**JOKER**

**AN ORIGIN**

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This story takes place in its own universe. It has no

connection to any of the DC films that have come before it.

We see it as a classic Warner Bros. movie. Gritty, intimate

and oddly funny, the characters live in the real world and

the stakes are personal.

Although it is never mentioned in the film, this story takes

place in the past.

Let's call it 1981.

It's a troubled time. The crime rate in Gotham is at record

highs. A garbage strike has crippled the city for the past

six weeks. And the divide between the "haves" and the "have-

nots" is palpable. Dreams are beyond reach, slipping into

delusions.

**OVER BLACK:**

**HEAR LAUGHTER.**

The sound of a man totally cracking up.

**FADE IN:**

**1 INT. DEPT. OF HEALTH, OFFICE - MORNING 1**

CLOSE ON JOKER (30's), tears in his eyes from laughing so

hard. He's trying to get it under control. His greasy, black

hair is matted down. He's wearing an old, faded red hooded

zip-up sweatshirt, a threadbare gray scarf, thin from years

of use, hangs loosely around his neck.

WE NOTICE TWO FADED OLD SCARS cut at the corners of his

mouth. Almost forming a smile.

He's sitting across from an overworked SOCIAL WORKER (50's),

African American. Her office is cramped and run-down in a

cramped and run-down building. Stacks of folders piled high

in front of her.

She just sits behind her desk, waiting for his laughing fit

to end, she's been through this before. Finally it subsides.

Joker takes a deep breath, pauses to see if it's over.

Beat.

**JOKER**

--is it just me, or is it getting

crazier out there?

Despite the laughter, there's real pain in his eyes.

Something broken in him. Looks like he hasn't slept in days.

**SOCIAL WORKER**

It's certainly tense. People are

upset, they're struggling. Looking

for work. The garbage strike seems

like it's been going on forever.

These are tough times.

(then)

How 'bout you. How's the job? Still

enjoying it?

**JOKER**

Yeah, I mean, it's different each

day, so I really like that. I don't

think I could ever work in an

office. Behind a desk.

**(MORE)**

**2.**

**JOKER (CONT'D)**

(beat)

No offense.

She smiles. Writes something down. Looks at the clock, she's

running late for her next appointment.

**SOCIAL WORKER**

Have you been keeping up with your

journal?

**JOKER**

Everyday.

**SOCIAL WORKER**

Great. Did you bring it with you?

Beat.

**JOKER**

(dodging the subject)

I'm sorry. Did I bring what?

**SOCIAL WORKER**

(impatient; she doesn't

have time for this)

Arthur, last time I asked you to

bring your journal with you. For

these appointments. Do you have it?

**JOKER**

Yes ma'am.

Beat.

**SOCIAL WORKER**

Can I see it?

He reluctantly reaches into his bag. Pulls out a weathered

notebook. Slides it across to her--

**JOKER**

I've been using it as a journal,

but also a joke diary. Funny

thoughts or, or observations-- Did

I tell you I'm pursuing a career in

stand-up comedy?

She's half-listening as she flips through his journal.

**SOCIAL WORKER**

No. You didn't.

**JOKER**

I think I did.

**3.**

She doesn't respond, keeps flipping through his journal--

**SOCIAL WORKER**

Oh yeah. Because of what your

mother said,-- about your purpose.

"To bring laughter and joy to the

world," right?

**JOKER**

Right.

ANGLE ON JOURNAL, pages and pages of notes, all in neat,

angry-looking handwriting. Also, cut out photos from hardcore

pornographic magazines and some crude handmade drawings.

A flash of anger crosses Joker's face. We see him picking at

his right eyebrow, almost obsessively. Trying to stay calm.

His eyebrow is actually half-gone. Something he does a lot.

**JOKER**

I didn't realize you wanted to read

it.

The social worker gives him a look, then reads something in

the pages that gives her pause.

**SOCIAL WORKER**

(reading out loud)

"I just hope my death makes more

sense than my life."

She looks up at Joker. He just stares back. Lets it hang out

there for a beat.

Then he laughs a little, even though he doesn't think it's

funny--

**JOKER**

Yeah. I mean, that's just--

**SOCIAL WORKER**

Does my reading it upset you?

He leans in.

**JOKER**

No. I just,-- some of it's

personal. You know?

**SOCIAL WORKER**

I understand. I just want to make

sure you're keeping up with it.

She slides his journal back to him. He holds it in his lap.

**4.**

**SOCIAL WORKER**

What about your mom? How's she

feeling?

**JOKER**

She has good days. But mostly bad.

It's been a big help having me

there. She really needs me.

**SOCIAL WORKER**

Seems like she's been sick a lot

since you got home.

**JOKER**

(nods)

Yeah, it's good I'm there. When I

was in the hospital, after my last

episode-- she was having trouble

getting over there to visit.

She looks back up at the clock, she needs to get to her next

appointment.

**SOCIAL WORKER**

All right. So, I'll see you again,

two weeks from today?

He nods. But keeps sitting there for a moment.

She stands up, trying to signal it's time for him to leave--

**SOCIAL WORKER**

Is there something else I can help

you with, Arthur? My next

appointment is waiting.

He just keeps sitting there.

**JOKER**

Yeah, I was wondering if you could

ask the doctor to increase the

dosage on my medications? Nothing

seems to make a difference.

**SOCIAL WORKER**

(looking over his record)

Do you know which ones you'd like

increased?

Shakes his head, no.

**SOCIAL WORKER**

Have you been sleeping?

**5.**

**JOKER**

(lying)

Some.

She glances at his file again.

**SOCIAL WORKER**

Arthur, you're on seven different

medications. Surely they must be

doing something.

He finally stands up. Zips up his faded red sweatshirt.

Looks at her--

**JOKER**

I just don't wanna feel so bad

anymore.

**CUT TO BLACK:**

**TITLE:**

**JOKER**

**2 EXT. GOTHAM SQUARE, MIDTOWN - KENNY'S MUSIC SHOP - DAY 2**

GOTHAM SQUARE IS CLOGGED WITH TRAFFIC. Non-stop honking

horns, pedestrians crowding the sidewalk. Huge billboards,

giant movie marquees, garbage bags piled high everywhere.

Underneath it all we hear a TINKLING PIANO playing something

bouncy and fast-paced.

FROM ACROSS THE BUSY CITY STREET, we see Joker. He's dressed

as a sad-faced HOBO CLOWN. This is his job.

Dressed in tattered clothes, dark five o'clock shadow painted

on his face, big bulbous red nose, his mouth's outlined in

white, turned down at the corners.

He's holding up a sign in front of Kenny's Music Shop that

reads, "EVERYTHING MUST GO!" A banner above the store reads,

"GOING OUT OF BUSINESS!" Behind him, an OLD MAN plays a piano

on the street. Both of them there to draw attention to the

big sale going on in the store.

Joker's doing a little Charlie Chaplin like waddle to the

music. Most people walk right past, ignoring him. A few bump

into him by mistake.

JOKER SEES A GROUP OF FIVE BOYS, no more than 15-years-old,

walking toward him. He moves out of their way. They crack up

laughing when they see him. Start making fun of him.

**6.**

Joker ignores them, tries to do his job the best he can while

maintaining some dignity. Keeps dancing and holding up the

sign.

One of the kids knocks the sign out of Joker's hands--

**KID #1**

Suck my dick, clown.

The kids laugh. Joker doesn't say anything. Just bends over

to pick up the sign--

Another kid kicks him in the ass--

**KID #2**

Whoops.

Joker falls face first onto the sidewalk. Oddly, the old man

playing the piano picks up the pace of the music--

The kids crack up. One of the boys grabs Joker's sign and

takes off running across the street--

The other kids follow, weaving through traffic--

Joker gets up and gives chase. He needs his sign back.

He almost gets hit by a taxi, spinning out of the way just in

time-- Spinning right into another taxi that stops just short

of hitting him.

Joker keeps running through traffic. People stare. A clown

barreling down the street has got to be a joke--

**3 EXT. CORNER, SIDE STREET - GOTHAM SQUARE - CONTINUOUS 3**

The five boys are booking it down the crowded street laughing

and whooping it up. At the last second they take a sharp

right turn down a cross street--

Joker almost overshoots the corner, slip-sliding in his big

red shoes--

He rights himself and heads down after them--

Sees them running up ahead--

WHAP! Out of nowhere Joker gets hit in the face!

He falls to the ground.

One of the kids was hiding between parked cars and hit Joker

with the "EVERYTHING MUST GO!" sign, splintering it in two--

**7.**

The other kids turn back and walk up to Joker down on the

ground.

Joker reaches out, still trying to save the sign--

THE KIDS START KICKING AND BEATING THE SHIT out of Joker.

It's brutal and vicious. Nobody on the street stops to help.

CLOSE ON JOKER'S HOBO CLOWN FACE, down on the ground. Sweat

running down his face, smearing his make-up. He doesn't even

look like he's in pain. He just takes the beating.

That stupid frown painted on his face.

**4 INT. CITY BUS (PULLING OUT) - HEADING DOWNTOWN - DUSK 4**

Joker, makes his way toward the back of the crowded bus, now

walking with a slight limp, but keeping his head held high.

His make-up's washed off, costume and props all shoved into a

big shopping bag slung over his shoulder. Some white grease-

paint still smudged on the sides of his face.

He finds an empty seat in the back of the bus. Sees a sad-

eyed FOUR-YEAR-OLD GIRL, face puffy from crying, sitting on

her knees looking back at him. Her mother's facing forward,

but even from behind you can tell she's angry.

Joker sees the sad-eyed girl staring straight back at him. He

doesn't know where to look, feeling self-conscious and small.

He gets back into "character" smiling like a clown and covers

his face with his hands-- Starts playing the peek-a-boo game

with her.

The girl stares back at him for a moment then giggles--

**WOMAN ON BUS**

(turns back to Joker;

already annoyed)

Can you please stop bothering my

kid?

**JOKER**

I wasn't bothering her, I was--

**WOMAN ON BUS**

(interrupts)

Just stop.

AND SUDDENLY JOKER STARTS TO LAUGH. LOUD. He covers his mouth

trying to hide it-- Shakes his head, laughter pausing for a

moment, but then it comes on stronger. His eyes are sad. It

actually looks like the laughter causes him pain.

**8.**

People on the bus are staring. The girl looks like she's

going to cry again.

**WOMAN ON BUS**

You think that's funny?

Joker shakes his head no, but he can't stop laughing. He

reaches in his pocket and pulls out a small card. Hands it to

the woman.

CLOSE ON THE CARD, it reads: "Forgive my laughter. I have a

condition (more on back)"

She turns the card over and there is a bunch of information

in small writing--

"It's a medical condition causing sudden, frequent, uncontrollable laughter that

doesn't match how you feel. It can happen in people with a brain injury or certain

neurological conditions."

She doesn't read it (but if you freeze frame the movie you

could). She just shakes her head annoyed and throws the card

on the ground.

Joker laughs harder. Tears running down his face.

Not wanting to attract any more attention to himself, he

pulls up his red hood, and uses his threadbare scarf to cover

his mouth, trying to muffle the laughter.

He looks out at the city passing him by.

**5 EXT. LOWER EAST SIDE, STREETS - GOTHAM - EVENING 5**

The bus pulls away, sun almost gone.

Joker heads slowly down the litter-covered streets. Garbage

is piled along the sidewalks, the air thick with smog creates

a haze over everything.

The streets are crowded with the poor, the elderly and

disenfranchised. Women with children in busted strollers.

Homeless people sleeping on subway grates. Stray dogs. His is

one of the few white faces.

Joker makes his way into a run-down drug store, behind him

two drunks fight on the corner, beating the shit out of each

other. Joker, and nobody else for that matter, pays them any

attention.

No one here gives a shit.

**9.**

**6 INT. LOBBY, APARTMENT BUILDING - EVENING 6**

A shabby lobby in a building that was once probably pretty

nice, but now it's a dump.

Joker checks his mailbox. He's holding a small white

(prescription) bag in his hand.

The mailbox is empty.

**7 INT. ELEVATOR, APARTMENT BUILDING - CONTINUOUS 7**

Joker steps onto the wheezing elevator, harsh fluorescent

lights, graffiti on the walls. As the door closes, he hears--

**SOPHIE (OS)**

Wait!!

He puts his foot out with some panache to stop the closing

door-- He's a romantic at heart. Ding.

And SOPHIE DUMOND (late 20's), tired eyes, hands filled with

grocery bags, steps onto the elevator with GIGI, her 5-year-

old daughter.

**SOPHIE**

Thank you.

(realizing)

Of course it's you,-- everyone else

in this building is just so fucking

rude.

Joker nods "thanks." Holds his breath, hoping he doesn't

start to laugh.

Floors dinging as the elevator rises.

Joker sees GiGi licking the dirty smudged elevator handrail

behind her mom.

**SOPHIE**

How's your mom doing?

He takes a deep breath, he's uncomfortable talking to her,

holds up the white prescription bag.

**JOKER**

It's day to day. I'm doing

everything I can to get her back on

her feet.

(re: pharmacy bag)

Picked up her medicine. Gonna make

her some dinner.

**10.**

**SOPHIE**

(smiles; being polite)

She's lucky she has you--

Joker smiles thanks, can't help but glance at GiGi licking

the rail.

Sophie finally notices. She wants to grab her but can't with

her hands full. Tries to kick her away--

**SOPHIE**

Jesus. Don't do that, GiGi! How

many times have I told you that?

(to Joker)

This building is so awful, isn't

it?

Joker just nods... he doesn't know what to say, but clearly

wants to continue this conversation with Sophie.

The doors open. They all step off.

**SOPHIE**

Okay. Well, tell your mom I said

hello.

And Sophie and GiGi walk down the hall-- the opposite way of

Joker. He just stands there for a beat. Heart beating fast.

**JOKER**

(calls out after her)

Hey Sophie--

She turns around.

**JOKER**

I'll tell my mom you said hello.

She smiles as in "yeah, that's what I said."

**8 INT. MOM'S APARTMENT, FRONT DOOR - EVENING 8**

Old apartment, worn carpet. Nothing's new inside but it's

fairly neat and well-kept.

Joker closes the door behind him, leans his back against it

and swoons. Hears a deep purring sound. He looks down and

sees an OLD ORANGE CAT, rubbing up against his leg.

Then--

**11.**

**MOM (OS)**

(shattering the moment,

calls out)

Happy?! Did you check the mail

before you came up?

**JOKER**

Yes, Ma. Nothing. No letter.

**MOM (OS)**

You sure you looked? Sometimes I

don't know where your head is.

Joker glances back down and sees the cat is gone.

**JOKER**

Yes I'm sure. And my head's right

here. I'm gonna make you some

dinner, okay?

**QUICK CUTS:**

**JOKER TEARS OPEN THE PRESCRIPTION BAG... A FLURRY OF PILL**

**BOTTLES TUMBLE OUT ONTO THE COUNTER.**

**SEE HIS NAME, "ARTHUR FLECK" ON THE ORANGE PILL BOTTLES, AND**

**GLIMPSE THE GENERIC DRUG NAMES, TEMAZEPAM... PERPHENAZINE...**

**AHENELZINE... AMITRIPTYLINE... BENZEDRINE... DIAZEPAM...**

**MEPROBAMATE...**

**TAKES OUT ONE PILL FROM EACH THE TEMAZEPAM AND MEPROBAMATE**

**BOTTLES.**

**TWO PILLS BEING CRUSHED UP TO POWDER.**

**SPRINKLES THE POWDER ON TOP OF A TV DINNER.**

**SWALLOWS A HANDFUL OF PILLS FROM THE OTHER BOTTLES.**

**LOOKS DOWN AND SMILES AT THE ORANGE CAT LOOKING UP AT HIM**

**FROM THE COUNTER.**

**9 INT. MOM'S BEDROOM, APARTMENT - NIGHT 9**

Joker brings the food to his mother, PENNY (70's), lying in

her bed. The TV is on, playing the local news.

Joker sets the food down in front of his mother. He covers

the pain from his beating the best he can-- His mother

doesn't seem to notice anyway.

**MOM**

He must not be getting my letters.

**12.**

Joker sits down on a chair next to the bed.

**JOKER**

He's a busy man.

**MOM**

Too busy for me? I worked for that

family for 12 years. He always had

a smile for me. Least he could do

is write back.

**JOKER**

Ma, eat. You need to eat.

**MOM**

You need to eat. Look how skinny

you are.

Before Joker can say anything, his mother points to the news

on the TV--

**MOM**

All day long it's more bad news.

That's all there is.

**JOKER**

Maybe you shouldn't watch so much

television.

**MOM**

(ignoring)

He's the only hope for Gotham.

He'll make a great mayor. Everybody

says so.

**JOKER**

(playful)

Everybody who? Who do you talk to?

**MOM**

Well everybody on the news.

**JOKER**

Stop it. He's not even gonna run.

Why would Thomas Wayne want to be

mayor? He can do more good as a

businessman.

**MOM**

Because he cares about this city.

And everyone in it-- that's why I

can't believe he hasn't written me

back.

**13.**

**JOKER**

He will. Now eat some dinner.

He feeds her a bite of the food.

**JOKER**

How you feeling today?

**MOM**

I don't know. It always hits me

worse at night, you notice that?

He shakes his head.

**JOKER**

(teasing)

Maybe it's the moon. Maybe you're a

werewolf?

HE HOWLS SOFTLY like a wolf. She laughs.

**MOM**

It's not funny.

Joker watches her as he cuts up some more of her food.

**MOM**

Anyway, I wrote a new letter today.

A better one. I want you to hand

deliver it to him.

**JOKER**

What? Why?

**MOM**

Cause maybe the mailman is throwing

them away. We should have tipped

him at Christmas time.

**JOKER**

Who tips their mailman?

**MOM**

Some people do. Rich people do.

Joker sighs, resigned.

**JOKER**

Okay. I can try his office.

Tomorrow.

**14.**

**MOM**

Thank you.

(she pats the bed)

Come sit. It's almost on.

Joker gets into bed with her.

CLOSE ON TELEVISION, intro to "LIVE WITH MURRAY FRANKLIN!",

and we HEAR THE ANNOUNCER over clips of comedy bits, stars

and Murray Franklin himself--

**ANNOUNCER (ON TV)**

It's Live with Murray Franklin!

Tonight Murray welcomes, Sandra

Winger, comedian Skip Byron and the

piano stylings of Yeldon & Chantel!

As always, Don Ellis and his Jazz

Orchestra. And now, without any

further ado-- Murray Franklin!

Joker and his mom watch from bed, this is a ritual of theirs.

**10 INT. LIVING ROOM, MOM'S APARTMENT - NIGHT 10**

Late night. Joker's mom is dead asleep. Joker is alone in the

living room, which doubles as his bedroom. He can't ever

sleep. He opens his worn notebook. Flips to a page titled

"Jokes" and starts writing--

CLOSE ON WORDS, as he slowly writes: "The worst part about

having a mental illness is..."

ANGLE ON JOKER, pausing, thinking it over for a moment. Then

he laughs to himself when he comes up with something.

CLOSE ON WORDS, coming faster now, "...that people still

expect you to behave as if you don't."

**CUT TO:**

**11 EXT. WAYNE TOWER, STREET - MIDTOWN - MORNING 11**

Joker's looking up at the intimidating steel and glass tower,

he looks so small, holding his mom's letter in his hand.

Bustle of professionals coming in and out of the company's

corporate headquarters, Joker looks out of place.

He heads inside through the giant glass doors.

**15.**

**12 INT. RECEPTION, WAYNE ENTERPRISES - 25TH FLOOR - MORNING 12**

Joker steps off an elevator and walks up to the white marble

reception desk as if he belongs there--

**JOKER**

Hello. I have a personal letter for

Mr. Thomas Wayne.

**RECEPTIONIST**

Okay. You can leave it with me.

