

The Palisades Gig

by

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TITLE CARD:

FADE IN:

"Fairy tales are more than true: not because they tell us that dragons exist, but because they tell us that dragons can be beaten."

-G.K. Chesterton

FADE TO BLACK

FADE IN

"We shape our tools, and thereafter our tools shape us."

- Marshall McLuhan

FADE TO BLACK

FADE IN

OPENING SHOT - EXT. BUSY INTERSECTION - DAY

Extreme close up of Starbucks Siren logo on side of a grande' coffee. We see corner of the order sticker and a Sharpie "Enjoy!" with a smiley face in the "O". There is a dried streak of coffee down the side.

SHOT PANS BACK until we see the guy holding the cup. He's in a very authentic AQUAMAN outfit standing at a bus stop. He's staring blankly at 2 homeless guys, in army fatigue jackets on the bench, eavesdropping on their conversation..thousand yard stare.

Two gruff, street voices... down and out.

VET #1

You don't look so good friend? You kickin'?

VET #2

Not by choice. You got 10 bucks, Willie?

VET #1

Do I look like I got 10 bucks? You back on the ice?

VET #2
Never really off.. ya know.
(pause)
Where you serve?

VET #1
Kabul...forward group. You?

VET #2
I sectioned 8 after crawling out of
Fallujah.

VET #1
Those are hard lines, brother. What
brings you here?

VET #2
Tried to stop my meds.. making me
foggy.. took a swing at my wife.
Missed, thank god. Cops gave me a
free ride down here. VA hooked me
up with a shelter flop.

AQUAMAN breaks his stare, shakes his head. In a very
refined British accent he offers his oblique, distant
remarks. One eyebrow lifts broaching derision.

AQUAMAN
Poor sods.

Looks down the road, checks his watch. Someone's a bit
late. Behind him in the bus shelter is an advert LED TV..
shows ads and news snippets. We see a short news piece of
Pope Leo saying mass on the big 50ft 4K screen in St.
Peter's Basilica with a huge crowd watching.

A SMALL car pulls up.

AQUAMAN'S miffed, body language showing displeasure. He
opens the passenger door and gets in. Car signals and
pulls ahead and makes a right.

INT. SMALL CAR.

Woman in an equally authentic Wonder Woman outfit is
driving.

Rosary hanging on the rear view, a small bust of the
Virgin Mary glued to the dash, engraved with 'Matera
Dolorosa' (Mother of Sorrows - Protector of the Innocent)

AQUAMAN squirms, reaches down, pulls up a dog eared copy of "Eat, Pray , Love" he was sitting on. Holds it to WONDER WOMAN with a 'Seriously?' look.

She grabs it instinctively, throws it out the window of the moving car without a thought.

EXT. SIDE OF THE ROAD AS THE CAR PASSES.

Impromptu drum and meditation circle in session on a patch of grass. One woman in a chakra pose, arms out, eyes closed gets clocked in the forehead with the book.. 'OW!'

INT. WONDER WOMAN'S CAR (CONT'D)

(hint of Hispanic Angelino accent)

WONDER WOMAN
Bad break up a few months ago.
Useless.

AQUAMAN is British.. very proper accent. He moves on.

AQUAMAN
That's a legit tardy, lieutenant. 7
minutes late.. again.

WONDER WOMAN
Ya.. well... even Wonder Woman has
make up issues.

INT. WONDER WOMAN'S WASHROOM (30 MIN.EARLIER)

ANNIE/WONDER WOMAN's reflection in the mirror, starting her makeup routine. In costume but without the wig, hair in a sock mesh.

She has a scar from a wound down her right cheek.. shows some bad surgical field stitching.

Takes a breath, brings up a glob of old pancake makeup filler, starts to cover up the scar.

INT. CAR (CONT'D)

WONDER WOMAN
Don't think I don't appreciate the
irony. You lost the toss again for
Aquaman?

AQUAMAN

What kid asks for Aquaman? I had
Thor dry cleaned and ready to go.

WONDER WOMAN

It's double rate... stop
complaining.. richo client up in
the Palisades. Communion bash.

AQUAMAN

Double? Well, that's different.
With my bills, I'd dance stark
naked for double.

WONDER WOMAN

This was your weekend with your
boy... How'd that go?

AQUAMAN

(visible reaction, sore point)

Don't ask. The bloody shrew is
trashing me at every turn, asking
for more money. Kid thinks I'm a
loser ..like he's reading my most
private thoughts.

(beat)

Running around town on the bus in
tights doesn't help.

(beat)

Let's just get this bloody over
with.

WONDER WOMAN

Can I change lanes?

AQUAMAN checks his mirror and gives a quick glance back.

AQUAMAN

All clear. Guy just got his cast
off. What are the kids gonna think
of a Superman with a slight limp.

WONDER WOMAN

He said physio worked miracles..
but it shook up some shrapnel.
We'll just say... we'll say we ran
into some Kryptonite along the way.
Problem solved.

AQUAMAN

(gravelly, almost bitter)

Hang gliding...right...
(beat)
Can see the headline now, "Veteran
of Afghanistan Survives War Only To
Die in Bizarre Hang Gliding
Accident." No thanks.

WONDER WOMAN head pivots to the road side, sees someone.

WONDER WOMAN
There he is. Shit.. he's mad.

EXT. ANOTHER BUSY CORNER

Their friend is waiting, naturally, in a very authentic
Superman get up.. cowlick and all. Behind him a full
size, back lit, shelter poster ad, FTD and the winged
Mercury in full form.

SUPERMAN spots them, taps his watch.

A **raven** perched on the bus shelter.. caws loudly,
annoying. Caws again. SUPERMAN bugged by it, quickly
looks back at it with a annoyed scowl, almost personal,
then back at the car.

SUPERMAN moves off to meet the car O.S.

SHOT HOLDS on the bus shelter and the raven. Raven caws
annoyingly again and takes flight.

INT. CAR (CONT'D)

WONDER WOMAN
Ya, ya... I'm late already...I
know. No gratitude.

She slows the car and pulls up. SUPERMAN gets into the
back seat, tucks in his cape before he closes the door.

SUPERMAN has a residual Oklahoma/East Texas drawl.

SUPERMAN
10 minutes late.

WONDER WOMAN
Don't ask.

SUPERMAN
Where is this place?

WONDER WOMAN
Palisades. Ivanhoe Place. Another
50s cul de sac named after a famous
movie.

SUPERMAN

Ivanhoe Place? You're kidding. My club is right around there.. you could have grabbed me along the way. Shit...I didn't have to rush down here at all.

(3 beats)

Hey Aquaman... save any sardines lately ?

AQUAMAN

Not in the mood.. Clark...

SUPERMAN gets testy.

SUPERMAN

Uhh...don't.. don't say it like that.

AQUAMAN

What.. "Clark"?

SUPERMAN

Ya.

AQUAMAN

Like what?

SUPERMAN

Like all sarcastic and stuff.

AQUAMAN

What exactly should I call you?
"Clark" is your real name,
remember?

SUPERMAN

(more indignation)

Na, na...you said it sorta funny...
like a dig. Not the first time.

AQUAMAN

Who names their child, Clark
anyway... like it's no bloody
wonder you do this for a living.

SUPERMAN

I've told you about this, man. I've
had lots of bullying and trauma
over my name. Schoolyard shit.

WONDER WOMAN

Easy boys... don't make me pull out
the lasso..

SUPERMAN
(pitying, head shake)
You sound bitter, man.

AQUAMAN
Let's see... three ex military on
veterans pensions reduced to
dressing up like super heroes to
keep the larder full? Yes. I'm
bitter.

WONDER WOMAN
Here we go... every week. Must we?

SUPERMAN
Do a job and do it well... that's
how I look at it. Job is a job.

AQUAMAN
Easy to say when you're *Superman*
and kids aren't throwing food at
you calling you fish breath.

SUPERMAN
They're just kids, man. Not like
they're Taliban in Helmand, dude.
Relax, John.

AQUAMAN does a frumpy, sinks into his seat a bit.

AQUAMAN
Feels worse sometimes.

WONDER WOMAN
(non-chalance, que sera, focussed on
driving)
I've made my peace with it. It
sucks ...but it's 150 an hour. I
take the money...I don't bitch.
(2 beats)
I've been fired at by Iraqi Air
Defense... so what. 20 years ago.
It's a 3 hour minimum this time..
that helps. AND it pays for my
goddaughter's college.
(beat)
Suck it up, soldier.

EXT. TRAFFIC LIGHTS - LATE AFTERNOON.

We see WONDER WOMAN'S car pull up to a red light. There
is a movie shoot going on.. extras in costume eating
Craft bagels, folks sipping coffee.

A near lifesize portion of the Acropolis, Athena columns

in Styrofoam being moved by 2 crew.

A tall bearded Zeus, golden haired, white toga, golden sandled, chomping on a bagel while walking about, stops mid chew, looks down.. has stepped in dog turd. Grimaces and starts scraping it off on the curb, cursing, looking around self consciously.

The light changes and WONDER WOMAN'S car pulls away.

STATIONARY shot follows car as it moves off down the road Passes a guy in sandwich board ad for 'San Bernardino Lumber', various hammers, wood and tools pics on display. Guy is dancing, moving twirling a fat arrow sign that says 'SALE - BOSCH TOOLS!'.

FADE TO :

Overhead drone POV following small car as it climbs slowly into the Palisades... big houses, porsches, swimming pools, movie stars.

INT. CAR (CONT'D)

FORWARD SHOT FROM REAR SEAT - THE ROAD

ANNIE/WONDER WOMAN navigating, turning wide bends...

All of a sudden a ROLLS ROYCE appears a high speed coming the other direction, heading straight for them, reckless, out of control. It screeches it's brakes, slows, gets out of the way just in time... passes them on the left.

AQUAMAN

Jeeesus... what the ..!

