

# **THE TICK**

**PILOT EPISODE**

**(1~19~00)**

by  
**Ben Edlund**

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

EXT. BUS STATION - THE MIDDLE OF NOWHERE, U.S.A. - NIGHT

A small terminal with half-a-dozen busports, a desolate transfer point surrounded by open flatlands. An INTERSTATE BUS drives down the nearby off-ramp and pulls into the station. A TICKET LADY in her mid-50s sits at the ticket window, watching as the bus arrives. The STATION MANAGER stands in the ticket office door.

BUS DRIVER (OS)

(over bus P.A. system)

We'll be stopping for about ten minutes.  
Feel free to stretch your legs or get a  
soda, just don't get left behind...

The Bus Driver exits the bus, followed by a few WEARY TRAVELERS. The Driver lights a cigarette and approaches the Manager, casting his eyes up at the awning/roof above them.

BUS DRIVER

He's still here?

The Manager and the Ticket Lady both follow his gaze upwards and nod with pained expressions.

STATION MANAGER

Yep. 'Been up there a week now...  
We're starting to get a little jumpy.

BUS DRIVER

What are you gonna do?

STATION MANAGER

- ' I was kinda hoping you could help...

The Manager holds up a bus ticket. The Driver blanches as the CAMERA RISES away from them, up to the station's flat metal roof.

Striking a heroic pose on the roof, THE TICK keeps watch over the station. He's a towering, insanely-muscled man in a blue body suit and mask. Segmented antennae bob atop his head as he narrates dramatically to (and about) himself.

THE TICK

He stands in silence...ever-vigilant,  
ever-ready to resume his never-  
ending battle with Evil in all its  
forms. And yet...All is quiet...  
Peace reigns at the bus station...

But he knows that Peace is nothing  
more than a rubberized doormat to the  
boots of Villainy. And Oh, those wretched  
boots!! Muddy with misdeeds! Sticky  
with candy stolen from babes!  
(escalates to booming cry)  
SCUFFED BY THE DOWNY FUR OF A THOUSAND  
KICKED PUPPIES!...PUPPIES, BY GOD!

Tick's antennae prick up as he hears a commotion below (repeated  
'thuds' and an angry cry of protest). He dashes off camera.

At the far end of the station, A bus-worn SALESMAN in his forties,  
wearing a disheveled suit, pounds at the buttons of a COFFEE  
VENDING MACHINE which has just eaten his money.

SALESMAN  
(continued protest)  
Aw, no...come on. Come ON!

The Tick drops into shot, landing with a loud slam. He lifts the  
startled Salesman off his feet and puts him to one side.

THE TICK  
Stand back, citizen!  
(addresses vending machine)  
Machine, your mechanical mischief  
ends here!

Tick steps up to the machine, taps its buttons, then rests his  
finger on the coin return. He turns to the shaken Salesman.

THE TICK  
Did you jiggle the thingy?

The Salesman nods nervously. Tick begins jiggling the coin return  
with growing force, until it snaps off with a spark. Tick recoils.

THE TICK  
Armless bandit!

He lunges at the machine and lifts it up, shaking it and slamming  
it against the station wall like a reluctant informant. Its lights  
flicker, its insides sputter and wrench.

THE TICK  
Empty your bladder of that bitter black  
urine men call 'coffee!'  
(more and more incensed)  
It has its price, and that price has  
been PAID!

The Tick drops the machine with a crash. The machine spits out a plastic cup, groans, belches up a gallon of coffee, and goes dead. The Tick turns to the frightened Salesman, who backs away.

THE TICK

No need to thank me, weary traveller.  
It is my sworn duty to defend this bus  
station and all those who pass through  
it against the ravages of evil.

The Manager approaches cautiously.

STATION MANAGER

Uhm...say...blue fellah...Can't tell  
you how...ahem...grateful we are for  
all your help...But as far as I see  
it, your work here is done...

The Manager hands Tick the bus ticket.

THE TICK

(reads ticket)

The City?

STATION MANAGER

It's a big place with a lot of buildings.  
And bad people and crime and so forth...  
A place where there's...oh, I don't know,  
stuff to do...

THE TICK

Stuff to do...

The Tick heads toward the bus, entranced by the Manager's words. Weary Travellers scramble into the bus, pretty much fleeing the blue giant behind them. The Driver turns to the Manager.

BUS DRIVER

You owe me a big one.

The bus lists to one side as The Tick steps in. The Driver follows glumly. The Tick's narration intones from inside.

THE TICK (OS)

-- "Who was he?" They would ask with  
tears in their eyes, as he rode off  
into the night. "Who was that blue  
stranger...?"

The bus door closes. Just as it does, the bright orange and yellow logo of "THE TICK" (starting as a dot, center screen) zooms in to fill the frame, and the MAIN TITLE BEGINS.

FADE IN:

EXT. "THE CITY" - DAY

A mid-size metropolis, bustling with morning activity. The camera finds a large OFFICE BUILDING, and PUSHES IN on it.

INT. OFFICE BUILDING - DAY

PAN along a row of desks, where listless, NON-DESCRIPT ACCOUNTANTS toil. At the end of the long row, ARTHUR, a rotund accountant, accounts with automaton efficiency, despite the fact that he's wearing a white, skintight outfit with mask and goggles. TERRI, an accounting supervisor in her mid-30s, stops by Arthur's desk and takes some files from his out-box. She is bewildered by his suit.

TERRI

Arthur..? Are you feeling OK?

ARTHUR

(a little out of it)

What? Oh, sure...just had a...a late night, that's all.

Another ACCOUNTANT zips in, looking nervous.

ACCOUNTANT

Terri, run for cover. Mr.--

He cuts himself off, noticing Arthur's outfit with surprise, then turns back to Terri.

ACCOUNTANT

Mr. Weiderspahn is coming down. He'll be here any second!

TERRI

Here? Why?!

ACCOUNTANT

No one knows. But it can't be good.

ARTHUR

He's never been below the thirtieth floor.

The elevator doors open and MR. WEIDERSPAHN, the Firm's CEO, steps out. He's a gray-haired, dynamic, corporate powerhouse. MR. FERRET and a small ENTOURAGE OF SUITS follow in his wake. Arthur and all the other EMPLOYEES scramble to look busy and inconspicuous.

