



BATMAN®



THE DARK KNIGHT®  
RETURNS

TENTH ANNIVERSARY EDITION

FRANK MILLER  
WITH KLAUS JANSON  
AND LYNN VARLEY



# THE DARK KNIGHT RETURNS



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

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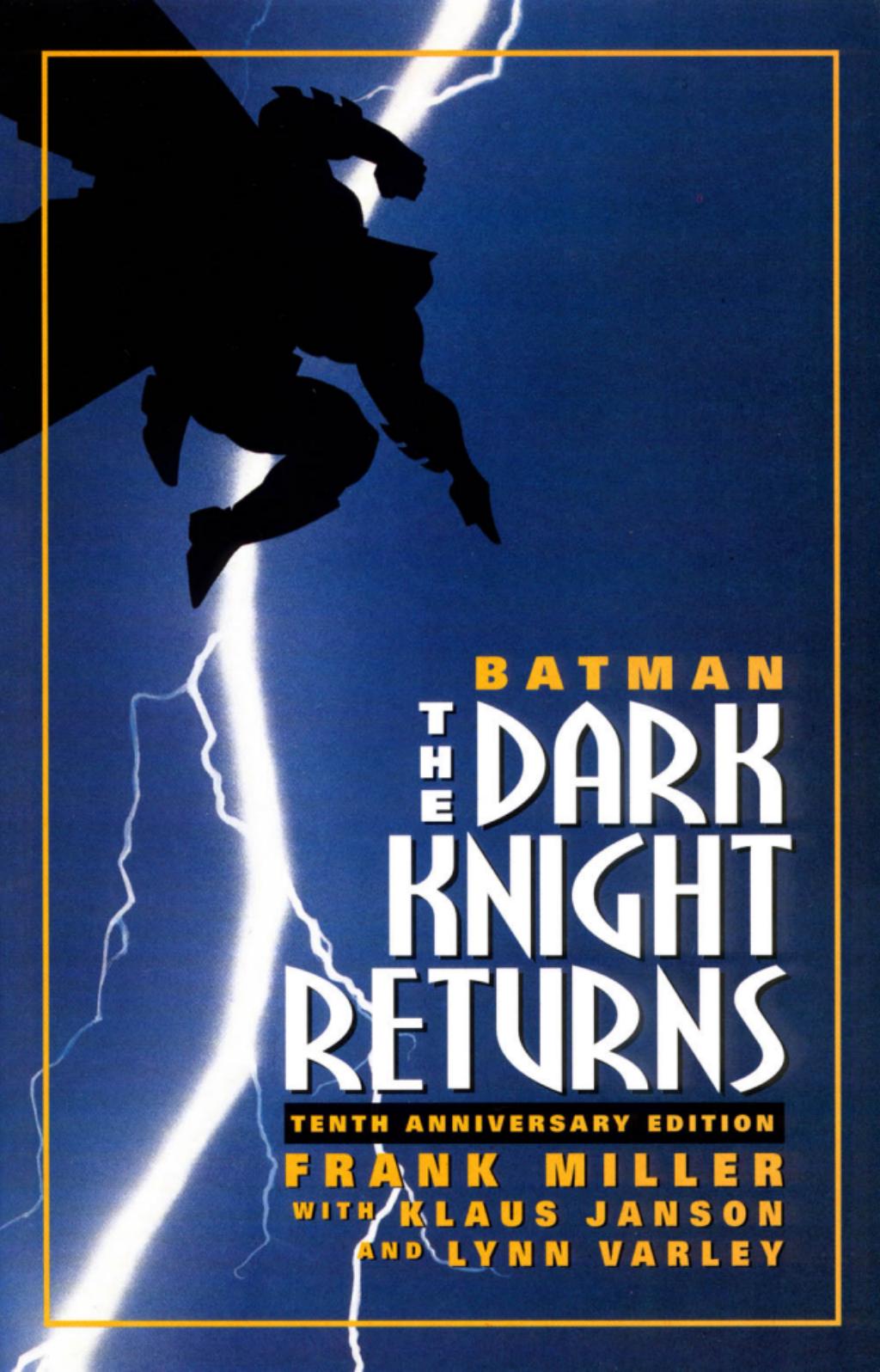
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Trade Paperback cover illustration  
by Frank Miller and Lynn Varley.

A large, dark silhouette of Batman is shown in mid-air, flying towards the right. He is in a dynamic pose with one arm forward and one leg bent. The background is a deep blue, and several bright white lightning bolts streak across the sky, creating a dramatic and intense atmosphere.

# BATMAN THE DARK KNIGHT RETURNS

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AND LYNN VARLEY

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# DARK KNIGHT DAYS

BY FRANK MILLER  
16 SEPTEMBER 1996

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

This was intolerable. Something had to be done.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

He insists.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



DEDICATED TO  
**Will Jungkuntz**  
1955-1985

B O O K   O N E



THE DARK KNIGHT RETURNS

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

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

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

IT ISN'T PROGRAMMED TO -- BRUCE!

BRUCE, YOU SON OF A

GRRRRR

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

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

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

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

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



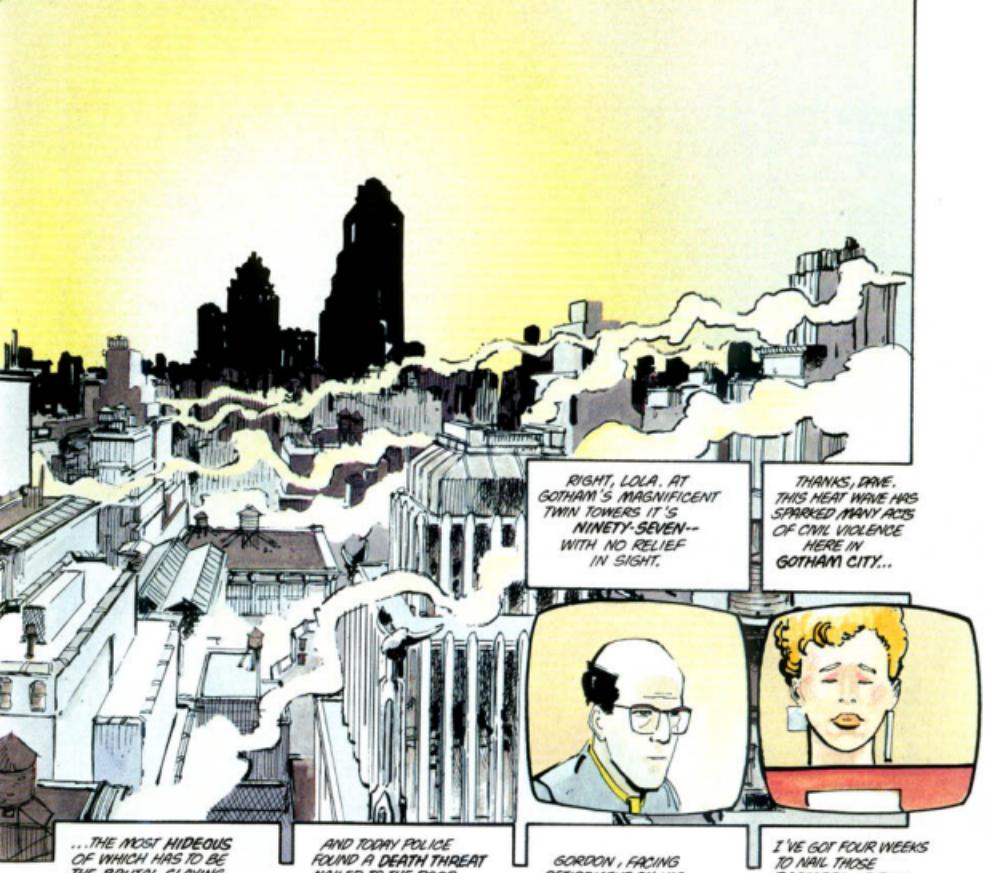
...BUT NOT GOOD ENOUGH.

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

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

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





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

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



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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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





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

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

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

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



...BORN HERE.

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

--IT COULD  
HAVE HAPPENED  
YESTERDAY.

IT COULD  
BE HAPPENING  
RIGHT NOW.

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



SO MANY...

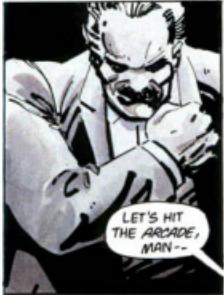
I DON'T  
KNOW, MAN.  
LOOK AT  
HIM. HE'S  
INTO IT--

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

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

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

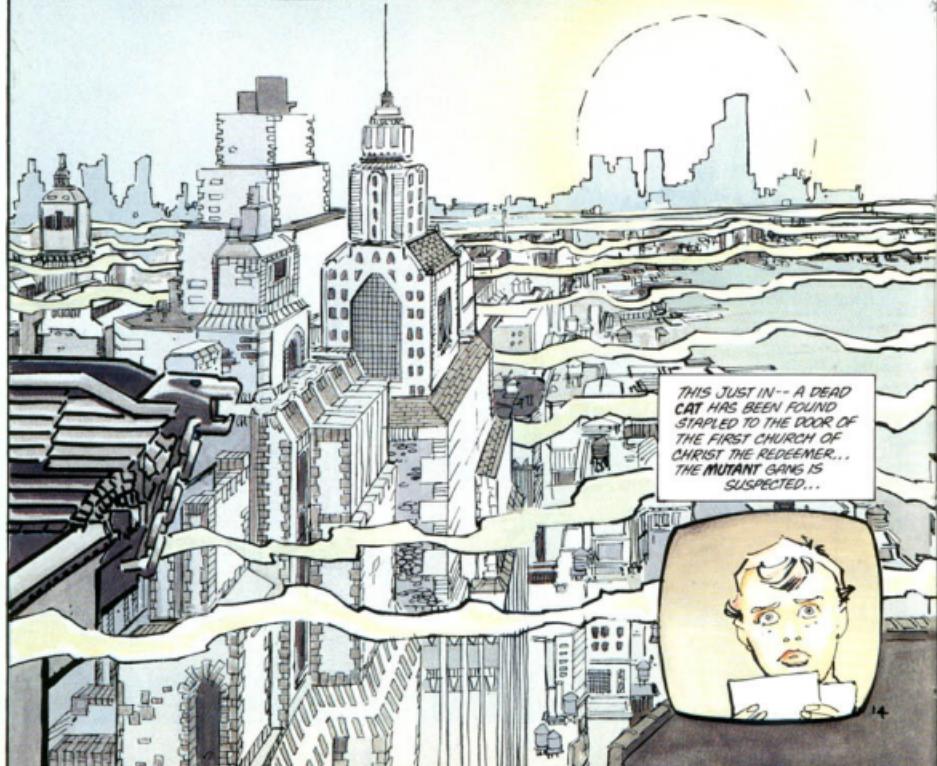
...AND THIS WORLD IS THEIRS.

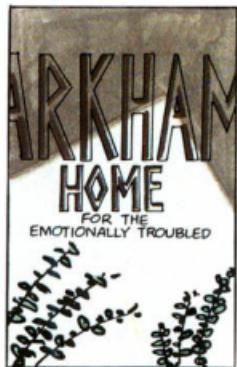


...BUTCHERY OF EVERY MEMBER OF THE FAMILY. THE MILITANT ORGANIZATION IS BELIEVED TO HAVE COMMITTED THIS ATROCITY FOR MONEY THE FAMILY HAD...

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

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

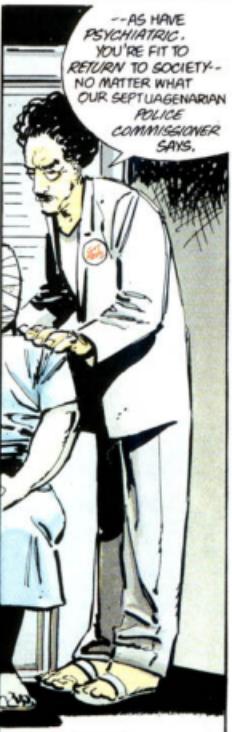




## INTENSIVE TREATMENT WARD



NINETY-NINE  
DEGREES AND  
THE AIR  
CONDITIONER  
BLOWS...  
NO VISITORS





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

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

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



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

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

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

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



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

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

SPEAKING TODAY, BOTH DOCTORS WERE JUBILANT.

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



AND HE LOOKS GREAT.

DENT READ A BRIEF STATEMENT TO THE MEDIA...

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

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



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

IT WAS, OF COURSE, UNMARRIED.

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

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



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

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

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

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



SKREE SKREE  
SKREE SKREE  
SKREE SKREE  
SKREE SKREE  
SKREE SKREE  
SKREE SKREE  
SKREE SKREE



SKREE SKREE  
SKREE SKREE

OOF!  
SKREE  
SKREE  
SKREE  
OWW!



THEN...

SOMETHING  
SHUFFLES.  
OUT OF SIGHT...

SOMETHING  
SUCKS THE  
STALE AIR...

...AND  
HISSES.

SKREE SKREE

GLIDING WITH ANCIENT GRACE...

UNWILLING TO RETREAT AS  
HIS BROTHERS DID...

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

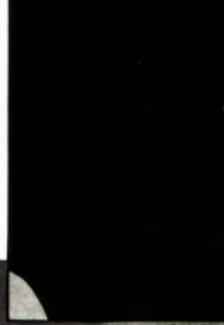
BREATH HOT WITH THE TASTE OF  
FALLEN FOES...THE STENCH OF  
DEAD THINGS, DAMNED THINGS...



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

GLARING, HATING...

...CLAIMING ME AS HIS OWN.



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

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

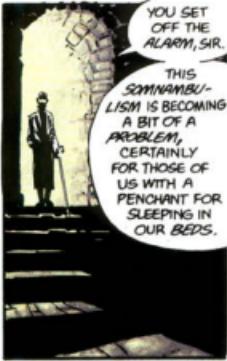
--AND HE LAUGHS AT  
ME, CURSES ME,  
CALLS ME A FOOL,  
HE FILLS MY SLEEP,  
HE TRICKS ME,  
BRINGS ME HERE  
WHEN THE NIGHT  
IS LONG AND MY  
WILL IS WEAK, HE  
STRUGGLES  
RELENTLESSLY,  
HATEFULLY, TO BE  
FREE--

I WILL NOT  
LET HIM. I GAVE  
MY WORD.

FOR JASON.

NEVER.  
NEVER AGAIN.





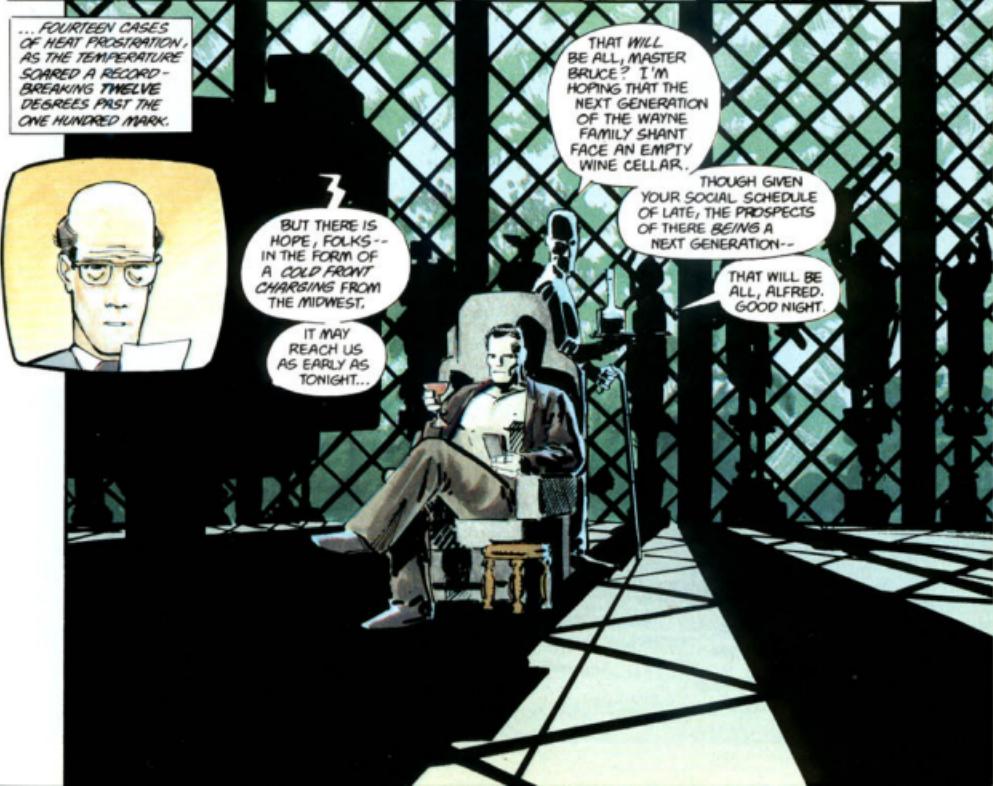
FOR ME, THIS IS THE END OF A LONG NIGHT-MARE... AND THE FIRST STEP ON THE LONG ROAD TO ABSOLUTION.

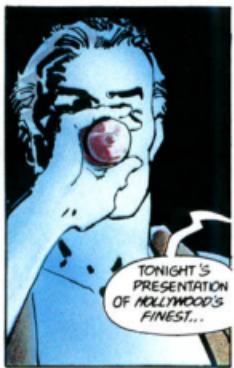
...THOSE WERE THE LAST WORDS Spoken IN PUBLIC BY HARVEY DENT BEFORE HIS DISAPPEARANCE THIS MORNING.

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

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

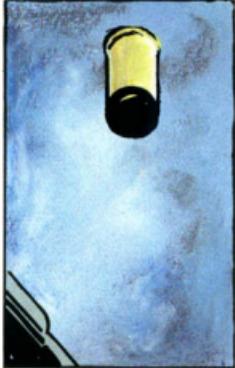






YOU LOVED IT SO MUCH... YOU JUMPED AND DANCED LIKE A FOOL... YOU REMEMBER...









THE  
TIME  
HAS  
COME.

YOU  
KNOW  
IT IN  
YOUR  
SOUL.

FOR I  
AM YOUR  
SOUL...

YOU  
CANNOT  
ESCAPE  
ME...



YOU ARE PUNY,  
YOU ARE SMALL--

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

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

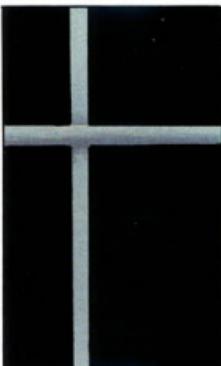
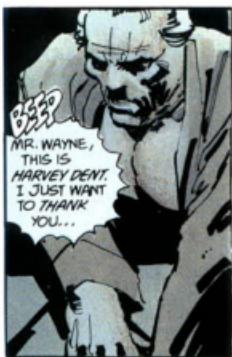


YOU CANNOT STOP ME--NOT  
WITH WINE OR VOWS OR  
THE WEIGHT OF AGE--

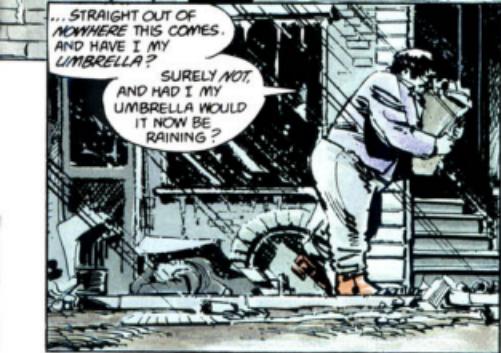
YOU CANNOT STOP ME BUT  
STILL YOU TRY-- STILL  
YOU RUN--

YOU TRY TO DROWN ME OUT...

...BUT YOUR  
VOICE IS  
WEAK...



RRRRRRMMMM BBBLLL



# KRE SS SHH



# KRE SS SHH



# R R M B L I I K K K R R A K K K K



YOU LEF US ONE CIV-  
PLEAS'D CUSTOMUM  
BACK THERE,  
JOANNIE...

LISSEN,  
SILK--

...THAT BASTARD  
WANTED ME TO  
AAAAA...

YOU SMILE A LITTLE  
HIDER NOW, JOANNIE...

...DOG  
EAT DOG  
WORLD...

CHAR  
CHAR

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

CHAR  
CHAR  
CHAR

DON STICK US.  
THAT WAS ON  
TH ROOF.

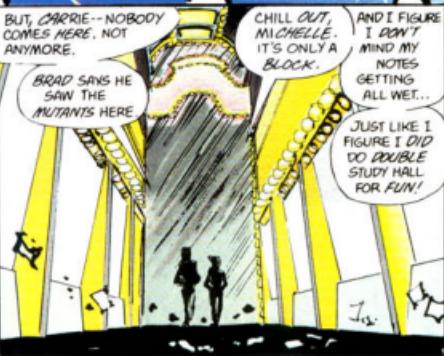
THE  
ROOF?

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

WHUMP

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







THUNK  
THUNK  
THUNK  
THUNKK





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

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



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

YOU  
DON'T  
SUPPOSE...



