

GRAYSON

written by
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INT. COMIC BOOK SHOP - DAY

We float through a comic book shop overflowing with vintage trades. At the back of the room, sitting atop a stack of weathered comics, is an ELSEWORLDS issue titled GRAYSON. In smaller print we read the caption, "IS THE BATMAN DEAD?"

The cover illustration comes alive and we are suddenly in...

EXT. DOWNTOWN - NIGHT

The city of GOTHAM fills our view. The CAMERA cranes down between two towering buildings and settles in...

AN ALLEY.

A BUM hobbles through the darkness, the RAIN pouring down. He approaches a garbage can and rummages through it as a church bell marks the hour.

BANG - a gunshot rings out. The Bum looks in all directions, but there's no one to be seen, until...

A shadow overtakes him. The bum looks up to see a MAN falling toward him.

CUT TO:

Water pours from a sink faucet. We are in...

INT. JIM GORDON'S HOUSE - NIGHT

JIM GORDON (76) stands at his kitchen sink and cleans up after dinner. His hair is white, his glasses thick - a shell of the man he once was. To his surprise...

The RED GLOW OF A ROTARY PHONE illuminates from the study.

EXT. ALLEY - NIGHT

Gordon arrives in a modest sedan, a red light clamped to the roof of his car.

COP #1
Commissioner, right this way.

Gordon pulls the collar up on his raincoat and makes his way into the alley. Cops swarm the area, when--

POOF - blue smoke sends a group of officers to their knees.

O'HARA

Get back!

Hollering over the scene is CLANCY O'HARA (63), the Chief of Police. He's an imposing man wearing dress blues and thin glasses, a thick Irish accent curling every word.

Gordon steps closer and covers his mouth from the fumes. The smoke clears to reveal...

BATMAN lying in a pool of blood. Gordon stares, slack-jawed. CRIME SCENE PHOTOGRAPHERS do their job, snapping dozens of photos. We only catch glimpses of Batman's body, his costume - navy against gray, with a metallic, mustard-colored belt.

GORDON

Is he breathing?

O'HARA

Who knows...

A CRIME SCENE INVESTIGATOR tries to collect a GREEN HAIR from Batman's fist when - ZAP! He receives an electrical shock.

O'HARA

We can't get close enough to find out.

Gordon removes his badge. Tucked into the leather backing is a COIN embossed with the BAT SYMBOL. In kneeling closer, a magnetic force pulls the coin from Gordon's fingers and into a slot on Batman's belt. The buckle unlatches, his defenses disarmed.

CUT TO:

EXT. DESERT - DAY

A COMMUNICATOR glows red. It's sewn into the belt of an iconic hero who needs no introduction. Despite the silver that graces his hair, SUPERMAN, aka CLARK KENT (56), is still an awesome sight to behold. With childlike ease, he wrestles a tank to its side, his costume awash in sand and oil.

Amid the chaos of exploding missiles and burning corpses, he switches off the comm and launches skyward.

BACK TO:

EXT. ALLEY - SAME

A cop taps Batman with his billy club.

COP #1
He's good. All clear.

One of the cops reaches for his cowl.

COP #2
Let's get a look...

GORDON
Get back!

Gordon draws his gun. He doesn't point it at anyone in particular, but the message is clear.

O'HARA
Jim-

GORDON
I SAID GET BACK!

The surrounding cops do as he says. A wave of emotion washes over Gordon as he searches Batman for a pulse.

GORDON
(to a Paramedic)
Bring the cart.

MEDIC
(to O'Hara)
He's been lying there for twenty minutes...

GORDON
BRING THE GODDAMN CART!

The medics bring over a defibrillator. They try to resuscitate Batman; with no results. Eventually the medics stop; however, Gordon keeps trying, performing manual CPR.

GORDON
Get up... get up....

There's no fighting it; the Batman is dead. A mix of anger and sadness overcome Gordon and he collapses to the pavement. He weeps like a child as SUPERMAN descends into the alley.

CUT TO:

An elaborate building constructed of white marble and blue glass sits at the heart of a bustling city. This is...

EXT. HALL OF JUSTICE - NIGHT

A soothing fountain trickles out front. All is peaceful, until a COMPUTER CONSOLE comes crashing out the window.

FLASH (O.S.)
Nice try, hot pants...

INT. HALL OF JUSTICE - SAME

A MAN dressed in street clothes snickers while admiring the damage. The slick blond hair and shit-eating grin belong to BARRY ALLEN (47), or as he's more commonly known - THE FLASH.

FLASH
...but you still throw like a girl.

Despite her reserved skirt and blouse, DIANA PRINCE (49), aka WONDER WOMAN, isn't one to piss off. She grabs a decorative statue from the corner of the room and tears it from its base.

FLASH
(sarcastic)
Oh, now that's impressive...

Wonder Woman brings the statue down for a crushing blow; however, the Flash dodges, his movements immeasurably fast. The statue hammers into the floor, shattering to pieces.

FLASH
...especially for someone your age.

She storms after him, knocking over everything in her way.

WONDER WOMAN
You're gonna learn some respect.