**JOKER**

It's kind of important. I need to

make sure he gets it himself.

**RECEPTIONIST**

Oh, in that case, I'll buzz you

right in.

Joker goes to enter--

**RECEPTIONIST**

I'm kidding. Leave it here.

He laughs along with her, even though she's not laughing.

**JOKER**

Oh. Right-- well, my mom used to

work for the Wayne family-- for 12

years. She was their housekeeper.

A couple other business people are now waiting behind Joker,

there for meetings.

**RECEPTIONIST**

That's great. But you can leave it

with me or you can leave with the

letter. Those are your options. Now

please step aside.

**JOKER**

Mr. Wayne knows her. Can you maybe

at least call back to him? Tell him

that I'm here.

**RECEPTIONIST**

Thomas Wayne is away on business.

Joker is getting frustrated.

**JOKER**

Okay. Well, can I have your name?

So I know who I left it with.

**16.**

Now Joker sees a GROUP OF MEN walking behind the glass that

separates the reception area from the back offices. Amongst

the group, he catches a glimpse of THOMAS WAYNE (60's), deep

tan, hair dyed so black it's almost blue.

**JOKER**

Wait. He's right there.

(goes up to the glass,

shouts)

Mr. Wayne! Mr. Wayne.

He starts banging on the glass... but the group keeps moving.

Not noticing him.

**RECEPTIONIST**

Sir. Please stop. Sir!!

Joker keeps banging on the glass.

**13 EXT. WAYNE TOWER, FRONT ENTRANCE - MORNING 13**

The glass doors swing open and Joker is forcibly thrown onto

the street. TWO LARGE SECURITY GUARDS stand over him.

He is still holding the letter.

He makes as if he's going to leave peacefully, then at the

last minute, TAKES ANOTHER RUN AT THE DOOR--

The two guards stiff arm him.

**CUT TO:**

**14 INT. HA-HA'S TALENT BOOKING, LOCKER ROOM - DAY 14**

The cramped locker room of a small talent booking agency.

This is where Joker works. They "rent out" talent for parties

and events. Clowns, magicians, male strippers.

Joker takes off his shirt, grimaces in pain as he moves. His

body's bruised from the beating he took chasing after his

sign.

**RANDALL (OS)**

You okay?

He turns. RANDALL (mid 50's), a big bear of a know-it-all,

standing there. He's a party clown as well. He's half-dressed

in his clown suit.

**17.**

**RANDALL**

I heard about the beat down you

took. Fucking savages.

**JOKER**

It was just a bunch of kids. I

should have left it alone.

Randall opens his locker--

**RANDALL**

It's crazy out there. And it's only

getting worse.

**JOKER**

(nods)

My mother says that the people

nowadays lack empathy.

**RANDALL**

What's empathy?

**JOKER**

It means like "feeling for other

people."

**RANDALL**

Like sympathy?

**JOKER**

Kind of. But different.

Randall comes over, hands Joker a brown paper bag-- Joker

looks inside. It's a GUN, a .38 snub-nose revolver.

Joker looks up at him, confused--

**RANDALL**

Take it. I got a few. You gotta

protect yourself out there, buddy.

Too many wackos.

As Joker stares at it--

**RANDALL**

(lowers his voice)

It's a .38 snub-nose. Gets the job

done if you ever need to use it.

Usually pulling it out is enough.

**JOKER**

I, I don't have the money for this,

Randall.

**18.**

**RANDALL**

Don't sweat it. You can pay me some

other time. You're my boy.

That lands with Joker, he smiles to himself.

**RANDALL**

(as he walks away)

But you didn't get it from me,

okay?

Joker nods. Puts the brown paper bag in his locker. Slowly

starts to get dressed-- his eyes darting toward the bag as he

does.

Another clown, GARY (30's), a dwarf, pops his head into the

locker room.

**GARY**

Arthur,-- Hoyt wants to see you in

his office.

**JOKER**

What for?

**GARY**

No clue.

**15 INT. FRONT OFFICE, HA-HA'S TALENT BOOKING - DAY 15**

Joker still half-dressed, walks into the cramped office.

His boss, HOYT VAUGHN (60's) sits behind a metal desk. The

office is a complete mess, newspapers and files litter the

desk. A giant ashtray filled with cigarette butts. A calendar

of booking hangs on the wall. A scribbled, jumbled mess.

**JOKER**

Hey Hoyt. Gary said you wanted to

see me?

**HOYT**

(without even looking up)

How's the comedy career? Are you a

famous stand-up yet?

**JOKER**

Not quite. Haven't even performed

yet. Just been working my material.

This business is all about fine-

tuning.

Now Hoyt looks up. Takes a drag from his cigarette.

**19.**

**HOYT**

Right.

Joker goes to sit down--

**HOYT**

Don't sit. This will be quick.

Joker stops in his tracks.

**HOYT**

Look, I like you, Arthur. A lot of

the guys here, they think you're a

freak. But I like you. I don't even

know why I like you. I mean, you

don't say much.

(beat)

It's probably that stupid laugh. It

gets me every time. Kills me.

Unsure how to respond, Joker just nods.

**HOYT**

But I got another complaint. And

it's starting to piss me off.

Joker takes a deep breath, maybe picks at his eyebrow.

**HOYT**

Kenny's Music. Sunday. The guy said

you disappeared. Never even

returned his sign.

**JOKER**

No. I got jumped. I told you about

that.

**HOYT**

For a sign? Bullshit. It makes no

sense, just give him his sign back.

He's going out of business for

god's--

BANG! Out of nowhere, Joker slams his head into the wall.

Head-butting it hard.

**HOYT**

(taken aback)

Hey!

BANG! BANG! He does it two more times. Breaking the plaster

on the wall--

**20.**

**HOYT**

What the fuck, Arthur?!

**JOKER**

(voice tightens)

I don't have his sign.

And Joker just stares at Hoyt, some blood forming on his

forehead--

**CUT TO:**

**16 EXT. BACK ALLEY, OUTSIDE HA-HA'S - AMUSEMENT MILE - DAY 16**

WE'RE AT THE FAR END OF AN ALLEY, about halfway down, catch a

glimpse of Joker still half-dressed on the other side of a

dumpster. From this vantage, all we can see is him furiously

KICKING and STOMPING on something... or somebody.

We don't hear anything. And we can't make out what it is that

he's so violently beating down.

It could be a cat... a cardboard box... a homeless person...

We don't know.

Joker just continues unleashing his rage--

**17 INT. CITY BUS (MOVING) - DUSK 17**

Joker at the end of his work day, sitting in his spot toward

the back of the bus.

Across the aisle from him, he's innocently watching a young

couple, playfully teasing each other.

**18 EXT. GOTHAM, LOWER EAST SIDE - EVENING 18**

Joker heading back home down the litter-covered streets like

he does every night. Garbage still piled along the sidewalks,

air still thick with smog.

He's carrying the paper bag that Randall gave him.

**19 INT. LOBBY, APARTMENT BUILDING - EVENING 19**

Joker checks his mailbox. Empty.

**21.**

**20 INT. ELEVATOR, APARTMENT BUILDING - CONTINUOUS 20**

Joker is on the elevator, as the door closes, he sticks his

foot out to stop it.

The door limps back open. Ding.

He looks to see if anybody, if Sophie, is coming. He waits.

Hoping.

The door starts to close on him again-- Right before it does,

he stops it with his foot again. Ding.

**21 INT. MOM'S APARTMENT, BATHROOM - NIGHT 21**

JOKER'S GIVING HIS MOM A BATH, being careful with her as he

shampoos her hair.

**MOM**

--so what did he say when you gave

him the letter?

**JOKER**

They wouldn't let me see him.

(lying)

But they promised me it would get

to him.

**MOM**

It's good they promised. He only

works with the best. We should hear

something soon.

He fills an empty plastic container with some bath water.

**JOKER**

Look up.

She tilts her head back and he rinses her hair with the water

from the container...

**JOKER**

Why are these letters so important

to you, Ma? What do you think he's

gonna do?

**MOM**

He's gonna help us.

**JOKER**

Help us how?

**22.**

**MOM**

Get us out of here, take me away

from this place and these-- these

awful people.

**JOKER**

You worked for him over 30 years

ago. What makes you think he would

help you?

She looks at him with conviction.

**MOM**

Because Thomas Wayne is a good man.

If he knew how I was living, if he

saw this place, it would make him

sick. I can't explain it to you any

better than that.

Joker nods. Annoyed, but not worth the argument. He stands up

to get her a towel.

**JOKER**

I don't want you worrying about

money. Everyone's been telling me

they think my stand-up is ready for

the big clubs. It's just a matter

of time before I get a break.

She steps into the towel. He's helping dry her off.

**MOM**

Happy, what makes you think you

could do that?

**JOKER**

What do you mean?

**MOM**

I mean, don't you have to be funny

to be a comedian?

Beat.

**22 INT. MOM'S BEDROOM, APARTMENT - LATE NIGHT 22**

Joker's mom is out cold in her bedroom, a half-eaten plate of

food is next to her on the bed.

**23.**

**23 INT. LIVING ROOM, MOM'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS 23**

Joker sits on the couch. The TV is on, but the sound is off.

He holds the .38 SNUB-NOSE REVOLVER Randall gave him in his

hand. He's never held a gun before, looks uncomfortable with

it, the weight of it in his hand...

He points it at the TV, hand trembling a bit... Points it at

the cat... Points it at his head.

Looks closely at the grip. The barrel. The cylinder. Now he

casually pulls the trigger--

**BLAMMMMMMM!**

He jumps up off the couch. What the fuck!? He looks around in

a panic. His hands shaking.

He shot a hole in the wall.

**MOM (OS)**

(awoken by the shot)

HAPPY!? What was that?

**JOKER**

What?!

He quickly turns up the TV volume. REALLY LOUD. Shoves the

still smoking gun under the couch cushions.

**MOM (OS)**

**THAT NOISE! DID YOU HEAR THAT**

**NOISE?**

He's inspecting the hole in the wall. Shouts back over the TV

noise--

**JOKER**

**I'M WATCHING AN OLD WAR MOVIE.**

**MOM (OS)**

**TURN IT DOWN!**

He heads for his mother's bedroom.

**24 INT. MOM'S BEDROOM, DOORWAY - CONTINUOUS 24**

Joker looks in on his mom in her dark bedroom, can make out

the outline of her body sitting up.

**MOM**

It's so loud.

**24.**

**JOKER**

I know. The Americans are really

giving it to the Japs.

He walks over to her in the darkness. Kisses her on the

forehead.

**JOKER**

(softly)

I'm sorry. I'll turn it down.

**25 INT. KITCHEN, MOM'S APARTMENT - LATE NIGHT 25**

Joker is writing in his journal. He speaks softly to himself

as he writes...

**JOKER**

Why didn't Randall tell me the gun

was loaded? He's my friend. With my

luck, I could have killed someone.

(beat)

I could have killed myself.

CLOSE ON THE LAST LINE, he crosses out "could"...

Writes... "should".

**JOKER**

(still to himself)

I should have killed myself.

CLOSE ON JOKER as he crosses out something again...

**JOKER**

(louder to himself)

I should kill myself.

Beat.

**26 EXT. STREET, LOWER EAST SIDE - MORNING 26**

HANDHELD POV, see the run-down building where Joker lives

from across the street.

REVEAL, Joker is watching his own building on the far side of

a parked truck. Red hood pulled up, covering his head. He

waits. Watches.

Now we see Sophie exiting the building with her daughter

GiGi. Sophie's dressed more conservatively than when we

previously met her.

**25.**

Joker starts following them.

**27 EXT. PUBLIC SCHOOL - MORNING 27**

Sophie drops GiGi off at school. Joker's still watching.

Following.

**28 EXT. ELEVATED SUBWAY PLATFORM - MORNING 28**

Sophie waits on the platform. Lights a cigarette.

We see Joker, hidden behind a steel support beam-- watching

her from a distance.

**29 INT. SUBWAY (MOVING) - MORNING 29**

Joker stands at the window between two subway cars. Just

watching Sophie as she reads a book in the next car.

The train comes to a stop and she exits. Joker exits as well.

**30 EXT. STREET, UPPER EAST SIDE - MORNING 30**

Nicer part of Gotham. Joker follows Sophie from a distance,

watches as she walks into Gotham First National Bank.

Sees her say hello to the guard. This is where she works.

Joker just watches and waits.

**31 INT. GOTHAM FIRST NATIONAL - LATER 31**

A large, mid-level bank. Sophie is one of THREE BANK TELLERS

working behind the plexiglass windows.

Joker pulls the hood back off his head, takes a deep breath

before he walks up to her window. She is looking down,

counting her drawer.

Takes another deep breath. Then--

**JOKER**

Hello. I'd like to open an account.

She looks up.

**SOPHIE**

(surprised)

Hey, what are you doing up here?

**26.**

**JOKER**

Oh, hi. That's weird.

(pausing to see if he's

gonna laugh; he's good)

I didn't know you worked at a bank.

**SOPHIE**

Pretty glamorous, right?

Not getting the sarcasm, Joker nods. Looks around.

**JOKER**

Very glamorous. Look at this place.

She laughs.

He stands there awkwardly for a moment looking around to see

what she's laughing about.

Realizes she thought he was making a joke.

Beat.

**JOKER**

I'm a comedian. I do stand-up

comedy.

**SOPHIE**

Really? I had no idea.

**JOKER**

Yeah. You know, I'm always making

funny observations. Always on the

look out for my next bit-- so it

makes sense.

**SOPHIE**

Right. Anyway, is there something I

could help you with?

Beat.

**JOKER**

I said hi to my mom.

**SOPHIE**

Excuse me?

**JOKER**

Last week. You said to say hi to my

mom. I did. Made her day.

They are interrupted by the BRANCH MANAGER (50's), white,

heavy-set, who has come up behind Sophie--

**27.**

**BRANCH MANAGER**

Everything okay here?

He puts his heavy hand on Sophie's shoulder. She practically

shudders from his touch.

**SOPHIE**

Everything is fine Mr. Slotnick.

Now he leans down and whispers something in her ear-- Joker

just watches through the glass.

**SOPHIE**

(shakes her head; to her

manager)

No. He's not. He's interested in

opening an account.

**BRANCH MANAGER**

(to Joker)

Great. You just need to fill out a

form. They are back there-- against

the wall.

As the manager talks, Sophie makes wide eyes at Joker, like

"I almost got in trouble."

**JOKER**

(covering; trying to act

cool)

Okay. Thank you, sir. And thank you

as well, Miss.

Joker walks back to the wall by the forms.

He fumbles around for a minute, clearly not there to open an

account. He begins filling out a form. Then--

**JOKER**

(shouts out, to no one in

particular)

**YOU KNOW WHAT?! I FORGOT MY ID!**

**I'LL BE BACK. THANK YOU.**

He walks out of the bank. Head in the clouds.

**32 INT. GOTHAM COMEDY CLUB, CHINATOWN - NIGHT 32**

Joker sitting in the middle of a dark, crowded comedy club.

People on dates. Groups of friends. All here to watch the

stand-up. He sits at a small table by himself, watching the

act on stage.

**28.**

The comic on stage is killing it. The whole room is laughing

and applauding. Everyone except Joker.

He's watching. Studying. Diligently jotting down notes in his

notebook.

**33 EXT. GOTHAM COMEDY CLUB, STREET - CHINATOWN - NIGHT 33**

People are piling out of the club, onto the narrow street,

jumble of lit-up signs, most glowing yellow or red. Joker

walks out alone, carrying his notebook. He sees a FLYER taped

to the entrance of the club.

CLOSE ON THE FLYER, "Open mic night. Thursdays. 10pm."

He rips the flyer off the wall.

**34 INT. HA-HA'S TALENT BOOKING, LOCKER ROOM - DAY 34**

Joker is working on his "Mr. Jingles" clown look, using the

small mirror in his locker. Behind him a couple of other

clowns are eating their lunch at a small table, not paying

Joker any attention.

Joker pauses half-finished, and stares at himself for a beat.

He starts to examine the two small scars on the corners of

his mouth, we really notice how they form a smile. Joker

hooks the corners of his mouth down with his index fingers,

turning his smile into a frown--

He lets go and his smile returns.

Does it again, up and down, up and down, his face a living

comedy/tragedy mask.

And then he pulls his fingers wider, stretching his smile

into a grotesque parody, pulling his mouth so wide tears come

to his eyes--

AND WE HEAR JOKER SINGING "If You're Happy and You Know It"

at his next gig.

**JOKER (PRE-LAP)**

(singing)

--if you're happy and you know it

and you really want to show it, if

you're happy and you know it clap

your hands.

**29.**

**35 INT. GOTHAM GENERAL - CHILDREN'S WARD - EVENING 35**

Joker is performing for a ward full of sick children, wearing

an oversized white lab coat over his "Mr. Jingles" clown

costume. A few nurses and doctors watch as well.

His white clown face, mouth outlined in black and filled in

with red, his green wig frizzy and worn out. Joker plays a

UKULELE along with the song.

**JOKER**

If you're happy and you know it,

stomp your feet.

Joker and the kids stomp and sing along.

**JOKER**

If you're happy and you know it,

stomp your feet.

(stomp, stomp)

If you're happy and you know it and

you really want to show it, if

you're happy and you know it stomp

your feet.

As the song winds down, the KIDS and NURSES clap.

Joker takes an exaggerated and ridiculous bow--

And as he does, his .38 SNUB-NOSE REVOLVER slips out of his

pants and slides across the floor.

Everyone stops. Looks at the gun on the floor.

**36 INT. LOBBY, GOTHAM GENERAL - LATER 36**

Joker is on a payphone in the lobby of the hospital. He's in

his street clothes, wig in his hand, clown-face still painted

on.

**JOKER**

(into phone)

Hoyt, let me explain.

**HOYT (OVER PHONE)**

Oh, this'll be good. Please tell me

why you brought a gun into a sick

kid's ward?

**JOKER**

(into phone)

It was, it was a prop gun. It's

part of my act now.

**30.**

**HOYT (OVER PHONE)**

Bullshit. Jingles would never carry

a fucking gun. Besides, Randall

told me you tried to buy a .38 off

him last week.

Joker's taken aback that Randall would do that to him.

**JOKER**

(into phone)

Randall told you that?

**HOYT (OVER PHONE)**

He was with me when the call came

in. You're a fuck up, Arthur. And a

liar. You're fired.

**JOKER**

(into phone)

Hoyt--

**HOYT (OVER PHONE)**

Say it, Arthur.

(beat)

Let me hear you say it.

**JOKER**

(into phone)

Say what?

**HOYT (OVER PHONE)**

I'm a fuck up and I'm fired.

Joker picks at his eyebrow.

**JOKER**

(into phone; low)

--I'm a fuck up and I'm fired.

**HOYT (OVER PHONE)**

Louder.

**JOKER**

(into phone; louder)

I'm a fuck up and I'm fired.

**HOYT (OVER PHONE)**

Yes. You are.

Click. He hears Hoyt hang up.

Beat.

**31.**

**37 INT. SUBWAY (MOVING) - NIGHT 37**

**JOKER SITS ON THE SUBWAY CONTEMPLATING WHAT JUST WENT DOWN,**

face still painted, his bag on the seat next to him, along

with his wig.

There's only one other person on the subway car, a YOUNG

WOMAN (30's) sitting at the far end-- reading a book.

The train comes to a stop and THREE WALL STREET GUYS enter.

They are being loud and obnoxious, clearly drunk. One of them

is eating some french fries out of a greasy McDonald's bag.

He flops down on the bench across from the girl and checks

her out. The other two guys start getting into it with each

other--

**WALL STREET #1**

--I'm telling you, she wanted my

number. We should have just stayed.

The train starts moving again...

**WALL STREET #2**

You're dreaming, man. She wasn't

interested-- at all.

**WALL STREET #1**

Are you nuts? Did you see how close

we were dancing!? She was in love,

bro.