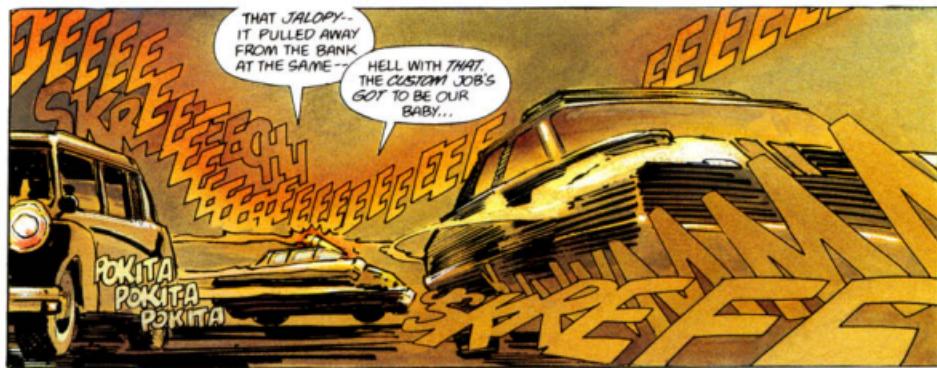
THIS JUST IN--  
TWO YOUNG CHILDREN  
WHO DISAPPEARED THIS  
MORNING HAVE BEEN  
FOUND UNHARMED IN  
A RIVERSIDE  
WAREHOUSE.

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

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

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





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

...BY THE BATMAN.

ALTHOUGH SEVERAL RESCUED VICTIMS-TO-BE HAVE DESCRIBED THE VIGILANTE TO NEWS TWELVE REPORTERS...

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



THIS SHOULD BE AGONY.

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

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

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



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



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

THE RAIN ON  
MY CHEST IS A  
BAPTISM--

I'M  
BORN  
AGAIN...

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



I SMELL THEIR  
FEAR--AND IT  
IS SWEET.

--WHAT THE  
HELL IS--

--CAN'T  
SEE--

--JESUS  
SLOW  
DOWN--

--STOP  
THE  
CAR--

--BUT WHAT  
IS THAT--

--IT'LL  
GET US--

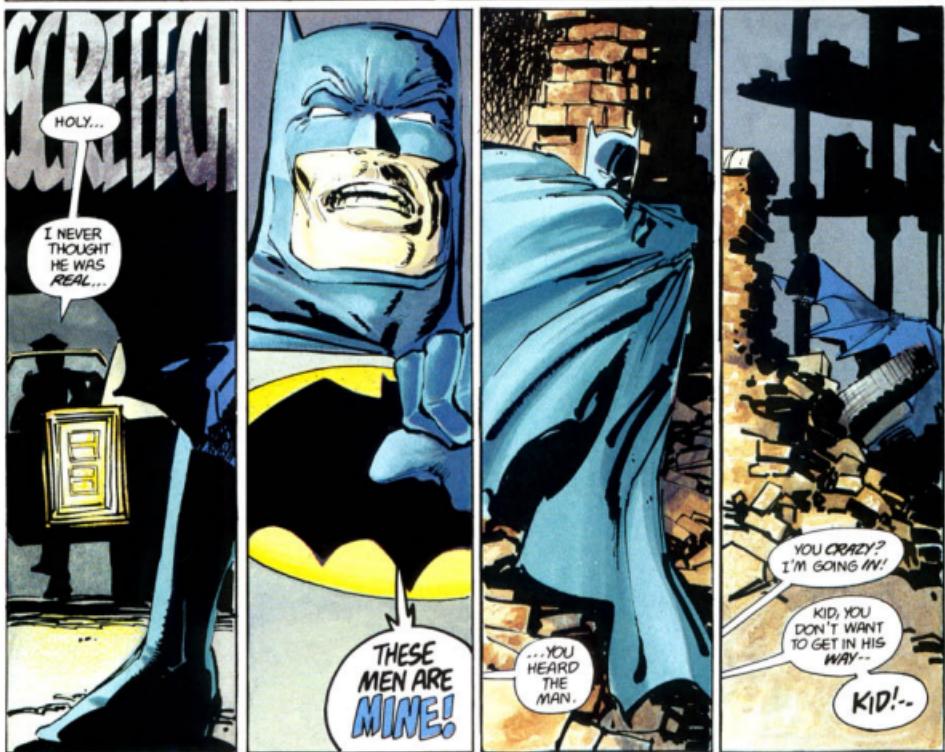
--HIT THE  
BRAKES--

SSSSSKYKREEEEEE

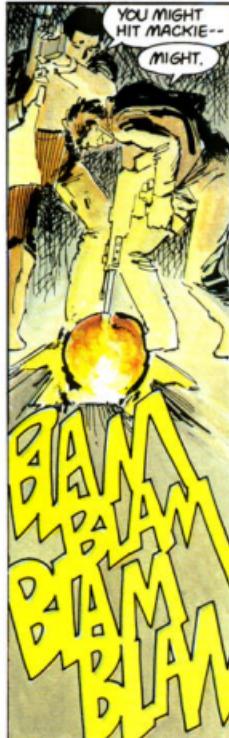
EECHHHH SKREEEEEE

EEEEEEECHHHH SKREEEEEE

EEF EEECHHHH









LET'S SEE WHAT YOU'VE GOT.

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

OH  
CHRIST  
I CAN'T  
STAND  
IT...

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

I'LL  
SHOOT--

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

NICE  
TO HAVE  
YOU BACK,  
BATS.

GO TO THEIR CAR,  
KID. FETCH THE  
PAYROLL.

I DON'T  
BELIEVE  
THIS...

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

PILLS. NO END  
TO YOUR BAD  
HABITS...

PPLEASE...

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

I WAS A  
ROOKIE-- LIKE  
SHMUCK FACE  
HERE.

IT WAS A  
LONG TIME  
AGO.

AT THE  
BANK-- WAS  
THERE A  
SECOND CAR?

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

YOU  
WEREN'T  
SUPPOSED  
TO.

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

--I MEAN, I WAS  
JUST A KID  
BACK THEN...

TELL  
GORDON  
WE HAVE  
TO TALK.

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

OM, YEAH!  
NOW I  
REMEMBER...

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



SURE KEPT  
THE HOSPITALS  
BUSY.

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

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

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

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



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

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

HE CERTAINLY IS TROUBLE FOR HIS VICTIMS.

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



AND BATMAN IS?



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



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



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



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



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



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



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



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

SCREW THE PRESS!



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

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



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

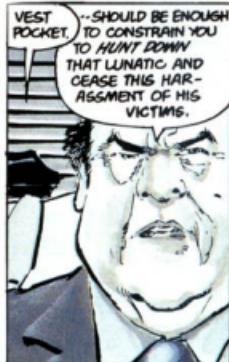


TURN THAT GOD DAMNED THING OFF, MERKEL...

A SAD, STRANGE CRIMINAL WAS HARVEY DENT.



COMMISSIONER, IF YOU PLEASE...



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

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

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

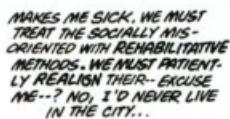
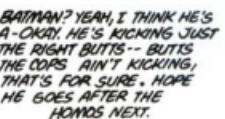
WITH THAT VIDEO TAPED MESSAGE, THE MUTANT LEADER -- WHOSE NAME AND FACE REMAIN A SECRET -- HAS DECLARED WAR ON THE CITY OF GOTHAM... AND ON ITS MOST FAMOUS CHAMPION...



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

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







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

THE PAYROLL ROBBERY WAS COMMITTED TO SPONSOR IT?

SPONSOR IT? THAT DOESN'T MAKE SENSE.

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

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

HE'S NOT CAREFUL, WHOEVER HE IS.

YOU STILL DON'T THINK IT'S DENT?

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

BUT IF IT IS...

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

THAT'S ALL HE KNEW, JIM.

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

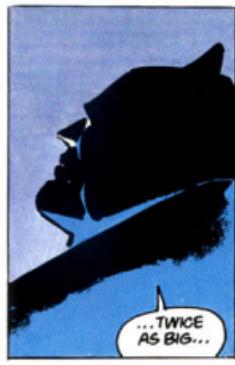
IF IT'S HARVEY, WE'LL CATCH HIM... THE TRICK WILL BE TO KEEP HIM ALIVE. HE'S POSSESSED, JIM. OUT OF CONTROL.

I THINK HE WANTS TO DIE.

WE ARE TALKING ABOUT HARVEY DENT...

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

...TWICE AS BIG...

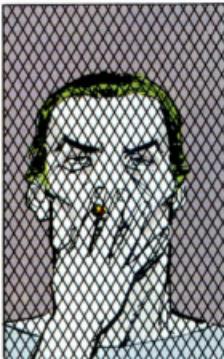
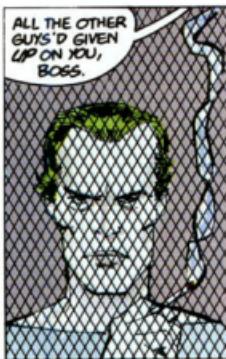


YES, MERV. I AM  
CONVINCED OF  
HARVEY'S INNOCENCE.  
ABSOLUTELY. HOWEVER, I  
WON'T GO SO FAR AS TO  
SAY I'M SURE HE HASN'T  
RETURNED TO CRIME.

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

BATMAN'S PSYCHOTIC  
SUBLIMATIVE / PSYCHO-  
EROTIC BEHAVIOR PATTERN  
IS LIKE A NET. WEAK-EGOED  
NEUROTICS, LIKE HARVEY,  
ARE DRAWN INTO CORRESPOND-  
ING INTERSTICING PATTERNS.

YOU MIGHT SAY BATMAN  
COMMITTS THE CRIMES...  
USING HIS SO-CALLED  
VILLAINS AS NARCISSIS-  
TIC PROXIES...



ONE MORE TIME I  
CHECK MY UTILITY  
BELT.

GAS AMPULES.  
FREEZING  
COMPOUND.  
CABLE,  
GRAPPLING  
HOOKS.  
STETHOSCOPE.  
PAIN  
KILLERS.

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

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

THEN I  
HEAR IT.

WHUP WHUP WHUP WHUP WHUP WHUP WHUP WHUP

DENT--OR WHOEVER  
IS SURE TO BE IN  
THE NEVER COPTER.  
I'M HOING HE'LL  
LAND ON THE  
TOWER I PICKED...

BUT I'M NOT  
COUNTING ON IT.



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

I PICKED  
THE WRONG  
ROOF.



GOOD  
THING I  
BROUGHT  
THE GUN.



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

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

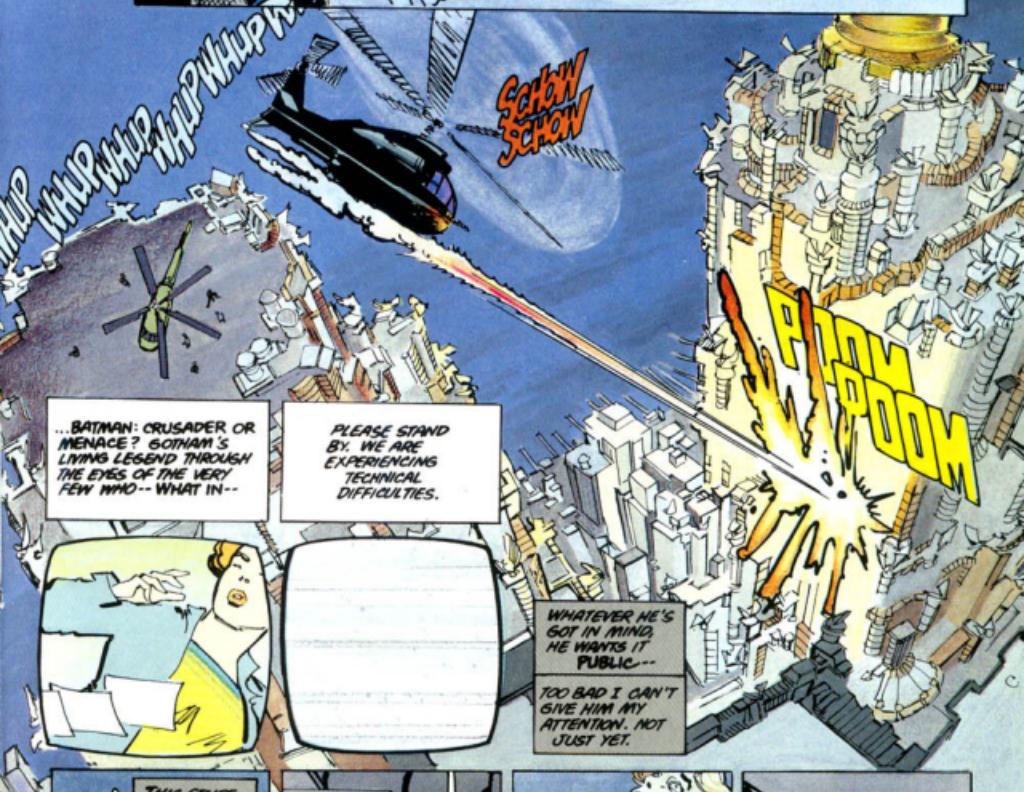
BROADCAST LIVE  
FROM GOTHAM'S TWIN  
TOWERS, IT'S  
NEWS TWO...



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



PAIN THAT'S  
THREE DAYS  
OLD CRACKS  
ACROSS MY  
BACK. I  
KICK THE  
DUST FROM  
MY JOINTS  
AND CLIMB.  
IT USED  
TO BE  
EASIER.

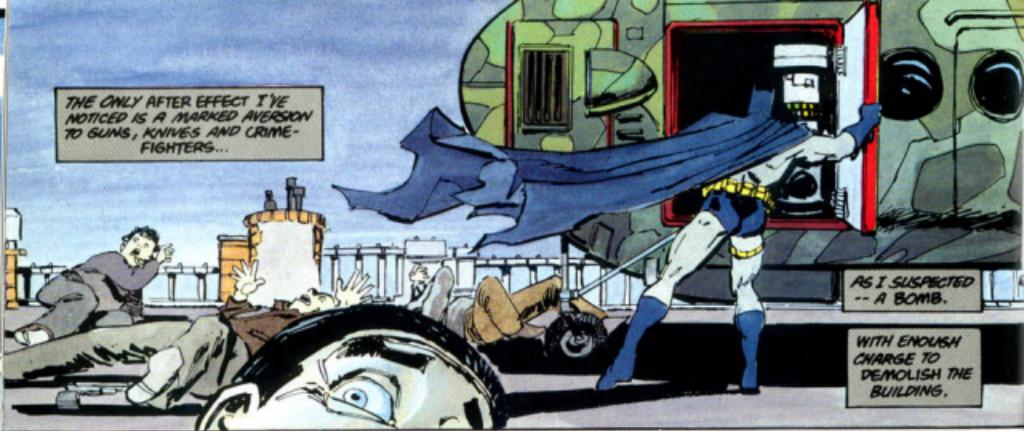


IT CONCENTRATES A POWERFUL STIMULANT TO A SECTION OF THE RIGHT HEMISPHERE OF YOUR BRAIN.



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

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



AS I SUSPECTED  
-- A BOMB.

WITH ENOUGH  
CHARGE TO  
DEMOLISH THE  
BUILDING.

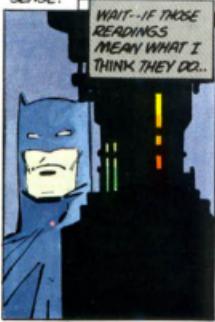
APPARENTLY A DETONATOR  
JOB. THAT WOULD MAKE  
SENSE.

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

AM I ON?

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

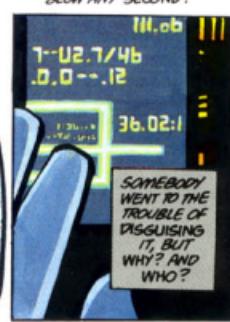
PEOPLE OF GOTHAM--LET  
ME APOLOGIZE RIGHT OFF  
THE BAT FOR THE INTERRUPT-  
TION OF YOUR VIEWING  
PLEASURE. THIS IS  
HARVEY DENT SPEAKING.



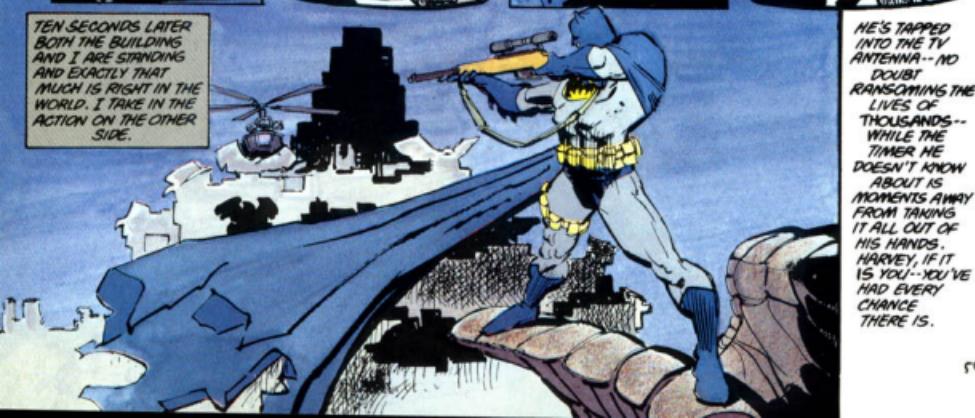
BRILLIANT DESIGN--WORTHY  
OF THE JOKER.



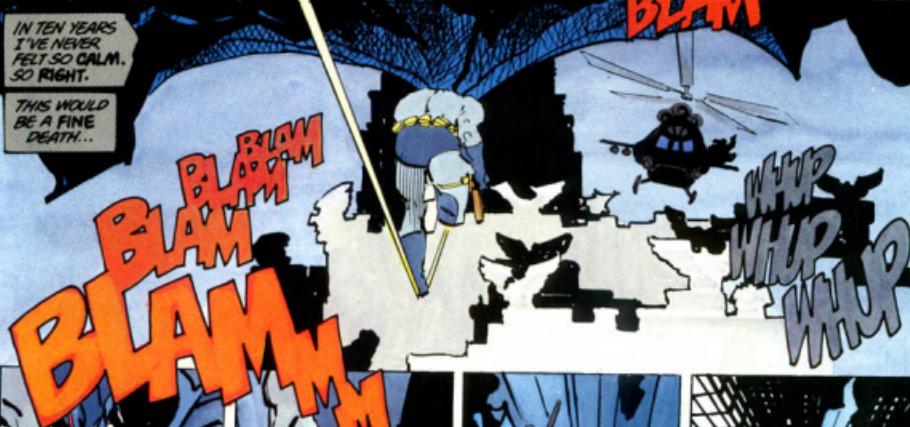
I STAND HERE ATOP  
GOTHAM'S BEAUTIFUL TWIN  
TOWERS, WITH TWO  
BOMBS CAPABLE OF  
MAKING THEM RUBBLE.  
YOU HAVE TWENTY MINUTES  
TO SAVE THEM.

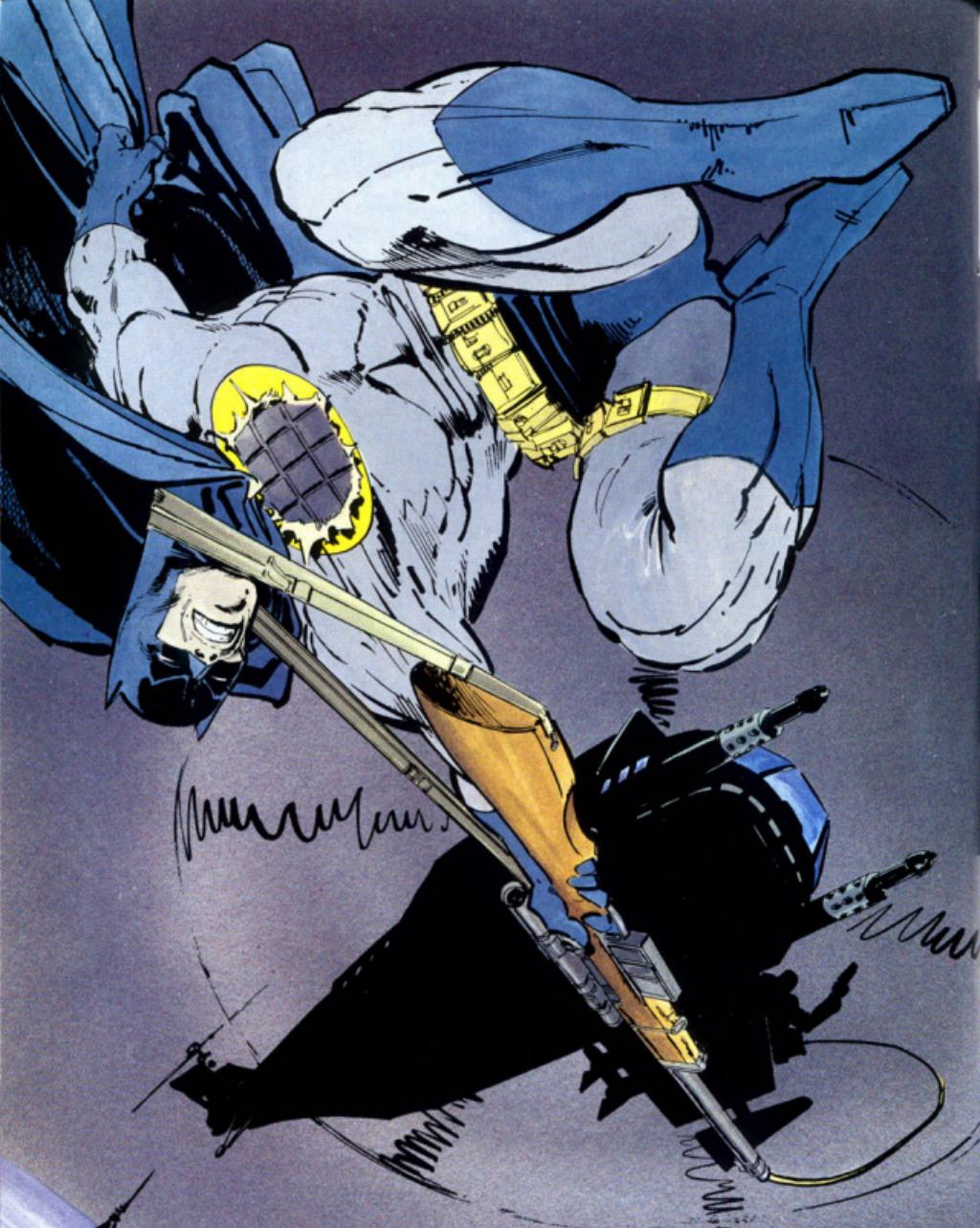


TEN SECONDS LATER  
BOTH THE BUILDING  
AND I ARE STANDING  
AND EXACTLY THAT  
MUCH IS RIGHT IN THE  
WORLD. I TAKE IN THE  
ACTION ON THE OTHER  
SIDE.



