

B O O K T W O



THE DARK KNIGHT TRIUMPHANT

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



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



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



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



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



I WONDER HOW MANY MEN HE'S HAD TO KILL, JUST TO STAY IN BUSINESS.



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



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



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



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



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



SUDDENLY THE HAIR BRISTLES ON THE BACK OF MY NECK.



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



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



THEN I SUCK IT AGAIN.



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



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

I THINK OF SARAH.

THE REST IS EASY.



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

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



THE MAYOR
SPOKE TO REPORTERS
THIS
AFTERNOON
...

STILL IN
CONSULTATION.
IT'S STILL IN
CONSULTATION.

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

--AND WHICH
HE HAS
INSPIRED.

EXCUSE
ME--





-- I'VE JUST BEEN HANDED THIS BULLETIN--

COMMISSIONER JAMES GORDON HAS BEEN SHOT AND KILLED--



-- OOPS! SORRY, FOLKS. I READ IT WRONG--



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

GORDON WAS ATTACKED OUTSIDE HIS WEST END APARTMENT...

OH, WOW...



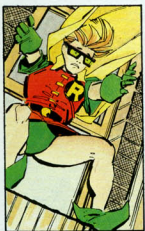
...WHAT A BRING DOWN. SEVENTEEN YEARS OLD...

MAGHISMO WITH A BADGE-- JUST LIKE CHICAGO.

REMEMBER CHICAGO, HON...?



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



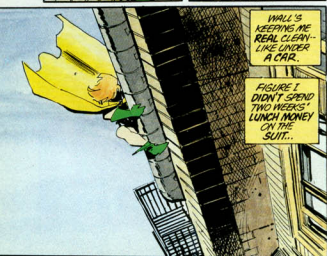
ONE-STEP STREET PIZZA.

MAXIMUM CHECK-OUT.



WIND'S ACES. AND THE LEDGE ISN'T TOO MUCH SMALLER THAN A BALANCE BEAM.

SURE JUST SLIPPERY AND ABOUT A MILE UP.



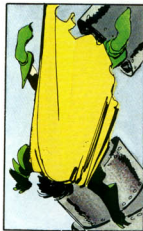
WALL'S KEEPING ME REAL CLEAN-- LIKE UNDER A CAR.

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



OH, REAL GOOD, CARRIE...





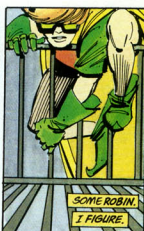
COMMISSIONER--
YOU JUST SHOT A
BOY. HOW DOES
THAT FEEL?
COMMISSIONER?...



THANK YOU, HERNANDO.
THIS IS THE THIRD
ATTEMPT ON GORDON'S LIFE
IN THE THREE WEEKS SINCE
THE LEADER OF THE
MUTANT ORGANIZATION
MADE HIS VIDEOTAPE
DEATH TREAT...



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



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



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



GORDON, FACING MANDATORY
RETIREMENT LATER THIS
WEEK, HAS OFFERED TO
STAY AT THE JOB UNTIL THE
MUTANT CRISIS HAS BEEN
RESOLVED. POLICE MEDIA
RELATIONS DIRECTOR LOUIS
GALLAGHER HAD THIS TO SAY...



NICE OF JIM TO OFFER, BUT
I THINK WE ALL KNOW
THINGS 'LL COOL OUT ONCE
HE STEPS DOWN. THE
MUTANTS HAVE A THING
ABOUT HIM...NO, I THINK
IT'S TIME FOR NEW BLOOD...



STRANGELY, THAT "NEW BLOOD"
HAS YET TO BE OFFICIALLY
ANNOUNCED. WHILE
INSPECTOR JOHN DALE
SEEMS TO BE THE OBVIOUS
CHOICE, THE MAYOR HAS
YET TO COMMIT HIMSELF...



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



WITH A SCANT SIX HOURS
REMAINING, THE QUESTIONS
HANGS IN THE AIR--WHO
WILL REPLACE JIM GORDON?
AND WHAT WILL BECOME
THE OFFICIAL POSITION ON
THE BATMAN? TOM?

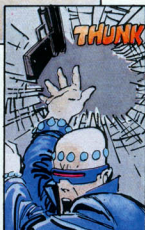


GOOD QUESTION, LOLA.
MRS. JOYCE RIDLEY WAS
ADMITTED TO A PRIVATE
HOSPITAL UPSTATE FOR
PSYCHIATRIC OBSERVATION
FOLLOWING HER COLLAPSE
THIS MORNING.

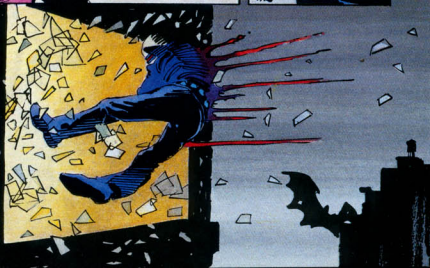


HER TEN-MONTH BABY,
KEVIN, HEIR TO THE
RIDLEY CHEWING GUM
FORTUNE, IS STILL
MISSING. ANYONE WITH
INFORMATION IS URGED
TO CALL THE CRISIS
HOTLINE...





