

THE BAT-MAN
RISE AND FALL

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Based on DC's Batman comics

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OVER BLACK:

"There is no hunting like the hunting of man, and those who have hunted armed men long enough and liked it, never care for anything else thereafter" - Ernest Hemingway

HARVEY DENT (V.O.)

Sadly, evil is very real. I'm
staring it in the face right now.

INT. GOTHAM CITY TRIBUNAL - DAY

Close on MARONI's face, a fat mob boss in his late 50's.

SAL MARONI

Think you can impress me with your
cheap philosophy, Dent?

HARVEY DENT, District Attorney, 30's, stands between Maroni
and two tribunes with people who take in every word he says.

HARVEY DENT

Sal Maroni, you're a relic from the
past, a time when we were all lions
and gazelles. The strong hunted and
killed remorseless while the weak
waited humble for their inevitable
demise. But time passed, we
evolved. Ferocious claws
transformed into skillful hands,
sharp teeth into clever tongues,
jungle into city. We built huge
walls made of steel and concrete,
inside them a heaven for the weak.
Society. But some animals made it
into our cities, refusing to adapt
to the new environment, ignoring
impudently all rules and doing what
they were doing outside: prey on
the weak. You are one of those
animals, Maroni.

MARONI'S ATTORNEY

My client is to be addressed
properly. *MISTER* Maroni is a highly
respected member of this community!

DENT

Your client is charged with 72 murders! Fraud! Unlawful deprivation of freedom! Animals don't have titles, they have leashes. And that's why we're here, to put your client in a leash.

Frantic applause, people's admiration for Dent is limitless.

JUDGE

Order in the room! Order! Mr. Dent, have a care! This is not a circus!

Dent makes a discreet sign, crowd immediately goes silent.

DENT

Sadly, it is.

JUDGE

Make your final point, Mr. Dent!

DENT

Gotham is the most dangerous city in the world. Chicago and Detroit are promise land compared to it. Sal Maroni has an estimated fortune of 3 billion dollars, six real estates on the continent, another nine outside it. I won't even mention small change like private jets and million dollar cars. How do you think a man without a college degree, a man who can't spell right achieved all this? Vermin like him are drawn to this city like moths to a flame. It's the perfect place for maggots to feed and grow until they become the most ferocious predators. People like him make the streets unsafe for your children!

Crowd cheering.

MARONI

What about your parents, Dent? Do you fear for their lives?

DENT

Threats...
 (smiles)
 (MORE)

DENT (CONT'D)

Justice is my mother, Gotham my father and I'll be damned if I disappoint one of them.

Crowd goes wild. It's a crowd who thirsts for justice.

MARONI

You could put mother Teresa behind bars if you wanted to, right big-shot? They don't know how easily you bend the law. Hear that? That's false love, Dent!

DENT

No, that's respect. Because I put your kind behind bars despite the fact that my bosses are owned by you.

People laughing and clapping.

JUDGE

Order! Order!
Mr. Maroni, do you have anything to say before I have my final verdict?

MARONI

First of all, your honour, I've always been a devoted--

CROWD

Death row! Death row!

Dent smiles defiantly at Maroni, who grabs the glass in front of him and splashes water over Dent's face. Wants to jump at Dent but two guards stop him. Dent still smiles.

MARONI

I'll kill you, Dent!

Crowd explodes. Mix of offending Maroni and cheers for Dent.

JUDGE

Order! Order in the courtroom!

No use, the crowd gets louder and louder, as it stops offending Maroni and gives itself over to adulation.

This session is suspended! Get Mr. Maroni out of here!

DENT

Your honour.

MARONI

You're dead, Dent! You hear me?!

While the guards drag the struggling Maroni away, Dent walks satisfied towards the exit. Two BODYGUARDS in suits follow.

CROWD

You the man, Dent! Justice for
Gotham! Get 'em, Harvey! Clean the
streets! Dent! Dent!

EXT. GOTHAM CITY TRIBUNAL - CONTINUOUS

Dent walks out of the tribunal followed by his bodyguards. As he walks down the long stairs, TWO MORE BODYGUARDS join him. A black car waits, a bodyguard opens the door, Harvey enters.

EXT. GOTHAM STREETS - CONTINUOUS

We follow the car through the streets of GOTHAM CITY.

INT. TUNNEL - CONTINUOUS

The car enters a tunnel. A black van drives next to it, almost touching it. The vehicles stick together. The van's side door opens, Dent opens the door as well and enters the van with the help of two TOUGH GUYS.

EXT. GOTHAM STREETS- MOMENTS LATER

The van and the car leave the tunnel, in opposite directions.

EXT. GOTHAM HARBOR - LATER

The van stops in front of a rusty, old ship. The driver, TIBERIUS, a very intimidating tough guy with a snake tatoo on his neck, exits the van and opens the side door. Dent exits, wearing a hooded jacket over his suit.

TIBERIUS

Doing the induction yourself, boss?

DENT

Got to stay in shape, right?

Dent walks towards the ship, followed by the thugs.

INT. SHIP - MOMENTS LATER

They walk through the ship's rusty hallways, enter a huge dark hall where other THUGS are waiting. Dent stops. Lights go on. Before him: sixty ASIAN FAMILIES. Unwashed, sweaty, scared.

Dent walks over to them, squats down in front of a family with TWO BOYS. The older one hides behind his mother, the other one stares at Dent, paralysed with fear. Dent reaches out his hand. Hesitating, the boy gives him his hand. Dent straightens and walks with the boy away from the group. While Dent talks, an ASIAN MALE in Dent's gang translates.

DENT

Welcome to America! Thousands of miles away from your homes. You're illegal immigrants, a crime not easily overlooked by your government back home. One not easily overlooked here. Your sole purpose is to work for me. I'm the main man, I have to be satisfied or things get... messy. You'll live in dire poverty, but you'll work your asses off. You'll have no contact with your families back home, and you'll work your asses off. No payment, no health care, your children will get no education. And still, you'll work your asses off. Why? Because I'll kill your children if you don't.

Dent pulls a gun, the immigrants panic, the boy's father is about to jump at Dent.

Ah, ah! Think of your other child!

The boy's mother looks at her son, forcing a smile. Dent tries to put the barrel in the boy's mouth.

Be a good boy, open up!
 (boy struggles not to)
 OPEN YOUR MOUTH, I SAID!!!

The terrified boy opens it, breathes heavily. Dent puts the barrel inside. The boy's father looks at Dent with hatred.

What are you?

The scared immigrants don't answer. The boy's father state changes from aggression to humility, begs through his eyes.

What are you?!!!
 (MORE)

DENT (CONT'D)
 (translator translates)
 Don't! All men understand the
 language of fear.

BANG! Dent's gun goes off. Child's mother breaks down, his
 father starts crying.

WHAT. ARE. YOU??!!!

The boy's father looks at his other child.

DAD
 (asian language)
 We are your workers... boss.

TRANSLATOR
 We are your workers, boss.

One by one, the immigrants start repeating in bad English. We
 yu wurks, buss! Weyu wurkrs buss! Dent leaves.

CUT TO BLACK. TITLE:

THE BAT-MAN: Rise and Fall

ALFRED (V.O.)
*There are no heroes in this story,
 Mr. Crane. Only bad guys and worse.*

CRANE (V.O.)
*You are surely exaggerating, Mr.
 Pennyworth.*

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

ALFRED (V.O.)
*If anything, I'm understating. This
 world poisons even the most noble
 and pure of minds.*

An untidy apartment, the only light cast by the TV. Books
 about mathematics on a table. JACK, 40's, watches a football
 game. The outcome isn't the one he hoped for. He picks up a
 book, rips out it's first, blank page and starts writing.

JACK (V.O.)
 Dear Matthew, life is like riding a
 bike, everybody thinks they own it.
 If I'm not the father you wished
 for, it's because life got the
 better of me.

(MORE)

JACK (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Dreams, as mighty as they might be,
turn to ashes when compromised by
money.

I/E JACK'S BUILDING - SAME TIME

Two dangerous looking men, COLLECTORS, enter the building.

JACK (V.O.)
I love mathematics, that's why I
became a teacher. But when you and
your sister were born, my paycheck
wasn't enough. So I got involved
with some very dangerous men.

The elevator is out of order. The collectors take the stairs.

Dangerous, but rich. I finally had
the opportunity to turn knowledge
into capital. They came to me with
this big thing. It was pretty easy:
Some calculations, some
permutations, reduce loss
probability to 1.8 percent and earn
myself a ridiculous amount of
money. You, your sister and your
mother would have been taken care
of for years to come.

The collectors stop in front of Jack's door.

But son, as well as you ride that
bike, inevitably there comes that
first bump you don't see. And when
you fall, you get hurt. The least.

The collectors kick the door in.

COLLECTOR #1
You in trouble now, Jack!

JACK
Gentlemen, it was an unfortunate
twist of events.

COLLECTOR #2
Damn right it was!

JACK
We had a 98.2 percent win
probability. Mr. Falcone said it
was an acceptable risk.

COLLECTOR #1
 You lost two million bucks, he
 don't accept that.

The collectors corner Jack, grab him and hold him down.
 Collector #1 pulls a knife.

Now you'll see what it means to
 fuck with Mr. Falcone.

JACK
 Stop! I'll come up with another
 system! I'll get his money back!

COLLECTOR #2
 You'll give him back two million?
 You're a real joker, aren't you?

Collector #1 cuts off Jack's lips. Collectors run away. Jack
 lies crying in a puddle of blood, his face a blood tap.
 Crawls to the table and grabs the letter.

INT. ARKHAM ASYLUM - NIGHT

CRANE (V.O.)
*Do you know where you are, Mr.
 Pennyworth?*

ALFRED PENNYWORTH, 59, handcuffed, is escorted by two ARKHAM
 GUARDS through a long corridor with cells on both sides.

ALFRED (V.O.)
Arkham Asylum, I suppose?

The most different kind of PSYCHOPHATS shout insults at him.

CRANE (V.O.)
*He can't find you in here. And if
 he does, he's done. Nobody makes it
 out alive, unless I wish it so.
 Gotham's most dangerous individuals
 are gathered under my roof. Do you
 really think he is skilled enough
 to deal with all of them?*

At a corridor intersection, they have to stop. ZSASZ (30's,
 bald, muscular, shirtless, body full of tally marks) passes
 in front of them, handcuffed. He's held by SIX GUARDS with
 long stick leashes. The inmates start cheering: Zsasz! Zsasz!

Zsasz sees Alfred and stops. A guard pulls. All of a sudden
 Zsasz swings his leg over the leash stick and pulls it down,
 drawing the guard towards him.

Zsasz headbutts the guard hard and starts walking all over him. We hear his skull breaking. Guards panic, they almost lose control over him.

One of them zaps Zsasz from behind with a teaser, he collapses. The guards force him back on his feet. Inmates jump up and down their cells, shouting Zsasz' name.

INT. ARKHAM INTERROGATION ROOM - NIGHT

DR. JONATHAN CRANE (50's, wearing a suit) and Alfred (hands and feet cuffed) sit at a table. Room filled with smoke. Alfred coughs as Crane blows cigarette smoke in his face.

CRANE

(reads from a file)

Alfred Pennyworth, 59, born in Brixton, former actor at the Royal Theatre in London. Diagnosed with cancer 32 years ago, he moves to the States where he lives in the house of his cousin in-law, Dr. Thomas Wayne, who treats and cures him. You see, I know everything there is to know about you. But your partner in crime? Now that's a whole other story. More than a decade missing from his records... Please be a good boy and fill in the gaps for me. Tell me all you know about *Bruce Wayne*.

Crane lights another cigarette, exhales smoke. Alfred coughs.

EXT. STREET IN GOTHAM - DUSK

ALFRED (V.O.)

An unfortunate twist of fate made him a very troubled young man.

THOMAS WAYNE (38), his son BRUCE (12) and wife MARTHA (33) walk towards the cinema. Bruce looks up at the movie-title: *The Mark of Zorro*

INT. CINEMA - LATER

Bruce's eyes wide open, overwhelmed by the magic of the big screen. His parents look smiling at each other. On the big screen, ZORRO fights his enemies.

EXT. STREET IN GOTHAM - NIGHT

They walk out of the cinema. Bruce fences with imaginary adversaries. He's a very cheerful boy, full of energy.

MARTHA WAYNE

Bruce, come back here, honey!

BRUCE

Yes, mom?

MARTHA WAYNE

You were wondering too far, you little musketeer. Shouldn't we grab a cab, Thomas? I don't think it's very safe around here this late.

JONATHAN WAYNE

People less fortunate than us walk these streets. They can't afford a cab and they manage. We shouldn't be living in fear in our own city. I remember times when you could take a walk with your family *after* sunset.

A MAN walks towards them, they try to avoid him, but he blocks their way. Sweating hard. Dementia, probably on drugs.

JONATHAN WAYNE (CONT'D)

Is there a pro-

THIEF

Shut the fuck up! Your wallets!

He draws a rusty knife.

JONATHAN WAYNE

Bruce, Martha, get behind me!
Here, take it and le-

THIEF

Tell her to give me the necklace.

MARTHA WAYNE

Thomas...

THIEF

Bitch, give me your necklace!!!

THOMAS WAYNE

You hold it right--

The thief, screaming, starts STABBING them. A lot of blood spills on the ground. Bruce freezes, shocked. He notices PEOPLE on the other side of the street, who see the crime and run away scared. The thief is still stabbing his parents.

Bruce looks at the puddle of blood getting bigger by the second. A shape in it's reflection: the thief now stands in front of him. Beat. He STABS Bruce. A CAR drives by and the thief runs away.

BRUCE
Mom? ... Dad?

We see their bloodshot eyes: Thomas Wayne is already dead, his look empty. Martha Wayne gives him a desperate look. Her heart and breathing stop, her look dies out.

SAME, later: Bruce sits on a gurney, a nurse straps a bandage to his chest, blood shows through. He doesn't move, his eyes stare blankly. Police everywhere. Right in front of him, the medics push gurneys with his parent's corpses.

I/E. - WAYNE HOUSE - NIGHT

NOTE: The two storey house and it's garage are big, but definitely no mansion.

Alfred checks on Bruce's room. It's empty. Worried, he walks to the bathroom.

ALFRED
Bruce, are you in there?

He hurries down the stairs into the kitchen.

Bruce?

Walks outside, to the pool, looks around, nothing.

INT - MASTER BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Alfred opens the door. He smiles, seeing Bruce lying on his parents' bed, apparently sleeping. He slowly closes the door.

BRUCE
Alfred?

ALFRED
Yes, Bruce?

BRUCE
They're going to take me away,
aren't they?

Alfred sits down on the edge of the bed.

ALFRED
Well, your parents named me your
guardian in their will, so I guess
I'm going to move in for good now.
Of course you'll be a nuisance,
considering all the parties I'm
going to throw here with your
parents money, so I'll clearly have
to get rid of you.

Alfred smiles, Bruce smiles back and they hug.

BRUCE
So I can stay here with you?

ALFRED
Yes, Bruce, this is *your* home.

ALFRED (V.O.) (CONT'D)
*It was the last time I saw Bruce
Wayne smile.*

INT. WAYNE HOUSE - NIGHT

1 AM: Alfred is woken up by undefined noises. He gets out of the bed and listens. He hears Bruce cry, runs up the stairs and enters the master bedroom. Bruce lies on the ground, crying his soul out. Alfred runs over to him and hugs him.

ALFRED
It's going to be all right, Bruce!

2 AM: Alfred holds Bruce tight, Bruce cries/screams, seemingly trying to escape Alfred's grip.

BRUCE
No! ... No!

ALFRED
It's going to be all right!

3 AM: Bruce, held by Alfred, is still crying. Eyes swollen, face full of slobber and snot. Torn apart by grief.

4 AM: Bruce still crying, louder than before. Alfred, with tears in his eyes, holds him tight.

ALFRED (CONT'D)
I promise you, Bruce, it's going to
get better eventually!

5 AM: Bruce's voice starts to break. Alfred is helpless, all
he can do is keep him from harming himself.

DUSK: Bruce lies in Alfred's lap. Eyes and nose swollen.
Exhausted, on the verge of falling asleep. Breathing hard.

ALFRED (V.O.) (CONT'D)
*That night he cried all the tears
reserved for his entire life.*

ALFRED (CONT'D)
It's going to be all right, Bruce.

BRUCE
(voice almost gone)
No it isn't.

A ray of light shines on Bruce's face.

I felt weak tonight, Alfred. I
never want to feel weak again.

FADE OUT. Alfred's voice fading away, whispering:

ALFRED (V.O.)
Smooth seas don't make good
sailors, Bruce.

INT. ARKHAM INTERROGATION ROOM - NIGHT

CRANE
How long did it take until he
recovered psychologically?

ALFRED
Oh, he didn't. Quite the contrary.

INT. WAYNE HOUSE - NIGHT

Alfred walks past Bruce room. Stops. He slowly enters. Bruce
sits on the bed. Stains of blood on the sheets.

ALFRED
Bruce?

Bruce turns, blood on his fingertips. He opened up the stab
wound stitches on his chest.

My god, what are you doing?

He kneels down in front of Bruce and takes a closer look at his chest. The wound is bleeding.

BRUCE

I never want it to heal. I never want to forget.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

The hallway is filled with kids. Big agitation. A BULLY keeps slapping another boy. Some kids laugh, others just look.

Bruce, angry, runs towards the bully and shoves him from behind. The bully hits the locker hard and collapses. He hardly manages to stand up, Bruce shoves him again. The bully stays down, with a bleeding broken nose.

BRUCE

Are you all right?

The bullied-around-kid nods. He looks scared at Bruce, clearly afraid of him, as are all the other children.

INT. HEADMASTER'S OFFICE - LATER

Bruce sits on a chair, calm.

HEADMASTER (O.S.)

Boys fight from time to time, it happens to children their age. But disfiguring a fellow student, that we can not tolerate, Alfred!

ALFRED (O.S.)

Trust me, I couldn't agree more. But the poor kid's been through a lot these past weeks.

HEADMASTER (O.S.)

I know that and we do our best to support him. All I'm asking you is to try and calm him down. I'll talk to the other boy's parents, I'm sure they'll overlook this incident. This one time.

ALFRED (O.S.)

Thank you.

HEADMASTER (O.S.)
Alfred, do the police have any
leads?

ALFRED (O.S.)
No, he's still out there.

EXT. SCHOOL - MOMENTS LATER

Alfred and Bruce walk out of the school.

ALFRED
You could have seriously injured
that boy!

BRUCE
He was humiliating that kid and
everybody just looked!

ALFRED
I'm not saying you were wrong
feeling what you felt, but you
didn't think, you just reacted.
They could take you away from me
for something like this.

BRUCE
I'm sorry.

Alfred crouches in front of Bruce.

ALFRED
You did the right thing, Bruce. But
with the wrong means. Do you know
who killed your parents?

(Bruce shakes his head)
I know.

(Bruce looks stunned)
It was a dumb man. Stupid.
Uncultivated. As a child he was
probably just like that kid you
beat up today. You think your dad's
murderer would have been there that
night if he would have studied in
school? It's mandatory for you to
become a smart man. When you do,
you'll be able to round idiots like
that bully around your little
finger.

BRUCE
A lot of good it did my father.

Bruce starts walking away, Alfred grabs his arm. Looks him straight in the eye, affronted by Bruce's words.

ALFRED

One was a respected member of society, the head of a superb family, a loving, providing father and husband. The other one a nameless, purposeless man with a knife in his pocket. Cutting throats to put food on his table. Which one would you like to be one day?

Bruce looks at Alfred and slowly nods.

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

He understood that the strong will always prey on the weak. And that weakness can become strength when using intelligence. I asked him what he'd rather be, strong or smart?

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

ALFRED (V.O.)

He chose both.

Bruce keeps a careful eye on the teacher and writes down everything he says.

INT. WAYNE HOUSE - DAY

Bruce studies, a lot of books lying before him.

I/E. SCHOOL - DAY

ALFRED (V.O.)

He signed up for almost every sport class the school offered.

Bruce plays different sports, he's very focused.

INT. WAYNE HOUSE - DAY

Bruce and Alfred sit face to face. Bruce cries his heart out and in an instant changes his face expression to happy.

ALFRED (V.O.)
Occasionally, I taught him acting techniques, how to build characters. He really enjoyed that, it was the only time we had a connection. Wearing an imaginary mask made him more sociable.

EXT. WAYNE HOUSE - DAY

ALFRED (V.O.)
At first he wasn't what you'd call the best athlete, but there was no convincing him to take it easy.

Alfred looks out the window. In the big yard, Bruce is target practicing. A big pile of baseballs next to him. One after the other, he throws them at his target, a plastic bottle. Misses every time.

INT. SCHOOL FESTIVITY ROOM - DAY

ALFRED (V.O.)
Two years have passed and Bruce became the perfect student.

The room is packed with parents. Alfred sits among them. Bruce walks to the middle of the stage where the headmaster is handing out diplomas. He obviously got taller, stronger.

HEADMASTER
 Bruce Wayne, captain of the football and baseball teams, highest achiever of Gotham High two years in a row now!

Everybody is clapping. Bruce looks as if he doesn't feel proud at all. He seems sad. He receives his diplomas and walks back into the bulk of students. Alfred looks worried, this clearly isn't a normal kid's behavior.

INT. CAR - MOVING - LATER

BRUCE
 I want to be home schooled.

ALFRED
 Oh?

BRUCE

Just wasting time at school. I'm already past the twelve grade material and there are so many more things to be learned.

Alfred is silent. He looks at Bruce through the rear mirror.

ALFRED (V.O.)

He was cutting himself off from society. I tried to oppose at first, but it was like blowing against a hurricane.

INT. WAYNE HOUSE - DAY

Bruce and his literature teacher sit at the table.

BRUCE

I think we're done for today. Thank you, Mrs. Debright.

MRS. DEBRIGHT

It's only been 15 minutes, Bruce.

BRUCE

Mrs. Debright, there's nothing left to learn. At the final exam I'll score a maximum amount of points and your quota will rise. So we'll take it easy, you'll come here once a week to do your obligatory attendance, check if I really am up do date with the matter and five minutes later we will drink a tea and say goodbye till next week. And you'll still get your money.

MRS. DEBRIGHT

Wouldn't be fair.

BRUCE

Let's talk about fair. My parents are six feet under while the man who put them there enjoys freedom. Come on, Mrs. Debright, there's no point hunting lions in a European forest, don't you agree?

MRS. DEBRIGHT

...I guess you're right.

Same setting, different teachers:

PHYSICS TEACHER

Yeah.

MATHEMATICS TEACHER

You're right.

BIOLOGY TEACHER

Good point.

CHEMISTRY TEACHER

Won't argue there.

LOGICS TEACHER

I don't know, Bruce...

Bruce looks at him very confident and challenging.

LOGICS

Guess you're right.

INT. WAYNE HOUSE - NIGHT

Bruce sits at his table with the lamp on, reads and writes.

ALFRED (V.O.)

*He kept his word, learned
everything he was supposed to. And
more.*

INT. WAYNE HOUSE - DAY

Alfred puts a big bunch of newspapers on Bruce's table.

ALFRED (V.O.)

A lot more.

He brings a big box, BRUCE WAYNE written on it. Bruce opens the box, which is filled with science books.

I/E. WAYNE YARD/HOUSE - DAY

Bruce plays the baseball-target game with multiple targets. He hits the bottles every single time. Minutes later, he enters the house with a towel around his neck, sweaty.

ALFRED (O.S.)

Can you please join me in the
kitchen?

Bruce enters the kitchen, Alfred holds some bills.

(MORE)

ALFRED (O.S.) (CONT'D)
You've written checks for martial
arts classes?

BRUCE
Yes.

ALFRED
For six different classes? Why
don't you continue playing baseball
or basketball? Coach Grim talked to
me about some teams you could join.
Said you could have a great career
as an athlete.

BRUCE
I'm not a team player, Alfred. Sign
those checks, it's my money.

Bruce walks out of the kitchen, leaving Alfred worried.

INT. DIFFERENT DOJOS - DAY/NIGHT

Bruce is training in different styles, from karate to boxing.

ALFRED (V.O.)
*And so it went on. More years of
ignoring life. Training, studying
and sleeping. That's all he ever
did. At 17 he excelled in almost
every discipline.*

INT. WAYNE HOUSE - DAY

Bruce sits on the sofa reading the Time magazine, Alfred
opens a big envelope. He reads out loud.

ALFRED
Dear Bruce Wayne, we are happy to
inform you that you have passed the
final exam with the maximum...
Pointless to continue, right? You
already know your score.

BRUCE
I want to start studying abroad.

ALFRED
Out of the question!

BRUCE
Wasn't asking.

ALFRED

Still not going to happen.

BRUCE

You're not my father, Alfred! You will sign the necessary papers and send me money whenever I'll need it! End of discussion!

(leaves)

CRANE (V.O.)

Boys at puberty. No respect for the elder, right?

ALFRED (V.O.)

That's what I thought back then, but in his twisted young mind, he had a plan. Meticulously engineered, but doomed to failure.

EXT. BUDAPEST - DAY/NIGHT

The 2006 Budapest riots: the Freedom Square is filled with angry citizens protesting against the government. Bruce, climbed on a statue, mouth covered with a black neckcloth, watches very carefully, taking in every detail.

COMENTATOR (V.O.)

At Budapest's Freedom Square, protestors stormed the headquarters of the Hungarian state television. They demanded the resignation of the prime minister, who admitted lying to the Hungarian people about the state of the country's economy in order to retain power.

