his backpack, heading towards the building...

**LATER**

Martin is seen at the fence separating him from the decrepit building we saw earlier. He pulls out a pair of fence-cutters and goes to work on a hole in the fence.

INT. DECREPIT BUILDING--CONTINUOUS

Martin enters the door, turning on a light revealing--

THE PARAGON'S LAIR

-- Where he finds the prototype suit, and the map.

Martin finds a wall with a set of schematics. Grabs them.

Martin continues to look around when he sees the envelope from Gates. Opening it. Finds the tape and the coordinates.

After a beat, Martin exits.

INT. 4-DOOR SEDAN--WITH MARTIN

As he's entering the coordinates on smart-phone app.

After a beat, we see the words: "*SAINT'S HAVEN CEMETERY*". Martin sees the cemetery in the distance, and races towards it.

EXT. APARTMENTS ON 8TH AND LINCOLN--CONTINUOUS

FIREFIGHTERS are at the scene of the apartment complex-- which is quickly burning to a cinder.

Firefighters spray down the apartment with hoses, while others are leading TENANTS to safety.

A nearby crowd of ONLOOKERS are filming the scene with camera-phones.

All seems to be good, until a WOMAN screams out.

The Firefighters look up in horror.

INT. APARTMENTS--CONTINUOUS

And we realize why. A MOTHER and her LITTLE GIRL remain in the building. The Mother looks for a way out. Nothing.

She looks out the window. Screaming. Waving. To no avail.

The Mother considers jumping for a moment. It's too high-- the fall means instant death.

The Mother goes to the Little Girl, who's panicking. Shields her as the apartment begins collapsing. Covering her eyes.

They prepare for oblivion...

... When an FIGURE bursts through the ceiling. Raining down debris. Lands on the floor in front of them. The Paragon.

He scans the place for a beat. Then spots the family.

With no hesitation, he grabs the Mother and her Little Girl--

EXT. APARTMENTS ON 8TH AND LINCOLN-CONTINUOUS

-- Bursting through the apartment, in flight.

They DESCEND, in front of a LARGE crowd of relieved onlookers. People are recording the scene with camera-phones.

The Mother and Child give our hero a hug of, while Firefighters give him a pat on the back...

After waving to crowd, our hero walks away. Pulls out the set of coordinates. Enters them into his smart-phone.

After a beat, he sees the words "*SAIN'T'S HAVEN CEMETERY*".

Our hero rockets into the night. And we-

CUT TO:

EXT. CEMETERY, SAINT'S HAVEN-WITH MARTIN

As he searches the graveyard. Cautiously. Flashlight in hand. After a long beat, Martin cuts through several head stones.

Martin spots something in the distance: A large crypt on a small hill top. Heads for it.

**LATER**

Martin reaches the crypt. Points his flashlight and we see the name "JOSEPH GATES" on the side.

Martin pulls out a crowbar from his backpack, prying the door open. Then heads inside--

INT. CRYPT-CONTINUOUS

-- Where we find a stark burial ground. The coffin of Dr. Gates is in the center of the crypt.

Martin aims the flashlight, searching. Nothing.

As Martin's quest seems hopeless, he prepares to leave when he spots something in a corner near the coffin...

... A crack. A crevice. With something protruding out of it.

Martin pulls the object out. A small urn. Opening it.

He pulls out something shiny. Mechanical. **THE ORB**. Martin examines it for a beat, before putting it in his backpack. Exits.

EXT. CRYPT-CONTINUOUS

Martin RACES off into the night, undetected.

**MUCH LATER**

A figure DESCENDS quietly on to the grave site: The Paragon.

INSIDE THE CRYPT

Our hero notices its been pried open. He sees the urn, opened. Stares for a long beat. Hard.

Off The Paragon's reaction:

And we-

CUT TO:

EXT. DECREPIT BUILDING- WITH THE PARAGON

As he hovers in the distance, seeing a HOLE in the fence. He flies over to his lair heading...

INSIDE THE DECREPIT BUILDING

Where he notices the door's been forced OPEN.

OUR HERO

Searches for a long beat. Notices everything's intact. Everything except the tape from Gates and the coordinates that were on the table.

The Paragon stands there, Worried. Maybe for the first time in a while. The radio plays in the background.

NEWS REPORTER (O.S.)

*...In other news, police are still searching for Richard Gray, the master-mind of a bombing as well as the failed bank-robbery at New Horizon Financial. He recently escaped from a local correctional facility. Police are saying he's extremely dangerous. If you have any information on him, you can call our hot-line at 847-353-TIPS...*

Enraged, The Paragon punches a nearby wall- WHAM!! Leaves cracks in the concrete.

Off our hero's grave reaction:

INT. BASEMENT, WALKER RESIDENCE-NIGHT

Martin returns to the basement. Tape in hand.

He sits the ORB down on a table. Turns on the TV. Puts in tape...

As the recording plays, a familiar face appears on screen: Dr. Gates (the tape is pre-recorded, days before his death).

DR. GATES (ON TV)

(Addressing camera)

David, if you're listening to this message by now, you know I've already passed. But there's still something I need to tell you.

(Beat)

I created the ORB because I wanted to use technology to transcend our limitations as humans. The plan worked. You're proof of that-- even if the world will never know.

Martin's transfixed at the recording-- *David? The ORB?*

DR. GATES (ON TV) (CONT'D)

I realize now that the world isn't ready for widespread access to such powers.

(Beat)

(MORE)

DR. GATES (ON TV) (CONT'D)  
 Which is why I've reverse-  
 engineered the ORB. No one else  
 will be granted powers by it.

Martin's considers this, dejected (as if an opportunity has just been snatched away from him).

