

THE RISE OF THE SUPER-COPS

Written by

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**FADE IN.**

**EXT. THE RED DAGGER'S FARM - DAY**

SUPER: The Red Dagger's Farm/Outside Gaithersburg,  
Maryland/2020

Something is happening on this farm. It is busy and the crowd looks out of place.

There is a main house, a silo and a big barn. A plume of black smoke rises from the house.

Police cars, ambulances and other vehicles everywhere. EMTs carry motionless bodies from the house on stretchers.

Officers JULIO WILLIAMS and TEDDY DRAKE barricade behind their cars, ahead of the crowd. Julio yells into a megaphone and waves his hands for people to move away from the barn.

JULIO

Everyone, stay back! Stay back!  
We've heard noises inside. Hold  
your position!

TEDDY

Be careful, people! We have no idea  
what's coming out of that barn.

Zoom forward from Julio's POV through the slightly ajar barn door to see...

**INT. BARNHOUSE - CONTINUOUS**

An older white man, THE RED DAGGER, aka PAUL BENJAMIN, rests against a hay bale. He wears an all-white suit that looks a lot like what Col. Sanders would wear. But this suit is covered in splashes of red, red blood. His mask lays on the ground beside him and he has blood on his face.

Towering above Paul is KYLE JONATHAN, dressed in his full uniform as THE PATRIOT, which is a cross between the New England Patriots uniform and Captain America. Kyle is surrounded by a blood-red energy field. He hovers a few inches above the floor and glares at Paul.

Paul licks blood from his hand.

PAUL

Do you know how good blood tastes  
when it comes from...

Kyle glows even brighter red and then he launches forward, directing all his anger into what would obviously be a killing blow.

**CUT TO BLACK.**

**EXT. THE RED DAGGER'S FARM - MOMENTS LATER**

Kyle staggers out of the barn, very clearly disturbed and not paying attention.

He stares at the blood on his fists and has splashes of blood on his face and costume.

JULIO

Freeze!

Julio and the other cops all point their guns at Kyle.

Kyle barely glances at them and then flies away. He moves too quickly for anyone to even get a shot off.

**INT. THE CATALANO HOME - CONTINUOUS**

SUPER: The Catalano Home/Prince George's County, Maryland

STAN CATALANO, WM, 50s, drinks from a whiskey tumbler while he watches the news from his favorite blue recliner. His wife, JOAN, WF, 40s, stands near the bar, pouring herself another glass of red wine.

Their son MAX, 18, walks into the living room. He wears his graduation cap and open gown over a Central High School Falcons t-shirt and jeans.

Joan sees Max and her face explodes with joy. She puts the wine down and rushes towards him.

JOAN

Look at my little man. A high school graduate!

Max blushes.

MAX

C'mon mom.

STAN

Where's this party at?

MAX  
I already told you. And I left the  
flyer on the bar.

Stan holds up his empty tumbler.

STAN  
Good. Get me a refill while you  
read it and tell me where this  
party's at.

Max grabs the tumbler and complies. Joan takes a sip of her  
wine and then grabs her phone.

MAX  
It's at Andersons' house. Over in  
Forest Heights.

He hands his dad the full tumbler. Joan grabs his shoulder  
and poses him for a picture.

STAN  
Gene and Kellee Anderson?

MAX  
Yes, dad.

JOAN  
Smile for me. I need a picture.

He poses and smiles as she snaps a few.

JOAN (CONT'D)  
Let's do a selfie.

She pulls Max in and waves Stan over.

STAN  
Come join in.

Stan doesn't move.

STAN (CONT'D)  
I already did this, at graduation.

He points at the TV.

STAN (CONT'D)  
This stuff is serious.

JOAN  
Graduation is serious!

She hugs Max and he walks towards the front door.

MAX  
Bye! Gotta go.

STAN  
Don't drink and drive!

JOAN  
Stan!

MAX  
I never do.