TIME EFFECT: Time starts passing faster around Bruce, while he remains in the same position. The POLICE FORCES position themselves in front of the protestors and a very tactical ballet of violence begins:

The first row of policemen with shields come closer to the protestors, who throw stones at them. The policemen stop, take a step to their left and the second row steps forward between the gaps, shooting tear gas into the protestors. Then they duck back behind the first row, waiting for the gas to work.

The police forces attack, hard and merciless. Bruce stores every detail in his memory: the police movement, combat tricks. Suddenly, a TANK bursts into scene, followed by hundreds of protestors cheering and waving Hungarian flags.

COMENTATOR (V.O.)

A Soviet tank was seized by
protestors and driven towards the
police lines.

EXT. SORBONA LAW SCHOOL - PARIS - DAY

Bruce walks up the stairs of the law school, reading.

INT. AUDITORIUM - LATER

The PROFESSOR teaches class in an auditorium packed with
students.

NOTE: DIALOGUES ARE SPOKEN IN FRENCH WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES.

PROFESSOR

...murder of female victim. Suspect
was declared innocent due to lack
of evidence. The case is reopened
seven years later. With a new
forensic vacuum the police searches
for the killers DNA on the murder
weapon.

JAQUES, a very arrogant young man, sitting in the back.

JAQUUES

Does this device work? Does it find
the suspects DNA?

PROFESSOR

Yes.

JAQUUES

Then we got ourselves a conviction.

BRUCE

We don't.

Everybody turns to Bruce. The professor is intrigued.

He will invoke double jeopardy and
probably walk away.

PROFESSOR

Very well, monsieur Wayne!

The girls smile at Bruce. Jaques gives him a mean look.
Bruce's French isn't the best, but he manages.

BRUCE

If a defendant was tried for a crime and acquitted, he can not be tried again for the same crime. That's the law, our legal system. It's not working.

PROFESSOR

Of course it's not. Not at full potential, anyway. The law isn't as important as the ideals it stands for. They are the only thing keeping our society from tearing itself apart.

Enough for today, we'll finish a little earlier so you have time to make it home before sunset. Please stay indoors and far away from these riots. I don't see an end to them anytime soon.

STUDENT

Do you think it's wrong what they're doing, professor? Some say they're fighting for a just cause.

PROFESSOR

Dangerous thoughts, Mr. Leroix. The question is not whether their cause is just, but whether it's in the boundaries of the law. As much as we would sympathize with these protests, I wouldn't suggest any of you taking part in this. Stay away from the suburbs. It's where you live, isn't it, Mr. Wayne?

(Bruce nods)

I would consider moving out.

BRUCE

Thanks for your concern, professor, but I can't afford it.

EXT. PARIS SUBURBS - NIGHT

Bruce covers his face with a black neckcloth. Just like the other hundreds of RIOTERS. Everywhere around him BURNING CARS, rioters are setting them on fire with petrol bombs.

The POLICE forces are slowly approaching. Things rapidly get violent. The rioters start throwing stones.

One of them throws a petrol bomb and a policeman catches fire, his colleagues put him out. The rioter picks up a brick and wants to throw it. Bruce grabs his hand.

RIOTER

Let go! Are you on their side?

BRUCE

Not like this!

He looks deep into the rioter's eyes, who then runs away. Bruce turns his attention back to the fight. A strong, bearded man, DUCARD, 25, catches his eye: fighting against several police officers, like a lion against men who want to put him in a cage. He's slowly overrun by the cops.

Bruce piles into the cop mob. Kicks one cop in the shield, pushing him away. Starts throwing powerful punches. Some reach their targets, others don't. Now and then he's hit by the rubber batons.

Ducard, lying on the floor with a busted lip, watches impressed as Bruce fights off the cops. They now hold their distance, ready to attack at any moment, but happy if they don't have to. Bruce takes a few steps back, not losing his opponents out of sight. Helps Ducard on his feet.

BRUCE (CONT'D)

Come on!

They run off into the smoke.

EXT. SIDE ALLEY - MOMENTS LATER

They sit with their backs against the wall, breathing hard.

DUCARD

You know how to fight, mon ami!

BRUCE

So do you.

DUCARD

But you fight too clean, like in a comic book. Kia Kia!

(imitates karate)

You were lucky to escape.

BRUCE

Lucky enough to save your ass!

DUCARD

(laughs)

Still, out there, you have to fight dirty. I can teach you how.

BRUCE

Why?

DUCARD

So you can save my ass the next time too! Come, first we drink!

INT. BAR IN PARIS - NIGHT

Bruce, Ducard and others sit at a big table, drinking beer.

DUCARD

You heard of parkour, Bruce?

BRUCE

Yes, I often see these athletes running across the city.

DUCARD

(laughs)

Hear that, gentlemen? You're athletes! These fine gentlemen here are the most skilled parkour *athletes* you'll find on Earth.

PARKOUR GUY

Ducard says you're interested in extreme sports. You train with us first thing tomorrow morning.

DUCARD

No, no, gentlemen. Our American friend is a future lawyer. He has to study to get my ass out of jail. He'll train after school.

BRUCE

No, I'm done with school. Let's parkour!

EXT. STREETS OF PARIS - DAY/NIGHT

Bruce -now bearded- and the PARKOUR GANG do parkour in various locations. Incredible jumps. Most seem inhuman. Amazing agility and speed. You see parkour for the first time, you think this might be a trick. It's not.

INT. ABANDONED BUILDING - DAY

Bruce and Ducard, shirtless, wearing boxing gloves, are fighting. Ducard throws Bruce to the ground a few times, but in the end, Bruce has the upper hand. Ducard smiles, takes his gloves off and makes a fist

DUCARD
OK then, gloves off!

INT. BAR IN PARIS - NIGHT

Ducard, face bashed, has a cute girl sitting on each thigh. Bruce's face is also a mess.

DUCARD
You sure you don't wanna stay? Come on, look at my face, you earned it!

BRUCE
Sorry. You know I can't!

Bruce walks towards the exit.

CUTE GIRL 1
Why won't he stay?

DUCARD
He has training in the morning and needs his beauty sleep. Or has to read a book or whatever the fuck he's doing to "expand his limits".

CUTE GIRL 2
Your friend is weird.

DUCARD
Yes he is, love. He sure is.

INT. BRUCE APARTMENT - DAY

Hard knocking on the door. Bruce opens it. Ducard enters, half furious, half joking.

DUCARD
You son of a bitch!

BRUCE
What's wrong?

DUCARD

Janine! You're all she's talking about. Bruce, the sex god!

BRUCE

She said you sent her over to check if I'm gay.

DUCARD

... I am the sex god of Paris! You want to overthrow the king? What did you do to her?

BRUCE

Nothing special...

DUCARD

Couldn't you have done a little less of that *nothing special*?! This is gonna cost you so much beer! Common, I'm thirsty!

BRUCE

And the training?

DUCARD

Screw the training! My ego's damaged! We get wasted!

BRUCE

How about we mix them? You ever been to Berlin?

INT. NAZI BAR - BERLIN - NIGHT

Bruce and Ducard enter the bar. Packed with loud SKINHEADS. They walk to the counter. Smiling, Ducard puts on a Jewish hat, Bruce a hat with Jewish curls. The BARKEEPER comes to take their order. Seeing them, he freezes, shocked.

BRUCE

Shalom!

The skinheads gather around, menacingly.

DUCARD

I keep telling you we have to train outside the ring. Glad you listened

A skinhead breaks a bottle on the table surface. The next second, Bruce and Ducard are at their throats and a good old fashion bar fight starts.

EXT. BRANDENBURGER GATE, BERLIN - LATER

They sit on a bench, drinking beer, both with one eye swollen and lips busted.

DUCARD
I love Berlin!

BRUCE
Prost!

INT. FBI OFFICE, BOSNIA - DAY

We follow AGENT BRADLEY through the hallway, passing other AGENTS. He enters--

INT. BRUCE'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Bruce sits at his desk in front of the computer. Stands up.

AGENT BRADLEY
Mr. Wayne, Agent Bradley. Welcome to the FBI, the Bureau is thankful for every talented lad abroad.
(they shake hands)

BRUCE
I just want to serve my country the best I can, sir.

AGENT BRADLEY
Well then, Mr. Wayne, Information and Technology is just the right division for you.

EXT. MARKET PLACE, SOUTH AFRICA - DAY

Packed street. Hot sun. Bruce and a black man, a BOUNTY HUNTER, follow a man through the crowd. In exchange for a big envelope, he gives another man a stack of money .

BOUNTY HUNTER
See? Just like I told you, new papers to get across the border.

BRUCE
Let's get him.

BOUNTY HUNTER
(smiles)

(MORE)

BOUNTY HUNTER (CONT'D)

Why complicate things when we can do it the easy way? This is only the messenger. We stay on his tracks long enough, he'll take us directly to our prey.

The man gets moving, Bruce and Bounty Hunter follow.

INT. JEEP - MOVING - LATER

Bruce drives, Bounty Hunter clocks their weapons. They're following another jeep.

BOUNTY HUNTER

After he gives them the passports, we have a window of maximum five minutes to catch them. If they make it across the border, they're gone.

BRUCE

What will happen to them when we bring them in?

BOUNTY HUNTER

Not enough.

EXT. ABANDONED HOUSE - LATER

Bruce and Bounty Hunter hide behind a wrecked brick wall, observing. The pursued jeep is parked in front of a wrecked house. Behind the house, a black man, FUGITIVE 1 patrols. The "messenger" walks out and drives away.

BOUNTY HUNTER

Approach him from downwind, so he can't hear you. Ready?

Bruce nods. They run towards the house, ducked. Bruce runs at FUGITIVE 1 and knocks him to the ground. Turns him face down, zip-ties his hands and gags his mouth, all with amazing speed, like he's been doing this for years. Gunshot inside!

INT. HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Bruce enters carefully. Bounty Hunter stands holding his gun. Before him a thin, black man, FUGITIVE 2, screaming in pain. A hole in his knee, little chunks of flesh on his pants.

BRUCE

(relief)
OK, we got them.

BOUNTY HUNTER
 (aims at fugitive)
 Not just yet.

BRUCE
 NO! We got them, our job is done!

Bruce positions himself in front of Fugitive 2, who stopped screaming. He's scared to death,

BOUNTY HUNTER
 Dead or alive, American. They pay either way.

BRUCE
 This is wrong!

BOUNTY HUNTER
 What they did is wrong! Their crew *butchered* a whole village, killed old people and children! Raped the women and little girls. Then killed them. Now they were on their way to another country, where they would continue doing what they did here.

FUGITIVE 2
 (crying)
 No, I swear! I wouldn't.

BOUNTY HUNTER
 SHUT UP!!!

BRUCE
 We got'em! They'll be locked away!

BOUNTY HUNTER
 Is this your justice, American?! They kill innocent people and rape little girls and they're locked away for that? Is that punishment enough? You begged to be my apprentice, now you oppose me? How would you punish this man?

Bruce turns to the man, face full of hatred and aggression.

BRUCE
 This is no man, this is a *monster*.

Fugitive 2 puts his hands together, praying to Bruce.

FUGITIVE 2
 Please!

Bruce kneels down, grabs his hands and, while speaking, slowly starts CRUSHING his fingers. With disgust:

BRUCE

I would make sure he never touches
a woman again.

Fugitive 2's fingers are pointing at different directions, like a spindly tree, bent like wires. He screams in agony, trying to get away. No use, Bruce is much stronger.

I would make sure he never again
holds a gun in his hands.

With a sudden movement, Bruce snaps both his wrists. The hands of Fugitive 2 hang. He desperately shakes his head NO! Bruce slowly reaches for the man's knee and grabs it with both hands. Looks deep into his eyes.

And I would definitely make sure
this fuckin' piece of shit never
chases anyone in his life again.

CRACK! We hear the sound of his knee being destroyed. He stands up while the man whines and looks at Bounty Hunter.

BOUNTY HUNTER

You are cold, American. But you
make too much of your code of
justice. A flaw of youth.

Bruce, between Bounty Hunter and Fugitive 2, stands his ground, staring intensely. Bounty Hunter spits on the man. Walks to the exit, stops and without looking back:

When I was a little boy in Congo,
our village was raided by men like
him. My little sister was raped by
four men. Then they cut off her
ears and nipples...just for fun.
She was eleven.

(walks outside)

FUGITIVE 2

(weak)

Thank... you...

Bruce looks down at him with hatred. GUNSHOTS from outside.

EXT. BACK OF THE HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Bruce comes running. Fugitive 1 lies dead on his stomach, bullet wounds in his back. Bounty Hunter stands next to him, gun barrel smoking. He walks past Bruce.

BOUNTY HUNTER

Bend the law as much as you can,
make your own justice.

While Bruce just stares at the dead man, Bounty Hunter enters the house. We hear GUNSHOTS, Bruce doesn't react.

After a couple of seconds he snaps back to reality, walks to the jeep and drives away. Bounty Hunter walks out of the house. The jeep disappears in the distance.

INT. PARIS APARTMENT - DAY

Phone rings. PARKOUR GUY picks it up.

PARKOUR GUY

Oui?

BRUCE (V.O.)

How many bruises have you added
since we last spoke, mon ami?

PARKOUR GUY

Bruce! How you doing, brother?
Haven't heard from you in two
years.

BRUCE (V.O.)

Been here and there. The gang still
together?

PARKOUR GUY

More or less.

BRUCE (V.O.)

How about we move your parkour
training to more exotic places?

Parkour Guy smiles.

EXT. NATIONAL PARK RUGGED TERRAIN - DAY/NIGHT

MONTAGE:

--Bruce and the PARKOUR GANG are base jumping

--Bridge jumping

--High altitude parachuting

--The parkour gang glides over the canyon, wearing WINGSUITS, they fly with enormous speed

--Extreme mountain climbing. Muscles flex as Bruce and the gang climb to reach a very difficult spot

--Gang is *rope walking*. Incredible balance, it seems almost inhuman how they're balancing against the strong wind.

--Bruce walks on the rope towards the parkour gang gathered on the edge of the cliff. He's not secured with a safety rope like he should be. Strong wind blows, he flexes with the wind. The depth is enormous. Bruce reaches the edge

EXT. JAPAN, FISHERMAN HUT - DAY

An old man, YAKAMOTO, separates good from bad fish parts. Bruce, angry, enters and starts helping.

NOTE: JAPANESE WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES

YAKAMOTO

Another rejection, Wayne-san?

Bruce keeps on working, frustrated. Stops after a moment.

BRUCE

Yes, Yakamoto. The Bashida clan too denied me access to their training grounds. I'm speaking to the Tamada clan tonight. Someone has to take me in eventually.

Yakamoto shakes his head. A wise man who knows better.

INT. TAMADA CLAN BAR - NIGHT

Bruce walks in, the customers deliberately ignore him. Doesn't happen for the first time. He can't hide his frustration.

BRUCE

My name is Bruce Wayne. I humbly step in front of the honorable Tamada Clan, offering my service to preserve it in its high position.

Everybody ignores him. Bruce gets more frustrated.

(MORE)

BRUCE (CONT'D)

My dedication towards the causes of the clan will be limitless, my will won't be bent by man or nature.

AKINOBU

Nice poem. How long did it take you to memorize every word?

The people in the bar start laughing. Bruce loses patience.

BRUCE

I know ninjitsu is only dead for the world outside. The clans can't afford to shut ninjas out of their ranks.

People stop eating. Silence. Bruce has their attention. Akinobu, a clan member, stands up. With a look of despise:

AKINOBU

You want to be a ninja, Gaijin? Do you have any idea about the level of devotion and physical condition needed to undertake the training?

Bruce takes his shirt off: every muscle is perfectly visible, he isn't even flexing.

BRUCE

I am prepared.

Clan member walks close to him.

AKINOBU

Physically, maybe. But is your mind prepared? Are you ready to... kill?

He is probing Bruce's eyes intensely. Bruce tries to stare back, but slips an expression of uncertainty.

BRUCE

I am ready for anything you need me ready for.

AKINOBU

You *think* you are, but you're no killer.

He turns his back on Bruce and starts walking.

BRUCE

Akinobu!

AKINOBU stops. Tension in the room. He walks back to Bruce. Stops in front of him, noses almost touching.

AKINOBU

In over fifteen centuries, not once was a gaijin trained in the arts of real ninjitsu. There never was a shinobi from the outside and there never will be, especially not an American. Do you know why, gaijin?

Bruce looks at him, understands Akinobu's NO is a final one.

Because you people are shallow, you have no conception of honour or devotion. You have a false conception about love and would do anything and kill anyone for money. I will die before I let our culture be infected by your kind. Now get out of here before I put a blade through your throat!

EXT. FISHERMAN HUT - NIGHT

Bruce kicks the fire-place. Yakamoto calmly eats his noodles.

BRUCE

The nerve! Calling me unworthy!
That racist piece of shit!

YAKAMOTO

Bruce san! Be rational.

BRUCE

I *am* rational! All of my life I've been *rational*! It's what led me to this point. Years and years of training and planing, pushing my body to it's limits. To be ready for this! For the last step! It was all in vain if I can't receive the ninja training. All this strength and agility... I have to be taught how to use it!

YAKAMOTO

I think there is a reason for you being rejected. Failures lead man to his true purpose in life.

Bruce sits down at the fire, desolated.

There is a place, far from here, up
in the mountains.

EXT. TEMPLE - DAY

A huge field in front of a monastery, or is it a fortress?
Hard to say. Hundreds of people sitting on the field. Bruce
walks in the middle of the crowd and sits down.

YAKAMOTO (V.O.)

*Few people made it in and less left
it. So few, that we don't know if
the stories about them are true or
just glorified legends.*

BRUCE (V.O.)

What legends?

YAKAMOTO (V.O.)

*They say they were masters of
masters, wielding a knowledge of
the martial arts never seen before,
their bodies shaped to perfection,
fast like dragons. Their wisdom
unparalleled and their skills
unmatched. If half of what they say
is true, that is the place you're
searching for.*

ONE SHOT, TIME EFFECT: Time passes. People fade out. It gets
colder. Bruce sits, unmoved. More people fade out. Bruce
remains in the same position. It is raining, the last ones
walk away, coughing. Bruce still there.

BRUCE (V.O.)

Won't they turn me down?

YAKAMOTO (V.O.)

*They don't choose according to
origin. You will go there, you will
fast for seven days and wait to be
called upon, as long as it takes.*

It starts snowing. Bruce is in terrible condition. Dark eye
rings. Dehydrated. Eyes dazed.

YAKAMOTO (V.O.)

Goodbye, Wayne-san!

Bruce collapses. The huge gates open.

Moments later: TWO MONKS carry him inside. He's unconscious.

INT. TEMPLE - 2 DAYS LATER

Bruce slowly opens his eyes. He lies on a thin mattress. Looks a little better, but still like hell. He's very dizzy. An old Asian man, MASTER KIRIGI, sits in front of him.

MASTER KIRIGI

Your name or your past are of no concern to me. To be here, you were willing to make the ultimate sacrifice, a great passion is fueling your goal. From now on you will be called The Impassioned One.

BRUCE

(weak)
The training...

INT. TEMPLE HALLWAY - DAYS LATER

A huge hallway with great pillars is illuminated by big candles. Bruce wipes the floor, on his knees.

MASTER KIRIGI (V.O.)

We will train you until you have the means to fulfill your purpose. First, you have to learn patience.

Two monks walk past Bruce and greet.

MONK

Impassioned One.

Bruce nods respectfully and continues wiping.

MASTER KIRIGI (V.O.)

For a year you'll be the temple's housekeeper. You will use this time to get to know it's inhabitants, learn their languages.

INT. LI'S DOJO - WEEKS LATER

Bruce mops the balcony over a round shaped dojo, hears voices from downstairs and slowly walks to the balcony's edge.

MASTER KIRIGI (V.O.)

You will have access to our training grounds, after the monks finish training. You may watch, but under no circumstance disturb the training.

Master CHU CHI LI stands before his STUDENTS. Next to him stands a MONK covered head to toe in acupuncture needles, hundreds. Walks to another MONK. A single long thin needle stands out of his neck.

CHU CHI LI
 Know the human body and you'll be
 able to defend yourselves even when
 you're old and weak.

He taps the needle and the monk collapses soundless.

INT. TSUNEMOTO'S DOJO - DAY

Bruce mops around the dojo. TSUNEMOTO, ex-ninja, holds a kendo sword, so do the SIX MONKS surrounding him. They wait for the right moment to strike.

MASTER KIRIGI (V.O.)
*Master Tsunemoto will teach you the
 arts of the ninjutsu.*

BRUCE (V.O.)
I will be taught by a ninja?

MASTER KIRIGI (V.O.)
*You will be taught to stay alive,
 not to kill. Those days are over
 for master Tsunemoto.*

TSUNEMOTO
 Hai!!!

The monks attack. With unbelievable speed, the kendo swords slap against each other. Tsunemoto's a fury, wielding his sword perfectly. After a short, breathtaking fight, he battles them to a stalemate. Bruce looks amazed.

INT. SHAOLIN DOJO

Bruce mops the floor, he's grown a beard. In the dojo, SHAO LA, a bald female master, 50's, demonstrates to her pupils.

MASTER KIRIGI (V.O.)
*Master Shao La will make your body
 hard as a rock and your mind light
 as a feather.*

She closes her eyes, gathers her strength. Two monks hit her hard in the back with wooden bats, which break. She punches through a pile of bricks standing in front of her.

She notices Bruce staring. Fire in his eyes, with a thirst for learning her skills.

SHAO LA
Patient One! You want all this.

BRUCE
Yes.

SHAO LA
And you will keep wanting it on the day you die.

BRUCE
Master Shao La?

SHAO LA
Kung fu requires inner peace, there's none in you. Only anger and eagerness to learn the means to defeat your demons.

Bruce is caught red-handed. She looks deep into his eyes.

What *would* you do to them if you had the means?

INT. TRAINING ROOM

Bruce hits the wooden doll extremely hard, sweaty and angry.

BRUCE (V.O.)
And what will you be teaching me?

INT. TEMPLE - BACK TO PRESENT

Bruce lying on the mattress, master Kirigi sits next to him.

MASTER KIRIGI
Probably the most important thing, when you'll be ready. But that will take long years. Rest now, tomorrow you begin. There are a lot of corners this temple needs cleaned.

Kirigi stands up and walks away. Bruce closes his tired eyes.

INT. TSUNEMOTO'S DOJO

Bruce and Tsunemoto sit face to face, cross legged. A candle between them is the only light source.

TSUNEMOTO

Patient One, are you ready to
become the Invisible One?

Bruce stands up and walks backwards, out of the light.
Tsunemoto smiles.

The logical step. Won't be that
easy with two light sources. Shen?

A candle lights up next to Bruce, revealing a monk, SHEN.
Bruce walks away from Shen, hiding in the remaining darkness.

TSUNEMOTO (CONT'D)

Chongan, if you may.

Another candle, lit by CHONGAN reveals Bruce. He hides again.

Hiro?

Same story. Bruce hides again.

Kasem!

BRUCE (O.S.)

Come on, really?!

Same. Bruce turns to Tsunemoto, but he's gone. He looks to
the one corner still covered in darkness, a tiny little spot.

TSUNEMOTO (O.S.)

To be truly invisible, you have to
learn light...

Tsunemoto straightens and walks out of the darkness.

...and then *kill* your shadow.

EXT. TEMPLE YARD - MINUTES LATER

Bruce and the monks are performing a kata.

INT. LI'S DOJO

Master Chu Chi Li invites Bruce to attack. He does, Chu Chi
Li takes the attacks apart with his efficient aikido style.
He shows Bruce where to hit. Bruce nods and assumes position.

INT. TSUNEMOTO'S DOJO

Bruce and Tsunemoto sit face to face, candle between them.

TSUNEMOTO

To avoid light, you have to *know*
light. To *be* light.

Bruce doesn't understand.

Open your mind to things you do not
consider logical. Things we
discovered on this side of the
planet thousands of years ago,
things you mock, driven by science.
But you will become light, Patient
One! We will stare into this flame
until it dies out. Then you will
understand.

EXT. TEMPLE YARD - DAY

Bruce and the monks in low Kiba Dachi positions, a bowl of
water in each stretched hand, on each thigh and on the head.
All breathe and sweat heavily. Shao La watches.

INT. TSUNEMOTO'S DOJO

The flame is almost out, it flickers very weak. Bruce looks
into it. Woosh! It's out. A few seconds of pure darkness.

TSUNEMOTO (V.O.)

Are you light, Patient One?

Tsunemoto lights a candle, raises it and looks around. Bruce
is not to be seen. He smiles and lights another one,
stretches his arms to the side and slowly rotates,
enlightening different parts of the dojo. Bruce remains
hidden. Tsunemoto smiles pleased.

EXT. TEMPLE YARD - DAY

The monks hit sand in the open sacks in front of them with
bloody knuckles. They hit in precise coordination with each
other, no expression of pain on their faces, only
determination.

Winter. It snows. Now they are punching cold water in big
barrels. It splashes over their naked chests.

INT. TRAINING ROOM - DAY

Bruce exercises aikido and Chun Chi Li's pressure points on a wooden model. He is very sweaty, must be at it for hours. Shao La enters the room.

SHAO LA

They should call you the Overzealous One.

(Bruce ignores her)

Or the Stupid One!

BRUCE

(stops)

Master Shao La?