DR. GATES (ON TV) (CONT'D)  
 My hope was that you'd continue to  
 be a positive force in the world.  
 But I know that's a lot to put on  
 anyone's shoulders. That being  
 said, I've enabled the ORB with the  
 capability of *removing* your powers:  
**Permanently**. I've ironed out a few  
 kinks. Should be functioning  
 normally, now. Should you ever  
 decide to go through with this,  
 you'll know how to find it. I love  
 you, David. You were always like a  
 son to me. My demise won't change  
 that...

Martin turns the TV off. Ponders for a beat. Wheels turning.

MARTIN  
 (To himself)  
*Permanently*, You don't say...

#### **LATER**

Martin works in his makeshift *lair*, feverishly. He's  
 examining the ORB. Pulls out a small stack of paper.  
 Schematics for THE ORB.

#### INSERT- SCHEMATICS

We see a series of equations, graphs, and Da-Vinci like  
 sketches of the human body.

In the center of the schematics is a crude sketch of the ORB.  
 Glowing. *Like the symbol on The Paragon's costume.*

There's a question mark in the center of the ORB with an  
 arrow pointing to a sketch of a human, illuminated (We're  
 seeing in picture form how the device works).

#### BACK TO BASEMENT

Martin eyes the ORB for a beat, reflecting...

THE PARAGON (V.O.)  
*...You're looking at the symbol.*  
*It's just a reminder.*  
 (MORE)

THE PARAGON (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
*Of where I came from. Of where I'm  
 going. Nothing more...*

MARTIN  
 (Re: The ORB)  
 So *this* is what you meant.

A beat. Martin ACTIVATES the ORB which glows with an intense, RED hue. All nearby electronics malfunction, leaving Martin AWED. And we-

CUT TO:

INT. BASEMENT, WALKER RESIDENCE-MORNING

A loud BEEPING fills the basement: The alarm clock. Martin wakes up. Groggy. Sees the clock.

Martin DESTROYS the tape and schematics. Trashing them.

Afterwards, he hides the ORB in a box. Then leaves.

**LATER**

We see Martin. Dressed. Briefcase in hand. Scrambling out the door.

INT. NELSON-WHITLEY ADVERTISING GROUP-LATER

Martin RACES into the lobby, as the MANAGER is entering with AMANDA SUMMERS, the CEO of Aegis Medical. The MANAGER spots Martin. Approaches.

MANAGER  
 Glad you could make it, Martin.  
 Mrs. Summers is heading into the  
 board room as we speak. Everything  
 up and running?

MARTIN  
 I certainly hope so.

They enter the board room--

INT. BOARD ROOM-CONTINUOUS

-- Where Martin checks his folder, panicking. He realizes that he didn't bring his presentation, and his notes aren't with him.

ANDREW enters shortly afterward, glancing nervously at Martin.

Mrs. Summers and some of her people take their seats. Their collective gaze on Martin.

MARTIN

When you think of *Aegis Medical*,  
what comes to mind? Well, I  
think...

(*Fumbles*)

...What I'm trying to say, is that  
*Aegis Medical* can reach a whole new  
customer base by reaching out  
hospitals. Maybe donating some  
equipment...

(*Grasping at straws*)

...If you look up *Aegis*, it means  
"with the support of, or backing  
of"...

A tense, AWKWARD beat. Martin fumbles. Mrs. Summer's people start checking their watches. The Manager shifts, nervously. The wheels are coming of this thing, fast.

Andrew steps up.

ANDREW

...Sorry folks, my friend got a  
little nervous.

Silence.

ANDREW (CONT'D)

What Martin was trying to say is  
that to reach a bigger audience,  
you have to go beyond simple ads.

(Off their look)

*Word of mouth* is your best ally.  
Get enough people talking about  
your products.

MRS. SUMMERS

We know-- But what about ads? I'm  
curious as to what you came up with  
as far as print and online  
advertising.

ANDREW

We came up with a Powerpoint  
presentation that I think you'll  
like.

(To Martin)

(MORE)

ANDREW (CONT'D)

Martin, can you play the presentation?

A beat. What's about to ensue is painful to watch.

MARTIN

(Off their look)

...I forgot to bring it.

A very long beat. Mrs. Summers shoots a glare at the MANAGER--  
*You wasted my time for this?* The MANAGER face-palms.

MRS. SUMMERS

(Checks watch)

I just remembered, I've got another appointment to get to in 30 minutes.

(Rising)

I'll get back with you all.

Mrs. Summers and her people leave the board room.

Off Martin and Andrew's reaction:

EXT. LOBBY-MOMENTS LATER

We find Martin, seated. Dejected. After a beat, Andrew walks out of the board room. Ticked.

ANDREW

(Quoting)

"The most dysfunctional presentation I've ever seen during my time here." That's what the boss told me, just now.

(Off Martin's look)

I thought you had this handled? It didn't seem like it in there.

MARTIN

I told you I left my notes-

ANDREW

-That's why I called you last night, so we could prepare for this. Not to mention rehearse.

MARTIN

Look I'm sorry, alright? I was unprepared. Get off my back...

Martin drops his folder. Andrew picks it up. Sees the article  
*"SUPERHERO OR SUPER-MENACE?"*

ACLU 'TROUBLED' OVER ASSAULT ALLEGATIONS INVOLVING 'THE PARAGON'". Andrew's even more upset at this.

ANDREW

(Re: article)

You mean you forgot things for a presentation that would've gotten us promoted, but you remembered an article about a freak-show superhero?

(Beat)

I'm gonna go drink my troubles away.

With no further words between them, Andrew exits. Martin's not out of the woods yet. A ticked off MANAGER approaches.

Off Martin's reaction:

**LATER**

We see Martin heading towards the exit. Holding a box containing his belongings. Distraught.

He makes his way over to the RECEPTIONIST, handing over his clearance pass.

