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Batman: The Dark Knight Returns

Batman: The Dark Knight Returns 1 - 4
(1986)

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THE DARK KNIGHT RETURNS
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BATMAN: THE DARK KNIGHT RETURNS
TENTH ANNIVERSARY EDITION

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BATMAN: The Dark Knight Returns

TENTH ANNIVERSARY EDITION

FRANK MILLER

WITH KLAUS JANSON AND LYNN VARLEY
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*By Frank Miller*

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*With excerpts from Frank Miller's Sketch Book*
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, everwise 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 draftsman 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 JUNKRUNTZ
1955-1985
I've got the home stretch all to myself when the readout stops making sense. I switch to manual.

Bruce, this is Carol. You're going too fast!

Bruce, you son of a...

It isn't programmed to-- Bruce!

The engine, angry, argues the point with me. The finish line is close, it roars too close.

The left front tire decides to turn all on its own. I laugh at it and jerk the steering wheel to the right.

Then the front end lurches, all wrong. I know what's coming.

I've got just under two seconds to shut this mess down and forfeit the race.

The nose drags up a chunk of asphalt. I look at it... then straight into the eye of the sun.

The engine angry, argues the point with me. The finish line is close, it roars too close.

Then the front end lurches, all wrong. I know what's coming. I've got just under two seconds to shut this mess down and forfeit the race.

The nose drags up a chunk of asphalt. I look at it... then straight into the eye of the sun.

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 NINTY-SEVEN-- WITH NO RELIEF IN SIGHT.

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

...THE MOST BIZARRE OF WHICH HAS TO BE THE BRUTAL SLAYINGS 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 TRIP REPORTER...

I'VE GOT FOUR WEEKS TO NAIL THOSE BASARADS. 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 WRONG 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 DICKS, 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 JASON.

LET'S CALL IT A NIGHT, JIM.

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

...WHILE IN MY GUT, 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 ANYTHINGS RIGHT NOW. I WALK THE STREETS OF THIS CITY THAT 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 BRITAIN 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.

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

COME ON, HONEY. SLICE AND DICE...

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

IT IS HIM, IT IS. AND WE KNOW SO MANY WAYS TO HURT HIM...

SO MANY LOVELY WAYS TO PUNISH HIM...

NO, IT'S NOT HIM.

SLICE AND DICE, WE GOT A QUOTA....

SO MANY...

I DON'T KNOW, MAN. LOOK AT HIM. HE'S INTO IT--
... Butchery 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 neat 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.
ARKHAM HOME
FOR THE
EMOTIONALLY TROUBLED

INTENSIVE TREATMENT WARD

NO VISITORS

NINETY-NINE DEGREES AND THE AIR CONDITIONER BLOWS...

WATER'S OUT IN MY BUILDING TOO, COULDN'T EVEN TAKE A SHOWER THIS MORNING.

YOU KNOW WHAT I HATE MOST ABOUT THE HEAT?

IT'S THE WAY YOUR UNDERWEAR SCALES TO...

SHUT UP

601

WE KNOW WHAT THEY SAID, HARVEY. BUT THAT'S HISTORY. SURGICAL PROCEDURES HAVE IMPROVED...

...AS HAVE PSYCHIATRIC. YOU'RE FIT TO RETURN TO SOCIETY. NO MATTER WHAT OUR SDOUASAGHERAN POLICE COMMISSIONER SAYS.

MAYBE GORDON...

...IS RIGHT ABOUT ME.

WHEN I CAME HERE, THEY SAID...

— I COULD NEVER BE CURED.

BEN A LONG TIME SINCE ANY OF THESE GUYS HAD MOMENTS.

NONSENSE. GORDON'S JUST GONE SENILE.

DR. WILLING ISN'T QUALIFIED TO JUDGE THAT...

...BUT I CONCUR.

THANK YOU, DR. KOLPER, AND NOW, HARVEY DENT...

— MEET HARVEY DENT.

OH MY GOD...
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 SCORRED 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 DEIGNED 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 HORRIBLE 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 WILLING 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 NIGHTMARE... 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, unmarked.

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...

Faster than a rabbit...

Look at that boy run! We've got an athlete on our hands!

Bruce--what are you going to do with it when you catch--

Don't go in that hole--

Won't get away from me...

...faster than a rabbit, mom! Just watch!
NO! GO WAY!

SKREE SKREE SKREE

OOOF!

OWW!

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... BREATHE NOT WITH THE TASTE OF FALLEN FORES... THE STHOM OF DEAD THINGS, DAMNED THINGS...

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

GLARING, HATING... CLAmmING 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 CORIERS BROW AND THE DUST THICKENS IN HERE AS IT DOES IN ME--

AND HE LAUGHS AT ME, CURSES ME, CALLS ME A FOOL, HE FITS MY SLEEP, HE TORMS ME BRINGS ME HERE WHEN THE NIGHT IS LONG AND IT WINSL IS WEAK, HE STRESSES RELENTLESSLY, HATEFULLY, TO BE FREE--

I WILL NOT LET HIM, I GAVE MY WORD.

FOR JASON.

NEVER.

NEVER AGAIN.
MASTER, BRUCE?

YOU SET OFF THE ALARM, SIR. THIS SOMNAMBULISM IS BECOMING A BIT OF A PROBLEM, CERTAINLY FOR THOSE OF US WITH A PENDANT FOR SLEEPING IN OUR BEDS.

IT'S THE SPRING. I SUSPECT TENDS TO MAKE ONE OVERLY SENTIMENTAL.

COME, SIR. HARDLY THE HOUR FOR ANTIQUES, IS IT?

HARDLY, ALFRED. SORRY TO WAKE YOU.

MASTER, BRUCE. WHATSOEVER HAPPENED TO YOUR MUSTACHE?

IT IS HALF PAST THREE...

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

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...

GORDON'S REACTION IS ONE OF TEAT BOWK HYSTERIA...

I MEAN DENT WONT BE STICK HERE.

WE BEEN GETTING BY WITHOUT HIM...

I MEAN, IT AIN'T BEEN GREAT...

THAT'S RIGHT...

SO--WHAT DO YOU THINK? I THINK IT'S TOO DAMN HOT...

AND I THINK HE SHOULD SEE IT OR FOLD.

SO DO I. I OUGHTTA SEE IT FOLD.

AND CHARACTERISTIC INSENSITIVITY HARVEY, ON THE OTHER HAND, IS AN EXTREMELY SENSITIVE MAN...

...AND IN EXTREMELY VULNERABLE EMOTIONAL CONDITION. I BELIEVE...
...AND WE MADE SOME GREAT SCORES WITH OLD "FACE..."
NO DENYIN' IT.
NUTS, I'M FOLDING.

...THAT HE HAS SOUGHT SOME MUCH-NEEDED PRIVACY...

ABOUT TIME.
YEAH.

HARVEY NEEDS OUR SUPPORT—OUR CONCERN...

...NOT TO BE HUNTED DOWN LIKE SOME WILD.
WHO THE HELL—

GOING FOR A GUN—
I DON'T THINK SO...

...FOURTEEN CASES OF HEAT PROSTRATION AS THE TEMPERATURE SOARED A RECORD—BREAKING TWELVE DEGREES PAST THE ONE HUNDRED MARK.

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

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

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, ALFRED. GOOD NIGHT.
Tyrone Power in "The Mark of Zorro"... Zorro, I should have checked the listings. I should turn it off... right this second...

---

Just a movie, that's all it is. No harm in watching a movie...

Tonight's presentation of Hollywood's finest...

You loved it so much... you jumped and danced like a fool... you remember...

---

You remember that night...
CHILDREN WERE LAST SEEN WITH TWO YOUNG MEN...

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

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

--FOUR KILLED IN A SENSELESS ATTACK ON...

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

--RARE AND MUTILATION OF...

--HERE'S SOME GOOD NEWS, DAVE?

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

RIGHT, LOLA. RIGHT AS THE HEAT'S FINALLY GOING TO BREAK--
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 SHELL, A RUSTY TRAP THAT CANNOT HOLD ME--

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--

SMDORDERING, I BURN YOU--BURNING YOU, I BLARE, HOT AND BRIGHT AND FIERCE AND BEAUTIFUL--
YOU TRY TO DROWN ME OUT...

...BUT YOUR VOICE IS WEAK...

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...

BEEP

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

BEEP

SELINA, BRUCE. I'M LONELY...

KLIK

KLIK

KLIK

KLIK

I'LL BE OUT OF TOWN FOR THE NEXT FEW WEEKS. WAY OUT OF TOWN.
...POWER LINES ARE DOWN ALL OVER THE SUBURBS. IT'S A MEAN ONE--AND IT'S HEADED STRAIGHT FOR GOTHAM.

LIKE THE WORTH 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....
GET YOU UGLY ASS IN THERE, BITCH. WE TAKIN A RIDE. I MAN, OFF!

YOU PAININ ME, JOANNE. NOT MY FACE, SILK... PLEASE.

YOU MESSIN WIF MY LIVELIHOOD. AAAH...

LOOKIT YOU, JOANNE. YOU WENT AN GREW ANOTHER NOSTAL...

SHUT YOU HAIRY FACE AN DRIVE. HEY, MAN -- TAKE IT SOMEPLACE ELSE. I DON'T NEED THE GRIEF.

YEAH, ALL RIGHT. JUST MAKE IT QUICK.
YOU LEF US ONE UN-PLEASED CUSTOMER BACK THERE, JOANNIE...

LISTEN, SAILK...

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

YOU SMILE A LITTLE WIDER NOW, JOANNIE...

WHUMP

WHAT THE...

EASE UP BACK THERE MAN, I'M STILL PAYIN FOR THESE WHEELS.

... DOG EAT DOG WORLD...

?... JUST HAD THIS BABY TUNES...

DON'T STICK US, THAT WAS ON THE ROOF?

THE ROOF?

THAT RIGHT, THE ROOF, AN IF IS SOMEONE TO MESSA' MIF ME...

WHORK

GNAAR

GNAAR

GNAAR

GNAAR

GNAAR

GNAAR

GNAAR

GNAAR

GNAAR

KLUNK

OH MAN OH MAN START ALREADY...
COME ON, MICHELLE—WE'LL CUT THROUGH THE ARCADE.

SO YOU FLUNKED THE CHEM TEST. SO WHAT? YOUR COMPUTER SCORES'LL BRING YOUR GRADE POINT IN 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 TROUBLE.

BUT, CAROLIE—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 WET...

JUST LIKE I FIGURE I DID TO DOUBLE STUDY HALL FOR FUN.

DON'T GO ALL BILLY, MICHELLE. IT'S JUST THE STORM. LIGHTS'LL COME BACK ON.

COME HERE COME HERE COME HERE.

CHICK CHICK CHICK CHICK.

CHICK CHICK.

CHICK CHICK CHICK.

CHICK CHICK.

NO, IT WAS JUST LIGHTNING.

SEE THEY—
...breakthrough in hair replacement techniques, and this is 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 pleased 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 Gang.

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 have 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...

Oh man — 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 —

Battered, wounded criminals are being found by police — while witnesses’ descriptions are confused and conflicting...

Holy...

You're slowing down!

Heh. Yeah, we're in for a show, kid.
This should be agony.
I should be a mass of aching muscle—broken, 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 pain on my chest is a baptism—

I'm born again...

Reality check: in chelle, talk about composure, total lack of. He's a man... about—twelve feet tall—
OH MY GOD! OH MY GOD!
Murray's leg... LEAVE HIM! THAT WAS BATMAN!

BATMAN?

SCREEECH

HOLY...

I NEVER THOUGHT HE WAS REAL...

These men are MINE!

YOU CRAZY? I'M GOING IN!

KID, YOU DON'T WANT TO GET IN HIS WAY...

KID!...
HARD TO SEE - QUIET!

BUT THEY'RE SCARED.

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

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

WE GET HIM?

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

WAIT, WHAT'S THAT SOUND...

FIRE CLOCK...

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

THEY'RE FAST.
HE NEVER USED TO MAKE SOUNDS...

GET YOUR OWN GOD DAMN CUP. HEY, THERE'S THAT COP CAR...

KLIK KLIK KLIK

WELCOME TO HELL.

AAA

I DON'T LIKE THIS.
YOU GOT A SPARE CUP?

CCRRRRRRRRR SRKREK

SKRAK

YOU MIGHT HIT MACKIE--

MIGHT.

DID YOU?

MACKIE?

YEAH.

BUT I DON'T SEE--

HKKH

NO
EVERYBODY FREE.  Ohh!!

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 FOOTSTEPS, COMING UP FAST BEHIND ME.

I'LL HAVE TO KEEP HIM FROM GETTING KILLED.

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.

THREE OF THEM DISARM WITH MINIMAL CONTACT.

THE OTHER...

YOU'RE UNDER ARREST, MISTER.

YOU'VE CRAMPED THAT MAN!

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

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

JESUS SWEET JESUS...
LET'S SEE WHAT YOU'VE GOT.

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

I DON'T BELIEVE THIS...

IT ISN'T IN THE CAR. IT'S NOWHERE AROUND HERE... PILLS, NO END TO YOUR BAD HABITS...

Y'KNOW, BATS— I SAW YOU ONCE—BACK WHEN I WAS WORKING THE EAST END. I WAS A ROOKIE—LIKE SHARK FACE HERE.

IT WAS A LONG TIME AGO.

AT THE BANK—WAS THERE A SECOND CAR?

CAR? YEAH, AN OLD JALOPY. I Didn'T THINK—

ANYWAY, IT WAS A RAINY NIGHT, JUST LIKE THIS. I WAS WALKIN' MY BEAT— --I MEAN, I WAS JUST A KID BACK THEN....

...AND I SAW THIS GUY DRAW A GUN ON— TELL GORDON WE HAVE TO TALK.

SURE THING, BATS. BUT HOW'S HE SUPPOSED 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...

AAA B A A A T...

A rebirth of the American fighting spirit.

Batman. Ease up, Lana. The only thing he signifies...

...is an aberrant psychotic force...

Darling.

--Morally bankrupt, politically hazardous, reactionary paranoia...--

--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? Hell, he's just as much a threat to Harley Dent as Harvey Dent is to his victims.

That's cute, Lana. But hardly apropos, and hardly fair to his troubled soul as Harvey Dent's.

He certainly is trouble for his victims. Was, Lana. Was, if Harley Dent is returning to crime--and please note that I said if--it goes without saying that he's not in control of himself.

DING

Surely, he knows exactly what he's doing. His kind of social fascist always does.

When's the last time you called him psychotic? Because you like to use that word for anyone 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? Hun? Try reckless en

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. Morry'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 defaced 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 dammed thing off, Merkel. A sad, strange criminal was Harvey?

Commissioner, if you please...
YOU STILL HERE?

LET'S WE DROP THIS, MH?

YOUR CLIENT HAS BEEN IN AND OUT OF PRISON SINCE HE LEARNED TO WALK.

YOUR CLIENT FLED THE SCENE OF A RECON' AND FIRED THOSE ON POLICEMEN WITH AN ILLEGAL WEAPON.

WHERE'D I PUT THE RECON' AND FIRED THOSE ON POLICEMEN WITH AN ILLEGAL WEAPON?

NO LOST, NO ROBBY. COMMISSIONER. HE HAS NOT BEEN IDENTIFIED AS HAVING FIRED UPON YOUR MEN.

AND AS FOR THE WEAPON--

DAMN THINGS'LL KILL ME.

--Batsman put it there during a criminal assault that left two men in deep shock--

...another... and my client with a shattered... physical and emotional trauma--

VEST POCKET TO CONSTRAINT YOU TO HUNT DOWN THAT LUNATIC AND CEASE THIS HARRASSMENT OF HIS VICTIM.

CAN YOU HEAR ME, COMMISSIONER?

Draw up release papers for femur here, Merkel.

NOT UNTIL HE IS INSURED OF PROTECTION... YOU HEARD ME, MERKEL.

AAAH!

EASY, ALFRED, EASY.

IF IT'S SUICIDE YOU'RE AFTER, MASTER BRUCE...

I HAVE THE RECIPE FOR AN OLD FAMILY POTION. IT'S SLOW IN WORKING, AND QUITE PAINFUL YOU'D LIKE IT.

BRINGC

IT'S GORDON, SIR.

HELLO, COMMISSIONER?

NO. I'M JUST FINE.

Hi.

HE'LL JUST HAVE TO WEAR IT WET...

THAT IS INTERESTING.

RELEASE HIM NOW, ARE YOU?

WAYS INFRARY.

YES, SIR. JUST A MOMENT, SIR.

YOU KNOW, SIR, THAT THERE IS A PRECEDENT FOR INJURY--

SHUT UP, ALFRED.
YOU'VE GOT RIGHTS.
LOTS OF RIGHTS.
SOMETIMES I COUNT THEM JUST TO MAKE MYSELF FEEL CRAZY.

BUT RIGHT NOW YOU'VE GOT A PIECE OF GLASS SHOVED INTO A MAJOR ARTERY IN YOUR ARM.

BUT RIGHT NOW I'M THE ONLY ONE IN THE WORLD WHO CAN GET YOU TO A HOSPITAL IN TIME.

BATMAN? YEAH, I THINK HE'S A-CRAZY. HE'S KICKING JUST THE RIGHT BUTTS-- BUTTS THE CORPS AIN'T KICKING, THAT'S FOR SURE. HOPE HE GOES AFTER THE HOMOS NEXT.

