

LIGHTNING

RIPS across a jet-black SKY. THUNDER CRASHES.

LIGHTNING

casts GOTHAM CITY in stark relief. SIRENS WAIL. CAR ALARMS SCREAM. A CACOPHONY.

LIGHTNING

SILHOETTES a menacing POLICE HELICOPTER, ROARING downward like a monster insect.

LIGHTNING

WHITEOUT.

...SPARKS SHOWER. WILD.

REVEAL:

INT. DARK AREA - NIGHT

A sweating, tormented sleeper-- BRUCE WAYNE.

His eyes hollowed, skin sallow, TOSSES and TURNS. Then--

FLINCHES

3 more times he--

FLINCHES

FLINCHES

FLINCHES. Then--

BANG!

His EYES pop open WIDE

BRUCE WAYNE SCREAMS

It is the sound of INCOMPREHENSIBLE HORROR.

INT. BRUCE WAYNE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Awoken from his NIGHTMARE by the sound of his own scream, disoriented, BRUCE goes to the sink and SPLASHES cold water in his face.

BRUCE (V.O.)

Father. WHERE are you? What will I DO?

His hands tremble. Distant THUNDER sounds.

EXT. EAST END SIDEWALK - MORNING

LITTLE AL, a gigantic, early middle-aged black man carries a bag of doughnuts and two coffees.

He whistles as he walks through a run-down slum.

He stops and inserts a key at a grimy storefront: The sign reads, "Al and Son, Repair, Service, Salvage."

REVERSE SHOT OF:

INT. AL'S GARAGE - MORNING

LITTLE AL hits the lights revealing a meticulously clean auto repair shop.

LITTLE AL

Bruce? Bruce? You here?

LITTLE AL continues his search in the--

EXT. JUNK YARD BEHIND AL'S GARAGE - MORNING

It's a dreary, dirty, isolated place.

Its sole occupant, BRUCE, loads large car parts onto a flatbed TRUCK bearing the 'Al and Son' logo.

He carries the heavy transmissions and engine blocks on his broad, muscular shoulders.

LITTLE AL

Morning sunshine.

BRUCE says nothing, he just STARES at LITTLE AL with troubled, tired eyes.

LITTLE AL

(Hands BRUCE a coffee)

OK twinkle toes. Let's take a look at the job orders.

The two head up a wooden staircase over the garage and enter--

INT. BRUCE WAYNE'S APARTMENT - MORNING

It's the claustrophobic room of an obsessive compulsive.

Neatly organized electronic hobby projects line the walls-- POLICE SCANNERS, RADIOS and TVs. Their readouts and displays provide the only light.

LITTLE AL opens the blackout curtains. Sunlight pours in.

LITTLE AL

(opens a ledger)

So the load on the truck is the DiMotto order, right?

(BRUCE nods)

You finished the rebuild on that caddie, and the tranny for Spencer.

(BRUCE nods some more)

I guess that's it, huh? You know I COULD put in a couple days, help you out down here, if you want a break.

BRUCE

I'm fine.

LITTLE AL looks at BRUCE's pale skin and sunken eyes.

LITTLE AL

BIG AL would kick my butt if he saw you now. You look terrible.

LITTLE AL puts his hand on BRUCE's shoulder.

LITTLE AL

Those pills aren't working, are they, son?

BRUCE

They're fine.

LITTLE AL

The nightmares stopped then?

BRUCE doesn't speak.

LITTLE AL

Maybe you just need to air yourself out a little bit. Go the park. Go to the beach. Find yourself a girlfriend.

BRUCE

I'm fine.

LITTLE AL

(frustrated)

Yeah, fine. Right Here.

LITTLE AL hands BRUCE a wad of bills

LITTLE AL

Listen, a man can't keep cooped up in one place all the time. He's got to keep moving, like a shark, moving, moving, moving, or he dies. You can't stay stuck in one place, Bruce It just ain't HEALTHY.

LITTLE AL leaves.

As BRUCE closes the blackout curtain, his gaze lingers across the street on the girls galore peepshow theater. From the looks of it, the sleazy sex venue was once a GRAND THEATRE.

But now, on top of its classic, old-world facade, a pink plastic sign promises 'GIRLS, GIRLS, GIRLS.' Out front, prostitutes offer their wares.

CHI-CHI, a young PIMP with long, greasy hair and felt bell-bottoms, SLAPS a fat whore, she CRIES and APOLOGIZES.

Other whores usher men into a brownstone CATHOUSE next door.

BRUCE's gaze travels to a window directly across from his.

Inside the CATHOUSE, a long, lean black woman, SELINA, puts handcuffs on a skinny man. She wears tight fitting, black leather.

SELINA notices BRUCE and gives him a playful wave.

He closes the curtains. Leaving us alone in--

INT. BRUCE WAYNE'S APARTMENT - MORNING

BRUCE sits and writes a letter.

BRUCE (V.O.)

September 4. Dear Father, I am still confused. What are you trying to tell me? What do you want from me? Please, I don't understand. Your son, Bruce.

Finished, BRUCE puts the letter in an ENVELOPE.

Then, gets up and goes back to work.

INT. JAMES GORDON'S APARTMENT, BATHROOM - NIGHT

THUNDER rolls on the night air.

In the sweaty palm of JAMES GORDON rest six bullets.

GORDON sits in his boxers on the toilet.

In his mouth he holds his SERVICE REVOLVER.

ANN (O.S.)

Honey, come to bed.

GORDON looks up at the door. He puts the gun, with its wet barrel, into a holster with a badge clipped to the side and leaves the bathroom.

ANN (O.S.)
Hard time sleeping again, baby?

We hear bedsprings sag.

INT. POLICE PRECINCT, SQUADROOM - MORNING

GORDON gets off the elevator and walks through the busy precinct room full of COPS.

As he passes, CONVERSATIONS STOP.

Men with shoulder holsters and badges on their hip watch GORDON with obvious disdain.

GORDON puts his lunch in his desk and flips through papers. He lights a MARLBORO.

INT. POLICE PRECINCT, HALL OUTSIDE EVIDENCE ROOM - DAY

A sign reads 'Evidence Room.' A YOUNG COP stares at GORDON with bad intent through a Plexiglas window.

GORDON puts papers in the pass-through.

GORDON
This is for the Irwin case.

The YOUNG COP doesn't say a word.

As GORDON leaves, he passes the door to the evidence room. It's half open.

We catch a quick glimpse inside--

two detectives stuff YELLOW ENVELOPES and stack BILLS

-- before the door SLAMS shut.

INT. BATHROOM, POLICE PRECINCT - DAY

GORDON stands at a URINAL as DETECTIVE FLASS, about 40, blond crew cut, enters.

FLASS
I've got something for you Gordon.

GORDON
Come on Flass, I told you, I just don't want it.

FLASS
Jimmy, Jimmy, Jimmy, you're going to have to learn what it takes to be a cop in this town

FLASS (CONT'D)

It makes the guys nervous when someone doesn't participate. They think you might say something.

GORDON

It's not like that, I just don't need the money. Maybe if I had kids like the other guys, or had trouble making ends meet it would be different.

FLASS

The guys are saying, 'maybe he thinks he's better than we are. Maybe he thinks he's superior.' Is that how it is Jimmy? You think you're some kind of saint?

GORDON

No, it's nothing like that.

FLASS

So you're not a saint, Gordon. Who are you?

GORDON

I'm just a cop.

FLASS

Yeah, that's right, you're one of us--

FLASS jams a yellow envelope into GORDON's hand and leaves.

GORDON CRUSHES the YELLOW ENVELOPE.

INT. SQUADROOM, POLICE PRECINCT - MOMENTS LATER

FLASS jokes around the water cooler with a couple COPS.

Then, back at his desk he sees the YELLOW ENVELOPE spiked on his message post.

FLASS registers a look of concern.

FLASS' partner DETECTIVE CAMPBELL, a fat cop in a wrinkled suit, slaps him on the shoulder.

CAMPBELL

Come on, we'll deal with him later. We got to make our rounds.

Together they leave and we--

CUT TO

EXT. GIRLS GAIARE PEEPSHOW THEATER - EVENING

BRUCE carries a brown paper grocery bag in his arms.

THE WHORES do their thing: waving at cars, posing, vamping.
They see BRUCE in his BLUE JUMPSUIT.

FRENCH MAID

Hey there garage boy! Want to look under
my hood, check my fluid levels.

CHEERLEADER

You can top me off anytime.

The youngest prostitute, HOLLY, joins in.

HOLLY

I'll show you why they say, "good things
come in small packages?"

SELINA

HOLLY! GET OVER HERE! He's a neighbor,
not a John. And the rest of you, cut it
out. You got nothing better to do?

CHI-CHI

(cuts in)

Yeah, like making me some MONEY. Get to
work.

CHI-CHI is interrupted by the honk of a horn.

DETECTIVE FLASS sits behind the wheel of an UNMARKED COP CAR
with a Ballantine Ale on his lap.

FLASS

Hey there CHI-CHI, how's business?

Next to him in the car sits DETECTIVE CAMPBELL.

CAMPBELL

(laughing, to CHI-CHI)

Hey, you know what, you're the only HIPPIE
PIMP I ever seen.

FLASS

You got something for us Greaseball?

CHI-CHI

Yeah, sure. Here you go guys.

CHI-CHI passes a YELLOW ENVELOPE through the window to FLASS.
FLASS flips through the bills inside.

FLASS

This it, Flowerpower? Looks kind of
light to me.

CHI-CHI

It's the same as last week.

FLASS

Yeah? Well, you seem to be doing pretty good for yourself. Maybe it's time we talk to ESTRADA, RE-EVALUATE our arrangement.

CAMPBELL

Or maybe SELINA can throw in a little dark meat to make up the balance. How about that?

CHI-CHI

Yeah, sure. SELINA, get over here!

SELINA reluctantly approaches the car.

CHI-CHI

Give DETECTIVE CAMPBELL a date on the house.

CAMPBELL

You can put away the toys, sweet thing. I'll show you how a REAL MAN does it.

SELINA

Forget it. You're not coming anywhere near me.

She turns to walk away but CHI-CHI grabs her arm.

FLASS

(laughs)

Classic. One can't get his whores to screw, the other can't get screwed by a whore.

FLASS pulls away.

FLASS

We don't have time for this. Got to keep moving. More pick-ups to make before quitting time. Ta-ta ladies.

FLASS waves his BEER CAN farewell as he drives off.

CHI-CHI

What the hell was that? You made me LOOK BAD. I got a REP to maintain. I look weak, then scumbag crooked cops take advantage, try to push me around.

SELINA

You know the rules Nothing for free

SELINA jerks her arm free and storms off.

But CHI-CHI grabs her again and SPINS HER AROUND.

CHI-CHI

Well maybe it's time we RE-EVALUATE the rules.

Suddenly CHI-CHI is aware that

BRUCE stands very close glowering at the pimp.

PURE, UNHOLY HATRED.

CHI-CHI

What the fuck you want, retard?

CHI-CHI flicks open his SWITCH BLADE.

SELINA

(to CHI CHI)

Leave him alone.

CHI-CHI backhands her across the mouth.

BRUCE, oblivious to the knife, moves to take out CHI-CHI.

But SELINA catches BRUCE's eye and,

WITHOUT SAYING A WORD, tells BRUCE to

"let it go."

BRUCE just turns and walks away-- an obedient soldier.

CHI-CHI

That's what I thought. Wimp!

Selina watches BRUCE march back into--

INT. AL'S GARAGE - MOMENTS LATER

BRUCE KICKS open the door--

FLINGS groceries everywhere--

PUNCHES the plaster wall--

BRUCE (V.O.)

September 17. Father, it takes everything I have just to contain this fury. I can feel it in my chest. It wants to ESCAPE. I'm AFRAID of what I might do.

LITTLE AL is in the doorway.

LITTLE AL
What the hell's going in here. You OK?

BRUCE
I'm fine.

BRUCE tries to push past LITTLE AL and out of the garage.
But LITTLE AL grabs his wrist.

LITTLE AL
Bruce.

BRUCE
What do YOU want?

LITTLE AL
Don't you give me lip, boy. I know what
you're going through. You can't hide it
from me.

BRUCE
You don't know ANYTHING.

LITTLE AL
Come on. I've got something for you.

LITTLE AL pushes aside a work bench, digs out a key and opens
a dirty, disused door.

BRUCE
Your father's office?

LITTLE AL says nothing. The two men go inside--

INT. BIG AL'S OFFICE - DAY

It's like a tomb. Dusty, unused and preserved.

LITTLE AL sits at the desk and starts opening drawers.

LITTLE AL
(without looking)
Sit down Bruce.

BRUCE sits on a dusty chair.

LITTLE AL finds what he's looking for, shoe-box. He turns to
BRUCE

LITTLE AL
You know, Bruce, BIG AL worked HARD to
put me through med school. He dreamed of
giving me more than that garage. But he
NEVER said a WORD after the war.

LITTLE AL (CONT'D)

He understood what happens to a man who's SEEN too much of this world's evil. Do you know what I'm talking about Bruce.

BRUCE nods.

LITTLE AL

When we found you out in the scrap pile you were scared, more of a wild animal than a boy, really. And you had something with you, do you remember that?

BRUCE says 'Yes' with his eyes.

LITTLE AL

(laughs)

You wouldn't let it go. Took BIG AL three months to even get a look at it. You cried for weeks when he took it from you. He said you weren't ready to have it. You called it your INHERITANCE.

LITTLE AL puts a hand on BRUCE's shoulder.

LITTLE AL

When BIG AL was up in that hospital, he asked me watch over you, made me promise, and I have. You're like my boy, Bruce.

LITTLE AL gives BRUCE's shoulder a squeeze.

LITTLE AL

But now you're scaring me. There's something going on in your head, and while I can't say I know exactly what it is, I can tell you this: A man has got to know who he is before he can confront his demons.

LITTLE AL open the shoe box and removes a smaller WOODEN BOX with a heavy brass latch

LITTLE AL

Maybe your INHERITANCE can help you figure it out.

LITTLE AL places the WOODEN BOX on BRUCE'S knee.

BRUCE just stares at it.

LITTLE AL

Not ready yet, huh? I understand

LITTLE AL stand up and waits. After a moment BRUCE stands up and they both walk back into--

INT. LITTLE AL'S GARAGE - MOMENTS LATER

LITTLE AL locks the door behind them.

LITTLE AL

You take all the time you want. It's late. I'm going home. I hope you can find some comfort in this, Bruce. Sleep well.

LITTLE AL leaves BRUCE staring at the WOODEN BOX.

INT. BRUCE WAYNE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

BRUCE writes another letter.

BRUCE (V.O.)

September 22. Dear Father, I almost slipped today. God help me if I lose control. Little Al gave me back my inheritance. What should I do with it? Please tell me. I don't know how much longer I can go without your help. Please send instructions. Your loving son, Bruce.

BRUCE signs the letter and puts it in an ENVELOPE. Puts a stamp on the envelope.

BRUCE gets ready for bed and turns in. He doesn't sleep, just stares at the WOODEN BOX from his bed.

INT. SELINA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

SELINA's apartment is painted to look like a dungeon. The tools of her trade line the walls-- WHIPS, CUFFS, A CRICKET BAT FOR SPANKING. CATS lounge all over the place.

HOLLY sits cross-legged in an electric chair. She paints her toe nails and watches SELINA pace the cramped room.

SELINA

There has to be more to it than this.

HOLLY

This what?

SELINA

LIFE! Jesus, there has GOT to be more out there than just PIMPS and JOHNS. We spend our lives on our backs shuttling money from one to the other, FOR WHAT?

HOLLY

I don't know, what?

SELINA

Nothing! Don't you see, we're being used. We're stuck here and for all our work, we have nothing. While they're getting rich. I'm sick of it, I'm not going to take it anymore.

HOLLY

What are you going to do? Run off?
Marry a John?

SELINA

HA! Have you seen the guys who come here for my services? Shit. What I'd give to meet a real man.

HOLLY

(rising)

Got to go. My 10:30 should be here.

(at the door)

You know, maybe there are no real men.
Maybe the whole world IS just PIMPS and
JOHNS. Ever think of that?

HOLLY leaves.

SELINA

(to self)

Then I'll have to find my own way out.

She closes her door. And we--

CUT TO:

EXT. A MAGNIFICENT THEATER - NIGHT

We're on the steps of a magical old-world movie palace. It's bright, clean, hyper-real-- a dream.

A BOY, about 8, leaves a showing of Zorro with his MOTHER and FATHER. He goofs around with an imaginary sword.

BOY

En guard! En guard!

MOTHER

(Her best Fay Rae
imitation.)

Oh Brave Zorro, Save us!

FATHER

Yes, but can Zorro fly?

FATHER grabs his BOY and throws him in the air.

The BOY freaks out with laughter.

The BOY is caught under his arms and again tossed upwards,
and into a--

NIGHTMARE

The sky darkens. The boy registers FEAR and falls--

-- falls-- falls--

and SLAMS HARD onto a grimy sidewalk puddled with BLOOD.

His parents STRUGGLE with a MUGGER in the alley.

FATHER

Get away from her you monster!

The MUGGER shoves FATHER back.

MOTHER

(slaps at MUGGER)

No! Get off me. You can't have it.

MUGGER grabs MOTHER VICIOUSLY

by the THROAT and

LIFTS HER OFF THE GROUND.

She's choking.

PEARLS bounce on the pavement.

FATHER Takes a swing at the MUGGER.

MUGGER

Crazy bastards.

BANG!

BOY FLINCHES.

Blood sprays on his face.

BANG!

BANG!

BANG!

BRUCE WAYNE's body FLINCHES in his cot with each shot.

We're back in--

INT. BRUCE WAYNE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

BRUCE shoots upright in bed.

BRUCE WAYNE'S MOUTH SNARLS, in torment.

BRUCE WAYNE'S FISTS Lay in his lap. The fists QUAKE. UNHOLY RAGE.

He goes and takes the WOODEN BOX in his shaking, sweaty hands. His thumb is about to open the heavy brass latch
BRUCE is interrupted by a clanking sound from the street.

EXT. THE GIRLS GALORE PEEPSHOW THEATER - NIGHT

The sleazy sex venue was--

THE GRAND THEATER FROM BRUCE'S NIGHTMARES.

Only now, instead of a young BOY walking the sidewalk with his parents--

CAMPBELL, the fat detective, staggers around in the street.

DRUNKENLY he throws a RUSTY MUFFLER up at SELINA'S WINDOW.

CAMPBELL

Rapunzel, Rapunzel, let down your hair!

Her window opens.

SELINA

You picked a BAD night to mess with me,
CAMPBELL!

CAMPBELL

Aww, come on darling is that anyway to
treat a customer?

SELINA

I'm paid up. You got your damn money.
That's all you get from me, asshole.

SELINA SLAMS her window.

CAMPBELL takes a PULL from his BOTTLE

And goes into the CATHOUSE.

A moment later BRUCE crosses the street and follows him
inside the--

INT. CATHOUSE - NIGHT

BRUCE cautiously enters. From upstairs--

Bang, bang, bang.

--he hears the sound of a fist pounding a door.

Voices echo down the empty stairwell.

CAMPBELL (O.S.)