Martin takes a **final** look at the place, then exits.

EXT. SAINT'S HAVEN-LATER THAT NIGHT

We see a small group of men race across the street. We recognize them instantly: Gray's men. Doing their best not to get spotted.

ACROSS THE STREET

Is an warehouse. Worn. Grungy. Abandoned. Gray's thugs make their way to it.

INT. ABANDONED WAREHOUSE-WITH GRAY'S THUG

Who watches out of a window *as police cars cruise by, patrolling.*

GRAY

Appears with the men from earlier, who are unloading their gear next to a small mountain of crates. Turns to WINDOW THUG.

GRAY  
 (To "Window" Thug)  
 Are the cops gone?

WINDOW THUG  
 Yeah, but this is the second time  
 I've seen police cars in the area.  
 (Off Gray's look)  
 Someone in the area must've  
 recognized us...Gray, we better get  
 outta here.

GRAY  
 We're not going anywhere. We just  
 need to lay low. If the police  
 suspected we were here, they  
 would've already come in force.  
 Besides, we've got more pressing  
 business...  
 (Off their look)  
 ...The superhero.

A beat. Something none of them wanted to hear. HENCHMAN #1  
 approaches.

HENCHMAN#1  
 Gray, when are you gonna let that  
 go? We *tried* already. At the bank.  
 With the Mech. We couldn't touch  
 him.  
 (Beat)  
 The best thing we can do is to get  
 outta this town so we don't get  
 arrested again.  
 (Off Gray's look)  
 Even so, I'd rather risk a clash  
 with the police as opposed to  
 throwin' down with a god.

GRAY  
 Better to fight and lose to a god,  
 than to run in shame-

HENCHMAN#1  
 -That's easy to say because you  
 won't be the only one risking your  
 life out there.

A tense, AWKWARD beat. More grumbling. Some look as if  
 they're gonna walk out. Gray's losing the argument. Makes a  
 final push.

GRAY

Friends, listen to me. We've been at this for a while, now. Taking scores. Gettin' rich. Now look at us. Running scared. Hiding like prey. Because of *him*. Why is that? Who appointed him ruler over all of us, huh?

(Beat)

Why should he get to meddle in the lives of others from on high...

EXT. SKIES OVER SAINT'S HAVEN-CONTINUOUS

The Paragon flies through the night, searching.

GRAY (V.O.)

*...He's not a god. He's a freak, it's that simple. An affront to nature itself...*

INT. BASEMENT, WALKER RESIDENCE-CONTINUOUS

Martin studies schematics for the ORB. Picks up the ORB, examining it.

GRAY (V.O.)

*...And deep down everyone knows it, though they claim to look up to him.*

INT. ABANDONED WAREHOUSE-CONTINUOUS

GRAY

We've have a chance to do something about it. A chance to balance the scales. To get retribution for what was taken from us.

(Off their look)

Who's with me?

A long beat. Gray's men step forward, one after the other(as crazy as it sounds).

Henchman#1 shakes his head-- *Madness! Utter madness!*

Then steps forward(probably to save his own life). Gray smiles.

GRAY (CONT'D)  
 Excellent. But first we need  
 weapons.  
 (Off their look)  
 And I need a bus. Preferably with  
 passengers on it.

And we-

CUT TO:

EXT. BASEMENT, WALKER RESIDENCE-NIGHT

Martin paces back and forth, Fuming.

MARTIN  
 I know it was a big deal and all,  
 but they didn't have to take it  
 this far...

He continues pacing for a long beat. Then he spots:

His collection dedicated to our hero.

In a fit of rage, Martin TURNS OVER THE COLLECTION.

Off his reaction:

EXT. SAINT'S HAVEN-LATER

Our hero DESCENDS on the ledge of a rooftop. The Paragon  
 pulls out his phone, and finds a card. Martin's card.

He reflects on it for a beat. Then pulls out a phone. Dials.

INT. BASEMENT, WALKER RESIDENCE-CONTINUOUS

Martin is pulling down the newspaper clippings about our  
 hero. Trashing them. Hangs up schematics for the ORB.

His phone starts RINGING. It goes to voice mail.

THE PARAGON (V.O.)  
*Martin, it's me. It's The Paragon.*

Martin stops his work.

THE PARAGON (V.O.)  
*I called to let you know I thought  
 about what happened last week.  
 Martin, you were right.*  
 (MORE)

## THE PARAGON (V.O.) (CONT'D)

*I know you were only trying to help. I'm sorry...I won't keep you any longer. Bye, Martin.*

Martin considers this for a beat. Face hardens. Throws away the last of the news clippings.

**LATER**

Martin's in the basement. ORB in hand. He goes over to the radio-- turning it on. Nightly News.

## NEWS REPORTER (O.S.)

... In other news. Police reports indicate that a mugging was stopped by what they're calling a "masked vigilante". The victim reported that she was attacked by two men-- who were taken out themselves by the crimefighter-- who left when pursued by the police...

Martin hears this, excited.

## NEWS REPORTER (O.S.) (CONT'D)

We're launching an online forum to talk about the crime-fighter.

(Beat)

So what do you think: An emerging hero, or *the poor man's Paragon*?

Martin's excitement quickly turns to rage as he knocks the radio off the table. Then leaves.

## EXT. SAINT'S HAVEN-NIGHT

As night reaches the city, THREE MEN wait at a street corner for approaching transit bus. Gray's men.

They zip up their weapons. Waves at the bus driver who pulls over--

## EXT. CONSTRUCTION SITE-CONTINUOUS

-- While GRAY emerges from the shadows with some of his goons. They're loading weapons: Guns. Rocket launchers. A small ARSENAL.

## GRAY

Directs two of his men to be on look out. Pulls out a walkie-talkie.

