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S U P E R M A N

A Screenplay By

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FIRST DRAFT
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S U P E R M A N

FADE IN:

INT. TV MONITOR - DAY

TIGHT ON a video image of a news telecast. Except there's no one there -- just the empty newsdesk.

Odd.

Suddenly a NEWSCASTER appears behind the desk -- he's 45, rushed and unkempt. Fumbles with his clip mic, hands trembling. It's unsettling; he looks up at us, trying desperately to sound confident. But his voice shakes:

NEWSCASTER
Ladies and gentlemen. If you are watching this, and are not taking shelter underground, we strongly urge you -- all of you -- to do so immediately. Anywhere-- anywhere you are, anywhere you can find.
(beat)
At this hour, all we know is that there are visitors on this planet-- and that there's a conflict between them-- the Giza Pyramids have been destroyed-- sections of Paris. Massive fires are raging from Venezuela to Chile-- a great deal of Seoul, Korea... no longer exists...

All this man wants to do is cry. But he's a pro. We realize now that we've been SLOWLY PUSHING IN all along:

NEWSCASTER (cont'd)
Only weeks ago this report would've seemed... ludicrous. Aliens... using Earth as a battleground....
(then, with growing venom:)
... but that was before Superman.
(beat)
It turns out that our faith was naive. Premature. Perhaps, given the state of the world... simply desperate--

Something urgent is YELLED from behind the camera -- our Newscaster looks off, terrified -- he yells something back, but it's masked by a SHATTERING -- FLYING GLASS -- the video camera SHAKES --

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CONTINUED:

A TERRIBLE WHISTLE, then an EXPLOSION -- everything is WHIPPED OUT OF FRAME in the same horrible instant the screen goes to STATIC --

EXT. GOTHAM CITY - DAY

-- the network skyscraper is being BLOWN APART -- literally -- by one of the aforementioned VISITORS: dressed in body armor and a sort of NINJA'S CLOAK (along with a SWORD SHEATH containing a WEAPON we'll learn about later), he stands in the middle of a central, now-abandoned city street -- cars strewn everywhere. He's BLOWING -- EXHALING WITH A FORCE OF A THOUSAND HURRICANES -- and flattening five city blocks in the process.

After the buildings have fallen, a distant, escalating WHOOSH can be HEARD. This Visitor turns to look behind him and we QUICKLY PUSH IN on his face--

-- this Kryptonian's name is TY-ZOR. A handsome 30 years old, looking into the distance as the WHOOSH GROWS LOUDER, Ty-Zor's mouth curls into a slight smile -- there's a radical conviction lurking behind those dark eyes. What that conviction is, exactly, we'll learn soon enough. Suffice to say, this destruction has gotten Ty-Zor the attention he wanted.

Suddenly we PULL BACK -- two blocks away, ANGLE still on Ty-Zor -- as two RED BOOTS hit the pavement in the foreground like an NBA MVP coming down from a slam dunk; the WHOOSH coming to a satisfying halt.

Oh yes. We can feel his presence.

And the CAMERA STARTS TO MOVE -- AROUND, to the FRONT of the boots -- SLOWLY RISING, DRAMATICALLY REVEALING the body of a 29 year-old warrior. A warrior in brilliant red and blue -- cape billowing -- an icon on his muscular chest resembling an "S" -- and finally the face -- eyes awash with rage and determination --

-- but our first view of SUPERMAN isn't the all-powerful superhero one might expect. While fierce and resolute, this Superman, at this moment, is winded. His iconic suit SHREDDED in areas. His sail-like cape SLASHED.

Bruised and bloodied, Superman stares ferociously at Ty-Zor. Two boxers in the instant before Round Twelve.

And for this one moment, it's dreadfully silent in the middle of this gothic American city -- two extra-terrestrial soldiers facing off like wild gunslingers. Then, with a sudden and powerful LEAP, Ty-Zor LIFTS OFF THE PAVEMENT AND BLASTS INTO THE SKY -- Superman furiously pursues --

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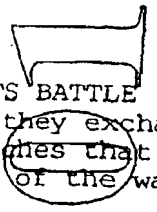
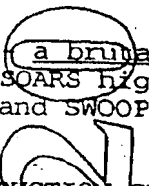
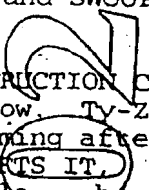


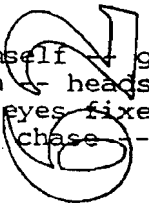
What follows is a frenzied MID-AIR MARTIAL ARTS BATTLE -- the camera quickly ORBITING around the two as they exchange deadly, lightning-fast blows -- powerhouse punches that would propel a battleship two-hundred feet out of the water --



-- they SLALOM buildings -- battle and chase -- a brutal but equal battle of superhuman strength: Superman SOARS high above the buildings -- then turns 180 degrees and SWOOPS DOWN, backward-somersault-kicking Ty-Zor --

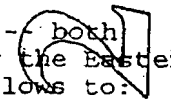


Ty-Zor is thrown back hard, into a giant CONSTRUCTION CRANE that falls back, CRASHING into the streets below. Ty-Zor is shell-shocked for a moment -- sees Superman coming after him -- so Ty-Zor grabs the end of the crane and LIFTS IT, swinging it as if it had been made in Louisville -- he SLAMS THE THING into Superman, who is thrown out of control -- WE ACTUALLY FOLLOW SUPERMAN IN SLOW MOTION: our angle straight-on as he CRASHES THROUGH TWO FLOORS OF TWO DIFFERENT BUILDINGS -- people RUNNING crazily through the halls to avoid the danger.



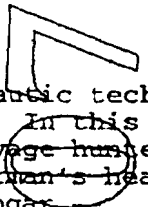
Still reeling backwards, Superman steadies himself -- gets his bearings in mid-air, then -- God bless him -- heads back for more. Ty-Zor sees Superman coming -- his eyes fixed, satisfied. Ty-Zor flies off -- Superman gives chase --

EXT. EAST COAST - DAY

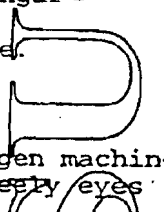


SONIC BOOMS as Superman bullets after Ty-Zor -- both breaking the sound barrier, flying south over the Eastern seaboard -- Ty-Zor DIVE BOMBS -- Superman follows to:

EXT. CAPE CANAVERAL - DAY



Rockets, shuttles, massive crawlers and aeronautic tech. Superman lands fast -- WE PUSH CLOSER TO HIM. In this moment, sweating, panting, he seems like a savage hunter, hungry for a kill. A METALLIC SOUND and Superman's head snaps to the side, eyes fixed on a distant hangar --



In a blur, the Man of Steel has left the frame.

INT. NASA HANGAR - DAY

A giant warehouse. Rocket boosters and next-gen machinery. Superman enters. Scans the place with his steely eyes --

-- we suddenly RUSH INTO SUPERMAN'S EYES -- suddenly we can see what he sees: X-RAY VISION.

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CONTINUED:

Imagine the optic nerve working like a frog's whip-fast tongue -- INSTANT ZOOMS -- pushing THROUGH objects -- it's almost dizzying, this computer-like X-ray scan -- and Superman sees, across the space, an ACCESS DOOR, ripped off its frame --

Superman BLURS THROUGH THE SPACE and through the door --

INT. NASA TESTING AREA - DAY

Superman enters the long, dark corridor. It's a dead-end, but there are a dozen doors here.

Ty-Zor is here somewhere.

Superman stares down the hall -- but something is wrong; his eyes aren't working as they normally do. Then, a CHILLING WHISPER:

TY-ZOR (O.S.)
Kal-El...

Superman looks up -- we see fear in those eyes. Where is this quiet voice coming from?

TY-ZOR (O.S.) (cont'd)
Lead walls.
(beat)
... it's almost like we're human, isn't it?

Determined -- having had enough -- Superman hurries down the hall -- POWERFULLY rips off each door, searching the testing rooms -- each filled with NASA gear and GIANT WATER TESTING TANKS. Superman moves through the place, door-to-door --

He finally rips off one door that makes him stop -- we're TIGHT ON HIS FACE -- his eyes wide with terror at what he sees -- and although we don't see what it is, we can guess. And Superman almost GASPS:

SUPERMAN
-- no--

-- overcome with deep pain Superman CRASHES to his knees, sinking into the concrete floor like it was soft sand. An agonizing, confusing moment: WHAT THE HELL IS HAPPENING TO ME?! His head hung low, he tries to crawl forward but it's so painful -- and Ty-Zor's VOICE returns -- FORCEFUL NOW:

TY-ZOR (O.S.)
I want to hear you cry, Kal-El. Like your mother cried...
(MORE)

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CONTINUED:

TY-ZOR (O.S.) (cont'd)
(almost amused)
... cry for me... "Superman."

-- and Superman finally looks up -- and what we see is terrifying: his face covered in a repulsive BLISTER RASH, his eyes ROLLED BACK AND BLOODSHOT -- and SUPERMAN SCREAMS LOUD ENOUGH FOR THE WORLD TO HEAR -- finally we SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. FIELD - DAY

Peace. Nature. The only sound, the gentle brushing of tall wheat.

A five year-old girl, the picture of innocence, sits on the ground, holding a small flower. Her hair moves in a soft breeze.

PULL BACK to a massive LONG SHOT. The endless field, adjacent to a thick forest. Snowy mountains, hundreds of miles away. Three moons in the daytime sky. The whole image washed in a CRIMSON GLOW; on this planet, their sun is red. And these WORDS APPEAR ON SCREEN:

KRYPTON. TWENTY-NINE EARTH YEARS EARLIER.

We're TIGHT AGAIN on the little girl. She picks another flower, collecting them. She's so adorable you could almost watch her forever. Then her head snaps up -- she hears something we do not.

A moment later and we feel it: a deep, powerful, distant THUD. Then ANOTHER.

She stands. Looks off, worried. Another, LOUDER, DEEPER THUD. CRASHING, SNAPPING, RUMBLING -- something fucking gargantuan is coming. As her face grows in panic, all of a sudden there's silence.

The little girl's eyes dart around... what was that? Is it gone...? Will it c--

KA-RASH!!! The girl SCREAMS IN SHEER HORROR as a TWELVE-STORY TALL WAR MACHINE -- a THREE-LEGGED WALKING TANK (a "ROUSER") -- CRASHES THROUGH THE FOREST -- its FIRE TURRETS BELCHING FLAME, immediately SCORCHING THE GROUND -- AND THIS BEAST IS HEADED HER WAY --

The girl runs -- holy shit does she run -- SCREAMING HER HEAD OFF -- screaming WORDS -- calling for her mother and father -- but the words she's SHRIEK-CRYING are KRYPTONIAN:

KRYPTONIAN GIRL
DAMA-SO!!! KALA-SO!!!

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CONTINUED:

The girl runs past us -- we PAN to reveal her distant, doomed, un-Earthly HOME -- and we realize this is a BORDERLAND: her house set amid enormous WALLS -- FENCES -- BARRIERS that resemble tank-stops.

The enormous ROUSER MECH WARRIOR charges forward -- SPITTING its napalm in appalling bursts. And we BOOM UP, looking over the horizon -- there are DOZENS MORE of these beast-machines coming.

And the towering Rousers break through the blockades -- automated DEFENSE MUNITIONS FIRE at the dinosaur tanks -- but there are too many of them. The border is crossed.

INT. SENATE CORRIDOR - DAY

A HANDHELD CAMERA races behind a Senate OFFICER who sprints down a long corridor -- the image is shaky and fast. And this building feels imposing -- the design almost Japanese in influence -- combined with the huge scale of Soviet-era government buildings --

-- the Officer bursts into:

INT. SENATE ASSEMBLY ROOM - DAY

-- a magnificent meeting space -- the heart of this political system. EIGHT SPECIES are represented here: forty-seven senior SENATE MEMBERS surround a central lectern where four HIERARCHS flank their KING.

All heads turn to the visibly shaken, out-of-breath officer, who makes a dire announcement (NOTE: ALL SCENES ON KRYPTON ARE SPOKEN IN KRYPTONIAN -- AN ACTUAL LANGUAGE WE WILL DEVELOP. WHERE SUBTITLES ARE NEEDED, SPECIFIC DIALOG IS WRITTEN).

OFFICER
-- they've crossed the border into Darajin.

The senate members are stunned. They all inevitably turn to one man -- and so do we: the CAMERA MOVES IN TO REVEAL JOR-EL, their handsome, rugged 39 year-old leader -- who has been dreading this.

JOR-EL
Have we heard from Kaas?

OFFICER
... Sir, the General is dead.

Jor-El absorbs the devastating news -- then suddenly vaults into action--

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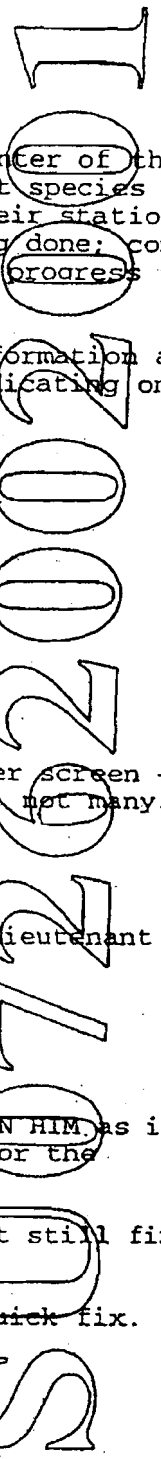

INT. WAR ROOM - DAY

It's a panic in here, the bustling command center of their military. Two dozen LIEUTENANTS (still, eight species represented) talk over each other, manning their stations. Holographic monitors show that damage is being done; complex symbols and diagrams indicating just how much progress the enemy is making.

Jor-El bursts into the room, taking in the information as one Lieutenant reports directly to Jor-El, indicating on the screens:

LIEUTENANT
They attacked at once, from the east and the south --

JOR-EL
-- but their units in Menna were destroyed --

LIEUTENANT
I'm afraid those were decoys.

Increasingly distraught, Jor-El moves to another screen -- calls up other icons of their surviving troops. Not many.

LIEUTENANT (cont'd)
We have no offense left.

Jor-El looks at his Lieutenant, enraged. The Lieutenant stares back, anxious.

LIEUTENANT (cont'd)
Sir, look at our positions. Tell me you see a way out.

Jor-El looks back to the screens. We MOVE IN ON HIM as it becomes increasingly clear that his people... for the moment... are damned.

Jor-El's eyes swell with tears... the Lieutenant still fixed on his leader, truly wishing for a miracle.

But the miracle that Jor-El has is far from a ~~quick~~ fix.

JOR-EL
Go to your family.

LIEUTENANT
Sir, my job is here, I--

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JOR-EL
I'm ordering you to go.
(beat, forceful)
Go.

A beat. Finally the Lieutenant nods. Then heads off. We're on Jor-El now. Alone. Looking off, his heart sinking as the SOUNDS OF DESTRUCTION GROW LOUDER...

EXT. TAZA, KRYPTON - DAY

A massive, glorious capital city, currently under siege. MECH WARRIORS crash through the streets, attacking fleeing residents mercilessly.

We follow one giant war machine -- PANNING with it -- REVEALING the city's PALACE in the distance --

INT. TAZA PALACE - DAY

Jor-El hurries down a corridor, followed by his wife, LARA, who is crying -- begging:

LARA
-- please -- Jor-El--

But he's determined -- as he walks:

JOR-EL
Lara, you knew this day might come.

LARA
There must be something else we can do!

JOR-EL
There isn't.

And she stops him, physically, strong, yelling:

LARA
He is our SON! And I will not send him away!
(and she cries)
... our baby...

Jor-El looks at her, his heart faring no better. But if he's not strong in this moment, there's no hope for the future at all. He embraces her. Then, quietly.

JOR-EL
... my love, there's no time.

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CONTINUED:

He kisses her forehead, then looks into her red, wet eyes. His look silently asks: are you ready? She just cries, defeated. It's the best she can do.

INT. LAUNCH CHAMBER - DAY

With a shockingly LOUD HISS a PORTAL opens -- we're looking inside a TRANSPORT CAPSULE -- large enough for one adult. But we are TIGHT ON an INFANT, as he is placed on the cushioned interior of the capsule.

This child -- the baby KAL-EL, who will one day become Superman -- looks up hopefully at the parents who are about to send him light years away.

The child, oblivious, smiles at his parents; a still teary-eyed Lara has just reluctantly placed her son into the carrier. Jor-El stands beside her. They look down at their son for a last, heartrending moment.

Jor-El touches the baby -- and we see just how devastating this is for him.

JOR-EL
Look at us now... so that one day you might remember us.

Then a distant THUNDERING -- the Machines are coming.

We see now that we're in a large, observatory-like space. Jor-El uses a holographic keyboard and the capsule's portal CLOSES. We can still see the infant inside through a window as the capsule begins to FILL WITH A CLEAR, THICK LIQUID.

Lara chokes back tears as the oxygenated, protective GEL covers her son -- she can't take it. Lara turns away.

Jor-El continues the operation: in what must be some kind of NANOTECHNOLOGY, a metallic OUTER SHELL seems to GROW around the capsule. Then the high CEILING SLIDES OPEN.

The countdown has begun. Jor-El goes to Lara:

JOR-EL (cont'd)
We have to go.

As the LAUNCH ALARM BLARES, Jor-El starts out -- returning for his wife's hand -- YELLS for her to come. Trying desperately to maintain her sanity, she runs with him --

EXT. TAZA PALACE GARDEN - DAY

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CONTINUED:

Jor-El and Lara run through the labyrinthine garden as behind them their son's ESCAPE POD BLASTS INTO SPACE from the launch chamber -- they turn to look: the exhaust is BRIGHT -- the force almost blows them over --

Jor-El grabs his wife's hand -- they keep running -- finally they arrive at a dirt trail -- a VEHICLE is here (a ZOOBA, a one-wheeled, gyroscope-controlled speeder) -- with a strange-looking creature manning the handlebars. This is TAGA. Imagine a turtle without its shell, only as big as you are.

Lara gets on the Zooba as Jor-El talks urgently to Taga, who nods, and responds, a devoted follower. Lara is aghast as she realizes what's happening:

LARA
-- you're coming with me--

JOR-EL
You will see me again. I promise you.

He grabs her face and kisses her passionately. A nearby EXPLOSION ROCKS THE CAMERA -- Jor-El turns to look back at the palace. He then commands Taga to go -- far -- fast --

Taga REVS the engine, RACES AWAY. Jor-El hurries back--

INT. TAZA PALACE - DAY

It's mayhem: in classic wartime documentary HANDHELD STYLE, we witness two mech warriors CRASH THROUGH the entrance of the palace.

Soldiers wielding powerful LASER weapons FIRE at the machine monsters with Jor-El leading the charge. He runs past pillars, yelling orders to his troops, FIRING HIS BLASTERS at the invaders.

Jor-El FIGHTS with enemy troops: his skills with MARTIAL ARTS and WEAPONRY are magnificent -- he skillfully TWIRLS a "BLASTAFF" -- a three-foot long composite PULSE BLASTER that can fire from either end --

Jor-El then switches weapons and fires what looks like a GRENADE LAUNCHER at one of the MECHS -- it lands with a CLANK on the underbelly of the metal beast -- Jor-El YELLS for his troops to scatter -- he dives for the ground as the mech VIOLENTLY EXPLODES, shredding everything around it --

Smoke everywhere. Jor-El looks up and spots the Lieutenant he ordered to return home, lying on the ground, badly wounded by shrapnel. Jor-El hurries to the hurt soldier, who, seeing Jor-El, says painfully:

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LIEUTENANT
... it was my duty was to stay.

Jor-El grabs the Lieutenant -- is helping him up -- when suddenly SOMETHING GRABS JOR-EL AROUND THE NECK -- it's a COLLAR, attached to a long WIRE which suddenly goes TAUT: Jor-El is YANKED OUTSIDE --

EXT. TAZA PALACE - DAY

-- and we realize now: this "living collar" is attached to one of the twelve-story mechs. Jor-El is now lying in agony on the grounds outside the semi-demolished palace. The mech towers above him, one of its enormous, smoking LASER CANNONS only a few feet above him, aimed directly at him.

Then all goes quiet. Jor-El, bones broken, rolls over. And sees, like a vision, someone step through the smoke.

Only a few years younger than Jor-El, this Kryptonian, apparently leading the enemy troops, is Jor-El's brother. His name is KATA-ZOR and he moves to his stricken older brother and looks down upon him. There's a familiar disease behind Kata-Zor's eyes... we've seen it before in the eyes of his son, Ty-Zor.

KATA-ZOR
Can you imagine? What father would say, seeing me... standing like this, above you?

Jor-El just looks up at his brother with contempt. The silence infuriates Kata-Zor -- he leans in close. An intense, quiet, frightening moment:

KATA-ZOR (cont'd)
I know what you've done. That you've sent the boy off-planet. Hoping to fulfill The Prophecy.
(touches Jor-El's face)
But I will find him, my brother...

Kata-Zor starts to SQUEEZE Jor-El's face -- powerfully, painfully -- Kata-Zor leans in even closer:

KATA-ZOR (cont'd)
-- and these are the hands... that will kill him.

Kata-Zor shoves away Jor-El's face and stands, barking to his Lieutenant:

KATA-ZOR (cont'd)
I want the boy.

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CONTINUED:

KATA-ZOR'S LIEUTENANT
Sir, the pod could be headed for any one of a thousand planets.

KATA-ZOR
(beat, do it)
... then send a thousand men.

EXT. KATA-ZOR'S MILITARY BASE - DAY

Dozens of Kata-Zor's SOLDIERS -- hundreds of them -- run across a tarmac to their PODS -- we see them SECURE themselves inside, hatches closing, preparations made --

EXT. KRYPTON - DAY

A SHOT so LONG that you can see the curvature of the planet. And suddenly the PODS come. Hundreds of them, lifting off from Krypton and dispersing into space. All headed away from their RED SUN, hunting down an innocent child... who couldn't possibly know of the journey that lies ahead.

Our MUSIC SWELLS -- it's EPIC -- and then...

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

INT. KENT'S KITCHEN - DAY

MARTHA and JONATHAN KENT eat breakfast. They're in their late thirties. A handsome couple. A good couple.

Their farmhouse is modest and cozy. The large window beside the table frames a view of their expansive corn field. A timeless place.

We HOLD ON this one shot; it's so simple, so mundane. These are their last moments of a normal life.

JONATHAN
Good eggs.

MARTHA
Oh, good, I'm glad you like 'em. I used that new cheese.
(beat)
You know, with that orange label?

JONATHAN
Mm. Thank you.

(CONTINUED)

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CONTINUED:

MARTHA
You're welcome. Is Mr. Devaney still coming by this afternoon?

JONATHAN
Yeah, I told him he's getting his check -- he still wanted to come by at three.

MARTHA
Then I might go out this afternoon.
(Jonathan looks up)
I just don't... like him much.

Jonathan looks at her, not understanding exactly -- when just then a twisted WHINE-SCREAM SUDDENLY GETS CRAZY LOUD AND THROUGH THE WINDOW: A METEOR SLAMS INTO THEIR FIELD, FIVE ACRES AWAY -- NOW HEADED FOR THEIR KITCHEN!

EXT. KENT FARM - DAY

-- the meteor SCREAMS ACROSS THEIR FIELD, PLOWING UP THE EARTH -- DIRT EXPLODING EVERYWHERE as it barrels toward the house --

INT. KENT'S KITCHEN - DAY

Martha's SCREAMING -- on the tracks of an unearthly freight train -- Jonathan GRABS HER, pulls her away --

EXT. KENT FARM - DAY

The Kents run out toward a cornfield, YELLING madly as the meteor THUNDERS TOWARD THE HOUSE. A hundred yards away, they dive to the ground -- Jonathan covers his wife, protecting her as they HEAR the meteor come to a slow, crunching STOP.

After a catch-their-breath moment, they take a careful peek, just above the cornline. The meteor stopped, literally inches from their kitchen window. They're just stunned.

Moments later, the Kents approach the thing. Smoke rises. Dirt everywhere. A nervous couple.

MARTHA
... careful--

JONATHAN
-- I am, I am...

She stands back, a little more nervous than he is. When Jonathan gets to the edge of this new, burnt-out ditch, what he sees bewilders him.

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CONTINUED:

JONATHAN (cont'd)
... good God...

Jonathan jumps down into the ditch, Martha watching. And now we see it: Kal-El's POD. Like a giant metallic ball bearing, half-buried in the earth.

MARTHA
-- Sweetheart...?

JONATHAN
Honey, you might wanna stand back--

Jonathan slowly approaches the pod -- and as he does, his HAIR STANDS ON END -- a result of the pod's static electricity. Jonathan reaches out... slowly, cautiously... and just as he touches the pod its OUTER SHELL SUDDENLY, LOUDLY RETRACTS -- THE KENTS SCREAM -- Jonathan falls back --

And what they see, where the metallic pod once was, is the LIQUID-FILLED CAPSULE, now leaning against the dirt. Then the CAPSULE OPENS -- the liquid spills into the dirt... and the NINE MONTH-OLD KAL-EL IS REVEALED.

Jonathan's in absolute shock. Martha can't help it: she just starts to cry. She moves for the baby, the maternal instinct she never had a chance to apply surfaces full-force.

JONATHAN (cont'd)
-- Martha--

-- but she carefully lifts the wet, beautiful infant into her arms. Holds him close. Lovingly.

Jonathan moves behind her, both looking into the eyes of this incredible child. Pure awe.

Then the baby SNEEZES. Through her teary eyes, Martha smiles, and says, softly:

MARTHA
... bless you.
(beat, meaningfully)
... bless you...

And on their astonishment we PULL BACK, a couple, instantly transformed into a family.

INT. KENT'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Later -- perhaps the same day -- the CAMERA is ON THE FLOOR as a BALL OF YARN rolls past.

