



B A T M A N[®]



**THE DARK
KNIGHT[®]
RETURNS**

TENTH ANNIVERSARY EDITION

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



THE DARK KNIGHT RETURNS



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BATMAN: THE DARK KNIGHT RETURNS TENTH ANNIVERSARY EDITION

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INTRODUCTION

BY FRANK MILLER

5

BOOK ONE

THE DARK KNIGHT RETURNS

8

BOOK TWO

THE DARK KNIGHT
TRIUMPHANT

56

BOOK THREE

HUNT THE DARK KNIGHT

104

BOOK FOUR

THE DARK KNIGHT FALLS

152

GALLERY

THE ORIGINAL COVERS

200

**THE DARK
KNIGHT FALLS**

THE ORIGINAL PLOT

WITH EXCERPTS FROM FRANK MILLER'S SKETCH BOOK

207



TABLE OF CONTENTS

DARK KNIGHT DAYS

BY FRANK MILLER
16 SEPTEMBER 1996

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

This was intolerable. Something had to be done.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

He insists.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



DEDICATED TO
WILL JUNGRUNTZ
1955-1985

B O O K O N E



THE DARK KNIGHT RETURNS

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

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

BRUCE, YOU SON OF A *SHANK*

IT SHOES NOT NEEDLES IN MY FACE AND TRIES TO MAKE ME BLIND. I'M IN CHARGE NOW AND I LIKE IT.



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



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 DIGS UP A CHUNK OF MACADAM. I LOOK AT IT--

-- THEN STRAIGHT INTO THE EYE OF THE SUN.

THIS WOULD BE A GOOD DEATH...

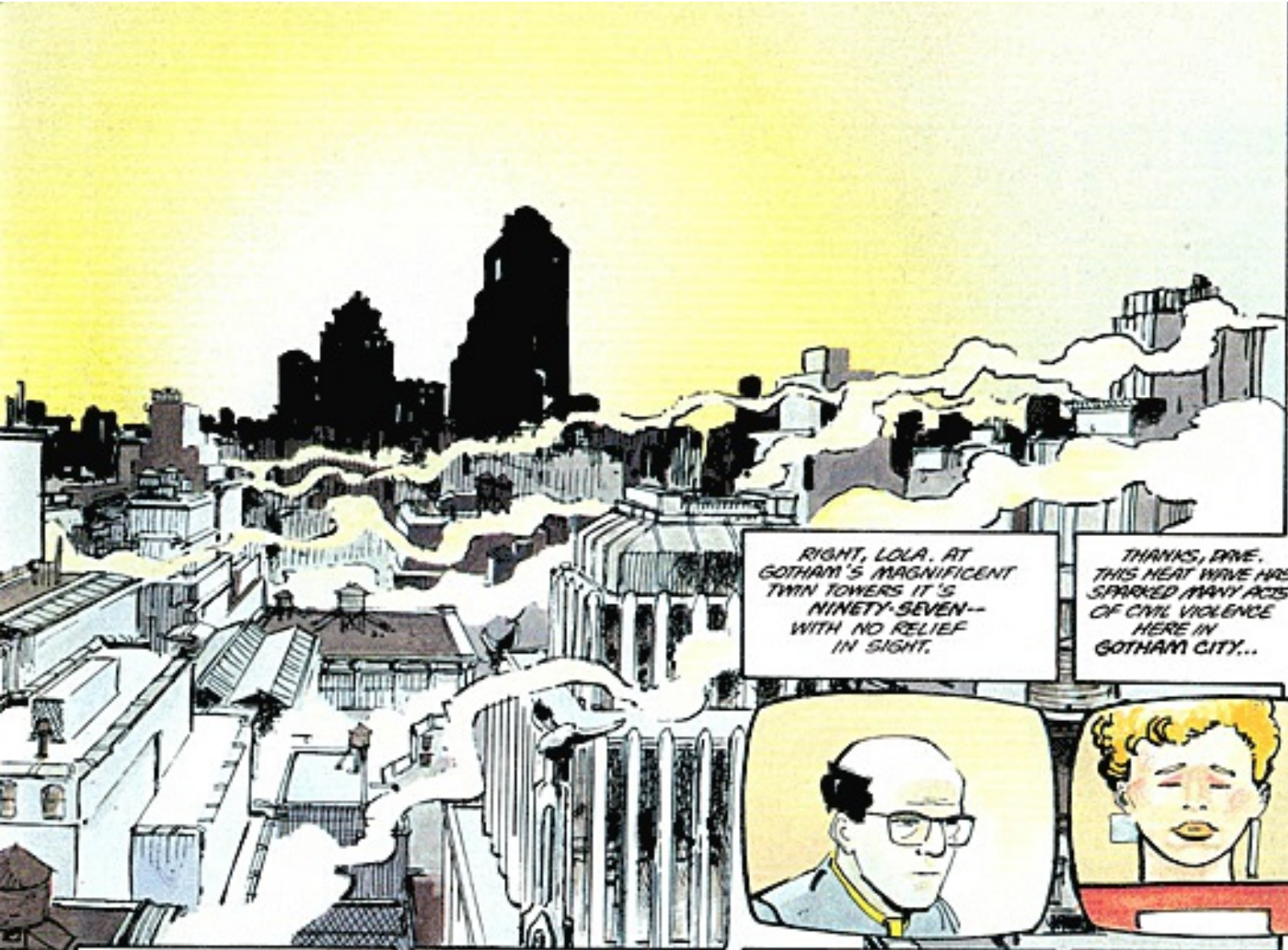
... BUT NOT GOOD ENOUGH.

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

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

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





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

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



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

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

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

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



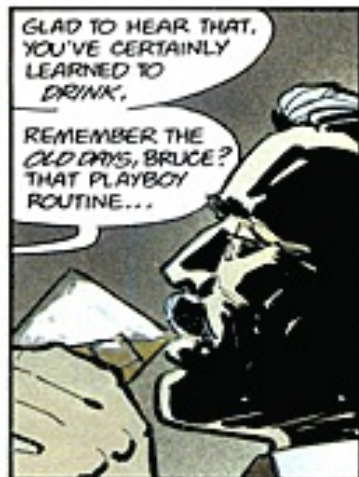
IRONICALLY, TODAY ALSO MARKS THE TENTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE LAST RECORDED SIGHTING OF THE BATMAN. DEAD OR RETIRED, HIS FATE REMAINS UNKNOWN.

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

BUT REAL HE WAS. EVEN TODAY, DEBATE CONTINUES ON THE RIGHT AND 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...





AS WE PART, JIM SQUEEZES MY SHOULDER AND GRINS. "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 ANYTHING RIGHT NOW. I WALK THE STREETS OF THIS CITY I'M LEARNING TO HATE, THE CITY THAT'S GIVEN UP, LIKE THE WHOLE WORLD SEEMS TO HAVE.

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

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

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

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

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



... BORN HERE.

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

--IT COULD HAVE HAPPENED YESTERDAY.

IT COULD BE HAPPENING RIGHT NOW.

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



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

...RIGHT OVER THERE...



SO MANY LOVELY WAYS TO PUNISH HIM...



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



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

ALL HE WANTED WAS MONEY. I WASN'T HAVE ENOUGH TO THINK HIM THE LOWEST SORT OF MAN.



LET'S HIT THE ARCADE, MAN--

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



-- ALWAYS A GOOD TIME AT THE ARCADE--

... AND THIS WORLD IS THEIRS.

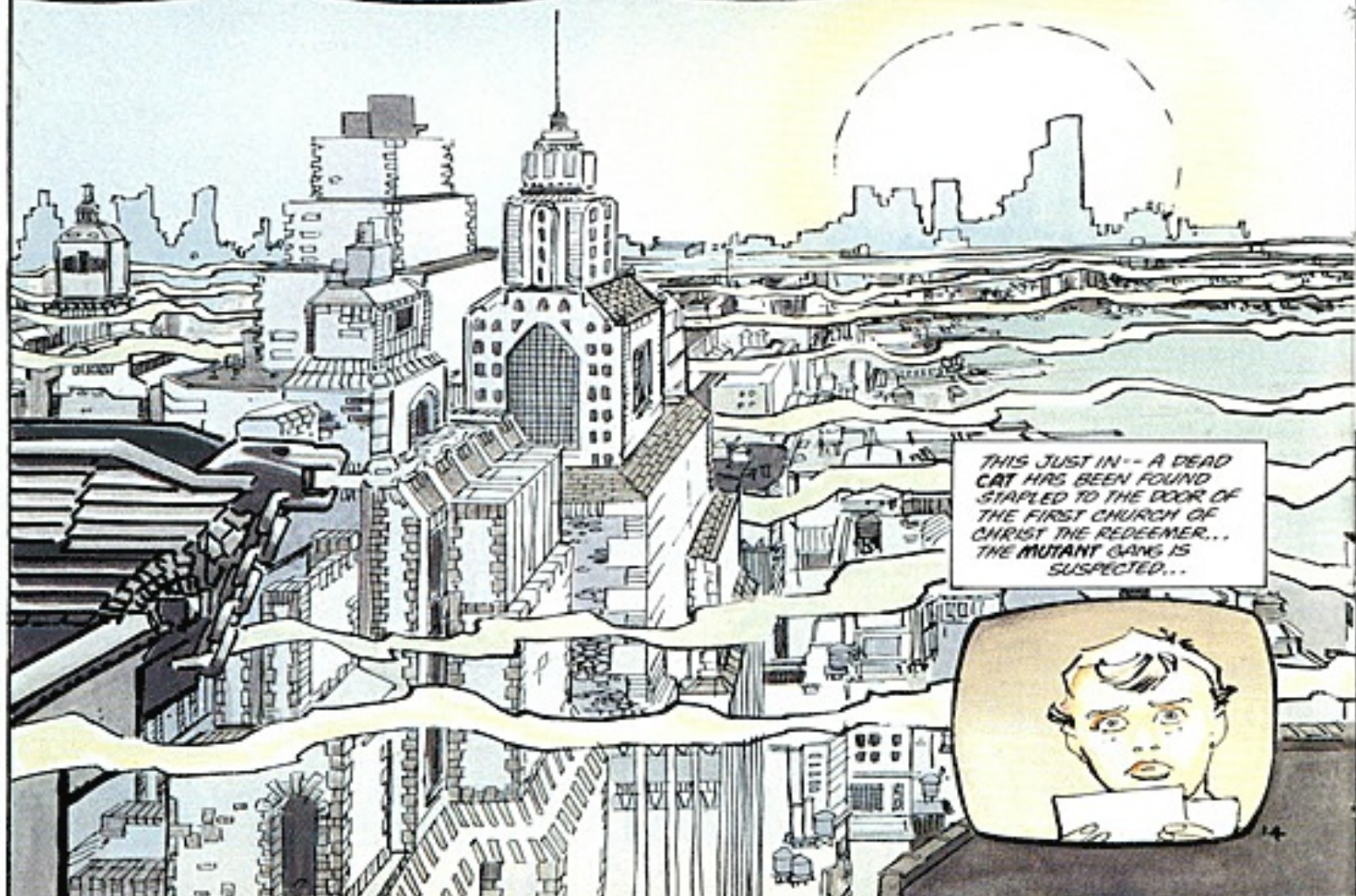


... BUTCHERY OF EVERY MEMBER OF THE FAMILY. THE MUTANT ORGANIZATION IS BELIEVED TO HAVE COMMITTED THIS ATROCITY FOR MONEY THE FAMILY HAD...

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

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

... AND IT LOOKS LIKE ITS 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 STICKS TO--

SHUT UP.

601

YEAH, WELL. YOU DON'T SEE HIM SWEATING.

JUST LOOK AT HIM.

YOU LOOK AT HIM. HE MAKES ME SICK.

601

YEAH, WELL. GUESS BEING CRAZY HAS ITS MOMENTS.

602

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

602

WHEN I CAME HERE, THEY SAID--

-- I COULD NEVER BE CURED.

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 SEPTUAGENARIAN POLICE COMMISSIONER SAYS.

MAYBE GORDON ...

... IS RIGHT ABOUT ME.

NONSENSE. GORDON'S JUST GONE SENILE.

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

-- BUT I CONCUR.

THANK YOU, DR. WOLPER. 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 SCARRED 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 DEFACED, TO REPRESENT THE WARRING SIDES OF HIS SPLIT-PERSONALITY. A FLIP OF THE COIN COULD MEAN LIFE OR DEATH FOR HIS VICTIMS.

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

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

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



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

... WHILE NOBEL PRIZE-WINNING PLASTIC SURGEON DR. HERBERT 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, UNMARRIED.

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...



...FASTER THAN A RABBIT, MOM! JUST WATCH!



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...



BRUCE!



OOF!

OWW!



NO!
GO
AWAY!



GO
AWAY!



SKREE
SKREE
SKREE



THEN...

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

...SOMETHING
SUCKS THE
STALE AIR...

...AND
HISSES.



GLIDING WITH ANCIENT GRACE...



UNWILLING TO RETREAT AS HIS BROTHERS DID...



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



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



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



GLARING, HATING...



... CLAIMING ME AS HIS OWN.



DREAMING...

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

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

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

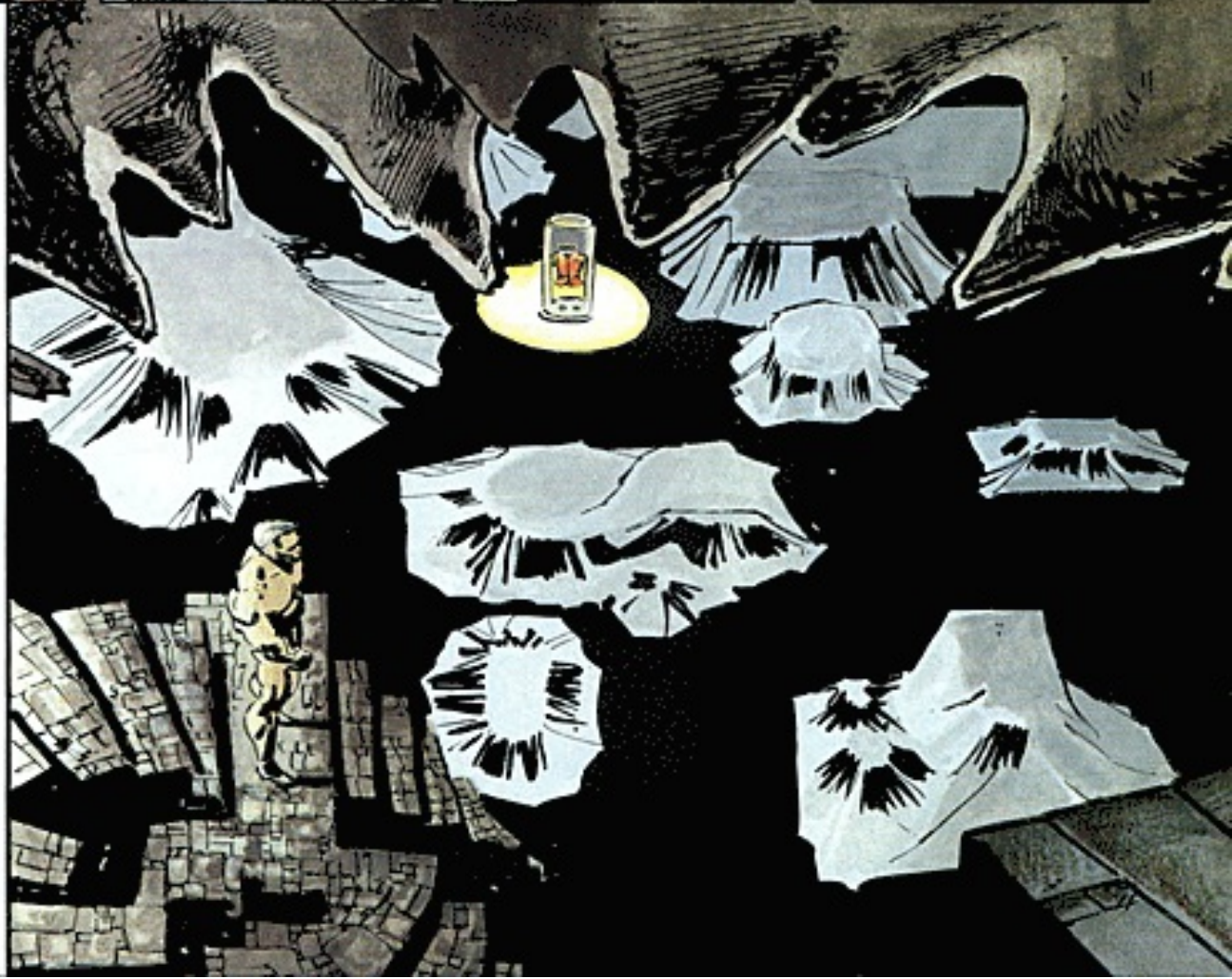
--AND HE LAUGHS AT ME, CURSES ME, CALLS ME A FOOL, HE FILLS MY SLEEP, HE TRICKS ME, BRINGS ME HERE WHEN THE NIGHT IS LONG AND MY WILL IS WEAK, HE STRUGGLES RELENTLESSLY, HATEFULLY, TO BE FREE--

I WILL NOT LET HIM. I GAVE MY WORD.

FOR JASON.

NEVER.

NEVER AGAIN.





MASTER BRUCE?



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



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



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



... HARDLY, ALFRED. SORRY TO WAKE YOU.

IT IS HALF PAST THREE ...



MASTER BRUCE.

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO YOUR MUSTACHE?



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

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

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

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



SO--WHAT DO YOU THINK?
I THINK IT'S TOO DAMN HOT--
--AND I THINK HE SHOULD SEE IT OR FOLD.



GORDON'S REACTION IS ONE OF TEXT BOOK HYSTERIA...
I MEAN DENT --NOT DID STICK HERE.
SO DO I. OUGHTTA SEE IT OR FOLD.



WE BEEN GETTING BY WITHOUT HIM.
UH HUH.
... AND CHARACTERISTIC INSENSITIVITY. HARVEY, ON THE OTHER HAND, IS AN EXTREMELY SENSITIVE MAN...



I MEAN, IT AIN'T BEEN GREAT...
THAT'S RIGHT.
...IN EXTREMELY VULNERABLE EMOTIONAL CONDITION. I BELIEVE...



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



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

IT MAY REACH US AS EARLY AS TONIGHT...

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

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

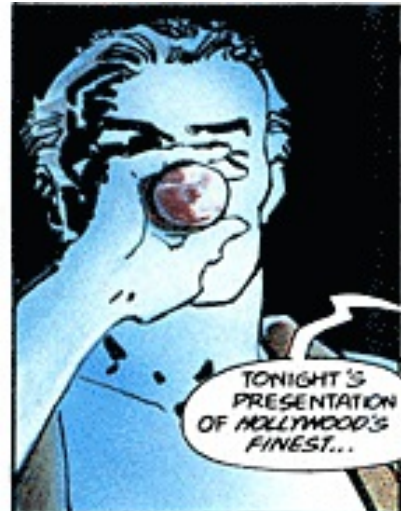
THAT WILL BE ALL, ALFRED. GOOD NIGHT.

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

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

THAT WILL BE ALL, ALFRED. GOOD NIGHT.





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







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



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



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



-- FOUR KILLED IN A SENSELESS ATTACK ON--



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



-- RARE AND MUTILATION OF...



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



RIGHT, L.O.A. RIGHT AS RAIN THE HEAT'S FINALLY GOING TO BREAK--



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

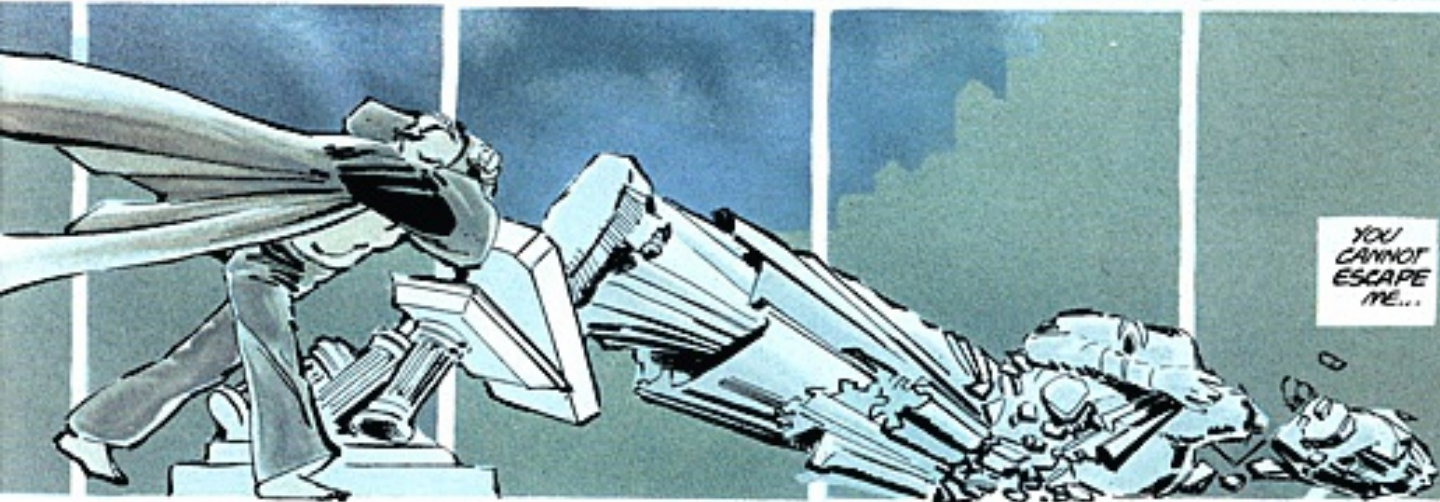


THE
TIME
HAS
COME.

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--



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

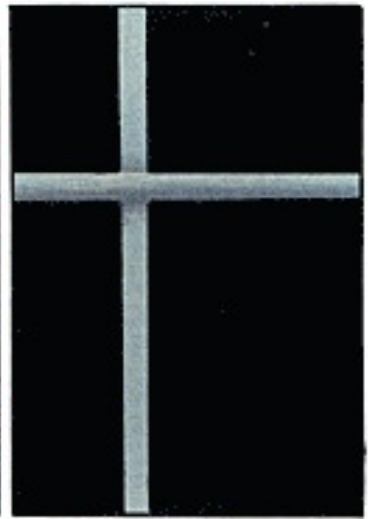


YOU CANNOT STOP ME--NOT
WITH WINE OR VOWS OR
THE WEIGHT OF AGE--



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





RRRRMMMMBBLLLLL



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

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



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

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



SURELY NOT--

HEY, MOMMIE...



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

I NEED YOU, MOMMIE.



MAKE ME FEEL SAFE.



OH NO PLEASE...



PLEASE GOD NO--



TALK SOFT...

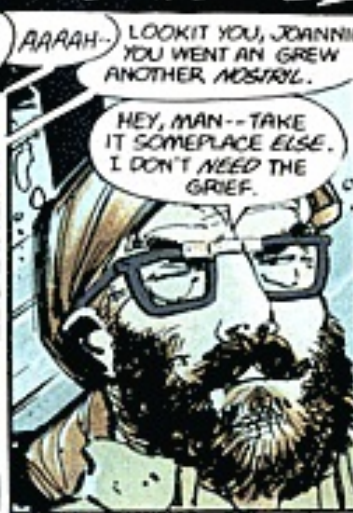
KRE
SSS
SHHH



KRE
SSS
SHHH



RRMBL
K K K R R A K K K K



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

LISSEN,
SILK--



... DOG
EAT DOG
WORLD...

DON STICK US.
THAT WAS ON
TH ROOF.



THE
ROOF?

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

YOU SMILE A LITTLE
WIDER NOW, JOANNIE...



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



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

WHUMP



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



SKR
SKR
SKR



GNAA
GNAA



WHOKK

GNAA
GNAA
GNAA

OH MAN OH
MAN START
ALREADY...



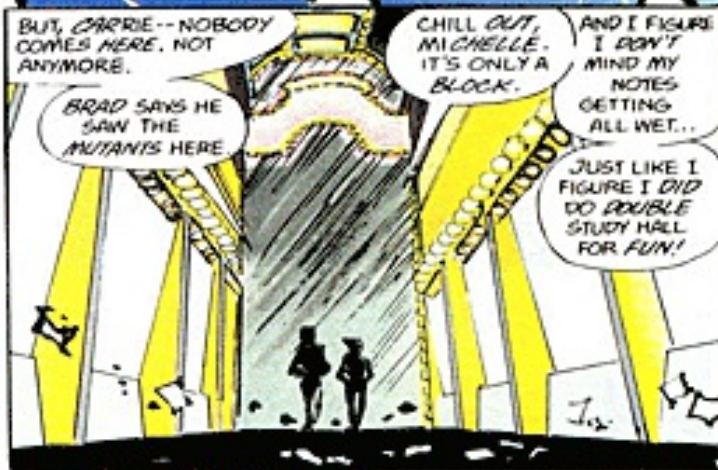
GNAA
GNAA
GNN
KLUNK





COME ON, MICHELLE--

-- WE'LL CUT THROUGH THE ARCADE.



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

BRAD SAYS HE SAW THE MUTANTS HERE

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

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

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



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

AND BRAD SAID-- I KNOW, MICHELLE.



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



--IT'S TOO BRIGHT HERE FOR TROUBLE.



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

CARRIE...

LIGHTS'LL COME BACK ON...



SEE? THEY--



NO. IT WAS JUST LIGHTNING.



CHICK CHICK CHICK



CHICK CHICK CHICK



CHICK CHICK CHICK

CHICK CHICK CHICK

COME HERE COME HERE COME HERE, CHICKEN LEGS--



START WIF TH LITTLE ONE--
NO!



CARRIE ON GOY WIMP
SHH--



SLICE AND DICE
MAN SLICE
AND DICE--

THUNK
THUNK
THUNK
THUNKK



AAAAA



JESUS
MY
ARM--

SOMETHING
STUCK IN MY
ARM--

S OKAY
MAN I GOT
MY NINE--



ANYTHING
MOVES I
SHOOT--
WH...



AAAH--



SPIKE--
WHAT'S
HE DO--
WHA--



NO...
PUT ME
DOWN--

NO



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

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

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

YOU DON'T SUPPOSE...



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

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



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 RAIN ON
MY CHEST IS A
BAPTISM--

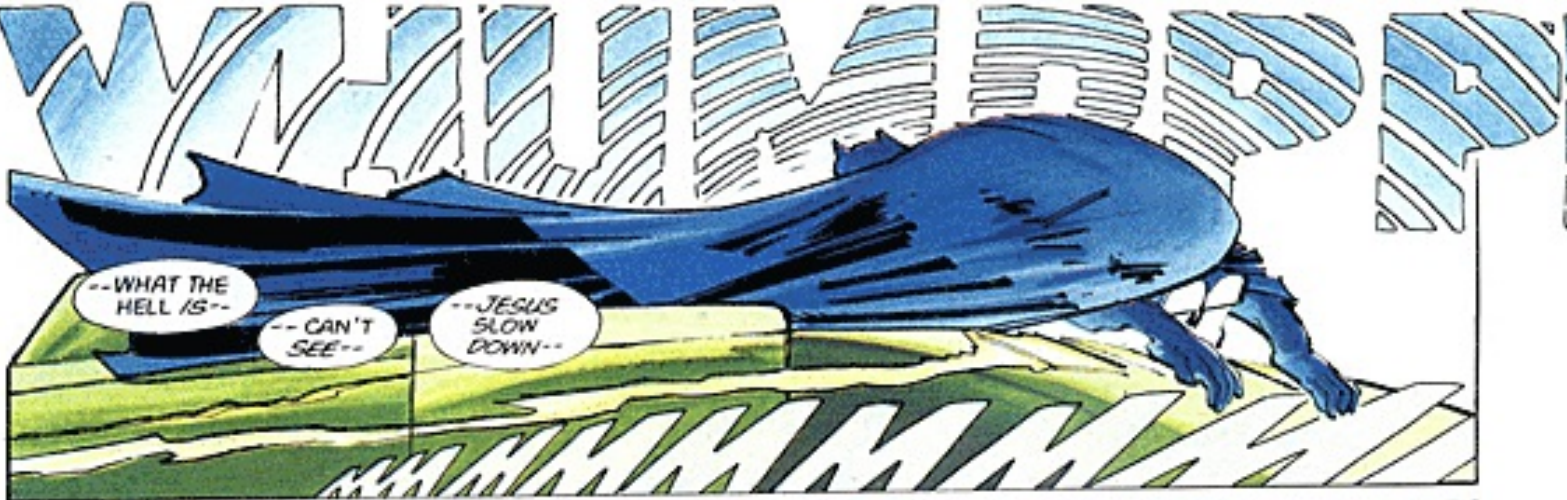
REALITY CHECK,
MY CHELLE, TALK ABOUT
COMPOSURE, TOTAL LACK OF.
HE'S A MAN-- ABOUT--
TWELVE FEET TALL--

I'M
BORN
AGAIN...





I SMELL THEIR FEAR--AND IT IS SWEET.