MAKES ME SICK. WE MUST TREAT THE SOCIALLY MIS-Oriented WITH REHABILITATIVE METHODS. WE MUST PATIENTLY REALIGN THEIR-- EXCUSE ME--? NO. I'D NEVER LIVE IN THE CITY...

...CAN'T BELIEVE YOU HAD IT PUT BACK, COMMISSIONER. IF GALLAGHER KNEW...

GALLAGHER DOESN'T RUN THIS DEPARTMENT YET, MERKEL.

KOF!

BUT ISN'T THERE SOME OTHER WAY TO CALL HIM? AT LEAST A DOZEN.

THEN WHY? TO LET THEM KNOW, MERKEL; TO LET EVERYONE KNOW.

HIT IT.

OBVIOUSLY A FASCIST. NEVER HEARD OF ELLIE-- DOESN'T MATTER. THEY ALL LOVE HIM. THE AMERICAN CONSCIENCE DIED WITH THE KENNEDYS, TOO TRUE...

ALL THE MARCHING WE DID-- IT'S LIKE IT NEVER HAPPENED, NOW.

I KNOW... I KNOW...

SOMETIMES I DESPAIR... GIVE ME ANOTHER HINT OF THAT, HUN?
—SO IT'S JUST A MATTER OF FIGURING OUT WHAT HE'S AFTER.

THE PAYROLL 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 PAYROLL, 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.

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

YOU STILL DON'T THINK IT'S DENT?

BUT IF IT IS...

TWO TIMES AS BIG AS YOU CAN IMAGINE—THAT'S ALL HE HAD TO SAY?

THAT'S ALL HE WANTED, JIM. BUT TOMORROW IS THE SECOND—AND A PEACE...

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...
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 / PSYCHOEROTIC BEHAVIOR PATTERN IS LIKE A NET. WEAK-ENDED NEUROTICS, LIKE HARVEY, ARE DRAWN INTO CORRESPONDING INTERSTICING PATTERNS.

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

ALL THE OTHER GUYS'D GIVEN UP ON YOU, BOSS.

BUT I KNEW YOU WERE GONNA BE OKAY. YOU LOOK GOOD.

...BUT I GOT A PROBLEM.

YOU KNOW I LIKE TO MAKE STUFF. IT'S ALL I'M GOOD AT...

...WELL, HARVEY... DENT WANTS TO PAY ME A LOT OF MONEY TO MAKE HIM SOME BOMBERS.

HE NEEDS THEM TONIGHT. THAT'S IF I'M GOING TO MAKE THEM...

WHAT KIND OF BOMBS?

I HAVEN'T SAID YES YET...
ONE MORE TIME I CHECK MY UTILITY BELT.

GAS AMMUNITIONS, FREELING, COMPOUNDS, CABLE, SNAPPING HOOPS, STETHOSCOPES, PAIN KILLERS.

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

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

THEN I HEAR IT.

HUP WHUP WHUP WHUP WHUP

POKITAPOKITAP POKITAPOKITAP

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

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

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

I PICKED THE WRONG ROOK.

GOOD THING I BROUGHT THE GUN.

DENT—OR WHOEVER IS SURE TO BE IN THE NEIGHBOR COPER. I'M HOPING HE'LL LAND ON THE TOWER I PICKED...

BUT I'M NOT COUNTING ON IT.

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

GOOD EVENING, I'M LOLA CHONG. TONIGHT WE'RE PLEASED TO BRING YOU A SPECIAL REPORT...
PAIN THAT'S THREE DAYS OLD ORNIUS ACROSS MY BACK. I KICK THE DUST FROM MY JOINTS AND CLIMB. IT USED TO BE EASIER.

...BATMAN: CRUSADER OR MENACE? GOHAN'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--

Too 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.

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 AVESION TO GUNS, KNIVES AND CRIME-FIGHTERS...

APPEARENTLY A DETONATOR JOB THAT WOULD MAKE SENSE.

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

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

AM I OWED?

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

THE PRICE IS FIVE MILLION DOLLARS. I WOULD HAVE HAD IT FOR TWO—but I'VE GOT BILLS TO PAY...

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

BRILLIANT DESIGN—WORTHY OF THE JOKER.

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

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

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

— I'D SAY A PRAYER.

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.

HE'S TAPPED INTO THE TV ANTENNA—NO DOUBT RANSOMING THE LIVES OF THOUSANDS—WHILE THE TIMER HE DOESN'T KNOW ABOUT IS MONTUES 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...

... THINK...

... 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.

Blam

Blam

Blam

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.

Not much of a corpse left.

Mostly liquid.

Problem is...

There might not be any fingerprints.

Even dental records would probably be useless.

And like I said, Harvey...

...I have to know.

The impact is tremendous. Even bone is turned to powder.
WE TUMBLE LIKE LOVERS.

THE AIR IS COLD.

THE NIGHT IS SILENT.

THKTHKTHKTHKTHK.

LEAVING THE WORLD NO POORER--

--FOUR MEN DYE.
... HARVEY...

... WHAT ARE YOU SO MAD ABOUT, BATS? I’VE BEEN A SPORT...

YOU HAVE TO ADMIT THAT-- I PLAYED ALONG.

AND YOU... YOU TOOK YOUR JOKES 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...

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

AT LEAST, BOTH SIDES MATCH...

... THE SCARS SO DEEP, TOO DEEP...

I CLOSE MY EYES AND LISTEN.

NOT FOOLLED-- BY SIGHT, I SEE HIM...

... AG HE IS...

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

... I SEE A REFLECTION...
PROBLEM WITH CRIME IS THE MORE YOU KNOW, THE MORE NERVOUS IT MAKES YOU.

ME, I CAN'T LOOK AT THAT DOORWAY OVER THERE WITHOUT THINKING OF THE SEVENTY TWO CORPSES I'VE FOUND IN SPOTS LIKE THAT...

...SHOT OR STABBED OR JUST BEATEN TO DEATH BECAUSE THEY WERE TOO STUPID TO KEEP THEIR DISTANCE.

TOO STUPID, OR TOO CIVILIZED. ONE'S THE SAME AS THE OTHER. IN GOTHAM CITY.

I PASS A LIQUOR STORE, RUN MY EYES OVER THE RIGID FEATURES OF THE NUN OF MELT THAT USED TO BE A FRIENDLY MERCHANT.

I WONDER HOW MANY MEN HE'S HAD TO KILL, JUST TO STAY IN BUSINESS.

I SEE A HIGH-PRICED CAR, GLEAMING LIKE NEW IN THE STREETLIGHT, ONCE A SYMBOL OF WEALTH AND POWER, NOW JUST ANOTHER TARGET IN A CITY OF VICTIMS.

A YOUNG BOY DASHES PAST ME, HEALTHY, DIRTY, AND BEAUTIFUL. YOU DON'T WANT TO KNOW WHAT HE MAKES ME THINK OF.

I CURSE SARAH, NOT MEANING IT, FOR HER HIPPIE VEGETARIAN RECIPES AND THE BEAN SPROUTS SHE FORGOT TO PICK UP.

THEN MY CIGAR DOES ITS USUAL AND I COUGH UP A SOUR OF THE BROWN STUFF.

I'M AMAZED AS MY HEAD GOES LIGHT AND THE SPOTS DANCE IN FRONT OF ME—THAT SHE CONVINCED ME NOT TO SMOKE IN MY OWN HOME.

THEN I SICK IT AGAIN.

DURING NEVER SEEMED REAL TO ME WHEN I WAS YOUNG...

FOR SOME REASON I WANT TO SEE BRUCE—NOT TO TALK. I MEAN SURE, TO TALK, AND MAYBE TO DRINK, EVEN THOUGH HE SEEMS TO HAVE GIVEN THAT UP.

SUDDENLY THE HAIR BRISTLES ON THE BACK OF MY NECK.

I HEAR A GIRLISH GIGGLE AND THE SOFT, CHILLED SOUND OF A GUN BEING COOKED BEHIND ME.

I SEE THE FACE OF A KILLER WHO ISN'T YET OLD ENOUGH TO SHAVE.
I THINK OF SARAH.

THE REST IS EASY

...THE COUNCIL OF MOTHERS TODAY PETITIONED THE
MAYOR TO ISSUE A WARRANT FOR THE
IMMEDIATE ARREST OF THE
BATMAN, CITING HIM AS
A HARMFUL INFLUENCE ON
THE CHILDREN OF GOTHAM.

ANOTHER PETITION ON THE
MAYOR'S DESK CAME FROM
THE VICTIMS' RIGHTS TASK
FORCE, DEMANDING AN
OFFICIAL SANCTION OF THE
VIGILANTE'S ACTIVITIES...

THE MAYOR SPOKE TO
REPORTERS THIS
AFTERNOON...

STILL IN
CONSULTATION.
IT'S STILL IN
CONSULTATION.

INCIDENTS OF VIOLENCE
TO CRIMINALS CONTINUE
TO ABOUND IN GOTHAM.
WE CANNOT BE SURE
WHICH ARE THE WORK OF
THE BATMAN--

--AND WHICH
HE HAS
INSPIRED.

EXCUSE ME--
--- I'VE JUST BEEN HANDED THIS BULLETIN.
COMMISSIONER JAMES GORDON HAS BEEN SHOT AND KILLED.

--- OOPS! SORRY, FOLKS. I READ IT WRONG...

--- GORDON WAS ATTACKED OUTSIDE HIS WEST END APARTMENT...

--- GORDON HAS SHOT AND KILLED A SEVENTEEN-YEAR-OLD MEMBER OF THE MUTANT GANG.

...WHAT A BRING DOWN. SEVENTEEN YEARS OLD.
MACHISMO WITH A BADGE... JUST LIKE CHICAGO.

...NOT REAL WELL. I WAS TRIPPING THE WHOLE TIME...

ONE-STEP STREET JUG.
MAXIMUM CHECK-OUT.

WIND'S ALES.
AND THE LEDGE ISN'T TOO MUCH SMALLER THAN A BALANCE BEAM.

SURE JUST SLIPPERY AND ABOUT A MILE UP.

WALL'S KEEPING ME REAL CLEAN-LIKE UNDER A CAR.

FIGURE I DIDN'T SPEND TWO WEEKS' LUNCH MONEY ON THE SUIT...

OH, REAL GOOD, CAROL...

SPAKK...
COMMISSIONER--
YOU JUST SHOT A
BOY. HOW DOES
THAT FEEL?
COMMISSIONER?

THANK YOU, HERNANDO.
THIS IS THE THIRD
ATTEMPT ON GORDON'S LIFE
IN THE THREE WEEKS SINCE
THE LEADER OF THE
MUTANT ORGANIZATION
MADE HIS VIDEOTAPED
DEATH TREAT

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 SICK 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.

GORDON, FACING MANDATORY
RETIREMENT LATER THIS
WEEK, HAS OFFERED TO
STAY AT THE JOB UNTIL THE
MUTANT CRISIS IS RESOLVED.
POLICE MEDIA
RELATIONS DIRECTOR LOUIS
GALLAGHER HAD THIS TO SAY.

NICE OF JIM TO OFFER, BUT
I THINK WE ALL KNOW
THINGS'LL COOL OUT ONCE
HE STEPS DOWN. THE
MUTANTS HAVE A THING
ABOUT HIM...NO, I THINK
IT'S TIME FOR NEW BLOOD.

SUDDENLY, THAT 'NEW BLOOD'
HAS YET TO BE OFFICIALLY
ANNOUNCED. WHILE
INSPECTOR JOHN DALE
SEEMS TO BE THE OBVIOUS
CHOICE, THE MAYOR HAS
YET TO COMMIT HIMSELF.

WITH A SCANT SIX HOURS
REMAINING, THE QUESTIONS
HANG IN THE AIR...WHO
WILL REPLACE JIM GORDON?
AND WHAT WILL BECOME
THE OFFICIAL POSITION ON
THE BATMAN? ROM?

GOOD QUESTION, LOLA.
MRS. JOYCE RIDLEY WAS
ADMITTED TO A PRIVATE
HOSPITAL UPDATE FOR
PSYCHIATRIC OBSERVATION
FOLLOWING HER COLLAPSE
THIS MORNING.

HER TEN-MONTH BABY,
KEVIN, HEIR TO THE
RIDLEY CHEWING GUM
FORTUNE, IS STILL
MISSING. ANYONE WITH
INFORMATION IS URGED
TO CALL THE CRISIS
HOTLINE.

I'M STILL POULING
OPINIONS.
I'M STILL POULING
OPINIONS.
CHILL, MAN--IT'S JUST A GOD DAMN-- BAT...

SKREE SKREE SKREE SKREE

GET AWAY...

JESUS...

OH MAN--IT'S HIM--

GRACE--KEEP YOUR GUN ON TH KID

SPOT--GET OUT OF TH WAY--

BRAKA BRAKA BRAKA BRAKA
Braka Braka Braka Brakkk

Back off, man--
--I'll kill the kid--

--Believe me, man, I will--

Believe me--
I believe you.

A ruthless, monstrous vigilante, striking at the foundations of our democracy—maliciously opposed to the principles that make ours the most noble nation in the world—and the kindest...

I'm glad you asked me that question, Ted. It is true that this Batman has terrorized the economically disadvantaged and socially insulated—but his effects are far from positive.

But you see, Ted, the membrane is flexible and permeable. Here the more significant effects of the blow become calculable, even predictable. To wit—

Dr. Wolper—You have claimed that the Batman is himself responsible for the crimes he fights. Still, crime rates have shown a steady drop in the weeks since his return. How do you explain this?

...Frankly, I'm surprised there aren't a hundred like him out there—a thousand people are fed up with terror—with stupid laws and sexual cowardice. He's only taking back what's ours...

Tonight, we will examine his impact on our consciousness from Metropolis: we have Lava Lamb, managing editor of the Daily Planet...

...Joining us from Gotham City—Dr. Bartholomew Wolper, popular psychologist and social scientist, author of the best-selling "Hey—I'm Okay"...

...With us tonight from his office in Washington—presidential media advisor Chuck Brick...

Pictures in the public psyche as a vast, moist membrane...through the media, Batman has struck this membrane a vicious blow, and it has recoiled. Hence your misleading statistics.
EVERY ANTI-SOCIAL ACT CAN BE TRACED TO IRRESPONSIBLE MEDIA INPUT. GIVEN THIS, THE PRESENCE OF SUCH AN ABERRANT, VIOLENT FORCE IN THE MEDIA CAN ONLY LEAD TO ANTI-SOCIAL PROGRAMMING.

MR. BROWN, THE PRESIDENT HAS REMAINED SILENT ON THIS ISSUE. DON'T YOU-- AND ME-- FEEL THAT THE NATIONAL UPRIGHT, OVER THE BATMAN WARRIORS, IF NOT ACTION, A STATEMENT OF POSITION?

HECK, TED. HE'LL GET AROUND TO A PRESS CONFERENCE SOONER OR LATER. BUT THE PRESIDENT'S GOT TO KEEP HIS EYE ON THE BIG PICTURE, Y'KNOW? AND THIS BATMAN PLATYPUS, WELL...

IT'S NOISY, ALL RIGHT. THAT BIG CAPE AND POINTY EARS -- IT'S GREAT SHOW-UP, AND YOU KNOW THE PRESIDENT KNOWS HIS SHOW AND YOU JUST KEEP YOUR SHIRT ON, TED...

MISS LANS, YOU ARE THE BATMAN'S MOST VOCAL SUPPORTER, HOW CAN YOU CONDONE BEHAVIOR THAT IS SO BLATANTLY ILLEGAL? WHAT ABOUT DUE PROCESS--CIVIL RIGHTS?

WE LIVE IN THE SHADOW OF CRIME, TED. WITH THE UNSPOKEN UNDERSTANDING THAT WE ARE VICTIMS-- OF FEAR--OF VIOLENCE--OF SOCIAL IMPOVERISH.

A MAN HAS RISEN TO SHOW US THAT THE POWER IS, AND ALWAYS HAS BEEN, IN OUR HANDS. WE ARE UNDER-SERVE-- HE'S SHOWING US THAT WE CAN RESIST.
Lana--you haven't exactly answered my question...

I'm the worst nightmare you ever heard, kind that made you wake up screaming for your mother.

You've got a mother, don't you? Every punk should have a mother...

Quite an arsenal you and your buddies had...

The 45 was nothing special, of course...

...I think I'm bleeding, man... I need a doctor...

...but that Smith & Wesson on your rack was carrying...

...you know which... the one you perforated...

...that pistol was odd.

Man...

Especially since it was adapted for a silencer, you just don't run across that--not outside of military intelligence.

But that NGO of yours--that's combat weaponry.

Man...

I don't think you understand the situation. You're not in a position to negotiate.

Let me show you...

...no cops, man... I walk...

...what do you say, man?...
IT WAS TOUGH WORK, CARRYING TWO HUNDRED AND TWENTY POUNDS OF SOCIOPATH TO THE TOP OF GOTHAM TOWERS—THE HIGHEST SPOT IN THE CITY.

THE SCREAM ALONE IS WORTH IT.

WATCHA RED CARD, MAN, WATCHA RED CARD...

I HEARD THIS IS A CON GAME...

SEE FU YOURSELF, MAN—WATCHA RED CARD...

OW... MAN—WHAT THE HELL...
IT'S THE TRAIN, THINKS MARGARET CORCORAN. MY LEGS NEVER HURT LIKE THIS WHEN I WAIT THE TABLES.

THE TRAIN--IT WON'T LET THE PAIN LIE IN MY CALVES WHERE I'M USED TO IT.

SHE FEELS THE METAL SQUARE INSIDE HER PURSE AND SMILES.

