

*Superman: Man of Steel*

Based on the "Superman" character by  
Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster

Unknown/Abandoned Draft  
WB #0003126005

"SUPERMAN: MAN OF STEEL"

FADE IN:

INT. HOUSE - AFTERNOON

A HEAVY SET WOMAN (60's) lifts herself up from her favorite recliner and wanders into the kitchen just as the television program goes to commercial.

Mid-way through the thirty second spot, the program cuts away to a STOCK NEWS SLATE:

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)  
(on TV)  
This is a Storm Team 5 Weather  
Alert...

CLOSE ON TV

METEOROLOGIST in front of Doppler radar.

METEOROLOGIST  
Good evening, I am meteorologist  
Jack Kinsman with this special  
weather bulletin. The National  
Weather Service has just issued a  
tornado warning for southern Lane  
County...

The meteorologist steps to the side to show the radar.

METEOROLOGIST  
Lane County Sheriff's department  
reports seeing a funnel cloud on  
the ground twenty-three miles  
south, south-west of Alamota and  
moving to the Northeast at --

The TV cuts to static --

INT. DINER - AFTERNOON

A red cape flaps in the air as an 8 YEAR OLD BOY runs around the diner pretending to be a superhero.

He spins around, creating sound effects for his own little imaginary world. But one spin too many causes the boy to run headlong into a WAITRESS who nearly dumps a pot of coffee on the boy.

His MOTHER SNAPS her FINGERS, motioning the boy over.

MOTHER

Get - over - here!  
 (to waitress)  
 Sorry. I'm sorry. He's just really  
 excited...

WAITRESS

Don't sweat it hon, I've got two at  
 home just like 'im. They can be  
 handful.

The boy crawls back into the booth.

MOTHER

Here... eat your fries!

The mother pushes a plate in front of him with old, limp  
 fries and a large pool of ever-drying catsup.

FRONT ENTRANCE

A man barges in, clutching a newspaper over his head,  
 escaping from the wind and rain.

MAN #1

Damn almighty! It's gettin' ugly  
 out.

The waitress comes around with the pot of coffee. She peers  
 out the window as the storm continues to rage.

A second later, the DEAFENING ROAR of the RAIN and WIND drops  
 off as the sky grows darker.

WAITRESS

Huh... I think it's lettin' up.

Other patrons sitting at the counter facing the kitchen  
 continue eating, not giving much attention to the weather  
 behind them.

COUNTER TOP

cups and utensils start RATTLING across the Formica surface.

CLOSE ON CUSTOMERS

they stop in mid-bite, some terrified.

A an old FARMER slowly turns around to peer out of the large  
 windows at the front of the diner.

THROUGH WINDOWS

two cars slide across the asphalt before flipping up and clapping together roof-to-roof in mid-air.

DINER

all the customers quickly back away from the windows just as they blow out, hurling glass all over. The lights flicker before snapping off.

TORNADO SIRENS blast their dire warning in the b.g... but it's too late.

A WOMAN SCREAMS just as a rogue truck flying through the air barrels into the front of the diner.

The seven-ton metal monster slides towards the counter where the waitress is trapped, threatening to crush her. She crouches near the cash register, waiting for the impact.

But the CRUNCH she hears is not her bones, but the front grill of the truck --

TWO HANDS

shoot out, caving in the front end and stopping the truck in mid-air.

The mother, clutching her son, stares, panic-stricken. The boy forces his mother's hands away from his face to get a glimpse. He smiles.

WAITRESS

(relieved, panting)

Oh my God.

A red cape with an emblazoned yellow "S" shield whips around in the wind, obscuring the view of the hero. But we all know who it is.

The truck is slowly lowered and placed out of harm's way.

The women behind the counter peers up,

WHAT SHE SEES: A blurry red and blue silhouette obscured by the bright truck lights and moisture in her eyes.

He holds out his hand.

SUPERMAN

Are you alright?

She takes it and rises to her feet.

WAITRESS

I think so.

SUPERMAN

Excuse me.

Just as quickly as it arrives, the storm passes along with the WHOOSH and BOOM of the man of steel.

Silence. RAIN WATER DRIPS from the broken glass and roof line.

Everyone wanders towards the gaping hole in the diner. They form a collective hushed reverence for what they have just witnessed.

Only the 8 year old boy can sum up everything --

BOY

(amazed)

Awesome.

Everyone glances down at the boy.

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

OPENING CREDITS - MONTAGE

The following is played in quick succession over titles and MAIN THEME OVERTURE.

Note: This is meant to re-educate the audience on the mythology of Superman post-Crisis (see DC comics "Crisis on Infinite Earths" and Byrne's "Man of Steel" series).

A) Sweeping over green pastures to reveal a gleaming citadel under green skies. Inside a highly advanced civilization with robot servants, Clark's biological parents, JOR-EL and LARA, place their infant son inside a birthing matrix.

B) The rocket leaps into the air as a series of violent explosions erupt through the outer mantle of the planet setting the world ablaze. The rocket escapes the gravitational pull just before the planet explodes.

C) A teenage CLARK KENT out runs the defense and scores another touchdown for the Smallville Sentinels football team.

D) JONATHAN "PA" KENT stops the old pickup truck in a field where Clark moves a large piece of steel plating that has been hiding the rocket ship that brought him to earth.

E) An emotional Clark takes off into the night as Jonathan Kent attempts to comfort him. Clark leaps over a drainage ditch but his feet never hit the ground and he takes off into the sky.

F) MARTHA KENT opens a scrapbook chronicling the dozens of "miracles" and the "unseen hero" that seems to be bouncing around the country preventing many disasters.

G) In Metropolis, Clark is one face among thousands at an air fair. Above their heads, an experimental aircraft experiences a catastrophic failure. As fire and smoke streak behind the aircraft, people in the crowd react and point in the air. Immediately, without thinking, Clark leaps into the air, several people around him are either blown back or swept off their feet. Others are startled by the flying man. As the jet spirals towards the earth, Clark comes up underneath it, his jacket and shirt being torn to shreds with the friction of the air. The plane lands without incident and Clark stumbles out - his clothes tattered, his hair unkempt, and his face dirty and smudged. LOIS LANE climbs down from inside the jet and immediately grabs Clark as bystanders and reporters sprint down the tarmac and quickly surround them. Frightened, and uncomfortable, Clark leaps into the air and disappears in the clouds.

H) Jonathan finds his son sitting alone in the dark in his tattered clothes.

I) Martha pieces together a costume as Jonathan digs up an old set of spectacles, replaces the lenses with glass, and shows Clark how to slump over when standing and walking. Martha shows Clark the finished costume and signature "S" symbol.

J) In Metropolis, Lois is enjoying a cup of coffee when a man in a blue and red suit flies past the window. People on the street point and are shocked as Lois spits her coffee out, runs outside, and sees the flying man coasting upwards.

K) A bundle of newspapers are slammed on the sidewalk: "IT'S SUPERMAN!"

CUT TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

EXT. KENT FARM - DAY

A wooden four-by-four is thrust into the ground.

Clark Kent (41) is clad in a pair of overalls and a white under shirt. He is a muscular man, 6'3" and 225 pounds.

His ice blue eyes and jet black hair compliment his chiseled features well.

SUPER: "SMALLVILLE, KANSAS"

SUPER: "TODAY"

Clark continues pounding in the beams for a new pole barn with his bare hands as his adoptive mother, MARTHA KENT (70s), a thriving gentile woman with silver hair, brings out a pitcher of lemonade with two glasses.

MARTHA  
How's it comin'?

Clark struggles with another large beam.

CLARK  
It's -- uh -- going quick.

MARTHA  
(exasperated)  
Your father is having trouble with that tractor again.

Clark peers out into the field and sees his father beating the old, cast-iron red tractor with a wrench.

CLARK  
I'll give him a hand.

Clark takes the pitcher and pours a glass.

EXT. FIELD - DAY

The CLICK, CLICK, CLICK of the ratchet reverberates from under the metal beast as the strong, broad-chested JONATHAN KENT (70's) struggles to get things working again.

Clark bends down with the lemonade.

CLARK  
Need some help there, pop?

JONATHAN  
Oh! Clark!

Jonathan slides out from underneath the tractor with a grunt.

JONATHAN  
Yeah. The damn thing keeps bustin' on me. No good piece of --

He throws the wrench, hitting the TRACTOR with a CLANG at the appropriate time of the curse word.

CLARK

You should probably think about getting a new one soon.

JONATHAN

(tapping tractor)

Nah! This bessy still has a few more years left in her. She's never let me down before. I've plowed this field every year with this same tractor since the day your mother I found you out there and I'm not about to give up now.

Clark glances at the engine with his X-ray vision.

CLARK

Well, you won't be doing much today. It looks like the block is cracked. I'll get it back to the house so I can weld it later.

Clark hoists the 5000 pound tractor onto his back, with one hand over his shoulder gripping the front axel.

JONATHAN

I heard you had a busy night?

Clark nods.

CLARK

You could say that.

JONATHAN

Anything you want to talk about?

CLARK

No one died...

JONATHAN

But...

CLARK

It was close.

Jonathan stops.

JONATHAN

Have you ever thought about the possibility...

CLARK

I know, dad. And it scares me every time.

JONATHAN

You can't save everyone.

EXT. BARN

Clark drops off the tractor and closes the doors.

Jonathan grips his son's shoulder.

JONATHAN

Listen very carefully, son. You're a hero. And heroes do more than just save lives. They inspire. You're a beacon of hope to the world. Never forget that. There will come a day when you can't save everyone. But there is great evil out there that will try to destroy you, try to destroy everything you stand for. And that is far worse than the loss of a life. You may not believe me, but I've seen it in war and in life. Remember, It isn't just what you can do, it's who you are.

CLARK

Thanks, pop.

JONATHAN

Now, let's see if we can't get this barn put up by Monday.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. KENT FARM - EVENING

Clark picks up a truss for the roof of the barn. He flies it over to his dad who is atop a ladder with a hammer and nails.

Clark locks the truss in place and Jonathan hammers it down firmly.

Clark then takes up a position on the framed roof, near his dad.

CLARK

Hey, can we talk a second?

Jonathan puts down his hammer and takes out a handkerchief to wipe his brow.

JONATHAN  
What's on yer mind?

CLARK  
I've been doing a lot of thinking.

JONATHAN  
(interested)  
Oh?

CLARK  
You know about me and Lois --

Jonathan laughs.

JONATHAN  
(sarcastically)  
Yeah, I know about you and Lois. I sometimes need cliff notes just to keep track.

Clark flashes him a glare.

JONATHAN  
Sorry, go ahead.

CLARK  
What would you say if I wanted to tell her?

Jonathan is slightly preoccupied with the build.

JONATHAN  
Tell her what?

CLARK  
Everything.

Jonathan stops and gives Clark his full attention.

JONATHAN  
Have you thought about this?

CLARK  
I've been thinking about it for a long time and -- I love her.

JONATHAN

Yes, but she loves Superman. She doesn't know Clark Kent even exists.

CLARK

There's a reason for that.

JONATHAN

And are you willing to risk that?

Clark hesitates.

JONATHAN

Listen, I ain't tellin' you shouldn't do it... But, telling Lois that you're Superman won't make all your problems go away, son.

CLARK

I have to know... I don't want to live alone...

JONATHAN

You're not alone, Clark.

CLARK

That's not how I feel... knowing that I am the last. All I want is companionship, for someone to share with. Is that too much?

JONATHAN

No, son. It's not.

Jonathan climbs down the latter as Clark floats down.

JONATHAN

Whatever you decide, I want you to know one thing: Superman may be loved by the world, but only Clark Kent could fall for a woman like Lois Lane.

CLARK

(laughing)

Thanks.

Both men head in for supper.

FADE TO:

EXT. METROPOLIS - DAY - ESTABLISHING

It is another bright, sunny day in the capital city of Metropolis. Tall skyscrapers pierce the sky with their silver mirrored windows like giant glass spires.

RADIO DJ (V.O.)

Looks like it's gonna be another scorcher with temperatures reaching into the low-triple digits. We've got an accident on the 405 pike approaching Crescent so be on the lookout for that. In other news, as the presidential campaign season kicks off, expect a big announcement today from one of the pillars of the community.

A sound bite plays giving the audience a hint to the mystery person.

RADIO DJ (V.O.)

Word is that he will endorse Senator Frost, but there are rumors floating around that he may throw his hat into the race. We will just have to wait and see. This is ninety-seven point nine K.R.P.T., Radio Metropolis.

SERIES OF SHOTS

Construction workers sweat as heat waves billow up from the black asphalt.

Cars sit idle on the highway in a massive traffic jam.

Pedestrians slowly cross a busy intersection, wilting in the scorching summer heat as drivers lay on their HORNS.

The sun reaches its zenith over the city, erasing any hope of shade.

EXT. CAFE - DAY

LOIS LANE, the tall, brown-haired ace reporter of the Daily Planet, is waiting, sipping her water and looking at her watch as she quickly fans herself in the heat.

Her foot shakes back and forth in heady impatience.

It is at this moment that Clark runs up, quite unaffected by the heat.

This Clark Kent is strong, humble, but virtually unseen. He is Cary Grant with glasses, but he does have his moments, mostly because he was raised as a human.

CLARK  
I'm sorry, my flight was late  
getting in and I couldn't get a cab  
and --

LOIS  
You ran?! In this heat?!

CLARK  
Something wrong?

LOIS  
Yeah, it's gotta be close to a  
hundred degrees! And you're not  
even sweating!

CLARK  
I guess I'm just well suited for a  
warm climate or something.

LOIS  
Yeah... or something.

Clark takes a sip of his water. There is a long awkward pause as Lois continues to check her watch and tap her fingers on the table.

CLARK  
Expecting someone else?

Lois looks around, preoccupied.

LOIS  
Uh-huh.

CLARK  
I'm actually glad you asked me  
here. I have something that I want  
to ask you...

Lois looks past Clark and sees a man in a suit walking towards her, a woman just behind him with a briefcase.

CLARK  
Lois, I was wondering if --

Clark leans on the small wire bistro table, tipping it over and spilling water in Lois' lap.



LOIS  
Not a good time, Smallville!

INT. OFFICE - DAY

PERRY WHITE, the old, grizzled editor-in-chief of the Daily Planet, is carefully reading and examining a resume.

He reads and growls every few seconds but doesn't give the recently paroled JOHN CORBEN, sitting across from him, even a glance.

