

Ext. Cityscape - night

A bird's eye view of glittering lights in office windows above and headlights below. Could be anywhere, but the music sounds like New York, 1986.

Title:
New York
1987

Damn. Close though.

A gravelly-voiced narrator.

NARRATOR (V. O.)
This is my city.

Look, a silhouette ahead, perched on the rooftops like a statuesque gargoyle. A drooping cape hides their figure.

NARRATOR (V. O.) (CONT'D)
I wasn't born here, but it's mine
regardless. Not because I inherited
it, or bought it, or just asked for
it nicely and never returned it.

We're closer now to the silhouette, whom we see is a masked woman as she stands.

NARRATOR (V. O.) (CONT'D)
I stole everything from them. Piece
by piece. That made it mine.

The woman is running along the roof edge now. It's dangerous and people get hurt doing it.

NARRATOR (V. O.) (CONT'D)
I can't let her stop me.

The woman runs along the edge full-on. She's headed for a corner, clearly intent on leaping.

A foot sticks out from around the corner. She trips, leaps terribly, and ends in a clumsy fall between one building and the next.

The foot that tripped her returns to its place, under our narrator, who smiles at the camera while the heroine plummets.

NARRATOR
(mouthing)
One... Two... Three...

A TERRIBLE CRASH sounds from below. Horns honk, screaming ensues.

NARRATOR (V. O.)
They call me Mr. Fingers.

He looks over the edge.

MR. FINGERS (V. O.)
Because you can count on me.

Mr. Fingers straightens, then casually strolls along the ledge towards a window washer cart suspended from taut cables.

EXT. ROOFTOP - NIGHT

WHIRRRRR. The cart crests the top of the building, and Mr. Fingers steps off. He cracks knuckles hidden inside leather gloves.

And more knuckles.

And more. Geez.

MR. FINGERS (V. O.) (CONT'D)
They may have other reasons for the name. Fingers in a lot of pies, or sticky fingers, or trigger fingers... Who can say?

Last knuckle crack.

MR. FINGERS (V. O.) (CONT'D)
All I care about is that when they say my name, it's with respect.

He walks towards a door marked "STAIRS" and goes in.

MR. FINGERS (V. O.) (CONT'D)
Or, you know, fear.

EXT. CITY STREET - NIGHT

The caped woman lies dead, her mask askew. Horrified bystanders cover their eyes or mouths in shock.

A military grade smartwatch is blinking a tiny light. The blinking slows.

BYSTANDER #1
Is that.. Is it her?

BYSTANDER #2
It can't be...

The blinking light stops.

Soon new lights flash... Smartphones snapping pictures of the battered corpse. We freeze on one of the shots, and dissolve to:

INT. HERO HIDEOUT - NIGHT

A 4k screen displays the picture in graphic detail.

In front of it enters the weathered face of BILL GORDON. He's old, black, and moves with the frenetic pace of a hyper Little League coach.

BILL

Dark Madame is dead.

Gasps from other heroes around the room. A shy, petite, black twenty-something named CRASHLEY looks up from her laptop in horror. Beside her is a sumo wrestler-sized thug, GRIP, who hides his reaction. The most stunned is MAJOR HART, a 40-something would-be romance novel cover novel.

TWOBOWS, a latino archer with weird facial hair and, you guessed it, two bows, is wide-eyed.

TWOBOWS

All the way?

Disgusted mutters around the room.

GRIP

Dammit, Twobows!

TWOBOWS

What?

BILL

Yes, "all the way."

GRIP

You've got all the brains of an oak tree.

Major Hart is at the breaking point.

TWOBOWS

Trees don't have brains, Grip.

Crack! Hart snaps a keyboard in half over his knee.

MAJOR HART

Quiet!

The others hush up.

MAJOR HART (CONT'D)

Who did it? How?

BILL
She fell face first from the
twentieth floor.

GRIP
Sounds like she was doing her jump
thing-

MAJOR HART
Agreed. But she never misses. What or
who made her miss the jump?

They all speak in unison.

ALL
Mr. Fingers.

TWOBOWS
(simultaneously)
Someone in this very room.

More groans from the others.

