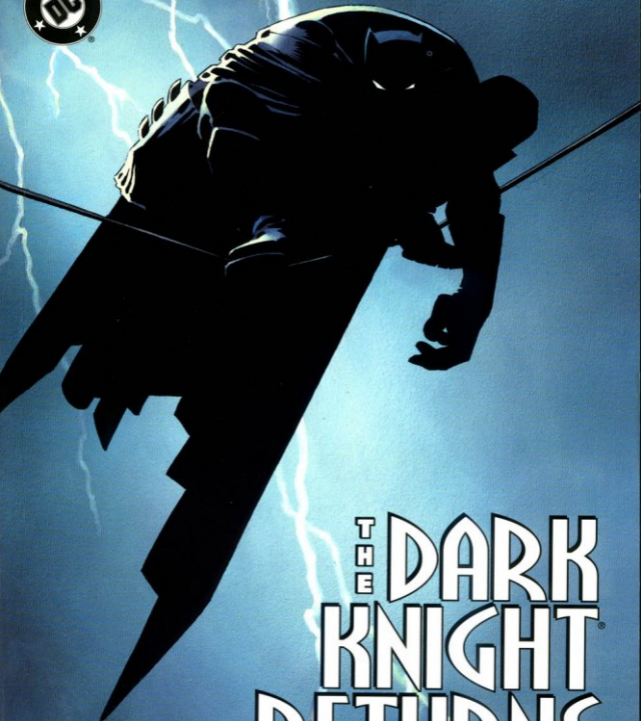




B A T M A N®



**THE DARK
KNIGHT
RETURNS**

TENTH ANNIVERSARY EDITION

**FRANK MILLER
WITH KLAUS JANSON
AND LYNN VARLEY**



THE DARK KNIGHT RETURNS



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BATMAN: THE DARK KNIGHT RETURNS TENTH ANNIVERSARY EDITION

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DARK KNIGHT DAYS

BY FRANK MILLER

16 SEPTEMBER 1996

1963. (OR IS IT '64? THE EXACT YEAR IS UNCERTAIN. BUT THE MEMORY IS VIVID.)

A department store in Vermont. I'm 6 (or 7) years old. I come across an 80-page Giant comic starring Batman. I open it. I look it over. I fall in.

I wish I'd kept a diary. But who could've known? Nobody, that's who.

Well, maybe Dick Giordano. Maybe Dick had some idea where all this might take us. He was editor-in-chief of DC Comics at the time, and he'd been pushing this Batman thing for many a month. Whether Dick saw what might come of it or not, he was relentless. He was fixated.

1984. In any number of restaurants and hotel bars. Many times. Dick Giordano says sure, Batman's sales are flat. But look at what happens any time somebody conducts one of those reader surveys in the fanzines. Batman's just about everybody's favorite character. The time is more than ripe for a high-profile, all-out relaunch of the old war horse.

But that was just it. That was exactly what came to bother me about Batman. He wasn't old, damn him. Despite nearly fifty years of continuous publication, there he was, unwrinkled, handsome, perpetually twenty-nine. Never a kink in that tree-trunk neck. Never a moment fretting the possibility that his athletic prowess would ever fade. Perpetually young, younger than Magic Johnson or Michael Jordan. Impervious to time itself.

1985. My apartment in New York City. A sudden realization, and not a pleasant one. My thirtieth birthday is right around the corner. I'm poised to turn one year older than Batman.

I've come to accept, in recent years, that Spider-Man is younger than my little brother, but Batman? Batman? My favorite childhood hero? That lantern-jawed, ever-wise father figure? I'm actually gonna be older than Batman?

This was intolerable. Something had to be done.

Later that same year. On board an airplane headed for Texas. Dick Giordano and I sip white wine and talk. Enthusiastically, if clumsily, I lay out to him the collection of ideas I've got for this Batman thing he's wanted me to do. The central notion is to simply move Batman through time, and chronicle his last case. Move him through time, and, just by happenstance, make him once again much older than I am.

I fire a barrage of scenes at Dick. He urges me on. It's a raw, rambling narrative I hit him with, not yet a story at all, a mixed bag of cool things Batman will do and say that winds up with an ending that could never work — and even, should it work, is one DC would never publish.

At this stage, THE DARK KNIGHT RETURNS is, to use the technical term, a mess. But it's a very enthusiastic mess. I'm red-hot to get started. And a good editor knows

when to let the process begin. Dick gives it a thumbs-up, no doubt praying he'll be able to keep me from doing too much damage.

Putting the team together was the easiest part. Your basic no-brainer. A piece of cake. When it came to working with other artists, I'd already been lucky as a fool, twice over.

My longtime partner Klaus Janson had brought a crackling energy and verve to my pencil art on Marvel Comics' Daredevil. By the time we'd finished our Daredevil run, Klaus had taken on the lion's share of the drawing, so much so that he took over as sole artist when I left the title. The question was whether he'd want to collaborate again. More luck: he did.

After leaving Daredevil, I went to work on my first comics novel, RONIN, published by DC Comics. Painter Lynn Varley joined me, and, chapter by chapter, set a brand-new standard of excellence in comic-book color. Lynn actually redefined the very role of color on the comic-book page, bringing such mood and temperature and draftsmanship to my linework that the black-and-white was plainly incomplete without her artistry. Even the story itself was a colder, unfinished thing before she took her brush to it. For color artists to come, Lynn raised the bar to the stratosphere.

A less visible member of the RONIN team was Bob Rozakis, DC production boss, who stayed up as late as we did during grueling press checks and solved countless unforeseen problems. This was an ambitious project and a wildly transitional time, and new challenges hit almost hourly. Bob's contribution was quiet, but crucial. With him on the job, we knew we could set our sights high.

Also crucial to the final look and feel of any book is the expertise of the art director. From the late Neal Pozner to Richard Bruning and onward, DC's made sure to have somebody awfully good in that position. As this edition should demonstrate, that's a practice DC continues to this day.

1977. DC President Jenette Kahn's apartment. A party. Curious to look over Jenette's collection of mystery novels, I run into an affable, witty fellow, writer Mike W. Barr. Almost instantly, a friendship begins. It doesn't take long before we find ourselves talking about Batman. Ideas fly back and forth. They will continue to fly just about every time Mike and I chat, for all the years to come.

1979. The editorial offices of Marvel Comics. "That's a Batman idea," says writer and then-editor Jo Duffy, responding to a scene I want to write into Daredevil. It's hardly the first time she's had to say that. Ever encouraging and expert in her suggestions, Jo is editor, colleague, consultant and friend. Of course, over the years to come, she has a lot to say about Batman.

Nothing is created in a vacuum, and brother! is that true when you're messing with a character who's loved by generations. Ideas flutter like muses through party chatter and dinner conversations and breaks in dime-ante poker games.

Leave us say if I were to try to list every other writer out there who had something to offer about Batman, there wouldn't be room in this volume for the story you're about to read.

It was a roller coaster ride, making DARK KNIGHT was, with lurching ups and downs, countless regrettable arguments and welcome surprises. Sometimes pulling it all together, I felt less like an author than a circus ringmaster. There was so much in the air, so many of those fluttering muses.

And there was Batman himself. He was the real boss. As he was quick to assert, Batman has a personality and purpose all his own, a definable core. He's neither petty nor petulant. He's no whiner; there's not a trace of self-pity in his soul. He's smart. He's noble. And most important, he's big. His passions are grand. Even his unhappiness is not depressing, but a brooding, Wagnerian torment. And his triumphs are Olympian.