Joan smacks Stan's shoulder. She grabs her wine and walks out of the room. Stan continues watching TV as a NEWS ANCHOR stares gravely at the audience.

NEWS ANCHOR  
Police and military are coordinating in a multi-state search for the super formerly known as "The Patriot." Also known as Kyle Jonathan, the former Dallas Cowboys footballer...

Stan takes another sip from his tumbler.

**INT. MAX CATALANO'S DORM ROOM - DAY**

SUPER: Max Catalano's Apartment/Baltimore/2021

Max walks into the room and stops before a mirror, combing his hair. On the couch sit his roommate, DIEGO, and Diego's girlfriend, FIONA. They're sharing a joint and watching cartoons.

DIEGO  
Hey, Max. This is my girl, Fiona.

Fiona raises a hand to say hi without turning away from the TV.

FIONA  
Kinesiology. You?

Max is satisfied with his hair.

MAX  
Journalism.

FIONA  
Sweet.

MAX  
Off to class.

FIONA  
Mr. Fitness Administration over  
here never seems to have class.

DIEGO  
Hey, I take nigh--

An emergency news alert cuts into the cartoon.

FIONA  
Quiet down.

Max stops to look.

ANNOUNCER  
Today, the governments of the world  
and leaders of global private  
industry came together to launch a  
project to manufacture technology  
that will "level the playing field"  
according to an unnamed official  
inside the administration. The  
source said...

DIEGO  
Where are my 'toons, man?

MAX  
(to himself)  
Level the playing field?

He walks out the door, a concerned look on his face.

**EXT. CROSS CAMPUS DRIVE, TOWSON UNIVERSITY - NIGHT**

SUPER: Towson University/Towson, Maryland/2022

Max exits a campus building and turns right onto Cross Campus Drive. On one side of the sidewalk is a grove of trees on the other side a large grass field. A poster on the door behind Max says: "If you see something super, say something sublime!"

MAX  
(mumbling to himself)  
Dr. Finkelstein will kill me if I'm  
late.

He rushes down the sidewalk.

BABY BLUE (O.S.)  
Chicken fingers!

Max looks around for the faint voice, but doesn't see anything.

BABY BLUE (CONT'D)  
Chicken fingers!

A very large blue-skinned, muscle-bound woman, BABY BLUE, lands on the sidewalk a few feet in front of Max, breaking the concrete into large chunks.

Max cowers and backs away. Baby Blue sees him and advances.

BABY BLUE (CONT'D)  
Chicken fingers?

MAX  
What?

BABY BLUE  
(louder and angrier)  
Chicken fingers?

MAX  
No... me... uh... Max.

Baby Blue growls at him.

BABY BLUE  
Where chicken fingers, puny man?

Max shrugs.

MAX  
I don't--

Out of nowhere, the Patriot arrives, smashing Baby Blue into the field. Students and professors flow from nearby buildings.

Baby Blue and the Patriot battle, farther and farther away from the growing crowd. A car pulls up and THE FOX jumps out. She's a tall thin woman in a brown and blue costume. She moves gracefully and faster than the normal humans.

THE FOX  
Everyone head away from the battle.  
We'll keep it contained.

The crowd gathers around her.

THE FOX (CONT'D)  
 If you're parked South of here,  
 head towards your vehicle right  
 away.

Several people walk away. Several run.

THE FOX (CONT'D)  
 If you use transit or are parked to  
 the north, we have a series of cars  
 arriving to take you away.

She gestures towards the cross street, where a row of cars  
 sits, idling. On the doors of each of these cars is a cow-  
 patterned magnet that says "MooVers."

In the field, Baby Blue smashes her body into the Patriot,  
 knocking him to the ground.

BABY BLUE  
 Where chicken fingers!?!

Max follows the stream of people towards the cars.

**EXT. MAX CATALANO'S DORM - DAY**

SUPER: Towson, Maryland/2024

Max jumps in the back of a MooVers rideshare car. He is  
 wearing his black and gold Towson cap and gown.