(CONTINUED)

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CONTINUED:

A moment later, little Kal-El, now wearing a diaper, takes careful baby steps toward the yarn.

Martha and Jonathan watch him. They're smitten, but it's still all very new.

Kal-El kicks the ball. It rolls under one end of their sofa. The Kents watch as the adorable little boy waddles over to the couch, carefully bends down to pick it up...

... and with one hand FLIPS THE ENTIRE SOFA INTO THE AIR -- THE HUGE PIECE OF FURNITURE TUMBLES ACROSS THE ROOM --

EXT. KENT'S HOUSE - DAY

-- THE SOFA CRASHES THROUGH THEIR FRONT DOOR FRAME, FLIES OFF THEIR PORCH AND INTO THEIR FRONT YARD.

INT. KENT'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

The Kents are literally in shock. Kal-El has his ball of yarn. He's smiling.

INT. KENT BEDROOM - NIGHT

Little Kal-El is set down on their bed. Jonathan watches closely as Martha starts to undo the baby's diaper. As she opens it, we CUT TO A SHOT LOOKING UP at the Kents. We stay here. The smell of that diaper is stupefying. Jonathan covers his face with his shirt -- Martha's affected too, but she keeps her act together better.

JONATHAN
Okay, what in the Lord's name is that.

Martha just starts changing the diaper, trying to act like what they're seeing/smelling is ordinary.

MARTHA
Well... it came from him. So it's beautiful.

Jonathan is not nearly on the same page as his wife:

JONATHAN
Okay, listen Honey, I think we should talk about this--

But before Jonathan can even start, she says:

MARTHA
You listen to me. This child is alone.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

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CONTINUED:

MARTHA (cont'd)
He has no family -- he obviously didn't come from here -- from anywhere near here. Now yes, he might have certain... skills that other children of his age don't -- why or how that is we may never know. But look at him.
(beat, emotional)
Jonathan, look at this beautiful boy... he's everything.

JONATHAN
... I'm just saying, our sofa's on the front lawn--

MARTHA
Then we teach him. We teach him restraint. We teach him to control himself -- as parents that's something we'd need to do anyway--

JONATHAN
(still covering his nose)
Well, yes, but normally our lives wouldn't be at risk--

MARTHA
This boy is an angel. Look at that face. Those dimples.
(she smiles at him)
He's like a little movie star. A little Clark Gable.
(then)
Clark Kent. I think we should call him Clark.

JONATHAN
Just... throw that diaper away, we can call him anything you want. Seriously. Clark's great.

And a SONG BEGINS -- something moving but upbeat -- Something that PLAYS under the scenes that follow:

INT./EXT. KENT FARM - DAY

Jonathan works on repairing the front door and porch. Inside, Martha carries around baby Clark, who's CRYING. She's trying to "shush" him, but he is -- as infants sometimes are -- momentarily inconsolable.

Clark inhales -- AND CRIES SO LOUDLY THAT ALL THE WINDOWS IN THE HOUSE SHATTER. Jonathan covers his ears, suddenly surrounded by SHATTERED GLASS, everywhere. Fantastic.

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INT. KENT'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

About a year later; CLARK'S TWO NOW. He's running around the living room. Jonathan's trying to get him to come, but Clark keeps rambling away. Finally, Martha enters:

MARTHA
Clark, come on: we have to go upstairs for a bath, now.

Suddenly CLARK TAKES OFF -- FLYING THROUGH THE CEILING. JONATHAN AND MARTHA ARE SHOCKED.

JONATHAN
... Well, that's new.

Martha bolts up the stairs:

INT. KENT'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Clark is there, covered in wood splinters and drywall powder. His parents teaching him a lesson:

JONATHAN
No flying. D'you understand? That's right, like us.

MARTHA
You have to stay on the ground. Your father's right: no flying.

As they continue to lecture, we're TIGHT ON this little face, listening and learning...

EXT. KENT FARM - NIGHT

Bedtime. PUSH IN as Martha reads a book to two-year-old Clark. Clark, without even knowing it, touches her hand.

EXT. KENT FARM - DAY

CLARK IS THREE NOW. He faces Jonathan, ten feet away. Like any three year-old, Clark tosses a baseball to his dad. A few OTHER BASEBALLS scattered about.

JONATHAN
Good. Excellent -- nice arm.

Jonathan rolls the ball back to the kid. Clark picks it up, throws it again.

JONATHAN (cont'd)
Yes, great control -- you see that?

CLARK
... yeah...

(CONTINUED)

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CONTINUED:

JONATHAN
(tosses it back)
Okay, give it a little more juice. A little of that "Kent magic."

And Clark hurls the ball -- OUT OF THE STATE. Jonathan just watches it go.

JONATHAN (cont'd)
... oh God...

EXT. HUB CITY - DAY

A LOUD, busy, multi-lane highway, a grand City in the distance. Out of nowhere, a baseball lands -- SIX CARS AND TWO TRUCKS SCREECH LIKE MAD to avoid an ugly crash

EXT. KENT FARM - DAY

Jonathan tries to teach Clark, who's clearly nervous:

JONATHAN
-- 'kay, not that much juice.

CLARK
-- sorry --

JONATHAN
You don't have to be sorry, just... always remember: control yourself.

CLARK
Okay.

And Jonathan hugs his son, saying sweetly:

JONATHAN
I don't want you ever getting in trouble.
(then after a beat, strained)
-- not so tight--

CLARK
-- sorry--

INT. CLARK'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

TIGHT ON our SOLAR SYSTEM. It's a mobile, hanging above Clark's bed. FIVE YEAR-OLD CLARK lies there, staring up at the planets. As if he's mesmerized by them. And the SONG ENDS as we CUT TO:

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INT. KENT'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

OVERHEAD, SLOWLY MOVING TOWARD Martha and Jonathan, who lie awake, reading.

MARTHA
(very quietly)
So Clark made a discovery today.

JONATHAN
... yeah...? What's that.

MARTHA
He can see through things.

Jonathan lowers his tractor manual. Incredulous.

JONATHAN
.... what?

MARTHA
Yup. We were at the supermarket, Loretta Lang was there. Clark said, "Mommy, why is that lady not wearing underpants?", which we all know is true about Loretta--

JONATHAN
-- you're kidding me.
(a long beat)
... that lucky kid--

Martha hits him playfully -- he smiles and kisses her. The kiss grows more passionate, until, very quietly:

MARTHA
Not tonight: he can hear us, too.

JONATHAN
(barely a whisper)
Not if we're REALLY QUIET.

She looks at him -- then, to prove her point:

MARTHA
(quieter whisper)
Clark?

Then, from way down the hall:

CLARK (O.S.)
Yeah, Mom?!

Jonathan can't believe it.

(CONTINUED)

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CONTINUED:

MARTHA
(still quiet)
Go to sleep.

CLARK (O.S.)
'Kay!

Martha smiles, goes back to her book. OFF Jonathan:

INT. SMALLVILLE DINER - NIGHT

We move through this classic small town diner. We find SIX-YEAR-OLD CLARK having dinner with his mother at a booth. What's striking is that Clark Kent has had "control" so deeply ingrained in him that even at six he's already an introverted, self-conscious, overly-self-controlled person.

MARTHA
-- thought maybe when Dad gets back we can screen in the back porch.

CLARK
... yeah, that'd be good...

But Clark's eyes are elsewhere: across the diner, LANA LANG -- six-years-old and adorable -- stands at the rotating pie display, just watching the pies go round. Martha turns -- sees Lana.

MARTHA
Oh. Why don't you go say hi.

CLARK
(back to his food)
Nah. Lana doesn't know me.

MARTHA
There are only eight kids in your class, Clark, she knows you. Go say hi, it's the nice thing to do.

A beat. Clark sighs. Gets up, moves to Lana. He stands there, beside her. Both kids just staring at the parade of pies. She looks at him, then looks away.

CLARK
Hi, Lana.
(a horrible silence)
You just looking at pies?

Then Lana looks at him. Not necessarily approvingly.

(CONTINUED)

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CONTINUED:

LANA
You stare at the wall a lot. In class.

CLARK
... yeah. Yeah, I know. I just... I like looking at the clouds and stuff.

LANA
(like he's a freak)
But it's just a wall. There aren't even windows.

CLARK
(beat, smiles, as if sharing a secret)
I make my own windows.

She just looks at him.

LANA
You're the weirdest kid in class.

This breaks his heart. He forces a weak smile.

MR. LANG (O.S.)
Lana, come on. We're leaving.

A beat, and Lana just walks away. Clark's left alone. Deeply alone. And we PRELAP WITH:

MARTHA (V.O.)
You are the least weird kid I know.

EXT. DINER - NIGHT

The diner parking lot's adjacent to train tracks. It's dark out here, no one else around. Only a couple parked cars. Clark follows his mother across the lot:

MARTHA
... you just have some gifts that they don't.

CLARK
-- which makes me weird.

Martha starts to unlock the car.

(CONTINUED)

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CONTINUED:

MARTHA
You're a normal boy -- if your eyes are bothering you, I thought we might be able to have some special glasses made up. With some lead specks in the glass--

MR. DEVANEY (O.S.)
Saw you inside.

-- and the voice makes Martha jump a little as she turns to see MR. DEVANEY walking out of the darkness. He's the Kent's landlord -- a man we've heard she's not crazy about. A big guy in his early 50's. Short, cropped red hair. Brown suit, no tie. Martha tries to hide her discomfort as he approaches. But she always gets the feeling that he's undressing her with his eyes.

MARTHA
Mr. Devaney. How are you?

Drunk, is how he is.

MR. DEVANEY
Me? I'm fantastic. I am fantastic -- where's your husband?

MARTHA
(unlocking Clark's door, quickly)
Jonathan's out of town.

The distant BELLS of a TRAIN CROSSING --

MR. DEVANEY
Really. Doing what, getting a loan?

MARTHA
(quietly, urgent)
Get in the car.

-- and Clark does, in the back seat. She closes his door. Clark keeps his tormented eyes locked on Devaney.

MARTHA (cont'd)
You don't have to worry: rent will be on time this month.

MR. DEVANEY
Oh yeah? You're kidding, hell froze over? No one told me.

Amused at himself, Mr. Devaney has walked close to Martha -- putting his hand on the car, preventing her from getting in.

(CONTINUED)

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CONTINUED: (2)

Clark watches nervously though the glass as Mr. Devaney leans close to his mother:

MR. DEVANEY (cont'd)
I have an idea, you wanna hear it?

The TRAIN COMES NOW, LOUD on the tracks --

MARTHA
I need to get my son home for bed--

MR. DEVANEY
The boy can stay in the car -- we could do each other a favor...

MARTHA
-- Mr. Devaney--

MR. DEVANEY
-- we could say this month's "rent free," how's that sound?

MARTHA
(forceful)
I'd rather pay the rent.

MR. DEVANEY
(grabs her arm)
-- I see how you look at me --

Little Clark's eyes are wide -- terrified --

MARTHA
PLEASE let go of my arm --

-- but Mr. Devaney kisses her -- she tries to push him away -- his lips go to her neck -- his hands on her -- she tries to move him away, but he's being aggressive -- Clark quickly gets out of the car -- he grabs at Mr. Devaney's jacket:

CLARK
Stop it!

But Devaney just pushes the boy back:

MR. DEVANEY
Get back in the car!

He continues to attack Martha, who tries in vain to fight him off -- Clark -- enraged -- lunges at Mr. Devaney -- grabs him and throws him -- OVER A HUNDRED YARDS ACROSS THE PARKING LOT --

Martha's shocked -- as Clark runs toward the man:

(CONTINUED)

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CONTINUED: (3)

MARTHA
Clark!!! NO!

The TRAIN still passes, LOUDLY -- Mr. Devaney is wounded and disoriented as Clark -- six-year-old Clark -- grabs the large man and WHIPS HIM INTO THE AIR THEN SLAMS HIM ONTO THE PAVEMENT -- Mr. Devaney SCREAMS -- Clark then does it AGAIN. AND AGAIN.

As much as the audience will go wild over this sequence, it quickly becomes disturbing -- and bloody -- and all too real -- Martha SCREAMING -- BEGGING -- for her son to stop the attack --

Once the caboose passes and the train's gone, Mr. Devaney is a horrible, bloody mess -- Clark is out of breath -- splattered in blood himself -- more afraid than anything.

What's most frightening is Mr. Devaney's wide, ~~terrified~~ eyes set against his blood-wet face:

MR. DEVANEY
... you... you're Satan! You're the Devil himself...!

Martha takes Clark's hand, wanting only to get the hell out of there. But somehow, Clark is fixed here -- staring at this man, who says words that will stay with Clark -- partially define Clark -- for years:

MR. DEVANEY (cont'd)
... you're a freak! Sent from hell -- you're a freak from hell!

MARTHA
LET'S GO!

And Martha drags Clark away -- into the car, SCREECHING AWAY -- all the while, Mr. Devaney yelling:

MR. DEVANEY
THAT BOY'S A MONSTER!!! THAT'S WHAT HE IS!!! A MONSTER!!!

INT. CLARK'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Clark lies in bed. He's turned away from his mother, who sits beside him, stroking his hair. Clark's eyes are open. Traumatized. Not just because he saw his mother attacked. But because deep down, he thinks Mr. Devaney might have been on to something...

(CONTINUED)

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CONTINUED:

We SLOWLY PULL BACK from the scene...

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

EXT. FARMLAND - DAY

White. Winter in Smallville. And that dot of yellow is the Smallville Junior High school bus. We can barely make out KIDS singing embellished Christmas songs (i.e.: "We Wish You a Merry Penis") as the bus pulls up at a crossroads.

The doors open. The Kids much LOUDER now. Clark, NOW 14, gets off the bus. Clearly not one of the popular kids, he wears glasses now (lead-specked, thanks to Mom), and is even more the "class outsider" than he was the last time we saw him. As he gets off, he says to the Driver, kindly:

CLARK
Merry Christmas, Miss McGrath.

MISS MCGRATH
(sympathetic)
Merry Christmas, Clark.

The doors close and the bus drives off. Clark walks home -- BUT HE CAN STILL HEAR THE KIDS INSIDE THE BUS, EVEN AS IT DRIVES AWAY, A QUARTER MILE DOWN THE ROAD:

KIDS
(ab lib continues:)
-- could Clark Kent be more bizarre?! Not a chance -- he's like a total psycho -- he doesn't even play sports -- his only friends are his parents--!

Clark keeps walking, by now used to this. But that doesn't mean he likes it: he covers his ears as he walks.

INT. KENT'S HOUSE - DAY

Clark comes in, stomping his icy snowshoes on the porch and pulling them off.

CLARK
Mom?! Dad?!
(shoes off now)
Mom or Dad?

No one's home. PUSH IN on his face: he smiles and hurries off -- SMASH CUT TO:

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INT. KENT'S BEDROOM - DAY

Clark sits in the back of his parents' closet, going through his CHRISTMAS PRESENTS. He picks up a wrapped box -- shakes it -- but unlike most kids, Clark doesn't have to unwrap anything to see what's inside; he just removes his glasses and LOOKS THROUGH THE WRAPPING.

We SEE his X-RAY VISION: one gift's a pair of sneakers. Another's a microscope. Then a sweater. Of course, he's disappointed. There must be something better.

Clark pulls over a chair, stands up on it and cheeks out the elusive, dark top shelf of the closet. He peers up there hopefully, but there doesn't seem to be anything besides mom and dad's boring storage.

Until he finds something interesting. Something in the way-back. He reaches for it -- and pulls it out. It's a sort of CANNISTER -- a little larger than a football. Metallic. Smooth. Looks somehow not of this earth.

Clark tries to open it -- but he can't find any way to do it. No latch, no screw-top. But he tries anyway -- pulling with all his might (and that's considerable). But it won't open. What the hell is this thing and how is it so strong?

INT. KENT'S KITCHEN - DAY

Clark sits at the kitchen table, eating from a container of chocolate ice cream and staring at the metallic CANNISTER that sits in the middle of the table. He gets to the last of the ice cream -- his face a chocolate mess -- and as he uses his spoon to scrape the last of the ice cream into his mouth, in the FOREGROUND, the cannister OPENS.

And Clark freezes. He just looks at the now-open metallic football as if it were haunted. And he slowly leans toward it... slowly... with nervous anticipation.

He peeks inside. Something RED seems to fill the interior. But is it a liquid or solid? Rubber or steel? And then he TOUCHES IT -- and like a jack-in-the-box, something BURSTS FROM THE CANNISTER, sending Clark onto his back.

Standing there now, in the middle of this classic Americana kitchen, is our pristine SUPERMAN SUIT. Yes, standing there, as if it's being worn by a powerful man. An adult powerful man.

Clark, still on his back, is wide-eyed. Finally -- quickly -- he gets to his feet. More afraid than anything, he grabs whatever's close: a whisk.

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CONTINUED:

He slowly walks around the self-standing suit. It seems almost alive, the RED CAPE gently oscillating...

Clark finally reaches out -- carefully -- and touches the cape. Feels the thick, alien material... then he feels the suit itself. And getting just a little too comfortable, he checks out the sleeves...

And suddenly something extraordinary happens: THE SLEEVE SUCKS HIS ARM INSIDE, UP TO HIS SHOULDER -- CLARK FREAKS:

CLARK
AAAGHHHH!!! HELLLLLLLLLP!!!

He resists it, but in an instant THE SUIT WEARS CLARK: IT SUCKS HIM INSIDE AS IT RIPS OFF HIS CLOTHES -- and suddenly he's motionless -- a 14 year-old boy, wearing the coolest fucking suit you've ever seen, only it's ten sizes too big.

CLARK (cont'd)
... no way.

EXT. KENT FARM - DAY

The front door bursts open and Clark steps out onto the porch, standing akimbo. Behind those glasses, his eyes are melodramatically fixed on the horizon.

He looks ridiculous. Except this really is Superman in the making. No matter -- he runs off --

EXT. ROAD - DAY

Inspired by the suit, Clark SPRINTS -- watching the cape flap in the wind behind him. He's having a blast, getting comfortable in this "second skin."

And as he runs, faster and faster, he starts LEAPING -- at first a few feet -- then a few more -- soon he's jumping twelve feet -- twenty -- HE CAN'T BELIEVE THIS

Clark run-jumps FORTY FEET -- and then he jumps again -- BUT THIS TIME HE STAYS AFLOAT, THE CAPE ADJUSTING TO KEEP HIM IN THE AIR, LIKE A LIVING AILERON ORGANISM -- he quickly realizes the best position for his arms isn't perpendicular to his body, but STRAIGHT AHEAD --

-- and Clark just starts LAUGHING as he SOARS in the sky -- like Tony Hawk without the board or half-pipe. This kid has never been so exhilarated.

He sails two-thousand feet into the sky, then DIVES toward the SNOWY FIELDS, stabilizing just before he hits the earth: he dives into the snow --

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CONTINUED:

Clark BULLETS UNDER THE SNOW, burrowing through the fields like an adolescent airborne MOLE -- he bursts through the snow, back into the sky -- for Clark, this experience is celebratory -- heart-lifting -- he then plunges back to earth -- flying just above the snow, eyes closed.

And just when he's having the best time of his life, CLARK SLAMS HEAD-FIRST INTO HIS FATHER'S TRACTOR -- the thing practically EXPLODES into a thousand pieces -- Clark wipes out spastically in the snow --

Out of breath and stunned by the impact, he puts his glasses back on. He then stands in the snow -- only to find his PARENTS, standing next to their car, having just arrived home. An "oh shit" moment if there ever was one.

CLARK
... sorry.

JONATHAN
Go to your room.

INT. CLARK'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Clark sits on his bed, pensive, still wearing the too-big suit and his glasses. The door opens. His parents enter and sit across from him. They're about to have the difficult conversation they've been dreading for years. He watches them for a moment. Then:

CLARK
I don't know where you got this flying suit, but it's the coolest thing I've ever seen. Is it not for me?

JONATHAN
Clark... it isn't the suit that flies.

CLARK
Yeah, the cape: it's like handlebars. Like a steering wheel.

JONATHAN
Well, maybe the suit helps you steer, I don't know. But even when you were little... gravity didn't always work on you.

MARTHA
The same way your eyes work differently than other kids -- the same way you're stronger.

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CONTINUED:

CLARK
I don't... I don't understand -- am I in trouble?

MARTHA
Honey, you know we both love you.

CLARK
Yeah. Hey, what's going on?

MARTHA
We are your parents.
(difficult beat)
... but not... biologically.

This news is horrifying -- takes a beat to sink in...

CLARK
... I'm-- I'm... adopted-?!

JONATHAN
Clark. That suit. It came with you. When you landed here.

Clark doesn't realize his breathing quickens:

CLARK
When I... landed here? What do you mean landed...?

MARTHA
You're not from here.
(beat)
Not from Smallville. Not from this planet.

There are now tears in Clark's eyes...

CLARK
... then... where am I from...?

JONATHAN
We don't know.

Clark looks off, grappling with this mega-news... the realization that all he's feared is being confirmed... he is a freak -- a monster -- PERHAPS the Devil himself --

Clark suddenly stands up, PULLING at the suit, wanting it off -- desperately wanting it off --

MARTHA
-- Clark, wait--

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CONTINUED: (2)

Clark YANKS the thing so hard it finally SEPARATES and comes off his body -- he THROWS the thing to the floor, then grabs whatever clothes are there and runs away --

JONATHAN
CLARK!

EXT. FIELDS - NIGHT

Clark runs through the night, crying -- trying to lose himself -- wishing he weren't himself. Running so hard, for so long, he finally collapses in a snowy field. Sobbing. The deep, painful cries of a true Outsider.

And he looks up with his wet eyes, into the infinite night... knowing that somewhere up there is a home that cast him away...

The STARS FILL THE SCREEN. And after a beat we SLOWLY TILT DOWN... it's a transition that takes us to:

EXT. DJOMEIN DESERT, KRYPTON - NIGHT

-- nighttime in a cracked-earth desert that seems to go on forever. Those three moons we saw during the day are glowing brightly tonight. And amid the nothingness is a clay and straw three-room HUT. Smoke rises from a makeshift chimney. And these WORDS APPEAR ONSCREEN:

DJOMEIN DESERT. KRYPTON.

INT. HUT - NIGHT

TAGA, the turtle-like creature that drove Lara away, cooks a grisly-looking stew. He takes the pot over to Lara (50 now), who sits at a table, lost in thought. Her spirit crushed long ago. Taga serves her. Without much enthusiasm, Lara thanks him in Kryptonian.

She looks down at her food... her mind once again drifting, no doubt back to her lost family... when there's a strange SOUND --

-- Lara looks up -- Taga's ears perk up -- it's something outside. Taga grabs a large, self-made WAR CLUB -- he WHISPERS in Kryptonian: SHH. DON'T MOVE.

Taga leaves the hut. We're EXTREMELY TIGHT on Lara as she sits, nervous... listening carefully for a long beat. Finally she gets up and --

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EXT. DJOMEIN DESERT, KRYPTON - NIGHT

Lara steps out. Looks at the vast, empty desert. There's no one here. So Lara slowly walks, around the structure... it's like a horror movie: you just know you're about to be scared to death.

Lara turns the corner -- and finds Taga, dead on the ground -- SHE TURNS TO RUN BUT ONE OF KATA-ZOR'S GUARDS IS THERE -- HE SLAMS HER IN THE FACE WITH THE BUTT OF HIS BLASTAFF.

EXT. YISPA MEGACITY, KRYPTON - NIGHT

The universe's largest MEGACITY. Hundreds of ~~STARSCRAPERS~~ (monolithic, two-thousand story multi-function ~~buildings~~). Aircraft everywhere. The WORDS APPEAR:

YISPA MEGACITY, KRYPTON.

INT. YISPA CONCENTRATION CAMP - NIGHT

A dark, immense CONCRETE PRISON. Lara is led down the wide, central corridor by THREE ARMED GUARDS. As she walks, scared and in pain, she glances into the cells.

There are Kryptonians held here -- those who once lived under Jor-El's tolerant rule -- and they're suffering. Emaciated and sick. This moment is more heartbreaking for her than anything. Seeing her people in such a condition, her eyes fill with tears.

It is just then that one of the male PRISONERS sees Lara. The stick-figure MAN moves to the cell's bars and calls out, with reverence and a weak voice:

KRYPTONIAN PRISONER
... the queen... it's Lara!

The tears now rolls down her cheeks, as these poor prisoners begin moving to their bars, seeing her -- and bowing to a woman who, in their minds, is still their first lady. The camp is filled with the prisoners' QUIET CHANTS of (in Kryptonian) "QUEEN LARA... QUEEN LARA..."

Headed to her own cell, Lara just cries as we PULL BACK TO REVEAL that this camp is enormous: this one wing at least a dozen stories tall -- there must be over a hundred-thousand prisoners here.

INT. PRAYER CHAMBER - NIGHT

Kata-Zor and son Ty-Zor (60 and 22 years-old now) bow at an altar.

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Instead of candles, GLOWING WIRES, like orange incandescent light bulb filaments, surround the room. It's actually rather beautiful.

An AMBASSADOR enters the room, sees them. Hushed tones:

AMBASSADOR
Your holiness.. She's here.

Ty-Zor looks to his father, who contemplates this, deeply pleased. We also sense: Ty-Zor wants this job.

TY-ZOR
... Father...

KATA-ZOR
Can I trust you with this?

TY-ZOR
(respectfully)
Yessir.

Finally, a nod from Kata-Zor.

INT. JOR-EL'S CELL - NIGHT

We PUSH IN on Superman's father -- Jor-El's now a shell of a man. 68 years old now, he is half-hanging, his wrists, caked with dried blood, chained to the wall behind him. Scars and filth cover the former Kryptonian leader.

He looks up as the cell door bursts open -- three GUARDS come in, holding the wife he hasn't seen in almost two decades -- he is in shock, beyond speech as they look at each other --

They shove her to the ground, holding her head down, execution style. She whimpers quietly...