He insists.

Then, paradoxically, all the goofy stuff, the on-the-face-of-it preposterous stuff, nudges its way back in. The Batcave just isn't complete without that fifty-foot penny. When Commissioner Gordon wants to summon his favorite outlaw, he doesn't do it discreetly, like anybody with a lick of sense would, Nah. He lights up the whole sky with the Bat Signal. Given a hundred more pages of DARK KNIGHT to write and draw, I might well have brought giant typewriters and the Bat-Mite into the mix.

I'd never intended to use Robin. But then, one day, I pictured a little bundle of bright colors leaping over buildings, dwarfed by a gray-and-black giant...and there she was, Robin.

Not that my version sprang into my head full-blown.

1985. At 30,000 feet. I talk to cartoonist John Byrne about Batman. John talks to me about Robin. "Robin must be a girl," he says. He mentions a drawing by Love & Rockets artist Jaime Hernandez of a female Robin. To prove his point, John provides me with a pencil sketch of his own.

But it took Lynn Varley to give Carrie Keane Kelley her true voice. It's no exaggeration at all to say that Lynn edited and co-wrote Robin's, and the other youngsters', dialogue. This is only one paltry example of what Lynn brought to DARK KNIGHT, even beyond her palette and brush. As much as this book is mine, it is hers.

Colleagues, friends, and those fluttering muses. They were all quite generous.

I got to scratch a whopper of an itch. With one hell of a lot of help, I got to send a gift back in time to that kid in Vermont who opened a Batman comic and fell in, never entirely to emerge.



DEDICATED TO
WILL JUNGKUNTZ
1955-1985

B O O K O N E



THE DARK KNIGHT RETURNS

I'VE GOT THE HOME STRETCH
ALL TO MYSELF WHEN THE
READINGS STOP MAKING SENSE.
I SWITCH TO MANUAL--



BRUCE, THIS IS CORKY.
YOU'RE GOING TOO
FAST!

THEN THE FRONT END LURCHES,
ALL WRONGS. I KNOW WHAT'S
COMING.

-- BUT THE COMPUTER
CROSSES ITS OWN CIRCUITS
AND REFUSES TO LET GO. I
COAX IT.



IT ISN'T PROGRAMMED
TO--
BRUCE!

I'VE GOT JUST UNDER TWO
SECONDS TO SHUT THIS MESS
DOWN AND FORFEIT THE
RACE.



BRUCE, YOU
SON OF A
BITCH!

THE ENGINE, ANGRY, ARGUES
THE POINT WITH ME. THE
FINISH LINE IS CLOSE, IT
ROARS. TOO CLOSE.

IT SHOVS HOT NEEDLES IN MY
FACE AND TRIES TO MAKE ME
BLIND. I'M IN CHARGE NOW
AND I LIKE IT.



THE LEFT FRONT TIRE
DECIDES TO TURN ALL ON
ITS OWN. I LAUGH AT IT
AND JERK THE STEERING
WHEEL TO THE RIGHT.



THE NOSE DROPS UP A CHUNK
OF MACADAM. I LOOK AT IT--

-- THEN STRAIGHT INTO THE
EYE OF THE SUN.

THIS WOULD BE A GOOD
DEATH...



... BUT NOT GOOD ENOUGH.



...SPECTACULAR FINISH TO
THE NEUMAN ELIMINATION,
AS THE FERRIS GOOD
PINWHEELED ACROSS THE
FINISH LINE, A FLAMING
COFFIN FOR BRUCE WAYNE...



...OR SO EVERYONE
THOUGHT. TURNS OUT THE
MILLIONAIRE BAILED OUT
AT THE LAST SECOND.
SUFFERED ONLY SUPERFICIAL
BURNS. LOLA?



THANKS, BILL.
I'M SURPRISED ANYONE
CAN EVEN THINK OF
SPORTS IN THIS
WEATHER. RIGHT,
DAVE?





RIGHT, LOLA. AT GOTHAM'S MAGNIFICENT TWIN TOWERS IT'S NINETY-SEVEN-- WITH NO RELIEF IN SIGHT.

THANKS, DAVE. THIS HEAT WAVE HAS SPARKED MANY ACTS OF CIVIL VIOLENCE HERE IN GOTHAM CITY...



...THE MOST HIDEOUS OF WHICH HAS TO BE THE BRUTAL SLAYING OF THREE NUNS LAST WEEK BY THE GANG KNOWN AS THE MUTANTS.

AND TODAY POLICE FOUND A DEATH THREAT NAILED TO THE DOOR OF THE OFFICE OF POLICE COMMISSIONER JAMES GORDON.

GORDON, FACING RETIREMENT ON HIS SEVENTIETH BIRTHDAY NEXT MONTH, SPOKE TO A NEWS TV REPORTER...

I'VE GOT FOUR WEEKS TO NAIL THOSE BASTARDS. IF THIS MEANS THEY'RE WILLING TO TAKE ME ON, I'M DELIGHTED.



IRONICALLY, TODAY ALSO MARKS THE TENTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE LAST RECORDED SIGHTING OF THE BATMAN. DEAD OR RETIRED, HIS FATE REMAINS UNKNOWN.

OUR YOUNGER VIEWERS WILL NOT REMEMBER THE BATMAN. A RECENT SURVEY SHOWS THAT MOST HIGH SCHOOLERS CONSIDER HIM A MYTH.

BUT REAL HE WAS. EVEN TODAY, DEBATE CONTINUES ON THE RIGHT AND WRONGS OF HIS ONE-MAN WAR ON CRIME.

THIS REPORTER WOULD LIKE TO THINK THAT HE'S ALIVE AND WELL, ENJOYING A CELEBRATORY DRINK IN THE COMPANY OF FRIENDS...





TO BATMAN.

IT'S GOOD THAT HE RETIRED-- ISN'T IT?

TINK



I'M GRATEFUL HE SURVIVED RETIRING.



HE DIDN'T. BUT BRUCE WAYNE IS... ALIVE AND WELL.



GLAD TO HEAR THAT. YOU'VE CERTAINLY LEARNED TO DRINK.

REMEMBER THE OLD DAYS, BRUCE? THAT PLAYBOY ROUTINE...



YOU WITH YOUR GINGER ALE, PRETENDING IT WAS CHAMPAGNE, FOOLING EVERYBODY--
--ALMOST.



NOW-- WELL, I'D ALMOST WORRY.

SPOKEN TO DICK LATELY?



NOT FOR SEVEN YEARS, JIM. YOU KNOW THAT.

STILL, HUH? I'M DAMN SORRY ABOUT THAT.

ESPECIALLY WITH WHAT HAPPENED TO JAROSY..



LET'S CALL IT A NIGHT, JIM.



AS WE PART, JIM SQUEEZES MY SHOULDER AND GRINS. "YOU JUST NEED A WOMAN," HE SAYS.

... WHILE IN MY GLIT THE CREATURE WRITHES AND SNARLS AND TELLS ME WHAT I NEED...

I LEAVE MY CAR IN THE LOT. I CAN'T STAND TO BE INSIDE ANYTHING RIGHT NOW. I WALK THE STREETS OF THIS CITY I'M LEARNING TO HATE, THE CITY THAT'S GIVEN UP, LIKE THE WHOLE WORLD SEEMS TO HAVE.

I'M A ZOMBIE. A FLYING DUTCHMAN. A DEAD MAN, TEN YEARS DEAD..