**BRAKA
BRAKA
BRAKA
BRAKA
BRAKA**







I BELIEVE YOU.

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

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



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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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



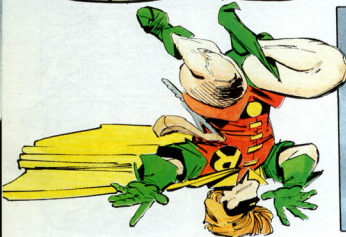
EVERY ANTI-SOCIAL ACT CAN BE TRACED TO IRRESPONSIBLE MEDIA INPUT. GIVEN THIS, THE PRESENCE OF SUCH AN ABERRANT, VIOLENT FORCE IN THE MEDIA CAN ONLY LEAD TO ANTI-SOCIAL PROGRAMMING.

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

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

THAT'S THE DUMBEST LOAD OF...

LANA-- PLEASE-- THE NETWORK--



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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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



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



NEXT UP..
FIGHTING
CRIMES.

DO YOU
KNOW
WHO I
AM,
PUNK?

WH...

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

WH...
WHERE
AM I...

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

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

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

QUITE AN
ARSENAL
YOU AND
YOUR BUDDIES
HAD...

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

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

...BUT THAT
SMITH &
MESSON & I
YOUR PAL WAS
CARRYING--

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

-- THAT
PISTOL WAS
ODD.

MAN...

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

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

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

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

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

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

...DEAL
IS...

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

LET ME
SHOW YOU...

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

...WHAT
DO YOU SAY,
MAN?





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



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

SHE FEELS THE METAL SQUARE INSIDE HER PURSE AND SMILES.



HER PURSE STRAP BITES INTO HER SHOULDER...



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



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



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



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



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



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



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



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



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




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



WOMAN EXPLODES IN SUBWAY STATION-- FILM AT ELEVEN.





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

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

I ALMOST
ASKED
HIM WHY...



WORD'S COME DOWN, MAN--



--FROM THE LEADER. SO GET IN--

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



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

OKAY, OKAY--

THE DUMP.
I LOATHE THE DUMP.



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



SO HE MIGHT BE THERE...



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

YOU COULD OVERTHROW A SMALL GOVERNMENT WITH THIS MUCH FIREPOWER.



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

...POLICE MEDIA DIRECTOR LOUIS GALLAGHER HAS PROMISED AN ANSWER SOON TO THE QUESTION THAT'S ON EVERYONE'S MIND--WHO WILL BE THE NEW POLICE COMMISSIONER OF GOTHAM CITY?...



THE HEAT IS ON, YOUR HONOR...

EXECUTIVE STEAM ROOM

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

WISH WE COULD JUST HOLD AN ELECTION...

...JOHNS REUNION OF THE RIDLEY FAMILY. AND NOW, A SAD NOTE--FOUR-STAR GENERAL NATHAN BRIGGS IS DEAD, AN APPARENT SUICIDE. RELATIVES SAY BRIGGS HAD BEEN VIOLENTLY DEPRESSED...

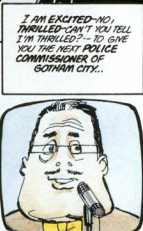
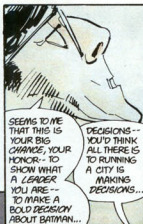
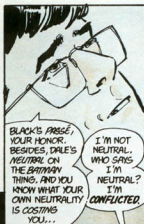
...SINCE HIS INSURANCE COMPANY REFUSED TO SPONSOR A RARE TREATMENT THAT MAY HAVE SAVED HIS WIFE, WHO IS DYING FROM HODGKIN'S DISEASE IN OTHER NEWS...



NOT FOR COMMISSIONER, YOUR HONOR. NOT ANYMORE. NO, IT'S UP TO YOU...

...TOUGH DECISION, TOO. GORDON'S POPULAR...

I KNOW THAT. DON'T YOU THINK I KNOW THAT? AND I'VE GIVEN IT A LOT OF THOUGHT. DALE'S LOOKING GOOD TO ME. HE'S AVAILABLE-- AND HE'S BLACK...



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

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

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

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

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

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

GOTHAM CITY
BELONGS TO
THE 'MUTANTS'!

TAKE THE
GUNS. TAKE
THE BOMBS.
STORM
POLICE
HEAD-
QUARTERS.

KILL
AND
KILL.

BRING ME
THE HEAD
OF THE OLD
MAN
GORDON.

MY
TRUNCHEON
WILL CARRY
IT THROUGH
THE
STREETS.

