

**\*Anything in italics is in ASL, not spoken.**

INT. SUBURBAN HOUSE - NIGHT, THEN

SUPERIMPOSED - Comic Bubble - "THEN"

No sound but the house settling. A simple house- colorful carpet, thrifted furniture. No one significant has ever lived here.

The lights are off, but neon light filters through the window. A tacky curtain flutters in the breeze.

Standing on the carpet, squishing blood between her toes is a YOUNG GIRL (13). She stands shock still, staring at something below her. She clutches a BUNNY to her chest, eyes wide and mouth closed tight.

Splayed out on the carpet are HER PARENTS, dead. They are arranged to look like they're holding hands. Each one has their RIGHT EYE CUT OUT.

The girl breathes hard through her nose, close to hyperventilating when-

A SHADOW passes over her. She looks up and out the window.

Shadowed against the neon street lights is the form of GUARDIAN, superhero. Looking at him now, he seems more like a nightmare than a hero. Only the cape distinguishes him, fluttering in the wind.

The girl watches as the hero lifts his hand and presses it to the glass. An invitation.

She walks up to the window, leaving bloody footprints.

She looks up at his shadowed face, not able to see any features. She presses her hand against the glass in the same place as his, holding her bunny close under her chin.

She stands in his shadow, light bending around her. The image of someone so large and faceless looming over such a small girl gives an insidious impression.

SUPERIMPOSED - Comic Bubble - "CHIMERA"

A RED CRAYON X is slashed over the frame.

CUT TO:

EXT. SIDEWALK - MIDNIGHT, NOW

SUPERIMPOSED - Comic Bubble - "NOW"

The city of PORT EIDOLON, an ugly mixture of Chicago and Vegas. Twirling neon signs flash, coated in grime, casting colorful shadows across the greystone, gothic architecture.

Standing on the ledge of a building is a SILHOUETTE of someone wearing a hood over her head. A small crackle is heard. She lifts her hand up to her ear.

EARPIECE  
(almost unintelligible)  
Come home.

Silently, she drops her hand from her ear and STEPS OFF THE LEDGE, disappearing without a sound.

Sink down to the street. A few DRUNKS mill around. Distantly, the sound of police sirens. Blue and red lights reflect in a puddle on the ground.

SPLASH!

A booted foot blasts through the puddle.

Running down the street like a bat out of hell is DALLON (26, male presenting, they/them), chin length hair, eyeliner and glitter running in rivulets down their face. Hearing aids in their ears.

SUPERIMPOSED - Comic Bubble - "DALLON ECHO"

Breathing hard, Dallon looks over their shoulder every few seconds. A high pitch rings in their ears.

They SLAM into a PEDESTRIAN.

PEDESTRIAN  
Hey- watch it, fuck nut!

Dallon is barely standing, breathing hard.

PEDESTRIAN  
Hey, you okay? Sorry about the fuck nut thing. Here, let me...

He lifts Dallon's chin, noting the blown pupils and red eyes.

PEDESTRIAN  
Dude, I've gotta get what you snorted.

Dallon points at themselves, barely lucid.

A shadow passes overhead like a monster in the corner of your eye. An unknown PURSUER. He jumps across balconies as he approaches.

Dallon whimpers, trying to shake out of the pedestrian's grip.

DALLON

*Coming... after me...*

Text appears beside Dallon as they sign, scribbled like notes in a rough draft.

PEDESTRIAN

Look- yeah, I don't know what that means, dude. There's a clinic down the street. Heroes drop some people there all the-

SPLAT!

A thin line of blood splatters over Dallon's face.

Pedestrian's face is frozen as blood leaks out of the side of their neck. A BLACK THROWING KNIFE in his neck. He slumps forward, dying.

Dallon looks up, seeing the hand of Pursuer poised like he threw it.

Dallon runs away into an alleyway. They scramble up a fire escape, slipping and almost falling several times.

MATCH CUT TO:

**THEN**

The style of animation SHIFTS- scribbly, saturated colors, like a child's marker drawing over construction paper.

Emerging from the fire escape at the top of the roof is a gaggle of CHILDREN in COLORFUL TACTICAL GEAR, MASKS AND CAPES.