Come on honey, you know that's not the way things work. It's just part of the price of doing business.

SELINA (O.S.)

Go away you fat pig.

CAMPBELL (O.S.)

What the hell? Who are you? You're a WHORE. This is what you DO.

BRUCE puts a foot on the first step up to--

INT. SELINA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

CAMPBELL KICKS IN the door--

CRACK!

SELINA

(backs away)

You can't do this. I pay you-- I've always paid you.

CAMPBELL grabs SELINA'S WRIST.

SELINA kicks him in the crotch -- THWACK.

CAMPBELL

BITCH!

CAMPBELL SLAPS HER across the face, HARD.

She CRASHES into a table covered with LEATHER BONDS, RUBBER GEAR, MASKS.

CATS scamper in all directions.

SELINA SCRAMBLES for the door.

CAMPBELL JERKS her back into the room and SLAMS her against the wall.

SELINA punches CAMPBELL -- POP -- in the face.

CAMPBELL's head snaps back and SELINA makes a break for the door. He puts a hand to his face and feels the blood.

CAMPBELL

You're fucking dead.

ENRAGED, CAMPBELL moves to block SELINA's escape. He punches her in the stomach. She Collapses.

CAMPBELL picks up her CRICKET BAT and starts smashing the place. SMACK -- a lamp flies into the wall. BASH -- a music box explodes into a million pieces.

CAMPBELL
I've had it up to here with all the
bitches like you.

CAMPBELL is standing over SELINA now, CRICKET BAT in his hands.

CAMPBELL
I'm going to show you once and for all.

SELINA is TERRIFIED!

CAMPBELL bends down and GRABS SELINA VICIOUSLY by the THROAT and--

LIFTS HER OFF THE GROUND with one hand.

She is CHOKING.

CAMPBELL
You're mine to do with as I please, you
understand that? And now it's going to
please me to KILL YOU.

He cocks the CRICKET BAT back, about to smash her brains out when--

SUDDENLY BRUCE APPEARS IN THE ROOM.

HIS FACE: a mask of UNHOLY RAGE.

CAMPBELL
What the fuck do you want? Get the hell
out of here!

BRUCE doesn't say a word. He just delivers an upper cut--

SMACK

--to CAMPBELL'S rib cage. A couple ribs go.

A left hook--

SMACK

--to CAMPBELL'S face. The nose shatters.

An elbow--

SMACK

--to CAMPBELL'S head. The jaw breaks.

CAMPBELL stumbles back to the wall. FALLS to his knees.

BRUCE isn't finished with CAMPBELL. He moves in.

SELINA grabs the cricket bat--

CRACK!

SHE HITS BRUCE!

A startled BRUCE staggers.

Things--

SELINA

Sorry about that.

Go--

SELINA

But he's mine.

DARK.

MUCH LATER:

BRUCE slowly comes around.

SELINA is gone.

CAMPBELL lies smashed out on the floor in a puddle of blood.

DEAD.

RED LIGHTS FLASH from the street.

Footsteps in the hall.

Voices.

COP (O.S.)

That one at the end of the hall.

GORDON (O.S.)

You go in yet?

BRUCE holds his head, spins circles and looks for a way out.

COP (O.S.)

Just got here, only pecked through the door. Didn't want to disturb the scene.

BRUCE tries to squeeze out the bathroom window-- too small.

INT. CATHOUSE, HALLWAY - DAWN

GORDON
(pulls down yellow
police tape)
Who called it in?

COP
A guy named CHI-CHI. Claims he's the
property manager. More like a PIMP.

GORDON steps on his MARLBORO. Just as he touches the knob--

FLASS Pushes past the uniformed officer. GORDON turns--

INT. SELINA'S APARTMENT - DAWN

BRUCE looks out the back window -- cops everywhere.

INT. CATHOUSE, HALLWAY - DAWN

GORDON blocks the doorway--

FLASS
What the hell are you doing here?

GORDON
It's my collar.

FLASS
Like hell it is. Get out of my way.

GORDON doesn't move.

FLASS muscles past GORDON and opens the door into--

INT. SELINA'S APARTMENT - DAWN

BRUCE looks out the bedroom window, it's a narrow air-shaft
who's bottom opens in a rubbish-filled mini-courtyard.

BRUCE looks over--

THE FRONT DOOR IS OPENING.

FLASS (O.S.)
Jimmy-boy, I ain't kidding around now.

GORDON backs into the apartment, he's been shoved.

BRUCE makes a desperate play and throws himself out the
window. He hangs four stories up by his fingers as inside--

GORDON

OK, have it your way.

GORDON stands aside.

FLASS

Yeah, that's what I thought--

Then, confronted with the sight of his DEAD PARTNER--

FLASS

Oh Christ!

Outside the window BRUCE is slipping. He tries to get his feet on the window sill below while--

GORDON

(to the cop)

I thought you said there were two bodies.

COP

(shrugs)

That's what this CHI-CHI guy said. And that's what it looked like about three minutes ago.

BRUCE can't reach the sill with his feet.

GORDON squats down and inspects the body.

A series of four -- DEEP SCRATCHES -- line CAMPBELL'S cheeks.

BEAT COP

(to GORDON)

Girl goes by the name of Mistress SELINA lives here. 21, 5'9" 120 pounds. Works an S&M dungeon, uh, obviously. She hasn't turned up yet.

FLASS casually tosses the apartment, looks out the back window, opens a wall CLOSET, picks up some handcuffs--

BRUCE can't hold on any more. HE SLIPS AND FALLS.

While FLASS looks at the cuffs,

GORDON

(to FLASS)

You don't seem all that broken up. This IS you partner here, right?

FLASS, angry, throws them back and SLAMS the CLOSET DOOR--

Just at the moment BRUCE CRASHES into the rat-infested rubbish below.

GORDON hearing something, takes a look out the window where BRUCE was hanging moments ago.

FLASS
This kind of shit happens everyday. I've learned to grieve in my own way, Jimmy-boy.

GORDON
(pulls head back in)
And what, exactly, does that mean?

FLASS
It means I'm going to find her and put her in a box.

GORDON
It's that simple, huh?

FLASS
Yup.

In the air-shaft, BRUCE climbs out from under the filth and pushes open a basement window.

GORDON
Come ON. There's more going on here. She didn't do this alone. What was it? CAMPBELL wanted his graft in trade? That pimp get tired of paying you guys off?

FLASS
(to the beat cop)
YOU. Get out.

The BEAT COP leaves.

FLASS
Listen Boy Scout, you need to think long and hard about what you say and do on the job. You're in way over your head. Keep it up, and someone's going to get HURT.

FLASS storms out.

GORDON watches him go.

EXT. CATHOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Cops loaf around the crime scene eating doughnuts. BRUCE tries to look inconspicuous on the sidewalk, hands in his pockets, head down. FLASS burst out of the building and slams into BRUCE. FLASS shoves BRUCE.

FLASS
Watch where you're going. PUNK.

They hold eye contact for a tense moment.

INT. SELINA'S APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

GORDON is alone with the body. He stands soaking up the details with a troubled look on his face.

INT. GORDON'S APARTMENT, BEDROOM - NIGHT

GORDON sits on the bed with his arm around his wife.

She's crying.

GORDON

Honey, come on. I didn't mean it. It's just, raising a child in this hell hole. Maybe after my transfer goes through things will be different.

ANN jerks her shoulder away and exits in a huff.

Leaving GORDON alone with the--

TV NEWS--

NEWS ANCHOR, BRIAN

Is Gotham City in the middle of a crime wave? Murder, prostitution, drugs, racketeering, all on the rise. The commissioner's office refuses to comment.

On the TV: THOMAS WAYNE's crest, an INTERTWINED 'T' AND 'W.'

NEWS ANCHOR, BRIAN

When we return: Can the Wayne Corporation find the missing heir to THOMAS WAYNE's fortune before the 15 year deadline?

GORDON pays no attention.

INT. OUTSIDE COMMISSIONER LOEB'S OFFICE - DAY

GORDON sits in the waiting room outside a door marked 'Police Commissioner GILLIAN LOEB.'

Loud, muffled voices argue on the other side. LOEB's SECRETARY is doing a crossword puzzle, oblivious.

The door opens, Gotham's young Assistant District Attorney, HARVEY DENT, stands in it yelling back into the office.

DENT

You can't protect him forever. ESTRADA will go down and you'll go with him.

DENT slams the door and stomps off. The SECRETARY pushes a button on the INTERCOM.

SECRETARY

Commissioner Loeb, there's a Detective Gordon here to see you.

LOEB (O.S.)

Send him in.

GORDON enters--

INT. COMMISSIONER LOEB'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

GORDON musters all his confidence as he approaches LOEB who works an exercise spring in his beefy fist.

GORDON

Sir, I'm Detective James Gordon. I'm here about my transfer.

LOEB

I know who you are Gordon. Chief Collins has told me all about you. Says you're another COWBOY, like your friend Dent there. Says you don't understand the way things are done.

GORDON

I've never met Assistant D.A. Dent, sir. And don't know why Chief Collins would say anything like that.

LOEB

(rubs temples)

There's no transfer for you, Gordon. It's my responsibility to train young officers a proper respect for tradition, for the established order of things. You need to learn what it takes to be a cop in Gotham.

GORDON

If by 'tradition' you mean graft and--

LOEB

(interrupts)

I suggest you be a little more selective in your manner of speech, detective. Things could get awfully difficult for you around here. And you don't want that, not for your lovely wife.

GORDON's jaw drops at the overt threat.

LOEB

You're mine Gordon.

Without saying a word GORDON turns and leaves -- DEFEATED.

INT. GORDON'S APARTMENT. BATHROOM - EVENING

GORDON has his GUN in his mouth.

He looks down at his SHAKING FIST.

He opens it-- EMPTY!

This time HE'S LOADED THE BULLETS INTO THE GUN.

The HAMMER pulls back--

We hear the front door open and the sounds of ANN looking through the apartment for GORDON.

Then she's at the door--

ANN (O.S.)

Jim. Jim, it's a boy.

GORDON takes the GUN out of his mouth.

It's like he has just heard her voice for the first time.

He bursts out of the bathroom and ENGULFS his wife in a hug.

GORDON

A boy. We're going to have a baby boy.

A smile crosses ANN's lips.

EXT. JUNK YARD BEHIND AL'S GARAGE - DAY

BRUCE works like a FIEND. HE'S POSSESSED.

Sweat soaks through his clothes as he HEAVES ENGINES into a giant CRUSHING MACHINE.

He pulls the lever. Solid steel POPS and CRACKS like eggs.

LITTLE AL watches, then approaches and shuts off the machine.

LITTLE AL

This can't go on.

BRUCE

What?

LITTLE AL

When was the last time you slept more than two hours in a row?

BRUCE doesn't answer.

LITTLE AL

That's what I thought. You're going to hurt yourself. You need time to sort stuff out. Consider yourself on vacation. Go.

LITTLE AL points to BRUCE'S door.

INT. GREASY SPOON DINER - THE NEXT DAY

GORDON looks tired, as if he's been up all night thinking.

He hasn't touched his food. But he HAS piled an ashtray full of MARLBORO butts.

The counter man, DAVE, fills his coffee cup.

DAVE

You OK Jim?

GORDON

Thanks Dave, you ever notice how, sometimes, coming to a realization about something, you know, figuring out something important, only makes everything more difficult?

DAVE

Um, I guess. There was this one time my brother-in-law wanted to open a bar and the wife says--

The conversation is interrupted by GORDON'S RADIO.

RADIO

Four-Sixteen. DUTTON HEIGHTS HOUSING PROJECTS. Hostage situation. Suspect armed and dangerous. SWAT teams have been deployed. Responding officers report to Commissioner Loeb on site.

GORDON

What the HELL is Loeb doing there?

GORDON jumps to his feet and grabs his coat.

DAVE

What's up Jim, that's not even your beat?

GORDON

(running for the door)
Loeb's an animal. It'll be a bloodbath.

GORDON runs for the door and out onto--

EXT. THE STREETS OF GOTHAM CITY - MOMENTS LATER

GORDON drives like a madman through the run-down East End.
SIRENS BLARING.

LIGHTNING rips across the clear sky. A storm is rolling in.

EXT. THE DUTTON HEIGHTS HOUSING PROJECTS - MINUTES LATER

UNIFORMED POLICE OFFICERS hold back curious residents.

A GUNMAN yells unintelligibly from the roof of the projects.

GORDON arrives the same time as the TV NEWS VAN from Channel One Eyewitness News.

Parked at the center of the police encampment: A SWAT VAN.
Inside a half dozen men strap on BODY ARMOR and check their MACHINE GUNS.

LOEB

Ah, the COWBOY. Came to see how REAL
policemen earn their pay?

GORDON

Where's the negotiator?

The SWAT guys are climbing out of the van, ready for action.

LOEB

He's working a jumper on the Herzog
Bridge. We don't have time to wait.
Time is money, tax-payer's money.

GORDON

More like VOTERS' money. That's it,
isn't it? You're here for the TV
cameras.

GORDON, disgusted, heads back toward his car.

SOMEONE IN THE CROWD

Oh my god he's got a baby!

GORDON STOPS. LOOKS UP.

The GUNMAN in fact holds a LITTLE BABY.

LOOKS OVER.

LOEB'S SNIPERS have taken their positions.

LIGHTENING.

The GUNMAN is spinning around with the child in his arms, yelling at the lightening. The SNIPERS try to line up their shots.

It's all happening too FAST.

LOEB talks to the SNIPERS on a RADIO.

LOEB

Take your shots.

SNIPER

(on radio)

The baby is in the way. It's a tough shot.

LOEB

Just do your job. SHOOT HIM!

The GUNMAN waves a 9mm over the edge of the roof.

The TV CAMERAS zooms in on the GUNMAN.

The situation slips OUT OF CONTROL.

SOMEONE IN THE CROWD

Someone save the baby!

GORDON

(to himself)

Aw fuck it.

GORDON steps out from behind the POLICE BARRICADE.

LOEB

Gordon! GET YOUR ASS BACK HERE, NOW!

GORDON ignores him and holds up his REVOLVER with two fingers on its barrel.

GORDON

(shouts)

Hey! HEY YOU! I'm coming up!

GORDON drops his WEAPON--

thud

--and enters the building.

The TV CAMERAS eat it up.

Meanwhile, across town in--

INT. BRUCE WAYNE'S APARTMENT - DAY

BRUCE is A BALL OF NERVOUS ENERGY.

Outside, the RAIN beats down on his window.

He PACES back and forth.

CRASH.

LIGHTNING rips across the blue sky.

He tries to write a letter.

BOOM.

THUNDER rolls.

He can't sit still.

BRUCE (V.O.)

October 3. Dear Father, It's only getting worse. It's tearing me apart. I'm afraid it's happening. I've let it out. Father, I've let you down. I may have KILLED A MAN last night. I may be a MURDERER. I am no better than he was, a monster.

Back at the--

INT. DUTTON HEIGHTS HOUSING PROJECTS - MOMENTS LATER

GORDON creaks up the stairs.

He approaches a DOOR that says, "ROOF." He eases it OPEN.

The scruffy GUNMAN yells up at TV NEWS HELICOPTERS.

GUNMAN

No identifying marks. A million losers never finish.

His blond hair, going gray, sticks to his lips as he screams.

GUNMAN

Spider nasty. Don't noise it. No gangrene lunch.

GORDON steps out on the roof, hands open in front of him.

The GUNMAN has a 9mm pressed into a LITTLE BOY'S MOUTH.

HE HOLDS THE CHILD AGAINST HIS OWN CHEST. If he fires he will kill the child AND himself.

The TERRIFIED child cries for his mother.

GORDON

Hi, my name is Jim.

GORDON steps forwards to shake hands. The guy freaks--

GUNMAN

Loudmouth fraud. Liberty is an ape.

TV NEWS CAMERAS circle overhead capturing the whole scene.

GUNMAN

So I says to him, I says, "to him."

GORDON point to the sky, acting angry--

GORDON

Um, Bad helicopters!

Meanwhile back in--

INT. BRUCE WAYNE'S APARTMENT - DAY

BRUCE continues with his letter--

BRUCE (V.O.)

Please tell me what to do, Father. I'm afraid.

BRUCE picks up the WOODEN BOX. He stares at it for a long moment then suddenly--

THROWS IT AGAINST THE WALL--

SMACK

--it smashes the vacuum tubes of an electronics project. Pop, pop, pop -- Overloaded circuits burn out more equipment.

SPARKS EXPLODE from the blown FUSE BOX--

BRUCE

(screaming)

Tell me what you want me to DO!

--and SHOWER down onto the floor.

The workshop plummets into DARKNESS except for one TV. It casts an eerie BLUE GLOW.

BRUCE looks over at the TV NEWS--

ON THE TV--

GORDON is on the roof with the GUNMAN.

LIGHTNING

The GUNMAN recoils and spins looking around, frantic. GORDON eases closer while he's distracted by the lightning.

GUNMAN

We're rich. Again.

GORDON

Where is your medication? You have to trust your doctors, trust in the system.

GORDON slides closer to the GUNMAN with every word.

GUNMAN

Nice toilet.

GORDON

Everything will be fine if you just follow the program.

But GORDON's words seem hollow. They have no effect on the GUNMAN.

GUNMAN

I'll change him with my love.

The GUNMAN jams the 9mm further into the child's mouth, he's about to pull the trigger.

The HAMMER STARTS GOING BACK!

GORDON acts without thinking.

He throws a right cross--

CRUNCH!

-- dropping the GUNMAN, knocking away his 9mm just as--

BANG!

-- he pulls the trigger, missing the child.

INT. BRUCE WAYNE'S APARTMENT - DAY

BRUCE FLINCHES

-- at the sound of the gunshot.

EXT. DUTTON HEIGHTS HOUSING PROJECTS, ROOF - DAY

The TV cameras frame a close-up shot. The GUNMAN, now lying on the roof, reaches for the CHILD, an arm out-stretched.

SMASH CUT:

EXT. A GRAND THEATER - NIGHT

BRUCE's FATHER lies in a puddle of blood, an arm out-stretched, reaching for YOUNG BRUCE. He grabs the BOY's hands and closes something inside them.

FATHER

Your INHERITANCE. Use it wisely, son.

YOUNG BRUCE kneels in silence with his dying parents.

SMASH CUT:

EXT. DUTTON HEIGHTS HOUSING PROJECTS. ROOF - DAY

GORDON is on top of the GUNMAN raining punches down on his face -- pow, pow, pow -- until the GUNMAN stops struggling for the LITTLE BABY.

INT. BRUCE WAYNE'S APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

BRUCE is entranced by what he sees on the TV.

EXT. DUTTON HEIGHTS HOUSING PROJECTS. ROOF - MOMENTS LATER

GORDON, with the LITTLE BOY on his hip, emerges from the building to the cheers of the crowd just as--

LIGHTENING.

THE GOTHAM SKIES LET LOOSE A TORRENT OF RAIN ON THE DIRTY CITY.

The TV news media ignores the storm and mobs him. Cameras jam in his face. BRUCE watches--

REPORTERS

You went against direct orders from the commissioner. Why didn't you follow normal police procedures?