FERRET

Sir, I'm sure that human resources can handle this--there's no need to--

MR. WEIDERSPAHN

No bureaucratic half-assing, Mr. Ferret. I want to take this bull by the horns personally.

Weiderspahn stops at Arthur's desk, frowning with concern.

FERRET

Here's the fellow, sir.

MR. WEIDERSPAHN

I can see that...Good Lord, I may be too late.

Weiderspahn pulls a chair away from a seated employee (underplayed slapstick) and sits down next to an astonished Arthur, eyes boring into him. He speaks with hard-boiled, hard-selling momentum.

MR. WEIDERSPAHN

It's Arthur, right? ...Arthur, I'm the most successful man you've ever met. My time is worth seventeen dollars a second. And I'm spending that time here, now, to save your life.

ARTHUR

Mr. Weiderspahn, I don't understa--

MR. WEIDERSPAHN

(jabs accusatory finger at Arthur)  
You thought you got dressed for work today, didn't you!

ARTHUR

(looks down at his outfit, startles)  
Oh my God.

MR. WEIDERSPAHN

You're up to your love handles in an identity crisis, and you don't even know it!

ARTHUR

I had no idea...Really, I thought I...I--

MR. WEIDERSPAHN

(nods knowingly)

It's an occupational hazard, son.  
I've seen it a million times.

ARTHUR

You have?

MR. WEIDERSPAHN

A good accountant, bright future ahead of him, starts thinking he's missing out, starts wanting to save the world. Oh, it's innocent enough at first. He picks up a few magazines...He's "just curious." Soon he finds himself hanging around costume shops...trying on capes... a few helmets...and then all of a sudden he flips his wig! Starts jumping around town in a body sock, fighting crime!

ARTHUR

Well, I haven't actually fought any crime yet. I--

MR. WEIDERSPAHN

Good! Keep it that way, son. Crime fights back! Remember the Lesson of Metcalf!

ARTHUR

Metcalf?

MR. WEIDERSPAHN

Metcalf! Head of shipping and receiving, third floor! Metcalf! He lost all his game pieces, just like you. Cashed in his 401k and bought a jet-pack!

(like the end of a ghost story)

Now the poor bastard can't even talk. Just blinks his eyes for 'yes' and 'no.'

ARTHUR

Listen, I know there are risks involved...

MR. WEIDERSPAHN

Risks?! Look at yourself, son! You're built like a sensible shoe! They'll eat you alive out there!

ARTHUR

You're right, Mr. Weiderspahn. It's not rational, I know that. But I didn't ask to feel this way. I just do.  
(after a pause; heartfelt)  
I have to try, sir.

Frozen in a stalemate for a beat. Then Weiderspahn's glare fades.

MR. WEIDERSPAHN

I'm sorry to hear you say it... But I respect a man who sticks to his guns. Even when they aren't loaded.  
(gets up, on to next business)  
Well, Arthur, clear out your desk. Security will escort you out of the building.

ARTHUR

Sir?

MR. WEIDERSPAHN

Superheroism is against company policy, son. Something to do with insurance, I believe.  
(as he strides off)  
Which means you...are fired.

A stunned Arthur watches Weiderspahn leave.

CUT TO:

EXT. "THE CITY" - LATE AFTERNOON

AERIAL SHOT - sweeping over The City, bristling with detail and activity at SUNSET. SOARING MUSIC thrills us as we sail in toward the top of a TOWERING SKYSCRAPER. The Tick is on the roof, palms rested on its low wall. He looks out over the rooftops below and breathes in deeply.

THE TICK

Ah, there's Crime here...He can smell it. He can taste it! Destiny has finally called on him, and now he feels her moist warm hand at the small of his back...pushing, pushing...  
(leans forward, shouts to City)  
CITY! I am The Tick! From this day forth, I will spread the Butter of Justice over your every nook and cranny! Hear me, O-City-my-City! Your toast will never go bare again!

The Tick walks backwards, pacing out the distance for a leap.

THE TICK

And so begins his first rooftop patrol...  
(begins running full tilt to roof's edge)  
With one...giant...LEEAP!

He hurls himself off the building. Clearly his intent is to land on a ROOFTOP across the wide avenue, but as he sails over the breach, his arc fails, and he hurtles toward a PENTHOUSE WINDOW.

INT. PENTHOUSE - BUILDING ACROSS STREET - CONTINUOUS

A lavishly-appointed PENTHOUSE APARTMENT, beautiful in the fading light of day. One large plate glass window explodes as The Tick bullets through it. He lands on the glazed terra-cotta tile floor and slides to a standing stop. Tick glances around, feeling awkward, but the apartment is empty, SAVE FOR:

A tiny, shivering, rich person's LAP DOG, standing a dozen feet from Tick. The dog rifles a quivering, bug-eyed look of fear at Tick, then pees a small puddle where it stands.

THE TICK

Eeegh.

CUT TO:

EXT./ INT. CHINESE RESTAURANT - EARLY EVENING

CLOSE ON - a beatific, GOLDEN BUDDHA, nestled in an alcove shrine. CAMERA PULLS BACK to find Arthur, seated at the bar in the LOUNGE, a half-full beer before him. A touch tipsy, he's in mid-confession to the CHINESE BARTENDER, a matronly, no-nonsense woman in her 50s. (She speaks tersely, with the mildest trace of an accent.) A cardboard box of OFFICE BELONGINGS sits on the bar beside Arthur. He takes an inexpert swig of beer and nods emphatically.

ARTHUR

--yes! Fired! ...And I've still got  
.. three years of payments to make on  
this suit!

The Bartender squints and cocks her head, judging Arthur's suit as she prepares a martini.

BARTENDER

It doesn't do a lot for you. Makes  
you look like a Easter Bunny.

ARTHUR

No, no...you don't understand.

(sighs)

I'm not wearing this because it looks good. I want to...It's supposed to be... It's a flying suit.

BARTENDER

(evenly skeptical)

Flying suit. Huh.

Arthur taps a button on his chest glumly. In a whirr of hi-techness, TRANSLUCENT WHITE MOTH WINGS unfold instantly from his slim backpack. Behind him, A TIPSY OCTOGENARIAN in a three-piece suit is profoundly startled and spills his tumbler of scotch and ice.

OCTOGENARIAN

Jesus Christ!

