

BATMAN: THE DARK CRUSADE

By

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Based on Characters owned by DC

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FADE IN:

EXT. MILLER HARBOR - OLD GOTHAM - NIGHT

A dilapidated warehouse overlooks the waterfront. Two sedans parked, headlights beaming down on an ongoing drug deal. Two briefcases on a foldout table.

GREG, 30s, smooth criminal, flanked by two bodyguards, taps in a code on his briefcase. Open, he turns it to the view of TEDDY, 20s, standing on the opposite side of the table.

Teddy lifts a brick of cocaine out of the case, sets it on the table and whips out a switchblade. He cuts into it.

A DOCKWORKER with other things on his mind nonchalantly works by a docked speedboat keeping an eye on things.

SCOPE P.O.V

Wind and distance statistics. Teddy and Greg in sight. All bodyguards highlighted by danger levels: red and amber.

"GREGORIO DOMINGUEZ, wanted for multiple homicide, rape, kidnapping, extortion, money laundering, burglary..."

The cross-hair hovers over Greg. "Target Locked..."

EXT. MILLER HARBOR - OLD GOTHAM - NIGHT

Teddy deals with the aftermath of cocaine snorting. Slowly, he nods his head in approval. He opens his briefcase. Turns it to Greg's view. HALF A MILLION DOLLARS. Greg checks it.

Greg compares a note from the case with one of his own. His eyes find Teddy, who's a rock. Greg approves the money.

Teddy hands the cocaine case to one of his men. Greg gives the money case to one of his own. Teddy extends a hand.

Dockworker reaches for a gun stuffed in his boot.

SCOPE P.O.V

The scope sweeps the dockland and finds Dockworker. "Threat Level: 95%. Take Immediate Action".

"Dist. 1,382m. Wind. <20mph. Calculating Trajectory..."

EXT. OLD GOTHAM - NIGHT

A utility vehicle sits parked by the curbside flanked either side by rows of duplexes and shoddy apartment blocks.

INT. UTILITY VEHICLE - NIGHT

High-tech police equipment. Monitors. Computers. The works.

JIM GORDON, 51, a rugged and worn out individual, decent by design with heavy weight in his eyes, watches the monitors.

One of the monitors shows the drug deal going down.

EXT. MILLER HARBOR - OLD GOTHAM - NIGHT

Teddy and his men return to the speedboat. Dockworker gives them a slight nod. The men board the boat.

Greg whips out a cell phone and dials a number en route to one of the sedans. Someone opens the back door for him.

GREG

Went down without a hitch. They get the message. Should have an answer within forty-eight hours. I'm on my way now, boss. Alright.

He hangs up. A bullet SMASHES the window and nails Greg in the side. He goes down. His guys pull out their sidearms.

Teddy and co. notice the mad scramble by the cars. He looks to the unglued Dockworker, pulls a gun and shoots him dead.

INT. UTILITY VEHICLE - NIGHT

Gordon leans in. The monitor that showed the drug deal now boasts an image of muggy water.

DETECTIVE RENEE MONTOYA, 33, beautiful but downplayed with a ferocious side to her, enters through the back door with a takeaway bag in hand and two coffees.

Gordon pulls up his radio.

GORDON

Mulligan, come in. Mulligan? Shit.

Gordon makes for the driver's seat. Montoya sets down the takeaway bag and coffees and takes a seat as passenger.

EXT. OLD GOTHAM - NIGHT

The utility vehicle pulls a 180 and hurtles down the road.

Various vehicles, including GCPD squad cars and SWAT trucks follow the utility vehicle around a corner.

EXT. MILLER HARBOR - OLD GOTHAM - NIGHT

A THUG takes a bullet to the forehead and drops. Others make for cover behind anything they can use.

THUG#2 assists Greg into the back of a sedan.

Dockworker floats on the surface. Teddy and his crew speed away down the harbor.

THUG#3

Anyone pinpoint the shot?!

THUG#4

I couldn't even hear it!

A bullet ricochets off a dumpster and nails Thug#5 square between the eyes.

The sedan RAMS through a pair of chain-link gates.

EXT. OLD GOTHAM - ROOFTOP - NIGHT

A gloved hand wielding a bracer-cannon attachment assembles an advanced sniper rifle like a professional assassin.

EXT. MILLER HARBOR - OLD GOTHAM - NIGHT

The utility vehicle and GCPD units roll into the yard. Thugs around the area dash away, some shoot at the vehicles.

The utility vehicle drifts into a 90 degree stop. Montoya gets out and takes up her sidearm. Gordon shoots out of the driver's side window, takes a thug down.

EXT. OLD GOTHAM - NIGHT

The sedan races down the street scraping parked vehicles. A bullet smashes the back window, and the sedan loses control, nails a streetlight. Greg falls onto the pavement.

He crawls for a nearby alleyway with everything he has left. A bullet rips through the back of his head. He flops dead.

EXT. MILLER HARBOR - OLD GOTHAM - NIGHT

GCPD and SWAT restrain/arrest thugs. Gordon and Montoya look at the floating Dockworker in the water. Gordon sighs.

GORDON

I want an APB out on that boat and  
I want it now.

MONTOYA

And Dominguez? He got away, chief.

Gordon rubs the space between his eyes, visibly stressed. He disgustedly turns away.

GORDON

Find that boat.

INT. LUXURY PENTHOUSE SUITE - LOUNGE - NIGHT

Overlooking the lengthy midtown central park and scrapers.

ROMAN SIONIS/BLACK MASK, 44, a devil in looks with a scar down one blind eye, pours himself a bourbon at the liquor cabinet. His cell phone vibrates on the coffee table.

Sionis takes a swig of bourbon and answers the call.

SIONIS

What is it?

GRUFF VOICE (V.O.)

Do you know who I am?

Sionis walks over to the window.

SIONIS

How could I forget? You're the one  
who got away. I gotta give credit  
where it's due. You got balls. So  
to what do I owe the pleasure?

GRUFF VOICE (V.O.)

You know what I want.

SIONIS

Yeah, I do. But you see the thing  
about want, is you don't always get  
it. And sorry to say, but you ain't  
gonna get it.

GRUFF VOICE (V.O.)  
We'll see.

EXT. OLD GOTHAM - ROOFTOP - NIGHT

Combat boots methodically pace about crunching gravel. A scuffed silver case sits on a ledge.

SIONIS (V.O.)  
Save yourself a lot of trouble and  
give up. Otherwise, your precious  
girl won't be the only thing taking  
a long nap in the Gotham Sound. All  
I have to do, is snap my fingers.

GRUFF VOICE  
You took the only thing I gave a  
damn about. So I only have one  
thing I need to say to you...

A gloved hand clenches a fist.

REVEAL - FLOYD LAWTON/DEADSHOT, 41, gruff and rugged with  
the weight of the world in his eyes, one of which lays under  
a scope-eye device, dressed in a dark burgundy/black outfit.

LAWTON  
...I'm coming for you. And if  
you're as smart as you say you are,  
you'd do well to remember just who  
in the hell you're dealing with.

Lawton collects the case.

LAWTON  
I'll see you soon, Mr. Sionis.

INT. LUXURY PENTHOUSE SUITE - LOUNGE - NIGHT

Sionis' lip curls. He presses a hand against the window.

SIONIS  
I look forward to it, Mr. Lawton.

Sionis hangs up and sets down the phone. A vindictive smirk  
crosses his face. High-heels clack along hardwood nearby.

SIONIS  
It seems our mutual friend is still  
walking around Gotham. See that his  
feet meet the cold steel of chains.

A shadow with pigtails on the wall turns away.

SIONIS  
And honey...  
(faces her)  
...have fun.

HARLEY QUINN, 30, gorgeous yet untamed in a crazy way with pigtails, heavy makeup and a sexy ensemble, smiles widely.

HARLEY  
Oh, you betcha, puddin'.

CUT TO BLACK:

SUPER: "THE DARK CRUSADE"

EXT. WAYNE MANOR - DAY

A large Victorian Mansion enveloped by acres of farmland and luscious countryside. A fountain in the central courtyard.

INT. WAYNE MANOR - KITCHEN - DAY

Toast pops out of an expensive toaster.

ALFRED PENNYWORTH, 66, rather nimble with a kind appearance, adorned in butler garb, pours orange juice into a glass.

He sets the toast on a plate. The plate and glass onto a tray with the Gotham Times Newspaper, and exits the kitchen.

INT. WAYNE MANOR - FOYER - DAY

Grand. A family portrait hangs on the landing with THOMAS, 37, respectable, MARTHA, 34, beautiful and YOUNG BRUCE, 10.

Alfred ambles up the staircase with somewhat of a limp.

INT. WAYNE MANOR - MASTER BEDROOM - DAY

Large and extravagant with lots of eye-catching detail. The curtains shut on all but one window, where --

BRUCE WAYNE, 36, handsome but haunted in more than one way, chiseled like a Greek God but befallen by scruffiness, sits in an armchair staring intently out the window.

Alfred enters, sets the tray down on a dresser and collects various items of clothing from the floor.

Bruce's cold eyes remain locked on the windowpane, a ghost.

Alfred carries laundry to the door, looks back. Opens his mouth to say something, but leaves the room. CLICK.

INT. GOTHAM TIMES HQ - DAY

A newspaper with the headline "WHERE IS BATMAN?" slaps down on a table boasting a computer monitor.

JACK RYDER, 29, a ladies man with a smooth overcoat filled with confidence, spins in an office chair toying with a slinky. He acknowledges the headline.

RYDER

You like it?

VICKI VALE, 32, gorgeous in that reporter way with a smart dress sense, leans against the booth wall.

VICKI

That was my headline.

RYDER

Consider us even, Vix. You owed me one. Besides, you were just sitting on it. Procrastination is good for only two things. Writing a novel-

VICKI

You ripped me off, Jack. I get it. I do. Journalism's a fight to the finish line, but you don't screw over your colleagues.

Ryder arrogantly kicks his feet up and raises an eyebrow.

VICKI

I thought we were friends. But I guess I was wrong. After all, who could be friends with an asshole?

INT. WAYNE MANOR - MASTER BEDROOM - DAY

Bruce, with a walking stick, limps over to the dresser and sets an empty plate on the tray. His eyes find the paper.

He catches a glimpse of his troubled reflection in a photo containing THOMAS and MARTHA on their wedding day.

He takes a bottle of prescribed pain medication from a unit beside the bed. Sits down. Pops the cap and downs two.

FLASH

Young Bruce stands in a steam-filled alleyway frozen in an instant of fear staring down at his dead parents.

INT. WAYNE MANOR - MASTER BEDROOM - DAY

Bruce ditches the walking stick and forces himself to stand. His leg buckles and he drops to the floor.

He uses the bed to drag himself up. Clenches his teeth and pushes the armchair over in anger. Tips the dresser over.

INT. WAYNE MANOR - UPSTAIRS HALL - DAY

Alfred stands outside a door listening to CRASHING, SMASHING and various things BREAKING. His eyes well up.

EXT. OLD GOTHAM - RUNDOWN APARTMENT BLOCK - DAY

Various shady individuals loiter, roam and chat on phones. A peddler deals drugs out of the trunk of his car.

Lawton, hooded, cautiously makes his way into the building.

INT. RUNDOWN APARTMENT BLOCK - FIRST FLOOR - DAY

Lawton casually checks mailbox names. His eyes find apt. 5D marked "MARGERY RICKS".

INT. RUNDOWN APARTMENT BLOCK - FIFTH FLOOR - DAY

An OLD LADY enters apartment 5C as Lawton exits an elevator. He takes a pistol from his pants and assembles a silencer.

Lawton kicks down 5D's door and bursts inside, gun drawn.

INT. APT. 5D - LOUNGE - DAY

Shoddy yet well-furnished and kept. Lawton swings inside and tactically maneuvers through keeping his eyes active.

He checks the kitchen. Opens the bedroom door, peers inside. A gun COCKS. Slowly, he shifts his gaze onto --

MARGE, 40s, worn out and delicate, shaky hand holding a gun and face filled with nerves, fear and angst.

MARGE  
Did he send you?

LAWTON  
No.

MARGE  
Drop the gun.

Lawton leans down and discards the pistol. He stands with a raised hand. She motions to the couch.

MARGE  
Sit down.

LAWTON  
Okay. Just relax, alright? I'm not here to hurt you.

Lawton sits on the couch. She grabs the house phone. Dials 911. The phone just "BEEPS". She panics.

MARGE  
What do you want from me?

LAWTON  
Your husband took something that I cared about. I'm here to make him suffer. I'm not going to harm you or your son. But I need Nicholas.

MARGE  
What?

LAWTON  
Nicholas is the only thing your husband cares about. But I'm not here to take him from you. I just need you to make a call.

Lawton sets a folded piece of paper on the coffee table.

LAWTON  
There's an old shipping warehouse on Howell Drive. I need you to call your husband and tell him that a man came and took Nicholas to that warehouse. And that to come alone or he'll never see him alive again.

Lawton places a stuffed envelope next to the folded paper and takes to his feet. Marge keeps the gun trained on him.

Lawton collects the pistol, stuffs it in his pants.

LAWTON  
Then get outta Gotham.

Lawton keeps her in view as he walks to the door.

MARGE  
Who are you?

LAWTON  
Just a father seeking redemption.

Lawton leaves. Marge lowers the gun, heads for the door. She watches Lawton walk down the hall and down the steps.

Marge closes the door, backs into it and sighs, unwound.

INT. WAYNE MANOR - MASTER BEDROOM - DAY

Bruce sits in isolation against the wall surrounded by glass and overturned furniture. A KNOCK at the door alerts him.

Alfred enters with a dustpan, brush and broom in tow. He surveys the destruction. He starts cleaning.

Bruce just stares at him. Alfred scoops up the broken photo of Thomas and Martha, sets it on a cabinet.

He sweeps broken glass into the dustpan. Stops and ponders.

ALFRED  
You can sit there in self pity all you want, but it won't turn back time. What's done is done. You need to pick yourself up. You're better than this. Gotham is tearing itself apart. The people need you. And I need you to come back. I can't bear to see you like this anymore. It's breaking my heart, sir.

Bruce, emotionless, looks on. Alfred wipes a tear away.

ALFRED  
You're my family and I love you as if you were my own son. But I can't watch you fade away.

Alfred sets everything down and heads for the door.

BRUCE  
(darkly)  
I couldn't save him, Alfred.

Alfred turns back.

BRUCE

I tried. But he wouldn't stop. I've replayed that moment over and over again, and nothing I could've done would've saved him. Because all he wanted... was the one thing I could never give him.

Bruce's eyes weigh water.

BRUCE

An end.

Alfred ingests this. He takes a knee beside Bruce, who looks up at him. Alfred sits a hand on Bruce's shoulder.

ALFRED

He knew what his death would do to you, Bruce. Let it go.

BRUCE

How do I do that, Alfred?

INT. GCPD - COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE - DAY

Gordon furiously pounds a fist on a desk. Montoya stands by.

GORDON

You can't pull me off the Cartel!  
If I can link the dope and cash to-

COMMISSIONER GILLIAN B. LOEB, 46, a stingy looking guy with a bit of a dark side, sits the opposite side of the desk.

LOEB

You defied a direct order from your commanding officer and went ahead with an unsanctioned operation that resulted in the death of a fellow officer. You're fortunate to still have that badge, Detective.

GORDON

I take full responsibility for what happened. But you cannot take me off this case. I just need a little more time.

Loeb clasps his hands together and sinks back in his chair.

LOEB

I can't risk anymore of my men  
dying on the whim of one detective.

Gordon looks to Montoya for help. She remains silent.

LOEB

You're off the case, Jim.

INT. GCPD - MAJOR CRIMES UNIT - DAY

Phones ring. Detectives and cops mingle. Crooks sit cuffed.  
Witnesses give evidence to desk jockeys.

Montoya follows a peeved off Gordon.

GORDON

Thanks for having my back, partner.

MONTOYA

Don't put this on me. You did this.  
Went against protocol. Ordered an  
unsanctioned sting operation. Never  
told me a thing.

GORDON

I guess Allen neglected that lesson  
when he was teaching you the way of  
things.

MONTOYA

(hurt)

Screw you.

She storms off.

GORDON

Renee.

INT. WAYNE MANOR - MASTER BEDROOM - DAY

Bruce helps Alfred lift the dresser back to its position.  
They succeed and glance around the now clean room.

ALFRED

How long have those socks been in  
here?

BRUCE

No idea.

ALFRED  
 I'll fetch the tongs. Open a window  
 or two, let some fresh air inside.  
 And maybe a good shave is in order?  
 That bird's nest is out of control.

Bruce flashes a slight smile.

ALFRED  
 I trust you remember where the  
 bathroom is?

BRUCE  
 Think I'll manage.

Alfred takes his leave.

BRUCE  
 Hey Alfred...  
 (Alfred looks back)  
 ...thanks, for not giving up on me.

ALFRED  
 I shall never give up on you, sir.

INT. WAYNE MANOR - BATHROOM - DAY

Bruce whips off his shirt to reveal deep scars down his back  
 and front. Stares at his scruffy reflection in the mirror.

Applies shaving foam. Dips the razor in water. Shaves. Dips.  
 Steam overthrows the mirror. He wipes the steamy mirror --

JOKER, late 30s, hideously demented with deep scars and  
 clown makeup, smiles widely behind him.

Bruce turns around. Nothing there. He hyperventilates and  
 tries to compose himself. Finds a seat on the bath.

SCRAPING gains his attention. The mirror reads "HA, HA, HA".

BRUCE  
 It's not real. It's not real.

JOKER (O.S.)  
 Oh, I'm very real.

Bruce looks beside him. Joker waves "hello" and smiles.

BRUCE  
 You can't be here.

Joker claps Bruce on the shoulder.

BRUCE  
You're dead.

JOKER  
Am I? Are you sure? See that's the thing about madness. No one is mad until they're sitting in a bathroom talking to someone that's dead.

Joker laughs. Bruce stands and backpedals into the door.

Joker collects the razor from the sink, removes the blade and discards the razor.

JOKER  
How did you get those scars?

Bruce's arms birth insane scars all the way down them. He panics, closes his eyes.

BRUCE  
It's not real. It's not real. It's not real! GET OUTTA MY HEAD!

A KNOCK at the door snaps Bruce out. No Joker or scars.

ALFRED (O.S.)  
Sir, are you alright?

Bruce scans the bathroom, visibly shaken.

ALFRED (O.S.)  
Master Wayne?

BRUCE  
(shaken)  
Fine, Alfred. I'm... I'm fine.

EXT. OLD GOTHAM - HOWELL DRIVE - NIGHT

An old shipping warehouse behind a pair of rusty gates and flanked by housing development.

A black sedan pulls up to the gate.

INT. SHIPPING WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

Stacks of palettes, boxes and various containers sit around.

Sionis walks inside by himself. Warily, he surveys the area with caution. Makes his way to the center of the large room.

A red dot finds his heart. He smirks as he notices it.

SIONIS

So much for a face to face. Guess I overestimated you. I thought you had balls, but you can't even look me in the eye.

A fist collides with Sionis' cheek sending him into a stack of palettes, which topple. Lawton makes for him, pissed.

Lawton grips him by the scruff of the neck. Sionis chuckles.

SIONIS

That's more like it. Feels good to let it out, huh? All that rage!

LAWTON

You know nothing of hell!

Lawton throws him into a wall, wails on him with heavy one-twos to the face. Digs him in the ribs with a right fist. Sionis HUFFS. Lawton brings him up, punches him in the face.

Sionis drops to all fours like a dog. Reaches for Lawton. Lawton punts him in the chest. Sionis drops to the floor.

LAWTON

You killed my daughter!

Lawton rolls Sionis onto his back, mounts. Punches him in the face repeatedly, breaking his nose. Sionis spits blood.

SIONIS

I did a lot more than kill her.

Lawton SCREAMS in Sionis' face, left hook, right hook, and a head-butt to the nose. Strangles Sionis. Sionis struggles.

SIONIS

(choking)

She screamed. Cried for daddy. But you never came. But I did. Over and over and over and over AGAIN!

LAWTON

SHUT UP!

Lawton bangs Sionis' head off the floor. Stands, swipes a forearm across his blood speckled face.

Sionis violently COUGHS as he pushes up. Lawton stomps hard on his arm SNAPPING the bone.

Lawton turns away in disgust like a caged animal. He takes a pistol from his pants, COCKS it.

Sionis cradles his broken arm and fights pain.

LAWTON

Why?

SIONIS

Cattle need to know who shepherds them. It's the only way to keep everyone in line. You're a sheep, Lawton. Always will be.

LAWTON

No. I'm nothing anymore. You took everything I had, everything I was. I got nothing left.

Lawton takes aim at Sionis' head.

LAWTON

And neither do you.

SIONIS

That's where you're wrong, Floyd.

A KATANA bursts through Lawton's chest from the back and violently twists. Lawton GASPS for air, looks down. The sword yanks out. Lawton drops to his knees.

Lawton raises the gun. The Katana slices off his hand.

Sionis vindictively smirks as Lawton drops to the floor.

SIONIS

You took your time.

SLADE WILSON/DEATHSTROKE, 40, a bad ass son of a bitch with a two-tone mask and dark ensemble, sheathes the Katana over his back alongside its twin and steps over Lawton.

Deathstroke helps Sionis to his feet. Sionis immediately scoops up Lawton's dismembered hand clenching the gun. He takes the gun, discards it and keeps the hand.

SIONIS

Think I'll keep this as a souvenir.  
Mount it on my nightstand.

Deathstroke sets a Katana tip to Lawton's neck. Sionis waves him off. Deathstroke takes a step back.

Sionis kneels down beside a waning Lawton and sighs.

SIONIS

I'd do you the favor of a bullet to the head but that's a painless fade out and one you don't deserve. So while you're laying there, bleeding out like a stuffed pig, I want you to think about Zoe.

Lawton raises his head and stares Sionis dead in the eye.

SIONIS

Of how she screamed. And suffered. And called your name. Daddy. Daddy. DADDY! Help me, Daddy. And before you die, I want you to know. It's real important that you remember this, because it's going to make everything you just did, pointless.

Sionis leans in so only Lawton can hear him.

SIONIS

Zoe's still alive. And I'm going to pay her a nice. Little. Visit.

LAWTON

No... NO...

Sionis hugs his broken arm to his gut and stands. Lawton grips a handful of the man's pants.

LAWTON

...you son of a bitch!

SIONIS

Perhaps in the next life you won't be a disappointment as a father. I'll give Zoe your love, shall I?

Sionis kicks Lawton's hand away and walks off. Deathstroke flanks him every step of the way.

Lawton crawls with all his might, drops. Reaches out.

EXT. GCPD - NIGHT

Two uniformed cops wrestled a cuffed criminal to the doors. Gordon opens up, allows them passage and then exits.

Montoya leans against the wall pondering on a thought. She acknowledges Gordon, who stuffs his hands in his pockets.

Gordon leans against the wall. She looks away.

GORDON

I'm sorry. I know the wound's still fresh.

MONTOYA

I don't need your pity. Allen was an idiot. All men are. You never think before you act, blame others for your mistakes. Confront Joker without backup. I can still see it in my mind, Jim.