He starts dancing a bit with himself, mimicking what he

remembers. Wall Street #2 takes a swig from the brown bag he

is carrying.

**WALL STREET #2**

She couldn't wait to get away from

you.

Joker is watching them closely, impressed by their confidence

and easy-going camaraderie.

**WALL STREET #1**

(to the third guy)

Ryan, am I crazy? Tell him what you

saw.

But the third Wall Street guy isn't paying his friends any

attention. He has his eyes set on the young woman sitting

across from him, reading her book.

**WALL STREET #3**

(to the girl)

Hey. You want some french fries?

**32.**

He holds out his McDonald's bag and shakes it to get her

attention. The other two share a look. Joker watches from his

seat.

**WALL STREET #3**

Hello? I'm talking to you. You want

some fries?

She looks up and shakes her head, polite smile.

**YOUNG WOMAN**

No thank you.

The other two guys crack up at this apparent blow-off. The

third Wall Street guy shakes his head, embarrassed, and

starts softly flinging fries at the young woman.

**WALL STREET #3**

You sure? They're really good.

She just buries her face deeper in her book--

**WALL STREET #2**

Don't ignore him. He's being nice

to you.

One of the french fries lands in her hair. She looks down

toward Joker, looking to see if he's going to do something or

say something--

Joker just sits there nervous. Not sure what to do, or even

if he wants to do anything at all.

AND HE JUST BURSTS OUT LAUGHING. He covers his mouth with his

hand as they continue to harass the woman.

They all look over-- What the fuck is this clown laughing at?

**WALL STREET #1**

Something funny, asshole?

With their attention diverted, the young woman rushes out

through the door between subway cars, glancing back at Joker

before she goes--

**WALL STREET #3**

(shouts after her)

**BITCH!**

Joker laughs even harder through his hand. The Wall Street

guys turn to him sitting by himself at the end of the car--

**33.**

Joker sees them staring. Looks down at the ground, hand still

covering his mouth, face turning red. Subway swaying, lights

flickering on and off.

Beat.

One of the guys heads down the car toward Joker, starts

singing "Send in the Clowns" as he approaches--

**WALL STREET #1**

(singing)

Isn't it rich?

Are we a pair?

Me here, at last on the ground

You in mid-air

Send in the clowns.

The others crack up and follow after him. The guy plops down

next to Joker, puts his arm around his shoulder as he sings--

**JOKER**

(shakes his head, stifling

the laughter)

Please. Don't.

**WALL STREET #1**

(continues singing to him)

Isn't it bliss?

Don't you approve?

One who keeps tearing around,

One who can't move.

Joker starts to get up-- The lead guy pulls him back down.

**WALL STREET #1**

Where are the clowns?

There ought to be clowns.

As he finishes the song, Joker's laughing fit is coming to an

end. One of the other guys sits down on the other side of

him. He's now sandwiched in between them--

**WALL STREET #2**

So tell us, buddy. What's so

fucking funny?

**JOKER**

Nothing. I have a condition--

Joker reaches into his bag to get one of his "Forgive my

laughter" cards, the third guy sees him reaching and tries to

grab the bag from him---

Joker pulls on it--

**34.**

**JOKER**

No. It's just my stuff. I don't

have anything.

The guy rips the bag from his hand--

**WALL STREET #3**

I'll tell you what you have,

asshole.

Joker gets up from between them to go grab his bag back. The

two guys are cracking up.

**WALL STREET #3**

You want it back? Here--

Joker reaches out to grab the bag--

And the guy tosses it over his head to one of his friends.

Keeping it away from Joker.

Three guys in suits tossing a bag around, playing 'monkey in

the middle' with a clown. THE LIGHTS ON THE TRAIN SEEM TO

GLOW BRIGHTER AND WE HEAR the drum roll opening to BOBBY

SHORT singing "Send in the Clowns" Live at the Caf� Carlyle.

Joker keeps trying to catch his bag until suddenly--

WHAP! Out of nowhere one of the guys punches him hard in the

face.

Joker goes down as if in slow motion. Blood coming from his

nose. He tries to get up, but his feet slip from under him

and he falls back down--

**WALL STREET #1**

Stay down you freak.

And the third Wall Street guy starts kicking him--

The others join in. Surrounding Joker on the ground, kicking

him deliberately, sadistically, and the music swells--

**BLAM!**

SUDDENLY THE LIGHTS GO BACK DIM, and one of the guys stops

kicking and falls back dead. Blood splattering on the subway

wall behind him--

And we HEAR Bobby Short sing out, picking up from where the

Wall Street Guy left off--

**35.**

**BOBBY SHORT (SINGING)**

Just when I'd stopped opening doors

Finally knowin' the one that I

wanted was yours

BLAM! BLAM! Wall Street #2 goes down--

Revealing Joker on the ground, opening his eyes to see what

he did, smoking gun in his hand--

**BOBBY SHORT (SINGING)**

Making my entrance again with my

usual flair

Sure of my lines

No one is there

The third guy takes off running for the doors that separate

the cars.

Joker starts after him, but then stops... turns back to grab

his bag and his wig, his hands shaking from the adrenaline.

The train is coming to a stop.

**BOBBY SHORT (SINGING)**

Don't you love farce?

My fault I fear...

Joker picks up his bag between the two dead bodies, blood

everywhere...

The subway doors wheeze open and Joker steps halfway off the

train, waiting to see if the third Wall Street guy gets off

in the car ahead of him. Joker sees him run off--

**38 EXT. SUBWAY PLATFORM - CONTINUOUS 38**

The platform is empty, the Wall Street guy is running toward

the stairs--

Joker follows--

Behind them, the train pulls away--

**BOBBY SHORT (SINGING)**

I thought that you'd want what I

want.

Sorry, my dear.

The guy makes his way to the stairs, unaware that Joker is

behind him--

**BLAM!**

**36.**

The third guy falls, tumbling down the stairs. Joker walks

over to the body and empties the chamber-- BLAM! BLAM!

**BOBBY SHORT (SINGING)**

But where are the clowns?

Quick, send in the clowns

Don't bother they're here.

And as "Send in the Clowns" ends, Joker fires the last shot--

BLAM! He's got nothing left.

**39 EXT. STREET, ROBINSON SQUARE PARK - NIGHT 39**

Joker hauls ass out of the subway and makes a mad dash across

a busy street, horns honking--

Running as fast as he can past piles of garbage, he takes a

sharp turn high-tailing into a small, run-down needle park,

disappearing into the darkness.

**40 INT. PUBLIC BATHROOM, ROBINSON SQUARE PARK - NIGHT 40**

Joker runs into the bathroom, locks the door behind him and

**SUDDENLY EVERYTHING HITS HIM ALL AT ONCE--**

He throws up into the dirty toilet, puking his guts out--

He finishes, wipes his mouth with the back of his hand. And

pulls the gun out of his waist, looking around for someplace

to throw it out. Under the sink he sees a rusted, metal grate

hanging off the wall covering some pipes.

Before he bends down, Joker catches his reflection in the

smudged mirror. Sees himself holding the gun in his hand--

Beat.

He raises the gun to his head and pulls the trigger--

Click.

It's empty.

He gets down on his knees, sweat dripping off his face, pulls

the grate away from the wall. And tosses the gun away inside.

Moves the grate back in place.

Joker stands back up and turns on the faucets. Rinses out his

mouth.

Looks at his smudged reflection as he starts washing the

clown make-up off his sweaty face--

**37.**

**JOKER**

Hi. Do you like to laugh?

Water dripping, white grease paint running off his face--

**JOKER**

Remember how I told you that I'm a

stand-up comedian?

(again)

Hi. How are you?

Beat.

**41 INT. APARTMENT BUILDING, LOBBY - LATER 41**

Joker enters his building with great urgency. No time for the

elevator, he takes the stairs. Two at a time.

He races up the stairwell.

**42 INT. HALLWAY, APARTMENT BUILDING - CONTINUOUS 42**

When he gets to his floor, instead of making a left toward

his apartment-- He makes a right, toward Sophie's. He stops

at her door. Out of breath.

Knocks.

He hears footsteps. Quickly pulls the folded-up flyer out of

his pocket.

The peephole in the door goes dark and then light again. He

hears locks unlocking. Sophie opens the door halfway--

Joker looks down at his feet--

**JOKER**

Hi. Do you like to laugh?

**SOPHIE**

What?

**JOKER**

(continuing without taking

a breath)

Remember the other day when I told

you about my stand-up comedy. Well,

I'm doing a set next Thursday and

I'm inviting a bunch of my friends

and I was wondering if maybe you

wanted to come and check it out.

**38.**

He reaches out to give Sophie the flyer, she opens the door

wider-- He notices her face, sees her eyes are red.

**JOKER**

Were you crying? Why are you

crying?

Beat.

**SOPHIE**

I had a bad day.

**JOKER**

I'm sorry. I, I didn't--

**SOPHIE**

It's okay. How would you know.

**JOKER**

What happened?

**SOPHIE**

I got fired. From the bank.

Joker takes a deep breath and smiles without realizing it,

hoping he doesn't start to laugh.

**JOKER**

What for?

**SOPHIE**

Because,-- I don't know. It doesn't

fucking matter. I don't know what

I'm gonna do.

And she starts crying again. Joker doesn't move. Just stands

in the doorway awkward.

**JOKER**

(finally)

Okay. Well, all the info is right

there on the flyer.

He starts to walk away, then turns back to her--

**JOKER**

You know they say laughter is the

best medicine.

Sophie wipes her eyes and manages a smile.

**SOPHIE**

Is that what they say?

**39.**

Joker just nods yes and walks back toward his mother's

apartment.

**43 INT. DEPT. OF HEALTH, OFFICE - MORNING 43**

JOKER SITS ACROSS from the same Social Worker from the

opening scene. Same depressing office.

She stares at him for a beat, clearly annoyed.

**SOCIAL WORKER**

We spoke about this last time,

Arthur. You're supposed to bring

your journal with you.

**JOKER**

Well I didn't think you were going

to read it.

**SOCIAL WORKER**

You said it didn't bother you.

**JOKER**

I lied. Everything bothers me.

**SOCIAL WORKER**

What about it bothered you?

**JOKER**

It's personal. It's my private

thoughts. Plus it contains original

comedy material that I don't feel

comfortable handing over to you.

She looks at him and shakes her head. Not in the mood to deal

with this.

**SOCIAL WORKER**

Arthur, I have some bad news for

you.

He looks up, intrigued.

**SOCIAL WORKER**

They've cut our funding. We're

closing down our offices next week.

He looks around, just noticing some MOVING BOXES stacked

against the wall.

**JOKER**

So where will we be meeting?

**40.**

**SOCIAL WORKER**

We won't be. The city's cut funding

across the board. Social services

is part of that.

Joker nods, not hating the idea.

**JOKER**

Okay.

**SOCIAL WORKER**

They don't give a shit about people

like you, Arthur. You don't have a

voice and they don't really care

what happens to you or to us for

that matter.

He sits there for a moment. And then it dawns on him--

**JOKER**

How am I gonna get my medication?

Beat.

**44 INT. MOM'S APARTMENT, KITCHEN - MORNING 44**

CLOSE ON A COUPLE OF PILLS, as they get crushed up.

CLOSE ON THE RESIDUE, as it's sprinkled on top of a bowl of

oatmeal.

**MOM (OS)**

Happy! Come in here. Thomas Wayne

is on TV.

Joker takes a couple of pills for himself. Looks inside. Not

many left. He looks over at the orange cat sitting on the

counter, purring loudly, watching him.

**MOM (OS)**

Quick! Come.

**45 INT. MOM'S BEDROOM, APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS 45**

Joker walks in carrying her breakfast. She waves him over to

her bed.

**MOM**

They're interviewing him about

those horrible murders on the

subway last week.

**41.**

**JOKER**

Why are they talking to him?

His mother shushes him. Joker sits on the end of the bed next

to her. It's one of those "Good Morning, Gotham" shows.

**THOMAS WAYNE (ON TV)**

--as you know, Jerry, all three of

them worked at Wayne Investments,

and they were the best of the best.

Solid young men.

A small smirk registers on Joker's face when photos of the

THREE WALL STREET GUYS come up on the screen.

**THOMAS WAYNE (ON TV)**

And while I didn't know them

personally, like all Wayne

employees, past and present, they

were family.

Joker's mom perks up at that--

**MOM**

You hear that! I told you. We're

family.

ANGLE ON TELEVISION, footage of GRAFFITI around the city.

"KILL THE RICH" spray painted on a storefront. "F CK WALL

STREET" written on a subway wall. "RESIST" scrawled across a

billboard.

**"GOOD MORNING" HOST (ON TV)**

There now seems to be a groundswell

of anti-rich sentiment in the city.

It's almost as if our less

fortunate residents have taken the

side of the killer.

**THOMAS WAYNE (ON TV)**

Yes and it's a shame. It's one of

the reasons I'm considering a run

for mayor. Gotham has lost its way.

**"GOOD MORNING" HOST (ON TV)**

Are you announcing your candidacy?

**THOMAS WAYNE (ON TV)**

(smiles)

No comment.

We hear his mother gasp, excited.

**42.**

**"GOOD MORNING" HOST (ON TV)**

What about the eyewitness report of

the suspect being a man in clown

make-up or a clown mask-- Care to

comment on that?

Joker leans in, intrigued. The camera zooms in closer to

Thomas Wayne on the screen...

**THOMAS WAYNE (ON TV)**

It makes total sense to me. What

kind of coward would do something

that cold-blooded? Someone who

hides behind a mask. Someone who's

envious of those more fortunate

than themselves, yet too scared to

show their own face.

(to camera)

And until that jealousy ends, those

of us who've made a good life for

ourselves will always look at those

who haven't as nothing but clowns.

**CUT TO:**

**46 INT. COMEDY CLUB, BACKSTAGE HALLWAY - NIGHT 46**

JOKER'S POV, slowly walking down the hall -- as if in slow

motion -- toward a curtain at the end, spotlight bleeding

through, other wannabe comics looking at him as he passes--

CLOSE ON JOKER, eyeing the others, sweat beading on his

forehead--

He gets to the curtain, the light, pulls his worn joke-

notebook out of his back pocket. Glancing into the room he

sees it's a pretty good crowd. Sees Sophie taking a seat in

the back.

Wheeling back into the dark hallway, he catches his breath in

the shadows--

And starts BANGING HIS HEAD BACK against the wall--

He hears the EMCEE from the stage.

**EMCEE (OS)**

This next comic describes himself

as a lifelong Gotham resident who

from a young age was always told

that "his purpose in life was to

bring joy and laughter into this

cold, dark world." Ummm. Okay.

**43.**

He hears the crowd laugh.

**EMCEE (OS)**

Please help me welcome Arthur

Fleck!

There is a smattering of applause.

**CUT TO:**

JOKER STEPPING ON STAGE, out under the spotlight, lifts the

microphone in front of his mouth, the light so bright he

can't see faces in the dark audience, his hand trembling

holding onto his worn notebook--

He takes a deep breath, looks out at the dark crowd, and

opens his mouth.

And starts to laugh. His eyes go wide. God no, not now. A

terrified look comes to his face under the laughter. He just

keeps laughing. The crowd is just staring back at him.

Finally he composes himself--

**JOKER**

(trying to stop himself

from laughing)

-- good evening, hello.

(deep breath; trying to

stop laughing)

Good to be here.

(keeps cracking up)

I, I hated school as a kid. But my

mother would always say,--

(bad imitation of his mom,

still laughing)

"You should enjoy it. One day

you'll have to work for a living."

(laughs)

"No I won't, Ma. I'm gonna be a

comedian!"

Dead silence. Except for Joker, who's still cracking up.

**CUT TO:**

**47 EXT. COMEDY CLUB, CHINATOWN STREET - NIGHT 47**

Joker and Sophie walking out of the club after the show, the

audience trickles out around them. Nobody looking in Joker's

direction, nobody says anything to him, maybe one or two even

cracking up at him behind his back. Garbage bags crowding the

narrow street, lit up by the bright signs.

**44.**

Joker and Sophie walk a ways without saying a word. Awkward

silence.

Then--

**JOKER**

So, did you laugh? Really couldn't

see much from up there.

Sophie pauses, doesn't know what to say. She lights up a

cigarette.

**SOPHIE**

(trying to be nice)

Of course. Yeah. You couldn't hear

anything?

**JOKER**

All I heard was my heart pounding.

**SOPHIE**

It was good. I really needed to get

out of my apartment so, thanks.

(beat)

What happened to the rest of your

friends?

**JOKER**

What friends?

**SOPHIE**

Didn't you say some of your friends

were coming?

**JOKER**

(he forgot; recovers)

Yeah, I decided not to invite them.

As a performer sometimes you want

to see how a "real" crowd reacts.

People who don't already love me,

or, or have a notion of who I am,

you know?

**SOPHIE**

(nodding)

Yeah. I get that.

Joker smiles at the connection. They walk past a newsstand--

a wall of Chinese language newspapers mixed with local papers

and tabloids, screaming headlines about the three Wall Street

Guys gunned down on the train.

Joker stops and stares at the headlines--

**45.**

CLOSE ON HEADLINES, "Subway Vigilante"... "Yuppie Slaughter"

"Killer Clown On The Loose?"...

**SOPHIE (OS)**

(re: the headlines)

You believe that shit?

**JOKER**

Yeah,-- I don't know how something

like that happens.

**SOPHIE**

Please. I'll bet you five bucks

those rich assholes deserved it.

He turns to her.

**JOKER**

You think?

**SOPHIE**

Look at their faces. Those smug

smiles. I've seen that look. Fuck

them.

Sophie flicks her cigarette away and starts walking.

**SOPHIE**

The guy who did it is a hero. Three

less pricks in Gotham City. Woo-

hoo! Only a million more to go.

Joker watches her walk for a beat.

**JOKER**

(calls out to her)

Hey. You want to get some coffee?

Sophie turns around and smiles. She looks great, even in

front of the mounds of garbage bags that line the sidewalk.

AN AMBULANCE SCREAMS BY, SIRENS BLARING as Sophie says

something that Joker doesn't hear. She keeps walking.

Joker chases after her and trips over a TIN GARBAGE CAN LID--

CLANG. CLANG. He falls down flat on his face.

Sophie turns and bursts out laughing. She can't help but

laugh. It's the first time she's laughed all night.

**46.**

**48 INT. SZECHUAN ACE RESTAURANT, TABLE - NIGHT 48**

Table covered with plates of half-eaten Chinese food.

Joker and Sophie sitting across from each other, middle of

conversation. Crowded room, brightly lit, looks more like a

casino. Almost everybody eating there is Chinese. It's loud.

**SOPHIE**

--I'm telling you, it's across the

board. Wall Street, the banks,

politicians. They've been making a

killing for years. Fuck them.

Joker takes a moment to think about what she said.

**JOKER**

I don't know.

**SOPHIE**

What don't you know?

**JOKER**

Not all of them are awful. Take

someone like Thomas Wayne for

example. He's a hero.

**SOPHIE**

Oh c'mon, he's the worst!

Joker is taken aback--

**JOKER**

Sophie, he's the only one who can

save this city.

**SOPHIE**

You can't be serious!? He's a

complete narcissist. Brags about

his money. Meanwhile, the rest of

us can barely make rent. Or feed

our kids.

Joker nods. Thinking about it.

Then--

**JOKER**

What happened?

**SOPHIE**

With what?

**47.**

**JOKER**

With your job. At the bank?

**SOPHIE**

(suddenly uncomfortable)

Oh. Yeah, I was, um,--

**JOKER**

We don't have to talk about it.

Beat.

**SOPHIE**

Have you ever been fired before?

Joker thinks it over for a moment.

**JOKER**

Every time.

**SOPHIE**

And have you ever wanted to torch

the place?

**JOKER**

(thinks it over again)

Every time.

