

# **A SUPERMAN & PERRY MASON ADVENTURE**

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**By Bruce Kanin  
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9:00 **8 11 12** ADVENTURES OF SUPERMAN — Adventure

"Murder in Malibu". This special two-part story begins on ADVENTURES OF SUPERMAN and concludes next week on PERRY MASON.

In Part 1, Clark Kent is arrested for the murder of a Los Angeles mobster. The evidence against the Daily Planet reporter is overwhelming, but how can *Superman* be sent to the gas chamber?

And who will rescue The Man of Steel if he *himself* is in jail?

From a story by Bruce Kanin. Clark Kent / Superman: George Reeves. Inspector Henderson: Robert Shayne.



Robert Shayne and George Reeves

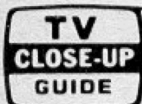
#### Guest Cast

Luigi Dinelli ..... Anthony Caruso  
Lt. Tragg ..... Ray Collins  
Finnegan ..... John Kellogg  
Baxter ..... Frank Richards

Smathers ..... Glenn Corbett  
Banner ..... Jackie Coogan  
Maddie Baker ..... Greta Thyssen

TV GUIDE

A-9



9:00 **8 11 12** **PERRY MASON — Crime Drama**

"The Case of the Super-Secretive Reporter". This special two-part story began on ADVENTURES OF SUPERMAN and concludes this week on PERRY MASON.

In Part 1, Clark Kent was arrested for the murder of a Los Angeles mobster. In Part 2, the conclusion, star attorney Perry Mason is enlisted to defend the Daily Planet reporter.

But with the evidence against Kent seeming to be overwhelming, will Mason go down to defeat, or will he need Superman to save the day?

From a story by Bruce Kanin. Perry Mason: Raymond Burr. Della Street: Barbara Hale. Paul Drake: William Hopper, Jr. Hamilton Burger: William Talman. Lt. Tragg: Ray Collins.

#### Guest Cast

Clark Kent / Superman ..... George Reeves  
Inspector Henderson ..... Robert Shayne



**Raymond Burr and George Reeves**

Perry White .....	John Hamilton
Baxter .....	Frank Richards
Smathers .....	Glenn Corbett
Banner .....	Jackie Coogan
Maddie Baker .....	Greta Thyssen

TV GUIDE

A-9

## INTRODUCTION



**BACK IN THE FIRST HALF OF THE 1950s**, just before the television series *The Adventures of Superman* moved from black & white to color, CBS television produced what is termed a “backdoor pilot” for a new lawyer series called *Perry Mason*. The pilot occurred in two parts, with the first part being a special hour-long broadcast of *The Adventures of Superman* (normally presented as half-hour episodes) and the second being an hour-long pilot for *Perry Mason*.

Unfortunately, the people behind *Perry Mason* decided to scrap their pilot after realizing that the intrepid lawyer and his stories should be wholly based on science, not science fiction and fantasy, which is what *The Adventures of Superman* involved. This also meant scrapping the backdoor pilot – the special hour-long episode of *The Adventures of Superman*.

Of course, none of the above actually happened.

No, it didn't, but it *is* a “fun” way of imagining how these two beloved television series could be linked with one another. In fact, the two shows barely overlapped from a time period standpoint. *The Adventures of Superman* began in 1952 and ended its sixth season in 1958. *Perry Mason* began in 1957 and ended its ninth season in 1966.

Also noteworthy is that *The Adventures of Superman* produced black & white episodes in its first two seasons; the remaining four years were produced in color (although back then, few people had color TVs, so they probably didn't know that). *Perry Mason* was, with one exception, shot in black & white for its entire run. The lone exception was its 1966 color episode “The Case of the Twice Told Twist” from the final season of that series.

That said, the tale presented herein takes place during the B&W era of *The Adventures of Superman*. In fact, it occurs sometime between the end of the first season and beginning of the second, which began in 1953. As for *Perry Mason*,

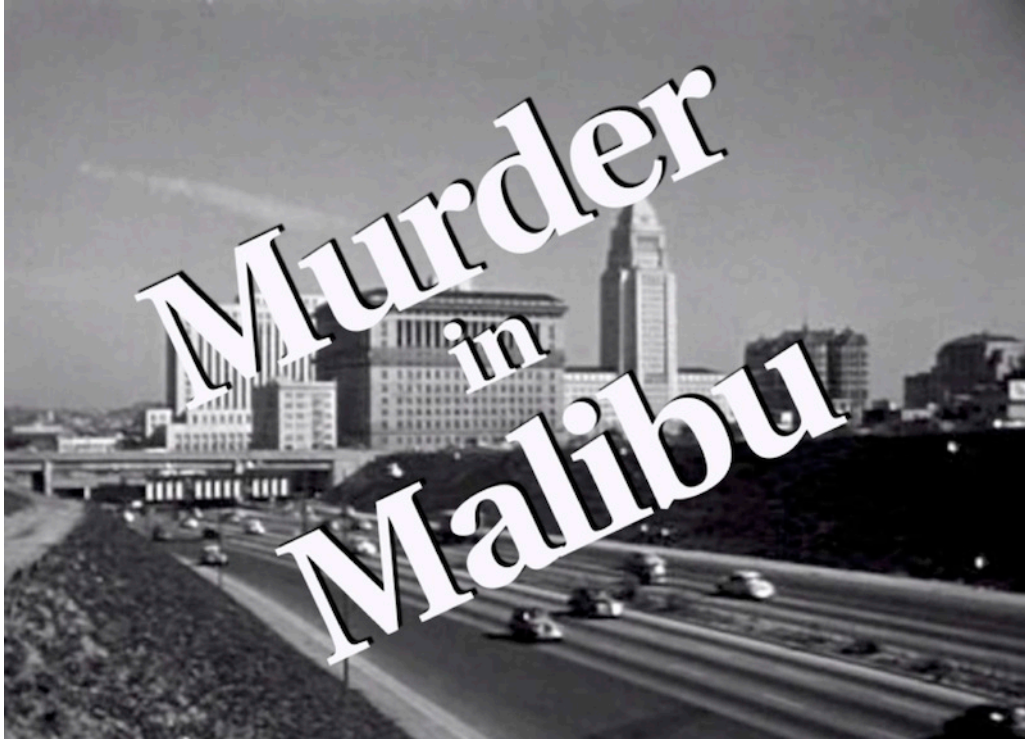
since it didn't premier until 1957, we just have to imagine, as mentioned above, that there really *was* a pilot created back then that was scrapped, and its filmed reels lost.

What a shame, but at least this story remains. ☺

## Acknowledgements

To the men and women that made *The Adventures of Superman* and *Perry Mason*, two beloved series that continue live on in the hearts and minds of a great many fans.

**THE ADVENTURES OF SUPERMAN: "Murder in Malibu"**



## PROLOGUE



**THERE'S A COMMON MISCONCEPTION** that the state of Kansas is devoid of forests. Perhaps what lends to that idea is that this state, smack in the middle of America's Great Plains, is flat and without mountains. That much is true. Its highest point is Mount Sunflower – the “peak” that gives Kansas its nickname – which hugs the state line with Colorado and checks in at a mere four thousand feet and change. Considering that Kansas itself is a mere two thousand feet or so above sea level, the notion that mountains aren't in Kansas is a reasonable one.

But forests? The Sunflower State has a few million acres of them, with one in particular being outside of Smallville, a medium-size town in the middle of Kansas. It was there that teens Clark Kent and Pete Ross would often walk with their dogs, Shelby, a golden retriever, and Abigail, an Eskland, respectively.

Today, a crisp mid-October afternoon, was no different. The two friends and their dogs were out amongst the bright orange hickory trees, trying to get a walk in before a cold front marched through their neck of the woods, so to speak. The teens chatted about their favorite subjects: college sports, high school classes, politics, and ... *girls*.

For Clark, his friend Pete was someone he felt close to, like the brother he didn't have. However, as close as they had become, there was one thing that Clark could not share. His *secret*. Other than Clark himself, there were only two people in all of Smallville ... and Kansas ... and, well, perhaps the entire world ... that knew how “special” Clark was.

Clark himself only figured it out over the past few years. The gradual realization set in that he was “different” from other kids his age. He could run awfully fast at times ... faster than anyone had a right to. One time he kept pace with an eastbound

Union Pacific rail locomotive and its trail of box- and flatcars speeding towards Kansas City. Objects that normal people couldn't budge seemed light as balsa wood to Clark ... such as when Pa's tractor was once out of control and about to overtake Shelby.

Then there was the time that Clark and his friends were playing baseball at school. Clark himself had hit a deep home run into bushes beyond the schoolyard. It was their only ball, so they all went looking for it.

The search went on for nearly a half-hour before Clark himself had found it – behind a rock. He didn't see it immediately, though. As he had later told his foster mom, "all I had to do was look around and there it was behind a rock. I saw right *through* the rock."



Clark's foster parents then realized that they could no longer hold back telling him about his origins – that he had come to them as a baby aboard a rocket – and that these strange powers and abilities were likely the result of him being from "somewhere else" – probably from somewhere in outer space, not Earth. It was hard for Clark to accept that, but since that time, with the guidance of his Ma and Pa, he had learned to use his powers discretely and to hide the fact that he had them, lest too much attention be drawn to him and the Kents, disrupting their lives.

Pa Kent drove it home to Clark: "Son, one day you're going to do amazing things for the world. Your Ma and I feel it in our bones..."



"...Look at all you can do, and think of everything you'll be *able* to do to help people. But once you show people your incredible abilities, they'll want a piece of you, from the government to everyday folks. While you're gonna be a – a *superman* – you're still gonna be just a man, too. And a man needs his privacy..."

"...Plus you'll need to protect your loved ones from nasty people that you might cross, Clark. So you're gonna have to keep your powers a secret - at least, you, Clark Kent, will have to keep 'em a secret. I don't know how you're gonna do that, but

people can't know that the face of this super-powerful man is the face of you, Clark Kent."

So, even though Clark and Pete were close friends, Clark kept his unique abilities to himself. It was a source of anxiety at times, though, because he longed to use them openly to help people. As such, Clark found it frustrating to read newspapers or listen to the radio when there'd be reports of natural disasters or crimes in which he might have made a difference.

Such opportunities to "help" were rare, in Smallville, but as Clark and Pete walked through the forest, one was about to arise. As the pair of teens chatted, Clark's super-sensitive hearing detected a "click". He spun around, and at the far edge of the forest saw a man dressed like a hunter aiming his rifle into the woods. Clark then turned his head and followed the direction of the rifle to its target: a majestic reindeer with antlers in full display that was munching on whatever presented itself as food on the floor of the forest.

Clark had been taught by his parents to respect life, and that in turn helped him nurture an instinct to protect the lives of others, human or animal. This, in turn, led him to the conclusion that he himself could never kill, no matter what the circumstances.

As such, without hesitation, Clark ran to what he perceived to be the midpoint between the man and the deer. Clark stood there, facing the hunter in the distance, and with a hand up, yelled, "No!"

But it was too late – the hunter had pulled the trigger – the bullet was on its way toward the deer – and Clark. Pete, seeing this, called out "*Clark!*" but then watched in horror – and then utter amazement - when Clark remained standing despite the bullet clearly hitting his chest.

Pete ran over to his friend and stood there examining Clark. "Are you all right? You're not hurt?" But Clark was focused on the hunter, who had come running through the forest towards the boys. He stopped about ten yards in front of the boys and said nothing. Then he reloaded his rifle, aimed it, and fired it at Clark. He repeated that three times, and each time the bullet would hit Clark and bounce off.

***"Bang!"***  
***"Bang!"***  
***"Bang!"***

Clark thought ... *what did I do? My secret! Now this man knows it ... and Pete, too!*

***"Bang!"***  
***"Bang!"***  
***"Bang!"***

He opened his eyes. The forest had vanished along with the hunter and Pete Ross. The cool, dry autumn of October was replaced by stifling heat and humidity. No longer dressed in a light coat, t-shirt, jeans and sneakers, Clark was lying in his pajamas. *Adult* pajamas. He turned and saw his familiar eyeglasses on the night table next to his hotel room bed. He had awoken from yet another dream. Clark didn't need sleep – his super-metabolism didn't require it. But his *mind* required a rest – and it would often provide him with vivid dreams and occasional nightmares.

Though the forest outside of Smallville had been replaced by Clark's room at the *Mark Stevens* hotel and he was no longer a teenager, one thing remained constant: the banging. It came from the door to his room.

The knocking at the door was replaced by calls of "*Kent!* Are you there?" followed by "*Clark!?*" It was Henderson. Clark quickly got out of bed, donned his glasses, put on the bathrobe lying on a nearby hassock, got into his slippers, and made his way to the door, opening it halfway.

"Bill? What is it?"

Inspector William J. Henderson of the Metropolis Police, also in a bathrobe covering his pajamas – and in slippers – looked down and then back at Clark, sheepishly. "I'm sorry, Clark."

Clark offered half a smile. "Well, you *should* be, Bill." He glanced back at the clock sitting on a night table in the room and then again at Henderson. "It's just past three o'clock in the morning."

Henderson said nothing, but then moved aside just a little. From behind him stepped a man Clark had only met recently, Lt. Tragg of the Los Angeles Police – head of the Homicide division. Now Tragg faced Clark, and said, "Clark Kent. You're under arrest."

Clark, shocked, said, "Under arrest? For *what*, Tragg?"

Henderson, now behind Tragg but a few inches taller than the L.A. cop and making sure he was still seen, said, "Now Clark, don't say anything until we get you a lawyer."

"I don't *need* a lawyer! What's this about, Lt. Tragg?"

Tragg continued, "Just put your clothes on, Kent. You need to come down to the station."

"First tell me *why* I'm under arrest!"

“OK, Kent. I’ll tell you.” Tragg paused. “You’re being arrested for the murder of Luigi Dinelli.”

## ACT 1

**INSPECTOR BILL HENDERSON** begged Lt. Arthur Tragg to allow him to accompany his friend down to the precinct, but the L.A. cop cited regulations and politely refused. So instead, the Inspector found a hotel pay phone and made an urgent collect call to Kent's boss, Perry White, at his home. Henderson fully expected an earful of references to Julius Caesar and his ghost as soon as he relayed the bad news about White's star reporter.

Meanwhile, Clark Kent had been allowed to dress before being led out of his hotel room by Tragg along with a uniformed cop. Before long, the reporter was in the back of a squad car heading towards police headquarters. Kent, in handcuffs, sat next to Tragg while the officer drove.



The *Mark Stevens* hotel was typically about a half hour's drive in traffic from the city jail, but at this time of night, it was only ten minutes away. Kent stared out the window for the entire trip, not uttering a word. While his mind began to race, Clark barely noticed the Los Angeles City Hall in the distance, which looked uncannily like his own *Metropolis Daily Planet* building.

*Even during the short drive, Kent's extraordinary mind was able to super-speed through the events of the past twenty-four hours...*

Clark Kent and Inspector William J. Henderson had been called to Los Angeles as witnesses for the murder trial of mobster Luigi Dinelli. In actuality, while Henderson was a witness, Kent was not. It was Henderson and *Superman* that saw Luigi Dinelli gun down his own brother, Frank, on the set of *National Studios* months earlier. However, Kent asked that he substitute for Superman as a sort of surrogate until the actual trial began, in order that The Man of Steel himself remain available for his rather well-known duties in Metropolis and elsewhere.

Los Angeles County District Attorney Hamilton Burger, prosecuting the Luigi Dinelli case, reluctantly agreed to Kent as a substitute for Superman and arranged a meeting with Henderson and Kent. However, when the pair from Metropolis showed up at the L.A. County Courthouse in late afternoon on a hot and steamy August day, they instead found themselves in a courthouse meeting room with the head of Homicide, Lt. Arthur Tragg.

After an exchange of pleasantries and the delivery of three cups of coffee by one of the staff secretaries, Tragg sat down across from the Metropolis duo. The Homicide chief began, "Welcome to Los Angeles, gentlemen. So I guess both of you are wondering why you're meeting with *me* and not D.A. Burger."



Henderson answered, "You've read my mind, Tragg. I'm a little surprised to be meeting with Homicide, as well. I'd have thought your role in all of this wouldn't come until the trial."

"You have a point, Inspector."

"Call me Bill, Tragg. After all, we're cut from the same cloth." Henderson grinned. Tragg returned the grin but then looked at Clark. "So, Kent, I understand you're here representing the other witness."

Clark nodded. "That's right".

"Well, as much as I had hoped to *meet* this other witness – and we all know who that is..." Tragg offered a half-sigh, and continued, "There may be no need for him to be here, after all." He added, "Or either of you."

Both Henderson and Clark were clearly taken aback, but the Inspector responded first. "What do you mean?"

Kent added, "There's still going to be a trial, Lt. Tragg, isn't there?"

Tragg looked at both men. "I'm afraid I don't know. That's the reason why D.A. Burger isn't here right now."

Henderson now sounded annoyed. "You mean to tell me that Kent and I took a six-hour flight here for nothing? What the devil is going on, Tragg?"

Tragg waved his hands to try and calm his guests. "Now you two, take it easy. I'll explain it." He then got up and fully closed the door to the conference room they were in before sitting down again.

"You of course remember the circumstances of Frank Dinelli's death."

Clark, thinking back to the event, nodded, "Yes, of course we do."



Henderson shot a look at Clark: "You weren't even *there*, Kent. *Superman* was."

Clark adjusted his glasses, saying, "Oh, I know, Bill. I meant *Superman* was there and he relayed everything to *me*, naturally."

Henderson, still looking at Clark, said, "Naturally". He turned back to the lieutenant. "OK, Tragg. Go on."

"Frank Dinelli, who himself had murdered one of the studio's actors reportedly as ordered by his brother, was chased by Superman and had fallen from the studio set rafters, becoming seriously injured, maybe even fatally so."

Henderson, impatient, said, "We know that."

"Well then you also know that Luigi Dinelli shot his brother because Frank was spilling the beans about Luigi being the mastermind of the actor's murder."



Kent said, "Luigi claimed he was doing his brother Frank a favor by killing him."

Henderson added, "That's right. He said he was putting Frank out of his misery, given that he was dying already. Of course, we know that Dinelli's claim was nonsense and that he was trying to silence Frank from fingering Luigi himself as being the brains behind the other murder."

"And, gentlemen", said Tragg, "that gets me to the heart of the matter. You see, to this day, Luigi Dinelli has stuck to his claim that he was distraught at seeing Frank in pain, dying, and that shooting his brother was a kind of ... mercy killing."

Henderson smiled just a little, "Which we all know is nonsense, Tragg."

Kent nodded in agreement, as Tragg answered, "*You* know that. And *I* know that. Even D.A. Burger knows that."

"So what's the problem, lieutenant?" asked Kent.

Tragg looked again at both men. “The problem is our illustrious attorney general”.

The men from Metropolis said nothing, letting Tragg continue.

“You see, our A.G. is running for higher office.”

Kent said, “Yes, one of my colleagues even wrote an article in the *Daily Planet* about that.”

Tragg continued, “That’s right, Kent. His political aspirations are well known. Anyway, the A.G. has taken an interest in the Luigi Dinelli situation. You know, Dinelli has a lot of high-powered lawyers that have delayed this trial for months.”

Henderson said, “If not for them, the trial might’ve been over. I’d bet anything that Dinelli would be on Death Row by now.”

Tragg nodded in agreement. “Those lawyers of his make so much money, it makes me wonder if I picked the wrong profession.”

Henderson smiled, “Except Dinelli’s attorneys are pretty crooked. Anyway, from what I hear Tragg, you’re in the right job. Besides, I can’t picture you as a lawyer.”

“Thanks, Bill. I don’t know whether to take that as a compliment or an insult.” Tragg took a sip of coffee and continued. “Apparently the A.G. and Dinelli have been having a series of powwows over the last few months.”

Kent whistled. “That sounds pretty odd, don’t you think, lieutenant?”

“Well maybe”, Tragg said, “But the A.G. has the right to talk with virtually anyone, if you think about it. In any event, they appear to be negotiating a deal.”

Henderson became irate. “A *deal*? Doesn’t the A.G. know that Dinelli is a murderer? He not only killed his brother – with two witnesses, mind you – but he’s rumored to have arranged for the murders of countless others!”

Kent added, emphatically, “Not to mention embezzling, blackmailing, kidnapping and more. It’s all in the series of articles I wrote, lieutenant.”

Tragg said, “I know, Kent. I read them. They were quite good and the basis for that ‘Czar of the Underworld’ film that brought you two out to Hollywood awhile back.”

“So, Tragg”, Henderson said sarcastically, “What kind of terrific deal have they made with each other?”

“Well, there’s no deal yet, Bill, but Burger tells me that the A.G. would reduce the charges against Dinelli if—”

Henderson stood up and put both palms on the table, “*Reduce* the charges? To *what*? Jaywalking?” He turned to Clark. “Did you hear that, Kent?” Then he turned and pointed a finger at Tragg. “What kind of Mickey Mouse operation are you, Burger and the A.G. running out here? Why, if this was Metropolis, Dinelli would already have gotten the *chair*!”

Tragg once again put his hands out, trying to calm Henderson and Clark Kent. He waited until the Metropolis cop sat down before continuing. “Now listen, Bill. I don’t like this any more than you do. In fact, that’s the main reason why I wanted you and Kent to fly out here, anyway, even if there turns out to *be* no trial.”

Henderson and Kent said nothing as Tragg went on.

“You see, I want you to work with Burger to try and convince the A.G. of his folly.”

Henderson spoke. “That’s fine, Tragg, but you haven’t told us what this so-called deal is about, other than the possibility of Dinelli getting off all but scot-free.”

Tragg said, “In exchange for the charges being reduced – Dinelli is going to open up on dozens of mob bosses across North America.”

Henderson and Clark looked at each other with eyebrows raised, and then back at the L.A. cop. Henderson said, “Go on.”

Tragg said, “According to what Burger told me, the A.G. may be on the receiving end of some pretty juicy information that could put several big bosses behind bars, including members of the powerful Corleone family back east.”

Henderson, having calmed down, said, “That part is all well and good, Tragg, but Dinelli’s a murderer, first and foremost. Getting the goods on these other mob men would be a huge prize, for sure – heck, they’re murderers, too – but to do that in exchange for letting a nasty killer like Dinelli avoid the gas chamber? I don’t know. Doesn’t seem right.”



Kent looked at his friend. “I think that’s why Tragg brought us here, Bill.”

“That’s right, Kent”. Tragg was clearly pleased that Clark got the point of their visit. “As I said, I don’t like this any more than you two do. Heck, I think Dinelli deserves to be six feet under, as well.”

Clark Kent’s reporter’s instincts then kicked into high gear and he leaned over the desk. “Lieutenant. Any chance I could get to interview Dinelli? It’d be a terrific scoop.”

Tragg shook his head. "Not a chance. Dinelli lives in a fortress surrounded by the A.G.'s men."

Clark replied, "What do you mean – a fortress? I thought he was in the city jail. And before that, he lived in an apartment not far from here."

Henderson looked at Clark as if to say, *how did you know about Dinelli's apartment?* but then thought ahead to what the response would be. *Superman.*

"Dinelli *was* in jail", Tragg answered, "until he and the A.G. began their negotiations. After Dinelli began hinting at a few mob secrets that were confirmed by the FBI, he demanded that for him to continue being an informant, the remaining meetings would have to be in his home." Tragg shook his head, seemingly in disgust. "And of course, the A.G. gave in. Luigi's got a pretty neat place in the hills overlooking Malibu." Tragg shrugged again. "All bought with mobster's money."

Henderson jumped in. "But why'd you call it a fortress, Tragg?"

"Well, you should see the place." Tragg's eyebrows went up. "Besides the house with a fantastic view of the coast and the city, he's got only one relatively easy way in and out, up and down the hill it sits on".

Henderson took his handkerchief out and wiped his forehead. "I'll tell you what, Tragg." He then wiped his neck with the cloth and continued. "It's pretty hot in this foxhole of yours. Kent and I haven't had something decent to eat all day. What say the three of us continue the conversation over dinner?"

Tragg smiled. "You know, Bill? I like your way of thinking. Plus I can charge it to my expense account."

Kent intervened. "The *Planet* will pick up the tab, lieutenant." Then he turned to Henderson. "Say, Bill. How about that place with the French dip sandwiches?"

Henderson looked at Clark. "You mean the bar & grille we ate at last time we were here?"

