



The Cape

Written by
Tom Wheeler

BermanBraun
2900 West Olympic Boulevard
Third Floor
Santa Monica, CA 90404

Universal Media Studios
100 Universal City Plaza
Bldg. 1320 Suite 4M
Universal City, CA 91608

01/09/10

COPYRIGHT © 2009 Universal Media Studios

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. NOT TO BE DUPLICATED WITHOUT PERMISSION.

This material is the property of Universal Media Studios and is intended solely for use by its personnel.

The sale, copying, reproduction or exploitation of this material in any form is prohibited.

Distribution or disclosure of this material to unauthorized persons is also prohibited.

THE CAPE

ACT ONE

TITLE: CHESS

INT. FARADAY BEDROOM - MORNING

The shrill BEEP-BEEP-BEEP of an alarm clock. Its 5am.

VINCE FARADAY (30s, capable) turns over in bed, expecting to find his wife, instead finding his 8-year-old-son TRIP staring back at him.

VINCE FARADAY
(to Trip)
What're you doing here?

TRIP
Bad dream.

INT. KITCHEN - FARADAY HOME - MORNING

VINCE sips his coffee, watching the news. TRIP watches his Dad. He likes to watch his Dad get ready for work. Vince absently puts HANDCUFFS and a HOLSTERED PISTOL in his belt.

NEWS 7 REPORTER (V.O.)
...to show that City Hall is
dealing with rampant police
corruption in several of its
precincts and a spiralling crime
epidemic...

ON SCREEN: Images of PALM CITY. Crime tape surrounding chalk marks on the ground.

NEWS 7 REPORTER (V.O.) (CONT'D)
...Mayor Welkins will introduce his
new top cop, Chief of Police Tom
Ross, at a press conference today.

Trip pours himself some cereal. Watches news.

NEWS 7 REPORTER (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Ross is widely given credit for
turning around Valley Ridge and New
Belmont but this will definitely be
his greatest challenge yet...

Vince finishes his coffee. He leans down and plants a kiss on Trip's head. Heads off.

TRIP

Bye Dad!

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE STATION - DAY

VINCE walks through an office bustling with activity. It's an important day. All hands on deck.

A FEMALE DETECTIVE hands Vince a piece of paper.

FEMALE DETECTIVE

Just to start your morning right.

(beat, re: paper)

Death threat to the Mayor.

Faraday studies printout. Frowns.

VINCE FARADAY

(reads name)

Guy calls himself Chess? That's cute.

(pause)

He's got the Mayor's internal schedule.

FEMALE DETECTIVE

We gave that to the press.

VINCE FARADAY

In a press release. This schedule came from inside the Mayor's office.

(beat)

Better take this upstairs.

INT. OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF POLICE - DAY

VINCE FARADAY enters the office as ROSS - the new Top Cop of Palm City - looks over his speech.

VINCE FARADAY

Sorry to bother you, Chief.

ROSS

(doesn't look up from speech)

What's up?

VINCE FARADAY

(holds up paper)

Threat to the Mayor came in.

(MORE)

VINCE FARADAY (CONT'D)
 Calls himself 'Chess.' He's got
 today's event schedule. That hasn't
 been released.

ROSS
 We don't flinch. Not today.

VINCE FARADAY
 (pause, pockets the paper)
 Understood.

ROSS
 (puts speech down, picks
 up two pieces of paper)
 I'm like Santa Claus here, Faraday,
 I've got two lists. Cops who've
 been Naughty and cops who've been
 Nice.

Ross holds up a sheet of paper with two hundred names. And a
 sheet of paper with five names.

ROSS (CONT'D)
 (shakes two hundred names)
 Naughty.
 (shakes five names)
 Nice.
 (beat)
 That's a lot of coal.

VINCE FARADAY
 Yes, sir.

ROSS
 I've never seen corruption like
 this and I'm no boy scout. So what
 the hell have I gotten myself into?
 (holds up his hand)
 Don't answer that.
 (beat)
 I need someone I can trust.
 (glances at paper)
 I've read your performance reviews.
 Outstanding. Says here you have a
 military background. Army Rangers.
 Special Operations?

VINCE FARADAY
 (nods)
 Unconventional warfare.

ROSS
 Good. We face an unconventional
 war.

(MORE)

ROSS (CONT'D)

(beat)

So what's the deal? You some kind of hero? Think you're just better than everyone else?

VINCE FARADAY

No, Chief.

ROSS

So why? Why stay clean? Better yet: why's this city worth saving?

VINCE FARADAY

(pause)

I played ball on Ditmuss Avenue. My son goes to Radnor Elementary. My wife grew up over the hill in Baldwin. It's home.

ROSS

You married up.

VINCE FARADAY

She'll tell you that.

ROSS

All right, Faraday, get out. I'm gonna lean on you. Make us proud today. Need to read this stupid damn speech.

CUT TO:

EXT. ROOFTOPS - PALM CITY - DAY

SWAT SNIPERS train their scopes on any open window. A CROWD gathers below. We hear VOICES amplified by microphones.

EXT. COURTHOUSE STEPS - PALM CITY - DAY

ROSS - THE NEW CHIEF OF POLICE - is at the podium in the middle of his speech. THE MAYOR is flanked by UNIFORMED POLICE. REPORTERS and PHOTOGRAPHERS fill the steps. There is a serious law-enforcement-presence on the streets.

PALM CITY has a coastal sunniness and allure. A mixture of sleek skyscrapers and white-sand-beaches. It could be LA or Miami. A world just like ours. But just beneath the surface...a cancer grows.

ACROSS THE STREET: VINCE FARADAY watches the speech and the sidewalks with TWO UNIFORMED OFFICERS.

VINCE FARADAY
 (to cops)
 Get somebody on that north corner.
 We're looking a little thin there.

OFFICER #1
 On it.

The officer jogs down the closed-off-street. Vince is uneasy.

VINCE FARADAY
 (to remaining cop)
 Why show off that you've got the
 mayor's schedule? What's the point
 of that?

OFFICER #2
 Look at all this press. He wants
 the attention.

VINCE FARADAY
 Guy names himself Chess, though. I
 studied chess - the game - a lot in
 military theory classes.

The press conference is over. The Mayor is whisked down the
 stairs. Flashbulbs POP. Police fan out to their cars. A
 UNIFORMED OFFICER heads towards Vince.

VINCE FARADAY (CONT'D)
 (still talking to cop)
 Key piece of Chess strategy is
 disguising your true objective. Get
 your opponent to defend his...
 (notices something, stops
 an approaching officer)
 Jenner, what're you doing? You and
 Garcia are my bodies on the Chief.

JENNER
 (confused)
 You just called me off it.

The Chief of Police shakes hands. Ducks into a black sedan.

VINCE FARADAY
 The hell I did!

INT. BLACK SEDAN - DAY

THE CHIEF OF POLICE loosens his tie in the passenger seat.

CHIEF OF POLICE ROSS

Let's roll.

(beat, jokes)

Hope that Chess moron had a front row seat.

Ross smells something. He turns around and sees...

...an officer - GARCIA - dead. A smoking hole in his chest.

Ross turns to THE DRIVER who takes off his sunglasses. He wears freakish contact lenses - A CHESS SYMBOL IN EACH EYE - a rook and a knight.

CHESS

Backstage pass.

Before the Chief can react there's a HYPODERMIC NEEDLE in his neck and a poison pushing into his carotid artery.

EXT. COURTHOUSE STEPS - PALM CITY - DAY

VINCE jogs towards the black sedan which PEELS out in reverse, suddenly.

VINCE FARADAY

(into radio)

He's got the Chief!

The black sedan SQUEALS around the corner. Vince races after it on foot. Officers scramble.

CUT TO:

INT. FARADAY KITCHEN - NIGHT

A haggard VINCE FARADAY enters the kitchen. Wife DANA (30s, pretty, no pushover) gives him a well-needed-hug.

TRIP sits at the table eating dessert. The news is on.

NEWS 7 REPORTER (V.O.)

...following a tip from the investigative blogger known, mysteriously, as ORWELL, Ross's body was found yesterday hanging from the Statue of Justice...

ON TV SCREEN: WE SEE a black tarp covering a statue. More police tape. Police cars everywhere.

NEWS 7 REPORTER (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 ...in the Palm City Memorial Park.
 Police are withholding information
 on possible suspects pending the
 investigation.

(beat)

So who is ORWELL and how does this
 anonymous blogger solve crimes
 that the police can't even...

TRIP

(to Vince)

Dad, are the bad guys winning?

VINCE FARADAY

Yeah.

(looks at Dana)

Yeah, they are.

DANA

(to Trip)

Dad's just tired.

CUT TO:

INT. BASEMENT - FARADAY HOME - NIGHT

Under a bare bulb VINCE twirls two police truncheons and
 assails a hanging bag. Heavy blows. Vince is covered in
 sweat. Hands taped. He drives knees into an unseen enemy. He
 uses the truncheons with deadly accuracy. Substitutes his
 fists. This is a guy with advanced and unique fight training.

After exhausting himself he hears a floorboard CREAK...

...Vince turns to TRIP on the stairs. His small hands are
 taped too. Vince gestures for him to come over.

Trip walks over. Punches the bag.

VINCE FARADAY

(gently)

Good. Turn the hips.

(turns his hips to
 demonstrate)

Boom.

Trip whacks it again. Gives it his all.

VINCE FARADAY (CONT'D)

Better.

Trip punches it again. Again. Hard. Vince watches. Proud.

TRIP
 (a little winded)
 I know you'll get him, Dad.

Vince pulls Trip into a hug. Cradles his head to his stomach.

TRIP (CONT'D)
 Love you.

CUT TO:

INT. BEDROOM - FARADAY HOME - NIGHT

DANA is in the bathroom. Dries her face. VINCE is in bed. They're in the middle of a discussion.

VINCE FARADAY
 I thought you'd be happy.

DANA
 I just want to know it's what you want. You've always wanted to be a cop.

VINCE FARADAY
 I'd still be a cop.

DANA
 A private cop. A corporate cop.

VINCE FARADAY
 How can I do my job if I can't trust the guy next to me?

DANA
 No, I get it.

VINCE FARADAY
 Lynx Corporation runs a tight ship. Everyone says they're taking over the force in six months. I get in now. Good benefits. Time off.

Dana climbs onto the bed.

DANA
 Time off? What's that?

VINCE FARADAY
 Home for dinner? Not that you can cook.

DANA

Not that you've ever tried. Or
changed a light bulb in two years.

