

M S C U

METROPOLIS · SPECIAL · CRIMES · UNIT

2x09: "*Trident*"

Written by

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XaleCorp Productions 2018

METROPOLIS : SPECIAL CRIMES UNIT

2x09: "Trident"
(Part 1 of 2)

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

TOBY RAINES Kelly Rowan
SUE DEARBON Jodi-Lynn O'Keefe
VINNIE MORGAN Eddie Cahill
VIC SAGE Mark Pellegrino
ETTA CANDY Lesley-Ann Brandt
TOMMY JAGGER Luke Macfarlane
PRINCE ORM Dylan Bruce
GARTH Ryan Guzman
KING/MALCOLM WALKER Patrick Fabian
QUEEN/DONNA WALKER Kristen Lehmen
JACK/ERIC WALKER Dominic Sherwood
TEN Penelope Mitchell
ACE/DEREK RESTON Cody Runnells
DR. DABNY DONOVAN Orny Adams
DR. LOUISE LINCOLN Claire Coffee
DR. STEPHEN SHIN Tom T. Choi
SROYA BASHIR
PHILLIP KARNOSKY/BARRAGE
REPORTER #1
REPORTER #2

SPECIAL GUEST STARS

KING ORIN/ARTHUR CURRY Alan Ritchson
QUEEN MERA Elena Satine

with

Tom Welling as "CLARK KENT/SUPERMAN"

TEASER

FADE IN:

EXT. METRO COFFEE STOP, DOWNTOWN METROPOLIS - DAY

Establishing shot. It's a busy day inside as usual...

TRAYCE (PRE-LAP)

Oh, come on, Turpin! Lighten up!

INT. METRO COFFEE STOP, MIDTOWN METROPOLIS - CONTINUOUS

Standing in line are PATRICIA TRAYCE and DANNY TURPIN. Danny makes a point of avoiding Trayce's intense gaze.

DANNY

If I've told you once, I've told you a hundred times.

(beat)

Don't use my coffee mug.

In front of them is a TALLER MAN with slicked back dark hair, and a long beige trench-coat. As the man ahead deals with the waiting barista, Trayce rolls her eyes, peeved.

TRAYCE

It was an accident, Danny! I swear, I'll buy you a new one in the next few days. Superman mugs are a dime a dozen these days!

DANNY

That's not the point, Trayce! It was a gift from Stevie for Father's Day.

TRAYCE

(awkward)

Ah. Okay. I'm sorry.

CLARK (O.C.)

Time was you didn't very much care for 'capes'.

Danny looks forward, totally surprised, as the TALLER MAN turns to reveal a smiling CLARK KENT!

CLARK

Nice to see some thing have changed.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DANNY

Kent? Jeez, long time, no see, man.

Danny studies him for a moment - the hair, the large-frame glasses, and the slight slouch to his posture. This isn't the same guy he worked with briefly all those years ago.

DANNY (cont'd)

Yeah, speaking of things changing..?

CLARK

(shrugs)

Sometimes change is a good thing.

He sips his drink carefully, as Trayce pointedly clears her throat. Danny catches her drift, and makes introductions.

DANNY

Pat Trayce, meet Clark Kent, one of the *Daily Planet's* best. We met way back when Kent here tried playing it undercover.

(beat)

Kent, Pat Trayce, the latest thorn in my side.

TRAYCE

(offers hand)

Good to meet you. You helped Turpin here expose those jerks at the 44th?

CLARK

(nods)

A little, I suppose. It was the Green Arrow that did most of it, though.

SROYA BASHIR (O.C.)

--coming to you live bringing you this breaking news!

Clark looks around. All eyes are on the TELEVISION SCREEN on the wall - where SROYA BASHIR (mid-30s, Indian-American, a tad conservative) reports from the W-LEX news studio.

SROYA BASHIR

We can confirm reports coming in that several Coast Guard and Navy vessels are being diverted to off the coast of Hawaii. A Portuguese oil tanker, the S.S. *Magdalena*, is under attack by the terrorist 'Black Manta'.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Danny and Trayce share a look. They've dealt with Manta. They know exactly what he's capable of.

Clark, watching, narrows his eyes. His entire manner changes in a second. Gone is the 'mild-mannered' act, replaced by a steely resolve. *The true hero underneath it all.*

DANNY

Huh. Guess you've just found your next story, huh, Kent?

The CHIMING of the door bell causes Danny to look around - blinking in surprise to find Clark is gone. His drink left abandoned on a table.

DANNY (cont'd)

('what the..?')

Where'd he disappear to so damn fast?

Off his confusion...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. PACIFIC OCEAN, 100 NAUTICAL MILES FROM HAWAII - DAY

The clear horizon of a gorgeous day on the open and calm ocean waves is broken only by one minor blip - a MASSIVE OIL TANKER, the S.S. *MAGDALENA*, its stark, metal hull gleaming under the sun's rays.

From its torn belly spills THICK DARK LIQUID - millions of gallons of CRUDE OIL.

Sitting off the wreck of the tanker is a SMALL, SLEEK CRAFT of familiar design - the MANTA-FLYER, a scaled-down version of the MANTA SUB.

Around it are several 2-man attack craft - MANTA FIGHTERS.

MANTA TROOPER (PRE-LAP)

Sir. We have incoming.

INT. COMMAND AND CONTROL, MANTA-FLYER - CONTINUOUS

An array of control interfaces fill the small room, with a large VIEW-SCREEN in place of a window at the front. MANTA TROOPERS, all in full-encasing armor, man each console.

Standing at the MAIN COMMAND STATION is the TROOP LEADER, watching his crew work. He looks towards the TROOPER at the scanner station.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TROOP LEADER
Is it Target 1?

MANTA TROOPER
No sir. Coming from air, not sea.

TROOP LEADER
(realizing)
The Kryptonian.

He addresses another Trooper, manning the weapons console.

TROOP LEADER (cont'd)
(beat, defiant)
Prepare the countermeasure.

Off the Trooper's nod, as he manipulates his controls...

EXT. PACIFIC OCEAN - CONTINUOUS

Approaching at super-speed across the clear blue sky is the familiar RED/BLUE form of SUPERMAN. His cape flowing with majestic grace behind him, arms outstretched....

On the Manta-Flyer, a LONG HATCH opens on the dorsal hull of the Flyer, and the LARGE BARREL of some kind of FUTURISTIC CANNON emerges. Locks in position. Aims. *Fires.*

GREEN ENERGY streaks across the sky - slamming straight into Superman - who immediately *screams in agony, convulsing,* writhing in it's embrace.

UGLY GREEN VEINS bulge through his skin, until consciousness finally leaves him, and he slowly, inexorably plummets down toward the sea--

--where, seconds before he hits, a SHAPE BURSTS FORTH from the ocean surface, intercepting the falling Superman and propelling them both towards the deck of the tanker, which rings with the sound of their impact.

INT. COMMAND AND CONTROL, MANTA-FLYER - CONTINUOUS

The Trooper manning the scanning station works his controls with frantic effort.

MANTA TROOPER
Sir! Something registering on sonar!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

With a touch on his console, the main screen comes to life with a SONAR DISPLAY. On which shows a VERY LARGE SHAPE coming directly at them!

TROOP LEADER
Why didn't we see it before?!

MANTA TROOPER
They must be using stealth tech!

CRASH! The Flyer rocks under a sudden impact. Weapons fire. Troopers fall from their positions, while the Troop Leader barely maintains his own upright stance...

EXT. PACIFIC OCEAN - CONTINUOUS

One of the MANTA FIGHTERS explodes in a fiery conflagration. The Flyer begins to pull away, retreating from a fight it's not prepared for--

--as a MASSIVE ATLANTEAN CRUISER rises through now-churning waters. A thing of surprising beauty, elegance and power. Sharp edges give a sword-like quality to it's design.

It fires another volley of shots at the fleeing flotilla of Manta craft, causing damage to a single engine of the Flyer before they all sink below the surface, out of sight...

EXT. MAIN DECK, S.S. MAGDALENA - CONTINUOUS

A woozy Superman slowly regains his senses. With a soft groan, he finally pushes himself up, looking around to see see his savior - ARTHUR CURRY, a.k.a. AQUAMAN.

He stands tall, dressed in ATLANTEAN WARRIOR GARB - fitted and functional, in his usual orange/green scheme. He leans down, his cocksure grin in place, offering a hand up to his old friend.

AQUAMAN
Need some help, Boy Scout?

As Aquaman helps a still-dizzy Superman gets to his feet...

FADE TO:

EXT. ATLANTEAN CRUISER, PACIFIC OCEAN - DAY

The Atlantean Cruiser has assumed position off the tanker's side, near to where oil is contaminating the ocean waters.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A SMALL HATCH is open, a LARGE TUBE extended from it. PURPLE LIQUID trickles out of it, into the oil spill.

SUPERMAN (O.C.)

What is that?

Atop the hull stand the two friends. They watch the clean-up operation progress at a steady pace.

AQUAMAN

An Atlantean biochemical. Organic and safe for the environment. Should have that spill sorted in a few hours.

He watches, concerned, as Superman flexes a hand, taking note of the GREEN VEINS as they slowly fade away.

AQUAMAN (cont'd)

You okay, Clark?

He balks a little at the intense glare Superman shots him as he turns to face him.

SUPERMAN

(realizing)

You knew Manta was going to do this, didn't you, Arthur?

AQUAMAN

(smile fade, nods)

There's a major agricultural colony right below us. Supplies most of the crops to Atlantis's outer regions.