Arthur sags and taps the button again. The wings re-fold and disappear into the backpack.

ARTHUR

The problem is, I can't seem to get up the nerve to fly...

(sighs; takes another swig)

Mr. Weiderspahn is right. I must be losing my mind...

The bartender levels a long, jaded stare, then shakes her head.

BARTENDER

No longer interested.

(shakes martini shaker vigorously)

Too late for whining. You're not happy with your life--fix it.

Arthur sways on his stool, catches himself, then realizes:

ARTHUR

(woozy; nauseated)

.. I should go home...

He stands, picks up his office box, and heads for the door.

BARTENDER

HEY! Mister Crazy!

(Arthur stops, turns to her)

Rub Buddha's belly.

ARTHUR

What?

BARTENDER

Buddha's belly! Rub it for good luck.  
You're gonna need it.

Arthur turns to the Buddha in the shrine. He acquiesces.

ARTHUR

Oh...uh...right.

CU ON BUDDHA'S BELLY - Arthur's distorted reflection (on the polished orb of Buddha's gut) reaches out. His hand enters frame and gives the belly a tentative rub. SFX: PORTENTIOUS SQUEAK.

EXT. CHINESE RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Arthur weaves out of the restaurant, onto the sidewalk. He looks a little green in the face. Above him the joint's name glares in garish neon: "THE LONELY PANDA". Arthur walks off.

CUT TO:

INT. APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

A FRUMPISH WOMAN sits stiffly on a couch, clutching a bouquet of flowers. A LUMPEN MAN sweats nervously in an armchair next to the couch. The TV is on; the screen is filled RIOTOUSLY LAUGHING FACES. (It's a first date, and tension reigns!) They both look up as THUNDEROUS FOOTFALLS crash across the roof above them. The blaring laughter from the TV cuts to SNOWY STATIC.

EXT. ROOFTOPS OF THE CITY - NIGHT

The Tick bounds across the rooftops. A TV ANTENNAE is wrapped over him, and he shakes it off without missing a step.

THE TICK

Ah, The City rests easy in its  
pajamas, safe in the knowledge that  
The Tick is on the hunt...

The Tick's ROOFTOP BALLET is extremely hard on the roofs. He cracks CORNICES, clips a few bricks out of a CHIMNEY with his elbow, etcetera--all to GREAT COMEDIC EFFECT.

CUT TO:

EXT. WAREHOUSE LOADING DOCK - NIGHT

A short alley, dead-ending in a loading dock. A FLATBED TRUCK idles before the dock. A DOZEN HENCHMEN (dressed in identical PURPLE DOUBLE-BREASTEDSUITS, an embroidered gold crown crest on

each ) cluster around the truck. One henchman lowers A LARGE WOODEN CRATE onto the flatbed with a SMALL FORKLIFT. Others guide it and lash it down with CHAINS.

HENCHMAN I, a powerfully built alpha-male, talks on a CELL PHONE, keeping lookout near the mouth of the alley. HENCHMAN II stands at his side. Bald, stockier, he has a FRESH "CROWN" TATTOO on his forehead, coated with vaseline.

HENCHMAN I

Yes, Your Highness...It's right where they said it would be...You'll have it within the hour.

(closes phone, calls to men)

Let's go...come on, The Big Man is waiting...

EXT. NEARBY STREET - NIGHT

Arthur stumbles down the street, carrying his office box. He looks progressively MORE NAUSEATED, as his last shot catches up with him. He is about to heave when he spots an alley.

EXT. ALLEY - CONTINUOUS

Arthur wheels around the corner and THROWS UP. He sees shoes and looks up, mortified, to see Henchmen I scowling.

ARTHUR

Oh...I'm so...I'm so sorry...

HENCHMAN I

(inspects vomit-covered shoes)

Dammit!

HENCHMAN II

- ' Look boys! It's a super-hero, come to take us away!

All the Henchmen stop what they're doing and smile at Arthur.

ARTHUR

What? No, I--URK!

Henchman I grabs Arthur's suitfront, lifts him off the ground, and draws him into the alley, slamming him against the brickwall.

HENCHMAN I

Don't you know better than to mess with King Crime's men?

ARTHUR  
King Crime?

Arthur glances around fearfully, and then INTO CAMERA as his mind races and WE CUT TO:

INT. ARTHUR'S MIND - NIGHT

Appearing on screen, separated by VIOLENT WHITE FLASHES, A QUICK SERIES of NEWSPAPER HEADLINES run through Arthur's memory:

"KING CRIME HOLDS CITY IN THRALL OF TERROR!" --- "KING CRIME SUCKER-PUNCHES STATE'S OLDEST WOMAN!" --- "KING CRIME TRIAL SHOCKER: JURY EXPLODES!" --- "KING CRIME 'UNTOUCHABLE' SAY LOCAL SUPERHEROES!" CUT BACK TO:

EXT. WAREHOUSE ALLEY - NIGHT

Arthur's panic grows as the Henchmen gather around him, leering.

ARTHUR  
Oh no.

HENCHMAN II  
I think we might have to teach him  
the Lesson of Metcalf...

ARTHUR  
NOOOOOOOOOOOO!!!!

EXT. CITY ROOFTOPS - NEARBY - NIGHT

Arthur's HIGH-PITCHED WAIL OF TERROR drifts over the rooftops. The Tick bounds into frame and halts, listening keenly.

THE TICK  
- ' Aha! My first Damsel in Distress!

HIGH ANGLE VIEW - down into the warehouse alley, from just over the edge of the roof above. Arthur is being PLAYFULLY BEATEN by the cruel mob. The Tick looms up into FG.

THE TICK  
Huhn! That's no damsel! It's a  
comrade-in-arms, fighting the good  
fight!  
(calls down to Arthur)  
Wait! Save a piece of the cake  
for me!

The Tick leaps off the roof and lands on the truck's flatbed with A TREMENDOUS SLAM. The truck bounces on its suspension.

THE TICK

Wicked men! You face The Tick!  
(to Arthur, politely)  
That is, if you don't mind--

The Henchmen are startled mid-beating, and clear away from Arthur somewhat. Arthur sways weakly, huffing with fright.

ARTHUR

HEEEEEELP!

THE TICK

Great! Thanks!

