



An Untold Story from *The Adventures of Superman*

By Bruce Kanin

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# ***MASTER MIND***

***Episode 3 of 3***

***“The Super-Menace of Metropolis”***





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## ACT 1: "THE MENACE OF SUPERMAN"

*Note: "The Super-Menace of Metropolis" occurs sometime after the end of "Attack of the Zombies" but well before the start of the third season of **The Adventures of Superman**.*

### **DAILY PLANET**



*Perry White sat in his leather-bound guest chair, holding in his right hand several high-priced diamond necklaces. He looked up at the colorfully costumed man in front of him who stood there sternly, with hands on hips, and was focused on the Daily Planet's Chief Editor.*

*White, normally used to handing out assignments and **giving** orders, was uncomfortably on the receiving end. The costumed man spoke. "Now you're certain you understand, Mister White."*

*White nodded. "Yes, I understand." He looked at the jewels in his hand. "I'm to give them to the Metropolis Charity for the Homeless."*

*"And you're not to worry. Everything will go to charity."*

*"Yes. Yes, I'll ... I'll print just what you said."*

*Satisfied, the costumed man said, "Goodbye Mister White."*

*Perry saw that the man turned and headed for the door, not the window - that should have set off alarms for the Chief Editor. But the whole situation rattled him so – Perry White of all people – it just didn't immediately register. He got up from the chair, saying, "Wait a minute, Superman."*

*The costumed man turned to look at White, surprised at being held up.*

*White said, "You know, this doesn't **seem** like you." The costumed man now offered a slight grin. Perhaps defiance. White continued, "It doesn't **sound** like you."*

*Now the costumed man was annoyed. "What do you mean?"*

*White stuck out a comforting hand, not wanting to rile the intimidating man. "Now don't take offense." He put his left hand on the visitor's right shoulder and then withdrew it. "The idea of you playing...Robin Hood...stealing from one person...giving to another." He waved his hand.*

*The man in the uniform remained annoyed and his voice got louder. "Are you insinuating that everything I – borrow – will **not** be given to charity?"*

*White turned and walked a few steps away to hopefully diffuse the building confrontation he feared could have a terrible outcome. He looked down at the floor to gather his thoughts as well as the right words that might calm the man with whom he was speaking. "No, of course not. Of course not."*

*White turned and stepped back to face the man. "But - don't you see how **wrong** that is?" He was matter of fact. "You've always worked **with** the police. Upheld law and order."*

*The Editor started to walk away from the man again, once more to diffuse the confrontation, hoping his words would sink in. "You've never taken anything from anyone but—" And then he turned back to the man and looked squarely at him. "Well, you should hear what people are saying about you now."*

*He put his left hand on Superman's arm, even shaking it a little. "Listen to me, please, Superman." Now he was pleading with the man. "You haven't considered what the **consequences** will be."*

*The man looked down at White's hand on his arm as if he was going to amputate it. White withdrew it.*





*"Mister White", the man seethed. Perry White then witnessed a face and voice he'd never seen this man direct at him in the almost two years he'd known Superman. It was like an incensed god on the verge of striking down a mere mortal.*

*"Have you ever considered what the consequences would be if I got angry at Metropolis?"*



*Then the man spun and left through the Chief Editor's door. When he was gone, White stood there for a moment and then plopped down in an identical leather*



*chair facing the other one, with the jewels still clutched in his hand. Clearly defeated for the moment, all he could muster was a weak version of his favorite exclamation, "Great Caesar's Ghost."*

And now, a few months later, White thought hard about that encounter. As it turned out, the man dressed like Superman, looking like Superman and sounding like Superman – *wasn't* Superman. It was the man now believed to still be in prison – John "Boulder" Crane. At the time, he was *posing* as Superman as part of an elaborate underworld scheme.

But the impostor's final words to White never left the editor and chilled him to this day – especially so, because it appeared that the *real* Superman was now angry at Metropolis, with the city and its residents experiencing the devastating consequences.

White sat in his office as a violent springtime electrical storm smashed the city. The office lights flickered and he might have otherwise wondered whether the turbulence outside was in fact Mother Nature – or perhaps The Man of Steel. Behind him, an announcer could barely be heard via White's office radio as his voice was interspersed by static caused by the storm. The radio, too, would go on and off in sync with the lights. But White, lost in thought, was mostly oblivious to it all until the lights and radio remained off. Any ambient light from outside had faded quickly, as the heart of the storm raged overhead along with its swirling dark clouds.

As the editor sat in near darkness, there was a crash of lightning like he'd never experienced before, which flashed and lit up the room. When it diminished, there were flickers, like aftershocks of an earthquake. And after those subsided, he saw a

shadowy figure suddenly appear a few feet from the window, near the middle of his office. White was sure that he recognized the figure and stood, whispering, "Superman?"

The costumed figure spoke. "Mister White." It seemed like the same, angry "Superman" he confronted months ago had now returned!

White spoke louder – no longer a whisper. "Superman. What's *happened* to you? The news reports. It's *unbelievable*."

"Maybe it's *your* fault, Mister White. Did you ever consider that?"

"*What?* I don't understand. How could any of this be *my* fault?"

The costumed figure moved closer. White could clearly see his face. The editor thought, *it really is Superman*. But it seemed like there was a great strain in his face. He exhibited anger, yes, but something else – tenseness, almost like – there was something else on his mind, what with his eyes darting back and forth. The stern figure said, "All I can say is, search your soul. And think back almost two years."

White was still confused. "*What?*"

"You had a visitor. Yes, someone who wanted to talk to you about an urgent matter. But you were distracted. Metropolis was distracted, as was the entire world."

"I don't—"

"No, of course you don't remember, because the visitor was *unimportant* to you. But had you given him the time of day, I might not be here right now. And what I've been doing" he nodded at the window "out there, might not be happening, either." White felt like he was hearing someone else's words through this man's mouth.

"Really, Superman. I don't understand. You're not making any *sense*."

Lightning flickered, and he thought he saw a completely different man, one wearing a fedora and an overcoat whose face he believed was familiar – in the shadows – just for a moment. When White's eyes recovered from the lightning flash the shadowy figure was gone, as was the costumed man.



The editor collapsed in the same leather chair he sat down in after the Superman imposter, Boulder, had met with him months ago. Only this time, White didn't even have enough energy to muster his famous exclamation about a long-dead Roman dictator.

Minutes later, the lights suddenly flickered on, as did the vacuum tubes in his radio, and before long, William Henderson came through the editor's office door.

"*Mister White!*" Henderson rushed over to White and bent down. "Are you OK?"

When he saw White just staring into space, Henderson got up and rushed out the door. A minute later he was back with a paper cup filled with water from a hallway cooler. He bent down again and brought the cup to the editor's lips. "Here, Mister White. Take this."

White hesitated, but then took a sip. He hesitated again and then said, "Thanks Henderson." He then continued to stare out into space, holding the cup of water unsteadily.

The Inspector took the cup from him and stood. "You look like you just saw a ghost."

White looked up slowly and said, "Maybe I finally did, Henderson. Maybe I did. But it sure wasn't Julius Caesar's."

The tubes in White's radio had finally warmed up once again and both men heard a familiar announcer's voice coming from it.



*"...to repeat: Superman, The Man of Steel, continues on an unexplainable rampage in Metropolis, terrorizing its citizens. So far eyewitnesses report that he ripped open the vault at the Metropolis Trust Company, hurled the WMET television tower into Metropolis Bay, flooded the south tube of Tri-State Tunnel and created a mile-long gulley down the center of Broadview Way.*

*"Amazingly there have been no reports of casualties. Mayor Fiorletto has called an emergency council. Governor Stone and even President Eisenhower are conferring with the Mayor, as well. So far, attempts to..."*

***Click!***

A disgusted Perry White had stood up and walked over to shut the radio. "I've heard enough."

Bill Henderson was somber. "I came here to see if you wanted to accompany me to the mayor's office."

White ignored him and sat down at his desk. "He was *here*, you know."



"Who?"

"Him." White nodded at the radio. "*Superman*." Then he pulled out a cigar and lit it.

Henderson was shocked. "*What?!*"

"That's right. Plain as day. Or at least as plain as this blasted storm would allow."

"What did he want?"

"The whole thing was crazy, Henderson. Absolutely crazy. He told me that all the trouble he's been causing has been *my* fault."



The Inspector smiled just a little. "*Crazy* is right. What could he have possibly meant by that?"

White went on. "He said something about an incident awhile back. About someone who came to see me. Someone I ignored, apparently."

"Did you know who he was referring to?"

Perry's voice rose and he waved his hands. "Of course not. Do you know how many people have come through this office?" He calmed himself and said, "But then, there was a flash of lightning, and I saw someone else. At least, I thought I did." White shook his head. "No, it's too fantastic. I don't believe any of it. Maybe *Superman himself* wasn't even here." He looked towards the window and then back at the Inspector. "It's a horrible day for Metropolis, Henderson. Maybe the *world*. This is a *catastrophe* beyond anything anyone has ever seen."

Henderson was equally grim. "I'm afraid the worst is yet to come. If only there was a way to get *through* to Superman. Or even *stop* him."

"You and I know the only thing in the world that'll stop him is *Kryptonite*."

"Well, based on your tip earlier, I've got some frogmen hunting for that lead pipe you mentioned sitting at the bottom of Metropolis Bay. The one Superman himself hurled there – a pipe containing kryptonite."<sup>1</sup>

"It's our only hope, Henderson. Other than trying to *reason* with the man."

"Doesn't seem like there's much chance of that."

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<sup>1</sup> *The Adventures of Superman* (Season 2), "The Defeat of Superman"

"I know. It's like he's out of his *mind*! If only Kent were here. I don't remember him saying he was taking vacation to see his dear old mother in Smallville, like you told me." White gave off a sarcastic smile.

Henderson said, "Well, I didn't say exactly *that* to you the other day, Perry, but last time I spoke with Kent – before all this happened – he seemed to be calling from Smallville."

"Well, if that's where he is, it's a fine time to be milking cows."

Just then White's door swung open and Lois Lane came barreling in. White, still rattled from all that had just gone on, was startled for a moment. Then he said, "I usually scold Olsen for that, Lois, but I won't speak ill of him while he's still recovering – and I certainly won't yell at *you*!"

Lois nodded at Henderson and stood next to him in front of White's desk. "Oh well, Chief, I just came from the hospital, and Jimmy's doing much better. Thanks to..."

White said, "Yes, yes, I know. Superman. If he hadn't gotten the truth out of that infernal doctor – what's his name?"

Henderson said, "*Brentwood*. Superman – at least when he was the man we *used* to know – pinpointed the drug that created the zombies, including Olsen."

Lois said, "And the doctors were able to determine an antidote. But Chief, Inspector, listen. This is what I wanted to tell you. WMET is downstairs—"

White said, "I thought their tower was out of commission!"

Lois said, "Apparently they have a backup facility."

Henderson said, "Good for them."

Lois said, "Anyway, they've set up a camera crew downstairs, in the alcove. Looks like the rain has stopped for a little bit. Radio stations are setting up, too. And I saw Brady from the *Star* milling around. Seems like every kind of media is there."

White twisted his head, "What on Earth for?"

"Superman..." Lois looked down at the floor and then back at her boss, then at the Inspector, "... if that's who it is – is apparently holding a press conference – in ten minutes."



"*Great Caesar's Ghost!* Right outside our own building! It's like he's pushing our *noses* in it!"

Lois asked, "*Who* is? *Superman?* In *what?*"

"Never mind – just get down there, right away."

"Not you, Chief?"

"No, I've seen enough of him. Besides, I want to try again to get hold of Kent."

Henderson grabbed Lois by the arm to usher her out. "Come on, Miss Lane. I'll go, too. The mayor can wait. In fact, he'll probably be watching it on TV like the rest of Metropolis. I'll fill you in on what Mister White was referring to." Half-joking, he said, "Maybe I'll even get to *arrest* Superman!"

Lois scolded, "Now that's not funny, Bill."

White called out. "Just a minute."

The Inspector and reporter turned to look back at White as they stood in the doorway leading into the hall. White looked at Lane, saying, "What you just said, Lois - who says it's *not* Superman!?"

Lois said somberly, "Well, how *can* it be? With everything that's gone on, it doesn't *seem* like the Superman we know."

Henderson turned to Lois. "What are you suggesting, Miss Lane? Are you saying it's a double – an imposter – like Boulder was? Or *Boulder* himself?"

Lois's eyes lit up. "Yes! It's *got* to be! That *has* to be the answer!" She waved a hand for emphasis.

Henderson shook his head. "But Boulder didn't have superpowers. And clearly – this one does. You've heard the accounts of all the damage and destruction. People seeing him leap across the sky. Boulder could never do that."

Lois, almost pleading that her idea could be right, said, "But maybe someone could've *given* him powers."

White said, "No, Lois, I'll have to side with Henderson. It's too fantastic. You know it pains me to say this, but", he paused and then, "more likely it's that Superman – the *real* one – has gone out of his mind. Maybe it has something to do with what happened at the ballgame recently - when he lost his powers. I don't know." White paused. "Anyway, get down there now."

Lois said, "Chief, are you sure you don't want to come with us?"

"No, like I said, I'm going to try getting hold of Kent one more time. Couldn't get through to his mother the last few tries. Maybe this time I'll get lucky."

Lois looked down at the floor and then at her boss. "I'm worried about Clark not checking in." She paused. "Unless..."

Henderson raised his eyebrows at White and then shepherded Lane out the door. The two of them walked silently to the elevator. When it arrived and they were inside, Henderson spoke. "I'm afraid your boss may be onto something about Superman. Kent and I were looking into someone who was mastering *mind control*. Like the zombies who invaded *Project X*. Right after that, Superman told me that he had a lead. But he never told me exactly what, just that he suspected he was closing in on the man behind the mind control."

Lois said, "And then there was no sign of Superman – until all this." She paused and then said, "But Inspector - you mean – you think – *something* or *someone* is controlling Superman's *mind*?"

"Well, given what we know and all that's happened of late, isn't that more believable than – than someone giving, say, Boulder, superpowers?"

Lois wondered, "I don't know, Inspector. It would have to be something incredibly powerful to affect Superman's mind. Something that would have to overcome his amazing physique."

Henderson nodded. "I know. His invulnerability allows him to withstand virtually anything thrown at him."

"Except *Kryptonite*."

The elevator doors opened and the pair walked out.

***CUNNINGHAM PRISON***

It was a practice at Cunningham Prison for groups of prisoners to be allowed to sit around a radio for special occasions. The tradition began around the time FDR held his so-called fireside chats via radio broadcasts. Warden Raines felt it helped inmate morale; it good activity for the guards and other prison workers, as well. And then when Raines arranged for Cunningham to obtain a television for the visitor area, the custom continued.

Due to limited space in the visitor area, drawings were held to determine who would be lucky enough to participate. Sporting events were most popular, whether or not the medium was radio or television. Boxing matches drew the most interest, especially Sugar Ray Robinson vs. Jake LaMotta in 1951, Rocky Marciano vs. Jersey Joe Walcott in 1952 and again in 1953. The Monarchs baseball games were a hit, so to speak, as well.

Once in awhile, other events drew a crowd, and these were usually done without a lottery system. The end of the Korean War, 1952 election eve and other special news events drew inmates and guards alike.

This was particularly true with regard to news coverage of current events in Metropolis - it attracted a packed house. Amongst the crowd of inmates was William Remsen, AKA Willy the Whisker, who was being escorted with several other inmates into the visitor area. Willy, college-educated and a refined speaker, was unlike most of the other foul-mouthed prisoners whose speech often exhibited barely recognizable English. The diminutive Willy had fallen on hard times and got involved in an armed robbery caught holding the goods. As a result, he ended up in Cunningham.

Willy spotted a familiar face and a guard escorted the somewhat tall man over. As Whisker sat down on a bench, he turned to his friend and said, “Gee Boulder, when did you get here?”

“*Shssh!* I’m trying to watch TV, Whiska.” He struggled to see around the inmates seated in front of him.

“Sorry, Boulder. They said that there’s a special broadcast, though. What do you see?”

“It’s hard to see anything, what with these big lugs sittin’ in fronna me.”

Two of the hefty inmates in the next row turned around, and one said, “Hey, who are ya callin’ a big lug? You want I should shut ya mouf?”

Willy jumped in and waved a hand. "Boulder didn't mean anything, sir, did you Boulder...?"

All Willy's friend did was grunt and continue to struggle to see the television in the front of the room.

Willy continued, "So did they say something about Superman, Boulder?"



"Yeah, someone said he's gonna make a news conference."

"I hear that Superman's done some terrible things."

"I don't believe it."

There was a groan from the front of the room, and then a guard yelled out, "Just a little trouble with the set. It'll be a minute." More groans.

Willy said, "So where were you yesterday, Boulder? I missed you at lunchtime."

"Oh, I was gettin' my shot. From Doc Reed. You know."

"How many more of them will you need? You seem to get inoculated every day."

"He said it's on accounna the accident I had."

"You still all black and blue from that?"

"Yeah, and it still hoits."

The television comes back on. Willy struggled to see around the big men in front of him, but then said, "It's incredible, Boulder – he looks like *you*! Or, well, you look just like *him*!"

"Yeah."

Whisker said, "Superman's talking now."

Then they heard a voice from the television.



*"For some time now I've been serving Metropolis ... and the world. You've all been living off of me. Now it's time for retribution. Until now I've had no possessions. Until now I've followed your restrictive and suffocating laws. Until now I've been your slave."*

**MAXWELL'S ROCK**

Under Maxwell's Rock, Alec Endicott spoke into a microphone as his sister watched.

*"...it's time for retribution. Until now I've had no possessions. Until now I've followed your restrictive and suffocating laws. Until now I've been like your slave."*

*"For almost two years I've been at your beck and call. But no more..."*

**CUNNINGHAM PRISON**

In the Cunningham visitor area, the inmates and guards gasped at what they were seeing and hearing on the television. They watched as the camera briefly turned away from its star attraction and panned through the crowd of reporters and onlookers.

Willy stood up and pointed, excitedly. "Hey, that looks like the reporter who you met with, Boulder." They heard a wolf whistle from one of the inmates and another say *"Whadda doll!"*

But Whisker's fellow inmate wasn't amused. He said, loud enough for the inmates around him to hear, *"Shadap. I want to hear this. And don' call her a 'doll'."* There were a few stares and grumbles, but then everyone quieted down as they all continued to watch the screen.

The television focused on the costumed man behind the microphone and a group of reporters directly in front of him. *"Superman. What are you saying?"* It was Lois Lane. There was exasperation in her voice.

The commanding and almost condescending tone of the man changed as he looked at the *Daily Planet* reporter. He even smiled. *"Oh, hello Miss Lane..."*

He stared at her and an awkward silence ensued.





**DAILY PLANET – WHITE'S OFFICE**

It wasn't often that Perry White would make a non-business call, other than to his wife or other members of his family, something he minimized as much as possible during working hours. But his two star reporters were unavailable, not to mention his "cub" reporter, so he had to make a phone call that made him just a tad uncomfortable.

"Yes, operator. Her name is Sarah Kent. Lives on a farm. Outside Smallville. Yes, yes, I'll wait."

Soon an older woman's voice came on the line. "Hello."

"This is White at the *Daily Planet*. Metropolis."

"Yes?"



"Is this Sarah Kent?"

"Why yes, Mister White."

"Mrs. Kent, I'm calling about your son."

"My son?"

White was already getting just a little impatient. "*Clark*. Clark Kent."

"Oh, why yes, of course."

"Mrs. Kent. Is your son available? Is he *there*, with you?"

"Clark?"

The steam was forming between the Chief Editor's ears. "Yes, ma'am. Your son *Clark*. Is he with you on the farm?"

"You know, Mister White. When Clark was a child, he would sometimes run off."



White was incredulous, but held back exploding. "Beg pardon?"

"The shed. The woods. Land sakes, there was an old tunnel that he liked. Oh, the world could be falling apart and sometimes he wouldn't know the difference."

The volcano known as Perry White erupted. "The world *is* falling apart!" He thumped his fist on his desk, making the phone ring.



Sarah Kent exclaimed, "*Jehoshaphat!*"

Perry White took a deep breath, held it for a moment and waited until he felt his heart stop racing. His reply started off softly. "I'm sorry, Mrs. Kent. I didn't mean to raise my voice. It's just that we have a - *situation* here. A very *bad* one. I don't know if you get all the news down there." He paused. "It just would be helpful - if I could reach your son." His last sentence descended into resignation.

"I need to talk to Clark, too, Mister White. Tractor mower's acting up. He always had a knack for fixin' it."

White thought. *I'm wasting my time.* He steadied his temper as well as the tone of his voice. "Mrs. Kent. All I ask is, if Clark shows up, please have him call me in the office. He knows the number. Thank you." He hung up, shook his head and stared into space for a quarter-minute. Then he got up to retrieve his fedora and raincoat before heading out his office door.



Meanwhile, at her farm, Sarah Kent sat in her kitchen staring at the telephone. She didn't often keep in touch with world events and rarely read the newspaper. She did occasionally pick up a copy of the *Daily Planet* from Charlie's newsstand in town - especially when her son, Clark, had the byline.

Or as Superman - he commanded the *headline*.

But now even Smallville buzzed with the disturbing news of a Superman gone berserk and that troubled Sarah Kent to no end. When she last saw her son, he had brought her presents from Paris - including a pretty little snow globe of the Eiffel Tower. She remembered most that her son was troubled about losing his powers and the health of his friend Jimmy Olsen. Now she wondered what exactly was going on. *Eben 'n I raised him good. Something's very wrong here.*

It made no sense to her.

In the meantime, she did something that she'd practiced for almost two years, which was to cover up for Clark's whereabouts. If someone wanted to know where Clark was, she would deliberately be evasive. It couldn't hurt his dual identity to make people think he might be in Smallville ... or might not.

So she put on an act. She pretended to have, well, just a touch of ... *senility*.

With the phone call over, though, all she could do is wonder about her son. That meant waiting ... and, like any mother thinking about their child that might be in trouble ... *worrying*.

**CUNNINGHAM PRISON**

The prison visitor area television boomed to its riveted audience: "*From this point on, I will **take** what I want. Laws will mean **nothing** to me. I'll not be **your** slave, but you **will** serve **me**!*"

Another voice is heard from the TV, "*Superman. Brady of the Daily Star. So, uh, what exactly are you gonna do?*"

*"You'll see! Now, if you'll excuse me!"*

A different camera angle was shown on the screen. Willy stood again and pointed, "Look at that ... he's running and leaping into the air. *Incredible!*"

Baby Face Stevens, who had managed to slink into a standing room only section of the visitor area in the back, said, to no one in particular, "Well, well. I thought I'd never live to see *this* day. Superman turning crooked. Even gives *me* the creeps."