SUPERMAN

A Kryptonite energy weapon? Killing innocent civilians to hurt Atlantis? Manta needs to be stopped, Arthur.

AQUAMAN

(serious)

I know, Clark. That's why I finally convinced the Royal Council that it's time for Atlantis to step out of the shadows of the deep and into the light of day.

SUPERMAN

The talks with the United Nations?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

AQUAMAN

(nods)

It's taken a while to convince them to deal with a nation everyone used to believe didn't exist, but we've made a lot of headway. Mera and I are leading a delegation to Metropolis next week to meet with their Security Council. If it goes well, Atlantis will soon join it as a recognized nation-state of it's own.

(beat)

You know, having 'Superman' with us could really help.

SUPERMAN

(doubtful)

Probably not a good idea, A.C. After what happened in Gotham, I've still a ways to go before I'm fully trusted again by the public.

AQUAMAN

(unconvinced)

Come on, Clark. People used to call me a 'terrorist', once upon a time, but now look at me. They'll get over it, and besides it wasn't your fault. It was that bastard Lord.

SUPERMAN

(cautious)

And if they can't, or won't?

AQUAMAN

(foreboding)

Then the Lords, and the Black Mantas of the world? They win.

Off his ominous statement, we...

SMASH TO BLACK:

END OF TEASER

CONTINUED: (3)

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

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

Establishing shot of the building.

DONOVAN
 (far too cheerful)
 Kitty, please take a seat!

INT. ADMINISTRATOR'S OFFICE, S.T.A.R. LABS - CONTINUOUS

An anxious KITTY FAULKNER enters the office, where DABNY DONOVAN, wearing an eager smile, stands behind his desk, waving her in.

Kitty takes note of the blonde woman (wire-frame glasses, prim, stoic, with a icy haughtiness to her) also present.

DONOVAN
 I'd like you to introduce Dr. Louise Lincoln, a special liaison sent here by the S.T.A.R. Labs Executive Board.

KITTY
 (awed, excited)
 I've read your work, Dr. Lincoln.
 Very nice to meet you.

LINCOLN
 (dismissive)
 Yes, I'm sure it is.

Kitty balks at Lincoln's attitude, any eagerness she felt fading fast, as she sits next to her.

DONOVAN
 (excited)
 Dr. Lincoln is here to perform a full and extensive efficiency review! To light a fire under divisions that are under-performing.

LINCOLN
 It's become clear Metropolis branch needs guidance. Too many projects stagnate or lead to nil results.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LINCOLN (cont'd)

While our paying client projects fall by the way side. I'm here to put a stop to that.

KITTY

B-but S.T.A.R. isn't about making money, right? I mean, I thought science was the goal here? Progress d-doesn't always go to schedule.

LINCOLN

(condescending)

Dr. Faulkner, that's a commendable attitude, really, it is. But without progress, without results that lead to patents, without the contracts we fulfill, we don't have the finances to continue making further progress.

She stands, a signal that this meeting has come to an end. Donovan scrambles to his feet, smile growing wider, taking Lincoln's proffered hand.

LINCOLN (cont'd)

I'll be interviewing each employee in due time, but I should have a prelim report for you by tomorrow.

DONOVAN

Of course, of course! Can't wait to read it, Dr. Lincoln!

Kitty stands and shakes Lincoln's hand as well, watching her warily as she exits. Rubbing her fingers absently, she faces Donovan. He flinches under her intense gaze.

KITTY

This isn't right, Dabny! I mean, I get what she's saying, but we've always given our staff a free-hand, I mean, that's the point of S.T.A.R. in the first place, right?

DONOVAN

(dismissive)

Time are changing, Kitty! We need to hone our focus on to the jobs that really matter, no more time wasters! Those that can't get on board? Well, they might as well start looking for a job elsewhere!

As Kitty absorbs this...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

KITTY (PRE-LAP)
I guess, I suppose I get it now.

INT. STAFF ROOM, O.C.M.E. BUILDING - DAY

Kitty sits on the sofa, nursing a cooling cup of coffee in her hands, as BETH CHAPEL joins her. She sips her own drink, calmly waiting, allowing Kitty to get it off her chest.

KITTY
After my parents visited, I realized I've not been as happy at S.T.A.R. as I used to be when I first started. I mean, sure, being named Assistant Head of R&D seemed like such a great thing at first, but I'm a scientist, not an administrator. It's not where I saw my career going.

BETH
Where did you see it going?

KITTY
(uncertain)
I-- I'm not... I don't know if I have an answer to that question.
(sighs)
I love living in Metropolis, I have a nice place to live, great boyfriend, and friends. People I care about, who care about me. But when it comes to my work, I just don't know anymore.
(beat)
Am I making any sense?!

BETH
(laughs softly)
More then you realize. Remember who you're talking to, Kitty?

VREEP! Kitty quickly pulls out her buzzing CELL PHONE. Her face lights up with a small smile as she reads it, before noticing Beth's curious stare.

KITTY
It's from Vinnie. He's asking me to wish him luck, he's about to go into a really big press conference.

She briefly types a response, before pocketing the cell again. Her smile fades as she looks to Beth, apprehensive.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KITTY (cont'd)

How did you do it? Give up your dream of being a surgeon. Become a coroner?

BETH

(smile fades)

Because I realized that living my dream was slowly killing my soul. I spent years studying how to heal the sick, but hated that I couldn't save them all. Med school taught us not to get attached but it's not so easy in real life. These people trust you with their life, literally.

(beat, ashamed)

I felt I didn't deserve that honor anymore. So I left it behind. Now, I still help people, just another way.

KITTY

Do you ever... miss it?

BETH

Honestly? Every day. But I also know I don't regret it.

(beat, gently)

Maybe it's time you did some hard thinking about what you do want?

As Kitty considers her words...

EXT. METROPOLIS HEIGHTS, CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT - DAY

The once-blighted skyline of Metropolis is finally restored with the reconstruction of the building now completed. Only a few scaffolds structures remain, but it's clear all work has finished.

There are differences. Where once there was a stained-glass window is now one with a stylized "R" and "F" logo design. Under that is a large sign, big enough to rival the nearby LexCorp one: RIDGE-FERRICK.

VINNIE (O.C.)

(over microphone)

Thank you all for coming here today!

PUSH DOWN to the street below, where a PRESS CONFERENCE is underway by the main doors. On a raised stage, at a podium of microphones is VINNIE MORGAN. Behind him stand several older gentlemen, all well-dressed and severe looking.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He beams at the assembled press crowd, as he addresses them with his usual charm.

VINNIE

This is a great day, not just for us at Ridge Ferrick as we open the doors to our new home on the top floors of this gorgeous building behind me, but for Metropolis itself as well.

Behind him, assorted Ridge Ferrick employees break out into massive applause. Even the reporters are caught up in the excitement...

Except one. With his arms crossed, VIC SAGE looks decidedly out of place among his colleagues.

VINNIE (cont'd)

Our great city's skyline is finally restored to it's former glory, and it shows just what can be done when we work hard and put our minds to it.

(beat)

But it wouldn't have been possible if I hadn't had the continued support of the city's business leaders. I want to thank Dayton Industries, Ferris Aircraft and Sutherland Corporation. I'm thrilled that we have agreed for them to join us as we expand what we do at Ridge Ferrick.

Stunned murmurs flow through the press members. Vic, though, doesn't seem the least bit surprised. In fact, he looks like he's had a suspicion confirmed.

VIC

(raised voice)

Care to share the secret, Mr. Morgan?

VINNIE

I'm sorry?

VIC

How does a relative newcomer to the Metropolis business scene talk three prominent businessmen, known for long-time independent stances, to work with you?

VINNIE

My esteemed colleagues know a good deal when they are offered one.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

VIC

You have a silver tongue, Mr. Morgan?
Others have tried. LexCorp, Stagg
International, Daggett Enterprises.

VINNIE

What those companies tried to do was
buying out the competition, but what
we have is a partnership, Mr. Sage.
An understanding of merging companies
for the betterment of all involved.

VIC

But you're the one who comes on top?

VINNIE

(aggravated)

You make it sound untoward, Mr. Sage.
It isn't, I assure you. It will help
unite our goals and propel Metropolis
further onward into the 21st century.

(beat, short)

I believe that is all the time for
questions we have. Thank you all for
coming, good day to you.

Buttoning his jacket, Vinnie's easy smile returns as he
waves again at the crowd, as he heads down the stage steps
to the sidewalk, where a LIMOUSINE is waiting parked.

As Vic watches the limousine drive away...

INT. MAIN BAR, BIBBO'S TAVERN - LATER

CLOSE ON: A T.V. SCREEN, mounted on the wall, as it shows
footage of the press conference, as Vinnie walks away from
the podium.

SROYA BASHIR (ON T.V.)

Edward Morgan earlier today at the
press conference for the opening of
the new Ridge Ferrick offices.

Watching from their table are RALPH DIBNY and SUE DEARBON.

SUE

You have to admit, Morgan is doing a
lot of work to win the popular vote.
Finally seeing Metro Heights looking
good again? That's going to swing a
lot of people his way.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DIBNY
I thought you were a Berkowitz girl?

SUE
(shrugs)
I'm open to changing my mind.

SROYA BASHIR (O.C.)
Current reports are sketchy, but the theft from the Midway City Museum has the archaeological community in uproar.

Dibny looks back at the screen with curiosity, as SROYA appears on screen in her news studio.

SROYA BASHIR
The theft itself has the local police baffled, the only physical evidence left behind being a single playing card.

A dramatic change comes over Dibny - his curiosity vanishes in an instant, a singular focus directed at the T.V. screen.

