

Save Us

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EXT. STREET - NIGHT

In the middle of the street, CONCRETE has been CRACKED, TRASH and DEBRIS are scattered everywhere. A CROWD of bewildered CITIZENS stands near the sidewalk watching as something unfolds in the newly demolished street.

NARRATOR (V.O)

A long time ago. Not really sure when, but a long time ago I heard this quote...

CRAWLING through the rubble is a MAN whose face is SCARRED. He is trying to get away from someone not yet seen.

NARRATOR (V.O)

It was simply this: "Death is certain. Life is not."

The pursuer is another MAN dressed in a FULL BODY TACTICAL SUIT. And a MASK.

On the sidewalk, a TEENAGE BOY DROPS his COMIC BOOK as he tries to catch a glimpse of the action.

The COVER reads: "PART ONE OF TWO: 'FOUR SHADOWS'"

The SCREEN fills with BLACK.

GUNSHOTS.

FEMALE BYSTANDER (V.O)

Oh my god! I think he's dead. What now?

NARRATOR (V.O)

Then one day, I finally realized the relevance of such a statement.

INT. ALPHA-PRIME BIOTECHNOLOGIES - DAY

SIX MONTHS EARLIER...

A massive swarm of various media entities surround a well-groomed, expressionless business man.

SAMSON CARMICHAEL, (35; distinguished; asshole) nonchalantly maneuvers through the sea of CAMERAS, MICROPHONES and bothersome REPORTERS.

He ignores all questions.

(CONTINUED)

## FEMALE REPORTER

What now, Mister Carmichael? How are you planning to move forward with business matters for your company in light of recent allegations of you being involved in the plot to assassinate Mayor Winchester?

The pompous socialite continues to brush off the mob of inquisitors.

HAROLD STEIN, Samson Carmichael's attorney (40's; glorified sleaze bag) steps in front of his client, shielding him from the outrageous media blitz.

## STEIN

Samson Carmichael has been and continues to be one of the most prominent, well-reputed figures in this city. He is completely appalled that such unfounded slander would even be entertained by the various manipulative news outlets looking to diminish his storied track record of excellence in service to his community.

Samson pastes on an empty, prepared smile for the cameras.

## STEIN (CONT'D)

Obviously, Mr. Carmichael denies all notions that he is linked in any capacity to the unfortunate attempt on our mayor's life. Like everyone else, he is shocked and disgusted by such a horrific act and wants nothing more than for justice to be served to the monsters responsible. That is all.

EXT. ALPHA-PRIME BIOTECHNOLOGIES - DAY

Glass DOUBLE DOORS open as the reporters spill out onto the front steps.

Samson and Stein SHOVE passed the crowd and into a waiting LIMOUSINE.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Only the light from the old, analog TELEVISION set illuminates this otherwise pitch black room as a YOUNG WOMAN (20) locks her attention on the news report being broadcast.

On the screen is anchorman SULLIVAN JENKINS (40s; pudgy; balding) wrapping up the night's biggest stories.

Alongside the shot of the newscaster is an imposed PHOTOGRAPH of Samson Carmichael.

SULLIVAN

Action News has learned that as of seven o'clock this evening, founder and CEO of Alpha-Prime Biotechnologies, Samson Carmichael has been officially indicted on charges of conspiracy to murder New Egypt mayor, Ryan Winchester.

The DOORBELL to the young lady's apartment sounds. She breaks her concentration in order to tend to the situation.

YOUNG WOMAN

(still focused on the t.v)  
Who in the hell?

She sits up from the bed and exits the room.

EXT. STREET CORNER/ALLEY - NIGHT

In this gritty, rundown section of town, some of the worst inhabitants linger about almost aimlessly. A DRUG DEALER meets up with his latest shady customer. A PROSTITUTE propositions a new john. POLICE SIRENS BLARE in the distance.

We bypass these eyesores until finally resting on a rugged LONER seated on an empty crate.

This loner draped in a tattered PULLOVER and faded, torn JEANS is ADAM LANGLEY (25; meek; carefree). He is completely bored out of his mind. As usual.

Another straggly, down-on-his-luck guy pulls up a seat next to Adam. He lights a HALF-SMOKED CIGARETTE. Meet Adam's only close friend, WESLEY (22; passively pessimistic; nerd).

WESLEY

Adam, my man. Another exciting  
night of hopeless human existence  
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

WESLEY (cont'd)  
has once again been graciously  
bestowed upon us. Ain't it grand?

ADAM  
(staring off into space)  
Couldn't get any better.

WESLEY  
Yeah, you said it. So, what's on  
your agenda for tonight?

ADAM  
I don't know. Wandering this urban  
cesspool until the crack of dawn  
and trying not to get robbed or  
arrested sounds like a decent way  
to occupy my evening. Yourself?

Wesley removes a brown bag from pocket.

WESLEY  
Recreational literature.

ADAM  
What is that, another comic book?

WESLEY  
(re: comic book cover)  
*Dark Guardian* issue number  
thirty-five to be exact, friend.  
This one contains a surprise ending  
which is actually a nod to an old  
episode of the *Twilight Zone*, which  
was the writer's favorite show as a  
kid.

An AMBULANCE RACES down the street, mere feet away from  
where the two sit.

ADAM  
(interested more in ambulance  
than comic)  
Why do you read that crap, Wesley?  
Isn't that something you're  
supposed to grow out of during  
adolescence?

WESLEY  
(somewhat insulted)  
That is a very ignorant thing to  
say, dude. Just because there are  
illustrations, doesn't make it any  
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

WESLEY (cont'd)

less of a legitimate piece of writing or mean it is solely for snot-nosed juveniles. Some of our times greatest authors and artists have worked on "crap" like this.

ADAM

(indifferent)

Whatever. I just have a slight problem separating fictional nonsense about make-believe entities with magic wands and mystical flying carpets that entertained me in preschool from the make-believe entities with magic powers and flying capes that comprise your dignified funny papers.

WESLEY

It's an escape, asshole. In case you haven't noticed, we don't live in a fairy tale. This nonsense is one of the things that keeps me from jumping out in front of one these cars and calling it a day.

ADAM

I surely hope your self-worth is invested in more than your vicarious relationships with sociopaths that wear Halloween outfits, otherwise you are in for a harsh disappointment when it comes to reality.

WESLEY

(ponders over the statement)

Look, I am not a goddamn idiot. I'm not expecting some benevolent being from a far away galaxy to swoop down and change the world. It's all metaphoric, man. Good versus evil. The never-ending struggle. Take away the costumes and superpowers and you have basic moral dilemmas. "What would you do if you could do the impossible?"

ADAM

Maybe use my gifts to turn a profit and get the hell away from this

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

ADAM (cont'd)  
city. Who knows? I wouldn't be  
living this pathetic life  
discussing modern folklore on a  
Friday night, that's for damn sure.

## INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Same bedroom from earlier. A few changes. The television set remains tuned to the news, however PICTURES have been SMASHED and knocked off the wall; DRESSER DRAWERS have been ransacked, CLOTHING scattered about. This place is a total wreck.

The young woman from earlier is also there but in a very different physical condition. BLOOD DRIPS from her MOUTH and NOSE. She fearfully CRAWLS toward her CLOSET, obviously trying to escape someone not yet visible.

Sullivan Jenkins wraps up tonight's news on the tube.

## SULLIVAN

Lastly, tonight, the number of  
violent crimes in the city has  
almost double that of the previous  
year.

As her ASSAILANT approaches, the young woman grabs a nearby overturned LAMP and HURLS it at the attacker, but it is SWATTED away like a measly insect.

## YOUNG WOMAN

(petrified; crying)  
Get away from me!

## EXT. STREET CORNER/ALLEY - NIGHT

Adam collects his belongings into a BACKPACK and prepares to leave the corner. Wesley stops him and hands him a COMIC BOOK. Not *Dark Guardian* # 35, of course.

Adam reluctantly accepts the magazine. He thumbs through its pages as he walks off into the night.

## SULLIVAN (V.O)(CONT'D)

With the latest rash of car thefts,  
burglaries, armed robberies, and  
murders-including the attempted  
killing of Mayor Winchester, New  
Egypt looks prime to retain its  
dreadful title as "Most Dangerous  
City in America".

Wesley lights another cigarette then makes himself comfortable for his evening of reading.

INT. MAYOR'S OFFICE - NIGHT

A COFFEE MUG TIPS over spilling its content on a stack of scattered PAPERS atop a DESK.

The nameplate on the desk reads: MAYOR RYAN WINCHESTER.

WINCHESTER (40's; mischievous) PUSHES an attractive, WOMAN (20's) off of his lap and attempts to save the coffee-soaked documents.

WINCHESTER  
Christ, Kelly! Watch it, would you?

KELLY  
I'm sorry, sir. You didn't have to overreact like that.

WINCHESTER  
Don't tell me how I should or shouldn't behave. As a matter of fact, get the hell out of here. You're no longer needed.

KELLY  
But, Ryan--

WINCHESTER  
You're dismissed.

KELLY  
(irate)  
You are unbelievable.

Kelly retrieves her PURSE and SHOES then storms out of the room.

WINCHESTER  
(to self)  
Unbelievable. What an appropriate word.

After cleaning up the mess, Winchester picks up his office TELEPHONE and dials out.

WINCHESTER  
(phone)  
I need you to pick me up from the office. We have urgent business to discuss.

INT. ALPHA-PRIME BIOTECHNOLOGIES - LOBBY - NIGHT

A CLIPBOARD falls to the floor, startling bumbling security guard, CHARLES (30's) out of his semi-conscious state.

He wipes the sleep from his eyes then picks up his clipboard. Bored, Charles tunes on the small TV SET positioned in front of him on his less-than-fancy work desk.

CHARLES

(to self)

Let's see what's going on in this God-forsaken town tonight. Hopefully something involving a drunk driver, a mangled vehicle and that good-for-nothin' slut of an ex-wife of mine. I swear to god, that bitch--

Charlie stops his rant once he notices his voice echoing through the nearly empty lobby. He turns his attention to the local news.

SULLIVAN

(re: television)

...reports of bizarre side effects have lead to a recall by the FDA of the anti-depressant manufactured right here in New Egypt. Amongst these startling claims are hallucinations, memory loss, and even dementia.

A METAL BRIEFCASE SLAMS down next to the television. Attached to it is the intimidating boss man.

Charles quickly straighten his posture in a pointless effort at impressing his employer.

CHARLES

(babbling)

Hey, how goes it, Mister Carmichael...sir?

Samson Carmichael glances at the chatter emitting from the moronic rent-a-cop's idiot box.

