

FADE IN:

EXT. CITY - NIGHT

Street level, a beat up clunker sits idle in a darkened alley. Inside the car a light burns from a cigarette. The passenger door opens up and Janet steps out. She straightens out her skirt and wipes the corners of her mouth. A handful of cash pokes out of the passenger window.

TOM

Here ya go...

As Janet reaches for her payment, Tom wads up the money and tosses it on the pavement.

TOM (CONT'D)

...For a job well done.

He pulls out of the alley laughing.

JANET

Dick!

She kneels down to gather her money when suddenly a sonic boom rumbles through the air. Janet looks up and spots a caped figure flying through the sky.

EXT. SKY - NIGHT

Grindstone flies toward his place of employment, the Hero Agency. His helmet is dented and his costume is scarred with the marks of battle but his invulnerable body remains unharmed. He enters through a retracted roof.

INT. HERO AGENCY - NIGHT

Grindstone lands in the lobby and is greeted with a handshake from Force Field.

FORCE FIELD

Great job protecting the Old Man.

GRINDSTONE

Thanks.

The blurry Jetstream runs up to Grindstone and pats him on the back.

JETSTREAM

Yeah, great save at the hospital.

GRINDSTONE  
Just doing my job.

From an upper area an arm stretches down and offers a high five.

STRETCH  
Way to stop Master Mind and his diabolical schemes.

GRINDSTONE  
Thanks Stretch.

The rest of Stretch's body bounces down to where his hand is.

STRETCH  
I heard he had a bunch of clones with him or something.

GRINDSTONE  
Yeah, he learned a new trick.

An office door opens up and out comes The Manager to disrupt the party.

THE MANAGER  
Grindstone, my office.

JETSTREAM  
Uh oh, The Manager wants to see you.

STRETCH  
He's probably going to give his golden boy a raise.

Grindstone removes his helmet.

GRINDSTONE  
That would be nice. Monica's pregnant again.

FORCE FIELD  
Congratulations man.

STRETCH  
You're an animal--

THE MANAGER (O.S.)  
Grindstone!

GRINDSTONE  
I better go.

FORCE FIELD

Yeah. See you at the bar?

GRINDSTONE

Maybe.

STRETCH

Maybe?

JETSTREAM

You know what that means?

STRETCH

Yeah. It means that he has to ask the ol' ball and chain for permission.

Stretch raises his arm that is now in the shape of a ball and chain.

INT. MANAGER'S OFFICE - DAY

The Manager finishes a cigarette and tosses it into an overstuffed astray. A knock on the door.

THE MANAGER

Come in.

Grindstone enters the room and notices 2 Large Men in matching uniforms waiting inside.

GRINDSTONE

Who are they?

THE MANAGER

The company sent them.

The Manager pulls another cancer stick from a pack and ignites it with his finger. He motions for Grindstone to take a seat.

THE MANAGER (CONT'D)

First, I'd like to congratulate you on your work at the hospital.

GRINDSTONE

Thank you sir.

THE MANAGER

Listen. As you know, times are pretty tough and...

He takes a long drag from his cigarette.

THE MANAGER (CONT'D)  
...Your hard work has always been  
appreciated around here.

GRINDSTONE  
Is something wrong?

THE MANAGER  
The company has been looking for  
ways to save money and with your  
seniority and pay level, they can't  
justify--

Grindstone can hear The Manager's heart wildly thumping.

THE MANAGER (CONT'D)  
What I'm trying to say is that the  
recession has hit hard and  
everybody's feeling the pain, even  
people that are invulnerable.

The Manager opens up a desk drawer and hands Grindstone  
termination papers.

THE MANAGER (CONT'D)  
I'm sorry.

The 2 Large Men approach Grindstone.

THE MANAGER (CONT'D)  
The company wants you out of here  
as soon as possible.

GRINDSTONE  
So that's why they're here.

THE MANAGER  
The company was afraid you'd make a  
scene.

The 2 Large Men each place a hand on Grindstone's shoulders.  
"It's time to go." Grindstone is escorted out of the office.