



2x06: "*Tattoo*"

Written by

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METROPOLIS : SPECIAL CRIMES UNIT

2x06: "Tattoo"

CAST

CAPTAIN MAGGIE SAWYER Jill Teed
DETECTIVE DAN TURPIN David Paetkau
TODD RICE Chris Lowell
DR. BETH CHAPEL Tembi Locke
WALLY WEST Fran Kranz
LIEUTENANT RALPH DIBNY Fred Weller
DR. KITTY FAULKNER Felicia Day
DETECTIVE PATRICIA TRAYCE..... Katee Sackhoff

ALSO STARRING

DAMON MATTHEWS Jonathon Groff
EDWARD 'VINNIE' MORGAN Eddie Cahill
KING FARADAY Alex Carter
WILLIAM GREAT EAGLE Lou Diamond Phillips
BLACK MANTA Lance Reddick
JACKSON HYDE Shameik Moore
ETTA CANDY Lesley-Ann Brandt
TROOP LEADER

SPECIAL GUEST STARS

ARTHUR CURRY/AQUAMAN Alan Ritchson
EVERETT FAULKNER John Shea
MEREDITH FAULKNER Patricia Tallman

TEASER

FADE IN:

EXT. APARTMENT COMPLEX, DOWNTOWN METROPOLIS - DAY

Establishing shot of the modern high-rise residential.

INT. LIVING ROOM, KITTY'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

EDWARD 'VINNIE' MORGAN, in baggie sweatpants, sits on a couch sipping coffee. He scans a newspaper, as he absently places the drink down on a side table.

KITTY (O.C.)
(frantic)
Stop!!

Vinnie freezes, the mug millimeters from the table. He watches, unable to suppress an amused grin as a frazzled pajama-clad KITTY FAULKNER puts a coaster underneath.

KITTY
I spent all day yesterday cleaning, remember? The last thing I need is for you to leave coffee stains.

VINNIE
Because..?

KITTY
(irritated)
Wait till you meet my mother. Then you'll understand.

Vinnie takes Kitty's hand, gently pulling her into an embrace. She gets comfortable on his lap, nestled into him.

VINNIE
Today's the day, huh?

KITTY
Zero hour. Thanks for staying over, it helped me forget for a while.

VINNIE
You're cute when you're wired.

KITTY
Gee, thanks. I think. Anyway, you remember the plan, right?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

VINNIE

You'll pick your parents up at the airport. Then you'll spend a few hours with them, before I arrive like the white knight I am, to help out.

KITTY

At which point I will have already told them about you. Then we'll all go out for dinner somewhere nice.

VINNIE

I made the reservations at Bravado's.
(beat, nervous)
Would it help to let you know I'm a little scared too? It's been a while since I met a girl's parents.

KITTY

(deadpan)
Just remember. Show no fear.

VINNIE

(quoting)
"I must not fear. Fear is the mind-killer. Fear is the little-death that brings total obliteration."

KITTY

(impressed)
Who was that, the Dalai Lama?

VINNIE

Frank Herbert, in "Dune".

Kitty's face brightens, leaning in to kiss him on the lips. As they continue, becoming enthusiastic and passionate--

-- a loud KNOCK at the door pulls them apart, surprised. Kitty heads on over. She opens the door to reveal two older people. Meet EVERETT AND MEREDITH FAULKNER!

KITTY

(gasps, stunned)
Dad?! Mother?! What the--?

Kitty gapes at the sight of her parents. Vinnie jumps to his feet, and pulls on a sweater laying nearby.

EVERETT

Surprise, baby!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

EVERETT, dressed in casual fashionable clothing reflecting his age and apparent wealth, eagerly embraces Kitty tightly. A genuine smile lights up well-worn features, his salt-and-pepper hair catching the light.

MEREDITH
(standoffish)
Hello, Katherine.

Kitty reluctantly pulls away from Everett to meet Meredith's gaze. Approaching 60, still looking like a woman in her 40s, impeccable in smart designer clothes. Not a red hair out of place.

KITTY
Hello, Mother. It's good to see you.

Meredith briefly leans in, placing a barely-there kiss on her daughter's cheek. She breezes past into the apartment.

MEREDITH
I assume you will invite us in?

Kitty rolls her eyes, clearly used to her mother's attitude, as Everett offers an apologetic look as he follows. Kitty lets out a strained breath, before she closes the door.

Meredith surveys the apartment with critical eyes. Vinnie quickly straightens his sweater, and runs a hand over mussed hair, as Meredith's gaze falls on him.

MEREDITH (cont'd)
(accusingly)
Who are you?

KITTY
Mother! This is Edward. Edward Morgan. My, uh, my boyfriend.

Both parents blink in surprise. Meredith blatantly studies Vinnie in detail. Everett beams in delight, hand extended, taking Vinnie's and shaking it with gusto.

EVERETT
Lovely! Very pleased to meet you,
Edward. Eddie? Ed?

VINNIE
Actually, my friends call me Vinnie,
uh, my middle name is Vincent.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

EVERETT
(nodding)
Vinnie it is, then.

MEREDITH
(sniffing in disdain)
Pleased to meet you, Mr. Morgan.

KITTY
So, uh, you're early.

As Kitty and her parents talk, Vinnie begins pulling on his trainers as fast as possible.

EVERETT
Well, yes, I did try to explain to your mother we should have told you--

MEREDITH
(interrupting)
A quicker flight became available.
You know how much I loath flying.
(beat)
I assumed you'd be happy to see us.

KITTY
(faux-pleased)
Of course I am, Mother.

MEREDITH
(to Vinnie)
Leaving so soon?

VINNIE
(standing up)
I, uh, should go. I have work to do.

He grabs his keys from the table, Meredith's gaze drilling into him. He gives Kitty a quick peck on the cheek, before facing the parents.

VINNIE (cont'd)
It was nice to meet you both.

KITTY
I'll call you, okay?

VINNIE
(nodding)
See you later.

He quickly EXITS. Meredith, eyebrow raised, looks after him, before facing Kitty, almost accusingly.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

MEREDITH

So... A boyfriend. I thought you were married to that job of yours.

EVERETT

Tell us all about him!

As Kitty forces a smile, preparing for the onslaught...

TODD (PRE-LAP)

I really appreciate this, Jackson.

INT. BACK ROOM, ISIS FOUNDATION - LATER

With effort, TODD RICE carefully picks up his end of the room's circular table. Assisting is JACKSON HYDE. He's mid-20s, well built, with rugged good looks and only a sheen of hair on his near-shaved head.

He has a well-defined physique flattered by the fitted sleeveless shirt he wears. But what's eye-catching are the MATCHING THICK BLACK TATTOOS snaking all the way down both of his arms, ending at the back of his hands.

JACKSON

Happy to help. I was free, and I like to give back to the Foundation when I can. Where's Rebekah?

TODD

Our lovely receptionist has a meeting with her OB/GYN this morning. Turns out she finally got pregnant.

JACKSON

About time. How long have her and Phil been trying now?

TODD

Two years, and while I'm happy for her, unfortunately it leaves me shorthanded, especially with Angela out of town setting up the new Foundation branch in San Francisco.

JACKSON

Good thing I'm such a nice guy, then!

As they start setting up an array of fold-out chairs into a therapy circle, Todd can't help but stare, even though he's seen the tattoos quite a few times already. Noticing his smile, Jackson looks at him askance.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TODD

I'm proud of you, Jack. It's been, what, 3 years since you started with us? Back then, you wouldn't have dared to keep your arms bare.

JACKSON

(nodding)

It's a lot more comfortable too, no matter what I would wear, my tattoos would always itch so bad!

(beat)

I've never been very good at opening up to people. But I'm glad you're one of them.

TODD

Me too. I can imagine how hard it is to talk about the *other* stuff you can do.

JACKSON

(grins with mischief)

Sometimes it's easier to show than tell.

(laughs)

Of course, I scared a few people with how long I'm underwater for.

Todd grins in reply, the two men enjoying the jovial and easy bond between them. He surveys the finish set-up.

TODD

Done. Come on, let's grab something from the diner. My treat.

They head out of the back room, into the front reception area. Jackson picks up a thin jacket from one of the chairs against the wall, as Todd pulls the double door separating the two closed.

They fail to notice as the ENTRANCE DOOR opens just a crack. Neither are they aware of the GLOVED HAND extending in and gently tossing a SPHERICAL DEVICE onto the floor. Not until it starts beeping, faster and faster each second until--

ZZAP!! A WAVE OF CONCUSSIVE FORCE *explodes* outward! Both men are blasted back, as every window shatters, and furniture is knocked to the ground

What remains of the door is KICKED OPEN! Six individuals in ADVANCED STREAM-LINED ARMOR push in. They move with a fluid surety and swiftness indicative of skilled professionals.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

They each hold a sophisticated, sleek looking TASER RIFLE. The armor is top-of-the-line, dark black broken with lines of red. A gray opaque face-plate obscures their features.

The one in front steps forward, staring down at the two prone men. His suit has slightly different markings, identifying him as the TROOP LEADER.

TROOP LEADER
(digitally distorted)
Take them both. The other one could
prove useful.

OFF Todd's insensate form being lifted up, we...

BLACKOUT:

END OF TEASER

CONTINUED: (3)

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

EXT. ISIS FOUNDATION, MIDTOWN METROPOLIS - DAY

A METRO P.D. PATROL CAR is parked on the curb, alongside a large van marked with "CRIME SCENE UNIT". A beat-up CROWN VICTORIA is parked nearby. A lone PATROL OFFICER stands guard on the entrance to the building.

PULL BACK to reveal an BLACK SUV, parked up across from the Foundation building. One of the tinted windows is lowered, partially revealing the face of someone watching.

Thin-framed sunglasses help obscure their face, but it's clear that they intently focused on what's going on...

MAGGIE (PRE-LAP)

What've we got, people?

INT. FRONT AREA, ISIS FOUNDATION - CONTINUOUS

The smashed door lies in two halves on the floor, having been trampled over. Several CRIME SCENE TECHS collect evidence, as a determined Maggie makes her way inside.

Standing next to the small receptionist desk are RALPH DIBNY and PATRICIA TRAYCE. Seated at the table is a shell-shocked DAMON MATTHEWS. They all look up as Maggie approaches.

DIBNY

Todd's been abducted. There's also a civilian missing. A member of staff for the Foundation.

TRAYCE

It looks like it happened a couple of hours ago. Juanita's already working on confirming it with the building's security footage, but it's an old system, analog video recordings.

DAMON

(worried sick)

I-- I came by to see surprise him for lunch, my court date got rescheduled. When I saw the door, I called 911.