Sophie smiles.

**SOPHIE**

Right. And this was like the first

good job I had in like, years. Not

waitressing or anything like that.

It was 9-5. I had benefits. You

know what that means when you have

a kid?

Joker just looks at her, he doesn't really know what that

means. He just smiles.

**SOPHIE**

But from the very first day, the

manager guy starts smiling at me,

whispering in my ear, touching me,

trying to get me to sleep with him--

**JOKER**

(interrupting)

Did you do it? Did you go to bed

with him?

**48.**

**SOPHIE**

Fuck no. The guy's a fucking pig.

So finally I complained to his

boss, and they fired me... And now,

now I don't know what to do with

myself.

**JOKER**

Right. Wait, what do you mean?

**SOPHIE**

I finally felt good. Like I had a

future. A purpose. And now I don't

even know how I'm gonna pay my

rent.

AND JOKER STARTS LAUGHING. He puts a hand over his mouth

trying to cover it, but he can't stop cracking up--

It's unsettling and disturbing for Sophie. People eating,

waiters in red vests, busboys, all look over and stare at

him. A few laugh. Joker turns away embarrassed, he looks out

the plate-glass window, face turning red from laughing so

hard--

AS HE LOOKS OUT, HE SEES A GROUP OF ROWDY KIDS walking down

the street. One of them glances back before he turns the

corner-- HE'S WEARING A CLOWN MASK THAT LOOKS JUST JOKER'S

CLOWN FACE. And then he's gone. The group disappears around

the corner--

Joker can't believe his eyes, still laughing-- He turns to

Sophie who didn't see them. Just sits there awkwardly waiting

for it to stop.

Finally, it subsides--

**JOKER**

(catching his breath)

I'm sorry. I have this thing--

**SOPHIE**

I know.

Awkward beat.

**SOPHIE**

How did you get it?

**JOKER**

I don't know. I read you can get it

from a brain injury or, or a lesion

in there. My mom said I was born

this way. Born laughing.

**49.**

**SOPHIE**

Is that why she calls you Happy?

**JOKER**

Kind of. That actually started when

I was a kid. The other kids made

fun of me, called me Happy-- but

not in a good way. I got so sick of

it, one day when I was about ten,

**I, I,--**

He smiles.

**SOPHIE**

What?

**JOKER**

I took a razor and cut this smile

onto my face.

(she's taken aback as he

points to the scars)

Sort of like "You want happy? Here,

how's this for happy?"

He looks down, still smiling. She just watches him for a

beat.

**SOPHIE**

You okay?

**JOKER**

I've been thinking about this night

my whole life.

They just sit there for a beat. Quiet.

**49 INT. MOM'S APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT 49**

Joker opening the door to his mother's apartment, holding a

doggie bag in his hand, sees the flickering blue light of the

TV on in the living room, hears the end of "LIVE WITH MURRAY

FRANKLIN!" He locks the locks, drawing the security chain

high on the door.

TURNS TO CATCH A GLIMPSE OF HIS MOTHER PASSED OUT in the

living room, the cat jumping up next to her on the chair.

Joker watches for a beat as Murray does his signature sign

off, the one he's been doing for years--

**50.**

**MURRAY FRANKLIN (ON TV)**

(looking into camera)

Good night! And always remember,--

That's life.

**JOKER**

(quietly)

"That's life."

He hears Don Ellis and his Jazz Orchestra playing the show's

closing song-- the instrumental version of Frank Sinatra's

"That's Life".

As the music continues, Joker puts his face up against his

mom's nose, to see if she's breathing or if she's dead.

He feels her breath against his cheek.

Now he picks his mother up in his arms and carries her into

her bedroom to the music, almost as if he's dancing with her

as he leaves the room...

We stay behind.

"That's Life" still playing from TV.

He comes back into the living room and turns off the TV.

Takes off his jacket and throws it on the couch. Notices

something sticking out of his jacket pocket. He pulls it out.

It's the envelope he was supposed to deliver to Thomas Wayne.

He stares at it for a beat. And then--

Quietly rips it open, starts to read the letter:

CLOSE ON WORDS, "Dearest Thomas, I don't know where else to

turn..."

"Need your help..."

"You have a son. We have a son. His name is Arthur."

Stops reading, stays on--

"You have a son."

JOKER STARING DOWN AT THE LETTER, reading those words over

and over again -- "You have a son."

**CUT TO:**

**51.**

**50 INT. MOM'S BEDROOM, APARTMENT - EARLY MORNING 50**

JOKER'S SITTING IN A CHAIR in his mother's room watching her

sleep. He has clearly been up all night. Still wearing the

same clothes.

He's holding her letter in his hand as the sun is just

starting to rise outside the windows, light just beginning to

crack the gloom.

THE ORANGE CAT SITS AT HIS FEET staring up at him, won't take

her eyes off of him.

Joker impatiently sits there for another moment waiting for

his mother to wake up, then suddenly--

SHRIEKS OUT AT THE TOP OF HIS LUNGS like a teapot, kicking

his back on the chair like an excited toddler--

His mother wakes with a start, looking around half asleep and

confused--

Joker turns and sees the cat run out of the room--

**MOM**

--what, what time is it?

He doesn't answer.

**MOM**

What happened? Did you hurt

yourself again?

Joker holds her letter up in his hand.

**JOKER**

What is this? How come you never

told me?

**MOM**

Is, is that my letter? Is that my

letter, Happy?

**JOKER**

How could you not tell me, Ma?

**MOM**

You told me you dropped it off.

You have no right opening my mail.

Who do you think you are?

**JOKER**

(raising his voice;

excited)

**(MORE)**

**52.**

**JOKER (CONT'D)**

Apparently I'm Thomas Wayne's son!

How could you keep that from me?

His mother slowly getting up out of bed.

**MOM**

Stop yelling at me, you're gonna

kill me, give me a heart attack!

She goes into the bathroom.

**JOKER**

(shouts after her)

I'm not yelling! I'm just, excited.

How can any of this be real!? How

can Thomas Wayne be my father?

**MOM (OS)**

(shouts back from behind

the door)

I'm not talking to you until you

calm down.

Joker sits for a minute then gets up and goes to her bathroom

door. Talks to his mother from the behind the closed door.

**JOKER**

(lowers his voice; trying

to sound calm)

Okay. How's this, Mom? Better? Will

you please talk to me?

Joker leans in closer to the door. Leaning against it with

just his head--

**JOKER**

Please.

**MOM (OS)**

He is an extraordinary man, Arthur.

We had a connection. I was so

beautiful then. We were in love.

Joker just leans there, listening. He closes his eyes, it's

all too much.

**MOM (OS)**

His wife could see it. She was

jealous from the moment I started

working there. She fired me before

I even knew I was pregnant with

you.

(hear her crying now)

**(MORE)**

**53.**

**MOM (OS) (CONT'D)**

And, I never told him or anybody

because, well, you can imagine what

people would say about Thomas and

me, and, and what they would say

about you.

**JOKER**

(eyes still closed, head

leaning against the door)

What would they say, Ma?

**MOM (OS)**

That I was a whore, and Thomas

Wayne was a fornicator, and that

you're a little, unwanted bastard.

AND THE BATHROOM DOOR SUDDENLY SWINGS OPEN, and Joker falls

face first into the bathroom--

Just missing his mother, crashing down onto the floor--

**CUT TO:**

**51 EXT. BOARDWALK, AMUSEMENT MILE - MORNING 51**

Joker heads down the boardwalk toward Ha-Ha's, a bounce in

his step.

Looming behind him like the skeletons of monsters, a

sprawling rickety-looking wooden roller coaster and the

gigantic steel Wonder Wheel in the amusement park by the

ocean. Sound of waves crashing, seagulls squawking.

**52 INT. HA-HA'S TALENT BOOKING, LOCKER ROOM - MORNING 52**

Joker walks into the locker room, sees Randall half-dressed

for work, red nose, big pants, big shoes, no wig yet, sitting

with Gary, TWO OTHER CLOWNS AND A MAGICIAN around the small

table, shooting the shit, drinking coffee.

They nod hello at Joker or give him a perfunctory wave, most

of his co-workers think he's a freak.

**GARY**

Hey Art, I heard what happened--

I'm sorry man.

**RANDALL**

Yeah, Hoyt did you wrong, buddy.

Doesn't seem fair.

**54.**

Joker looks hard at Randall for a moment, just slowly nods,

and continues on to his locker.

He starts to clean it out, stuffing all of his clown gear

into an old brown paper shopping bag. Hears them talking

about him behind his back, about why he got fired, laughing

at him--

**HA-HA CLOWN #1 (OS)**

Did you really bring a gun to the

kid's hospital, Artie? What the

fuck would you do that for?

Joker doesn't answer them, just continues emptying his

locker, a bag of balloons, a magic wand, some trick flowers--

**HA-HA CLOWN #2**

No, I heard he pulled it out and

waved it around like a cowboy.

His co-workers crack up. Joker answers the guy without

looking back--

**JOKER**

It was a prop gun. And I didn't

pull it out, it fell out.

**MAGICIAN**

So is that part of your new act? If

your singing doesn't do the trick,

you just gonna shoot yourself?

More laughter.

**HA-HA CLOWN #2**

I thought Jingles was a lover not a

fighter.

Joker turns and looks at all of them, nods at Randall--

**JOKER**

Why don't you ask Randall about it?

It was his idea.

**GARY**

(to Randall)

Since when do you use a prop gun?

**RANDALL**

What? I don't. Stop talking outta

your ass, Art!

(to the guys)

**(MORE)**

**55.**

**RANDALL (CONT'D)**

I think all his stupid laughing

musta scrambled his brain or

something.

The guys laugh and keep jawing. Joker doesn't say anything.

Just finishes packing his bag and closes his locker door--

**53 EXT. HA-HA'S, BACK ALLEY - AMUSEMENT MILE BOARDWALK - MORNING**

**53**

Joker exits the back door holding onto his brown shopping bag

under his arm, starts down the alley.

Behind him, Randall hustles out and chases down the alley

after him, still half-dressed for work.

**RANDALL**

(calling out)

Art! Hold up,--

As he catches up with Joker his red nose falls off, but he's

so out of breath he doesn't realize he lost it--

**RANDALL**

What the fuck was that about?

Beat.

**JOKER**

What?

**RANDALL**

Why would you say that? That, that

it was my idea.

Joker just looks back at Randall. Sees his red Styrofoam nose

bouncing down the alley behind him.

**JOKER**

**...**

**RANDALL**

You don't get it, do you, buddy,

that shit that went down on the

subway, that's no joke. They got

clown sketches on the front of

every fucking paper. It's just a

matter of time before the cops come

around.

Beat.

**JOKER**

I don't know anything about it.

**56.**

**RANDALL**

(leans in close; lowers

his voice)

Art, you know you're my boy. I'm

not gonna say shit. I just hope you

got rid of that gun. That can't

come back on me, okay?

**JOKER**

Randall, I didn't shoot anybody.

That wasn't me. And I don't have

time for this, I got somebody real

important I gotta go see.

Joker turns to go--

**RANDALL**

You know they're sellin' masks.

**JOKER**

(turning back around)

What?

**RANDALL**

They're selling masks of your clown

face,-- based off the description I

guess. It's like a thing now.

**JOKER**

What are you talking about?

**RANDALL**

There's a lot of people in this

city who are happy you did what you

did. If you did it.

**JOKER**

Randall. Your nose.

**RANDALL**

What?

Randall touches his face. Realizes his nose is not there.

Joker points to Randall's clown nose tumbling back down the

alley. And Randall hustles after it, chasing after his red

nose blowing skipping away in the wind--

**54 INT. METRO TRAIN (MOVING) - COUNTRYSIDE, OUTSIDE GOTHAM - 54**

**NEXT AFTERNOON**

**CLOSE ON NEW "KILLER CLOWN" SKETCH ON FRONT PAGE OF THAT**

DAY'S TABLOID, a more detailed drawing.

**57.**

**HEADLINE, "KILLER CLOWN STILL ON THE LOOSE!"**

SUB-HEAD, "'Kill the Rich' -- A New Movement?"

**ANGLE ON JOKER LOOKING DOWN AT HIS NOTEBOOK, STARING AT A**

PHOTOGRAPH OF THOMAS WAYNE RIPPED OUT FROM A MAGAZINE, taped

to a page. He glances at his distorted reflection in the

window, takes his hand and parts his hair to the side, more

like Thomas Wayne's hair. Maybe there is a resemblance.

WIDER ANGLE, train is packed with wealthy white businessmen

and a couple businesswomen heading home after work, many of

them reading the same tabloid. The "Killer Clown" sketch of

Joker's clown face dots the train. No empty seats -- except

the one next to Joker.

**55 INT. TAXI CAB (MOVING), COUNTRYSIDE - AFTERNOON 55**

**JOKER IN THE BACK OF A TAXI STARING OUT AT THE COUNTRYSIDE,**

at the trees and green grass and blue sky and open spaces

whizzing by. The sun is getting low, bathing everything in a

golden light.

He doesn't see garbage anywhere.

**56 EXT. WAYNE MANOR, FRONT LAWN - MAGIC HOUR 56**

Joker walking along an intimidating wrought iron fence,

surrounding the estate like prison bars, the brown paper

shopping bag stuffed under his arm. The big house set up a

small hill, evergreens dot the lush grounds. As he walks

around looking for the front entrance, Joker catches a

glimpse of an innocent looking EIGHT-YEAR-OLD BOY tracking

him from behind the trees, hiding as he follows.

Joker stops.

He sees the boy stop behind a tree.

Joker continues walking until he gets to the front gate. He

digs into his bag and pulls out the magic wand--

He holds it up for the boy to see.

The boy steps out from behind a tree to get a closer look.

Joker puts the brown bag down on the ground, looks over the

wand, pretending like he's trying to figure out what it does.

He waves the wand over the front gate lock to "try and see"

if it will open-- It doesn't.

**58.**

The little boy walks down toward the fence, face like an

angel.

Joker waits until he gets closer and then reaches his hand

through the fence and hands the kid his magic wand so he can

try and figure out what it does--

The boy takes the wand and it goes limp in his hand before he

can wave it-- He laughs, surprised. He hands it back to

Joker.

The boys sees Joker's face up close, staring at his scarred

smile--

Joker straightens the wand back out, and reaches in through

the fence again so the kid can give it another try.

AND AGAIN THE MAGIC WAND DROOPS IN THE BOY'S HAND. He laughs

and gives it back to Joker--

Joker examines the wand as if its "broken", stiffens it one

last time, crouches down lower, and...

Ta-da! A bouquet of flowers bursts out the end of the wand--

Joker smiles and hands him the wand bouquet of flowers--

The little boy takes the flowers. Keeps staring at Joker, at

the scars around his mouth.

Now, he reaches his hand out through the fence and touches

Joker's face, tracing his finger around the edges of Joker's

mouth, over his scarred smile--

Joker closes his eyes -- embarrassed -- but it feels good to

him, nobody ever touches him besides his mother.

He starts to smile, when a man's voice shatters the moment--

**ALFRED (OS)**

(shouting; slight English

accent)

Bruce! What are you doing? Get away

from that man.

The little boy pulls his hand back. Turns and runs away--

Joker looks up and sees a balding, tired-looking, ALFRED

PENNYWORTH (50's) bounding down the hill toward them.

Joker stands back up.

**59.**

**ALFRED**

(still shouting)

What are you doing? Who are you?

Little Bruce runs behind Alfred, hiding behind his legs.

**JOKER**

My name's Arthur. I'm here to see

Mr. Wayne--

**ALFRED**

(interrupting)

You shouldn't be talking to his

son. Why did you give him those

flowers?

Alfred takes the flower-wand away from the kid--

**JOKER**

I, I was just trying to make him

laugh.

He hands it back to Joker.

**ALFRED**

Well it's not funny. Do I need to

call the police?

**JOKER**

No, please. My mother's name is

Penny Fleck. She used to work here,

years ago. Can you tell Mr. Wayne

that I need to see him?

**ALFRED**

(color drains from his

face; beat)

You're her son?

**JOKER**

Did you know her?

Alfred doesn't say anything.

Joker puts his face right up against the bars, whispers so

the boy can't hear him--

**JOKER**

You don't need to cover for them.

I'm sure Mrs. Wayne was very upset

when she found out.

**60.**

**ALFRED**

There was nothing to find out

about. Your mother was, was

delusional. She was a sick woman.

**JOKER**

No. No, just let me speak to Mr.

Wayne.

Now Alfred leans in closer to Joker, almost looks like he

feels some pity for him--

**ALFRED**

Please just go, before you make a

fool of yourself.

Beat.

**JOKER**

(blurts out)

Thomas Wayne is my father--

Alfred looks at Joker, and can't help but crack up laughing

at him.

AND JOKER REACHES THROUGH THE BARS AND GRABS HIM. Pulls him

in close, trying to choke him, still holding the wand of

flowers in one hand--

AS HE CHOKES ALFRED, Joker sees little Bruce, wide-eyed in

the shadows, looking out at him in horror.

Joker stops.

Lets go of Alfred... Takes off running back down the street

away from Wayne Manor, magic wand in hand, leaving the rest

of his clown gear behind.

**CUT TO:**

**57 EXT. LOWER EAST SIDE, STREETS - NIGHT 57**

JOKER'S BACK IN HIS PART OF TOWN, garbage everywhere here.

The neighborhood at night is alive. Loud kids on the street

corners... A drunk seemingly fights no one... Hookers working

the street... He hears a wailing siren...

As Joker turns the corner, he sees AN AMBULANCE PARKED in

front of his building. Lights flashing. Hit with a sense of

dread, he runs toward the building--

**61.**

**58 EXT. STREET, APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT 58**

A SMALL CROWD OF GAWKERS have gathered around watching the

drama unfold. Shouting and laughing, loud dance music blaring

out an open window, feels like an impromptu block party.

Joker runs up, sees his mother being wheeled down the front

steps unconscious on a stretcher, AN EMT holding an oxygen

bag on her face. TWO DETECTIVES IN PLAIN SUITS following

behind them. It's a chaotic scene.

FROM ABOVE, Joker pushing through the crowd, rushes to his

mother's side. We don't hear what he says to the paramedics

over the music and the crowd, just see them nod okay and

Joker follow after them into the back of the ambulance--

**59 INT. CITY AMBULANCE, BACK (PARKED) - NIGHT 59**

Joker looking out the back doors as they start to shut close--

CATCHES A GLIMPSE OF SOPHIE, coming out of the building. He

stares at her through the small back door window. Casually

waves at her, trying to connect with her--

Joker sees the two detectives approaching Sophie as the

ambulance pulls away. Speeding away down the street, siren

wailing--

**CUT TO:**

**60 INT. CITY HOSPITAL, EMERGENCY TREATMENT ROOM - NIGHT 60**

Joker's standing near the doorway of a large overcrowded

treatment room. Watching a sleep-deprived ER RESIDENT (late

20's), and an EMERGENCY NURSE start to intubate his mother.

He hears shouts and cries of pain from around the crowded

room.

Joker turns away when he sees them insert a thin endotracheal

tube into her mouth and down through her larynx. It makes him

gag--

**61 EXT. CITY HOSPITAL, ER - NIGHT 61**

Joker sits on a bench outside the bustling emergency room.

He's getting some fresh air, but he picked a weird spot to do

it.

He watches the sick and dying being rushed through the glass

doors. Opening and closing. This happens in the background

throughout the scene.

**62.**

The two detectives walk up to Joker, interrupting him

watching the doors. Gotham police detectives, GARRITY (50's),

grey hair, and BURKE (30's), his partner.

**DET. GARRITY**

Mr. Fleck, sorry to bother you, I'm

Detective Garrity, this is my

partner Detective Burke.

Joker looks up at them. Doesn't say anything.

**DET. GARRITY**

We had a few questions for you, but

you weren't home. So we spoke to

your mother.

