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Narrative Screenplay: Anansi and the Chest of Stories: 2

Select scene from an original award-winning feature screenplay, *Anansi and the Chest of Stories*, based on folktales and cultural storytelling from the Ashanti region, West Africa.

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Select scene of original television content. *Seminars for Better Heroing*: a superhero pastiche that imagines a world where heroes from older eras are retired and living in a new normal.

Spec Script – Craig of the Creek 16

Sample of spec for Cartoon Network animated series: *Craig of the Creek*. Features characters from Warner Bros and original concepts by head writers Ben Levin and Matt Burnett.

Spec Script – The Flash: 21

Sample spec episode for CW series, *The Flash*. Features characters from DC Comics and original concepts of the CW Network.

ANANSI AND THE CHEST OF STORIES

Adapted by

Ayinde Ricco

Based on the Ashanti folktale.

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SORO
 (serene)
 And so will he, with you're there.

The blunt statement surprises her.

ASO
 Hopefully. But with him, who knows
 where's he'll end up.

She shares an unsure look with Soro, then pushes off into the forest. Soro smiles knowingly as she goes.

SMAH CUT TO:

EXT. PEAK OF NYAME'S THRONE - THE NEXT DAY

The top of the mountain. Clear and sunny, yet empty but for the ferns. The horizon is visible in every direction.

ANANSI (O.S.)
 (gasps in strain)

Anansi's hand claws over the peak's edge. The rest of him straggles behind. With deep breaths he drags to his feet.

It takes him a moment to be well enough to look around - and he realizes he is alone at the top of the world.

ANANSI (CONT'D)
 (increasingly awed)
 I... I did it. I did it! I, ALONE!
 THE GREATEST!

He looks to where the village lies and spits, derisive.

ANANSI (CONT'D)
 Fools. Now for some proof...

Anansi yanks at a fern nearby. But as he touches it, the wind picks up - softly, then violently.

It throws Anansi off of his feet, and only the fern roots him to the ground.

Like magic, the air itself reforms into NYAME, THE SKY GOD. The wind stops as quickly as it began.

Anansi drops to the ground. Nyame ignores him and reaches for the frayed fern, dismayed. At his touch, it heals.

NYAME

Who stands upon my throne, wishing
to touch the sky?

Anansi stands, actually nervous for once.

ANANSI

I-I do. I... wow. You are real.

Nyame looks at him - not visibly surprised, but amused.

NYAME

Ah. Kwaku Anansi.

ANANSI

You know me?

NYAME

I know all of my children. And what
brings you here to my realm?

Nyame swoops down to Anansi's eye level, and the wind moves
with him. Anansi stumbles back in surprise.

ANANSI

I-I come from the lands of the
Ashanti. We're in dire straits.

NYAME

Osebo, yes. I know.

ANANSI

You know? The whole monster thing?

Nyame nods. Anansi jumps closer to him, surprised.

ANANSI (CONT'D)

Then why haven't you done anything?
(loses confidence)
... o' great Nyame, sir.

NYAME

You're the storyteller. Tell me.

ANANSI

(struck by the question)
W-well, Mmoatia stole the Chest of
Stories and lost it, So you...
(unsure)
... decided we weren't worth it?

NYAME

(sarcastically)
Almost...

Nyame looks to the Earth. From this height, patches of endless miasma swirl below.

NYAME (CONT'D)

Truth is, I want nothing more than to help your people. All people.

His mood falls. A fog rolls over all except the Throne.

NYAME (CONT'D)

But when the Chest broke, my power spilled across the land. Creating great things. Terrible things.

ANANSI

Like Osebo?

NYAME

And worse. Dmons, monsters, nightmares. So much pain.

A wasp - normal - flies past them. Anansi swats it away.

NYAME (CONT'D)

And that same power keeps me here.

Nyame suddenly dives into the miasma. It shudders but repels all but a small gust of magic. Nyame flies back upwards.

NYAME (CONT'D)

See? It doesn't matter what I want.

(somber)

I can only help in the smallest of ways now. I'm sorry, my boy.

Nyame sheds a tear. As he does it rains, everywhere except - again - the Throne. Anansi scoffs.

ANANSI

So you powerless?! What a waste!

Nyame glares. The rain stops suddenly.