The Tick leaps into battle. The Henchmen rush him, leaving Arthur to collapse against the brick wall. WHAT FOLLOWS IS POETRY IN MOTION as The Tick joyously sweeps up the alley with the henchmen. Arthur watches the comedic but sharply actioned battle in raw amazement. The Tick was born to beat guys up.

HENCHMEN I and II stumble away from the epicenter of combat, beaten but standing.

HENCHMEN I

Get the truck! We can't let them  
take the 'Scare'!

The Tick handily disposes of his last Henchman as the truck roars out of the alley and fishtails away. Tick rushes up to Arthur.

THE TICK

That was so...neat! We were magnificent, chum! Ten thugs pummeled into submission! And we two none the worse for the wear!  
(tones down bombast)  
What do you call yourself, by the way?

ARTHUR

(breathless; can barely speak)  
Ar...Arthur.

THE TICK

Well, Arthur, bad things happen in threes. Evil's on the run now, but it will rally and strike again!  
(darts out of shot.)  
To the rooftops!

Arthur stands shakily, bewildered by The Tick's exit.

ARTHUR

Wait...I'm not--

In the alley behind him, the beaten Henchmen begin to groan and stir. One of them (who can't get up) points at Arthur and snarls angrily. Arthur tiptoes out of shot, following Tick.

CUT TO:

EXT. CITY ROOFTOP - A SHORT TIME LATER - NIGHT

The Tick stands, hands on hips, waxing exuberantly. Arthur appears behind him, climbing up the fire-escape ladder. He's having a little trouble heaving himself over the roof edge.

THE TICK

He breathes in deep the sweet air of his first victory. And with the newly won friendship of a fellow warrior--

Tick reaches over and casually lifts Arthur up by his wing harness, setting him down on the roof with out pausing:

THE TICK

--he stands tall against the inevitable horrors to come...

ARTHUR

What?

THE TICK

(as no one had been saying anything)

What?

An awkward pause. Tick surveys the cityscape and inhales.

THE TICK

Ah...It all happens here, Arthur. Below the street, villains squirm and gnaw at the foundations of society. On the street, Mr. Work-a-day-Joe buys his paper...or perhaps a pastry of some kind...And on the rooftops, brightly clad stallions run the most dangerous steeplechase of all! Flanks sweating, nostrils flaring--We heroes are our own jockeys, chum! We ride ourselves! And hard!!

ARTHUR

I'm starting to think this is all a little too much for me.

He startles as a BAT-A-RANG-LIKE GRAPPLING HOOK rockets between them and lodges into a NEARBY CHIMNEY with a loud clank. They both turn to see a suave, BAT-THEMED HERO slide down the cable attached to the hook with perfect cool. He lands in a dramatic crouch, his brown cape pooling around him superbly.

THE TICK/ARTHUR

(both impressed)

Wow.

WIPE TO:

EXT. / INT. KING CRIME'S CITY LAIR - NIGHT

PAN OVER the luxurious castle-like interior of KING CRIME'S LAIR. The Henchmen who escaped with the crate nurse their wounds as Henchman I recounts their tale to their OS boss.

HENCHMAN I

The little one vomited on me...that's how the big blue guy got the drop on us.

HENCHMEN II

'Called himself "The Tick"...

KING CRIME is revealed, in his villainous splendor. He wears an IMMACULATE DEEP PURPLE SUIT and a SIMPLE GOLDEN CROWN. By him stands his CHIEF SCIENTIST, a slight man with intriguing eyewear. MORE HENCHMEN fill the hall of Crime's lair, awaiting his command.

KING CRIME

Superheroes, eh? This displeases me...You'd think they'd have gotten the message after they saw the unspeakable nastiness we visited upon...what was that poor bastard's name?

SCIENTIST

The Flying Metcalf, Your Highness.

KING CRIME

Ah, yes...Metcalf. Poor bastard..... I think my new superweapon's first task will be to set another hideous example...with this Tick and his queasy little friend.

KING CRIME (cont.)  
(gestures to crate)  
Open it up, boys!

Two Henchmen pry the crate open. The crate stands vertical, and the lid falls forward, followed by a rush of STYROFOAM PEANUTS. Inside the crate, a wicked looking METALLIC CAPSULE stands. A CLIPBOARD slides out on the wave of packing material.

SCIENTIST  
Here's the bill-of-sale...  
(picks it up; reads it)  
Contents: one "Red Scare" attack unit.  
Let's see...engineered and programmed  
in 1979 for covert Soviet KGB operation  
133-dash-P3.

KING CRIME  
Twenty years old, eh? No wonder it  
was so cheap.

As the Scientist reads, King Crime picks the REMOTE ACTIVATION UNIT out of the foam. It looks like a landmine with a single red button at it's center.

SCIENTIST  
The mission was Code-named--  
(struggles to translate)  
Heh, my Cyrillic is a little rusty...  
Code-named "The Peach...of Georgia..."  
But the operation was shelved...The  
thing's been warehoused in Afghan-  
istan for the last decade. We might  
have a few bugs to work out...

KING CRIME  
Well, let's turn it on. If it's broken,  
then several Former Soviet Union heads  
will roll...

King Crime hits the remote.

A BLARING ALARM SOUNDS. In a SPECTACULAR DISPLAY, the Capsule hums to life, blows exploding bolts out of its seams, hisses out a cloud of cryogenic vapor, and unfurls like a flower, revealing the hulking, spiked shape of THE RED SCARE. The Scare lumbers into the light, frosted by his quick thaw from deep-freeze.

KING CRIME  
Oooo--I like him!

FADE OUT: END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

EXT. ROOFTOP - NIGHT

The Tick and Arthur watch as DIE FLEDERMAUS, a handsome, suave fellow in a bat suit, moves impressively toward them.

DIE FLEDERMAUS  
Nice out tonight.

ARTHUR  
Uh...

THE TICK  
Yes!

DIE FLEDERMAUS  
Haven't seen you around before. I'm--  
(strikes dramatic pose)  
Die Fledermaus!  
(relaxes, more casual)  
I sort of run things around here.  
You may have heard of me. I get a  
lot of press.

Fledermaus goes to his grappling-hook, which is lodged in the side of the chimney, and tries to casually pull it free. It's stuck.

ARTHUR  
I saw your picture in Leotard Legends  
Monthly.

DIE FLEDERMAUS  
That was a good one wasn't it?