Tragg jumped in. "You must mean *Clay's*. A few of us go there from time to time."

There was a knock at the door, and the same secretary that had brought the coffee opened it. "Excuse me, lieutenant, but D.A. Burger wants to see you."

Tragg nodded at the woman, put up a "one minute" finger and the secretary left, closing the door. He turned to his guests. "You two go on ahead. I'll meet you there. I'm pretty hungry myself. Maybe I'll even get the D.A. to join us, too."

The three men stood and Henderson responded with a smile. "Sounds like a plan."

*Clark's police car sat for a long stretch at an intersection. The reporter barely noticed as a motorcade passed through in front of them. Governor? President? Hollywood star? Clark didn't care. He continued to trace recent events that would help him figure out why he was headed to jail, under arrest for murder.*

Clay's Bar & Grill was located in the lower level of one of Los Angeles's big office buildings that towered over its downtown. At the end of the day, office workers began trickling in, whether to relieve the stress of a long workday with a beer or a gin & tonic, or reward themselves with one of Clay's appetizers and main dishes ... or both.

Clark Kent and Bill Henderson sat in a semi-booth towards the rear of the restaurant. Henderson deliberately took the bench seat so that he could nonchalantly gaze outwards at a good part of the restaurant.

The cop sat and looked at his dining companion, sitting on a chair facing the inner part of the booth. "It's an old habit, Kent." He smiled. "Always have your back to the wall so you can watch whoever or whatever might be coming toward you."

"You learned that in the Army, didn't you, Bill?"

"That's right. Guess I must've told you about it once. It came in handy as a beat cop a few times when some characters back in Metropolis were stalking me. Took the advantage of surprise away from them."

"Guess I'll have to remember that. Now, shall we order, or wait for Tragg?"

Henderson rubbed his hands together. "Let's compromise. How about some appetizers?"

Soon after ordering, Kent asked Henderson. "So, Bill. What do you make of the Dinelli situation? Seems pretty outrageous that the attorney general stepped in to make a deal."

"It does, doesn't it?" Henderson paused. "Still, forgetting the A.G.'s political ambitions, getting the goods on a dozen or so crime families would be a big boon to law enforcement."

"You're not telling me you agree with Dinelli getting to skip the gas chamber?"

"No, Clark. But think about the number of lives that may be saved by putting these other hoods behind bars."

"Maybe, but other men will only take their places."

Henderson smiled. "Maybe one day a *woman* will."

Clark grinned. "I hope not. And I can't even imagine that. Although—"

"Excuse me." It was the maître d. He looked at both men. "Is one of you a Mister Henderson?"

"I am."

"You have a call in the lobby phone booth." The man pointed. "This way, Mr. Henderson."

The Metropolis inspector stood and slid out from the booth, looking at Clark. "Must be Tragg. I'm famished - maybe he'll tell us to order the rest of the meal without him."

Clark answered, "I hope not. I want to hear more from him about Dinelli."

Henderson walked off to the lobby. Meanwhile, a bread bowl came and Clark grabbed a roll. As he buttered it, the reporter heard a voice behind him. "Well, well. Look who's a few thousand miles away from home."

Clark didn't even have to turn around to recognize the voice. "You're pretty far from home yourself, Mad Dog."

Jim "Mad Dog" Finnegan, two-bit thug from Metropolis and other locales on the east coast, sat down in the booth, facing Clark. "You dinin' all by yourself, Kent?"

"No, and any minute now my friend will be returning, so don't get too comfortable."

The thug had a toothpick dangling from his lips. "So, what are you doing way out here, Kent? Some big story?"

"I'd tell you, Mad Dog, but I'm not feeling very chatty today."

"Lemme see." Finnigan pulled the toothpick out and pointed it at Clark. "I think I read something in your own paper. Something about you and a copper coming here for a trial."

Clark said nothing as he tore off a part of the roll and stuffed it in his mouth.

Finnigan continued. "Yeah, I remember now. Luigi Dinelli's trial. You and that Inspector Henderson are witnesses."

Again, Clark said nothing.

"Or maybe it wasn't you, it was *Superman* that was a witness. Yeah, that was it." Finnegan threw his toothpick away and glanced towards the lobby. Clark noticed.

"Waiting for someone, Mad Dog?" As Clark said the words, the sixth sense of trouble made him tense up. He made a move to leave, but Finnegan grabbed Clark's arm that had been resting on the table.

"Going somewhere, Kent? We was just havin' a nice conversation." He held Clark's arm – it was a message to "stay put".



But Clark simply gripped Finnegan's hand and effortlessly removed it. As he stood up, so did Finnegan, who moved to block Clark's path.

The thug's leisurely look was replaced by one that meant business. "Listen, Kent. We're not finished."

Clark looked Finnegan in the eyes. "I say we *are*, Finnegan". Then he stepped on the hood's left foot, causing him to cry out in pain. As Clark moved past him, the wounded thug made one last attempt to corral the reporter by grabbing his shoulders from behind. Clark then easily grabbed each of Finnegan's hands with his own, and squeezed them with an audible "crunch" while at the same time stepping on the hood's other, uninjured foot.

Finnegan tumbled to the floor, what with all four appendages in mind-numbing pain. Clark looked at a horrified couple staring from a nearby table and said, "Oh, er, my friend and I always argue over who's going to pay the bill. Tonight -- he lost." He straightened his tie and quickly left the scene.

Once in the lobby, Clark quickly spotted a row of four phone booths. They were situated just beyond a coatroom guarded by a pretty woman with a tray of cigarette boxes suspended around her waist. When Clark's x-ray vision told him that no one was in any of the phone booths, he turned to the woman.

She saw he was looking at her and proudly displayed her products. "Hi. Cigarette, mister?"

The reporter asked urgently, "No, Miss, sorry. Look - there was a man – a friend of mine – called to the phone. Did you see anyone?"



“Well, let’s see.” She looked up at the ceiling and then back at Clark. “Yes, there was a man. Rather tall. I remember - Benny – that’s our maître d – walked him over to the first booth. Then he went inside but then another man came by and spoke to him.”

“Oh? Did you see what he looked like?”

“He was shorter. Wearing a hat and suit.” She added, “Oh, he had a raincoat over his arm.”

*That doesn’t sound good*, thought Kent. Now he put more concern into his voice. “Well, neither of them is here now. Did you see where they went?”

“Oh dear. Well... yes, they went out the rear entrance.” She pointed. “I think—”

Clark didn’t wait for her to finish. He ran out the short corridor that ended in a door with an “exit” sign over it. He was already scanning beyond it with his x-ray vision. The reporter opened the door and found himself in an alley leading to the busy street where the building’s main entrance was.

There was no sign of Henderson. Clark ran out of the alley to the sidewalk next to the busy street. The sun had long since vanished to the west. Cars and neon signs lit up the downtown neighborhood. At any other time, it would be a lively setting, but for Clark Kent, it was distressing, for the hustle and bustle made it that much more difficult to figure out what happened to his friend.



Clark walked back into the alleyway, considering his next move, when he heard, "Hey mister! I was trying to tell you!" It was the coat check woman, this time without her cigarette tray, shouting and waving to him from just outside the rear entrance. She moved beyond the entrance and into the alley, hands on hips. Clark walked hastily over to her. She lowered her voice. "I was tryin' to tell ya, mister. I overheard the short guy say something to your friend."

Clark put his hands on her shoulders. "Yes? What was it?"

"He said something about takin' a trip."

"A trip? Did he say where?"

"I think he said down to the harbor. But I couldn't hear the rest."

Clark gave the woman an affectionate pat on her arms with his hands that were already holding her. "Thank you!" Then, still holding her shoulders, he spun her around. "Now be a good little girl and go back inside." With one hand he patted her back to usher the woman towards the restaurant while with the other hand, Clark

opened the rear entrance door. As gently but as forcibly as he could, Clark pushed her through the door and then pulled the handle to close it tight.

Then he spun around and scanned both ways down the alley while tugging on his tie before removing it. In barely a moment he had exchanged his “Clark Kent clothes” for a uniform seen more often in Metropolis than Los Angeles. Then, he took a running jump up, up and away into the air.

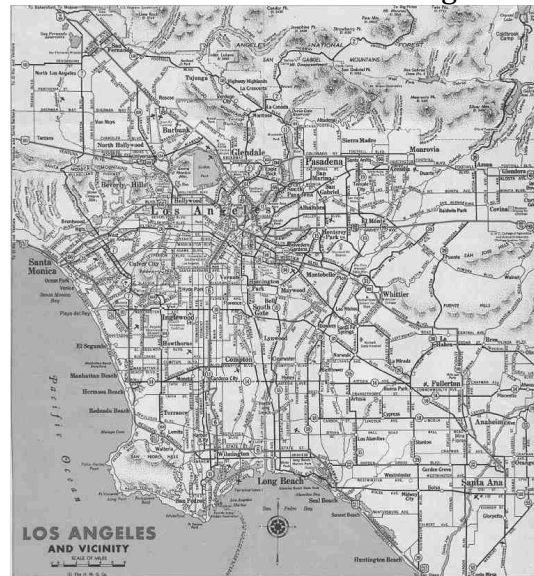


As he leaped, the coat check woman came back out the rear door, yelling, “You want I should call the pol—”. She stopped in disbelief, gazing at the silhouette of what appeared to be a man flying over and above the blaring downtown Los Angeles lights. All she could say was, “Holy...”

Superman soared over the streets of Los Angeles, a place he had visited before. The last time was during the “Czar of the Underworld” filming.

The Man of Steel had memorized a map of Southern California awhile back along with its growing system of freeways, boulevards, avenues, aqueducts and more.

The harbor, by Long Beach, was well south of downtown. It would’ve taken Superman moments to reach it, but he wanted to carefully scan any cars going in that direction for signs of Bill Henderson.



However, it was a daunting task, even for someone as amazing as Superman. Los Angeles was full of cars as far as the eye could see. Finding a needle in a haystack would be a cinch for his x-ray eyes, but finding a man in thousands of moving cars was a different matter.



Before long Superman had made it to the harbor front. He hovered silently several hundred feet above the streets and piers along the waterway, scanning the terrain for any signs of life. Several stretches were busy with longshoremen loading cargo ships headed into the Pacific. Superman figured that if Henderson was kidnapped, he wasn't being taken to a busy part of the harbor.

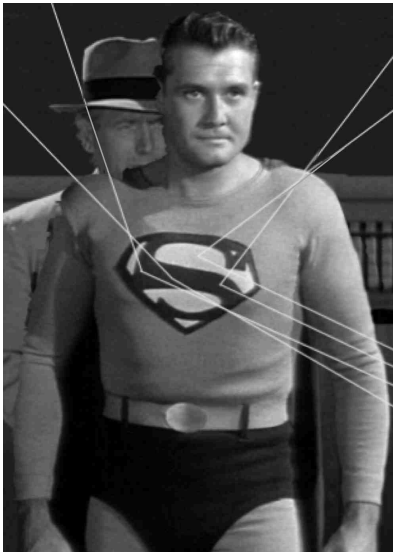
No, he'd be going to a secluded area, which is where The Man of Steel focused his attention. Eventually he spotted a sedan pull to a stop at the end of a deserted street that led to a pier jutting out into the harbor. Still hovering high above the scene, Superman peered inside the car with his x-ray vision. Despite a gun being pointed at Henderson, Superman was relieved to have found him.

The man with the gun was in the backseat while Henderson had been the driver. Superman held off intervening, for as quick as he was, he did not want to risk a bullet being fired at close range, striking down his friend. So he continued to scan the car's interior, watching as Henderson obediently handed the car keys behind him to the man with the gun, and then exiting the car as ordered.

Before long both men were outside the car, with the gunman trailing Henderson onto the pier and to its edge. They stopped when there was no more real estate. Henderson stood with his back to the edge of the pier – and the water – while the other man trained his gun on the Metropolis cop.

Superman, observing from above, heard Henderson say, somewhat defiantly, "You know, you still haven't told me what this is all about."

The gunman said, “*Shaddap* and say your prayers, copper.” He then took aim at Henderson’s heart, only a couple of yards away, and fired. But as he fired, the gunman blinked for a split-second, and when his eyes opened, someone else was standing in front of Inspector Henderson.



Superman stood there with a look that combined disinterest with impatience. The thug fired again and then again as he emptied his gun in frustration. Each bullet ricocheted off the “S” emblem and into space before falling onto the pier or into the nearby water. Then, like so many others that had come before, the thug threw his gun at the Metropolis Marvel, only to have it “thump” off of his chest and clatter onto the wooden pier.

It was then that the gunman spun around and took off, running back down the pier and towards his car. Superman quickly glanced behind him. “You all right, Inspector?”

“Don’t worry about me, Superman – go get *him*!” Henderson pointed to the crook, who had just reached and entered his car.

Superman nodded with a slight grin. “If you *insist*, Inspector.” He then leaped like no broad jumper had ever done so before and landed alongside the driver’s door of the thug’s car. He tapped on the window and beckoned the man to emerge. When the crook tried to engage the ignition, Superman grabbed the door and ripped it off its hinges, tossing it away. Then he reached inside and pulled the man out, saying, “Going somewhere?”

The man said nothing. Superman then seized him around his waist and did another broad jump back to where Henderson was still standing. When he was deposited on the pier, The Man of Steel glared at the thug, “Who sent you? Why were you trying to kill Henderson?”

The Inspector smiled, “That’s what I’ve been asking Baxter for the past half hour, Superman.”

*"Baxter, Inspector?"*

"Brad Baxter. Two-bit thug from Metropolis. Used to work for another thug named 'Mad Dog' Finnigan."

Superman remained silent about his encounter with Finnigan.

Baxter's eyes were wide and he was trembling. Henderson added, "I don't know why he's so nervous, Superman. He's seen you in action before."

"Maybe it's not *me* he's afraid of, Inspector." Then Superman lifted the man by the back of his suit and, carrying him, walked over to a side edge of the pier. He suspended the gunman over the water. "Now, *talk!* *Who* sent you – and *why!*?"

The man trembled even more. He began uttering noises, but not words.

"You know, Inspector, I think Baxter needs to cool off", said Superman. He crouched on one knee and lowered the man into the water, which the tide had brought only a foot below the pier. Superman dunked him completely under the surface for ten seconds before pulling him back up.

The Man of Steel smiled. "Now, wasn't that refreshing?" The man gasped for air but said nothing – so Superman repeated the process. This time he left him under for double the time.

Superman pulled the man out and dropped him unceremoniously onto the pier. The man coughed and wheezed, spitting up a lot of water. Superman looked at Henderson seriously. "Inspector, someone has put real fear into this man."

"But *who*, Superman?"

"Dinelli..." It was the gunman. He had finally finished gasping and coughing up water. He sat up and breathed heavily. "Luigi Dinelli".

Superman bent over and lifted the thug into the air by his shirt. "Dinelli wanted Inspector Henderson killed?"

But the man said nothing. The excitement was too much for him and he passed out. Henderson observed, "Between Dinelli probably scaring the wits out of him – and seeing someone as powerful as you", Henderson paused, "maybe it was too much for him."

Superman faced Henderson with his hands folded across his chest. "Why would Dinelli want *you* out of the way, Inspector?"

"I'm not sure, Superman, although I can hazard a few guesses." The cop then switched gears. "Say, where'd *you* come from, anyway?" He added with a smile, "Not that I'm ungrateful."

"Oh, well, I've had an interest in the whole Dinelli affair all along as you know, Inspector."

"I get it – Kent had you keep an eye on things here while we came out for the trial."

"You could say that."

"Well, there may not be a trial after all."

"Oh?" Superman pretended to not know the score.

"Well, we met up with Tragg of the L.A.P.D. He told Kent and me—" Henderson stopped. "Wait. Kent. He's back at the restaurant. Probably wondering what happened and worried sick."

"Oh, well, Kent's alright, Inspector."

"I'm sure he is – he's probably the one that contacted you."

Superman said, "Speaking of Kent, Inspector. Why don't you head back to your hotel? I'd wager that he'll be there waiting for you."

"Oh? You going to fly me there after dropping Baxter off with the police?"

Superman bent over the prone and still-unconscious thug. He fished for something in his pants pocket and then handed a set of car keys to Henderson. "No flights, Inspector. Here – after I fix the driver's door on Baxter's car, you can drive it back to the hotel while I drop our friend at a nearby police station".

Henderson nodded, and a few minutes later he was in Baxter's car on his way to the hotel as Superman flew the thug to a police station not far from the harbor.

## ACT 2

*It wouldn't be long before the squad car reached its destination. As they neared the police station, a nearby siren shook Clark out of his deep thought. Instinctively, the noise made him wonder if Superman's help was needed.*

**Superman.** *Yes, Clark couldn't forget his alter ego. It would be easy for him to break out of the handcuffs and escape the police car. He could simply fly away and then, as Superman, explain the circumstances to Lt. Tragg and others. He'd be in the clear and those likely responsible for Luigi Dinelli's death would be under suspicion, instead.*

*But there'd be one problem: his secret identity would be revealed, putting innocent people – people he revered as friends and even more – in harm's way. No, he'd have to tough this one out – as Clark Kent. As the squad car drove closer to the station, the reporter continued thinking back to recent events...*



**WILLIAM J. HENDERSON STOOD IN THE LOBBY** of the *Mark Stevens* hotel, next to the front desk, staring across the lobby at a revolving door leading to the street for fifteen minutes. As he grew impatient, Henderson turned and asked the front desk clerk, "Excuse me, but are you *positive* that Clark Kent hasn't checked in?"

The clerk politely replied, "No Mr. Henderson. His room key is still with us. I'm sorry, but Mr. Clark Kent still has not arrived."

"Somebody looking for me?"

Henderson looked to his right and with relief said, "Well, Kent. Where'd *you* come from?" He looked behind Clark and saw a rear entrance to the hotel.

"Oh, I went looking for you after leaving the restaurant." He smiled. "Anyway, you're looking fit, Bill. What happened to you? I was worried sick."

"Lucky you were worried enough to contact Superman." Henderson returned the smile.

Clark adjusted his glasses. "Well, I thought you might be in trouble. It's actually lucky that the coat check girl at the restaurant—"

"Excuse me, Mister Kent?" It was the front desk clerk.

Clark turned and looked at him. "Yes, I'm Clark Kent."

"I'm sorry to interrupt." The clerk then turned his back on Clark and Henderson, scanned a row of open mail slots against the wall and then spun back to his guests, handing a small envelope to Clark. "This came for you, Mister Kent."

As Clark took it, he scanned it with his x-ray vision. Upon reading its contents, he hesitated opening it, prompting Henderson to say, "What's the matter, Kent? Aren't you going to open it?" When Clark said nothing, the Metropolis cop said, with a smirk, "Don't tell me you have x-ray vision like Superman."

Shaken out of his funk, Clark ran a fingernail through the top of the envelope and removed the letter inside. After barely glancing at it, he said, "I need to go, Bill. I'll see you later." The reporter then took a step in the direction of the lobby's revolving door.

But Henderson would have none of it and grabbed Clark by one of his shoulders, stopping him in his tracks. "Now hold on." Clark turned to face his friend as the cop continued, "Barely an hour ago I might've been *killed* if not for you – and Superman. Now -- what's going on?"

Clark said nothing, for he was there when Henderson's would-be murderer was about to shoot him.

Henderson continued, "If Dinelli wanted *me* dead, maybe he's got trouble waiting for you, too. Wherever you're going, I'm going with you."

The reporter was familiar with Henderson's stubbornness and gave in. He said with deadly seriousness, "Funny that you mention Dinelli, Bill." Then he handed the letter to the cop.

Henderson read the note silently, not aloud, since he was standing in a busy lobby. Then he looked up at his friend. "*Holy cow!*"

Clark put one hand on Henderson's shoulder. "Bill, I need to see Dinelli and I need to see him alone."

"Not a chance, Kent." Clark removed his hand and stood there as Henderson said, "You helped me and now I'm returning the favor." He nodded towards the lobby revolving door. "Now, let's call a cab and not waste anymore time."

Clark could've tricked his friend by pretending to go to his room and then flying off as Superman. He could've tried a half dozen ways of shaking off the good inspector. But in the end he thought better of it, and appreciated the company – for now. Minutes later the Metropolis duo was in a cab, with Clark telling the driver, "26-201 Mulholland".

The cabbie half turned to look at his passengers. "You know who lives there, doncha?"

Henderson leaned over. "Yes, we know. Now, if you want a decent tip, step on it, pal."

*The police car had reached the building where the L.A. central city jail was located. It was adjacent to the courthouse where Clark, Henderson and Tragg had met several hours earlier. After pulling into a parking spot behind the building, Clark's door opened and he was led by two cops to an entrance. He continued thinking back to recent events...*

An hour after leaving the *Mark Stevens*, the taxi slowed to a stop on a pitch-black road illuminated by a lone street lamp. The vehicle's headlamps shone on a brick façade several yards ahead. The cabbie pointed to it, implying that this was their destination. Clark paid him before he and Henderson stepped out of the taxi.



They stood on blacktop as the cabbie made a U-turn and sped into the blackness illuminated only by the vehicle's brights. Both men stared at it until the lights had faded and disappeared over the rolling street leading back across the hills to Los Angeles.

The two men were immediately assaulted by an almost deafening chorus of crickets and katydids that had come alive once the last light of the setting sun had given way to blackness. Clark tapped Henderson on the shoulder. "Did you hear that?"

Henderson said, "All I hear is these blasted bugs!"

"There's a man – he's calling to us."

Now with Clark's prodding, the Inspector finally heard a voice, almost entirely drowned out by the chorus of summer insects. They both heard, "Excuse me! Are you guys lost?" coming from behind them.

Clark and Henderson spun around, with their gaze immediately blinded by the headlights that had just come on from another vehicle. They could see a shadow walking to them in front of the lights. Henderson could make out that it was a man in a suit and fedora, while Clark could see the man clearly. The stranger approached them and then stopped a couple of yards away.

The man nodded, "Hello" and then said, "You fellows sure you're in the right place?"

Clark spoke. "I believe so. Just who are you?"

Henderson noticed a bulge under the man's suit jacket, a sure sign that he was armed. Clark saw the man's concealed gun and holster outright via his x-ray vision.

The man spoke again. "Why don't we start with *you* telling *me* who *you* are? *Both* of you." It was a request, not a demand. There was no edge to the man's voice suggesting that he was a threat, at least not yet.

Clark was about to answer again, but Henderson gently stuck his arm out in front of his friend. "Let me handle this." He looked at the man. "I'm Inspector William J. Henderson of the Metropolis Police." He pulled a wallet-sized holder containing his

badge, flipped it open and then motioned with his head. "This is Clark Kent of the *Metropolis Daily Planet*."

The man offered a quizzical look. "Henderson. *Metropolis*? What are you doing way out here?"

"It's a long story. Would you mind telling us who you are?"

"Name's Walt. Walt Smathers. Federal agent."

Henderson grinned. "Smathers? Don't tell me you're Jim Smather's little brother!"

"You know Jim?"

"Jim's on the force in Metropolis. Good man. He's mentioned you more than a few times."

"I thought your name sounded familiar." Smathers shot out an arm and shook hands with Henderson. "Small world. Glad to meet you, Inspector."

"Call me Bill."

Smathers looked at Clark. "Hello Mister Kent. I've heard of you, too."

Clark and Smathers shook hands, but Kent said nothing and only nodded. Henderson could see that he was preoccupied, and knew why. He then turned to Smathers. "Look, Smathers. Kent and I are here to see Luigi Dinelli".

"Jumping Jets! No fooling?"

Clark corrected Henderson. "Actually, Dinelli requested that *I* meet with him." He was deadpan.

Smathers answered, "Well, Mister Kent, actually, no one is allowed to meet with Dinelli, on orders of the Attorney General."

Henderson said, "That's all well and good, Jim, but we have a rather complicated situation."

"I understand, Bill, but those are my orders."

The Metropolis cop smiled just a little. "Well, couldn't you bend the rules? Maybe you could accompany us."

"First of all, Bill, I'm not supposed to leave my post. None of us are, unless we're relieved."

Clark asked, "None of *us*? Who else is there?"

"Oh, well, Mister Kent, there are agents ringing the hill, pretty much. Each one is stationed anywhere that's directly or even remotely accessible to Dinelli's house. I will say that getting up to his place is a chore in itself."

Henderson asked, "What do you mean, Walt?"