SAMSON

(condescending)

This crap will rot your brain, you know. One minute you're just kicking back and killing some time watching the old tube and the next

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

SAMSON (cont'd)  
minute you're wondering why you  
have a dead-end, minimum wage job  
and no ambition in life. You  
wouldn't want that, now would you,  
pal?

CHARLES  
Well, I suppose not. I mean, what  
are you trying to say?

SAMSON  
Don't worry about it. Just be  
content with your mediocre  
existence and be grateful you  
didn't succeed at your goals as I  
did. Trust me, it's not all it's  
cut out to be.

CHARLES  
(almost composed)  
Yeah, I guess you're right. I  
think.

SAMSON  
(almost daydreaming)  
Believe it or not, I envy people  
like you. While the weight of the  
world burdens those like myself who  
are without question destined to be  
leaders, your kind gets to piggy  
back off that very society that we  
help sustain. It's just the way it  
is.

Samson collects his briefcase and proceeds towards the exit  
of the lobby.

SAMSON (CONT'D)  
I wouldn't expect someone of your  
diminished intellect to fully grasp  
anything I was just ranting about,  
though. I simply enjoy the sound of  
my own voice.

CHARLES  
Uh...

SAMSON (CONT'D)  
Anyway, I am off to drown  
my sorrows in expensive alcoholic  
beverages and engage in a bit of  
fornication with a newly acquired  
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

SAMSON (CONT'D) (cont'd)  
 lady friend. I suggest you do the  
 same.

CHARLES  
 (uncomfortable)  
 I don't really do that well with  
 the chicks these days.

SAMSON  
 Of course you don't. Look at you.

Charles drops his head in shame.

SAMSON  
 (unapologetic)  
 Have a good night.

INT. BUS DEPOT - NIGHT

Inside the nearly desolate depot, Adam sleeps upright on a bench. In his hand is the comic book given to him by Wesley. It looks as if he tried to read it.

A JANITOR stops his normal cleaning and turns his attention to Adam.

JANITOR  
 Hey, kid, move it along.

ADAM  
 (barely responsive)  
 Yeah, I gotcha.

JANITOR  
 I've told you before that you can't  
 camp out here.

The janitor NUDGES Adam with his PUSH BROOM.

JANITOR (CONT'D)  
 This ain't your Motel Six, bum.  
 Find a shelter or something---

With an almost lightning fast reaction, Adam grabs the broom and SNAPS the end off of it.

ADAM  
 (pissed)  
 I heard you the first time.

Bewildered, the janitor remains speechless as Adam shoves his comic book in his pocket and walks off.

(CONTINUED)

JANITOR  
(freaked out; re: broom)  
Jesus H...

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Mayor Winchester pours himself a glass of WHISKEY. Next to him in the backseat of this vehicle is another PERSON whose face is obscured by SHADOWS.

WINCHESTER  
As I mentioned, discretion concerning this particular matter is of the utmost importance to me. I don't want this being traced back to me in any way, you understand?

Winchester takes a deep SIP of his drink.

WINCHESTER (CONT'D)  
Good. Now, you may or may not be privy to this fact, but every since this whole assassination business arose, my approval ratings have skyrocketed. Nonetheless, being connected to something of this magnitude would surely destroy me politically and give all those talking heads the ammunition they need to hang me in the public eye.

The mystery person gives an unenthusiastic NOD of agreement.

WINCHESTER (CONT'D)  
Not to mention, of course, there are those unsavory legal ramifications to deal with. I hope you get my point.

INT. ALPHA-PRIME BIOTECHNOLOGIES - PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Samson SLAMS the trunk to his car and unlocks the DRIVER'S SIDE DOOR.

WINCHESTER (V.O)(CONT'D)  
It goes without saying-though I will say it anyway--that this must look like something random. Something completely out of anyone's control...

(CONTINUED)

Suddenly, THREE MASKED MEN approach Samson who notices them but is not startled.

SAMSON  
(nonchalant)  
Evening, gentlemen. I would love to be of some service to you, but business hours have concluded. You may want to see my receptionist and schedule an appointment tomorrow.

MASKED MAN #1  
Shut up and hand over your wallet and the keys.

SAMSON  
No.

MASKED MAN #2  
What?

SAMSON  
Are you deaf? I said no. My suggestion is that you three lovers scratch whatever dimwitted plan you may have had and get the hell out of my parking lot while I'm still in a compassionate mood.

MASKED MAN #3  
This guy has got to be goddamn retarded.

The second masked man brandishes a PISTOL, while the third an ARMY KNIFE.

Samson is unshaken. He proceeds to open his car door, dismissing the hoodlums.

The BOOT from Masked Man #1 forces the door back SHUT.

MASKED MAN #1  
We are not done.

SAMSON  
You just kicked my brand new Bentley with your piece-of-shit department store work boot. I would definitely say *somebody's* done.

Masked Man #3, having heard enough, CHARGES Samson with his KNIFE. Samson quickly evades the strike, causing the attacker to STAB his partner in the CHEST.

WINCHESTER (V.O)

Were this delicate plan to go awry,  
there is no telling what  
repercussions would ensue. Failure,  
is without a doubt, not an  
option...

Samson notices Masked Man #2 aiming his pistol at him and before the first SHOTS EXPLODE from the barrel, he locks the now knife-less attacker in a REAR CHOKE HOLD, turns him towards the line of fire, uses him as SHIELD from BULLETS.

WINCHESTER (V.O)(CONT'D)

I can tell that you are growing  
tired of my self-indulgent  
monologue, so I will wrap this  
up...

The last masked man looks on dumbfounded as Samson tosses his accomplice's lifeless body to the ground.

MASKED MAN #2

(terrified)

Impossible. How did you--? This  
shit was not part of the deal.

SAMSON

(smirking)

Sorry, you must be quite surprised.  
I know much surprises bother some  
people. How about we go ahead and  
end this. There are worse things  
than prison. I'm sure your buddies  
here would concur.

Masked Man #2 points his gun at Samson and squeezes the trigger. The SHOT goes wild into the air as something has obviously thrown off the shooter's aim.

The ARMY KNIFE, before stuck in the chest of the first masked man, has been driven into the final attacker's FOREHEAD like a dart.

Masked Man #2 crumples to the ground.

Samson calmly dusts off his clothes.

SAMSON

(to dead thugs)

You know what? Now that I think  
about it, why don't you guys go  
ahead and take my money and  
car? As a gift...No, no, I insist.

Samson starts LAUGHING as he wipes BLOOD off of his shoes.

EXT. BUS DEPOT - NIGHT

Adam exits the depot, irritated and restless. As he pulls his hood over his head, he BUMPS into SOMEONE.

ADAM  
Sorry about that.

After helping pick up the knocked over bags, Adam notices the person to be the young woman from the bedroom attack earlier.

YOUNG WOMAN  
(rushed)  
It's no problem.

Adam can now see FACIAL BRUISES and what appears to be a BROKEN NOSE.

ADAM  
Your face? What happened?

YOUNG WOMAN  
Nothing.

The young woman collects her belongings and brushes passed Adam.

ADAM  
Hey, did someone do that to you?

YOUNG WOMAN  
Not your concern, Sherlock. Leave me alone.

The young woman enters the bus depot. Adam contemplates forgetting the issue and moving along, but decides against it and follows her.

INT. BUS DEPOT - NIGHT

As the young woman walks into the lobby of the bus depot, Adam approaches her, undeterred.

ADAM  
I know I am a complete stranger but maybe you need someone to talk to.

(CONTINUED)

YOUNG WOMAN

I don't. And if I did, trust me, I wouldn't talk to you. What are you, some kind of psycho?

ADAM

I'm nobody. I just want to help.

YOUNG WOMAN

I don't need your help. I need to get the hell out of this crummy town. Away from all the sickos who inhabit it.

ADAM

I know the feeling. Come on, let me at least keep you company while you wait on the bus. What's the worst that could happen?

YOUNG WOMAN

Well, you could be some deranged creep bent on lulling me into a false sense of security in order to drug me and do all types of sick and twisted things to me. For starters.

ADAM

I assure you I neither have the intent nor the resources to do such things. I'm simply a guy who's down on his luck and could use some company for the next few minutes. Besides, we are in a public place. They have cameras here. People say those are supposed to make us feel safe.

YOUNG WOMAN

(loosening up)

I guess you have a point.

ADAM

So, would I be asking too much to know your name?

YOUNG WOMAN

(hesitant)

Jennifer.

(CONTINUED)

ADAM

Pleased to meet you, Jennifer. I'm Adam.

JENNIFER

Well, Adam, don't get familiar. I'm not looking to make a new friend.

ADAM

I kind of assumed as much. Let's just shoot the shit until you have to leave. I will buy you a soda. This place has a great vending machine.

JENNIFER

(slightly amused)

Sure.

Adam takes Jennifer's bags and the two sit down at a nearby bench.

WINCHESTER (V.O)

Rest assured that your interests in this project will not go unrewarded.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Mayor Winchester finishes his drink.

WINCHESTER (CONT'D)

Big things are to come, my friend. Unbelievable things.

INT. CARMICHAEL RESIDENCE - BEDROOM - MORNING

A STREAK of SUNLIGHT breaks through the curtains, its brightness stirring Samson Carmichael from his slumber.

Samson groggily pulls himself out of bed and turns on his TELEVISION.

On the screen is an investigative reporting show focusing on Mayor Winchester.

Once again, Sullivan Jenkins.

SULLIVAN

Last week marked the five-year anniversary of Ryan Winchester's election as New Egypt's mayor.

(CONTINUED)

Samson takes a drink of WATER then stands to fully open the window curtains.

On the television, various CLIPS of Mayor Winchester during his mayoral run.

SULLIVAN (CONT'D)

As we all remember, Winchester was elected the city's youngest mayor and vowed to bring an end to the corruption that had consumed previous administration.

SAMSON

Yeah, right.

SULLIVAN (CONT'D)

From day one, Winchester has dedicated his career and some say his life to changing the image of the city and thwarting crime and injustice wherever it may rear its ugly head.

SAMSON

Oh, give me a freaking break. How do people believe this garbage?

SULLIVAN (CONT'D)

The decorated mayor has recently faced stark opposition as he has focused his attention on harsher regulations for local businesses that threaten to endanger the city's people or environment.

SAMSON

And here we go.

SULLIVAN (CONT'D)

Most notably coming under pressure has been Alpha-Prime Biotechnologies and its questionable ethics pertaining to the human testing being done for a number of the company's popular pharmaceuticals.

Samson puts on a shirt then exits the room disgusted, leaving the television idle.

On the screen is footage of Samson being hassled by reporters.

(CONTINUED)

## SULLIVAN (CONT'D)

Founder and CEO, Samson Carmichael has denounced any claims of criminal or unethical practices within Alpha-Prime and insists that all experiments conducted in its name were done following the strictest of government guidelines. Interesting to note, however, that the company has suspended further product testings for an indefinite period. As if this bit of bad press were not enough...