INT. LIVING ROOM, DAVID'S HOUSE-NIGHT

David's seated on the couch. Relaxed. Hangs up his costume on a nearby chair.

"Breaking News" comes on.

TV REPORTER (O.S.)

This is Channel 9 News reporting from the Archer Construction site on 5th and Orchard. It's the scene of a hostage crisis as Richard Gray is reported to have several hostages in a transit bus. He's demanding that The Paragon show up, alone, or he'll kill the hostages.

David eyes his costume, reflecting...

INT. BANK-FLASHBACK

We find JULIANNE among several HOSTAGES. Bound. Panicking...

... And for good reason: Bombs are planted at all four corners of the bank (Much like at the earlier bank robbery scene).

INSERT-THE BOMB

Which has a timer on it. 00:07... 00:06... 00:05...

BACK TO BANK

Julianne looks out of the window. Sees something *approaching*.

EXT. SAINT'S HAVEN-CONTINUOUS

Which is none other than David. Slightly older. Plain-clothes.

He's flying as fast as he can-- yet struggles. It's clear he hasn't mastered the art of flight just yet...

... As he flies low, *almost* slamming into a building-- before DARTING past it.

David goes WARP SPEED-- racing towards the bank--

INT. BANK-CONTINUOUS

-- As Julianne and the Hostages spot him in the distance approaching. They're all in dis-belief at the sight.

INSERT-THE BOMB

... 00:03... 00:02...

BACK TO BANK

Julianne looks at the bomb. Sheds a single tear. Resolved. *She knows what's about to happen.*

EXT. SAINT'S HAVEN-CONTINUOUS

David's nearly there...

...When the building EXPLODES. Engulfed in smoke and fire.

David freezes-- in mid-air. Watching the building burn to a cinder.

David's in shock. Horror. Grief. All at once.

Our hero's grief quickly turns to rage.

BACK TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM, DAVID'S HOUSE-CONTINUOUS

A moment of rage still fresh as David picks up the costume-- heading out of the living room. Meanwhile--

INT. LIVING ROOM, WALKER RESIDENCE-SAME TIME

-- Martin is watches the same news bulletin, while studying a set of blueprints.

ON A NEARBY TABLE

Is none other than the ORB.

TV REPORTER (O.S.)  
48 hours ago, Gray was reported to  
have escaped from Saint's Haven  
Correctional Facility...

Martin picks up the ORB, activating it. The sphere-like device gives off a faint red glow while he holds it in his hand gazing at it, intensely-- Everything seems okay. But:

Unbeknownst to Martin, everything's far from okay as we

CLOSE IN ON THE ORB: A slight crack begins forming along the surface of the device. *Just a few kinks?*

The TV begins experiencing technical problems. A nearby light flickers-- as does a digital clock.

Martin holds the ORB, remembering...

MARTIN (V.O.)

*Just because you have powers  
doesn't make you better than anyone  
else.*

THE PARAGON (V.O.)

*If the goal is not get killed while  
fighting crime, I'd say it does!*

MARTIN

(Beat)

We'll see about that...

Martin deactivates the ORB-- and everything returns to normal. He places it into a backpack, heading out. And we--

CUT TO:

EXT. SKIES OVER SAINT'S HAVEN--WITH THE PARAGON

As he DARTS past a series of skyscrapers, dodging the giants of concrete and steel with SUPERHUMAN precision.

Our hero spots the construction site in the distance, racing towards it.

ON THE STREETS BELOW

Is none other than Martin's sedan, trailing.

INSIDE THE CAR

We find Martin, The Paragon's friend-turned-rival. Intense. He FLOORS the gas pedal, following.

In the passenger seat, we see the ski mask and gloves from earlier. We also see the ORB.

EXT. CONSTRUCTION SITE-NIGHT

All is quiet at the construction site, tonight. We see semi-completed buildings, bags of cement, and equipment next to a set of I-beams.

The quiet is interrupted by the sound of IMPACT as Our hero descends from the sky.

SEVERAL FEET BEHIND HIM

Martin is seen moving towards a nearby crate. Slowly. Quietly. He puts on the ski-mask and gloves.

Afterward, Martin pulls out the ORB , activating it. The ORB begins to glow with a faint, white light that quickly transitions to bright, translucent red...

THE PARAGON

Is seen moving forward toward a large group of crates in search of the hostages.

He takes another step forward and immediately clutches his head, staggering for a beat. Our hero turns around. Sensing something WRONG, yet strangely familiar.

THE PARAGON

...Gray.

He begins making a quick scan of the area look toward his right and left when a voice is heard...

GRAY (O.S.)

You finally made it, I'm glad...

He looks up to find GRAY standing on some crates, several feet above him. Clad in Kevlar. Armed. Ready for battle.

GRAY (CONT'D)

...I told you that eventually I'd get out. I guess it turns out that I didn't need to "fly out of prison" after all.

(Beat)

Well, hero, this is it. The *grand finale*. No elaborate traps. Just a couple of men ready to fight it out to the death.

THE PARAGON

"Fight to the death"? Please. Using innocents as leverage just proves what a coward you really are.

(MORE)

## THE PARAGON (CONT'D)

Let the hostages go, this is  
between you and me.

## GRAY

You've got it all wrong. This isn't  
about leverage, I only needed to  
provide a reason for you to show  
up...

Gray pulls out cellphone and begins dialing.

The Paragon feels weary, almost drained, yet puts on a good  
façade so as not to give his situation away. Meanwhile...

## MARTIN

Is seen moving closer to the ensuing fray. The ORB's glow  
GROWS in intensity, as he does his best not to give away his  
location...

## GRAY (CONT'D)

(To henchman)

...I got what I wanted, so release  
the fine people of Saint's Haven.

(Off The Paragon's look)

No one's dying tonight...except  
one.

