

The Story

I open the film with the logo of my studios. And without wasting any time on title cards, I drive straight into our story. To give the audience a flavor of the ambience our characters might be experiencing, I decided to add a date card. The first shot is of our stage, where our story is set. This stage serves as my (0, 0, 0). In the next shot, we see a youngster appear on the streets of Gotham, trying to hide his identity by wearing large spectacles and a hat. The impression that I want to give the audience is that something shady is about to go down and that this individual will be involved. In the next scene, Batman appears behind our person of interest for a quick second before disappearing back into the shadows in the next shot. With this shot, I establish that crime is imminent.

Two cars pull up, and we see them unload their “cargo.” This “cargo” is represented by rubber bands. I am letting the audience decipher what this cargo is, as it can symbolize many different objects, tangible or otherwise. But the cargo is something illegal, as Batman is involved, who shows up right on time. In the next couple of shots, the narrative that I have tried to build is that Batman realizes that the young boy is not a part of this criminal meet-up but happens to be in the wrong place at the wrong time. Batman fights off the cars and forces them to retreat. Once Batman is certain that the kid is safe, he calls for an ambulance. And as soon as the ambulance arrives, Batman disappears into the background. The young boy, *Dick Grayson*, the boy wonder, the first Robin, is whisked away from the scene by Gotham PD, and this is where I hit the audience with the title of the film, *Defender of Gotham*.

The title has been carefully chosen after taking inspiration from Nolan’s Dark Knight and Snyder’s Dawn of Justice. I wanted to go with a title that was a nickname for The Bat and painted an accurate picture of our hero. And Defender of Gotham seemed like an appropriate choice given that my Batman is currently in his second year as Batman. At this point in his timeline, he is still considered a myth by the people of Gotham. Some claim to have seen him, and others believe he is a fable created to stir fear into the criminal class of Gotham. Right now, Batman is trying to keep the streets clean and lock up criminals. He has not yet had to face adversaries that will help define his legacy as a hero. My Batman defends Gotham one person at a time. [He is a guardian, a watchful protector, the vengeance of the night, the defender of Gotham.](#)

Moving onto the second part of the story. The second part is a bit more layered, with more characters and moving pieces. My goal was to make this film with just the objects on my desk and in my drawer, so I had to assign value to everyday objects. The first three shots in the second story signify the changing of the days from day to night and from night to day, and so on. In the next scene, we see a freighter appear on the docks of Gotham. The size of the freighter signifies that this is no longer a small criminal activity but rather a big one with a lot more parties involved. The first character that we see set foot off the ship is a being with a suit powered by batteries. This essentially means that our criminal is a human who is using technology to set himself apart from the current criminal class in Gotham. We see two locks standing in front of our battery-powered supervillain. These locks are meant to represent the bodyguards of our main villain. The very next shot sets up all the characters in our story. This shot was rushed. There should have been a few shots in the middle between the previous shot and this one. I will discuss this issue further in the next section. Furthermore, we see the cars returning to our crime scene. And Batman has been observing these movements and is now ready for the fight to begin.

Right before the fight ensues, we see a creature enter the shot at the very top of the screen. As the creature starts to descend, we get to see the true nature of Batman. We see what makes him a hero and not just another anti-hero. In the next few shots, the narrative is that Batman steps onto the field and does whatever he has to do to disperse the crowd. Batman realizes the value of human life and senses that an alien creature poses far more danger than regular and slightly enhanced criminals. He fights off the humans, and once the coast is clear, he sets his sights on the creature.

For the shot where Batman sees the creature for the first time, I decided to go with the over-the-shoulder shot to give the audience an impression of what Batman is seeing on his end. We see Batman lift his head ever so slightly, which I think was a very cool shot, before getting close to the creature. Over the next few shots, Batman fights off the creature, and we slowly see it disappear from our screens. Once the creature has been vanquished, Batman takes one final look to make sure everything is in order before he seemingly disappears from the northwest side of the shot, but in the very next scene, we see his silhouette in the northeast. This was done to

add mystery and intrigue to the character. Finally, the credits roll, and we see the two main characters in our story along with the supporting cast.

Before the audience leaves, I tease them with a single line: “*Batman will return.*” And this line has several underlying tones. First off, the font used for this text is **Jokerman**. We all know what this means, and secondly, this is the only scene in the film that is in color. So, the audience should be ready to see the Joker in the sequel and can expect the sequel to be in color.

Methodology and Challenges

This was my first ever filmmaking experience, and it was certainly eye-opening, to say the least. There were some factors that I was able to control during the process, but there were some issues that I did not realize were problems until it was too late. I should have started off by doing a storyboard breaking down all the scenes in my film. But I did not think about it until it was too late. It wasn't until I started the editing process that I saw that I had missed a few shots, and it wasn't feasible for me to do reshoots.

Moreover, another challenge I faced was the color of the film. I was not satisfied with the overall color theme of my film. So, I decided to go with black and white. This reminds me of the challenge that Kevin Smith faced while making the first Clerks film. He shot the entire film in black and white because getting the lighting right was an immense challenge. During my shooting process, I decided to do 4 takes of each shot:

- Light On, Flash On
- Light On, Flash Off
- Light Off, Flash On
- Light Off, Flash Off

However, during the shoot, I did not keep track of which style of shot had been completed before moving on to the next one. Therefore, when I got to the editing floor, I had to make some tough choices about which shot to use, as I had multiple possibilities for one shot and only one possible shot for another. That said, I did fix my camera in one position to record every shot from the same position.

All in all, making this stop-motion movie was a fun and rewarding experience. I learned a little bit about how films are made and how tough this process is. This has only made me gain greater respect for the filmmakers that I look up to and hold in high regard.

With this, I will sign off and hopefully return with a longer and more colorful sequel to *Defender of Gotham*.

The Set Up – Pencil marks to hold my camera in the same position for every shot



The Workspace