Maggie kneels down in front of Damon, forcing him to look at her. She rests a hand on his knee.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAGGIE
(determined)
We're going to get him back, Damon.
Count on it, okay?

Damon slowly nods, taking solace and hope from her words. Maggie stands, indicating for Dibny and Trayce to follow her as she steps away from Damon.

MAGGIE (cont'd)
(softly)
So, we're thinking this isn't pure
chance, are we?

TRAYCE
Hell no, not with the state of this
place. This was professional.

DIBNY
Do you think Todd was deliberately
taken?

MAGGIE
I'm not sure, but we can't rule it
out. It could be for any number of
reasons.

DIBNY
(unconvinced)
Todd doesn't have any enemies.

TRAYCE
That he knows of. Come on, L.T., he
works for the police, volunteers at a
support center for metahumans and is
dating an A.D.A.
(beat)
In someone's book, those could be
reasons enough.

MAGGIE
Trayce, do me a favor? Take Damon
home. He's in shock, worried and no
good to anyone in that state.

TRAYCE
(nods, understanding)
You got it.

She heads back over to Damon, and quietly converse with him for a moment before they both EXIT. Maggie turns to Dibny as this goes on, concern and worry playing across her face.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MAGGIE

Hell of a time for Danny to take a couple of personal days.

DIBNY

He did say he's available if we needed him, for an emergency. I think he'd agree this qualifies.

MAGGIE

(shakes head)

No. Danny hasn't taken a personal day in all his time with the department. If he wanted one now, he must have good reason.

(beat, frustrated)

Be nice to know what it is, though.

Off her distracted frown...

FADE TO:

INT. DANNY'S CAR, RESIDENTIAL AREA, BAKERLINE - DAY (LATER)

An unkempt, unshaven DANNY TURPIN sits in his parked sedan, staring out of his open window. He's sipping coffee from a thermos, but his gaze remains unwavering, focused on ONE HOUSE in particular.

It's a prim, proper, charmingly normal, the epitome of the all-American dream with a picket fence and manicured lawn. A few individual touches separate it from the cookie-cutter identical copies around it.

Danny sits a little straighter, as the door opens and his target finally steps out. It's WILLIAM GREAT EAGLE (from 2x05). He climbs into his station wagon, ignites the engine and drives off, heading off down into Metropolis proper.

Danny watches him go for a moment, before disposing of his coffee out the window, securing the thermos, then gunning his own engine. Once the car is in gear, he drives off, following behind a few car-lengths away...

INT. DAMON'S OFFICE, METROPOLIS COUNTY COURTHOUSE - LATER

Damon slowly sits down at his desk, staring forlornly at the copious piles of paperwork that need tending to. Through the open door, Trayce walks into the relatively spacious office carrying two cups of coffee.

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CONTINUED:

TRAYCE

(unsure)

You certain you don't want to go home?

DAMON

(resigned)

And do what? Worry endlessly about Todd? Call his sister and tell him he's been taken by persons unknown?

(shakes head)

No. The best thing for me to do is be here, catching up on paperwork, keep myself busy and distracted until we know something more.

(beat)

Then I'll worry.

She hands him one of the coffees. He takes a deep, grateful sip, leaning back into his leather chair. Trayce seats herself opposite him.

TRAYCE

Where is she? The sister?

DAMON

Jennifer? She's had to go back to Midway City to sort out getting her deposit back from her old apartment.

TRAYCE

Can I be honest?

(off his nod)

Maybe I've grown jaded over the years, but a long-lost sister? Turning up out of the blue, like she did? I'm surprised you're not a little dubious.

DAMON

(guarded)

What makes you think I'm not?

TRAYCE

(surprised)

I thought you liked her.

DAMON

I do, but that doesn't mean I'm ready to throw caution out the window. I just, I don't know, I want to believe she's on the level..

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

TRAYCE

(understanding)

But it does all seems a little too convenient, turning up just as he's recovering from what happened at Metro Central.

(checks watch)

I should be getting back to the precinct. I'll call you with any updates, okay?

DAMON

(nods)

Of course. Thanks, Trayce.

She offers him a sardonic salute as she stands and walks away. She stops at the doorway, indecision and concern waging war in her eyes, before turning back to Damon.

TRAYCE

Look, I don't want to put ideas into your head, or cause any problems, but if you have doubts, don't you think you should look into it?

DAMON

(uncertain)

I don't know. What if I don't find anything, and I just end up feeling guilty for not trusting her?

(beat, sighs)

Or worse, what if I do?

TRAYCE

If you don't find anything, no harm, no foul. But in my opinion, no one is squeaky clean, we all have skeletons in our closets.

(beat)

But it's your call, okay?

Conflicted, Damon considers his next move as Trayce EXITS...

EXT. 8TH PRECINCT, MIDTOWN METROPOLIS - LATE MORNING

Establishing shot of the S.C.U. HEADQUARTERS.

WALLY (PRE-LAP)

I've scoured everything we downloaded from the closest security cameras.

INT. S.C.U. SQUAD ROOM, 8TH PRECINCT - CONTINUOUS

The team (now including WALLY WEST) are gathered around the CENTRAL LAYOUT TABLE. On the OVERHEAD MONITOR ARRAY is CCTV footage of the Isis Foundation from various angles. It's being played at 2x speed, people and cars flying past.

WALLY
(disappointed)
Nada. Sorry, Cap.

MAGGIE
(sighs)
Not your fault, Wally. Do you have any good news, though?

WALLY
The CSU techs found something funky. Traces of sewer water on the floor of the Foundation office.

TRAYCE
Something sprung a leak?

WALLY
(shakes head)
This was untreated sewer water, not the stuff that comes out of a faucet. It was also found out on the corridor floor and the steps down into the basement.

DIBNY
The Foundation building does have an underground basement. Maybe that was how the abductors gained entry - through the sewer system?

PING! Wally picks up a COMPUTER TABLET from the table, reading something on the screen.

WALLY
The Foundation security footage has finally been converted and uploaded to our system.
(works device)
Give me a sec, I'll key it up on the screens.

Everyone looks up as the screens go BLACK for a moment. On each screen, an identical BLACK AND WHITE CAMERA VIEW of the corridor outside the Foundation office appears.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DIBNY
Nothing from inside the Foundation?

WALLY
Out of respect for patient privacy,
there are only cameras in the
corridors.

The footage plays, showing the empty corridor for a few moments - then sudden becomes obscured by BLURRY, INDISTINCT SHAPES.

MAGGIE
What the hell? Wally?

WALLY
(nonplussed)
I-- I'm not sure, Cap.

DIBNY
Is it a problem with changing from
analog to digital?

WALLY
(scrutinizing screen)
No, look. The effect isn't focused on
a particular area, it's moving.

They keep watching as the 'shapes' approach the door to the Foundation. After a moment, the door is smashed in, and the 'shapes' move into the office. They exit again momentarily - the bodies of TODD and JACKSON carried out by them.

WALLY (cont'd)
(realizing)
They're wearing some kind of stealth
tech, it's stops their image from
being recorded clearly. Kind of like
wearing a reflective material, but
way, way more advanced.

ETTA (O.S.)
I'm not surprised.

As one, the S.C.U. team turn to face the direction of the voice.

It comes from ETTA CANDY (30s, cocky and with a steely gaze that brokers no resistance). She wears a form fitting black body suit that accentuates her lithe figure. A gun at her hip and the A.R.G.U.S. logo on the suit's arms complete it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ETTA

Their employer can afford top-of-the-line merchandise.

Next to her, arms crossed, looking decidedly concerned is SPECIAL AGENT KING FARADAY.

FARADAY

We need to talk, Sawyer. Now.

Off Maggie's growing worry, realizing that the situation is by no means a simple kidnapping...

INT. REPAIR AREA, OLD METROPOLIS DOCKYARDS - CONTINUOUS

The large space is old, dusty and in a state of disrepair. The actual docking pit where ships would be moored is filled with dirty, brackish water filled with detritus.

On the small entry ledge, sat against a SUPPORT COLUMN, is a damp-looking TODD. Woozy, he starts to lean forward-- only to find his wrists bound by PLASTIC CABLE TIES, securing him to the piping around the base of the column.

Jolting upright, he frantically struggles against them--

JACKSON

(despondent)

I wouldn't bother.

Todd snaps around to see an equally-damp JACKSON secured to across column across from him. He lifts his own cable-tie-bound wrists. Thin streaks of BLOOD coat his wrists and the white plastic.

TODD

What the hell is going on?!

BUBBLES form on the surface of the dirty water. FOAM begins to froth, the water churning as *something emerges...*

JACKSON

(dreading)

I think we're about to find out.

A figure in an ARMORED SUIT rises from the depths. They climb up on to the entry ledge, coming to a stop, dripping water onto the deck. The armor is similar in design to the earlier troopers, but bulkier on the arms and shoulders.

The HELMET AREA differs, though. Instead of a face-plate, the wearer's head is fully encased in a large flat oval.

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CONTINUED:

Large RED 'EYES' give it a bug-eyed appearance, splitting the black top half from the silver lower half.

This is BLACK MANTA. He reaches up and presses down on a CONTROL on his collar. Part of his COLLAR releases and retracts down. He slowly removes his helmet...

...revealing a scarred, gaunt and weathered face, deep lines that carry many years of struggles etched into them. Manta carries himself with a certain pride and arrogance that is well earned.

He steps forward, focused exclusively on Jackson, ignoring Todd completely, who watches with fearful concern. Jackson glares angrily at Manta, as he kneels down in front of him. He studies the younger man's face, almost whimsical.

BLACK MANTA

(fondly)

Hello, son.

JACKSON

(bitterly)

Hello. *Father*.

Off Todd's complete astonishment at this bombshell...

BLACKOUT:

END OF ACT ONE

CONTINUED: (2)

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

INT. REPAIR AREA, OLD METROPOLIS DOCKYARDS - AS BEFORE

BLACK MANTA, a soft smile warming his features, stares into Jackson's defiant gaze.

BLACK MANTA
You look so much like your mother.
You have my eyes, though.

JACKSON
(seething)
Go to hell.

BLACK MANTA
(amused, proud)
And my stubborn streak, it seems.

He stands. The smile fades in an instant as he looks towards Todd with annoyance.

BLACK MANTA (cont'd)
I apologize for you being caught up
in this, Mr. Rice. Most unfortunate.

TODD
(surprised)
How do you know my name?

BLACK MANTA
(coyly)
I do my research.

JACKSON
Leave him out of this, Father. This
is between us, he's a good man.

