YOU’VE CAN’T BELIEVE WHAT CAN I SAY— I HAVE FREAKISHLY SMALL FINGERS.

THIS IS IT, CLARK, I CAN FEEL IT. THIS IS THE PIECE THAT’S GONNA WIN ME THE PULITZER!

YOU’VE EARNED IT, LOIS...

I CAN’T BELIEVE YOU FAST-TALKED YOUR WAY TO THE PRO-DEMOCRACY REBEL LEADER WHILE HE WAS IMPRISONED BY THE REGIME...

AND RESCUED A DOZEN POLITICAL PRISONERS WHILE YOU WERE AT IT!

CANT SPEAK TRUTH TO POWER IF YOU NEVER LEAVE THE SAFETY OF THE HOTEL BAR LIKE THE REST OF THESE SO-CALLED FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS...

THERE— IT’S OFF TO THE PLANET! THIS CALLS FOR DRINKS—

--PLURAL!

BARKEEP—!
WAIT, YOU HAVE PHONE RECEPTION? BUT THE REGIME BOMBED THE CELL TOWERS WHEN THE UPRISINGS BEGAN.

I HACKED THE MILITARY NETWORK.

I THINK NO FORCE ON THIS EARTH COULD STOP LOIS LANE WHEN SHE SMELLS A SCOOOP.

WHAT, YOU THINK A LITTLE THING LIKE A TOTAL MEDIA BLACKOUT IS GOING TO STOP ME FROM TELLING THE WORLD WHAT'S GOING ON OVER HERE?

AT LAST HE SEES THE LIGHT, WE MIGHT MAKE A REPORTER OUT OF YOU YET, SMALLVILLE.

YOU SHOULD SEE SMALLVILLE ON A SATURDAY NIGHT, THAT PLACE CAN GET PRETTY ROUGH.

YYKNOw, YOU HELD TOGETHER PRETTY WELL WHEN THE BOMBS STARTED DROPPING.

I GUESS I NEVER FIGURED YOU FOR THE RUGGED, MANLY TYPE...
HAH! I’LL BET, I’M STARTING TO SEE YOU IN A WHOLE NEW LIGHT...

Y’KNOW, MAYBE IF YOU TOOK OFF THE HARRY POTTER GLASSES...

...YOU WOULDN’T LOOK HALF BAD...

MESSAGE FOR YOU, MISTER KENT!

OH! UH, THANKS.

MAN, I’M SORRY, LOIS. I’D LOVE TO... TO STAY...

BUT IT’S MY CONTACT, I GOTA GO. MEET HIM!
Terrific. The one gun worth a damn around here would rather brave curfew than have a drink with Lois Lane.

Line 'em up. Barkeep. Looks like it's gonna be a long night...

Hi. I don't mean to bother you, but I saw your friend had to run, and I wondered if you could use some company.

You're Lois Lane from the Daily Planet, right? I'm a big fan of your work...

And I'm a big fan of a man with taste.

You're with the Metro Star, right...?

That's right, my name's Jon Carroll.

It would never have worked out...

Sure, Clark. You just keep telling yourself that.
ALL THIS TIME I’VE SPENT WITH LOIS, FIGHTING FOR TRUTH, FOR JUSTICE—BUT SHE CAN NEVER KNOW THE TRUTH ABOUT ME...

ABOUT SUPERMAN.

I CARE ABOUT HER TOO MUCH TO MAKE HER A TARGET FOR MY ENEMIES.

MEANWHILE, SUPERMAN HAS A JOB TO DO!
My contact said the Quraci regime is smuggling illegal weapons to crush the pro-democracy uprisings...

And I don’t like bullies.

According to his note, the weapons are hidden in one of these cargo ships.

Thousands of containers on each, but it should be easy enough to find the right one...

Strange. The containers are impervious to my supervision. But how would they know to shield them, unless...?

Weapons. Right.

Oh, boy.
LISTEN TO ME!
I HAVE NO QUARREL WITH YOU...

I CAN HEAR THEIR HEARTBEATS BENEATH THE WHINE OF HYDRAULICS...
AND I'M HERE TO PROTECT, NOT TO PROVOKE...

WAR MACHINES—CONTROLLED BY HUMAN PILOTS.

BUT THESE PEOPLE—ALL PEOPLE—are under my protection. Power down, and let's talk.
HA! Y'hear that? He wants to talk! Ain't that sweet? Well, listen up, boy. 'Cause I got something to say...

BOOM

BLZAM

SHRAMM
Tried to be reasonable.

Woo! All right!

You see that? One shot, Baby!