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





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

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

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



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

THOUGHTS LIKE  
THAT KEEP ME  
WARM AT NIGHT.

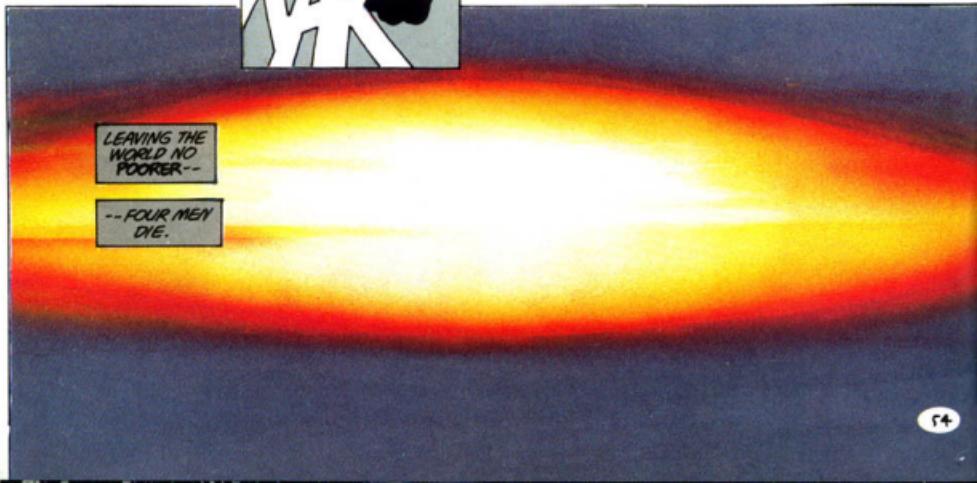


WEEES



LEAVING THE  
WORLD NO  
POORER--

--FOUR MEN  
DIE.



...HARVEY...

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

YOU HAVE TO ADMIT  
THAT--I PLAYED  
ALONS...

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

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

THE SCARS  
GO DEEP,  
TOO DEEP...

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

AT LEAST...  
BOTH SIDES  
MATCH...

I CLOSE MY  
EYES AND  
LISTEN.

NOT FOOLED  
BY SIGHT, I  
SEE HIM...

HAVE YOUR  
LAUGH,  
BATMAN--  
TAKE A  
LOOK!

...TAKE  
A LOOK...

...AS  
HE IS.

I SEE HIM.  
I SEE...

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

A  
REFLECTION.





B O O K   T W O



THE DARK KNIGHT TRIUMPHANT

PROBLEM WITH CRIME IS  
THE MORE YOU KNOW, THE  
MORE NERVOUS IT MAKES  
YOU.



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

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



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



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



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



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

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



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



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



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

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



THEN I SUCK IT AGAIN.



58



SUDDENLY THE HAIR  
BRISTLES ON THE BACK OF  
MY NECK.



I HEAR A GIRLISH GIGGLE  
AND THE COLD OILED  
SOUND OF A GUN BEING  
COCKED BEHIND ME.



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

I THINK OF SARAH.

THE REST IS EASY.



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

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



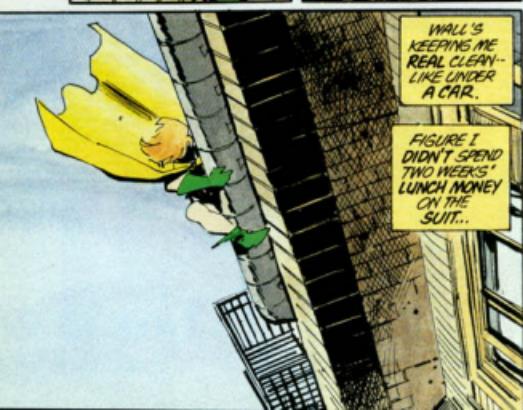
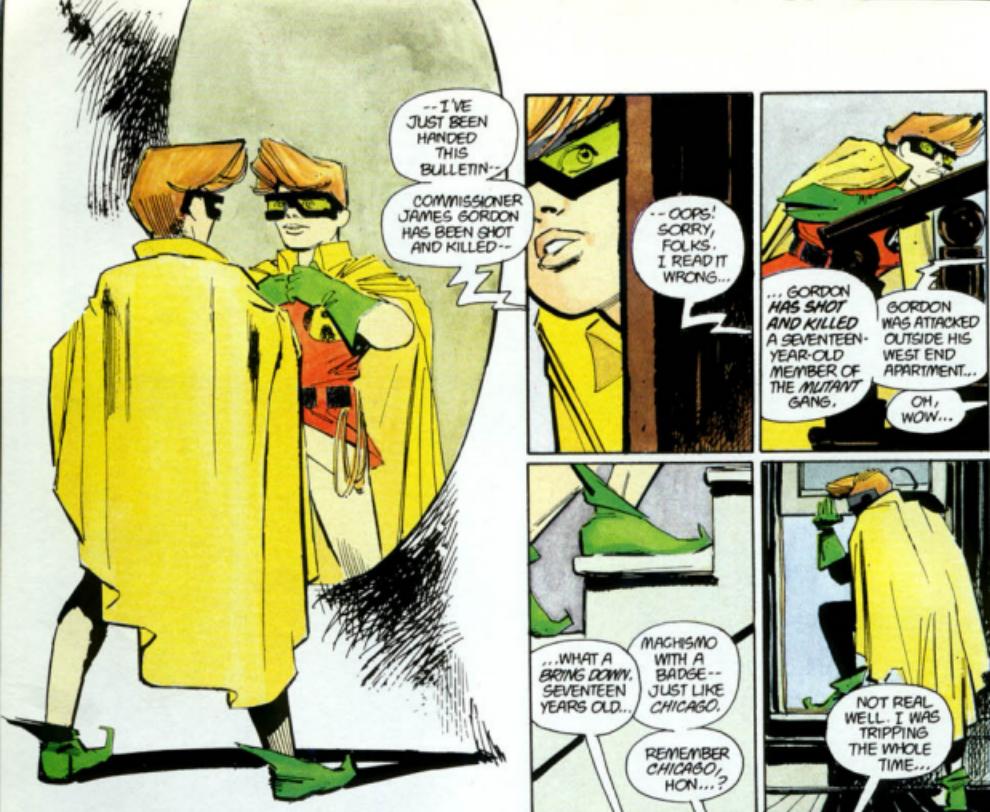
THE MAYOR SPOKE TO REPORTERS THIS AFTERNOON ...

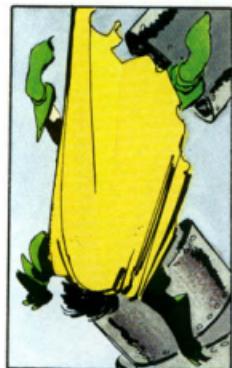
STILL IN CONSULTATION. IT'S STILL IN CONSULTATION.

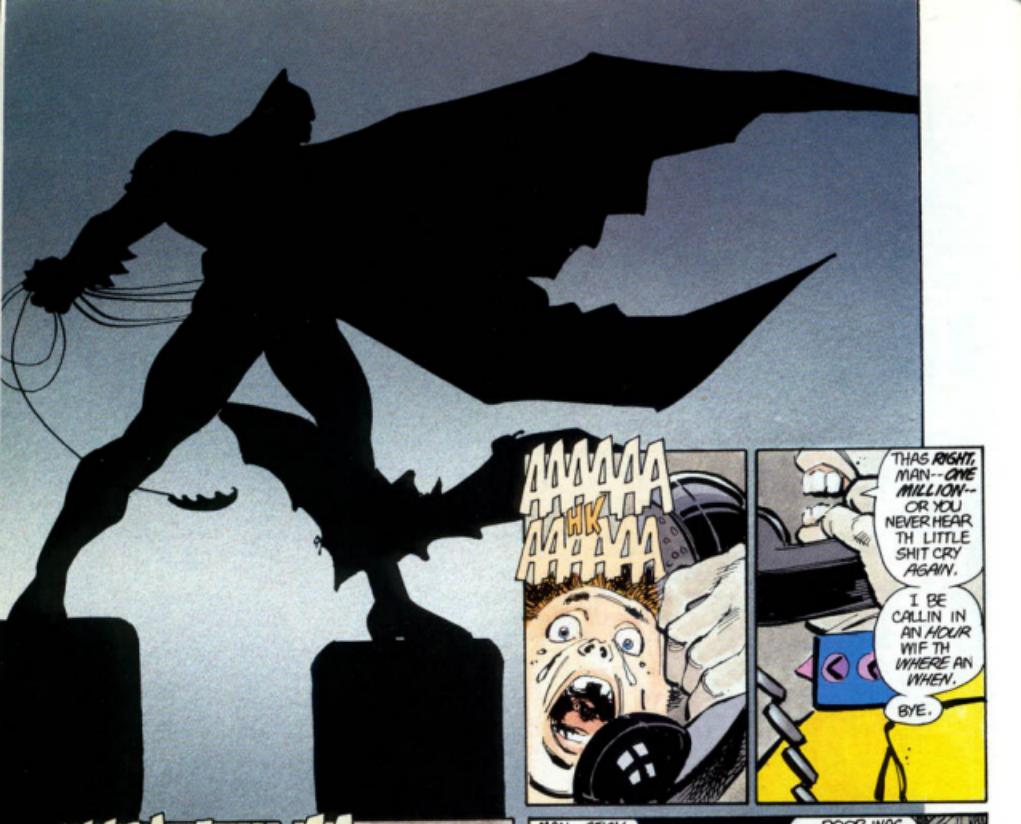
INCIDENTS OF VIOLENCE TO CRIMINALS CONTINUE TO ABOUND IN GOTHAM. WE CANNOT BE SURE WHICH ARE THE WORK OF THE BATMAN--

--AND WHICH HE HAS INSPIRED.  
EXCUSE ME --





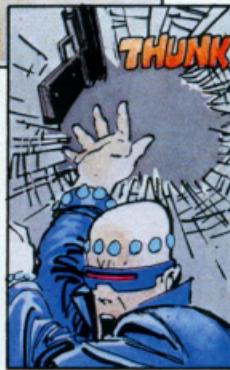




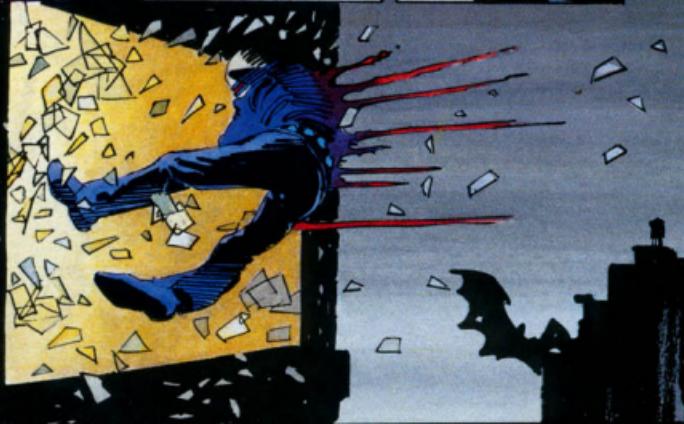


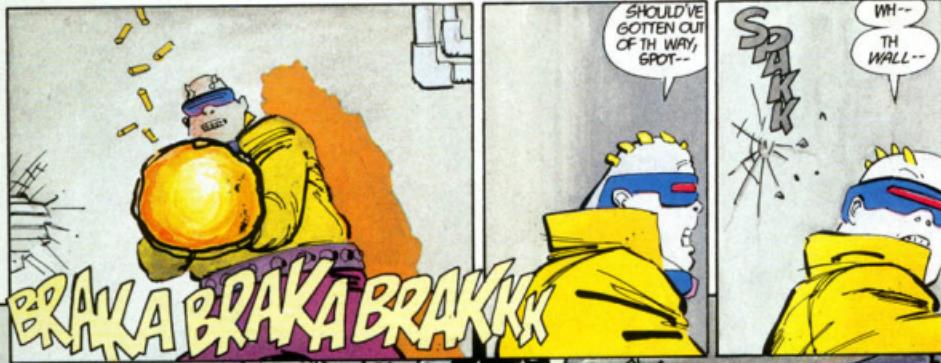
CHILL, MAN--  
IT'S JUST A  
GOD DAMN--  
-- BAT...--

SKREEEE SKREEEE



BRAKA  
BRAKA  
BRAKA  
BRAKA  
BRAKA







I BELIEVE YOU.



... A RUTHLESS, MONSTROUS VIGILANTE, STRIKING AT THE FOUNDATIONS OF OUR DEMOCRACY - MALICIOUSLY OPPOSED TO THE PRINCIPLES THAT MAKE OURS THE MOST NOBLE NATION IN THE WORLD - AND THE KINDEST...

... FRANKLY, I'M SURPRISED THERE AREN'T A HUNDRED LIKE HIM OUT THERE -- A THOUSAND PEOPLE ARE FED UP WITH TERROR - WITH STUPID LAWS AND SOCIAL COWARDICE. HE'S ONLY TAKING BACK WHAT'S OURS...

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

TONIGHT, WE WILL EXAMINE HIS IMPACT ON OUR CONSCIOUSNESS. FROM METROPOLIS - WE HAVE LANA LANG, MANAGING EDITOR OF THE DAILY PLANET...

... JOINING US FROM GOTHAM CITY - DR. BARTHOLEMW WOLPER, POPULAR PSYCHOLOGIST AND SOCIAL SCIENTIST, AUTHOR OF THE BEST-SELLING "HEY - I'M OKAY..."

... WITH US TONIGHT FROM HIS OFFICE IN WASHINGTON -- PRESIDENTIAL MEDIA ADVISOR CHUCK BRICK.



DR. WOLPER - YOU HAVE CLAIMED THAT THE BATMAN IS HIMSELF RESPONSIBLE FOR THE CRIMES HE FIGHTS. STILL, CRIME RATES HAVE SHOWN A STEADY DROP IN THE WEEKS SINCE HIS RETURN. HOW DO YOU EXPLAIN THIS?

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

PICTURE THE PUBLIC PSYCHE AS A VAST, MOIST MEMBRANE - THROUGH THE MEDIA, BATMAN HAS STRUCK THIS MEMBRANE A VIOLENT BLOW, AND IT HAS RECOILED. HENCE YOUR MISLEADING STATISTICS.

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



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

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

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

THAT'S THE DUMBEST LOAD OF...

LANA -- PLEASE -- THE NETWORK --



MR. BRICK -- THE PRESIDENT HAS REMAINED SILENT ON THIS ISSUE. DON'T YOU -- AND HE -- FEEL THAT THE NATIONAL UPROAR OVER THE BATMAN WARRANTS, IF NOT ACTION, A STATEMENT OF POSITION?

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

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

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



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

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

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

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



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



NEXT UP--  
FIGHTING CRIMES.

DO YOU  
KNOW  
WHO I  
AM,  
PUNK?

WH...

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

WH...  
WHERE  
AM I...

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

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

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

QUITE AN  
ARSENAL  
YOU AND  
YOUR BUDDIES  
HAD...

THE .45  
WAS NOTHING  
SPECIAL, OF  
COURSE...

...I THINK  
I'M BLEEDING,  
MAN... I NEED  
A DOCTOR...

...BUT THAT  
SMITH &  
WESSION 44  
YOUR PAL WAS  
CARRYING--

--YOU KNOW  
WHICH PAL,  
THE ONE YOU  
PERFORATED--

-- THAT  
PISTOL WAS  
ODD.

MAN...

ESPECIALLY SINCE  
IT WAS ADAPTED  
FOR A SILENCER.  
YOU JUST DON'T  
RUN ACROSS THAT--  
NOT OUTSIDE OF  
MILITARY  
INTELLIGENCE.

BUT THAT  
M60 OF YOURS  
-- THAT'S  
COMBAT  
WEAPONRY.

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

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

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

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

...DEAL  
IS...

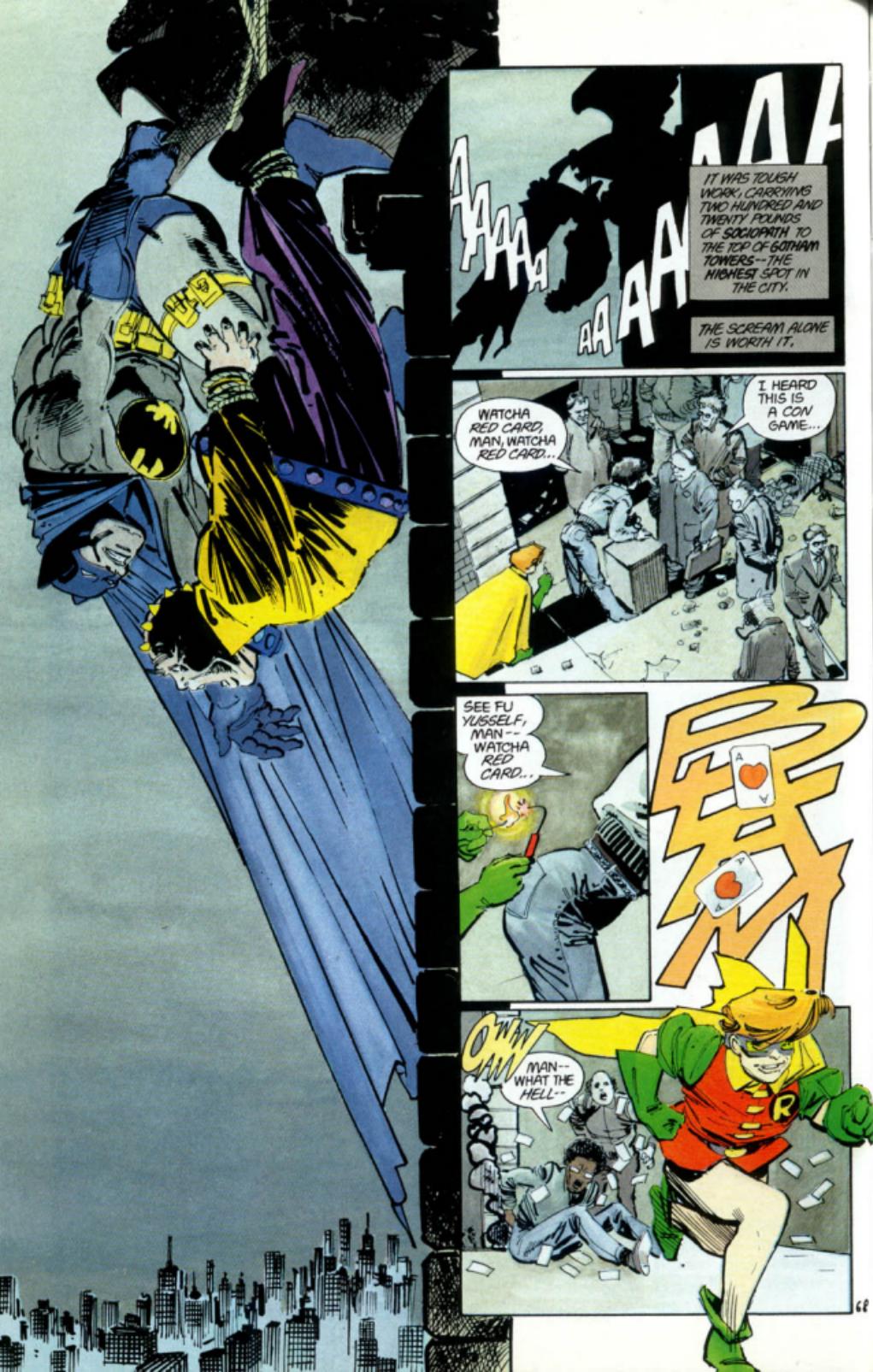
...NO COPS,  
MAN... I  
WALK...

...WHAT  
DO YOU SAY,  
MAN?

I DON'T THINK  
YOU UNDERSTAND  
THE SITUATION.  
YOU'RE NOT IN  
A POSITION TO  
NEGOTIATE.

LET ME  
SHOW YOU...





