

B O O K T H R E E



HUNT THE DARK KNIGHT



BRUCE,  
YOU  
IDIOT.



YOU'LL RUIN  
EVERYTHING.



FOR ALL  
OF US.



I ALWAYS  
KNOW YOU  
WOULD...



I'VE WAITED  
LONG ENOUGH,  
YOU SOFT GLOB  
OF SHIT.

EMPTY THE  
CASH REGISTER--  
OR MY BULLETS WILL TEAR  
THROUGH YOUR SPRAIN,  
BREAKING IT INTO MOIST,  
GOCEY LUMPS...

THAT'S IF I  
DON'T GIVE WITH  
A SURPRISE FROM  
UP THE SLEEVE.  
HUH, BRUNO?

BRUNO GET  
ASTAY, DON.  
YOU SEE.

BRUNO DON'T  
SHIV.

YOUR BOYS--USED TO BE  
MAYNARDS, HUH? GUESS SINCE  
THEIR BROS GOT HIS ASS  
FLATTENED THEY'LL WORK  
FOR ANYBODY.



GUESS WITH YOUR  
BODYMIND IN THE LOONY  
BIN YOU GOT TO PAY FOR  
YOUR OWN  
BODYMIND.

NICE WORK,  
TOO. CAN BARELY  
SEE THE  
STRETCH  
MARKS.



I'LL  
STRIP  
YOUR FLESH  
WITH MY  
TEETH...



THIEF!  
YOU'RE A  
THIEF!

SEBBIN  
LEBBIN  
SELLS THIS  
FOR  
TWO-FIFTY!



HE'S YOUNG--  
HE'S QUICK--



HE ALMOST  
PULLS THE  
TRIGGER--

SKR  
EK



--THEY ALMOST  
GET THE DROP  
ON ME--

I WISH I COULD  
SAY IT'S THE SUIT--



--THAT SLOWS  
ME DOWN--

--THAT MAKES  
ME SWEAT...



WHIFF



HEY,  
BABS--

--BRAND--  
SHE'S GETTIN'  
AWAY!



K  
R  
S  
H  
H  
H



NOW WE  
SETTLE  
UP.  
PULL THAT  
TRIGGER--



--AND I'LL  
BE BACK. FOR  
YOU!

DISCOUNT  
LIQUOR



BRUNO IS COMING YOUR WAY, ROBIN.

GET HER INTO THE ALLEY. DO NOT LET HER SEE YOU.

BOYS, BOYS, BOYS... ONE AT A TIME NOW... NOW HOW ABOUT THAT SMARTLY DRESSED YOUNGSTER IN THE FRONT ROW THERE...



MR. PRESIDENT-- WE'RE ALL ANXIOUS TO HEAR YOUR PLANS FOR THE GORDO MATRESE CRISIS. BUT FIRST, ANOTHER QUESTION MUCH ON THE MINDS OF AMERICA. WHAT IS YOUR POSITION ON THE BATMAN CONTROVERSY?



WELL, I DON'T THINK THAT'S MY BULL TO -- MY ROW TO HOE, BOYS... HEH... YOU SEE, THAT'S A RIGHT BIG STATE, ALL ITS OWN... AND IT'S GOT ITS OWN SOLID, CLEAR-HEADED GOVERNOR, YES, IT DOES...

SORRY, GUYS, I'M THE GOVERNOR. GOT A WHOLE STATE TO LOOK AFTER. I TRUST THE JUDGMENT OF THE MAYOR OF GOTHAM CITY IMPLICITLY.

AS MAYOR, IT IS MY DUTY TO ADMINISTER-- NOT TO RENDER MORAL JUDGMENTS. DON'T ASK ME TO INTERFERE WITH THE DECISION-MAKING POWER OF OUR NEW POLICE COMMISSIONER.

AND SO THE BATMAN BUCK IS PRESSED-- TO ELLEY YINDEL, WHO REPLACES JAMES GORDON AS POLICE COMMISSIONER TONIGHT. WILL SHE FULFILL HER PROMISE TO ISSUE AN ARREST WARRANT FOR THE BATMAN?



CHANNEL TWO WILL BROADCAST THE BANQUET LIVE, GORDON IS SCHEDULED TO INTRODUCE YINDEL-- A GRACEFUL GESTURE, CONSIDERING THEIR DIFFERENCES. WE MAY SEE SOME SPARKS FLX TOM?

THAT WE MAY, LOLA. WE'LL BE RIGHT BACK, AS JULIE PARKS BRINGS US A STORY WE DON'T KNOW WHETHER TO CLASSIFY AS AN ATMOSPHERE ANOMALY--OR A UFO SIGHTING.





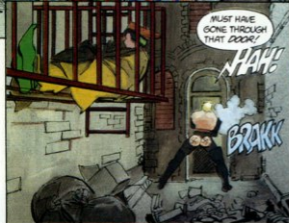
TOM, SUNFLOWER STANDISH HAS OPERATED HIS CORNER NEWSSTAND FOR FIFTEEN YEARS. HE'S NEVER SEEN THE LIKE OF WHAT STRUCK SEVENTH AVENUE THIS EVENING. HAVE YOU, MR. STANDISH?

NOT WITHOUT ACID, I MEAN, NO-- I DIDN'T SEE IT, MY MAGAZINES AND NEWSPAPERS -- THEN I SAW, BLOWING LIKE LEAVES. BUT I DIDN'T SEE IT. IT WAS TOO FAST-- IT WAS FASTER THAN ANYTHINGS.



FASTER THAN A SPEEDING--

CAREFUL NOW, LOLA.



MUST HAVE GONE THROUGH THAT DOOR!

**WAAH!**

**BRAK!**



IF YOU'RE LUCKY, BRUNO--

--YOU'LL GO TO JAIL TONIGHT.



BUT FIRST YOU'LL TELL ME WHAT YOUR BOSS HAS PLANNED.

ON HIS TV APPEARANCE.

**KRACK KREELAK KKK**



DON'T TAKE THE STAIRS.

THEY AREN'T SAFE.



ANOTHER BIZARRE  
INCIDENT-- THIS ONE IN THE  
SOUTH STREET SUBWAY  
STATION. ADVERTISING AGENT  
BYRON BRASSBALLS TOLD  
REPORTERS...