"Well, it's like this." Smathers pointed in the direction of the hill. "Dinelli's house sits on a hill that ends on a bluff overlooking Malibu. There are only two ways up. One is a beat-up dirt road running all the way down to the Pacific Highway. It's got two of my fellow agents guarding it at the bottom. We've got a few more guys surrounding the hill."

As Henderson asked his next question, neither man noticed that Kent had slipped away into the darkness. "What's the other way up?"

Smathers pointed to the brick façade well behind him that was barely lit by the lone street lamp. "The other way up is the weirdest escalator you'll ever see. It's outdoors." He nodded behind him. "It's right over here and runs along a steep incline up to the house, and has a small compartment for a man to sit in."

"Sounds a little like that *funicular* in Paris."

"Never been there, Inspector, but I do know that it was built by the same guy who designed Angels Flight."

"Oh, you mean the hill tram in downtown L.A."

"You got it."

Just then, both men heard the whine of machinery cranking up. Smathers spun around. "That's *it*! Someone's started the escalator!" He ran towards the brick façade.

It was then that Henderson noticed that Clark was missing. "*Kent*!" When there was no response, the Metropolis cop rushed over to Smathers. The dim streetlight revealed that a gate separated the brick wall. A few feet beyond it were stairs leading to a platform. A twin set of rails that glimmered in the little light available rose sharply up the hill from the platform.

Smathers stared through the gate. "Kent must've activated the car."

Henderson asked, "You mean – he's on his way up?"

"No other explanation, although I don't know how he got past the gate, seeing as it's locked!"

"Can we go up after him?"

"Not until the car comes back down, Inspector."

"Is there another way up? A path? Stairs?"

"No, sir. It's a sheer drop from the house. Other than that dirt road from the Pacific Highway, this is the only access to the house. But it'd take at least an hour or more to reach the house that way. The dirt road is pretty treacherous even during the day – it's much worse now, in the dark."

"How about climbing up the hill by foot?"

Smathers pointed up the hill. "Those are sheer rock walls, Inspector. You'd need mountain-climbing gear."

"So we're stuck here while Kent is up there with Luigi Dinelli?"

"As soon as Kent reaches the top, we can summon the escalator car back down with this button." He pointed to a green button on a panel.

Bill asked, "Are any of your men up top with Dinelli?"

"Unfortunately, no. Dinelli insisted on being up there without any of our agents, and the A.G. agreed as long as the place was ringed by our guys down below."

Henderson shrugged and said to himself, "Well, at least Kent is probably getting the interview he wanted with Dinelli..."

Smathers, puzzled, said, "What was that, Inspector?"

"Oh, nothing..."

A short time earlier, Clark had leaped over the gate and then, surmising how the electric car worked, got in and punched a button that sent it up the hill. All the



while he kept tabs on Henderson and Smathers. He could have leaped up the hill, but that would have raised suspicions all around.

Before long, the funicular had reached the top. Clark hopped out and then, to prevent Henderson and Smathers from chasing after him, he forced open the upper station electrical panel and disconnected one of the wires that in turn disabled the mechanism. He then proceeded towards the house.

The first thing the reporter spotted was a two-car garage bathed in lights next to the large ranch-style home. Clark took particular notice because a man was working under a huge 1940s Cadillac. Upon reaching the garage entrance, Clark called out, "Excuse me."

The man under the car rolled out via a dolly he was laying on and then glanced towards Clark. "Oh, hello." He sat up off the dolly and stood up. A somewhat pudgy belly pushed against his greasy striped overalls. He took a rag out of his back pocket, wiping both sweat and oil from his forehead below a mostly hairless scalp.

"Name's Josh." He stuck out a hand. "Josh Banner." But then he looked at his hand, and seeing that it had a thin latex glove on it, he removed it before offering it again. Clark shook Banner's hand. It was cool and felt like he was gripping a fish. He said without emotion, "Clark Kent."

"Oh, right. Luigi sent for you, Mr. Kent." Banner removed the latex glove from his other hand and then pointed towards the house's entrance. He smiled and said, "I'll show you to him."

*Clark was all but sleepwalking while being led through the jail complex. He went through the motions of being fingerprinted – his first time ever, since having Superman’s fingerprints on file jeopardized his secret identity. But Clark had no choice and was obedient. Afterwards he was led to a changing room where Clark was told to replace his reporter’s clothes with prison garb. It was risky, but he decided to retain his Superman uniform underneath the clothing given to him by the guard. As he was led down the corridor towards the cellblock, Clark Kent continued reminiscing recent events...*

Banner led Clark into a hallway that ran past a kitchen into a connecting corridor. They passed a darkened den illuminated solely by the bright picture tube of a television. Clark glanced in and could see a woman – a rather attractive blonde – sitting on a sofa chair laughing at Groucho Marx appearing on the screen as a toy duck dangled between the comedian and one of his guests.

“That’s Maddie, Mister Kent.” Banner had paused to introduce the woman. “Maddie Baker”.

All they saw was a hand shoot up from the chair. “Hellooo!” is all she said, before chuckling again at the TV.

Clark continued to follow Banner down the hallway, which ended at a closed door. The reporter could see where he was being led and what was beyond the door. Banner knocked and called out. “Clark Kent’s here, Mr. Dinelli.”

“Send him in.” The sound of Luigi Dinelli’s voice though the door might’ve sent chills up someone else’s spine, but all Clark felt was disgust - disgust that the mobster would be in the comfort of his own home and not behind bars -- or worse. Banner opened the door but didn’t go in. Instead, he waved his arm through the entrance. Clark obediently walked passed him and nodded with a faint smile.

After Banner had closed the door, Clark found himself in an enormous room. It had an unusual triangular shape, with two perpendicular walls made of rustic wood panels. The floor was knotty pine and the ceiling appeared to be redwood, with redwood beams running horizontal to the walls.

In the background was a huge window that effectively formed the third side of the triangular room. Clark could see beyond the window and out towards the distant twinkling lights of Los Angeles. It was a view that most mortals would marvel at, but not Clark Kent, given all that he had seen around the world as Superman.



The room was dimly lit when Clark had walked in, but then suddenly a bright lamp was flicked on from a corner. Luigi Dinelli was sitting in it, smoking a cigar. He called out “Commere, Kent. Lemme see you better.”

Clark slowly strolled over until he was a few feet away from the mobster. He said nothing.

Dinelli nodded at a folding chair near him and said, with a big grin, “Siddown, Kent. Make yourself comfortable.”

“No thanks, Luigi. I’ll stand. I don’t plan on being here very long, anyway.”

“Suit yourself.” The crime boss then got up and walked over to a wooden desk near the window. He sat down and opened a side drawer that contained a box of cigars. He opened it, took a stogie out and then pointed it at Clark.

“Your boss loves these, don’t he, Kent?” Dinelli closed the drawer and held out the cigar. “Bring this back to him. A present.”

But Clark ignored the mobster. “What do you want, Dinelli?” His voice was firm.

“So serious, Kent.” Dinelli threw the sealed cigar on his desk. He inhaled the one he was smoking and then let out a cloudy puff. “I guess you’re concerned about that little note I left you at the hotel.”

Clark said nothing.

“Well, it’s like this.” Dinelli used the lit cigar as a prop for emphasis. “I got this neat little deal going on with the attorney general.”

Clark seethed. "So I've heard."

"Yeah, I know. I got men following you and the copper."

"You mean Henderson -- who you tried to murder."

"What murder? Finnigan was supposed to keep you distracted long enough for my man Baxter to shake up Henderson."

"Seemed like Baxter wanted to shoot him and then dump his body in the harbor."

"Baxter ain't the brightest. He was only supposed to pistol-whip Henderson and send him a message, like I'm about to give you."

"Oh?"

"You sound surprised. I figured that note would explain it all."

Again, Clark waited for Dinelli to continue. The less he said, the better.

Dinelli took another puff and then parked the cigar in an ash tray on his desk. "You see, Kent. This deal with the A.G. is a dream come true. Instead of the gas chamber, I get to live my life in obscurity somewhere where no one can find me. Can't beat that, right?"

"You're a murderer that deserves the gas chamber, Dinelli. Nothing more and nothing less." Clark spat the words out.

"Says you, Kent. But not the A.G. Pretty soon I'm gonna disappear from the face of the Earth, and it ain't gonna be from bein' put six feet under."

"Not if I can help it. And not if Bill Henderson can, either."

"Well, whether I shook up Henderson enough, I'm not really worried so much about him. It's *you* that could ruin my plans."

"Why? Afraid I'll write another expose?" For the first time in awhile, Clark smiled.

"No, Kent, you ain't doin' nothin'." Dinelli then reached into the drawer with the cigar box once again while still looking at the reporter, but this time his hand emerged holding a gun. "You're *finished*!"

As fast as Clark was normally able to react, he was caught off-guard and never expected what came next.

***Pthump!***  
***Pthump!***

The gun had a silencer and spat two bullets point-blank at Clark Kent's chest. Each missile simply folded like a miniature accordion and dropped to the wood floor.

Clark said nothing, but his mind raced. He had no excuses – no lucky silver dollars or anything else in his suit jacket that he could offer as a reason for the bullets bouncing off without harming him. It seemed like he was cornered.

Dinelli put the gun down on his desk. "Don't be so surprised, Kent. You should've had an idea from my note that I suspected who you *really* are. And this" he held up the smoking gun "confirms it".

Again, Clark said nothing.

"Actually, I pretty much had a good idea about your secret ever since the last time you were here for that movie."

"Oh?"

"Let's just say that between some guys I had keeping an eye on you, and some inside information from back east, I had my suspicions." Dinelli picked up his cigar, shook its ashes into the tray and puffed once more. "In fact, even when I was locked away, I was able to collect some pretty convincing evidence about you being Superman."

"I don't believe you."

"Oh, believe it, Kent. It's all sitting in a safe deposit box in L.A., where you'll never find it, even with your x-ray vision."

"I suppose that the people who collected this information also know my secret?"

"Well, whether they did or not – they don't, *now*." Dinelli smiled.

"You killed them."

"Well, your secret is a pretty valuable thing – something I don't really wanna share. It's good business, Kent."

"So what do you want, Dinelli? You *still* haven't told me."

Luigi Dinelli then got up and stood face to face with Clark. "I'll tell you what I want. You leave town. Henderson, too. You stay away from the A.G. and my negotiations with him. *Nothing's* getting in the way of my sweet deal."

"Or else?"

"Or else I'll tell everyone that Clark Kent is Superman. Pretty simple."

Clark then reached an arm out and gripped Dinelli by the scruff of his shirt, lifting him in the air. He all but shouted, "There's not going to be a deal with the A.G. or anyone else." Clark shook the mobster with his one hand. "And you're not getting away with threatening *me* or Henderson, either."

The reporter then slowly lowered Dinelli, who then took a handkerchief out of the pocket of his suit jacket and wiped his brow. "Everyone knows you don't kill no one, Kent, so I don't know what you're thinking." He put the cloth back in its pocket. "But you need to be know two things before you get any bright ideas."

Clark said nothing as he glared at the mobster.

"First, if anything happens to me, I left instructions that the safe deposit box gets opened and your secret gets published in a few key newspapers across the country." He paused and picked up his ashen cigar for a puff. "Not your *Daily Planet*, of course, but ones *I* have connections to, if you know what I mean."

"And second." Dinelli chuckled as he took another drag. "Well, let's just say that I know about a little old lady in your home town back in Kansas. Someone near and dear to you."

"**No!**" Clark picked Dinelli up again and shouted. "You leave her *alone!*" He threw him down to the floor. Dinelli hit his head on the floorboard and grimaced as he tried to move.

The mobster slowly sat up and then used the desk to help him stand before sitting again in his chair. He rubbed the back of his head and mopped his brow with the handkerchief. He took a deep breath and said, "There's *nothing* you can do to *me*, Kent without consequences to *you!* You're *finished!*" Dinelli shouted, "Now *get* out of my house and go *back* to Metropolis, if you know what's *good* for you!"

Clark stared at the mobster for almost a half-minute before retreating towards the door. He opened it and stepped into the hallway while slamming it. His mind was racing. *Ma at risk!* Thoughts of returning to Smallville and standing guard to protect his foster mother flashed through Clark's mind. It would end his career as a reporter and cripple his impact as Superman. *No! I won't play into Dinelli's hands!*

The shaken reporter walked slowly down the corridor and away from the room where Dinelli was. As he approached the den he had passed earlier, two loud gunshots startled him out of his funk.

***Blam!***  
***Blam!***

The noise came from the den. This time the room was brightly lit. The television had been turned off. As he reached the frame of the den's large entranceway, Clark saw Josh Banner standing just inside.

His right hand was dangling a gun barely outside the den's entryway and was within easy reach for Clark. The weapon still had smoke emerging from the barrel. Clark grabbed it from Banner and held it as if he was going to use it himself. Then he placed it on a table and then pushed the Banner further into the room.

Clark held the man by his shoulders. He still had much leftover anger from his encounter with Dinelli. "What's going on? Why'd you fire that gun?"

Just then, another voice spoke up, and from behind the couch near the TV, the blonde, Maddie Baker, stood up. "What happened, Josh? You was supposed to say your next line."

Banner looked at her and nodded in the direction of Clark but said nothing. Maddie Baker shot an annoyed look at Kent. "Oh. *You*. You *ruined* our scene."

But Clark was in no mood for explanations. He let go of Banner and made a move towards the hallway leading out of the house. This time Banner grabbed him. "Sorry, Mr. Kent. Maddie and I were practicing."

Just barely, Clark's reporter instincts kicked in, if only for a moment, and he seethed, "Oh? Practicing?"

Maddie yelled over, with a tinge of pride in her voice. "Yeah. I'm practicing to be an actress, Mr. Kent. Josh 'n me was just practicin' a death scene, that's all."

Banner added sheepishly, "I was firing blanks. Sorry to startle you, Mr. Kent."



A moment later, the door to Luigi Dinelli's spacious room opened and the mobster emerged, holding his gun. As he walked down the hallway he shouted, "What's going on!? Who fired that gun?!"

As soon as he reached the den, Banner told his boss, "Sorry, Mr. Dinelli. That was me 'n Maddie just having fun."

Dinelli, who was fuming at Banner, then turned to Clark. "I thought I told you to leave."



Clark angrily looked at all three of them - Dinelli, Banner and Baker. Then he stormed out into the hallway and away from the house. He went over to the funicular's control box and reconnected the wire he had loosened earlier. Then he sat down inside the escalator car. The reporter punched a button and soon he was slowly going down the hill. The relatively short ride gave him time to think.

Henderson and Smathers were waiting at the bottom, inside the unlocked gate. The car came to a stop and Kent got out. Henderson grabbed his friend by his shoulders. "*Kent!* Are you all right? We heard *gunshots!*"

Smathers looked at Clark and said, "We couldn't go up - the escalator wouldn't come down. We called up to the house but no one answered."

Henderson added, "Smathers couldn't leave his post but was about to radio for another car to take me up the hill from the other side." Then he looked at the clearly troubled reporter. "Anyway, Kent, this is *my* turn to be worried sick about *you!* What happened?"

Clark stared blankly. "Nothing. Let's go back to the hotel, Bill."

"*Nothing?* Say, you look like you've been to a funeral."

Clark ignored Henderson and turned to Smathers. "How can we get a taxi from here? I'm anxious to get away as fast as I can."

Smathers screwed a look at the reporter. "You sure you're ok, Mr. Kent? I mean, like the Inspector said, we heard gunshots."

"Believe me, it was nothing. Just a couple of stupid people."

"But what about Dinelli? Did you get see to him?"

"I did. He made some threats, that's all." Then Clark walked aimlessly away from his friend from Metropolis.

Henderson took a couple of steps and when he had caught up, put a hand on Clark. "Kent, something doesn't seem right. We really—"

For the first time in his life, Clark got mad at his friend. He turned and said, "Bill, either we get a cab or I'm walking back to the city on my own."

Smathers called over, "I've got a two-way radio in my car. I can call you a taxi."

Before long, Henderson and Clark were in a cab on their way back to the *Mark Stevens*. Neither man said a word on the hour or so long ride back. Once at the hotel, both men trudged up to their adjacent rooms.

As Henderson put the key in his door, he felt a hand on his arm. It was Clark. "I'm sorry, Bill." He withdrew his arm. "It got a little rough up there with Dinelli. I can fill you in tomorrow."

The cop nodded. "OK, Clark. I guess we just need a good night's sleep. It's been a heck of a day for both of us."

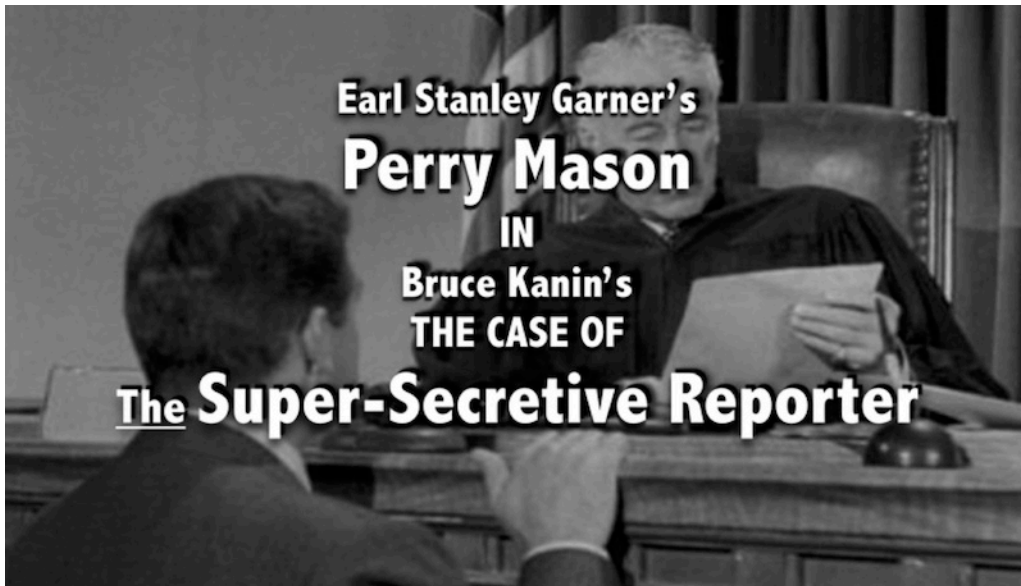
"Good night, Bill."

And then, hours later, Clark Kent, mild-mannered reporter from Metropolis – also the most powerful man on Earth – found himself on the wrong side of the bars in a Los Angeles jail. He sat down on the cot in the dank confines and replayed the events of the past twenty-four hours over and over at super-speed, wondering how things could've gone so bad, so quickly, and what he could possibly do next.

Despite his strength and incredible abilities, Clark felt weak, powerless ... and defeated.







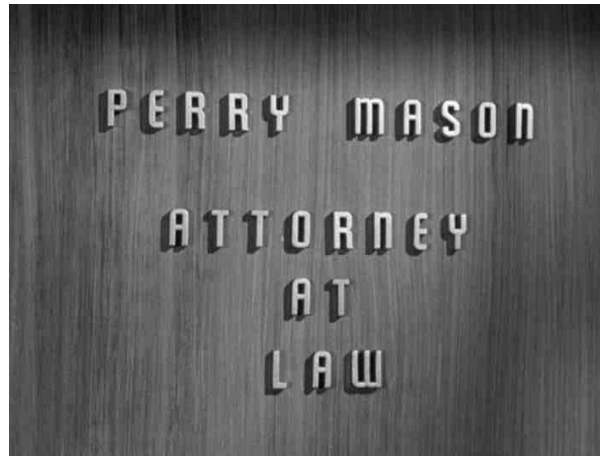
## ACT 1



**THE BRENT BUILDING RISES PROMINENTLY** above the streets of downtown Los Angeles. The towering structure contains a wide variety of offices for doctors, accountants and even a few lawyers. One of the more prominent and well-known offices belonged to criminal defense attorney Perry Mason.

He and his staff, consisting solely of Della Street, Mason's secretary and Gal Friday, and Gertie, a receptionist, occupied a three-room suite on the ninth floor overlooking downtown and the distant mountains beyond Los Angeles.

It was on this particular late August morning that Mason was chatting with Della Street before beginning a long day in court that included two murder cases and three controversial depositions, along with the contested will of a high profile California politician. Though Mason was a defense lawyer, he strayed into other legal territory at the behest of friends and others for whom he felt an obligation.



Mason sat at his desk as he puffed on the remaining length of his Chesterfield, with Della sitting across from him.

His secretary said, "You know, Perry. I've been going through your address book." She opened a narrow embossed spiral notebook on Mason's desk and pointed to it. "I think you've got half of Hollywood in here."

Mason smiled. "It wouldn't surprise me, Della. I *do* know a lot of actors and actresses in the community. Even represent a few." Then his smile went away. "One thing concerns me, though."

"What's that?"

"Well, Della, I know you secure this", Mason said, as he patted the address book, "but it'd be a shame if any of the Hollywood stars' contact information fell into the wrong hands."

"You know, Perry, I was thinking the same thing." She shut the book. "I'm going to remove their names, addresses and numbers. Then I'll put them all in a separate book under lock & key."

"Good thinking. I'd hate for some unscrupulous autograph-seekers to be able to harass these stars."

"I'll get on it right away."

Just then, the intercom buzzed on Mason's desk. It was Gertie, the receptionist. "Mr. Mason. I'm sorry, but I couldn't *stop* him."

Mason talked back to the intercom. "Stop *who*, Gertie?"

Then Della stood up and spoke to the intercom. "Gertie? What's going on?"

Their questions were immediately answered when the office door burst open and a man stormed in. Gertie was right behind him. "I'm sorry Della ... Mr. Mason... but he *insisted*..."

The gray-haired, well-dressed man carried his fedora and walked right up to Perry's desk. He pointed his hat at the lawyer. "Now see *here*, Mason! I'm told you turned down his case! That's *preposterous*!"



Mason stood. "Now hold on, mister..."

"Don't tell *me* to hang on! *Great Caesar's Ghost*! You've *got* to take Kent's case!"

Della looked at the intruder and then at her boss, who began smiling. "Perry, do you know this man?"

Mason looked at his secretary and deadpanned, "It depends on which *Perry* you're asking, Della." The lawyer blinked and said, "Why of course I know this gentleman, Della." Then he turned his gaze to the man. "This is Perry White, Chief Editor of the Metropolis *Daily Planet*. We've never met, but we *have* spoken over the phone. In fact, Mr. White called me the other day to ask that I represent, one of his employees,

Clark Kent.” His smile faded slightly. “Your reference to Julius Caesar gave you away, Perry.”

Gertie closed the door as she quietly exited the room. Della offered a chair to White. “Won’t you please sit down, Mr. White?”

White looked at Della. “Don’t you see? There’s no time!” Then he turned to Mason. “You’ve *got* to take his case, Mason!”

Mason motioned for White to sit. “Perry, please sit down. Let’s go over the situation.”

White finally lowered himself into the chair. He took out a handkerchief from his suit jacket and wiped his brow. “This blasted heat. At least we have a sea breeze in Metropolis this time of year.”

Mason looked at his secretary. “Della, why don’t you get Mr. White a glass of ice water?” As she nodded and left the room, the attorney looked at his namesake. “Perry, I realize how upsetting this whole thing is.”

White all but snarled. “No, I don’t think you do, Mason. Clark Kent isn’t only a star reporter. He’s much more than that.”

“I know. He’s your friend.”

“No, that’s not what I meant, Mason.” White mopped his brow once more as Della returned, handing the newspaper editor a glass of water tinkling with ice cubes. The editor turned to her, and then perhaps because the secretary’s charm had finally pierced the cloud of anger surrounding him, said rather gratefully. “Thank you.” He took a sip. “Thank you very much.” Then White looked at Mason, saying nothing as he gathered his thoughts.

Mason said, “Won’t you please meet my secretary, Della Street?”

Della and White nodded at each other. The man from Metropolis then spoke, albeit with a calmer, lowered voice. “Mason, Kent is much more than just a reporter, and I wasn’t referring to him being a friend. I don’t even think of him as one, although maybe he is!” White’s voice rose.

“Oh?”

“No, I’m referring to something you’re not used to here on the West Coast.”

Mason’s eyes opened wide. “Perhaps you’re referring to *someone*. Not *something*.”

White nodded. "You've got the idea, Mason. Clark Kent seems to be the only one I know that can contact *Superman*."