I'LL FEEL BETTER IN THE MORNING. AT LEAST, I'LL FEEL IT LESS...



IT'S THE NIGHT—WHEN THE CITY'S SMELLS CALL OUT TO HIM, THOUGH I LIE BETWEEN SILK SHEETS IN A MILLION-DOLLAR MANSION MILES AWAY...



...WHEN A POLICE SIREN WAKES ME, AND, FOR A MOMENT, I FORGET THAT IT'S ALL OVER...



BUT BATMAN WAS A YOUNG MAN. IF IT WAS REVENGE HE WAS AFTER, HE'S TAKEN IT. IT'S BEEN FORTY YEARS SINCE HE WAS BORN...



...AND THE MAN WHO STOLE ALL SENSE FROM YOUR LIFE, HE COULD BE STANDING...



...RIGHT OVER THERE...



...BORN HERE.

ONCE AGAIN, HE'S BROUGHT ME BACK-- TO SHOW ME HOW LITTLE IT HAS CHANGED. IT'S OLDER, DIRTIER, BUT--

--IT COULD HAVE HAPPENED YESTERDAY.

IT COULD BE HAPPENING RIGHT NOW.

THEY COULD BE LYING AT YOUR FEET, TWITCHING, BLEEDING...



COME ON, HONEY SLICE AND DICE--

--I DON'T KNOW, MAN. HE'S AWFUL BIG--



SO MANY LOVELY WAYS TO PUNISH HIM...



SO MANY...

NOT HIM. HE FLINCHED WHEN HE
PULLED THE TRIGGER. HE WAS
SICK AND GUILTY OVER WHAT
HE DID.

ALL HE WANTED WAS MONEY.
I WAS NAIVE ENOUGH TO THINK
HIM THE LOWEST SORT OF MAN.

THESE--THESE ARE HIS
CHILDREN. A PURER BREED...

...AND THIS WORLD IS THEIRS.



CAN'T DO
MURDERS
WHEN THEY'RE
INTO IT--



LET'S HIT
THE ARCADE,
MAN--



--ALWAYS A
GOOD TIME
AT THE
ARCADE--

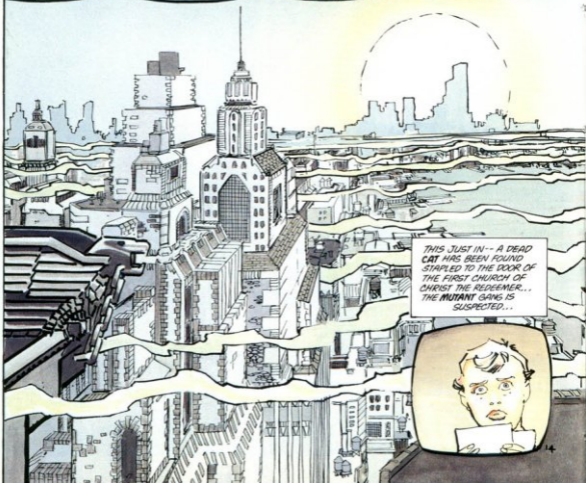


... BUTNERY OF EVERY
MEMBER OF THE FAMILY. THE
MUTANT ORGANIZATION IS
BELIEVED TO HAVE COMMITTED
THIS ATROCITY FOR MONEY
THE FAMILY HAD...

... SOMETHING UNDER
TWELVE DOLLARS. THIS IS
CONSIDERED A DRUG-
RELATED CRIME AT PRESENT,
BUT SURELY THIS HEAT
WAVE IS A FACTOR. RIGHT,
DOC?

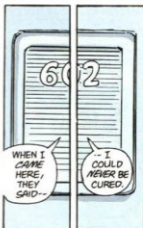
ABSOLUTELY, BILL.
ROUGH MONTH IN THE
BIG TOWN. RIGHT NOW
THE MERCURY IS
CLIMBING TO AN
UNSEASONAL ONE
HUNDRED AND THREE...

...AND IT LOOKS
LIKE IT'S GOING
TO GET WORSE
BEFORE IT
GETS BETTER...



THIS JUST IN-- A DEAD
CAT HAS BEEN FOUND
STAPLED TO THE DOOR OF
THE FIRST CHURCH OF
CHRIST THE REDEEMER...
THE MUTANT GANG IS
SUSPECTED...







WHAT CAN I SAY?

... THANK YOU, TOM.
A NEW LIFE
BEGINS TODAY
FOR
HARVEY DENT.

DENT, A FORMER DISTRICT
ATTORNEY, BECAME
OBSESSED WITH THE
NUMBER TWO WHEN
HALF HIS FACE WAS
SCORCHED BY ACID.

DENT BELIEVED HIS
DISFIGURATION REVEALED
A HIDDEN, EVIL SIDE TO
HIS NATURE. HE ADOPTED
AS HIS PERSONAL SYMBOL
A DOLLAR COIN...



... ONE SIDE OF WHICH
WAS DEFACTO, TO REPRESENT
THE WARRING SIDES OF
HIS SPLIT- PERSONALITY.
A FLIP OF THE COIN
COULD MEAN LIFE OR
DEATH FOR HIS VICTIMS.

DENT'S CRIMES WERE
BRILLIANTLY PATHOLOGICAL,
THE MOST HORRENDOUS
OF WHICH WAS HIS
LAST--

--THE KIDNAPPING AND
RANSOMING OF SIAMESE
TWINS, ONE OF WHOM
HE ATTEMPTED TO MURDER
EVEN AFTER THE
RANSOM WAS PAID.

HE WAS APPREHENDED
IN THE ACT BY GOTHAM'S
FAMOUS VIGILANTE, THE
BATMAN, AND
COMMITTED TO
ARKHAM ASYLUM
TWELVE YEARS AGO.



FOR THE PAST THREE
YEARS DENT HAS BEEN
TREATED BY
DR. BARTHOLOMEW WOLPER
FOR HIS PSYCHOSIS...

... WHILE NOBEL PRIZE-
WINNING PLASTIC SURGEON
DR. HERBERT WILLIAMS
DEDICATED HIMSELF
TO RESTORING THE
FACE OF HARVEY
DENT.

SPEAKING
TODAY, BOTH
DOCTORS WERE
JUBILANT.

HARVEY'S READY
TO LOOK AT THE
WORLD AND SAY,
"HEY--I'M OKAY."



AND HE
LOOKS GREAT.

DENT READ A
BRIEF STATEMENT
TO THE MEDIA...

I DO NOT ASK
GOTHAM CITY TO
FORGIVE MY CRIMES. I
MUST EARN THAT, BY
DEDICATING MYSELF
TO PUBLIC SERVICE.

FOR ME, THIS IS THE
END OF A LONG NIGHT-
MARE... AND THE FIRST
STEP ON THE LONG ROAD
TO ABSOLUTION.



NEXT, DENT DREW FOND APPLAUSE BY PRODUCING A NEWLY-MINTED DOLLAR COIN.

IT WAS, OF COURSE, UNMARRED.

BUT POLICE COMMISSIONER JAMES GORDON'S REACTION TO DENT'S RELEASE WAS NOT ENTHUSIASTIC...

NO, I AM NOT SATISFIED. DR. WOLPER'S REPORT SEEMS OVERLY OPTIMISTIC--NOT TO MENTION SLOPPY.



WHILE MILLIONAIRE BRUCE WAYNE, WHO SPONSORED DENT'S TREATMENT, HAD THIS TO SAY...