GORDON

I don't like what passes for NORMAL in this town. CRIME is NORMAL in GOTHAM. CORRUPTION is NORMAL. The scum of this city have taken so much from us, our youth, our families. I've declared my WAR ON CRIME!

(points into the camera)

Now YOU must FIGHT BACK for what's been lost!

AT THE SAME TIME:

INT. BRUCE WAYNE'S APARTMENT - DAY

THE WORDS ARE A REVELATION TO BRUCE.

He tears himself away from the TV and digs wildly through the burning electronics until he has the scorched WOODEN BOX in his shaking fist.

BRUCE

NOW I understand.

He RIPS open the WOODEN BOX revealing his father's heavy, silver SIGNET RING balled up in old newspaper.

It bares the intertwined initials - 'T' and 'W.'

BRUCE runs out the door with the WOODEN BOX and up onto the--

EXT. ROOFTOP OVER BRUCE WAYNE'S APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER

LIGHTENING.

SHEETS OF RAIN fall on BRUCE's face as he slides the SIGNET RING on his wet finger and screams up into the storm--

BRUCE

Thank you Father. Thank you. I KNOW
what I must DO.

LIGHTNING fills the sky as we --

CUT TO:

EXT. DUTTON HEIGHTS HOUSING PROJECTS - SECONDS LATER

--we hear THUNDER.

GORDON extracted himself from the throng of MEDIA who now turn on LOEB.

REPORTERS

What was going through your head? Why
did you try to stop Detective Gordon from
saving that child?

LOEB

(uncomfortable)

I assure you I had no intention of--

GORDON'S heard enough. Turning away, he smiles and lights a MARLBORO.

A PATROLMAN jogs up to him.

PATROLMAN

Sir, sir. Your gun

He hands over GORDON's SERVICE REVOLVER, the one he'd put in his mouth so often.

PATROLMAN

Looks like the finish has worn off the barrel.

GORDON

Guess it's time for a new a new gun, huh?

GORDON takes the weapon and heads to his car.

EXT. EAST END SIDEWALK - THE NEXT DAY

BRUCE, dressed in an overcoat, waits in a doorway while CHI-CHI talks to SKINNY GIRL in fish-net stockings.

CHI-CHI

I don't care if you're pregnant with the second coming of Christ. I made the appointment and you'll be there.

BRUCE (V.O.)

October 4. Father, The trail begins with the pimp. He is only a guppy swimming in the cesspool but he knows where she is. I must find her.

CHI-CHI leaves the SKINNY GIRL crying.

BRUCE (V.O.)

She used me to KILL that man. And murder is not allowed.

CHI-CHI passes BRUCE's doorway. FOUR DEEP SCRATCHES cross his cheek. BRUCE steps out.

CHI-CHI

(startled)

Oh, the retard. Get lost.

BRUCE

Where's SELINA?

CHI-CHI

SELINA? She's good as dead by now. Come around tomorrow. I'll have another dominatrix by then.

BRUCE

I don't want her for that.

CHI-CHI

Yeah? That's not what it looked like the other night. You guys got a little carried away with your games, huh?

BRUCE
You were THERE? You let her get away?

CHI-CHI
(fingers his cheek)
Yeah she got away but they'll find her.
She'll fry for killing that cop.

BRUCE
(grabs CHI-CHI)
You're going to help me find her.

Instantly CHI-CHI stabs at BRUCE with the switchblade.

BRUCE floats to the side and stomps on the pimp's knee--

CRUNCH

--bending it in a way knees were never meant to bend.

The PIMP writhes in pain on the ground--

CHI-CHI
You psycho! I know you. I've seen your
face, man, you can't hide!

BRUCE walks away--

BRUCE (V.O.)
And so it begins. I will not let you
down. Your loving son, Bruce

He's got a new spring in his step.

ON THE TV--

CHANNEL ONE EYEWITNESS NEWS runs a Special Report. THE
ANCHORMAN delivers his lines under the title 'SUPER COP.'

ANCHOR, BRIAN
Detective James Gordon wowed the city of
Gotham by single-handedly rescuing a
small child from the hands of an escaped
mental patient and possibly avoiding
needless bloodshed and mayhem at the
hands of this city's notoriously violent
SWAT team. His comments to the press
highlighted a growing rift between
various departments within the police
force. He hinted at charges of police
corruption and promised to wage a one-man
war on crime. I don't know about you
Sandy, but this reporter finds such
straight talk very refreshing.

CO-ANCHOR JANE

Indeed Brian. Now let's take a look at sports--

We pull back WIDER to see the TV plays in--

INT. GORDON'S APARTMENT - EVENING

GORDON and ANN are watching on the sofa. ANN is stunned.

ANN

This is a big deal. They're going to want you on talk shows, you know? You're going to need a new suit.

GORDON

(laughing)

Let's go celebrate!

ANN

Honey, we can't. It's late, we've already eaten.

GORDON

Then, let's get a drink.

ANN

(laughs)

Jim! Hello? I'm 'with child.'

GORDON

Oh, sorry. Right. Then dinner, Friday. How's La Bonne Maison sound?

ANN

Ooh, Fancy. It's a date.

ANN pulls her husband down on top herself, kissing him.

INT. BRUCE WAYNE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

The TV NEWS plays in the back ground as BRUCE applies a fake wax scar onto his cheek.

BRUCE (V.O.)

November 8. Dear Father, The pimp knew my face. A distracting scar will hopefully mask my identity.

BRUCE puts on the overcoat and wide-brimmed, concealing hat.

BRUCE (V.O.)

Tonight I begin your revenge. I will rid this city of its cancer. I will draw the scum to me and make them pay.

BRUCE hold up his FIST and on it--

BRUCE
 Father, tonight I am declaring war! Your
 loving son, Bruce.

-- HIS FATHER'S SIGNET RING.

EXT. EAST END PARK - NIGHT

BRUCE has a tourist map in his hands, he acts lost.

A pair of MUGGERS saunter out of the night. They circle.

MUGGER #1
 Need some help mister. Maybe you're
 lost?

BRUCE says nothing, just soaks in the atmosphere of violence.

MUGGER #1
 You could use a guide to show you where
 the bad places are.

MUGGER #2
 Yeah, to protect you from the bad
 elements.

BRUCE cracks a gentle smile.

MUGGER #2
 We'll take care of you mister. But you
 have to give us a tip.
 (holds out hand)
 NOW! MONEY!

One of the assailants becomes impatient and SHOVES BRUCE.

There is no delay in cause and effect. The shove sparks an
 almost ORGASMIC release of RAW, PENT UP VIOLENCE from BRUCE.

HE EXPLODES-- CRACK! CRACK! CRACK! CRACK!

BRUCE PUNCHES MUGGER #1 in the CHEST, rapid-fire, brutal,
RIBS CRUNCH.

MUGGER #2 steps into the fray.

BRUCE neatly SNAPS HIS ARM--

CRUNCH

-- and SWINGS an ELBOW--

POP

-- SHATTERING MUGGER #2's FACE.

He SLAMS to the PAVEMENT in sudden, surprised PAIN.

BRUCE stands over both the fallen MUGGERS and breathes in a huge lung-full of the crisp, clear night air.

A calm washes over him.

BRUCE

Here's your tip.

He delivers a final kick and walks off into the night-- A CHANGED MAN.

EXT. EAST END ALLEY - NIGHT

SKINHEADS divide the contents of a BLOODY PURSE.

A BEATEN WOMAN lies sobbing on the ground by some trash cans.

SKINHEAD #1

You took the credit cards last time.

Then, suddenly aware of someone else in the alley, they turn to see BRUCE standing over them.

SKINHEAD #2

Looks like it's going to be a good night, boys.

The SKINHEADS descend on BRUCE.

BRUCE

Yes. It does.

BRUCE tears into the SKINHEADS with all the joy of a child at Christmas.

BRUCE punches the SKINHEADS in the face, his father's SIGNET RING crushes flesh against bone, leaving a deep BLOODY MARK.

EXT. EAST END STREET - NIGHT

A greasy junky holds a FAKE PEARL NECKLACE up to his DEALER.

GREASY JUNKY

But that's all I got.

DEALER

Then you'll have to go get something else. Won't you?

PAY-PHONE rings. The DEALER answers

BRUCE appears behind the drug DEALER at his PAY-PHONE.

DEALER

Can't you see I'm doing business here?
Wait your turn.

BRUCE

I'm done waiting.

BRUCE grabs the DEALER'S HEAD by the hair and SLAMS IT--

BASH-BASH-BASH

--into the METAL PAY-PHONE.

BRUCE

Welcome to my war.

The dealer slides to the ground.

BRUCE walks off. His FAKE SCAR hangs half off his cheek.
The is sun just beginning to peek over the worn rooftops.

INT. BRUCE WAYNE'S APARTMENT - MORNING

BRUCE sleeps.

DEEP. SOUND. RESTFUL.

A comforted smile teases the edges of his lips.

INT. LA BONNE MAISON - EVENING

ANN and GORDON enjoy a nice dinner together in one of
Gotham's finest restaurants, white linen, tuxedo-ed waiters.

ANN

To my Super Cop.

GORDON

To the most beautiful woman in Gotham.

Clink.

GORDON

Things are going to be different, baby.
I feel it. SHIT!

ANN

What it is honey?

GORDON

I don't believe it.

GORDON watches as Commissioner LOEB and Emilio ESTRADA are
lead to a private dining room along with several scantily
clad, exotic-looking women. ESTRADA hands the maitre'd a
hundred dollar bill.

His face is an emotionless mask, perfectly smooth and featureless, the result of a compulsive addiction to cosmetic surgery.

ANN

Who IS that with Commissioner Loeb. He looks like a zombie.

GORDON stands up and starts dumping bills on the table.

ANN

JIM? What's the matter, honey?

GORDON drags wife from the restaurant.

EXT. SIDEWALK OUTSIDE LA BONNE MAISON - EVENING

GORDON is livid.

GORDON

I can't believe he's so blatant.

ANN

Who? What's the matter?

GORDON

Christ! Don't you read the papers?
That's was Emilio ESTRADA.

(air quotes)

"Gotham's Golden Pimp?" Harvey Dent had him up on charges 6 months ago? Now he's eating at La Bonne Maison with your Police Commissioner. OK? That's what's the MATTER.

ANN, hurt, jerks her hand free and walks ahead.

GORDON realizes he's crossed the line. He's pissed at himself for scaring his wife. He lashes out and KICKS a nearby trash can.

GORDON

Dammit!

GORDON jogs to catch up and gently takes ANN's arm.

ANN

I'm your wife, not some rookie cop you can treat any old way you want.

GORDON

I'm sorry I snapped at you.

(sighs)

Look. Those are BRUTAL and VICIOUS men. And they are making this city a bad place to live, to raise OUR son.

GORDON (CONT'D)

It's just, I don't know what to do. I get angry. I get angry for US. For the BABY.

ANN

(touches his cheek)

I know. But what can you do? You're just one man. You can't carry the whole city on you back.

GORDON

There is something I CAN do. I can go over their heads. I can go to the Mayor.

ANN

Is that safe?

GORDON

(shakes head)

No.

GORDON puts his coat over ANN's shoulders, they walk off.

INT. BRUCE WAYNE'S APARTMENT - EVENING

BRUCE writes a letter--

BRUCE (V.O.)

October 12. Dear Father, it's working. I've engaged the enemy, made progress. But I've only struck at their front line, the grunts. Tonight, I start climbing their chain of command.

Then BRUCE opens a binder full of meticulous notes, drawings, charts, and reports. He turns to a STREET MAP marked with red 'x's and scowls at it.

EXT. THE COMET LOUNGE, EAST END GOTHAM - NIGHT

This is easily the lowest ranking drinking establishments in Gotham. Most of the bar's patrons originate from the Gotham City Corrections Facility located directly across the street.

Flickering neon sign: "First beer free with release papers."

BRUCE watches from a doorway as newly released prisoners make a bee-line from the jail into the COMET LOUNGE.

BRUCE steps over a pair of drunks on the sidewalk and into--

INT. THE COMET LOUNGE - NIGHT

The place emanates PURE MENACE.

The patrons consist of doomed addicts hunkered over their drinks, deflated whores and working-class thugs with overly attentive eyes. MURDER seems an everyday occurrence.

BRUCE takes a table away from the sodden trio on the stage accompanying a floor show of TRANSVESTITE singers and dancers who double as waitresses.

Once seated, BRUCE is visited by a flock of waitresses, and waiters. They sit on his lap, rub up against him, play with his hair.

TRANSVESTITE #1

And what have we here?

TRANSVESTITE #2

Ooh, big.

WAITER

Honey, you want a private show?

TRANSVESTITE #1

Hey, back off. I saw him first.

WAITRESS

Can I get you something?

BRUCE

Beer.

TRANSVESTITE #1

See those little doors over there? For \$50 I'll blow your mind.

BRUCE

No thanks.

WAITER

Be don't want what you got, skank.

BRUCE

You don't have what I'm looking for either.

BRUCE stuffs small bills in their sagging bras. The money attracts attention.

TRANSVESTITE #2

Come on baby, I can cheer you up.

BRUCE

I doubt it.

The waitress returns with a beer.

WAITRESS

That will be \$2, honey.

BRUCE pulls out a HUGE ROLL OF BILLS and peels off a FIFTY.

BRUCE

Keep it.

The waitress registers FEAR at the sight of all that money.

She barely has her money before more than a dozen THUGS set upon BRUCE from all angles with KNIVES, CLUBS, BOTTLES and POOL QUEUES.

BRUCE JUMPS TO HIS FEET. The table, chair, and transvestites tumble to the ground.

The FIRST GUY swings a POOL QUEUE baseball bat style.

BRUCE ducks under it and--

CRONCH

--comes up with a knee into the guy's groin.

The SECOND GUY gets an elbow to the nose.

The THIRD, FOURTH and FIFTH GUYS move in together.

BRUCE drops those three with a series of vicious rabbit-punches to their faces-- POP, POP, POP.

But it's with numbers six through 16 that he runs into trouble. They work as a team and surround BRUCE.

The first one smashes BRUCE with a chair--

Then, another clocks him in the head with a whiskey bottle--

And a third belts him in the jaw with brass knuckles.

BRUCE staggers back. The men descend and beat him to the ground.

We lose sight of BRUCE under a rain of KICKS, PUNCHES, BOTTLES and SWINGING POOL QUEUES. Then suddenly BRUCE--

EXPLODES

--through the ATTACKERS, line-backer style, sending them sprawling.

He breaks across the room and through a door marked 'EXIT.'

The room goes silent--

beat.

--then breaks into laughter.

BRUCE has cornered himself inside the--

INT. WOMEN'S BATHROOM, THE COMET LOUNGE - NIGHT

The small, dirty room has no windows. The only other doors open onto toilet stalls and a cleaning closet full of mops, buckets and CLEANING SUPPLIES.

BRUCE (V.O.)

It was almost a stupid death--

Then his eyes fall on the CLEANING SUPPLIES.

BRUCE (V.O.)

--were it not for your birthday gifts,
those chemistry sets I so loved.

BRUCE rifles through the chemicals.

BRUCE (V.O.)

Ammonia, borax, bleach, peroxide, baking
soda. Thank you, Father.

BRUCE grabs a PLASTIC JUG and dumps hand fulls of BORAX and BAKING SODA into it, topping it off with a blast of DRY-PROPELLANT from a fire extinguisher.

Outside the door in--

INT. THE COMET LOUNGE - NIGHT

The men taunt him.

ATTACKER ONE

When you're done powdering your nose, can
I have a free date?

ATTACKER TWO

Don't forget to wash your titties.

Meanwhile, inside--

INT. WOMEN'S BATHROOM, THE COMET LOUNGE - NIGHT

BRUCE picks the TOILET CAKE out of a filthy toilet and shatters it against the porcelain sink. He drops that into the PLASTIC JUG and starts mixing liquids in an empty BEER BOTTLE-- AMMONIA, BLEACH, PEROXIDE.

BRUCE stabs the PLASTIC JUG with a SCREW DRIVER while outside the door in --

INT. THE COMET LOUNGE - NIGHT

The men, now done with their taunting, approach the door--

INT. WOMEN'S BATHROOM, THE COMET LOUNGE - NIGHT

BRUCE holds the PLASTIC JUG in one hand and the BEER BOTTLE in the other. HE takes a deep breath and dumps the liquid into the PLASTIC JUG --

INT. THE COMET LOUNGE - NIGHT

Suddenly the door BURSTS OPEN.

A tattered and beaten BRUCE stands holding the PLASTIC JUG.

He tosses the PLASTIC JUG at a thug but it misses and slides under the pool tables--

BRUCE

It's over. You people should get out of here.

(beat)

It isn't safe.

The THUG whips out a LONG SCALLOPED KNIFE and comes at BRUCE.

THUG WITH KNIFE

Let's see what you had for lunch.

Under the pool table the PLASTIC JUG BUBBLES AND STEAMS. The men raise their pool queues and encircle BRUCE.

BRUCE

Have it your way.

BRUCE jerks a neon beer advertisement off the wall as he leaps up onto a pool table.

The sign *shatters*.

SPARKS SHOWER DOWN

WHOOSH!

The LOW-LYING GASSES go up in BLUE-HOT FLAMES.

Every man standing on the floor collapses in agony-- pants on fire, legs scorched.

BRUCE casually steps from his pool table onto the bar--

BRUCE

Gentlemen, thank you for the dance.

-- walks down the bar and hops out the front door.

INT. BRUCE WAYNE'S APARTMENT - MORNING

A badly beaten BRUCE finishes his letter with a bruised face and a black eye swollen almost shut.

BRUCE (V.O.)

Tonight I learned that I am nothing more than a LUCKY AMATEUR. To climb the ladder of crime, I will need protection, weapons, technique. I need to cultivate an advantage if I'm to take my war up the ladder of crime to the bosses, to the GENERALS. But what should that advantage be, Father. How will I find it? Your loving son, Bruce.

BRUCE finishes the letter, folds it, puts it into an envelope and stamps it. He looks at it for a moment then adds it to a CARDBOARD SHIPPING BOX with hundreds just like it.

INT. MAYOR NOONE'S OFFICE - DAY

Mayor Noone greets GORDON at the door to his gilded, wood-panelled office.

NOONE

I hear you have some disturbing news regarding the East End precinct detective Gordon.

GORDON

Yes, sir. I'm afraid so.

NOONE

First let me say how impressed I am that you've come forward. I know how hard these situations can be. I want you to know I admire your bravery and integrity. We need more men like you on the force.

GORDON

Thank you sir. I'm not trying to be a hero or anything. It's just that-- well things are out of control.

NOONE

Of course, I understand. Have a seat. Now tell me everything. Why did you come to my office? It's not the normal route. Why bypass internal affairs?

GORDON

I believe the problem goes beyond the East End precinct, far higher. I've seen the money, been offered bribes-- almost forced to take them.

NOONE

I see.

GORDON

I can name names. I am willing to testify. I believe my current notoriety with the news media makes this the perfect time to bring this matter to the public. If we hold a press conference--

NOONE

(interrupting)

Whoah, slow down, Jim. I'm afraid it's not as simple as that. We have to be very careful how we present our case. Now who have you told about what you know? Who knows you've contacted me?