ANANSI (CONT'D)

(nervous)

I mean, how awful.

NYAME

And you, Anansi? If I know you, you're not here to help anyone, but to prove that you can. Am I right?

ANANSI

Well, when you put it like that.

NYAME
 (laughs uproariously)
 What a pair we are. A selfish hero,
 and a feeble god.

He is taken by mirth for a moment. Beat. Anansi stares,
 surprised - he does not understand.

NYAME (CONT'D)
 And yet, for all your ego, you're
 the only one to ever really try.
 (in thought)
 That must mean something.

Nyame eyes Anansi, inspired. Anansi raises an eyebrow.

ANANSI
 (incredulous)
 What do you mean, hero? If I could
 kill Osebo I wouldn't be here.

NYAME
 Now that I can help with.

Nyame guides Anansi's hands to the fern and concentrates. It
 vanishes from Anansi's fingers, and reappears with Nyame.

NYAME (CONT'D)
 If you could capture them, I could
 handle the rest. Once enough of
 them are gone...

Nyame waves his hand. The fern replants, and blossoms into a
 meadow. Anansi watches with awe, but is still unconvinced.

ANANSI
 And in return?

NYAME
 Return? For doing the right thing?

Anansi stares, expectant. Nyame sighs.

NYAME (CONT'D)
 Of course... well...
 (pretends to think)
 The Chest did cause all this...

ANANSI
 You'd give me The Chest of Stories?

Nyame shrugs, but his face is resolute.

ANANSI (CONT'D)
 I'd make me famous. The greatest
 storyteller of all time! I'd be-
 (catches himself)
 Wait, isn't it broken?

NYAME
 I'm sure a wordsmith of your
 caliber could fix it.

Anansi stares in expectation, but Nyame does not elaborate.
 Nevertheless, Anansi is unable to repress himself.

ANANSI
 Deal!

Nyame laughs widely. His joy whirls the wind.

NYAME
 I feared this would go on forever!

Anansi ignores the wind. He taps his foot impatiently.

ANANSI
 (clears his throat)
 You expect me to fix this myself?
 How's that divine "help?"

NYAME
 So impatient...

The air stills. Symbols fill Nyame's eyes, as the air
 crackles with power. Anansi watches in bated anticipation.

All stops. A Gourd drops from the sky, and hits Anansi on the
 head. A seal is etched into it.

Beat. Anansi stares at the gourd, expressionless.

ANANSI
 What is this?

NYAME
 (mischievous)
 A gourd. You fill it with things.

ANANSI
 It's junk!

NYAME
 The seal on it will let it contain
 anything you desire.

Anansi touches the seal. It magically etches into his palm.

ANANSI
It's still junk!

NYAME
A crooked stick will reveal the
true artist.

Anansi glares at him, jaw slack and unimpressed.

NYAME (CONT'D)
It means "learn to deal with it."

The wind forms into Nyame's hand, which gently lifts Anansi to the god's eye. Anansi jumps, and nearly drops the gourd.

NYAME (CONT'D)
You're a fool Anansi, it's true.
You're young, and vainer than most.
But there's potential in there.

ANANSI
More than you think!

NYAME
Then prove it, if you can.

There is a bright flash, and Nyame suddenly vanishes in all but voice. Anansi drops, the gourd still in his arms.

NYAME (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Because I believe you can.

ANANSI
Did you just leave?

Furious, Anansi pitches the gourd over the edge.

ANANSI (CONT'D)
THANKS FOR NOTHING, 'GREAT ONE!'

Nothing happens. Beat.

The sky dims. The wind picks up, with dust and debris. Anansi shields himself, but loses ground.

The gourd returns. It flies past Anansi's head, into the air. At once, Anansi becomes aware of his terrible mistake.

ANANSI (CONT'D)
Ah, spoke to soon again...

With a roar, Anansi is lifted into the air and off the peak.

SEMINARS FOR BETTER HEROING: THE SERIES

EPISODE N: KNOW YOUR SURROUNDINGS

Written by

Ayinde Ricco

Based on the skit by Ayinde Ricco, Matthew Mahoney & Jason Ho.

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RUDY ROYCE
 Maybe. But not next Thursday.
 You've got a trip to plan!

Rudy exits, cheery as can be, as Tibble seethes.

