

The Hero - by Nathaniel Jones

EXT. PLAYGROUND - DAY

The time is 11:44 on Tuesday, December 11, 1987.

The playground is completely deserted, save one discarded doll missing an eye lying face down on the ground, hand outstretched toward the playground equipment, as if reaching out to be saved from the grey brick elementary school building across the pavement.

A clock on the school wall ticks away the seconds - 11:44:46, 11:44:47, 11:44:48...

There is a sense of expectation - a palpable feeling that very soon, something big will happen.

11:44:57, 11:44:58, 11:44:59...

The recess bell rings loud, echoing across the playground. The doors of the school burst open, and hordes of excited kids race onto the playground in a life-or-death struggle to get the best swing, or the ball that bounces the highest.

Excitement flows from the children, and every child is full of glee!

Except for GORDON. He stands in the doorway of the cafeteria looking out at the general camaraderie of his classmates. Gordon is a lad of small stature - even for a second grader. His clothes hang loose on his body, and his glasses are too large for his face. In one hand, Gordon holds a comic book. In the other he holds a carton of chocolate milk.

Gordon is about to join his fellow schoolmates, when suddenly he finds himself flung facedown onto the concrete. His belongings fly from his hands and land near the four-square courts.

He looks up to see CHRIS, TYLER and ANDREW towering above him. They are the schoolyard bullies - fourth graders who enjoy tormenting the smaller kids - especially the ever-vulnerable Gordon.

Chris, the leader of the gang, reaches down and grabs Gordon's collar, pulling him to a sitting position.

CHRIS
You were in our way.

GORDON
Sorry.

ANDREW
Where's my chocolate milk?

GORDON
(gesturing towards four-
square area)
Over there.

ANDREW
Go get it!

Andrew pushes Gordon in the direction of the milk.

Gordon reluctantly walks to the foursquare area and picks up the milk.

When he arrives back at the spot where the gang waits for him, Chris is flipping through one of the comic books.

GORDON
Hey! Don't!

CHRIS
Don't what? Do you know what he's
talking about?

TYLER
I have no idea!

CHRIS
Oh! Maybe he means the comic book!
What don't you want us to do with
it?

GORDON
Put it down!

CHRIS
Oh! He doesn't want us to put it
down! In that case, I'll just read
it.

GORDON
Put it down now!

ANDREW
Or what?

GORDON
Or I'll tell the playground teacher
on you!

ANDREW

Ooh, I'm so scared! Give me my milk!

Andrew grabs milk and chugs it.

CHRIS

The playground teacher? In that case, yeah - we'll put down your comic book.

Chris rumples the comic book and throws it on the ground. He then steps on it, and grinds it into the pavement.

ANDREW

(drinking milk)

Mmm... this is good! I wonder if Batman wants some.

GORDON

NO!

ANDREW

What's that, Batman? You DO?

GORDON

NO!

ANDREW

Well, have some of mine!

Andrew pours the remainder of the chocolate milk onto the crumpled comic book on the ground.

The three laugh and walk off to take over another area of the playground.

Gordon looks at the ruined comic book, and runs to the playground teacher.

MRS. SPELLING is standing by the tetherball courts with whistle in mouth - a middle aged woman with an obscene amount of make-up and perfume that cannot mask the smell of cigarette smoke that lingers about her at all times.

GORDON

Mrs. Spelling, Chris just, and Andrew took my milk and my comic book is ruined!

MRS. SPELLING

Slow down - what happened?

GORDON

I was walking, and Andrew took my milk, and Chris took my comic book, and Andrew put the milk on my comic book, and Chris wrinkled it, and Tyler was there too.

MRS. SPELLING

What were you doing with milk outside the lunch room?

GORDON

I... they took it, and -

MRS. SPELLING

Never mind "and" young man. Milk isn't allowed on the playground area.

GORDON

But - my comic book.

MRS. SPELLING

So tell them to give it back.

GORDON

But they threw it on the ground and -

MRS. SPELLING

If they gave it back, what's the problem? I'm trying to watch tetherball. Go play on the slide.

GORDON

But I -

MRS. SPELLING

Do you want a detention?

GORDON

No

MRS. SPELLING

Then go!

GORDON

(walking away)
This isn't fair...

MRS. SPELLING

(under her breath)
Life's not fair, kid.

Gordon, dejected, slowly walks away from Mrs. Spelling and towards the slide.

On the wood-chipped area that housed the Big Toy, the kids are running and laughing. Gordon doesn't fit in here.

He leaves the main playground, and walks down to the lower field, where some construction workers have recently poured cement for a new addition to the playground.

Nobody is around, so Gordon approaches the cement and sticks a finger in - the cement is still wet.

Teary eyed, Gordon kneels beside the large grey rectangle that glitters in the sun, and he begins to write:

GORDON

(in cement)

When I grow up, I will make
everyone be nice to each other, and
make everyone stop fighting. Even
when people are mean to me and
don't like me and wreck my comic
books. - Gordon Pierce, 1987

As he finishes signing his name, the recess bell rings, and Gordon stands up, wipes the tears from his eyes, and races back to class.

CUT TO:

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - DAY

The tree-lined streets of this serene suburb are alive and vibrant with color as Gordon, walking tall with a new sense of righteousness, makes his way on the long trek home from school.

Gordon is smiling, his stride is long, his arms swing at his sides - never has young Gordon looked so happy. As he walks along, he smiles and waves at passersby. Life appears to be good for everyone.

Walking proud, Gordon nears his house, and then stops dead in his tracks. His smile turns into a look of shock and disbelief as he reaches his house, and sees it surrounded by police cars, fire trucks, and reporters.

Gordon runs forward, making his way through the crowd - his small size makes it easy for him to wriggle in below the sight line of the adults that mill about.

The sound of police radios, television reporters doing mic checks, sirens and the general stressed mumble of the crowd fill Gordon's head - he covers his ears to block out the sound as he forces his way past the police blockade that separates the masses from his front yard.

POLICE OFFICER

Hey, kid - you can't go in there!

GORDON

No - I *must* go in there.

Gordon walks toward a circle of firefighters standing around the big tree in the middle of the yard, looking concerned. One of the firefighters spots Gordon nearing them. He breaks from the circle and kneels down to Gordon's level. He lifts his helmet so that Gordon can see his face - that of a friendly old grandpa.

THE ELDERLY FIREFIGHTER

Hello, son - what are you doing in all of this commotion? This is no place for a small boy like you. Why don't you run along home now like a good boy.

GORDON

This is my home. If something bad happened to my family, I will do whatever I can to right whatever injustice has brought so many to my door.

The elderly firefighter is stunned into silence by Gordon's eloquence.

GORDON

Why are all these people here?
What's going on?

The elderly firefighter stands and looks towards the tree, and then back down at Gordon.

THE ELDERLY FIREFIGHTER

(with a sigh)

Are you sure you want to see this?

GORDON

I've never been more sure of anything in my life.

The elderly firefighter nods in understanding, and leads Gordon through the circle of firefighters to the large tree.

Within the mess of branches, in the very middle, sits MISTY, Gordon's pet cat. When she spots Gordon down below, she mews softly.

GORDON

Misty!

THE ELDERLY FIREFIGHTER

Yup. She's been up there for a few hours now. The trouble is, where she got herself stuck, it's too high for the short ladder, and too low for the long ladder, and for either ladder she's so far in, we couldn't grab her, unless we were to shove her out with a stick.

GORDON

Isn't there anything you can do?

THE ELDERLY FIREFIGHTER

That's what we've been trying to figure out. We called in some loggers from the west coast with some experience in these matters, and they have their chainsaws on stand-by - but they say that if they start hacking away around here, that cat is as likely to climb up higher as she is of getting out safe. So that's kind of a last resort.

GORDON

I can get her down - she knows me.

Gordon walks to the base of the tree, and looks up at Misty. She looks back down at Gordon and makes such a sound as to tell Gordon "it's about time!"

Gordon reaches his hand up towards Misty, and Misty reaches her paw down towards a caterpillar a few branches below her. She chirps at the caterpillar and bats it around a bit.

GORDON

(gently)

Come on, Misty - come on down. You can do it, Misty - just go down one branch at a time.

Misty looks at Gordon for a moment, and makes a "are you nuts?" sound.

GORDON
(to elderly firefighter)
Hey - do you have any keys on you?

THE ELDERLY FIREFIGHTER
Yes - why?

GORDON
Give them to me.

THE ELDERLY FIREFIGHTER
Why do you need keys? You can't
drive the cat out of the tree.

GORDON
You'll see.

The elderly firefighter hands Gordon his keys. Gordon holds the key up towards Misty and begins jingling them around. Misty looks at the keys intently.

THE ELDERLY FIREFIGHTER
(to himself)
Clever kid...

GORDON
Look what I have, Misty! You want
the keys? Come on down and you can
play with them.

Misty chirps at the keys. She takes a cautious step down one branch.

GORDON
That's it Misty - keep on going.
Just take it slowly, that's it.

Misty stares at the keys as if it were a giant tuna and steps down on another branch.

The crowd of firefighters begin to shout out encouragement as well, and the sound brings the crowd or reporters crashing past the police blockade. Cameras flash, film rolls, and the sound of the crowd grows to a roar.

Misty looks at the crowd, and crouches back.

GORDON
(to crowd)
Quiet! You're making her nervous!

The crowd keeps moving closer, and getting louder, and Misty keeps moving back, farther into the middle of the tree.

GORDON
 (the loudest hollar in
 history)
 Silence!

The echo of his hollar can be heard repeating and fading. The crowd becomes completely silent, and all eyes are on Gordon. Gordon looks across the sea of police, firefighters and journalists.

Amongst the press, there stands a small girl, with long brown hair, holding a press pad and pencil. Gordon has never seen her before, but the site of her now gives Gordon a feeling he has never had, and cannot explain. He tries to brush this feeling aside, but it doesn't go away completely.

GORDON
 Thank you.

Gordon looks back up at Misty, and she looks back at the caterpillar. Gordon jingles the keys in Misty's directing once more, and Misty, after losing interest in the caterpillar, gets on her haunches, and with the look of a tiger in the wild, she leaps out of the tree and pounces on the keys. The force of her leap knocks Gordon flat on his back, and Misty rolls around on his stomach, tossing the keys from paw to paw - safe at last.

Gordon stands up and holds Misty in his arms, and the crowd gives Gordon a mighty round of applause. The reporters surround him, taking pictures and shouting out questions.

REPORTERS
 How old are you? How old is the
 cat? How long has the cat liked
 keys? How did you know she would
 chase the keys? Where did you get
 the idea? Etc.

Gordon is overwhelmed by the questions, and stammers responses. He looks around, trying to spot the girl he saw before, but he can't find her.

ACE REPORTER
 Hey, kid, how about a picture for
 the front page of the paper?

GORDON
 I'm gonna be on the front page?

ACE REPORTER
 Of course - you're a hero, kid.

GORDON
(dreamily)
I'm a hero...

Gordon smiles, and a flashbulb flashes, and we see the picture on the front page: Gordon beaming while Misty, in his arms, is trying to grab the keys in Gordon's hand. The headline over the picture reads "LOCAL HERO SAVES DAY" and the sub-headline reads "local locksmith says 'Those are my keys!'"

CUT TO:

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - DAY

Gordon suddenly snaps out of it. We are back at the point where Gordon just said "I can get her down - she knows me."

THE ELDERLY FIREFIGHTER
Well, if you say you can get her
down, there's no harm in letting
you try.

GORDON
I just need somebody to lift me up
higher.

Gordon looks around at the crowd and spots a seven foot tall man standing in the crowd, facing away from the cat situation.

Gordon walks towards him, pointing and yelling. The crowd has remained ignorant of Gordon until now - they stop their milling about and turn to see who this little kid is yelling to.

GORDON
Hey! You! Come over here! Come on!

The tall man realizes that he's being called to, and he slowly turns around. He's a good looking guy, very athletic, with a pair of designer shades on. He lowers the shades in classic movie star fashion and flashes a smile.

A woman in the crowd recognizes him and screams

WOMAN
Oh my God! It's Basketball
superstar 'Gator' Larson!

The crowd goes wild - everyone stops what they're doing, throw their papers, pens, cameras, etc. into the air and move toward Gator.

Gator sees the crowd coming at him, and he runs away, with the entire crowd chasing him, Beatles style.

He runs down the street followed by screaming girls, followed by screaming neighborhood residents, followed by screaming reporters, followed by screaming firefighters and police officers.

Back at the tree, Gordon and the elderly firefighter stand alone, while all around them remnants of the crowd lie scattered on the ground.

Gordon and the elderly firefighter look at each other.

THE ELDERLY FIREFIGHTER
Crowds are fickle.

Gordon looks around at the scattered debris, and at Misty in the tree (who now has become tangled in some branches), and finally at the elderly firefighter.

GORDON
Well... we still have to get Misty
down.

THE ELDERLY FIREFIGHTER
Do you still believe you can do it -
even without a crowd of supporters?

Gordon thinks about this, and he looks up at Misty in the tree, and she mews down at him.

GORDON
Crowd or not, that's my cat.

THE ELDERLY FIREFIGHTER
Well then, let's get her down,
shall we?

Gordon nods, and motions that he wants to be lifted up.

The elderly firefighter hoists Gordon onto his shoulders, and together they are nearly tall enough to reach Misty - but not quite.

GORDON
We need more height.

THE ELDERLY FIREFIGHTER
Why? You're a growing boy.

Gordon doesn't understand this, but he reaches back to Misty again anyway.

As he reaches, it is as if his arms grow longer and longer, until he is able to reach Misty, pick her up, and place her on your shoulder.

Once she is safely in your arms, the elderly firefighter sets you back onto the ground.

Gordon examines his arms, which look no different now than they did before he went up into the tree.

GORDON
How did I do that?

THE ELDERLY FIREFIGHTER
All you did was what you had to - there's nothing wrong with that, is there?

GORDON
I didn't say there was something wrong with it, but how did my arms grow like that?

THE ELDERLY FIREFIGHTER
Your arms look normal now - your mind just must be playing tricks on you.

Gordon doesn't believe him, but he doesn't pursue the subject any further. He thanks the firefighter, and begins to return Misty to the house, but the firefighter stops him.

THE ELDERLY FIREFIGHTER
Gordon.

GORDON
Yeah?

THE ELDERLY FIREFIGHTER
You're a good boy. If you keep working at it, I'd say you could do great things in the future.

GORDON
Thanks.

Gordon once again starts to leave, and is once again stopped.

THE ELDERLY FIREFIGHTER
Gordon.

GORDON
Yeah?

THE ELDERLY FIREFIGHTER

Here's a nickel's worth of free advice: if you want to be a hero - be a hero. If you want the world to love you forever, you'd better start looking for a different profession. Now you can go.

Gordon turns away slowly, and runs into the house with Misty in his arms.

The elderly firefighter watches Gordon run, nods approvingly, and leaves the yard. As he walks, he takes off the firefighter hat and coat and tosses them to the ground, revealing that he is wearing a magnificent shiny red suit with black trim, and he walks with a cane out of sight.

CUT TO:

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

It is the following day, and the class is excitedly discussing the presence of 'Gator' Larson in their town. The three bullies loudly talk about how they got to meet him.

Meanwhile, Gordon sits at his desk, away from the Gator conversations, doodling superhero costumes.

The classroom door flies open, and in walks MR. HENDERSON, a tall, lanky man, who is dressed in a white tweed suit with a blue shirt and tie. His hair is combed in such a way as to hide the fact that he is balding.

He walks to the desk at the front of the room, sets down his briefcase, and looks intently at the students. They all quiet down and sit at their assigned seats, except for Gordon, who continues drawing.

Mr. Henderson neatly arranges the papers for the day's lesson on his desk in rows. The students sit still, trying to carry on their conversations unnoticed.

MR. HENDERSON

Good morning, students.

STUDENTS

Good morning, Mr. Henderson.

MR. HENDERSON

I'm sure you are all very excited to hear that a basketball star was visiting our city, however, we will put that on the back burner for the rest of the day. Understood?

STUDENTS

Yes, Mr. Henderson.

MR. HENDERSON

Very good. I'm sure you all remembered to do the reading in your geography books, yes?

STUDENTS

Yes, Mr. Henderson.

MR. HENDERSON

Very good. A lie, but good.

The sound of a pencil scratching on a piece of paper catches Mr. Henderson's ear. The teacher's ears perk up, and his nose begins twitching like a dog that has just caught the scent of its pray. He scans the room, looking for the culprit, when he spots Gordon.

MR. HENDERSON

Mr. Peace.

Gordon doesn't notice, and he continues to draw.

MR. HENDERSON

Mr. Peace, what are you working on that could possibly be more important than my geography lesson?

Once again Gordon doesn't notice.

Mr. Henderson walks to Gordon's desk and sees that he is drawing superheroes rather than reading about Geography. This upsets Mr. Henderson, who snatches Gordon's pencil mid-line.

Gordon looks at Mr. Henderson, suddenly pulled out of his fantasy world of superheroes.

MR. HENDERSON

So, Mr. Peace, you like superheroes.

GORDON

Yes, Mr. Henderson. I'm going to be one when I grow up.

The class snickers, and Mr. Henderson silences them.

MR. HENDERSON

Really? A superhero? That's an awfully big job for someone as small as you. Why would you want such a job?

GORDON

So that I can make the world a better place.

MR. HENDERSON

And how would you do such a thing?

GORDON

By helping people that need help.

MR. HENDERSON

I see... Well, this is certainly a noble goal. I'll tell you what - since you feel that being a superhero is more important than geography, I'll help you out. Instead of sitting here reading with the rest of the class, you can spend the period making the world a better place by helping the janitors clean the playground.

GORDON

But that's not -

MR. HENDERSON

Now now, we mustn't be picky about who we help. Janitors are people too, you know. Now get out of my class room.

GORDON

Yes, Mr. Henderson.

CUT TO:

INT. HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Gordon walks out of the room and heads down the long hallway to the Janitor's closet. He looks into the windows of classrooms as he walks - each one filled with students sitting neatly in rows, with their hands folded on their desks, obediently responding to their teachers. Gordon sighs as he sees these rooms full of little children that are being turned into machines by their teachers.

Each room he passes, he hears the students calling out in unison.

STUDENTS

Yes, Mr. Hammond! Yes, Mrs. Smith!
Yes, Mrs. Marks! Yes, Mr. Brian!

As he walks along the hallway his anger grows at the injustice he is facing. He reads signs hanging along the hallway; pictures of animals with captions such as "What's the key to success? Aard vark!" and "Always do your best and the results will be Amazon!"

When he reaches the end of the hallway and the doorway to the outside world, Gordon looks up and sees the large banner spread over the door which reads "Education does not end at these doors - it begins."

Gordon pushes the doors open and walks out onto the playground.

CUT TO:

EXT. PLAYGROUND - MOMENTS LATER

The playground looks much as it did in the opening scene, except that now there is more debris laying around - papers, pencils, hair bands, broken toys, etc.