SHAO LA

You keep pumping raw power into that body, but your mind doesn't know what to do with it. I never see you meditate. You, like all Westerners ignore the power of the mind. Brute force is all you know, always has been.

She walks to the puppet. Draws breath and sweeps off the puppet's wooden arms with a powerful hit. Bruce is amazed.

You know what that was, Invisible One? *Chi*. I am one with my chi, you haven't even found your's.

(starts walking away)

BRUCE

Teach me!

SHAO LA

When you're ready.

INT. NINJUTSU DOJO

The monks train in pairs, practicing their blade skills. Tsunemoto watches. Bruce defeats his partner easily.

BRUCE

Master Tsunemoto! I wish to train without the sword.

TSUNEMOTO

(pointing at door)

Then you are free to go train in another master's dojo.

BRUCE

You misunderstand. I want to continue learning the art of sword fighting. *Without* the sword.

Tsunemoto looks intrigued.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

The monks eat. Bruce sees Shao La walk out of the temple, followed shortly by a dozen students. He follows her with his eyes as she enters another temple entrance alone.

BRUCE (CONT'D)

Min, where do our teachers go after training? Where do they sleep?

Min points at the enormous wall at the end of the yard.

MIN

On the other side.

INT. SHAOLIN DOJO

Shao La conducts the training. Bruce walks in, stops at the edge of the dojo. Shao La makes a sign, the monks stop.

BRUCE

I'm ready.

SHAO LA

Show me.

She points at the wooden dummy. Bruce walks over, concentrates and lashes down. CRACK! We hear bones break. Bruce screams, but rapidly chokes his scream. He walks out of the room with his hand hanging. Shao La smiles.

EXT. TEMPLE YARD - DAY

Bruce, with his legs split and a splint on his right arm, meditates.

INT. NINJITSU DOJO

Bruce stands in front of the burning candle. He hears words echoing in the darkness, but he can't determine the source. He's very tense.

TSUNEMOTO (O.S.)

Use the walls to change the sound's direction. Mislead your opponent, he'll expect the attack from one direction...

Bruce turns to his left, the source of Tsunemoto's words.

...but it comes from the opposite.

Bruce is punched from his right. He straightens and walks slowly backwards, away from the light.

No! We have to sharpen your senses.

Bruce takes a step back into the light. Concentrates. WHAM! Another hit from the back. He tries to strike back, but Tsunemoto is already gone.

That candle is the only chance for you to see my attacks coming.

Bruce concentrates. Behind him, we see a shape coming out of the darkness. Bruce knows it's there. He punches the air in front of the candle, the candle goes out, revealing with it's last breath Tsunemoto. Total darkness.

BRUCE (O.S.)

Kia!!

We hear someone fall to the ground.

TSUNEMOTO (O.S.)

I'm impressed, Invisible One! Come on, help me up!

EXT. TEMPLE YARD - DAY

The monks do push-ups on one finger. Bruce, having one hand broken, does push ups on one hand with one finger.

INT. NINJUTSU DOJO

Sword fight training. Bruce's back is full of bruises, face bashed. His partner attacks, Bruce dodges the first two blows, is hit by the third one and put down by the fourth.

INT. SHAOLIN DOJO

Shao La teaches the monks. Bruce enters the dojo and walks to the dummy without saying a word. The monks stop.

Bruce gathers his chi. He hits with his left hand. CRACK! It breaks. Keeping himself from screaming, he walks out.

SHAO LA

When you meditate, your chi is right there, in front of you, but you can't see it in all the chaos that is your soul. You can't be the Unbreakable One if you break!

EXT. TEMPLE YARD - DUSK

Bruce meditates. Both hands in hand splints. In the distance, master Kirigi and Shao La watch him.

SHAO LA

He is *hate* in its purest form. He'll never be ready.

MASTER KIRIGI

Help him. Prepare him for the *liberation*. Your training is the last step he lacks.

SHAO LA

No.

MASTER KIRIGI

Shao La, please. He needs the liberation as much as Tsunemoto did

SHAO LA

But Tsunemoto has *murdered*. As an assassin he killed scores.

MASTER KIRIGI

Yes, but he hasn't. Yet. If we don't kill the demon within him before it takes control, he'll be just like Tsunemoto in his days of shame, worse maybe. We have to save him from what he might become. Isn't this the reason we opened this temple?

SHAO LA

Your trust in this man will bring you great regret, Kirigi.

INT. SHAOLIN DOJO

Bruce does shaolin fighting under Shao La's guidance.

INT. NINJUTSU DOJO

Partner sparring. Bruce elegantly evades his opponent's wooden blade, very acrobatic and elastic. He's in a tremendous physical shape. Tsunemoto nods pleased.

INT. SHAOLIN DOJO

Bruce does more extreme shaolin training. Shao La looks worried. Master Kirigi enters. He looks at her and nods.

INT. TEMPLE CORRIDOR - MINUTES LATER

Master Kirigi, Bruce and a monk walk through a corridor. Bruce notices spatters of blood on the floor.

MASTER KIRIGI

You are one last step away from liberation.

BRUCE

What is the liberation?

MASTER KIRIGI

It is the reason you are in this temple, the purpose of your lives. The years of training will culminate in this final experience.

They stop in front of a large wooden door. To Bruce:

You wait here, you'll go in second.

Kirigi opens the door, he and the monk walk in. Door shuts.

INT. CORRIDOR - LATER

Bruce sits on a bench. Listens to the fight sounds behind the door. The noise stops. Silence. The door opens, two men drag the monk away. He's beaten badly, can hardly open his eyes.

As he is dragged past Bruce, the monk looks at him and smiles. Bruce looks at the trail of blood the monk leaves behind. He turns and walks towards the door.

INT. ARENA - CONTINUOUS

Bruce enters the arena. Blood on the floor. Eight monks with wooden swords and long wooden sticks in the center. Master Kirigi, Shao La, Tsunemoto and Chun Chi Li stand behind them.

Bruce stops, the warriors start circling him. He assumes fighting position, tense. Beat. Warriors attack. While the fight rages, Kirigi walks up and down the dojo, explaining:

MASTER KIRIGI

The training you received wasn't chosen randomly. For the last step towards liberation to succeed, you need to prove to yourself that your body can do things the mind thinks are impossible. You have to defeat eight warriors who received the same training you did, who are as strong and determined as you are and have defeated all who stood here before you.

Your mind and your body have to work together to elaborate a plan to overcome an impossible task. Your assimilated personas have to complete each other perfectly:

To even the odds, the UNTOUCHABLE ONE has to wear them out. Let them put as much energy as possible in their attacks, while you get hit as seldom as you can.

For the Untouchable One to be able to keep up this insane tempo, you'll have to be the INEXHAUSTIBLE ONE.

Maybe during the years of training, you've learned a few tricks, haven't you... INVISIBLE ONE?

Bruce constantly takes the fight to the flames that burn on the edges of the arena. One by one, he puts them out, making the room darker. He jumps from darkness to darkness, hitting from the shadows at the right moment.

Master Kirigi calmly walks from one extinguished flame to the other and reignites them. By the time the room is bright again, Bruce incapacitated two adversaries.

Good, but six against one are still unsurpassable odds. The PATIENT ONE has to wait, to memorize his enemies' fighting patterns and the weaknesses in their techniques. He'll take a lot of punishment so you'll need the UNBREAKABLE ONE.

Bruce stays close to his opponents, like a boxer, concentrating on memorizing as many fighting moves as possible. He is hit hard. Some hits he can block, others not. DONE! He memorized the patterns. He focuses and--

When every persona has done it's part, it's time for the INVINCIBLE ONE.

Bruce blocks a blow from the attacker facing him, punches him in the neck and almost simultaneously kicks the aggressor behind him in the stomach. Both go down grasping for air.

Two monks with kendo swords attack. Bruce screams and runs towards them, delivering furious and fast kung fu punches, at the same time dodging their swords. Sends one of them unconscious to the ground. It looks like Bruce will win this. BAM! He is hit by a wooden blade in the back, goes down. He tries to stand back up, another hit to the head sends him back to the floor.

Four minutes against eight adversaries. Very pleasing.

BRUCE

But I didn't become the Invincible One.

MASTER KIRIGI

(smiles)

There is no Invincible One. Never was, never will be. Your body can't be invincible, only your mind. This is the closest you'll ever come to physical perfection. But it was enough for the next step. Take him to his quarters! When you recover, we'll start with your liberation.

Two monks drag Bruce away. He drifts into unconsciousness.

EXT. BEHIND THE WALL - DAY

Days have passed. Bruce and master Kirigi walk across an almost magical garden. Some older monks sit on the greenest grass possible, meditating, others take a walk, everybody is extremely calm.

MASTER KIRIGI

The other side of the wall belongs to your past now. You will leave everything you were behind.

BRUCE
Is this part of the liberation?

MASTER KIRIGI
Yes.

BRUCE
What exactly is the liberation?

MASTER KIRIGI
We are all sons of war. Our society, as well as yours, was shaped by war and violence. All martial arts were birthed by violence with violence as their purpose. We pass them on to our offspring, because they're an inseparable part of our culture. We are proud of them and develop them to perfection. You are now the wielder of countless martial arts. You know how dangerous you have become. Only the mind of a body so deeply bathed in violence can see how unnecessary it is.

BRUCE
I don't understand.

MASTER KIRIGI
We are living our lives wrong! I will teach you to forget everything we taught you. This will take five years. Then you'll know life's true meaning and you will truly live.

He points at the monks that are meditating.

BRUCE
I don't want to forget what I was taught.

MASTER KIRIGI
I picked you because I've seen what drives your every move. Thirst for revenge. Hate. It has begun many years ago and your soul is almost entirely consumed. You of all people need this.

BRUCE
No.

MASTER KIRIGI

Let us save your soul, let it blossom instead of infecting it with darkness.

(tears surface)

BRUCE

I can't. I'll walk my own path. This darkness inside me, I need it.

MASTER KIRIGI

It will consume you. Please!

BRUCE

Forgive me.

Kirigi gently touches Bruce's face. Shao La watches from the distance.

MASTER KIRIGI

Your soul. A shame it'll die young.

(Bruce walks away)

You were my best pupil. And my greatest disappointment.

Kirigi sits down on a bench with his head inclined, crying. Shao La comes from behind and puts her hand on his shoulder.

We failed him, Shao La.

EXT. TEMPLE MAIN ENTRANCE - LATER

Bruce, a bag on his back, exits the temple.

SHAO LA (O.S.)

You brought shame to this temple.

Bruce stops, turns and faces a very mad Shao La.

BRUCE

I can't accept what he's offering.

SHAO LA

You refuse inner peace but welcome a life of violence? You are truly lost then.

Bruce walks over to her.

BRUCE

If there's something I hate, it's hypocrisy.

(MORE)

BRUCE (CONT'D)

I'm honest to myself, know what I am, what I will become, and I accept it. But you, Shao La... You live on the other side of the wall, feeding bullshit to your precious inner peace. I see the passion in your eyes when you use your chi and you feel bricks hard as rock break under the pressure of your bones. I know that's the real you. You need it every day, or you'd go insane in that little paradise of yours.

Shao La is caught red-handed.

SHAO LA

I once asked you what you would do to your demons if you had the means to fight them. Now you do and you owe me an answer.

Bruce leans forward and whispers in her ear.

BRUCE

I will burn trough them like a purifying fire, break every single bone in their body, til they are no more demons, but plain, mortal men.

SHAO LA

And who will purify you?

INSERT: Bruce as a child happy with his parents in the Wayne House yard.

BRUCE

Death.

INT. WAYNE HOUSE - DAY

ALFRED (V.O.)

After twelve long years Bruce Wayne returned home, to Gotham City.

Bruce puts down his luggage, Alfred stands before him, overwhelmed by emotions, so happy to see him.

ALFRED

Bruce. My God, you have grown!

He walks towards Bruce, who stops him by putting his hand on Alfred's shoulder. Bruce is distant.

BRUCE

I'm happy to be home. You look good, Alfred.

He walks past a raddled Alfred and up the stairs.

I hope you could arrange for the things I asked you over the phone.

Alfred looks stunned.

BRUCE (O.S.) (CONT'D)

We have to move stuff out of the study, I'll use it as a gym.

Bruce walks down the stairs in a haste.

Can I take your car for a spin?

ALFRED

Technically *your* car, go ahead.

Bruce walks out of the house.

I/E. GOTHAM STREETS - CAR - MOVING - DAY

Bruce drives trough the streets of Gotham. The GOTHAM NEIGHBORHOODS are full of BEGGARS, deserted buildings, all for sale, everything is "grey", cold. DRUG DEALERS. HOOKERS. People search for food in garbage cans. A naked old CRAZY WOMAN runs across the street.

UPTOWN Gotham. At the entrance of skyscrapers: MEN in suits, laughing. Luxury cars. Elegance. Style.

INT. WAYNE MANSION KITCHEN - NIGHT

Alfred walks into the kitchen. Bruce sits at the table, a big map of Gotham stretched in front of him. He's very focused.

ALFRED

Bruce?

Bruce looks at him, then back to the map, reflective. The silence is very unpleasant for Alfred.

Can't sleep?

BRUCE

It's gotten worse, Alfred. A lot worse. I expected a degradation over the years, but not like this.

(MORE)

BRUCE (CONT'D)

(shows on map)

The population moved to the periphery. Only the rich ones remained in their own little luxury fortress. Entire areas are abandoned, the suburbs empty, most moved to the cheap hoods. They're overcrowded, boiling with tension. What led Gotham to degradation and emigration? What happened, Alfred?

ALFRED

Politics. Banks. Greed. Corruption. The same diseases that sooner or later bring every great society to it's knees.

BRUCE

Has everyone abandoned this city?

ALFRED

Not everyone. There are still some fighting to keep Gotham alive. District Attorney Harvey Dent and a few others. Not nearly enough. People are scared. The hoods they live in are controlled by the mob and the police keeps out of them. Most are dirty cops and stay out on purpose, the few who aren't are too afraid to go in.

BRUCE

Father would be so disappointed.

ALFRED

He would.

Bruce sits in his chair, angry and determined.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Bruce walks in a haste towards a bar. His face has the same determination it has in the previous scene. In front of the bar a lot of choppers, THOUGH GUYS exiting and entering.

INT. BAR - CONTINUOUS

The smoke is thick enough to cut with a knife. Bar is packed with THUGS. Clearly the most of them don't have legit jobs.

BRUCE

A minute of your time, boys!

They slowly turn down the chat volume.

Unexpectedly, I have a spare hour
tonight and my balls are full. So
would you gentlemen be so kind and
tell me which ones of your mothers
I haven't boned yet?

Beat. The nearest guy to Bruce punches him in the face. Bruce falls over a table, breaking all the glasses. Wipes the blood off his busted lip and smiles.

If they aren't too ugly, I can do
at least two!

A boot kicks him in the face. Hard. Bruce stands up, almost laughing, satisfied with the level of violence he is receiving. He assumes fighting position.

Bring it!

All thugs attack at once. What looks like a classic, good old bar fight at first, quickly turns into a very violent one. Bruce punches and kicks with amazing speed, but obviously does not want to avoid all attacks.

A thug draws a knife and stabs him in the leg and shoulder. Another one breaks a chair on his back. A third one hits him in his face with a bottle, which brakes, cutting him badly.

Pool sticks and brass knuckles take their toll on Bruce's flesh. When the punishment he takes edges death, Bruce turns on the engines. Placing powerful hits that knock out his adversaries instantly, he makes an escape route out of the huge mass of muscle and fists, bolting to the window.

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

Bruce jumps through the window, resulting in more cuts. Stands up and runs limping in a side alley. The thugs laugh. Suddenly, engines roar in the side alley and strong headlights go on. The tough guys stop laughing. Beat.

A CAR drives out of the alley towards the bar. The thugs step back but just before impact the car makes a hard right and drives away.

INT. CAR - MOVING - CONTINUOUS

Bruce is beaten so bad he's unrecognizable. The wounds won't stop bleeding. He breathes hard. Puts on a racing helmet and fastens a very broad double seat belt. Pedal to the floor. Speedometer needle rising. And rising.

EXT. STREET CORNER - CONTINUOUS

The car hits a fire hydrant, goes nose over tail, hits a building wall hard and lands on the street, completely wasted. Beat.

Bruce crawls out, takes off the helmet, separates the airbag and the double seat belt from the car and throws them inside a trash container in a side alley. Walks back to the car, dialing a number on his cell phone. Reaches the car and sits down.

ALFRED (V.O.)

Bruce?

BRUCE

They will call you, give you some terrible news. You'll act shocked, knowing that I'm all right and this is all part of the plan.

ALFRED (V.O.)

What plan? Bruce!

Bruce hangs up, breaks the phone with his bare hand, throws it in the car. Unwraps a whiskey bottle, opens it and drinks half the bottle. He crawls back into the vehicle, lies on his back. SIRENS approaching.

BRUCE

There you go!

He closes his eyes. Pleased.

INT. WAYNE HOUSE - LATER

Alfred sits in the dark in front of the phone, edgy. It suddenly rings, he immediately answers.

ALFRED

Yes... Yes, I understand. I'll be there as soon as I can.

Puts the phone down, then sinks his face into his palms.

EXT. GOTHAM CITY HOSPITAL - DAY

ALFRED (V.O.)

The media blew the incident out of proportion. Bruce was rich, yes, but certainly no billionaire. Had a nice home and thanks to the patents for Wayne Medical Tech a fortune of maybe 15 million. Vultures...

Media gathered at the entrance of the hospital.

ANCHOR (V.O.)

Bruce Wayne, one of Gotham's spoiled sons, recently returned from a twelve year globe-trotting where he spent all the family fortune and instantly draws attention in a manner worthy of a rock star.

Last night around midnight he miraculously survived a car crash.

(FOOTAGE of the wreckage)

Mr. Wayne had a blood alcohol level of 0.121 and sources inside Gotham General tell us he's still extremely drunk, refusing to stay in hospital and declining medical care. He allegedly hit a doctor when he tried to stitch one of the many wounds on his disfigured face.

Bruce and Alfred walk out the entrance, reporters gather around them, asking questions and taking pictures. Bruce's head is bandaged, but he intentionally lets his face show: deep cuts, some wounds probably infected.

As you can see, the scars are very deep, and Bruce Wayne will probably remain mutilated for the rest of his life.

Alfred helps Bruce into the car. Reporters buzzing around.

REPORTER

Mr. Wayne! Mr. Wayne!

(to Alfred:)

A few questions, sir!

ALFRED

Look, I've heard the same questions all morning a hundred fold. Yes, he spent all of the family fortune in Europe.

(MORE)

ALFRED (CONT'D)

Yes, I have signed for his release.
Yes, Mr. Wayne *has* a drinking
problem and no, he will probably
never get over it. Now please leave
us alone. While he was away I lived
in peace, please allow me to
continue doing so.

He enters the car and drives away.

INT. CAR - MOVING - CONTINUOUS

Bruce sits in the back. Alfred looks at him through the rear
window. The silence is killing him.

ALFRED

Would you mind telling me why you
had me empty all your accounts and
declare you broke?

(Bruce is absent)

Or why I helped you drag the Wayne
family name through the mud?

(Nothing)

Bruce?

BRUCE

Soon.

ALFRED

Bruce!

BRUCE

You will be given necessary details
in the near future! Now drive and
let me think!

INT. ARKHAM INTERROGATION ROOM

CRANE

What a jerk, right?

ALFRED

You don't know the half of it.

CRANE

Please, Mr. Pennyworth, do tell me
until I know. And then the other
half too.

He blows cigarette smoke in Alfred's face. Alfred coughs.

EXT. GOTHAM HOOD - NIGHT

An old HOMELESS MAN with a big, dirty beard (Bruce in disguise) shoves a cart through a red-light-district-like street. Strong red neon lights.

ALFRED (V.O.)

*He soon started doing recon walks,
as he called them. He infiltrated
society's lowest circles. Said that
in order to get to the big guys who
pull the strings, you have to start
at the bottom, learn how their
soldiers operate.*

He walks past hookers, pimps, drug dealers. Behind him a HOOKER walks to a car. The window lowers. Bruce listens.

HOOKER

How much do you want to invest?

GUY IN CAR

Fifty.

HOOKER

You five-o? Because if you a pig,
they gonna cut you like one.

She points at her pimps, two MEXICAN THUGS.

GUY IN CAR

N-no, no cop, Miss.

HOOKER

OK, sweetie, let's have ourselves a
good time!

She enters the car, which drives past Bruce. He's frown.

EXT. SIDE ALLEY - NIGHT

"Homeless" Bruce and some real HOMELESS PEOPLE stand around a garbage bin fire and pass around a bottle of cheap booze. Bruce listens very carefully.

HOMELESS #1

Come on, man! It's the Maroni's who
run shit in the Upper Side.

HOMELESS #2

Bullshit! Since Dent put Maroni
behind bars, Falcone's taken over.
(MORE)

HOMELESS #2 (CONT'D)

He put more soldiers out on the streets than any of his predecessors. He's really holding on to that district.

HOMELESS #3

No wonder. It's a gold mine for the drug business.

BRUCE

What about challengers? No new players want in on the cut?

HOMELESS #2

(laughs)

Hey new guy, you're not from around here, are you? You don't fuck with the Falcones. These are hard core guys. Broke Greg's arm for begging in the Bowery.

GREG, a homeless guy with a hanging arm:

GREG

Motherfuckers! Said they'd chop off the other one if they ever catch me in their neighborhood again.

HOMELESS #2

Some punks started dealing in the Bowery a couple of weeks ago. They ran into one of Falcone's psychos. One of them got lucky, poor fella got his throat cut and died quickly, but the other one... The pigs found the man lying in the middle of the street. Bled out. More than hundred stab wounds. Nine knives still deep in his corpse.

HOMELESS #1

Fuckin' animals!

Bruce stares thoughtful into the fire.

INT. WAYNE HOUSE - DAWN

Homeless Bruce enters. Walks past Alfred, who drinks his coffee and reads the newspaper. Takes off the fake beard, throws it on the table. His face is scarred and will be throughout the story. Alfred covers his nose, Bruce smells.

ALFRED

Is your eight thousand dollar bed not comfortable enough, or why do you spend your nights sleeping in garbage? I could fit some garbage bags under your mattress. Spare you the drive.

(Bruce walks away)

Bruce, I'm talking to you!

(Bruce stops, turns)

We can't go on like this, you have to tell me what's going on. I can get you help, you can trust me!

(Bruce wants to leave)

Bruce!! Tell me what we're doing here.

(picks up a file)

What about this new *assignment*? You want me to invest four million in a building cleaning company. But we don't hire employees and our prices are so low that the company won't be able to sustain itself? Tell me Bruce, why would you invest a big part of your fortune in a business doomed to fail?

BRUCE

What part of *soon* don't you understand?

ALFRED

Why do you treat me like this?

BRUCE

I will let you in on the plan soon enough. Right now it's crucial you follow my instructions.

Alfred is deeply offended.

ALFRED

Yes, *master* Bruce.

BRUCE

What?

ALFRED

If you treat me like I'm your butler, I might as well act like one, *Sir!*

(leaves the room)

EXT. STREET IN GOTHAM HOOD - NIGHT

Homeless Bruce sits on a wet sidewalk. On the other side the FALCONE GANG deals drugs. Bruce observes. Suddenly, a man block his view.

HOOD COLLECTOR

You're new around here, pops? You wanna stay, you gotta pay! Can't just take a perfectly good spot for free, get it?

BRUCE

Walk away while you still have your kneecaps!

The hard, acid tone delivers the message instantly: the collector leaves without further questions.

A young HOOKER, 14, walks to the Falcone gang and buys a hit. She turns to leave. A gang member grabs her from behind, perches her and licks her cheek, whispering in her ear.

GANG MEMBER #1

Come back at midnight. We could use letting off some steam. You do your job well, there might be some free shit in it for you.

He releases her with a slap on the ass.

BRUCE

(to himself)

Enough.

He stands up. Huge in his thick coat. He walks towards the gang, unnoticed. Takes the beard off, throws it in the street. Puts on a black mask. Takes his coat off. Still huge. Reaches the gang with determined steps.

Throws a guy who stands in his way to the side and starts delivering punches. He's serious. Noses break. He kicks a gang member in the stomach so hard the guy instantly vomits.

Now we see his entire COSTUME: Black ski mask with big eye and mouth holes. Bulletproof vest. Thick belt. Military knee and elbow pads with robust elastic straps. Combat pants. Military combat boots. Tactical gloves. All BLACK.

By the time the gang members realize what's happening, three of them are unconscious. Another GANG MEMBER comes running out of a nearby shop, holding an iron crowbar.

He lashes down at Bruce, who blocks it with the shock absorbing forearm protector. Another hit. Bruce blocks it with both hands crossed and kicks the guy in the sternum.

Another THUG, closest to Bruce, draws a gun. Bruce quickly strikes his hand with his gauntlet, thug screams in pain and the gun goes off. The BANG attracts the attention of a LOOKOUT GANG MEMBER behind the street corner. He notices the fight and runs for backup.

Bruce kicks the gun away, grabs his opponent with both hands by the collar and lifts him up. From across the street, the lookout gang member and FIVE THUGS come running. Bruce throws the guy through the window and runs away.

LOOKOUT GUY

Stop him!

Bruce runs into an alley, his way is blocked by a tall fence. He keeps running and jumps over it parkour style. His pursuers look amazed, chins dropped!