TIBBLE
 "Disappoint the students." Pah.
 (beat, devilishly)
 Now there's an idea...

CUT TO:

TITLE

INT. EXTRAPOL HALLWAYS - MORNING

The halls of the training complex. Young agents-to-be go from class to class, including ROLLY ROYCE and POINTE.

Rolly and Pointe continue a conversation as they enter.

POINTE
 Come on, you don't think there's
something off about him?

ROLLY
 Professor Tibble?

POINTE
 Y'know, like he's up to something!

Amused, Rolly waves the thought away.

POINTE (CONT'D)
 I'm serious. He's always leering!

ROLLY
 (bemused)
 "Leering?"

POINTE
 Not quite staring, not quite
 looming?

ROLLY
"Looming?"

They approach their next room: Prof. Tibble's Class.

POINTE
You know what I mean! Sometimes I
think he's out to get us!

Rolly again discards Pointe's frustration.

ROLLY
Come off it. Unc-The Professor
isn't so bad. I'm sure he loves us!

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. TIBBLE'S CLASSROOM - LATER

The class has just settled in, when Tibble barrels inside.

TIBBLE
Attention, junior cretins!

The class falls silent. Pointe stares pointedly at Rolly, who sheepishly turns away.

TIBBLE (CONT'D)
Each year it is my duty to babysit
you adolescents on "field trips,"
torturous experiences that make me
question the very existence of joy.

One student in the back - smarmy jock HAWK - calls out.

HAWK
You're welcome!

Tibble cracks a smile, and makes finger guns at him.

TIBBLE
Eyyyyy!
(returns to rant)
But this year, I subvert my misery.

Another student, studious KARA, raises her hand dutifully.

KARA
Does this mean we're not going?

TIBBLE
To the contrary! We're going all
right. Somewhere so irresponsible,
so badly conceived that I'll never
be volunteered for this bunk again.

Kara raises her hand again, this time nervously.

KARA
So... er... why are you telling us?

TIBBLE
Cause you can't do anything about
it! Feel free to snitch, though.

An inexplicable shadow falls as he leers evilly. The students look to one another for nervous support.

TIBBLE (CONT'D)
As for where we're going...

EXT. THE JUNKYARD, ENTRANCE - THURSDAY MORNING

A yawning expanse of metal, dirt and machinery. Sci-fi machines and space-age car parts line the landscape.

Tibble stands before the class and gestures to the view.

TIBBLE
(completes last line)
... The Junkyard!

The students shuffle about, and try not to touch anything.

TIBBLE (CONT'D)
In the old days every plan every
villain had would end here as junk.

He kicks a trash pile. It beeps, turns red and begins to smoke. The students panic, but it stops as he kicks it again.

TIBBLE (CONT'D)
Exquisite.

He begins to walk away.

KARA
W-wait! Where are you going?

TIBBLE
I shall be wasting my time there.

He gestures to a tavern beside the yard. The sign states: THE BONEYARD. A dizzy, costumed man toddles out and collapses.

At once, the students realize the gravity of their situation.

POINTE
What about us?!

TIBBLE

Ah, right. Your assignment.
(pretends to think)
Wander around and find...
something. Then write about it.
And have fun!

He strolls into The Boneyard. The students stand in front of the Junkyard, alone. Beat. Pointe turns to Rolly.

POINTE

Still think he doesn't have it in
for us?

CUT TO:

INT. THE BONEYARD - CONTINUOUS

A seedy bar, but a lavish seedy bar. Supervillains sit around or carouse. One group bands together with a rousing chorus of "Waltzing Matilda."

CAROUSERS

**He sang he shoved the jumbuck in
his tucker bag.
You'll come a' waltzing Matilda
with me...**

Tibble bursts into the doors. The patrons recoil, paranoid.

TIBBLE

It's a raid!

As they see him the patrons raise glasses to him, and SKELETON - the peppy, yet extremely emaciated owner - rushes to greet him. He claps an arm around Tibble's shoulder.

SKELETON

(heavy Australian accent)
Tiberius Tibble! You old schemer!
Bring that big brain in here!

He guides Tibble to the bar. Tibble happily gets comfortable.

TIBBLE

Skeleton! Nothing too heavy today.
I'm technically working.