**DAILY PLANET – JUST OUTSIDE LOBBY, BY STREET**

White made it down to the alcove outside the *Daily Planet* building just as the press conference was ending. He looked at the man leaping away, thinking, *Great Caesar's Ghost! Superman looks as stern-faced as he did when I saw him less than an hour ago.*

The editor walked over to Lois and Henderson. Lois looked at the Chief and, exasperated, said, "He's *got* to be an imposter." Then her eyes lit up. "I'm heading over to Cunningham. If Boulder's not there, then *that*" she pointed up at the sky "was *him*, and the real Superman is missing!"

Perry White looked at his reporter and shook his head. "Lois, that just sounds too fantastic, particularly because we all just saw that man *leap* into the air!" He turned to the Inspector. "What do you think, Henderson?"

"I don't know, Mister White. At this stage, I'd say all bets are off - anything is possible. It could be an imposter. Or it could be that Superman's mind has snapped."

Lois answered, "No, Bill, not *him*! Superman's invulnerable. We *know* it. We've *seen* it. Nothing can affect his mind like that. And he, of all people, wouldn't suddenly *snap*."

Henderson said, "Like I said, I really don't have a clue. I mean, for all we know, his mind may be under someone else's influence ... or ... maybe that was an imposter with superpowers, as you suspect, Miss Lane. I'd wager my career that it's all tied to what happened recently - at the ballgame and then wherever he went after finding that doctor's zombie drugs." He rubbed the back of his neck. "But we're sure not going to figure it out here." The Inspector was then tapped on the shoulder by a police officer and directed his attention to him.

In the meantime, White shrugged and offered a rare apology. "I'm sorry, Lois. Maybe he's right or maybe you're right. It could be that it was someone *posing* as Superman. There's been too much on my mind. Olsen having been ill. Superman the way he is. And Kent missing."

Lois composed herself. "Did you get through to Smallville, Chief?"

"Yes, yes. I spoke to Kent's mother, God bless her."

"And?"

"She sounded confused. I couldn't make head or tail of whether Kent is down there. All I could do is ask her to tell him to check in here as soon as possible."

"I'm not surprised." Then Lois mumbled. "Maybe she was covering for him."

White squinted at his reporter. "*What?*"

Just then, Henderson came back to them. "My man just told me that the Mayor postponed his meeting so he could watch the broadcast. But now his meeting is 'on'. I've got to get over there *pronto*."

White said, "Wait a minute, Henderson, I'll go with you. And in the meantime, Lois, you get over to Cunningham. Check up on Boulder. If he's not there, then maybe your theory is right!"

Lois asked, "And if Boulder *is* there?"

Henderson looked grim. "Then heaven help us all, Miss Lane, because there'll be no one to stop the angry man who just flew away from here – someone who promises to turn this city – and maybe the *world* - into a living **nightmare**."

### **MAXWELL'S ROCK**

Underneath Maxwell's Rock, Doctor Brentwood was performing yet another inoculation.

"Please roll up your sleeve."

"I still don't understand this needle, Doc."

"You had a rough time recently. Mister Endicott and I believe that this will insure that you fully recover."

He attempted to plunge the needle in, and it *broke*.

"Tough skin, eh, Doc?"

Brentwood said nothing. He pulled out a hypo with a stronger steel alloy. This time it worked. "Now run along."

### **SOMEWHERE IN METROPOLIS**

"Gotta go all the way around, lady. Streets all tore up."

Lois, in the back seat of a cab, asked the driver, "But *why*? What happened?"

"Whatsa matta, you no read the papers? *Superman*. He's gone nuts. He's a menace, I tell you."

**CUNNINGHAM PRISON**

The news conference was over but the crowd of inmates took a few minutes to disperse as guards determined who was due in the mess hall, courtyard or back to their cells. In the meantime, a murmur of conversation ensued as the prisoners discussed the unbelievable scene they had witnessed on television.

Willy the Whisker said, "Did you see that, Boulder? Superman flew away! And boy, is he mad. Boulder, what did you think?"

"The man's an imposter."

Willy cocked his head. "What, Boulder?"

"It *can't* be Superman."

"Why, Boulder? It *has* to be Superman. They showed him *flying*. Only *Superman* can do that."

"No they didn't show him flying." He paused, as if he was straining against something he was thinking and then said, "Dey showed him *leapin'* away."

"What? Boulder, what are you talking about? That had to be Superman. It *had* to be."

"No way, Jose... Dat man said a lot of terrible things... Da real Superman's a good man." He paused again, like he was struggling to talk at times. "I'm certain that the man we saw on television is *not* Superman."



Willy did a double take. "Boulder, are you feeling all right? One minute you sound like yourself, and the other, well, almost like *me*."



"He sounds fine to me, Whisker. Maybe he's gone soft, that's all". It was Baby Face Stevens. "Have you gone soft, Boulder? Maybe you're upset about Superman, 'cause Superman's like your brother? You look and sound the same?"

The man who looked like Superman turned and shot a nasty look at Stevens. "Oh... *you*. I think you'd better *shaddup*."

"Who's gonna make me shut up? *You*?"

"If I have to."

"You don't have any superpowers, Boulder. Not like that guy on TV."

Willy nervously intervened, like a boxing official getting between two angry fighters, "Boulder, just ignore him. You don't want any trouble."

But Baby Face grabbed Willy around the neck and all but cut off his air supply. "You should learn to shut up, Whisker. You and your big mouth have already cost me plenty."

Willy watched as his big friend stood up and said, "Leave him alone, Stevens, or I'll snap your head off."

Baby Face slowly put the diminutive Whisker down and then let go of him. "Well, Boulder, with what? Your super-strength? Like I said, I don't think so."

Finally, three guards came by and broke up the confrontation. The one named McGowan looked at Stevens. "Guess what, Stevens? Baby's gonna get new shoes." All three guards laughed.

Stevens said, "What are ya talking about?"

McGowan said, "The new shoe shipment arrived. You and your cell block are getting' them."

Baby Face said, "Do I hafta?"

McGowan poked his rifle into Stevens' gut. "Yeah, ya hafta. Unless ya wanna go barefoot."

But if McGowan thought Baby Face was reluctant to get new shoes, he was dead wrong.

Another guard began to escort Whisker to his cell. As he did, he turned to the third guard and said, "Miller, take Boulder to Doc Reed." The guard looked at his watch. "Time for another injection."

**MAXWELL'S ROCK**

Under Maxwell's Rock, Doctor Brentwood was frantic. He was overdue at the prison, as Doctor Reed, for one. But more importantly, the target of his search continued to be elusive.



Brentwood was anxiously searching a storage closet next to Endicott's office area. He knew that either here, in the closet, or in one other place in the Maxwell's Rock lair, a chemical storage area, was a stash of money Endicott kept. Actually, there were several places where Endicott kept his cash, mainly as contingencies in the event of a disaster.

The doctor had had enough of Endicott and company. He wanted to make good on a promise to himself to finally sneak off to Mexico. But it would take cash, and Brentwood needed more than he possessed. The money he planned to use for his escape South of the Border went up in smoke at his Fort Granville home.

And then finally he saw it - after moving a stack of heavy books - Brentwood saw a safe with a combination lock. He reasoned that with his stethoscope there was a chance he could figure out the combination. He reached into his medical bag to fetch it.

"Aren't you late, Doctor ... *Reed*?"

It was Endicott. Brentwood was sure he was down at the dock, supervising preparations for the arrival of the uranium.

"Why yes, I was just gathering some materials."

Endicott moved closer to the doctor. "I see. Well, you know the consequences of any delay. It would ... *complicate* ... things for all of us." His eyes narrowed. "And don't forget your medicines."

Brentwood nodded nervously and then scurried out back to his small office where he quickly gathered the medication he needed.

**CUNNINGHAM PRISON – CELL BLOCK FOUR**

Sometime later, Baby Face Stevens was back in his cell, reading a library copy of *Life* magazine from 1951 with Gina Lollobrigida on the cover. He waited a minute for one of the guards to finish his rounds and then called across the passage separating the cells.

"Hey Porky. How are them new shoes of yours?"



Porky, sitting directly across from Stevens on a wooden bench, said, "Poifect. Baby Face. Poifect." Stevens could see he was smiling.

Stevens then called over to the cell next to Porky. "What about you, Stinky?"

"Oh, very comfortable, Baby Face. Love'm."

"And Danny?" He was two cells down.

"Best shoes I eva had, bar none."

Baby Face then sat upright on his bed. He crossed his left leg over his right thigh and draped the *Life* magazine on his lap, all but covering his left shoe. As expected, he identified an almost invisible rectangular marking on the rear of the heel that formed part of the back of the shoe.

Once again Stevens listened hard for any indication that a guard was coming. When he was again satisfied that the coast was clear, he used his right thumb to press the center of the rectangle. With a barely audible "click", the rubbery rectangle then protruded from the rest of the heel. Baby Face then slowly pulled on it, and before long, the object of his attention emerged.

Stevens' eyes lit up as he gazed at the narrow stiletto knife.

### **CUNNINGHAM PRISON – INFIRMARY**

Meanwhile, Brentwood finally made it to Cunningham, though much later than expected. It occurred to him as to how fortunate it was that he had established a phony identity as Doctor Reed. While the police were looking for Brentwood, no one suspected any wrongdoing by Doctor Reed, not even Warden Raines. It helped that Brentwood, as Reed, gave his faux persona a slightly different appearance, sporting thick black glasses, regularly wearing short sleeve shirts and exhibiting a slight limp.

When he got to the Infirmary, Brentwood, as Reed, found that his patent was already there. "Well, Boulder, sorry I'm late. So much traffic, especially with all the trouble going on."

"No problem, Doc. I been readin' yer magazines."

The doctor placed his medical bag on a shelf and opened it. To his horror, half the bottles inside had leaked due to his hasty departure from Endicott's laboratory. He thought, *the one for Boulder is almost empty. If I go back to Maxwell's Rock now, Alec will have my head. But then...* Brentwood squashed any further thoughts about it. He had no choice but to "make do" and then retrieve more medicine as soon as it made sense.



He then took a sterilized hypodermic and attempted to fill it with liquid. As expected, less than a fourth of the syringe ended up with fluid. Sweat was breaking out on his forehead. "Boulder, remain seated but please pull up your left sleeve."

"Sure, doc. Hope it don't hoit like did the other times. I ain't never felt pain like dat before."

"Now, Boulder, you mustn't complain. I told you these antibiotics are necessary. You got some nasty bruises in that road accident. We don't want an infection."

"Yeah, yeah, I know. You told me dat last time."

The needle punctured the skin in with some initial resistance and a flinch from the patient. With a sigh of relief, Brentwood put his instruments away. "That's right. Next time that ambulance driver needs to be more careful. If not for the accident, you'd have gotten your, well, your original face back." Brentwood noticed his patient staring at him. "You're looking at me kind of funny, Boulder. Is something wrong?"

"Nothing. It's just dat - well, Doctor Reed, you look kinda familya."

A wave of concern passed through the doctor's mind, but then he brushed it away and said, "What an odd thing to say. Of *course* I should look familiar, Boulder. You've been seeing me for quite some time now." He offered a nervous smile. "I hope you're not sore at me because the needle hurt, Boulder."

"Nah, but..." He paused, as if something was on his mind, and then, "It still hoits."

"Sorry, Boulder. Now, I was only able to give you about a quarter of your dose. I've run out of ... antibiotic. I'll need to run back to my ... office for more. When I come back, you'll get the rest." Brentwood nodded to the guard standing outside the Infirmary entrance. "Run along."

#### **CUNNINGHAM PRISON – CELL BLOCK FOUR**



Sometime later, in his cell, Baby Face Stevens looked at his watch. *It's time*, he thought. He called out, "Hey, McGowan. I need to use the facilities down the hall. Mine's busted."

Sean McGowan was on duty patrolling the row of cells where Baby Face Stevens was assigned. He took his time walking over to Stevens cell and then stopped to look at the criminal. The guard grinned, "S'matter, Stevens? Ya break it?"

Baby Face smiled. "Funny. Real funny. Just let me go ... so I can *go*. All right?"

McGowan removed his sidearm and motioned for Baby Face to move away from the front of the cell. Then he took out his ring of keys and unlocked the gate. The guard then stood back from it and motioned with his gun for Stevens to come out. As Baby Face stepped into the corridor, McGowan said, "No readin' material, Stevens."

"Hey, McGowan, have a heart. Guy needs something to read."

The guard shook his head. "Put the magazine back in the cell or else *it* leaves and *you* stay put. I wouldn't mind that one, too, with that pretty I-talian actress."

At that moment, there was a *clang* from directly in back of McGowan. The guard spun and looked down. To his surprise, on the floor, there was a small, thin stiletto knife inches from his feet.

And an instant later, to his greater surprise – and *distress* – there was one pressing against his throat.

As this was happening, Lois Lane arrived in a taxi at Cunningham Prison. Soon she was escorted to Warden Raines' office and after a brief conversation, Raines excused himself, letting Lane use his phone to call Perry White, who she tracked down in the Mayor's office.

"So that's about the size of it, Chief. Boulder's here." Clearly the statement made the reporter glum.

White was disappointed, as well. He had hoped that Lois's theory about Superman being a fake was true. "But did you actually get to *see* him?"

"Well, no, but the Warden confirmed it."

"Then I'm afraid that our renegade Superman is the McCoy."

"Oh, I don't know, Chief. I still don't know."

"Well then, you should've *seen* Boulder if you're still uncertain. Wouldn't Raines let you see him?"

"He said that Boulder was in the Infirmary getting an injection." She paused. "Actually, there's something that *is* a little strange. Raines said that a few days ago Boulder was on his way to have plastic surgery – you know, to have his old face restored."



White was impatient. "Yes, yes, I know. *You* reported that it was going to happen - in the series you wrote. So what."



"But get this: while he was being taken by ambulance, there was an accident. Apparently Boulder was injured, and they returned him to prison to be treated for injuries."

"Go on."

"Baines said that the shot he's getting now is an antibiotic due to Boulder's injuries from the accident, and that his plastic surgery has been delayed until he's fully recovered."

"I suppose it's possible. Not so strange to me."

"Well, the Warden told me to wait here. He went off to find out when Boulder would be free for me to talk to him."

There was a pause at the other end of the phone and then Lois's boss said, "I don't like it."

"What do you mean, Chief?"

"Something's fishy. I can't put my finger on it, but Lois, get back here. *Now.*"

"But Chief, *why*? Like you yourself said, let me at least *talk* with Boulder. The Warden should be back any minute now."

"No, I changed my mind. It's too dangerous. I'm still with the Mayor, but I'm leaving for the *Planet*. I want you back there, too."

"*What's* too dangerous? Chief, you're not making sense."

Perry White all but shouted. "You have your feminine intuition and I have *editor's* intuition!" He lowered his voice. "Now please, Lois. I just feel like the world is going to pieces. There's a crazy man with super-powers loose in Metropolis and Kent's not here. Humor an old man and get back to the office *now*, for your own good - and that's *final!*" He hung up.

Lois heard the "click", stared at the phone for a minute, and then hung up.

## ACT 2: "RIOT AND REVELATION"

### DAILY PLANET

**PERRY WHITE'S UNEASE** while talking to Lois Lane may have been triggered by some sixth sense he thought he possessed or perhaps based on decades of experience dealing with trouble as well as a nose for news. Or both.

And now that he had returned to his office at the *Daily Planet* after meeting with the Mayor, Inspector Henderson and other officials, White was feeling something else: *loneliness*. Perry was used to being surrounded, at least part of the time, by three people he considered friends: Clark Kent, Lois Lane and yes, Jim Olsen. The Chief considered Jim Olsen more than just a subordinate. Though Perry often scolded the cub reporter, Jim was almost like a son to White. And then there was also Bill Henderson.

But none of those familiar faces were around. Clark was either in Smallville – or, worse, missing. Lois was at prison but hopefully, thanks to White, on her way back to the *Planet*. Olsen was recovering in the hospital. And Henderson was still with the Mayor.

However, if White was feeling emptiness and a longing for company, it was short-lived, as his door creaked open and a woman's face peered around the edge. Normally he was too busy to be bothered, but at this moment, he uncharacteristically didn't mind the interruption and asked, "Yes, ma'am, can I help you?"

Considering that an invitation, the woman completely entered the editor's office and walked to the middle of the room while White remained sitting at his desk. As she approached, Perry had a feeling of *déjà vu*, what with her light gray dress, white gloves, pearl necklace and white hat having fruit patterns. She smiled and said, "Oh, yes. Hello."

White stood up and half-smiled. "And how may I help you?" Already there was a touch of characteristic impatience creeping into his tone.

"It *had* to be *him*!" The woman waved a hand for emphasis.

"Yes, ma'am. *Who* had to be *who*?"

"Why, *him*, of course!"

White offered a facetious smile as his tolerance of the woman was already shrinking fast. "As you say, of course. But to whom are you referring, ma'am?"

"The man in the picture. That's who it must be."

"My dear woman, have you ever read *Doctor Seuss*?"

"I beg your pardon?"

"Never mind." White shook his head, like he was crazy to engage in a conversation with the woman in the first place. He then strolled to within a few feet of her. As he did, it occurred to him as to when and where he had last seen her. "Forgive me ma'am, but I *do* believe you're making little or no sense at all. And if I recall, when you last graced these offices, some six *very* odd months ago, you were in a *similar* state." The editor held a hand out, motioning to the door. "Now, if you'll excuse me, I'm dealing with a crisis of *epic* proportions, much like the rest of our city is."

He began to usher her out, when a boy came through White's door. "Oh, there you are, mom."

White, seeing the boy, said, "Oh, no, I'm afraid the nearest public school is several blocks away. You two must have gotten off at the wrong subway stop." He began to walk both of them out, but then stopped and said, "Wait just a minute. I *do* remember *both* of you." He looked at the woman. "You're his aunt."

The woman answered, "No, *Harriet* is his aunt. I'm *Dorothy*, his sister. I mean, *she's* Alan's mother. No, that's not right, *I'm* Alan's mother. We look so much alike, sometimes even *I* get confused."



The boy looked at the editor, "You're Mister White. My aunt was here last October to see Mister Kent."

The woman said looking at her son. "She came to see Alan, Superman. I mean ... Superman, Alan. Well..."

The boy, Alan, was holding a large clasped Manila envelope. "Mister White, you *do* remember my aunt and me, don't you? After all the excitement, Mister Kent brought me here to meet you. Anyway, it all started because of two photos I took back then. One was a photo of Superman. He was wearing pants – I mean, pants like you or Mister Kent would wear." He smiled.

The editor shook his head. "That's not ringing a bell with me, son."

The woman looked at her son again and said, "How about the other one, Alan? You know, the man with the flowers? Or the tulips? You and Harriet told me about that one."

Alan said, "That's right, Mom. *The Tulip Man*. He was a criminal. But Superman caught him."

It suddenly registered with White and his eyes lit up. "*Great Caesar's Ghost!* Burt Burnside! The Tulip Man! I *remember!*"<sup>2</sup>

White had them sit down in comfy chairs while he went back to his desk, as he was back to being in a welcoming mood. He looked at Alan. "Son, what brings you and your mother here?"

"Well, you know I'm an amateur photographer."

His mother jumped in, "He's taking a photography class in school. After school, that is." She shook her head and smiled. "But it's *in* school."

White couldn't believe how much the woman reminded him of her sister. Regardless, he politely ignored Alan's mother and looked at the boy. "Go on."

Alan opened his envelope and pulled out six photos. "Well, we were on a field trip a few days ago. We were supposed to take photos of rock formations. And I did." He got up and spread the photos on White's desk, facing the editor. "Anyway, I heard all that stuff going on with Superman and everything. I thought you might be interested. Take a look at these. Notice anything peculiar?"

White put his reading glasses on and studied the photos. "Grass, rock outcroppings, blue sky and ... *what's that?*" He opened a drawer and pulled out a magnifying glass. Then he studied the each photo, spending ten seconds on each, and then repeated his examination.

Finally, White put the magnifying glass down. The boy was still standing next to his desk. White looked at him and then his mother. "Ma'am, your son's not only a talented photographer, but he's *smart* lad, too."

The woman waved and said, "Oh, he gets all his intelligence from his father."

White took off his reading glasses and then thinly smiled at Alan's mother. "You and I are in *complete* agreement on that count, ma'am." Then he turned back to Alan. "So son, where was this field trip of yours? Where'd you take these photos?"

Alan shrugged and scratched his head. "Oh yeah, I guess I forgot to tell you that part. It wasn't far from the Sound. Way up in the Northeast part of Metropolis, by the city line." He paused as White held up a hand.

Then the editor opened another drawer and pulled out a map. It was a Geologic Survey map of the Metropolis area. He sprawled it out on his desk and then stood,

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<sup>2</sup> *The Adventures of Superman* (Season 2), "Shot in the Dark"

hunching over it. "Now, son. Alan. Show me on the map." White motioned to the boy. "Here, come around this side."

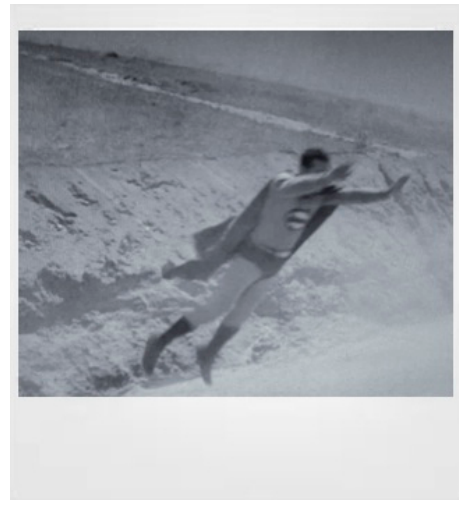
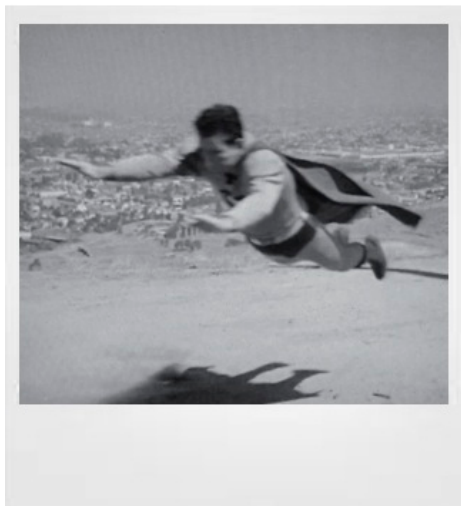
Alan walked around the desk so that he was standing next to White. Alan's mother also came over, but she was crowded out and had to stand to the side of the desk. Alan hunched over, like White, and stared at the map. Then he ran a finger along a line, saying nothing.