The guys are startled, ANNIE punches her brakes in response, corrects, slows. They all look left as the car passes. Occupants look left toward them, man driving, woman in passenger seat, 8 year old child in lap... all wide eyed in terror. The car passes then punches it and squeals away, continues his reckless speed and maneuvering.

WONDER WOMAN brandishes her middle finger.

WONDER WOMAN

La puta madre! Jesu Cristo!

She gathers herself, puts the car into gear and moves

ahead, little engine sputters once then into a steady rhythm.

EXT. BURNED OUT SECTION OF PALISADES

OVERHEAD SHOT follows the little car as it leaves an unscathed area and enters a stretch of entirely burned out houses and petrified trees. Car slows visibly but keeps moving.

INT. CAR

WONDER WOMAN, SUPERMAN AND AQUAMAN in profile shot stare out the windows in silence as the utter destruction rolls past their windows. They each eye different elements, turn their heads, scan the opposite side.

They don't say a word.

EXT. OVERHEAD SHOT (CONT'D)

CAR still moving slowly, reverently through the scene of destruction. A raven appears in the foreground, larger, much closer.. glides through shot, over the car, almost obscuring it, in silence.

CUT TO:

CLOSE UP - SUPERMAN through rear passenger window. Reflection of raven as it flies past, petrified landscape in background, and SUPERMAN leans forward, looks up through window, head following it with serious expression.

RETURN to OVERHEAD

We see the car finally exit the burned out area and start to move through an undamaged area...speed picks up a bit .

The car reaches it's destination and pulls into the massive driveway and rolls into the large, gated property and parks in one of the many service or delivery spots.

EXT. PALISADES HOME DRIVEWAY - DAY

Our gang piles out of the car.

SUPERMAN is preening his cowlick, AQUAMAN sniffs his pits and WONDER WOMAN is doing a last check in a compact mirror. She immediately notices the wide brim sunglasses she is wearing and rips them off, stuffs them in her bag. They assemble at the rear of the car, do a circle check and then walk 3 abreast in stalwart fashion up the driveway, in character. SUPERMAN briefly favors his left leg/knee.. massages it as he walks,takes a moment, gets

back into posture in a few seconds.

AS THEY pull up closer to the rear servants entrance, things are clearly amiss. Kids are being packed up and parent's are scrambling to leave in a hurry, rushing out the back door.

Our 3 heroes stop dead.

A steady stream of distressed parents walking quickly, carrying or leading very well dressed kids out of the house filters by them unevenly. We hear car doors opening, slamming shut and a series of cars starting and revving up, getting into motion.

They look at each other...puzzlement.

WONDER WOMAN

Wow...something's up. Some kid drop a turd in the pool?

(She can't resist, side eyes AQUAMAN and smiles)

Looks like a job for Aquaman.

AQUAMAN looks about, eyes different elements.. A professional assessment.

AQUAMAN

(gruff)

I dunno, guys. Looks more serious than kid poop.

SUPERMAN

Agreed. They look scared *shitless*.. keeping a tight grip on their kids. Reminds me of right after a Hellfire hit in a village.. same vibe.

(beat)

Something very bad happened here.

WONDER WOMAN breaks off from her scan of the situation, turns and addresses the guys.

WONDER WOMAN

(puzzlement)

Uhh..nobody's on the phone. I've never seen that in L.A. Literally *nobody*. Not much could put an Angelino off their phone.

AQUAMAN

Might still be in progress,
whatever it is..stay frosty. Look
about people... a car out of
place.. shitbox driven by
gangbangers.

SUPERMAN

Just Porsches, Mercedes and Teslas,
dude. Usual mix.

WONDER WOMAN

Anyone carrying?

AQUAMAN holds up his plastic trident.

AQUAMAN

(sarc)

Just my trident... hard plastic.

SUPERMAN

Just my wit and charm.

WONDER WOMAN

Can't just stand here. There are
children in there.

AQUAMAN

Let the cops handle it. We'll do
recon. Observe and report.

WONDER WOMAN starts checking her large handbag. Lots of
digging about, loads of junk in there.

WONDER WOMAN

That could take 15 minutes.
Somebody could have a gun to their
heads.

(takes a break from
digging about.. Looks up
and around again.)

And why is no one calling the cops?

SUPERMAN

Yeah. Rich people love cops. Only
one thing scares rich people away
from cops.

(beat)

Dirty money. Mob... organized
crime. You read about this shit
happening up here all the time.

We hear a huge, glass breaking sound come from inside the
house. All three pivot their looks at the noise in
unison.

AQUAMAN

Damn it all.

(he stuff his trident under his arm, pulls his iPhone from the back of his tights)

AQUAMAN

I'm calling the police.

A maid comes running out screaming towards him.

MAID

NO POLICE! NO POLICE!CARTEL!
CARTEL!

She grabs AQUAMAN'S hand to stop him from dialing, takes a breath and then looks around at these 3 ridiculous figures standing before her.

MAID

Who the fuck are you guys?

AQUAMAN

(blank look to Annie, then Clark, back to maid)

We're superheroes, ma'am.

MAID

(scrutinizing eyes)
Are you fucking joking right now?

AQUAMAN

I know. The irony.

WONDER WOMAN

(diffusing AQUAMAN's cynicism)
We were hired for the party. We're actors.

(she switches to Spanish to help things along, glares at AQUAMAN)

Por favor, discúlpelo... es británico. Un humor *diferente*. Por favor, continúe ('Please excuse him.. he's British.. different humour. Please continue.')

MAID

Of course.
(beat)
Just go home and don't talk to anyone about this. Ever. Not unless

you want the same to happen to you.

SUPERMAN breaks off from looking at the house and turns to the maid.

SUPERMAN

What did happen here?

MAID

Go home. They took the boy right in the middle of his communion party! This is El Diablo! You can't help. Just leave. I'm outta here..giving notice. ADIOS!

MAID simply takes off in full uniform... no belongings, just gleaming white orthopedic shoes at a full run down the driveway. Our 3 heroes look on as shot pans back.

SUPERMAN'S cape catches a breeze and wafts dramatically in the silence.

WONDER WOMAN

Cartel... La orginazacion..?

(shakes her head)

Maid got it wrong.. this is beyond Cartel. Cartel probably wouldn't desecrate a communion. Gotta be a new crew, striking out, breaking the rules. Mia madre.

(beat)

Either they are stupid fucks using Cartel window dressing .. or Satan himself.

AQUAMAN

Cartel?

(beat)

I vote we leave. Now.

SUPERMAN

John's right. That's the smart move. Not much we can do here. Could just make things worse.

WONDER WOMAN just stares at the house, thinking, sharp facial tone. She doesn't hear anything the guys are saying.

(3 beats)

AQUAMAN

Oh, damn. She's got that look, Clark.

CLARK looks over at WONDER WOMAN/ANNIE.. massages his temple.

SUPERMAN

Yup. Strap in, dude. We aren't going anywhere.

WONDER WOMAN gets back to digging in her handbag frantically. She finds something..starts carefully extracting it through the brick-a-brack.

WONDER WOMAN

Well... (continuing careful extraction)...I've got something... for L.A. dates...(more jostling).. that go very bad.

She finally pulls out a shiny Beretta from her big handbag with some ceremony, satisfaction and checks the site.. cocks it.

WONDER WOMAN

Follow me.

She starts walking toward the entrance. The guys hang back... deciding.

AQUAMAN

(brandishes his trident)

Umm...great...I'll uh... cover you.

(he follows)

SUPERMAN.. Eye roll.. Head shake.

SUPERMAN

Oh jeez... here we go.

SUPERMAN winds up the rear and they check the door, look about, take positions, nod to each other then enter.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

(BALLOONS, PARTY FAVORITES, CAKE AND CHIPS, ETC. BUT UTTERLY ABANDONED.)

A man is being attended to by his terrified wife... he's been worked over. She is still working on restraints that tied him to a dining room chair. There are various torture implements.. tasers, balpeen hammer, a syringe

and a vial in plain view.

WONDER WOMAN clocks the gear from across the room.

WONDER WOMAN

Restraints... syringes..taser..
these are ex-cartel guys.

AQUAMAN

Christ on a bike... these guys do
not fuck around.

SUPERMAN

I dunno guys. This is getting
messed up.

WONDER WOMAN assumes professional posture, aims gun up
and holds it close.

WONDER WOMAN

Spread out... recon. I'll check
with the parents.

AQUAMAN

Well if cops aren't coming, we're
bloody all there is. Just observe
and report. Agreed?

SUPERMAN

Quickly. Don't wanna hang around
here too long in case they come
back for 2nd crack.

(3 beats)

WONDER WOMAN staring off, a revelation.

WONDER WOMAN

Very weird. *Something* is going on
here folks.

(2 beats)

Three *trained* military people show
up at the *exact* moment of a
kidnapping? Dressed as super
heroes?

(2 beats, then more
profound look and
posture)

This...this is fate ..Mano de
Dios.. an intercession. My people
are big on this stuff.

(2 beats, then stares

off, softer tone)

"El destino ama a los valientes".

AQUAMAN

English?

WONDER WOMAN

(looks back to them,
shoulders back, postured,
pistol up)

"Fate loves the fearless"

SUPERMAN

Uh oh...

AQUAMAN

(exhales loud, uphill
against Annie's stance)

Now calm down, mama bear... keep
your hair on. I think the suit's
gone to your bloody head. Sometimes
fate is a BAD thing, Annie.

(he eyes his trident
again.. eye roll.)

You forget.. most bloody stories
about fate are tragedies.

ANNIE tilts her head back in a posture of resistance to
AQUAMAN's argument. AQUAMAN clocks this.. stops..gives a
slight side eye back, waits, hoping it will sink in.

(3 beats)

AT THAT MOMENT, a breeze blows in from the open sliding
door. A white butterfly wafts in gracefully, chaotically
flapping about. AQUAMAN raises his finger to make another
point, stops dead as the butterfly approaches and lands on
his shoulder.