## INT. DINER - MORNING

In the far rear of this quaint eatery sit Adam and Wesley, each enjoying a cup of COFFEE and TOAST. These meals are far cries from the plentiful plates that the other, more fortunate patrons have.

On a fixed TV SET, the investigative report plays. Sullivan Jenkins seems to be who everyone watches.

## SULLIVAN (CONT'D)

Carmichael was recently indicted on federal corruption and conspiracy charges related to last week's attempted slaying of Mayor Winchester. Carmichael's reps have yet to make a statement regarding...

## WESLEY

You worried?

## ADAM

Not really. Why should I be?

## WESLEY

You know why. I know, I know. None of my business but I just think you should go get checked out or something. Make sure those clowns didn't screw you up.

## ADAM

Eh, I feel fine. Probably better than fine. Anyway, I took those test like six months ago and I have yet to detect a single out-of-place mutation or anything.

(CONTINUED)

WESLEY

Okay, dude. Whatever you say, but trust me, denial is the first step. Do you even know what kind of shit they injected into you?

ADAM

Some kind of growth hormone or steroid. It was a trial so I only went in for like two or three treatments and I got paid. Seemed like a waste of time, though.

WESLEY

Steroids? You trying to be a pro wrestler or something?

ADAM

(laughs)

Hell no. I don't know what I was thinking. I was hungry and it was a quick buck. I don't have to tell you how it is out here.

WESLEY

That's true. Personally, however, I choose to stay away from the evils of foreign substances. I prefer to keep the old temple pure.

ADAM

Bull. I just saw you smoke a joint before we came in. You did that in front of me. Only a few minutes ago.

WESLEY

(ponders)

Damn, I forgot about that. Odd. The point is, you don't want to dabble with unfamiliar chemicals and whatnot. You don't know what that stuff does to you in the long run. You might turn into some radioactive giant mutant. Which, might I add, would be quite awesome.

ADAM

Why am I not surprised? Every conversation I have with you somehow always reverts back to comic books. You should snap to

(MORE)

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ADAM (cont'd)  
reality and go see a movie or something.

WESLEY  
(disgusted)  
Movies suck, man. Of course, that's just my expert opinion. It's all over-budgeted, over-hyped visceral masturbation catering to the lowest denomination of human intelligence. You know, that's why Alan Moore, who is probably the greatest author in comic book history refuses to endorse any film adaptations of his work. I don't blame him. Movies can go to hell.

ADAM  
(a bit confused)  
Hold up, allow me to stop you there for the sake of my own sanity. First off, I don't who Alan Moore is and don't really care to learn. Second, I happen to like movies so chill out. Third, why do you know so much useless information yet you haven't had a steady job a day that I have known you?

WESLEY  
I have a rebellious nature coupled with a remarkable lust for unconventional learning.

ADAM  
Another thing. Can you please use normal layman's English from time to time? I feel like I need a goddamn dictionary half the time I listen to you. You ever want to get a woman to have sex with you then lay off the nerd crap a bit.

WESLEY  
I apologize if my mastery of vocabulary intimidates you, man. I'll try to dumb it down as much as possible.

ADAM  
(whatever)  
I'm just going to watch t.v. and take a break from this  
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

ADAM (cont'd)

little pointless dialog now that I've reminded myself that you are a grown man that fantasizes about adults in spandex. Anything you say should automatically register as irrelevant to me.

WESLEY

(thinks about it)

It's always the truth that burns the nastiest.

ADAM

Always.

INT. CARMICHAEL RESIDENCE - KITCHEN - MORNING

A REFRIGERATOR DOOR CLOSSES.

Samson pours himself a glass of ORANGE JUICE as he talks on the PHONE.

SAMSON

(irked)

...no, listen to me. I don't want to hear your bullshit excuses anymore. I paid you to take care of a problem for me and that is what I goddamn well expected you to do. As if I didn't already have enough bothersome issues to deal with, you mucking up a relatively simple assignment doesn't help.

Samson picks up the day's NEWSPAPER from the counter. The headline reads: EMBATTLED CEO SURVIVES ATTACK. It is accompanied by a PHOTO of Samson talking to police.

SAMSON (CONT'D)

I don't want you to even think about calling me again until you have completed your assignment. Allow me to be crystal clear so that your minute mind can properly comprehend this time. I want the situation neutralized. Not partially, not mostly, but fully taken care of. Fail me again and you will find yourself being the one neutralized. Now, if you will excuse me, I have an impromptu

(MORE)

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SAMSON (CONT'D) (cont'd)  
meeting with our beloved mayor to  
prepare for.

Samson hangs up.

EXT. DINER/SIDEWALK - MORNING

Adam and Wesley have just stepped outside of the diner and into the relatively active business day of New Egypt. HORNS HONK, TIRES SCREECH, JACKHAMMERS BUZZ in the background as people pass to and fro.

WESLEY

I'm telling you, man, today's society is headed closer and closer to complete and utter chaos. All this elaborate technology pacifying the masses of blissfully ignorant sheep in order to distract from the underlying atrocious truth that very soon a one-world government will arise and transform the globe into an Orwellian police state where the so-called freedoms and liberties we have so blindly endorsed will be simply a thing of the past. Like VHS.

ADAM

I do not understand, for the life of me, what I may have said or insinuated that would lead you believe that I give a ferret's shit about any of this crap you force into my mind. Who are you supposed to be, Oliver Stone or someone? I am almost certain that the last topic that I actively participated in with you was about finding a place to live. How do you connect that with whatever nonsense you were talking about?

WESLEY

The economy. That how it starts. The powers-that-be are making sure that everyone loses faith in the current quality of living to the point that any new idea seems like a welcomed breath of fresh air. Then, BOOM, they hit us with the

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

WESLEY (cont'd)  
mandatory curfews and decide what  
we can and can't do in our personal  
lives. Plain as day.

ADAM  
I could care less. My immediate  
concern is finding a means to  
income and a roof over my head. I  
hope you haven't forgotten that no  
matter what conspiracy theory you  
may have going on, it really won't  
matter if you die of starvation in  
a week. That would technically be  
the end of the world for you,  
right?

WESLEY  
Point taken.

ADAM  
Hey, I'm going to head over to the  
soup kitchen and try to get a jump  
on the lunch line.

WESLEY  
Save me a spot. I have to go see a  
man about a copy of Deadpool #1.

ADAM  
Figures. I'll see you soon.

Adam and Wesley part ways.

As Adam crosses the street at an intersection, an  
out-of-control CAR CAREENS towards him.

It is not until the very last moment that Adam notices the  
hunk of steel and almost as if springs were loaded in his  
feet, he JUMPS into the air and onto the HOOD of the car,  
then ROLLS off to safety before it SLAMS into a LIGHT POST.

A SMALL CROWD forms and watches in shock.

MALE BYSTANDER  
(hysterical)  
Did you see that? That guy  
just---he freaking pulled a goddamn  
gymnastics routine on that  
Cadillac. What the hell was that  
about?

(CONTINUED)

Adam, fairly shaken and surprised by his own reflexes, pulls his hood over his head and quickly ducks off into the busy day as POLICE and FIRE SIRENS BLARE.

Still in the immediate area, Wesley, having witnessed everything, displays a mixed look of amazement and disbelief. He looks at his *Dark Guardian* comic and slyly grins.

INT. MAYOR'S OFFICE - DAY

PHONES RING and ASSISTANTS scramble about, signifying another work day. Kelly, Mayor Winchester's personal secretary prepares a STACK of DOCUMENTS as the mayor enters the office, fresh coffee in hand.

KELLY

(anxious)

Ryan---sir, I have prepared a summary of today's agenda as well as an outline of the proposed budget just like you requested.

WINCHESTER

(barely interested)

Excellent.

KELLY

Mr. Donald "Prince" Townsend has once again filed a complaint about the new ordinance blocking him from displaying his...um, mural of exotic artwork on his lawn.

WINCHESTER

Artwork? That cluster of rubble is the furthest thing from art. Send him some kind of letter explaining everything and disregard any future communications from our dear Prince Donnie.

Winchester approaches the door to his office.

KELLY

One last thing, sir...

WINCHESTER

Give me a few minutes, Kelly. I barely slept last night.

(CONTINUED)

KELLY

But, Mayor...

Winchester opens the door. Seated in front of his desk is...

KELLY (CONT'D)

Mr. Samson Carmichael is hear to see you...obviously.

On cue, Samson turns around to greet Winchester.

SAMSON

(more arrogant than usual)  
The great and powerful Ryan Winchester. Indeed you are every bit as awe-inspiring as your beloved press makes you out to be. Well, almost.

WINCHESTER

(pestered)  
I can only imagine to what honor I owe this rather unexpected visit.

Winchester SHOOS Kelly off and closes his door.

SAMSON

I assure you it is not to take your life. I'm unarmed, I swear.

WINCHESTER

I know that you are not stupid enough to do anything to draw attention to yourself, being in the sensitive situation you are in and all.

SAMSON

You would know all about that, wouldn't you?

WINCHESTER

Let's cut the shit, Carmichael. Why are you here interrupting my day? Don't you have some Frankenstein-like experiments to oversee?

SAMSON

(not amused)  
It's not nice to judge people, Mr. Mayor. Especially when you yourself have a few skeletons in the closet. That's hypocritical.

(CONTINUED)

WINCHESTER

I don't have time for your little riddles. Get to the point and get out or just get out.

Samson removes a FOLDER from his briefcase.

SAMSON

Recently, I procured a bit of controversial information pertaining to some of your less-than-legal business practices.

WINCHESTER

Choose your words carefully, Carmichael. Blackmail and/or extortion won't look too good piled on top of your pending corruption and conspiracy raps.

SAMSON

Hey, I have not said nor done anything incriminating. I only want to remind you that you are not the only one who can manipulate circumstances to his will.

Samson removes a NEWSPAPER from the briefcase.

SAMSON (CONT'D)

I will assume that you have heard about my little run in with a group of thugs the other night.

WINCHESTER

(insincere)

I heard. Unfortunate.

SAMSON

Yes, very. Anyway, though the motley band of would-be "robbers" failed to succeed in their attempts, I couldn't help but feel somewhat violated. Now, I am not one to conjure unwarranted speculation, but I happen to believe this incident to be more than just a case of wrong place at the wrong time. I mean, it could be mere coincidence that I was attacked on the same day that news broke of the trumped up charges you filed against me. Problem is this: I don't believe in coincidences.

(CONTINUED)

WINCHESTER

(fed up)

You come down to my office and try to intimidate me by intruding on my workspace and throwing around vale allegations after putting a hit out on me. You have some nerve. Perhaps the combination of all those millions of dollars and exposure to god-knows-what kind of chemicals your company brews up has finally disintegrated what common sense you once had. This conversation is over.