Leading the pack is CHIMERA (16, she/her), boxer physique, tall as hell, crooked nose from many breaks. Her laughter rings in the night.

SUPERIMPOSED - Comic Bubble- "CHIMERA"

CHIMERA

Come on! Echo- Echo!

ECHO, (14, they/them), doing unnecessary flips and graceful tricks as they move. They clap their hands mid flip to get Chimera's attention.

SUPERIMPOSED - Comic Bubble - "ECHO"

CHIMERA  
Quit it with the theatrics.

ECHO  
*Worry more about the runt.*

CHIMERA  
That's not my job.

Echo fixes her with a look.

Chimera lets out a childish whine before turning back and jogging over to the edge of the building.

CHIMERA  
Flatline! Keep up!

FLATLINE  
I'm coming!

Tottering behind them and tripping too often to keep up is FLATLINE (12, she/her), chubby cheeked, a space themed band-aid on her nose.

SUPERIMPOSED - Comic Bubble - "FLATLINE"

Flatline stands on the ledge of the next building over, nervous to make the jump and hiding it poorly.

CHIMERA  
Just like training, right?

FLATLINE  
No safety matt, though.

CHIMERA  
The dumpster will break your fall.  
No worries.

ECHO  
*Told you she shouldn't come.*

CHIMERA  
She's fine.

ECHO  
*She's gonna land ass first in day-old burgers.*

Flatline scrunches her nose. She gives herself a few little jumps to pump herself up before jumping to the next roof ledge. She lands slightly unsteadily next to Chimera.

Chimera reaches out her hand, ushering Flatline forward with a smile.

CHIMERA  
See? Not so bad.

FLATLINE  
Whatever.

She looks towards Echo haughtily.

FLATLINE  
See?

Echo flips her off.

The three take off at a run to continue their journey. Their giggles echo in the night as the jump to another roof like acrobats.

MATCH CUT TO:

**NOW**

Back to original animation.

Note: we will switch between the two styles based on timeline from now on.

Dallon lands sloppily on the roof's edge. Their pants rip at the knees as they scramble to their feet.

The shadowed Pursuer approaches, a mass of ripped black fabric, prowling like a bloodhound.

Dallon gags. Their hearing aids are soaked in blood, dripping from their ears. Dallon jumps but misses the next roof. They fall and land hard in a DUMPSTER.

Hot garbage sprays out, rotten food and soda stains Dallon's clothes.

Above, Pursuer jumps across the roof. His head peers down at Dallon, a black void with two eyes lit like a camera flare.

Dallon drags themselves out of the dumpster. The skin scrapes off their hands. The ringing gets louder, blocking out the sounds of the city.

As they stand, a figure- THE BACKWARDS WOMAN- seem to crawl out from Dallon's back. Sinewy, made of dead flesh. She moves her lips to Dallon's ear. As she speaks, her words are out of sync with her mouth.

BACKWARDS WOMAN  
(multiple voices)  
...the house has always been on  
fire...

Dallon clutches at their ears, back bending and breath increasing.

The Pursuer lands at the end of the alley, sheathed in shadow. His eerie eyes peer out of the dark.

BACKWARDS WOMAN  
...since before we lit the  
matches... since before we stepped  
inside...

Backwards Woman slides down Dallon's shoulder and disappears behind their back.

MATCH CUT TO:

**THEN**

The Backwards Woman finishes whispering in Dallon's ear before retreating into their back. A CRAYON SMILEY FACE is drawn over her face.

FLATLINE (O.S.)  
Hey- hey!

Echo crouches on the railing, turning their head to the girls.

Chimera lands next to Echo, grabs a piece of stray pipe, and twists it into a knot as easily as someone would fiddle with a piece of clay.

CHIMERA  
(signing)  
The theatrics are getting out of  
hand, y'know.

ECHO  
*Your love and support is duly  
noted, Reagan.*

CHIMERA  
Codenames.

ECHO  
*We're on a roof. Who's listening?  
 Look- MELANIE! DALLON! REAGAN!*

Chimera smacks Dallon's hands.

CHIMERA  
 There could be security cameras  
 somewhere. So no chances taken, got  
 it?