IT WAS TOUGH WORK, CARRYING TWO HUNDRED AND TWENTY POUNDS OF SOCIOPATH TO THE TOP OF GOTHAM TOWERS--THE HIGHEST SPOT IN THE CITY.

THE SCREAM ALONE IS WORTH IT.



I HEARD THIS IS A CON GAME...



SEE FU YUSSSELF, MAN -- WATCHA RED CARD...



MAN -- WHAT THE HELL--

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

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

SHE FEELS THE METAL SQUARE INSIDE HER PURSE AND SMILES.

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

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

SURGERY WITH NO INSURANCE AND TWO PAYMENTS LEFT ON JAMIE'S BRACES AND THE TURN-OFF NOTICE FROM THE ELECTRIC COMPANY COMING WITH WINTER ON ITS WAY.

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



HER PURSE STRAP BITES INTO HER SHOULDER...

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



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

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

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



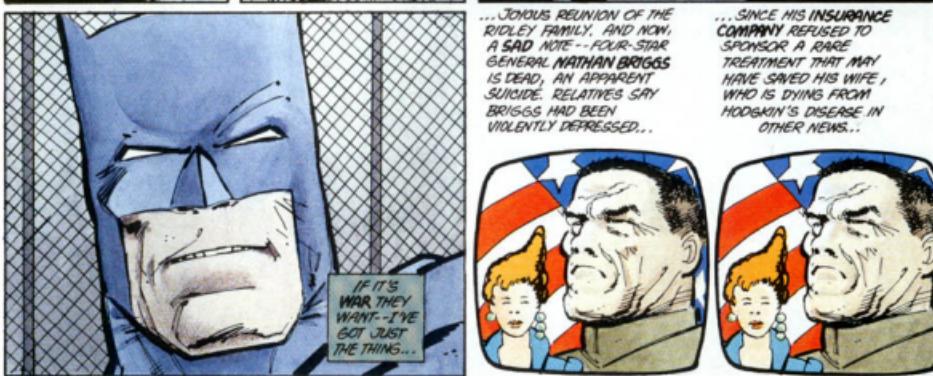
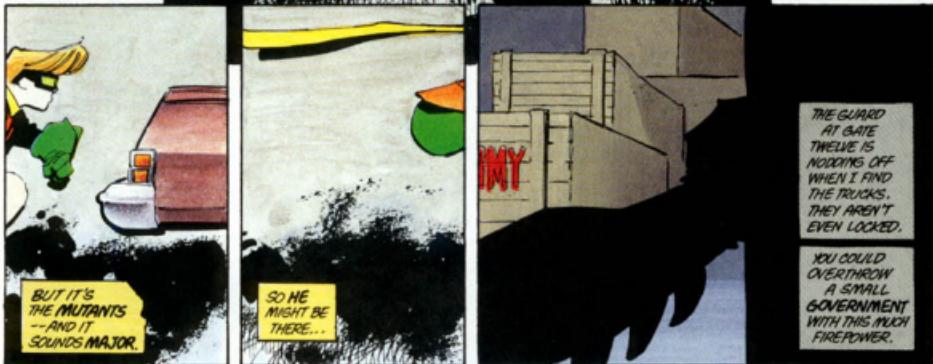
WOMAN EXPLODES IN SUBWAY STATION-- FILM AT ELEVEN.

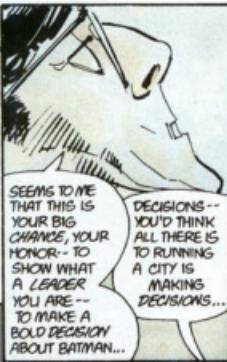


THE GENERAL'S RECORD  
IS AN ANTHEM OF  
ORDERS BARKED  
BETWEEN DEAFENING  
EXPLOSIONS... OF A  
STEELY, REASSURING  
VOICE ABOVE THE  
CRIES OF WOUNDED  
MEN...

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

I ALMOST  
ASKED  
HIM WHY...





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

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

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



THEY CALL US A GANG. THEY CALL US A MOB. THEY THINK WE JUST NOISY KIDS.



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

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

GOTHAM CITY BELONGS TO THE MUTANTS!



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



KILL AND KILL.

BRING ME THE HEAD OF THE OLD MAN GORDON.



MY TRUNCHEON WILL CARRY IT THROUGH THE STREETS.



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



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

I SHALL CRUSH THE FOOL--

CHIK



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

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

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



**BLAM BLAM BLAM**  
BRAKA BRAKA BRAKA  
**BLAM**

PWING PWING PWING

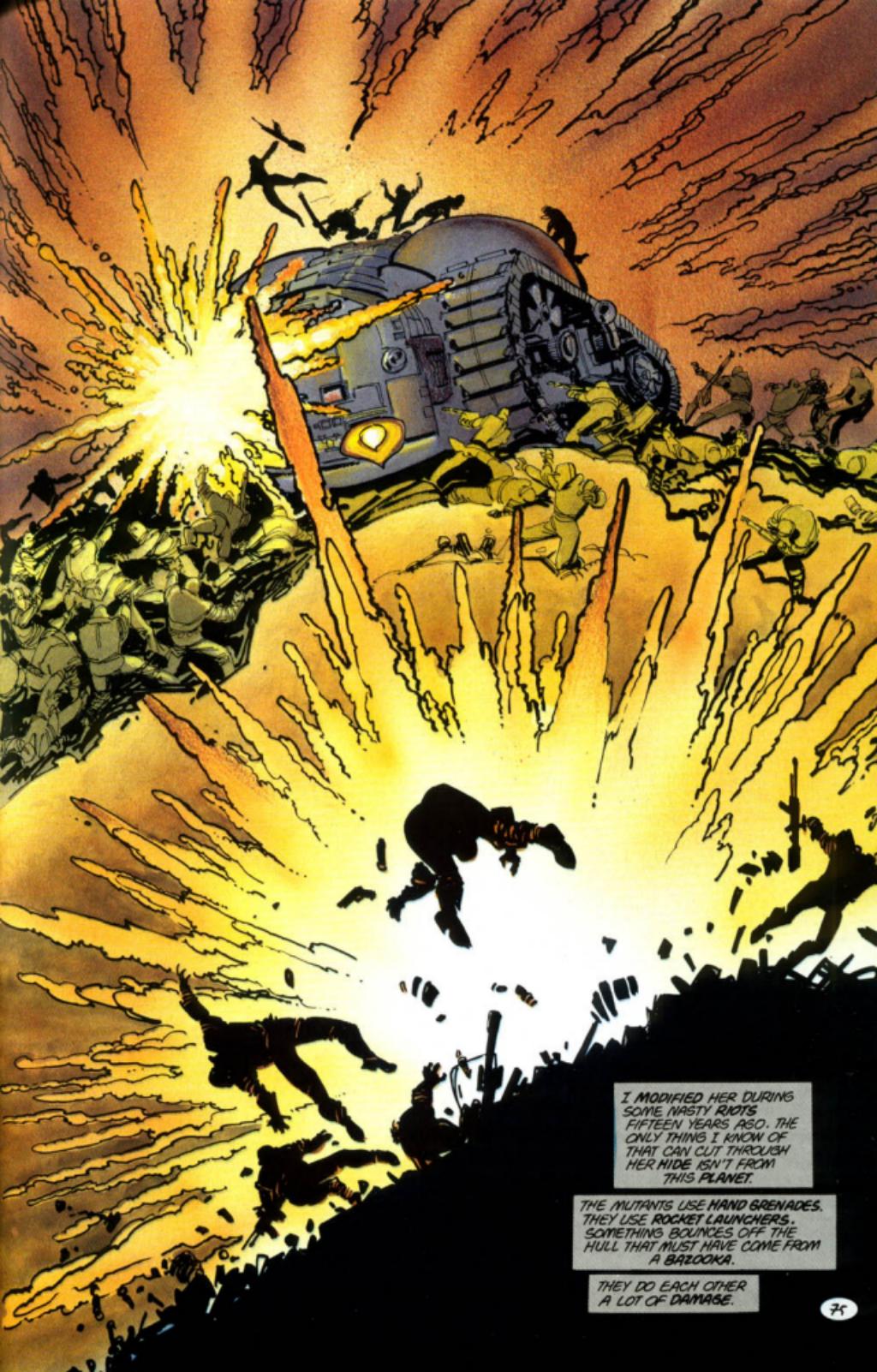
**POOMIN'**  
**POOMIN'**

THEY DON'T  
EVEN WAIT  
FOR THE  
ORDER.

YOUNG PEOPLE  
THESE DAYS...

...NO RESPECT  
FOR HISTORY.

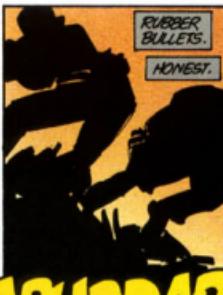




I MODIFIED HER DURING  
SOME NASTY RIOTS.  
FIFTEEN YEARS AGO. THE  
ONLY THING I KNOW OF  
THAT CAN CUT THROUGH  
HER HIDE ISN'T FROM  
THIS PLANET.

THE MUTANTS USE HAND GRENADES.  
THEY USE ROCKET LAUNCHERS.  
SOMETHING BOUNCES OFF THE  
HULL THAT MUST HAVE COME FROM  
A BAZOOKA.

THEY DO EACH OTHER  
A LOT OF DAMAGE.

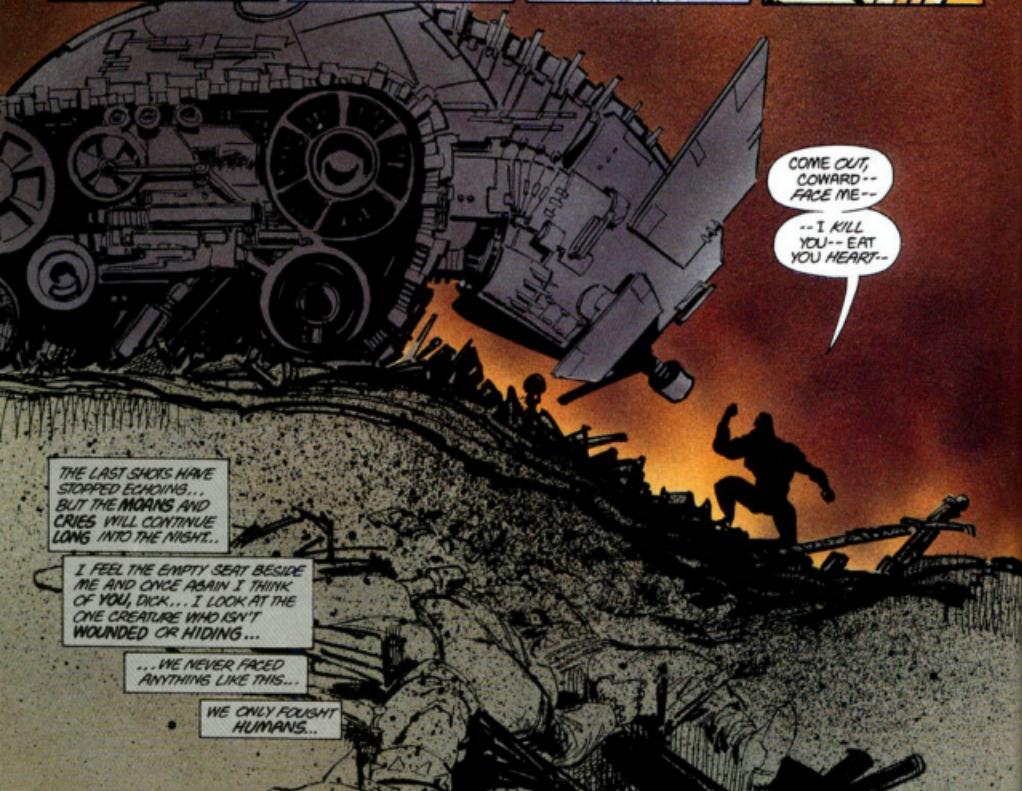


GREAT  
DINNER,  
HON.

THANKS,  
BABE.

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

I CALL  
YOU  
COWARD!



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

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

...A KIND  
OF EVIL WE  
NEVER  
DREAMED  
OF...

...THERE  
HE IS--  
SQUARE  
IN MY  
SIGHTS.

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

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

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

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

EXCEPT...

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

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

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

--AND HE'S  
YOUNG...

...IN HIS  
PHYSICAL  
PRIME...

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

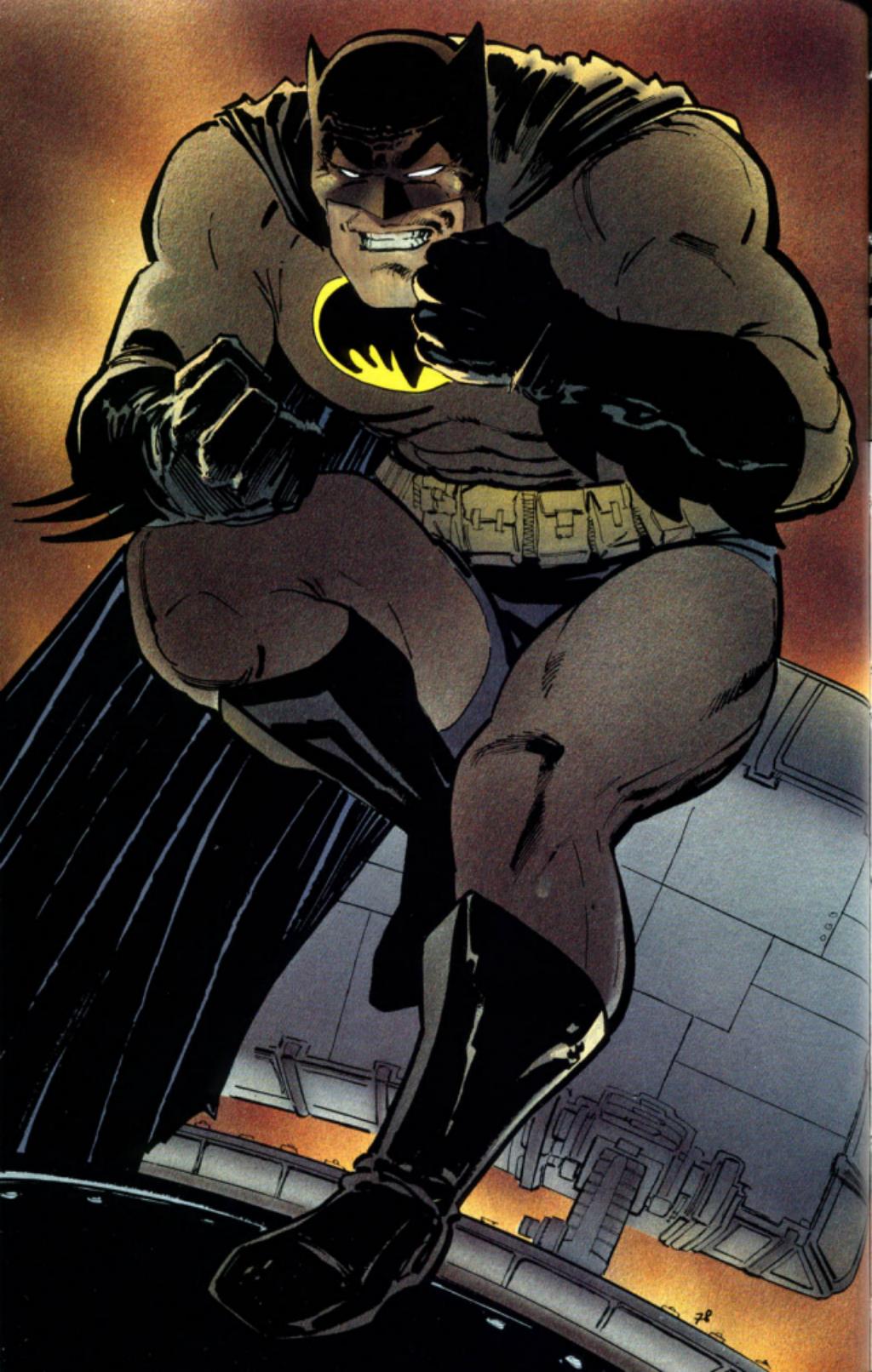
MASTER  
BRUCE--  
YOU'VE SHUT  
DOWN  
THE  
WEAPONS!

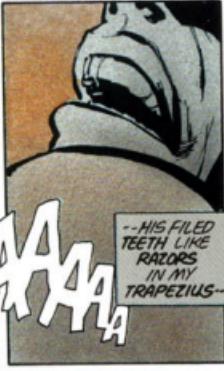
CAN'T HAVE  
A BACK  
DOOR, ALFRED.  
MIGHT BE  
TEMPTED TO  
USE IT.

SIR...  
YOU  
CAN'T BE  
SERIOUS--

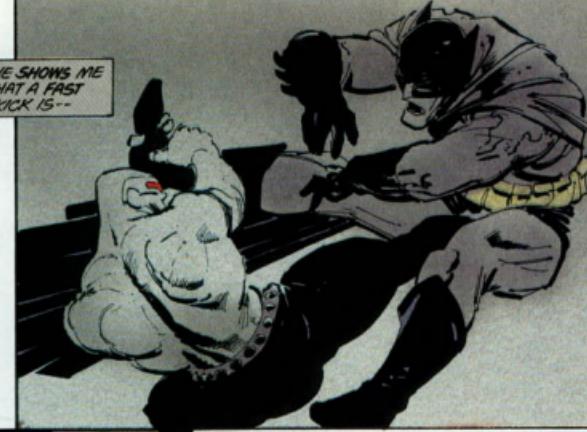
SIR...  
HE'LL  
KILL  
YOU--

COME ON,  
MAN--  
BORIN'  
ME--





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



--SOMETHING  
EXPLODES IN  
MY MIDSECTION--



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



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

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



--GIVE HIM--  
EVERYTHING  
I'VE GOT--

--HIS NECK  
HOLDS--

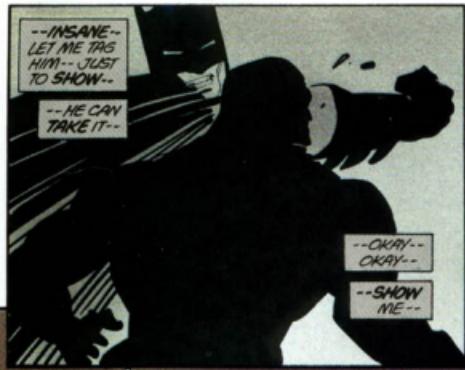
--HIS NOSE--  
SHATTERS--

--BONE BITES  
INTO MY  
KNUCKLES--



--THE  
IDIOT--

--STARTS  
LAUGHING--







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

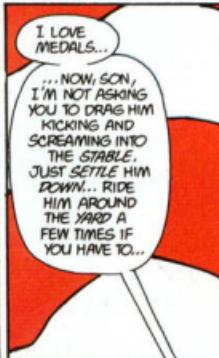
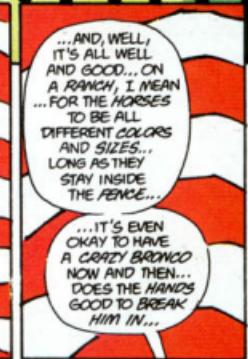
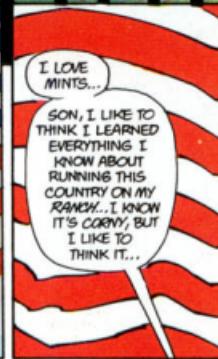
IN OTHER NEWS, GALAXY BROADCASTING PRESIDENT JAMES OLSEN ASSURED VIEWERS THAT THE TELEVISION WRITERS STRIKE, NOW IN ITS FOURTH YEAR, WILL NOT AFFECT THE YEAR'S PROGRAMMING...



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

THIS JUST IN--EYEWITNESSES REPORT EXPLOSIONS RIPPING ACROSS THE GOTHAM DUMP. A NEWS FOUR HELICOPTER IS ON ITS WAY, FOLKS...





...A SCENE OF TOTAL WARFARE! EIGHTY-THREE MEMBERS OF THE MUTANT GANG HAVE BEEN FOUND, SUFFERING FROM BULLET AND SHRAPNEL WOUNDS. AMONG THOSE CAPTURED BY POLICE IS THE MUTANT LEADER, WHO CLAIMS THE BATMAN USED MILITARY WEAPONS IN THE ATTACK--AND ALSO CLAIMS TO HAVE DEFEATED THE BATMAN IN PERSONAL COMBAT...

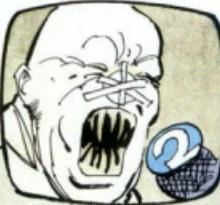


BATMAN IS A COWARD.  
I BROKE HIS BONES. I  
CONQUERED THE FOOL. I  
MADE HIM BEG FOR MERCY.  
ONLY BY CHEATING DID  
HE ESCAPE ALIVE.

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

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

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



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



THAT'S KEEN.



ROBIN.



THE REST OF  
THE MUTANT LEADER'S  
STATEMENT IS  
UNFIT FOR  
BROADCAST.







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

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

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

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



NOT AT ALL, BILL. FRANKLY I EXPECT THE MAYOR'S CREDIBILITY RATING TO GO THROUGH THE ROOF, ESPECIALLY IF HE'S SUCCESSFUL IN THE NEGOTIATIONS.