Corben is blond, mid-30's with razor-sharp cheek bones, and a thin but hard physique from his time in the slammer.

PERRY  
How long?

CORBEN  
6 months, 2 weeks, and 13 days...  
sir.

PERRY  
What for?

CORBEN  
Petty Larceny. And violating my  
parole.... for.... robbery.

PERRY  
Armed?

CORBEN  
I pretended I had a gun... but...  
no.

PERRY  
Good. I don't like the violent  
ones. How'd they get ya?

CORBEN  
Superman, sir.

PERRY  
Yeah, he always gets ya.

CORBEN  
It was actually a blessing in  
disguise. He talked with me, you  
know, like I was a real human  
being. He never raised his voice.  
He just talked to me.

(MORE)

CORBEN(cont'd)

He told the police that I didn't have a weapon and that I never meant to hurt anyone, which was the truth. He even told me that as soon as I got out, to come here and talk to a Mister Kent about getting a job. I'm determined to fly right, Mister White. Honestly.

PERRY

Good to hear it, kid. Clark really came through for ya. Highly recommended. He is, in my thirty-years, the best damn judge of character I have ever met... Now, you understand that the position doesn't pay well.

CORBEN

I'm willing to work my way up.

Perry leans back in his chair, thinking.

PERRY

Well, with Clark in your corner, it's hard to say no.

(heavy pause)

What the hell! You seem like a bright kid that just had a rough couple of years. I can understand that. Why, I had quite a battle with the bottle once...

CORBEN

I was never into drugs or alcohol, sir. It was just trying to keep my hands off of other people's stuff.

PERRY

Good for you! You'll fit in just fine around here. You're hired!

Perry gets to his feet to shake Corben's hands.

CORBEN

(quickly, stammering)

Thank you, Mister White, sir, you won't be disappointed, I won't let you down.

INT. NEWS ROOM - DAY

Clark and Lois exit the elevator to the hustle and BUSTLE of the Daily Planet news room. JIMMY OLSEN (20s) is there waiting.

JIMMY  
Hey, the dynamic duo is back.

CLARK  
Excuse me?

JIMMY  
(to Lois)  
Did you run through a sprinkler or something?

LOIS  
(pointing to Clark)  
Ask captain marvel over there!

Lois trudges towards her desk.

Jimmy slides up next to Clark.

JIMMY  
Boy, what did you do to rattle her cage?

CLARK  
It's just a whole big misunderstanding...

Lois brushes past Clark, bumping her shoulder into his.

JIMMY  
Well, whatever it is, I haven't seen her this mad since... Come to think about it, I've never seen her this mad. I mean, I haven't seen her this mad, and actually had the person she was mad at still walk without the aid of crutches or a wheel chair.

CLARK  
Thanks for the moral support, Jimmy.

JIMMY  
(patting Clark on the back)  
Not a prob, C.K.

From across the room comes the BOOMING VOICE of PERRY WHITE.

PERRY (O.S.)

OLSEN!

JIMMY

Gotta go!

OTHER END OF NEW ROOM

Jimmy rushes over where Perry is waiting with John Corben.

PERRY

Olsen, I'd like you to meet John Corben. He'll be starting here in the mail room. John, this is the thorn in my side that is James Olsen.

Shaking hands.

JIMMY

CORBEN

John.

Jimbo.

PERRY

Show Mister Corben around, get him acclimated to the routine, and then head down to the mail room to show him where he'll be working.

Perry slams his office door.

JIMMY

Mail room, huh? What did you do to deserve that kind of punishment?

CORBEN

6 months for larceny.

The naive Jimmy Olsen just laughs at the "clever joke."

JIMMY

(laughing)

Larceny. That's a good one.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

LEX LUTHOR is fussing with his tie and cuffs to his suit in a mirror, but his face is hidden from view. He is whistling Vivaldi or Mozart or something.

An assistant barges in.

ASSISTANT

Two minutes.

Lex waves his hand, but is still not seen.

LEX (O.S.)

(slightly annoyed)

Fine.

Lex finally gets his tie straightened. He snaps his fingers and MERCY GRAVES helps him with his jacket.

Mercy is Lex Lex's Minister of Security and personal bodyguard. She is young and petite with short blond hair and dressed in a modified version of a traditional chauffeur's uniform. She looks harmless... she isn't.

Lex takes one last look with the mirror blocking the view.

LEX

Perfect.

Lex confidently strides out of the little office, his back always turned, his identity still unknown.

EXT. LEXCORP HEADQUARTERS - DAY

A swarm of reporters are waiting in earnest as photographers snap pictures.

CHAIRMAN

... and so, it is my great pleasure  
to introduce the President and CEO  
of LexCorp, Lex Lex!

Lex walks up to the podium, his imposing image washing over the crowd of reporters.

Behind him, the front entrance of LexCorp is covered by a tarpaulin.

Lex calms the light clapping.

LEX

Thank you. Thank you all for  
coming.

(takes a breath)

I am many things to many people.  
But I am here today because the  
country I help build is sick and I  
cannot sit idly by while it slowly  
decays and dies. Technology can  
save us. Technology and vision.

(MORE)

LEX(cont'd)

I want this campaign to stand for something. I believe in the people of this nation, I believe in this country. We all wish for the same thing - prosperity, and peace. You have the ability to be great, you wish to be, you only lack the guidance to show you the way. That is why I have decided to run and to become the next President of the United States.

The giant tarpaulin is pulled, displaying a "LUTHOR FOR PRESIDENT" banner.

Lex raises his hands in triumph. All the reporters jump, ravenous with questions.

Lex holds that pose and the subsequent picture carries over to --

INT. NEWSROOM - DAY

A Daily Planet Newspaper is SLAMMED on a desk.

INSERT - NEWSPAPER

In big, bold type across the headline: "PRESIDENT LUTHOR?"

BACK TO SCENE

Clark picks up the paper.

A sea of front page Lex Luthor's stretch across the newsroom as everyone reads about Metropolis' newest star.

Lois hustles to her desk, dropping off her purse and taking off her jacket.

Clark glances away from the paper and pulls a double-take as he jumps up.

CLARK

Lois!

LOIS

Hey, Clark.

Lois starts walking away. Clark quickly follows.

CLARK

Lois, I feel awful about what happened yesterday, and I want to make it up to you.

LOIS  
Oh, it's okay.

CLARK  
No, really. I was wondering if  
maybe you'd like to get some lunch,  
sometime. You know, if you're  
hungry.

LOIS  
Clark, are you asking me out?

CLARK  
No. Yes? Well... Yes. Yes, I am.

Lois is left speechless.

LOIS  
(relaxed)  
Yeah, Sure. Okay.

CLARK  
Yeah?

LOIS  
What time?

Clark is about to make the final arrangements when his WATCH  
STARTS BEEPING.

He quickly covers it with his other hand to muffle the sound.

CLARK  
You know what, I have to be  
somewhere, but I'll get back to  
you.

LOIS  
Okay?

Clark quickly dashes off.

ELEVATORS

Corben exits, pushing around his little cart filled with the  
day's mail.

But his eyes soon run into the most strikingly beautiful  
creature he has ever seen - Lois Lane.

CORBEN  
(shout whisper)  
Hey, Jimbo!

He motions him over.

CORBEN  
(pointing)  
Who is that?

JIMMY  
Who? Lois? Trust me, you don't want  
anything to do with her.

CORBEN  
Why? What's wrong with her?

JIMMY  
Oh, nothing, she's just taken.

CORBEN  
Married?

JIMMY  
Not exactly.

CORBEN  
Engaged?

JIMMY  
I'm pretty sure no.

CORBEN  
Then as far as I'm concerned, she's  
still on the market.

JIMMY  
Just so you know, she sort has this  
thing for guys in blue tights and  
red capes.

CORBEN  
(laughing)  
HA!

Jimmy's face doesn't flinch.

CORBEN  
Oh, Jesus, you're serious.

JIMMY  
Yeah, they sort of have this  
relationship where she gets all the  
exclusives and he... well, I don't  
what he sees in her.

CORBEN  
Well, watch and learn. Superman or  
not, John Corben goes down  
fighting.

JIMMY  
(under his breath)  
So did Custer.

John approaches, searching through the stack of mail  
specifically for Lois's name.

CORBEN  
Miss... Lane?

Lois looks up.

LOIS  
Yes?

CORBEN  
Not Misses? Shocking. Such a fine  
specimen shouldn't be alone.

Lois gives him a sarcastic half-laugh as she takes her mail.

LOIS  
Listen mail boy, if you know what's  
good for you, you'll just move on  
with your little paper route.

CORBEN  
Ouch. So mean. What man hurt you,  
my Amazonian goddess?

Lois gets up to leave.

LOIS  
I'm just weighing my options.

CORBEN  
Yeah, blue tights and a cape, I  
heard. Well, since you dig a man in  
costume, let's say I put on my Evel  
Kniesel jumpsuit from last  
Halloween and you and me go grab a  
bite to eat.

Lois gives him a genuine laugh this time.

CORBEN  
Is that a yes?

LOIS  
That's a maybe.

CORBEN  
Then, maybe I'll see you after  
work. Say... 7?

LOIS  
Maybe.

Walks to the elevator.

LOIS  
Oh, and leave the jumpsuit at home  
daredevil.

Corben clicks his tongue and gives her the ol' ricochet with  
his thumb and index finger.

CORBEN  
Got it.

Lois squeezes through the elevator doors just as they close.

Corben crosses in front of Jimmy.

CORBEN  
And that's how you get things done,  
Jimbo.

CUT TO:

ON TV --

Television news reporter ANGIE BRANT (20s) is standing in  
front of a press conference as Superman and the Chief of  
Police meet.

ANGIE BRANT  
This is Angie Brant reporting live  
for channel 5 news. Superman and  
Police Chief Harry Standon have  
been in quiet talks all morning  
about this years emerging crime  
patterns.

FILE FOOTAGE of Superman standing straight, tall and strong,  
hands clasped behind his back under his cape, walking around  
the police headquarters, meeting with officers.

The TELEVISION is switched OFF.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

Lex leans back in his chair.

LEX  
(mocking)  
Superman. Super-man. Who does he  
think he is?

MERCY  
He only wants to help, boss.

LEX  
Help? Help?! The real question is,  
my little platinum ancillary, is  
what is he helping himself to?

MERCY  
What do you mean?

LEX  
Nobody does something for nothing.  
What's his angle? What does he want  
in return?

MERCY  
Money?

LEX  
Money he can get. With his  
strength, speed, and abilities,  
money is the least of our worries.  
No, Mercy, what he wants is  
something far more dangerous.

MERCY  
What's that?

LEX  
A home.

MERCY  
Well, he can stay with me anytime.

Lex shakes his head at her ignorance.

LEX  
With his world destroyed, he has no  
where to go. He wants to remake  
that utopian paradise for others  
like him, right here. No crime, no  
poverty, no conflict. What's the  
fun in that?!

(MORE)

LEX(cont'd)

(thinks)

Who the hell is he to tell us how to live? To involve himself in our affairs. That do-gooding -- big, blue boy-scout!

MERCY

Calm down Lexy.

Lex walks around Mercy, who has propped herself up on his desk.

LEX

Mercy, there is someone I need you to find... a Doctor Emmett Vale. I do believe he can help me in my current endeavour.

MERCY

Which is...?

LEX

I have to kill Superman, my dear, for the safety of Earth and mankind.

MERCY

And how do you plan on doing that?

Lex holds up a magazine:

INSERT - COVER

Sidebar type reads: "ADVANCED HUMANOID ROBOTICS FOR MILITARY A GO FOR VALE"

BACK TO SCENE

MERCY

Who do you want to use?

LEX

Let's see what our friend Mister Orr is doing these days.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. HACIENDA - NIGHT

SUPER: "COSTA RICA"

In a small rural village, a quaint establishment serves all the locals with simple meals and home made rot gut.

MISTER ORR (40s) is off in a corner, hidden in shadow, with a drink in front of him. His CELL PHONE on the table BUZZES. He reaches for it.

LEX  
(over phone)  
Mister Orr, you're a hard man to find. How is the mercenary business?

ORR  
(grunts)  
Slow.

LEX  
(over phone)  
Well, I have a job that requires your particular touch.

ORR  
What's the price?

LEX  
(over phone)  
Twelve-thousand.

ORR  
Cash on delivery... and the mark?

Mister Orr listens as Lex relays all the details to him, occasionally nodding.

LEX  
(over phone)  
Oh, and this one is kind of special, so please be gentle.

ORR  
Won't be a problem.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. METROPOLIS - NIGHT

Superman is coasting through the city on his normal route.

As he banks around a few buildings the horizon line behind him slants giving the feeling of flying with the man of steel.

Superman's calm flight is unexpectedly interrupted by a red flare shooting into sky from the hills.

He slowly glides over to investigate.

EXT. MANSION - NIGHT

Mercy is loading another flare when Superman touches down near the large sweeping patio.

MERCY

Good. You saw it. Please come in,  
Mister Luthor would like a word  
with you.

Superman tucks his hands behind his cape and walks in through the patio doors to --

INT. LIBRARY - NIGHT

Superman surveys the room. On the wall is a framed copy of the Daily Planet when Alexander L. Luthor first came to Metropolis at the age of 28.

INSERT - FRONT PAGE

In bold font: "THE PRODIGAL SON RETURNS"

BACK TO SCENE

Below it, he finds an original handwritten copy of Sun Tzu's "The Art of War" in Chinese, sealed in a bullet proof glass case.

Other artifacts of war including Japanese swords and firearms from the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries adorn the walls.

Lex walks in and sees Superman examining his collection.

Mercy is close behind.

LEX

Are you well-versed in the rules of  
combat and war, Superman?

SUPERMAN

I abide by all international  
treaties to the strictest letter of  
the law.

LEX

Ah, one of those.

Lex helps himself to a drink.

LEX

Drink?

Superman holds up his hand and shakes his head.

SUPERMAN

Mister Luthor, I don't normally answer to every beck and call when there are not lives at stake.

LEX

You have to admit, though, the flare gun was pretty clever.

(pours a drink)

I know this is a tad informal, I agree. But, if it'll make you feel better, I don't let just any alien walk in through my front door...

Superman registers this jab and can sense Luthor's subtle xenophobia.

LEX

... but I thought you and I should talk for a minute.

Lex walks to his desk.