--WHAT THE HELL IS--

--CAN'T SEE--

--JESUS SLOW DOWN--



--STOP THE CAR--

--BUT WHAT IS THAT--

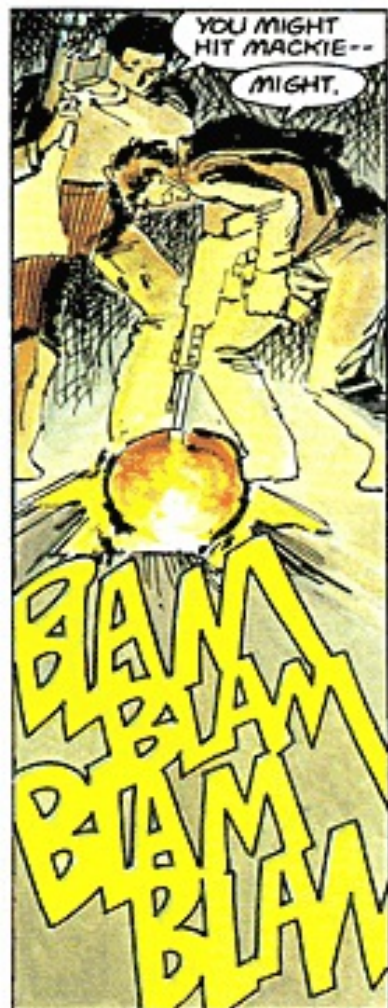
--IT'LL GET US--



--HIT THE BRAKES--









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

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

AND I LET HIM COME TO ME.

THEN I HEAR THE ROOKIE'S FOOTSTEPS, COMING UP FAST BEHIND ME.

I'LL HAVE TO KEEP HIM FROM GETTING KILLED.



EVERYBODY FREEZ! **OWW!**



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

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



THERE ARE SEVEN WORKING DEFENSES FROM THIS POSITION.

THREE OF THEM DISARM WITH MINIMAL CONTACT.

THREE OF THEM KILL.

THE OTHER--



-- HURTS.

KRRR



YOU'RE UNDER ARREST, MISTER.

YOU'VE CRIPPLED THAT MAN!



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

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

JESUS SWEET JESUS...

LET'S SEE WHAT YOU'VE GOT.

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

OH CHRIST I CAN'T STAND IT...

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

I'LL SHOOT--

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

NICE TO HAVE YOU BACK, BATS.

GO TO THEIR CAR, KID, FETCH THE PAYROLL.

I DON'T BELIEVE THIS...

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

PILLS. NO END TO YOUR BAD HABITS...

PPPLEASE...

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

I WAS A ROOKIE-- LIKE SHMUCK FACE HERE.

IT WAS A LONG TIME AGO.

AT THE BANK-- WAS THERE A SECOND CAR?

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

YOU WEREN'T SUPPOSED TO.

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

--I MEAN, I WAS JUST A 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 SPOSED TO GET IN TOUCH WITH--

OH, YEAH! NOW I REMEMBER...



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



SURE KEPT THE HOSPITALS BUSY.

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



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



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



BBBAT... A REBIRTH OF THE AMERICAN FIGHTING SPIRIT.



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



...IS AN ABERRANT PSYCHOTIC FORCE-- DARLINGS.



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



--A DANGER TO EVERY CITIZEN OF GOTHAM!

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



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

THAT'S CUTE, LANA, BUT HARDLY APPROPRIATE, AND HARDLY FAIR TO AS TROUBLE A SOUL AS HARVEY DENT'S.

HE CERTAINLY IS TROUBLE FOR HIS VICTIMS.

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



AND BATMAN IS?

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

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

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



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

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

ALSO OF CONCERN IS THIS MORNING'S ANNOUNCEMENT BY POLICE MEDIA RELATIONS DIRECTOR LOUIS GALLAGHER THAT A 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...

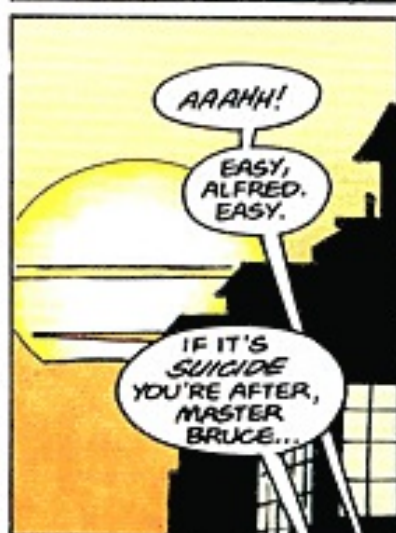
... THIS DOES GIVE ONE A SENSE OF DEJA VU...



TURN THAT GOD DAMNED THING OFF, MERKEL.

A SAD, STRANGE CRIMINAL WAS HARVEY DENT?

COMMISSIONER, IF YOU PLEASE...



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

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

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

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



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

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

FACE-- IT WAS BATMAN. HE-- WH...



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



SLAM



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

I KNOW YOU'RE VERY CONCERNED ABOUT THAT.

GET AWAY FROM ME...



YOU'RE GOING TO TELL ME EVERYTHING YOU KNOW, SOONER OR LATER.

IF IT'S LATER--



--I WON'T MIND.

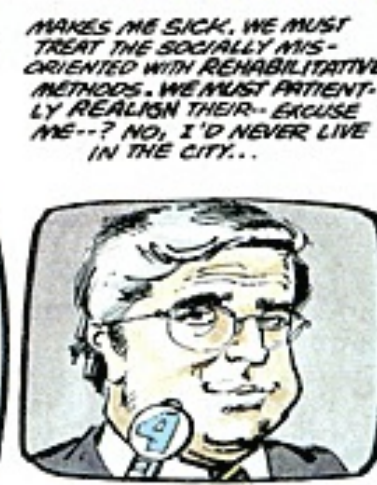


NO!-- STAY BACK--



--I GOT RIGHTS--







...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.

YOU STILL DON'T THINK IT'S DENT?

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

BUT IF IT IS...

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

THAT'S ALL HE KNEW, JIM.

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

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

I THINK HE WANTS TO DIE.

WE ARE TALKING ABOUT HARVEY DENT...

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

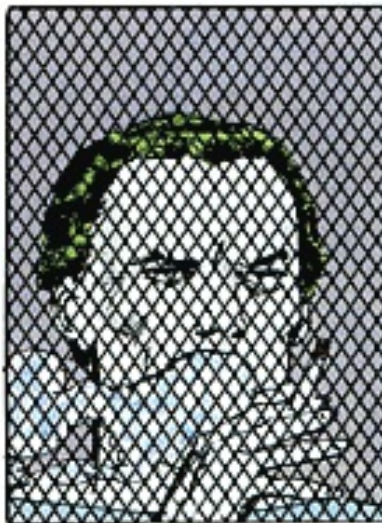
... TWICE AS BIG...

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

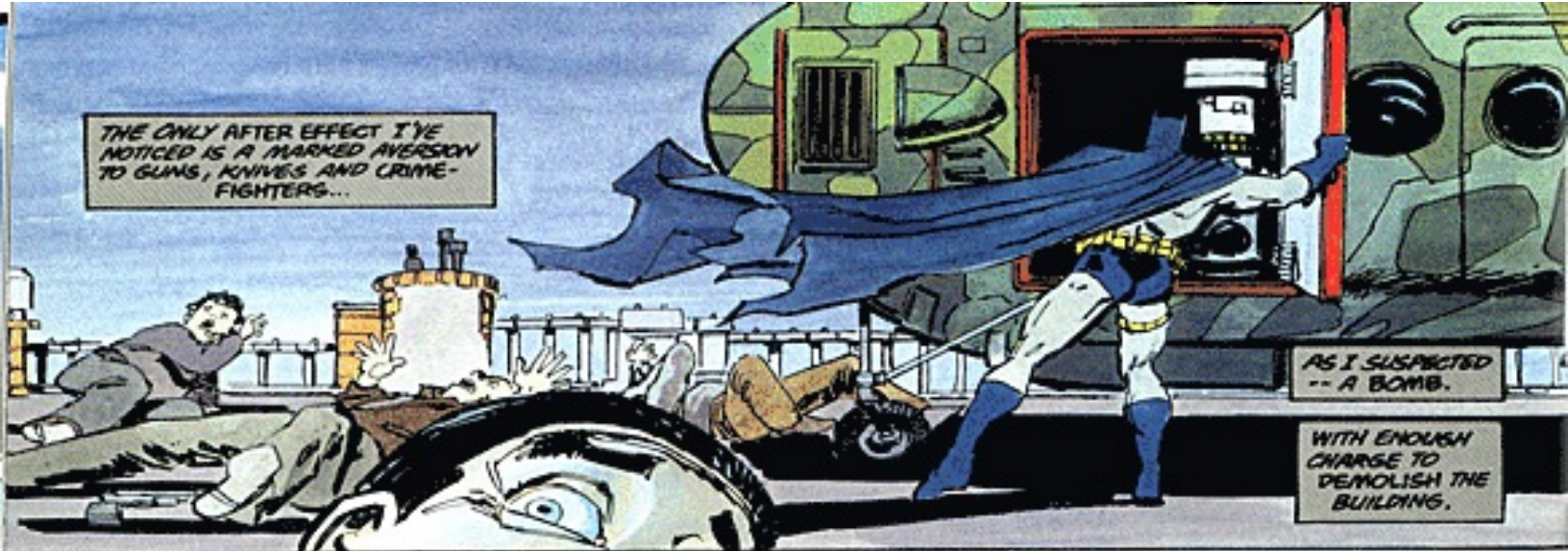
I KNOW THAT SOUNDS CONFUSING. THESE THINGS OFTEN DO TO THE LAYMAN. BUT I'LL TRY TO EXPLAIN WITHOUT GETTING OVERLY TECHNICAL. YOU SEE, IT ALL GETS DOWN TO THIS BATMAN FELLOW.

BATMAN'S PSYCHOTIC-SUBLIMATIVE / PSYCHO-EROTIC BEHAVIOR PATTERN IS LIKE A NET. WEAK-EGGED NEUROTICS, LIKE HARVEY, ARE DRAWN INTO CORRESPONDING INTERSICING PATTERNS.

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



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



AS I SUSPECTED -- A BOMB.

WITH ENOUGH CHARGE TO DEMOLISH THE BUILDING.

APPARENTLY A DETONATOR JOB, THAT WOULD MAKE SENSE.

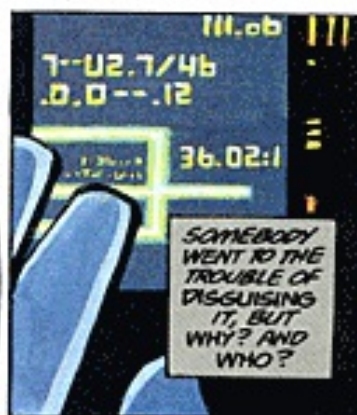
WAIT--IF THOSE READINGS MEAN WHAT I THINK THEY DO...



AM I ON?

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

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



BRILLIANT DESIGN--WORTHY OF THE JOKER.

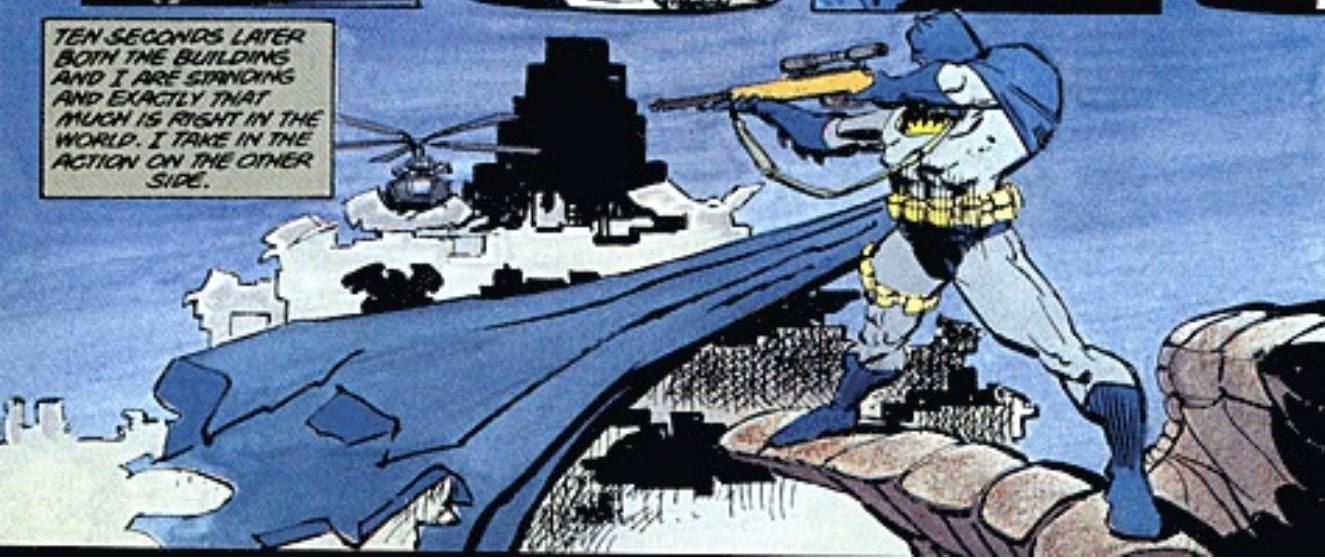
I STAND HERE ATOP GOTHAM'S BEAUTIFUL TWIN TOWERS, WITH TWO BOMBS CAPABLE OF MAKING THEM RUBBLE. YOU HAVE TWENTY MINUTES TO SAVE THEM.

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

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



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 MOMENTS AWAY FROM TAKING IT ALL OUT OF HIS HANDS. HARVEY, IF IT IS YOU-- YOU'VE HAD EVERY CHANCE THERE IS.



IN TEN YEARS
I'VE NEVER
FELT SO CALM.
SO RIGHT.
THIS WOULD
BE A FINE
DEATH...



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

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

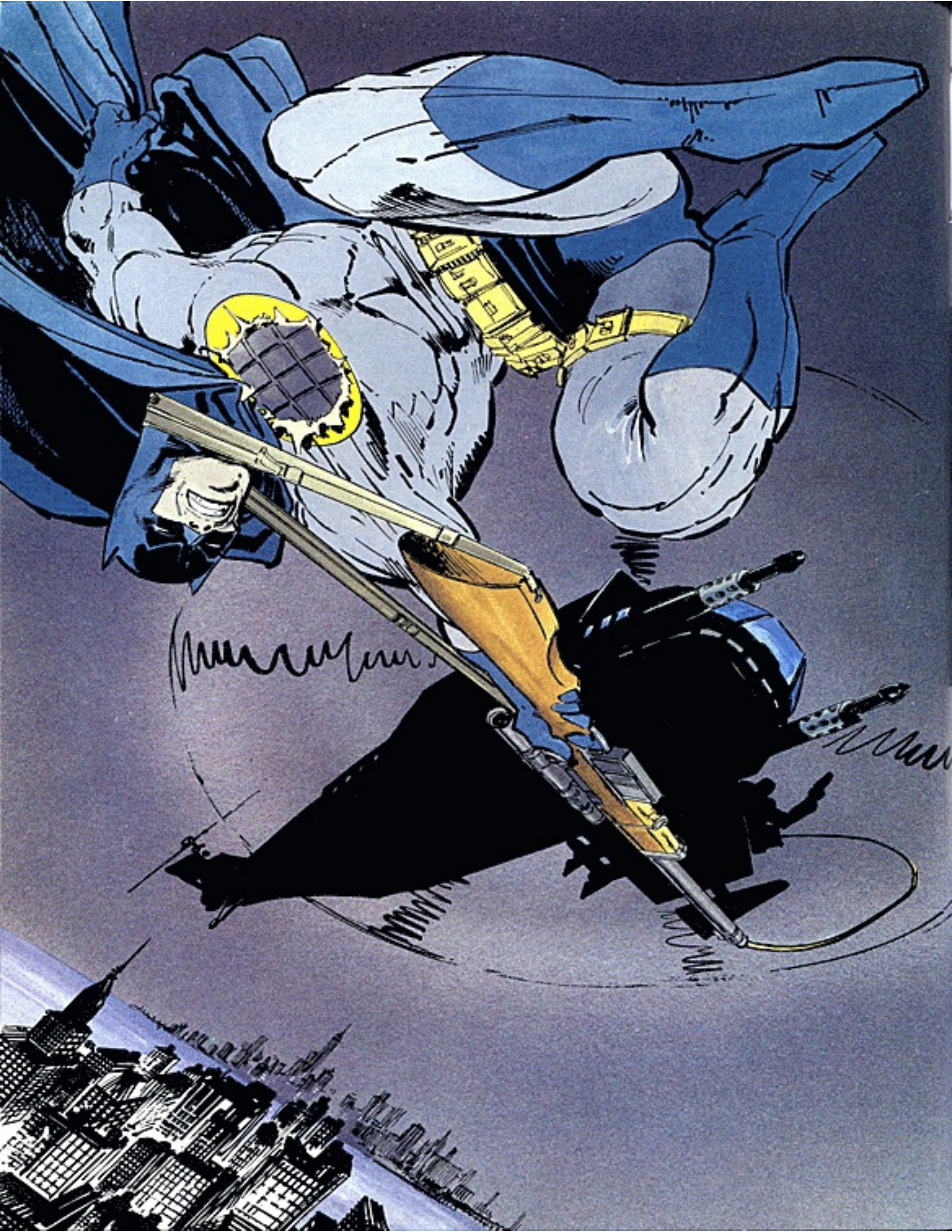
--IF IT'S A HEART ATTACK
I'M FINISHED--



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

...AND
HARVEY...

...I HAVE
TO KNOW.



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



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



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



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



THOUGHTS LIKE
THAT KEEP ME
WARM AT NIGHT.



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



NOT MUCH
OF A CORPSE
LEFT.

MOSTLY
LIQUID.

PROBLEM
IS...



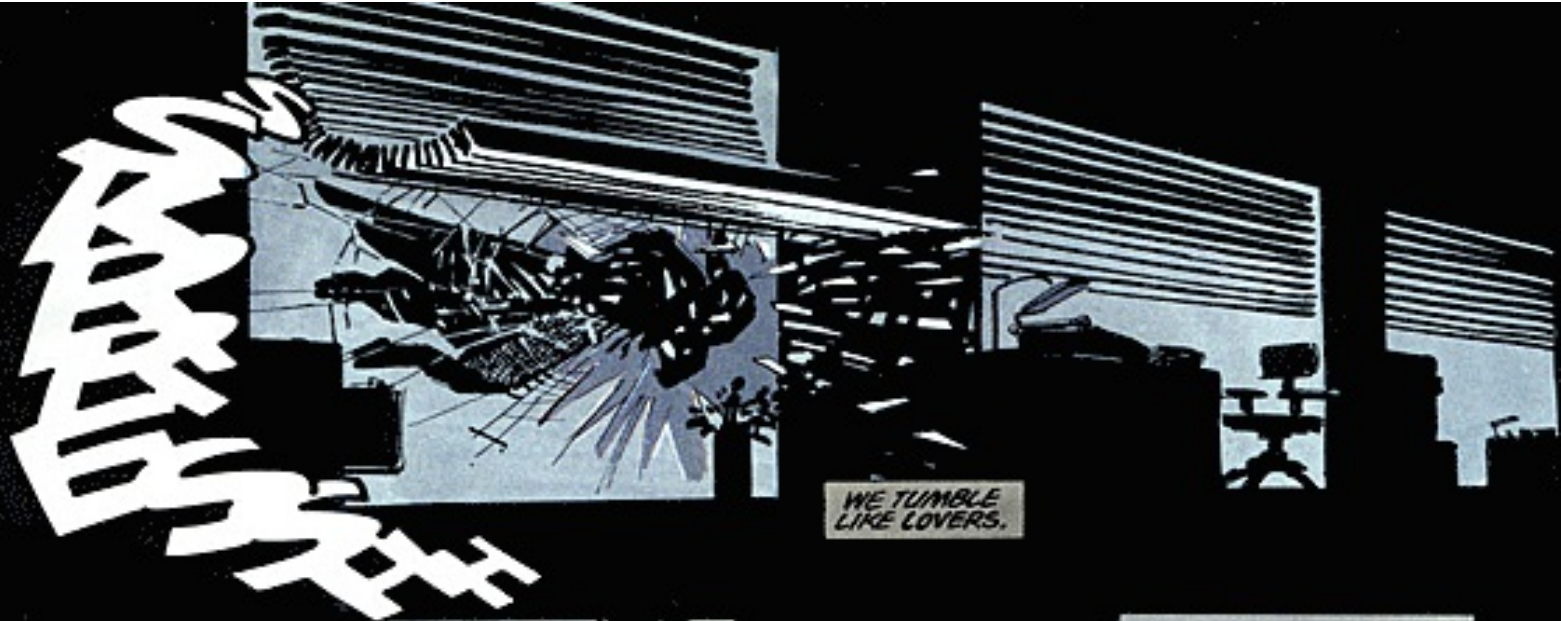
...THERE
MAY NOT
BE ANY
FINGER-
PRINTS.

EVERY DENTAL
RECORDS
WOULD PROBABLY
BE USELESS.



AND
LIKE I
SAID,
HARVEY...

...I HAVE
TO KNOW.



WE TUMBLE
LIKE LOVERS.



THE AIR
IS COLD.



THE NIGHT
IS SILENT.



LEAVING THE
WORLD NO
POORER--

-- FOUR MEN
DIE.



... HARVEY...

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

YOU HAVE TO ADMIT THAT-- I PLAYED ALONG.

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



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

THE SCARS GO DEEP, TOO DEEP...



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

AT LEAST... BOTH SIDES MATCH...

I CLOSE MY EYES AND LISTEN.

NOT FOOLED BY SIGHT, I SEE HIM...



HAVE YOUR LAUGH, BATMAN-- TAKE A LOOK!

...AS HE IS.



... TAKE A LOOK...



I SEE HIM. I SEE...



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



A REFLECTION.





B O O K T W O



THE DARK KNIGHT TRIUMPHANT

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 HUNK OF METAL 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 LOAD 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 SUCK IT AGAIN.



DYING 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 COLD, OILED SOUND OF A GUN BEING COCKED BEHIND ME.

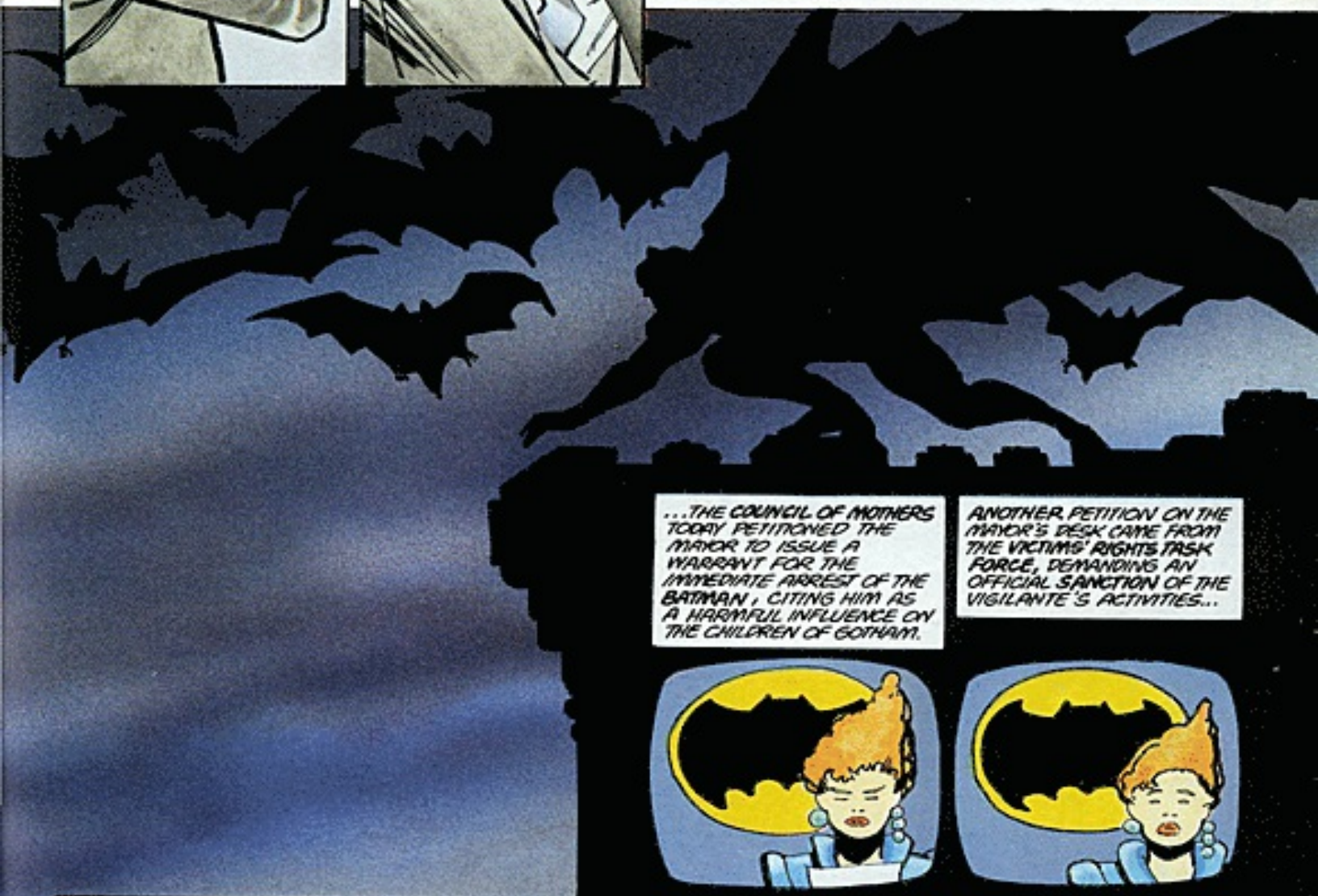


I SEE THE FACE OF A KILLER WHO ISN'T YET OLD ENOUGH TO SHAVE.

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

GORDON WAS ATTACKED OUTSIDE HIS WEST END APARTMENT...

OH, WOW...



...WHAT A BRING DOWNY, SEVENTEEN YEARS OLD..

MAGISMO WITH A BADGE-- JUST LIKE CHICAGO.

REMEMBER CHICAGO, HON...?



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

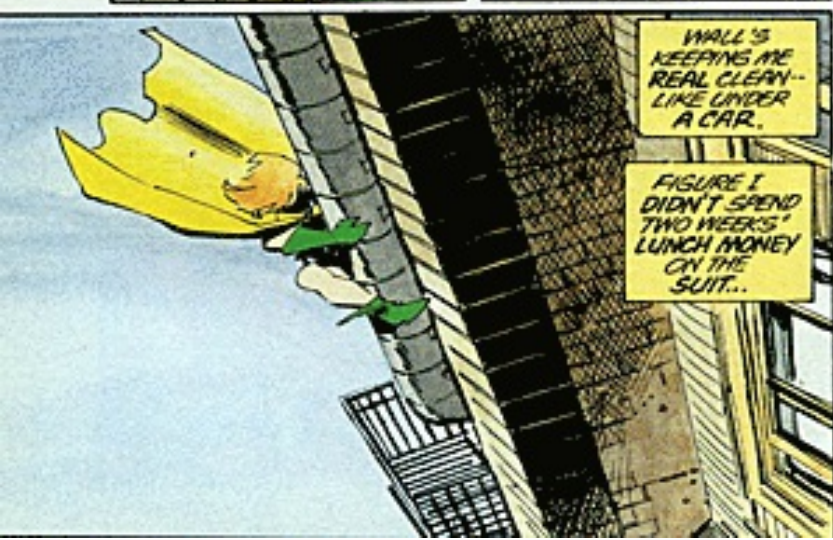


ONE-STEP STREET PIZZA.
MAXIMUM CHECK-OUT.



WIND'S ACES. 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.

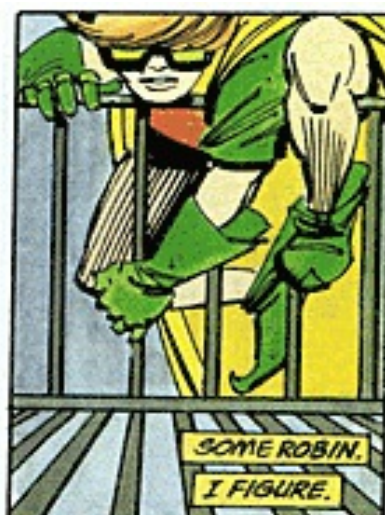
FIGURE I DIDN'T SPEND TWO WEEKS' LUNCH MONEY ON THE SUIT...



OH, REAL GOOD, CARRIE...



SPAKKKK



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 VIDEOTAPE 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 SUCK THEM DRY. I WILL EAT HIS HEART AND DRAG HIS BODY THROUGH THE STREET.



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

GORDON, FACING MANDATORY RETIREMENT LATER THIS WEEK, HAS OFFERED TO STAY AT THE JOB UNTIL THE MUTANT CRISIS HAS BEEN 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...

STRANGELY, 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...