GANG LEADER

What the fuck? Gather the others!
He doesn't leave this hood alive!

EXT. GOTHAM HOOD - CONTINUOUS

Bruce runs out of the alley, from his right a GROUP OF THUGS comes running. To his left, a car with THUGS comes from behind that corner.

He runs into another alley, followed by the car. Another fence, another fantastic parkour jump. The car drives through the fence, gets very close. He jumps on a ladder and starts climbing. The thugs step out of the car and look amazed.

EXT. ROOFTOP/STREET - CONTINUOUS

Bruce climbs up, looks around, runs to the edge of the rooftop and, jumping from one wall to the other parkour style, climbs down the walls and runs towards the street.

Once on the street, people stare at him. A man in a strange costume. They're surprised and scared at the same time. His first encounter with the people of Gotham.

The silence is broken by the approaching, loud FALCONE GANG. He starts running again, down the street, jumping like an athlete over each obstacle in his way. The thug-car joins the chase. Bruce bolts out of the hood into:

EXT. NEWTOWN SQUARE - CONTINUOUS

He stops next to a huge fountain. The square is PACKED. He turns around, facing about 14 pursuers and the car.

INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

GANG LEADER
Gotcha now, bitch!

EXT. NEWTOWN SQUARE - CONTINUOUS

Leader walks out of the car. A thug draws his gun.

GANG LEADER
No guns, too many witnesses.
(loud:)
The old fashioned way, then!

They slowly gather in front of Bruce, who assumes fighting position. The fight begins. Being so many, only 3-4 can attack him at once head on. Bruce knows this and uses his brilliant tactics: He blocks and hits while very slowly retreating, giving his opponents no chance to flank him. He takes the hits he knows do no harm, blocks the dangerous ones and when *he* hits, he does it hard.

He knows he has to knock them out as fast as possible, otherwise he will be run down. BYSTANDERS on the square are drawn close by the fight.

Seven adversaries lie on the ground unconscious or holler in pain. Still, the pressure grows. Hard punches and kicks start reaching their target on Bruce's body. The tides have turned.

Bruce covers his face with his forearm and pushes a button on his gauntlet. Pepper spray spatters in all directions. The spray cloud incapacitates five thugs, who go down screaming. Sensing the right moment, he bolts into the thugs like a force of nature, each hit followed by blood loss.

From behind, a thug hits him in the shoulder with a baseball bat. Bruce kicks the attacker away. Another thug sticks a knife into his ribs. Bruce screams, cracks the thug, pulls the knife out and throws it away.

From behind, the BASEBALL GUY -again- hits him in the leg with the bat. Bruce goes down. He blocks another hit with his gauntlet and kicks the baseball-guy away. Bruce picks himself up. A few attackers have recovered, they're more cautious now. Bruce is worn out, he barely stands.

Another wave of attacks. Bruce blocks punches, but his aren't as accurate and hard as they were. A thug cuts him again, another one kicks him to the ground. Just as Bruce is about to stand up, he is hit by the baseball-guy in the head. He strikes a second time, Bruce blocks the bat with his palm and head-butts the baseball-guy. Keeps the bat.

He spits blood and looks at his enemies. Time to end this before it ends him. Beat. He bolts into the bulk swinging his bat from one broken bone to the other. Panic spreads across the thugs, there's no escape. He *breaks* everyone in his path.

Bruce stands in the middle of unconscious thugs. The ones who are not so lucky, scream and cry.

Bruce, full of adrenaline and hate, holding his bat with both hands, walks towards the baseball-guy, who lies on the concrete, nose broken and terrified.

BASEBALL-GUY

It's enough, man! Come on, man!

(Bruce raises the bat)

Please! Stop!

BRUCE

Tell everybody what happened here tonight!

BASEBALL-GUY

You're a dead man, you know that, right? The Big Man's gonna kill you for this. The mask can't protect you. Your kung-fu bullshit either.

BRUCE

Who's the Big Man?

BASEBALL-GUY

(laughs)

I donno, man! I'm just small fish. I just break a bone from time to time.

BRUCE

Funny, so do I.

He lashes down on the baseball-guy, who screams as we hear bones shatter.

INT. WAYNE HOUSE - ALFRED'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Alfred wakes up as he hears a car engine outside. Walks to the window.

He sees Bruce walk out of the garage, barely standing, leaning against the wall. He enters the house through the back door. Alfred looks worried. FADE OUT.

INT. WAYNE HOUSE - BRUCE'S BEDROOM - DAY

ALFRED (V.O.)
Master Bruce! Master Bruce!

Bruce opens his eyes. He's lying in a giant bed, white sheets full of blood stains. He straightens. A bandage covers his ribs. He touches it and it hurts like hell.

ALFRED (O.S.)
Master Bruce, I know you can hear me!

Bruce puts on a white bathrobe.

INT. WAYNE HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Bruce walks down the stairs. Alfred sits in an armchair. The TV is on, showing amateur video footage of Bruce fighting the thugs. Alfred tunes up the volume:

ANCHOR (V.O.)
...brutally beating on a group of twenty people. Nine hospitalized with multiple broken bones. Most victims are former inmates. We have no details about the masked man or his motives.

CUT to Baseball-Guy, lying on a stretcher, taken into the ambulance. Right hand on his chest, all fingers broken and bent in all directions, like a treetop.

BASEBALL-GUY
Done some rough shit in my life, man! But this... *animal*? Maaan, he fuckin' butchered us with a fuckin' baseball bat! You believe that? A bat, man!

POLICE OFFICER
That's enough! Get him inside!

Alfred turns the sound off.

ALFRED
I saw you this morning, barely standing on your feet.
(MORE)

ALFRED (CONT'D)

At first I thought you were drunk. You proved not so long ago you're a master of that. I thought: is that what he's been doing all those years abroad? Training to be the world's greatest drunk? But then I saw the blood. And this!

(holds the mask)

And of course the heavy bullet proof vest in the garage. Your parents would be so proud of you--

He picks up a newspaper and shows Bruce a half page article: "THE **BAT-MAN**, VIGILANTE OR NUTCASE?" and a drawing of a masked man, holding a bat, in a superhero-pose.

--their son made it to page three, Gotham's new clown! Is this what you learned abroad?! To beat people up and put yourself in situations where you get stabbed like your parents?! What did you do the last twelve years?!!!

BRUCE

I prepared for war!

ALFRED

War? That's why you destroyed your face?

BRUCE

Yes. Alibi for scars to come.

ALFRED

The war is over! Haven't you looked around? Gotham is a cemetery now!

BRUCE

I have a plan to change things.

ALFRED

Your body can't take it!

Alfred looks at Bruce's bathrobe. Bruce looks down and sees that blood came through the bandage.

BRUCE

It will have to.

Bruce turns and walks to the stairs.

ALFRED
 (ironic:)
 Really, Sir? The *Bat-Man*?

BRUCE
 (on stairs)
 If life gives you lemons...

ALFRED
 (to himself:)
 This is insane.
 (loud, ironic:)
 Ok, *Batman*! So what's next? The
 Batmobile?

BRUCE (O.S.)
 (from upstairs)
 Hold that thought!

EXT. HARBOR WAREHOUSE - ESTABLISHING - NIGHT

INT. HARBOR WAREHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

A SHADOW sneaks in. THUGS unload exclusive vehicles. The dark shape climbs up the pillar to the electricity panel. From up there, the BATMAN scopes out one vehicle:

A red Bugatti Veyron, with modifications that make it look even more futuristic and massive. We'll call it: BATMOBILE.

He turns off the electricity. Total darkness. Wearing night vision goggles, he walks past confused thugs.

CAR THIEF
 The hell? Somebody turn the damn
 lights back on!

The Batman walks to the Batmobile, gets the car keys out of a suitcase on the drivers seat. Meanwhile the thugs turn their flashlights on, light rays zigzag in the dark. Avoiding them, the Batman runs to the entrance and opens the huge door.

Thugs immediately point their lights at him.

CAR THIEF (CONT'D)
 Who...? Simmons, is that you?

WOOSH! The Batman is gone.

What's going on here?

Suddenly, strong headlights go on, a powerful engine roars and the Batmobile drives off, thugs running after it.

INT. WAYNE HOUSE GARAGE - NIGHT

Bruce sprays the stolen vehicle with black paint.

ALFRED (O.S.)
Grand theft auto now, master Bruce?

Bruce takes off his goggles, Alfred stands behind him.

We should definitely have a little
chit-chat, you and I.

INT. WAYNE HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Bruce and Alfred sit face to face, Alfred holds a glass of brandy. They've been talking for hours.

ALFRED (V.O.)
*We talked the whole night through.
He told me about his journey and
his plan, one in the making for two
decades. Of course, he didn't tell
me everything, just a fraction, but
enough for me to see that he had
completely lost it.*

Alfred puts his glass on the table and stands up.

ALFRED
I will not be a part of this, I
won't watch you die. Your parents
were unfortunate. Wrong place,
wrong time, died a violent death.
But you.. You provoke it! We still
have some money, we could get you
professional help.

BRUCE
Sit down.

ALFRED
No.

BRUCE
Please, my friend. This won't work
without you.

ALFRED
I know. That's why I'm leaving.
(starts walking.)

BRUCE
They'll kill me!
(Alfred stops)
Maybe not tonight or tomorrow. But
without your help, they *will*
eventually. I know you, Alfred. You
raised me as if I was your own son,
you won't abandon me. You'll stay
and do whatever is in your power to
aid my cause if that keeps me safe.

Alfred knows this to be true. He sits down.

ALFRED
So, Master Bruce, how long will
this take?

BRUCE
Five years, top. I doubt my body
can last more, pushed like this.

ALFRED
.... Heavy stuff.

BRUCE
Yes.

ALFRED
You're going to hurt people. Bad.

BRUCE
Yes.

ALFRED
How can you sleep at night?

BRUCE
I don't intend to sleep at night.

INT. ARKHAM INTERROGATION ROOM

CRANE
So what was his plan?

ALFRED
The first step was to reveal
himself to the people of Gotham as
a bringer of justice. True justice.
(MORE)

ALFRED (CONT'D)

He knew their trust in the legal system faded away and gave them an alternative, by showing them *he* can succeed where the police failed.

CRANE

The Tizziano case.

EXT. CHURCH - ESTABLISHING - NIGHT

ALFRED (V.O.)

Yes. The priest accused of sexually abusing five children, who got away due to insufficient evidence.

INT. CHURCH - NIGHT

Father TIZZIANO prepares for the mass, whistles while he lights the candles.

ALFRED (V.O.)

That case made the fracture between people and police definitive. Thousands were protesting out on the streets, but father Tizziano refused to give up his function and continued his work under police protection.

BATMAN (O.S.)

Not too many attendants today.

The priest turns, scared. Words echoing in the dark shadows.

I wonder why.

FATHER TIZZIANO

Show yourself! I was acquitted and I won't leave this church! You protestors will not intimidate me!

The Batman steps out of the darkness.

BATMAN

You got me all wrong. I'll be doing a lot more than protesting. And the law? It can't guarantee you any protection from *me*.

INT. CHURCH KITCHEN - LATER

The Batman ties the priest's palms to the water tap.

BATMAN

Let's make sure these hands won't
touch little boys ever again.

Looks disgusted at the priest and turns on the hot water.

Last chance.

FATHER TIZZIANO

I will confess to no one but God!

STEAM rises out of the sink.

BATMAN

Don't call me that.

EXT. CHURCH - CONTINUOUS

We hear the priest SCREAM.

INT. CHURCH - LATER

REPORTERS and CAMERA CREWS burst into the church.

ALFRED (V.O.)

*He called the press. Not the
police, they would've only tried to
cover up their own failure.*

The reporters look shocked at the image before them: The priest tied to the statue of Jesus on the crucifix, his face blood caked and his palms gravely burned.

*Next morning the Batman made every
newspaper cover and the police
reputation was dragged trough the
mud.*

The camera crews approach the priest. He's in a lot of pain and in shock, crying.

FATHER TIZZIANO

I didn't believe in God until I met
the Devil, hidden in his human
form. Forgive me God, for I have
sinned! I did it, Lord! I touched
them! I touched them!!!

The POLICE enters the church and forces the press to leave, while the priest keeps screaming.

INT. WAYNE HOUSE GARAGE - DAY

A large street map of Gotham spread on the table, on it hundreds of pictures of side alleys and buildings. Bruce studies them and draws lines and circles on the map.

ALFRED (V.O.)

The next weeks he focused on becoming an extension of Gotham. He memorized every single street, every building, the plans for the sewer system, everything.

EXT. LOCATIONS AROUND GOTHAM - MONTAGE - DAY

Bruce is dressed in a Pennyworth Building Cleaning uniform with the inscription: "Worth Every Penny". On the walls of various buildings he mounts handles, safety hooks, ladders...

ALFRED (V.O.)

Gotham became his playground. He altered it's architecture to his own liking, planned escape routes for every situation he could think of. I often tried to convince him to quit, but he was adamant about it. He put a powerful machine in motion and it was far too late to stop it.

CRANE (V.O.)

Sounds like manic-depression.

ALFRED (V.O.)

(makes noise in agreement)

INT. WAYNE HOUSE GARAGE - DAY

Bruce puts together a huge computer, a lot of wires and hard drives. Alfred observes.

ALFRED

Sir, I know you've been away for a long time, but we have something called laptops now, solves the problem of space.

BRUCE

Alfred, a laptop is a Tamagochi compared to this fella here. I've stolen police data, satellite codes, 3D city maps and a lot of et ceteras. A normal computer can't possibly process all that data, so I'm building a super-computer. I knew my time with the FBI would come in handy someday.

ALFRED (V.O.)

Thought he was joking about the FBI. Turned out he wasn't.

BRUCE

When I'll be out in the field, I'll need you to support me from here.

INT. WAYNE HOUSE GARAGE - NIGHT

Bruce and Alfred sit in the dark in front of the computer screens. Bruce explains, enthusiastic. Alfred is very tired.

ALFRED (V.O.)

He burned for his cause, for his illusion, more than anyone I met.

INT. WAYNE MANSION - TRAINING ROOM - DAY

Alfred walks past the training room -ex study-, stops and looks at Bruce doing insane CALISTHENICS pole-exercises.

ALFRED (V.O.)

His thirst for strength and knowledge was insatiable. He was hypnotizing his body into believing it is capable of more than it was created for. I pitied him, but had at the same time great admiration for him. His unbendable will, if not corrupted by the weakness of a frail mind, could have made Bruce Wayne one of the history greats.

EXT. GOTHAM HOOD - ROOFTOP - NIGHT

The Batman looks focused in the distance.

NOTE: Costume is now more dynamic. The eye/mouth holes of the ski mask are smaller.

Combat boots are replaced by motorcycle boots with exterior high impact protection. Spine protector on the back. A bullet proof protection jacket instead of the combat vest. Underneath it all, the Batman wears a one piece undersuit.

ALFRED (V.O.)

*But there was no more Bruce Wayne
in that body, only the Batman.*

Sirens. Flickering lights reflect in his eyes. Underneath, TWO POLICE CARS rocket past the building. He looks at a place in the distance, better lit than the rest of the hood.

BATMAN

I've intercepted an emergency on the police line. There's something big going on in Crime Alley. Hostage situation, they mention the name Zsasz a lot. Tap into the police database, like I taught you. See what you can find out.

INT. WAYNE MANSION GARAGE - SAME TIME

ALFRED

OK, got it! Victor Zsasz, previously convicted for attempted murder. It says here he was in the Foreign Legion and it drove him mad. Heard of the Foreign Legion, Sir?

INSERT CUT:

EXT. MOUNTAINS - FLASHBACK - DAY

It's raining hard, Bruce fights a much bigger OPPONENT in the mud, while around them LEGIONNAIRES are cheering.

EXT. GOTHAM HOOD - ROOFTOP - BACK TO PRESENT

BATMAN

Yeah, heard about it. Briefly.

ALFRED (V.O.)

He's a specialist in man to man combat. Extremely dangerous with knives, a genuine psycho, please take care.

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

The police and SWAT-teams are positioned in front of a building. A lot of agitation, strong headlights are pointed at a half-open window on the 1st floor.

POLICE OFFICER
Zsasz, what happened to the negotiator? Is he all right?

INT. APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

The NEGOTIATOR lies dead in a puddle of blood. Backs against the wall: five terrified HOSTAGES. ZSASZ, 35, stands by the window, carving with an army knife a tally mark in his shoulder, next to two others. On his naked upper body he has more complete carvings. Some of them fresh.

ZSASZ
Let's say we didn't agree on common terms! How about you send me another one?

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

POLICE OFFICER
Shit! Are the SWATS in position?

Suddenly the lights in the entire building go out.

Damn it! He killed the lights!

INT. APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

ZSASZ
What are you up to, pigs?

Drags a WOMAN to the window and puts his knife at her throat.

BATMAN (O.S.)
Put the knife down, Zsasz!

He turns and sees the Batman.

ZSASZ
I told you pigs no tricks!!!

He throws his knife at the Batman, it sticks in his bullet proof vest. The Batman pulls it out, but while he does that, Zsasz furiously throws himself on top of him.

The Batman blocks a few hits, but Zsasz is insanely fast and rams four knives in the Batman's armor: shoulder, leg, arm and one in the back. The Batman collapses, defeated in only a couple of seconds. He lies helpless on the ground, while Zsasz drags the woman back to the window--

ZSASZ (CONT'D)

Didn't I say no tricks??!!

--and cuts her throat. The other hostages scream.

BATMAN

No!!!

The police fires some shots, missing Zsasz.

POLICE (O.S.)

Hold your fire, you idiots! He still has hostages!

Zsasz carves one more tally mark in his flesh -four now-, then cuts a horizontal line over them.

ALFRED (V.O.)

Urgent news, sir. This isn't his first attack tonight. The police found twenty two bodies at three other locations the past hour.

Zsasz walks towards the rest of the hostages.

ZSASZ

I need a new tally mark.

BATMAN

Zsasz!!!

Zsasz stops, turns and sees the Batman standing up. The Batman pulls the knives out of his body and discards them.

ZSASZ

Fool, you cannot beat me.

BATMAN

Unfortunately there's not enough time to prove how wrong you are. SWATs will be here any minute.

ZSASZ

Let them come! I will kill them! You! I'll kill everybody!

BATMAN

No more dead!

The Batman plugs his ears and throws a SOUND GRENADE to the floor. It goes off. The sound is extremely high pitch, the hostages and Zsasz are in pain. The Batman runs Zsasz down and holding him tight, jumps through the window--

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

--landing on a car's rooftop. Beat. The Batman straightens and stands triumphant over an unconscious Zsasz. CROWD behind the safety belts brakes into applause.

BANG! A shot throws the Batman off his feet. He lands on his back, behind the car. The crowd is outraged and start booing.

The Batman crawls to the car and leans with his back against its door. Breathes extremely hard. SWATS slowly approach. The Batman holds a SMOKE GRENADE, lights it, waits until a big smoke cloud forms around him, stands up and runs away holding the grenade. SWATS and police aim at the cloud.

POLICE OFFICER

Hold your fire! Too many civilians!

POLICE OFFICER #2

Sir, I think that's the Batman!

POLICE OFFICER

That's a murder suspect, don't let him get away!

INT. POLICE CAR - CONTINUOUS

Two policemen see the smoke cloud "running" past their car.

RADIO OFFICER (V.O.)

Suspect is heading down Columbia street, possibly armed, certainly dangerous. Could be the Batman. Tear him apart, boys!

The police car follows the smoke cloud into an alley.

EXT. ALLEY - CONTINUOUS

The car stops in front of the now stationary cloud. The officers step out and point their guns at the cloud, baffled.

OFFICER

Come out with your hands behind your head! ... Come out with--

The smoke dissipates and the officers see the grenade on the ground. They look up and see the Batman climbing.

OFFICER (CONT'D)
 (into radio:)
 Suspect is on a rooftop on Doyle
 street. Need immediate back-up!

RADIO OFFICER (V.O.)
 Aerial support is on it's way.

EXT. CRIME ALLEY ROOFTOPS - CONTINUOUS

The Batman runs, jumping from rooftop to rooftop. A POLICE COPTER joins the chase, headlights on the Batman.

HELICOPTER SPEAKERS
 Stop! This is your first and last
 warning!

ALFRED (V.O.)
 Sir, is that a helicopter I hear?

The Batman uses his amazing parkour skills to keep a distance between him and the helicopter, changing his direction often.

INT. HELICOPTER - MOVING - CONTINUOUS

PILOT
 Damn, he's fast!

The SHOOTER inside tries to put his aim on the Batman.

SHOOTER
 I have a half-way clear shot at
 him! Permission?

ON THE RADIO
 Shoot!

EXT. ROOFTOP - CONTINUOUS

SHOOTER'S POV: crossfire on the Batman's back.

ALFRED (V.O.)
 They're going to shoot! Loose the
 helicopter now!

The Batman jumps over the edge, smashing hard through the next building's barricaded window on the top floor.

INT. HELICOPTER - MOVING - CONTINUOUS

SHOOTER
Shit! Lost visual!

INT. CAR - MOVING - CONTINUOUS

OFFICER GORDON, 50s, drives with the sirens on.

PILOT (V.O.)
(on car radio)
Suspect disappeared on corner of
Orange and Clinton.

Gordon makes a hard right, pedal to the floor.

INT. ABANDONED BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

The Batman lies on the floor, all around him wooden chunks.
We hear the helicopter departing. Almost total darkness.

ALFRED (V.O.)
Sir, you still there?

BATMAN
Yes.

ALFRED (V.O.)
I've intercepted some concerning
chit-chat.

RECORDED POLICE VOICE (V.O.)
Tear him apart, boys!

ALFRED (V.O.)
They're not out to arrest you, they
want you dead. Hold on!

The Batman hears Alfred listening to the police channel.

They know your location!

KRACK! The downstairs entrance doors break.

INT. ABANDONED BUILDING - ENTRANCE - CONTINUOUS

Four SWATs enter. One tries to turn on the light switch.

SWAT
We're inside. Power's off. Let's
turn it to advantage. Night vision!

The SWATs turn off their flashlights and put on their night vision goggles. They walk up the stairs to the first floor.

RADIO OFFICER (V.O.)

Team Delta, back-up is on it's way.
If you make contact, shoot to kill,
unless he surrenders immediately.

INT. ABANDONED BUILDING - 2ND FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

SWAT POV: night vision, the Swats walk across the empty office space. Suddenly, they see a SHAPE. They approach it carefully. In front of them: The Batman, on his knees, hands behind his head, in surrender-mode.

SWAT

We got him!

The Batman smiles, slowly lifts his hands and we now see he's holding some sort of grenade. He closes his eyes and BOOM! The LIGHT GRENADE goes off. SWATs scream, covering their eyes. But it's too late, they're temporarily blinded.

The Batman puts night vision goggles on. He takes the SWATs down with powerful kicks and punches that break their goggle glasses. Two are down and unconscious. While he fights one SWAT, another one recovers his sight, aims at the Batman--

BATMAN

Don't!!!

--and starts shooting. The Batman instinctively hides behind a SWAT, who is gunned down. The Batman is furious, punches the shooter several times until the he's unconscious. And then again. And again.

You idiot! You fucking idiot!

The SWAT's face is beaten to a pulp. The Batman runs downstairs.

INT. POLICE CAR - MOVING - CONTINUOUS

Gordon sees the Batman running across the street. He takes the parallel street.

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

The Batman runs for the corner, but Gordon's car appears out of a side street and HITS the Batman, throwing him on the hard concrete.

Gordon exits the car with his gun pointed at the Batman, who tries to get on his feet, very dizzy.

GORDON
Stay down or I will shoot!

BATMAN
I mean you no harm, officer.

He starts walking. BANG! The bullet hits the vest and sends the Batman to the ground.

GORDON
Stay down!

The Batman stands up. BANG! BANG! The Batman crawls to the wall and leans against it, grasping for air.

That vest won't last much longer.
Don't make me put one in your head.

BATMAN
You have... to let me go...

GORDON
Tell it to the judge!

BATMAN
Ha! I won't make it to the judge.

Gordon handcuffs the Batman. He speaks into his radio.

GORDON
Officer Gordon here, suspect is immobilized and in custody. I'm on Clinton. Should I wait here for reinforcements?

RADIO OFFICER (V.O.)
Negative, Gordon! The place is crawling with the media. Bring him in to the Otisburg district station. Units will be waiting there for takeover.

Gordon shoves the Batman into the back of his car.

INT. POLICE CAR - CONTINUOUS

BATMAN
You're making a big mistake.
They'll kill me once you give me over to them.

GORDON
Nobody's going to kill you.

Batman smiles, knowing better. Gordon starts the car.

BATMAN
Blind and naive, one of the good cops, I suppose? Why haven't you taken my mask off?

GORDON
It's not *my* job. The people in charge of your case will--

BATMAN
Kill me, trust me.
Look officer, it's safer out there *with* me. Drug dealers, rapists, child molesters, all loose on the streets. They should be pissing their pants when a police car drives by, instead they walk around like the city belongs to them. And when someone like me shows up to deliver them the bad guy, they put a target on my forehead.

GORDON
What the hell did you expect?! You practically started war with the police with the Tizziano incident!

BATMAN
No, I started war with the dirty cops. Cops who didn't bother with the case because it wasn't profitable enough. They're used to look away because they earn more if they do.

GORDON
I'm not blind, you know. But you're still a vigilante who doesn't give a damn about the law!