**INT. MOOVERS RIDESHARE CAR - DAY**

The driver of the rideshare is STEFF, BF, early 30s. She has  
 natural hair and a happy and bouncy personality.

STEFF  
 You undergrad?

MAX  
 Yes. Mass communications degree.

Steff is puzzled.

STEFF  
 What do you do with that one?

Max chuckles.

MAX  
 I focused on journalism. I'm  
 interviewing with newspapers.



STEFF

Locally?

MAX

Yeah, but not JUST locally. Only so many local papers these days. Can't be stuck to one place and hope to find work.

STEFF

I hear that. I tend to move around myself. Go where the work takes me.

MAX

The rideshare work?

Steff laughs.

STEFF

Who says this is my main gig?

Max nods.

MAX

Fair enough.

Max stares out the window. Driving through the city, they can see video screens and cameras everywhere. Most buildings have some kind of screen on them, from small to large. They show a panoply of shows and channels.

STEFF

You got a first choice?

Max smiles.

**INT. BALTIMORE SUN OFFICES - DAY**

SUPER: Offices of the Baltimore Sun/2024

Max sits in across a messy desk from the Sun's editor-in-chief, CAMERON PRITCHETT, WM, 60s. Behind Max on the inside of the closed office door is a propaganda sign that features a picture of Uncle Sam peering through a looking glass. It reads "Uncle Sam wants you to keep an EYE out for Supers."

PRITCHETT

These samples are great. Your resume is as good as could be expected. I'm inclined to give you a shot.

Pritchett takes off his reading glasses and sets the papers on his desk.

PRITCHETT (CONT'D)  
 Why do you want this job? Why journalism? Why here?

Pritchett leans back to listen. Max smiles. Confidently.

MAX  
 Baltimore's my home. I've lived here. I know this city. I know its beautiful parts. I know the ugly, too. And I want more. I want to live in a NEW Baltimore.

Pritchett smiles.

MAX (CONT'D)  
 What better way than journalism? Finding the truth, shining a light on it and making the people in charge make it better.

Max smiles.

MAX (CONT'D)  
 What could be more important than that?

Pritchett reaches across the desk and shakes Max's hand with a grin.

**INT. BALTIMORE SUN OFFICES - DAY**

Max sits at his desk, typing away on his computer. The screensaver on a nearby computer is a clock. It's 2:13 p.m. and the date is 2/24/25.

Max finishes a sentence and rereads it. The mailroom guy, STEVE-O, pushes a cart and stops at Max's desk. He puts a few letters on Max's desk and then picks up a large Manila envelope.

MAX  
 Hey, Steve-O!

STEVE-O  
 Max, my man.

He reads the package's address.

STEVE-O (CONT'D)  
Got a big one for you, here.

Steve-O hands Max the envelope. Max tosses it on the desk.

MAX  
You been watching Ambush Bug?

Steve-O gets very excited.

STEVE-O  
That shit is hilarious! My favorite  
part was when he fought Argh!Yle!

MAX  
Dude was fighting a living sock.

They laugh. Steve-O fist bumps Max and moves on to deliver the rest of the mail. Max goes back to typing. The CAMERA stays focused on the envelope addressed to Max. It has no return address, stamps or other markings.

**CUT TO:**

The screensaver now says it is 4:47 p.m.

Max hits save on the article he's working on. He shuts his computer down and pulls on his jacket. He gets up to leave then spots the package on the desk.

He picks it up and opens it. Max pulls up several large sheets of blueprint paper. He unfolds them and lays them out on the desk.

What Max sees is the working schematic of a titanium-alloy mechasuit armed with various lasers and a netcaster and a flamethrower and all kinds of blades. It is at least a dozen feet tall with a massive robotic exoskeleton protecting and enhancing the human pilot inside.

It's called the Eradicator Mark 25.

Max is puzzled. He looks around, but he is alone.