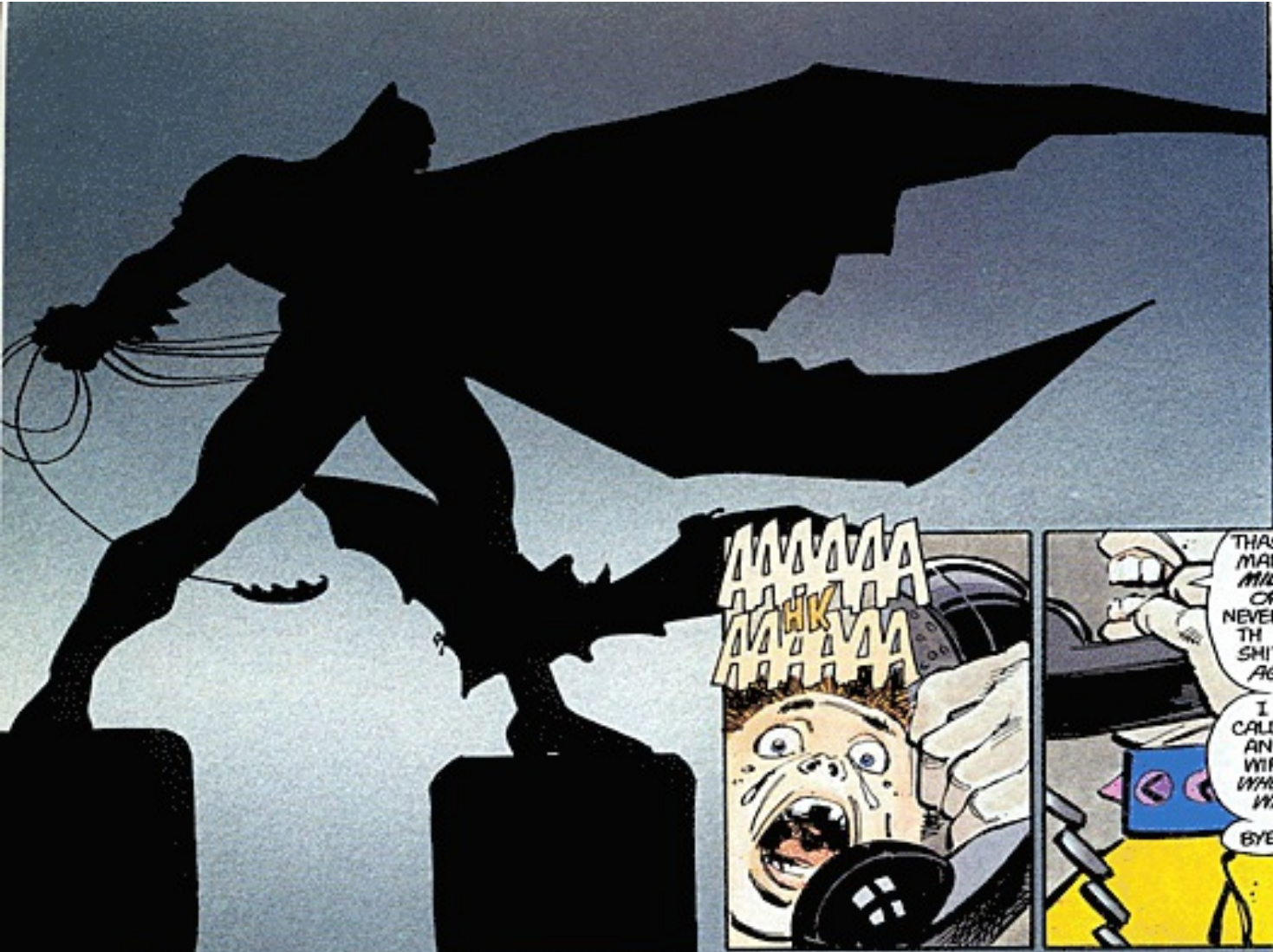
I'M STILL POOLING OPINIONS. I'M STILL POOLING OPINIONS.

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? TOM?

GOOD QUESTION, LOLA. MRS. JOYCE RIDLEY WAS ADMITTED TO A PRIVATE HOSPITAL UPSTATE 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...





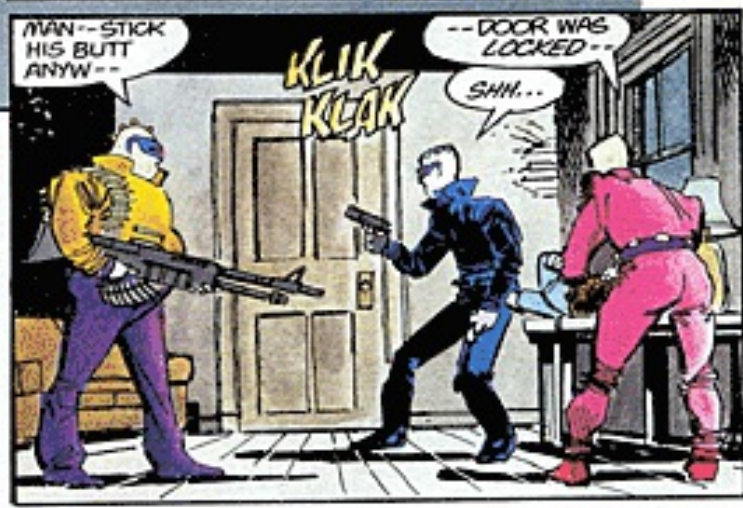
THAT'S RIGHT, MAN-- ONE MILLION-- OR YOU NEVER HEAR TH LITTLE SHIT CRY AGAIN.
I BE CALLIN IN AN HOUR WIF TH WHERE AN WHEN.
BYE.



RIDLEY'S GOIN FRIT. BEGGIN TO PAY.
HIT IT WIF THE TRANK, MAN...
LES JUS FLUSH IM DOWN TH JOHN, MAN.



HE'S FLUSHED, MAN. SOON'S WE GET TH MILL.
JESUS-- HE'S MESSED HISSELF...



MAN-- STICK HIS BUTT ANYW--
--DOOR WAS LOCKED--
SHH...





**BRAKA
BRAKA
BRAKA
BRAKA
BRAKA**







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...

... 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 SOCIAL COWARDICE. HE'S ONLY TAKING BACK WHAT'S OURS...



THESE-- AND MANY, MANY OTHERS-- ARE THE REACTIONS TO A PHENOMENON THAT HAS STRUCK A NERVE CENTER IN OUR SOCIETY-- THE RETURN OF THE BATMAN.

TONIGHT, WE WILL EXAMINE HIS IMPACT ON OUR CONSCIOUSNESS. FROM METROPOLIS-- WE HAVE LANA LANG, 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.



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?

I'M GLAD YOU ASKED ME THAT QUESTION, TED. IT IS TRUE THAT THIS BATMAN HAS TERRORIZED THE ECONOMICALLY DIS-ADVANTAGED AND SOCIALLY MARGINALIZED-- BUT HIS EFFECTS ARE FAR FROM POSITIVE.

PICTURE 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.

BUT YOU SEE, TED, THE MEMBRANE IS FLEXIBLE-- AND PERMEABLE. HERE THE MORE SIGNIFICANT EFFECTS OF THE BLOW BECOME CALCULABLE, EVEN PREDICTABLE TO WIT--



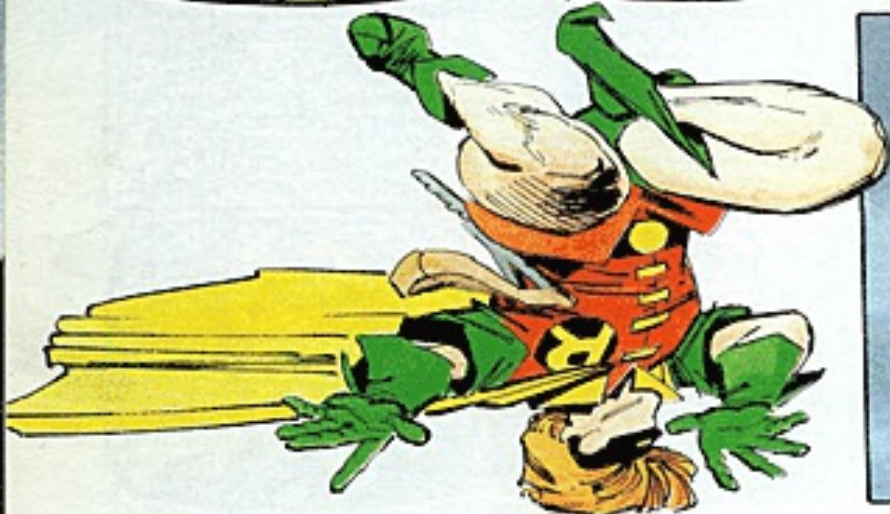
EVERY ANTI-SOCIAL ACT CAN BE TRACED TO IRRESPONSIBLE MEDIA INPUT. GIVEN THIS, THE PRESENCE OF SUCH AN ABERRANT, VIOLENT FORCE IN THE MEDIA CAN ONLY LEAD TO ANTI-SOCIAL PROGRAMMING.

JUST AS HARVEY DENT-- WHO'S RECOVERING STEADILY, THANKS FOR ASKING-- ASSUMED THE ROLE OF IDEOLOGICAL DOPPELGÄNGER TO THE BATMAN, SO A WHOLE NEW GENERATION, CONFUSED AND ANGRY--

-- WILL BE BENT TO THE MATRIX OF BATMAN'S PATHOLOGICAL SELF-DELUSION. BATMAN IS, IN THIS CONTEXT-- AND PARDON THE TERM-- A SOCIAL DISEASE...

THAT'S THE DUMBEST LOAD OF...

LANA-- PLEASE-- THE NETWORK--



MR. BROCK-- THE PRESIDENT HAS REMAINED SILENT ON THIS ISSUE. DON'T YOU-- AND ME-- FEEL THAT THE NATIONAL UPROAR OVER THE BATMAN WARRANTS, 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 FLAPTRAP, WELL...

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

...PRETTY SOON NOW THE RATINGS'LL DROP ON THIS ONE AND IT'LL BLOW OVER. BESIDES, I THINK THE WHOLE THING'S JUST AS LIKELY A HOAX. NETWORKS'VE DONE WORSE.



I MEAN, BATEBOY'D BE PUSHING SIXTY BY NOW-- IF HE EVER WAS REAL. FUNNY NOBODY'S EVER TAKEN A PICTURE OF HIM... MIGHTY FUNNY, I SAY...

MISS LANG, YOU ARE THE BATMAN'S MOST VOCAL SUPPORTER. HOW CAN YOU CONDONE BEHAVIOR THAT'S 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 IMPOTENCE.

A MAN HAS RISEN TO SHOW US THAT THE POWER IS, AND ALWAYS HAS BEEN, IN OUR HANDS. WE ARE UNDER SIEGE -- HE'S SHOWING US THAT WE CAN RESIST.



LANA-- YOU HAVEN'T EXACTLY ANSWERED MY QUESTION...



NEXT UP... FIGHTING CRIMES.

DO YOU KNOW WHO I AM, PUNK?

WH...

I'M THE WORST NIGHTMARE YOU EVER HAD, KIND THAT MADE YOU WAKE UP SCREAMING FOR YOUR MOTHER.

WH... WHERE AM I...

YOU'VE GOT A MOTHER, DON'T YOU? EVERY PUNK SHOULD HAVE A MOTHER...

C... CAN'T SEE, MAN...

WHAT'S... ON MY FACE...

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 #1 YOUR PAL WAS CARRYING--

-- YOU KNOW WHICH PAL, 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 M&O OF YOURS -- THAT'S COMBAT WEAPONRY.

SAME KIND ANOTHER MEMBER OF YOUR GANG TRIED TO USE ON JIM GORDON.

SO FILL ME IN, PUNK-- THE MUTANTS HAVE A WHOLESALE DEAL WITH THE ARMY?

YOU'VE GOT A LOT OF TEETH LEFT. AND I HAVEN'T EVEN TOUCHED YOUR TONGUE...

S... SOLID, MAN... I'LL TELL YOU...

... DEAL IS...

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?





AAAAA
AAAAA
AAAAA

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 YUSSELF, MAN-- WATCHA RED CARD...



OWWW
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 GAWLES.



HER PURSE STRAP BITES INTO HER SHOULDER...



SHE LANDS HARD ON THE CEMENT, BUT IT ONLY HURTS.



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



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



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

SHE FEELS THE SQUARE OF METAL AND THANKS GOD AND CAN'T HELP BUT CRY.



VARIKOSE VEINS, THE DOCTOR SAID. EASY FOR HIM TO TELL HER TO QUIT HER JOB. EASY FOR HIM TO TALK ABOUT SURGERY.



BUT YOUNG ROBERT'S ART TEACHER SAYS HE HAS TALENT...



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



SURGERY, WITH NO INSURANCE AND TWO PAYMENTS LEFT ON JAYNE'S BRACES AND THE TURNY-OFF NOTICE FROM THE ELECTRIC COMPANY WITH WINTER ON ITS WAY.



SHE PICTURES ROBERT'S ABLE LITTLE HANDS, HIS EAGER SMILE...



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



WOMAN EXPLODES IN SUBWAY STATION-- FILM AT ELEVEN.



THE GENERAL'S RECORD
IS AN ANTHEM OF
ORDERS BARKED
BETWEEN DEAFENING
EXPLOSIONS... OF A
STEELY, 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...



WORD'S COME DOWN, MAN--



--FROM THE LEADER. SO GET IN--

WE DOWN' CRIMES, MAN-- AN WE BEHIND QUOTA-- GOT NO TIME FER SPEECHES--



NOT TALKIN SPEECHES, MAN. TALKIN WAR. GOT AN HOUR TO MAKE THE DUMP.

OKAY, OKAY--

THE DUMP
I LOATHE THE DUMP.



BUT IT'S THE MUTANTS --AND IT SOUNDS MAJOR.



SO HE MIGHT BE THERE...



THE GUARD AT GATE TWELVE IS NODDING OFF WHEN I FIND THE TRUCKS. THEY AREN'T EVEN LOCKED.

YOU COULD OVERTHROW A SMALL GOVERNMENT WITH THIS MUCH FIREPOWER.



IF IT'S WAR THEY WANT-- I'VE GOT JUST THE THING...

...JOYOUS REUNION OF THE RIDLEY 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 GALLAGHER HRS PROMISED AN ANSWER SOON TO THE QUESTION THAT'S ON EVERYONE'S MIND-- WHO WILL BE THE NEW POLICE COMMISSIONER OF GOTHAM CITY?...



THE HEAT IS ON, YOUR HONOR...

EXECUTIVE STEAM ROOM

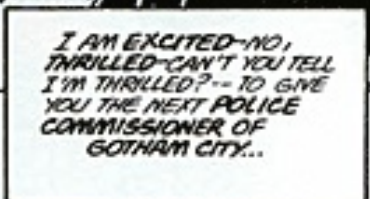
I CAN SEE THAT. CAN'T YOU TELL THAT I CAN SEE THAT?

WISH WE COULD JUST HOLD AN ELECTION...

NOT FOR COMMISSIONER, YOUR HONOR. NOT ANY MORE. NO, IT'S UP TO YOU... ...TOUGH DECISION, TOO. 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...



THE DUMP STRETCHES OUT OF SIGHT FROM THE FAR BANK OF THE WEST RIVER. I'M TOLD IT ENDS SOMEWHERE BEFORE THE FARLANDS.

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 RAPED 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 HEAD-QUARTERS.

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.

I SHALL CRUSH THE FOOL--

--BATMAN AAA

BAM

**MUTANTS!
SURRENDER
NOW--OR BE
DESTROYED!**

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

KIND OF NAME A
KID WOULD COME
UP WITH...

**BAM BAM BIAN
BRAKABRAKABRAKA
BLAM**

**PWING
PWING
PWING**

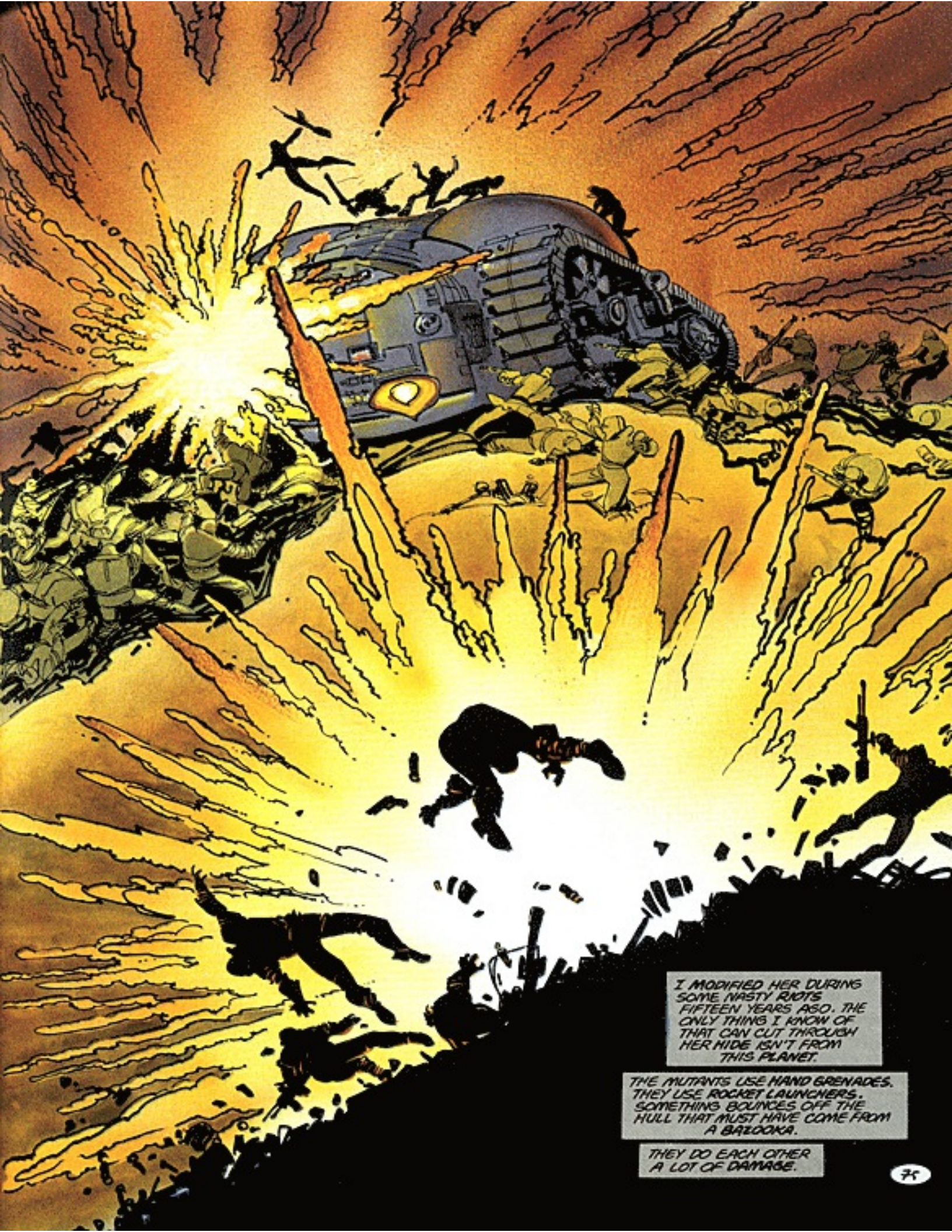
**POOMPA
POOMPA**

THEY DON'T
EVEN WAIT
FOR THE
ORDER.

YOUNG PEOPLE
THESE DAYS...

...NO RESPECT
FOR HISTORY.





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.



MASTER BRUCE-- COME IN, PLEASE -- MASTER BRUCE...


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




... A KIND OF EVIL WE 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--




-- 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...




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

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




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

-- AND HE'S YOUNG...



... IN HIS PHYSICAL PRIME...




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



MASTER BRUCE-- YOU'VE SHUT DOWN THE WEAPONS!

CAN'T HAVE A BACK DOOR, ALFRED. MIGHT BE TEMPTED TO USE IT.

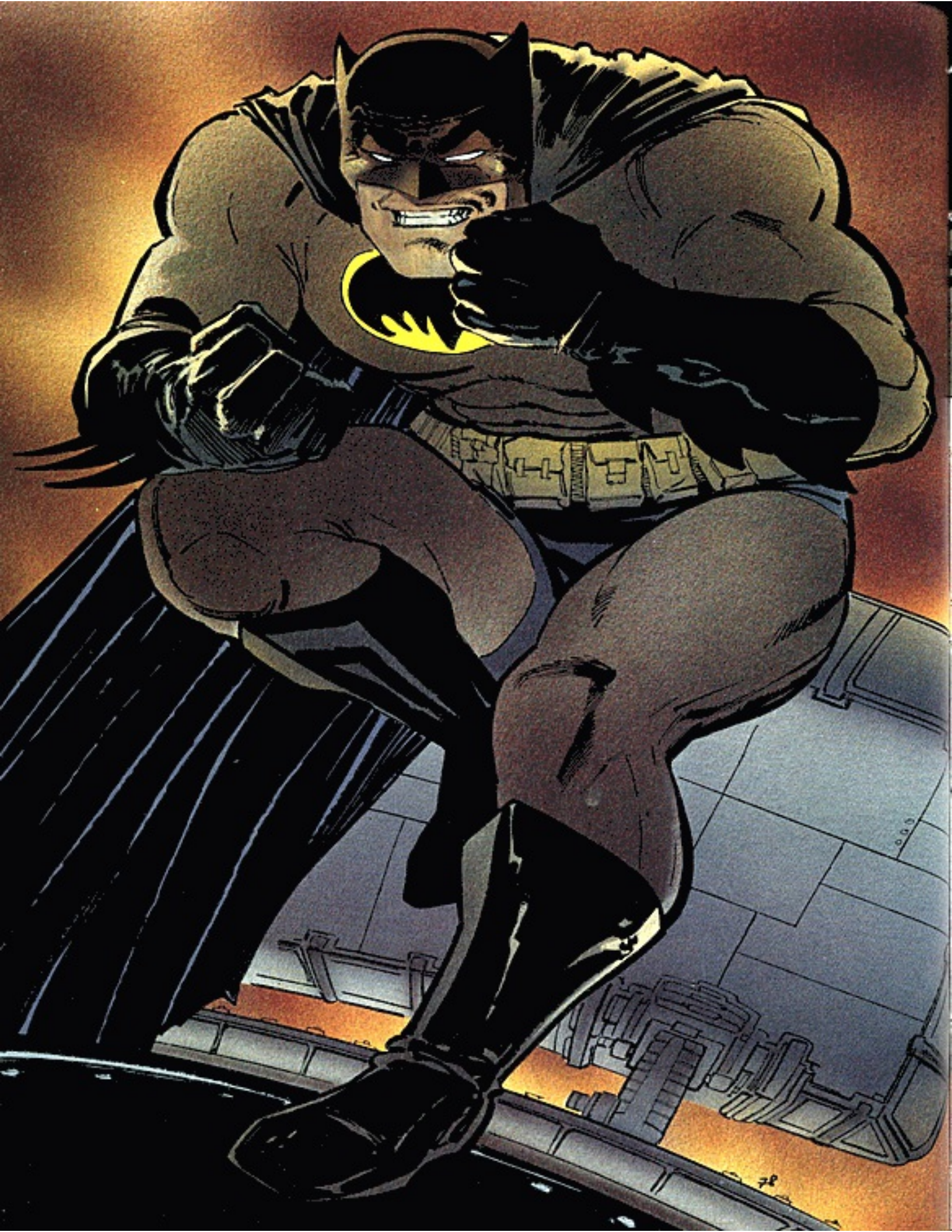


SIR, YOU CAN'T BE SERIOUS--

SIR... HE'LL KILL YOU--



COME ON, MAN-- YOU BORIN ME--





RAARR



I MAKE HIM EAT SOME GARBAGE--

KRAMP



--THEN I HELP HIM SWALLOW IT.

THWAKK



KLUDD

A BEAUTY TO HIS SOLAR FLEXIS -- I WORRY HE MIGHT DROP TOO SOON--



-- THEN HIS CLAWS DIG INTO MY BACK--

GGGRRRAAAAAA



-- HIS FILED TEETH LIKE RAZORS IN MY TRAPEZIUS--



CHUD



FAPP

HA!
YOU SLOW MAN!

HE'S RIGHT-- HE HAD ALL THE TIME IN THE WORLD--

--HE SHOWS ME
WHAT A FAST
KICK IS--



WHKKK

--SOMETHING
EXPLODES IN
MY MIDSECTION--



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



--A MOMENT OF
BLACKNESS--
TOO SOON
FOR THAT--

--TOO SOON--
WHAT'S WRONG
WITH ME--



NO--



--RIBS
INTACT--

--NO
INTERNAL
BLEEDING--



--LET IT
LOOK
WORSE
THAN IT
IS--



--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--



--THE
IDiot--

--STARTS
LAUGHING--







LUCKY... YOU'RE LUCKY I'M ALWAYS HERE...



... TO BAIL YOU OUT...



...DICK...



STILL ALIVE--

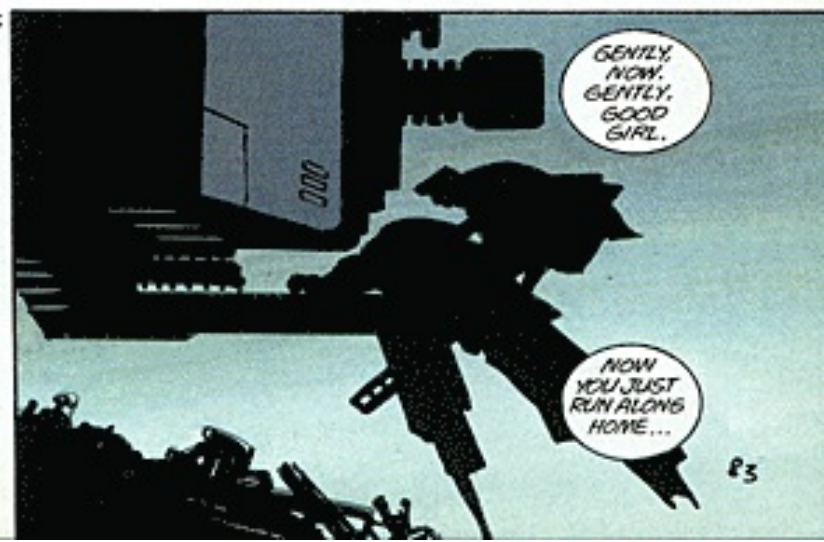
FORN STAR HOT GATES TODAY SIGNED A TWELVE-MILLION-DOLLAR CONTRACT WITH LANDMARK FILMS TO STAR IN A SCREEN VERSION OF SNOW WHITE. "I'M DOING IT FOR THE KIDS," SAYS GATES...

IN OTHER NEWS, GALAXY BROADCASTING PRESIDENT JAMES OLSEN 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 RIPPING ACROSS THE GOTHAM DUMP. A NEWS FOUR HELICOPTER IS ON ITS WAY, FOLKS...



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.

YES, SIR.

WELL, IT'S A RUCKUS I'D LIKE YOU TO STRAIGHTEN OUT FOR ME-- IN GOTHAM CITY. JUST BETWEEN YOU AND ME AND THE FENCE POST, I'M WORRIED.. ABOUT A FRIEND OF YOURS.

HERE... HAVE A MINT.

THANK YOU, SIR, BUT I'M NOT HUNGRY.

I LOVE MINTS...

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

...AND, WELL, IT'S ALL WELL 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 BROWNO NOW AND THEN... DOES THE HANDS GOOD TO BREAK HIM IN...

... BUT IF THAT BROWNO UP AND KICKS THE FENCE OUT AND GETS THE OTHER HORSES CRAZY... 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. YOU WANT A MEDAL, SON?

NO, THANK YOU, SIR.

I LOVE MEDALS...

... NOW, SON, I'M NOT ASKING 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 TALK TO HIM, BUT--

WELL, I'D SURE APPRECIATE IT... I'D JUST HATE TO SEE THINGS GET OUT OF... WELL, I'D JUST HATE THAT.

GIVE IT A SHOT, SON. YOUR COUNTRY'S COUNTING ON YOU...

...YES, SIR.

GOOD BOY...



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

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

WHAT ARE YOU DOING WITH HIS ARM, YOUNG LADY?

...A SCENE OF TOTAL WARFARE! EIGHTY-THREE MEMBERS OF THE MUTANT GANGS HAVE BEEN FOUND, SUFFERING FROM BULLET AND SHRAPNEL WOUNDS.

AMONG THOSE CAPTURED BY 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...



BATMAN IS A COWARD. I BROKE HIS BONES. I CONQUERED THE FOOL. I MADE HIM BEG FOR MERCY. ONLY BY CHEATING DID HE ESCAPE ALIVE.

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



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

THAT'S KEEN.



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

THIS YOUNG LADY WAS KIND ENOUGH TO HELP YOU ABOARD.



CAREFUL, MAN-- YOU'RE BOUNCING AROUND TOO--

NO... NOT... BOUNCING ME... DON'T WORRY...



I... KNOW WHAT SHE DID, ALFRED.

WHERE... DID YOU LEARN TO SET AN ARM... MAKE A SPLINT...?

GIRL SCOUTS.



WHAT'S... YOUR NAME...



CARRIE. CARRIE KELLEY.



ROBIN.



MINE'S BRUCE...

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



WE'RE ONLY MOMENTS FROM THE HOSPITAL--

NO... HOSPITAL, ALFRED...

... THE CAVE...



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 UNFIT FOR BROADCAST.



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

HARVEY DENT DIDN'T EXACTLY BRING US POSITIVE PUBLICITY, AND THIS ONE...

I KNOW, GLEN. I KNOW--

ARKHAM HOME
FOR THE EMOTIONALLY TROUBLED

--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.

DR. GLEN FORB
CHIEF ADMINISTRATOR

PUSH

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

I DON'T KNOW, THERE'S SOMETHING... WELL... SOMETHING SUPERNATURAL ABOUT THAT ONE.

CHIEF ADMINISTRATOR

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

FIVE MINUTES, GLEN. HE IS A PATIENT.

GLEN FORB
ADMINISTRATOR

OKAY, ALL RIGHT. FIVE MINUTES.

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

DON'T... WORRY, ROBIN...

...IT'S JUST ...A HOLOGRAM...

SIR-- I URGE 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...

903



THE CAVE...



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 HISSES.