SAMSON

(calm)

I predicted you would react like this and it's perfectly fine. You can take this as a threat or whatever you want, Ryan, but I guarantee you this is far from finished. It seems like you want a war with me and a war you will get. Suit up, friend and prepare for the body count.

Samson collects his articles and briefcase and begins to exit the office.

SAMSON (CONT'D)

Good day.

He exits.

Winchester slumps down into his desk chair and SIGHS.

INT. HOMELESS SHELTER - DAY

In this old high school GYM-turned-shelter, a handful of needy PEOPLE mingle amongst each other as VOLUNTEERS prepare foods for lunch.

Adam, notedly exhausted, walks into the shelter and plops down in the first available chair.

Soon, a WHEELCHAIR BOUND MAN rolls up next to Adam. This is VIC LAMAR (60's; laughably grumpy).

ADAM

(mildly panting)

How's it going, Vic?

(CONTINUED)

VIC

Apparently better than you. You look like you're about to cough up a lung. What's the matter?

ADAM

(catching breath)

Oh, I'm fine. I just...uh, almost got hit by a car. Nothing really.

VIC

Well, almost doesn't count. You're still sucking air and not a stain on the concrete so tough it out and move on. Don't be a pussy.

ADAM

(sarcastic)

Gee, Vic, you always know the right things to say.

VIC

Hey, I'm not *only* good looks. So, where's that socially challenged running mate of yours?

ADAM

Wasting his life as usual. He should be getting here soon.

VIC

(far from excited)

Fantastic. I'd better get my place in line before Boy Wonder shows up and bores me to suicide with his fantasy philosophies.

ADAM

Welcome to my world.

Vic heads to the lunch line.

Adam sits and observes his acquaintances. He soon recognizes a new face. It is Jennifer. Adam walks over to the lunch line where she is volunteering.

ADAM

Hey, stranger.

JENNIFER

(timid)

Hey, you.

(CONTINUED)

ADAM

Didn't think I would be seeing you again.

JENNIFER

Yeah, must really be a small world.

ADAM

Or maybe this means there's some higher power willing us together.

JENNIFER

I seriously doubt that. Besides, you wouldn't want to be willed towards me.

ADAM

Why is that?

JENNIFER

Long story. Just trust me.

ADAM

(joking)

Trust you? I don't even really know you.

JENNIFER

Yet that does not seem to stop your persistence in trying to earn my attention.

ADAM

It's sort of a problem of mine. I refuse to relent when related to things I feel passionately about.

JENNIFER

(flattered)

Passionate, huh? Look at you with your little infatuation. It's kind of cute.

ADAM

Cute enough to maybe spend some time with?

JENNIFER

Are you trying to ask me out?

ADAM

(nervous)

Assuming I were...what do you say?

(CONTINUED)

JENNIFER

I say...sure. One day.

ADAM

(disappointed)

Oh, I see. One day, not today, but one day. More like never.

JENNIFER

I'm sorry, Adam. It's just that there are a lot of things going on with me right now. Complicated things. Perhaps if the situation were different...

ADAM

Perhaps. Don't worry about it. Forget I said anything.

Adam drops his head and slowly makes his way back to his chair.

Not a good day so far for Adam.

INT. MAGIC MIKE'S COMICS - DAY

Standing beside a DISPLAY of newly-arrived COMIC BOOKS, two fan boys, RUDOLPH (19; stereotypical geek) and DEXTER (22; slightly more outgoing) are amidst a heated debate.

RUDOLPH

Man, I still say that when it comes down to a realistic depiction of the comic book hero, hands down Batman is far superior to Superman.

DEXTER

I'm sorry, but you are grossly incorrect. I respect the Caped Crusader as much as the next, but everyone knows Big Blue is what defines superhero.

RUDOLPH

Why? Because he possesses basically god-like abilities. Dude, it gets boring after a while. Barring the seemingly infinite clever combinations of Kryptonite usages and maybe a Doomsday attack, nothing can kill him. Bruce Wayne on the other hand is

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

RUDOLPH (cont'd)  
just flesh and blood like the rest  
of us. Subject to the same mortal  
shortcomings.

A BELL RINGS to indicate that someone has entered the store.  
It is Wesley. Nobody notices.

DEXTER  
We're talking science fiction. When  
I take time to read through one of  
these magnificent pieces of art and  
literature, I want to suspend my  
disbelief and get lost in a  
larger-than-life world. No rational  
person thinks that a man could  
actually fly or survive bullets or  
move at the speed of light but it's  
entertaining.

RUDOLPH  
I agree, however for my taste, I  
would rather see a hero who does  
extraordinary things at the risk of  
losing something. Ultimately, the  
one thing that bonds all people is  
the inevitability of losing life.  
The more suffering a guy has to  
endure the more the audience is  
inclined to support and root for  
him. In most cases, like with your  
friend Clark, the danger of death  
is merely a tease, but what if  
Superman died? For real. What if  
there were no happy ending?

Wesley interrupts the discussion.

WESLEY  
(excited)  
Top of the morning to you, lads.  
Apologies on so brashly putting an  
end to your conversation which I  
have no doubt was nothing short of  
thought-provoking, but I have  
something really important to talk  
to you about.

DEXTER  
(rolls eyes)  
Terrific. What is it today? You  
finally find Area 51?

(CONTINUED)

WESLEY

The jesting ends once you find yourself aboard some alien craft being rectally probed. Remember who warned you. Anyway, this is vastly more important. First thing's first, though. Pay me what you owe, Rudolph, you bastard.

Rudolph reluctantly retrieves a BROWN PAPER BAG and hands it to Wesley.

WESLEY (CONT'D)

A pleasure doing business with you, sir.

RUDOLPH

You going to check it?

WESLEY

Should I? I trust that you know better than to try to swindle me out of what I'm entitled to. Deadpool issue number one. I can smell it.

RUDOLPH

(irritated)

Go to hell. My grandmother gave me that on her deathbed. Have you no shame?

WESLEY

Have you none? This should teach you a valuable lesson on what items you should and should not put up as collateral in drunken poker. Your grandma, God rest her soul, would be heartbroken to know that you squandered away her last earthy gift to you in such an irresponsible way. The only bright side is that you couldn't have lost to a nobler gent.

RUDOLPH

You're an ass.

DEXTER

So, go ahead and enlighten us on your latest baseless tale so that you may move on to your next unfortunate listener all the hastier.

(CONTINUED)

WESLEY

Ladies, I can't go into details because I don't have any but let's just say that I suspect that an associate of mine may potentially be a physically enhanced human.

RUDOLPH

What the hell are you talking about?

WESLEY

Today I witnessed something that is pretty much unbelievable.

DEXTER

Yeah, what?

WESLEY

I saw said associate defy the laws of gravity, I believe. This person moved faster than a cheetah, boys. No bullshit.

RUDOLPH

Bullshit.

DEXTER

You full of it, Wesley. Stop daydreaming.

WESLEY

Why would I make something like this up?

RUDOLPH

Because you're you. You enjoy trying to make everybody pay attention to you and your insane theories of the apocalypse or whatever disinformation you decide to share.

WESLEY

(insulted)

Kiss my ass. I know what I saw. Later, bitches.

Wesley pockets the brown bag and exits the store, accidentally KNOCKING over a NEWSSTAND.

(CONTINUED)

RUDOLPH  
(chuckling)  
What a tool.

INT. ALPHA-PRIME BIOTECHNOLOGIES - RESEARCH DEPARTMENT - DAY

Several WHITE COATS work diligently inside an equally as white and bland office. Some tend to COMPUTERS, while others occupy time filling out various paperworks and so forth.

We focus on one of the scientists in particular, sitting at a desk, LAPTOP in front of him. His name tag reads: DR. BRADLEY REED. Dr. Reed (late 30's) is talking to someone.

It is Samson Carmichael via VIDEO CONFERENCE.

SAMSON  
(re:monitor)  
Dr. Reed, I hope whatever you have to discuss with me is of the greatest importance. Your frantic and urgent message caused me to put my bi-daily archery training on hold. I never do that.

DR. REED  
(surprised)  
Archery? Are you serious?

SAMSON  
Why wouldn't I be? I'm expertly versed in a majority of the world's weaponries and martial arts. You should know these things. They are well-documented.

DR. REED  
Excuse me for asking, but why would you ever need to acquire such skills?

SAMSON  
Preservation of life. Let me ask you something, doctor. Do you believe that you could reasonably defend yourself against an aggressor more than twice your size and strength using only your wits, a table spoon and a handful of dirt?

(CONTINUED)

DR. REED  
(rightfully unsure)  
Well...

SAMSON  
(inpatient)  
The answer is no, you would  
definitely be killed. Now, on to  
more pressing matters. Update me on  
the situation.

DR. REED  
Very well. It's Serum D.  
Unfortunately, the news is not what  
we were hoping for.

SAMSON  
Enlighten me.

DR. REED  
Initial tests with primate subjects  
wielded astonishing results  
including enhanced sensory  
perception, increased muscle  
density and sustained levels of  
elevated adrenaline with little or  
no signs of molecular  
deterioration.

Dr. Reed takes a DEEP GULP of his beverage before resuming.

DR. REED  
(hesitant)  
The same, however, can not be said  
in regards to the human subjects.  
There have been no reports of  
extraordinary abilities and most  
have displayed horrifying  
complications as rejection to the  
treatments continue. Unless  
rectified, these findings pose  
great setbacks for the project. And  
even worse, maybe.

SAMSON  
(concerned)  
At this stage, what looks to be the  
final diagnosis for those who have  
been exposed to the serum?

DR. REED  
Divine intervention not  
withstanding, I would sadly have to  
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

DR. REED (cont'd)  
say expiration. Certain, inevitable  
death.

SAMSON  
(upset)  
This has to be contained, Dr. Reed.  
I want you to make damn sure that  
no one other than you and I know  
about this conversation. Destroy  
any record of this video if  
possible. I want a list of every  
person who participated in Project  
Eden faxed to my office within the  
hour. Do I make myself clear?

DR. REED  
(anxious)  
Yes. Crystal clear, sir.

The monitor goes BLACK as Samson ends the conference.

DR. REED  
(to himself; shamed)  
Dear God.

INT. HOMELESS SHELTER - DAY

A few hours have passed since the end of lunch. Only a  
handful of people still wander about the old gym, most  
either resting on COTS or mingling with one another.

Adam lays reclined, with his pullover serving as a pillow,  
on one of the cots.

Wesley approaches him.

ADAM  
Where have you been? You missed the  
award-winning cuisine of the day.