GORDON

No one. I mean besides my wife. I don't know what sort of repercussions I'd face if they knew I was here.

NOONE

Good. The fewer people who know the better. You may be in serious danger if these corrupt officers knew we were working together.

GORDON

Yeah. OK. What do you want me to do?

NOONE

For now, I'll see what I can do on my end. I want you to lay low, act normal. I'll contact you when it's time for us to make our move.

GORDON

But sir, there has to be something I can do to help us prepare our case. At least I can document what I see.

NOONE

Do nothing to jeopardize your safety. Keep clear of the officers involved. Let them think it's business as usual in Gotham while we work up a plan of action.

GORDON

(nods)

OK.

NOONE

(stands and offers hand)

Good. You'll see, we'll get these guys.

NOONE sees GORDON to the door.

INT. GOTHAM PUBLIC LIBRARY - DAY

BRUCE brings a huge pile of books to the busy young LIBRARIAN at the checkout counter.

LIBRARIAN

Understanding Ballistics, Improvised
Munitions, Explosives: Step By Step,
Guerrilla Warfare, Neurochemistry, Thrown
Weapons Handbook, 101 Sucker Punches
(laughs)
Looks like you're starting a war.

BRUCE says nothing.

She looks up for the first time, sees his bruised face.

LIBRARIAN

You know what? Why don't you just take
these. You look trust worthy. Bring
them back whenever you like.

The LIBRARIAN slowly backs away from the counter.

EXT. GOTHAM PUBLIC LIBRARY - DAY

BRUCE leaves with his arms full of books.

BRUCE (V.O.)

November 15. Dear Father, I am ready for
the next level. I realize now violence
alone is not enough. I must become a
detective, a scientist, a scholar of
crime.

BRUCE dumps the books into the Al and Son Garage truck.

INT. ARMY/NAVY STORE - DAY

BRUCE shops: AMMO BELTS, HUNTING KNIFES with boot sheath,
COMBAT BOOTS, BINOCULARS.

BRUCE (V.O.)

I will need tools to give me an edge.

BRUCE holds up a heavy HELMET DEVICE with wires sticking out.

EXT. HARDWARE STORE - DAY

BRUCE wheels a shopping cart out of a MEGA-BOX STORE to his
TRUCK. There he loads his purchases into the back: SPRAY
PAINT, SAW, TIN SNIPS, RAZORS, DUCT TAPE, INDUSTRIAL GLUE.

BRUCE (V.O.)

I will no longer rely on strength alone.

BRUCE starts the TRUCK.

INT. SPORTING GOODS STORE - DAY

A CLERK eyes BRUCE warily as he charges through the place, looking everything over. BRUCE holds up a white FIELD HOCKEY MASK. Glares at it.

BRUCE (V.O.)

Father, I can feel myself TRANSFORMING.

At the checkout counter, THE CLERK stares numbly as across the counter slide a GOALIE'S MASK, a PADDED GLOVES, SHIN GUARDS, and a bright-red catcher's CHEST PROTECTOR.

CLERK

Credit or debit, dude?

BRUCE

Cash. Keep the change.

BRUCE slaps a wad of TWENTIES on the counter.

EXT. EAST END PARKING LOT, BEHIND MEGAMART - NIGHT

GORDON pulls up to a small gang of young GANG MEMBERS slinging DRUGS from the parking lot.

THEY SCATTER.

GORDON steers to block the escape of one GANG MEMBER, O'NEIL.

GORDON

Hey, O'NEIL! O'NEIL! Come here. I ain't going to do nothing. I just want to talk to you.

O'NEIL

I'm paid up man. Right on time.

GORDON

I know. I know. Get in.

O'NEIL gets into the passenger side.

GORDON

Things going OK down here these days?

O'NEIL

(suspicious)

Yeah.

GORDON
Officer CRAMDEN been taking care of you?

O'NEIL
What is this?

GORDON
Think of it as quality control. We just want to make sure you're getting everything you're paying for. A happy drug dealer is a profitable drug dealer. So you're up to, what, \$200 a week now.

O'NEIL
\$250 papa, and I still get the Mexicans biting into my turf. I told CRAMDEN, he said he'd take care of it but he spends all his time sampling the merchandise down at the LAB.

GORDON
The lab, huh?

O'NEIL
Yeah, he's over there PARTYING while them Mexicans are out slinging product by MY Doughnut King.

GORDON
That so?

O'NEIL
(cocky)
YEAH. That's SO. And I want to know what you're going to DO about it.

GORDON
Oh, I know just how to take of this situation.

GORDON grabs O'NEIL and SMASHES his face into the dashboard.

GORDON
Take me to the lab.

GORDON jams the dealer's head under the dash and cuffs him.

EXT. RUNDOWN WAREHOUSE DISTRICT - NIGHT

GORDON puts the car in park and watches a low-slung warehouse. Suspicious looking men stand outside.

GORDON (V.O.)
Corruption Log, day six. Despite the mayor's advice, I am finding it harder and harder to remain a quiet observer.

GORDON, and the cuffed O'NEIL, drives off.

INT. POLICE PRECINCT HOUSE, BOOKING STATION - LATER

Jail cells line the walls of the large room. The prisoners, cocky and defiant, taunt the police and laugh. They call the cops PUSSIES and FAGGOTS.

GORDON shoves the bruised, O'NEIL, into the BOOKING STATION.

GORDON (V.O.)

I've transcribed testimony from one Trey O'NEIL, appendix 17, describing the officer Jonathan CRAMDEN as an enforcer for East End drug dealers.

GORDON drags O'NEIL to the BOOKING STATION amid ANGRY STARES from the other officers present--

GORDON (V.O.)

I am playing a dangerous game. These men are serious. But I will not sit by any longer. I can't. I have a son to think about now.

--including one officer with the name "CRAMDEN" stitched into his uniform.

INT. BRUCE WAYNE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

BRUCE reads a recipe from the Anarchist's Handbook and mixes a tar-like substance on his scarred and blackened STOVE.

BRUCE (V.O.)

October 29. Dear Father, I will be as devious as my enemy.

Chemistry projects BUBBLE on every burner.

BRUCE very carefully pours yellow liquid into a glass vial.

BRUCE (V.O.)

I will learn his tricks.

He draws a milky substance from a Pyrex beaker into a vicious looking SYRINGE.

BRUCE fires a COPPER WIRE out of a BLACK TUBE.

BRUCE (V.O.)

I will follow his lead.

BRUCE carries a frying pan caked in GRAY GOO out into the Junkyard. He puts it on a pile of car parts.

Inserts a fuse, LIGHTS IT, and gets away fast--

BLAM!

--a huge EXPLOSION lights the night sky and sends debris flying in all directions.

BRUCE (V.O.)

I will show them no mercy. Your loving son, Bruce.

BRUCE smiles at the smoking crater. .

INT. GOTHAM JUSTICE BUILDING GARAGE - NIGHT

GORDON's footsteps echo through the empty garage. He puts his key in the car door then, turns at a SOUND.

A baseball bat drags across the concrete FLOOR.

GORDON pivots as more BASEBALL BATS approach from every direction.

Shadowed figures surround GORDON.

FLASS

You know the ORDERS, dudes. Just enough to keep him out of the HOSPITAL. And out of the PAPERS. We don't want no TROUBLE for our HERO COP making it into the PAPERS.

A baseball bat SLAMS into GORDON'S SIDE.

WIDER

SILHOUETTES as a DOZEN MEN swing BASEBALL BATS at the helpless GORDON.

He doesn't have a chance against the bastards.

When they finish, he's lying on the ground BLEEDING.

FLASS

This is just a warning. Wouldn't want your pretty wife to get hurt because of your stubbornness, Jimmy.

FLASS drops his BLACK AND YELLOW BASEBALL BAT on GORDON.

They leave, laughing and DRAGGING BATS on the concrete floor.

Slowly, GORDON gets to his feet and heads home to the--

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE GORDON'S APARTMENT - LATER

GORDON drags his battered body slowly down the hall to his door. He enters.

ANN (O.S.)

{screams}

Oh my god, JIM!

The door swings shut.

INT. CHOP-SHOP, EAST END - NIGHT

BRUCE enters a large, dirty GARAGE where young men dismantle expensive SPORTS CARS.

BRUCE (V.O.)

November 2. Dear Father, you always told me, if a job is difficult, then I'm using the wrong tools. Today I test that theory.

All eyes fall on the tall stranger as he flings open his long OVERCOAT.

He's wearing the brightly colored SPORTS GEAR under his coat and the CATCHER'S MASK under his wide-brimmed hat.

BRUCE

Put these on.

He tosses a pile of HANDCUFFS on a work bench.

The thieves, STUNNED for a moment, break out laughing.

They attack with the tools of their trade-- BUTANE TORCHES, CUTTERS, HAMMERS.

BRUCE takes a terrible beating but he gives back at least twice what he's getting.

Until an UNDER-BOSS pulls out a GUN.

BRUCE SLAMS a handful of GLASS VIALS into the gunman's chest.

WHITE PHOSPHOROUS EXPLOSIONS blinds the would be shooter, burns his clothes and face.

BRUCE

OK, that's enough fun for now.

BRUCE throws another hand-full of VIALS at the criminals--

POP, POP, POP-- The men instantly fall to their hands and knees vomiting as BRUCE makes his exit.

EXT. ALLEY BEHIND THE CHOP-SHOP - MOMENTS LATER

BRUCE'S catcher's mask FLIES through the air and SHATTERS against stone WALL.

BRUCE (V.O.)

Too much protection, just slowed me down.

The chest protector slips into a dumpster.

INT. BRUCE WAYNE'S APARTMENT - LATER

BRUCE, naked, SEWS STITCHES INTO HIS STOMACH with a NEEDLE AND THREAD.

DEEP CUTS on his back ooze blood, they're stitched up only as far around as he can reach.

BRUCE (V.O.)

I have the tools but not the methodology.
Something is still missing, Father. I
need an edge, an advantage--

ON THE TV--

Under the words SPECIAL REPORT--

TV NEWS ANCHOR, BRIAN

Criminals are a superstitious and
cowardly lot. It's obvious this
vigilante is trying to scare and
intimidate with violence.

TV NEWS CO-ANCHOR, JANE

That's Right BRIAN, the vigilante marks
his victims with a wound shaped like a
BAT. An obvious reference to the occult.

They show victims with MARKS ON THEIR FACES.

BRUCE looks at his father's SIGNET RING and picks something
(a piece of flesh?) out of it with the SEWING NEEDLE.

The TV shows a scared MUGGER in Gotham Prison's Hospital.

MUGGER

I make a few MISTAKES and I get THIS! I
get MARKED! People won't even TALK to
me! I been MARKED by the BAT!

TV NEWS ANCHOR, BRIAN

But you know, JANE, not everyone thinks
the vigilante is the bad guy here. A lot
of Gotham's common citizens are happy to
see those people get what they deserve.

TV NEWS CO-ANCHOR, JANE

Thanks for that report, BRIAN. Up next,
THE BAT-MAN Vigilante: Friend or Foe?

BRUCE (V.O.)

Yes Father. Now I see. Thank you. Your loving son, Bruce.

BRUCE looks over at the pile of supplies left over from his shopping spree.

BRUCE SMILES WIDE.

He's missing all his front teeth.

INT. COMMISSIONER LOEB'S OFFICE - THE NEXT DAY

Mayor NOONE storms into LOEB's office. He's pissed.

MAYOR NOONE

Loeb, what the hell is going on here? Police officers beaten in the precinct parking garage? This is an officer who has come to me with serious accusations against this department. How do you think that looks?

LOEB

Mayor, sit down.

The mayor sits.

LOEB

You should leave this to me, Frank.

MAYOR NOONE

But Gillian, our operations. He knows too much, and he isn't backing off. Maybe we should slow things down. If he goes to the press--

LOEB

(interrupts)

And maybe you need to remember who's running this show. I'll say when we slow things down, which will be NEVER, AND how we handle Gordon.

MAYOR NOONE

He was at my office again. Said he's making a file documenting what he knows. I tried to get it but he wouldn't hand it over. He's a loose cannon. There's no telling what he might do.

LOEB

Don't you worry, Frank. I'm putting Gordon where he can't do any harm.

LOEB smiles.

INT. BRUCE WAYNE'S APARTMENT - DAY

BRUCE cuts a HOCKEY MASK in half and spray-paints it black along with the AMMO BELT, the GROIN PROTECTOR and KNIFE.

He paints a pair of STEEL DENTURES white.

BRUCE (V.O.)

November 6. Dear Father, it's all coming together. I can feel it.

BRUCE welds a familiar but primitive BAT LOGO into a pair of brass knuckles. He tries them on over a pair of HEAVY LEATHER GLOVES with razor blades fitted into the side-seams.

BRUCE (V.O.)

I have everything I need.

BRUCE fills the ammo belt with: ROPE, DUCT TAPE, LOCK PICK SET, dangerous looking STUN GRENADES--

BRUCE (V.O.)

All the pieces are falling into place.

--SYRINGES labeled stimulant, pain killer, truth serum, fear toxin--

BRUCE (V.O.)

Everything is changed. I am reborn.

--SMOKE BOMBS, also home made and dangerous looking--

BRUCE (V.O.)

I will show them no mercy.

--THROWING KNIVES, PEPPER SPRAY, SMELLING SALTS, TAPE RECORDER, BINOCULARS, SEWING KIT, and SUPER-GLUE.

BRUCE (V.O.)

Father, you will have your revenge!

LEATHER GLOVES - click - the AMMO BELT around his waist.

INT. COMMISSIONER LOEB'S OFFICE - DAY

GORDON stands at attention before LOEB's huge, walnut desk. He's swollen and bruised.

GORDON

You wanted to see me, sir?

LOEB

Yes, Gordon. I heard about the unfortunate incident the other day.

LOEB (CONT'D)

Funny, you'd think a trained police officer would have no problem with thugs in the precinct garage.

GORDON

Yes, you would.

LOEB is taken back. Was that some kind of jab? He continues.

LOEB

I'm reassigning you.

GORDON suppresses a smile, hopeful.

LOEB

The press has its panties in a bunch, asking questions, hounding me.

LOEB enjoys it, draws it out.

LOEB

And because you seem to need a, um, SAFER environment. I'm putting you on THE BAT-MAN vigilante case.

GORDON scowls. Pure rage.

INT. GORDON'S APARTMENT - THAT NIGHT

GORDON pounds on an old TYPEWRITER at the kitchen table. MARLBOROS overflow an ash tray. ANN stands behind him in a nightgown, hands on his shoulders.

ANN

Honey, can't this wait?

GORDON

This file is my only chance. They put me on THE BAT-MAN case to get rid of me. I can't let Loeb push me aside that easily. I've got to compile the evidence the mayor needs to take them down.

ANN

OK, honey. But come to bed soon.

She gives him a kiss and leaves. GORDON resumes typing.

GORDON (V.O.)

Section fourteen: Commissioner Loeb. Based on interviews and my direct contact with the commissioner, I believe it is possible the commissioner's involvement goes far deeper than the kickback slush fund. Loeb may be CONTROLLING all organized crime in Gotham City.

GORDON (V.O.) (CONT'D)

As of now these allegations are mere speculation. I don't have the resources to pursue that line of inquiry.

GORDON sighs, lights another MARLBORO and goes back to work.

INT. GOTHAM JUSTICE BUILDING, BASEMENT - MORNING

GORDON walks down dark stairs, along a long corridor, down more stairs, past dripping pipes, through a door, down another hallway with flickering lights, to the door to--

INT. GORDON'S NEW OFFICE - MORNING

On the walls hang maps with numbered pins, police sketches of THE BAT-MAN and photos of the MARKS on victims' faces.

As GORDON enters, a young police officer, MERKEL, jumps up.

MERKEL

Good morning, sir. Three more came in last night sir.

GORDON

Let me guess, we'll find all of them in the prison wing at Gotham Mercy.

MERKEL

Yup. All three, admitted last night.

GORDON

We better hit the road then. I can get my coffee on the way.

GORDON leaves. MERKEL runs after him pulling on his coat.

INT. GOTHAM MEMORIAL HOSPITAL, SECURITY WARD - LATER

GORDON and MERKEL meet Dr. Wallace as they pass through security. They talk as they walk through the busy ward.

Everywhere beaten men lie cuffed to hospital beds. Some in traction, or horrible looking braces. Almost all bear the MARK OF THE BAT.

GORDON

Morning doctor. I hear you have a few more guests for us to talk to.

DR. WALLACE

MERKEL. Gordon. Your lacerations seem to be healing nicely.

GORDON

(ignoring the remark)

So what do you have for us today?

DR WALLACE

Couple guys from a electronics store heist. Broken clavicle, some ribs, dislocated shoulder, concussion and about 12 hours surgery between 'em.

GORDON

And the other one?

DR. WALLACE

A pusher from Stillmore Heights. He'll need some Dental work and he took about 75 stitches but he's OK. We have him in isolation if you want to talk to him.

GORDON

Yeah?

DR. WALLACE

Seems he was made to eat his own product. We've had to keep him away from the general population.

The doctor stops to inspect the chart for a man in bandages.

GORDON

(to MERKEL)

Do you notice anything about these men?

MERKEL

You mean the mark of the bat?

GORDON

No, I'm talking about their spirit. These men are broken. Scared.

MERKEL looks around, HE'S RIGHT! Some of the criminals are even crying.

Just then the doctor opens a door for the cops.

DR. WALLACE

Here's your drug dealer.

In the corner of the padded room cowers the former shell of a once-tough street pusher. His haunted eyes are framed by stitched-up wounds that still very much resemble a bat.

INT. HARVEY DENT'S OFFICE - LATER

Harvey DENT opens a door bearing the words, 'HARVEY DENT, ASSISTANT DISTRICT ATTORNEY' for GORDON

The two men enter together. GORDON carries a note pad.

DENT

You're kidding me! I'm THE BAT-MAN vigilante? My wife will love this.

GORDON

Hey, you're young, you work out. And I've seen your record. You have no love of organized crime. I saw the ESTRADA trial on TV.

DENT

Yeah, well he's still on the streets, isn't he. If I was the vigilante, ESTRADA would be making license plates right now, not running Gotham's prostitution racket.

GORDON

Yeah, it must be FRUSTRATING.

(flipping through notes)

You know, ESTRADA's operation has been hit quite a few times. A detective was even killed at one of his brothels.

DENT

I heard. Detective CAMPBELL. No big loss for the department from what I understand.

GORDON smiles at that.

GORDON

Yeah, well I have a list of dates and times. I'd like you to account for your whereabouts.

DENT

(takes the list)

Sorry detective, I was in DC at a convention for three of these dates and my wife will tell you I was home with her for most of the rest. I'm not your BAT-MAN. Wish I was but I'm not.

GORDON

No you don't. He's a dangerous psychopath. And when I catch him, he's going down hard.

DENT

I'm surprised to hear you say that Gordon. I hear you're one of few remaining good cops on the force.

GORDON

Oh Christ, not you too. You of all people should know, we live in a society of laws. This guy isn't a hero. He thinks he's above the law. He's a terrorist. Plain and simple.

GORDON lights another MARLBORO.