Gordon glances around looking for the janitor, but he is nowhere to be seen. Wishing to return back to class as soon as possible, Gordon begins picking up papers and putting them into the trash can beside the school building.

After carrying a few pieces of paper from the playground to the trash can, Gordon grows bored. To make things more exciting, he begins to play a game of pretend.

Gordon picks up a Barbie doll without a head and places it at the top of the slide.

GORDON

(in Barbie voice)

Oh no! I am at the top of a
horrible cliff, and I can't get
down! Who will save me?

Gordon reaches down and picks up a sock from the ground. He places it on his hand like a puppet.

GORDON

(sock voice)

I will save you!

GORDON

My hero!

Gordon's puppet moves towards Barbie, but then Gordon throws a woodchip at the puppets head.

GORDON

Oh no! It's my arch nemesis, the Litter Bug!

GORDON

That's right, Mr. Socky!

GORDON

What is your evil scheme now, Litter Bug?

GORDON

I put garbage all over this mountain, and if you don't pick it all up, this lady gets it!

GORDON

Don't let him get me, Mr. Socky! Help!

GORDON

There's not enough time to pick up all this litter!

GORDON

Then I guess the lady will die!

GORDON

Help me, Mr. Socky!

GORDON

Don't worry, I'll get this litter picked up in no time!

Gordon runs around the playground, picking up the garbage with his sock puppet and putting it in the trash can. As he runs around cleaning up, he continues the dramatic story.

GORDON

Ha ha ha! You'll never beat me, Mr. Socky! My gangs of litterers will always be one step ahead of you!

GORDON

That's what you think, Litter Bug! I'll have you know that my good friend Gordon Pierce is on my side!

GORDON
Gordon Pierce? Oh no! He's the best
superhero in the world!

GORDON
Yes he is!

Gordon continues to run around, not looking where he is going, until he runs into NATALIE, the girl he saw in the crowd of reporters when he was imagining saving the cat.

Natalie is even more stunning up close than she was in the crowd. She has a look of intelligence, mixed with some sly cunning.

NATALIE
What are you yelling about?

GORDON
Nothing. I was just... cleaning...

NATALIE
I thought I heard voices.

GORDON
Oh, yeah, I heard that too. I think
it was some people across the
street.

NATALIE
Really?

GORDON
Yeah.

NATALIE
Oh.

GORDON
Yeah...

Natalie looks at Gordon as if she's trying to analyze him scientifically, and then begins to walk away as she asks her question.

NATALIE
So, what did you do that got you
sent out to playground duty?

Gordon notices her walking away, and runs to catch up.

GORDON
I was doodling.

Gordon makes a doodling gesture with his hand, notices that he still is wearing the sock, and he quickly takes it off and tosses it away.

Natalie notices, but doesn't comment. The two continue to walk together around the playground, occasionally picking up a piece of litter.

NATALIE

For that you got sent outside?
That's harsh.

GORDON

Yeah. Why are you out here?

NATALIE

I'm out here because the school system is totally opposed to open exchange of thought.

GORDON

What does that mean?

NATALIE

It means that I talked back to the teacher.

GORDON

Oh. I didn't know that there was anyone at this school who would do that.

NATALIE

Yeah, I guess I'm the school rebel.
Hi, I'm Natalie.

GORDON

I'm Gordon. Gordon Pierce.

Natalie stops at the recognition of his name.

NATALIE

Not the Gordon Pierce who vandalized the new cement they poured on the lower field last week?

GORDON

I don't think it's really *vandalizing* -

Natalie slaps Gordon on the back in a congratulatory gesture.

NATALIE

You are my personal hero, do you know that?

GORDON

What do you mean?

NATALIE

You totally left your mark on this school! You know this school doesn't have the money to re-pour that cement: your name could be in that ground for years! I'd give anything for publicity like that!

GORDON

I just wanted to show everyone that I don't like the way things are.

NATALIE

Exactly - exactly. Well, listen, I've done my good deed of the day.

Natalie holds up pile of papers in her hands.

NATALIE

So I think I'm going to call it quits. If the janitor comes looking for me, tell him my teacher let me back in.

GORDON

Where are you going?

NATALIE

Home. I have better things to do than submit to free child labor. Gordon, nice to meet you.

GORDON

I saw you before... you were at my house when my cat was stuck in the tree.

NATALIE

Yeah, I was. Nice rescue, by the way.

GORDON

You saw that? I thought everyone stopped paying attention once they saw the basketball guy.

NATALIE

Come one - who needs basketball
when you can see a hero in action?

Gordon is too happy to speak.

NATALIE

Yeah, well, you have a good one.
Man... saves cats and vandalizes
school property. Can you get any
better than that?

Natalie walks away, and Gordon, now madly in love with her,
watches her go.

As she reaches the school gate, Natalie turns back and shouts

NATALIE

Oh, Gordy...

GORDON

Yeah?

NATALIE

Don't forget your Barbie.

Gordon stands still as Natalie walks away from the school
yard.

The elderly firefighter (now dressed as a janitor) walks
behind Gordon and places his hand on his shoulder. Gordon
jumps and spins around, surprised to see the old man once
again, and even more surprised to see that he is no longer a
firefighter.

THE ELDERLY FIREFIGHTER

You've picked yourself a doozy of a
love interest, kid.

GORDON

What? I don't love her. I don't
even like girls.

THE ELDERLY FIREFIGHTER

Of course not.

The old man picks up the sock puppet from the ground.

THE ELDERLY FIREFIGHTER

I saw your little performance
earlier.

GORDON

I didn't think anyone could see me.

THE ELDERLY FIREFIGHTER
Obviously. Listen, Gordon, you
really want to be a superhero?

GORDON
More than anything in the world.

THE ELDERLY FIREFIGHTER
I believe you. Do you?

GORDON
Of course - what do you mean?

THE ELDERLY FIREFIGHTER
Just something to think about:
would a superhero spend his time
playing with socks, or would he
spend his time helping people? You
don't have to wait until you grow
up to change the world.

The old man puts the sock on his hand and makes it fly around
the way Gordon was, and then takes it off and tosses it to
Gordon, who catches it.

GORDON
What are you - some kind of nut?

THE ELDERLY FIREFIGHTER
No, but if you run I'll cashew.

The old man turns and walks away. Gordon is befuddled - two
rather odd conversations on one playground are enough for
him, so he drops his sock to the ground, and walks to the
library.

CUT TO:

INT. SCHOOL LIBRARY - LATER

Gordon sits at a table with a blank sheet of paper in front
of him. With his pencil, Gordon writes across the top of the
paper "things I need to do to become a superhero," and
numbers one through ten down the side.

On space one he writes "superhero name," on space two he
writes "costume," on space three he writes "damsel in
distress," on space four he writes "theme song," on space
five he writes "superpowers," on space six he writes "picture
on the front page," on space seven he writes "bad guys to
beat up," and on spaces 8-10 he writes "etc."

Gordon holds the sheet up and reads over it, dissatisfied. He can't figure out what is wrong with it. He reads it again and again, and then the voice of the old man comes into his head:

THE ELDERLY FIREFIGHTER

You can either try to be a
superhero, or you can be a
superhero. What would you rather
do?

Gordon thinks about this for a moment, until he hears from across the library the sound of a girl with blonde pigtails trying hard to reach a book on the top shelf - just out of her reach.

Gordon stands up, crumples his to-do list into a ball, and tosses it into the garbage can on his way over to the little girl.

GORDON

Here - let me get that for you.

Gordon reaches up and pulls down the book she was reaching for. She smiles at Gordon.

GIRL

Thank you!

Gordon hands her the book, and she races over to a beanbag chair that sits in the corner. Pleased with his handiwork, Gordon heads off in search of more people to help.

CUT TO:

EXT. PLAYGROUND - DAY

Montage:

Gordon throws a ball at another ball caught in a tree, and both balls fall to the ground. Gordon hands one ball to a group of kids playing four square, and hands the other to the boy who got stuck with the flat recess ball.

A girl is hanging upside down from the monkey bars, and she slips - but Gordon softens her fall by catching her, and then falling backwards. The girl runs off happy, and Gordon is left with a backside covered with wood chips.

At the swing set, a disagreement is going on about whose turn it is for the swing, and Gordon settles it by standing and counting to one hundred for each of them.

Gordon is sliding down the slide, and when he reaches the bottom, a group of kids is waiting for him - one kid with a hurt thumb, two kids with a popped ball, another two kids with a ball stuck in another tree, and a kid who wants a piggyback ride.

Gordon gives the first kid a band-aid, the second two kids a new ball, and is about to toss a ball up on the roof to get the ball down, when Gordon's ball is grabbed by Andrew - the chocolate milk stealing bully.

ANDREW

Look - I got a ball!

The three bullies are standing behind Gordon in a pack, ready to cause trouble. Even tho Gordon is a hero now, he is still intimidated by this group of three boys who are bigger than he is.

GORDON

Give that back - I'm using it to get that ball off the roof.

Gordon goes to grab the ball, but Andrew hands the ball off to Chris.

CHRIS

Yeah, we know. You're going to help those kids get their ball, and then you're gonna help somebody else. But thing is, we need some help right now.

Gordon walks over to Chris, and he tosses the ball at Andrew, who misses it, and the ball rolls away. Gordon is about to go grab it, but Andrew grabs his shoulders. Tyler chases after the ball and brings it back.

CHRIS

See, it just so happens that we lost our ball.

TYLER

No, here it is - I got it.

Tyler's help irritates Chris, who grabs the ball from him. He then drop kicks it up onto the roof of the gym - the tallest building in the school.

CHRIS

Uh oh! I lost it again! Go get it, hero!

GORDON
Get it yourself.

Gordon tries to walk away, but the three bullies surround him.

TYLER
Boo!

ANDREW
I don't think Batman would say that.

CHRIS
Come on - what kind of hero can't even get a little ol' ball off a little ol' roof?

GORDON
It's against the rules.

Gordon struggles to get past them, but he is not strong enough.

CHRIS
To help a friend in need? Since when is 'kindness' against the rules?

GORDON
Let me go!

CHRIS
If we let you go, will you get the ball?

GORDON
Fine! Just let me go!

The bullies let Gordon go, and he walks over to the wall of the gym. He looks up - from his point of view, the building might as well be Mt. Everest.

On the side of the building there is a covered pathway, and beside the covered pathway, there is a chain fence. Gordon walks to the fence and climbs to the top, and from there he is able to slowly climb on top of the covered area. From there, Gordon goes to a fire escape ladder that leads to the top of the building.

The ladder is old and rusty - it looks like it hasn't been used in quite a few decades. Rung by Rung, Gordon climbs higher until he reaches the roof of the gym.

The roof is covered in balls of all shapes and sizes - a recess dream come true. Gordon walks to the edge of the roof and looks down at the three bullies, who stare in disbelief.

TYLER

He actually went up there!

ANDREW

That's awesome!

CHRIS

Shut up!

Gordon finds the ball the bullies kicked up, and he tosses it down to them - the ball flies from the roof and lands in Chris' hands. Chris looks up, trying to look angry, but it is obvious he is more than a little impressed.

From the top of the big toy, Natalie watches Gordon's ball rescue, and she spreads the word by shouting to the world of the playground

NATALIE

Hey everybody! Come see what
Gordon's doing!

At the sound of his name, the kids leave their playground activities to gather at the base of the gym.

Gordon looks down at them from the roof, and gives a wave. He then proceeds to take every ball from the roof and toss it to the crowd.

The kids are ecstatic - this pile of balls flying from the roof of the gym is even better than a snow day.

Eventually the last ball is thrown over the side of the building, and then Gordon descends back down, the same way he went up, and is met on the ground by throngs of screaming fans, as well as the playground teacher, waiting to drag him off to detention for going on the roof.

As he is led to the detention room, the rest of the playground, including Andrew and Tyler, cheer him on - a true hero's exit.

CUT TO:

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL TRACK - EIGHT YEARS LATER

Gordon is running around the track at near-super human speed and jumping over hurdles lengthways.

It is obvious that over the past eight years, Gordon has done quite a bit of working out - rather than the smallest kid in his class, he is now the strongest, fastest guy anywhere around. He would be the star of every sports team at his school, if he had any interest in sports.

After a lap, Gordon is interrupted by a group of girls standing at the edge of the track. The girls appear star-struck. They have been gathering up the courage to talk to Gordon for some time.

Gordon has earned a reputation, but he is still small-time, and outside of a few die-hard fans, most people either disregard Gordon completely, or treat him as a kind of novelty act.

GIRL 1
Gordon!

GORDON
Ladies.

GIRL 1
I saw you on the news last week -
helping that lady who got stuck on
her roof.

GORDON
Yeah, that was... a challenge.

Gordon is uncomfortable with fame, since he feels that he has not done anything worth fame yet. The discomfort is especially evident with female fans such as these.

GIRL 2
You were great. I saw it too.

GORDON
Thank you.

GIRL 3
It was really great.

GIRL 1
Really. It was great.

GIRL 2
You're great.

GORDON
I... thank you.

GIRL 3

When are you going to do that again? I'd love to see you save someone in person.

GIRL 1

We'd love it.

GIRL 3

We would.

GORDON

I don't know - it's not like I *plan* these things.

GIRLS

giggle

Gordon stretches his arms and glances around. The arm motion makes the girls swoon.

Gordon spots Natalie walking out of the school building down the hill from the track.

GORDON

Hey, listen - I gotta get going. See you later.

GIRL 1

Goodbye, Gordon!

GIRL 2

See you later, Gordon!

GIRL 3

You're so great, Gordon!

Gordon grabs a towel and backpack from the edge of the track and runs down to where Natalie stands, looking at a thin crack along down the side of a window, and writing on a legal pad.

GORDON

Natalie

NATALIE

Gordy - running another marathon?

GORDON

Just a couple miles.

NATALIE

Saw the stunt with the ladder on the news - you're making quite a name.

GORDON

It was only the local news.

NATALIE

Better than a kick in the head.

GORDON

Yeah. What are you working on?

NATALIE

This crack in the wall is symbolic of everything that's wrong with this society - they can build a new sports arena, costing the tax payers millions of dollars, and meanwhile the public school is going down the toilet.

GORDON

It's an outrage.

NATALIE

Don't mess with me today.

Natalie writes furiously on her legal pad, having just thought of something brilliant to write.

GORDON

No joking. For the newspaper?

NATALIE

Yeah - if you want to fight evil, this crack is what you should be looking at. You get rid of this, everything else falls into place.

GORDON

I don't think that a crack is going to lead to the downfall of society.

NATALIE

Just you watch.

Gordon tries to think of a topic of conversation that both can relate to and draws a blank. Gordon and Natalie actually have very little in common, but this doesn't stop Gordon from holding on to his childhood crush.

Natalie finishes what she is writing, folds her legal pad, and takes her pen cap off with her teeth, puts it on the pen, and sticks it in her pocket.

NATALIE

Well, Gordy, it's been great as always, and now I've got to get this typed up by 2:00, or else this issue will be without a cover story.

GORDON

Okay, yeah, I'm going to do a couple more laps before I call it a day, too. I'm almost down to a four minute mile.

NATALIE

Wow - I take the bus.

Natalie flashes a smile and races off. Gordon watches her go until she turns a corner, at which point he turns to go back to the track.

Unfortunately, standing between him and the track are Chris, Andrew and Tyler - also much grown since elementary school. Chris is the star athlete, and the only guy within the district that could compete with Gordon's strength, but is no match for his speed. Andrew is still a big guy - but now just bigger. He is holding a bottle of Mountain Dew and a slice of pizza, as always. Tyler is the tallest of the three, and although he too is strong, his eye is always on the ladies, as opposed to the accumulation of power that drives Chris.

CHRIS

Looky here! The big man himself.
The big hero.

GORDON

I have training to do.

CHRIS

Training! So you can save more ladies from rooftops? I saw that on the news - it was nothing. She could have gotten down herself in a second.

TYLER

Actually, I saw that - it was pretty impressive.

Chris glares daggers at Tyler.

GORDON

What do you want?

CHRIS

I want to find out how tough you
really are.

Chris takes a swing at Gordon, who dodges the hit, which misses by inches.

Gordon is not interested in a fight, so he takes off running, and the three guys start after him.

CHRIS

Look at the hero - can't even take
one hit!

Gordon is tired from his few miles running at the track, so is not at top speed - Chris and Tyler are able to keep up with him, although Andrew lags behind, eventually giving up the chase when he spots a vending machine.

Gordon takes the lead and turns a corner, hoping that the two remaining pursuers will lose him - they don't. They continue to chase, and Gordon continues to run.

Eventually Gordon reaches a large hedge, too high to jump over, but he somehow jumps it. Even he is impressed.

On the other side of the hedge, Gordon finds himself in a large, elaborate garden. The garden belongs to PROFESSOR ELI VAN HORN, a local eccentric genius who exists mainly in the community as a rumor.

Through the hedge, Gordon watches Chris and Tyler run by. He lets out a sigh of relief, and then begins exploring the garden, trying to find a way out.

Rather than an exit, Gordon finds Professor Eli sitting at a table behind a large bush in the shape of a rabbit. Gordon is surprised to see that Professor Eli is none other than the elderly gentleman who has popped up here and there throughout his life.

PROFESSOR ELI

Well, Gordon - for once, you come
to me!

GORDON

Who are you?

PROFESSOR ELI

Let me show you.

Eli leads Gordon through the garden to a large fountain. Water falls flows along an intricate path, through scenes from classic fairy tales.

Gordon leans over to pass his hand through the water only to discover that the water does not exist - it is a hologram, as is the rest of the fountain.

Eli brushes past Gordon and begins walking down through the fountain.

PROFESSOR ELI
Watch your step.

Eli disappears into the fountain.

Gordon nervously sticks his foot in until it lands safely on a stone step. He walks down through the fountain until he is completely through.

INT. SECRET CAVE

Below the garden lies a large crystal cavern - the walls glimmer and reflect the light of what appears to be a large natural chandelier hanging in the center of the room.

Gordon continues down a long, winding staircase etched out of the wall.

The walls are lined with bookshelves, each one full - Gordon has never seen so many books in one place. He reaches the bottom of the stairs, walks to the nearest book case, and picks up one of the books, titled "Astral Projection and Time Travel."

Gordon flips through the book open, when Eli calls to him.

PROFESSOR ELI
Gordon! Welcome to my library.

Gordon jumps at the sound of his voice, and he places the book back on the shelf.

Although the professor's voice is clear as day, the man himself is nowhere to be seen.

GORDON
What is this place? Where are you?

PROFESSOR ELI
This is my library. And as far as where I am...

Professor Eli appears behind Gordon's shoulder, and whispers in his ear

PROFESSOR ELI
I'm right behind you.

Gordon once again jumps.

PROFESSOR ELI
Rather jittery, aren't you? We'll
have to work on that.