**JOKER**

You did this to her?

**DET. GARRITY**

What? No. We just asked her some

questions and she started getting

hysterical-- hyperventilating,

trouble speaking-- then she

collapsed. Hit her head pretty

hard.

**JOKER**

They told me she had a stroke.

Beat.

**DET. GARRITY**

Sorry to hear that.

AND JOKER BURSTS OUT LAUGHING, he can't stop it.

The detectives are taken aback. They don't know what to make

of him laughing. They share a look.

**DET. BURKE**

(confused)

I'm lost. Is something funny?

**JOKER**

(laughter choking up in

his throat)

No I,-- I have a, a--

Tears rolling down his face, he takes out one of his cards

and hands it to Det. Burke. Burke glances over the card, a

skeptical look on his face.

**63.**

**DET. BURKE**

Okay. But we have some questions

for you.

**DET. GARRITY**

About those subway killings from a

few weeks ago.

Joker pauses for a moment, his laughter subsiding. He holds

his breath.

**JOKER**

I don't know anything about that.

**DET. GARRITY**

We have an eyewitness who described

a white male, about 6 feet tall, in

clown make up. Or a clown mask.

Spoke to your boss at Ha-Ha's, Mr.

Vaughn, and he said you were on a

job the day of the shooting.

Joker's still holding his breath, he nods yes.

**DET. GARRITY**

(just continues)

He also said you got fired that

day,-- For bringing a gun into the

children's hospital.

And Joker cracks up again, his laughter coming back harder--

He covers his mouth with his hand, shaking his head no, his

face now turning red.

**DET. GARRITY**

You weren't fired?

Joker catches his breath as the intensity of his laughter

starts to wane, petering out.

**JOKER**

Not for having a gun. That was prop

gun. Part of my act.

Joker's laughter finally stops for good.

**DET. BURKE**

So why were you fired?

**JOKER**

They said I wasn't funny.

The detectives share another look.

**64.**

Joker stands up.

**JOKER**

Now, if you don't mind, I have to

go back and look after my mother.

Detective Burke steps close to him, holds up the card that

Joker handed him--

**DET. BURKE**

Hey lemme ask you a question? This

condition of yours,-- Is this real

or is this like some sorta clown

thing?

**JOKER**

Clown thing?

**DET. BURKE**

I mean, is it part of your act?

**JOKER**

What do you think?

And Joker walks away-- heads for the sliding glass doors.

Only the motion detector doesn't engage--

**AND HE SLAMS RIGHT INTO THE GLASS DOOR.**

**HARD.**

He bounces back.

**62 INT. HALLWAY, NURSE'S STATION - CITY HOSPITAL - NIGHT 62**

Joker walking down the hallway, ER flooded with the poor and

uninsured. Overwhelmed doctors and nurses trying their best

to keep up. He stops at the busy nurse's station, and stands

there for a moment, trying to get a nurse's attention--

**JOKER**

Excuse me, I was wondering how I

could check my mother out of here?

One of the nurses at the desk looks up at him, seems slightly

annoyed.

**ER NURSE**

What's your mother's name?

**JOKER**

Penny Fleck. I'd like to take her

home.

**65.**

The sleep-deprived ER RESIDENT who was working on his mother

overhears Joker, comes over to talk to him with a clipboard

in his hand. Joker recognizes him--

**ER RESIDENT**

Mr. Fleck, your mother had a

stroke. It's very serious. You

can't "check her out." She's gonna

be here for at least a week.

**JOKER**

She's not gonna wanna stay that

long. She doesn't like hospitals.

Or doctors.

**ER RESIDENT**

I'm sorry to hear that. But she

can't just leave.

**JOKER**

I don't like hospitals either.

Beat.

The resident just nods okay. Looks down at his clipboard--

**ER RESIDENT**

Listen, I wanted to talk you about

something we noticed in her tox

report. We found heavy traces of

multiple medications in her system.

**JOKER**

Okay. Thanks.

He turns to go, but the resident continues--

**ER RESIDENT**

One of them's perphenazine. It's a

powerful anti-psychotic. If she was

taking that regularly and then

suddenly stopped, the withdrawal

could have contributed to her

stroke. Did you notice any

symptoms?

**JOKER**

Symptoms?

**ER RESIDENT**

Withdrawal symptoms. Nausea...

anxiety... hallucinations.

Joker shakes his head, no.

**66.**

**ER RESIDENT**

Do you know how long she's been

taking it?

Joker shakes his head no again, leans in closer to the

resident--

**JOKER**

Can you tell me what those symptoms

are again?

**CUT TO:**

**63 INT. PATIENT BAY, EMERGENCY TREATMENT ROOM - NIGHT 63**

CLOSE ON TV, Murray Franklin is in the middle of doing his

monologue.

**MURRAY FRANKLIN (ON TV)**

So I told my youngest son, Tommy,

remember he's the 'not so bright'

one,--

(laughter)

I told him that the garbage strike

is still going on. And he says, and

I'm not kidding, Tommy says, "So

where are we gonna get all our

garbage from?"

Murray Franklin cracks up at his own joke. Studio audience

laughs.

JOKER LAUGHS, LYING IN BED NEXT TO HIS UNCONSCIOUS MOTHER in

the large overcrowded treatment room.

Blue curtain dividers separate the bays. He's watching the

show on a TV bolted high on the wall. He glances over at his

mother, laughing over the sounds of her labored breath, the

pain and suffering of those around him.

He looks back up at the television.

**MURRAY FRANKLIN (ON TV)**

And finally, in a world where

everyone thinks they could do my

job, we got this videotape from the

Gotham Comedy Club. Here's a guy

who thinks if you just keep

laughing, it'll somehow make you

funny. Check out this joker.

**67.**

**EXTREME CLOSE ON TV, GRAINY VIDEO OF JOKER'S STAND-UP**

PERFORMANCE. Joker on stage smiling behind the microphone,

under the harsh spotlight.

Joker watching himself on TV, his jaw drops--

**JOKER (ON TV)**

(trying to stop himself

from laughing)

-- good evening, hello.

(deep breath; trying to

stop laughing)

Good to be here.

(keeps cracking up)

I, I hated school as a kid. But my

mother would always say,--

(bad imitation of his mom,

still laughing)

"You should enjoy it. One day

you'll have to work for a living."

(laughs)

"No I won't, Ma. I'm gonna be a

comedian!"

Back to Murray Franklin shaking his head, trying not to

laugh.

**MURRAY FRANKLIN (ON TV)**

You should have listened to your

mother.

The studio audience erupts into laughter.

ANGLE ON JOKER, watching Murray Franklin make fun of him on

TV. He gets up and starts walking toward the TV set as if in

a trance. Unsure if this is really happening.

**MURRAY FRANKLIN (ON TV)**

One more, Bernie. Let's see one

more. I love this guy.

The tape continues of Joker at the comedy club.

**JOKER (ON TV)**

It's funny, when I was a little boy

and told people I wanted to be a

comedian, everyone laughed at me.

(opens his arms like a big

shot)

Well no one is laughing now.

Dead silence. Nobody is laughing. Not even him.

CUT BACK CLOSE ON MURRAY FRANKLIN, just shaking his head.

**68.**

**MURRAY FRANKLIN (ON TV)**

You can say that again, pal!

Murray cracks up and the studio audience laughs along with

him.

CLOSE ON JOKER, looking up at the television, hearing them

all laughing at him.

Beat.

**JUMP CUT:**

Joker is dragging a chair to the television set.

In a rage, he gets up on the chair and tries to pull the TV

out of the wall, as the show continues to play--

But the set is firmly secured to the wall, and Joker pulls so

hard the chair flips from underneath him and he goes flying

up the air, crashing down hard onto the floor.

**64 INT. CAFETERIA, CITY HOSPITAL - EARLY MORNING 64**

Joker walks with a plastic tray of food. Some runny eggs and

a coffee. He keeps his head down so no one can see his face.

There are a few DOCTORS AND NURSES sitting and chatting at

one table. A group of ORDERLIES are sitting together at

another table.

He goes and sits down in the far corner, far away from

everyone else. Sees a tabloid newspaper left on the table,

and picks it up to read so he doesn't seem so alone.

ANGLE ON FRONT PAGE HEADLINE, "Thomas Wayne Announces Run",

over a full-page campaign-style photograph of Thomas Wayne

waving to a crowd standing next to his wife, MARTHA (50's), a

severe looking, well-preserved former model, and little Bruce

Wayne standing in front of them. Photo catches Bruce looking

into camera, eyes wide, scared by the crowd.

SUB-HEADLINE READS, "Protest Planned at Wayne Hall Opening

Tonight"

Joker stares at the family photo.

CLOSE ON BRUCE WAYNE IN PHOTO, Joker's fingers ripping his

picture out of the front page.

**YOUNG DOCTOR (OS)**

-- I'm sorry to bother you, but can

you settle an argument for us?

**69.**

CLOSE ON JOKER LOOKING UP, interrupted from ripping out the

picture. One YOUNG DOCTOR and TWO NURSES are standing around

him. We stay with Joker, don't see their faces. Just their

bodies, all dressed in green scrubs, uniforms.

**JOKER**

Excuse me?

**YOUNG DOCTOR (OS)**

You were the guy on Murray Franklin

last night, right?

He hears the nurses giggle.

**JOKER**

No, sorry. Wasn't me.

**NURSE #1 (OS)**

Of course it was you. You were the

comedian.

**YOUNG DOCTOR (OS)**

Except you weren't funny. You

didn't tell any jokes.

He hears the nurses giggle again.

STAY CLOSE ON JOKER, getting upset. He just shakes his head.

**JOKER**

I don't know what you're talking

about.

**YOUNG DOCTOR (OS)**

No. It was definitely you, buddy.

You're the guy who couldn't stop

laughing. Murray killed you.

More laughter. Joker looks up at them.

**JOKER**

If I were you, I'd walk away from

this table before I strangle all

three of you with that fucking

stethoscope hanging from your neck.

Beat.

**65 EXT. CENTER FOR PERFORMING ARTS, WAYNE HALL - UPTOWN - DUSK**

**65**

Joker crosses a busy street heading to the Center for

Performing Arts. Light falling. Storm clouds gathering.

**70.**

Joker stops when he sees--

**A CROWD OF PROTESTERS SCREAMING AND SHOUTING IN FRONT OF**

WAYNE HALL, behind steel barricades. Many wearing Joker's

"clown face" mask... A few wave homemade signs, "CLOWN FOR

**MAYOR"... "KILL THE RICH"... "MR. WAYNE, AM I A CLOWN?"**

A LINE OF POLICEMEN AND SECURITY GUARDS stand between the

crowd and the lit-up white marble building.

Joker watches the protest for a moment, then continues across

the street. It starts to rain.

**66 EXT. WAYNE HALL, FRONT ENTRANCE - EVENING 66**

A FIGHT BREAKS OUT between a "clown" masked protester and two

cops. The crowd goes crazy, pushing through the barricades

toward the building in the driving rain. The police and Wayne

Hall Security fight to keep them out--

Amidst all the chaos, we glimpse Joker slipping into the

building unnoticed--

**67 INT. LOBBY, WAYNE HALL - EVENING 67**

Joker walks through the massive multi-level lobby. It's

completely empty since the performance has already begun and

whatever security was available is outside helping the police

deal with the protesters.

He looks up in awe at the crystal chandeliers... The shiny,

marble floor beneath his feet. He's never seen anything this

opulent in his entire life.

**68 INT. BACK OF THEATER, WAYNE HALL - EVENING 68**

**JOKER MAKING HIS WAY THROUGH THE DARK SHADOWS ALONG THE BACK**

WALL OF THE AUDITORIUM, looking for Thomas Wayne in the sold-

out black-tie audience--

He catches bits of Chaplin's MODERN TIMES projected on a

screen behind the Gotham Philharmonic playing the silent

movie's score... the Tramp roller skating blindfolded on a

date with the Gamin (Paulette Goddard) in a department store.

He continues moving along the wall from aisle-to-aisle

looking for Thomas Wayne...

The audience laughs as the Tramp skates blindfolded, skirting

along the edge of a balcony with no rail, orchestra playing

the bouncy score. Joker can't find Thomas Wayne in the dark--

**71.**

He moves to the top of the next aisle, pausing to watch more

of the film. Suddenly somebody bumps into Joker--

He looks up and sees it's one of Thomas Wayne's TWO SECURITY

GUARDS, escorting Thomas Wayne out of the auditorium--

Joker turns and watches them lead him out. Behind Joker on

screen, the Tramp is rescued by the girl before he falls off

the edge, orchestra swelling--

**69 INT. LOBBY, WAYNE HALL - CONTINUOUS 69**

Joker peeks his head out of the auditorium, sees Thomas Wayne

heading into the men's room, his two security guards waiting

by the door, still hear the orchestra playing the score--

Joker glances back into the auditorium--

Sees a lobby broom and upright dustpan tucked in the back

corner--

**70 INT. HALLWAY, MEN'S ROOM - WAYNE HALL - SECONDS LATER 70**

Joker's sweeping up the hallway with his head down, hear the

orchestra playing the melancholy "Smile" from the film's

score. He sweeps along to the music like Emmett Kelly's

famous hobo clown... Sweeping around the two security guards'

feet... Annoyed, they move a bit away from the bathroom

door... And don't give Joker a second look as he heads

inside...

**71 INT. MEN'S ROOM, WAYNE HALL - CONTINUOUS 71**

Joker sweeps his way into the cavernous, black & white tiled

bathroom, ornate gold fixtures. It's empty save for Thomas

Wayne peeing at the far end of a long line of urinals.

Joker takes a deep breath, and walks down the line of urinals

right up next to Thomas Wayne--

He stands there for a beat while Thomas urinates, lobby broom

and upright dustpan in hand--

**THOMAS WAYNE**

(glances over; annoyed)

Can I help you, pal?

**JOKER**

What? Yeah. No I, I--

**72.**

**THOMAS WAYNE**

(interrupting)

You need to get in here or

something?

Thomas Wayne finishes and zips his fly back up. Joker is not

sure what to say to him, just says--

**JOKER**

Dad. It's me.

Beat.

But Thomas Wayne doesn't hear him, he was flushing the

urinal. He walks toward the sink.

**THOMAS WAYNE**

Excuse me?

Joker follows after him.

**JOKER**

My name is Arthur. I'm Penny's son.

(beat)

I know you didn't know about me,

and I don't want anything from you.

Well... maybe a hug.

And Joker smiles, it's all very emotional for him. Thomas

looks over at him like he's fucking crazy.

**THOMAS WAYNE**

Jesus? You're the guy who came by

my house yesterday.

Joker nods, relieved he finally broke through.

**JOKER**

Yes. But they wouldn't let me in,

wouldn't let me see you. So I came

here. I have so many questions.

Thomas Wayne just laughs to himself and turns on the gold

faucets at one of the sinks.

**THOMAS WAYNE**

Look pal, I'm not your father.

What's wrong with you?

**JOKER**

How do you know?

Thomas Wayne just keeps washing his hands, doesn't even look

over at Joker.

**73.**

**THOMAS WAYNE**

Cause you were adopted. And I never

fucked your mother. What do you

want from me, money?

**JOKER**

No. What? I wasn't adopted.

Thomas starts drying his hands.

**THOMAS WAYNE**

She never told you? Your mother

adopted you before she even started

working for us. She was arrested

when you were four years old and

committed to Arkham State Hospital.

She's batshit crazy.

Joker starts to smile, feels a laugh coming on.

**JOKER**

No. No, I don't believe that.

Thomas finishes drying his hands. Turns to Joker, his tone

way more serious now.

**THOMAS WAYNE**

I don't really give a shit what you

believe.

(steps in closer)

But if you ever come to my house

again, if you ever talk to my son

again, if I ever even hear about

you again, I'll--

AND JOKER CRACKS UP LAUGHING, interrupting his threat.

Laughing right in his face--

**THOMAS WAYNE**

Are you laughing at me?

Joker's laughing so hard he can't answer.

THOMAS SHOVES JOKER HARD UP AGAINST THE TILED WALL, gripping

his neck with one hand. Joker just cracks up louder, he drops

the dustpan and broom--

**THOMAS WAYNE**

(shouting)

You think this is funny?

Thomas Wayne's security guards bang open the door, rushing

into the bathroom when they hear the shouting--

**74.**

They stop when they see Thomas has Joker jacked up against

the wall.

**JOKER**

(tries shaking his head

no; still laughing and

choking)

No, no I have a con--

**THOMAS WAYNE**

(interrupting; raising his

voice)

Is this a fucking joke to you?

AND THOMAS WAYNE PUNCHES JOKER STRAIGHT IN THE FACE with his

free hand, blood spraying from his nose--

**72 EXT. WAYNE HALL, FRONT ENTRANCE - PLAZA - NIGHT 72**

The two security guards roughly throw Joker out of the hall,

right in front of the drenched crowd of screaming protesters,

TV cameras and photographers now on hand, bulbs flashing--

Joker knowing how to take a fall, plays it up in front of

this audience for all it's worth, tumbling end-over-end out

onto the plaza in the rain--

He rolls to his feet with a bit of panache and brushes

himself off like it was nothing.

The protesters go crazy, cheering and applauding his act--

And Joker takes a deep dramatic bow. Wet hair. Bloody nose.

He turns and sees the security guards coming back out--

Joker takes off running through the plaza in the downpour,

running out of the Center for Performing Arts. Turns down a

side street almost slipping--

And keeps running even though nobody's chasing after him.

We HEAR the familiar beats of THE SUGARHILL GANG'S "Apache"

as Joker just keeps running and running.

**73 INT. APARTMENT BUILDING, HALLWAY - NIGHT 73**

Joker knocking on Sophie's apartment door, "Apache" blaring

inside. He's soaking wet, clothes clinging to his body.

There's no answer.

**75.**

He knocks again. Hard to hear anything over the loud music.

Now he tries the door. It's unlocked.

**74 INT. SOPHIE'S APARTMENT, FRONT HALL - CONTINUOUS 74**

Joker walks into Sophie's apartment, "Apache" thumping,

lights dim.

**JOKER**

Sophie?

WALKS INTO THE DARK LIVING ROOM, catches a glimpse of Sophie,

naked riding on top of SOME GUY on the couch--

The guy sees Joker standing in the shadows and jumps. Sophie

turns and sees Joker as well. She screams--

**75 INT. HALLWAY, APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT 75**

Joker rushing for his mother's apartment.

Behind him, the guy comes out half naked into the hallway,

zipping up his pants, screaming at Joker--

Joker doesn't look back, doesn't hear the guy yelling at him--

Quickly opens the door to his mother's apartment and hurries

inside.

**76 EXT. ARKHAM STATE HOSPITAL - MORNING 76**

A GRAY, BEHEMOTH STATE HOSPITAL looming over the city block.

Metal screens cover steel-framed windows. Joker crosses the

street toward the building, eyes weary, he hasn't slept in

days.

HE SEES TWO GOTHAM CITY COPS AND A PARAMEDIC rolling a gurney

into the entrance... a naked, sunburned man screaming his

head off is handcuffed to the stretcher underneath a white

sheet. Joker follows them inside.

**77 INT. ARKHAM STATE HOSPITAL - ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE - MORNING**

**77**

Joker sits waiting in a cramped office, looking out a

plexiglass window that overlooks the crowded hallway--

**76.**

A constant din of people moving about, talking and shouting.

Patients handcuffed to the armrests of their wheelchairs,

lying on stretchers, heads covered with pillowcase turbans or

forearms to block out the harsh fluorescent lights.

His gaze is interrupted by a CLERK (40's), ID clipped to his

shirt, who's lugging an old heavy file storage box.

He drops the box down on his messy desk with a thud.

**CLERK**

Sorry for the wait. All our records

that are 10 years or older are

stored in the basement. You're

talking over 30 years ago,-- I had

to do some serious digging.