INT. UPHOLSTERY DISTRICT CATHOUSE - NIGHT

SELINA and HOLLY now live in a large warehouse divided by plywood into dozens of small rooms for prostitutes. Their cubicle sports a sagging bed and a gaudy pink paint-job. The ceiling is chicken wire.

Hundreds of voices-- arguing, copulating, flirting-- fill the cavernous space around and above their cubicle.

Selina wears a blonde wig.

It's dinner time. SELINA: Tuna from a can, HOLLY: Pizza.

HOLLY

SELINA, I don't like it here.

SELINA

Sssh. Keep your voice down. I'm Mistress Kitty now. You have to remember that. No one can know who we are.

HOLLY

I'm sorry.

SELINA

Look, I don't like it any better than you, OK? But I've got an idea. We can change things-- for real this time.

HOLLY

What are you going to do?

SELINA

I'm going to take a little something back from those bastards. I'm going to make them pay.

HOLLY

Can't we just leave town, go somewhere where CHI-CHI and the cops can't find us?

SELINA

Come on HOLLY. If it isn't CHI-CHI, it's going to be someone else.

(moves closer to HOLLY)

SELINA (CONT'D)

Now, I've been talking to some of the girls who work down on Franklin street. They say sometimes city limos pick up girls down there for parties. I figure we get a camera--

HOLLY

You're SCARING me.

SELINA

Yeah, well maybe it's TIME we did some scaring.

SELINA finishes her tuna and throws the can to a black cat.

INT. GORDON'S CRAMPED, NEW OFFICE - NIGHT

GORDON smokes a cigarette and watches a small monitor set up on his desk. MERKEL stands behind him with his coat on.

The security tape, CHOPPY and GRAINY, shows the inside of a jewelry store.

Four men climb through a broken window and begin stuffing their pockets with gems.

GORDON

Watch this. He scares the crap out of them.

Suddenly they all jump in surprise.

A dark SHADOWY FIGURE enters the frame. It's THE BAT-MAN but we can't make out exactly what he looks like. To us he's just a big, black hulk.

The men back away, SCARED. THE SHADOWY FIGURE LEAPS ON THEM.

There's a fight but it's over very quickly. The SHADOWY FIGURE leaves the thieves TWITCHING on the floor.

MERKEL

Jesus. The guy is BRUTAL.

GORDON

Yeah. BRUTAL and VICIOUS.

MERKEL

Shouldn't you call it a night?

GORDON

I've still got a little more work to do.

MERKEL

All right. Well. Good night, sir.

MERKEL leaves. GORDON hits rewind.

EXT. GIRLS GALORE PEEPSHOW THEATER - NIGHT

GORDON sits in his parked car between Al and Son's Garage and the CATHOUSE.

CHI-CHI yells at the girls as he hobbles down the steps and gets in his car. A moment later he pulls out.

GORDON stubs out his cigarette and pulls out after him.

From a nearby ROOFTOP a large shadowy silhouette watches them both.

INT. HARVEY DENT'S OFFICE - DAY

GORDON bursts in unannounced.

GORDON

Harvey, I need a favor.

DENT

Good morning to you too, Jim.

GORDON

I need a search warrant.

DENT

You don't need a warrant to search my place, Jim. You're always welcome. Come over tonight and dig through my underwear drawer for a mask and cape.

GORDON

Sorry, you're not a suspect anymore, Harvey. You're just not BAT-MAN material.

DENT

My wife will be so disappointed. She's really into the suit.

GORDON

Yeah, OK. I didn't need to hear that. It's not a BAT-MAN thing, Harvey. I've got a hunch.

DENT

A hunch? Aren't you supposed to stick to THE BAT-MAN case?

GORDON

That's what I need you for. I can't request it myself.

DENT

OK, I'm listening

GORDON

After we spoke, I got to thinking about the CAMPBELL murder. He was killed INSIDE one of ESTRADA's cathouses, just before the vigilante appeared. And ESTRADA's prostitution ring has been hammered by the vigilante.

DENT

So you think ESTRADA can lead you to THE BAT-MAN?

GORDON

Or the other way around. It doesn't matter.

DENT

I still don't get it.

GORDON

Look, I just want to take a look inside one of ESTRADA's warehouses. OK?

DENT

Hey. OK. You got it. I'll put the request in front of Judge Gillen this afternoon. Jim, this BAT-MAN thing is really getting to you, huh?

GORDON

The guy's slippery and he's getting better. Doing bigger and bigger criminals. He's changing his M.O., using a random pattern so we can't catch him. And he's been working on his disguise. It's-- TRANSFORMING.

SMASH CUT:

EXT. ROOFTOPS - NIGHT

A shadow runs across the gravel topped surface, and leaps to the next roof.

Seen from below as a fast, fluttering blur against a cloud-filled night-sky.

He's going from high buildings to lower ones, jumping and rolling into the shadows.

A window opens, a confused person looks out.

CONFUSED PERSON

You see that Harold?

HAROLD (O.S.)

Betty, fershristsake, close the window.
You'll catch your death.

Betty closes the window and gets back to her life.

We follow his progress but have trouble seeing him. We catch a glimpse as he LEAPS from a high building across an alley onto the fire escape on the other side.

Then he's gone over the lip of the roof.

This is THE BAT-MAN's environment, elevator rooms dripping with tar, the water towers, the TV antennas, ABANDONED mattresses, old chairs, cable TV hookup boxes, the crisp night air, alone.

THE BAT-MAN (V.O.)

The new identity changes everything,
Father. I have an edge. I stay off the
streets, work only at night. I stab fear
in their hearts. I HAVE BECOME THEIR
NIGHTMARE!

Then we finally get a good look at THE BAT-MAN decked out in his new threads. He's -- MASSIVE, TERRIFYING, SPECTACULAR.

He stands on the edge of a high roof, silhouetted against a giant full moon, watching an--

EXT. EAST END WAREHOUSE, PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Below GORDON and a bunch of UNIFORMED COPS file out of a warehouse. GORDON balls up a search warrant and throws it into the gutter, DISGUSTED.

The cops drive off moments before CHI-CHI arrives in his car and hobbles on crutches inside the--

INT. EAST END WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

CHI-CHI makes his way through rows of stacked cardboard boxes and rolls of carpet.

Then it's, slowly and painfully, up a flight of wooden stairs to an office, the kind with glass windows overlooking the warehouse and high glass skylights.

In the office, five young men drape themselves over leather sofas, smoking, and throwing potato chips at a group of young, malnourished women who cower on the floor.

SANCHEZ, an older, fat man, sits behind a desk on the phone.

SANCHEZ

(into the phone)

They just left. Yeah, they had a warrant. Bunch of pusses. I told them they're house cleaners. Hey, what can they do? The girls have papers.

Nobody greets CHI-CHI as he enters, no one offers him a seat.

SANCHEZ

Yeah, they look good too. No I got the Russian ones. Oh yeah? No shit? The shipment from Honk Kong or the Mainland? Well I hope they're as good as these.

SANCHEZ hangs up.

SANCHEZ

So, CHI-CHI. Leg still hurt?

CHI-CHI

Well sometimes when it's wet out I get this--

SANCHEZ

(interrupting)

No one cares. What's our take for the week?

CHI-CHI

We did OK.

CHI-CHI crutches over and puts a yellow paper bag from a department store on SANCHEZ's desk.

SANCHEZ

(looks in the bag)

OK? What the hell is OK? We don't pay you for OK. We want good. We want great. We want freaking excellent out of you!

CHI-CHI

There's been problems lately. Business is off. This vigilante is keeping the joints away. He's got everyone scared to--

CRASH!

A shower of glass drops from an overhead skylight.

THE BAT-MAN lands on SANCHEZ' desk.

A terrifying demon of the night-- Pure menace.

THE BAT-MAN

Gentlemen, I'm here to ask you a few questions.

The men are stunned-- paralyzed by fear until SANCHEZ pulls an UZI from a holster and fires--

BREKKK

-- a volley at THE BAT-MAN.

BUT HE'S GONE.

The bullets strike CHI-CHI in the CHEST. HE GOES DOWN.

THE BAT-MAN is in the air, he somersaults over the men on the sofas.

Smoke Bombs fly from his fingers.

POP. POP. POP. POP.

Then it's all shadows and confusion.

Guns fire-- Bam. Bam. Bam.

Bones CRACK.

People SCREAM.

Guns click, click, click empty.

Finally a body smashes through the plate glass onto the warehouse floor. A chimney effect takes place. The smoked, no longer trapped, is quickly sucked out the broken skylight, leaving THE BAT-MAN and SANCHEZ the lone people on two feet.

SANCHEZ, in shock, clicks his empty gun.

The women break for the door and scatter into the night.

A man clutches his throat and writhes on the desk.

Without ever removing his eyes from SANCHEZ, THE BAT-MAN draws a knife and jabs it into the choking man's throat.

Instant tracheotomy.

The man can breathe, he slides, relieved, to the floor.

THE BAT-MAN

Now then, where is your boss.

THE BAT-MAN grabs SANCHEZ by the head with both hands

THE BAT-MAN

Where is ESTRADA?

SANCHEZ

Down-- docks-- new girls-- shipment

THE BAT-MAN throws SANCHEZ to the floor.

SMASH CUT:

EXT. DARK STREETS - NIGHT

A black on black LINCOLN CONTINENTAL drives through the bleak, barren streets of Gotham at BREAK-NECK SPEED.

It is no ordinary LINCOLN CONTINENTAL -- It's the BAT-MOBILE.

Its windows are tinted opaque. Heavy, steel bumper modifications have been welded to the chassis. The hood has been chopped back to make room for the super-charged school bus engine that powers it.

And it drives without headlights, LIKE A CAR POSSESSED, reckless and demonic.

INT. 6-STORY WAREHOUSE, NEAR GOTHAM DOCK - MOMENTS LATER

Armed guards playing cards at a table.

At the service entrance a guy draws back the peep hole in a reenforced steel door just as--

CLANG!

The door FLIES OFF ITS HINGES and skids, sparking across the parking lot on a chain behind the BAT-MOBILE.

The guards rush outside, guns at the ready. The LINCOLN CONTINENTAL does a skidding 180 dragging the heavy door. The BAT-MAN accelerates, then stomps the brakes. The heavy STEEL DOOR flies past him SMASHING into the guards.

Meanwhile, attracted by the noise. More armed men rush down the staircase.

Enter THE BAT-MAN--

THE BAT-MAN

Two options: Tonight you men can go to prison or to the prison hospital, the choice is yours.

The first goon to recover LEVELS A SHOTGUN.

THE BAT-MAN throws a VICIOUS KICK to the guy's CROUCH before he can fire.

THE BAT-MAN
That's the one I HOPED you'd pick.

THE BAT-MAN leaps into the fray,

Taloned claws sink into a man's shoulder, he screams as he's
THROWN THROUGH A WINDOW.

Another thug swings a bat.

THE BAT-MAN kicks him in the chest, grabs his bat from mid
air and flings it--

CRUNCH

--into the face of another gunner across the room.

A guy gets the drop on THE BAT-MAN with a machine gun.

THE BAT-MAN (V.O.)
There are seven working defenses from
this position. Three of them disarm with
minimal contact. Three of them kill.
The other just H-U-R-T-S!

CRACK!

He throws a MAIMING SIDE-KICK into a guy's hip.

THE BAT-MAN (V.O.)
He's young. Father. He'll probably walk
again. But he'll stay SCARED.

THE BAT-MAN puts a foot between another's shoulder blade and--

CRACK

--JERKS BOTH WRISTS BACK UNTIL THEY CROSS.

THE BAT-MAN (V.O.)
Fear clouds their judgement, makes them
stiff and clumsy.

Guys keep pouring down the stairs.

THE BAT-MAN throws one OVER THE RAIL. Another goes THROUGH A
WINDOW.

THE BAT-MAN (V.O.)
They are like rag dolls to me now. To be
thrown aside and forgotten.

A third gets CRUSHED UNDERFOOT as THE BAT-MAN continues to
climb, floor by floor, to the top.

It's been a tough fight. He's sweated through his clothes, lost his cape but the action only makes him stronger. A GLOW OF EXCITEMENT shines off him.

THE BAT-MAN (V.O.)

There is only one man I am looking for tonight. He's the GENERAL!

And, now, before him ESTRADA tries to muster some composure. He's run out of men to fight for him and stands surrounded by half-starved Asian women with hate in their eyes.

THE BAT-MAN

Ah, ESTRADA. At last we meet face to face. Such as it is. You're coming with me. I have a lot of questions for you.

ESTRADA is backing to the wall in pure fear. THE BAT-MAN's gloved hand covers his eyes. Everything goes DARK.

EXT. 6-STORY WAREHOUSE, NEAR GOTHAM DOCKS - LATER

Close up of a syringe.

The tip makes a dimple in ESTRADA's neck.

THE BAT-MAN

This is Hydro-strychnine-sulfate, you can think of it as a cross between truth serum and the worst acid trip of your life. Makes the stuff they had a Woodstock feel like aspirin.

THE BAT-MAN presses the sinister syringe into ESTRADA's carotid artery.

There's an immediate change in ESTRADA's attitude.

EXT. SIX STORY WAREHOUSE - MORNING

An obviously drugged ESTRADA, duct taped to a 6th floor flag pole, rants loudly.

A few cops stand around looking up at the spectacle.

A crowd has gathered. ESTRADA yells to anyone who will listen--

ESTRADA

We get the girls from over seas. They work for us. Loeb takes money, he runs the show. The trains run on time. Keeps the show on the road. Police say, you do your job, we do your job. No wait. I do my job you pay me. Something like that.

ESTRADA (CONT'D)

We go to parties sometimes. I have a nice car.

CORRUPT COP

(to a junior cop)

Cut him down before someone hears him.

The cop cuts him down and we cut forward to--

INT. GOTHAM JUSTICE BUILDING, BOOKING DESK - MORNING

GORDON rages at a desk sergeant.

GORDON

This man is a known felon. He's on the MOST WANTED LIST. We have numerous witnesses who heard him confessing to serious racketeering and corruption operations. You can't just let him go!

DESK SERGEANT

He walks. I got my orders.

GORDON

(kicking the desk, hard)

Damn it!

DENT pulls GORDON off.

DENT

Jesus, Jim, calm down. What do you expect, the man was assaulted, drugged, kidnapped. Nothing he says is admissible in court. No sane person will prosecute.

GORDON

Bull. It was Loeb who sprung him to cover his own butt.

GORDON stomps off in a rage.

EXT. THE GOTHAM JUSTICE BUILDING - MORNING

THE BAT-MAN sits in his LINCOLN CONTINENTAL across the street from the police station. In the morning light it looks more like a souped-up limo than a demon car-- ALMOST.

THE BAT-MAN is totally messed up. His clothes hang in tatters. Blood puddles in the foot-well of the car.

He listens to the tapes of ESTRADA's 'confession'--

ESTRADA (V.O.)

(on tape)

Loeb runs the whole thing, uses cops as bagmen to collect and distribute the money.

ESTRADA (V.O.) (CONT'D)

He's into everything, numbers, drugs, girls, guns. You name it, he gets a cut. Hey, you don't look like my mother.

Click.

THE BAT-MAN turns off the machine and looks out his tinted window.

GORDON storms out of the precinct house.

A dazed and rumpled looking ESTRADA (newly released) and FLASS (his releaser) share a smile at GORDON's obvious fury.

THE BAT-MAN (V.O.)

The enemy is everywhere, even HERE. These so called policemen nurture the cancer, they breed it in men like ESTRADA and turn it loose on my streets. It looks like ESTRADA is only another soldier. The real generals live in there.

THE BAT-MAN looks up at the GOTHAM JUSTICE BUILDING and says out loud--

THE BAT-MAN

It's your turn Loeb. I'm coming after YOU.

With a painful effort, THE BAT-MAN puts the car in gear.

THE BAT-MAN (V.O.)

So I must climb higher still. Your loving son, Bruce.

The LINCOLN drives off.

EXT. EAST END SIDEWALK - MORNING

LITTLE AL walks down the same crappy sidewalk as before with his coffees and doughnuts.

EXT. JUNK YARD BEHIND LITTLE AL'S GARAGE - MORNING

LITTLE AL enters a transformed junk yard. Piles of junk have been moved. Rearranged.

LITTLE AL

Bruce?

All around LITTLE AL sees evidence of TARGET PRACTICE, STRANGE DEVICES and SMALL EXPLOSIONS. There's the LINCOLN CONTINENTAL with BLOOD POOLED ON THE SEAT.

He follows BLOOD DROPLETS up the wooden stairs that lead to BRUCE's apartment. The door hangs slightly ajar. LITTLE AL pushes it open and enters.

INT. THE BAT-MAN'S LAIR - MORNING

BRUCE's apartment has been TRANSFORMED into a crime fighting command center.

There's a HUGE FLOW chart describing Gotham's crime organizations, people's names, rank, jobs and police involvement.

Pictures of LOEB and ESTRADA hang from the wall with duct tape. Crime fighting gear lays piled on the tables (and is that CHI-CHI's paper department store bag of money?).

In a series of metal lockers we can see the progression of BRUCE's suits, belts, weapons and disguises. Some broken. Many caked with blood.

LITTLE AL finds THE BAT-MAN lying UNCONSCIOUS ON THE FLOOR.

He's lost a lot of blood.

INT. THE BAT-MAN'S LAIR - HOURS LATER

BRUCE comes around in his bed. His eyes flutter and then snap open. He's momentarily confused.

LITTLE AL sits nearby drinking a coffee.

BRUCE

You . . . didn't call the police?

LITTLE AL

Nope.

BRUCE looks at his bandages. Not a bad job at all.

He tries to sit up. Too painful.

LITTLE AL

Settle down boy, let me tell you something. I seen a lot of people get cut all to pieces in the jungle. And after, I seen even more come home all cut up on the inside. Now, they trained me to heal a man on the outside with bandages and thread. But there ain't nothing anyone can do for those wounds on the inside. You just stay the hell out of the way and hope they sort it out for themselves. I've been wondering when you were going to go off. But this? This is something else.

(beat)

You know it's a lucky thing we're the same blood type.

LITTLE AL holds up his arm. He's got a transfusion hose going from it into BRUCE.

LITTLE AL

We weren't, I'd have HAD to take you to the hospital. And they would have thrown your ass in Arkham Asylum.

INT. ARKHAM ASYLUM - AFTERNOON

GORDON follows an orderly through the large, time-worn Victorian building.

Strange sounds emanate from doors lining the hallways-- WHIMPERING. GIGGLING. SOBBING.

A pair of ORDERLIES pass wheeling a young, very pale man in a straight jacket. He has green-ish hair.

ORDERLY #1

(laughs)

You're joking.

GORDON watches them go by before knocking on an office door marked, "Dr. Patricia Holcomb, MD, Ph.D. Director."

INT. PATRICIA HOLCOMB'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON

Patricia Holcomb is a handsome woman reaching early middle age with all the dignity that could be expected of someone who spends their lives surrounded by the criminally insane.

GORDON

Thank you for seeing me doctor. I'll try not to take up much of your time.

DOCTOR HOLCOMB

Not at all detective. I've been following your vigilante case with some interest. An intriguing mind. I look forward to hosting it, if that's possible.