Super-imposed alongside Sroya is an ACE OF SPADES.

SROYA BASHIR (cont'd)
No details about the card itself have been released, but sources inside of Central City Police confirm that they are operating on the belief that this is the latest in a long list of recent museum thefts all across the country.

Sue looks from Ralph to the T.V. and back again, her smile fading as she regards how intent he is on it.

SUE
(concerned)
Ralph, sweetie? You okay?

DIBNY
(distracted)
Huh?

SUE
What is it? Something wrong?

Dibny forces his attention back to his girlfriend, seeing her open worry. He manages a strained smile.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DIBNY

Sorry, sorry. It's nothing, really.

An unconvinced Sue nods slowly, before carrying on eating her lunch. Missing the cold stare Dibny focuses on the new report as it finishes up.

SHIN (PRE-LAP)

So, you think we should be worried about all these recent break-ins?

INT. MAIN DISPLAY CORRIDOR, METROPOLIS MUSEUM - DAY (LATER)

TODD RICE and THOMAS JAGGER walk through one of the halls of the museum, lead by a tired-looking DR. STEPHEN SHIN (mid-40s, Korean descent, permanently stressed).

They pass a variety of other open plan exhibit areas but aside from a casual glance, pay them no need. Shin has a clear destination in mind for them.

SHIN

We've been putting this exhibit together for months now, and a lot of it rides on our special display. But I can't risk the museum's reputation. If something were to happen--

TODD

(confident)

You got no reason to worry, Dr. Shin.

JAGGER

The S.C.U. and Gemini Security has everything in hand to make this place extra secure. The Atlantis Exhibit will be perfectly safe.

SHIN

(apologetic)

You can't blame me for being jumpy, can you, gentlemen? This isn't just a first for us, it's a major moment for the world. The first time people from Atlantis will attend an event on the surface world in celebration of the reality behind the myth!

(beat)

I'm very thankful for your department for getting involved.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SHIN (cont'd)

I realize it's a side benefit of your Unit handling the security for the Royal Family's visit to open the Exhibit.

TODD

(nods)

With A.R.G.U.S. handling the security for the diplomatic summit, right. The U.N. security guys are good, but it's never a bad idea to have extra help.

They step around the corner to where the massive "Behold Atlantis!" Exhibit has been set up.

It's breath-taking, and fills a large portion of the space ahead. Full-size mannequins in ATLANTEAN ARMOR stand guard at it's entrance. Various props of weapons, artifacts and sea-animals are placed strategically all over.

The center-piece is a LARGE CLEAR DISPLAY CASE. Empty.

SHIN

This is where we'll be housing the Trident of Neptune that the Atlantean Royal Family have graciously allowed us to use as our centerpiece.

TODD

(impressed)

It's amazing, Dr. Shin. I'm sure they will recognize what a labor of love this was for you and your staff.

SHIN

I've spent years studying what I could about Atlantis, back when we believed it to be just a myth. But to find out that it's actually real..?

JAGGER

A lot of people feel the same, sir.

As the three men enjoy a long moment taking in the entirety of the exhibit...

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM, S.C.U. SQUAD ROOM - DAY (LATER)

MAGGIE SAWYER sits the conference table, looking over one of several papers arrayed in front of her. Beside her, holding and reviewing a DATA TABLET, is ETTA CANDY of A.R.G.U.S.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

With a melodramatic, frustrated sigh, Maggie abruptly pushes away from the table, running her fingers through her hair. She shoots Candy a disgruntled glare upon noticing the other woman's amused smile.

MAGGIE

If I'd known saving your life would land me with this much paper work, I wouldn't have done it.

ETTA

And here was me thinking I was doing you and your Unit a favor.

MAGGIE

Gee, thanks! This kind of favor I could do without.

ETTA

You should be grateful, Sawyer. I have to deal with the politicians, remember? All you have to handle is the arrival of the Atlantean's flagship at MetroDock tomorrow.

MAGGIE

(resigned)

Fine, fine, I get it.

(sighs)

Jibes aside, the S.C.U. is here to help, but I'm glad your agency is taking the lead. This city tends to have plenty of trouble happening in it most days as it is. I doubt the visit of a undersea kingdom's royal family will change that.

She stands and stretches, letting out a groan of relief.

MAGGIE (cont'd)

I need coffee. Come on, I'm buying.

ETTA

Sounds good to me.

The two women quickly EXIT...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SKYLINE, CENTRAL CITY, MISSOURI - NIGHTSUBTITLE: **CENTRAL CITY, MISSOURI**

Another beautiful city of the Midwest United States. Several prominent landmarks are brightly lit up, but it's most striking feature is the VAN BUREN BRIDGE connecting it to KEYSTONE CITY across the Missouri River...

INT. CENTRAL CITY MUSEUM, CENTRAL CITY - NIGHT

A SECURITY GUARD (old-timer, bored with retirement) makes his rounds of the exhibits of the central display area. Satisfied, he makes his way to a separate area housing GREEK ARTIFACTS. He passes his flashlight across them--

--but quickly doubles back when he notices ONE IS EMPTY! Rushing over to it, he peers inside. According to a display card, it should house "The Gauntlets of Atlas". It it holds now is a SINGLE PLAYING CARD: the King of Spades...

KING (PRE-LAP)

Another successful heist, my dears!

INT. ROYAL FLUSH GANG HIDE-OUT, CENTRAL CITY - CONTINUOUS

The ROYAL FLUSH GANG sit together in the plush, high-end hide-out - this is definitely no abandoned warehouse. It's the best money will buy, for however brief a time.

Four members are wearing a uniform of sort - khaki cargo pants and open military-style jackets, with tight-fitting white tops underneath, each emblazoned in black with their chosen character (King, Queen, Jack and 10).

The KING hold his champagne glass high, leading the toast. His wife, QUEEN snuggles up to him, basking in their victory. Opposite them sit JACK and TEN, also in an embrace.

On the coffee table in front of them are the GAUNTLETS OF ATLAS: a pair of silver arm-enclosing vambraces, with gold plating on their edges. They shine brightly under the room's lights.

KING

I think special thanks also go to our newest member, the lovely Ten.

Jack plants a kiss on Ten's forehead, as she shies away from the praise.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JACK
Knew my girl would come through.

QUEEN
(grudgingly)
She did, didn't she.

TEN
So, what now?

QUEEN
Now, we take a break. A much needed
one, I think.

ACE (O.C.)
Maybe. Maybe not.

They all look around as ACE walks in from another room. He's dressed the same, but his shirt is black, symbol white. with the latest edition of the *Daily Planet*. It's headline reads: "AQUAMAN TO OPEN ATLANTIS EXHIBIT IN METROPOLIS"

ACE
I think we've got time for one more.

JACK
You're joking, right, Uncle Derek?

With a shake of his head, Ace opens up and reads from the paper.

ACE
"The exhibit's main focus will be the Trident of Neptune, long believed to be a myth, just like Atlantis itself. The weapon is a symbol of royal power and might, and made of solid gold with precious gems encrusted along the hilt."

QUEEN
(intrigued)
I'm sold.

KING
(unconvinced)
Hmm, I don't know. It sounds like a great score, but security will be--

ACE
Ah, I haven't gotten to the best part yet.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ACE (cont'd)

(reads)

"The Special Crimes Unit have worked closely with museum staff to ensure the Trident is well protected. Lt. Ralph Dibny of the Unit, explained that--"

King suddenly stands, and snatches the paper from Ace's hands, reading for himself. A malicious grin forms.

KING

Dibny. Haven't heard that name in a long, *long*, time.

He shares a knowing look with Queen, who nods her assent, her eyes alight with wicked glee. Jack and Ten look at each other, clueless.

QUEEN

This is going to be fun.

KING

That it will. Pack your bags, people. We're off to Metropolis.

Off Walker's easy, confident grin...

SMASH TO BLACK:

END OF ACT ONE

CONTINUED: (3)

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

EXT. METRODOCK, HOB'S RIVER, DOWNTOWN METROPOLIS - MORNING

A gleaming example of the city's move into the 21st century and beyond is Metropolis Harbor and Dockyard (MetroDock). A modern and sprawling part of the city's waterfront.

A POLICE CORDON keeps the huge mass of onlookers back from the MAIN SLIP AREA. All other ships currently harbored have been moved to slips further out of the way to make room for the massive ATLANTEAN CRUISER now docked there.

On it's flawless exterior, a boarding hatch is open, and from it extends a walkway. In front of the is a small raised podium area for the arriving royals to greet the cheering, eagerly awaiting 'AquaFans'.

But they're not the only ones waiting. Another section of the crowd are jeering angrily, waving banners that aren't as supportive or friendly. Signs like "UNDERWATER FREAKS!", "STAY WHERE YOU BELONG!", OR "AQUAMAN = TERRORIST!".

At a COMMAND POST, MAGGIE, DANNY and TRAYCE keep watch. At the PRESS AREA, TOBY RAINES stands with VIC.

MERA (PRE-LAP)
(frustrated)
Look at them. So determined to hate
us for being different.

INT. ROYAL CHAMBERS, ATLANTEAN CRUISER - CONTINUOUS

Through a porthole, QUEEN MERA, attired in a green gossamer gown over a mid-riff baring halter and matching leggings, topped with a gold tiara, watches the crowd outside.

The happy cooing of a baby draws her gaze away, and a smile brightens her face as she watches ARTHUR, attired in a smarter version of his armor, complete with a flowing green cape, play with their infant son, A.J. in his crib.

She joins her husband and son, lovingly embracing him from behind, as Arthur pulls faces at his giggling child.