AQUAMAN's expression changes.. he looks down at his
shoulder. His face concedes, blank WTF look. Deadpan,
looks back at ANNIE. Her face says "You were saying?"

They all stare at it. It flies off momentarily. SUPERMAN
eyes the butterfly flapping off.. looks agnostic,
affected.

(5 beats, silence, nervous eyes back and forth)

JOHN pivots to CLARK , eyebrows raised, a 'give me some
help here, buddy' look. CLARK declines.

SUPERMAN

Don't look at me, pal. My people
are East Texas.. we're big on this
stuff too. Uhh.. But, ya know...
uuhh... what's the harm in getting
some intel... right?

WONDER WOMAN's eyes follow the butterfly in flight until
it leaves through the back door.. Turns back to the
guys.. Eyebrows raised, encouraged.

WONDER WOMAN

Meet back here in 5 min.

WONDER WOMAN heads toward the shocked parents. AQUAMAN
looks toward the backyard, sees the balloons and a rented
pony standing nonchalantly by the pool, chewing on the
manicured lawn.. everything abandoned. He unconsciously
brandishes his plastic trident like a weapon again, looks
at it disappointingly. Eye roll.

SUPERMAN

I'll check the kitchen. Might be
some witnesses. Can get some
details, descriptions, car or even
a plate.

SUPERMAN pivots 180 and starts toward the kitchen leaving
AQUAMAN on his own. He chirps after them.

AQUAMAN

(sarc)
So.. guess I'll uh.. just take the
pool then, shall I? ...guys?
(Long look after them .. shrug..
then sarcasm)
You lot are *hilarious*.

AQUAMAN waits.. no answer.. heads toward the pool O.S.

WONDER WOMAN walks up to the couple. The wife is having
trouble with the restraints. WONDERWOMAN pulls out a
military knife from her bag and slices them instantly
freeing the man. She takes a look at the interrogation
implements.. picks them up and examines each, then puts
them in her bag.

INT. LARGE PALISADES KITCHEN

SUPERMAN enters the kitchen... totally empty. He sees a
cracked open bottle of Bushmills Black Label and takes a
haul to steady himself. Starts looking around the room..
spots something on the message board written in black

Sharpie. It reads "Air Tag Code: ID- 78894, PSSWD - Kitten.

There's a Sharpie stuck to the board, he grabs it and writes the info on his hand. He looks around and sees a small LED TV on the table.. the servants TV. It is playing "Annie Hall" in dubbed Spanish.. he looks and sees Woody Allen pull out Marshall McLuhan from off camera, who then criticizes the other guy in the movie line up and Woody gives his line in Spanish "If only real life were like this." ..with English subtitles.

Blank stare from SUPERMAN.

His eyes say "wow.. weird".

He looks around a bit and walks out, nothing more there.

EXT. POOL SIDE - DAY - SUNNY

Large, flowing garden with fountains, trimmed hedges, outbuilding, pool and cabana.

There is an ice sculpture of the Mexican/Aztec national symbol of an eagle devouring a snake..melting considerable in the hot sun and starting to deform at the end of a long table full of food.

AQUAMAN steps into the scene from off camera.. not much to see, nothing obvious. He moves toward the outbuilding. He looks down at his feet.

There's a odd looking rifle with a shoulder strap just laying there in the grass. He picks it up. He checks the cartridge... full.

AQUAMAN

(spithballing, sleuthing)
Whoa... Benelli bean bag launcher.
Looks like they wanted someone
alive. Auto loader.

(2 beats)

Kid was probably a handful..
dropped it when he started to kick
and scream.

(beat, scans the wider area)

Escaped out the back and into the
canyon.. avoid witnesses or
neighborhood video surveillance.
Pacific Coast Highway is right at

the bottom of this hill. Car
waiting. Smart.

He shoulders the weapon and continues. He turns around and looks back at the house. There is a life sized, inflatable of Aquaman on his seahorse with flashing LED lights he didn't see walking out. He stops dead, stares at it, mouth open.

He shifts internally, some realization, gravity in his face.

INT. MAINTENANCE BUILDING - DARK

The door cracks and light spills in. AQUAMAN sticks his head in professionally for a look before committing. Seems OK... he cracks the door some more and steps in, flicks on the light.

AQUAMAN does preliminary look about then his eye catches something.. Looks left.

There's a pile of Aquaman themed pool toys and inflatables, Aquaman mask and flippers, Aquaman stuff everywhere. He pauses, lifts a few of the items.

He find's a child's AQUAMAN mask, well worn and holds it up, turns it about, looks at it somberly.

AQUAMAN

Huh.

Has a pause. Sits with it.

(5 beats)

There is also an array of gardening and pool stuff, rakes, fertilizer bags. He quickly notices a rack of hand radios charging on a shelf that staff use to communicate. He grabs 3 of the 4 on charge, shuts off the light and walks out.

INT. LIVING ROOM

SUPERMAN steps back in from the kitchen. WONDER WOMAN is getting nowhere with the parents.. frustrated. They are refusing to answer anything, shaking their heads forcefully against any questions and gesturing strongly for her to leave. She looks over at SUPERMAN.. he signals he has something, thumbs up. She gestures to the couple and throws up her arms in defeat, heads over to SUPERMAN.

They meet in the middle of the room, he silently shows her the code and password on his hand.. she lights up and they move to exit the room. There is a huge, custom printed portrait shot of the communion boy underneath a banner at the end of the room. ANNIE produces her cell, steps once towards it and takes a flash shot, puts her phone away. Continues outside.

EXT. DRIVEWAY

SUPERMAN AND WONDER WOMAN exit the door onto the driveway to find AQUAMAN waiting with the radios in his hand and his trident leaning against the garage. They scrum.

AQUAMAN

I found these.. could come in handy. (holds up the little radios)

SUPERMAN

(walks up holding the face of his hand to AQUAMAN.)

Got an Air Tag code and password.. probably the kid's. We can track him.

WONDER WOMAN

Nada from the parents. Told me to leave the property and not to call the cops if we valued our own lives and those of everyone we know.

(deep breath)

I believed her.

(beat)

Got one thing out of them.. only 3 guys were here... that's it.

AQUAMAN

(skeptical, lower voice register, gravelly)

I dunno. That changes things...evens it up.. I guess.

AQUAMAN looks through the house and massive windows at the pool area.

CUT TO:

AQUAMAN POV

He sees the back of the AQUAMAN inflatable as the pony barges through, knocks it over on it's side still flashing, starts to dig into the cake on the table. The ice sculpture is losing it's shape, deforming more. One of it's massive wings finally gives way and it lands with

a thud. The glassware resonates, clinks in response.

EXT. DRIVEWAY (CONT'D)

AQUAMAN turns back to ANNIE and CLARK.

AQUAMAN

But I am still kinda worried about
all the bloody irony.

WONDER WOMAN

(making her case)

We've got the location now. These
guys are goons.. clowns...low on
the pecking order.

SUPERMAN

I dunno, guys. A small caliber
pistol and a dollar store trident
against the cartel?

AQUAMAN

(coming around, listing
assets, less skeptical
tone)

And 3 radios. First rule of
engagement? The thing that
guarantees defeat?

WONDER WOMAN AND SUPERMAN (SIMUL)

Don't reveal your position.

AQUAMAN starts pacing slowly, making begrudged points.

AQUAMAN

Exactly. And now.. we have theirs.
What else..so...our assets so far..

(beat)

Tag will lead us right there.
Radios provide concealment and
coordination. They won't be
expecting us..technically that
gives us the initiative.

SUPERMAN

You've changed your tune. You
tryin' to say you can effect a
kill... with your Trident.. if we
get you close enough?

AQUAMAN pulls the beanbag launcher forward into view from
hanging around his back.

AQUAMAN

(deadpan, Snake Plissken)
No... I snagged this too. They
dropped it. Amateurs.. probably
high as kites.

SUPERMAN
(face screws up..
questioning)
What the hell is that?

AQUAMAN
(he holds up rifle,
demonstrating)
That, my American friend, is the
Benelli M4. Crowd control weapon..
fires bean bags. They didn't want
too much noise..911 call from a
neighbor would stop them in their
tracks. It only incapacitates...
hurts like the dickens... but your
victim can still give you
information when they come to.

SUPERMAN
Looks close range. 50 ft max.

AQUAMAN resumes his pacing. Eyes on them.. sharper focus.
Voice low and steady.

AQUAMAN
Now...not suggesting we do a bloody
frontal assault here.. but we
haven't even observed the enemy
yet. Can't make a determination
..if we're really going by the
field manual.

SUPERMAN
(mock puzzlement)
What's up, fish man? One minute
you're mister irony, now you wanna
lead Seal Team Six behind enemy
lines.

AQUAMAN stops his back and forth.. long stare at
SUPERMAN.. then a nod.. exhale then a gruff concession.

AQUAMAN
I dunno.. the kid asked for me
special right? I can at least give
him due diligence.

WONDER WOMAN spins her head, stares furtively at AQUAMAN.

WONDER WOMAN

Well.. with this pistol in my hand,
being surrounded by men in tights
and John's sudden unselfish
bravery, I think I'm a little
turned on here folks.

AQUAMAN fishes his iPhone from his tights in the rear and
looks at SUPERMAN.

AQUAMAN

Crikee... I'm gonna regret this.
What's the code and password. Let's
at least see if we even know where
the child is before we decide to
charge in guns blazing. Mission
might end right here, folks.

SUPERMAN holds the flat of his hand up to his face and
AQUAMAN types in code and password, stares at his phone,
waits for process.

(3 beats)

AQUAMAN' eyebrows lift, looks up slowly, success.

AQUAMAN

Oh my giddy aunt.. Got him! Moving
north up the PCH and out of the
city most likely.

WONDER WOMAN

(subtle swoon)

My, that's very "take charge". To
the car. I'll drive.

(To AQUAMAN as they start moving.)

Are you seeing anyone right now?