BLACK MANTA
I'm very aware of that, 'Jackson'.
That's the name your using currently,
yes? I prefer to that *other* name.
(to Todd)
I gave my troopers orders to leave no
witnesses, but no unnecessary killing
either. So they brought you as well.

TODD
Gee, thanks for that.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BLACK MANTA

(coldly, unimpressed)

You should be. I am not a man known for his altruistic tendencies. It so happens I now have to set an example for my son, hence my merciful orders.

He works his CONTROL GAUNTLET. Seconds later, two TROOPERS enter from the access corridor outside onto the decking.

One of them, the TROOP LEADER, approaches, as the other one places down two GAS CANISTERS at the entrance.

TROOP LEADER

Sir?

BLACK MANTA

Have you secured the perimeter?

TROOP LEADER

Deployed them in Pattern Gamma, per your orders. I've also set up the fail-safe contingency.

BLACK MANTA

(nodding)

Excellent. Now, release Mr Rice and my son from their restraints.

TROOP LEADER

Sir? Is that wise?

BLACK MANTA

(fiercely)

What is 'wise' is following my orders, Lieutenant.

TROOP LEADER

(chastised, afraid)

Of course, sir.

The Troop Leader uses a SMALL BLADE extending from his wrist armor to cut them free. Todd scrambles to his feet, watched by the second trooper, Jackson stays seated,

TODD

Who are you?!

BLACK MANTA

(amused)

Most people call me 'Black Manta', but to you, Mr. Rice, I am the man who has your life in his hands.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Off Todd's realizing just much deep shit he is in...

MAGGIE (PRE-LAP)
What the hell is a 'Black Manta'?!

INT. MAGGIE'S OFFICE, S.C.U. SQUAD ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Maggie sits on the edge of her desk, arms crossed as she glares at Faraday and Candy stood in front of her.

MAGGIE
(unimpressed)
Sounds like the name of a wannabe
punk rock band.

FARADAY
He's the intelligence community's
best kept secret. A ocean-based
mercenary who sells his services to
the highest bidder. Terrorist
organizations get him to do the dirty
work they can't do.

ETTA
Last report, he was working for the
Royal Matriarch of Bialya. But now,
it seems he's gone rogue, and come to
Metropolis.

FARADAY
Sawyer, this is Henrietta Candy, on
detached duty from ARGUS.

MAGGIE
(derisive)
How does this concern your glorified
superhero clean-up squad? Or Todd?

ETTA
Normally that would be classified,
but my Director has authorized a
small number of people to be read in
on it in a limited fashion.
(snarky)
Congratulations, you're one of them.

MAGGIE
I'm all ears.

ETTA
It's not your man he wants. It's the
individual he was with at the time.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAGGIE
 (nodding)
 Jackson Hyde. Why? Because he's
 Manta's son?

ETTA
 (nods, evasive)
 For the most part.

MAGGIE
 (fuming)
 Dammit, Candy, if you're holding out
 on me, and it blows up in our faces,
 so help me--

BUZZ! Etta pulls out a CELL PHONE, frowning at the caller
 I.D.

ETTA
 (concerned)
 Excuse me, I have to take this.

Etta EXITS, leaving Faraday with a stressed-out Maggie. He
 watches with sympathy as she pinches the bridge of her nose
 in a vain effort to relieve her nervous tension.

MAGGIE
 I'm really getting sick of people I
 care about being abducted.

FARADAY
 It is rather oft-tread territory in
 our line of work, huh?

He puts a hand on Maggie's shoulder, offering his support.

FARADAY (cont'd)
 Todd's a survivor. He'll be okay.

MAGGIE
 (grim)
 He'd better be. For Manta's sake.

Off the determined set of her jaw...

EXT. TYLERCO BUILDING, BUSINESS DISTRICT - DAY (LATER)

From out of the revolving door into the building's reception
 lobby, step DR. BETH CHAPEL, alongside GREAT EAGLE. Beth is
 beaming with pride, and there's a spring in her step as they
 walk down the sidewalk.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GREAT EAGLE

You look like pleased with yourself.

BETH

(laughs happily)

So should you! The work we're doing with Rick-- I mean, Mr. Tyler-- it's really going to make a difference.

GREAT EAGLE

(nodding, grins)

You do have a point. It's nice to be working with someone who wants to do right not just by the city, but it's people too.

(beat, smirks)

Of course, he did seem to be enjoying the time spent with you more than me.

Beth, blushing, looks away, but her eyes twinkle with the knowledge that Great Eagle speaks the truth. They slow to a stop as they approach where Great Eagle's car is parked.

GREAT EAGLE (cont'd)

(unlocking car)

Anyway, I'm off to work, no rest for the wicked, as they say. You need a lift?

BETH

No, it's fine, I'm not on until later today. See you soon.

She watches as Great Eagle drives away, offering a wave before turning round--

--only to JOLT in surprise at the sight of DANNY standing in front of her,

BETH (cont'd)

(gasps, startled)

Good Lord, Danny! Don't do that!

DANNY

(straight to business)

William Great Eagle. You know him?

BETH

(confused)

Will? Yeah, he's a senior attending at MetGen, we're old friends. We work together on some of the inner city project committees. Why?!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DANNY

I think he's involved in something.

BETH

(appalled)

Something criminal?! No way, Danny. I know him, there's no way!

Undeterred, Danny pulls out a A4 FOLDED PHOTOGRAPH from his inner jacket pocket. He hands it to Beth, who, curious despite herself, opens it up. She stares at it, in *total disbelief!*

As she looks up at a grim-faced Danny, dread understanding in her eyes...

INT. REPAIR AREA, OLD METROPOLIS DOCKYARDS - DAY (LATER)

A pair of MANTA TROOPERS stand watch by the entrance, keeping guard on the door and their 'guests'.

Jackson, legs pulled up, his chin resting on his knees, has the weight of the world on his shoulders. Todd watches with worry, wondering if it's all getting too much for him.

TODD

You doing okay over there?

JACKSON

(sighs)

Not really, no. Can you blame me? I feel like everything I've worked hard to build here is crashing down on me.

(beat, sadly)

I never wanted to lie to you. I just-- I couldn't tell you everything, for your own good.

TODD

(dark laugh)

That didn't really work out, did it?

(sighs)

Who are you? Really?

JACKSON

It's a long story, really long. Ever since I found out who my biological father was, I've worked hard to distance myself from him. 'Jackson Hyde' may not be my birth name, but it's who I am now.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TODD

You know, if there's one person who can understand what it's like living with the legacy of your parents, it's me.

(beat)

When I found out who mine were, I has so many questions. I probably will never get all the answers as to why they gave me and my sister away.

JACKSON

It's different for me though, Todd. My questions were all answered, but those answers don't offer me any solace from the actions my so-called father has done.

(beat, distraught)

What's that expression, 'the sins of the father'? Fits me perfectly.

TODD

(confused)

What do you mean?

Off Todd's growing bewilderment, as a guilt-ridden, tearful Jackson turns away...

INT. MAGGIE'S OFFICE, S.C.U. SQUAD ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Etta walks back into the office, finishing her call up.

ETTA

That was one of my agents. Our asset on the ground has gone silent.

MAGGIE

(dubious)

'Asset'?

ETTA

Given the involvement of Manta, we called in a specialist of sorts, one with an interest in protecting Jackson and stopping Manta.

(beat, sighs)

Unfortunately he's a bit of a wild card. He was ordered to wait for back-up at his location, but I don't think he will.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAGGIE

Where is he?

ETTA

Last reported location was on the
move towards Hobbs Bay.

MAGGIE

(to Faraday)

You called Manta 'ocean-based', yeah?

FARADAY

That's right. Some people prefer to
fly, but Manta, has an advanced, well
armed, top-of-the-line submarine.

MAGGIE

(confident)

Then I know where he's going. There's
an abandoned drydock at the Old
Dockyards. It was shut down years ago
when the new harbor opened up. It
would make a perfect hiding place and
avoid any accidents from being too
near the busier MetroDock.

ETTA

Are you sure?

MAGGIE

(off-put)

This is my city, Candy. Trust me.

FARADAY

(to Etta)

I already have my agents on tactical
alert. I'll have them meet us at the
dockyards.

MAGGIE

(pissed, defiant)

Hey. You're not leaving me behind.
This is our man caught up in this,
we're going to help get him back.

Etta remains unconvinced. She looks to Faraday, who shrugs.

FARADAY

It's your call, Candy. But for what
it's worth, her people, they're good.

After a moment of indecision, Etta makes her decision. Off
her nod of acquiescence...

INT. REPAIR AREA, OLD METROPOLIS DOCKYARDS - AFTERNOON

Todd and Jackson both look up as Black Manta and the Troop Leader talk in hushed whispers. Something is going down. Manta turns and makes his way to them, an anxiousness about him now, as he approaches Jackson.

BLACK MANTA

(urgent)

We have very little time so let me be direct. You are my blood, no matter what may have happened to you. So, I offer you a choice. Join me. Take a place at my side, as it should be.

Jackson stares for a long moment. He SPITS viciously at Manta's feet. His face is twisted with ugly hatred.

JACKSON

Not a chance in hell. You are a cold-blooded murderer. You've killed hundred, if not thousands!

(shouts)

I want nothing to do with you!

BLACK MANTA

(sadly, resigned)

As I feared. You've been completely indoctrinated by those savages. But I owed your mother no less than to ask.

He stands, not a trace of emotion in his expression. Like stone. The Troop Leader, his taser rifle held at the ready, approaches at an rapid pace.

TROOP LEADER

Sir, we just lost contact with Delta Team. That's all perimeter teams out.

BLACK MANTA

(nods, prepared)

Have all remaining forces pull back to this area. On the double.

The Troop Leader nods, walking off as he works his suit-com, issuing the order. Manta takes a final look at Jackson. A fleeting wistfulness plays across his scarred face.

BLACK MANTA (cont'd)

When this is all over, remember I offered you something more.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Manta places his helmet back on. It locks back into place with a click, as a half dozen troopers make their way in...

EXT. ENTRY DRIVEWAY, OLD METROPOLIS DOCKYARDS - CONTINUOUS

A caravan of SUVs pull up and park. From them emerge a phalanx of D.E.O. Agents, accompanied by Faraday, Etta, Maggie, Dibny and Trayce. All wear KEVLAR-VESTS with their agency name, and have weapons drawn.

The D.E.O. Agents, on hand signals from Faraday, take the lead and head in, slow and steady.

TRAYCE

(unnerved)

Is it me, or is it too quiet?

MAGGIE

For the lair of a so-called super-villain, I would have expected more in the way of security.

Faraday, weapon raised, edges forward, casting a quick glance down a side alley between buildings. He freezes, and quickly motions the others over.