THE TICK  
Arthur, look! Another superhero--  
and a woman!

In the distance, AMERICAN MAID, a tough but graceful female hero in a RED-WHITE-AND-BLUE MAID'S UNIFORM, leaps and somersaults across the rooftops toward them.

DIE FLEDERMAUS  
(sounds none too pleased to see her)  
Yeah, we hooked up once or twice...just  
watch out, that kitten's got claws...  
With her--

Fledermaus gives the hook a harder tug.

DIE FLEDERMAUS

--it's always 'that time of the month'  
if you know what I mean...

Fledermaus looks to them for manly agreement.

THE TICK

(feigns understanding)

Always that time of the month. Check.

American Maid flips into scene and lands on the roof. She and  
'Maus regard each other with obvious distaste.

DIE FLEDERMAUS

Well, if it isn't American Maid,  
the nation's most patriotic dom-  
estic.

AMERICAN MAID

And if isn't Die Fledermaus, the  
City's most pathetic excuse for  
a human being.

American Maid has an air of competent urgency about her as she  
approaches the trio. Tick pipes up good-naturedly:

THE TICK

I'm told that it's that time of the  
month for you every day! Madam, I  
feel the same way! I say CARPE  
DIEM!

AMERICAN MAID

(long incredulous stare, then:)

My sources say King Crime is on  
- the move again. Any of you heard  
anything?

Die Fledermaus hauls one more time on the hook and gives up.

DIE FLEDERMAUS

(edgy fear)

Don't you stir up any trouble  
-- with him! He'll start coming after  
all of us...

THE TICK

We just beat up ten of his men!

DIE FLEDERMAUS  
(profound alarm)  
What!?

Tick smiles good-naturedly and plucks the grappling-hook out of the chimney without a trace of effort. He hands it to Fledermaus.

ARTHUR  
(awed as he remembers the fight)  
The Tick was amazing. I've never  
seen anything like it.

AMERICAN MAID  
Did they have something with them?  
Something big?

ARTHUR  
They had a crats...covered with  
Russian markings. And...and one of  
the men called it..."The Scare?"

She turns to camera in the FG, thinking out her next step aloud.

AMERICAN MAID  
The Red Scare...I wasn't even sure it  
was real...If King Crime has the Red  
Scare...Then he's preparing an all-out  
offensive! I've got to go--

American Maid does a gymnastic dance of exit. Fledermaus watches her go while he reels in his GRAPPLING CABLE.

DIE FLEDERMAUS  
You can lie to us, but you can't  
lie to yourself, honey. I'm in your  
blood like rabies!

He finishes, waits until she's out of ear-shot and then cups his mouth with one hand, speaking to Tick in a locker-room whisper.

DIE FLEDERMAUS  
.. Dyke.

Tick cocks an eyebrow, confused. Arthur too. Die Fledermaus fires his grapple off screen and parts with final words.

DIE FLEDERMAUS  
It's a good time to leave town, boys.  
King Crime is going to be on you  
like Ugly on a wheel of head cheese.

They watch him soar off on his cable.

CUT TO:

INT. KING CRIME'S CITY LAIR - NIGHT

The Red Scare looms over King Crime and the Scientist, a full seven feet tall, hugely muscled, covered head-to-toe in red spiny armor. He raises his head mechanically. The capsule behind him flashes as a PRE-RECORDED VOICE emanates from within it.

CAPSULE RECORDING  
(In RUSSIAN -- sub-titled)  
["Engage Primary Mission Objective."]

The Red Scare looks down at King Crime.

RED SCARE POV - wavers IN AND OUT OF FOCUS. He's a little rusty.

RED SCARE  
(heavy Russian Accent)  
Are you Jimmy Carter?

KING CRIME  
Excuse me?

Red Scare leans in, squinting.

RED SCARE  
Jimmy Carter...President...peanut  
farmer...Are--you--Jimmy Carter?

KING CRIME  
(chuckling; sarcastic)  
Yeah...I'm Jimmy Carter.  
(gestures to his goons)  
And this is my cabinet. Right boys?

HENCHMEN  
(laugh along with their King)

IN A FLASH the Red Scare unsheathes A HUGE HAMMER and SICKLE. On the forehead of his helmet, a RED SPOTLIGHT turns on. King Crime and his men are shocked. The Scientist, seeing King Crime targeted by Red Scare's red light, backs away subtly.

RED SCARE  
Then you DIE!

The Red Scare Fires the sickle from his wrist (it's attached to a chain than whizzes out of his armor). The sickle RICOCHETS off two walls and slices through the CHAIN which suspends a HUGE WICKED-LOOKING GLASS-AND-METAL CHANDELIER which hangs above King Crime.

The Chandelier lands on King Crime. It's completely clear that King Crime is dead, dead, dead. His Henchmen grow progressively more emotional and teary-eyed from this point on. They loved him.

HENCHMAN I

Aw NO!

King Crime's dented crown rolls out of the splintered mess of glass and metal, to the feet of Henchman II.

HENCHMAN II

(to the Scare; choked up with grief)  
Sarcasm! It was sarcasm! He's not...  
I mean, he wasn't...He wasn't  
Jimmy Carter!!

Red Scare lifts Henchman II off his feet roughly.

RED SCARE

Where is Jimmy Carter?

HENCHMEN II

I DON'T KNOW!!

The Scare hurls him away and stomps out of the mansion, SMASHING the DOUBLE DOORS like matchwood.

RED SCARE (OS)

DESTROY JIMMY CARTER!

The Henchmen stare at their dead leader in shock and sadness. The Henchman with the fresh crown tattoo on his forehead laments:

HENCHMEN I

Aw, man...And I just got my tattoo...

CUT TO:

EXT. CITY ROOFTOPS - NIGHT

Tick and Arthur walk along an uninterrupted stretch of warehouse rooftops.

THE TICK

I mean, good heavens, man! It's like having Christmas strapped to your back! The gift of flight just keeps on giving! TAKE IT!

ARTHUR

That's easy for you to say. I

ARTHUR (cont.)  
mean, you're a superhero.

Tick gives him a puzzled look. JUST THEN -- far off RUMBLINGS and CAR ALARMS herald mayhem. The Tick springs into action.

THE TICK  
Quickly, flightless chum! There's  
no time to lose!

He reaches out to Arthur, who shrinks back a bit.