Then Ty-Zor enters. Calm, Controlled. And holding an ancient, sheathed SWORD -- like a KATANA BLADE, engraved with KRYPTONIAN TEXT.

TY-ZOR
I wasn't born yet. The day my father was overlooked. The day grandfather chose you for the throne... and handed you this blade.
(beat)
But look what happens. Look where you are. And look what I've got.

Ty-Zor PULLS OUT THE BLADE. He holds it with the respect and skill of a master. Bows with the sword;

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CONTINUED:

the proper technique just before its use. A whip-fast series of SWIPES and Ty-Zor's holding the blade directly above Lara's head.

TY-ZOR (cont'd)
I need to find my cousin. Tell me where he is... and your wife will live. Simple.

Jor-El stares at his fucking nephew -- blind with rage and horror --

LARA
Never.

Jor-El's eyes flick to his defiant, terrified wife.

JOR-EL
... my sweet love...

LARA
-- thank God we sent him away. I love you...

JOR-EL
... I love you too...

TY-ZOR
Where... is Kal-El.

But it's clear to Ty-Zor that his uncle won't budge. Finally, in a terrifying moment, Ty-Zor RAISES THE BLADE AND STRIKES DOWN -- we don't see it, but Ty-Zor has just murdered Lara. Jor-El, traumatized, stares at nothing -- and we HEAR SCREAMS -- getting LOUDER -- and we CUT TO:

EXT. METROPOLIS UNIVERSITY CAMPUS - NIGHT

-- six drunk SCREAMING STUDENTS goofing off, crossing campus, no doubt en route to a party. We BOOM DOWN to find 20-YEAR-OLD CLARK walking with his roommate, JERRY SHUSTER -- a big, handsome fraternity type. Clark, true to form, is still the glasses-wearing introvert.

CLARK
Jerry, I don't want to do this-- I'm no good at parties, I don't have fun.

JERRY
How would you know? It's been four years, Clark, you never leave our room.

Jerry's turned -- he roughly but kindly unbuttons Clark's shirt, loosening him up:

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JERRY (cont'd)
I'm getting Susan, I'll be at the party in ten -- when we get there I wanna see you inside, drunk, hanging from something and acting like a monkey.

CLARK
I'm going back to the dorm.

Jerry whips out a TERM PAPER -- Clark's eyes go wide --

JERRY
Then you're not getting this back.

CLARK
Jerry, I have to turn that final in tomorrow.

JERRY
Then get your scared little ass to the party. You can do it.

Still holding the paper, Jerry heads off. Clark signs.

EXT. FRAT HOUSE - NIGHT

Clark walks up as a group of partying STUDENTS walks past him. He approaches the house nervously. He stands outside, staring at the side of the house, drapes obscuring a view into the house.

So Clark RAISES HIS GLASSES and uses his X-RAY VISION -- we see what he sees, and it's incredibly cool: as his eyes scan the house, it's as if portions of the exterior wall VANISH, providing a view into the party.

Dancing and drinking -- lots of kids laughing, having a blast. Clark could not be less of a candidate. He looks increasingly worried about going in there...

-- THEN WE PUSH IN ON CLARK AS HE SEES SOMETHING THAT MAKES HIS HEART STOP.

A beautiful, brunette GIRL, standing in the middle of the party, looking somehow out of place. This is LOIS LANE, incoming freshman. And she's standing there, observing. The outsider. We will come to learn that in many ways, Lois is just as much an alien as Clark.

Clark watches her -- for a moment she's in SLOW MOTION. But then a COUPLE approaches her: a blonde GIRL and big GUY.

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The couple's been drinking -- they're heading upstairs for some fun and clearly trying to get Lois to go with them. Clark watches as she declines.

The blonde takes her arm but Lois pulls away, making some excuse, and heads for the back of the house.

Clark puts his glasses back on. Adjusts his clothes a little. Takes a deep breath... and heads off --

EXT. FRAT HOUSE - BACK PORCH - NIGHT

Through the kitchen windows, kids party. But out here, it's like a sanctuary. Lois is alone, looking out at the night. Then Clark walks up the steps. A beat. It takes a bit of courage to get to:

CLARK
... great party.

LOIS
(not looking at him)
It sucks.

A beat. Clark nods: this isn't gonna work. He turns to leave when Lois says, more to herself than to him:

LOIS (cont'd)
I can not believe I'm here.

CLARK
Me neither. Actually.

LOIS
This girl from high school-- Abby Farmer -- she and I are gonna be freshmen here next year, she said we needed to come tonight, we needed to "network" -- but we're not even friends, okay? The only reason she wanted me to come was so she wouldn't show up alone -- damnit, I predicted this would happen: now Abby's almost unconsciously drunk, upstairs with some three-hundred-pound, former Lincoln High all-star football dough-head, and I'm stuck out here, waiting for her to "finish" with him so that I can drive the three hours back home while she's passed out riding shotgun. Great party. Your fly's undone.

CLARK
-- oh--

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CONTINUED:

As he does his zipper, she says, frustrated:

LOIS
Maybe I need to lighten up. Just... chill. Try and network.
(with a faux smile)
Hi, what class are you in? What's your major?

This is actually a sensitive subject for Clark:

CLARK
I'm, uh... I'm a senior. And... undeclared.

LOIS
(beat, like he's a leper)
You're an undeclared SENIOR?

CLARK
-- oh, well, that was a nice... non-judgmental reaction...

LOIS
I'm sorry-- that was rude--

CLARK
I just don't know what I want to do yet. That's all. I have... some other questions I'm still working on...

LOIS
That's cool, I'm just one of those freaks who's always known what I want to do. That's why I hate school and parties -- I just want to skip it all and get on with it.

CLARK
Yeah? To do what?

LOIS
Journalism. I'm gonna graduate in three years, move to the city and start writing for the Daily Planet. That's my plan.

Maybe it's how she smells. But Clark is in love with her. She reads his ga-ga stare as common skepticism:

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LOIS (cont'd)
You think I'm peculiar. Overly-ambitious. Too focused on the future to really exist in the present.

CLARK
(smiles)
... that's not what I was thinking.

Suddenly the door opens -- it's ABBY and the BIG GUY:

ABBY
-- hey! So there's another party in town, let's go.

LOIS
I am not going to another party.

The Big Guy TAKES Lois' arm:

BIG GUY
-- Come on, I'm driving--
-- Trust me, you'll have fun!

LOIS
-- I said no!
-- Hey!

CLARK
-- leave her alone.

The Big Guy turns to Clark... then PUSHES HIM.

BIG GUY
Excuse me? Was I talking to you?

But instead of killing the guy, Clark is frozen. He's terrified -- as the Big Guy PUSHES Clark again -- and again -- it quickly becomes clear that over the years Clark has been terrified into inaction: HE WON'T EVEN DEFEND HIMSELF.

The Big Guy PUSHES AGAIN -- and just when it's about to get really ugly, LOIS PUSHES THE BIG GUY, HARD:

LOIS
Leave HIM alone!

The Big Guy turns to her, surprised. Then the Big Guy PUSHES HER. Before Clark can even react, Lois SLAMS the Guy in the face -- followed by a FLURRY OF POWERFUL, SUDDEN, KRAV MAGA BLOWS. The Big Guy SLAMS ONTO THE PORCH, out cold. Clark is absolutely STUNNED. Abby is aghast:

ABBY
Now how are we gonna find the party?!

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CONTINUED: (3)

LOIS
We're not going to the party, we're going home.

ABBY
Okay, you know what?! This is why people don't like you! 'Cause you're not, like... normal.

Abby storms off, leaving Lois, embarrassed and sad. Clark watches closely as Lois finally says:

LOIS
Take care.

And as she heads out:

CLARK
Wait...
(Lois stop)
... what... what's your name?

LOIS
Lois Lane. The abnormal Lois Lane.
(then)
Good luck figuring everything out.

She turns and heads off. We HOLD ON CLARK, considering this brief, life-altering meeting.

FADE OUT.

The SOUND of MILITARY CHOPPERS over BLACKNESS.

FADE IN:

EXT. SKY - DUSK

A helicopter ROARS OVERHEAD -- we follow it to reveal a normally-sleepy desert town in the distance, fifty miles east of Mesa City. The sun sets behind distant mountains as WORDS APPEAR:

DUST CITY, ARIZONA. SEVEN YEARS LATER.

EXT. DUST CITY - NIGHT

A dozen POLICE CARS are here. Emergency WORKERS in HAZ-MAT GEAR cordon off streets, unspool YELLOW TAPE. A few dozen of RESIDENTS look on as the chopper lands.

Through the swirl of dust, three black-suited MEN step off the copter and move forward. At center is a severe-faced 50 year-old man with closely-cropped hair.

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10/7/2002

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CONTINUED:

This is CIA Special Agent DR. LEX LUTHOR. Flanked by dark-suited, former Navy Seals GRAY and BURK.

POLICE LIEUTENANT HANNAH approaches Luthor, who walks briskly, already unhappy:

POLICE LT. HANNAH
Dr. Luthor, I'm Police Lieutenant Hannah, thank you for coming. Two hours ago we received an anonymous phone call claiming what appeared to be a UFO crashed in the area -- we've found the site and secured the perimeter. I've ordered everyone to keep a distance... it looks like there might be a body.

Off Luthor's steely reaction --

EXT. CRASH SCENE - NIGHT

We CRANE DOWN in the middle of a large field. POLICE, weapons at the ready, in the distance behind yellow tape. Smoke rises in the foreground -- we arrive at ground level to see a small CRASHED VEHICLE, pieces of metal strewn about, some of the surrounding grass ON FIRE. This thing looks distinctly like a CRASHED POD.

Luthor and the others stop at the yellow tape, a hundred yards from the crash. Luthor fixes his eyes on the distant fire. We're TIGHT ON his hard, determined face. You wouldn't want this guy for an enemy.

Luthor quickly walks under the yellow tape, towards the crash. Hannah holds up a haz-mat suit:

POLICE LT. HANNAH
What about hazard gear?

But Luthor just keeps walking, leaving Gray and Burk behind. Ignored, Hannah uses binoculars to follow Luthor. The RESIDENTS -- a few dozen of them -- watch from behind yellow tape, many with binoculars too.

Luthor arrives at the crash. Sees what looks like scattered metal pieces and motor parts -- and what looks like the BLOODY REMAINS of an ALIEN.

Hannah and others anxiously watch him through binoculars as Luthor moves closer to it. Kneels. Reaches out with his fingers and grabs a piece of red, wet flesh.

POLICE LT. HANNAH (cont'd)
... the hell...?

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CONTINUED:

Luthor studies the flesh... and then brings the chunk to his mouth AND EATS IT.

WHOA! MOANS OF HORROR AND DISGUST from all who watch -- many wince and turn away. Luthor -- indignant -- walks back to the Police and Residents:

LUTHOR
Turkey and tomato sauce. Your alien's a hoax. Tasty, but still a hoax.

POLICE LT. HANNAH
-- what about the ship?

LUTHOR
The ship's a Ford Escort. Stripped, dissembled -- it's actually a nice job.
(calls to crowd, kindly)
Hey, whoever did this did terrific work! Who's the artist?

The Residents look at each other nervously. Then two beer-friendly 19 year-old GUYS step forward, bashfully proud:

HOAX GUY #1
'Was my idea, but... my buddy helped out a little.

HOAX GUY #2
'sup.

Luthor smiles at them, then turns grim to Burk and Gray:

LUTHOR
Arrest them.

GRAY
Yessir.

As Luthor turns to leave, there's a CAMERA FLASH which becomes a black and white PHOTO from a below-the-fold story in The Daily Planet. The story headline: "CIA SPENDS MILLIONS ON LITTLE GREEN MEN." Written by LOIS LANE.

DIRECTOR DRESSLER (O.S.)
Lex, I'm not gonna pretend this isn't bad news for you.

PULL BACK FROM THE ARTICLE TO REVEAL that we're in:

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INT. CIA DIRECTOR DEAN'S OFFICE - DAY

A sleek, Langley office. DIRECTOR DEAN DRESSLER is a classic 60-year-old Skull and Bones inductee. Lex reads Lois' story, clearly troubled.

DIRECTOR DRESSLER
This obviously isn't the first experimental enterprise financed by the CIA -- but those projects remained classified. This reporter, Lois Lane, she has a source. She's printed, in its entirety, your division's mission statement.

LUTHOR
... Lane was there...? How did she know to be in Dust City?

DIRECTOR DRESSLER
The hoax was her idea.
(off Lex's look)
We questioned those trailer park boys. Turns out Lane paid them to put the whole thing together. Lex, I'm not questioning your intentions or your integrity, but the CIA can't publicly acknowledge it spends taxpayer money on the hunt for alien species. We should pull the plug--

LUTHOR
-- Dean--

DIRECTOR DRESSLER
-- at least until things settle down--

LUTHOR
-- my work, while idiosyncratic and difficult to quantify publicly... is significant.
(re: paper)
Which would have been obvious had Lane printed the most important detail.

DIRECTOR DRESSLER
Thank God she didn't.

LUTHOR
Why? Dean, we can't let some skirt with a press pass threaten this planet's security. I say we go public with the Big Secret.

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CONTINUED:

DIRECTOR DRESSLER
... that could result in mass hysteria.

LUTHOR
Well, maybe a little hysteria's just what we need.

EXT. THE DAILY PLANET - DAY

The skyscraper headquarters of the nation's largest newspaper. We're in the heart of teeming METROPOLIS, a city with very different feel from that of Gotham. Metropolis is a shimmering vertical urban center, the happy ~~combo of~~ New York, Chicago and San Francisco. Today's brilliant blue sky a magnificent backdrop.

JIMMY (V.O.)
-- okay, so keep paying attention: over there? You got the Sports desk.

INT. THE DAILY PLANET - DAY

The sprawling newspaper office, twenty-five stories high. We're with JIMMY OLSEN -- a Brooklyn-born somewhat effeminate twenty-something photographer who talks to someone OFF-CAMERA:

JIMMY
Those guys are all, like, old school boys' club, you know what I'm sayin', so unless you're like, "Mr. Sports Guy," they're never gonna ask you to lunch, never.
(walks off)
Come follow me.

As he heads off, CLARK KENT enters frame, following him. He's 29 now and is precisely where we'd expect, given the life trajectory we've witnessed thus far: he wears a suit, tie, hat and thick glasses and is insecure as ~~ever~~. He also carries a briefcase. The tour continues:

JIMMY (cont'd)
Coffee room, okay? For breaks and whatnot. Microwave, sink, toaster oven, all the anemones of home. This way.

They move through the BULLPEN, to an empty desk.

JIMMY (cont'd)
This is your desk. I had this fabricated. A little gift.

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He hands Clark an engraved desk nameplate: "CLAR KENT."

CLARK
--oh, thanks, Jimmy, it's-- my name's "Clark."

JIMMY
Clar Kent.

CLARK
(holds it up)
"Clark" Kent.

JIMMY
... oh...

CLARK
Lemme ask you something: there's a woman I met, years ago -- she's a reporter here now, I wondered if--

Interrupted by a MASSIVE DOOR SLAM, Clark turns to see on the other side of the massive space: Lois storming out of PERRY WHITE'S OFFICE. Jimmy looks troubled:

JIMMY
Oh crap.

CLARK
(beaming)
That's her.

And Lois storms over, furiously grabbing items from her desk, which backs up to Clark's desk. Clark's in the eye of the storm:

JIMMY
We coverin' Air Force One or no?

LOIS
"Or no." He said he's sick of "baby-sitting me."
(emphasizes words by throwing items into her bag)
He also used the words "foolish", "reckless", and "amateurish"--

JIMMY
-- Lois, you're talkin' 'bout Mr. White, he's from another planet.

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CONTINUED: (2)

LOIS
No, he's from another generation -- which might make him a brilliant editor-- but it doesn't mean he's always right.

JIMMY
(as she heads off)
She paid two kids to fake a UFO crash--

CLARK
-- uh-huh--

LOIS
(turns back)
--The CIA didn't have to send anyone but they did! I took a gamble, Planet got the story and I get disciplined: we're on Luthor's press conference.

JIMMY
-- this is Clark Kent --

-- but Lois has walked off -- they turn when they HEAR:

PERRY
-- Clark Kent.

-- PERRY WHITE is here -- the gruff, white-haired, fast-talking bastard Editor-in-Chief. He shakes Clark's hand:

PERRY (cont'd)
Perry White, you know who I am--

CLARK
-- yessir--

PERRY
-- good-- that's not a handshake, what the hell is that? --

CLARK
-- sorry, sir, I --

PERRY
Jimmy's got a better handshake than you, and he's got a boyfriend.

CLARK
-- that's-- isn't that offensive?

JIMMY
-- yup--

(CONTINUED)

S10762002001

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PERRY
-- don't worry about your handshake, work on your writing: you'll trail Lois and Jimmy for a while, they'll show you the ropes-- you've met Jimmy.

CLARK
(re: nameplate)
Yessir, he gave me this.

PERRY
Well, it's misspelled. That's why he's just the photographer.
(slaps Clark's arm).
Get to work.

Perry heads off. They watch him go.

JIMMY
When I first met Mr. White, I thought he was just a total asshole.

After a long beat, Clark looks at Jimmy, waiting for the revised opinion. Jimmy realizes:

JIMMY (cont'd)
Oh, no, that's it.

Clark nods and we CUT TO A PHOTOGRAPH OF:

A UFO. A GRAINY IMAGE. Like the kind we've all seen before. And we HEAR:

LUTHOR (O.S.)
-- Ridgeway, Nevada. 1993.

And then LEX LUTHOR walks in front of it. We ~~PULL BACK~~:

INT. GLOBAL CENTER - DAY

An auditorium. Fifty REPORTERS gathered to watch Lex, who is on stage, where the UFO image is being projected.

LUTHOR
And for this event in New Zealand, there were eighty witnesses. All of them reported that the object reversed course... then vanished into the sky.
(beat)
Hundreds of thousands of sightings are reported every year.
(MORE)

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LUTHOR (cont'd)
Most of them can be explained: weather balloons, satellites, hoaxes...
(beat)
But a few... can not.

We see Clark, sitting in the audience next to Lois. He watches, rapt. After all, he could be related to that thing in the picture. Jimmy and camera are here too.

LUTHOR (cont'd)
I am Director of the Special Operations Division of the CIA. As you may have read in Lois Lane's wonderfully written article.
(LAUGHS from the crowd)
The fact is, that hoax was Miss Lane's creation. Which makes me question her career choice: that's not how legitimate journalism should work.

She looks down, humiliated. Angry.

LUTHOR (cont'd)
The truth is, I'm relieved. We can finally talk publicly about what we do.

A SLIDE appears behind Lex: the CIA'S S.O.D. SEAL.

LUTHOR (cont'd)
Yes, the Special Operations Division seeks out intelligent, extraterrestrial life. And yes, we operate under the assumption that these beings are a threat. A danger to all life on this planet.

Clark shifts in his seat, a little uncomfortable.

LUTHOR (cont'd)
This division exists not because we're paranoid, acne-faced science fiction fanatics.
(big beat)
But because the CIA already has a UFO in its possession.

SHOCKED MURMURS from the crowd -- Clark in particular is thunderstruck. Lois reaches and pushes closed Clark's open jaw, saying quietly:

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LOIS
Don't be naive. This whole thing is propaganda.

Luthor advances to VARIOUS IMAGES: a CAPSULE -- very much like the one that Kal-El was sent in -- lying in a SWAMP.

LUTHOR
I led the team that recovered this craft, nine years ago. There's clear evidence that someone -- something -- was sent here. Specifically to this planet. Yet no body was recovered. Which means that it... is still out there.

Clark suddenly looks pale -- like he might get sick...

JIMMY
-- you okay?

CLARK
-- uh-huh...

LUTHOR
So what is "it" doing? Is "it" studying us? Communicating with its planet of origin? Perhaps designing some sort of attack?
(beat)
Of course, there will be skeptics among you. But my job today isn't to convince you of anything. It's simply to inform you that we have evidence. There is a Visitor. Hiding somewhere on Earth, right now. We can't afford to assume it's nonviolent. And as we all know... there's no such thing as one cockroach.

Clark gets up, a rush to the bathroom:

CLARK
-- excuse me --

LOIS
-- Cliff?

JIMMY
Clark.

LOIS
-- Clark?

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CONTINUED: (3)

LUTHOR
-- needless to say, if anyone out there has information that could help us in our search, I urge you to come forward--

INT. GLOBAL CENTER CORRIDOR - DAY

We're TIGHT ON CLARK, who is on the pay phone, looking pallid, edgy. Behind him, in the BACKGROUND, conference Attendees begin streaming out the doors. He talks stealthily:

CLARK
-- mom-- it's me. Yeah, I'm okay, the City's good, thanks; how are you? Good-- listen that...
(quieter)
... the capsule. The thing I landed in. Where is it?
(listens)
You're sure... and it's still there in the barn...
(beat, answered but still confused)
No, no reason, just... curious. I should go. Yeah, mom, love you too.

Clark hangs up and we PUSH IN on his puzzled face...

CLARK (V.O.) (cont'd)
... what do you think Luthor would do... if he found one of those aliens?

INT. THE DAILY PLANET - NIGHT

DOLLY ACROSS the mostly empty office, at this late hour. Clark works at his computer, Lois at hers. Open Chinese food containers.

LOIS
Don't tell me you believe that crap.

CLARK
What, the alien crap? A little.

LOIS
Clark, that press conference was classic reactive PR fiction! I wrote an article that embarrassed a division of the CIA -- they only held that conference to justify their existence! There's no UFO.

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CLARK
Well, wait a minute -- what if... for example -- just academically -- what if there were? Aliens on this planet.

Their eyes meet. Looking at him, she considers this for a long beat. Clark grows nervous. Then:

LOIS
There aren't! I'm telling you, you can't believe a thing that man says, there's just something about him. You must have that sometimes: instincts about people?

CLARK
(beat)
Yeah, I actually had one about you. Years ago.
(off her look)
We've met before. You and I.
(off her surprise)
At M.U. Remember?
(she strains to recall)
That party? At Gamma house? You were an incoming freshman? I was a senior? "Undeclared"?
(beat, nothing)
It was your first party? You'd driven there with a friend? Abby?
(beat, not yet, sighs)
We were on the back porch? You were wearing a red sweater? It was ten-sixteen--?

LOIS
... are you sure it was me--?

CLARK
Am I sure it was y--? Of course! You-- you beat up some guy, you--

LOIS
(vaguely)
Oh my God. I do remember beating up some g-- a big guy, right?

CLARK
Yes.

LOIS
He had a striped shirt, shaggy hair...?

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CONTINUED: (2)

CLARK
Yes!

LOIS
And you were there?

CLARK
This is unbelievable...

LOIS
(laughs)
I'm sorry -- and you should know, I have a really good memory.

CLARK
It doesn't matter-- I only brought it up because I wanted to say thank you.
(beat)
That night you said that one day you were going to become a journalist. And work here. I won't bore you with the details, but... you sort of helped give me a direction.

LOIS
(touched)
I did that for you?

Clark smiles at her. Grateful. A bit shy.

CLARK
Yeah.

Her PHONE RINGS. She answers.

LOIS
Lois Lane.

Clark works, stealing occasional glances at her.

LOIS (cont'd)
Yessir, the press conference piece is almost locked.
(listens, excited)
-- it was? At what time? Yessir -- no sir, I won't blow this, thank you--
(hangs up, gathers her things)
President's flight was rescheduled, I'm interviewing him tomorrow morning on Air Force One, I have to catch a train to D.C. -- can you please proof this?

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CLARK
Done -- congratulations--

LOIS
-- thanks-- Jimmy's gonna freak --
I'll see you later.

She heads off, then mid-office, turns back, eureka:

LOIS (cont'd)
Your fly was undone!

CLARK
(almost gloriously)
Yes it was!

He almost laughs, watching Lois smile and head off.

EXT. WASHINGTON, D.C. - DAY

Our MUSICAL SCORE creates an atmosphere of power and anticipation. The National Mall in all its glory; the brilliant-white Washington Monument pierces the deep blue sky...

EXT. ANDREWS AIR FORCE BASE - DAY

Lois Lane -- Jimmy Olsen behind her -- moves through a security checkpoint. They then continue onto a tarmac -- we PAN WITH THEM, REVEALING AIR FORCE ONE under prep. White House STAFF and MEMBERS OF THE PRESS climb the stairs to enter the plane. Lois and Jimmy follow.

INT. AIR FORCE ONE COCKPIT - DAY

The CREW performs a flight check.

INT. AIR FORCE ONE - DAY

Lois and Jimmy take their seats. She's trying as hard as she can not to reveal her giddy excitement. Then the SOUND of JET ENGINES starting up --

EXT. ANDREWS AIR FORCE BASE - DAY

The TURBINES begin to turn -- and we PUSH IN on an ENGINE PANEL at the front of the engine. It's loose. RATTLING. And on this foreboding image we CUT TO:

INT. CLARK'S APARTMENT - DAY

We PUSH THROUGH the moving boxes that litter the place. And there's Clark, asleep in bed.

(CONTINUED)

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CONTINUED:

His RADIO ALARM goes off: MUSIC PLAYS. Clark hits the SNOOZE BUTTON and within seconds is asleep again.

EXT. SKY - DAY

Air Force One climbs to altitude --

INT. AIR FORCE ONE - DAY

Lois looks over her notes. Jimmy is putting napkins, menu cards, anything "Air Force One", into his camera bag. Lois sees this -- says, quietly:

LOIS
Jimmy!

JIMMY
What? Come on, they know we're gonna take this stuff.

A STAFF MEMBER approaches, talks to Lois:

STAFF MEMBER
The President's ready to see you.

LOIS
Thank you.