And then his eyes lit up. "Yeah, there it is." He looked at White and then tapped the map. "The map calls it *Maxwell's Rock*."

Within minutes White finally had shepherded the mother and son out of his office, thanking them but not all that profusely. He managed to keep two of the six photos, promising to return them personally. Then, sitting at his desk, the Chief Editor had a rare moment of indecisiveness, hesitating before making a phone call. Perry wondered if he should wait for Lois's return, partly to have her accompany him on his wild goose chase, as he thought it might turn out to be – and also to make sure that she was all right.

In the end he thought, with some reluctance, *well, she's a big girl, and what am I paying her for, anyway*. White then picked up the phone and caught Inspector Henderson in his office as he had just returned from seeing the Mayor.

"Henderson, listen to this. I was just shown photos of what appears to be *Superman* leaping in the air and landing. I'm staring at two of them right now."



"What's so unusual about that?"

"Well, if you ask me, it looks like he was *practicing* how to fly. Or *leap*. And get this."

"What?"



"Two other photos show men standing there, watching him, as if they were 'spotters' of some kind. Like they were watching him jump and leap. They appear to be holding clipboards."

"Are you sure? Just from a bunch of photographs?"

White was getting impatient. "It's hard to tell anything, Henderson. These are just stills, not a film. Plus the photographer and eyewitness is a *kid*, not a professional." The editor got up and carried his phone around, pacing as he spoke to the Inspector. "But I tell you, it looks suspicious and it's worth investigating."

"Well, White, I wish I could, but most of the force is out dealing with the wrath of Superman."

"Listen, this may be the break we need. Maybe the people in these photos are mixed up in this thing! Maybe they *know* something about our renegade Superman! Could be they know how he can be *stopped*!"



"Seems like a bit of a stretch, Perry, even for you."

"*Great Caesar's Ghost!* I'm a newspaperman, not a novelist! You know how we work – if there's a lead, we check it out! Especially now, when so much is at stake! Maybe even the fate of the *world*!"

"OK, Perry, take it easy." He paused. "Well, I was just about to head back to the Mayor. You know, he's frantic, too."

"Yes, yes, I know all about the Mayor and his troubles. You're forgetting that I used to warm the chair he's sitting in now. But Mike's got a *staff* full of people to help calm him down." He paused. "Pick me up in ten minutes. Let's go see where this thing took place. Maybe there's a clue of some sort. And if you don't want come with me, I'll go myself." Perry White said it like a threat.



"Just where is this?"

"Maxwell's Rock!"

"*Holy Cow!* That's not far from *Project X*."

"Oh, so I caught your interest, eh, Henderson?"

There was silence, and then, "All right. I'll be out front in ten minutes, provided *Superman* hasn't torn up any more streets."



"Better take one of your unmarked cars. I don't want to scare anyone off."

"Thanks for the advice, Perry but now who's the cop and who's the newspaperman?"

"Let's put it this way, Henderson. If going to Maxwell's Rock helps us find out what's going on with Superman, I'll let *you* write the story!"

Both men hung up.

**MERCY GENERAL HOSPITAL**

It was break time for three nurses in the eighth floor recovery section at *Mercy General*. The trio of white-garbed hospital workers sat with other nurses in a break room having coffee and pastries, listening to a somber announcer's voice coming from a radio that sat on a sunlit windowsill. They all stared at the *Zenith* radio like they would *The Edge of Night* or *Secret Storm*.

*"This is a special news update.*

*"Just a little while ago, on the steps of City Hall, Mayor Fiorletto declared that the city of Metropolis was under a State of Emergency. In coordination with President Eisenhower and the Governors of the Tri-State area, the Mayor said that the National Guard has been called out to defend the city from none other than its former protector – Superman.*

*"While the Mayor was speaking, reports came in that Superman was, inexplicably, uprooting trees and fire hydrants in the fashionable O'Connor Gardens neighborhood. This came after he had literally pulled the rails out of a street used by the Bensonhart Trolley Line and tossed cars around a supermarket parking lot in the Ramshorn Bay neighborhood, as if they were toys.*

*"As with earlier incidents, the only saving grace is that not a single innocent bystander appeared to be harmed, or, worse, mortally injured.*

*"A moment ... this just in. Workers at the so-called 'Project X' facility in northeastern Metropolis have sighted ... yes, it's confirmed ... The Man of Steel appearing on the grounds of the atomic plant. Reports indicate..."*

As the announcer droned on, the nurses had heard enough and began to look away from the radio. One, called Nurse Gladys, shook her head. With a strong "neighborhood" accent she said, "That's just awful. Very awful. He's gone crazy, you

know." She accentuated her comment by pointing an unlit cigarette at her co-workers.

Nurse Drago, a hefty *Brunhilde* type, replied, "If you ask me, he was always too powerful and all that the power's gone to his head, you know what I mean? I mean, what do we really know about him?"

"Nuttin'", said Nurse Gladys, "We don't know where he comes from. Who his parents are. His upbringing. Like I said – nuttin'. Heck, he can't be human, right?" She turned to the third nurse in the room, who had been silent. "Mare, you ain't said nuthin'. Whatdayou think? He's crazy, right? Superman is crazy."

Nurse Willingham stared at the window and then shook her head. "Oh, I don't know. Superman's a good man. Something's wrong. Something's *horribly* wrong."

"You can say that again, for sure", said Nurse Drago.

Nurse Gladys looked at her watch and said, "OK, so whose turn is it to check on freckle-face?"

Willingham elbowed Nurse Gladys. "Don't call Jimmy that. I think he's kinda cute."

Drago said, "Well, anyway, does anyone have a three-sided coin?" She chuckled at her own "joke", with her laughter quickly deteriorating into a horrible smoker's cough.

Willingham peeked out of the room and into Olsen's. "Aw, he's still sleeping."

Gladys, "Yeah, but the schedule says we gotta wake him up."

Across the hall and in his room, Jim Olsen was having a dream starring himself – and Nurse Willingham. He was a doctor – like Doctor Kildare – and she was a nurse – like herself. A rash of emergencies had come into the emergency room. Olsen had to tend to hundreds of emergency cases – with only Nurse Willingham at his side.



And in his slumbering fantasy he stood by while she sighed and breathlessly called him "*Super Doctor!*"

All Doctor Olsen could say was – out loud, "Aw, shucks, it was nothing, Nurse Willingham."

And then in reply, he heard a *raspy* voice say, "Well I ain't Nurse Willingham and this ain't nuthin'. Turn over Olsen, it's time for your shot."

Upon hearing the voice, Olsen's eyes shot open like they'd been splashed with ice-cold water. "Nurse—"

"*Drago*. Now, turn over on your belly so I can give you this" she held up a syringe with a long needle.

When she was done, he returned to lying on his back. "Oww! Boy, if the needle didn't hurt much going in, I sure am sore now."



But Nurse Drago, who had the bedside manner of a plunger, wasn't interested. "Don't get too comfortable, Olsen. I hear some radio guy is coming by to interview you."

"Some *who*? For *what*?"

Drago filled out a form sitting on a clipboard. "Maybe 'cause you're a celebrity now. How should I know? And I wouldn't be so anxious to leave here – not that I can't wait to see the back of you."

"Why? What are you talking about?"

"Haven't you heard?" She paused and looked up from her clipboard. "*Superman* is wrecking Metropolis. He's gone off his rocker."

"I don't understand. I think I'm going to go back to sleep. None of this makes sense. Maybe when I'll wake up, everything I just heard will have been a dream – and *you'll* be Nurse Willingham." He smiled as Nurse Drago left the room, rolling her eyes.

As she exited the room, Olsen yelled, "*Wait* – what did you mean? About *Superman*. And – and how's Professor Adams doing?"

But Drago was already halfway down the hallway.

**MAXWELL'S ROCK**

Perry White sat in his office at the Daily Planet by his desk with his reading glasses on, studying a galley.

*"Never thought I'd live to see the day we'd print a headline like this."*

*"Us or any paper, Mister White." It was Jim Olsen, the 'cub' reporter.*

*"That's right, Olsen." White looked up from the draft newspaper. "Where's Lane? I wanted her here before I approve this. After all, it's her story."*

*"She's pretty upset, Mister White. But she said she'd be here in a minute."*



*Just at that moment, the Chief Editor and cub reporter turned their heads as they heard a recognizable "swoop" outside of the office. A moment later, a familiar but grave-faced figure emerged from one of the windows and took a few steps towards White and Olsen.*

*White stood and held his hands up, almost as if to protect himself. Olsen retreated to the other side of his boss's desk.*

*White gasped, "Superman!"*

*Olsen said, "Please. Please don't **hurt** us, Superman!"*

*But The Man of Steel didn't look menacing – not like he had over the past several days. No, if his face conveyed anything, it was a plea – for help. He held a hand up and said somberly, "Mister White. Olsen. Please. I'm not here to hurt you."*

*White was nervous, "N-Now Superman. I know we printed some... some bad things about you. But really, I—"*

*Olsen picked up a baseball bat that stood next to White's desk. "I'm warning you. Maybe this can't hurt you, but I'm going to protect myself as best as I can."*

*Superman looked at both men. "Please. You don't understand. There was an imposter. He looked like me. Sounded like me. He was the one who did all those terrible things. You **must** believe me!"*

*"We've heard that one before, Superman." It was Inspector Henderson. He had come through White's door and was holding a gun on The Man of Steel.*

*Behind him was Lois Lane, who, too, stepped into White's office. Her eyes were red. She sobbed, "You **betrayed** us. We **trusted** you. You're a menace. A **super**-menace."*

*Then she openly cried, tears streaming down her face. She was comforted not by Henderson, but another man who entered the room. He put an arm around Lois Lane and then spat venom directed at The Man of Steel. "That's right, Superman. We, your 'friends', trusted you, as did Metropolis -- and the world. And look what you did. You've all but **wrecked** Metropolis. You've threatened to make the world **suffer**. You're a **disgrace** and have become an **enemy** of everyone - **everywhere**. And hopefully, now, you're **finished**."*

*Superman looked at the man and begged, "Kent -- you **know** me. You can't **believe** any of this."*

*Henderson looked out White's door and nodded. Then a policeman came in and slowly walked over to Superman. The Inspector then said, "Officer Mugsy here is going to slap a pair of cuffs on you Superman. Now, before you get any ideas, I've got a concentrated uranium derivative bullet in my gun. And yes, the cuffs are made of the same stuff. The smartest scientists around tell me this stuff will stop you but good."*

*With that comment, Lois sobbed uncontrollably, and Clark Kent held her tighter, saying, "It's all right, Lois. We'll get through this ... " then he looked at Superman, as if he, Kent, was able to issue beams of heat vision, "... somehow."*

*Superman pleaded with all of them, "You don't understand. You've been tricked. There's a phony Superman out there." Then he looked at Henderson. "**He's** the one you want, Inspector."*

*Henderson nodded at the cop, who moved closer to Superman. Officer Mugsy removed a greyish cloth that was covering pair of dull metallic cuffs. The Inspector said, "I expect you may get a fair trial, this being America, although I don't know a single lawyer worth his salt who'd want to defend you."*

*But Superman backed towards the window. "**No!** You're all wrong! I'm going to **prove** you're wrong, too!"*

*Henderson shouted, "**Stop!**"*

*Lois shouted, "Superman! **No!**"*

*Henderson aimed his gun at Superman and shouted, "Don't do it, Superman! I'm **warning** you!"*

*Kent yelled, "Inspector, he's getting away!"*

*When Henderson hesitated, Kent grabbed his gun and pulled the trigger. Superman had already turned and was almost at the window. The bullet tore through his cape, just under the "S" insignia and then through his costume, hitting him in the back.*

*The Man of Steel collapsed by the window. Lois Lane ran over to him. "No! He's---"*

*Superman gasped, "I'm sorry— I'm sorry— I'm sorry--"*

*"I'm sorry, Mister Endicott. Mister Endicott? I'm sorry, but---"*

Alec Endicott awoke from a dream. He shook his head. He had dozed off in his comfy leather chair, in his office, next to the photo of Oak Ridge, listening to the radio. Endicott looked up to see that Mugsy, one of his henchmen, was standing a few feet from him, holding a gun. That startled Alec and got his blood pumping.

Mugsy continued. "Sorry t'wake you, boss, but we got a coupla intruders." Then he waved his gun at the intruders and Endicott's eyes followed.

Alec Endicott wiped the imaginary cobwebs from his face and moved forward in his chair. Then he smiled. "Well, well." He paused and then turned to Mugsy. "No Mugsy, they are not intruders, but *guests*." He paused again and then said, "However, to be sure ... tie them up to two of those heavy chairs we have. Get Scudder to assist you."

Then Endicott looked at the two silent men standing, with Mugsy guarding them, and said, "No, Mugsy. Inspector Henderson and Editor White are most certainly our *honored* and *welcome* guests."

It took several minutes for his *Cheshire Cat* smile to fade.

**MERCY GENERAL HOSPITAL**

"So, Olsen, what's it feel like to be a zombie?"

"A *zombie*? I wasn't a zombie."

Don Daniels shut his tape recorder. "Olsen, ya gotta play along with this. I got listeners who think you were a zombie."

"Play along with *what*? I thought this was an interview, not some drama." Jim Olsen was still in his hospital pajamas, but was fully recovered from his ordeal.

"Look, Jimmy. I thought you were gonna help me out. I told ya, one big break and they'll transfer me from the crummy dead-end music gig to do some real on-the-air journalism, like, uh, Ed Murrow or, eh, Robert Trout."

"I dunno, Don. You seem pretty good at it, already. Introducing records and stuff."

Daniels grinned. "Oh, ya think? I didn't know I had any fans."

"I think your real problem is the station you work for – WWMT. The station letters make it sound 'empty', you know?" Olsen chuckled and play-slapped the radioman.

"You're funny, real funny. Now, when I turn the tape recorder on, please, just go with the flow. Let me ask the questions. You hear them. You think for a sec, and then you give the answer. How's that?"

"Well, OK, I guess."

So Don Daniels recorded an interview with Jim Olsen. The cub reporter talked about the incident at the Thomas Jefferson Bridge, the clue from a piece of paper Professor Adams dropped, finding Doctor Brentwood, his experience at the doctor's office and then ... a vague recollection of being at a ballgame and marching down Broadview Way with scores of other "zombies".

When the interview was over, Daniels thanked Olsen, packed up his tape recording equipment, and told Jimmy to listen for it in the coming days along with other "zombie patient" recordings he was collecting after it was all edited for broadcast on WWMT.

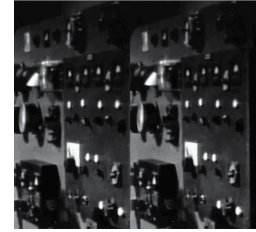
Jimmy laughed again at the call letters. "Ha ha... WWMT ... Empty..."





**MAXWELL'S ROCK**

"So, gentlemen. Welcome to my humble abode." Endicott waved his hands, pointing to their surroundings carved out of rock. They were encircled by equipment.



Henderson and White look around. Besides all the electronic equipment, they saw a large television monitor. Its scene was seemingly in motion, showing neighborhoods seemingly on the outskirts of Metropolis.

Endicott noticed what they were looking at and said, "Quite advanced technology. *Fairly impressive*, wouldn't you say?"

Henderson turned to look at his and White's captor. "Just who *are* you? You look familiar."



But Alec just smiled, looking at both men. He was drinking in their wonderment and confusion.

White studied Endicott's face carefully and said, "You're right, Henderson, he *does* look familiar."

Endicott said, "Well, I *should* look familiar to *both* of you. Henderson, you must've seen me in the FBI files."

Henderson stared some more, saying nothing.

Endicott turned to White and his smile vanished. "As for *you*, I visited you almost two years ago."

A chill went up White's spine, but he said nothing and just stared at Endicott.

Endicott kept looking at Perry and then said, "*Nothing?* That hurts, White. Almost as much as you turning me down when I came to see you. You see, we might not be here right now had you shown even a modicum of interest in my cause."

Henderson turned to look at the *Daily Planet* editor. "You know this guy, Perry?"

A swirl of memories spun in Perry White's mind and then, "*Great Caesar's Ghost!* You're the one who came to see me about that Red Spy! Fleming. *Richard* Fleming. That was over a year and a half ago. You claimed you had evidence concerning Endicott – *Randall* Endicott!" And White thought, *and somehow that have been what Superman was referring to when appeared in my office during the storm.*

Now it was Henderson's turn to make sense of things. "*Holy Smokes! You're Richard Fleming?*"

Endicott shrugged at Henderson. "Well, that was my cover. I couldn't use my real name at the time." Then he turned back to at White and pointed at him. "*You* might have turned me in to the FBI."

Henderson nodded. "And that probably would've been the right thing to do. Anyway, whatever your real name is, we looked into your so-called evidence."

"*You?* How--?" Endicott was genuinely surprised.

White squinted at Endicott, "When you left my office, you *forgot* to take your briefcase. One night I decided to take a look at it. There might've been a *story* in it for all I knew then, but I gave it to Henderson to figure out, given who Randall Endicott was. I take risks, but this was too dicey even for me. Besides, if there *was* a story, Henderson would probably let me in on it first." Perry smiled at the Inspector.

Henderson nodded and added, "Anyway, I had my guy look into your information, Endicott. And he did a great job, too."

Endicott said nothing. He was flabbergasted that his accidentally leaving the briefcase of materials behind led to something – *but what*, he wondered?

White looked at Henderson. "You told me about that, Henderson - your man Dithers."

Henderson gave White a pained glance. Then he looked back at Endicott. "So *who* are you, really? We never found anyone named Richard Fleming. I think Dithers figured out who you are, but he didn't live long enough to tell me."



Endicott paused, for effect. And then he looked at both men, "You have no idea who I am, do you?" Then he focused on Henderson, "And *you* call yourself a policeman."

White spoke up. "You can spare us your insults and in particular treat Henderson with some respect."

Endicott next looked at the editor. He said, with scorn, "And *you* call yourself a newspaperman."

Henderson kept looking at Endicott but spoke to White. "Best to let Fleming – or whoever he is – tell us, Perry."

Endicott turned and stared at a large aerial photo of Oak Ridge, Tennessee. Then, still looking at the photo, he said, "Do you recognize this photo? Either of you?"

There was silence in the room. White broke it. "That's Oak Ridge. In Tennessee."

Henderson said, "Of course, where the *Manhattan Project* was."

Endicott continued to look at the photo. "That's right, the *Manhattan Project*."

Henderson turned to look away from the photo and Endicott. "Wait. You mentioned the FBI files. Of *course*."

Then White jumped in. "*You* – Fleming – you wanted to exonerate the spy – Randall Endicott!"

Endicott spun and his captive audience of two saw a twisted face. "He was **not** a spy! But yes, gentlemen. I'm the *son* of the man I wanted to – and *still* want to – vindicate."

"*Great Caesar's Ghost!* Randall Endicott's son – *Alexander* Endicott?"

"In the flesh. And you can call me *Alec*."

Henderson spoke again. "You're wanted for murder, Endicott. More than one, in fact. A cop in Wyoming and an FBI man in Metropolis, if I recall."

Alec said calmly, "I suppose you wouldn't believe that those were both accidents."

Henderson spat back, "And I suppose you're going to tell me the death of my man Dithers was an accident, too."

The memory of that incident was still fresh in Alec's mind. "If he's who I think he was, yes, that was most certainly an accident." Endicott was quite serious.

Henderson said, "Well, Fleming ... or Endicott, let me tell you something you *don't* know. Bill Dithers called me one last time before his body was fished out of the Hobbs. Like I said, he did a great job of research on your papers."

"Really, I never knew this until you mentioned it a moment ago, Inspector."

"*Shut up* and let me finish. Oh, you're going to *love* this. Dithers read through your research in detail and *agreed* with your assessment that David Redfield's testimony was suspect. And boy, did Dithers get a *whopper* of a story."



White looked at the Inspector. "Shame you couldn't tell me about it, Henderson."

Henderson kept his focus on Endicott but replied, "I was going to, Perry, believe me."

Endicott was riveted. "Go on, Henderson. Please."

"My man tracked down David Redfield in Mexico. Dying in a rat-infested jail. In fact, he died a few days after Dithers visited him." Henderson paused. "Redfield told Dithers that as a young man, you, Endicott, hung around your dad's lab. Even worked there as a sort of apprentice. Randall Endicott let you read his top-secret manuals, provided that they didn't leave the place with you."

Alec shook his head. "That's absolutely true."

"But one day when Redfield visited your home – that was in Oak Ridge."

"Yes..."

"He had been invited for dinner. He got up to go to the washroom. Passed your room and happened to glance inside. Saw a stack of pulp magazines on your desk and took a couple to the washroom." The Inspector paused again, for effect. "But wedged between them was a top-secret document of your father's."

Endicott's eyes narrowed.

Henderson continued. "Redfield discovered the document - but he never returned it. He stuffed it in his shirt and claimed he had to leave. Told everyone he didn't feel well."

Endicott turned pale. *I remember.*

Henderson concluded with, "And the rest is history. Your dad was accused – and *convicted* – of being a spy. Passing secrets to the Soviets. But it was *Redfield*."



Endicott was dumbfounded. "It ... can't ... be."

There was quiet in the room, and then Perry White spoke up, softly. "Endicott. You were *right*, after all. Your father *wasn't* a Red Spy nor did he collaborate with the other side. This Redfield character apparently did all that."

Alec sat at his desk chair. He sounded like a defeated man. He looked at Henderson and White. "Those documents. I- I- took a few home occasionally. No one checked. I always brought them back. All that data. I ate it all up." Then Alec looked off into space. "Then – that day – that *evening* - I thought I had misplaced one of them. It haunted me, but I never connected it with..." The weight of what had happened crushed Alec. "If not for me..."

Henderson wasn't sympathetic, not with the blood of a Wyoming cop, an FBI man and his own man Dithers possibly on Endicott's hands. "None of this would have happened. Your father might be alive today."

But the father figure in Perry White briefly surfaced again, just as it did when Endicott first met the editor. "I'm sorry, son."

Even Henderson buckled a little. He said softly, "A shame that the two men who could have helped your cause – David Redfield, who died of pneumonia in that jail – and Bill Dithers, whose death is *still* a mystery – are no longer around to talk and *prove* your dad's innocence."

"**No!**" Endicott pounded his desk and a heavy paperweight kicked up in the air. Then he buried his head in his hands.