Della chimed in. "*Superman? Really?*"

White looked at Mason's secretary. "That's right". Then he turned back to Mason. "I don't know how he does it. Maybe he has a secret signal watch with an alarm that only Superman can hear, for all I know. But he does it, and whenever we need Superman, Kent seems to get him to appear. Often in the nick of time!"

Mason said, "I see."

"Then you also see, Mason, that if Kent is behind bars, he probably has no way of contacting Superman!"

"Now I understand, Perry. Superman helps a lot of people, and if Kent is unable to contact him, it increases the risk that he can't be reached."

"That's right, and that's why you've *got* to take Kent's case, Mason!" White was becoming animated again and even pounded his fist on Mason's desk.

"But Perry, I never said that I *wasn't* taking his case."

"Then why aren't you with Kent, talking with him and plotting your defense?"

"Well, Perry, I *did* try to talk to your reporter, as you had asked, but he *refused* any help. As a matter of fact, Kent said that he'd defend *himself*." Mason paused and then said, "He also seemed to hold a lot back, Perry. Kent seemed rather secretive, in fact."

White once again wiped his brow with the handkerchief. "Oh, I know. Sometimes I wonder if *he's* Superman, but I'm convinced that that just can't be."

Mason said, "Still, Perry, I can't represent a man that doesn't want an attorney."

White pounded his fist on the desk again as he stood up. "*Great Caesar's Ghost!* It'd be easier to talk sense into that nitwit Olsen! Kent *can't* defend himself! He's a newspaperman, not a lawyer!"

Mason stood, too. "OK, Perry. I'll tell you what. I'll give it another try. But maybe you should go see him first. Grease the skids, so to speak."

White smiled. "Now you're talking, Mason." They finally shook hands. White turned to nod at Della with another "thank you" and then she escorted the editor out of the room.

Within moments there was a knock from a back door next to Mason's desk. It opened a crack and a tall, husky blonde-haired man poked his head in. "Is it safe to come in? I heard shouting."

Mason looked at his friend and Man Friday, detective Paul Drake. The lawyer smiled. "The coast is clear now, Paul. You can come in."

As Drake stepped in, Della returned, causing the P.I. to grin and offer her his usual greeting, "Hello, beautiful."

She smiled back with a shake of her head, and then the three of them sat down. Perry explained the situation with Kent and the exchange with White to Drake, who then asked, "So how bad *is* it for this Kent guy?"



"Well, Paul. Let's put it this way. There are three things that'll hang someone: witnesses, motive, and evidence".

Drake lit a cigarette and then said, "Tell me something I *didn't* know."

Mason continued. "Burger's got two witnesses that can put Kent at the scene of the crime. Plus he may have two other *corroborating* witnesses."

"That's not good."

"Burger says that Kent had *reasons* for killing Dinelli, both from a prior experience and something more recent."

"Motive. That can't help."

"No, but the worst is yet to come, Paul." Mason paused, and then said, "An hour ago I found out that the police identified Kent's fingerprints on the alleged murder weapon."

"*Bingo.*" Drake took a drag on his Chesterfield and then said, "So, Perry, are you taking his case?"

"I don't know. He's got the unholy trio of things against him I just mentioned that any good lawyer would think twice about, Paul."

"So what's next, Perry?"

"I don't know *that*, either, Paul. I met Kent. He's stubborn and he's definitely holding something back. But he doesn't seem like a murderer. Plus from all I've heard about Kent, he's a good man. White has spoken highly of him in our phone chats. I even had a few minutes with William Henderson from the Metropolis Police, who's in with Burger and Tragg as we speak."

"What'd Henderson say about Kent?"

"He called him a Boy Scout."

"Wouldn't be the first one to have committed murder."

Mason shook his head at Drake's comment, then stood up and the P.I. did, too. "Paul, I want you to get me everything you can on Luigi Dinelli. Also, there are two people living at his home in the Malibu hills. Some mechanic and a woman. Dig up what you can on them. Also, see what you can find out about a visit to Hollywood by Kent and Henderson awhile back."

Della stood and chimed in. "I remember reading about that. It's when this whole thing started – when Luigi Dinelli was arrested for murder. So does all this mean you're taking the case, Perry?"

Mason turned to his secretary. "Yes, for now, at least, despite Kent not wanting anyone representing him. Hopefully my namesake can make his reporter come to his senses."

Not long afterwards, Perry White and Clark Kent faced each other through a glass window that was part of a long partition in the prisoner visiting area of the jail. Each man was holding a telephone.

Clark spoke first. "Hello, Chief." He looked down, and then back through the glass at his boss. "I'm sorry."

White spoke into the receiver. "What have *you* got to be sorry about, Kent? It's clear someone's *framed* you!" The editor all but shouted, realizing that he needed to keep his voice low, not knowing who might overhear their conversation.

"Thanks, Chief. Of course I'm being framed, and I've a good idea as to who's involved."

"Well, then, Kent – why not have a lawyer represent you? And I hear that this Mason's the best in the business."

"I've heard that, too, Chief, but there's more at stake here."

"What's more at stake than you going to the gas chamber?!" White had to restrain himself.

"Chief, all I can say is, I want to handle this myself."

"You *can't* defend yourself! You've no training as an attorney!"

"I don't feel that I have a choice in the matter, Chief."

"Of course you do! Now look here, Kent..." White then took a deep breath. His voice softened. "Clark..." Now it was father-to-son. "You mean a lot to me. And to Lois plus that clumsy photographer, Olsen."

Clark smiled. "Jimmy's a good kid. You know that, Chief."

"Oh, I know, Kent. But listen. You're not doing yourself any favors by trying to defend yourself. Plus ... you have a lot of people rooting for you. I'd wager even *Superman* would step in if he could." Clark said nothing as White continued. "Son, I need you to trust Perry Mason. I hear that this D.A. Burger is pretty tough. Not only that..."

"What, Chief?"

"Well, the Attorney General, I hear, is upset that he can no longer get Dinelli's testimony about the other mob bosses. He's so angry that he's taking it out on *you* – he wants your trial to start immediately!"

"I don't know what to say. Seems pretty crazy to me."

"Of *course* it is. But with the A.G. against you and a tough D.A., you need all the help you can get."

"I see."

"Clark, I'm asking you. In fact, I'll say something I don't think I've ever said. I'm *begging* you, Kent. Accept Mason as your lawyer. He'll help you nail whoever's framed you!"

A jail guard came over to Clark and told him to wrap it up. The reporter nodded and then spoke into the receiver. "I've got to go, Chief."

"So you'll drop this silly idea that you're a lawyer and accept Mason's help?"

"I'll think about it. Thanks, Chief."

Later that day, Clark Kent reluctantly bowed down to the wishes of his chief, and a meeting took place between the reporter and L.A.'s renowned lawyer. They both sat in one of the rooms available to lawyers and clients in the L.A. jail facility.

Perry Mason asked for every detail of Clark's experience from the "Czar of the Underworld" trip with Henderson to L.A., all the way through his arrest. The mild-mannered bespectacled man obliged, telling Mason about the meeting with Tragg, "Mad Dog" Finnegan at the restaurant, and the meeting with Dinelli – but in the end, he left out parts, lest he reveal his other identity.

The attorney let his new client finish before asking questions. "So, regarding that note the clerk handed you at the hotel. What did you think when you read it?"

Clark hesitated and then said, "Well, it was somewhat upsetting."

"*Somewhat* upsetting? Is that all?"

"I didn't know *what* to think, except that I needed to see Luigi Dinelli."

"Why? You could've thrown the note in the trash. Or given it to the police to handle."

"I couldn't ignore it." The reporter tried a different tack. "Besides, an interview with the mobster would've been a great story."

"I don't doubt it, Kent, but that's not motivated you to see him. What was the *real* reason you went to see Dinelli?"

"I've already told you, Mason. I don't know what else there is to say."

Mason, clearly frustrated, moved on and said, "Now, the meeting with Dinelli."

"I've already told you about that."

"Yes, so you did. But tell me again how he threatened you."

"You know about his negotiations with the attorney general. He said that I better not interfere with them. He threatened Henderson, too."

"Luigi Dinelli threatened you?"

"Yes."

Perry was clearly getting impatient with his client. "Threats come with *consequences*, Kent. What did Dinelli promise to do if you *did* interfere?"

For all of his life, as far back as he could remember, Clark prided himself in being an honest man. It came from his upbringing in Smallville and in particular his parents, as well as some of his teachers. He just did not lie. Sometimes, though, Clark would omit or only provide partial information, solely to protect his secret identity. But he did that because he felt that hiding the fact that he was also Superman was in turn protecting friends and loved ones.

As such, Clark, while not lying, felt that he could not be completely forthcoming with his attorney. He said squarely, "Mr. Mason, Luigi Dinelli is still a very powerful man, despite being dead. He has many powerful underworld allies."

Mason, too, calmed his demeanor. "I don't doubt that. But how did he threaten you?"

"Simply by saying that he would inflict harm, if not on myself, then on people that I am close to."

"I see."

Perry Mason got up, walked to a barred window and then spun around. Again, he moved on. "You mentioned the people at the Dinelli home."

"That's right. The man, Josh Banner, and the woman, Maddie Baker."

"And you mentioned their supposed play acting."

"Yes, and I said that I believe it was just a cover to have me incriminated."

"But Banner and Baker are apparent compatriots of Dinelli. What motive would they have had for murdering him and framing you, Kent?"

"I don't know, Mason."

The attorney sat once more. He said, gently, "You know ... Clark ... I don't feel that you've told me everything."

Kent said sternly. "I've told you what you *need* to know, counselor."

Mason's face hardened and a fire came to his eyes. "That might work for another attorney, Kent, but not for *me*!"

"I'm sorry, Mason, but I've given you the facts!"

"But you've cherry-picked the facts, Kent, and that may not be enough to stop you from going to the gas chamber!"

Clark chuckled but said nothing.

Perry Mason was astonished. "You think going to the gas chamber is a joke, Kent?"

The reporter shook his head. "No, not one bit." Then he said, "Look, Mason, I've told you all that I can. In reality, I'm only taking you on because Mr. White urged me to do so."

Mason, still standing, looked down and glared at his client. "And *I'm **also*** here only at the urging of Perry White. I'll see you in court." With that, the attorney hurriedly gathered his folders and briefcase before leaving, making way for a guard that escorted Clark Kent back to his cell.

## ACT 2

**A MERE TWO DAYS LATER,** on an unusually crisp September first, court was in session. The prosecution, facing the judge and seated to his left, consisted of D.A. Burger and Homicide Division's Lieutenant Tragg. Along a table opposite them, towards the right of the bench, were Perry Mason, Clark Kent and Della Street. The courtroom was packed with spectators and witnesses.



The judge was chatting with the bailiff, and as such proceedings had not yet begun. Perry Mason used the brief free time to chat with his P.I.

Drake said, "I did some digging on that couple living at Dinelli's house."

Perry asked, "Oh? A couple? Do they have a relationship?"

"At best it's a platonic one, but they do seem to hang out together when they leave that house."

Mason saw that the judge was finishing his conversation. "Talk fast."

Drake said, "The mechanic guy, Banner, has been friends with Dinelli for years. It's the woman Baker who's got some mysterious ties."

"How so?"

"With some gangsters in Chicago."

"Interesting."

"One more thing. I've dug up some dirt on some guy named Finnigan who's working for Dinelli. My sources say that he's almost as big a gold mine of mob information as his boss."

The judge's gavel banged and with that, Perry Mason told his investigator, "Good work, Paul. Keep digging."

As Drake hurried out of the courtroom, Perry Mason took his place next to Clark Kent. The judge then spoke and then nodded at D.A. Burger, who stood. "Now, as you know, your honor, this is a preliminary hearing with no jury. However, the prosecution intends to present sufficient evidence to have the defendant, Clark Kent, turned over for trial in front of a jury of his peers for the murder of Luigi Dinelli."

The judge looked at Perry Mason. "Do you wish to make a statement, as well, Mr. Mason?"

"No. Thank you, your honor."

The judge turned back to Burger. "You may begin, mister prosecutor."

"Thank you, your honor. I call as my first witness Lieutenant Tragg of the Homicide Division."



Soon, with Tragg in the witness chair, Burger began his questioning. "Now, Lt. Tragg, please describe for the courtroom the events on the evening Luigi Dinelli was found dead in his home."

Tragg began. "My office received a call around 10 P.M. that evening."

"And can you identify the person that made this call?"

Tragg flipped open a small memo pad, glanced at it and then looked out at the courtroom. Then he looked back at Burger. "Yes, his name is Josh Banner." Tragg nodded at the audience. "He's sitting right there." Banner nodded back ever so slightly.

"Thank you, Lieutenant. Please continue."

"Banner said that a man had been shot in his Malibu Hills home."

"That man was Luigi Dinelli."



Tragg nodded and with a wide-eyed expression, said, "Yes, the well-known mobster."

There was a murmur from the crowd and the judge banged his gavel but said nothing.

Burger asked Tragg, "Now, what happened next, lieutenant?"

"I took a couple of men with me and we drove out to Dinelli's house. We had to take a circuitous route via the Pacific Highway and up a steep hill to get there. Wasn't so easy in the dark."

"But you eventually arrived, and once there, what did you learn, Lieutenant Tragg?"

"We met the caller, Josh Banner", Tragg again nodded at Banner, in the courtroom. "He led us inside the house. That's where we met the woman sitting next to Banner" again he nodded at the audience and then flipped open his notebook, "a Miss Maddie Baker".



"Please continue, lieutenant."

"Both of them led me to a large room towards the rear of the house in which Luigi Dinelli was sitting, slumped in a desk chair. He was dead. Coroner thinks he had been dead for one to two hours."

"And did you surmise the cause of death, lieutenant?"

"Two gunshots to the heart did him in."

"Lieutenant Tragg, was a murder weapon found on the premises?"

"Not immediately, Mr. Burger. My men explored the house and the grounds. The grounds were especially hard to search because it was so dark and hilly."

"Go on, lieutenant."

"It wasn't until sunrise that we found it."

"What is 'it', lieutenant?"

"A small handgun. It was alongside the tracks of that escalator contraption. Almost missed it but the sun caused it to glint just enough."

Burger went over to the court reporter and returned to the witness box holding a tagged gun, identifying as official evidence. "And when you brought this small handgun back to police headquarters, what did you determine, lieutenant?"

"Sgt. Redfield of Ballistics found that the bullets which killed Dinelli were appropriate for the handgun."

"And what else?"

"The fingerprints on the gun were a match for the defendant's."

"Thank you, lieutenant." Burger turned to look at Mason. "Your witness, counselor." Then the D.A. sat down.

Mason stood and smiled at the D.A. "Thank you, Mr. Burger." He then remained standing at his table, looking at Tragg. "Lieutenant Tragg, you said that Sgt. Redfield determined that the bullets which killed Luigi Dinelli were, as you called it, 'appropriate' for the handgun found on the compound."

"That's right, counselor."

"Can you be more specific with regard to the word 'appropriate'?"

"Well, the type of bullet that killed the victim is typical for the handgun used in this instance."

"Can you be more specific with regard to the word 'typical'?"

Burger stood and looked at the judge. "Your honor, this is not an English lesson. Mr. Mason knows perfectly well what the lieutenant means."

Mason stared at the D.A. "On the contrary, Mr. Burger, I *don't* know what Lt. Tragg means. That's *exactly* the reason for my questions."

The judge turned to the witness chair. "Lieutenant Tragg, can you please be more specific?"

Tragg nodded at the judge and then turned to look at Mason while Burger sat down, shaking his head. But then Mason put up a hand and looked at the judge. "Actually, your honor, let me rephrase my question." He then returned his gaze to Tragg. "Lieutenant, are you positive that the exhibit entered as the murder weapon – the handgun you say was used to kill Luigi Dinelli – is in fact the murder weapon?"

Tragg said, "All indications are that it is indeed the murder weapon, but no, Mr. Mason, I cannot be positive that it is."

Mason smiled. "Thank you, lieutenant. No further questions." He sat down.

Burger offered a slight sneer in Mason's direction as he stood and said, "I call Josh Banner to the stand."

Soon, Banner was on the receiving end of the D.A.'s questions. "Now, Mr. Banner. Can you please tell the court of your experiences on the night that Luigi Dinelli was murdered?"

"Well, I was working on Mr. Dinelli's Cadillac. I mean, he don't drive no more on account of everything, but he loves that car and I keep it in tip top shape."



"Thank you, Mr. Banner, but would you please stick to the events of that evening."

"Sure, well, I was underneath the car checking an oil leak – they can really stain the driveway – and this Mr. Kent arrived from the outdoor escalator."

"You're of course referring to the defendant, sitting next to Mr. Mason."

"Yeah, that's right. That's him." Banner nodded in Kent's direction. "He came over. I got up and he said that he had an appointment with Mr. Dinelli, so I showed him the way."

"And what happened next, Mr. Banner?"

"Well, after Kent went in to see Mr. Dinelli, I went back to working on the car. It must've been five or ten minutes later when I heard shouting from inside the house. Then I heard gunshots."

Clark leaned over to Mason and whispered. "He's lying." Mason patted Clark's arm and nodded.

Burger asked the witness, "What did you do when you heard the gunshots?"

"Well, I started towards the house, but saw Kent running out and over to the escalator."

"Did you see Kent carrying anything?"

"I have to tell ya, Mr. Burger, things were happening fast. He coulda been holding something in one of his hands but I don't know."

"All right then, so what did you do?"

"I ran into the house. Maddie heard the shots, too, and we both went into where Mr. Dinelli was."

"You're referring to Maddie Baker?"

"Yes, sir."

"Thank you. When you went in to see Luigi Dinelli, what did you both observe?"

"Luigi... I mean... Mr. Dinelli...was dead." Banner looked down and then back at the D.A. "I could see he wasn't breathin'."

"And then you called the police."

"That's right."

"Thank you, Mr. Banner." Burger turned to Mason. "Your witness, counselor."

As Burger sat down, Mason got up and slowly walked over to Banner. He stood in front of the witness box, leaning right up against the rail. The attorney stared at the witness for several seconds, then spun around and looked out across the audience, finding Maddie Baker. He remained at the witness box, this time with his back pressed to the rail, still staring at Baker.

Perry Mason then spun around again, stared at Banner and said out loud. "No questions".

After Burger got Maddie Baker to provide similar testimony – and after Mason very quickly followed that with "no questions", the D.A. called agent Walt Smathers to the stand.

Burger said, "Now, Agent Smathers, you were assigned to guard the Dinelli compound?"

"Yes, sir. Me and eight other agents."

"You were situated by the front entrance, where the so-called outdoor escalator is?"

"That's right. The other agents were scattered around the perimeter of the compound, mostly at the bottom of the hill."

"I see. What was the nature of your duties and those of the other guards?"

"We made sure that no intruders made their way onto the compound up on the hill. The A.G. was very specific about that."

"Did you serve another function, Agent Smathers?"

Now Smathers looked uncomfortable and tugged at his collar. "Well, yeah, when there *were* visitors, we had to frisk them."

"*Frisk* them? Meaning what?"

"Well, you know. Go through their pockets and make sure they weren't bringing anything up to the compound."

Burger was clearly agitated. "Agent Smathers, please be specific. For what kinds of 'things' did you frisk visitors?"

"Well, such as a weapon. Like a gun."

The D.A. was all but shouting now. "On the evening of Luigi Dinelli's murder, were there any visitors?"

"Sure, Inspector Henderson and Clark Kent."

Burger looked at the judge. "Your honor, let the record show that the witness is referring to William J. Henderson of the Metropolis police department, seated behind Mr. Mason in the courtroom, and the defendant, Clark Kent."

The judge responded, "So noted."

The D.A. turned back to the witness. "Now, Agent Smathers. Were Inspector Henderson and Clark Kent the *only* visitors that evening?"

"Well, yeah, until the police arrived later."

"And what happened when Henderson and Kent arrived?"

Smathers got fidgety all of a sudden. "Well, we talked for a bit and then Henderson and me noticed that Kent was gone."

"What do you mean – gone?"

"Uh, well, we heard the outdoor escalator crank up and when we didn't see Kent, we both assumed he was on it, going up to the house."



"Before Kent disappeared, did you have the opportunity to check him – *frisk* him, as you put it?"

Smathers tugged at his collar and looked at his lap. "No, sir."

Burger raised his voice again. "I'm sorry, Agent Smathers, but I didn't hear you. Please speak up."

Smathers looked up and at the courtroom. "No, Kent was gone before I had a chance to frisk him."

"So, Clark Kent may have been carrying a weapon up to the Dinelli compound."

*"Objection!"* It was Mason, standing. "Mr. Burger is making a conclusion not based on facts and is leading the witness."

"Sustained." The judge turned to the D.A. "Mr. Burger, you will refrain from such statements and questions."

"I apologize, your honor. Agent Smathers, in your written testimony you said that you heard gunshots some time after Clark Kent went up to the Dinelli home."

"That's right."

"What happened next?"

"Henderson and me were worried - we wanted to go up to the house. We pressed a button to call the escalator car, but nothing happened."

"Please explain what you mean."

"Well, the outdoor escalator works on a set of controls. They're on a panel at the bottom station. There's a similar panel at the upper station at the top of the hill near the house. If the escalator car is at the top of the house and you're at the bottom, you can call it to come down by pressing at button at the bottom station."

"But when you tried, Agent Smathers, the car didn't come down?"

"That's right. Like I said, Henderson and me were frantic, because we had heard the gunshots."

"What did you do?"

"We couldn't climb up any other way - it's too steep. We waited and then figured we'd take my car down to the Pacific Highway and drive up the hill. That would've taken an hour or so, but it was the only way up to the house if the escalator wasn't working."

"And then?"

"As we turned to walk to my car, we heard the escalator come on, meaning that the car was coming down. When it got to the bottom, Kent, the defendant, stepped off."

"And did Clark Kent say anything after he returned from the house?"

"No, not much. He seemed kinda distracted." Smathers paused and then said, "Oh, he did say that he wanted to get away from there as soon as possible."

Burger smiled. "How very interesting. Please go on."

"Then I got on my car's radio phone to call a taxi for him and Henderson. It took fifteen minutes for it to come."

"Thank you, Agent Smathers." Burger turned to Mason. "Your witness."

The judge looked at Clark's attorney. "Do you wish to question the witness, counselor?"

"Not at this time, your honor."

Burger, who was still standing, said, "In that case, I now call Inspector William J. Henderson to the stand."

### ACT 3

**CLARK LOOKED BLANKLY AT HENDERSON**, who had slowly gotten up and was clearly reluctant to take the stand as he strode over to the witness box. After the Inspector was sworn in and sat down, Burger approached the bench. “Your honor, I request that Inspector Henderson be declared a hostile witness.”

The judge responded, “Why is that, Mr. Burger?”

“Your honor, William Henderson is a colleague of Clark Kent’s. My understanding is that they have shared a number of situations back in Metropolis related to police matters. The prosecution has determined that their closeness may result in an unintended or even *intended* bias with regard to the defendant. As a result, I consider him a hostile witness.”

“So noted. Please proceed, Mr. Burger.”

Burger walked over to the witness box. “Inspector Henderson, I want you to understand that despite my declaring you as a hostile witness, the court has the utmost respect for you and your work in Metropolis.”

Henderson nodded but said nothing.



The D.A. continued, “Now, Inspector, please describe the events of the evening Luigi Dinelli was murdered.”

Henderson summarized the meeting with Tragg, his kidnapping at gunpoint and subsequent rescue by Superman at the harbor front. “I then met up with Kent at our hotel. He’d been given a note by the hotel clerk.”

Burger then walked over to the court reporter sitting by the judge and retrieved an envelope. He then turned to the judge. “This note was placed in evidence for the court, your honor”. He then returned to Henderson, having taken the note out of the envelope. “Did the defendant make you aware of the contents of the note after he received it, Inspector?”

“Yes.”

The D.A. smiled, handed it to Henderson and asked, “And would you please read to the court what is written on the note, Inspector?”

Henderson paused and looked across to Clark. His eyes said, *sorry, Kent, but I don’t have a choice*. Then he looked at the piece of paper. “It says ‘Kent, if you want to

prevent Superman's greatest secret from being revealed, meet me at my home tonight. Come alone."

There was a murmur from the courtroom. Burger asked, "And is there a signature or name on the note telling you who it was from?"

The cop's voice was testy. "You know who this was from, Burger. It's the whole reason we're here." Henderson waved the paper. "The note was from Luigi Dinelli."