I DIDN'T DO ANYTHING  
WRONG. I WAS JUST TRYING  
TO PROTECT MYSELF. THE  
SUBWAYS ARE DANGEROUS.  
YOU DON'T NEED ME TO TELL  
YOU THAT. SO THERE I WAS,  
ALONE IN THE STATION EXCEPT  
FOR THIS 'BEGGAR'-- I WANT  
THAT IN QUOTES--



--WHAT?... HOW WAS I TO KNOW  
HE DIDN'T HAVE A GUN? THEY  
NEVER SHOW YOU THAT UNTIL  
THEY'RE READY TO KILL YOU--  
WHAT?... OH, SURE, THE  
CRUTCHES. A LOT OF THEM  
USE CRUTCHES. YOU KNOW  
WHAT I MEAN.





...HAVEN'T SEEN A DOCTOR YET, BUT I'M SURE I SLIPPED A DISC LANDING ON THE TRACKS... NO, I COULDN'T SEE. NOT A FRIGGING THING. THAT WIND KICKED UP TOO MUCH SCOT. SPENT A SECOND LISTENING TO THAT BEGGAR PRAY LIKE AN IDIOT...

...YES, I AM RELIGIOUS, BUT I'VE GOT THE DEGENCY TO KEEP IT IN CHURCH. THEN I HEARD THE SCREAM OF TWISTING METAL-- SHOUTS FROM INSIDE THE TRAIN. PEOPLE BITCHING. FINALLY THE SCOT SETTLED...



... AND THERE IT WAS-- THE TRAIN, I MEAN-- ITS FRONT END CRASHED INWARD, LIKE IT RAN INTO SOMETHING... WELL, SOMETHING...



SOMETHING MORE POWERFUL THAN A LOCOMOTIVE, RIGHT, TOM?

LOLA-- THE LAST THING WE NEED IS TROUBLE WITH THE F.C.C. ...

SOFTENING UP -- SHE'LL START TALKING SOON--



--WHAT'S THAT SOUND--

--THE FLOOR--

--IT'S SHAKING--

--NOT AN EARTHQUAKE. DO NOT PANIC. WHATEVER IT IS, IT'S LOCALIZED-- AND MOVING ACROSS GOTHAM'S SOUTH SIDE...



RRRRRRRRMMMMBBBB







SOMETHING  
HURLES ITSELF  
INTO THE SKY.



SOMETHING  
LEAPS A TALL  
BUILDING WITH  
A SINGLE  
BOUND.

...SOVIET REPRESENTATIVES  
STORMED OUT OF THE HALL,  
REPEATING THIS LATE-  
BREAKING STORY—U.S./SOVIET  
TALKS ON THE CORFIO  
MALTESE CRISIS HAVE  
BROKEN DOWN.

TERMINING U.S. MILITARY  
SUPPORT OF THE RESERVE OF  
GENERAL MONTALBAN AS  
"FASCIST AGGRESSION." THE  
SOVIETS PLEDGED A "TOTAL  
MILITARY COMMITMENT." THIS  
HAS BEEN A NEWS SIX SPECIAL  
REPORT.

...BODIES OF A PUSHER AND  
JUNKIE FOUND HACKED TO  
PIECES IN A WEST END  
TENEMENT. MEMBERS OF THE  
DISBANDED MUTANT GANG ARE  
CARRYING OUT THEIR THREAT TO  
GOTHAM'S UNDERWORLD.

THE MUTANTS ARE DEAD. THE  
MUTANTS ARE HISTORY. THIS  
IS THE MARK OF THE FUTURE.  
GOTHAM CITY BELONGS TO  
THE BATMAN.



DO NOT EXPECT ANY  
FURTHER STATEMENTS. THE  
SONS OF THE BATMAN DO  
NOT TALK. WE ACT. LET  
GOTHAM'S ORIGINALS  
BEWARE. THEY ARE ABOUT  
TO ENTER HELL.

BATMAN'S CULPABILITY  
FOR THIS ATROCITY IS OUR  
SUBJECT TONIGHT. WITH  
US IS THE WORLD'S LEADING  
EXPERT ON THE SOCIOLOGICAL  
IMPACT OF THE BATMAN—  
DR. BARTHOLOMEW WOLPER.

BATMAN  
IS A  
MENACE  
TO  
SOCIETY.

NOW, I KNOW THAT'S SOMETHING  
OF AN OUTDATED TERM. SURE  
SOUNDS STRANGE, COMING  
OUT OF MY MOUTH. NONETHELESS,  
IT APPLIES. DESPITE MY ALERTING  
THE CITY TO THE INEVITABLE  
CONSEQUENCES--




--NOTHING HAS BEEN DONE  
TO STOP THIS PSYCHOSOCIAL  
INFECTION. BATMAN SHOULD  
BE CONSIDERED PERSONALLY  
RESPONSIBLE FOR EVERY  
HUMAN BEING MURDERED  
BY THIS GANG.

MY ORDERS  
WERE SPECIFIC--  
WATCH  
IT--  
YEAH,  
BUT...







--STILL, YOU MADE YOURSELF *VISIBLE* TO BRUNO. I WILL NOT TOLERATE *INSUBORDINATION*--

-- CAREFUL--

... BUT BACK THERE-- WAS THAT HIM?

...THE HALL IS SILENT, AS THE MAN WHO HAS BEEN POLICE COMMISSIONER OF GOTHAM CITY FOR TWENTY-SIX YEARS STEPS TO THE PODIUM...



NICE WATCH.

... JAMES GORDON DRAWS A FOND CHUCKLE FROM THE AUDIENCE...

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN... IT IS MY PLEASURE TO INTRODUCE YOU TO YOUR NEW POLICE COMMISSIONER. I DO NOT ENVY HER THE NEXT FEW YEARS. THE JOB HAS FEW REWARDS.

THE BEST YOU CAN HOPE FOR IS THAT WHEN YOU'RE FINISHED WITH IT, THINGS AREN'T AS LOUSY AS THEY WOULD'VE BEEN WITHOUT YOU. ELLEN YINDEL IS EMINENTLY QUALIFIED FOR THIS JOB...



TO ATTEMPT TO QUOTE HER OUTSTANDING RECORD IN THE MINUTES I'M ALLOWED WOULD BE A DISSERVICE TO HER. RATHER, I OFFER MY SYMPATHY, IN THE KNOWLEDGE OF WHAT SHE FACES.