The crew turn and head toward the car off screen. AQUAMAN
is behind SUPERMAN looking at his phone, locked on the
location of the kid and accidentally steps on SUPERMAN's
cape, pulling his head back and knocking him off stride.
He turns at AQUAMAN who has stopped, looking impish.

SUPERMAN

Dude(!) Seriously?

AQUAMAN

Sorry, mate..

SUPERMAN readjusts his cape, they continue towards the

car.

CAMERA holds on scene as the guys exit the shot. The white butterfly flies through quickly, less chaotically, as if struggling to follow.

INT. COMPACT CAR

(HEADING DOWN THE A STEEP ROAD OUT OF THE PALISADES AND ONTO THE PCH.)

Each are warming up their old skills, terms.. years out of service and all pushing or past 50 years of age. ANNIE is out front and the fellows are still lagging, have the caution that comes with that age.. source of frustration for ANNIE.

WONDER WOMAN starts shifting gears hard to accelerate.

WONDER WOMAN

What's their 20. They still on the highway?

AQUAMAN

Yup.. they're goin' like the hammers. Faster, Annie. They drop out of service in these canyons, that's us done.

SUPERMAN leans in up between the front seats. Engine now whines a little higher against an incline.

SUPERMAN

So what's the plan.

AQUAMAN

(reviewing objectively,
residual skepticism)

Plan? Wouldn't break out the bunting just yet . Still a big guess. Few known unknowns. Mostly unknown unknowns.

SUPERMAN

(worried tone)

You're quoting Rumsfeld.. *that's* encouraging.

(beat)

And suppose they have a whole freakin' elite crew - used to work for *El Chapo* ...found new jobs with this gang. *They'd* be a problem.. no amateurs there.

AQUAMAN

Settle down.. let's not jump to conclusions, Clark.

SUPERMAN

(miffed)

There it is again.. that dig with my name in that superior Brit tone.

AQUAMAN

Jesus man. I didn't say it any differently that time. You keep this up and I'm just going to start calling you Fred from now on. Saints preserve us.

WONDER WOMAN

(bridles)

It's a *little boy, people!* What's all this goddamn bullshit! We ARE going!

(beat.. then sotto)

Dónde están tus pinches cojones?

(translation:'Where are your damn balls?')

SUPERMAN seems to catch the 'cojones' part of the insult, pivots to ANNIE/WONDER WOMAN with a hurt, indignant face.

AQUAMAN

Fair point, though.. *Mr. Czikowski.* We do need to know what's our 'abort'..what's the deal breaker? What's our "Go- No Go"?

(beat)

Lieutenant? Umm...You're ranking here.

Little engine continues to struggle and whine in high revs in the background.

AQUAMAN looks back at SUPERMAN , then JOHN. Both are stumped. ANNIE's face says "fuck this". She is in a silent fume.. wide eyed. She slams the dash.

Boiling anger bursts out in a lengthy, hispanic fireball rant.. perfect diction... we can make out personal insults to the guys when she points.

JOHN/AQUAMAN recognizes one of the insults, eyebrows go up. He mounts a weak defense while the rant continues in the background.

AQUAMAN

Hey.. I know that word..now *that's* uncalled for.

She pauses briefly, blows it off .. continues for quite a bit.. continues to slam her hand on the steering wheel with each exclamation throughout.

It ends.. she catches her breath. More calm.

WONDER WOMAN

Are you kidding?! The fucking DEALBREAKER is they kidnapped a child!

WONDER WOMAN drops the clutch, engine revs up and she punches in the next gear. The guys are thrown back a bit, recover.

The guys are visibly chastened. AQUAMAN awkwardly pivots back to the planning mode to change the subject..one eye on ANNIE, wary of the next outburst. He screws up his eyes and pulls the phone closer, trying to focus between car jumping about and gear changes.

AQUAMAN

They're turning... side road.. about 6 miles up. Private road... runs along a reservoir.

SUPERMAN

Reservoir (?) Shit. I fly over this place all the time. That's a private camp for kids... in a canyon, high hills all around.

(he pulls cellphone in AQUAMAN's hand over to look down at it)

Ya.. that's it. Good cover. Buildings, trees.

(lets AQUAMAN have his hand back)

Camp is closed for the season. Ritzy... horseback riding, boating, bonsai gardening classes, tennis..

the works.

SUPERMAN and AQUAMAN brace themselves as WONDER WOMAN makes a snap lane change. She is passing cars at a good clip.

SUPERMAN

(recovers from turn,
leans back in)

It would be a tough assault, not impossible. Some open ground to cover.

AQUAMAN

Back to basics. It's a beachhead essentially. Think people..it's Normandy. What's the classic attack pattern.

WONDER WOMAN

(revelation, remembering
- 2 beats)

Land, sea and air. We got no air, sea.

AQUAMAN

(lightbulb moment)

They must have boats right? We just boost one and scupper in when it's dark. *That's* our 3rd flank.

WONDER WOMAN

Flank.. that's good.

(beat)

I've got thirteen rounds. Beretta is as loud as a cherry bomb. Would give our position away immediately.

Car continues to scream along as they collectively mull this some more.. they again look stumped, thinking hard.

(5 beats)

SUPERMAN

(exclamation face)

I have an idea. Sounds wild but hear me out. Give me the bean bag gun. I can grab a hang glider.. elevation is right..my club looks over this whole area. Silent approach.

(he grabs one of the radios)

I can pick off sentries at will
without raising the alarm.

(he points specifically
at a spot on the phone
map)

Opens a corridor in by land. That
would be you, Annie.

SUPERMAN clicks on his radio.. low beep and little green
light comes on.

WONDER WOMAN

You're *wide open* up there, Clark.
Easy target. I dunno...

SUPERMAN

Got a better idea? Clocks ticking.

(3 beats)

WONDER WOMAN

Sold.

WONDER WOMAN grabs one of the radios.. thumbs the on
switch, low beep and little green light comes on. AQUAMAN
grabs the final radio and turns it on.

SUPERMAN

Drop me off ... club's about a mile
away. I'll call you by radio when
I'm in position.

AQUAMAN

Guess I'm water again. Any more
intel?

SUPERMAN

Place has these little kiddie
boats.. probably electric.. quiet
as hell... they won't hear a thing.
There's your 3rd flank. Done.

AQUAMAN

Fiddlesticks. That will have to do.

They sit in silence.. take it all in as the car whines
along, little bumps here and there along the highway.
The circumstances are insane. It slowly registers on
their faces.

The little engine sputters, loses power momentarily but
gets back up to high revs.

WONDER WOMAN
Come on baby.. not now.

(3 beats)

WONDER WOMAN breaks the silence, steps up.

WONDER WOMAN
Alright... we have a plan. Where's
the drop off?

SUPERMAN
We're close. Radio check. Channel
3. Squawking now.

All three hold up radios. SUPERMAN clicks the mic button on his radio a couple of times.. quiet beeps respond on the other two.

WONDER WOMAN
Radio check completed. Ammo?

AQUAMAN lifts GUN strap and slides the Benelli off of his shoulder, presents it to SUPERMAN.

AQUAMAN
Check. 5 bags left, mate. Make them
count.

Car hits bump and makes a big noise. Our crew goes silent again at the interruption. More deep thought about the insane thing they are about to do. Blank stares looking ahead.

Engine continues whining like a lawnmower at max in the background.

WONDER WOMAN
(dryly)
A tactical assault against the
cartel in superhero costumes... not
the first thing on my mind while I
was choking down my Metamucil this
morning.

SUPERMAN brings up his arm up between the seats and points.

SUPERMAN
K.. this is me here.. slow down.

EXT. SIDE OF PCH - PROPERTY WITH A WIRE GATE - DUSK

A hand painted sign with an airfield name, swinging in a light breeze.. 'Hollywood Hang Gliding Club'

Small car pulls into shot and SUPERMAN gets out. A moment of grave reflection.. leans down and looks into the car.

SUPERMAN

I guess we are doing this. No more discussion necessary.

(5 beats.. big silence hangs)

Good luck, guys. Don't die.

AQUAMAN

(sincere, a friend)

Ditto.. now get out of here.
Clock's ticking and there's some poor kid with a gun to his head.

SUPERMAN fetches himself up, assumes professional posture, closes the car door, turns around and starts a military canter, climbs the closed gate and then onto the property, continues military trot, holding the Benelli against his side in a professional manner. He does a quick run on his sore leg, massages it mid-stride, carries on.

Sun is fading fast, long shadows everywhere.

INT. CAR (CONT'D)

They are looking off at Clark moving away. Radio squawks.

SUPERMAN(V.O. RADIO)

Radio voice check. Golden Lasso.. come in.

WONDERWOMAN puts her radio up to her mouth, squawks in.

WONDER WOMAN

Copy Man of Steel.. 5 by 5. Lasso out.

WONDER WOMAN turns to AQUAMAN in the next seat. AQUAMAN is zooming in on his phone map.

WONDER WOMAN

Show me the aerial of the camp.

AQUAMAN

(still gruff but professional)

Well..bit of a hike around the property to get to the

boathouses..there's a service road
to the launch. Camp gate is a
couple of klicks further. Park half
a klick away.. we'll continue on
foot.

WONDER WOMAN leans in, hovers over the phone.. focusing.
It's an aerial photo view.

WONDER WOMAN

There's a dock off the main
building.. I'd put a guard there.
And at the security guard booth at
the entrance to the main building .
Leaves one guy in the building
guarding the kid. Let's move.

EXT. CAR (ON SIDE OF PCH)

Little car is a stick, she gives the gas and punches the
clutch and it kicks up the soft shoulder in a flurry of
dust.

EXT. HANG GLIDING CLUB - NIGHT

Open air hangar and storage. Not a soul about. There are
some gliders tied down. SUPERMAN enters the shot, looks
down the line of hang gliders.

A raven flies through cawing and lands on the 3rd or 4th
one down... caws some more.

SUPERMAN clocks the bird, a curious familiarity, goes to
the hang glider to find it perched perfectly on the
leading edge.