Joker nods thanks.

**CLERK**

Like I said, if it's in here, I'm

still gonna need a release from

her.

The clerk opens the file box. Starts digging though it. Joker

stares out the plexiglass window that faces the hallway--

**JOKER**

Can I ask you a question? How does

someone wind up in here? Have all

these people committed crimes?

**CLERK**

(going through the files)

Some have. Some are just crazy and

pose a danger to themselves or

others. Some just got nowhere else

to go.

Beat.

**JOKER**

(nods; looks down)

Yeah, I know how that is. Sometimes

I don't know what to do, y'know, I

don't think I can take any more of

this.

The clerk is half listening as he scans the paper work.

**CLERK**

Yeah, I can't take much more of

this shit either.

**(MORE)**

**77.**

**CLERK (CONT'D)**

Now they talking about more

layoffs, man, we're understaffed as

it is. I don't know what I'm gonna

do.

Joker looks up at the guy, thinking he's made a connection.

**JOKER**

Last time I ended up taking it out

on some,-- people. Bad shit. I

thought it would bother me but, it

really hasn't.

For the first time, the clerk looks at him--

**CLERK**

What's that?

**JOKER**

It's just so hard to try and be

happy all the time, y'know, when

everything's going to shit all

around you.

**CLERK**

(taken aback; beat)

Listen, I'm just an administrative

assistant, like a clerk. I file

paperwork, fill out forms. I don't

really know what to tell you, but

maybe you should see someone-- they

have programs, like city services.

**JOKER**

(backtracking)

Yeah. They cut those. Anyway, I was

just talking to talk.

The clerk just nods. Finally finds what he was looking for.

**CLERK**

(surprised)

Here it is,-- Fleck. Penny Fleck.

He pulls out an old file, bulging with yellowing records.

Moves the box to the floor and sits down at his desk.

**JOKER**

(saying it out loud for

himself to hear)

So she was a patient here.

The guy opens the file. Yellowing pages of her records--

**78.**

**CLERK**

(nods, skim-reading)

Uh-huh. Diagnosed by Dr. Benjamin

Stoner... The patient suffers from

delusional psychosis and

narcissistic personality

disorder... Found guilty of

endangering the welfare of a child--

The clerk stops reading out loud, eyes going wide as he skims

further ahead. Joker just looks at the guy, waiting to see

what he's gonna say.

**JOKER**

What?

**CLERK**

You said she's your mother?

Joker just nods.

**CLERK**

(closes the file)

I'm sorry, I can't. Like I said, I

can't release this without the

proper forms. I could get in

trouble.

(closes the file; beat)

Besides, it's pretty bad.

CLOSE ON JOKER, he shakes his head and smiles to himself.

**JOKER**

I can handle bad. I've been on a

pretty bad run myself.

The clerk puts the file down on his desk--

**CLERK**

I can't help you. If you want these

records you have to get your mom to

sign a patient disclosure form. I

can have someone mail you one.

Joker just sits there, thinking it all over for a moment.

Then snatches the file off the clerk's desk--

The clerk grabs it as well.

They play tug-of-war with the file, it's awkward and goes on

way too long. Finally, Joker shoves the guy hard and pulls

the file away--

**79.**

He takes off running out of the office with it. The clerk

watches for a beat, but does nothing.

**78 INT. HALLWAY, ARKHAM STATE HOSPITAL - MORNING 78**

Joker running down the hallway, files in his hands. Frantic.

Unaware he is not being chased.

Turns a corner and runs down another long hallway.

Gets to a stairwell door and runs in.

**79 INT. STAIRWELL, ARKHAM STATE HOSPITAL - CONTINUOUS 79**

Bounding down the steps. He stops at a landing below. Looks

up, sees no one is chasing after him--

ANGLE ON JOKER, catching his breath. He opens the file,

flipping through the records, finds the page the clerk was

reading. As he reads it over for himself, he HEARS his mother

being interviewed for her psychiatric assessment, over 30

years ago.

**MOM (VO)**

He's not adopted-- he's Thomas

Wayne's son. I work for him, I told

you, I clean his house. He's always

smiling at me.

**CUT TO:**

**80 INT. EMERGENCY INTERVIEW ROOM, ARKHAM STATE HOSPITAL - DAY 80**

**(FLASHBACK)**

Penny Fleck (late 20's) is sitting across the table from DR.

BENJAMIN STONER (50's), in a dreary small interview room,

windows covered with security screens. Penny takes a drag off

a cigarette, her face is beaten to shit, nose battered, lip

busted up.

Dr. Stoner is going over Penny's thick file, the same file

Joker's holding in his hands.

**DR. STONER**

We went over this, Penny. You

adopted him. We have all the

paperwork right here.

Penny doesn't say anything, just smiles like she's in on a

big secret. And exhales smoke.

**80.**

Dr. Stoner keeps going through the file, pulls out black &

white forensic photographs of three-year-old Joker's body--

**DR. STONER**

You also stood by as one of your

boyfriends repeatedly abused your

adopted son. And battered you.

Penny looks at Dr. Stoner like he's crazy.

**MOM**

He didn't do anything to me. Or to

my boy. Can I go now, I don't like

hospitals.

Dr. Stoner lays out the photographs in front of Penny--

Penny keeps smoking her cigarette, glances down at the

photos, we catch glimpses of various bruises on parts of

Joker's body... A filthy crib... A rope tied to the

radiator...

**CUT BACK TO:**

Joker looking over the same black & white photographs, still

HEARS his mother--

**MOM (V0)**

I never heard him crying. Not once.

He's always been such a happy

little boy.

**DR. STONER (VO)**

Penny, your son was found tied to a

radiator in your filthy apartment,

malnourished, with multiple bruises

across his body and severe trauma

to his head.

Joker looks up from the file when he hears/reads this, turns

and looks at Penny's reaction-- HE'S NOW IN THE INTERVIEW

ROOM WITH THEM, living what he's reading on the page.

He sees his mother lean forward in her chair, glaring at Dr.

Stoner--

**MOM**

That's not true. My apartment

wasn't filthy. I keep a clean

house.

Joker just stares at his mother.

Dr. Stoner looks at Penny, not sure how to respond to that.

**81.**

**DR. STONER**

(beat)

And what do you have to say about

your son?

ANGLE ON PENNY, thinking it over, taking a drag off her

cigarette.

**MOM**

I'm just glad I got to know him.

Joker just keeps staring at her as she exhales--

JOKER BACK IN THE STAIRWELL LOOKS UP FROM THE FILE, looks

like maybe there's cigarette smoke drifting in front of his

face--

**CUT TO:**

**81 EXT. SCHOOL PLAYGROUND, STREET - AFTERNOON 81**

Joker walking fast toward the playground. Sees Sophie talking

with some other moms, as GiGi and a few kids play on the

monkey bars.

Sophie walks toward him, still disturbed about last night--

**SOPHIE**

What the hell was that? You can't

just walk into my apartment like

that.

He is taken aback by her anger--

**JOKER**

No, wait,-- Sophie, we can get

through this, that's why I'm here.

**SOPHIE**

What are you talking about? What do

you think this is?

**JOKER**

I don't know. I mean I've never

been with a woman "like that," but,

this feels like a beginning to me.

**SOPHIE**

Arthur, I was just being nice to

you. I felt sorry for you. I have a

boyfriend.

**82.**

**JOKER**

You what? What? What kind of woman

are you? Who does that?

Some of the other mothers turn toward them--

**SOPHIE**

You need to leave. I'm not having

this conversation with you.

**JOKER**

(shouts)

Why not?

GiGi runs up to Sophie's side to see what's going on, to see

if her mother's okay.

**SOPHIE**

(turns to her daughter)

Go back with your friends, honey.

Mommy's having a grown up talk.

Before GiGi leaves Joker looks down at her--

**JOKER**

No. Don't listen to her GiGi, you

need to hear this. Your mother's a

bad person. She's a whore, she's

seeing two men at once. You can't

trust her,-- She'll break your

fucking heart.

Joker turns to go, behind him GiGi starts to cry. He's close

to tears himself.

Sophie takes off after him, and reaches out and grabs him--

Joker spins quickly around to face her, looks like he might

even hit her--

**JOKER**

How come nothing ever comes easy

for me?

And Sophie slaps him hard across the face-- Then turns and

walks away.

CLOSE ON JOKER, he begins to laugh--

**CUT TO:**

**83.**

**82 INT. MOM'S APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT 82**

Joker manically pacing around the living room, banging the

side of his head with his hand, muttering to himself, almost

like he's having a conversation with himself, taking part in

some story in his head, in the background the 11:00 News is

playing on the television.

Footage of a protest in front of Wayne Tower... Protesters in

"Joker" clown masks... Hear the NEWS ANCHOR's bombastic voice

over, "The anger and resentment that's been building up for

weeks now, seems close to exploding. Protestors today, many

dressed as clowns, took to the streets in front of Wayne

Tower in one of many planned demonstrations."

Joker stops when he hears this, turns to the flickering

screen--

ANGLE ON TELEVISION, protesters in the middle of a massive

crowd outside a Wayne Tower.

**"CLOWN" PROTESTER #1 (ON TV)**

You'll see what's gonna happen at

City Hall next Thursday. We're

gonna--

Joker sits down on the couch eyes, leaning forward to make

sure he's seeing what he's seeing--

**"CLOWN" PROTESTER #2 (ON TV)**

(interrupts; screaming

into camera)

[Beep] the rich, [beep] the media,

[beep] the blacks, [beep] the

whites, [beep] everybody. They all

[beeped] us, that's what this is

[beeping] about!

CLOSE ON JOKER, doesn't even blink, it's like he's watching

himself on television.

**CUT TO:**

**83 INT. MOM'S APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM - MORNING 83**

Sun peeking through the windows. PHONE RINGING. Joker opening

his eyes.

His orange cat is sitting on his chest, staring at him.

Joker finally got some sleep. He lies there for a beat. Phone

still ringing, until the machine picks up the call.

**84.**

**SHOW BOOKER (ON MACHINE)**

This message is for Arthur Fleck.

My name is Shirley Woods, I work on

the Murray Franklin show.

Joker sits up, the cat jumps off his chest. He can't believe

what he's hearing. He gets up off the couch as the woman

continues to leave a message on the machine--

**SHOW BOOKER (ON MACHINE)**

I don't know if you're aware, but

Murray played a clip of your stand-

up on the show recently and we've

gotten an amazing--

Joker picks up the phone--

**JOKER**

(into phone; skeptical)

Who is this?

**SHOW BOOKER (OVER PHONE)**

Hi, this is Shirley Woods from

Murray Franklin Live. Is this

Arthur?

Beat.

**JOKER**

(into phone)

Yes.

Joker looks down at the cat purring at his feet, and kicks it

away.

**SHOW BOOKER (OVER PHONE)**

Hi Arthur. Well, as I was saying--

we've gotten a lot of calls about

your clip, amazing responses. And,

Murray asked if I would reach out

to see if you would come on as his

guest. Can we set up a day?

PUSH IN ON JOKER'S FACE, as it sinks in.

**JOKER**

(into phone)

Murray wants me to come on the

show?

**SHOW BOOKER (OVER PHONE)**

Yes. Isn't that great? He'd love to

talk to you, maybe do some of your

act. Does that sound good to you?

**85.**

As the PUSH IN ON JOKER finishes.

Hold.

**84 INT. CITY HOSPITAL, HOSPITAL ROOM (SHARED) - MORNING 84**

JOKER WALKS INTO HIS MOTHER'S SHARED HOSPITAL ROOM, passing

an elderly wheezing woman in the bed closest to the door.

Sees his mom in her bed by the window.

He pulls the blue curtain separating the beds, giving him and

his mother some privacy. Sits down on the edge of her bed.

She smiles when she sees him. Still fairly incapacitated.

He leans down close to her. Speaks softly, but filled with

rage--

**JOKER**

Ma, remember how you used to tell

me that God gave me this laugh for

a reason. That I had a purpose. To

bring laughter and joy into this

fucked up world,--

She looks at him confused.

**JOKER**

HA! It wasn't God, it was you or,

or one of your boyfriends,-- how

could you let that happen? What

kind of woman are you? What kind of

mother are you?

She looks away.

**JOKER**

What's my real name?

Her whole body is shaking, overwhelmed with emotion.

**JOKER**

C'mon, Ma, I know I was adopted.

What's my name? Who am I really?

She looks back him, struggles to speak--

**MOM**

H-h-happ--

**JOKER**

(interrupting, snaps at

her)

**(MORE)**

**86.**

**JOKER (CONT'D)**

Happy?! I'm not happy. I haven't

been happy for one minute of my

entire fucking life.

He reaches behind her, grabs one of her pillows--

**JOKER**

But you know what's funny? You know

what really makes me laugh?

Leans down closer, face-to-face with her--

**JOKER**

I used to think my life was nothing

but a tragedy, but now, now I

realize it's all just a fucking

comedy.

**85 INT. BLUE CURTAIN, HOSPITAL ROOM (SHARED) - CONTINUOUS 85**

Other side of the blue divider curtain. We see Joker's feet

shifting a little.

SLOWLY WE PULL OUT, backing out of the room. Leaving behind

whatever Joker's doing to his mother on the other side of the

curtain. And we HEAR applause...

**86 INT. MOM'S APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT 86**

JOKER'S STUDYING VHS TAPES OF "MURRAY FRANKLIN LIVE!", studio

audience applauding Murray... He jots down notes in his worn

notebook... Watches the guests come out... how they cross the

stage... how they greet Murray... how they sit down... if

they cross their legs or not... studying how he should act,

how to be a person like other people.

His cat sits on top of the TV watching him the whole time,

never taking her eyes off him.

**JUMP CUT:**

Practicing. Joker walks across the living room like he's on

the show, smiling, waving to the "audience"... He mimes

shaking Murray's hand... Mimes unbuttoning his jacket and

sits down. He smiles and pulls out his worn notebook from his

pocket--

**JOKER**

You wanna hear a joke, Murray?

He "waits" for Murray to answer. Then Joker nods okay and

opens his notebook--

**87.**

**JOKER**

(reading)

Knock-knock.

His cat still watching him, now at his feet. Joker crosses

and uncrosses his legs... Looks uncomfortable.

He glances down at his cat. It's as if he can hear the cat

talking to him.

**JOKER**

(nods; frustrated)

Yeah, I don't know if I should

cross or uncross 'em. Both feel

completely unnatural.

Joker gets up off the couch and walks back across the living

room. Waves to the "audience"... Mimes shaking Murray's

hand... Mimes unbuttoning his coat and sits down... Crosses

his legs.

**JOKER**

Thanks for having me on, Murray. I

can't tell you how much this means

to me, it's been a life long dream.

I have a joke for you--

Joker stands back up.

Looks down at the cat again.

**JOKER**

You're right. You're right,

uncrossed is better.

Joker sits back down... Doesn't cross his legs this time.

**CUT TO:**

**87 EXT. POTTER'S FIELD CEMETERY - DUSK 87**

WIDE SHOT, a lone figure in a vast sea of mass graves, grey

headstones. This is where they bury the poor and the

unclaimed dead.

Joker stands by his mother's grave. His head bowed, face in

his hands, his body convulsing. He's dressed in an ill-

fitting faded rust colored suit, almost shiny from all the

wear. Behind him in the distance, the TWO DETECTIVES stand by

their parked car on the cemetery roadway. Sun dying in the

sky.

**88.**

CLOSE ON JOKER'S FACE BURIED IN HIS HANDS, see he's laughing--

impossible to tell if he's laughing because of his condition

or laughing for real.

**88 EXT. ROADWAY, POTTER'S FIELD CEMETERY - DUSK 88**

Joker walking away from his mother's grave, goes to the two

detectives -- GARRITY and BURKE -- waiting for him by their

unmarked car. His face is still red, tears in his eyes from

laughing.

**JOKER**

(wiping his eyes;

restrained anger)

You shouldn't be here. It's not

right.

**DET. GARRITY**

We just came to pay our respects.

Sorry about your mother.

**DET. BURKE**

Yeah, it's too bad.

Joker just stares at the two detectives.

Awkward beat.

**DET. BURKE**

Where is everybody?

**JOKER**

It's always been just me and her.

Joker pauses for a moment, then starts to walk away.

**DET. BURKE**

(calls out)

We saw you on Murray Franklin.

Joker turns back to them.

**JOKER**

You saw that?

**DET. GARRITY**

Yeah. Heard you were on, so we got

a videotape.

**DET. BURKE**

I just couldn't tell if you were

actually trying to be funny or not.

**89.**

**JOKER**

Yeah, well I guess you didn't get

the joke.

**DET. GARRITY**

Listen, we need to clear a few

things up, we spoke to the hospital

administrator--

**JOKER**

(interrupting)

Which hospital?

**DET. BURKE**

The Children's Hospital.

(reminding)

The night you were fired. He said

it didn't look like a prop gun, it

was heavy, like a real one. We have

some more questions for you.

**JOKER**

I just buried my mother.

The detectives share a look. Garrity pulls out a card. Hands

it to Joker.

**DET. GARRITY**

We can do it tomorrow. But you need

to come down to the precinct--

first thing in the morning.

**JOKER**

(looks down, reading the

card)

Right. Thanks for coming.

**DET. BURKE**

Of course.

Joker looks back up.

**JOKER**

That was a joke.

We hear applause followed by the familiar opening riff to

ELTON JOHN'S "Bennie & the Jets".

**89 INT. MOM'S APARTMENT, BATHROOM - NEXT AFTERNOON 89**

JOKER'S LEANING OVER THE BATHROOM SINK, water running. He's

wearing rust colored pants and a white "beater" T-shirt.

**90.**

A "Joker" clown mask hangs off the dirty mirror by its

elastic band. "Bennie & the Jets" blaring from a transistor

radio turned all the way up.

Joker lifts his head up. He's dyed his hair green like his

old "Mr. Jingles" clown wig-- but he's missed spots. Some of

his hair is still its original color, sticking out all helter-

skelter.

**JUMP CUT:**

Now he's smearing white grease-paint all over his face.

He's dancing along to the music, gyrating and thrusting his

hips to the beat, as he glances at the mask hanging from the

mirror, trying to copy how it looks... A copy of a copy of

himself.

He barely hears someone banging on the front door over the

loud music--

Doesn't answer. Joker just keeps putting on his make-up,

dancing provocatively to the music.

More banging on the front door.

Joker casually opens the medicine cabinet. Finds some old

rusty scissors and turns the radio off--

**90 INT. FRONT DOOR, MOM'S APARTMENT - AFTERNOON 90**

Joker unlocks the locks, keeping the security chain latched,

and cracks open the door,-- Sees Randall. Looks down, and

sees Gary next to him. Undoes the chain and opens the door

for them--

Randall and Gary get a look at Joker's face, his dyed green

hair still wet, streaking white grease-paint smeared over

part of his face--

**GARY**

(re: his look)

Hey Arthur, how's it going? You get

a new gig?

Joker shakes his head no, steps aside so they can come in,

palming the scissors in his hand--

**RANDALL**

You must be goin' down to that

rally at City Hall. Right? I hear

it's gonna be nuts.

**91.**

**JOKER**

Is that today?

Randall looks at him and laughs--

**RANDALL**

Yeah. What's with the clown-face

then?

Joker shuts the door behind them. Locks the chain-lock.

**JOKER**

My mom died.

**RANDALL**

(nodding)

Yeah we heard. That's why we're

here. Figured you might wanna go

out, get a drink or something?

Joker doesn't answer.

Awkward beat.

**GARY**

We don't wanna bother you. Randall

just thought we should come and pay

our respects.

**RANDALL**

Yeah, we're family. We gotta stick

together.

Joker stares at Randall.

**JOKER**

(beat)

It's not a good time. I'm in the

middle of something here.

**GARY**

Of course. No problem. Another

time.