The professor walks to a different book shelf and begins searching through the books, eventually pulling down a hefty volume called "An Introduction to Mind, Matter, and the Essence of the Universe."

Eli carries the book back to Gordon.

PROFESSOR ELI
This was my introduction, and so it
shall be yours as well.

GORDON
Listen, I'm sorry I hopped your
fence, I was just trying to ---

PROFESSOR ELI
What you were trying to do doesn't
matter - what matters is that you
are here. I'm very excited - I've
been waiting for this day since I
first saw you.

GORDON
The day I got my cat out of the
tree?

PROFESSOR ELI
Oh, no - that was the first day you
saw me. Not the first day *I* saw
you.

Eli leads Gordon to a table and sits him down in a wooden chair that is much larger than anyone could possibly need.

Gordon is baffled and rather creeped out by what's going on - while he sits at the table, Professor Eli slams the book down in front of him, and then proceeds to gather an assortment of objects from around the room - candles, a small statue, a hood ornament from a car, a mirror, and an antique phonograph player - and set them up on the table in an orderly fashion.

PROFESSOR ELI
You saw my book on astral
projection - believe me, I put it
to use.

(MORE)

PROFESSOR ELI (cont'd)
I've been watching you since you
were in preschool - I always knew
you'd grow up to do great things.
You were so good with those blocks.

GORDON
Wait - I don't understand.

PROFESSOR ELI
I don't expect you to - not yet.
But you will - maybe not today,
maybe not tomorrow, but soon - and
for the rest of your life.

GORDON
I have to get back to my training---

Professor Eli stands on the opposite side of the table and
slams his hands down, leaning close to Gordon.

PROFESSOR ELI
Gordon! *This* is your training.

Eli stands up straight and turns away.

PROFESSOR ELI
Perhaps a demonstration. You are
familiar with the abilities of the
mind, and what can be done with it
if one were to unlock the 90% of
our brains that most don't use?

GORDON
I've heard of it, but I don't
believe that ---

Eli puts up a finger to shush Gordon.

PROFESSOR ELI
Wait a minute. Just wait.

Eli turns back around and holds up his left hand.

PROFESSOR ELI
Look at my hand. Can you blur your
vision?

GORDON
Yes.

PROFESSOR ELI
Do it. Try to make my hand as fuzzy
as possible. Do you see it?

GORDON
Yes. What does this ---

Eli shushes again.

PROFESSOR ELI
I want you to try to see through my
hand - as if my hand was not there
at all.

Gordon stares at Eli's hand, trying to see through it.

GORDON
I can still see it.

PROFESSOR ELI
That's because you don't have your
90%. But watch this. Just look at
my hand normally.

Gordon does. As he looks, the hand blurs, fades, and seems to
disappear in a whisp of steam.

GORDON
How did I do that?

PROFESSOR ELI
You didn't. That was me forcing my
perspective onto you. You saw what
I wanted you to see. Just as I want
you to see me standing here, when
in reality-

Eli appears across the room.

PROFESSOR ELI
I am over here. That is, unless I
am-

Eli appears on the stair case

PROFESSOR ELI
Up here? Gordon - look in that
mirror there.

Gordon picks up the mirror from the table - an antique
handheld mirror with gilded frame. He looks at his reflection
for a moment, when suddenly his face turns into that of
Professor Eli.

PROFESSOR ELI
(in mirror)
Boo!

The four visions of Professor Eli converge at the table.

PROFESSOR ELI

You see what fun the mind can be?

Gordon is thoroughly freaked out by this time. He jumps from his seat and points a shaking finger at the professor.

GORDON

How are you able to do all that?

PROFESSOR ELI

That, my dear boy, is what you are here to learn.

Eli touches Gordon's shoulder to show him to sit down. Gordon complies, still staring at the professor.

Eli opens the book to page one, and gestures for him to read.

The pages are worn and faded, but the words and decorations are very clear - as if the ink is still fresh. At the top of the page is an etching of a man dressed in medieval-style clothing, and his face looks almost exactly like that of Gordon.

Below the picture is the chapter marking, written in large decorative letters: "Your Destiny Begins Now"

As Gordon reads, we see his progression - first struggling to see through his hand, progressing to being able to see through other objects.

Gordon reads more books, and with each book he reads, his mental powers become stronger.

INT. UNDERGROUND CAVERN - DAY

Gordon stands in a corner of the room, teeth clenched, eyes closed tight, hands in tight fists. Professor Eli stands in the opposite corner.

Both men dissolve into the air, their mental projections appearing in the center of the room seconds later. Gordon throws a punch toward Eli's stomach, but the fist passes through his body.

ELI

It's hard to make bodily contact
when you're not using your body.

Eli dissolves into the air and appears behind Gordon's back. Gordon attempts a flying backflip/kick, but Eli stops him by grabbing his foot, flipping him on his back and pinning him to the ground.

Gordon loses his concentration and his physical body falls back in the corner of the room. He chokes, and gets back to his feet.

The projected Eli returns to the physical form, and he walks to Gordon's side.

GORDON
You said I couldn't do that.

ELI
You couldn't. I said it's hard -
not impossible.

GORDON
As opposed to this.

Gordon leaps over Eli's head and grabs him from behind.

ELI
You're great physically, but a
great mind can easily defeat a
great body.

Eli appears behind Gordon's back and behind each of his shoulders. The three Eli's pull him off the physical Eli and hold him in the air.

ELI
See what I mean?

GORDON
Three against one - that's hardly
fair.

ELI
You're right.

The three Eli's disappear and Gordon falls flat on his face.

ELI
You've got work to do.

GORDON
Come on... no villain out there is
going to have the powers that you
have.

ELI

The greatest enemy you will ever have is the idea that your enemy is weaker than you.

GORDON

Well then, the same goes for my enemy.

EXT. COURTHOUSE - DAY

A large crowd of reporters stands on the steps of the courthouse, waiting for someone to emerge. The crowd is buzzing with rumors and speculation.

Natalie is walking by, placing flyers for a peace rally under the windshield wipers of all the cars parked along the street when she notices the crowd.

She sticks the rest of the flyers in a newspaper machine, pulls a notepad and pen from her pocket and runs up to the crowd.

NATALIE

What's going on?

REPORTER

I'm not sure - something about an illegal gambling ring.

NATALIE

One of the casinos?

REPORTER

No - basketball.

The basketball superstar that stole Gordon's spotlight emerges from the courthouse surrounded by lawyers.

When he is spotted, the press immediately starts running towards him, barking questions.

REPORTERS

Are you involved in an underground gambling ring? Have you been throwing games? How do your teammates feel about this? How far does the corruption go? Can you sign this jersey for my nephew?

Natalie witnesses the hysterical press, puts her paper and pen back in her pocket, and starts to leave the area.

NATALIE

The media.

EXT. OUTDOOR CAFE - DAY

Gordon and Eli sit at a table under a large sun umbrella. Eli wears sunglasses and a fisherman's cap. Both men sip iced tea.

Gordon flips through the newspaper, reading about the gambling scandal.

GORDON

Did you see this? Superstar's been throwing basketball games. Apparently been making some big money for whoever's in this gambling racket.

Eli is reading the Weekly World News. He doesn't look up.

ELI

You think that's something - in Lake Michigan they found a four hundred pound Galapagos penguin that can cure impotence. Apparently he's getting married next week to a midget descendent of Jesus.

GORDON

You learn something new everyday. Seriously - this gambling thing could be a good way for me to get noticed. A big star - if I solve this thing, I'd be recognized as a real hero.

ELI

He's innocent.

GORDON

Come on - if he's innocent, I'm a four hundred pound Galapagos penguin that can cure impotence.

ELI

If you're a four hundred pound Galapagos penguin that can cure impotence, it'll make it difficult to prove his guilt. Look, this is a case to leave alone.

(MORE)

ELI (cont'd)

Even if you could prove him guilty, he's a celebrity, and whether he's guilty or innocent, in six months everyone will have forgotten about it and the only thing you'll be remembered as is the guy that tried to get everyone's favorite player off their favorite team. Leave it alone.

Gordon sits silently for a moment, using his straw to push the ice around in his tea. He looks upset, as he tries to figure out what he has just been told.

GORDON

So I'm just supposed to let the bad guy go free?

ELI

He's not the bad guy. He's just the face that they put on the front page. If you want a chance to try out your skills, start small. And start with something that helps someone - not something you think will get you a story on the six o'clock news.

GORDON

But if I don't get on the news, how will people know that I'm around?

ELI

Playing to the media is how you become a celebrity - not a hero.

Gordon swallows the rest of his iced tea and stands up.

GORDON

Whatever the people want.

Gordon sets the cup on the table, pushes his chair in, and storms off.

ELI

Some hero... leaves me with the bill.

EXT. STREET CORNER - DAY

Gordon, still upset, walks past an alley, where he hears sounds of a struggle.

He leans around the corner to see a greasy slime-ball guy, STEVE, trying to make out with an unwilling woman, HEATHER. Heather is an attractive "girl next door," 17 years old, with dark red hair.

Heather pushes Steve to the ground as he attempts to grope her.

Steve jumps to his feet, and looks as if he will strike Heather, but before his hand touches her face, he stops, leans his head in close and whispers in her ear.

STEVE

Oo, baby - you know I like it rough.

He grabs her hair and throws her into a pile of garbage bags as she yells out.

HEATHER

Stop it!

Gordon projects into the far side of the alley, in the form of a hot blonde woman dressed in black leather.

GORDON

(as sultry blonde)

Why are you treating her like that, when you could be doing so much more to me?

Steve turns his attention away from Heather and towards the female Gordon.

When Heather sees that he is distracted, she runs out of the alley.

Gordon projects the image of Heather walking back into the alley, walking seductively beside the hot blonde.

GORDON

(as Heather)

Why didn't you say you were bringing a friend?

GORDON

(as blonde)

Now we can double your pleasure.

The hot blonde tries to push Steve down to the ground, but her hand passes through him. Steve doesn't notice. The hot blonde pulls her hand away and motions towards the pile of garbage bags.

GORDON
(as blonde)
Lie down there.

Steve lies down in the garbage and begins unbuckling his pants.

STEVE
Thank you, Jesus!

INT. POLICE STATION - DAY

As Gordon is keeping Steve occupied, he sends a third projection to the police station. He walks to the front desk, and finding no one there, he rings the service bell.

After a moment, a middle-aged police officer emerges from the break room holding a cup of coffee. He slowly makes his way to the desk, and sits down.

POLICE OFFICER
What can I do for you?

GORDON
I'd like to report a crime.

The police officer nods and shuffles through papers on his desk. Eventually he finds a clipboard with a stack of forms on it.

POLICE OFFICER
Fill out the top three sheets, what the crime was, when it happened, where it happened, etcetera etcetera. Bring it back up to me when you're finished and we'll see what we can do.

GORDON
No - it's a crime in progress.

POLICE OFFICER
Well, obviously you're safe now, so don't worry about it.

GORDON
A woman was being raped in the alley at 4th and Wesson!

The police officer sits up.

POLICE OFFICER
She was? Then she isn't now?

GORDON

No, she got away, but the guy is still in the alley.

POLICE OFFICER

If the girl didn't got away, then the it's a happy ending and you don't have to worry about it. Just go on home.

EXT. ALLEY - DAY

Steve is sitting in the pile of garbage in his boxers, while Heather and the blonde pose and make sexy noises.

Suddenly, Heather stops acting sexy, leans in, makes a motion as if she is grabbing a coffee cup, and shouts

GORDON

(looking like Heather, but sounding like Gordon)

I'm not going home until you get out of your chair and do your job!

Steve is confused. He begins to protest, but decides to let things go so as to not risk losing his position.

INT. POLICE STATION - DAY

POLICE OFFICER

Listen, buster, I don't know who you are, but you have no right telling me to do my job. Now get out of here before I cite you for wasting my time.

The projected Gordon begins to fade and flicker as Gordon loses his concentration.

EXT. ALLEY - DAY

Steve is becoming alarmed as he watches the two women flicker and fade.

GORDON

(as blonde)

You're going to cite me? I'm trying to help you out and you're going to cite me? Way to beat up the good guy, chief!

INT. POLICE STATION - DAY

Gordon becomes more and more angry, and the angrier he becomes, the less stable his projection appears.

As he speaks, the projection of himself and the two women begin to flip back and forth, so that the police officer is seeing a man flickering into two different women.

The police officer looks into his coffee and smells it to make sure nobody stuck some drugs in.

GORDON

You know, it's people like you that make it necessary for people like me to exist! If you did your job, crime would be down, and everybody would be so much happier!

EXT. ALLEY - DAY

The three projections continue to break apart until eventually the two women give way completely and the real physical Gordon can be seen at the end of the alley.

GORDON

But no! You sit there with your coffee thinking nothing matters but your crossword puzzles and your sports magazines. Well I have news for you, buster - you're not living in the real world!

Gordon realizes that he has broken he is visible in his real form. He looks up to see Steve, very much angered by the realization that his two women were actually one man, slowly approaching with a switchblade in his hand.

INT. POLICE STATION - DAY

The Gordon in the police station has completely disappeared as well.

The police officer walks to a wastebasket and drops his coffee in, then continues walking to the dispatcher's office. When he gets there, he knocks twice on the open door and says to the person inside

POLICE OFFICER

Better send someone over to 4th and Wesson.

EXT. ALLEY - DAY

Gordon spins around and closes his eyes hard in concentration. Nothing is happening.

Steve grins as he nears his target with blade extended.

His mental abilities failing him, Gordon leaps into the air and does a backward flip - just as the switch blade slices through the space he was just occupying.

Gordon kicks Steve's legs out from under him, and Steve falls on his back. While Steve is still stunned, Gordon runs back to the corner, concentrates once more, and is then able to project himself back to where Steve lies.

Steve jumps to his feet and takes swings at the projected Gordon, but his knife is of no use - it goes right through the air.

Once Steve realizes that he can't touch Gordon, it dawns on him that this means that Gordon cannot touch him as well, so he runs straight through him towards the street.

The projected Gordon disappears, and three Gordons step into the alley, blocking Steve's exit.

Steve looks at the three in disbelief. He turns away from the Gordons for a moment, and then spins back around and flings the switchblade directly at the Gordon in the middle. The knife flies straight through, landed in the street.

Convinced that these three are no more touchable than the first, Steve makes another run for it.

Just as he is about to pass through the Gordons, the real Gordon concentrates harder than ever, and the three Gordons combine into one, and this projected Gordon grabs Steve and pins him against the wall.

STEVE

I didn't think you could touch me.

GORDON

It's hard - not impossible.

Steve struggles against Gordon, who is struggling to maintain the ability to hold on to this level of concentration.

With a defiant scream, Steve uses all his strength to push Gordon away, and Gordon screams trying to keep Steve pinned to the wall.

Gordon cannot hold on any longer - the projection disappears, and the physical Gordon collapses in the corner.

Steve makes a run for it, and makes it out of the alley - running straight into the hood of the police car that has just arrived. The cops rush out and grab Steve, putting his hands behind his back and cuffs on his wrists.

From the back of the alley, Gordon looks up weakly yet triumphantly, and smiles at a job well done.

INT. UNDERGROUND CAVERN - NIGHT

Gordon is seated at the table covered with books, his head hanging low, a hot towel on his neck and a blanket around his shoulders - he is not looking well.

GORDON

But I did it! I was able to hold him!

ELI

Your adrenaline was able to hold him - that wasn't concentration. Concentration doesn't do this to you.

Gordon stands up and puts the towel on the table.

GORDON

I'm fine! I was just tired.

ELI

When I found you passed out in that alley you looked a little more than tired.

GORDON

Well I'm over it now.

Gordon shows he's over it by jumping up to a pull-up bar - but when he grabs the bar, he is overcome by pain and he falls to the ground.

Eli helps him up and walks him back to the chair.

ELI

So I see. Gordon, you're a good kid, but you're trying to be too much too soon. Start small - give yourself something to look forward to.

(MORE)

ELI (cont'd)

If there's one thing I've learned in my many years, it's don't rush through things. You've got a long life ahead of you. Take your time.

Gordon sits down unhappily.

GORDON

There's a lot of stuff going on right now that I don't like. I feel like if I don't fix it all now, things will keep getting worse, and it looks like people don't even care that it's getting worse. I want to show them that we don't have to live like this.

ELI

Oh?

GORDON

Yeah - people accept so much. It's like, 'politicians always lie, so it's okay.' 'Crime happens, so it's okay.' 'Bullies beat up on people that can't help themselves, so it's okay.' It's not okay!

Color is returning to Gordon's cheeks, and it looks like his strength is coming back. He is finding what he has to live for.

ELI

And how do you plan to change it?

GORDON

I'll lead. I'll do what everyone else should be doing but is afraid to. I won't accept the lies, and I'll do everything that I can to turn it around. I'll save the world.

ELI

Yeah - you're a good kid.

Eli pats Gordon on the back and walks to the stairs.

ELI

Rest up - you'll need your strength for tomorrow.

GORDON

What do we do tomorrow?

ELI
Tomorrow we turn you into a
superhero.

EXT. GARDEN - DAY

Eli leans against a birdbath, shouting commands to Gordon,
who stands in the center of a gazebo.

ELI
Chef! Grocery clerk! Beggar! 19th
century French nobleman!

Gordon responds to each command by projecting himself in the
image demanded.

GORDON
When will I ever need to be a 19th
century French nobleman?

ELI
Halloween, perhaps? Pirate!

Gordon appears as a pirate. Eli projects a pirate as well.

GORDON
Ahoy, ye scurvy dog! Prepare to
walk the plank!

ELI
Not by the hair on my chinny-chin-
chin!

The two pirates draw their swords. Gordon thrusts towards
Eli, and the sword passes through.

GORDON
What would happen if the sword
didn't pass through? Once I'm
fighting people who can't disappear
at their whim?

ELI
Once you can fully control your
projected self, and your projected
self is capable of full contact,
every aspect of your projected self
is essentially 'real' - so if you
stab someone with a sword, the
wound would be real. This is why we
don't fight with weapons.

GORDON

And when someone with a weapon is fighting the projected me?

ELI

When you're good enough to fully control your projected self, you won't need to worry about it.

Gordon isn't satisfied with the answer, but he nods anyway - he knows he won't get anything more out of Eli just now.

GORDON

Once more.

ELI

Stand-up comedian! Doctor! Superhero!

At the shout of 'superhero,' Gordon doesn't project. Instead, he waves at Eli.

ELI

Just checking. That's enough today - don't want this superhero business to interfere with your schoolwork.

GORDON

You sound just like my dad. Except that you acknowledged the superhero part.

ELI

No - now I sound like your dad.

Eli appears as Gordon's father, wearing worn-out white briefs and a bath robe.

Gordon turns, gets a running start, and leaps over the tall hedge surrounding the garden.

Eli sits down at a small white table, pours himself a glass of lemonade, and starts humming to himself.