CRASHLEY
I've got feeds from traffic cams,
smart doorbells, dash cams... None
pointing up, though.

TWOBOWS
Check Insta.

MAJOR HART
Or Facebook.

CRASHLEY
Uh, no. Insta. Facebook users are
older. Slower. Insta kids will look
up, see some weirdo on a ledge,
they'll grab a shot.

MAJOR HART
Fine. Search everything and look for
a shot of Mr. Fingers. We'll at least
know his face.

TWOBOWS
They say he can change his face.

GRIP
I hear can control bugs.

CRASHLEY
I hear he's a woman.

TWOBOWS

I hear your mom is a woman.

Crashley stares.

CRASHLEY

Correct.

TWOBOWS

I hear it a LOT.

Crashley would throw her mouse but it's too pricey..

BILL

You two done?

GRIP

What can we do?

BILL

You and Twobows head to that bar she likes, look for leads.

They look really sheepish.

BILL (CONT'D)

Who was she after tonight? Anybody see her, or talk to her, anything like that.

Grip and Twobows look very reluctant.

BILL (CONT'D)

What's the problem?

TWOBOWS

Her bar is the Flagstaff Taps.

BILL

So?

GRIP

It's a male strip club.

BILL

Oh geez. Just go you homophobes.

GRIP

I'M just scared they gonna say get up here. I might have the physique but I can't dance -

BILL

Go!

Grip and Twobows exeunt.

MAJOR HART

And I suppose I should...

Bill is pulling a navy shirt out of a closet full of sundry costumes and disguises. Clown. Priest. Fireman.

BILL

Identify her body. Look for clues, anything. She was on to something big.

MAJOR HART

(reluctant)

And should I...

BILL

Of course.

MAJOR HART

What are you gonna do?

BILL

Somebody needs to tell her family.

He throws the shirt on the bed, and we see its front: silver buttons on the collar, and a shiny badge over one pocket - the shield reads LAPD.

INT. WAREHOUSE LAIR/OFFICE - NIGHT

Mr. Fingers sits at desk, looking at something on his computer.

In walks VANCE, a mercenary for hire with a commando knife sheathed on his belt, and other guns hidden somewhere else on his person.

MR. FINGERS (V. O.)

That's Vance. He had the skills to go into business for himself, but he just really enjoys his work. Although maybe it's just how I pay him so dang much.

MR. FINGERS

He here yet, Vance?

VANCE

He's downstairs as we speak.

MR. FINGERS

Excellent.

He stands, pulling a gun out of his desk drawer.

MR. FINGERS (CONT'D)
Can I ask you a question, Vance?

Vance looks a bit perplexed.

MR. FINGERS (V. O.)
Look how confused he is. Of course I
can ask him a question. I'm the boss.

Vance shrugs.

MR. FINGERS (CONT'D)
Why come all the way upstairs? Why
not just... text me?

Vance ponders it for a moment. It's hard to tell if he's
nervous, but he might be.

VANCE
(smiling)
Just good manners, I guess.

MR. FINGERS
(nodding)
Courtesy is a virtue, Vance. Thank
you.

Mr. Fingers holsters his gun, drums lightly on the grip, and
heads downstairs.

INT. WAREHOUSE LAIR - NIGHT
The warehouse proper is cooled by enormous ceiling fans. A
score of dilapidated mannequins stand or lean in a number of
directions.

Four of Vance's thugs are standing after abandoning a game
of poker, their trigger hands at Standing nervously before
them is RAUL HERNANDEZ. He's carrying a hefty case.

Me. Fingers stands with his own bag at the top of the
staircase. Higher ground.

MR. FINGERS (CONT'D)
Senor Hernandez, I believe the reason
for your visit may be moot.

HERNANDEZ
Excuse me?

MR. FINGERS
You came to sell me something. In
private. Something your employer
doesn't even know is missing yet.

Hernandez looks confused. He bites his tongue.

MR. FINGERS (CONT'D)
But you didn't bring any... seconds.
Backup. Or rather... witnesses.

Hernandez realizes the threat being made, and spins to go--
Vance is there, a black gun menacing him. Hernandez sees
he's trapped. He clutches his heavy case.