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

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

I SHALL
CRUSH THE
FOOL--

--BATMAN

AAA

BOOM

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

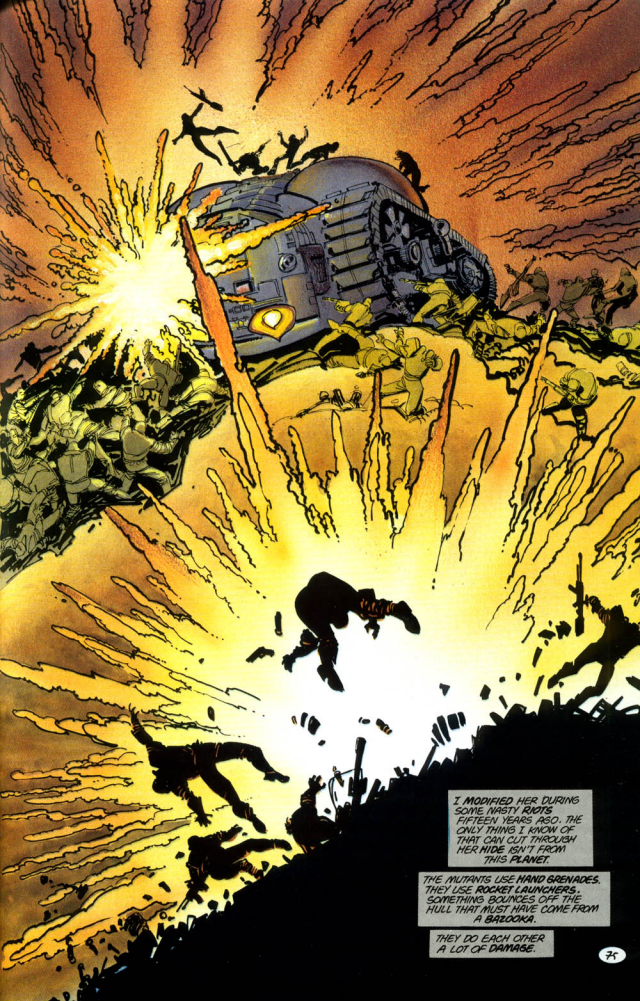
THE BATMOBILE -- THAT'S
WHAT YOU CALLED IT, DICK.

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

THEY DON'T
EVEN WAIT
FOR THE
ORDER.

YOUNG PEOPLE
THESE DAYS...

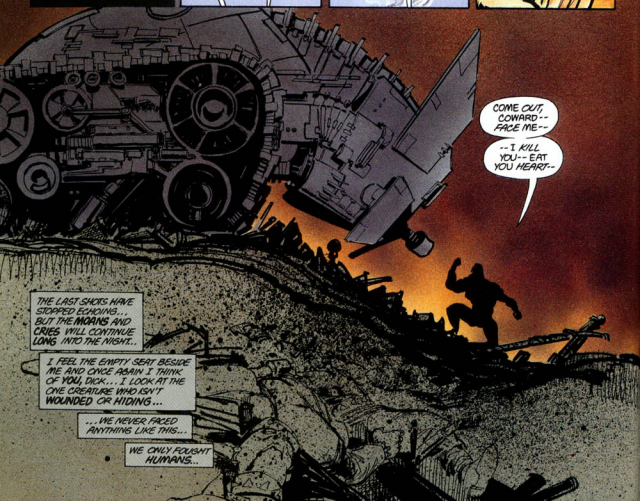
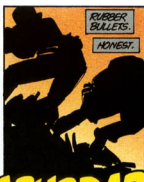
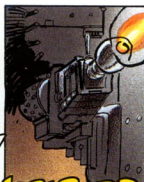
...NO RESPECT
FOR HISTORY.



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

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

THEY DO EACH OTHER
A LOT OF DAMAGE.



THE LAST SHOTS HAVE STOPPED ECHOING... BUT THE MOANS AND CRIES WILL CONTINUE LONG INTO THE NIGHT...

I FEEL THE EMPTY SEAT BESIDE ME AND ONCE AGAIN I THINK OF YOU, DICK... I LOOK AT THE ONE CREATURE WHO ISN'T WOUNDED OR HIDING...

... WE NEVER FACED ANYTHING LIKE THIS...

WE ONLY FOUGHT HUMANS...

COME OUT, COWARD-- FACE ME--

-- I KILL YOU-- EAT YOUR HEART--

RUBBER BULLETS. HONEST.

GREAT DINNER, MON.

THANKS, BABE.

FIT

HEY...

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

BATHWAX!!

I CALL YOU COWARD!



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

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



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



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



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




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



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

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

EXCEPT...



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

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



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



--AND HE'S
YOUNG...

...IN HIS
PHYSICAL
PRIME...