MERA
(concerned)
Are we sure this is the best place
for our son, Orin?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ARTHUR

(chuckles)

You only call me 'Orin' when you're worried. Everything will be fine, I promise you.

(beat, serious)

You know why we have to all do this?

MERA

(sighs, resigned)

I know, I know, and you know I agree, that I want the same thing you do - for Atlantis and the surface world to co-exist. But there is so much hate out there, hate that our people have moved past centuries ago.

ARTHUR

Which is why we'll show them that we can all live together without it. Our people have spent too long hiding, we can't do that anymore.

The gentle rap of knuckles on the hatch of their quarters has them both look over to see PRINCE ORM, dressed regally, similar to Arthur's style, but in dark blue with gold piping on the edges.

With him stands a younger man, standing with a more military bearing, straight and tall. He wears a form-fitting outfit of blue and silver light armor. But what sets him apart is his EYES - the irises are bright purple.

This is GARTH, the King's Tempest, the personal bodyguard.

ORM

It's time, Arthur. Are you both ready?

ARTHUR

(nods, stands)

As ready as we're going to be.

EXT. ATLANTEAN CRUISER, METRODOCK - MOMENTS LATER

A RETINUE OF ROYAL GUARDSMEN march out, and assemble along the edge of the dock. They each carry a LANCE, held at their sides. Standing at attention, as the Royal Atlantean Anthem begins to play.

The crowds are awestruck. Even the protesters are stunned into silence.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Everyone is drawn to watch as the Royal Family emerges. Mera holds her child close to her bosom, one arm hooked into Arthur's.

Behind them walk Orm and Garth, slowly making their way down to the podium. Arthur takes his place at it, staring out at the crowds for a long moment. All eyes are on him.

ARTHUR

You all know why I am here. How important the talks between Atlantis and the United Nation are.

(beat)

To some of you, I am a hero, but to others, a terrorist. There are things I have done that, at the time, I felt were needed to be done. Mistakes were made on both sides, but now we are here to show that we are all, at our core, *human*. No matter where we come from, or what we can do.

Mera listens intently, beyond proud of her husband's words. Orm softly nods in agreement at times. Garth, at parade rest besides Orm, maintains a stoic, bland expression, but is that a *hint of doubt* in his strangely-colored eyes?

DISSOLVE TO:

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

CLOSE ON: A T.V. SCREEN on the wall, where LIVE-FOOTAGE of Arthur is playing. DIBNY sits at his desk, attention focused on his LAPTOP, occasionally consulting one of the papers that litter his uncharacteristically-messy desk.

ARTHUR

(through television)

Atlantis has much it can offer to the surface world, but as someone who grew up in Miami, I also know it has just as much to offer it's underwater brethren as well. Thank you.

Rejoining his family, Arthur offers a wave to the crowd, breaking the spell of silence. Supportive cheers break out, drowning out the weaker, not-entirely-convinced, protests.

The camera view pulls back from the crowd, and focuses on SROYA BASHIR as she steps up, microphone in hand.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SROYA BASHIR

(through television)

King Orin of Atlantis, also known as 'Aquaman', ladies and gentlemen. It appears rumors that Superman would be appearing were unfounded. As many people are aware, his actions several months ago in Gotham have caused many people to lose faith in--

BLINK! The T.V. goes dark. The sudden loss of background noise gets Dibny's attention. He looks up to see TODD standing at the screen, having pressed the 'ON/OFF' button.

TODD

(disgusted)

Seriously? The King of the Seven Seas brings his entire family to our city, and somehow, WLEX turns it into a Superman bashing?

DIBNY

(surprised)

Something I can do for you, Todd?

TODD

Just bringing you the final report on the background checks for the extra staff the museum brought in.

Todd hands Dibny the MANILA FOLDER he has tucked under an arm. He watches with mild surprise as Dibny glances at it briefly, before tossing it on the desk. He takes in the messy desk, curious.

TODD (cont'd)

You okay, Lieutenant? Not like you to be so, uh, spread out, I guess?

DIBNY

(distracted)

Just working on something. Not sure if it's going to pan out yet.

TODD

(nods)

Sure. Let me know if you need help.

Dibny nods, not looking up, focused completely on whatever he's doing. After a moment, Todd shakes his head, confused, walks out, closing the door behind him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Dibny picks up one of the other folders on his desk, opens it and pulls out some A4 PHOTOS - one is of the GAUNTLETS.

DIBNY
 (to himself)
 High profile. Nothing new on the
 black market. Private buyers, maybe?

He pulls out some more PHOTOS - all PLAYING CARDS. A King. Queen. Jack. Ace. All of Spades.

He pulls open one of his desk drawers, pulls something out. It's an EVIDENCE BAG, old and creased. Inside, visibly worn, is a PLAYING CARD. A KING OF SPADES.

Dibny studies them with a cold fury we've never seen before in him. For whatever reason, this case has gotten to him...

TODD (PRE-LAP)
 Something's definitely up with him.

INT. SUNDOLLAR CAFE, METROPOLIS MUSEUM - DAY (LATER)

Todd sits with TOMMY JAGGER at a small table in the in-house coffee shop, next to the Gift Shop.

TODD
 I've never known Ralph Dibny to be anything but the epitome of Southern charm. Today, though, he was really distracted. That's not like him.

JAGGER
 Everyone's has 'off-days', Todd.

TODD
 (sighs, unconvinced)
 I guess, yeah.
 (beat, laughs)
 Sorry, this was supposed to be a working lunch.

JAGGER
 Hey, I don't mind. To be honest, I've enjoyed the whole chance to have that catch up we talked about. I mean, the whole thing with your parents being part of the J.S.A.? Your counseling with the Isis Foundation? You really seem to have found yourself.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TODD
 (uncomfortable)
 I suppose, yeah. But what about you?
 I mean, your father, a hero of the
 Gulf War? Part of a secret group of
 heroes operating behind enemy lines?

JAGGER
 The All-Star Squadron, yeah. Who
 would've thought back in college we'd
 find out our families had that kind
 of lineage and history? But it gave
 me the purpose I lacked back when I
 knew you. I enlisted, took up every
 martial art I could, did what I
 needed to live up to his example.

Todd looks away, unable to meet Jagger's eyes, conflicted by
 his own current demons.

JAGGER (cont'd)
 (concerned)
 You okay?

Todd forces a big, near-convincing smile, stands, nodding.

TODD
 Fine, really. But we should get back
 to it, we've still got some checks to
 finalize before everything is ready
 for the opening.

He walks off, an unconvinced Jagger following after him...

EXT. SKYLINE, EAST SIDE, ST. MARTINS, METROPOLIS - AFTERNOON

The most exclusive area for the city's super-rich, on the
 outskirts of Metropolis. The 1% version of 'holiday homes',
 many of them are empty for the majority of the year until
 the owners deign them with their presence...

TEN
 (dubious)
 Are we sure this was a good idea?

EXT. PENTHOUSE SUITE, ABBEY HOTEL, ST. MARTINS - CONTINUOUS

Standing on the balcony, looking out onto the city, inhaling
 the crisp Kansas air, are TEN and JACK, in a close embrace.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TEN

Coming to Metropolis? I mean, this city is full of wannabe heroes, it could be too much trouble.

JACK

(cocky)

It'll take more than some dude in tights and a cape to stop the Royal Flush Gang, babe.

ACE (O.C.)

What's the matter, girl? You scared?

The couple pull away from each other as ACE joins them.

ACE

(snide)

Maybe we should have left you in the dive we found you in in Happy Harbor.

JACK

Leave her alone, Uncle Derek. She's proven she's got what it takes.

ACE

A couple of easy jobs, that's all.

Ace walks right up to Ten, gets in her face. Studies her in a decidedly lecherous manner, enough to make her skin crawl.

ACE (cont'd)

She's got a long way to go till she proves she's one of us.

Cece closes what little distance that remains, stares him straight in the eyes. She's not one to back down.

TEN

Remind me? Who was it that almost set off the damn alarms in our last job?

(beat, icy)

Oh, yeah, it was you!

JACK

(laughs)

She's got you there, Uncle Derek.

INT. PENTHOUSE SUITE, ABBEY HOTEL, ST. MARTINS - CONTINUOUS

QUEEN leans on the suite's wet bar, watching as Ten stands to Ace, with suspicion and disdain.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

QUEEN

I don't like her, Malcolm.

She pushes away from the bar, and joins KING sitting at the expansive dining table he's using as a planning area. He carefully studies BLUEPRINTS, not looking up from his work.

KING

(amused)

Not good enough for our young prince?

QUEEN

I'll admit, she helped the last few jobs go a lot easier. But she's not family, not yet.

KING

(meets her gaze)

Neither was I, at first. Remember?

QUEEN

You proved your worth, otherwise my father would never have let us marry, let alone make you King in his place.

KING

So, give Ten have that same chance. She's got a natural gift for our line of work. We can use that...

(beat, grins)

Until we don't need her anymore.

Queen slowly smiles, enjoying the way her husband thinks...

EXT. U.N. ANNEX BUILDING, DOWNTOWN METROPOLIS - AFTERNOON

Another gorgeous example of modern Metropolis architecture. Very similar to the U.N. Headquarters in New York, but with a more updated look.

TV CREWS wait outside, kept at bay by a dozen A.R.G.U.S. AGENTS forming a cordon. Sroya Bashir quickly checks her hair and make-up in her compact mirror, before her CAMERAMAN signals her. Microphone in hand, she addresses the camera.