MR. FINGERS (CONT'D)
I'd still very much like to see your
product in action. Why don't you...
Put it on?

Hernandez deliberates, then complies. He opens his case,
revealing a loose red garment, flowing and barely shaped
like a suit. He puts it on. He looks like a deflated,
scarlet Michelin Man.

The crew around him laugh, but he's emboldened by the armor.

HERNANDEZ
The batteries and motors are carried
in the hips. Cameras are in the
shoulders, CPU at your sternum.

Vance feels the cloth without asking.

VANCE
Heh. A little heavy, but that won't
stop a bullet.

HERNANDEZ
Power on.

The saggy folds in the fabric come to life, lifting and
twisting in the air as far as they can stretch from their
seams.

Vance and other grunts jump back.

BANG! The suit warps to form a twisted cone in the direction
of the shooter, then we see in SLOW MOTION:

A BULLET, spinning towards Hernandez, reaches the horizontal
cone of fabric, the point of which is towards the
projectile. As they collide, the cone deforms and spins,
buckling, but also deflecting the bullet to the side.

In an instant it's done, and Hernandez is trying to catch
his breath from shock.

Mr. Fingers lowers his gun.

VANCE

Oh. My. G-

MR. FINGERS

Wait! Before anyone blasphemes,
please note we've just been given a
gift from God.

VANCE

How the hell did it do that?

HERNANDEZ

Dammit! You can't just shoot people
like th-

BANG BANG BANG! The cloth whips around, twisting shots out
of the air. It leaves Hernandez tangled and angry.

Mr. Fingers laughs in delight, lowering his gun once more,
and approaches Hernandez.

MR. FINGERS

His many shots can it take?

Hernandez is quiet, fuming.

Mr. Fingers brings his gun up once more. The cloth twists
and rises to start a protective barrier.

HERNANDEZ

It depends! It's not indestructible!
Every bullet it stops is damaging the
smart fibers, breaking the weave.

MR. FINGERS

How many? Give me range.

HERNANDEZ

(flustered)

Zero to 50.

MR. FINGERS

Zero?

HERNANDEZ

You might get shot in the face if
it's not ready. The camera tracking
isn't perfect. The cloth has to
estimate the trajectory of the shot
to be in the right place before it
sees muzzle flash. If the shooter is
too fast, or in the dark--

While Hernandez talks, Mr. Fingers is waving the gun around,
watching the cloth warp in a mirrored dance.

MR. FINGERS

And how many do you have?

HERNANDEZ

One! I told you before, it's a prototype--

Mr. Fingers, with his gun, is carefully wrapping the cloth up in front of Hernandez' face. It's infuriating. Finally, Hernandez just pulls the whole thing off.

HERNANDEZ (CONT'D)

Look you psycho, are you going to pay me or--

BANG! A tendril of smoke trails out of Mr. Fingers' gun. Hernandez slumps to the floor, dead.

MR. FINGERS (V. O.)

Some people resort to name-calling. That's not respectful. People who name-call are dumbasses who deserve to be shot.

EXT. MORGUE - NIGHT

Major Hart strides through the antiseptic-looking hallway, accompanied by a bouncy older lady, EVELYN, struggling to match his pace.

EVELYN

But you're not her next of kin, mister...

MAJOR HART

Major.

EVELYN

Major Hart. We can't let just anyone-

-

MAJOR HART

We were engaged.

EVELYN

I see. Do you have a marriage permit? I could--

MAJOR HART

Nah, I burned it when she dumped me.

Evelyn is aghast. The push through doors into the locker bay where bodies are kept nice and cold.

EVELYN

Major! You say you were close, but a failed engagement isn't sufficient for our requirements.

MAJOR HART

Evelyn, please. She was the Dark Madame. I know her true identity. Maybe six of us in the world know, seven with you, and they're all busy tonight. And as soon as I can confirm it's her, we can tell her family.

Evelyn is crestfallen.

EVELYN

She has kids?

MAJOR HART

Yeah.
(shaking his head)
And a husband.

Evelyn thinks about it, then turns to one of the lockers, and cranks the handle open.

INT. BILL'S SEDAN - NIGHT

Bill cranks the gear shift into park., He's wearing a police uniform.