GLIDING WITH ANCIENT GRACE...



EYES BLEAMING, UNROUCHED BY LOVE OR JOY OR SORROW...

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



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

GLARING, HATING...



...CLAIMING ME AS YOUR OWN.

WE WILL COME FOR OUR LEADER. WE WILL RAPE GOTHAM. WE WILL RAPE GOTHAM. WE WILL TASTE GOTHAM'S BLOOD.

ON HEARING THIS MESSAGE FROM THE MUTANTS, COMMISSIONER GORDON PUT HIMSELF AND HIS MEN ON TWENTY-FOUR HOUR ALERT-- WHILE THE MAYOR 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...

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



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--

--PUBLIC PERCEPTION-- WISE, THAT IS.



ALL THIS AND BRAINS TOO!



ARNOLD CRIMP 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 HAD A PRAYER TO SATAN IN THEIR SONG "STAIRWAY TO HEAVEN."

THEY HID IT VERY WELL. THEY RECORDED IT BACKWARDS.



ARNOLD CRIMP TOOK THE ALBUM FROM THE RECORD STORE WHERE HE WORKED UNTIL THEY FIRED HIM THIS AFTERNOON AND TRANSFERRED "STAIRWAY TO HEAVEN" TO TAPE.

TAPE
XXX

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 CRIMP.

BUT 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.



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.



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.

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. SHOOT-OUT. DETAILS TO FOLLOW...

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





IRON MAN VASQUEZ CAN'T TASTE HIS SNICKERS BAR. HE KNOWS HE SHOULD BE OUT OF HERE, OUT AND HOME, WAITING FOR BIGGERS TO SEND THE SIXTY DOLLARS, THIRTY FOR EACH LEG, HE THINKS, FEELING NOTHING.

FEELING NOTHING AND NOT TASTING HIS SNICKERS BAR.

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, BIGGERS HAD CALLED HIM. JUST LAUGHED WHEN IRON MAN CRIED LIKE A BABY AND BEGGED FOR ANOTHER FIGHT.

THEN BIGGERS PUT HIS FAT ARM AROUND IRON MAN'S SHOULDER AND TOLD HIM THE ONLY WAY HE COULD MAKE MONEY NOW.

SUDDENLY HIS EYES STING 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, PEPE SPANDECK 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 EARS. HE KNOWS HE'S GONE CRAZY. BUT THE MUGGER IS RUNNING, AFRAID. AFRAID OF PEPE!

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 STAND LIKE A CAPTIVE ARMY. I'D LIKE TO THINK THEY'RE CRAZY--

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 GOES THICK. I FEEL THE MAYOR SHUDDER, IN TIME WITH ME.

I ASK HIM ONE MORE TIME IF HE IS SURE HE WANTS TO GO IT ALONE. HE GURGLES, 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.



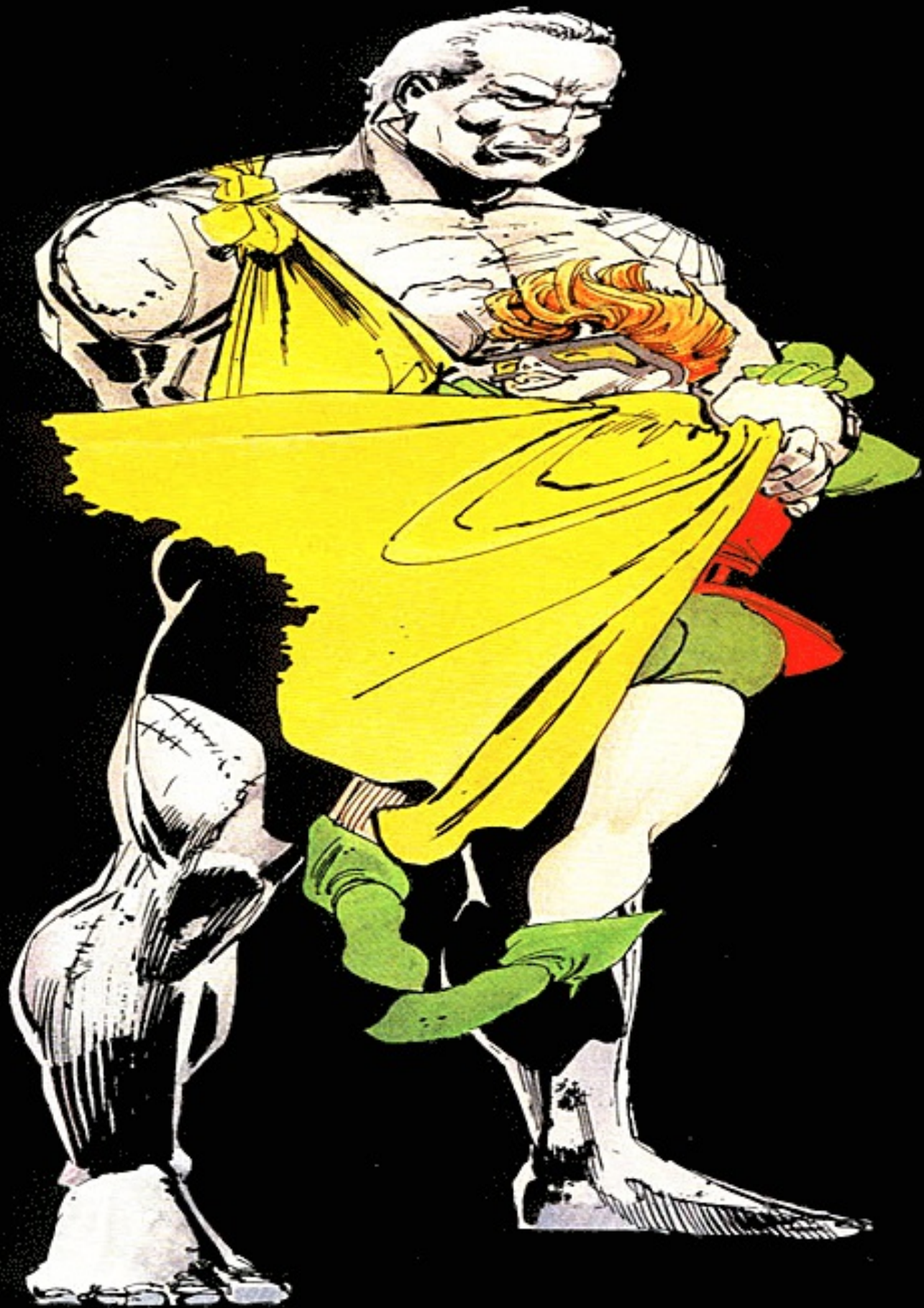
I SEE SOMETHING I'LL TAKE TO MY GRAVE.

SOME IDIOT STOPS ME FROM DOING THE OBVIOUS THING.

...THE MAYOR IS DEAD.

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 VIDEOTAPE OF THE MAYOR'S MURDER! ONLY ON CHANNEL TWO! NOT FOR THE SQUEAMISH. STAY TUNED.

SOVIET DESTROYERS HAVE BEEN SIGHTED IN THE WATERS OFF CORTO MALTESE... AND, IN GOTHAM CITY, IT ALSO LOOKS LIKE IMPENDING WAR-- AS THE CITY GIRD'S ITSELF FOR THE MUTANT ATTACK...



CHECK WHAT'S COMIN', MAN-- SOME PIECE--

TASTY-- HEY-- IS THAT WHO I THINK-- IT IS--



HEY, SWEET PIECE-- WE GOT PLANS F YOU--

NIZE PLANS.



FRISID BITCH--

WE CURE HER...

A FRIGHTENED SILENCE HAS FALLEN OVER GOTHAM. SILENCE BROKEN ONLY BY THE URGENT WORDS OF DEPUTY MAYOR-- EXCUSE 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.

CARRIE. SHE'S PERFECT.



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

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

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

SHE'S A SWEET YOUNG CHILD.



SHE'S MORE THAN THAT.

VERY WELL, SIR. 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.

...PLEASE...



I DON'T CARE IF HIS MOTHER'S PREGNANT!

JAMES M. GORDON
COMMISSIONER
OF POLICE



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

SLAM

W. EARL HOGGARD

COMMISSIONER, I'M REPORTING FOR DUTY.



FEW DAYS EARLY, AREN'T YOU--

CAPTAIN YINDEL?



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.



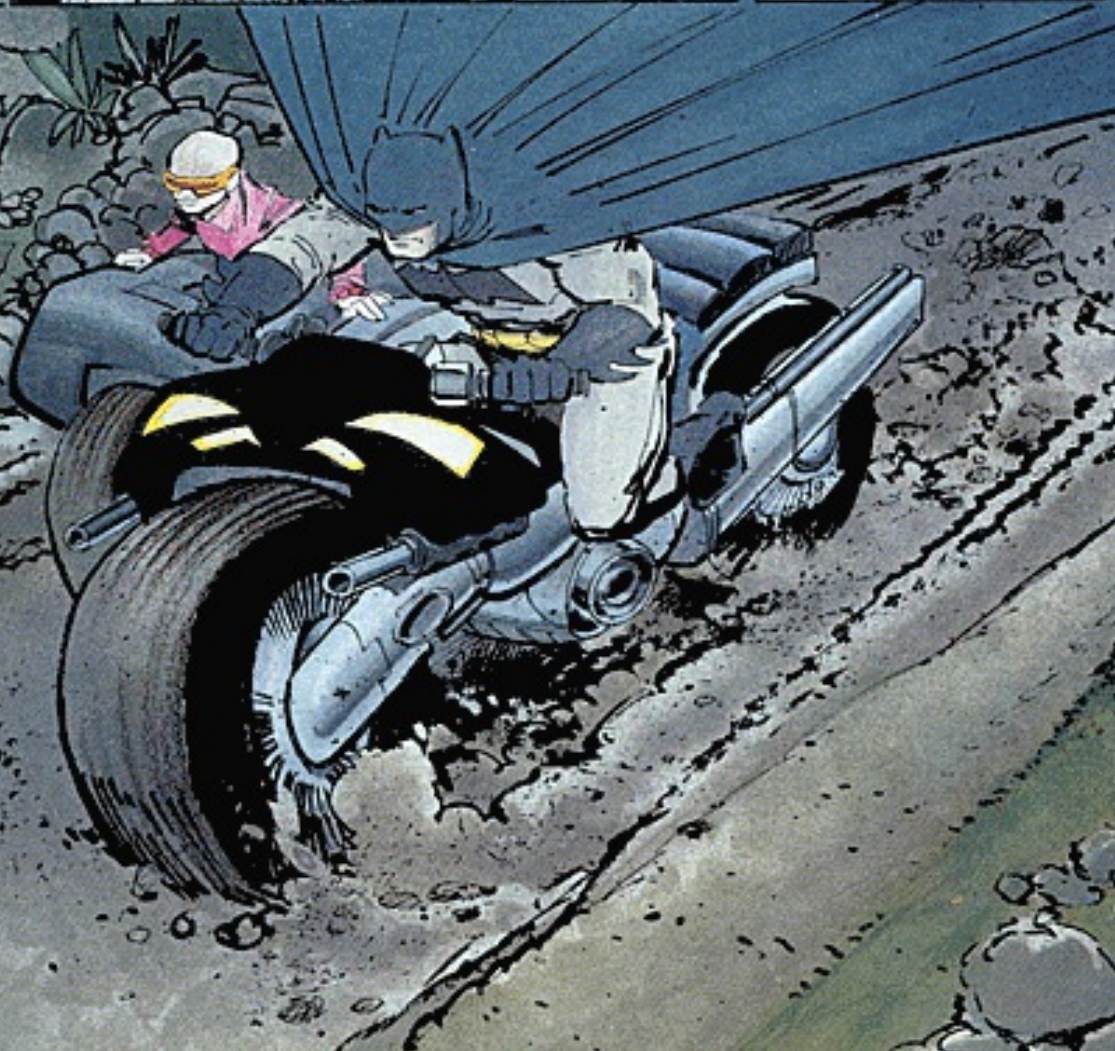
YOUR TRAINING BEGINS TOMORROW.

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



I HAVE DETAILED TONIGHT'S PLAN.

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



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 I DON'T LIKE HIM.

I'M AMAZED AT HIS JUDGMENT. I'VE READ YOUR RECORD.



YOU GOT ANY KIDS, OFFICER?

SHUT UP.



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?



THAT BATMAN-- HE NASTY. TOSSED SPIKE RIGHT THROUGH TH SIGN, DON.

I FIGURE THAT REAL COOL, ROB. FIGURE FIXES THE SIGN DIDN'T BILLY UP TH PRICE OF TH GAMES.



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

LEADER SAY, BUT LEADER CHILL-- IN A CELL, DON.

AN BATMAN-- HE NUKE HALF THE GAMS. RADICAL. HEY-- EYES SLIDEWAYS, DON. CHICKEN LEG COMIN -- WEARIN COLORS.



MY MON LICKEN CHESS--

ALL LINES ARE BUSY.



CHESS BILLY.. CHESS PRE-SCHOOL MUTANT.

CHESS KINDA MY NASTY, ROB.

LEADER TAKE YOU FACE F TOUCHIN ME, SPUD.



YEAHH, YOU LEADER SQUEEZE I FIGURE.

GEE, BOYS -- I FIGURE YOU AIN'T ALL BRIGHT.

FIGURE YOU ARE MUTANTS.



WE MUTANTS! WE SLICER-DICERS!

I'M SURE. THAT'S WHY YOU AT TH PIPE.

I DON'T SHIV.



BAWD! SHE DON'T SHIV.

AIN'T FAN. WHAT PIPE, CHICKEN LEG?

EARS ONLY, SPUD. AS IN MEMBERS.



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.

REAL COO, ROB.



JUST ASKING, OFFICER.

I LOVE KIDS.





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!



KLK



CHKCHAK



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

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

SPAKK



NGG

GOOD BOY.



Oof!

WHUMP



GRRRR

FORGOT 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.

SKWEE SKWEE SKWEE



SKWEE SKWEE SKWEE SKWEE SKWEE



CAN YOU SMELL THE RIVER YET?

SEE THE END OF THE PIPE?



THE ONLY THING BETWEEN YOU-- AND IT--



--IS ME.

GGRAAA





YOU SEE, DON, BATMAN -- HE NASTY.

HOPE ROB DON'T SAY BALLS NASTY.

MY NAME IS AME
ROBJ



BALLS NASTY.

SHH!

MY NAME IS AME
ROBJ



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



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

I WAIT FOR HIM TO TRY A KICK--



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

THE KIND THAT BLEERS.



MY MISTAKE WAS TO TRY TO MATCH HIS SAVAGERY.

TO FIGHT LIKE A YOUNG MAN.



RIGHT ON SCHEDULE THE BLOOD HITS HIS EYES.

I GRAB A CLUMP OF MUD.



SPLOOT



LEADER'S BOGGIN!

LEADER, BILLY BERSERK, SPUD. LEADER, FES BATMAN, YOU SEE.

SHH!



HE CHARGES, BLIND --

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

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



HIS RIGHT--

-- IT'S FAST --
-- TOO FAST --



HE DUSTED! HE DUSTED!

MY MON BATS DON'T SHH.

YOU SEE.



BLACKNESS -- COMES IN FROM THE EDGES --

I GET SICK OF THE ARM --



... AND KILL IT BELOW THE ELBOW.



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...



...IT'S AN OPERATING TABLE.



KRAK KRAK

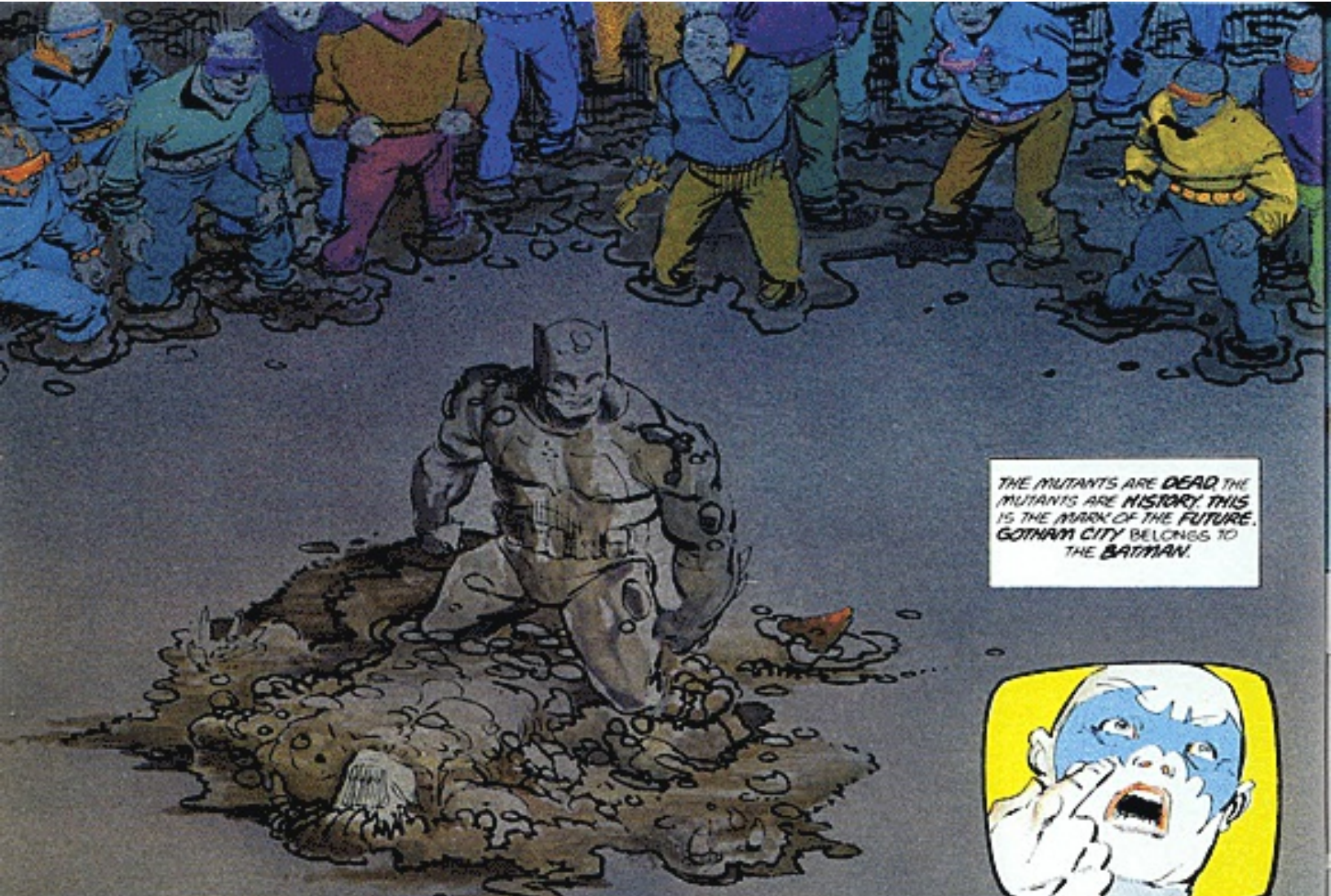
AND I'M THE SURGEON.



SOMETHING TELLS ME TO STOP WITH THE LEG.



I DON'T LISTEN TO IT.



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



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 EMBITTERED THAT WE TAKE SATAN'S METHODS AS OUR OWN.



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.



SO A BUNCH OF PSYCHOPATHS 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.

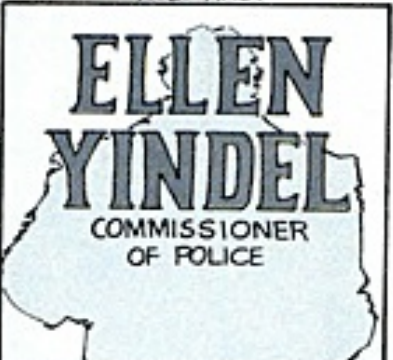


LET ME TELL YOU MY SECRET.



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.



ELLEN YINDEL
COMMISSIONER OF POLICE

...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.



ELLEN YINDEL
COMMISSIONER OF POLICE

FIFTY YEARS OF THIS AND THEY WONDER.



I WON'T BE SEEING HIM AGAIN. I MEAN, SURE, I'LL SEE HIM -- HE'S THAT CLOSE TO POLITE. 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.



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

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



...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.



AND NO POINT, I GUESS.



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

-- IT'S A SIMPLE SECRET.



I THINK OF SARAH.

THE REST IS EASY.



THE WIND RISES, TEARING DEAD LEAVES FREE.



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



A WOLF HOWLS.



I KNOW HOW HE FEELS.



B O O K T H R E E



HUNT THE DARK KNIGHT



BRUCE,
YOU
IDiot.



YOU'LL RUIN
EVERYTHING.



FOR ALL
OF US.



I ALWAYS
KNEW YOU
WOULD...



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

EMPTY THE
CASH REGISTER--
OR MY BULLETS WILL TEAR
THROUGH YOUR BORN,
BREAKING IT INTO MONST,
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
MUTANTS, HUH? GUESS SINCE
THEIR BOSS GOT HIS ASS
FLATTENED THEY'LL WORK
FOR ANYBODY.

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



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

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



THIEF!
YOU'RE A
THIEF!

SEBBIN
LEBBIN
SELLS THIS
FOR
TWO-FIFTY!



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



HE ALMOST
PULLS THE
TRIGGER--



--THEY ALMOST
GET THE DROP
ON ME--

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



--THAT SLOWS
ME DOWN--

--THAT MAKES
ME SWEAT...



HEY,
BATS--

--BRUNO--
SHE'S GETTIN'
AWAY!



NOW WE
SETTLE
UP.
PULL THAT
TRIGGER--



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



BRUNO IS COMING YOUR WAY, ROBIN.

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

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

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



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

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

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

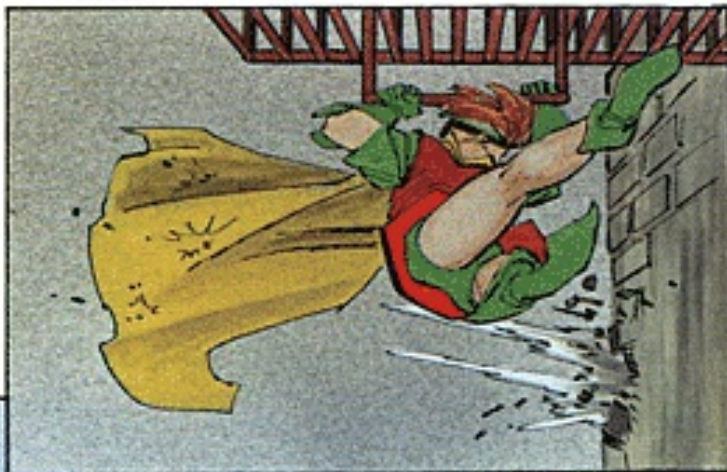
AND SO THE BATMAN BUCK IS PASSED-- TO ELLEN YINDEL, WHO REPLACES JAMES GORDON AS POLICE COMMISSIONER TONIGHT. WILL SHE FULFILL HER PROMISE TO ISSUE AN ARREST WARRANT FOR THE BATMAN?



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.





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 -- THEM I SAW, 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.



MUST HAVE GONE THROUGH THAT DOOR!

HAHH

BRACK



IF YOU'RE LUCKY, BRUNO--

--YOU'LL GO TO JAIL TONIGHT.



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

ON HIS TV APPEARANCE.

KKKKREEEAK



YAAA

DON'T TAKE THE STAIRS.

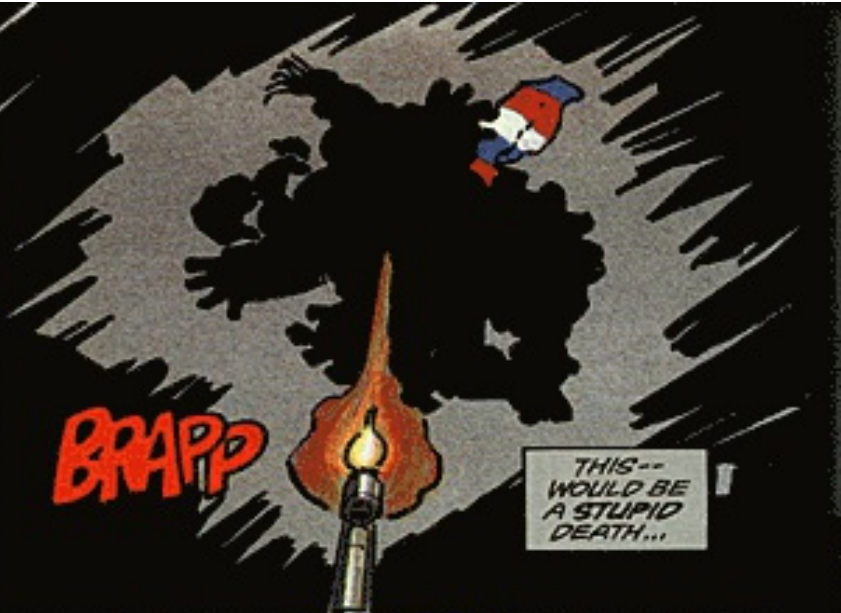
THEY AREN'T SAFE.



NEVER MEANT--
TO GIVE HER TIME--

CHKCHK

-- TO COCK
THAT THING--



BRAPP

THIS--
WOULD BE
A STUPID
DEATH...



MISSED.



LUCKY--

-- LUCKY
OLD MAN...

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
GRUTCHES. A LOT OF THEM
USE GRUTCHES. YOU KNOW
WHAT I MEAN.



HEY-- HE STARTED IT. AND IT
WAS HIS GRUTCHES THAT
TRIPPED HIM UP, BARE--
WHAT?... YOU BET HE YELLED.
WANTED ME TO JUMP DOWN AND
DIE WITH HIM. OF COURSE I AM.
WHO WOULDN'T? THEN SOME-
THING HIT ME HARD-- IN THE
CHEST--





--HAVEN'T SEEN A DOCTOR YET, BUT I'M SURE I SLIPPED A DISC LANDING ON THE TORCAS... NO, I COULDN'T SEE. NOT A FRIBBING 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-- ITS 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...



RRRRRRRRRRMMMMBBBB



SOMETHING
MURKS ITSELF
INTO THE SKY.



SOMETHING
LEAPS A TALL
BUILDING WITH
A SINGLE
BOUND.

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

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

... BODIES OF A FUGHER 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 CLEARABILITY
FOR THIS ATROCITY IS OUR
SUBJECT TONIGHT. WITH
US IS THE WORLD'S LEADING
EXPERT ON THE SOCIOLOGICAL
IMPACT OF THE BATMAN--
DR. BARTHOLOMEW WOLPER.

BATMAN
IS A
MESSAGE
TO
SOCIETY.

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



--NOTHING HAS BEEN DONE
TO STOP THIS PSYCHOSOCIAL
INFECTON. 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 DRINKS A FOND CHUCKLE FROM THE AUDIENCE...

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

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



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



IF YOU DISOBEY, EVER AGAIN--

-- YOU'RE FIRED.

SHE FACES A CITY OF THIEVES AND MURDERERS AND HONEST PEOPLE TOO FRIGHTENED TO HOPE. SHE FACES LIFE-AND-DEATH RECURSIVELY, 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 APPAUSE FOR JAMES GORDON...

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

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



ACES. I GET SOME CLUES.



ROBIN!

NO!

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

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



EYUUUH.



EYUUUH YOURSELF, BITCH.



I SAID NO!

IT TALKS--

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

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





I'LL SEND ROBIN HOME.

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



I'LL COUNT THE DEAD, ONE BY ONE.

I'LL ADD THEM TO THE LIST, JOKER.

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



-- BY LETTING YOU LIVE.



JUST CAN'T SLEEP.



SHOULD SLEEP.

SHOULD BE FRESH TOMORROW.



TOMORROW I GO FREE.

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



-- BUT I JUST CAN'T SLEEP.

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

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

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

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



...DESPITE MASSIVE SOVIET ARMS BUILDUP IN THE WATERS SURROUNDING CORDA 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...

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

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

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



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

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



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

WHEN THAT HAPPENS...



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



... 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-- AHEM-- STAND UP FOR THE CAUSE OF FREEDOM...

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





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--





GUESS YOU HEARD MY PLACE WENT UP. GOT EVERYTHING OUT, THOUGH--CEPT MARY, OF COURSE.

EVERYTHING'S ALL SET FOR TONIGHT, JUST LIKE YOU WANT IT.

HERE'S YOUR STUFF.

BUGS BUGS BUGS BUGS BUGS BUGS BUGS BUGS BUGS

BUGS BUGS BUGS BUGS BUGS BUGS BUGS BUGS

DON'T FORGET TO WEAR THE NOSE PLUGS.

-- A SUDDEN COMMUNICATIONS BLACKOUT IN CENTRAL AMERICA, FOR FIVE HUNDRED MILES SURROUNDING CORO MALIESE --

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.

AND, SHOULD MISS KELLY HAVE BETTER WAYS TO SPEND HER EVENING?



THERE'S NOTHING BETTER.



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



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



MORE ON THE EYES.

YOU WANT LIPSTICK, SWEET GUY?



NO. I BROUGHT MY OWN.

WONDERFUL TO SEE YOU SHOW SUCH INTEREST.

WHIP WHIP WHIP WHIP WHIP WHIP

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

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

YOU ARE NOT TO TOUCH THE CONTROLS.



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

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



FIGURE I WOULDN'T

SIT UP STRAIGHT, ROBIN.



YES, SIR.

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



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

THIS THING FACK A CLANK?



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

OLD NEWS, BOSS.



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



JUST BE YOURSELF...