IF YOU DISOBEY, EVER AGAIN--

--YOU'RE FIRED.

SHE FACES A CITY OF THIEVES AND MURDERERS AND HONEST PEOPLE TOO FRIGHTENED TO HOPE. SHE FACES LIFE-AND-DEATH DECISIONS, EVERY HOUR TO COME. SOME WILL TORTURE HER.

WE GOING SOMEWHERE OR WHAT?

TO THE ONLY SOLID LEAD I'VE GOT LEFT, ROBIN.

A MAN NAMED ABNER.



SHE WILL FACE A MAN WHO IS THE LIVING SPIRIT OF... SOMETHING WE NEED. SHE MAY BE HIS ENEMY. SHE MAY LEARN FROM HIM. I WISH HER WELL. THANK YOU-- AND GOOD-BYE.

... THERE IS STRAINED APPRAUSE FOR JAMES GORDON...

FIGURE WE'VE BEEN DOING THE SPIDER HERE FOR LESS THAN THREE YEARS.

PATIENCE, ROBIN. IT'LL KEEP YOU ALIVE. ABNER ISN'T HOME.



ACES I GET SOME CLUES.

ROBIN!

NO!

... AND YES-- A STANDING OVATION FOR POLICE COMMISSIONER YINDEL!

THANK YOU... I AM HONORED TO SHARE THE STAGE WITH JAMES GORDON. HE SPOKE OF DECISIONS. NOW I MUST MAKE MY OWN.



EYUUGH.



EYUUGH YOURSELF, BITCH.



I SAID NO!

IT TALKS--

DESPITE GOTHAM'S PLAGUE OF CRIME, I BELIEVE OUR ONLY RECOURSE IS LAW ENFORCEMENT. I WILL NOT PARTICIPATE IN THE ACTIVITIES OF A VIGILANTE. THEREFORE, AS YOUR POLICE COMMISSIONER--

--I ISSUE THIS ARREST ORDER FOR THE BATMAN ON CHARGES OF BREAKING AND ENTERING, ASSAULT AND BATTERY, CREATING A PUBLIC MENACE--





I'LL SEND ROBIN HOME.

I'LL HELP THE EMERGENCY TEAMS AS BEST I CAN.



I'LL COUNT THE DEAD, ONE BY ONE.

I'LL ADD THEM TO THE LIST, JOKER.

THE LIST OF ALL THE PEOPLE I'VE MURDERED--



-- BY LETTING YOU LIVE.



JUST CAN'T SLEEP.



SHOULD SLEEP

SHOULD BE FRESH TOMORROW.



TOMORROW I GO FREE.



FISTFUL OF ENTERTAINMENT TOMORROW NIGHT, WITH DR. RUTH WEISENHEIMER, THE WET HAMBURGER BUN CONTEST, AND A MAN WHO'S BROUGHT A LOT OF SMILES TO THE WORLD, GO TO BED.



-- BUT I JUST CAN'T SLEEP.

...TWELVE KILLED IN A MYSTERIOUS EXPLOSION THAT LEVELLED A BAY RIDGE APARTMENT BUILDING ...THE RESCUE TEAM SIGHTED BATMAN AT THE SCENE...

...FOLLOWING HER ARREST ORDER FOR THE BATMAN, COMMISSIONER YINDEL FILED A FORMAL PROTEST WITH THE MEDIA COUNCIL AGAINST THE JOKER'S APPEARANCE ON THE DAVID ENDOCHRINE SHOW...

THE COUNCIL DENIED HER PROTEST...THE BODY OF THREE-TIME LOSER NECTOR MENDEZ WAS FOUND IN AN EAST SIDE ALLEY. HE HAD BEEN LITERALLY SKINNED ALIVE...

...THE AMERICAN HOSTAGES GUILD HAS DECLARED A GENERAL STRIKE, IN RESPONSE TO TREATMENT OF THEIR MEMBERS IN THE RECENT LIBYAN INCIDENT...



...DESPITE MASSIVE SOVIET  
ARMS BUILDUP IN THE  
WATERS SURROUNDING  
CORD MALTESE, THE  
PRESIDENT PROMISES THAT  
AMERICA WILL NOT BE THE  
FIRST TO DEPLOY NUCLEAR  
WEAPONS...

# GOOD MORNING GOTHAM!



THERE'S JUST  
THE SUN AND THE  
SKY AND HIM,  
LIKE HE IS THE ONLY  
REASON IT'S ALL HERE.

THEN HE RUINS  
EVERYTHING BY  
TALKING.



YOU'RE NOT A  
YOUNG MAN  
ANYMORE,  
BRUCE...

MAYBE  
IF YOU'D  
LEARNED  
TO SLOW  
DOWN...  
FIND YOUR  
NICHE...



...BUT TIMES  
HAVE CHANGED,  
AND YOU--

WELL, IT'S  
JUST NOT  
HEALTHY!  
YOU'LL BURN  
YOURSELF  
UP.



I KNOW, I  
KNOW, YOU  
LOOK BETTER  
THAN YOU ARE  
IN YEARS.  
BUT...

YOU'RE  
GOING TO  
MAKE ME  
COME ARSH  
OUT AND SAY  
IT, AREN'T YOU?



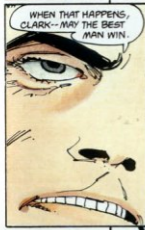
NOBODY CAN MAKE YOU DO ANYTHING YOU DON'T WANT TO DO, CLARK.



THESE AREN'T THE OLD DAYS, BRUCE... WORLD'S GOT NO ROOM FOR...

IT'S LIKE THIS, BRUCE-- SOONER OR LATER, SOMEBODY'S GOING TO ORDER ME TO BRING YOU IN. SOMEBODY WITH AUTHORITY.

WHEN THAT HAPPENS...



WHEN THAT HAPPENS, CLARK-- MAY THE BEST MAN WIN.



NOW THAT'S JUST-- --HOLD ON A SECOND--

...AMERICAN TR-- EXCUSE ME... AMERICAN TROOPS ARE NOW ENGAGED IN DIRECT COMBAT WITH SOVIET FORCES... NOW THERE'S BEEN A LOT OF LOOSE TALK THESE DAYS ABOUT NUCLEAR WAR...



I HAVE TO LEAVE.

WE'LL TALK LATER.



NO HURRY.