Gordon ingests this.

MONTOYA

The things you do or don't do all have repercussions. I chose to sit back, and Allen got killed because of it.

GORDON

Allen got killed because Joker was an unstable lunatic. It could've been anyone else. You can't blame yourself for that.

MONTOYA

He died alone, Jim. Joker-

GORDON

Joker is DEAD, Renee. He's gone and he's never coming back. You need to move past this. Start trusting me.

MONTOYA

How can I trust you when you don't tell me everything?

Gordon understands. She takes a deep breath.

GORDON

I'm going off the books.

She cocks an eye.

GORDON

Running a sting on Sionis. I could use an extra hand getting things set up.

MONTOYA

Loeb threw out the case.

GORDON

Why do you think he did that?

She's lost. Gordon walks around the corner. She follows.

Gordon waits by a dumpster. Renee meets him, looks around.

NOTE: They speak quietly.

GORDON

I think Loeb's working with Sionis.

MONTOYA

You think he's crooked?

GORDON

No. Nothing like that. Sionis is an animal. Plays dirty to stay clean. He knows the ins and outs of every federal investigation. No one can touch him. For that he needs a man with power. Loeb. And in order to get Loeb in his pocket-

MONTOYA

He needs leverage.

GORDON

Exactly. Loeb's a good cop, one of the best I know. He would never cross his own beliefs no matter how much he was paid. So I'm thinking Sionis has something on him. He'd not throw this case out otherwise.

A police cruiser pulls into the yard. They act casually.

GORDON

Sionis has connections in Europe. Human trafficking. Kids, Renee.

MONTOYA

Oh shit...

GORDON

Loeb has a ten-year-old daughter, Amelia. She hasn't been in school in six months. And in those six months, Loeb hasn't been the same.

MONTOYA

Oh my God...

Gordon sets a hand on her shoulder.

GORDON

I do trust you, Renee. And I hope  
that trust goes both ways. Because  
I need your help.

She considers this, and nods.

MONTOYA

What do you want me to do?

EXT. OLD GOTHAM - HOWELL DRIVE - NIGHT

The shipping warehouse burns. Firefighters tackle the blaze.

Ryder exits his car with a camera and pen/pad in hand. Walks  
over to the fence. Witnesses gather around police blockades.

Ryder takes photographs of the inferno.

TIM DRAKE, 28, devilishly handsome with a fierce edge to his  
appearance, scar down his eye, approaches the blockade.

A cop halts him. Drake shows his CIA badge. The cop allows  
him passage. Ryder recognizes Drake.

RYDER

Tim?!

Drake takes a look back, acknowledges Ryder. Ignores him. He  
proceeds past several firefighters. Intently surveys.

Ryder whips out his cell and dials a number.

RYDER

Yeah, it's me. You won't believe  
who just popped up.

INT. THE BATCAVE - NIGHT

High-tech and cavernous. A super computer with a citywide  
scan in progress on a large monitor. The BATMOBILE, large  
and tank-like sits on an oval platform.

The BATSUIT, kick ass and armored with a dark gold "BAT"  
symbol rests in a cylinder. Bruce, clean, stares at it.

Alfred ambles down a steel walkway. Spots a fresh Bruce.

ALFRED

You look less like a neanderthal  
now, sir. It's a big improvement.

Bruce slightly smirks.

ALFRED

I was wondering how long it would take you to come back down here.

BRUCE

It still looks the same. I thought you would've let it fade away.

ALFRED

A part of me always knew at some point you would come back. I just thought it would be wise to keep things running in case you changed your mind.

BRUCE

No.

Alfred's taken back by this.

BRUCE

I'm done, Alfred. Finished. I can't go back. Not after what happened.

Bruce initiates computer shutdown. The monitor turns black. "LOGGING OFF" on screen.

ALFRED

After everything that's happened, you're quitting?

BRUCE

Gordon knows what he's doing. The GCPD can do more than Batman ever could alone. It's time I gave them that responsibility.

Bruce taps in a code on the Batsuit cylinder keypad. The cylinder sinks into the earth and the floor seals shut.

BRUCE

Batman has carried the weight of Gotham for over a decade.

The lights over the Batmobile shutoff. Quadrant by quadrant, the cave darkens until only the walkway lights remain.

BRUCE

Not one day more.

Bruce claps Alfred on the shoulder and makes for the exit.

ALFRED

A great man once told me that a Wayne doesn't give up on the people that need him the most. That same man told Gotham that in the darkest of times, the Wayne Family would be there beside them.

Bruce looks back.

ALFRED

That man was your father, Bruce. He made a vow. And you inherited that vow. You can't break the promise.

BRUCE

I'm not breaking the promise. I'm fulfilling it.

INT. THE ICEBERG LOUNGE - V.I.P AREA - NIGHT

A classy joint. Restaurant/nightclub combo. Waiters serve the high class. Revelers dance the night away.

OSWALD COBBLEPOT, 48, monocle, snooty appearance, shorter than most people, with a vindictive side, puffs on a cigar and makes a toast.

OSWALD

To a new day... partner.

Sionis (wearing the BLACK MASK and a sling) raises his glass, and takes a swig of champagne. Oswald eyeballs him.

OSWALD

Batman's gone. Joker's dead. And business couldn't be better. I'd call that a win-win on all fronts. That aside, I got to ask, what the hell is with that mask?

SIONIS

I had a run in with an old friend. He let his fists to the talking.

OSWALD

Nothing I need to worry about, I hope.

SIONIS

Nothing you need concern yourself with, Oswald. It's been dealt with.

Sionis extends a packet to Oswald. Oswald checks it. Agrees.

SIONIS

The network's set. Cartel's moving a shipment shortly. I'll send you the details on when and where.

OSWALD

Any news on the Bat?

SIONIS

No sightings since J died. Guess he took it to heart.

Oswald slowly chuckles as he chomps on his cigar.

A BODYGUARD leans over Sionis' shoulder. Says something. Sionis ingests the news and nods.

One of Oswald's boys whispers something in his ear. Both men take to their feet. Sionis extends his hand.

SIONIS

Let's do this again sometime.

OSWALD

I look forward to it.

They head their separate ways.

Oswald limps along favoring his left leg. Follows his boy through the dancing patrons.

INT. THE ICEBERG LOUNGE - OFFICE - NIGHT

PENGUIN statues everywhere. An ARCTIC painting on the wall. Blood drops along the white carpet leading to a dark corner.

Oswald enters, closes and locks the door behind him.

OSWALD

I just had a lovely meeting with our mutual acquaintance. Shook the hand of a man who was meant to be d-

A lamp turns on. Lawton, looking like death, sits in the dark corner, towel wrapped around his wrist stub.

OSWALD

(concerned)

What the bloody hell happened?

LAWTON  
Slade happened.

Oswald waddles over, checks Lawton's wounds. He shakes his head at the man. Sighs.

LAWTON  
Zoe's alive, Oswald. He's got her imprisoned somewhere. I need-

OSWALD  
You need a doctor.

Oswald makes a phone call.

LAWTON  
I gotta find her.

OSWALD  
You won't be doing anything like that. Sit still and shut up.  
(someone answers)  
Mr. Elliot... I need your help.

INT. WAYNE MANOR - MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Bruce sleeps and sweats profusely. Clenches handfuls of the bed sheets. Violently tosses.

EXT. DOWNTOWN GOTHAM - CHURCH ROOFTOP - NIGHT (DREAM)

BATMAN, bloodied, beaten and damn near dead, his mask half cracked and face partially revealed, gingerly pushes up and locks onto --

-- Joker, standing with his back to him, gazing out over the city with a flower-topped detonator in hand as BOMBS explode and sirens WAIL in the distance.

JOKER  
You wanted to know why I do what it is I do... this is why.

Batman forces himself to stand.

JOKER  
Gotham at its core is a cesspool of violence and corruption. You give a trigger to a family man and when he loses what makes him that man, this is what he does with it. He takes fate and makes it his toy.

Joker extends his arms into a crucifix gesture.

JOKER

Just open your eyes and you see the world for what it truly is. We are not so different, you and I.

BATMAN

I'm nothing like you.

JOKER

LIAR!

Joker faces Batman.

JOKER

(ferociously)

You're exactly like me. You bring justice. I bring dismay. You bring order. I bring chaos. We are two sides of the same coin. And deep down in your black heart, my dear delusional Dark Knight, you know my words to be true.

Joker goes toe-to-toe with Batman.

JOKER

Look me in the eye and tell me I'm not right.

BATMAN

You don't have to do this.

Joker second guesses him, tilts his head slightly. He digs Batman in the ribs with a punch. Batman keels over. Knees Batman in the face sending him to the deck. Laughs.

JOKER

I was made to be this. And you were made to stop me. SO STOP ME!

Joker punts Batman in the ribs. Joker mounts Batman, grips his cheeks and clenches.

JOKER

It's the only way this ends.

BATMAN

It doesn't have to be like that. We can stop this. Just stop it. No one else has to die.

JOKER  
Everyone has to die!

Joker violently punches Batman.

JOKER  
It's why we were born!

Joker punches Batman again, bloodying his eye.

JOKER  
But you never could make the hard  
decisions!

Joker punches Batman with velocity. And dismounts. He steps to the edge of the rooftop.

JOKER  
You will never break your one rule.

Harley emerges from the bell tower just in time to see Joker mount the ledge.

Batman struggles to his feet, staggers a bit.

Joker stares at the detonator contemplating. His finger over the big red button. He knows this is it.

JOKER  
Last chance to break that rule.

BATMAN  
Don't do it...

JOKER  
We are who we are.

Someone pistol whips Harley unconscious. Raises a pistol.

Batman notices the gun in the shadows. Looks at Joker. Joker attempts to press the button. GUNSHOT.

Joker stands frozen for a moment. A smile crosses his face. He teeters and falls. Batman catches Joker's wrist. Joker dangles over a long-ass drop.

BATMAN  
Grab my hand.

JOKER  
No.

Joker slips further away. Batman clenches tightly. Fabric tears. Joker slips even more.

BATMAN  
Reach, dammit.

Joker grins joyfully.

JOKER  
I win.

Joker's sleeve tears and he free-falls. Batman reaches out but can't grab hold of him.

Joker extends his arms and descends like a falling angel with a big smile on his face.

INT. WAYNE MANOR - MASTER BEDROOM - DAY

Bruce jolts awake puffing and panting. Birds COO outside. A freshly pressed shirt and pair of pants hang on the door.

Bruce sits up and rubs the space between his eyes.

INT. STORAGE WAREHOUSE - DAY

Harley backhands a MAN, hanging by his hands from chains and gagged, in the face. She licks her lips.

Sionis, with the mask, and his bodyguard approach her.

SIONIS  
What the hell are you doing?

HARLEY  
Extracting information. He said he knows something, but will only tell you. So I thought-

SIONIS  
Never think, Harley. It's not your strong suit.

Sionis removes the gag.

SIONIS  
Talk.

INFORMANT  
Crazy bitch...

Harley raises a hand to slap. Sionis grabs her wrist. She scowls at him.

SIONIS  
Take a walk.

Harley storms off in a huff.

SIONIS  
You have information, I wanna know  
what it is, or I'll call her back.  
She's got plenty more in the tank,  
and it ain't pretty.

INT. STORAGE WAREHOUSE - OFFICE - DAY

Harley sits on the desk stropily kicking her feet. Sionis  
walks inside, closes the door and shuts the blinds.

HARLEY  
Ooh... must be super important if  
you're closing the blinds.

Sionis squeezes her throat. She gags.

SIONIS  
If you ever disobey me again, I'll  
snap that scrawny little neck and  
dump your worthless corpse in an  
unmarked hole on some wetback farm.  
Do I make myself clear?

HARLEY  
(gagging)  
Yes.

Sionis shoves her back and approaches a filing cabinet. She  
rubs her neck.

SIONIS  
You'd be wise to remember who you  
work for, Harley. Joker's dead. He  
can't protect you.

Harley sadly hangs her head.

Sionis pulls a file from the filing cabinet and walks over  
to his desk, takes a seat.

SIONIS  
Get out.

Harley leaves the office with anger in her eyes.

Sionis goes over a file. Pulls another. Compares the two  
side by side. He pulls up the land line phone. Dials.

INT. STORAGE WAREHOUSE - DAY

Harley trots down the steps. A few of Sionis' men block her. One of them steps forward, a big, mean looking guy.

GUARD#1

Boss wants-

Harley kicks him in the balls. He WHEEZES, goes down. Other guards look on, none of them making a move.

HARLEY

Anyone care to elaborate?

No one steps up to the plate.

HARLEY

I didn't think so.

EXT. DOWNTOWN GOTHAM - DAY

Bruce pulls up to traffic lights in a black Lamborghini. A SPORTS CAR pulls up beside him. A COCKY HIPSTER driving. He revs his engine. Bruce nods, appreciates the car.

The lights shift to amber. The hipster grips the wheel and prepares to drag. Bruce smirks.

GREEN. The sports car speeds down the road. Bruce makes a soft right turn into a BUSINESS ROW.

BRUCE

Idiot.

EXT. WAYNE INDUSTRIES - DAY

A great skyscraper with a "W" at the top.

Bruce parks and steps out of the Lamborghini. A security guard posted at the door recognizes him.

WAYNE SECURITY#1

Welcome back, Mr. Wayne.

BRUCE

Joseph, right?

WAYNE SECURITY#1

Sir.

Bruce shakes "Joseph's" hand.

WAYNE SECURITY#1  
You're not allowed to park there.

BRUCE  
Keep that between us, eh?

Joseph likes this. Gets the door for Bruce.

BRUCE  
How's the wife?

WAYNE SECURITY#1  
Still on my case.

INT. WAYNE INDUSTRIES - LOBBY - DAY

A bronze statue of THOMAS WAYNE dominates the foyer with a plaque reading "IN MEMORY OF THOMAS WAYNE".

Bruce respectfully acknowledges the statue. Pats it as he passes by. A courier jogs past him to the reception desk.

Business people come and go. Security guards wave metal detectors up/down incoming folk.

INT. WAYNE INDUSTRIES - OPERATIONS - DAY

Booths everywhere. Office bees buzz around the place. Phones ring. Support workers chat to customers over the phones.

Bruce, hands stuffed in his pockets, walks around taking note of everything going on.

LUCIUS FOX, 60, rather worn and frayed with a tired look yet keen appearance, hands documents to an employee.

BRUCE  
Lucius Fox.

FOX  
Bruce Wayne. I haven't seen you in years. You look tired.

BRUCE  
And you look the same.

FOX  
A good night's sleep helps. Though from what I hear, your nights have been quiet lately.

Bruce shakes Fox's hand. There's a respect between them.

BRUCE

How you been?

FOX

Ah, you know. Same old. Got a few projects ongoing. Though I don't think you came to check up on me, but I have been wrong before.

BRUCE

I'm here for something else. Been thinking about my options. Thought I'd pay the old place a visit, see what I can see. Wilson around?

FOX

In his office, as always. But he's in a meeting.

BRUCE

I'm sure he won't mind if the guy who's name is on his paycheck pops in for a social call. It was nice seeing you again, Lucius. Stay out of trouble.

FOX

(slyly)

You know me.

Bruce pats him on the shoulder and heads off. Turns back.

BRUCE

Oh... how's Victor doing?

FOX

Still working on a cure. He's down in R and D.

INT. WAYNE INDUSTRIES - RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT - DAY

Enclosed labs visible from the wide hall. SCIENTISTS work on projects, exit labs, converse and buzz about the place.

Bruce watches through icy glass as --

-- VICTOR FRIES, 49, heavily afflicted, weary and confined to a suit of cryogenic armor, synthesizes chemicals alone.

Bruce scans the laboratory. Locates a stasis pod where --

-- NORA FRIES, 30, a stunning beauty frozen in time, sleeps peacefully inside.

INT. WAYNE INDUSTRIES - C.E.O OFFICE - DAY

A stunning view of Gotham outside the window. Artwork adorns the walls and artistic shelves host various objects.

MARCUS WILSON, 58, a guy that would look down his nose at anyone nearby, paces to/fro in front of his desk.

WILSON

As much as I'd like to agree, I'm not sold on the idea that buying into your division is a wise choice under the current circumstances.

A HOLOGRAPHIC PROJECTION of a JAPANESE BUSINESSMAN floats above a high-tech projector.

WILSON

Your company is under investigation and I can't afford more problems...

A KNOCK at the door piques his interest. Bruce nods. Wilson raises a hand "wait". Bruce walks in anyway.

JAPANESE BUSINESSMAN

You need not worry about us. It's under control. What you need to concern yourself with is what we have to offer your organization. If you can look past the difficulties then we can come to an agreement.

Bruce takes a seat on the couch.

WILSON

Wayne Enterprises is a respected company. If we associated ourselves with another corporation, such as yours, considering the situation you are in, then it creates a bad public image that I'd rather not enforce. We've worked hard to get where we are. I'm not about to risk everything we have built by going ahead with the merger right now.

JAPANESE BUSINESSMAN

I must implore you to see-

WILSON

No. I've said all I will say on the matter. Until the issue has been cleared up, we have nothing else to discuss.

Wilson ends the call. The projection fades away.

BRUCE

I come at a bad time?

WILSON

Depends on how you define the term  
"bad".

Bruce meets Wilson. Wilson embraces him in a fatherly way.  
Bruce reciprocates. They part ways.

WILSON

Between the problems in Old Gotham  
and the tribulations overseas, I'm  
starting to see why Thomas wanted  
to keep things simple and based at  
home. Drink?

Wilson pours himself a whiskey.

BRUCE

No, I'm okay, thanks.

WILSON

So what can I do you for? I take it  
this is more than a social call.

BRUCE

I want in.

Wilson takes a seat across from Bruce.

BRUCE

I wanna help the company reach the  
people of Gotham more. Help those  
that need it.

WILSON

Why the change of heart?

BRUCE

I've had a lot of time to think as  
of late. About the direction I was  
going. I've made a lot of wrong  
calls over the years and I want to  
set a few things straight. Taking  
up my father's place beside you is  
something I feel will benefit more  
people... and help me fulfill his  
promise to the city. He made a vow  
to aid the people who needed it the  
most. Died believing that this city

(MORE)

BRUCE (cont'd)  
could be a better place for future generations. It's taken me a long time to realize that.

Wilson takes all of this in, exhales.

WILSON  
Your father was a great man with a broad vision. A vision that put him at odds with his own partners. I'd like nothing more than to have a Wayne standing by my side.

Bruce appreciates this.

WILSON  
But not right now.

BRUCE  
This is my company, Marcus. I'm not asking for a job. I'm telling you-

WILSON  
Hostility isn't necessary, Bruce. I respected your father, admired him. And I care for you as if you were my own. But now is not a good time. We're overstaffed as it is. I need to cut ties. Close divisions-

BRUCE  
What divisions?

WILSON  
R and D, for one. Technology. This company's going down the plughole, kid. We're losing support from our shareholders. Everyone's boarding lifeboats, sailing off.

Wilson tiredly sighs.

WILSON  
I'm sure you've heard about the rise in criminal activity since the disappearance of Batman. With the increase in crime, our stock is plummeting. We had a break-in last month. Our weapons were used in terrorist attacks in Metropolis a week ago. Everyone's on edge, kid. Cashing out and moving on.

BRUCE  
I didn't think it was that bad.

WILSON  
What can I say... no one wants to be associated with the devil that sold the demons their firepower.

Bruce stands. Wilson rises, empty glass in hand.

BRUCE  
What about Victor? He's working on a cure for his wife. Closing down R and D, she'll die.

WILSON  
I'll keep Victor funded as long as I can.

BRUCE  
Thank you.

They shake hands.

WILSON  
I'm sorry I can't help, Bruce.

INT. WAYNE INDUSTRIES - ELEVATOR - DAY

Bruce rides down 60 floors. He weighs stress and concern on his mind. Elevator music plays, JOKER hums along.

JOKER  
I never really appreciated elevator music as much as I should have. It does have a certain allure to it, don't you think?

BRUCE  
Go away.

JOKER  
Aw... what's wrong, got your balls in a twist? Lighten up a bit. It's not the end of the world. Face all scrunched up like worm skin. Look at me, I know how to be sad! Give me a break. You're alive. That's something to be happy about.

Joker swipes his hand down ALL of the buttons. Giggles.

JOKER

You should be smiling, like me. I'm always happy and I'm dead, so look at the bright side of things. You get to drink cola, and I get to eat dirt, or is it ash? What did happen to my body anyway? Did I go down or did I go up in a blaze of glory?

Bruce clenches a fist. Clenches his teeth.

JOKER

Did you even think to investigate what they did with me? I mean, I fell off a church roof after I got shot in the back by someone. You tried to catch me, failed, and then you retreated to your cave like the caveman you are and wallowed in self pity like a sad baby who lost his favorite rattle. It's kinda sad when I think about it. Or are you thinking about it?

Bruce swings a punch -- and dents the elevator wall. The doors DING open. A few worker bees enter, notice the dent.

Joker cups a hand over his mouth and holds in laughter.

JOKER

Missed me.

EXT. WAYNE INDUSTRIES - DAY

Joker emerges from the skyscraper with a grand finish. Bruce walks out trying to snap out of it. Joseph looks on.

Joker slides over the Lamborghini's hood.

JOKER

Such a glorious day! The sun is a shining! The birds are a singing! The people are a happy and all is well! Smell that fresh air!

BRUCE

Get out of my head.

WAYNE SECURITY#1

Mr. Wayne, are you alright?

BRUCE  
I'm fine, Joe, just a headache.

JOKER  
He's actually talking to someone  
who doesn't exist. I think he's  
losing his marbles.

INT. LAMBORGHINI - DAY

Bruce switches on the engine. Pulls the gearstick.

Joker toys with the radio from the passenger seat. A POP  
song. Joker grimaces, changes the station. A METAL song. He  
doesn't like that either. A RAP song. Joker bobs his head.

JOKER  
Yo, yo, yo, yo! 'Sup my dog I'm  
kicking it real, bro. Homey going  
up south central, yo! Somebody call  
my momma! WOO-

Bruce turns off the radio. Joker frowns, folds his arms.

JOKER  
Well that wasn't very nice.

INT. THE ICEBERG LOUNGE - OFFICE - DAY

Lawton recuperates, heavily bandaged around his bare chest,  
wrist stub cauterized and too bandaged.

THOMAS ELLIOT, 37, respectable yet unhinged, seals a bag of  
medical supplies. Oswald consults him.

OSWALD  
What's the damage?

ELLIOT  
I've cauterized the stub but the  
blade that pierced his chest nicked  
his heart. If moves too much he'll  
tear it open again. You need to  
keep him under close observation.

Elliot hands Oswald a bottle of pills.

ELLIOT  
Give him two of these every four  
hours for the pain.

And another bottle.

ELLIOT

And one of these every twelve to keep his levels balanced. His blood pressure's too high.

OSWALD

He lives an active life.

ELLIOT

I'm sure he does, but for the time being, he needs to rest. And I know you don't wanna hear this, but I'm gonna say it anyway. You need to get him to a hospital.

OSWALD

I can't do that.