Vince curls Dana into his arms. Kiss.

VINCE FARADAY

(means this)

I don't care if it all burns to the
ground as long as I have you.

DANA

Where'd you hear that?

VINCE FARADAY

What? I thought that sounded good.

Vince kisses her. Dana kisses him back, presses against him.
The temperature goes up as we...

CUT TO:

INT. IMMACULATE OFFICES - DAY

VINCE looks like a fish out of water in these sleek steel and
slate offices. In iron letters on the wall it reads: LYNX.
Vince wears a suit and tie and watches a PROMOTIONAL VIDEO as
he waits for his appointment.

TITLE: TWO WEEKS LATER

INTENSE WOMAN'S VOICE (V.O.)

...operating in war theaters in 17
nations, Lynx Corp. is leading the
world with 21st century solutions
to the world's oldest conflicts.

ON SCREEN: Tanks rumble through deserts...MEN IN SUNGLASSES
look at Architectural blueprints for schools in destroyed
towns...WE SEE black choppers shooting across night skies
armed to the teeth with outlandish-tech-hardware...

INTENSE WOMAN'S VOICE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Chairman and CEO Peter Fleming now
plans to bring Lynx solutions to
cities all across America.

ON SCREEN: CHAIRMAN OF LYNX - PETER FLEMING (40s, glowing)
confers with POLICE OFFICERS in an urban setting...Peter
Fleming giving speeches...

INTENSE WOMAN'S VOICE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Setting a new standard in
privatized law enforcement through
charter programs...

MARTY VOYT (O.S.)
Vince?

VINCE looks away from the screen at MARTY VOYT (40s,
friendly) - former police detective and friend.

VINCE FARADAY
Marty.

The two old friends share a hug.

MARTY VOYT
I was so happy to get your call.

INT. MARTY VOYT'S OFFICE - DAY

VINCE and MARTY sit at a coffee table.

MARTY VOYT
This takeover is happening. Palm
City will have a private police
force. Peter Fleming is a freakin'
visionary. Real wages. Real
technology. It's the future.

VINCE FARADAY
Sounds great.

MARTY VOYT
How's Dana? Trip?

VINCE FARADAY
Good. You know, I never see 'em but
they're good.

MARTY VOYT
These hours won't kill you either.

INT. HALLWAY - LYNX CORPORATE HQ - DAY

MARTY and VINCE shake hands outside Marty's office.

VINCE FARADAY
Can't tell you how much I
appreciate this, Marty.

There is movement down the hall as Lynx CEO PETER Fleming
makes his way through the offices.

MARTY VOYT
 (to Vince)
 This is him.
 (to Peter Fleming)
 Mr. Fleming.

Peter Fleming stops. Vince is nervous.

MARTY VOYT (CONT'D)
 (to Peter Fleming)
 This is the detective I told you
 about: Vince Faraday.

PETER FLEMING
 (shakes hands with Vince,
 smiles)
 You coming aboard?

VINCE FARADAY
 I...sure...I'd be honored.

PETER FLEMING
 (puts his hand on Vince's
 shoulder)
 This can be a great city again,
 Vince.

VINCE FARADAY
 Yes, sir. Yes it can.

PETER FLEMING
 All right then. Let's do it.

MARTY VOYT
 (smiles at Vince)
 You're in partner.

Relief flushes over Vince.

CUT TO:

INT. FARADAY KITCHEN - NIGHT

VINCE makes out with Dana in the family's kitchen. TRIP
 covers his eyes.

TRIP
 I'm eating.

DANA
 (to Vince)
 How do you feel?

VINCE FARADAY
 Like I can breathe.
 (taps Trip on the head)
 Now we can focus on getting bad
 guys.

Trip smiles.

INT. TRIP'S ROOM - NIGHT

DANA pokes her head in.

DANA
 He's gotta finish his school
 reading.

VINCE lays over the covers. TRIP is tucked in.

VINCE FARADAY
 (holds up book)
 We're on it.

Dana smiles.

DANA
 (to Trip)
 Night sweetheart.

TRIP
 Night Mom!

Dana closes the door. Vince looks at Trip. Trip nods.

Vince puts down the school book and pulls out a comic book. The titular character is a black-masked-super-hero streaking across the sky, a great black cape fluttering in the wind behind him. The title: **THE CAPE.**

VINCE FARADAY
 Where were we?
 (reads)
 "...The Cape looked up at his
 friend - the man he thought was his
 friend - instead it was El Diablo,
 his face a leering mask of fire.
 The Cape: 'I should've killed you
 when I had the chance, El Diablo.'
 El Diablo says: 'I've been
 pretending to be Mike Masters to
 get close to you. To learn
 everything about you. And now the
 master stroke...'"

Trip cuddles in a little closer to his Dad.

CUT TO:

INT. LYNX OFFICES - DAY

VINCE walks the halls in the black jumpsuit of Lynx Security Forces. He wears a sidearm on his leg, carries a bunch of files. He stops as a TV plays in one of the offices.

NEWS 7 REPORTER (V.O.)
 ...the Chess crime spree continues.
 Two bodies were found on the steps
 of City Hall. One of them belonged
 to City Treasurer Michael--

MARTY VOYT
 (passes Vince in the hall)
 How was your first day?

VINCE FARADAY
 (to Marty, re: TV)
 We've been wrong about this guy.
 Doesn't seem crazy. Ambitious, yes.
 Crazy no.
 (beat)
 We have to get this guy, Marty.

MARTY VOYT
 That's the plan. Have a good one.

VINCE FARADAY
 (distracted, watching TV)
 Night.

INT. PARKING STRUCTURE - NIGHT

VINCE gets into his car, looks up and sees a DVD CASE sticking out of his visor. Vince looks around the parking lot then, cautiously, takes down the DVD. On the cover is an image of an ALL-SEEING-EYE.

VINCE FARADAY
 (recognizes the image)
 Orwell.

INT. VINCE'S HOME OFFICE - NIGHT

DANA - in pajamas - sleeps on the couch in the living room as we MOVE THROUGH THE HOUSE to Vince's office.

VINCE is at his computer. He pops the DVD in his computer. A *digitally-disguised-VOICE* speaks to Vince through the computer. The ORWELL LOGO turns on screen.

ORWELL

Hello, Vince. We haven't met but I've been watching you. You're one of the honest ones. One of the few left. And now you're a part of the Great Machine - Lynx.

The floating Orwell logo is replaced by a variety of images: LYNX TROOPS in foreign conflicts - PROTESTS in South America watched over by LYNX TROOPS - SURVEILLANCE PHOTOS of PETER Fleming exiting a corporate jet, shaking hands with SOUTH AMERICAN GENERALS...

ORWELL (CONT'D)

You're on the inside. Now might be a good time to examine just who it is you're working for.

More images: Surveillance of PETER FLEMING exiting a limousine at a British estate - then heavily blacked-out CIA DOCUMENTS labeled: **CHIMERA**...

ORWELL (CONT'D)

To ask yourself: what is Lynx? What is its mission?

More images: DEA images of cocaine shipments intercepted on the high seas - burning villages in Africa - raw diamonds - mug shots of MOBSTERS including one who has sub, parchment skin, looks like a corpse...

ORWELL (CONT'D)

This is Umberto Molich. You know him as The Lich. Head of the Molich Crime Family...

More images: The Lich in sunglasses at a private air port...

ORWELL (CONT'D)

And this is Chess.

On screen is a composite sketch of a MASKED FIGURE.

ORWELL (CONT'D)

We know a disturbing amount of nothing about him. But the word on the street is Chess struck an alliance with The Lich. Where am I going with all of this?

(beat)

The Lich has opened business contacts with Hong Kong toy manufacturers, maker of the popular Pammy Pees doll.

(MORE)

ORWELL (CONT'D)
 Rumor has it Chess is helping the
 Lich move product to a Palm City
 warehouse near the piers. A
 warehouse owned by a subsidiary of
 Lynx. Your new boss. Address is
 4222 Lake.

(beat)

I don't know what's in there. I
 can't get inside. But you can. So,
 let's see if you're still a cop,
 Vince. We'll be in touch.

The screen goes black. Vince considers all of this.

CUT TO:

EXT. WAREHOUSE - PALM CITY PIERS - NIGHT

A sleepy and annoyed MARTY VOYT pulls up in his SUV to an
 abandoned warehouse on a lonely pier. VINCE waits by the
 curb, blowing on his hands for the chill.

MARTY VOYT
 It's 3am, Vince.

VINCE FARADAY
 You alone?

MARTY VOYT
 No, there's five guys in the trunk.

Vince turns and heads over to a warehouse where the front
 door is ajar. Marty studies the chain lock which is cut.

MARTY VOYT (CONT'D)
 Did you clip this chain?

VINCE FARADAY (O.S.)
 (already inside)
 Come on.

INT. WAREHOUSE - PALM CITY PIERS - NIGHT

MARTY VOYT follows VINCE, warily.

MARTY VOYT
 (stops walking)
 I'm sorry, I'm getting a little
 nervous.

Vince stops at a few opened brown boxes labeled: PAMMY PEES.

VINCE FARADAY
 Look inside.

Marty glances inside the box, takes out a Pammy Pees doll.

MARTY VOYT
 (reads box)
 Pammy Pees, hours of toilet-
 training-fun.

VINCE FARADAY
 Open the box.

MARTY VOYT
 This is illegal, Vince. This is not
 my idea of the 21st century police--

Vince takes the box from Marty, tears it open, takes out the Pammy Pees doll and - carefully - pulls off the head.

VINCE FARADAY
 (hands over the doll)
 I don't know about you: I'm
 thinking recall.

Marty looks inside the doll body, tilts it and out slides a STEEL CANNISTER with a chemical name on the label as long as your arm and NERVE AGENT printed prominently upon it.

VINCE FARADAY (CONT'D)
 It's a weaponized shell filled with
 - what I think is - VX gas. I've
 checked six boxes. All the same.
 (beat)
 What's Peter Fleming need a
 warehouse full of nerve gas for?

Marty looks around at all the boxes. Back at Vince.

MARTY VOYT
 You're talking about a multi-
 billion-dollar-corporation. Has a
 lot of moving parts.

VINCE FARADAY
 In this city those moving parts
 seem to include organized crime and
 chemical weapons. Marty, I'm sorry.
 You're my friend--

MARTY VOYT
 Let me get on the phone with Mel
 Thomas over at the Bureau, find out
 what the hell is going on. You go
 home. I'll call you in two hours.

Marty exits.

CUT TO:

INT. BEDROOM - FARADAY HOME - NIGHT

VINCE lays in bed, still in his clothes. DANA sleeps beside him. The clock reads 5:45 AM. Vince closes his eyes.

The phone RINGS. Vince answers immediately.

VINCE FARADAY

Yeah?

CUT TO:

EXT. FREIGHT YARD - PALM CITY - NIGHT

VINCE exits his car at a rail yard. He checks that his GUN is loaded and stuffs it in the back of his pants. He walks between heavy freight cars. In the distance a TRAIN WHISTLES.

In the maze of cars, Vince passes one with a once-garish, now fading poster for an old carnival exhibition: MAX MALINI'S FANTASTIC ODDITIES AND AMAZEMENTS!

MARTY VOYT (O.S.)

Vince.

Vince turns to an open freight car. MARTY waves. Vince heads over. Marty helps him up. Vince sees tears in Marty's eyes.

MARTY VOYT (CONT'D)

I'm sorry--

A hypodermic is in Vince's neck before he can reach his gun.

FADE TO BLACK:

INT. FREIGHT CAR - RAIL YARD - NIGHT

VINCE gasps awake. He's tied to a chair.

CHESS sits in front of him. He wears a tight black mask over his face. Only his eyes with the disturbing contact lenses are visible. There is a chess board in front of Vince.

Vince looks around and sees MARTY in the shadows.

VINCE FARADAY

Marty...what'd--?

Marty says nothing, stares at his shoes.

VINCE FARADAY (CONT'D)
 (sees chess board, to
 Marty)
 What did you do!?

CHESS
 Do you play Chess?

VINCE FARADAY
 (looks at Chess, slowly)
 I'm...not good.

CHESS
 I ask because you have an
 aggressive opening. In the game I'd
 call it a Latvian Gambit. You
 forced me to finetune some things.

VINCE FARADAY
 What's the plan for the VX?

CHESS
 But we're in the Middlegame. Pawns
 become crucial. And out of your
 inexperience, you left your
 king...vulnerable.

Vince absorbs this. Thinks of his family.

CHESS (CONT'D)
 My life is a chess game that I play
 against myself. I'm a little like
 Lancelot on the bridge. Waiting for
 the one who will challenge me.

Chess pulls off his mask TO REVEAL...

...PETER FLEMING - Chairman and CEO of Lynx Corporation.

Vince's jaw falls open. LYNX TROOPS step forward from the shadows. Peter Fleming removes the Chess contact lenses.

VINCE FARADAY
 (stunned)
 No...no...

PETER FLEMING
 Chess must pay for his crimes.

Peter Fleming hands the Chess mask to Marty and a Lynx thug. They smear glue all through the fabric.

PETER FLEMING (CONT'D)
Lynx will make him pay. And when
they do, the Mayor will turn over
the police to me.

(beat)

And when the Coroner's report is
released to the press it will be
your skin they find under Chief's
Ross's fingernails.

VINCE FARADAY
Please don't. I've got a family--

PETER FLEMING
This is check, Vince.

Peter Fleming nods. Marty and the Lynx thugs hold Vince--

VINCE FARADAY
No! No!

The Chess mask is forced over Vince's head and face.

PETER FLEMING
You have one move left.
(beat)
Run.

END ACT ONE

ACT TWO**TITLE: THE CARNIVAL OF CRIME**

EXT. FREIGHT YARD - PALM CITY - DAY

A blood dawn looms on the horizon as VINCE FARADAY runs for his life, staggering through the rail yard, YANKING on the Chess mask glued to his face as...

...LYNX TROOPS methodically sweep across the rail yard. Red targeting lasers dance across the freight cars.

A LYNX CHOPPER swerves overhead, its hot spotlight on Vince as he darts in and out.

INT. KITCHEN - FARADAY HOME - DAY

Coffee brews. Dana fixes TRIP his breakfast. The TV is on with the sound down. There are images of the police chase happening at the rail yard.

The chyron on TV reads: BREAKING NEWS - LYNX SECURITY PERSONNEL PURSUING SUSPECT IN 'CHESS' MURDERS...

DANA
(to Trip)
Oatmeal, okay?

TRIP
(groggy)
Sure.
(beat)
Where's Dad?

DANA
I don't know, hon. He must've been called in to work.

TRIP
(watches TV)
Hey Mom. I think they caught Chess.

Dana notices the TV for the first time. She turns it up.

REPORTER (V.O.)
...very fluid situation developing. Lynx Security Personnel are in pursuit of a suspect in the 'Chess' murders. The suspect is on foot in the Palm City rail yard.

TRIP
 (hopeful)
 Is that where Dad is?

DANA
 (brightens)
 Maybe.

EXT. FREIGHT YARD - PALM CITY - DAY

VINCE slams against a freight car. He looks freakish with the torn, half-glued mask stuck to his face. Bullets PWING off the steel casing of the freight cars. Vince ducks and runs. He sees Lynx BOOTS underneath the freight cars. The chopper spotlight follows him relentlessly.

INT. KITCHEN - FARADAY HOME - DAY

DANA continues with TRIP's breakfast, glancing at the TV. Trip watches - fascinated.

DANA
 Why don't we turn that off?

TRIP
 No!

DANA
 Honey, they sometimes have to shoot the person, I don't want--

REPORTER (V.O.)
 ...okay, there is new information-- we're-- News 7 has learned -- we're being told the suspect is Police Sergeant - former Police Sergeant - Vince Faraday.

TRIP
 (confused)
 Why did she say that?

DANA
 (fixing Trip's plate)
 What, hon?

TRIP
 They said Dad was Chess.

DANA
 (looks over)
 They said what?

TRIP
 (frightened)
 She said Dad.

Dana turns up the TV.

DANA
 That was a mistake. You didn't hear
 it, right.

With shaking hands, Dana fumbles for the phone, dialing
 Vince's cellphone.

TRIP
 Mom, what--?

DANA
 Quiet Trip!

Suddenly, a black and white PHOTOGRAPH OF VINCE flashes on
 the screen with the chyron: CHESS SUSPECT.

Dana drops the phone. Hands over her mouth. Pure horror.

TRIP
 (in tears)
 Why are they saying that?! Mom?!

DANA
 (whispers)
 It's a mistake, it's a mistake--

TRIP
 (looks at TV)
 Are they gonna kill him?

Dana takes hold of Trip in a primal embrace, terror-filled
 eyes locked on the screen.

DANA
 (tries to cover Trip's
 eyes)
 Don't watch. Don't watch. It's a
 mistake! They just got it wrong!

TRIP
 (crying)
 Why are they chasing him!?

EXT. RAIL YARD - PALM CITY - DAY

VINCE staggers past the strange Carnival poster and catches
 his foot on a broken timber. Vince hits the ground hard. He
 climbs to his feet, turns and sees...

...LYNX TROOPS curl around the corner, rifles aiming.

Vince turns and sees a FUEL CAR blocking his path. Vince charges towards the fuel car as bullets PWING all around him. Vince hits the dirt and scrambles on his stomach under the fuel car. Vince claws for daylight.

Vince knows what happens next. He digs in the gravel. Drags himself to his feet on the other side. But too late as...

...THE FUEL CAR EXPLODES.

A shockwave hits Vince, throwing him forward like a rag doll, followed by a gathering wave of blue fire that soars overhead.

The chopper PEELS away as the RAIL CAR hurtles into the sky on a plume of hellflame before PLUMMETING back to Earth.

LYNX TROOPS are flattened by the blast, retreating in a panic from the licking, devouring fire.

INT. KITCHEN - FARADAY HOME - DAY

DANA screams and holds TRIP to her chest as the TV screen fills with images of the explosion - their lives - in an instant - turned inside out.

EXT. RAIL YARD - PALM CITY - DAY

The rail yard is filled with choking black smoke. Debris is everywhere. VINCE'S body smokes. His clothing is charred. He is unconscious, face-down. He is oblivious to...

...a set of small, gnarled hands that take his collar and roughly DRAG him into the shadows.

FADE TO BLACK:

EXT. COURTHOUSE STEPS - PALM CITY - DAY

PETER FLEMING stands before a flotilla of cameras. A CROWD fills the street. Peter Fleming is flanked by a LINEUP OF LYNX TROOPS in their black gear.

PETER FLEMING

Six months ago, when Mayor Welkins approached me about taking over the Palm City police force I told him 'no.' I told him Lynx - having proved itself in international conflicts the world over - hadn't proven itself on this battlefield. Today...we have.

There is APPLAUSE. Cameras CLICK.

PETER FLEMING (CONT'D)
 Palm City is safer this morning
 because of us.
 (beat)
 And so it is - with pride - that I
 accept Mayor Welkins offer to be
 the first fully private
 metropolitan police force in the
 United States!

More APPLAUSE.

INT. KITCHEN - FARADAY HOME - DAY

PETER FLEMING smiles for the cameras. Waves.

REPORTER (V.O.)
 In related news Lynx stock rose to
 40-dollars-a-share--

Click. Screen goes black. A gaunt, exhausted DANA takes her coffee and trudges up the stairs.

INT. TRIP'S ROOM - DAY

DANA knocks softly.

DANA
 (whispers)
 Trip, honey?

TRIP lays in bed. Reading his CAPE COMIC.

DANA (CONT'D)
 (whispers)
 Sweetie, you want breakfast?

Trip doesn't respond. Just reads his comic.

DANA (CONT'D)
 Take all the time you need. Will
 you eat a little something for
 Mommy later?

Trip nods a little.

DANA (CONT'D)
 (smiles, thankful for any
 response)
 Okay, hon. I love you.

Dana shuts the door. Then...she loses it. She GASPS into her hand and SOBS. Doesn't want Trip to hear. She heads for the stairs. Coming apart at the seams.

There is a KNOCK at the door.

Dana recovers. Wipes her eyes. Heads downstairs. She opens the door. It's MARTY VOYT. Pale. Ashen.

MARTY VOYT
(tears in his eyes)
Dana...

Seeing any kind of friendly face, Dana crumbles into his arms.

MARTY VOYT (CONT'D)
(holds her)
I wish I knew what to say. I don't
know what to say. I'm so sorry.
(beat)
This is a nightmare.

Marty looks up...

...and sees TRIP staring down at him from the top of the stairs. Marty tries to convey sympathy to Trip but there's something about the boy's eyes that for a moment - shake Marty. Marty's eyes show just a trace of menace.

CUT TO:

INT. UNDERGROUND HIDEOUT - NIGHT

Total blackness. WE HEAR rustling. Murmurs. Then...

VOICE
(gravelly)
Wake him up.

POW! Vince's eyes blink open. The first thing he sees is a MUSCULAR LITTLE PERSON - about three feet tall - in a wife-beater-t-shirt, standing on a chair, reaching back with a balled fist ready to BELT Vince again.

VINCE FARADAY
M'awake.
(clears his throat)
I'm awake.

MAX MALINI (O.S.)
Rollo.

The little person - ROLLO - climbs down from the chair, glares at Vince.

Vince takes in the EXOTIC CREW before him. There are POSTERS and dusty FRAMED PHOTOS of their traveling circus personas. Rollo - the Little Person Strongman/Clown in his white makeup alongside an East Indian in a shiny blue turban. The Animal Trainer - RAIA - in her garish leather costume. Vince fits right in with the Chess mask still half-glued to his face.

In their civilian clothes, the Carnival still strikes a fairly odd note.

The leader of this group is showman/magician/escape-artist (once extraordinaire) MAX MALINI (60s). Max has a faded-Errol-Flynn-feel about him. He taps pills into his hand and washes them down with a swig of red wine.

MAX MALINI (CONT'D)

(to Vince)

211. On the nose. Am I right?

VINCE FARADAY

(groggy)

Where am I?

Rollo SMACKS Vince.

ROLLO

Answer him, jerkface. He's guessing your weight. Two-eleven! Is he right?

VINCE FARADAY

(confused)

That sounds...yeah. About right.

There is scattered applause.

RAIA

(to Vince)

He's never wrong.

MAX MALINI

I never miss.

(beat)

So you're Chess, eh?

VINCE FARADAY

I'm not Chess--

The group LAUGHS.

MAX MALINI

Is there egg on my face? Whatever
gave me that impression?

Rollo POPS on the TV across the room. There is wall-to-wall-
coverage...

REPORTER (V.O.)

...authorities continue to gather
evidence after the explosion that
appears to have taken the life of
Vince Faraday, aka: Chess...

We see VINCE'S PHOTO alongside of police sketches of Chess.
TV pops off.

MAX MALINI

(turns back)

Whoops!

VINCE FARADAY

I was framed...I was...

(beat)

Look, you want the truth? Chess is
Peter Fleming.

There is LAUGHTER.

VINCE FARADAY (CONT'D)

He is!

(beat)

Fine. Whatever. What do you want?

MAX MALINI

Money, you poor, slow-thinking man!
We are the Carnival of Crime! We
are professional bank robbers! Now
are you worth anything to me or
not? Because I'm getting thirsty!

Rollo pours Max another cup of wine. Max drinks. Scowls.

VINCE FARADAY

I'm just a cop.

There is a GROAN from the gang.

MAX MALINI

Wrong answer! Rollo!

Rollo drops the barbells, climbs up onto the chair and BELTS
Vince again.

MAX MALINI (CONT'D)
 We hate cops! They arrest people
 like us!

RAIA
 Max, you're screaming.

MAX MALINI
 (to Raia)
 I'm using my stage voice!
 (to Vince, quieter)
 When you were Chess you were
 interesting. Now you're boring.
 (to Ruvi, Rollo)
 Dump him in the desert. Cut the
 fingers off. Head too, I guess.

RAIA
 But he's cute.

The Carnival takes this in stride.

VINCE FARADAY
 Wait! Just...wait.
 (beat)
 I'm a cop...who happens to know
 every security procedure, code
 schedule and personnel shift for
 the Palm City branch of Lynx
 Security Corporation.
 (beat)
 Check my pockets.

Max nods. Rollo goes through Vince's pockets. Pulls out a set
 of keys.

VINCE FARADAY (CONT'D)
 Those are bypass keys. Fit into
 alarm keypads to bypass security
 codes.
 (beat)
 Lynx alarms and security troops are
 taking over every bank in Palm
 City.
 (beat)
 Now how much is my life worth?

Max stares at Vince. Takes a gulp of wine. Smiles.

CUT TO:

INT. LYNX CORPORATE HQ - PALM CITY - NIGHT

A JANITOR wheels his cart down a long, dark hallway.

CLOSE AS: A GLOVED HAND sticks Vince's key into the code keypad. The key turns. The keypad lights go dark. WE HEAR a door open.

WE FOLLOW: RAIJA'S RACCOON who lopes purposefully down the hallway. THE JANITOR heads down another hall in the distance.

CUT TO:

INT. MAX'S TRAILER - NIGHT

MAX MALINI dumps BRICKS OF CASH onto the table.

MAX MALINI
Ladies and gentlemen we have a
winner!

The CARNIVAL GANG applauds. VINCE lingers in the background. RAIJA sidles closer to Vince, nuzzling her RACCOON.

Max points his gold-tipped-cane at Vince. Nods approvingly.

CUT TO:

INT. OFFICE OF PETER FLEMING - LYNX - DAY

PETER FLEMING sits at his desk watching SECURITY VIDEO FOOTAGE of Raia's RACCOON loping down the hallway, one paw lugging a suitcase of cash.

MARTY VOYT stands behind Fleming with SEVERAL SECURITY TECHS. Fleming is not pleased. He freezes the image of the raccoon.

PETER FLEMING
(dripping sarcasm)
Do we think the raccoon acted
alone?

MARTY VOYT
(squirms)
Probably not, sir.

PETER FLEMING
How much did it take?

MARTY VOYT
Around eighty...thousand.

PETER FLEMING
That would buy a lot of pinecones.
Find these comedians. I'll deficit
the eighty from your pay. As
motivation.

MARTY VOYT
 (swallows)
 Yes, sir.

CUT TO:

INT. CARNIVAL HIDEOUT - UNDER THE FREIGHT YARD - NIGHT

VINCE sits on a cot. He holds a PHONE to his ear, working up the courage to dial. The TV drones in the background.

NEWS 7 REPORTER (V.O.)
 ...the badly burned body was identified as belonging to Vince Faraday - the primary suspect in the Chess murders.

Vince turns to the TV MAX MALINI curls around the corner.

MAX MALINI
 (re: TV, sarcastic)
 See? You really are Chess.

VINCE FARADAY
 (beat)
 Move on Vincent. Time to move on.

VINCE FARADAY (CONT'D)
 I have to call my family. My son--

MAX MALINI
 Explain to them that you're not dead...that you didn't kill ten people...and drag them through two years of criminal trials ending in your conviction and eventual execution. Or Peter Fleming just kills them.
 They're safer with you gone. As simple as that.

Vince kicks the table over.

VINCE FARADAY
Then I'll kill Peter Fleming.

MAX MALINI
 You won't get to him. If you do another like him rises to take his place. Lynx is bigger than one man.

VINCE FARADAY
 I can find evidence, prove--

MAX MALINI

And they'll laugh at you. The cops.
The press. They're in his pocket!

VINCE FARADAY

Then what?!

MAX MALINI

Take his damn money. That's how you
take him down. That's how you take
down Lynx. Cut off their money. And
who better than me to take it?

VINCE FARADAY

It's not enough.

MAX MALINI

Here's the deal, Vincent: you help
me rob Peter Fleming...and I'll
help you get your family back.

Off Vince's look we...

CUT TO:

EXT. PALM CITY CEMETERY - DAY

VINCE watches his own burial from behind a tree at the Palm
City Cemetery. He sees DANA in black holding TRIP in his
suit. Vince sees MARTY VOYT consoling Dana.

Vince clenches his fists. Tortured. He wants to go to them
but after a few moments...he walks off in the opposite
direction.

END ACT TWO

ACT THREE

TITLE: THE BIRTH OF A HERO...

INT. BANK - PALM CITY - DAY

WE ENTER THROUGH THE DOORS of the bank, past a steel sign that says LYNX OPERATED SYSTEMS. Regular day. Move past a SECURITY GUARD with a LYNX BADGE. WE PAN AROUND TO...

...ROLLO, whistling to himself as he enters the bank. MOVE PAST Rollo and UP TO...

...THE MANAGER'S desk where RUVI applies for a loan. The Bank Manager's (he wears a LYNX pin) eyes have trouble staying open. As RuvI talks he slowly moves his hands in a deceptively hypnotic way.

RUVI
(speaking softly)
...I tell her I go to the bank on
Wednesday and she tell me that no
good we need the money on Monday
for the down payment and I tell her
that won't work because...

Ruvi studies the Bank Manager's face.

RUVI (CONT'D)
(smiles)
Because you hypnotized sucker.
(beat)
Open the safe.

WE PAN AROUND TO...

...ROLLO who stuffs a GUN in the Lynx Security Guard's crotch.

ROLLO
(to Guard)
Sssh.

WE SWING AROUND TO: MAX MALINI and VINCE enter wearing ski masks.

MAX MALINI
Ladies and gentlemen, children of
all ages...
(beat)
...on the floor or you're dead.

CUT TO:

INT. MAX'S TRAILER - NIGHT

MAX sits at a table and hands out bricks of cash to the CARNIVAL CREW lined up. Max gives VINCE a wink. Hands Vince a brick of cash.

CUT TO:

INT. ANOTHER PALM CITY BANK - DAY

A LYNX GUARD lunges at VINCE during a robbery. Vince takes him down, pins him to the floor while the Carnival does their work.

CUT TO:

INT. ANOTHER PALM CITY BANK - DAY

ROLLO, in a face-mask, fires SHOTGUN BLASTS into the roof of the Palm City bank. CUSTOMERS dive under desks and onto the floor. There are SCREAMS of panic.

ROLLO
Everybody down!

THE MASKED CREW goes about their business. MAX up-ends a LYNX GUARD with his gold-tipped-cane. WE SWING AROUND TO...

...VINCE - who guards the door - wearing his own ski mask.

DANA (O.S.)
(whispers)
Honey, get down...honey...

Vince turns and sees...

...TRIP, standing in front of him, frozen with fear. DANA is on the floor reaching for Trip. She sees Vince see him...

VINCE FARADAY
(steps forward)
It's okay--

DANA
Stay away from him!

Rollo PIVOTS around aiming the shotgun.

ROLLO
On your faces!

VINCE FARADAY
(to Rollo)
No!

Dana slowly pulls Trip into her arms.

TRIP
(crying)
I wish the Cape were real, mama. I
wish he were real.

Vince stands there. Helpless. Ashamed. Until POLICE SIRENS.

MAX MALINI (O.S.)
Hello?! We are leaving!

Vince turns to see THE CREW waiting for him. Vince shakes out of his daze, throws one last look back at his family as we...

CUT TO:

INT. MAX'S TRAILER - NIGHT

MAX sits at his desk with bricks of cash beside him. Max hands ROLLO a brick. Rollo heads out as VINCE enters...

MAX MALINI
Next!
(writes on a clipboard)
Mr. Faraday.

Max slides a stack of bills.

MAX MALINI (CONT'D)
A little more focus next gig, yes?
(looks up from his notes)
You're not getting them back. I
know who that was in the bank
today. I'm not an idiot.

VINCE FARADAY
Palm City is my home. And it's been
taken over by madmen. There is no
law. There's only...

MAX MALINI
What? Only what? You?

VINCE FARADAY
I'm still his father, Max, don't
you understand? I have to show
him...that he isn't alone. Send him
a message.

MAX MALINI
What message?

VINCE FARADAY

That it's not all corrupt. That one man...can still make a difference.

MAX MALINI

(dubious)

Show him? How?

CUT TO:

INT. STORAGE TENT - NIGHT

VINCE is alone in a vast shadowy space. Dust swirls in the moonlight that invades through the patchwork circus tent. Vince sweats. He's taped chair legs - substitute truncheons - to his forearms and assails one of the thick tent posts with fast and hard BLOWS. It creates a RAT-A-TAT-TAT sound that echoes through the space. Again. RAT-A-TAT-TAT. Again until one of the chair legs BREAKS IN TWO.

Vince tears it off his arm, frustrated. He turns to the rest of the storage area. The walls are covered in old costumes, handcuffs, broken magic cabinets, pieces of water tanks, horse whips, clown toys and...

...Vince stops at Max's locker. Hanging from a nail is a simple BLACK CAPE. Vince takes the cape off the nail sending glistening dust into the air as it unfurls. Vince holds the fabric in his hands.

FLASH ON:

Vince lays in bed with his son...

FLASH ON:

Vince stares intently at the black cape in his hands...

FLASH ON:

Vince pulls out the wrinkled comic book as Trip snuggles into his father's arms...

FLASH ON:

Vince wraps an end of the black cape in each fist...something dawning in his eyes...

FLASH ON:

Trip's eyes light up as Vince turns the page of the comic to a full-page-spread of the superhero THE CAPE leaping across a nighttime city-scape...

FLASH ON:

VINCE ducks down and SWIRLS the black cape over his head. Pivots and crouches concealing himself in the cape...an insane idea forming...Vince SLAMS the tent post with the unbroken chair leg on his arm and WHIRLS around into a crouch, the cape concealing all of Vince's face but his burning eyes as we...

CUT TO:

INT. MAX'S TRAILER - NIGHT

WE PAN ACROSS a wall of framed photos and posters advertising "Max Malini's terrifying escapes and acts of stupendous survival." VINCE sits across from MAX. Max holds the old cape in his hands.

MAX MALINI

Haven't seen this old rag in years.
(considers what Vince has
asked him)
That would be...quite an act.

VINCE FARADAY

Is it possible?

Max stands up with the cape.

MAX MALINI

I've broken ninety-two bones in
pursuit of the perfect illusion.
Trained generations of escapists,
acrobats and magicians. I
specialize in impossible.

Max SNAPS out the Cape and it WRAPS around a glass on another table and WHIPS back. Max catches the glass.

MAX MALINI (CONT'D)

But I do nothing halfway. It's all
or nothing. You'll feel pain you've
never felt. I'll work you to the
bone and beyond. You give me your
soul...

(beat)

...and I'll make you the greatest
circus act that ever lived.

With that, Max throws the cape around his body. There is an EXPLOSION OF SMOKE and Max seemingly vanishes into thin air.

VINCE FARADAY
 (approving, amazed)
 When do we start?

CUT TO:

INT. BOXING RING - DAY

THE CREW hoots and hollers as VINCE squares off against ROLLO in a boxing ring.

VINCE FARADAY
 (trash talking Rollo)
 Let's see how tough you are when
 I'm not tied to a chair, huh?

ROLLO
 Bring it, bitch boy.

Vince lunges for Rollo who somersaults through Vince's legs, whirls around and takes Vince down with an ankle-drag. He WRENCHES Vince's ankle in a vice-like-grip. Vince writhes on the ground.

ROLLO (CONT'D)
 Tap out! Tap out, bitch!

Vince TAPS...

MOMENTS LATER...

Vince and Rollo rush at each other. Vince KICKS at Rollo who CATCHES Vince's leg, SWEEPS the other leg and DROPS a nasty elbow right onto Vince's balls.

Vince curls up like a dead spider. The Crew GROANS in sympathy. Rollo raises his arms - victorious.

CUT TO:

INT. RUVI'S TRAILER - DAY

RUVI - the cranky East Indian Mentalist - sits across from VINCE at a table. Ruvi fiddles with a toothpick on the table as he imparts his wisdom to Vince.

RUVI
 In Mentalism, the point is to not
 let the sucker know he's getting
 hypnotized, right? You talk about
 the weather, 'oh my wife give me
 hard time,' you move his eye...

Vince glances at the toothpick and back at Ruvi.

RUVI (CONT'D)
 ...but slowly you working your way
 into his mind...into his very
 soul...it's in the way you
 talk...the tone of your
 voice...your hands and how they
 move...

(breathes)
 Your breathing. Lulling the dumb
 bastard into a state of
 utmost...suggestibility...

Vince's lids flutter as Ruvi SLAMS the table.

VINCE FARADAY
 (jolts)
 What was that?

RUVI
 I just hypnotize you, sucker.

VINCE FARADAY
 Yeah, right.

RUVI
 Then why you wearin' girlie
 panties, Vince?

Vince stares at Ruvi for a beat. Then, slowly, Vince's eyes
 look down at his jeans. Vince looks back at Ruvi - deeply
 suspicious. Then Vince unbuttons his jeans and peeks and...

VINCE FARADAY
 (to Ruvi)
 That is not cool, Ruvi!

Ruvi CACKLES with glee. Vince stands up, re-buttoning his
 jeans, freaked completely.

VINCE FARADAY (CONT'D)
 Not cool!

RUVI
 Gimme a hundred bucks and I won't
 tell the rest of the crew!

CUT TO:

INT. TRAPEZE - GYM - DAY

VINCE stares down from the trapeze platform 100-feet to the
 hard ground. POPO THE ACROBAT - a compact Korean man - stands
 next to him.

VINCE FARADAY
 (to Popo)
 Where's the net?

POPO
 Nets are for girls. No net make you
 think harder.

VINCE FARADAY
 You people are insane.

CUT TO:

INT. MAX'S TRAILER - DAY

VINCE sweats. He TWIRLS the cape. MAX shouts commands.

MAX MALINI
 Spin! Spin! Spin! And snap it!

Vince FLINGS the cape which SNAPS OUT and SNATCHES an empty glass from the top of a stool and WINGS back at Vince's hand. Vince almost catches the glass. Vince looks up at Max.

MAX MALINI (CONT'D)
 Again.

CUT TO:

INT. MAX'S TRAILER - DAY

MAX holds a small capsule up to VINCE's eye. Max throws the capsule on the ground. There is a BURST OF SMOKE.

CUT TO:

INT. VINCE'S TRAILER - NIGHT

VINCE works on a dented laptop. He scrolls through information on UNCONVENTIONAL and ASSYMETRICAL WAREARE.

There are files on DEMOLITIONS and CONCEALMENT, PSYCHOLOGICAL WARFARE. Vince writes in a notebook...

CUT TO:

INT. TRAPEZE - GYM - DAY

VINCE tips forward and FREE-FALLS from the trapeze platform - swan-diving - until CAPTURING the swing as it comes at him. Vince goes up and up and...

...BACKFLIPS through the air CATCHING the other swing. All without a net.

Vince lands safely on the other platform. POPO gives him a thumb's up.

CUT TO:

INT. RUVI'S TRAILER - DAY

RUVI and VINCE sit across from each other. Ruvi's eyes drift for a second as Vince SLAMS the table.

RUVI
(recovers)
You wish, sucker.

Vince pulls on his shirt collar. Smiles.

Ruvi feels his shirt collar. Looks down at his shirt buttons. Unbuttons his shirt. Opens his shirt TO REVEAL...

...A BRA. Double D.

VINCE FARADAY
Gimme a hundred bucks and I don't
tell the crew.

Ruvi LAUGHS. Vince LAUGHS as Ruvi reaches across the table and PUNCHES Vince off his chair.

CUT TO:

INT. BOXING RING - DAY

Back in the boxing ring. VINCE has a bloody nose. ROLLO's got a cut under his eye. They circle each other.

Rollo lunges but Vince drops to his stomach, catches Rollo by the waist in a SCISSORS-CLUTCH. Rollo squirms. Escapes. Dives at Vince who break-dance-pivots and RE-CAPTURES Rollo by the leg. YANKS on the ankle. TWISTS.

VINCE FARADAY
Now you tap!

Rollo fights and fights but finally relents TAPPING OUT to the crew's CHEERS. Vince falls back, exhausted.

CUT TO:

INT. VINCE'S TRAILER - NIGHT

VINCE studies a FLOW CHART that he has constructed on his wall with PETER FLEMING at the top of it.

LYNX CORPORATION and CHESS occupy the spaces beneath Peter Fleming representing his criminal and corporate empires. Vince searches for weaknesses.

CUT TO:

INT. MAX'S TRAILER - DAY

VINCE wields the cape like it's a living thing, a whip-like-shadow, SNAPPING across the room.

MAX watches, following each move. Focused.

Vince SNUFFS a candle flame with the cape which STREAKS back and RIPS a knife from the hand of a mannequin and FLINGS the knife into a BULLSEYE TARGET across the trailer before...

...wrapping up Vince like a corpse. There is an EXPLOSION OF SMOKE and...

...Vince is gone. The cape drops harmlessly to the floor. Max sits back on the table. Impressed.

MAX MALINI
(to the air)
I think you're ready.

END ACT THREE

ACT FOUR**TITLE: THE CAPE**

EXT. CLUB TATOU - PALM CITY - NIGHT

BLACK SUVs line up outside the glittering lights as long lines of PARTIERS wait to get into this exclusive club.

EXT. BUILDING ROOFTOP - ABOVE CLUB TATOU - NIGHT

SOMEONE'S P.O.V: WE SEE through a telephoto lens TWO LYNX GUARDS in plainclothes entering the Club Tatou.