... WELL, LET ME TELL YOU NOBODY'S RUNNING OFF HALF-COOKED, NO SIR... BUT WE SURE AS SHOOTIN' AREN'T RUNNING AWAY EITHER. WE'VE GOT TO SECURE OUR- AH-EM-- STAND UP FOR THE CAUSE OF FREEDOM...

... AND THOSE CUTE LITTLE CORRO MALTESE PEOPLE, THEY WANT US THERE, JUST YOU ASK THEM... MEANWHILE, DON'T YOU FRET... WE'VE GOT GOD ON OUR SIDE... OR THE NEXT BEST THING, ANYWAY... HEH...



YOUR ACCOUNTANTS WAIT IN THE WEST WINGS, SIR.

TELL THEM I'M SICK.



SHAN'T HAVE TO LIE. THAT REFUSEE CHARITY CALLED...

WRITE THEM A CHECK.



AND THE COMMITTEE FOR THE PREVENTION OF OBSSIVE BEHAVIOR IN MIDDLE-AGED MEN?

WRITE THEM A CHECK.



VERY GOOD, SIR.

YOUR SENSE OF HUMOR IS KEEN AS EVER, SIR.



THE REST  
OF US LEARNED  
TO DOPE.

THE REST OF US  
RECOGNIZED THE  
DANGER-- OF  
THE ENDLESS  
ENVY OF THOSE  
NOT BLESSED.



DIANA WENT  
BACK TO HER  
PEOPLE.

HAL WENT TO  
THE STARS.

AND I HAVE  
WALKED THE  
RAZOR'S EDGE  
FOR SO LONG...



BUT YOU,  
BRUCE--

-- YOU, WITH  
YOUR WILD  
OBSESSION--







-- A SUDDEN COMMUNICATIONS BLACKOUT IN CENTRAL AMERICA, FOR FIVE HUNDRED MILES SURROUNDING CORDO MALTESE--

THE REST OF YOU WILL JOIN ME ON THE ROOF.

THAT MANIAC IS NOT GETTING AWAY-- AND NEITHER IS THE BATMAN.

ANY QUESTIONS?



--FIFTY-FOOT WAVES, ROUNDING THE SOUTH AMERICAN COAST--



THE ONLY DANGER IS POSSIBLE HARASSMENT BY THE BATMAN. JUST WATCH THE SHOW TONIGHT. YOU'LL SEE HOW HARMLESS MY PATIENT IS-- HE'S A CHANGED MAN.



WHIP WHIP! WHIP WHIP

--SEVEN POINT FIVE ON THE RICHTER SCALE... HAVE THOSE IDIOTS FINALLY DONE IT?...

THIS IS STRICTLY AN OBSERVATION MISSION FOR YOU, ROBIN. YOU WILL STAY IN THE COPTER.

YOU ARE NOT TO TOUCH THE CONTROLS.



IF ANYTHING GOES WRONG, JUST SAY "BOOSTERS" INTO THE MIKE.

IT'S VOICE ACTIVATED COMPUTERS. YOU WOULDN'T UNDERSTAND.



FIGURE I WOULDN'T

SIT UP STRAIGHT, ROBIN.



YES, SIR. SENSORS READ EIGHT POLICE CHOPPERS IN THE VICINITY OF THE TV STUDIO.



YINDEL'S SERIOUS ABOUT THAT ARREST ORDER. BUT I THINK SHE'S IN FOR A SURPRISE WHEN SHE SIGS POLICE ON ME. THEY'LL SEE US SOON...

THIS THING PACK A GLOAM?



...YES. HOW'D YOU KNOW ABOUT...

OLD NEWS, BOSS.



HAVE WE GOT A LANSBUSTER OF A SHOW FOR YOU TONIGHT..



JUST BE YOURSELF..



...PEOPLE SHOULD HAF ZEK UND ZEK UND ZEK-- ALL ZE TIME, DAVID...



YOUR SISTER MARY DID REAL GOOD FOR UNCLE JOKER, BOBBIE. YOU WILL TOO, WON'T YOU?

GO SCREW, FAT BOY--



GOD DAMN MILK BABY!



TOO *SOON*, THE *PAINS* START--  
ACROSS MY *TRICEPS* AND *CHEST*--

I KEEP *FORGETTING*  
HOW MUCH *HARDER*  
EVERYTHING  
HAS *BECOME*...



...HOW *FAR*  
...I'M *PUSHING*  
IT...

TWO *DOZEN*  
GUNS *ARE*  
COCKED--

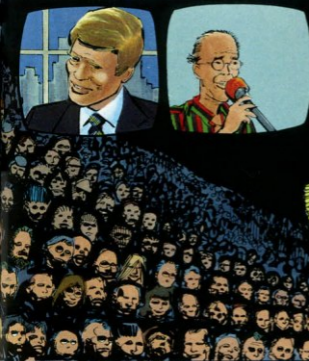
**BATMAN  
YOU ARE  
UNDER  
ARREST**





WHAT CAN I SAY ABOUT OUR NEXT GUEST THAT HASN'T BEEN SAID BEFORE? PAUL?

HE'S A KOOK, DAVE. A MANIAC. A REAL LUNATIC. NO, I MEAN IT. HE'S A NUT.



SO MANY FACES--SO DIFFERENT FROM ONE ANOTHER...

...SO FEW SMILES...



YOU'RE SAID TO HAVE ONLY KILLED ABOUT SIX HUNDRED PEOPLE, JOKER. NOW DON'T TAKE THIS THE HARD WAY, BUT I THINK YOU'VE BEEN HOLDING OUT ON US.

THIS IS A SENSITIVE HUMAN BEING HERE, DAVE. I WON'T LET YOU HARRASS--

I DON'T KEEP COUNT.



HE... AH... HE'S JUST... AH... TRYING TO BREAK THE TENSION...

:AHEM: DR. VOLPER--YOU HAF BLEMMED ZE BATMAN FOR ZESE KILLINGS, YES?

YES, YES, MY PATIENT IS A VICTIM OF BATMAN'S PSYCHOSIS.

LIND WHAT IZ ZE NATURE LIF BATMAN'S PSYCHOSIS?

WHY, SEXUAL REPRESSION, OF COURSE.

SEXUAL REPRESSION --ZIS IS A TERRIBLE ZING...

YOU'RE RIGHT, WE MUST NOT RESTRAIN OURSELVES.