ALMOST NOBODY TIPS ANYMORE. BUT AN UPTOWN DRUNK LEFT TEN DOLLARS ON THE TABLE TONIGHT. WHAT WITH THE TURN-OFF WORSE IT WAS WRONG TO SPEND THE TIP ON THE PAIN.

HER PURSE STRAP BITES INTO HER SHOULDER...

...AND MARGARET CORCORAN, WHO HAD NOT PLEASSED WITH BLUE CROSS WHEN THEY CANCELLED HER INSURANCE OR WITH CITIGROPP WHEN THEY REPOSSESSED HER CAR...

...BEGS LIKE A KNOCK FOR A TEN-DOLLAR PAINT SET.

SHE FEELS HER PURSE HIT HER STOMACH AS THE TRAIN RUMMLES TO A STOP. SHE HEARS THEM LAUGH.

SHE LANDS HARD ON THE CEMENT, BUT IT ONLY HURTS. SHE FEELS THE SQUARE OF METAL AND THANKS GOD AND CAN'T HELP BUT CRY.

THEN SHE FEELS SOMETHING HEAVY AND ROUND LIKE AN APPLE IN HER PURSE...

WOMAN EXPLODES IN SUBWAY STATION--FILM AT ELEVEN.
THE GENERAL'S RECORD IS AN ANTHEM OF
ORDERS BARKED BETWEEN DARKENING
EXPLOSIONS... OF A
STEEPLY, REASSURING
VOICE ABOVE THE
CRIES OF WOUNDED
MEN...

...AN ANTHEM, SHATTERED INTO
DISCORD IN ITS
LAST FEW NOTES--
BY MISAPPROPRIATED
WEAPONS, SOLD
TO THE MUTANTS.

I ALMOST ASKED
HIM WHY...
"The Heat is on, your honor."

EXECUTIVE STEAM ROOM

I can see that. Can't you tell that I can see that?

If it's war they want, I've got just the thing.

Not for commissioner, your honor. Not anymore. No, it's up to you. Don't make a decision too soon. Gordon's popular.

I know that. Don't you think I know that? And I've given it a lot of thought. Dale's looking good to me. He's available -- and he's black.

...Jor-es reunion of the Riddle family... and now a sad note -- four-star General Nathan Briggs is dead, an apparent suicide. Relatives say Briggs had been violently depressed...

...since his insurance company refused to sponsor a rare treatment that may have saved his wife, who is dying from Hodgkin's disease in other news...

...police media director Louis Gallager has promised an answer soon to the question that's on everyone's mind -- who will be the new police commissioner of Gotham City...?
BLACK: RAISE YOUR HONOR. BEHIND DARE'S NEUTRALITY ON THE BATMAN THING, AND YOU KNOW WHAT YOUR OWN NEUTRALITY IS COSTING YOU...

I'M NOT NEUTRAL. WHO SAYS I'M NEUTRAL?

I'M CONFUSED.

WELL, ALL RIGHT, GALLAGHER--I'LL MAKE A DECISION. I'LL SHOW THEM WHO'S BOSS ON MY OWN PRIVATE AUTHORITY--I ASSIGN YOU THE TASK OF FINDING ME A POLICE COMMISSIONER.

I ALREADY HAVE, SIR.

OF COURSE, SIR. IT'S JUST THAT THE SIGNAL IS COMING FROM INSIDE THE--

THAT'S RIGHT, ALFRED. I'M TAKING HER OUT.

I HIT THE ENGINE. SHE RESPONDS LIKE IT WAS YESTERDAY.

IT IS YESTERDAY...

I'M SURPRISED THERE IS A CONTROVERSY. HIS ACTIONS ARE CATEGORIZED CRIMINAL. I WILL HAVE HIM BROUGHT TO TRIAL. EXCUSE ME...

...YES, I'LL BE SPECIFIC. MY FIRST ACT AS POLICE COMMISSIONER WILL BE TO ISSUE AN ARREST WARRANT FOR THE BATMAN ON CHARGES OF ASSAULT, BREAKING AND ENTERING,创造 A PUBLIC HAVOC...

LITTLE MORE THAN HALF THE AGE OF THE MAN SHE'S REPLACING, ELLEN YINDEL IS--

A WOMAN CHRIST ALMIGHTY...

DID YOU SAY SOMETHING, JIM?

...NOTHING, SWEETHEART...

...CAPTAIN ELLEN YINDEL...

...THE YOUNGEST EVER TO HOLD THE OFFICE...AND, OF COURSE, THE FIRST WOMAN--

ELLEN YINDEL BrINGS WITH HER AN ASTONISHING ARREST RECORD FROM CHICAGO. SHE WAS QUICK TO ANSWER ON THE SUBJECT OF BATMAN...
THE DUMP STRETCHES OUT OF SIGHT FROM THE FAR BANK OF THE WEST RIVER. I'M TOLD IT ENDS SOMEWHERE BEFORE THE FARM LANDS.

IT SMELLS OF ROT AND RUST--IT'S A BREEDING GROUND FOR INSECTS AND RODENTS.

I CUT THE ENGINE AND LISTEN TO ONE OF THE RODENTS.

THEY CALL US A GANG, THEY CALL US A Mob. THEY THINK WE JUST NOISY KIDS.

ONLY WHEN THEY DIE BY OUR HANDS AND SEE THEIR WOMEN RAPE, WILL THEY KNOW...

--WE HAVE THE STRENGTH-- WE HAVE THE WILL-- AND NOW WE HAVE THE GUNS.

GOTHAM CITY BELONGS TO THE MUTANTS!

TAKE THE GUNS, TAKE THE BOMBS, STORM POLICE HEADQUARTERS.

KILL AND KILL.

BRING ME THE HEAD OF THE OLD MAN GORDON.

MY TRUNcheon WILL CARRY IT THROUGH THE STREETS.

I LISTEN FOR AS LONG AS I CAN STOMACH IT...

...THEN I LET THEM KNOW I'M HERE.

---BATMANAAA!

---CHIK---
MUTANTS! SURRENDER NOW... OR BE DESTROYED!

THE BATMOBILE -- THAT'S WHAT YOU CALLED IT, DICK.

KIND OF HARD TO BE A KID AND COME UP WITH...

BLAM BLAM BLAM BLAM
BRAKABRAKABRACKA
POOM POOM POOM...

THEY DON'T EVEN WAIT FOR THE ORDER.

YOUNG PEOPLE THESE DAYS...

...NO RESPECT FOR HISTORY.

WHOOP
I modified her during some nasty riots fifteen years ago. The only thing I know of that can cut through her hide isn't from this planet.

The mutants use hand grenades. They use rocket launchers. Something bounces off the hull that must have come from a Bazooka.

They do each other a lot of damage.
THE LAST SHOTS HAVE STOPPED ECHOING... BUT THE MOANS AND CRIES WILL CONTINUE LONG INTO THE NIGHT...

I FEEL THE EMPTY SEAT BESIDE ME AND ONCE AGAIN I THINK OF YOU, DICK... I LOOK AT THE ONE CREATURE WHO ISN'T WOUNDED OR HIDING...

... WE NEVER FACED ANYTHING LIKE THIS...

WE ONLY FUGHT HUMANS...

GREAT DINNER, HON.

THANKS, BABE.

FTT

HEY...

... DIDN'T WE HAVE A KID?...

I CALL YOU COWARD.

COME OUT, COWARD -- FACE ME --

-- I KILL YOU -- EAT YOUR HEART...
MASTER BRUCE—COME IN, PLEASE — MASTER BRUCE...

BUT THERE HE IS, DICK — THE MUTANT LEADER...

...A KIND OF EVIL HE NEVER DREAMED OF...

...THERE HE IS — SQUARE IN MY SIGHTS.

...AND THERE'S ONLY ONE THING TO DO ABOUT HIM THAT MAKES ANY SENSE TO ME...

...EVERY MUSCLE A STEEL SPRING—READY TO LASH OUT—

...AND HE'S YOUNG...

...IN HIS PHYSICAL PRIME...

JUST PRESS THE TRIGGER AND BLAST HIM FROM THE FACE OF THE EARTH.

THOUGH THAT MEANS CROSSING A LINE I DREW FOR MYSELF, THIRTY YEARS AGO...

...I CAN'T THINK OF A SINGLE REASON TO LET HIM LIVE...

...EXCEPT HE'S GOT EXACTLY THE KIND OF BODY I WISH HE DIDN'T HAVE...

...POWERFUL, WITHOUT ENOUGH BULK TO SLOW HIM DOWN...

MSTER BRUCE—YOU'VE SHUT DOWN THE WEAPONS!

...AND I HONESTLY DON'T KNOW IF I COULD BEAT HIM.

...AND I CAN'T BE SERIOUS—SIR, HE'LL KILL YOU—

COME ON, MAN—YOU BORIN ME—

CANT HAVE A BACK DOOR, ALFRED. MIGHT BE TEMPTED TO USE IT.
I make him eat some garbage—

— then I help him swallow it.

A beauty to his solar plexus— I worry he might drop too soon—

Then his claws dig into my back—

His filed teeth like razors in my trapezius—

You slow, man.

He's right—he had all the time in the world—
---HE SHOWS ME WHAT A FAST KICK IS---

---SOMETHING EXPLODES IN MY MIDSSECTION---

---A MOMENT OF BLACKNESS---
---TOO SOON FOR THAT---
---TOO SOON---
---WHAT'S WRONG WITH ME---

---SUNLIGHT BEHIND MY EYES AS THE FOG RISES---

---LET HIM GET CLOSE---
---NOT YET---
---NOT YET---

---GIVE HIM EVERYTHING I'VE GOT---
---HIS NECK HOLDS---
---HIS NOSE SHATTERS---
---BONE BITES INTO MY KNUCKLES---

---BLOOD INTACT---
---NO INTERNAL BLEEDING---

---LET IT LOOK WORSE THAN IT IS---

---THE IDIOT---
---STARTS LAUGHING---

---NO---
"HA! GETTIN TIRED, OLD MAN?"

"---INSANE--LET ME TRY HIM--JUST TO SHOW--HE CAN TAKE IT--"

"---OKAY--OKAY--SHOW ME--SHOW ME EXACTLY--HOW MUCH--"

"---IT TAKES TO BREAK YOU--"

"---LEAST I CAN DO--IS SHUT HIM UP--ONE TO THE NECK--SHOULD TEACH HIM BRAND-NEW KINDS OF PAIN--"

"THAK CHDK KLÜDD"
WHERE'D HE GO—

NO—DON'T GO INTO SHOCK...

COLD. GETTING COLD...

COLD OLD COLD...

NO—NO...

DON'T GO INTO SHOCK...

WHERE... ARE YOU... DICK...

YOU WERE ALWAYS...

MY LITTLE MONKEY WRENCH...

DICK...

DICK...

ROBIN... THE BOY HOSTAGE...
THAT'S WHAT TWO-FACE CALLED YOU...

NEK... YOU HATED THAT...

GOT YOURSELF IN DEEP AGAIN, DICK...

ALWAYS... IN OVER YOUR HEAD...
LUCKY, YOU'RE LUCKY I'M ALWAYS HERE...

...TO BAIL YOU OUT...

...DICK...

STILL ALIVE...

PORN STAR HOT GATES TODAY SIGNED A TWELVE-MILLION-DOLLAR CONTRACT WITH LANDMARK FILMS TO STAR IN A SCREEN VERSION OF SNOW WHITE. "I'M DOING IT FOR THE KIDS," SAYS GATES...

IN OTHER NEWS, GALAXY BROADCASTING PRESIDENT JAMES O'BRIEN ASSURED VIEWERS THAT THE TELEVISION WRITERS' STRIKE, NOW IN ITS FOURTH YEAR, WILL NOT AFFECT THE YEAR'S PROGRAMMING...

...THE POLITICAL PERFORMANCE COMMISSION HAS AWARDED THE PRESIDENT AN UNPRECEDENTED FIVE CREDIBILITY POINTS FOR HIS HANDLING OF PUBLIC PERCEPTION DURING THE ECONOMIC CRISIS...

...THIS JUST IN—EYEWITNESSES REPORT EXPLOSIONS RIFFING ACROSS THE GOTHAM DUMP. A NEWS FOUR HELICOPTER IS ON ITS WAY, FOURS...

GENTLY NOW, GENTLY, GOOD GIRL...

NOW YOU JUST RUN ALONG HOME...
SON, I HOPE YOU DON'T MIND IF I GET RIGHT DOWN TO BRASS TACKS... NOT AT ALL, MR. PRESIDENT, YOUR TIME IS PRECIOUS.

GUESS IT IS AT THAT...

WELL, SON, YOU KNOW I LIKE TO KEEP YOU OUT OF DOMESTIC AFFAIRS... WHAT WITH ALL THE RUCKUS YOU KICK UP.

...WELL, SIR, BUT I'M NOT HUNGRY.

HERE... HAVE A MINT.

I LOVE MINTS...

SON, I LIKE TO THINK I LEARNED EVERYTHING I KNOW ABOUT RUNNING THIS COUNTRY ON MY RANCH... I KNOW IT'S COMY, BUT I LIKE TO THINK IT...

...AND WELL, IT'S ALL WEAK AND GOOD... ON A RANCH, I MEAN... FOR THE HORSES TO BE ALL DIFFERENT COLORS AND SIZES... LONG AS THEY STAY INSIDE THE FENCE...

...IT'S EVEN OKAY TO HAVE A CRAZY BUCK... NOW AND THEN... DOES THE MAN'S GOOD TO BREAK HIM IN...

...BUT IF THAT BROCHED UP AND KICKS THE FENCE OUT AND GETS THE OTHER HORSES CROOKED... WELL, IT'S BAD FOR BUSINESS.

WORLD'S CHANGED, SON. IT'S NOT LIKE THE OLD DAYS. I WISH IT WERE. I'D GIVE HIM A MEDAL... SIR, I CAN'T TALK TO HIM, BUT...

...NOW, SIR, I'M NOT PULLING YOU TO DRAG HIM KICKING AND SCREAMING INTO THE STABLE. JUST SETTLE HIM DOWN... RIDE HIM AROUND THE YARD A FEW TIMES IF YOU HAVE TO.

SIR, I CAN'T APPRECIATE IT. I'D JUST HATE TO SEE THINGS GET OUT OF... WELL, I'D JUST HATE THAT.

NO, THANK YOU, SIR.

YES, SIR.

ON, DEAR... HE'S NOT DOING WELL AT ALL...

PLEASE, DEAR... STAY OUT OF THE WAY OF THE SENSOR.

A Scene of Total Warfare! Eighty-Three Members of the Mutant Gang Have Been Found Suffering from Bullet Wounds and Shrapnel Wounds.

Among Those Captured by the Police Is the Mutant Leader, Who Claims the Batman Used Military Weapons in the Attack—and Also Claims to Have Defeated the Batman in Personal Combat...

WHAT ARE YOU DOING WITH HIS ARM, YOUNG LADY?
BATMAN IS A COWARD. I BROKE HIS BONES. I CONQUERED THE POOL. I MADE HIM DUG FOR MERCY. ONLY BY CHEATING DID HE ESCAPE ALIVE.

LET HIM GO TO HIS WOMEN. LET HIM LICK HIS WOUNDS. HIS DAY IS DONE. GOTHAM CITY BELONGS TO THE MUTANTS.

STRETCHER'S... ON A GYROSCOPE... STAYS LEVEL... NO MATTER WHAT...

SQUEEEE

THAT'S KEEN.

I... KNOW WHAT SHE DID, ALFRED. WHERE... DID YOU LEARN TO SET AN ARM... MAKE A SALVAGE?

GIRL SCOUTS.

WHAT'S... YOUR NAME...

CARrie, CARRIE KELLEY.

ROBIN.

NOW DON'T YOU STRAIN YOURSELF, SIR. YOU'VE QUITE A LOT OF INTERNAL BLEEDING...

THIS YOUNG LADY WAS KIND ENOUGH TO HELP YOU ABDOR...

SIR! YOU'RE DELIRIOUS, SR. YOU JUST REST NOW... DON'T TRY TO SPEAK!

WE'RE ONLY MOMENTS FROM THE HOSPITAL...

NO... HOSPITAL, ALFRED...

... THE CAVE...

SIR!

BUT SIR... THE CAVE... AND ROBIN... COMES WITH US...

SOON MY ARMY WILL STORM GOTHAM CITY. SOON THE HEAD OF GORDON WILL BE CARRIED THROUGH THE STREETS. THEN I WILL HUNT YOUR NEW COP... YOUR WOMAN COP... AND I WILL $!
THE REST OF THE MUTANT LEADER'S STATEMENT IS LIMIT FOR BROADCAST.

I DON'T THINK YOU REALIZE WHAT YOU'RE SUGGESTING, DR. WOLPER.

I DON'T EXACTLY BRING US A POSITIVE PUBLICITY, AND THIS ONE...

I KNOW GLEN. I KNOW.

--BUT I'M NOT TALKING ABOUT A RELEASE. THIS WILL BE A CONTROLLED ENVIRONMENT-- AND IT WOULD BE SO GOOD FOR HIM.

HIM?

I'M NOT WORRIED ABOUT HIM.

COME NOW, GLEN! HE'S BEEN NEARLY COMPRISE FOR MORE THAN A DECADE. IF YOU'D JUST TALK WITH HIM... FOR FIVE MINUTES, GLEN...

I DON'T KNOW. THERE'S SOMETHING WELL...

GLEN, HE IS A PATIENT.