THIS, COMBINED WITH HIS STRONG STAND ON BATMAN-- AND MAKING A WOMAN THE NEXT POLICE COMMISSIONER-- WELL, I THINK WE'VE GOT A WHOLE NEW MAYOR ON OUR HANDS--

-- PUBLIC PERCEPTION-WISE, THAT IS.



ARNOLD CRIMP FINGERS THE COLD STEEL THING IN HIS POCKET AND STARES AT THE MOVIE MARQUEE AND DOES NOT THROW UP.



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

THEN HE PLAYED THE TAPE BACKWARDS.

HE PLAYED IT FORTY-SEVEN TIMES UNTIL HE WAS ABSOLUTELY CERTAIN THAT FATHER DON WAS RIGHT.

HE LOST HIS TEMPER AND BROKE THE RECORD INTO FOUR PIECES THAT WERE EXACTLY THE SAME SIZE.



ROW ON ROW ON ROW OF PICTURES OF WOMEN AND WORDS AND WORDS AND WORDS. HE STOPPED AT THIS ONE, THE ONE HE IS IN RIGHT NOW AND READ THE TITLE THAT DID NOT MAKE HIM THROW UP.

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



HE THINKS ABOUT LED ZEPPELIN AND HOW THEY ARE TRYING TO KILL HIM.



HE HAD NOT KNOWN ABOUT LED ZEPPELIN UNTIL FATHER DON ON TV HAD EXPLAINED IT LAST NIGHT.

FATHER DON SAID THAT LED ZEPPELIN HID A PRAYER TO SATAN IN THEIR SONG "STAIRWAY TO HEAVEN."

THEY HID IT VERY WELL. THEY RECORDED IT BACKWARDS.

BUT THE YOUNG GIRL WHO WAS PAINTED LIKE A WHORE DIDN'T BELIEVE HIM.



THAT WAS THIS AFTERNOON, IN THE STORE.



ON THE SCREEN A NUN A NUN IS DOING SOMETHING AND SHE'S PAINTED EXACTLY LIKE A WHORE--



THAT WAS THIS AFTERNOON, IN THE STORE. HE EXPLAINED IT TO HER VERY CAREFULLY. SHE SAID AWFUL WORDS.



EVERY MORNING AND EVENING UNTIL TONIGHT OF COURSE HE HAD WALKED SIX BLOCKS OUT OF HIS WAY TO AVOID THIS NEIGHBORHOOD.



THREE SLAIN IN BATMAN-INSPIRED PORN THEATER SHOOT-OUT. DETAILS TO FOLLOW...





HE PUSHES THROUGH THE COTTON IN HIS HEAD AND REMEMBERS THE LAST TIME HE FELT SOMETHING.

IT WAS IN THE FIRST AND ONLY ROUND OF HIS LAST FIGHT. HIS LAST FIGHT WHEN CAPTAIN WARRIOR HIT HIM ACROSS THE NOSE.



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

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

SUDDENLY HIS EYES STING AND IRON MAN HURTS ALL OVER AND REALEASES HE'S READING ABOUT A MAN.

A MAN WHO DRESSES UP LIKE A MONSTER AND MAKES THINGS RIGHT.



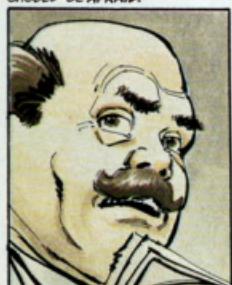
THE NEXT TIME IRON MAN VASQUEZ FEELS SOMETHING, HE'S STANDING IN A RESTAURANT WITH SOMETHING ON HIS FACE AND A GUN IN HIS HAND.

HE HEARS A TRUCK BACKFIRE --



AND WHEN HE HEARS THE WOMAN SCREAM DOWN THE STREET, HE KNOWS HE SHOULD BE AFRAID.

INSTEAD HE'S LOOKING AT THE ALARM SYSTEM THAT COST HIM TWO MONTHS PROFITS AND THE IRON BARS OVER HIS WINDOWS THAT MAKE HIS BEAUTIFUL SHOP LOOK LIKE A PRISON...



...AN UPDATE--THE MAYOR IS THIS MINUTE IN CONSULTATION WITH THE MUTANT LEADER, WHO HAS AGREED TO MEET HIM ALONE. MEANWHILE, THE MAYOR'S LEADERSHIP QUOTIENT HAS SOARED-- EXCUSE ME...



I'D EXPECTED THEM TO BE SCREAMING AND FIGHTING. BUT THEY STAND LIKE A CAPTIVE ARMY. I'D LIKE TO THINK THEY'RE CRAZY-- BUT HERE I AM, WALKING THE MAYOR TO MEET THEIR LEADER--



--WITH ALL THE CEREMONY OF A MILITARY CONFERENCE.

THE CELL DOOR OPENS. THE AIR GOES THICK. I FEEL THE MAYOR SHUDDER, IN TIME WITH ME.

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

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



I HEAR A NERVOUS GIGGLE AND AN ANIMAL GROWL.

I HEAR HANDCUFF LINKS SNAP.



I SEE SOMETHING I'LL TAKE TO MY GRAVE.

SOME IDIOT STOPS ME FROM DOING THE OBVIOUS THING.

...THE MAYOR IS DEAD.

THE MUTANT LEADER RIPPED THE MAYOR'S THROAT OUT WITH HIS TEETH. THE MUTANT HAS BEEN RETURNED TO HIS CELL. MORE ON THIS AS WE GET IT.





THAT'S RIGHT--WE'VE GOT POLICEVIDEOTAPE OF THE MAYOR'S MURDER! ONLY ON CHANNEL TWO! NOT FOR THE SQUEAMISH. STAY TUNED.

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



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

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



IT'S THE GIRL, SIR.  
CARRIE, SHE'S PERFECT.

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

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

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



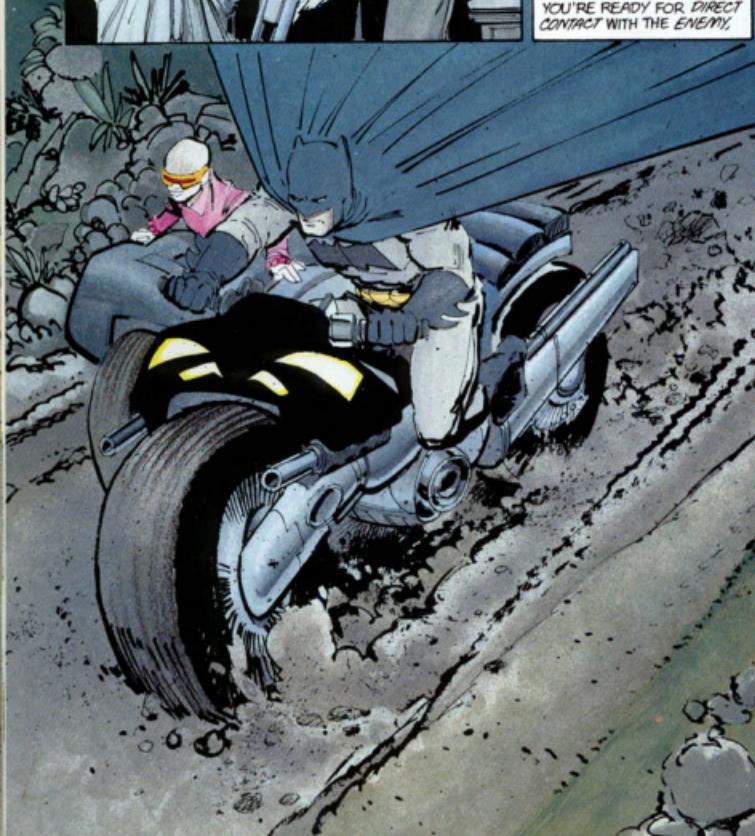
SHE'S MORE THAN THAT. I SHALL COME RIGHT OUT WITH IT.

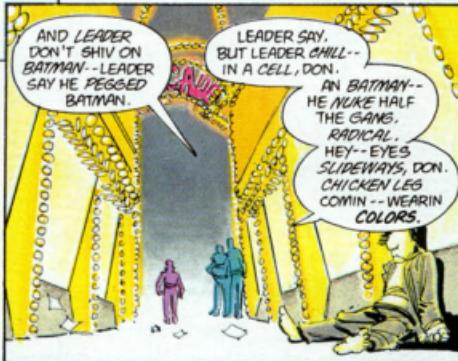
HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN WHAT HAPPENED TO JASON?

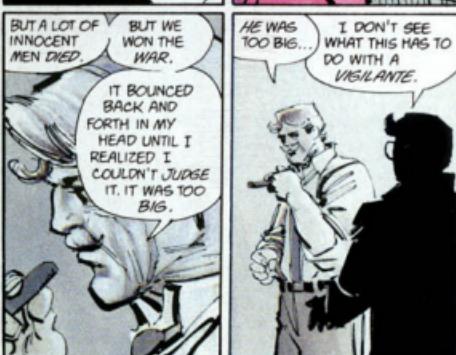
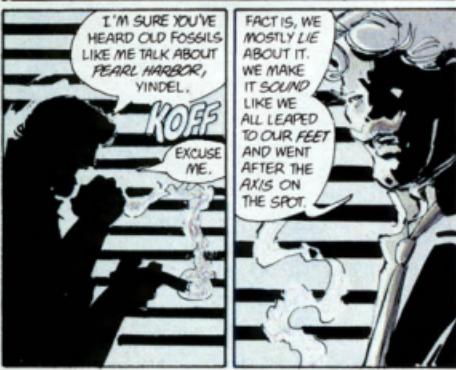
I WILL NEVER FORGET JASON. HE WAS A GOOD SOLDIER. HE HONORED ME.

BUT THE WAR GOES ON.

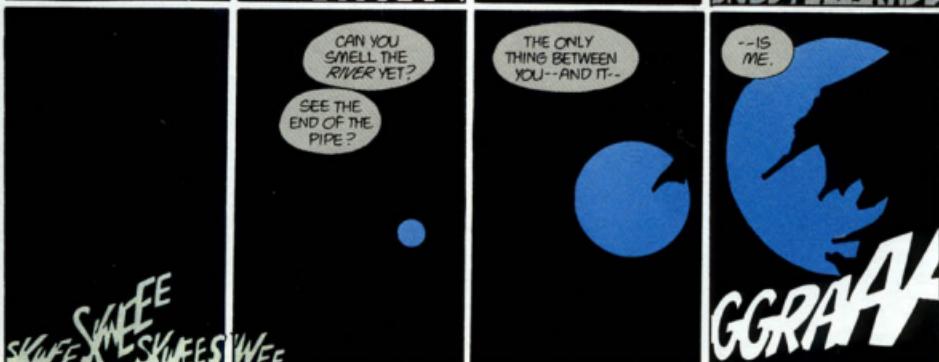
...PLEASE...



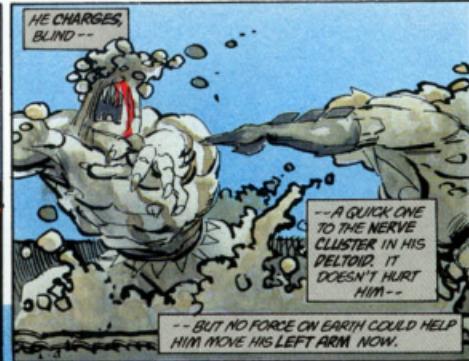








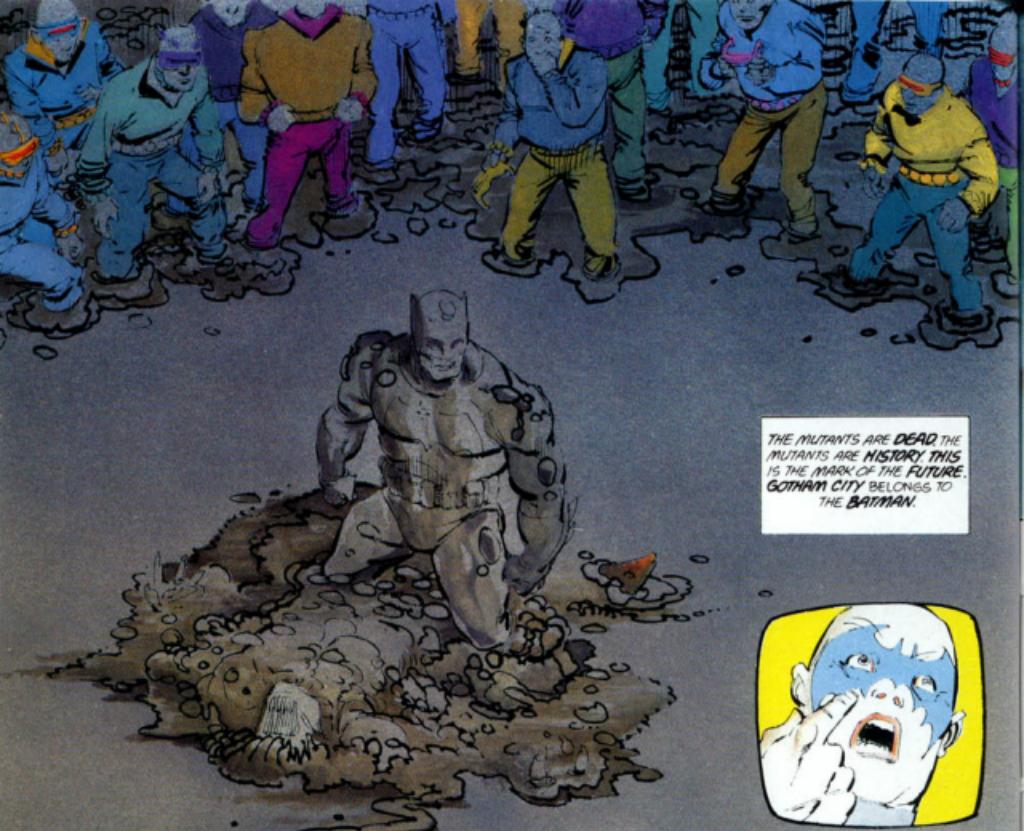






RAAAARRRR





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

JUST AS I PREDICTED--THE  
BATMAN HAS INFECTED  
THE YOUTH OF GOTHAM--  
POISONED THEM WITH AN  
INSIDIOUS EXCUSE FOR  
THE MOST VIOLENTLY ANTI-  
SOCIAL BEHAVIOR.

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

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

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



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



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



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



I SAID  
NO  
COMMENT.



LET ME TELL YOU MY SECRET.

SEEMS EVERYBODY  
WANTS TO KNOW  
WHAT IT IS.

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

THEY WONDER HOW I CAN  
LEAVE IT BEHIND WITHOUT AT  
LEAST A MONTH OR TWO OF  
FEELING USELESS.

FIFTY YEARS OF THIS AND  
THEY WONDER.



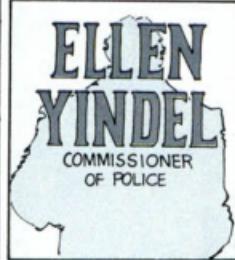
LIFE WILL BE EASIER NOW. I  
WON'T FEEL LIKE DAD TO AN  
ENTIRE CITY OF SOULS. I  
WON'T BLEED WITH EVERY  
SINGLE ONE OF MY CHILDREN.



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

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

-- IT'S A  
SIMPLE  
SECRET.



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



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

AND NO  
POINT,  
I GUESS.



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



A  
WOLF  
HOWLS.



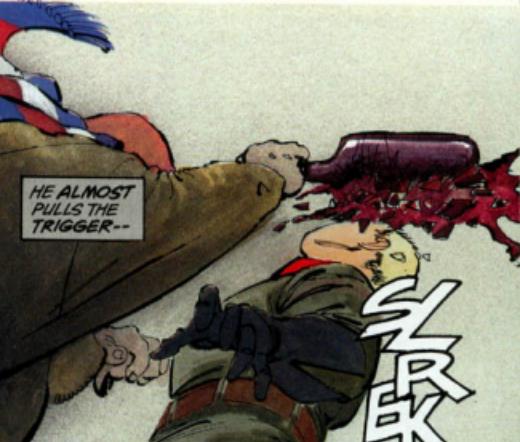


B O O K   T H R E E



HUNT THE DARK KNIGHT







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

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



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

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

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

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



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

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





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

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



FASTER THAN A SPEEDING--  
CAREFUL NOW, LOLA.



MUST HAVE  
GONE THROUGH  
THAT DOOR!

**WAHH**

**BRAKK**



IF YOU'RE  
LUCKY, BRUNO--

--YOU'LL  
GO TO  
JAIL  
TONIGHT.



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

ON HIS TV  
APPEARANCE.

**KAKKREEAK**



**YAAA**

**AAA**



DON'T  
TAKE THE  
STARS.

THEY  
AREN'T  
SAFE.



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





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

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



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



SOMETHING MORE  
POWERFUL THAN A  
LOCOMOTIVE,  
RIGHT, TOM?

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

SOFTENING  
UP--SHELL  
START  
TALKING  
SOON--

--WHAT'S  
THAT  
SOUND--

--THE FLOOR--  
IT'S SHAKING--



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



RRRRRRRRMMMBBBB





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

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

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

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



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

BATMAN'S CULPABILITY FOR THIS ATROCITY IS OUR SUBJECT TONIGHT. WITH US IS THE WORLD'S LEADING EXPERT ON THE SOCIOLOGICAL IMPACT OF THE BATMAN-- DR. BARTHolemew Wolper.

BATMAN IS A MENACE TO SOCIETY.

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



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

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





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

--CAREFUL--

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

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

NICE  
WATCH.

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

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

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



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



WE GOINS  
SOMEWHERE  
OR WHAT?

TO THE ONLY  
SOLID LEAD I'VE  
GOT LEFT, ROBIN.  
A MAN NAMED  
ABNER.

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



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

... THERE IS STRAINED APPRAISE FOR JAMES GORDON...

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

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



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

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



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

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



I'LL SEND  
ROBIN HOME.

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

I'LL COUNT  
THE DEAD,  
ONE BY  
ONE.

I'LL ADD  
THEM TO  
THE LIST.  
JOKER.  
  
THE LIST OF  
ALL THE  
PEOPLE I'VE  
MURDERED...

-- BY  
LETTING  
YOU  
LIVE.

JUST  
CAN'T  
SLEEP



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

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

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

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



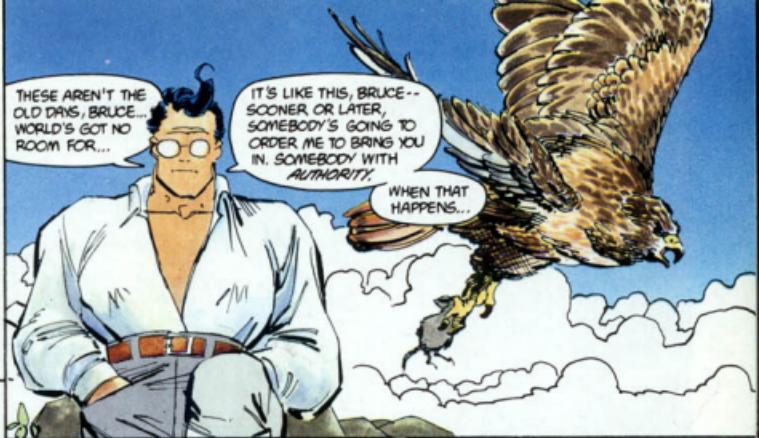
...DESPITE MASSIVE SOVIET ARMS BUILDUP IN THE WATERS SURROUNDING CORO MALTESE, THE PRESIDENT PROMISES THAT AMERICA WILL NOT BE THE FIRST TO DEPLOY NUCLEAR WEAPONS...

GOOD MORNING, GOTHAM!

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

THEN HE RUINS EVERYTHING BY TALKING.







THE REST  
OF US LEARNED  
TO DANCE.

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



DIANA WENT  
BACK TO HER  
PEOPLE.

HAL WENT TO  
THE STARS.

AND I HAVE  
WALKED THE  
Razor's Edge  
FOR SO LONG...



BUT YOU,  
BRUCE...

-- YOU, WITH  
YOUR WILD  
OBSESSION --





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



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



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



NO. I  
BROUGHT  
MY OWN.



WONDERFUL  
TO SEE YOU SHOW  
SUCH INTEREST.

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

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

YOU ARE NOT TO  
TOUCH THE  
CONTROLS.



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

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

A LUNGBUSTER  
OF A SHOW  
FOR YOU  
TONIGHT...

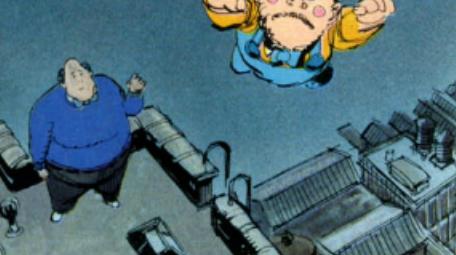
JUST BE  
YOURSELF...