Flatline lands beside them, crouched like a gargoyle.

ECHO  
*Work on the stealth, would ya?*

Flatline signs, clumsy but trying.

FLATLINE  
 You're still just pissed I did more  
 pull ups than you in the last  
 physical. And I don't even need  
 your stupid superpower crutch to  
 kick ass.

Echo smirks, amused. They tug a bit on Flatline's hair.

ECHO  
*It's not a crutch. I'm just better  
 than you in every conceivable way.  
 And I happen to have powers on top  
 of it.*

Flatline sticks out her tongue. Echo mimics good naturedly.

ECHO  
*Pay attention to the job and maybe  
 I'll spare you a bit of respect,  
 shrimp.*

FLATLINE  
 Then point me in the right  
 direction. Did your whole... thingy  
 tell ya?

Flatline wiggles her fingers around her temples.

Echo points over their shoulder towards a WAREHOUSE with a  
 MASSIVE WINDOW.

CHIMERA  
 What've we got inside?

ECHO  
*Drugs. Guns. The fun overflows.  
 Intel says they're connected to One  
 Eye.*

Chimera cringes. Flatline regards her.

FLATLINE  
 You good?

CHIMERA  
 Duh.

FLATLINE  
 Of course. So... how do we get in?  
 Crash in through the skylight? Blow  
 up a wall?

Before anyone can respond, a SHADOW passes over them.

They look up to see Guardian crossing the roofs above them.  
 We don't see much of him, but he's in BLACK AND BLUE tactical  
 gear, eyes covered by a mask.

Flatline crawls up Chimera like a monkey, ending up on her  
 shoulders and waving at Guardian.

Something dark passes over Echo's face.

ECHO  
*Look's like Daddy Dearest wants a  
 front row seat.*

Chimera tugs on Flatline's leg.

CHIMERA  
 I know how to get you in there  
 fastest.

Flatline hops down and bounces on the tips of her toes.

FLATLINE  
 I can go in first?

CHIMERA  
 Helps with confidence. Just trust  
 me.

Chimera grabs Flatline by the scruff of her uniform, picking  
 her up with inhuman strength. The concrete beneath her feet  
 cracks, heels digging in.

Blue veins are drawn over her arms as they BULGE with barely  
 restrained power.



Echo looks away, flicking off their hearing aids.

FLATLINE  
Hey- wha- what're ya-

With a grunt, Chimera THROWS FLATLINE FULL FORCE at the warehouse window.

Flatline lets out a shriek, vaulting towards the window and-  
CRACK!

MATCH CUT TO:

**NOW** INT. WAREHOUSE - MIDNIGHT, NOW

Dallon's body SLAMS THROUGH the window, falling onto the concrete floor. Glass spreads everywhere, reflecting the neon light outside. They groan in pain, pushing themselves up. Blood coats their ears, hearing aids ripped out.

Pursuer jumps through the broken window, landing almost silently.

Dallon lets out a nasally laugh, manic and mean.

DALLON  
*How rude! Rules of engagement  
dictate you should never attack  
someone higher than a kite.  
Pathetic, if you ask me.*

The Backwards Woman crawls back over Dallon's shoulder, arm around their neck, tongue in their ear.

BACKWARDS WOMAN  
...we can't go back...

The boots of Pursuer approach. He remains faceless.

DALLON  
*It wasn't my fault. Not my fault.*

PURSUER  
You knew what you were doing when  
you told them about us.

Pursuer's voice ripples out, rough, low. Like a demonic father about to dole out punishment.

DALLON  
*Secrets are only secrets if someone  
knows they're there.*

Dallon makes the ASL sign for "home". No subtitles.

Pursuer repeats the sign.

Dallon shakes their head and howls with laughter.

DALLON

*We're not ready. You never asked! I  
just wanted you to leave me alone!  
THE HOUSE IS ON FIRE! WE'RE GONNA  
CHOKER ON ALL THE SMOKE!*

WHACK!

Pursuer knees Dallon hard in the temple.

The Backwards Woman lets out an inhuman shriek. Dallon screams along.

A high pitched tone screams out. Pursuer falls to his knees.

Black.