...PEOPLE SHOULD HAF ZEX LIND ZEX LIND ZEX-- ALL ZE TIME, DAVID...



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

GO, SCREW, FAT BOY--



GOD DAMN MILK BABY!



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

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



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

TWO DOZEN GUNS ARE COCKED--

**BATMAN
YOU ARE
UNDER
ARREST**





...IT'S BEEN TWENTY YEARS...
...EVEN MY THERMITE IS OLD...



KPOOM

OPEN FIRE!

BUDDA



LUCKY-- LUCKY--

SPAK

SPAK

SPAK



SPAK

SPAK

SPAK

SPAK



GAS MASKS.
CEASE FIRE.

RUSH HIM.

RUSH-- HIM?



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



COPTER ONE--

-- COME IN LOW AND BLOW THIS SHIT AWAY.



OVER HERE--

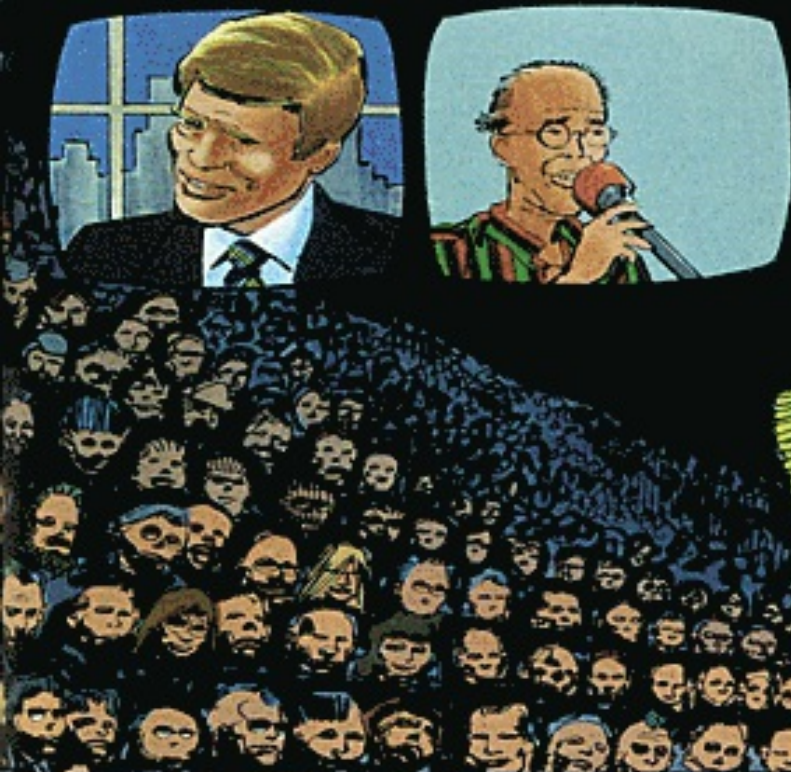
WHOK

SQUAD TWO REPORT.

ALL COOL HERE, COMMISSIONER. THEY'RE JUST NOW INTRODUCING 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.



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

...SO FEW SMILES...



OVER THERE--

I SEE HIM--

JESUS, HE'S--



SMOKE'S CLEARING!

WE GOT HIM--



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

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

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...

OH, AHEM! DR. VOLFER-- YOU HAF BLENNED ZE BATMAN FOR ZESE KILLINGS, YES?

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

LIND WHAT IZ ZE NATURE UF BATMAN'S PSYCHOSIS?

WHY, SEXUAL REPRESSION, OF COURSE.

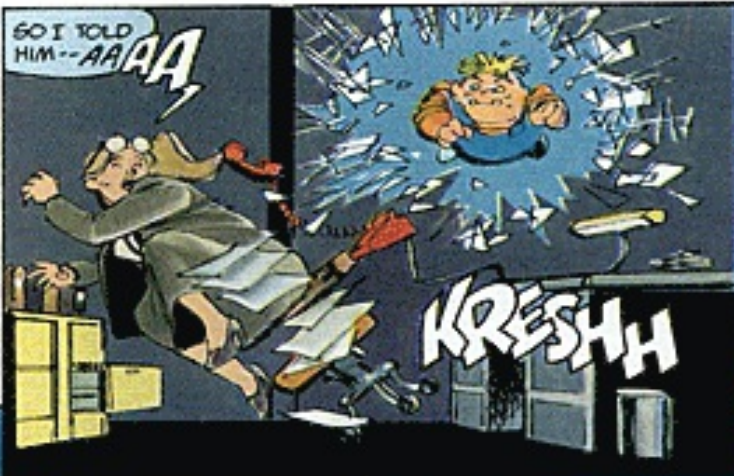
SEXUAL REPRESSION -- ZIS IS A TERRIBLE ZIND...

YOU'RE RIGHT. WE MUST NOT RESTRAIN OURSELVES.



TK TK TK

TK



60 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.





SO MANY SMILES--

--SO MANY FACES--

--ALL THE SAME...

JOKER FREE--
HUNDREDS DEAD.
AFTER THIS.



THEY'LL KILL US IF THEY CAN, BRUCE.

EVERY YEAR THEY GROW SMALLER.

EVERY YEAR THEY HATE US MORE.



WE MUST NOT
REMINDE
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 FIRST MOVE," SAID THE PRESIDENT. "BUT WE'RE READY TO MAKE THE LAST."

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

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

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



COMMISSIONER -- WHITTAKER'S GONE ALL SICK.

HE'S JUST A ROOKIE...

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

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

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



KYLE
ESCORT SERVICE, INC.

YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE COME BACK, BRUCE.

AMERICAN EXPRESS CARDS WELCOME



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

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



IT'S A .45 CALIBER BULLET.

HOLLOW POINT.



IT EXPLODES IN HIS CHEST.

I FEEL THE SHOCK THROUGH HIS FINGERS.



FOR THE HUNDRED THOUSANDTH TIME--

--MY FATHER DIES...



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

HAD TO LEARN SOMETHING IN SCHOOL...



UHM... THIS I DIDN'T ASK FOR, ELSIE--

SHH...



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



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

YES... CLOSELY...



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

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



QUIET-- I'M PICKING SOMETHING UP--

--A TELEVISION TRANSMISSION--



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

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

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

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

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 DRAGGED SHUT THE JOINT DOWN-- AND PICK UP SELINA KYLE.

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

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

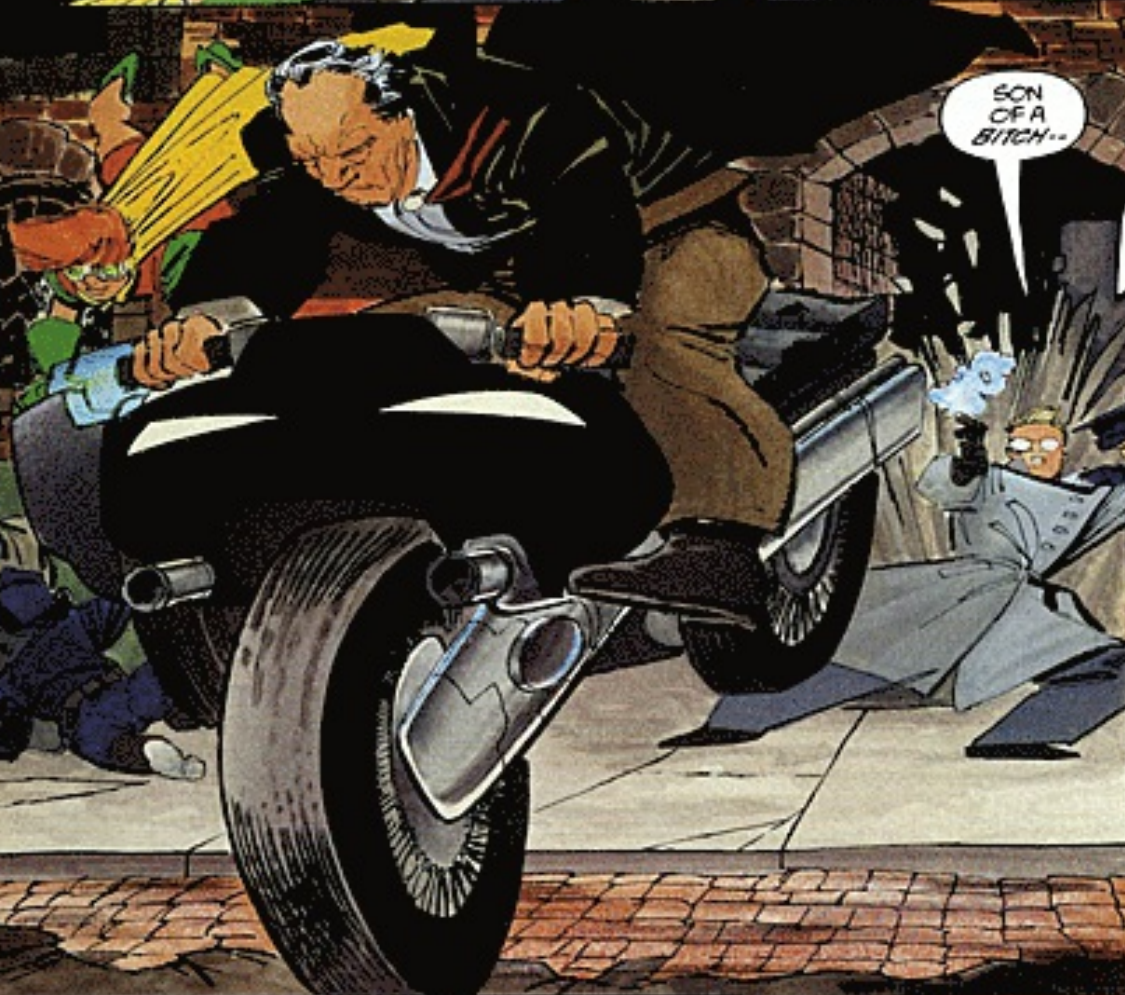
STOP THAT MAN! WHAT THE...





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

HOLD ON--



SON OF A BITCH--

BLAMM



NGG



YOU'RE HIT--

FLESH WOUND--

BANDAGE IT ON THE WAY--

SKREKK



HOW MUCH LONGER... 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
HORN--
--NOBODY AT
KYLE ESCORT,
COMMISSIONER.

KYLE'S
APARTMENT,
MERKEL--



SELINA...



KOFF
BRUCE...
HE'S WORSE
THAN
EVER...



HOW MANY
MORE--
WILL IT
TAKE?..



...HE'S USING
LIPSTICK,
BRUCE... MIND
CONTROL...
ELSIE...

SPEAK



...HAD ELSIE 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 CHAIR.
HE'LL...



POLICE ARE
RIGHT ON TOP
OF US, ROBIN.

BRING THE WING
IN CLOSE.

ON
IT.

SSSSSS

SHE GOT HERE FASTER THAN I PLANNED...

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



WATCH IT-- HE'S--

CHRIST-- I CAN'T--

DAMN HE'S--

WHEE

-- CAN'T GET A CLEAR SHOT--



CHRIST--

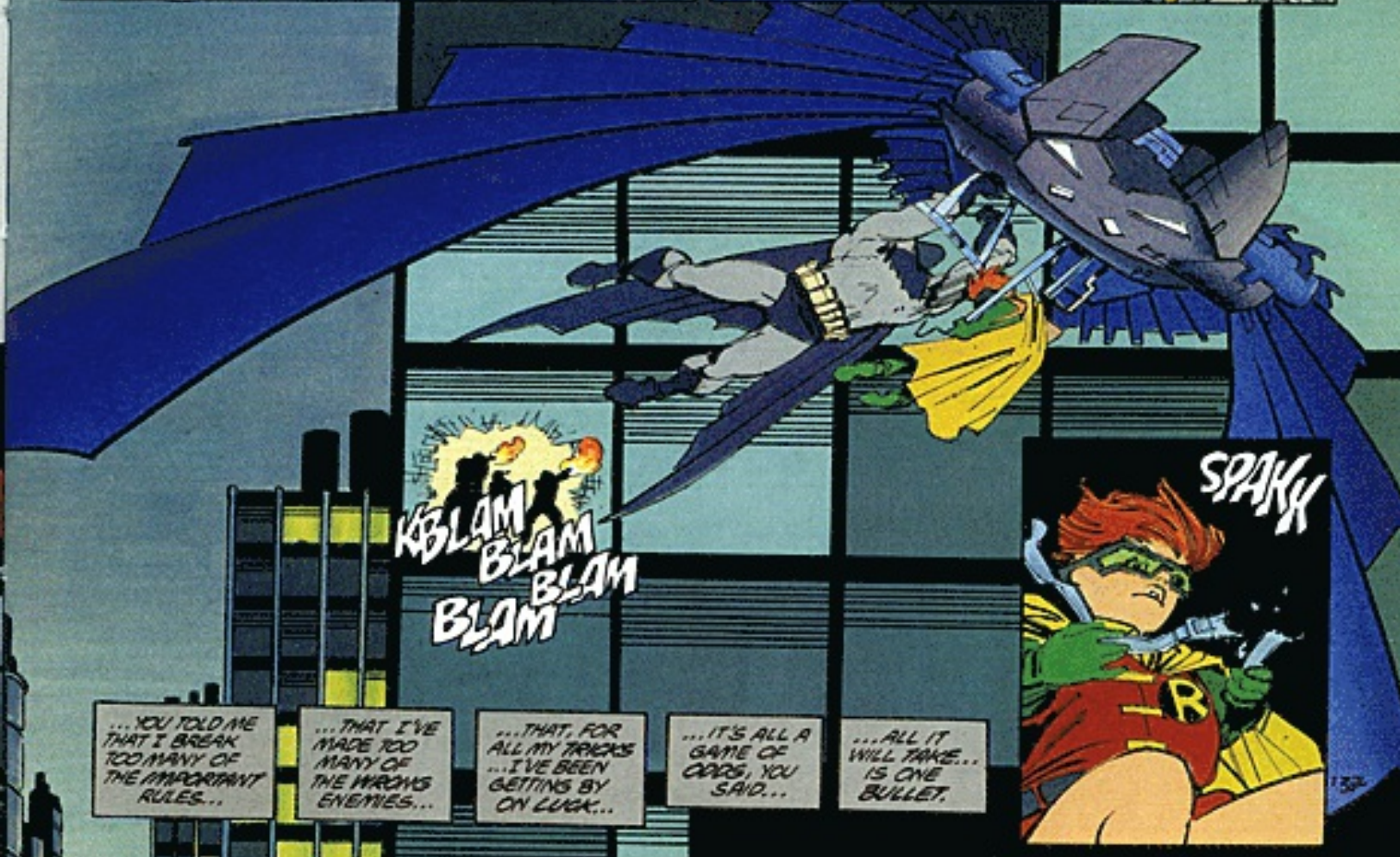
IT'S SUICIDE--

CRAZY--



... YOU TRIED TO WARN ME, JIM...

... SO MANY TIMES...



KBLAM BLAM BLAM BLAM

SPANK

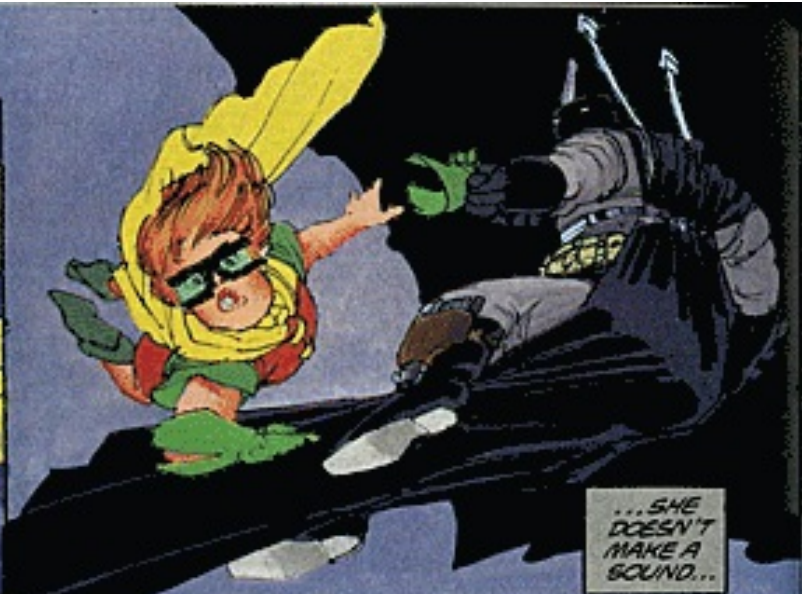
... YOU TOLD ME THAT I BREAK TOO MANY OF THE MARRIOTT RULES...

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

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

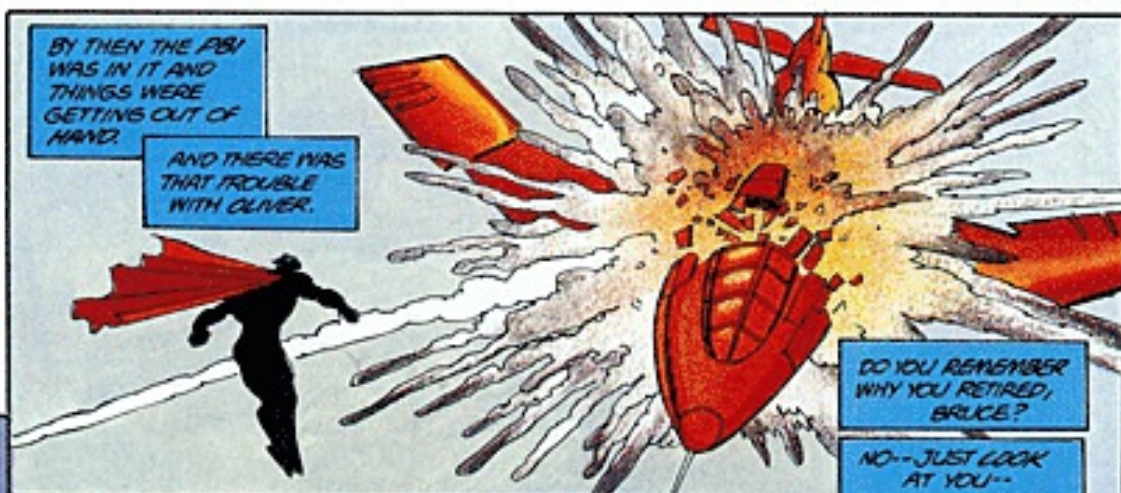
... IT'S ALL A GAME OF CARDS, YOU SAID...

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





WE ALMOST
THREW A
PARTY
WHEN YOU
RETIRED.



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

AND THERE WAS
THAT TROUBLE
WITH OLIVER.

DO YOU REMEMBER
WHY YOU RETIRED,
BRUCE?

NO-- JUST LOOK
AT YOU--

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

NOTHING
MATTERS TO
YOU-- EXCEPT
YOUR HOLY
WAR.



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



I GAVE THEM MY
OBEDIENCE
AND MY
INVISIBILITY.

THEY GAVE ME
A LICENSE AND
LET US LIVE.

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



BUT NOW
THE STORM
IS GROWING
AGAIN--



--THEY'LL
HUNT US
DOWN
AGAIN--



--BECAUSE
OF YOU.

... COMMUNICATIONS BLACKOUT CONTINUES AT GORDO MARITSE, AS DO THE BIZARRE WINDMILL DISTURBANCES. HUNDRED-MILE-AN-HOUR WINDS LASH THE PORT OF SAN CONDEACION, SIXTY MILES SOUTH OF CORTO...

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

-- AND IT WOULD NEVER BE ENOUGH.

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

AND I LOVE YOU FOR IT.



FREE COTTON CANDY FREE COTTON CANDY



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

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



SOMEWHERE A WOMAN CALLS OUT FOR HER SON...

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



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

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

...IT ENDS TONIGHT, JOKER.

LAWA, YOU ABANDON ME. FIFTEEN POLICEMEN HOSPITALIZED-- HUNDREDS DEAD-- AND STILL YOU CLING TO THIS HERO WORSHIP THOUGH NOW ANYONE CAN THINK OF A DETRACTO MURDERER AS A HERO...

BATMAN HASN'T KILLED ANYBODY, MORRIE.



PERHAPS HE HASN'T--
TECHNICALLY, THAT'S WHY
I SAID BE FEARFUL, LANA
DEAR. STILL, IT'S HARDLY
A COINCIDENCE THAT THE
JOKER CAME OUT OF A
TEN-YEAR CATATONIA--
NOW, OF ALL TIMES...

THANK
THE NICE
MAN,
DONALD.

I WANT
THE KIND
THAT
TALKS.

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

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

PISS
OFF.



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

WHAT-- WHAT
ARE THEY--

HEY!

UP THERE--
IT'S--

BOBBIE-- HEY--

RIGHT,
RIGHT...

BOMB?
DID HE SAY...

I HEARD--

-- IT'S
BATMAN--

BOSS--
IT'S ONE OF
THOSE--

IT'S LOADED,
ROBIN--

--WAIT
FOR MY
ORDER--

--LET IT
GET CLOSE--



OH, MY GOD
IT'S--

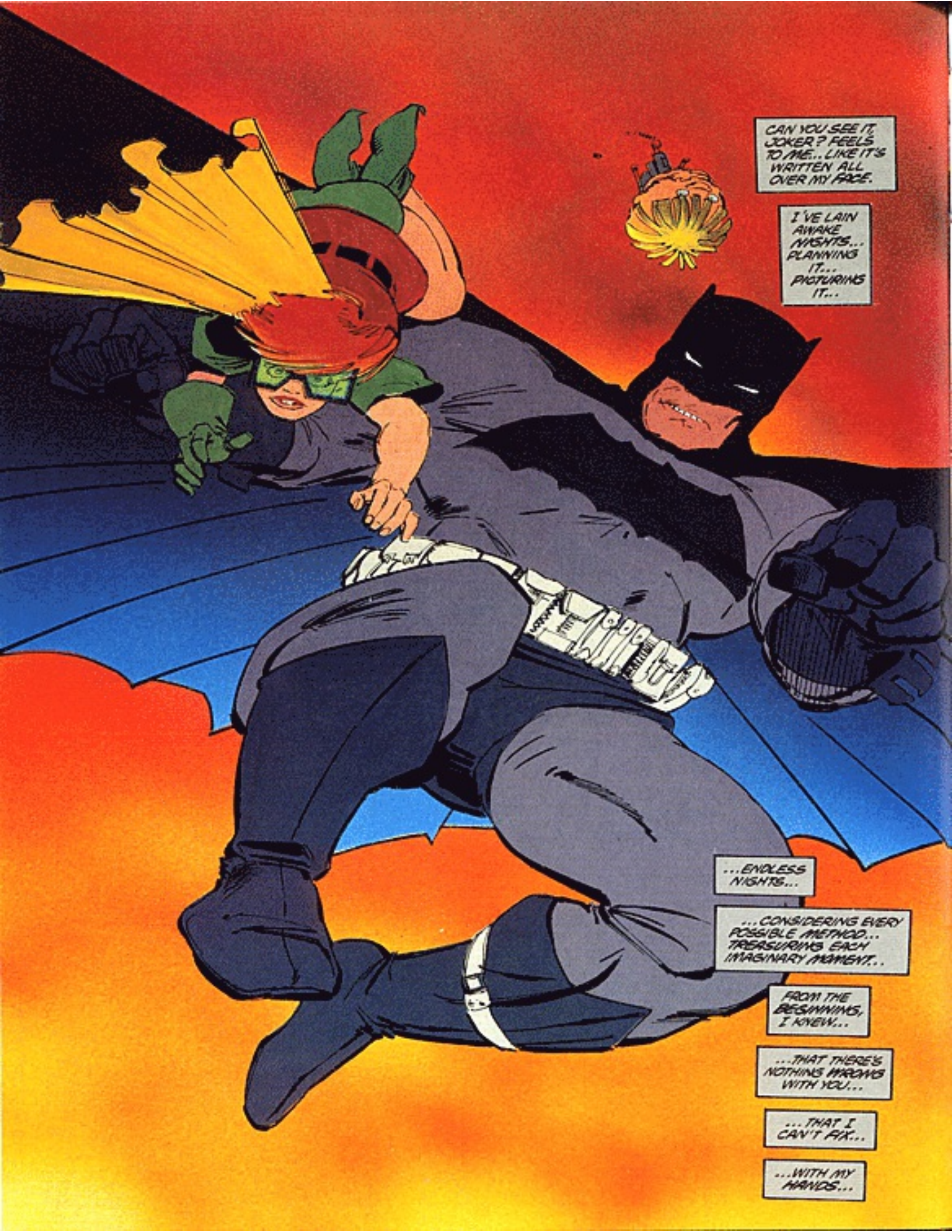
OH,
MY--

OH, MY
GOD..

BOOM



DARLING.



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

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

...ENDLESS
NIGHTS...

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

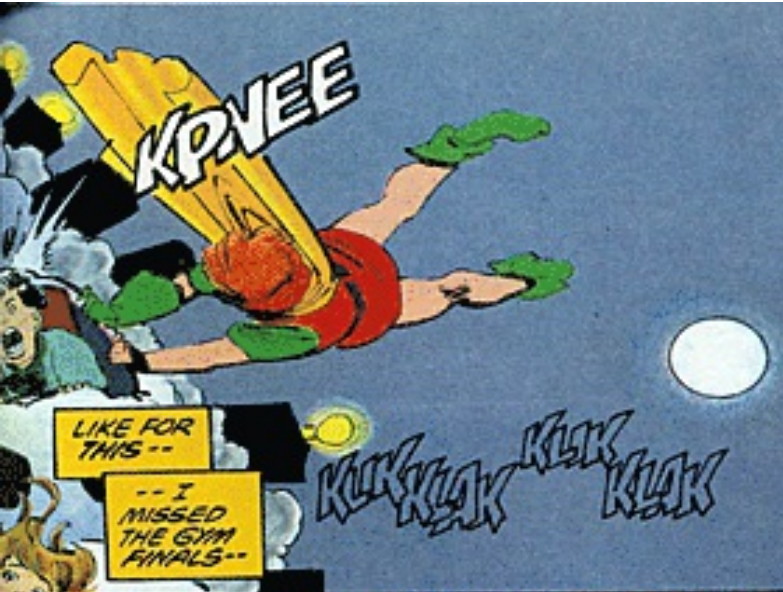
FROM THE
BEGINNINGS,
I KNEW...

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

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

... WITH MY
HANDS...





LIKE FOR THIS--
-- I MISSED THE GYM FINALS--

KIKKIKIK KIKKIKIK KIKKIKIK

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

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



HEY-- WHAT--

WHAT THE--

HOUSE OF MIRRORS

OH MY GOD IT'S-- HEY!



-- GOT A GUN! OH GOD--

GET OUT OF--

GOT A GUN--

RUN FOR--



IT'S HIM-- IT'S--

OH, JESUS--

-- CHRIST, IT'S!

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



JOKER ...

PUT THE BOY DOWN...

YOU'VE STILL GOT...

... ONE EYE LEFT...

SHRINK

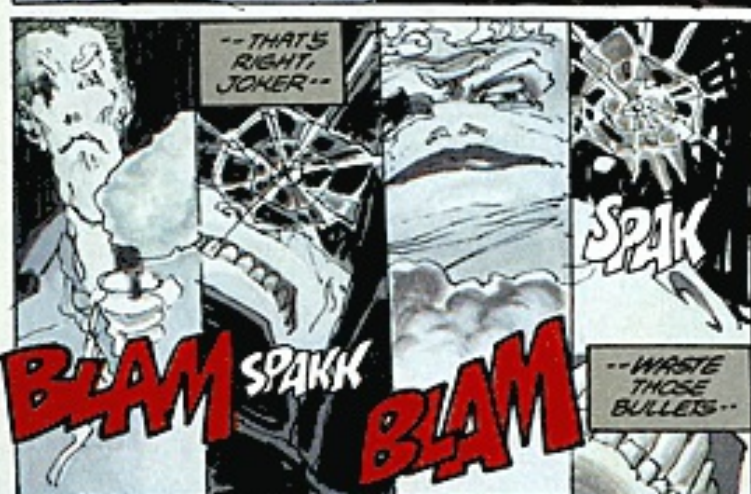
TOO SLOW--

HE HEARS THE GLASS--

HE GETS--

-- A GOOD ONE IN--

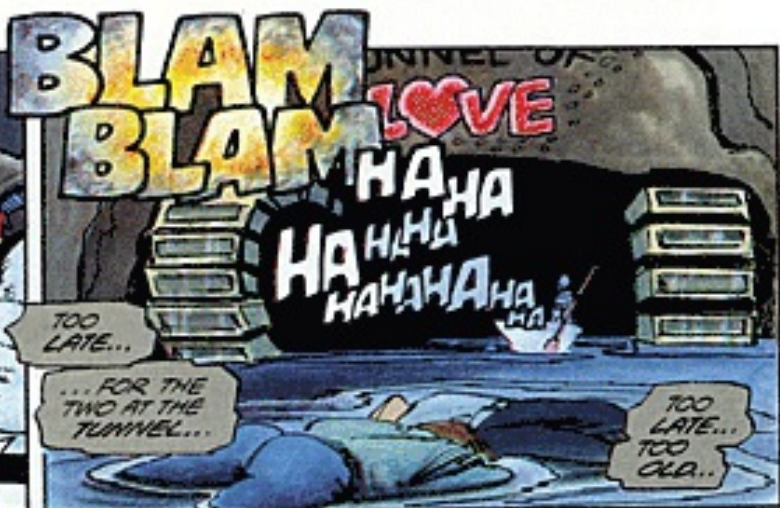
BLAM





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

KLIK KLIK
KLIK KLIK
KLIK KLIK



BLAM
BLAM
LOVE
HA HA HA
HA HA HA
HA HA HA

TOO LATE...