He folds up the schematic and puts it in his bottom drawer, next to the bottle of whiskey and the holstered pistol. He locks the drawer with a key and leaves, making sure no one is following him.

**INT. BALTIMORE SUN OFFICES - DAY**

Max sits at his desk again, reading over a printed copy of his latest article, covered with red editing marks.

The screensaver on the empty desk behind him says it is 9:19 a.m. and the date is 3/24/25.

Steve-0 comes by with his mail cart.

STEVE-0

Yo? You been watching that new Jar Jar show?

Max looks up and nods with a grin.

MAX

Who would've thought a gritty reboot would've worked so well?

Steve-0 raises his hand. They both laugh.

MAX (CONT'D)

Yeah, you did call it.

Steve-0 hands him a large manila envelope and starts to move on.

STEVE-0

The crown remains intact.

He laughs.

Max stares at the envelope and notes that it doesn't have any postage or return address. The address is written in the same generic-looking Sharpie handwriting.

MAX

Hey, Steve-0?

He stops and looks back. Max holds up the envelope.

MAX (CONT'D)

You see who dropped this off? It has no postage.

Steve-0 shrugs.

STEVE-0

No idea.

Max is puzzled.

MAX

Thanks.

Steve-0 rolls on. Max sits down and opens the package. He pulls out a thick stack of folders.

The top one is labeled "The Patriot." He opens the folder and it is a full dossier on the Patriot: photos, analysis of powers, list of weaknesses, full personal information, including names and addresses, etc.

Max frowns. He flips through a few more, they're all super hero dossiers, like the Patriot's. The other folders include heroes with names like Green Star, Captain Echo, Slaughterhouse, the Dustomancer, Puppy.

Max quickly puts them back in the envelope. He grabs a sports bag from under his desk. He unlocks the drawer from his desk and stuffs the folder, the schematic and his gun and stuffs them in the bag. He zips it up and looks around.

No one's watching him.

He puts the bag over his shoulder and quickly walks toward the elevators.

#### **INT. BALTIMORE SUN OFFICES - DAY**

Max sits at his desk, finishes typing and leans back to reread his work. The nearby screensaver says 4:37 and the date reads 4/24/25.

He gets up and goes to the bathroom.

**CUT TO:**

Steve-O the mail guy puts another package on Max's desk and walks away.

**CUT TO:**

Max returns from the bathroom and notices the package on his desk. He picks it up and finds no return address or postage.

MAX

You've gotta be kidding?

He looks around, puzzled. Seeing nothing helpful and no new people who look out of place.

He takes the package and walks towards the mailroom.

#### **INT. BALTIMORE SUN MAILROOM - DAY**

Max walks into the mailroom. Steve-O sorts letters and packages and puts them into mailboxes.

MAX

You HAD to see who left it this  
time?

Steve-O looks up and sees Max. He laughs and shakes his head.

STEVE-O

No, sir.

MAX

You're kidding?

STEVE-O

Nope. I promise you. It wasn't  
there when we got here this  
morning. And we've watched your box  
all day.

Beat.

STEVE-O (CONT'D)

Nothing.

MAX

That's impossible.

Max scratches his head.

MAX (CONT'D)

Do you have video of this room?

Steve-O nods enthusiastically.

STEVE-O

Of course, video's everywhere these  
days. Screens everywhere but...

Not only does Max join in, so do the other WORKERS in the  
mailroom.

ALL

(simultaneously)

...the Bathroom and the Bedroom!

Everyone laughs. Except Max, who focuses on the task at hand  
again.

STEVE-O

Everywhere but the Bathroom and the  
Bedroom. That's what Elon said,  
right?

Max nods.

MAX  
Can I get that video?

STEVE-O  
Of course.

He jumps up and heads to a PC in the corner and starts typing away.

**CUT TO:**

Max stands above Steve-O. Video from the security camera speeds by on fast forward. Both men watch it like a hawk, looking for anything.

As they watch, the envelope appears on the desk, as if by magic. Max points.