### **MERCY GENERAL HOSPITAL**

The last time Jim Olsen had been in Professor Adams' hospital room seemed like a lifetime ago. But here he was, having bribed the cute Nurse Willingham with the promise of a pair of Monarchs tickets. Olsen thought Willingham looked a lot like the actress Dorothy Dandridge and got butterflies around her.

"Professor Adams?" Jimmy saw that Adams was up, reading a book.

"Yes?" Adams turned to look towards Olsen, who was just inside the doorway.

"Jim Olsen." He was going to say "Daily Planet", but didn't want Adams to think this was a professional visit, despite Olsen's bathrobe and pajamas.

Adams took off his reading glasses and stared. "Why, it's the reporter from the *Planet*." Then he smiled, to Olsen's relief. Even better was that the Professor called him a "reporter", not a "cub reporter" or "kid". That brought a big grin to Jimmy's face as he walked further into the room. He motioned at a guest chair as if to ask permission to sit in it, and Adams nodded.

Jimmy gave a reassuring smile and said, "So, Professor. How are you feeling?"

"Much better, Mister Olsen. Thank you." He paused and then said, "I hear you had a rough time of it, too." Olsen thought, *Willingham must've told Adams I was coming and about my ordeal.*

Jimmy's expression turned grim. "Yeah, they tell me it was touch and go for awhile." Then Olsen's face lit up again. "But I'm feeling great and you're looking good, yourself. Uh, and please call me, 'Jim'."

"OK...*Jim*." He paused. "I feel like I've come out of a long, long nightmare." Adams looked away from Olsen, staring into space.

When he didn't respond for a moment, Jim reached over to Adams' shoulder and patted it. "Professor. It's ok now. You're gonna be fine. And believe me, I know the feeling." He paused, then. "But as a matter of fact, you *are* fine. The nurse said all the poisons are pretty much gone – from both our systems. Heck, Miss Lane told me that if not for Superman, the cure might not have been found. He tracked down that nasty Doctor in Fort Granville."

"Brentwood."

Jimmy nodded and said, "That's right. Gives me a chill just to think about him."

"But Brentwood is only part of it. He's not the main source of trouble, Jim."

Olsen's reporter instincts went into high gear. "Jeepers, that's what Miss Lane said, but no one knows who was behind it all – the drugs, the zombies, the attempted theft at *Project X*."

But Adams didn't respond. He seemed lost in thought. Olsen patted him again. "Professor?"

"Sorry, Jim. You mentioned a number of things." He paused. "Alexander Endicott."

"Excuse me?"

"Alexander Endicott. I was his professor back at the *University of Tennessee*. In Oak Ridge."

"Who is Alexander Endicott? I mean, the name sounds familiar."

"That's a long story, son. He was a good man. Might still be, deep down. Came from a good family. But then something horrible happened. I'll spare you the details."

"I wish you wouldn't. We're in no rush."

Adams gave Olsen an abridged version of what he knew of Endicott's life. "Alec wanted to use me – my position at *Project X* – to get hold of an incredible power source."

"What power source is that?"

"Uranium. We in the field call it U-236 or *U-2*."

Jim thought back. *Days ago, Adams was saying, "You, too. You, too."* Then Olsen spoke, with caution in his voice. "Professor Adams. *That's* what you were trying to tell us. Me and the Inspector. And Mister Kent. You, too ... *U-2* ... **Uranium.**"

"I can't remember. I suppose so."

Then a chill went up Olsen's spine. "But Professor." He spoke even more seriously, now with urgency in his voice and even more than a hint of fear. "You mentioned a booby trap. Do you remember? What did you mean?"

Adams went back into what was now becoming a characteristic stare. Olsen shook him this time, albeit gently, and the Professor came out of his funk. "The bet. The bet with Alec."

"What, Professor? What *bet*?"

Adams put his face in his hands, and lifted his head. To Olsen, it was like the Professor had put on a horrific mask and was now speaking like a possessed man. "Back in school. At Oak Ridge. We knew about the *Manhattan Project*. Alec and I – we became friends. *And* competitors. One night, in a bar, we made a bet as to who could *build* an atomic bomb."

"Jeepers!"

"When it was apparent that we would reach a stalemate – we'd both figure out how to build one, we upped the ante."

Olsen gulped. "How?"

"Whoever could build the most powerful nuclear bomb first, would *win*."

"Uh, just curious – what would the winner get?"

"Gloating rights."

"Well, that's not much. But naturally neither of you went ahead with the bet, right?"

"I doubt that Alec had the time, given all that he was up against. As I mentioned, his life changed quite drastically not long after that."

Olsen knew where this was going and started getting nervous. "B-But neither did you, Professor, right? You didn't try to build a bomb, did you?"

"No."

Olsen let out a sigh of relief. But Adams continued. "Not back then. But at *Project X*, I assembled a non-working bomb. In a private workroom of mine – a chamber of sorts – I assembled all of the critical components. But there was no uranium trigger. It was harmless."



"That's good." However, Olsen couldn't let go of the "booby trap". "But Professor, that's not all, is it?"

"No, son. I did something *terrible*." He paused and then said, "You see, when Alec drugged me and wanted me to help him *steal* the uranium using my position at *Project X* – in my drug-induced delirium I fought back and decided to 'protect' the uranium."

"With what, Professor?"

"With a *real* nuclear bomb."

### **CUNNINGHAM PRISON**

After her unsettling conversation with Perry White, Lois sat in Warden Raines' office wondering what to do. It wasn't often that her boss was wrong. His observations were almost always right on target.

And so were his *hunches*.

The girl reporter had time to mull over her boss's urgent request. Raines said he'd be back with word on when she could see Boulder. But twenty minutes had gone by since he had left the office. Lois was getting anxious and as such got up to look out into the corridor. To her right, down the hall, was a heavy door that led to a row of cells. She remembered that Boulder's cell was in that section.

To the left was the main entranceway of the prison that served as a lobby of sorts. Beyond that was the area where visitors and inmates would meet. An alarm went off in her head as she scanned the hallway.



It was *empty*. No guards. No prisoners being escorted. No visitors. And certainly no sign of Warden Raines.

And then she noticed something that made her heart race. Strolling into the lobby were three grinning *armed inmates* – clearly prisoners due to their attire. *No prison guards accompanied them*.

Plus one of them was none other than Baby Face Stevens.

Lois quietly closed Raines' office door. She then rushed to the phone and picked up the receiver. She waited for a dial tone or an operator. But there wasn't even static. The girl reporter then pressed the switch hook several times to no avail. Assuming that the line was cut since her call with the Chief, Lois hung up and then quietly went back to the doorway. She carefully opened it a crack, peeking to her left. Stevens and his men had stopped to talk. When she saw that they weren't looking in her direction, she opened the door enough to slip through and dashed to her right – towards the door leading to the rows of prisoners' cells.

Praying no one had seen her, Lois opened the heavy door and entered the cell block. The first thing she noticed was that all the cells seemed empty. *Could it have been time for them to exercise in the courtyard?* But there wasn't a moment to spare thinking about it. She was looking for another way out, although her recollection was that the lobby area contained the only entrance and exit to the prison.



Lois ran down the corridor between the rows of empty cells, not noticing a door that led to another part of the prison. Her focus was on getting to the end of the cellblock - and a hiding place. When she reached the end, she noticed that one of the cells was in fact occupied. The inmate was sprawled on the floor, head down.

She stood by the cell bars, peering in, and then carefully opened it before going inside. She strained her head to look at the man's face and then a surge of mixed emotions went through her.

*"Boulder!"* Lois felt his pulse and then realized that he was breathing. Then she knelt beside him. *"Boulder. What happened?"*

She saw his eyes flutter. Upon apparently recognizing Lois, he offered a slight smile and then spoke, "Oh. Hiya Miss Lane. Whadaya doon heah?" He paused and felt his head. "Boy, does my head hoit." Slowly but surely he moved a little and then, clearly in pain, sat up on the floor. Lois sat down beside him.

She noticed that his face was black and blue, with a shiner around his right eye. "My goodness."

He looked at her and stared. Then he put a hand on her shoulder and said, "Miss Lane. How did you—"



"Boulder, we may not have much time. I just saw Baby Face Stevens—"

"Stevens. That's who slugged me. He and his men. They took Willy. Willy the Whisker." He nodded at the empty cell next to his. "Tried to stop them." He shook his head and then rubbed his temples.

"But *why*?"

"He once crossed Baby Face. Stevens never forgave him and finally got revenge." He paused and shook his head. "Funny thing is, I don't know *how* I know that."

"I remember reading something in the *Planet* about that. Clark Kent wrote an article about it."

"Then I must have read it there." He rubbed his temples in pain and groaned. "Boy, do I have a splittin' headache. It's a strange feelin', Miss Lane."



"I wish you could get medical attention. The Infirmary ... but ..."

"And I wish I could get the image out of my head."

The reporter's instinct kicked in and Lois wanted to know more. "What image, Boulder? What happened?"

"Baby Face's men must've gotten hold of keys – keys to the cells. They ... unlocked them." He paused to take a deep breath. "Willy was scared. He knew Baby Face was out to get him. He ran ... and I followed him. He went into a laundry room to hide." He nodded up at the cell window above and behind him. "You can see it right across the alleyway."

Lois glanced but didn't get up to look out the window. "Then what happened?"

"As soon as I got to the laundry room, Baby Face and his men showed up. He was holding a machine gun."

"Must've gotten it from one of the guards."

"I'm sure he did. Baby Face said he didn't want any witnesses, and his men dragged me at gunpoint back here. They let me watch through the window, not that I could see much."

"It must have been terrible."

"There was a ladder. I could see it through the glass window of the laundry room. Whisker must have climbed it to reach a big shelf. I'm guessing he hid behind the pillows on the shelf. But Baby Face knew where he was and he let go with his machine gun."

"Oh *no*."



"I can't shake the image of looking through the window glass, with the pillow feathers falling around the ladder. Just can't get it out of my mind. Then when it was over, Baby Face came over here and pummeled me. His men hit me, too. They used their fists and the butt of the machine gun because Baby Face ran out of ammunition and couldn't finish the job. You know, he needs bullets." He shook his head and then sat up a little more, grimacing. "Miss Lane, you shouldn't be here. He'll be back. It'd be bad if he found you. *Real* bad."

Lois said, "I saw him walking around, too, unguarded. And armed, like you said. This is *horrible*."

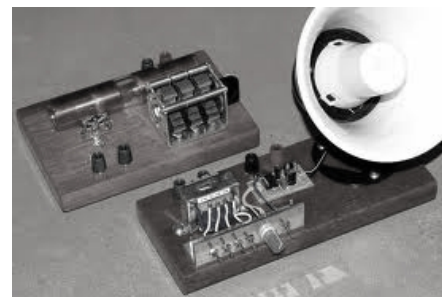
Suddenly they heard a chorus of voices singing, "*You'll wonder where the yellow went when you brush your teeth with Pepsodent!*" It was a musical jingle from a commercial. There was an announcer's voice, but it was overcome by static. Then there was silence.

Lois said, "My goodness, what was that? Seems like it's coming from that cell. You said it was Willy's cell."

"Oh, that's his radio."

"You told me about him when I interviewed you. That he likes to build crystal radios."

"I did? I don't remember." They heard static and bits of a radio voice coming from it. Then he said, "*Shshh!*"



Lane whispered, "What?"

"Voices. It's Baby Face. He's coming."

"I don't hear anything."

"I'm sure of it."

"Oh *no...*" Lois was worried. She remembered how nasty Baby Face was in the New England motel. *Wish I had listened to the Chief*, she thought. "Boulder, what are we going to do now?"

"Don't worry, I'll protect you, Miss Lane." He put his arm around her and they waited.

**MAXWELL'S ROCK**

Endicott lifted his head from his hands. His eyes were red – and they seemed to have a far-off look. He spoke again to Henderson and White. "No, gentlemen. Despite what we just – *discussed* - I will **not** blame myself. It was the *government* who wrongly convicted and effectively murdered my father. I will **never** forgive them!" He pounded his fist on the desk once more.

Henderson interrupted, "But—"

Endicott stood shouted. "***Silence!*** And *you*, Mister White. If *you* had listened to me back then – when I came to see you .... **you** and people *like* you ... *and* the Government ... and maybe even most of all, ***Superman*** ... you're *all* the reason the Endicott name remains ***cursed*** everywhere."

As Alec strode over to the two men, standing right in front of them, Henderson thought, *he's sounding more like a madman now.*

White looked up at Alec, saying, "Endicott. When you came to see me, well, you couldn't have picked a worse time. Superman—"

Endicott seethed, "Yes. *Superman*. I came to see you the day Superman revealed himself to the world. Superman. *Protector* of Metropolis. A *stooge* of President Eisenhower and the United States Government – the same government that sent my father into to *oblivion*."

Henderson tried to speak again, "Now see here, Endicott—"

Endicott smashed the back of his hand against the Police Inspector's face. "***Silence!***"

White shouted, "*You leave him alone!* He tried to *help* find the truth about your father!"

But Henderson seemed unscathed and looked at the editor. "It's all right, Mister White." Then he looked up at Alec. "So, tell us, Endicott, what *is* your game, after all?"

Endicott nodded and smiled. "Ah, you finally got around to asking me that."

White asked, "Were *you* the one behind those so-called zombies attacking *Project X*? And those infernal red lights at the ball game?"

"Why, yes, White, I was." Endicott reached over to a bottle of *Red Star Cola* that sat on his desk and held it up. He examined it and continued, "I was also behind *this* – the bottling company I bought. Renamed it *Red Star Cola*. Cute little inside joke, eh? Oh, but you wouldn't understand that, would you?"

Henderson asked, "What on *Earth* are you talking about?"

"On ***Earth***. *Ha!* But I suppose I can tell you – you'll never tell anyone."

White said, "So that's it. You say you're not a murderer, yet you're going to silence Henderson and me."

"No, White, I'm *not* a murderer." Alec thought of the cop in Wyoming, the FBI man on the Metropolis subway ... and Louisa. Blood on his hands but not premeditated. "The deaths I was accused of causing *were* accidents. And maybe one day I'll *prove* it. Just as you know that my father was innocent." There was a moment of silence in the room – almost a solemn moment, and then Endicott continued. "And as I am not a murderer, I will not take either of your lives. But as you are *here* and have found me, I cannot let you talk."

White asked, "So, then, how will you stop us?"

Endicott answered, "Oh, I'll think of a way. I do have the means to re-program your minds." He waved at the equipment behind him. "Let's leave it at that."

Henderson and White exchanged dubious glances.

Endicott went on, "But enough of this. To answer your question, Inspector, well, you see, I've decided that I don't like our government – nor our law enforcement authorities. After all, *they're* the ones who did away with my dad."

White said, "You're crazy. I recall that your father was *murdered* in prison – by *another* prisoner!"

Alec shot a disgusted look at White but otherwise ignored him and went on. "So to gain the upper hand against them, I needed a weapon. A powerful weapon. And having grown up around Oak Ridge, I learned about uranium. A lot about uranium and its *power*. Harnessed properly, it can yield tremendous energy. Both for peaceful purposes – for energy – and otherwise."

White interrupted again. "We don't need a history or science lesson, Endicott. We all remember Hiroshima and Nagasaki."



"Well, I'm going to create something more powerful than what those two cities experienced. And something more practical. With enough uranium, I'll be able to build, say, a portable, even a hand-held atomic ray."

Henderson said, "Now you sound like ... *Buck Rodgers*."

Endicott smiled, "Perhaps, but the uranium is the key."

Henderson said, "And *Project X* has it."

"That's right. I created those so-called zombies – ordinary citizens commanded to do my work – to invade *Project X* and cart it off."

White asked, "But how? With drugs? And how did you control so many people?"

Henderson looked at White. "I think I know part of that, Mister White. Kent and I were onto something. There was a doctor – a man named Brentwood – he was drugging people. The same stuff that was pumped into Professor Adams. And the kid."

White raised his eyebrows. "You mean that's what happened to Jim Olsen? *Great Caesar's Ghost!*"

Henderson turned back to Endicott. "You and Brentwood managed to drug lots of people, Endicott. But your operation failed. Superman recovered from whatever you tried on him and then stopped you and your ... *zombies*. And then you tried something else on him, didn't you?"

Endicott lost whatever smile he had. "I'm a brilliant man, Henderson. Some people have called me a mastermind."

White interrupted yet again. "Well, I still think you're *crazy!*"

"Maybe so, White, maybe so. But I did some research into Superman. He was an agent of the government and had to be stopped. He was bound to stop me, so for that alone, I had to do something about him."

Henderson sat there and was now splitting his focus. He continued his exchanges with Endicott and White, but was also feeling the bonds tying his hands behind the chair in which he sat. He began to animate his body slightly in tune with his talking, such that Endicott wouldn't notice he was moving his arms and hands – in order to see how much the ropes binding his hands would "give". He said to Endicott, "Go on."





Endicott had strolled back in front of White and Henderson. He said, "I made some - acquaintances - people who know a lot about The Man of Steel. Oh, a Professor Lucern in Washington. And even Professor Roberts here in Metropolis, at the observatory. Plus several other scientists."

White said, "I know Lucern *and* Roberts. They're good men, unlike you."

"Well, to make a long story short, Superman apparently thrives under our sun. Gives him his powers to a large extent. Something to do with it being yellow, as I understand it. But on his home planet, well, his people had no such powers. They were ordinary, like the three of us."

"Henderson and I aren't anything like you, Endicott. We're not *insane*."

Endicott geared up, as if to slap White on the face as he did Henderson, and then caught himself. "I was taught to respect my elders, White, but you're trying my patience."

The editor just *harrumphed*.

Endicott continued, "Anyway, you see... Superman's home world apparently had a *crimson* sun. At least, so theorize the astronomers, including Roberts. I figured, if he was an ordinary man *there* and I could duplicate its conditions *here*, perhaps Superman's super-powers could be *neutralized*."

Henderson, animating himself once again to get Endicott used to his movements, said, "Holy Smokes!" White turned to look at the Inspector, who added, "*Red Star Cola!*"

White, still looking at Henderson, said, "Those infernal red lights. For the cola promotion. At the ballgame."

Endicott seemed gratified that the two men understood. "*Exactly*. The soft drink was a cover - and its name an inside joke, as I said." Alec chuckled. "It was a way for me to get red lights and my hired hands legitimately into the game, a game in which I knew *exactly* when and where The Man of Steel would be. The lights stripped Superman of, amongst other things, his invulnerability. You may not have noticed that my ... 'umpire' ... gave him an injection that helped to retain the effect, if you will, although unfortunately it didn't last long enough for my purposes."

Henderson said, "So *that* explains it!"

White asked, "And now? What have you done to him? He's acting like a *madman*, ripping up Metropolis!"

Henderson asked, too, "Is he – *hypnotized*? How in the world are you able to control *him*, of all people?"

Endicott didn't respond.

**MERCY GENERAL HOSPITAL**

"Get me Inspector Henderson! It's an *emergency*!" Jim Olsen, standing in his hospital pajamas, had grabbed the phone at a nurse's station and dialed Police Headquarters.

The voice at the other end said, "I'm sorry, but Inspector Henderson isn't here right now."

"Then give me Inspector *Hill* – *anyone*!"

Just then, Nurse Willingham who heard Olsen on the phone and was behind the nurse's station desk asked, "Jimmy, what's wrong?"

Olsen covered the receiver and said, excitedly, "It's Professor Adams!"

"Is he OK?" Willingham started to flag down another nurse but Olsen stopped her.

"He's OK, but we're *all* in trouble!"

Then Jimmy heard the Police HQ receptionist on the phone say, "Sorry, no one is available – everyone is—"

A new voice entered the conversation. "Hey, what's all the commotion, Olsen?"

Jimmy turned. "Don." It was the guy from WWMT. Olsen stared at him for a few seconds and then had a moment of realization. He said "Never mind" into the receiver and hung up. Then he put both his arms on Daniels' shoulders. "A *broadcast*. It's the fastest way. But..."

Daniels was confused. "Kid, what are you talkin' about?"

Jimmy paused again and thought. Then he put his arms on Daniels again.

Daniels looked at the arms on him and said, "I'm gettin' a little nervous, Jim Boy. You sure you're feeling all right?"

But the cub reporter was in a zone. "Don. How many listeners does WWMT have? I mean, if we broadcast something now, will it reach a good part of Metropolis?"

"What are you talking about? Really, I *don't know* what you're *talkin'* about."

Jimmy pulled Daniels aside and quickly explained what Adams said.

Daniels said, "You're kiddin' me."

"No, Daniels, I'm on the level and so is Adams."

"But you said he went *nuts*. Like, uh, Superman."

"Daniels. Don. I *believe* Adams. Now are you going to help me – and *everyone* in the city?"

"I dunno—"

Jimmy was clearly exasperated. "We're wasting *time*!" He paused and then stared at Daniels. "Look and *listen*..."

"What..."

"This could be your big break. The one you wanted. You can get an *exclusive* on the story of the century."

Daniels looked away and then said to Jimmy, "I need to hear it from the horse's mouth before I broadcast something like that."

### **CUNNINGHAM PRISON**

"Do you mind me with my arm around you, Miss Lane? You seemed cold and scared."

Lois Lane was chilled, sitting on the cold stone floor of the prison cell, and she *was* scared, knowing that one of the most dangerous criminals in Metropolis was apparently running the prison she was now in. "Oh, that's ok, Boulder. Thanks." She moved and he took his arm away. "But... I thought you said Baby Face Stevens was coming."

"I thought I heard his voice. Could be he stopped in Doc Reed's office. It's right at the end of this row of cells."

"I didn't hear a thing." Then Lois looked at her cellmate. She thought, *he looks the way Superman would if could someone beat him up*. "Are you feeling any better? Those bruises don't look so bad any more, Boulder. Your shiner is ... well, *fading*."

"Still hurts." He paused and then said, "You know, Miss Lane. I meant what I said. I'll protect you. I mean, I'm not Superman, but I won't let Baby Face Stevens get to you."

Lois looked at the man in the cell with her. She never realized that Boulder could be so ... *compassionate* and protective. She said, "You know, Clark..." and paused.



An odd chill went up her cellmate's spine and he cocked his head. Then he said, "Kent?"

"Yes, that's right. I—"

(static)

*"...zenhower will hold a news conference from the West Wing at eight PM tonight, to be broadcast on this station."*

Lois then said, "Boulder, listen - it's the crystal radio - it's working again."