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

TOO LATE...
TOO OLD...



...THE LAST TWO, JOKER...

...MY WOW...



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



...HAVE TO FINISH HIM QUICKLY...



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



COLD...

...WATER'S COLD...

NO...

...IT ISN'T...

...THE WATER...



SPANGG

KLIK KLIK



SPANGG

--IT HAPPENS SO FAST--

--EVERYBODY'S SCREAMING--

KLIK KLIK
KLIK KLIK



SPANG

--MY CAPE GOES TIGHT--

KLIK KLIK



--HE STARTS BREATHING ON ME--

KLIK KLIK



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

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

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

KLIK KLIK KLIK



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

KLIK KLIK



-- I CAN'T
BREATHE--

-- HE'S
GIBBLING--

-- CAN'T--

-- HE SMELLS
LIKE MILK--

KLIK KLIK



-- THEN--

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

-- AND HE
FLIES--

KLIK KLIK KLIK KLIK



KLIK KLIK



KLIK KLIK



A GUN...
IS A
CORRUPT'S
WEAPON.

A LIAR'S
WEAPON.



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



... AND THE
HOOK...

... SPARING
OURSELVES...
THE MASS...



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



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



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



THNK



SHKK
 KRAK



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

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



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



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



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



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



...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
KILL YOU
FOR THIS...



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



I'LL... SEE
YOU... IN
HELL--
WITH A
DEVIL'S
STRENGTH...
...HE
TWISTS...

HEHH
KRAAKK



...AND
TWISTS...
...WHAT'S
LEFT OF
HIS SPINE...
GOES...



HA HA HA HA HA
HA HA HA HA HA
KRAAK



HA HA HA HA HA
HA HA HA HA HA
KRAAK



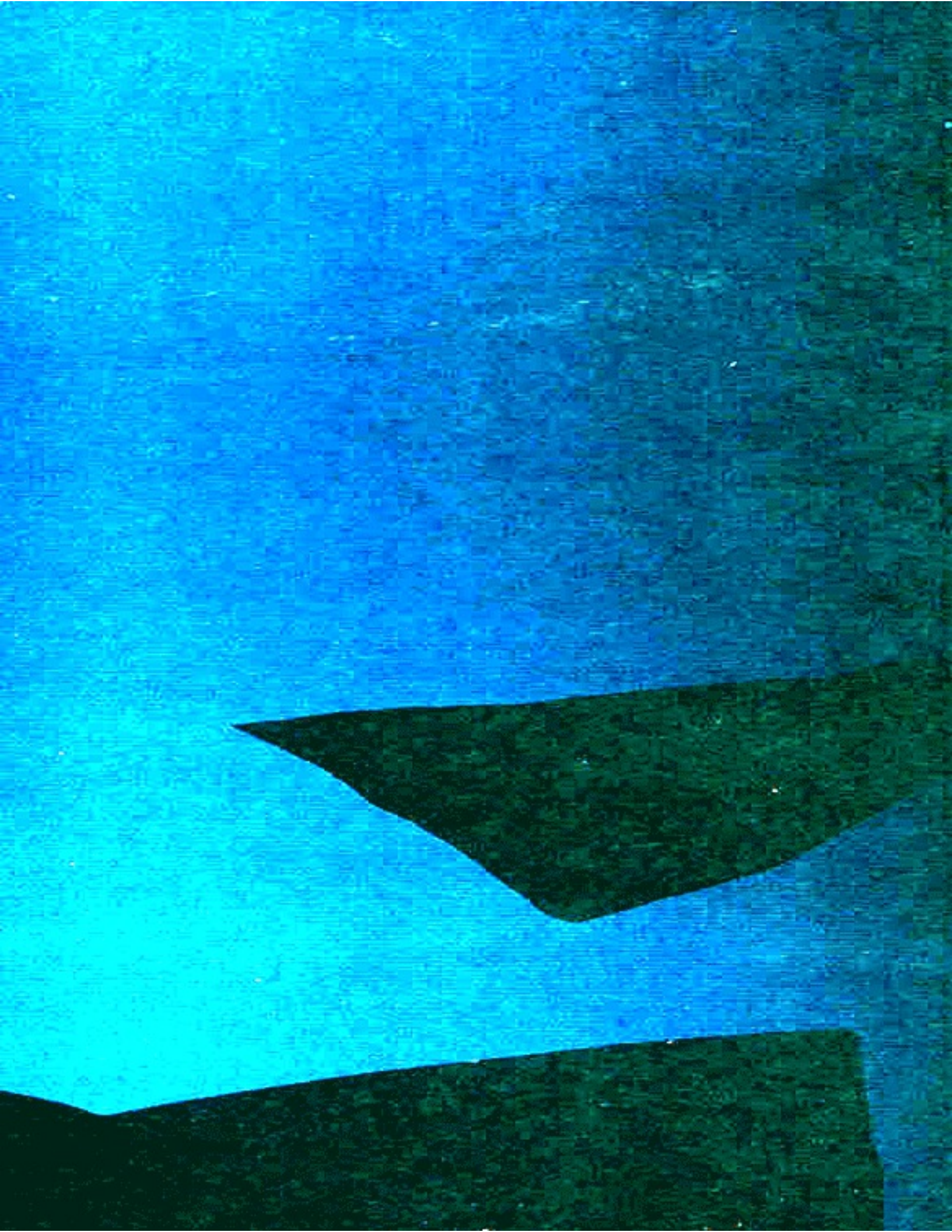
HA HA HA HA HA
HA HA HA HA HA
KRAAK



... WHATEVER'S IN
HIM RUSTLES AS
IT LEAVES.

...THE SIRENS ECHO
THROUGH THE TUNNEL...
TIRES SCREECH...
...THE WORLD
...IS GROWING
DARK...

...AND
COLD...



B O O K F O U R



THE DARK KNIGHT FALLS

THAT'S RIGHT, CAPTAIN--
THE COMMISSAHER GOT
TIRED OF WRITINGS, TOOK
A SQUAD IN HERSELF.

-- GOT THE OTHER
END SEALED --
NO WAY THEY'LL
GET PAST US --

YOU LIKE
THAT BITCH,
DON'T YOU,
MERKEL?

-- WITNESSES
SAY THEY
BOTH GOT
GONS --

-- KEEP AN
EYE OUT --

TUNNEL OF
LOVE

... SHOWDOWN 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...

-- GET SOME
BODY BAGS --
GOT TWO
COLD ONES --

... LED BY COMMISSAHER
YINDEL, POLICE WERE LAST
SEEN CONVERGING ON
THE TUNNEL OF LOVE,
WITH ARREST ORDERS FOR
BOTH THE JOKER -- AND
FOR GOTHAM'S VIBLANTE...

SO DARK,
MAN...

CAREFUL,
NOW...
QUIET...

-- CAN'T SEE
A DAMN
THING --

-- SO
DARK --

TAKE
IT SLOW...

THE INCENDIARIES...
ARE IN PLACE...

THE ENEMY... IS
SECONDS AWAY...

I WASTE ONE
SECOND... WITH
A GOOD-BYE...

PTUI

SPLTT

COMMISSAHER --
OVER HERE --

IT'S THE
JOKER --

-- IT'S NO
SUICIDE --

SERGEANT
-- DON'T
TOUCH IT --

I SAID
DON'T
TOUCH --

-- LIEUTENANT --
GET HIM
COVERED --

JESUS --

RIGGED
THE BODY --

-- SON OF
A BITCH
RIGGED THE
BODY --

AAAAA

NOW...
WHILE THEY'RE
SCARED...

WHILE MY GUTS
ARE STILL...
WHERE THEY
BELONGS...



CHRIST IT'S--

SPREADING --IT'S--

FIRE'S SPREADING--

HOLY--

POOM



POOM
POOM

ROBIN...



...COME IN... ROBIN...

KLIK KLIK



SUMMON... THE COPTER...

FOLLOW... MY SIGNAL...



...YES, SIR. I'M PUNCHING THE CODE IN--

UH-OH-- GOT TROUBLE, BOSS.

WHUP
WHUP

KLIK
KLIK



ATTENTION. AS IN MEDIA.

WHUP
WHUP

KLIK KLIK

KLIK KLIK

CLOSER-- MOVE IN CLOSER-- LOLA-- CAN YOU SEE IT?-- LIVE FROM THE NEWS AND COPTER-- IT'S ROBIN-- THE BOY WONDER!

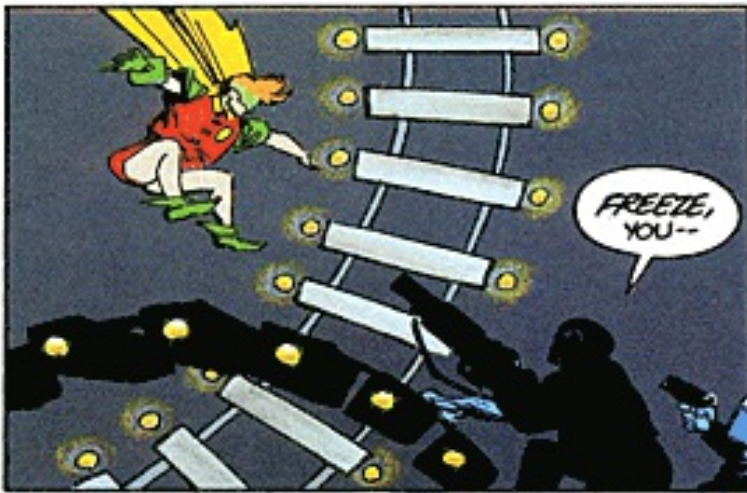
HE'S YOUNG-- CAN'T BE OLDER THAN THIRTEEN-- HE'S RIDING THE ROLLER COASTER-- HE'S WAIT-- HE'S--



KLIK KLIK

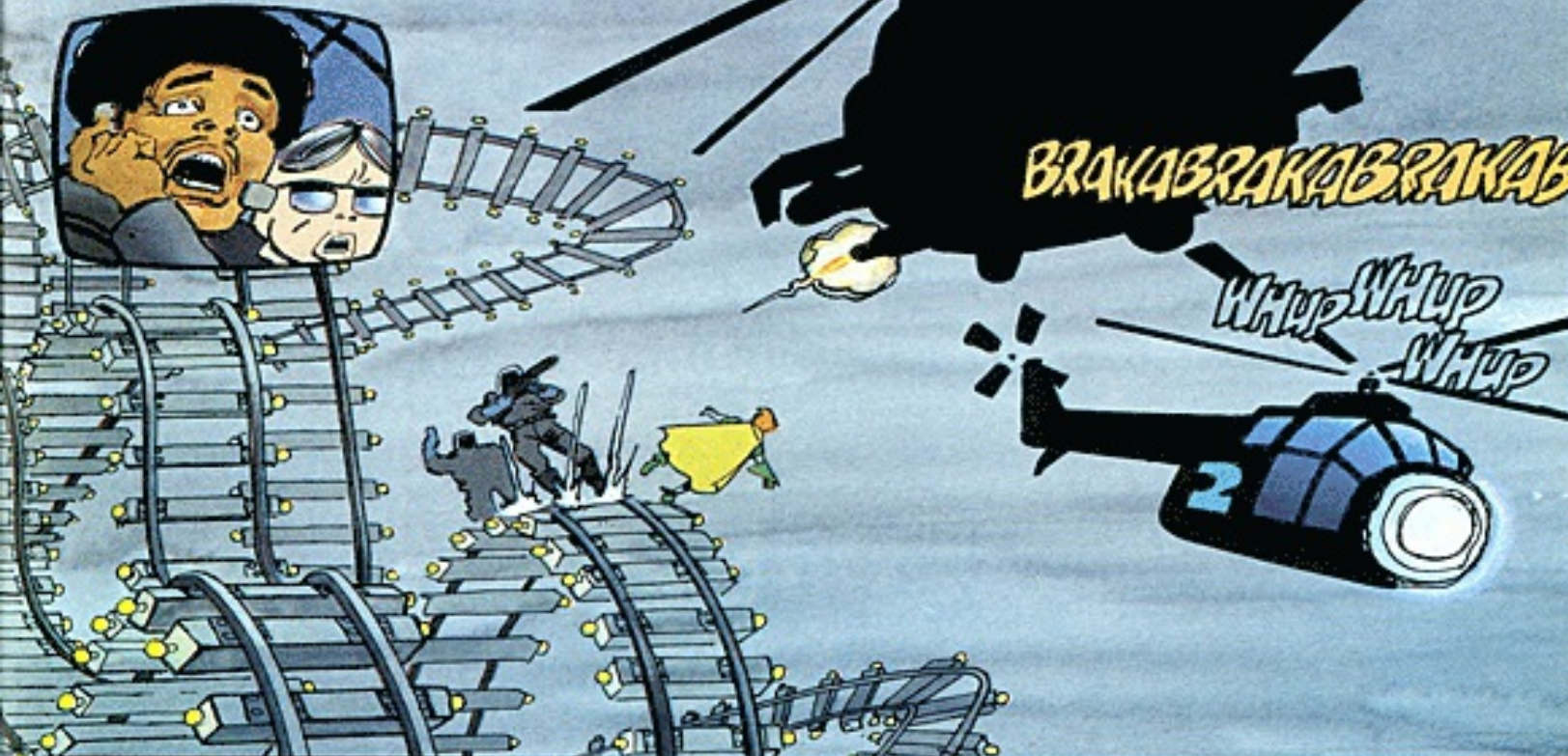


MFF



...HE SEEMS CONFIDENT
--WHAT THE-- THAT'S
NOT ONE OF OURS--
COMING RIGHT AT US--
BANK, YOU IDIOT--
BANK--

WHUP WHUP WHUP



BRAKABRAKABRAKAB

WHUP WHUP WHUP

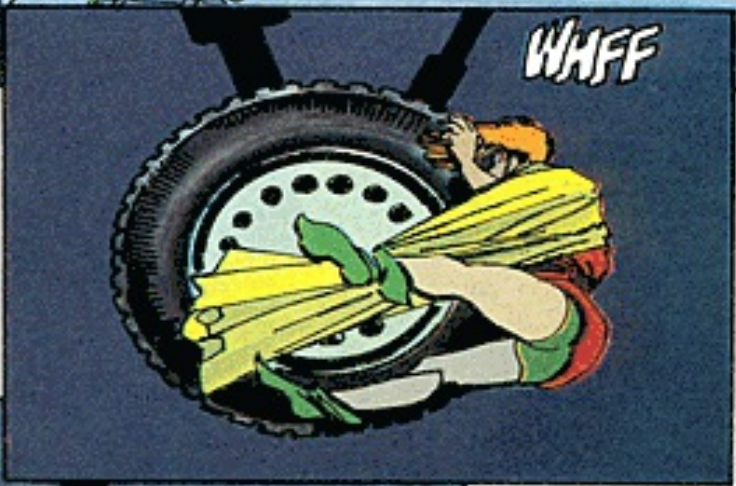


COMING
RIGHT AT
US--

LOOK
OUT--

BRAKABRAKABRAK

SKREKK



WHFF



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



OOY...

BLAM



SPAKK

CLUMSY... STUPID...
SENILE...



THERE--

SHOOT TO KILL--

DODDERING...
HELPLESS...



BLAM



...LUCKY--

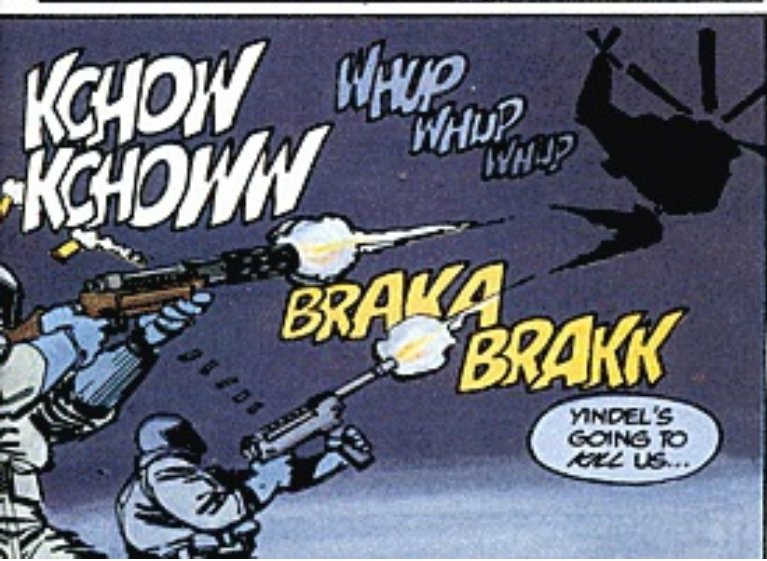
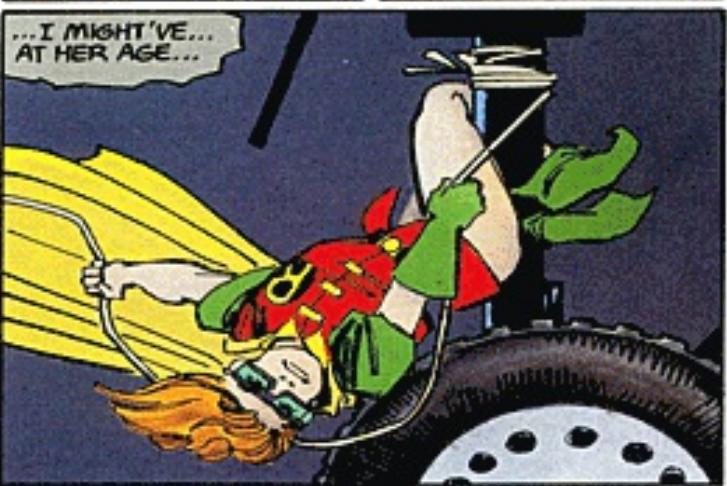
--THE PLASTIQUE GOES UP--

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

...LUCKY...

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

...LUCKY OLD MAN...



GOTHAM CITY WILL NO LONGER TOLERATE THIS FRAGORNT 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 THREAT. I HAVE INSTRUCTED THE ATTORNEY GENERAL TO PLACE THE STATE POLICE AT GOTHAM'S DISPOSAL...



...THE JOKER'S BODY FOUND ANILATED 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.

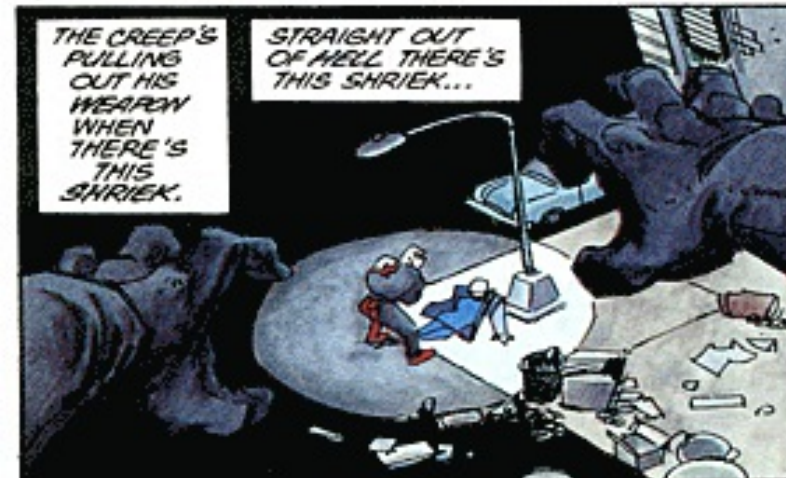
YOU DON'T HAVE TO HEAR THE SUCKING SOUNDS THEY MAKE EVERY TIME YOU WALK BY. THIS ONE, HE'D BEEN WORKING THE NERVE UP FOR WEEKS BEFORE HE WAS HORNY ENOUGH...



...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 BIGGLING LIKE HE'S TURNED ON! I FIGURE HE'S SERIOUS ENOUGH TO RUN AFTER ME. I GO FOR THE MACE.



THE CREEPER'S PULLING OUT HIS WEAPON WHEN THERE'S THIS SHRIEK.

STRAIGHT OUT OF HELL THERE'S THIS SHRIEK...



... IT TURNS INTO A GROAN-- FLAPPING OF WINGS--BIG WINGS--



-- SOMETHING WET HAPPENS TO THE CREEPER--



--A SIDE OF BEEF SLAMS INTO THE LAMPPOST--

--A SWITCHBLADE SNARFS OPEN--



BOYES START POPPING INSIDE THE CREEP -- HE'S SCREAMING AND BEGGING --

-- WHAT GARBLED HIM IS LAUGHING AND SO AM I...

AND THE MAN WHO ASSAULTED YOU?

STILL IN THE HOSPITAL.



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



SUTURE.



HE'S GOING TO BE OKAY, RIGHT?

HE'LL LIVE...

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.

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

... THE SONS OF THE BATMAN HAVE STRUCK AGAIN. JEFF STRAKEN WAS CLOSING UP THE SOUTH STREET 7-11 WHEN HE BECAME BOTH WITNESS-- AND VICTIM...

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 THREE NIXONS CAME INTO THE STORE. WHAT?... NO, I DID NOT GO FOR THE ALARM. THEY DON'T PAY ME ENOUGH FOR SUICIDE.



I'D HAVE LOVED TO HAVE WARMED HIM.



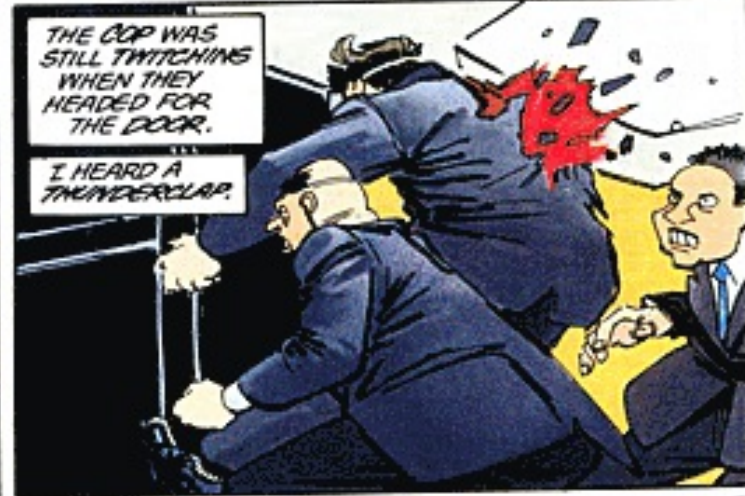
THE TALL NIXON WENT FOR HIS PIECE.

MORE THUNDER.



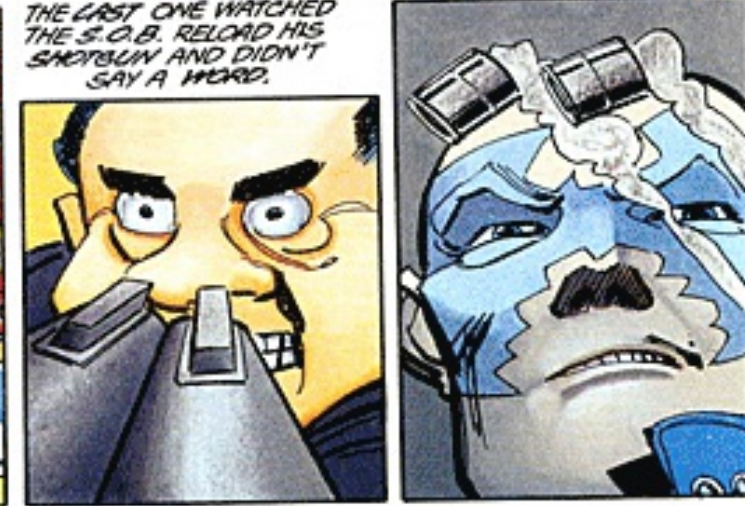
I WAS CLEARING OUT THE REGISTER WHEN THAT OFF-DUTY COP CAME UP FROM THE BACK.

HE ONLY SAW TWO OF THE NIXONS.



THE COP WAS STILL TWITCHING WHEN THEY HEADED FOR THE DOOR.

I HEARD A THUNDERCLAP.



THE LAST ONE WATCHED THE S.O.B. RELOAD HIS SHOTGUN AND DIDN'T SAY A WORD.

THEN THE S.O.B., HE TOLD ME I SHOULD'VE PUT UP A FIGHT WITH THE NIXONS. SAID I DIDN'T DESERVE TO RUN A CRIM REGISTER. HE GRABBED A PAIR OF WIRE CUTTERS--

THE NIXONS ARE THE NEWEST SPLINTER GROUP OF THE MILITARY ARMY, WHICH EXPERTS BELIEVE DISBANDED WHEN THE BATMAN DEFEATED THEIR LEADER, TOM?



THANK YOU, LOLA. STILL HELD AT BOTHAM 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, ACQUIRED 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, URGED THE MAYOR NOT TO RELEASE--

WE INTERRUPT THIS BROADCAST FOR A NEWS TWO SPECIAL REPORT

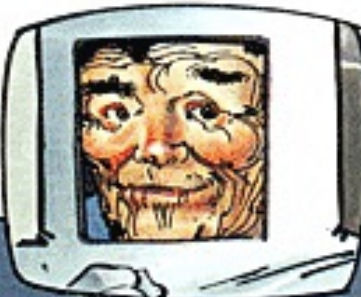
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES.



WELL, FOLKS, I'VE GOT SOME GOOD NEWS-- AND SOME BAD NEWS... HEH... THE GOOD NEWS IS THAT THE SOVIETS HAVE WITHDRAWN THEIR FORCES FROM THE ISLAND OF CORDO ALTESE...



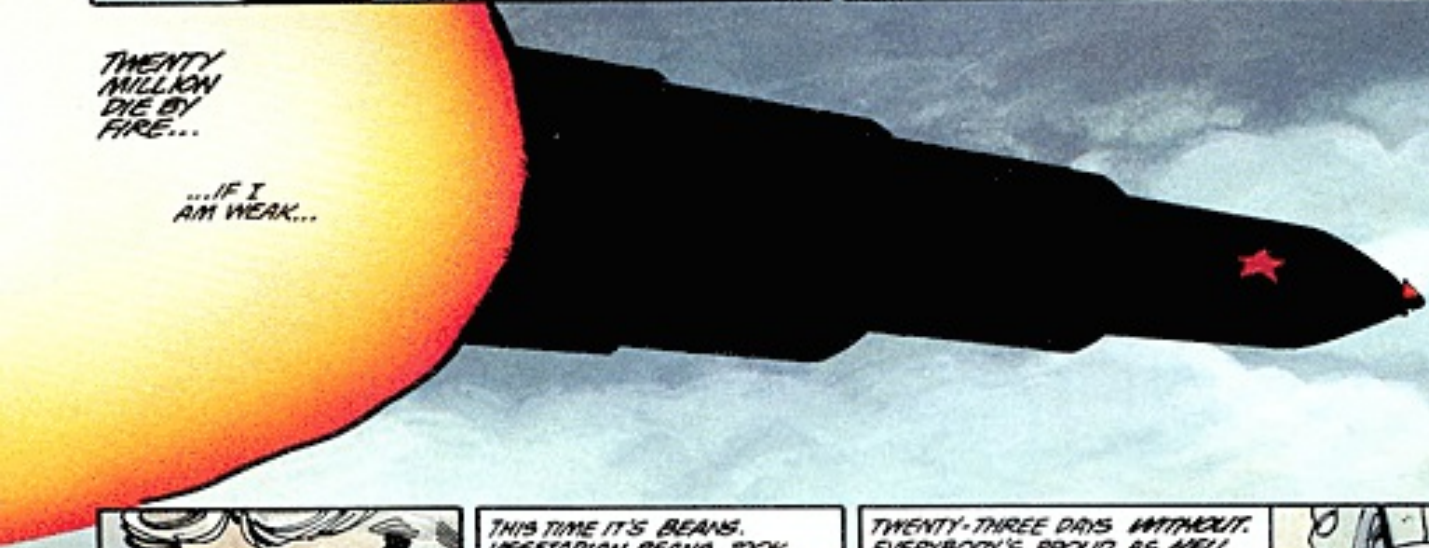
...AND THE BAD NEWS, WELL... IT LOOKS LIKE THOSE SOVIETS ARE PRETTY BAD LOSERS, YES, THEY ARE...





TWENTY MILLION DIE BY FIRE...

...IF I AM WEAK...



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

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 NEED A CISAR.

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

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



WHAT--

WHAT'S SHE SAYING--

OH, GOD. NO...

QUIET-- I CAN'T HEAR--

A SOVIET NUCLEAR WARHEAD--
SECONDS FROM DETONATION
OVER CARDO MALTESE--

LOLA CHONG
GIVES GOOD NEWS

CAREFUL--BE CAREFUL
HOW YOU PUT THINGS, LOLA.
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
MUSK, ABOARD THE NEWS
TWO SHUTTLE. WHAT'S
THE WORD, DAN?

STILL COLLATING, LOLA--
BUT IT'S A BIG ONE--
HEAVY MEGATONNAGE--
WITH UNUSUAL COMPUTER
ACTIVITY--WE CAN'T BE
CERTAIN OF ITS CAPABIL-
ITIES...

...AT THE VERY LEAST,
CARDO WILL BE LEVELLED--
THE FIRES 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 HARLAN
ELLISON IN THE STUDIO...



MR.
PRESIDENT
--GIVE THE
WORD--

NOW YOU
JUST
KEEP YOUR
SHIRT
ON,
LUCIUS...