SUPERMAN

Well.. A raven.. grunt's best
friend. Best watchdogs in
Afghanistan.

(2 beats)

What's up, buddy? You tryin' to
tell me somethin'?

It caws once, loudly, then takes flight. Glider is jet
black. He checks out the glider, smiles, squawks the
radio.

SUPERMAN

Come in LASSO.

AQUAMAN (RADIO)

Copy.. this is POSEIDON. LASSO
driving. Over.

SUPERMAN puts his hand confidently on the front framing.

SUPERMAN

We have a bird... repeat.. bird
acquired. Over.

AQUAMAN (RADIO V.O.)

(stern military order)

Copy. Wait for instructions and
line of approach. Over.

SUPERMAN

Copy.. uh.. POSEIDON. Seriously?
That's a bit of an upgrade there,
fella. Over.

AQUAMAN (RADIO V.O.)

Just give me this.. OK?

SUPERMAN

Whatever.. POSEIDON. Over and out.

EXT. PACIFIC COAST HIGHWAY - NIGHT

WONDER WOMAN'S car pulls into shot and off the road using
the trees as cover. They exit the car. AQUAMAN is still
carrying his trident purposefully. WONDER WOMAN eyes the
trident and she stops dead.

WONDER WOMAN

Jesus. Leave that here.

AQUAMAN

(shoulders drop)

I dunno.. I feel utterly naked
without it.. I need something in my
hands.

WONDER WOMAN reaches into her bag, digs a bit, produces
her military knife, hands it over.

WONDER WOMAN

Stealth. The night is your friend.
Silent but deadly. Toss the toy.

AQUAMAN sighs, shrugs and throws the toy trident in the
scrub. Takes the knife and sheathes it in side of his
pants. He pulls up his phone.

AQUAMAN

Main camp road is that way.. about
400 yards. Service road to the
boathouses is the other way..

couple of hundred yards.

WONDER WOMAN

Alright, John.. I guess this is it.
(3 beats, her eyes moist)
See you on the other side. Semper
Fi... or whatever you Brits say.

AQUAMAN

Thanks, Annie. (winks) Hoooah.

They hug long, may be their last.. and turn in opposite directions, start trotting to their appointed positions.

EXT. GLIDING CLUB HANGAR - NIGHT (CONT'D)

He approaches the Jet black glider and steps into the harness area... lifts it up, checks the weight with a few bounces, balances it and then carries it skillfully out of shot.

EXT. HIGHWAY ALONG THE CAMP PROPERTY - NIGHT

It is almost entirely dark now. AQUAMAN trotting along side the highway... he spots the service road for the marina and turns off... stops. He pulls out his cell to double check, rotates slightly to get true north and his bearings.. confirms the road, slips cell back into his tights and continues in a military jog down the road.

EXT. CAMP GATE - NIGHT

WONDER WOMAN.. skipping more than jogging in her heeled, authentic WW boots. She grimaces and wobbles at the effort occasionally. She arrives at the camp gate. Takes up position behind some scrub. The guard booth at the main building is visible and she begins observing. There is one henchman. He's lazily hanging about in the glare from the booth's exterior lighting , machine gun leaned up against the structure. He's got a bottle in his hand. She pulls up the radio and squawks it.

WONDER WOMAN

This is LASSO. In first position.
Eighty yards out. I can see the
booth. One guy.. taking hauls from
a bottle of scotch. Small calibre
machine gun. Over.

AQUAMAN(V.O. RADIO)

Copy LASSO. Entering the marina..
no guards. Can see transport. Will
acquire. POSEIDON out.

EXT. HANG GLIDING CLUB - NIGHT

SUPERMAN WALKS INTO SHOT CARRYING BLACK HANG GLIDER. He gently sets it down and steps out, looking down at his take off point... fifty yards of ground followed by a cliff drop off.. He is quite a ways up, can see the whole canyon.

WE HEAR a distant eagle's cry echoing through the canyon. SUPERMAN pauses, looks up toward the sound, then back down at the target below.

WE HEAR a single, long note from an Aztec clay flute.. stops in a discordant harmonic 5th 2 octaves up.

He squawks his radio.

SUPERMAN

MAN OF STEEL. In first position. I can see target clearly. I only have one pass. No updrafts at night, so make it good, folks. Over.

SUPERMAN swings his shouldered gun forward on the strap, grips it for feel, cocks and checks the chamber. All good. He swings it back under his cape and out of view.

EXT. CAMP GATE - NIGHT (CONT'D)

WONDER WOMAN pulls up her radio.

WONDER WOMAN

LASSO here. The lights are on in a couple of rooms, ground floor. Goon posted at the booth is your first target, Clark.

EXT. HANG GLIDING CLUB - NIGHT (CONT'D)

SUPERMAN

Acknowledged. ETA is 3 to 4 minutes. Just need a GO from your end. Over.

WONDER WOMAN(V.O. RADIO)

Godspeed, friend.

SUPERMAN tucks the radio in his belt, steps over to the glider and shoulders it skillfully. He rips up a clump of grass and tosses it to check for wind speed and direction. He puts himself into a ready posture, waits for signal.

EXT. MARINA - NIGHT

AQUAMAN is moving stealthily along the darkened dock. There are a half dozen or so kiddie boats tied up, a charging station on the dock. He tries the boathouse door and it opens.. he steps in.

INT. BOATHOUSE - NIGHT

Moonlight streaming in through a few windows.

AQUAMAN steps in, doing recon for something useful, picks this and that up from shelves.. a bat or something, anything. He moves in further.. finds scuba gear, flippers, etc. He puts on his cell flashlight and scans around, then up. His eyes widen.

On the wall is hanging a gleaming, steel fishing trident loaded into a spear gun. He smiles. He grabs it and heads to the dock.

EXT. DOCKSIDE - NIGHT

He moves along, carrying the steel trident like a weapon, and hops quietly into each KIDDIE BOAT, checking the battery charge.

First boat... a fiberglass My Little Pony. Indicator shows red, flashing ... dead.

Next boat... a classic swan.. same... dead.

He steps into 3rd boat..Eureka.. 50% charge.. Green light indicated, squawks radio.

AQUAMAN
(pumped)
This is POSEIDON. Transport
acquired... am a GO. Repeat am a
GO. Over.

He clips radio back onto his side, looks up at the front, notices the boat theme and character... and eyebrows go up.

It is a giant seahorse head and bridle.

CUT TO:

Shot of gnarly seahorse face, close up.. looking directly into camera.

(3 beats)

RETURN TO JOHN

JOHN's face is locked in a dead stare. He then seems to

address the skies, the universe, looking around.

AQUAMAN

Christ almighty.. you have GOT to
be kidding me (!).

He puts his wrist up against the seahorse head and leans
his forehead against it in ironic exhaustion, eyes
closed, exhales loudly.

EXT. CAMP GATE - NIGHT (CONT'D)

WONDER WOMAN is still retreated behind cover. She squawks
her radio.

WONDER WOMAN

LASSO here. Alright, Clark.. you're
on. GO! Repeat GO! POSEIDON..
depart in 60 seconds, repeat , 60
seconds. Over.

EXT. HANG GLIDING CLUB - LAUNCH AREA - NIGHT

SUPERMAN pulls out radio and answers.

SUPERMAN

MAN OF STEEL ...acknowledged. Over
and out.

A heavy based chime sounds in the background.. start of
mission.

He stuffs radio back into his belt, sets his legs and
hefts up the glider skillfully. He does a few quick, deep
breaths and starts a run down the hill toward the drop
off, cape starts flowing dramatically. He gets some
speed, gets aloft and lifts his feet behind him.

SHOT follows him from behind as he literally flies away,
diminishing, cape flowing.

EXT. BOATS AT DOCK - NIGHT

AQUAMAN checks his watch, unties the boat and throws
rope in...he grabs the little kiddie steering wheel and
flips a switch. The little boat begins to putter along
silently. He turns and approaches POV from the front.

We see AQUAMAN, trident in hand and upright, gleaming in
moonlight, mist, coming forward with seahorse under
bridle pushing ahead some white water.

CUT TO:

ANOTHER heavy bass chime sounds off.. lingers.

A massive cell tower in the area.. side aerial shot from a hundred yards, way up. We see the plethora of massive broadcast dishes pointed in every direction. The flashing safety lights glow on and off in perfect rhythm. It looks like a post card Notre Dame lit up on a summer night.

Another bass chime, semi note higher. (sounds like a church bell)

SUPERMAN/CLARK flies in a perfect line through the shot next to the tower, looks tiny in comparison. Straight flight then a highly skilled arc and turn then exits the frame.

EXT. CAMP ROAD - NIGHT

(2 beats) then..

CUT TO:

Cell phone aerial map zoomed in. We see the AirTag location pulsing slowly on the building in the map.. seems to match the light pulses of the cell tower. A finger swipes the screen and the picture of the boy portrait in the living room pops up.. she zooms in .. little innocent child with a huge smile.

(SHOT ZOOMS OUT TO INCLUDE WONDER WOMAN HEAD/SHOULDER PROFILE)

She is looking at the boys picture on her cell phone, tucks the phone in her costume in the back, closes her eyes and mouths a prayer silently.

She pulls her Beretta from her bag and cocks it, watches the skies... squints into the distance.. sees a vague form, closing. She checks her watch underneath her golden bracelets, confirms and looks skyward again.

WONDER WOMAN'S POV

Shot imitates her focus shifting, accumulating clarity.

SUPERMAN comes into focus, silhouetted. The jet black glider is nearly invisible.. she can only see the cowlick, the flowing cape and Clark's chiseled military physique in the suit and tights, cape flowing in the classic style. He passes over her momentarily at about 40 feet up and looks impeccable in flight.

EXT. CAMP ROAD - NIGHT

WONDERWOMAN in cover.. eyes skyward. She blinks and

double takes... does a head shake at the extraordinary image in front of her. She adjusts her golden belt and lower garment.