GORDON'S REMARKS SEEM OVERLY PESSIMISTIC--NOT TO MENTION RUDE.

THE COMMISSIONER IS AN EXCELLENT COP-- BUT, I THINK, A POOR JUDGE OF CHARACTER. WE MUST BELIEVE IN HARVEY DENT.

WE MUST BELIEVE THAT OUR PRIVATE DEMONS CAN BE DEFEATED...





OOOF!

OWW!



NO!
GO
WAY!



GO
WAY!



SKREE
SKREE
SKREE



THEN...

...SOMETHING
SHUFFLES.
OUT OF SIGHT...

...SOMETHING
SUCKS THE
STALE AIR...

...AND
HISSES.



GLIDING WITH ANCIENT GRACE...



UNWILLING TO RETREAT AS HIS BROTHERS DID...



EYES GLEAMING, UNTOUCHED BY LOVE OR JOY OR SORROW...



BREATH HOT WITH THE TASTE OF FALLEN FOES... THE STENCH OF DEAD THINGS, DAMNED THINGS.



SURELY THE FIERCEST SURVIVOR-- THE PUREST WARRIOR...



GLARING, HATING...



...CLAIMING ME AS HIS OWN.



DREAMING...

I WAS ONLY SIX YEARS OLD WHEN THAT HAPPENED. WHEN I FIRST SAW THE CAVE...

... HUGE, EMPTY, SILENT AS A CHURCH, WAITING, AS THE BAT WAS WAITING.

AND NOW THE COBWEBS GROW AND THE DUST THICKENS IN HERE AS IT DOES IN ME--

--AND HE LAUGHS AT ME, CURSES ME. CALLS ME A FOOL, HE FILLS MY SLEEP, HE TRICKS ME. BRINGS ME HERE WHEN THE NIGHT IS LONG AND MY WILL IS WEAK. HE STRUGGLES RELENTLESSLY, HATEFULLY, TO BE FREE--

I WILL NOT LET HIM. I GAVE MY WORD.

FOR JASON.

NEVER.

NEVER AGAIN.





FOR ME, THIS IS THE END OF A LONG NIGHTMARE... AND THE FIRST STEP ON THE LONG ROAD TO ABSOLUTION.

...THOSE WERE THE LAST WORDS SPOKEN IN PUBLIC BY HARVEY DENT BEFORE HIS DISAPPEARANCE THIS MORNING.

WHILE POLICE COMMISSIONER GORDON ISSUED AN ALL POINTS BULLETIN FOR DENT, ONE VOICE WAS RAISED IN PROTEST...

...THAT OF DR. BARTHOLOMEW WOLPER, DENT'S PSYCHIATRIST...





...FOURTEEN CASES OF HEAT PROSTRATION, AS THE TEMPERATURE SCORED A RECORD--BREAKING TWELVE DEGREES PAST THE ONE HUNDRED MARK.



BUT THERE IS HOPE, FOLKS-- IN THE FORM OF A COLD FRONT CHARGING FROM THE MIDWEST.

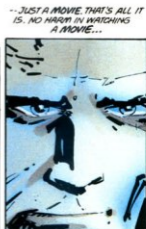
IT MAY REACH US AS EARLY AS TONIGHT...

THAT WILL BE ALL, MASTER BRUCE? I'M HOPING THAT THE NEXT GENERATION OF THE WAYNE FAMILY SHANT FACE AN EMPTY WINE CELLAR.

THOUGH GIVEN YOUR SOCIAL SCHEDULE OF LATE, THE PROSPECTS OF THERE BEING A NEXT GENERATION--

THAT WILL BE ALL, ALFRED. GOOD NIGHT





YOU LOVED IT SO MUCH... YOU JUMPED AND DANCED LIKE A FOOL... YOU REMEMBER...







...CHILDREN WERE LAST SEEN WITH TWO YOUNG MEN...



...WHO WERE DRESSED IN THE DISTINCTIVE COSTUME OF THE MUTANT GANG...



ANYONE WITH ANY INFORMATION REGARDING THE CHILDREN IS URGED TO CALL THE CRISIS HOTLINE...



--FOUR KILLED IN A SENSELESS ATTACK ON--



--SUBWAY DEATHS REACHED AN ALL-TIME HIGH THIS--



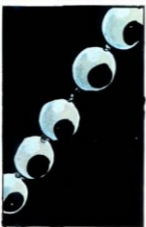
--RARE AND MUTILATION OF...



--HERE'S DAVE WITH SOME GOOD NEWS, DAVE?



RIGHT, LOLA. RIGHT AS RAIN THE HEAT'S FINALLY GOING TO BREAK--



--BUT WE'RE IN FOR A WHOPPER OF A

KLICK

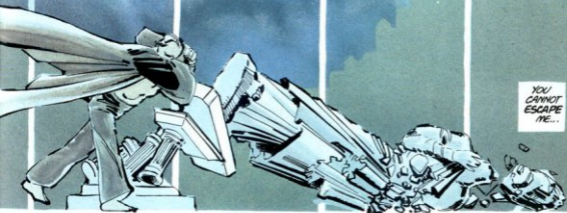


THE
TIME
HAS
COME.

YOU
KNOW
IT IN
YOUR
SOUL.

FOR I
AM YOUR
SOUL...

YOU
CANNOT
ESCAPE
ME...



YOU ARE PUNY,
YOU ARE SMALL--



YOU ARE NOTHING--A HOLLOW
SMELL, A RUSTY TRAP THAT
CANNOT HOLD ME--



SMOLDERING, I BURN YOU--
BURNING YOU, I FLARE, HOT
AND BRIGHT AND FIERCE
AND BEAUTIFUL--



YOU CANNOT STOP ME--NOT
WITH WINE OR VOWS OR
THE WEIGHT OF AGE--



YOU CANNOT STOP ME BUT
STILL YOU TRY-- STILL
YOU RUN--



YOU TRY TO DROWN ME OUT...



... BUT YOUR VOICE IS WEAK...



BEEP?

MR. WAYNE, THIS IS HARVEY DENT. I JUST WANT TO THANK YOU...



YOU'VE DONE SO MUCH. I FEEL SO WHOLE, SO FREE. I WANT YOU TO KNOW THAT, SOMEDAY--

--I'LL FIND A WAY TO REPAY YOU...

KLJK



BEEP

BRUCE? CLARK. JUST THOUGHT YOU SHOULD KNOW...



...I'LL BE OUT OF TOWN FOR THE NEXT FEW WEEKS. WAY OUT OF TOWN.

KLJK



BEEP

SELINA, BRUCE. I'M LONELY.

KLJK



RRRRMMMMBBBLLLLLL



... POWER LINES ARE DOWN ALL OVER THE SUBURBS, IT'S A MEAN ONE-- AND IT'S HEADED STRAIGHT FOR GOTHAM.

LIKE THE WRATH OF GOD IT'S HEADED FOR GOTHAM...



... STRAIGHT OUT OF NOWHERE THIS COMES, AND HAVE I MY UMBRELLA?

SURELY NOT, AND HAD I MY UMBRELLA WOULD IT NOW BE RAINING?



SURELY NOT--

HEY, MOMMIE...



... COME IN HERE WHERE IT'S WARM.

I NEED YOU, MOMMIE.



MAKE ME FEEL SAFE.



OH NO PLEASE...



PLEASE GOD NO--



TALK SOFT...

KRE
SS
SHH



KRE
SS
SHH



RRMBL
K K K R R A K K K





YOU LEF US ONE UN-
PLEASED CUSTOMER
BACK THERE,
JOANNIE...