## EXT. A BLOCK FROM THE CONSTRUCTION SITE-CONTINUOUS

A few feet from the construction site lies parked transit  
bus.

The doors to the bus OPEN and nervous yet relieved hostages  
are seen filing out of the bus quickly to safety.

We also see Gray's men. Masked. Wielding automatic weapons.  
Making their way to the construction site...

## EXT. CONSTRUCTION SITE-CONTINUOUS

Without any ceremony GRAY'S MEN pop up from crates--  
unleashing a hail of bullets which ricochet off our hero.

## THE PARAGON

*Fires a TK concussive blast*, which KNOCKS the men back into a  
some crates. Hard. He tries to use another blast, but he  
begins struggling to form another blast.

Another goon, wielding a shotgun, tries to surprise our hero  
from behind.

The Paragon reacts, BENDING the barrel of the shotgun as the goon watches in horror. He tries to flee, but is HURLED into some gravel bags, knocking him out.

Our hero attempts to take flight. As he begins to levitate, he starts DESCENDING rapidly as quickly as he began to ascend. His flight is starting to fail. *Fast!*

GRAY

Along with his men continue their assault from their perch above.

The Paragon grabs a FORKLIFT, and with every bit of strength he has, HURLS it at Gray and his goon-squad.

The men scatter immediately as the forklift CRASHES.

Gray orders signals for his men to move in on our hero. He GRABS an RPG Launcher near a dead henchman, and begins loading it...

ANOTHER GOON

Picks up a sharp, metal rod and rushes our hero with it. He tries to swing it at the hero who blocks it with his hand, SHATTERING it upon impact (leaving a jagged half lying on the ground). The goon is knocked out in a similar fashion to the others.

As The Paragon moves forward, he grasps his hand in pain.

He looks at his hand and his eyes widen in surprise. He sees a sight that he hasn't seen in ages: Blood!

Gray's men advance, firing hand guns as our hero bristles for confrontation. Meanwhile...

GRAY FIRES THE RPG

Something not lost on our hero, who in a last-minute effort, HYPER JUMPS, launching himself into the air...

The rocket hits the ground, EXPLODING. Enveloping Gray's men in a wall of smoke and fire.

The impact of the blast hits The Paragon, knocking him to the ground. Hard.

The fallen hero staggers. His once impeccable suit has now been singed by the flames and is stained with dirt. His mind wants to rise, but his body struggles.

GRAY

Jumps down from the crate to our hero below, kicking him in the ribs as he tries to rise. He repeats, each kick more violent than the last...

GRAY

This moment has been long overdue.  
I'm sorry it cost some of my best men, but that's why it pays to have "flunkies stupid enough to follow you".

MARTIN

Peeks up behind a crate, seeing the beating unfold. He spots a handgun laying next to a dead henchman, picks it up, and moves in.

The ORB continues to grow in intensity to the point that nearby lights at the construction site begins FLICKERING...

GRAY

Stands over the fallen hero, swelling with pride like a fighter who has just defeated his opponent and eagerly awaits the final count.

The Paragon staggers to get up, but fails.

He sees something buried in the dirt: **the half of the metal rod that he broke minutes ago.**

GRAY (CONT'D)

Look at the self-appointed savior of Saint's Haven. An indestructible champion reduced to grovelling. Hanging on for dear life.

(Beat)

See, power has its limits.

Gray pulls out a gun, cocking it.

GRAY (CONT'D)

You're a sorry sight. But a win is a win.

The Paragon reaches out for the rod, focusing. The rod begins MOVING, slightly until it starts shaking WILDLY.

Our hero makes a YANKING motion, pulling the rod to him, and PLUNGING it into a surprised Gray in what looked to have been a single move...

Gray reflexively FIRES, hitting our hero in the shoulder as he attempts to back away. Both men let out a scream, and Gray drops to his knees. Dying.

THE PARAGON

Julianne.

(Off Gray's look)

You asked if you killed a loved one of mine-- Her name was Julianne.

(Beat)

I would've killed you earlier. But I didn't want everyone to think I was a menace.

(Impales Gray further)

I don't care about that, anymore.

Gray smiles. A macabre site. Then falls over dead--

EXT. STREETS, SAINT'S HAVEN--CONTINUOUS

--As we see, in the distance, the POLICE heading towards the construction. SWAT's not too far behind.

EXT. CONSTRUCTION SITE--CONTINUOUS

We find The Paragon. Sweaty. Dirty. Bloody. As he rises to his feet, he feels a SURGE go through him, as if sapping him of all his strength. He drops to his knees as...

A MASKED MAN

Emerges from the shadows. The ORB in one hand, and a gun in the other. He moves closer to our hero like a predator who's cornered his prey.

The Paragon does his best to back away from him.

The man pulls off the ski mask revealing Martin.

*The Hero and Villain are frozen in this tableau moment.*

THE PARAGON

You?!

MARTIN

Yes it's me...David.

The Paragon's eyes WIDEN-- *He knows my name?!*

MARTIN (CONT'D)

(Off his surprise)

I found the tape of your friend Gates.

(Re: The ORB)

As you can see-- I found the ORB as well. I hate that this has to be done, but it must end this way.

THE PARAGON

(Disgusted)

You wanna be a hero that bad, huh?

MARTIN

"A hero"? My friend, this is for the world. You're too dangerous to be left unchecked. We wouldn't stand a chance against you, if push came to shove. You simply are-

THE PARAGON

-Spare me the self-righteous babble. You're not doing this for the world, you're doing this for you. I represented something that you could never be...

(Beat)

And that always killed you.

MARTIN

(Flash of Anger)

Go on and say it. You were a legend. An icon. Well, it takes more than powers to be a legend. You're right about one thing: You **were** something that I could never be. I tried to be like you-- and came up short. The "poor man's Paragon".