*"... just in. We have an unconfirmed report of a developing crisis at the so-called Project X facility in northeast Metropolis. One moment..."*

(static)

*"...report from sister station WMTT..."*

(static)

*"... of a **bomb** at Project X, possibly **atomic** in na ...."*

(static)

*"... danger of being triggered by the renegade Man of Steel who has been terrorizing Metrop..."*

(static)

*"... and has advanced on the nuclear facility with intent to rob it of uranium that we are told is protected by a nuclear booby-trap. Repeat, unconfirmed reports of a nuclear bomb at Project X. If this is true and Superman ..."*

(more static and then silence)

Lois looked at her cellmate, but he seemed lost in thought. Then she realized that someone *had* walked down the row of cells and was standing just in front of the one they were in. She saw his shoes and then slowly looked up at his face, expecting to see Baby Face Stevens. But it was one of the other inmates, someone she recognized but whose name she momentarily couldn't recall. He stared at Lane, smiling. Then he took off, back down the row of cells.

Meanwhile, Baby Face Stevens and his small entourage had appropriated enough rifles and pistols from the guards and supply rooms to effectively take over the

entire prison. His men led the guards to a basement and locked them in. Warden Raines was locked in with them.

Those prisoners that didn't swear allegiance to Stevens were led to another basement dungeon and locked in there, too. He made sure one of his men cut the phone lines to make sure that no one called for help.

Stevens' goal was to escape without any interference. Once the guards and troublesome prisoners were no longer an issue, he gathered his men together in order to plan an escape. There were still guards surrounding the perimeter of the prison who had to be dealt with, and after that, he needed to depart the vicinity quickly in order to get as far from the prison as possible, and into hiding.

But Stevens also was somewhat obsessive-compulsive – it was one of the reasons why he didn't like to waste bullets. As such he wanted things neat and tidy – no loose ends. Willy the Whisker was the first to suffer. Sometime back, Willy had told the police where Baby Face was hiding out in exchange for a reduced sentence.

In Stevens' mind, it was Willy who led to his capture, and Lois Lane who led to his conviction. His goal was to get Lane, eventually, after escaping from prison, but in the meantime, he had Willy in the palm of his hand, and crushed him. They threw his body in the basement with the other prisoners.

As Stevens and his men prepared to leave the prison, one of his men, Stinky, went down a row of cells to his own to retrieve his small collection of comic books that had been appropriated by one of the other prisoners. While Stevens and his men waited for him, they made detailed plans for their escape. And while they did, Doctor Brentwood poked his head out of the Infirmary. He was hoping to return to Maxwell's Rock to get more medication that he'd run out of.

Brentwood gathered his belongings, put his hat and coat on, and then headed into the lobby. As he did, he noticed the odd sight of inmates milling around on their own. Though alarmed, he put his head down, trying to slink past Stevens and his men to get to the exit. But one of Stevens' men blocked his way, saying, with a grin, “What's up, Doc?”

Not wanting to cause a ruckus, Brentwood simply said, “Medical emergency. Please let me through.”

When Stevens' man wouldn't let him through, Brentwood made his fateful decision to confront Baby Face, assuming he was “in charge”, walking right up to him. “I *demand* to know what's going on!”



Stevens smiled. "Oh really now?"

Brentwood lied. "I have an appointment. An *emergency*. Mercy General."

"What's the rush, Doc? They've got plenty of good doctors and nurses at *Mercy General*."

One of Stevens' men chuckled and wiggled his eyebrows like Groucho Marx, "Especially the nurses." (he pronounced the word "noy-ses").

Brentwood pleaded. "*Please*. This is a life or death situation."

Stevens raised one eyebrow and offered a sinister grin. "Is that so? Life or *death*? Seems to me we have something like that right here, Doc."

A cold reality then hit Brentwood all too late – he saw that there continued to be no guards around – and that Baby Face and his men were still standing there, free as birds. He quickly backed down, saying, "I see. Well, then, if you'll excuse me, then, I'll get back to my work."

Brentwood spun around, but was immediately grabbed on his right shoulder. It was Baby Face, who lost his grin. "And what work is that, Doc? Maybe to call the police?"

His heart racing, the doctor felt the world closing in around him. "Why, no. To call my, uh, boss."

"The warden? He's indisposed at the moment, Doc."

"No, as a matter of fact, I'm employed on the outside by someone else."

"Oh yeah? And who's that?"

"I work for *Alexander Endicott*." Brentwood said it proudly, as if it might mean something to Baby Face.

"Yeah, so what." It wasn't a question.

"Listen, you don't understand."



Just then, Stinky came back. He apparently had become so distracted and excited about his discovery, he forgot the comic books. "Hey Baby Face – you should see who I found hangin' out in one of the cells."

Using the momentary distraction, Brentwood dashed away. Baby Face's men were blocking the front entrance of the prison, so he ran back to his office, slammed the door and locked it. Then he picked up the phone receiver. His hand was sweating so

profusely that it slid off his palm and fingers, bouncing like a yo-yo off the linoleum floor.

He didn't notice that there wasn't any dial tone.

As Brentwood bent down to pick up the receiver, he heard a gunshot coming from the office door. After a second shot, he heard a thump against the door, which quickly swung open. During all of this, the doctor was in a frozen state of shock, like a deer in headlights.

Baby Face had kicked open the door after destroying the lock. He stood there with his gun pointed at Brentwood. His small entourage stood behind him. Stevens nodded in back of him, "Hey Stinky, how many bullets in this *Swiss and Wesson*?"

"Om, let's see. You got model thirty-four. That'd be, uh ..." He quickly counted on his fingers and then finished with, "... *six* in the chamber, Baby Face."



Stevens then emptied three bullets from his gun. "Six, huh? Two fired. And now take away three." Brentwood, still frozen with fear, stared at Baby Face, who had a smile that would have made the Devil himself proud. "OK, Doc. I'll give you enough time to do the math ..." then his grin vanished, "... *and* say your prayers."

Several yards away, two figures moved gingerly down the hallway that separated the rows of empty cells. Then the sound of two gunshots made them realize that time was of the essence – someone would find them there soon.

Lois helped her companion to take steps, but he was having a difficult time of it. "Boulder, we've got to make it to that door." She nodded at an alcove and door that led to another hallway, one that she had missed earlier, in her haste. In her mind it was a possible way to avoid Baby Face and his men.

"I'm trying, Miss Lane, but they did a number on my legs. I'm sure my left foot is broken. You should go without me. *Please*."

"No, Boulder, I'm not leaving you here."

Just then, they heard another gunshot. The two looked at each other and tried to quicken the pace. Before long they had reached the alcove and the door. Lois tried turning the handle.

She groaned when it wouldn't move. And then there was another voice.

"Going somewhere?"



It was Baby Face, with his men in tow. They were a few feet away. Stevens, who had reloaded, had his gun trained on Lois. He displayed his patented grin. "Well, well, well. Must be my birthday. This is a most unexpected gift."

Lois put on a brave face. "What's going on, Stevens?"

"What does it look like, Lane? I've taken over the prison." He smiled.



"Well, maybe so, but you can't get away with it. Sooner or later there'll be a change of shift – someone outside the prison will realize what's happened, especially if no phone calls are getting through."

"By then I'll be long gone. Which is why I need to take care of business right away."

Lois didn't like the sound of that. "What are you talking about?"

"Well, me and the boys were going to leave, but seeing you has ... *inspired* me." Still looking at Lois, Stevens asked, while nodding, "How's your boyfriend?"

"Boulder's hurt badly. There was no need to rough him up. Listen, Stevens, just *go* – get out of here. We won't try to contact the police."

"No, I don't think so Miss Lois Lane. You see, I seem to remember a certain nosy reporter – *you* – saying that I oughta be executed in front of a firing squad. Well, guess what? They have a courtyard here at Cunningham. I spent a lot of hours sweating and freezing my bunions off there. A lot of that time was spent thinkin' about how I would get back at you. And now here you are – all my thinkin' wasn't for nuthin' after all. So now I'm gonna take you up on your firing squad idea, 'cept in reverse, with you and your pal at the wrong end."

Now Lois was pleading. "Listen Stevens. Boulder and I just heard a radio report. There's a *bomb* at the atomic plant – *Project X*. A *nuclear* bomb that may be triggered. It may already be too late, but we've *all* got to try and get far away from here."

"I'll tell *you* who's outta time – *you* ... and *him*." Baby Face waved his gun. "Now get movin'."

Lois tried another tack. "But he can barely walk."

"I'll be all right Miss Lane." And then the man who resembled Superman looked at Baby Face. "As for you, Stevens, you're a dead duck. We all will be, soon, if the radio report was right. You'll get what you deserve, after what you did to Willy in Paris."

Baby Face scrunched his face. Even Lois did. Stevens looked at her and said, "*Paris? Is your boyfriend off his rocker?*"

Lois, equally confused, just shook her head. "I don't—"

Stevens seethed and then waved his gun again. "Enough talking. Now *move* or the shootin' starts *here!*"

## ACT 3: "COUNTDOWN TO ANNIHILATION"

### **MAXWELL'S ROCK**

*"And now the six PM news.*

*"The renegade Man of Steel has used his mighty superpowers to vanquish what was believed to be one of the most potent forces of the United States – the National Guard. The Guard was posted at the nuclear facility – since the so-called zombie attack days ago – to not only safeguard the atomic pile, but to protect a large supply of uranium.*

*"But now it seems that Superman, former defender of Metropolis, the Nation and the World, has gone mad, and is crashing through the last line of National Guard defenders. Onlookers have reported rifle bullets and even tank shells bursting against his steel-hard body, to no effect.*

*"Mayor Fiorletto is believed to have called President Eisenhower himself, with the expectation that the Army, Navy and Air Force may be called into action in an attempt to stop The Man of Steel.*

*A moment ... this just in from sister station WWMT--"*

Endicott clicked off the radio.

Inspector Henderson continued to feel some "play" in the rope tying his hands together with the chair he was in, and worked on it. He thought that asking Endicott questions would buy him some time – in additional learning as much useful information as possible, should he and White somehow escape. He asked Endicott, "You still haven't told us how you're able to control Superman, Endicott."

White looked at the machine near them. "Henderson, look. I've been staring at that machine. It looks familiar. I remember seeing photos. Around the time of Senator Taylor and his crime committee. That's Doctor *Stanton's* device!"

Endicott looked at his machine. "Looks very much like Stanton's, but, no not quite the same, White. I used his plans to build a much more feature-rich version. Stanton's was a child's toy compared to mine."

Henderson said, "But it *is* a mind machine." It was a question.

"Essentially, yes. It is a mind *control* apparatus."

Henderson followed with another question, "Then are we to understand that you controlled all those peoples' minds with it – the so-called *zombies* – and now you're controlling Superman's?"

Endicott seemed happy to explain his creations and ideas. "You're on the right track, Henderson. The drugs *prepared* their minds. The machine *controls* them. The machine is *programmed* to control every mind I select. Delicious, isn't it?"

But White shook his head. "But Stanton's machine was limited to influence one person at a time. It used television signals to home in on a single subject. He told me *himself!*"

Endicott's eyes widened. "As I just said, White, my machine is different." He pointed to the contraption behind him. Endicott then went on to explain his work with the brain and brain frequencies. He ended with, "My version of Stanton's invention can be *programmed* to send messages to *precise* brain frequencies. It feeds people's minds instructions on *what* I want them to do, even *how* I want them to talk and ... if necessary ... *who* I want them to be." He smiled and added, "And sometimes I talk into *this*", he picked up and waved a microphone sitting on a small table, connected to the big machine behind him, "when I want to be *very* specific."

Henderson shot a look at White as if to say, *this man is frighteningly beyond genius*. But White kept his focus on Endicott. "That's fascinating, Endicott, but why do you want to *control* Superman?"

Endicott laughed. "*Ha!* A silly question, White. Who *wouldn't* want to control Superman?"

Henderson said, "Clearly you're going to have Superman steal the uranium in *Project X*. Your zombies failed, but now you've got Superman to do your dirty work."

But Endicott ignored Henderson's conclusion. Instead his eyes widened again and he pointed to his equipment, as if he was conducting a tour. "Look. *More* of my ingenuity." He pointed at the TV screen. "You think you've been watching a television camera at *Project X*, showing the National Guard being pummeled by the man under the influence of my machine."



White asked, "Well, haven't we? You've got to have some sort of cameraman down at *Project X* taking these pictures!"

Endicott smiled. "Wrong again, Perry White. You see", he smiled with delight, "the mind machine is connected via radio waves to his ..." he points at the screen "... optic and auditory nerves. His *eyes* are functioning like a TV camera and we can *hear* what he hears." The TV screen showed the room that Endicott learned contained the uranium, from Adams. He spoke into the microphone. "Now, get the uranium in that room!"

White looked at the Inspector. "*Incredible*. We're looking through *Superman's* eyes and listening to what he hears. The man's beyond genius, Henderson."

Henderson continued to make progress with the binding around his wrists and threw out a random question in an effort to continue to stall for time. "What about that goon at the hospital, Endicott? You sent him to kill Adams, no doubt."

"Oh, you mean ... *Grodd*? I gave him and a few others something called a *steroid*. Enhances their reflexes, their strength and their stamina. I needed a few of what you call *goons* to help in a few situations."

White said, "Amazing."

Endicott added, shaking his head, "But my intent was not to *kill* Adams. Only to make him comatose. I told you, I'm not a murderer."

White himself added, "At the rate you're going, you're not much *different* than one."

### **CUNNINGHAM PRISON**



The Cunningham Prison courtyard ran about halfway along the main building. It was bounded by a high fence on three sides with barbed wire on top, and the prison building on the other. Except for a large cement patio by the main building access door, the courtyard was made of dirt and patches of grass.

In the middle of the courtyard were four wooden posts. No one recalled why they were there. Stories were that before the prison was built, the courtyard was part of a farm or a ranch, and that horses or farm animals were tied to the posts.

Now the posts served another purpose. This time, two human beings were tied to them. Lois Lane, bound by heavy rope to one of the middle posts, squinted into the last rays of sunlight as she looked to her right. "Boulder, I'm sorry. If not for me, Stevens and his men might have just left."



"It's all right, Miss Lane. I just feel bad that we're both in this mess." And then he was deep in thought, staring ahead, beyond the gathering of men several yards away. Soon Baby Face Stevens joined them. Along with him, four men lined up with machine guns that had been appropriated from the prison guards.

The executioners stood with their backs to the setting sun as its rays gave the prisoners an orange hue. Then Baby Face turned to his intended victims and spoke. He was far enough from them that he had to all but shout. "Any last words, Boulder, or ... Miss *Daily Planet* reporter?"

All Lois could think of was, "You'll die, too, when the nuclear bomb goes off."

Baby Face waved his hand and said, "Ah, I can't wait to shut you up."

Lois turned to her right and said, "Boy, if only you were the *real* Superman." But the man next to her was silent, lost in thought. His mind was swirling about many things ... *images*.

And then he looked at the men with the machine guns, aimed at him and Lois Lane. He felt the ropes binding him to the post and how tight they were – seemingly impossible to wriggle out of. And his mind continued to spin, like he was searching for clear skies from the middle of a fogbank.

*A million images coming together. Familiar, yet distant.*

Stevens shouted. "**Ready!**" His men lifted their weapons.

*The bomb. The atomic bomb. The radio said it could be triggered by Superman's interference. At Project X.*

Baby Face grinned, his eyes widened above a chilling smile. "**Aim!**"

*They're going to **shoot** ... they're going to kill **Lois**. They already killed Willy and they're going to **kill** again. Baby Face killed Willy. In the laundry room. I saw it*

*looking through the glass window. The feathers falling around the ladder on the other side of the glass. The ladder ... just like ... just like ... it looked just like ... the Eiffel Tower ... in ... snow. Just like ...*

And then in an instant, in the brain of the man everyone called Boulder, strange thoughts of a distant city in France connected with something fondly remembered which then triggered several other memories of different sizes and shapes - and then it was like what happens during the dead of night in a blacked out city when the power suddenly returns, causing buildings, street lamps and other things to light up all at once.

While that happened, Stevens' grin turned to anger, just like all of the vengeance he ever felt was culminating with this execution.

**"Fire!"**

The machine guns went off with their non-stop *rat-a-tat-tat*. A great cloud of dust was immediately kicked up in front of the posts where the two seemingly helpless victims were immobilized. When the ammunition was exhausted and echoes of the shooting subsided, Stevens shouted, "What happened? I can't see anything! Damn dust cloud! Did you idiots fire at the *dirt?!"*

And then the dust cloud settled. As it cleared, Baby Face Stevens and his four executioners rubbed their eyes - not from the dust - but from what they were seeing.

Appearing in the dissipating cloud of dust was a man standing plain as day.



His face was as stoic and chiseled as Mount Rushmore. His fists were coiled as if they were ready for action. His prison-issued shirt was in tatters, exposing his strapping chest. Bullet holes riddled his pants. His shoes and socks had been completely destroyed, leaving both feet bare.

Behind him, crouched in as small a target as possible, was Lois Lane, untied and unscathed. She was afraid to move, but then slowly looked up and saw, from behind, an unexpected but familiar pose by the man seemingly protecting her.

Lois Lane didn't dare stand, but uncoiled herself slightly. "*Boulder?* Are you all right? What *happened?*"

All she heard was "Stay down, Miss Lane." His voice was different: Confident. Commanding. *Determined.*



Baby Face stared in disbelief. "It can't be. It just can't *be*!" Then he looked at his men. "Naw, you guys fired in the dirt." He pulled out his Smith and Wesson that was tucked in his pants, pointing it at the man standing several yards away. He said, to no one in particular, "I'm leaving all the bullets *in* this time around."

Then he fired one bullet at the man. It ricocheted off his chest as the man offered a slight, steely smile. And then the man began walking steadily towards Stevens. As he did, Baby Face fired each of his remaining bullets. One by one they bounced off the bare chest of the man getting closer and closer, until he was inches from Baby Face, who was now holding – an empty gun.

The man grabbed the gun from Stevens and crushed it with one hand like it was *licorice*. Then he smiled and said, "Hello Baby Face. Shame that you seem to have run out of ammunition."

Baby Face looked at his men, all of whom had pistols tucked in their shirts and shouted, "Use your guns on Lane – let *her* have it!"

They all aimed, but suddenly their hands were empty. And then, two by two, the man with the tattered prison shirt grabbed a pair of the thugs' heads, conked them together, and gently let the men fall to the ground. He repeated the process with the other pair.

Baby Face, seeing this, dashed towards the prison building. But the man in the ragged prison garb caught up with him easily, seizing Stevens by the scruff of his shirt. He spun the criminal around, saying, with a big smile and rearing a fist, "This will be my *biggest* pleasure."



Then he paused, losing his smile, saying, "It doesn't even *begin* to pay you back for what you did to Whisker." Then he punched Baby Face in the gut – pulling his punch just enough not to kill him or cause permanent internal injuries – but enough to take the wind out of him and send Stevens into dreamland.

By then, after watching it all, Lois Lane ran over to the man. She stopped for a moment and stared. "You're really—?"

The man – *Superman* – nodded and smiled.

Lois stepped closer and then hugged him. "Thank *goodness*! It's like my wish came true!"

Superman raised his eyebrows, "It almost *didn't* come true."



"But... how... I mean... what *happened*?" She looked up and down at him. "I thought you were ... *Boulder*."

"Well, to be honest, so did *I* until a few minutes ago." He came close to telling her about how the horrible scene with Willy's death – pillow feathers falling around a ladder behind glass – jarred him to remember Sarah Kent's birthday present - the snow globe from Paris – and helped him see through the cloud of being ... *Boulder*.

"But that means ... the other one ... the one everyone thinks is *you* ..."

"Yes, yes, I know. An *imposter*. And it's probably our good friend Boulder. Plus, if I'm right, the poor fellow is under someone else's control. Just like I was."

Lois snapped her fingers. "*I thought* so! I never believed it could be you."

Superman put a hand on Lois's shoulder and in a rare display of affection, smiled and said, "Thanks ... *Lois* ... for the vote of confidence. And if it's any consolation, even when *I* thought I was Boulder, I knew that *that* Superman was a fake."

"OK, but what happened? What's going on? Is this related to—"

Superman's smile disappeared and he held up a hand. "I know, I know. There's a lot to explain. And figure out. But first things first." He paused and looked at Stevens and his henchmen.



"These boys will be out for a bit longer. In the meantime, can you get the keys from Warden Raines' desk and unlock him and the guards? I believe I heard earlier one of Stevens' men say that they're locked in a dungeon or basement of sorts. I'd love to stay and piece together the exclusive of your life, but we seem to have a dire emergency."

Lois nodded, "Yes, I know."

The Man of Steel put both his hands on Lois's shoulders, smiled again. "Thank you, Lois."

"Wait ... *Clark*."

Superman, rattled for a moment, eyed Lois suspiciously. "*What?*"

"Clark ... no one's heard from him. Inspector Henderson thought he might be in Smallville visiting his mother."



"Oh, I see." Superman thought, *hmmm, I may have caught a lucky break*, and he made a mental note to scheme about it later – given the chance.

"Superman, promise me that, when this whole thing is over. That is, if—"

"I know. I understand. I'll look for Clark. Don't you worry. I've a strong feeling he's all right but just hard to reach right now. You know how Smallville's out in the boondocks, Lois. Now, I really must go." He winked at the girl reporter and then ran inside the prison building at eye-blurring speed.

Lois looked at Baby Face and his men sprawled on the ground. Satisfied that they weren't going anywhere, she darted inside the building. For good measure, she locked the door behind her, in case Stevens or his goons woke up. Soon she was in Warden Raines' office.

The first thing she noticed was that the Superman uniform given to Raines that was hung on the wall - was *gone*.

### **MAXWELL'S ROCK**

Back in the caves under Maxwell's Rock, the three men – Endicott, Henderson and White – were now all riveted to the TV screen. All they could see were two hands grabbing a steel door and lifting it off its hinges.

Endicott spoke into a microphone. "That's it. That's it. You've done it! Now ... *go* inside!"

White said, "So *that's* the deal – you used this infernal machine and drugs to take over Superman's mind – and *control* him so you could get the uranium!"

Endicott remained focused on the TV screen. "If only it were so easy. Mister White – I'm astounded. Thought you were a *smart* newspaper man."

Henderson was close to freeing himself. He was now thinking ahead to the move he should make once the bonds were discarded. "What are you talking about, Endicott? You've got *Superman* following your every command, don't you?"

Endicott turned around to look at both men. Then he pointed at the TV screen. "I'm surprised at *both* of you. You're intelligent men." He paused and shook his head. "Those aren't Superman's hands. That's *not* Superman breaking into the room with uranium. That's John Crane. You know him as *Boulder*."

Henderson turned to White, smiling, "Lois was *right*, Perry."

But White protested, "That's not *possible*. Why Lois Lane herself confirmed to me *personally* that Boulder's in *Cunningham*." White shouted. "Barely *two* hours ago!"