USSEN,
SILK--

... DOG
EAT DOG
WORLD.



...THAT BASTARD
WANTED ME TO
AAAA...

YOU SMILE A LITTLE
WIDER NOW, JOANNIE.

?... JUST
HAD THIS
BABY TUNED...



WHUMP



WHAT
THE... EASE UP
BACK
THERE, MAN. I'M
STILL AROUND FOR
THESE WHEELS.



DON STICK US.
THAT WAS ON
TH ROOF.

THE
ROOF?



THAS RIGHT.
TH ROOF AN IF
IS SOMEONE
MESSIN WIF ME...



GNAA
GNAA



WHOKK

GNAA
GNAA
GNAA

OH MAN OH
MAN START
ALREADY...



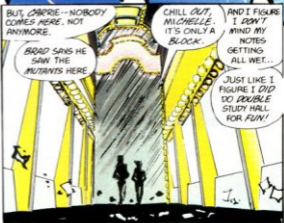
GNAA
GNAA
GNAA
KILUNK





COME ON, MICHELLE--

-- WE'LL CUT THROUGH THE ARCADE.



BUT, CARRE-- NOBODY COMES HERE. NOT ANYMORE.

BRAD SAYS HE SAW THE MUTANTS HERE

CHILL OUT, MICHELLE. IT'S ONLY A BLOCK.

AND I FIGURE I DON'T MIND MY NOTES GETTING ALL WET...

JUST LIKE I FIGURE I DID DO DOUBLE STUDY HALL FOR FUN!



SO YOU FLUNK THE CHEM TEST. SO WHAT? YOUR COMPUTER SCORES'LL BRING YOUR GRADE POINT AV. BACK UP.

AND BRAD SAID -- I KNOW, MICHELLE.



BUT-- BUT EVEN MUTANTS'D KNOW TO GO HOME IN THE RAIN, AND BESIDES--



--IT'S TOO BRIGHT HERE FOR TRAVEL.



DON'T GO ALL BILLY, MICHELLE. IT'S JUST THE STORM.

CARRE...

LIGHTS'LL COME BACK ON...



SEE? THEY--



NO. IT WAS JUST LIGHTNING.



CHICK CHICK CHICK



CHICK CHICK CHICK



CHICK CHICK CHICK

CHICK CHICK CHICK

COME HERE COME HERE COME HERE, CHICKEN LEGS--



THUNK
THUNK
THUNK
THUNKK





... BREAKTHROUGH IN HAIR REPLACEMENT TECHNIQUES, AND THAT'S THE-- EXCUSE ME...

I'VE JUST BEEN HANDED THIS BULLETIN-- A LARGE, BAT-LIKE CREATURE HAS BEEN SIGHTED ON GOTHAM'S SOUTH SIDE.

IT IS SAID TO HAVE ATTACKED AND SERIOUSLY INJURED THREE CAT-BURGLARS WHO HAVE PLAGUED THAT NEIGHBORHOOD

YOU DON'T SUPPOSE...



THIS JUST IN-- TWO YOUNG CHILDREN WHO DISAPPEARED THIS MORNING HAVE BEEN FOUND UNHARMED IN A RIVERSIDE WAREHOUSE.

AN ANONYMOUS TIP LED POLICE TO THE WAREHOUSE, WHERE THEY FOUND THE CHILDREN WITH SIX MEMBERS OF THE MUTANT GANGS.

ALL SIX ARE SUFFERING FROM MULTIPLE CUTS, CONTUSIONS, AND BROKEN BONES. THEY WERE RUSHED TO GOTHAM GENERAL HOSPITAL.

THE CHILDREN DESCRIBED AN ATTACK ON THE GANG MEMBERS BY A HUGE MAN DRESSED LIKE DRACULA...





POLICE PHONE LINES ARE JAMMED WITH CITIZENS DESCRIBING WHAT SEEMS TO BE A SIEGE ON GOTHAM'S UNDERWORLD...

...BY THE BATMAN.

ALTHOUGH SEVERAL RESCUED VICTIMS - TO BE HAVEN'T DESCRIBED THE VIGILANTE TO NEWS TWELVE REPORTERS...

... COMMISSIONER JAMES GORDON HAS DECLINED TO COMMENT ON WHETHER OR NOT THIS MIGHT MEAN THE RETURN OF THE BATMAN...



GORDON'LL HAVE OUR HEADS IF WE LOSE THEM...
DAMN-- THAT SUCKER CAN MOVE!



HEY, WHAT'S THAT?
WHAT'S WHAT? I CAN'T--



UP AHEAD-- IT'S-- SOMETHING WEIRD...
KID-- THIS AIN'T THE TIME--



BUT IT'S--
ALL RIGHT! ALL RIGHT! WHAT IS--



HOLY...

... BATTERED, WOUNDED CRIMINALS ARE BEING FOUND BY POLICE -- WHILE WITNESSES' DESCRIPTIONS ARE CONFUSED AND CONFLICTING...



YOU'RE SLOWING DOWN!
HEH. YEAH. WE'RE IN FOR A SHOW, KID.

... MOST DESCRIPTIONS SEEM TO MATCH THE METHOD AND APPEARANCE OF THE BATMAN -- OR AT LEAST THE IMPRESSION HE WAS KNOWN TO MAKE...





THIS SHOULD
BE AGONY.

I SHOULD BE A MASS OF
ACHING MUSCLE-- BAKEN,
SPENT, UNABLE TO MOVE.

AND, WERE I
AN OLDER
MAN, I SURELY
WOULD...

... WILD ANIMAL.
GROWLS. SNARLS.
WEREWOLF
SURELY.



... MONSTER! LIKE
WITH FANGS AND
WINGS AND IT
CAN FLY--



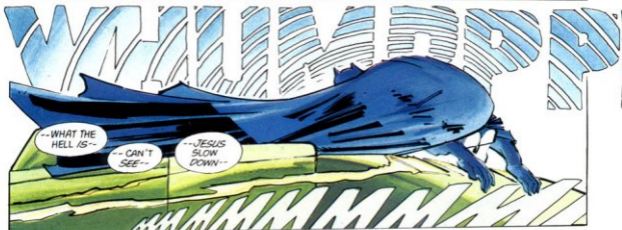
... BUT I'M A MAN
OF THIRTY-- OF
TWENTY AGAIN.

THE RAIN ON
MY CHEST IS A
BAPTISM--

REALITY CHECK,
MY CHELLE. TALK ABOUT
COMPOSURE. TOTAL LACK OF.
HE'S A MAN-- ABOUT--
TWELVE FEET TALL--

I'M
BORN
AGAIN...









...COULDN'T BE BATMAN. TURK SAID HE KILLED BATMAN.

TURK SAYS LOTS

FOUR OF THEM. ONE IN THE CAR, LEG BROKEN, IN SHOCK.



HARD TO SEE... QUIET!

OTHER THREE ARE ARMED-- AND SMART ENOUGH TO HANG CLOSE TOGETHER.



BUT THEY'RE SCARED.

FLOOR'S WEAK. DOESN'T FEEL SAFE--

SO LIVE DANGEROUSLY AND SHUT UP.



IF IT'S HIM...

... HE'S GOT TO BE PRETTY OLD...

SHHH!

OLD ENOUGH TO NEED MY LEGS TO CLIMB A ROPE...



OVER THERE--

FIRE LOW--



THEY'RE FAST.