MAX  
There. Did you see that?

Steve-O stops the video and rewinds it.

STEVE-O  
I didn't see anything.

He hits play.

MAX  
Slow it down. Like SUPER slow.

STEVE-O  
Okay.

He sits back and they watch. In super slow motion, a man runs into the frame. A super in a black bird-themed costume, this is BLACK HERON. He is a white man in his 30s.

Black Heron runs to the mailboxes at the back of the room and leaves the latest package in Max's box. Black Heron turns and runs back out. Even in slow motion, he's pretty fast.

STEVE-O (CONT'D)  
Dude, that's Black Heron.

MAX  
You know him?

STEVE-O  
Seen him on the news. He's a member of the Super Supreme Dream Team.

MAX  
Hero?

STEVE-O

Yep. Part of the team that fought  
off the Snakepocalypse.

They both take a deep breath and think about the  
Snakepocalypse.

MAX

That totally sucked.

STEVE-O

Worst three months of my life.

MAX

Yours and everybody in the path of  
the Leviathan.

They both laugh ruefully.

STEVE-O

What's in it?

Max shrugs. He thinks about if for a second then he opens the  
envelope.

It's a LONG list of names. Many, many loose pages.

MAX

Names?

He hands a few pages to Steve-O.

MAX (CONT'D)

AF, AR, MA, NA... ringing a bell...

One of those four codes appears in a column next to each  
person's name.

STEVE-O

What's an Eradicator?

MAX

Where do you see that?

Steve-O shows him the front page, which is the only page that  
has labels at the top of the columns. One of the columns is  
titled "ERADICATOR NU." The column above the two letter  
abbreviations says "BRANCH."

MAX (CONT'D)

The Eradicator is a suit of armor.

STEVE-O

Like Iron Man?



MAX  
Nah, more like something out of  
Robocop.

STEVE-O  
That kinda hardware?

MAX  
Worse.

Steve-O looks at the pages.

STEVE-O  
There sure are a lot of them.

MAX  
Yeah.

STEVE-O  
What are they for.

Max grabs the pages and stuffs them all back in the envelope.

MAX  
Hey, Steve-O... let's forget... you  
should forget we had this  
conversation.

STEVE-O  
Yeah?

MAX  
You got any vacation--

As Max sticks the last of the pages back into the envelope, he sees something inside. He reaches in and pulls out a black business card. It simply reads "Let's meet," in a courier font. A QR code sits above the words.

STEVE-O  
What is it?

MAX  
Nothing safe for you to know about.

Steve-O gets the point and starts closing down his computer.

**EXT. BALTIMORE SUN OFFICES - MOMENTS LATER**

Max stands outside the Sun building, but far away from the front door. A nondescript car pulls up and he gets in. No one would ever remember a car the Fox drives.

**INT. NONDESCRIPT CAR - CONTINUOUS**

The Fox drives, Max sits in the back.

MAX

I should've guessed it was you.

THE FOX

Supers are involved and people need transportation? They go to me. It's my gig.

MAX

For how long?

She makes eye contact in the rearview mirror.

THE FOX

For as long as I can.

Max nods.

MAX

Where we going?

THE FOX

To meet the Black Heron.

Max assumed as much.

**INT. EMPTY HOUSE - LATER**

Max stands in an unrented house. The electricity is off and the only light comes from a streetlight outside the uncurtained window.

He looks around, but it's quiet and empty.

MAX

I don't li--

He comes face-to-face with the Black Heron and jumps.

MAX (CONT'D)

Don't do th--

BLACK HERON

We don't have time.

Max listens.

BLACK HERON (CONT'D)

I have all the documents you need.

He walks to a closet, opens it up and pulls out a portable safe. He hands it to Max. Then he hands Max a scrap of paper.

BLACK HERON (CONT'D)  
This is the code. Don't use it  
inside your house or office. Open  
the safe somewhere you've never  
been before. Then get rid of it.

Max nods.

MAX  
What is it?