GO I TOLD HIM--AAAA

KRESHH



BILLY IN CLOSE.



WHEEZING NOW--CHEST LIKE A BLAST FURNACE--

--SO MANY OF THEM...



A SENSITIVE HUMAN BEING.

ZEX LIND ZEX...

...LIND ZEX LIND ZEX...

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...SO MANY... AND THEY'RE ALL...

...SO YOUNG...



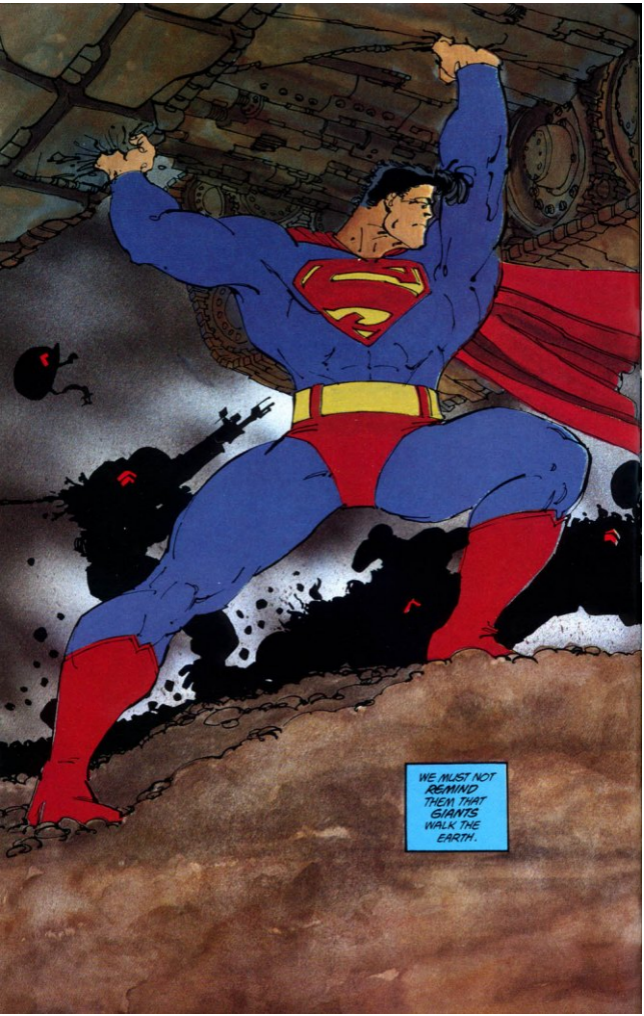
ACE THE CLOAK.











WE MUST NOT  
REMIN  
THEM THAT  
GIANTS  
WALK THE  
EARTH.

...URGING THE PUBLIC NOT TO WORRY, THE ARRESTED HAS PLACED STRATEGIC AIR COMMANDS ON RED ALERT. "WE WON'T MAKE THE FIRST MOVE," SAID THE PRESIDENT, "BUT WE'RE READY TO MAKE THE LAST."

THE ROPE XRAY DECLARED THAT THE CHURCH'S STAND ON CONTRACEPTION WILL NOT CHANGE, DESPITE YESTERDAY'S FIREBOMBING OF ST. PETER'S SQUARE... AND, IN LOCAL NEWS...

MY HEAD GOES LIGHT AND THE SMOKE COATS THE INSIDE OF MY MOUTH AND LEAVES A PRICH OF RED-HOT GRAVEL AT THE BASE OF MY THROAT.

I STOPPED DOING THIS TO MYSELF FIVE YEARS AGO...



CORTE MALTESE



COMMISSIONER -- WHITTAKER'S GONE ALL SICK.

HE'S JUST A ROOKIE...

SEND HIM HOME, MERKEL. TELL HIM IT'S ALL RIGHT.

...TWO HUNDRED AND SIX WERE SLAIN DURING THE JOKER'S ESCAPE FROM THE DAVID ENDORCHINE SHOW INCLUDING HOST ENDORCHINE AND DR. BARTHOLOMEW WOLPER.

THE JOKER REPORTEDLY USED HIS DEADLY SMILE GAS ON THE CROWD. COMMISSIONER YINREL REFUSED TO COMMENT ON THIS, OR ON THE ESCAPE OF THE BATMAN, WHICH LEFT TWELVE POLICE OFFICERS HOSPITALIZED...



**KYLE**  
ESCORT SERVICE, INC.

YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE COME BACK, BRUCE.

AMERICAN EXPRESS CARDS WELCOME



...THE SONS OF THE  
BATMAN HAVE STRUCK  
AGAIN. IN FRONT OF A  
DOZEN WITNESSES,  
THEY ACCOSTED A  
SHOPLIFTER AND...  
CHOPPED HIS HANDS  
OFF...

THE SHOPLIFTER IS SAID  
TO HAVE BEEN CARRYING  
SEVERAL MAGAZINES  
AND A CANDY BAR... AS  
YET, POLICE REPORT NO  
EVIDENCE TO DIRECTLY  
LINK THE BATMAN TO  
THESE CRIMES...



IT'S A .45  
CALIBER  
BULLET.

HOLLOW  
POINT.



IT EXPLODES IN  
HIS CHEST.

I FEEL THE SHOCK  
THROUGH HIS  
FINGERS.



FOR THE HUNDRED  
THOUSANDTH TIME--

--MY FATHER  
DIES...

...WHERE'D YOU  
LEARN ABOUT  
COMPUTERS, ROBIN?

HAD TO LEARN  
SOMETHING  
IN SCHOOL...



UHH...THIS  
I DIDN'T SAY  
FOR, ELSIE--

SHH...



NO-- I MEAN IT--  
I'M A HAPPILY  
MARRIED MAN...



THERE'S SOMETHING YOU  
HAVE TO DO FOR ME,  
CONGRESSMAN. LISTEN  
CLOSELY...

YES...  
CLOSELY.



THIS UNIT HAS  
ITS OWN CONTROLS.  
HOW'S IT  
DETACH?

I DON'T  
HAVE A  
LICENSE  
YET, BUT--



QUIET-- I'M  
PICKING  
SOMETHING  
UP--

--A TELEVISION  
TRANSMISSION--



--HE'S STILL UP THERE, LOU--  
DRESSED IN NOTHING BUT  
AN AMERICAN FLAG,  
CONGRESSMAN MOCHES,  
PLEADING FOR A FULL  
NUCLEAR STRIKE ON  
CORSO MALTESE--



WE'RE  
BASTARDS  
LET'S  
ACT LIKE...  
NO...