CUT TO:

EXT. PANNING OVER ROOFTOPS - SECONDS LATER - NIGHT

The Tick bounds from rooftop to rooftop, Arthur curled under one arm like a giant limp football. Arthur is too jostled to protest.

They arrive at the edge of another roof and look down into the street. Below, the Red Scare is storming down the street in a tantrum, ROARING and DESTROYING as he goes.

THE TICK  
Well, that looks like a Red Scare  
to me. Let's go!

Arthur (who was dazed until now) re-animates and screams as The Tick hurls them both off the four-story building.

ARTHUR  
No! No! AAAAAAAAAAAAAA--URGHK!

Red Scare in FG stiffens as he hears the Tick slam to the street in the BG. The Scare turns to face him.

Tick lets Arthur go--he crumples from the impact of the landing.

THE TICK  
All right, Mr. Knock-Everything-  
Over! That'll be just about enough  
of that!

The Red Scare growls and RIPS a US MAILBOX out of the cement, hefting it over his head and roaring.

He hurls it at The Tick, into whom it SMASHES, carrying him back into a GLASS STOREFRONT.

THE TICK  
OOOGH!

The Scare turns to Arthur and stomps over to him. He lifts Arthur up by the scruff of the suit and growls:

RED SCARE  
Where is Jimmy Carter?

ARTHUR  
(supremely confused)  
Wh-Who?

RED SCARE  
Hated puppet leader of Western  
Capitalist Machine. Exploiter  
of the working class. Grower of  
peanuts.

ARTHUR  
I...I don't know. Atlanta, maybe?

RED SCARE  
I MUST DESTROY HIM!

The Tick reappears, recovered from the blow, and cocks back a fist. The Scare drops Arthur and wheels to face him, too late.

THE TICK  
Take your hands off my friend,  
you big red crap-hound!

Tick throws a mighty punch that catches Scare under the chin. The Scare is lifted high into the air and disappears into the shadows at the end of the block, where we hear a HUGE CRASH.

Tick darts off camera, Arthur follows.

They get to the impact site and find an empty crater in the middle of the street,

THE TICK  
Rats! He got away!

ARTHUR  
(still out of breath)  
Maybe you shouldn't hit them so far.  
It's...It's kind of like giving them  
a head start.

THE TICK  
That's a very good point.  
(hands on hips. ready)  
Well, the trail's still hot! Let's  
get cracking!

Arthur's mind boggles at the idea. He's sapped of his last bit of strength.

ARTHUR

I...I...can't...I'm so tired. And people keep hitting me and shoving me...I sorry...but I just want to go home.

Arthur staggers off, homeward. Tick contemplates, then:

THE TICK

Ah, yes, HQ! Perhaps you're right. We should go to your stronghold to strategize--or play *Stratego!*

He follows Arthur. Arthur is none too happy about this, but remains polite.

ARTHUR

Oh. Well...uh...

CUT TO:

INT. ARTHUR'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Arthur and The Tick enter Arthur's modest, cluttered apartment.

ARTHUR

Here we are...Like I said, I don't keep much in my refrigerator...I'm not really prepared to entertain.

THE TICK

It's incredible! It looks just like an apartment.

(glances around excitedly)

All right...show me your trigger.

ARTHUR

(a touch of alarm)

My what?

THE TICK

Your Secret Headquarters trigger. You know, the statue or the candlestick that you twist and then all your secret crime-busting equipment pops out!

(sees something OS)

Is this it?

Tick strides over the to wall and RIPS a COAT-RACK out with a chunk of plaster.

ARTHUR

Aaa-aa...

The Tick heads for a lamp, arms outstretched.

THE TICK

This is it, right?

Arthur zips in and pulls the lamp free from Tick.

ARTHUR

Gimme that!

Tick, smiling, goes to the couch and flips it over.

THE TICK

What does your sofa turn into? Some kind of sonar/radar perimeter defense unit?

ARTHUR

NO! It turns into a bed!  
(plaintive, exhausted)  
Please! This is just a regular apartment.

THE TICK

It is?

ARTHUR

Yes! Yes! So stop breaking things!  
OK?!

THE TICK

(he can dig it)

OK.

Arthur frowns at him for a beat, puts the lamp down, and walks toward a door.. The Tick follows close behind, crowding him.

THE TICK

Where're we goin'? Secret elevator?  
Subterranean cavern?

Arthur opens the door and reveals a MUNDANE BATHROOM.

ARTHUR

I'm going to the bathroom.

THE TICK  
(backs off awkwardly)  
Oh, ah...Check. Ahem...I'll just be  
over here, eh...monitoring the culture...

Tick gestures to the TV and goes toward it.

ARTHUR  
Fine.

Arthur slams the door shut.

INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Arthur approaches the mirror and pulls off his cowi / goggles. He stares at himself in the mirror, inspecting a bruise on his cheek. The TV GOES ON in the living room.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The Tick sits on the overturned couch, remote in hand, channel surfing rapidly, still energized by the evening.

TV ANNOUNCER I (OS)  
"In the future, one out of every five  
people will be Abraham Lincoln..."

THE TICK  
Amazing!

Tick CHANGES CHANNEL.

TV ANNOUNCER II (OS)  
"Although it spends its entire life  
in water, the sea otter never gets  
wet..."

THE TICK  
Get out of town!

Tick CHANGES CHANNEL AGAIN.

INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Arthur's bathroom has a door leading to his BEDROOM. He sees his bed and moves towards it. Tick's OS responses to TV are muted.

THE TICK (OS)  
That makes two of us!

INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Arthur sits on the edge of his bed, spent.

THE TICK (OS)

I'm hip!

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. CITY WATERFRONT - DAWN

The Red Scare stalks down the street, passing by a NEWSPAPER VENDING MACHINE. The headline catches his eye and he TEARS the front of the machine off. Then he snatches up a paper, reads it, and roars with bloodlust.

RED SCARE

DESTROY JIMMY CARTER!!

He turns and storms off.

CUT TO:

INT. ARTHUR'S LIVING ROOM - MORNING

TV IMAGE FILLS SCREEN - AN ANIMATED CARTOON - "He-Man" holding up his sword and calling on the power of Greyskull.

HE-MAN

By the power of Greyskull, I have  
the power!

Tick responds and then changes the channel.