ELLIOT

If you wanna bury him, be my guest. I've done all I can.

Oswald hands Elliot an envelope. Elliot takes his leave. Oswald sits down next to Lawton and keeps an eye on him.

LAWTON

(drowsily)

You know that's not gonna happen. I have to find her.

OSWALD

My guys are already looking. They will find her. I give you my word.

Lawton sits up fighting excruciating pain. Oswald pops the pain pill bottle. Lawton waves him off and tries to stand.

OSWALD

I can't let you do that, Lawton. I need you alive.

LAWTON

My daughter needs me.

OSWALD

You're no good to her dead.

LAWTON

I'm no good to her in here either.

Lawton makes it to his feet, but buckles immediately and hits the floor. Oswald assists him. Lawton shrugs him off.

Oswald sympathetically watches as Lawton fights his way up.

INT. STORAGE WAREHOUSE - RESTROOM - DAY

Slade, face fighting a losing war, sits alone in the corner sharpening one of his Katanas. His mask on the table.

Various crooks, low level, street level and major players, loiter around talking about their latest successes.

Harley pops bubblegum and takes a seat across from Slade. He gives her the time of day for a brief moment.

She opens her mouth to talk, but decides to leave him alone.

SLADE

You obviously came over here for a reason. What's on your mind?

HARLEY

I thought you were the silent type?

SLADE

I only talk when I have something to say. Sit.

She obeys the order. He raises the Katana, tests the balance and sheathes it.

HARLEY

That's a nice sword. Where did you get it?

SLADE

From a friend who no longer needed it. But I doubt you came over to compliment my blades.

She nervously looks around, confides in him.

HARLEY

I miss Mr. J. Things were so simple when he was around. It was, blow up this, destroy that, kill them and laugh it off. But now... things are different. It's not the same as it was anymore. Sionis is... he's...

SIONIS (O.S.)

...standing behind you.

She turns around. He backhands her across the face hard and her head smacks against the table. Slade looks on, stony.

Harley cradles her cheek and fights emotion as she winces.

SIONIS

Rule number one and you'd do well to keep this in mind. Never talk about me behind my back. If you've something to say, say it to my face or keep it stowed.

He takes a seat next to her, grips her throat and reels her in close enough for a kiss.

SIONIS

I don't know why Joker kept you around as long as he did. You're nothing but a worthless, painted piece of gutter trash.

Slade sets the tip of his Katana to Sionis' throat. Sionis' guys remove their sidearms and stand to attention.

Sionis' lip curls. Slade is unmoving, confident and brave.

SIONIS

Feeling sorry for the whore, Slade?

The blade nicks Sionis' throat, drawing blood.

SIONIS

The odds don't look good. Twenty in here, thirty out there. How far do you think you will get before one of mine cuts you down a peg?

SLADE

Further than you.

Sionis gets it, lets Harley go. She rubs her throat. Slade sheathes the Katana.

SIONIS

Anyway... before we all get excited I have some news. My informant gave me some... information Seems one of my flock has sold me to the red and blues. We need to stub out the fire before it spreads.

Sionis takes to his feet. Slade grabs the two-tone mask and fits it on. Harley stands.

SIONIS

No, not you. You stay here, make me my favorite dish like a good little housewife. Can you do that, honey?

HARLEY

Yes.

SIONIS

What?

HARLEY

(convincingly)

You betcha, puddin'.

Sionis pinches her cheek.

SIONIS

That's my girl.

Sionis leads the men, and Deathstroke, out of the restroom leaving Harley alone.

She waits until they're all clear, and breaks down in tears.

EXT. OLD GOTHAM - HOWELL DRIVE - NIGHT

Drake uses a piece of wood to sift through burnt wreckage.

VICKI (O.S.)

When I got the call, I thought he was bullshitting.

He faces Vicki and his face falls. She just stares at him. He ditches the piece of wood, dusts off his hands.

DRAKE

I'm here on assignment. It wasn't my choice.

VICKI

I wasn't asking.

She approaches. He recoils. A meter between them.

DRAKE

Don't... just don't. Just say what you gotta say and go.

VICKI

Why did you leave? After all that crap went down, you just upped and vanished, never even said goodbye. What the hell happened, Tim?

His face admits guilt.

VICKI

What did you do that was so bad  
that you couldn't even say goodbye?

DRAKE

I did what I had to do.

VICKI

That's not an answer. Just tell me  
the truth. You owe me that much.

DRAKE

I've done enough for you.

VICKI

What is that supposed to mean?

DRAKE

Oh wake up, Vix. You know exactly  
what I mean. You know what I did.

She scoffs and shakes her head.

DRAKE

I never meant to hurt you.

VICKI

Well, you did a great job, Tim. I'm  
so thrilled that you didn't want to  
hurt me, but you did. You left me.  
I tried calling you, but you never  
picked up. And what's worse than  
that is you're back and you still  
can't look me in the eye and tell  
me why.

He rubs his brow.

She rips an ENGAGEMENT RING off her ring finger and tosses  
it as his feet.

VICKI

Goodbye, Tim.

She walks off leaving him alone.

He scoops the engagement ring off the dirt and wipes the  
dirt away. Inspects it... then looks to her.

DRAKE

(sincerely)  
I'm sorry.

INT. THE ICEBERG LOUNGE - OFFICE - DAY

Lawton shrugs on a jacket, rubs his stub. Oswald waddles in carrying a case in hand. He sets it on his desk. Opens it.

Inside, disassembled sniper parts and the bracer-cannon.

OSWALD

At least let me send a few of my  
guys with you. You're not exactly  
fit for the challenge.

LAWTON

I'll manage.

Lawton picks up the bracer-cannon, acknowledges his stub.

OSWALD

And if you get killed?

LAWTON

Then I guess our business is done.

Oswald doesn't like this.

LAWTON

I'll get my daughter back, and then  
I'll take care of your legal issue.

EXT. GOTHAM BAPTIST CHURCH - DAY

Bruce stands at the scene of Joker's downfall.

Joker walks past Bruce and looks around with a magnifying  
glass wearing a trapper hat like Sherlock Holmes.

JOKER

Riddle me this, riddle me that, do  
you like my brand new hat?

Bruce just stares at him.

JOKER

Cut me some slack, it was my first  
try. Not like you're any better.

Bruce kneels down and investigates the pavement. Joker does  
the same thing. Bruce double takes at him. Joker smiles.

A few PEOPLE exit the church and make their way past Bruce.

Drake steps out a moment later. Bruce notices him and his  
face tenses. He stands as Drake shamefully approaches.

DRAKE

Bruce.

BRUCE

Tim. Long time.

DRAKE

Yeah.

Drake looks up at the bell tower. Bruce watches him closely. Joker methodically paces around Drake scowling manically.

DRAKE

You talk to Vix? She tell you-

Bruce grounds Drake with a wicked right hook. Bruce favors his hand as Drake grips his jaw.

Bruce walks away leaving Drake to pick himself up.

DRAKE

I didn't have a choice!

Bruce turns back.

BRUCE

We always have a choice, Tim. You chose wrong.

Bruce disgustedly shakes his head at the man.

BRUCE

I'm sorry that you had make that call. But it doesn't change what you did.

INT. GOTHAM TIMES HQ - NIGHT

Ryder chomps on a Biro as he contemplates his new article.

VICKI (O.S.)

Hey.

He spins around. Vicki leans over the wall apologetically.

VICKI

Thanks for the scoop.

RYDER

Don't mention it.

She takes a seat on his desk, plucks the slinky.

VICKI  
Anything productive?

RYDER  
Ferris Aircraft. Test pilot wrecked  
a five hundred million prototype-

VICKI  
Hal Jordan?

RYDER  
How the hell you know that?

VICKI  
Carol's a friend of mine.

RYDER  
Learn something new every day.

He types out the headline "Drunken Pilot Crashes Prototype".

VICKI  
Thought you would've been working  
on the next installment. Why the  
sudden change of heart?

RYDER  
A friend of mine informed me that  
we don't screw over colleagues.

Vicki smiles.

RYDER  
We square?

VICKI  
Consider us even, Rye.

RYDER  
Really? You know I hate that.

She heads off (with the slinky) boasting a coy smirk.

VICKI  
I know.

INT. GORDON'S HOUSE - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Paperwork clutters the dining table. Gordon (in glasses),  
tirelessly goes over police reports and browses files.

BARB, 18, beautiful in every natural way with a geeky side,  
confined to a wheelchair, rolls into the room.

Gordon looks up and sympathetically notices her. She flashes a solemn smile and wheels up to him.

GORDON  
Hey, sweetie. Everything okay?

BARB  
Hunky dory. You?

GORDON  
Busy.

BARB  
I can see that. Anything I can do?

GORDON  
Unless you know to to organize and file, not really.

He removes the glasses and rubs tired eyes. She sets a hand on his. He rubs her hand gently.

BARB  
You look tired, dad. You work too hard. It's not normal.

GORDON  
You sound like your mother. That's not a bad thing.

He looks to a family photo of his younger self, Barb before the accident and BARBARA GORDON, 40s, gorgeous.

GORDON  
I miss her.

BARB  
Me too.

GORDON  
I'm sorry, Barb.

BARB  
For what?

GORDON  
I shoulda been there when he- when that son of a bitch-

BARB  
I'm still alive, dad. I might be in this chair, but I'm still alive. I don't blame you for what he did to me and neither should you.

GORDON

How can you sit there, unable to walk and not blame me for failing to protect you?

BARB

Because you're my father and I love you. Nothing will change that. Not this chair. Not my back. Nothing.

He ingests this. Barb applies herself to the paperwork.

BARB

Now, what were you looking for?

GORDON

Case file four-nine-four.

BARB

You mean this one?

She holds up a file. He fits on his specs and opens it up. Takes out a coroner's report and a few pages.

Something doesn't sit right with him all of a sudden.

GORDON

This can't be right.

BARB

What is it?

GORDON

It's uh... I got... I gotta go down to the station and check on... lock the door, okay? I'll be back soon.

Gordon shrugs on his coat and gathers the #494 files. He swiftly makes for the hall.

INT. THE BATCAVE - NIGHT

Security camera playback of the church on "08/24/16" plays on the monitors. Coroners lift Joker onto a gurney and wheel him to a van. Gordon and Drake present at the scene.

Bruce rewinds the footage. Pauses. Examines.

MONITOR: Joker dead on the ground, product of a long fall and abrupt stop, head caved in, bullet hole in his chest.

ALFRED (O.S.)  
Back again, I see.

Bruce slightly flinches as he spots Alfred standing there.

BRUCE  
Jumping out the shadows is usually  
my job, Alfred.

ALFRED  
(RE: Footage)  
I see you've not forgotten how to  
hack into the citywide grid. What's  
on the agenda?

BRUCE  
Excavation. Joker was never off his  
guard even when he had his back to  
the wind. Look at this.

Bruce taps away on the keyboard.

The monitors playback new footage of "BATMAN'S" P.O.V of A  
bullet strikes Joker in the left side of the back.

The crime scene footage and Joker's death sit side by side.

BRUCE  
I've mapped the trajectory of the  
bullet and it came in at an seventy  
three degree angle from the tower.  
But the gunshot wound on the body  
is on the right hand side, not the  
left. So unless it zigzagged, the  
body on the street isn't the same  
one as the man I saw fall.

ALFRED  
A switch?

BRUCE  
Impossible. Gordon confirmed that  
he saw Joker impact.

ALFRED  
Then you miscalculated the bullet's  
trajectory.

Bruce raises an eyebrow.

ALFRED  
It's the only explanation.

Bruce brings up a file on the computer. Alfred surveys it.

BRUCE  
Remember him?

"SCARECROW" in headlines and a photograph of the man with a scarecrow mask straight from a nightmare on the monitor.

BRUCE  
If Joker got his hands on some of Crane's hallucinogenic...

ALFRED  
Why would he fake his own death?

BRUCE  
On the same night Joker died, there was a break-in at Wayne Industries. Prototype weapons were stolen from R and D. Six days later-

ALFRED  
The Mayor was assassinated.

BRUCE  
Leaving Commissioner Loeb in charge of the city's affairs until a new mayor could be appointed. It opened the door for something bigger. And who benefits the most from a city without law and order?

Alfred considers, then a daunting look befalls him. A call on the computer gains their attention.

Bruce answers the call. A distorted video of a WOMAN in computer code appears on the monitor.

BRUCE  
Hello, Oracle.

INT. GORDON'S HOUSE - BARB'S ROOM - NIGHT

Dark, curtains drawn. A trio of monitors hooked into a large desktop. Barb sits at the desk operating three keyboards.

BARB  
My dad just ran out, seemed like he was in a hurry. Whatever he found out has him spooked.

Barb hacks into the GCPD database with ease, bypassing all firewalls in milliseconds. She opens up case file #494.

She uses the keyboard in the center and stabs at keys.

BARB  
I'm sending you the file now.

INT. THE BATCAVE - NIGHT

File received. Bruce opens it. 4 pages take up 4 quadrants.  
The image zooms in on the coroner's report.

BARB (V.O.)  
Are you seeing this?

A green highlight envelops a signature "THOMAS ELLIOT".

BRUCE  
Hush. I thought he was dead.

ALFRED  
There seems to be a lot of that  
going around lately.

BARB (V.O.)  
What does he mean?

Bruce leans on the counter, heavily burdened.

BRUCE  
Joker's alive.

INT. GORDON'S HOUSE - BARB'S ROOM - NIGHT

Barb freezes in fear. Her hands tremble something rotten.

BARB  
No that's not, that's not possible.

BRUCE (V.O.)  
I'm afraid it is.

BARB  
How? We all saw him die.

BRUCE (V.O.)  
I think he managed to get his hands  
on some of Scarecrow's formula.

Barb rubs her leg and fights her emotions. BEEP, BEEP, BEEP.

BARB  
Oh shit. I think he's in trouble. I  
been tracking his car, he's in Old  
Gotham... uh... Amusement Mile, by  
the old-

INT. THE BATCAVE - NIGHT

Bruce stands toe-to-toe with the Batsuit. He stares at his reflection in the glass. Clenches a fist.

BRUCE  
Fun-house.

BARB  
You gotta help him.

INT. THE ICEBERG LOUNGE - NIGHT

A night in full swing. Drake passes a security check and makes his way to the bar. He consults the BARMAID.

DRAKE  
I'm looking for Oswald Cobblepot.  
He here?

Barmaid points to the V.I.P Area.

DRAKE  
Thanks.

INT. THE ICEBERG LOUNGE - V.I.P AREA - NIGHT

Oswald lights a cigar as SCANTILY CLAD women mingle with his flock. Drake approaches. A bodyguard stops and frisks him.

OSWALD  
Well well, look who's back in town.  
Never thought I'd see you again. He  
knows his place, Bart, no need to  
molest the boy. Come in, sit down.  
Take a load off. Drink?

Drake passes "Bart" and acquires a seat across from Oswald.

DRAKE  
I'm good.

OSWALD  
I bet. You know, me and you we had  
our differences, but you did me a  
favor getting rid of that problem.  
Business has never been better.

DRAKE  
I'm thrilled for you.

OSWALD

Cut the sarcasm. What do you want?

DRAKE

Information. That's how it works, right? You're the guy who knows a guy who knows the answer to the questions. I'm looking for someone. Last I heard he was in town working as a hired gun. Floyd Lawton. Seen him around?

Oswald arrogantly puffs a plume of smoke.

OSWALD

Maybe I have.

DRAKE

How about we cut the crap and get to the point. I'm willing to look past all your discrepancies if you give me the information I want. And what I want, is Lawton.

He leans forward.

DRAKE

We can do this the easy way, or we can do this the hard way. It's up to you how we move forward.

OSWALD

Is that a threat?

Drake smirks.

DRAKE

I don't make threats. I make vows.

Oswald stands up.

OSWALD

Let's talk.

INT. THE ICEBERG LOUNGE - OFFICE - NIGHT

Oswald shows Drake inside. Drake studies the room. Oswald seals him inside alone. Drake goes for the door, locked.

OSWALD (O.S.)

Don't stain my carpet.

Drake palms the door. He turns around --

-- a baseball bat swings into view. Nails him in the face. He goes down like a sack of spuds, unconscious.

Harley steps over him, baseball bat across her shoulder.

HARLEY

No promises.

INT. FUN-HOUSE - NIGHT

Dark as hell. Tarps everywhere. Chains dangle from the ceiling and RATTLE. A puppet booth sits dusty and unused.

Gordon enters through plastic curtains. Pulls his sidearm.

He slowly maneuvers through the place keeping his eyes busy. Passes an old carousel. WATER DRIPS onto the floor nearby.

Gordon avoids the chains. CRUNCHES glass beneath his feet.

Moves around a stack of boxes aiming down the sights. His eyes narrow, focus on a distant, old snowy TUBE TV screen.

Steps on a pressure plate. A light above a CHAIR turns on to reveal a --

-- MANNEQUIN dressed like joker, without a head, holding the TV on its neck. A snowy, distorted image bleeds through.

Gordon keeps his wits about him as he advances on the TV.

Joker's face frozen in a sadistic smile finally breaks onto the screen. He leans back a bit and clears his throat.

JOKER (TV)

Leeches and Germs, welcome to Happy Hour on Joker TV, the only station in Gotham with twenty-four seven coverage of yours truly.

Gordon reaches for his radio.

JOKER (TV)

In local news, renowned detective, James "Jim" Gordon is in mourning today after the death of his wife, Barbara Gordon. According to eye witness reports, she had enough of him and decided to blow her brains out all over the new Persian rug. The family is said to be shocked and are unavailable for comment.

Gordon SHOOTs the TV. Sparks and glass spray wildly. Another TV turns on, sitting on another Mannequin's neck.

JOKER (TV)

Well that was rude. I don't come  
into your house and break your  
things do I, Detective Gordon?

Gordon's face says it all. Joker breaks into a cackle.

JOKER (TV)

Betcha didn't see that one coming.

JOKER (O.S.)

DID YOU?

Gordon GASPS. Joker beside him, smiling, sets a gun to the man's temple and clicks back the hammer.

JOKER

Hello, Jim.

EXT. OLD GOTHAM - LEVEL CROSSING - NIGHT

A family station wagon with luggage on the top pulls up to flashing signal lights and a barricade.

In the wagon, an ORDINARY JOE, 30s, sits slumped over the wheel as his WIFE files her nails in the passenger seat.

A mass of black steel rockets down the tracks leaving smoke and fumes in its wake.

Ordinary Joe and Wife exchange wide-eyed looks.

INT. THE BATMOBILE - NIGHT

Batman in full get-up operates the race-car steering wheel and follows a high-tech GPS system.

He swerves. A train bolts past the window.

ALFRED (V.O.)

I forgot how nauseous this was.

Batman smirks.

ALFRED (V.O.)

Would sticking to the roads be too  
much to ask, sir?

BRUCE

This way's faster.

Batman turns off the tracks.

BARB (V.O.)

You might need to kick it into a higher gear, GCPD are en route.

INT. THE ICEBERG LOUNGE - OFFICE - NIGHT

Drake, shirt ripped open and chest on display, head hanging over and beaten, sits cuffed to a chair.

Harley kneels down in front of him, her mascara sliding down her angry face. She grips his cheeks and makes him pout.

HARLEY

Does it hurt yet? Do you want me to stop yet? Huh?!

She backhands him ferociously. Stands upright and paces round him thinking about something.

DRAKE

Look at what you've become. He made you into a freak, just like him.

HARLEY

He made me better. Helped me see my true potential. He saved my life.

DRAKE

He twisted you into his puppet.

HARLEY

There are no strings on me. Mr. J loved me.

DRAKE

He never gave a shit about you. He used you, Harleen.

She grabs a knife from the table.

DRAKE

Just look at what you've become and tell me I'm lying.

HARLEY

I'm not the same person I was. And it's Harley. Harleen is dead.

DRAKE

We can all come back.

HARLEY

He can't. And I don't want to. All I want is you to suffer.

She cuts his chest with the knife. He holds in the pain. Blood trickles down his chest.

HARLEY

Then, when it's too much for you, I'll put you down.

She takes a pistol from a holster.

HARLEY

With the same gun that you used to kill him.

DRAKE

Do whatever you have to do.

She pistol whips him --

INT. FUN-HOUSE - NIGHT

Gordon, blood dripping from his temple, wakes up, tied to a chair wired to explosive kegs and dynamite. He struggles...

JOKER (O.S.)

It's no use.

A spotlight strikes a STAGE CURTAIN. Joker steps out wearing a top-hat and wielding a cane, which he twirls around.

JOKER

You're not going anywhere. And why would you want to? You went through all this trouble to find me, so sit and relax. Enjoy the show.

GORDON

How the hell are you still alive?

Joker grins widely.

JOKER

Coffee. But we'll save the whys and hows until he gets here shall we? I don't want to leave out my favorite flying rodent.

INT. VAN - NIGHT

Black Mask's guys cock AK47s and attach the clips in back.

EXT. FALCONE'S SHIPPING HARBOR - NIGHT

Forklifts load palettes of TVs into the backs of delivery trucks. Armed guards stand around.

A black sedan followed by two black vans drive inside and park up. Black Mask's guys exit.

CARMINE FALCONE, 45, a sleazy son of a bitch with a bit of an overbite, weary and frayed, flanked by two BODYGUARDS, waits by his top of the range SUV.

Black Mask and Deathstroke make their approach. Black Mask extends his arms.

SIONIS

Carmine. It's been a while.

CARMINE

Save the warm welcome and get to the point, Roman.

SIONIS

If you insist.

Black Mask's guys riddle Carmine's men with bullets until all of them are dead leaving Carmine alone.

Black Mask claps Carmine on the shoulder.

SIONIS

Make no mistake, the expression on the mask doesn't insist a smile rests beneath. I gave you a clear warning to stay OFF my turf. You keep your leaves in your yard and everything runs smoothly. But you had to go and blow leaves into my garden. And if there's one thing I hate, it's having a messy lawn.

Black Mask turns his back on Carmine and scans the yard.

SIONIS

I swear, it's like trying to run a crime organization with my mother.

Black Mask's guys chuckle at the remark. Deathstroke weighs one of his Katanas in hand and stares dead at Carmine.

CARMINE

You know how it gets, Rome.

SIONIS

Oh I understand, Carmine. Why do you think I'm here? I wanna iron all this out. Press the issue. As a businessman it's my job to ensure all my assets remain in line.

Black Mask pulls out a gold plated pistol.

SIONIS

The only way to do that is to send a message. And that message is...

Black Mask shoots Carmine in the knee. He collapses to the ground in agony.

SIONIS

...don't bleed on my carpet.  
(to Deathstroke)  
Finish him off. Nice and slow.

Deathstroke gives a slight nod and stalks Carmine. Black Mask returns to his sedan.

CARMINE

Roman, wait! We can work this out!

SIONIS

Nothing to work out.

Deathstroke raises the sword.

CARMINE

He's alive!

Black Mask hesitates, looks over. Deathstroke pauses. Black Mask methodically approaches.

SIONIS

Who?

CARMINE

Joker. He's alive.

This doesn't sit well with anyone.