LEN FORB
ADMINISTRATOR

NOW THAT'S A FINE WAY TO SPEAK IN A HOUSE OF MERCY, ISN'T IT? LISTEN-- PUT ALL THE GUARDS YOU WANT IN THE STUDIO, IF IT WILL MAKE YOU FEEL BETTER.

OKAY, ALL RIGHT.

FIVE MINUTES.

FIVE MINUTES, GLEN. HE IS A PATIENT.

S'CAUSE ME, WE'RE HEADING STRAIGHT FOR A BRICK WALL...

DON'T WORRY, ROBIN...

SIR-- I URGES YOU TO REJECT DR. WOLPER'S SUGGESTION. I DON'T DESERVE THIS CHARITY... MY CRIMES WERE HORRIBLE BEYOND ALL WORDS... I AM BEYOND REDEMPTION.

PLEASE-- JUST LOCK ME AWAY-- FROM HUMAN MEMORY...

IT'S JUST A HOLOGRAM...

...
I leave them behind me...

I leave it all behind me...

I go...

to the dark place...

...where I first met you...

...before my parents died...

...before I learned...

...what I am.

I'm dying...

But I can't die...

I'm not finished yet...

...and you're not finished with me.

Then...

...something shuffles...

out of sight...

...something sucks the stale air...

...and..misses.
GLIDING WITH ANCIENT GRACE...

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

SURELY THE FIRST-GROWTH, THE PURES'T WARRIOR...

SURELY THE PURCHEST CURATOR...CLAIRING NATIONS...

CLAIMING ME AS YOUR OWN.

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

ON HEARING THIS MESSAGE FROM THE MUTANTS, COMMISSIONER GORDON PUT HIMSELF AND HIS MEN ON TWENTY-FOUR HOUR ALERT--WHILE THE MIRACULOUS MALP WAS QUICK TO SPEAK OUT...

THIS WHOLE SITUATION IS THE RESULT OF GORDON'S INCOMPETENCE--AND OF THE TERRORIST ACTIONS OF THE BATMAN, I WISH TO SIT DOWN WITH THE MUTANT LEADER... TO NEGOTIATE A SETTLEMENT.

NOT AT ALL, BILL. Frankly I expect the mayor's credibility ratings to go through the roof, especially if he's successful in the negotiations...

This, combined with his strong stand on Batman...and making a woman the next police commissioner--well, I think we've got a whole new mayor on our hands--

WHAT DO YOU THINK, TRISH? HIS HONOR BONE NUTS?

--PUBLIC PERCEPTION--THAT IS.
Arnold Crump fingers the cold steel things in his pocket and stares at the movie marquee and does not throw up.

He thinks about Led Zeppelin and how they are trying to kill him.

He had not known about Led Zeppelin until father Don on TV had explained it last night. Father Don said that Led Zeppelin hid a prayer to Satan in their song "Stairway to Heaven."

They hid it very well. They recorded it backwards.

The young girl who was painted like a whore didn't believe him.

That was this afternoon, in the store. He explained it to her very carefully. She said awful words.

Arnold Crump took the album from the record store where he worked until they fired him this afternoon and transferred "Stairway to Heaven" to tape.

Then he played the tape backwards.

He played it forty-seven times until he was absolutely certain that father Don was right.

He lost his temper and broke the record into four pieces that were exactly the same size.

The young girl who was painted just like a whore screamed for the manager and the manager walked out from the back room and wouldn't even listen and fired Arnold Crump.

That was this afternoon, in the store.

Every morning and evening until tonight of course he had walked six blocks out of his way to avoid this neighborhood.

It's worse than he imagined.

Row on row on row on row of pictures of women and words and words and words. He stopped at this one. The one he is in right now. And read the title that did not make him throw up.

THE TITLE IS "MY SWEET SATAN," WHICH IS WHAT ARNOLD CRUMP IS ABSOLUTELY CERTAIN HE HEARD WHEN HE PLAYED "STAIRWAY TO HEAVEN" BACKWARDS.

On the screen a nun. A nun is doing something and she's painted exactly like a whore.

Three slain in Batman-inspired porn theater. Sandblot. Details to follow...
Iron Man Vasquez can't taste his Snickers Bar. He knows he should be out of here, cut and gone, waiting for Bigger's to send the sixty dollars, thirty for each leg, he thinks, feeling nothing.

He pushes through the cotton in his head and remembers the last time he felt something.

It was in the first and only round of his last fight. His last fight when Captain Warrior hit him across the nose.

Broken nose Vasquez. Bigger's had called him. Just laughed when Iron Man cried like a baby and begged for another fight.

Then Bigger's put his fat arm around Iron Man's shoulder and told him the only way he could make money now.

Suddenly his eyes stings and Iron Man hurts all over and realizes he's reading about a man.

A man who dresses up like a monster and makes things right.

The next time Iron Man Vasquez feels something, he's standing in a restaurant with something on his face and a gun in his hand.

He hears a truck backfire...

Crazed would-be Killer dresses as Batman--after this...

A devout Catholic, Peperi Spanneck can't say he approves of this Batman.

And when he hears the woman scream down the street, he knows he should be afraid.

Instead he's looking at the alarm system that cost him two months' profits and the Iron Bars over his Windows that make his beautiful Shop look like a prison...

He can feel his pulse, just below his eyes. He knows he's gone crazy. But the Murderer is running, afraid.

Nobody is hurt badly enough for this to make the news.
AN UPDATE--THE MAYOR IS THIS MINUTE IN CONSULTATION WITH THE MUTANT LEADER, WHO HAS AGREED TO MEET HIM ALONE. MEANWHILE, THE MAYOR'S LEADERSHIP QUOTIENT HAS SOARED--EXCUSE ME...

I'D EXPECTED THEM TO BE SCREAMING AND FIGHTING, BUT THEY SIT LIKE A CAPTIVE ARMY. I'D LIKE TO THINK THEY'RE SCARED. BUT HERE I AM, WALKING THE MAYOR TO MEET THEIR LEADER--WITH ALL THE CEREMONY OF A MILITARY CONFERENCE.

THE CELL DOOR OPENS. THE AIR GETS THICK. I FEEL THE MAYOR SHudder, IN TIME WITH ME.

I ASK HIM ONE MORE TIME IF HE'S SURE HE WANTS TO GO IT ALONE. HE SURGES, AND NODS.

I DON'T KNOW IF I'D CALL IT COURAGE.

I HEAR A NERVOUS GIGGLE AND AN ANIMAL GROWL. I HEAR HANDCUFF LINKS SNAP.

THE MUTANT LEADER RIPPED THE MAYOR'S THROAT OUT WITH HIS TEETH. THE MUTANT HAS BEEN RETURNED TO HIS CELL. MORE ON THIS AS WE GET IT.
THAT'S RIGHT—WE'VE GOT
POLICE VIDEO TAPE OF
THE MAYOR'S MURDER!
ONLY ON CHANNEL TWO!
NOT FOR THE SQUEAMISH.
STAY TUNED.

SOVIET DESTROYERS HAVE
BEEN SIGHTED IN THE
WATERS OFF CORSO MALTESE.
AND, IN GOTHAM CITY,
IT ALSO LOOKS LIKE
IMPELLING WAR, AS
THE CITY BIRDS ITSELF
FORS FOR THE MUTANT ATTACK...

NEWS 4
GORDON FLYNG

CHECK WHAT'S
COMING, MAN.
SOME PIECE.

TASTY—HEY—
IS THAT WHO
I THINK IT IS?

HEY, SWEET
PIECE—we
GET PLANS IF YOU—

NICE PLANS.

FRIGID
BITCH—WE CURE
HER...

A FRIGHTENED SILENCE HAS
FALLEN OVER GOTHAM;
SILENCE BROKEN ONLY BY
THE URGENT WORDS OF
DEPUTY ANDEREN—EXCLUSE
ME—MAYOR STEVENSON...

IF THERE ARE ANY
MEMBERS OF THE MUTANT
ORGANIZATION LISTENING...
PLEASE—PLEASE WE
ARE STILL OPEN TO
NEGOTIATION...

YOU'VE BEEN THROUGH
QUITE A LOT, MASTER
BRUCE. IT FOLLOWS
THAT YOUR JUDGMENT
MAY BE IMPAIRED...

WHAT ARE YOU GETTING
AT, ALFRED?

IT'S THE
GIRL, SIR.

SHE'S YOUNG.
SHE'S SMART.
SHE'S BRAVE.

CARRIE, SHE'S
PERFECT.

YOU SEE IT
ALL GETS DOWN
TO THEIR LEADER, THEY
WORSHIP HIM...

SHE'S A SWEET
YOUNG CHILD.

WITH HER, I
MIGHT BE ABLE
TO END THIS
MUTANT NONSENSE
ONCE AND FOR ALL.

SHE'S MORE
THAN THAT. I
SHALL COME
RIGHT OUT
WITH IT.

HAVE YOU
FORGOTTEN
WHAT HAPPENED TO JASON?

I WILL
NEVER FORGET
JASON. HE WAS
A GOOD SOLDIER.
HE HONORED ME.

BUT THE
WAR GOES ON.
I DON'T CARE IF HIS MOTHER'S PREGNANT!

HE'S ON TIME -- OR I'LL HAVE HIS Badge!

M. KENOSUR "Commissioner"

SLAM

I'M REPORTING FOR DUTY.

FRED YINDEL?

I HAVE DETAILED
TODAY'S PLAN.

ALTER IT IN ANY WAY -- TAKE ANY CHANCES -- AND YOU'RE FIRED.

ANY DUTY, SIR.

I'M AFRAID WE'RE AS READY AS WE'RE GOING TO GET, CAPTAIN. IT'S A WAITING GAME NOW. IF YOU'D LIKE TO WAIT HERE -- HAVE A SEAT.

YOUR TRAINING BEGINS TOMORROW.

IT WILL BE WEEKS BEFORE YOU'RE READY FOR DIRECT CONTACT WITH THE ENEMY.

COMMISSIONER -- I'VE ADMIRED YOU SINCE I WAS A CHILD.

HARD TO BELIEVE THAT, YINDEL, CONSIDERING HOW YOU GOT YOUR JOB.

YES, GALLAGHER. HE LOVES ME. I DON'T LIKE HIM.

I'M AWARED AT HIS JUDGMENT. I'VE READ YOUR RECORD.
THANK YOU, I DON'T THINK HE'S READ IT. HE ONLY SEEMED TO CARE HOW I FELT ABOUT BATMAN.

LET'S... NOT TALK ABOUT BATMAN, SHALL WE?

AND LEADER... DON'T SHIV ON BATMAN--LEADER SAY HE PEGGED BATMAN.

LEADER SAY, BUT LEADER CHILL--IN A CELL, DON--AN\nBATMAN--HE NURE HALF THE GAMES, ARINDAL.\nHEY--EYES, SLIDEWAYS, DON. CHICKEN LEG COMIN'-WEARIN' COLORS.

That Batman--He Nasty Tossed Spike Right Through Th Sign, Don.
I Figure That Real Cool, Rob. Figure Axins The Sign Didn't Bully Up Th Price Of Th Games.

My Mon Licken Chess--All Lines Are Busy.
Chess Kinda My Nasty Rob.
Chess B'ly--Chess Pre-School Mutant.

Yeah, You Leader Squeez. I Figure.
Gee, Boys -- I Figure You Ain't All Bright.

We Mutants! We Super-Slayers!

I'm Sure, That's Why You At Th Pipe. I Don't Shiv.

Sand! She Don't Shiv.
Aint Fan, What Pipe, Chicken Legs? We Mutants! What's This Pipe?

Pipe, Spud. West River And Forty Attendance, As In Mandatory.

Sure, Th Pipe. We Heard. Didn't Hear It From Me.
Spud

Just Asking, Officer.

I Love Kids.
YOU STAND FOR EVERYTHING.
I BELIEVE IN, COMMISSIONER. I'VE ALWAYS WANTED TO BE THE KIND OF COP YOU ARE. I CAN'T UNDERSTAND HOW YOU CAN SUPPORT A VIGILANTE.

I'M SURE YOU'VE HEARD OLD FOSSILS LIKE ME TALK ABOUT PEARL HARBOR, YINDEL.

FACT IS, WE MOSTLY LIE ABOUT IT. WE MAKE IT SOUND LIKE WE ALL LEAPED TO OUR FEET AND WENT AFTER THE AXIS ON THE SPOT.

HELL, WE WERE SCARED, RUMORS WERE FLYING, WE THOUGHT THE JAPANESE HAD TAKEN CALIFORNIA. WE DIDN'T EVEN HAVE AN ARMY, SO THERE WE WERE, LYING IN BED PULLING THE SHEETS OVER OUR HEADS.

AND THERE WAS ROOSEVELT, ON THE RADIO, SWEARS AND SURE, TAKING FEAR AND TURNING IT INTO A FIGHTING SPIRIT. ALMOST OVERNIGHT WE HAD OUR ARMY.

WE WON THE WAR.

A FEW YEARS BACK, I WAS READING A NEWS MAGAZINE. A LOT OF PEOPLE WITH A LOT OF EVIDENCE SAID THAT ROOSEVELT KNEW PEARL HARBOR WAS GOING TO BE ATTACKED.

AND THAT HE LET IT HAPPEN.

YOU AIN'T HEARD, MAN, I HEARD.

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AND THAT HE LET IT HAPPEN.

YOU AIN'T HEARD, MAN, I HEARD.
THERE'S THOUSANDS OF THEM, BATMAN! WHY? WHY THERE?

BECAUSE I WANT THEM THERE, JIM.

WE COULD MOVE IN--WITH HELICOPTERS AND ALL THE MEN WE HAVE... MAYBE THE NATIONAL GUARD.

NO, JIM.

THEY CAN'T BE ARRESTED. YOU COULD NEVER HOLD THEM ALL. THEY HAVE TO BE DEFEATED. HUMILIATED.

IT'S THE ONLY WAY, JIM. I'M COUNTING ON YOUR HELP. ONE LAST TIME, OLD FRIEND.

HOW ABOUT A WIFE? GOT A SWEET LITTLE WIFE?

SHUT UP.

THOMPSON! YOU'RE RELIEVED.
YOU COME TO SAY HELLO, OLD MAN?

NO.

I CAME TO SAY GOOD-BYE.

YOU SO DEAD, OLD MAN!

GOOD BOY. YOU KNOW WHAT TO DO WITH AN OPEN DOOR.

NOW LET'S TRY A VENT. IT'S YOUR WAY OUT.

GOOD BOY.

FORGET TO TELL YOU ABOUT THE DROP?

YOU'LL BE COMING ACROSS A HOLE SOON—JUST ABOUT THE RIGHT SIZE FOR YOU.

THERE. JUST CLimb INTO THE PIPE.

REMEMBER—RATS CARRY DISEASES.

DON'T EAT ANY.

CAN YOU SMELL THE RIVER YET?

SEE THE END OF THE PIPE?

THE ONLY THING BETWEEN YOU—AND IT—

-- IS ME.

SKWEE-SKWEESKWEESKWEESKWEESKWEES

GGRAAA
SPLOOT

BATMAH!

FACE ME, FOOL...

I KILL YOU...

I SHOW YOU WHO RULES GOTHAM CITY!

OKAY, BOY.

SHOW ME.

GRAAAAHHH...
YOU SEE, DON'T BATMAN -- HE NASTY!

HOPE ROB DON'T SAY BALLS NASTY.

BALLS NASTY.

SHH!

HE'S FAST -- FASTER THAN I AM. AND STRONGER--
-- AND SEEMINGLY IMPERVIOUS TO PAIN. BUT THEY DO COME SMARTER.

MY NAME IS----- ROBY

MY NAME IS----- ROBY

-- GIVE HIM JUST THE RIGHT KIND OF CUT ABOVE THE EYES.

THE KIND THAT BLEEDS.

TO FIGHT LIKE A YOUNG MAN.

I GORB A CLUMP OF MUD.

AND NOBODY'S VERY FAST WHEN HE'S THIGH-DEEP IN MUD.

I WAIT FOR HIM TO TRY A KICK--

LEADER'S BOSSY!

LEADER SLY, BERSERK, SPID, LEADER PEG BATMAN, YOU SEE.

LEADER'S BOSSY!

LEADER SLY, BERSERK, SPID, LEADER PEG BATMAN, YOU SEE.

A QUICK ONE TO THE NERVE CLUSTER IN HIS DELIRIUM, IT DOESN'T HURT HIM--

-- BUT NO FORCE ON EARTH COULD HELP HIM MOVE HIS LEFT ARM NOW.

SHH!

HE CHARGED, BLIND--

-- IT'S FAST--

-- TOO FAST--

SPLORT

SPLORT

THE WIND BLOWED, THE WIND BLOWED AND HE WAS BLOWED.

HE DUSTED!

MY LONER BATS DON'T SHIV, YOU SEE.
Blackness comes in from the edges—
---and kill it below the elbow---
I get sick of the arm---

He spins—at the perfect moment---
---goes for my throat---
---have to take us down---

You don't get it, boy... this isn't a mudhole...

KRAKK... something tells me to stop with the leg.

It's an operating table.

And I'm the Surgeon.

I don't listen to it.
JUST AS I PREDICTED--THE BATMAN HAS INFECTED THE YOUTH OF GOTHAM--POISONED THEM WITH AN INSIDIOUS EXCUSE FOR THE MOST VIOLENTLY ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOR.