WONDER WOMAN

(sotto))

Jeez.. you guys(!). Well.... that's it for my dry cleaning deposit... that's for sure.

INT. BACKROOM IN THE MAIN BUILDING - LOW LIGHTING

We see the poor kid, apparently locked in a room, bound to a chair by a window, moonlight streaming in. He has been crying, is a lonely, desperate mess. He has a habit of looking out the window onto the lake to see if any help is coming.. he looks again.. nothing. His head sinks. Some silent sobs.

CUT TO:

GRAND SHOT OF HANG GLIDER IN FLIGHT JUST OVER SUPERMAN'S FORM

Cape billowing dramatically, his arms outstretch holding on to the frame in perfect flying form.

The landscape is passing below in a grand, panoramic fashion, moving silently. We pass over WONDER WOMAN'S position, her upward stunned, agape expression appears briefly below as the glider approaches the first guard post.

EXT. MAIN BUILDING FRONT ENTRANCE - NIGHT (CONT'D)

GUARD is sitting on the steps watching Shakira videos on his phone. We hear the shitty speaker music spilling into the night. He takes another swig from the bottle. As he lifts his head up, he catches the barely visible silhouette of CLARK's approach.. his eyes squint... struggles to focus.

GUARD'S POV

The image soon becomes clear... it is literally SUPERMAN in flight almost directly above him, arms stretched out, cape flowing, cowlick, red boots.. he shakes his head, looks at the bottle.

BACK TO SCENE

GUARD is looking up, eyes wide. Shakes his head.. Then shakes it again.

CARTEL GUARD

Jesu Cristo.. what the fuck?

CUT TO:

SUPERMAN IN FLIGHT - PROFILE

SUPERMAN whips around the bean bag launcher on the shoulder strap into his right hand, points and fires one bag.. then another a couple seconds later

EXT. NIGHT - MAIN ENTRANCE

First bag hits the guy in the chest, he drops his gun, doubles over. Second bag glances off his head.. money shot... he lifts his hand briefly to the contact point on his head and slowly keels over. Out. The bottle shatters. Phone falls out of his pocket.. something clicks.. starts up the the Shakira song again.. blares out obliviously into the night.

CUT TO:

SUPERMAN IN GLIDER - PROFILE SHOT.

He lets the gun drop and hang from the strap, pulls out the radio and calmly squawks in.

SUPERMAN

This is MAN OF STEEL... first
position eliminated... condition
GREEN.. CONDITION GREEN. Heading to
POSEIDON for backup. Out.

He returns the radio to his belt, shifts his weight and changes flight path to head to the lake.

EXT. OPEN LAKE - NIGHT - MISTY

We see AQUAMAN in the little boat. In profile, noble posture, trident poised, with whiny little electric motor sound, pushing boat at 5 miles an hour. Small wake noises.

He pulls out his radio for a quick reply.

AQUAMAN

Copy. Heading to the main dock.
POSEIDON is 60 seconds out. Via con
Dios, my friends.

He pockets the radio and then looks upward, quick side to side, checks for SUPERMAN.

EXT. CAMP ROAD - NIGHT

WONDER WOMAN is already underway. She is making a good, professional clip, has her weapon pointed skyward in good training form. She gets to the main door of the building. She looks up to see beautifully polished and restored, massive Texas longhorns over the door defiantly. She checks the fire window.. scans about and opens it, steps in quietly.

EXT. OPEN WATER - NIGHT - MIST

AQUAMAN, trident ready, plowing through water and mist behind the snarly seahorse in bridle.

EXT. DOCK AT MAIN BUILDING

CARTEL Henchman guy is standing guard under a post light on the dock.. also has a flask.. takes a swig, lights a smoke.. settles in for boring watch duty. Pulls out his phone, starts surfing the web.

WE HEAR the subtle water sounds of the little boat pushing ahead, little splashes. The CARTEL GUY looks up, slight head tilt listening. Getting subtly louder.. he pockets his phone, tosses his cigarette... might be something, might be nothing.. still listening. He looks straight out into the lake distantly, eyes focusing.. more wake noise now. The mist is obscuring everything.

POV OF CARTEL GUY

Just mist and a still lake, the water splash sounds increasing.

(5 beats)

Sounds are more pronounced now.

ALL of a sudden we see the figure of AQUAMAN breaking through the mist with the mist billowing out beside him in an heroic flourish.. Gnarly faced seahorse, AQUAMAN perched on one side, leg up, trident aimed straight at him.

EXT. DOCK AT MAIN BUILDING - NIGHT (CONT'D)

CARTEL GUY blinks his eyes... does not believe what he is seeing..

CARTEL GUY
Jesu Cristo.. what the HELL?

He snaps out of it fairly quickly, pulls gun out from his inside pocket, points to fire.

CUT TO:

AQUAMAN IN BOAT

He tightens aim and fires the speargun with a springy clip sound.

CUT TO:

Trident in flight, profiled.. turning slowly.. gleaming.. a divine instrument.

EXT. DOCK AT MAIN BUILDING (CONT'D)

CARTEL GUY still postured for a shot but..

We hear the ting of steel in flight and the trident nails the guy's hand to the post.

He screams.

CARTEL GUY

AAAAAaaaaagh.. MY HAND! You fucking loco GRINGO!

Not over. Guy reaches with his remaining hand into the small of his back, pulls out a small back up pistol and aims again. He looks up in astonishment.

CUT TO:

SUPERMAN AND GLIDER SWOOPING IN TANGENTIALLY IN FRONT OF AQUAMAN.

SUPERMAN one hands a single bag... powder flash flame creates a halo around our two heroes..then a second shot, same flash.

EXT. DOCK AT MAIN BUILDING - NIGHT

First bag incredibly knocks the gun out of the guys hand.. guy recoils in pain. Next bag hits him square in the nose.. head knocks back a bit... guy mouths, grimaces in pain..slowly falls forward cupping his face until he is hanging from his nailed hand on the post in a pathetic posture. Out cold.

EXT. OPEN LAKE - NIGHT

SUPERMAN is in flight in the moonlit night, hovering about 15 feet above and over from AQUAMAN in moving boat.

CUT TO:

SUPERMAN AND GLIDER-PROFILE

He is in a slight bob, controlling the glider... looks left and smiles... money shot with the big teeth, cowlick

and hair, and smiles down at AQUAMAN.

SUPERMAN

Very Poseidon, dude... great shot man. We still gotta move it.. have to find the kid and Annie's on her own.. see you on land.

He gives a very Superman tip off the eyebrow then slow wave, smile, the TV Superman incarnate..leans and steers away out of shot in a grand arc.

CUT TO:

AQUAMAN/JOHN in boat.. holding the spent spear gun up.. gives an equally profound wave. He is visibly emotional.

INT. MAIN BUILDING - BACK ROOM

WE see the boy tied in chair. Room has low lighting

He hears some of the activity outside and leans his head to look out the small window.

CLARK/SUPERMAN flies into view just in front of the window, very low and about to land. Again, it looks like he is flying, cape flowing.. the black hang glider is almost invisible. His expression is rapturous.

BOY

SUPERMAN!!! YOU CAME!! HOLY SMOKE!!
I KNEW IT!!!

INT. MAIN BUILDING - MAINFLOOR ENTRY/RECEPTION

Building is dark inside save for a sliver of light coming out of a room down the hall from reception. Someone in the room is listening to music again on their cell phone ..another Einstein.

ANNIE steps in stealthily and backs up against a wall, gun pointed up professionally. She sees the light from the door and hears music from a shitty cell speaker, looks over. She steps over to the door jam and flattens herself against it. She leans over and takes a peak through the sliver of a gap quickly and then back up straight away.

INT. ROOM IN MAIN BUILDING - LIGHTS ON.

Last GUARD is sitting with his back to the door, smiling at a George Michael video, bopping his head lightly like a doofus, oblivious to his nemesis on the other side of the door.

The door blows open and WONDER WOMAN storms in, cracks the guy on the skull with the butt of the gun.. his eyes cross and he hits the floor, starts moaning.

She whips out the lasso and starts frantically tying him up.. it's so long, she ends up sitting him up in a chair in his injured state and wrapping it around him multiple times (sort of like the comic strip.) After he's tied up she reaches into her bag and pulls out the vial and syringe, sticks the needle in the vial, pulls back on the syringe and fills it up.

CUT TO:

CLOSE UP ON VIAL LABEL "PFIZER- SODIUM PENTATHOL"

INT. ROOM IN MAIN BUILDING (CONT'D)

The CARTEL GUY starts coming to. He looks up at ANNIE.. blinks hard, then down at the golden rope wrapped several times around his body... shakes his head.. looks back up at ANNIE.

CARTEL GUY

WHOA.. what the fuck is going on..
who the fuck are you?! Is this some
kinda joke?

ANNIE backhands him in the jaw with the barrel of pistol.

WONDER WOMAN/ANNIE

No joke, seniore. You're gonna tell
me everything I need to know... got
it? Where's the boy? How many are
coming to get you and when.. is the
place booby trapped?

CARTEL GUY

(blinking, shaking off
the jaw hit, recovers,
heavy Colombian accent)
Lemme get this straight. Some puta
Wonder Woman has tied me up in her
golden lasso.. and I'm supposed to
spill the beans? Now THAT's funny!
I paid a prostitute to wear this
costume and tie me up in Bogota
once..they were WAY better.

WONDER WOMAN/ANNIE

Oh.. you're GONNA talk amigo...
you're gonna sing me an opera.

She brandishes the full needle in front of his face. He grows pale and doesn't look so good now.

CARTEL GUY

No.. no .. please. My life won't be worth shit if they find out... in the name of Santa Maria de Guadalupe...

ANNIE ignores this and jabs his leg with the needle, poignantly pushes the plunger then empties the syringe, extracts it then tosses it out of shot.

She does a few pacing back and forths, the intimidating interrogator, locked on his eyes the entire time.