GORDON

You say that as if you don't think we're going to catch him.

DOCTOR HOLCOMB

I'm not sure you can, not alive anyway. I've read the files you sent over. They describe a man who inhabits a delusional world of great danger and violence.

GORDON

Danger and violence. Sounds about right for the East End.

DOCTOR HOLCOMB

Ah, but this mind inhabits a world more horrible than the East End. A world so threatening and dangerous that it's had to create a new personae, a new IDENTITY to cope.

GORDON

This guy's become a demon in order to fight his demons.

DOCTOR HOLCOMB

Exactly. Now, normally this kind of delusion represents the terminal stage of a suicidal psychosis.

GORDON

He's trying to kill himself?

DOCTOR HOLCOMB

Yes and no. Something is keeping it going. A quest or a mission of some sort. Much like the crusaders in ancient Europe who were capable of great feats by virtue of their belief or faith.

GORDON

You mean flying? X-ray vision?

DOCTOR HOLCOMB

Nothing like that I assure you. More like mothers lifting cars off children during emergencies. Or even monks and Yogis who's faith allows them to do incredible things with their bodies.

GORDON

So how do I catch him before his faith does any more 'great feats' to the citizens of this city?

DOCTOR HOLCOMB

I'm afraid that's your problem Detective. My job is knowing what makes them tick, not what makes them run. I will tell you this though, that mind is starting to enjoy its work. It's capable of anything.

GORDON

Come on doctor, what do I DO? How do I stop him before he kills someone?

DOCTOR HOLCOMB

I suppose you strike at the weaknesses. What is this great delusion protecting?

DOCTOR HOLCOMB (CONT'D)

It didn't just come into being over night. It started long ago with a young boy being terribly, terribly hurt.

GORDON

Huh. Interesting. Thank you doctor.

GORDON stands to go.

EXT. ARKHAM ASYLUM, PARKING LOT - MOMENTS LATER

GORDON, lost in thought, digs for his keys. He's startled by JANET SELLING.

JANET SELLING

Detective Gordon, Detective Gordon. Wait up a second. JANET SELLING, Channel One News. Can I have a word with you?

GORDON

Sorry, I'm in a rush here.

JANET SELLING

It'll only take a second. I want to ask about allegations of corruption in the precinct. I'm hoping you'll corroborate some of the rumors I've been hearing.

GORDON

I really AM in a hurry.

JANET SELLING

A hurry to what, chase a mental case? Doesn't it ANGER you that you've been put out to pasture while all through the department corruption is running rampant.

GORDON SPINS on her, furious. Then catches himself and smiles. SHE GOT HIM.

GORDON

OK, what do you want to know?

SELLING smiles and takes out a note pad.

EXT. GOTHAM JUSTICE BUILDING - NIGHT

THE BAT-MAN climbs up a black iron DRAIN SPOUT in the rain. It's DIRTY, SLIPPERY, DANGEROUS work.

Gotham City spreads out, glittering and twinkling, far below.

INT. GOTHAM JUSTICE BUILDING, LOEB'S OFFICE - NIGHT

LOEB sits in a red leather club chair drinking brandy as Mayor NOONE paces the room.

MAYOR NOONE

You see Channel One News? They just ran a big police corruption story. Someone's talking. It's that damn Gordon, I'm telling you.

LOEB

We're going to have to take drastic measures with that detective. But right now we've got bigger problems. Our friends on the street are making some seriously unhappy noises about this vigilante.

MAYOR NOONE

For Christ's sake Gillian things are slipping into chaos. What's going on around here?

LOEB

I don't know, exactly. For now, our boys on the force are keeping our associates calm. But I'd like to meet face-to-face, let them air their concerns, do a little damage control.

MAYOR NOONE

(smiles)

Sounds like you're talking about one of your parties.

LOEB

Yeah, I talked to ESTRADA he'll bring some girls.

MAYOR NOONE

All his girls are so-- PRISSY.

LOEB

Don't worry, I know you like 'em more, uh, assertive. We'll find you a party favor. I'll see to it myself. And by the way, here.

LOEB tosses a yellow envelope like the one FLASS tried to give to GORDON, only fatter, at the mayor.

LOEB

The precinct guys wanted you to have this.

The mayor flips through it, smiles.

We pan out the window to--

EXT. GOTHAM JUSTICE BUILDING - MOMENTS LATER

A large gargoyle sits hunched on the granite façade of the justice building.

Wrapped in his cape, THE BAT-MAN remains unmoving in the cold, pouring rain. Pigeons walk around on the ledge next to him, cooing and pecking at bird shit and smog fallout.

A wire runs along the ledge leading to a small contact microphone attached to the window. THE BAT-MAN grins.

THE BAT-MAN

(to self)

Oh boy, we've been invited to a party.

He reels in his contact mic.

INT. HARVEY DENT'S OFFICE - MORNING

GORDON bursts in, interrupting. It's becoming a pattern with these two.

DENT

What's up Jim. You look terrible.

GORDON

(paces the room)

My office was ransacked. They were at my apartment too. Broke the locks, tossed the place. They tried to make it look like burglars but I think it was Flass and his crew looking for my file.

DENT

I'm not surprised, after that news story, you're likely to be public enemy number one to those guys. In fact, that file MAY be the only thing keeping you alive at this point.

GORDON

Great, because they FOUND it and they TOOK it.

DENT

Here sit down, have some coffee. You got to get out of town, disappear for a while.

GORDON

Right, I'll go up to a cabin in the woods and die of multiple, accidental hunting gunshot wounds to the back.

DENT

Jesus, calm down Jim. Just take it easy.
There has to be something you can do.

GORDON

Nope. It's business as usual for me. I
play the good soldier, stay low and hunt
for my BAT-MAN.

DENT

They don't want you to catch the
vigilante, they would give you some man-
power if they did. And when you capture
the guy, they're going to crucify you on
the news. This guy's becoming a saint to
some people.

GORDON

He's a terrorist, Harvey. A DANGEROUS
PSYCHOPATH. Who knows how far he'll take
his personal war on crime.

DENT

Yeah, it's really scary to think how far
a guy will go to rid this town of crime.

DENT meant that as a JAB but GORDON missed it.

EXT. FRANKLIN STREET - NIGHT

A limo rolls through the darkened streets. As it passes
nasty, SKANKY whores fly into a frenzy. They desperately
prostrate themselves before the car.

ALL BUT ONE. She's different. Confident and attractive
where the others twitch and vamp, PITIFUL and HORRID.

IT'S SELINA. She's dressed in knee-high black boots, black
leather pants, a leather halter top. She wears her wig and
carries a whip.

INT. THE LIMO - NIGHT

LOEB assesses SELINA.

LOEB

(to the driver)

That one.

And the next thing you know SELINA is inside--

INT. LOEB'S MANSION, MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

LOEB lives in a beautiful, old-world mansion, one of the many
benefits he's received from his long career of graft.

SELINA lies on his FOUR POSTER BED in his tacky mirror-and-silk bedroom.

LOEB

Make yourself at home darling. I have some business to attend to, then I'll introduce you to a good friend of mine. He's eager to meet you.

The moment LOEB leaves, descending the grand staircase, SELINA dumps her purse on the bed-- cuffs, whips, rubber ball and a SMALL CAMERA with a long TRIGGER CORD.

She finds a hiding place for the CAMERA and strings the CORD under the headboard.

Then she casually begins to case the place-- turns over the CERAMICS to read the brand, checks out the SILVER HAIR BRUSH.

She grabs a SATIN PILLOW CASE and fills it with loot.

She peeks through a gilded door it leads to a staircase. Intrigued, SELINA descends to another door that leads to--

INT. LOEB'S PRIVATE STUDY - NIGHT

SELINA cautiously enters the room.

INT. LIVING ROOM, LOEB'S MANSION - NIGHT

Off-duty cops and gangsters party with ESTRADA's exotic-looking whores. Drugs in high piles cover silver platters. ESTRADA talks to FLASS by a lion statue. Beautiful women bear trays with expensive liquor.

LOEB makes his entrance, followed by Mayor NOONE.

LOEB's guests stand as he takes a glass and clinks it.

LOEB

Gentlemen I've brought a guest with me this evening. Mayor NOONE would like to express his gratitude for the civil way you've all conducted your business these last few years. Isn't that right mayor?

MAYOR NOONE

Yes, indeed. I am very grateful for the restraint you've shown by keeping your businesses localized to your own, ah, areas of expertise and I would like to pledge to you all--

LOEB

(interrupting)

All right, fine. Down to business.

LOEB takes a seat in a big leather club chair by the fire.

NOONE looks around for a chair, finds none and wanders over towards the BAR.

But unbeknownst to the party, one more person is in attendance. He's--

EXT. OUTSIDE IN THE BUSHES - NIGHT

THE BAT-MAN has his contact microphone attached to the window of the living room. He listens intently to the conversation taking place inside--

INT. LIVING ROOM, LOEB'S MANSION - NIGHT

LOEB holds forth, the center of attention.

LOEB

Our topic of discussion this evening:
THE BAT-MAN.

A MURMUR goes through the gangsters. While nearby in--

INT. LOEB'S STUDY - NIGHT

SELINA roots around. She checks out STATUES, lifts CARPETS, tosses the odd GOLD CIGAR CLIPPER into her PILLOW CASE.

INT. LIVING ROOM, LOEB'S MANSION - NIGHT

LOEB continues--

LOEB

Gentlemen I know THE BAT-MAN has caused some problems for our operations. But his activities must be kept in proper perspective. He is an annoyance, nothing more. A temporary fly in a very rich ointment.

GANGSTER #1

Are you CRAZY? Do you know how many of my boys that PSYCHO has hospitalized?

GANGSTER #2

It is absolutely preposterous that you would even think about leaving this nut case to ruin our businesses like this. After what he's done to our OPERATIONS.

Meanwhile, SELINA continues to rifle through--

INT. LOEB'S STUDY, LOEB'S MANSION - NIGHT

She's made her way into the DESK DRAWER.

She finds CASH, a SILVER PLATED GUN, a SAFE DEPOSIT BOX KEY.
Some PAPERS grab her attention-- GORDON'S FILES.

She reads a little bit, finally she just dumps the whole drawer, PAPERS and all, into the PILLOW CASE.

INT. LIVING ROOM, LOEB'S MANSION - NIGHT

The arguing continues.

LOEB

Think of the big picture. Sooner or later, we'll get lucky and someone will put a bullet in this nut. Until then, the media love him. He gives the impression that the city is getting safer.

The men, starting to catch his drift, nod.

EXT. OUTSIDE IN THE BUSHES - NIGHT

THE BAT-MAN has heard all he cares to hear.

He's about to crash the party with the HAND GRENADE he holds in his fist-- two inches from his mouth dangles its circular pin.

Suddenly his head snaps to the side. He's heard something that we haven't. He's not at all pleased.

Close up shot of the pin being replaced.

INT. LIVING ROOM, LOEB'S MANSION - NIGHT

The conversation continues.

LOEB

This 'war on crime' forms the perfect cover for our operations. We don't want to jeopardize them now that the money is really starting to pour in.

Shouts and stomping feet interrupt LOEB's appeal.

INT. LOEB'S STUDY - NIGHT

Three armed security guards burst into the room and catch SELINA, red handed trying to pry open a locked cabinet. She's tripped an alarm.

SELINA turns and without missing a beat assumes a regal air.

SELINA

How DARE you enter without knocking.

The men look confused as she approaches.

Once she is close enough to the guards, she whips off her leather belt and--

Cracks

--the first one across the face with the buckle, knocking his gun free.

Then--

Rips

--her long nails across the second's face.

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE LOEB'S STUDY - NIGHT

Three more guards rush toward the door, GUNS DRAWN.

INT. LOEB'S STUDY - NIGHT

They burst in to find SELINA securing the two guards together in a very complicated and painful looking way with her belt.

SELINA

Hello my miserable little pets.

But these guards aren't falling for it--

Bam-bam-bam-bam!

--they open fire.

SELINA dives behind the desk. Bullets rip into the antique mahogany.

The dust settles. The guards LAUGH and move in for the kill.

When suddenly--

CRASH!

A BLACK LINCOLN CONTINENTAL SMASHES into the study, taking out a wall of WINDOWS.

CHAOS. CONFUSION. GUNFIRE. SHOUTS.

The back end of the LINCOLN FISHTAILS, demolishing the antique DESK and two GUARDS.

The front end of the LINCOLN SCREECHES to a stop, a WHEEL an inch from SELINA's face.

The DOOR of the LINCOLN SWINGS OPEN.

SELINA looks up, stunned to see THE BAT-MAN standing up through the moon roof of the car. He holds a BLACK TUBE.

A security guard levels his UZI at the pair but before he can get off a shot--

TWANG

--he's hit in the chest with two BRASS DARTS attached to THIN COPPER WIRES.

The wires lead to a massive, dripping BATTERY in the car.

The guard FLINCHES and FOAMS AT THE MOUTH from the effects of the PRIMITIVE TAZER.

THE BAT-MAN

(to SELINA)

Get in.

She does.

TIRES SQUEAL.

THE BAT-MAN tosses a GRENADE past her into the STUDY

The GRENADE CLACKS across the FLOOR, emitting a sharp, accelerating SIGNAL.

This ain't no smoke bomb.

EXT. FRONT LAWN, LOEB'S MANSION - NIGHT

The heavy LINCOLN CONTINENTAL sends rooster tails of expensive, manicured lawn high in the air.

From all directions security guards open fire with shot guns, pistols and uzis.

They rake the car with bullets.

INT. THE BAT-MAN'S LINCOLN CONTINENTAL - NIGHT

SELINA freaks out as bullets PLINK and CLANK around her, bouncing off sinister looking canisters strapped in the area where the back seat should be.

THE BAT-MAN

Keep low and cover your ears.

SELINA gives THE BAT-MAN an incredulous look then does exactly what he says as outside on the--

EXT. FRONT LAWN, LOEB'S MANSION - NIGHT

KA-BLAN!

THE BAT-MAN's grenade goes off sending a fireball out of several window and shattering many more.

FROM THE FIRE leaps ESTRADA and FLASS, GUN BLAZING.

Behind him stumbles COMMISSIONER LOBB, desperately trying to pat down his burning HAIR, and Mayor NOONE, just plain stunned.

ONE BULLET cuts a bloody STREAK across BATMAN's shoulder. He pays it no heed.

SELINA stares at him. A little turned on.

The LINCOLN bounces through a wrought iron fence and onto the tree-lined road.

Seconds behind it, a pair of white limos give chase.

Out on the dark road the LINCOLN CONTINENTAL is almost invisible, driving at ridiculous speeds without headlights.

INT. THE BAT-MAN'S LINCOLN CONTINENTAL - NIGHT

THE BAT-MAN, drives with crude home-made night-vision goggles while SELINA appraises the man next to her.

Slowly she makes a hand gesture as if she were picking up the phone. With her thumb and pinky she puts the imaginary headset to her mouth.

SELINA

Hello mom. I've met a guy. I think I'm in love.

THE BAT-MAN

I'm taking you to prison for the murder of a police officer.

THE BAT-MAN cuffs her to the dashboard. She's shocked.

INT. PURSUING LIMO - NIGHT

The security guards call for assistance on the radio.

SECURITY GUARD #1

We need a road block on Bridge road at the junction of Highway 6. Do you copy.

From the radio--

SHERIFF

This is the Gotham Sheriff's Department. I copy you, we're on our way.

Meanwhile--

INT. THE BAT-MAN'S LINCOLN CONTINENTAL - NIGHT

THE BAT-MAN listens to the transmission on his own radio.

THE BAT-MAN

Hold on.

SELINA braces herself as he wrenches the steering wheel. The darkened LINCOLN SWERVES to a stop in the woods.

Out on the road, both pursuing limos rip past doing 100mph.

INT. PURSUING LIMO - NIGHT

It's a windy, tree lined road through the forest.

SECURITY GUARD #1

Is he there yet?

SHERIFF

(From the radio)

We're in position but he hasn't shown up.

SECURITY GUARD #1

He should be on you any second. We're right behind him. Be ready. OH SHIT!

As the limo rounds the a corner it's greeted by two cop cars forming a ROADBLOCK.

The driver desperately CUTS THE WHEEL but it's too late. The big car SKIDS sideways and SMASHES into the cops.

The second limo SLAMS into the first.

Cops DIVE for cover. GLASS AND HUBCAPS go everywhere.

Slowly the doors open and dazed security guards get out of the crumpled cars.

SECURITY GUARD #1

Where the hell did he go?

Everyone stops and turns to look up the road at THE BAT-MAN's Lincoln Continental as it slowly approaches the crash site.

Suddenly --

BAM!

--super high-powered KLEIG LIGHTS shine forth from the Lincoln.

The men cover their eyes, temporarily BLINDED, as the ominous black car accelerates into the wrecked cars.

Its heavy bumpers sink into the doors of the cop cars and grind them backwards and out of the way.

Some of the cops and security guards regain their wits and open fire with their pump action shot guns and uzis.

INT. THE BAT-MAN'S LINCOLN CONTINENTAL - NIGHT

A giant gloved fist pounds a series of heavy-duty switches bolted onto the dashboard.

Both sides and the rear of the car erupt --

BLAM-BLAM-BLAM -- road spikes

FOOM - FOOM -- smoke

SPLASH -- oil

CRACK - CRACK -- tire-puncturing darts

-- the gunmen stagger back, punctured, pierced and slimed by the cannonade.

The Lincoln lays a generous TIRE PATCH as it accelerates, down the wooded road.

Behind it the stabbed and oil-covered men can do nothing but watch, stunned as the Lincoln disappears into the darkness.

INT. THE BAT-MAN'S LINCOLN CONTINENTAL - NIGHT

Click. Click. And SELINA is out of the cuffs. THE BAT-MAN, surprised, looks over.

SELINA

Handcuffs? What were you thinking? I'm a handcuff expert.

He reaches for her but she's already slipped out the door.

EXT. WOODED ROAD - MOMENT LATER

SELINA rolls in the ditch as THE BAT-MOBILE skids to a stop a few hundred feet up the road.

SELINA takes off into the woods.

She runs through with a natural animal grace, leaping fallen trees, ducking branches, moving silently.

THE BAT-MAN (O.S.)

Give it up SELINA.

SELINA spins around looking for the source of the voice. Then breaks into a serious sprint.

She runs all out through the woods, leaps a stream, scrambles an embankment, then out into a clearing. She's really moving when--

smash

--she's tackled by THE BAT-MAN. He pins her down in the wet grass.

THE BAT-MAN

You didn't really think you could run from me?

She struggles. Takes a swipe with her claws but he's ready for her and easily dodges.

THE BAT-MAN

I'm taking you in. I will not allow murder, not even for revenge.

SELINA

Whoa, slow down.

(starts to have fun with the situation)

I didn't kill that bastard,

(shows her fingernails)

I just prettied him up a little.

She takes his gloved hand off her shoulder and admires the bat-shaped brass knuckles.

SELINA

Nothing you haven't done.

(pouts, smiles)

I'm innocent.

THE BAT-MAN

You hit the -- GARAGE MECHANIC. The cop is dead.

SELINA

(pissed)

I didn't kill him.