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



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

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

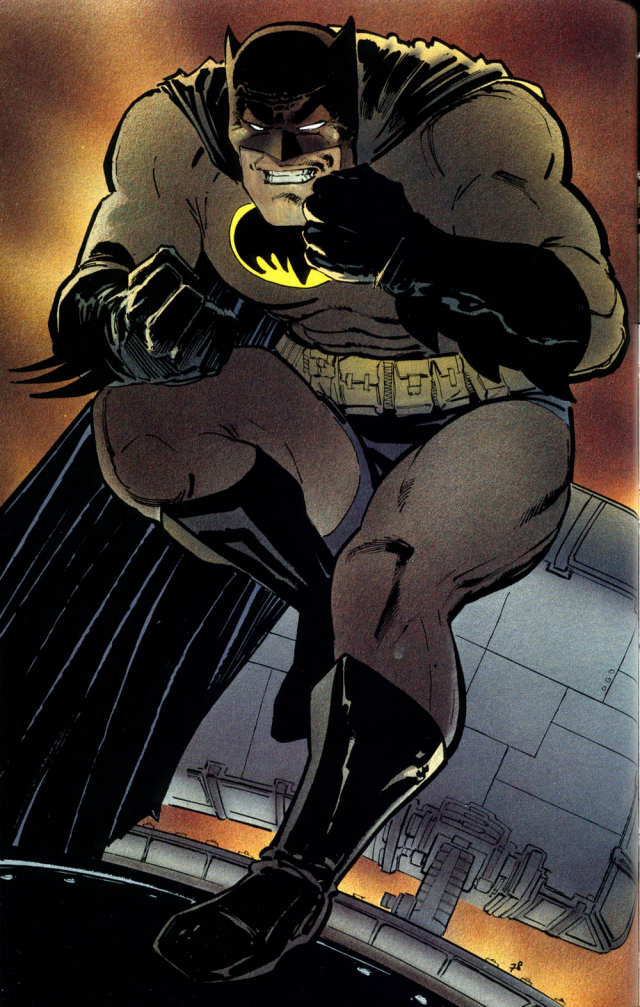


SIR, YOU
CAN'T BE
SERIOUS--

SIR...
HE'LL
KILL
YOU--



COME ON,
MAN--YOU
BORIN'
ME--





HAAR



KRAMP

I MAKE HIM EAT SOME GARBAGE--



THWAKK

--THEN I HELP HIM SWALLOW IT.



KLUDD

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



-- THEN HIS CLAWS DIG INTO MY BACK--

GGGRRRAAAAAA



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



CHUDD



FAPP

HA!
YOU SLOW, MAN!

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

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



WUWK

--SOMETHING
EXPLODES IN
MY MIDSECTION--



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



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

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



NO--



--RIBS
INTACT--

--NO
INTERNAL
BLEEDING--



--LET IT
LOOK
WORSE
THAN IT
IS--



--LET HIM--
GET CLOSE--

--NOT YET--

--NOT YET--



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

--HIS NECK--
HOLDS--

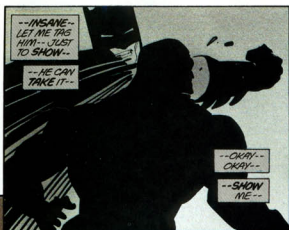
--HIS NOSE--
SHATTERS--

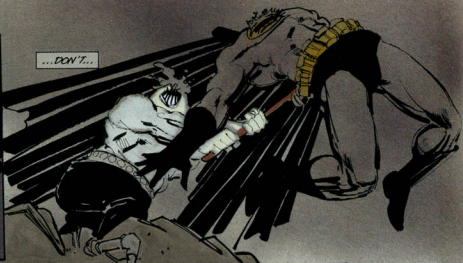
--BONE BITES
INTO MY
KNUCKLES--



--THE
IDIOT--

--STARTS
LAUGHING--







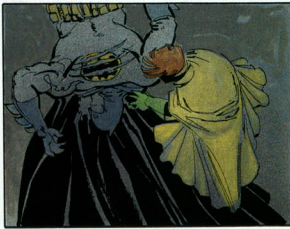
LUCKY...YOU'RE
LUCKY I'M
ALWAYS HERE...



...TO
BAIL YOU
OUT...



...DICK...



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

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

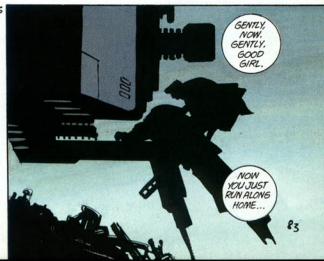


STILL
ALIVE--



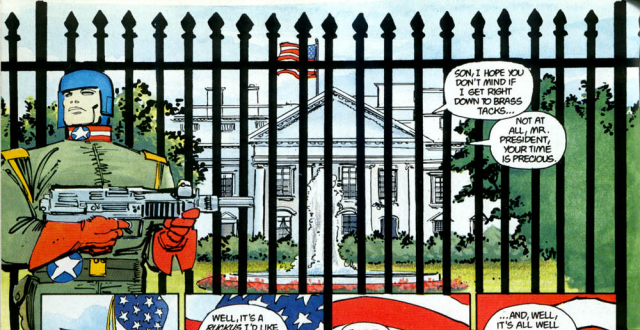
...THE **POLITICAL PERFORMANCE**
COMMISSION HAS AWARDED
THE PRESIDENT AN
UNPRECEDENTED FIVE
CREDIBILITY POINTS FOR
HIS HANDLING OF PUBLIC
PERCEPTION DURING THE
ECONOMIC CRISIS...