Burger took the paper from Henderson and placed it back in the envelope. "So, Inspector, Luigi Dinelli sent a note to Clark Kent threatening to expose Superman's greatest secret."

Henderson shrugged. "It sure seemed that way."

Burger's eyes widened as he offered a slight smile. "And Inspector, what do *you* think Superman's greatest secret is?"

Henderson grinned. "I don't know. You'll have to ask Superman."

Laughter from the courtroom prompted the judge to bang his gavel. Burger continued, "Now Inspector, some time ago you and the defendant were preparing to come to Los Angeles as advisors for a Hollywood movie called 'Czar of the Underworld', is that right?"

"That's right."

"But before you left Metropolis, you and Clark Kent were in his office at the newspaper where he works, the *Daily Planet*."

"Yes."

"And while you were there, Clark Kent received a long distance call from none other than Luigi Dinelli."

"That's correct."

"What happened, then, Inspector?"

"Well, the two of them spoke over the phone, and then suddenly shots were fired through an open window into Kent's office."

"Was anyone hurt?"

"No. Whoever fired at us was a lousy shot."

"Do you know who the intended victim was?"

Mason called out. "*Objection.* The district attorney is soliciting an opinion, not facts."

Burger spun around and looked at Clark's attorney. "May I remind counselor that Inspector Henderson is a hostile witness and as such leading questions are permitted."

The judge called out. "Overruled."

The D.A. turned back to Henderson. "Now, Inspector, did you, as a member of the Metropolis police force, ascertain who the intended victim of the gunfire was?"

Henderson knew where Burger was going and dodged the question. "My men and I determined that it was one of Luigi Dinelli's hired hands that did the shooting."

"With all due respect, Inspector, that's not what I asked." He paused to look at the defense table and then turned back to the witness. "Clark Kent was the target, wasn't he?" Burger raised his voice and then turned to look directly at the defendant. "In fact, didn't Luigi Dinelli threaten Clark Kent on the phone, just before the shots were fired?"

"He threatened *both* of us. Dinelli said that both Kent and I wouldn't get out of California alive if the 'Czar of the Underworld' film was made."

The D.A. was angry. "Inspector, you're leaving out key information. As I understand it from your *own* police reports, Luigi Dinelli's man had plenty of opportunities to shoot you, but didn't start firing until he had a clear shot of Clark Kent."

Humbly, Henderson shrugged and said, "That's correct."

Burger continued to grill the Inspector. "Would you say that Clark Kent, the defendant, held a grudge against Luigi Dinelli because of the attempt on his life?"

"If he did hold a grudge, I couldn't tell." Henderson shook his head. "No, I wouldn't say that. Kent's a tough guy. It didn't rattle him one bit."

Now the D.A. calmed his demeanor. "I see. Now, as I understand it, when you and the defendant arrived in Los Angeles for the filming of that movie, Luigi Dinelli's men trapped you in a garage with an apparent intent to kill you both."

"That's right, but we managed to escape."

"And soon after you arrived in Los Angeles more recently, one of Luigi Dinelli's men tried to shoot you and dump you in the harbor. Isn't that true?"

"Yes."

"And soon after you were rescued, Clark Kent learned about this, giving him even more reasons to want revenge towards Luigi Dinelli."

Mason stood up. "Objection. Your honor, it's one thing to lead the witness. It's another to make up stories based on supposition."

The judge said, "Sustained. Mr. Burger, please stick with your interview of the witness, please."

"My apologies, your honor." He looked at the attorney. "Mr. Mason." He then looked at the judge. "I just have one more set of questions for this witness." Burger turned back to Henderson. "Now, Inspector, did you hear gunfire coming from the home of Luigi Dinelli on the night he was murdered?"

"Yes, I believe I heard two gunshots."

"Was Clark Kent, the defendant, with you at the time?"

"No, he had already gone up to see the victim."

"Yes, you already explained the note that Clark Kent received from Luigi Dinelli, requesting that they meet. Now, after your heard the gunshots, what happened next?"

"Soon afterwards, Kent came riding down the outdoor escalator. Agent Smathers and I met him at the station near the bottom of the hill."

"Did the defendant say anything when he debarked the escalator?"

"Kent seemed rather sullen and not talkative. He just wanted to head back to our hotel."

"As a matter of fact, Inspector, you characterized the defendant to his face when you saw him."

Henderson paused and once again shot an *I'm sorry* look across the courtroom to Clark. "I said to him that it looked like he just came from a funeral".

Burger smiled, slightly, and said, "Thank you, Inspector. I have no more questions."

Henderson put his hand up. "Excuse me, Mr. Burger, but can I make a remark?"

Burger nodded, and Henderson continued, "You know, I've sat where Tragg is sitting now, aiding my Metropolis D.A. more times than I want to remember. So, I can appreciate what you're trying to do and what you need to do, Mr. Burger, believe me. Now, a little while ago, you referred to Kent and me as colleagues. That's not really accurate. I'm a cop and he's a reporter. He's got his job and I have mine."

Henderson paused and then added, "But if technically Clark isn't a colleague, there's one thing he *is* to me, and that's a friend. And as my friend, I know that Clark hasn't a bone in his body that could hurt a fly. There's no way in Sam Hill that he could've murdered Luigi Dinelli, no matter what evidence you have."

The Inspector looked at Clark, who winked back with a slight smile that said *thanks*. The defendant nodded in appreciation.

Burger said, "Thank you, Inspector". He then looked at Mason. "Your witness."

Mason remained seated and nodded at Henderson. "No questions".

Burger walked over to the bench. "Your honor, with regard to the charge that Clark Kent murdered Luigi Dinelli, I believe that the prosecution has established motive on four counts. First, revenge for the attempted shooting in Metropolis. Second and third, revenge for the attempted murder of the defendant and Inspector Henderson in Los Angeles on their prior trip, and more recently, the attempted murder of the Inspector once again."

He continued. "And fourth, there was the need to silence Luigi Dinelli because of the mobster's threat to expose Superman's so-called greatest secret."

The D.A. went on. "I believe that we have identified four witnesses that placed Clark Kent at the scene of the crime, that being Josh Banner, Maddie Baker, Agent Smathers and Inspector Henderson."

Burger looked directly at Mason. "Finally, police ballistics have tied the bullets that killed Luigi Dinelli to a handgun found on the Dinelli estate, and as well our experts have identified Clark Kent's fingerprints as being *on* that same handgun."

The D.A. concluded by looking at the judge. "It is for these reasons that the prosecution feels it has more than enough evidence for Clark Kent to be put on trial, by jury, in the Los Angeles County Courthouse, for the premeditated murder of Luigi Dinelli. The prosecution therefore rests."

Burger handed the judge a manila folder. The judge looked at it and then turned his attention to Perry Mason. "Counselor, are you ready to for your defense?"

Mason stood. "Yes, your honor."

The judge looked at his watch. "Given the late hour on this Friday afternoon, I propose that you begin your defense first thing Monday morning."

Mason said, "Your honor, if it please the court, I would like to call one witness to the stand for very brief questioning."

The judge looked at the D.A. "Mr. Burger?"

Burger, sitting at his table, said, "I have no objection, your honor." He looked at the defense table and nodded. "Mr. Mason."

The judge looked at Mason. "Proceed with your defense and your witness, Mr. Mason."

Perry Mason said, deadpan, "thank you, your honor" and then, smiling at the D.A. table, "Thank you, Mr. Burger". Then he looked around the courtroom. He gazed at Josh Banner and Maddie Baker. Still staring at them, with almost a twinkle in his eye, Mason spoke, "I call Sergeant Will McAllen to the stand."

Soon, Mason was questioning the witness. "Now, Sergeant McAllen, you work for the Los Angeles police department?"

"That's right. Specifically in Ballistics."

"Thank you, Sergeant. I take it that you were the one that examined the bullets which were determined to have killed Luigi Dinelli?"

"That's correct."

"And you as well examined the alleged murder weapon, a handgun?"

"Yes."



"Sergeant McAllen, what evidence do you have that makes you conclude that the bullets which killed Luigi Dinelli came from the alleged murder weapon?"

"Well, Mr. Mason, I believe that Lt. Tragg already answered that question."

Mason smiled. "I know, Sergeant, but I'd like to hear it from you, the ballistics expert."

"Well, the bullets of the type found typically come from a handgun like the murder weapon."

"The *alleged* murder weapon."

"*Alleged* murder weapon. The bullets that killed Luigi Dinelli appear to have come from the alleged murder weapon."

"But is it possible that these bullets were fired from a different gun, perhaps *identical* to the alleged murder weapon?"

"Mr. Mason, no other weapon was found on the premises, according to Lt. Tragg."

"Please, Sergeant, answer the question."

"Yes, it's possible that the bullets were fired from a different, identical gun."

The attorney smiled. "Thank you, Sergeant. No more questions."

Mason spun and looked at Burger. "Your witness."

Burger stood, looked at Sergeant McAllen, but said, "No questions."

Then Mason looked back at the witness, who was getting up. "Oh, one more question." McAllen sat back down and the lawyer continued. "The handgun identified as the alleged murder weapon. Could it, or another one just like it, accommodate a silencer?"

"I don't understand."

"Is it possible for someone to have as an attachment to the barrel of the handgun used in the murder of Luigi Dinelli a sound suppressor known as a silencer?"

"Well, yeah. This model can accommodate a silencer."

Mason turned around to face the courtroom. He raised his voice and made eye contact with Josh Banner and Maddie Baker. "So, Sargent McAllen, isn't it possible that another handgun, including a silencer, is somewhere else on the Dinelli estate, perhaps out of sight and hence was not discovered by Lt. Tragg and his men?"

The District Attorney shot up out of his chair. "*Objection*, your honor! Mr. Mason is projecting his fantasies into this hearing."

Mason gave a wide-eyed stare at the D.A. "Fantasies, Hamilton?" Then he offered a big grin. "Hardly. But I'll withdraw my question." As he spoke, the lawyer once again scanned the courtroom, and thought he detected unease amongst by Josh

Banner and Maddie Baker. Again, giving each a measure of eye contact, Mason said, "No more questions, your honor."

The judge spoke. "This court will resume nine o'clock Monday morning." He banged his gavel.

Later that evening, Perry Mason, Paul Drake and Della Street convened, sitting in their usual chairs in the attorney's ninth floor office. Mason and Drake held Chesterfields while Street held a pen and memo pad.

Drake spoke. "Do you think your bait will catch some fish, Perry?"

"I can't be certain, Paul." He took a drag from his cigarette. "All I know is what Kent told me about the night Dinelli was murdered."

Drake said, "But Kent's fingerprints are on the murder weapon. You can't argue with that."

Perry raised his eyebrows. "Now you're sounding like the prosecution, Paul."

"Sorry, but this talk of another gun seems pretty wild."

"No, Paul, it's not – not if you think about it. Let's assume, as I do, that Kent did not shoot Dinelli."

Della jumped into the exchange. "Well, then it could mean that Clark Kent put a hand of his on a gun that someone else later fired."

Perry turned to his secretary. "Not a bad idea, Della, but then that someone likely would have smudged Kent's fingerprints such that they would be all but unrecognizable."

Drake said, "But the fingerprint guy's written testimony said that he had clear prints of Kent's on the handle of the gun that Tragg's men found."

Mason responded, "That's right, Paul. And that tells me that no one else gripped the handle of the gun with Kent's fingerprints, and to the best of my knowledge, you can't easily fire a gun unless you're firmly gripping the handle."

Della said, "So that's why you think there was another gun used to kill Dinelli?"

Mason stared at a pencil he was now holding with two hands in front of him. "It's as good a theory as any, Della."

Drake asked, "So that's why you put on that demonstration today – tossing out the idea of another handgun that Tragg and his men didn't find."

Della said, "The real murder weapon."

Mason spoke. "Exactly. I especially wanted that to sink in to the two witnesses that I think lied on the stand and implicated Kent. I'm hoping they get nervous and one of them tries to find a better hiding place for this second gun."

The P.I. said, "But Perry, unless both of them were born yesterday, you'd have to believe that they wiped any fingerprints from the gun, assuming it even exists."

"I realize that, Paul, but even simply locating and retrieving a second gun can only help our cause."

Drake whistled. "Well, I'll go along with anything you want, Perry, but this seems like a doozy of a long shot to me. I hope you're not pinning all your hopes on it."

Mason half-grinned. "You should know me better than that, Paul."

At that moment there was a knock at the front door. "Della, would you mind seeing who that is?" Then he smiled. "I'm guessing that Gertie has left for her movie premier."

Mason's secretary nodded, rose, and walked over to open the door. She said, "Oh, Inspector. Won't you come in?"

Henderson nodded, said "thanks", and then was standing in front of Mason's desk. He nodded at Drake and then sheepishly looked at Perry Mason, who pointed to Della's chair and said, smiling, "Won't you sit down, Inspector?"

The cop obliged the attorney and sat. Della pulled over another chair and sat alongside Henderson, who spoke. "Mason, I feel a little funny coming here."

"Oh? Why is that, Inspector?"

"Please call me Bill."

Mason smiled. "That's fine – we're all on a first name basis here." Then the attorney offered a more serious face. "So tell us, Bill – what's on your mind?"

"Well, you know that I was a witness for the prosecution, of all things."

"Yes, Bill, but you were a *hostile* witness. You testified against your will."

"That's true, Perry. But I still was rather incriminating with regard to Kent."

Perry answered, "Nonsense. You did what you had to, and you spoke the truth. That's all that counts."

"Still, I still feel – guilty – so to speak – and came here to see if there was something I could do to help the case."

Then Mason grinned. "Your timing is impeccable, Bill. There most certainly *is* something you—" he then turned to look at Paul Drake "and Paul, can do."

Drake chimed in. "Oh? And what's that?"

Mason, still grinning just a little. "Remember the fishing trip you alluded to a few minutes ago, Paul?"

Drake said, "Oh brother..."

Meanwhile, Clark Kent gazed out through the four-by-four barred window of his fourth floor cell that had an east-facing view towards an alley and low-rise buildings of downtown L.A. He looked with his amazing vision through the structures and beyond - past the city of Pasadena, the San Gabriel mountains and then far to the east, well across Arizona, the Grand Canyon, the Colorado River and Great Plains, across Kansas, the Mississippi River and the Midwest, and the Appalachians - all the way to Metropolis.

Clark peered inside the *Daily Planet* building and could see his friends, Lois Lane and Jimmy Olsen packing up at their respective desks to leave for the day. He could clearly see their sullen looks - it made him feel a bit guilty to know why. After all, Clark didn't want to be the *cause* of anyone's unhappiness - except perhaps those considered the "bad guys".

The jailed reporter continued his far-off gaze even while one of the guards walked by his cell. But when the guard returned, Clark glanced around and saw that this time he was escorting a familiar face with him: the man that had tried to murder Henderson at the behest of Luigi Dinelli. The thug, who Clark learned was named Brad Baxter, looked ahead and didn't bother glancing in Kent's direction.

Out of curiosity, wondering where Baxter was being taken, Clark allowed his x-ray eyes to follow the prisoner down the corridor of cells and all the way to the partitioned section where prisoners and visitors met.

Then, still via the power of his x-ray vision, Clark watched as Baxter's visitor sat down. It was Jim "Mad Dog" Finnigan. The two men picked up their respective phones, and with that, Clark Kent homed his incredible super-hearing on their conversation.

*The prisoner chuckled, "You look like you ran into a meat grinder, Mad Dog."*

*Baxter glanced at each hand. "These? They're nuttin'."*

*Baxter said, "So you here to bail me out, Mad Dog?"*

*"You think any judge is gonna allow bail when you tried to murder a copper, even if he was from out of town?"*

*"So why're ya here?"*

*Finnigan replied, "I know your cell is near that nosy reporter, Kent. You must enjoy watching him squirm."*

*Baxter shook his head. "I'm more worried about me, not some lousy hack. So why're ya here?"*

*"Orders from the boss."*

*Baxter squinted. "The boss? He's dead."*

*"The **new** boss, ya dummy."*

*"Oh. So what of it?"*

*"The boss is gettin' nervous."*

*"So what? Why should I care?"*

*Finnigan said, "That big shot lawyer Mason is making noises about something."*

*Baxter stood. "Big deal. I'm getting' up now, Mad Dog. I got my own problems."*

*Finnigan waved at his fellow thug, motioning for him to sit. "Hold yer horses. I'm gettin' to the part where your problems'll be solved."*

*Baxter slowly sat back down. "OK, I'm listenin', but not fer long."*

*Finnigan continued, "Like I said, The boss – the new boss - is gettin' nervous. That Mason guy said something about a second gun. It's like he knows about it."*

*"I'm listenin'."*

*Finnigan said, "You know the Dinelli property like the back of your hand."*

*"Yeah. Spent a lot of time there."*

*"Well, they still got the place surrounded by agents."*

*"Yeah, so?"*

*"So me 'n the boss heard you know a secret way in."*

*Baxter shrugged. "Why do you need a way in? Dinelli ain't there no more."*

*Finnigan smiled. "Let's just say that the boss wants me to find something, and if you tell me how to sneak past the guards, there'll be a way to get you outta here."*

At that moment, a guard, named Tanner, came by Clark's cell to bring fresh linens and a towel for cell. He unlocked the gate and entered. "Hello, Clark. How's it

going?" The guard and the reporter had built a rapport in the short time Clark was there.

But Clark, now standing in a corner of the cell trying to focus on the conversation several yards away between Baxter and Finnigan, said nothing.

Tanner looked at Clark. "What's the matter, Clark? You seem like you're in a trance." He then took the old linen off the cot, not looking at the prisoner.

Clark responded, "Oh, sorry Tanner. Just thinking about something."

Tanner replaced the pillowcase, and then as he was retrieving a soiled towel, replacing it with the fresh one, said, "You're a good man, Kent. If you killed that mobster, you did us all a service."

The distraction was enough for Clark to miss the end of Baxter's conversation with Finnigan, but he had heard enough. He turned to Tanner, who was leaving. "Thanks, Tanner. But I didn't kill anyone."

Tanner, who had closed and locked the cell door, said. "I didn't think so, either. Good night, Clark."

As Tanner left, Baxter and his guard escort returned down the corridor. This time Baxter looked at Clark but with a somewhat empty stare. Clark didn't know what to make of it.

Four hours later it was "lights out". The only faint illumination came from the far end of the corridor of cells that led to a guard's station. Meanwhile, Clark Kent was fast asleep on his cot, under the cover of a woolen blanket. At least, that's what a guard or other passerby would have thought, seeing the outline of a body on the cot and even the shadow of a head resting on a pillow.

Anyone trying to rouse the seemingly dormant figure, though, would get no response from the blanket, sheet and towel positioned to make it look like someone was sleeping. As well, anyone looking very closely at the window bars of the cell might have noticed a slight bend to the middle ones that did not seem typical.

At the same time many miles away in the hills west of Los Angeles, two men strode carefully amongst the dirt, rocks and fallen leaves of the Dinelli compound several yards from the house. Each carried a flashlight that alternated between scanning the ground and the woods surrounding them.

"I have to say, Henderson, it's lucky you came along when you did to Mason's office."

"Why, Drake? So you wouldn't come here alone?" The cop grinned.

The P.I. chuckled. "Not quite. The Attorney General is still surrounding this place with Feds, at least until Kent's trial is over. Knowing that agent friend of yours sure helped us get a free pass to come up here."

"Well, Smathers isn't exactly giving us a free pass. He did say that if we found something, that we have to bring him in on it. I'm guessing he wants to make up for not having frisked Kent."

"*If* we find something is right. This terrain is a mighty big haystack for the needle we want."

"Drake, you and I aren't even supposed to *be* here. If we *do* find something, your D.A. will claim we planted it."

"Seems like you've gotten to know Hamilton Burger pretty well in such a short time."

"Oh, I've worked with all sorts of district attorneys. Say, I understand your guy Mason has won virtually every case against Burger."

"Well, let's just say that the ones Perry didn't win occurred on his off-nights. But there weren't many of those."

Suddenly there was a "swoop" noise and Henderson stopped in his tracks. Drake stopped, too, and said, "If that was a bird, it was the oddest sounding one I ever heard."

The glow of Drake's flashlight partly illuminated Henderson's smile. "No, that wasn't a bird, Drake. And if I'm right, it's something that doesn't even have wings."

From out of the shadows and into the glow from Drake's and Henderson's flashlights stepped Superman. "Good evening, gentlemen."

Henderson spoke. "Well, this is a treat, Superman. At least this time I'm not in danger." He glanced at Paul Drake, who was clearly standing there dumbfounded, and said, "Oh, Superman, this is a private investigator, Paul Drake."

Superman took two steps over to the P.I. and reached out a hand. "Nice to meet you, Drake. I understand that you assist the attorney, Perry Mason."

Drake stood in awe of the powerful hand and gave it a brief shake. "The pleasure's all mine, sir." He then pulled hand back, looking at it, saying, "I don't know that I'll be washing this anytime soon."

Superman chuckled and looked at Henderson. "Well, I'd love to chat, but I've a feeling that the three of us are here for the same important reason."

Henderson spoke. "You mean, you know about the trial – and Kent?"

The Man of Steel grinned. "Inspector, I'm surprised at you."

The cop held up a hand. "All right, I know. I should've realized that you know *everything* about this case."

Drake looked at Superman. "So, you actually *know* what we're looking for?"

Superman said, "I think so, yes." Then he held up a hand. "Shush. Someone's coming."

Drake said, "I didn't hear anything."

Superman said, urgently, "Shut those beams – *now!*"

Jim "Mad Dog" Finnigan had come up the side of the hill facing Malibu. It was a steep climb, and his recent injuries made the trek more difficult, but he had finally made it to a level section of the terrain in a ravine. In order to avoid being spotted by the agents below, he had kept his flashlight turned off. But now that he was out of sight of them, he turned it back on.

Pretty soon he had found exactly what he had come for. The boss had told him precisely where it had been thrown. Before long, he had put each object in his backpack and headed back towards the steep incline leading down to Malibu and the Pacific Highway.

Finnigan shone the light directly ahead one more time. Soon he would need to shut it for the descent. But as he looked straight ahead, “Mad Dog” couldn’t believe his eyes. The target of the beam of the light was clearly from a uniform – a uniform with a big “S” inside of a pentagon shape.



“Mad Dog” had seen the emblem before back in Metropolis – worn by *Superman*.

“Hello, Finnigan. Fancy running into you here so far from home.”

The thug threw down his flashlight and spun around, running back towards the ravine. He took two steps and ran right into The Man of Steel.

“I get around pretty fast, Finnigan.” Superman grabbed him by his shoulders and then, commenting on the bandages adorning “Mad Dog’s” hands, said, “Say, you’re looking a little worse for wear.” The Man of Steel smiled, thinking back to the damage inflicted by Clark Kent on Finnigan back in the restaurant a few days earlier. “Don’t worry, I’ll be gentle.” Then he flew “Mad Dog” up and out of the ravine to the top of the hill where Paul Drake and Bill Henderson were waiting.

Henderson shone his light in Finnigan’s face. “Well, well. It’s been a few years, eh, ‘Mad Dog’?”

Finnigan said, “I ain’t done nuthin’ wrong. You can’t keep me here.”

Drake spoke. “I think you *have* and I think we *can*, Finnigan.”

Superman scanned Finnigan’s backpack and pointed. “They’re in there, gentlemen. The gun and the silencer.” He grabbed the backpack, held it high and scanned it. “But I’m afraid there’s bad news.”

Henderson said, “What’s wrong, Superman? I thought you said you could see the gun and the silencer in the bag with your x-ray vision.”

“Oh, they’re in there, but they’re wiped clean – there’re no fingerprints on them.”

Drake said, “There goes Perry’s last hope.”

Angry, Superman turned to Finnigan. “Did you wipe them off?” Then he grabbed the thug by his shirt and all but lifted him into the air. “Who are you protecting, Finnigan?”

The hood, unfazed, said nothing.

Henderson then said, "Finnigan, you're Dinelli's point man. Or *were*. Who are you working for now?"

As Superman eased the thug down, Drake answered, "I can tell you some of it, Inspector. Perry Mason had me dig into the whole Dinelli crime family. He's working with Brad Baxter."

"That's the mug that tried to do me in at the harbor", said Henderson.

The P.I. continued, "Baxter and Finnigan may have worked for Dinelli, but they both have ties back East in Metropolis and Chicago. Everything my men and I dug up suggests that it wasn't only Dinelli pulling their strings."