Endicott laughed, "No, Mister White. You see, after Superman visited my doctor friend and learned of my hideout here, I ambushed him and subjected him to red

solar radiation. Then he was de-powered with a series of injections – and I arranged for an ambulance accident in which he and Boulder were, well ... *exchanged*.

“Once Superman was without his powers, the Mind Machine worked on him, too, making him think he was someone else. The man Lois Lane *thought* was Boulder is ...” A pause. “ ... the *real* Superman.”

**MAXWELL’S ROCK SHORELINE BY METROPOLIS SOUND**

Elena Endicott was happy that this whole thing would be over soon – this so-called *Operation X-3*. She had supervised ship hands to ready a small but powerful ocean-going vessel that would carry the uranium away, along with Alec, herself and a good part of his laboratory equipment. Maybe even Boulder was part of his plans.



Alec figured that a ship flying under the flag of Portugal would be more or less ignored in the high seas. Before long they would be on a rock Alec had come across in his research. They were headed for the Madeira archipelago, belonging to Portugal. Porto Santo Island, specifically. It would be an ideal place to hide out for awhile – until he had amassed enough power from his new found uranium to make his next move.

One of the ship hands had a radio on. It was playing an interview recorded earlier, it said, with a man at Mercy General Hospital. His name was Professor Milton Adams. At the mention of Adams’ name, Elena stopped what she was doing, and walked over to the radio, pushing two men aside and *shssshing* them. She heard the interviewer ask a question and then the familiar voice of Adams.

*“I was heavily drugged in order to do the bidding of a dangerous man. I escaped, only to end up here, in the hospital. But that’s not important. What is crucial for all to know is – I have heard how Superman has gone mad and is threatening to break into the Project X atomic facility. His goal, I am surmising, is to rob Project X of its uranium.*

*“Now, in my drugged – and delirious – state – I had built a bomb to stop this scheme. A powerful nuclear bomb. Yes, I realize that you might still think I’m delirious, but I assure you I have my full mental faculties once again. There **is** an atomic bomb at Project X.*

*“The bomb is situated with the uranium there. Once the lone entrance to the uranium is compromised in **any** way it will trigger a fifteen-minute countdown.*

*“If Superman can hear me, he must stop immediately. If he has already broken through or removed the door, then there is no hope. Whoever can flee Metropolis should do so, but in reality, fifteen minutes is no time at all.*

*“We will all be doomed.”*

The interviewer got back on.

*"Adams went on to identify a man by the name of Alexander Endicott, located in a secret facility under Maxwell's Rock, who is pulling the strings in this operation to steal the uranium."*

*"Meanwhile, a state of emergency has been declared as officials try to confirm the Professor's claim that a nuclear bomb..."*

Once the Maxwell's Rock lair was identified, Elena dashed through the rock wall tunnel and back to the lab.

In her mind, *Operation X-3* was over. *Maybe everything was*, she thought.

### **MAXWELL'S ROCK (ENDICOTT'S OFFICE)**

Endicott continued to speak into the microphone, "Grab the uranium containers. Bring as many as you can carry them to the dock. And then repeat that until there are no more!"

Suddenly Elena burst in and grabbed the microphone from her brother. "*Boulder!* John! There's a *bomb*. Find it! *Destroy* it!"

Alec was aghast. "*Elena!* What are you *doing!*?" He was mystified not only at Elena's actions, but that she was defying him.

But Elena was focused on Boulder. "John! Find the bomb! *Show* us the bomb!"

Alec grabbed the microphone with one hand and threw the back of his hand against his sister's face, knocking her to the floor. He scrambled to bend and pick up the mike but then heard, "Leave it there, Endicott! Have a seat on the floor and don't move a muscle!"

It was Henderson, standing. He was holding, of all things, the paperweight Endicott kept on his desk. He was poised to throw it at Alec. It was seemingly the only weapon immediately available, given the circumstances, but the heavy object could stop Endicott at close range, and both men knew it.

Elena called out. "*You fools!* We're *doomed!* There's a bomb! An *atom* bomb! Adams booby-trapped the room containing the uranium!"

Alec tried to get up, but now Henderson threatened him with a kick. "Stay there, Endicott." Then he turned to Elena, now sitting. The Inspector squinted at her. "Now, what's that you said?"

Elena looked at Henderson, saying, "Their bet. Their *stupid* bet." Then she looked at her brother. "*Your* stupid bet!"

Alec stared for several seconds and then, clearly astounded, said, "He didn't. He really *didn't*. *Did* he?"

Elena, "Apparently Alec, he *did*. Adams did it. How long ago did – Boulder – break in?"

White called out. "Couldn't have been more than two or three minutes ago. Why? Why's that matter?"

Alec said, "A timed atomic bomb, no doubt. The *fool*! He really *did* it!"

Elena said, "Adams was on the radio. He ID'd us being here at Maxwell's Rock."

Henderson had a slight look of satisfaction. "Well then you're *finished* Endicott. The law will find us here soon."

But Elena ignored the Inspector and kept speaking to her brother. "Adams said it was timed for *fifteen* minutes!"

White called out again, "Then we have less than fifteen minutes to live unless your man Boulder can do something."

Henderson looked at the TV screen. "All I can tell is that it looks like he's broken into the room and is gathering the uranium canisters." Henderson looked away from the screen. "We're done for."

Then White said dejectedly, "Great Caesar's Ghost. What a way to go."

Alec looked dejectedly at Elena, "I'm sorry."

Elena said, "Me, too, Alec. After all we've been through."

Henderson then gazed back at the screen. He figured that Boulder must have turned his head to look at something in the room that hadn't been there before. Now, via the waves beamed from Boulder's optic nerve into Endicott's Mind Machine and television, Endicott, Elena, White and Henderson saw it, too.

Henderson then smiled, nodding at the TV screen, "Well, maybe *he* can help."

On the TV, the three men and one woman were amazed to see ... **Superman**.



**PROJECT X**

Superman felt wobbly during his flight from Cunningham Prison to *Project X*. He was not at full strength and as such could not fly at top speed. But he poured it on, regardless, all but running on fumes. Below him he saw people streaming out of Metropolis on foot and by car, strangling the thoroughfares. *Apparently word has gotten out about the bomb*, he thought. For a fleeting moment the spectacle of everyone leaving the city made him think back to the "zombies" advancing on *Project X*.



As he approached the atomic facility he swooped low over the facility grounds. The Man of Steel was aghast at the sight of military men, weapons, tanks and more strewn about. At the same time, he wondered about the person who did this – the "Superman" he had seen on television from the prison.

He tried not to ponder the thought of Boulder – or whoever it was with super-powers – being more powerful than him. In fact, Superman hoped that his apparent adversary was nowhere around, so that he could deal with the bomb he'd heard about over Willy the Whisker's crystal radio back in prison.

Superman scanned the *Project X* facility looking for anything resembling a bomb. Finally, on the far right of the main building ahead of him, his x-ray vision spotted what appeared to be a lead-lined chamber of sorts. He couldn't see through its walls but there was a wide-open doorway – with no door – that allowed him to peer inside.



In the chamber he saw canisters – presumably filled with uranium – and a man in a Superman outfit who looked just like him.

The Man of Steel took the shortest route to the location by crashing through the building's outer wall, along with interior walls and floors until he reached the doorway to the chamber.

Immediately from inside, the imposter in the super-suit spun to look at the intruder. The two seemingly identical twins faced each other, with Superman standing in the doorway and his doppelgänger well inside the chamber. Superman made an assumption about his adversary's identity, hoping to connect with him in some way.



"Boulder. We've met once before. *Remember?* The bank truck filled with gold - with *Fairchild?*"

Boulder studied his double. Then he shook his head, like he was trying to clear a fog. "I- I- don't know. I think—But... No, not gold. I need to get the *uranium*. Not ... gold. And ... not Mister Fairchild. No, not him. I'm getting it for Mister *Endicott*, that's who."

Superman wondered, *Endicott?*

Boulder turned around and began to scoop up several uranium canisters. But by then Superman was in the chamber, next to Boulder, and grabbed him by the shoulder. "No, Boulder, you mustn't. We need to find a deadly bomb that's going to go off. *Now!*"

Boulder yelled, "*No!*" He dropped the canisters he was holding and swung at Superman, connecting with The Man of Steel's gut, catching him off guard. It sent Superman crashing into a wall adjacent to the doorway. But he got up quickly, then ramming Boulder, causing him to drop all the canisters he had again scooped up and go smashing into the opposite-end lead-and-cinderblock wall. While Superman took an instant to survey the scene, hoping to find a clue as to the bomb's location, Boulder quickly recovered and tackled him, sending Superman into the wall opposite the doorway.

As this happened, almost in slow motion, Superman's spine tingled as he spotted electrical contacts by doorway that no longer held its door. He saw that the contacts were connected to a cable running along the side of the doorway, down *into* the floor. Like the walls, the floor was lead-lined. He thought, *I need to see where those wires go!*

Superman attempted to stand for more leverage but his adversary grabbed him around his legs. Boulder then lifted Superman such that he was upside-down. He then began to twirl him in the small room, presumably to send him with great impact into one of the walls again.

But to Superman, this was perfect positioning. As the upside-down spin began, he sent a fist into one of Boulder's shins, causing the super-menace to buckle slightly and stop the twirling. This allowed Superman to extend his other fist into the floor. Once he did that, The Man of Steel was able to reach and hold onto a now-exposed metallic beam holding up the floor. This enabled him to pull himself *down* into the new hole he had created below.

As he did this, Superman used one of his boots to kick Boulder in the face, causing his adversary to completely let go. At that point, Superman was able to drop further into the hole he had widened, with his head poking through to what was apparently a lower chamber identical to the one he was in. The only difference was that this



contained a distressing difference: the wires he spotted earlier emerged from the ceiling and ran to what appeared to be a timer – *a countdown clock*, Superman thought.



That was adjacent to what had to be the nuclear device. What was most alarming, more so than the sight of the bomb, was the *time* on the clock. It seemed to be counting down to twelve o'clock – with the second hand indicating that there were barely *five* minutes left!

But before he was able to drop any further into the chamber, Superman felt himself being tugged once again at his legs. This time he realized there was only one way out – literally – and he did an unusual thing: he *flew* upside down, with Boulder still clutching him, and crashed through the *ceiling* of the upper chamber and the ceilings above them until both supermen were just beyond the roof of the building.

With all his might, Superman kept going up, up, up, until the pair were high above the *Project X* facility. Superman hoped that Boulder had not mastered flying – he had a vague recollection of observers claiming that Boulder *leaped* and didn't fly.

Superman next righted himself and then stepped away – in mid-air – hoping his opponent would fall or be disoriented. But Boulder somehow maneuvered himself in mid-air, too, and



swung at Superman. Soon there was an amazing sight – perhaps the most unique sparring match ever – with two gloveless boxers high in the air, swinging away.

Boulder, a former ring fighter before he descended into the underworld, knew all the moves, too, and was no slouch as a super-boxer.

However, Superman realized that precious time was ticking away what with the countdown clock now having barely four minutes left on it. He had no idea yet how to diffuse the bomb, but wasn't even being given the chance. He had to *stop* Boulder first.

Superman made up his mind that a boxing match was not going to help him win, nor would it save Metropolis. He needed an *unconventional* fight with a quick finish.

He stood in mid-air and let Boulder aim a right cross at his jaw. Except he caught Boulder's fist and attempted to *crush* it. Perhaps Boulder's powers were starting to wane – or Superman's determination was peaking – for it worked. Boulder grunted and paused just long enough for Superman to send a super-kick to his gut, knocking

Boulder several yards across the sky. Superman then poured on the super-speed to reach him and then tried what the faux Superman seemed to want to do before on him.

Superman grabbed Boulder's feet, in mid-air, and twirled him around and around. Finally, he let go, watching Boulder soar past the *Project X* complex and beyond the seawall separating it from Metropolis Sound. This was followed by splash into the choppy blue waters that were growing darker by the minute due to the setting sun. The Man of Steel used his x-ray vision to spot Boulder rise sluggishly to the surface. *He'll live*, Superman thought, *but hopefully he no longer has enough strength to come after me.*

With no time to spare, Superman zoomed and crashed his way back into the chamber containing the bomb.



Superman examined what was clearly the nuclear device. He remembered reviewing diagrams and photos in the *Daily Planet* archives for research on an article he was doing following the *Project X* scare several months ago. This device vaguely resembled the so-called *Fat Man* bomb that was dropped on Japan. As well, it had a large oval metallic chamber surrounded by several rectangular metallic chambers. The cable from the chamber above ran into it. It appeared to be the only cable – a trigger from the doorway – but not the power source. He then surmised that something within the apparatus must be self-powering the bomb and the clock.

Superman accepted the fact that he couldn't monkey with the mechanism without risking a premature explosion. With less than three minutes to go based on the clock, Superman recognized that he had run out of options, but one.

It all depended on how well built the chamber infrastructure was – and how *super-powered* he was feeling.

Superman zoomed out of the lower chamber through the opening he had made and into the sky above *Project X*. Then he flew back down beside the chambers and *underneath* the one containing the bomb. At this point he drilled through the

bedrock below *Project X*. At top speed, he used his hands, arms and heat vision to carve out a bedrock platform below the foundation of the two chambers.

Then he flew around the sides of the chambers, carving out a separation between their walls and the adjoining building. Soon he was done with the preparatory work, but there was no time to spare.

Superman dove back underground below the bedrock foundation he had carved out below the two chambers. And then, like he had done before – whether lifting the support beams of a trestle in the North Woods<sup>3</sup> – preventing a coal mine up from collapsing<sup>4</sup> – lifting a stricken airplane<sup>5</sup> – he raised the rock foundation up, up and away.

As he did, it emerged from the *Project X* facility. Bystanders a mile away later recalled that the sight resembled a small building flying into the sky like a rocket.

The afterglow of a spectacular sunset to the west of Metropolis shone as Superman held the foundation supporting the chambers steady while *Project X* receded below him. Soon he was high above Metropolis and the Metropolis Sound, pushing with every ounce of super-strength he could muster, consciously thinking *up* and little else. He was not in peak form – certainly not after being drugged by – was that Doctor *Brentwood* or Doctor *Reed*? – and whoever was behind it all. Did Boulder say ... *Endicott*? He felt slight stresses in his muscles, but there was too much at stake to dwell on that.



As he was now high in the stratosphere – Superman realized that the bomb was ready to blow any moment. He then considered the catastrophe of an atomic explosion here, high in the atmosphere but still above the Metropolis region. The fallout would either rain on the inhabitants below – or be mixed with the jet stream and travel to Europe – or a combination of both. Plus the great quantity of uranium contained in the upper chamber – the object of Boulder’s theft – would only worsen the situation.

So Superman, motivated by the thought of saving his friends, Lois, Perry, Jimmy, Inspector Henderson and millions of others, poured it on. Soon he was in the *exosphere*, the layer of atmosphere that contained little or no air, and was the last atmospheric layer of the planet before Outer Space.

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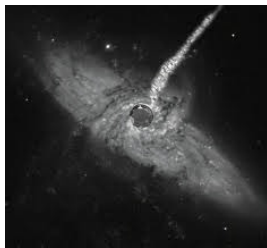
<sup>3</sup> *The Adventures of Superman* (Season 1), “Ghost Wolf”

<sup>4</sup> *The Adventures of Superman* (Season 1), “Rescue”

<sup>5</sup> *The Adventures of Superman* (Season 1), “The Mind Machine”

*Not good enough*, thought Superman. He pushed even harder. Fortunately the atmospheric resistance and Earth's gravity were no longer major factors working against him. He kept pouring it on, remembering the last time he was this far above his adopted planet, when he had battled a rogue asteroid threatening Earth.<sup>6</sup>

And then, sensing that the deadly situation was on borrowed time, Superman gave the chambers a super-heave away from Earth and towards the bright yellow star at the core of the solar system. He watched as the pair of chambers supported by the bedrock foundation hurtled into the abyss of Space, becoming a darkened and shrinking dot against the background of the sun.



As Superman floated backward towards the Earth, he then saw an incredible sight. The dot suddenly became a brightly glowing mushroom that spread out in two directions. In seconds, it dissipated and then – *disappeared*.

At that moment it struck Superman as to why he had been able to overcome the last of what he realized were a mad doctor's disabling injections: *adrenaline*. It was a rush of adrenaline that had helped him recover from being tossed off the Ellsworth Building. It was surge of adrenaline – caused by him seeing Lois Lane in front of a firing squad – that spurred him back to normal at Cunningham Prison.

And it was *adrenaline* brought on by the thought of Metropolis being vaporized that finally eliminated the last traces of drugs in his system, allowing him to lift the *Project X* chambers into Space.

Meanwhile, far below, on Earth, Jimmy Olsen and Professor Adams looked out Adams' hospital window and glimpsed a brief bright light in the night sky above, hoping it wasn't Superman's funeral pyre.

Lois Lane, standing outside of Cunningham Prison, getting into a police squad car the Warden had arranged to collect her, paused as she looked up. She saw a shining star suddenly appear and then vanish high above in the night sky, wondering if that was Superman's attempt to save Metropolis yet again. The reporter fought back tears, praying that The Man of Steel himself survived what she imagined was a fearsome blast.

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<sup>6</sup> *The Adventures of Superman* (Season 2), "Panic in the Sky"

**MAXWELL'S ROCK**

At about the same time, the situation at Maxwell's Rock was a very different story. No one was looking up at the sky, nor would they have cared had they been able to. When Superman broke the two chambers free from the rest of *Project X*, it had the effect of short-circuiting a cable connected to the main power source of the complex. That cable was connected to another, and another, and eventually it reached Alec Endicott's Maxwell's Rock facility, which tapped into *Project X* for electrical power that ran his laboratory and equipment.

So when the short circuit occurred, it sent a powerful surge back down the cable and into everything run by electricity in Alec's office and work areas. The overload impacted cables throughout the complex, causing sparks to fly everywhere and short-circuiting the Mind Machine. This, in turn, ignited vats and containers of flammable chemicals. Finally, fires and small explosions caused cavernous walls and ceilings to collapse.

Prior to the short circuit, Henderson had freed White from his bonds. But then flickering lights and sparking equipment provided a distraction for the Endicott siblings to disappear in the confusion. Both the Inspector and Chief Editor soon felt the ground shake as Endicott's facility was crumbling around them.

Not wanting to waste time, Henderson and White headed towards the only apparent passageway not compromised by cave-ins – the one that led to Metropolis Sound. That went through the lab, which was only partially caved in. As the two men navigated around the rubble amidst fires, smoke, chemical explosions and dislodged rock falling from the ceiling, Henderson saw Elena. Her head and torso were lying bent over a lab table while her legs were standing on the rocky floor. The Inspector rushed over to her with White behind her. Henderson felt her pulse.

White asked, "Is she—"

"No, there's a pulse." As Henderson spoke, a big explosion rocked the facility. Vats of flammable chemicals were being ignited. "I'm guessing we don't have much time before this place blows. Endicott must have kept a lot of volatile stuff here for his operation."

"Alec..." It was Elena, moaning. Henderson and White looked at each other. Alec had barely introduced Elena to them – only for a minute or two. But both men sensed that she was an unwilling pawn in her brother's schemes, and as a result, they held some degree of sympathy for the woman.

White went over to her. "Miss Endicott?"

"Alec. He—"

Now Henderson bent over to look at Elena's face on the table. "Miss Endicott. Can you move? We need to get you to safety."

"Alec ... he ... he used it. He used it ... on me."

White spoke again. "What's that? What did he use?"

Henderson stood up and looked at the newspaper editor. A look of realization appeared on this face. "The Mind Machine. He used it on his own *sister*."

White said, "*Great Caesar's Ghost!* And when that infernal machine short-circuited it cut her off!"

Elena spoke again, her speech slurring. "I thought my brother was... mad. He hated Super...man. A good man... *Champion*. For everyone. Prof... Professor Adams. Good man, too. I... I was ... going to leave Alec for him. For Adams." She could barely breathe. Now Henderson and White noticed a gash on her head and a growing pool of blood underneath her torso. "When I decided to leave ... Alec somehow found out ... he couldn't bear to let me go. He felt he ... couldn't do ... his mad scheme. Without me. So...he drugged me. Then... when he perfected the... Mind Machine... controlled me ... with it ... just enough to get me to ... do ... what he wanted. I couldn't help it ... had to ... obey." Her voice was fading.

White said, "I'm sorry."

Elena continued, weakly, "Oh ... I... don't fault... Alec. He was... right... in a... way. Our father... wrongly... convicted..."

Henderson spoke. "Miss Endicott. Your brother will have to pay for his crimes, but maybe his efforts – and yours – won't be in vain. I'll work with the FBI to find every shred of evidence *vindicating* your father."

White jumped in and looked at the Inspector. "And the *Daily Planet* will work with you, Henderson, to assure that the *truth* is printed."

Henderson bent over and looked at Elena's eyes that were wide open. Then he felt her pulse. After several seconds he stood up, slowly, and, looking at White, shook his head. They had no idea if she had heard their vows about vindicating Randall Endicott.



And then, a powerful blast shattered a rock wall only a few yards from them. Henderson pulled White towards him to avoid chunks from hitting the editor. Then he said, "We'd better go – *now!*"

They both took a momentary somber look at Elena, believing that this would be her tomb, and then dashed towards the passageway leading to Metropolis Sound. As thundering explosions were felt and heard behind them, they made their way down the rocky walkway, eventually reaching the dock.



Endicott's large boat was waiting there. Two men were visible on the pier. Henderson ran up to them holding up his hands, like a peace gesture. "Listen, I know you worked for Endicott, but this place is going to blow any minute. I'll make you a deal. You take me – and Mister White here" he nodded at Perry, "out into the Sound and then to any dock in the city, and I'll guarantee you safe passage."

The two men looked at each other and hesitated. Henderson then said, "If you run into the Harbor Patrol, I can get you through safely. Otherwise, all bets are off." After another moment's hesitation, the men nodded in agreement. Then all four of them got in the boat. Two more men were on the boat already in the pilothouse. Before long, they were chugging into Metropolis Sound.

Behind them, Maxwell's Rock exploded like a fireworks show against the dusk sky.

Henderson and White stood in the back of the boat facing Maxwell's Rock along with the two men they boarded with, while the other two men piloted the vessel. They all looked back at the pyrotechnics. As they did, Henderson said to White, "Every minute we're still here suggests that *Superman* was successful."

White added, "Maybe there wasn't even an atom bomb."

"Hopefully Superman himself will let us know sometime soon."

"And let it be the *real* one who does!"

Soon after the Maxwell's Rock explosions subsided, Henderson told White he was going to visit the boat pilots, meeting with a "*harumph*" from the editor. Once upstairs with them, Henderson requested that he and White be dropped off at the 42<sup>nd</sup> Street pier along the Hobbs River.