BILL

You're one hundred percent positive?

INTERCUT:

MAJOR HART

(on the phone)

Yeah. She hit face-first, but there were... other identifiable marks that I... recognized.

BILL

But no ID. So they're not going to know how to come after her family.

MAJOR HART

Maybe not tonight, but her real identity has to get a death certificate sometime. You gonna ask them to not file a missing person's report for a while?

BILL

If Jill's husband is as smart as she always said he was--

MAJOR HART

Keeping in mind he never figured out her secret identity...

BILL

--Then maybe he'll understand why we need a few days' headstart.

Bill hangs up. He gets out of the car, and stares up at the townhouse across the street.

He's got to do this. He starts walking.

INT. HEROES HIDEOUT - DAY

The sun is just starting to crack through the blinds, stabbing Crashley in the eyes while she works at her giant monitor.

Major Hart is back first.

MAJOR HART

What have you found?

CRASHLEY

TMZ says they have exclusive footage from several security cameras, behind a paywall.

MAJOR HART

And?

CRASHLEY

Nah, I checked. Same stuff from 4chan and reddit. No shots that show her assailant, nothing that tracks her fall.

MAJOR HART

So, you think it's still possible she just tripped.

CRASHLEY

Yes. It is possible. And I hope she did just trip, because if she was murdered then you're going to go off on some revenge fantasy.

MAJOR HART

Get the guy who killed her? That's not revenge, that's justice!

CRASHLEY
She wouldn't have wanted that.

MAJOR HART
How do you know th--

CRASHLEY
Because she didn't want you.

The major is stunned by this blow. He turns to face her, hatred welling up.

CRASHLEY (CONT'D)
If anybody gets to go after revenge, it's her poor husband. And how's that going to work out? Father of three, leaving his kids orphans while he gets himself killed storming Mr. Fingers's stronghold.

MAJOR HART
So what do you think we should do, Crash?

CRASHLEY
I think you sit this one out.

EXT. LADIES CLUB - NIGHT
Grip and Twobows approach the entrance. There's a line of ladies ahead of them.

CRASHLEY (V. O.)
Grip and Twobows are chasing down leads.

TWOBOWS
I've never done this, man.

GRIP
Gone to a bar, or gone to a male strip club?

TWOBOWS
A bar! You step in and there's a bar fight already happening.

GRIP
What movies are you watching?

TWOBOWS
Pee Wee's Big Adventure...

There's a BOUNCER at the door. Smaller than Grip, but still scary. He sees them approach from the side. Several fans seem to notice them too.

BOUNCER
Back of the line, guys.

GRIP
Excuse us, I'm -

FAN #1
GRIP!

Friends try weakly to keep her in line. They fail.

FAN #2
And Twobows!

She rushes for a sneak squeeze of his biceps..

BOUNCER
All right, you two, IN.

The heroes enter. Twobows is new to this, but definitely likes it.

INT. LADIES CLUB - NIGHT

They barely make it inside when two more fangirls start squealing. Twobows smiles broadly, Grip steers his head back to the front.

They pass through a metal detector -

BEEP BEEP BEEP BEEP

Another nameless bouncer, BOUNCER 2, stops Twobows with a palm to the chest.

BOUNCER 2
You can't bring weapons in here.

Twobows has, indeed, brought both his bows and a quiver of arrows into the club.

TWOBOWS
(waxing confident)
Hey, man, they're mostly just props.
Scare the bad guys off, you know.

Bouncer 2 doesn't get another line; instead he just gestures to the coat check guy. Twobows reluctantly disarms, handing them over.

Grip is further into the club. On stage are absurdly fit male dancers in cop and firemen attire. Grip beelines for the bar.

The Bartender is a cute brunette woman. She's not a squeally type, but still seems to recognize him.

BARTENDER

Hey Grip.

Grip is only slightly distracted by the pretty face. He's here on business. At least at first.

GRIP

Hi. I'm... Oh. Sorry.

BARTENDER

You don't get recognized all the time? You've been at this for years now.

GRIP

This whole... celebrity thing... It's still new to me. Nobody cared about our little team of vigilantes until last month. With the whole...