WESLEY  
(serious)  
Dude, I need you to be straight  
with me.

ADAM  
About?

WESLEY  
(lowers voice)  
Look, man, I saw what happened this  
morning with the car.

(CONTINUED)

ADAM

So what? Some non-driving asshole almost hit me. Happens all the time.

WESLEY

Screw that. Ordinary people don't have the kind of reflexes you displayed. You should be dead.

ADAM

But I'm not. Wesley, I have no idea what you are trying to infer. I got lucky. No big deal.

WESLEY

Yes, big deal. Very big deal. This is exactly what I was trying to tell you about. Something is up with you, bro. Whatever experiments they ran changed you. Probably turned you into some freak of nature.

ADAM

(annoyed)

Give it a rest. No matter how much you refuse to admit it, stuff like that doesn't happen in the real world. Today was a chance happening. One-in-a-million type of deal.

WESLEY

You are way too close-minded. Try thinking outside of the box sometimes. There are big things going on, man, I'm telling you. I can feel it.

ADAM

It's probably indigestion.

WESLEY

Shut up. Speaking of, did you claim any foods for your best bud?

ADAM

I shouldn't have but I did.

Adam reaches under his cot and hands Wesley a PAPER PLATE with a HAM SANDWICH on it.

(CONTINUED)

WESLEY

Awesome. I'm starving.

ADAM

Where were you, anyway?

WESLEY

(eating)

Well...after I took care of some business over at Magic Mike's, I was headed over here for lunch but got sidetracked. The craziest shit...some cop was beating the holy hell out of some junkie over on 22nd Street. In front of everyone...for like ten minutes.

ADAM

Why?

WESLEY

No idea. The pig was yelling something about a secretary or some shit. Who knows, though. This city is a goddamn cesspool just waiting to be wiped out of existence completely. And I say good riddance.

ADAM

People just stood around and let a cop beat a man for that long?

WESLEY

That's exactly what they did. Nobody cares anymore. I chalked it up to free entertainment and a case of "better him than me".

ADAM

(indifferent)

Oh well. Just another Tuesday in New Egypt, I suppose.

WESLEY

You said it. Wow, this is a pretty good sandwich.

ADAM

Enjoy.

Adam rolls over and resumes his nap.

INT. CONDEMNED APARTMENT BUILDING - DUSK

A barely hinged DOOR is KICKED IN.

SGT. GERALD ZANE (40; bulky; prick) SHOVES a HANDCUFFED, and noticeably smaller MAN (22; scrawny) through the door and onto the trash-covered floor. The man has obviously been roughed up.

MAN

(sobbing)

You can't do this, man. You're a goddamn cop!

ZANE

(amused)

That's funny. That fact hasn't seemed to stop me thus far. It's unlikely it will now.

MAN

But I told you I don't know what the hell you're talking about.

ZANE

Well, you are a lying, pathetic excuse for a human. I don't know how you pulled it off and I don't really give a shit. I am more than sure it has something to do with that little whore friend of yours, but I will deal with her again later.

The man SPITS in Zane's face. Not a good idea. Zane KICKS him in the MOUTH.

MAN

(in agony; rambling)

You are a psycho! I have no idea who you are or what any of this bullshit is about. I'm a damn software programmer. Not even that anymore. I'm broke, dude. I'm freaking hooked on meth. Just let me go.

ZANE

(deadpan)

Very touching biography. Well, it has become apparent that you are not going to supply me with the information I want. Whether you are

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

ZANE (cont'd)  
being less than honest with me or  
sincerely ignorant, I am not sure.  
Nonetheless, you are of no use to  
me and I have to move on to more  
important affairs.

MAN  
(hopeful)  
I'm ignorant. I've been trying to  
tell you that for the last hour. I  
don't know shit! I am of no use to  
you.

ZANE  
You're right.

MAN  
So, are you going to let me go?

ZANE  
(smirks)  
No. I thought you knew how this was  
going to end.

MAN  
What?

Zane removes his PISTOL and SHOOTS the man point blank in  
the HEAD.

He takes out his CELL PHONE and makes a call.

ZANE  
(phone)  
He didn't give me shit. I took care  
of him, but I still don't know  
where the girl is. I'm sure she's  
in the city still, though and I  
will find her.

EXT. HOMELESS SHELTER/ALLEY - DUSK

A MUGGER CHASES a MAN down the alley behind the shelter,  
right passed Adam and Wesley, who step aside nonchalantly.

Wesley is in the middle of one of his usual rants.

WESLEY  
So, basically, that's why I believe  
time travel is possible. Only  
backwards into the past, though.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

WESLEY (cont'd)

Too many complications with going into the future. It doesn't exist if you think about it.

ADAM

But you're not opposed to tampering with history?

WESLEY

Sure, there are chances of altering reality and all that but who really cares? Selfishly, wouldn't we all want to go back and redo something that went wrong, or just experience events again from childhood?

ADAM

(beat)

Maybe. I don't know. This is an annoying conversation.

WESLEY

I like it.

ADAM

You like anything that would have likely been a topic on the *X-Files*.

WESLEY

Hey, it is not my problem you can't recognize and appreciate the greatest show of all time. Most time, at least.

ADAM

Sorry, that would be *Gunsmoke*.

WESLEY

Classy.

The BACK DOOR of the shelter OPENS and out steps Jennifer carrying her BACKPACK.

Adam immediately directs his attention to her. And just kind of stares.

WESLEY

You okay, you bloodhound?

ADAM

(anxious)

No. I mean, yeah. I know her...somewhat.

(CONTINUED)

WESLEY  
(chuckling)  
Well, go talk to her, you chicken  
shit.

ADAM  
I think something bad happened to  
her recently. I don't know what,  
though.

WESLEY  
Go rescue her then. Whatever, man.  
Do your thing.

Wesley playfully SHOVES Adam in Jennifer's direction. Adam,  
at first embarrassed, relents and walks towards her.

ADAM  
(to Jennifer)  
Hey! It's me. Again.

Approaching.

ADAM  
(mumbling to self)  
Don't say anything stupid.

There.

JENNIFER  
Hello, Adam...again. I'm sorry if I  
hurt your feelings earlier. That  
was not my intent.

ADAM  
(nervous)  
It's cool. Didn't bother me at all.

JENNIFER  
You sure?

ADAM  
Yeah.

Awkward silence.

JENNIFER  
(confused)  
So, what did you want?

ADAM  
(still nervous)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

ADAM (cont'd)  
Uh, well, I was hoping you would  
reconsider spending some time with  
me. Nothing too fancy, obviously.

JENNIFER  
(snickers)  
You don't give up, do you?

ADAM  
Apparently not.

JENNIFER  
What about your friend over there?  
You planning on just ditching him.

ADAM  
That's exactly what I plan on  
doing. He understands.

JENNIFER  
That's horrible. I'm probably going  
to regret this, but why don't you  
guys keep me company for tonight.

ADAM  
(baffled)  
Really?

JENNIFER  
Sure. You never know, I might need  
some protection.

ADAM  
(sarcastic)  
You picked the perfect duo if that  
is the case.

The two look at Wesley who gives a comical "thumbs up".

JENNIFER  
(laughing)  
I figured.

INT. WINCHESTER RESIDENCE - NIGHT

Mayor Winchester, dressed down to only his undershirt and  
slacks, sits down on his SOFA with a GLASS in one hand,  
BOTTLE of BRANDY in the other.

After pouring himself a shot, Winchester picks up the REMOTE  
CONTROL and begins surfing through channels on the  
television.

(CONTINUED)

Nature. A LION stalks a GAZELLE.

NARRATOR (V.O)

...however, the cunning maneuvers of the gazelle are no match for the speed and power of the king of the jungle. Despite a valiant effort, it soon becomes evident that the the world's most dangerous predator will once again see victory, as well as a gratifying meal.

Sports. A BASKETBALL PLAYER DUNKS during a highlight reel.

SPORTSCASTER (V.O)

...and just like that, Dewayne Hudson's illustrious career has come to an end after resigning from the *New Egypt Pharaohs* following his admission to using performance enhancing drugs to give himself the edge on the court. It's a real shame that such a talented young man felt the need to tamper with his God-given abilities in order to earn an extra buck.

Politics. A middle-aged POLITICIAN stands at a podium in front of crowd. Some type of press conference.

ANCHOR (V.O)

Today, President Norman Handler announced plans to reform the current Patriot Act in order to restore more personal liberties to American citizens. While there are strong supporters of the president's initiative to bring forth a more open and transparent administration, there are also opponents who insist that such actions will no doubt put the country in the line of more dangerous terror attacks...

Local news. An ELDERLY LADY is being interviewed.

ELDERLY LADY

Well, I for one, do not believe that the things they say he is responsible for are true. I once worked for Samson Carmichael's father, Blair, and he was an

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

ELDERLY LADY (cont'd)  
 amazing man. Samson was raised by good people and does everything he can to continue in his family's legacy. There are folks all over this city benefiting from the medicines that his company produces. Hell, if it weren't for Mr. Carmichael, I wouldn't be able to afford my diabetes pills. He pays for a lot of the underprivileged to keep health care. Absolute saint, he is.

Winchester SWALLOWS his shot of brandy.

A WOMAN enters the living room from the kitchen. It is Winchester's wife, CHRISTINE (40's; loving; naive). She walks up to her husband and drapes her arms over his shoulders from behind the couch.

CHRISTINE  
 Is everything okay, Ryan? You seem distant. More so than usual.

WINCHESTER  
 (still fixed on t.v)  
 All is fine, honey. Just another day.

CHRISTINE  
 You sure? I mean, the first thing you did when you got home was head straight for the liquor cabinet. That's not like you.

WINCHESTER  
 It's just been a really hectic few days. All this additional media attention and whatnot. It's all somewhat overwhelming, but you know me. I'll manage.

CHRISTINE  
 Of course you will, sweetie. You're my big, strong hero. This city's, too. Don't you forget that.

Christine gives Winchester a KISS on the cheek.

CHRISTINE (CONT'D)  
 I do wish you would open up to me more often, though. You walk around  
 (MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CHRISTINE (CONT'D) (cont'd)  
with such burdens on yourself and  
you insist on bottling your  
emotions from me. From everyone.

WINCHESTER  
(searching for response)  
Maybe that is for the best. Some  
things need not be discussed.  
Besides, I don't like bringing the  
office home. There is a time for  
that and right now isn't that time.  
It's "me and my lovely wife" time.

CHRISTINE  
(flattered)  
You charming devil. Okay, you win.  
This time. Dinner will be ready  
soon. It's your favorite, Chicken  
Casserole.

WINCHESTER  
I could already smell it. You're  
the best, Mrs. Winchester. You know  
I love you, right?

CHRISTINE  
Absolutely, Mr. Winchester. I love  
you, too.