White grew impatient over Henderson's slow return but eventually the Inspector re-joined him in the rear of the boat. Before long they were on the Hobbs River with its assortment of boats and ships along with their twinkling lights. Their boat pulled into the 42<sup>nd</sup> Street pier alongside a tug and a barge on either side. Once Henderson and White debarked, the pilots put their boat in reverse. As they did, two things happened. First, powerful lights suddenly bathed the pier and the surrounding waters.



More significantly, the boat's return to sea was now blocked by a police boat.

And suddenly appearing from nowhere on the tug and the barge were Henderson's men armed with police rifles trained on each of the four men on Endicott's boat. One of the men – the one with whom Henderson had spoken to originally before he and White boarded, offered a nasty stare at the Inspector.

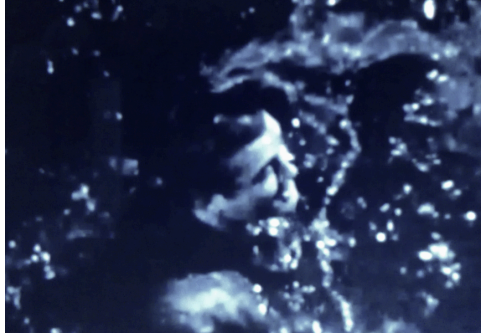
Henderson smiled at White, "Lucky they had a short wave radio on-board for me to use."

White said, "Well, Henderson, you tricked those thugs with a lie, but we got here safely, and that's all that counted."

"I didn't lie, Perry. I guaranteed them safe passage to any dock in the city. That's as far as it went." He winked, and White shook his head, smiling.

## ACT 4: "ENDINGS AND BEGINNINGS"

### ***METROPOLIS SOUND, NEAR MAXWELL'S ROCK – AN HOUR AFTER EXPLOSION***



#### **THE CHOPPY WATER OF METROPOLIS SOUND**

bobbed around John "Boulder" Crane. After being pummeled and tossed there by Superman, he struggled to the surface, gasping for breath. His head was spinning after having been cut off from Alec Endicott's mind machine, now destroyed. But his mind retained a new singular focus: no longer was his quest to steal uranium. Now all he wanted was to return to the Endicott Lair under Maxwell's Rock.

Boulder wasn't that far from shore. His waning superpowers afforded him a fairly easy swim to the rocks along Metropolis Sound. As the last rays of the sun became a faint glow on the watery horizon, Boulder pulled himself over the rocks and onto a thin strand of sand behind them. Soon he staggered on the beach all the way to the dock where Endicott had his boat.

It didn't matter to Boulder that the boat was no longer there. His compulsion was to return to the man who only very recently was a kind of mentor to him. Boulder entered the rock tunnel that led to Endicott's lair, not knowing that chemical explosions caused by the short-circuited cable connected to Project X had mostly destroyed the facility.

He staggered up the slight slant of the tunnel, walking like the Frankenstein monster with his heavy-foot trudge. But before getting very far, Boulder collapsed onto the rock pathway. He was conscious, though, and immediately tried to get up. Boulder then realized that the Superman cape was a burden, and pulled it off. As he did, he noticed a pouch on the inner side of the cape. Curiosity trumped his motivation to return to Alec Endicott, so Boulder reached inside the pouch. He pulled out a complete set of clothing compressed inside which seemed to all but unfold on its own as he removed them – a white shirt, dark blue suit jacket and pants, red tie, black belt and shoes. Undergarments were included, as well.

All were amazingly dry, as well.

With the Superman suit drenched and as such quite heavy, he removed it and threw it all to the side of the tunnel along with the cape. Slowly but surely Boulder put on everything he had found in the pouch. He did not notice a necktie and eyeglasses - they remained in the pouch.

In his hazy state of mind, it didn't occur to Boulder that the clothing belonged to Superman when he was the "other guy".

Feeling somewhat renewed – and lighter - Boulder continued to trudge up the rocky tunnel pathway. Soon, though, he came across a cave-in that separated the tunnel from the cave containing Endicott's lair. Driven by a strange need to return to the place where he received his powers – and first met Alec Endicott – he took advantage of his remaining super-strength to remove rocks and other debris that fell as part of the cave-in. Before long Boulder had cleared an opening, allowing him to crawl into what used to be Alec Endicott's laboratory.

Whatever ambient light left in the tunnel from the last glow of dusk was now replaced by near darkness. Flames that had burned due to chemical fires left only an acrid smell but few embers to provide much light. As a result, Boulder now had to stumble his way over rubble, and very slowly.



He called out. "Mister Endicott?"

No answer.

"Miss Endicott?" A pause to listen, then, "Doc Brentwood?"

Boulder stood in silence. Even when he was at full strength, Boulder did not seem to possess or know he had Superman's "lesser" powers, such as infrared vision and super-hearing, either of which even weakened would have been invaluable to him now. However, Boulder did hear a slight movement. It sounded like ... rubble moving.

He focused on the sound and then looked in its direction. The sound of ... movement ... continued. Once again he called out, "Mister Endicott?"

Boulder listened and held his breath. Then his patience and perseverance paid off, for he heard, "John?"

"Mister Endicott. Is that you?"

"Yes, John. Can you find me?"

"Keep talking, Mister Endicott. I'll find you. Are you hurt?"

"I'm under some rubble, but I can feel my legs and arms. I couldn't tell you where I am, though." He paused. "I don't seem to be hurt, although..."

Suddenly Alec realized that someone was standing right next to him. He heard, "I'm right here, Mister Endicott." The two men could now make each other out in the darkness, as some ambient light had crept in around them, after all.

Boulder then reached down to lift Endicott, but Alec said, "Wait – my briefcase. I was trying to salvage some papers before the roof fell in." He handed it to Boulder.

Before long, Boulder helped Alec to his feet. Endicott limped alongside the former faux Man of Steel, who acted like a crutch. Soon Endicott was walking on his own, albeit gingerly.



Both men then made it through the hole that Boulder had created connecting the lair with the tunnel and before long they were standing on the dock facing Metropolis Sound. Across the way, the lights of Metropolis twinkled, its inhabitants breathing a sigh of relief after having been saved from a nuclear disaster by none other than Superman.

The pair stayed there for a short time to get their bearings. When Boulder said that he wanted to go back inside to fetch Elena and anyone else who might still be alive, Alec said that he had already checked and no one survived but him. In fact, Alec knew that Elena was dead, for he had seen her body, but did not know the fate of his other staff.

Endicott still maintained his resolve to achieve the goals he had written many months ago on a blackboard in his Andersonville basement. But all that would have to wait. Now he needed to get away, for before long the police would no doubt be swarming in and around Maxwell's Rock – what was left of it.

At the same time, Boulder seemed to be taken by Endicott for whatever reason. Alec decided to let him tag along until he could figure out what to do with him. Maybe Boulder would even prove to be useful.

Alec, too, realized that if Henderson and White had escaped the Maxwell's Rock debacle, he would be even *more* of a wanted – and *identifiable* – man than ever. He had to get away and change his identity, as well.

Alexander Endicott was going to have to disappear forever.

With their second wind, Alec and Boulder said good-bye to Maxwell's Rock and the dock that never got to launch a boatload of uranium. They walked along the thin

strip of beach northward a few miles until they reached a small shipping pier used during daylight hours. A night watchman came out of a booth to see who they were. Alec explained that their boat had run aground down the beach and they were heading inland to meet up with their shipmates.

Before the befuddled guard could ask any more questions, the two men turned towards an asphalt road leading inland to the main highway north of Metropolis. By midnight, under a field of stars and a new moon, Alec and Boulder made it to the Endicott's Andersonville home. Alec unlocked the front door using a spare key he and Elena had hidden in a small flowerpot.

Inside, Alec explained his plan to Boulder, and the Superman-lookalike readily agreed to it. Both men were dead tired, but Alec worried that the police would soon trace the house to Elena, so they could not stay very long. Each man cleaned up and packed a small suitcase. Boulder only had the clothes on his back to fit him, so he had next to nothing to pack.

Alec had a wad of cash stashed away and retrieved it. Before long he was saying good-bye to yet another place he had known well – the residence shared with Elena for a time after arriving from the west. He locked it and then the two men found their way to an all-night taxi stand in Andersonville.

### **MAXWELL'S ROCK**

The very next morning, the police had gotten to Endicott's destroyed lair early, well before Henderson did. There were enough wide-open holes leading to the surface to provide limited natural lighting. The officers' flashlights provided the rest.

Henderson eventually arrived, carrying his own flashlight. He said, "Glad you could meet us here, Miss Lane. I know your boss was a bit burnt out from the whole ordeal. Normally we'd wait a bit before the press would be let in, but given that the *Daily Planet* was a part of this, well, I bent a few rules."



Lois Lane, wearing what amounted to spelunking gear instead of her usual work outfit, was right behind Henderson. "Thanks, Inspector. *Ordeal* is an understatement. And boy do we have stories to trade." She wore a miner's hat that had a built-in light.

The two gingerly walked through rubble in Endicott's former lair. Henderson stopped her when he saw something interesting on the floor. His flashlight revealed several cracked vials that were empty but labeled. He crouched and shone the light directly on them, "Looks like they've got markings, but the lab boys will have to decipher what they mean. It's *Greek* to me."

Lois crouched and looked, too. She picked up one vial in one of her work-gloved hands. "Looks like the writing really *is* Greek."

"For all we know, these are the vials he used on Superman and Boulder."

They both stood up. "Inspector, from what you told me before, Endicott subjected Superman to the red lights – the same ones at the stadium that took away his powers."

"That's right. It's what he told your boss and me. And then he drugged him so that he could use the mind machine." Henderson pointed to remains of the machine with his flashlight. "That's what's left of it."

"But why? Why did he put Superman in prison? And why make everyone think he was Boulder? Seems a bit crazy to me."

"That's exactly what Mr. White and I wondered." Henderson continued, "Endicott was pretty diabolical. Or *is*, if he's still alive. He wanted to tarnish Superman's reputation through the phony Superman's actions."

"You mean – *Boulder*."

Henderson continued walking around, gingerly, and Lois followed. He said, "That's right. But if Boulder was known to be missing – not in jail - people would wonder if Superman was really *him* - Boulder. In other words – people would suspect that the man doing all the damage in Metropolis was really Boulder, and Superman's reputation would have remained in tact."

"Sounds confusing, but that's pretty much the point I made to you and the Chief. I just *knew* that the real Superman couldn't be a menace."

"Yeah, I know, and even your boss told me he regretted not believing you right from the start."

Lois laughed, "Thank goodness for something."

Henderson continued. "So with Boulder still in prison – or seemingly *back* in prison – as you yourself thought you had confirmed, Miss Lane – people thought that the 'Superman' in Metropolis causing all that havoc was the real McCoy."

"OK, I'll buy that, but why bother with Boulder? Why not just control the *real* Superman and make *him* do all those terrible things?"

Henderson paused, as did Lois. "I had the same question for Endicott. He said that he originally thought about having Superman himself break into *Project X*. But he

figured that the drugs and mind machine would only work on Superman when he had no powers, which would've made him useless to Endicott. If he had regained his powers, it'd have been all over – he'd have shaken off the mind control, remember who he really was and stop Endicott."

Lois said, "Incredible. But Boulder was given powers just like Superman. Why couldn't *he* resist the mind machine?"

"Boulder was easier to control than Superman, at least according to Endicott. Plus he wasn't as powerful as Superman. So the mind control machine and drugs *worked* on him. On the other hand, Superman's moral character and conscience might have helped him fight off the urge to rip up Metropolis. Again, this what Endicott told your boss and me, but it seems to make sense."

Lois said, "So as I understand it, Endicott arranged an 'accident' when Boulder was being transported for his plastic surgery. And when I showed up at the prison, it was *Superman* who was there."

"That's right – being 'treated' by that nasty Doctor Brentwood ... or Doctor *Reed* at the prison, his cover as I learned only about an hour ago. He gave Superman injections to keep him powerless while the mind machine broadcast made him think he was Boulder."

Lois continued, "In the meantime, Endicott was controlling Boulder, posing as Superman, doing all those terrible things – including the attempted theft of *Project X*."

"It's a mouthful, Miss Lane, but that's about the size of it."

One of Henderson's men came over holding a vial. The glass was intact but there was no stopper and it was empty. "Inspector. I think this is the one you were hoping to find."

"Thanks Ron." Henderson took it and the officer went back to looking around the chamber.

He held it carefully in a handkerchief and showed it to Lois. Then Henderson shone his flashlight on it. "See the inscription?"



Lois read it out loud. "ISCHYROS". She shrugged. "More Greek?"

"Look closely at the inscription. The 'S'."

Lois stared at it. "Is that what I think it is?"

"Well, I guess it's a bit cryptic. And I only know this because Endicott gloated in front of Mister White and me, explaining what this vial is – or what it used to contain."

"Please, Inspector, the suspense is killing me."

"Ischyros' means 'powerful', in Greek."

"Since when do you know Greek, Inspector?"

The Inspector chuckled. "Since Ron Dimitriatis joined this detail, Miss Lane." The officer who had given Henderson the vial was standing only a few yards away. He turned around and smiled. Henderson continued, "And the shape around the 'S' are supposed to suggest Superman's symbol."

"A vial ... for *Superman*?"

"More like ... *of*. Endicott got hold of Superman's *blood*."

"Oh *no*!"

"When Endicott got Superman under the red lights, somewhere in this facility ... " Henderson waved his hands around " ... he was able to plunge a needle into his arm and extract some blood."

"It's probably the first time anyone's ever done that."

Henderson nodded and said, "He did it for a specific purpose. In fact, it's the question you haven't asked yet, Miss Lane: how did Boulder get his powers?"

"Superman's *blood*!"

"*Exactly*. But Endicott told us he created a mix that became weakened in brain tissue, allowing the mind machine to get through to Boulder's brain and control him."

"Too bad Endicott is on the wrong side of the law. He's a genius. Or *was*."

"Well, he wasn't always a bad guy, but that's another story."



"But why didn't Endicott give *himself* Superman's blood? *He* would have had superpowers."

"Endicott told us why. He said that he didn't want to taint his blood with that of an *alien* and couldn't be sure what it would do to him. Boulder became his guinea pig."

"Superman ... an *alien* ... I don't know about you, Inspector, but I think of four-eyed green Martians when someone mentions the word 'alien'. Not Superman."

"I'm the same as you, Miss Lane. Superman's like one of us."

"Well, not exactly."

They laughed and then continued to walk towards the tunnel that led to Metropolis Sound.

Henderson concluded with, "So he managed to keep Superman at bay, in prison, with regular injections from the same doctor who inoculated all the so-called zombies, including your co-worker, Olsen."

"The doctor you mentioned before – Brentwood ... or Reed."

"And then after *Project X* would've been robbed, he was going to stop the injections, allowing Superman to remember who he was, regain his powers and effectively leave Cunningham."

Lois said, "I can just imagine. He'd have been a wanted man by then. It would've been horrible for him."

"That was Endicott's plan. But your boss told me he's running a front page story explaining it all – vindicating Superman."

"Written by yours truly very early this morning. The Chief and I were worried sick about Superman until he was seen over Metropolis this morning, making all sorts of repairs to the city."

"Yes, I heard about that."

"But there's someone I'm still worried about."

"Yes, yes, I know. Clark Kent. Like I told you in White's office, Miss Lane, last I spoke to him, I could've sworn he was in Smallville."



"Did somebody mention my old home town?" It was Kent. He was dressed in a suit and tie but no fedora. In one of his hands was a flashlight, as well.

Lois looked at him and shone her headlamp on her fellow reporter who was standing a couple of yards away. "Clark, where have *you* been? Everyone was worried about you."

As Kent approached Lane and Henderson, he smiled, with a slight tease. "Oh, well, didn't you just hear the good Inspector?" He looked Lois up and down with his flashlight. "My, **that's** an interesting get-up, Lois."

Lois then noticed an envelope sticking out of Clark's suit jacket. "Forget to mail a letter?"

"Oh, *this*?" He took it out of the pocket. The envelope was no longer sealed, so he easily removed its contents. It was a Hallmark card. He shone his flashlight on it and Lois leaned over to look at it. "Just something I intended to give to my mother."

Lois read it. "*Wishing you a HAPPY BIRTHDAY!*" - then she opened it. "Dear Ma, so very glad we could get together for this special occasion. Love, Clark".

Lois had a warm twinkle in her eyes for a moment but it was quickly replaced with her trademark, "Wait a minute—"

Clark thought, *uh-oh*.

"Are you asking me to believe that you were in Smallville, to celebrate your mom's birthday, and you forgot to give this to her? And all this time, you didn't check in with us - with all that was going on here?"

Clark touched his glasses, "Well, Lois, Smallville *is* out in the boondocks, and—"

Lois thought, **boondocks**, *someone else called it that. Hmm....*

All thoughts and conversations about Clark's whereabouts were interrupted by one of Henderson's men calling out. "Inspector! Look what I found!"

Henderson went towards the noise that was coming from the tunnel that led to Metropolis Sound. Kent & Lois followed. Kent could see ahead to Henderson's man and what he had found. As he gazed down the tunnel, Lois noticed. "What are you staring at?"



"Oh, nothing, Lois. But I am grateful that this whole situation is over

with."

"How would *you* know about it? You weren't even here."

"Well, I spoke to the Chief before coming here, and he filled me in." It was the truth, although he only had had an abbreviated conversation with White over the phone.



Then they finally reached Henderson's man and gathered around him. There was enough ambient light from the tunnel exit by the Sound to make flashlights unnecessary. Henderson looked at what his man was staring at and said, "*Holy Cow!*"

Lois looked, too. "Superman's *uniform*?!"

Henderson's man said, "Inspector, do you think it's the Real McCoy?"

Kent responded, "I'm certain it is."

Lois looked at him, twisting her head, "How would *you* know?"

Henderson stared at Clark. "Yeah, how *would* you know, Kent?"

"Well, like I said, I spoke to the Chief. It's very simple. Endicott put Superman's uniform – the *real* costume, that is – on Boulder. And then when all the hoopla was over, Boulder abandoned the costume here as it would make him too noticeable."

Henderson scratched his chin. "I suppose so..."

Kent quickly scanned the costume with his x-ray vision and noticed that the secret cape pouch was bare except for his necktie and eyeglasses. It wouldn't do for his curious co-worker or even Henderson to find them, so he quickly reached out and picked up the costume. He folded it neatly and tucked it under his arm. Lois jumped in. "And just where are *you* going with that, Mister Kent?"

Clark smiled. "Well, I think it's obvious – to give it to Superman – the *real* one, that is."

"Honestly—"

Henderson said, "But then all this is saying that Boulder might be alive – and Endicott for all we know. They could've escaped through this old rum runner route and be anywhere by now."

The trio walked to the end of the tunnel and out onto the dock from which Endicott's boat had debarked with Henderson and White the evening before.

Lois said, "What I don't understand is, why did Endicott go to all that trouble to get hold of uranium? He recruited a lot of people. The so-called zombies. The drugs and Stanton's machine. Capturing Boulder and everything with Superman. I'm not sure I get it."

Henderson said, "Well, Miss Lane, I only know what Alec Endicott said. You know, your boss and I were lectured by a pretty passionate man. Randall Endicott was unjustly convicted – his son was right about that. That's what drove him. And the uranium, well, he claimed it could do all sorts of things – for better or worse."

The trio looked up to watch a flock of geese honk on by, and then Henderson continued. "No, Endicott's a pretty smart cookie. In fact, assuming he's still alive, if he continues to put his mind towards the things he mentioned, particularly on the wrong side of the law, he could end up the most prolific criminal genius in history." Then Henderson looked at Clark. "I'm pretty sure he'd be a formidable enemy for Superman, eh, Kent?"

Clark, who had been staring silently out at the busy shipping traffic on Metropolis Sound, finally chimed in rather glumly. "I'm afraid you may be right, Bill..."

***SOMEWHERE IN VIRGINIA – ON THE SILVER PHANTOM***

The *Silver Phantom* charged its way south through the lush, green woods of Virginia near Washington, D.C. The passenger train was filled to capacity with business people, vacationers and others heading to Florida and other points south.

Alexander Endicott and John Crane sat in a private compartment.

"I still can't get over how we made it here, Mister Endicott."

"And I can't get over how you're talking, Boulder."

"Call me John. And I guess it's a side effect of what you did. But I'm forever grateful for you rescuing me."

"I think it was the other way around, Boulder. Anyway, like I said before, I want you to introduce me to that plastic surgeon of yours who lives in Florida. You know, the one who gave you



your face."

Boulder nodded. He was trying to read the *Washington Post*. Endicott saw that he was struggling and reached inside his briefcase. "Here, I bought these glasses at Union Station. They have magnifying lenses. They'll do until we can get you a prescription."

"Gee, tanks" Boulder lapsed into his *Brooklynese* and then put the glasses on. Endicott wondered if it was a withdrawal from both the drugs and mind machine that was causing Boulder to drift between his old accent and a more dignified one – like Superman's. He shrugged it off.

Alec pulled a copy of the *Daily Planet* from his briefcase. A major story on the front page was about him. It was an exposé by Lois Lane and an interview with Police Chief Inspector Henderson. The article continued a few pages in where there was a photo of Clark Kent with Henderson.

Endicott looked up and then saw Boulder with his specs on. He did a double take and looked back at the photo of Kent, then Boulder, and then Kent again.

Out loud, he said, "Huh..."

Boulder said, "What's up, Mister E? You like my new look?"

"As a matter of fact, I do, John, I do."

There was a knock on the compartment door. Endicott was wary of opening it and hesitated answering, but then thought better of it. "Yes?"

The door slid open and revealed a tall, medium-thin, well-dressed man in a suit and tie. Alec immediately thought he resembled the actor and musician, Hoagy Carmichael. But there was something cold and ruthless in his face, perhaps even cruel, particularly regarding his mouth. A scar ran down his left cheek between the jaw-line and the corner of the eye. His dark hair fell in a comma over the right eyebrow.

The man didn't seem surprised at finding people in the compartment. He smiled and said, "Oh, my mistake." He was clearly English, with more than a hint of Scotland. "Isn't this compartment forty-three?"

Endicott returned the smile. "No, 'fraid not. It's number forty-eight, but they've neglected to replace the worn number above the door."

The man looked up above the door. "Look at that. Well, you're right of course. Sorry to disturb you gents." He stuck out a hand. "Name's Bryce. John Bryce." Endicott shook it briefly but said nothing. Boulder was immersed behind the *Washington Post*

and ignored them. While the visitor bent to shake Endicott's hand, Alec could see a woman standing behind the Englishman. She was stunning, with long, black hair. For an instant Endicott was transported back to Cody, Wyoming and the smell of Louisa's perfume. But then his momentary peace went up in flames like those in the lab accident that killed the only woman he ever loved enough to marry. With that, Endicott's smile and interest in the Englishman evaporated instantly.