SIONIS

(not convinced)  
I highly doubt that, Carmine. He's scattered in the wind. I watched  
(MORE)

SIONIS (cont'd)  
him take the swan dive. Made for a  
good show. I'd give it five stars.

CARMINE  
It was a ploy. He faked his death.

SIONIS  
You expect me to believe the Joker  
planned his death? And even if he  
did, why would he do it?

INT. LUXURY PENTHOUSE SUITE - LOUNGE - NIGHT

Lawton, with a modified bracer-cannon now attached to his  
stub, kicks the front door down and storms inside aiming.

He checks various doors, returns to the main room. Checks  
the answer machine. No new messages. Rummages around.

He shoots a liquor cabinet drawer lock and pulls it open.  
Inside, various journals and files. He takes them all.

Sets everything down on the coffee table, reads. Consults  
journals, runs a finger down the page...

INT. THE ICEBERG LOUNGE - OFFICE - NIGHT

Drake bleeds profusely from every facial feature and an ear.

Harley slides the knife across his chest finishing a scar in  
the shape of a Crucifix.

HARLEY  
I want you to say it. Admit what  
you did to my face. Unless...

She scrapes his forearm with the knife. He barely has enough  
in him to muster a groan.

HARLEY  
...you want more.

The door unlocks and Oswald walks inside taking note of the  
situation at hand. He closes the door.

OSWALD  
Bloody hell, Harley.

She flashes a sadistic smirk.

HARLEY

I'm not finished yet. He's still kicking.

OSWALD

Then finish him off so I can call the cleaner.

Oswald unlocks a petty cash tin and takes something out that he swiftly stuffs in his pocket.

OSWALD

I've a business to run and the last thing I need is his stench stinking out my club.

HARLEY

What's in your pocket?

OSWALD

Business. And none of yours.

Oswald takes his leave, locks the door behind him.

HARLEY

Now where were we?

INT. FUN-HOUSE - NIGHT

The carousel goes round in circles. Gordon tries to get free of the bonds. Joker is nowhere to be found.

Gordon's restraints snap and he gets free. He looks around. No one in sight. Down at the ropes. He tilts his head a bit.

A BATARANG, small and curved in the shape of a bat, rests at the broken rope. Gordon scoops it up.

JOKER (V.O.)

He's here...

Joker, over speakers, cackles hysterically.

JOKER (V.O.)

...my dear, delusional Dark Knight has returned home at last.

Gordon grabs a wrench. A shadow grows over him. He swings it behind himself. Batman catches his wrist, stopping him. A deep, dark and knowing look exchanges between the men.

Chains JANGLE. JOKER mounts a catwalk rail clutching a chain in hand. He pulls out a flower-topped detonator.

Batman and Gordon's eyes navigate to the madman above.

JOKER

Welcome back to the madhouse, Bats.  
It's been so long since we had a  
face to f-

Batman shoots his grapple gun. The hook latches onto Joker.  
Pulls him off the catwalk. Joker LAUGHS.

Batman grips Joker's throat and forcefully pins him to a  
wall, breaking plaster. Joker GAGS, chuckles a little.

JOKER

You're invading my private space.

BATMAN

Why?

JOKER

Ask nicely.

Batman bounces Joker's head off the wall.

JOKER

Oh... ow... that hurt. Do it again.  
Harder. Make the building shake.

BATMAN

You played me. Set me up to fall.

JOKER

It was the only way. I needed you  
out of the way for a while. You're  
only here now because I allow it.

Gordon wrests a hand around the wrench, eyeballs both men.

JOKER

And it's almost time.

BATMAN

For what?!

JOKER

Let me finish and I'll tell you. Do  
you want to know my secret, Batman?  
What makes me tick.

The stage curtains open by themselves to reveal a countdown  
timer ticking down from 01:00 minute.

Joker's face cracks into a smile. Batman looks to Gordon.

EXT. FALCONE'S SHIPPING HARBOR - NIGHT

One of Black Mask's guys checks his watch. "00:51...52...".  
He gives a slight nod to another guy, who readies his gun.

Black Mask, Deathstroke and Carmine are unaware.

INT. LUXURY PENTHOUSE SUITE - LOUNGE - NIGHT

A timer TICKS down almost silently.

Lawton moves books away from the bookshelf to uncover a  
TIMER rigged to EXPLOSIVES. "00:47...46...".

INT. GCPD - MAJOR CRIMES UNIT - NIGHT

A SHADY COP makes his way to the commissioner's office, hand  
on his holstered sidearm. He grips the doorknob.

A clock over the floor reads "21:59pm".

INT. THE ICEBERG LOUNGE - NIGHT

A BODYGUARD takes out a shiv and closes on Oswald's booth.  
He nods to the bodyguard nearby, who reciprocates.

INT. FUN-HOUSE - NIGHT

Batman slams Joker down hard into a table.

BATMAN

What happens at zero?!

JOKER

Everything changes.

Gordon checks gasoline barrels, all wired into the timer.

GORDON

He's got it all wired. The whole  
place is gonna go up. We need to  
leave. Now.

BATMAN

Get out of here, Jim.

GORDON

Don't give him the satisfaction...

The timer hits "00:20".

GORDON

Batman...

BATMAN

I'm not going anywhere. Because if I've learned anything about you, I know you don't have the gall to end yourself. You never did.

JOKER

People change all the time, Bats.

Still counting "00:10...09...".

JOKER

Sometimes for the better. Sometimes for the worse.

Gordon closes his eyes and says a quiet prayer.

JOKER

When that clock hits zero, nothing will ever be the same again. For better or worse? Tic-Toc. Tic-Toc.

FIVE. Joker grins. FOUR. Batman grits his teeth. THREE. TWO. Gordon braces himself. ZERO.

EXT. OLD GOTHAM - LUXURIOUS COMPLEX - NIGHT

BOOM. The top floor EXPLODES in glorious flames.

Lawton watches the blaze from the street.

INT. GCPD - MAJOR CRIMES UNIT - NIGHT

Three GUNSHOTS from inside the commissioner's office alerts most of the detectives. A FOURTH gunshot erupts.

INT. THE ICEBERG LOUNGE - NIGHT

Oswald sits on his knees, hands behind his head. His guards hold everyone to ransom.

OSWALD

What the bloody hell is this?! What are you playing at?!

One of the guards cracks Oswald over the back of the head with his gun. Oswald grunts as he goes down.

Various night owls cower in immense fear all over the joint.

EXT. FALCONE'S SHIPPING HARBOR - NIGHT

Bodyguards train their guns on Black Mask, Deathstroke and Carmine. A few guards fit on CLOWN MASKS.

Deathstroke draws both Katanas and watches his back.

"HAPPY" steps forward toting a shotgun, cocks it.

HAPPY  
Drop the blades, Slade.

"GRUMPY" takes Black Mask's pistol. "FATTY" whacks Black Mask in the back of the legs with a rifle. Black Mask drops.

Deathstroke holds his ground. Clowns surround him.

CARMINE  
I'd do what they say.

SIONIS  
Someone care to explain?

HAPPY  
We'll let the boss explain.

SIONIS  
I am the boss.

HAPPY  
Not anymore.

Happy whips out a cell phone, dials. RING. RING.

INT. FUN-HOUSE - NIGHT

Batman keeps Joker pinned. A phone RINGS. Gordon checks his pockets. Joker raises a finger.

JOKER  
I think it's mine. Would you mind?  
I kinda need both hands.

Batman pulls Joker's phone from his pocket, "HAPPY CALLING".

JOKER  
That button there.

Batman answers the call. Gordon anxiously looks on.

HAPPY (V.O.)  
It's done, boss. Everything's set.

Joker smiles widely, something not right about all of this.

HAPPY (V.O.)  
What do you want us to do now?

GORDON  
Who is it?

HAPPY (V.O.)  
Batman, you receiving? This thing  
even on? Hello...?

Batman's face contorts in a confused way. Joker GIGGLES...

JOKER  
Surprised?

Batman crushes the phone in his hand and raises Joker, slams him into a wall.

BATMAN  
What have you done?

JOKER  
Do you like it? I was gonna put a  
nice bow on the top but I thought  
that would be a little O-T-T. Like  
I said, Bats, we're the same.

BATMAN  
Why?

JOKER  
You know how it goes. Give a family  
man a trigger and he'll use it once  
he loses what made him that man...  
but give that trigger to Batman...  
I'm giving you the key to the city,  
Bats. Unlock the door and take what  
belongs to you! Gotham ITSELF!

Every light in the place illuminates at once blinding Gordon and Batman, allowing Joker to get free.

Various CLOWNS move in wielding automatic rifles.

Joker grips a chain and mounts a stack of palettes. He grins his happiest grin.

TWENTY CLOWNS envelop Batman and Gordon.

JOKER

Look at what I'm giving you, Bats. An army. A body of men and women who will serve you until the day they die. I'm giving you a chance to cure Gotham of its diseases. So it can begin again, with you in the throne. King Batman! And these are your loyal royal subjects willing and able to do what is necessary... but there's just one stipulation.

Joker presents a flintlock pistol to a clown, who takes it and offers it to Batman.

JOKER

All you have to do... is kill me.

BATMAN

No.

JOKER

No? NO?!

A clown kicks Gordon's legs out. The man drops to his knees. Another clown sets a .32 to Gordon's head.

JOKER

I never said you had a choice. You can break your one rule... or you can watch him die. And then you can watch Gotham BURN. Hear the cries of a thousand children echo in the night. Think of the children.

GORDON

Don't give in to him.

The clown clicks back the .32's hammer.

Batman takes note of the area. He takes the flintlock.

JOKER

You've only got one shot, so you'd better make it count.

GORDON

Batman...

Batman aims at Joker, who leans back in a crucifix position and extends his arms. Batman shoots out the GENERATOR.

Every light shuts off immediately. Fumbling in the darkness. CRASH. THUD. GUNSHOT. CACKLE. WHOOSH. SMASH.

EXT. FUN-HOUSE - NIGHT

Batman, with Gordon in hand, swings down on the grapple and lands in the road. Batman detaches the grapple.

BATMAN

Get out of here, Jim.

Batman shoots the grapple to the top of the fun-house and zips out of sight.

GORDON

Wait! Dammit...

He reaches into his car and pulls a radio.

GORDON

This is detective Gordon, I need all units down at the old Fun-house in Amusement Mile. Joker is alive. Repeat. Joker is alive.

INT. FUN-HOUSE - NIGHT

Clowns use night-vision goggles to survey the darkness. They move about keeping their wits about them.

A firework EXPLODES and Joker CACKLES as he lights more.

Batman swoops down from the rafters and takes a clown into the darkness. Other clowns shudder and tremble.

Joker pulls a large crate's side down and unveils a small GYROCOPTER painted like a carnival object.

Batman takes another clown into the sky.

Joker mounts the gyrocopter, pulls out a detonator and flips its switch. His face contorts into a vindictive grin.

JOKER

Don't say I didn't try! Have fun exploding, Bats.

Joker pilots the gyrocopter as oil drums and dynamite erupt all around the fun-house. Clowns dive for cover.

The fun-house roof splits open. Joker LAUGHS as he ascends. A grapple hook latches onto the gyrocopter's rail.

Batman clings onto the grapple gun. Joker is unaware.

EXT. FUN-HOUSE - NIGHT

Gordon ducks behind his car to avoid flying debris. He sees the gyrocopter soar across the sky.

Several GCPD vehicles arrive on the scene. Montoya steps out of one and makes her way to Gordon.

MONTOYA

Jim-

Gordon points. Montoya notices Joker getting away and Batman clinging on underneath. She grabs her radio.

MONTOYA

This is Montoya, I need air support immediately. Get a bird in the sky!  
Jim, are you hurt?

GORDON

No...

MONTOYA

What is happening?

EXT. SKY OVER OLD GOTHAM - NIGHT

Joker notices a HELICOPTER off in the distance. He grabs a ROCKET LAUNCHER from the side of the gyrocopter, laughs.

A BATARANG clocks him in the face. He MOANS, looks down.

JOKER

HEY! No freebies! If you wanna ride  
you gotta PAY!

Joker kicks at Batman's hands.

JOKER

GET. OFF. MY. GYROCOPTER!

Kicks Batman's hands off the rail. Batman free-fall in an uncontrollable rotation. Joker soars away.

Batman's cape extends and he glides down, eyes to the sky.

Joker takes aim at the oncoming helicopter, fires a rocket and laughs his ass off.

JOKER

BOOM!

The rocket EXPLODES on impact. Helicopter debris rains down. A rotor whirls through the air toward --

-- Batman, who banks left barely avoiding a building. The rotor crashes through the windows.

Joker tosses the rocket launcher away, pulls out a phone.

Batman taps on his wrist, BEEP, BOP, BEEP. He banks right into a narrow gap between buildings.

JOKER

(into phone)

Batman's taken the moral high and denied my proposal, so it's back to business as usual. Kill 'em all.

EXT. OLD GOTHAM - NIGHT

The Batmobile SCREECHES around a corner missing a row of parked vehicles by inches. Its cockpit slides open.

Batman glides down and lands in the cockpit. It seals shut.

INT. THE BATMOBILE - NIGHT

The race-car wheel extends out of the dash. Batman grips it.

BRUCE

Alfred, I need a location on Joker.

ALFRED (V.O.)

Searching for him now, sir.

BARB (V.O.)

Is my father okay?

BRUCE

He's fine. GCPD have him. Oracle, I need you to contact Drake.

BARB (V.O.)

I've been trying most of the night, but I can't get through.

BRUCE

Last location?

BARB (V.O.)

Iceberg Lounge.

INT. THE ICEBERG LOUNGE - NIGHT

Oswald discreetly removes the tip of his cane revealing a sharp blade beneath. A bodyguard grabs hold of him.

OSWALD  
Oi, now wait a bloody minute.

BODYGUARD#1  
No use in delaying the inevitable,  
Mr. Cobblepot.

OSWALD  
I wasn't asking for me.

Oswald jams the blade up through Bodyguard#1's neck, uses him as a human shield as another opens fire.

A PATRON SMASHES a bottle over the other bodyguard's head. He wobbles a moment, then falls over. Patron looks on...

Oswald corrects his coat and looks around.

OSWALD  
The Lounge is closed! OUT!

Another bodyguard emerges from the toilets. Oswald swings his cane into the man's face taking him out.

OSWALD  
Just can't get the staff...

INT. THE ICEBERG LOUNGE - OFFICE - NIGHT

Harley licks her lips and sets the baseball bat to Drake's chin, propping up his head. He's barely conscious.

The door unlocks and Oswald storms inside. He confiscates Harley's baseball bat. She's taken aback by this.

OSWALD  
No need to spill more of the boy's  
blood.

HARLEY  
I'll say when he gets a reprieve.

She notices blood on his coat.

HARLEY  
What happened to you?

OSWALD  
Your bloody boyfriend happened.

HARLEY  
Huh?

Oswald turns on the TV. Gotham News. CHAOS IN GOTHAM. All hell breaks loose. Explosions. Riots. The Batmobile racing. Drake catches a glimpse of the TV: Joker in the gyrocopter. Harley doesn't understand. She stares dumbfounded at the TV.

OSWALD  
I suppose you didn't know anything about that, did you?

HARLEY  
He fell... HE shot him. I saw it.

OSWALD  
If there's one thing I've learned about Gotham, it's that nothing is ever how it first looks.

Harley clenches a fist, looks to Drake, then storms out in a big, pissed off huff.

Oswald fishes through Drake's hung coat, finds the keys and unlocks the cuffs. Drake collapses off the chair.

Oswald tosses Drake's clothes at the man and limps off.

OSWALD  
If you're not gone by the time I come back, I'll finish you myself.

EXT. OLD GOTHAM - NIGHT

GCPD units tail the Batmobile down a wide-birthed street.

The Batmobile cockpit slides open and Batman SHOOTs out like a torpedo. The Batmobile drifts around a corner.

EXT. SKY OVER OLD GOTHAM - NIGHT

A grapple hook latches onto the copter. Joker SNARLS as he spots Batman soaring upward.

Batman grabs hold of the stick. Joker punches him in the face. Batman returns the blow. They jerk the stick...

...the gyrocopter loses control. Joker head-butts Batman.

Batman loses his grip and falls back. His leg catches the rail and he dangles precariously. Joker kicks away at him.

Batman grabs Joker's foot. Joker tries shooin' him off.

JOKER

Why won't you just die already?!

Joker lands a kick to the face. Batman's foot unhitches and he falls. He grabs hold of the gyrocopter's frame.

Joker's eyes go wide. A SKYSCRAPER. He pulls the stick back.

Batman's cape swipes the top of the building as the copter barely avoids impact. It soars toward the harbor.

WARNING LIGHTS and ALARMS signal on the copter's dash. Joker fights with the stick. Batman pulls up.

JOKER

Ta-ta!

Joker bails with an hysterical CACKLE. The gyrocopter spins out of control. Batman tries to get it under control. Bails.

Joker glides through the air with his WING-SUIT. He looks --  
-- as the gyrocopter SMASHES into a building.

Batman blindsides Joker and the two free-fall in a spin. Joker hugs his arms around Batman.

JOKER

Then we die together!

Batman forces a separation. Joker laughs as he spins outta control. Batman glides down, reaches --

-- grabs Joker by the tie... and they slam into the water.

EXT. SHORE - NIGHT

Batman COUGHS and crawls onto the riverbank.

Joker punts Batman in the ribs sending him onto his back.

JOKER

(between kicks)

Can't...you...just...play...along?!

Joker mounts Batman, unloads on him with heavy one-twos and chuckles in-between.

JOKER

I give you an army and you throw it  
back in my face!

Lands a punch.

JOKER

I surrender and give you a chance  
to end me once and for all and you  
completely missed me!

Lands another punch. Batman coughs blood.

JOKER

Why does everything have to be so  
difficult with you?! Anyone else  
would've given in by now!

Swings a punch. Batman catches his hand, butts him in the face and kicks him off. Joker crashes into the dirt.

Both men stand, stare one another down. They slug it out.

Batman tackles Joker into the soil. Joker chokes Batman. Batman forces a break, tries to restrain the man.

Joker reaches into his boot, pulls a switchblade and jams it into Batman's thigh. Batman holds in the pain.

JOKER

(gagging)

You're not trying hard enough! If  
you're gonna kill me, then kill me!

BATMAN

No!

Batman throws Joker down.

BATMAN

I'll never kill.

JOKER

Then you're a fool!

Joker kicks out. Batman grabs his leg, twists. Joker slams hard into the ground. Joker claws at the dirt.

Joker throws dirt into Batman's eyes. Batman staggers back.

JOKER

You know there's only one way this ends, Batman. Either you die, or I do. There's no other w-

Spotlights shine down on Joker and Batman. Joker looks up and laughs. 4 GCPD helicopters buzz above.

GCPD harbor patrol cuts through the water.

GCPD squad car FLASHING LIGHTS on the road above. Cops make their way down the steps toting their sidearms.

JOKER

What do you know...

Gordon and Montoya walk down the steps, guns drawn.

MONTOYA

On your knees, Joker.

JOKER

Well you certainly know how to time things accordingly.

Gordon decks Joker with a vicious punch. Gordon slaps cuffs on Joker's wrists.

Montoya finds Batman, holsters her gun. She extends a hand.

MONTOYA

Are you holding up?

JOKER

Ooh, that tickles.

GORDON

Shut up.

Batman, standing, gives Montoya a slight nod.

Gordon hands Joker off to a few cops. Joker stares at Batman with intent on his face.

JOKER

I'll see you soon.

Cops wrestle Joker up the steps. Gordon consults Batman. He extends his hand. Batman shakes it.

GORDON

It's good to see you again.

BATMAN

Likewise.

TWIN-JET ENGINES above. Turbines fire on all cylinders. Batman shoots his grapple gun and glides into the air.

Montoya and Gordon watch the BATWING soar away.

MONTOYA

Why don't we have those?

GORDON

Budget restraints.

INT. BATWING - NIGHT

Batman pilots the craft. He removes the mask revealing cuts and scrapes down his face. Tiredly sighs.

BRUCE

What's the damage?

BARB (V.O.)

About two million, give or take.

ALFRED (V.O.)

Master Drake is in the stasis pod, sir. He's recuperating now.

BARB (V.O.)

Thank you, Bruce.

BRUCE

(elsewhere)

Sure.

EXT. FALCONE'S SHIPPING HARBOR - NIGHT

Happy circles Deathstroke, Black Mask and Carmine, on their knees with their hands on their heads at the pier's edge.

CARMINE

I suppose you have a plan to get us out of this mess?

SIONIS

Quit your cowering.

GUNSHOTS cry out. Grumpy takes one to the chest. Fatty takes one to the head. Other clowns drop like flies.

Happy raises his gun. Deathstroke commandeers it, cracks him in the face and kicks him over the railing into the water.

Black Mask takes to his feet dusting off his hands. Carmine looks around with an exhausted look "pew".

Deathstroke acquires his Katanas, sheathes them.

CARMINE

Guess it's our lucky day.

SIONIS

Depends where the bullet flies.

Black Mask shoots Carmine in the chest. Carmine collapses into the water.

Lawton, hood over his head looking like a bad-ass vigilante, approaches from the east taking aim with his stub-cannon.

Deathstroke unsheathes his sword, guards Black Mask.

LAWTON

Move outta the way, Slade. This is between me and him.

Deathstroke stands his ground. Lawton shoots. Deathstroke deflects the bullet with a Katana.

SIONIS

He's right, Slade.

Black Mask steps out from behind Deathstroke.

SIONIS

Let's talk.

INT. THE BATCAVE - NIGHT

Drake, unconscious, rests in a medical pod off to the side of the main platform. Robotic arms stitch his lacerations.

Bruce, sitting down, removes a high-tech knee brace. Alfred hands him a walking stick. Bruce accepts it. Stands.

ALFRED

Master Drake received several deep lacerations to the chest, face and lower abdomen. The machines are doing what they can for him-

BRUCE  
I sense a "but" coming.

ALFRED  
As wise as your father, sir.

BRUCE  
He's carried the burden for months.  
Believes himself responsible for an  
event that never happened. When he  
wakes up, I'll take the burden off  
his shoulders. Clean slate.

Alfred understands this. Bruce browses mail on the table. He  
tears open an envelope. An INVITATION to an EVENT.

BRUCE  
Hm...

ALFRED  
Maybe he can help you.

BRUCE  
I doubt that.

Bruce bins the invitation. The name "BARRY ALLEN" visible.

BRUCE  
I'm gonna turn in. Keep me posted.

INT. GCPD - MAJOR CRIMES UNIT - NIGHT

Coroners wheel Loeb's body (in a body bag) out of his office  
and past many detectives/cops.

Gordon tiredly shakes his head. Montoya looks on.

MONTOYA  
(finishing statement)  
...and according to my men, Sionis'  
apartment went up at the exact time  
Loeb was assassinated. Connected?

GORDON  
More than likely. Any word on him?

MONTOYA  
No. But we found Carmine Falcone.

GORDON  
You bring him in?

MONTOYA  
He's in the fridge.

Gordon sighs.

GORDON  
Shit.