Lois gives Jimmy a look, then heads to the front --

EXT. AIR FORCE ONE - DAY

The plane FLIES -- and the CAMERA MOVES, to the ENGINE with the LOOSE PANEL -- we PUSH IN, TIGHT ON the panel -- it's SHAKING VIOLENTLY now --

INT. AIR FORCE ONE - COCKPIT - DAY

The Pilots, as the plane reaches its 33,000 foot altitude. Suddenly an EMERGENCY LIGHT FLASHES -- a constant BUZZING -- they react -- technical CHATTER --

INT. AIR FORCE ONE - DAY

Lois follows the Staff Member down the aisle as the "FASTEN SAFETY BELT" light illuminates --

EXT. AIR FORCE ONE - DAY

The ENGINE PANEL RIPS LOOSE AND IS SUCKED INTO THE TURBINES -- BLADES SHATTER -- the engine EXPLODES -- the plane BANKS HARD --

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INT. AIR FORCE ONE - DAY

Lois falls to the floor -- people SCREAM as everything TILTS -- one of the JOURNALISTS on the PLANE PHONE reports:

JOURNALIST
-- oh my God! Robert, we're going down--! WE'RE IN A DIVE!

INT. AIR FORCE ONE - COCKPIT - DAY

The Pilots frantically try to correct the plane's attitude -- feverish RADIO CALLS --

EXT. AIR FORCE ONE - DAY

The plane DIVES hard -- and SMASH CUT TO:

INT. CLARK'S APARTMENT - DAY

Clark is unconscious. His RADIO goes off again:

D.J. (V.O.)
-- orce One is apparently having engine probl--

Clark hits SNOOZE again. Is instantly asleep.

INT. AIR FORCE ONE - COCKPIT - DAY

-- it's MAYHEM in here -- ALARMS BLARING --

PILOT
-- engine two's red-lining!

EXT. AIR FORCE ONE - DAY

-- a SECOND ENGINE BLOWS -- BLACK SMOKE POURING FROM IT as the plane plummets --

INT. AIR FORCE ONE - DAY

Lois -- terrified -- holds on to the seats as she desperately tries to make it back to Jimmy --

We now see the PRESIDENT, who, along with his WIFE and DAUGHTER, are surrounded by SECRET SERVICE AGENTS, all terrified --

INT. CLARK'S APARTMENT - DAY

PUSH IN ON sleeping Clark as a REPORTER'S VOICE FADES UP:

(CONTINUED)

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CONTINUED:

TV REPORTER
-- we're receiving information from a source on the airplane that Air Force One has lost two of its engines, and is -- at this moment -- plunging toward Earth --

-- suddenly Clark BOLTS AWAKE -- he turns to look and we RACK FOCUS: in an apartment in the building across the street, behind a closed window, a Woman irons while watching TV -- the news report.

TV REPORTER (cont'd)
Repeating the breaking news: it has been confirmed that Air Force One is in a steep, uncontrolled dive, headed for collision--

Clark springs from bed -- his mind races. Finally he realizes exactly what he must do. He turns to the moving boxes -- scans them all -- rips one open -- under sweaters and sweatshirts... is a cannister. A WHIP of his wrist and the SUIT BOUNDS OUT and into the middle of the apartment, standing there like it did once before... but this time... it'll fit.

Off Clark's face -- awash in trepidation -- we suddenly PULL BACK AT LIGHTSPEED to:

EXT. CLARK'S APARTMENT - DAY

-- outside his apartment -- a LONG SHOT from across the street -- we can make out Clark as he puts on the suit -- as the suit puts on him -- and in this SAME SHOT we RACE IN A BLUR UP TOWARD THE ROOF as SUPERMAN emerges, blowing the roof access door off its hinges.

We then QUICKLY PUSH IN TIGHT ON SUPERMAN'S FACE as he searches the sky. Though, of course, this is still Clark, his typical fear is overwhelmed by intense determination.

And in that moment, he takes off into the sky.

EXT. SKY - DAY

Air Force One spin-dives -- two F-18's APPEAR, flanking the failing aircraft --

INT. F-18 - DAY

One of the PILOTS into his radio:

(CONTINUED)

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CONTINUED:

F-18 PILOT
-- negative that, there's nothing we can do from here--

INT. AIR FORCE ONE - DAY

Lois is trying to climb up, toward the rear of the plane, tears streaming down her face.

EXT. SKY - DAY

Piercing the clouds -- a human bullet blurring through the sky -- Superman blasts across the horizon.

For a moment, Superman stops -- steadying himself, still new to flight -- we PUSH IN TIGHT on his face as his extraordinary eyes and ears scrutinize the sky -- HE HEARS THE STRAINING ENGINES and he TAKES OFF AGAIN -- we PAN as he darts through billowing clouds and--

EXT. BOSTON - DAY

PEDESTRIANS in Harvard Square looking upwards:

PEDESTRIAN #1
-- look! Up in the sky!

PEDESTRIAN #2
(who cares?)
It's a bird.

PEDESTRIAN #3
It's a plane!

PEDESTRIAN #2
... oh my God, it is a plane...

EXT. SKY - DAY

Air Force One can't recover -- the engines STRAINING LOUDLY, the plane SPINS, F-18's still flanking. Then the CAMERA PIVOTS -- revealing SUPERMAN as he approaches the plane -- as he reaches for a wing, the plane SPIRALS, sending him tumbling --

Superman steadies himself mid-tumble and DIVES again for the plane -- he first grabs one of the wings and tries to stop the plane from spinning --

INT. F-18 - DAY

The Pilot -- having seen Superman -- is astonished:

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CONTINUED:

PILOT
Fellas...?!

EXT. SKY - DAY

Superman strains, pull on the wing, stopping its spiral.

INT. AIR FORCE ONE - DAY

Lois gets to a window -- looks out -- sees Superman for the first time -- as he then flies back, underneath the belly of the plane. Her mind spins --

Jimmy arrives beside her, taking PICTURES out the window.

EXT. BOSTON - DAY

More and more people in the streets stop to watch the skies, the plunging plane -- many run, terrified --

EXT. SKY - DAY

Hoisting the entire aircraft on his back, Superman begins to LIFT THE PLANE -- Superman strains under the ebormous weight -- and restores it to normal attitude.

INT. AIR FORCE ONE - DAY

Lois is in disbelief -- she almost wants to laugh --

The President and his Family, relieved but confounded, look out the window, trying to understand what's happened.

INT. AIR FORCE ONE - COCKPIT - DAY

The crew reacts:

NAVIGATOR
-- Wally, good job!

PILOT
Guys, I'm not doing anything.

INT. F-18 - DAY

The Pilot's eyes locked on Superman:

PILOT
-- uh, is anyone else seeing this?

RADIO VOICE (V.O.)
(in disbelief)
... I... think so...

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EXT. KENT FARM - CORN FIELD - DAY

In the middle of the expansive field, Jonathan Kent, 31-years-old now, brings his tractor to a stop -- he's listening to his TRANSISTOR RADIO -- we PUSH IN as the newscast is HEARD:

RADIO BROADCASTER (V.O.)
-- and Air Force One -- ladies and gentlemen, this is what they're reporting -- is being carried to safety by a man. A man in blue with a red cape --

Jonathan looks up, amazed --

EXT. BOSTON - DAY

-- some Pedestrians are running like mad -- others (most) stunned, frozen in shock -- as Air Force One is carried safely down into the city, toward the middle of the Boston Commons, by a man dressed in a full-body blue suit and red cape.

INT. AIR FORCE ONE COCKPIT - DAY

NAVIGATOR
-- should we put down landing gear?

PILOT
(in shock)
-- sure, what the hell--

EXT. KENT FARM - CORN FIELD - DAY

As Jonathan Kent runs across the field, back to the house, holding the radio. He's excited -- anxious to tell Martha of Clark's extraordinary event --

JONATHAN
-- Martha...!

-- but as he runs -- suddenly his face is strained -- he drops to his knees -- something's wrong. We're TIGHT ON his face: oh God --

EXT. BOSTON COMMONS - DAY

The park in the middle of the city: countless Bostonians CHEER WILDLY as Superman gently sets down the President's airplane. Out of breath, Superman looks up at the audience of Pedestrians -- YELLING, LAUGHING, SHOCK, APPLAUSE, and LOTS of PICTURE-TAKING--

(CONTINUED)

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CONTINUED:

Superman -- Clark -- is so unaccustomed to this moment -- such a superneophyte -- that he's unable to enjoy it.

Emergency CHUTES inflate and Secret Service AGENTS begin sliding off the plane -- followed by the President, who moves toward Superman. Agents try to hold him back, but he insists. As the President approaches, he's cautious.

PRESIDENT
Excuse me... do you... speak English?

SUPERMAN
Yessir...

PRESIDENT
Well, then. I'd like to say two words to you, son. Two words I've never meant more sincerely in my--

SUPERMAN
-- excuse me --

Superman walks past the President over to LOIS, who has just slid down the slide. She looks up -- his hand is there. She takes it and he helps her to her feet -- she looks up at him, her breath taken away.

SUPERMAN (cont'd)
... you okay?

LOIS
(astonished)
... me?

She looks him down and up, stunned and grateful to the core. He's perplexed that she doesn't know who he is.

LOIS (cont'd)
... who are you?

SUPERMAN
Who? I'll give you a hint.
(then)
Fly.

LOIS
(oblivious, in shock)
... yeah, I know, I saw you -- how do you do that?!

It hits him: she doesn't know who he is. Then, from behind him: half a dozen REPORTERS with STILL and VIDEO CAMERAS hurry towards him:

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REPORTERS
(all OVERLAPPING)
SIR! IN THE RED AND BLUE! WHO ARE YOU?! ARE YOU A REPUBLICAN? WHERE ARE YOU FROM? WHAT'S YOUR NAME? ARE YOU THE ALIEN WE'VE BEEN HEARING ABOUT? WHAT DOES THE "S" STAND FOR?

-- CAMERAS going wild the whole time -- the hoard of reporters surprisingly irritating for Superman. He looks back to Lois, who stares at him, beholden. Captivated. But he's too anxious to say anything but:

SUPERMAN
... excuse me.

And with a magnificent LEAP, he BOUNDS into the SKY -- everyone GASPS -- some people SCREAM -- others FAINT. Cameras catch every moment -- including Jimmy's.

JIMMY
(taking pictures)
-- Miss Lane-- oh my God... oh my God, Miss Lane...

And we PUSH IN on Lois' wide, incredulous eyes as they watch the RED STREAK in the magnificent sky... a TEAR streams down Lois' face as we PRELAP:

NETWORK REPORTER (V.O.)
-- a truly incredible sight -- just minutes ago in the center of Boston --

INT. CIA - LEX LUTHOR'S OFFICE - DAY

We are TIGHT ON the video monitor as the NETWORK REPORTER announces:

NETWORK REPORTER
-- the President of the United States, flying aboard Air Force One, was saved from certain death today by an astonishing stranger...

An IMAGE OF SUPERMAN taken at the scene appears and we SWIFTLY MOVE AROUND TO REVEAL LEX LUTHOR, watching with steely eyes. Beside him, Agents Gray and Burk watch, grim.

PUSH IN on Lex as he watches. Then, with foreboding:

LUTHOR
... well, here we go.

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EXT. ALLEYWAY - DAY

The dark, brick canals of the City. In a RED BLUR Superman makes a quick landing. Out of breath, his back against a wall, he looks around -- is he being followed somehow? No.

He PULLS open a steel, multi-locked door -- quickly peeks inside. Coast is clear.

INT. CLARK'S APARTMENT - DAY

Front door bursts open -- Superman quickly enters and locks the door. Still breathing hard -- this is an anxiety attack -- he quickly closes the blinds then PULLS at the suit -- it RIPS off his body, landing -- standing -- in the middle of the apartment -- SMASH CUT TO:

INT. CLARK'S BATHROOM - SHOWER - DAY

Clark takes a steaming shower, his heart still pounding.

INT. CLARK'S APARTMENT - DAY

Clark sits naked in a chair, hunched over, rocking... his mind racing. Thirty minutes ago he was sleeping. Entirely unprepared that today was the day he would reveal himself to the world.

And now he sits here, somehow afraid, his mind racing.. knowing his life will never be the same. Then, the PHONE RINGS. He looks at the phone, nervous for a moment. Then he answers it:

CLARK
... hello?

MARTHA (V.O.)
... Clark.

CLARK
Mom, you saw the news-- you can't tell anyone that was me -- d'you understand? No one-- will you tell Dad?

MARTHA (V.O.)
(beat, sad)
.... sweetheart... your father's passed away.

ON CLARK -- the awful words landing, we start to HEAR CHINESE... it's a NEWSBROADCAST... and we CUT TO:

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INT. VIDEO MONITOR - DAY

-- the Chinese newscast is just the first of a SERIES of INTERNATIONAL NEWS REPORTS -- French, Japanese, Russian, Hebrew -- we see the monumental impact Superman has made. Then a BBC REPORT: behind the BBC NEWSCASTER is an image of SUPERMAN, and the words "THE STRANGER."

BBC REPORTER
-- and given the American government's recent UFO revelations, he could be from another planet. Regardless, in this age of hyperbole it's refreshing to simply be honest. And to report that today... a miracle occurred.

EXT. EARTH - NIGHT

Our planet, floating in space. We PULL AWAY from it as the SOUNDS of the international newscasts continue. The planet shrinks from view... the newscasts OVERLAPPING. Soon it's a cacophony -- forever transmitting into space... the SOUNDS BECOMING...

EXT. YISPA MEGACITY, KRYPTON - NIGHT

... the ROAR of a small PASSING SPACECRAFT, which REVEALS the Megacity in all its hideous glory.

INT. COVA PALACE - NIGHT

A central room of the dark palace, illuminated mostly by the hazy city lights through full-height windows. The glossy floors and low ceilings create a slit-scan look.

Kata-Zor sits at a small game table, flanked by two semi-clad Kryptonian FEMALES. He smokes from a Kryptonian bong, and plays an age-old Kryptonian board game called SAWAGO (chess on four levels, the pieces hovering in space, moved with a touchpad at the base).

His opponent is a thin, brilliant, but skittish MAN (his name is PREDIUS, though we won't get to know him until the next film of the series). The way Predius is dressed, it's clear: he's one of the concentration camp prisoners.

Kata-Zor finally finishes a turn. Predius nervously looks on -- realizing that Kata-Zor has made a bad move. What to do. Predius gives Kata-Zor a slight look with his eyes. Kata-Zor doesn't understand at first -- then realizes he's made a mistake. Kata-Zor, as if it were his idea, re-takes his last turn. Predius nods at Kata-Zor's genius.

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CONTINUED:

Ty-Zor enters, inspired, tasting blood:

TY-ZOR
We've found Kal-El.

Kata-Zor looks up: he's been waiting for this forfuckinEVER. Predius has heard this as well. He'll surely be taking this information back to his people.

KATA-ZOR
Where.

TY-ZOR
.... Earth.
(beat)
And I'd like to go. Kill him myself. Father, please..

-- PUSH IN on Kata-Zor as he looks at his son, the Devil himself behind those eyes... and we CUT TO:

EXT. KATA-ZOR'S MILITARY BASE - NIGHT

With a bowel-shaking RUMBLE, a COMBAT SHIP -- the QYRA -- takes off from an endless, grimy spaceport. Needless to say, Earthbound. IT FILLS THE FRAME, passing by to REVEAL:

AN AMERICAN FLAG. BOOM DOWN to see it's atop a pole at:

EXT. SMALLVILLE CEMETERY - DAY

Heart-breaking, intimate MUSIC PLAYS over Jonathan Kent's funeral. A small cemetery on Smallville Hill. A handful of MOURNERS. Martha leans against her tall son. Clark shelters her in his strong arms.

INT. KENT'S BEDROOM - DAY

The mournful MUSIC CONTINUES as Clark stands at his father's dresser, staring at framed photographs of his family. Golden light through the window. A bittersweet moment.

Clark opens the wooden box on the dresser. Jonathan's two watches are here. Cuff-links, used only once. A few half dollars. A pipe. And a baseball.

Clark picks up the baseball. Holds it, flooded with memories. After a beat:

MARTHA (V.O.)
You hungry?

Clark turns: Martha is in the doorway. Wistful.

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CLARK
No thanks, Mom.

And she moves beside Clark and looks into the wooden box of Jonathan's personal effects. Finally:

MARTHA
... it's amazing, isn't it. The things we keep. And leave behind.

And she's picked up a small burgundy fabric POUCH with a string tie. She opens it, pours the contents into her hand. Five odd-shaped SILVER PIECES.

CLARK
... what is that?

MARTHA
A gentleman gave us those. Years ago. He told us that where he was from, each symbol represents a different principle. Lemme see.
(a beat, recalling)
One stood for Courage. Another Sacrifice. ... Wisdom... Faith...
(beat, then)
... and Love.
(beat)
Your father liked these. Said they reminded him about what was important. As if he needed reminding.

Clark stares at these pieces, then, sadly:

CLARK
... did Dad have his radio with him?
(off her discomfort, a confirmation)
... it was because of me, wasn't it...

MARTHA
Clark. What you did... was wonderful.

CLARK
(quietly, eyes on the photographs)
... I'm never putting that suit on again.

Martha just looks at Clark, saddened...

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EXT. WASHINGTON, D.C. - DAY

TO ESTABLISH. PRELAP:

LUTHOR (V.O.)
-- what I'm proposing might seem unusual, given the circumstances, but--

INT. APPROPRIATIONS CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Marble columns, high ceilings, darkly lit. Lex, seated beside Director Dressler (who's visibly uncomfortable), addresses a half a dozen elderly LEGISLATORS. Mounds of documents before Lex.

LEGISLATOR #1
(reviewing records)
Dr. Luthor, you're looking for additional funding. Military resources to locate and imprison this... "Stranger" as they're calling him...

LUTHOR
Yessir.

LEGISLATOR #1
You want to incarcerate the man who just saved the life of our President.

LUTHOR
Sir, I'd like to remind you that, as much as he may look the part, the being in question is not a man. He is an alien --

LEGISLATOR #1
-- we don't know anything about this man-- he could be from France for all we know--

LUTHOR
Sir, I promise you we're dealing with an alien -- an illegal one, and he should be treated as such. His ability to fly and lift hundreds of tons shouldn't exempt him from U.S. Naturalization protocol -- I assert it's all the more reason to keep this unknown quantity in check -- to examine him and keep him in custody as long as necessary.

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LEGISLATOR #1
What the hell happened in your life that makes you hate aliens so much?

A beat. Then:

LUTHOR
Read my hypotheses. And ask yourself: how many of our greatest enemies were once considered harmless. This Stranger's motives are unclear, and that's dangerous. He may appear sympathetic... He may also be the herald of the end of the world.

The Legislators seem to be considering this. Then:

LEGISLATOR #1
When I was a boy, my neighbor got a dog. Great Dane. Giant animal. Scared me to death. One day he walked up to me. Licked my face. You know what I didn't do? Kick him in the balls.

LUTHOR
(seething...)
... while that's a delightful analogy-

LEGISLATOR #1
Your proposal is paranoid. This is the first real hero I've seen since DiMaggio, you think I'm gonna be the one to lock him up? Threaten him with the might of the U.S. military? Not a chance.

Luthor feels the burn of this consequential rejection. He looks over at Dressler for support. But Dressler isn't on his side either. He says, cutting him off:

DRESSLER
I'm sorry, Lex.

LUTHOR
(deadly eyes)
You coward.

Dressler looks at Luthor -- his real disdain for the doctor on the surface now -- as Luthor turns to the Legislator:

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LUTHOR (cont'd)
THINK for a minute about someone you love! Now understand that by doing nothing you are killing them!

LEGISLATOR #1
You might be a smart man, Dr. Luthor -- but you might also be insane.

LUTHOR
(stands, irate)
-- AND YOU'RE AN IDIOT!

LEGISLATOR #1
DR. LUTHOR--!

LEGISLATOR #1 (CONT'D)
-- I WANT YOU OUT OF THIS ROOM!
-- THE ONLY PERSON GOING INTO CUSTODY WILL BE YOU!

LUTHOR
-- YOU WILL HELP BRING THIS ALIEN INTO CUSTODY!
-- WE MUST DESTROY THIS ALIEN THREAT!

LEGISLATOR #1 (cont'd)
(stands, storms off)
I'm demanding the CIA dismiss you from active duty immediately -- session adiourned.

As they all leave -- even Dressler -- as we HOLD ON LUTHOR'S infuriated FACE...

PERRY (V.O.)
Superman.

INT. THE DAILY PLANET - DAY

Lois excitedly follows Perry White through the office -- he's reading her copy.

LOIS
-- the "S" --

PERRY
-- yeah, I gettit --

LOIS
-- I thought it was better than "The Stranger" -- d'you think it's good?

PERRY
Don't ever ask me if I think it's good -- you wanna know what I think?
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

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CONTINUED:

PERRY (cont'd)
This "Super-man" walked away from the President and directly over to you -- and what did you do? You shut down, you froze up.

LOIS
The plane was about to crash -- a man was flying, I was in shock...

PERRY
Well, get over it. You should've asked the guy in tights for an interview. You didn't. You blew it.
(re: page)
Change the second "inconceivable" to "unimaginable" -- lose the first paragraph, you don't need it, and you misspelled "sinewy" and "valiant".

LOIS
-- I haven't proofed it yet--

PERRY
-- Well, next time proof it -- and you'll want to change it to former CIA Director of Special Operations.

LOIS
-- excuse me?

PERRY
Lex Luthor was just fired. I've got Griffith on it.

Perry walks off -- Lois' mind races --

JIMMY (V.O.)
-- the hell was he fired for?!

INT. THE DAILY PLANET - LATER - DAY

Lois has rushed over to Jimmy Olsen, who's cropping PHOTOS OF SUPERMAN on his computer.

LOIS
-- a friend at the Agency said Luthor was banging the war drums too loudly -- he wanted to have Superman incarcerated -- I'm gonna go to D.C

JIMMY
-- did Mr. White send you?

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CONTINUED:

LOIS
No, I just don't trust what Luthor's gonna do next -- do you still have that shotgun microphone?

JIMMY
Y'actually think Luthor's gonna talk to you?

LOIS
Not knowingly.

INT. KENT'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Clark sits at the table, eating the sandwich. Lost in thought, he absentmindedly slides the SILVER PIECES around on the table, arranging and rearranging them. Martha is at the sink, cleaning.

MARTHA
I always meant to learn about our bills... how much we owe every month...

CLARK
Mom, I'll take care of all that, don't worry about it.

MARTHA
I'd ask... he always said, "One day I'll explain the whole thing."
(beat)
... said that for fifty years...

And as Martha keeps talking, we SLOWLY PUSH IN ON CLARK -- MARTHA'S VOICE FADING AS WHAT CLARK SEES MAKES HIS EYES GO WIDE --

-- AND THEN WE SEE IT: THESE FIVE SILVER PIECES ARE THE NEGATIVE SPACE THAT MAKE UP THE "S" ON SUPERMAN'S SUIT.

CLARK
Mom...? ... who was the man...? Who gave you these?

MARTHA
-- just a man... truck broke down one night--

CLARK
-- when --?!

Martha walks over to Clark --

(CONTINUED)

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CONTINUED:

MARTHA
-- ages ago-- must be thirty years -- more -- he just came to us for help He was a lovely ma--

-- she sees the "S" on the table and drops the glass she's drying.

INT. KENT'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Martha goes through a PHOTO ALBUM, Clark sits beside her.

MARTHA
-- dad had just bought a new camera... I remember we used it that night...
(as she searches)
... I just remember the three of us stayed up talking... he kept asking us questions about ourselves... I'd never met anyone more curious -- here.

-- Martha's found a photograph of Jonathan and Martha -- AND JOR-EL, in simple American clothes. They sit at the Kent kitchen table. Clark stares, overwhelmed. Somehow, this man's face is familiar. Tears come to his eyes. It's almost as if Martha intuits that this is Clark's biological father.

MARTHA (cont'd)
... Clark... what does this mean...?

CLARK
(long beat, breathless)
... it means that it was no accident...
(beat, reeling)
... it means I was sent here... to you and dad... for a reason...

As Clark's mind tumbles, Martha moves close to him -- says, quietly, guiltily:

MARTHA
Your father and I always told ourselves that you were here... because you were the answer to our prayers.
(beat, sad smile)
But the truth is... I always knew it was more than that.
(beat)
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

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CONTINUED:

MARTHA (cont'd)
Clark... I think you're the answer to the world's prayers.

Clark looks at her, challenged and afraid --

MARTHA (cont'd)
Teaching you to resist your powers, the way dad and I always did... trying to make you... "normal"... I think that was all a mistake.

CLARK
... you didn't make any mistakes--

MARTHA
Maybe we did. We were always so afraid that you'd be found out. That you'd get in trouble and someone would take you away from us.

CLARK
No one's ever gonna take me away from you.

MARTHA
What I'm saying is... it's okay.
(beat)
I'm not suggesting you give up being Clark, that's up to you... but I think it's time for you to be true to your calling.
(beat, tears in her eyes)
Courage. Sacrifice. Wisdom. Faith. And love.
(beat)
... son... go save the world.

And we PUSH IN on Clark's face... knowing his mother is right... and as our MUSIC starts to BUILD -- momentous -- powerful -- we CUT TO:

EXT. ANDES - DAWN

We RACE THROUGH THE CLOUDS as the SUN RISES -- and we find Superman, who flies with a determination we haven't seen before --

Now we're WHISKING AROUND the soaring ANDES MOUNTAINS -- PUSH IN as Superman lands atop a mountain -- an icon of freedom and bravery -- but what is he doing here?

He's listening to the world's cries for help.

Eyes closed, we HEAR what he HEARS: distant SCREAMS... SHOUTS... YELLS... CRIES...

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desperate PLEAS for help -- and we're TIGHT ON Superman as he listens to the world -- his emotions rising, his heart breaking -- and then, as if snapped out of it, he hears horrible THUNDER and one particularly HORRIBLE CRY -- Men. Japanese. Resolved to help, Superman TAKES OFF --

EXT. PACIFIC OCEAN - NIGHT

A WILD STORM -- sixty-foot SWELLS. A Japanese FISHING BOAT tossed in the nightmare. The CREW -- whose CRIES we've heard -- fights fiercely to keep the boat afloat.