FARADAY

(points)

I think we just found it.

The others approach and look at where he's pointing. THREE MANTA TROOPERS lays insensate on the floor, helmets removed, all bound together in rope. An assortment of cuts and bruises shows they went down fighting...

INT. REPAIR AREA, OLD METROPOLIS DOCKYARDS - CONTINUOUS

The remaining Manta Troopers have assumed a defensive group stance, tasers up and aimed, not at the entrance, but the pool of brackish water. Behind them stands Black Manta. The air is tense with dread anticipation of the coming fight.

Across the room, Todd and Jackson huddle together. Watching. Waiting. Seconds ticking by slowly. Too slowly.

TROOP LEADER

(agitated)

What is he waiting for?! Why doesn't he just attack already?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BLACK MANTA

Patience. To panic is to let him win,
and we will not let him have--

His words die on his lips, as a LOOMING SHADOW is cast down from the above-head skylight. Across the water's surface is the silhouette of a MAN. Manta's gaze snaps up, the bug-eyes of his helmet glinting in the sun.

BLACK MANTA (cont'd)

(impressed)

He's on the roof! Open fire!

As the sky-light EXPLODES outward, glass raining down as the barrage of weapons fire destroys it...

EXT. REPAIR AREA, OLD METROPOLIS DOCKYARDS - CONTINUOUS

Weapons discharges echo through the building, loud enough to be heard outside. Quickly drawing the attention of the infiltrating D.E.O. and S.C.U. teams, and their ARGUS guest.

ETTA

Dammit! I knew he wouldn't wait!

She goes to charge forward, but Maggie grabs her by the shoulder, pulls her back.

MAGGIE

Going in half-cocked is a sure fire
way to get yourself dead, Candy!

ETTA

(desperate)

You don't understand, my asset, he's
too important for--

BOOM!! The CONCUSSIVE FORCE of the explosion knocks everyone to the floor! From the now-open doors, and every window, pours THICK WHITE GAS.

Maggie scrambles to her feet, eye wide with horror at the sight before her.

MAGGIE

(shocked, whispers)

Todd. Oh God.

From the smoke, TWO FIGURES slowly take shape. Weapons are quickly brought back up and aimed in the direction--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

--until TODD and JACKSON stumble out, coughing and blinded from the gas. Maggie lowers her weapon, runs forward.

MAGGIE (cont'd)
(frantic)
Don't shoot! They're friendlies!!

Dibny, Etta and Trayce quickly surge forward, helping the two former-abductees to their feet, and pulling them out of the line of fire, as the D.E.O. Agents keep their weapons aimed and ready.

TODD
(relieved)
Good to see you, Maggie.

MAGGIE
(thankful)
Likewise. What happened in there?

TODD
(shakes head)
No idea! Someone got them spooked, and came crashing in through the skylight. We made a break for it, next thing we knew, there was a great big bang and smoke was everywhere!

Trayce squints into the now-thinning cloud of smoke, and quickly pulls out and aims her weapons again.

TRAYCE
(warning)
Metropolis Police! Identify yourself!

Etta approaches, and gently lowers Trayce's weapon, much to her incredulity.

ETTA
(aggrieved)
Relax, Detective. This is my 'asset'.
Actually, I think you all may have met him already.

Everyone watches with stunned amazement at the unexpected sight of ARTHUR 'A.C.' CURRY standing in front of them. He wears the shredded remains of civilian clothes, revealing a skin-tight orange/green wet-suit underneath.

ARTHUR
(casually)
Hey guys. What's up?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Off his familiar cock-sure grin...

BLACKOUT:

END OF ACT TWO

CONTINUED: (3)

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

EXT. METROPOLIS GENERAL, DOWNTOWN METROPOLIS - AFTERNOON

Establishing shot of the building.

INT. EMERGENCY ROOM, METROPOLIS GENERAL - CONTINUOUS

TODD sits on a bed, fidgeting just enough to earn a look of reprimand from WILLIAM GREAT EAGLE. The doctor then shines a pen-light into Todd's eyes, before nodding with certainty.

MAGGIE (V.O.)

Todd and Jackson both check out okay.

As Todd slips of the bed, finally free, he looks up, beaming with pure joyful relief as DAMON runs up. They embrace each other warmly, tightly, happy that the other is there...

INT. CONTAINMENT AREA, S.T.A.R. LABS - AFTERNOON (LATER)

Under HEAVY GUARD, BLACK MANTA, devoid of armor, wearing just a simple form-fitting black wet-suit, is escorted into a cell. Weapons are trained firmly on him as he calmly sits down in the bunk, no hint of resistance.

TRAYCE and DIBNY watch as the door is closed and locked, and a S.T.A.R. Labs GUARD inputs a long code in to the KEYPAD. It lets out a shrill beep once secured.

MAGGIE (PRE-LAP)

I think it's time for some answers.

Off Manta's Zen-like calm, not a care in the world...

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM, S.C.U. SQUAD ROOM - CONTINUOUS

MAGGIE sits at the head of the table. Around from her sit FARADAY, ETTA and ARTHUR. Arthur is now wearing an outfit similar to Etta's, but in his distinct orange/green colors.

MAGGIE

First of all, why the hell is the King of Atlantis involved in this?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ETTA

As you may be aware, the United Nations and the Atlantean Kingdom are in a delicate state in negotiations that will cement future relations.

MAGGIE

I know it's been something that's been going on for years, ever since Atlantis was confirmed to be real, just after Contact.

ARTHUR

Having another planet so close didn't just mess up the surface world, it did a number on every Atlantean city as well. It took every bit of sweet talk I had to convince my people it was the right time to step up and reveal ourselves.

MAGGIE

That doesn't answer my question, uh-- what do I call you? 'Aquaman'? Your Highness? Mr. Curry?

ARTHUR

(laughs)

'A.C.' will do fine, really.

(beat, sighs)

In answer to your question, I'm here for two reasons. Jackson Hyde and Black Manta.

MAGGIE

Okay, I'm going to need more than that.

FARADAY

Manta is more than just a terrorist for hire. He's also the Atlantean version of Public Enemy No. 1.

ARTHUR

For the last couple of decades, Manta has made various attacks against Atlantean targets. Cities, colonies, our industrial sites. He hates all things Atlantean.

MAGGIE

Why?!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ARTHUR

That's a long, involved story that you probably won't believe.

MAGGIE

(undeterred)

Try me. But I'm guessing it has something to do with Jackson Hyde?

Off Arthur's nod of confirmation...

TODD (PRE-LAP)

So? You're half-Atlantean?

INT. BREAK ROOM, S.C.U. SQUAD ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Todd, Damon and JACKSON sit sipping hot coffees. The former two sit listening attentively as Jackson opens up finally.

JACKSON

Essentially, yes. My mother was from a small outlying village of Tritonis. She wandered out of bounds, and met a treasure hunter. My mother, she was skilled in magick, and used it so she could survive out of water. They fell in love, and in the end, had me.

DAMON

The treasure hunter? That was Manta?

JACKSON

Yes, but this is something I would not find out for years.

TODD

What happened to him? To your mother?

Jackson abruptly stands. He walks over to a window, looking out of it. Staring into his past.

JACKSON

They were exploring an ancient sunken ruin near Greece when they were caught between the Atlantean Army and creatures called Trenchers. Their sub was destroyed, and my mother went into labor early. One of the soldiers was an old friend of my mothers, she took her to the closest healers.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JACKSON (cont'd)

They were able to save me, but not her, and because of the magick she'd use to stay on the surface, I became what you see know. Not truly human, but not fully Atlantean either.

He holds up a hand, to show THIN WEBBING between his digits. ELECTRICAL ENERGY dances around them, then fades away.

TODD

(awed)

That's incredible. How did you find all this out?

JACKSON

Same as you, really. You have to understand, that even though not everyone in Atlantis looks entirely human, I've always felt different from those around me. That pushed me to search for answers.

DAMON

But how did you end up here?

JACKSON

(desperate)

Because of Manta! He-- he came looking for me, somehow he found out I was still alive. The death of my mother, it changed him, filled him with hate for anything Atlantean. He made it his mission to hunt me down, and burn anything in his way.

TODD

So, you came here, to the surface?

JACKSON

(nodding)

To hide in plain sight, as it were. He may be a hired mercenary, but Manta does not kill without reason.

(beat)

Unless you're Atlantean.

He looks out the window, the weight of the world pressing hard on his broad shoulders, as Damon and Todd slowly absorb everything they've just been told...

BETH (PRE-LAP)

(dumbfounded)

I can't get my head around this.

INT. BIBBO'S TAVERN - AFTERNOON (LATER)

BETH and DANNY sit at the bar, nursing drinks of their own. Beth's sits forgotten, as she shakes her head in denial.

BETH

You're going to have to run this by me again. You're being stalked..?

DANNY

(patiently)

By Charles Great Eagle, your friend William's son.

BETH

Why?!

DANNY

I have no idea! It's taken weeks to figure out who it was. The only reason we did was because William got caught on security footage with Charles. When we ran background on him, that's when we figured out who Charles was. Somehow, he's removed all traces of himself as an adult from online sources, and since he's not on the system, he didn't show up in standard searches.

BETH

(shakes head)

William, I've only known him a few months. He's never mentioned his son except when I saw a picture one time at his home.

(sighs)

He made it sound like they don't have the best relationship. He did say he was supposed to be studying at Ivy University. Forensic science.

DANNY

(angrily)

Yeah, I'm not really concerned with that, more the danger he presents to me and my family!

BETH

He's a kid, Danny! What kind of 'threat' could he be to you?!

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BETH (cont'd)

(sighs)

Look, you're not doing anyone any good stalking William in some kind of twisted payback.

DANNY

I needed to figure him out for myself, Beth. See if he could lead me back to Charles, end this finally. But given what you said, I don't think that will happen.

BETH

Then let's cut the crap and go see William.

(off his dubious look)

Look, I get you don't trust him, but you trust me, right? When it comes down to it, William is a fellow doctor, and I have to believe that he'd have no part in whatever it is Charles may or may not have planned.

Off Danny's uncertainty...

EXT. STREETS, DOWNTOWN METROPOLIS - AFTERNOON (LATER)

KITTY is sandwiched between her parents, as they make their way down the sidewalk.

EVERETT

You've been an excellent tour-guide, honey. You clearly love this city.

KITTY

It's an amazing place to live, Daddy.

MEREDITH

(pointedly)

That must be why you never come back to New York to visit, dear.

KITTY

My work keeps me very busy, Mother. You know that. Especially since I moved to Research and Development.