Christine exits the room, joyous smile painted on.  
Winchester also has a smile on, a more uncomfortable one.

DOORBELL.

Winchester, surprised, gets up to answer the door. On the  
other side is someone he obviously did not expect to see.

WINCHESTER  
(lowers voice)  
What the hell are you doing here?  
You know goddamn well that my home  
is off limits.

CHRISTINE (O.S)  
Honey, who is that?

Winchester hesitates to answer.

INT. JOKER MAN'S BILLIARDS CLUB - NIGHT

A CUE BALL BREAKS a diamond of RACKED POOL BALLS. At the controlling end of the POOL STICK is Wesley.

At the bar nearby, Adam and Jennifer sit and watch. Both enjoying BEERS.

WESLEY

I haven't played in years, but it is obvious that indeed gifted with a wooden stick.

JENNIFER

(chuckles)

I'm not going to even touch that.

WESLEY

You sure? I would love for you to touch my long, wooden stick.

JENNIFER

I'm sure you would.

ADAM

I apologize for my friend. He's little more than an adolescent boy trapped in an adult frame. Not really accustomed to female companionship.

WESLEY

(to Adam)

Dude, I can totally hear you talk about me. Not cool, bro. And for your information, I was one of the most charismatic and popular kids in high school.

ADAM

Besides the fact that I highly doubt that, you graduated high school like four or five years ago. No longer relevant.

WESLEY

(slightly embarrassed)

Whatever, man. Nice way to put me on blast in front of my potentially new girlfriend, ass.

(CONTINUED)

JENNIFER  
(trying not to laugh)  
Oh, I wouldn't worry too much about that.

Wesley cuts the two a sharp look.

WESLEY  
(irritated)  
So funny. I'm going outside to smoke a cigarette. Have fun ridiculing me, "buddy".

Wesley walks off.

JENNIFER  
I think you really pissed him off.

ADAM  
No way. He does that same little routine or some variation of it at least once a day. He always finds a reason to be in a bad mood. It'll pass, trust me.

JENNIFER  
Okay. Hey, I don't mean to be rude but you two aren't...you know?

ADAM  
What?

JENNIFER  
Gay?

ADAM  
God no. Is that what you thought?

JENNIFER  
Kind of. You guys have been bickering every since we got here. Like an old married couple or something.

ADAM  
Believe me, even if I were, Wesley would be the very last choice. It may not seem like it, but he's basically my only friend. As you can probably already gather, I am not the most social of people. Wesley is just a big geek and, well, I'm not. So in lies the constant conflict.

(CONTINUED)

JENNIFER

What's wrong with being a geek?

ADAM

I don't know. Just not my cup of tea, I guess. Are you a geek?

JENNIFER

Maybe I am.

ADAM

If so, then I apologize if I offended you and the geek squads worldwide.

JENNIFER

(laughing)

You're adorable. Why would you assume that you are bad in social surroundings? You seem comfortable enough to me.

ADAM

Normally, I try to stay as far away from others as possible. I've been like that ever since I got to this town a few years ago. I suppose you bring out the better in me.

JENNIFER

Wow, that was such a line. You think I bring out the better in you after this, only our second conversation? You barely even know me.

ADAM

I have great intuition.

JENNIFER

I bet.

ADAM

Let's talk about you. You still haven't told me why you were in such a dire hurry to leave town the other night. Or why you returned.

JENNIFER

(uncomfortable)

It's a very long story, Adam.

(CONTINUED)

ADAM

Look at me. I'm homeless. I have nothing but time to spare.

JENNIFER

Let's just say, I have a sort of overly protective ex and I felt like leaving was the only option. I soon realized, though, that I have nowhere else to go, so I came back to give it another chance in this wretched city.

ADAM

Is that who did that to your face? Your ex.

JENNIFER

No. I haven't actually seen him in over six months. He has other ways of monitoring and controlling my life, however.

ADAM

You don't have to be afraid, anymore, Jennifer. As long as I'm around, I won't let anything happen to you.

JENNIFER

(skeptic)

That's very noble of you, Adam, but I doubt you understand the magnitude of the situation. I was only kidding about the protection thing. This guy is connected and dangerous. I wish I had never met him. I shouldn't even be telling you any of this.

ADAM

Like I said, nothing will happen to you.

JENNIFER

(sighs)

Thanks anyway for being so concerned. About everything.

ADAM

I don't mind at all.

Cutting Adam and Jennifer's conversation short, is an intoxicated THUG (early 30's; intimidatingly hefty).

(CONTINUED)

THUG  
(belligerent)  
Hey, loser, fancy seeing your  
pathetic ass in here again.

ADAM  
(confused)  
Sorry, do I know you?

THUG  
Oh, you don't recognize me, huh? I  
remember you. And your little  
weasel pal. You two shits hustled  
me and my brother out of two  
hundred dollars last Friday.

ADAM  
That was you? Unfortunate, man. You  
know how the games goes, though.  
Better luck next time.

THUG  
(pissed)  
Luck, my ass! You're going to hand  
over my loot right now or I'm going  
to force your goddamn teeth down  
your throat and charge you for a  
meal.

ADAM  
(sarcastic)  
This is when I'm supposed to be  
scared out of my socks, isn't it?

JENNIFER  
Calm down! I'll pay you. Just leave  
him alone.

Jennifer reaches for her purse but Adam stops her.

ADAM  
I don't want you involved in my  
troubles.

THUG  
And troubles they are. You know  
what, I like your lady friend here.  
If she wants to save you, I'm sure  
her and I can step into my office  
in the parking lot and work out an  
arrangement.

(CONTINUED)

ADAM

Very original there, big guy. And just so we are clear, I do not need saving. Can you say the same?

THUG

(laughs)

You got a few screws loose, I can see.

ADAM

Perhaps.

Adam stands up from his stool.

ADAM (CONT'D)

Sorry to spoil your drunken ego trip, but we were just leaving.

THUG

Correction: You were leaving. Me and "sweet thing" here have some business to conduct.

The thug GRABS Jennifer's arm.

ADAM

Alright, it's not funny anymore. Take your hands off of her.

JENNIFER

Adam, don't do anything stupid.

ADAM

(to thug)

Seriously. Now!

At the sound of Adam's elevated tone, a few of the patrons turn their attentions to the situation at hand.

THUG

You got it, man.

The thug releases his grip on Jennifer and wraps both large hands around Adam's NECK, lifting him off the ground.

JENNIFER

(frightened)

Let him go! What the hell is your problem.

(CONTINUED)

THUG  
Shut up, bitch!

ADAM  
(choking)  
Not cool....not at all.

THUG  
You never shut that goddamn mouth  
of yours, do you?

ADAM  
...sometimes.

Wesley returns and notices Adam in danger. He runs over, POOL STICK in hand and CRACKS it across the thug's BACK.

The thug drops Adam and turns towards Wesley.

THUG  
(even more pissed now)  
You!

The thug BACKHAND SLAPS Wesley to the ground.

Adam rises from the ground and brushes himself off. By this time, a small crowd had formed to watch the fight.

ADAM  
Shit, guy, you have serious anger  
issues.

THUG  
You again with the wit.

The thug throws a PUNCH at Adam, but Adam DUCKS. The Thug SLAMS his fist into a GLASS PITCHES resting on the bar counter, SHATTERING it.

ADAM  
Listen, I don't want anymore  
problems, man. Just let us get out  
of here and this doesn't have to go  
any further.

THUG  
Too late, dip shit!

Again, the thug attempts to attack Adam. This time however, Adam catches his fist mid-punch. He SQUEEZES until the sound of BONES CRACKING can be heard. The thug is dumbfounded. So is everyone else watching.

(CONTINUED)

THUG  
(wincing)  
Not happening!

ADAM  
Seems it is.

The thug uses his free hand to try to strike Adam, but Adam catches that hand. The HEAD BUTTS the thug. BLOOD SPURTS from the thug's nose as he stumbles backwards.

THUG  
(raging)  
You asshole! I'm going to kill you!

ADAM  
(to crowd)  
And you people would let that happen, wouldn't you? Of course you would.

Obviously not learning, the thug CHARGES at Adam again. He is stopped when Adam lands a viscous UPPERCUT to his STERNUM. The thug drops to his knees.

WESLEY  
(disoriented)  
Holy shit, man. How the hell did you do that?

ADAM  
Not sure.

WESLEY  
Bullshit, dude. I know what's up.

ADAM  
Shut up and get off the floor.  
We're leaving.

The Thug draws a HANDGUN and points it at Adam. GASPS are heard almost in unison.

THUG  
Ain't nobody going nowhere until I get my freaking money!

ADAM  
(finally rattled)  
Take it easy. This has already gone further than it should have. No need for this to escalate. Put that away.

THUG

I'm making the rules here. And since you don't seem to be ready to pay me what's owed. I think I will show you I mean business.

The thug takes his aim off Adam and focuses on Jennifer. He FIRES.

Using himself as a shield, Adam jumps in front of Jennifer, protecting her from the bullet.

BLOOD DRIPS from a HOLE in the back of Adam's pullover.

Before he can even acknowledge what has happened, however, Adam turns around and RUSHES at the thug. He PUNCHES him unconscious within seconds.

Wesley, Jennifer, and the rest of the pool hall are in disbelief and shock. All eyes are on Adam, who is now PANTING as he comes down off his adrenaline high.

JENNIFER

(seriously shaken)

Adam...are you..are you alright?

ADAM

(panting)

Dandy.

JENNIFER

You're bleeding. Adam, are you crazy? Why did you do that?

ADAM

(calming down)

What was I supposed to do? He was about to blow your head off.

WESLEY

(scrambling for words)

Uh, Adam, man...do you realize that there is freaking hole in your back?

ADAM

(somewhere else)

Let's go.

Ramblings echo throughout the small crowd. POLICE SIRENS can be heard nearing the scene.

(CONTINUED)

JENNIFER

(near hysteria)

We have to get you to a hospital! I think the cops are on their way. Sit down and we will wait for them.

ADAM

No. I'm getting out of here. You guys can stay if you want, but there is nothing wrong with me and I don't particularly like law enforcement.

Adam heads for the exit. He seems to show no effects to being shot. Wesley reluctantly follows suit. Followed by Jennifer, who is in tears.

WESLEY

Dude, did you hear me? You have a goddamn hole in the middle of you back. How are you even walking?

Adam doesn't respond. The three exit the billiard hall.

The cowardly BARTENDER emerges from behind the counter.

BARTENDER

(scared shitless)

Okay, okay. Everybody relax. Mr. Joker Man is on the way. The cops, too. Please don't allow this isolated incident deter you from returning to *Joker Man's Billiards*.