But this is a losing battle -- and here comes the WAVE that will kill them all -- and these Men know it. In this very moment, crossing the threshold to their death, the fishing boat is suddenly LIFTED OUT OF THE WATER --

-- they look up -- and SUPERMAN IS THERE, straining to hold the boat, flying them into the sky --

Superman carries the boat JUST PAST THE ENORMOUS DEATHWAVE -- the thing LICKS the hull of the boat --

EXT. DOCKS - JAPAN - NIGHT

It rains hard -- but this is safety. Superman sets the boat down in the dock. Looking down at the shocked seamen, Superman gives a short salute.

Then he HEARS ANOTHER CRY -- a WOMAN this time -- Italian -- and he FLIES OFF IN A BLUR AND --

EXT. SKY - NIGHT

WE FLY WITH SUPERMAN -- through NIGHT, across the Ocean, through TIME ZONES and WEATHER and into DAYLIGHT -- to ITALY -- specifically:

INT. FLORENCE APARTMENT - DAY

We're in the middle of a furious domestic dispute: an enraged HUSBAND hits his crying WIFE. He YELLS at her in Italian -- sadly, this could be any language.

This man is RAGING -- he could actually kill her. The Husband moves toward the woman, taking out all his aggression -- he throws a LAMP at her -- she SCREAMS --

He continues to YELL -- and in the background there's a FLASH of red -- a piece of his cape -- the wife, face wet and bruised -- looks up, shocked.

Just then the Husband moves for his Wife -- about to hit her again -- when he's suddenly grabbed from behind -- yanked back POWERFULLY -- the Wife GASPS.

(CONTINUED)

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CONTINUED:

SUPERMAN

Italiano?

ITALIAN WIFE

... si.

SUPERMAN

'Scuzi.

And Superman LIFTS INTO THE SKY with the Man --

EXT. SKY - DAY

Superman races UPWARD -- holding onto the Husband who SCREAMS, terrified -- at two-thousand feet, Superman DROPS THE HUSBAND --

-- the man falls -- SCREAMING, TERRIFIED. Superman SWOOPS DOWN, grabs him --

EXT. FLORENCE - DAY

On a crowded street, Superman lands -- he throws the Husband to the ground -- the guy's cowering now. Pedestrians freeze, shocked --

Superman raises a hand, as if he's about to punch the guy into the center of the Earth -- and the Husband starts crying. Superman kneels to him -- and with his finger motions, "no, no, no". The Husband nods, understanding, still terrified for his life.

-- then the SOUND of a horrible EXPLOSION -- Superman turns his head -- he's the only one who HEARS it. He FLIES OFF, his RED CAPE FILLS THE FRAME, taking us to:

EXT. WASHINGTON, D.C. - NIGHT

A rainy night. Lois sits in a rented American car. Watching with binoculars: the front door of a brownstone.

After a long beat, Lex Luthor exits the building. Looks around, sees no one. He gets into his black sedan and drives off.

Lois looks a touch nervous -- but she lives for shit like this. After a beat she puts her car in gear and follows.

EXT. PERU - NIGHT

Men and Women SCREAM, holding their children, running from their red clay village as a distant VOLCANO ERUPTS, SPEWING LAVA everywhere -- destroying their fragile homes.

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It's a melee -- when suddenly there's the sound of a GALE-FORCE WIND --

In the insanity, many don't even hear it at first -- but some turn to look -- and there, from a nearby mountain, Superman BLOWS AT THE LAVA -- his powerful breath FREEZING the molten rock -- creating a natural WALL OF LAVA that protects the village. The Villagers see this hero -- literally saving their lives -- and they start CHEERING -- CRYING -- kissing their babies in impossible, shocked gratitude --

EXT. WASHINGTON, D.C. - WAREHOUSE DISTRICT - NIGHT

A spooky, empty, after hours part of the city. Lex's car arrives at an old brick, burnt-out government WAREHOUSE, stopping at a combination-code SECURITY GATE. After a moment the gate OPENS -- the car drives in and the gate CLOSES.

RACK FOCUS to find Lois's car, lights off, in the distance.

Inside her car, Lois watches -- waits. Then grabs her black umbrella and gets out --

INT. WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

Lex walks through the dark, scary, decrepit building.

EXT. WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

Lois tries to find a way in -- but the only way is over the fence. She scales it, an athletic, determined body.

INT. WAREHOUSE - MEETING ROOM - NIGHT

Lex enters the bare, dark, leaking room. Sitting at a table are Gray and Burk, Lex's aides. Lex sits across from them. It's a scene that's mostly DARK -- except for sharp MOONLIGHT slicing across their faces.

LUTHOR
I called this meeting... because you've both been loyal to me for years. And I'm grateful for that. But I need your help now, more than ever.

Gray and Burk nod in subservience.

INT. WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

A series of macabre corridors and doorways. Lois, now wet, enters the building through an old steel door, almost rusted off its hinges.

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CONTINUED:

As she crosses the filthy cement floor, two RATS scurry by -- she GASPS, but quietly. Then she removes the MICROPHONE and small VOICE RECORDER from her bag.

INT. WAREHOUSE - MEETING ROOM - NIGHT

Lex, Gray and Burk. Lex talks quietly, ominously. His eyes are almost hypnotic. He's a fanatic, but he's wildly convincing.

LUTHOR
As you know, the Agency has decided to terminate my position. This is a narrow-minded and deadly mistake. But not a surprising one...

INT. WAREHOUSE - CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Lois walks quietly, her back against the corridor wall. Can BARELY make out a VOICE. She gets to a doorway and peeks around the corner.

Through three OPEN DOORWAYS, seventy-five feet away, Lex talks with Gray and Burk. Lois turns on the recorder. Wears the EARPHONE and aims the MICROPHONE. She and we HEAR:

INT. WAREHOUSE - MEETING ROOM - NIGHT

Lex continues:

LUTHOR
I was a young man, I had a vision. The words were spoken to me as if by a stranger, whispered to me. Images of what would come made clear in my mind. I began my studies with a laser focus: what seemed like lunacy to the average person... was simply my fate.
(beat)
This vision told me that Others would come, hunting down this "Super-Man." That there would be great destruction. Earth's darkest days. In the vision I would assist the Others -- hand them what they came for. And in exchange... they would grant me supreme power over this planet.

Lois watches, eyes wide -- Luthor's clearly mad -- except that we do know: Others ARE coming...

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LUTHOR (cont'd)
Assist me in this effort... and in exchange I'll share with you that power.

Gray and Burk look at each other... In agreement.

GRAY
We're in.

LUTHOR
Good. Then what I'm about to tell you is Red-band classified. The alien pod we found, years ago...
(beat)
... a body was recovered.

TIGHT ON LOIS -- she can't believe this --

LUTHOR (cont'd)
It was dead. Killed on impact. But I organized top secret biological studies. What we learned was that a seemingly benign element... changed the molecular structure of this alien.

Luthor pulls out a folder -- slides it over to Gray and Burk. A top secret NASA file: pages of text and some PHOTOS of a phosphorous GREEN ROCK.

Lois watches -- behind her, a few more RATS she doesn't yet see...

LUTHOR (cont'd)
Kryptonite. A rock, one of thousands plucked out of space by the Virgo Space Probe. Harmless to humans. Poison to the likes of Super-man.
(beat)
A sample is on loan to the National Aerospace Museum -- you retrieve the Kryptonite, I'll handle contacting the--

Just then rats cross Lois' feet -- she reflexively STEPS BACK -- making a small NOISE --

Luthor and the Agents looks up -- Lois runs -- Agents Gray and Burk pull their guns and run after her --

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INT. WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

A fast CHASE through the facility -- Lois RACING -- SLIPPING for a moment in a puddle -- Gray and Burk running, searching, guns drawn --

She runs through an EXIT DOOR and suddenly an ALARM BLARES --

EXT. WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

Lois SPRINTS through the rain -- distant POLICE SIRENS can be HEARD -- she races towards a chain link fence -- jumps -- climbs -- an alleyway and garbage cans on the other side -- we're TIGHT ON LOIS as she makes the climb and JUMPS DOWN on the other side -- she turns and SCREAMS:

LEX LUTHOR STANDS RIGHT BEFORE HER -- he suddenly GRABS her by the throat -- straining, terrified -- she tries to fight back but he's TOO STRONG -- he LEANS CLOSE to her face, which is turning blue --

LUTHOR
... did you get the story you came for? Miss Lane?

Lex GRABS the TAPE RECORDER and MICROPHONE from her hands -- then looks at her with a killer's eyes. POLICE SIRENS getting LOUDER, she strains to breathe -- he gets even closer -- his lips almost touching hers --

LUTHOR (cont'd)
You just wait... and see where this story goes...

And just as we think he's going to murder her, he THROWS HER DOWN HARD into the garbage cans -- it's a painful landing --

Just then she's illuminated by HALOGEN HEADLIGHTS -- two POLICE CARS have arrived, COPS jump out, aiming their pieces on Lois:

COP
FREEZE!

Lois looks up: LEX IS GONE.

OFF LOIS, horrified, confused, out of breath, CUT TO:

EXT. SPACE - NIGHT

The Kryptonian combat ship Qyra BLASTS through hyperspace -- it finally SLOWS and comes to a stop, floating in space --

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INT. QYRA - NIGHT

A corridor of this dark, wet ship -- tubing and rust-heavy control panels everywhere. A three-part corridor PORTAL LOUDLY SEPARATES and FOUR KRYPTONIANS step through it -- TY-ZOR leads the determined, quick pace. Who are these other Kryptonians? Two MALE, one FEMALE, we'll get to them later -- but for now:

-- they enter the DECK of the Qyra -- quickly manning four separate COCKPIT CONTROL UNITS. They strap themselves in, use their controls to execute a well-synchronized set of commands and:

EXT. SPACE - NIGHT

The Qyra SEPARATES -- sections of the ship peel BACK LIKE A BANANA -- REVEALING WHAT LOOKS LIKE A SMALLER WARSHIP INSIDE.

Elements of the SMALLER WARSHIP TURN, RETRACT -- the thing TRANSFORMS and we realize it's a ROUSER -- one of their twelve-story MECH WARRIORS. While the Qyra mothership remains stationary, the Rouser's BOOSTERS IGNITE -- it BLASTS away --

INT. QYRA - NIGHT

-- and the four Kryptonians watch from the Qyra as the Rouser heads away from them. We're TIGHT ON Ty-Zor, whose stare is intense and unwavering --

TY-ZOR
(in Kryptonian; English SUBTITLES)
Arm the canons.

-- we HEAR an OFF-CAMERA KRYPTONIAN RESPONSE. Ty-Zor's blood-hungry eyes seem sickeningly pleased...

INT. THE DAILY PLANET - DAY

The place is ABUZZ in Superman talk. We see a HEADLINE, "SUPERMAN SAVES THOUSANDS", photos from Peru and Japan. Clark walks through, arrives at his desk. Jimmy's there, looking over PROOF SHEETS.

JIMMY
-- hey, how's your mom, she okay?

CLARK
(glances at photos)
-- she will be, thank you -- where's Lois?

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CONTINUED:

JIMMY
(not happy)
Getting fired.

CLARK
-- what?

Another DOOR SLAM: Clark looks up to see Perry White burst from his office wearing his jacket. Lois, with a bandage, trails:

PERRY
-- what upsets me, and this is the last time I will say this, is not what or why you do what you do, it's how--

LOIS
-- Mr. White--

PERRY
-- I am not a bail bondsman, Miss Lane! I am not a baby-sitter or a father or even very patient -- I want your desk cleaned out this afternoon.

LOIS
Lex Luthor is planning something to destroy Superman--

PERRY
SUPERMAN?! THE MAN YOU DIDN'T INTERVIEW?!

-- the entire newsroom stops. Perry gets very quiet.

PERRY (cont'd)
You're fired. Excuse me.

And Perry walks off. Lois stands there, dazed. Clark approaches:

CLARK
-- Lois--

LOIS
(totally dismissive)
-- not now, Clark --
(goes after Perry)
Mr. White, wait a minute--!

Following Perry, Lois has left the main office. Clark looks off, his mind racing: Lois can't leave The Daily Planet.

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The pit in his stomach is back, knowing what he must do. Jimmy turns:

JIMMY
-- ca'you believe him?
(but Clark's gone)
... Clark...?

EXT. METROPOLIS - DAY

Perry quickly exits the building, Lois tags behind:

LOIS
-- Luthor is a madman -- I heard him talk about some vision he had -- he thinks he's going to rule the planet--

PERRY
And what evidence do you have of that, your police record? You can't follow me around like this all day--

LOIS
There is a story here somewhere-- give me one more chance!

PERRY
Being a decent writer doesn't make you a good reporter. It's about the choices you make. About judgment. At the press conference Luthor said he questioned your career choice. I recommend you follow his lead.

This breaks her heart; she looks at Perry, furious, tears in her eyes:

LOIS
-- that... was just mean.

PERRY
I didn't get where I am by being a sweetheart.

Off Lois's sad, seething face: SCREEEECH!!! She turns -- half a dozen cars barely avoid crashing as SUPERMAN SWOOPS DOWN and HOVERS, twenty feet above the middle of the street. Pedestrians go NUTS -- some SCREAMING, others on cell phones, telling whoever they're talking to that they're seeing Him. Others simply freezes, agog.

SUPERMAN
Lois! How about an interview?

We PUSH IN on Lois and Perry, shocked.

(CONTINUED)

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CONTINUED:

LOIS
... I was just fired.
(points)
By him.

PERRY
-- now wait a minute--

Superman quickly FLIES OVER to Lois and Perry and lands, looking at Perry as if he's never seen him before. Superman extends his hand.

SUPERMAN
Hi there. Who are you?

PERRY
(shakes his hand)
Perry White, Editor-in-Cheeee--!

Perry's wincing at Superman's POWERFUL GRIP:

SUPERMAN
(with a smile)
-- you didn't just fire this woman, did you--?
-- because she's my favorite reporter--

PERRY
(in agony)
--nononono--
-- one of the best--

Superman lets go of Perry's hand and moves close to Lois, his lips to her ear. This sends a chill down her spine.

SUPERMAN
(whispers)
Tonight. Eight o'clock, roof of The Daily Planet. Our secret.

LOIS
(soft whisper)
... our secret...

Then Superman steps back, pats Perry's arm:

SUPERMAN
Smart man. Keeping her around.

Lois suppresses a laugh as Superman looks at her again -- we know how pained he is, returning like this... but he's crazy about her. Superman then TAKES OFF into the sky.

People YELL after him, loving him. Drivers HONK their horns, it's like seeing every great sports figure of all time, rolled into one, at the height of their career, only airborne.

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Perry's eyes are on the sky -- Lois' too. She's smitten.

EXT. SPACE - NIGHT

The ROUSER, on its speedy trajectory PASSES US and we PAN WITH IT -- REVEALING EARTH IN THE DISTANCE -- and we MATCH CUT THE ACTUAL PLANET TO:

EXT. THE DAILY PLANET - NIGHT

The SILVER DECO GLOBE atop the skyscraper.

INT. THE DAILY PLANET - NIGHT

The back of a computer. Then, after a moment, Clark peers out from behind it. And we see his POV: Lois is at her desk, putting on LIPSTICK. She's also wearing a dress -- sexy but still professional.

CLARK
... are you, uh... going out tonight? After your interview?

Lois looks up at him, annoyed.

LOIS
What does that mean?

CLARK
What. Nothing, I'm just--

LOIS
No, I'm not going out-- am I dressed up too much? Is that what you're saying?

CLARK
-- no, I--

LOIS
Does it look like I'm trying too hard? Not that I am, but does it look like I am? Listen to me -- don't even answer that question.

CLARK
(beat)
... what is it about him. That makes you nervous.

LOIS
I am not nervous. This is just an interview. I've done dozens of interviews--

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CONTINUED:

CLARK
-- I know, but--

LOIS
He saved my life. And my job.
(beat)
And he can fly. Top that. I'm grateful, I'm indebted, I'm amazed, and I'm a woman-- you wouldn't understand this-- Jimmy does but you don't: this guy -- I don't care what planet he's from -- is gorgeous. Okay? I'm not nervous, I'm thunderstruck. So talking to him -- no, it's not like sitting here talking to you -- no offense, Clark, you're good-looking -- but this guy, who I've known for less than a couple days...
(imagining him)
... he's made an impression.

Clark looks at her, resolute. He's about to tell her the truth.

CLARK
Lois.

LOIS
(looks up)
What.

A tense moment -- all Clark has to do is say it. But he doesn't want Lois to look at him differently because of Superman. So, finally, quietly:

CLARK
Have a good interview.

LOIS
Thanks.

With a sweet smile she goes. Clark watches... and sighs.

EXT. THE DAILY PLANET - ROOF - NIGHT

High atop the mid-town Metropolis skyscraper, the SILVER GLOBE lit by giant arclights. A chilly breeze blows Lois's hair as she waits for Superman, her eyes scanning the sky. It's quiet and isolated and somehow romantic up here.

Lois takes out a small digital VOICE RECORDER. Hits RECORD.

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CONTINUED:

LOIS
Testing. Test, test...

She then hits STOP and PLAY, and we HEAR her VOICE playback. Then she tries to get a look at her lipstick in the reflection of her recorder. We're TIGHT ON HER as she senses something and looks up. Then she turns around, RACK FOCUS TO REVEAL that Superman has landed, just ten feet away. She does everything she can to appear all-business:

LOIS (cont'd)
... hello.

SUPERMAN
Hi.

LOIS
Good. I'm glad you came.

SUPERMAN
Me too.

She catches herself staring at him. Then:

LOIS
So. Let's start.

SUPERMAN
Before you ask, I don't know where I'm from. Or how I fly, or see through steel. I don't know my real name or who my parents were.
(beat)
I'm pretty sure I'm the worst interview you're ever gonna have.

LOIS
I'll just ask my questions. If there's something you don't want to answer -- or don't have the answer to... just say "Next question."

Superman agrees. She hits RECORD.

LOIS (cont'd)
Where do you live.

SUPERMAN
Next question.

LOIS
Oh, come on.

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SUPERMAN
Seriously, next question.

LOIS
You said you can see through steel.

SUPERMAN
Mm-hmm.

LOIS
... is there anything you can't see through?

SUPERMAN
... lead isn't so easy.

LOIS
... isn't so easy or you can't see through it...?

SUPERMAN
... can't see through it.

LOIS
... you said you don't know where you're from... were you born on this planet?

SUPERMAN
... no...

Concerned, she CLICKS OFF the recorder --

LOIS
... then you should know, there's a man who wants you dead.

He looks at her... sort of falling deeper in love. He starts SLOWLY MOVING TOWARDS HER, drawn to her beauty but embodying the strength of Superman... acting the part of the Confident Man for the first time...

SUPERMAN
Yes. I'm familiar with Lex Luthor's work.

... and as he approaches, she slowly melts...

SUPERMAN (cont'd)
Dr. Luthor will be happy to read that I'm not the monster he's predicted.

And now Superman is standing right in front of Lois -- inches away, as if he's about to kiss her.

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CONTINUED: (3)

The charge between them could supply all of Iceland's electrical needs for centuries. Looking up at him, she's almost breathless --

LOIS
... he's the monster... there's something, an element that's poison--

... and his hand moves to her face -- the most beautiful face he's ever seen -- and he touches her gently, saying:

SUPERMAN
... I can take care of myse--

-- but before he can finish his statement, LOIS IS KISSING HIM, ARMS WRAPPED AROUND HIS HEAD -- Superman kisses her back, shocked, loving it, when suddenly SHE STOPS, horrified by her behavior, she hurries away from him, his back now to Lois --

LOIS
-- oh my God, uh... that was so not okay...

Superman's head is down... he's smiling... blushing...

LOIS (cont'd)
Superman-- can I call you Superma-- I am so sorry about that-- you must get that a lot, huh.

SUPERMAN
(back still to Lois)
... not so much...

LOIS
Well. That was... proof. That Perry White is absolutely right about me: my judgment's off the charts--

SUPERMAN
Your judgment is why I'm here.
(turns to her)
Don't underestimate yourself, Lois.

Lois smiles. Hits RECORD again.

LOIS
What does it feel like to fly?

SUPERMAN
I think like you'd imagine. Like surfing.

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CONTINUED: (4)

LOIS
Oh, you... you surf?

SUPERMAN
No, but I imagine it feels like flying.

He takes a step toward her, extends his hand.

SUPERMAN (cont'd)
I'll show you.

LOIS
-- show me what, flying? I...
(beat, joking)
Well, you should be careful, I might just go insane and kiss you again.

SUPERMAN
Like I said before. I can take care of myself.

A beat -- she takes his hand. He takes her to the edge of the building. The CAMERA MOVES ABOVE THEM, looking down to the street, forty stories below.

LOIS
-- oh God--

SUPERMAN
-- hold on --

LOIS
-- yeah, no kidding --

And they step off the roof -- and are suddenly AIRBORNE.

EXT. SKY - NIGHT

A MONTAGE as Superman and Lois fly through the sky. It's a miraculous flight through the city, slaloming buildings, racing just a few feet above the Metropolis River. She is amazed -- laughing -- and Superman is purely happy.

Finally, Superman returns Lois to:

EXT. THE DAILY PLANET - ROOF - NIGHT

He sets her down, gently. The classic awkward post-date moment. Who's going to do what. Finally:

SUPERMAN
-- maybe we can do--

LOIS
-- thanks for the--

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CONTINUED:

Another awkward moment... then:

LOIS
So how do I... get hold of you?

SUPERMAN
... you'd want to get hold of me?

LOIS
Yeah.

SUPERMAN
(smiles)
... I'll be in touch.

Their eyes meet for a long beat. Then Superman turns and leaps into the sky... she watches him fly off... smiling so much she's almost laughing.

EXT. METROPOLIS - DAY

NEXT MORNING: UPBEAT MUSIC BLASTS as Clark walks with a definite in-love BOUNCE to his step. We've never seen Clark so full of joy.

He passes a GUY hawking Superman shirts:

GUY
Want one?

CLARK
Got one!

He passes a NEWSSTAND where Lois' INTERVIEW is the headline: "SUPERMAN SPEAKS."

Clark turns the corner, loving life. As he crosses the street, there's a sudden, deep POWERFUL SONIC BOOM -- WINDOWS SHATTER everywhere -- people start RUNNING -- SCREAMING --

Clark's mind races -- what the hell could this be?!

INT. THE DAILY PLANET - DAY

DOLLY FAST as Clark races through the office -- most people are gathered watching the BANK OF TELEVISIONS -- reporting on the arrival of an ALIEN CRAFT IN Washington, D.C. -- of course we've seen the craft before: IT'S THE ROUSER, AND IT SITS IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NATIONAL MALL IN WASHINGTON, D.C., all twelve stories of mech standing on three massive legs, motionless.

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CONTINUED:

CLARK
(to Jimmy)
... what's going on...?

JIMMY
(scared)
-- I dunno, this thing just landed... and it wants Superman.

Clark's brain twists in fear and dread -- on one of the TV monitors: a BREAKING NEWS BANNER with a VIDEOTAPED VIEW OF THE MONSTER WARRIOR, absolutely still in the middle of the Mall. Helicopters hover high overhead -- POLICE can be spotted in the area --

D.C. REPORTER (V.O.)
-- what you're witnessing here... is yet another mind-bending, paradigm-shifting event -- whatever this "machine" is, it currently stands motionless in the National Mall of our nation's capital.

-- the video ZOOMS IN on the rouser, smoke wafting ominously from its turrets--

D.C. REPORTER (V.O.) (cont'd)
-- phone and television service has been disrupted as far away as Hub City, with U.S. military and all major networks receiving this on-going transmission --

-- the news channel presents a new VIDEO WINDOW, it's mostly STATIC -- but the image is clear. IT'S THE SUPERMAN "S." Clark watches this, mind racing, heart sunk -- he looks over at LOIS, who watches, equally horrified -- he moves to her --

CLARK
-- Lois--

LOIS
(aghast, eyes on screen)
-- not now, Clark--

-- and Lois hurries over to Jimmy, who stares at the screens, shocked --

LOIS (cont'd)
-- find out everything you can about Kryptonite--

JIMMY
-- okay...

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-- and she moves to Perry, who watches the screens, gripped by the vision --

LOIS
Mr. White, we need to talk. Mr. White.

Perry's eyes finally find Lois -- with his attention now, she hurries off. Perry follows. Clark watches her go, looking back at the TVs, knowing in his heart what he must do --

INT. THE DAILY PLANET - MAIN CORRIDOR - DAY

Clark rushes to the 25th floor's main corridor -- no one's here -- so Clark SPRINTS toward the floor-to-ceiling window at the end of the hall. And as he runs the following happens IN ONE SHOT: HE RIPS OFF HIS CLOTHES, TRANSFORMS INTO SUPERMAN, TAKES OFF AND SMASHES THROUGH THE WINDOW, FLYING INTO THE SKY. A VACUUM EFFECT SUCKS his work clothes and anything else in the hall out the window after him --

INT. PERRY WHITE'S OFFICE - DAY

Lois is there with Perry -- she's wild with adrenaline; terrified over the Rouser's arrival -- and what that means vis-a-vis Lex -- Perry listens, concerned:

LOIS
-- this is exactly what Luthor predicted would happen--

PERRY
-- yes, I remember--

LOIS
-- Mr. White, I'm still pretty much a neophyte in this business, I don't know the people that you do -- and yes, our job is to report the news not influence it -- but we also have to do the right thing, if Superman's taught us anything it's that. Somehow -- and I need your help with this -- we have to stop Luthor.

Perry considers: what to do...? He grabs the phone, dials --

LOIS (cont'd)
-- Sir, the phones are dead.

