

Justice League unlimited

"Clash"
(Outline)

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Outline, 06/16/04

TEASER

EXT. STREETS OF GOTHAM CITY - DAY. A furious battle in *medias res*. The camera pans slowly across the scene. Cars are overturned and on fire, chunks of concrete from smashed walls litter the street --whatever's going on here is very bad. The pan reveals something strewn across the scene, eventually, we see that it's the hugely distended, unconscious form of ELONGATED MAN. Finally the shot arrives at PARASITE, who holds a helpless and pained METAMORPHO in his clutches. Metamorpho slumps to the ground, out for the count. Parasite is hit in the back by an EXPLODING Batarang. Parasite turns to an unseen opponent and smiles. Parasite's clenched fist CATCHES FIRE and he STRETCHES his arm like Elongated Man, throwing a flaming fist.

Ten yards away, BATMAN barely dodges the incoming flaming fist. The fist strikes the wall behind him and BUCKLES it, while incidentally setting it on fire. Parasite throws a right, left, right combination at a wildly dodging Batman. Batman retaliates with a spread of

Batarangs that Parasite knocks out of the air with a stream of fire from his hands. Batman continues to battle but he's in trouble. He hates to do it, but he calls for help on his com-link...

EXT. THE SKIES OF METROPOLIS - DAY. Superman is in the middle of rescuing an airplane with engine trouble when he gets the call. He gently sets the plane safely on the ground then tells J'onn that he's on his way. Before he can take off, a red and gold STREAK flies past Superman, moving so quickly that its wake sends Superman briefly tumbling end over end. Superman quickly regains his balance, zooms into the air and across town, arriving at...

EXT. STREETS OF GOTHAM CITY - DAY. The site of the battle. A stunned Superman arrives to see that the fight's already over. Parasite is wrapped in a lamppost, being neatly tied neatly into a bow by CAPTAIN MARVEL. Cap dusts his palms as if to say, that takes care of that. Batman (and the now recovered Elongated Man and Metamorpho) congratulate him on a job well done. Superman doesn't know CM. "That's right, you were on a space mission when we recruited him." CM grins like a kid

meeting a sports hero and grabs Superman's hand as he introduces himself, "I'm your biggest fan, Sir. Captain Marvel!"

ACT ONE

1. EXT. STREETS OF GOTHAM CITY - DAY. Time has passed, as specially-equipped police cart off Parasite, the media moves in (the rest of the Justice League slip away. Captain Marvel gets cornered by the media). Captain Marvel is winning, he's truly grateful to be a member of the team and genuinely happy to help. LOIS LANE asks him what he likes best about the League, "Gosh! I guess it's all the good they do. Not just helping people, which is great but they really change the world. Look at Luthor for instance, he was a super-villain and now he's a good guy. I think it's great that he's running for president." Are you moving to Gotham from Fawcett City? Nope, he helps where he's needed but he'll "always be a Fawcett Boy." In fact he has to get back home right now. Cap excuses himself, and flies away.
2. EXT. SCHOOL - DAY. Captain Marvel flies to the building, finds a secluded spot in the bushes and shouts the magic

word, "Shazam!" Ominous clouds instantly form high above and a LIGHTNING BOLT strikes him, transforming him into BILLY BATSON. Captain Marvel is actually a little boy! He Runs into class, obviously late. The teacher gives him a good talking to. "Billy Batson. Late for class again. Don't you think its about time you grew up?" Billy squirms as we DISSOLVE TO:

3. WATCHTOWER CORRIDORS - CONTINUOUS. Match cut to smiling Captain Marvel, as he walks through the satellite, greeting everyone with a cheery grin, "Morning, Wonder Woman!... Hello, Vigilante!... Shining Knight, looking good! Is that new armor?" Everyone is just as happy to see him until he looks up to see Superman, glowering. "Is something wrong?" "Come with me.
4. INT. MAIN CONFERENCE ROOM. The big seven are all there, seated and stoic. "Hi, everybody!" Flash breaks character, waving back at Cap until Superman catches his eye, frowning. Flash remembers what he's supposed to be doing and stops waving, awkwardly pasting a frown on his face. Superman takes the lead, "Have you read the papers today?" "The comics, Snorkle the Squirrel was hilarious, he's looking for his nuts, right? But he can't find

them..." Captain Marvel trails off as Superman unfolds the paper, revealing the huge headline, "CAPTAIN MARVEL ENDORSES LUTHOR." "Holy Moley."