INT. ALPHA-PRIME BIOTECHNOLOGIES - LOBBY - NIGHT

Charles, the security guard, sits in his normal carefree position. He is talking on the phone.

CHARLES

(angry)

No, bitch, you heard what I said. You already get an ungodly amount of money from me every month. I refuse to fork over anymore so that you and whatever college student you have as a boy-toy this week can run around and do what every in God's name it is you do these days.

The somberness of the lobby is disturbed as a group of BUSINESS TYPE MEN approach the security check in.

(CONTINUED)

CHARLES  
(re: phone)  
We'll finish this later.

Charles hangs up the phone.

CHARLES (CONT'D)  
(to business men)  
May I help you?

BUSINESS MAN  
(deadpan)  
Samson Carmichael.

CHARLES  
Sorry, he's done taking  
appointments for the day. In fact,  
I believe he is on his way out now.

BUSINESS MAN  
Very well.

CHARLES  
Is there anything else?

BUSINESS MAN  
Just this.

The Business man pulls out a SILENCER-EQUIPPED PISTOL and SHOTS Charles TWICE in the FACE.

The business men continue on their way into the interior of Alpha-Prime.

INT. MOTEL - NIGHT

The door opens and in walks Jennifer, Adam and Wesley.

JENNIFER  
(still shaken)  
You guys can stay here until we get  
all of this figured out. Again,  
Adam, I think you need a doctor.

WESLEY  
Yeah, man, the time for your  
stubborn nature is not now. You  
could be seriously injured.

ADAM  
(annoyed)  
Goddamn it, I said I'm fine.

(CONTINUED)

JENNIFER

No, you're not. Take off your shirt. Let's see how bad it is.

ADAM

It's probably a fresh wound of something.

Adam removes his shirt. To both Wesley's and Jennifer's shock, there is a BULLET lodged in Adam's SPINE.

WESLEY

Holy shit!

ADAM

What?

JENNIFER

You were shot directly in the spine, Adam. You shouldn't even be able to stand. Can't you feel it?

ADAM

A little, I guess. It kind of stings.

WESLEY

(anxious)

This is unreal, dude. It's like the damn thing just stopped. It's only like halfway in.

ADAM

Well, pull it out already, dumb ass.

JENNIFER

I don't know if that's such a good idea. You should have someone with medical training messing with that.

ADAM

Screw that. Wesley, do you still have those pliers you stole from the pawn shop?

WESLEY

Indeed I do.

Wesley pulls out a pair of PLIERS.

(CONTINUED)

WESLEY (CONT'D)

(hesitant)

You sure about this?

ADAM

Stop being a pussy and remove the damn bullet from my body if you wouldn't mind, sir.

WESLEY

Sure. It's your mobility, after all.

As Jennifer GRIMACES, Wesley carefully removes the bullet from Adam's back with the pliers.

Adam doesn't even flinch before grabbing his shirt and putting it back on.

ADAM

You gotta cut out the melodrama, Wesley. You're scaring the lady.

WESLEY

No way. There is something strange going on with you. You just don't want to believe me. I mean, first the car leap frog and now this. You just beat that guy to a bloody pulp in the blink of an eye. You survived a point-blank gunshot. It's those experiments, man. I warned you.

JENNIFER

What experiments?

ADAM

Nothing. Pay him no mind. He lives in a fantasy world filled with people in capes.

WESLEY

(ignoring Adam)

You know that Alpha-Prime place? The one that's in all that trouble because of that rich prick of an owner and all it's questionable testings. Well, Prince Charming over here was one of the lab rats. Now, he's turning into this bionic Chuck Norris all of a sudden and inexplicably. Topped off

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

WESLEY (cont'd)  
with the fact that he's now  
obviously bulletproof.

ADAM  
(frustrated)  
Why don't you just write a book  
while you're at it?

JENNIFER  
(concerned)  
How long ago did you take those  
tests?

ADAM  
Six months or so. What does it  
matter?

JENNIFER  
It matters. You remember the crazy  
ex I told you about?

ADAM  
Yeah.

JENNIFER  
It was him. Samson Carmichael.

WESLEY  
You're shitting me.

ADAM  
I still don't understand what that  
has to do with when I took some  
stupid trial drugs.

JENNIFER  
I broke up with Sam after I  
accidentally stumbled upon his  
plans to manufacture some kind of  
terrible super drug. I threatened  
to go to the authorities about it.  
To warn people. He has been trying  
to find and kill me every since.

ADAM  
I'm sorry if this come off the  
wrong way, but that is one  
unbelievable story.

JENNIFER  
I know it is, but if you were  
involved in one of those

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

JENNIFER (cont'd)  
experiments, then there is no  
telling what kind of side effects  
may develop.

WESLEY  
Like becoming a super human.

ADAM  
Shut up.

JENNIFER  
Like death.

BOOM! The door is KICKED IN.

It is Sgt. Zane, SHOTGUN in hand.

ZANE  
Took a while, but I found you,  
sweetie. Daddy's home.

Adam and Wesley stand confused. Jennifer, completely  
mortified.

JENNIFER  
(to Adam and Wesley)  
You guys should run.

ZANE  
That would be quite pointless. I  
don't know who you supporting  
characters are, but bad timing must  
be your specialties.

ADAM  
More surprises? Who would you  
happen to be, might I ask?

ZANE  
None of your goddamn  
business. That's who I am. The young  
lady and I have unfinished affairs  
to tend to and you two are what I  
call collateral damage.

WESLEY  
Bullshit! I am done with craziness  
for one night. Adam, let's roll.

(CONTINUED)

JENNIFER

(to Zane)

How did you find me?

ZANE

It's what I do. Now, you know what I'm here for. Hand it over peacefully and things won't have to get unnecessarily messy and tortuous.

Wesley has heard enough. He makes a break for the door, passed Zane.

WESLEY

What you have against her is your deal. I doubt it has anything to do with me.

Zane SMASHES the BUTT of the shotgun into Wesley's face, sending him to the ground.

ZANE

Any more sudden actions? Didn't think so.

JENNIFER

I'm not who you're looking for. I don't have what you are after. I told you that before.

ZANE

I have reason to believe otherwise. I told you that before.

ADAM

Before?

JENNIFER

We've met.

ADAM

Your face?

ZANE

What about it? I am no chauvinist. I have no hesitations about slapping around some stupid bitch. I'm sorry if you have a problem with that. It doesn't matter, just so you know.

(CONTINUED)

ADAM

(exhausted and angry)  
Why do I have to run into the  
biggest assholes in the city? What  
did I ever do?

JENNIFER

(sobbing; to Adam)  
I didn't mean to get you wrapped up  
in this mess. I told you that you  
didn't want to know me.

ZANE

(unsympathetic)  
Blah, blah, blah. Enough of this  
emotional nonsense. Give me the  
package so I can kill you and get  
on with my day. I have things to  
do.

ADAM

Go to hell.

ZANE

I've already got reservations. Hold  
my seat.

Zane SHOOTS Adam in the CHEST. Adam is propelled violently  
against the wall. He crumples to the ground motionless.

Jennifer SCREAMS.

ZANE

That isn't going to help you,  
whore.

Zane cracks a sinister grin as he approaches Jennifer.

INT. ALPHA-PRIME BIOTECHNOLOGIES - EXECUTIVE OFFICE - NIGHT

Samson Carmichael's HEAD is SLAMMED through a GLASS COFFEE  
TABLE. BLOOD POURS from his face. The three business men  
from earlier surround him.

SAMSON

(chuckling)  
Is that the best you bastards have?  
I've had rougher sex with your  
wives.

A KICK to the stomach sends Samson SLIDING through broken  
glass and other trash until he rests against a corner of the  
room.

(CONTINUED)

The attacking trio slowly stalks towards Samson. The speaker of the group steps forward.

BUSINESS MAN

Mr. Carmichael, your vain bravery even in the face of certain demise is admirable. It's a shame we couldn't have met under more pleasant circumstances.

SAMSON

(sarcastic)

What ever do you mean? I'm having a blast. My night was so mundane until you fine sirs showed up to brighten it.

The business man motions to his accomplices. They each grab nearby GASOLINE CONTAINERS.

SAMSON (CONT'D)

Isn't this a wonderful city where at any given moment you can be unsuspectingly ambushed by random lunatics who want you dead for conveniently undisclosed reasons?

The two business men begin DOWSING the office WALLS and FURNITURE with gas.

BUSINESS MAN

It is quite simple. You happen to be a rather troublesome obstacle standing in the way of our client. You must be eliminated.

SAMSON

I'm sure. Did that son-on-a-bitch mayor send you?

BUSINESS MAN

You won't be alive soon, Mr. Carmichael. Who sent us should not be important to you at this point.

SAMSON

So, you're going to set fire to my building, huh? Somebody watches too many *Batman* movies. What does it prove?

(CONTINUED)

BUSINESS MAN

Absolutely nothing. My associates here are a bit OCD about forensic evidence. They believe the flame to be the ultimate cleansing tool. I suggested just shooting you in the head.

SAMSON

(serious)

You should have done that. Now you've just infuriated me. I'm going to find you and find whoever hired you and I'm going to rip you apart limb by limb. Slowly and painfully.

BUSINESS MAN

(amused)

Cute. I do not believe you are in any condition to make idle threats. You are witnessing your final moments on this earth. Consider those your last words.

The business man LIGHTS a BUTANE LIGHTER and TOSSES it to the floor.

FLAMES ENGULF the room.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

Drunken patrons are enjoying more drinks and discussing various things amongst themselves. On the television, as usual, is Sullivan Jenkins.

Harold Stein, Carmichael's attorney, watches visibly intoxicated.

SULLIVAN

(re: television)

It has been nearly a month since the devastating arson attack that burned Alpha-Prime Technologies to the ground and police say there are still no leads in the case. It remains unknown if the pharmaceutical juggernaut's head man, Samson Carmichael survived the fire as no body was ever recovered. The prominent playboy has been missing and presumed deceased every

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

SULLIVAN (cont'd)  
since disappearing the night of the  
fire. Skeptics, however, worry that  
this is just another ploy being  
implemented in order for Carmichael  
to dodge his recent legal woes.

INT. BAR RESTROOM - NIGHT

Stein STUMBLES into the restroom. He checks the mirror for a second before heading to the stall.

Once inside, Stein begins humming as he pisses. Soon, someone else enters the restroom. Stein finishes up and exits the stall.

Standing in front of him is a MAN in a TRENCH COAT with a HOOD over his head. He also wears a MASK.

STEIN  
(startled; snickering)  
What the hell? Nice mask, loser.

The person doesn't respond. He GRABS Stein by the throat and LIFTS him a foot off the ground.

MAN  
(intense yet cold)  
Samson Carmichael. Tell me where he  
is.