-- she's right. He hangs up, confides:

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PERRY
-- there's a man named Stuart Sutton -- he's a general -- an old friend at the Defense Department. I have to stay here with the paper -- you should go see him --

LOIS
-- thank you. Okay...
(beat)
I'll need your car.

PERRY
What? Nonono, use Jimmy's car--

LOIS
Sir, Jimmy's car is a moped.

He stares at her, hating this. Finally he picks up the phone, testing it: nope, still dead. Finally, reluctantly, he tosses his KEYS to Lois -- as she heads out --

PERRY
Not a scratch!

LOIS
-- no sir, thank you!

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. PARKING GARAGE - DAY

SCREEEEEEEEECH! -- Perry's red 2004-model Dodge Viper backs out of a parking space, CRASHING INTO ANOTHER PARKED CAR. Lois winces horribly in the driver's seat --

LOIS
-- God--

She puts the thing in gear and SCREECHES AWAY --

EXT. NATIONAL MALL - DAY

-- the imposing ROUSER -- RACK FOCUS TO SUPERMAN as he LANDS, facing the Kryptonian monolith of war, two-hundred yards away at the other end of the Mall. We see the fear behind Superman's eyes. Nevertheless, here he stands. Finding courage in the darkest corners.

The hundreds of PEDESTRIANS CHEER and APPLAUD Superman's arrival -- but he just stands there, his cape hovering behind him, moving slowly, a living thing, as we CUT TO:

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- CONTINUED:

A PIXILATED IMAGE OF SUPERMAN FROM THE ROUSER'S POV -- A QUICK ZOOM OUT REVEALS MOST OF THE MALL. Then, a quiet KRYPTONIAN VOICE (as before, Kryptonian is SUBTITLED):

TY-ZOR (O.S.)
Closer.

And we PULL BACK TO REVEAL that we are --

INT. QYRA - ROUSER CONTROL STATION - NIGHT

-- Ty-Zor, strapped into the GYROSCOPE CONTROLLER in the center of the chamber -- hundreds of WIRES running from the gyro to comm ports against the walls -- above which are a series of large VIDEO SCREENS which display a 360 degree REMOTE VIEW OF D.C.

TIGHT ON TY-ZOR'S ANTICIPATING FACE as he whispers.

TY-ZOR
Come to me...

EXT. NATIONAL MALL - DAY

-- but for the moment Superman remains motionless as he STARES AT THE ROUSER -- our CAMERA WHIPS INTO HIS EYES as we suddenly SEE WHAT SUPERMAN SEES:

X-RAY VISION REVEALS THE INCREDIBLE ROBOTIC INTERIOR OF THE ROUSER -- what seems like thousands of miles of CABLING -- hundreds of tons of green GEL-FUEL -- every inch built for battle --

-- and Superman calls out to the hundreds of ONLOOKERS (not urgent, but calm, protective, strong):

SUPERMAN
Everyone please leave this area. Now..

While the still-hovering military CHOPPERS and handful of POLICE CARS remain where they are, the hundreds of Onlookers, sensing that something terrible is about to occur, start to hurry off --

EXT. WASHINGTON, D.C. STREET - DAY

The ROUSER stands tall and intimidating, eight blocks away -- Pedestrians hastily make their way out of central D.C. -- and in this SAME SHOT we PAN with the Pedestrians TO REVEAL CIA AGENTS GRAY AND BURK, who stand, staring at the Rouser.

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GRAY
... should we be concerned about this?

BURK
Not if Luthor's right. And he's been right so far.

Gray agrees. And so they turn, walking toward the:

EXT. NATIONAL AEROSPACE MUSEUM - DAY

-- where dozens of PEOPLE look on, including a handful of Museum ADMINISTRATORS. Gray and Burk approach, revealing their CIA badges.

BURK
Excuse me: we're with the Central Intelligence Agency, looking for Museum Director Diaz.

-- of course none of the Administrators can take their eyes off the Rouser -- including 55 year-old Museum Director DIAZ.

DIAZ
... that's me...

BURK
Sir, we need to talk, it's a matter of national security.

-- and Diaz looks at Burk, puzzled -- and an INCREASING HIGH-PITCHED ROAR BECOMES:

EXT. EXPRESSWAY - DAY

Lois, driving Perry's Viper FAST AS HELL -- the car's engine RED-LINE SCREAMING as she somewhat spastically steers -- the car WHIPS past a "Washington, D.C. - 10 MILES" ROADSIGN -- and we see that she's the only car on her side of the road -- there's IMPOSSIBLE TRAFFIC on the other side of the expressway, everyone desperate to LEAVE D.C. --

EXT. NATIONAL MALL - DAY

The place is mostly abandoned now, except for Superman and the three-legged, 120-foot mech warrior, which looks like it could kill anything in an instant. The distant, hovering CHOPPERS just watch and wait.

Finally Superman starts walking forward -- and we--

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INT. QYRA - ROUSER CONTROL STATION - NIGHT

-- PUSH IN ON TY-ZOR as he watches Superman moving now. Ty-Zor smiles. The expectant CRUNCH-STRETCH SOUNDS of Ty-Zor's gloves as he gets a better grip on the Rouser controls --

EXT. NATIONAL MALL - DAY

With a slow, strong gait, Superman moves toward the Rouser. His heart pounds as he approaches --

INT. QYRA - ROUSER CONTROL STATION - NIGHT

-- EVEN TIGHTER on Ty-Zor, whose heart pounds just as hard --

TY-ZOR
... keep going, keep going...

EXT. NATIONAL MALL - DAY

-- but then, as if sensing something, Superman stops.

INT. QYRA - ROUSER CONTROL STATION - NIGHT

Ty-Zor stiffens --

EXT. NATIONAL MALL - DAY

As Superman considers his next move, we suddenly HEAR:

WOMAN (O.S.)
Superman!

-- and Superman looks: a WOMAN -- a Bystander -- a fan -- runs toward him -- fifty yards away, between him and the Rouser -- with a piece of paper and a Sharpie:

WOMAN (cont'd)
-- can I get you to sign this?!

SUPERMAN
MA'AM, GET AWAY!

-- but she doesn't stop -- Superman's eyes widen --

INT. QYRA - ROUSER CONTROL STATION - NIGHT

Ty-Zor ZEROS IN ON THE WOMAN WITH HIS WEAPON'S SITE CROSSHAIRS --

EXT. NATIONAL MALL - DAY

-- Superman yells:

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SUPERMAN
GET OUT OF HERE!

-- as one of the Rouser's TURRETS PIVOTS SUDDENLY -- BACK FOCUS TO THE FUCKING INSANE WOMAN who keeps running for him:

WOMAN
-- it's for my daughter, she loves v--!

-- but before she's done with the request, SUPERMAN HAS FLOWN LIKE A BULLET TO THE WOMAN, WHISKING HER BACK AT THE VERY MOMENT THAT TY-ZOR FIRES -- THE ROUSER UNLEASHING AN EARTH-SHAKING BLAST THAT BLOWS A THIRTY-FOOT DEEP HOLE IN THE GROUND OF THE NATIONAL MALL!

People everywhere SCREAM and RUN --

INT. NATIONAL AEROSPACE MUSEUM - DAY

A massive museum hall, various collections of space paraphernalia. Agents Gray and Burk walk with Director Diaz, who freezes at the not-so-distant RUMBLES -- suddenly a museum GUARD RUNS PAST THEM, frightened out of his mind --

MUSEUM GUARD
THEY'RE FIGHTING. IT'S THE END OF THE WORLD!!!

-- and suddenly Diaz' flight reflex takes hold and he just RUNS OFF, full of fear.

Gray and Burk look at each other -- should they run too?

GRAY
We get the rock then get the hell out of here.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. NATIONAL AEROSPACE MUSEUM - ROCK COLLECTION - DAY

A GLASS CASE of precious SPACE ROCKS, SHATTERED BY BULLETS -- PUSH IN on a particular GREEN ROCK the size of a softball.

KRYPTONITE.

Burk reaches in grabs it -- in an instant the two Agents haul ass out of the museum -- MUFFLED THUNDER SOUNDS becoming:

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EXT. NATIONAL MALL - DAY

The Rouser STEPS FORWARD -- each time one of the Rouser's 20-foot-high, 100-ton FEET SLAM into the ground, it ROCKS BUILDINGS across the Potomac --

INT. QYRA - ROUSER CONTROL STATION - NIGHT

Ty-Zor is now in full-operation mode -- his HEADS-UP-DISPLAY FULLY ILLUMINATED now, the GYROSCOPE IN MOTION --

EXT. WASHINGTON, D.C. STREET - DAY

-- People running everywhere -- Superman drops off the shaken autograph Woman two blocks away then turns and heads back --

EXT. NATIONAL MALL - DAY

Superman flies above the Mall as the monstrous Rouser moves for him -- BLASTING ITS POWERFUL RAPID-FIRE GUNS -- Superman darts through the sky, avoiding the terrifying onslaught --

INT. QYRA - ROUSER CONTROL STATION - DAY

We DOLLY FAST around Ty-Zor as he ATTACKS MADLY -- the GYROSCOPE TURNING AND BANKING as the Rouser moves

EXT. KELVIN CIA FACILITY - DAY

BOOM DOWN from an American flag TO REVEAL an isolated, two-building military base. And the WORDS APPEAR: "KELVIN RESEARCH FACILITY - JITTERS, VIRGINIA." And LEX'S BLACK SEDAN pulls up to the SECURITY GATE.

The 19 year-old MILITARY GUARD sees Luthor, who flashes his ID credentials. Suddenly the Guard is severely awkward:

MILITARY GUARD
... I'm... Dr. Luthor, I'm sorry, they, uh... Director Dressler sent a memo you're not allowed in the facility.

-- the Guard meekly holds up a copy of a memo. Luthor looks at him with eyes of pure evil. His voice oddly calm.

LUTHOR
... open... the gate.

Now the Guard's terrified.

MILITARY GUARD
... uh... no Sir.

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-- and on Lex -- about to pounce... and as a SUDDEN SHOCKING SOUND makes us jump out of our seats (was it a GUNSHOT? What the hell was that?), we CUT TO the MEMO... flitting to the ground... blood-splattered.

EXT. NATIONAL MALL - DAY

-- the Rouser WALKS FAST, BLASTING MADLY into the sky -- Superman DODGES THE NON-STOP MUNITIONS as he FLIES AN ARC in the sky and DIVES back toward the Rouser, just trying to get to the damn thing -- but just as he approaches:

INT. QYRA - ROUSER CONTROL STATION - NIGHT

-- the GYROSCOPE SPIN-TURNS as we COUNTERMOVE and Ty-Zor BLASTS AWAY, hitting the HELLFIRE TRIGGER and --

EXT. NATIONAL MALL - DAY

-- WHITE-HOT FIRE BELCHES from the Rouser's FLAME TURRETS -- Superman is engulfed in the flames and is sent back --

INT. QYRA - ROUSER CONTROL STATION - NIGHT

Ty-Zor expertly TURNS and FIRES AGAIN --

EXT. NATIONAL MALL - DAY

-- this time the Rouser's GUNBLASTS HIT SUPERMAN AND HE'S THROWN BACK POWERFULLY -- FOUR BLOCKS and --

EXT. WASHINGTON, D.C. STREET - DAY

-- Superman SLAMS UNCONTROLLABLY into the facade of a D.C. BUILDING -- he stops for a moment, shocked -- for the first time in his life facing a physical threat potentially stronger than he is.

Superman gets his bearings -- finds his resolve and TAKES OFF AGAIN, back to the National Mall -- but we STAY HERE -- BOOMING DOWN FAST as Perry's Viper SCREEEEECHES around a corner and comes to a cockeyed stop.

Lois jumps out of the car and runs into the DEFENSE DEPARTMENT BUILDING across the street --

INT. DEFENSE DEPARTMENT - OPERATIONS OFFICE - DAY

-- it's mayhem here (in many ways this is a sister scene to the military panic we witnessed on Krypton -- only now Kata-Zor's forces threaten Earth) -- a dozen frantic MILITARY PERSONNEL (some on SAT PHONES) arguing over protocol and procedure --

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Among those in the fray is STUART SUTTON -- 62, large grey-haired four-star General who argues with one of the President's military ADVISORS (male, 50):

SUTTON
-- we have three dozen F-22s standing by to scramble!
-- if we don't jump on this now we will lose our window!

ADVISOR
-- the President is not prepared to take that action!
-- there are CIVILIANS in this city!

-- as they argue LOIS enters the room, spots Sutton --

LOIS
-- General Sutton?!

ADVISOR
-- the President will NOT risk military action in the capital until--
-- then what the hell are you suggesting?

SUTTON
-- there's not gonna BE a capital -- or a COUNTRY if we don't move on this!
-- GOD SAVE ME: I WANNA BOMB THE NATIONAL MALL!

LOIS (cont'd)
GENERAL SUTTON!
(he turns to her)
Lois Lane, reporter at The Daily Planet -- I work with Perry White.

SUTTON
-- well, I have no comment-- how the hell'd you get in h--?

LOIS
-- Sir, I'm not here as a reporter, I came because of Superman: someone's trying to kill him.

SUTTON
Lemme guess, is he a 150 foot-tall ROBOT?!
(to anyone)
-- SOMEONE GET HER OUT OF HERE!

A SECURITY GUARD approaches, takes her, pulls her away--

LOIS
-- Sir, you have to listen to me: it's Dr. Lex Luthor! He says that he recovered an alien body, that--
PLEASE!!! IF WE DON'T STOP LUTHOR, SUPERMAN COULD LOSE THIS FIGHT!!!

-- and just as she's out the door, we HEAR:

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DRESSLER (O.S.)
HOLD IT!

The Guard stops -- Lois, too -- Sutton turns: DRESSLER (Lex's former boss) is here too -- he moves to her.

DRESSLER (cont'd)
-- what'd you say about Luthor?

INT. LUTHOR'S LAB - DAY

-- the LIGHTS COME ON with a CLANG as Lex Luthor enters his now-empty MAIN RESEARCH LAB -- a large room with many ANALYSIS DESKS. At the center, however, is a familiar POD. Lex begins working the alien craft's controls -- the thing LIGHTS UP like a view from Mulholland. As Lex WORKS, we...

EXT. NATIONAL MALL - DAY

Superman flies AROUND the Rouser -- which TURNS to keep him in view -- the various GUNS FIRE -- BLASTING PAST SUPERMAN, into SURROUNDING BUILDINGS and GROUNDS -- making RUBBLE of much of the surrounding area --

INT. QYRA - ROUSER CONTROL STATION - NIGHT

-- Ty-Zor TURNS, FIRING -- CLOSE ON TY-ZOR: this is personal.

EXT. NATIONAL MALL - DAY

The Rouser belches more FIRE -- Superman uses his BREATH to WHIP the FIRE AWAY -- then he flies up -- GUN TRACES TRAILING HIM -- and he heads for the top of the Rouser --

Superman gets a grip on the head -- tries to PUSH IT OVER -- actually STARTS TO -- but --

INT. QYRA - ROUSER CONTROL STATION - NIGHT

-- TY-ZOR TILTS in the gyro -- he's visibly SURPRISED at Kal-El's strength -- Ty-Zor hits CONTROLS and --

EXT. NATIONAL MALL - DAY

-- Superman PUSHES HARD against the mega-chine as suddenly on the Rouser: ARMOR PANELS AROUND HIM RETRACT and TWO DOZEN TURRETS SHIFT INTO VIEW -- Superman's eyes go wide in the instant before THEY ALL FIRE -- hitting Superman fiercely, throwing him back --

Superman lands on the lawn of the Mall -- disoriented as the GIANT ROUSER STEPS HUNGRILY TOWARD HIM --

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INT. QYRA - ROUSER CONTROL STATION - NIGHT

-- the gyroscope in aggressive motion as the Rouser LUMBERS TOWARD Superman, going in for the kill --

EXT. NATIONAL MALL - DAY

-- and just as the thing seems to be upon him, Superman shakes off the daze, looks up and FLIES AWAY just as a MASSIVE BLAST eviscerates the Earth he just sat upon --

Superman now flies toward the Washington Monument -- luring the Rouser, which gives chase -- all three legs, running prodigiously after its airborne enemy --

-- Superman flies to the middle of the REFLECTION POOL -- he lands in the knee-high water and quickly turns back -- his cape WHIPPING AROUND behind him. He watches as the Rouser walks into the water, each step a huge SPLASH --

INT. QYRA - ROUSER CONTROL STATION - NIGHT

-- Ty-Zor remotely hurries toward Superman, FIRING --

EXT. NATIONAL MALL - DAY

-- MUNITIONS BLASTS in the water as the Rouser approaches -- Superman FLIES FORWARD -- diving under the water --

INT. REFLECTION POOL - DAY

-- we're UNDERWATER as Superman BULLETS through the shallow pool toward his mechanical enemy --

INT. QYRA - ROUSER CONTROL STATION - NIGHT

-- Ty-Zor's disoriented, having momentarily lost Superman --

EXT. NATIONAL MALL - DAY

-- suddenly Superman BURSTS from the water directly underneath the Rouser -- he ROCKETS UPWARD, SLAMMING POWERFULLY INTO THE BELLY OF THE 1000-TON TRIPED -- the Rouser LURCHES UPWARD --

INT. QYRA - ROUSER CONTROL STATION - NIGHT

-- and Ty-Zor FEELS THE IMPACT -- he's unnerved -- he tries to counter Superman's might -- but:

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EXT. NATIONAL MALL - DAY

-- Superman HEAVES WITH EVERYTHING HE'S GOT -- actually YELLING it's such a struggle -- just as the Rouser seems to avoid a fall, Superman THROWS THE THING DOWN IN THE OTHER DIRECTION -- the massive Rouser TURNS SIDEWAYS AND CRASHES ONTO ITS SIDE, a titanic SPLASH in the Reflection Pool --

INT. QYRA - ROUSER CONTROL STATION - NIGHT

-- the gyro sends Ty-Zor VIOLENTLY HORIZONTAL --

EXT. NATIONAL MALL - DAY

-- the Rouser's three legs lamely scramble to get a footing, but it's pitiful and failing as Superman darts to one of the Rouser's colossal TURRETS -- like the one we saw, years ago, aimed at Jor-El's head.

Superman begins PULLING ON THE TURRET in an attempt to BEND THE ENORMOUS GUN BARREL. It's perhaps the hardest thing he's ever had to do -- but finally THE TURRET BEGINS TO BOW--

INT. QYRA - ROUSER CONTROL STATION - NIGHT

-- still sideways but refusing to give up, Ty-Zor FIRES MADLY AT SUPERMAN AGAIN --

EXT. NATIONAL MALL - DAY

-- but firing with a CHOKED TURRET is suicide: a section of the Rouser ERUPTS FROM WITHIN and a horrifying internal CHAIN REACTION BEGINS -- Superman flies off as the Rouser SELF-DESTRUCTS SPECTACULARLY --

-- and Superman lands at a distance, watches gratified as --

INT. QYRA - ROUSER CONTROL STATION - NIGHT

-- all the activity lights and video monitors GO DIM. No SOUND either. PUSH IN ON A DEFEATED TY-ZOR -- motionless with rage -- a volcano about to EXPLODE -- the THREE-SECTION PORTAL separates and the female Kryptonian (ALTA) enters, saying in Kryptonian:

ALTA
We've got a signal from Earth.

And as Ty-Zor turns to her -- of course we already know: IT'S LEX LUTHOR CALLING. And we PRELAP:

DRESSLER (V.O.)
He's dangerous.

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INT. DEFENSE DEPARTMENT - OPERATIONS OFFICE - DAY

The room still in mayhem -- lots of noise that the "fight is over!" And WE'RE MOVING QUICKLY AROUND Lois, Dressler and Sutton:

DRESSLER
I've suspected that from the beginning -- yes, he's a brilliant researcher, he's earned more degrees than the rest of my department combined -- but Luthor is not your average guy.

LOIS
(so angry)
He's worse than that: he's an irrational, power-hungry, paranoid, misogy--

SUTTON
-- I've heard from you--
(to Dressler)
We've got bigger problems than Luthor.

DRESSLER
-- we might not. His division was black ops, no oversight: Luthor had total autonomy -- he might have an alien corpse -- Kryptonite might cause him harm -- if Luthor believes destroying Superman means world domination the smartest move we could make is putting Luthor out of business.

Sutton looks at Lois. And old, tough scrutiny. Finally Lois just nods at him, as if to say, "He's right." Just then an AIDE hurries over -- another emergency:

AIDE
-- Sir, I know there are other issues, but three guards were just found dead at the Kelvin lab.

Dressler takes this in -- turns to Sutton, certain:

DRESSLER
It was Luthor.

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EXT. NATIONAL MALL - DAY

AN EVOCATIVE, HEARTBREAKING SCORE PLAYS as we ~~fly over~~ the ruins of the National Mall: though the major ~~monuments~~ stand, some surrounding buildings don't. The ~~place~~ has, sadly, been transformed into a war zone.

Then we're ON THE LAWN, where large BURNING ROUSER CHUNKS litter the place as Superman walks through, looking for people in trouble. He spots a MAN, helping another, WOUNDED MAN to his feet. As Superman approaches them, the MEN see him coming -- and they back away from Superman -- as if Superman were suddenly someone they <u>didn't</u> trust.

MAN
-- yeah, we don't need your help, we're okay...

Superman doesn't understand -- but the two Men move off. Then Superman turns: three WOMEN stand nearby, staring at him, disturbed. He approaches.

SUPERMAN
-- are you all right...?

But (in revealing SLOW MOTION), the Women nervously turn and walk away. Still in SLO-MO, we're TIGHT ON SUPERMAN'S FACE as it occurs to him: <u>these people are blaming him for what's happened here</u>. Finally we FADE IN/PRELAP:

NEWSCASTER (V.O.)
... as the world begins to ask the real question, "A hero at what cost?"

INT. TV MONITOR - DAY

Our MOURNFUL SCORE CONTINUES as we're TIGHT ON a TV MONITOR, displaying a dour news broadcast:

NEWSCASTER
Certainly the events today in Washington, D.C. bring to the forefront concerns that some have had since this "Superman" first appeared: can the world afford to blindly trust this Stranger? Does he bring light to our planet ...or darkness?

The report CONTINUES as our MUSIC DARKENS -- grows URGENT AND AGGRESSIVE as we DOLLY BACK TO REVEAL THAT WE ARE

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INT. KELVIN CIA FACILITY - DAY

-- it's the SMALL TV in the now-dead Military Guard's shack -- his lifeless HAND in the FOREGROUND as FOUR HUMVEES ROAR THROUGH the front gate --

VARIOUS SHOTS as a MILITARY SWAT TEAM JUMPS from the vehicles and SURROUNDS THE FACILITY: precision, stealth manpower, lethal semi-automatic weaponry. In under fifteen seconds this place is bordered with the best shots in the business: THREE DOZEN HK MACHINE PISTOLS AND PANCOR AUTOMATIC SHOTGUNS levelled at every possible access point.

TEAM LEADER GERACE takes cover -- quietly radios:

GERACE
-- Bravo Team: move -- we want Luthor alive.

DOLLY LOW AND FAST as six full-gear TEAM MEMBERS rush into:

INT. KELVIN CIA FACILITY - DAY

HANDHELD and FAST-MOVING as we follow the Team into the narrow, dark halls of the compound, the tension unbearable.

EXT. KELVIN CIA FACILITY - DAY

The rest of the Team holds position -- and we find that LOIS is here too, remaining in the passenger seat of one of the parked HUMMERS. Dressler beside her, behind the wheel. She talks quietly into her voice recorder:

LOIS
(sotto)
...the remaining twenty-odd military SWAT team members remain absolutely motionless -- a display of their masterful training.

She hits PAUSE, eyes on the building. Then:

DRESSLER
You did good.

And she glances at Dressler. They share a smile. It's nice to have an ally. Just then: GUNSHOTS COMING FROM INSIDE THE BUILDING. LOTS.

GERACE
-- Bravo Team! Do you copy? Bravo Team, this is Alpha Leader, do you copy?!

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-- but there's no answer. With Gerace tense -- the rest of the Team on edge -- the SOUNDS OF GUNFIRE CONTINUES until finally...

Silence.

Lois' eyes dart around the facility -- Dressler's visibly nervous too -- the Team Members tense as the facility's MAIN DOORS OPEN -- the SWAT Team cocks so many GUNS that it SOUNDS like a flock of birds taking flight --

And with all eyes on the open door, someone steps out of the building. But it's not the bad guy you were expecting.

TY-ZOR WALKS OUT. EXCEEDINGLY CALM.

Lois watches, confounded -- Gerace grabs his BULLHORN:

GERACE (cont'd)
You have trespassed onto Federal property! We are authorized to use lethal force! Stop right there, put your hands on your head!

-- and Ty-Zor does stop. Except then the OTHER THREE KRYPTONIANS step out of the building (ALTA, the FEMALE, who'd be the hottest girl in town, except she'd destroy the town -- and the TWO MALES, BAZ-AL and CAAN).

The four Kryptonians, all dressed in dark body armor and ancient Kryptonian ninja-style vestments (complete with what appears to be SWORD SHEATHS), are the oddest sight. Still, somehow, the whole military SWAT team knows they're in trouble.

A BEAD OF SWEAT drops from Gerace's forehead. Lois stares, stone-still...

And Ty-Zor, his eyes scanning the area, seems oddly pleased. As if this ambush were just a speed bump on the Autobahn. We're TIGHT ON HIS FACE as he CLOSES HIS EYES -- INHALES DEEPLY, his head tilts back as if in ecstacy...

The SWAT Team watches -- but damnit, Gerace's had enough:

GERACE (cont'd)
-- ALL RIGHT, HANDS ON YOUR H--

-- BUT TY-ZOR SUDDENLY WHIPS FROM HIS SHEATH HIS THREE-FOOT LONG COMPOSITE WEAPON -- THE BLASTAFF -- TWIRLS IT IN A BLUR AND FIRES A TERRIFYING DEATH-RAY THAT INCINERATES GERACE AND BLOWS UP THE HUMVEE BESIDE HIM IN A SHOCKING FIREBALL!