Superman, still holding onto Finnigan once again aimed his anger at the thug. "*Talk!* Whose gun is in the bag?"

"Nuthin' that belongs to any of you. And I ain't done nuthin' wrong, so you all need to let me go. Besides, none of you are the law here in California."

Henderson responded with a lie. "First of all 'Mad Dog', I've been deputized by the L.A police." Then he nodded at The Man of Steel. "And *Superman* here is effectively a lawman via a presidential proclamation. Of course, you wouldn't know that because you don't read the newspapers."

Drake poured it on. "That's right, Finnigan. We can have you arrested for trespassing, theft, and tampering with evidence."

Superman looked at Henderson. "What do you say, Inspector? Minimum ten years in prison for that?"

The Metropolis cop chuckled. "Probably fifteen to twenty."

The P.I. continued. "Plus, a lot of your prison roommates might not be so fond of you having worked for a con that squeals on other cons."

Finnigan said, "But he's dead. Luigi, that is."

Henderson said, "That's even worse. Now there's no one to protect you, in prison, that is."

"Mad Dog" finally looked panicked. "OK, OK. I'll make you a deal." He looked at the trio of men in front of him.

Superman shook his head. "Don't look at me – if you know anything about me, Finnigan, you know I don't *make* deals."

Finnigan looked frantically at all three men and then finally said, "Listen, I don't want to do any prison time. Maybe I can make a deal with the A.G."

Henderson and Drake looked at each other, and then the P.I. said, "Go on, Finnigan."

Drake said, "I guess what Henderson and I are trying to say is – even if Superman won't make a deal, we're listening."

Superman interjected, mindful that he needed to return to his jail cell lest someone discover that Clark Kent was missing. "Gentlemen, I'd love to stay and hear this, but I'm needed elsewhere". He held the backpack up. "Fingerprints or not, this still contains evidence." Then he handed the backpack to Henderson. "You should get this down to your agent Smathers."

Henderson looked quizzical. "How did *you* know about Smathers, Superman?"

Superman, realizing his slight slip-up, said, "Well, that's not important at the moment. Now, I assume that you two can take care of our friend Mr. Finnigan?"

Drake said, "Two against one, Superman, I think we'll be fine."

Henderson added, "Drake's right, Superman. Besides, Finnigan would rather talk about a deal than try and escape, at this point, right, 'Mad Dog'?"

The thug shook his head in agreement.

Superman said, "It was nice meeting you, Drake." He nodded at Henderson, said, "And now, if you'll excuse me..." and then took a running leap before soaring above the forested hills, into the starry sky.

Drake watched in awe and Henderson saw it, saying, "You know, I've seen him take off a hundred times, but still haven't gotten tired of it."

The P.I. then shone his flashlight at Finnigan as he grabbed one of his shoulders. "Now, let's head down the hill to Agent Smathers and talk about that deal..."

While Paul Drake, Inspector Bill Henderson and Superman were at the Dinelli compound, Perry Mason sat in his apartment meticulously studying transcripts and other documents from the trial.

Perry sat at a desk piled high with manila folders. He was concerned about the way the proceedings were going. Even if Paul Drake and Bill Henderson came up with the theorized second gun, it still might not be enough to stop Burger, especially if there were no prints on it. He needed something else to damage the D.A.'s case – to contradict the testimony of Josh Banner and Maddie Baker, especially.

*But what?*

Much of what he read came from Inspector Henderson. It included testimony from his and Kent's prior visit to Los Angeles – their first encounter with Dinelli. The Metropolis cop described in detail the events of their arrival in L.A. through the shooting of Frank Dinelli's by his brother at the movie studio.

Perry was intrigued by the passages describing how the Inspector and Clark escaped capture by Luigi Dinelli in a garage. Henderson had relayed, in the transcript, that Clark used a trick to escape that "Superman taught him" and how Superman managed to be on the scene at the Hollywood studio where Henderson and Kent were – except that Clark wasn't on the scene when Frank Dinelli was gunned down.

He then examined the transcript of Inspector Henderson's written testimony he had given before the trial began that detailed his experience at the hands of Brad Baxter and Superman's rescue. It described how The Man of Steel arrived in the nick of time and then stopped Baxter from escaping, including how he ripped the door off of the thug's car. Perry smiled just a little at the thought of that.

The attorney then stared at another transcript of Henderson's, this one from the trial in which the Metropolis cop read aloud the note that Clark Kent received from Luigi Dinelli and ran over it dozens of times in his mind.

*Kent, if you want to prevent Superman's greatest secret from being revealed, meet me at my home tonight.*

Superman's greatest secret. What could that be? His weakness? Something that could pierce his great power of indestructability? Perhaps something that could destroy Superman?

*Perhaps,* thought Perry.

Or could there be another secret? The secret of who Superman is, as a civilian? *Perhaps a secret identity.* Mason thought back to the visit by *Daily Planet* chief Perry White, referring to Kent as being the "only one who could contact Superman".

Perry again went through the folders and transcripts. He was at an impasse. Then, as he put some papers back in one of the folders, a small cellophane packet slipped out and onto his desk. The attorney knew what it was and opened it. Inside was a piece of paper with an imprint of Clark Kent's fingerprints. All defendants were required to make four imprints – two to be on file at the courthouse, one for the prosecution and one for the defense.

Mason stared at the fingerprints and then opened a desk drawer. In it was a magnifying glass sitting with an old fingerprint kit he had used when he was just starting out in the field. Perry took the magnifying glass and studied Clark's fingerprints.

*Nothing unusual there. Fingerprints like anyone else's.* He put the magnifying glass down and inserted the imprinted paper back in the packet. Then he put the packet back in the folder.

It was past midnight, now Sunday morning. By the time he'd next wake up, there'd be barely twenty-four hours before he'd have to present the heart of his defense. As Perry Mason drifted off to sleep the pieces of information he had reviewed that evening swirled around in his head like random ingredients thrown together.

Four hours later, with the city of Los Angeles still slumbering, Perry Mason's eyes suddenly shot open. He then reached over to switch on a lamp on a night table next to his bed before propping up his pillow, sinking his head against it ... to think.

Yes, it was a crazy idea. But it might be the key to everything. The L.A. lawyer picked up the phone to make sure he'd be able to scour the possible evidence he needed.

Then he got dressed and headed down to the apartment garage to his car in the wee hours of the morning.



Willie Marks had worked the graveyard shift of the police evidence impoundment section for almost fifteen years. He wouldn't trade it for any other job. It was quiet and it allowed him to read his seemingly endless supply of detective paperbacks. Once in a blue moon a sleepless lawyer, prosecutor or even a police detective would show up during his shift, but otherwise it was as peaceful and quiet as a library.

Despite getting a phone call barely an hour earlier, it was still somewhat surprising to Marks when there was a tap on the door to his section, a huge storage facility in a building adjacent to police headquarters. He got out from behind his desk and opened the door, recognizing the face immediately.

"Perry Mason. Well, I'll be. You sure didn't waste any time getting' down here."

Mason smiled. "Hello Willie."

Marks opened the door wide. "What brings you here at" he turned to look at a clock on the wall "five thirty on a Sunday morning?"

"Oh, something that just couldn't wait for Monday, Willie." Mason had broken out into an even bigger grin.

Willie Marks saw that the lawyer was carrying a box. "You fingerprint huntin'? Thought you was a lawyer, not a gumshoe, Mason. You got that Paul Drake to do all yer investigatin'."

"Well, let's just say that sometimes I need to do my own ... investigatin'."

"Let me brew a fresh pot o' coffee. It's from beans I get from a farmer out near San Bernardino – not that bitter police grade stuff."

The lawyer paused and then said, "You know, I don't think I can turn down an offer like that, Willie. But first, why don't I get started."

Perry described what he was looking for. Willie then led him to the back of his section. It had a high ceiling, like a garage, and was filled with cars in various conditions. Marks checked a clipboard he had taken with him and soon found what Mason was looking for.

"Here she is. Brought in the other day."

Mason studied the car but said nothing as Willie Marks added, "Sure I can't help you with that?"

"No, thanks Willie, but if you're still making that coffee, I'll take it black."

After Marks scurried off, Perry got out his fingerprint kit. He recalled Henderson's written transcript of how Superman had ripped off the door of the car, and went to work. Ten minutes into it, Marks came back with a mug of coffee. Mason thanked him and the attendant went back to his office. After three gulps of coffee, the lawyer was even more energized and focused than before. Nearly an hour after he had arrived, Mason had lifted several sets of prints from the driver's door, both from the body of it and the frame.

He packed up his kit and then, after thanking Willie Marks, headed back home. Once back in the confines of his den, Mason got out his magnifying glass, hoping to make the find of the century – or confirm that he had wasted his time.

Just after noon that Sunday, Clark Kent and his attorney once again sat in one of the private areas reserved by the L.A. County Jail for lawyers and their clients. Mason explained to Clark that the second gun had been found and the encounter with “Mad Dog” Finnigan.

“The trouble is, Kent, the gun was wiped clean of any prints.” said Mason.

“I see.” Clark made it sound like he didn’t know.

“That’s why I’m here. You see, I think that Burger still has enough of a case. Despite the holes I’ve poked in it and still plan to, tomorrow, we need an ace in the hole.”

“Now you’re finally talking, Mason.”

“Oh?”

“Yes. You can put Banner and Baker on the stand. *Grill* them. You *know* they’re lying.”

“Yes, I believe they are, Kent, but they could *continue* lying no matter how much I interrogate them.”

“Then there’s only one ace in the hole – as you put it – left for us.”

“And what’s that?”

“You need to put *me* on the witness stand as I had asked from the beginning. I can tell the *truth* – the *real* story of what happened that night.”

The lawyer gave Clark an intense stare and then said, angrily, “Really? Don’t you think you should first tell *me* the complete story of what happened, Kent?”

Clark was momentarily stunned but ignored Perry’s comment. He then repeated his request, this time more vehemently. “Listen, Mason. Like you said – it’s our ace in the hole - it may be all I’ve – *we’ve* – got left. You *must* put me on the stand!”



The attorney shook his head. “I can’t do that, Kent. Burger will rip you to shreds.”

Clark smiled and adjusted his glasses. “Oh, I doubt that.”

Mason shook his head once again. “No, he’ll do just that. Hamilton is the best I know, despite his record against me. He’ll do just enough to insure that you’re

handed over for a trial by jury.” Clark said nothing as his attorney continued. “And we both know how bad a thing that would be – no only for you.”

Clark twisted his head. “What do you mean, ‘not only for me’?”

Mason walked over to a small barred window that looked out at the streets of L.A. facing northwest. In the distance he could see the famous Hollywood sign sitting on Mount Lee in the Santa Monica Mountains. He stared for a moment, deep in thought and then turned around to look at Kent with a slight smile. “Oh, I think you *know* what I’m referring to.”

A chill went up Clark Kent’s spine, something that rarely happened to him. “Actually, I don’t, Mason.”

Perry Mason again looked out the barred window but continued talking to his client. “You know, Kent, it’s been several days since *Superman* was last sighted in Metropolis. At least, that’s what I’ve read. I understand that its residents typically see him flying above the city almost on a daily basis.”

Clark said half-heartedly, “What does that have to do with *me*, Mason?”



Then the attorney spun around and took a few steps towards his client. His whole face softened, as did the tone of his voice. “Clark... I’ve gotten to know you pretty well over these past few days.” Mason paused and then said, “You’re a good man. And I know that you’re *more* than just a good reporter. *Much* more.”

The look on his attorney’s face and the realization of his words hit Clark like a thunderbolt. He let the words hang in the air and said nothing.

Perry Mason put a hand on Clark’s shoulder. “So now you have to trust me. I *know* how to move forward with your case. To *acquit* you – and *incriminate* whoever is guilty. But I need you to be *completely honest* with me.”

Clark thought back for a moment. He remembered his foster father’s words:

*“While you’re gonna be a – superman – you’re still gonna be just a man, too. And a man needs his privacy. Plus a man needs to protect his loved ones from nasty people he might cross. So you’re gonna have to keep your powers a secret - at least, you, Clark Kent, will have to keep’em a secret. I don’t know how you’re gonna do that, but people can’t know that the face of this super-powerful man is the face of you, Clark Kent.”*

But then Clark recalled his father adding, *"Still, you've grown up amongst human beings ... and in my book you **are** human. It means that you have feelings, and no doubt you'll have friends. Good, honest, close ones. And there may come a time when you'll have enough **trust** in one or two of them such that you can share this great secret of yours."*

Clark looked back at his attorney. As he did, he replayed his father's words again in his mind, and then said, "Well, Perry, if I'm going to be honest, I have to tell you that I already *knew* that the prints were wiped clean on the second gun."

"I know." Mason smiled. "I know you were there with Paul Drake and Henderson last night."

When Luigi Dinelli revealed that he knew Clark's other identity, the reporter was shocked and even panicked. But now, all Kent could feel was relief, like an immense burden had been lifted. He replied, "OK, Perry. What do you have in mind?"

Mason said, with an impish grin. "I think I know of a way to get *you* on the stand."

Moments later, after Clark Kent was back in his cell, Mason was on a pay phone in the jail complex, speaking to his secretary. "Della, remember that new address book you said you were putting together? I need you to rush it over to me at the jail. Fast as you can!"

## ACT 4

**TYPICAL SUMMER WEATHER HAD RETURNED** to Los Angeles on the Sunday before the murder trial resumed. By the time everyone reconvened at nine o'clock on Monday morning, the courtroom was already thick with hot, humid air.



In an attempt to put a dent in the stifling atmosphere, Mason requested that a skylight in the high ceiling above one corner of the courtroom be opened, and he was obliged. Several in the audience waved fans and papers in front of their faces to combat the stale air. Even Perry White, editor of the *Daily Planet*, sat there with an occasional wave of his fedora and wiping of his brow with a handkerchief.

Mason then stood with Drake and Della, who were by the defense table. The attorney spoke in a low voice, looking at the P.I. "Is your man ready, Paul?"

"He should be walking through the door any second now."

Perry then looked at his secretary. "You'd better get going Della." He then followed his request with a slight smile. She nodded and hurriedly left the courtroom.

The judge finally spoke and looked at Perry Mason. "Counselor, are you ready resume your defense?"

Mason said, "Yes, thank you, your honor. However, I require just a moment to review some notes."

"That's fine, if it will be brief, Mr. Mason." Said the judge.

Mason replied, "Yes, it will, your honor."

Mason sat down at his table next to Clark Kent. As he did so, the courtroom door opened and a man in a business suit walked in. He looked across the courtroom and then went over to Maddie Baker. The man whispered to her as the judge watched. Finally the judge said, "What is the meaning of this?"

Maddie Baker stood and sheepishly said, "Oh, excuse me, judge, but it seems that I have an urgent phone call." She turned and followed the man out the door.

Perry Mason watched Baker leave the courtroom and then put down his papers. He then called out to the courtroom audience and said, "I call Josh Banner to the stand."



Soon, with Banner in the witness box, Mason asked, "Mr. Banner, you've testified that you were present at the Dinelli residence the night Luigi Dinelli was murdered."

"That's right."

"Now, if I recall, you said that you were working in the garage when the defendant, Clark Kent, arrived, and you then showed him to the room where Luigi Dinelli was waiting."

"Yes, that's correct."

"You also testified that you then returned to your garage, and soon afterwards you heard gunshots."

"I did, yes."

"Would you please tell the court what you *did* when you heard the gunshots?"

"Well, as I explained, I ran into the house and was joined by Maddie, Maddie Baker. We—"

Mason held up a hand. "Excuse me, Mr. Banner. Just *where* was Maddie Baker when you encountered her?"

"She was in the den."

"What was she doing?"

"Uh, watching television, if I recall."

"Do you remember what she was watching?"

"*Objection! Relevance*". Burger had shot up from his chair.

Mason turned to the bench. "Your honor, I am establishing the scene of the murder and adding more color to it. I believe that this will all become relevant before long."

"Overruled. You may continue, counselor", said the judge.

The attorney turned back to the witness, who said, "To be honest, Mr. Mason, I don't remember what Maddie was watching. I had a lot more on my mind – the gunshots?"

Mason smiled. "Of course. So, what happened next, Mr. Banner?"

"Well, we both ran over to the room where Mr. Dinelli was."

"This was after you said Clark Kent had left the house."

"That's right. He was already gone."

"You say both you and Maddie Baker ran over to the room where Luigi Dinelli was last seen?"

"Yes."

"Was the door to the room closed?"

"Uh, yes, it was closed."

"So, when Clark Kent left Luigi Dinelli, the *defendant* must have closed the door."

"I don't know."

"Well, if *he* didn't, who *did*? Luigi Dinelli?"

"Well, no, of course not. So maybe Kent closed the door, after all, on his way out."

"But in written testimony from Lieutenant Tragg, it said the doorknob contained no fingerprints – not even the defendant's."

"Maybe he used a handkerchief. I wouldn't know."

"Now, who opened the door? You or Maddie Baker?"

"Uh, I don't remember. I think I did."

"You *think*? Don't you *remember*?"

"I was pretty scared, Mr. Mason. I mean, again, the gunshots."

"Oh yes, the gunshots. So you opened the door. Who went into the room first?"

"Well, *I* did – I mean, I was afraid for Maddie, I guess. I didn't know what to expect."

Meanwhile, the man that had fetched Maddie Baker from the courtroom led her to a row of phone booths in a nearby lobby. He reached into one booth, beckoned her in, and handed her the phone as she sat down before he himself left.

Baker spoke into the receiver. "Hello?"

The voice, a woman's, said, "Is this Miss Baker?"

"Speaking. What's this about? The guy said it was important."

"Oh, yes it is. Very important. So, just to confirm, is this Miss Baker?"

"I just *told* you it is. Maddie Baker."

"Thank you. It's important that you confirmed that."

"Would you *please* tell me what this is about? I'm in the middle a *trial*, see?"

"Oh, I'm *so* sorry. Yes, I'll be brief."

"Wait – how did you even find me here?"

"Oh, our organization is quite large. We employ a great many people to track down award winners."

"An award? You mean, like *money*?"

"That's right, Miss Baker - it looks like you're the recipient of a great *deal* of money."

"*Really*? How *much*? And, well, how *come*?"

"Well, according to my notes, you're supposed to receive a quarter million dollars."

"A quarter *mill*? You're *kiddin'* me. How on *Earth*?"

"Oh, I'll tell you how. Now, I believe you have relatives back East, correct?"

"Well, yeah, I do. But—"

"Do you have an uncle? A rather rich uncle?"

"I have two uncles on my mother's side. They're her brothers, but neither of them is rich. In fact one of them is in *Sing Sing*."

"Oh, I'm not referring to him, of course."

"Yeah, but the other one, Uncle Phil, he's near broke. I know that for a fact."

"Hmmm... let me look at my papers."

"A quarter mill. That's unbelievable."

"Yes, that's quite a lot of money. You should be excited. Imagine the possibilities."

"But it can't be my Uncle Phil. So *who is it?*"

"Do you have an uncle named Robert? Perhaps Bob or Robbie?"

"No. I don't even know anyone by that name. I knew a Bob in grade school."

"Oh, *no*, we're not going back that far."

"Then, what's this *about*, if it's not one of my uncles?"

"Let me re-check my documents."

After several seconds, Baker said. "I really have to get back. They might be calling me to the stand, you know."

"Oh, all right. So let's start at the top. You *did* say you're Miss Baker."

"Yes – for the *third* time!"

"Miss *Patty* Baker?"

"*No!* With an '*M*' not a '*P*'. And it's '*Maddie*', like *Madeline*!"

"You're not Miss Patty Baker?"

"*No!* I *told* ya! What's this about, anyway? *Who* are you?"

"Oh, I'm *terribly* sorry." The line went dead.

Maddie Baker then stormed out, slamming the receiver down onto the cradle, not caring that its impact caused it to bounce out and dangle in the booth. When she passed the other end of the row of phone booths, she also failed to notice that in the last one was a woman wearing a kerchief around her head, still with a phone in her hands, seemingly chatting away. Had Baker looked closely enough, she might've noticed a striking resemblance between the woman on the phone and Perry Mason's secretary.

Back in the courtroom, Mason continued to question the witness. “Now, once inside the room, you testified that you went over to Luigi Dinelli’s body.”

“That’s right.”

“So *you* approached the body first, not Miss Baker?”

“Sure. I already told you I was tryin’ to shield her from whatever happened.”

“Yes, I recall. So what did Miss Baker do? Did she *follow* you or stay by the door?”

“Uh, I don’t remember.”

“I see. And what did you do *next*?”

“Well, I looked at Luigi and could see he wasn’t breathing. There was a lot of blood, too. I figured he’d been shot.”

“And then?”

“I picked up the phone on his desk and called the police, like the lieutenant said.”

“And at that point, where was Miss Baker?”

“I don’t remember. Maybe she came over to where Luigi was layin’.”

“How did she react?”

“I think she was upset.”

“You *think*, don’t you *know*?”

“Listen, Mr. Mason. It was all pretty upsetting to me. I’m sure you can imagine. I knew Luigi for many years.”

Mason noticed that Maddie Baker had returned to the courtroom. Then, turning back to the witness, he said. “I understand, Mr. Bannon. It’s also upsetting to see a man on trial for a murder he didn’t *commit*.” Seeing that Burger was about to object, Mason looked at Banner and said, “No more questions.”

When Burger had no redirect, Mason then called Maddie Baker to the stand.

“Now Miss Baker, we’ve just heard the testimony of your colleague, Mr. Banner.”

“Well, actually, I didn’t. I was called away for something stupid.”

"Oh?" Out of the corner of his eye, Mason could tell that Burger wasn't happy. "I'm sorry to hear that. Anyway, Mr. Banner described in *detail* where he was and what he did at the time of the gunshots, and then his coming upon Luigi Dinelli's body."

"Yes, it was awful."

"I'm sure. Mr. Banner also described, as best as he could remember, where *you* were that evening."

Maddie Baker shifted uncomfortably in her seat but said nothing.

"Now, Miss Baker, with that in mind, meaning, with Mr. Banner's testimony having just been shared with the court, would you please tell us where *you* were when you heard the gunshots?"

Baker looked at Banner, seated in the courtroom. He stared back at her as if he was trying to transmit his thoughts into her mind. She replied carefully, "Well. I was. Uh. I was in the den. I was watching TV."

"Yes, that's also what Mr. Banner said." Mason turned to look at Banner, and then back at Baker. He smiled and said, "Do you recall what you were watching?"

Baker squirmed again and looked at Banner, who shook his head ever so noticeably. "Om, I think it was a comedian. Yeah, it was Milton Berle. He was pretty funny."

"And while you were watching the television you heard gunshots, did you not?"

"That's right."

"How *many* gunshots did you hear, Miss Baker? Was it *two* or *three*? Perhaps it was only *one*."

Baker looked again at Banner but then said, "Two, it was definitely two."

"I see. And what did you do *after* you heard the gunshots?"

"I was startled. I got up." She glanced back at Banner. "I went to where Luigi was."

"That's interesting. Most people would've *hidden* somewhere until they thought the coast was clear."

"Well, I—"

"Did you *run* or did you *walk* out of the den?"

Baker tried to look at Banner, but Mason shifted to block her view. She said, "I-- I moved pretty fast. I walked fast."

"Were you *alone* when you, as you put it, went to where Luigi was?"

She looked at Mason, who had shifted his position such that Baker could now see Banner. "Well, yeah, I mean, no." She looked back at Mason and then again at Banner.

Mason said calmly, "Why are you looking out at the *audience*, Miss Baker?" Then he asked, sternly. "Are you afraid that *your* story won't match Mr. Banner's?"

"No, that's silly." She paused and then said, "He was with me. We both ran into the room and found Luigi."



Mason increased the edge to his questions. "Was Luigi Dinelli *dead* when you found him?"

"I guess – I mean – I – yeah, he was dead."

"How did you *know*? Have you ever *seen* a dead man before, Miss Baker?"

Burger jumped up. "Your honor, I must protest counselor's *badgering* of the witness!"

"Sustained." The judge looked at the attorney. "Mr. Mason, perhaps you could lower the intensity of your questions."

Mason looked at the judge and hesitated for a second before responding. "I'll endeavor to do so, your honor."

Mason spun and looked at Banner. Then he turned back to the witness and broke out into a big smile. "Miss Baker, I understand that you have a hobby. Maybe even a budding profession."

Baker was surprised by the seemingly innocent question. "Oh? And just what would *that* be?"