Yeah!

Didn't throw the first punch.

I'll throw the last.
CATASTROPHIC SYSTEMS FAILURE!

REACTOR OFFLINE!

EJECT! EJECTION!

HOLY HELL! I'M ALL MESSED UP! BAILING--!

WAIT.

PHOOM

I'M NOT DONE WITH YOU YET.

THAT'S AN AMERICAN ACCENT. WHO SENT YOU? WHAT ARE YOU DOING IN QURAC?

BUH BUH BUH-- SPIT IT OUT!

BUH-- B-BEHIND YOU--!
MECH ONE IS DOWN!
MOVE IN!

DEPLOYING HELLSPIKE MISSILES!

FRIENDS OF YOURS?
P-Please, I-I don't wanna die--!

AAAAAAH!

HOLD THAT THOUGHT.
HELLSTREAK MISSILES—NEGATIVE EFFECT!
DEPLOYING INFRASONIC WEAPON!

WHUNNA!

AAAGH!

NOT SO TOUGH AFTER ALL.

PLOOSH
I-impossible! He's... how can he--?!
Now, then... Where were we...?

Still slightly dizzy from the sonics they were using...

---JIMMY OLSEN?!

---STAY BACK---!

He didn't look like that a second ago.

Calm down. I only want to talk. How did you get here from...

He told us not to--not to--

NNGH! GAHH...

What's happening--?!?

**WHAT'S HAPPENING TO MMMAAAH?!

**

Subdermal thermit? He probably didn't even know he was carrying it.

I know that couldn't have actually been Jimmy--got hit harder than I thought. But someone doesn't want these men to talk.

Whoever it is...
...I'm dying to meet him.

Good afternoon, Doctor Lagarde.

Mister Luthor, come in.

Please, take a seat.

Thank you.

Are you cold, Doctor? You're shivering.

I'm fine. Thank you.

So.

So.
DOCTOR LAGARDE, YOU HAVE TREATED PRESIDENTS, NOBEL LAUREATES, AND MEN WHO HAVE WALKED ON THE MOON.

YOU ARE WIDELY REGARDED AS THE PREEMINENT PSYCHOANALYST OF OUR AGE...

...AND YET I CANNOT HELP FEELING THAT, ALL THIS TIME, YOU'VE SIMPLY BEEN TELLING ME WHAT I WANT TO HEAR.

UNLESS THERE'S SOME SORT OF BREAKTHROUGH IN THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE, I MAY HAVE TO...TERMINATE THESE SESSIONS.

SO PLEASE, SPEAK DAZZLE WITH ME THE BRILLIANCE OF YOUR INSIGHT.

W-Well, clearly, you are a Genius. But you exhibit a number of worrying symptoms.

Obsessive behaviors. Inability to socialize or empathize. Apparent lack of...of conscience...

Your ego has been damaged by early abuse and rejection by parental authority figures, giving rise to a—a malignant narcissism.

This perfect storm of factors renders you susceptible to the diagnosis of being—

—in my professional opinion—

A sociopath. A psychotic megalomaniac. Quite possibly the most dangerous man on the planet...SIR.
ANP

A

THEN...J

^...ANP^...THEN

WILL

YOU LET ME

V

SO?

TAKE

SOME TIME TO

RECALIBRATE. WELL

SPEAK AGAIN.

SAME TIME NEXT

WEEK?

I SOLVED

FERMAT’S

LAST THEOREM

WHILE I WAS STILL IN

KINDERGARTEN.

I DREAM IN

ALGORITHMS.

I AM

EXCEPTIONAL.

AND THE

EXCEPTIONAL CANNOT

BE MEASURED NOR JUDGED

BY THE PETTY SCALES OF

CONVENTIONAL THOUGHT.

AND THEN...

...AND THEN WILL YOU LET ME

GO?

BUT

THERE IS STILL

SO MUCH TO BE DONE.

IF THE WORLD CANNOT

SEE THE TRUTH, THEN

IT IS THE WORLD THAT

MUST CHANGE.

AND I AM

THE ONE TO

CHANGE IT.
YOU KNOW, I'M STARTING TO WONDER IF DOCTOR LAGARDE IS GOING TO BE ABLE TO HELP ME ACHIEVE MY LIFE GOALS AFTER ALL.

HAVE HER CELL MONITORED. I BELIEVE SHE MAY BE A SUICIDE RISK.

WE'VE RECEIVED WORD ON THE STRIKE TEAM IN QURAC. MISSION FAILURE.

DEFINITE FAILURE IN THIS CONTEXT.