SKELETON

Same. No rest for the wicked, eh?

He slides a giant soda down the bar for Tibble, who grabs it.

SKELETON (CONT'D)
(teases him)
Or the not so wicked, any more. Ey,
"teach?" I hear things.

TIBBLE
Hey now. Nothing changed about me.

SKELETON
Ohoho? Mr. Diabolical over here!

TIBBLE
You know it.

Tibble takes a long swig of his soda. Skeleton produces one of his own and sips it airily.

SKELETON
Prove it, then! The old challenge?
The two clink bottles, and get in each other's face.

TIBBLE
You're on. Let the good times roll!

CUT TO:

EXT. THE JUNKYARD - LATER

POINTE
I am not having a good time.

The students mill about the junkyard in search of something worth their time: a lethargic, bored lot.

Only Rolly is in good spirits: he hurries about and scavenges for swag. Pointe trudges behind with arms full of junk.

He spots a glowing disc from the dirt, and snatches it up.

ROLLY
You kidding? This is a genuine
Atomic Disc! They can burn through
steel! The Saboteur nearly killed
my dad with one of these once.

He swings it around, as if to throw it. Pointe flinches.

POINTE
(more annoyed than scared)
Please don't throw that at me.

ROLLY

Are you really gonna sulk all day?
This is fun!

POINTE

We're rooting in a literal trash
heap! Face it, the guy is evil!

ROLLY

He's not evil!

Pointe drops all the junk in her arms, angry. Rolly winces as fragile items break on the ground.

POINTE

He left to go hang out in a literal
bad guy bar!

Rolly glances over at the BONEYARD, and sheepishly hangs his head. However, he pockets the disc anyway.

Other students - Kara and Hawk included - wander over.
Displeased, Hawk shoves his way past Rudy.

KARA

I'll admit, Rolly. Not a good look.

HAWK

If he won't be a good teacher, why
should we be good students?

ROLLY

We can't just ditch, Hawk!

HAWK

It's not ditching if we're doing
actual work. I'm going to go train.
(sneers)
You wanna keep collecting litter,
be my guest.

Hawk stomps off through the junkyard. Most of the students
reluctantly follow him, including Kara.

Beat. Rolly watches them go, then turns to Pointe. Pointe
looks uncomfortable, but turns away.

POINTE

Sorry. I'm with Hawk on this one.

She exits behind the other students.

THE PIRATES OF ZEN PANTS

Written by

Ayinde I. Ricco

A Spec Script for Craig of the Creek, created by Matt Burnett &
Ben Levin, property of Warner Bros & Cartoon Network.

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EXT. THE CREEK, THE STUMP - DAY

Outside THE STUMP, flecked with trophies of many adventures. In a clearing just beyond it, CRAIG, KELSEY and JP finish off a tense game of hot potato... with a real potato.

CRAIG

Let's go, twenty seconds left! JP!

Craig tosses the potato to JP. It goes high, but JP jumps and grabs it, then lobs to Kelsey.

JP

That's one hot potato!

Kelsey dives to grab it... but holds on. Her eyes shift craftily from one and the other target.

The sunlight dims dramatically for Kelsey's inner monologue.

KELSEY (V.O.)

(faux-British accent)

Now was Kelsey's chance! A decisive blow, and victory was hers.

Outside the drama, the other two stand around awkwardly.

JP

That tater's gettin' cold, Kelsey!

CRAIG

Only ten seconds left!

KELSEY (V.O.)

(still British)

Hold... hold...

CRAIG

Five! Four! Three! Two!

KELSEY

Now! J... Craig!

An afterimage follows Kelsey as she pretends to throw to JP, then redirects to Craig at the last second!

KELSEY (CONT'D)

You can't beat a kn-

Craig sees it coming and slaps the potato back. It lands right back into Kelsey's outstretched hands.

KELSEY (CONT'D)

-ight..?

RRRING! The alarm of Craig's phone goes off!

CRAIG
Time! You're out, Kelsey!

Kelsey stares down at the potato. Beat. Then... she throws it to the ground. It bounces over to JP, who picks it up.

JP
Don't mind if I do!

CRUNCH! He takes a bite out of it. Kelsey stomps to Craig.

KELSEY
Trickery!

CRAIG
(playfully)
You know, it's all in the wrist!

Kelsey throws her finger into Craig's face - who sees she is genuinely incensed. He backs up in sheepish distress.

KELSEY
I demand a rematch!

CRAIG
Sure! No need to get worked up.

Kelsey wilts at Craig's reaction. JP walks up to them with the potato in hand, poised to bite into it.

CRAIG (CONT'D)
It might have to wait until we get another potato, though.

KELSEY
No, no. Sorry about that. I've got kind of a "losing" thing. As a knight, I should be more honorable.

CRAIG
(good-natured laugh) Been there!

Kelsey smiles appreciatively, and then... CRASH! Out from the bushes flies a junk cart in the shape of a ship, with a broom for a "mast" and swanky bellbottoms for a "flag."

The PIRATE KIDS ride atop it, with their leader SNACKBEARD and her FIRST MATE.

CRAIG & JP & KELSEY
Whoa. Nice pants.

The ship skids to a stop in front of them.

SNACKBEARD
(very bad pirate accent)
Avast, ground lubbers!

PIRATE KIDS
Ahoy!

SNACKBEARD
I be Cap'n Snackbeard, o' the Creek
Pirates. We hail from past Paul
Royale's house!

Craig pulls out his map of the Creek and pores over it.

CRAIG
No way, really? That's all the way
past the Poison Ivy Grove.

FIRST MATE
We navigatered it!

SNACKBEARD
(drops accent, awed)
Woulda been easier with a cool map
like that...

She shares a glance with the other Pirates, who grin. Kelsey notices, and steps in front of the others - sword drawn.

KELSEY
Stay back! I don't trust these
brigands!

SNACKBEARD
Ey! Don't imprune me... imbrune?
Never mind. We just wants to play!

FIRST MATE
We're here to beat-

Snackbeard nudges him hard in the ribs.

FIRST MATE (CONT'D)
-challenge everyone to their best
games!

CRAIG
Oh! Well, we were playing hot
potato, if you're interested.

Craig pauses.

CRAIG (CONT'D)
Just as soon as we restock...

JP fishes a potato out of his pocket and tosses it to Craig.

JP
Never leave home without an extra potato. That's just good sense.

SNACKBEARD
I love hot potater! One on one?

CRAIG
Sounds good to me!

KELSEY
Wait, Craig! No!

Kelsey is too late: Craig steps up to the ochre.

CRAIG
What's the harm?

LATER

Craig is winded, and time is sparse. A dramatic wind blows.

SNACKBEARD
Ready ter lose?

CRAIG
I haven't lost yet!

Craig throws the potato, but Snackbeard lobs it back.

Craig reaches out, but just as he grasps it bright glint blinds him. The SUN BEAMS DIRECTLY IN HIS EYES!

CRAIG (CONT'D)
(yelp)

He fumbles the potato, which rolls in the high grass. He dives down and tries to find it.

KELSEY
Come on! Find it, Craig!

Snackbeard shares a smirk with her cronies. She eyes a watch on her twist as time ticks down, until RRRING! Time's up.

CRAIG
Aw, man. I lost bad!

JP
 Coulda happened to anyone, man.

SNACKBEARD
Buuuut, it happened to you!

Snackbeard swaggers over, with a malevolent smirk.

SNACKBEARD (CONT'D)
And since I won, by pirate law I
gets to take a prize!

What? CRAIG Since when? KELSEY

SNACKBEARD
And I pick...

Snackbeard suddenly snatches the map out of Craig's pocket.

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                SNACKBEARD (CONT'D)
... this here cool map!

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CRAIG
We've been plundered!

SNACKBEARD
Sorry, not sorry! Pirate law!

Snackbeard and the Pirate Kids beat a hasty retreat to their ship and run it up to speed.

Kelsey crouches into an action pose.

KELSEY
I knew they were up to something!
Leave this to me!

She springs away before they can stop her...

JP
Okay, have fun!

EXT. THE CREEK, PIRATE CHASE

The Pirate Kids kick back as Snackbeard admires the map.

Suddenly, Kelsey SWINGS from a nearby tree! She aims for the ship... but hit the edge and climbs awkwardly over the side.

KELSEY
You won't get away, Snackbeard!

THE FLASH - FAVORS THE BRAVE

Spec Script written by:

Ayinde I. Ricco

Based on characters and franchise developed by DC Comics and the
CW Television Network.