Superman reads him the riot act, Justice Leaguers are public figures. We don't get involved in politics, we certainly don't endorse super-villains for the office of president of United States! Cap explains, he was misquoted. He didn't really endorse Luthor but that said, he stands by the thought that people can change for the better. Even Luthor. Maybe he really did change into a good guy, even if he hasn't, we owe it to him to take him at his word until he proves otherwise. Captain Marvel isn't to make any more public statements without running them through the League first. "So I'm in trouble for saying I like the Justice League?" Sulky Captain Marvel exits muttering about how Luthor seemed okay to him. Someone asks Superman if he wasn't kind of harsh on the rookie. Superman responds that everything isn't black and white, there are shades of gray.

5. INT. TV STUDIO. A Bill O'Reilly-esque TALK SHOW HOST introduces his guest, former super-villain and current presidential candidate Lex Luthor. Lex is glad to have

this chance to talk to the good people of America. What he's really here for is to promote his new Lexor City Project, a fully-functional city for low income people, giving them a fresh start and a chance to make better lives for themselves. Host plays devil's advocate, Lex is doing good works now but some people say you still can't be trusted. Lex doesn't blame them, he did lots of things in the past he isn't proud of, if it weren't for the justice league he might never have seen the light. It's like Hawkgirl, the last polls he saw says that "63% of the American public distrusts her, well, it's not a popular position but I say she's a hero, or at least we should give her a chance to be!" That's what Lexor City is all about, second chances. I got one and I'm passing it on to others. Lex takes this opportunity to invite (actually challenges) Superman to attend the charity "open house" event tomorrow night. "I know how much you like charities."

6. EXT STREETS OF METROPOLIS - DAY. Big fight. Hyper competent Superman and Batman debate while kicking the crap out of a group of villains known as "the Cadre." Batman still thinks Superman was a little tough on the boy scout. Superman, "I thought I was the boy scout." "Me

too, but that was before I met a real one." Superman doesn't understand why everybody, including Batman of all people, is defending Captain Marvel. "Don't tell me you like him too." Batman shrugs, twisting the knife. "He's sunny." As they finish up, Superman gets com link from PROFESSOR HAMILTON. Sorry to disturb you, Superman. J'onn patched me through. There's something you should see..."

7. INT. STAR LABS FACILITY - DAY. Superman and Batman are there to meet Hamilton. There's been a robbery. Why call Superman? "I thought you'd be interested. They ignored valuables, precious gems, high technology artifacts, in fact, the only thing they took was the contents of this safe." As they look in the empty safe he continues, "...nearly four pounds of weapons-grade kryptonite..."

FADE OUT

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

1. INT. STAR LABS FACILITY - DAY. Batman is CSI-ing the safe as Superman and Hamilton watch. Superman suspects Luthor. Batman puts away the sample he was examining. "The lock was nano-picked. Lexcorp technology." Superman is frustrated. That's not enough to arrest him. Batman opines that it's not enough to even link him solidly. Technology could be planted. Superman's irritated with Batman. "You don't think Luthor's behind this?" "I'm not entirely convinced. This is too sloppy for Lex." "Maybe he doesn't care if we find out." Maybe. Batman will go to the Watchtower, maybe Dr. Palmer can find something to pin this more definitively on someone. In the meantime, "Superman's got a charity event tonight, doesn't he?"

2. EXT LEXOR CITY PARK - NIGHT. It's a PR/charity event to promote Lex's soon to open "City of the Future." The center piece is n ornate fountain. The press is there, including Lois Lane, along with officials, and VIPs (including a group of lucky kids who will live in Lexor City when it opens in a few weeks). Nearby, Billy Batson is watching from outside the security fence. He crawls under a gap, dusts himself off and blends in with the group of kids. Lex holds court, explaining the purpose of

the place (it's almost finished. 30,000 people will move in only a few weeks from now) shaking hands, and charming everyone with his good works. Superman is very stiff and uncomfortable. He subtly hints to Luthor that he knows what he's up to, trying to prod him. Lex seems completely oblivious. He's thrilled that Superman was a big enough man to put aside their differences and help the poor. He toasts Superman. As everyone clinks glasses, MERCY (she wears a formal, she's running Lexcorp now, she's not a chauffeur) comes over, there's an important matter to attend to. Lex excuses himself and they wander off together. Superman good-naturedly talks to the crowd but his attention is split.

3. ACROSS THE COURTYARD. Mercy and Lex. She whispers into his ear. "The device is in place. T-minus four minutes."
"Perfect. Make sure my escape route is in place."

4. EXT LEXOR CITY PARK - NIGHT. Back on the distracted Superman. Close on his ear as he listens to Luthor and Mercy with his SUPER HEARING. He's heard every word! Superman frantically scans the surrounding empty buildings with his X-RAY VISION. He sees nothing until he looks deep beneath the ground under the square - there.

It's some kind of high-tech device, partially shielded with lead. He can clearly see a counter ticking down, though...