(CONTINUED)

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Lois SCREAMS -- the SWAT Team FIRES AT THEM, but the bullets BOUNCE OFF THEM, falling to the floor with a thousand METALLIC CLINKS --

-- the Team SCATTERS now -- it's insanity -- Dresseler fumbles with the Humvee KEYS -- DROPS THEM -- Lois DUCKS in the vehicle as ALTA, BAZ-AL and CAAN join Ty-Zor in the ferocious attack -- LEAPING INTO THE SKY, TWIRLING THEIR DEADLY BLASTAFFS LIKE JU-JITSU SNIPERS, BLASTING the retreating Team Members with CRUEL DEATH RAYS -- annihilating the entire SWAT TEAM FROM THE SKY --

-- Lois sees Ty-Zor SWOOP DOWN and turn toward her Humvee -- she looks at Dressler, still scrambling with the keys -- there's no way he's getting them in -- she opens her door and jumps out of the Humvee -- we MOVE WITH HER FAST AS SHE RUNS -- THE HUMVEE IS HIT WITH A DEVASTATING DEATH RAY AS SOON AS SHE'S TEN FEET AWAY -- THE VEHICLE EXPLODES and --

-- we're TIGHT ON LOIS as she sprints, terrified beyond belief -- as suddenly ALTA LANDS in front of her -- Lois SCREAMS -- but then as a reflex ROUNDHOUSE KICKS ALTA, whose head barely turns; the decent-for-a-human kick has only one effect: it makes Alta SMILE -- she GRABS LOIS by the hair, brings her to her knees -- RAISES AND TWIRLS HER BLASTAFF, about to BLOW OFF LOIS' HEAD when:

LUTHOR (O.S.)
NOT HER!

Alta looks up as everything stops -- Lex walks out here amid the rubble, his shoes CRUNCHING in the gravel. The whole SWAT team now deceased. He moves to Lois. Smiles. His affiliation with the Others just where he always wanted it.

LUTHOR (cont'd)
(quietly)
... that would be a waste.

INT. THE DAILY PLANET - DAY

The busy newsroom -- MOVE FAST with Perry as he barks orders to the three Reporters who follow him through:

PERRY
-- no, I want all four D.C. photos on the cover-- we need more testimonials-- and I want the headline to make the point: "SHOULD WE TRUST SUPERM--?"

-- but before Perry can finish, he's stopped -- talking and walking -- and the whole newsroom slowly goes silent. All eyes trained on the same thing:

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CONTINUED:

Superman stands on an outside ledge, having just landed.

The whole newsroom has a fearful, awkward reaction -- as if Superman carried some kind of disease and was potentially infectious. Truth is: there might be another Rouser coming... and no one here is looking to die.

Superman opens the window and enters the office, walking through the space -- silent stares. And Superman eyes the place. Knows he's not wanted. Doesn't blame a soul.

SUPERMAN
Is Lois here?

A long silence. Then, finally:

PERRY
No.

Superman looks to him. Then something catches his eye: one of the TV MONITORS, airing world news 24/7. Showing protesters in England: BURNING IMAGES OF SUPERMAN'S 'S' IN EFFIGY. Pumping into the air handmade SIGNS reading, "GO HOME."

Superman looks away. Leans against a desk, backlit by the windows. The image reminds us of a burdened Kennedy in the Oval Office. In fact, Jimmy Olsen can't help himself, he takes a few snaps.

Superman's heart is broken... though truly, that's his last concern. He says, not facing anyone in particular:

SUPERMAN
If I'd known I had such enemies... I would never have come here.
(then, turns to Perry)
Please. Tell the world I'm leaving. That I never meant to do anyone harm.
(beat, fighting his heartache)
That I hope my going away... saves this planet.

A beat. Finally Perry just nods. Then:

SUPERMAN (cont'd)
One more thing I'd like you to tell Lois...

-- but just before Superman's about to speak, he begins to HEAR a deep, frightening, guttural SHRIEK -- Superman turns -- the hell is THAT?!

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And soon we recognize the VOICE AND NAME as it travels from FAR ACROSS THE GLOBE, ECHOING through time:

TY-ZOR (O.S.)
KAAAAAAAAAAL-ELLLLLLLLLLLLL!!!!!

Superman at the window -- he looks out -- we're TIGHT ON SUPERMAN'S FACE as another HORRIBLE SOUND is HEARD -- some kind of MASSIVE DESTRUCTION -- and he knows: he can't leave just yet. Superman TAKES OFF INSTANTLY and --

EXT. SKY - DAY

Superman FLIES FASTER THAN HE EVER HAS, his face racked with concern -- fear of what's ahead -- and he FLIES THROUGH TIME ZONES -- SHIFTING TO NIGHT and --

EXT. GIZA PYRAMIDS - EGYPT - NIGHT

-- as Superman arrives, he finds one of the great Pyramids BEING BLOWN APART by Alta, Baz-Al and Caan -- STONES, in place for thousands of years, cast into the sky like dry leaves by the mega-gale force breath of Ty-Zor's team.

Superman BULLETS through the sky for them -- the three see him coming -- have expected him -- and as Superman grabs Caan in mid-air, Caan answers with sudden, majestic MARTIAL ARTS SKILLS which STUN SUPERMAN -- the following happens in mere seconds: Baz-Al SPINS SUPERMAN around -- this guy is wicked-tough -- Superman tries to fight back, but Baz-Al TRIPLE ROUNDHOUSE KICKS Superman over to Alta, who is perhaps the deadliest of the bunch -- she works him hard, sending Superman SPIRALING toward Earth --

-- he lands in the desert below, painfully, impossibly hard. Some blood. His suit slightly damaged. We're TIGHT ON SUPERMAN as he begins to recover -- horrified at their power -- then we HEAR -- IN ENGLISH::

TY-ZOR (O.S.)
Hello.

-- and Superman looks up at Ty-Zor, who stands above him.

TY-ZOR (cont'd)
Cousin.

-- before Superman can think, Ty-Zor has smiled and TAKEN OFF -- Superman gathers all the strength and BLASTS AFTER HIM --

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EXT. SKY - NIGHT

Superman RIPS THROUGH THE SKY -- above the HEAVY CLOUD LAYER -- he stops, HOVERS, his eyes ferociously scan the night sky. It's incredibly beautiful up here, by the way, a silent, precious haven...

... interrupted by SOUNDS OF DISTANT, ERRATIC CHURCH BELLS AMID HORRIBLE DEVASTATION -- Superman's head whips toward the SOUND -- terrified, he BULLETS TO --.

EXT. PARIS - NIGHT

-- a horrific sight: NOTRE DAMN COLLAPSES -- Alta, Baz-Al and Caan having just blown the structure to fiery shards with their BLASTAFFS -- they're now LIFTING CARS WITH PEOPLE INSIDE -- and HURLING THEM AGAINST BUILDINGS -- and suddenly Superman tackles Baz-Al hard, punches him powerfully, numerous times -- but when Baz-Al FIGHTS BACK it's a wicked display of super-human strength --

-- still, Superman continues to fight -- even as Alta and Caan join the fray. But Superman is no match for them. Especially when Baz-Al and Caan HOLD SUPERMAN UP for Ty-Zor, who lands AND JUST BEGINS PUNCHING THE HELL OUT OF SUPERMAN. Imagine a bar brawl between a decorated Sergeant and a new recruit; after a dozen painful blows, this pummelling just becomes sad.

Ty-Zor ends the tirade with a devastating KICK -- sending Superman TUMBLING --

EXT. SKY - NIGHT TO DAY

-- as Superman, propelled by the abysmal power of Ty-Zor, across the entire Atlantic Ocean -- and --

EXT. GOTHAM CITY - DAY

-- Superman CRASH LANDS VIOLENTLY in the American city -- CARS and PEDESTRIANS SCATTER as Superman -- essentially a horrifying projectile -- RIPS UP A CITY BLOCK as he lands, finally stopping in front of the Gotham City Library.

Superman is bloody now. Suit torn. Exhausted -- in agony -- Superman then HEARS a DEAFENING CRASHING SOUND -- summoning energy he doesn't have, Superman TAKES OFF AGAIN and --

EXT. GOTHAM CITY - DAY

WE'RE BACK WHERE OUR STORY BEGAN: TY-ZOR HAS JUST DESTROYED THE NETWORK SKYSCRAPER. SUPERMAN LANDS. TWO BLOCKS AWAY. We now, of course, understand the battered look.

(CONTINUED)

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They face off -- then Ty-Zor LIFTS OFF THE PAVEMENT AND BLASTS INTO THE SKY -- Superman furiously pursues --

We see a QUICKER-CUT VERSION OF THE FRENZIED MID-AIR MARTIAL ARTS BATTLE we saw before -- this time with DIFFERENT CAMERA ANGLES -- and they SLALOM buildings -- battle and chase --

Ty-Zor is thrown into the CONSTRUCTION CRANE -- it CRASHES, as before, into the streets below. Ty-Zor uses the crane, HITTING SUPERMAN WITH IT -- Superman reels -- CRASHES THROUGH TWO BUILDINGS (which, unlike the opening, we now see from the OUTSIDE of the buildings).

Superman then goes after Ty-Zor again -- chasing him through the sky --

EXT. CAPE CANAVERAL - DAY

Superman lands. Searches --

INT. NASA TESTING AREA - DAY

Superman enters the long, dark corridor. It's a dead-end, but there are a dozen doors here. Ty-Zor is here somewhere. Superman stares down the hall. Then, the WHISPER:

TY-ZOR (O.S.)
Kal-El...

Where is this quiet voice coming from?

TY-ZOR (O.S.) (cont'd)
Lead walls.
(beat)
... it's almost like we're human, isn't it?

Superman POWERFULLY rips off each door, moving through the place, door-to-door -- he finally rips off one door that makes him stop -- we're TIGHT ON HIS FACE -- his eyes wide with terror at what he sees. And Superman almost GASPS:

SUPERMAN
-- no--

-- and THIS TIME we see what we didn't see at the beginning: LYING AT THE BOTTOM OF ONE OF THE GIANT, WATER-FILLED TESTING TANKS IS LOIS LANE. Her HANDS BOUND behind her back -- her FEET BOUND together -- she's been in the water for close to a minute now -- her life slipping away

AND SITTING IN THE TANK IN FRONT OF HER IS KRYPTONITE.

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-- overcome with deep pain from the Kryptonite, Superman CRASHES to his knees, sinking into the concrete floor like it was soft sand. An agonizing, confusing moment: WHAT THE HELL IS HAPPENING TO ME?! His head hung low, he tries to crawl forward but it's so painful --

TY-ZOR (O.S.)
I want to hear you cry, Kal-El. Like your mother cried...
(almost amused)
... cry for me... "Superman."

-- and Superman finally looks up: his face covered in a repulsive BLISTER RASH, his eyes ROLLED BACK AND BLOODSHOT -- and SUPERMAN SCREAMS --

-- and Lois sees Superman -- bubbles escaping her mouth -- she shakes her head at him, her YELLS MUFFLED UNDERWATER:

LOIS
NO!!! GET AWAY--!!!

-- but Superman struggles to crawl toward her -- the devastating effects of Kryptonite killing him. Lois struggles, desperate to turn Superman away -- she's crying underwater now, knowing that he's coming to save her, knowing what exposure to Kryptonite will mean --

-- we DOLLY WITH SUPERMAN as he strains to the wall of glass -- the DEADLY GREEN ROCK and the WOMAN HE LOVES submerged in water behind it -- and as their lives slip away, Superman PULLS HIS ARM BACK and POUNDS the glass -- but his powers are gone now -- in fact, he's so weak now that any of us could have hit the glass harder --

-- Lois furiously shakes her head, the last oxygen bubbling from her mouth -- Superman pulls his arm back and STRIKES THE GLASS AGAIN -- then AGAIN -- but the blows are pointless: he leans against the glass, crying himself, his life force depleted -- and their eyes meet -- two souls on the verge of death -- we're TIGHT ON THEIR EYES as Superman gathers every ounce of strength he's got left and in SLOW MOTION PULLS HIS ARM BACK AND WITH IMMENSE POWER SLAMS IT INTO THE GLASS -- WHICH SHATTERS -- THE WATER, THE ROCK AND LOIS RUSH OUT OF THE TANK, INTO THE ROOM -- THRUSTING SUPERMAN BACK --

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-- Lois lies on the ground, in shock, INHALING DESPERATELY and COUGHING water from her lungs -- she looks up: Superman lies blistered, battered and motionless -- the Kryptonite rock on the ground near him -- crying and out of breath, Lois grabs a SHARD OF GLASS and using it behind her back she CUTS THE ROPE THAT BINDS HER -- she scrambles for the Kryptonite, grabs it and THROWS THE ROCK -- it lands far from them, in the doorway.

Lois takes Superman's heavy, lifeless body in her arms -- tries to awaken him as she cries--

LOIS (cont'd)
-- Superman -- please... please... Superman, please...

-- but her cries go unanswered -- and finally, drained and joyless, her head just drops to his chest -- to his shredded "S," the image of strength and truth and all that is right having been destroyed by an unimaginable darkness. PULL BACK TO A LONG SHOT: Lois cradles Superman -- the KRYPTONITE ROCK in the FOREGROUND. After a moment, A HAND comes into frame and picks up the green rock --

-- and we see that it's AGENT GRAY. He places the Kryptonite into a LEAD CASE. Locks it. And looks as TY-ZOR enters the room. Pleased at what he sees. He says, simply:

TY-ZOR
His heart has stopped.

-- and Lois looks up. Looks at Ty-Zor with red, wet, lost eyes. Ty-Zor appears calm. Satisfied.

TY-ZOR (cont'd)
I can see it.

Tears just stream down her face -- her rage building too, but what can she do -- then her eyes flick to see Lex Luthor move in beside Ty-Zor. Proudly surveys the scene. He then moves to soaking, crying, devastated Lois. He pulls out a HANDKERCHIEF. Holds it out for her.

LUTHOR
Take it.
(then, smiles)
Looks like it's your already.

She looks at it: the "L L" MONOGRAM. She hates Lex so much in this moment -- but all she can do is sob, holding Superman. Lex just drops the handkerchief, which we WATCH IN SLOW MOTION as it DROPS THROUGH THE AIR, LANDING ON SUPERMAN'S DEAD, WET FACE -- and --

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INT. JOR-EL'S CELL - NIGHT

-- Jor-El -- his face ravaged by age and abuse -- suddenly awakens, alone in his cell. No sound has awoken him -- no touch or prodding. But rather a SENSE. An emotional, INNATE UNDERSTANDING -- a TRUTH which transcends time and distance. In this moment Jor-El simply KNOWS that his son is dead.

And his eyes go wide, his mouth open in a long, silent, breathless shriek -- and Jor-El begins to cry. A physical pain worse than any he has ever endured -- SMASH CUT TO:

INT. COVA PALACE - NIGHT TO DAY

KATA-ZOR SCREAMS IN CELEBRATION -- alone in this enormous space, he TWIRLS, LAUGHING -- picks up a glass of liquor and HURLS IT joyously against the wall -- it SHATTERS as he turns to a fluid, cloth-like VIDEO MONITOR where TY-ZOR'S IMAGE IS SEEN. In Kryptonian, almost giddy:

KATA-ZOR
I'll be sure to tell Jor-El.

INTERCUT WITH:

EXT. CAPE CANAVERAL - DAY

-- as Ty-Zor, Alta, Baz-Al and Caan walk cocky amid the rockets and shuttles. Lex and Agents Gray and Burk trail them, some thirty feet behind -- Gray holding the lead Kryptonite case. Ty-Zor, feeling particularly audacious, holds out his dice-sized COMMUNICATOR, attached to his cloak with a retractable cord --

TY-ZOR
The one who helped -- Lex Luthor -- he's asked for something in return.

KATA-ZOR
Anything -- give him anything --

TY-ZOR
He wants the planet.

KATA-ZOR
Earth? Give it to him. Anything.

TY-ZOR
(smiles)
Yessir.

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KATA-ZOR
When you're done with Earth, we'll celebrate.

Ty-Zor lets the communicator RETRACT as he turns back to Lex.

LUTHOR
So? Are we good?

TY-ZOR
(beaming)
We're good.

EXT. ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY - DAY

A HEART-RENDING MUSICAL CHORD... our SCORE begins simply and sadly and PLAYS over IMAGES of this gray day. Drizzle. Black umbrellas. MOURNERS; faces of REAL PEOPLE. Friends. Parents. Sons and daughters. Grandparents. Tears from those who, in this mad world, have just lost the one hope they ever had.

Not hundreds of people. Not thousands. Literally millions of MOURNERS. Many still arriving by car, by bus.

They have all come today... for Superman's funeral.

A hand-sewn, red cape with the YELLOW "S" draped over the coffin.

CLOSE-UPS of FLOWERS and CARDS. Many written by schoolchildren. And over this we begin to HEAR an amplified, sorrowful voice:

LOIS (O.S.)
... why are we here.
(beat)
... this minute. Standing in the rain, honoring a man we hardly knew.
(beat)
... why are we here.

Then WE SEE Lois. She stands at a PODIUM, bandaged, in black, facing the unbelievable sea of people.

LOIS (cont'd)
I don't know.
(long, sad beat)
Maybe it's because we'd forgotten.
(beat)
What selflessness looks like. Honesty. Kindness to people who could never return the favor.
(MORE)

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CONTINUED:

LOIS (cont'd)
(beat)
True spectacle. Majesty... and courage.
(beat)
Maybe it's because we'd forgotten what it felt like to be safe.
(beat)
When I was small... when I'd have trouble falling asleep... my father knew to come to me. Kneel by my bed and look into my eyes... calm and constant.

The President of the United States is there with his family, holding hands. Perry White and Jimmy and millions we don't know...

LOIS (cont'd)
He'd offer his hand, and I'd hold it. My small fingers wrapped around his.

And as she CONTINUES, we CUT TO:

INT. YISPA CONCENTRATION CAMP - NIGHT

-- as Kata-Zor walks haughtily down the halls of the horrific camp, ENTOURAGE behind him. And we HEAR:

LOIS (V.O.)
I wouldn't tell him about the monsters I feared. Or why the darkness made me afraid.

-- and as Lois CONTINUES, we CUT TO:

INT. JOR-EL'S CELL - NIGHT

-- we PUSH IN ON JOR-EL as he SHARPENS A PIECE OF STONE on the ground -- his eyes wet and determined -- a man on a sublime mission --

LOIS (V.O.)
I didn't have to. Looking into his eyes, I was understood. And I was safe.

EXT. ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY - DAY

As Lois CONTINUES, Superman's coffin is BURIED in the Earth.

LOIS
I looked into Superman's eyes, too. Up close. And I saw that same understanding. That same calm and constancy...

(MORE)

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CONTINUED:

LOIS (cont'd)
(beat)
I saw goodness.
(beat)
Robert Kennedy once said that "it is from numberless diverse acts of courage and belief that human history is shaped..."

And amid the mass of Mourners, a BUS stops. And a woman gets off. An older woman, who we recognize as Martha Kent. Her face long and pale. She is alone. So far away from her son's coffin.

LOIS (cont'd)
"... Each time a man stands up for an ideal, or acts to improve the lot of others, or strikes out against injustice, he sends forth a tiny ripple of hope...".

-- these people -- these countless people, their faces running the gamut of color and shape, their hearts all heavy with the inconsolable loss...

INT. YISPA CONCENTRATION CAMP - NIGHT

-- Kata-Zor turns a corner -- getting closer to his brother's cell -- almost smiling in anticipation of delivering the news...

LOIS (V.O.)
"... and crossing each other from a million different centers of energy and daring, those ripples build a current which can sweep down the mightiest walls of oppression and resistance."

INT. JOR-EL'S CELL - NIGHT

-- Jor-El kneels on the ground -- shirtless -- holding the now-sharpened stone angled toward his belly -- his eyes set forward -- wide with the horror what he's about to do --

LOIS (V.O.)
Maybe that's what we saw in Superman.
(beat... just sad...)
Maybe that's why we're here today.

And suddenly Jor-El JABS HIMSELF WITH THE STONE -- resisting the pain, ripping the thing across his body --

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CONTINUED:

We're TIGHT ON HIS FACE for the most horrific part -- but we are all witness to what seems like simply a man's suicidal reaction to the heartbreaking news that his son has perished.

INT. YISPA CONCENTRATION CAMP - NIGHT

-- and Kata-Zor moves into the cell block which houses Jor-El. As he heads down the hall, ready to make his Big Announcement, he sees BLOOD, POOLED outside a cell. Kata-Zor grows concerned as he approaches -- finally arriving at the cell and finding Jor-El, dead. Lying in a large RED PUDDLE -- and with KATA-ZOR'S DAUNTED EYES FILLING FRAME, we HEAR:

LOIS (V.O.)
... as safe as I once felt... I'm now that afraid. Afraid of what's next.

EXT. ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY - DAY

-- as Lois CONTINUES:

LOIS
We've seen protesters. People chanting for Superman to go away.
(beat)
Well, now he has. And so perhaps the question isn't, "Why are we here"... but rather, "Who are we going to be?"
(beat, voice cracks)
Now that Superman has gone.

The MUSIC ENDS. And we CUT FROM LOIS' tear-streaked face to:

WHITENESS. BLINDING. A DISTANT RUSHING SOUND, AS IF THIS PLACE WERE SOMEHOW WOMB-LIKE -- WE ONLY SEE A LIGHT... BUT WE'LL CALL THIS:

EXT. INFINITY - TIMELESS

-- and it's not really a place at all. There are no boundaries here, no edges, no beginnings, no endings. It's as much a journey as it is a location. You are alone here... yet you can not be alone here.

Then we see a speck of something -- so far away it's impossible to make out at first. And we just HOLD ON THIS IMAGE, allowing us to finally realize:

It's Superman.

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CONTINUED:

He walks toward us, placid and composed -- his suit restored to pristine condition, his scars and blisters gone. (NOTE: this should not be true SLO-MO, but there should be an other-worldly quality to this moment -- think, 40 fps).

And we're TIGHT ON SUPERMAN as he walks, somehow drawn forward -- his eyes searching this place, not at all alarmed, but not at all comfortable. Then, as he passes us, we HEAR:

JOR-EL (O.S.)
Kal-El.

-- and Superman stops -- turns -- standing twenty feet away from him in this spaceless space is Jor-El. Jor-El, still at 69, is dressed in the MONARCHAL ROBES he was wearing when we first met him. He looks handsome again. Imperious.

Superman stares at this man... recognizing him from his mother's photograph -- and Superman is stunned -- at first too shocked to move. Finally, emotional, uncertain, quiet:

SUPERMAN
... I know you...

Jor-El's eyes well with tears, though he remains as strong and composed as ever.

JOR-EL
And I know you.
(beat, quietly)
... you are my son.

Superman steps toward him -- now ten feet away. He dares not move closer... his mind tumbling...

JOR-EL (cont'd)
Your cousin and the others are still on Earth.
(beat)
They must be stopped, your destiny depends on it. The destiny of millions.

SUPERMAN
(sotto, afraid)
... my destiny...?

JOR-EL
(beat)
Your home planet is called Krypton. It is a place undone by civil war.
(beat)
(MORE)

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JOR-EL (cont'd)
There is a Prophecy, an ancient Kryptonian text, that speaks of that war. That speaks of a Prince. Whose fate was to be sent away, raised in another world. This young man would face a challenge. If prosperous, his destiny is to return to Krypton... and free his people from the ravages of evil.
(beat)
Kal-El, you are that Prince.

SUPERMAN
... I don't understand--

JOR-EL
You will.
(beat)
When you return you will meet Hen-Gra. He will be your Guide.

SUPERMAN
-- how... how am I supposed to know what to do--?

JOR-EL
Because you understand what is good. Because you understand what is evil.
(beat)
Because the Kents raised you, as we knew they would... with integrity. And compassion.
(beat)
We travelled many years searching for a home for you. Hoping we would never have to send you away... yet knowing always that day would come.

And Jor-El starts slowly toward Kal-El... having missed his boy so much...

JOR-EL (cont'd)
I can give my life for yours... what I know... who I am... but I can not be the Savior. That is your burden. That is your gift.

Jor-El stands right in front of Kal-El now. Face-to-face. Superman is visibly afraid. Quietly:

SUPERMAN
... what if I fail you...?

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JOR-EL
(beat, proudly)
You could never fail me.

Looking into Jor-El's eyes, it's almost as if Superman is comforted. Calmed in a way that Lois just described.

AND JOR-EL EMBRACES HIS SON -- SUPERMAN EMBRACES HIS FATHER -- and a REVERSE-REVERBED PRIMAL SCREAM SOUND BEGINS... starts to GROW...

INT. COFFIN - DAY

INSIDE the DARK COFFIN where Superman lies, dead -- BATTERED and BLOODY, his suit TORN, SHREDDED. THE REVERSE-PRIMAL SCREAM SOUND GETTING LOUDER as we PUSH IN on Superman's CORPSE... the SCREAM SOUND REACHES A CRESCENDO AND STOPS AS SUDDENLY SUPERMAN GASPS -- HIS EYES OPEN -- we JUMP so much that we might not even realize in that instant his SKIN IS REPAIRED -- his suit RESTORED --

EXT. ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY - DAY

Lois steps down from the podium. A somber CHORAL HYMN plays. Church bells RING...

INT. UNDERGROUND - DAY

Superman furiously BURROWS HORIZONTAL THROUGH THE EARTH -- his expression intense and driven -- his focus complete -- his strength doubled -- and in his eyes, the wisdom of a man who understands his destiny. A man who knows his purpose.