SROYA BASHIR

Sroya Bashir, live from the U.N Annex building, where the opening session of final talks between the U.N. and the Atlantean Royal family has ended. We're told that the King and Queen will deliver a statement shortly.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHEERS from 'Aquafans' break out as Arthur and Mera emerge. Garth stands with them, eyes peeled, alert for any possible dangers to his patrons.

Mera and Arthur approach the waiting reporters, supportive shouts of "Aquaman!" emboldening him as he faces them.

ARTHUR

The United Nations has laid terms for Atlantis's entry as a full member. I am sure that they believe them to be fair and just, but this is a decision we cannot undertake quickly.

MERA

We must now weigh those terms against what is best for both our people and the word of the surface dwellers.

REPORTER #1 (O.C.)

Queen Mera, how do you feel about being called terrorists due to your attacks against the V.R.A.?

SROYA BASHIR (O.C.)

Now that you're the so-called King of the Seven Seas, do you still have time to be a 'super-hero'?

REPORTER #2

Your Majesty, what is Atlantis's position on claims by Black Manta that you're secretly arming to take over the surface world?

Mera's fists clench in quiet fury. Her expression turns icy and cold, but Arthur maintains his calm demeanor.

ARTHUR

We're not taking any questions right now. Thank you.

They walk away, ignoring further questions, Garth alongside.

MERA

(quietly)

Are all their scribes so impertinent?

Arthur smiles in amusement, then, ever the gentleman, opens the door of the car ready to take them to MetroDock. Trayce and Danny stand with it, each taking up a flanking position.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

A GLINT OF LIGHT from on the roof of one of the neighboring buildings catches Trayce's attention. Squinting, she stares for a long moment--

TRAYCE
(realizing)
Sniper! Everyone get--!

--FWOOSH! A BRIGHT BALL OF LIGHT slams into the empty car in front. It DETONATES IN A MASSIVE CONFLAGRATION, as we...

SMASH TO BLACK:

END OF ACT TWO

CONTINUED: (3)

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

EXT. U.N. ANNEX BUILDING, DOWNTOWN METROPOLIS - AFTERNOON

CLOSE ON: The green eyes of MERA as she slowly blinks with effort, as she comes to.

DANNY (O.C.)
 (echoes, distant)
 Secure the area! We need a medic here
 pronto, get Candy on the horn! Go!
 (beat, closer)
 Queen Mera? Can you hear me?

PULL BACK as Mera, face down on the ground, slowly pushes up - where she sees the BURNING REMAINS OF THE CAR upended and laying across the front end of their vehicle.

MERA
 (stunned)
 Poseidon's beard...
 (realizing, scared)
 Orin? Where's my husband?

She looks to DANNY, bleeding from several shrapnel cuts to his face. Unsure how to answer, he looks away, where Mera follows his gaze--

--to where ARTHUR lays prone, his royal garb burned away in some places, still smoking in others. A singed GARTH kneels at his side, eyes closed and hands hovering over his King, glowing with PURPLE ENERGY.

DANNY
 He-- he took the brunt of the blast,
 shielded you with his body.

Mera watches, fearful, as a sweaty Garth, short of breath, the light fading from his hands, sags with exhaustion.

GARTH
 (weakly)
 I've done all I can to heal him with
 magic, but he's still badly wounded.

Mera crawls to Arthur's side, stroking his hair, tears in her eyes, ignoring the chaos around her. Danny gets to his feet as Trayce limps towards him as fast as she can.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TRAYCE

It's only been a couple of minutes,
we might be able to get the shooter.

Danny nods. Looks to a slowly recovering Garth.

DANNY

A.R.G.U.S. medics should be here
soon. You got this?

GARTH

(nods, furious)
Go find that bastard.

Pulling their weapons out, Danny and Trayce head off...

EXT. BACK ALLEY, DOWNTOWN METROPOLIS - MOMENTS LATER

A door opens, and a FIGURE steps out - male, large in build,
wearing a heavy quilted jacket, baseball cap and baggy
pants. As he heads down the alley with alacrity--

DANNY (O.C.)

Freeze! Special Crimes Unit.

The man halts, as Danny and Trayce come down the alley from
the street, weapons aimed. Not taking any chances.

DANNY

Turn around slowly. Hands in the air.

The man doesn't move, stance relaxed. *Not worried in the
slightest.* The two detectives approach with caution.

TRAYCE

You heard him, buddy. Move it!

With lightning speed, the man spins around, raising his
right arm up, the light reflecting of something metal--

TRAYCE (cont'd)

Gun!

BANG! BANG! The man staggers back under the sudden onslaught
of bullets. Metal rings follows each impact. But he does not
fall.

TRAYCE (cont'd)

(disbelieving)
What the Sam Hill..?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The man stands there. Clothing shredded by the weapons-fire. Metal gleams under the ruined fabric. He tears it all off--

--revealing a full-body HIGH-TECH SUIT OF ARMOR. He discards the baseball cap, revealing a head protected by a matching helmet, with a red visor. He raises his right arm again, an ENERGY CANNON instead of a hand - GLOWING AN OMINOUS GREEN.

DANNY
 (realizing)
 Oh, crap.
 (beat)
 Get down!

Too late. A BRIGHT BALL OF SUPER-HEATED PLASMA launches from the cannon's maw, and strikes the ground in front of where they stand! The BLAST-WAVE tosses them down the alley. Both hit the ground hard.

Danny scrambles up into a kneeling position, weapon still in hand, taking aim in time to see the would-be assassin take to the sky - propelled by HIGH POWERED JETS on his back.

As Danny watches him disappear into the sky, mouth agape...

MAGGIE
 (incredulous)
 A jet-pack, Danny? You serious?

EXT. U.N. ANNEX BUILDING, DOWNTOWN METROPOLIS - LATER

Several ambulances have parked up. Inside one is Trayce, getting her leg seen to. Standing with Danny outside is MAGGIE.

DANNY
 (nods, tired)
 As a heart attack, Boss.

Maggie shakes her head, still not taking it in. Together, they watch as Arthur, on a stretcher, accompanied by Mera, is loaded into an A.R.G.U.S. vehicle. When Garth attempts to climb aboard, one of the agents stops him.

GARTH
 (deadly serious)
 Unhand me if you wish to keep that limb intact.
 (beat)
 I will not warn you again.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The Agent shots a look over towards ETTA, who leaves her debrief with another agent to intercede. The transport is closed up, leaving Garth quietly fuming at his exclusion.

ETTA

No need for that, Garth.

GARTH

There is every need. I am the King's Tempest, his sworn protector. I should be with them both.

ETTA

You said so yourself, he's beyond your ability to heal. We're sending him to S.T.A.R. Labs for treatment, he's in the best possible care.

GARTH

I do not like it. Neither will Prince Orm, either.

ETTA

(loosing patience)

I don't need for you to *like* it, and frankly, I don't care. What I do need is your cooperation. Understood?

GARTH

(stiffly, cold)

Understood. But I will be involved in whatever investigation you make into whoever tried to kill my King.

MAGGIE

(overhearing)

I don't have an issue with that, as long as you realize you're only an observer. Agreed?

Garth offers a curt nod as reply, then he and Etta join the S.C.U. detectives at the ambulance. Trayce, leg bandaged, clambers out, limping still, but not as badly.

TRAYCE

So, what now, Captain?

MAGGIE

I want to know who the hell this freak in a suit of armor and a jet-pack is, that's what.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ETTA
 (dreading)
 Did you say armor and jet-pack?

DANNY
 That's what we saw. Metal, kinda purple, I guess. With some kind of energy cannon where his right arm should have been.

MAGGIE
 (studying Etta)
 You know who it is?

Off Etta's slow nod of acknowledgment...

MAGGIE (PRE-LAP)
 Phillip Karnosky. That's a name I haven't heard in a few years.

INT. S.C.U. SQUAD ROOM, 8TH PRECINCT - AFTERNOON (LATER)

Around the central layout table stand Maggie, Etta, Trayce, Danny and Garth. They are joined by WALLY WEST and DIBNY. The OVERHEAD SCREENS display a PERSONNEL FILE on Karnosky, complete with a PHOTO of him in an Army Sergeant's uniform.

ETTA
 You know him?

MAGGIE
 He was part of a task force during the height of the VRA mania, what, 5, 6 years ago? When it was repealed, a few of those jack-asses went rogue, and I helped take them down.
 (beat, grimly)
 That hand he lost. Kinda my doing.

TRAYCE
 (grimacing)
 Ouch.

ETTA
 He calls himself "Barrage" now.

WALLY
 (laughs, derisive)
 "Barrage"? Seriously? I'm whelmed.
 (off Maggie's glare)
 Sorry. Shutting up now.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ETTA

He stole a prototype armor the the DDS developed for them to use against vigilantes. Had it modified over the years, which is where he got that particle cannon. He's been a merc-for-hire on our radar the last few years, a loner who works for whoever pays the most. The money he gets goes on improving his tech even further.

GARTH

So, how do we proceed?

MAGGIE

We do what we do best. Find and stop the bad guys. Wally, Danny, Trayce, see if you can figure out where he might be hiding.

(to Etta)

Can I assume A.R.G.U.S. has advised canceling the attendance of the Royal family at the Museum launch, but was ignored?

ETTA

Pretty much, yeah.

MAGGIE

Figures. Dibny, I want you to head to the museum, talk with Jagger, do what you can to up security.

DIBNY

You think that they'll try again?

MAGGIE

I don't want to take any chances.

ETTA

Sawyer, Garth, a word?

They step away from the table, letting the others work.