"Clear the area immediately! Everybody out, now!" Lois asks, "Superman...?" "No time. Get as far away as you can!" Lex stays behind as reporters and guests head for the exit.

5. JUST OUTSIDE THE GATES. Billy Batson ducks out of sight and says the magic word, "Shazam!" He is transformed into CAPTAIN MARVEL.

6. EXT LEXOR CITY PARK - NIGHT. Luthor stands between Superman and the device, feigning ignorance and concern. Superman's not listening. "Get out of my way, Lex." Captain Marvel arrives, politely stepping in the way, trying to calm things down. Lex plays him. "Thank goodness you're here, Superman won't listen." Superman tells Captain Marvel "you don't have super vision, I do. There's some sort of device down there. I'm shutting it down." Luthor is "panicked." Superman can't, if he touches it, it could go off. "You put a bomb under this city?" "Not a bomb, An experimental fusion engine. It'll

supply nearly free energy to everyone who lives here.”

“Then why the lead shielding?” “It’s for your protection. The engine creates energy through controlled fusion of Kryptonite particles...and maybe I was afraid you wouldn’t believe me.” Puppy dog eyes. Superman’s not buying it. “I don’t.” Captain Marvel thinks maybe they should call the Atom or Steel to look over the device and see if he’s telling the truth. “There’s no time.” Super brushes Luthor aside and reaches for the model. Captain Marvel grabs his wrist. Superman is hot, he shrugs off the wrist. “Don’t put your hands on me!” Superman clocks Captain Marvel, and it’s on...

7. THE FIGHT - CONTINUOUS. It’s simple, Superman wants to break the device. Captain Marvel wants to stop him. It’s a super-powered game of “Kick The Can.” The media returns, the ugliness is all captured on video. Massive abandoned city destruction. Punches sound like cannon fire. Captain Marvel grabs Superman’s cape and twirls, throwing Supes into the air. Amazing aerial battle between two flying, super-powered combatants. Cap throws Superman down through the roof of a bank, demolishing the building. Superman rises from the debris carrying the entire bank vault over his head. He bashes Cap with it,

then pushes a nearby building on him. The fight ends up in the power plant, deep beneath the town square (and out of sight of the reporters). Captain Marvel staggers to his feet, he's losing but not ready to give up. He manages to get behind Superman, trapping him in a reverse bear-hug. He shouts, "Shazam!" and leans back, lifting Superman into the path of the magic lightning bolt. Superman is badly hurt by this tactic. Cap repeats it, it works again. He pushes his luck, going for it a third time but Superman reverses positions, flipping Cap into the path of the lightning bolt. Captain Marvel is transformed into helpless Billy Batson. He yells "Sha-" before Superman clamps his hand over his mouth. "Fight's over."

8. THE BOMB SITE. Billy's tied and gagged as Superman tunnels down and destroys the device. All the lights in town go out.

Later. In front of the media, in the ruins of the totally demolished town. A Justice League scientist (the Atom maybe? If we're voice heavy, Batman can do it but it won't be as funny) looks at the debris and makes his pronouncement: It's exactly what Lex said it was.

Superman is stunned as the flashbulbs go off in his face. He tries to apologize. Luthor is magnanimous, he forgives Superman, this was sort of his fault. He shouldn't have tried to make the free power a surprise. Superman says that of course the Justice League will pay for the damage (he glances questioningly at Batman as he says this. Batman nods "yes" almost imperceptibly). Luthor shakes his head and smiles like a predator, revealing a touch of his cockiness for the first time, "I won't allow it. This one's on me...".

9. WATCHTOWER - CONTINUOUS. A grim Captain Marvel repeats his walk through the corridors, this time going to the conference room on his own initiative.
10. INT. MAIN CONFERENCE ROOM. Cap called this meeting. Joining the Justice League was the proudest day of his life. He idolized the heroes in this room, even modeled himself after Superman. He wanted to be him. But that was before he saw him in action. "I believe in Fair Play. I believe in taking people at their word, in giving them the benefit of the doubt. Back home I've fought a lot of villains but I've never had to resort to being as bad as they are to win the day, I always found another way. I

guess I'm saying I want to be one of the good guys. And that's why I'm quitting the Justice League. We don't act like good guys anymore" Captain Marvel exits. Superman is stung by his words, "He's right." Batman is more pragmatic. "You were set up, Clark." "Yes. And I know by who..."

11. INT. MYSTERY OFFICE, - NIGHT. Luthor gloats in monologue to someone unseen. The plan worked better than he's hoped. All he wanted was for Superman to wreck the energy source but the city-wrecking fight with Captain Marvel, and the media getting it all on video - well, this was beyond his wildest dreams. Everything's going according to plan... New angle reveals Luthor's talking to AMANDA WALLER. They clink glasses, toasting their successful partnership.

FADE OUT

THE END