LEX

The most powerful man in Metropolis! That's what they called me... until you showed up exactly one a year ago.

SUPERMAN

This isn't a competition.

LEX

Everything is a competition. And I don't like to lose.

SUPERMAN

If you have anything to say, then say it, because I'm not looking for a fight. I think it would be in our best interest to work together --

LEX

Blah, blah, blah. I don't like you, Superman. Never have. I don't trust what I can't control. And you're one big unknown in my book.

SUPERMAN

I'm here to protect, and to fight,  
for truth and justice.

LEX

I get that about you. But it  
doesn't mean that I buy it.

(takes a sip)

Listen, Superman. As far as I'm  
concerned, you're just another  
foreigner sticking your nose in  
places where it doesn't belong. So,  
let's make a deal, right here,  
right now. You stay out of my  
business, and out of my city, and  
I'll avoid having to personally  
destroy you. This is only the  
beginning for me. I will be  
president someday, and when I am,  
I'll make sure you and everyone  
like you, are exiled from this  
planet.

Superman walks right up to Lex Luthor. Both men are face to  
face, same height, same determined demeanor and expression.  
Two titans cut from the same cloth but on opposite sides.

SUPERMAN

It's not your country yet.

LEX

And its not your world either.

Superman walks away towards the open french doors and takes  
off with a WHOOSH.

LEX

(to himself)

It's time to see just how super you  
are.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

Mister Orr is waiting with DOCTOR EMMETT VALE (60's), a  
stocky, heavy-set man with long gray hair swept to one side  
covering a bald spot and small, thin glasses. He has all the  
markings of your average U.F.O. conspiracy theorist.  
Basically, a nut job with a Ph.D.

A black limousine pulls into the warehouse.

Mercy exits from the driver's seat and walks towards Mister Orr. She hands him a bulky envelope supposedly full of cash.

He opens it and then nods. He pushes Doctor Vale towards the blond, who begins walking towards the limo.

Doctor Vale is in a slight state of shock, but he follows.

Mercy opens the door for him, he attempts to peer into the dark coach section, but can't see anyone. He then looks up at Mercy, who nods.

He climbs in to --

INT. LIMOUSINE

Vale takes a seat. Lex sits across from him.

LEX  
Hello, Doctor Vale.

Lex turns on the sociopathic charm.

DOCTOR VALE  
(nervous)  
M-M-Mister Luthor.

LEX  
Please... Lex. I'm sorry for all the secrecy but I had to meet a man of such -- great intellect. I am very interested in some of the work you have been doing recently, especially your research into cybernetic limb replacement. Tell me, Doctor, what would it take to bring your research to the next level... full human trials?

DOCTOR VALE  
(exasperated)  
Whoo... I... uh... I don't know. A state of the art lab, about a dozen of the world's best surgeons and five billion dollars.

He chuckles.

LEX  
Do you take a check?

Doctor Vale gives an astonished laugh, while his brain fires with the possibilities.

DOCTOR VALE  
Why would you do this? What's in it  
for you?

LEX  
Superman.  
(smiles)  
You and I share something in  
common, doctor. Our hatred for this  
alien visitor.

Lex picks up a science journal and shows it to Doctor Vale.

INSERT - ARTICLE TITLE

"EXTRA-TERRESTRIAL IMPERIALISTIC CONQUEST: KRYPTONIAN AND  
OTHER INVADERS OF EARTH BY DOCTOR EMMETT EUGENE VALE"

BACK TO SCENE

DOCTOR VALE  
Everyone loves Superman. But they  
don't see the danger like I do.  
It's not just him... its what comes  
looking for him. What else is out  
there?

LEX  
You're not alone, Doctor.

Hope sparkles in Doctor Vale's eyes.

LEX  
What we need... is to take on this  
man of steel with our own man of  
steel. And show the world how  
mortal their savior really is.

Doctor Vale sits back, thinking as he stares out of the  
window.

LEX  
Do we have a deal?

Doctor Vale looks back.

DOCTOR VALE  
I need a more substantiable power  
source.

LEX  
I have just the thing. I've been  
experimenting with a very specific  
alternative energy source for some  
time.

Lex reaches over to a silver suitcase and opens the lid.

Both men are enveloped in a green glow.

DOCTOR VALE  
Is that...?

LEX  
(nodding)  
Hm-hm. Will this be adequate for  
your needs, Doctor?

DOCTOR VALE  
Quite.

LEX  
Then we have a deal?

Doctor Vale nods slowly.

LEX  
Excellent. You now work for me.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. DAILY PLANET - ROOF - EVENING

Superman sweeps in and touches down gracefully near the giant globe. He walks back to the edge, takes one last look down and around, before quickly zipping inside the globe, and then down the --

STAIRWELL

The red and blue blur gradually changes to grey and white --

HALLWAY

Clark emerges. He puts his glasses on, slumps over as he pushes the button for the elevator.

INT. ELEVATOR - MOMENTS LATER

As the elevator doors open, Lois enters and stands next to Clark. They descend.

CLARK  
Taking off?

LOIS  
I'm beat.

She presses the button for the lobby.

Silence. There is an inner battle inside Clark's mind - "What to say," "How to say it," "I wonder if she has plans?"

CLARK  
(clears throat)  
Um, Lois, if you're not too busy...  
I mean, I was thinking...  
(deep breath)  
Would you like to get a cup of  
coffee together?

LOIS  
Oh, I'm sorry, Clark, I can't.

The doors open and --

INT. LOBBY

Corben is there, waiting.

CORBEN  
Ready to go?

LOIS  
Yeah, I just have to pick something  
up.

Lois walks over to the main desk as Clark and Corben chat it up near the elevators.

CORBEN  
Hey, Kent. I can't thank you enough  
for going to bat for me. It's  
really turned my life around.

CLARK  
(placid)  
Yeah, no problem.

Corben takes his hand to shake it, but Clark is someplace else mentally.

CORBEN  
 Who'da thunk? John Corben got  
 himself a job and a girlfriend all  
 in the same week?

CLARK  
 Girlfriend?!

Lois returns.

	CORBEN		LOIS
Yeah.		No.	

Lois gives Corben a look.

LOIS  
 No. We're just going to grab  
 something to eat, together.

CORBEN  
 (shrugs)  
 Of course.

Corben hams it up with Clark when Lois turns her back.

LOIS  
 Okay, see ya later, Clark.

CLARK  
 Yeah, I'll... uh... catch you  
 later.

Clark stands in the elevator doorway. Other people get on as  
 the doors try to close but keep bumping into Clark.

MAN #1  
 Hey buddy, on or off?!

Clark snaps back to reality.

CLARK  
 Sorry.

And steps back into the elevators. The doors close.

INT. NEWSROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Clark slinks back to his desk. He thinks for a minute then  
 picks up the telephone and begins dialing. It RINGS.

CLARK  
Hello? Dad? Can we talk?

FADE TO:

INT. OFFICE - EVENING

Lex sits at the head of a long conference table with his campaign team as they formulate a plan going into the fall.

Campaign slogans, city stops, and issues to focus on are all being discussed.

They are just finishing when Lex sees one of his confidants, JAMES GRANT (20's), signaling him.

LEX  
Thank you, gentlemen. Thank you.  
That'll be all.

The men shuffle out like lemmings.

The room empties and James enters, closing the door behind him for privacy.

Lex stands and waits near a window overlooking the city.

LEX  
Mister Grant. What do you have for me?

GRANT  
I've narrowed it down to one highly viable candidate.

James hands Lex a folder.

GRANT  
Just released a week ago for Petty Larceny.

LEX  
Good, good. We don't want anyone too violent.

GRANT  
He's 38, in perfect health with no signs of mental illness according to the board of corrections and he has the exact same dimensions that you requested. Whatever it is, he'll fit perfectly.

LEX

Family?

GRANT

None, and no close relatives. And look at the former address from six months ago.

LEX

Washington? So he's not local.

GRANT

He didn't even leave a paper trail when he came to Metropolis. Must have hitch-hiked or walked. He's completely off the grid. Not so much as a credit card or bank account anywhere. And believe me, I tried, we all tried.

LEX

Did you now?

GRANT

You don't pay us what you pay us, Mister Luthor, to be second best. If we can't find anything on him, no one else will.

LEX

Excellent.

GRANT

There's only one problem. He works at the Daily Planet in the mail room.

LEX

Well, we'll have to take care of that, then. Good work!

Lex places the open folder in front of him: JOHN CORBEN'S MUG SHOT.

LEX

Hello, Mister John Corben.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Lois and Corben enter a local grease bucket on the lower west side of Metropolis, also known as Suicide Slum.

Lois is no Madison Avenue debutante, but even this place is a little rough around the edges for her.

COOK (O.S.)  
Is that Johnny Corben waltzing into  
my joint?!

The COOK barrels out from the back room through the swinging doors.

CORBEN  
What?! Didn't think I was coming  
back?

COOK  
Hell no!

They give each a secret handshake.

Lois looks on, feeling a little out of place.

CORBEN  
Oh! This is Lois.

LOIS  
Nice to meet a friend of John's.

COOK  
No offense, honey. But what are you  
doing with this loser?

CORBEN  
Hey, c'mon! Do you always have to  
bust my balls?

LOIS  
This loser talks a fast game, and I  
knew there was something about him  
I had to get to know. And if you  
call me honey, sweetie, doll, or  
cutie ever again I'm going to break  
your left arm because I know you  
need your right to cook.

COOK  
(sideways)  
Hey, Johnny, I like her.

CORBEN  
(pointing)  
Get back there and make yourself  
useful!

The cook wobbles back into the kitchen smiling and laughing.  
Lois and Corben grab a booth near the window.

LOIS  
Interesting guy.

CORBEN  
Me and him go way back.

LOIS  
Is he an ex-con too?

Corben takes a deep breath and sits back in the booth.

CORBEN  
Despite what you've heard, miss  
Lane. I ain't no criminal. I made a  
mistake, but I'm a changed man.

LOIS  
That's what they all say.

CORBEN  
I am! I swear on my mother's life.

LOIS  
And when do we get meet her?

CORBEN  
Who? Ma? Oh, I don't think you're  
ready for her yet.

LOIS  
Try me.

CORBEN  
(realizing)  
You ain't like the normal broads I  
usually meet.

Lois kicks Corben in the shin under the table.

CORBEN  
Sorry. I mean, lady.

LOIS  
Yeah, well, you grow up an army  
brat, it tends to toughen you up  
real fast.

CORBEN  
Army, huh?

LOIS

It wasn't a glamorous life. Moving around a lot, different schools --

CORBEN

-- different friends, not knowing if you're dad will come home as a passenger, or as luggage.

Lois gives him a puzzled look.

CORBEN

My dad was killed serving in the Marines when I was about four. Ma had a hard time raising me alone.

LOIS

I'm sorry.

CORBEN

Nah, don't give it a second thought. Anyway, it was hard for the two us. Going from place to place, picking up small jobs here and there... Listen to me go on and on about my problems. Old news, right?

LOIS

No, it's okay. It's actually kind of refreshing to hear the truth sometimes. I don't hear a lot of that as a reporter, you know.

CORBEN

I bet. Man, a reporter! What's that like?

LOIS

Never a dull moment. Not with Superman around.

Corben leans in.

CORBEN

(quietly)

I actually heard around the water cooler that you and him have something going on?

LOIS

No, not like that. I'm more of his P.R. Rep. or something.

CORBEN

And what about that big guy with the glasses I always see you talking to?

LOIS

Clark? No. Clark is a whole other species unto himself. He's as hard to pin down as a greased pig. Oh God! Now I'm even sounding like Smallville!

CORBEN

So, there isn't anything going on?

LOIS

Trust me, you have nothing to worry about.

At this point, the waitress comes around with their order they didn't order.

Two plates heaped with brown meat, brown rice, brown sauce, and brown beans with a piece of white crusty bread.

Corben digs in.

LOIS

What's this?

CORBEN

They call it "The Mess." It's the best grub you'll get below 57th street. You're not one of those house salads and Perrier water types, are you?

LOIS

John, after eating your weight in M.R.E.'s, nothing scares me anymore.

Corben smiles as Lois picks up her fork.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

THUNDER RUMBLES in the distance with a brief flash of lighting.

Corben and Lois are sitting his car in front of her apartment building.

CORBEN  
How about a cup of coffee?

LOIS  
Not on the first date.

Corben smiles as Lois exits.

CORBEN  
So, can I call you?

LOIS  
After tonight, you'd better.

CORBEN  
It seems like a darn shame.

LOIS  
What is?

CORBEN  
We're going to the same place  
tomorrow anyway, I mean, just to  
save gas...

Lois slams the car door.

LOIS  
Go home John.

EXT. ROOF - CONTINUOUS

Superman watches this playful exchange from across the street.

He is standing with one foot on the ledge, cape blowing in front of him.

As the storm approaches and Corben leaves, Superman floats off of the building and then takes off.

EXT. BUILDING - NIGHT

Corben gets half way up the stairs to the dingy, dilapidated building --

MERCY(O.S.)  
John Corben?

Corben turns and sees Mercy standing near a black limousine.

CORBEN  
Yeah?

MERCY  
Please come with me.

CORBEN  
What for?

MERCY  
We have a job for you.

CORBEN  
Got a job.

MERCY  
This one pays much better.

Mercy holds up a stack of hundred dollar bills.

CORBEN  
Is this a joke or somethin'?

MERCY  
No joke, Mister Corben.

Corben walks down the steps and holds out his hand for the money. Mercy yanks it away.

MERCY  
This is just a taste. You want more, come to this address.

She hands him a card.

MERCY  
And don't take too long, he hates to wait.

CORBEN  
Who?

MERCY  
You'll see.

Corben looks at the card.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. MANSION - NIGHT - ESTABLISHING

Corben's beat-up old dodge rumbles up.

INT. LIBRARY - DAY

Corben is ushered into a warmly lit library.

Lex is sitting, reading, in a Victorian-style leather chair. He glances up at Corben.

LEX  
Mister Corben? Mister John Corben?

CORBEN  
Who wants to know?

LEX  
Alexander Luthor.

Lex shakes his hand graciously.

CORBEN  
I know who you are, Mister Lex.

LEX  
Excellent! You are a rare breed, Mister Corben. It's hard to find men like you in this world.

CORBEN  
No kidding?

LEX  
I'll get right down to business, John. Do you mind if I call you John?

Corben shrugs.

LEX  
I have a job for you. A very lucrative job, if all goes to plan.