BATMAN
Your law is broken.

GORDON
No, the people are broken! They gave up on ethics, but the concept of law is still there, flawless. You only have to be willing to apply it by the letter.

BATMAN

Let me go, officer. Turn a blind eye for the greater good.

GORDON

(to himself)

No compromises.

The Batman hides a smile and looks somewhat proud at Gordon.

ALFRED (V.O.)

Sir, got him. James T. Gordon, 42, lives on Parson with his wife Sarah and their little girl, Barbara.

BATMAN

Thanks.

GORDON

What for?

BATMAN

For showing me there are still good men in this godforsaken city. Now stop the car.

(Gordon ignores him)

Or do you want your *daughter* to be someday touched by a priest, while your cop buddies look away?

GORDON

What did you just say?

BATMAN

Stop the car!

GORDON

What. Did. You. Say?

BATMAN

I respect your integrity, James T. Gordon. Still, I am nothing like you. I'm ruthless and will walk over corpses to complete my mission. Right now, my mission is to exit this car. Meet my associate.

Alfred's voice out of the car speaker:

ALFRED (V.O.)

Hello, Mr. Gordon.

BATMAN

Just now he's pointing a gun at your wife's head. Little Barbara's next. I want your full cooperation. Stop the car!

Gordon takes out his mobile phone and starts dialing.

You think I'm bluffing?!!
Nightwing, shoot her in the head.

ALFRED (V.O.)

(on Bruce's earphone)
Don't make me do this!

BATMAN

Shoot her!!

INT. WAYNE HOUSE GARAGE - CONTINUOUS

Alfred SLAMS a thick book against the table.

INT. CAR - MOVING - SAME TIME

Out of the speakers, we hear a GUNSHOT. Gordon is shocked!

BATMAN

Nightwing, the girl!

Gordon hits the breaks, hard. He's desperate.

GORDON

No! No! Tell him to stop! Tell him to stop, now!!!

BATMAN

Abort!

ALFRED (V.O.)

(in earphone)
Sir, you're a monster!

BATMAN

I know. Open the door, uncuff me!

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

Gordon, eyes filled with tears, steps out of the car, opens the back door and uncuffs the Batman. Looks him for a second in the eye, full of hatred, then runs back to the car and drives away in a haste.

EXT. GOTHAM BRIDGE - A MINUTE LATER

Gordon's darts through traffic with sirens on. PHONE RINGING.

GORDON (V.O.)
Pick it up! Please pick it up!

SARAH (V.O.)
Hello?

GORDON (V.O.)
Sarah? Thank god!

SARAH (V.O.)
Jim? Is everything all right?

GORDON (V.O.)
Yes, honey, everything's fine. Is Barbara all right?

SARAH (V.O.)
Yeah, I put her to sleep hours ago.

GORDON (V.O.)
Perfect. See you at home. Love you.

I/E. OTTISBURG POLICE STATION - LATER

Station packed with police officers, phones ringing like crazy, tension at an all time high. An officer comes running.

OFFICER
He's here!

Everybody bolts outside, where a small army of tense armed policemen is waiting. Gordon's car stops in front of the precinct stairs. Gordon exits the car. Alone. Lust for revenge encrypted on his face.

GORDON
He got away.

INT. WAYNE HOUSE - NIGHT

ON SCREEN:

ANCHOR
...killed 22 people before he got cornered in a building in Crime Alley, where he killed one more woman and a police negotiator.
(MORE)

ANCHOR (CONT'D)

The hostage situation has been resolved when the Batman entered the scene.

HOSTAGE

He saved our lives! He got hurt bad, but he continued to fight.

ANCHOR

Video footage show the Batman neutralizing the murderer. Then we see what it seems to be a shot fired at the Batman.

INTERVIEWED MAN

I was there, I saw it all, man! The pigs shot at him. He just stood there, no threat to anyone, and they shot him down in cold blood! Who knows what's their interest in this? They're gunning down people who actually do something for our society! Fuck the police!

CROWD

Fuck the police! Fuck the police!

Bruce is watching the news. Alfred walks in the room.

BRUCE

Our idea is out there, people have something tangible now, something that gives them hope.

ALFRED

You're playing with dangerous things, Sir. You hope to start a revolution, but you can't possibly know the long term consequences. A man once split the atom, making nuclear fusion possible. His honest, noble intention was to provide Earth with a limitless power source. An incredible invention. It ended up killing hundreds of thousands in Japan.

The buzzer starts ringing. Again and again. Bruce and Alfred walk to the window and see a jeep parked in front of the gate. TWO HUGE MEN IN SUITS next to it.

You think they're on to you?

BRUCE
The place would be crawling with
SWATS or mob agents if they were.

ALFRED
Doesn't mean they're not out there.

BRUCE
No. I know these kind of guys.

EXT. MOSCOW CLUB - FLASHBACK - NIGHT

NOTE: DIALOGUES ARE SPOKEN IN RUSSIAN WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES.

Bruce is a bouncer at a VIP club. TWO HUGE RUSSIAN GUYS want to enter the club. Bruce blocks their way.

BRUCE
You are not on the list. Sorry.

RUSSIAN TOUGH GUY
Amerikansky, out of the way if you
do not want to get hurt.

BRUCE
Mr. Vladimir doesn't tolerate this
kind of behavior in or outside his
club. Leave now, last warning!

RUSSIAN TOUGH GUY
Little American, I will--

He makes a step towards Bruce. With an amazing speed Bruce hits him in the neck, the Russian grasps for air.

The other Russian attacks, Bruce punches him extremely hard and fast in the face. The , although he's twice as big as Bruce. This really shows the raw power of Bruce's hits.

INT. WAYNE HOUSE - BACK TO PRESENT

As Alfred walks down the stairs, Bruce exits the room. He returns a few moments later in a bathrobe, fake beard in one hand, a bottle of whiskey in the other. Pours on the carpet.

Sits down, spills some on the beard. Takes a sip, gargles with it, spits it out. Pours in his hand and splashes it on his neck. He hears the entrance door open and shut. Alfred walks up the stairs, followed by the two very imposing men.

MAN IN SUIT #1

Mr. Wayne, thank you for receiving us at this late hour.

(to Alfred)

Would you leave us alone?

ALFRED

I will certainly not.

MAN IN SUIT #1

Mr. Wayne, will you please tell your butler to leave the room?

ALFRED

I'm not his butler!

Bruce makes a sign for Alfred to leave the room. Alfred understands. The men sit down next to Bruce. They smell the alcohol. Bruce is absent, he really looks like a wrecked man.

MAN IN SUIT #1

My employers have analyzed your situation carefully: your accounts are almost empty. All the money from the patents for your parent's medical machines, gone. You're a alcoholic heading for total bankruptcy with the speed of light. We feel we would make better use of your capital. So let me tell you how this is gonna play out: Ex-millionaire Bruce Wayne, over his head in debts, sells his house and the patent rights to Wayne Medical Tech for a feeble amount and, free of debts, buys an apartment downtown, where he can drown his last remaining days in alcohol. Or the alternative: Bruce Wayne, drunk, falls out of the balcony and remains paralyzed for the rest of his life. Or: he sets his house on fire and dies in it. Which one should it be?

He puts a pen and some documents on the table. Bruce picks up the pen, signs the papers and leans back inside the couch.

Well, that's all. Thanks for your cooperation, our lawyers will take it from here.

He puts the document in his interior jacket pocket.

Tell your butler I said hi!

They leave. Bruce sits absent on the couch. As soon as he hears the door slam, his face becomes serious, determined.

INT. JEEP - MOVING - MINUTES LATER

MAN IN SUIT #2
Loser didn't even try to put up a fight.

MAN IN SUIT #1
Saddest fucker I've ever seen.
Forget that asshole, we just earned ourselves a big bonus. Let's hit the bar and tap some ass!

From behind, the BATMOBILE approaches fast with lights off--

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

--and rams the jeep hard from the side, pushing it off road. Jeep spins over it's head and stops on the passenger's side.

I/E. JEEP - CONTINUOUS

Man in suit #1 tries to stand up, blood caked, he's in great pain. TWO HANDS pull him up through the broken side window. The Batman, climbed on the car, holds him by his collar.

BATMAN
Tell your boss I'm on his tail for a while now. He can't fart without me knowing about it.

MAN IN SUIT #1
F-- Fuck you!

The Batman shakes man in suit #1 hard, poor bastard falls through his jacket on his colleague. Both scream in pain. The Batman searches the pockets and finds more "contracts".

BATMAN
You've been busy, haven't you?

He tucks the documents into his belt.

I have a message for your boss.

MAN IN SUIT #1
What-- message?

BATMAN
You're the message.

The Batman jumps into the car. Black.

INT. WAYNE HOUSE GARAGE - NIGHT

Blood stained contracts lay on the table in front of Alfred.

BRUCE
Compare the contracts, track them back to their benefactor. Whoever runs this works for the Big Man.

ALFRED
You know the Big Man could only be his delusion, a desperate man will say anything to save his life. In his condition, he would have told you anything.

EXT. JEEP - NIGHT - AN HOUR EARLIER

Man in suit #1 lies broken, the Batman on top of him.

MAN IN SUIT #2
I donno who he is!

BATMAN
Of course you don't, you're scum. The ladder's bottom. Just like your boss, and his boss. But *their* boss... How do I get to him?

MAN IN SUIT #2
Only a few know his identity, but *everybody* knows he's crazy. Maybe even crazier than you.

BATMAN
Facts!
(slaps him)
Tell me a good enough story and I might call an ambulance for you and your friend. Think I might have broken him a bit.

MAN IN SUIT #2
There's this... urban legend...

EXT. AFRICAN NATIONAL PARK - FLASHBACK - DAY

A man walks through the bush, searching for something.

MAN IN SUIT #2 (V.O.)
*--word on the street is he's
 fearless. Before he took over
 Gotham, he wanted to find out if he
 had the necessary strength to rule.*

It's Harvey Dent. A male LION is approaching. Dent is pleased

DENT
 There you are.

The lion stops close to Dent, looks straight into his eyes.

MAN IN SUIT #2 (V.O.)
*They say you can't look a lion in
 the eye, 'cause after a while you
 realize he's better than you in
 every way and you're overwhelmed by
 fear. And that's when he strikes.
 The Big Man took it literally. He
 faced a male lion in his prime in
 his own territory. He thought that
 if the lion backed off, he was
 ready to take on anything plain men
 were going to throw at him.*

The looks between Dent and the lion sharpen.

DENT
 (for himself)
 Come on, give it up!

BATMAN (V.O.)
What happened?

MAN IN SUIT 2 (V.O.)
*Isn't it obvious? I mean, he took
 over Gotham, didn't he?*

The lion attacks. Dent reaches for his gun. In an instant, the lion is PIERCED by bullets, flesh is ripped off the bones. Behind Dent we see two safari jeeps with SHOOTERS in the back. Dent kneels before the lion, catching the last glimpse of life leaving the lion's eyes.

DENT
 Shit.

Clearly disappointed, he stands up, while his men approach.

TIBERIUS

Cheer up, boss. You faced a killing machine.

DENT

With a gun in my hand.

TIBERIUS

We're talking bout a lion, for Christ sake!

DENT

I needed him to see my will is greater than his strength. Shit!!

(loud order to his men:)

Tag his male cubs. Let me know when the toughest one reaches maturity.

INT. ARKHAM INTERROGATION ROOM / WAYNE HOUSE GARAGE - NIGHT

Fast cuts / alteration of locations:

CRANE (ARKHAM)

Did he believe the story?

BRUCE (HOUSE)

It doesn't matter if I believe it or not, Alfred. His men do. And the mob will follow a man with an iron will blindly.

ALFRED (HOUSE)

And this doesn't scare you, Sir?

BRUCE (HOUSE)

No. But it'll scare his own men, Gotham's citizens, even the police. That's how he controls Gotham: FEAR.

CRANE (ARKHAM)

What was his next step?

BRUCE (HOUSE)

Find out who runs the extortion business! I'll take it from there. Oh, and Alfred, I'll need some cash from our savings.

ALFRED (HOUSE)

How much?

INT. SELINA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

BRUCE (V.O.)
More than you'd like.

A well dressed man, a CLIENT, is being friendly pushed out of the apartment by SELINA KYLE, late 20's, beautiful, sexy.

CLIENT
 Come on, kitty cat, one last kiss
 to remember you till next time.

SELINA KYLE
 You'll remember me when you'll take
 a look at your account statement.

She shuts the door on him and walks back to the bedroom.

Asshole!

On the bed a closed suitcase and a note: DON'T SCREAM.

BATMAN (O.S.)
 We need to talk, miss Kyle.

She turns. Nothing. The Batman walks out of a cone of darkness. Her fright turns into a smile.

SELINA KYLE
 The Batman. Gotham's greatest
 occurrence since Harvey Dent.
 Tempting, but no thanks. I don't do
 masked men. Well, not in this
 context anyway.

BATMAN
 I'm not here to enjoy your...
 qualifications. Which doesn't mean
 I don't value them. On the
 contrary, I'll pay for them. One
 million now, one more when our
 collaboration is over.

SELINA KYLE
 And what do I have to do for it?

BATMAN
 The same thing you're doing now.
 Drunk and horny men are chatty. You
 keep your ears sharp and report
 directly to me.

SELINA KYLE
 Report what?

The Batman takes out a list.

BATMAN

Twenty men on this list. Company
CEO's who are part of the greatest
crime syndicate in Gotham.

SELINA KYLE

Well isn't this your lucky day? The
first one on your list, David
Stryker, he's a regular.

BATMAN

Security?

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

David Stryker, 48, crosses the street to Selina's building.

SELINA KYLE (V.O.)

*Usually a dozen bodyguards. But he
comes here alone, incognito. Too
afraid of his wife.*

INT. SELINA'S BUILDING, CORRIDOR - 2 MINUTES LATER

Selina opens the door, Stryker walks in, she closes the door.

INT. SELINA'S APARTMENT - LATER

Selina lies on the bed, very sexy. Stryker stands next to the
bed and drinks out of a glass. He makes a grimace.

SELINA KYLE

Drink up, I'm in the mood!

He drinks up and she shoves him on the couch. He's dizzy, a
mixture of pleasure and faint. Selina is on all fours in
front of him. She makes her way between his legs, looks up to
him, smiling. He can barely keep his eyes open.

STRYKER

Selina...

He faints. She quickly undresses him and drags him onto the
floor. She undresses and puts on a silk bathrobe.

SELINA KYLE

Wakey-wakey! Time to go home,
tiger!

He wakes up hard.

STRYKER
My head! Selina? What time is it?

She helps him dress up.

SELINA KYLE
Time to go home to your wife. You drank like a Norse god. I'd like to see you talk your way out of this one.

She helps him to the door, he's short a step fainting again.

STRYKER
Was I good?

SELINA KYLE
The best. You have to go now, I need my beauty sleep.

INT. CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

He walks down the corridor, leaning against the wall. Selina smiles and looks to her left at the Batman.

SELINA KYLE
So we're really doing this...

INT. WAYNE HOUSE GARAGE - NIGHT

Stryker wakes up. Badly. Dizzy, his vision blurry.

ALFRED (V.O.)
You've kidnapped a man, Sir! Can't you see how far you went? I'm very uncomfortable having a hostage and a kidnapper under our roof, especially if the hostage is one of the most influential men in Gotham.

As his vision starts to become clear, he looks around. Between him and the giant computer: a big blood stain. From it's center drag marks leading into the darkness.

ALFRED (V.O.)
Not to mention you destroyed the garage floor thanks to your inclination towards theatrics.

BRUCE (V.O.)
You taught me that.

ALFRED (V.O.)
I wish I hadn't.

His heart starts beating fast.

BATMAN (O.S.)
 Who do you work for?

STRYKER
 Where am I?

BATMAN (O.S.)
 Who do you work for?

STRYKER
 You have no idea who you're fucking
 with. I demand to know--

The Batman walks out of the darkness--

BATMAN
 Who. Do. You--

--and punches Stryker hard.

--work for?!

Stryker spits blood and starts whinig.

BATMAN (CONT'D)
 (just realizing this)
 You've never been punched before,
 have you?
 (raises his fist)

STRYKER
 Stop! What do you want?

BATMAN
 I know you run the extortion
 operations for the syndicate.
 Couldn't care less about you. I
 want the Big Man.

Stryker starts laughing. The Batman picks up a blood stained
 army knife from the table.

You think you're the first one to
 play tough in this room, like you
 got balls? They always talk after I
 cut them off.

STRYKER

Stop!! I don't know who he is! I never saw him!

BATMAN

Bullshit!!!

STRYKER

I swear! Only his generals know his identity. Richer people than me, more powerful.

BATMAN

Then give me their names. Give me the means to get to *him*.

STRYKER

He'll kill me if I do.

BATMAN

I'll kill you if you don't.

STRYKER

My family... I can't risk another silent minute.

BATMAN

What's a silent minute?

STRYKER

(surprised)

For someone so eager to get the Big Man, you know very little of him.

BATMAN

(grabs his jaw)

What is the silent minute?

INT. OFFICE - FLASHBACK - NIGHT

Dent sits at his desk, in front of him SIX MOB BOSSES. At the entrance: TIBERIUS.

STRYKER (V.O.)

After a long stay in Africa he returned to Gotham and took over all the criminal organizations. Nobody saw him coming. Over night, he was the new boss in Gotham. The old bosses weren't happy about it.

MOB BOSS #1

Look kid, you feel like the king of the world *now*, but it'll pass. You're too young to run this city by yourself. It'll tear you apart.

DENT

I don't get what you're saying.

MOB BOSS #2 points his finger at Dent.

MOB BOSS #2

What we're *saying* is you leave this fuckin' city or we cut you open.

Dent makes a discrete sign yo Tiberius, who takes a mobile phone out of his pocket and walks out.

MOB BOSS #3

Be smart, kid. Don't let your talent go to waste. Come work for us if you wanna stay in Gotham.

DENT

Gentlemen. I could have killed you just now. This morning. Yesterday. Weeks ago. Have your throats cut by your own men while you take a shit or fuck your wife, mistress or boyfriend. The only thing keeping you alive is your amazing ability to make money.

Tiberius walks back into the room.

And now you're going to make money for *me*. After I teach you to roll over and be obedient dogs, you'll make more than you've ever dreamed of. You'll learn I'm a very generous master. Now be good puppies and fuck off!

Mob Boss #2 takes a threatening step towards Dent.

Of course I knew you wouldn't bow so easily after a lifetime of running the show. So I came prepared, you see. The moment you pointed that fat disgusting finger at me, my associate made a call which led to some more calls.

The mobile phones of all mob bosses start ringing almost at the same time. They answer. As they listen, their jaws drop.

STRYKER (V.O.)

The voices on the other end told them that in the previous minute a member of their family was butchered. And that if they don't obey, now or in the future, the rest of their families will suffer the same.

Dent smiles, reaches out his hand, the mob bosses shake hands with him and leave.

INT. WAYNE HOUSE GARAGE - BACK TO PRESENT - CONTINUOUS

STRYKER

There's no betraying this man.

BATMAN

You lead the extortion operations, turn acquired assets into legit money. But you never met the people who collect, have you? Never saw how they obtain what you want them to. Well, now you'll learn. The procedure is simple: You'll stay here, without food or water, in total darkness, until you break. I beat you every day. Your wounds will never heal properly. In the end, you will give me what I want.

The description brings tears into Stryker's eyes. The Batman disappears into the darkness. Next day:

BATMAN (CONT'D)

How do I lure him out?

STRYKER

I don't know.

Batman kicks him in the chest, Stryker falls on his back.

BATMAN

How do I lure him out?

STRYKER

It would take a huge hit for the syndicate. Something big.

(MORE)

STRYKER (CONT'D)

You already brought the tension to a boiling point these past few months. Maybe if you top it off he'll call for an enlarged meeting.

BATMAN

Would you be invited as well?

STRYKER

If it was big enough, probably.

BATMAN

So I have to give him a reason to contact you. Any suggestions?

GUY

... No.

BATMAN

Have it your way.

He takes a step back, the darkness swallows him.

INT. WAYNE HOUSE - DAY

Bruce sits in front a screen, watching Stryker through the night vision camera. Alfred walks in holding a thick file.

ALFRED

I know why you're doing this. The person who destroyed your life might still be free. Believe me, I understand. It drove me crazy for years.

(gives Bruce a file)

So I gathered everything related to your parents murder. Paid a lot of money for police files. There's about eighty people there who were involved in criminal activities in Crime Alley the year your parents were killed. One of them might be their murderer. I kept running into closed doors, but maybe together--

Bruce rips the documents to pieces.

What are you doing?

BRUCE

I don't want to know his identity.

(MORE)

BRUCE (CONT'D)

As far as I know, the man who butchered my parents could be any of the criminals out there. So all will be punished accordingly.

(Alfred looks stunned)

Burn the file!

INT. WAYNE HOUSE GARAGE

Water splashes on Stryker's face. He wakes up, still on his back, starts licking water off the ground.

BATMAN

Disgusting. How can you sleep in the stink of your own shit?

STRYKER

Please!

BATMAN

You received a message on your phone. Something about a new delivery in Boston. I'll see if I can shake things up and then you will lead me to the Big Man.

STRYKER

I won't. You don't know what he's capable of!

EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT

The Batmobile rockets out of Gotham.

BRUCE (V.O.)

He won't cooperate, he's too afraid of the Big Man.

ALFRED (V.O.)

So we let him go?

BRUCE (V.O.)

No. I just have to make him more afraid of me.

EXT. BUILDING IN BOSTON - ESTABLISHING - 2 HOURS LATER

INT. BUILDING IN BOSTON - CONTINUOUS

It's very dark. The lights from the moving cars outside make the shadows "dance".

ALFRED (V.O.)
You really going to wear that?

BRUCE (V.O.)
It's perfect for camouflage and makes the striking surface wider and the chances to hit my body smaller.

ALFRED (V.O.)
Still looks ridiculous.

A SHAPE -the Batman covered by his CAPE- moves across the building, passing by unsuspecting THUGS.

NOTE: The costume has changed, it's more futuristic. The elbow/knee pads and the forearm/shoulder protectors are now connected directly to the costume, without straps. The ski mask eye holes are even smaller, they don't show much skin. A cape is connected to his costume, it doesn't touch the floor.

INT. BASEMENT 1 - CONTINUOUS

The Batman walks slowly but determined past rooms without doors, packed with Asian FAMILIES. A boy with big eyes looks at him. He's been through a lot, despite his age. At the end of the corridor, a THUG guards the door to the 2nd basement. He looks to his left and sees a flattering shape moving very fast towards him. BLACK.

INT. BASEMENT 2 - MOMENTS LATER

The Batman walks down a dark corridor. On his right and left: drugged and beaten WOMEN and GIRLS in closed cells. He hears a girl crying and TWO MEN laughing, he follows the sounds. In the last cell: a GIRL with ripped clothes and fresh blood on her skirt, cries bitterly.

MAN #1 (O.S.)
When do you think she'll be ready to turn tricks?

MAN #2 (O.S.)
I'd say she's ready now!

Laughter. Around the corner, in a doorless, filthy bathroom MAN#2 washes his penis. Man#1 sits on a chair at the entrance.

Shut up bitch! Their crying always drives me crazy. Don't make me come back for round two!

MAN #1

Put your cock back in your trousers, it's my turn now. Ladies, who's next?

BATMAN (O.S.)

You are!

They turn and see the Batman coming towards them. Angry.

The SCREAMS and SNAPPING OF BONES fill the corridors. All cell doors open. The women follow the screams. Behind the corner stands The Batman, in all his glory. Holds one man by the neck, the other by his hair. Both unconscious, beaten to a pulp, unrecognizable. He's breathing hard, it's almost impossible to control that much anger. He struggles.

NOTE: THE DIALOGUES ARE SPOKEN IN JAPANESE WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES.

BATMAN (CONT'D)

Any of you speak Japanese?

(one raises her hand)

I'll get you out of here. These brutes won't touch you again.

(starts walking, all follow)

How many?

JAPANESE WOMAN

Twenty maybe. You can't face them alone, they're heavily armed.

BATMAN

So am I.

INT. BASEMENT 1 - CONTINUOUS

Batman enters the basement, followed by the women. A THUG packs stacks of money in a bag.

THUG

What the--

The Batman hits him in the neck, the man chokes. He then STEPS ON HIS KNEE, pushing the knee cap out through the back of his leg.

INT. GROUND FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

Two thugs are watching TV.

THUG
Did you hear that?

INT. BASEMENT 1 - CONTINUOUS

The Batman is on top of the thug. He turns his head to look at a boy standing close to them. Woman translates.

BATMAN
You! How long have you been here?

The boy looks to his father, who nods it's OK to tell him.

BOY
Three years.

KRACK!!! An enraged Batman breaks the thug's other leg.

BATMAN
Three years! Three years you've
stolen from this boy!!!

The Batman throws the thug at the women's feet. They start kicking him violently, maybe to death.

They're coming. Do exactly as I
tell you.

INT. GROUND FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

Thugs gathered in front of the basement door. One of them opens it. Beat. WOOSH! He's pulled into the darkness. SCREAMS. Multiple bones break. The screaming stops. Silence.

The PRISONERS start walking out of the darkness. They fill the room and look straight into their tormentors' eyes.

THUG
How did you get out of your cells?
Answer me!!!

The prisoners are silent. The thugs start walking past them towards the basement door. Thug stops in front of a woman.