Gordon steps out from behind a bush.

GORDON

Don't get up - I'll show myself out.

Gordon leaves just as another Gordon walks out from behind the bush. Gordon after Gordon walks to the backdoor of the mansion, each one waving to Eli.

Eli stands up and walks behind the bush where the real Gordon is crouching. He hits him on the back of the head.

ELI
Get out of here!

Gordon laughs as he jumps up and runs off.

INT. SCHOOL DINING HALL - DAY

Steve sits at a large round lunch table with Chris, Tyler, and Andrew. Each one has a half-eaten school lunch on their tray, except for Andrew who has a plate full of pizza and a soda.

Tyler mixes ketchup packets in with his food, and pours chocolate milk on top as Steve tells his story.

STEVE
So there I am with these two hot chicks, and they're all, like, "oo, baby" and I'm all, like, "come here!" And they're all over me.

Steve makes groping motions with his hands and makes out with the air.

Steve hits him on the side of the head.

CHRIS
Would you knock that off? People are watching.

Steve rubs his ear in pain, giving Chris a dirty look.

Chris' gives Steve an even dirtier look, which puts Steve back in his place.

STEVE
Anyway, so there I am with the two ladies, and then all of a sudden this guy shows up and he starts talking crazy - I don't know what he was going on about, but when he shows up the two ladies take off, and I'm left alone in the alley with my pants around my ankles.

ANDREW
They got your pants off?

STEVE
You know it.

Andrew and Tyler are impressed, and they give hi-fives to Steve until Chris interrupts.

CHRIS

Enough. So what? The guy spoils your party. What do you want us to do about it?

As Steve continues his story, he gets out of his chair and makes big gestures of what happened, while Tyler and Andrew get very worked up, and Chris just gets irritated at the other three.

STEVE

I didn't get to the craziest part - see, I see this guy and I pull out my blade, to scare this guy off, but he doesn't go! So I take a swing at him, but I guess I missed him or something, and then he's doing all this kung-fu and I'm going "whoah!"

TYLER

That's awesome!

STEVE

Well, it was, but not when I was getting the beating. So anyway, once I finally get a good hit in, I can't even touch him! Serious! I run through this guy, and then there are three of him, but these three grab me and shove me against a wall.

CHRIS

So there were three guys all dressed alike? Is there some new gang in town?

STEVE

They didn't dress alike - they were the same guy. Serious! And so I'm up against a wall with these three guys and I break through and run straight into the cops. Lucky they couldn't charge me with anything, so they let me go.

Steve sits back down and looks intently at Chris.

CHRIS

And now you want me to... what?
Throw you a party?

STEVE

I want you to find this guy and
teach him a lesson! I spent almost
two hours at the cop station -
that's two hours I could have been
having a good time with those two
ladies.

CHRIS

If there's a new gang in town, it
might be worth my while to get
friendly with them... any of the
guys I know?

Steve looks around the dining hall, when in walks Gordon,
carrying a sack-lunch. He spots Natalie and joins her at her
table.

STEVE

I dunno. Do you know him?

Steve points at Gordon, and Chris follows where the finger
points.

CHRIS

The guy in the green shirt there?

STEVE

Yeah! That's the guy!

Chris stands up and motions for Tyler and Andrew to get up
with him. Chris scowls at Gordon.

STEVE

Do you know him?

The three bullies walk to the dining hall doorway.

Chris pulls the other two in close.

CHRIS

It looks like our good friend Gordy
is building himself a gang.

ANDREW

I didn't think superheroes had
gangs.

TYLER

What about Charlie's Angels?

ANDREW
They're hot. I'd do any one of
them.

TYLER
I'd do all three of them. At once!

ANDREW
Oh yeah!

Andrew and Tyler high five.

CHRIS
Would you two shut up? I let his
little superhero act slide, but now
he's stepping on my toes. Look at
him there - "look at me, I'm a
hero, I'm saving the world!" And
they're buying it! I mean, what's
he ever done for anybody?

Gordon is signing newspaper articles for some fans at the
table. The headline reads "Local Hero Saves Elderly Couple
from Burning Vehicle."

ANDREW
He did save that pizza delivery guy
who almost got hit by a car.

TYLER
And those puppies.

ANDREW
Yeah! I forgot about those puppies!

CHRIS
That's what makes a hero? Pizza and
puppies? That's no hero. Boys? I
think it's time we gave the hero a
villain to play with.

Chris leads the gang back to the dining table. Steve is
anxiously waiting.

STEVE
So, what are you gonna do? Beat him
up?

CHRIS
That's only the beginning.

Chris gets an evil look on his face as he stares at Gordon
surrounded by adoring fans.

When one of the female fans gives him a kiss on the cheek, Chris grabs Tyler's chocolate milk carton and slams it on the table, sending a spray of chocolate into the air, and landing all over the back of his jacket.

EXT. SCHOOL PARKING LOT - DAY

Chris, Tyler and Andrew wait in the parking lot with their hands in their pockets. It is obvious they have been waiting for a while. They stand next to an old beat-up cadillac.

TYLER

Are you sure this will work?

CHRIS

Of course I'm sure. I told Natalie to meet me here at three so I could tell her about a newspaper story idea I had. Then, once we get her into the car, she'll start screaming, and Gordon will come running to the rescue. Then we've got him.

ANDREW

How do you know she'll scream, and how do you know he'll come running?

CHRIS

Because that's what superheroes do! Superman will show up to save Lois Lane. Trust me. And here comes Lois now.

Natalie walks out of the school building. She spots Chris, and she runs over.

NATALIE

Hey - what's up? You said the president of the school board is trying to cut arts funding?

CHRIS

That's what I heard.

NATALIE

Earl Van Dorien is such a ratbastard. What details can you give me?

Natalie pulls her notepad and pen out.

CHRIS
I think that we'd better discuss
this in my car.

Andrew and Tyler move closer to Natalie to force her in, but she doesn't give them reason.

NATALIE
Okay. I call shotgun.

Natalie opens the passenger side door and hops into the front seat.

The guys look at each other. This was not in the plan, but they go along anyway. Chris gets in the front seat, and Tyler and Andrew get in the back.

INT. CAR - DAY

ANDREW
Since this was my turn to be
shotgun, I get it next time.

TYLER
It's not my fault she took your
turn - next time it's my turn.

ANDREW
But I didn't get my turn!

TYLER
This is the worlds smallest violin,
playing a sad song for you.

Chris leans to the backseat.

CHRIS
Shut up or get out.

TYLER
Sorry.

ANDREW
Sorry. Hey - don't I get the front
seat next time?

CHRIS
Forget about it!

Chris starts the car and pulls out of the school parking lot.

NATALIE

Tell me all about the arts funding.
I'm gonna get Van Dorian really
good with this one!

CHRIS

I have good news and bad news.

NATALIE

Give me the good news.

CHRIS

The good news is that the arts
funding isn't in any danger.

NATALIE

What's the bad news?

CHRIS

I can't say the same for you.

Chris takes a hard right, into the parking lot of a big
abandoned building.

EXT. BACKYARD - DAY

At the top of a tree, two small boys are dangling from a rope
ladder leading up to their tree house - the boards that made
up the floor come undone, and the kids are now struggling to
keep from falling the twenty-odd feet to the ground.

On the ground, the boys' parents anxiously call for help.
Gordon hops over the fence and to the base of the tree.

GORDON

I see you boys are at the end of
your rope!

The boys are afraid, and they cry to Gordon to get them down.

GORDON

Not a problem.

The tree has boards nailed into the side so that kids can
climb up to the rope ladder, and get to the tree house from
there.

Gordon steps on the lowest board, and it comes right out of
the tree.

Gordon jumps up to the second board, and that one comes right
out, too.

The two boards lay on the ground - on closer inspection, Gordon sees that the boards were nailed with the cheapest nails he has ever seen - strong enough to hold an eight-year-old, but by no means strong enough to hold a 17 year old.

Gordon takes a step back and stares intently at the kids.

PARENTS

What are you doing? Climb up and save them!

GORDON

That's what I'm doing.

Gordon closes his eyes and pictures the two kids.

Gordon projects himself up into the tree house. The projected Gordon stretches out his hand to grab the first boy's hand.

The boy lets go of the rope so he can grab Gordon's hand, but the hands pass right through each other.

The boy is startled, and he loses the grip of his other hand and he begins to fall. At the last possible second, he gets his hand on the bottom knot in the rope ladder.

The force of the child grabbing the rope is enough to undo the knot that ties the rope to the tree, and the rope, along with the two kids, falls.

The real Gordon watches the kids begin to fall in slow motion. He then closes his eyes once more, and enters a very tranquil, meditative state.

In the tree, the projected Gordon dives over the side of the tree house, grabbing the rope in the air. The projected Gordon is able to maintain his grasp on the rope.

Two more projected Gordons appear in the treehouse, and the three form a human chain to lower the kids safely to the ground.

Gordon's eyes open, and he realizes that he has finally reached the point where he has mastered his powers.

As the children run into their parents' waiting arms, Gordon's cell phone rings.

GORDON

Hello?

CHRIS

Gordy.

GORDON

Who is this?

CHRIS

This is an old friend. We've got your girlfriend in the old slaughterhouse. Get over here in five minutes, or it will be back in business.

(Natalie screams in background as Tyler and Andrew laugh)

Do you hear that, Gordy? So come -

Gordon hangs up the phone in the middle of his sentence and runs from the backyard as fast as he can.

INT. SLAUGHTERHOUSE - DAY

Natalie is seated on a packing crate with a dirty sock in her mouth. Tyler and Andrew tickle her with bits of hay.

Chris is standing at a payphone, the light from the door shining on one side of his face.

CHRIS

- on down to the plant. But take your time, there's no rush. Is there, Lois Lane?

Natalie kicks her shoe off, and it hits Chris in the head. He picks it up off the floor.

CHRIS

I'm keeping this! (into phone) And I'm keeping her until you get here with your little gang.

Gordon steps into Chris' light.

GORDON

I'm already here.

Chris looks at the telephone. He listens to the earpiece, and then hangs up the phone.

CHRIS

I don't know how you did that, but now that you're here, I'm going to show you what I do to people that try to take my turf. Take this, superhero!

Chris grabs a meat hook from the wall and swings it at Gordon's head - a direct hit. Gordon flies across the room, landing on a conveyor belt littered with old meatpacking supplies.

Gordon touches his forehead - a trickle of blood runs down.

EXT. SLAUGHTERHOUSE - DAY

The real Gordon stands outside. He opens his eyes and touches his forehead. There is no blood, but when he touches the place where his projection was hit, he winces in pain.

INT. SLAUGHTERHOUSE - DAY

Gordon on the conveyor belt rolls off the side - he is then hidden by the side of the conveyor belt.

Chris points to where Gordon fell and shouts to Andrew and Tyler

CHRIS

Get him!

Andrew and Tyler stop tickling Natalie, and then run to the conveyor belt. Tyler leaps over the side. Andrew attempts to, but the conveyor belt is too high, so he drags a crate over, and uses that as a stair. He climbs onto the conveyor belt, and then jumps to the other side.

From behind the conveyor belt, there are audible screams from Gordon, and the sound of Andrew and Tyler beating him to a pulp.

INT. BEHIND THE CONVEYOR BELT - DAY

Gordon sits behind the conveyor belt, holding his hands over the mouths of Andrew and Tyler. Gordon is yelling in pretend agony, and kicking debris around to make it sound like he's being beaten to a pulp.

He then Andrew and Tyler's heads close together, and he whispers

GORDON

Sleep.

The two goons fall asleep like babies.

The projected Gordon transforms into projections of Tyler and Andrew. These projections stand up and face Chris, who is caressing Natalie's hair.

INT. SLAUGHTERHOUSE - DAY

Chris has taken the sock out of Natalie's mouth, and is now playing with her hair and cooing

CHRIS

What do you want with that Gordon
guy? I mean, why be with a zero
when you can be with a -

NATALIE

Hero?

Chris flinches. He then realizes that the sounds of beating have stopped, so he turns to look at the projected Andrew and Tyler.

CHRIS

How is he?

TYLER

Ask him yourself.

Tyler pulls up the projected Gordon, who now looks as if he is passed out, and severely beaten - his face is bloody, his lips are red with blood, both his eyes are purple, and his shirt is drenched with blood and sweat.

Natalie is shocked - she begins to sob.

Chris looks at her mockingly.

CHRIS

Who was that you were calling a
hero?

Natalie slaps Chris hard. He rubs his jaw.

CHRIS

Drag that piece of garbage to the
car.

He grabs Natalie's hair.

CHRIS

You too.

EXT. SLAUGHTERHOUSE - DAY

The real Gordon ducks behind the building as Chris steps out, pulling Natalie beside him. Behind them come the projected Tyler and Andrew carrying the projected beaten Gordon between them.

Chris opens the front passenger door and throws Natalie in, and then walks around to open the driver door, but Natalie locks it.

Chris walks to the projected Gordon and punches him in the jaw.

Natalie unlocks the door, and Chris walks back and gets in. He then unlocks the back doors, and the three projections get in - Tyler and Andrew in the window seats, Gordon slumped in the middle.

INT. SLAUGHTERHOUSE BEHIND CONVEYOR BELT - DAY

Andrew and Tyler are curled up asleep behind the conveyor belt. Tyler is leaning against the conveyor, and Andrew has his arms around Tyler's waist.

The sound of the car engine starting wakes Tyler with a jolt. He looks around, trying to figure out what's going on, and then he notices Andrew lying on him.

Tyler shoves Andrew onto the floor, waking him.

ANDREW

Did we win?

EXT. SLAUGHTERHOUSE - DAY

Chris is beginning to drive away when Tyler and Andrew run out of the slaughterhouse, waving their arms in the air and yelling for him to stop.

INT. CAR - DAY

Chris sees Tyler and Andrew running in his rearview mirror. He then adjusts the mirror to see the Tyler and Andrew in the back seat.

CHRIS

Wait a second...

Chris slams on the breaks and looks into the back seat.

Three healthy Gordons smile and wave.

Chris reaches under his seat and pulls out a crowbar.

Natalie ducks just as the crowbar flies over her head to hit the Gordon on the right. The crowbar misses Gordon, but hits the back window, shattering it.

Chris is furious.

CHRIS

Look what you did to my car!

The Gordon on the right reaches over the seat and opens Natalie's door.

GORDON

Get out of the car, and run to the right side of the building.

Natalie rolls out of the car and does as she is told.

EXT. SLAUGHTERHOUSE - DAY

Andrew and Tyler run to the car parked car and look into the shattered back window.

ANDREW

Did we get him?

Chris and the three Gordons turn around.

CHRIS

Get the girl!

Andrew and Tyler look to see Natalie run behind the slaughterhouse. They chase after her.

Two of the Gordons jump out the back window and follow them.

With just one Gordon and one Chris, Gordon allows himself to be defeated. Chris gets out of the car and drags Gordon out as well. He ties Gordons hands behind his back with a t-shirt, and holds him against the hood of the car.

CHRIS

I don't know how you're doing what you're doing, but I've got you now. Don't move.

Gordon doesn't struggle.

A few minutes later, Tyler and Andrew return with Natalie.

Chris looks at them suspiciously.

CHRIS
Who are you?

TYLER
What are you talking about?

CHRIS
Prove that you're actually you.

ANDREW
How are we supposed to do that?

CHRIS
Whose turn is it to sit up front?

ANDREW
It's my turn.

TYLER
No it's not - you were supposed to sit up front before she got here, and she took your turn, so now it's my turn again.

ANDREW
But she's been up front twice, so she took your turn, too. So it's my turn, weather she took my turn or not.

TYLER
You can't say that - I've been waiting to sit -

CHRIS
Alright! Get in the car.

Andrew and Tyler both run to the front seat. While they struggle, Chris throw Gordon and Natalie into the trunk.

CHRIS
Not gonna get out of there, hero boy.

Chris slams the trunk closed, and gets into the car. Tyler has won the battle of the front seat.

INT. CAR - DAY

ANDREW
(from the back seat)
This is so not fair - this is twice
in a row he sits up front!

TYLER
This makes up for you sleeping on
my like a baby.

ANDREW
I wasn't!

EXT. BEHIND THE SLAUGHTERHOUSE - DAY

Gordon and Natalie emerge from a large bush and watch the car
drive away.

NATALIE
What just happened?

GORDON
It's a long story.

Gordon picks Natalie up in his arms and runs until he gets to
the Professor's mansion. He sets her down on the front steps.

NATALIE
Where are we?

GORDON
I want you to meet somebody.

Gordon takes a key out of his pocket and opens the front
door.

INT. ELI'S MANSION

The front door leads into the main hallway - reminiscent of a
museum, the walls are lined with photographs and newspaper
clippings.

The clippings are browned with age, and Natalie walks along,
reading with interest the headlines - 'Soldier Single-
Handedly Overtakes Nazi Stronghold,' 'Eli Van Horn Wins
Congretional Medal of Honor,' 'Local Professor Winner of
Nobel Prize of Medicine,' and 'Professor Van Horn Honored for
Heroic Deeds.'

As she looks at the newspaper articles and pictures of Eli as a young man, Gordon is becoming increasingly alarmed - Eli is nowhere to be found.

NATALIE

What's wrong?

Gordon races upstairs to Eli's bedroom.

INT. ELI'S BEDROOM - DAY

Eli is lying in bed, looking sickly. When Gordon walks in, he sits up a little - he doesn't have much strength left.

ELI

Congratulations, Gordon.

Gordon walks to the bed and sits beside Eli.

GORDON

For what? What happened to you?

ELI

Your training is finished. You're ready.

GORDON

What happened to you?

ELI

I have given you all that I have to give. The rest is up to you. I've had my time, and now it is yours.

GORDON

But there's still so much that I don't know! What am I supposed to do now?

ELI

I've left everything that you'll need in my will. My library is yours - in it you will find answers to all of your questions.

GORDON

But what if I don't?

ELI

Then you're not looking in the right places. Books aren't the only place to find answers. Just a good starting out point.

GORDON

You can't die.

ELI

It's hard - not impossible. And anyway, it's not death - it's just retirement. I've had a big life - bigger than most men. And I've earned a break. Gordon, you're a good kid - believe that. You've just got to remember that no matter what happens, real heroes exist to help people. You'll be showered with praise, and awards, and fame. You may even be tasting that now. Don't let that distract you. All the fame in the world won't get you closer to saving the world. In fact, that may be the one thing that most gets in your way.

GORDON

Besides underestimating the enemy.

ELI

Of course. Never underestimate your enemy.

Eli lies back down and draw the blankets around his chin.

ELI

Now I am tired. It's time for me to go. I've left an envelope with instructions on the table in the back yard. Any last questions?

GORDON

How do I save the world?

ELI

One person at a time.

Eli closes his eyes, and rests in peace.

INT. GARAGE - DAY

Chris pulls his car into the his parents' garage - it is full of bicycle parts, tools, and boxes that haven't been unpacked after since the family moved into the house 10 years earlier.