MEREDITH

Well, I'm just saying that work shouldn't be the sole focus of your life. You'll be forty soon enough.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

EVERETT

(rolls eyes)

Meredith, she's got plenty of time to think about the future!

(cautious)

But are you happy, darling? I mean, your science was what always drove you. Isn't this new position taking you away from that?

KITTY

It keeps me focused, Daddy. Yeah, sometimes I wish I could spend time on my own projects a little more, but I'm learning so much helping others.

(to Meredith)

I also know when to step back away from it, and just enjoy myself. Vinnie has helped a lot with that.

MEREDITH

(doubtful)

Yes. 'Vinnie'. He seems... *nice*.

EVERETT

(warning)

Meredith.

MEREDITH

What? Don't you think it's strange that Kitty's not even mentioned him in her phone calls? E-mails?

KITTY

(defensive)

I-- I just wanted to enjoy what we have, Mother.

MEREDITH

Yes, you never really have had much luck with relationships with boys in the past, have you? Are you sure this one will stick?

KITTY

I hope so. Vinnie gets me, know how I think. He makes me-- makes me feel 'normal'.

Meredith halts, staring at Kitty with outright disbelief.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MEREDITH
(condescendingly)
But, darling. You're *not* normal.

EVERETT
(quickly)
What your mother means to say, is that you're special. The work you're doing, it will change the world. What about his?

KITTY
Vinnie runs his own business, Daddy. He might even be Mayor of Metropolis in a few months time. He's very important.

MEREDITH
(amused)
Darling, men like that don't date girls like you. They date supermodels or actresses. Not scientists.

Kitty's eyes flash with hurt at her mother's callous words. She should be used to this kind of talk, but it still cuts deeply every time.

She looks away, but her gaze comes across one of Vinnie's Mayoral CAMPAIGN POSTERS. She seems to draw strength and courage from the image. Fierce pride replaces her pain, as she turns back to her mother.

KITTY
(defiant)
Mother, I'm pushing the frontiers of knowledge in new and amazing ways. I'm on the cutting edge of science and I wouldn't change that for anything. But Vinnie doesn't care about all that. He loves me. For *me*.

MEREDITH
Of course he does, darling.

BUZZ! Meredith pulls out her cell phone, her face lighting up with an actual genuine smile, opposed to her previous false one.

MEREDITH (cont'd)
Oh! It's Ivanka, she has a new book coming out soon. I won't be a moment.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

Meredith casually wanders off, chatting amicably on the cell. Kitty visibly grits her teeth, clenching her fists so tight the knuckles are bone-white.

Everett's hand on her shoulder seems to calm her somewhat.

EVERETT

She really does mean well, Kitty. You know that, don't you.

KITTY

(sighs)
Deep down, yeah.
(beat, snarky)
Way, way, deep down, sure.

EVERETT

(curious)
So, tell me more about this Vinnie fellow. How serious are things?

KITTY

(happier, smiles)
We're still getting to know each other, but I really like him, Daddy.

EVERETT

You said he loves you, baby. Do you feel the same.

After a split-second of hesitation, Kitty nods, eyes lighting up with this understanding.

EVERETT (cont'd)

(proud, pleased)
That's good enough for me. We should go out to dinner, talk properly.

KITTY

He's already made reservations at Bravado's, one of the city's best.

EVERETT

(puts arm around her)
Excellent, excellent. Now, don't worry about your mother. I'll make sure she plays nice, okay?

Off Kitty's growing smile, as they walk down the sidewalk...

INT. LIVING/KITCHEN AREA, TODD'S APARTMENT - LATER

Todd and Damon walk in, shrugging off jackets as they walk up to the kitchen counter. Damon drops his shoulder bag onto the counter, before looking back at a tired Todd.

DAMON

(anxious)

Do you want anything? Tea, Coffee?
Something to eat? I can order in from
your favorite place? What are you in
the mood for?

Smiling, Todd wraps his arms gently around Damon's neck, giving him a quick peck on the lips.

TODD

What I'd like is for my boyfriend to
stop fussing, and treating me like an
invalid.

DAMON

(smiles contritely)

Sorry, I just want to make sure that
you're okay.

TODD

I'm fine, Damon. No lasting effects
from that gas, besides a sore throat.

DAMON

(cheekily)

I know something that will help.

He leans in and gently kisses Todd's throat seductively. Todd immediately melts at the touch, angling his head back to allow Damon full access.

TODD

(sexily)

Hmm, I don't know if it's working,
you might need to keep at it.

Damon does as instructed, his lips moving down Todd's throat--

--before abruptly pulling back, part-coughing, part-gagging. He wrinkles his nose in revulsion, much to Todd's ire.

TODD (cont'd)

Uh, okay, way to spoil the mood.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DAMON

(laughs)

I'm sorry, I'm sorry! It's just, well... You smell like a storm drain!

Todd frowns, lifts his arm, sniffs it. *Recoils in disgust.*

TODD

(shudders)

Oh my God. I reek! Urgh! I need a shower, like right now.

(seductively)

Wanna scrub my back?

DAMON

(amused)

How about I order food, because I doubt either of us has actually eaten today. Okay? You, go shower.

He turns Todd around and aims him for the bathroom. He slaps Todd's posterior playfully, watching as Todd starts undoing his shirt as he EXITS.

Damon opens up and searches his bag, but instead of pulling out his cell, he pulls out a THIN MANILA FOLDER. His smile is replaced by a concerned frown, as he opens it.

CLOSE ON: A MUG-SHOT of a younger JENNIFER HAYDEN-LYNN, looking very punk rock and angry at the world in general.

Off Todd closing the folder and shoving it back into his bag, a secret weighing heavily on his mind...

INT. MAGGIE'S OFFICE, S.C.U. SQUAD ROOM - AFTERNOON (LATER)

Maggie watches intently as Etta talks into her cell phone in a hushed voice, a short distance away. Unwrapping a stick of gum next to her is Faraday.

FARADAY

She may not be warm and cuddly, but she's someone to have in your corner.

MAGGIE

Why do I think that's probably how you described me to her?

FARADAY

(grins)

You are very alike in some ways. How were the Mayor and the Commissioner?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAGGIE

Unhappy to find out that A.R.G.U.S had been running a secret WitSec program in the city. More so that a world-class terrorist is now in secure lock-up. But Berkowitz's got people to handle any media fallout.

FARADAY

That's something. Although my guess is that A.R.G.U.S. could handle that too.

MAGGIE

Let's leave this in-house, so to speak, for now, okay?

FARADAY

I'm sorry I couldn't bring you in before Todd got caught up in it all.

MAGGIE

(sighs)

I don't like it, but I understand it.

She gestures to the sight of Arthur sitting with Jackson, a group of DETECTIVES (including Trayce and Dibny) and several PATROL OFFICERS all talking animatedly in the bull-pen. Lots of grandiose arm waving and amazed laughter.

MAGGIE (cont'd)

Involving the ceremonial monarch of a large non-aligned nation state? I can see why it was kept quiet.

(beat, grins)

Not that he seems bothered by it.

Faraday matches Maggie's grin with one of her own, popping the gum into his mouth, as Etta steps back.

ETTA

My Director agrees with avoiding moving Manta for now. He still has loyal troops out there we haven't taken down yet.

MAGGIE

S.T.A.R. Labs' containment cells are designed to handle metahumans of various persuasions. It can handle Manta for now.

(indicates Jackson)

What about him?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ETTA

Jackson? It's up to him. With Manta in custody, he doesn't have to go back into hiding. He can go back to Atlantis, resume his life there. Or maybe he'll stay in Metropolis. Whatever he decides, A.R.G.U.S. will do what it can to--

TRAYCE (O.C.)

(panicked)

Someone call 911!!

The three of them snap around to look into the bull-pen--

--where Jackson is FLAT ON THE GROUND, *convulsing!* As one, they rush out and make their way over. Trayce, on her knees next to Jackson, is trying vainly to hold him steady as she turns him on his side.

Everyone stares as Jackson's TATTOOS suddenly BEGIN TO GLOW BRIGHT BLUE! Arthur immediately pulls Trayce back - just as SPARKS begin to emit from Jackson's twitching body.

TRAYCE

What the hell?

ARTHUR

He's losing control, stay back, everyone!

They watch helplessly, as Jackson continues to fit. BLOOD is coming from his nose and ears.

Suddenly overcome with a *wave of dizziness*, Arthur stumbles. Dibny manages to brace him, but struggles with effort.

Maggie, wide-eyed, stares at the TRICKLE OF BLOOD that is now coming out of Arthur's nostril.

As they realize just how bad things are becoming...

BLACKOUT:

END of ACT THREE

CONTINUED: (3)

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

EXT. S.T.A.R. LABS, MIDTOWN METROPOLIS - LATE AFTERNOON

Establishing shot of the building. A new feature has been added - several LARGE LCD SCREENS attached to the outer walls. They play PROMOTIONAL MATERIAL on a continuous loop.

INT. AQUATIC LAB, S.T.A.R. LABS - CONTINUOUS

JACKSON HYDE floats inside a large CYLINDRICAL WATER TANK - think Luke's bacta tank from "Empire Strikes Back". Most of his face is obscured by a HI-TECH OXYGEN MASK.

An ARRAY OF MONITORS nearby display his vital signs - heart rate, EEG, blood pressure. Several white-clad S.T.A.R. Labs staff keep a watchful eye on them. One is KITTY FAULKNER.

KITTY (PRE-LAP)

They've been poisoned.

Off her deep concern...

INT. MEDICAL WARD, S.T.A.R. LABS - MOMENTS LATER

ARTHUR CURRY, awake and alert but looking pale and tired, lies shirtless on a bed. Various sensors attached to his chest, head and arms hook him up to the bed's LCD MONITOR SCREENS.

Standing at the end of the bed are Kitty, MAGGIE, ETTA and FARADAY.

KITTY

By something I've never seen before.
An odd chemical I've isolated in both
blood samples.

(to Arthur)

You said there was some kind of gas?

ARTHUR

Yeah. Manta called for the 'fail-safe
protocol', or something.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KITTY

(nodding)

That was probably how you were exposed to it. The gas was probably an agent to carry the poison.

ETTA

Can you cure them?

KITTY

Not without understanding what was used better. It's a deliberately engineered chemical, not something we would have a cure for in stock.

FARADAY

(to Maggie)

Did your CSU teams recover any of the gas canisters from the Old Dockyards?

MAGGIE

Give me a few minutes, I'll find out.

As she pulls out her cell phone and makes the call, Etta shakes her head.

ETTA

Manta did this. He may not have made it himself, but Manta's no fool, either.