MR.
PRESIDENT
--WE'LL LOOK
LIKE WIMPS
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?...

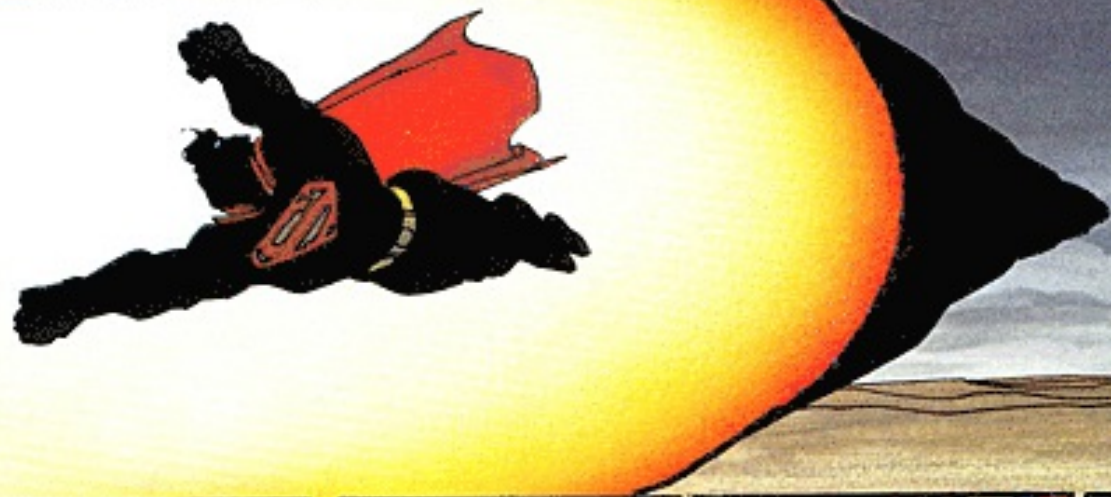
LOLA--IF IT GENERATES A PULSE OF SUFFICIENT INTENSITY, IT COULD--

DAN-- WE'VE FINISHED OUR TECHNICAL SEGMENT...

--IT COULD DISRUPT THE MAGNETIC FIELD CAUSING--

COMING UP-- VIEWER OPINIONS ...

LOLA-- THIS IS INCREDIBLE--TRAJECTORY CHANGE-- TWENTY DEGREES DUE 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







MAYBE DURING A BREAK BETWEEN POLICE ACTIONS, ONE OF YOUR MILITARY FRIENDS TOLD YOU WHAT AN ELECTROMAGNETIC PULSE IS, AND MAYBE YOU LISTENED, CLARK.

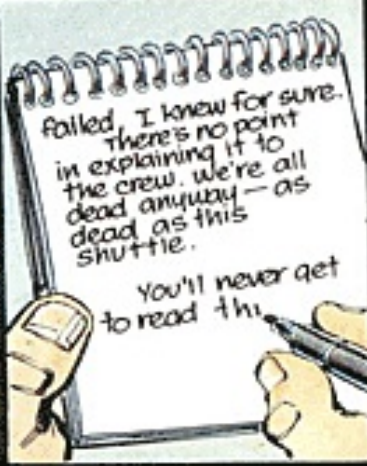
ALL YOU NEED TO GENERATE THE PULSE IS THE ORGANIZED DEROGATION OF A FEW DOZEN NUCLEAR WARHEADS.

THAT, OR A SPECIAL KIND OF NUKE THAT BOTH SIDES HAVE BEEN TRYING TO DEVELOP...

Sweetheart, The last of the readings gave a hint of what would happen.



When the computer failed, I knew for sure.



failed, I knew for sure. There's no point in explaining it to the crew. We're all dead anyway - as dead as this shuttle.

You'll never get to read this.



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.

...YES, CLARK. BOTH SIDES.

THE AMERICAN NAME FOR IT IS COLDBRINGER. IT'S DESIGNED TO CAUSE MAXIMUM DAMAGE TO THE ENVIRONMENT - ALL THE WHILE SAVING 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 WATCH 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.







YOU BAS--



BAGLE

HE DUSTED--

MY MON BOWER DON'T SHIV--

BALLS NASTY

NOPE BOWER DON'T SAY WE BREAKIN OUT--

BONER NASTY--

RAD

BALLS RAD

HE DUSTED--

DUSTED MAN HE GOT NO FACE--

SHIT MAN WE NEVER GET TV NOW--

BOSUE HE GOT NO FACE--

ZIPLIP WE BREAKIN OUT.

SPUDS IN FRONT.

BAND! BREAKING OUT--

SPUDS IN FRONT MAN--

NO SPUD MAN I'M SLAYER DICER--



THIS IS REALLY DANGEROUS.



PEOPLE ARE JUST STARTING TO SCREAM WHEN SOMETHING BAS FALLS FROM THE PLANE.



THAT'S WHEN I NOTICE ALL THE STALLED CARS.



WITH ALL THEIR FILLED GAS TANKS.



PUSH

NNFFF



GOATHAM CITY IS HELPLESS--

THIS IS OUR CHANCE TO RAZE GOATHAM--



--TO RAZE GOATHAM--



NO



*THE
DUMP.*

*IT'S A BREEDING
GROUND FOR
INSECTS AND
RODENTS.*

*SOME
RODENTS
FLY.*



THE WIND PICKS UP, SPREADING THE FLAMES ACROSS THE WEST SIDE-- TOWARD MY HOME--TOWARD--



--TOWARD SARAH.

JESUS CHRIST ALMIGHTY SARAH--



NGGAA



NO-- NO-- --IF I HAVE A HEART ATTACK I'M NO USE TO ANYBODY--



--NO. I'M ALL RIGHT.

I'M ALL RIGHT.



ONLY FEELS LIKE THERE'S A STORM COMING.

IT'S JUST HIS VOICE...

THIS LOUD, CLUMSY, STUPID THING--



THIS IS THE WEAPON OF THE ENEMY! WE DO NOT NEED IT. WE WILL NOT USE IT.



OUR WEAPONS ARE QUIET-- PRECISE. IN TIME, I WILL TEACH THEM TO YOU. TONIGHT, YOU WILL RELY ON YOUR FEELS-- AND YOUR BRAINS.



TONIGHT, WE ARE THE LAW.

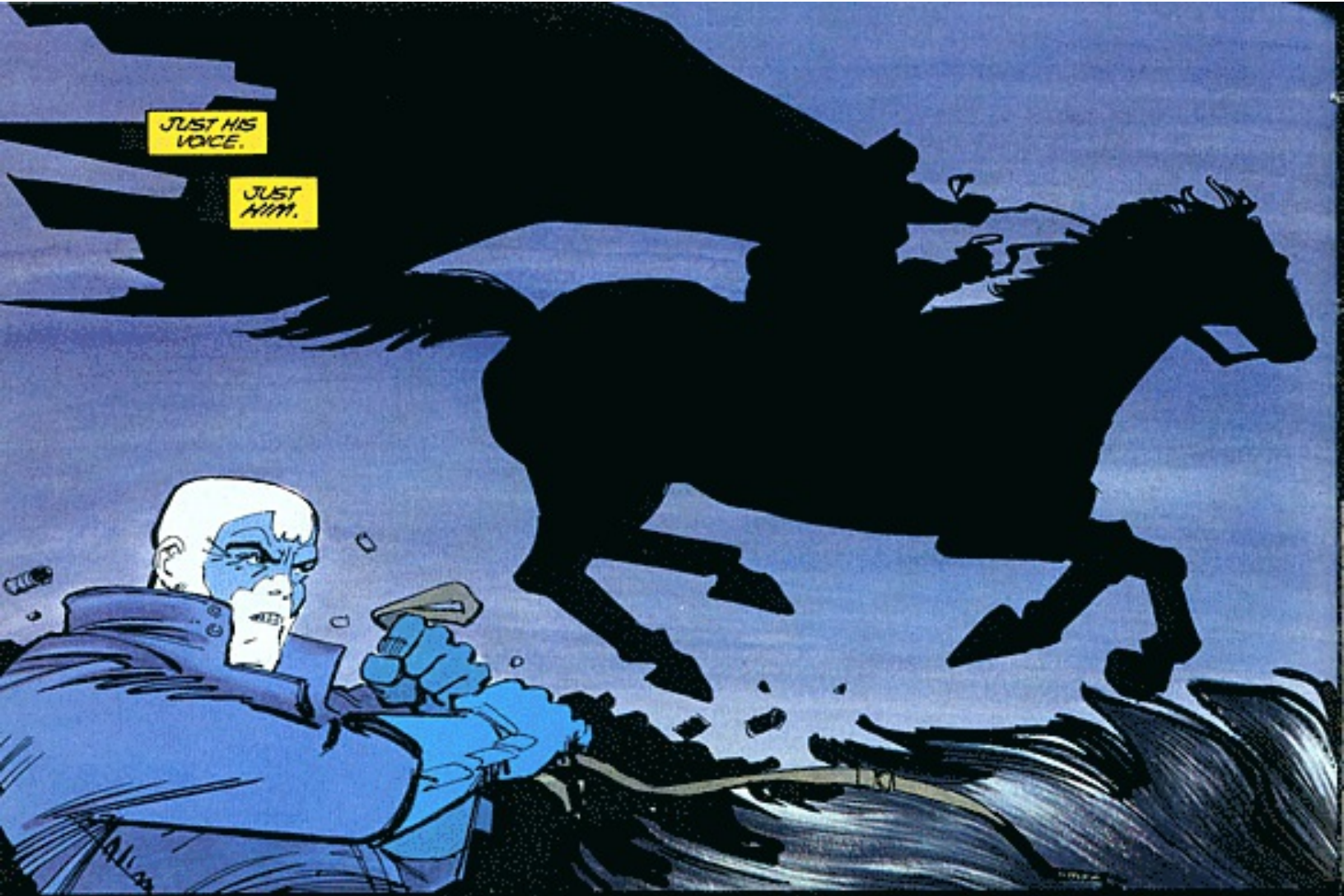
TONIGHT, I AM THE LAW.



LET'S RIDE.

JUST HIS VOICE.

JUST HIM.



EEEEKKRKKKK



ALL RUNNING AWAY - LOOKS BAD -- I'M CRYING BUT IT'S JUST THE SMOKE --



-- SMOKE -- DOESN'T IT FIGURE --

KK



DOWN THERE --

COGS -- AIN'T FAN --

DON'T SHIV --

SOMETHING EXPLODES --



-- RIGHT ON MY BLOCK --

-- A GAS MAIN --

BIIDDA





-- GOD ANYTHINGS
IN THERE IS AS
GOOD AS --

-- DAMN THAT
SMOKE --

-- 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 DAMN
GOOD --



-- I START YELLING
ORDERS --

-- SOME OLD WOMAN
LAUGHS AT ME --



WHOLE CITY
BLACKED
OUT --

RAD

BALLS
RAD --

IT'S
OUR
NIGHT --

SLICE AN
DICE MAN --

SLICE
AN DICE --



YOU HEAR
HORSES? WH

YOU KNOW
-- LIKE IN A
WESTERN --

EYES
SLIDEWAYS,
SPUD --

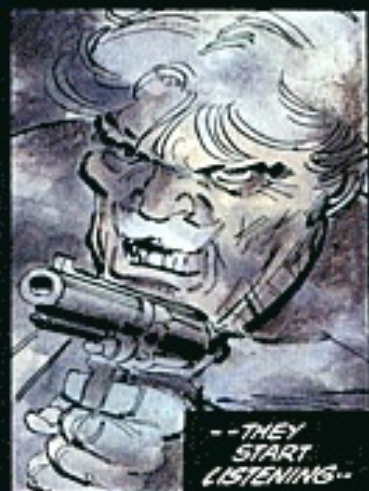
THERE --



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

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

-- OF COURSE
I STILL
CARRY IT --



-- THEY
START
LISTENING --



THINK
A
A
A



THINK
W
W
W

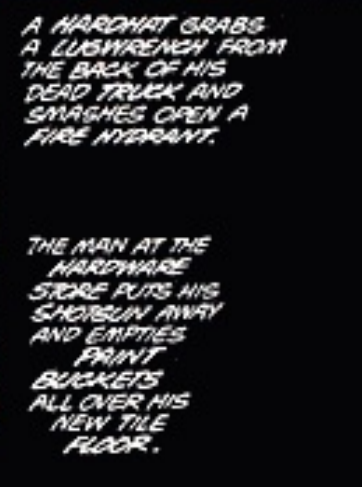


THINK
THINK
THINK



COMMISSIONER --

QUIET,
MERKEL.



... 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,
BRUCE,
YOU
LAUGH
AT
THEM.

THEY
CAN DO
THIS...
AND YOU
LAUGH...

... THEY CAN SPILT
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...



THOUGH I WAS BORN A GALAXY AWAY...



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



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





YOU ARE... SO GENEROUS...



YOU GIVE ME... YOUR BEAUTIFUL JUNGLE...

I SWEAR...



... YOUR ADOPTED SON WILL HONOR YOU.



FROM MY BUILDINGS...

... SHE SCREAMS...



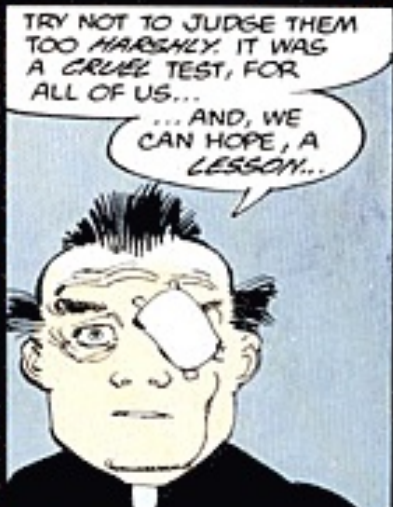
SARAH'S HEIGHT--

-- SARAH'S HAIR --



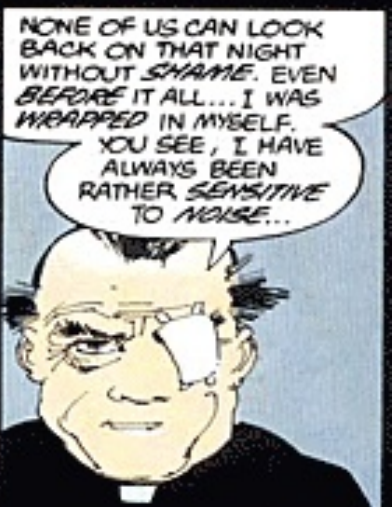
A SKIRT--

-- THAT COULD BE SARAH'S --



TRY NOT TO JUDGE THEM TOO HARSHLY. IT WAS A CRUEL TEST, FOR ALL OF US...

... AND, WE CAN HOPE, A LESSON...



NONE OF US CAN LOOK BACK ON THAT NIGHT WITHOUT SHAME. EVEN BEFORE IT ALL... I WAS WRAPPED IN MYSELF.

YOU SEE, I HAVE ALWAYS BEEN RATHER SENSITIVE TO NOISE...

... AND THAT BOY-- HE SEEMED TO KEEP PACE 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...



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

I HEARD SHOUTS...



YES, I WAS SHOUTING. WHAT DO YOU EXPECT? I HAPPENED TO BE UP AGAINST A BITCH OF A DEADLINE. WHAT?...
... YES, OF COURSE I'D HEARD ABOUT THE BOMB. 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 ASS IS COVERED.



SO I'M BARELY STANDING UP WHEN THERE'S THIS EXPLOSION! KNOCKS ME FLAT--
MY ANKLE FEELS LIKE IT'S BROKEN-- SOMEBODY IS GOING TO GET SUED--

I'M BARELY ON MY FEET WHEN THAT 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--



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

...AND WHEN THE LIGHTS WENT OUT...



...WELL. I KNEW IT HAD TO BE THE ELECTROMAGNETIC PULSE... AND ALL THE BOOKS SAY THAT'D ONLY HAPPEN DURING A FULL-SCALE EXCHANGE...

...AND WHEN I HEARD THAT EXPLOSION...



...I MEAN, LATER I FOUND OUT IT WAS A 747, CRASHING INTO THE BRISMAN BUILDING...

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



...BUT JUST THEN, I... I MEAN NOT KNOWING... BUT... IT WAS DUMB! BUT WHEN I HEARD THE EXPLOSION, I THOUGHT...

...AND WHEN THE CARS STARTED GOING UP...



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

-- IT WAS EVERY MAN FOR HIMSELF.



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 STUPID BITCH OUT OF HER VOLKSWAGEN.



GROW UP SOMEBODY WAS GOING TO GET HIS GUN. HE SURE DIDN'T HAVE ANY USE FOR IT.

THAT PRIEST, HE DIDN'T SEE IT MY WAY...



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...



HEY--YOU WEREN'T THERE, COULD BARELY SEE 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 DARNY WAS FOOD.

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 PORET, A BLOODY MESS, I DIDN'T CARE...



...NO EXCUSE... I WAS IN WITH THE REST OF THEM, SHOWING, YELLING ABOUT FOOD 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-- HIT THE GRAND UNION PARKING LOT...



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

--AND WANTED IT ALL FOR THEMSELVES.



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

I DID WHAT ANYBODY WOULD'VE.

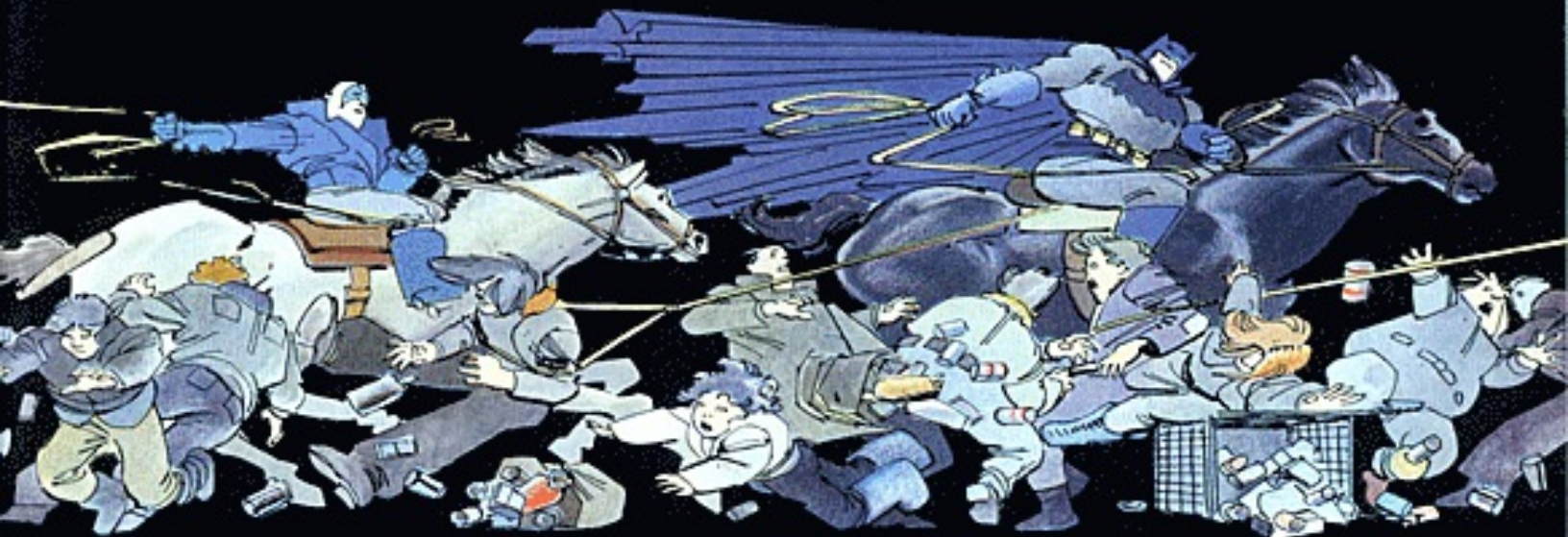


I STILL CAN'T BELIEVE IT GOT AS BAD AS IT DID. YOU'D NEVER HAVE KNOWN THAT JUST A FEW MINUTES EARLIER WE'D BEEN...

... I WAS STORING SOMEbody WHEN I HEARD THE HORSES...







LIKE THE *GESTAPO* THEY MOVED IN ON US--*BATMAN* AND THAT *BRAT ARMY* OF HIS-- YOU'D HAVE THOUGHT WE WERE *CRIMINALS*.

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



BROKE THREE RIBS-- AND THIS *BOGIE* ISN'T FOR *LAUGH*S. 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...



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



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



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

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

... HE JUST *SASS* IN HIS *SADDLE* LIKE AN *OLD MAN*...

...THEN HE STRAIGHTENS UP AND GRINS AT ME LIKE IT'S FUNNY.

HE CAN'T DIE...



URNS OUT SARAH HAD GONE TO THE GROCERY STORE.

URNS OUT SARAH FORGOT TO TELL ME SHE NEEDED MILK.

ONE MORE THING.



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

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



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

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



BUT, OF COURSE, THERE HASN'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 COLDBRINGER WAS DESIGNED TO INCLUDE THE ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS OF FULL-SCALE NUCLEAR WAR. FIRST, IT GENERATED THE PULSE THAT BLACKED OUT--

ON THAT PULSE-- DON'T MISS OUR SPECIAL TONIGHT-- YOUR FAVORITE STARS ARE ASKED "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--

THEY SURE HAVE, CARLA, AND SO HAS MY WARDROBE. THIS IS THE COLDEST DAY OF THE YEAR. I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO WEAR THESE DAYS...



STARVING
CIVIL WAR IN THE MID-WEST
CUBANS WON'T BUDE
RIOTS
MEDIA PUSH
CREDIBILITY DISASTER

...NO, MR. PRESIDENT, I'M AFRAID HE'LL NEVER LET ME BRING HIM IN ALIVE...

THE COLDEST, LOLA-- UNTIL TOMORROW. THE BOMB'S BLAST THRUST HUNDREDS OF MILLIONS OF TONS OF SOOT INTO THE STRATOSPHERE--

-- CREATING A BLACK CLOUD THAT COVERS THE AMERICAS, BLOTING OUT THE SUN-- DEPRIVING US OF LIGHT AND HEAT...



...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 HAS ALWAYS LIVED BY HIS IMPULSES.



THIS PARTICULAR IMPULSE I CAN UNDERSTAND...

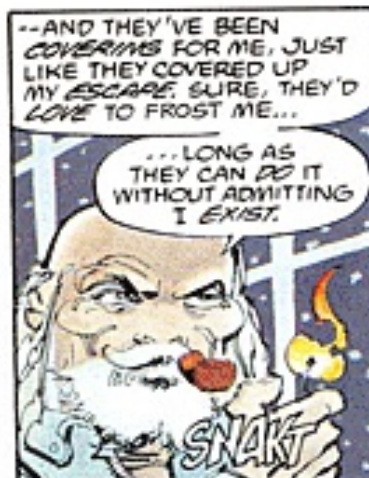
YOU'VE ALWAYS HAD IT HAZARD, BRUCE...

... GIVING THEM SUCH A BIG TARGET. SURE, YOU PLAY IT MYSTERIOUS -- BUT IT'S A LOUD KIND OF MYSTERIOUS, MAN, ESPECIALLY LATELY.

YOU GOT TO LEARN HOW TO MAKE THOSE SONGS OF BITCHES WORK FOR YOU. LOOK-- IT'S BEEN FIVE YEARS SINCE I BLEW OUT OF ARIZONA--

-- AND YOU KNOW I'VE KEPT BUSY--

... COMPUTER FAILURE WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE SINKING OF THE U.S. NUCLEAR SUBMARINE VALIANT. PENTAGON SOURCES DISCLOSED TODAY... NO HANDS WERE LOST...



--AND THEY'VE BEEN COVERING FOR ME, JUST LIKE THEY COVERED UP MY ESCAPE. SURE, THEY'D LOVE TO FROST ME...

...LONG AS THEY CAN DO IT WITHOUT ADMITTING I EXIST.

SNARK



BUT YOU, BRUCE--
--MAN, THEY HAVE TO KILL YOU.



OLIVER--
WHAT DO YOU WANT?



I ALWAYS KNEW IT'D GET DOWN TO YOU AND THE BIG BLUE SCHOOLBOY. PLANET'S TOO BIG FOR THE TWO OF YOU.

WHEN IT ALL COMES DOWN...



...I WANT A PIECE OF HIM. A SMALL PIECE WILL DO. FOR OLD TIMES SAKE, YOU KNOW...

...IT STILL HURTS WHEN IT'S COLD...



...NOTHING WE CAN'T HANDLE, FOLKS. WE'RE STILL AMERICA-- AND I'M STILL PRESIDENT.



WHO WAS THAT SPUD? TALKS LIKE MY DAD.
HE USED TO FIGHT CRIME.



...THE PRESIDENT HAS IMPOSED LIMITED MARTIAL LAW, THEREBY DEPLOYING MILITARY AID TO LAW-ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES AGAINST OUTBREAKS OF VIOLENCE AND LOOTINGS...



RIGHT THERE-- IN THAT SADDLE-- IS ALL THE REASON I NEED...

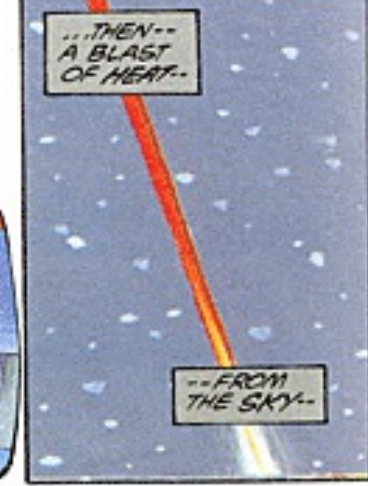
...IT'S ALMOST FRIGHTENING HOW QUICKLY SHE'S LEARNING TO RIDE...



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. WITH ONE EXCEPTION. RIGHT, TOM?...



...THEN-- A BLAST OF HEAT--

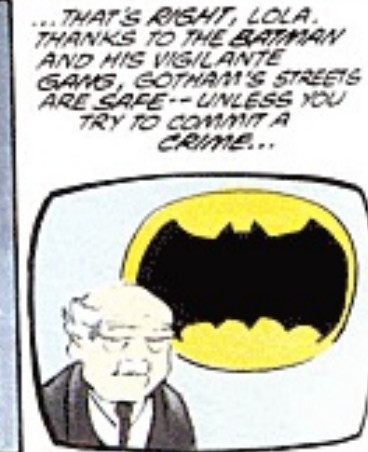
--FROM THE SKY--

WHERE?

--AND IT BEGINS...



CRIME ALLEY.



...THAT'S RIGHT, LOLA. THANKS TO THE BATMAN AND HIS VIGILANTE GANG, GOTHAM'S STREETS ARE SAFE-- UNLESS YOU TRY TO COMMIT A CRIME...



... 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 CAVE... I WAS JUST SIX YEARS OLD...



NO... IT WAS... TWO YEARS LATER... WHEN HER NECKLACE CAUGHT ON HIS WRIST...

... AND EVERYTHING MY MOTHER WAS STRUCK THE PAVEMENT AS A BLOODY MURDER...

THAT NIGHT... BEGAN THIRTY YEARS OF HUNTING THIEVES AND MURDERERS...

... COMMISSIONER YINDEL REFUSED TO COMMENT ON THE CHARGE THAT GOTHAM'S POLICE HAVE BEEN LAX IN PURSUING THE MURDER CHARGE AGAINST THE BATMAN...



... ARMY TROOPS HAVE EVACUATED THE SLUM KNOWN AS CRIME ALLEY-- NO EXPLANATION IS GIVEN-- NEWS COVERAGE HAS BEEN FLATLY DENIED--



THE THINGS... MUST BE EXACT...

RUMORS FLY-- ARMY HELICOPTERS HOVER OVER THE EMPTY STREETS OF CRIME ALLEY-- IS THIS A MILITARY EFFORT TO CAPTURE THE BATMAN--



-- OR IS THIS THE FINAL BATTLE BETWEEN TWO TITANS -- THE LAST STAND FOR THE CAPED CRUSADER -- FACING THE MIGHT OF THE MAN OF STEEL



THEY LEAVE A HOLE
IN THE CONCRETE
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 HATE
TO STAY
UP LATE.

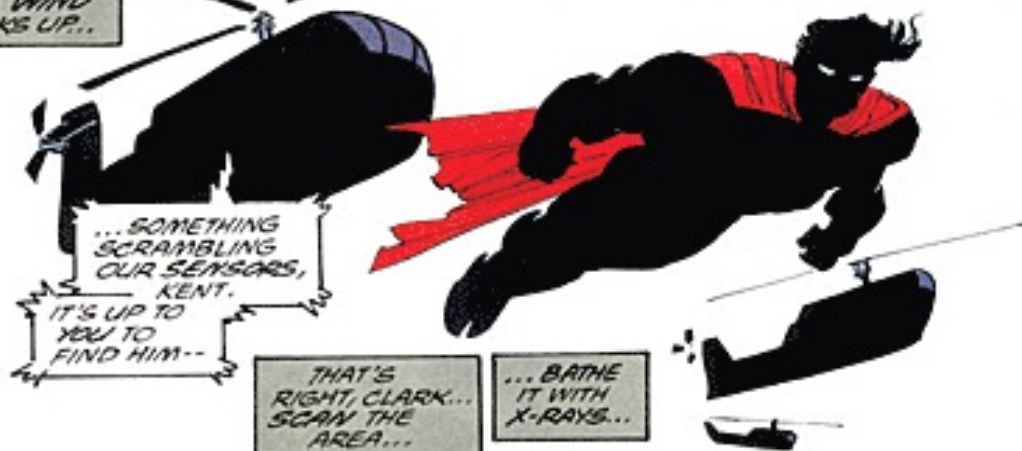
...EVERYTHING'S IN POSITION,
BOSS, LIKE MAYBE IT'S
TIME YOU TOLD ME THE
PLAN... I MEAN...