ETTA (cont'd)

Look, I know there's nothing I can say that will make either of you sit out of this operation, so let me make it clear. If we find--

MAGGIE

(interrupting, firm)

When we find him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ETTA

(sighs)

Sorry, when we find Barrage, this will be an A.R.G.U.S. op, and you'll both follow my orders to the letter. Got it?

GARTH

As you say, Agent Candy.

(beat, concerned)

Is there any word on the King?

As Etta sadly shakes her head...

DISSOLVE TO:

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

Arthur floats in a CYLINDRICAL WATER TANK, face covered by a OXYGEN MASK (the same seen in 2x06: "Tattoo"). His eyes are closed, his breathing steady.

ETTA (V.O.)

Recovering, but still unconscious. The doctors are S.T.A.R. Labs aren't sure when he'll wake up.

MERA stands besides the tank, one hand pressed against it - as if she hopes she can rouse her husband via sheer force of will. Behind her, lending what support he can, is ORM.

MERA

(distant, soft)

The amount of times I've bemoaned his hardheadedness, now I am grateful for it. It may have saved his life.

Monitoring the vitals on a nearby display is KITTY, while stood behind her is LINCOLN. Kitty squirms under Lincoln's hawk-like gaze.

Orm studies the water tank with disdain, before casting a suspicious glance towards them both.

ORM

(whispered, uncertain)

Mera, can we be sure this is the best place for Orin? I mean, what do these surface dwellers know of us?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MERA

(shakes head)

Arthur told me of Dr. Faulkner, Orm.
She saved both him and Kaldur'ahm. I
trust her to do so again.

She turns to face him. Defiant. Regal. A *Queen*. With a nod,
Orm relents, leaving a wife to support her husband...

INT. FORENSICS FACILITY, 8TH PRECINCT - DAY

Wally works the keyboard under the COMPUTER SCREENS at the
Audio/Visual Area. Standing behind him are Etta and Maggie.

WALLY

So, I was studying a sample of the
alley where Barrage attacked Danny
and Trayce, and I noticed something
hinky with it.

ETTA

'Hinky'? How so?

WALLY

It had a weird radioactive signature,
kinda familiar actually.

With a touch of the mouse, one of the screen blinks up an
image of GREEN ROCK FRAGMENTS.

MAGGIE

Kryptonite?

WALLY

Uh-huh. It means his suit packs a
punch, that's for sure. But it also
means we should be able to track him.

ETTA

The upgrade must have been recent,
from a black-market tech-broker, this
is the first I've heard of him using
Kryptonite.

(beat)

But wouldn't he have shielded his
power source?

WALLY

Probably, but he can't shield the
emission from his cannon. He may not
even know that it's leaving a trail.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ETTA

We can use the A.R.G.U.S. satellites
to scan for that signature, we have
it on our system.

(impressed)

Excellent work, Mr. West.

As Wally beams at the compliment...

INT. ATLANTIS EXHIBITION, METROPOLIS MUSEUM - DAY (LATER)

Dibny stands before the "Behold Atlantis!" exhibit. Out of the way of the museum staff as they finish preparations. Studying it all intently - looking for weaknesses.

SHIN (O.C.)

Ah, Lieutenant! There you are!

Dibny turns to find DR. SHIN approaching, a bounce in his step as his project finally come together around him.

SHIN

I must thank you and your department
for all their help. You and the
people from Gemini have really
fortified this place.

Dibny smiles and nods, acknowledging Shin's praise, unaware of the scrutiny they are under across the other side of the corridor, where JACK and TEN, in street clothes, blending in, stand watching with interest.

Jack gingerly touches his ear, where a small EAR-BUD sits.

JACK

You seeing all this, Dad?

KING (OVER RADIO)

Crystal clear.

Ten plays with a LARGE BROACH on her shirt, which conceals a MICRO-CAMERA...

INT. PENTHOUSE SUITE, ABBEY HOTEL, ST. MARTINS - CONTINUOUS

KING sits at the dining/strategy table, QUEEN standing with him, a LAPTOP open in front of them. It shows a LIVE CAMERA FEED, where Shin, Dibny and Sue can be seen talking. Further down the table ACE studies the blueprints.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

QUEEN
(pleased)
Well, well, look who it is.

KING
(hard)
Hello, old friend.

QUEEN
(laughs)
Oh, this... this is going to make
this score ever better. Too much fun
to pass up!

She nuzzles into King's neck, who enjoys it immensely...

EXT. OLD RIVERFRONT HOUSE, OUTSIDE METROPOLIS - EVENING

Calling it 'vintage' would be a huge compliment. It's dirty, rundown and in need of some major TLC. A perfect hide-away for a wanted criminal.

MAGGIE (O.C.)
Like what he hasn't done with the
place.

PULL BACK to reveal, crouched down behind a crumbling dry-stone wall, Maggie, Etta and Danny. All in TACTICAL GEAR.

ETTA
(touching earpiece)
All teams in position? Confirm.
(beat, nods)
Good to go.

DANNY
Wally, he's definitely here, right?

WALLY (V.O)
(through earpiece)
Signature confirms it. He's in there.

INT. A.R.G.U.S. MOBILE COMMAND CENTER - CONTINUOUS

Inside the cramped interior sits Wally at a sophisticated CONTROL CONSOLE with multiple screens displaying all kinds of data he easily interprets. He has a headset on, and talks into the microphone, working the console like a pro.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Behind him is Garth, arms crossed, managing to somehow be intimidating even when he's hunched over, unable to stand properly inside.

His gaze bounces between two of screens. One show's an INFRA-RED SATELLITE IMAGE, revealing ONE HEAT SIGNATURE. The other shows a GREEN DOT, pulsing at regular intervals.

KING

Satellite imagery shows he's in an underground bunker beneath the house. No other heat signatures, so he's on his--

(stops, confused)

Huh?

GARTH

(suspicious)

Is something wrong?

MAGGIE (V.O.)

(over headphones)

What is it, Wally?

WALLY

Just a sec, Boss. Something weird...

He squints, studying the screen with the green dot - the pulsing of which has increased in speed. Getting faster. *Stronger.*

WALLY (cont'd)

(realizing)

Holy crap-cakes!

EXT. OLD RIVERFRONT HOUSE, OUTSIDE METROPOLIS - CONTINUOUS

MAGGIE

Wally, what the hell is--?

KA-BOOM!! The house EXPLODES, destroying it totally, debris flying, raining down on the stunned tactical teams, floored by the blast-wave!

Off the BURNING RUBBLE of what used to be the house, we:

SMASH TO BLACK:

END OF ACT THREE

CONTINUED:

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

EXT. OLD RIVERFRONT PROPERTY, OUTSIDE METROPOLIS - EVENING

TWO A.R.G.U.S. SUPPORT VANS have joined the mobile command center. Sitting on the fender of one of them is DANNY, his tactical gear off, massaging his shoulder, wincing in pain. He looks up as GARTH approaches, concerned.

GARTH

You are injured?

DANNY

Two bad falls in a day, kinda knocked my shoulder out of place a little.

GARTH

Surely one of the healers could see to it?

DANNY

(shakes head)

Nah, some of their agents took that hit worse than I did, they need them more than I do.

GARTH

Then, if you will allow me..?

He raises his hands, and off Danny's slow nod, unsure but willing to trust him, places them on Danny's shoulder. They glow with a FAINT PURPLE LIGHT, as he closes his eyes.

Whatever pain Danny was feeling vanishes in an instant. He sits upright, surprised, but pleased. The light fading, Garth steps away as Danny flexes his shoulder gently. Testing it. He grins, impressed.

DANNY

Good as new! Thanks.

Garth offers a small but genuine smile, happy to have helped as they are joined by ETTA and MAGGIE. Etta holds Barrage's HELMET in her hands. Scorched. Blackened. Visor cracked.

ETTA

This is pretty much all that is left of Phillip Karnosky.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DANNY

Do we know what happened?

MAGGIE

From the damage done, it looks like his suit core overloaded and went critical.

DANNY

Kinda big coincidence, isn't it?

WALLY (O.C.)

It wasn't a coincidence, guys.

They all look over as WALLY steps out of the command center and heads their way, holding a COMPUTER TABLET.

WALLY

The timing of all this didn't sit right with me, so I've been scrubbing through the raw satellite data feed, and I found something. A weird signal waveform, it got beamed directly into the bunker underneath the house.

MAGGIE

You think someone deliberately triggered the core meltdown?

WALLY

What's the old saying, "first rule of assassination: kill the assassins"?
(off their looks)
What? Captain Kirk said it in "Star Trek VI".

ETTA

Could you trace the origin point?

WALLY

That's another weird thing.

He hands her the TABLET. A blinking indicator focuses on a random point in the middle of the GULF OF MEXICO.

WALLY (cont'd)

Who'd send a signal like that from out in the middle of nowhere.

GARTH

(vicious)

Black Manta. It has to be.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ETTA

(nodding)

He could park his sub there, transmit the signal, and then Barrage becomes just another loose end tied up.

MAGGIE

You think Karnosky was hired to take out Aquaman? Why now?

GARTH

To delay or ruin the talks. With Atlantis on the verge of joining the United Nations, Manta would no longer be attacking a lone, isolated nation, but a member of the global community.

ETTA

Could that happen?

Off Garth's uncertainty on how to answer...

INT. AQUATIC LAB, S.T.A.R. LABS - EVENING (LATER)

MERA hasn't left her vigil at ARTHUR's side. He continues to remain unconscious, floating serenely in the tank.

The sound of a baby's fussing draws her attention away from her husband, to see ORM entering with A.J. in his arms.

ORM

I think our tired little prince was missing his mother.