(Resolved)

But none of that matters, anymore: You see, I don't have to be like you. I can be something in my own right.

(Raises ORB; takes a step forward)

You're a god among men to a lot of people. And once you're gone, I'll be known as the "man who brought down a god".

(Off his look)

In that respect, I'll be a legend...

Martin moves closer to our hero. The ORB's glow begins to PULSATE, as if the device had sensed our hero's presence.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

...Time to join the rest of us mere mortals.

MARTIN

presses a button on the ORB, throwing it to the ground. Our hero tries to scurry away, but is ENVELOPED in the ORB's glow.

Martin covers his eyes, as does our hero, while the light show continues for a long beat. Then dissipates.

THE ORB

Lies on the ground. Visible cracks along its surface.

The Paragon takes the opportunity to make a run for it while Martin starts SHOOTING-- **BANG!BANG!BANG!**

THE PARAGON

Makes his way to a stack of I-beams. He finds one lying on the ground, attempting to lift it. He pulls upward on the beam with both hands. Nothing. He tries, no avail.

The superhero hides behind the I-beams as his friend-turned-nemesis follows in the distance, gun raised...

OUR HERO

Sees an opportunity to run and takes it, but is cornered by Martin. Gun in one hand, the ORB in another.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

(Re: ORB)

You know, it's amazing that this little thing could lead to all of this. The powers. You. None of this would have been possible without it.

As Martin advances with the ORB, the cracks along its surface GROW and a faint red light begins to intensify as well...

MARTIN (CONT'D)

...I'll keep it as a reminder of all this.

Before he can pull the trigger, the ORB begins to glow again. This time the device itself begins to PULSATE...violently.

SPARKS begin to shoot out from the ORB as the cracks on the device spread along its surface.

The intense heat causes Martin to drop the device. Realizing what's about to ensue, Martin moves away as does The Paragon.

*We see VERY FAINT ripples in the air surrounding our hero.*

The last cracks form on it and it releases a bright, violent energy from its core. EXPLODING.

Martin makes a run for it, *seeing The Paragon seemingly caught in the blast...*

Martin puts some distance between himself and the explosion, when:

SWAT approaches, their guns DRAWN on Martin who puts his hands up. Surrendering.

Off Martin's reaction as officers haul him away.

#### **LATER**

We see the blast site. Bits of charred debris. Smoke. A small blaze nearly gone out. Then:

We find a man-hole at the site of the blast. Slightly uncovered. *Did our hero survive?*

POLICE OFFICERS seal off the area as INVESTIGATORS approach. And we-

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

EXT. POLICE DEPARTMENT-MORNING

It's a stark morning at Saint's Haven Police Department.

Captain Stevens makes his way to a podium in front of a sea of REPORTERS and PHOTOGRAPHERS. The occasional camera flash goes off.

## CAPTAIN STEVENS

(Addresses crowd)

As you are aware, an arrest was made at a construction site around 9 p.m. last night. The suspect arrested is one Martin Walker in connection with the death of the vigilante known as The Paragon. No body has been found as of yet, though eye-witness accounts place Mr. Walker at the scene during an explosion that led to The Paragon's apparent demise.

Commotion among the crowd. A FEMALE news reporter raises her hand.

## FEMALE REPORTER

Do we know if the suspect had powers or some type of weaponry?

## CAPTAIN STEVENS

The suspect showed no signs of powers, which makes sense as we wouldn't have been able to make an arrest if he had. As to any type of weaponry, none was found thus far, but the investigation is ongoing. That's all I can say for now.

The captain leaves as more reporters are asking questions. And we-

## BEGIN MONTAGE:

1. Various news outlets across the globe are reporting on The Paragon's apparent demise.
2. People in Saint's Haven are having a vigil at the construction site.
3. In jail, we see the 711 THUGS, COCKPIT THUG, GANG LEADER, among other criminals captured by our hero. They see the news and begin CHEERING.
4. Investigators are surveying the wreckage at the construction site, attempting to find clues. The "Men In Black" type is seen in the distance, taking pictures.
5. A newspaper delivery man drops by a stack of newspapers at a storefront. The headline reads "'THE PARAGON' KILLED!!!"
6. Madeline is with her SISTER and some FRIENDS. They see the news coverage. She's stunned to see Martin.

7. At Martin's old job, Andrew and the firm's manager see the news coverage. They trade stunned looks with each other.

Our montage comes to an end.

INT. CITY HALL-DAY

Everything happens MOS as...

... We see the MAYOR stand at a podium. She's giving a speech before a crowd of SPECTATORS and REPORTERS.

After the speech, a WORKER comes on stage-- making his way to a large object. Covered up. Pulls off the cover revealing:

A large statue of The Paragon. It's a massive, life-sized replica( or as close as they could get to our hero via news footage).

At the base of the statue is a plaque.

INSERT-PLAQUE, Which reads:

*"IN MEMORY OF 'THE PARAGON'*

*A MODEL OF EXCELLENCE THAT WILL NEVER BE FORGOTTEN."*

BACK TO CITY HALL

Spectators applaud. Reporters take notes. The occasional camera flash goes off.

More Spectators begin pulling out cellphones, recording.

It's a sobering, yet celebratory event--

INT. RECREATION ROOM, JAIL-CONTINUOUS

-- That's being watched by Martin along with other INMATES.

Martin's expression is stoic. Emotionless. An expression that quickly gives way to a smile that would make your very skin crawl. And we-

CUT TO:

INT. JAIL-DAY

We hear the sound of jail house doors closing as Martin is escorted to his cell by GUARDS. The entire jail is so quiet that a pin drop could be heard...

The eyes of all inmates are on Martin, who doesn't even look in their direction.