THE TICK

Now you're talking!

INT. ARTHUR'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Arthur stirs and wakes. He simply passed out last night; his legs are still draped over the edge of the bed. Light pours in through his window. He hears the OS TV BURBLE and Tick's OS PATTERN, and the events of last night crash back on him.

ARTHUR

Oh God...He's still here...

The Tick suddenly booms, and Arthur lurches out of bed,

THE TICK (OS)

HEAVENS-TO-BETSY!!

(Arthur startles)

WHAT--ARE--THE--ODDS!?

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Arthur enters, pulling up his mask. Tick is glued to the set.

NEWS ANNOUNCER

--and founder of Habitat For Humanity International, arrived via chartered jet earlier today.

ARTHUR

Why are you yelling?

THE TICK

Shhh!

NEWS ANNOUNCER

President Carter will attend a ceremony in his honor at the site of his foundation's most recent home-building project, in Evettsville...He'll be rolling up his sleeves and lending a hand with the construction later this afternoon...

ARTHUR

The Red Scare! He's going to kill Jimmy Carter!

THE TICK

*I know!*

ARTHUR

Someone's got to do something about this! We've got to call the police!

THE TICK

- . The only antidote for a supervillain is a superhero, chum. It's up to us!

Arthur blanches and sits on the couch next to Tick, miserable.

ARTHUR

This is all our fault...We let him get away...

THE TICK

Arthur, your flying suit! You've got to fly us to Jimmy's aid!

ARTHUR

I can't fly us to Evettsville! It's fifteen miles away...I can't even fly.

THE TICK  
To your Arthur-mobile, then!

Arthur comes clean in a frustrated, poorly rested rant. .

ARTHUR  
Tick, I don't have an Arthur-mobile,  
or a secret elevator, or a cave, or  
anything...I'm not a superhero...  
I mean, last night scared me.

The Tick throws an arm around Arthur, giving his shoulders an  
encouraging squeeze.

THE TICK  
Arthur, you've learned the hero's  
most important lesson: bravery is  
nothing more than 'fear' spelled  
backwards...And bravery spelled  
backwards is nothing more than...  
Than "Y-rev-arb"...

Arthur let's this wisdom settle in blankly. Tick begins squeezing  
Arthur more and more tightly.

THE TICK  
You can't hide from it. No sir,  
you've got to hug it!  
(crushes Arthur in bearhug)  
HUG YOUR DESTINY, ARTHUR!  
(passionate whisper)  
Hug it!

ARTHUR  
(crushed wheeze).  
- ' Tick...President Carter...

Tick releases Arthur, back to heroing.

THE TICK  
Right you are, chum! Jimmy  
needs us now more than ever...

ARTHUR  
(catches wind, nods)  
We've got to think of something.

The Tick nods dutifully and hunches over, concentrating. CAMERA  
PUSHES IN TO ECU on his blue brow.

THE TICK  
Think of something...think of some-  
thing...

We hear regular heavy THUDS dial up and the CAMERA GOES INTO  
TICK'S HEAD - WHERE WE SEE:

EXT. FIELD OF TALL GRASS - SUNSET

TWO HUGE GORILLAS hurl LARGE STONES mechanically at each other's  
 chests, making the now THUNDEROUS THUDS.

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

PULL OUT OF TICK'S HEAD - he's still concentrating, BUT THE THUDS  
FADE. Arthur turns to Tick with a mild shrug.

ARTHUR  
Take a cab?

THE TICK  
Hmmm...Makes more sense then what  
I was thinking...and yet it's just  
crazy enough to work!

WIPE TO:

EXT. EVETTSVILLE HABITAT CONSTRUCTION SITE - DAY

A SMALL CROWD of Habitat workers and supporters cluster at the  
edge of a large PARKING LOT. EX-PRESIDENT JIMMY CARTER stands at a  
RAISED PODIUM, addressing the crowd and A CONTINGENT OF LOCAL NEWS  
PEOPLE. He wears a YELLOW CONSTRUCTION HAT. Behind him, a NUMBER  
OF PARTIALLY FINISHED HOMES stand, all frame and 2x4s. Carter is  
seen in the distance only.

JIMMY CARTER  
(over P.A. speakers)  
I'd like to thank all of the vol-  
unteer workers and everyone who's  
supported the Habitat project.  
Some of you from the very beginning...

The Red Scare lumbers into the FG and begins crossing the parking  
lot toward to Carter. His RED LIGHT goes on and he unsheathes his  
hammer and sickle, roaring:

RED SCARE  
JIMMY CARTER! YOU HAVE BEEN SEN-  
TENCED TO DEATH BY THE UNION OF  
SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLICS!

JIMMY CARTER

Oh my.

RED SCARE  
PREPARE TO MEET YOUR DOOM!

Carter (in a cheated, stand-in shot) turns from the podium and runs quietly away, into the MAZE OF UNFINISHED HOUSES.

CUT TO:

EXT. HIGHWAY TO EVETTSVILLE - DAY

A TAXICAB zooms along the highway.

INT. CAB - CONTINUOUS

Tick is crammed into and takes up the whole of the backseat. He narrates to himself. Arthur sits up front, with an anxious-looking CAB DRIVER.

THE TICK

Meanwhile he and his trusty sidekick race to thwart the sinister goal of the would-be assassin...

ARTHUR

(cranes around seat to face Tick)  
Tick, who are you talking to?

THE TICK

I wasn't talking.

Arthur winces at Tick's fireworks of denial. Tick spies the Habitat Construction Site just off and below the ELEVATED HIGHWAY they're racing on. A distant Red Scare stalks through the Site.

THE TICK

There he is!

EXT. HIGHWAY - CONTINUOUS

Tick throws open the cab door and leaps out, flying over the edge of the highway, several storeys above the ground.

ARTHUR (inside car)

Tick!

INT. CAB - CONTINUOUS

The Driver swerves side-to-side in a panic he shares with Arthur.

CAB DRIVER

AAAAAAAAAA---

ARTHUR

Take this exit! Take this exit!

They veer sharply onto an off-ramp exit.

EXT. STORAGE AREA OF CONSTRUCTION SITE - CONTINUOUS

Tick landed on a pile of LARGE SEWER PIPE sections, mashing a Tick-sized dent into them. He muses through gritted teeth.