What are you doing out here, bitch?

He grabs her jaw. She looks directly into his eyes, no blink, not even when behind him a DARK SHAPE straightens.

A few steps away, some thugs hear hard punches and somebody falling to the ground.

THUG #2

What's going on here? Tommy, hit the lights!

TOMMY walks to the switch, reaches his hand for it... The Batman grabs his wrist and with a powerful punch from beneath, PUSHES THE ELBOW through the skin. Grabs his neck and slams his head against the wall. Thugs clock their guns.

BATMAN (O.S.)

The law can't punish you enough for the crimes you've done in this hellhole. So I will.

The Batman jumps out of his hiding place, starts to throw kicks and punches with amazing speed. Each punch accompanied by the sound of a bone breaking.

THUG #2

The lights!!! Someone turn on the--

BAM! A hard punch visibly brakes his jaw.

THUG #3

Where is he?!!

He takes them out one by one, in an extremely brutal manner. There's nothing heroic in what he does. Pure street justice. All around him ankles and jaws snap like porcelain.

A thug reaches for his gun, the Batman throws two NINJA-STARS. One pierces the flesh between two fingers, stopping at the wrist, the other one chops off his pinky.

One thug panics and starts firing at the Batman. He shoots down all the prisoners between him and his target. Encouraged by this, another thug draws his Uzi. The Batman, incredibly fast, disarms the thug and SHOTS the Uzi-guy several times in the legs. His shooting skills are excellent. He picks up the other uzi.

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

Flashes from the loud shots are visible through the windows. A CROWD cautiously gathers in a safe distance.

INT. GROUND FLOOR - CONTINUOUS

The Batman shoots thugs in the legs. Everywhere around him, thugs holler in pain.

THUG #3
I'm begging you...

The Batman picks him up by his collar.

BATMAN
Did you show mercy when they
begged?
(headbutt)
Did you show mercy?!!!

Another headbutt. Thug starts crying. His face is wrecked.

I thought so.

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

The thug is thrown out through the window, hits a light post and falls unconscious on the concrete. The Batman exits the building. POLICE, SWATS everywhere, but also a big CROWD. The Batman stops. Dozens of little red laser dots cover his body.

The prisoners walk out. Two women position themselves in front of the Batman. Now they're covered in little moving red dots. More and more pour out of the building, surrounding the Batman, willing to give their lives for him. The Batman slowly walks backwards and is swallowed by the sea of prisoners.

The SWATS approach. The Batman is gone.

INT. WAYNE HOUSE GARAGE - HOURS LATER

Dark. The TV gets turned on. Stryker wakes up. ON SCREEN:
news coverage from Boston.

ANCHOR
--downtown Boston, where a vast
underground prostitution ring has
been shut down. Video footage show
the Batman, who's usual operating
area is Gotham. Or is it a copycat?

INTERVIEWED YOUNG MAN
Finally! I hope these guys start
popping up all over the country. So
much violence and corruption
everywhere!

(MORE)

INTERVIEWED YOUNG MAN (CONT'D)

America needs to heal and it has to start somewhere! We need more Batmen!

INTERVIEWED YOUNG WOMAN

I mean this guy frees a dozen people held captive and the cops are all over him, same as with the other Batman in Gotham! And they expect us to trust the system? Where were the cops while these women were being humiliated and tortured? I'll tell you where! Drinking a beer with these criminals. Shame on you!

ANCHOR

As far as we know at the moment, the women were drugged heavily and trafficked across the country, while entire families lived in the building basement and were put to hard work. Three women died in the crossfire between their captors and the masked individual. The police found large quantities of drugs and fire arms. The captors are all in critical condition. We must warn you, the next images you'll see may be disturbing for some viewers because of their graphic nature.

The thugs are taken out of the building on stretchers, covered in blood, with bones protruding through their skin.

BOSTON POLICE COMMISSIONER

Outrageous! This vigilante is the most dangerous criminal of all. Some people celebrate him as hero, when in fact he's a butcher. These men in there, his victims, will file charges. People have rights, even these bastards. The things he's done to them... Christ! The Batman has got to be stopped and we will unite our forces with the Gotham police to achieve that.

INTERVIEWER

Are you sure it was the Batman?

BOSTON POLICE COMMISSIONER

I'd like to believe it's only one psychopath we're dealing with.

(MORE)

BOSTON POLICE COMMISSIONER (CONT'D)

If people were to be inspired by this guy and start doing stupid things, this could end in a lot of deaths.

INTERVIEWER

Commissioner Grogan from Boston P.D. and his take on the Batman.

ANCHOR

Would you agree, Tom?

INTERVIEWER

(passionately)

Definitely not, Susan. These so called victims are terrible men who have done terrible things and now they pay for all of their sins.

TV goes mute. Stryker, terrified, sees the Batman coming into the light: a demon of vengeance and retribution. A nightmare.

STRYKER

I'll do it! I'll do it!!!

EXT. TEN STORED BUILDING - DAY

Bruce, hanging in a rope outside the building, cleans a huge window on the 6th floor.

BRUCE

Bulletproof, as expected. We have the exact distance to the rooftop, all that's left is to weaken the temper of the glass.

Takes a window breaker with carbide tip out of his water bucket and hits all window corners, causing tiny cracks.

ALFRED (V.O.)

I still can't believe you got the contract on such a short time.

BRUCE

Told you, the richest people are the most closed-fisted ones.

ALFRED (V.O.)

What if this doesn't work?

BRUCE

I'll be the biggest stain in building cleaning history.

EXT. HANGAR - NIGHT

A PILOT performs maintenance on the helicopter.

BATMAN (O.S.)
Are we ready to go?

The pilot turns and sees the Batman.

HELICOPTER PILOT
Thought this was a joke when I got
the call. Got the money?

INT. HELICOPTER - MOVING - LATER

Pilot in the front, the Batman in the loading dock.

PILOT
This is the closest I can get you
without blowing my patrol cover.

The Batman, without a word, jumps out of the helicopter.

Hey! You still--

He looks behind him, the loading dock is empty.

EXT. OVER GOTHAM - CONTINUOUS

The Batman bolts like a bullet towards the city. His cape, connected to the costume, forms a WINGSUIT. He's becoming faster and faster.

INT. WAYNE HOUSE - FLASHBACK - NIGHT

Bruce seams parts of his cape and costume together. Alfred watches.

BRUCE
Stryker says the building is
impenetrable. A hundred heavily
armed agents guarding all entrances
and corridors.

EXT. OVER GOTHAM - PRESENT

The Batman maneuvers past skyscrapers. As he descends, he fixes his sight on one particular building, a smaller, ten stored one. He taps a button and his PARACHUTE OPENS.

EXT. ROOFTOP - MOMENTS LATER

An armed SECURITY AGENT looks in the distance. Behind him, the Batman lands silently on the roof top stairwell, followed moments later by the black parachute which covers him entirely. A shape covered in a mass of black. The shape "sinks" into the ground. The security agent doesn't notice.

INT. OFFICE - SAME TIME

Dent sits at the end of a huge business desk, his eight GENERALS -plus Stryker- at the other end.

DENT

Cancer is best stopped at an early stage. So how do we stop it? What kind of cancer is this *Batman*?

GENERAL #1

The direct damage he inflicts on our business is minimal. But the indirect damage is eating away at the syndicate's foundation: Our collectors report payment refusals. The men won't work at night. Some of our partners put our collaboration on hold until we solve the Batman issue. They don't want to be associated with our syndicate. Word on the street is the Batman is hunting especially for you, sir! After last night's events in Boston, they're afraid their operations could also be exposed.

Dent notices that Stryker is very uncomfortable and sweating.

DENT

Everything OK, Mr. Stryker?

STRYKER

... Yes. Yes, Sir.

DENT

Is it hot in here?

STRYKER

Yes, sir. A little.

He avoids visual contact with Dent, has a guilty look.

DENT
Are you intimidated by me, Mr.
Stryker?

STRYKER
... Yes, Sir.

Dent stands up and bangs his fist against the table.

DENT
Well you should be!!! You all
should be! If things get out of
control, I'll take it as your
failure. I don't tolerate failure
in my organization.

He calms down, realizing he got carried away. He sits down
and draws a strong breath.

Let's hear your suggestions.

EXT. ROOFTOP - SAME TIME

The security agent lies unconscious on the ground. At the
edge of the rooftop, the Batman ties an elastic cord to his
costume and to a rail on the edge of the building.

He focuses, gains momentum and runs towards the edge. JUMPS.
When the elasticity of the rope reaches it's limit, he's
drawn towards the building. Fast. From the distance, it looks
very smooth, but the CLOSE on the Batman shows us the hard,
vibrant ride. He sees the window getting closer. Shuts his
eyes, preparing for--

INT. OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

IMPACT! The glass breaks at the edges, cracks in the middle.
The Batman smashes in, rolls over the floor and jumps on the
table in one smooth movement. Everybody's shocked. So is he.

BATMAN
Dent!

He sees the bulk of generals opposed to Dent. Couldn't be
more obvious who runs the show. Dent draws his gun--

DENT
(smiling, impressed)
Stryker, you tricky son of a bitch!

--and fires at the Batman, who quickly finds cover behind a group of generals. Two generals are sprayed with bullets. After his clip is empty, Dent shouts in his wrist microphone.

Security breach!!! Get in here
right now!!!

Small metal balls roll across the floor. SMOKE starts spraying out of them, filling the room. The Batman jumps on the table and is slowly swallowed by the smoke.

EXT. BUILDING - SAME TIME

Smoke comes out of the office, is blown away by the wind.

INT. OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

The Batman is now only a silhouette in the smoke.

BATMAN

No place on Earth you can hide from
me now, Dent. I'm coming for you.

The security agents burst through the doors.

SECURITY

Everybody on your knees!!! We don't
have a visual on the boss! Sir?!!

DENT

Don't let him get away!!!

The smoke swallows everything.

Later: Numerous tense SECURITY AGENTS make phone calls and secure the office. Shards everywhere, the wind blows strongly inside the office. TIBERIUS walks in, looks around. Dent sits on a chair with his head down. Tiberius walks over to him and puts his hand on his shoulder.

TIBERIUS

This was inevitable.

DENT

(a little bit off)
He looked me in the eyes and stood
his ground...

TIBERIUS

Now you have to do the same.

DENT

He knows who I am. He's at an advantage.

TIBERIUS

You own this city. You're the one with the advantage.

He looks at Dent, sees him disheartened for the first time.

Are you afraid of him?

DENT

... No. I'm concerned about the damage his knowledge could do.

TIBERIUS

You have to be tougher than this. Your position comes with a tremendous pressure. One defeat and your reign is over. You're in the eight round, starting to lose ground. You tire, you're breathing harder while your opponent seems to be fitter than you. For the first time in your life, instead of attacking you put your energy into defense. I can promise you this: As soon as you take that first step back, you lose.

(sits down next to Dent)

He put you in the corner.

DENT

Nobody forces *me* in the corner!!!

TIBERIUS

You're confused, I know. You were never assaulted because you were feared. But this man, he is taking your own weapon away from you. You own fear. You have the *patents* for it! And he stole it from you! Now they start fearing him more. He pissed on your territory for the whole world to see, showed everyone he doesn't fear you. And that they shouldn't either. This could be the moment your empire starts falling apart. It all depends on how you react to this provocation. Do you expect your generals to respect you if they see this man stealing from you?

Hatred gathers in Dent's eyes. BUZZER RINGS.

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

HARRY, 40, opens the door. Dent stands on the sofa, next to Harry's wife ROSIE. He holds their daughter MARIE on his lap.

HARRY
Harvey? What a surprise.

DENT
(extremely friendly)
Harry. I was just telling Rosie
what a beautiful daughter you have.

HARRY
(shakes Dent's hand)
Good to see you, man! District
Attorney Dent, Gotham's superhero.
Would you believe I went to school
with this guy? What can I do for
you, Harvey?

DENT
A lot, actually. Remember 5th
grade? You beat me up, stole my
bike. Slapped me around, humiliated
me in front of the other kids.

HARRY
Harvey, we were kids back then.
Comes without saying I'm sorry.

DENT
There are some things I have to
tell you, so you understand the
shape of things to come. I am the
head of Gotham's organized crime. I
single-handedly run this city.

Harry starts laughing. Dents stands up and puts Marie in her mother's arms. Then he slowly takes out his silencer gun.

I've conducted a list since I was a
boy. I've written down all the
people who wronged me. Most of them
are dead now. What you did to me
back then... well, I would have let
it slide, probably, but tonight's
events have changed that. Someone
stole something from me.
Disrespected me.

(MORE)

DENT (CONT'D)

To overwhelm this critical situation, I have to show my conscience I'm ready to do what she constantly keeps *screaming* I shouldn't.

(steps closer, agitated)

She tries to stop everything I'm doing, all of the way. Sometimes she gets louder than usual, like now. So I have to shut her up by doing something extreme. That's where you and your family come in.

Dent pulls out a plastic bottle and starts splashing gasoline on Rosie and Marie. Harry jumps at him, Dent shoots him twice in the leg. Dent continues splashing, Marie cries.

HARRY

Harvey, I'm begging you!

DENT

(explodes)

You stole from me!!! You don't fucking steal from me!!! You take what's mine, I fucking kill you and shit on everything you love!

He sets the girls on fire. Harry screams.

INT. CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

Dent exits the apartment. TWO MEN waiting.

DENT

Make it look like a nice family drama. No witnesses.

He walks away, his men enter the apartment.

INT. BOXING GYM - NIGHT

Tiberius and a young KICKBOXER sparring. The kickboxer throws punches and kicks, Tiberius only defends.

TIBERIUS

Harder!

He takes some powerful hits to the abdomen and shoulder.

Harder!

Punch to the face. Lip busted. Tiberius smiles.

Harder.

Dent enters the gym in a haste, followed by an army of SECURITY AGENTS. Walks straight to the ring.

DENT
Beat it, kid!

The kickboxer leaves. Dent enters the ring, takes off his jacket and rolls up his sleeves. Tiberius smiles.

TIBERIUS
Your training session isn't until tomorrow.

Dent smiles back and attacks. It's no contest, Tiberius easily takes Dent's attacks apart. But Dent *is* fast, he had a good training. He hits hard. Tiberius sends Dent to the ground with a kick in the stomach. Dent quickly stands up.

You hit harder than usual. Faster.
What happened?

DENT
Got my edge back. Time to remind everybody that if you fuck with me, I obliterate you.

Dent stops hitting, picks up his jacket and walks away.

The old factory in the Narrows. Be there in half an hour. And wear a mask.

TIBERIUS
I've always been a sucker for Mexican wrestling.

EXT. TOP OF BUILDING - NIGHT

The Batman hides between two statues, spying on Dent's penthouse in the opposite building. His cape flaps in the wind. He's blending perfectly into the surroundings.

ALFRED (V.O.)
You absolutely sure it's him, Sir?

BATMAN
He was standing right before me.
Dent is The Big Man.

INT. WAYNE HOUSE GARAGE - SAME TIME

ALFRED
How could this happen?

INTERCUT BETWEEN ALFRED AND THE BATMAN

BATMAN
It's the *only* way it could. The only way one single person could achieve control over a city's criminal infrastructure is if he was running the entire legal system. He put his competition out of the way without drawing suspicion.

ALFRED
He's the two most powerful men in Gotham rolled up into one. What now?

BATMAN
Don't know yet.

ALFRED
You're at an advantage, knowing his identity. Wait for the right moment to bring the evidence down on him.

BATMAN
No, he will lay low. He's not going to get caught off guard again. I have to make a move tonight. And I hope that in the heat of the moment he's thinking the same way.

ALFRED
Is now the right time to improvise?

BATMAN
Wait!

ALFRED
What is it?

EXT. DENT'S ROOFTOP PENTHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Lights are lit in the huge living room.

TWO THUGS enter and start taping big cardboard messages on the glass:

"OLD CHEMICAL PLANT. NOW."

BATMAN
He just sent me a message.

ALFRED (V.O.)
It's a trap.

BATMAN
It's my opening.

INT. FACTORY - DESERTED HALL - NIGHT

Tiberius stands on a pile of rubble from the collapsed roof. Colossal. Black undershirt, MEXICAN WRESTLING MASK on.

TIBERIUS
He's not coming.

Noise from above. He looks up and sees a dark shape gliding down a rope. Twelve feet from the ground the Batman unlinks his rope, impressively landing on his feet.

Took you some time. Had to make sure it's not an ambush? Don't worry, I'm alone. Still more than you can handle.

BATMAN
Where is he?

Tiberius laughs. Ignores the question.

TIBERIUS
Finally. The Batman. Larger than life. Dangerous. Remorseless. What's next, huh? Beat me up until I tell you where he's hiding?

BATMAN
If you leave me no other choice.

Tiberius laughs. Then suddenly, he charges at the Batman, who is clearly surprised. He athletically jumps out of Tiberius' way, but Tiberius grabs his cape, pulls and stops the Batman's momentum.

The Batman falls on the ground. Tiberius, holding the cape with both hands swings his opponent against the wall. His sheer force is impressive. The Batman stands up as if nothing happened and takes off his cape.

Both assume fighting position and size each other up. The Batman strikes first, Tiberius blocks all punches. Numerous punches from Tiberius, the Batman blocks all.

TIBERIUS

Good. Very good!

This was only the appetizer. THE REAL FIGHT BEGINS. Two colossal warriors, throwing at each other punches that could shatter rocks. Their skills are perfect. Two athletes on their peek, equal in every way.

This extreme fight is the proof of how far the physical limits of man can be pushed. Both fight extremely focused, but Tiberius is the one enjoying this.

TIBERIUS (CONT'D)

This is great! Please don't break to soon.

After an even fight, the balance inclines towards Tiberius. The Batman starts panting more than his opponent. Tiberius takes note and hits harder, pushing the Batman into a corner.

You play with fear like it's a toy, but you do not understand it. You think you are above *fear*. You think you are above *man*. You cripple your enemies, put them in wheelchairs for the rest of their lives. You don't put them out of their misery like a merciful executioner would do. Do you think you fight *against* crime? You're the worst of all.

The Batman tries to get out of the corner but Tiberius' kicks keep him there. He tries one last hard punch, Tiberius grabs his fist and kicks him to the floor. With both hands, he lifts the Batman up and throws him some seven feet away. He lands hard on ta pile of jagged rubble.

Tonight it is *your* turn to get crippled. Tonight is *your* turn to know fear.

The Batman hardly stands up. He coughs, spits a lot of blood.

BATMAN

(silent)

I'm losing this one.

ALFRED (V.O.)

On my way!

Tiberius walks relaxed towards a shaking Batman.

TIBERIUS

How long did you think we would
stand by while you humiliate our
soldiers?

Tiberius starts throwing punches. The Batman, dizzy, can only block some of the blows. No doubt about this fight's outcome.

How long did you think you were
going to spit in our faces?

The Batman, covered in dust, gasps for air, mask blood caked, eyes bloodshot. Tiberius BREAKS his leg with a kick. The Batman collapses. Tiberius crouches over him, the Batman tries to punch him, Tiberius blocks, holds and BREAKS his hand. The Batman SCREAMS.

INT. CAR - MOVING - SAME TIME

ALFRED

Hang in there!

INT. DESERTED HALL - CONTINUOUS

Tiberius walks to a metal bar lying on the floor. The Batman takes a REMOTE out of his utility belt and pushes a button.

INT. WAYNE HOUSE GARAGE - SAME TIME

--The printer automatically starts printing a document.

--CLOSE on Alfred's laptop: YOU GOT MAIL!

--Main computer: YOU GOT MAIL pops all over the screen.

INT. CAR - MOVING - SAME TIME

Alfred's mobile phone starts beeping. He's receiving a text message. He notices but ignores it, he's focused on the road.

INT. DESERTED HALL - CONTINUOUS

Tiberius picks up the metal bar, walks back to the crawling Batman and starts hitting the broken leg, again and again. At first the Batman holds it back, but as the damage is getting more severe, he starts screaming.

TIBERIUS

You wanted us to fear you?

I/E. CAR - ROCKETING THROUGH TRAFFIC - SAME TIME

ALFRED
Come on! Come on!

INSERT FLASHBACK: A much younger Alfred holds a 3 years old Bruce on his lap. The child is laughing. In the background Martha and Thomas Wayne watch smiling.

Back to the present, in the car, Alfred bursts into tears while hearing Bruce's screams in his earphone. Steps on it.

Come on!!!

INT. DESERTED HALL - CONTINUOUS

Tiberius throws the bar away. He removes the Batman's knee pad, holds the knee down with his left and grabs the ankle with his right hand. Pulls up HARD, destroying his knee. The Batman SCREAMS.

INT. CAR - MOVING - SAME TIME

ALFRED
(listening, crying)
Please don't!

INT. DESERTED HALL - CONTINUOUS

Tiberius takes the Batman's boots off and starts breaking his toes one by one, with intimidating ease.

TIBERIUS
You wanted us to fear you??!!!

He continues with the left hand, than the right one, snapping one by one wrists, ankles, fingers, elbows. Everything.

We will teach you fear.

He starts punching the Batman in the face, his teeth break.

You and every fool encouraged by your actions to oppose us! You don't fuck with us! You pay the protection fee on time! And you certainly don't steal from us!!!

He stands up and steps on the Batman's chest. No sound of breaking bones. He kneels down, rips off the Batman's bullet proof vest.

He puts his knee on the Batman's chest and starts pushing. Ribs start snapping. The Batman doesn't scream anymore, his nose and mouth filled with blood.

DENT (V.O.)
(in Tiberius' earphone)
Kill him already!!!

TIBERIUS
Not yet! He has to learn. He has to see. *Then* I'll break his neck.

KRACK! Another broken rib. The pain is the only thing keeping the Batman conscious.

Tell me, do you feel fear now?

BATMAN
Doug--lhs--Fai--rrrr--bks...

TIBERIUS
Do you feel fear?!!

BATMAN
(spitting blood)
Dou--las--Ffrr--banks...

TIBERIUS
Answer me!!!

BATMAN
Doughlss Frrbanksss...

TIBERIUS
What?!

BATMAN
Dough-lass Fair-banks!

The batsuit talks! "VOICE COMMAND ACTIVATED!"

GAS sprays out of the Batman's collar. Tiberius inhales it, swipes him off his feet, messes with his neurological system. He coughs, keeps standing up and falling to the floor.

TIBERIUS
You coward... motherf--

He loses consciousness. So does the Batman.

INT. CAR - MOVING - SAME TIME

Alfred puts on a ski mask. Pedal to the floor.

INT. DESERTED HALL - CONTINUOUS

The car bolts through the old metal doors and stops between the Batman and Tiberius. Alfred jumps out of the car and drags the Batman like a lifeless doll to the car. Drives off.

INT. CAR - MOVING - CONTINUOUS

Alfred's phone keeps beeping. He looks at it: VOICEMAIL. Puts it on speaker:

BRUCE (V.O.)

You're receiving this message in case of an extreme emergency. I'm probably dead or on my way there. For the latter, I've prepared the Martha Wayne protocol. You know that warehouse dad had at the docks. I've stored there one of each Wayne Tech Medical Equipment model that's been produced in the past twenty years. You've received a list with three doctors. Contact them in given order. Their clinics each received one million dollars in exchange for their discretion and their willingness to cooperate with the Batman, if needed to.

INT. VAN - MOVING

DOCTOR LESLIE THOMPSON and her FOUR ASSISTANTS in the back. They have no idea where they are heading. The van stops.

BRUCE (V.O.)

The one you reach first will gather their team and you will take us to the warehouse.

INT. WAREHOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Alfred, ski mask on, opens the door. The doctors get out.

BRUCE (V.O.)

In exchange for their attempt to save me, you will donate five more million to their clinic and hope for the best. Now you know I intend to spend my parents fortune. Hope to see you soon, my friend.

INT. WAREHOUSE - LATER

The doctors are operating. Blood. Scans. Iron implants. Tubes. Blood transfusion. You name it. Dr. Thompkins wants to cut the Batman's mask off. Alfred grabs her hand.

ALFRED

Not the mask!

DR. THOMPKINS

Mister, I wouldn't recognize my own son's face if it was this messed up. I need that mask off so we can stitch him properly.

Alfred lets her hand go. She gives the scissor to an assistant who starts cutting.

We're doing everything we can, but at this point I can't guarantee anything. Broken jaw, brain trauma, several bones broken, internal bleeding, he could go blind on one eye, teeth severely damaged, torn muscles and tendons, I could go on for hours. If not for this excellent equipment, he would have been dead by now. Chances are 50/50 he makes it through the night.

While listening, Alfred's eyes fill with tears.

INT. ARKHAM INTERROGATION ROOM - NIGHT

ALFRED

They tinkered on his body for a week. Metal plates, screws and artificial tendons. A lot of morphine.

CRANE

How did he come back from something like this?

INT. WAREHOUSE - NIGHT/DAY

ALFRED (V.O.)

At first he didn't.

Bruce lies on the bed, in a state of delirium. Screams, he's in terrible pain. Alfred sits next to him, cries too. Dejavu.

INT. GOTHAM PUB - DAY

People look shocked at footage shown on TV: the Batman is brutally beaten by the masked Tiberius.

ALFRED (V.O.)

In the meantime, things changed on the outside. Dent posted the fight on the internet. TV stations aired the footage and in a few days, the Batman's revolution was quashed.

INT. WAREHOUSE - DAY

Alfred watches over Bruce as he sleeps.