CORBEN  
What do I have to do?

LEX  
Just trust me. You have a special purpose in life. You just don't know it yet.

CORBEN  
Why do you need me? I ain't nothin' special.

LEX  
Oh, but you are.

CORBEN  
Listen, mister Luthor --

LEX

Lex.

CORBEN

Lex. I don't know what you may have heard, but I'm not who I used to be. I'm a straight arrow now. You can keep your money.

Corben drops the wad of cash on the floor. He turns to leave.

LEX

It'd be a shame if you lost that new job. It would be even worse if you got picked up for violating your parole. You'd see another, what? 2, 3 years?

Corben stops.

CORBEN

Is that a threat?

LEX

Yes. I find these deals go much smoother when you lay everything out on the table, and remind people of the consequences.

CORBEN

And if I still refuse?

LEX

I don't like to hear "no", Mister Corben.

Corben gets right up to his face.

CORBEN

No!

He knocks away the drink away in Luthor's hand, splattering it on the wall and chair, and shattering the glass.

Corben storms out of the room.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Doctor Vale is returning home late in the pouring rain.

He seems to be the only car on the road in the mountainous terrain just outside of Metropolis.

But a van pulls up right behind him, nearly kissing his back bumper. The bright headlights blind him in the rearview mirror.

DOCTOR VALE  
(adjusts mirror)  
Hey! Jackass!

The van passes him at a high rate of speed almost forcing Vale over the cliff.

EXT. ROAD

The car that passed Doctor Vale continues driving recklessly down the road.

INT. CAR

Corben is travelling on the same lone road in the opposite direction.

He glances down to fiddle with the radio -- he glances back up -- two headlights are bearing down on him --

CORBEN  
Jesus!

Corben jerks the wheel and his car spins out.

THE CAR

flips and tumbles towards the edge of the road.

INSIDE CAR

Corben is thrown around the cab as little pieces of glass and other debris spin around as though inside a dryer.

EDGE OF RAVINE

Corben's car comes to rest on its roof.

INT. CAR

From around the corner, Doctor Vale encounters the carnage. He can see the debris littering the road and the broken guard rail.

He pulls over.

EXT. ROAD

Doctor Vale takes out a flashlight and begins searching in the pouring rain.

He finds Corben's car resting on the ledge upside down with the headlights still on.

Vale frantically stumbles down the muddy hillside. He crawls over to the injured and unconscious Corben.

He checks on him and then quickly takes out his cell phone. He begins dialing 911 but stops. He dials again.

DOCTOR VALE  
Mister Luthor. I think I have  
somebody.

He hangs up the phone.

Doctor Vale crawls back into the car and checks Corben's pulse. It's weak. He doesn't have long.

Doctor Vale than sees his face.

DOCTOR VALE  
(realizing)  
Mister Corben...?

After only a few minutes an ambulance pulls up and several men with a stretcher get out. They climb down.

DOCTOR VALE  
You got here fast!

The men peel back the door with their equipment.

DOCTOR VALE  
Quickly, Careful!

The men extradite Corben from the wreckage, giving his physical body very little care.

They load him into the ambulance and take off.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. LABORATORY - NIGHT

Corben's body is wheeled in on a gurney. Lex is there waiting.

DOCTOR VALE  
Mister Luthor, it's Corben.

LEX  
(sly)  
Is it now.

Doctor Vale puts things together... he is no dummy.

DOCTOR VALE  
What did you do?

LEX  
I fulfilled my end of the bargain.

DOCTOR VALE  
This isn't what I signed up for.

LEX  
Yes, well, things didn't exactly go  
as planned.

DOCTOR VALE  
(hesitant)  
Mister Luthor --

LEX  
Do not fail me, Doctor! You will  
live to regret it.

He just nods submissively.

LEX  
How long?

DOCTOR VALE  
I don't know. He's in pretty bad  
shape.

LEX  
The brain, doctor. The brain is all  
we need.

DOCTOR VALE  
Give me twenty-four hours. The  
Metallo endoskeleton is all ready.  
It's just a matter of preparing the  
plastisteel musculature and forced-  
growth vat-clone organics.

LEX  
He must appear exactly the same.  
Exactly!

(MORE)

LEX(cont'd)

Every hair, mole, scar, and defect  
must be the same. We can't have  
anyone getting wise. Not yet,  
anyway.

DOCTOR VALE

I'll do my best.

LEX

Whatever you need, I'm here.

DOCTOR VALE

There is one more thing --

LEX

-- I'll get the rock. You start  
prepping the body.

Lex walks away.

LEX

(shouting back)

Smile, Doctor! We're about to make  
history!

FADE OUT.

The BEEP and HISS of HOSPITAL EQUIPMENT pushes in from the  
b.g. --

FADE IN:

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Corben wakes.

His eyes dart around the hospital room - bright lights,  
white, sterile equipment, plain blue linoleum tiles, water  
stain flowing down the wall in the corner.

The COMMOTION of a typical hospital ECHOES IN from the halls.

Corben glances out the window on his left and sees the  
Metropolis skyline.

The DOOR OPENS and CLOSES.

Corben turns his head back.

DOCTOR VALE

Hello, John. My name is Doctor  
Vale. How are you feeling?

Corben opens his mouth to speak but nothing comes out. He then slowly forms a few words.

CORBEN  
I feel funny, doc.

Corben's first words are warped and tinny, like his voice was being processed through a computer. But within a few seconds, it plains out.

DOCTOR VALE  
That's just the anesthesia wearing off. Do you know where you are?

Doctor Vale takes out his stethoscope and begins examining him.

CORBEN  
The hospital?

DOCTOR VALE  
(nodding)  
Metro General. Do you know who the president is?

CORBEN  
Doc, I wouldn't know that even if I didn't take a blow to the head. I kinda missed a lot in the pen.

Doctor Vale motions for him to bend forward.

Corben slowly sits up. Each movement is heavy and lethargic. As he raises his arm he can sense an unfamiliar heaviness.

CORBEN  
Everything feels heavy, like... I'm controlling my body from the outside.

DOCTOR VALE  
Well, you did have quite an accident.

CORBEN  
Accident?

DOCTOR VALE  
Don't you remember the car crash?

MEMORY FLASH

Doctor Vale peering in the car with his flashlight, upside down due to Corben's perspective. The pouring rain and mud flooding the car.

END MEMORY FLASH.

CORBEN

No.

DOCTOR VALE

I'm sure it will all come back to you.

(finishes exam)

Well, you seem to be on the upswing. You're a very lucky man, Mister Corben, you hardly have a scratch on you.

Corben looks at his body.

DOCTOR VALE

You'll be up and around in no time.

Doctor Vale jots down a few notes on his chart and hangs it back up at the foot of the bed before leaving.

Corben waits a few seconds before slowly pulling the covers back and getting to his feet.

He is wobbly and unsteady. He takes one step, and then another. The heavy weight of an unfamiliar body.

He shuffles over to the window and peers out. He puts his hands on the glass then his forehead to look down. He stares down at the spotted yellow dots of dozens of taxi cabs cutting in and out of traffic from his high vantage point.

He then notices the glass is refusing to fog up from his breath. He breathes on it harder... nothing. He is a bit put off by this event, but quickly pushes it out of his mind. He continues to look around the room, thinking he is alone...

He is not.

What appears to be a normal wall is actually a two way mirror.

INT. COMMAND CENTER - CONTINUOUS

On the other side are several doctors and armed guards all monitoring Corben.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Corben is laying in bed, his eyes staring straight up, wide awake.

He closes them for a second.

MEMORY FLASH

Doctor Vale standing over him with the Metallo endoskeleton hanging in the background.

END MEMORY FLASH.

Corben's eyes snap back open as he HEARS someone enter the room.

DOCTOR VALE  
I'm sorry to wake you, I was just --

CORBEN  
I wasn't sleeping, doc.

DOCTOR VALE  
Well, you really should rest.

CORBEN  
That's the thing, I don't feel tired. I don't feel hungry, I don't feel thirsty, I don't feel like anything at all.  
(takes Vale's hand)  
Level with me, doc. What's wrong with me?

DOCTOR VALE  
What are you talking about?

CORBEN  
(anxious)  
I haven't slept in two days, I haven't eaten anything in God knows how long, and I can't remember how I got here.

Doctor Vale approaches, the room still partially dark.

DOCTOR VALE

Relax, Mister Corben. You're just experiencing a few fluctuations in your normal routine. You were in a coma for quite a while, that's probably why you're not tired.

CORBEN

Stop lying to me!

Corben pounds his fist on the little rolling table in front of him, breaking it in half.

Doctor Vale is alarmed but maintains his composure.

DOCTOR VALE

Mister Corben, I really must insist that you calm down.

CORBEN

Calm down?!

Corben climbs out of bed and begins pushing the doctor towards the back wall.

DOCTOR VALE

Please, Mister Corben, you're just adjusting to the new medication --

CORBEN

I told you to stop lying! I hate it when people lie to me!

Corben reaches out and picks Doctor Vale up by the neck with one hand.

CORBEN

You! You're going to tell me the truth! Tell me what is happening to me!

Doctor Vale begins turning red, then purple. Corben can't control his new found strength.

He breaks Doctor Vale's neck with an audible POP.

Corben lets the doctor's body fall to the ground.

CORBEN

Oh my GOD!

He then HEARS men running down the hall. He panics.

Corben grabs the foot of the bed and flings it around, intending to block the door. Instead, he launches it into the opposite wall, ripping through the two way mirror and exposing the command center.

Without hesitation, Corben flees, still wearing his hospital gown --

INT. LOBBY

Corben emerges in the lobby of LexCorp. Even at this late hour executives and secretaries dressed in business suits are coming and going.

As Corben runs through the lobby WOMEN SCREAM and MEN SHOUT at him.

Several security guards, armed only with tazer sticks and unaware of the situation, attempt to stop him. But the newly endowed Corben tosses them through the air, breaking bones and furniture with ease.

The escalator to the lower lobby is jammed with people, so Corben slides down the center divider and leaps to his feet. He then jumps through the glass and out into the --

EXT. STREET

Pedestrians are shocked as a confused Corben runs into them.

But he soon gets his bearings. He then glances at the LexCorp logo in the fountain outside.

Corben glares at the double LLs staring back at him, his brow furrows.

He then takes off running at super-human speeds.

INT. OFFICE - NIGHT

Lex swivels around in his chair, the phone to his ear.

LEX

He did WHAT!

(listens)

This is very troubling.

(listens some more)

No, no. We'll let him come home.

He'll come to me.

(interrupts)

Because he's going to want answers.

He slams the phone down.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

Corben returns to his little hole in the wall apartment, still wearing his hospital gown.

He is breathing heavy from the run, but then realizes that this is simply a reflex. He turns it off like flipping a light switch. He stands up straight, barely drained from the long run.

He pats his person, realizing he doesn't have a key for the door. But instead of getting upset, he takes a second to think. He then reaches and grips the door knob.

As he turns it, the locks CRUNCH and CLANG. He pushes the door open and the dead bolt and locking assembly fall out and bounce on the ground: TING, TING, TING.

Corben stands in his apartment for a minute, not knowing what to do and still in shock.

He then wanders over and turns on the lamp on his dresser.

He opens a few drawers and retrieves a pair of dress pants and a white collard shirt. He then notices the red blinking light on his answering machine. He presses play.

ANSWERING MACHINE

You have two new message, all messages play back.

PERRY

(recording)

John. It's Perry. I really hate this part of the job -- but -- it's been four days. While I hope you're alright, I just can't tolerate this, so unless you have a really good explanation, I'm gonna have to let you go. Sorry, kid.

John stops dressing, crushed.

LOIS

(recording)

Hey, John. It's Lois.

(MORE)

LOIS(cont'd)

Look, I don't know what happened but -- they found your car on the pike and then the police came to talk to me and... and... I don't know.

(breathing)

They think you were drinking, John. There's a warrant out for your arrest. Please call me when you get this message. I'm starting to get worried.

ANSWERING MACHINE

End of messages.

Corben rips the answering machine out of the wall in a fit of rage and tosses into the kitchen area, breaking it to bits.

He rests his hands on the dresser, his head dangling from his shoulders. He looks up at his reflection in the mirror.

There is something slightly off. He leans in for a closer look and for a split-second... a flash of green in his eyes.

Corben pulls back quickly, frightened.

He then sees a newspaper from the Daily Planet on the floor announcing Luthor's bid for the Presidency.

CORBEN

Luthor...

INT. OFFICE - NIGHT

Lex is relaxing, listening to some Mozart, and waiting for Corben to arrive which he does with style, tearing the thick steel door off the hinges and throwing it several yards.

LEX

Please come in, the door's open.

Corben pushes an 800 pound pool table out of the way like it was a small chair, the balls CLINKING and shifting wildly.

CORBEN

What the hell did you do to me?

Corben lifts Lex off the ground with one hand.

LEX

(choking)

I saved -- your life.

CORBEN  
Liar! I didn't ask for this! I  
didn't want this!

LEX  
(choking)  
Look at it -- as a gift.

CORBEN  
A gift?!

LEX  
(choking)  
Put me -- down --

Corben finally drops Lex, who coughs and hacks while trying to catch his breath. He then straightens his suit and tie.

LEX  
Thank you.  
(regains composure)  
As I was saying. I gave you a gift,  
and everything you can do now, is  
because of me.

CORBEN  
I can't feel anything, I can't  
taste, I can't even hear my own  
heart beat anymore.

LEX  
Yes, well, there are still some  
bugs to work out. I assure you,  
though, I have the best scientists  
working on the problem.

CORBEN  
Problem? Problem?! What am I?

LEX  
You're still you, just a better  
you. The Metallo Endoskeleton is  
virtually unbreakable and it has  
given you abilities us mere mortals  
can only dream about.

CORBEN  
Meta--what?

LEX

John! Don't you get it? You will never get sick, never feel pain, you will live forever. You are a modern day Dorian Gray.

Lex's psychology is working.

LEX

We did put humpty dumpty back together again, didn't we? We can give you back everything else...

CORBEN

Really?

LEX

Trust me. There's just one little thing I want you to do for me first.

CORBEN

Yeah, what's that?

LEX

Superman.

CORBEN

Superman?

LEX

He's become a pest and he needs to retire... permanently.

CORBEN

You're a funny guy, Mister Luthor.

But Lex isn't laughing. He just has a mischievous, smirking grin.