THE TICK

Gravity is a harsh mistress...

EXT. MAZE OF UNFINISHED HOUSES - CONTINUOUS

Jimmy Carter runs for his life through the Site. The Red Scare gains on him at a brisk walk. Carter darts into an UNFINISHED HOUSE.

INT. UNFINISHED HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Carter jogs up the stairs to the second floor, just as the Scare explodes through the wall into the house. Ripping his way through the bare-frame interior walls, he reaches the stairs.

JIMMY CARTER (OS)

(muted plead)

Leave me alone!

EXT. MAZE OF UNFINISHED HOUSES - CONTINUOUS

The Tick runs full tilt through the Site, heading for the OS LOUD CRASHING.

THE TICK

Nnngg...That can't be good for Jimmy!

Arthur runs in from the opposite direction. The cab idles in the distant BG.

INT. UNFINISHED HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Carter now climbs a ladder up to the bare-frame roof of the house. The Red Scare explodes up through the floor. He targets Carter, raising hammer and sickle.

RED SCARE

DESTROY JIMMY CARTER!

The Scare leaps upward, just as Carter scrambles onto the struts of the roof. The Scare hooks in with his sickle, and swings his hammer blindly at the President.

The Tick explodes through a new hole in the second floor and sails up, grabbing the hanging Red Scare around the waist.

THE TICK

Quit it! The Cold War's over you  
kooky commie!

The Red Scare strains to reach Carter, splintering roof struts out from under him just as he dances to others.

EXT. UNFINISHED HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

The whole house now THREATENS TO CRUMBLE AT ANY MOMENT. Arthur sees the President's plight. He looks at his wings button with trepidation. Then the Tick's DISEMBODIED HEAD appears over his shoulder and enunciates carefully:

TICK'S DISEMBODIED HEAD

Y-REV-ARB! Y--REV--AARRB!

ARTHUR

(stirred to heroic action)  
Mr. President!

Arthur taps his chest button and his WINGS UNFOLD. He gets a running start and wavers up into the air.

Just as the Scare is about to nail Carter, Arthur sails in and sweeps the President off the roof.

RED SCARE

- . (LION-LIKE ROAR OF RAGE)

LONG SHOT - Arthur and Carter do an ungraceful wobbling glide down to the ground. Arthur lands his full weight on top of Carter.

JIMMY CARTER

AAagh!

ARTHUR

Sorry! Sorry!

Arthur looks up to see the ENTIRE HOUSE COLLAPSE into a pile of rubble.

The rubble of splintered wood shudders as an ongoing battle rages within. Pieces of house explode from the pile. Then it goes still.

Arthur staggers to his feet, worried for The Tick.

ARTHUR

Tick!

After an appropriately melodramatic pause, The Tick emerges triumphant from the pile, the beaten Red Scare held by the scruff of the neck.

THE TICK

Got him!

Arthur exhales with relief. SECRET SERVICE AGENTS sweep in around him, helping the President.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. HABITAT CONSTRUCTION SITE PARKING LOT - DAY

POLICE, AMBULANCES, GOVERNMENT CARS AND NEWS VANS have turned the lot into a circus. Die Fledermaus sits behind the wheel of his SLEEK BAT-ESQUE MOBILE. AN EAGER NEWSWOMAN has her mike thrust at him. A CAMERA MAN by her side.

DIE FLEDERMAUS

Yes, I've been tracking this Red Menace thing for months...I think it's safe to say that if it wasn't for me, we'd be short one ex-President right about now...

(now flirting in high gear)

You know, you have a lovely bone structure--

A RIPPLE OF VOICES washes through the bedlam.

FRESS

("Mr. President!" ad lib walla)

The newspeople converge on SOME OS ACTION. The Newswoman exits.

American Maid moves through the stragglers. A CIA AGENT rushes up to her and flashes his badge.

CIA AGENT

American Maid--Agent Da Costa, CIA.

AMERICAN MAID

I came as soon as I could. Is the Scare neutralized?

CIA AGENT

Yes, Ma'am. And heavily sedated.  
We're set to air-lift him out to  
our Nevada base of operations.

AMERICAN MAID

Save a seat for me.

CIA AGENT

Yes, Ma'am.

Through his windshield, Fledermaus watches American Maid cross the lane about thirty feet in front of his car. He picks up his public address hand mike. His voice rings out over the area.

DIE FLEDEPMAUS

Lesbian.

American Maid gives 'Maus the two armed Italian gesture for 'screw you' and keeps moving.

Carter is being wheeled toward an ambulance in a gurney. Tick and Arthur walk along side the gurney's side.

ARTHUR

I'm so sorry, Mr. President! I just started flying a couple of minutes before we met...

Carter's hand reaches up in a CU and touches Arthur's hand.

JIMMY CARTER

You saved my life, son. Thank you.

Arthur swells with a sense of Presidential approval. The Press descends on he and Tick, shoving mikes into their faces.

NEWS WOMAN

(above ad lib question walla)  
Arthur! Tick! You're heroes! Do you have anything to say to our viewers...

THE TICK

Yes, I do!

He doesn't really. After a long, dead silence--during which The Tick keeps smiling--Arthur tries his best to fill in the gap.

ARTHUR

(making it up as he goes along)  
Well...I think it's...good...that President Carter is...still alive.

He seems like a nice man--

THE TICK

(cuts Arthur off, blurting:)  
Hey, kids! Don't smoke! And dont rob!  
Or kill people! ...Meanwhile--

CUT TO TV COVERAGE OF SAME SCENE - a "NEWS 17" banner runs under their video image. Tick talks directly into camera.

THE TICK (cont.)

(throws arm over Arthur's shoulder)  
We'll be out there doing whatever  
we can to keep the gnarled hand of  
villainy from closing around your  
tender young throats! Right, Arthur?

CAMERA PULLS AWAY - to reveal a 12-FOOT WIDE TV SCREEN, in a shadowy, creepy DUNGEON-LIKE PLACE.

ARTHUR (on TV)

Uh...yeah...

THE TICK (on TV)

Do you suppose I could stay on your  
couch again tonight?

In the EXTREME FG, a scaly HAND OF VILLAINY rises with remote control, and shuts the BIG TV screen off.

SCALY VILLAIN (OS)

(SPINE-TINGLING VILLAIN CHUCKLE)

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO