

TITLE: DISCOUNT HERO

FADE IN:

INT. SMALL APARTMENT – LIVING ROOM – NIGHT

A cramped, messy studio. Pizza boxes, thrift-store furniture, a broken TV propped on books.

On the couch: MILO CRUZ (20s, awkward but sincere) in a homemade superhero suit: bike helmet, ski goggles, hoodie with duct-taped logo: a crooked “D” and “H”.

He holds his phone, recording himself.

MILO

(intense, to camera)

Citizens of Mabalacat... or, you know, whoever finds this on TikTok. I am... DISCOUNT HERO.

He strikes a pose. The bike helmet slips over his eyes.

MILO

(helmet muffled)

Ow. One second.

He fixes it, clears his throat.

MILO

I may not have lasers, or muscles, or... health insurance. But I have heart. And a taser I got on sale.

He proudly holds up a tiny pink taser keychain.

It crackles weakly, then dies.

MILO

Okay, it *had* batteries. The point is: crime, beware.

A KNOCK at the door.

TITA LUZ (50s, Filipina aunt, no-nonsense) opens the unlocked door, holding a laundry basket.

She stares at him.

TITA LUZ

Milo, why are you dressed like a traffic cone?

Milo jumps, hides the taser.

MILO

It's... for a short film. Superhero genre. Low budget but high... passion.

Tita Luz squints.

TITA LUZ

As long as you still apply for jobs tomorrow. Superhero cannot pay Meralco.

She drops a folded barong on the couch.

TITA LUZ

Interview clothes. Don't lose it. And take out the trash. It smells like villain.

She exits.

Milo sighs, looks at his reflection in the TV.

MILO

Discount Hero today... Discount Call Center Agent tomorrow.

He checks his phone: a local news alert.

ON PHONE: "BREAKING: MYSTERIOUS 'GADGET BANDIT' STRIKES AGAIN. ROBBING MINI-MARTS WITH HOMEMADE TECH."

Milo's eyes light up.

MILO

Supervillain. Low-budget. This is my brand.

He grabs a cheap utility belt (fanny pack), stuffs in: duct tape, zip ties, flashlight, almost-dead taser.

He flips the hoodie hood up like a cape.

MILO

Time to roll back the prices... on crime.

He opens the door... and comes back to grab a face mask.

MILO

Safety first.

He exits.

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EXT. MABALACAT SIDE STREET – NIGHT

Quiet neighborhood, sari-sari stores closing. Streetlights flicker.

Milo pedals into frame on a rusty bicycle covered in reflective tape.

He talks into a cheap action camera duct-taped to the handlebars.

MILO

(narrating)

Operation: Closeout Clearance. Objective: catch Gadget Bandit. Budget: negative three hundred pesos.

He almost crashes into a tricycle, swerves.

TRICYCLE DRIVER

Hoy! Watch where you're biking, Power Ranger!

MILO

Sorry! Independent hero, low funding!

He stops near a 24-hour MINI-MART, "STARLIGHT MART."

Through the window, a FIGURE in a hoodie browses the shelves.

Milo narrows his eyes.

MILO

Target acquired.

He parks the bike, tries to lock it with a flimsy chain. It immediately falls off.

MILO

Please don't steal my bike, crime. I'm trying to *fight* you.

He hurries toward the door.

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INT. STARLIGHT MART – NIGHT

A small convenience store. Fluorescent lights hum. Shelves of instant noodles, canned goods, and snacks.

Behind the counter: JEN (20s, bored, sharp-witted) scrolling her phone.

The HOODIED FIGURE stands near the drinks fridge, backpack half-open, fiddling with something metallic.

Milo bursts in, breathless.

MILO

Stop right there, evildoer!

Everyone turns.

The hooded figure freezes, then slowly pulls down the hood: KARL (20s, scrawny, anxious), holding... a weird homemade gadget: a power bank duct-taped to a hair dryer with wires.

KARL

...Milo?

Milo blinks.

MILO

Karl?! You're the Gadget Bandit?

KARL

Dude, no! I'm... field testing my portable... hair-drying... device.

Jen leans over the counter.

JEN

Is this another one of your YouTube pranks? Because last time you did "social experiment" in aisle three, a kid cried for twenty minutes.

Milo points dramatically at Karl's gadget.

MILO

News said the Bandit uses homemade tech. Karl *failed* engineering twice. That's basically a villain origin story.

Karl clutches the gadget.

KARL

Excuse you, I dropped out for emotional reasons.

The door CHIMES. Another hooded person enters: REAL GADGET BANDIT – taller, wearing a motorcycle helmet with LED strips, carrying a METAL BRIEFCASE.

They walk with way too much confidence for this small store.

Milo turns, eyes widening.

MILO

Okay, plot twist.

The Bandit flips an improvised device onto the counter: a remote with taped-on antennas.

GADGET BANDIT

Everyone stay calm. This is a robbery, but, like, a polite one.

They press a button. The store lights FLICKER, fridge HUM dies, Jen's phone shuts off.

JEN

Hey! I didn't save my game!

She glares.

JEN

You just made it personal.

Milo steps forward, puffing up.

MILO

In this economy? You're robbing a mini-mart? That's not villainy, that's bullying.

The Bandit turns to him, LED helmet blinking.

GADGET BANDIT

And who are you supposed to be? Budget Spider-Man?

Milo strikes a shaky pose.

MILO

I am... Discount Hero. Defender of small businesses and... buy-one-take-one deals.

Karl facepalms.

KARL

Oh my God, he actually used the name.

GADGET BANDIT

Cute. Step aside, cosplay.

They point a chunky, homebuilt gadget—like a leaf blower with wires—at Milo.

GADGET BANDIT

This is an EMP blaster. Don't make me turn your brain into a dead SIM card.

Milo glances at Karl.

MILO

Is that... scientifically possible?

KARL

Absolutely not... I think. But it could knock out your pacemaker. If you had one. Which you don't. I hope.

Milo straightens.

MILO

So it's mostly vibes. Good. I can work with vibes.

Jen reaches under the counter, pulls out... a rolled-up PROMOTIONAL POSTER.

She tosses it at Milo.

JEN

If you're gonna be a hero in my store, at least have a weapon that's not pink and out of battery.

Milo fumbles the taser and grabs the poster like a staff.

MILO

Starlight Mart, I accept your sponsorship.

He charges.

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INT. STARLIGHT MART – CONTINUOUS

LOW-BUDGET ACTION MONTAGE – all in this tiny space.

- Milo swings the poster like a bo staff. The Bandit ducks; a bag of chips explodes in a shower of crumbs.
- Karl dives behind a shelf, peeking out with his hair-dryer gadget.
- Jen casually moves expensive items off the counter, away from the fight.

JEN

Not the imported chocolate. Use the *cheap* snacks as shields.

Milo slips on spilled chips, sliding across the floor straight at the Bandit.

MILO

WHOOOA—

He accidentally headbutts the Bandit in the stomach with his bike helmet. The Bandit doubles over.

GADGET BANDIT

Oof!

They swing the EMP gadget blindly. It hits a security camera, which sparks and dies.

MILO

You broke the CCTV. That's, like, extra paperwork for Jen.

JEN

You're both filling out incident reports after this.

Karl pops up, aims his Franken-gadget.

KARL

Science time!

He flips it on. It WHIRRS... then blows a weak puff of air and a spark. The room fills with the smell of burnt plastic.

KARL

Okay, prototype needs work.

The Bandit shoves Milo, aiming their EMP blaster at the fridges.

GADGET BANDIT

Move, or I nuke all the ice cream.

Everyone gasps.

JEN

You monster.

Milo puts his hands up.

MILO

Okay, okay. Let's be reasonable. You don't need to do that.

GADGET BANDIT

I need cash. Now.

Jen narrows her eyes, thinking fast.

JEN

Our cash is worthless if the ice cream melts. The entire neighborhood riots.

Milo nods solemnly.

MILO

She's right. There are laws. Social ones.

Karl whispers to Milo.

KARL

We need a plan that doesn't involve me getting punched.

MILO

All my plans involve us getting punched.

His eyes land on a shelf of BUY 1 TAKE 1 ENERGY DRINKS.

He gets an idea.

MILO

(to Bandit)

You like gadgets, right?

The Bandit hesitates.

GADGET BANDIT

...Obviously.

MILO

Then you'll love this special item. Very advanced technology. Limited edition.

He slowly moves toward the energy drink shelf.

JEN

(confused)

We don't sell gadgets—

Milo shoots her a look. She catches on.

JEN

Oh. Ohhh. Yes. Our flagship product.

She leans on the counter.

JEN

Top-tier... uh... Quantum Energy Modules.

KARL

Those are cans.

Milo elbows him.

MILO

(low)

Improv, Karl. Improv.

The Bandit eyes the shelf, curious but wary.

GADGET BANDIT

You think I'm stupid?

MILO

I think you've been working too hard. You're overclocked. You need a boost.

He grabs a can, flips it in his hand like it's something serious.

MILO

Fully charged with B-vitamins and poor decisions. Limited-time promo: buy one, take one concussion.

Before the Bandit can react, Milo POPS the tab and SHAKES the can, spraying sticky energy drink directly onto the EMP blaster.

The gadget sputters and shorts out, sparks flying harmlessly.

GADGET BANDIT

Hey!

Jen tosses Milo the second can.

JEN

Buy one—

MILO

Take one!

He swings the unopened can like a fist, clocking the Bandit's helmet with a solid thud.

The Bandit stumbles, dropping the metal briefcase. It pops open: inside, rolls of cash and more janky gadgets.

Karl rushes forward with a roll of duct tape from Milo's fanny pack.

KARL

Don't worry, I know how to secure unstable structures.

He duct-tapes the Bandit's hands together in a messy cocoon.

The Bandit struggles, overbalanced.

GADGET BANDIT

Release me, normies!

They fall backward into a stack of toilet paper.

Silence.

Then: a tiny, defeated groan.

GADGET BANDIT (O.S.)

This... is not how I pictured my legacy.

Milo breathes hard, looking at his sticky gloves.

MILO

First arrest. On a budget.

Jen checks the Bandit's gadgets on the floor—tiny drone, hacked phone, homemade shock glove.

JEN

I'm keeping this one. For... security reasons.

She pockets the shock glove.

MILO

You... were amazing.

JEN

You dented two shelves, almost broke the fridge, and got energy drink on everything. Seven out of ten. Would call again.

Karl looks at Milo with newfound respect.

KARL

Dude. You actually did it. You fought a real villain.

Milo looks around. It's just them, the store, the trussed-up Bandit.

MILO

Yeah. In a mini-mart, with expired energy drink.

He grins.

MILO

I think I found my niche.

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EXT. STARLIGHT MART – LATER THAT NIGHT

Police lights flash. The Bandit sits in the back of a patrol car, still wrapped in duct tape.

A SMALL CROWD has gathered, recording on their phones.

A LOCAL REPORTER films a segment with a shaky cameraman.

REPORTER

...Witnesses say a mysterious “Discount Hero” stopped the Gadget Bandit using improvised... beverages.

Milo stands off to the side, helmet off, hoodie unzipped, trying to look casual. Karl and Jen stand with him.

On nearby phones, social media clips show Milo slipping, sliding, and accidentally headbutting the Bandit—with heroic music edited over it.

KARL

You’re viral, bro. People love a disaster with heart.

JEN

They’re calling you “Budget Batman” and “Tito Iron Man.”

Milo scrolls on his cracked phone: comments, memes, fan art of his duct-tape logo.

He looks up, overwhelmed.

MILO

I was supposed to be invisible. Failing quietly. Now strangers are rating my fighting stance.

Jen nudges him with her shoulder.

JEN

Hey. You saved my job. And the ice cream. That’s A-tier hero work.

Karl points to the duct-taped briefcase, now in a police evidence bag.

KARL

Also, Bandit’s gadgets are going to keep the forensics people busy for months. That’s like... job security for nerds.

Milo watches the patrol car drive off.

MILO

So what now? Discount Hero retires while he's ahead?

Jen looks at the crowded street—people laughing, taking selfies where the fight happened.

JEN

You really think this is the last idiot with a home-made doomsday device?

Karl's phone BUZZES.

KARL

Uh... guys?

He shows them breaking news on the screen: grainy footage of a guy in a bedsheet cape on top of a jeepney, shouting, sparks coming from a makeshift lightning rod.

HEADLINE: "NEW 'STORM KING' BLOCKS TRAFFIC, CLAIMS CONTROL OF WEATHER."

Milo, Jen, and Karl all stare.

MILO

We just unlocked sequel mode.

Jen sighs, but she's smiling.

JEN

I close the store at midnight. You have until then to not die.

Karl adjusts his backpack, where his broken gadget sticks out.

KARL

If we tweak the capacitor, my thing might actually work next time. Maybe.

Milo looks at his helmet, then at his reflection in the store window: messy, cheap, but heroic.

He puts the helmet back on, pulls up the hood.

MILO

Mabalacat deserves a hero it can afford.

He swings a leg over his rusty bike. It squeaks.

MILO

Discount Hero, version 1.1. Now with slightly more confidence.

Jen grabs a broom, like a makeshift staff.

JEN

Fine. I'll tag along. Somebody has to keep you from slipping on chips again.

Karl hops onto the back of Milo's bike, nearly tipping it.

KARL

To the Storm King?

Milo looks down the street, toward distant thunder and flickering lights.

MILO

To the Storm King.

He pedals off, wobbling, the three of them an absurd silhouette against the flashing sky.

The action camera on his handlebars blinks a tiny red light: recording.

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INT. SMALL APARTMENT – LATER (RECORDED VIDEO)

Back to Milo's living room. The earlier video continues—but now, it has EDITS: quick cuts of him fighting the Bandit, slipping on chips, spraying energy drink, Jen rolling her eyes, Karl duct-taping.

Text overlay: "DISCOUNT HERO – EPISODE 1."

MILO (V.O.)

(awkward but proud)

I'm not the strongest. Or the smartest. Or even the most coordinated. But as long as there are low-budget villains... this city has a low-budget hero.

Freeze-frame on Milo's goofy helmeted grin as he bikes toward chaos.

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FADE OUT.

TITLE CARD: "DISCOUNT HERO WILL RETURN (AFTER PAYDAY)"

THE END