The telephoto lens comes down. A GLOVED HAND holds up a PHOTOCOPY OF LYNX ID CARDS. Same guards.

INT. CLUB TATOU - PALM CITY - NIGHT

TECHNO-POP throbs in every ear as champagne flows and glamed-up-CLUB-GIRLS shake it for the POWER ELITE of Palm City.

It's like cowboy Moscow. Oligarchs of industry with too much money on their hands.

INT. BACK CORRIDOR - CLUB TATOU - NIGHT

TWO PLAIN-CLOTHES, LYNX TROOPS push a COUPLE DRUNK CLUB GIRLS down the corridor.

CLUB GIRL #1
Quit shoving already!

The men LAUGHS.

EXT. ALLEY - IN THE BACK OF CLUB TATOU - NIGHT

THE LYNX TROOPS push the girls into the alley.

CLUB GIRL #1
(looks around)
What the hell is this?
(beat)
I'm going back inside.

One of the drunk troops shoves Club Girl #1 too hard and she face-plants across the cement.

CLUB GIRL #1 (CONT'D)
(digs in her purse)
I'm calling a cop--

Her hand is YANKED AWAY. The Lynx Trooper gets in her face. Flashes a LYNX BADGE.

LYNX TROOP #1
We are the cops!

The Trooper picks up Club Girl #1 by the jaw.

CLUB GIRL #2
 Come on, guys, it's cool--

Trooper #2 hauls off and WHACKS Club Girl #2 into a row of trash cans. Trooper #2 pulls a GUN.

LYNX TROOP #2
 Time to play Simon Sez.

The Trooper chambers a round as...

...a LIVING SHADOW snaps out of the darkness, SNATCHES the gun from the Trooper's hand and FLINGS it 50-feet-away.

LYNX TROOP #2 (CONT'D)
 (watches the gun go)
 What the fu--?

The fire escape SHUDDERS as SOMETHING blurs by at the two-story-level when there is a BURST OF SMOKE and...

...another BURST OF SMOKE in the alley. The smoke clears away from a TALL FIGURE completely hidden by a LONG COWL or CAPE.

LYNX TROOP #1
 (to Figure)
 You want some? You freak piece-of-

Lynx Trooper #1 does a running JUDO KICK and...

...*passes harmlessly through the empty cloak.* The Trooper CRASHES into a set of noisy trash cans.

Lynx Trooper #2 looks around - frantic as...

...VINCE FARADAY rises up behind him wearing a thin black mask and black body armor. When he looks like this...

...we'll call him THE CAPE.

The Lynx Trooper WHIRLS around.

THE CAPE
 Simon Sez fall down.

The Cape ducks a punch and drops to the ground, viciously LEG-SWEEPS the Lynx Trooper, then TWISTS and PIVOTS around his body RAINING DOWN BLOWS on the overmatched Trooper.

Lynx Trooper #1 aims and FIRES but The Cape SPRINGS up the wall and BACKFLIPS over the Trooper's head and lands...

...at his cape which he WHIPS into the air and it SNAPS out, WRAPS around the Trooper's wrist and YANKS him forward where he meets...

...The Cape's fist. WHAM. Lights out. Bye bye.

CUT TO:

EXT. TOP LYNX HEADQUARTERS SKYSCRAPER - NIGHT

THE LYNX TROOPER'S eyes flutter open. It's windy. He looks around at the glowing cityscape of Palm City. Looks down and sees that he is harnessed to a bungee cord.

LYNX TROOP #1
Whoa! What's--what's this!?

The Trooper looks around and sees THE CAPE testing the strength of a piton. The Cape then writes something on a piece of paper. He comes at The Trooper.

LYNX TROOP #1 (CONT'D)
P-please! What do you want?

The Cape pins something on the Trooper's chest. The Cape digs in the Trooper's pockets and pulls out a...

...a slip of paper. A SCHEDULE OF A SHIPMENT from the Palm City Piers. Someone has written **2PM** on it. He pockets it.

THE CAPE
You were there. You helped to frame Vince Faraday. Now you're going to help me send a message.

LYNX TROOP #1
What? What message?! What're you--

The Cape THUDS his boot into the Trooper's chest. The Trooper SCREAMS bloody murder as he TOPPLES backwards, off the roof and PLUNGES twenty stories, bungee cord trailing until...

INT. OFFICE OF PETER FLEMING - LYNX HQ - NIGHT

PETER FLEMING types at his computer as...

...THE TROOPER explodes through his floor-to-ceiling plate glass window. Fleming dives to the ground as shattered glass sprays everywhere. The Trooper FLOPS onto the ground.

Fleming crawls over to the Trooper's body. Finds the note.

It reads: "*Endgame. Where the pawn becomes King. I know what you really are. The Cape.*"

Peter Fleming sits back against his desk. He looks out the window, eyes aflame with fury and excitement.

CUT TO:

INT. FARADAY KITCHEN - NIGHT

TRIP draws. DANA fixes dinner. The TV is on.

DANA
Carrots okay?

ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
Eyewitness News 7 happens now...

TRIP
Sure.

NEWS 7 REPORTER (V.O.)
...city is buzzing with more sightings tonight of the mysterious figure who officials have named 'The Cape--'

Trip looks up.

NEWS 7 REPORTER (V.O.) (CONT'D)
...this is believed to be the same person who was spotted at the Club Tatou on Wyden Avenue.

TRIP
(stunned)
Mom.

Dana looks up.

TRIP (CONT'D)
(thrilled)
Mom!!!

ON SCREEN: THE CAPE runs along the ledge of a building before VANISHING off the side, trailed by his flowing cape...

TRIP (CONT'D)
Mom, it's him! It's the Cape!

WITNESS
(on TV)
Came out of nowhere, just bang!
(MORE)

WITNESS (CONT'D)

Took out these two dudes. I'm still shakin'.

TRIP

They called him The Cape! It's him, right?!

DANA

(sort of stunned, smiling)
I don't...I don't know honey.

Trip turns back to the TV. Dana watches the hope in his eyes. The smile on his face that's been missing for months.

CUT TO:

INT. OFFICE OF PETER FLEMING - LYNX HQ - NIGHT

PETER FLEMING hunches over his desk. The light is eerie. The phone RINGS. Fleming reaches out - pushes a button.

PETER FLEMING

What is it?

MARTY VOYT (V.O.)

It's Marty Voyt, sir. I just think we need to jump on this...guy in the cape. Special unit. Come up with a strategy.

PETER FLEMING

(voice strained)
'Strategy'...yes.

MARTY VOYT (V.O.)

Everything okay, Mr. Fleming?

Peter Fleming looks up with his chess-piece-contacts in his eyes. WE SEE that he is cutting a new Chess mask.

PETER FLEMING

I'm wonderful.

CUT TO:

EXT. SIDEWALK - PALM CITY - DAY

RAIA the Animal Trainer - in clown makeup - poses for a photograph with her RACCOON and a HAPPY TOURIST. The Happy Tourist's WIFE (also happy) takes the picture.

HAPPY TOURIST WIFE

I think the raccoon waved!

RAIA

He loves to have his picture taken.

The tourists move on. Raia turns to the Raccoon who hands Raia the Tourist's wallet. She checks it. Full of cash.

RAIA (CONT'D)

You want a treat now, my love?

A HAND snatches Raia's arm. The Raccoon HISSES as it's GRABBED by the neck...

INT. LIMOUSINE - PALM CITY - DAY

RAIA is forced into the back of a limousine by LYNX COPS. Inside the limousine is MARTY VOYT...

...and CHESS.

LYNX COP

(hands personals to Chess)

Had this on her.

Chess examines a yellowing business card for MAX MALINI'S FANTASTIC ODDITIES AND AMAZEMENTS. He studies a small key.

MARTY VOYT

That's...that's our card key.
That's how they're getting around
our codes.

Chess examines the key looks up at Raia.

RAIA

(through her fear, to
Chess)

Thought you were dead.

Marty and the Lynx Guard look at each other nervously. Obviously this wasn't part of their plans either.

CHESS

I got better.
(beat)
Say something that makes me happy
or I will eat your raccoon. Alive.
In front of you.

The usually tough Raia pales. She believes him.

CUT TO:

EXT. PALM CITY PIERS - DAY

A TRUCK pulls up to a SECURITY POST at the Palm City piers. Huge tankers and towers of shipping containers form the backdrop.

The truck window lowers. THE SECURITY GUARD drops his ring of keys as a...

...strangely glittering, scaled HAND reaches out of the truck clutching a wad of hundreds. The Security Guard takes the money, finding it hard to look at the person in the truck.

REVERSE ON: The face behind the window. He's big. Massive even. He has a freakish skin condition that gives him the appearance of green and gold scales. And he wears RayBans. This is DOMINIC RAOUL aka: GATOR. He's human. Just barely.

GATOR
What's shaking, baby?

SECURITY GUARD
Container Twelve.

The Security Guard pushes the button lifting the arm. The truck drives onto the piers.

EXT. CONTAINER TWELVE - PALM CITY PIERS - DAY

GATOR tears open a box marked: BABY TOYS. He digs out a TOY BEAR and rips off the head. Checks to see if the NERVE AGENT cannister is inside. Bingo.

GATOR
Move, slugs! On the truck!

Gator's men haul the crates on hand trucks towards the back of the truck. A SCARED THUG stands next to Gator.

GATOR (CONT'D)
I don't want to name names to Chess. Yeah. You're moving now.

Gator's phone rings.

GATOR (CONT'D)
(answers)
What'd I tell you about this number? You don't call this God damn number, I'll crush you!
(hangs up, to Scared Thug)
My therapist. My old lady's got me seeing one.

The Scared Thug nods, wishing he were somewhere else.

Something black DARTS out from behind a tower of crates, COILS around a thug's neck and JERKS him behind a crate. There is a CRASH and a CHOKED CRY.

Everyone looks around. Gator frowns. Draws a massive GUN.

There is a SNAP and ANOTHER THUG goes HURTLING into the water. And another YANKS backwards out of frame and WHAMS into the shipping container.

Gator aims for the shadows as...

...a cape SNAPS around his wrist. But Gator SNARLS and RIPS his arm forward...

...somersaulting THE CAPE into the light. The Cape recovers and delivers several FIERCE BLOWS to Gator's ribs.

GATOR (CONT'D)

(grins)

Sweet threads.

THE CAPE

Thanks.