INT. RECREATION ROOM, JAIL-DAYS LATER

PRISON GUARDS stand by as A CROWD OF INMATES congregate.

Among them is a LARGE INMATE covered in gang tattoos. A look that screams hardened criminal-- clearly the leader of the bunch.

ACROSS THE ISLE

Is Martin. Seated. Alone. He doesn't make eye contact with anyone. What's odd is despite his condition, there's an unusual serenity about him.

The inmates begin huddling around a TV. The news.

NEWS REPORTER (ON TV)

This is Channel 9 reporting from the construction site on 5th and Orchard which is the site of an ongoing investigation involving the death of the superhero known as "The Paragon". Investigators are still gathering evidence to find the cause of the hero's apparent demise...

The Inmates begin cheering. Martin says nothing.

INMATE#1

What'd they call the guy? Para-GONE?

INMATE#2

Para-GON. Means "model of excellence". I looked it up in the prison library.

LARGE INMATE

"Model of excellence"? Well, he ain't no more. Dead as a doornail. I say it couldn't have happened to a nicer guy.

INMATE#3

Damn straight. The guy busted a cousin of mine for taking an armored car.

TV REPORTER (ON TV)  
 ...Social media sites have exploded  
 as everyone's talking a about the  
 murder of the century. More people  
 are wanting to know more about the  
 suspect at the center of the  
 investigation. A man named Martin  
 Walker.

Martin's face pops up on the TV screen. The inmates begin  
 talking among themselves. Large Inmate calls out to Martin.

LARGE INMATE  
 (Re: Martin)  
 Hey, *super-villain!*  
 (Off Martin's look)  
 You're on TV.

Some of the inmates begin clapping. Some cheering, whistling.  
 The Guards begin trading looks with each other, uneasy.

Martin takes in the adulation and smiles. A macabre sight.

INT. VISITATION ROOM-DAY

Martin waits for his visitor as a MAN emerges, sitting across  
 from him.

The man is sharply dressed. Clean-shaven. A look that  
 practically screams GOVERNMENT--*It's the "Men In Black" type*  
*we saw earlier.*

We'll refer to him as G-MAN.

G-MAN  
 Good morning, Mr. Walker. I know  
 you're expecting a visitor. I'll be  
 brief.  
 (Off his look)  
 My *employers* are interested in the  
 specifics of what happened at the  
 construction site, notably what  
 happened to the one called The  
 Paragon.

A beat.

MARTIN  
 ... Your employers? You mean the  
 government. Who are you? CIA? NSA?

G-MAN

I'm *independent*. Let's leave it at that. The division I work for studied The Paragon every since he made himself public to the world.

(Laments)

Ultimately, we learned very little about him.

(Off Martin's look)

We even had a little *project* developed in case he was a threat. Very costly. Was a complete failure. But that was only *one* counter-measure. One of many. To prepare for *others* like him. We could use your help.

(Beat)

So how'd you pull it off?

Martin glares at G-Man, curious.

G-MAN (CONT'D)

(Off Martin's look)

Are you super-powered as well?

MARTIN

I wouldn't be in here if I were.

G-MAN

Fair enough. Well then you must have had some type of advanced tech or weaponry...

Nothing. G-Man sees this is going nowhere, fast.

G-MAN (CONT'D)

...Think it over. My employers may have a use for someone with your skills. Who knows, we might even be able to shorten your stay here.

(off his look)

Get in touch with us, should you change your mind. Goodbye.

G-MAN leaves a perplexed Martin behind. Martin looks at the table for a beat and notices A CARD LEFT BEHIND WITH A PHONE NUMBER ON IT. Martin pockets it.

**LATER**

A GUARD walks up to Martin, who's still seated.

GUARD

You have a visitor.

After a beat, Madeline walks in. Martin looks down, ashamed. She takes a seat on the opposite side of the glass.

MARTIN

Madeline...I can explain-

MADELINE

-Explain?! What, this?

She shows him a clipping of a newspaper headline. It reads "WORLD'S FIRST SUPER-VILLAIN?! INVESTIGATORS BAFFLED AS TO HOW SUSPECT KILLED HERO". A tense, awkward beat.

MADELINE (CONT'D)

(Re: News headline)

How could you possibly explain this?

MARTIN

I didn't mean...Look...He was a menace. Who knows what he would've done in the long run.

(Beat)

I didn't want any of this.

MADELINE

Didn't you? How could you be this stupid?

(Off his look)

How could you ruin your life. *Our* life. And for what, jealousy? Because you couldn't be some hero?

(Removes ring)

I can't be a part of this anymore.

(Off Martin's look)

I've already talked to a lawyer.

MARTIN

You're leaving me? Now, of all times?

Silence. Her expression says "yes".

MARTIN (CONT'D)

Will you at least be there at my hearing?

MADELINE

When is it?

MARTIN

In a couple of days.

MADELINE

...I guess I owe you that much.

Madeline rises. Leaves. Before she heads out, she turns to him.

MADELINE (CONT'D)

Maybe in time, I'll forgive you for all of this...but ruined a good thing. I hope you know that.

Off Martin's reaction as she leaves:

INT. SEWERS-LATER THAT NIGHT

We see the sewers. Dark. Wet. Creepy as hell. A seemingly endless tunnel with specks of light...

Rats are seen scurrying through the sewers. Seemingly alone, until...

A FIGURE

Moves through the sewer system. Staggering. It's human in shape, but we can't make out anything further.

The person travels for a long beat towards a ladder heading up to the surface.

The figure appears to be holding something. Something that flickers wildly. Very bright.

In the brief moments of flickering, the dazzling light reveals the identity of the figure: The Paragon.

He's alive(miraculously).Bloody. Tattered. *Mortal*.

Our hero carries the last remnants of the ORB-- whose light is beginning to fade...