THE BAT-MAN

(deflates)

Then it was the GARAGE MECHANIC?

SELINA

(shakes her head, pities him)

No. CHI-CHI came in as I was marking CAMPBELL. HE killed him. Said the scumbag cop had taken enough of his money. He was going to kill me too.

SELINA (CONT'D)

He had me pinned, was trying to cut my wrists with that switchblade of his. Wanted it to look like murder-suicide. But HOLLY showed up. We fought.

(gestures to her cheek)

I gave him a nice little something to remember me by and got the hell out of there. I figured you could take care of yourself

(beat)

GARAGE-BOY.

THE BAT-MAN

(surprised)

How did you--

SELINA

Darling, in my whole life, I've only met one REAL man. I'm not about to forget his eyes.

She draws the leather-gloved hand to her mouth and bites a finger.

THE BAT-MAN

You're not going to knock me out again are you?

SELINA pulls off his glove.

EXT. THE WAREHOUSE, UPHOLSTERY DISTRICT - DAWN

The mangled LINCOLN pulls to the curb on an empty street.

SELINA

I have this bad feeling that the only way I'm ever going to see you again is if I continue my life of crime.

THE BAT-MAN

I wouldn't recommend that. You didn't do so well on your debut.

SELINA

(gets out)

Yeah, well, practice makes perfect, right?

THE BAT-MAN

(holds the pillowcase)

Aren't you forgetting something.

SELINA

Keep it. There's something in there I think you'll find interesting.

She walks off shaking her money-maker.

INT. BRUCE WAYNE'S APARTMENT - DAY

BRUCE's apartment is now jam-packed with crime fighting equipment. He reads GORDON's FILES intently at his cramped desk.

LITTLE AL

(holds the pillowcase)

Doing some redecorating? Funny, I never had you pegged as a satin pillow type of guy.

BRUCE reads a paper and puts it into a home-made photo machine. Pop goes a flash and out slips a microfilm, he adds it to a little pile.

BRUCE

(distracted, reading
another)

This changes everything.

LITTLE AL

Well, if you can take a break from your homework for a minute, I've got something to show you.

LITTLE AL jerks the plug on BRUCE's machine. BRUCE looks up.

INT. BIG AL'S OFFICE - DAY

LITTLE AL is again looking around in BIG AL's desk. After some searching he retrieves another key. It fits a door at the far end of the room.

LITTLE AL

(smiling)

Come on.

LITTLE AL leads BRUCE through the door and to a dark and dusty stairwell winding down into the--

INT. UNDERGROUND CHAMBER, BELOW LITTLE AL'S GARAGE - DAY

LITTLE AL throws a heavy Frankenstein-style switch flooding an immense brick chamber with light.

From the high, arched ceiling hang bare bulbs, tangled pipes, winches and chains. Industrial lathes, drills and presses line the walls. All covered in dust.

The terminus of a rusted train track lies on the floor.

LITTLE AL

BIG AL bought this place from the Wayne Corporation. Used to be a repair shop for the trains. Back in the day, Wayne Corp built a lot of the infrastructure for Gotham City-- water systems, electrical, sewers.

BRUCE walks around, soaking it all in.

LITTLE AL

This place connects to the access tunnels. It's like a maze back in there. Runs all under the entire city. It's kind of spooky.

BRUCE turns to look at LITTLE AL. BLOWN AWAY.

LITTLE AL

Yeah, I thought you might like it.

A rat squeaks by.

INT. GOTHAM JUSTICE BUILDING, LOEB'S OFFICE - DAY

LOEB berates GORDON.

LOEB

Jesus Christ! I tell you to do one simple thing, catch some freak in tights. What's wrong with you?

LOEB wears a hat to cover his burnt hair.

INT. THE WAREHOUSE, UPHOLSTERY DISTRICT - DAY

SELINA sits amide a pile of leather and sewing materials. She snaps razor blades with a pair of pliers making little triangles. Then, she sinks one of the small, metal triangles into some kind of epoxy under her fingernail.

SELINA holds her hand up to HOLLY--

SELINA

What do you think?

--razors line the underside of each fingernail.

HOLLY is horrified.

INT. GOTHAM JUSTICE BUILDING, SITUATION ROOM - DAY

The hunt for THE BAT-MAN has been kicked into high gear. GORDON has a dozen cops working with him now. His cramped office has been replaced with a full-sized situation room.

MERKEL

Do we have a spot set for tonight, sir?

GORDON

(puts down some papers)

Not yet.

GORDON consults a map.

EXT. EAST END SIDEWALK - NIGHT

A well dressed MAN, WOMAN and SMALL BOY walk hand-in-hand through a bad part of town. A thug follows them.

THE BAT-MAN watches from a nearby rooftop. But he does nothing as the man gets closer and pulls out a gun.

THE BAT-MAN watches the guy grab the woman's purse.

WOMAN

Help! Help! My purse! Help!

Still THE BAT-MAN does nothing.

The mugger wrenches the purse free and takes off running down the empty street.

Watching from--

INT. GORDON'S CRAPPY CAR - NIGHT

GORDON jabs out a MARLBORO, frustrated--

GORDON

(into radio)

That's it, meet back at headquarters in 30 minutes.

--lights another one.

EXT. EAST END SIDEWALK - NIGHT

Up and down the street homeless people shuffle out from behind dumpsters, get in unmarked cop cars and drive off.

The couple and child head for a car. GORDON stops to thank them. He squats down, tussles the SMALL BOY's hair.

GORDON

Good work son.

The pair take off. GORDON, alone now, walks back to his car.

THE BAT-MAN (O.S.)

I can help you get what you want.

GORDON freezes. Turns slowly.

THE BAT-MAN stands hidden in shadows just inside the alley.

GORDON puts his hands out like he's trying to calm a lost kitten.

GORDON

OK. We can talk. How about down at the station?

THE BAT-MAN

No. You don't understand.

GORDON, easing his gun out.

GORDON

You know you're on a suicide course, right? I'll get you some help. They'll kill you otherwise. Believe me.

THE BAT-MAN

Please. Don't. It doesn't have to be like this.

GORDON, facing THE BAT-MAN now, close, has his gun leveled at THE BAT-MAN's chest.

GORDON goes for his cuffs. THE BAT-MAN slaps the gun out GORDON's hands.

THE BAT-MAN

You fool. You idiot. Don't you see?

GORDON

NOW!

A TRAP WITHIN A TRAP!

Four uniform cops come out of hiding.

UNIFORM COP #1

Freeze! Put your hands up.

THE BAT-MAN looks over, then pounces on GORDON. His hands FUMBLE AROUND ON GORDON'S JACKET. As the cops move to encircle him.

UNIFORM COP #2

(into a radio)

We've got THE BAT-MAN at TRAP LOCATION ALPHA.

THE BAT-MAN finally heaves GORDON through the air at the cops. He lands, head first, sprawling into the cops and knocking about half of them off their feet.

THE BAT-MAN makes a break for it. Cops open fire--

BAM! BAM! BAM!

GORDON
(only half conscious)
HOLD YOUR FIRE!

THE BAT-MAN takes a slug in the thigh but makes it into an ABANDONED tenement.

The cops come to GORDON's side.

UNIFORM COP #1
Jeez, are you all right? Why didn't you
give the signal sooner?

GORDON
(rubs his bleeding head)
I had to be sure.

The UNIFORMED COPS help GORDON to his feet. His head is bleeding badly.

Cruisers start to show up. MERKEL arrives with a UNIFORMED COP. Together they begin sealing off the area.

FLASS pulls up and gets out of his car waving at the SWAT to park by the ABANDONED TENEMENT.

An ambulance driver tries to tend to GORDON's injuries.

GORDON
Get off me.

GORDON is more concerned about the SWAT VAN unloading men.

GORDON
This is my collar, my case. I'm in
charge here. We DO NOT need your help.

SWAT COMMANDER
I guess you can talk to Commissioner Loeb
about that, Gordon. Here he comes now.

SWAT COMMANDER points to a POLICE HELICOPTER on the horizon. From this distance you can just make out the fire bombs hanging below it like lures on a fishing line.

INT. ABANDONED TENEMENT - NIGHT

THE BAT-MAN is in the LOBBY of what was once a transient hotel. He collapses against the check-in counter. He wraps duct tape around the badly bleeding wound in his thigh.

THE BAT-MAN

Lucky.

THE BAT-MAN gets up. Trying the leg.

THE BAT-MAN

Ignore the pain.

He limps up the stairs as fast as his injured leg will allow.

INT. POLICE HELICOPTER - NIGHT

Commissioner LOEB yells at the CHOPPER PILOT--

LOEB

Drop it, drop it.

CHOPPER PILOT

Sir, we need clearance. There may be people in there.

LOEB

No one is in there but that psycho.

LOEB reaches over and slaps a button labeled, "Incendiary Release."

LOEB

(sits back)

I'll take full responsibility.

Below the POLICE HELICOPTER, a dark object falls--

INT. ABANDONED TENNEMENT - AT THAT MOMENT

THE BAT-MAN bursts onto the roof and looks up at the falling bomb.

THE BAT-MAN

Too late.

THE BAT-MAN throws himself back inside and leaps the railing.

FOOM! -- the fire bomb goes off behind him.

THE BAT-MAN FALLS JUST AHEAD OF DEBRIS FROM THE EXPLOSION.

He hits the floor, HARD, and rolls under the staircase as half the building collapses around him.

He's bleeding badly, partially blind, groggy.

THE BAT-MAN

Don't pass out.

THE BAT-MAN removes a syringe, labelled "stimulant," from his ammo belt and injects the needle into his biceps.

His eyes come alive again: GRIM DETERMINATION.

Everything is on fire. THE BAT-MAN wraps himself with his cape. The building threatens to come down around him.

Dying homeless people scream in the fire.

THE BAT-MAN (V.O.)

Can't help them. Must find shelter.

THE BAT-MAN breaths through his cape as he crosses the lobby, to a STEEL DOOR bearing the words "Danger! 20,000 volts."

THE BAT-MAN (V.O.)

Steel door, might be enough to protect me. Provided the warning is a lie.

He picks the lock and slips through.

EXT. ABANDONED TENNEMENT - NIGHT

The POLICE HELICOPTER lands. LOEB gets out looking pretty pleased with himself. He slaps FLASS on the shoulder.

GORDON

That building wasn't cleared. You hear that? That's the sound of people DYING!

Screams emanate from the building. Its upper floors are completely consumed in flame.

LOEB

Guess that's the cost of doing business.

GORDON is about to take a swing at LOEB but MERKEL steps between the men.

MERKEL

Sir, you're bleeding pretty bad. Let's get your head looked at.

GORDON

(pushes around MERKEL)

later.

MERKEL

(holds him)

NOW!

(beat)

Sir.

MERKEL looks at LOEB with disdain.

MERKEL

You don't want to do anything-- RASH.

LOEB

Yeah, time for you to go Gordon.

Just then a section of the roof collapses. Sparks fill the night sky.

LOEB AND FLASS

(together)

Oooh. Aaaah.

GORDON, disgusted, leaves LOEB and FLASS to watch the fire.

EXT. ABANDONED TENNEMENT - LATER

Fire trucks shower the now smoldering building with water as the SWAT team goes in to search for survivors.

INT. ABANDONED TENNEMENT - MOMENTS LATER

The smoke has settled a little bit.

SWAT COMMANDER and his SWAT TEAM enters the half-collapsed building as a well-oiled machine, covering each other and moving as a single, disciplined organism.

SWAT COMMANDER

No prisoners, Commissioner's orders.

The SWAT TEAM enters the lobby. The top floors have collapsed down the staircase filling the area with rubble. The elevator shaft is piled with debris. Water pours from the ceiling.

The SWAT TEAM finds the STEEL DOOR. They toss in CONCUSSION GRENADES-- BOOM. BOOM.

Sections of the LOBBY floor jump, then sag and splinter from the explosions. Creaking sounds fill the LOBBY.

SWAT GUY #1

This place is barely standing, sir.

SWAT COMMANDER

Shut up. SQUAD ONE stay here. SQUAD TWO with me.

The SWAT COMMANDER and SQUAD TWO go below to the--

INT. ABANDONED TENNEMENT, BASEMENT - NIGHT

The grenades have destroyed the superintendent's basement apartment and blown a hole through the ceiling over his SMALL BATHROOM.

The puzzled men look around. Then SWAT GUY #1 points to the collapsed chimney.

SWAT GUY #1
He must have kicked through--

Smoking gas canisters-- CLINK, CLINK -- fall out a hole in the chimney.

INT. ABANDONED TENNEMENT, LOBBY - NIGHT

Upstairs, in the LOBBY, the crumbling brick above a fireplace explodes, showering SQUAD ONE.

THE BAT-MAN pounces from his hiding place in the chimney--

Smack. Crack. Crunch.

--he savages the armored men.

INT. ABANDONED TENNEMENT, BASEMENT - NIGHT

The cramped basement apartment is filling with smoke.

SWAT COMMANDER
Gas masks! Cough, cough.

The men fumble for their masks.

INT. ABANDONED TENNEMENT, LOBBY - NIGHT

All around the lobby lies SQUAD ONE, unconscious. THE BAT-MAN kicks the steel door shut and RE-CLASPS THE LOCK, then climbs over the debris and up the elevator shaft.

EXT. ABANDONED TENNEMENT - NIGHT

The police have barricaded the area with cars, ambulances, fire trucks and situation vans. Helicopters circle overhead. Snipers have taken position around the collapsed building.

INT. ABANDONED TENNEMENT, BASEMENT - NIGHT

SQUAD TWO opens fire at the lock on the STEEL DOOR.

INT. ABANDONED TENNEMENT, ELEVATOR SHAFT - NIGHT

The reinforced ELEVATOR SHAFT rises a few feet above the debris of the top floors. Crouched in the shadows, THE BAT-MAN scopes out the snipers and choppers with binoculars.

PE-ANG -- a sniper's bullet ricochets off brick near his face.

THE BAT-MAN ducks and pulls a very detailed UNDERGROUND MAP from his ammo belt.

INT. ABANDONED TENNEMENT, LOBBY - NIGHT

SWAT COMMANDER kicks the steel door open, rips off his mask.

SWAT COMMANDER

What the hell is going on here?

His men look at him in confusion. Half of them writhe on the floor, bleeding.

SWAT COMMANDER

Get these men out of here.

(Listens to radio)

Snipers got him in the elevator shaft.

(points)

You two cover the shaft. You, over there. You, come with me.

The SWAT TEAM takes up positions in the lobby as the wounded men are dragged from the building.

EXT. ABANDONED TENNEMENT - NIGHT

GORDON watches the scene outside the building while paramedics work on the wounds THE BAT-MAN inflicted.

SWAT GUYS approach GORDON's ambulance, one carries the other.

SWAT GUY #2

You let this man die, I'll have your ass.

A couple of paramedics get to work on the unconscious man.

GORDON

What's going on in there?

SWAT GUY #2

He's an animal-- a wild beast.

The medics finish with GORDON.

MEDIC

I've given you about 35 stitches for that gash on your head. Try to keep it dry.

The medic hands back GORDON's jacket. Something has been stuffed in his breast pocket. Puzzled, GORDON finds BRUCE's microfilm. Holding it up to the light, his jaw drops open

GORDON

I'll be a son of a--

Behind him, FLASS observes GORDON's discovery.

INT. ABANDONED TENNEMENT, LOBBY - LATER

The SWAT TEAM waits nervously holding their machine guns on the elevator shaft. Sweat beads on their foreheads.

INT. ABANDONED TENNEMENT, ELEVATOR SHAFT - LATER

A gloved hand drops a single brick.

INT. ABANDONED TENNEMENT, LOBBY - LATER

Nervous SWAT GUYS open fire into the rubble.

THE BAT-MAN uses the noise and confusion to drop through a hole in the ceiling, unseen, onto a SWAT GUY. He pulls back the SWAT GUY's helmet and sprays him with mace.

A second SWAT GUY turns to fire but THE BAT-MAN throws his knife into the guy's shoulder. He goes down screaming.

The whole SWAT TEAM, now aware of THE BAT-MAN, turns and opens fire at the moving cape as it streaks across the LOBBY.

Bullets tear through the cape and into old, brass mailboxes.

THE BAT-MAN throws itself through the hole where the floor has collapsed above the--

INT. ABANDONED TENNEMENT, BASEMENT BATHROOM - NIGHT

THE BAT-MAN lands in a pile of shattered tile and mirror.

He digs into his belt and pulls out several ROUND OBJECTS strung together with green cord. Then, holding one end of the cord, he flushes them down TOILET.

INT. ABANDONED TENNEMENT, LOBBY - NIGHT

Upstairs, the SWAT TEAM, guns poised, peeks over the lip of the broken ceiling just in time to get a face full of--

BLAM!

--exploding plumbing.

INT. ABANDONED TENNEMENT, BASEMENT BATHROOM - NIGHT

Outside the BATHROOM door, THE BAT-MAN covers his ears until the debris settles.

Then he's back into the BATHROOM peering into the giant hole where the TOILET used to be. He gets on his hands and knees and squirms into the wet, slimy hole.

A half second later SWAT COMMANDER and three SWAT GUYS show up to investigate the explosion.

SWAT GUY #2

Ug, stinks.

They shine their lights into the hole.

INT. GOTHAM SEWERS - NIGHT

Flashlight beams shine through a hole in a long drain pipe.

The light reflects off the water and feces-slimed walls as a dark figure runs limping away down the pipe.

A couple minutes later--

EXT. ABANDONED TENNEMENT - NIGHT

GORDON watches as the sooty and defeated SWAT team exits the building.

LOEB screams at the SWAT COMMANDER. Spittle flies. Fingers jab his chest.

GORDON smiles as he the microfilm in his pocket and starts his car.

INT. BAT CAVE - LATER

All the crime fighting equipment from BRUCE's room is now downstairs on several long workbenches.

Up on a giant hydraulic lift the LINCOLN shows its scars from earlier-- BULLET HOLES, BROKEN WINDOWS, CRUSHED FRONT END.

LITTLE AL looks up to see a thoroughly shredded BAT-MAN at the tunnel entrance to the cave.

LITTLE AL

Bruce!

THE BAT-MAN braces himself against the wall, fighting to stay on his feet.

LITTLE AL grabs him before he falls and brings him to a workbench covered with medical equipment.

LITTLE AL

Off with your friends again I see. When are you going to learn to play nice?

BRUCE winces as LITTLE AL cleans his wounds.

BRUCE

I've got to go I'm not done.

LITTLE AL watches BRUCE try to get up. He can't.

LITTLE AL

Not tonight, son. You need time to heal.

BRUCE tries again but can't even get off the bench. He collapses back, resigned.

INT. EILEEN'S BAR - EVENING

GORDON and DENT smoke and drink at a back booth.

GORDON

He risked his life to get me those files.

DENT

He could have mailed them.

GORDON

Not really his style. I think he read my files and wanted to be friends, allies, I don't know. He's obviously crazy but he's not the wild animal I thought.

DENT

So what are you going to do?

GORDON

There was more in those files than just my report-- evidence Harvey, it's all laid out.

DENT

What kind of evidence?

GORDON looks at his friend, savoring the moment.