Gary turns to go. Randall pauses for a moment, has something

else to say before he leaves--

**RANDALL**

Yeah. Another time, then. Oh hey,--

one other thing--

He takes a step closer to Joker--

**92.**

**RANDALL**

Listen, the cops have been poking

around the shop, they're talking to

all the clowns about those subway

murders and--

**GARY**

(interrupting)

They didn't talk to me.

**RANDALL**

(snaps at Gary)

That's because the suspect was a

regular-sized person. If it was a

fucking midget you'd be in jail

right now.

(turns back to Joker)

Anyway, Hoyt said they were looking

for me, and, and I just wanna see

what you said. You know, make sure

our stories line up, bein' that

you're my boy and--

AND JOKER STABS THE SCISSORS AS DEEP AS HE CAN into Randall's

neck. Blood spurts. Randall screams. Gary stumbles back in

shock--

**GARY**

(screaming)

What the fuck what the fuck WHAT

**THE FUCK--**

Joker pulls them out and jams them into Randall's eye before

he can react. The sound is sickening. Gary's screaming in the

background--

Randall blindly fights back, screaming in pain, flailing his

arms, his own blood blinding him--

Joker grabs Randall by the head -- all of his pent up rage

and frustration pouring out of him -- AND SLAMS HIS HEAD

**AGAINST THE WALL.**

AGAIN. And AGAIN. And AGAIN.

Joker lets go of Randall's head, and Randall drops to the

ground. Joker leans back against the wall, out of breath,

kind of slides down the wall to the floor--

Sees Gary huddled in the corner, trembling with fear--

**93.**

**JOKER**

(catching his breath)

I'm gonna be on TV tonight. Can you

believe it?

Gary doesn't answer. Doesn't move--

**JOKER**

It's okay, Gary. You can go.

Gary backs away toward the door. Joker sits there for a

moment, breathing heavy, wipes Randall's blood off his face--

**GARY (OS)**

Hey, Art?

Joker turns, sees Gary at the front door. He points up high

to the chain-lock. He can't reach it.

Joker just shakes his head to himself and gets up to unlock

the door.

He walks past Gary who's still trembling almost too afraid to

look up at him. Joker leans over him and undoes the chain,

opens the door. Gary bolts, running down the hallway as fast

as he can--

**CUT TO:**

**91 INT. MOM'S BEDROOM, APARTMENT - LATE AFTERNOON 91**

(Over the following, we don't see Joker's face. We don't

reveal his finished "look" just yet.)

CLOSE PICKING UP HIS NOTEBOOK, fanning through the pages--

Pausing at the BLACK & WHITE RIPPED PHOTO OF BRUCE WAYNE for

a moment. Continues, stopping at the same entry from the

opening scene--

CLOSE ON WORDS, "I just hope my death make more sense than my

life."

**92 INT. LIVING ROOM, MOM'S APARTMENT - LATE AFTERNOON 92**

**CLOSE ON TAKING RANDALL'S WALLET OUT OF HIS BLOOD SOAKED**

PANTS, pocketing all the cash.

**CLOSE ON BUTT OF A GUN STICKING OUT OF RANDALL'S WAISTBAND,**

glimpse Joker's hand reaching for it--

**94.**

**93 INT. KITCHEN, MOM'S APARTMENT - LATE AFTERNOON 93**

JOKER'S P.O.V. FINISHING WRITING A NOTE, "On Murray Franklin

Tonight -- Please Watch!"

CLOSE ON STUFFING THE NOTE AND ALL OF RANDALL'S MONEY into an

envelope--

TURNING ENVELOPE OVER, WRITING "SOPHIE" on the front.

**94 INT. LIVING ROOM WINDOW, MOM'S APARTMENT - LATE AFTERNOON 94**

CLOSE ON THE ORANGE CAT AT THE WINDOW, and maybe if we're

looking close enough we notice something strange... the cat

has no reflection.

ANGLE OVER JOKER'S SHOULDER OPENING THE WINDOW, shooing the

cat out onto the fire escape, out into the dying day--

**JOKER (OS)**

Go on. Go. You're free.

**CLOSE ON THE CAT LOOKING BACK AT JOKER FOR A LONG MOMENT,**

before scampering off out into the world, leaving him behind

for good.

As he closes the window we almost catch Joker's reflection in

the glass--

**95 INT. HALLWAY, APARTMENT BUILDING - LATE AFTERNOON 95**

FOLLOWING BEHIND JOKER, walking down the hallway as if in

slow motion, heading for Sophie's apartment. His dyed green

hair now slicked back.

He's wearing the ill-fitting rust colored suit he wore to his

mother's funeral.

STILL FROM BEHIND, he lays the envelope in front of Sophie's

door, then pulls something else out of his pocket -- his body

obscuring what it is -- puts it down by her door and leaves.

As he walks away down the hallway, we see what else Joker

left behind--

HIS WAND OF FLOWERS, at Sophie's door.

Hold.

**95.**

**96 INT. ELEVATOR, HALLWAY - LATE AFTERNOON 96**

**FROM BEHIND JOKER STEPPING ONTO THE ELEVATOR, TURNING TO FACE**

**US AS THE DOOR STARTS TO CLOSE, FINALLY REVEALING HIS LOOK--**

Green hair slicked back like one of the Wall Street assholes

he killed... White grease paint smeared over his face... red

nose painted on... dark blue peaks over and under his eyes...

his mother's red lipstick crudely outlining his broken

smile... Under the harsh flickering fluorescent lights, he

looks like an insane version of his mask.

The door closes on his new face. Ding.

**97 EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - LATE AFTERNOON 97**

Joker steps out of his building into the setting sun, just as

Garrity and Burke are getting out of their unmarked Ford LTD

Crown Vic--

**DET. GARRITY**

Hey Arthur, where you going?

**DET. BURKE**

Yeah, thought you were coming down

to the station this morning.

And Joker takes off running--

Garrity gives chase on foot as Burke hurries back into the

car--

**98 EXT. 174TH STREET, TWO LANES - CONTINUOUS 98**

Joker darts out from his block into the avenue, sprints

across the busy, two-lane street without looking--

Running right in front of an oncoming YELLOW CAB on the far

side of the street--

**BAM!**

The cab hits him and Joker goes crashing into the windshield.

Bounces up and over the car. Landing hard on the pavement--

The car directly behind the cab skids to a stop just before

running over Joker's face. Swerving into the other lane and

CRASHING INTO an oncoming truck.

Cars on both sides of the street skidding trying to stop--

Crashing. It's chaos.

**96.**

Joker pops back up from getting hit. He's in pain. But not

dead.

Garrity has drawn his service revolver as he makes his way

through the pile up. And Burke, now blocked because of the

crash has jumped out of his car--

Joker takes off running, limping down the street toward an

entrance for the elevated train--

**99 EXT. ELEVATED TRAIN STATION, STEPS - CONTINUOUS 99**

Joker hustling up the stairs, dripping sweat, his white

grease-paint running down his face. He gets to the top of the

stairs, looks back and catches a glimpse of Garrity and Burke

at the bottom--

**100 EXT. PLATFORM, ELEVATED TRAIN STATION - CONTINUOUS 100**

Joker makes his way down the crowded platform, the passengers

starting to file on a waiting Lexington Ave/Pelham Express

Train heading downtown. The train's packed with protesters

heading to the rally at City Hall. Many carrying signs...

most of them in "Joker" masks... a few painted up to look

like the "Joker" mask. Joker fits in with all of them.

He looks through the crowd of clowns and sees the two cops

getting to the top of the stairs, looking up and down the

platform for him. Pulling out their badges on chains from

around their necks. Identifying themselves as cops.

Joker's willing the doors to close. But they don't.

The two detectives run onto the train just as the doors are

finally closing--

**101 INT. LEXINGTON AVE/PELHAM EXPRESS (MOVING) - CONTINUOUS 101**

Joker moves through the loud train pushing through the rowdy

protesters-- Into the next car, all of them packed.

AS THE TRAIN GOES UNDERGROUND, the lights flicker on and off--

car GOING BLACK FOR A FEW SECONDS as the train turns and dips

and speeds down the tracks.

Joker glances back at Burke and Garrity pulling out their

badges on chains around their necks. Smith & Wesson service

revolvers by their sides. Shouting at the crowd, identifying

themselves as cops.

**97.**

Joker hears some on the train shouting back in anger at the

police, keeps moving... past clown-faced protestors carrying

signs, "RESIST"... "AM I A CLOWN?"... "SAVE A CITY, KILL A

**YUPPIE"...**

The two cops push through the car, scanning all the "clown"

faces... So many look like Joker. They just shove protesters

out of the way, shouting at them all the while. A few more

voices rising up in protest--

Joker feels Burke and Garrity behind him getting closer. In

the flickering light sees a DRUNK GUY (20's) wearing a

'Joker' mask and pulls it right off his face--

The drunk guy turns ready to fight.

He throws a punch at Joker, and Joker steps out of the way--

The guy pummels someone else--

A FIGHT BREAKS OUT, spilling down the car.

Joker slips the clown mask over his clown face--

AND JUST STANDS THERE IN THE MIDDLE OF THE CHAOS, at home

with the chaos all around him--

Garrity and Burke spot Joker's rust colored suit in the

middle of the unruly mob--

Burke pulls his gun--

**BURKE**

(shouting)

**EVERYBODY DOWN, GOTHAM PD!**

The crowd doesn't drop to the ground. They just keep fighting

with each other--

Burke sees Joker just standing there. Keeps yelling for the

crowd to get down, get down, but they don't listen to him--

He starts shoving protestors down, out of the way-- and

AND THEN THE MOB TURNS ON HIM AND GARRITY, starts closing in

around them--

Garrity and Burke are pointing their guns at the crowd,

yelling panicked for them to back off, back off, and one

idiot reaches for Garrity's gun--

Bang.

**98.**

Burke fires into the crowd, as the train pulls into the

station--

A protestor falls dead. The other clowns on the train go

crazy, starting to riot. Glimpse Joker walking away calmly

out of the chaos. Taking off the mask and dropping it at his

side as he steps off the train, disappearing onto the crowded

platform.

**CUT TO:**

**102 EXT. WGCTV STUDIOS, FRANKLIN THEATER - MIDTOWN - EVENING 102**

An excited line of ticket holders waiting to get in to "Live

with Murray Franklin!" The poster marquee box near the door

reads: "TONIGHT'S GUESTS. Lance Reynolds. Dr. Sally Friedman.

And Special Guest."

They swing open the doors and start to let the audience

inside...

**103 EXT. BACKSTAGE DOOR, FRANKLIN THEATER - SIDE STREET - EVENING**

**103**

Random fans and autograph hounds hanging out by the backstage

door, waiting for the night's guests to arrive...

**104 INT. STUDIO 4B, STAGE - FRANKLIN THEATER - EVENING 104**

Studio audience filing into the studio, being seated in the

wide bleachers along one wall. Three TV monitors hang from

the ceiling, facing the audience. Three studio cameras on the

floor, black cables strewn everywhere.

The set for "LIVE WITH MURRAY FRANKLIN!" is dark... but we

can still make out his desk... guest chairs... Don Ellis and

his Jazz Orchestra's band stand... big blue curtain.

**105 INT. HALLWAY, FRANKLIN THEATER - EVENING 105**

The host of the show, MURRAY FRANKLIN (60's), usually quick

with a bemused grin but right now in a sour mood, walks fast

down the hall toward the drab dressing rooms with his old-

school producer, GENE UFLAND (60's), who's holding the show's

rundown rolled up in his hand.

**GENE UFLAND**

--You gotta see this nut for

yourself, Murray. I don't think we

can put him on. With the rioting

out there.

**99.**

**MURRAY FRANKLIN**

(annoyed)

Jesus, Gene, I don't have time for

this. Cindy's been breaking my

balls all day.

**GENE UFLAND**

She's still mad at you about that

thing?

**MURRAY FRANKLIN**

Three marriages, you'd think I'da

fuckin' learned something.

(then)

What do I gotta see? I already know

he's a nut. That's why we're

putting him on, it's a goof.

A young BLONDE INTERN walks by in the opposite direction. She

nervously smiles to them and keeps walking. Both men turn and

check out her ass. Murray winks at Gene.

**GENE UFLAND**

(just shakes his head, and

smiles)

I'm telling you, you gotta see him,

Murray. I think it's too risky, the

show's too big. It's worth too much

to blow it on this,-- this freak.

**106 INT. DRESSING ROOM, FRANKLIN THEATER - CONTINUOUS 106**

Joker's sitting on a small couch in the cramped dressing

room, watching the local news on a TV that's mounted up on

the wall, live shots from the subway station where Burke shot

the protestor, footage of the City Hall rally, clashes with

police.

He's cleaned himself up as best he could... white grease-

paint smeared more evenly over his face, green dyed hair

slicked back in place. Red lips redone.

Murray and his producer Gene open the dressing room door

without knocking--

Joker gets up off the couch and goes to shake Murray's hand.

Murray pauses when he sees Joker's face.

**JOKER**

(shakes Murray's hand;

effusive)

Murray, I can't believe this is

real, that I'm really here.

**100.**

**GENE UFLAND**

It's Mr. Franklin kid, show some

respect.

**MURRAY FRANKLIN**

Oh shut up, Gene.

(to Joker)

Murray is fine. I prefer it in

fact. Thanks for coming on the

show.

**JOKER**

Are you kidding? Thank you for the

opportunity. I've been watching you

forever. My mother never missed a

show.

Murray nods not listening, he's heard this before.

**MURRAY FRANKLIN**

So what's with the face? Are you

part of the protests?

**JOKER**

No, I don't believe in any of that.

I don't believe in anything. I just

thought it would be good for my

act.

**GENE UFLAND**

(upset)

Your act? Didn't you hear that a

kid got killed on the subway and

two cops who were almost beat to

death? You didn't hear about the

dozens of protestors and police

injured in the riots?

Joker looks like he's about to bust out laughing. All of that

news is playing out on the TV above their heads. He takes a

deep breath. Swallows the laugh.

Beat.

**JOKER**

No. I hadn't heard.

Gene and Murray share a look.

**GENE UFLAND**

--the audience is gonna go crazy if

you put him on. It was okay maybe

for a bit, but not a whole segment.

**101.**

Murray thinks about it for a beat.

**MURRAY FRANKLIN**

I like it. It's timely. It's edgy.

It's, it's dangerous. The best

comedy is all those things put

together.

(done)

We're gonna go with it.

Gene rubs his temples, he doesn't like this, but Murray is

the boss.

**JOKER**

Thank you Murray.

**MURRAY FRANKLIN**

(flashes his bemused

smile; condescending)

Couple rules though,-- No cussing,

no off-color material, we do a

clean show, okay? You'll be on

after Dr. Sally. Someone will come

and get you. Good?

Joker nods good. Smiles back at Murray.

Murray and Gene turn to go, exchanging smirks with each other

as they walk out, making light of Joker who we see behind

them still standing there.

**JOKER**

Hey Murray,-- one small thing? When

you bring me out, can you introduce

me as "The Joker"?

Murray and Gene look back at him

**GENE UFLAND**

What? You don't want to use your

real name?

**JOKER**

Honestly, I don't even know what my

real name is.

Joker smiles, the guys can't tell if he's kidding or not.

**JOKER**

Besides, that's what you called me

on the show, Murray. A joker.

Remember?

**102.**

**MURRAY FRANKLIN**

(to Gene; trying not to

crack up)

Did I?

**GENE UFLAND**

I have no idea.

**MURRAY FRANKLIN**

(turns back to Joker)

Well, if you say so, kid. Joker it

is.

Murray starts to laugh at Joker as he closes the dressing

room door, shutting it right in his face.

**CUT TO:**

**107 INT. BACKSTAGE, BEHIND CURTAIN - STUDIO 4B - NIGHT 107**

JOKER'S BACKSTAGE AT THE EDGE OF THE BLUE CURTAIN, trying to

watch the show through a slim gap. Behind him there's a

monitor on a cart playing the live feed.

He moves the curtain aside to get a better look-- Glimpses

Murray laughing, finishing up talking to noted sex therapist

DR. SALLY FRIEDMAN (60's).

**MURRAY FRANKLIN**

(to Dr. Sally)

You gotta see our next guest for

yourself. Will you stick around?

Maybe you can help, I'm pretty sure

he could use a doctor.

The audience laughs.

**DR. SALLY FRIEDMAN**

Oh. Does he have sexual problems?

**MURRAY FRANKLIN**

He looks like he's got a lot of

problems.

Another big laugh.

**MURRAY FRANKLIN**

(turns, looks into camera)

It's been a crazy few days here in

Gotham, and, I think maybe things

are about to get crazy around here

too. Don't go anywhere folks. We'll

be right back.

**103.**

APPLAUSE SIGN LIGHTS UP. Everyone claps. Joker keeps watching

Murray through the slim gap at the end of the curtain. Hears

the floor director shout, "And we're out. Back in three."

Joker adjusts the waist of his pants under his jacket. Takes

a deep breath.

**108 INT. DIRECTOR'S BOOTH, STUDIO 4B - NIGHT 108**

Perched one story above the studio. There's a long console

where the DIRECTOR sits in front of a gooseneck microphone,

looking over a double-bank of monitors.

Sitting next to him are the ASSOCIATE PRODUCER who times the

show, and the TECHNICAL DIRECTOR who operates the board. The

monitor showing the live feed is playing a commercial.

**ASSOCIATE PRODUCER**

Back in 30 seconds.

**DIRECTOR**

Okay, cue the clip. We'll come to

it straight out of break.

**ASSOCIATE PRODUCER**

Five... Four... Three...

**DIRECTOR**

Roll clip. Put up the show graphic.

ON THE SHOW MONITOR, video of Joker's original stand-up

performance comes up with the show's graphic in the lower

right of the screen.

**109 INT. TALK SHOW SET, STAGE - STUDIO 4B - CONTINUOUS 109**

ON THE SET, Murray watches the clip on the monitor above his

desk, can't help but laugh. Sees the FLOOR DIRECTOR counting

him down silently with her fingers... Three... Two... points

to Camera One.

**MURRAY FRANKLIN**

(looking into camera)

O-kay, you may have seen that clip

of our next guest when we first

played it two weeks ago. Now before

he comes out, I just want to say

that we're all heartbroken here and

sensitive to what's going on in the

city tonight. But, this is how he

wanted to come on the show. So let

me introduce-- The Joker.

**104.**

BEHIND THE BLUE CURTAIN, Joker gathers himself, ready for his

moment. Doesn't hear his introduction or see a STAGEHAND pull

open the curtain for him to go out--

ON SET, THE CURTAIN'S OPEN, Don Ellis and his Jazz Orchestra

are playing Joker on. He doesn't come out. Murray looks over

to the empty space in the curtain.

The audience laughs.

BEHIND THE CURTAIN, Joker sees the stagehand motioning for

him to go out on stage. Joker starts out, pausing when he

takes a step into the bright lights. The stagehand doesn't

see him stop, and drops the curtain back on Joker before the

audience can really see his face--

Tangling Joker up in the curtain.

The audience keeps laughing thinking it's part of his act.

The band keeps playing him on. Joker untangles himself from

the curtain and the audience gets a good look at him.

Some continue laughing. A few boo. Most don't know what to

make of him.

Joker walks across the stage, forgetting to wave like he

practiced. He trips over the riser surrounding the set when

he goes to shake Murray's hand. Almost falls on him.

Murray tries not to crack up. The audience laughs. Thinks

it's part of Joker's act.

Joker reaches out to hug Dr. Sally as she goes in for a

handshake. Another awkward moment. More laughs.

Joker finally sits down next to Murray. Crosses and uncrosses

his legs. Can't get comfortable.

**MURRAY FRANKLIN**

So, ahhh, thanks for coming on the

show. But I gotta tell ya, with

what happened at City Hall today,

I'm sure many of our viewers here

in the studio, and at home, might

find this look of yours in poor

taste.