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



GENTLY,
NOW.
GENTLY.
GOOD
GIRL.

NOW
YOU JUST
RUN ALONG
HOME...



SON, I HOPE YOU DON'T MIND IF I GET RIGHT DOWN TO BRASS TACKS...

NOT AT ALL, MR. PRESIDENT, YOUR TIME IS PRECIOUS.



GUESS IT IS AT THAT...

...WELL, SON, YOU KNOW I LIKE TO KEEP YOU OUT OF DOMESTIC AFFAIRS... WHAT WITH ALL THE RUCKUS YOU KICK UP.

YES, SIR.



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

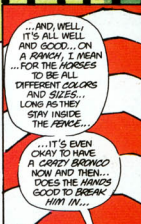
HERE... HAVE A MINT.

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



I LOVE MINTS...

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



...AND, WELL, IT'S ALL WELL AND GOOD... ON A RANCH, I MEAN... FOR THE HORSES TO BE ALL DIFFERENT COLORS AND SIZES... LONG AS THEY STAY INSIDE THE FENCE...

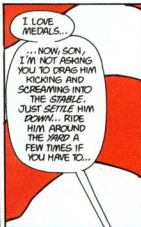
...IT'S EVEN OKAY TO HAVE A CRAZY BRONCO NOW AND THEN... DOES THE HANDS GOOD TO BREAK HIM IN...



...BUT IF THAT BRONCO UP AND KICKS THE FENCE OUT AND GETS THE OTHER HORSES CRAZY... WELL, IT'S BAD FOR BUSINESS.

WORLD'S CHANGED, SON. IT'S NOT LIKE THE OLD DAYS. I WISH IT WERE. I'D GIVE HIM A MEDAL... YOU WANT A MEDAL, SON?

NO, THANK YOU, SIR.



I LOVE MEDALS...

...NOW, SON, I'M NOT ASKING YOU TO DRAG HIM KICKING AND SCREAMING INTO THE STABLE. JUST SETTLE HIM DOWN... RIDE HIM AROUND THE YARD A FEW TIMES IF YOU HAVE TO...



SIR, I CAN TALK TO HIM, BUT--

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

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



...YES, SIR.

GOOD BOY...



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

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

WHAT ARE YOU DOING WITH HIS ARM, YOUNG LADY?

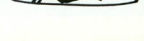
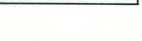
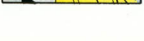
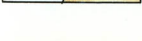
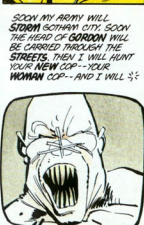
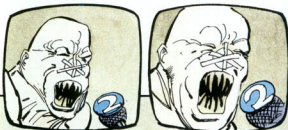
...A SCENE OF TOTAL WARFARE! EIGHTY-THREE MEMBERS OF THE MUTANT GANGS HAVE BEEN FOUND, SUFFERING FROM BULLET AND SHRAPNEL WOUNDS.

AMONG THOSE CAPTURED BY POLICE IS THE MUTANT LEADER, WHO CLAIMS THE BATMAN USED MILITARY WEAPONS IN THE ATTACK-- AND ALSO CLAIMS TO HAVE DEFEATED THE BATMAN IN PERSONAL COMBAT...



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

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



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



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

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

I KNOW,
GLEN. I
KNOW--

ARKHAM
HOME
FOR THE
EMOTIONALLY TROUBLED

--BUT I'M NOT
TALKING ABOUT
A RELEASE. THIS
WILL BE A
CONTROLLED
ENVIRONMENT--
AND IT WOULD
BE SO GOOD
FOR HIM.

HIM
I'M NOT
WORRIED
ABOUT.

DR. GLEN F
CHIEF ADMIN



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

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

HIEF ADMINIS

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

FIVE MINUTES,
GLEN. HE IS A
PATIENT.

LEN FORB
ADMINISTRATOR



OKAY. ALL
RIGHT.
FIVE
MINUTES.



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

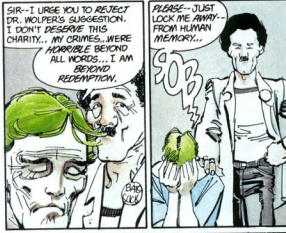
DON'T...
WORRY,
ROBIN...



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

SIR--I URGE YOU TO REJECT
DR. WOLPER'S SUGGESTION.
I DON'T DESERVE THIS
CHARITY... MY CRIMES...WERE
HORRIBLE BEYOND
ALL WORDS... I AM
BEYOND
REDEMPTION.