...HE'S DOWN, LOLA. HE'S  
STREET PIZZA.  
COMMISSIONER YINDEL IS  
ON THE SCENE-- LET'S  
SEE IF WE CAN GET HER  
TO SAY A FEW WORDS...

COMMISSIONER GET  
THIS  
CLOWN  
OUT OF  
HERE  
--DO YOU  
THINK THE  
JOKER--

BALLASHER'S HEARING  
ABOUT THIS!

O'HALLORAN, MA'AM.  
SIXTH PRECINCT.  
WHAT VE WE GOT?



IT'S NO  
SUICIDE,  
LIEUTENANT.



THE GIRL WITH HIM IS FROM  
KYLE ESCORT. SHE'S  
BEEN DRUGGED. SHUT  
THE JOINT DOWN--  
AND PICK UP  
SELINA  
KYLE.



YES, MA'AM.  
THANK YOU,  
MA'AM.  
COMMISSIONER...



...O'HALLORAN, MA'AM.  
SIXTH PRECINCT.  
ANYTHING I CAN--  
--SOMETHING  
WORTH,  
COMMISSIONER?



STOP  
THAT  
MAN!

WHAT THE...





BESS-- YOU'RE HOLD ON--  
TURNING THE WRONG WAY--

HOLD ON--



SON OF A BITCH--

BLAMM



YOU'RE HIT--

FLESH WOUND--

BANDAGE IT ON THE WAY--

SKREKK



HOW MUCH LONGER... HAVE I GOT...



ALL UNITS-- CONVERSE ON RYLE ESCORT--

YOU WERE THE ONE  
THEY USED AGAINST  
US, BRUCE.

THE ONE  
WHO PLAYED  
IT ROUGH.



WHEN THE MOOSE  
STARTED FROM THE  
PARENTS' GROUPS  
AND THE SUB-  
COMMITTEE  
CALLED US IN FOR  
QUESTIONING--



--YOU WERE  
THE ONE WHO  
LAUGHED...

...THAT SCARY  
LAUGH OF  
YOURS...



"SURE WE'RE CRIMINALS,"  
YOU SAID. "WE'VE ALWAYS  
BEEN CRIMINALS."



"WE HAVE TO  
BE CRIMINALS."



I'M FINE,  
ROBIN.

JUST PICK  
THAT LOCK  
LIKE I TAUGHT  
YOU.



JUST CAME  
OVER THE  
ACRY--  
--NOBODY AT  
KYLE ESCORT,  
COMMISSIONER.

KYLE'S  
APARTMENT,  
MERKEL--





SHE GOT HERE  
FASTER THAN I  
PLANNED...

...REMINDS  
ME OF JIM  
...IN THE  
OLD DAYS...

KBLAMM

WATCH  
IT--  
HE'S--

CHRIST--  
I CAN'T--

DAMN  
HE'S--

WHEE

--CAN'T  
GET A  
CLEAR  
SHOT--

POOM

SK  
RE  
K  
K

CHRIST--  
IT'S  
SUICIDE--  
CRAZY--

...YOU TRIED  
TO MARRY  
ME, JIM...  
...SO  
MANY  
TIMES...

KBLAM  
BLAM  
BLAM  
BLAM

SPANK

... YOU TOLD ME  
THAT I BREAK  
TOO MANY OF  
THE IMPORTANT  
RULES...

... THAT I'VE  
MADE TOO  
MANY OF  
THE MURDER  
ENEMIES...

... THAT, FOR  
ALL MY TRICKS  
... I'VE BEEN  
GETTING BY  
ON LUCK...

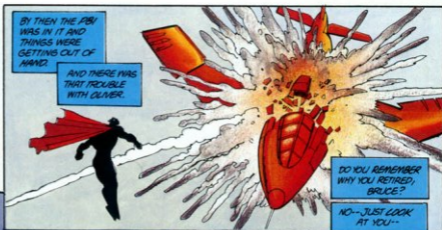
... IT'S ALL A  
GAME OF  
CARDS, YOU  
SAID...

... ALL IT  
WILL TAKE...  
IS ONE  
BULLET.





WE ALMOST  
THREW A  
PARTY  
WHEN YOU  
RETIRED.



BY THEN THE FBI  
WAS IN IT AND  
THINGS WERE  
GETTING OUT OF  
HAND.

AND THERE WAS  
THAT TROUBLE  
WITH OLIVER.

DO YOU REMEMBER  
WHY YOU RETIRED,  
BRUCE?

NO--JUST LOOK  
AT YOU--

--YOU'D DO IT  
AGAIN-- AND  
LIKE A MURDERER,  
YOU'D COVER IT  
UP AGAIN.

NOTHING  
MATTERS TO  
YOU-- EXCEPT  
YOUR HOLY  
WAR.



THEY WERE CONSIDERING  
THEIR OPTIONS AND  
YOU WERE PROBABLY  
STILL LAUGHING WHEN  
WE CAME TO TERMS.



I GAVE THEM MY  
OBEDIENCE  
AND MY  
INVISIBILITY.

THEY GAVE ME  
A LICENSE AND  
LET US LIVE.

NO, I DON'T  
LIKE IT.  
BUT I  
GET TO  
SAVE LIVES  
--AND THE  
MEDIA  
STAYS  
QUIET.



BUT NOW  
THE STORM  
IS GROWING  
AGAIN--



--THEY'LL  
HUNT US  
DOWN  
AGAIN--



--BECAUSE  
OF YOU.

... COMMUNICATIONS BLACKOUT CONTINUES AT CORTO MATRESE, AS DO THE BIZARRE AIRBORNE DISTURBANCES. HUNDRED-MILE-AN-HOUR WINDS LASH THE PORT OF SAN CONDESPON, SIXTY MILES SOUTH OF CORTO...

THEY COULD PUT ME IN A HELICOPTER AND FLY ME UP INTO THE AIR AND LINE THE BODIES HEAD TO TOE ON THE GROUND IN DELIGHTFUL GEOMETRIC PATTERNS LIKE AN ENDLESS JUNE TAYLOR DANCERS ROUTINE --

-- AND IT WOULD NEVER BE ENOUGH.

NO, I DON'T KEEP COUNT. BUT YOU DO.