Joker's not listening to Murray. He's mesmerized by all the

lights shining on him... all the eyes on him... he doesn't

answer Murray.

Nervous laughter from the audience.

**105.**

**MURRAY FRANKLIN**

(tries again)

Can you tell us why you're dressed

like this?

AND JOKER STARTS TO LAUGH. Not embarrassed of it anymore. He

goes with it. Giving in to it, enjoying the laughter.

**MURRAY FRANKLIN**

(can't help but smile at

Joker's laughing)

Okay. But I'm not sure how any of

this is funny. A lot of those

protesters are going with this

look. City seems to be full of

clowns these days.

**JOKER**

(just nods, still

laughing)

Yeah. Isn't it great?

Joker just keeps cracking up. Audience still isn't sure what

to make of him. There's some awkward laughter.

**110 INT. DIRECTOR'S BOOTH, STUDIO 4B - CONTINUOUS 110**

Nobody's laughing in the booth.

**TECHNICAL DIRECTOR**

(looks to the director)

This guy's got nothing.

**DIRECTOR**

(hits the producer's talk

button; into the mic)

Gene, what the hell? You wanna kill

this?

**111 INT. TALK SHOW SET, STAGE - CONTINUOUS 111**

Murray glances over at his producer Gene Ufland, who's

sitting off-camera on a director's chair by a monitor. Gene

shrugs at him.

**MURRAY FRANKLIN**

(smiles; trying to save

the interview)

So when we talked earlier, you

mentioned that you aren't

political. That this look isn't a

political statement.

**106.**

**JOKER**

(between laughs)

That's right. I'm not political,

Murray. I'm, I'm, I'm just trying

to make people laugh.

**MURRAY FRANKLIN**

(beat; smiles)

How's that goin' for ya? Have you

been working on any new material?

Do you want to tell us a joke?

The audience claps, egging Joker on to tell a joke.

Joker looks over at Murray -- his laughing fit finally

subsiding -- and reaches into his jacket pocket and--

Pulls out his worn notebook, catching his breath. Looks

through it to find a new joke.

**MURRAY FRANKLIN**

You brought a joke book?

The audience laughs. Joker smiles, opens the page to Bruce

Wayne's photo, pauses for a moment then turns the page. Finds

a joke--

**JOKER**

(reading)

Okay. Here's one. Knock knock.

**MURRAY FRANKLIN**

Oh god, a knock-knock joke? And you

need to read it?

**JOKER**

(nods, reads it again)

I want to get it right. Knock

knock.

Murray makes a face like, "Okay, I'll go along with this."

**MURRAY FRANKLIN**

Who's there?

**JOKER**

(looks up from his

notebook)

It's the police, ma'am. Your son

has been hit by a drunk driver.

He's dead.

Beat.

**107.**

**112 INT. DIRECTOR'S BOOTH, STUDIO 4B - CONTINUOUS 112**

The associate producer tries not to laugh, but she can't help

it. The director looks over at her like she's lost her mind.

**DIRECTOR**

(shakes his head)

Okay, ready Camera Two. Take Two.

Ready Three. Three.

ON THE MONITORS, some of the audience cracks up. Joker smiles

at the response. Murray Franklin shakes his head, smirking at

the joke despite himself.

**MURRAY FRANKLIN (ON MONITORS)**

So, Arthur, you told me backstage

that your--

Joker leans over interrupting Murray, whispers something to

him.

**113 INT. TALK SHOW SET, STAGE - STUDIO 4B - CONTINUOUS 113**

Murray nods as Joker whispers.

**MURRAY FRANKLIN**

(bemused smile;

patronizing)

Right. Sorry. I mean Joker-- you

told me backstage that your

mother's a big fan of the show,

that she never misses it.

Joker puts the notebook back in his pocket. Crosses his legs,

starting to get a bit more comfortable.

**JOKER**

That's right, Murray. But she's

dead now.

The audience laughs.

**MURRAY FRANKLIN**

(goes along with the

"joke")

Hold on. Your mother's dead?

**JOKER**

Yeah. She is.

Murray's not sure if this is part of his act.

**108.**

**MURRAY FRANKLIN**

Okay. What about your father? Does

he watch the show?

Laughter from the crowd.

**JOKER**

I don't know who my father is,

Murray. Turns out I was adopted and

sexually assaulted by my mother's

boyfriend.

A few in the audience groan. A couple even laugh. Still think

it's just Joker's edgy, off-kilter sense of humor.

Don Ellis plays "wha-wha-wha-whuuuuh" on his trumpet from the

band stand.

**DR. SALLY FRIEDMAN**

Ahhhh! No, no,-- You can not joke

about that.

**MURRAY FRANKLIN**

(shakes his head;

irritated)

Yeah, that's not funny, that's not

the kind of humor we do on this

show.

Murray glances over at Gene in the wings. He gives him the

"wrap it up" sign.

**JOKER**

(just keeps going, on a

roll)

Sorry. It's been a rough few

months, Murray. I mean, after my

mother died, the police came to

question me at her funeral. Who

does that?

**MURRAY FRANKLIN**

(too easy)

Oh really? Were you a suspect?

The audience laughs.

**JOKER**

Very funny, Murray. No, they came

because I killed those three Wall

Street guys.

Beat.

**109.**

Studio audience can't tell if he's joking or not. Murray

can't either.

**MURRAY FRANKLIN**

(looks at him confused)

Okay. I'm waiting for the

punchline.

**JOKER**

There is no punchline. It's not a

joke.

**114 INT. DIRECTOR'S BOOTH, STUDIO 4B - CONTINUOUS 114**

The director stares at the monitor.

**DIRECTOR**

Did he just confess to killing the

Wall Street Three?

**TECHNICAL DIRECTOR**

(horrified)

Yeah. I think he did.

**ASSOCIATE PRODUCER**

(turns to the director,

nods)

He definitely did.

**DIRECTOR**

Jesus Christ.

(hits the camera talk

button, into mic)

Camera Three, get in close.

ANGLE ON MONITOR, Camera Three zooming in close on Joker's

face.

**115 INT. TALK SHOW SET, STAGE - CONTINUOUS 115**

Gene Ufland is now standing up from his chair. Motions for

Murray to kill the interview. Murray shakes his head to

himself. This is a big "get," it could be great television.

**MURRAY FRANKLIN**

(turns back to Joker; with

gravitas)

You're serious, aren't you? You're

telling us you killed those three

boys on the subway. Why should we

believe you?

**110.**

**JOKER**

(shrugs)

I got nothing left to lose, Murray.

Nothing can hurt me anymore. This

is my fate, it was always my fate.

My life is nothing but a comedy.

**116 INT. SOPHIE'S APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS 116**

Sophie's sitting on her couch watching this interview play

out on TV. GiGi's asleep next to her. The open envelope and

the money are lying on the coffee table. No sign of the

flowers anywhere.

**MURRAY FRANKLIN (ON TV)**

Let me get this straight, you think

killing those young men is funny?

**JOKER (ON TV)**

Yeah. But comedy is subjective,

isn't that what they say? Besides,

the way I see it, what happened was

a good thing. All of you, Gotham,

the system that knows so much, you

decide, you decide what's right and

wrong. What's real or what's made

up. The same way you decide what's

funny or not.

Sophie edges forward on the couch, can almost see a hint of

agreement on her face.

**117 INT. TALK SHOW SET, STAGE - STUDIO 4B - CONTINUOUS 117**

Back on set, we can tell by the way Murray's now interviewing

Joker, talking to him slower, more thoughtfully, that he

thinks this is gonna get him an Emmy... Maybe even a Peabody.

**MURRAY FRANKLIN**

(beat)

Okay, I think I understand. You did

it to start a movement, to become a

symbol.

**JOKER**

C'mon, Murray, do I look like the

kind of clown who could start a

movement? I killed those guys

because they were awful.

Everybody's awful these days. It's

enough to make anyone crazy.

**111.**

**MURRAY FRANKLIN**

So that's it, you're crazy. That's

your defense for killing three

young men? Because they were mean

to you?

**JOKER**

No. They couldn't carry a tune to

save their lives.

Some audible groans from the audience.

**JOKER**

Why is everyone so upset about

these guys? Because Thomas Wayne

went and cried about them on TV?

**MURRAY FRANKLIN**

You have a problem with Thomas

Wayne, too?

**JOKER**

Yeah. I do. Everything comes so

easy for him.

**MURRAY FRANKLIN**

And what's wrong with that?

**JOKER**

Have you seen what it's like out

there, Murray? Do you ever actually

leave the studio? Everybody just

yells and screams at each other.

Nobody's civil anymore. Nobody

thinks what it's like to be the

other guy. You think men like

Thomas Wayne, men at ease, ever

think what it's like to be a guy

like me? To be anybody but

themselves.

(shaking his head, voice

rising)

They don't. They think we'll all

just sit there and take it like

good little boys. That we won't

werewolf and go wild. Well, this is

for all of you out there.

Joker "howls at the moon." It's fucking weird.

**112.**

**118 INT. STATION SQUAD ROOM - 7TH PRECINCT - CONTINUOUS 118**

OFFICERS AND DETECTIVES JUMPING INTO ACTION, rushing past a

small portable black & white television sitting on one of the

desks, hear one of them shout--

**POLICE LIEUTENANT (OS)**

That asshole just confessed to

killing those Wall Street guys on

fucking live TV!

ANGLE ON THE LITTLE TV, TIGHT TWO-SHOT OF JOKER looking at

Murray.

**MURRAY FRANKLIN (ON TV)**

(shakes his head)

So much self-pity, Arthur. You

sound like you're making excuses

for killing three young men. Not

everybody's awful.

**119 INT. TALK SHOW SET, STAGE - STUDIO 4B - CONTINUOUS 119**

Back on set. Joker looks straight at Murray.

**JOKER**

You're awful, Murray.

There is no more laughter. The audience is watching this

exchange with full attention.

**MURRAY FRANKLIN**

Me? How am I awful?

**JOKER**

Playing my video, inviting me on

the show,-- You just wanted to make

fun of me. Well it's easy to laugh

at Frankenstein on a crowded beach,

isn't it? You're just like the rest

of them, Murray. Everything comes

too easy for you.

**MURRAY FRANKLIN**

(on the spot; defensive)

You don't know the first thing

about me, pal. Look what happened

because of what you did, Arthur,

what it led to. There are riots out

there. Two policemen are in

critical condition, someone was

killed today.

**113.**

Joker nods in agreement, yeah, it's because of what he did.

**JOKER**

How about another joke, Murray?

What do you get when you cross a

mentally-ill loner with a system

that abandons him and treats him

like trash?

Murray pauses for a minute, not really listening to Joker,

suddenly realizing the seriousness of the situation. He

starts to turn to camera--

**JOKER**

(pulls Randall's gun)

I'll tell you what you get. You get

what you fucking deserve,--

And as Murray Franklin turns back to him, JOKER SHOOTS THE

**SIDE OF MURRAY'S HEAD OFF--**

Blood splatters all over the back of the set. Some spraying

in Joker's face. AUDIENCE SCREAMS! Dr. Sally dives for the

floor.

**120 INT. SOPHIE'S APARTMENT, LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS 120**

Sophie screams and jumps to her feet horrified! Waking up

GiGi who starts to cry when she sees what's on television--

ON THE TELEVISION, Joker gets up and walks right up to the

camera. Blood sprayed over his white painted face. Hear the

studio audience still screaming, bedlam all around him.

**JOKER (ON TV)**

(looks straight into

camera; screams Murray's

signature sign off)

**GOOD NIGHT AND ALWAYS REMEMBER,--**

**THAT'S LIFE!**

And as Joker waves goodbye to the home audience, a black &

white "INDIAN-HEAD TEST PATTERN" cuts off the show--

**"PLEASE STAND BY"**

HERB ALPERT'S "Spanish Flea" plays underneath.

Beat.

**114.**

**121 INT. TALK SHOW SET, STAGE - CONTINUOUS 121**

**BACK LIVE IN THE STUDIO, JOKER'S TACKLED BY TWO SECURITY**

GUARDS AND SOME STAGEHANDS, still hear screams of terror from

the audience around him.

**HIS FACE HITS THE SHINY FLOOR AS IF IN SLOW MOTION--**

And we HEAR the soft and familiar opening to FERRANTE &

TEICHER's piano version of "Send in the Clowns".

**CUT TO:**

**122 INT. GOTHAM SQUAD CAR (MOVING), GOTHAM STREETS - NIGHT 122**

JOKER GAZING OUT THE WINDOW, at all the violence and madness

in the city. We only see it in the reflection of the glass...

the fires burning... the mob crowding the streets. Joker's

handcuffed in the back of the squad car moving slowly through

the rioting, sirens wailing, red lights flashing, blood still

splattered on his face.

**STAY ON JOKER'S FACE AS HE HEARS THE POLICE RADIO CRACKLING,**

reports of rioters in "Joker" masks setting fires, breaking

windows, looting stores.

The images reflected in the window start to speed up as the

officer driving weaves faster through the chaos.

**POLICE OFFICER #1 (OS)**

Look what you caused, you freak,

the whole city's on fire because of

you.

**AND JOKER BANGS HIS HEAD HARD AGAINST THE STEEL MESH CAGE--**

**BAM.**

**POLICE OFFICER #2 (OS)**

Keep it up, asshole. Watch what

happens when we get to the station.

HE BANGS HIS HEAD AGAIN. BAM. BAM. Some blood is forming on

his forehead--

**POLICE OFFICER #1 (OS)**

(glancing at Joker in the

back seat, shouting)

-- Calm the fuck down, you're not

going anywhere!

And when the cop driving turns back, catch a glimpse of

someone or something running out into the street in front of

the speeding squad car--

**115.**

CLOSE ON JOKER AS THE SQUAD CAR SWERVES OUT OF THE WAY, Joker

banging up against the door--

**CRAAAASSSHHHHHH!!!!**

The squad car hits a parked car hard and flips over, sliding

across the street on its roof--

**123 EXT. SQUAD CAR (SLIDING), STREET - CONTINUOUS 123**

**SPARKS FLY UNTIL FINALLY THE UPSIDE DOWN SQUAD CAR COMES TO A**

STOP. Smoke rising from the wreck. Ferrante & Teicher's piano

only version of "Send in the Clowns" still playing...

Both police officers in the front seat are either unconscious

or dead. We see movement in the back seat, hard to tell

what's going on inside.

Suddenly the back door kicks open--

And Joker falls out of the car, landing hard on the street,

one hand free, handcuffs dangling from his other hand. Hear

sirens in the distance--

JOKER LEANS BACK AGAINST THE CAR, his face bloody, his body

broken from the crash. Sitting there amongst the wreckage,

can still see and hear the chaos, the fires burning all

around him. He reaches for a jagged shard of broken glass--

And pauses for moment catching his breath, hand holding the

jagged glass resting on his lap, wailing sirens getting

closer, looks like he's about to cut his wrists--

**124 EXT. MOVIE THEATER, STREET - UPTOWN - CONTINUOUS 124**

A WELL-HEELED CROWD LETTING OUT OF A MOVIE THEATER, the

violence has even reached up here, the nice part of town...

Sirens wailing, gangs of punks wearing "Joker" masks running

past, breaking car windows, fires burning... Catch a glimpse

of the lit up marquee listing the films playing, "Blow Out"

and "Zorro the Gay Blade". Hear "Send in the Clowns" still

playing...

FROM BEHIND SEE A SILHOUETTED COUPLE AND THEIR KID hurry down

the dark side of the street, ducking into an alley to avoid

the chaos--

Catch a glimpse of a punk in a "Joker" mask following after

them pulling a gun--

**116.**

**125 EXT. SQUAD CAR (UPSIDE DOWN), STREET - CONTINUOUS 125**

Joker lifts the jagged shard of glass, handcuff swinging...

Passes by his wrist... And starts cutting into the slit on

one corner of his mouth, making his smile longer and wider.

Blood pouring down his face, onto his hand...

Joker tearing into the other side of his mouth, jagged glass

ripping into his flesh, spurting blood, handcuff swinging--

Sirens on top of him, red lights flashing over his face--

ANGLE ON JOKER LIT UP RED, done cutting his smile, letting go

of the jagged bloody shard... Leans his head back against the

squad car, and closes his eyes, covered in his own blood.

He's finished.

Now he is the Joker.

**126 EXT. ALLEY, MOVIE THEATER - CONTINUOUS 126**

FROM BEHIND, FAMILY IN THE SHADOWS sees the guy's eyes go

wide behind the mask, pointing his gun, music swelling--

**PUNK**

(shouting)

You still think we're all fucking

clowns?

And the punk shoots the man. Reaches out and grabs something

off the woman's neck before he shoots her as well. Both fall

to the ground dead. Revealing their young son standing behind

them--

CLOSE ON EIGHT-YEAR-OLD BRUCE WAYNE, closing his eyes as

blood sprays across his face. He opens his eyes and looks up

scared at the man in the "Joker" mask who killed his parents,

Thomas and Martha Wayne. "Send in the Clowns" ends.

**CUT TO BLACK.**

A long beat.

**HEAR LAUGHTER.**

The sound of a man totally cracking up.

**FADE IN:**

**127 INT. ARKHAM STATE HOSPITAL, INTERVIEW ROOM - MORNING 127**

CLOSE ON JOKER, tears in his eyes from laughing so hard. He's

enjoying it, not trying to get it under control.

**117.**

His head's been shaved. He looks medicated or maybe even

lobotomized. Wearing white institutional clothes.

HIS NEW SMILE IS ALL STITCHED UP, cut deep up the corners of

his mouth. Forming a longer, "happier" smile.

He's sitting across from an overworked HOSPITAL DOCTOR

(50's), African American woman. Somehow it's the exact same

room Joker imagined his mother was in some 30 years ago. The

room and the doctor also look vaguely similar to the social

worker and her office in the opening scene.

The doctor just sits there, waiting for him to stop laughing.

A weathered notebook is on the table in front of him.

Finally, Joker stops himself.

**HOSPITAL DOCTOR**

What's so funny?

He takes a deep breath, his eyes are glazed over. His voice

is scratchy, like he doesn't use it much.

**JOKER**

-- just thinking of this joke.

**HOSPITAL DOCTOR**

Do you want to tell it to me?

Beat.

**JOKER**

No.

**HOSPITAL DOCTOR**

Because you don't think I'll get

it?

**JOKER**

Because it's personal, it's between

me and him.

Beat.

**HOSPITAL DOCTOR**

Okay. Is the medication working?

How's your sleeping?

**JOKER**

(nods yes)

**...**

**HOSPITAL DOCTOR**

How are you feeling?

**118.**

**JOKER**

Good. Everything's good now.

**HOSPITAL DOCTOR**

Have you been writing in your

journal?

Joker slowly nods.

**HOSPITAL DOCTOR**

Great. I want to make sure you're

keeping up with it.

**JOKER**

(beat)

Yeah.

**HOSPITAL DOCTOR**

Have you written about your

episode? About what happened?

**JOKER**

How I remember it.

**HOSPITAL DOCTOR**

(re: the journal)

Can I see?

Joker slides his journal across to her. She picks it up and

flips through the pages--

ANGLE ON JOURNAL, blank page after blank page, there's

nothing inside of it.

The doctor looks up at him confused.

ANGLE ON JOKER, a smile creeping across his face. And we HEAR

the groovy organ opening to FRANK SINATRA's anthem "That's

Life"...

Beat.

**128 INT. HALLWAY, ARKHAM STATE HOSPITAL - MORNING 128**

From behind, see Joker shuffling down the hallway past all

the other mental patients, an orderly by his side. Sinatra

starts singing.

And Joker does a slide step to the music like he can hear it

too... into a skip... and another slide step into a spin...

Dancing down the hallway into the sunset...

**IRIS OUT:**

**119.**