Chris parks the car in the garage, lowes the garage door, and the three bullies step out of the car and surround the trunk.

Chris bangs on the trunk and shouts

CHRIS
Hey, Gordy! Comfy in there?

He then unlocks the trunk and opens it up - it is empty, except for some empty beer bottles, a tire iron, and a wrinkled Playboy magazine.

TYLER
They aren't there!

ANDREW
Are you sure you closed the trunk
all the way?

Chris' face has turned red with rage - he screams out and slams the trunk closed.

ANDREW
If you're done with that playboy,
can I have it?

Chris shoves Andrew and Tyler, and reopens the garage door.

CHRIS
Boys, it looks like we need a
change in strategy.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

Eli is lying in an open casket at the front of the church.

Gordon and Natalie sit in the front row of the congregation. Besides them and a few elderly men and women, mostly wearing military clothing, the church is empty.

An old man is standing at the podium making a speech.

OLD MAN
Eli often spoke of the value of
people - he cared so much about
human life. He would do anything he
could to make sure that life on
this planet was the best it could
be. From his work with the Elderly,
to serving his country in the
second World War, to teaching at
the university level for thirty
years - he was always working to
make the world a better place. To
me, he was one of the greatest
heroes of our time.

(MORE)

OLD MAN (cont'd)

I'm sure I speak for all those here when I say that Eli Van Horn was a wonderful friend, a wonderful teacher - a wonderful human being. Thank you, Eli, for everything you've done for us, and by way of those you have touched, everything you will continue to do for us in the future. Let us bow our heads in prayer now.

EXT. SIDEWALK CAFE - LATER THAT DAY

Gordon and Natalie are sitting at the same table.

There is a long silence as Gordon stares down at his tea.

NATALIE

What are you going to do now?

GORDON

I'm going to keep going. I'll keep training, keep helping people. Try to do what he would have wanted me to do.

NATALIE

Can I help?

Gordon is surprised by her question - he looks up and stares into her eyes.

GORDON

You already are.

NATALIE

Then by all means - let's continue.

Natalie leans over and kisses Gordon - he is unresponsive.

Natalie looks at him expectantly - she does not get the reaction she was hoping for. Gordon still looks mopey. She sits back in her chair.

NATALIE

I'm sorry.

GORDON

Don't - it's just not time yet.

NATALIE

Well, when it's time, you give me a call.

Natalie stands to leave.

GORDON
Wait - don't go.

NATALIE
I've got a deadline. Things to do,
people to see. Give me a hollar,
Gordy. I'll be around.

Natalie leaves.

Gordon raises his glass.

GORDON
To saving the world.

He clinks Natalie's glass, left on the table, and takes a drink.

A girl walking by the cafe notices him.

GIRL
Hey! Aren't you that guy?

GORDON
Not today. Ask me again tomorrow.

Gordon brushes past her and walks down the sidewalk with his hands in his pockets.

INT. NEWSROOM - EVENING

KATHERINE JOYCE, an attractive female reporter sits behind desk on the local evening news.

KATHERINE
Local college student Gordon Pierce has been making waves around the city in recent months as he personally has lowered the crime rate on his campus 45%, virtually eliminating all violent crime. According to college president Don Young, now the only crime they have a problem with is public drunkenness.

Her co-anchor Craig laughs, and they chitter about how much those college kids love their alcohol.

EXT. FRATERNITY ROW - NIGHT

Gordon walks along a street full of frat houses, with a trash can full of liquor bottles in tow. He stops an obviously under-age intoxicated boy on the sidewalk carrying a bottle of vodka.

GORDON
That's quite a bit of vodka.

BOY
Man, I'm gonna get so wasted! It'll be great!

GORDON
How old are you?

BOY
I'm twenty-se... wait, I have an ID.

The boy pulls out his wallet and rummages through, trying to find his ID. He finds it and hands it to Gordon. The face on the ID looks nothing like the boy.

GORDON
How old are you?

The boy looks at the ID, and sees the birthdate: 11/7/77.

BOY
I was born in 1977.

GORDON
So how old does that make you?

The boy starts to count on his fingers.

Gordon takes the bottle of vodka and puts it in the trash can.

GORDON
Go on home. Your mother'll be worried about you.

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

Two rival street gangs walk in, snapping their fingers rhythmically.

They meet in the middle of the street, and the two gang leaders step forward, drawing their knives.

JET

Are you ready to rumble?

SHARK

Yeah, but before we do, I have a question.

JET

What?

SHARK

Why must we settle our disputes with violence?

Both gangs look at each other confused.

JET

What are you talking about?

SHARK

All of these years, we've been fighting over this territory - we've both lost some terrific guys in the shuffle.

JET

And we're going to get you back for that.

SHARK

Yes, and then we'd have to get you back for this, and you'd get us, and we'd get you, and where does it end? But if we forgive each other, and work together, we can end this war, and turn this into a neighborhood we can all be proud to call home!

JET

Gee, I never thought about it like that. From now on, we are all one gang - a gang of friends!

The two gang leaders hug.

The rest of the gangs shuffle their feet and look uncomfortable.

The two gang leaders look at their gangs and motion for them to mix.

GANG LEADERS

Come on, fellas!

The gangs toss their knives to the ground start to have a dance party in the street.

As they dance, the two gang leaders walk into a back alley, and Gordon emerges.

EXT. STEPS OF CITY HALL - DAY

MAYOR CROSBY stands at a podium, making his annual state of the city address to a crowd of reporters and onlookers.

MAYOR CROSBY

I am proud to announce that this year, for the first time since 1962, the homicide rate for our city is zero!

The crowd cheers.

MAYOR CROSBY

And if you re-elect me in the coming election, I plan to bring it even lower!

The crowd is silent.

MAYOR CROSBY

No new taxes!

The crowd cheers.

Montage of Gordon bringing peace to stereotypical bad guys.

EXT. STEPS OF CITY HALL - DAY

The mayor stands at his podium with the chief of police.

MAYOR CROSBY

Ladies and Gentlemen, in all my years as mayor of this town, I've valued our police force, and especially our fine police chief. Why, in the past year they have helped reduce the crime rate to virtually zero, and for this we thank them. We can finally rest easy at night. And in the day time. All the time, really. And since we feel such a sense of security, we've decided that it's time to refocus our finances.

(MORE)

MAYOR CROSBY (cont'd)

Starting on January first, the police force will officially retire, and we can fully finance what really matters to this community - our children. And the best way we can help our children is by building a new Sports Arena! To give you all the details, here is basketball superstar 'Gator' Larson!

The crowd cheers as Gator walks in and waves.

EXT. SHOPPING DISTRICT - NIGHT

With the police gone, the hooligans are running amock - shoplifters run through the streets carrying television sets, teenagers jump up and down on cars setting off car alarms, and protestors throw mailboxes through Starbucks windows.

Three Gordons race through the streets faster than is humanly possible, grabbing stolen merchandise from people's arms and returning them to the shops, grabbing mailboxes in mid-throw, and shooing people away.

One of the television sets being confiscated belongs to the police chief, obviously intoxicated.

CHIEF

Hello, Gordon! There's a terrific sale at the Video Dungeon! A five finger discount!

GORDON

You've got to bring the police back! The streets have gone mad!

CHIEF

We don't have straightjackets big enough to cover a whole street! Quick! Get a sewing machine!

The chief stumbles to the sidewalk and falls in the gutter.

Gordon returns to his task of trying to minimize the damage.

Eventually all the people clear out, with a relatively small amount of damage. The street is littered with torn up papers, torn down signs and broken glass.

As Gordon is surveying the mess, the mayor steps up next to him.

MAYOR CROSBY

Who would have thought that people would commit crimes when there's no police around to stop them?

CHIEF

Shoulda given me a raise!

GORDON

You've got to rehire the police.

MAYOR CROSBY

Oh, no. I think you're doing a great job. Just try to get here a little faster next time, huh? We've got to keep this city safe for business!

Mayor Crosby walks away with his hands in his pockets, whistling a merry tune.

EXT. OUTDOOR CAFE - DAY

Gordon and Natalie are sitting at their usual table, drinking hot apple cider. They have been arguing.

On the table there sits an issue of 'Green Haven Weekly,' the city's "alternative" newspaper. The cover story is 'Police State Without the Police?' by Natalie Hutchinson.

NATALIE

I see what you're saying, but you're not listening to me! This might be what we as a society need! Have you ever thought that? I mean, yeah, it's great to have law and order and everything, but for the first time in centuries, people are being given the chance to choose for themselves - to choose to be good or bad, to do right or wrong.

GORDON

And the people chose wrong! Did you miss the news footage? For two weeks straight, no one could walk the streets safely because chances were you'd be mugged, or beaten, or raped. If I didn't enforce -

NATALIE

I get that! But you have to trust in people.

(MORE)

NATALIE (cont'd)

You have to believe that in time,
once people got over the initial
shock of no police, they would
eventually choose to be good
people.

Gordon closes his eyes, and the sound of someone yelping in
surprise can be heard in the distance.

NATALIE

Stay here!

GORDON

Sorry.

NATALIE

All I'm saying is you don't have to
be so totalitarian about
everything. It's ok if there's
crime.

GORDON

Batman wouldn't let criminals run
around free.

NATALIE

Batman is a fictional character.
You know, you live in a fantasy.
You've got to be realistic! What
you're doing isn't saving people,
you're just making everybody do
what you want! It's a total
dictatorship!

GORDON

I defend freedom.

NATALIE

By making sure everybody's good all
the time? Freedom means having the
choice to do what you're not
supposed to.

Gun shots are heard in the distance.

GORDON

I can't have this conversation. I
have to go.

NATALIE

Wait -

GORDON

I have to go.

Gordon stands up and races away.

Natalie stays at the table, upset. She begins to get a bit misty-eyed, but then brushes it away, grumbles at Gordon's lack of vision, and stands up to leave.

Then she notices that Gordon left her with the check again.

She puts some money down, and walks in a huff to her car in the parking lot.

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

Natalie approaches her car, but stops when she notices a man in a denim jacket leaning against it.

NATALIE

Can I help you?

The man turns around - it is Chris. It's been years since the meat packing plant, and he has not been aging well. He's lost much of his hair, and has dark circles around his eyes.

CHRIS

Hello, Lois Lane.

It takes only a second for Natalie to recognize him, and when she does, she turns away quickly and walks the opposite direction.

CHRIS

Come on, Natalie! Don't be like that! I'm your biggest fan! I read all your articles.

Natalie doesn't stop.

Chris follows.

CHRIS

I was thinking - maybe we could work together. I've changed my ways, Natalie, and now I'm all about doing what's right for the world. I'm all about letting every voice be heard, and freedom of speech, and basic human rights. I think that we would make a great team - I've read your articles, I know we share the same views.

Natalie stops and turns to Chris.

Chris holds up the article about police states.

CHRIS

Even some of the same views on our
good friend Gordy. What do you say?
All I want is for my voice to be
heard.

INT. NEWSROOM - NIGHT

An African-American woman wearing a Santa Clause hat sits
behind the desk reading the local news.

NEWSCASTER

You'd better watch our, you'd
better not cry, you'd better not
pout, I'm telling you why - Gordon
Pierce is coming to town! The
'superhero' from Green Haven,
Washington is making his way around
the country, but don't go looking
to him for presents. According to a
recent press release, Gordon plans
to visit every major metropolitan
area in the country this holiday
season in an effort to bring peace
and joy to every corner of the
country.

EXT. CASINO - DAY

Gordon walks into a flashy Vegas casino, and returns a few
moments later with a sleazy looking casino owner with a huge
cigar in tow. The two stand outside the casino, handing large
piles of cash to the ripped-off gamblers as they leave.

EXT. STREET CORNER - NIGHT

Three attractive streetwalkers stand on a city corner, waving
at all the cars that pass by.

A long stretch limo pulls up with license plates that say
'PETROL1.' The back window slides down and a hand holding a
wad of hundred dollar bills comes out.

INT. LIMO - NIGHT

The three street walkers enter the car, where there sits a
very overweight, very rich man with a string tie with and a
oil tycoon hat.

The street walkers begin to cuddle with him, and the limo drives away.

EXT. CITY STREET - NIGHT

The limo drives along, when suddenly there's a shriek, and the limo slams on its breaks.

INT. LIMO - NIGHT

The three street walkers have become three bald toothless hillbillies named Cletus. They put handcuffs on the tycoon and lead him out of the limo.

EXT. STEPS OF CITY HALL - DAY

A montage of city halls in cities across the country - Gordon receives keys to the city, medals of honor, honorary diplomas, certificates of merit, and other symbols of appreciation.

EXT. TIMES SQUARE, NEW YEARS EVE - NIGHT

The New Years ball begins to drop and the crowd begins the countdown. When the count hits 2, the ball stops, and Gordon walks out with a skinny white guy with a long beard covered in dynamite.

The man lights the fuse, and everyone gasps in horror, but before anything bad can happen, Gordon snips the fuze off.

Everybody cheers.

EXT. NEWS STAND - DAY

Every newspaper and magazine has Gordon's face on the cover.

Time has Gordon listed as the Person of the Year.

In a small pile in the corner sits an independent weekly newspaper, the cover asking 'World Peace or Mass Delusion?'

Cosmo says 'Turn Your Man into a Superhero In Bed! Gordon Pierce's Steamy Bedroom Secrets!'

Below that sits the Weekly World News, proclaiming 'Gordon Pierce Proven to be Descendant of Jesus Christ and Monkey Woman of Spain!'

EXT. FRANCE - DAY

A ridiculously stereotypical French man with a black and white striped shirt, red scarf, and long cigarette stands in front of the Eifel Tower.

FRENCH MAN

I actually don't mind stupid
Americans so much any more. I only
vomit twice when I look at them.

EXT. DESERT - DAY

Israelis and Palestinians stand around hugging and throwing away weapons.

EXT. WHITE HOUSE - DAY

The President stands at his podium with Gordon.

PRESIDENT

My fellow Americans. On this day, I
am proud, and honored, to be
standing on this lawn with a true
hero, Gordon Pierce.

Crowd politely applauds.

PRESIDENT

Largely due to his efforts, in the
past year in the United States the
crime rate has dropped to virtually
zero. I am proud to say that in the
past weeks, the only deaths in this
country, and around the world, have
been natural or accidental. We have
much to thank Gordon Pierce for,
and as a token of our appreciation,
I am awarding you a special award,
created specially for you. Gordon
Pierce, I declare you official
Superhero of the Global Community.

The crowd gives Gordon a standing ovation as he takes the podium.

GORDON

Thank you, Mr. President. When I
was a child, I swore that one day I
would make the world a safe place
to be, and I believe that today, I
have kept that vow.

(MORE)

GORDON (cont'd)

I thank you for this honor, and I
look forward to serving you all in
the future. Thank you.

Gordon sits down, and the president stands back up.

PRESIDENT

I hereby proclaim that evil is
dead!

The crowd cheers.

EXT. DARK ALLEY - NIGHT

A shadowy figure lurks along the alleyway, bundling his long
black coat tight around his body. A large brimmed hat hides
his face.

It is clear that he is hiding something in his coat.

A flashlight suddenly shines in the mans eyes, temporarily
blinding him.

GORDON

It's pretty late for a man to be
out alone, don't you think?

The man turns around. A second Gordon stands in his way
shining a light in his eyes.

GORDON

What the matter? You don't like the
light of justice?

MAN

Please, sir, I ain't doing nothing
wrong, I'm just - this is a
shortcut.

GORDON

Really? Well then, by all means, be
on your way!

The two Gordons dissolve into the fog.

The man, frightened, runs along. Gordon follows him to a
crummy apartment a few blocks away. The man enters, and
Gordon projects a fly to follow him.

The man gets in the elevator, and the fly enters after him.

The man gets off on the sixth floor, and walks to the apartment at the end of the hall. He takes out a key and opens the door. The fly buzzes inside.

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

The man pulls a long thin box out of his coat and leans it against the wall. He locks the apartment door, and opens the box.

He reaches into the box and pulls out some boards. The man sets pulls out a small book from the box as well and tosses it onto the ground. The title is 'How To Assmble Your Hart-Smith Shelving.'

The fly disappears, and Gordon opens his eyes, disappointed.

INT. AIRPORT - DAY

Gordon sits in the airport, surrounded by media and people wanting autographs.

REPORTERS

What will you do now that the world is at peace? What about the people that say you're a bad guy? Will you write a book? Who do you favor for the super bowl? Is it true about the Monkey Woman and Jesus?

Gordon stands and the crowd hushes.

GORDON

The world is at peace, for now, but I will always be keeping an eye out for danger, because the world will always need its super heroes!

EXT. ELI'S MANSION - DAY

Gordon sets his luggage on the front steps.

POSTAL WORKER

Hey, Gordon! Give me a hand?

Gordon turns and sees a POSTAL WORKER walking his way dragging an enormous sack of mail.

POSTAL WORKER

We've been holding your mail while you've been gone, and as you can see there's quite a bit of it.

Gordon walks over to help.

GORDON

Oh, great. Let me take that.

POSTAL WORKER

No, no - I've got this one all right. I need help with those.

The postal worker points to his truck, the back open, filled to the top with bags just as enormous as the one he is carrying.

Gordon stands with his mouth open, and the postal worker smiles, takes off his hat, and wipes the sweat from his brow.

INT. ELI'S MANSION - DAY

The three Gordons bring in the last of the mail bags and pour the letters onto the table in the study - they cover the table and flow onto the floor - up to Gordon's ankles.

The physical Gordon sits at the desk, being buried in letters.

The postal worker stands in the doorway.

GORDON

Well, it looks like that's it.

POSTAL WORKER

Think you'll be able to handle all that?

GORDON

I'll find out if that speed-reading course was worth it.

POSTAL WORKER

That's true. Say, would you mind signing this newspaper article?

GORDON

Of course.

The postal worker looks at the pile of letters. He attempts to step in the room, but he's unable to.

POSTAL WORKER

Maybe I'll just get it another time. You have a good one, Gordon.

GORDON

You too... buddy.

The postal worker leaves, and Gordon looks at the letters, and sighs.

He reaches into the pile and pulls out a letter.

EXT. OUTDOOR CAFE - DAY

Gordon and Natalie sit at their usual table eating muffins.

GORDON

I got offers from cereal companies, toy manufacturers, every movie studio looking to buy the rights to my story, publishing companies, television stations - everybody wants me to do a talk show for them and solve relationship problems. They even want to make a new brand of shoes with my name on them.

NATALIE

Are you gonna cash in?

GORDON

What? No.

NATALIE

Really?

GORDON

Don't be ridiculous.

Gordon nibbles on his muffin. Natalie watches him.

GORDON

What do you think... I could write a book, and that wouldn't be so bad. People only see me as a superhero - I could write about me as a person, so that they could see the man behind the hero. And they could turn that into a movie. And make toys from the movie, and a cereal from the movie, and a tv series based on the movie.