BATTLE MECHS RENDERED INOPERATIVE. PILOTS SELF-TERMINATED.

THE MECHS WERE A DISTRACTION. NOTHING MORE. JUST ENOUGH TO TRIGGER A U.S. INVASION.

AS FOR THE SO-CALLED 'SUPERMAN'-ONE NEVER ATTACKS A STRONGER OPPONENT HEAD ON.

YOU USE HIS OWN STRENGTH AGAINST HIM.
Each Hellstreak Warhead was tipped with a microscopic nanite probe laced with a molecular shell of pure kryptonite.

Not enough to kill, barely enough to notice, but enough to penetrate his alien hide...

Once I’ve unlocked the secrets of his genetic structure, I can program the nanite to modify and replicate whatever genes I dictate!

I can recode his DNA from the inside out, play him like a Stradivarius...

There, you see? Superman’s genetic blueprint, the key to his powers...

It’s actually quite beautiful, isn’t it? For a space monster, I mean.

I put a tiny death machine inside him, and he doesn’t even know it.
METROPOLIS

THREE WEEKS LATER

INITIATING SECURE UPLINK... QUANTUM DECRYPT... GOOD

NEW GENETIC TEMPLATE... RECEIVED...

REPLICATION PROTOCOL...

...ENRAGE.

AAAGH!

MY HAND...

SUDDEN AGONY...!
SUPERMAN!
YOU OKAY--?

KEEP BACK!
I DON'T KNOW WHAT'S WRONG...

SOMETHING KIND OF INFECTION...
NEXT ISSUE: THE BEAST WITHIN!
THE HYBRID
THREAT CONTINUES...

...IN Action COMICS #20

AND

Action COMICS #21
THEN THINGS TO COME...
Welcome back to Channel 52 News. We’re going to break away to a live report from Gotham City where an entire city block has come under attack from dozens of humans that have mutated into bats!

Our reporter, A. Bug, is in the 52 Action News Chopper above the city trying to assess the pandemonium. Bug, what can you tell us?

Bethany, it is abject horror in Gotham, where normal citizens have been inexplicably transformed into giant bloodthirsty monsters!

These “Man-Bats,” if you will, are an unstoppable force preparing to feast on the corpses of the slaughtered innocents.

At least that’s what I assume is happening since we technically never left for Gotham. I couldn’t determine if the outbreak was in the 14th Street area or the 100 block of Midtown.

Before he left, the pilot was all like, “When you’re done playing Map Detective you should get another guy crazy enough to do this.”

And then I was all, like, “Hm. Maybe it’s irresponsible reporting to do flying directly into Man-Bat Country without calling ahead first.”

So in the interests of Channel 52’s journalistic integrity, I decided to stay put.

A spokesperson for the mayor’s office said that SCPD officers are working to contain the situation and that the National Guard can be called in if any of the city’s costumed vigilantes or superpowered criminals exacerbate the situation by becoming involved.
IN OTHER NEWS—

RECLUSIVE MOLT INDUSTRIES CEO MICHAEL MOLT RELEASED A STATEMENT TODAY EXPLAINING WHY HE ISN'T PURSUING LEGAL ACTION FOR THE DAMAGES POWER GIRL CAUSED TO ONE OF HIS FACILITIES THIS WEEK.

HOLT CLAIMS THAT THE MATTER IS "PERSONAL" AND "MORE COMPLEX THAN REGULAR HUMANS CAN PERCEIVE."

NOW WE TAKE YOU TO OUR SPORTS REPORTER VARTOX IN FLORIDA FOR SPRING TRAINING, WITH A SURPRISING PICK TO BE HOME RUN KING THIS YEAR...

ENOUGH OF THIS SILLY CHILD'S GAME, BETHANY!

NONE OF THESE BASEBALLERS CAN COMPETE WITH VARTOX!

I WAS GOING TO GIVE YOU A DISPLAY OF MY SPORTS POWER WHEN I SAW HER IN YOUR REPORT!

MY FUTURE QUEEN! REGALE ME WITH MORE TALES OF THIS "POWER GIRL."

SPEAKING OF PREDICTIONS FOR THE LEAGUE—I'M PRETTY SURE POWER GIRL IS OUT OF YOURS!

WE HAVE SUCH A GOOD TIME WITH EACH OTHER HERE AT CHANNEL 52, FOLKS...

AFTER THE BREAK—CALENDAR MAN WILL HAVE THE DETAILS OF TROUBLE IN PARADISE FOR MOVIE STAR AND SUPERHERO ANIMAL MAN.

YOU'RE WATCHING CHANNEL 52!