ALFRED (V.O.)

The first and worst pain wave was over after a week, but he felt pain for the following twelve months.

He stands up and walks away from the bed.

BRUCE

I'm sorry.

(Alfred stops)

For the way I treated you. You've always been there for me, tried so desperately to be part of my life. And I constantly shut you out.

(tears well in his eyes)

In order to be the Batman, to truly be him, to do all the things he's needed to do... I had to become cold, obsessive, a man without compassion. I treated you like dirt when I love you like a father.

ALFRED

And I love you like a son. Always did.

BRUCE

Alfred, when I'll put the armor back on, I will become that prick again. I'll have to.

ALFRED

Bruce... your body... It won't be able to carry the burden of the Batman ever again.

BRUCE

Maybe. And maybe one day it will.
But until then, let's call it a
truce. Let me try to be a good
stepson and I will allow you to be
a good stepfather.

ALFRED

I'd like that very much... Bruce.

INT. DESERTED FACTORY - DAY

Dent's generals on the catwalk. In the middle of the huge
hall: Dent, Tiberius and two strong WORKERS, breaking the
concrete with jackhammers. They pull a big cage with iron
bars out of the hole in the ground.

They open it and STRYKER falls to the ground. Unshaven. Dirty
clothes and fingernails. A wreck. Dent helps him up, walks
him to a table near the hole, helps him sit down and tucks a
napkin into his collar. Gently, like a caring mother. A meal
and a bottle of water on the table.

DENT

Come on, eat. That's it.

Stryker starts eating. Two men come and start fixing shunts
into his arms. Stryker is scared.

Calm down. They're just infusing
you vitamins, your reserves are
exhausted. Come on, eat your meal.

Stryker eats. The generals are watching.

STRYKER

Mr. Dent, sir. I'm so sorry!

DENT

What for, David? For giving my
enemies direct access to me? For
endangering the whole syndicate?

Stryker cries. He's a mess. All shaking.

STRYKER

I just want to see my family.

DENT

David, don't make a scene. Eat up,
gather strength. I want you alive a
couple more days in that cage.

STRYKER

What? No!

Dent starts dragging Stryker towards the hole.

DENT

(whispering)

I have to set an example, David.

(to his generals:)

You've seen what I did to the Batman. You know how I punish my enemies and now you know how I punish those who feed me to them.

STRYKER

You're a monster!

The two workers hold the cage, Dent throws Stryker inside.

Please! I want to see my family!

Dent comes very close to the cage, smiling.

DENT

They're on their way.

STRYKER

No! No!!!

The cage is lowered into the ground and the hole covered.

DENT

Last warning, gentlemen.

GENERAL

Dully noted, Mr. Dent!

INT. WAYNE HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY

Bruce, lying in the bed, watches a NEWS COVERAGE about Gotham after the Batman.

CINIC ANCHOR

Seems like things have gotten back to normal in Gotham City. The crime rate is back at an impressive 2,122.9, the police is continuously taunted by crime syndicates and unemployment rate skyrockets as companies leave town daunted by the mob. To put it short, Gotham is a *No Mans Land* once again.

Bruce makes a fist.

ALFRED

Bruce, you have to let it go. You showed them the way, but you couldn't have possibly done more for Gotham.

BRUCE

Shen La was right about me not meditating enough. That's why I never reached my true potential. I've been pushing my body to it's limits without giving my mind time to assimilate. Just kept going towards my goal like a bulldozer with no brakes.

ALFRED

Your goal...

BRUCE

The Batman. What he can achieve. But I'm a cripple now, I have all the time in the world to meditate.

INT. SAME - DAY

Bruce lies on his bed, seemingly asleep but with a serious facial expression.

ALFRED (V.O.)

So he did. Eight hours a day. Said he wanted to make his mind as strong as his body once used to be.

The phone rings. Alfred answers.

ALFRED

Wayne residence.

DUCARD (V.O.)

Finally!

ALFRED

Who is this?

INTERCUT with Ducard in his PARIS APARTMENT.

DUCARD

Ducard's the name, Bruce will know. Tell him I saw him getting his ass kicked by that sonovabitch wrestler and I'm very disappointed!

ALFRED

Sir, I think you got the wrong number, I will hang up now.

DUCARD

Alfred, right? Let's not play this game. I know you have to protect his identity and all, but I'll be damned if I don't recognize that right hook! Just tell him I said he could've taken this clown any time of the day if he relied more on his street fighting skills. That kung fu shit is for the movies. Adieu!

INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Alfred walks past the open door.

BRUCE

Who was it?

ALFRED

... Your French buddy from overseas.

BRUCE

Ducard? What did he say?

ALFRED

He just wanted to say Hi.

(sideways look)

He recognized your combat moves in the video. Said you could've taken him, but you fought too disciplined.

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

He picked up the idea that if Ducard recognized his fighting skills, he too could recognize his tormentor. He started watching DVD's of all known martial artists. Weeks of searching the needle in the haystack.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Alfred brings the breakfast. On the ground a pile of DVD's.

BRUCE

Found him.

Alfred looks at the TV screen. An image of a younger TIBERIUS in the UFC RING is paused. Bruce hits PLAY.

ON SCREEN: MONTAGE of TIBERIUS knocking out his opponents with supernatural fury. Alfred looks shocked at the screen.

ALFRED

Tiberius Bane...

BRUCE

Yes.

BANE (ON TV)

They say I damage the sport I so much love with my boring wins. So I'm retiring until someone worth fighting shows up.

ALFRED

You're lucky you're still alive.

EXT. WAYNE HOUSE PREMISES - DAY

ALFRED (V.O.)

After a year, he started walking again. Immediately as he could walk without crooks, he began training.

Bruce is jogging.

First he lost the weight gained during his recovery.

INT. WAYNE HOUSE - GYM - DAY

Bruce lifting weights.

ALFRED (V.O.)

After that he started building up the wasted muscles.

INT. WAYNE HOUSE - GYM - DAY

ALFRED (V.O.)

Then he started taking it too far.

Bruce inserts two very thick RESISTANCE ROPES into the wall. He positions himself with his back to the wall, holds the handles making a fist, and pulls. It's very hard, he can barely stretch them a little.

EXT. WAYNE HOUSE - DAY

Bruce comes running, stops at the house entrance and leans with his back against the wall. Sweaty. He's in pain. Grabs his ankles with grinding teeth, they hurt.

ALFRED (O.S.)

Why are you doing this?

Like a kid who got caught, Bruce straightens fast.

BRUCE

I'm just--

ALFRED

No! Why do you put your body under so much pressure?

BRUCE

It can take it. It'll give me a sign when it's too much.

ALFRED

It already did. When Bane broke you. And you don't want to listen.

BRUCE

Alfred...

ALFRED

What is all this extreme training?

BRUCE

I can take him.

ALFRED

Who? Bane? Are you insane? That man almost killed you two years ago. Back when you were in your prime!

BRUCE

I'm so much more than he is. My training...

(MORE)

BRUCE (CONT'D)

I just needed time to let it all settle down. I can be a much better Batman now.

ALFRED

I can't believe I'm hearing this. Your mind is truly broken... The machines, your parents legacy saved your life and you *mock* their gift? I was happy when Bane broke you! I was happy and I thanked god for it. I knew it would mean the end of the Batman and the beginning of your life as Bruce Wayne.

(eyes fill with tears)

And when you started recovering so well, I thanked god again for that horrible day. Despite all odds, you won't live the rest of your life in a wheelchair, you are almost fully recovered! And now you want to commit suicide by facing a man who is superior to you in every way? I've been through your parents death. I've almost been through your's. No more. Farewell, Sir!

BRUCE

Stop! ... Alfred, wait! One last thing and then you go wherever you want to.

I/E. CAR/STREET - DAY

Gloomy weather. It drizzles. The street is packed with suspicious people. WHORES. PIMPS. DRUG DEALERS, BUMS. DRUNK PEOPLE. A GUY is slapped around by some THUGS. A police car drives by and GANG MEMBERS shout insults at the COPS. Bruce and Alfred sit in the car and watch.

ALFRED

We've been sitting here long enough. Is there a purpose to this or you just want to show me how depressing this city is?

Bruce points at a group of PARENTS and CHILDREN, exiting the kindergarten, making their way through the vile bulk.

Alfred looks at the children and all the degraded figures around them. Closes his eyes for a second, draws a big breath.

ALFRED (CONT'D)

Are you sure we can take down Dent?

BRUCE

Yes.

ALFRED

You absolutely positive you can take Bane?

BRUCE

Yes. Thank you, Alfred.

ALFRED

Don't get me wrong. I would do anything to keep you from putting the costume on ever again. But I can't get through to you and I never will, I can see that now. You are too far gone, too sick. I was sick once and your father didn't give up on me. I won't give up on you either. Somehow, despite the confusion in your head, you somehow managed to lite a spark of hope in the darkness that is Gotham. It only lasted for a blink of an eye, but it was there, undeniable. Everybody in Gotham felt it. And if your comeback is able to light that spark again and hold it lit a little bit longer, then your cause is a cause worth fighting for. Sir.

INT. WAYNE HOUSE GYM - DAY

ALFRED (V.O.)

So he trained until he was convinced his body was stronger than it was before Bane.

TIME EFFECT: Bruce holds the elastic strings, punching, slow at first. He's shaved. As we slowly MOVE IN on him, he gets faster and faster, his hair and beard grow more and more and the sweat covering his shirt "retreats".

ALFRED (V.O.)

After three years, ha was ready.

Camera stops in a CLOSE UP: Bruce is very determined.

INT. WAYNE HOUSE GARAGE - NIGHT

Bruce in the Bat-costume. He wears a face protection mask with multiple protective layers: for the jaw, nose, cheeks, forehead. The thickest layer is protecting the ears, going up over the temple and to the crown. So when he pulls the ski mask over his head, it looks like he has two small bat-ears.

INT. UNDERGROUND PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Tiberius Bane walks to his car. A voice echoes.

BATMAN (O.S.)
Hello, Bane.

Bane stops, looks around. Nothing but darkness and shadows.

BANE
Who is this? Why don't you come
into the light, so I can see you?

A Mexican wrestling mask is thrown at Bane's feet.

BATMAN (O.S.)
Put it on!

The Batman walks out of the darkness. Bane picks up the mask and puts it on, then takes off his shirt.

BANE
How do I know you're the *real*
Batman and not some wannabe?

Very strong lights go on. The HIDDEN CAMERAS blink red.

ALFRED (V.O.)
(in earphone)
Visuals and audio online, sir!

The Batman takes off his cape and upper costume. Visible on his body: big scars, stitches on both wrists, chest, neck, everywhere, very Frankenstein-ish. Bane smiles pleased.

BANE
Amazing, you've recovered.
(attacks furiously)
No tricks this time!

Perfect tie. After the first exchange of kicks, Bane takes advantage. His punches and kicks start doing real damage.

INT. VAN - SAME TIME

In the back of the van, Alfred looks at multiple screens.

ALFRED
Oh god, no!

INT. UNDERGROUND PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

Bane grabs the Batman from behind. The Batman grabs Bane's crotch and squeezes hard, loosening Bane's grip as a result of agonizing pain and causing Bane disorientation.

BANE
(screams)
You mother--

The Batman breaks away, kicks Bane in the stomach and lands two strong punches in the face. Bane loses a tooth.

BATMAN
You're just a thug. Big, strong,
dumb. I'm not afraid of you, Bane!

Bane is infuriated. He attacks viciously. Throws angry, powerful punches. Batman barely blocks them, they're like HAMMERS. Bane gains advantage again.

He squeezes the Batman hard to his chest, face to face. The Batman headbutts him once. Bane returns the headbutt five painful times. The Batman's face is a mess again.

BANE
Where's your big mouth now?

BATMAN
You're a ring-fighter, Bane. I'm a
street-fighter.

The Batman spits bloody saliva in Bane's face. Bane instinctively wipes it off, releasing the Batman.

There are certain tricks you can't
learn in the ring.

A series of powerful punches. Bane barely stands.

BANE
How?! How are you doing this?!!

BATMAN
Chi.

Bane attacks with a high kick, the Batman blocks with his forehand, breaking Bane's shin. Bane screams, steps on the broken leg, which bends to a sharp angle and he collapses.

The Batman approaches, Bane tries to hit him with his right hand. The Batman grabs it and breaks Bane's elbow with his knee. Bane crawls backwards, the Batman walks slowly towards him, fuelled with adrenaline.

BANE

We used to make jokes about you.
The Bat-Man. To us, you were just a clown in a costume. And now look at you. What a magnificent creature you turned out to be...

BATMAN

You know what you did to me that night. What I've been through because of you...

He crouches over him and grabs Bane's neck.

You know what's next, don't you?
 (Bane nods yes)
 Tell me, Bane, are you afraid?

BANE

... Y- Yes.

Kung fu finger tap renders Bane unconscious.

BATMAN

Ready for upload?

ALFRED (V.O.)

Yes, sir.

ON SCREEN: NEWS COVERAGE 1

Footage of the second Bane-Batman fight.

ANCHOR (V.O.)

--the new internet sensation, the video of the Batman's comeback has two hundred million clicks in it's first two days! Our specialists confirmed the two people fighting are the same ones from the well known graphic video 3 years ago.

ON SREEN: NEWS COVERAGE 2

A huge CROWD and lot of police cars in front of a building..

ANCHOR (V.O.)

--several shots were fired in
Uptown Gotham after the residents
of a building chased away a
syndicate of drug dealers who were
conducting business at the base of
their building for years.

ON SCREEN: NEWS COVERAGE 3:

POLICE and an ANTI-POLICE CROWD in front of a LIQUOR STORE.

ANCHOR (V.O.)

--where a police officer was
severely beaten by the shop owner.

The handcuffed STORE OWNER is taken to the police car. Camera
crews all around him.

STORE OWNER

Two years now this filthy pig's
been collecting protection money!
Told him today I won't pay anymore.
He started trashing my shop.

In the background, MEDICS are attending to the beaten up COP.

INT. DENT'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Dent sits in a huge armchair, looking at the giant TV screen.

ANCHOR (ON TV)

Authorities can not say for certain
if these events have been
influenced by the Batman video that
has swept the internet.

(shuffles papers)

Perhaps a wind of change is blowing
across Gotham City.

Dent turns off the TV. Stares at the black screen. Scheming.

INT. GOTHAM TUNNELS - LATER

A person in ragged clothes scribbles something resembling
mathematical equations with chalk on the walls and--

DENT (O.S.)

Knock, Knock!

--turns around. It's JACK with his lips missing, a constant sick smile on his face. Dent stands next to a water pipe.

(jokingly)
May I come in?

Jack's eyes search for an escape route.

No need to run, Jack. Yes, I know who you are. Who you were. I have my eyes on you since your... accident. You eat garbage, hide from all the sane people upstairs. Fuck'em! They're sheep, expendable. Not you. You're special. Like me.

JACK
What do you... want?

The way he articulates without lips is very creepy.

DENT
I want you to have the time of your life. I will organize the most complex terrorist strike in recent history. You'll be a part of it. And when the dust settles, you'll take the fall for me.

JACK
Why would I do that?

DENT
Because I'm offering something that would give a little meaning to your pathetic life.

JACK
I'm listening.

DENT
You're my perfect alibi. You've already been involved with Gotham's underworld. You have the perfect motive to exact revenge on a society that allowed this--
(points at his lips)
--horror to happen to you. It's all taken care of. Documents, witnesses. You've been planing this coup for years now.

JACK
You are either unbelievably stupid
or incredibly honest.

DENT
Want a proof of good faith? Come.
We have to get your hands dirty.

INT. UNDERGROUND HIDEOUT - LATER

Two DOOR GUARDS sit on chairs. Knock! Knock! They stand up,
draw their guns. Door Guard #1 opens the door slit.

DOOR GUARD #2
Who is it, man?

DOOR GUARD #1
Shut up!

Door Guard #1 opens the door. Dent and Jack enter, followed
by 30 armed BODYGUARDS. They walk through several rooms. In
the last one, a VICTIM is tormented by 3 THUGS. Two of them
are Joker's tormentors, the COLLECTORS who cut off his lips.

DENT
Get him out of here!

Two bodyguards drag the victim out of the room.

You recognize this man?

The collectors look shocked at Jack.

JACK
Great to see you, guys. You always
put a smile on my face.
(re: 3rd thug)
Tie that one to the chair!

Dent's men tie the struggling thug to the chair. Jack looks
at all the bloody torture tools on the table. He seems sad.

Why do we even try to act human
when we drifted so far away from
our humanity?

Picks up a small saw, walks to the tied up thug and starts
cutting, blood splashing on his face. Horrible screams. The
collectors look terrified, Dent smiles. The thug faints.

JACK (CONT'D)

(re: collectors)

I want these two to be my personal bodyguards. They are to be at my side at any time.

Cheer up, it'll be fun! Like Russian roulette. You'll never know when I'll have a--

(looks at the unconscious thug)

--moment.

DENT

If anything happens to him I will chop down your family trees.

So Jack, do we have a deal? Can I count on you to deliver me the perfect Silent Hour?

JACK

(laughing)

Absolutely.

INT. UKRAINEAN FACTORY - DAY

The factory hall is packed with SHIFTY MEN. Jack has a scarf covering his mouth. By his side his new bodyguard, DOO DOO, former collector and lip-cutter. Collector 2, now answering the name BONZO, enters the hall and whispers in Jack's ear.

JACK

Show time.

He takes off his scarf and walks to the mob. In the distance, a man is taking pictures of Jack. He starts talking, SIX TRANSLATORS translate in six languages.

Gentlemen, I'm glad so many of you came. Ukraine, Romania, Bulgaria and all the other Eastern European shitholes. I have a task that needs to be carried out by the kind of muscle your syndicates have to offer. My employer plans the biggest hit in U.S. History and it needs to be executed by cells who can't be traced back to him.

EUROPEAN THUG

(bad English)

This hit... How big?

JACK
78 targets must die in one night.

EUROPEAN THUG
Not big.

JACK
In order to make it look
coincidental, there will be
thousands of victims.

EUROPEAN THUG
So hundreds die to cover up one
murder. That's cold.

JACK
A mathematician among butchers,
that's a surprise. (loud:)
So killing the same amount of
civilians to stop uprisings in your
countries is OK, but *this* is cold?

EUROPEAN THUG
It's terrorism on American soil.

JACK
Yes it is. But don't worry, we have
Lady Justice on our side.

EUROPEAN THUG
It's a very risky job.

JACK
That's why I brought the necessary
stimulus.

The giant factory gates open, three large earth moving TRUCKS
with sealed canvas tops enter in reverse. They stop. The
tippers lift their payload. The mobsters take a few steps
back and draw their guns. Jack walks to the exit.

Don't be so dramatic! It's your
payment. The only reason scum like
you would go into the darkest
corners of their minds to gather
strength to do the most vile tasks.

Tons of banknotes start "spewing" out of the back of the
trucks, mobsters now stand in money knee deep. They can't
believe their sight. Probably billions.

MONTAGE: the ASSASSINS travel to Gotham.

JACK (V.O.) (CONT'D)
*Over the next two weeks, you will
 be shipped to the States, in
 different cities. It has been
 arranged for accommodation, food,
 transport to Gotham and weapons.
 Also hiding places after the hit
 and safe transport back to Europe.*

--Killer 1 takes a seat in the plane.

--Killer 2 checks in at the HOTEL.

--Killer 3 sits in a moving GREYHOUND.

--Killer 4 receives weapons in a Gotham back alley.

INT. CHURCH - NIGHT

Selina Kyle sits in the second row from the front, looking at a statue of a black Saint Marie.

BATMAN (O.S.)
 You wanted to talk to me?

Selina sees the Batman in the dark shadows.

NOTE: the costume has now become an ARMOR. Chest/spine/rib protector-jacket. Kidney belt. Shoulder/elbow/knee/upper arm/shin pads. Boots with reinforced ankle/toe/shin protectors. Combat gloves with wrist protection.

She runs over to him and hugs him with feeling.

SELINA KYLE
 Thank you so much! For what you've
 done for those girls in Boston.

BATMAN
 Why did you call me, Mrs. Kyle?

She wanders back to her seat. He disappears into the darkness.

SELINA KYLE
 Something big is going to happen.

The Batman's voice echoes.

BATMAN (O.S.)

I know. I can feel it in the city's vibes. The police is tense. The criminals lay low. Something very big is coming our way.

SELINA KYLE

I have this client, big shot rich guy. Quite obsessed with me. There's a party tomorrow evening at the Ritz. He insists I go there with him. Yesterday he got wasted. Badly. Started telling me that I'll be safe there, that everyone that counts will be there. Why should I be safe *there* and not anywhere else? Seemed odd, so I contacted you.
By the way, like the new costume.

BATMAN (O.S.)

Not a costume, it's an armor. I'll be in touch.

Selina looks around, the Batman is gone.

EXT. THE RITZ - ESTABLISHING - NIGHT

BATMAN (V.O.)

Mrs. Kyle, is the invitation for the party tonight still valid?

SELINA KYLE (V.O.)

Yes.

INT. THE RITZ - CONTINUOUS

Costume party. The ballroom is packed.

BATMAN (V.O.)

*Good. You should go. I've checked the police frequency. They've deployed a lot of units in the surrounding area. The whole hotel is booked out and paid from **one** account. An external security company is providing for the guests safety. The place will be a fortress. I've got my hands on the guest list. All Dent's men. You'll be safe there. What concerns me is what will happen outside the hotel.*

Selina -in a black latex costume with cat ears- walks towards the GROUP OF THE RICH AND POWERFUL. She puts her arms around ROMAN SIONIS, her big shot client.

NOTE: the author suggests that the group of rich and powerful is formed of famous cameos: Tommy Lee Jones and Jim Carrey dressed as Two Face and the Riddler, Uma Thurman and Arnold Schwarzenegger as Poison Ivy and Mr. Freeze, Jack Nicholson as the Joker and Danny De Vito as the Penguin.

SELINA KYLE

I'm bored. This party's lame.

SIONIS

Selina, meet some dear friends of mine. You probably know the governor...

"Mr. Freeze" kisses Catwoman's hand gently.

SELINA KYLE

Enchanté! I'll leave you to your dull discussions about stock and caviar. Maybe there are some tasty birdies to hunt.

She enters the dance floor tightly packed with people.

BATMAN (O.S.)

You see, *this* is a costume.

She turns around and smiles.

SELINA KYLE

It certainly is.

Before her: the Batman in an ADAM WEST BATMAN costume. She puts her arms around him and they start dancing.

BATMAN

All the roads to the hotel are cut off. Need to know why, have to talk to your boyfriend.

SELINA KYLE

He's over there.

The Batman looks over to Sionis.

BATMAN

Jealous?

SELINA KYLE

You have no idea.

The Batman smiles at Sionis and drags Selina by her arm towards the door, abruptly. Sionis walks over to them.

SIONIS
Is everything all right, dear?

SELINA KYLE
This idiot won't take no for an answer. I said let go!

Sionis grabs Batman's arm.

SIONIS
Are you deaf, buddy? The lady said--

The Batman turns his wrist, drags him out of the ballroom.

INT. RITZ CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

Sionis shouts for help but is hit in the throat and chokes.

INT. TOWEL STORAGE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The Batman throws Sionis against the towel rack. He slides to the ground, towels fall over him. The Batman stuffs a small towel into his mouth, ties his hands with towels to the rack.

Sionis sees a big pile of towels next to him. A shoe protrudes from a pile of towels, as if someone's under it. A big red stain on the pile. Sionis panics, screams desperately. The Batman pulls the towel out.

SIONIS
Stop! Please don't! For Christ sake! What do you want to know?

BATMAN
Where's Dent? Why isn't he here?

SIONIS
I don't know! I swear I don't know!

BATMAN
What is this party? Why has he gathered you here?

SIONIS
He calls it *the ark*. There's a flood coming tonight, many will die, all here will survive.

BATMAN
Who will die?

SIONIS
Everyone with political and
financial power. All the cogs that
make up the machine that runs this
city.

BATMAN
(realizing)
And you're the spare parts. He's
going to replace them all with you!
Andy Howe, is he a target?

SIONIS
If he's not on the guest list,
he's as good as dead.

The Batman picks up the shoe, Sionis realizes there's no
corpse under the towels. The Batman slaps him unconscious
with the shoe.

INT. RITZ BALLROOM - LATER

The Batman walks to Selina.

BATMAN
Stay here all night! It's not safe
outside.

SELINA KYLE
What's outside?

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

BATMAN (V.O.)
A flood.

Judge O' HARA and his WIFE sit at a table. A HITMAN enters,
shoves the waiter aside, draws a shotgun and shoots the judge
and his wife down. Panic. People run outside, the hitman
shoots randomly at them.

The Silent Hour has begun.

I/E. GOTHAM BRIDGE - SILENT HOUR

SUPERINTENDANT HILL, his WIFE and BOY drive home. In front of
them a VAN.

The back doors open and TWO HITMEN shoot them dead with automatic guns. The bullets hit a lot of other cars, leading to a spectacular pileup.

EXT. STREET IN GOTHAM - SILENT HOUR

People walk on the street. Above their heads, in a tall building, a big EXPLOSION. Another one. Mass panic.

EXT. GOTHAM OPERA - SILENT HOUR

Rich Gothamites leave the opera, walking down the long stairs. DRIVE BY SHOOTING leaves nothing behind but white marble stairs with corpses and blood.