Gator grabs the Cape by the throat and literally THROWS him 20-feet. The Cape SLAMS off one of the containers. Before The Cape can catch his breath...

...Gator is on top of him. BITES his shoulder. Lifts him up - over his head like an Olympic lifter - and brings him down HARD over his knee. We might hear a rib CRACK.

The Cape rolls over in agony. THUGS watch as Gator RIPS part of a chain barrier and a pylon from the ground.

GATOR

(to his boys)

Pay attention, slugs!

Gator wraps the chain around the Cape's neck. Knots the chain around his arms. The Cape STRUGGLES.

Gator hefts the pylon (has to be 300-pounds) which drags the chain...which drags the Cape to the water's edge.

His phone RINGS.

GATOR (CONT'D)

(answers, listens)

I'm not paying for the missed hour!
Here. Listen to this.

Gator holds the phone up the The Cape's GAGGING.

GATOR (CONT'D)
 (into phone)
 That's how I roll, Dennis!

Gator hangs up, heaves the pylon over the edge...

...DRAGGING the Cape across the concrete and WHIPPING him over the side. The Cape plummets 30-feet into the water and vanishes. Even Gator's thugs are freaked out by his ferocity.

GATOR (CONT'D)
 (to thugs)
 Fish 'em out tonight. The Lich'll want to see that.

INT. UNDERWATER - DAY

THE CAPE kicks and panics as the pylon ROCKETS to the bottom and lands with an audible THUD. The Cape writhes and swallows water. WE HEAR his heartbeat HAMMERING.

WE FLASH on STUTTERING IMAGES of MAX MALINI...RUVI THE MENTALIST...Vince doing meditations...

WE FLASH on The Cape slowing down, relaxing his body. WE HEAR his heartbeat SLOWING.

WE FLASH on MAX vanishing in a burst of smoke...Ruvi SLAMS the table...WE HEAR voices...commands...

WE FLASH on The Cape. He is utterly still. His body rests, corpse-like, on the bottom. His heartbeat slows to a stop.

The images fade. Voices fade. The Cape is completely still.

Until...WHAM. The Cape JERKS his body - dislocating his own shoulder. The extra slack allows him to work free of the chains. Bubbles pour forth from his mouth as he slides the chains off like a snakeskin and claws for the surface...

CUT TO:

EXT. WAREHOUSE - PALM CITY PIERS - NIGHT

A LYNX TROOPER walks the pier as lights glow from the warehouse windows. We hear MACHINERY running inside.

Suddenly, the Lynx Trooper HITS the ground hard and DRAGS over the side. We hear a SPLASH.

EXT. ROOF - WAREHOUSE - PALM CITY - NIGHT

THE CAPE climbs onto the roof and runs to a row of skylights. He peers inside and sees GATOR running things. FORKLIFTS move the boxes we saw earlier. The Cape sees the material is being moves into new boxes labeled for VENEZUELA. Then...

...The Cape hears a shutter CLICK. He whips around and sees nothing but hears FOOTSTEPS.

From the ledge, the Cape spots a FIGURE running away. The Cape DIVES to the other rooftop, lands in a roll, gets up on his feet, racing after the figure. He springs off the roof, uses the fire escape as a springboard and FLIPS onto the ground where he DROPS the figure with a SPINNING KICK.

Vince tears off the figure's backpack, spilling notebooks that bear the ORWELL INSIGNIA.

THE CAPE
(hesitates)
Are you--?

The Cape catches a SWINGING PUNCH. He twists Orwell's arm but doesn't see the tazer that ZAPS him. The Cape snatches it.

THE CAPE (CONT'D)
Not cool!

Orwell's ponytail shakes free in the struggle. She's 23 and really cute in an intrepid, violent sort of way.

THE CAPE (CONT'D)
You're Orwell? What're you twelve?

ORWELL
You're the one wearing long
underwear and a cape.

THE CAPE
(thinks about this)
Fair enough.

END ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE**TITLE: ORWELL**

INT. MAX'S TRAILER - NIGHT

MAX MALINI secures a few bricks of cash in his safe. A distant train WHISTLES. Then...a KNOCK on his door.

MAX MALINI

This is my private drinking time!
This better be...

Max opens the door for FOUR LYNX TROOPS.

MAX MALINI (CONT'D)

Gentlemen...join me for a drink,
won't you?

Out of sight of the Lynx Troops, Max PULLS on a hidden cord in an old clock beside the door that...

INT. CARNIVAL HIDEOUT - UNDER THE FREIGHT YARD - NIGHT

...reaches underground, through a system of pipes and into the Carnival's secret tunnels. ROLLO and RUVI look up at the RINGING BELL - an alarm.

ROLLO

They got Max.

INT. MAX'S TRAILER - NIGHT

A TROOPER shoves MAX hard against the wall and BELTS him. He's taken roughly by the arms and led out of the trailer.

CUT TO:

INT. ORWELL'S WHEELS - PALM CITY - NIGHT

THE CAPE is in the passenger seat of ORWELL's hot, black, sports car loaded with open laptops. On one screen NUMBERS scroll and scroll.

THE CAPE

(recognizes)

Are those credit card numbers?

Tires SCREECH as Orwell turns sharply into an underground parking lot. The Cape hangs on tight - a little worried - as Orwell speeds up taking turn after turn finally SQUEALING to a stop inside a WIDE FREIGHT ELEVATOR.

ORWELL

Take off your glove and flip the
button for your window.

Vince takes off his glove. Flips the button for the window.
But instead of the window moving - BEHIND THEM - the doors
seal shut and the elevator LIFTS.

THE CAPE

(approves)

That was cool.

When the doors - re-open. Orwell throws the car in REVERSE
and peels out into a completely bare, top-floor, floor-wide
penthouse view space above Palm City. Orwell stops.

ORWELL

Get out.

INT. ORWELL'S PENTHOUSE LAIR - PALM CITY - NIGHT

Vast. Barebones. Lots of laptops. Lots of wires. Cold.
Beautiful. ORWELL walks over to check on of her screens.

THE CAPE

(looks around)

Some poor bastard has some credit
card bill.

ORWELL

(types)

Who do you work for?

THE CAPE

I don't work for anyone.

ORWELL

Oh, please. You're just another
mindgame to squirm out of Peter
Fleming's twisted brain.

THE CAPE

What are you doing?

ORWELL

Running the fingerprints you gave
me when you pushed for the elevator
door in the car. I'll find you.

THE CAPE

(thrown, angered)

Hey, wait a minute--

On Orwell's laptop we suddenly see VINCE'S POLICE ID PHOTO.
It's Orwell's turn to be stunned.

ORWELL
Vince Faraday?

The Cape sweeps across the room and SWATS Orwell's computer
onto the floor where it SHATTERS.

THE CAPE
(serious)
Vince Faraday is dead.
(takes Orwell by the
collar)
You put this on your blog and put
my family in danger, I swear to God
you won't need that freight
elevator to reach the street.

ORWELL
We're on the same side, Vince--

THE CAPE
How many cops did you rat out? I
lost count!

ORWELL
Dirty cops.

THE CAPE
Well, I wasn't! And you ruined my
life!

The Cape shoves her to the ground. Orwell climbs to her feet.

ORWELL
I though you might like to know who
you were working for.

THE CAPE
I found out, all right.

ORWELL
(amazed)
So this...this is real. You're
fighting back.

THE CAPE
Do I have a choice?

ORWELL
(pause)
Why the get-up?

THE CAPE

I have my reasons.

(beat)

This is an unconventional war.

ORWELL

I want to help you, Vince--

THE CAPE

I'm the Cape.

ORWELL

Fine, whatever. You know Lynx from the inside, you know the players in ways I don't. You can get INTEL in ways I can't. But I can make you better. Accurate. I can help you hit Peter Fleming hard and fast from his blindside. Where he's weak. Together we can scare him. And when you're scared you over-react and you over-reach.

Vince considers this as we...

CUT TO:

INT. A BASEMENT - SOMEWHERE AWFUL - NIGHT

MAX MALINI squints from the bright lights in his eyes. He's tied to a chair surrounded by LYNX GOONS lingering in the shadows. He hears a door open. Hears footsteps as...

...CHESS steps into the light. Sits in front of Max.

CHESS

I love your story. You're like something out of a dustbowl dime-store-novel. A Carnival of Crime...it's great.

MAX MALINI

Always love to hear from the fans.

CHESS

I need your crew names.

MAX MALINI

Ours is a road show. Town-to-town type of deal. Never give the angle, see? Company policy.

CHESS

This is my company policy.

A Goon PINS Max's arm to the arm of the chair. Chess reveals a BRICK in his hand. He SLAMS it down on Max's hand.

MAX MALINI
(recoils, winces)
I...broke bones for a living...my
boy. Pain's a good friend of mine.

CHESS
Then you two have a lot of catching
up to do.

The Goons grab hold of Max. He struggles as we...

CUT TO:

INT. ORWELL'S PENTHOUSE LAIR - PALM CITY - NIGHT

VINCE's cell phone RINGS. ORWELL monitors her bank of
screens. Vince answers.

VINCE FARADAY
Hello?

ROLLO (V.O.)
They got Max, Vince! Lynx Troops
took him. We don't know where he
is!

VINCE FARADAY
I'm on my way!

Orwell turns at the alarm in Vince's voice as we...

END ACT FIVE

ACT SIX**TITLE: THE CAPE VS. CHESS - ROUND ONE**

INT. BASEMENT - SOMEWHERE AWFUL - DAY

MAX MALINI'S head droops over his shirt. Blood drips from his lips. CHESS paces, frustrated, sleeves rolled up.

CHESS
Don't die, Max. I need names.

MAX MALINI
Die?

Max lifts his head with effort. His face is a mess. Brutal.

MAX MALINI (CONT'D)
(smiles)
Just getting warmed up, sweetheart.

CHESS
(to Marty Voyt)
Bring him in here.

MARTY VOYT turns paler than usual and exits.

MAX MALINI
Peter!

Chess turns, livid.

MAX MALINI (CONT'D)
Didn't Mummy love you enough? What did she do to you that made you such a raving loon?
(beat)
The Cape's gonna get you, boyo.

CHESS
(his cool falters)
Shut up!

The door opens. The light frames a MASSIVE FORM as...

...GATOR enters. Takes off his sunglasses.

MAX MALINI
(spots Gator)
Whatever he's paying you I'll double it.

Gator CHUCKLES. Cracks his knuckles.