WONDER WOMAN/ANNIE

Alright. We'll try it out. Say something truthful.

Guy is affected by the shot, head rolls around, eyes glassy..

CARTEL GUY

I am a dead man.

ANNIE

Hmmm... that is true.. this is working. Anything else?

CARTEL GUY

(becoming emotional,
teary)

I am secretly bisexual and sneak out to the clubs in Bogota. The name I use there is Rosie. I have a boyfriend there.. we want to get married in secret.

ANNIE

WHOA.. pump the breaks there, amigo.. a little more than I need. Just need to know three things .. k?

Guy is oblivious, maudlin, dull eyed and keeps gushing.

CARTEL GUY

His name is Desmondo.. he writes poetry and works in the cafe, looks after his elderly mother.

(tears start forming)

He has such a good heart.. (sobs)

ANNIE

Oh jeez... come back to me amigo..
(she snaps her fingers in his face.. he startles)

There.. listen to me. Is anyone
else coming?

CARTEL GUY

(head is still unsteady,
eyes rolling about)

Not for a few hours.. they will
land a plane on the lake and
collect the boy, fly back over the
border..

(he pauses, another gusher builds)
Desmondo, my love.. look at me
now.. I should have gotten out like
you said...

ANNIE

We'll be long gone by then. Uh...
what's your name?

CARTEL GUY

(emotional stupor, some slurring)
Don't laugh.. but it's Elvis.. my
mother ...was a huge fan... a
gangster named ELVIS.. nobody knows
.. oy mia madre.. I use my middle
name.. Francisco.. after the saint.
My poor mother..(sob)

ANNIE

(small titter)

Wow.. you are just one surprise
after another, aren't you,
Francisco. Well... the drug is
definitely working now.

(steps in front, eye
level)

Alright... WHERE'S THE BOY?

FRANCISCO

(has recovered a bit, could still
blow any at time)

Next room over.. he is tied up.. I
tried not to tie him too tight.
(head starts leaning)

She snaps her fingers again.

ANNIE

Stay with me, Francisco.. you can
see Desmondo when this is ALL
over.. OK? Last question. IS .. THE
ROOM... BOOBYTRAPPED?

FRANCISCO

(another gusher
building)
No.. we aren't that smart. We were
low on the organizational ladder.
This has always been a source of
frustration.. no advancement.
That's why we started our own
group.. did this stupid job..
(sob)we needed funding.. we are
holding the boy to get codes to
offshore accounts.. how can I look
at Desmondo.. such a failure..
(sobs)

ANNIE
Is the door locked? Do you have the
key?

FRANCISCO
(he is getting
drowsier... slurred)
The door is locked.. I hid the
key.. I am too drugged to remember
where.. ohh Desmondooooo...
(his head bolts up
suddenly)
.. .Hey!... you said you wanted an
opera.. I had voice training...
(belch).. when I was young..
this... is from "Don Carlo"...the
basso profundo.. King Philip 1st..
(pauses... takes a deep
breath)
Ella giammai m'amòooooooooooo!!!

IT IS PERFECT... AN UTTERLY MAGNIFICENT VOICE.

ANNIE is stunned... WOW. She is dead still, wide eyed at
this man's delivery. The vibrato seems to go on for
ages... then ELVIS conks out, head falls over to one
side.

CUT TO:

AQUAMAN and SUPERMAN have since taken up positions on
either side of the door to the room. They also heard the
magnificent voice.. expressions are equally stunned.

SUPERMAN mouths "HOLY FUCK!" at AQUAMAN.

AQUAMAN has since retrieved his trident. He looks at the
center prong.

There is a single, bloodied complete fingernail stuck on
it.. he gives a slight, very British "ew" look, gingerly

picks it off and throws it aside.

INT. ROOM IN MAIN BUILDING (CONT'D)

ANNIE
(eyes wide, shock)
What the Holy fuck, Elvis!!!?
Jeesus!

She wavers in emotion, cups her hand to her forehead in disbelief. She waits a bit... snaps her finger next to his ears. He is out COLD. ...dead to the world.

ANNIE
Perfect. Looks like I gave you
little too much (checks his pulse).

(she caresses his cheek like
someone's Mom)

Sleep it off, Elvis. When you wake
up, you can see Desmondo on
visiting days. Sweet dreams, amigo.

Just then the door bursts open again.

SUPERMAN jumps in professionally with gun aimed, AQUAMAN
coming in behind. ANNIE raises her hands in surrender.

ANNIE
DON'T SHOOT!! IT'S MEEE!!

SUPERMAN instantly lowers his weapon.

SUPERMAN/CLARK
WOW...You've been busy. Uhh... Did
you just have NPR on in here at
full blast?

ANNIE
I'll tell you later.

AQUAMAN eyes the scene, clocks the rope, vial.

AQUAMAN/JOHN
Nice work. What did you find out?

ANNIE
(rhymes off everything in
a rush)
The kid's in the next room...no
trip wires...nobody else is here..
they're coming in a couple of hours
in a float plane to take the kid
back over the border. Let's move.

They rush out of the room. ELVIS starts snoring.

INT. HALL IN MAIN BUILDING

Our heroes arrive and gather in front of door next room over. WONDER WOMAN tries the door just in case.. The door is locked.

ANNIE

Damn! It's locked... just like
Elvis said.

SUPERMAN/CLARK

(Huh? look)
Elvis told you the door was locked?

(beat)

He's *dead*.

ANNIE

Long story. Kick it in.

SUPERMAN

I just got my cast off...don't look
at me.

AQUAMAN enthusiastically steps up and starts kicking the door.. big hits. It finally gives way.

INT. NEXT ROOM

We see the lad utterly apprehensive, ecstatic about his rescue. Eyes wide, big smile.

The door gives way in a flurry of door jam wood, flying splinters in slo mo. Our heroes enter professionally in a room clearing fashion.. SUPERMAN gun aimed up, WONDER WOMAN straight ahead, followed by AQUAMAN with his trident spear gun framed and centered perfectly in a Superhero portrait fit for a comic cover. A grand, slo motion spectacle, wood flying end over end, etc.

CUT TO:

Boy bound in chair.. dried tears, big smile.

BOY

Aquaman..!!!! YOU CAME!!

AQUAMAN relaxes his entry posture and looks at the kid, smiles.. he may weep.. a true moment.

They converge on the boy and begin loosening his ties..

AQUAMAN is still standing off, collecting himself emotionally.

ANNIE

Are you alright? Did they hurt you?

BOY

I'm OK .. now.. this is SO AWESOME!
I was praying for you guys to come.

ANNIE is now emotional.. lost for words. CLARK steps up like George Reeves.. a 1950s gentleman TV SUPERMAN addressing a young fan.

CLARK

You're a brave boy. What's your name, son?

BOY

Julio. Thanks.

SUPERMAN

Well, Julio, we arrived right after they grabbed you. We followed the trail here. You're AirTag... that saved you.

JULIO

I know.. I swallowed it soon as I saw the guy hit my dad with his gun. They checked me...but they never found it.

INT. JULIO'S HOUSE - STAIR LANDING(FLASHBACK)

JULIO hiding on a stair landing while all hell is breaking loose in the house in the moments before his abduction. He pulls the gleaming white AirTAG from his dress jacket pocket, sticks out his tongue, places it gently in the center, closes his teary eyes in seeming prayer, pulls his tongue back in slowly and swallows the tag.

INT. ROOM (CONT'D)

SUPERMAN/CLARK impressed, bends slightly in a respectful posture and extends his hand in a grown up gesture, man to man.

SUPERMAN/CLARK

It's an honor to finally meet you, Julio. You are very brave, indeed.

JULIO first wipes his eyes on his very expensive dress

jacket sleeve then takes CLARK'S hand and shakes it like a little man.

CLARK

My name is Clark. It's actually my real name. This is (gestures to Annie)...

Julio interrupts..

JULIO

Anita.. Annie.. Annie
Babenco...Lieutenant First Class...
US Air Force.. Retired. And you are
Clark Czikowski, Corporal, retired.

(Smiles at Aquaman)

And Aquaman! You are John Darby,
Sargent Major, Queen's Own Lancers
9th.. MSM, Silver Oak Leaf..
retired.

They each turn their heads at each other in utter amazement.

INT. JULIO'S HOUSE(FLASHBACK)

Julio's Dad is at his PC in his home office, waves young Julio over.. starts scrolling through the head shots and action photos of our heroes on the agency website. JULIO gets excited.. his dad rubs his head, gets up and leaves the room. JULIO steps to the desk and grabs the mouse.. sees a [BIO] button on Annie's pics. He clicks it and her real photo pops up , her in a flight suit, portrait shot.. personal and professional details along the side margin.

JULIO (V.O.)

My dad showed me your photos on the computer to let me know my favorite superheroes were coming. He left the web page open on your agencies website.. I read all your bios.

INT. ROOM (CONT'D)

JULIO

You are all decorated veterans.

JULIO'S VOICE OVERLAYS EACH FLASHBACK CLIP IN TURN. ALL CLIPS ARE SILENT.

CUT TO:

SILENT clip of footage of F18 blazing across the sky with

a missile in pursuit. The jet goes into evasive maneuvers, highly skilled, barrel rolls and then a tangential upward arc, more evasive rolls. The missile still finds the jet and goes off next to the cockpit.

CUT TO:

INT. SILENT COCKPIT(FLASHBACK)

Annie is the pilot.. smoke, mayhem, flashing lights. Her visor is cracked and there are streaks of blood. Obvious disorientation, horizon turning in the background, but she manages to reach up behind her and pull eject handles. Explosive bolts fire and the canopy is ejected.. seat launches straight up and out of shot.

JULIO (V.O.)

Annie.. Flying Cross and a Purple Heart..

EXT. DIRT ROAD - AFGHANISTAN(FLASHBACK)

JOHN/AQUAMAN sitting roadside in Afghanistan, both eyes bandaged, being attended to by a medic. Stunned, shocked look.. distant.