MONTOYA  
Forensics pulled him out the sound,  
bullet in his chest along with half  
a dozen "clowns", Sionis' guys.

GORDON  
Joker said he was giving Batman an  
army. I didn't realize that was the  
army he was talking about.

MONTOYA  
Why would he give Batman an army?

GORDON  
Let's go ask him.

INT. GCPD - INTERVIEW ROOM - NIGHT

Joker sits cuffed and shackled to a table looking bored out  
of his skull. The door BUZZES. Gordon and Montoya enter.

Gordon acquires a seat. Montoya leans against the wall and  
folds her arms.

JOKER  
Common decency is that a man gives  
the lady the chair.

GORDON  
What's your game, Joker?

JOKER  
Angry Birds. I despise yet love it  
because it's so damn annoying. I  
can never get the bird to go beyond  
the gap. I've tried everything-

Gordon angrily pounds the desk. Joker flinches.

JOKER  
Watch your blood pressure, Jim. A  
man your age should be careful how  
he exerts himself.

MONTOYA  
We want the facts, Joker.

Joker looks her up/down.

JOKER  
You remind me of someone.

An uneasy stare-down commences between them. Joker smiles.

JOKER  
I'll tell her.

GORDON  
Tell me.

JOKER  
No. I'll tell her and her alone.  
You can wait outside. Or watch from  
the trick-mirror. HIYA!

Joker waves at the "mirror".

GORDON  
Forget-

MONTOYA  
It's okay, Jim. I can handle him.

Gordon reluctantly stands and privately consults Montoya.

GORDON  
Don't let him get inside your head.  
I'll be right next door.

Gordon heads to the exit. Joker waves him "goodbye". Gordon leaves. Montoya sits across from Joker. He grins.

JOKER  
I never thought we'd get a moment  
alone. He's so clingy.

MONTOYA  
The same question.

JOKER  
No foreplay? Suppose I'm already  
handcuffed, so I guess there's no  
point in small talk, right?

MONTOYA  
Why did you do it?

Joker discreetly fiddles with a cuff-link on his sleeve. He maintains eye contact with her.

JOKER

You might need to be a little more precise in your questioning, Renee.

She squints, a little uneasy.

JOKER

Why did I kill that mother and her child? Why did I blow up that ferry full of children? Why did I shoot up the stock exchange? Why did I kill Crispus Allen?!

He leans forward.

JOKER

Because it's fun, Renee.

She bites her lip, holding back the anger.

JOKER

Halloween, my favorite night of the year. The one day I can be normal. And he came up to my door, rang my bell and said "trick or treat", so I performed a magic trick. Do you want to know what it was, Renee?

Joker plucks the cuff-link, attached to it is a long thin spike. He flashes her a smile.

JOKER

Because I have a similar trick just for you.

MONTOYA

Whatever sick, twisted game you're trying to play, it's not going to work on me.

JOKER

Oh, my dear sweet innocent Renee, the game is over.

Joker, free of his chains, bounds over the table and takes her to the floor. She SCREAMS. He raises the spike.

A shadow on the wall depicts Joker stabbing Montoya in the face repeatedly with the spike.

He wipes her blood across his lips and facial scars. Smiles.

The door BURSTS open. Gordon and five cops flood inside.

Joker slits one of their throats with the spike. CACKLES as the others wrestle him to the floor.

Gordon checks on Montoya. One of her eyes gone, blood pours from various slashes across her face and neck. She GASPS.

GORDON

Call an ambulance! Renee... dammit.  
Oh shit... God... stay with me...

JOKER

Lesson number one, Detective. Never  
leave a woman alone with a madman!

GORDON

GET HIM OUT OF HERE!

Cops wrestle a LAUGHING Joker out of the room.

Gordon presses a hand to Montoya's neck. Blood seeps through his fingers. She CHOKES on her own blood.

GORDON

Hey, hey... look at me. Look at me,  
Renee. It's okay.

Her fingers touch his cheek. Fear in her eyes. She fades... her hand falls limp. She dies in his arms.

GORDON

Renee?

INT. GOTHAM TIMES HQ - DAWN

Vicki works with Ryder in her booth. They crosscheck files. A clock reads "06:30am". Ryder nods. Vicki types.

EXT. DOWNTOWN GOTHAM - DAY

A stack of newspapers hits the pavement. "JOKER RETURNS" as its headline with an image of the GCPD escorting him away.

Civilians buy newspapers. Talk about "Joker" and "Batman".

Lawton buys a coffee from a stand. Walks to the curb. He sips coffee as he stares at a FLIER: "VOTE DENT!".

He hails a cab. One pulls over. He steps inside.

GCPD cruisers flank an ESCORT TRUCK down the street.

INT. ESCORT TRUCK - DAY

Armed ARKHAM ASYLUM guards sit beside and opposite a chained and shackled JOKER. He hums "CAROL OF THE BELLS".

JOKER

Don't you just love Christmas time?  
Carols. Mince Pies. Cream. Gifts.  
Turkey... mm... I love turkey. It's  
my favorite. Will I be getting any?

ARKHAM GUARD#1

We'll make a request.

The other share a chuckle. Joker joins in on the laughing.

JOKER

You wanna know what's funny? Your  
daughter. How old would she be now?

Guards stop laughing. Arkham Guard#1 whacks Joker in the gut with a truncheon. Joker WHEEZES.

JOKER

Oh that's right. Ten.

INT. GCPD - INTERVIEW ROOM - DAY

Forensics collect evidence. Place the spike in a plastic bag and seal it shut. Coroners lift Montoya onto a gurney.

Gordon bows his head as the coroners wheel her away.

INT. ARKHAM ASYLUM - ADMINISTRATION - DAY

Five guards and Arkham Guard#1 flank Joker as the WARDEN takes away Joker's "toys".

Switchblades, buzzers, various sharp objects, a "flower".

INT. WAYNE MANOR - MASTER BEDROOM - DAY

Bruce sits in the armchair rehabilitating his knee with an exercise machine. He stands on his own two feet, buckles.

He collects the walking stick, limps around the room.

Bruce finds the unframed photo of his parents. He picks it up, stares at it. Runs a finger down the photo.

THUNDER outside. Rain tinkles against the windows.

INT. ARKHAM ASYLUM - CELL BLOCK A - DAY

Guards escort Joker down the row. CRAZED INMATES gather at bars. Some shout. Others reach out. Voices rise.

JOKER  
It's good to be back home! I've  
missed you all!

The guards unlock a cell, open the door. One of them shoves Joker inside. He tumbles to the floor.

JOKER  
Watch it. This suit ain't cheap.

INT. ARKHAM ASYLUM - CELL - DAY

The door closes and locks. A dim light overhead BUZZES.

Joker sits back against the wall, hands on his knees, sighs. He tilts his head sideways.

VICTOR ZSASZ, late 30s, seriously demented with tally charts up and down his scarred arms, leans out of the bottom bunk.

JOKER  
Hi, Zsasz. How have you been?

Zsasz just stares at Joker.

ZSASZ  
Would you like to know how I got  
these scars?

Joker looks at the camera, deadpan.

INT. THE BATCAVE - DAY

Drake rubs his chest and sits on the edge of the medical pod with pain shooting across his face.

Alfred offers Drake a glass of water and some pills. Drake takes them, downs two and guzzles down water.

ALFRED  
How are you feeling, Master Drake?

DRAKE  
How many times I gotta ask you to  
call me Tim, Alfred?

Drake sets the empty glass down and stands upright.

BRUCE (O.S.)  
You know how he is. It's not in his  
programming.

Drake acknowledges Bruce.

DRAKE  
Not gonna punch me again, are you?

Bruce embraces Drake in a brotherly way. Drake doesn't know  
what to make of it. Pats him on the back.

DRAKE  
Ribs...

BRUCE  
I'm sorry, Tim.

They part.

DRAKE  
I've felt a whole lot worse. Gotta  
say, the pod's a big help.

BRUCE  
I put a lot on you, kid. Blamed you  
for what happened that night-

DRAKE  
I deserved it. You've got that rule  
for a reason. I broke it. Nothing I  
do will ever change what I did.

BRUCE  
You didn't do anything, Tim. It was  
all a big game. Joker played us...  
he's alive.

DRAKE  
The hell you talking about?

BRUCE  
Scarecrow's hallucinogenic.

Drake doesn't take this well, shakes his head.

BRUCE  
It's OK.

DRAKE  
OK? It's OK? Bruce, do you have any  
idea what I've been through in the  
past six months? All the lies. All  
the deceit. I lost everything.

Bruce smirks, places something in Drake's hand and closes the man's fist around it.

BRUCE  
Not everything.

Bruce turns away. Drake opens his hand. Inside, a symbolic golden "R" patch. Drake's face falls.

Bruce taps on the keyboard. Compressed gases HISS.

Drake takes a step aside as a cylinder rises from the floor. Inside, a black and red armored ROBIN costume with a hood.

BRUCE  
And everything you lost, you can  
get back. What do you say, Tim?

DRAKE  
What, you think you can just plop  
the R in my hand, show me the suit  
and I'll jump on the bat-wagon?

Bruce raises his eyebrows. Drake's face breaks into a smile.

DRAKE  
Bet your ass I will.

ALFRED  
I've taken the liberty of preparing  
you a room on the top floor, sir.

BRUCE  
Welcome home, Tim.

Drake sets the R down.

DRAKE  
Listen... I know this might come a  
bit hot on the heels, but, there's  
something I gotta do first.

BRUCE  
Yeah, I noticed that new badge. So  
what's the problem?

DRAKE  
I've been tracking someone. He's an  
assassin wanted by agencies across  
multiple continents for over three  
dozen assassinations over the past  
six years-

Bruce holds up a hand.

BRUCE

I don't need a Wikipedia on him.  
Just give me his name.

DRAKE

Floyd Lawton.

Bruce looks to Alfred. Both share a similar expression.

DRAKE

I'm guessing he's another ghost who  
didn't board the Afterlife Express?

Bruce brings up a GCPD file on the computer. An AUTOPSY  
report on ZOE LAWTON.

DRAKE

(disgusted)  
Jesus Christ.

BRUCE

This case is OFF the books. Only a  
few people know all the details...  
Gordon tried contacting family, but  
he didn't get far, just a string of  
numbers that led to a disconnected  
line in Monolith.

DRAKE

No one deserves to die like that.  
Any suspects?

BRUCE

One.

Bruce brings up another file.

DRAKE

Sionis.

INT. STORAGE WAREHOUSE - OFFICE - DAY

Sionis removes the mask and stares at his beaten, battered  
face in a webbed mirror. He turns his head side-to-side.

Pours himself a bourbon, takes a seat at his desk. Clenches  
a fist with his broken arm, can't quite close it.

A photograph on his desk of MARGE and NICHOLAS, 10, a cancer  
afflicted yet happy kid in a wheelchair, gains his interest.

Sionis plucks the desk phone, dials a number. The engaged  
tone sounds. He dials another number. RINGING...

INT. APT. 5D - LOUNGE - DAY

Marge answers the ringing phone on the wall.

MARGE

Hello?

SIONIS (V.O.)

It's Roman.

She acknowledges Nicholas in his wheelchair eating pizza watching TV, cautiously turns away from him.

NOTE: She speaks in a hushed tone of voice.

MARGE

What do you want, Roman? I told you not to call.

SIONIS (V.O.)

I just wanted to hear your voice... see how you were doing.

MARGE

Why?

INT. STORAGE WAREHOUSE - OFFICE - DAY

He polishes off the bourbon. Pours another.

SIONIS

Am I not allowed to check up on my favorite girl? How's the kid?

MARGE (V.O.)

He's fine.

A slight "human" smile crosses his face.

SIONIS

Tell him I said "hi".

MARGE (V.O.)

I don't think so, Rome. As far as he knows, his father's gone. And that's how it's gonna stay. It's better that way.

SIONIS

He's my son.

MARGE (V.O.)  
 You gave up that right a long time ago. You're nothing to him.

He shamefully bows his head. Sighs...

MARGE (V.O.)  
 Goodbye, Roman.

SIONIS  
 Wait-

She cuts him off. He lowers the phone, pauses. Slams the phone repeatedly into the desk shattering it.

Swipes everything off his desk in a fit of rage. Favors his broken arm. Hugs it to his chest.

He lifts the bourbon-soaked photo off the floor, wipes the liquid off. Tears Marge out. Stares at Nicholas.

INT. GORDON'S HOUSE - LOUNGE - DAY

Family by heart with framed photos on the mantelpiece.

Gordon sits on the couch drinking whiskey and concerning his thoughts. He rubs tired eyes.

Barb wheels in. He affords her a brave smile.

BARB  
 Are you OK? I heard what happened.

GORDON  
 I keep replaying it over and over again in my head... I never shoulda left her in there with him. Maybe she'd be alive if I-

She consoles him. He fights tears.

BARB  
 You couldn't have known, dad.

GORDON  
 That's just it. I shoulda known. It just happened so fast I didn't even think, I just... left her, Barb. He killed her and he laughed about it. Just like your-

Gordon regrets his words, hesitates...

BARB  
Just like my...?

He takes her hand and looks her square in the eyes.

GORDON  
I can't keep you in the dark, Barb.  
Not anymore. No more secrets. Your  
mother, the night she died, I lied  
to you. Your mother wasn't killed  
in a car crash. Joker killed her.

BARB  
No... no, you said... you said...

GORDON  
I'm sorry. I couldn't tell you the  
truth. You were too young, wouldn't  
understand-

BARB  
(emotionally)  
So you're telling me now?!

She retracts her hand and disgustedly shakes her head.

GORDON  
Barb, I'm sorry-

BARB  
You've lied to me for five years?!  
Why now?!

GORDON  
I can't keep lying...

BARB  
Well I'm glad your conscience is  
clear... thank you, dad.

She wheels off, the wheel nips the edge of the couch. She  
fights to control it.

GORDON  
Sweetheart-

She falls out of the wheelchair. He rushes to her aid. Tries  
to help. She flails at him.

BARB  
I don't need your help!

She viciously slaps him. He tumbles back. She cries...

BARB  
 ...I hate you...

FOOTSTEPS upstairs gain Gordon's attention. FOOTSTEPS on the stairs coming down. Gordon goes for his GUN.

LAWTON punches him out.

BARB  
 DAD!?!?!?

LAWTON  
 Ssh...

Lawton lifts Gordon onto the couch. Stalks Barb. She remains rooted to the spot. He reaches for her.

BARB  
 Don't touch m-

LAWTON  
 Easy now. I'm not gonna hurt you.

He gently assists her onto the couch next to Gordon.

LAWTON  
 You know who I am?

BARB  
 I have an idea.

LAWTON  
 Good. Saves me introducing myself.

Lawton pulls up a chair, takes a seat. Gordon stirs...

GORDON  
 (groggily)  
 Barb...

Gordon's eyes find Lawton. He instantly reacts. Lawton aims Gordon's own gun at him, shakes his head "no".

GORDON  
 Let my daughter go, Floyd.

LAWTON  
 So you do remember me? That's good.  
 But you needn't threat, detective.  
 I won't harm her.

Lawton sets Gordon's gun on the coffee table, slides it over to him. Gordon doesn't get this move.

LAWTON  
As a show of good faith.

Gordon takes the gun. Lawton nods.

LAWTON  
I was sent here to kill you. Plain and simple. But you got something I want and I got something you need. Now, I'm no businessman, but I know how to communicate. So here's the deal. You tell me what I wanna know and I'll give you the bust of your career.

GORDON  
What do you want?

INT. ARKHAM ASYLUM - INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

Joker sits at a table with a straight-jacket on. He stares at a cockroach scuttling along the tabletop.

JOKER  
(to the cockroach)  
You think you got it bad, take a look at me. I can't even scratch my ass. People think I'm crazy. Me... crazy. I know, right? It's crazy. I might've blown up a few buildings and killed a lot of people, but I'm not crazy. I'm-

The door BUZZES open. A GUARD and VICKI walk inside. She takes a sit opposite Joker.

The guard swipes the cockroach off the tabletop and squashes it on the floor. Joker snarls at him.

JOKER  
Murderer.

ARKHAM GUARD#2  
Zip it, freak.

JOKER  
I bet you feel big. A big man, who goes around killing cockroaches!

ARKHAM GUARD#2  
Quiet!

Arkham Guard#2 cracks Joker in the side with a truncheon.  
Vicki sets a notepad and pen on the table.

JOKER

I hope you're taking notes. That's brutality. He hit me for no reason. I should file a complaint, get you fired for abuse in the workplace!

ARKHAM GUARD#2

I don't think anyone would care too much, clown.

JOKER

I'm not a clown. I'm a jester. It's completely different.

VICKI

I'd like some time alone with him, if it's not too much trouble?

ARKHAM GUARD#2

Can't do that, ma'am.

VICKI

He's restrained. And I have pepper spray. I got it covered, chief.

ARKHAM GUARD#2

He was cuffed before, didn't stop him last time. Do what you came to do. I'm not going anywhere.

She doesn't like this. Goes along with it anyway.

VICKI

Okay.

JOKER

I don't like him either.

She narrows her eyes. Joker subtly winks at her. She sets a recorder on the table, presses "rec".

VICKI

December fifteenth, two-thousand seventeen. Vicki Vale reporting from Arkham Asylum, interview with Joker-

JOKER

The.

VICKI

What?

JOKER

It's The Joker. Saying Joker alone kinda makes me sound like a guy who goes around pulling pranks. Putting a The in front makes me sound more sophisticated. And you should also mention that we have a murderer in the room who goes by the name of Cockroach Killer with a capital C and a capital KILLER!

Arkham Guard#2 grips his truncheon firmly.

VICKI

Interview with The Joker.

JOKER

You smell nice. What is it?

VICKI

Perfume.

JOKER

Oh? What kind? Smells like apples. I love apples. Do you have one?

VICKI

Why did you kill Renee Montoya?

JOKER

Answer mine and I'll answer yours.

She sighs. He widens his eyes "well?".

VICKI

No, I don't have an apple.

JOKER

(disappointed)

Oh...

(sighs)

...can you get me one? I do love apples. They're my favorite fruit. Succulent. Juicy. You can bake pies with them-

VICKI

Why did you kill Renee Montoya?

JOKER  
 Could you loosen this jacket? It's  
 a little tight.

ARKHAM GUARD#2  
 That's the idea.

JOKER  
 The idea's to make inmates die of  
 asphyxiation? You should put that  
 in your report.

Joker agrees with himself.

VICKI  
 I'll consider it, if you answer my  
 question. Why did you kill her?

JOKER  
 Why do you think I killed her? Hm?

VICKI  
 It doesn't matter what I think. I  
 want to hear it from you.

Joker leans forward. Arkham Guard#2 prepares...

JOKER  
 Investigative journalism is a dying  
 breed. Everything's done on PC's  
 nowadays. It's all so technological  
 and super advanced. Kinda makes me  
 wonder why you came here to have a  
 little chat with me. You could've  
 made something up. Everyone thinks  
 I'm bonkers anyway so it doesn't  
 matter what I say.

She leans forward.

VICKI  
 I'm an old fashioned girl.

JOKER  
 I like old fashioned girls.

VICKI  
 So how about you tell me why you  
 killed Detective Montoya?

JOKER  
 Since you asked nicely...

Joker sits back, looks to Arkham Guard#2.

JOKER

...she didn't smell as nice as you.  
And she betrayed herself.

VICKI

How do you mean?

JOKER

Detective Montoya was on the other  
train, if you know what I mean. I'm  
not overly fond of the other train.  
There should only be one train.

VICKI

Are you saying you killed Detective  
Montoya due to her orientation?

Joker "seriously" nods. Vicki contemplates her words. Joker  
breaks out laughing.

JOKER

I'm kidding! The look on your face.  
Uh, duh, what do I say next?! HA!  
I'm not homophobic. People can do  
whatever they want. The real reason  
I killed Detective Montoya is oh-so  
simple...

Joker's face contorts into sheer vindictiveness...

JOKER

...because she was in the room!

He slowly chuckles, unnerving her. Then breaks into a full  
cackle and clacks his feet off the floor.

ARKHAM GUARD#2

Alright, that's enough, clown...

Arkham Guard#2 pulls Joker up.

JOKER

It's JESTER!!!!

Joker bites Arkham Guard#2's nose drawing blood. Vicki cups  
a hand over her mouth in shock. Joker bites the nose off.

Joker spits the nose and licks his bloody lips. The guard  
writhes in agony on the ground.

JOKER

Put that in your article...

INT. GORDON'S HOUSE - LOUNGE - NIGHT

Lawton cradles his head in his hands. Barb sympathetically watches him.

GORDON  
I don't know what to say...

LAWTON  
Save your pity for someone else. I  
sure as hell don't need it.

Lawton stands up. Barb recoils slightly.

GORDON  
Your end.

LAWTON  
South Pier. Just off Robbinsville.  
There's an old warehouse, some kind  
of car import/export business. He's  
meeting his contact in two weeks...  
that's all I know.

Lawton makes for the door. Gordon pulls the gun on him.

GORDON  
I can't let you walk, Floyd.

Lawton, back to Gordon, stops in the doorway. He looks over his shoulder glaring daggers at the man.

LAWTON  
You're a good cop, Jim. One of the  
best. But you're not that cop.

Lawton methodically approaches.

LAWTON  
Besides, you couldn't shoot me even  
if you wanted to.

Lawton raises a pistol magazine. Gordon checks the gun, no magazine. Lawton tosses it on the couch and turns away.

GORDON  
So much for good faith.

LAWTON  
You're still breathing.

Barb pulls herself into the wheelchair as the front door slams. Gordon rubs his forehead. She wheels off silently.

INT. THE BATCAVE - NIGHT

Bruce analyzes case files on the computer. Drake plucks a small rod from a steel box, extends it, it spans length.

DRAKE

I have missed you...

Bruce smirks at the remark. BEEP. His attention diverts to the monitors.

Drake and Bruce study the monitors. "GOTHAM GRID" of the entire city's surveillance system. A security feed pops up.

Lawton, downtown buying a coffee, he hails a cab. Several "VOTE DENT!" fliers nearby. Zoom on the cab license plate.

Bruce taps a mile a minute. The monitors reflect his work. "GOTHAM CAB COMPANY"... "TRACKING LICENSE"...

A "list" of "drop off" points comes up.

DRAKE

Drop off at Salamander Avenue.

They both get the same feeling.

BRUCE

Gordon.

Bruce makes a call. RING. RING. Someone answers.

GORDON (V.O.)

This is Gordon.

Bruce hangs up.

BRUCE

He's fine.

Drake just stares at him. Bruce double-takes at the man.

BRUCE

What?

DRAKE

(chuckling)

Nothing... it's just... I can't believe you just did that. I used to do it all the time as a kid.

BRUCE  
(obliviously)  
Did what?

DRAKE  
Uh... you know, call people, then  
hang up on them for fun.

BRUCE  
Moving on... we need to find a link  
between Lawton and Sionis. Someone  
both have contact with, might lead  
us to the source.

Drake thinks about something.

BRUCE  
Most of Lawton's old contacts are  
either dead or in Blackgate. So our  
options are limited to-

DRAKE  
Cobblepot.

Bruce ingests this.