BARTENDER

Yeah, I remember.

GRIP

That was crazy, right?

BARTENDER

Oh, man, I was right there on 1st when it all went down.

GRIP

Wow! You're all right, though?

BARTENDER

Yeah...

GRIP

What?

BARTENDER

You saved me.

GRIP

What??

BARTENDER

Yep, you remember catching that big...
(gesturing)

GRIP

The i-beam?

The bartender smiles.

GRIP (CONT'D)
That was you? That's awesome!

BARTENDER
Well, thanks. I like to think I
screamed at just the right moment for
you to save me from being squished.

Grip laughs.

BARTENDER (CONT'D)
I mean, I tried, but it wasn't a
perfect rescue. Piece of cement still
hit me.

She shows him a fresh scar on her shoulder.

GRIP
Oh no! I'm so sorry!

BARTENDER
Maybe someday you can make it up to
me.

She winks. Demure, schma-schmure.

Twobows finally catches up, now bowless.

TWOBOWS
Hey, there you are. Learn anything?

The bartender raises an eyebrow. Grip flashes pink, but
shakes his head.

GRIP
I was just about to ask -

BARTENDER
About Dark Madame?

They both nod.

BARTENDER (CONT'D)
Her favorite drink was a Shirley
Temple. Cute. I liked her. She's been
trying to get dirt on Gretchen White.

She thumbs back over her shoulder at the mirror behind the
bar. Grip and Twobows look past their reflections to a
restricted area upstairs with its balcony.

TWOBOWS
And did she get any?

The bartender shakes her head.

BARTENDER
I like my job, fellas. I'm only
telling you about your friend because
I owe you one. Sorry.

Grip looks hurt.

GRIP
What??

Bartender shrugs.

GRIP (CONT'D)
Is this because of that piece I
missed?

She laughs and shakes her head.

TWOBOWS
(suddenly furious)
Hey, you have to tell us!

BARTENDER
Excuse me?

GRIP
Chill, man, not now-

TWOBOWS
If that bitch upstairs had anything
to do with Dark Madame's death, you
better tell us right now.

Oops, he made a commotion. BOUNCER 2 is back with Bouncers 3 through 6, and they grab Twobows.

TWOBOWS (CONT'D)
Grip!

Grip rolls his eyes, mutters something under his breath, and shoulder-pinches a few of the Bouncers. They cave in pain instantly.

Grip grabs Twobows under his butt, and hefts him into the air, freeing him from the other Bouncers' grasps. Then he shot-puts him over the now screaming crowd, back to the coat check.

Cell phones are alight as people record. Twobows reaches inside the coat check and grabs his quiver, dons it, then grabs his bows.

Bouncer 4 catches up to him in time to take a bow to the jaw, sending him spinning.

Then, in a bizarre feat of parlor-trick-cum-martial-arts, draws both bows at once, each hand holding both a bow and the string for its opposing number.

He has two bows aimed in opposite directions, nearly flat against his chest. He looks absurd. Does that even work? Doesn't matter, people are screaming. The bouncers are frozen in place as Twobows spins, aiming everywhere.

GRIP
(to Bartender)
I barely know him!

GRETCHEN WHITE (O. S.)
I've called the police.

Screaming diminishes; people look up at the radiant woman on the landing. She's plump and kinda short, but is turning heads like any runway model might.

GRETCHEN WHITE (CONT'D)
I don't mind the police. I like law and order. You two vigilantes have escaped the law long enough.

TWOBOWS
Grip?

Grip thinks. He turns to the bartender for help but she's gone. Then, in the mirror, he spots her... Going out a back exit.

GRIP
C'MON!

Twobows postures and threatens his way through the crowd until they reach a clear path to the back door.

Grip pushes it open and goes out first, not slowing for his companion.

Gretchen watches from the balcony. Behind, from the shadows, steps Mr. Fingers.

MR. FINGERS
I love it when the competition is incompetent.

Gretchen sighs.

GRETCHEN
Did you kill Dark Madame?

Mr. Fingers is quiet for a moment. He leans in and whispers.

MR. FINGERS
Maybe a little.

He smiles.