CORBEN

I know I'm strong, but I ain't that strong.

LEX

You're better than he is.

CORBEN

Yeah, how?

LEX

Open your shirt.

CORBEN

What?!

LEX

Open... your shirt.

Corben does as commanded.

Lex reaches in and pushes on a plate that is cleverly disguised just off-center of his chest, where his heart formerly resided.

Both Lex and Corben are immediately enveloped in a green glow.

CORBEN

Is that....?

LEX

You have all of his strengths, and his one greatest weakness right in the palm of your hand. Metaphorically speaking, of course.

Corben smiles.

CORBEN

I have a few things I want to do first.

LEX

Of course. Take your time.

Corben exits the way he came in.

Lex loosens his tie and glances down at a "Time Magazine" cover with Superman on it.

He whips it into the fire.

LEX

So long, Superman.

The cover crumples and turns black as the flames consume it.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. DAILY PLANET - EVENING - ESTABLISHING

A going away party is in full swing for one of the seasoned veterans.

INSERT - BANNER

In big, bold, multi-colored letters: "CONGRATULATIONS ERNIE ON 50 YEARS!"

BACK TO SCENE

CHAMPAGNE BOTTLES are POPPED, PEOPLE LAUGH and TALK over the LIGHT POP MUSIC in the b.g.

INT. DAILY PLANET - OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

But that is a world away for Clark Kent.

He is firmly seated in a small office, working.

But, the door is flung open with considerable force as the party begins to intrude on his private space.

WOMAN #1  
C'mon Clarky! Join the party!

CLARK  
No, really, I have work to do. But  
thank you.

The inebriated blond leans over and gives him a little kiss, spilling her champagne on his shoe.

Clark jumps up. He then gently ushers her out before closing the door but a brief minute later, the door opens once again.

CLARK  
Please! I really need to...

Clark turns and sees Lois standing in the doorway.

LOIS  
Easy there, Smallville. I didn't  
mean to ruffle your feathers.

CLARK  
I'm -- I'm sorry. I thought you  
were someone else.

LOIS  
Not the partying type?

CLARK  
I was just catching up on some  
work.

Lois peers over and sees notes and pictures strewn around the desk.

LOIS  
Well, you know what they say, all  
work and no play --

CLARK  
-- makes Clark a dull boy.

LOIS  
Must have heard that one before.

CLARK  
Once or twice growing up.

Pause.

LOIS  
I was just leaving for the night  
and -- uh --  
(thinks)  
You haven't -- heard anything from  
John, have you?

CLARK  
I'm sorry, Lois. No. But if I did,  
you would be the first to know.

Lois nods... short pause.

LOIS  
Thanks, Clark. You're a good  
friend.  
(awkward pause)  
Well, don't work too late.

Lois starts to leave but Clark jumps up.

CLARK  
Lois!

She stops. He straightens up. His tone changes.

CLARK  
I just want to -- I just want you  
to know that if you ever need to  
talk...

Lois sees a new side to Clark. It's so familiar.

LOIS  
Oh, Clark. I know.

She turns to leave again. But Clark takes her hand.

CLARK  
I mean it, Lois.

Lois looks at his hand on hers.

LOIS  
I know you do Clark. Good night.

Lois finally leaves, closing the door behind her.

Clark stands for a moment before pulling the chair out and sitting back down.

He then takes his glasses off to rub his eyes. He looks at them.

He just chuckles.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

Lois bursts into her dark apartment carrying two bags of groceries, her purse, and some Chinese food for dinner.

She lays everything down on the nearest table and switches on the lights.

INT. KITCHEN

As she busies herself with dinner, her cat, MONTY, begs for a treat around her ankles.

LOIS  
Oh, Monty! What? I don't have anything for you.

The cat looks up and MEOWS.

LOIS  
No! This is Lo Mein, you wouldn't like it.

The cat MEOWS again and PURRS.

LOIS  
Fine! Fine! Alright!

Lois deposits a good amount of the chicken and shrimp in the bowl and Monty is overjoyed.

INT. LIVING ROOM

Lois returns to the living room carrying a white cardboard container with two chopsticks jammed in.

She switches on a few more lights and takes off her shoes and lets her hair down.

She relaxes on the couch and switches the television on.

Monty returns, rubbing against her shoulders and head from the back of the couch.

She is then forced to get up with a KNOCK at the door.

CORBEN (O.S.)

Lois! It's John.

LOIS

Oh my God!

Lois peers through the peep hole with Corben's fish-eye-lens-face staring back.

She quickly opens the door and stands in the doorway.

LOIS

Where the hell have you been?! Who do you think you are?! I've been worried sick!

CORBEN

I'm sorry. Can I come in? To talk.

LOIS

I don't think I'm in the mood right now.

CORBEN

Please, Lois. Just a minute.

Lois debates in her head for a second before moving aside.

Corben walks in, relieved.

LOIS

Do you want any coffee?

CORBEN

No.

LOIS

Tea? Water? Left over Chinese?

This whole time John is shaking his head. He finally explodes.

CORBEN

NO!

(calms)

Sorry. No. Thank you, though.

Monty apprehensively approaches the stranger. But as Corben reaches out to pet the cat, it HISSES and GROWLS at him before running away, frightened.

LOIS

Strange. He's never done that before.

Corben shrugs.

LOIS

Okay, lets hear it. This better be one hell of a story involving alien abduction or pod people or something.

CORBEN

Well, first, I just wanted to tell you that I had a great time the other night.

LOIS

John, that was over a month ago.

CORBEN

Oh.

LOIS

What happened to you? Everyone thought that you either skipped town or your body washed out to sea.

CORBEN

(smiling)

Well, as you can see, I'm right as rain.

Lois is not amused.

CORBEN

Lois, I'm on the verge of something big. Something that's going to make me very, very famous, and very, very rich.

(MORE)

CORBEN(cont'd)

And I don't want you to worry. I'm hoping that when I get back, we can pick up where we left off.

LOIS

What are you talking about?

CORBEN

I had an accident, Lois. I don't know how. But what began as something... something... terrible, turned out to be a blessing in disguise.

LOIS

(frightened)

Okay?

CORBEN

I love you, Lois. We're two of kind, you and I.

LOIS

John -- I -- I don't think you should come around here anymore, not until you get yourself straightened out.

CORBEN

What do you mean?

LOIS

You seem like a really nice guy, but -- you're just not my type. You wreck your car, disappear for a month, and you come back here, now, saying all these things that don't make sense. I just think it would be best if we don't see each other any more.

CORBEN

It's because of him, isn't it?

LOIS

Who?

CORBEN

You know who!

LOIS  
This has nothing to do with  
Superman and don't try to compare  
yourself with him, you'll just come  
out feeling inadequate.

CORBEN  
I thought you and I had something  
special. I thought we had fun.

LOIS  
It was one date --

CORBEN  
You'll see, Lois. Pretty soon  
everyone will know the name John  
Corben.

John storms out of the apartment.

Lois is left to wonder just how psychotic Corben may be.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Corben exits Lois' building and starts walking down the  
sidewalk. He only makes it a few yards before passing an ATM  
machine.

He retraces his steps and stops in front of the ATM. He looks  
around before plowing his fist into the money machine and  
taking a few handfuls of cash.

Corben smiles as he sorts and organizes the bills.

INT. CAR - AT THE SAME TIME

Two men in black suits watch. One of them opens a cell phone.

INT. OFFICE - AT THE SAME TIME

Lex swivels around in his chair.

LEX  
(on phone)  
So, our tin man has himself a  
Sibyl. And his choice in mates  
could be extremely beneficial. Keep  
an eye on him.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

Corben saunters into a local dive in Suicide Slum.

The local riff-raff give him an ugly look, obviously disdainful of his presence.

But Corben just glares at them as he approaches the counter. He grabs a stool and then slams a \$50 down.

CORBEN  
Give me the best stuff you got.  
Anything double-malt.

The bar tender pours him the drink.

Corben downs the shot. But since he can't taste it he is unsatisfied.

CORBEN  
Again!

The bartender gives him the shot.

Corben downs it, with the same result.

The bartender starts to leave but Corben grabs his arm and holds up a wad of cash.

CORBEN  
Leave the bottle.

The bartender shrugs and complies.

Corben is desperate to taste something... anything.

But a huge black biker with a tight black bandana has other plans.

BIKER  
You's in my seat!

CORBEN  
(over shoulder)  
I'd back off if I were you.

BIKER  
Is you gonna move or do I have to  
move you?

Corben turns around on his stool.

CORBEN  
Are you just naturally stupid, or  
is that skull cap cutting off blood  
flow to that peanut you call a  
brain.

The biker grabs Corben by his shoulder, who in turn reacts and throws the biker across the bar and into a table.

Corben gets to his feet as another one of his buddies throws a punch.

Corben grabs his fist and breaks every bone in his hand with a CRUNCH. The man SCREAMS in pain.

Corben then picks him up and throws into a nearby wall.

One of the biker's friends takes out a 9mm.

CORBEN

Now, let's not do anything rash.

BIKER #2

Oh, I got 9 reasons right here why we should.

The thug fires a shot at Corben, which just ricochet's off.

Corben looks down at the bullet hole in his clothes.

BIKER #2

What the hell?!

Corben starts to charge at him but the thug drops the gun and takes off running.

CORBEN

Anyone else! C'MON!

Corben looks for his next fight but the patrons cower in fear.

The bartender picks up the phone while crouching behind the counter.

BARTENDER

Yeah, police? I need --

The line suddenly goes dead.

BARTENDER

Hello? Hello?!

The bartender looks up and watches as Corben crushes the base in his hands.

BARTENDER

Jesus!



CORBEN

I said NO!

LADY #1

What the hell's your problem? Did you loose your thing in an accident or something?

Corben becomes enraged, knocking the girl away into another waitress.

CORBEN

I'm done. Party's over.

Corben jumps up on stage, rips the brass pole out and tosses it at the DJ like a javelin.

The DJ ducks, as the pole destroys all his equipment. The pole wobble back and forth with a TWANG.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. DINER - MORNING

Corben is sitting, sulking in a small diner. He looks out the window and sees a bank across the street.

The waitress comes by and pours him a cup of coffee.

WAITRESS

What can I getcha, honey?

Corben just looks up at her, glaring.

CORBEN

Nothing. Go away.

WAITRESS

We've got the best pie around.

CORBEN

What are you, deaf?!

The waitress just stares at him and slowly backs away.

Corben looks at the coffee but he is neither hungry nor thirsty. He hears the GEARS of the carousel of swirling pies and cakes and then the SIZZLE of BURGERS and FRIES on the flat-top grill.

LEX (V.O.)

You will never get sick, never feel pain, you will live forever.

He glances back at the bank with its constant flow of foot traffic in and out.

Other patrons become alarmed as Corben taps his fingers on the table with an eerie CLICK, CLICK, CLICK of some kind of mechanization.

Corben then pushes the cup of coffee off the table, smashing it on the tile floor and spilling the coffee.

Everyone in the diner turns and looks at him.

CORBEN  
What are you all looking at?!

They resume their meal. A COOK stomps out from the kitchen. He stands next to Corben in the booth.

COOK  
Okay, buddy, time to hit the road.

Corben looks up at him with fierce, raging eyes.

BEHIND COUNTER

the cook is catapulted against the menu and cash register.

DINER

The customers cower as Corben passes. He stops in front of an old couple with a pair of sunglasses and a scarf laying on the table.

CORBEN  
Do you mind if I borrow these?

They nod in fright.

CORBEN  
Much obliged.

INT. NEWSROOM - MORNING

Lois is at her desk typing away. A disposable coffee cup enters her vision.

CLARK  
Grande non-fat Latte.

LOIS  
(smiling)  
Yeah... Thanks...

She takes a sip.

CLARK  
I'm sorry your latest venture into  
the dating world went so... awry.

LOIS  
Me too. He seemed like a really  
nice guy. I don't know why I am so  
attracted to freaks.

CLARK  
You don't mean that.

LOIS  
No, of course not. It's just  
frustrating. I guess I'm just  
destined to be alone.

CLARK  
You're not alone, Lois.

LOIS  
I'm not?

CLARK  
You have Lucy.

Lois just nods.

CLARK  
Lois, I was wondering --

ON TV

REPORTER  
This is an Action News 4 Special  
Report. There is a standoff at the  
fifth avenue Empire Bank by an  
armed robber, details are still  
coming in but --

LOIS  
Whadaya say, Smallville, you up for  
some --

Lois turns around but Clark is gone. Lois looks around the  
newsroom.

LOIS  
That little sneak...

INT. DAILY PLANET - STAIRWELL - CONTINUOUS

Clark closes the door and takes a second. He shakes his head. This always happens to him, everytime. He pounds his fist on the door.

INT. DAILY PLANET - NEWSROOM - CONTINUOUS

LOIS  
C'mon Jimmy!

Jimmy grabs his camera.

JIMMY  
Alright!

EXT. DAILY PLANET - MOMENTS LATER

Lois and Jimmy emerge from the building.

Lois puts her thumb and index finger to her lips and gives a quick but powerful WHISTLE. A cab stops and both jump in.

Above them, Superman takes off from the roof like a bullet shot from a gun. A SONIC BOOM follows.

INT. BANK - CONTINUOUS

People panic as Corben walks down the center aisle.

CORBEN  
Calm yourselves, just calm down!  
This will all be over very quickly!  
I've just come to make a  
withdrawal.

Corben passes a man holding a gym bag.

CORBEN  
Excuse me, I need this.

The man gives Corben the gym bag and then falls to the floor with everyone else.

Corben empties the clothes and sneakers and then tosses it to the teller.

CORBEN  
Fill it up! And no tricks! I want  
small bills and no dye packs.

The teller empties her drawer and then passes the bag along.

CORBEN  
C'mon, c'mon!

Corben looks around, impatiently.

EXT. BANK

The giant marble table which stood in the middle of the bank explodes through the front entrance and into traffic.

Cars SWERVE and SKID to avoid the table. Shattered glass and broken metal litter the sidewalk and road as Corben walks out.

But he is met by several police cars that have taken defensive positions around the bank.

A REPORTER is near the police squad cars.

REPORTER  
(into camera)  
Just moments ago, a man with  
apparent superhuman strength has  
just robbed the fifth avenue Empire  
Bank. Is this another alien visitor  
in our midst?

Corben walks into the street as all the cops draw their weapons and take cover.

CORBEN  
Do you think you can stop me?!  
Huh?! Shoot! I don't care! SHOOT!

The police resist.

CORBEN  
C'mon! Give me a real challenge!

A SONIC BOOM over head alerts Corben to the challenge he so desired.

He glances up just in time to see a streak of red pass through a few white, puffy clouds.

CORBEN  
(to himself)  
That's more like it.

Superman gracefully descends to Earth, his red boots gently connecting with the pavement as his red, flowing cape cascades off his shoulders and perfectly hangs from his frame.

He holds his hand up to the police. They lower their weapons.

SUPERMAN

Put the bag down and surrender.  
There is no chance for escape, but  
I can help you.

CORBEN

Oh, you're right Superman.

SUPERMAN

Corben?

CORBEN

In the flesh, as it were.

Corben puts the bag down and slowly walks towards Superman with his arms out, wrists up.

CORBEN

I've been a bad little boy,  
Superman.

SUPERMAN

What's happened to you?

CORBEN

I've just had a run of bad luck  
lately.

SUPERMAN

Well, I'm here to help.

Superman takes Corben by the arm.

CORBEN

But who's going to help you?

Corben moves with lightning quick speed and whips Superman through --

INT. BANK

Like a red wrecking ball, Superman tears through the lobby, destroying everything in his path, only stopping when he hits the vault door, denting it.

Superman grimaces as he gets to his hands and knees. He then looks up at Corben and scans him with his X-ray vision.

The full scope of Corben's condition becomes apparent as he sees all the mechanics, wires and the endoskeleton.

His Kryptonite heart burns like a white-hot light.

SUPERMAN

What the...?

CORBEN

Catch me if you can, Superman!

Corben takes off at near super-sonic speed.

Superman is about to give chase when the MOANING and CRIES from a few injured bystanders force him to stay.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Perry White paces back and forth, the whole writing staff staring at him.

PERRY

I don't know what's happening to this city. It's enough to drive a grown man to drink. I want to know everything about Mister Corben before he arrived here. I want a complete background check. Family, friends, pets. Find out who he talked to, who he met, and who he had lunch with. If he sneezed, I want to know about it. C'mon people, work the story, get to the truth, break this thing wide open, and find out why a perfectly normal human being is now faster and stronger than Superman.

All the reporters sit and listen.

PERRY

Now!

Everyone jumps up.

PERRY

Lois! Can I talk to you a minute?

Lois hangs back and waits for everyone to clear out.

PERRY

How you feelin'?

LOIS

I'm okay.

PERRY

Look, I know you're kind of close  
on this one and if you want --

LOIS

When have you ever known me to back  
down from a story, Chief?

PERRY

Never.

LOIS

And I'm not about to start now.

Perry hands her a note.

PERRY

Here's the address he gave  
accounting, check it out and see if  
our friend was sleeping on a pile  
of plutonium or something.

LOIS

Or bit by a radioactive Superman...  
I'll see what I can dig up. Thanks  
chief!

INT. NEWSROOM - CONTINUOUS

Jimmy swivels around in the chair as he watches the news  
footage of Superman being tossed by the bank robber.

JIMMY

Can you believe that, Lois?

LOIS

No, No I can't.

She grabs a note pad and digital recorder from her desk.

JIMMY

Boy, you think you know a guy.

LOIS

(distant)

Yeah.

Lois then grabs her purse.

JIMMY

Where you off to?

LOIS  
I have a few questions that need  
answers.

JIMMY  
Need any back-up?

LOIS  
Sorry, Jimmy, not this time.

JIMMY  
(disappointed)  
Oh man.

Lois runs up to grab the elevator. Just as the doors open,  
Clark exits and Lois passes him.

CLARK  
Lois!

LOIS  
Sorry, Clark. Gotta go!

The doors start closing.

CLARK  
I think we'd better talk!

The doors shut and Clark is left hanging.

CLARK'S DESK

Jimmy Olsen is fingering through a few of Clark's assignments  
but quickly stops when he approaches.

JIMMY  
Hey C.K., where'd you disappear to?

Jimmy hits him on the back and he winces.

JIMMY  
What happened to you?

CLARK  
Oh, I -- uh -- slipped outside.

JIMMY  
Hey, did you hear the big news?

CLARK  
Big news?

JIMMY

Yeah, apparently John Corben is some kind of super-human freak.

CLARK

Where did you hear that?

JIMMY

Superman. His whole conversation with the robber was caught on tape. That was just before he threw Superman through the bank like he was a crash test dummy. Then he took off and later robbed some jewelry store under a hail of bullets from Metropolis S.W.A.T. I mean, the guy was like some kind of terminator, nothing could stop him...

Jimmy continues to ramble on but Clark is lost, thinking.

CLARK

(interrupts)

Where was she going?

JIMMY

Who? Lois? I don't know, she said that she had some questions that needed answering. I guess about Corben. You know, it's pretty --

Clark dashes off before Jimmy can finish another thought.

JIMMY

(shouting)

Okay, I'll just be....

(to himself)

....here, hanging out, doing nothing...

Jimmy starts to lean back on Clark's desk as an attractive woman walks past, but just as he relaxes --

PERRY(O.S.)

Olsen!

Jimmy jumps up.

JIMMY

I didn't do it!

EXT. DAILY PLANET - DAY

Clark runs out through the revolving door just in time to see Lois take off in a taxi.

He looks around, flustered by the fact that there are no cabs anywhere.

He then takes off down the sidewalk the opposite direction.

He runs down a back alley while taking off his glasses and loosening his tie. He then tears open his shirt, revealing the signature "S" shield.

In a blur, he goes from Clark Kent to Superman and appears above the buildings as a streak of red and blue.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

As Lois approaches Corben's sleazy building, a vagrant is sleeping in the little entrance way clutching a bottle of booze wrapped in a paper bag.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING

The man behind the desk, dressed only in a white T-shirt and a pair of gray sweatpants gives her a dirty look.

LOIS

Hi, I'm Lois Lane. I'm a reporter with the Daily Planet, I'm looking for John Corben's apartment.

MAN #1

Oh, so you're the one. John mentioned that he was seeing a Lois but I thought he just made it all up.

(smiles)

Yeah, I can show you his place. What's left of it anyway.

Lois and the man start walking.

LOIS

Did Corben have any visitors? Friends?

MAN #1

Nah, he pretty much kept to himself.

LOIS

Did he get any suspicious mail, or did any suspicious people ask about him?

MAN #1

Now that you mention it, a while back. He was coming home late and there was this limo parked out front, a pretty tough looking blond all dressed up in some kind of servant outfit, I thought maybe she was one of them high-priced hookers.

LOIS

Mercy Graves.

(to man)

Do you remember what they were talking about?

MAN #1

Lady, I'm lucky I can remember yesterday.

INT. HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

They both reach the top of the stairs.

MAN #1

(pointing)

His place is down there. Third door on your left. You can't miss it.

LOIS

Thanks.

Lois makes her way down, eventually coming to the wide open door.

The dead bolt and locking mechanism are still laying on the ground, the door knob crumpled.

INT. APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Lois looks around the cramped space. A bed and TV sit in the corner which flows into an open kitchen and bathroom off of that.

She finds the hospital gown laying on the floor. She examines it.

A BOARD CREAKS.

Lois jumps up, prepared to defend herself like a good soldier, but is startled when she sees Corben.

CORBEN  
I knew you'd come.

LOIS  
John. What's going on? What happened to you?

CORBEN  
It's still me. I'm still me. But I'm faster, stronger, and better than anything you could ever imagine. I'm even stronger than Superman. Did you see that? The way I threw him through that building.

Lois continues to back away from him.

LOIS  
I don't understand. How'd you do it? Drugs? An operation?

CORBEN  
There's nothing you have to understand. I have all the power of Superman. Isn't that what you like? Now we can be together. Just you and I.

LOIS  
Listen to yourself. You need help.

CORBEN  
I thought you would like me now. I thought this is what you wanted.

He backs her into the --

KITCHEN

-- towards the stove. Lois gropes for something... anything... to defend herself with.

LOIS  
John, you're robbing banks, hurting people. What's next?

CORBEN  
I'm just trying to do better, to be better.

LOIS  
At what cost? By turning into a --  
a monster.

CORBEN  
Monster? Monster?!

Corben becomes enraged again.

He reaches for her, but Lois's military training kicks in. She jams a carving knife into Corben's arm. But it just sticks in and WOBBLES back and forth.

Lois puts her hand over her mouth in shock.

She tries slugging him across the face but nearly breaks her hand when it strikes his head with a dull CLANG.

Lois falls down in pain. Corben stands over her.

CORBEN  
All I wanted was for you to love me  
like you love him!

Corben gets ready to strike but --

WINDOW

Superman explodes into the apartment, striking Corben with a right hook.

HALLWAY

Corben exits through one wall and enters another --

APARTMENT

-- Corben tears through room after room --

ALLEY

-- Corben bursts through the brick wall out of the end of the building.

BACK TO APARTMENT

Superman hovers near Lois, who has taken cover from the shower of glass and debris.

LOIS  
(surprised)  
Superman!

SUPERMAN  
You're a hard woman to find, Miss  
Lane. Are you alright?

LOIS  
My hand.

Superman takes a peek at it with his X-ray vision.

SUPERMAN  
It's not broken, just bruised.  
You'll be fine. Now, if you excuse  
me.

LOIS  
Superman!

Superman stops in mid-air.

LOIS  
Don't hurt him, please...

SUPERMAN  
... I promise.

Superman flies through the building, following Corben's path  
and into --

EXT. ALLEY

Superman lands but doesn't see Corben.

CORBEN (O.S.)  
Oh, Superman!

The man of steel turns and is immediately struck by an  
automobile thrown by Corben.

The car and Superman bounce into --

STREET

CARS swerve and honk their HORNS on the little two lane road.

The car that struck Superman lays on its side, the front end  
caved in by the impact.

SUPERMAN

is on all fours, shaking his head.

CORBEN

leaps into the air as high as a four story building --

SUPERMAN

quickly pulls the car over, using it as a shield. But Corben plows through the car, splitting it in half and crashing into Superman --

CRATER

Corben grips Superman around the neck. The man of steel has a hold of Corben's arms, trying to pry them loose.

CORBEN

You're not so great, are you?

Superman digs deep to find the strength to push Corben away.

The SERVO MOTORS begin to struggle with a low WHIRRING.

Corben tries to force him back, but Superman is still stronger.

Superman uses his feet to launch Corben into the air --

STREET

Corben skids to a stop, barreling into the cement and peeling it back like dried mud.

Superman zips over and stares down at Corben from just a few feet in the air as he lays in the pit.

Corben's faux flesh on the left side of his body has been torn back, including his face, exposing the Metallo endoskeleton.

SUPERMAN

I don't want to hurt you.

Corben then stands up and tears his shirt away, Superman style, and the plate holding the Kryptonite heart slides away.

Superman instantly falls to the ground and wilts.

CORBEN

I wouldn't worry about that.

Corben climbs out of the pit and stands over Superman, baking him in the deadly green glow.

Superman is in pain. The veins in hands constrict and throb.

CORBEN

You've had your day, Superman. But  
it was only a matter of time before  
someone better came along!

Superman tries crawling away under the burning green glow of the Kryptonite, but Corben has him exactly where he wants him.

Or so he thinks.

A car driven by Lois runs into Corben full force, punting him down the road like a football.

The front end of the car caves in, vital liquids and steam hemorrhaging out through the grill.

INT. CAR

Lois peels herself off the air bag and unbuckles her seat belt. She is a little dazed and her nose is bleeding.

She climbs out of the car and --

EXT. STREET

-- helps Superman to his feet.

The man of steel puts one arm over her shoulder as Lois helps him limp to a car that was abandoned when the fight began.

Lois is panicked as she sees Corben marching down the street. Two cars blocking the road in a "V" are pushed out of the way by a very angry Corben.

LOIS

C'mon. C'MON! MOVE!

She pushes Superman into the back seat and then climbs into the driver's seat.

INT. CAR

Lois struggles to get the POS car started.

The seconds tick by agonizingly as Lois frantically tries to get the engine to turn over with Corben getting closer and closer.

Finally, the ENGINE ROARS to life and Lois takes off.



Superman shakes his head.

LOIS  
So, were you, like, planning on walking?

Superman falls back down on the back seat.

LOIS  
How long does it take for you to recover from Kryptonite poisoning?

SUPERMAN  
It's never been this bad. The strength of that --  
(catches his breath)  
The piece that he has, it's stronger, more potent. It must be because he's using it like a battery. Drawing off that much energy is increasing the fission reaction exponentially.

LOIS  
I don't get it, is that Corben or not?

SUPERMAN  
It looks like him, but he's an android - a robot that appears human with no biological parts except for the brain.

LOIS  
How did I miss that?

SUPERMAN  
He wasn't that way before. Something happened. Someone did something to him.

LOIS  
Who could have done that?

SUPERMAN  
Somebody with a lot of connections.

LOIS  
Like Lex Luthor.  
(glances back)  
(MORE)

LOIS(cont'd)

I was talking with Corben's landlord, somebody in a limo came and picked him up just before he had that accident and disappeared. He gave a spot-on description of Mercy Graves, Luthor's bodyguard.

Superman winces as he crawls into the front seat next to Lois.

LOIS

We have to get you to a hospital or something.

SUPERMAN

They can't do anything for me. I just need time to recharge.

LOIS

I think I know someone who can help, I just hope he's home.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - HALLWAY - EVENING

Lois must still help the man of steel limp down the hallway.

She frantically knocks at the apartment door.

LOIS

Clark! CLARK! It's Lois!  
(to herself)

He must still be at the Planet.

Lois leans Superman up against the wall and looks for his spare key.

SUPERMAN

Check the lower right corner.

Lois kneels down and removes part of the door frame, revealing a space just big enough for a key.

Lois looks at him.

She unlocks the door and Superman takes a step to enter but he quickly collapses. Lois is there to catch him.

INT. APARTMENT

Lois pushes the man of steel in and he quickly collapses on the couch. Lois drops her hand bag.

BACK TO HALLWAY

Lois pokes her head out before closing the door.

BACK TO APARTMENT

LOIS  
Okay, what can I do?

Superman points towards the patio.

SUPERMAN  
Light. I need sunlight.

Superman rolls to his feet and Lois helps him out into the sunlight, he rests on a deck chair.

He closes his eyes.

Lois backs away.

SUPERMAN  
Much better. I'll be up in no time.  
(grabs her wrist)  
Thank you, Lois.

LOIS  
(shrugs)  
You've been there so many times for me -- I just thought it was time I returned the favor.

Lois heads into the --

INT. KITCHEN

LOIS  
(to herself)  
I wonder what's he got to eat in this place? I'm starving.

Lois opens the refrigerator but finds it almost completely empty, except for a few gallons of chocolate milk and several pizza boxes.

She then opens the pantry and finds it stuffed with snack cakes, cookies, and other sweets.

LOIS  
Well, that's interesting.

She takes a cupcake, coming out of the kitchen she sees Superman standing, facing the setting sun.

EXT. PATIO

Lois comes up behind him.

LOIS  
Feeling better?

SUPERMAN  
Much.

Pause.

Superman is about to take off.

LOIS  
(blurted)  
I worry about you... sometimes.

Lois is slightly embarrassed by this outpouring of emotion. She taps her head and tries to hide.

Superman stops and turns.

SUPERMAN  
I know you do, Lois.

LOIS  
Why are you always there when I  
need you?

SUPERMAN  
You seem to have a habit of getting  
yourself in trouble, Miss Lane.

Lois smiles.

LOIS  
Is that it? I thought maybe there  
was --

SUPERMAN  
-- something else?

Lois nods.

SUPERMAN  
I'm sorry, Lois. There isn't.

LOIS  
Someday?

SUPERMAN

Lois, there is someone for everyone. Even someone right in front of your face.

Superman takes two steps up towards the railing and floats in the air.

SUPERMAN

Stay here, don't tell anyone where you are.

LOIS

He wouldn't hurt me.

SUPERMAN

How do you know?

LOIS

I could see it in his eyes... there's a piece of him that's still human.

SUPERMAN

I hope you're right.

Superman takes off, straight up.

INT. APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Lois wanders back inside. She starts to pick up her purse and everything that fell out when she dropped it helping Superman inside.

She then finds her notes from talking to Corben's landlord. She quickly packs everything up and then dashes out of the apartment.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. RESTROOM - NIGHT

The crippled form of John Corben stumbles into the dark surroundings.

He reaches up and pulls on the light cord. The pale, halogen light bulb casts a ghastly glow over the bionic man.

Corben begins pulling off the tattered clothes. He then looks at his hands.

One hand is still encased in the flesh-like covering, but the other has been wiped clean, only the nearly indestructible Metallo endoskeleton remains.

Corben looks up at himself in the mirror.

Half his face is missing, the cold-metallic grin staring back at him. The once natural blue eyes are a sharp green.

Corben takes a long, hard look at himself. He touches the metal part of his face.

MEMORY FLASH

Corben sees Doctor Vale poking his head inside his car and several men removing him.

He then sees the markings on the van that ran him off the road.

SLOW-MO: the double LL's of LexCorp.

Swirling images of several surgeons standing over him, operating on him. Lex Luthor stands behind a small window, watching the procedure.

The Metallo body comes into view and then everything goes dark.

END MEMORY FLASH.

Corben explodes and smashes the mirror.

In his anger, he smashes the tiny light bulb swinging from the ceiling the middle of the room.

Darkness. Then, the green glow of his left eye.

CORBEN  
 (high-pitched, hauntingly)  
 Johnny. Johnny boy. Why so sad?  
 (low-pitched, metallic)  
 John. John? John isn't here  
 anymore, there is only Metallo.

INT. LEXCORP HEADQUARTERS - SERVICE ENTRANCE - NIGHT

A cleaning crew is just passing through security on their way to the freight elevator in the back passages of the building.

But one of the MEN in a blue jumpsuit and blue hat with the company logo falls behind. The worker then darts into --

INT. SERVICE ROOM

The worker takes off his hat, revealing himself to be the fearless and intrepid reporter Lois Lane.

Lois quickly removes the jumpsuit and then pulls her hair up and puts on a blond wig. She also puts on a pair of square-rimmed glasses, completely changing her look.

INT. ELEVATOR

Lois quickly grabs an elevator, jammed with people going up.

She stands unusually close to a stocky, and slightly overweight gentlemen. He turns to look at Lois Lane. She smiles, he smiles back.

But what he doesn't see is Lois picking his pocket and removing his I.D. card.

INT. HALLWAY

Lois approaches a secure area. At the locked door, she uses the man's I.D. card to gain access.

INT. OFFICE SUITE

Lois sits at a dark computer terminal in the empty office area. The computer prompts her for a username and I.D. code.

Lois uses the man's name from the card and the bar code number on the back.

The computer grants her access.

ON SCREEN -

She punches up all the doctors that LexCorp employs privately. As she searches through she sees cardiologists, neurosurgeons, ear, nose, and throat doctors, and then sees Doctor Vale and his speciality in limb replacement.

She brings up his file and begins reading. Doctor Vale's file leads her to a list of projects in LexCorp's medical division. She then finds an entry for "Project Prometheus"

Lois clicks on it and discovers that the project deals with creating bionic soldiers using a transplanted endoskeleton.

BACK TO SCENE

Lois inserts her flash drive and downloads the files.

INT. HALLWAY

Lois tucks the drive away in her bra and starts heading for the nearest elevator.

But as she walks past a doorway, Mercy Graves grabs her around the neck and than smashes her head into the wall, knocking her unconscious.

She stands over Lois.

MERCY  
Hello, Miss Lane, you naughty,  
naughty girl.

Two security guards arrive to take her away.

INT. OFFICE - AT THE SAME TIME

Lex sits at his desk when the haggard form of John Corben stumbles in.

Lex barely looks up.

LEX  
Welcome back, Mister Corben.

CORBEN  
You -- You destroyed my LIFE! You  
took everything from me and turned  
me into -- into -- THIS!!

Lex continues to go about his business, not even glancing up at Corben.

LEX  
And Superman?

CORBEN  
Look at me!

Corben wipes his desk clean, breaking the computer, phone, and lamp and spilling all his important documents on the floor.

Lex finally looks up at Corben.

CORBEN  
You killed me, Lex Luthor, you  
destroyed everything that I was!

Corben reaches across the table to grab Lex but instead he falls to the ground in pain, his body malfunctioning.

Lex holds up a hand remote device.

LEX

It's an interesting sensation, isn't it? I had the late doctor wire it directly into the pain center of the brain. It is the purest form of pain one can ever experience.

(walks around him)

Did you really think I would give someone such extraordinary power without taking the proper cautions. If I won't allow Superman to have it, what made you think I would give you such free range?

Lex releases Corben from the grips of his device and kneels down.

LEX

Now, you listen to me, you bucket of bolts. I saved your life. I gave you life, and I can just as easily take it away. You were nothing when I found you! NOTHING! Now, you either destroy Superman, or there is no place in this world you will be able to hide.

CORBEN

(panting)

F-f-f-from him?

LEX

From -- me!

(closer)

You got that?

(stands up)

I'm on your side, John, I really am. You don't want to see Miss Lane in the hands of that, that alien? Do you?

CORBEN

No!

Corben gets to his feet.

LEX

Good. Now, don't come back here again until you've completed your job.

CORBEN  
And the repairs?

LEX  
You have to earn that merit badge.

Corben turns and takes off in a blur.

At the same time, Luthor's CELL PHONE RINGS. He reaches into his pocket and listens --

LEX  
What kind of problem?

INT. LEXCORP HEADQUARTERS - BASEMENT - MOMENTS LATER

Lex stands over Lois Lane handcuffed to a chair.

LEX  
(tapping forehead)  
This is turning into one hell of a night, Mercy.

MERCY  
She had this.

Mercy hands him the flash drive.

LEX  
Oh, Miss Lane. Your curiosity always did get the best of you. Unfortunately, this will be your last.  
(to Mercy)  
Get rid of her.

MERCY  
And Corben?

LEX  
Once his job is done, I see no reason to keep him around.

EXT. ALLEY - MORNING

Mercy supervises as two security guards load Lois's still unconscious body into a black sedan.

MERCY  
Take her down to the reservoir and let the car roll down the launch.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. STREET - DAY

Like busy little bees, men and women in business suits scurry up and down the bustling metropolitan streets.

But in their midst, walking straight down the middle of the sidewalk, is John Corben.

He is covered, hidden underneath a large hooded sweatshirt and jacket. On his left hand is a black glove, concealing his bionic metal mandible.

No one would suspect how dangerous, or how demented this figure is. He just blends in, disappears. Except for the green glow of his left eye hidden under the hood.

INT. APARTMENT - DAY

Clark barges into his apartment.

CLARK  
Lois! LOIS!

Clark checks every room. But soon realizes... she is gone.

CLARK  
Can't that women ever stay put!

Clark grabs his cell phone to call Lois, but after several rings there is still no answer. He hangs up and then tries someone else.

CLARK  
Hey, Jimmy, have you heard from  
Lois?

INT. DAILY PLANET - NEWSROOM

Jimmy is sitting at Clark's desk.

JIMMY  
Sorry, C.K., she has been  
incommunicado since yesterday. Have  
you tried her cell phone?

INTERCUT PHONE CONVERSATION

CLARK  
No answer.

JIMMY  
Sorry, wish I could help.

CLARK

Thanks.

JIMMY

But I do have something else you may be interested in.

Jimmy picks up a paper to read.

JIMMY

A body was just fished out of the reservoir. Some doctor. His neck was snapped like the wishbone on Thanksgiving.

CLARK

Is this going somewhere?

JIMMY

Get this, his last known employment was with LexCorp Industries. There were fingerprints pressed right into his flesh. But the M.E.'s office said they were completely smooth, no ridges whatsoever, and the radiation levels were off the scale. This guy must've been playing with plutonium or something as a hobby.

Clark starts putting the pieces together.

CLARK

Jimmy, call the police, report Lois missing. Have them start searching near the reservoir.

JIMMY

Don't you need, like, twenty-four hours or something.

CLARK

Lie to them.

JIMMY

What are you talking about?

CLARK

Just do it, Jimmy.

JIMMY

Okay, okay, I'm calling right now.

BACK TO APARTMENT

Clark hangs up. He thinks for a minute. He starts to loosen his tie when there is a KNOCK at the door.

He re-tightens his tie and answers the door.

When the door swings open, the hooded form of Corben grabs Clark by the neck and hoists him up.

CORBEN  
Hiya, Clark!

Corben forces his way into the apartment.

He pulls his hood off, revealing his half human, half robot face.

CORBEN  
I need you to call your friend...  
Superman.

CLARK  
I can't.

Corben throws Clark across the living room, breaking a chair and bookcase.

CORBEN  
Try harder!

Clark fixes his glasses.

CLARK  
I'm telling you, I can't!

CORBEN  
Liar!

Corben up ends an oak dining table, flinging it into the wall and breaking the window.

CLARK  
Corben, I know there's a part of you that doesn't want to this. Just stop, please. There are scientists that can help you. We can figure something out.

CORBEN  
There's no going back now. This is the end for me.

CLARK

There's always a way. You have a choice.

CORBEN

From this!

Corben unzips his hooded sweatshirt and opens up the panel.

CORBEN

Look at me!

Clark immediately begins feeling the effects of the Kryptonite. He tries to hide the pain.

Corben notices Clark's labored breathing and sweat forming on his brow. He then sees his veins constricting and turning darker in his hand.

CORBEN

Well, well, well. Looks like somebody has a secret.

Corben kneels down and knocks off Clark's glasses. He then rips his shirt open and finds the suit. Clark is helpless to stop him.

CORBEN

(laughing)

Well, look at that! This whole time!

(stands up)

It all makes perfect sense, you, Lois, and the other you. Sorry, Supes, she's mine now.

CLARK

I won't let you hurt her.

CORBEN

I don't think you're in a position to argue. But I have no interest in killing Clark Kent. I mean, who would care, not Lois that's for damn sure! But Superman. Ah! Now that's something. And when I raise your lifeless body over my head for all the world to see, they will know the name Metallo, and all shall worship and fear me. So, c'mon. Let's see some tights.

CLARK  
If I don't?

CORBEN  
Well, I'll just have to force it  
out of ya!

Corben reaches down and grabs Clark by the neck, he then flings him across the apartment, destroying furniture and part of a wall.

Corben starts to walk over.

CORBEN  
C'mon farm boy! Let's see that red  
and blue suit!

Clark sees an opportunity. He uses his heat vision to hit an automatic sprinkler just over Corben's shoulder.

The apartment is immediately drenched in a raging shower as FIRE ALARMS BLARE.

The panel holding Corben's Kryptonite heart shuts automatically. He looks down, trying to get it open, but when he looks up --

He is met by Clark tackling him. Both super beings crash through the brick wall of the apartment --

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING

In mid-air, Clark and Corben battle.

Corben rips Clark's shirt and punches him a few times, Clark manages to get in a few good punches himself.

Before they both crash through the cement roof of a --

INT. MANUFACTURING PLANT

-- and leave a sizeable crater in the floor.

Workers in the plant flee at the SOUND of the CRASH and EXPLOSION.

Clark gets to his feet. His shirt is worn and torn, his Superman costume exposed.

Corben pulls himself, bits of concrete trickle off.

CORBEN  
Still not going to play?

Corben's eyes flash green. He charges like a bull at the still disguised man of steel.

Clark braces himself as Corben collides with him.

Both men crash into one of the cement pillars holding the building up and tear right through it.

Clark pushes back, his feet tearing up the cement floor.

Both men are locked together in stale mate -- pushing and shoving back and forth.

CORBEN

You're not as strong as you think!

CLARK

Neither are you!

Clark pushes Corben into another cement pillar, snapping it in half.

On the battle goes, back and forth, tearing the factory apart until --

The roof loses its structural support and caves in.

Both Clark and Corben are buried under huge blocks of concrete, twisted metal girders, and sparking power lines.

Quiet. The dust settles. Minutes pass. Nothing.

INT. CAR - DAY

Lois awakes surrounded by waist high water quickly filling the car.

She reaches for her cell phone, but it is water-logged and no longer works. She pushes against the door, but with the difference in pressure, she can't move it. She bangs at the window.

LOIS

(screaming)

HELP! SOMEONE HELP ME! SUPERMAN!

Outside --

Her cries are only a MUFFLED SCREAM which no one will hear.

## INT. MANUFACTURING PLANT

A large chunk of concrete moves. Inch by inch, it slowly slides to one side before launching into the air and crashing down twenty yards away.