The Paragon covers his face-- ascending to the surface. And we-

CUT TO:

EXT. COURTHOUSE, SAINT'S HAVEN-DAYS LATER

Throngs of PEOPLE flock to the steps of the courthouse-- awaiting the trial of the century!

Cameras flicker as PHOTOGRAPHERS take shots of the scene.

After a beat, a police car pulls up. Officers emerge from the car as does another figure: Martin. Cuffed. Jail uniform.

Photogs take pictures of Martin, who's heading for the court house. Emotionless.

IN THE CROWD

We see a familiar face: Madeline. Distraught. Tears down her face.

Martin sees this, turning away. Ashamed. He advances towards impending judgement. A voice is heard.

UNKNOWN MAN (O.S.)  
LISTEN TO ME, EVERYONE...

The sound brings the scene to a complete STOP. We see another familiar face in the crowd: *The Lone Nut from earlier.*

THE LONE NUT

Grungier than ever, continues waving his sign. Frantically. Martin notices.

LONE NUT  
(Re: Martin)  
LISTEN! IF HE COULD KILL THE SO-  
CALLED HERO, HE'LL DO FAR WORSE TO  
US IF LEFT UN-CHECKED!

Martin turns away when...

**BANG! BANG!**

... And Martin drops to the ground as people flee in terror.

POLICE

Quickly apprehend the Lone Nut-- who's drops the gun.

MADELINE

Rushes to Martin, through police officers who are attending to him. Crying. Panicked.

Martin tries to stay alert when:

He sees David in the crowd. In disguise. Slightly more stubble on his face. Glaring.

Martin can't believe it. The two lock eyes for a long beat, before David slips back into the crowd. Martin Dies. And we-

FADE TO BLACK.

OVER BLACK: "TWO WEEKS LATER"

FADE IN:

EXT. FIELD-DAY

CAMERA'S POV:

As we DRIFT over a vast field overlooking a nearby lake. It might seem like no one's around, until:

DAVID

Enters the frame, looking around to make sure no one's watching. Then addresses the camera.

DAVID

(To Camera)

This is tape#3...the *final* tape for now. So far, the powers have made me stronger as well as nearly bullet-proof. There's just one last thing to work on...

(Wry smile)

...Travel.

WITH A FLICK OF HIS WRIST, David makes the camera PAN over the field. We see a vast blue lake in the distance. Seemingly endless.

DAVID (CONT'D)

(Beat)

Dr...Uh...Joseph. If this doesn't work...Well, it was nice knowing you.

David takes a few steps back. Begins focusing. Nothing happens.

After a beat, we see PARTICLES OF DIRT begin levitating off the ground as if they were ORBITING David. Suddenly:

David begins LEVITATING off the ground. Hovering for a beat, before FALLING to the ground. Frustrated. Gets up.

David focuses again. This time, we begin to see faint rippling in the air around David.

David JUMPS, landing several feet on the other side of the field IN A SINGLE BOUND! David looks around. *Getting there.*

After a beat, David runs toward us. The air RIPPLES around him as he makes his way into the frame before HYPER JUMPING again.

THE CAMERA

Is YANKED into the air with David who's GAINING altitude.

We realize the truth: That wasn't a long jump, David's actually FLYING.

David continues to ASCEND reaching--

THE SKY

-- Where David streaks through several large CLOUD BANKS (*With the camera following behind*). An ethereal sight.

*We're several THOUSANDS of feet off the ground at this point. Everything on the ground, from up here, looks like little specks.*

David shivers from the altitude.

A Small FLOCK OF BIRDS enter the frame-- nearly colliding with our hero-in-training.

He ducks them at the last minute, before going WARP SPEED flying into the distance.

After a long beat,

David comes to a complete stop, DESCENDING rapidly. The camera's YANKED along with him.

He continues to fall, until: **BOOOOOOOOOOM!!!**

David lands into--

A BACK YARD

-- Throwing up a CLOUD of dust. A MAN panics, fleeing the scene.

DAVID

Steps out of a large crater in the backyard. He makes his way to the Man whom we recognize instantly: Dr. Gates.

Gates sees David-- who's unharmed. To say he's stunned would be an understatement.

DAVID (CONT'D)

(To Gates)

Hi. I told you I had something to show you.

(Re: Crater)

Might need to work on my landing, though.

(Off Gate's look)

So, what do you think?

DR. GATES

(AWED)

...I think you're gonna change the world.

(Off David's Look)

Now, what are we gonna tell the neighbors?

The video cuts off--

INT. LIVING ROOM, DAVID'S HOUSE-DAY(CONTINUOUS)

-- As David turns the TV off. He places the tape marked "*FIRST FLIGHT*" in a box on a nearby table.

David picks up remnants of the ORB, reflecting...

INSERT CUT: A younger David activates the ORB for the first time.

David packs up the prototype costume we saw earlier as well. Picks up his *Paragon costume*. Reflecting.

David's memories flash before us as we-

BEGIN MONTAGE:

1. David ,in time, is getting better at flying and landing.
2. David is working on what will become the suit.
3. David is seen trying on the suit for the first time.
4. David, as The Paragon, flies toward a man who fell off of a building-- Catching him at the last minute.
5. The bank scene-- The Paragon clashes with Gray's men.

Our montage comes to an end as the sound of GUNFIRE fills the house. David checks it out.

OUTSIDE THE HOUSE

The POLICE pursuing a car full of CRIMINALS. The Criminals take shots at the Police while fleeing.

INT. LIVING ROOM, DAVID'S HOUSE-CONTINUOUS

Reflexively, David rushes to the bedroom with the costume. Stops in his tracks.

David looks at the costume for a beat, regretful. Then tosses it in the box. Sealing it up along with the ORB, and its schematics. And we-

FADE OUT.

**THE END**