SHOULDN'T HAVE GONE SO EASY ON THEM IN THE CAR.



WE GET HIM?

HARD TO TELL. HAVE TO ASSUME WE DIDN'T.

WAIT. WHAT'S THAT SOUND...

GGRRRR





...KILL HIM
I'LL KILL
HIM...

THE LAST
ONES USUALLY
THE ONE TO
LOSE IT. SO
I LET HIM.

AND I LET HIM
COME TO ME.

THEN I HEAR THE
ROOKIE'S FOOT-
STEPS, COMING UP
FAST BEHIND ME.

I'LL HAVE TO KEEP
HIM FROM GETTING
KILLED.



EVERYBODY
FREEZ!
OWW!



THE ROOKIE'S
SAFE FOR THE
FIVE SECONDS
IT WILL TAKE
HIM TO FIND
HIS PISTOL.

I PLAY THE
SHADOWS, FORCING
THE HOOD TO
COME CLOSE.
HE MAKES LESS
NOISE THAN A
TRUCK.



THERE ARE
SEVEN WORKING
DEFENSES FROM
THIS POSITION.

THREE OF THEM
DISARM WITH
MINIMAL CONTACT.

THREE OF
THEM KILL.

THE OTHER--



-- HURTS.

**K
R
A**



YOU'RE UNDER
ARREST, MISTER.

YOU'VE
CRIPPLED
THAT MAN!



HE'S YOUNG. HE'LL
PROBABLY WALK
AGAIN.

BUT HE'LL
STAY SCARED--
WON'T YOU,
PUNK?

JESUS
SWEET
JESUS...

LET'S SEE WHAT YOU'VE GOT.

CIGARETTES, NO WONDER YOU'RE SO SLOW...

OH CHRIST I CAN'T STAND IT...

I MEAN IT, MAN--GET AWAY FROM HIM--

I'LL SHOOT--

DON'T TRY IT, KID. HE'S BEING PATIENT WITH YOU AS IT IS.

NICE TO HAVE YOU BACK, BATS.

GO TO THEIR CAR, KID. FETCH THE PRYROLL.

I DON'T BELIEVE THIS...

IT ISN'T IN THE CAR. IT'S NOWHERE AROUND HERE.

PILLS. NO END TO YOUR BAD HABITS...

PPPLEASE...

Y'KNOW, BATS-- I SAW YOU ONCE-- BACK WHEN I WAS WORKING THE EAST END.

I WAS A ROOKIE-- LIKE SHAMUK FACE HERE.

IT WAS A LOVE TIME AGO.

AT THE BANK-- WAS THERE A SECOND CAR?

CAR? YEAH. AN OLD JALOPY. DIDN'T THINK--

YOU WEREN'T SUPPOSED TO.

ANYWAY, IT WAS A RAINY NIGHT, JUST LIKE THIS. I WAS WALKIN' MY BEAT--

-- I MEAN I WAS JUST A ADD BACK THEN...

... AND I SAW THIS GUY DRAW A GUY ON--

TELL GORDON WE HAVE TO TALK.

SURE THING, BATS. BUT HOW'S HE SPOSED TO GET IN TOUCH WITH--

OH, YEAH! NOW I REMEMBER...



...ONE ALMOST EXPECTS TO SEE THE BAT-SIGNAL STRIKING THE SIDE OF ONE OF GOTHAM'S TWIN TOWERS. YES, HE GAVE US QUITE A NIGHT...



SURE KEPT THE HOSPITALS BUSY.

YES, MORRIE, BUT I THINK IT'S A MISTAKE...



...TO THINK OF THIS IN PURELY POLITICAL TERMS...



BB...

RATHER I REGARD IT AS A SYMBOLIC RESURGENCE OF THE COMMON MAN'S WILL TO RESIST...



BBBAT...

A REBIRTH OF THE AMERICAN FIGHTING SPIRIT.



BATMAN! EASE UP, LANA. THE ONLY THING HE SIGNIFIES...



...IS AN ABERRANT PSYCHOTIC FORCE--

DARLINGS.



--MORALLY BANKRUPT, POLITICALLY HAZARDOUS, REACTIONARY PARANOID--



--A DANGER TO EVERY CITIZEN OF GOTHAM!

PERHAPS, MORRIE. PERHAPS THE BATMAN IS DANGEROUS...



... BUT HE'S HARDLY AS DANGEROUS AS HIS ENEMIES, IS HE? TAKE HARVEY DENT, JUST TO PICK A NAME...

THAT'S CLUE, LANA, BUT HARDLY APROPOS. AND HARDLY FAIR TO AS TROUBLED A SOUL AS HARVEY DENT'S.

HE CERTAINLY IS TROUBLE FOR HIS VICTIMS.

WAS LANA WAS, IF HARVEY DENT IS RETURNING TO CRIME -- AND PLEASE NOTE THAT I SAID IF -- IT GOES WITHOUT SAYING THAT HE'S NOT IN CONTROL OF HIMSELF.



AND BATMAN IS?

CERTAINLY HE KNOWS EXACTLY WHAT HE'S DOING. HIS KIND OF SOCIAL FASCIST ALWAYS DOES.

THEN WHY DO YOU CALL HIM PSYCHOTIC? BECAUSE YOU LIKE TO USE THAT WORD FOR ANY MOTIVE THAT'S TOO BIG FOR YOUR LITTLE MIND? BECAUSE HE FIGHTS CRIME INSTEAD OF PERPETRATING IT?

YOU DON'T CALL EXCESSIVE FORCE A CRIME? HOW ABOUT ASSAULT, FAT LADY? OR BREAKING AND ENTERING? HUM? TRY RECKLESS EN

DING



SORRY, MORRIE, BUT WE'RE OUT OF TIME -- THOUGH I'M SURE THIS DEBATE IS FAR FROM OVER FOR THOSE OF YOU WHO CAME IN LATE, TODAY'S POINT VERSUS POINT...

... WAS CONCERNED WITH LAST NIGHT'S ATTACK ON DOZENS OF INDIVIDUALS WHO MAY HAVE BEEN CRIMINALS BY A PARTY OR PARTIES WHO MAY HAVE BEEN THE BATMAN.

ALSO OF CONCERN IS THIS MORNING'S ANNOUNCEMENT BY POLICE MEDIA RELATIONS DIRECTOR LOUIS GALLAGHER THAT A DEFACTO DOLLAR COIN, WAS FOUND ON ONE OF THE SUSPECTS...

... IN LAST NIGHT'S PAYROLL ROBBERY, THOSE WHO REMEMBER THE CRIMES OF HARVEY DENT WILL RECOGNIZE THIS AS HIS TRADEMARK.



POLICE COMMISSIONER GORDON HAS REFUSED TO CONFIRM THAT HE HAS ISSUED AN ARREST ORDER...

SCREW THE PRESS!

STILL HOT ON THE HEELS OF BATMAN'S APPARENT RETURN.

NO MORE LEAKS, GALLAGHER--OR I'LL HAVE YOUR HEAD ON A STICK!

SON OF A...

... THIS DOES GIVE ONE A SENSE OF DEJA VU...

TURN THAT GOD DAMNED THING OFF, MERKEL.

A SAD, STRANGE CRIMINAL WAS HARVEY?

COMMISSIONER, IF YOU PLEASE...





WE WILL KILL THE OLD MAN GORDON. HIS WOMEN WILL WEEP FOR HIM. WE WILL CHOP HIM. WE WILL GRIND HIM. WE WILL BATHE IN HIS BLOOD.