(MORE)

GORDON (cont'd)

And I could give all the money to charities. Most of it.

NATALIE

First of all, people don't want to read about ordinary people. They don't care about your inner feelings. To them, you are an interesting freak, and that's all they want you to be. Secondly, what you're talking about is trading in the little good that you did for some money. You'd be selling your values for fast cash, and destroying everything you've done. And thirdly, what charities? They've all lost their reason to be!

GORDON

Are you mad at me?

NATALIE

Do whatever you want to do.

Natalie stands up in a huff, throws down her napkin, and runs off.

Gordon starts to get up, but then decides against it. He sits back down and starts picking on his muffin again.

EXT. NEW BRIDGE - DAY- ONE YEAR LATER

Gordon stands on a newly-built bridge, across which is draped a large ribbon.

Gordon holds a microphone, and into it he proclaims

GORDON

On behalf of the city of Newport, I open this bridge to the people, that it may connect two places, the way I have connected the people of the world.

Gordon uses large scissors to cut the ribbon, and the crowd cheers.

EXT. COLLEGE CAMPUS - DAY

Gordon stands in front of Peace Hall, a new building on the campus of a prestigious college. A large ribbon is draped across the doors.

GORDON

On behalf of the University of Washington, I open this hall to the students, that it may bring knowledge of science and philosophy to the people, in the same way that I have brought knowledge of peace and joy to the people.

The crowd cheers, but less loudly.

INT. OFFICE BUILDING - DAY

Gordon stands in front of a new wing of an office building, across which hangs a ribbon.

GORDON

On behalf of the company, I open this wing, and all the cubicles it contains, that it may allow you to conduct business more efficiently, in the same way I have allowed the world community to live more efficiently, without fear.

The office crowd isn't really paying attention, although some clap.

INT. SUPERMARKET - DAY

A mother walks along the grocery aisle of a generic grocery store.

As she rolls her cart along she looks at the prices on the products: 'Too Expensive!' 'Not Today!' 'Maybe After That Promotion!'

MOTHER

The price of food is so high these days, I feel like I'm drowning!

Fakey blue water rises, and the mother starts waving her arms as if to signify swimming.

MOTHER

Somebody help me!

Gordon jumps in, two years older than when last we saw him.

GORDON
I'll save you... money!

The "water" lowers, and the mother smiles.

MOTHER
Thanks, Gordon!

GORDON
Don't thank me, thank my friends at
Price Blasters Grocery Outlet!

MOTHER
Price Blasters? Wow!

GORDON
And just wait until you see the
prices! They have the biggest
savings on all your favorite Gordon
Pierce products, including three
brand new flavors of Gordon
Pierce's "World Piece of Pizza,"
right here in the frozen food
aisle.

MOTHER
Wow! What was the name of that
store again?

GORDON
Price Blasters! They do to big
prices what I did to violence!

The Price Blasters logo pops up, as Gordon and the mother
jump in the air and freeze.

EXT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TRACK - DAY

Gordon stands in front of the track, where a line of
elementary school students stand, ready to race. In front of
them is a ribbon, made by Mrs. Mishky's second grade class.

Before his opening ceremony speech, Gordon walks over to one
of the boys who doesn't look excited about being there.

GORDON
Hey there, big guy! What's the
matter?

The kid, FRANCIS, is wearing large glasses and has his hair
neatly combed. He is not the athletic type.

FRANCIS
I hate Field Day.

GORDON
I know how you feel. When I was your age, I hated it too. But then, once I put my mind to it, I was able to out run all the guys at my school, and eventually, I was able to get rid of all the evil in the world. So don't hate field day.

FRANCIS
That's good for you, but I don't want to be able to run fast. I'd rather be good at math, or science. I'd rather have people respect me than say 'wow, he's really fast.'

GORDON
Why can't you have both?

FRANCIS
I dunno.

After a pause, he moves on to the next kid, who looks startling like Andrew the bully.

GORDON
Hello there. My name is Gordon.
What's your name?

ANDREW
My dad says you're the Antichrist.

The principal walks over to Gordon and taps him on the shoulder.

PRINCIPAL
It's time to get started.

Gordon glares at the mini-Andrew and walks back to the ribbon.

GORDON
On behalf of the Green Haven Elementary school, I open this Field Day, that it might give these children the chance to grow strong and change the world, just as I, as a young man at this very school, grew strong and -

The principal taps Gordon on the shoulder, leans in and whispers

PRINCIPAL

Keep it short - the kids want to get on to the tug-o-war.

Gordon looks wounded.

GORDON

Just as I grew strong and changed the world. When I look at these faces, I am reminded of my days on this playground, which were not always the happiest for me, but which paved the way for me to -

PRINCIPAL

Thank you, Gordon Pierce.

The kids aren't paying attention.

The principal holds up his hand, and eventually the kids raise their hands as well, silently.

PRINCIPAL

Thank you. Now, let's have all first through third graders out in the field for the tug of war, and the fourth through sixth graders to the track for the twenty yard dash.

Gordon realizes that he is unwanted, so dejectedly he leaves the field and walks home.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Gordon slowly walks in and plops on the couch in front of the television set.

He turns on the TV, stands up, and walks to the antique-style phone that is on the wall.

He dials the number for his voicemail.

VOICE

You have one new message and three saved messages.

Gordon dials 'one'.

VOICE

Saved message, today, two-fourty-six, p.m.

MAN'S VOICE

Hello, Mr. Pierce, this is Harold Cross from the United Fellowship Church, calling about the auction next Friday. As it turns out, we won't be needing you to be there after all. We were able to get Phil Simon, the weather man from channel eight. But, yeah, you're still welcome to come as a guest. We'll have some food, and the auction of course. It costs five dollars at the door, and if you could bring a hot dish for the potluck, that would be -

Gordon hangs up the phone and dials another number. After a few rings, Natalie's voice comes on the line.

NATALIE

Hey, this is Natalie, you know the drill.

At the tone, Gordon leaves a message.

GORDON

Natalie, this is Gordon... you haven't returned my call... Just wondering where you've been. I just found out that I'm free on Friday, so if you want to do something... Give me a call back or something. I miss you, huh? Yeah, call me back.

Gordon hangs up.

He drums his fingers against the wall for a moment, and then picks up the phone one more time, dials a number, it rings, and a man answers

MITCH

Mitch's Pizza. Delivery or carry out?

GORDON

Delivery.

MITCH

What is your telephone number?

GORDON
843-4376.

MITCH
Area code?

GORDON
426.

MITCH
I'm sorry, we don't deliver to that location.

GORDON
What? Oh... pick up, then.

MITCH
Okay. What would you like?

GORDON
I'll take a... large pizza with pepperoni, and pineapple, and sausage. And the stuffed crust.

MITCH
Would you like to order some buffalo wings or cheesy bread with that?

GORDON
Uh... yeah.

MITCH
Which one?

GORDON
Both.

MITCH
Ok. Is that all?

GORDON
I think so.

MITCH
That comes to twenty-four dollars and sixteen cents.

GORDON
Ok.

MITCH
It will be ready within 20 minutes.

GORDON

Thank you.

Gordon hangs up the phone and plops on the couch. He is not as in-shape as he was.

Gordon switches around on the tv - infomercials, soap operas, and sitcoms from the 80s. He stops flipping when he gets to Boy Meets World.

After watching for a while, Gordon groans and leans his head back and closes his eyes. After a few minutes, projected Gordon walks in the door with the pizza.

Physical Gordon opens his eyes and gets up. Projected Gordon disappears, and the pizza falls to the floor, cheese down.

GORDON

No!

Gordon runs to the pizza and puts it right-side-up again. He lifts the lid to check the damages. The cheese is mostly intact, but the toppings are pineapple, ham, and olives.

GORDON

No! This isn't what I ordered! The crust isn't even stuffed.

Gordon walks back to the phone and dials again.

MITCH

Mitch's pizza. Delivery or carry out?

GORDON

Hi, this is Gordon Pierce, I just picked up a pizza with the wrong toppings.

MITCH

I'm sorry.

GORDON

Yeah, could you deliver the correct pizza?

MITCH

What's your area code?

GORDON

426.

MITCH

I'm sorry, we don't deliver to that area code. If you'd like to bring the pizza back, we'll be happy to replace it.

Gordon leans his head against the wall.

GORDON

No thanks. It's fine.

MITCH

Ok. Bye.

GORDON

Good bye.

Gordon hangs up, carries his pizza back to the couch and plops down. He eats slice after slice.

Once the pizza is gone a couple hours later, he gets up, puts the box on the counter and looks around confused. He walks to the front door and opens it. On the front step is the box of buffalo wings and cheesy bread, both spilled.

GORDON

No!

Gordon gathers the food and carries it inside to the kitchen. After some examination, Gordon decides the food is still good, so he pops the boxes in the microwave and reheats them.

The microwave beeps and Gordon goes back to the couch to eat his food.

Now Gordon pops in the movie 'A Face in the Crowd.' He eats his food, and falls asleep.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Gordon wakes up to the sound of static on the television.

Gordon reaches for the remote to turn the tape off. On television, Conan O'Brian is interviewing "Gordon Pierce" - a photograph of Gordon with a man moving his mouth in the mouth spot.

CONAN

Gordon, it's great that you could take time out of your day to come down.

GORDON
On behalf of NBC, I declare this
interview started!

CONAN
Yes, we know it's started, Gordon.

GORDON
Just like I started saving the
world!

CONAN
Now, Gordon, you may have heard
that there are some people out
there that don't believe you
actually saved the world - that
you're just using force to make
people behave.

GORDON
On behalf of me, I declare those
people stupid! Just like I -

Goron switches the tv off, stands up, and brushes the cheese
grease from his face. He tosses the chicken and cheesy break
boxes in the trash can and walks up to his bedroom.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Gordon sits at the desk in his room and lights Eli's thinking
candle.

The light of the flame reflects on the portrait of Eli
standing in front of a log cabin, and at the right angle, it
even looks as if the cabin is on fire.

Gordon looks at the flame, licks his thumb and forefinger,
and pinches out the fire.

He then picks up a match, strikes it, and lights the candle
again. And again he pinches it out.

A final time, he lights the candle, stares at the "cabin on
fire," and has a revelation - his eyes open wide, startled at
how obvious this is. He jumps out of his chair and runs out
the door.

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - DAY

Flames light the night sky as the home of SALLY and ANDREW
DRAPER and their son ANDREW DRAPER II, slowly burns to the
ground.

Neighbors stand around shocked.

Gordon comes racing onto the scene.

GORDON
What's going on?

NEIGHBORS
The house is on fire! That poor family! She's trapped inside! That poor boy! You have to do something!

GORDON
Don't worry. I'll take care of it.

Gordon closes his eyes and projects himself into the flames.

One Gordon enters the master bedroom and grabs Sally, who is screaming like a banshee. He gently lowers her to the ground and re-enters the flames.

The second Gordon has grabbed a fire hose and is beginning to put out the flames.

The third Gordon has gone into the boy's bedroom and pulled him out of bed.

The boy is tired and doesn't really know what's going on - Gordon throws him over his shoulders and takes him piggy-back out the front door, leaving him standing next to his mother.

Before going back in to fight the fire, he leans down next to Andrew II's ear and whispers

GORDON
Who's the Antichrist now?

He then rushes back inside.

The first projected Gordon is inside, waking up the adult Andrew - the same Andrew that has bullied Gordon all these years.

GORDON
Andrew! Your house is on fire. I've come to rescue you!

ANDREW
Is that you, Jesus?

GORDON
No, it's me! Gordon!

ANDREW

Oh. Well tell Jesus I said hi.

Gordon rushes Andrew downstairs - he is too large to lower through the window.

As they are running downstairs, Andrew continues

ANDREW

And that monkey lady, too.

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - DAY

Gordon helps Andrew to the curb to join his family. The three Gordons are able to put the fire out by the time the fire trucks arrive. The press arrives a few moments later, chasing the sirens.

Gordon walks over to the family.

SALLY

You saved our lives! Thank you!

ANDREW

Gordon, I never thought that after everything I've done for you, you'd be the one to save my life. I misjudged you. I'm sorry.

ANDREW II

My toys better not have been ruined.

SALLY

What caused the fire? Was it electrical?

GORDON

I'm afraid not - this was caused by an arsonist.

Gordon holds up a match.

The media starts filming and taking pictures.

GORDON

This is the match that started this fire - and from the looks of it, it was started by an arsonist gang. An arsonist gang that is a threat to all of us.

REPORTERS

How was it that you were unable to stop this fire when you have been able to stop every other crime?

GORDON

It's been such a long time since any crime has been committed, I haven't been spending as much time being vigilant. It just goes to show that no matter how peaceful things are, my services are still very much needed. By no means am I a has-been. I am just as vital and heroic as I ever was.

REPORTERS

Any leads on who did this and how to stop them from doing it again?

GORDON

I can't say that for sure, but I will be working to make sure everyone in the community is safe from this new threat.

REPORTERS

Can we get a picture of you with the family?

GORDON

Of course.

Gordon stands with the family, the cameras flash, and Gordon smiles as he sees that he is needed again - even if he did set that fire himself.

EXT. MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY - DAY

A school bus full of laughing happy children pulls in front of the museum. Once the bus has reached a complete stop, the bus door creaks open, and out steps Mr. Henderson's second grade class, followed by their chaperones: Mrs. Spelling, DARE Officer Peterson, and most important of all, Gordon Pierce.

The children race into the museums entrance, followed by DARE Officer Peterson and Mrs. Spelling. Gordon and Mr. Henderson trail behind.

As Gordon pulls the door open, Mr. Henderson grabs his arm and pulls him aside.

MR. HENDERSON

Gordon, I'm really glad you came along today. All the stuff going on lately, I was getting ready to cancel this trip all together.

GORDON

Nonsense - I remember when I was in your class this trip was the best part of the year.

MR. HENDERSON

It's hard to believe that little Gordon grew up to become a superhero. Do you remember that day that you announced you would be a superhero?

Gordon gets a cold look on his face.

GORDON

I remember.

MR. HENDERSON

Man, who would have thought you really would?

GORDON

Not you, apparently.

MR. HENDERSON

No, no - but I'll tell you one thing: I'm glad you did. Especially now - since the country's law enforcement was disbanded a couple years ago, there was nothing to protect any of us except for you. Granted, there wasn't anything to protect us from, but after all this... Well, I'm glad you're around.

GORDON

Don't mention it.

Mr. Henderson pulls a flask out of his jacket pocket and takes a swig.

He offers some to a shocked Gordon, who declines.

MR. HENDERSON

If anyone starts anything today, you'll put a stop to that. I'm sure it won't happen.

(MORE)

MR. HENDERSON (cont'd)
 Can you imagine what would happen
 if something were to happen to a
 whole classroom full of kids? That
 would be tragic.

GORDON
 It would be. That's why I'm here -
 to stop that kind of thing from
 happening.

MR. HENDERSON
 Hey, if you save my life today,
 I'll give you a gold star for the
 day.

Mr. Henderson laughs and takes another swig of whiskey. He offers it again to Gordon, who again declines.

Gordon holds the door open as Henderson walks inside.

GORDON
 You go ahead - I'll catch up to
 you.

MR. HENDERSON
 Don't go skipping out on me Gordon -
 I don't want to handle these brats
 by myself!

Gordon waves at Henderson as the door closes.

EXT. SCHOOL BUS - DAY

Gordon walks back to the school bus. The DRIVER stands outside smoking a cigarette.

Gordon sneaks onto the bus and begins examining the controls.

The bus driver sees him and looks inside the door.

CRAIG
 Hey! What are you doing in there?

Gordon looks up at the bus driver alarmed.

GORDON
 Just looking for my pen. It rolled
 down the aisle while we were
 driving. I got it.

CRAIG
 Oh, great. Sorry, Gordon - I didn't
 recognize you.
 (MORE)

CRAIG (cont'd)

While you've got that pen out,
would you mind signing this pair of
Peacemakers?

The bus driver climbs on board the bus, reaches into his cubby hole and pulls out a shoe box, takes off the lid and pulls out a pair of Peacemakers - sneakers with Gordon's name printed on one side, and Gordon's logo on the other.

CRAIG

I'm saving them for his birthday,
but I figured I'd bring them along,
just in case you had the chance to
sign them. It'd make his day,
really.

Gordon grabs one of the shoes and pulls a pen out of his pocket.

GORDON

Sure - who do I sign it to?"

CRAIG

My son. Craig. Craig is my son's
name.

Gordon looks up above the driver's seat that says "Hi! Today you will be driven by: CRAIG"

He pulls the pen cap off with his teeth and writes "Craig - stay in school, because education is the way to becoming a hero. - Gordon Pierce"

He puts the cap back on the pen and hands the shoe back to the Craig.

Craig reads the signature, nods, and smiles at Gordon.

CRAIG

Thanks! That goes right with the
poster with that saying on it in my
room. His room. My son Craig's
room.

The bus driver carefully packs the shoes back in their box, puts the box back in the cubby hole and walks back out of the bus.

Gordon returns to the controls. He kneels on the floor examining the breaks.

He traces the brake pedal with his finger to where it disappears into the floor of the bus.

Gordon notices that the floor of the driver's area is actually a large panel - a panel that could be removed without too much difficulty.

He thinks for a moment, and projects himself about two miles down the road.

EXT. CURVY ROAD - DAY

Projected Gordon looks at an intersection right before a bridge and imagines:

if the bus were speed through the light, without the ability to use its breaks, it would skid along a metal rail until it stopped safely.

However, if the rail were weakened at a certain rough corner, the force of the bus skidding along it would be just enough to break through the rail and go over the ledge just the right amount that it would teeter in a way that would look perilous on television news program, but would be easy for Gordon to pull back onto the road, saving the day.

Gordon walks to the sharp turn, and with the help of two other projected Gordons, they bend the rail back and forth, weakening the metal.

The projected Gordons disappear, and Gordon opens his eyes back on the bus.

INT. SCHOOL BUS - DAY

Gordon gets out of his seat and pulls up the panel.

He looks at the wires that control the breaks, and he uses his muscle strength to stretch the wires to near breaking point - if they are used more than a few times, the wires will snap, and the breaks will be useless.

Gordon returns the panel to its proper place, and leaves the bus to rejoin the class tour.

Gordon hasn't noticed the security camera above the school bus door.

INT. SEATTLE SCIENCE CENTER - DAY

The class is standing in the dinosaur hall admiring the fossils.

Gordon quietly enters the group.

Mr. Henderson whispers

MR. HENDERSON

What happened to you? You missed half the tour.

GORDON

Bad Mexican food.

MR. HENDERSON

Yikes. You know they use grade D meat in those places?

GORDON

I think some of it came from these guys.

Henderson snorts and moves into the next room.