PLEASE-- JUST
LOCK ME AWAY--
FROM HUMAN
MEMORY...







GLIDING
WITH ANCIENT
GRACE...



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

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



SURELY THE
FERCEST SURVIVOR
...THE PUREST
WARRIOR...

GLARING,
HATING...



...CLAIMING
ME AS YOUR
OWN.

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

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

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

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



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

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

--PUBLIC
PERCEPTION--
WISE,
THAT
IS.



ALL THIS
AND
BRAINS TOO!



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

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

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

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

THEY HAD IT VERY WELL. THEY RECORDED IT BACKWARDS.



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

TAPE
XXX

THEN HE PLAYED THE TAPE BACKWARDS.

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

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

THE YOUNG GIRL WHO WAS PAINTED JUST LIKE A WHORE SCREAMED FOR THE MANAGER AND THE MANAGER WALKED OUT FROM THE BACK ROOM AND WOULDN'T EVEN LISTEN AND FIRED ARNOLD CRIMP.

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

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



THAT WAS THIS AFTERNOON, IN THE STORE.

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



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



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



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

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





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

FEELING NOTHING AND NOT TASTING HIS SNICKERS BAR.

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



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



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

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

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

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



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

HE HEARS A TRUCK BACKFIRE --



CRAZED WOULD-BE KILLER DRESSES AS BATMAN-- AFTER THIS...



A DEVOUT CATHOLIC, PEPPY SPINDECK CAN'T SAY HE APPROVES OF THIS BATMAN.



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

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



HE CAN FEEL HIS PULSE, JUST BELOW HIS EARS. HE KNOWS HE'S GONE CARED. BUT THE MURDER IS RUNNING, AFRAID. AFRAID OF PEPPY!

NOBODY IS HURT BADLY ENOUGH FOR THIS TO MAKE THE NEWS.

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



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



-- WITH ALL THE CEREMONY OF A MILITARY CONFERENCE.

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

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

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



I HEAR A NERVOUS GIGGLE AND AN ANIMAL GROWL. I HEAR HANDCUFF LINKS SNAP.



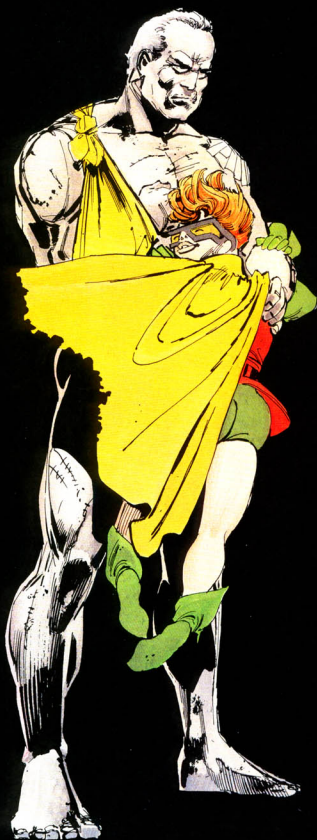
I SEE SOMETHING I'LL TAKE TO MY GRAVE.

SOME IDIOT STOPS ME FROM DOING THE OBVIOUS THING.

...THE MAYOR IS DEAD.

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





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

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



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

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



YOU'VE BEEN THROUGH QUITE A LOT, MASTER BRUCE. IT FOLLOWS THAT YOUR JUDGMENT MAY BE IMPAIRED.

WHAT ARE YOU GETTING AT, ALFRED?



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

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

SHE'S A SWEET YOUNG CHILD.



...PLEASE...



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

JAMES W.
GORDON
COMMISSIONER
OF POLICE

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

SLAM

W. GORDON

-- COMMISSIONER,
I'M REPORTING
FOR DUTY.

FEW DAYS
EARLY,
AREN'T
YOU--

--CAPTAIN
YINDEL?

ANY
DUTY,
SIR.

... I'M AFRAID WE'RE
AS READY AS WE'RE
GOING TO GET,
CAPTAIN. IT'S A
WAITING GAME
NOW.

IF YOU'D LIKE
TO WAIT HERE--
HAVE A SEAT.

YOUR
TRAINING
BEGINS
TOMORROW.

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

I HAVE
DETAILED
TONIGHT'S
PLAN.

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

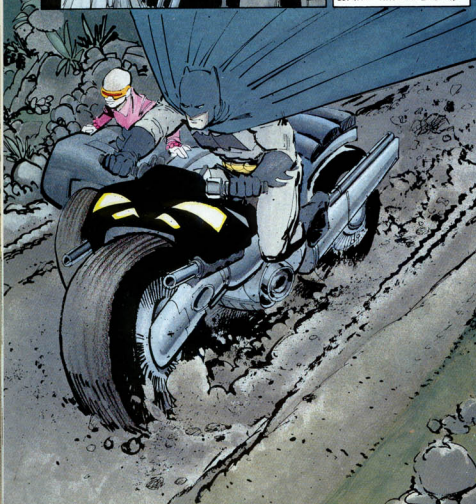


COMMISSIONER--
I'VE ADMIRED
YOU SINCE I WAS
A CHILD.