JULIO (V.O.)

John .. Silver Oak Leaf.. mentioned in dispatches.

INT. SILENT - APC (FLASHBACK)

CLARK among a platoon seated, bumping along with dust, grime, etc. CLARK takes a look through square porthole to recon things.

CUT TO:

SUPERMAN POV

A raven on the roadside, on a fence post. It looks directly at him, flaps quickly and flies off in a hurry.

INT. APC (CONT'D)(SILENT)

CLARK pulls back, registers something, some concern..like the bird has tipped him off somehow...an old infantry myth/legend. Very brief. Turns around quickly, opens his mouth to shout..

AN IED goes off and the entire crew is slammed to the ceiling.. then slumps to the floor.. major injuries are obvious, unconscious soldiers, other flailing injured.

CLARK is the least injured and immediately begins assisting his comrades. They come under fire.

JULIO(V.O.)
Clark.. nominated for the
Congressional Medal of Honor,
Purple Heart.

INT. BACK ROOM (CONT'D)

They all have pretty floored expressions.

JULIO continues...

JULIO
I know.. I'm a kid.. but I'm not a
2 year old. I know you guys are
actors. But I saw your service
records and knew you'd be arriving
at the party soon. That you would
do something, wouldn't run away
like everyone else.. they just ran.
Everybody ran. I prayed that you
wouldn't be like everyone else..
that you would come.

JOHN is now a mess, turns away.. puts his finger to his
eye.

JOHN
Wow.. something just landed in my
eye... 'scuse me folks.. oy..

ANNIE is now staring in wonderment as this powerful
little boy. She reaches down and hugs him. SUPERMAN is
trying to hold it together.. turns and checks his eyes
like JOHN.

ANNIE
Well Julio.. you're right.. we
couldn't walk away like the others.
It seems you knew we were
coming ...even before we did.

(2 beats, glances back at the guys)

You know... we kinda knew too.
Let's get you home.

ANNIE grabs his hand and leads Julio towards the door.
She turns to the guys..

ANNIE
You guys coming?

JOHN and CLARK are still collecting themselves...they are both useless at this point.. overwhelmed. CLARK speaks for both of them.

CLARK

Uhh... Yup.. ya.. just need a minute... we'll catch up.

ANNIE

Enough already .. I'm gonna cry too. I gotta get this kid outta here. When we get clear, make an anonymous call for a black and white and a bus to pick up the poor soul in the next room.

CLARK gives a silent, emotional thumbs up.. not there yet.

ANNIE gets it, smiles and turns, leads the boy out of the room.

CLARK steps over to a seated JOHN.. he is still recouping, resting elbows on knees. CLARK extends his hand...JOHN takes in military lock-hoist grip and is helped up by CLARK.

They stand and regard each other momentarily, shared slight smile. JOHN leads the way to the door, CLARK follows him out of the room.

EXT. MAIN ENTRANCE - NIGHT

The main door opens and ANNIE and JULIO exit in slow motion and onto the driveway, head toward the main gate. The light fades behind them and we only see their silhouettes eventually...

CUT TO:

FRONT SHOT - SLO MO

They are now on the road leading off the property.

They pass the last street light on the way out, a gleaming red rose bush in a half barrel at it's base.

SHOT FOCUSES CLOSER ON THE BUSH.. SLOW ZOOM TO CLOSE UP.

A white butterfly, drawn by the light, clumsily but gracefully flies in and lands on a rose.

SHOT HOLDS THERE.

A long Aztec clay flute note, low then trailing off.

BACK TO FRONT SHOT

They are soon silhouettes.. WONDER WOMAN'S big hair and crown now look like a veil in dark relief, fields of stars behind them.

FADE TO WHITE

EXT. BUSY INTERECTION - BUS STOP - DAY

A few days later.

The same 2 homeless veterans are on their favorite bench in fatigue jackets chatting it up. Their conversation overlays the following scene.

CUT TO:

CLOSEUP ON A LEVI STRAUSS TAG ON A PAIR OF JEANS.

(2 Beats)

SHOT PANS BACK SLOWLY.

The STARBUCKS SIREN logo clear view on a cup adjacent in close up, sunlit, clean and unblemished.. looks more smiley. We begin to overhear the growing conversation of the HOMELESS VETERANS.

VOICE #1

Hey friend, you look happy. Gotta say.. that's not normal.. for you.

VOICE #2

Just came from court. I get to see my kids.. got visitation. It's a good day, man.

VOICE #1

WOW.. that is great man. Truly. Congratulations. Supervised?

VOICE #2

Ya. For now. I showed them my starter chip for NA. Worked like magic. If I can get a place, they'll lift the supervision.

VOICE #1

So that's it. I noticed you're slightly less pale today. This a con for your public defender or you bein' real?

VOICE #2

It's real. One day at a time,
friend.

VOICE #1

I thought about it..got my own chip
a year back. Didn't stick. Not
there yet friend.. still got the
nightmares from too many wet ops..
Know what I mean? But you run with
it, boy... let me know how it goes.

VOICE #2

Thanks, friend. Things are lookin'
up. Got some clean underwear and a
script for my meds. Gonna give it
my best shot.

VOICE #1

Well this is a good day. Who knows,
maybe I'll join ya one day. Always
thinking about quitting.. it's my
first thought every morning when I
wake up with the crazies, ya know?

SHOT PANS BACK FURTHER CONTINUOUSLY UNTIL IT SHOWS THE
STARBUCKS CUP IS IN A TRAY WITH 2 OTHERS.

PANS FURTHER BACK AND WE SEE IT IS BEING HELD BY
JOHN/AQUAMAN.

He's in civilian clothes, looking at the 2 veterans. Not
the 1000 yard stare now, but more focused, purposeful. He
walks over and engages the 2 guys, they instantly clock
him as an army vet, brother hand shakes and smiles. He
hands them each a coffee, tosses the tray into the
recycling slot in the garbage and takes a seat next to
them, smiling and chatting them up. In the background, we
see the small LED TV in the bus stop running a news piece
with news ticker running along the bottom. It is Ursula
von der Leyen, president of the EU, taking questions at a
press conference.

SHOT PANS BACK SLOWLY.

JOHN is now gesticulating like he is sharing an old war
story, humorous anecdote, acting things out. The 2 vets
are locked in, smiling and anticipating.. JOHN drops the
punchline and all three break out into roaring laughter.
Goes on for a bit as they each recover and catch their
breath. John pulls out his wallet, pulls out a pic
(ostensibly) of his son.. some pride.. guys each take it
in turn, smile.. hand it back.

JOHN takes back the photo, stares it at.

(3 beats)

Puts the photo back in his wallet.

SHOT PANS BACK SLOWLY ON THE SUNLIT SCENE as...

The boys settle into normal exchanges. The one veteran reaches into his pocket and shows JOHN his gleaming white chip. JOHN smiles big and shakes the guys hand again, pats him on the back in support.

SHOT CONTINUES TO PAN BACK SLOWLY AND SIMULTANEOUSLY

FADES TO:

WHITE FLASH

EXT. BUS STOP IN THE SUBURBS -DAY

Sunny, birdsong, etc.

CLARK/SUPERMAN is in full costume, sitting waiting for a bus on a bench, heading out for a solo gig. Bus pulls up and SUPERMAN attempts to stand. There is a slight hesitation as he grabs then massages his knee very briefly, shakes it off. The bus door opens with a hiss and he gets on confidently.. no sign of his injury.

INT. FRONT OF BUS - DAY

SUPERMAN gets on.. has a bit of superhero swagger and stride now, takes a seat at the front.. tucks his cape beside him. Bus driver knows him from his daily routine.

BUS DRIVER

Hey Clark.. off to a gig?

CLARK

Hey Norm.. ya.. just me this time.

CUT TO:

2 young kids with their moms seated on the side bench clock his entrance once they hear his name "Clark".. they whisper loudly.

KID #1

The bus driver said "Clark".. he must be the *real* Superman.. WOW!

They stop whispering and look over, long stare of fan worship, admiration.

INT. FRONT OF BUS - DAY (CONT'D)

CLARK.. catches their look, turns and looks over. He looks away briefly, tilts his head in thought, a moment of realization, reckoning...then contentment and a private smile. He steps up. He looks back at the kids.

He puts on his best cowlick, CHRISTOPHER REEVE smile and grin. He tips his hand off of his forehead in a big, slow Superman gesture/salute back at the kids, very genuine and heartfelt.

INT. SIDE BENCH SEAT (CONT'D)

They are wide eyed, excited in response. One kid produces a comic book, whispers to his Mom. She produces a marker from her purse, gestures to him to go ahead, gives permission. The kid walks toward SUPERMAN O.S.

INT. BUS - FRONT SEATS

Kid walks excitedly into shot, slows then approaches nervously, hands over comic and marker. CLARK smiles big and takes it, pops off the marker top, positions it for an autograph.

CLARK/SUPERMAN

Why sure, son! What's your name?

One kid steps up, leans in and almost whispers his name.. we don't hear it. CLARK hears it, nods and begins to sign the comic confidently.

CUT TO:

CLOSE UP SHOT OF COMIC AND HAND SIGNING

CLARK writes:

'To my Superfriend, Kyle'

His hand pauses.

CUT TO:

CLOSE UP - CLARK'S FACE

Thinking... looks gets more somber, deciding, becoming more definitive. Blinks.. then his faces softens. A decision has been made. He looks back down to finish.

CUT TO:

CLOSE UP SHOT OF COMIC AND HAND SIGNING

He writes in a confident flourish, larger letters, then a swirly underline:

'Clark'

INT. FRONT OF BUS (CONT'D)

CLARK smiles and hands back the comic to the kid. Kid beams at SUPERMAN, steps out while the other kid steps up, says his name. CLARK begins to sign the 2nd autograph as...

SHOT PANS BACK INTO SILENCE

FADE TO BLACK

THE END