The attorney maintained his suddenly bright demeanor. "I'm told that you're an actress."

The witness gulped as Mason continued to beam a smile at her. She finally said, "Oh, *that*. Well, I dabble in it."

"Oh, I think you do more than *dabble*, Miss Baker." Then Mason's grin became deadly serious. "I think you'd make a very *good* actress." He spun and looked at Burger. "No further questions."

The D.A., looking somewhat stunned, had no redirect. Mason then looked out at the door of the courtroom, and like clockwork, Paul Drake walked in. When he reached the attorney, Mason turned to the bench. "Your honor, a brief moment, if you please."

The judge nodded as Mason and his P.I. spoke under their breath. Then Mason turned back to the judge. "If it please the court, the defense needs two hours – no more than that, before presenting its next witness."

Looking at his watch, the judge said, "All right, counselor. We'll reconvene at one o'clock. I know I could use the long lunch break."

1 P.M. rolled around, and court was back in session. Once again, Burger and Tragg were seated at the prosecution table. Mason and Della Street sat at the defense table, sandwiching the bespectacled man known to the courtroom as the defendant.

Perry Mason stood up and announced, "I call my next witness to the stand". As he spoke, a whistling noise was heard from above. It grew louder, and then, through the skylight that had been opened hours before, two red boots emerged, followed by the astounding sight of a red, blue and yellow-costumed man that landed squarely in front of the judge with a gentle "*whoop!*"

The audience offered a combination of "*oohs*" and "*aaahs*" as the judge banged his gavel and called for order. Mason spoke. "Your honor..." he then turned to the D.A. "...and Mr. Burger, my next witness is ... *Superman*."

Burger slowly stood up from of his chair, dumbfounded, as Superman stepped over to the witness box. The court clerk got up and looked at the judge in disbelief. Then after the judge nodded, the clerk, a foot shorter than The Man of Steel, went over to him, and with one quivering hand holding a Bible, reached out, saying, "Uh, would you please r-raise your right hand and p-put the other one here, sir", he pointed to the book. Superman nodded and complied. The diminutive clerk then said, "D-do you s-swear to tell the truth - and n-nothing but the, um, truth?"

The Man of Steel responded, nodding, and with a serious face. "Yes, I do."

"State your name."

"*Superman*."



Burger, who was still standing in awe, said, "Your honor, I stand here before this great man who has done so much for so many, and at the same time I am quite reluctant but honor-bound to request that he tell us his *real* name, as I understand that the name 'Superman' is merely a nickname of sorts that is not legal for our purposes here in the courtroom."

Mason, who had been standing in front of the bench, said. "Hamilton, I, too, am in awe of this man. But I would wager that it's not necessary for him to state his real name for the court, for it is his *testimony* that is relevant and crucial to these proceedings."

The D.A. twisted his face a bit then walked over to the bench, looking at the judge, "Your honor, Mr. Mason is well-known for his theatrics, and in some ways this is no different - with all due respect." He turned to Superman, who stood with his hands folded against his chest, listening, "We need to follow procedure."



Mason looked at the judge, "Your honor, I—"



Superman silently observed the exchange and then finally interrupted by putting up a hand. "I think I can resolve this quickly, gentlemen". He turned to the bench and added, "and your honor."

Then he looked at Mason and Burger, saying, "You see, I learned of my true origins not long ago, by various means, and found out that my birth name is in fact ... *Kal-El*."

There was hum from the audience as The Man of Steel continued. "You may wish to call me that, or you can simply refer to me via my adopted name of *Superman*".

Mason looked at him and said, "Thank you ... *Superman*". He turned to the D.A. "Will that suffice, Mr. Burger?"

Burger shook his head, mumbled a “yes” and sat down.

As Superman sat down in the witness box, Mason went back to the bench. “Your honor, I now declare Superman to be a *hostile* witness.”

A murmur again pervaded the audience as the D.A. shot up out of his chair, staring in disbelief but saying nothing. The judge banged his gavel and the room quieted down. “What is the purpose of this, counselor? Surely this man” he stuck out an arm towards the witness box “cannot be considered *hostile*, for all the *good* he has done.”

Mason smiled. “No, your honor, he is not a ‘hostile’ man, but he *can* be considered a *hostile witness*. My reasoning is that he is here against his will, and therefore can be declared as such.”

The judge narrowed his expression and asked, “Mr. Mason, why do you say that ... *Superman* ... is here against his will?”

The counselor replied, “Superman helps countless people, your honor. I would wager that he is ‘on duty’ all but twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. He’s quite a busy man. I would offer, then, that he would prefer being out there” Mason pointed to the skylight “where he can do the most good, and not here, helping but one man.”

The judge turned to the witness box. “Superman, do you agree with the counselor’s assessment?” He rubbed the back of his head. “I’m not sure *I* do.”

The Man of Steel looked at the judge. “Actually, your honor, I *do* agree with counselor. I may not be a hostile witness in the *classic* sense, but I *am* otherwise one, based on the reasoning put forth by Mr. Mason, in my opinion.”

The judge raised his eyebrows, threw his hands up in the air and looked back at Mason. “So be it. You may proceed, counselor.”

The attorney smiled at the judge. “Thank you, your honor.” Then he walked over to the witness box, now sanctioned to ask leading questions as he had hoped. “Now, Superman, as I understand it, you have been aware of the events of Luigi Dinelli’s murder all along.”

“That’s right, Mr. Mason.”

“Are you aware that Luigi Dinelli summoned Clark Kent to his home, and of the note containing a warning about *your* so-called”, he smiled, “‘greatest secret’?”

Superman nodded. “I am.”

"And so, where were *you* when Luigi Dinelli was murdered?"

"Well, Mr. Mason, you *could* say that I was very close to Clark Kent."

Burger stood. "*Objection.* Your honor, with all due respect to the witness, I honestly don't even know what that *means.*"

Mason, looking at the D.A., anticipated the objection and turned back to the witness box as the judge said, "Mr. Mason, I'm going to sustain the district attorney's objection unless you can convince me otherwise."

The attorney said, "Understood, your honor." He looked at the witness. "Superman, as most people know, you have a great many powers, *incredible* as it may seem. You have amazing speed, you can fly, your body is seemingly indestructible and you have the so-called x-ray vision that enables you to *see* through walls and such."

"But not lead". Superman smiled. "Yes, Mr. Mason *all* of that is true."

"Would you say that these powers enable you to be in places *undetected* by those around you?"

"When I *want* to be, yes."

"Would you care to demonstrate how you do that?"

"If you insist."



Burger, who was still standing, said, "Your honor, and once again with all due respect to our esteemed witness, I see no reason for counselor to employ his well-known parlor tricks to entertain the courtroom."

Mason chuckled. "Mr. Burger, I'm trying to have your objection overruled. Please indulge us for a minute more." Then the lawyer turned back to look at The Man of Steel. "Go ahead with your, er, parlor trick, Superman."

"Well, essentially, if I want to remain *undetected*, as you put it, Mr. Mason, meaning -- if I don't want to be *seen*, I simply do *this.*"

At first, nothing happened as the courtroom focused on the witness. But then Superman became a sort of blur – and vanished! When he did, the whole room began talking and once again, the judge banged his gavel.

Mason counted silently to ten and then spoke. “OK, Superman. Demonstration over.” With that, The Man of Steel reappeared in the witness box to another chorus of murmurs from the courtroom.

Burger said directly to the witness, “We know of your great powers, Superman, but I wasn’t aware that you possessed the ability to become *invisible*.”

Superman nodded. “Technically you’re correct, Mr. Burger. What I just did is to take advantage of my super-speed. You see, I’m able to vibrate so quickly that the human eye can no longer see me. I don’t use this ‘technique’ often, but when I *do* it’s quite effective.”

Burger said, “I see”. Then he grinned and said, “Or maybe I don’t.” There were some cackles from the audience.

Perry Mason then said to both the judge and district attorney. “So, your honor, and, Mr. Burger, the witness’s comment about being close to Clark Kent on the evening of Luigi Dinelli’s murder *could* be explained by his ability to remain, if you will, incognito.” He then turned to look at the witness box. “Would you agree, Superman?”

“Yes, Mr. Mason.”

The judge said, “Mr. Burger, in light of this demonstration and explanation, I’m going to overrule your objection”. With that, the dismayed D.A. once again sat down.

The testimony resumed with Mason asking Superman. “Now, again, I understand that you were close to the events that involved the murder of Luigi Dinelli.”

“Yes, I was. I witnessed the entire sequence, from Kent arriving at the Dinelli home through the time he returned to meet up with Henderson and the federal agent at the bottom of the hill.”

“And what did you observe?”

“Kent approached Mr. Banner, who was working in a garage and then led him into the house. As they walked in, Banner introduced Kent to Miss Baker. Then Banner brought him to the room in which Luigi Dinelli was waiting.”

“And then?”

"Kent and Dinelli had a discussion – then a heated exchange. After several minutes, Kent left."

"Superman, did you observe Clark Kent *shoot* Luigi Dinelli?"

"During the entire time Clark Kent was with Luigi Dinelli, he did *not* shoot the mobster. Kent didn't even possess a gun."

There was a hum from the crowd and the judge's gavel banged once more.

"And, Superman, when Clark Kent left the room, was Luigi Dinelli still *alive*?"

"Yes, Mr. Mason. Luigi Dinelli was alive and kicking." Superman spat the words out.

"What did you observe next?"

"Kent went through the corridor. As he was about to pass the den, there were gunshots – *two* gunshots."

"Where did the gunshots occur, Superman? Where Luigi Dinelli was – in his room?"

"No, they came from the den where Josh Banner and Maddie Baker were."

Again, the courtroom hummed. Banner and Baker shot quick glances at each other.

"And what happened next, Superman?"

"Kent heard the shots. When he reached the den, he noticed that a gun was dangling from Banner's right hand. Kent thought Banner had fired the gun and assumed that there was trouble. It was easy for Kent to grab it and take it away from Banner."

"So it was at that point that Clark Kent gripped that gun firmly in one of his hands."

"That's right."

"Thinking back, do you notice anything peculiar?"

"Banner was wearing latex gloves."

"The kind that would prevent *his* fingerprints from being on that weapon."

Burger, still sitting, barked out. "Objection. Leading the witness."

Mason spun and looked at the D.A. "May I remind the prosecutor that a hostile witness may be asked leading questions."

The judge said, "Overruled".

Mason turned back to his witness. "So, Superman, you saw Kent remove the gun from Banner. Would you say that at that moment, Kent's fingerprints were applied to that weapon?"

"I most assuredly would."

"And then what happened?"

"There was an exchange between Banner, Baker and Kent. Banner and Baker explained that Baker is a budding actress and that they were practicing a scene. They said that the gun was loaded with blanks."

"I see. And what happened next?"

"Luigi Dinelli came out of his room to see what the gunshots were about."

"So, Superman, the mobster was still alive at that point?"

"Yes, Mr. Mason. And he seemed rather irate."

"And then, immediately after that, Clark Kent left the house."

"That's right."

Perry Mason turned to look at Josh Banner and Maddie Baker as he said, emphatically, "So Luigi Dinelli was *alive* when there were two gunshots..." then he turned to look at D.A. Burger "...and he was *still* very much alive when Clark Kent walked out the door of the house." Then he turned back to the witness. "I just want to be *clear* about that, Superman."

Superman nodded. "That's exactly what happened, sir. After the final confrontation with Dinelli, Banner and Baker, Kent left the premises and used the escalator to meet up with Henderson and the Federal agent at the bottom of the hill."

"Thank you, Superman. No more questions."

Burger said, "Your honor, the testimony we just heard will require the prosecution to review this testimony from the court reporter's records. We will need some time for that. I respectfully request a brief recess, after which I may cross-examine the witness."

Mason jumped in, "Your honor, and ... Mr. Burger. If it please the court, I have just one more witness. After that, Mr. Burger, I would have no objection to you taking a break as you see fit, and then, if necessary, cross-examining the current witness."

The judge looked at the D.A. "Mr. Burger?"

Burger said, with no resistance in his voice, "No objection, your honor."

The judge turned to Superman. "The court thanks you for your time, Superman. I would ask, though, that should we need you for cross-examination, you please make yourself available as much as you're able to."

"Thank you, your honor. I will endeavor to be available as needed."

Superman rose. The judge added, "Oh, and if you don't mind, Superman, could you please leave through the door? I think we've had enough excitement for one day." He pointed towards the courtroom door and then smiled, as did Superman, who nodded. The Man of Steel then left the courtroom to the astounded gaze of its spectators.

Mason said, "I would like to recall Josh Banner to the stand."

With Banner back in the witness box, Mason said, "Now, Mr. Banner, you've heard the testimony the court's last witness. What do you have to say?"

The witness shrugged and said nonchalantly, "Well, it's his word against mine."

The attorney nodded. "Possibly. Now, you may recall the testimony of Sergeant Alex Redfield of Ballistics, Mr. Banner."

"I don't think I do."

Mason smiled. "Well then let me refresh your memory. The good sergeant said that the bullets which gunned down Luigi Dinelli might have come from something other than the alleged murder weapon."

"Again, I don't know about that."

"Did Mr. Dinelli keep guns in his home, Mr. Donner?"

"I suppose he did."

"Did he have guns in his home that were possibly overlooked when Federal agents searched the premises, prior to him being there under house arrest, while he was in negotiations with the attorney general?"

"I really have no idea, Mr. Mason."

"Could it be that Luigi Dinelli hid *more* than one gun – perhaps two *identical* guns – along with ammunition – the same ammunition used to kill him?"

"I really don't—"

"When Clark Kent picked up the gun you left dangling for him, wasn't it your intention to get his fingerprints onto it, so that when you used a second, identical gun to kill Luigi Dinelli, you could leave the first gun in an easy place for the police to find it, so that Kent would be suspected of murder?"

"No, that's ridiculous."

The attorney then turned to look at the D.A. and waited just a moment. Burger closed his eyes for a second and then nodded back to Perry. Then Mason turned back to the witness, like a beast in the wild closing in on its prey.

"Suppose I told you that a second handgun has in fact been found on the grounds of the Dinelli home."

"I'd say that you were mistaken."

Mason stepped up his intensity. "No, it's not *me* that's mistaken, Mr. Banner. There *was* in fact a second weapon – a handgun identical to the alleged murder weapon. It was found in a ravine next to the Dinelli home. I wonder who threw it there, Mr. Banner. Was it *you*?"

"No. I don't know anything about it."

"Isn't it *true* that *you* decided to kill Luigi Dinelli ever since you became aware of his cooperation with the attorney general in which all sorts of mob secrets would be revealed?"

"No."

"Isn't it *true* that some of these underworld secrets involved illegal transactions such as extortion and bribery that would implicate even *you*, Mr. Banner?"

"That's crazy."

"Isn't it *true* that you plotted with Maddie Baker to kill Dinelli and when you both heard that he had invited Clark Kent over to the house, you quickly put a plan in place to frame *him* for the murder?"

Banner didn't answer the question.

Mason turned down his tone a notch. "Didn't you wear latex gloves to keep *your* prints off of the gun Kent had unwittingly placed *his* fingerprints on, the gun that was first thought to be the alleged murder weapon? And then, when Kent left the Dinelli compound, *you* went into Dinelli's room and killed him with a duplicate handgun, but with a silencer so no one would hear the gunshots?"

"No!"

"And then, Mr. Banner, isn't it *true* that you tossed the gun with Kent's fingerprints alongside the outdoor escalator, sure to be found by the police, while the actual murder weapon was later thrown into a ravine where it would be nearly impossible to find?"

"No. You have no *proof*!"

"Suppose I told you that when the second handgun was examined by the police, *your* fingerprints were found on it?"

Banner shot up and looked at Maddie Baker. "No! It was *her*! If there are any prints on that gun, they're *hers*!" He pointed at Baker and Mason spun around.

Baker sat there, stunned at first, and then defiant. She leaned forward and grasped the wooden rail in front of her, looking at the witness box. "You and your big *mouth*, Josh. Kent coulda gone to the gas chamber."

Then she stood, clutching her pocketbook. She looked at Mason. "You figured it out, Mason. I loved Luigi, but he turned on us. He turned on everyone. He was gonna expose us all to save his skin."

Mason spoke directly to Baker. With a slight smile he said, "You say you loved him? But how is that possible? My investigator found that you didn't encounter Dinelli by chance. In fact, you were sent by men in Chicago to keep an eye on him. They *knew* he was a loose cannon, and believed that Dinelli became expendable after Clark Kent's *Daily Planet* articles exposed his mob practices."

Mason went on, shaking his head. "You weren't in love, Miss Baker. You were a *killer* deliberately put in Luigi Dinelli's company, so that you could eliminate him as soon as they gave the word."

Baker responded, slowly moving her hands in position to open the latch on her pocketbook. "They was hopin' Luigi was gonna go to the gas chamber."

Mason said, "But the Attorney General had different plans. He got Luigi Dinelli to talk. And that's when your friends back east sent word to you to have him killed."

Baker said, "They were going to give me Luigi's empire. Imagine – the first lady mobster. That would've been one for the history books, *eh* Mason?"



Then she opened her pocketbook, reached inside and whipped out a handgun. She aimed it at the bespectacled man in the defendant's seat, looking right at him. "But *you* ruined it all, Kent. You could've gone down like a good patsy. You could've gone to the gas chamber, quietly. Well, now you'll get to where you were *supposed* to go – only sooner!"

She fired directly at her target, and as she did, the wall nearest to Maddie Baker exploded. But it wasn't a bomb or anything like that - it was a man. And in an instant, the figure that had burst through the wall reached out, inches away from Maddie Baker's target, catching the bullet in one hand. As he did, Paul Drake, sitting behind Baker, karate chopped the wrist of the hand holding her weapon, as Inspector Bill Henderson, sitting next to Drake, grabbed her arms, immobilizing the woman.

Superman turned his head to nod at the relieved man about to be gunned down – who nodded back with a *thanks*. While dusting off some of the splinters and wallboard from his uniform, The Man of Steel then spun around to look at the judge. "I'm sorry about your wall, your honor. It will be my duty – and *pleasure* – to repair it."

With a facial expression that betrayed his relief and amazement, the judge said, "Not necessary, Superman. I'm sure that our taxes will cover the bill. We will be forever in your debt for what you just did."

D.A. Burger, who had been standing ever since Superman burst into the room, said to the judge, "Your honor, under the circumstances, the prosecution drops all charges against Clark Kent, but will be immediately filing new ones against Maddie Baker and her accomplice, Josh Banner."

The judge looked at Burger, saying, "So noted." Then he turned to the court officer. "The bailiff will release Clark Kent and at the same time take into custody Miss Baker and Mr. Banner." He then looked at The Man of Steel, uncharacteristically reaching out from the bench, as the caped figure took a step closer to him, saying, "And *thanks*, Superman." They shook hands.

## EPILOGUE 1

**SOMETIME LATER**, in *Clays Bar & Grill*, a happy group of people holding glasses ranging from liquor to soda assembled, all except Clark Kent. After a round of drinks, Hamilton Burger cornered Perry Mason. "So, counselor, you really pulled out all the stops in this one."

"It worked, Hamilton, and", Mason added a smile, "I'm hoping you agree that it worked out for the better."

"Yes, I have to admit that I'm not unhappy about the outcome. I'm also going to give our illustrious Attorney General a piece of my mind."

"Oh? Why is that?"

"Well, let's just say that he was anxious for a jury trial to make up for losing Luigi Dinelli as an informant."

"Sounds like you might have a case of tampering, Hamilton."

"Perhaps, but would you care to join me in going up against the Attorney General?" Burger took a sip of his cocktail.

Perry grinned. "Despite our differences, Mr. Prosecutor, I'd like to think of you as a friend, so *yes*, I would, if the opportunity presented itself."

"Thanks, Perry." Then the D.A. shrugged at the thought of doing battle with the A.G. "I'll let you know."

"Actually, Hamilton, my thanks go to *you* for not objecting during Banner's last time on the stand."

"Well, Perry. What can I say? Superman's testimony won me over. Truth be told, at that point I was anxious for you to find out who did it – Banner or Baxter."

"I thought it had to be one of them, but when Paul uncovered her ties to Chicago gangland – and in particular mob chiefs that were not fond of Luigi Dinelli, it made me highly suspicious of her, more so than Banner."

Burger said, "Speaking of Banner, what was that story about fingerprints on the second gun that you told him?"

"I never said that there were in fact fingerprints on the second gun. All I said to Banner was '*suppose* I said your fingerprints were on it' ..."

"I should know by now that when you use the word – *suppose* – you're setting up the witness."

Mason smiled. "You're catching on, Hamilton." He paused and said, "Oh, and there's one more thing. I have a new client of sorts who'd like to have a chat with you."

"You have a client that wants to talk with me? Why counselor, that's a first."

"Not when you hear what he has to say. In fact, I'd wager to say that Jim Finnigan, my client, can provide the Attorney General with almost as much juicy mob information as he would've gotten from Luigi Dinelli."

The D.A.'s eyes lit up. "You don't say? I suppose a big thank-you is in order, although I'm wondering what kind of deal *you* had to make – assuming you even had the authority to make one."

"That'll be up to you, Hamilton and maybe the A.G. In fact, maybe he might give Finnigan the same kind of deal he was going to give Luigi Dinelli."

"He might at that. I wouldn't be against it, as I understand that Finnigan isn't a murderer."

"That's right. He's just a two-bit hood, but one that had access to a great deal of underworld information. In any event, you can thank Paul Drake, Bill Henderson and ... *Superman*."

Just then, Perry White strolled over and shook Mason's hand. Henderson saw it and said, "Well, too bad Jim Olsen isn't here. He'd take a neat photograph of the two Perrys."

White said, "Mason, I'm grateful for what you did for Kent."

"You're grateful for what, Chief?" It was Clark, who had finally shown up.

White spun around. "And where have you been? Phoning in this whole affair as a story?"

"Why, no, Chief, I'd have thought that you did."

White put his hand on Clark's shoulder. "As a matter of fact, Kent, I did. It's going to be *my* byline for a change. First one in a long while, in fact." The editor thumbed his lapels while he beamed. "Felt good being a reporter again."

Mason chimed in, "But not at your reporter's expense, I hope. I mean, would you rather that this whole thing hadn't happened? Clark was in hot water for awhile, Perry."

Drake came over and jumped in the conversation. "I don't know, but from what I can tell, Kent's got a guardian angel."

And now Della completed the picture. "A guardian angel? You mean, *Superman*?"

Henderson responded. "Say, whatever became of him? He deserves to be here, too."

Clark shook his head and said, "Oh, Bill, I don't think Superman is much of a drinker."

They all chuckled.

## EPILOGUE 2

**PERRY MASON SAT ALONE IN HIS OFFICE.** It was ten past eleven and the Monday evening glow of the Los Angeles skyline had faded ever so slightly as many of its residents went to bed while office buildings gave way to their skeleton crews.

The attorney was on the phone, speaking into the receiver. "I realize that you think you didn't *do* very much just sitting there, but it may have been the most important acting of your career. What's that? The Myasthenia Gravis Foundation? Yes, most certainly. Thanks again and have a good trip back to Honolulu."



Just as Mason put the phone down, he heard a somewhat familiar whistle in the air outside the open window of his office. It grew louder, and soon standing in front of his desk was The Man of Steel.

"Hello Perry."

"Hello Clark." Mason smiled.

Superman smiled. "You know, counselor, there's only one other person in the world who can say that to me when I'm dressed like this."

"And until recently, there was yet another, but thankfully he's no longer in a position to talk."

"You're right about that."

Mason stood and walked over to the wall opposite his desk and approached a painting. He removed it from its hook, revealing a combination safe that he soon unlocked. The attorney pulled out a rectangular metallic box and brought it over to his desk and looked at Superman. "I think you know what this is."

"The evidence Dinelli had on my secret identity?"

"Yes."

"How on *Earth* did you get hold of it?"

Mason grinned. "Oh, I have *my* secrets too, you know."

Superman raised his eyebrows and half-smiled. "I'm sure you do, Perry."

Mason then retrieved a newspaper from his desk and held up the front page for Superman to see. It was the *Los Angeles Gazette* with a headline, ***"SUPERMAN SAVES DEFENDANT CLARK KENT IN COURTROOM!"*** He said, "You *do* realize that this front page will go a long way towards protecting your so-called 'greatest secret'."

"I'll have to thank the actor you and Drake were able to secure on short notice."