HARD TO
BELIEVE THAT,
YINDEL, CONSIDERING
HOW YOU GOT YOUR JOB.

YES, GALLAGHER. HE LOVES
I DON'T LIKE
HIM.

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





YOU GOT ANY KIDS, OFFICER?

SHUT UP.



THANK YOU. I DON'T THINK HE'S READ IT. HE ONLY SEEMED TO CARE HOW I FELT ABOUT BATMAN.

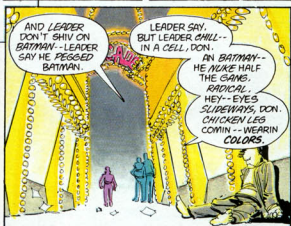


LET'S... NOT TALK ABOUT BATMAN, SHALL WE?



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

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



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

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

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



MY MON LICKEN CHESS--

ALL LINES ARE BUSY.



CHESS KINDA MY NASTY, ROB.

CHESS BILLY... CHESS PRE-SCHOOL MUTANT.

LEADER TAKE YOU FACE F TOUCHIN ME, SPUD.



YEAHH, YOU LEADER SQUEEZE I FIGURE.

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

FIGURE YOU ARE MUTANTS.



WE MUTANTS! WE SLICER-DICERS!

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

I DON'T SHIV.



BAND? SHE DON'T SHIV.

AIN'T FAN. WHAT PIPE, CHICKEN LEG?

EARS ONLY, SPUD. AS IN MEMBERS.



WE MUTANTS! WHAT'S TH PIPE?

PIPE, SPUD. WEST RIVER AND FORTY. ATTENDANCE. AS IN MANDATORY.



SURE TH PIPE WE HEARD.

DIDN'T HEAR IT FROM ME.

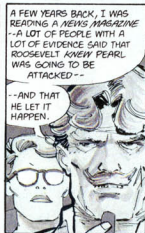
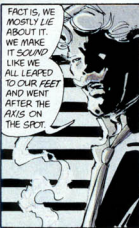
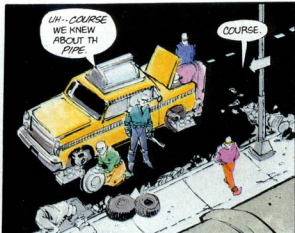
SPUD.

REAL COO, ROB



JUST AKSING OFFICER

I LOVE KIDS.





THERE'S THOUSANDS
OF THEM, BATMAN!
WHY? WHY
THERE?

BECAUSE I
WANT THEM
THERE, JIM.

WE COULD MOVE IN--WITH
HELICOPTERS AND ALL THE MEN
WE HAVE...
MAYBE THE
NATIONAL
GUARD--

NO,
JIM.

THEY CAN'T
BE ARRESTED.
YOU COULD NEVER
HOLD THEM ALL.
THEY HAVE TO BE
DEFEATED.
HUMILIATED.

IT'S THE ONLY
WAY, JIM. I'M
COUNTING ON
YOUR HELP.

ONE
LAST TIME,
OLD FRIEND.

HOW ABOUT A
WIFE? GOT A
SWEET LITTLE
WIFE?

SHUT
UP--

THOMPSON!
YOU'RE
RELIEVED.



YOU COME TO SAY HELLO, OLD MAN?
NO.



I CAME TO SAY GOOD-BYE.



YOU SO DEAD, OLD MAN!



KLIK



CHKCHAK



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

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

SPAKK



NGG

GOOD BOY.



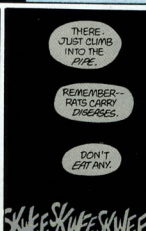
COOF!



GRRRR

FORGOT TO TELL YOU ABOUT THE DROP?

YOU'LL BE COMING ACROSS A HOLE SOON-- JUST ABOUT THE RIGHT SIZE FOR YOU.



THERE. JUST CLIMB INTO THE PIPE.

REMEMBER-- RATS CARRY DISEASES.

DON'T EAT ANY.

SKWEE SKWEE SKWEE



SKWEE SKWEE SKWEE SKWEE



CAN YOU SMELL THE RIVER YET?

SEE THE END OF THE PIPE?

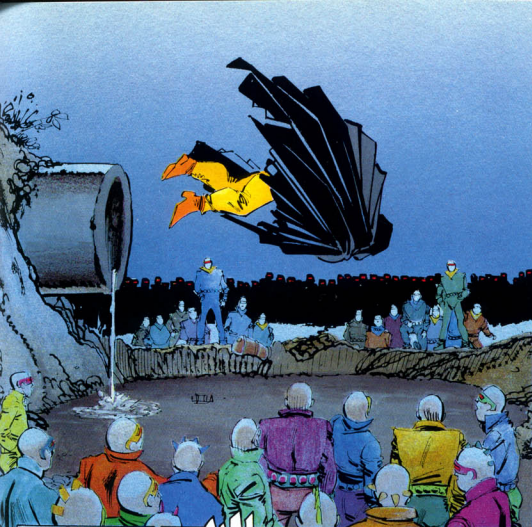


THE ONLY THING BETWEEN YOU-- AND IT--



--IS ME.