EXT. CENTRAL CITY - EVENING

The sun is beginning to set in Central City. BARRY ALLEN - The Flash - speeds through the streets, zipping from crisis to crisis.

BARRY (V.O.)
Life is full of sudden chances.

EXT. BUSY STREET

A PEDESTRIAN crosses. She finds a silver dollar on the ground, and reaches to pick it up. In doing so she fails to notice a speeding car, which shows no signs of stopping.

BARRY (V.O.)
You never know how a single moment
can change things. What life is
throwing at you next.

The Pedestrian spots the car, too late.

A second before impact, a red blur passes by and deposits her safely on the sidewalk.

EXT. SCAFFOLDING

A remodeling project on a brick building.

A WORKER attempts to hammer a bad brick out of the setting. To his surprise, the brick pops out easily.

BARRY
So its natural to try to control as
much as we can, to keep uncertainty
from taking that control from us.

The rest of the wall shudders and cracks. The Worker recoils, as it appears it will collapse on top of him.

The red blur speeds through. Before the Worker's eyes, the entire wall is rebricked and re-set in the blink of an eye.

EXT. THE FOX GARDENS CASINO

Aside a bright complex, a drunken GAMBLER attempts to escape a MUGGER with a wallet full of cash. The Gambler stumbles, and the MUGGER nabs him. He slams the Gambler against a wall.

MUGGER
Wallet! Now!

BARRY (V.O.)
But there's always going to be
times when you can't do it all. At
least, for most of us.

The Gambler clutches the wallet like a lifeline.

GAMBLER
(stuttering)
No! Let go!

The Gambler attempts to pull back. The Mugger pulls a knife, angry. He raises it to the Gambler's face, preparing to stab.

The red blur arrives, lifts the Mugger and tosses him into a nearby dumpster. The Flash slows down just enough to be seen and gives the Gambler a salute, then speeds away.

The Gambler cannot believe his luck. He stares.

GAMBLER (CONT'D)
(nonplussed)
Huh.

He shrugs it off and turns to the casino. Grinning hungrily, he shambles inside.

INT. THE FOX GARDEN CASINO

The casino is busy, but not overly so.

The Gambler makes straight for the nearest slot machine and pops a quarter in. The numbers spin, slowly stopping one by one: 7... 7... 7... and 7!

The Gambler leaps off of his chair.

GAMBLER
Yes!

The power immediately goes out. Everything is cast into darkness.

GAMBLER (CONT'D)
<groan>

CROWD
<screaming>

TITLE

INT. JITTERS - THE NEXT DAY

The midday hotspot is fully lighted and still as bustling as ever. As the lunch crowd moves, the television plays a news report of the previous day.

REPORTER

... and as power failures swept across the city, emergency responders may have been overwhelmed if not for the intervention of Central City's hero: The Flash...

Barry, along with IRIS WEST and CAITLIN SNOW, walk past the television and settle their coffees on a free table. CISCO RAMON still waits at the counter.

Barry sinks into his chair, exhausted. Iris and Caitlin join.

BARRY

What a night...

CAITLIN

That bad, huh?

Iris and Barry share a fatigued reaction - Iris, less so.

BARRY

Accidents, looting, people were going crazy out there.

IRIS

We were taking calls all across the city. It's just a miracle STAR Labs was unaffected. Where were you?

Caitlin looks uncomfortable.

CAITLIN

Killer Frost was out... "enjoying" the anarchy. Don't ask.

IRIS

Enough said.

Iris shoots Barry an annoyed glance.

IRIS (CONT'D)

Besides, it wouldn't have been so bad if someone hadn't tried to run all over the map.

BARRY

Hey! People needed me. I had to be out there.

On cue, the news report shows an image of The Flash. Onscreen, The Flash helps a toddler get a cat out of a tree.

REPORTER

... and with the city struck with fear, even the smallest of us found a guardian angel watching over...

Beat. Iris glares at Barry, who shuffles uncomfortably.

CISCO (O.S.)

Cats in trees, bro? Really?

Cisco arrives, strawberry smoothie in hand. He pulls out the remaining chair and plops down.

BARRY

(playing it off)

You should've seen her, she had really sad eyes.