With a loving smile, Mera gently takes A.J. from his uncle, and holds him close, swaying softly. His fussing some fades as he snuggles up to his mother. Orm allows them a moment.

ORM (cont'd)

The U.N. liaison has made contact, Mera. The General Assembly will be making it's final vote first thing in the morning. They wish to know if you intend to attend in the King's place.

MERA

He's worked on a speech for that vote for weeks, Orm. He finally believed he had it worked out, that his words will help sway any final detractors against Atlantis joining.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She turns away from her son's innocent eyes, looking deep into Orm's.

MERA (cont'd)

Tell me, Orm. How do you feel about all of this? You've been remarkably silent on it all. That's not like you at all.

Orm finds himself unable to meet her gaze, begins pacing.

ORM

Truthfully? I do not feel Atlantis needs the surface world as much as they may need us. Our technology, our advances in medicine and science, the fact that we are stronger than them? If we wanted, we could wipe them out.

(off her horror)

But, that is not our way. We are a warrior people, not barbarians. We need to show them they have nothing to fear from us. The best way to do that is to join them in their union, and help them realize their better angels. As your friend Superman has done over the years.

He places a hand on Mera's shoulder. *Supportive.*

ORM (cont'd)

Just remember, when you take your place at their table, that you are not there as a mother, or as a wife, but as a Queen in your own right.

MERA

I am glad you are here to offer me counsel, Orm.

ORM

As I am, my Queen. I will leave you with your son and husband.

As Mera watches Orm leave, too many thoughts racing through her tired mind...

EXT. ATLANTEAN CRUISER, METRODOCK - THE NEXT MORNING

Maggie and Etta stand in front of a BLACK A.R.G.U.S. SUV parked near to the gangway up to the cruiser.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Etta checks her watch for the umpteenth time, Maggie not even attempting to hide her amusement.

ETTA

She's cutting it fine. We're gonna be late, even with traffic redirected.

MAGGIE

She's a Queen. They're allowed to be fashionably late, I think. Besides, with everything I think we--

She stops, jaw dropping in amazement as Mera steps out of the opening hatch - looking every inch a Queen. Resplendent in royal garb, her crown atop her red hair, she walks down the gangway with unmatched elegance and style.

This time it is Etta unable to hide her smile at Maggie's reaction.

ETTA

Close your mouth, Sawyer.

MAGGIE

(awed)

Right. Sorry.

MERA

Are we ready to depart?

ETTA

We are, your Majesty.

MERA

Then, let us not keep the United Nations waiting.

As Mera climbs into the SUV once Etta opens the door...

MERA (PRE-LAP)

For centuries, you have all believed that Atlantis was nothing more than a myth. A fairy tale. A legend.

INT. CONFERENCE SUITE, U.N. ANNEX BUILDING - DAY (LATER)

Mera stands at a speaker's podium at the end of a ROUND BRIEFING TABLE, around of which 15 people are seated. The chosen representatives of the countries that make up the U.N. Security Council.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MERA

I stand before you now to show you that is far from the truth of it. In fact, while you on the surface thought war after war, we of the sea have survived and flourished in our isolation. If not for the damage caused by the presence of another planet so close to ours 5 years ago, we may very well have continued to hide ourselves away. But my husband, Orin, born Arthur Curry, known to you all as 'Aquaman' made a decision that changed all that. When an American naval submarine, the *USS Defiant*, was damaged and would have been lost with all hands, he had our Royal Navy come to their aid. He saved 152 men and women that day. Because it was the right thing to do.

(beat)

You have put to us stipulations for joining that no other nation has been asked. Why? Because we would not be able to host a traditional embassy. Or is it the fact that the United Nations has been very well aware of the existence of Atlantis for far longer than it cares to admit?

Her words cause quite a furor among the Council members. She waits briefly before continuing, emboldened by the protests.

MERA (cont'd)

I have been surrounded by politics my entire life. Wherever it happens, it is the same all the world around. I know that this hard-line stance on technological exchange is your way of saving face. You wish to recoup something for your years of silence.

(beat, hard)

But let me be clear. If there ever came a time of conflict between us, you would not win. Even your combined navies would be no match for ours.

COUNCIL MEMBER #1

(English accent)

Is that a threat?!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

COUNCIL MEMBER #2

(French accent)

Who do you think you are, madame?!

MERA

(proudly)

I am the Queen of Atlantis. Wife to Orin, King of the Seven Seas. And no, it is not a threat, but a statement of fact. I have no desire to raise my son during a conflict. To see the sons and daughters of Atlantis go to war with those of your countries.

(beat)

I ask you now, Council members, to do the right thing now once again. We can come to you, not as soldiers, but as teachers and guides, to help humanity advance, while you help my people learn about your world. Let us be a part of this global community you are working to build.

(beat)

We wish no longer to be alone.

As Mera takes a breath, stepping back from her podium...

INT. FORENSICS FACILITY, 8TH PRECINCT - DAY (LATER)

CLOSE ON: The burned, damaged remains of a LAPTOP sit on top of the Audio/Visual set-up. A USB CABLE connects it to the computer that Wally is working. On the overhead screens are various files and raw data, with more still loading up.

Behind him are Etta and Maggie, trying (and failing) to keep up with the dizzying amount of information he is absorbing so easily.

WALLY

I managed to recover enough from this crispy critter to access Barrage's private bank accounts. He was paid a nice little sum a few days ago from an offshore account.

He points to one of the screens. Etta leans in, scrutinizing it for a long moment. She nods.

ETTA

I recognize it. Belongs to a holding company we think Black Manta funnels his funds through.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAGGIE

You think? You haven't gotten the records to verify?

ETTA

It's a Bialyian bank. We can't touch it. Officially, anyway.

MAGGIE

(sighs)

Well, either way, I guess this means I can officially hand the case over to A.R.G.U.S. now. An international case involving a water-wandering wanted terrorist isn't our purview.

ETTA

(laughs)

You sound disappointed, Sawyer.

MAGGIE

(embarrassed)

I was kinda hoping to use it as an excuse to avoid going to the museum party tonight. Berkowitz insists I be there, unfortunately.

(checks her watch)

On that note, I should get going. Toby'll kill me if I'm late.

She reluctantly walks away from an amused Etta and Wally...

INT. ATLANTIS EXHIBITION, METROPOLIS MUSEUM - NIGHT

The launch party is in full swing. SERVERS offering nibbles and champagne move fluidly between well-dressed guests. The TRIDENT OF NEPTUNE, now in the presentation case, is the centerpiece of attention.

Sipping their champagne, dressed to impress, are TODD and DAMON MATTHEWS. Todd studies the sleek and golden weapon, taking in the priceless gems that decorate it. Damon reads the information plaque on the front.

DAMON

"The Trident grants its wielder great power and the divine right to rule the sea. Part of 'The Seven Treasures of Atlantis', mystical relics crafted and used by the first king of the seven seas, Atlan.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DAMON (cont'd)

It is a symbol of Atlantean royalty, giving the user unrestricted right and lordship over the various oceans of the world."

(beat, deadpan)

Must be handy for fishing, too.

Todd gives him a sour look. Damon pokes his tongue at him.

DAMON (cont'd)

Hey, you invited me here, so you get to suffer my bad jokes. How did you get an invite, anyway?

TODD

Being part of the Isis Foundation has it's perks. Although, technically, I think Angela was expected, but she's out of town for the time being, so I figured we could do with a night out.

DAMON

(uncertain)

Yeah, it's been a while, huh? I mean, you've been pretty distant lately.

TODD

(guiltily)

I know, and I'm sorry for that, I am, really. It feels like such a cliché, but it really is me, not you.

DAMON

Hey. I love you, okay. I'm not going anywhere, whatever it is.

Todd stares deeply into Damon's eyes. Seeing the affection, the love in them. It emboldens him. He takes Damon's free hand in his. Squeezing it. with tenderness.

TODD

There-- there's something I need to tell you. Later, after we get home.

Damon nods, smiling - but the smile collapses into a frown as he stares at something, worried.

DAMON

That invitation wasn't specific right? There's a security guy over there staring at us weirdly.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Todd, confused, looks over. TOMMY JAGGER, dressed in an all-black suit and tie combo, his weapon on a hip holster, is stood in the corner, smirking. He tips a casual mock-salute at Todd.

TODD

(caught)

Ah. Okay, so... there's something else I need to tell you.

As Todd prepares himself for 'the ex' talk, a BLONDE FEMALE WAITER walks past with her empty tray. As she passes a MALE MUSEUM SECURITY GUARD, we see their faces.

ACE and TEN. They exchange a curt nod, before he talks into a concealed wrist-mounted radio.

ACE

We're in. Let's get started.

As he leers avariciously at the golden, bejeweled Trident, gleaming in the spotlight, we:

SMASH TO BLACK:

END OF ACT FOUR

CONTINUED: (3)

ACT FIVE

FADE IN:

EXT. METROPOLIS MUSEUM, MIDTOWN METROPOLIS - EVENING

Establishing shot. Distinguished guests arrive and enter through the main entrance. Spotlights shine brightly.

ORM (PRE-LAP)

What you have done here, Dr. Shin, is truly amazing.

INT. ATLANTIS EXHIBITION, METROPOLIS MUSEUM - CONTINUOUS

ORM, flanked by two A.R.G.U.S. AGENTS, fondly gazes at the Trident of Neptune in it's display case. With him stand SHIN and JAGGER.

ORM

The sheer amount of research you must have done to create such an accurate depiction? Incredible.

SHIN

(modestly)

Well, I wanted to do you and your great nation justice.