GGRRAA



YOU SEE,
DON. BATMAN
--HE NASTY.

HOPE ROB DON'T
SAY BALLS
NASTY.

BALLS
NASTY.

SHH!

MY NAME IS
ROB!

MY NAME IS
ROB!

HE'S FAST-- FASTER
THAN I AM. AND
STRONGER--

--AND SEEMINGLY
IMPERVIOUS TO PAIN.

BUT THEY DO COME
SMARTER.



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

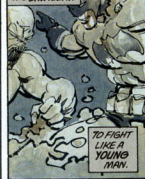
I WAIT
FOR HIM
TO TRY
A KICK--

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



THE KIND
THAT
BLEEDS.

MY MISTAKE
WAS TO TRY
TO MATCH
HIS SAVAGERY.



TO FIGHT
LIKE A
YOUNG
MAN.

RIGHT ON
SCHEDULE
THE BLOOD
HITS HIS
EYES.



I GRAB
A CLUMP
OF MUD.

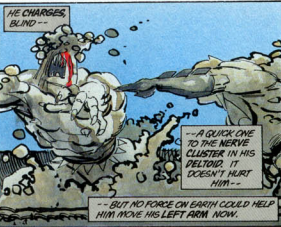


SPLOOT

LEADER'S
BOSSIN!

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

SHH!



HE CHARGES,
BLIND--

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

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

HIS RIGHT--

--IT'S FAST--

--TOO FAST--



HE DUSTED!
HE DUSTED!

MY MON BATS
DON'T SHIV.

YOU
SEE.





BLACKNESS--
COMES IN FROM
THE EDGES--

I GET SICK OF
THE ARM--



-- AND KILL
IT BELOW
THE ELBOW.



HE SPINS-- AT
THE PERFECT
MOMENT.

-- GOES FOR
MY THROAT--

-- HAVE TO--
TAKE US
DOWN--



YOU DON'T
... GET IT,
BOY...
THIS ISN'T
A MUDHOLE...



...IT'S AN
OPERATING
TABLE.



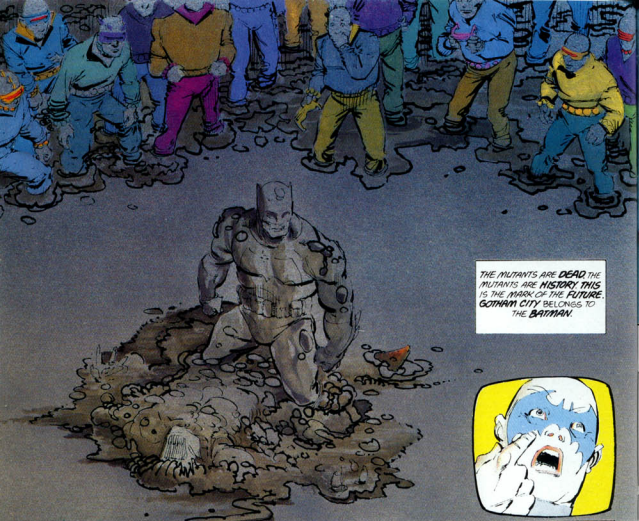
AND I'M THE
SURGEON.



SOMETHING
TELLS ME
TO STOP
WITH THE
LEG.



I DON'T
LISTEN
TO IT.



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



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

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

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

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



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



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



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



I SAID
NO
COMMENT.



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



SEEMS EVERYBODY WANTS TO KNOW WHAT IT IS.

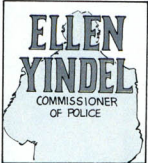
LIFE WILL BE EASIER NOW. I WON'T FEEL LIKE DAD TO AN ENTIRE CITY OF SOULS. I WON'T BLEED WITH EVERY SINGLE ONE OF MY CHILDREN.



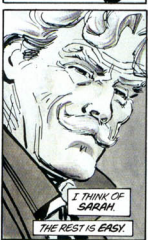
I WAS GOING TO TELL YOU MY SECRET. THE ONE I'LL TELL NOBODY AT THE BANQUET--



--GOD, WHAT WILL I SAY AT THE BANQUET?--
--IT'S A SIMPLE SECRET.



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

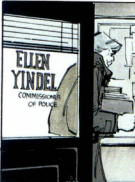


I THINK OF SARAH.
THE REST IS EASY.



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

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



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



AND NO POINT, I GUESS.



A WOLF HOWLS.

FIFTY YEARS OF THIS AND THEY WONDER.



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



THE WIND RISES, TEARING DEAD LEAVES FREE.



I KNOW HOW HE FEELS.