Off Etta's determined, hard glare...

WALLY (PRE-LAP)

How's it going, Cap?

INT. FORENSICS FACILITY, 8TH PRECINCT - MOMENTS LATER

WALLY, DIBNY and TRAYCE stand by the lab's audio/visual area. On the LARGE MONITOR are Maggie and Kitty - a banner under them declares "VIDEO CALL, S.T.A.R. LABS ONLINE".

MAGGIE

(over computer)

Not good, Wally. According to Candy, A.R.G.U.S. is already familiar with this bio-weapon. Apparently, an Atlantean colony was attacked, and everyone killed a few weeks ago.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KITTY

(over computer)

I have a theory, but it's not good news.

TRAYCE

Lay it on us, Doc.

KITTY

I think this chemical is attacking the particular DNA strands that make Atlanteans what they are.

DIBNY

What do you mean?

KITTY

Okay, so Atlanteans are basically human, right? It's just a few different DNA sequences that have adapted to live underwater.

WALLY

But weren't they changed by magick?

KITTY

Magick, or just advanced genetic re-sequencing, who knows? However it was done, it's all the same thing.

WALLY

We've recovered a couple of the gas canisters from Evidence Storage, Cap. They're on their way to you now.

Off Maggie's nod...

INT. CONTAINMENT AREA, S.T.A.R. LABS - CONTINUOUS

Under HEAVY GUARD, BLACK MANTA calmly sits on his bunk. He wears a knowing, arrogant smile. Watching it from nearby is Etta, staring daggers at the captured terrorist.

ETTA

(coldly)

Tell me what you know.

Manta remains silent for several seconds, before he starts laughing. A cold, dark laugh, dripping with sadism.

BLACK MANTA

You want *my* help?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ETTA

It's not just Aquaman. Your son,
Jackson, is dying as well.

BLACK MANTA

(sneers)

You think to save my son, I would
also save the man who leads the
people who took my child from me?

(shakes head)

How little you know me. My son was
lost to me from the moment of his
birth. I entertained a fantasy that I
am now thankfully free of.

(coldly)

He made his choice. He can die with
his beloved 'King Orin'.

Off his casual disregard for his own blood...

INT. MAINTENANCE AREA, UNDERNEATH S.T.A.R. LABS - CONTINUOUS

The door opens, and a BLUE-UNIFORMED SECURITY GUARD walks
in, using his FLASHLIGHT to illuminate his way.

GUARD #1

(into radio)

Why did I get stuck with this job?

GUARD #2

(over radio, laughs)

Comes with being the new guy. Just
make it quick, that chick in the
black leather is kicking up a right
stink about us 'doing our jobs'.

GUARD #1

Yeah, yeah, I'll check back in 5.

He closes the channel, carelessly and quickly moving the
flashlight's beam around the room. He's not exactly the most
diligent of employees as he glances around.

The GLINT OF METAL where it shouldn't be on the floor gets
his attention. He meanders over, curiosity piqued as he
finds an OPEN SEWER GRATE, it's discarded cover next to it.
He peers down the dark hole for a brief moment--

-- only to see an armor-clad MANTA TROOPER hiding in the
darkness!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GUARD #1 (cont'd)
(recoils, grabs radio)
Holy s--!

A PAIR OF HANDS grabs either side of his head, and with a sick SNAP, break his neck. The guard's limp body collapses instantly to the floor, revealing ANOTHER TROOPER...

INT. LOWER CORRIDOR, S.T.A.R. LABS - CONTINUOUS

Three BLUE-UNIFORMED SECURITY GUARDS, your typical 'Mall Cops' hired by S.T.A.R. Labs itself, stand around, looking bored. All they need is some donuts and coffee. None notice the slight opening of the doorway at the end of the hall.

PFPT! PFPT! PFPT!

They silently drop to the floor, dead. Each of them sports an identical BLEEDING BULLET HOLE in the middle of their forehead.

A SIX-MAN TEAM of Troopers emerge from the doorway, moving with the same precision as seen earlier. Taking point is the TROOP LEADER. He uses military-style gestures to direct his men into position...

INT. RECEPTION LOBBY. S.T.A.R. LABS - CONTINUOUS

EVERETT sits, casually flicking through an edition of the "Daily Planet", while MEREDITH angrily paces. The ding of the ELEVATOR draws her gaze, and she glares at Kitty as she exits.

MEREDITH
Finally! Your father and I have been
sitting here for over an hour!

KITTY
(cowed)
I-- I'm sorry, Mother. But I did tell
you that I'm on call for emergencies.
They needed me.

EVERETT
We understand that, darling, really.

MEREDITH
Oh, stop it, Everett! She's doing
what she always does, putting 'work'
ahead of her family.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KITTY

(pissed)

What is that supposed to mean?

MEREDITH

Oh come on, Kitty, sweetie. How many times when you were growing up did I try to get you to engage with other children? All those events I took you too? But no, all you ever did was sit in a corner reading.

(sighs)

I just wish you could have been a bit more like other girls that age.

Kitty's eyes sparkle with TEARS. But her anxiety is burned away with a fiery anger that her mother's words ignites.

KITTY

You're right, Mother. I'll never be like other girls, I'm not 'normal', wasn't that what you said earlier?

(beat, proud)

Well, screw 'normal'!

Meredith gapes. Kitty has NEVER spoken to her like that before. She doesn't know how to react.

KITTY (cont'd)

Do you understand why they called me? Because I am the leading expert in advanced biochemistry, not just in this city, but the whole damn world! One of the men I'm treating commands the largest army this world has ever seen. I'm doing everything I can to keep him alive, and that's all because of who I was. Who I am.

Kitty glares at her shocked mother. Everett, hooked on the exchange, watching with baited breath, bursts with pride as Kitty finally tells Meredith off, like he never could.

KITTY (cont'd)

(calmer)

You may not have the daughter you wanted, but you do have one that deserves your respect. You owe me that much at least.

Meredith, eyes wide as saucers, slowly nods, finally closing her mouth. Satisfied, Kitty nods once in acknowledgment.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

KITTY (cont'd)

I'm going to be here a while, so I'll
arrange a car to take you to your
hotel.

She turns on her heel and walks towards the reception desk.
Meredith slowly lowers herself into the seat next to
Everett, studiously ignoring his gaze...

INT. SECURITY ROOM, LOWER LEVELS, S.T.A.R. LABS - CONTINUOUS

A stoic Etta stands in front of the ARRAY OF SCREENS that
displays camera-feeds throughout the building. She remains
focused on them as Maggie walks in, holding two S.T.A.R.
Labs coffee mugs, steam rising from them both.

MAGGIE

I figured you might need the pick me
up, and you strike me as someone who
doesn't care from cream or sugar.

Maggie proffers her one of the mugs. After a brief moment of
hesitation, Etta takes it, sipping gratefully. She grimaces.
Maggie looks at her askance.

ETTA

(smiles softly)

Actually, I have quite a sweet tooth.
But I appreciate it anyway.

They enjoy their coffee in silence for a moment, each woman
keeping a watchful eye on the activity on the screens.

MAGGIE

So, what makes a former military
intelligence officer join up with
A.R.G.U.S.?

ETTA

(impressed)

I wanted to work with the people who
make a difference to the world.

MAGGIE

That's how you see the capes?

ETTA

Not at first. Not until I was caught
up in a mission that went totally
FUBAR. I almost died, but this woman
came out of nowhere and saved me.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ETTA (cont'd)

(beat)

That's when I realized how much the world had changed and that there are some things that us regular folks can't handle. Sometimes we need someone who's a little bit super, or terrific, or even *wonderful*.

MAGGIE

Amen to that.

She raises her mug, and they toast. To Superheroes--

--just as every screen goes DEAD. Off their reactions...

INT. CONTAINMENT AREA, S.T.A.R. LABS - CONTINUOUS

Manta sits, eyes closed, in a lotus position, meditating. ARMED D.E.O. AGENTS stand alongside more S.T.A.R. Labs guards. No chances are being taken.

Faraday, leaning against the wall near the elevator doors, chewing gum silently, watches Manta with curiosity. He turns as the door open, and a HEAVYSET GUARD exits, looking around for a moment, until he sees Faraday.

GUARD #2

(concerned)

Uh, excuse me, Agent Faraday, but you said to mention if there anything odd happened, right?

(off his nod)

Well, I can't reach several of our guys. They're not answering my calls.

Frowning, Faraday casts an uneasy glance towards Manta - who now sits with his eyes open, wearing an 'I know something you don't know' smile.

FARADAY

(realizing)

Oh, crap...

BOOM! An explosion BLASTS the stairwell door off it's hinges, knocking down the closest D.E.O. Agents. They're easy picking for the hail of bullets that pours forth. It cuts assorted agents and guards down in seconds.

Thinking fast, Faraday DIVES into the open elevator, tackling the Guard as he does. They hit the ground hard, bullets hitting the back wall, before Faraday is able to slap the FLOOR CONTROLS, closing the door...

INT. SERVICE ELEVATOR, S.T.A.R. LABS - CONTINUOUS

The elevator rocks, both as it moves up, and the continuing bullet impacts. Faraday breathes a sigh of relief - until he notices his hand is COVERED IN BLOOD. He turns to see the open, dead stare of the Guard, bloody holes in his chest.

FARADAY
(whispered, regretful)
Damn it.

His guilt-ridden expression vanishes when a LOUD KLAXON begins blaring! Seconds later, the elevator JERKS to a grinding halt, and the lights die!

As the RED emergency lighting kicks in, Faraday looks around with wariness, taking stock of his options...

INT. CONTAINMENT AREA, S.T.A.R. LABS - CONTINUOUS

Bodies litter the floor. Blood is splattered and streaked across every surface. The Troop Leader approaches the cell where Manta now stands. Waiting for imminent freedom.

Ignoring the alarm and lighting, the Troop Leader gestures, ordering two of his men to approach the reinforced Plexiglas barrier. One pulls out a small ELECTRONIC LOCK DECODER and hooks it up to the entry controls.

As that trooper works, the other pulls off the large HARD-SHELL CASE strapped to his back. He gently lays it on the floor, and presses a release catch. The trooper stands and presents the freed Manta with his HELMET.

As Manta coldly smiles...

INT. SECURITY ROOM, LOWER LEVELS, S.T.A.R. LABS - CONTINUOUS

Maggie and Etta both check their weapons.

MAGGIE
We do need to get moving. That alarm, it means the buildings emergency lock-down has kicked in. No lights, no elevators, priority systems only.

ETTA
I'll head to the containment area.
You head to the medical ward.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

 ETTA (cont'd)
 (off her dubious look)
We need to make sure both Manta and
Arthur are secure, it'll be quicker
to do if we split up.