AND I LOVE YOU FOR IT.



... PENTAGON CHIEF GENERAL LUCIUS FOX REVEALS THAT STRATEGIC AIR COMMAND STANDS AT DEF CON THREE-- A HEARTBEAT FROM DEPLOYMENT. "WE'RE PRIMED, SAYS FOX."

... APPREHENDED WHILE TRYING TO POISON THE GOTHAM RESERVOIR WERE FORMER MEMBERS OF THE MUTANT GANG. THEIR SKIN WAS PAINTED CHARLAK WHITE, THEIR HAIR DYED GREEN...



SOMEWHERE A WOMAN CALLS OUT FOR HER SON...

SOMEWHERE A CALLIOPE PLAYS THE SAME TUNE, AGAIN AND AGAIN...



... A TINY HAND TIGHTENS ITS GRIP ON MY ARM...

... A GIRL OF THIRTEEN BREATHES IN SHARPLY, SUDDENLY, HER INNOCENCE LOST...

... IT ENDS TONIGHT, JOKER.

LAVA, YOU APOLOGIZE ME. FIFTEEN POLICEMEN HOSPITALIZED-- HUNDREDS DEAD-- AND STILL YOU CLING TO THIS HARD WORSHIP. THOUGH HOW ANYONE CAN THINK OF A DETROIT MURDERER AS A HERO...

BATMAN HASN'T KILLED ANYBODY, MORRIE.



PERHAPS HE WASN'T--  
TECHNICALLY, THAT'S WHY  
I SAID DE FACED, LANA  
DEAR. STILL, IT'S HARDLY  
A COINCIDENCE THAT THE  
JOKER CAME OUT OF A  
TEN-YEAR CAPTIVITY--  
NOW, OF ALL TIMES...

THANK  
THE NICE  
MAN,  
DONALD.

I WANT  
THE KIND  
THAT  
TALKS.

UH, BOSS--  
THERE'S A **BOY**  
HEADING OUR  
WAY.

IT'S **BIG**.  
IT'S...

PISS  
OFF.



...IT'S HIM. I'LL MAKE  
SURE THE  
**BOMB** GOES  
OFF.

WHAT--  
WHAT  
ARE  
THEY--

HEY!

UP THERE--  
IT'S--

BOBBIE--  
HEY--

--IT'S  
**BATMAN--**

RIGHT,  
RIGHT...

BOMB?  
I HEARD--  
DID  
HE SAY...

**KLAK  
KLAK  
KLAK  
KLAK**

BOSS--  
IT'S ONE OF  
THOSE--

IT'S LOADED,  
ROBIN--

--WAIT  
FOR MY  
ORDER--

--LET IT  
GET CLOSE--

OH, MY GOD  
IT'S--

OH,  
MY--

OH, MY  
GOD--

**BOOM**





CAN YOU SEE IT,  
JOKER? FEELS  
TO ME... LIKE IT'S  
WRITTEN ALL  
OVER MY FACE.

I'VE LAIN  
AWAKE  
NIGHTS...  
PLANNING  
IT...  
PICTURING  
IT...

...ENDLESS  
NIGHTS...

...CONSIDERING EVERY  
POSSIBLE METHOD...  
TREASURING EACH  
IMAGINARY MOMENT...

FROM THE  
BEGINNINGS,  
I KNEW...

...THAT THERE'S  
NOTHING WRONG  
WITH YOU...

...THAT I  
CAN'T FIX...

...WITH MY  
HANDS...





NO, JOKER.

YOU'RE PLAYING THE WARDS GAME, THE OLD GAME.



TONIGHT YOU'RE TAKING NO HOSTAGES.



THINK THINK THINK THINK THINK

AAAAGG

TONIGHT I'M TAKING NO PRISONERS.



BAMM

OUT OF YOUR MIND--

CHECK THE STATISTICS, LANA DEAR-- HECK, IF YOU TOSS IN THE VICTIMS OF HIS FAN CLUB, THE BATMAN-RELATED, BODY COUNT IS UP THERE WITH A MINOR WAR.



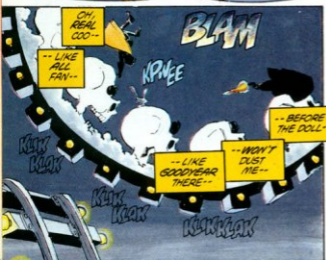
IT IS A WAR, MORRIE-- THOUGH HE SEEMS TO BE THE ONLY ONE WITH BALLS ENOUGH TO FIGHT IT.

WHO GAVE THIS THUG THE RIGHT TO DECLARE MARITAL LAW, HUH? LAST I HEARD, THAT TAKES AN ACT OF CONGRESS.



BILLY GONE BILLY CAN'T

BELIEVE I'M DOING THIS--



BLAM



TK TK TK

-- DOES THE MAXIMUM FLASH--

KLIK KLIK



BLAM

KLIK KLIK





KPVEE

LIKE FOR THIS --

-- I MISSED THE GYM FINALS --

KIK KIK KIK KIK

-- CHILD ENDANGERMENT IS THE LATEST CHARGE AGAINST THE BATMAN, REPORTS POLICE MEDIA RELATIONS DIRECTOR LOUIS GALLAGHER. BATMAN HAS BEEN SIGHTED USING A YOUNG BOY...

... AS A SHIELD AGAINST POLICE GUNFIRE. COMING UP-- COMMISSIONER YINDEL SAVES THE GOVERNOR FROM LITERALLY STRANGLING HIMSELF WITH RED TAPE...



HOUSE OF MIRRORS

HEY-- WHAT--

OH MY GOD IT'S-- HEY!

WHAT THE-- IT'S--



-- GOT A GUN! OH GOD--

GOT A GUN--

GET OUT OF--

RUN FOR--



IT'S HIM-- IT'S--

OH, JESUS--

-- CHRIST, IT'S!

YOU'RE THE JOKER, RIGHT? BATMAN'S GONNA KICK YOUR ASS.



PUT THE BOY DOWN...

YOU'VE STILL GOT...

... ONE EYE LEFT...