MAX MALINI (CONT'D)
 I mean it, son. You're playing for
 the wrong team. I'll make you a
 star.

CHESS
 (to Gator)
 Tear his arms off and beat him to
 death with them.

GATOR
 Sweet.

Gator approaches.

MAX MALINI
 (disapproving)
 Doesn't anyone value showmanship
 anymore?

Max POPS his shoulder. His other arm WRIGGLES free. With
 shocking speed, Max flings a chair at Gator's head, vaults
 the table and DIVES through the door to the stairwell.

INT. WAREHOUSE - PALM CITY PIERS - DAY

MAX drags himself to his feet, limping terribly.

CHESS and GATOR surge up the stairs. Chess pulls a gun and
 FIRES after the fleeing Max who...

...darts into a cityscape of shipping crates.

CHESS
 Find him! He's one old man!

INT. ELSEWHERE IN THE WAREHOUSE - DAY

MAX hobbles along. His hand leaves a BLOOD IMPRINT on one of
 the crates. He's been hit.

He WHEEZES and staggers. Searching for escape with
 increasingly blurry vision.

He drops to a knee. Recovers. His eyes go to a HUGE WINDOW at
 the end of the corridor. Max shuffles towards it as...

...TWO LYNX TROOPS step into his path holding rifles.

LYNX TROOP #1
 Abracadabra, Pops.

A SHADOW rises in the window, behind the Lynx Troops...

MAX MALINI
 (sees the shadow,
 whispers)
 Presto.

...as THE CAPE explodes through the window and falls upon the Lynx Troops like a bird of prey. There are STUTTERED GUNSHOTS then silence as unconscious bodies hit the floor.

Max BUCKLES into The Cape's arms.

THE CAPE
 Max!

The Cape sees the blood. Sees Max's beaten face.

THE CAPE (CONT'D)
 It's okay, don't try to talk.

MAX MALINI
 (through bloody lips)
 I'm the one dying here. I like to talk.

The Cape eases Max to the floor.

MAX MALINI (CONT'D)(beat)
 At least you've...gotten yourself an act. What you said about your boy...about showing him that one man can make a difference. That stayed with me.
 (beat)
 Just take this from a man who never knew his father and never had a son...that bond...it's what makes heroes...
 (beat)
 Don't make me a jerk. Get your boy back.

THE CAPE
 I will, Max.

MAX MALINI
 Want to say something profound...last words and all but...God...I really need a drink.

Max stops. His eyes close. The Cape lays him down gently. Puts a hand on Max's chest. Then...

...Max opens one eye.

MAX MALINI (CONT'D)
Damn it...I thought that was it.

THE CAPE
(surprised, relieved)
Max?

MAX MALINI
And I wasted that great speech.

CUT TO:

INT. NEWSROOM - NEWS 7 - DAY

A bustling news room. THE LOCAL NEWS DIRECTOR takes a phone from an INTERN.

NEWS DIRECTOR
This is Shwaid.

ORWELL (V.O.)
(digitally disguised
voice)
This is Orwell. 4222 Lake Street by
the Palm City Piers. Shots fired in
a warehouse owned by Peter Fleming.

EXT. PALM CITY PIERS - DAY

ORWELL sits in her car. A voice-disguiser on her phone which is plugged into her laptop. She watches LYNX TROOPS funneling into the warehouse.

ORWELL
(eyes on warehouse)
...The Cape has been spotted on the
scene. This is your scoop. Try not
to screw it up.

Orwell hangs up.

INT. WAREHOUSE - PALM CITY PIERS - DAY

MARTY VOYT runs down the corridor of the warehouse.

MARTY VOYT
(into radio)
Donnelly? Where are you?!

Suddenly, something BLACK shoots out of the darkness and wraps around Marty's ankle, YANKING him off his feet. Marty turns - terrified - to the DARK SHADOWS as he drags slowly towards them...

THE CAPE (O.S.)
 When traitors die...they don't see
 a light at the end of the
 tunnel...they see darkness...*they*
see me.

Marty SCREAMS like a stuck pig as he VANISHES into the shadows and we hear a few seriously PAINFUL BLOWS.

INT. WAREHOUSE - PALM CITY PIERS - DAY

TWO LYNX TROOPS enter a tunnel in the warehouse but don't see POPO THE ACROBAT wedged in the ceiling above their heads. Popo DROPS on top of them swinging a bo-stick.

INT. ELSEWHERE IN THE WAREHOUSE - DAY

A LYNX CAPTAIN jogs up to CHESS and A LYNX OFFICER.

LYNX CAPTAIN
 (to Chess)
 Scanners picked up News Van
 chatter. Cameras are coming here.
 Now.

CHESS
 (to Officer)
 Set charges. Light it up.

The Officer runs off. The Captain's radio SQUAWKS.

LYNX CAPTAIN
 (to Chess)
 Your chopper's on its way, sir.
 Roof's this way.

Chess and the Lynx Captain head for the stairway.

ACROSS THE WAREHOUSE:

GATOR stalks the corridors. Hears SHOTS echo off the walls. Gator turns the corner as...

...a thrown WRENCH smacks off his head. Gator stumbles back as ROLLO somersaults into the corridor. Cracks his own neck.

ROLLO
 You like to party, bitch?

GATOR
 Looks like you need to cook a
 little longer.

Rollo pulls a LEAD PIPE. He walks up and CRACKS Gator right in the kneecap. Gator ROARS in pain as Rollo SPINS and POPS the lead pipe off Gator's shin bone. Gator collapses onto his hands and knees. Rollo hauls off and WHACKS Gator in the jaw with the pipe. Sharp teeth go flying...

ELSEWHERE IN THE WAREHOUSE:

MARTY and his TROOPS set timers on EXPLOSIVES. Set them for two minutes. The countdown begins...2:00...1:59...1:58...

EXT. ROOF - WAREHOUSE - PALM CITY - DAY

CHESS and the LYNX CAPTAIN run across the warehouse roof where a CHOPPER hovers. A ladder is dropped.

The Lynx Captain grabs the rope ladder. Hauls himself up. Throws out a hand for Chess who takes it. They climb the ladder, dangling over the warehouse roof.

In the distance FIRE and POLICE sirens are seen and heard.

CHESS
(to Captain)
Hurry up!

Chess looks up into the black visor and helmet of the Lynx Captain.

CHESS (CONT'D)
Pull me up!

The Lynx Captain takes off his helmet TO REVEAL...

...THE CAPE.

Chess's crazy eyes go wide. The two adversaries are frozen there in space for a long moment. The chopper hovers.

THE CAPE
Checkmate.

Chess pulls a KNIFE from his pocket, tries to swing it around, but the Cape sees it and simply OPENS HIS HAND...

...Chess PLUMMETS backward 20 feet to the warehouse roof.

The Cape RIPS OFF his gear and DIVES after him. His CAPE UNFURLS allowing him to glide to the roof - landing surely on his feet. Chess struggles to his feet, hurt but alive.

INT. WAREHOUSE - PALM CITY PIERS - DAY

ORWELL ducks bullets and races around towers of shipping containers. She pulls up fast when she sees...

...the EXPLOSIVES. The countdown: 20...19...18...

ORWELL
(into radio)
Cape, we have to clear out of here
now! We've got twenty seconds!

EXT. ROOF - WAREHOUSE - PALM CITY - DAY

THE CAPE and CHESS exchange blows on the warehouse roof. The Cape lifts Chess's body into the air with brutal KICKS to the ribs. He BACKHANDS Chess who topples onto the ground again.

The chopper continues to HOVER overhead.

ORWELL (V.O.)
(over radio)
Cape! Respond!

A CONE OF FIRE rips a piece of the roof away. Glass SHATTERS. Chess PUNCHES The Cape.

Another EXPLOSION spews debris into the air. The Cape TACKLES Chess. The chopper BUZZES overhead.

CHESS
I'll find out who you are! I'll
find out who you are and kill
everything you love!

THE CAPE
(takes Chess by the
collar)
You can't touch me. I'm already
dead!

Another ERUPTION disintegrates most of the roof. The Cape has no choice, he backs away from Chess, throws his cloak around himself and VANISHES in a burst of smoke.

WIDE AS: The warehouse PLUMES in a crescendo of flames. WE SOAR UPWARDS and see...

...CHESS - his body smoking - clinging desperately to the rope ladder of the chopper as it swerves away into the sky.

FADE TO BLACK:

INT. ORWELL'S PENTHOUSE LAIR - PALM CITY - NIGHT

ORWELL hovers over her many laptops speaking with VINCE on speakerphone.

ORWELL

You did good out there, Vince.

THE CAPE (O.S.)

You too, Orwell. But now you're the mystery. Who are you anyway?

Orwell looks down at an OPEN DRAWER in her desk. There, discarded like an ashtray, is a small framed photo of ORWELL, in happier times, with her father: a smiling PETER FLEMING. Orwell shuts the drawer.

ORWELL

Nobody special.

CUT TO:

INT. TRIP'S ROOM - NIGHT

It's 3am. The city sleeps. All is quiet in the Faraday apartment. Dana and Trip have moved into an apartment downtown.

TRIP's eyes POP open at the sound of weight CREAKING on the fire escape outside his window.

Trip sits up. Looks out the window. Opens the window. Hears FLAPPING and sees the wind rustling the pages of a new CAPE comic book on the fire escape.

Trip smiles, reaches for it as...

THE CAPE (O.S.)

Are you Trip Faraday?

Trip WHIRLS around and looks up and sees...

...THE CAPE balanced on the railing of the fire escape, his cloak billowing in the wind behind him.

Trip - his mouth dry - can only nod.

THE CAPE (CONT'D)

You read my comic?

Trip nods.

THE CAPE (CONT'D)
I knew your father.
(pause)
He was a good cop. And he was
framed for those crimes.

Unbelievable relief washes over Trip.

THE CAPE (CONT'D)
I know the guilty. And I won't stop
until they know justice.
(pause)
Your father wanted me to give you a
message. He said, 'don't lose hope.
Never lose hope.' He said 'be good
to your Mom and study your math.
You need to work on the math.'

Trip nods, sounds like his Dad all right.

THE CAPE (CONT'D (CONT'D)
And tell him, 'I love him more than
anything. And someday...someday
we'll see each other again.'

In the distance a police siren WAILS. Trip turns to look. He
turns back and...

...THE CAPE is gone. Trip goes to the edge of the railing.
Stares out into the night. Hope in his eyes as we...

FADE TO BLACK:

END PILOT