Maggie reluctantly nods, They carefully open the door, and head out into the corridor...

INT. CORRIDOR, LOWER LEVELS, S.T.A.R. LABS - CONTINUOUS

The two women carefully and quietly make their way down the corridor. They reach the t-junction at it's end, quickly checking the way is clear. With hand signals, Etta motions for Maggie to head one way, herself another.

They split up, each heading to opposite ends of the corridor. Etta reaches hers, the closer of the two, first--

-- just as a Manta Trooper turns the corner! Etta quickly FIRES, but her bullets bounce off the trooper's armor! She discards her weapon, and lashes out with a FIERCE KICK!

Maggie, now at the door marked "STAIRWELL ENTRANCE", spins around, weapon raised. She can only watch as the Trooper and Etta engage in close combat for several seconds until Etta takes a blow to the head. She crumples to the floor, dazed.

She looks up, woozy but coherent, eyes locking with Maggie.

 ETTA
Go, Sawyer! Now!

Conflicted, Maggie falters for a moment... but only a moment. She turns and heads through the door and up the stairs.

Etta slowly sits up and turns to face the barrel of the rifle the Trooper now has aimed straight at her head. Off her defiant, unwavering glare...

INT. RECEPTION LOBBY. S.T.A.R. LABS - CONTINUOUS

The staff are making their way out of the main entrance, Kitty ushering them out.

 KITTY
 (shouting)
Please, everyone, please remain calm.
Wait outside by the assembly point,
okay.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Once all the staff are clear, Kitty heads over to where her parents sit, wide-eyed and fearful.

EVERETT

Kitty, what's going on?!

KITTY

I don't know, Daddy, but it's not good. Just stick close and follow me!

A SCREAM from Meredith cuts through the alarm's noise. Kitty spins around as the armor-clad Manta leads his TROOPERS into the lobby. With them, bruised, bloody but alive, is Etta.

The Troopers quickly train their weapons on what is now the trio of hostages in front of them.

BLACK MANTA

My apologies. I must insist you all stay exactly where you are.

As Kitty, Meredith and Everett cower in the face of the danger standing right in front of them...

BLACKOUT:

END OF ACT FOUR

CONTINUED: (2)

ACT FIVE

FADE IN:

INT. RECEPTION LOBBY. S.T.A.R. LABS - AS BEFORE

Kitty and her parents sit on the floor against a far wall, clutching at each other. Several Manta Troopers patrol, keeping their weapons ready.

BLACK MANTA stands at the reception lobby's main desk, watching as two of his Troopers work the computer, seemingly with little success. He leaves them to their work, as he stalks towards a bound ETTA.

BLACK MANTA

How do I access the security system?

Etta simply GLARES at him with a snide smile. She's not in a cooperative mood.

Manta, loosing patience, grabs her by the hair, and pulls her up. He raises his other arm. The armor retracts, and a WICKED-LOOKING BLADE slides out! He holds it to her throat.

BLACK MANTA (cont'd)

If you won't talk, then your use to me is done.

KITTY (O.C.)

Stop!

Manta slowly turns his helmeted gaze toward KITTY, who has jumped to her feet. Meredith and Everett look at her like she's lost her mind!

KITTY

(nervously)

She-- she doesn't know anything, but I do. So, just let her be, and I'll help you.

Manta gestures, and the two closest Troopers move on, pulling Kitty away from her frantic parents. Everett jumps to his feet--

EVERETT

Kitty, no!

-- only to get a rifle butt to his STOMACH! He doubles over, gasping for breath. Meredith screams in fear.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KITTY
 (terrified)
 Daddy!
 (to Manta, panicked)
 Stop it, I'm helping you!

With a wave of his hand, Manta orders the trooper off. Meredith tends to her winded husband, as Kitty is pushed towards the waiting Manta.

MANTA
 You know how I am?

KITTY
 (nods)
 You have to promise me you'll not hurt anyone here. Please?

Manta simply stares at her. But when he replies, we can hear the sadistic smile.

BLACK MANTA
 I do not make promises I may not be able to keep. But rest assured, if I think for one moment you're working against me, I will do more than *hurt* them. Starting with your 'daddy'.

Off the escalating fear in Kitty's eyes...

EXT. S.T.A.R. LABS, MIDTOWN METROPOLIS - CONTINUOUS

Pedestrians quickly move out of the way as a S.W.A.T. VAN and several PATROL CARS pull up to the curb, disgorging uniformed OFFICERS and plainclothes DETECTIVES alike. All wear KEVLAR VESTS and carry weapons.

An unmarked sedan arrives last, and DIBNY and TRAYCE emerge, ready for battle.

DIBNY
 Secure the perimeter, clear the area of civilians. You know the drill.

Trayce stares up at the building as the confused staff milling around are lead out of the way to relative safety.

TRAYCE
 (quietly, dubious)
 Wanna bet this isn't related to Manta being there?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DIBNY

Not a chance. Good thing we set up that alert system between S.T.A.R.'s computers and our own.

TRAYCE

(unimpressed)

Not that we actually have any clue what's going down in there.

He cautiously approaches, studying the DARK DISPLAY SCREENS. He stops as the screens come alive with STATIC, which is quickly replaced by the visage of Manta. The large bug-eyes of his helmet glow red.

BLACK MANTA

(on monitors, echoes)

Attention. This is Black Manta. I have a group of hostages that I can have killed in a moment's notice.

Off Dibny and Trayce's dismayed reactions...

INT. CORRIDOR, UPPER LEVELS, S.T.A.R. LABS - CONTINUOUS

MAGGIE slowly heads down the empty corridor, senses on high alert. On the wall-screens that are dotted all down the corridor, Manta continues with his spiel, as Maggie spares it a brief, disgusted glance.

BLACK MANTA

These peoples' lives mean nothing to me, but I know that they mean something to you, 'your Majesty'. So I will make it simple. Surrender to me within the next ten minutes, or the killing will continue.

The transmission ends. The screen goes BLACK.

FOOTSTEPS ahead pull her attention away, and freeze in place, as she aims her weapon towards the junction ahead of her. Determined, her finger start to squeeze the trigger--

--as FARADAY appears, his own weapon drawn and aimed at her. Both react at the sight of the other, lowering weapons.

Her relief gives way to concern at the sight of BLOOD smeared all over his shirt and hands. He notices her gaze.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FARADAY

(grimly)

It's not mine.

(beat)

Candy?

MAGGIE

(shakes head)

I don't know. Come on, the medical ward is one level up.

As they head back down the corridor...

INT. MEDICAL WARD, S.T.A.R. LABS - MOMENTS LATER

ARTHUR struggles as he slips of his bed. His skin is still pale and covered in a sweaty sheen, but he ignores his weakness as he pulls off sensors attached to him. He looks up as Faraday and Maggie walk in.

MAGGIE

Going somewhere?

ARTHUR

You heard that psycho. I need to get down there before he kills someone.

FARADAY

He already did! What makes you think he'll keep his word.

ARTHUR

I can't just do nothing, goddammit! If I sit back and let innocent people get murdered, how am I supposed to be the bridge between Atlantis and the surface.

MAGGIE

How can you do anything if Manta kills you? Look, you can barely stand right now, let alone defend yourself.

ARTHUR

I don't have a choice. I have to go.

Maggie and Faraday share a look. There's no talking him out of this. Maggie reluctantly nods- then her gaze is drawn to something on the ceiling. *An idea forms.*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAGGIE

How much do we know about that armor
Manta and his guys wear?

FARADAY

A fair amount. Why?

MAGGIE

We need a plan to take them down, and
I have an idea.

Off her conspiratorial smile...

INT. RECEPTION LOBBY. S.T.A.R. LABS - LATER

Trooper raise their rifles as Arthur, head held high, walks in as much royal bearing as he can muster. The toxin is clearly taking it's toll on him. His uniform is stained with perspiration, and each breath is ragged and drawn.

ARTHUR

Manta! You wanted me? Well, here I
am! Show yourself!

BLACK MANTA (O.C.)

My, my, my.

Arthur turns to face the approaching Manta, who holds onto Kitty's arm with an iron grip, dragging her along. She's terrified, but valiantly trying not to show it.

BLACK MANTA

You're looking a little pale, 'my
King'. Not feeling well, are we?

The closest Trooper roughly pushes Arthur with enough force to force him to the floor in his weakened state. He glowers up at Manta.

BLACK MANTA (cont'd)

(shakes head)

This is Atlantean royalty? Pathetic.

ARTHUR

Let her go, Manta. Let them all go. I
give myself up to you, willingly.
This doesn't have to get any worse.

BLACK MANTA

I'm in control here, remember?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The troopers slowly approach, surrounding Manta and Arthur. One takes Kitty from Manta and places her with a relieved Meredith and Everett.

ARTHUR

You're no idiot, Manta. You know by now that this place is surrounded. You're not getting away.

BLACK MANTA

I am right where I want to be, with you at my feet, at my mercy. I will enjoy this.

With lightning speed, Manta STRIKES Arthur hard across the face, sending him sprawling to the ground. He spits out blood, dazed.

ARTHUR

Attacking a man when he's already down? I thought you considered yourself a man of honor?

BLACK MANTA

You do not deserve it!

He lashes out with a KICK, catching Arthur in the chest. Arthur rolls with the impact, coughing up more blood, as he gingerly touches what is undoubtedly several cracked ribs.

Manta closes in, and attempts to kick him again, but this time Arthur blocks it. He pushes Manta off-balance, using the time to get to his feet, wobbly but defiant.

ARTHUR

Old school, huh? Bring it on!

Manta lunges forward, and two exchange vicious, no-holds-barred blows. Despite his best efforts, the exhausted Arthur is no match for Manta.

An unarmed Trooper enters from the corridor, and approaches Etta, Kitty and her parents. They kneel down, reaching up to touch their face-plate. It retracts - to reveal Faraday!

He puts a finger to his lips, before re-activating the face-plate. Then, he silently ushers the four of them towards the entrance he just came through. Manta and his other troopers are so focused on the fight, none of them notice.

But Arthur does. His cocky grin returns. He stands, barely. Faces down Manta.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ARTHUR (cont'd)

That the best you got, pal? Come on,
my wife punches harder then that.

Manta advances again, landing blow after blow, until Arthur,
bloody and beaten, drops to the ground.

MANTA

With your death, I will rip the heart
out of the Atlantean 'people'. They
will be easy pickings without their
beloved leader!

MAGGIE (O.C.)

Not on my watch, you bastard.