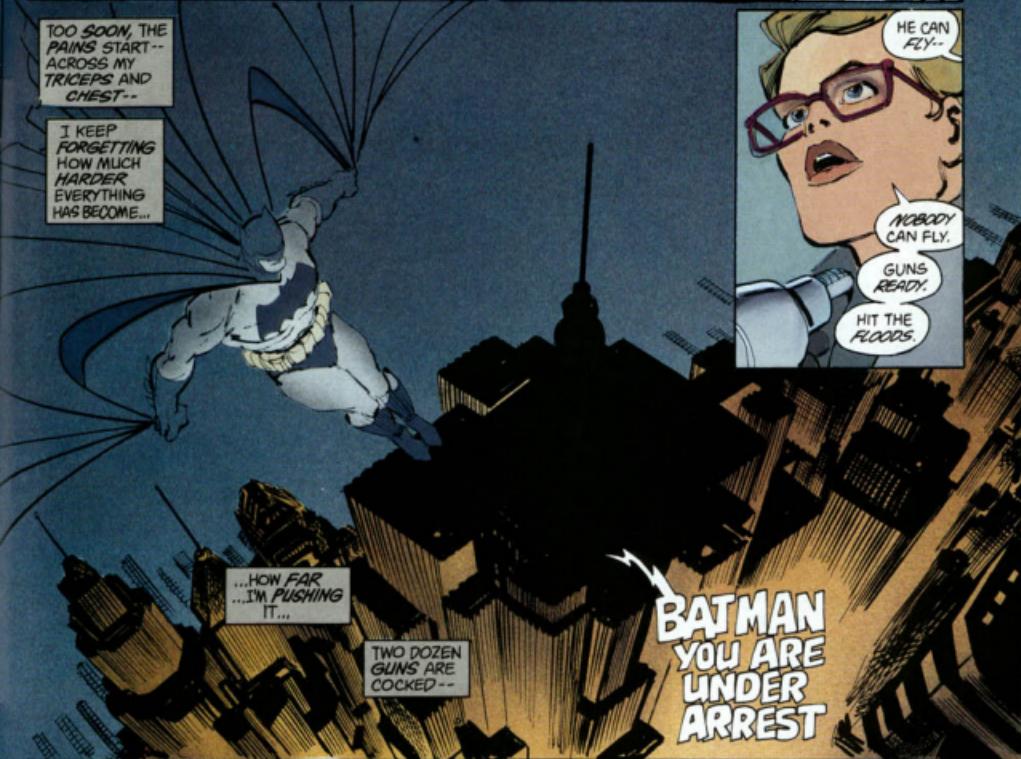


...PEOPLE ZHOULD  
HAF ZEX UND ZEX  
UND ZEX-- ALL ZE  
TIME, DAVID...

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

GOD DAMN  
MILK  
BABY...







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

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



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

THIS IS A  
SENSITIVE  
HUMAN  
BEING  
HERE, I  
DON'T  
LET  
YOU HARASS--

I  
DON'T  
KEEP  
COUNT.

I'M  
GOING TO  
KILL  
EVERYONE  
IN THIS  
ROOM.

NOW THAT'S DARN RUDE.

CAN'T BELIEVE IT--

--I'M ALREADY  
BREATHING  
HARD--

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

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

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

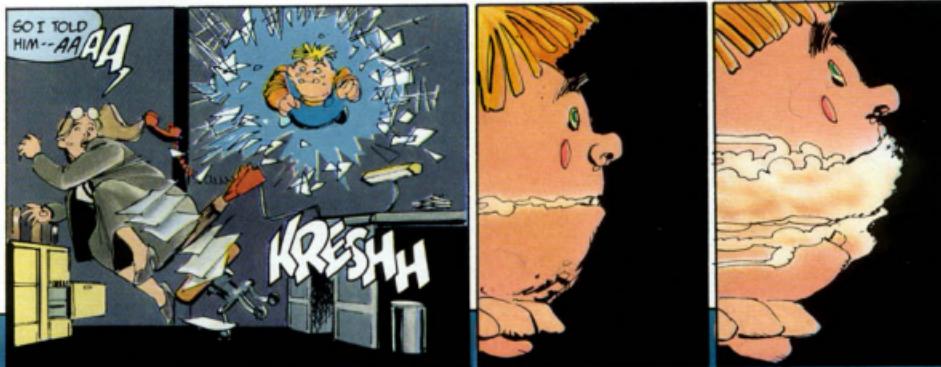
UND WHAT  
IZ ZE  
NATURE UF  
BATMAN'S  
PSYCHOSIS?

WHY,  
SEXUAL  
REPRESSION,  
OF  
COURSE.

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

YOU'RE RIGHT.  
WE MUST  
NOT RESTRAIN  
OURSELVES.

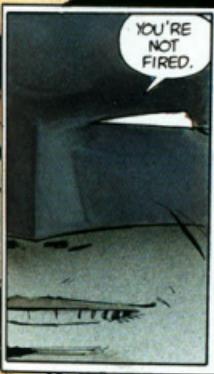






KRAAKK







WE MUST NOT  
REMIND  
THEM THAT  
GIANTS  
WALK THE  
EARTH.

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

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

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

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



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

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



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

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



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

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



--MY FATHER DIES...



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

SHHH...



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



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

YES... CLOSELY...



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



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

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

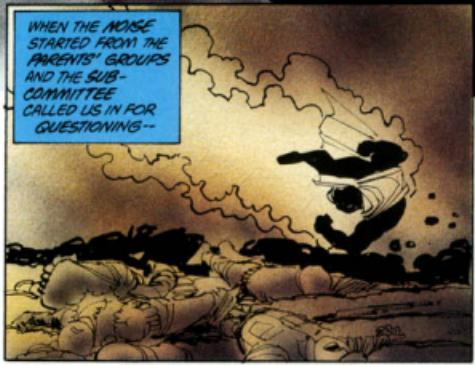
GALLAGHER'S HEARING  
ABOUT THIS!

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

IT'S NO  
SUICIDE,  
LIEUTENANT.







SELINA...

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

HOW MANY  
MORE...  
WILL IT  
TAKE?

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

HAD ELSIE USE  
IT ON THAT  
CONGRESSMAN.  
THAT'S WHY  
HE...

EASY.

MY GOD...  
MARY...  
SHE'S  
WITH THE  
GOVERNOR...

BOSS...

--I GOT  
SOMETHING.

COTTON  
CANDY.  
THE  
COUNTY  
FAIR.  
THOUSANDS

COUNTY...  
...HALF MY  
FRIENDS'LL BE  
THERE...

... HOW MANY  
MORE... UNTIL  
I FINALLY  
DO IT?

DON'T... TAKE  
THE GIRL.  
HE'LL...  
POLICE ARE  
RIGHT ON TOP  
OF US, ROBIN.

BRING THE WING  
IN CLOSE.

ON  
IT.

FSSSESS

SHE GOT HERE  
FASTER THAN I  
PLANNED...

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

KBLAMM

MARCH  
IT--  
HE'S...

CHRIST--  
I CAN'T--  
DAMN  
HE'S--  
--CAN'T  
GET A  
CLEAR  
SHOT--

POOM

SKRKK

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

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

...SO  
MANY  
TIMES...

SPANK

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

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

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

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

...ALL IT  
WILL TAKE  
IS ONE BULLET.

KBLAM  
BLAM  
BLAM  
BLAM





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

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

-- AND IT WOULD NEVER BE ENOUGH.

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

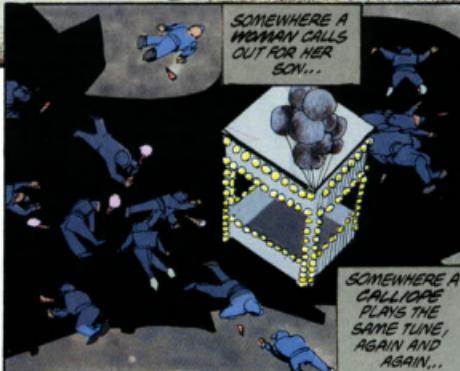
AND I LOVE YOU FOR IT.



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

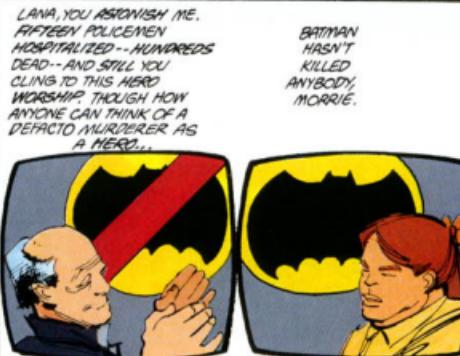
...APPRENDID WHILE TRYING TO POISON THE GOTHAM RESERVOIR WERE FORMER MEMBERS OF THE MUTANT GANG. THEIR SKIN WAS PAINTED CHALK WHITE, THEIR HAIR DYED GREEN...

SOMEWHERE A WOMAN CALLS OUT FOR HER SON...



...A TINY HAND TIGHTENS ITS GRIP ON MY ARM...  
...A GIRL OF THIRTEEN BREATHES IN SHARPLY, SUDDENLY, HER INNOCENCE LOST...

...IT ENDS TONIGHT, JOKER.



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

THANK  
THE NICE  
MAN,  
DONALD.

I WANT  
THE KIND  
THAT  
TALKS.

PISS OFF.

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

IT'S BIG.  
IT'S...



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

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

...ENDLESS  
NIGHTS...

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

FROM THE  
BEGINNINGS,  
I KNEW...

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

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

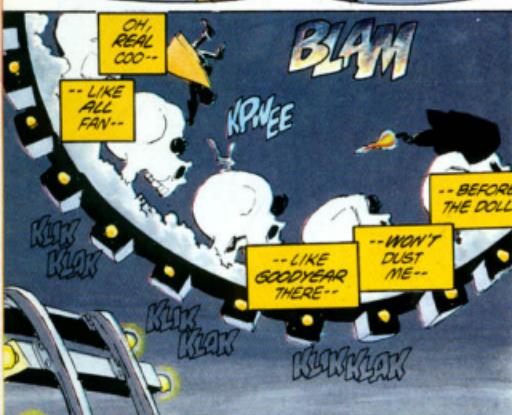
...WITH MY  
HANDS...





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

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





LIKE FOR THIS--

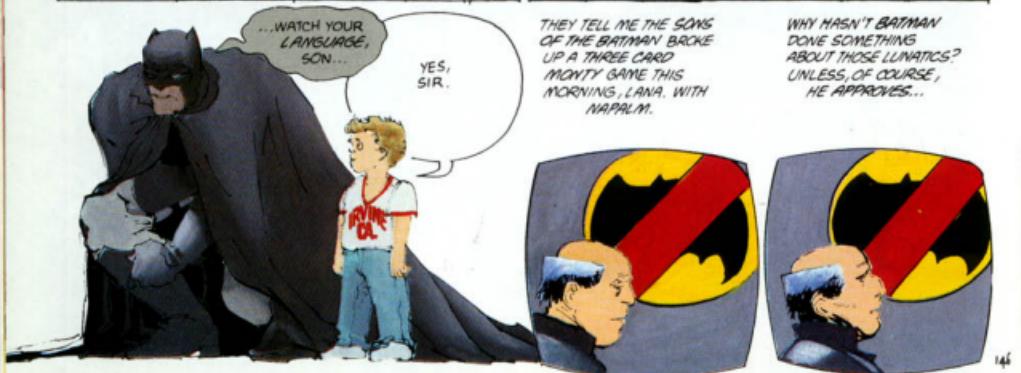
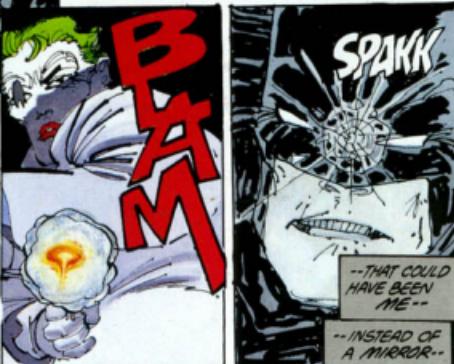
--I MISSED THE GYM FINALS--

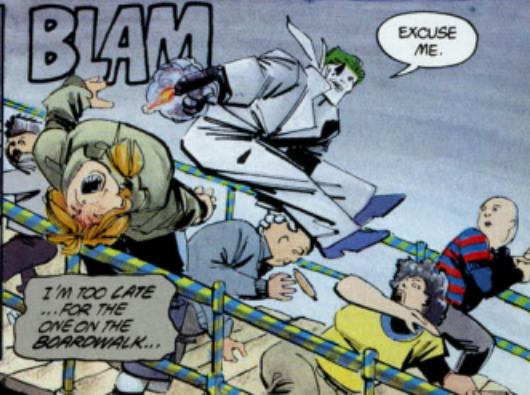
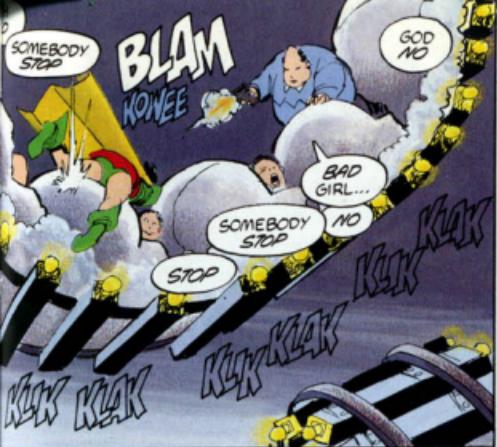
KICK KLAK KICK KLAK

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

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





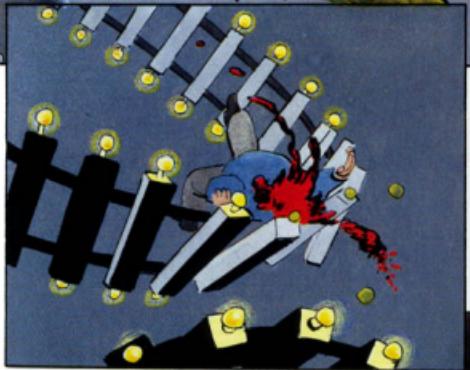
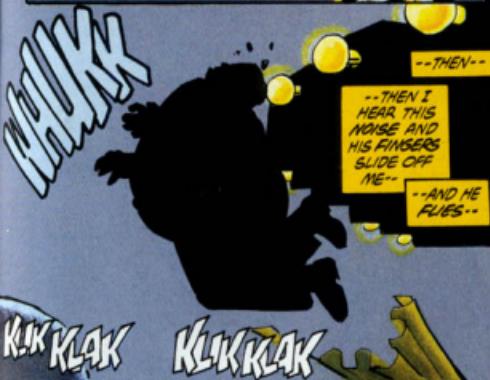


# BLAM BLAM LOVE



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







...JUST AN OUNCE OR TWO MORE  
OF PRESSURE... AND...

...DO I HEAR...  
SIRENS...?

YES... COMING  
CLOSE... YOU  
WON'T GET  
FAR...

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

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

HEHH

...BUT THEN...  
IT DOESN'T  
MATTER... IF  
YOU DO...

...THEY'LL  
KILL YOU  
FOR THIS...

...AND  
THEY'LL NEVER  
KNOW...

...THAT YOU  
DIDN'T HAVE  
THE NERVE...

...AND  
TWISTS...

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

HHEHH

HA HA

HA HA HA

KKKRAAKKK

KKKRAAKKK

KKKRAAKKK

KKKRAAKKK

KKKRAAKKK

KKKRAAKKK

KKKRAAKKK

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

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

...AND  
COLD...





B O O K F O U R



THE DARK KNIGHT FALLS

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

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

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

--WITNESSES  
SAY THEY  
BOTH GOT  
GUNS--

TUNNEL OF  
**LOVE**

...SHOWDOWN AT THE  
COUNTY FAIR, WHERE THE  
JOKER IS SAID TO HAVE  
MURDERED AT LEAST  
TWENTY. SIGHTED WAS  
THE BATMAN, IN HOT  
PURSUIT OF THE JOKER...

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

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

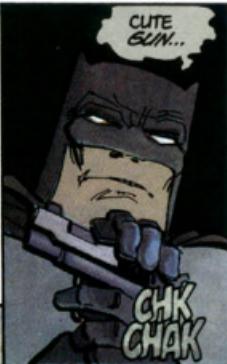




CLOSER-- MOVE IN CLOSER--  
COLA-- CAN YOU SEE  
IT?-- LIVE FROM THE  
NEWS TWO COPTER--  
IT'S ROBIN-- THE  
BOY WONDER!

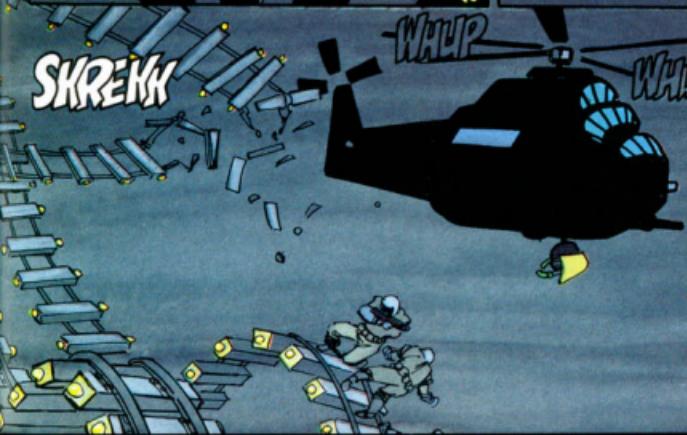
HE'S YOUNG-- CAN'T  
BE OLDER THAN  
THIRTEEN-- HE'S  
RIDING THE ROLLER  
COASTER-- HE'S  
WAIT-- HE'S--



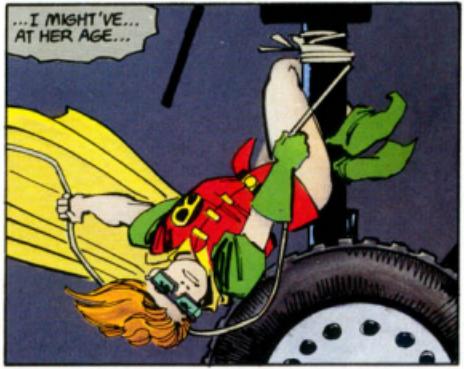
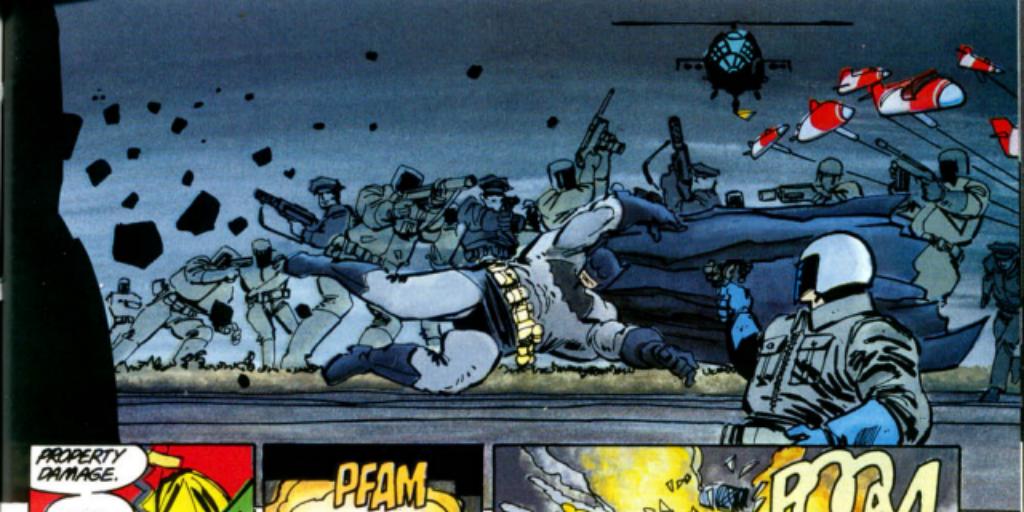


...HE SEEMS CONFIDENT  
--WHAT THE-- THAT'S  
NOT ONE OF OURS--  
COMING RIGHT AT US--  
BANK, YOU IDIOT--  
BANK--

WHUP WHUP WHUP





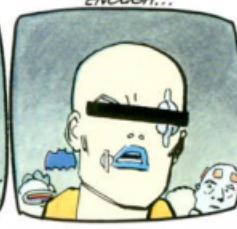
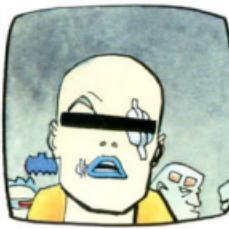


...THE JOKER'S BODY  
FOUND MUTILATED AND  
BURNED... MURDER IS  
ADDED TO THE CHARGES  
AGAINST THE  
BATMAN...



YOU CAN SAY WHAT  
YOU WANT. YOU CAN  
CALL HIM WHAT YOU  
WANT. YOU DON'T  
HAVE TO WALK  
DOWN AVENUE D AT  
NIGHT.

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



...NO, HORNY HE WASN'T.  
HE WAS JUST LOOKING  
TO HURT SOMEBODY  
AND HE'S THE KIND WHO  
HURTS WOMEN. I WISH  
THEY WERE RARE. HE  
GAVE HIMSELF AN  
EXCUSE...

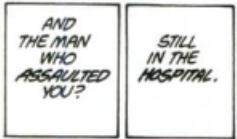
SO NOW HE'S GIGGLING  
LIKE HE'S TURNED ON!  
I FIGURE HE'S SERIOUS  
ENOUGH TO RUN AFTER  
ME. I GO FOR THE  
MACE.



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

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





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

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

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

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



...BUT I'M GETTING AHEAD OF MYSELF. IT ALL STARTED WHEN THREE NIXONS CAME INTO THE STORE. WHAT?... NO, I DID NOT GO FOR THE ALARM. THEY DON'T PAY ME ENOUGH FOR SUICIDE.