IRIS

Barry, I understand that you want to help everyone, but there's a limit. Look at yourself!

Barry forces himself to sit straight, poorly hiding his exhaustion. He gestures wildly to the television, defensive.

BARRY

Look, it's-

He lifts his coffee too fast, and nearly spills some.

BARRY (CONT'D)

(frustrated)

-like they said: everyone was afraid! They needed help... coping.

CAITLIN

He's got a point. Who could predict a freak blackout like that?

Cisco leans into the table, feigning mystique.

CISCO

(sagelike)

There are no accidents.

CAITLIN
Kung Fu Panda? Seriously?

CISCO
It's a movie with limitless
sentimental value. But fact is,
this was no accident.

He presents a tablet, on which is an image of a fuse the size
of a bicep - a SPIKE - on which is clamped a small panel.

CISCO (CONT'D)
Somebody snuck this baby into the
power plant. It's called a Spike.
Hit the right trigger, and BAM!

IRIS
(dawning realization)
No more lights. Some prank.

BARRY
Who set it off? Can we trace it?

Cisco shakes his head. He makes the tablet show the city's
electrical network, and makes sure to point out on a line
straight from the power plant to the casino.

CISCO
Nope. This is where we tracked it,
but it could've been anybody!

Cisco makes the tablet show the casino's security footage, of
the Gambler winning the jackpot. Then it shows only static.

CISCO (CONT'D)
A wireless signal. It went the
first time *anyone* got a jackpot.

CAITLIN
At random? Is that possible?

CISCO
Apparently. Harry's running tests
back at STAR Labs-
(raising his glass)
- smoothie break -
(serious again)
- but whoever did this has crazy
skills.

CAITLIN
That's just what this town needs.
Another evil supergenius.

BARRY

It's fine. We'll run it by every engineer and tech firm in town, see if we get a lead. Let me have it, I-

IRIS

(forceful)

No.

Iris abruptly stands up and puts a hand on Barry's shoulder, silencing him.

IRIS (CONT'D)

Cisco, you keep on the Spike.
Barry, lets... go for a walk.

Iris pulls a stammering Barry to the exit, to Cisco and Caitlin's confusion.

CUT TO:

INT. ROYAL FLUSH HIDEOUT - DAY

A musty warehouse, hastily refurbished. Gambling paraphernalia functions as decor.

At a cluttered work station, AMOS - evil supergenius - tinkers with a modified rifle with electrical parts. The door bursts open: members of the ROYAL FLUSH GANG leap inside behind their leader - KING. They carry weapons similar to the one Amos is working on, while King carries a burlap sack.

Members ACE, TEN and JACK test out the equipment with a deadly game of tag, while QUEEN watches. Arcs of electricity ricochet fill the room, setting blazes and barely missing the others. The others hoot and holler as they carry on.

A bolt passes behind Amos' head. He does not turn around.

AMOS

(emotionlessly)

Careful with those.

As the others fight, King walks up to Amos' workbench and dumps the sack in front of him. Amos half-turns, ambivalent.

AMOS (CONT'D)

What is this?

KING

(casual)

Last night's take, Amos. Seems a bit light, doesn't it?

Amos stands up. He gazes at King, but doesn't respond.

KING (CONT'D)
The boys and I-

QUEEN aims her gun at him, playful.

QUEEN
Oi!

KING
(aside)
Sorry-
(normal)
We've been wondering about what to
do about that. Sweet tech or not-

Ace fires a shot that knocks Jack and Ten to the ground. He pumps his fist like a jock.

ACE
<shout of triumph>

King uses the momentary distraction to grab Amos by the collar and pull him face to face. Several decorations are knocked over.

KING
- these 'ideas' of yours ain't
worth jack.

Queen steps aside King, taking Amos' attention. Ten and Jack pick themselves up and join them. At once, he is surrounded by the Royal Flush Gang.

They power on their weapons, but do not raise them. Amos looks at them, but shows no visible reaction.

AMOS
Be patient.

TEN
<laughter>

King snarls into Amos' face. Amos remains stiff.

KING
"Patient?" Don't know if you've
noticed, but this is a fast paced
town!

Amos tries to stand up, away from King's grip. Jack and Ten raise their guns, jumpy. Amos raises his hands, placating.