I MYSELF WILL KILL THE FOOL BATMAN, I WILL RIP THE MEAT FROM HIS BONES AND SUCK THEM DRY. I WILL EAT HIS HEART AND DRAG HIS BODY THROUGH THE STREET.

DON'T CALL US A GANG. DON'T CALL US CRIMINALS. WE ARE THE LAW. WE ARE THE FUTURE. GOTHAM CITY BELONGS TO THE MUTANTS. SOON THE WORLD WILL BE OURS.

WITH THAT VIDEOTAPE MESSAGE, THE MUTANT LEADER-- WHOSE NAME AND FACE REMAIN A SECRET-- HAS DECLARED WAR ON THE CITY OF GOTHAM... AND ON ITS MOST FAMOUS CHAMPION...



THE ROOM IS SPLIT BETWEEN LIGHT AND DARK, CLEAN AND DIRTY, BUT THE SPLIT ISN'T EVEN-IT FAVORS THE DIRTY.

IT'S AS IF THE DARK SIDE IS CLAIMING THE ROOM...AS IT CLAIMED THE COIN...



FACE--IT WAS BATMAN. HE--

WH...



YOUR BOSS LEFT. HE KNEW I'D TRACK HIM.



SLAM



IF HE IS HARVEY DENT, HE'S A MENACE TO EVERY LIFE IN GOTHAM.

I KNOW YOU'RE VERY CONCERNED ABOUT THAT.

GET AWAY FROM ME...



YOU'RE GOING TO TELL ME EVERYTHING YOU KNOW, SOONER OR LATER. IF IT'S LATER--



--I WON'T MIND.



NO!-- STAY BACK--



--I GOT RIGHTS--





BATMAN? YEAH, I THINK HE'S A-CORR! HE'S KICKING JUST THE RIGHT BUTTS-- BUTTS THE COPS AIN'T KICKING, THAT'S FOR SURE. HOPE HE GOES AFTER THE HONORS NEXT.

MAKES ME SICK. WE MUST TREAT THE SOCIALLY MIS-ORIENTED WITH RENABILITATIVE METHODS. WE MUST ATTENTIVELY REALIGN THEIR-- EXCUSE ME--? NO, I'D NEVER LIVE IN THE CITY...





...SO IT'S JUST A MATTER OF FIGURING OUT WHAT HE'S AFTER.

THE PRYROLL ROBBERY WAS COMMITTED TO SPONSOR IT.

SPONSOR IT? THAT DOESN'T MAKE SENSE.

TWO HELICOPTERS WERE STOLEN TODAY. ONE, A STATE-OF-THE-ART MILITARY FIGHTER-- THE OTHER, AN OLD ARMY SURPLUS JOB. THAT'S GOT TO BE DENT'S WORK.

WITH THAT PRYROLL HE COULD HAVE BOUGHT THEM.

THEN IT'S GOING TO BE A CRIME BY AIR-- USING SOMETHING ELSE MORE COSTLY.

HE'S NOT CAREFUL, WHOEVER HE IS.

YOU STILL DON'T THINK IT'S DENT?

I HOPE NOT. HARVEY WRESTLED LONG AND HARD WITH HIS OTHER SIDE. TO HAVE IT DEVOUR HIM NOW...

BUT IF IT IS...

"TWICE AS BIG AS YOU CAN IMAGINE"-- THAT'S ALL HE HAD TO SAY?

THAT'S ALL HE KNEW, JIM.

BUT TOMORROW IS THE SECOND-- AND A TUESDAY--

IF IT'S HARVEY, WE'LL CATCH HIM... THE TRICK WILL BE TO KEEP HIM ALIVE. HE'S POSSESSED, JIM. OUT OF CONTROL.

I THINK HE WANTS TO DIE.

WE ARE TALKING ABOUT HARVEY DENT...

IT SHOULDN'T BE DIFFICULT TO FIND HIS TARGET. ACCESSIBLE BY HELICOPTER AND TWICE AS BIG AS...

...TWICE AS BIG...


YES, MERV. I AM CONVINCED OF HARVEY'S INNOCENCE. ABSOLUTELY. HOWEVER, I WON'T GO SO FAR AS TO SAY I'M SURE HE HASN'T RETURNED TO CRIME.

I KNOW THAT SOUNDS CONFUSING. THESE THINGS OFTEN DO TO THE LAYMAN. BUT I'LL TRY TO EXPLAIN WITHOUT GETTING OVERLY TECHNICAL. YOU SEE, IT ALL GETS DOWN TO THIS BATMAN FELLOW.

BATMAN'S PSYCHOTIC SUBLIMATIVE / PSYCHO-EGOTIC BEHAVIOR PATTERN IS LIKE A NET. WEAK-EGOED NEUROTIKS, LIKE HARVEY, ARE DRAWN INTO CORRESPONDING INTERESTING PATTERNS.

YOU MIGHT SAY BATMAN COMMITS THE CRIMES... USING HIS SO-CALLED VILLAINS AS NARCISSISTIC PROXIES...





ONE MORE TIME I CHECK MY UTILITY BELT.

NERVE GAS AMPULES. FREEZING COMPOUND. CABLE GRAPPLES. HOOKS. STETHOSCOPE. PAIN KILLERS.

NONE OF IT'S GONE ANYWHERE IN THE LAST TEN MINUTES.

I SHIFT MY LEGS TO KEEP THEM FROM GRUMPING AND WATCH NIGHT SETTLE LIKE A CEASE FIRE ON THE CITY OF GOTHAM.

THEN I HEAR IT.

DENT--OR WHOEVER -- IS SURE TO BE IN THE HELICOPTER. I'M HOPEING HE'LL LAND ON THE TOWER I PICKED...

BUT I'M NOT COUNTING ON IT.

WHUP WHUP WHUP WHUP WHUP WHUP WHUP WHUP WHUP WHUP WHUP

POKITAPOKITAP POKITAPOKITAP POKITAPOKITAP

THEY SPILT THE ARMY SURPLUS JOB SETTLES DOWN, SPUTTERING LIKE A CRANKY OLD MAN BEHIND ME.

I PICKED THE WRONG ROOF.

GOOD THING I BROUGHT THE GUN.

THE NEW ONE COMES IN LOW, A GLEAMING METAL DRAGONFLY.

I'LL HAVE TO BUY ONE OF THOSE...

WHUP WHUP WHUP

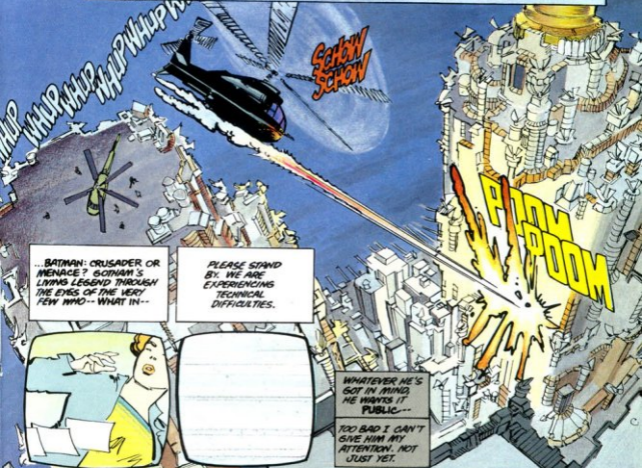
... BROADCAST LIVE FROM GOTHAM'S TWIN TOWERS, IT'S NEWS TWO...