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

HE ONLY SAW TWO OF THE NIXONS.



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

I HEARD A THUNDERCLAP.



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



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

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



THANK YOU, LOLA. STILL HELD AT GOTHAM JAIL ARE EIGHTY-SEVEN MEMBERS OF THE MUTANT GANG, WHO WERE CAPTURED BY BATMAN.

COMMISSIONER YINDEL HAS REQUESTED THAT THEY BE MOVED TO THE STATE PENITENTIARY, WHILE THEY AWAIT TRIAL...

NO--NO TROUBLE, COMMISSIONER...THEY'RE STILL JUST WATCHING TV...

YINDEL'S REQUEST WAS CUT SHORT BY A COURT ORDER, ACQUIRED BY THE MUTANTS' ATTORNEY...

MY CLIENTS ARE YOUNG PEOPLE--MINORS, MOST OF THEM. IF THERE ISN'T ROOM IN THE JAIL, THEY SHOULD BE RETURNED TO THE CARE OF THEIR PARENTS.

FOLLOWING THE ATTORNEY'S STATEMENT, A PETITION SIGNED BY SEVENTY-ONE OF THE MUTANTS' PARENTS, URGED THE MAYOR NOT TO RELEASE--

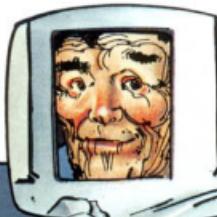
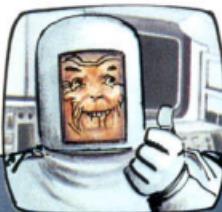
WE INTERRUPT THIS BROADCAST FOR A NEWS TWO SPECIAL REPORT  
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES.



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

SOMETHING WRONG, KENT?

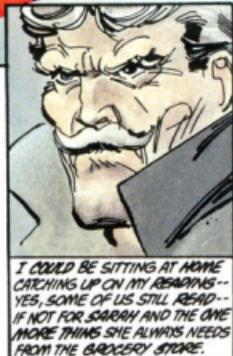
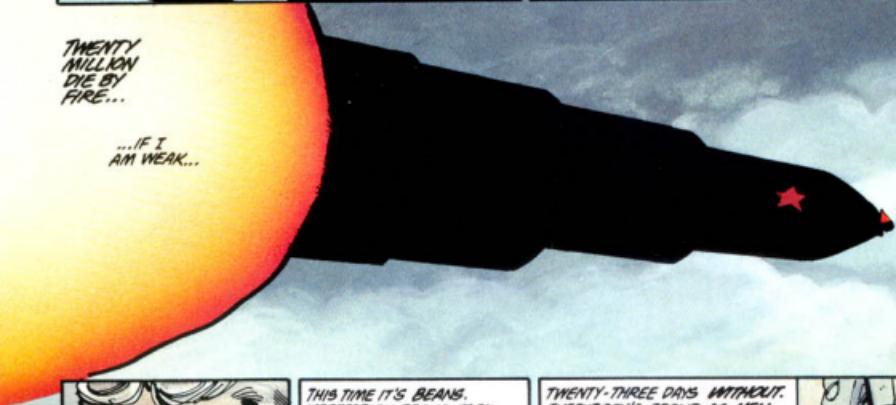
...AND THE BAD NEWS, WELL... IT LOOKS LIKE THOSE SOVIETS ARE PRETTY BAD LOSERS, YES, THEY ARE...





TWENTY  
MILLION  
DIE BY  
FIRE...

...IF I  
AM WEAK...



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

TEN MINUTES  
OF MY LIFE.

I NEED A  
CIGAR.



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

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

THIS IS IT,  
FOLKS--FIRST  
STRIKE! TOM?

LOLA CHONG  
GIVES GOOD NEWS

CAREFUL--BE CAREFUL  
HOW YOU PUT THINGS, LOLA.  
THIS IS ONE MISSILE--  
THERE ARE NO INDICATIONS  
THAT THIS IS PART OF A  
FULL-SCALE ATTACK...

TELL THAT TO  
THE AMERICAN  
TROOPS STATIONED  
THERE, TOM.

NEWS 2 GOTHAM



HOLD IT... WE'VE JUST  
GOTTEN WORD THAT IT'S  
NOT A CONVENTIONAL  
NUCLEAR WARHEAD--WE  
SWITCH YOU NOW TO DAN  
MUSK, ABOARD THE NEWS  
TWO SHUTTLE. WHAT'S  
THE WORD, DAN?

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

...AT THE VERY LEAST,  
CARDI WILL BE LEVELED--  
THE FIRES MIGHT  
SPREAD TO MAINLAND  
SOUTH AMERICA--  
SHOULD IT GENERATE A  
SUFFICIENT MAGNETIC  
PULSE, THERE MIGHT--

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



MR.  
PRESIDENT  
--GIVE THE  
WORD...

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



MR.  
PRESIDENT  
--WE'LL LOOK  
LIKE WIMPS  
IF WE DON'T--  
--LET'S  
SEE WHAT  
OUR OWN  
LITTLE  
DETERRENT  
CAN DO...





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

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

HEY...

WHAT  
THE  
DEVIL...





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

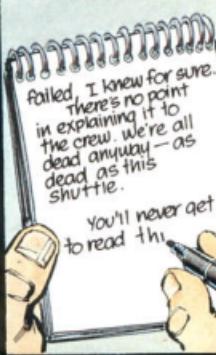
ALL YOU NEED TO GENERATE THE PULSE IS THE ORGANIZED DETONATION OF A FEW DOZEN NUCLEAR WARHEADS.

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

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



When the computer failed, I knew for sure.



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

You'll never get  
to read thi,

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



...and for planet Earth.

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



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

...YES, CLARK.  
BOTH SIDES.

THE AMERICAN NAME FOR  
IT IS COLDBRINGER.  
IT'S DESIGNED TO CAUSE  
MAXIMUM DAMAGE  
TO THE ENVIRONMENT--  
ALL THE WHILE SPARING  
THE INDUSTRIAL SITES  
YOUR FRIENDS REGARD  
SO HIGHLY.

SINCE MY  
OWN ATOMS  
AREN'T BOUNCING  
AROUND THE  
STRATOSPHERE...



-SINCE GOTHAM CITY  
SQUATS LIKE A GREAT  
BLACK GRAVEYARD--



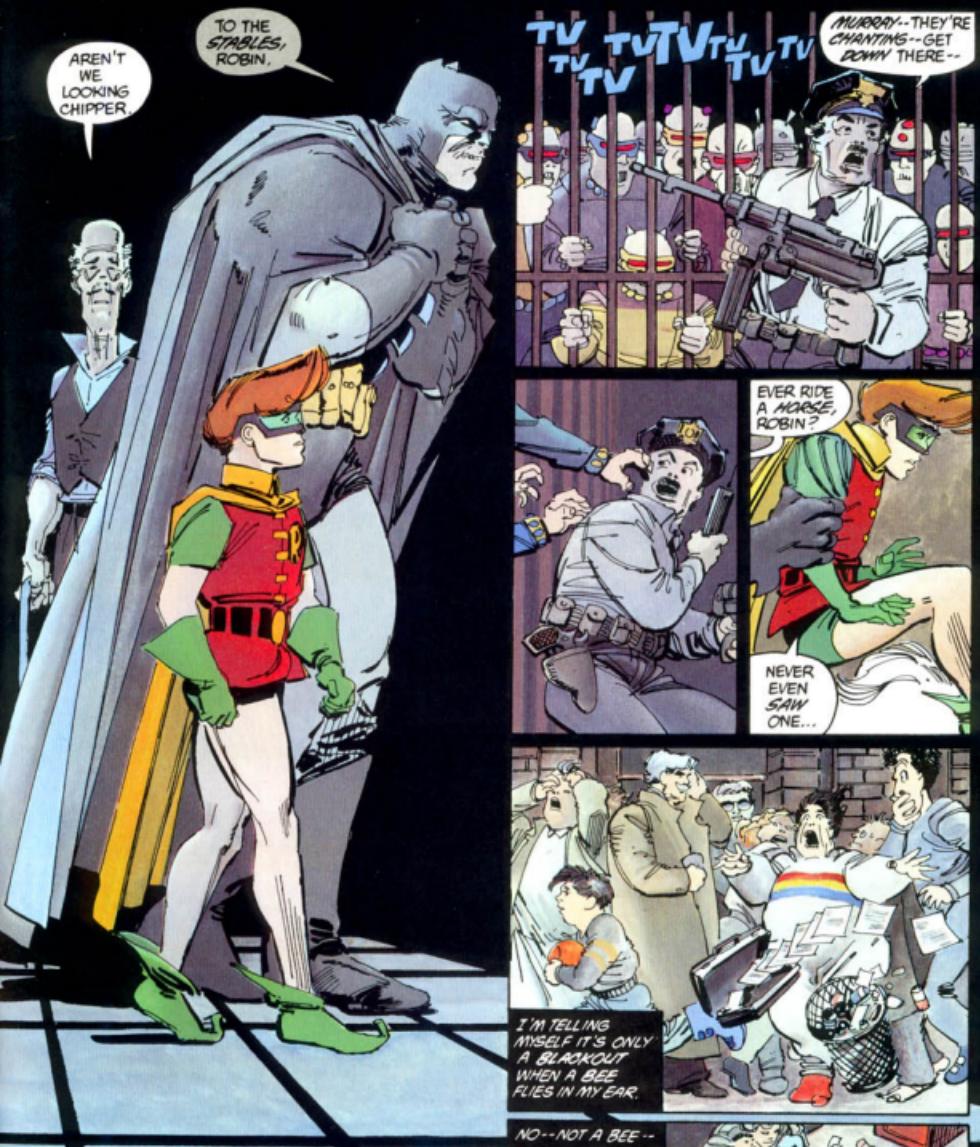
--SINCE WAYNE MANOR'S  
EMERGENCY GENERATOR  
HASN'T KICKED IN-- AND  
ROBIN'S MARCH HAS STOPPED--



--I'LL ASSUME  
RUSSIA HAS  
TAKEN THE  
LEAD IN THE  
ARMS  
RACE.



I KEEP TRACK  
OF THESE  
THINGS, CLARK.  
ONE OF US  
HAS TO.









THE  
DUMP.

IT'S A BREEDING  
GROUND FOR  
INSECTS AND  
RODENTS.

SOME  
RODENTS  
FLY.

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

--TOWARD SARAH.

JESUS CHRIST  
ALMIGHTY SARAH--

RASH

NGGA

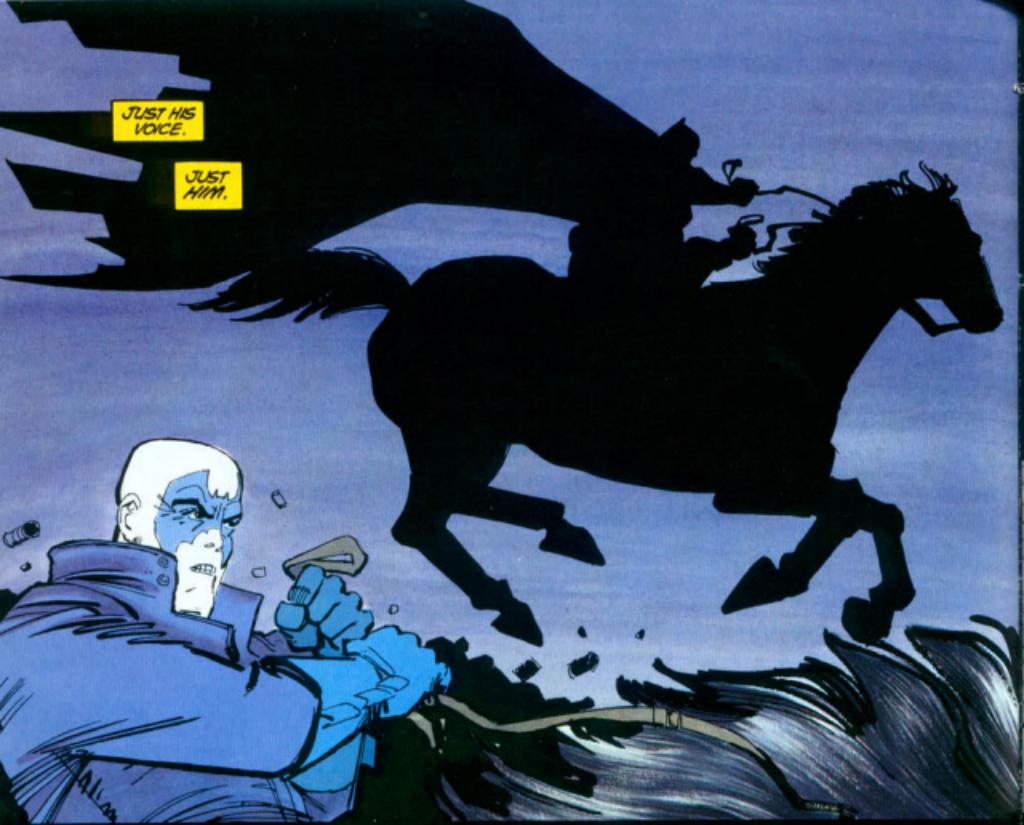


KKKREEEEEE



JUST HIS  
VOICE.

JUST  
HIM.



EEEEEKKKKKK

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

KK

DOWN  
THERE--

SOMETHING  
EXPLODES--

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

COPS--

AINT SHIN--  
FAN--

--RIGHT ON  
MY BLOCK--  
--A GAS  
MAIN--

BUDDA

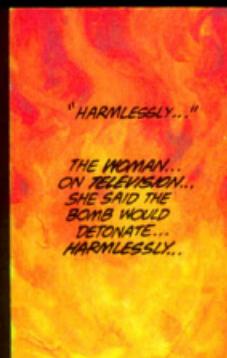






A HARDHAT GRABS  
A LUGWRENCH FROM  
THE BACK OF HIS  
DEAD TRUCK AND  
SMASHES OPEN A  
FIRE HYDRANT.

THE MAN AT THE  
HARDWARE  
STORE PUTS HIS  
SHOTBLUN AWAY  
AND EMPTIES  
PAINT  
BUCKETS  
ALL OVER HIS  
NEW TILE  
FLOOR.



...BULLFROGS,  
WHO SLEPT  
FOR YEARS IN  
DRIED-OUT  
RIVER-BEDS...  
THEN DUG  
THEIR WAY  
TO THE  
SURFACE  
WHEN THE  
RAINS  
CAME...

NOW...  
THERE IS  
ONLY  
BLACKENED  
GLASS...

...ENDLESS  
FLAME...

OUR  
PEOPLE,  
BRUCE.  
YOU  
LAUGH  
AT  
THEM.

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

...THEY CAN SPILT  
THE VERY FABRIC  
OF REALITY...  
BLAST A HUNDRED  
THOUSAND TONS  
OF SAND INTO  
THE SKY...

...BLOTTING OUT  
THE SOURCE OF  
ALL MY POWER...  
THE HOPE  
FOR SCREAMING  
MILLIONS...

MAGNETIC STORM  
...YOU HAVE  
EVERY REASON  
TO BE OUTRAGED,  
MOTHER EARTH...  
YOU HAVE GIVEN  
THEM...  
EVERYTHING...

THEY ARE TINY AND  
STUPID AND VICIOUS  
...BUT PLEASE...  
LISTEN TO THEM...

PLEASE...I AM  
SLOW AND  
DYING...

I NEED  
ONLY...  
REACH  
THE SUN...





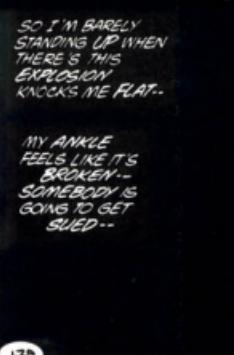
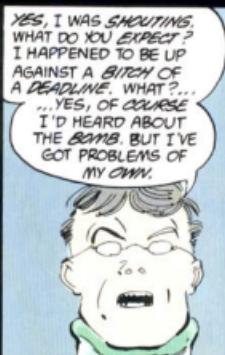


...AND THAT BOY... HE SEEMED TO KEEP PACE WITH ME DELIBERATELY, TAKING THE JOY FROM MY EVENING WALK...

...WITH HIS HORRIBLY LOUD RADIO...

WHEN IT SHRIEKED, I BLAMED THE BOY. TRUTH TO TELL, I TURNED TO CONFRONT HIM...

YES, I WAS SHOUTING. WHAT DO YOU EXPECT? I HAPPENED TO BE UP AGAINST A BUNCH OF A DEADLINE. WHAT?...  
...YES, OF COURSE I'D HEARD ABOUT THE BOMB. BUT I'VE GOT PROBLEMS OF MY OWN.



I'M BARLEY  
ON MY FEET  
WHEN THAT GIRL  
IS ALL OVER  
ME, TALKING  
ABOUT WORLD  
WAR THREE.

I DON'T LIKE  
BEING TOUCHED  
--AND LIKE I  
SAID, I'VE GOT  
MY OWN  
PROBLEMS--

--BUT SHE  
WON'T SHUT  
UP--



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

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

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

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

...I MEAN, LATER I  
FOUND OUT IT WAS A  
PLANE, CRASHING INTO  
THE BRISHAM BUILDING...

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

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



Nobody told me about  
any airplane. The cars  
were popping off like  
firecrackers--  
everybody screaming--

--IT WAS EVERY  
MAN FOR  
HIMSELF.

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

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



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

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



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



HEY--YOU WEREN'T THERE,  
COULD BARELY SEE  
THROUGH ALL THE SMOKE  
--WAS SURE I HEARD  
SHELLINGS.  
IT WAS THE END OF  
THE WORLD-- AND  
I HAD A GUN--

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

I WASN'T  
ALONE,  
EITHER.

THERE'S NO EXCUSE FOR  
WHAT WE DID. WE WEREN'T  
CRAZY. WE WERE JUST  
AN UGLY BUNCH OF STUPID,  
SELFISH BASTARDS.

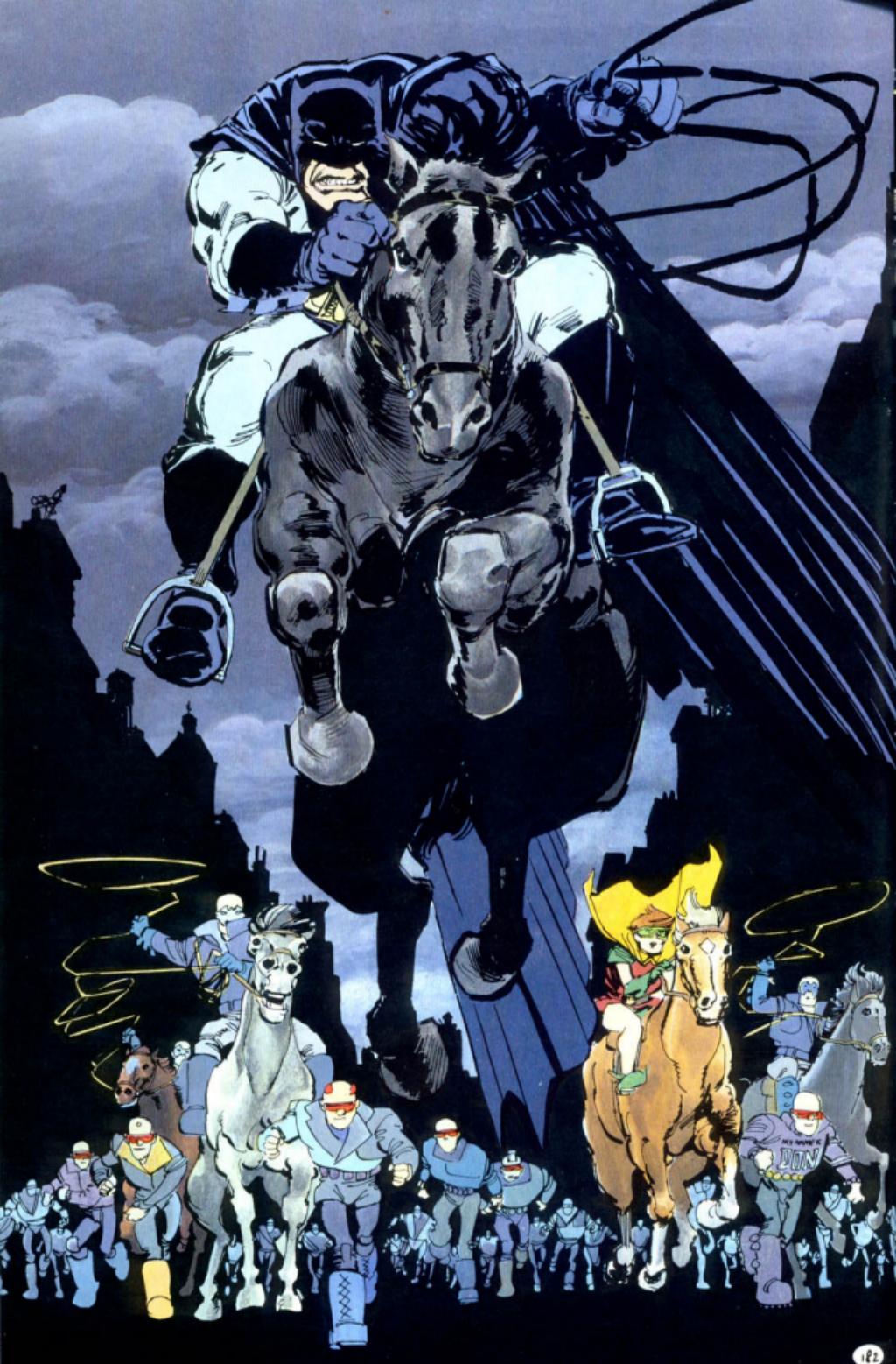
THERE WAS THE  
PRIEST, A BLOODY  
MESS. I DIDN'T  
CARE...