Superman pulls himself up and stands atop the pile of debris, covered in dust. He inspects the area with his X-ray vision.

He slides another chunk of concrete to the side and sees a hole and the subway rail line below. His brow furrows in concern.

## INT. SUBWAY PLATFORM - MOMENTS EARLIER

People from all walks of life are mulling around, waiting for the next train.

Corben limps out from the tunnel and starts walking towards the platform. A woman turns and sees his half man, half robot form and stops and stares. Corben glares at her.

CORBEN

Boo!

The WOMAN SCREAMS clearing the platform as Corben makes his way towards the stairs.

## EXT. STREET - DAY

A crowd of hysterical people emerge from the subway entrance, running.

Corben limps up the stairs shortly afterwards.

He marches into the street.

A city bus carrying dozens of passengers slams on its breaks as Corben walks straight into the its path.

The bus driver lays on the HORN.

Corben turns his head and the gruesome metal grin from the endoskeleton can be clearly seen.

The bus driver panics. He flings the door open and runs out, leaving the passengers behind.

Corben reaches under the front bumper and tips the bus up. He holds it over his head.

SUPERMAN

Put them down!

Corben turns and looks up.

Floating directly in the sun's path is Superman.

Corben squints in the light as the man of steel floats downwards.

CORBEN  
That's better!

Superman lands.

SUPERMAN  
You want me, here I am. Just put  
them down!

CORBEN  
As you wish.

Corben tosses the bus towards Superman.

THE BUS

flips on its side and SCREECHES across the asphalt.

INSIDE

the people roll around and SCREAM in terror.

SUPERMAN

puts himself directly in the path of the oncoming vehicle and takes the hit.

NEAR THE SIDEWALK

pedestrians run for safety as Superman and the bus jump the curb.

THE BUS

stops when it strikes a building, pinning Superman between the brick wall and the front grill.

Corben looks on. He pumps his fist in triumph. But --

The bus is slowly pushed away and Superman walks out. He is dazed and dusty but basically alright.

He pulls the bus out, away from the building. He peers inside through the windshield as all the stunned passengers look back.

Superman quickly uses his heat vision to cut the windshield away.

SUPERMAN

Okay everyone, last stop.

A few passengers manage to crawl out as Superman helps them.

Meanwhile, Corben approaches a light pole. With a swift quick it breaks from it's cement base. He then sneaks up behind Superman.

PASSENGER #1

Superman look out!

The man of steel turns and is struck. He is instantly catapulted back like a baseball from a bat.

The big red wrecking ball collides with a crane tower at a construction site, denting the base and weakening it to the point of failure.

Superman peels himself off the metal girder and shakes his head. He then looks up.

WHAT HE SEES: the huge crane starts to tilt forward, the metal girders CREAKING and GROANING.

Superman quickly tries to push the crane back up, but the top-heavy structure is bowing to the force of gravity.

The crane slowly collapses forward.

PEDESTRIANS

flee, except for one woman in a wheelchair.

One of the small wheels gets stuck in a sidewalk crack and she is too panicked to think clearly.

Superman tries in vain to hold the massive structure back but RIVETS POP and METAL GIRDERS twist and GROAN.

THE COCKPIT

crashes into the skyscraper across the street, colliding with the 22nd through 28 floor and sending glass raining down.

SUPERMAN

flies up and pulls on the middle of the crane, trying to stop its descent

THE METAL CLASP

breaks away under the strain.

CRANE

continues to fall.

The woman in the wheelchair continues to try to push herself forward.

Superman quickly flies back down and around. He stands next to the scared woman as the crane finally collapses in a heap and a giant dust cloud.

Under the wreckage, the woman cowers. She looks up and sees --

Superman holding back the giant metal behemoth. His feet are partially submerged in the broken cement.

SUPERMAN

(struggling)

Hi.

WOMAN

(calm)

Hi.

SUPERMAN

Are you okay?

She nods in disbelief.

SUPERMAN

Excuse me.

Superman pushes the crane back up and lets it fall the opposite direction, out of harms way.

Superman is just about to take off, when the stinging pain of Kryptonite poisoning knocks him off his feet.

CORBEN

So much for heroics, Superman.

Corben walks around him.

CORBEN

Can you feel that? That is the sting of defeat. That is your life slipping away. I know it well. I am going to take from you what was taken from me -- MY LIFE!

Several news cameras surround the site.

CORBEN  
(to videographer)  
Is that on?

The camera man nods.

Corben walks over.

CORBEN  
Come here! I want you to get this.  
I want the whole world to witness  
the last moments of the life of  
Superman at the hands of the real  
man of steel!

INT. OFFICE - AT THE SAME TIME

Lex watches the live feed of Corben's rant with his fingers clasped together in anticipation.

BACK TO STREET

Superman withers in the exposed light of the Kryptonite as he pulls himself across the cracked concrete, his fingernails digging in.

Corben walks around Superman as he tries to crawl to safety.

CORBEN  
What's the matter, Superman? You  
look a little GREEN under the  
GILLS!

With the punctuation of "Green" and "Gills," Corben kicks Superman in the chest and stomach.

CORBEN  
You brought this on yourself. You  
couldn't stand to have someone else  
with her, someone better than you.

Corben lifts Superman's head.

CORBEN  
It's all your fault, and now I'm  
going to do what no one else  
could... I'm going to kill  
Superman!

Corben pulls his fist back and lays Superman out. Blood spatters from his mouth.

Superman reaches down and touches it the blood splattered concrete.

CORBEN  
The god bleeds!  
(shouting)  
He bleeds!

Corben's exclamation rings through the streets.

All the commotion, all the fervor, all the on-lookers fall silent.

Superman looks around at their shocked and saddened faces.

Jimmy Olsen stops taking pictures and slowly lowers his camera.

Corben kneels down to Superman's ear.

CORBEN  
(whisper)  
If you can't save yourself, how can  
you save her.

INT. CAR

The water level in the car has reached Lois' chin as she continues to struggle to keep her head above water.

BACK TO STREET

SUPERMAN  
Lois.

Superman becomes enraged, clenching his fist.

As Corben turns to pose for the cameras, Superman summons the last ounce of strength he has and reaches for a downed and sparking power line.

As Corben turns Superman over to finish him, Superman jams the power line into the compartment holding the Kryptonite.

Both combatants are immediately catapulted back in opposite directions from each other.

Corben is layed out on the street, while Superman has torn through the front of a clothing store.

The jolt leaves Corben in critical error mode, requiring 90 seconds to reboot. His body twitches convulses as his face just has a blank stare.

INT. STORE

Superman is left dazed and smouldering but he is slowly regaining his strength now that he is out of the impenetrable gaze of the Kryptonite.

He slowly gets to his feet and exits --

EXT. STREET

When the 90 seconds have elapsed, Corben's eyes snap open and he rises up. The panel with the Kryptonite has shut automatically.

Corben is looking a little worn.

CORBEN

You!

Superman kneels down.

CORBEN

Surrendering?

SUPERMAN

No, just making it a fair fight.

Superman blasts his heat vision, sealing the plate with the Kryptonite.

Corben looks down at his chest. He tries to frantically open the little door, but it is welded shut.

CORBEN

Fine, I'll destroy you the old fashioned way!

Superman and Corben run at each other.

With the CLANG of two sledgehammers meeting, Superman and Corben lock together.

Corben then picks Superman up and slams him down. The weakened street from the collapsed crane causes both supermen to fall through the road and into --

INT. SUBWAY TUNNEL

Superman is lying on the tracks, while Corben is on the platform a few feet away.

Corben gets to his feet.

CORBEN  
You won't beat me!

He claws at the welded plate hiding the Kryptonite heart. He finally pries it open and jumps down on the tracks.

Corben stands over Superman, the green glow enveloping him.

But the SCREECHING of BRAKES can be heard and Corben turns around just in time to be hit head on by the train.

The impact shatters the Kryptonite into a million pieces.

The train is partially derailed and small fires burn everywhere.

Quiet and stillness.

Finally, a hand appears, grasping at the edge of the platform.

Superman slowly pulls himself up. He is beaten, dirty, and worn, but alive.

He slowly lifts himself up and then stands, triumphant.

The SERVO MOTORS WHIR as Corben struggles, the last ounce of power being slowly drained.

Superman walks over and stands over him.

The wretched form of Corben twitches and jolts. It is a sad sight.

CORBEN  
(whisper)  
Clark?

SUPERMAN  
I'm here, John. Hold on, just hold on! I'll get help.

Corben grabs his arm.

CORBEN  
No.

Corben continues to twitch as his VOICE BREAKS and WARPS.

CORBEN  
I -- can -- feel it. Feel it.

SUPERMAN  
 Feel what, John? Who did this?

CORBEN  
 Cold. Cold. I -- can -- feel --  
 cold.

SUPERMAN  
 John?

CORBEN  
 I'm not afraid. Afraid. Clark. Not  
 afraid.

Corben grips Superman's hand. He then pulls him down. The half grin of Corben's metal face whispers just one word in Superman's ear.

CORBEN  
 (whisper)  
 Lu-thor.

Corben's hand then goes limp as Superman leans back up and sees both his eyes blank and black. The green glow is gone.

Superman takes a somber minute to kneel over the body.

INT. CAR - AT THE SAME TIME

Lois is completely submerged. She frantically bangs on the window and windshield. It's only seconds before she is gone.

INT. SUBWAY TUNNEL

Superman suddenly looks up.

SUPERMAN  
 Lois!

EXT. STREET

Onlookers slowly approach the hole and attempt to avoid the huge plume of smoke billowing out when --

Superman BLASTS out at super sonic speed. All the people fall back from the sonic BOOM and rush of air.

Superman carries the smoke with him like a small tornado.

BACK TO CAR

Lois goes limp. Her hair floats in front of her face as one last bubble escapes her nostrils.

BACK TO STREET

Superman SCREAMS past office buildings and skyscrapers and at an unbelievable speed.

Several windows shatter as debris and newspapers on the street get sucked into the vortex.

Trees planted on the sidewalk bend and shake as pedestrians are blown back by the force of the wind.

EXT. RESERVOIR

Superman pulls the car out of the water and quickly rips off the door.

Lois' limp body tumbles out with the rush of water.

Superman catches her.

SUPERMAN  
Lois! LOIS!

She doesn't respond.

Superman puts her down and immediately starts C.P.R.

He gently inflates her lungs and presses on her chest to get her heart beating.

Each breath seems like an eternity as he struggles to bring his love back.

He touches her lips once again, and there is a slight "spark."

Lois hacks and coughs, expelling the water from her lungs.

Superman looks inside her chest cavity with his x-ray vision: The gray and blackening tissue gets a fresh burst of red.

Superman leans back, sighing with relief.

He picks her up.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Superman slowly deposits Lois on her bed.

SUPERMAN  
I'm sorry, Lois.

Lois reaches out and touches his arm.

LOIS  
(half-conscious)  
Clark...

SUPERMAN  
I'm here, Lois.

LOIS  
(half-conscious)  
I had the most vivid dream...

SUPERMAN  
I know. Get some rest.

Lois turns over.

Superman watches her for a minute.

SUPERMAN  
I love you, Lois.

LOIS  
(mumbled)  
Love you...

Superman takes off through the patio doors.

INT. LABORATORY - NIGHT

Lex stands over the charred remains of John Riley Corben.

LEX  
He is proving tougher than I  
imagined.

MERCY  
Are you angry boss?

LEX  
Angry? No, just disappointed. But  
you never know the right road,  
until you pick the wrong one.

Lex inspects the metal closely. He then sees a few blotches of red.

He retrieves a long cotton swab and a specimen container. He wipes the cotton swab along the metal and looks at it.

MERCY  
What's that?

LEX  
Blood.

He deposits the sample in a specimen jar.

MERCY  
Corben's?

LEX  
No... I don't think so.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

Clark Kent is slumped over in a thick, heavy and worn stuffed brown leather chair. He is wearing his white collar shirt unbuttoned over his Superman tights and his fake, black-rimmed glasses.

He is staring down into space, deep in thought. The floor lamp over him casting deep, dark shadows and partially obscuring his face.

He finally leans up. He removes his glasses and scratches the corner of his eyes... is it exhaustion?

He is about to put the glasses back on but stops and looks at them. He stares at his reflection and gives a little chuckle and shakes his head. He puts the glasses down on the table in front of him.

He slowly gets to his feet and walks over to his window. He stares out at the skyline and then sets his sights on the imposing monolith of LexCorp Tower.

His face goes from sad and forlorn to one of serious determination.

He takes off the shirt and with a WHOOSH flies out into the night.

INT. OFFICE - NIGHT

Lex loosens his tie as he enters his office. He walks straight for the bar and pours himself a drink - scotch on the rocks.

He sits down at his computer work station and tosses the flash drive Lois had on the floor. He SMASHES it with his heel.

At the computer, he types in a few passwords.

ON SCREEN -

The files and plans for "Project Prometheus" pop up. He presses a button and everything is deleted from the hard drive and servers.

BACK TO SCENE

Lex leans back.

A shadow moves across his office from the moonlight shining in.

Lex swivels around in his chair and sees Superman floating outside.

He discretely switches the monitor off. He then walks to the french doors that lead outside to the --

EXT. BALCONY

LEX  
(faked cheerfulness)  
Oh, it's you.

Superman just looks at him silently, emotionless.

LEX  
I'd invite you in for a drink but  
you I know you aren't the drinking  
type...

Superman just hovers and stares.

LEX  
Is there something I can help you  
with?

Still nothing.

LEX  
Say something you --

Lex throws his glass as Superman just moves up a little bit and the glass falls to the street below.

Superman flies in low.

SUPERMAN

I know about you. I know everything  
about you. And every time those  
little hairs stand-up on the back  
on your neck, that will be me,  
watching you. Pleasant dreams,  
Mister Luthor.

Superman slowly flies away from the window.

LEX

(yelling)  
This isn't over Superman!  
(to himself)  
Not by a long shot.

Lex returns to his desk. After a short beat, he violently  
jumps up and overturns his desk in a fit of rage.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. METROPOLIS - EARLY MORNING

As the sun rises over the far eastern part of the city,  
Superman coasts through skyscraper lined streets.

He closes his eyes, soaking up the sun's rays, knowing that  
another day has begun.

He then HEARS the FAINT CALL for help from somewhere. He  
smiles, and then flies to the rescue.

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END