EXT. PARK - SILENT HOUR

SUPERINTENDANT GRANGE takes his dog for a walk. A HITMAN stabs them both to death.

I/E. SUBWAY - MOVING - SILENT HOUR

The wagon is packed. A HITMAN wearing a long coat stands up and draws a gun. From outside we see gunshot flashes and blood spraying on the wagon windows.

INT. PARKING LOT - SILENT HOUR

SUPERINTENDANT DICKERSON walks towards his car. BOOM! A car EXPLODES, he ducks and crawls to his car. Another one explodes. He realizes his car could be next and slowly starts crawling backwards. BOOM! The fire swallows him.

EXT. STREET - SILENT HOUR

The batmobile rockets through the street, engine roaring.

INT. BATMOBILE - MOVING - CONTINUOUS

The Batman looks at the screen, which shows the shortest route to location X.

ALFRED (V.O.)

Sir, remind me why this Andy Howe
is such an important target for us.

BATMAN

He's the head of the Election Commission. Has the last word in the naming of a new commissioner, one of the few spots in the police not owned by Dent. If he replaces Howe with one of his own men, he'll have absolute control over the Gotham Police.

ALFRED (V.O.)

Sir, disturbing reports coming in. Explosions, murders, hostage-taking.

BATMAN

It has begun.

A building explodes just as the batmobile drives past it.

ALFRED (V.O.)

Sir, the crime-spree is spreading all over town!

BATMAN

I can't be everywhere at once!

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

THREE HITMEN fire at a building. The Batmobile hits two of them hard, throwing them in the air. If any hospital would take them in, they might survive.

INT. BATMOBILE - MOVING - CONTINUOUS

The Batman looks in the reversing camera at the third one who keeps shooting at the building, as if nothing happened.

ALFRED (V.O.)

Sir, is the life of this Howe worth ignoring all other victims in Gotham?

The Batman is innerly hurting, torn apart.

Sir?

EXT. BRIDGE - CONTINUOUS

The Batmobile rockets with ultra-speed through the cars, avoiding them by inches. Very dangerous driving.

ALFRED (V.O.)

Take it easy. You're no use to anyone in a body bag.

BATMAN

Don't worry, I'm not even flexing my muscles yet.

INSERT FLASHBACK: A younger Bruce speed drifting on a Saudi Arabian highway. Hundreds of people cheer on both sides of the road, as his skills are amazing.

BACK TO PRESENT - BRIDGE: From the back of a van shots are fired at other cars. The Batmobile SHOVES the van into a pillar. Brutal impact.

INT. BATMOBILE - MOVING - CONTINUOUS

The Batman steps on it, getting increasingly faster. He leaves the bridge behind. A car from the upcoming lane is brutally hit from the side by a GIANT TRUCK.

BATMAN

Shit!

The Batmobile takes the left, pursuing the truck. The screen shows the route changing.

ONBOARD NAVIGATION

Calculating alternate route.

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

The truck, powerful like a tank, crashes everything in it's path: cars, news stalls, benches. The Batmobile gains on it.

INT. BATMOBILE - MOVING - CONTINUOUS

ALFRED (V.O.)

Sir, according to the computer you've deviated from the route.

BATMAN

Conscience is a bitch, my friend!

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

The batmobile, now in front of the truck, zigzags swiftly, while the truck chases it like hypnotized.

The batmobile heads for a pillar. An instant before impact, it makes a hard left and avoids it by inches, clipping the side mirror.

As planned, the truck hits the pillar, but unlike the Batman expected, it drives through it. Seeing how the truck is unstoppable, the batmobile escapes into a side street, seemingly giving up.

The truck continues its rampage. BOOM! The batmobile rockets out of a side street and violently crashes through the front end of the truck, taking its wheel alignment with it and being destroyed in the process. The truck flips sideways.

The Batman walks out of the side street, shaky, his costume damaged from jumping out of the moving car. The injured TRUCK DRIVER climbs out of the truck, whining. The Batman kicks him in the head, rendering him unconscious.

BATMAN

Crashed the batmobile. Find me a new ride. Fast!

EXT. HOWE'S HOUSE - SILENT HOUR

The main gate is pushed down, a jeep parked at the entrance. GUN SHOTS inside the house.

INT. HOWE'S HOUSE - SAME TIME

Upstairs: ANDY HOWE, late 50's, his back to the edge of the wall, holds a pistol. His WIFE stands next to him.

Downstairs: FOUR HITMEN with automatic weapons, fire at him. He fires back. Knows how to handle a gun.

HOWE

Get the phone, call reinforcements!
I'll hold them back until--

Lights go off.

HITMAN

(Russian:)
What the fuck?

Downstairs: A DARK SHAPE attacks the hitmen, punching and kicking. They panic and start shooting in all directions.

Upstairs: The gunshots STOP. Howe walks to the stairs with his gun pointed ahead. The Batman punches it out of his hand. Howe starts throwing punches at the Batman, who easily blocks them and pins him to the wall.

BATMAN
Mr. Howe! The danger is over!

HOWE
Who are you?

BATMAN
An ally whom you now owe a favor.

INT. ARKHAM INTERROGATION ROOM

CRANE
How did he find Jack?

EXT. STREETS OF GOTHAM - SILENT HOUR

The Batman on moving motorcycle.

BATMAN
Alfred, search for a place other
than the Ritz where the cops didn't
leave their position during the
killing spree.

ALFRED (V.O.)
Tapping into police database...

In the distance: a CRANE positioned between four tall
buildings, hits them with a wrecking ball. One of the
buildings COLLAPSES. The Batman drives directly towards it.

EXT. CRANE - MINUTES LATER

The Batman climbs towards the drivers cabin.

INT. DRIVERS CABIN - CONTINUOUS

The assassin enjoys the wrecking. The door is suddenly opened,
the Batman enters the cabin and starts beating him to a pulp.

BATMAN
How can a human being be so cruel?!
So reckless?! Tell me! How can you
have so little respect for human
life?!!!

He stops when he notices that his opponent is unconscious.

EXT. CRANE - CONTINUOUS

He steps out of the cabin. A powerful EXPLOSION inside a building to his left. He starts running in that direction. Another BIG EXPLOSION behind him. He changes direction. GUN SHOTS underneath him. He looks down at the street: it's a slaughter. Assassins shoot at people who run for cover.

In the distance, a skyscraper collapses after a loud detonation.

It's too much for the Batman. He falls to his knees. The sounds become much louder: police/ambulance sirens, gunshots, screams, explosions, all mixing. His sight alternates between sharp and blurred. He hears his heart beating extremely loud. Starts breathing hard, gasps for air. PANIC ATTACK.

He lies down on a crane rail, while around him, Gotham goes to hell. Alfred's voice echoes in his head. Silent at first, then louder.

ALFRED (V.O.)
Sir! Sir!! Sir!!!

The Batman slowly snaps out of it.

BATMAN
(weak)
Alfred...

ALFRED (V.O.)
You were right! There's another place tightly guarded by the police tonight. I'm sending you the coordinates.

INT. JACK'S HIDEOUT - CONTINUOUS

On the table bags of cocaine. Jack, crouched, talks to someone we don't see yet.

JACK
A father who can't support his family can easily become a mad man. Trust me, they're all like me out there, only their lips aren't missing. Your society's full of ticking bombs, frustrated parents who burn on the inside. And when they reach their boiling point, when they explode, this whole world is going to hell. In the end, everybody will be just like me.

He draws a knife. In front of him, BONZO lies on the floor, bullet wound in his stomach, barely conscious.

You want to be like me, BONZO?

He cuts Bonzo's lips off. DOO DOO's corpse lies two feet away from them, lips missing, eyes open wide, as if watching.

Pathetic little thug! Did you think just because I'm mad I lost my appetite for payback?!

He stabs him violently. Bonzo dies choking on his own blood.

BATMAN (O.S.)
Are you done?

Jack turns around, nobody's there. He curls his cheeks back to form what would be a smile.

JACK
Finally! You know this all happened because you came back, right?

The Batman walks out of the darkness. Furious. He realizes this could be true.

BATMAN
Where's Dent?

JACK
Who cares about Dent? This is about you and me. Antagonist versus hero. The man who killed Gotham against the city's dark knight.

The Batman punches Jack, who collapses over the table.

BATMAN
You're a nobody! Just a clown without lips.

Jack straightens, turns around. His face covered in cocaine, with the mouth full of blood, soaking into cocaine, forming the shape of a big set of lips, like a clown: The JOKER.

JOKER
You're right.

Strange laughter. He looks at the Batman and in his delusion, sees HIMSELF behind the dark knight. JOKER #2 grips Batman's throat firmly from behind.

JOKER #2

He's magnificent, isn't he? Strong,
powerful, confident. Your opposite.

The Joker's laughter slowly drifts into crying.

You'll never be like him! You'll
never be more than a sad, bad joke.

JOKER

(mad rage)

Nooooo!!!!!!

He throws himself at the Batman, starts hitting him. Batman doesn't move, Joker's strongest punch couldn't tickle him. Hitting the Batman, he breaks his right wrist. The Batman backhands him, sending him to the ground in an inferior way.

BATMAN

Where's Dent?

JOKER

You were right about everything.

BATMAN

WHERE'S DENT??!!!

JOKER

I was nothing until now. But the
silent hour, it has enabled me.
Given me power, a name. I'll gather
allies in the shithole where you'll
try and keep me and I will come for
you. I'll break you.

Now I have purpose!

(spits cocaine and blood
into the Batman's face as
he struggles to form the
sounds)

Heh heh.

INT. ARKHAM INTERROGATION ROOM - NIGHT

ALFRED

Where is he?

CRANE

Who, Dent? In here of course, safe
from the silent hour. Nobody will
look for him here. And even if your
friend did find him, breaking in
here would be suicide.

INT. SELINA'S APARTMENT - DAWN

Selina is watching the news.

ANCHOR (ON TV)

...the seemingly random killings lasted for about an hour. Spreading from the suburbs to uptown Gotham. Several buildings were blown up. Damage amounting to billions of dollars. But the real damage is yet to be determined, as hundreds of people are still missing.

She switches the channel: Footage of the Batman chasing TWO HITMEN over Gotham's rooftops as the sun comes up.

--the Batman has been seen in different areas of the city, in the early morning hours still chasing the terrorists.

BONK! She looks at the balcony: The Batman, barely standing. Exhausted, cape ripped, lip busted, one hand hanging. She runs to the door, opens it. Searches eye contact, he avoids it. He walks inside, she notices blood dripping on the floor.

BATMAN

So many dead.

Selina takes a seat in her armchair.

Children... Many, many children.

The Batman erupts in crying. He collapses to a kneeling position and puts his head in her lap. She gently pats his head, consoling him like a mother would.

This city... is like a crack addict. I try to help it but it keeps spitting in my face. It doesn't want to be helped, it needs it's daily dose of violence.

INT. WAYNE HOUSE GARAGE

Lights are off. The mega-computer turns itself on. It plays a sound recording of Alfred.

ALFRED (V.O.)

I've tried so long to stop the Batman, but I failed terribly. Couldn't beat you so I joined you.

(MORE)

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

If we are in this together, I have
to do my part.

INSERT: EXT. ROOFTOPS OVER GOTHAM - DUSK/NIGHT

It's almost dark. Bathing in the "dying" red sun, Gotham
looks like a city on fire, a city of blood, a city from hell.

ALFRED (CONTD.)

*So I've started my own Martha Wayne
protocol. Remember the car we used
to get you out the factory when
Bane almost killed you?*

A SHAPE moves across the rooftops, too fast for us to see
what it is exactly.

*I made an anonymous call to Dent's
office. The unregistered car plates
will lead him directly to me.*

The sun goes down, Gotham is swallowed by darkness. The
SHAPE, jumping over the rooftops, seems to become larger, as
if it had a cape as an extension of it's core.

*I'm not afraid of dying anymore,
not afraid of you being killed. Not
after tonight.*

(voice starts to tremble)
*What are two troubled lives
compared to four thousand deaths?
Oh god...*

The SHAPE lands on a rooftop water tank and jumps off into
the dark depths. A second before diving into the darkness, it
seems like it's lifting two huge bat wings from it's body.

*Come find me. If there's a way to
stop him, do it tonight!*

INT. ARKHAM INTERROGATION ROOM

Alfred vision alternates between sharp and blurry. It's like
he's awakening from a long dream.

CRANE

Mr. Pennyworth, you must be asking
yourself: *why* did I tell him
everything?

(MORE)

CRANE (CONT'D)

I'll let you in on a little secret: the cigarette smoke you've been inhaling all night is a chemical agent I've been developing for some time now. A truth serum, if you like, still in a trial phase. Has side effects like slight delusions of the mind. You've told the truth, but it was being altered in your head as you were telling it. So you see, I don't really buy your story of the Batman as a plain urban guerilla fighter.

(stands up)

Come on, Mr. Pennyworth, the effect of my drug has got to have worn out by now. GIVE ME THE REAL BATMAN!

ALFRED

Sir?

On command the Batman crashes through the glass dome in the ceiling and glides down through the air, cape stretched in every direction. He lands on Crane, knocking him out.

BATMAN

Risky plan.

ALFRED

We found out where he's hiding, didn't we?

BATMAN

You've scanned the place?

Alfred pulls out a tooth --actually a microchip-- and gives it to the Batman, who mounts it into his utility belt.

Stay here. I'll go find Dent.

NOTE: This is the "modern" Batman, with sharper ears, golden utility belt, bat symbol, big cape, a shinier high-tech suit.

INT. ARKHAM CORRIDOR - LATER

The Batman walks past the cells. As he looks at the INMATES, some of them back off, others stand their ground. He stops at Zsasz' cell, looking surprised at all his new tally marks.

ZSASZ

Come on, coward!

Croc watches from the opposite cell. The Batman moves on.

INT. CELL - LATER

Dent sits at the table, eating elegantly. He glances upward and sees the Batman behind the cell bars.

BATMAN

Why all this, Dent?

DENT

Power, of course. Power over life and death. True power.

BATMAN

Power gained by murdering four thousand people!

DENT

(off-handedly)

Correct. My associates now have all key economical and political positions, I own Gotham. In all aspects. It is *my* city.

(excited)

Do you have any idea what enormous power this grants me?! With such a mighty machine backing me, I can repeat the process in countless other cities.

BATMAN

Where will it end? The White House?

DENT

(laughs)

President?! You think too small. I will own presidents

(the Batman stares)

Our system gives more and more *real* power to a *fictional* entity, this idea of LAW. But law is feeble, nothing in comparison to the forces that drive this world.

A lion hunting a gazelle, digging his claws into it's flesh, devouring it, *that's* reality. Law can't stop *that*! But humans still try. The idiots raised the law to the status of a living, thinking entity. And I gave them a show and they made it bigger, kept feeding it more power, until it became almighty. Now *I'm* almighty!

BATMAN

This is why I'm stopping you.

DENT

It's truly amazing how the universe put us both in the same era, on the same continent, in the same city. Each of us desperately trying to be what the other one actually *is*.

BATMAN

You don't know me!

DENT

Don't be ridiculous, of course I know you, two-face! You are my exact opposite. I am pure, unconditional evil, playing the part of the noble hero, while you are truly pure at heart, acting to be a heartless demon.

BATMAN

I will expose you.

DENT

I am backed 100% by the law, I can not be stopped! What are you going to do? Throw punches at the *system*?

BATMAN

Doesn't matter what you say or think, it ends tonight!

DENT

(laughs)

Are you trying to fool yourself? You incapacitated dozens of my men, never *killed* one of them tough. Of course a lot died during your actions, but not directly by *your* hand. You're no killer. You have... ethics. The only way you can stop me is by killing me. Are you ready to do that, hero?

The Batman looks determined at him. If looks could kill...

I see. You think you can solve this one the Batman way? Beat me, break me? Cretin! I can rule my empire from a wheelchair! True power comes from the mind, not the body.

(points at his head)

(MORE)

DENT (CONT'D)

This is where I'll enjoy my victory. Doesn't matter. We caught your associate. By now we probably know your identity, you would've died tonight anyway. But now you're trapped inside a prison with the most dangerous criminals of the world's most dangerous city. And they don't fear you.

A loud ALARM sound, alarm lights go on and off.

There you go! You gave me a hell of a fight! But now the curtains fall.

Dent wipes his mouth, stands up. The Batman draws a small metal chop saw out of his utility belt and starts cutting the bars. Dent pushes a button and two massive metal doors start closing behind the bars.

BATMAN

You can't hide in here forever!

DENT

Of course I can't. This cell has more than one exit.

(puts on his jacket)

Have a nice death.

The metal doors shut. The Batman returns to the corridor.

INT. ARKHAM CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

At the other end of the corridor, Crane points a gun at the Batman.

CRANE

Whoever separates his head from his body, gets a free pass out of here! Criminal records wiped clean, that's a promise!

Crane clicks on a device and the cell doors open. Most INMATES walk out of the cells, surrounding the Batman.

BATMAN

Last warning. Back to your cells!

They ATTACK. Crane watches. The Batman throws a lot of powerful punches and kicks, but also receives some. The mass of inmates is slowly pushing him to the ground, he has very little space to move. In the end, he's swallowed by the mass.

The Batman is surrounded by darkness, the inmates punish him. He kicks an aggressor out of the bulk, creating a small gap. Trough it, he shoots his GRAPPLE GUN. The projectile grabs onto the ceiling, the gap is rapidly filled by other inmates.

He connects the grapple gun to his utility belt and pushes a button. The high-tensile cord pulls him out of the bulk. A couple of inmates, still hanging on to him, fall to the ground. The Batman lands a few feet away from the bulk. He straightens, turns and assumes fighting position.

BATMAN (CONT'D)

Robin, activate!

Black lenses slip down over his eyes. Small dots on his costume heat up, becoming red dots, brighter and brighter. The inmates attack. Right before they reach him, the points start flashing bright. The flashes repeat every two seconds. The inmates are blinded and punch the air erratically.

The Batman starts a beautiful martial arts symphony, every hit incapacitates an adversary. Crane looks terrified, clearly intimidated by a flawless Batman in his prime. The Batman knocks out his last opponent.

BATMAN (CONT'D)

Robin, deactivate!

The bat-suit lights stop flashing.

ZSASZ (O.S.)

You done, disco boy?

The Batman turns. Zsasz stands provoking a few feet away from him. Croc runs out of his cell straight at Zsasz.

CROC

No! Zsasz is mine!!!

As Croc attacks from behind, Zsasz makes a spin, climbing on Croc's back in one fluent motion. He draws a handmade, improvised knife and starts stabbing Croc in the neck.

Croc falls on his knees, Zsasz still on his back. A lot of blood pours out of the wounds. Zsasz gets off him, grabs his head with one hand, holds the knife with the other.

CROC (CONT'D)

(weak)

You a pussy...

ZSASZ

Still you're the one being fucked.

He cuts Croc's throat and pushes him to the side. Cuts a tally mark next to three others on his forehead.

One more missing...

BATMAN

Your marks have doubled since our last encounter. How?

ZASS

(licks the knife)

You have no idea what this place is, do you? Arkham is Gotham's five star hotel for assassins. The Big Man made me a deal. I'm let off the leash every time someone needs killing and come back to my warm little cell at the end of the day. A killer that can't be found. Even if they did catch me, I'd be put back here.

The Batman looks at him with disgust. So many new scars.

BATMAN

All this madness ends tonight.

Zsasz runs at him screaming. In a fast, fluid movement, the Batman grabs his bat-ears and pulls them out, revealing knives. He makes two deep cuts on Zsasz' body. Zsasz screams in pain, drops the knife and falls on his knees.

ZSASZ

Bastard! I will gut you like a p--

The Batman rams the bat-knives in his back. Zsasz collapses, lies on his stomach, tries to move but only manages to crawl like a snake. Rage is mixed with crying.

Why can't I move? What did you do to me?!!!

The Batman crouches over him.

BATMAN

A fraction of what you deserve.

He picks up Zsasz' knife, carves the last tally mark on his forehead and cuts the line. He replaces the bat-ears with two spikes from his gauntlet, then looks at Crane.

Where is he?

CRANE
 (panicked, pale, sweaty)
 I know what you'll do to me!! I
 know what you'll do to silence me!!

BANG! He blows his brains out.

INT. ARKHAM INTERROGATION ROOM - MINUTES LATER

Numerous small explosions at the edges of the metal door. The door falls to the ground. Alfred sits calm in his chair, a napkin stuck in his bloody nostril.

ALFRED
 Is it done?

BATMAN
 He got away.

EXT. OVER GOTHAM - NIGHT - LATER

The Batman stands on top of Gotham's highest building. His huge cape, majestic in the strong wind.

BATMAN (V.O.)
 Alarm systems at the mansion didn't go off, there's no ambush waiting there. Maybe Crane didn't have time to tell anyone. Go home, see if you can find anything that leads us to Dent.

EXT. GOTHAM ZOO - LATER

The zoo is silent and seemingly deserted. The animals are in their cages but no sign of caretakers.

ALFRED (V.O.)
Sir, you know that software where you stored all the data we had on the Big Man? It scanned the internet and filtered all information relevant to his profile. It found something.

We see ARMED MEN around the lions den.

A male lion is added to the Gotham Zoo, he was brought in today.

BATMAN (V.O.)

We got him.

Dent stands in the middle of the den, holding a gun. His men point their guns at the den entrance. Dent sees two eyes sparking in the dark.

DENT

Come out and give me Gotham!

A guard is suddenly SUCKED into the darkness. Another goes down incapacitated by mini BATARANGS. The imposing LION slowly walks out of the cave, looking straight at Dent.

That's it, come on...

A dark shape straightens behind the third guard and drags him into the darkness. The fourth guard hears a movement, turns around, but too late. The Batman strikes.

The lion lost interest in the staring game. He looks like he's about to attack, makes a fast first step towards Dent... WOOSH! The Batman lands between the two of them. Dent points his gun at him, thinks he's still guarded.

DENT (CONT'D)

Don't shoot yet! I want to see how this plays out.

The Batman looks at the lion. Beat. The lion takes a few steps back and lays down. The Batman turns to Dent.

BATMAN

I told you, this ends tonight.

DENT

Gotham is mine!

BATMAN

No, Gotham is mine.

In an outburst of rage, Dent screams and points his gun at the Batman. Almost simultaneously, the Batman raises his arms and the enormous cape stretches in every direction.

The spectacular showing has the intended effect: Dent is startled, starts shooting but the shots miss the Batman, making holes in the cape. The lion runs away.

DENT

Die already!!!

The Batman crosses his hands before his face. Next round of bullets hit him, send him to the ground. He straightens again.

Why won't you die?

Again, he points his gun at the Batman.

BATMAN

You sure you want to waste those last two bullets on *me*?

Dent looks at the lion, then back to Batman.

DENT

Shoot him!!!

Nothing. Dent doesn't understand.

BATMAN

I took your guards out, you're alone. You like it, Dent? *This* is reality. Just like you said. No law, no appeals, no second chances.

(lion roars agitated)

I won't kill you, but I choose not to interfere with your *destiny*.

(re: lion)

There it is, Dent. Go face it!

Dent struggles not to shoot, keeps looking over to the lion. The Batman detaches the grapple gun from his utility belt, shoots a projectile outside the den and pulls himself out.

Dent and the lion stand face to face. The lion looks at Dent sharp, like a hunter at his prey. He roars.

DENT

No regrets.

EXT. OUTSIDE DEN - CONTINUOUS

The Batman walks away from the den towards us. We hear the lion roar. GUNSHOT. The Batman engulfs the screen. BLACK

INT. POLICE HEADQUARTERS - NIGHT

Gordon sits at his desk. He hears a sound and looks. The end of a black cape disappears behind a corner. It's dark, has he imagined it? He walks to the corridor. He hears a door SHUT. Slowly walks to the Commissioner's Office. A shape moving inside. Draws his gun.

INT. COMMISSIONER OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Gordon cautiously enters. Movement behind him. He turns, sees the Batman and points his gun at him.

GORDON
You mother--

The Batman kicks the gun out of Gordon's hand. Gordon immediately starts throwing punches.

Heartless sonovabitch!

Although he clearly has skills, the Batman easily blocks Gordon. He hits him with the palm hard in the chest, pushing him over the table and into the big leather armchair.

BATMAN
Get used to that chair.

GORDON
... What do you mean?

BATMAN
Let's just say I've put things in motion that will make you the new commissioner by tomorrow.

GORDON
Why?

BATMAN
This rotting institution needs a leader with convictions to revive it.

GORDON
I will chase you to the ends of the earth.

BATMAN
Yes. And I will continuously give you reason to. I'll catch the criminals your department can't, I will ridicule you in the eyes of the public, I'll make the police want to become better. I will educate you.

GORDON
Why?

BATMAN

Because the Batman can't be the answer to Gotham's problems forever. Ordinary people have to fight for what's just and they have to be lead by example. Make this department that leader, Gordon. And I promise you, when this city is under control again, you will cast this vigilante out of Gotham.

GORDON

Could take some time to regain control.

BATMAN

More than you think. The actual crime empire showed it's cracks. Now the jackals are coming. The empire will crumble and divide into more fractions. They will wage war. On *our* streets. We won't allow it.

GORDON

What if I'm not suited for this job? What if Gotham is untamable?

The Batman walks to the window--

BATMAN

Smooth seas don't make good sailors.

--and jumps out. Gordon runs to the window and sees the giant BAT gliding on the wind. We follow the Batman into the darkness between two buildings. BLACK.

-END-