The Black Heron looks around nervously.

BLACK HERON  
Evidence that the government has  
recruited an army and armed it with  
the most dangerous combat weaponry  
ever given to a soldier.

MAX  
An army? For what?

BLACK HERON  
Genocide. They're going to kill the  
supers. Every last single one of  
us.

Max stares at him.

BLACK HERON (CONT'D)  
You're a journalist. You have  
power.

Max nods. With purpose.

**INT. BALTIMORE SUN OFFICES - DAY**

SUPER: Offices of the Baltimore Sun/2026

Max walks in and sits at Pritchett's desk. On the backside of Pritchett's door is a government propaganda poster that reads: "Remember: Supers Are Illegal!"

PRITCHETT  
Thanks for joining me.

He frowns with a hint of concern.

MAX  
I got it. It's done.

Pritchett frowns.

MAX (CONT'D)

I have the proof. There are no holes. Poke all you want.

Pritchett leans forward and takes a deep breath. Max frowns.

PRITCHETT

I was contacted not too long ago by the White House...

MAX

THE White House?

PRITCHETT

Indeed. What was your... source? Where'd you get this information?

MAX

I... my source is confidential.

PRITCHETT

Was it a super?

Pritchett nods to the poster on the door. Max looks at it and then looks down at his lap.

MAX

I...

PRITCHETT

If you want to avoid any further trouble, I suggest you turn over ALL of your documentation. All drafts. Anything you've got.

MAX

What about the story?

PRITCHETT

I'm not going to jail for idle gossip.

MAX

Genocide is id--

Pritchett leaps to his feet and yells.

PRITCHETT

That's enough!

Max is wounded.

PRITCHETT (CONT'D)  
 You've caused enough trouble for my  
 tastes. Don't make things any worse  
 for yourself or for this  
 institution.

Max stares at him.

**EXT. BALTIMORE SUN OFFICES - MOMENTS LATER**

The Fox waits outside in a car. Not the same nondescript car  
 as the last one, but something similar.

Max hops in and she drives away.

**INT. THE FOX'S CAR - MOMENTS LATER**

The Fox stares in the mirror at Max. She pulls off her mask  
 and reveals her face. Max stares at her, memorizing what he  
 sees.

MAX  
 Off the record?

The Fox chuckles. There's no humor in it.

THE FOX  
 Does it even matter anymore?

Max laughs. He stares out the window for a bit.

MAX  
 They killed the story.

THE FOX  
 You serious?

MAX  
 Yeah.

She stares at him in the rearview mirror.

THE FOX  
 Sorry.

Beat.

THE FOX (CONT'D)  
 If you need anything...

MAX  
 I'll be fine.

THE FOX  
You sure about that?

MAX  
They can't kill the media.

Beat.

MAX (CONT'D)  
You can't kill the truth.

THE FOX  
They're gonna try.

MAX  
Some fascist is always trying.

THE FOX  
Sometimes they succeed.

MAX  
Not here.

Beat.

MAX (CONT'D)  
We're better than that.

The Fox stares at the oncoming cars, her mind drifting.

THE FOX  
Are we?

Max stares out the window.

**INT. MAX'S APARTMENT - NIGHT**

SUPER: Max's Apartment/Baltimore/2026

Max stands in his kitchen, pan-frying a steak. A bowl of canned peas cooks in the microwave.

MAX  
One of these days, I'm going to  
learn how to cook.

He picks the steak up and slops it onto a piece of fancy dinnerware. Remains of a marriage that didn't last.

He cuts a bite from the steak and pops it in his mouth. He shrugs. It's not bad.

That's when the window and wall explode inward. Max is thrown against the wall.

**CUT TO BLACK:**

Max slowly regains consciousness. He struggles to open his eyes. Blood seeps from a small wound on his forehead.

His eyes open on the Black Heron wearing the Eradicator Mark 2525 armor, a grin upon his face.

BLACK HERON  
Surprised?