INT. PLANETARIUM - "NIGHT"

The class of students sits on the floor, amazed at the vastness of space, until the stars fade, the lights come on, and a voice comes over the loudspeaker

VOICE

Thank you for visiting the Seattle Science Center. Please enjoy the rest of your stay.

Mr. Henderson stands up and claps "shave and a haircut," followed by the class clapping "two bits."

MR. HENDERSON

That's it for today. Time to head back to the bus.

STUDENTS

Awww...

MR. HENDERSON

I know, I know, but if I don't get you back to the school by three, your parents will kill me.

The students grab their lunch bags and backpacks and walk out of the planetarium, through the science center, and out to the parking lot.

Before Gordon exits the building, he walks over to a pay phone and dials a number. The phone rings, and after a moment, Gordon begins speaking in a disguised voice

GORDON

Hello, Channel Five News? Yes, this is Mr. Shapiro. I was just driving past along Three Pines Ranch, and there's a school bus there dangling over the side of the cliff along there. Yes, that's right. Send a camera crew.

EXT. SCHOOL BUS - DAY

Mr. Henderson counts the students as they climb on board the bus. When everyone is on board, the chaperones climb on, Gordon getting on last. Before he fully enters the bus, he turns and looks out of the bus for a moment, seeing families with small children running around Seattle Center, listening to the kids on the bus laughing and having fun.

CRAIG

Gordon! You can come back here another day! We've got to get these kids back to school!

Gordon enters the bus and sits down as the bus doors close.

INT. BAR - DAY

In a sleazy bar, Chris and Natalie sit at a back table, next to the dart board. They both smoke cigarettes, and Chris is holding an empty beer bottle. Several more empty bottles are sitting on the table.

NATALIE

No, I haven't heard from him in a couple months. Not since he got that bomb out of the city council meeting.

CHRIS

Good thing he was there that day. Of all the days to be there, it sure was lucky.

Gordon swishes the last bit of beer in his bottle around as Natalie gives him a look.

NATALIE

Look, I know you have some crazy vendetta against Gordon, but I'm sick of you making out like he's the bad guy.

(MORE)

NATALIE (cont'd)

I don't like his methods, and I think that he blows things way out of proportion, and I even believe that the lack of disorder is less than beneficial for society as a whole. But I look around and I see safety, for better or for worse, and I think the majority of people out there like it better this way.

CHRIS

Don't you think it's funny that wherever there's a crime, or a catastrophe, or a bomb scare, Gordon is right there, ready to save the day?

NATALIE

Gordon's always been there. Ever since I can remember. He's fast.

CHRIS

He was fast. Now he's there before the crime even happens. He knows what's going to happen before it happens. I'm not saying he's doing them, I'm just saying that it's worth looking into. Might make an interesting newspaper story.

NATALIE

Leave Gordon alone.

Natalie throws some beernuts at Chris, who laughs and throws beernuts back at her. Natalie jumps up from the table to leave, but Chris grabs her waste and pulls her onto his lap.

CHRIS

You know how hot you are when you're pissed?

Chris starts to kiss her neck, Natalie punches Chris hard, stands up, grabs his keys, and storms out.

The sound of an engine revving comes from outside, Chris stands up and runs to the door, rubbing his jaw.

CHRIS

Hey! That's my car!

Chris runs outside after Natalie.

INT. SCHOOL BUS - DAY

Mr. Henderson stands at the front of the bus and uses his hands like a megaphone.

MR. HENDERSON

Take your seats. Before we go, I'm just going to go over some of the rules for the bus again. No chewing gum, no playing video games, no yelling, no getting out of your seat, no hitting, no throwing garbage out the windows, no eating...

EXT. ELI'S MANSION - DAY

Natalie pulls in front of the mansion in Chris' car (the same car from the meat packing plant, but with a new paint job: yellow paint with red flames).

She steps out of the car and rings the doorbell. After a minute, there is no answer, so she rings it again. Again there is no answer, so she leans down to the ground, where there is a lawn gnome, a potted plant, and a big rock.

She lifts the rock, and underneath is the front door key.

Natalie stands back up, unlocks the door, and walks inside.

INT. SCHOOL BUS - DAY

MR. HENDERSON

... if you must talk, use a six-inch voice, no playing with tape players or CD players or whatever else you might have that makes noise, no paper airplanes, no hats, no comic books, no whining...

INT. ELI'S MANSION - DAY

Natalie closes the door behind her.

She is shocked at how filthy the place has become since she had last been there.

She walks past the living room, where the TV is on showing an infomercial about amazing new knives, and pizza boxes are piled high next to the couch.

NATALIE

Gordon? You alive in here?

Natalie walks down the hall to the clock. She opens the door of the clock, moves both hands to twelve, presses the pendulum in, and the clock swings open revealing the stairway to the underground cavern.

She begins walking down the stairs.

INT. SCHOOL BUS - DAY

MR. HENDERSON

And last but not least, no spitting. Do you have anything to say, Gordon?

Mr. Henderson sits down and Gordon stands up. He is a little nervous, but he hides it well.

GORDON

I think Mr. Henderson pretty much said it all. And I mean he said it ALL. But I'd just like to say, should anything happen to this bus on the way home, I want you to remain calm. I have everything under control, and as long as everybody stays in their seats and doesn't panic, I'll be able to get everyone out of the bus safely. Not that anything bad will happen, I'm just saying... just in case.

Gordon sits down next to Mr. Henderson, who is trying to get the last couple drops of whiskey out of his flask.

MR. HENDERSON

Very tactful.

Craig turns on the engine, and drives out of the parking lot.

INT. UNDERGROUND CAVERN - DAY

Natalie walks down the staircase to the secret library.

On the table sits a pile of books, and a large planner.

Compared to the rest of the house, the cavern is very clean - the books are in neat rows, everything has been dusted, and there is no garbage on the ground, except for a wastebasket next to the table overflowing with crumpled balls of paper.

Natalie walks to the table and opens the planner to the front page. The calendar is booked solid - every day has a list of appearances: ribbon cutting ceremonies, dedications, speeches, etc. Written along the Friday column in large letters it says 'RESERVED FOR NATALIE.'

Natalie flips through the pages of the book, and as she moves forward in time, the pages become less and less filled, and what is there is less and less prestigious: grocery store openings, fund-raisers, bingo games, etc. The handwriting is becoming sloppier, as well.

As she gets closer to the present, the calendars are nearly empty, Fridays are no longer reserved for Natalie, what is written is just scrawled along - no more neat handwriting. Many of the scheduled events have been scribbled out, due to cancellation.

INT. SCHOOL BUS - DAY

In the back of the bus, the children jump up and down in their seats singing 'The Wheels on the Bus.' Nearly every one of the rules announced before the bus ride is being broken, but it's all good fun.

In the drivers seat, Craig is joining along in the singing, making the kids laugh.

Gordon sits in his seat stretching, getting ready to put on a good show for the news crew.

His concentration is broken when Craig pushes the breaks in rhythm to the song - the kids laugh, but Gordon becomes alarmed. He closes his eyes and mentally travels underneath of the break pedal, to wear he weakened the wires - with each press of the breaks, the wire stretches a little bit, getting closer to the snapping point.

GORDON

Maybe you shouldn't do that with
the breaks.

CRAIG

What, this?

Craig slams on the breaks making all the kids scream playfully.

GORDON

Yes, that!

CRAIG

Relax - these brakes are as sturdy as they come. Besides, the kids get a kick out of it.

Gordon points at Mr. Henderson, who is looking rather woozy from the booze.

GORDON

I just don't want Mr. Henderson to get sick over here.

Craig turns around and looks at Mr. Henderson.

CRAIG

Looks like his liquid patience is going wrong. Don't worry, Gordon. I'll be gentle. You just sit still, Mr. Henderson! If you need me to pull over, just let me know.

Craig smiles at Gordon, who looks uneasily back.

INT. UNDERGROUND CAVERN - DAY

Natalie sits down in the large chair at the table as she continues reading.

When she reaches the day that Gordon set the first fire, the handwriting changes again - no longer sloppy, but much less innocent than at the start of the planner. Every few weeks, there would be crimes written - fires, bomb scares, robberies, etc.

As she nears the present, the frequency and scale of these crimes gets larger, and there are notes written underneath them all - notes on things to say to the press the next time, clever sound bytes, suggestions for how to increase the exposure of his rescues.

Natalie gets to the present day - March 14, 2004. It says "Trip to Seattle Science Center."

Natalie stands up, slams the planner closed, and runs up the stairs.

EXT. ELI'S MANSION - DAY

Natalie runs out of the mansion to Chris' car and jumps in the driver's seat and drives in the direction of the science center.

As she is driving, she passes the school bus on its way to the cliff.

She pulls in to the parking lot at the science center, parks quickly, and runs to the front gate, cutting in front of the long line of people.

NATALIE

I'm looking for a school group here
on a field trip.

The teenage girl behind the ticket counter chews gum and looks at Natalie in a 'I-Don't-Want-to-be-Here' way.

GIRL

There are school groups all over
here. Just throw a rock and you'll
hit one of 'em.

NATALIE

Gordon Pierce was with them.

GIRL

Oh! Yeah, they left a long time
ago.

NATALIE

How long?

GIRL

Like, five minutes? I used to have
such a crush on Gordon - he's not
that cute in person, tho. Have you
seen him? Not that cute.

NATALIE

Where did they go?

GIRL

Uh... They took off in a bus.

NATALIE

Thanks a lot. Do you know how to
get to Greenhaven Elementary School
from here?

GIRL

Go out of the parking lot, take a
left, go to the first light.
There's a 7-11. Go inside, buy a
map.

Natalie is about to cuss the girl out, but realizes there's no time, so she runs back to her car, pulls out her phone, jumps in the car, and dials Gordon's number as she pulls out of the parking lot.

INT. SCHOOL BUS - DAY

The bus is about a mile from the point of the accident, and Gordon is ready for action. Then, his cell phone rings. He pulls it out, ready to cancel the call, and then he notices it's Natalie's number.

GORDON

Natalie? I can't talk right now.
I'm busy.

NATALIE

I can't believe that I was defending you. No, I can believe that I was defending you, what I can't believe is that I didn't have reason to.

GORDON

What are you talking about?

NATALIE

I found your book. Your planner.

Gordon ducks down into the seat and tries to hide his conversation from the rest of the bus.

GORDON

How much did you read?

NATALIE

I read enough to know that you're the "gang of terrorists" that have been doing all these things lately.

GORDON

Look, I'll explain everything later. I'm in the middle of something.

NATALIE

Oh, really? What is it? Kidnapping? Flash flood? Will you hijack the bus?

GORDON

I'll call you back later.

Gordon hangs up the phone just as Mr. Henderson vomits all over Craig's back.

Craig hollars, slams on the breaks and swerves to the side of the road to park the bus.

The stress causes the break line to snap - a quarter mile early.

Gordon sits up straight and says to himself under his breath

GORDON
This is too soon...

EXT. ROADSIDE - DAY

The channel five news van sits parked with its antenna up, news caster standing outside, camera ready, with nothing to film.

The producer and director are having a meeting.

DIRECTOR
Are you sure we're in the right spot?

PRODUCER
All I know is what I was told, and I was told that there was a bus in trouble right here.

DIRECTOR
Well, maybe I'm blind, but I don't see any busses having any disasters around here, do you?

The producer looks over the director's shoulder at the school bus with no breaks scraping along the hillside towards the news van and cliff.

PRODUCER
Yes.

The director turns around slowly to face the bus.

Cars in the path of the bus race out of the way, and the news crew piles into the van to try to move.

INT. CAR - DAY

Natalie is going well above the speed limit, driving in between cars, on the way to the elementary school.

She comes up to a point where all the cars are stopped, and horns are beeping like crazy.

Natalie beeps her horn as well, until she gives up, stops the car, gets out and starts running down the road.

INT. BUS - DAY

The kids are cheering and laughing - this bus is just like a roller coaster.

Mr. Henderson is feeling much better now. He stands up and announces

MR. HENDERSON
Everyone stay in your seats!

as he is thrown to the ground. The children laugh.

Craig is pressing with all his weight on the breaks, not doing anything. He continues to drag along the side of the road to use the friction to stop.

Gordon jumps to his feet and runs up to the driver's seat. He grabs the steering wheel, turning it so the bus is back in the lane.

Craig tries to get the wheel back as he yells

CRAIG
What do you think you're doing?
You'll get us all killed!

GORDON
I'm trying to save your life.

INT. NEWS VAN - DAY

The news team is piled in the car, and as they start to drive, the producer looks over his shoulder and sees the newscaster and camera operator sitting there.

PRODUCER
What are you two doing in here?
This is great stuff!

The reporter and camera man give the producer a 'you-must-be-crazy' look.

EXT. NEWS VAN - DAY

The van stops, the door opens, and the newscaster and camera guy are pushed out into the street.

The van is now directly in between the bus and the spot Gordon has planned to drive through.

INT. SCHOOL BUS - DAY

Gordon and Craig are wrestling with the steering wheel, neither noticing the news van and reporter team in front of them.

The camera operator stands with camera pointed at the bus, legs shaking, as the newscaster looks into the driver's side mirror trying to fix his hair.

Craig looks out the window and sees the news crew and drops the wheel in shock.

Gordon had all his strength pulling on the wheel, so when Craig let go, the wheel went too far in Gordon's direction, causing the bus to tip on its side, so the bus is now flying down the road on its side, still going straight towards the news crew and the cliff.

The students are in a panic, and Mrs. Spelling is yelling at them

MRS. SPELLING

Either you kids sit down this minute or next recess you all get a detention!

EXT. ROADSIDE - DAY

Natalie is running in the direction of the commotion.

She realizes that she won't be able to get through the traffic in time to do anything, she climbs up on top of a truck, where she can see what's going on:

The bus is slowing down now that it is no longer on its wheels, but not nearly enough to stop before going over the edge.

As it nears the edge, the camera operator is stepping backwards towards the cliff until he runs into the railing, which he trips over, falling over the side of the road.

Before he can fall all the way, he grabs hold of one of the pieces that holds the railing up. With his other hand he holds the camera to his eye, trying to get some good shots.

The newscaster jumps out of the way just as the bus comes crashing into the news van, knocking it out of the way and through the pre-weakened railing.

The van hangs with one wheel over the side of the road, and the bus continues through, the front of the bus passing nearly a third of the way over the ledge.

INT. SCHOOL BUS - DAY

Gordon struggles to stand up, and when he does, he puts his hands to his waist and proclaims heroically

GORDON

Do not fear, my children - I will save you. Just do exactly as I say, and no one will get hurt.

The kids stop screaming and listen to Gordon.

GORDON

I want you all to stand up, and move in a straight line to the emergency exit. I'll help you all out of the bus from there.

INT. NEWS VAN - DAY

The producer is very upset - he unbuckles his seat belt and climbs to the front seat.

PRODUCER

What are you doing? Get us out of here!

The driver has the emergency break on, and reluctantly takes it off. The van slides backwards over the ledge.

PRODUCER

Not that way! Toward the road!

The driver puts the van into drive and attempts to drive forward, but the front tires are stuck in gravel - the wheels spin, but the van continues to slide backwards until the second back wheel is over the ledge, going right over the head of the camera man, still holding on to the railing with one hand.

PRODUCER

If you get me killed, you're fired!

INT. SCHOOL BUS - DAY

The kids are standing in line, many crying, at the emergency exit at the back of the bus. Two projected Gordons stand outside helping the kids get out of the bus.

While the kids are getting out, Mr. Henderson stands up and stumbles to the front door of the bus. He pulls the latch on the door, and it slides open.

Mr. Henderson walks down the steps to the open door and looks down. The only thing outside the door is a certain-death drop. Mr. Henderson steps out.

Before he can fall to his death, Gordon projects a third him to catch Mr. Henderson by the arm pits.

MR. HENDERSON

When did I learn how to fly?

Gordon tries to pull Mr. Henderson up, but Henderson fights back. The motion of the struggle makes the bus tilt down towards the cliff.

One of the Gordons helping the kids grabs the bus' back bumper to try to steady it.

Mr. Henderson relaxes in Gordon's arms and begins waving in the direction of the street.

MR. HENDERSON

Cheese!

He is waving at the camera man, hanging by one arm from the rail and still filming.

Gordon looks at the camera man and sees that the rail he is hanging onto is bending downward, and will not be able to support him much longer.

Gordon hollars to him

GORDON

Get off of the rail!

CAMERA GUY

If I do that I'll fall!

GORDON

Get off of the rail by climbing up
to the road!

CAMERA GUY

Oh! That's a much better idea.

EXT. ROADSIDE - DAY

The camera man tosses his camera over his shoulder and tries to climb up the cliff to the road, but he can't reach. Instead, he grabs hold of the van's bumper so he can pull himself up using that.

When his full weight is on the van's bumper, the van is too heavy at the back, so it tilts and begins to slip towards the cliff.

After some teetering, it appears the news van will be safe. Then, the sliding door opens, revealing the producer.

PRODUCER

If I had wanted a roller coaster, I
would have bought a theme park, not
a TV station.

The force of the door opening is too much for the van to handle - it is now so out of balance that its front wheels slide backwards and the van completely passes over the side of the road, and is nearly vertical.

Luckily, the Gordon that was helping the kids is holding onto the front bumper, keeping it from falling down the cliff killing everyone inside.

The producer leans out of the van and looks down at the tremendous drop.

As he is looking, he notices the camera man hanging on to the bumper.

PRODUCER

Why aren't you filming this? If we
survive, remind me to fire you in
the morning.

The producer sits back in his seat and lights a cigar.

INT. SCHOOL BUS - DAY

Craig climbs up to the back of the bus and helps the rest of the children climb out of the bus.

The projected Gordon helping Mr. Henderson pulls him into the bus and takes him out the back to join the children and other chaperones. He then helps the projected Gordon holding the van pull the van back onto the street.

The news crew gets out of the van, and the camera guy begins filming once more.

Meanwhile, physical Gordon is sweating profusely, his eyes shut tight as he struggles to hold on to the three projections - he hasn't much strength left.

The three Gordons are at the back of the bus trying to it to safety, but they begin to flicker and fade out - one of the them fades out completely, leaving two strong Gordons, but after a few moments they flicker as well.

One of the Gordons turns to Craig and says

GORDON

You have to go in there and get him out - we're not going to be able to save the bus.

Craig nods and climbs down into the bus, walking to the front where Gordon sits.

Craig gently touches Gordon on the shoulder.

CRAIG

Gordon... I'm going to help you out of here. Just keep concentrating. I'll make sure you get out all right.

Craig puts Gordon's arm around his shoulders and he hoists him to his feet. Craig has to drag him all the way to the back of the bus, even as one of the remaining projections disappears, leaving one flickering Gordon holding the bus.

Craig stands at the door and hands physical Gordon to someone in the crowd. He then looks back in the bus and sees his autographed shoes caught beneath the seat right below him.

He leans over to grab them just as the final projected Gordon disappears and the bus falls completely over the side with Craig still in it.