GOOD EVENING. I'M LOLA CHONG. TONIGHT WE'RE PLEASSED TO BRING YOU A SPECIAL REPORT...



AIN'T THAT'S
THREE DAYS
OLD GRANKS
ACROSS MY
BACK. I
KICK THE
DUST FROM
MY JOINTS
AND CLIMB
IT USED TO
BE EASIER.



...BATMAN: CRUSADER OR
MENACE? BOTHAM'S
LIVING LEGEND THROUGH
THE EYES OF THE VERY
FEW WHO-- WHAT IN--

PLEASE STAND
BY. WE ARE
EXPERIENCING
TECHNICAL
DIFFICULTIES.



WHATEVER HE'S
GOT IN MIND,
HE WANTS IT
PUBLIC--

YOU BAD I CAN'T
GIVE HIM MY
ATTENTION. NOT
JUST YET.



THIS STUFF
HAS A NAME
THAT'S AS
LONG AS
YOUR ARM.



IT WAS
DEVELOPED
BY THE
MILITARY
DURING ONE
OF OUR MORE
CONTEMPTIBLE
WARS.

HEY--

IT CONCENTRATES A POWERFUL
STIMULANT TO A SECTION OF
THE RIGHT HEMISPHERE OF
YOUR BRAIN.



A STRONG
DOSE AND
YOU DIE OF
FRIGHT IN
FIFTEEN
SECONDS.



A LIGHT
DOSE, LIKE
THIS--

--AND YOU SPEND
TWENTY OR THIRTY MINUTES
RELIVING YOUR LEAST
FAVORITE NIGHTMARE.

THE ONLY AFTER EFFECT I'VE NOTICED IS A MARKED AVERSION TO GUNS, KNIVES AND CRIME-FIGHTERS...



AS I SUSPECTED -- A BOMB.

WITH ENOUGH CHARGE TO DEMOLISH THE BUILDING.

APPARENTLY A DETONATOR JOB THAT WOULD MAKE SENSE.

AM I OVP

THE IGNITION PROCESS HAS ALREADY STARTED. IT COULD BLOW ANY SECOND.

PEOPLE OF GOTHAM-- LET ME ADVISE YOU RIGHT OFF THE BAT FOR THE INTERRUPTION OF YOUR VIEWING PLEASURE. THIS IS HARVEY DENT SPEAKING.

WAIT-- IF THOSE READINGS MEAN WHAT I THINK THEY DO...



BRILLIANT DESIGN-- WORTHY OF THE JOKER.

I'M NOT UP ON THESE DIGITAL JOBS...



TEN SECONDS LATER BOTH THE BUILDINGS AND I ARE STANDING AND EXACTLY THAT MUCH IS RIGHT IN THE WORLD. I TAKE IN THE ACTION ON THE OTHER SIDE.

PLEASE STAND BY



I STAND HERE ATOP GOTHAM'S BEAUTIFUL TWIN TOWERS, WITH TWO BOMBS CAPABLE OF MAKING THEM RUBBLE. YOU HAVE TWENTY MINUTES TO SAVE THEM.



SOMEBODY WENT TO THE TROUBLE OF DISGUIISING IT, BUT WHY? AND WHO?

SO I FREEZE IT. AND IF I HAD THE TIME OR THE RIGHT--



-- I'D SAY A PRAYER.



THE PRICE IS FIVE MILLION DOLLARS. I WOULD HAVE MADE IT TWO-- BUT I'VE GOT BILLS TO PAY...



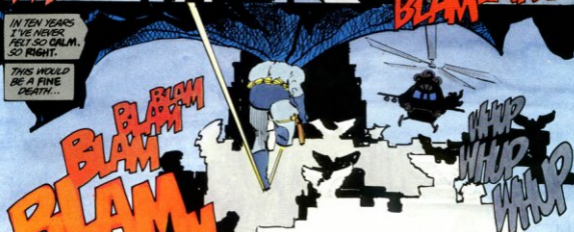
HE'S TAPPED INTO THE TV ANTENNA-- NO DOUBT RANSOMING THE LIVES OF THOUSANDS-- WHILE THE TIMER HE DOESN'T KNOW ABOUT IS MOMENTS AWAY FROM TAKING IT ALL OUT OF HIS HANDS. HARVEY, IF IT IS YOU-- YOU'VE HAD EVERY CHANCE THERE IS.





IN TEN YEARS
I'VE NEVER
FELT SO CALM,
SO RIGHT.

THIS WOULD
BE A FINE
DEATH...



--MAGNUM LOAD HAS TO BE--
HITS ME LIKE A FREIGHT
TRAIN--THE PLATE HOLDS--

-- WHY DO YOU THINK I WEAR
A TARGET ON MY CHEST --
CAN'T ARMOR MY HEAD --
LEFT ARM NUMB --

-- IF IT'S A HEART ATTACK
I'M FINISHED --



... A FINE DEATH,
BUT THERE ARE
THE THOUSANDS
TO THINK OF...



... AND
HARVEY...



THANK

... I HAVE
TO KNOW.



HE'S GOT YOUR STYLE,
HARVEY, AND YOUR GUTS.



UNFORTUNATELY FOR HIM,
HE'S GOT NO MORE SENSE
OF SELF-PRESERVATION
THAN YOU DID...



... AND INSPIRES THE
SAME LEVEL OF LOYALTY
FROM HIS MEN.



IT TAKES NEARLY A MINUTE TO FALL FROM THIS HEIGHT. AND DESPITE
WHAT YOU MAY HAVE HEARD, YOU'RE LIKELY TO STAY CONSCIOUS
ALL THE WAY DOWN.

THOUGHTS LIKE
THAT KEEP ME
WARM AT NIGHT.



THE
IMPACT IS
TREMENDOUS.
EVEN BONE
IS TURNED TO
POWDER.



NOT MUCH
OF A CORPSE
LEFT.

MOSTLY
LIQUID.

PROBLEM
IS...



... THERE
MIGHT NOT
BE ANY
FINGER-
PRINTS.

EVEN DENTAL
RECORDS
WOULD PROBABLY
BE USELESS.



AND
LIKE I
SAID,
HARVEY...

... I HAVE
TO KNOW.



WE TUMBLE
LIKE LOVERS.



THE AIR
IS COLD.



THE NIGHT
IS SILENT.



LEAVING THE
WORLD NO
POORER--

-- FOUR MEN
DIE.



... HARVEY...

... WHAT ARE YOU SO MAD ABOUT, BATS? I'VE... BEEN A SAPIRTE...

YOU HAVE TO ADMIT THAT-- I PLAYED ALWAYS.

AND YOU... YOU TOOK YOUR JOKE ABOUT AS FAR AS IT COULD GO...



... GOT THE WHOLE WORLD TO SMILE AT ME... GOT THEM ALL TO KEEP THEIR LUNCHES DOWN WHEN THEY SAW MY... MY FACE... SAYING I WAS CURED... SAYING I WAS FIXED...

THE SCARS GO DEEP... TOO DEEP...



TAKE A LOOK... HAVE YOUR LAUGH. I'M FIXED ALL RIGHT.

AT LEAST... BOTH SIDES MATCH...

I CLOSE MY EYES AND LISTEN. NOT FOOLED BY SIGHT, I SEE HIM...



HAVE YOUR LAUGH, BATMAN-- TAKE A LOOK!

... AS HE IS.



... TAKE A LOOK...



I SEE HIM. I SEE...



... I SEE... A REFLECTION, HARVEY.



A REFLECTION.