STEIN  
(scared)  
I don't know! News says he's dead.

MAN  
But you know better.

STEIN  
No, I really don't. I know nothing.  
Who are you?

MAN  
Don't worry about it.

The man reaches into Stein's pocket and removes his WALLET. He takes out the DRIVER'S LICENSE.

STEIN  
What are you doing?

(CONTINUED)

MAN

I'm going to pay your home a visit  
and see if I can't find the  
whereabouts of your client. Thanks.

The man THROWS Stein upwards and completely through the  
ceiling.

He takes off his mask and prepares to exit the restroom.

It is Adam.

EXT. HOMELESS SHELTER - NIGHT

Standing in front of the old gym are Wesley and Vic Lamar.  
Vic idly toys around with his wheelchair as Wesley carries  
on with one of his abstract monologues.

WESLEY

In the end, though, it probably  
will be stupid monkeys that take  
over. Makes enough sense. I'm  
betting it won't be long either.  
This is the future. All types of  
crazy shit is going on. I'm just  
waiting for the flying cars and  
cyborgs. On second thought, I  
believe the machines will inherit  
the land. Yeah, that's it. How does  
it feel to be amidst such a  
changing world? You being so old  
and all.

VIC

(inattentive)

Huh? What did you say? Eh, it  
doesn't matter. Kid, you have got  
to stop with the mind-numbing  
banter. I'm about to take a goddamn  
circular saw to my temple.

WESLEY

You're just grumpy. You'll thank me  
for the knowledge I generously  
bestow upon you one day. All of you  
guys will.

VIC

Yeah, yeah. Sure thing. Anyway,  
where's that Adam guy you're  
usually with. Ain't seen him in a  
while.

(CONTINUED)

WESLEY

I wish I could tell you. I rarely see him anymore. I'll probably run into sooner or later, though.

EXT. POLICE STATION - NIGHT

Police and staff go about their busy night. Reports are being taken, dispatchers work relays, etc. Rushing passed all of this is Sgt. Zane, dressed in plain clothes and carrying an EVIDENCE BOX towards the exit.

VIC (V.O)

Life has a way of working in circles, kid. He'll be back around.

He is abruptly stopped by a fellow OFFICER.

OFFICER

(surprised)

Sarge? What are you doing here?  
Thought you was on vacation.

ZANE

I am.

OFFICER

(smirks)

Hell, I guess you can't stop hunting down the scum of this town even if you're told to.

ZANE

Something like that.

INT. STEIN RESIDENCE- NIGHT

Above a FIREPLACE are various PHOTOS of Harold Stein with different family members. A survey of some of the main areas of the high-priced condo show Stein's luxurious items. PLASMA TV mounted on the wall, expensive FURNITURE and decor.

WESLEY (V.O)

The last few times I talked to him, he was different, man. Don't really know how to explain it, but...

The front DOORKNOB WIGGLES. Again. Then it is forcefully RIPPED off from the outside.

Adam has arrived.

(CONTINUED)

WESLEY (V.O)(CONT'D)  
He's been going on and on about  
some chick he barely knows. Total  
Taxi Driver shit, man.

Adam begins ransacking through Stein's belongings.  
Overturnd BOOKSHELF here. Emptied DESK DRAWER there. Within  
moments, the once elegant living space has been turned  
upside-down.

VIC (V.O)  
You mean that broad that used to  
come up here and serve lunch. I saw  
him getting shot down by her once.  
Ain't she missing or something?

WESLEY (V.O)  
Probably dead. Who knows? The point  
is that every since his little  
crush disappeared, all he ever  
worries about is finding out what  
happened.

Rifling through a closet, Adam comes across a COMPACT DISK  
hidden in a BOX of old VINYL RECORDS. The CD is labeled:  
"EDEN/JEN'S NOTES". He pockets the disk.

VIC (V.O)  
So what? The kid finally seems to  
have an objective. Something to  
strive for.

Outside, RED and BLUE LIGHTS FLASH. As Adam hurries to stuff  
as many useful items into his coat, STREAKS from FLASHLIGHTS  
shine through the window and cut the darkness.

VIC (V.O)(CONT'D)  
Sure it may be a waste of time but  
at least he's decided to get off  
his ass and find a purpose in this  
hopeless world.

Two PATROL OFFICERS slowly move about the yard and towards  
the front door.

VIC (V.O)(CONT'D)  
You should take some pointers.

Confusion washes over the faces of the officers as they  
notice the damaged space where the doorknob once was. They  
draw their GUNS.

INT. WINCHESTER RESIDENCE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

A jovial Christine Winchester is hard at work preparing the night's supper as "Help" by *The Beatles* somberly plays from a small RADIO near the stove.

Christine softly bobs her head to the tune as she carries on a phone conversation.

CHRISTINE

(giggling)

Oh my god, Rachael, I love this song. Remember how I told you that that creep Walter Mitchell tried to put the moves on me senior year? This was the song that was playing!

"Help, I need somebody..."

CHRISTINE (CONT'D)

It was so funny. I don't know how I ended up in a situation that warranted the two of us being alone but I thought it was so ironic that this very song was basically speaking what was on my mind.

"Help, not just anybody..."

CHRISTINE (CONT'D)

Thankfully, his overbearing mother busted up his pathetic attempts and yours truly was left unscathed--physically and emotionally.

A POT BOILS over startling Christine.

CHRISTINE (CONT'D)

(laughing)

Oh shit, Rachael, clumsy me just made a mess. I will call you after I've finished cooking.

Once off the phone, Christine begins to clean up the spill.

In the distance, the front door can be heard SLAMMING.

"Help, you know I need someone..."

CHRISTINE

Ryan, baby, you home early? I wasn't expecting you for another

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CHRISTINE (cont'd)  
hour or so. Well, it's almost  
supper time and you are going to  
love what I made.

Christine finishes cleaning and walks off to greet her  
husband.

Focus remains on the COOKING FOOD.

CHRISTINE (O.S)  
(scared)  
What the hell are you doing here?!  
Get out now!

"Help."

EXT. HOMELESS SHELTER - NIGHT

A CAR passes by VIC and Wesley. It is loudly blaring a  
familiar tune. "Help"

WESLEY  
(insulted)  
What do you mean by that? Pointers.

VIC  
What I mean is that unlike you,  
your buddy has actually taken some  
initiative. Albeit misguided  
perhaps. But he is goin' out there  
and getting shit done. You stand  
around all day and spew your  
never-ending mambo jumbo about  
this, that and the other to anyone  
bored or stupid enough to  
listen. After a while you have to  
stop running off at the mouth and  
make things happen.

Wesley removes his comic book, *Dark Guardian* from his  
pocket.

EXT. STEIN RESIDENCE - NIGHT

The two patrol officers cautiously approach the front door.

PATROL OFFICER #1  
This is the New Egypt police. If  
anyone is in there come out  
peacefully with your hands up.

(CONTINUED)

VIC (V.O)(CONT'D)  
 Life's short. You gotta live like  
 there is no tomorrow...

INT. WINCHESTER RESIDENCE - NIGHT

BLOOD has been SPLATTERED across PICTURES resting atop a  
 COFFEE TABLE. Wedding photo. Vacation. Anniversary.

VIC (V.O)(CONT'D)  
 Because eventually, there won't be.

EXT. HOMELESS SHELTER - NIGHT

Wesley thumbs through his book.

WESLEY  
 Now, old timer, I know you think  
 that this is garbage that I read  
 but you couldn't be further from  
 the truth. The reason I obsess over  
 comics is because they are complex  
 tales that relate to life.

VIC  
 (rolls eyes)  
 Oh, brother, here we go.

WESLEY  
 Take this one for instance. *Dark  
 Guardian* number thirty-five. One of  
 my particular favorites.

EXT. STEIN RESIDENCE - NIGHT

CRASH! Thousands of shards of GLASS fly out into the night  
 and onto the lawn. With the glass lands a dark figure. Adam.

The patrol officers are shocked at what they have seen.  
 Nonetheless they have a job to do.

PATROL OFFICER #2  
 Freeze!

PATROL OFFICER #1  
 (to partner)  
 Is he wearing a goddamn mask? What  
 is that, leather?

They train their guns on Adam.

(CONTINUED)

WESLEY (V.O)(CONT'D)  
I've read it more than thirty  
times. The story is loaded with  
layer upon layer of misdirection.

Adam quickly grabs a TRASHCAN TOP and HURLS it like a boomerang, STRIKING Officer #1 in the FACE and sending him to the ground.

WESLEY (V.O)(CONT'D)  
I'm going through this blasted  
thing the first time thinking the  
story is taking me in one direction  
but in the end everything goes  
askew.

The second patrol officer FIRES at Adam, who DODGES it and LEAPS into the air towards the officer.

INT. UNDISCLOSED BASEMENT - NIGHT

FOOTSTEPS lead down a STAIRCASE until finally stopping at the concrete base.

WESLEY (V.O)(CONT'D)  
The bad guys were actually the good  
guys and vice versa. What at first  
seemed obvious became uncertain.  
All around hysteria. Concentrated  
confusion.

Jennifer, SEVERELY BEATEN and nearly naked, lies CHAINED to a filthy bed.

INT. WINCHESTER RESIDENCE - NIGHT

Christine's lifeless body is sprawled over the couch, soaked in her own BLOOD.

WESLEY (V.O)(CONT'D)  
What bothered me was that these  
handful of small details in the  
beginning of the book that I had  
overlooked ended up serving as  
intricate pieces of the overall  
plot. That's called foreshadowing,  
Vic.

EXT. HOMELESS SHELTER - NIGHT

Wesley ROLLS up his comic and sticks it back in his pocket.

WESLEY (CONT'D)

Once I went back and reread, I noticed that the writer had basically given away the ending throughout the entire book but disguised it using a bunch of extra information and subplots and whatnot.

VIC

(irritated)

See, this is the shit I'm talking about. What does that have to do with anything I said?

WESLEY

Well, you implied that I have no drive or ambition because I absorb unusual facts. You assume I'm a type of person based on vain preconceptions, but other than what I allow you to perceive, you are clueless. Just like most people. Maybe I do just waste my life preaching to an inattentive audience. Or maybe that's simply what I want you to believe.

VIC

(confused)

Whatever you say, kid. I don't think I can take too much more of your double talk. You could be some sort of teacher or something but you prefer to spend your nights on this corner. Loony, you are, I tell ya.

WESLEY

Don't worry. It'll make sense eventually. Take care of yourself, Vic. And take this. I think I have gotten all the use out of it I'm going to.

Wesley hands Vic his *Dark Guardian* comic.

(CONTINUED)

VIC  
Yeah...sure.

Wesley walks off into the night.

Vic reluctantly opens the comic to the last page.

"END OF PART ONE."