WE'RE NOT TALKING ABOUT LETTING THE MUTANT LEADER GO. ONCE HE IS MOBILE, HE WILL BE ARRAIGNED--TO SEE IF HE IS FIT TO STAND TRIAL, OR THE VICTIM OF MENTAL ILLNESS.

BATMAN? I'M PLAIN TIRED OF HEARING ABOUT HIM. HIM AND HOW HE DOESN'T LET THINGS STOP HIM OR JUST LET THINGS GO THE WAY US HUMANS DO. WE COUNT TOO.

THOUGH SURROUNDED BY SINFULNESS AND TERROR, WE MUST NOT BECOME SO EMBRATTED THAT WE TAKE SATAN'S METHODS AS OUR OWN.

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

SO A BUNCH OF PSYCHEDOPE TURN ON CRIMINALS, INSTEAD OF INNOCENTS. FOR THIS YOU WANT TO BLAME BATMAN?

THE PRESIDENT IS CONCERNED, YOU CAN BANK ON THAT, PAL. BUT DON'T EXPECT HIM TO GO JUMPING IN ON GOTHAM'S OWN FINE MAYOR AND GOVERNOR. NO, SIR. THIS IS AMERICA.

I SAID NO COMMENT.
LET ME TELL YOU MY SECRET.

SEEMS EVERYBODY WANTS TO KNOW WHAT IT IS.

...THEY TELL ME I'M HANDLING IT WELL -- MY RETIREMENT. THAT IS -- THEY SMILE AND STARE AT ME, A LITTLE TOO OBVIOUS, ABOUT HOW CURIOUS THEY ARE.

FIFTY YEARS OF THIS AND THEY WONDER.

ELLEN YINDEL
COMMISSIONER OF POLICE

I WON'T BE SEEING HIM AGAIN. I MEAN, SURE, I'LL SEE HIM -- HE'S THAT CLOSE TO POLICE. BUT I'M OUT OF THE PICTURE NOW. OUT OF HIS PICTURE.

LIFE WILL BE EASIER. NOW I WON'T FEEL LIKE DAD TO AN ENTIRE CITY OF SOULS. I WON'T BLEED WITH EVERY SINGLE ONE OF MY CHILDREN.

WHEN I THINK OF BRUCE -- AND WHAT HE'S IN FOR -- I DON'T THINK HE CAN POSSIBLY KNOW HOW MUCH I HURT AND BROKE THE RULES FOR HIM, ALL THESE YEARS...

AND NO POINT, I GUESS.

...WHEN I THINK OF BRUCE -- THEN, I WISH THEY HADN'T RETIRED ME. HE'S FINISHED. AND THERE'S NO WAY TO TELL HIM THAT.

I WAS GOING TO TELL YOU MY SECRET. THE ONE I'LL TELL NOBODY AT THE BANQUET--

-- GOD, WHAT WILL I SAY AT THE BANQUET?

-- IT'S A SIMPLE SECRET.

I THINK OF SARAH.

THE REST IS EASY.

FROGS CROAK LIKE A CARTOON CAR ALARM. CRICKETS PICK UP THE CHORUS.

A WOLF HOWLS.

I KNOW HOW HE FEELS.
BRUCE, YOU IDIOT.

YOU'LL RUIN EVERYTHING.

FOR ALL OF US.

I ALWAYS KNEW YOU WOULD...

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

EMPTY THE CASH REGISTER—OR MY BULLET WILL TEAR THROUGH YOUR BRAIN, BREAKING IT INTO MOSI, GOOEY LUMPS...

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

CLERK GONE BILLY, ROB.

BRUNO GET NASTY, DON. YOU SEE.

BRUNO DON'T SHIV.

YOUR BOYS—USED TO BE AN MUSICIANS, HUH? GUESS SINCCE THEIR BARG BOY HIS ABS FLATTENED THEY'LL WORK FOR ANYBODY.

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

THIEF! YOU'RE A THIEF! SEBGIN LEBBI SELL THIS FOR TWO-FIFTY!

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

I'LL STRIP YOUR FLESH WITH MY TEETH...
HE ALMOST PULLS THE TRIGGER--

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

--THEY ALMOST GET THE DROP ON ME--

--THAT SLOWS ME DOWN--
--THAT MAKES ME SWEAT...

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

WHEE!

HEY, BABS--
--BRUNO-- SHE'S GETTIN' AWAY!!

NOW WE SETTLE UP,
PULL THAT TRIGGER--

--AND I'LL BE BACK FOR YOU!
BOYS, BOYS, BOYS... ONE AT A TIME NOW... NOW ABOUT THAT SMARTLY DRESSED YOUNGSTER IN THE FRONT ROW THERE...

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

BRUNO IS COMING YOUR WAY, ROBIN.
GET HER INTO THE ALLEY. DO NOT LET HER SEE YOU.

WELL, I DON'T THINK THAT'S MY BULL TO-- MY ROY TO ME, BOYS... HEN... 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, GUS, I'M THE GOVERNOR. GOT A WHOLE STATE TO LOOK AFTER. I TRUST THE JUDGMENT OF THE MINOR OF GOTHAM CITY IMPICITLY.

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

AND SO THE BATMAN BUCK IS PASSED-- TO ELLEN 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 FLY, 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.

I REPEAT: DO NOT LET BRUNO SEE YOU. THIS IS AN ORDER.
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 -- THEY HAD SLOW, BLOWING LIKE LEAVES. BUT I DIDN'T SEE IT. IT WAS TOO FAST -- IT WAS FASTER THAN ANYTHING.

FASTER THAN A SPEEDING -- CAREFUL NOW, LOLA.

IF YOU'RE LUCKY, BRUNO -- YOU'LL GO TO JAIL TONIGHT.

MUST HAVE GONE THROUGH THAT DOOR!

HAH!

BRAK!

YAAA

KKKKREEAK

KKKK

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

ON HIS TV APPEARANCE.

DON'T TAKE THE STARS.

THEY AIN'T SAFE.
NEVER MEANT--
TO GIVE HER TIME--

CHKKK

-- TO COCK
THAT THING

BRAPPP

THIS--
WOULD BE
A STUPID
DEATH...

Lucky--

--Lucky
Old Man...

Missed.

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.

HEY-- HE STARTED IT. AND IT
WAS HIS CRUTCHES THAT
TRIPPED ME UP, BLESS...
WHAT?... YOU BET HE YELLED.
WANTED ME TO JUMP DOWN AND
DIE WITH HIM. OF COURSE I RAN.
WHO WOULDN'T? THEN SOMETHING
HIT ME HARD-- IN THE
CHEST--
--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 soot! Spent a second listening to that beggar pray like an idiot.

...Yes, I am religious, but I've got the decency to keep it in church. Then I heard the scream of twisting metal—shouts from inside the train. People bitching, finally the soot settled...

...and there it was—the train, I mean—it's front end crushed 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...
BBBBLLLILLLFMP

POOM

HAH!

---NOT HIM---
---NOT NOW---

THE ROOM GOES HOT -- METAL EXPLODES --

BRAP!

SPAM SPAM SPAM SPAM

---I HAVE YOU---

I'M BUSY TONIGHT. YOU'VE JUST COST ME HOURS.

TOMORROW MORNING. MY PLACE. STAY OUT OF MY WAY UNTIL THEN.

KREEEE

BRUCE -- WE HAVE TO TALK.
SOVIET REPRESENTATIVES STORMED OUT OF THE HALL. REPEATING THIS LATE-BREAKING STORY—U.S./SOVIET TALKS ON THE ERAZED MALTESE CRISIS HAVE BROKEN DOWN.

...SOVIET MILITARY SUPPORT OF THE REGIME OF GENERAL MONTALBAN AS "FASCIST AGGRESSION." THE SOVIETS PLEDGED A "TOTAL MILITARY COMMITMENT." THIS HAS BEEN A NEWS XVI 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 CRIMINALS 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 WELFER.

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 AVERSION TO THE INEVITABLE CONSEQUENCES—

—NOTHING HAS BEEN DONE TO STOP THIS PSYCHOLOGICAL 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 DRANK A FOND CHEERS 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.

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

IF YOU DISOBEY EVER AGAIN--

--YOU'RE FIRED.

HE FACES A CITY OF THIEVES AND MURDERERS AND HONEST PEOPLE TOO FRIGHTENED TO NAME. 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 appreciation 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 wisdom, now I must make my own.

Despite Gotham's plague of crime, I believe our only hope is to examine 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--

It talks...
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. The list of all the people I've murdered.

The list of all the people I've murdered.

-- by letting you live.

She should sleep. She should be fresh tomorrow.

Fistful of entertainment tomorrow night, with Dr. Ruth Weisenheimer, the wet hamburger bun contest, and a man who's brought a lot of singles to the world. Go to bed.

But I just can't sleep.

Twelve killed in a mysterious explosion that leveled a Bay Ridge apartment building. The rescue team sighted Batman at the scene.

Following her arrest order for the Bat-man, Commissioner Yindel filed a formal protest with the media council against the Joker's appearance on the David Endorphine show.

The council denied her protest. The body of three-time loser Hector Memov was found in an east side alley. He had been literally skinned alive.

...the American hostages squad has declared a general strike, in response to treatment of their members in the recent Libyan incident...

Good Morning, Gotham! Good Morning, Gotham! Good Morning, Gotham! Good Morning, Gotham!
...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's the only reason it's all here.

Then he ruins everything by talking.

You're not a young man anymore, Bruce...

But times have changed, and you...

Maybe if you'd learned to slow down... find your niche...

Well, it's just not healthy... you'll burn yourself up.

I know, I know. You look better than you have in years. But...

You're going to make me come right 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 Jr.-- excuse me... heroic 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.

Well, let me tell you, nobody's running off half-cocked, no sir... but we sure as shootin' aren't running away either. We've got to secure our-- area-- stand up for the cause of freedom...

No hurry.

Your accountants wait in the west wing, sir.

Tell them I'm sick.

Shan't have to lie; that cooperative charity called...

And the committee for the prevention of excessive 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 COPE.

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 Cord Malone--

The rest of you will join me on the roof. That maniac is not getting away--and neither is the Batman.

Any questions?

Her last class is about to end. Go get Robin, Alfred.

There's nothing better.

--Fifty-foot waves, pounding the South American coast--

News 4 with Goring.

And, should Miss Kelly have better ways to spend her evening?

The only danger is possible harassment by the Batman. Just when the show begins, you'll see how harmless my patient is--he's a changed man.

You want lipstick, sweet guy?

No. I brought my own.

Wonderful to see you show such interest.
—Seven point five on the Richter Scale...

Have those idiots finally done it?

—Corso Maltese

If anything goes wrong, just say 'booster' into the mike. It's voice activated computers. You wouldn't understand.

Yndel's serious about that arrest order. But I think she's in for a surprise when she bics Police on me. They'll see us soon...

—Yes. How'd you know about...

This thing pack a cloak?

—People should have zek und zek und zek... all ze time, Dave...

Old news, boss.

Your sister Mary didn't real good for Uncle Joker, Bobbie. You will too, won't you?

—God damn milk baby.

Goddamn,
We're getting a reading, Commissioner. Can't pin it down.

Holy--

No, I will not teach you the program. Touch those controls--

And you're fired.

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.

--I was wrong--

--These children don't know me--

Do not move.

You are surrounded.

He can fly.

Nobody can fly.

Guns ready.

Hit the floods.

Fighting Boris, it's been a while...
...IT'S BEEN TWENTY YEARS...

...EVEN MY THERMITE IS OLD...

LUCKY--LUCKY--

SPARK

SPARK

SPLASH

SPARK

SPARK

SPLASH

GAS MERS.

RUSH HIM.

CEASE FIRE.

RUSH... HIM?

HE'S TWICE YOUR AGE, BOY. FIND THE NERVE.

COPPER ONE--

COME IN NOW AND BLOW THIS SHIT AWAY.

SQUAD TWO REPORT, ALL CLEAR, COMMISSIONER. THEY'RE JUST NOW IMPREGNATING HIM...
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.

THORR

KLUDD

SMOKE'S CLEARING!

OVER THERE.

JESUS, HE'S)

WE GOT HIM.

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

THIS IS A SENSITIVE HUMAN BEING HERE, DAVE. I DON'T KEEP COUNT.

I'M GOING TO KILL EVERYONE IN THIS ROOM.

NOW THAT'S DARN RUDE.

CAN'T BELIEVE IT--

--I'M ALREADY BREATHING HARD--

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

AH... DR. WOLFR-- YOU HAF BLEWED IE BATMAN FOR ZEEE KILLINGS, ZYES?

YES YES MY PATIENT IS A VICTIM OF BATMAN'S PSYCHOsis.

AND WHAT IZ ZE NATURE OF BATMAN'S PSYCHOsis?

WHY... SEXual REPRESSION... IZ IS A TERRIBLE ZIM...? ZOU'RE RIGHT, WE MUST NOT RESTRAIN OURSELVES.

TK TK TK

TK

TK

TK

TK
SO I TOLD HIM—AAAA,

KRESHH

BILLY IN CLOSE.

WHEEZING
NOW—CHEST
LIKE A BLAST
FURNACE.

—SO MANY
OF THEM...

A SENSITIVE
HUMAN BEING.

ZEX UND
ZEX...

UND ZEX
UND ZEX...

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

...SO YOUNG...

ACE
THE
CLOAK.
COMMISSIONER-- IT'S THE JOKER-- HE'S KILLED SOMEONE! WE'RE GOING IN!

--LUCKY OLD MAN... BET YOUR ASS WE'RE GOING IN--

WHAT THE HELL...

KRAAK!

BLA BLA BLA BUD BUD BUD BUD KCHOW
BOOSTERS.
BOOSTERS.
WHAT...
PEEL.

FULL SPEED TO THE CAVE. WE'LL SWITCH TO THE CYCLE.

I'M NOT FIRED.

YOU'RE NOT FIRED.

SO MANY SMILES--
SO MANY FACES--
ALL THE SAME...

JOKER FREE -- HUNDREDS DEAD. AFTER THIS.

THEM KILL US IF THEY CAN, BRUCE.

EVERY YEAR THEY GROW SMALLER.
EVERY YEAR THEY HATE US MORE.
WE MUST NOT REMIND THEM THAT GIANTS WALK THE EARTH.
...URGING THE PUBLIC NOT TO WORRY, THE PRESIDENT HAS PLACED STRATEGIC AIR COMMANDS ON RED ALERT. WE WON'T MAKE THE NEXT MOVE, SAID THE PRESIDENT. "BUT WE'RE READY TO MAKE THE LAST."

...THE POPe TODAY DECLARED THAT THE CHURCHES, 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 PATCH OF RED-HOT GRAVEL AT THE BASE OF MY THROAT. I STOPPED DOING THIS TO MYSELF FIVE YEARS AGO...

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

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

...COMMISSIONER WHITTAKER'S GONE ALL SICK. HE'S JUST A ROOKIE...

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

...THEY'VE CHANGED. YOU DON'T KNOW HOW THEY'VE CHANGED.

...THEY'LL ROLL YOU...

...SELINA-- I NEED YOUR HELP.

...IT'S VERY IMPORTANT.

...OH, JESUS.

...AH, SELINA-- YOU SHOULD BE GRATEFUL. I CHANGED MY LIPSTICK. YOU ARE GRATEFUL.

...YES... GRATEFUL...

...NOW... YOUR GIRL ELSE IS ESCORTING A CONGRESSMAN TONIGHT. MEETING HIM AT HIS HOTEL... WHY DON'T YOU CALL ELSE IN HERE?
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.

WHERE'D YOU LEARN ABOUT COMPUTERS, ROBIN?
HAD TO LEARN SOMETHING IN SCHOOL...

FOR THE HUNDRED THOUSANDTH TIME...
--MY FATHER DIES...

UHH... THIS I DIDN'T PAY FOR, EH?
SHH...

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

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

YES... CLOSER.

THIS UNIT HAS ITS OWN CONTROLS, HOW'S IT DETECT?
I DON'T HAVE A LICENSE YET, BUT--

QUIET-- I'M PICKING SOMETHING UP-- A TELEVISION TRANSMISSION--

--HE'S STILL UP THERE, LOUD-- DRESSED IN NOTHING BUT AN AMERICAN FLAG, CONGRESSMAN VACHES, PLEADING FOR A FULL NUCLEAR STRIKE ON CORD MALAYSE--
WE'RE BASTARDS LET'S ACT LIKE NO...

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

COMMISSIONER --DO YOU THINK THE JOKER...

GALLAGHER'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 DROPPED SHUT THE JOINT DOWN AND PICK UP SELMA RYZE.

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

COMMISSIONER...

O'HALLOAN, MA'AM, SIXTH PRECINCT, ANYTHING I CAN... SOMETHING WRONG, COMMISSIONER?

STOP THAT MAN! WHAT THE...
BOSS -- YOU'RE TURNING THE WRONG WAY.

SON OF A BITCH.

YOU'RE NOT.

FLESH WOUND.

BANDAGE IT ON THE WAY.

SKREEK.

HOW MUCH CASHER, HAVE I GOT.

ALL UNITS -- CONVERGE ON KYLE ESCORT.
YOU WERE THE ONE
THEY USED AGAINST
US, BRUCE.

THE ONE
WHO PLAYED IT ROUGH.

WHEN THE NOISE
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 LOOK
LIKE I TAUGHT
YOU.

JUST CAME
OVER THE
AIRHORN
-- NOBODY AT
KYLE E dOCT.
COMMISSIONER.

KYLE'S
APARTMENT,
MERKEL--
...He's using lipstick, Bruce... Mind control... Else...