DRAKE  
If there's anyone who knows what's  
going on in Gotham's underbelly,  
it's Cobblepot. Guy's got his beak  
in every cookie jar from Monolith  
to Arkham. He's our best bet.

INT. THE ICEBERG LOUNGE - NIGHT

Oswald drowns his sorrows at the bar. The place is empty. A  
door opens, closes.

OSWALD  
We're closed. Can't you read?

He looks to the main entrance. Batman stands there.

He almost falls off the stool. Hurries away from Batman.  
Receives a clothesline. Drops to the deck.

Robin steps over him, waves his index finger "naughty".

ROBIN  
Where you waddling off to, Oswald?  
I thought we were friends.

EXT. THE ICEBERG LOUNGE - ROOFTOP - NIGHT

Oswald SCREAMS as he hangs upside down off the roof. Batman and Robin hold his legs.

OSWALD  
Oh bloody hell!

ROBIN  
(exerting)  
You're a heavy one, Oswald. Should cut down on the carbs...

OSWALD  
Pull me up! Pull me up!

BATMAN  
First you tell us where to find Roman Sionis.

OSWALD  
What do I look like to you?! I'm not a bloody psychic!

He slips a little. YELPS like a sissy girl.

OSWALD  
Warehouse! He's at a warehouse off Bison. Down in Old Gotham!

ROBIN  
That was easy. We didn't even have to drop him.

OSWALD  
Pull me up, you bastards!

ROBIN  
Ask nicely.

Batman looks at Robin, who shrugs. They pull him up. He takes heavy breaths, sighs with relief.

ROBIN  
Thank you for your cooperation.

OSWALD  
Bite me.

ROBIN  
(to Batman as they walk)  
I forgot how much fun this was.

Oswald kisses the shingle with gratitude.

INT. ARKHAM ASYLUM - CELL - NIGHT

Zsasz, humming a charming tune, scratches a new mark into a mass tally-ridden wall to make a new "5".

Joker sits on the top bunk in the straight jacket with a Hannibal mask strapped to his face. Zsasz climbs up.

Joker looks at him. Zsasz toys with a shiv.

ZSASZ

Would you like to know how I got these scars?

JOKER

No.

ZSASZ

It's a fascinating story. Lots of glitz and glamor. It was at a ball, a charity event. I remember it as if it were yesterday. The wine was flowing. People were dancing. And soft music drifted through the air.

JOKER

I don't care.

ZSASZ

People made fun of me. They laughed at me. They didn't understand. So I took an icepick-

JOKER

Somebody shoot me.

Zsasz sets the shiv to Joker's neck.

JOKER

Zsasz!

ZSASZ

-and I put it to a young woman's neck. And I carved into her flesh the first of many. And after all was said and done, I found myself in a place I didn't understand at the time. But now I understand it well. I was home.

Zsasz gives out a soft chuckle. Takes the shiv away. Joker breathes a sigh of relief.

ZSASZ

It's funny, don't you think? How you look at your life when you've nothing to see? I like your mask.

JOKER

GUARDS!

EXT. PARK - NIGHT

Heavy rain falls. Harley sits on a swing in deep thought staring at her makeup-peppered reflection in a puddle.

INT. ARKHAM ASYLUM - PSYCHIATRY OFFICE - DAY (PAST)

A clock TICKS away. Harley, then Harleen Quinzel, a stunning and down to earth woman, takes notes in a chair.

HARLEY

...and what would you say drove you into performing such vile acts?

Joker, still Joker, lays back on the couch in restraints.

JOKER

I feel that I can be OPEN with you. There's a trust between us. It's as if you understand me.

HARLEY

Letting someone in is the first step to rehabilitation. I'm glad we're making progress. But I need you to answer the question. What would you say was the reason behind your actions?

JOKER

Like any other story, it began a long time ago. I was an only child. My father was a drunk who slept on the couch watching Nascar and my mother was a nurse. She helped a lot of people. She was a good soul. An angel among demons. One night, I was sitting in my room reading...

She jots everything down. Joker pauses...

JOKER

...and I heard a gunshot. So I went downstairs. There were apples on the floor. And I saw... my mother. My father holding a shotgun barely able to stand. He killed her...

HARLEY

And how did that make you feel?

JOKER

It made me feel angry... and sad at the same time. I didn't understand why... and he looked at me, crying and blubbering, saying how sorry he was, that he didn't mean it...

Joker's face scrunches.

JOKER

And he kept saying he was sorry as I drove a knife through his heart over and over and over and over and over and over and over again until he couldn't say it anymore. And it started there. My trigger. And from then on I couldn't stop. The thrill of the kill is a drug I can't live without...

Harleen takes all this in...

JOKER

...I take because he took. She was the only person who ever loved me for what I was. A freak.

HARLEY

You're not a freak.

His eyes find hers.

HARLEY

You're broken.

JOKER

Can you fix me, Doctor Quinzel? Can you save me from myself?

HARLEY

Do you want to be saved?

EXT. PARK - NIGHT

Harley wipes the makeup away with a rag until she can see Harleen in the puddle. She ties her hair in a ponytail.

INT. GORDON'S HOUSE - UPSTAIRS - NIGHT

Gordon knocks on a door, tries the handle, locked. He knocks again. Gives in. Sinks to the floor, back to the door.

GORDON

Barb, if you're listening I want to apologize. I understand how you're feeling. I can't change the lie but you have to understand why I chose not to tell you. After what he did to you, I didn't want to put more weight on your shoulders. You gotta know it was never my intention to keep the truth from you. I wanted to tell you...

INT. GORDON'S HOUSE - BARB'S ROOM - NIGHT

Barb lays in bed with a photograph of BARBARA in her hand. Emotions flood her face.

GORDON (O.S.)

(outside)

...he took your legs. Your mother. And I didn't tell you because I knew it would break your heart. I couldn't put you through that. But secrets destroy families... and I'm sorry I kept it from you...

A rogue tear escapes her eye.

GORDON (O.S.)

...I'm so sorry, Barb.

INT. GORDON'S HOUSE - UPSTAIRS - NIGHT

Gordon grips the banister and prepares to go down. Barb's door opens. She wheels out. He affords her a look.

BARB

Promise me you'll never lie to me again. Promise me.

He returns, takes a knee and grips her hand firmly.

GORDON  
I promise. No more secrets.

They embrace.

BARB  
I love you, dad.

GORDON  
Ditto, kiddo.

EXT. STORAGE WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

Batman and Robin stand atop a large building overlooking the storage facility. They cautiously survey the area.

DRAKE  
Too quiet.

BRUCE  
Joker turned all of Sionis' men  
against him. Bar one.

DRAKE  
Slade?

Batman nods.

DRAKE  
Either the unhinged lunatic or the  
sword-wielding bad-ass mute. I call  
dibs on Sionis.

BRUCE  
We're calling "dibs" now?

DRAKE  
You had training with swords and  
stuff. I've only had basic training  
so I can't exactly go toe-to-toe  
with Deathstroke. I'm not suicidal.

BRUCE  
I didn't realize I was.

Robin mounts the ledge. Batman takes up mantle.

DRAKE  
Well, we are about to jump fifteen  
stories toward concrete. This ain't  
suicidal I don't know what is.

Batman takes the plunge. Robin psyches himself up. Takes a deep breath. Leaps --

-- Batman's cape extends and he glides. Robin passes him in free-fall like a bullet, extends his arms. He glides...

They soar in different directions. Robin heads for the front as Batman veers to the rooftop of the warehouse.

Robin lands and rolls through onto his feet. He huffs, looks back at the flight path.

DRAKE

That was awesome.

Batman stops in mid-air, hovers back a bit and gently lands on the roof. He plucks a small gadget from his belt.

Robin mounts a stack of palettes and peers through a window.

Batman's gadget spurts a laser. He cuts through a skylight's lock. Opens it and drops inside.

INT. STORAGE WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

Robin maneuvers through various storage crates with the rod firmly in hand. Rounds a corner. Narrow passage ahead.

Batman, on a catwalk overlooking the floor layout, throws a batarang through the air --

-- it drives itself into a wall and clamps. BOP. BEEP.

BRUCE

Going dark.

Batman taps on his wrist. Darkness falls. Batman's eye slots light up blue.

Robin's eye slots have a red tint. He makes his way toward a staircase. Scans for movement. Stops, eyes busy --

-- A Katana cuts through the air behind him. He raises the rod, parries the blade. Deathstroke swings his other blade.

SLADE

Chirp chirp, little bird.

Robin barely avoids, backpedals. Parries an attack. Takes a kick to the gut, drops to his knees. Blocks a Katana.

A batarang cuts through the air. Deathstroke swats it with a Katana. It lands at Robin's feet. Deathstroke stalks him.

Robin backs up looking for an exit route.

ROBIN

Uh, I could use a little help down here.

Deathstroke unleashes a flurry of devastating sword attacks. Robin ducks, dips, parries and dives out of the way.

Deathstroke plunges his sword. Robin spreads his legs and the blade strikes the floor. He scoots back.

Batman swings down and takes Deathstroke into the air --

-- and tosses him to the floor a ways away. Deathstroke rolls back onto his feet into a sprint runner's position.

Batman lands like a boss, his gauntlet-blades extend.

Deathstroke lunges, swings heavy attacks. Batman parries with the gauntlets, traps one Katana between blades.

Black Mask exits his office and takes aim at Batman.

SIONIS

Goodnight.

Clicks back the hammer --

ROBIN (O.S.)

Think again!

-- Robin vaults over a rail and takes Black Mask down. The gun spills over the side.

Deathstroke forces a separation, elbows Batman in the face setting him unbalanced. Swings a Katana -- misses.

Batman shoots his grapple gun, the claw whips one of the Katanas out of Deathstroke's grip.

Black Mask head-butts Robin in the face, kicks him off and scrambles to his feet. Smashes a fire-axe case, grabs it.

Robin rolls under the rail to avoid the axe which clangs off the floor. Black Mask scours the room, fierce eyes busy.

Deathstroke kicks Batman into a crate. Drives a Katana at his head. Batman moves. The blade plunges through wood.

Robin chases Black Mask down an aisle. Black Mask axes a strap. Teetering crates plummet --

-- Robin vaults to the top of a large crate and runs full steam. Black Mask veers into a wide section.

Batman and Deathstroke trade fast speed attacks, both block expertly. Deathstroke lands a heavy punch. Batman staggers.

Deathstroke yanks his blade from the wood, twirls it in hand and faces his opponent. Batman's gone.

SLADE

Still using the shadows as an ally?  
You should know better. The shadows  
favor me.

Deathstroke swivels on the spot and swings. The blade cuts one of Batman's "ears" clean off the mask.

Batman shoots a grapple, slides between Deathstroke's legs taking him down. Deathstroke rolls over --

-- kicks Batman in the gut. Batman drops to all fours.

EXT. STORAGE WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

Black Mask bursts out of a side door and makes for his car.

A TOP OF THE LINE SPORTS CONVERTIBLE smashes through the main gates and drifts into a 90 degree stop.

Black Mask opens the driver's door, pulls a shotgun out.

Robin runs out of the side door, bumps into an oil drum. A shotgun BLAST. He ducks behind the barrel as shrapnel flies.

Lawton storms toward the front entrance cocking a pistol as the SHOTGUN BLAST draws his gaze to the side.

Black Mask's car hurtles toward him at breakneck speed. He rolls out of the way.

Robin vaults over the oil drum in time to see the car drive out of the yard and round a corner.

Lawton returns to the convertible, spots Robin. He shoots at Robin. Robin ducks behind cover, huffs...

ROBIN

What is it with everyone trying to  
kill me this week?

The convertible speeds out of the yard.

Robin emerges from cover and pursues. He taps buttons on his wrist-bracer. Vaults onto crates, then over the fence.

INT. STORAGE WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

Deathstroke slashes Batman across the chest. Batman returns with a swift right hook knocking the mask off.

Slade grips his jaw, blood dripping from his lip. His eyes lock onto Batman and intensify. He stands upright.

They methodically circle one another.

SLADE

You're a persistent son of a bitch,  
but this is a fight you can't win.

Batman narrows his eyes, focused.

SLADE

This ain't no street brawl. There's  
only one end to this. Your lifeless  
body at my feet!

Slade slashes manically at Batman. Batman parries, blocks, deflects, traps the Katana between gauntlet blades.

Slade tugs. Batman lands an elbow to the jaw. Thrusts his wrist. The Katana blade snaps. Batman kicks out --

-- Slade grabs his leg, flips him over and tackles him by the gut THROUGH a large wooden storage crate wall.

EXT. OLD GOTHAM - NIGHT

Black Mask's car scrapes a cab and sends it into a lamppost. The convertible catches up.

The cab steps onto the pavement hurling obscenities at the fleeing cars. A KICK-ASS BLACK/RED MOTORBIKE zooms past him.

Robin rides the motorbike, a jeep pulls out. He mounts the sidewalk. A woman SCREAMS. Robin YELLS. He barely avoids...

Lawton leans his stub-cannon out the window. Can't get a shot. Robin hurtles past him at breakneck speed.

LAWTON

He's mine, Bird-boy.

Lawton steps on the gas, takes aim at Robin --

INT. STORAGE WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

Batman ducks Slade's Katana and it plunges through a gas pipe. Gas leaks into the air.

Batman digs Slade in the gut, lands an uppercut, follows it up with a knee to the jaw. Swings a left --

-- Slade traps Batman's hand, butts him in the face with the hilt of the Katana. Kicks him into a wall. Plaster spits.

Batman swipes blood from his lip and scowls.

Slade fits on his mask. Motions "come on". Batman leaps with a clenched fist --

EXT. OLD GOTHAM - NIGHT

Robin pulls a large barreled pistol from the motorbike and takes aim at Black Mask's back wheels.

The convertible bumps him from behind. He looks back. Lawton shoots. Robin turns off --

-- The convertible pits the motorbike. Robin loses control.

Black Mask rounds a corner. The convertible tails him and just makes the turn.

Robin's bike hits a curb, he flies off and crashes into a car's windshield webbing the glass. He groans in pain.

A KID, 10, with a cell phone in hand looks on, mouth agape.

ROBIN

Oh man... oh...  
(notices the kid)  
...hey.

KID

Can you do that again?

ROBIN

Uh... not right now, no. Kinda busy  
at the moment.

Robin lifts his motorbike and mounts.

KID

I'm a big fan. I have your t-shirt.

Unzips his jacket to reveal a "Robin" t-shirt. He smiles.

KID  
Can you sign it?

ROBIN  
Yeah, sure, why not.

Kid hands Robin a pen. Robin signs the t-shirt.

ROBIN  
Who do I make it out to?

KID  
Jason... Todd.

Robin signs "To Jason Todd, from your pal Robin". Hands the pen back to "Jason".

ROBIN  
Don't sell it on eBay.

KID  
I won't.

Robin drives off, rounds the corner. Kid goes to a house.

KID  
Hey mom! Guess who just signed my  
t-shirt!

EXT. OLD GOTHAM - RIVERSIDE - NIGHT

Black Mask's car cuts down an embankment onto a dirt road. It tailspins, but he gets it under control. Proceeds.

The convertible hits a mound and flies. Lands on the dirt road, zigzags a moment but levels out. Lawton floors it.

Both vehicles race toward a dilapidated dock where a Guard waits with six armed goons and a speedboat.

Black Mask's car skids into a stop. He jumps out and shoots back at the convertible SMASHING the windshield.

Lawton dives out of the convertible. The convertible rams into Black Mask's car. Lawton rolls onto his feet. Aims --

-- Guard and his guys unleash automatic weapons fire on him.

He uses the cars as cover, pulls a pistol, cocks, leans out. A bullet grazes the taillight. He retracts his head.

Guard ushers Black Mask onto the speedboat. His men provide cover fire. Lawton seeks a way out.

INT. STORAGE WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

Batman pushes up, beaten, broken and bloodied. Deathstroke punches him to the floor. Scoops up his Katana.

SLADE

I expected more from you, Batman.  
World's Greatest Detective. Fabled  
Dark Knight.

Deathstroke scoffs, shakes his head in pity.

SLADE

Look at you now. Nothing more than  
another name on my list.

Batman kicks Deathstroke's knee out, boots him in the face. The mask CRACKS down the center and splits open.

Slade spits a tooth and blood. Warily looks up as --

-- Batman rises, ever resilient. He stands over his foe and looks him in the eye. Balls up a fist. GUNSHOT.

Slade's lip curls in a sadistic way.

EXT. OLD GOTHAM - RIVERSIDE - NIGHT

The speedboat makes for the main island.

Lawton fits a scope onto his eye. It calibrates, the outer rim spins and locks. He raises the pistol, spins out --

-- a cannon blast nails a goon between the eyes. He slides, shoots the pistol. Another goon takes a slug to the chest.

Bullets spray wildly as goons maneuver.

Lawton ricochets a bullet off Black Mask's car fender and it nails a goon in the neck.

Batarangs (different in design) slice two goons' arms and they drop their guns.

Lawton traps a goon's arm, snaps the man's wrist and elbows him in the face. Looks at the remaining two. They flee.

Lawton pulls up an automatic, steps to the dock's edge and aims at the speedboat.

SCOPE P.O.V

"Wind: 8mph South" "Dist. 378m". The speedboat dead in the cross-hairs. Highlights the fuel line "WEAK SPOT".

EXT. OLD GOTHAM - RIVERSIDE - NIGHT

Lawton shoots a bullet from the automatic --

-- it glides through the air, grazes the water's surface and strikes the speedboat's fuel line. BOOM! The boat explodes.

Lawton discards the automatic and takes satisfied breath.

LAWTON

I didn't need your help, Bluebird.

Lawton faces Robin, holding his extended rod.

ROBIN

Wrong bird.

LAWTON

You should fly away.

Lawton raises his stub-cannon. Robin stands his ground.

LAWTON

Go back to your nest. Lay an egg.

ROBIN

(laughs)

That's cute.

Robin steps forward.

ROBIN

I'm gonna lay it down for you nice  
and simple-

LAWTON

Let me save you the trouble.

Lawton shoots. Robin deflects the bullet with the rod and attacks. Lawton ducks the rod, sweeps Robin's legs out --

-- Robin hits the dirt. Lawton kicks the rod away, stands on Robin's chest, cannon primed and ready. Robin freezes.

A tense moment commences. Robin looks down the barrel --

-- Lawton looks him in the eye, then finds the burning boat across the waterfront.

INT. STORAGE WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

Batman, on his knees, cups a hand over a hole in his gut. Blood seeps through his fingers.

Slade sheathes his remaining Katana and collects his mask.

SIONIS (O.S.)  
Riddle me this...

BLACK MASK props Batman's chin up with his gun. Stares him dead in the eye. Chuckles methodically.

SIONIS  
...why did you come back? The hell drives you to put yourself through this every night? When is too much enough? What makes you tick?

Black Mask crouches down eye-to-eye with Batman.

SIONIS  
So many questions. So little time.

Black Mask turns away from Batman, pulls a lighter from his pocket and flicks open the lid.

SIONIS  
Men born in fire, die in fire.

Slade gets the side door. Sionis ignites the lighter and tosses it through the air. Leaves. Slade follows him out.

Batman taps on his wrist.

Gas ripples the air. Gas meets the lighter's flame. BOOM!

EXT. STORAGE WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

The entire place goes up in flames and folds in on itself like a house of cards.

A black sedan drives out of the yard and out of sight --

-- the Batwing shines its spotlight on the warehouse, hovers above and releases a large claw.

The claw digs through rubble and ruins. Plucks Batman out of the flames. The claw rises into the belly of the Batwing.

The Batwing turns in the air and flies into the night.

INT. SEDAN - NIGHT

Slade drives. Black Mask rides shotgun, answers his phone.

SIONIS

Well? That's a shame. I liked him.  
No. I don't think he's gonna be an  
issue anymore. Keep me posted.

Black Mask pockets the phone. Looks to Slade.

SIONIS

I guess sweet little Zoe Lawton can  
finally be at peace now the man who  
killed her is "dead".

Slade takes note of this.

EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - NIGHT

Miles of woodland on all sides. Wayne Manor in the distance.

Robin rides his motorbike along a dirt trail. The Batwing  
glides overhead. He spots it, hurtles after it.

EXT. LAKE - NIGHT

The water splits down the middle and a vast tunnel opens.  
The Batwing descends into it. The lake refills.

INT. THE BATCAVE - NIGHT

The Batwing lands. Powers down. The cockpit opens. Batman  
spills out to the steel floor. Alfred assists Batman.

ALFRED

The pod's already prepared, sir.  
Come on.

Robin's motorbike jumps through a waterfall and lands. He  
parks up on a platform, dismounts.

Alfred removes the cowl. Sets Bruce in the medical pod.

DRAKE

What happened?

BRUCE

Black Mask.

The medical pod seals. Steam fills it, shrouding Bruce...

DRAKE  
(to Alfred)  
Lawton killed Sionis.

ALFRED  
Apparently not.

Alfred notices Drake carrying a few war wounds. Drake's more concerned with Bruce.

ALFRED  
He will be fine. You should get cleaned up.

DRAKE  
I'm good. Just a few cuts. Nothing I can't deal with.

Drake leans back on the table, sighs...

ALFRED  
Something on your mind, sir?

DRAKE  
Lawton had me cold. He let me go. Why would he do that?

ALFRED  
I'm just a butler, Master Drake. I don't have all the answers. But if I were to say, then I would insist he had no reason to kill you.

DRAKE  
That's what he does, Alfred. He's an Assassin.

ALFRED  
Perhaps this Assassin is more of a father looking to do right by his daughter, than a stone cold killer.

Drake considers this.

ALFRED  
But that's just the theory of an old man, sir.

Alfred leaves Drake to his thoughts.

ALFRED  
Goodnight.

INT. GOTHAM TIMES HQ - DAY

Vicki squashes a squidgy ball in her hand. Ryder shakes his head, sighs "wow".

RYDER  
Jesus... how's the guy?

VICKI  
How do you think he is? Joker bit  
the poor guy's nose off.

RYDER  
And you?

VICKI  
(obviously the opposite)  
Spiffy.

She sets the ball down.

VICKI  
I wanna get the ball rolling on the  
report. The Joker's incarceration.  
Batman's return. Sionis' place  
going sky high. We need to move  
forward. Press the issue. Deliver  
the story the city needs to know.  
What do we have on the explosion?

RYDER  
While you were digging through the  
loony bin, some crazy shit happened  
down in Old Gotham. An eye witness  
caught this on his phone, uploaded  
it to Youtube.

Ryder brings up "Youtube" on the computer. Presses play.

MONITOR: Footage of the chase. Lawton rams Robin's bike.  
Robin crashes onto the windshield.

RYDER  
Guess the Boy Wonder's back under  
the Dark Knight's cape, or it's a  
new one, but...

KID (V.O.)  
Can you do that again?

ROBIN (V.O.)  
Uh... not right now, no. Kinda busy  
at the moment.

Vicki knows something.

RYDER

...yeah, the cockiness just slides off his tongue. Which kinda makes me think this is the second Robin making his comeback tour.

VICKI

Has anyone else seen this?