The man could sense that he wasn't welcome. "Well, again, sorry for the intrusion. Have a nice journey." And then, just when Alec thought the door would close, the man stepped in and bent down. He picked up a piece of paper from the compartment floor. It was semi-charred. "Oh, is this yours?" Without waiting for Endicott to respond, the Brit looked at it and said, "Nasty. Must have been quite a fire." The warmth from the man's face disappeared, matching Endicott's, like he was probing.

But as Endicott took the piece of paper from the Brit, all he said was "Thanks." Then the man nodded and closed the door.

As cordial as the Englishman seemed, Endicott's sixth sense that told him the man deliberately intruded – as if he was looking for something. Perhaps *spying* on someone.

Alec looked at the charred piece of paper. It was a piece of his birth certificate. Just before White and Henderson were captured, Endicott had been considering the future. He'd either be successful, with the power of uranium at his disposal – or on the run. Either way, there was the strong possibility that he'd have to operate under a new name. Alec had removed his birth certificate from a filing cabinet and was considering "revisions".

But he never got that far. The document still had a chemical-burn smell from the Maxwell's Rock lab explosion. The hospital name and a few others things were still legible. But his name was not – not entirely.

All he could read was part of his first name and his almost forgotten middle name. His last name was almost completely burned away.

Alec stared at it and then smiled, once again saying, "*Huh...*"

Boulder lowered the newspaper to look at Endicott. "Mister E, what's up?"

"John, I've just had an *epiphany*."

"You want I should get you a glass of water?"

"No, no. An *epiphany* is a sudden realization of something much bigger than yourself."



Boulder looked around, but then looked back at Endicott. He said nothing.

"John, you know how the lab was destroyed. How I believe that my sister Elena died."

"Yeah, I feel real bad about that."

"Well, someone else died back there."

Boulder again said nothing, but stared.

"Boulder ... *John*. Alec Endicott -- *Alexander* Endicott **died** back there, as well."

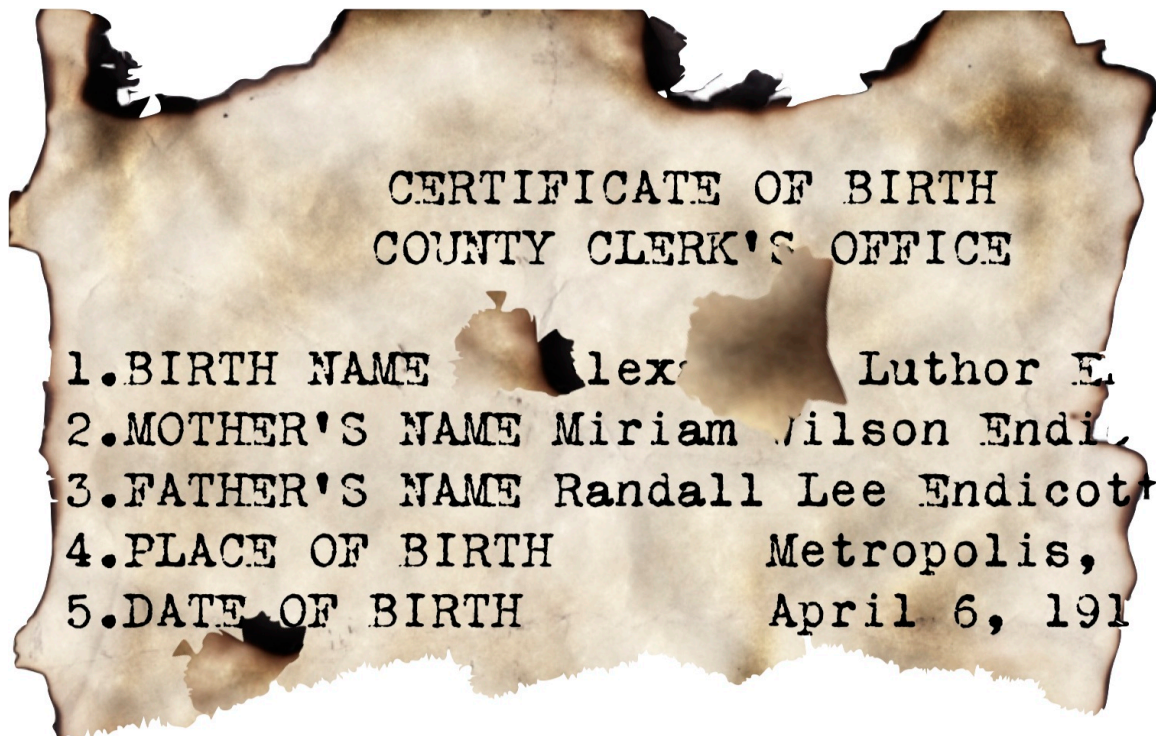
Clearly confused, Boulder said, "But you're right here, Mister E – sitting in front of me."

Alec got a little annoyed. "I tell you, Alexander Endicott is *dead*."

He removed his brown fedora and threw it on the floor. It revealed a scalp void of any hair - scarred from the Maxwell's Rock lab accident. "On that day, **this** man was born." He pointed at himself and then held out the charred birth certificate for Boulder to see. "**This** is *his* name now – **my** name - and the name I will be known as - from today forward."



And then he stared at the blistered birth certificate with his *Cheshire Cat* smile.



**SOMEWHERE IN OUTER SPACE**

The vessel had been dormant for many years, recharging its fuel cells for the long trip home. The bright yellow star provided an abundant source of solar energy to help replenish the secondary batteries needed to revitalize the interstellar drive. In due time, the ship would be ready to begin its final journey.

But then something unexpected occurred: a massive electromagnetic wave appeared, prematurely bringing the vessel out of its dormant state. Systems became powered up, as if the recharging was complete, though it was not.

Automatic monitoring devices traced the source of the energy to an area near a planet – the third one orbiting the great yellow star. Sensors additionally picked up movement – a tiny object – in fact, a *biological* entity – moving from the area of the energy wave down to the planet.

The sensors fed their data to the central computer. It almost immediately identified the signature of the entity and after an equally fast scan of its data banks, matched it with those of the inhabitants of a planet also contained in the same information repository.

The planet was classified as extinct, but its inhabitants – the race of people who lived there – were not entirely defunct. And now the sensors had detected *another* of this race.

The commander of the vessel awoke, too, and instantaneously understood all the information that its on-board computers had collected from the ship's sensing devices. The commander did so because it, too, was a computer, albeit quite a unique and mobile one. Even *humanoid* in appearance, one might say.

The only one of its kind, in fact.

Despite being at its core a computer, the commander nonetheless had its curiosity piqued. It had known about this third planet from the large yellow star but was anxious to return home with its prizes.

But now it needed to know more – and needed to know if there was an opportunity to bring home one more prize to go along with those it had collected already. It needed to know *who* this biological entity was and why its signature matched those of people it, the commander, was quite familiar with.

It would not rest until its curiosity had been satisfied...

Superman will return...  
and *The Adventures Continue* in...



... another story in the ...



**"THE SUPER-MENACE OF METROPOLIS"**

***Cast***

**George Reeves  
Noel Neill  
John Hamilton  
Jack Larson  
Robert Shayne**

**Glenn Langan.....***Alec Endicott*  
**Barbara Bel Geddes.....***Elena Endicott*  
**Joseph Forte.....***Professor Milton Adams*  
**Ralph Clanton.....***Doctor Brentwood/Reed*  
**Vera Marshe.....***Dorothy Harper*  
**Billy Gray.....***Alan Harper*  
**Richard Benedict.....***Baby Face Stevens*  
**Darryl Hickman.....***Don Daniels*  
**Wally Cox.....***Willy the Whisker*  
**Sean Connery.....***"John Bryce"*  
**John Harmon.....***Mugsy*  
**Dorothy Dandridge.....***Nurse Willingham*  
**Philippa Bevans.....***Nurse Drago*  
**Mary Wilkes.....***Nurse Gladys*  
**George Reeves.....***John "Boulder" Crane*





## POSTSCRIPT

### Lex Luthor

Superman's greatest arch-enemy, Lex Luthor, never appeared on *The Adventures of Superman*. He wasn't even *hinted* at. And that's a shame, because a face-off between George Reeves as Superman and Lex Luthor would have been splendid.

As such, *Master Mind* is my way of introducing Superman's archenemy to *The Adventures of Superman*. However, we are not treated to any direct theatrics between Luthor and The Man of Steel. That's because *Master Mind* was meant to *establish* Luthor's background (my version, at least) – it wasn't intended to showcase a face-to-face battle.

*That* historic meeting is planned, however, in a subsequent story.



### Super-menace comic book

The concept of a "super menace" and in particular a character that is very much like Superman but on the opposite side of the law, is not original. I'd like to think that my turning Boulder into a super-powered criminal is somewhat original, but the term "super-menace" and the idea of a Superman who is a bad guy, is not.

In fact, "Super-Menace" was a character back in the Silver Age Superman comics. **Superman** #137 (May, 1960) contains the terrific book-length story "The Two Faces of Superman!" It tells the tale of a replica of baby Kal-El created via an accident while the tot's spaceship was hurtling through space to Earth from the destroyed planet Krypton.

The duplicate baby, not human or alien, but just a "force manifestation", as it is called, is adopted by a *criminal* couple on Earth and grows up a villain, first as "Super-Bully" (paralleling *Superboy's* development) and finally in adulthood as "Super-Menace".

It's a classic story with a somewhat sad ending that I won't spoil here. And yes, the name "Super-Menace" was partially responsible for inspiring the title of the "episode", *The Super-Menace of Metropolis*.





### **Superman Undercover**

I once pitched a new comic book series to DC Comics called **Superman Undercover**. Well, I sent them mail (snail mail back then) with my proposal, only to be rejected unceremoniously by a form letter.

**Superman Undercover** was intended to be a monthly series or limited series about The Man of Steel going on missions, large and small, for the government or otherwise, as anyone but Superman. He would be dressed as an ordinary person, typically disguised so that no one would recognize him as The World's Greatest Superhero.

DC Comics has occasionally had stories in which Superman would appear as someone other than himself or Clark Kent. For me, these were very enjoyable, because they allow him to operate in situations that we generally do not see him in.

And of course, in **The Adventures of Superman**, Superman goes "undercover" at least twice, i.e., as a mail delivery driver in "Shot in the Dark" and as a night watchman in "Three in One". One could argue that his donning of a knight's armor in "The Last Knight" qualifies, as well.

Kirk Hastings' wonderful "[The Ghost of Chelsford](#)", a web sequel to "A Ghost for Scotland Yard", has Superman disguising himself as "Jim White" on an assignment in England. What was neat in this story, among other things, is that "Jim White" didn't have to behave as the "meek and mild" Clark Kent might have. When undercover, Superman could afford taking the risk of being exposed as his super-self, because he'd be revealing a "fake identity".

It's fun stuff and part of the reason why I had Superman disguise himself "Dirk Vanderwogg" makes an appearance in **Master Mind**.

### **Superman and other superheroes in the TV show universe**

The 1950s universe of *The Adventures of Superman* is very much like our own. It includes the United States, President Eisenhower, subways, farms, cars, comedians, singers, actors, hamburgers, flapjacks and snow globes. It has spies, the Iron Curtain, asteroids and diners. Virtually everything we have or had.

It also has Superman, Lois Lane and the rest of the crew, which we unfortunately *don't* have, in the flesh, at least.

So now the question is, does the TV Superman universe have Superman *comic books*? And if it does, are they the same as ours, e.g., like the hundreds (maybe thousands) I have in my cedar closet?

Well, *yes* and *no*.

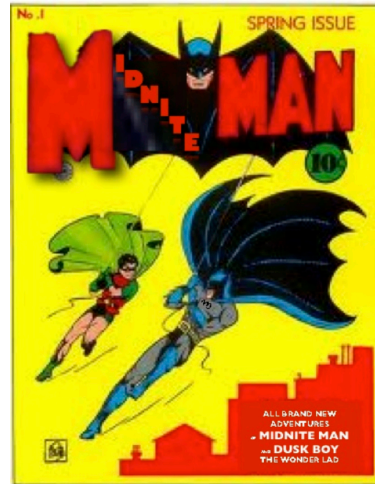
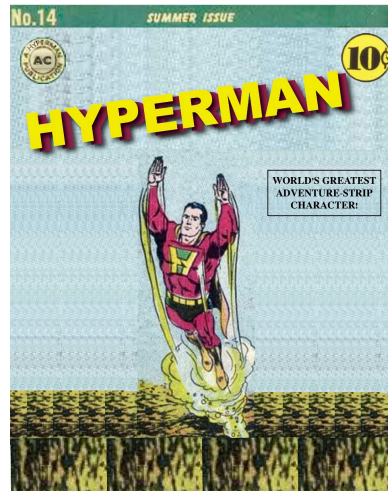
There *are* one or two episodes of *The Adventures of Superman* in which Superman and other DC comic books are shown at a newsstand - even *World's Finest*, which showcases Superman and the Dynamic Duo, *Batman and Robin*.



But clearly these comic books *can't* be the same as ours, because they couldn't possibly let on that Superman and Clark Kent are one and the same (nor that Batman and Bruce Wayne, and Robin and Dick Grayson ... you get the idea).

So, even though *The Adventures of Superman* supports the notion of DC superheroes existing comic books, I decided to take a different route. As such, when Alex Endicott was growing up, instead of reading Superman comics, he read *Hyperman* (from *American Comics* - *AC* - instead of *DC*).

And instead of *Batman and Robin* the Boy Wonder, he read about *Midnite Man* and *Dusk Boy*, the Wonder Lad.



Whereas Midnight Man and Dusk Boy are purely figments of my imagination (but not terribly original since they are, effectively, Batman and Robin), Hyperman is a “real” character from DC Comics presented in the wonderful Silver Age Superman story “The Superman from Outer Space!” (*Action Comics* Vol. 1 #265, June 1960). Hyperman’s physical appearance was identical to Superman’s (and wonderfully drawn by Curt Swan). His powers were almost identical, as was his origin story.

So, in order to avoid having Superman and Batman comics exist in the same universe as them, Hyperman, along with Midnight Man and Dusk Boy, were created. You may wonder why I cared to do this with Batman – the reason is that he’s briefly mentioned by Superman himself, as that vigilante in Gotham City.

### **Superman and Boulder**

Some episodes of *The Adventures of Superman* cry out for sequels. Kirk Hastings thought "The Stolen Costume" did, and so he wrote a sequel and then a sequel to *that*. Both sequels richly extended the story presented in the original classic episode.

And then, inspired by his work, I wrote a sequel to Kirk's sequels that was also based on another terrific first season episode, "Crime Wave".

"The Face and the Voice" was a good one for a sequel, in my view, because it ended with a character that looked and sounded like Superman. But it wouldn't have been very interesting to simply do a continuation or repeat of that story, so I mixed my yarn with concepts from other episodes, as well, most notably "The Mind Machine" and "Superman in Exile".

In addition, it was neat to have Superman and Boulder finally interact. They barely did in "The Face and the Voice". That episode didn't lend itself to having them spend much time together, plus with only a half hour (or less, with commercials), there wasn't a lot of room for the two of them to face off, so to speak.

As for *Master Mind*, its premise presented a challenge in having Superman really be Boulder and vice-versa. You see, had the story contained passages in which "Superman" (really Boulder) did something, and I referred to him as *Superman*, it would have been inaccurate and misleading on my part, to the reader.

The reverse was also true. When Superman was in jail appearing as Boulder, I couldn't refer to him as *Boulder*, or else it would have been a lie from me to you readers.

So, instead, I had to keep *my* narrative generic. However, the need was the same, which was to make the reader think, as much as possible, that the character was who I wanted you to *believe* he was – without fibbing to you. So in order to make you think Superman was Boulder and vice-versa, I enlisted the help of the characters around them, who, except for Lois Lane and perhaps Superman himself (as, er, Boulder), believed that the guy pummeling Metropolis was Superman and the guy stuck in *Cunningham Prison* was Boulder.

You still with me?

So when "Superman" appears at a news conference threatening the city, everyone *around* him refers to him as *Superman* because they're convinced that that's who he is (well, as said, good ol' Lois didn't). And at *Cunningham Prison*, everyone around "Boulder" thinks he's *Boulder*, and refer to him as such.

It's hoped that you appreciate the fact that I didn't try to trick you – all that much ;-). How well my trickery worked is another story...

### **Lex Luthor meets James Bond**

Towards the end of **Master Mind**, Alexander Endicott and Boulder are riding a train called the *Silver Phantom* from Metropolis to Florida. In fact, there was and is a train called the *Silver Meteor* that runs from New York to Florida.

The only *Silver Phantom* I'm aware of, the one that inspired what is about to be described, came from novelist Ian Fleming in his second James Bond novel, *Live and Let Die*. In it, 007 and his femme fatale, the gorgeous and mysterious Solitaire, ride that train from New York to Florida in pursuit of a villain named Mr. Big, who himself works for SMERSH, the Soviet spy organization.

Now, it can be argued that they take this journey at about the same time that Alec and Boulder take their trip – in April 1954 (that's when Fleming's novel was published). As such, for fun, Alec and 007 meet, albeit briefly. In Fleming's novel, Bond and Solitaire are traveling undercover as Mr. and Mrs. Somerset, and that guise is preserved in **Master Mind**.

In fact, Bond is instrumental in the story in that he notices a scrap of paper that ends up being a key turning point for the criminal mastermind – his rebirth as *Lex Luthor*!

It should be noted that *Superman* and James Bond never met, however there is an association of sorts between the two. The super-hero and super-agent are linked, if you will, via DC's *Showcase* comics that adapted the first James Bond movie, "Doctor No". On the cover of that comic book, not far below the Silver Age DC Comics logo featuring Superman's name we see 007 trying to thwart the evil "doctor" (*Showcase* #43, October 1962).



Also note that in **Master Mind** I took the liberty of having my all-time favorite James Bond, Sean Connery, cast as 007, even though in 1954 he was only 24 years old and still eight years away from being introduced as the British Secret Agent in, of course, "Doctor No".

### **Speaking of Bond**

Readers might wonder about the second story, "Man in the Shadows", in that it is primarily about Alexander Endicott, the man who would be re-born as Lex Luthor. The concern might be that Superman hardly appears in it. Moreover, the entire episode is told entirely from Alec's point of view.

This was done deliberately to hopefully build a solid foundation for the so-called mastermind of this saga – the "man in the shadows" who would become Superman's greatest enemy.

It was also with some degree of precedent and was partly inspired by something similar, that being Ian Fleming's fifth James Bond novel, *From Russia with Love*. This novel, arguably the best of Ian Fleming's stories about Agent 007, contains a long sequence at the beginning – perhaps one-quarter of the book – in which James Bond doesn't appear and is barely mentioned. (The sequence concerns SMERSH's plotting of an embarrassing death for Bond, one that will shame the British Secret Service and England, as well).

Yet, it firmly lays the groundwork for the rest of the novel and enriches the story as a whole. As such, to me, my invention of Lex Luthor's background, at least in terms of the Luthor in ***The Adventures of Superman***, required an entire "episode" to tell.

Plus, I thought it would be interesting to see the series regulars, Superman included, from another viewpoint.

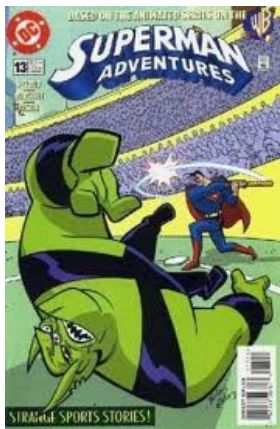
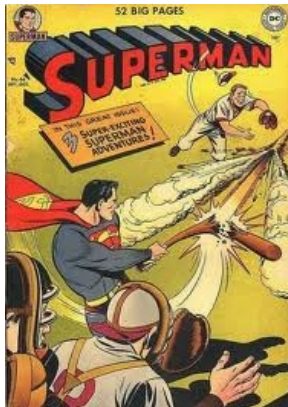


## Superman and baseball

"Truth, Justice and the American Way". What's more *American* than baseball? Yes, I know it's played in Japan, Latin America and elsewhere. But to me, Superman and baseball go together like hot dogs and mustard.

As such, it was fun to present him at a ball game, even if the outcome had nasty consequences for The Man of Steel.

Superman and the Superman Family are no strangers to baseball, as well...





## Odds and Ends

**Elena Endicott** has her origins in the Silver Age comics. Lex Luthor had a sister named *Lena*. They moved out of Smallville and reversed the spelling of their last name to "Thorul" in order to avoid the shame of being associated with their criminal son.



**"Bibbo" Bibbowski** was a supporting character introduced in Superman comics following the "reboot" by John Byrne. He was a dockworker who admired The Man of Steel and fancied him as his "pal".

One of the minor characters appearing in **Master Mind** is named *Grodd*. Aficionados of *DC Comics* know that one prominent member of *The Flash's* Rogues Gallery is a huge, powerful, intelligent and criminally-minded gorilla named Grodd. In fact, Clark Kent, in **Master Mind**, refers to Grodd as just that – a *gorilla*. (wink, wink).



I ignored the fact that in the anti-communist 1950s, **Red Star Cola** might not be a hit. ;-)

## About the Author

**BRUCE KANIN STILL LIVES IN NORTH MERRICK**, New York (on Long Island) with his wife, son, daughter and dog. By workday he is an Information Technology Business Management Architect. By night and weekends, besides being a family man, he is an aspiring novelist, singer-songwriter and explorer of sorts.

He's honored, as well, to be a part of Jim Nolt's *The Adventures Continue* (TAC) world.



Aside from *Superman and the Mob Men* and *Master Mind*, Bruce has written *Superman versus the Body Snatchers*, an "imaginary" story that brings together the world of the Silver Age Superman and the antagonists from the "Invasion of the Body Snatchers" movies; and *Superman Nine-Eleven*, a short story concerning The Man of Steel and that fateful day in September, 2001.

Bruce is also developing a sequel to *Master Mind* called *Terror from the Stars*. That story is planned to be followed by a conclusion to this trilogy of trilogies which is yet untitled. It will feature a team-up of the two protagonists from *Master Mind* and *Terror from the Stars*.

It should be noted that a teaser for *Terror from the Stars* appears at the end of *Master Mind* and will use as its inspiration the historic Silver Age comic book story in which Superman first meets the evil space villain *Brainiac* (July 1958, *Action Comics* #242, "The Super Duel in Space!").

Besides all that, Bruce is *still* wondering what else is coming next...