EXT. ROADSIDE - DAY

Gordon lies on the road trembling, his eyes wide open, sweat pouring down his face - he looks like he is screaming, but no sound is coming from his mouth.

Ambulances with sirens blaring arrive and the medics rush to Gordon's aid.

Natalie runs to Gordon's side - she stares at him, both glad he's alive, and disgusted at the man he's become.

Gordon reaches to her, but instead of reaching back, she puts a camera to her eye and takes Gordon's picture.

EXT. NEWS STAND - MORNING

A large man in a thick coat is putting the newspapers on display before the news stand opens.

The headline is huge letters that fill half the front page: "MURDER!" The second line continues "'Hero' commits first homicide the world has seen in over ten years."

Once again, the news stand is covered with Gordon's image, but a much different Gordon than before. No more idealistic hero - now he looks like a shell of what he once was.

The Green Haven Weekly's top story is the evidence found in Gordon's mansion - pictures and excerpts from Gordon's private journal and planner, discovered by Natalie Hutchinson.

EXT. WHITE HOUSE LAWN - DAY

The president stands at his podium with the head of the FBI. Reporters sit in folding chairs snapping pictures and murmuring.

PRESIDENT

My fellow Americans. As you are aware, a great tragedy has occurred. A man who I once considered a friend has become an enemy to all of us. Gordon Pierce has committed acts which I as president cannot ignore - he has put countless lives at risk, and now he has taken one. Gordon Pierce must be stopped before he can kill again.

The reporters cheer and bark questions

REPORTERS

How long have you known Gordon was evil?

(MORE)

REPORTERS (cont'd)

Will Gordon be tried for murder?
Will you declare war on him? Who
does your hair?

PRESIDENT

I am standing here with Tom Watts,
head of the FBI.

INT. BAR - DAY

Chris sits at the bar drinking a large beer and smoking a
cigarette, watching the president's speech on a small TV on
the wall.

PRESIDENT

I have asked him to come out of
retirement, as well as several of
the top agents in the FBI, the CIA,
and police forces across the
country so that they may together
find Gordon Pierce and bring him to
justice. His actions will not go
unpunished!

Chris raises his glass towards the television.

CHRIS

I'll drink to that! I hope they
kill the bastard.

INT. ELI'S MANSION - DAY

Gordon sits on the couch with his chin resting on his hands
as he watches the president's speech on his television - the
room is even messier now than it was before due to the press'
search for more exclusive evidence.

PRESIDENT

I stand here today to tell you all
that no matter where he may run, no
matter how long he may hide, Gordon
Pierce will be found, and Gordon
Pierce will be shown the
consequences of messing with God's
America.

Gordon's face is swelling with rage and sorrow as he hears
the words, and remembers all of the negativity aimed at him
over the course of his life - the bullying, the teachers who
didn't believe in him, his parents who ignored him, the
public who took him for granted, Natalie who deserted him in
his hour of need.

His flashbacks are disrupted by the sound of breaking glass - someone has thrown a brick through his window.

The brick is wrapped in paper. Gordon takes off the paper and reads it: "Rot in hell, Gordon Pierce-of-shit!"

This is the last straw. Gordon screams out loud, and he sends an explosion of energy out of his body that knocks pictures off walls, and anything not attached to something flies.

Gordon levitates off of the ground and flies out the front door.

EXT. ELI'S MANSION - NIGHT

Gordon's eyes have lost all emotion - he is rage personified.

As he walks down the street, four projections step out from behind Gordon, standing two on each side. Even with four projections, Gordon's adrenaline is so high that he continues to walk.

The five Gordons move together, like a high-precision army.

Their steps crack the cement underfoot as they walk towards the downtown.

EXT. DOWNTOWN/CITY HALL - NIGHT

In front of City Hall, the citizens are holding a large bonfire - burning Gordon dolls, shirts that say "Save me Gordon!", posters saying "Gord Bless the USA", trading cards, video games, calendars, graphic novels, etc.

The whole scene looks primal - large crowds of people standing in a circle around the flame.

The Gordons walk behind the crowd, whose angry/frightened shouts distract them enough that they don't recognize the newcomers.

GORDONS

(in unison)

What do you burn but yourselves?

The Gordons voice overpowers the commotion, and the crowd turns in their direction.

GORDONS

What is your life besides your possessions?

(MORE)

GORDONS (cont'd)

All my life I tried to protect
life, but now I see that all life
is to you is what you call your
own.

The crowd starts to move closer to Gordon, some gathering
burning articles for use as weapons.

GORDONS

Your belongings are illusions! What
matters are people - you. And me.
All I ever wanted was to make the
world a place where people cared
about people - but I couldn't do
it. Even at the peak of peace, the
only thing different in the world
was that your stuff was safe! As
individuals, we were all just as
greedy, and distrusting, and
hateful as we ever were.

The crowd begins throwing rocks, other objects at Gordon, but
none hurt him.

GORDONS

Look at yourselves and see! See
what you have become: what you
always were. You can burn your
belongings, you can even kill me -
you can kill whoever you want and
nothing will change. Your life will
still be illusion.

A flaming American Flag with a picture of Gordon where the
stars should be flies through the air and lands across
Gordon's chest.

GORDONS

So be it. Let yourselves burn.

Gordon lets the flag drop, and the four projections merge to
become two giant eagles. Gordon raises his arms, and the
eagles grab hold and lift him into the air, carrying him over
the bonfire.

The crowd looks at him, thinking that he is going to commit
suicide by falling into the flames.

Rather than die, the eagles hover over the flames and flap
their wings, making the fire billow and spread - the more
they flap, the larger the fire grows.

Flames leap from the bonfire onto cars, and from there onto the city hall building, and from there eventually the entire downtown area is burning.

The people flee, trying to get away, and most do - Gordon isn't trying to kill, only destroy property.

The eagles carry Gordon high above the city, until he disappears into the clouds.

INT. UNDERGROUND GOVERNMENT BASE - DAY

The President sits in a fake oval office in the underground base as he speaks to the world via a television camera.

PRESIDENT

As of the latest count, Gordon Pierce has caused nearly ninety billion dollars worth of property damage. The White House was demolished early this morning. Shortly thereafter, I gave the command for the United States military to mount a full attack on the perpetrator. Please, stay in your homes.

EXT. CITY STREET - DAY

The president's speech continues on television screens in the window of an electronics store, while large jets fly overhead, and firebombs destroy building after building.

PRESIDENT

I have been assured by the top generals that no civilians will be at risk, and that their weapons have such accuracy that there is no chance that -

The display of televisions is destroyed as the building explodes in a blast of brick, flame, and smoke.

INT. NUCLEAR HEADQUARTERS - DAY

Two men in high-level army clothing march down a long hallway - they appear to be identical twins.

The turn right, into a small room where two men sit - this is the room where every nuclear weapon in the United States is controlled.

The two men in the room stand at attention, and the two officials motion for them to sit back down.

One of the officials steps forward and states in a voice that is trying to sound official:

ARMY OFFICAL

Listen up, men. I just spoke with the president, and he told me to tell you that he wants to use nuclear weapons to get this guy.

The two sitting men give each other a "what's-up-with-this-guy" look.

ARMY OFFICAL

At twenty hundred hours - two hundred hours. At two - twenty... At eight o'clock, you are to set your weapons to 'kill,' and aim them at all the major cities.

SITTING MAN

Isn't that a little dangerous, sir? It would mean killing millions of people.

The official steps forward and slaps the sitting man.

ARMY OFFICAL

How dare you question the president? Don't you know there's a war on? Turn on the nukes or I'll give you each demerits! And lots of pushups! Make it so.

The two army officials salute the two sitting men, and then march out of the room.

Once they are out of sight, they turn back into Gordons, and then disappear.

INT. NATALIE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Natalie's apartment is pretty bare - a futon, a small kitchen with empty vegetarian dinner boxes on the counters, a dining room table with a stack of petitions and pamphlets on it, and a small television, currently showing a news broadcast of the devastation outside.

Natalie sits on the futon drinking tea, wrapped in a blanket.

NEWSCASTER

(on television)

No word yet on the official death count, but it is believed to be somewhere in the hundreds, or even the thousands. Most of these deaths are due bombing and bomb-related accidents, such as gas leaks, dust, and fires. Gordon is nowhere to be found - most likely he has retreated the major metropolitan areas to go to the mountains or forests, or even out into the ocean. We really can't say.

Somebody knocks on the door. Natalie stands up to answer the door, and on the way she grabs a broom from the kitchen. Before opening the door she shouts

NATALIE

If you are a looter, be warned that I'm armed, and I'm not afraid to shoot you.

The door is kicked open from the outside - Gordon is standing there.

NATALIE

What are you doing here? What are you doing out there - you're killing thousands of innocent people!

GORDON

I haven't killed anyone, on purpose, yet. All the deaths are the result of those people's actions.

NATALIE

Wake up, Gordon - those people are dead because you have some twisted superhero complex, coupled with the need to constantly be at the center of attention. What's happening out there is your fault, and now you're the only one who can stop it.

GORDON

I gave them a chance - I played the superhero game. I brought them peace, and security, and happiness - they chose not to accept it.

(MORE)

GORDON (cont'd)

They would rather have death, and so that's what they will get. I'm not really doing anything wrong - it's justice. The great cosmic wheel giving people what they deserve.

NATALIE

You're going against everything you believe in - those people out there are dying, and they need your help.

GORDON

I've tried morality. I've tried ethics. I've tried to show the world how to live in peace, but I've realized something - it doesn't work. Wake up, Natalie - you're living in a fantasy land.

Gordon throws open the window so that Natalie can see the mass destruction outside - fires blaze and smoke fills the sky. Gun shots and helicopters are unbearably loud.

GORDON

This is the real world! This is what happens when you try to do right! The only way to get peace is to blow people up now and then. Without war, there is no peace.

Gordon closes the window and notices a clock on the wall - the time is 6:54.

GORDON

We don't have much time, Natalie. It's time for you and me to go.

Natalie runs into the hall, but two Gordons bring her back into the apartment.

GORDON

Don't run off now - wouldn't want you to miss the Ark.

The two Gordons carry a struggling Natalie out, followed by the real Gordon - in his eyes you can see the reflection of the fire outside. As soon as he is out of view, the apartment door slams shut.

EXT. ROOFTOP - EVENING

From the top of the roof we can see the full extent of destruction - no building is left standing. The only lights visible are fires and helicopter search lights.

There is a door that leads to the apartment's stair well - it bursts open, and the two Gordons walk out, still holding Natalie, who has stopped struggling as hard. The real Gordon emerges last, and walks to the edge of the roof, looking down at the mayhem like a king looking down at his kingdom.

GORDON

I pity you, fools, for you will
never truly live. Are you
incapable? Or are you just too
lazy? Either or, your time to live
is ended. Good bye. I'll miss you.

The two Gordons holding Natalie merge into a fire hawk and lifts her into the air. A third projected Gordon becomes a fire hawk and lifts Gordon into the air.

The two hawks carry Natalie and Gordon off of the roof - they are quickly spotted by the helicopters, who begin to fire.

The hawk holding Natalie disappears, and Natalie free falls towards the earth, but is caught on the back of the hawk holding Gordon.

A new hawk swoops in carrying a projected Gordon - from the eyes of the helicopter pilots, the two hawks holding two Gordons look exactly alike - they can't see Natalie on top of one.

The two helicopters move in on the two hawks - it looks like they have them trapped, when suddenly one of the hawks goes straight up - as it moves we can see that it is the hawk without Natalie on it.

The two helicopter pilots are distracted, and they both fire at it. The hawk swoops around the sky, diverting the fire from the real Gordon.

The hawk then flies straight toward one of the helicopters - the pilot keeps firing at it, unaware that directly behind the hawk is the other helicopter, also firing.

The other helicopter is flying towards the hawk, firing, while the helicopter on the other side is firing as well.

When the two helicopters are quite close, the hawk disappears - the gun shots from each helicopter go right into the other helicopter, and both explode in a ball of fire.

The remaining hawk then flies out of sight, carrying a horrified Natalie on its back, and a triumphant Gordon in its talons.

EXT. SKY OVER THE CITY - MOMENTS LATER

The hawk is flying, and Gordon climbs onto its back to join Natalie. She is looking stoically over the destruction below.

GORDON

There's a small island in the South Pacific - an old military base reserved for when the Russians set off their nukes during the cold war. We can live there together for a few years, and when it's safe to come out, we can start the world over again - like Noah and his wife.

NATALIE

Unless what?

GORDON

"Unless what"?

NATALIE

You'll destroy the planet unless what? You've got to have some sort of an ultimatum for the people of the planet. Like "give me a million dollars," or "get rid of all the people named "Pete," or -

GORDON

Or "Admit you were wrong and make me a super hero again."

NATALIE

... Yeah.

Gordon stops for a moment and considers this.

GORDON

Everything is in motion - the timer has been set, the minute is getting closer. But what kind of superhero would I be if I didn't give them one last chance?

The hawks swoop down and change direction.

NATALIE

Where are we going?

GORDON

Back to the beginning.

EXT. PLAYGROUND - NIGHT

The scene looks much like it did at the beginning - empty playground, except now rather than being lit by the afternoon sun, it is lit by flames billowing from surrounding buildings.

Gordon lands softly on the pavement and walks to the big toy.

He climbs up the ladder and stands at the top of the big toy - the place where there is a steering wheel that makes the big toy look like a ship.

Helicopters and other military vehicles have been following Gordon, so they are right on the scene when he begins his proclamation.

GORDON

Ladies and gentlemen, when I was a child on this very playground, I said that I would make the world a better place, and ever since then that's what I've been trying to do. But the only way I can do so is if you let me, and you have to do what I say, and respect what I do, because otherwise we can't have peace. Without superheroes to keep people in line, everyone would be miserable, like me. You pushed me away once, but I am here again to tell you to walk behind me, and together we can make the perfect world, where nobody gets hurt, and everyone feels happy all the time, and that's what I want - but if you don't want that, you can have the alternative. I've set all the nuclear devices on the planet to go off in about ten minutes - if you'd rather die than live in paradise, that's your choice. Please - don't make me kill you.

Gordon outstretches his hands towards the soldiers, who are standing with guns trained on him.

GORDON

Please, take my hand in peace.

A brick flies through the air and strikes Gordon on the forehead, causing blood to flow down into his eye.

Gordon looks to see who threw the brick - it is "Gator" Larson, basketball star, dressed in army garb.

GORDON

So be it.

Gordon closes his eyes and a wall of flames rises around the big toy, separating him from the guards.

Gordon flies up out of the ring of fire and lands outside the wall of soldiers, looking for Natalie, who is nowhere to be found.

GORDON

Natalie! Where are you?

Gordon storms across the playground, tearing through large piles of debris scattered around trying to find her.

In Gordon's path stands a small child, wearing a t-shirt with Gordon's face on it, from the days when Gordon was well-loved.

Gordon doesn't notice the boy - he is blinded by his rage and the blood from his wound. He pushes the boy to the ground, causing him to spill his chocolate milk and drop his Batman comic book.

This makes Gordon stop - the little boy turns and looks at him with a tear, and Gordon sees that the little boy is an exact duplicate of himself as a child.

The child stands up and runs away, and some humanity appears in Gordon's face as he digs through the pile of rubble that boy was standing in front of, revealing the vow left in cement.

All the rage disappears from Gordon, and the realization that he has become what he wanted to fight hits him like a ton of bricks.

GORDON

Natalie!

Gordon takes to the skies, and flies to the world-wide nuclear controlling building.

EXT. NUCLEAR HEADQUARTERS - NIGHT

The nuclear headquarters is a large grey abstract building with a green dome in the middle of it. The building is surrounded by a large barbed wire fence. Outside the fence it seems the whole world is burning.

Gordon breaks through the fence and enters the building to stop the nukes from destroying the world.

The military arrives a few moments later, stopping outside of the gate.

Out of one of the cars steps a General, and out of the other side of the same car steps Natalie.

NATALIE

He said he would set off all the nukes at 8pm - that's in just a couple of minutes. Is there any way to shut it off once he starts it up?

GENERAL

It isn't likely - once the countdown is started, the only way to stop it is to physically enter the core and destroy the master computer that sends the detonation code around the world. And the only person that has the access code to the core is the President.

NATALIE

And where is he?

GENERAL

That's classified.

INT. NUCLEAR HEADQUARTERS - NIGHT

Gordon is trying to figure out a way into the core, but can't figure out the code. He closes his eyes and attempts to project himself into the core, but when the projection passes through the wall, it warps and fades - the material guarding the core won't allow him to enter mentally.

Over a loudspeaker Gordon hears:

VOICE

The nuclear arsenal will be
detonated in: 30... 29... 28...

Gordon grabs an ax off the wall and breaks through the glass leading to the inner chamber as the countdown continues:

VOICE

17... 16... 15...

Gordon looks around trying to find an abort switch of some sort - when he can't find one, he sees the main computer, which has its own chamber, with two columns holding two half-spheres rotating around.

Gordon smashes into the computer center and stands between the two pillars, grabbing hold of the two half-spheres, stopping the pillars from rotating.

The machine and Gordon are equally matched, and as the machine struggles to keep spinning, it begins to shudder and shake, and sparks fly.

VOICE

4... 3... 2...

Gordon closes his eyes and says

GORDON

Forgive me.

As the machine explodes in a burst of electricity and light.

EXT. NUCLEAR HEADQUARTERS - NIGHT

The green dome lights up bright and the explodes, sending green fragments all over, causing those watching outside the fence to run inside cars and under objects to prevent being hit.

The sound of the explosion echoes for a while, and when it becomes silent, Natalie gets to her feet and looks at what is left of the nuclear facility.

The entire structure has been leveled - the only recognizable feature is the inner core, with two chunks of pillar, with Gordon slumped between them.

Natalie runs to Gordon, who looks pretty dead.

She falls to her knees and cries, but Gordon is alive, and he places his hand on her shoulder to say "everything is going to be OK."

INT. NEWSROOM - DAY

News footage of the explosion plays over and over, from different angles, blended with images of people waving flags and smiling as the newscaster speaks over it.

NEWSCASTER

These were the sights last night as life on Earth was narrowly saved, thanks to the strength and bravery of one man, who even when the world didn't believe in him, believed in the world. That man is, of course, basketball superstar "Gator" Larson. At a press conference earlier today, Mr. Larson had this to say:

News clip of a conference room with "Gator" Larson standing at a podium.

GATOR

I would just like to say that I love this country, and I'd do anything to keep it, and basketball, safe. I pledge you all that as long as I can, I'll do all I can to keep this world spinning.

To prove it, he spins a basketball on his finger.

The people in the conference room cheer.

NEWSCASTER

According to his publicist, Gator will be the official superhero of the country for a sum of \$10.6 Million over the course of five years. And I'm sure it will be money well spent. In other news: How has this tragedy helped the hot dog industry? You may be surprised by the answer!