RYDER

Fourteen million and counting. It's hot news. Anyway, something else went down last night too. About ten minutes after this video was shot, there was a gunfight, no suspects, but according to all reports, two bodies were found near a burning speedboat. One of the guys was Roman S-

VICKI

He's dead?

RYDER

Nah. The guy's too smart to go up in flames. Hired himself a dupe. He's down in the city morgue, but if I were a betting man-

VICKI

Which you are.

RYDER

Yes. Then I'd say it was a hit. I took the liberty, which I also do a lot, in zooming in on the car that tapped Robin's ass and I couldn't get a clear shot, but...

Ryder opens up a video-editor. A ZOOMED image of a side mirror's reflection: A blurry LAWTON in the glass.

VICKI

...Floyd Lawton. That makes sense. Guy killed his daughter.

He cocks an eye. She smirks.

VICKI

You're not the only one with a few dimes in your pocket, Jack.

INT. ARKHAM ASYLUM - SHOWERS - DAY

Several guards lead Joker (still in a straight jacket and the mask) into the center of the room.

JOKER

It'd better be on a rope this t-

Arkham Guard#2, nose bandaged, steps out of a cubicle and claps a baton off his hand. Arkham Guard#1 steps forward.

A guard locks the door. They all envelop Joker. He chuckles.

JOKER

Oh... it's one of those occasions.

Guard#1 digs Joker in the gut with a baton. Joker HUFFS and keels over. Guard#2 sizes up Joker with evil intentions.

Guard#1 sets his baton down on a shower cubicle wall. Fits on a pair of rubber gloves.

JOKER

Look, I might seem like a freak but I'm really not into bondage, so-

Guard#2 cracks Joker in the jaw with his baton staggering the man backwards.

Another guard takes out the back of Joker's legs sending him to his knees. Others hold him in place.

ARKHAM GUARD#1

Take off his mask.

Someone removes Joker's mask. He wiggles his jaw.

ARKHAM GUARD#1

A few years ago, two bodies were found in Gotham Common. The flesh was mangled. Too severely damaged to identify on sight. So the police used dental records to identify the victims. One was a teenager who was babysitting the night she vanished and the other... was a girl called Abigail Bolton. My daughter.

Guard#1 pulls a pair of pliers from his pocket and steps in front of Joker, crouches down.

Joker tilts his head sideways trying to get a read on him.

Someone grabs Joker's hair and pulls his head back. Someone pulls Joker's mouth open. Joker GAGS.

ARKHAM GUARD#1

By the time they find you, not even your custom suit will identify you.

Guard#1 fits the pliers into Joker's mouth, grips a tooth.

ARKHAM GUARD#1

This is gonna hurt. A lot.

Yanks. The tooth doesn't budge. Joker smiles. Pulls again. ALL of the teeth pop out at once.

Guard#2 grows uneasy, turns away.

Guard#1 inspects the teeth. Plastic. He stares at Joker who breaks into a sadistic chuckle showing off a toothless gum.

JOKER

Courtesy of the Batman. He couldn't break his one rule, but it never stopped him breaking all my teeth. Bites a hole in your plan, huh?

EXT. GOTHAM CEMETERY - DAY

Lawton lays a flower on a grave and removes the dead ones. His eyes find the name "ZOE LAWTON - 1997 - 2014".

LAWTON

I've thought a thousand days about what I'd say when I got here, but now I'm here I can't...

A rogue tear escapes his eye. He wipes it away.

LAWTON

I guess by now you'd be in some top o' the line Uni. "I'm gonna be a doctor, daddy, you'll see". I never deserved you, or your mother, even our dog was better than me. Little Lucky and his three legs...

Lawton flashes a sad smile...

LAWTON

...but then he was gone. Then your mom was gone. And now you're gone. And it's all my fault.

A car pulls up at the roadside. Gordon steps out, searches. Two COP CARS pull up behind him. Four uniforms emerge.

Lawton notices Gordon and the four cops on approach.

LAWTON

It's gonna be a while before I can come talk to you again. But I'll be thinking about you.

He removes the stub-cannon, puts it on top of the grave.

Gordon halts the cops and goes alone.

LAWTON

Goodbye, baby. I love you.

Lawton meets Gordon halfway. A mutual understanding between them. Lawton extends his hands.

LAWTON

I'm ready, Detective.

GORDON

When my daughter lost her legs... I blamed myself for not being there, but I can't imagine what it's like to lose a daughter. And I know you don't need my pity, I just wanted to put it out there that if it had happened to my own, I'd have done the same.

LAWTON

Just get it over with.

Gordon pulls cuffs, slowly approaches.

GORDON

You're a crack-shot, but those guys back there couldn't hit the earth with the moon from that distance. If you wanted to, you could knock me out and run and they'd not stand a hope in hell in catching you.

LAWTON

I'm done running.

GORDON

You're not hearing me. A father's work is never done...

Lawton studies the distant cops, one grips his sidearm. He looks Gordon in the eye. Gordon's eyes navigate away...

GORDON  
 (RE: Stub-cannon)  
 ...you might need that.

Lawton gives a slight nod. Gordon braces. Lawton decks him with a punch and goes for the stub-cannon.

Cops remove their sidearms and make for the scene. One of them shoots --

-- Lawton fits on the stub-cannon. A bullet hits a grave a long way from him. He makes for the fence.

A cop checks on Gordon, the others pursue Lawton.

GORDON  
 I'm fine, get after him!

Lawton hops the fence, across the road. Down into a ditch. Clammers up the embankment. Makes for the woods.

INT. ARKHAM ASYLUM - SOLITARY CONFINEMENT - NIGHT

SCREAMING. MUMBLING. LAUGHING. CRACKING. BANGING. RATTLING. Joker sits back against the wall free of his bonds.

A slat on the bottom of the door opens. A tray of horrible food slides through with STALE BREAD. Joker stares at it.

Joker's fake teeth slide through a moment later. It closes.

He dusts off his teeth, fits them into his gob. Bites a few times, then collects the food tray.

He knocks the bread against the wall. Someone SCREAMS.

JOKER  
 If you don't stop screaming I'll  
 bash your brains in with this piece  
 of bread! It's hard enough!

Joker shakes his head, inspects the bread.

JOKER  
 Good thing I got fake teeth.

He bites into it. CRUNCH. He pulls a face, looks at the hole in the bread. A NOTE sticks out with a bite mark in it.

He spits the bread, the bitten piece flies out and lands on the floor. He rips the bread open, unfolds the note.

Pieces the bitten piece back with the rest and reads... a smile befalls him.

JOKER

Deck the halls with boughs of holly  
fa-la-la-la-la, la-la-la-la!

INT. WAYNE MANOR - LOUNGE - NIGHT

A TV on the wall over the fireplace, muted news network on its screen (police pull Goon and "Black Mask" from water).

Alfred and Drake jostle for position and try to fit a large Christmas tree through the archway.

DRAKE

(exerting)

Why can't we just... buy a smaller tree? This thing is heavy as f-

ALFRED

Language, Master Drake.

DRAKE

It's almost as heavy as Cobblepot.  
Weighs a damn ton.

He grunts, pulls. The tree fits through and topples --

DRAKE

Whoa!

-- he ducks. The tree lands on the couch, horizontal. Drake steps out from underneath it. Sighs "phew".

DRAKE

On top of Deathstroke, my ex-wife and Harley, now the tree's got it in for me too.

BRUCE (O.S.)

You haven't changed.

They acknowledge Bruce, leaning on a walking stick, by an open passage next to a bookshelf.

BRUCE

You're still sarcastic.

ALFRED

Good to see you on your feet, sir.

DRAKE

And you know how to time things so you can shirk your chores and make me do all the heavy lifting.

BRUCE

I got shot.

DRAKE

That's no excuse.

A cell phone RINGS. Drake goes to his jacket, pulls it from a pocket and checks the caller ID.

DRAKE

Speak of the devil and she'll call.

BRUCE

You should try fixing that bridge. Vicki's a good catch.

DRAKE

Dating advice from the Batman... I should cross that off my list of things to do before I die, which in this city, might be as soon as I answer the phone.

Bruce likes this. Drake heads out.

BRUCE

How's he settling?

ALFRED

Rather well, considering. Though he was concerned about you. Stayed by your side all night.

BRUCE

Breaking out the old tree, eh? It's worn.

ALFRED

Aren't we all.

Bruce nods in agreement.

ALFRED

I've been thinking. About what you said. Do you think he's ready?

BRUCE

Do you?

ALFRED

Tim is a good man. He's able. He's determined. And if I say so, rather like you in more than one way. He's a good fit.

BRUCE

He is a good fit.

Drake paces in the hall talking on the phone.

DRAKE

No, I don't have anything on... as long as there's not a slap involved I'm all for it. No, I wasn't being sarcastic- look, I'll try to book somewhere nice, we can chat and... not a takeaway, a real fancy joint, somewhere uptown. No, money is not a problem. Yes, I'm sure.

Bruce laughs slightly. Alfred rolls his eyes.

ALFRED

If there were ever a need for the term "hopeless romantic", he would fit the bill.

Drake returns rubbing his brow.

DRAKE

So Vicki wants to meet and go over a few things. I said I'd book some fancy restaurant uptown. She said "yes", any ideas?

BRUCE

Alfred?

ALFRED

I'll make the arrangements.

Alfred heads off, out of sight. Drake awkwardly looks on.

DRAKE

Uh... I kinda need some cash too.

BRUCE

I didn't think money was a problem?

DRAKE

It's not. I just don't have any. A little strapped for cash right now.

BRUCE

I thought the CIA paid well.

DRAKE

Yeah, about that... I'm not, well, technically... I'm freelance.

BRUCE

(smartly)

You don't say.

DRAKE

I was gonna say, but... I thought you'd be- wait, you knew?

BRUCE

Plastic badge spray painted gold? Yeah, I worked it out. And I ran the serial number. Came back with a toy manufacturer ID in Chicago.

Embarrassed, Drake looks away.

BRUCE

How many did it fool?

DRAKE

Got me a first class ticket home.

INT. ARKHAM ASYLUM - SOLITARY CONFINEMENT - DAY

Joker carves an "X" into a "5" on the wall his fingernails. 1 day remains. He sits back and WHISTLES "Silent Night".

The slat opens. A CHRISTMAS BOX slides through. It closes.

Joker gathers the gift, reads the tag. "To Mr. J, from your one and only". He unwraps it, lifts the lid and pulls out --

-- a spike mechanism attached to a bracer. He fits it on.

JOKER

(singing)

Jingle bombs, Batman falls, Gotham burns anew. Robin chirps as Penguin burps and Black Mask eats the snow. Jingle all the way, I'll see you in a day. Over the hill and far away, Gotham screams on Xmas Day.

INT. THE RICHMOND - NIGHT

High class all around. Waiters serve patrons meals, drinks.

Drake sits at a table for two reading a menu, his face says it all. A waiter carries a lobster past him. He stares...

VICKI (O.S.)

Hey.

He turns his attention to Vicki, wearing a gorgeous dress and looking like a woman of high taste. She smiles.

DRAKE

(taken aback)

Hey... wow, you look... good.

VICKI

You hesitated.

DRAKE

Yeah, I...

He nervously stands, gets her chair. She sits down. He takes a seat across, anxiously smiles.

VICKI

This is nice. You weren't bluffing.

DRAKE

When in Rome, right?

A waiter with a bottle of champagne turns up and showcases the bottle. Drake nods.

DRAKE

It's a nice bottle.

VICKI

You're meant to uh... taste it so he knows it's not corked.

DRAKE

People actually do that?

She nods. He raises his champagne glass. Waiter pours. He takes a sip, considers it, then nods.

DRAKE

It's good. Pour away, my man.

Waiter pours Vicki some champagne. Leaves the bottle in an ice bucket.

WAITER  
Would you care to order?

Vicki peruses the menu. Drake browses, can't understand half of it. He's stumped.

VICKI  
(in French)  
Well take the six as a starter. The  
forty-four with a side of fifteen  
for our main course and a number  
fifty-two for dessert.

WAITER  
(in French)  
Excellent choice, madam.

Waiter collects the menus and walks away. Vicki takes a sip of champagne. Drake stares at her.

VICKI  
What?

DRAKE  
Since when could you speak French?

VICKI  
Since the eighth grade.

A shady waiter passes by with a covered dish in hand, walks to the kitchen.

DRAKE  
So what did you order?

VICKI  
It's a surprise.

INT. GCPD - RECEPTION - NIGHT

A FEMALE RECEPTIONIST enters information on the computer. Cops come and go. One opens the door for a COURIER in a BASEBALL CAP and FedEx garb.

Courier sets a package down on the front desk.

COURIER  
Delivery for Jim Gordon.

Courier hands her a delivery sheet. She signs it. He doffs his cap and turns away.

COURIER  
Merry Christmas.

RECEPTIONIST  
Merry Christmas.

EXT. MOONEY BRIDGE - NIGHT

Similar in design to the Golden Gate, the only access to Blackgate Island and Blackgate Maximum Security Prison.

A cherry picker stands tall. A CITY WORKER works on power lines. One stands below keeping an eye out.

A Blackgate Cruiser rolls up and parks. Two Blackgate Guards emerge, one shines a flashlight.

The ground workman spots them on approach, reaches behind.

BLACKGATE GUARD#1  
What's this?

WORKMAN#1  
Maintenance. Got fluctuation on the power lines. Thought we'd get on it and save you fumbling in the dark.

BLACKGATE GUARD#1  
We weren't made aware of any work. You got a permit?

WORKMAN#1  
Yeah. It's right here.

Workman#1 shoots Guard#1 with a silenced pistol. Guard#2 reaches for his. Workman#1 shoots him dead.

WORKMAN#1  
I'll get rid of the bodies. You good here?

WORKMAN#2  
Hunky dory, as the boss says.

Workman#2 plants an EMP box device on the transformer as the other drags the two guards away.

WORKMAN#2  
(into radio)  
We're all set here. Waiting on your mark.

EXT. GOTHAM LIGHT AND POWER - NIGHT

A power plant. FOUR MASKED MEN at the fence. One cuts chain link with a laser cutter. The mesh folds. They enter.

They make their way across the parking lot.

A security guard's flashlight sweeps and locates. He pulls his gun. One of them shoots him with a silenced pistol.

They stop at a side door. One takes a knee, pulls the laser cutter and works on the lock.

INT. GOTHAM LIGHT AND POWER - REACTOR - NIGHT

A masked man drags a dead security guard away as two others work on the citywide power grid.

One plugs a flash drive into a slot, taps on a keyboard.

Two set charges at the base of the reactor.

INT. THE RICHMOND - NIGHT

Drake leaves money for the bill. Vicki smiles at him.

VICKI

No tip?

Drake sets a \$50 on the table, looks at her "good enough?". She nods. He approaches her --

-- the shady waiter bumps into him. They exchange looks. Drake doesn't break eye contact.

Shady waiter makes haste for the doors. Drake looks around, something off about him.

Waiter collects the bill. Drake consults him.

DRAKE

Jacques, that guy, he work here?

Waiter watches Shady waiter pass by the windows and out of sight. He shakes his head.

WAITER

He must be one of the volunteers.  
We've had a few come and go this week. They never stay for more than a night. Thanks for the tip, sir.

Waiter heads off. Vicki notices Drake's worry.

VICKI  
I know that look. What is it?

He hands her some money.

DRAKE  
Get a cab, go home.

He rushes to the front door.

VICKI  
Tim...

EXT. DOWNTOWN GOTHAM - NIGHT

Drake pushes through a crowd of people in pursuit. Shady waiter waits at the curb. A BLACK SUV pulls up.

DRAKE  
Hey!

Shady waiter faces him.

DRAKE  
Let me holler at you for a sec.

The driver's window rolls down. An UZI emerges and opens fire. He ducks behind a postbox. People scatter and PANIC.

Shady waiter enters the SUV. It peels away from the curb and cuts into traffic.

Drake grips his shoulder, bullet hole present. He groans... forces himself up and returns the way he came.

INT. THE RICHMOND - NIGHT

Drake pushes through the door. Vicki finds him.

VICKI  
What happened?

DRAKE  
EVERYONE OUT!

VICKI  
Tim, what's going on?

He shows his badge to the restaurant.

DRAKE

CIA, I am ordering you to evacuate  
the premises IMMEDIATELY!

EXT. GOTHAM LIGHT AND POWER - NIGHT

The four masked men evacuate the grounds through the fence.  
One takes a look back, pulls a phone and dials a number.

INT. GOTHAM LIGHT AND POWER - REACTOR - NIGHT

The charges blink and BEEP in increased tone. BOOM.

EXT. GOTHAM LIGHT AND POWER - NIGHT

The power plant goes up in flames. Pipelines BURST under the  
ground. Asphalt erupts.

EXT. DOWNTOWN GOTHAM - NIGHT

Gas lines under the streets explode. Vehicles veer out of  
the way of explosions.

INT. THE RICHMOND - NIGHT

Windows SMASH as explosions rattle outside. Patrons PANIC. A  
CAR flips through one of the smashed windows.

An EXPLOSION in the kitchen. Fire erupts through the doors.

Vicki GASPS. Drake grabs her hand --

EXT. DOWNTOWN GOTHAM - NIGHT

Flames spray out of the restaurant as the entire building  
folds in on itself. The city plummets into darkness...

EXT. MOONEY BRIDGE - NIGHT

Workman#2 blows the EMP device. Blackgate falls into shadow.

Three TAILGATING VANS proceed toward the prison with their  
lights off. The first van rams through the gates.

The work van pulls a 180 and drives the opposite direction.

INT. THE BATCAVE - NIGHT

Darkness. Bruce pulls up on a rail groaning. Looks around. Platforms submerged in water, the computer sparking, smoke.

BRUCE  
Alfred?!

Bruce waves his hand through smoke and limps forward.

BRUCE  
Alfred?!

ALFRED  
(painfully)  
Over here...

Bruce drops to his knees. Alfred lays on the floor, table on top of him. Bruce tries to lift it. Alfred GRUNTS.

Bruce grabs the clamp, presses it to the tabletop and lifts it off with ease. Alfred crawls out. Bruce drops the table.

Bruce checks on Alfred who shakes something fierce.

BRUCE  
Are you OK?

ALFRED  
What was that?

BRUCE  
I don't know...

Bruce helps Alfred to his feet. Alfred favors his leg... finds a seat on the shattered tabletop.

MONITOR: "REROUTING POWER..." "REBOOTING HUB, 30% POWER".

Monitors flicker on one at a time, not all turn on. Bruce taps on the keyboard, watches the monitors.

MONITOR: Citywide surveillance. Chaos everywhere. People scatter in multiple directions. Gas lines fume...

Bruce makes a phone call. Heavy burden on his face.

BRUCE  
Come on, answer dammit...

Alfred feels his side, pulls up his coat. Blood seeps into his shirt, a piece of steel in his kidney.

Bruce pounds the counter. Grits his teeth.

EXT. DOWNTOWN GOTHAM - NIGHT

A phone RINGS under mounds of rubble. Underneath, barely visible, Tim, DEAD, Vicki's hair just visible.

INT. THE BATCAVE - NIGHT

Alfred wanes, trembles.

ALFRED  
Master Wayne...

Bruce looks over. Sees the blood. He cancels the call and goes to Alfred. Alfred collapses into the table.

BRUCE  
No... ALFRED... don't you... don't  
you dare.

Bruce fights tears. Alfred extends a hand. Bruce grips it.

ALFRED  
(reassuringly)  
It's OK, Master Bruce. I'm an old  
man, I've had my time.

BRUCE  
Don't talk like you're giving up.  
Don't give up on me.

ALFRED  
I never... will, sir.

A tear escapes Bruce's eye.

ALFRED  
(dying)  
Your father... would be... proud of  
the man... you've become...

BRUCE  
Please... don't go. I can't do this  
without you...

Alfred smiles.

ALFRED  
You'll never be alone, Bruce. I'll  
always... be here...

Alfred's eyes close. His hand loses grip. Bruce keeps it for a moment, nudges Alfred. No response. His face falls...

BRUCE  
Alfred? Alfred...?

Bruce's face contorts. Ferocious anger takes over. Facial muscles tense up. He looks to --

-- the Batsuit cylinder.

INT. BLACKGATE PRISON - CELL BLOCK B - NIGHT

INMATES batter GUARDS in the halls. Various open cells...

Mass "? 's" on the walls of one cell. Plants in another. A calender in another on the month of December.

"BREAK BATMAN" in another cell written in blood on the wall.

EXT. MOONEY BRIDGE - NIGHT

The three VANS tailgate and proceed away from the prison. Inmates run across the bridge with batons and guns.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Lawton assembles a sniper rifle. Downs a glass of whiskey. He stares at a photograph of his daughter.

INT. GORDON'S HOUSE - LOUNGE - NIGHT

Gordon shrugs on a jacket.

GORDON  
Keep the doors and windows locked.  
Do not open the door for anyone.

He hands her a gun. She doesn't want it. He insists.

GORDON  
It's for your own protection. Don't  
hesitate. Promise me.

She reluctantly takes the gun.

GORDON  
I love you.

Lays a kiss on her forehead, exits.

She stares at the gun. Closes her eyes.

EXT. DOWNTOWN GOTHAM - NIGHT

GCPD fight CRAZED PRISONERS and CRIMINALS in the streets.

A brutish prisoner grabs a woman by the hair. She SCREAMS. He slams her into a car, bends her over.

Two criminals beat the shit out of a rich guy.

A prisoner jumps on a car's hood, inside, a family of four, smashes the windshield with an iron pipe.

Criminals and prisoners overthrow law enforcement.

A SWAT truck skids to a halt. SWAT flood out of the back and make for several prisoners and criminals.

A man throws a brick through a TV store window. LOOTERS take whatever they can carry.

All hell breaks loose. Flares spark. Gunfire drowns out the SCREAMING and YELLING. People flee.

A con stabs a man with a butcher's knife. They spill to the ground. He keeps stabbing the man. LAUGHS.

A city bus rams a moving SWAT truck onto its side.

INT. GCPD - MAJOR CRIMES UNIT - NIGHT

Detectives, SWAT and uniforms maneuver about the place.

Gordon coordinates the SWAT CAPTAIN, points out specifics on a map of Gotham. Other SWAT gather around.

GORDON

Push them back to eighth. See if you can drive them back over Mooney Bridge, buy us some time. I'll take a team through Monolith, wrangle up the strays.

SWAT CAPTAIN

What about Bane?

Gordon shows a little fear at the name, opens his mouth to talk... RING, RING, RING...

The PACKAGE on his desk vibrates. Gordon cautiously opens it. Pulls packing and finds --

-- a BOMB with a TIMER: "00:37...36..." "HA-HA-HA-HA-HA-HA".

GORDON

OUT!

A mad scramble for the stairs commences.

TIMER: "00:29...28...27..."

EXT. GCPD - NIGHT

Gordon makes it out as -- THE TOP FLOOR GOES UP. Glass rains down all around, paper flies through the air.

Everyone breathes a sigh of relief. PRISONERS with GUNS come from all angles BLASTING wildly.

Bullets shatter windows and riddle squad cars, SWAT trucks.

Gordon ducks behind his car, pulls a gun, breathes heavily.