...Had else use it on that congressman. That's why he:

Easy.

My God... Mary... She's with the governor.

Boss...

I got something.

Cotton candy. The county fair. Thousands.

County... Half my friends'll be there...

...How many more... Until I finally do it?

Don't... Take the girl. He'll...

Police are right on top of us, Robin.

Bring the wings in close. On it.
She got here faster than I planned...

Reminds me of JIM in the old days...

KBLAMM

Watch him, HE'S WHEE!

SKEK

Christ-- It's SUICIDE-- CRAZY--

You tried to warn me, JIM...

So many times...

POOM

...I've made too many of the wrong enemies...

KBLAM BLAM BLAM

...that for all my tricks I've been getting by on luck...

...it's all a game of odds, you said...

...All it will take...is one bullet.

SPAKK
COLD WAVES LAP SOHAM HARBOR...

LIKE THEY HAVE ALL THE TIME IN THE WORLD...

...SHE DOESN'T MAKE A SOUND...

GOOD SOLDIER.

GOOD SOLDIER.

CEASE FIRE.

IS THAT A KID WITH HIM?

CALL INSELBAU, MERKEL. TELL HIM TO ADD CHILD ENDANGERMENT TO THE--

BOY WONDER... GOT TO BE.

SHRIEK: COMMISSIONER... THIS IS THE--

THE GOVERNOR'S LIFE IS IN DANGER. I HAVEN'T TIME TO SAVE HIM. IT'S UP TO YOU.
WE ALMOST THREW A PARTY WHEN YOU RETIRED.

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

THINGS WERE OUT OF HAND.
AND THERE WAS THAT PROBLEM WITH OLIVER.

DO YOU REMEMBER WHY YOU RETIRED, BRUCE?

NO-- JUST LOOK AT YOU--

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--

-- BECAUSE OF YOU.

-- THEY'LL HUNT US DOWN AGAIN--
...COMMUNICATIONS BLACKOUT CONTINUES AT NORTH WAHISTE, AS DO THE BIZARRE NATURAL DISTURBANCES. HUNDREDS WERE ANSWERED. VARIOUS VIPERS LASH THE PORT OF SAN JUAN, SOUTHERN SIXTY MILES SOUTH OF COROTO...

THEY COULD PUT ME IN A HELICOPTER AND FLY ME UP INTO THE AIR AND LINE THE BOYS 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 LUCAS LOCKNEED CONFIERS THAT STRATEGIC AIR COMMAND STANDS AT DEF CON THREE - A HEARTBEAT FROM DEPLOYMENT. "WE'RE PRONED, SAYS LOCKNEED..."

APPREHENDED WHILE TRYING TO POISON THE BATMAN RESIDENCE. THE MUTANT GANGS, THEIR SKIN PAINTED CHALK WHITE, THEIR HAIR DYED GREEN...

SOMEWHERE A WOMAN CALLS OUT FOR HER SON... SOMETIMES A CANTOPL PLAYS THE SAME TUNE, AGAIN AND AGAIN...

...A TINY HAND TIGHTENS IT'S GRIP ON MY ARM...

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

LARA, YOU ABOMINATE ME. FIFTEEN POLICEMEN HOSPITALIZED... HUNDREDS DEAD... AND STILL YOU CLING TO THIS HERD WORSHIP, THOUGH HOW ANYONE CAN THINK OF A PERO Morocco AS A HERO...

IT ENDS TONIGHT, JOKER.

BATMAN HASN'T KILLED ANYBODY. MORRIE.
Perhaps he hasn't... but personally, that's why I said he failed, Lana dear. Still, it's hardly a coincidence that the Joker came out of a ten-year-old Canada... now, of all times...

Thank the nice man, Donald. I want the kind that talks.

Piss off.

Uh, boss-- there's a bad heading our way.

It's big. It's...

It's him. I'll make sure the bomb goes off.

What-- what are they?

Hey!

Hey-- it's--

Bobby-- hey--

It's Batman.

Right, right...

Boss-- it's one of those--

Klok Klok Klok

It's loaded, Robin-- let it get close-- wait for my order--

Oh, my god.

Oh, my--

Oh, my god...
CAN YOU SEE IT, JOKER? FEELS TO ME, LIKE IT'S WRITTEN ALL OVER MY FACE.
I'VE LAYN 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 WRONG GAME. THE OLD GAME.

TONIGHT YOU'RE TAKING NO HOSTAGES.

TONIGHT I'M TAKING NO PRISONERS.

THUNK BLAM THUNK THUNK OH AAGG

OUT OF YOUR MIND...

CHECK THE STATISTICS, LADY DEAR. HECK, IF YOU TOSSED IN THE VICTIMS OF HIS FAN CLUB, THE BANANAR-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 MARTIAL LAW, HO? LAST I HEARD, THAT TAKES AN ACT OF CONGRESS.

BILLY GONE BILLY CAN'T

BELIEVE I'M DONE THIS

OH, REAL COO...

LIKE ALL FAN...

Blam

LIKE GOODYEAR THERE...

-- BEFORE THE DOLL...

-- DOES THE MAXIMUM KLIK KLAK...

-- WOULDN'T DISTURB ME...

KLIK KLAK
BLAM

--GLANDED OFF A RIB--

--TOOK SOME MEAT WITH IT--

KSHH

--I'M TAKING TOO LONG--

--GIVING HIM--

--TOO MANY CHANCES--

chk chk

BMW

--THAT COULD HAVE BEEN ME--

--INSSTEAD OF A MIRROR--

SPAKK

--THAT'S RIGHT JOKER--

--BATTMAN-- HE'S GETTING AWAY--

YOU GOT TO KICK HIS--

WATCH...

BLAM / SPAKK / BLAM

--WASTE THOSE BULLETS--

...WATCH YOUR LANGUAGE, SON...

YES, SIR.

THEY TELL ME THE SON'S OF THE BATMAN BROKE UP A THREE CARD MONTE GAME THIS MORNING, LANA. WITH NAPALM.

WHY HASN'T BATMAN DONE SOMETHING ABOUT THOSE LUNATICS? UNLESS, OF COURSE, HE APPROVES...
Somebody stop
BLAM
HOME
BAD GIRL... STOP
SOMEBODY STOP
NO
SOMEbody STOP
CRAZY ITS
SOMEBODY STOP
SLOW LEARNER'S OUT OF BULLETS--
I'VE GOT A CHANGE--

--OUT OF BULLETS--
--REAL GOOD, CARRIE--
--SOME ROBIN--
--EASY--

GOT A SHOT-- ACE THE BOMB-- EASY SHOT--
LUNCHROOM OR WHAT LIKE YOU'VE GOT ALL NIGHT--
REAL COOL-- JUST ACE IT-- EASY SHOT--

TK TK
TK

TK TK
TK

TK THMP
TK

KLIK KLAK
KLIK KLAK
KLIK KLAK

ROOM
KLIK KLAK
KLIK KLAK

BLAM

I'M TOO LATE... FOR THE ONE ON THE BOARDWALK...
...very bad...
...you've been very bad...

klik klik klik klik!

too late...
...for the two at the tunnel...

 TOO LATE...

...it's bad...
...don't know how long i can stay awake...

my vow...

...the last two joker...

...have to finish him quickly...

...how many times do i have to say it, morrie? batman hasn't killed anybody...

...it isn't...

...the water...

cold...
...water's cold...
...no...

spang!

spang!
...it happens so fast...
...everybody's screaming...

spang!
...my hope goes tight...
...he starts breathing on me...

klik 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---
--They scramble down my face to my neck---

Kuk KLAK

--I can't breathe---
--He's gasping---
--Can't---
--He smells like milk---

Kuk KLAK

HUKK

--Then I hear this noise and his fingers slide off me---
--And he flies---

Kuk KLAK

Kuk KLAK

A gun...is a coward's weapon.
A liar's weapon...

WE KILL...too often...because we've made it easy...too easy...

...sparing ourselves...the mess...

...and the work...
...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 ADORABLE... I CAN'T HEAR ANYTHING...

...His NECK...
...Will have to do...

...He's MOVING MORE QUICKLY... Than I am...
...STABBING...

...SHKK

...THNK

...SHKK

KRACK!

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

...AND BATMAN HAS BEEN SEEN... HE AND THE JOKER ENGAGED GUNFIRE IN A CROWD...
...Hey... What... LOLA... They're evacuating the COUNTY FAIR...

...THE ROAR... IS FADING... I HEAR voices...

...I WISH I WERE...

...voices calling me... a KILLER...

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

THEY'RE GONE...?

...THE WITNESSES... I MEAN...

PARALYSIS... REALLY...
JUST AN OUNCE OR TWO MORE
OF PRESSURE... AND...
DO I HEAR SIRENS...?
YES... COMING CLOSE... YOU
WON'T GET FAR...

BUT THEN... IT DOESN'T
MATTER... IF YOU DO...
THEY'LL NEVER KNOW...
THAT YOU DIDN'T HAVE THE NERVE...

AND THEY'LL NEVER KNOW...
THAT YOU DIDN'T HAVE THE NERVE...

I'LL... SEE YOU... IN
HELL--

WITH A DEVIL'S
STRENGTH...
HE TWISTS...

HEHH

KKKKKK

AND TWISTS...

WHAT'S LEFT OF HIS SPINE GOES...

HA HA HA HA HA

HA HA HA

HA HAHAHAHA

AND TWISTS...

Whatever's in him rustles as it leaves.

...THE SIRENS ECHO
THROUGH THE TUNNEL...
TIRES SCREECH...
THE WORLD... IT'S GROWING DARK...

...AND COLD...
BOOK FOUR

THE DARK KNIGHT FALLS
That's right, Captain -- the Commissioner got tired of waiting, took a squad in herself.

-- Got the other end sealed -- no way they'll get past us --

-- Get some body bags -- got two cold ones --

-- Witnesses say they both got shots --

-- Keep an eye out --

Snowdown at the county fair, where the Joker is said to have murdered at least twenty sighted was the Batman... in hot pursuit of the Joker.

The mobsters... are in place...

The enemy... is seconds away...

I waste one second... with a good-bye...

PTUI!

I said don't touch...-- Lieutenant... get him covered...

Jesus -- rigged the body...

-- Son of a bitch rigged the body?

AAAAAA

Now... while they're scared...

While my guys are still... where they belong...
CHRIST IT'S SPREADING IT'S FIRE'S SPREADING...

POOM

POOM POOM

COME IN ROBIN...

SUMMON THE COPTER...

FOLLOW MY SIGNAL...

ATTENTION AS IN MEDIA.

YES SIR I'M PUNCHING THE CODE IN--

UH-OH-- GOT TROUBLE, BOSS.

WHUP WHUP

CLOSER-- MOVE IN CLOSER--

LOUD-- CAN YOU SEE IT?-- LIVE FROM THE NEWS TWO COPTER--

IT'S ARBAN-- THE BOY WONDER!

HE'S YOUNG-- CAN'T BE OLDER THAN THIRTEEN-- HE'S RIDING THE ROLLER COASTER-- HE'S WAIT-- HE'S--
ONE OF THEM HAS THE BRAINS TO JUMP CLEAR... --YOU SON OF A BITCH... FREEZE--

FREEZE, YOU--

ONE OF THEM HAS THE BRAINS TO JUMP CLEAR... --YOU SON OF A BITCH... FREEZE--

CUTE GUN...

CUTE GUN...

STOP... STOP LAUGHING.

WHDD

WE'RE MOVING IN, MEN--NO TIME TO WASTE--IF IT'S NOT A COP--SHOOT IT.

BLOW THAT BASTARD'S HEAD OFF... BLOW THAT BASTARD'S HEAD OFF...

SWAT TEAM...

THEY'RE ARMORED... WON'T HAVE TO RESTRAIN MYSELF...

JUST ENOUGH TIME TO--

BLACKED OUT... CAN'T AFFORD THAT... GOOD... DIDN'T GET THE GUN WET... I'LL NEED IT... PROVIDED I CAN FIT MY FINGER IN THE TRIGGER GUARD...

SOMETHING TO KEEP AN OLD MAN AWAKE... AND SOMETHING ELSE...

...TO BRING THE HOUSE DOWN...
...HE SEEMS CONFIDENT
--WHAT THE-- THAT'S
JUST ONE OF COURSE--
COMING RIGHT AT US--
BANK, YOU IDIOT--
BANK--

WHUP WHUP WHUP

BRAKABRAKABRAKA

WHUP WHUP WHUP

WHIP WHUP WHUP

COMING RIGHT AT
US--
LOOK OUT--

WHIFF

BRAKABRAKABRAKK

SHRENN

WHUP

WHUP

FIND HIM.
JESUS WHAT A MESS...
CAN'T SEE A DAMN THING...

HE'S IN HERE SOMEWHERE... LOOK SHARP...
MY FINGER... FITS...

PLASTIQUE... ALL SET... EASY SHOT. ANYBODY COULD HIT IT...

ANYB

ODY...

BLAM

SPAKK

THERE...

SHOOT TO KILL...

CLUMSY... STUPID...

SEMILE...

DODDERING...

HELPLESS...

Lucky...

...THE PLASTIQUE GOES UP...

...MY HEART... ONLY SKIPS... ONE BEAT...

Lucky...

...THE ROOF LANDS ON THE SWAT TEAM...

...Lucky Old Man...
PROPERTY DAMAGE.
AUTO.

PFAM

I KNEW SHE'D MAKE IT...

...I MIGHT'VE... AT HER AGE...

HNGG

GO CTHAM CITY WILL NO LONGER TOLERATE THIS FLAGRANT VIOLATION OF THE LAW--THIS VIOLENT ASSAULT ON THE VERY UNDERPinnINGS OF OUR SOCIETY...

BY ATTACKING GOTHAM'S POLICE, BATMAN HAS REVEALED HIMSELF AS AN UNQUALIFIED MESSIAH. I HAVE INSTRUCTED THE ATTORNEY GENERAL TO PLACE THE STATE POLICE AT GOTHAM'S DISPOSAL...

KChOW KChOWN

WHUP WHUP WHUP

BRACKA BRACK

YINDEL'S GOING TO KILL US...
...The Joker's body found mutilated and burned. Murder is added to the charges against the Batman...

Bruce, it's over.

You look tired, Kent.

Well, you've earned a good night's sleep. Heck of a police action, if you ask me...

I didn't...

You can say what you want. You can call him what you want. You don't have to walk down Avenue D at night.

You don't have to hear the shrieking sounds they make every time you walk by. This one, he'd been working the nerve up for weeks before he was horny enough...

...no, horny he wasn't. He was just looking to hurt somebody and he's the kind who hurts women. I wish they were rare. He gave himself an excuse....

So now he's shriekin' like he's turned on. I figure he's serious enough to run after me. I go for the mace.

The creep's pulling out his weapon when there's this shriek...

Straight out of hell there's this shriek...

--something wet happens to the creep...

...it turns into a growl--flapping of wings--she wings--
--A SIDE OF BEEF SLAMS INTO THE LAMPPOST--

--A SWITCHBLADE SNAPS OPEN--

AND THE MAN WHO ASSAULTED YOU?

STILL IN THE HOSPITAL.

HE'S OLD, HE'S ALMOST DEAD...

HE'S GOING TO BE OKAY, RIGHT?

HE'LL LIVE...

DO NOT EXPECT ANY FURTHER STATEMENTS. THE MUTANTS ARE DEAD. THE
SONS OF THE BATMAN HAVE STRUCK AGAIN. JEFF STRICKEN WAS
CLOSING UP THE SOUTH STREET R-11 WHEN HE BECAME BOTH WITNESS--
AND VICTIM...

THEM. THEY'RE YOUNGER THAN YOU'D THINK--THIS ONE WAS, ANYWAY, COULDN'T
HAVE BEEN OLDER THAN SIXTEEN... THAT'S RIGHT, THERE WAS JUST ONE OF THEM...

THEM. THEY'RE YOUNGER THAN YOU'D THINK--THIS ONE WAS, ANYWAY, COULDN'T
HAVE BEEN OLDER THAN SIXTEEN... THAT'S RIGHT, THERE WAS JUST ONE OF THEM...

THEM. THEY'RE YOUNGER THAN YOU'D THINK--THIS ONE WAS, ANYWAY, COULDN'T
HAVE BEEN OLDER THAN SIXTEEN... THAT'S RIGHT, THERE WAS JUST ONE OF THEM...

THEM. THEY'RE YOUNGER THAN YOU'D THINK--THIS ONE WAS, ANYWAY, COULDN'T
HAVE BEEN OLDER THAN SIXTEEN... THAT'S RIGHT, THERE WAS JUST ONE OF THEM...

THEM. THEY'RE YOUNGER THAN YOU'D THINK--THIS ONE WAS, ANYWAY, COULDN'T
HAVE BEEN OLDER THAN SIXTEEN... THAT'S RIGHT, THERE WAS JUST ONE OF THEM...

THEM. THEY'RE YOUNGER THAN YOU'D THINK--THIS ONE WAS, ANYWAY, COULDN'T
HAVE BEEN OLDER THAN SIXTEEN... THAT'S RIGHT, THERE WAS JUST ONE OF THEM...
...but I'm getting ahead of myself. It all started when these jerks came into the store. What? No, I did not go for the alarm. They don't pay me enough for suicide.

I was clearing out the register when that off-duty cop came up from the back. He only saw two of the Nixons.

He was still twitching when they headed for the door. I heard a thunderclap.

I'd have loved to have warned him.

The fall Nixon went for his piece. More thunder.