...NO EXCUSE... I WAS IN  
WITH THE REST OF THEM,  
SHOVING, YELLING ABOUT  
FOOD AND GUNS...

THERE WAS NO PLAN,  
NOBODY FIGHTING  
THE FIRE...

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

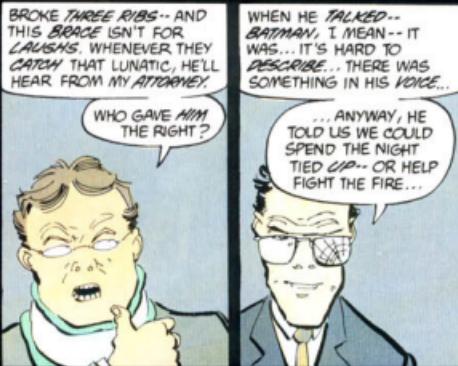






LIKE THE GESTAPO, THEY MOVED IN ON US--BATMAN AND THAT BRAT ARMY OF HIS-- YOU'D HAVE THOUGHT WE WERE CRIMINALS.

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



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



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



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

HE CAN'T DIE...

TURNS OUT SARAH FORGOT TO TELL ME SHE NEEDED MILK.

ONE MORE THING.

TURNS OUT SARAH HAD GONE TO THE GROCERY STORE.

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

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

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

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

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

LOLA, THE SOVIET COLDBRINGER WAS DESIGNED TO INDUCE THE ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS OF FULL-SCALE NUCLEAR WAR. FIRST, IT GENERATED THE PULSE THAT BLACKED OUT...

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

LOLA, THE PULSE WAS ONLY THE BEGINNING. WEATHER PATTERNS ACROSS THE HEMISPHERE HAVE BEEN COMPLETELY DISRUPTED...

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



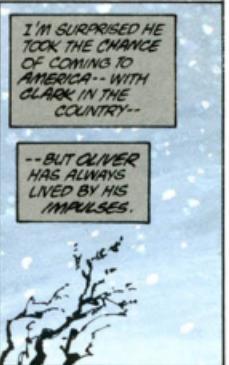
STARVING  
CUBANS WON'T BUDGE  
RIOTS  
MEDIA PUSH  
CREDIBILITY DISASTER  
CIVIL WAR IN THE MID-WEST

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

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



...PEOPLE ARE FREEZING TO DEATH BY THE THOUSANDS-- THE DAMAGE TO CROPS COULD WELL BRING ON A FAMINE...



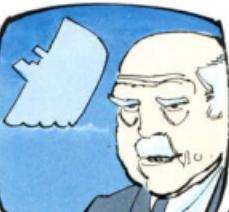
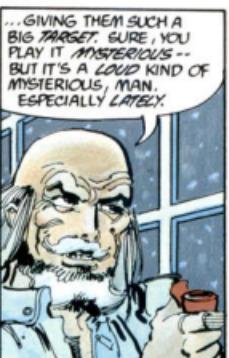
I'M SURPRISED HE TOOK THE CHANCE OF COMING TO AMERICA-- WITH CLARK IN THE COUNTRY...

-BUT OLIVER HAS ALWAYS LIVED BY HIS IMPULSES.



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

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



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

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



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

WHEN IT ALL  
COMES DOWN...

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

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

WHO WAS  
THAT SPUD?  
TALKS LIKE  
MY DAD.

HE USED TO  
FIGHT  
CRIME.



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



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



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

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



...NEW YORK, CHICAGO,  
METROPOLIS-- EVERY  
CITY IN AMERICA IS  
CAUGHT IN THE GRIP OF  
A NATIONAL PANIC--  
WITH ONE EXCEPTION.  
RIGHT, TOM?...



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



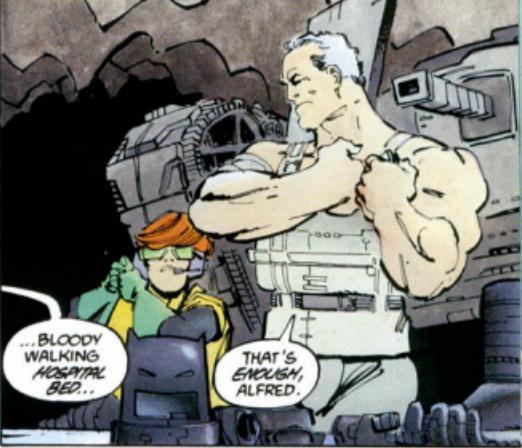
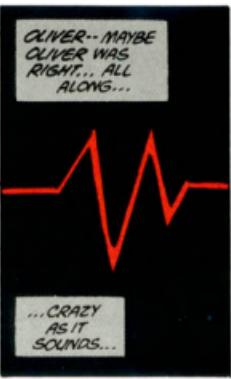
# WHERE?

--AND IT  
BEGINS...



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





...IN THE PAST WEEK, SEVENTY THREE VIOLENT ATTACKS ON WOULD-BE LOOTERS HAVE BEEN ATTRIBUTED BY WITNESSES TO THE BATMAN AND HIS GANG...



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

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



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

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





TWENTY MINUTES LEFT. I KNOW YOU WON'T BE LATE, CLARK.

YOU HATE TO STAY UP LATE.

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

...YOU GOING TO DIE OR WHAT?



THE WIND PICKS UP...



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

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

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

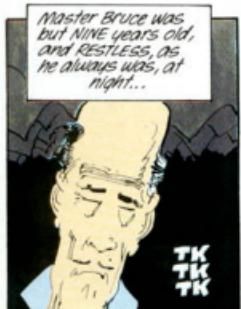
THIS IS A POWERS TEST...

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

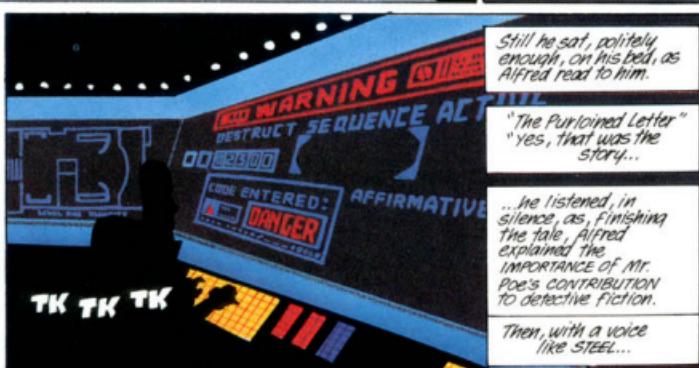
HE'D HAVE TO BE AT FULL SPEED TO DODGE THEM...



Strange to think of that particular evening, more than forty years past.



Master Bruce was, but nine years old, and RESTLESS, as he always was, at night...



...he listened, in silence, as, finishing the tale, Alfred explained the IMPORTANCE OF MR. Poe's CONTRIBUTION TO detective fiction.

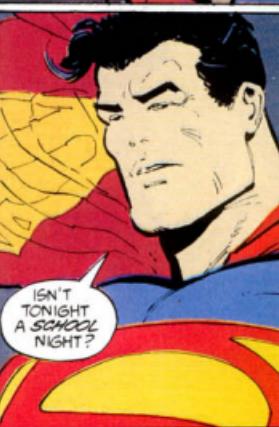
Then, with a voice like STEEL...

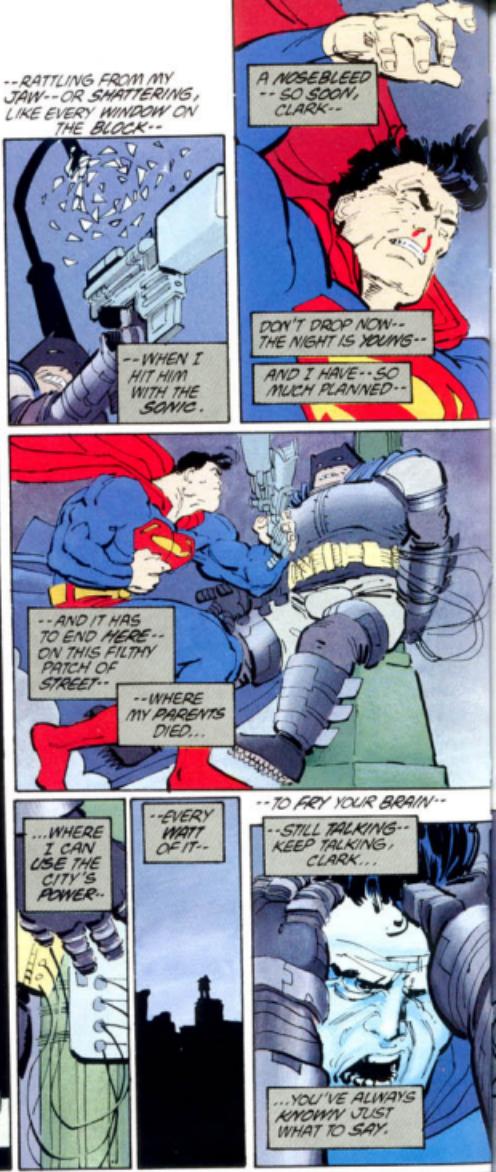
so frightfully formal,  
his dark eyes FLASHING...

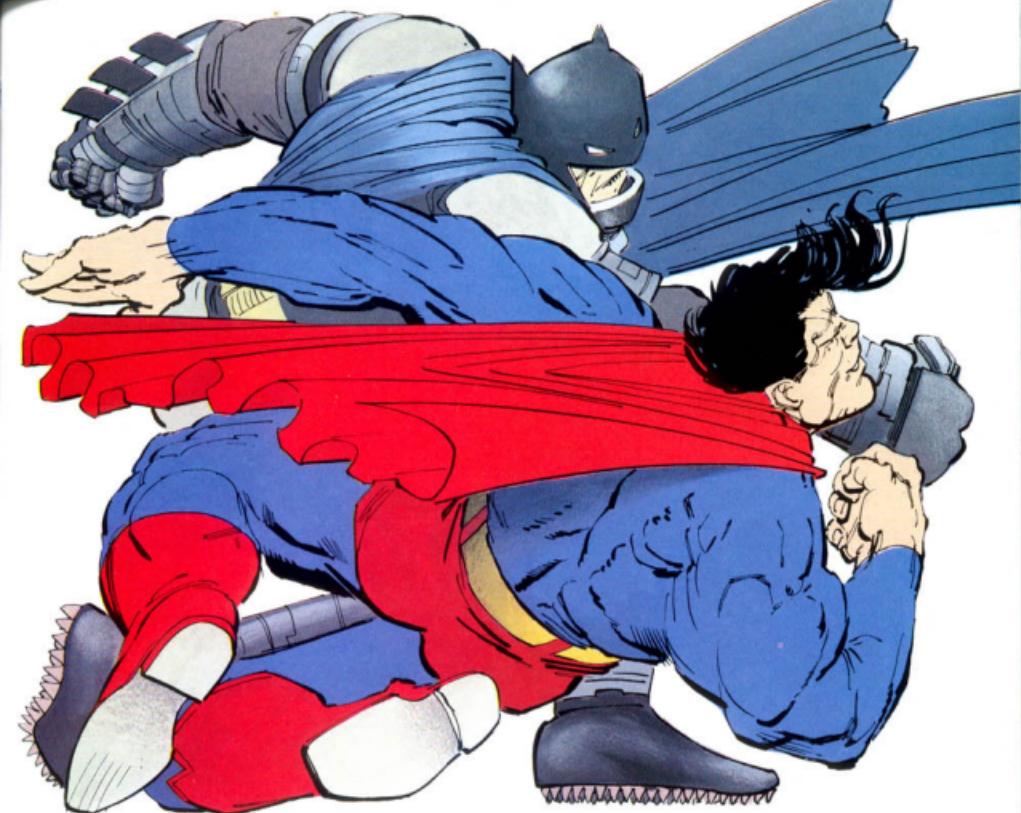
...Master Bruce  
asked -- NO,  
DEMANDED...  
"The killer was  
CAUGHT AND  
PUNISHED."

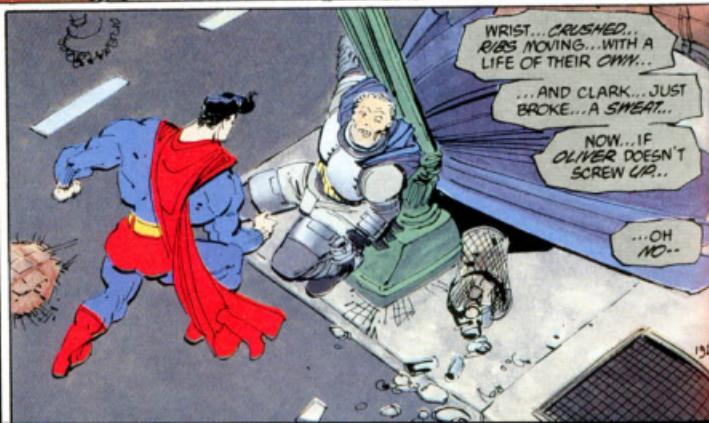
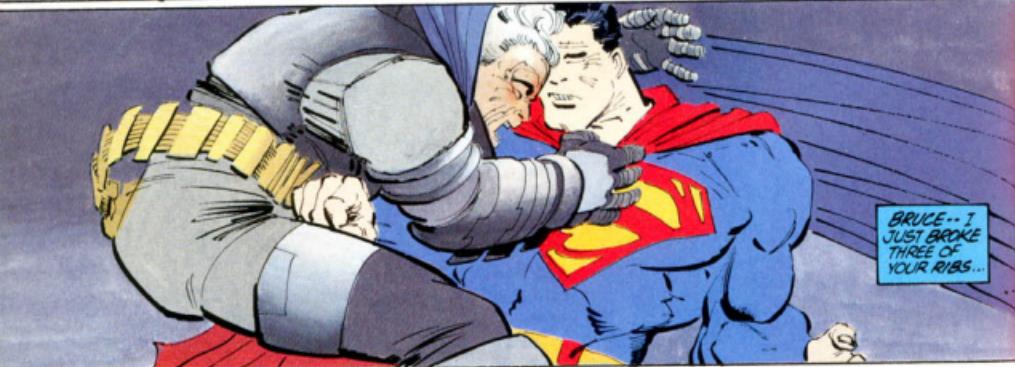
Alfred assured him  
that the villain had  
met justice.

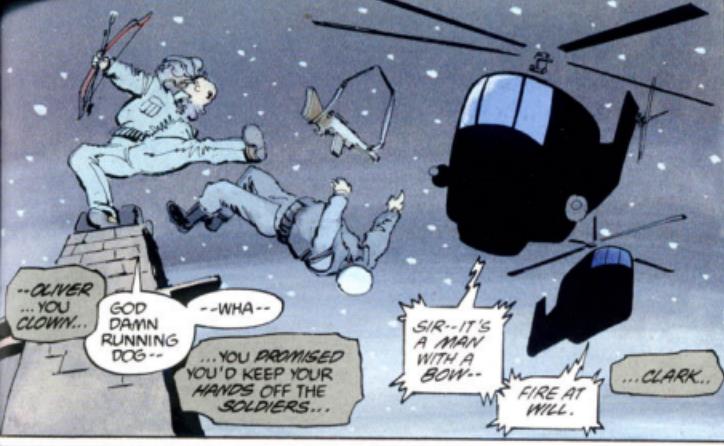
Bruce slept.  
Like a boy.



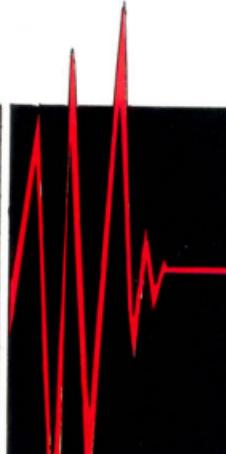


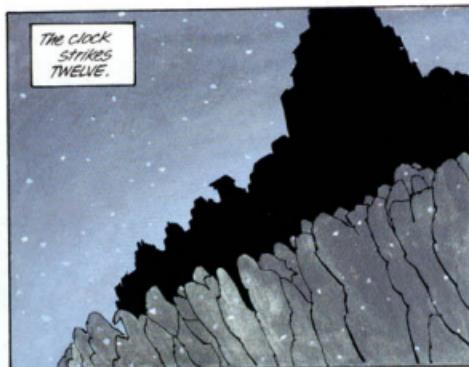




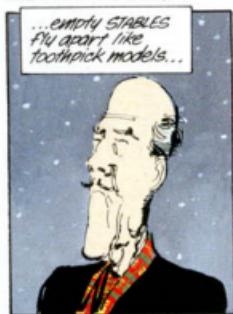








Mrs. Wayne's priceless collection of porcelain shatters, musically...



The world turns ruby red. The manor roof rises, madly, into the sky, riding a pillar of flame.



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



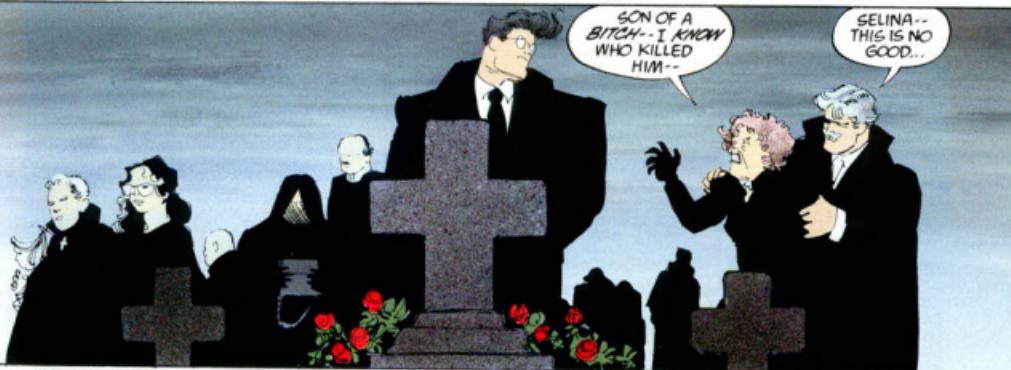
...COMMAND HIS SOUL...

...CLOUD HAS ALMOST COMPLETELY CLEARED IN THE PAST SEVENTY-TWO HOURS. THE PRESIDENT HAS DECLARED A STATE OF STABILIZED EMERGENCY...

REPEATING THE WEEK'S TOP STORIES--THE SPECTACULAR CAREER OF THE BATMAN CAME TO A TRAGIC CONCLUSION...

...AS THE CRIMEFIGHTER SUFFERED A HEART ATTACK WHILE BATTLING GOVERNMENT TROOPS.

HE HAS BEEN IDENTIFIED AS FIFTY-FIVE YEAR OLD BILLIONAIRE BRUCE WAYNE-- AND HIS DEATH HAS PROVEN AS MYSTERIOUS AS HIS LIFE...



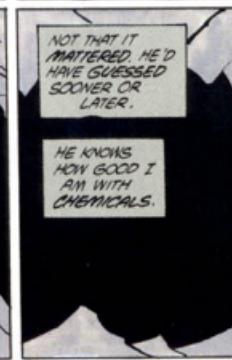
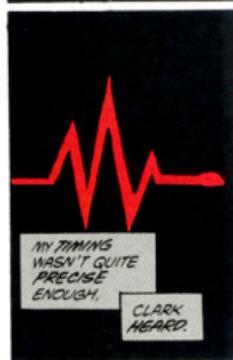
WAYNE MANOR WAS LEVELLED BY A SERIES OF EXPLOSIONS, SET APPARENTLY, BY WAYNE'S BUTLER, FOUND DEAD FROM A STROKE AT THE SCENE...

...FLAMES DESTROYED WHATEVER EVIDENCE MAY HAVE EXISTED AS TO BATMAN'S METHODS. ALSO MISSING, IT SEEMS, IS THE WAYNE FORTUNE...

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



... WHERE THE MONEY  
WENT IS ONE MORE  
SECRET WAYNE HAS  
TAKEN TO HIS GRAVE...  
HIS BODY WAS CLAIMED  
BY HIS ONLY LIVING  
RELATIVE, A DISTANT  
COUSIN...



HE'LL LEAVE ME  
ALONE, NOW. IN  
RETURN, I'LL  
STAY QUIET.

SO WILL ROBIN-  
AND THE REST...

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

RIGHT,  
BOSS.

CAREFUL  
WITH  
THAT--

RIGHT, ALL  
SET BOSS

GOOD. NOW  
GATHER ROUND.

WE HAVEN'T  
GOT ALL NIGHT,  
BOY.

*...WE HAVE YEARS--  
AS MANY AS WE  
NEED...*

FIRST WE GET A  
STEADY SUPPLY OF  
WATER. THERE'S  
A SPRING RIGHT  
BENEATH--

--ROBIN!  
SIT UP  
STRAIGHT.

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

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

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

THIS WILL  
BE A  
GOOD  
LIFE...



...GOOD  
ENOUGH.