"Oh, he was returning a favor. He was also on a break from a film he's making in Hawaii."

"You know, if he ever does television, there's a perfect role for him – *me*."

Mason offered a smile. "Funny you should say that, because I mentioned that to him, too. But he said that he enjoys making movies."

"Well, again, he deserves my thanks."

"I've told him that, and I'll wire you – *Kent*, that is – with details of the foundation for which he'd appreciate a donation."

"It'll be my pleasure. There's a large gold deposit in northern Alberta waiting to be uncovered – by me, of course – whose proceeds will be split between that foundation ... and the Canadian government."

"In the meantime..." Mason pointed to the steel box. "... do with this what you wish."

Superman stared at the box. "I'll likely destroy it or hurl it into outer space."

The attorney grinned. "Either one would be fascinating to watch. Oh, and one other thing."

"Yes?"

"Clark Kent's fingerprints are no longer on file at the L.A. courthouse."

"Well, I'm sure you won't tell me how you managed *that*, either."

Mason was dead serious. "No, but you should be aware that I did it because otherwise it would've meant that *your* fingerprints would be on file. I don't think it would've been good for someone who does so *much* for the world to have his anonymity in jeopardy."

"Well, the whole thing taught me a lesson to be more careful about leaving my fingerprints behind." Now it was Superman's turn to grin. "Anyway, thank you, again, Perry."

"You can thank the Drake Detective Agency, too."

"Paul is a good man – and a really good P.I. Anyway, if ever I can return the favor..."

"Oh, maybe one day. You never know." Mason smiled again.

Superman stuck out his hand, and the two men exchanged a warm, dry handshake. He said, "And now, if you'll excuse me..."

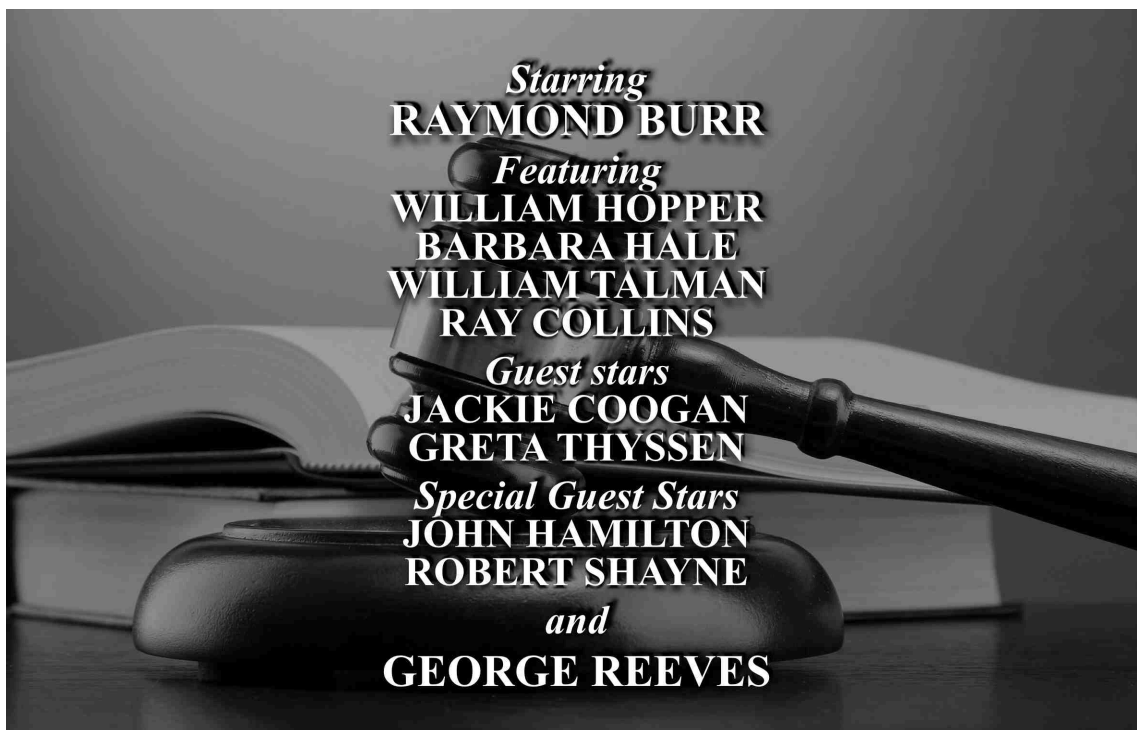
"Goodbye."

The Man of Steel, clutching the steel box containing the secret of his alternate identity, walked to the open window and leaped through it, soaring above the Los Angeles skyline. Perry Mason stared out the window, marveling as an incredible hero of a man faded from view over the twinkling lights of Los Angeles.



He smiled to himself, shook his head in amazement, and then turned to the serious business of his next case.





*Starring*  
**RAYMOND BURR**

*Featuring*  
**WILLIAM HOPPER  
BARBARA HALE  
WILLIAM TALMAN  
RAY COLLINS**

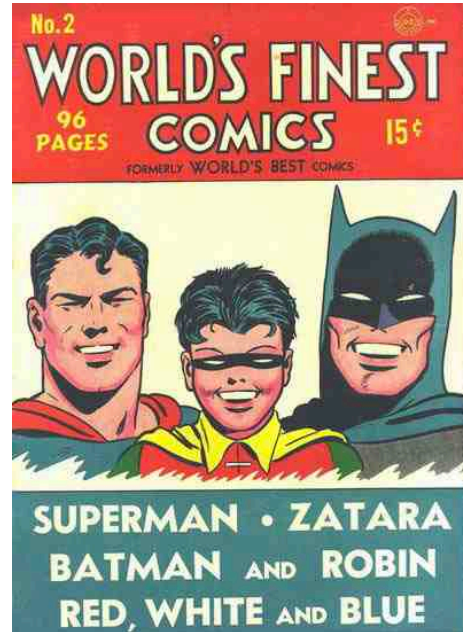
*Guest stars*  
**JACKIE COOGAN  
GRETA THYSSEN**

*Special Guest Stars*  
**JOHN HAMILTON  
ROBERT SHAYNE**

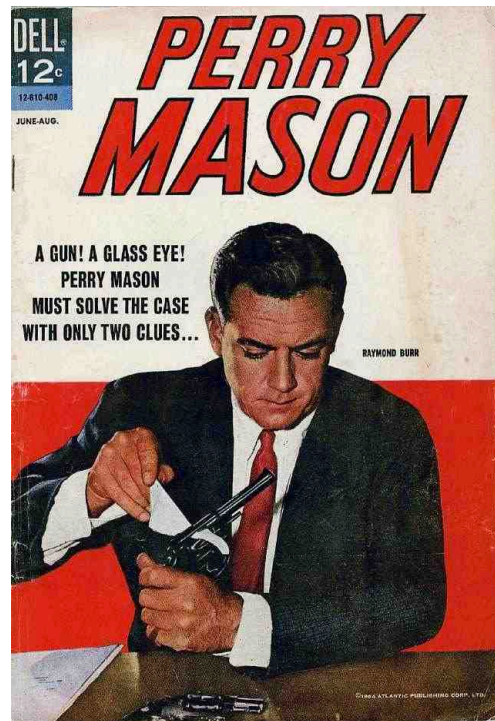
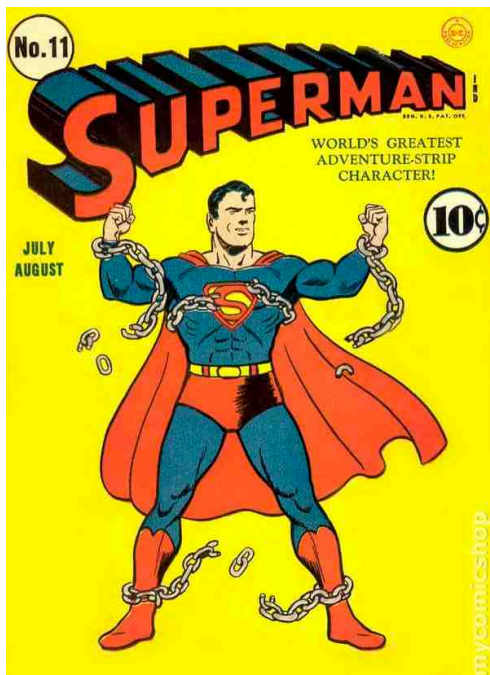
*and*  
**GEORGE REEVES**

## FROM THE AUTHOR: THE WORLD'S FINEST TEAM

**THERE WAS A TIME** when “your two favorite heroes” referred to Superman and Batman – the “World’s Finest” team...



However, in the story you may have just read, there is a different “World’s Finest” team...



So ... why pair Superman and Perry Mason in one “adventure”? Well ... why *not*? OK, the answer is really this: there are a number of similarities between ***The Adventures of Superman*** and the ***Perry Mason*** series. Let’s look at some of them:

### 1. Families



Both had **families** – regulars, if you will. But countless other series did, too. However, in the case of these two shows, at least for me, I became so accustomed to them that they were as familiar as my own family, if not others, like Ralph, Alice, Norton & Trixie ... or Jerry, Elaine, George & Kramer.

## 2. Girlfriends



Superman had a **girlfriend** and so did Perry Mason. Well, neither of them was exactly identified as such. Lois Lane, termed “Superman’s Girlfriend” in the comics, was the love interest but never mentioned as one on *The Adventures of Superman*. There may have been one episode in which she was loosely referred to as his girlfriend – I’m a bit vague about that – and of course there was the great episode “The Wedding of Superman” in which (spoiler alert) Lois dreams she’s engaged to marry The Man of Steel.



The girlfriend of Perry Mason is a bit more mysterious – and obvious. Della Street, his secretary and Gal Friday, was never referred to as the attorney’s girlfriend. But she might well have been. She was at his side almost all the time, and though they never showed any overt affection for one another (as in “longing for each other”), there were several occasions in which they gave each other “looks” that suggested something much more than a professional relationship.

### 3. Helpers

Superman and Perry Mason had **helpers**. In my humble opinion, the most helpful helper was Inspector Henderson. Seeing Superman and Henderson – or Clark and Henderson – paired on an adventure – or even going head-to-head as they did sometimes.

Also “helping” Superman and Clark were Lois Lane and Jimmy Olsen. But as Jerry Seinfeld once observed, Superman never really needed their help and more often than not, they would get in the way, if not cause trouble.

Perry Mason’s helpers were Paul Drake and Della Street.

### 4. Kid sidekicks.



Superman’s “kid sidekick” was most obviously Jimmy Olsen. This role was more defined in the comics, since Jimmy was termed “Superman’s Pal”. Like Robin the Boy Wonder and countless other comic book sidekicks, Jimmy – or Jim as he was called in the first season or so – was created by DC Comics back in the late 1930s to attract a young audience, and presumably it worked.

With one exception, Perry Mason had no such “kid sidekick”. However, across parts of two seasons, a character named David Gideon (played by actor Karl Held) appeared. He was presumably added to the series to provide a fresh young face. Gideon was a “legal eagle” aspiring young law student interning with Mason’s firm. He was the closest thing to a Jimmy Olsen equivalent.



## 5. The Law



Both series had their share of men representing the law. On *The Adventures of Superman* it was Robert Shayne's Inspector William J. Henderson (above left), who plays a large role in our story. In one episode, an Inspector Hill appeared, but otherwise, when police representation was needed, Bill Henderson responded to the call of duty.

*Perry Mason*'s primary representative of the law, that being the head of L.A. Homicide, was Lt. Arthur Tragg, played by veteran Ray Collins (above, second from left). Though Perry Mason and Tragg were at times adversaries, in the end they worked together. Unfortunately, due to Collins' poor health, he did not survive to the end of the series. Richard Anderson (above right), later to become mentor to *The Six Million Dollar Man* and *Bionic Woman* (amongst many other TV roles), appeared as Lt. Steve Drumm in the final season of *Perry Mason*.

As well, a constant figure on the series was Wesley Lau's Lt. Andy Anderson (above, second from right).

## 6. Receptionists



*The Adventures of Superman* sported at least three receptionists at various times, although they were fairly minor characters. The most prominent was Miss Bachrach, played by Alma Sessions (above, second from right). Her character was no-nonsense and often became exasperated, at least in the two episodes she appeared in.

The other two receptionists had very brief appearances in single episodes, i.e., actress Dani Sue Nolan (above, second from left, oddly listed as Miss Bachrach in IMDb) and Yvonne White as Ethel (above right).

*Perry Mason* had one receptionist, Gertie, played by Connie Cezon (above left), who appeared briefly and sporadically over the years on the series.

## 7. Books, film, television, and more



Superman came from the minds, pencils and inks of Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster. The Man of Steel then went on to fame in comic books, movie serials, television; and feature films, not to mention toys, parade floats and more.

Perry Mason was created by Earl Stanley Gardner, and went from the novels written by him to feature films, comic books and, of course, television.

## 8. The two heroic men



Almost last but certainly not least were the two leads, both supermen in their own ways. More than anything else, the traits shared the most by Superman / Clark Kent and Perry Mason has to be their honesty and integrity.

Tied to this is the feeling that when both men walked into a room, all was saved. Now, with Superman/Clark, a great deal of this – if not all of this – had to do with the fact that he provided protection like no one else could. But there was something about the man – whether he was appearing as Clark or in uniform – that just made one feel comfortable – or even “saved”.

And guess what? I had the same feeling with Perry Mason. Yes, he didn’t have superpowers. But there was something about Raymond Burr’s attorney that just made me feel that “all was going to be ok”. He was a mortal version of Superman.

Both men also shared a need to *tell* the truth and *find* the truth. They both had it in them to protect the innocent. And as mentioned, when they both walked into a room, you felt safe.

A word about their need to tell the truth: Both men always told the truth no matter what, but sometimes they hid things or led people to believe things that might not have been true. In the case of both men, they did that to protect the innocent.

In Superman’s or Clark Kent’s case, he would omit things or let people come to the wrong conclusion in order to protect his secret identity. By doing that, he was protecting innocent people, because anyone knowing the Clark Kent and Superman were one and the same could then threaten his friends and family (He only had one family member – Sarah Kent, his foster mother – and though we only got to see her in the episode that told us Superman’s origin (“Superman on Earth”) – this story has taken liberties to keep her around.)

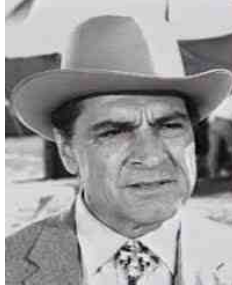
Superman/Clark would sometimes speak in riddles to confuse people about his secret identity, e.g., “It’s no wonder you wonder – you’re a pretty wonderful girl”

In Perry Mason’s case, he would omit things, typically, in order to protect his client. Or, he would try out a misleading question in order to trick a witness into admitting the truth. Mason would do that often, and it’s repeated in the story told here, when he begins a question with, “Suppose I told you...”.

As well, Mason would sometimes hold back information (“why, Lieutenant, that would be telling”) in order to help the defense of his innocent client.

## 9. The guest stars

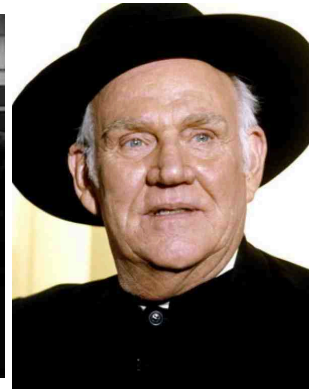
And finally, there were guest stars that the two series had in common. There were many (and, oh, you'll notice a fairly strong connection to another beloved series of mine, *Star Trek*)...



**Anthony Caruso** played Luigi Dinelli in “Czar of the Underworld” and our story “Murder in Malibu”; appeared in three different *Perry Mason* episodes; and had a memorable turn as alien Bela Oxmyx in the *Star Trek* episode “A Piece of the Action”.



**Claude Akins** played a bad guy with a deadly submarine in “Peril at Sea” on *The Adventures of Superman*; a police sergeant in “The Case of the Half-Wakened Wife” on *Perry Mason*; and starred as Sheriff Elroy P. Lobo on the short-lived *B.J. and the Bear* which then gave way to a longer-running and more popular *The Misadventures of Sheriff Lobo*.

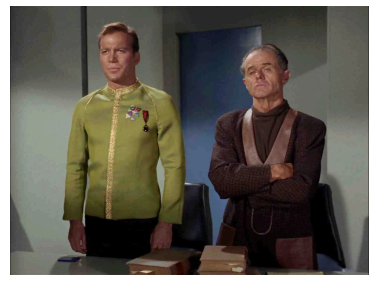


The beloved **Dabbs Greer** appeared in *three* episodes of *The Adventures of Superman* including “Superman on Earth” (pictured) and the crackerjack, heart-stopping second season premier, “Five Minutes to Doom” (in which Perry Mason might have had his character found innocent!); in a whopping *eight* episodes of ***Perry Mason***; and as Reverend Alden on ***Little House on the Prairie***. He later became a regular on ***Picket Fences***.



**Dan Seymour** appeared as a nasty in *three* episodes of ***The Adventures of Superman***, all in the first season, including perhaps his most famous turn as Ace, the man that threatened to expose Superman’s secret identity, only to fall to his death off of a mountaintop, in the memorable and controversial “The Stolen Costume”; a bountiful *seven* episodes of ***Perry Mason***; and then, once again in the realm of comic book characters, this time with the Caped Crusader and Boy Wonder, appearing as The Maharajah in a two-part episode of ***Batman***.

Seymour also appeared in the 1942 classic film “Casablanca”, a 1955 TV series based on that film, *and* in the 1946 “A Night in Casablanca” that starred none other than the Marx Brothers.



**Elisha Cook, Jr.** played private investigator Homer Garritty in “Semi Private Eye” on *The Adventures of Superman*; appeared in two episodes of *Perry Mason*; and later went on to defend Captain Kirk in “Court Martial” on *Star Trek*.



**Hayden Rorke** played the troubled Clark Kent’s psychiatrist and friend in “The Face and the Voice”; appeared in three episodes of *Perry Mason*; and later would psychoanalyze Tony Nelson – and sometimes himself – in perhaps his most well known role as Doctor Bellows on *I Dream of Jeannie*.



**Jeff Corey** played the memorably nasty Luke Benson in the film that led to Superman's foray into television, *Superman and the Mole Men* (the film was edited into a two-part episode on *The Adventures of Superman* called "The Unknown People"); guest-starred on *Perry Mason* via "The Case of the Reckless Rockhound"; and played the not-so-nice Plasus, leader of a cloud city who battled Captain Kirk in "The Cloud Minders" on *Star Trek*.



**John Banner** played a butler in "The Man Who Made Dreams Come True" on *The Adventures of Superman*; guest-starred on *Perry Mason* in "The Case of the Nine Dolls"; and, in undoubtedly his most famous role, as Sgt. Schultz – the man that knew "nothing", in *Hogan's Heroes*.



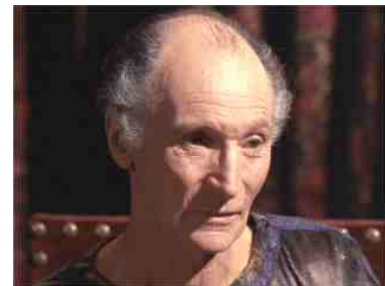
**Joi Lansing** made adolescent boys' hearts beat faster as Sgt. O'Hara in "Superman's Wife" on *The Adventures of Superman*; and would've made a perfect Maddie Baker, if not for her being too well remembered from the TAOS episode. She also appeared in "The Case of the Crimson Kiss" on *Perry Mason*. In a rarity, Lansing *first* appeared on *Perry Mason* and *then* on *The Adventures of Superman*.



**Joseph Mell** played an evil scientist that tried to electrocute Superman in the terrific episode "Crime Wave" on *The Adventures of Superman*; joined fellow Superman veteran Peter Brocco in "The Case of the Fraudulent Foto" on *Perry Mason*; and appeared as an imaginary space-faring trader who inhabits one of Enterprise Captain Christopher Pike's fantasies in "The Cage", the first *Star Trek* pilot, which was then re-used for the two-part series episode "The Menagerie".



**Paul Fix** played one of Luigi Dinelli's henchmen in "Czar of the Underworld" on *The Adventures of Superman*; a recurring small-town lawyer on *Perry Mason*; and the *Enterprise* doctor on the second *Star Trek* pilot "Where No Man Has Gone Before".



The prolific **Peter Brocco** played three distinctly different nasty men on *The Adventures of Superman*, including the infamous Dr. Ort in "The Secret of Superman" (pictured); appeared in "The Case of the Fraudulent Foto" on *Perry Mason*; and as Claymore, the Organian, in the episode of *Star Trek* that introduced viewers to the Klingons, "Errand of Mercy".



**Phyllis Coates** is the only regular from *The Adventures of Superman* to have also appeared on *Perry Mason*. Coates played a no-nonsense Lois Lane in the first season of *The Adventures of Superman*; guest-starred on *Perry Mason* in “The Case of the Black-Eyed Blonde”; and was the first of two actresses that played Ellen Lane, mother of Lois Lane (Teri Hatcher) on *Lois & Clark: The New Adventures of Superman*.



**Pierre Watkin** played the first live action Perry White in the two *Superman* movie serials. He appeared in four episodes of *The Adventures of Superman* including “The Last Knight” (pictured) and was also mentioned as a replacement for John Hamilton in a rumored seventh season of the series. Hamilton’s passing after the sixth season would supposedly have allowed Watkin to play White’s brother and new editor of the *Daily Planet*. George Reeves’ untimely death ended any such plans. Finally, Watkin appeared as a judge in three episodes of *Perry Mason*.



**Robert Lowery** played millionaire playboy Bruce Wayne and his alter ego in the 1949 movie serial ***Batman and Robin***; moved on to play Clark Kent's friend Gary Allen, a mortal man that mysteriously and inexplicably is affected by Superman's weakness, kryptonite, in "The Deadly Rock" on ***The Adventures of Superman***; and appeared in two episodes of ***Perry Mason***.



**Robert Rockwell** went from playing Superman's biological dad, Jor-El, in "Superman on Earth" on ***The Adventures of Superman*** in which he sent a guided rocket containing the future Superman into space, to a guest star in "The Case of the Misguided Missile" (pictured) and other episodes of ***Perry Mason***.



**Victor Sen Yung** appeared in "Riddle of the Chinese Jade" on ***The Adventures of Superman***; appeared in two episodes of ***Perry Mason***; and perhaps most famously appeared as the Ponderosa cook on the long-running ***Bonanza***.

Others that appeared on both ***The Adventures of Superman*** and ***Perry Mason*** included:

Ann Doran.  
Anthony De Mario.  
Arthur Space.  
Carleton G. Young.  
Cecil Elliot.  
Dale Van Sickel.  
Donald Lawton.

Doris Singleton.  
Everett Glass.  
Frances Morris.  
Frank Jenks.  
Freeman Lusk  
George Eldredge.  
Gloria Talbott.  
Herb Vigran  
I. Stanford Jolley.  
Jackson Gillis (writer).  
Jan Arvan.  
John Cliff.  
John Eldredge  
John Harmon.  
Joseph Forte.  
Keith Richards.  
Lane Bradford.  
Larry J. Blake.  
Lester Dorr.  
Lou Krugman.  
Mabel Albertson.  
Marshall Reed.  
Michael Fox.  
Myron Healey.  
Paul E. Burns.  
Percy Helton.  
Peter Makamos.  
Phillip Pine.  
Ralph Moody.  
Ralph Sanford.  
Ray Montgomery.  
Rhys Williams.  
Richard Benedict.  
Richard Reeves.  
Russell Carter.  
Ruta Lee.  
Sid Saylor.  
Sid Tomack.  
Stuart Randall.  
Trevor Bardette.  
Vera Marsche.  
Virginia Christine.  
Walter Reed.

William Challee

This is by no means an exhaustive list, but it *was* exhausting pulling it together, though fun. ☺

## About the Author



**BRUCE KANIN**, former resident of Brooklyn, NY and North Merrick, Long Island, New York, now lives in The Villages, Florida with his wife and dog. Their children remain in the NYC area.

A native of Brooklyn, NY, Bruce was “IT professional” for all of his working life as well considers himself a writer, singer-songwriter, world traveller and more.

Over the past several years he has developed a fondness for Facebook and as such hosts a handful of groups, including a favorite of his, [BK Unmasked](#), that presents his memes, parodies and other creations.