SWAT and GCPD Uniforms return fire. Prisoners and Cops drop like flies. SWAT Captain shoots one, eats a bullet.

INT. THE ICEBERG LOUNGE - NIGHT

Crooks and Cons break through the front doors and run riot. Flip tables. Tear down posters. Smash shelves.

OSWALD (O.S.)

OI!

They all look at Oswald, holding a FRIGGING BIG SHOTGUN.

OSWALD

If you like your heads, I suggest  
you get outta my Lounge or you're  
gonna lose 'em. You like my gun?

INT. PENTHOUSE - NIGHT

Lavish and expensive. Black Mask watches Gotham tear itself apart from a big window.

SIONIS

I guess the clown had an ace up his  
sleeve. And I gotta say, he pulled  
it at the right time. Benefits us  
all, wouldn't you say?

Looks over his shoulder at Deathstroke. Claps him on the shoulder and looks him in the eye.

SIONIS  
Find him. Bring me his head. Kill  
anyone who stands in your way.

EXT. DOWNTOWN GOTHAM - UPPER EAST SIDE - NIGHT

Anarchy reigns. Prisoners run riot. Someone throws a flaming cocktail through a townhouse window.

Two ROUGH PRISONERS grab a YOUNG WOMAN and drag her into a nearby alleyway.

EXT. DOWNTOWN GOTHAM - UPPER EAST SIDE ALLEY - NIGHT

The young woman CRIES for help. One of the cons backhands her across the face as the other rips her blouse open.

GUNSHOT. A con drops dead to the ground. The other turns --  
-- Deadshot, in full gear, points his smoking stub-cannon at the man and shakes his head "I wouldn't do that".

LAWTON  
Bang.

Deadshot shoots the man dead. The young woman trembles...

LAWTON  
You're welcome.

EXT. DOWNTOWN GOTHAM - NIGHT

SWAT crawl out of the overturned SWAT truck. One takes a boot to the face and flips onto his back.

Prisoners pounce on SWAT, drag them from the wreckage and beat the living hell out of them. An EXPLOSION nearby.

They all look around. Eyes widen --

-- The Batmobile splits a fiery car in half and erupts from the flames. A large turret emerges from the rear, aims --

-- fires BEANBAGS knocking Prisoners out left and right. The tires grind up asphalt. Nitrous kicks in.

The Batmobile pits a fleeing car into a lamppost. The turret locks onto a group of cons, fires.

SWAT retake their guns, attack every target that moves. The Batmobile races off into the night.

INT. ARKHAM ASYLUM - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Arkham Guard#2 escorts a restrained Joker along with guards. They reach a door. Joker looks to one guard, who nods.

JOKER  
Hey, Cockroach Killer.

Guard#2 looks at him.

JOKER  
Knock-knock.

The door slides open --

-- HARLEY, mascara flooding her face, chaos behind her as CROOKS kill GUARDS and STAFF alike, on the other side.

One guard reaches for his weapon. Harley shoots Guard#2 in the head. One of the remaining guards kills the one reaching for his gun. Joker chuckles.

JOKER  
I have missed you.

HARLEY  
Put him in the van, boys.

The guards hand Joker off to a couple of crooks.

HARLEY  
Your services were appreciated. But  
I can't afford loose ends.

She shoots all of them dead.

INT. GETAWAY VAN - NIGHT

Crooks toss Joker in the back. He growls and scowls.

JOKER  
No need to be so rough! I'm the one  
you're supposed to save, nitwits!

Harley climbs in. Someone slides the door shut. She takes a seat across from Joker. Someone drives.

HARLEY  
Do you recall the day you twisted  
me into your puppet? The day that  
you took my life and turned me into  
something else? And after all I did  
(MORE)

HARLEY (cont'd)  
 for you, everyone I killed and you  
 couldn't even send so much as a  
 postcard to let me know you were  
 still alive. Where was I in your  
 big grand plan, huh?

JOKER  
 Harley, dear. Don't be so dramatic.  
 Everything worked out in the end. I  
 love you. You'd never hurt me...

HARLEY  
 That was before.

JOKER  
 We can start again. A clean slate.  
 Take a trip. You always spoke about  
 Rome. Maybe we should go, book a  
 one way ticket outta this dump...  
 come on, gimme a second chance and  
 I'll prove it. You've done all the  
 hard work already. Brought anarchy  
 to Gotham, sprung me from Arkham,  
 brought down the system... let me  
 prove it to you.

HARLEY  
 How? By killing another ferry full  
 of children. Blow up a school?

JOKER  
 Nothing so drastic. Cut me loose  
 and I'll give you the greatest gift  
 a man can give...  
 (smiles)  
 ...Batman.

EXT. DOWNTOWN GOTHAM - NIGHT

Batman RAMS a crook's head through a car window. Pulls him  
 out, slams him into the side and punches him out.

A LUNATIC jumps on Batman's back, claws at his eyes. Batman  
 grabs his head, flips him onto a car hood denting it.

Prisoners, thugs and criminals rush toward Batman. One grabs  
 a gun from the ground.

Batman blocks an incoming punch, kicks out at a prisoner.  
 Nails a crook in the face. Elbows another unconscious.

A thug baseball bats Batman in the back. Batman doesn't react, turns, disarms him and swings for the fences. Thug corkscrews to the ground.

The GUNMAN lines Batman up. Batman drops a smoke grenade. It explodes. He emerges from the smoke swinging a punch --

-- nails the gunman in the jaw. The gun falls. Gunman hits the deck, grabs at his jaw. Batman stares at the gun.

EXT. GCPD - NIGHT

Gordon reels in an automatic, prepares himself.

A THUG shoots a COP in the head. The bad guys overthrow the GCPD. A brute breaks a SWAT'S neck.

Gordon steps out shooting. Thugs and crooks drop. Some go for cover, take bullets to the legs.

Gordon holds his position, empty. Grabs another gun.

INT. GORDON'S HOUSE - LOUNGE - NIGHT

A BRICK smashes through the front window. Barb raises the gun in her trembling hand.

A CONVICT climbs through the window. Sees her.

BARB

Get out of my house.

CONVICT

Aw... you gonna shoot me?

He edges forward. She CLICKS back the hammer. Tears escape her eyes.

CONVICT

Then pull the trigger. Go on. Shoot me in the head. I dare ya. COME ON!

Throws a book at her. The gun goes off, a bullet SMASHES the TV. Convict drags her out of the wheelchair by the hair.

Pins her to the ground. She flails at him. He pins her arms to the floor, sticks out his tongue in a sick way.

BARB

Get off me!

He laughs, leans for her face...

INT. PENTHOUSE - NIGHT

Black Mask pours himself a drink, takes a seat in an armchair by the window and watches the chaos in the streets.

The front door opens, closes. Black Mask raises his glass.

SIONIS

Back so soon? I expected more of-

Deadshot stands in the doorway, pistol in one hand. Cannon poised and ready.

SIONIS

You just don't know when to quit.

Black Mask pulls a gun, shoots. Deadshot takes one to the gut, ducks down, flips a table. Black Mask shoots at it.

Deadshot scrambles for a room divider. A bullet smashes a vase. Another strikes Deadshot's ankle.

Deadshot leans against the wall fighting pain. He looks left then right. A mirror, Black Mask moving in --

-- Deadshot blind-fires over the divider. Black Mask ducks and avoids. A bullet SMASHES the window.

Black Mask rounds the corner, aims -- Deadshot's gone.

SIONIS

A little game of hide and go seek?  
We're grown men, Floyd. This ain't  
our game no more.

LAWTON

I'm NOT hiding!

Deadshot tackles Black Mask over the divider. Black Mask's gun spills out of his hand.

Deadshot sets the cannon to Black Mask's head. Black Mask swats the cannon away, butts him in the face.

Black Mask grabs the gun, turns and shoots. Deadshot dives over the divider.

Black Mask stalks him. Plucks a knife from the counter.

SIONIS

Killing your daughter was business.  
You crossed me. Bitch deserved what  
she got. Killing you, that's gonna  
be my goddamn pleasure.

Deadshot YELLS and runs full steam at him. Black Mask jams the knife into the cannon, pistol whips --

-- Deadshot to the floor. Deadshot grabs at the knife. Black Mask kicks him in the face.

Black Mask takes Deadshot's cannon. Deadshot pushes up, ever resilient. Blood drips from his face.

EXT. GCPD - NIGHT

Gordon lowers the gun, looks around. Dead bodies everywhere. Some cops. Some crooks. A few cops stir...

Police cruisers arrive at the scene. Cops emerge.

EXT. GOTHAM BAPTIST CHURCH - NIGHT

The getaway van parks outside. Riots in the distance. Thugs step out, one slides open the side door --

-- Harley hops out. Two thugs grab restrained Joker and drag him toward the church entrance. They enter.

EXT. DOWNTOWN GOTHAM - NIGHT

Batman breaks a con's arm and punches him out. Stands. Looks at the carnage. Taps on his wrist.

SLADE (O.S.)  
Thought I'd find you here.

Batman freezes, clenches both fists.

Deathstroke walks toward Batman, back to him, pulls a sword and a pistol. Twirls the sword in hand.

SLADE  
Where chaos strikes, the Bat goes.  
You should be dead. Guess that's  
what happens when it's not me  
dealing the killing blow.

Batman's face scrunches in anger. He launches a batarang at Deathstroke. It splits into four --

-- Deathstroke cuts all four out of the air. Batman lands an elbow to the top of his head, unloads on him.

Deathstroke defends, blocks. Batman breaks his defense. Hits in square in the jaw staggering him.

Batman kicks the gun from his hand, disarms his sword. Grabs the sword. Knees Deathstroke in the gut. He keels over --

-- butts him in the back with the hilt of the sword. He goes down to his knees. Looks up --

-- Batman sets the Katana tip to Deathstroke's neck. They stare one another down.

SLADE

You wouldn't.

Batman draws blood. Deathstroke lifts his head slightly, willing him on.

SLADE

Your moral compass won't let you.  
You'll never break your rule...

Batman's eyes intensify. Wrests his hand around the handle.

A young girl in a window sees Batman. Batman sees her. His eyes lower. Deathstroke laughs.

Batman butts him in the face with the hilt of the Katana rendering him unconscious. He drops the sword.

The girl in the window gives a slight smile. He turns away.

The Batmobile arrives. Cockpit slides open. Batman enters. It seals. The Batmobile drives away.

EXT. DOWNTOWN GOTHAM - MONOLITH - NIGHT

Gordon, cops, SWAT and RESISTANCE (Civilians) make their way up the square taking the fight to the CONS and CROOKS.

Gordon shoots a crook in the leg. A civilian nails a con with a tire iron. Cops overthrow armed thugs.

EXT. DOWNTOWN GOTHAM - CHURCH ROOFTOP - NIGHT

A thug sets Joker on his knees with a view of the chaos. Harley cocks a pistol.

HARLEY

Leave.

The thugs leave Harley and Joker alone.

JOKER

I gotta say, I taught you well...  
look at what you've done, Harley.  
Brought Gotham to its knees. You  
should throw a party to celebrate.

HARLEY

I stood there and watched as you  
slugged it out with Batman. I saw  
you get shot and fall from that  
ledge. I mourned you. Buried you.  
But it was all a lie. You tricked  
me. Played me like a harp. I loved  
you and you lied to me!

JOKER

No... I didn't lie to you. I just  
didn't tell you the whole truth.

HARLEY

All these years I've just been  
another one of your lapdogs haven't  
I? Your little puppy... you never  
cared about me.

JOKER

I did. I do. But the pain... it's  
still in me. I just want an end...

She raises the gun, tears flood her face.

JOKER

...give me that end, Harley.

INT. PENTHOUSE - NIGHT

Black Mask rips Deadshot's mask off and grabs his cheeks.

SIONIS

You failed your wife. You failed  
precious little Zoe. You betrayed  
me. ME! Now look at you! Worthless.  
Pathetic. Pitiful. You're NOTHING.

Lawton wearily stares him in the eye.

SIONIS

I gave you everything and you spat  
in my face. Turned rat on me. Tried  
to kill ME! And for what? Misguided  
vengeance? Zoe would be ashamed to  
call you daddy, but I guess you'll  
find out soon enough...

Black Mask clicks back the hammer.

SIONIS

...then again, she was a saint and you... there's a special place in the pit reserved for men like you. Time to go.

LAWTON

No...

SIONIS

It's not an option.

LAWTON

...you're outta bullets.

Black Mask pulls the trigger. CLICK, empty. Lawton kicks him back, rises. Black Mask slashes the knife --

-- Lawton ducks the blade, pushes Black Mask toward the broken window. Black Mask grips the side of the window --

LAWTON

See you in hell you son of a bitch!

-- Lawton kicks Black Mask OUT of the window --

-- Black Mask descends toward the street reaching up and YELLING. Lawton watches him go.

SMASH. A car alarm goes off. Lawton drops to a knee...

LAWTON

Come back from that.

INT. GORDON'S HOUSE - LOUNGE - NIGHT

Convict reveals Barb's cleavage and fondles her. She reaches for the gun, fingertips away...

CONVICT

I'm gonna enjoy this.

BARB

NO!

She KNEES him in the groin. He HUFFS, winded. She grabs the gun and whacks him in the temple. He collapses beside her --

-- She scoots out from under him. Looks at the gun, then sees her foot move. She GASPS. Shock fills her face.

EXT. DOWNTOWN GOTHAM - NIGHT

Cops restrain felons. Citizens perform arrests. Gordon looks around, a COP runs over.

COP#1

Detective! You should see this!

Gordon follows the cop around a corner --

-- Cops and citizens gather around a caved in vehicle, Black Mask mangled among the steel and glass.

Gordon looks up at the penthouse, nods in approval.

INT. PENTHOUSE - NIGHT

A trail of blood droplets leads out of the suite.

EXT. DOWNTOWN GOTHAM - CHURCH ROOFTOP - NIGHT

Harley places the barrel of the gun to the back of Joker's head. Her finger brushes the trigger.

JOKER

It's as easy as one, two, three.  
Just pull the trigger... you know  
you want to. All the pain I caused  
you, all the lives I made you take.  
This is what I made you become. Now  
live up to it and put me down.

Harley hesitates.

JOKER

If you love me, you'll kill me...

HARLEY

I DON'T LOVE YOU!

Joker breaks free off the straight jacket and grips the gun. He wrestles it away and backhands her to the roof.

She holds her cheek, winces. He tosses the gun away and tuts in a disappointed way. Shakes his head.

JOKER

You can't live without me. I made  
you. Without me there is no Harley  
Quinn! There's only Harleen. And  
Harleen can't make the hard choices  
that Harley could!

He grabs her throat, brings her up and reels her in. She gurgles, grabs at his wrist.

JOKER

You disgust me. Nothing but a cheap whore... to think I loved you.

Throws her down. She COUGHS, grabs at her throat. He mounts the ledge and looks out over the city.

JOKER

I guess if you want something done, you have to do it yourself.

EXT. GOTHAM BAPTIST CHURCH - NIGHT

Thugs look up to see Joker turn his back on the world. One of them stands to attention, raises a gun --

-- the Batmobile races toward the church at breakneck speed. Smashes the front of a car.

Thugs open fire on the Batmobile. Bullet bounce off it --

-- The cockpit slides open. Batman SOARS out and up.

EXT. DOWNTOWN GOTHAM - CHURCH ROOFTOP - NIGHT

Joker raises his arms in a crucifix, leans his head back and falls backward, out of sight --

-- Harley looks on in disbelief.

Batman and Joker return over the ledge. Batman drops Joker who tumbles onto the roof. Batman lands a few feet away.

Joker pushes up and MOANS. He scowls at Batman.

JOKER

AAAHHH! You just had to go and ruin the moment! Batman always has to go and save the day!

Batman clenches a fist.

JOKER

I WANT an END! To all the pain. All the misery. And you can't even give me that! Why?! Why do you have to ruin EVERYTHING?!

Joker pulls up the gun and shoots Batman in the gut. Batman drops to a knee, rises. Joker shoots again --

-- a bullet to the arm. Batman keeps coming. Joker backs up. Catches the ledge, tips --

-- Batman grabs him, reels him in, lands a punch.

The gun spills from Joker's hand. Harley eyeballs it.

Batman punches Joker's fake teeth out. Pulls him in. Lands another heavy blow to the eye, then the nose.

JOKER

Is that all you got?!

Joker LAUGHS. Batman throws him down, mounts, pounds Joker's face into mulch. Joker COUGHS blood. CLICK. Batman pauses...

Harley holds the gun in a shaky hand. Batman looks dead at it, unmoving.

HARLEY

Let him go. Now.

Batman steps off Joker. Joker pulls himself up at the ledge.

JOKER

You see, Bats? Everyone needs a sidekick. Where's yours?

Batman snarls.

JOKER

The moral of the story is... always have a contingency p-

A gunshot POPS. Harley GASPS. Batman's eyes find Joker --

-- blood pours through Joker's shirt. He places a hand over his heart, faintly smiles, looks to Harley.

She drops the gun in shock, eyes frantic... winces.

JOKER

Thank you...

Joker falls over the edge. Batman just watches --

-- Joker descends with a happy smile on his face toward the concrete. He laughs his final laugh.

A SICKENING THUD hits their ears. Harley cups a hand over her mouth and drops to her knees crying.

Batman shows no pity, eyes unmoving...

EXT. GOTHAM BAPTIST CHURCH - NIGHT

Joker lays motionless. Smile on his face. Blood pools around his head and flows into the sewers...

CUT TO BLACK:

FADE IN:

EXT. DOWNTOWN GOTHAM - DAY

City workers clean the streets. A car hauler carries away a batch of burnt out vehicles.

NEWSCASTER (V.O.)

Three days after the devastating attacks that shook Gotham to its core, the city is slowly returning to normality.

EXT. BLACKGATE PRISON - DAY

Armed cops stand guard as PRISONERS leave buses in chains and shackles.

NEWSCASTER (V.O.)

Most of the escaped convicts from Blackgate Prison have been found and returned to their cells... but some are still unaccounted for and pose a threat. The police are asking for the citizens of Gotham to be alert, and that if you see or know anything, to contact them with any information you might have.

INT. GOTHAM TIMES HQ - DAY

Ryder finishes an article. Leans back. Proud. "JOKER DEAD"  
"By Jack Ryder and Vicki Vale".

NEWSCASTER (V.O.)

In further news. The GCPD have confirmed during the attacks, the Joker was found dead. Police have yet to release details on the suspect but early reports suggest he was killed by one of his own.

INT. ARKHAM ASYLUM - CELL 2 - DAY

Harley sits alone sobbing and rocking to/fro.

INT. THE ICEBERG LOUNGE - OFFICE - NIGHT

Elliot patches up Lawton. Oswald keeps an eye on things.

ELLIOT

I thought I was clear enough when I  
said to keep yourself grounded?

LAWTON

I had something to take care of.

ELLIOT

And?

LAWTON

It's taken care of.

ELLIOT

See to it that it is.

Elliot collects his bag. Oswald hands him an envelope.

ELLIOT

No more, Mr. Lawton.

Lawton holds up a hand.

LAWTON

Scout's honor, doc.

Elliot leaves. Oswald pulls a package from the top drawer of his desk, sets it in Lawton's lap.

OSWALD

It's time.

LAWTON

The last time.

OSWALD

You live up to your end, I'll live  
up to mine.

Lawton pulls a large photograph from the package along with a "VOTE DENT!" badge and pamphlet.

Oswald turns away, discreetly smirks.

INT. GORDON'S HOUSE - LOUNGE - DAY

Gordon smiles as Barb walks with crutches. She makes it to him. He embraces her, tears in his eyes. She laughs...

INT. THE BATCAVE - DAY

Bruce welds the underside of the computer. Scoots out from beneath and taps on the keyboard.

The computer wakes up. He smiles.

INT. WAYNE MANOR - FOYER - DAY

DING-DONG. DING-DONG. Bruce opens the door. Barb, on the crutches, stands outside.

BARB

Hi.

BRUCE

(RE: Barb walking)

Hey.

BARB

Are you just gonna stare or are you gonna invite me in?

BRUCE

Yeah, sure. Come in.

She hobbles inside. He closes the door.

BARB

I forgot how huge this place was. It's been a while...

BRUCE

Your dad drop you off?

BARB

No, I got a cab. He's at work. A lot to do. You know how it is...

He nods in agreement. She looks around...

BARB

Answering your own door now? Alfred in the cave or are you just-

Bruce's face falls. She looks on.

BRUCE  
He... uh... passed away. During...  
the explosion...

BARB  
Oh...

Tears build in her eyes.

BARB  
I'm so sorry, Bruce...

He wipes a tear, bows his head. She presses a hand to his  
cheek, rubs. He raises his head.

BARB  
Anything you need.

BRUCE  
I appreciate that. Thank you, Barb.

They hug in a sibling way. A lot of love there. They part.

BRUCE  
Look at you. Always defying nature.  
You never could take a back seat.

BARB  
I'm a Gordon. It's in my DNA.

BRUCE  
Just like your old man...

BARB  
Ditto.

Bruce appreciates this. She smiles.

BARB  
When Batman decides to return... I  
just want you to know, he won't be  
alone. Oracle's always watching.

She pulls a police file from her jacket, hands it to him.

BRUCE  
What's this?

BARB  
Motivation.

INT. THE BATCAVE - DAY

Bruce sets the file on the table. Sets his hands on the top.

BRUCE  
What's the prognosis?

A HOLOGRAPHIC PROJECTION of Alfred stands by.

ALFRED  
At least five of Blackgate Prison's most endowed criminals are still on the loose, sir. And if I may say, the list is quite dire.

BRUCE  
Show me.

MONITOR: Names on files appear "POISON IVY", "THE RIDDLER", "SCARECROW", "GARFIELD LYNNS AKA FIREFLY" and...

Bruce opens the police file. The name "BANE" at the top...

MONITOR: ..."BANE".

ALFRED  
When do we start, sir?

Bruce looks to the Batsuit...

BRUCE  
We just did.

CUT TO CREDITS:

FADE IN:

INT. ARKHAM ASYLUM - INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

Harley sits alone at the table. Someone in the shadows...

RICK  
I've been looking over your file.  
Got quite the rap sheet. Murder.  
Mayhem. Arson. Got a taste for  
destruction, Ms. Quinzel.

HARLEY  
It's Quinn.

"Rick" paces in the shadows.

HARLEY

What do you want, exactly? There's obviously a reason you're here...

RICK

I'm putting something together. Call it a second chance. A way for you to wash away your sins and be a better you.

HARLEY

Guess you haven't heard. I'm in for the long haul. Been a bad girl.

RICK

That's just what we need. A little diversity always helps.

HARLEY

Sorry, not interested.

RICK

I'm sorry to hear that.

The shadows conceal him as he approaches and sets a card on the table. She tries to get a read on him.

RICK

If you change your mind my number's on the back.

Rick knocks on the door. Keys jangle outside. The door opens and he leaves. The door closes.

Harley scoops up the card, blank on the front, turns it over and reads "RICK FLAG..." and a phone number.

CUT TO BLACK:

CONTINUE CREDITS