Then the S.O.B. told me I should've put up a fight with the Nixons. Said I didn't deserve to run a cash register. He grabbed a pair of wire cutters --

The Nixons are the newest splinter group of the Mutant Army, which experts believe disbanded when the Batman defeated their leader, Tom?
Thank you, Lola. Still held at Gotham Jail are eighty-seven members of the Mutant Gang, who were captured by Batman.

Commissioner Yindel has requested that they be moved to the State Penitentiary, while they await trial...

No—no trouble, Commissioner... They're still just watching TV...

Yindel's request was cut short by a court order, acquittal by the Mutants' attorney...

My clients are young people—minors. Most of them. If there isn't room in the jail, they should be returned to the care of their parents.

Following the attorney's statement, a petition signed by seventy-one of the mutants' parents, urging the mayor, not to release...

We interrupt this broadcast for a news two special report...

Ladies and gentlemen, the President of the United States.

Well, folks, I've got some good news... and some bad news... Huh... The good news is that the senators have withdrawn their forces from the island of Cordillera...

Something wrong, Kent?... And the bad news, well... It looks like those senators are pretty bad losers... Yes, they are...
TWENTY MILLION DIE BY FIRE...

...IF I AM WEAK...

THIS TIME IT'S BEANS. VEGETARIAN BEANS. TOOK ME TEN MINUTES TO FIGURE OUT THAT IT ISN'T IN THE HEALTH FOOD SECTION, IT'S JUST BEANS WITHOUT MEAT.

TEN MINUTES OF MY LIFE.

I COULD BE SITTING AT HOME CATCHING UP ON MY READING—YES, SOME OF US STILL READ—IF NOT FOR SHERIDAN AND THE ONE MORE THING SHE ALWAYS NEEDS FROM THE GROCERY STORE.

TWENTY-THREE DAYS WITHOUT. EVERYBODY'S PROUD AS HELL.

ONE CIGAR AND EVERYTHING WOULD BE RIGHT WITH THE WORLD...

WHAT—"WHATSHE" SAYS—"OH, GOD, NO..."

QUIET—"I CAN'T HEAR..."
A SOVIET NUCLEAR WARHEAD—SECONDS FROM DESTINATION OVER GOOD MALIGESE—
THIS IS IT, FOLKS—FIRST STRIKE, TOM?

LOLA CHONG GIVES GOOD NEWS

CAREFUL—BE CAREFUL—NOW YOU PUT THINGS, LOU. THIS IS ONE MISSILE—
THERE ARE NO INDICATIONS THAT THIS IS PART OF A FULL SCALE ATTACK...

TELL THAT TO THE AMERICAN TROOPS STATIONED THERE, TOM.

HOLD IT... WE'VE JUST GOTTEN WORD THAT IT'S NOT A CONVENTIONAL
NUCLEAR WARHEAD—WE SWITCH YOU NOW TO DAN MASON, ABOARD THE NEWS
THE SHOTGUN—WHAT'S THE WORD, DAN?

STILL COLLATING, LOU—
BUT IT'S A BIG ONE—
HEAVY MEGATONnage...—
WITH CANDIDAL COMPRUPTIIONS...
WE CAN'T BE CERTAIN OF ITS CAPABIL-
ITIES...

...AT THE VERY LEAST,
CORES WILL BE LEVELLED—
THE FACES MIGHT
SPREAD TO MAINLAND
SOUTH AMERICA—
SHOULD IT GENERATE A
SUFFICIENT MAGNETIC
PULSE, THERE MIGHT—

THANKS FOR THE DATA,
DAN, BUT WE'LL ALL
KNOW SOON ENOUGH
WHAT IT CAN DO. RIGHT
NOW, WE'VE GOT
AUTHOR MARLAN
ELLISON IN THE STUDIO...

MR. PRESIDENT—
NOW YOU JUST KEEP YOUR SHIRT ON—LUCEUS...

MR. PRESIDENT—
WE'LL LOOK LIKE WHOOPS IF WE DON'T...

—LET'S SEE WHAT OUR OWN LITTLE DETERRENT CAN DO...
...BE EATING OUR OWN BABIES FOR BREAKFAST.
THANK YOU, MR. ELLISON... YES, DAN?

LOLA -- IF IT GENERATES A PULSE OF SUFFICIENT INTENSITY, IT COULD...
DAN -- WE'VE FINISHED OUR TECHNICAL SEGMENT... -- IT COULD DISRUPT THE MAGNETIC FIELD CAUSING...

COMING UP -- VIEWER OPINIONS...

LOLA -- THIS IS INCREDIBLE -- TRAJECTORY CHANCE -- TWENTY DEGREES TO EAST -- THE WARHEAD HAS CHANGED COURSE...

YOU HEARD IT HERE FIRST -- THE WARHEAD HAS SOMEHOW BEEN DIVERTED -- IT WILL EXPLODE HARMLESSLY IN -- WHAT'S THE NAME OF THAT DESERT?...

IT MIGHT NOT BE HARMLESS, LOLA -- IF THAT PULSE IS STRONG ENOUGH, IT COULD DISRUPT ALL ELECTRICAL CIRCUITS... HEY...

WHAT THE DEVIL...
OH, GOD. HE'S--

--BETTER GET THAT 7-Y- WORKING, MAN--

SHUT UP...

WE SEEM TO BE SUFFERING A POWER OUTAGE. SEE WHERE, MISS KELLY--I DARE SAY ALL OF GOTHAM IS BLACKED OUT.

OH, REAL COO. FIGURE I CAN GET HOMIE. FIGURE IT ISN'T KINDA MY LATE.

MY WATCH STOPPED, ARSE, LIKE I DON'T JUST BUY IT...

HALF BLOODY ELECTRONICS. HERE NOW--IT'S HALF ELEVEN.

CLARK, YOU IDIOT. YOU LET THEM DO IT.

I ALWAYS KNEW YOU WOULD.
Sweetheart, the last of the readings gave a hint of what would happen.

When the computer failed, I knew for sure.

You'll never get to read this letter, it'll burn up with me when our orbit deteriorates. Still, my last thoughts will be a prayer for you, for humanity... and for planet Earth.

Nothing could stop the Russians from emptying their silos at us now. We'd have no defense, no way to retaliate.

The one hope we have is that the decision to murder billions has to be made by a human being.

---

Maybe during a break between police actions, one of your military friends told you what an electromagnetic pulse is. And maybe you listened, Clark.

All you need to generate the pulse is the organized detonation of a few dozen nuclear warheads.

That, or a special kind of nuke that both sides have been trying to develop...

The American name for it is Coldfire. It's designed to cause maximum damage to the environment... all the while sparing the industrial sites your friends regard so highly.

Since my own arms aren't bouncing around the stratosphere--

---Since Gotham City squats like a great black graveyard--

---Since Wayne Manor's emergency generator hasn't kicked in-- and Robin's which has stopped.

---I'll assume Russia has taken the lead in the arms race.

---I keep track of these things, Clark.

---One of us has to.
AREN'T WE LOOKING CHIPPER.

TO THE STABLES, ROBIN.

MURPHY—THEY'RE CHANTING—GET DOWN THERE—

EVER RIDE A HORSE, ROBIN?

NEVER EVEN SAW ONE...

I'M TELLING MYSELF IT'S ONLY A BLACKOUT WHEN A BEE FLIES IN MY EAR.

NO... NOT A BEE--

--IT'S THAT SOUND--
OH, JESUS--

LET HIM GO-- JUST PUT THE GUN DOWN AND LET HIM GO.

LISTEN TO ME-- THERE IS NO WAY YOU'RE GETTING OUT OF HERE, KIDS.

BUDDA N.E.O.

IT'S A BLACKOUT-- THE CELL DOORS CAN'T BE OPENED...

MURRAY-- IT'S MY OWN DAMN FAULT-- DON'T GO SOFT--

MUTH BALLES NASTY

YOU BASTARDS...

YOU BASTARDS...
Gotham City is helpless... This is our chance to raze Gotham...

Push

PUSH

NNFFF

With all their filled gas tanks... That's when I notice all the stalled cars...

Buddy Band: He Dust--

He Dust--

My Mon Bover--

Boner Dust--

Boner Dust--

My Mon Bover--

Shit Man He Got No Face--

Boner Dust--

Boner Dust--

My Mon Bover--

This is really dangerous.

People are just starting to scream when something big falls from the plane.

No, Man I'm Not Dicer.
--Toward Sarah.

Jesus Christ Almighty Sarah

--No, I'm all right.

I'm all right.

--If I have a heart attack, I'm no use to anybody.

KKKKKREEEEE

Only feels like there's a storm coming.

It's just his voice...

This loud, clumsy, stupid thing...

Let's ride.

Our weapons are quiet -- precise. In time, I will teach them to you. Tonight, you will rely on your feet -- and your brains.

Tonight, we are the law.

Tonight, I am the law.

This is the weapon of the enemy. We do not need it. We will not use it.
JUST HIS VOICE.

JUST HIM.

EEKKRRKKKK

ALL RUNNING AWAY—LOOKS BAD... I'M ORANGIN', BUT IT'S JUST THE SMOKE...

—SMOKE... DOESN'T IT FIGURE—

KK

DOWN THERE...

—RIGHT ON MY BLOCK—

—A GAS MAIN—

BULDA

—SMOKE... DOESN'T IT FIGURE—

ORES...

AIN'T FAN...

DON'T SHIV...
--CAN'T SEE HER-- CAN'T TELL IF SHE'S ALIVE OR--
--I'M RUNNING AROUND WITH ALL THE OTHER HEADLESS CHICKENS-- THAT'S NO DARN GOOD--

--GOD ANYTHING IN THERE IS AS GOOD AS--
--DAMN THAT SMOKE--

--WHOLE CITY BLACKED OUT--

--RAD, BALLS RAD-- IT'S OUR NIGHT--

--SOME OLD WOMAN LAUGHS AT ME--

--I START YELLING CROWD--

--YOU HEAR HORSES? I KNOW LIKE IN A WESTERN--

--EYES SLIDING, SPUD-- THERE--

--NOBODY LISTENS-- GONE CRAZY-- FIGHTING FOR FOOD LIKE IT'S THE END OF THE WORLD--

--MAYBE IT AS-- BUT WE'RE BETTER THAN THIS--

--OF COURSE I STILL CARRY IT--

--THEY START LISTENING--

--THUNK--

--THUNK--

--THUNK--

--THUNK--

--THUNK--
BOYS: GIRLS... I'M HERE TO APPEAL TO YOUR COMMUNITY SPIRIT.

COMMISSIONER, WE--

NO, NO.

HE'S... TOO BIG...

TWO NURSES SHOW UP OUT OF NOWHERE-- THEY DON'T HAVE A DAMN THING TO WORK WITH... THE ONES THEY CAN'T CONVINCE THEY GET DRUNK.

A HARDNUT GRABS A LUGWRENCH FROM THE BRACK OF HIS DEAD TRUCK AND SMASHES OPEN A FIRE HYDRANT.

THE MAN AT THE HARDWARE STORE PLOPS HIS SHOEBUDDY AWAY AND EMPTIES PAINT Buckets all over his new tile floor.

THE SPIRIT SPREADS AS FAST AS THE FIRE.

A LINE FORMS.

"HARMLESSLY..."

THE WOMAN, ON TELEVISION... SHE SAID THE BOMB WOULD DETONATE HARMLESSLY.

YOU CANNOT TOUCH MY PLANET WITHOUT DESTROYING SOMETHING PRECIOUS.

EVEN HER DESERTS ARE ABUNDANT.

THEY WERE BIRDS, HERE, WHO SHE BLESSED WITH CHEST FEATHERS ABUNDANT ENOUGH TO CARRY WATER FOR MILES TO THEIR CHILDREN..."
...bullfrogs, who slept for years in dried-out riverbeds... then dug their way to the surface when the rains came...

now... there is only blackened glass...

...endless flame...

our people, brace yourself. you laugh at them.

they can do this... and you laugh...

...they can split the very fabric of reality. blast a hundred thousand tons of sand into the sky...

...blotting out the source of all my power... the hope for screaming millions...

magnetic storm! you have every reason to be outraged, mother earth... you have given them... everything...

they are tiny and stupid and vicious... but please, listen to them...

please... i am slow and dying...

i need only... reach the sun...
I HAVE ALWAYS LOVED YOU...

THOUGH I WAS BORN A GALAXY AWAY...

...I HAVE ALWAYS SERVED YOU...

THE SAME POWER... THE SUN'S POWER...

...FUELS US BOTH...

YOU HOLD IT... HERE YOU STORE IT... MOTHER...

I BES YOU... FOR A SUFFERING WORLD... RELEASE IT...

MOTHER...
YOU ARE... SO SEVERE...
YOU GIVE ME... YOUR BEAUTIFUL JUNGLE...

I SWEAR...

YOUR ADOPTED SON WILL HONOR YOU!

FROM MY BULWARKS...
SHE SCREAMS...

SARAH'S WEIGHT...
A SKIRT...
--THAT COULD BE SARAH'S--

AND THAT BOY--HE SEEMED TO KEEP FACE
WITH ME DELIBERATELY, TAKING THE JOY
FROM MY EVENING WALK...

WITH HIS HORRIBLY LOUD RADIO...
WHEN IT SHRIEKED, I BLAMED THE BOY.
TRUTH TO TELL, I TURNED TO CONFRONT HIM...

NO, I WAS SHOUTING, WHAT DO YOU EXPECT?
I HAPPENED TO BE UP AGAINST A BUNCH
OF A DEADLINE, WHAT?

YES, OF COURSE I'VE HEARD ABOUT
THE BOYS. BUT I'VE GOT PROBLEMS
OF MY OWN.

I'M NOT CRAZY ABOUT GETTING OUT OF MY CAR--
NOT IN THAT NEIGHBORHOOD.

--BUT I KNOW I BETTER CALL THE
AGENCY AND MAKE SURE MY ASSET IS
COVERED.

THEN I NOTICED HIS OWN CONFUSION--
AND THE DARKNESS THAT SEEMED TO FALL
ACROSS THE ENTIRE CITY.

HEARD SHOUTS...

SO I'M BARELY STANDING UP WHEN
HERE'S THIS EXPLOSION... KNOCKS ME FLAT.

MY ANKLE FEELS LIKE IT'S BROKEN--
SOMEONE'S GOING TO SUE...
I'M BARELY ON MY FEET WHEN THE GIRL IS ALL OVER ME, TALKING ABOUT WORLD WAR THREE. I DON'T LIKE BEING TOUCHED -- AND LIKE I SAID, I'VE GOT MY OWN PROBLEMS --

BUT SHE WON'T SHUT UP...

I MEAN, LATER I FOUND OUT IT WAS A FAT, CRASHING INTO THE BESRAH BUILDING...

I GUESS WE WERE LUCKY IT WAS THE ONLY PLANE TO FALL ON GOTHAM...

NOBODY TOLD ME ABOUT ANY AIRPLANE. THE CARS WERE POPPING OFF LIKE FIRECRACKERS -- EVERYBODY SCREAMING...

OH, RIGHT. THE COP LISTEN, I'VE NEVER BROKEN THE LAW -- NOT IN ANY WAY THAT COUNTS...

AND IT WASN'T ME WHO TOLD HIM TO TRY TO HELP THAT COP Bitch OUT OF HER VOLKSWAGEN.

HE WOULDN'T LET GO. WOULDN'T LISTEN TO REASON. I'VE BEEN TO CHURCH EVERY SUNDAY SINCE I WAS A KID. BUT WHEN PUSH COMES TO SHOVE...

GUESS I JUST LOST CONTROL. I... I'D BEEN HAVING NIGHTMARES ABOUT THE BOMB... READ UP ON IT A LOT...

AND WHEN THE CASUALTIES WENT OUT...

... AND WHEN I HEARD THAT EXPLOSION...
HEY—YOU WEREN'T THERE. COULDBARELYSEE THROUGH ALL THE SMOKE. WAS SURE I HEARD SHELLINGS. IT WAS THE END OF THE WORLD— AND I HAD A GUN...

WOULDN'T TAKE A GENIUS TO REALIZE THAT THE ONLY OTHER THING WORTH A DAMN WAS FIRE...

I WASN'T ALONE, EITHER.

THERE'S NO EXCUSE FOR WHAT WE DID. WE Weren't CRAZY. WE WERE JUST AN UGLY BUNCH OF STUPID, SELFISH BASTARDS. THERE WAS THE COHRT: A BLOODY MESS. I Didn'T CARE...

...NO EXCUSE... I WAS IN WITH THE REST OF THEM, SHOVING, YELLING ABOUT RODD AND GUNS... THERE WAS NO PLAN, NOBODY FIGHTING THE FIRE...

FIRES ARE FOR THE FIRE DEPARTMENT. THAT'S WHY I PAY MY TAXES, WE HAD OURSELVES TO LOOK AFTER.

WE WERE HEADING EAST ON CHELSEA... THE GARF UNION PARKING LOT...

...WHEN WE RAN INTO ANOTHER CROWD THAT'D GOTTEN THE SAME IDEA. LOOKED LIKE THEY CLEANED THE WHOLE STREET OUT—

--AND WANTED IT ALL FOR THEMSELVES.

ONE OF THEM MADE A MOVE FOR THE GUY. HE WAS BLACK— I'M NO RACIST, BUT I THOUGHT HE MIGHT HAVE A KNIFE.

I DID WHAT ANYBODY WOULD'VE.