Manta and his troopers turn, raising their weapons to see
Maggie standing behind them, having approached unnoticed. In
her arms is a large FLAME THROWER, aimed towards them - but
it's clear she's outnumbered. Outgunned.

MANTA

(snidely)

Do you really think you'll do any
damage before we shoot you dead?

MAGGIE

(smiling)

Not really. But then, I don't plan on
shooting you.

She aims the flame thrower up, and pulls the trigger - a
WAVE OF FIRE punches skyward, and hits the WATER SPRINKLERS,
which activate!

Thick drops of water rain down on everyone in reception.
Within seconds, the ground is soaked. A drenched Maggie
throws the flame thrower to the ground.

MANTA

(unimpressed)

Do you believe that would stop us?

MAGGIE

That was the warm-up. It's time for
the main act. Now!

She looks behind her - where a weary JACKSON HYDE kneels
With a determined set to his jaw, and anger in his eyes, his
tattoos begin to GLOW. He slams his hand onto the wet
floor--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

-- and ELECTRICAL CURRENT bursts forth from his fingers. Under his guidance, the arcs of energy jump from PUDDLE TO PUDDLE, ignoring Maggie and Arthur, but striking Manta and his Troopers! They convulse as they are ELECTROCUTED!

Jackson keeps it up for several seconds, before his weakened system gives out. Spent, he slumps forward, and his tattoos return to their normal state. Manta and the troopers drop!

JACKSON

(weakly)

I'm sorry, I couldn't-- couldn't hold it any longer.

Manta struggles to stand, his suit still sparking a little. All the other troopers are either out cold, or trying to move and failing.

BLACK MANTA

(straining, disgusted)

No-- no son of mine would be so weak!

ARTHUR (O.C.)

(pissed)

Excuse me?

Manta turns to find a sodden but revitalized Arthur standing tall behind him, having just tapped on his shoulder.

ARTHUR

Aren't we in the middle of something?

SMACK! The sucker-punch sends Manta flying back! He hits the floor and rolls across it with the force of the impact. He looks up, one of his helmet lenses smashed and inactive.

BLACK MANTA

(to Jackson)

You were never really my son.

JACKSON

(hateful)

You never *deserved* me as your son.

BLACK MANTA

(resigned)

So be it.

His remaining eye-lens begins to glow a FIERY RED.

ARTHUR

(realizing)

Manta, no!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

Arthur throws himself forward, placing himself in front of Jackson--

-- just as Manta lifts his head! The OPTIC BLAST fires up, striking the ceiling. Debris rains down from the destroyed area. Arthur covers Jackson with his own body, as Maggie shields herself from it all as well.

Finally, the dust settles, literally. As Maggie, Arthur and Jackson look around the haze, they realize what's happened.

Black Manta is gone...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. S.T.A.R. LABS, MIDTOWN METROPOLIS - LATER

Several AMBULANCES have joined the other parked service vehicles on the curb. Inside one is a damp Etta, grudgingly accepting treatment for her injuries.

In another sit Everett and Meredith, clad in warm blankets who look up as Kitty approaches, wearing a blanket of her own. They embrace, all difference and earlier words forgotten about as they unite. A *family...*

FADE TO:

EXT. BIBBO'S TAVERN, DOWNTOWN DOCKYARD - EARLY EVENING

Establishing shot of the tavern.

INT. BIBBO'S TAVERN - CONTINUOUS

Danny, looking clean-shaven and more presentable, sits. *Waiting.* His finger taps the table top continuously as a sign of his agitation. He sits up, as the door opens, and BETH walks in - closely followed by WILLIAM GREAT EAGLE.

Beth meets his gaze, and nods gently, unnoticed by William whose looking around, dubious.

GREAT EAGLE

Not sure what I think about this locale, Beth. Definitely not what I was expecting.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BETH

Bibbo's has a certain charm, and a very exclusive patronage. Besides, I wanted somewhere I knew no-one could cause trouble.

She takes them to the booth where Danny sits anxiously. He stands, and he and Great Eagle quickly appraise each other.

BETH (cont'd)

William, I'd like to introduce you to a friend of mine.

GREAT EAGLE

(calmly, nods)

I think we've met before. Detective Turpin, right?

DANNY

Yeah, that's me. Call me Danny.

GREAT EAGLE

(smiles, reminiscing)

'Detective Danny Boy'.

Danny reels back, *shocked*.

DANNY

Where did you hear that? That was what Russell always called me.

BETH

Russell? Russell Ten Clouds?

(off Danny's nod)

William? You knew Ten Clouds?

WILLIAM

Very well. We were brothers.

Off Beth and Danny's complete surprise...

INT. LIVING ROOM, KITTY'S APARTMENT - MORNING (NEXT DAY)

Kitty stands at her window, tired, restless. What she's been through lately is haunting her.

She relaxes into the embrace of VINNIE who comes up quietly behind her.

VINNIE

I figure you're not okay... but are you good?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KITTY

I'm getting this. This is helping.

A soft knock on the door pulls them apart. Kitty braces herself as she walks over and opens it. Meredith and Everett stand there, nervous.

KITTY (cont'd)

(smiles)

This feels familiar.

EVERETT

At least we called ahead this time.

They walk in. Meredith, somewhat timidly, approaches Vinnie.

MEREDITH

Thank you for the car service, Mr. Mor-- I mean, Vinnie.

VINNIE

A pleasure, Mrs. Faulkner.

KITTY

Are you sure you wont stay a few more days?

MEREDITH

No, no, not after yesterday. I don't think I'll feel safe until we're back home in New York.

(beat, genuine)

But it was good to see you, darling.

KITTY

(sadly)

You too, Mother.

Everett embraces his daughter in one of his big hugs. Vinnie quietly take his leave, but not before Everett mouths a 'thank you' to him. With a nod, and a final wink at Kitty, he EXITS.

EVERETT

I love you so, so much, sweetheart.

MEREDITH

Everett, honey, would you give us a minute alone?

Kitty looks at her father, anxious. He gives her a final kiss on the cheek, then makes his own exit. Mother and daughter are alone. Neither wants to be the first to speak.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MEREDITH (cont'd)

I said some things yesterday, I'm not proud of them. But one thing I am proud of is being your mother.

(off Kitty's surprise)

I know I'm not the most expressive of women when it comes to my emotions, and that I always kept a distance from you. That was wrong, but it was how I was raised, and if I could change that about our relationship, I would. I really would.

KITTY

(touched)

Oh, Mom.

MEREDITH

(pleased)

That's the first time you've ever called me that. I think I like it.

Tears in her eyes, Kitty rushes forward and embraces her mother tightly. After a moment, Meredith returns the hug, lovingly holding onto her daughter.

MEREDITH (cont'd)

Are you sure you're happy here?

They reluctantly pull apart, looking into each others' eyes.

MEREDITH (cont'd)

You could get any job you wanted in any of the private labs in New York.

KITTY

This is my home, Mom. The City of Tomorrow. Where else would I be?

MEREDITH

(sighs, accepting)

I had to try, at least once. You're my darling little girl. I love you.

KITTY

(tearful)

I love you too, Mom.

Meredith smiles, offering a little fluttering kiss on Kitty's cheek. It leaves a little lipstick behind. As she quickly wipes away affectionately...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

ARTHUR (PRE-LAP)
Manta got clean away.

INT. MAGGIE'S OFFICE, S.C.U. SQUAD ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Maggie, Faraday, Etta and a fully recovered Arthur are all present. Through the windows, a conspicuous crowd of staff, officers and detectives are watching everything.

ETTA
He'll be back. Count on it.

MAGGIE
I'm sure A.R.G.U.S. will take him down, eventually. With a little help from 'Aquaman', no doubt.

ARTHUR
You got that right. Thanks to S.T.A.R. Labs, we have a cure and vaccine for his bio-weapon. He'll not be using that to kill any more of my people again.

FARADAY
And Jackson? I hear he's decided to stay in Metropolis?

ARTHUR
A decision I totally support. He's made a life for himself here, and now the truth is out, he's no longer having to hide who he really is.

ETTA
A sign of future surface/Atlantis relations, maybe?

ARTHUR
What's that phrase? 'From your mouth to God's ears'?

Having finally noticed the attention their meeting is getting, Maggie glares at the onlookers. Caught out, the crowd scatters - all apart from WALLY...

INT. S.C.U. SQUAD ROOM, 8TH PRECINCT - CONTINUOUS

Wally stands there, unabashedly excited, in an 'AQUAMAN RULES' t-shirt, clutching *something* to his chest. Bouncing with excitement.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

As they exit Maggie's office, she offers her hand first to Etta, then Arthur.

MAGGIE

It was a pleasure to work with the both of you. I hope this also means that A.R.G.U.S. and our department will have a better working partnership moving on?

ETTA

(smiles)

I think that would be best. This city is definitely becoming a hot spot for the kind of activity we sometimes have to involve ourselves in.

Todd, carrying some papers, joins them.

TODD

Sorry to interrupt, Agent Candy, but I just need your signature to confirm the transfer to A.R.G.U.S. custody of our prisoners.

As Etta signs the offered paperwork, Todd steals an amused glance at the desperately anxious Wally.

TODD (cont'd)

Also, I think someone wants to say hello before he bursts.

Shaking her head, but smiling, Maggie finally waves Wally to come over. He shots forward, a huge grin on his face.

MAGGIE

Arthur, I think you might remember Wally West, my forensics supervisor from the last time you were in town.

ARTHUR

Oh yeah, the whole thing at TylerCo, I remember. Good to see you again.

He offers his hand. Wally simply stares at it for a moment, before he grabs hold tightly and pumps it hard.

ARTHUR (cont'd)

(laughs)

Whoa, quite a handshake. Nice t-shirt, dude!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Wally's grin grows impossibly wider. He finally releases Arthur's hand, and timidly shows him what he's holding - an "AQUAMAN" ACTION FIGURE, complete in box!

WALLY

Wo-- would you sign this, please?

Arthur gently takes the figure. He beams with pride.

ARTHUR

They totally got my essence! Sure,
I'd be happy too!

As Wally offers him a Sharpie to sign the box with, Maggie can't help but smile. It transforms into a grin of her own as Wally pulls out his CELL PHONE, and with a consenting Arthur, snaps a SELFIE!

She turns away, back to where Todd stands with Etta, collecting the final form. He turns to walk away, exchanging an amused look with Maggie--

--only to suddenly COLLAPSE! His eyes roll back in his head, just as he hits the floor with a dull thud.

MAGGIE

(shocked)

Todd!

As Todd goes into CONVULSIONS...

BLACKOUT:

END OF ACT FIVE

END OF EPISODE