He laughs.

MAX  
Wh... wh... why?

Black Heron giggles.

BLACK HERON  
Good. You want answers. I do love to monologue. That's the best part.

Max tries to get up. Black Heron lets him.

BLACK HERON (CONT'D)  
Yes, yes. Do get up.

Max coughs. There's blood in it.

BLACK HERON (CONT'D)  
Don't feel special.

MAX  
What?

BLACK HERON  
You aren't special. We put out a net to catch any of you do-gooders. There were fewer than I thought, but still enough to say confidently that there is nothing special about you.

MAX  
But you're a super?

BLACK HERON  
Fuck yourself!

Max doesn't understand.

BLACK HERON (CONT'D)  
Putting on a child's costume  
doesn't turn a red-blooded human  
man like me into a fucking super!

Max is shocked.

MAX  
But you had super speed? How--

BLACK HERON  
I said I liked to monologue, not  
give exposition!

Max slumps backward in pain.

BLACK HERON (CONT'D)  
The whole thing was to give those  
like you who are dying to expose  
themselves the chance to do so.

MAX  
Why?

BLACK HERON  
There's a new world order coming.  
Hell, it's already here.

Beat.

BLACK HERON (CONT'D)  
And people like you have no place  
in it.

MAX  
Me?

BLACK HERON  
Do-gooder journalists. Willing to  
lie to advance your cause...

MAX  
I've never--

Black Heron punches Max in the ribs. They audibly crack as he  
crashes into the wall. Max screams out.

Black Heron advances on him.

BLACK HERON  
Your lies won't work on me. I'm  
smarter than that. As you can see,  
I do my own research.



MAX  
You made that?

BLACK HERON  
No, I'm more of what you'd call an  
"angel investor."

Max chuckles. Black Heron frowns.

BLACK HERON (CONT'D)  
You won't be laughing much longer.

Max tries to sit up, but the ribs won't let him move.

MAX  
If you're going to kill me, why  
don't you do it?

BLACK HERON  
Yes. I was going to monologue like  
a good villain, but I'm not really  
the villain.

Beat.

BLACK HERON (CONT'D)  
And you won't shut the fuck up.

MAX  
There's only one way to shut me up.

Black Heron waves him off.

BLACK HERON  
Yes, yes. When I want you dead,  
you'll die. There's nothing you can  
do to stop it.

Max stares at him, stone-faced.

MAX  
What do you want?

Black Heron laughs.

BLACK HERON  
Good. See how the pain clarifies  
your thinking?

MAX  
It's not a what. It's a who. Isn't  
it?

The humor drains from Black Heron's face.

BLACK HERON

You were found in possession of top secret government documents. Under the new constitution, that's treason. You know what the penalty for treason is under the new constitution?

Max shakes his head.

BLACK HERON (CONT'D)

Same as the old constitution.

Beat.

BLACK HERON (CONT'D)

Death!

Black Heron brings down an armored fist and obliterates Max's left foot. Max screams. His voice cracks from too many screams.

BLACK HERON (CONT'D)

Now, you have one last choice.

Max fights off his sobs. He's done crying and screaming for Black Heron's delight. He tries to sit up. It hurts, but he does it anyway.

BLACK HERON (CONT'D)

The Patriot.

Max rolls his eyes.

BLACK HERON (CONT'D)

You can choose to tell me where the Patriot is...

Black Heron raises his fist, ready to bring it down on Max's right foot.

BLACK HERON (CONT'D)

And die quickly. Or keep your evil secrets...

He smashes Max's right foot.

BLACK HERON (CONT'D)

And experience SO MUCH more pain.

It takes Max a second, but he clears his throat. Blood now trickles from both sides of his mouth and his nose.

MAX  
I'll die before I tell you.

Black Heron's grin falters very briefly.

BLACK HERON  
Okay!

His grin returns. Bigger than ever.

**EXT. MAX'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS**

Standing outside, the Fox stares through the window. She sees the Black Heron prepare to strike a killing blow to Max.