TOO SLOW--

HE HEARS THE GLASS--

HE GETS--

-- A GOOD ONE IN --

SPRINK

BLAM



**BLAM**

**WHOK**

--BLANCED OFF A RIB--

--TOOK SOME MEAT WITH IT--



**KLIK KLIK**

HE'S FAST-- AS EVER--

--WOULD HAVE GOTTEN ME--

--DIZZY--

--NOT DIZZY--  
--NOT ALREADY--



**KSHH**

--I'M TAKING TOO LONG--

GIVING HIM--

--TO MANY CHANCES--

**CHK CHAK**



**BAM**



**SPARK**

--THAT COULD HAVE BEEN ME--

--INSTEAD OF A MIRROR--



--THAT'S RIGHT, JOKER--

**BLAM SPARK BLAM**

**SPARK**

--WASTE THOSE BULLETS--



**BATMAN**-- HE'S GETTING AWAY--  
GET UP!

YOU GOT TO KICK HIS--

WATCH!

THIS IS TOO WEIRD...



...WATCH YOUR LANGURSE, SON...

YES, SIR.

THEY TELL ME THE SONS OF THE BATMAN BROKE UP A THREE CARD MONTY GAME THIS MORNING, LANA. WITH NAPALM.

WHY HASN'T BATMAN DONE SOMETHING ABOUT THOSE LUNATICS? UNLESS, OF COURSE, HE APPROVES...





SOMEBODY STOP

BLAM  
HOWEE

GOD NO

BAD GIRL...

NO

SOMEBODY STOP

STOP



BLAMM

MWUH...

SOMEBODY STOP  
CRAZY ITS

SLOW LEARNER'S OUT OF BULLETS--

--I'VE GOT A CHANCE--



SPANG TK TK TK

--OUT OF BULLETS--  
GOT A SHOT--ACE  
THE BOMB--EASY  
SHOT--

--REAL GOOD, CARRIE--  
LUNCHROOM OR WHAT  
--LIKE YOU'VE GOT ALL  
NIGHT--



--SOME ROBIN--  
REAL COOL-- JUST  
ACE IT-- EASY SHOT--



SPANG TK TK TK

--EASY--



EXCUSE ME.

I'M TOO LATE  
...FOR THE  
ONE ON THE  
BOARDWALK...



...VERY BAD...  
...YOU'VE BEEN VERY BAD...



TOO LATE...

...FOR THE TWO AT THE TUNNEL...

TOO LATE...  
TOO OLD...



...THE LAST TWO, JOKER...

...MY WOW...



...IT'S BAD...  
...DON'T KNOW HOW LONG I CAN STAY AWAKE...



...HAVE TO FINISH HIM QUICKLY...



HOW MANY TIMES DO I HAVE TO SAY IT, MORRIE? BATMAN HASN'T KILLED ANYBODY...



COLD...

...WATER'S COLD...

NO...

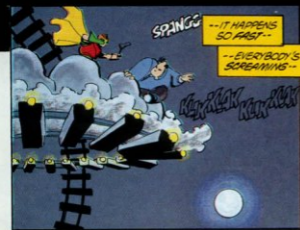
...IT ISN'T...

...THE WATER...



SPANGG

KLIK KLIK



SPANGG

--IT HAPPENS SO FAST--

--EVERYBODY'S SCREAMING--



SPANG

--MY CAPE GOES TIGHT--

KLIK KLIK



--HE STARTS BREATHING ON ME--

KLIK KLIK



-- THEN HE'S RIGHT--  
RIGHT ON TOP OF  
ME --

--SO MUCH OF  
HIM, HE'S ALL  
OVER ME--

--HIS HANDS  
--THEY'RE ALL  
WET--

**KLIK KLIK**



-- THEY SCRAMBLE DOWN  
MY FACE--TO MY NECK--

**KLIK KLIK**



-- I CAN'T  
BREATHE--

-- HE'S  
GOGGLING--

-- CAN'T--

-- HE SMELLS  
LIKE MILK--

**KLIK KLIK**



**WALK**

-- THEN --

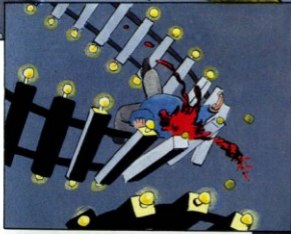
-- THEN I  
HEAR THIS  
NOISE AND  
HIS FINGERS  
SLIDE OFF  
ME--

-- AND HE  
FLIES --

**KLIK KLIK** **KLIK KLIK**



**KLIK KLIK**



**KLIK KLIK**



A GUN...  
IS A  
COMMAND'S  
WEAPON.

A LIAR'S  
WEAPON.



WE KILL... TOO OFTEN  
... BECAUSE WE'VE  
MADE IT EASY...  
TOO EASY...



... SPARRING  
OURSELVES...  
THE MESS...

... AND THE  
MUCK...



IT HAPPENS... SO SLOWLY...  
 ...IT HAPPENS... IN FIVE SECONDS...  
 ...THE BLADE IS SHARP...



... I BARELY FELT IT ENTER MY STOMACH...  
 ...HE'S TALKING... I CAN'T HEAR HIM...  
 ... SOMETHING IS ROARING... I CAN'T... HEAR ANYTHINGS...



... HIS NECK... WILL HAVE TO DO...  
 SHKK  
 ... HE'S MOVING MORE QUICKLY THAN I AM...  
 ... STABBING...



THNK



SHKK  
 KRACK



... THE ROAR... IS FADING... I HEAR... VOICES...

--SHEER PANDEMONIUM HERE AT THE COUNTY FAIR, LOLA! THE JOKER HAS BEEN GAZED-- SIXTEEN CLUB SCOUTS HAVE BEEN FOUND DEAD-- DOZENS HAVE BEEN WOUNDED BY EXPLOSIONS--



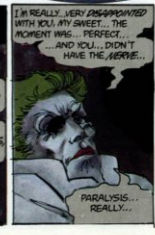
--AND BATMAN HAS BEEN SEEN-- HE AND THE JOKER EXCHANGED GLIMPSES IN A CROWD-- HEY-- WHAT-- LOLA-- THEY'RE EVACUATING THE COUNTY FAIR--



... VOICES CALLING ME... A KILLER...



... I WISH I WERE...  
 THEY'RE GONE...?  
 ... THE WITNESSES, I MEAN...



I'M REALLY... VERY DISAPPOINTED WITH YOU, MY SWEET... THE MOMENT WAS... PERFECT...  
 ... AND YOU... DIDN'T HAVE THE, NERVE...  
 PARALYSIS... REALLY...