EXT. LADIES CLUB / ALLEY - NIGHT
Grip marches like a tank through obstacles in the alley. Padlock securing a chain link fence? CRUNCH. Dangling fire escape ladder? CLANG as he hurls it upward.

Twobows struggles to keep up while he un-nocks arrows and puts his bows back on his shoulders.

TWOBOWS
You're mad.

Grip spins on him, eyes ablaze.

GRIP
We looked like petty thugs in there!

TWOBOWS
I didn't get to do the thing with the quiver--

GRIP
Plus, that bartender? She was really cute!

They round a corner of the alley, and she's standing right there. Headlights are on on the car behind her.

BARTENDER
I'm still really cute.

Grip melts. Twobows goes suspicious.

BARTENDER (CONT'D)
Need a ride?

They look at each other before both running for the car. Twobows starts to open the passenger door.

TWOBOWS
Shotgun.

Grip lifts him by the belt and moves him to the back door, then gets in the passenger side.

EXT. TOWNHOUSE - NIGHT
The front window is lit.

Some sitting shadows inside are barely moving.

One of them stands and moves towards the door. The door opens, and in it pauses Bill.

BILL

She never told you because she loved you. She protected you by hiding Dark Madame.

(BEAT)

Your wife was a hero, James.

(BEAT)

And Mr. Fingers will pay for this.

He steps out, pushing open the screen door and letting it swing shut on its own.

James steps into the doorway, out of focus as we instead go close up on Bill's face. His mouth is a grimace of anger, yet his eyes belie immense grief.

INT. HEROES' HIDEOUT - DAY / DAWN

The heroes are gathered on sofas and barstools, except Crashley, who is working at 3 monitors.

MAJOR HART

I'm so tired. The only plan I can think of is we find Mr. Finger's hideout, then we storm his place and kill us. I mean him.

TWOBOWS

Freudian slip there, eh?

MAJOR HART

I mean you.

CRASHLEY

Ha! I got something!

GRIP

For real this time?

CRASHLEY

Hey, getting root on an AWS box is definitely "something". Once I could spoof its IP I could--

GRIP

It's like a lullaby played on bagpipes, listening to you talk. It makes me want to sleep, but it's too noisy and irritating.

CRASHLEY

Anyway, I got security footage from the club at the time of the murder.

MAJOR HART

And?

CRASHLEY

Gretchen White was at the club. So it wasn't her.

Major watches her screen. Gretchen is talking to Hernandez, our dead armor dealer from before.

MAJOR HART

Who's that guy? With the big case?

CRASHLEY

(sighing)

I'll write something to look for a facial recognition match. He looks old enough to have a Facebook account.

The bartender enters from the restroom, trying to dry her hands with toilet paper.

BARTENDER

You guys need more hand towels in your secret lair.

TWOBOWS

Do all bartenders judge a place by its lack of cleaning supplies?

GRIP

Just all women, bro.

Bartender sees the club on the big monitor.

TWOBOWS

Do they have our fight on there?

Crashley jumps ahead in the video to where Twobows and Grip are running for the exit.

TWOBOWS (CONT'D)

Oh, just before that -

CRASHLEY

Nah, let's watch you two run away.

One of the screens shows part of the balcony where Gretchen stands. Mr. Fingers walks up behind her.

BARTENDER
 There's Mr. Fingers, if you've never
 seen him.

BILL
What?

MAJOR HART
The Mr. Fingers?

TWOBOWS
 He was there tonight?

GRIP
 What's with the hood?

BARTENDER
 You people are supposed to fight bad
 guys but you've never seen Mr.
 Fingers?

Beat. Sheepish looks.

BARTENDER (CONT'D)
 So, not "superheros". More like...
 "okay heroes".

MAJOR HART
 I don't suppose you know why Dark
 Madame was after him?

BARTENDER
 He's been buying stolen military
 technology. Gretchen White handles
 all the introductions.... Geez, maybe
 "sucky" heroes...

GRIP
 Isn't she great? Hey what's your
 name?

BARTENDER
 Uh, let's go with Cocktail.

Bill stares at the paused image of Mr. Fingers.

BILL
 From this moment on, he will never
 kill another human being.