...YOU GOING TO
DIE OR WHAT?



FIGURE
I
WILL.

THE WIND
PICKS UP...



THAT'S
RIGHT, CLARK...
SCAN THE
AREA...

...BATHE
IT WITH
X-RAYS...

...ACTIVATE THOSE SIX
HUNTER MISSILES
I WORKED SO HARD ON.

THIS IS A
POWER'S
TEST...

...I WANT TO
SEE HOW
MUCH OF YOU
SURVIVED
THAT NUCLEAR
EXPLOSION.

HE'D HAVE TO
BE AT FULL
SPEED TO
DODGE THEM...



HE ISN'T.
I WATCH
THEM KICK
HIM AROUND
FOR A
MINUTE.

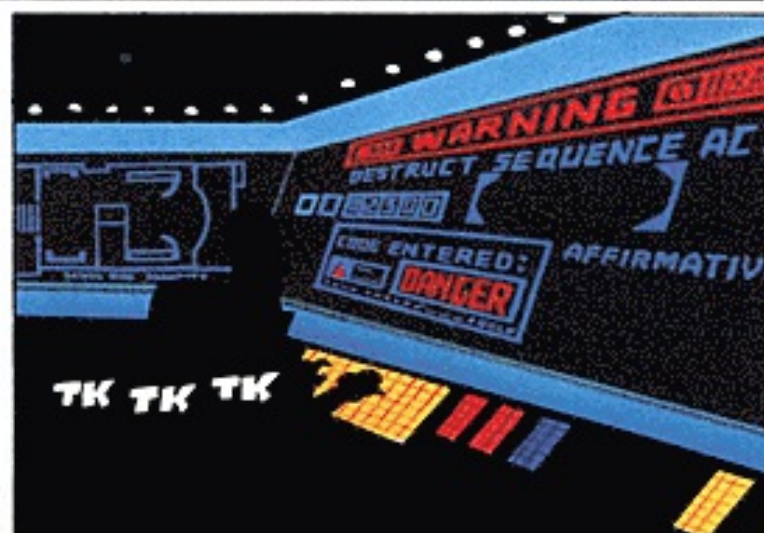
I'VE HAD
HORSE TIMES.

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...



TK
TK
TK



Still he sat, politely
enough, on his bed, as
Alfred read to him.

"The Purloined 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...

...so frightfully FORMAL, his dark eyes FLASHING...

Alfred assured him that the villain had met justice.

...Master Bruce asked -- NO, DEMANDED... "The killer was CAUGHT, AND PUNISHED."

Bruce slept. Like a boy.

**DETONATION
T MINUS
00:11:24**

HE HITS THE GROUND ON SCHEDULE.

ONE BLOCK FROM ME.

BREATHING A LITTLE FAST--

IT'S ROBIN'S TURN--

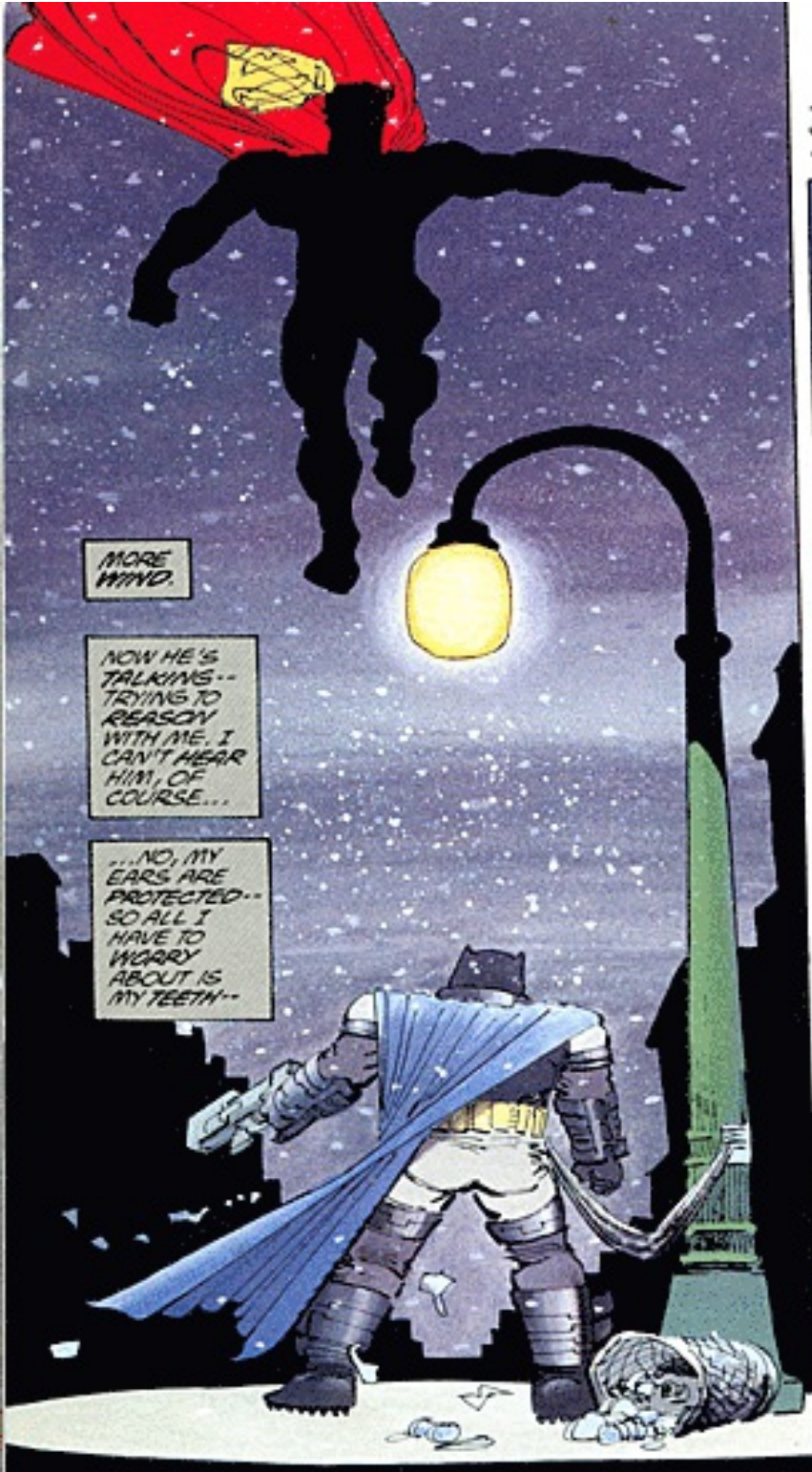
THE CHARGE COULD SINK A BATTLESHIP. I THINK HE FEELS IT.

POOM

**W
H
M
P**

SKREKY

ISN'T TONIGHT A SCHOOL NIGHT?



MORE WIND.

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--

--RATTLING FROM MY JAW-- OR SHATTERING, LIKE EVERY WINDOW ON THE BLOCK--



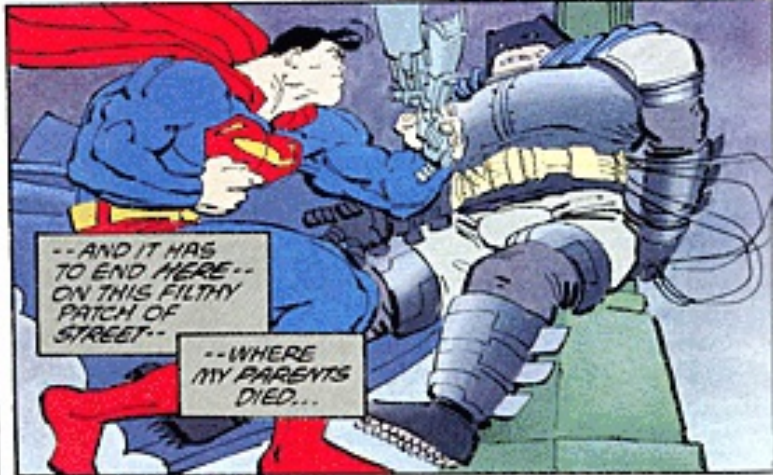
--WHEN I HIT HIM WITH THE SONIC.



A NOSEBLEED -- SO SOON, CLARK--

DON'T DROP NOW-- THE NIGHT IS YOUNG--

AND I HAVE-- SO MUCH PLANNED--



--AND IT HAS TO END HERE-- ON THIS FILTY PATCH OF STREET--

--WHERE MY PARENTS DIED...



...WHERE I CAN USE THE CITY'S POWER--

--EVERY WATT OF IT--



--TO FRY YOUR BRAIN--

--STILL TALKING-- KEEP TALKING, CLARK...

...YOU'VE ALWAYS KNOWN JUST WHAT TO SAY.



"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--



--IT'S WAY PAST TIME YOU LEARNED-- WHAT IT MEANS--

--TO BE A MAN--



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--

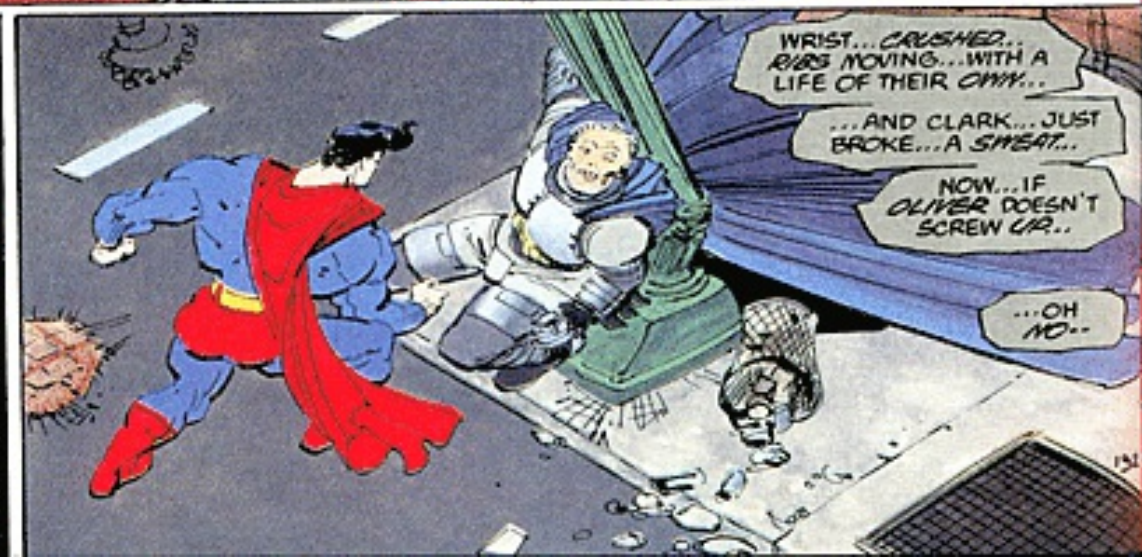


BRUCE-- I JUST BROKE THREE OF YOUR RIBS...



BY NOW CLARK SHOULD BE TOO BUSY TO LISTEN IN.

HERE'S THE PLAN...

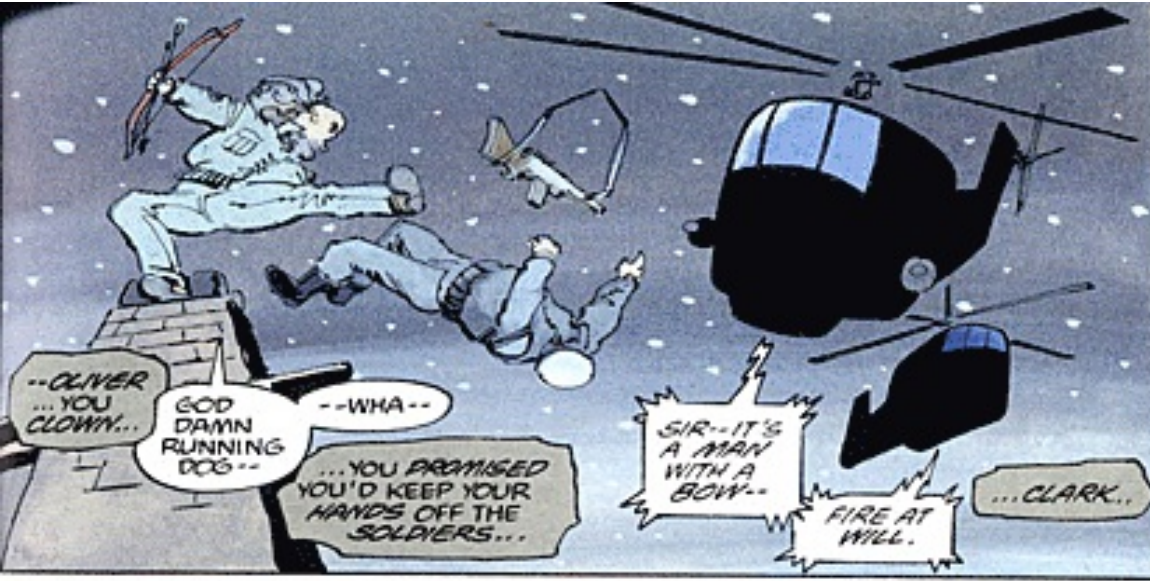


WRIST... CRASHED... RIBS MOVING... WITH A LIFE OF THEIR OWN...

... AND CLARK... JUST BROKE... A SWEAT...

NOW... IF OLIVER DOESN'T SCREW UP...

... OH NO...



--OLIVER... YOU CLOWN...
 GOD DAMN RUNNING DOG--
 --WHA--
 ...YOU PROMISED YOU'D KEEP YOUR HANDS OFF THE SOLDIERS...

SIR--IT'S A MAN WITH A BOW--

FIRE AT WILL.

...CLARK...



...IF CLARK FIGURES OUT WHY YOU'RE HERE...
 ...A LITTLE ACID... TO DISTRACT HIM...



OLIVER--

...GET YOURSELF KILLED... ON YOUR OWN TIME...

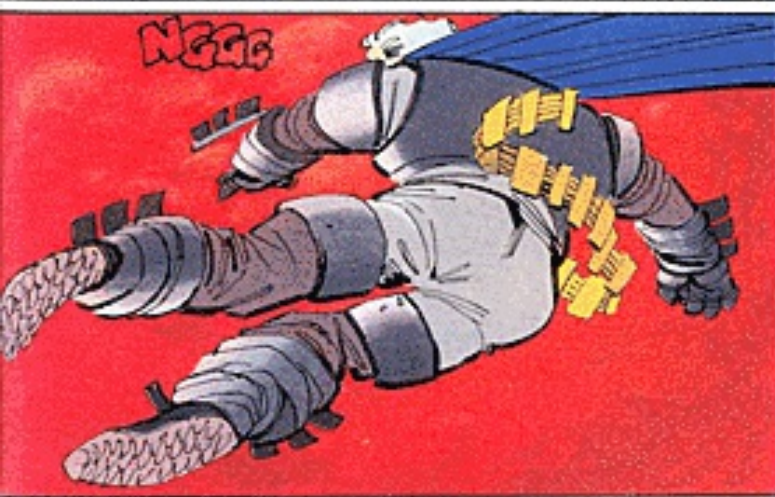
OWN
 GOD DAMN IT--



KNCHH

SPKH

...I'VE ONLY... GOT ONE MINUTE LEFT...
 ...AND I'M RUNNING OUT OF TRICKS...



NGGG



GOD DAMN FASCIST SONS OF BITCHES--

BRAKABRAKABR RAKABRA



OLIVER--
 --I'VE FINALLY GOTTEN HIM ANGRY--



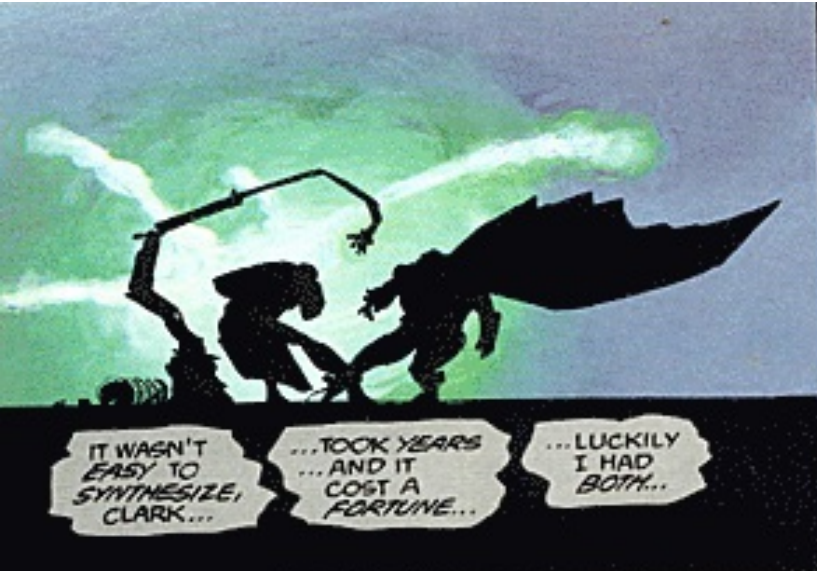
--IT'S NOW OR NEVER--



K-TAN
 GGGG



FAPP



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--
--WHA--

EYES DOWNSIDE, SPUD.



FIGURE WE GOT ALL WEEK...



HINO GOD DAMN SILVER.



KOFF BRUCE-- YOUR HEART--



YOU'RE BEGINNING TO GET THE /ASA, CLARK...

...THIS... IS THE END...
...FOR BOTH OF US...



-- TANK'S BREAKING AWAY --

-- GOT THEM --
WHOLE AREA'S SURROUNDED --

-- HEADING ACROSS THE PARKING LOT --



-- WHAT -- FELL THROUGH --

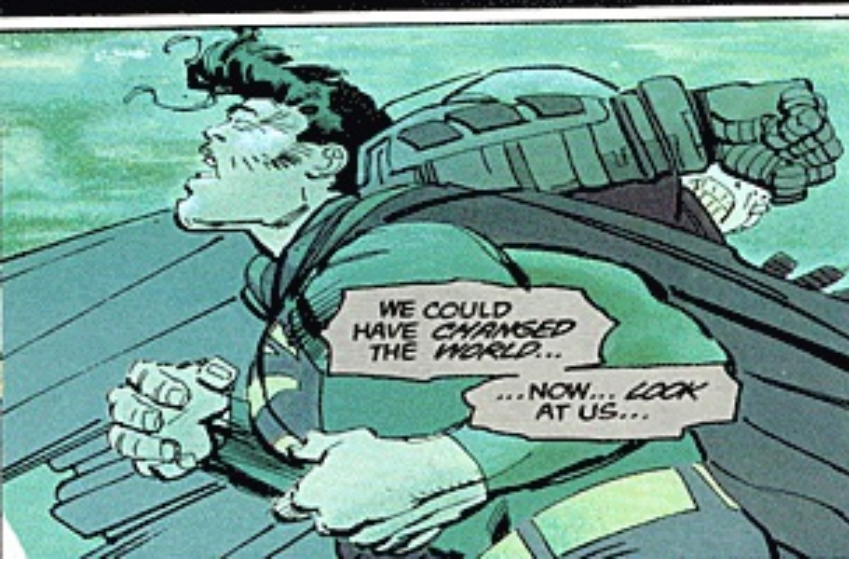
-- WHAT THE HELL --



OH, CHRIST--

WATER MAIN--
WE LOST THEM--

-- CHRIST WE LOST THEM --



WE COULD HAVE CHANGED THE WORLD...

...NOW... LOOK AT US...



I'VE BECOME... A POLITICAL LIABILITY...
...AND YOU...



... YOU'RE A JOKE...



... I WANT YOU...
TO REMEMBER,
CLARK...

... IN ALL THE
YEARS TO COME...

... IN YOUR
MOST PRIVATE
MOMENTS...



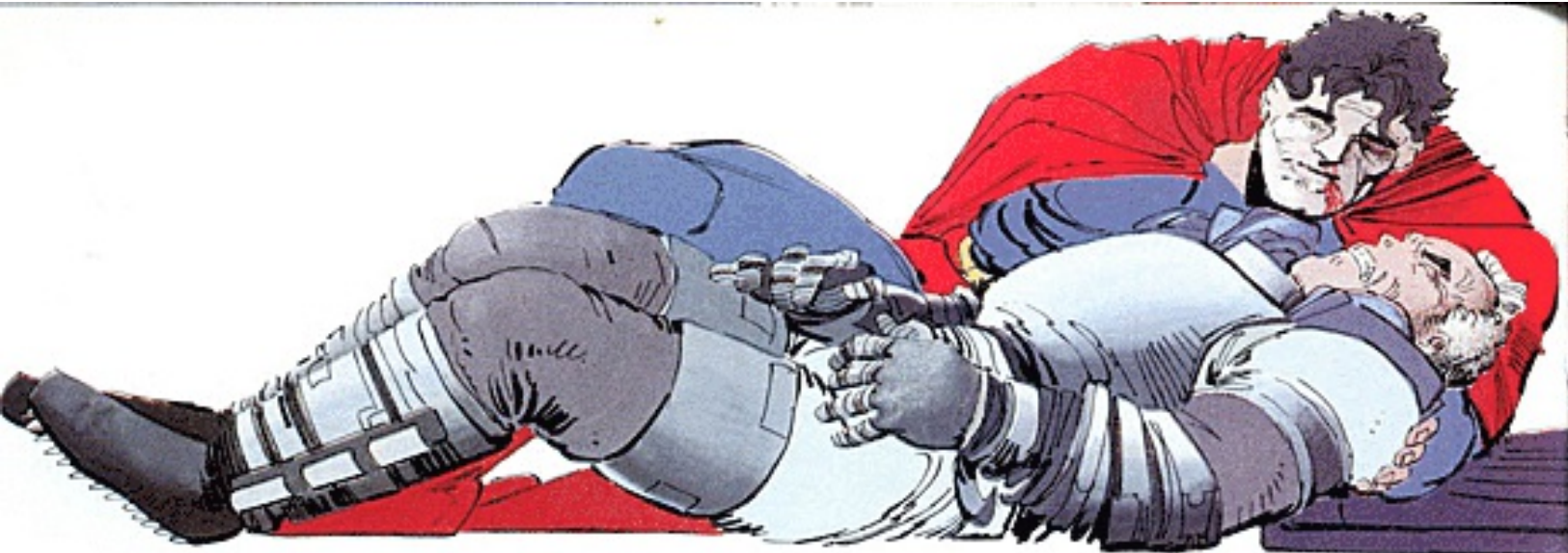
I WANT YOU TO REMEMBER
... MY HAND... AT YOUR
THROAT...

... I WANT... YOU
TO REMEMBER...



... THE ONE
MAN WHO
BEAT YOU...





The clock strikes TWELVE.



The ancient moor TREMBLES, beneath Alfred's feet.

Deep underground, COMPUTERS, holding every precious SECRET of the BATMAN, burst, and BURST...

Mrs. Wayne's priceless collection of PORCELAIN shatters, musically...

...the central mass of Wayne Manor SHUDDERS, as if ALIVE...

The world turns RUBY RED, the manor roof RISES, madly, into the sky, riding a pillar of FLAME.

A jolt travels the length of Alfred's spine. Of course, he thinks, as his head goes light.

...empty STABLES fly apart like toothpick models...

...then VANISHES in a FLASH, bright as the sun.



How utterly proper.



DON'T TOUCH HIM--

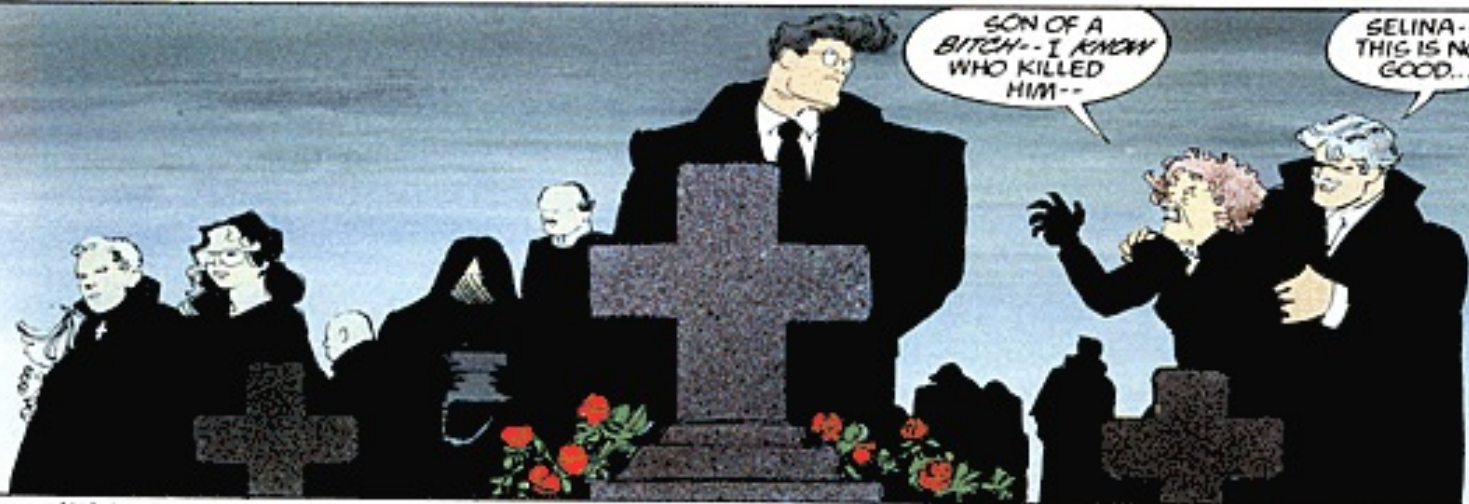
... COMMEND
HIS SOUL...

... CLOUD HAS ALMOST
COMPLETELY CLEARED IN
THE PAST 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--

SELINA--
THIS IS NO
GOOD...

WAYNE MANSION 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...

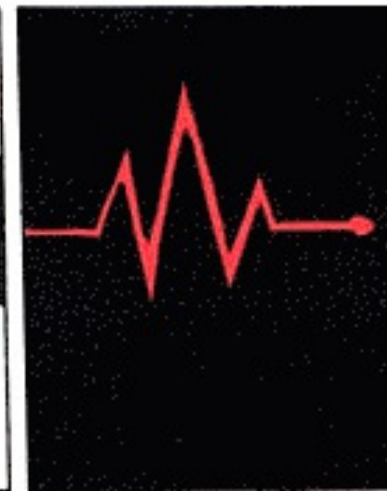
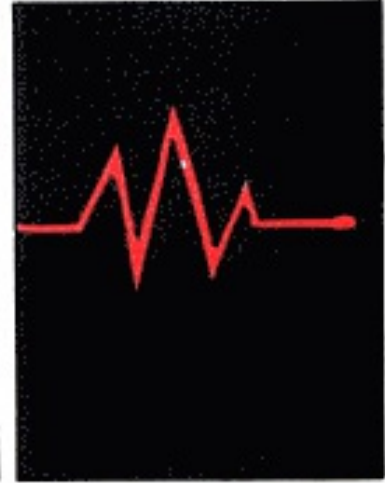
INTERNAL REVENUE
AGENTS INVESTIGATED
WAYNE'S RECORDS,
FINDING HIS EVERY
BANK ACCOUNT
EMPTY, EVERY STOCK
SOLD...



... 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...



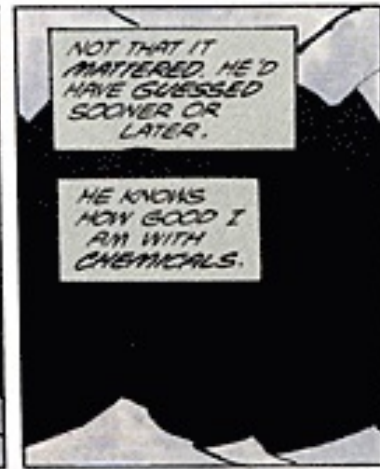
MY TIMING
WASN'T QUITE
PRECISE
ENOUGH.

CLARK
HEARD.



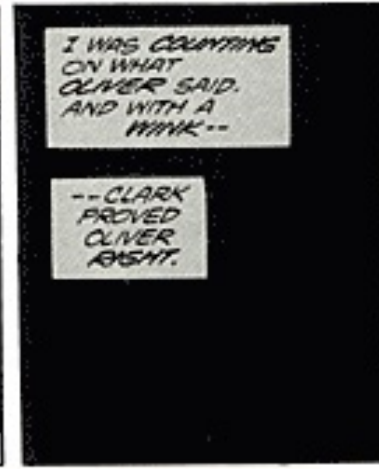
THAT WAS
THE FIRST
THING ROBIN
TOLD ME--

--WHEN SHE
DUG ME UP.



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...

THERE-- SEE THAT LEDGE? GET A LAMP UP THERE.

RIGHT, BOSS.

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.

YES, SIR.

YEARS-- TO TRAIN AND STUDY AND PLAN...

... HERE, IN THE ENDLESS CAVE, FAR PAST THE BURNT REMAINS OF A CRIMEFIGHTER WHOSE TIME HAS PASSED...

IT BEGINS HERE-- AN ARMY-- TO BRING SENSE TO A WORLD PLAGUED BY WARS THAN THIEVES AND MURDERERS...

THIS WILL BE A GOOD LIFE...

...GOOD ENOUGH.