EXT. ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY - DAY

Lois, an emotional wreck, makes her way through the quiet mass of people. We're TIGHT ON HER as she walks, pale and hollow. Then, a HAND on her shoulder. And she turns to see:

CLARK KENT. He stands there, somewhat pensive.

CLARK
Hi, Lois...

-- and seeing him, somehow that's all she needs. And she just starts crying. Clark embraces her. Holds her gently, as the Kents taught him how. Touches her hair comfortingly. And says, softly:

CLARK (cont'd)
... it'll be okay.

But Lois is just lost. Into his chest, she says, quietly:

(CONTINUED)

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CONTINUED:

LOIS
... I don't think it will...
(beat)
... I know this... sounds egocentric... and impossible...
(cries)
... but I loved him.

And as she cries, her face on his chest, we're on Clark, who can't help but smile at the news. But after a moment it's down to business -- the reason he's here as Clark at all: he takes her by the shoulders.

CLARK
Lois, I need to know what killed him. Superman. What was it.

LOIS
... a rock--

CLARK
-- I know, what kind of rock.

LOIS
It's called Kryptonite. It was picked up, years ago, by a spacecraft -- they took the piece away --

CLARK
Is there any more of it left?

LOIS
-- I don't think so--

JIMMY (O.S.)
-- oh yeah, there's more.

-- and Clark and Lois turn to see Jimmy, who's standing there, eyes wet and red.

CLARK
-- are you sure?

Jimmy BLOWS HIS NOSE -- a rather loud HONK --

JIMMY
Yeah, Lois asked me to research --
(and he hugs Clark and Lois at once)
Guys, this is so heartbreaking, I feel, like, hormonal--

Clark holds him back:

(CONTINUED)

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CLARK
I need to know about the Kryptonite NOW.

JIMMY
(confused)
-- a six-hundred pound rock was picked up in space nine years ago. They did what they do with lotsa rocks: they broke it up into pieces sent it to countries all over the world, ya know, so they could study it or whatever--

Clark's mind racing -- he turns to Lois.

CLARK
I have to go.

And she stares into Clark's eyes -- and notices a strength she'd never noticed before. And just as she starts to consider this, Clark leaves, fast.

JIMMY
... the hell was that about?

EXT. SKY - DAY

-- through the dark THUNDERCLOUDS, Superman BURSTS INTO THE SUNLIGHT -- whips BLISTERINGLY FAST through the sky and --

INT. UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY HALL - DAY

It's craziness in here -- no order -- pockets of ARGUMENTS between REPRESENTATIVES of the world's nations paints a grim picture: there's no way we're going to figure this one out without some real help.

Which is just what they're about to get:

SUPERMAN (O.S.)
(impossibly loud)
EXCUSE ME!

-- and everyone just STOPS -- sees Superman standing at the double door entrance. In five seconds it becomes ABSOLUTELY SILENT in here. Everyone looks at Superman, confounded; didn't he just have the biggest funeral of all time?

Maybe to prove that it's really him -- maybe because there's no time to lose -- Superman FLIES across this imposing, incredible room, landing in the center:

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SUPERMAN (cont'd)
First thing. I'm not dead. Sorry for the confusion.
(beat)
Secondly: the four aliens who have destroyed so much of Earth are still on this planet. And they're ambitious. No one's going to like it if they get their way. Stopping them, however, is a job no one man... not even a Super-man... can do alone.
(beat)
I'm not political. I'm not here representing any one country, any one race.
(beat)
Today, in this room... I'm just a man.
(beat)
But I can lead us to victory if you choose to follow.

INT. TV MONITOR - DAY

STATIC -- and then, LEX LUTHOR, sitting behind a very familiar-looking desk. Behind him are the KRYPTONIANS, as if standing guard.

LUTHOR
My name is Lex Luthor. And I am speaking to you tonight from the White House.
(beat)
As you may have heard, there's been a transition of power in Washington. It wasn't easy. There were casualties. But as of now... I am your new President.
(beat)
Now I'm sure you're asking yourself, "So who is this man?" Well, you'll get to know all about me. I'm full of surprises, I promise you that. And to those who might resist my rule... well, we all saw what happened in Egypt. In France and Korea. No one wants more of that. So I'm here tonight to make a suggestion. That you work with me.
(beat)
Superman is gone, but we have other visitors here now. I'm going to be working very closely with them.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

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CONTINUED:

LUTHOR (cont'd)
And I'll be talking to you soon about the changes ahead.
(beat, smiles)
... this is an exciting time. I hope you agree. Good night and God bless.

Then we see VIDEOTAPED IMAGES OF DESTROYED TANKS, burning shells of aircraft --

NEWSCASTER (V.O.)
-- outside the White House, military vehicles still burn --

Then an IMAGE OF SUPERMAN, standing FULL-BODY (a photo taken from his appearance in Boston).

NEWSCASTER (V.O.) (cont'd)
-- while hundreds of thousands remain at the site of Superman's funeral--

-- the Newscaster continues -- but Lois, too saddened at the image of Superman, hits her REMOTE: THE TV TURNS OFF. Except we can still see Superman's image on the black screen. It takes Lois only a moment to realize: IT'S A REFLECTION.

Lois turns -- there he is, standing beside the open balcony window. Superman. Lois is stunned -- tears come to her eyes. And Superman says, simply:

SUPERMAN
... hi.

And they move to each other and embrace -- and kiss. And our MUSIC BUILDS as we CUT TO:

A MONTAGE (NOTE: THE KEY TO THIS SEQUENCE IS THE UNITY OF THE WORLD -- IT WILL ALL FEEL LIKE ONE COHESIVE EFFORT, BUT CARRIED OUT ACROSS THE GLOBE BY TWO DOZEN COUNTRIES).

-- of LABORATORIES -- SCIENTISTS of various nationalities opening STORAGE CASES containing GLOW-GREEN KRYPTONITE --

-- of MUSEUMS throughout the world -- CURATORS opening DISPLAY CASES with KRYPTONITE --

-- QUICK CUTS of various countries' AIR FORCES -- MISSILES being dismantled -- removed from FIGHTER JETS --

-- CLOSE-UPS of KRYPTONITE secured in MEDICAL CLAMPS and -- under sterile conditions -- being BROKEN INTO PIECES --

-- military WORKSHOPS where MISSILES are being reconditioned -- HOLES BEING DRILLED into them --

(CONTINUED)

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CONTINUED:

-- KRYPTONITE getting SHAVED INTO A bright green POWDER --

-- and LOIS LANE in a LABORATORY, EXAMINING a small KRYPTONITE ROCK. She takes notes.

-- various multi-national MILITARY PERSONNEL INSERT KRYPTONITE POWDER INTO THEIR fighter jet MISSILES. This is the last piece of the MONTAGE as we CUT TO:

INT. WHITE HOUSE CORRIDOR - NIGHT

-- as Agent Burk RUNS as fast as he can toward the West Wing. Why? You'll see -- SMASH CUT TO:

INT. OVAL OFFICE - NIGHT

Food containers scattered about -- the place markedly disheveled. At a coffee table, Lex reviews a MAP OF THE WORLD with Ty-Zor, Alta, Baz-Al, Caan, and Agent Gray. Luthor says, his mouth half-full with food:

LUTHOR
-- then we take out the capital of every city. We'll start with Moscow. Then Beijing, London, New Delhi--

INT. WHITE HOUSE CORRIDOR - NIGHT

-- Burk SCRAMBLES around a corner, hauling ass --

INT. OVAL OFFICE - NIGHT

LUTHOR
-- Cairo, Tel Aviv, Taipei -- we should hit Paris again--

GRAY
Sir, excuse me, my, uh... my sister's in Taipei.

LUTHOR
Well, you might want to call her.

-- suddenly the doors burst open -- it's Agent Burk, he's out of breath --

BURK
-- outside! -- On the lawn!

-- they rush to the window -- standing out on the West Lawn, amid the ruin and still-burning TANKS, absolutely defiantly, is Superman. He sees them and WAVES.

Luthor, Ty-Zor and rest are shocked --

(CONTINUED)

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LUTHOR
... no...

Suddenly Superman TAKES OFF -- Ty-Zor, Alta, Baz-Al and Caan QUICKLY FOLLOW -- SHATTERING THROUGH THE OVAL OFFICE WINDOW --

EXT. SKY - NIGHT TO DAY

-- as Superman bullets through the sky pursued by Ty-Zor, Alta, Baz-Al and Caan -- they fly into the DAYLIGHT and Superman DIVES --

EXT. RJSEYAK CRATER - GREENLAND - DAY

-- and Superman's RED BOOTS LAND HARD in the middle of this, the second-largest CRATER on Earth. Made millions of years ago by some big motherfucker of a rock. Little did that rock know that it was creating the ULTIMATE BOXING RING -- the FOUR KRYPTONIANS LAND a hundred yards away.

They face off for a moment -- four warriors against one. But this time, Superman is fortified; he's received the Jor-El Touch -- and he's here to win.

Of course Ty-Zor's got the most invested here -- his Kryptonian blood boiling, he ROCKETS FOR SUPERMAN, who EVADES the LIGHT-FAST charge -- Superman moves so swiftly that Ty-Zor BLOWS THROUGH HIS RED CAPE like a frenzied bull and master matador.

Then Alta attacks -- then Baz-Al and Caan -- and what follows is a massive, violent, deliriously-fast FIGHT SEQUENCE on land and in the air. What makes this sequence different is that now Superman has the skills -- he returns the foursome's powerhouse combos with equally versed moves -- the fighting style that Jor-El demonstrated in Zaza Palace --

The Kryptonians whip out their BLASTAFFS -- TWIRLING and FIRING in blinding fashion -- in addition to fighting back hard, Superman AVOIDS THE PULSE BLASTS with almost prescient speed --

-- Alta, Baz-Al, Caan and especially Ty-Zor are stunned by Superman's moves -- Superman POUNDS CAAN so hard that Caan DROPS HIS BLASTAFF -- Superman grabs it and BLASTS BACK at his opponents -- PULLING THE BLASTAFF APART AND USING EACH HALF AS A SEPARATE MARTIAL ARTS BLASTER -- a truly ambidextrous soldier, fighting two battles at once.

But although he's the superior fighter, Superman is once again outnumbered -- and Ty-Zor gets in one especially cruel series of blows that sends Superman back five-hundred yards.

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CONTINUED:

He lands painfully and strains to stand, facing off with the Kryptonian Four once again.

But this time they all HEAR something... a strange, approaching, mega-scale ROAR -- and while Superman just stares straight ahead, chin down, eyes cocksure and determined -- Ty-Zor and the other three look around -- what the hell is that sound? Where is it coming from?!

And we PUSH IN FAST ON SUPERMAN, who says, quietly:

SUPERMAN
... surprise.

Suddenly behind Superman: A SWARM OF FIGHTER JETS -- SEEMS LIKE OVER A HUNDRED OF THEM -- APPEAR FROM OVER THE HORIZON -- and they BLAST HARD, FAST AND LOW OVERHEAD, UNLEASHING THEIR KRYPTONITE-LACED SHELLS at Ty-Zor and his three associates -- the Kryptonians SCATTER, taking off into the sky --

-- so begins an IMPOSSIBLY FAST AIR COMBAT SEQUENCE BETWEEN FIVE KRYPTONIANS AND FIGHTER JETS FROM TWENTY-FOUR NATIONS --

MISSILES SCREAM THROUGH THE AIR AIMED AT Ty-Zor, Alta, Baz-Al and Caan, who perform MID-AIR ACROBATIC EVASIVE MANEUVERS to avoid the bombs --

Many of the bombs EXPLODE ON THE GROUND -- and Ty-Zor, Alta and Baz-Al use their BLASTERS to FIRE at the JETS --

-- a few of the JETS get HIT BY THE PULSE BLASTS and are destroyed in POWERFUL EXPLOSIONS --

-- Superman flies and "AIR TACKLES" Alta -- an EXCHANGE OF MID-AIR BLOWS and Superman SLAMS HER BACK -- just as she's hit by a KRYPTONITE MISSILE -- a WILD EXPLOSION AND SHE'S GONE --

In the flurry of the blitz, Baz-Al and Caan also meet their demise -- building to the final confrontation between Superman and Ty-Zor, taking place on the crater floor --

With JET FIGHTERS BANKING, ROARING OVERHEAD, BOMBS EXPLODING AROUND THEM, it's a BRUTAL EXCHANGE of blows and while Superman seems to be losing the battle, he finally RALLIES -- and beats Ty-Zor badly enough that Ty-Zor's on his knees -- Superman looks up and LEAPS INTO THE SKY AS HALF A DOZEN MISSILES LAND ON TY-ZOR, BLOWING HIM INTO NOTHINGNESS.

Superman lands -- far from where the Kryptonite bombs exploded. He falls to his knees, out of breath... looking at the place where his mortal enemy once stood. And even though Ty-Zor was evil, and is now gone, somehow this moment is bittersweet. Superman simply lowers his head --

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INT. COVA PALACE - NIGHT

-- CLOSE-UP of a GLASS SHATTERING on the floor -- QUICKLY BOOM UP TO REVEAL the profile of the man who dropped it --

-- IT'S KATA-ZOR... and as Jor-El knew once, so does he, now. His son is dead... and Kata-Zor's face is suddenly wracked with alarm -- not so much sorrow that he's lost his son, but, rather, panic that the notorious Prophecy might actually come to fruition... that his days as ruler may be numbered... and as our MUSIC BUILDS WE CUT TO:

EXT. METROPOLIS SKY - DAY

-- the MUSIC is sad now, like a recollection, as Superman flies over the City... taking a moment to look down upon the city -- the planet -- he's about to leave.

INT. THE DAILY PLANET - DAY

-- our MUSIC CONTINUES over the busy newsroom. A HEADLINE, "PRESIDENT REINSTATED". Lois moves to Perry, who leans over a desk, reading a front page story from a computer monitor -- as she pulls off her coat:

LOIS
-- what's the news on Luthor?

PERRY
-- military surrounded the White House: his agents are already in custody.
(re: story)
-- Lois, this is good.

LOIS
(pleased)
... yeah? I wasn't going to ask.

And then there's APPLAUSE -- Lois and Perry look up -- Superman has just entered the office and all the Employees give him a standing ovation. Lois quickly DROPS HER PURSE INTO HER DESK DRAWER and CLOSES THE DRAWER -- as Superman modestly waves thanks to the people, Lois hurries to him:

LOIS (cont'd)
-- hi--

SUPERMAN
(quietly)
... I need to talk to you.

-- but she's pulling him out of the newsroom:

(CONTINUED)

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CONTINUED:

LOIS
-- we should go outside--

SUPERMAN
-- why?

LOIS
-- trust me --

EXT. THE DAILY PLANET - ROOF - DAY

Our SORROWFUL MUSIC CONTINUES OVER a LONG SHOT of the roof -- the giant iconic silver GLOBE a backdrop for Superman and Lois. Now we're CLOSE on them. He looks into her eyes, trying to find the way to say good-bye. And she gazes into his, searching hopefully for the thing he wants to say...

LOIS
... what is it?

This is truly hard for him. Finally:

SUPERMAN
I wanted to say good-bye.

... and her heart sinks. It takes her a moment.

LOIS
... I don't understand...

SUPERMAN
I'm going home.
(beat, simply)
They need me back home.

She looks at him through teary eyes, nodding, trying to be strong. She forces a smile:

LOIS
I sort of knew this would happen.

SUPERMAN
But I'm coming back.

LOIS
(not believing him,
emotionally shut down)
Well, good. Good, I hope so...

-- but he touches her face -- looks deep into her eyes.

SUPERMAN
(meaningfully)
... I'm coming back.
(MORE)

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CONTINUED:

SUPERMAN (cont'd)
(beat)
For you.

-- and she softens again, tears welling in her eyes. She's vulnerable again as she cries. He leans in and kisses her -- and it's a long, romantic, wonderful kiss. Their good-bye.

Finally he pulls back, looks at her.

SUPERMAN (cont'd)
Thank you. For everything.

She touches his face.

LOIS
No. Thank you.

-- they look into each other's eyes for a long moment... and just when you think Superman will turn to leave, a SARDONIC VOICE RINGS OUT:

LUTHOR (O.S.)
I'd like to thank you too, Miss Lane.

Superman and Lois turn to see LEX LUTHOR, walking toward them from the other side of the roof. Angry and spiteful:

LUTHOR (cont'd)
How else can a man find Superman so quickly?

Superman turns toward him -- slightly in front of Lois -- strong and impervious.

SUPERMAN
You came for me, Dr. Luthor?

LUTHOR
Well, yes I did, Superman, actually I did. I came for you. I CAME HERE... FOR YOU.
(beat)
D'you GET IT? Do you get the irony in that? Or have you not put it all together yet? Not to say that I'd blame you, I think I've done a pretty Goddamn spectacular job!

Luthor's talking so histrionically it's unnerving. Like he's lost his mind a little -- like he's just experienced the last straw...

LUTHOR (cont'd)
The good soldier. The loyal. The dedicated. The tenacious.
(MORE)

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CONTINUED: (2)

LUTHOR (cont'd)
That's me. When others would have quit-- when others have, I kept up the charade. Following orders that made me sick! To impersonate the very thing I despise most in the universe.
(to Lois, with disdain)
Those like you.

-- but Superman and Lois are befuddled as Luthor continues:

LUTHOR (cont'd)
I was hoping to do this on a slightly larger scale, SUPERMAN... but here we are. And the only way for me to be the good soldier is to tell you the truth.
(intense, evil beat)
No, that pod the CIA recovered... it wasn't yours.

A long, insane, dramatic beat -- and just as we get it:

LUTHOR (cont'd)
IT WAS MINE.

Suddenly -- SHOCKINGLY -- Luthor LEAPS INTO THE SKY, AIRBORNE AND SUPERHEROIC, like all of Luthor's fellow Kryptonians are capable of --

-- Superman and Lois's wide eyes follow Lex fast ACROSS THE SKY, the two of them in pure shock --

SUPERMAN
(sotto, to Lois)
... go inside... stay away from this.
(his critical eyes meet hers)
Go.

-- her eyes on Superman, Lois finally nods. She RUNS TO THE ROOF ACCESS DOOR and Superman TAKES OFF:

INT. THE DAILY PLANET - STAIRWELL - DAY

-- Lois races down the stairs -- determined -- she bursts through a door --

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EXT. METROPOLIS - DAY

-- and Superman ATTACKS LEX -- the battle we never imagined -- Superman and Lex in airborne hand-to-hand combat -- and we're witness to the remarkable SKILLS that Lex Luthor learned three decades ago as one of Kata-Zor's Kryptonian soldiers. For Superman this is like fighting against the SENSEI.

EXT. METROPOLIS STREET - DAY

-- PEDESTRIANS spot the battle and watch, horrified --

INT. THE DAILY PLANET - DAY

-- Lois races down the hall and into the office -- hurries to her desk -- pulls open the DRAWER she shut before -- she scrambles through her purse and finds a GLASS VIAL holding the PIECE OF KRYPTONITE we saw her examining during the montage --

EXT. METROPOLIS - DAY

-- Superman's fighting skills are advanced -- but Lex throws multi-combinations like we've never seen -- they HOVER AROUND BUILDINGS like two pro-boxers circling the ring --

INT. THE DAILY PLANET - DAY

-- Lois races back up the stairs -- three at a time --

EXT. METROPOLIS - DAY

-- Superman and Lex exchange blows -- and they HEAR:

LOIS (O.S.)
SUPERMAN!!!

-- both Superman and Lex (who's CLOSER to Lois) turn to see Lois back on the roof again. Lex smiles at Superman then DIVE BOMBS FOR LOIS -- Superman FLIES AFTER HIM --

Lois is visibly scared as Lex RUSHES TOWARD HER -- she's about to pull out the Kryptonite when LEX GRABS HER AND CARRIES HER OFF THE ROOF, INTO THE AIR --

NOW LOIS SCREAMS, HER PLAN GONE AWRY -- for a flash, Lex carries her with evil intent -- but then HE FEELS THE KRYPTONITE PAIN -- HIS SKIN STARTS TO BLISTER AS HE SEES THE VIAL OF KRYPTONITE THAT LOIS HOLDS -- LEX LOSES HIS POWERS AND THEY START TO FALL --

Superman DIVES after them as a hurting LEX tries to wrestle the Kryptonite away from her -- but she won't let go --

(CONTINUED)

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CONTINUED:

LUTHOR
-- NO!!! NOOOOOOO!!!

-- and just as they're about to HIT THE GROUND, SUPERMAN SWOOPS DOWN AND GRABS LOIS, WHO DROPS THE KRYPTONITE -- LEX SLAMS INTO THE ASPHALT, THREE FEET DEEP --

Superman lands with Lois:

SUPERMAN
-- you okay?

LOIS
-- yeah, you?

SUPERMAN
(smiles)
-- yeah --

EXT. METROPOLIS STREET - DAY

-- later: Lex, skin BLOTCHY and in bad pain, lies WHIMPERING in the back corner of a ARMORED POLICE VAN. Doors CLOSE on him.

A COP talks to Superman, the armed VAN in the distance.

SUPERMAN
Make sure you keep the Kryptonite near him at all times.

COP
Yessir, we will, swear to God.

And the police move away. Superman turns to Lois. She just knows, he's gotta go. She nods. He moves to her, takes her in his arms and they TAKE OFF --

INT. THE DAILY PLANET - ROOF - DAY

They land on the roof. One final look: she wants to say something so badly... but she's too choked up. Finally it's Superman who says:

SUPERMAN
-- I love you, too.

Touched, she smiles -- just as it occurs to her: the only person she told her true feelings to was Clark. Was this an assumption on Superman's part? And what was that strength she saw in Clark's eyes...?

A final look and Superman FLIES OFF. Lois watches him go -- touched and intrigued...

10/7/2002

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INT. THE DAILY PLANET - DAY

Lois walks in, still emotional, but her mind spinning. She finds Jimmy, who stands there, reading a letter, disturbed. Sort of suspiciously, she says:

LOIS
Jimmy, is Clark around?

JIMMY
(re: letter)
No, he quit...

LOIS
... really...

JIMMY
Yeah... said he's got stuff to deal with back home since the death of his father.

And we're TIGHT ON LOIS as she considers this -- the man she loves -- her soulmate -- off on the greatest adventure of his life. And in this moment, she knows he'll be back.

EXT. KENT FARM - DUSK

The most beautiful sight. The farm we first saw, thirty years ago. The sky pink, the MUSICAL SCORE at once a heartbreaking resolution and a promise of things to come.

And standing outside the farmhouse is Superman. He looks out at the land... where he was raised... the land he's about to depart to face the ultimate challenge. He takes a breath. Exhales. Bracing himself.

INT. BARN - DUSK

BLACKNESS -- and we REALIZE we're in an UNDERGROUND SHELTER inside the barn -- looking upward at Superman as he opens the swing doors. Looks down.

Then, we see what he sees. HIS POD. The one he arrived in, so many years ago.

EXT. KENT FARM - DUSK

Superman stands with his mother, Martha Kent. He embraces her -- a woman who once thought she'd lost her son. She now sees him in his greatest moment. They look into each other's eyes. Martha wipes away some tears. Trying to sound strong, but her voice cracking.

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CONTINUED:

MARTHA
Be safe, sweetheart.

And MOMENTS LATER, Martha Kent stands in her front yard as a BRILLIANT LIGHT illuminates the farm -- the POD'S THRUSTER showering the place in WHITE LIGHT.

And as our MUSIC RISES the pod lifts off.. Carrying Superman into the heavens. Beginning the journey of his lifetime.

And Martha Kent watches as The Light lifts into the sky. Her heart full. Proud of her son.

FADE OUT.

THE END

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-- and Superman ATTACKS LEX -- the battle we never imagined -- Superman and Lex in airborne hand-to-hand combat -- and we're witness to the remarkable SKILLS that Lex Luthor learned three decades ago as one of Kata-Zor's Kryptonian soldiers. For Superman this is like fighting against the SENSEI.

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A final look and Superman FLIES OFF. Lois watches him go -- touched and intrigued...

10/7/2002

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INT. THE DAILY PLANET - DAY

Lois walks in, still emotional, but her mind spinning. She finds Jimmy, who stands there, reading a letter, disturbed. Sort of suspiciously, she says:

LOIS
Jimmy, is Clark around?

JIMMY
(re: letter)
No, he quit...

LOIS
... really...

JIMMY
Yeah... said he's got stuff to deal with back home since the death of his father.

And we're TIGHT ON LOIS as she considers this -- the man she loves -- her soulmate -- off on the greatest adventure of his life. And in this moment, she knows he'll be back.

EXT. KENT FARM - DUSK

The most beautiful sight. The farm we first saw, thirty years ago. The sky pink, the MUSICAL SCORE at once a heartbreaking resolution and a promise of things to come.

And standing outside the farmhouse is Superman. He looks out at the land... where he was raised... the land he's about to depart to face the ultimate challenge. He takes a breath. Exhales. Bracing himself.

INT. BARN - DUSK

BLACKNESS -- and we REALIZE we're in an UNDERGROUND SHELTER inside the barn -- looking upward at Superman as he opens the swing doors. Looks down.

Then, we see what he sees. HIS POD. The one he arrived in, so many years ago.

EXT. KENT FARM - DUSK

Superman stands with his mother, Martha Kent. He embraces her -- a woman who once thought she'd lost her son. She now sees him in his greatest moment. They look into each other's eyes. Martha wipes away some tears. Trying to sound strong, but her voice cracking.

(CONTINUED)

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CONTINUED:

MARTHA
Be safe, sweetheart.

And MOMENTS LATER, Martha Kent stands in her front yard as a BRILLIANT LIGHT illuminates the farm -- the POD'S THRUSTER showering the place in WHITE LIGHT.

And as our MUSIC RISES the pod lifts off.. Carrying Superman into the heavens. Beginning the journey of his lifetime.

And Martha Kent watches as The Light lifts into the sky. Her heart full. Proud of her son.

FADE OUT.

THE END

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