The Black Heron looks up and makes eye contact through the window. The Fox wants to leave, but she can't look away.

The Black Heron's smile is that of a psychopath.

He holds up a bloody hand in the shape of a gun.

He points it directly at the Fox.

He shoots her. He winks.

He looks back down and smashes his armored fist into Max's now-dead face.

The Fox runs.

The Black Heron looks after her with a grin.

**INT. BALTIMORE SUN OFFICES - NIGHT**

SUPER: Offices of the Baltimore Sun/2027

Max's desk sits empty. It's dusty, untouched. The bullpen TV is on as several reporters work late. A lot of desks are empty. And dusty.

On TV, news anchor JEFFREY BRACK sits in the NBS News Studio, dressed in a designer suit. He's a white man in his mid 20s who very much talks in "game show announcer voice."

BRACK  
Government programs have proven to be fully effective in reducing the presence of supers.

He sits across from commentator SHARON ALLIGOOD, a tall white woman in her early 20s. She has long red hair and wears a calf-length skirt and matching jacket.

ALLIGOOD

Regardless of the methods used?

Brack scoffs.

BRACK

There are rumors, of course, but I, for one, refuse to give them credence.

Alligood is a little shook, like she's been accused of something.

ALLIGOOD

I am a woman of evidence, so I will ALSO keep speculation to myself, unlike the guests on SOME networks.

Brack chuckles.

BRACK

Good to see professionalism still dominates this network.

ALLIGOOD

Well, we've seen numerous journalists spread false rumors about "killing machines" and other such fantasy.

BRACK

And we've seen those journalists rightfully lose their platform. There's no place on television for fake news.

Brack stacks his papers and Alligood stares blankly at the camera.

BRACK (CONT'D)

In other news, New Baltimore Mayor Charles Falwell Jr. issued a proclamation declaring today "Freedom Day," marking the day that zero supers are known to live within the city limits.

**CUT TO:**

Mayor CHARLES FALWELL JR., WM, 50s, stands before a crowd of reporters, reading prepared remarks. He wears a gold cross lapel pin.

FALWELL

New Baltimore is free in the service of Christ. We have banished the forces of the devil from within our borders. Next on our agenda will be the eradication of the homel... the eradication of homelessness. In Christ's name we serve.

The assembled reporters respond in unison:

ALL

Amen!

Falwell points at reporters, ready to answer more questions.

**EXT. SIDEWALK OUTSIDE BALTIMORE CONVENTION CENTER - NIGHT**

SUPER: Comic-Con/New Baltimore/2043

Kyle stands in the center of a crowded Comic-Con sidewalk looking down at the ground, waiting for the light to change. He wears jeans and a hoodie.

It is now apparently monsoon season. Kyle stands perfectly still, almost meditating, his face wet with rain.

He looks up as the light changes. In the rain, a man, ARNIE, futilely tries to change his tire. He can't get enough leverage to turn the tire iron, which is too small for the job.

Arnie looks up at the traffic, but the rain blinds him. Despite clinging as closely as possible to the car, almost his entire body is in the second lane. Cars are slowly moving toward him but are still a few blocks away.

Arnie pushes with all his might. The tire iron moves a little. He exhales in joy.

Arnie stands up and looks inside the car to see a young girl strapped into a car seat.

ARNIE

It's gonna work, Jenny! I've almost got it.

JENNY can't hear him. He kneels down again and starts working on the tire. It's still tough going, but there is slight progress.

A red Lamborghini swerves around the corner of the next cross-street. The light behind Arnie turns green.

The Lamborghini slides on the wet pavement, but it doesn't slow down. The driver, a white guy who is drunk or high or both, overcorrects and is headed straight at Arnie.

On the sidewalk, Kyle looks up as tires squeal.

Arnie looks up into the blinding headlights.

Kyle's eyes glow red.

Kyle leaps into action with superhuman speed.

**FADE OUT.**