I STILL CAN'T BELIEVE IT GOT AS BAD AS IT DID. YOU'D NEVER HAVE KNOWN THAT JUST A FEW MINUTES EARLIER WE'D BEEN...

...I WAS STARELING SOMEbody WHEN I HEARD THE HORSES...
LIKE THE GESTapo; THEY MOVED IN ON US--BATMAN AND THAT BOAT ARMY OF HIS--YOU'D HAVE THOUGHT WE WERE CRIMINALS.

I TRIED TO DEFEND MYSELF--HE SINGLED ME OUT--

BROKE THREE RIBS--AND THIS FORCE ISN'T FOR LAUGHS. WHENEVER THEY CATCH THAT LUNATIC, HE'LL HEAR FROM MY ATTORNEY.

WHO GAVE HIM THE RIGHT?

WHEN HE TALKED... BATMAN, I MEAN--IT WAS... IT'S HARD TO DESCRIBE... THERE WAS SOMETHING IN HIS VOICE.

...ANYWAY, HE TOLD US WE COULD SPEND THE NIGHT TIED UP--OR HELP FIGHT THE FIRE...

IT'S ONLY ONCE... IN THE WHOLE NIGHT... THAT IT SHOWS...

SHE ONLY GOT TO SCREAM ONCE--IT WAS TOO LATE TO HELP HER.

SHE ISN'T SARAH. I DON'T KNOW HER.

HE'S GIVEN CAREERS AND ALL THE MUTANTS AND S.O.B.S. AND EVERYBODY ARE GONE FOR A MINUTE...

...HE JUST SAGS IN HIS SADDLE--LIKE AN OLD MAN...
...THEN HE STRAIGHTENS UP AND BRINGS AT ME LIKE IT IS FUNNY. HE CAN'T DIE...

TURNS OUT SARAH FORGOT TO TELL ME SHE NEEDED MILK.

ONE MORE THING.

AFTER THE MOB LEFT, THE EXPLOSIONS CONTINUED. THE STARS WERE EVERYWHERE...

...I WAS BARELY CONSCIOUS... IF NOT FOR THE BOY, I...

THAT'S RIGHT. THE BOY WITH THE ROCK. HE PULLED ME CLEAR. SAVED MY LIFE. WHEN BATMAN BROUGHT THE MEDICAL SUPPLIES, THE BOY PASSED THEM AROUND...

...HE WAS AT MY SIDE TILL MORNING, HELPING THE BURNED.

BUT, OF COURSE, THERE WASN'T ANY MORNING...

ONE WEEK LATER. IT'S STILL DARK AT HIGH NOON IN GOTHAM CITY. IT'S STILL WINTER IN AUGUST. HERE'S CARLA SHRIEK TO EXPLAIN...
LOLA, THE SOVIET COLDBRIDGE WAS DESIGNED TO ILLUSTRATE THE ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS OF A LARGE-SCALE NUCLEAR WAR. FIRST, IT GENERATES THE PULSE THAT BLACKED OUT--

ON THAT PULSE-- DON'T MISS OUR SPECIAL TONIGHT-- YOUR FAVORITE STARS ARE BAKED. "WHERE WERE YOU WHEN THE LIGHTS WENT OUT?" CARLA?

LOLA, THE PULSE WAS ONLY THE BEGINNING. WEATHER PATTERNS ACROSS THE HEMISPHERE HAVE BEEN COMPLETELY DISRUPTED--

THE COLDEST LOLA-- UNTIL TOMORROW, THE BONG'S BLAST THRUST HUNDREDS OF MILLIONS OF TONS OF Soot INTO THE STRATOSPHERE--

CREATING A BLACK CLOUD THAT COVERS THE AMERICAS, BLOWING OUT THE SUN-- DEPRIVING US OF LIGHT AND HEAT..."THE PEOPLE ARE FREEZING TO DEATH BY THE THOUSANDS... THE DAMAGE TO CROPS COULD WELL BRING ON A FAMINE..."

I'M SURPRISED HE TOOK THE CHANCE OF COMING TO AMERICA-- WITH CLARK IN THE COUNTRY--

-- BUT OLIVER HAD ALWAYS LIVED BY HIS IMPULSES.

GIVING THEM SUCH A BIG PARSE? SURE, YOU PLAY IT MISTRESS-- BUT IT'S A LUCKY KIND OF MISTRESS, MAN ESPECIALLY LATELY.

YOU GOT TO LEARN HOW TO MAKE THOSE SONS OF BITCHES WORK FOR YOU. LOOK-- IT'S BEEN FIVE YEARS SINCE I BLEW OUT OF PRISON--

-- AND YOU KNOW I'VE KEPT BUSY--

YOU'VE ALWAYS HAD IT, BRUCE...
I always knew it'd get down to you and the Big Blue Squirrel. Planet's too big for the two of you.

When it all comes down...

...the president has imposed limited martial law, thereby deploying military aid to law enforcement agencies against outbreaks of violence and looting...

...nothing we can't handle, boys. We're still America — and I'm still president.

Who was that spud? Talks like my dad.

He used to fight crime.

...new york, chicago, metropolis — every city in america is caught in the grip of a national panic — with one exception, right, tomtom?

...then — a blast of heat.

...from the sky...

...that's right, lola. thanks to the batman and his vigilante gangs, gotham's streets are safe — unless you try to commit a crime...

Panic!

...and it begins...

Crime alley.

She has decades — decades, left to her...

New york, Chicago, Metropolis — every city in america is caught in the grip of a national panic — with one exception, right, tomtom?

...it's almost frightening how quickly she's learning to ride...

...it still hurts when it's cold...

...I want a piece of him. A small piece will do, for old times sake, you know...

...long as they can do it without admitting I exist.

...nothing we can't handle, boys. We're still America — and I'm still president.

Who was that spud? Talks like my dad.

He used to fight crime.

...New York, Chicago, Metropolis — every city in America is caught in the grip of a national panic — with one exception, right, Tom?

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Panic!

...and it begins...

Crime alley.

She has decades — decades, left to her...

New York, Chicago, Metropolis — every city in America is caught in the grip of a national panic — with one exception, right, Tom?
...Healing quite nicely, Master Bruce.

SHALL I PREPARE ANOTHER SIMULANT? WHY DELAY YOUR VERY FIRST CAROUSEL ARMIST?

...Oliver, maybe Oliver was right... All along...

...CRAZY AS IT SOUNDS...

...BLOODY WALKING HOSPITAL BED...

...THAT'S ENOUGH, ALFRED...

...IN THE PAST WEEK, SEVENTY THREE VIOLENT ATTACKS ON WOULD-BE LOOTERS HAVE BEEN ATTRIBUTED BY WITNESSES TO THE BATMAN AND HIS GANG...

...WHEN YOU CAME FOR ME IN THE WARD... I WAS JUST SIX YEARS OLD...

...YOU WERE ALMOST NOTHING COULD KILL YOU...

...BUT THE WAR...

...IT DID NOT BEGIN THEN...

NO... IT WAS... TWO YEARS LATER... WHEN HER NECKLACE CAUGHT ON HIS WRIST...

...WHEN HE SHOVED HIS PISTOL TO HER CHEEK AND PULLED THE TRIGGER...

...AND EVERYTHING MY MOTHER WAS STRUCK THE PAVEMENT AS A BLOODY MAD...

THAT NIGHT... BEGAN THE SEARCH FOR THIEVES AND MURDERERS...

...IS THAT WHAT YOU INTENDED?...

COMMISSIONER HINDEL REFUSED TO CONTINUE ON THE CHARGE THAT GOTHAM'S POLICE HAVE BEEN IN PURSUEING THE MURDERER AGAINST THE BATMAN...

SOMEWHERE IN THE ENDLESS NIGHT, LIKE A BELLS FROM A WOUNDED BEAR...

...THE ANSWER COMES...

THE TIMMS... MUST BE EXACT...

...IN ONE HOUR... AT MIDNIGHT...

RUMORS FLY-- ARMY HELICOPTERS HOVER OVER THE EMPTY STREETS OF CRIME ALLEY-- THIS IS A MILITARY EFFORT TO CAPTURE THE BATMAN--

THIS ONE YOU WON'T BELIEVE, CLARK...

--OR IS THIS THE FINAL BATTLE BETWEEN TWO TITANS-- THE LAST STAND FOR THE CAPED CRUSADER-- FACING THE MIGHT OF THE MAN OF STEEL!

DO NOT ADJUST YOUR SET
They leave a hole in the cordyline big enough to drive a tank through.

That's exactly what I do.

Twenty minutes left, I know you won't be late, Clark. You have to stay up late.

Everything's in position, boss. Like maybe it's time you told me the plan... I mean...

...you going to die or what?

The wind picks up...

...something scrambling our sensors, Kent. It's up to you to find him...

That's right, Clark. Scan the area...

...bathe it with X-rays...

Figure I will.

Activate those six hunter missiles. I worked so hard on.

This is a powers test...

...I want to see how many of you survived that nuclear explosion.

He'd have to be at full speed to dodge them...

Strange to think of that particular evening, more than forty years past.

Master Bruce was, but nine years old, and restless, as he always was, at night...

Still he sat, politely enough, on his bed, as Alfred read to him.

"The Pencilled Letter" "Yes, that was the story...

...he listened, in silence, as finishing the tale, Alfred explained the importance of Mr. Poe's contribution to detective fiction.

Then, with a voice like steel...
Alfred assured him that the villain had met justice.

Master Bruce asked—no, demanded—"The killer was caught and punished."

"Bruce stop! Like a boy."

"One buck from me."

"Breathing a little fast—It's Robin's turn..."

"The charge could sink a battleship. I think he feels it."

"Poom"

WHAM!

"Skrew!"

"Isn't tonight a spookey night?"
-- Rattling from my jaw -- or shattering, like every window on the block.

-- When I hit him with the sonic.

-- A nosebleed -- so soon, Clark.

-- The night is young --

Don't drop now --

-- And I have -- so much planned.

-- Where my parents died...

-- To cry your brain --

-- Keep talking, Clark...

-- Still talking --

-- You've always known just what to say.

-- To be a man --

-- It's way past time you learned what it means.

-- Yes -- you always say yes -- to anyone with a badge -- or a flag --

-- No good --

-- The feedback -- I'm not getting a hundredth of what you are --

-- But it's getting bad -- ahead of schedule --

-- What didn't hit you -- and me -- fed this suit, Clark --

-- Every watt of it --

-- Where I can use the city's power --

-- To warn her... on this filthy patch of street --

Now he's talking -- trying to reason with me. I can't hear him, of course. . . .

... no, my ears are protected -- so all I have to worry about is my teeth --
YOU'RE JUST BONE AND MEAT... LIKE ALL THE REST.

BRUCE... THIS IS IDIOTIC.

KENT DISABLED SOME HEAVY HARDWARE. SIR-- DAMNEDEST ALLOY SURFACE-- SIR-- IT'S SHAKING.

CAPTAIN-- HIS HELMET IS OFF-- I GOT A PEACH OF A SHOT.

DON'T THINK ABOUT IT, SOLDIER-- NOT TILL ONE OF THEM DROPS.

EXECUTIVE ORDER. SQUAD THREE-- REPORT.
FALL BACK!

ROBIN...
-- THIS IS A RECORDING...

YOU SOLD US OUT, CLARK.
YOU GAVE THEM... THE POWER... THAT SHOULD HAVE BEEN OURS.

JUST LIKE YOUR PARENTS TAUGHT YOU TO.

MY PARENTS... TAUGHT ME A DIFFERENT LESSON...

LYING ON THIS STREET... SHAKING IN DEEP SHOCK...
DYING FOR NO REASON AT ALL...

THEY SHOWED ME THAT THE WORLD ONLY MAKES SENSE WHEN YOU FORCE IT TO...

BRUCE... I JUST BROKE THREE OF YOUR RIBS.

BY NOW CLARK SHOULD BE TOO BUSY TO LISTEN IN.

HERE'S THE PLAN...

WRIST... CRUSHED... RIBS MOVING... WITH A LIFE OF THEIR OWN...

AND CLARK... JUST BROKE... A SWEAT...

NOW... IF OLIVER DOESN'T SCREW UP...

OH NO...
OLIVER: You promised you'd keep your hands off the soldiers.

CLARK: A little acid to distract him...

OLIVER: Get yourself killed on your own time...

CLARK: I've only got one arrow left...

OLIVER: I've finally gotten him angry.

CLARK: It's now or never.
IT WASN'T EASY TO SYNTHESIZE, CLARK...
...TOOK YEARS
...AND IT COST A FORTUNE...
...LUCKILY I HAD BOTH...

COME AND GET ME YOU SONS OF --WH--

EYES DOWNSIDE, SPUD.

FIGURE WE GOT ALL WEEK...

HINO GOD DAMN SILVER.

NOTE: BRUCE-- YOUR HEART.

...THIS IS THE END...
...FOR BOTH OF US...

YOU'RE BEGINNING TO GET THE IDEA, CLARK...

-- TANK'S BREAKING AWAY
-- GOT THEM...
-- WHOLE AREA'S SURROUNDED...
-- HEADINGS ACROSS THE PARKING LOT--

-- WHAT FELL THROUGH--
-- WHAT THE HELL--

OH, CHRIST--

WATER MAIN-- WE LOST THEM--

CHRIST WE LOST THEM--

-- YOU'RE A JOKE--

WE COULD HAVE CHANGED THE WORLD...

...NOW... LOOK AT US...

I'VE BECOME... A POLITICAL LIABILITY...
...AND YOU...
I want you to remember my hand at your throat.

I want you to remember the one man who beat you...
The Cock strikes TWELVE.

Mrs. Wayne’s, priceless collection of PORCELAIN SHATTERS, musically...

...empty STABLES fly apart like toothpick models...

...the central mass of Wayne Manor SHAKES, as if ALIVE...

...then VANISHES in a FLASHER, bright as the sun.

The ancient moor TREMBLES, beneath Alfred’s feet.

Deep underground, COMPUTERS, knowing every secret of the BATMAN, burst, and BURN...

The world turns ruby RED, the iron roof RISES, madly, into the sky, riding a pillar of FLAME.

A joint travels the Length of Alfred’s SPINE. Of course, he thinks, as his head goes light.

How utterly proper.

DON’T TOUCH HIM...
...CLOUD HAS ALMOST COMPLETELY CLEARED IN THE LAST SEVENTY-TWO HOURS. THE PRESIDENT HAS DECLARED A STATE OF STABILIZED EMERGENCY...

REPEATING THE WEEK'S TOP STORIES - THE SPECTACULAR CAREER OF THE BATMAN CAME TO A TRAGIC CONCLUSION...

...AS THE CRIMEFIGHTER SUFFERED A HEART ATTACK WHILE BATTLING GOVERNMENT TROOPS.

HE HAS BEEN IDENTIFIED AS FIFTY-FIVE YEAR OLD BILLIONAIRE BRUCE WAYNE -- AND HIS DEATH HAS PROVEN AS MYSTERIOUS AS HIS LIFE...

SON OF A BITCH -- I KNOW WHO KILLED HIM...

SELENA -- THIS IS NO GOOD...

WAYNE MANOR WAS LEVELLED BY A SERIES OF EXPLOSIONS. SET APPARENTLY, BY WAYNE'S BUTLER, FOUND DEAD FROM A STROKE AT THE SCENE...

...FLAMES DESTROYED WHATEVER EVIDENCE MAY HAVE EXISTED AS TO BATMAN'S METHODS. ALSO MISSING, IT SEEMS, IS THE WAYNE FORTUNE...

INTERNAL REVENUE AGENTS INVESTIGATED WAYNE'S RECORDS, FINDING HIS EVERY BANK ACCOUNT EMPTY. EVERY STOCK SOLD...

...CAN'T BELIEVE HE HAD THE NERVE TO COME HERE...
...WHERE THE MONEY WENT IS ONE MORE SECRET WAYNE HAS TAKEN TO HIS GRAVE... HIS BODY WAS CLAIMED BY HIS ONLY LIVING RELATIVE, A DISTANT COUSIN...

THAT WAS THE FIRST THING ROBIN TOLD ME—

WHEN SHE DUG ME UP.

MY TIMING WASN'T QUITE PRECISE ENOUGH.

CLARK AGEND.

NOT THAT IT MATTERED. HE'D HAVE GUESSED SOONER OR LATER.

HE KNOWS HOW GOOD I AM WITH CHEMICALS.

I WAS COUNTING ON WHAT OLIVER SAID, AND WITH A WINK—

--CLARK PROVED OLIVER RIGHT.
HE’LL LEAVE ME ALONE, NOW. IN RETURN, I’LL STAY QUIET.

SO WILL ROBIN AND THE REST...

CAREFUL WITH THAT...

RIGHT, ALL SET, BOSS.

GOOD, NOW GATHER ROUND.

WE HAVEN’T GOT ALL NIGHT, BOY.

THAT’S NOT TRUE...

...WE HAVE YEARS—AS MANY AS WE NEED...

FIRST WE GET A STEADY SUPPLY OF WATER. THERE’S A SPRING RIGHT BENEATH—

—ROBIN! SIT UP STRAIGHT.

YEARS—TO TRAIN AND STUDY AND PLAN...

HERE, IN THE ENDLESS CAVES, FAR FROM THE BURNED REMAINS OF A CRIMEFIGHTER WHOSE TIME HAS PASSED...

IT BEGINS HERE—AN ARMY TO BRING SENSE TO A WORLD PLAUGED BY WORSE THAN THIEVES AND MURDERERS...

THIS WILL BE A GOOD LIFE...

...GOOD ENOUGH.