ORM

You have succeeded, Doctor. Seeing the Trident being held in such high regard is gratifying. I only wish the King and Queen could be here tonight. Sadly, I must step in for them.

JAGGER

I understand that it's rumored to have magical powers?

ORM

(laughs)

Well, that is the fable passed down to our children, Mr. Jagger. That it is a physical manifestation of the magic that saved Atlantis plunging beneath the waves so many centuries ago. Truth be told, it's just as it appears. It's real power lies in the faith our people place in it.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ORM (cont'd)

(beat)

I will admit, I was against the idea of such a priceless piece of our heritage being 'loaned out'. Now that I see just how well it's presence here has been received, I am glad that Orin swayed my opinion.

JAGGER

I can understand your reluctance, Prince Orm. It's safety is our top priority for time at the museum.

SHIN

Thank you again for coming tonight.

Orm nods, shaking the hands of both men before he allows the agents to escort him away. They pass DIBNY standing by one of the smaller displays, vigilant.

Across the room, stood near a display of a golden scepter, are MAGGIE and TOBY, both dressed in their finest, arm in arm. Toby sips champagne, while Maggie sticks with water.

TOBY

You know, another five minutes, and I would have sent out search parties.

MAGGIE

Hey, I came, didn't I? You know how much I hate things like this. I've had to do too many of these things of late at Berkowitz's insistance.

TOBY

(laughs)

Only you could moan about the fact you've actually had a social life.

MAGGIE

Having to hang out with the city's l%ers? Not as much fun as it sounds.

Off Toby's warm, amused smile...

INT. SECURITY ROOM, METROPOLIS MUSEUM - CONTINUOUS

A SECURITY GUARD sits at their monitor station, an array of surveillance screens in front of them. All is well, until a DARK BLUR shoots past one of the external cameras.

Confused, the guard reaches for their radio--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

THUNK! Unconscious, they slump to the desk. Behind him, holding a small billy club, are ACE and TEN, still in the 'borrowed' outfits.

ACE
You know what to do?

Off her confident nod...

INT. ATLANTIS EXHIBITION, METROPOLIS MUSEUM - CONTINUOUS

BE-BEEP! Jagger pulls out his CELL PHONE, frowning at it.

CLOSE ON SCREEN: Which displays an ALERT MESSAGE: "ROOF MOTION SENSORS TRIPPED."

Concern etched across his face, Jagger looks around, where he quickly spots and makes his way over to Maggie. Ace emerges from a side-door, casually looking around the room, watching them leave with a knowing smile.

ACE
Almost show time, boys and girls.

EXT. ROOF, METROPOLIS MUSEUM - MOMENTS LATER

Through the heavy-duty door burst Maggie, Dibny and Jagger. While Jagger approaches the BLINKING SENSOR, Dibny makes a quick visual sweep, as Maggie kneels down, pulling out her BACKUP WEAPON from an ankle holster. Cocks it. Ready.

JAGGER
I don't get it. The sensors were tripped, but I don't see anyone.
(into radio)
Control, are you seeing any more activity up here?

Silence. Not even static.

JAGGER (cont'd)
(into radio)
Control, come in. Gonzales? Larkin? Anyone?
(beat, realizes)
Comms are down. I can't reach anyone.

As one, they head to the door. Jagger pulls out a KEY-CARD, pressing it to the sensor. It respond with a negative beep. Tries again. The same.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAGGIE
 (realizing)
 Someone's playing with us. Jammed the
 comms, blocked your key-card.

DIBNY
 But Barrage's dead, and Prince Orm's
 already left. Why attack now?

MAGGIE
 Any other way to get down?

JAGGER
 (nodding)
 There's an emergency fire escape.

As he leads them further down the roof...

INT. ATLANTIS EXHIBITION, METROPOLIS MUSEUM - CONTINUOUS

Toby, SUE, Todd and Damon stand with a beaming Shin, as he
 basks in the success of the exhibit.

SHIN
 This has been better than I could
 have hoped. I do hope that the King
 and Queen are able to--

The LIGHTS GO OUT. Panicked and startled cries echo through
 the exhibit. Seconds later, the meager EMERGENCY LIGHTS kick
 into action.

SHIN (cont'd)
 (trying to keep calm)
 It-- it's all right, everyone. Just a
 minor power blip, nothing to worry--

A KLAXON SOUNDS. A heavy SECURITY PARTITION slam down from
 ceiling to floor, sealing the exhibit off!

SUE
 (terrified)
 What's happening?

TODD
 The security system been tripped, the
 room's gone into lock-down.

DAMON
 Where's are the security people?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MUFFLED SHOUTS, followed by furious banging through the security gates answer his question.

TOBY
Who's doing this?

A furious burst of MACHINE-GUN FIRE elicits panicked screams from guests, as the ROYAL FLUSH GANG make a grand entrance.

They all where their attire seen earlier, but now each also wears a HOCKEY MASK, each stylized for their chosen cards. KING strides forward, his machine-gun held high in the air.

KING
Ladies and gentlemen, stay quiet, and no-one will be hurt.

ACE
Everyone down on the ground! Now! Do it! Now! Hands on your heads!

As Ace swings his weapons across the frightened masses, they start dropping to their knees, hands down and spread apart. QUEEN faces Ten, who is taken aback by the fear in the room.

QUEEN
Don't you have a job to do, Ten?

Ten nods, snapping back to reality. She pulls out and plugs an ELECTRONIC HACKING DEVICE into the case's advanced lock.

SHIN
(horrified)
What are you doing?! No! You can't!

He tries to stand, but a SAVAGE BLOW from JACK floors him. He hits the ground, dazed, clutching his head in pain.

SUE
Stephen!

TEN
Hey?! Is that necessary.

JACK
(cackles with glee)
Nah. Fun, though.

QUEEN
Enough talk! Do your job, Ten.
(to Ace)
Get the others ready.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Off Ace's nod, as he drops the gym-bag he's holding, un-zips it, and reaches into it...

INT. MAIN DISPLAY CORRIDOR, METROPOLIS MUSEUM - CONTINUOUS

Tommy, Dibny and Maggie, all panting hard from running down the corridor, take stock of the situation as they come to a stop. Several GEMINI SECURITY OFFICERS and MUSEUM GUARDS are pounding the security partition.

One of the Gemini officer hands Jagger a TABLET. It displays CCTV footage - hostages on the floor, Ten working on opening the display case.

DIBNY

Good God. It's them.

He balks at the confused, quizzical glare Maggie shots him.

TOMMY

Dammit! Okay, if I take some of these men to the roof, we can get the drop on them.

MAGGIE

You go in there guns blazing, it just means the chances of a hostage being caught in the crossfire.

JAGGER

We just can't let them steal--

MAGGIE

That damn Trident isn't as important as the lives of the people in there! My girlfriend. *Todd*. They are what matter right now.

(beat)

I have training for these kinds of situations. Let me handle this.

A conflicted Jagger resists for a long moment. Sighs. Nods in acquiescence.

MAGGIE (cont'd)

Can you get this door open?

JAGGER

If they've overridden the system, I can use a backdoor access code we use to take back control. Then I can get us in there.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MAGGIE

Do it.

Jagger moves to the TOUCH-SCREEN CONTROL PANEL, places his thumb on it. It BEEPS in the affirmative, bringing up a KEY-PAD. As he starts typing, Maggie spins on Dibny.

MAGGIE (cont'd)

I think you've got some explaining to do, when this is all over.

Off Dibny's disturbed look...

INT. ATLANTIS EXHIBITION, METROPOLIS MUSEUM - CONTINUOUS

King stands before the now-open display case, and with great care, lifts the Trident of Neptune free from its stand. He holds it aloft for a long moment. Enjoying the moment.

KING

Lighter than you'd expect.

QUEEN

That's enough of that, darling. Time to go, I'd say.

ACE

It won't take long for those outside to get in here.

TEN

(uncertain, wavering)

Are-- are we really going to--

ACE

Too late to get cold feet now, girly.

The WHIR of the SECURITY PARTITION pulls their attention to it, as it slowly starts to rise up.

JACK

(excited)

Here they come!

KING

Positions. Follow my lead.

When the partition is high enough, Maggie, Dibny and Jagger lead the assembled guards and Gemini officer in. All weapons are drawn, as they enter. They freeze at what they see.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

All the hostages are on their knees, facing forward, mouths gagged, hands bound in front of them. Toby, Sue, Todd and Damon in front. The Royal Flush Gang stand casually behind them, the picture of cockiness (bar a nervous Ten).

Maggie quickly gestures for the others to stay where they are. She slowly, carefully, places her gun back on the floor before approaching, arms held up non-threateningly.

MAGGIE

I just want to talk, that's all.

KING

Sorry, not really in the mood.

Dibny falters. He recognizes the voice. He watches, shocked, as King reaches forward, squeezes Todd hard on the shoulder.

KING (cont'd)

Show the lady your little gift.

Todd's eyes find Maggie's, as he lifts and opens his hands - to reveal the MICRO-EXPLOSIVE he holds.

KING (cont'd)

You see, ten lucky people here are holding high-yield explosives.

CLICK! He hold up a hand, showing the BLINKING RED LED on the small REMOTE CONTROL he holds.

KING (cont'd)

I just armed them. If I let go of this for longer than 10 second, then these lucky people will be going kablooey twenty seconds later.

(beat)

Your choice.

Off Dibny's, Jagger's, then Maggie's horror at the choice she now has, we:

SMASH TO BLACK:

ON BLACK:

TO BE CONTINUED...

END OF ACT FIVE

END OF EPISODE