GORDON

It's the JACKPOT. It corroborates everything we suspected. Loeb is in bed with the biggest names in Gotham's underworld -- and we've got his accounting books. It's amazing.

DENT

That could never be admissible in court.

GORDON

Probably not. At least not all of it. But there should be enough to get ESTRADA at least. And who knows, we play our cards right--

DENT

It's dangerous, Jim. Who knows what they would do if they knew you had those files.

GORDON

That's the thing, no one knows. THE BAT-MAN slipped them to me in front of a half dozen officers. No one saw a thing, it was like a reverse pick pocketing.

DENT

I think we can make this work.

GORDON lights a MARLBORO and nods.

EXT. ESTRADA'S UPSCALE TOWNHOUSE - EVENING

GORDON, DENT and a dozen uniformed officers crowd the front stoop and sidewalk. At the front door, ESTRADA, in a bathrobe, holds a subpoena. A dozen half-naked men and women stand behind him.

GORDON

Is this a bad time for you?

ESTRADA

I want to speak with a lawyer.

GORDON cuffs ESTRADA.

INT. THE BAT CAVE

BRUCE, wrapped in numerous bandages, works on a black motorcycle.

His HEAD IS SHAVED and crisscrossed with STITCHES.

He's in bad shape. Even turning a wrench causes pain.

In the background on--

TV, CHANNEL ONE EYEWITNESS NEWS

Local TV news shows a red faced LOEB push through a mob of reporters to get into his office.

NEWS ANCHOR, BRIAN

District Attorney Harvey Dent today announced the arrest and indictment of Carlos ESTRADA on numerous racketeering charges-- the commissioner was unavailable for comment.

The TV shows GORDON leading ESTRADA up the steps of the Justice Building.

NEWS ANCHOR, BRIAN

Rumors fly about high level police involvement and possible federal investigations. Jane.

The TV shows BRUCE'S parents and a YOUNG BRUCE WAYNE.

NEWS ANCHOR, JANE

Thanks Jim. Up next, it's been fifteen years since the tragic death of THOMAS WAYNE and the mysterious disappearance of the heir to the Wayne fortune.

The TV shows old pictures of the GRAND THEATER as a crime scene.

NEWS ANCHOR, JANE

We'll go inside Wayne Corporation as it continues its agonizing search for young Bruce Wayne and see if we can't discover what has become of this fortunate young man--

BRUCE's greasy hand slips off the wrench. It clanks across the concrete floor to LITTLE AL's feet.

LITTLE AL stares at him.

LITTLE AL

It's you.

BRUCE

No, it's not. That little boy is dead.

LITTLE AL

But you can't just--

BRUCE

(interrupts)

What? WALK away? Do I LOOK like I'm walking away from anything?

BRUCE gets to his feet and open a locker containing his suit and equipment.

BRUCE

I'm making the most my inheritance.

Slowly, painfully he pulls on his suit.

INT. ACCESS TUNNEL, SOMEWHERE UNDER GOTHAM CITY - NIGHT

THE BAT-MAN guns his motorcycle through shallow puddles. Rats scurry.

He stops to check a map. A train rattles past behind a steel grate separating his tunnel from the subway.

He gets off the bike carrying a crow bar. He picks his target and SMACKS a grimy junction box with it. The lid clanks to the ground exposing an dense tangle of PHONE WIRES.

From a saddlebag he removes a TELEPHONE HEADSET. It has alligator clips where the phone should be.

He pulls back his mask. He's still bleeding from his wounds.

He cradles the phone to his ear and clips a pair of wires. Listens. Clips another. Listens.

EXT. SLUICeway - NIGHT

THE BAT-MAN tears out of the oversized sewer pipe on his motorcycle and bounces over debris clogging the bed of a stream.

Homeless people recoil.

INT. GORDON'S APARTMENT, BEDROOM - NIGHT

It's dark and quiet but something has woken up detective GORDON.

THE BAT-MAN (O.S.)

Loeb is up to something.

GORDON looks to the window where THE BAT-MAN forms a massive silhouette against the city night-scape.

THE BAT-MAN

Warn Dent. It's going down tonight but I don't know what it is, yet.

GORDON, turns to get his glasses.

GORDON

I think I know a way to find out.

When he turns back the window is empty, except for a small puddle of blood.

ANN

What's going on?

GORDON

Nothing, Hon. I've got to go to work. That's all.

GORDON gets out of bed and fumbles for his gun.

INT. GORDON'S CRAPPY CAR, EAST END - NIGHT

GORDON cruises the street. Watching the nightlife.

Looking. HUNTING

EXT. RUNDOWN WAREHOUSE DISTRICT STREET - NIGHT

In the rundown warehouse district GORDON puts the car in park and waits in the same spot as before.

FLASS finally comes out of the low-slung drug lab and we catch a glimpse of a very white, clean room and some very dirty cops.

FLASS

Jesus, what are you cutting this stuff with? Makes me have to piss like a racehorse. Wait for CRAMDEN to get off the CAN and you could do yourself some SERIOUS INTERNAL DAMAGE.

IN THE ALLEY

FLASS saunters to a DUMPSTER and proceeds to relieve himself.

GORDON (O.S.)

I'll try not to do YOU any SERIOUS damage, Flass.

FLASS WHIRLS.

reaching for his PISTOL, BUT

GORDON has the drop on FLASS, his GUN aimed, his hand steady as a surgeon's.

GORDON

Just enough to keep you out of the hospital.

FLASS tosses his GUN away.

FLASS

What, you gonna SHOOT me, Jiminy. Jiminy fricking CRICKET? You gonna SHOOT me?

GORDON slides his GUN back into its HOLSTER.

In his other hand, GORDON casually swings the BLACK AND YELLOW BASEBALL BAT.

GORDON

No. I'm not going to shoot you. You and me, we're going have a little ONE ON ONE.

GORDON playfully slaps the BASEBALL BAT into his open hand.

FLASS jerks a THUMB in the direction of the HOUSE.

FLASS

If I give a SHOUT to the GUYS--

GORDON

--Well, then, I'll shoot you.

GORDON WHIPS the BASEBALL BAT from hand to hand. Showing off. Pausing, calm as an executioner:

GORDON

Otherwise, it's ONE ON ONE. YOU and ME, Flass.

FLASS

One on one. Sure. I'll take you on, Jiminy.

GORDON

We've gotta play fair. I hear you were a green beret.

FLASS

That's right.

GORDON

So I guess you deserve a HANDICAP.

GORDON tosses FLASS the BASEBALL BAT.

He CATCHES it easily. FLASS SWAGGERS, SWINGING the BAT from side to side. Belligerent. All grins:

FLASS

You gotta be KIDDING. You going all KINKY on me, little man?

GORDON

Sure I am.

FLASS

You ready for your PUNISHMENT?

GORDON

Sure I am.

FLASS

THIS is gonna HURT.

GORDON

Sure it is.

WHAM!

GORDON SMASHES his FIST into FLASS' FACE--

GORDON DUCKS

as FLASS swings the BASEBALL BAT, missing by a mile--

WHAM! WHAM!

GORDON delivers vicious blows to FLASS' midsection--
THE BASEBALL BAT FLIES through the AIR, end over end--

CRACK!

A SPINNING KICK sends FLASS sprawling.

GORDON composes himself.

GORDON

Now then. Something's going down tonight,
you're going to tell me what it is?

FLASS

(laughing)

Forget it Gordon. You were in over your
head, and now it's over-- IT'S ALREADY
OVER.

GORDON

Fine. Have it your way. I'd like to
string you up. But when you took your
shot at me, you told your friends to keep
me out of the hospital. I suppose I
should return the favor.

GORDON turns to walk away, then spins around--

GORDON

Aw FUCK it.

--and kicks the stricken, laughing FLASS in the ribs
producing a sickening crunch.

GORDON

(finally walking away)

And Flass, thanks for showing me what it
takes to be a cop in this town.

FLASS

(now badly hurt)

Be sure to say 'Hi' to ANN for me.

GORDON instantly understands the full meaning of the threat.

GORDON

Oh god!

He breaks into a run for his car, seconds later he's on the--

EXT. STREETS OF GOTHAM - DAWN

The sun is just a pink edge on the skyline as GORDON tears ass across town.

He's taking horrible risks in traffic.

POWER SLIDES THROUGH A CROWDED INTERSECTION-- commuters dive for the curb.

BLOWS THROUGH A RED LIGHT-- delivery trucks honk and skid.

BUMPS OVER TRAIN TRACKS-- muffler sparks and tumbles loose.

He's on the radio--

GORDON

I need backup at 1827 Denny Way.

He SKIDS ONTO THE SIDEWALK--

--crushes a MAILBOX into his apartment building and--

--BOLTS from the car into the front door, gun drawn.

Meanwhile--

INT. PARKING GARAGE, GORDON'S APARTMENT BUILDING - DAWN

A very pregnant and very hysterical ANN struggles with four cops as they try to force her into an SUV. She's kicking and screaming. CRYING.

In the passenger seat sits a stoic LOEB smoking a cigar.

LOEB

Nobody wanted it to be this way. I don't want to hurt anyone. It never had to go this far. Your husband just CANNOT take a hint. No matter how hard we BEAT it into him.

GORDON bursts into the garage, gun drawn.

GORDON

Get your FILTHY HANDS off my wife.

ANN

Jim!

The cops go for their guns.

GORDON can't shoot. ANN is too close.

GORDON

Baby get down!

The cops OPEN FIRE.

Blam! Blam!

The shots echo in the garage.

Blam! Blam! Blam! Blam!

ANN throws herself down, as she's told.

Blam! Blam!

GORDON ducks for cover--

TOO LATE-- HE'S HIT!

The 9mm slug SLAMS into his stomach and

BLOWS HIM OFF HIS FEET.

ANN

Oh GOD, JIM! BABY!

But he COMES UP SHOOTING

Blam! Blam!

DOUBLE HEAD SHOT-- blood sprays, one down--

Blam! Blam!

TWO CHEST SHOTS-- a second cop staggers back, stricken and shocked--

Blam!

ONE IN THE HIP-- #3 spins, but manages to keep his feet--

Blam!

STOMACH SHOT-- #3 crumples.

The surviving cop, with the help of LOEB, manages to stuff the pregnant ANN into the SUV.

The last COP punches the gas and shoots for the door but

THE BAT-MAN stands--

BLOCKING THE EXIT

--in front of his black motorcycle.

The truck ACCELERATES.

HE'S GOING TO CRASH THROUGH.

Instead of getting out of the way,

THE BAT-MAN VAULTS OVER THE HOOD as the SUV crushes the motorcycle

THE BAT-MAN SMASHES FEET-FIRST THROUGH THE WINDSHIELD,
DRIVING BOTH SPIKED BOOTS INTO THE DRIVER'S FACE.

The SUV careens WILDLY, CRASHES into a parked car and
ROLLS OVER AND BACK ONTO ITS WHEELS.

Everything goes momentarily black.

Light returns.

LOEB pulls ANN down the street by her hair.

He's bleeding badly from a huge gash on his forehead and
seems a little dazed.

BRUCE falls from the SUV's door onto the sidewalk amid a
shower of shattered safety glass.

His disguise hangs shredded.

HIS MASK IS GONE.

He tries to get his feet but STUMBLES AND FALLS, tries again
and rises VERY UNSTEADILY.

HE'S NEAR THE END.

GORDON pulls himself across the street by sheer force of will.

He bleeds all over the place from his gut wound. His gun,
now SLIPPERY FROM BLOOD, is hard to hold.

Together BRUCE and GORDON converge on LOEB who seems to be
the least damaged of the three and now holds a MAGNUM in his
hand.

LOEB stops, turns and fires at his pursuers

Blam! Blam!

They throw themselves behind parked cars.

Glass rains down.

Blam! Blam!

From their positions behind parked cars, GORDON and THE BAT-
MAN make eye contact.

GORDON

What are you doing here?

THE BAT-MAN

Striking terror, what else?

GORDON

I mean the sun's coming up.

THE BAT-MAN

Then we better hurry.

GORDON

(holds up his service
revolver)

I'm out.

THE BAT-MAN draws a nasty looking THROWING KNIFE from his boot.

GORDON NODS.

Both men stand at the same time to face LOEB who holds his gun on one, then the other, momentarily unsure of what to do.

THE BAT-MAN pinches the knife by its tip, ready to throw.

THE BAT-MAN

Don't make me do it. Let her go.

He's holding ANN in front of himself as a human shield.

LOEB

You won't do it. YOU DON'T KILL.

GORDON

(levels his empty gun)
I have no such reservations Loeb.

LOEB

PFPT. You're empty. If you had a shot,
I'd be dead by now. I WALK.

LOEB has made it to the stone entrance to an URBAN PARK.

GORDON

TAKE him.

THE BAT-MAN

(to GORDON)
She's too close.

LOEB

(to THE BAT-MAN)
You've got nothing. I've seen your face

LOEB (CONT'D)

I've got the woman. And you won't kill me, it's against your code.

GORDON

Do it!

THE KNIFE SINKS DEEP INTO LOEB'S EYE.

He SCREAMS and falls writhing on the ground.

THE BAT-MAN

I've got a lot of codes.

ANN runs over to her husband.

THE BAT-MAN

(to LOEB)

Here's a little something to remember me by.

THE BAT-MAN, huddled over the supine LOEB, does-- something.

ANN

Oh JIM!

They embrace.

ANN

(pulls away)

You've been shot!

GORDON

It went right through. I'll be all right.

GORDON staggers a little. He's weak from his wounds. THE BAT-MAN steadies him.

ANN

(to THE BAT-MAN)

Are you OK?

THE BAT-MAN

I'm fine.

ANN

You look kind of-- hurt.

She's right. He looks as if he's had a burning building dropped on him. He's scarred, cut, bleeding and bruised.

THE BAT-MAN

I'll be all right--

(beat)

--with a little help from my friends.

GORDON
And WHO ARE your friends?

THE BAT-MAN
I don't know, who are YOU?

GORDON
I'm a COP. Who are you?

THE BAT-MAN
I'm THE BAT-MAN.

GORDON points to LOEB, his cheek carved with a letter 'Z.'

GORDON
That doesn't look like the mark of the
bat. What does that mean?

THE BAT-MAN
It's a gift for a kid I used to know, a
long time ago.

GORDON
(nodding)
Sirens coming, you better go.

THE BAT-MAN turns to go.

GORDON
Just so you know, I'm practically blind
without my glasses.

THE BAT-MAN, tosses the glasses from across the street--

THE BAT-MAN
I'll see you around, DETECTIVE.

--just as a truck drives in between them.

It looks like the AL and Son's Garage TRUCK.

GORDON
Thanks,
(realizing he's gone)
BATMAN.

As the cop cars, ambulances and TV crews show up we--

CUT TO:

EXT. GOTHAM SKYSCRAPER - DUSK

Gotham's skyline fills our vision as we zoom in on the top
floor of a super-ritzy high-rise. Its floor-to-ceiling
windows open onto a wrap-around, STONE ROOF-DECK.

We continue through into a splendid modern LIVING ROOM. Plush leather sofas are sunk into the floor to create a GLAMOROUS ENTERTAINMENT CENTER. Built into the wall is a GIANT-SCREEN TV.

ON THE TV--

NEWS ANCHOR, BRIAN

In a bizarre shooting incident early this morning Gotham's Hero-Cop James Gordon thwarted an attempted kidnapping of his pregnant wife by a band of ROGUE POLICE OFFICERS. Following the melee, three police officers are dead and two others hospitalized, including Police Commissioner Gillian Loeb who was BLINDED and DISFIGURED during the confrontation. GORDON was admitted to MERCY GENERAL for gunshot wounds. He is expected to make a complete recovery, as is his wife, ANN, and the baby.

The sounds of breaking glass fill the luxurious penthouse as the report continues--

NEWS ANCHOR, BRIAN

This evening, Police Commissioner Loeb faces numerous criminal charges including kidnapping and allegations of collusion with organized crime. Further reports indicated that Detective Jonathan Flass, also hospitalized at this hour in an unrelated incident, will turn state's witness against Loeb.

Someone has entered the LIVING ROOM. Their silhouette tip-toes past the TV, while--

NEWS ANCHOR, BRIAN

NOONE has been unavailable for comment and seems unlikely to face charges at this time.

The mysterious intruder lifts an EXQUISITE OIL PAINTING off the wall as we--

CUT TO.

EXT OVERGROWN GARDEN - DUSK

BRUCE WAYNE stands in a vast, classical garden amid weeds and tall grass. Flickering fire-light illuminates his face in the gathering gloom of night.

BRUCE (V.O.)

DECEMBER 18. Dear Father, you have taught me well, showed me who I am and what it takes to be a man in this world. For that I am grateful.

BRUCE looks down at his CARDBOARD SHIPPING BOX full of letters burning in a brick fire pit.

BRUCE (V.O.)

But I am ready to find my own way now. I will make the most of my inheritance. And I will always honor your memory.

BRUCE holds a final letter in his hands. He looks at it for one more moment, then lets it slip into the flames.

BRUCE (V.O.)

Night is falling. I've got work to do.
Your loving son,
(beat)
BATMAN.

BRUCE wipes away a tear.

LITTLE AL (O.S.)

Hey Bruce!

BRUCE turns to see LITTLE AL burst out the back patio door of a fabulous, old-world mansion. Warm, inviting light shines through the living room windows.

LITTLE AL

This place is SWEET!

BRUCE smiles as he heads into his home.

We pull back and away as the voice of a news anchor trickles in--

NEWS ANCHOR, JANE (O.S.)

In other news, missing millionaire heir to the Wayne Enterprises fortune, Bruce WAYNE, has returned to Gotham City.

We pull up, out and over the front gate of Bruce's home. Secured into the solid, timeless stone is an iron plaque. It reads: WAYNE MANOR.

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM, THE FABULOUS PENTHOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

In the GLAMOROUS ENTERTAINMENT CENTER, we pull back from the GIANT-SCREEN TV as the news continues--

NEWS ANCHOR, JANE

After the tragic murder of his parents more than 15 years ago, young BRUCE seemingly disappeared. Well, it turns out he was safe and sound all along pursuing his education abroad at the finest schools in Europe.

We're wide enough now to see SELINA working on a wall safe. The EXQUISITE OIL PAINTING rests against the wall at her feet.

She's wearing a sexy, black leather CAT-BURGLAR SUIT complete with ears, claws and a tail. A whip hangs on her hip.

NEWS ANCHOR, JANE

And what a handsome young man he is.

SELINA's head snaps around to see BRUCE on the TV waving to well-wishers at the airport.

NEWS ANCHOR, JANE

Look out ladies. Gotham has a new most eligible bachelor.

SELINA saunters over to the TV. Smiles ear-to-ear licks lips and--

SELINA

The plot thickens.

--blows a kiss to BRUCE on the TV.

Then, holding up a remote control device, she pushes a red button--

BOOM!

The wall safe blows.

Casually, The CATWOMAN scoops out a glorious DIAMOND NECKLACE and clasps it around her neck.

Suddenly an alarm sounds.

SELINA

Oops.

She smiles. Then runs full speed for the STONE ROOF-DECK and leaps over the railing. For just a moment she hangs in the air, high above the glittering lights of Gotham City.

Then she's gone.

End