FLASH
This coming from a woman who wears
a bikini three sizes too small.

Seething, Wonder Woman rips a gigantic, iron globe from the wall and hurls it toward him. To her surprise, it's intercepted by a spectral GREEN GORILLA.

This is the work of HAL JORDAN (58), aka the GREEN LANTERN. He too is dressed in street clothes - though on his right hand is an emerald RING, the source of his power.

GREEN LANTERN
That's enough.

FLASH
Nice monkey. Ya know...

The Flash zips across the room, stopping inches away from Green Lantern's face.

FLASH
...I like your voice. You just sound so tough.

He zips behind the Green Lantern, without skipping a beat...

FLASH
Why don't you let me hold onto that ring for a second? I'm guessing without it you sound a little less in charge.

He zips into a chair with his feet up as he snacks on chips.

FLASH
Too bad it didn't come with a necklace and a matching pair of ear rings.

The gorilla snarls and leans closer when an ALARM sounds and a bright yellow light glows on the main computer.

CUT TO:

SOMEWHERE UNDERWATER

A MAN can be seen welding. From a further vantage we see that the man is not using diving equipment, nor is he in the sea - he's in some sort of subterranean sea base.

A yellow light flashes on the wall and an ALARM sounds.

The man turns and angles his stare at a SHARK swimming in the distance. It immediately spins toward him and advances. Unafraid, the man grabs it by the dorsal fin and is brought to a steel hatch.

THE HALL OF JUSTICE - SAME

Rising from a dark pool is ARTHUR CURRY (56), aka AQUAMAN, the king of the seas. A jacket of sleek, bronze armor clings to his torso.

AQUAMAN
All day I've been plagued with this terrible feeling...

He marches toward the Flash who types on the building's main computer - an enormous wall of new-wave technology.

FLASH

Yeah? Well why don't you use that feeling and reach out to Clark, he's gathering us for somethin', but he hasn't said what.

GREEN LANTERN

That's not like him.

WONDER WOMAN

It's an Alpha One Priority...

Aquaman grabs a chair and takes a seat. He exhales a deep breath, causing all sound to fade into a murmur. Time and space appear to stop when suddenly he's jolted back into reality.

AQUAMAN

Oh dear god.

FLASH

That's some super power you've got there, fish man. You wanna elaborate?

AQUAMAN

It's Bruce...

A radar scope shows something speeding toward them.

FLASH

His comm is down and I've got Clark heading this way and fast.

WONDER WOMAN

Open the dome.

FLASH

As with everything...

Flash zips over to a lever on the wall and pulls it.

FLASH

...I'm way ahead of you.

The roof splits down the center and slides back. The building's external cameras give view to Superman. Silence fills the room as he descends from the night sky, holding Batman in his arms.

EXT. SUBURBS - MORNING

Gordon parks his car in front of a quaint, brick house. He takes a drink from a small flask before exiting his vehicle.

INSIDE THE HOUSE

BARBARA GRAYSON (40), an attractive redhead, readies herself for a meeting. She's all smiles and warmth.

BARBARA
Should I wear pearls or silver?

In the background, DICK GRAYSON (42) makes breakfast for their daughter, BETHANY (2). Dick's more average than he is handsome, with a thick beard, a receding hairline, and a heavy pair of glasses.

DICK
What do you think? Should Mommy wear pearls or silver?

Bethany
Banana.

DICK
Right. One vote for banana.

Barbara pokes her head out from the bathroom.

BARBARA
Pearls? Or... silver?

DICK
Silver.

She plucks a breakfast sausage from the table and kisses him.

Dick
You got your cell phone?

She grabs her cell off the counter.

BARBARA
I forget this thing everywhere.

DING-DONG. Barbara and Dick share a look.

BARBARA
Ha. See what happens when you ask nicely?

She strides toward the door.

DICK
So now every morning he's gonna
hand-deliver it?

BARBARA
Maybe he wants to apologize for
leaving it in the bushes - and in
the street, and everywhere but the
front door.

She opens the door to see GORDON.

BARBARA
Dad! What a nice surprise.

She greets him with a hug - and then sees...

BARBARA
I swear...
(marches outside)
That kid's gonna turn me into the
old lady on the block who complains
about everything.

She marches into the neighbor's yard and bends down to get
the newspaper, her back clearly causing her discomfort.

BARBARA
You want some breakfast? Dick's
making his famous pancakes.

Gordon doesn't respond.

BARBARA
What's wrong?

BACK IN THE KITCHEN

Dick slides a pancake onto a plate.

DICK
How 'bout a little syrup...

Dick dots the pancake with a syrupy happy face and looks
toward the entryway to see Barbara with tear-filled eyes.

EXT. HALL OF JUSTICE - DAY

Dick drives up to the building and squeals to a stop. He hops
to the pavement and storms past a dozen police cars already
parked out front.

Gordon arrives shortly after him.

GORDON
Dick, wait!

Dick enters the building behind one of the policemen.

INT. HALL OF JUSTICE - SAME

O'Hara and a group of cops mill about. Dick brushes past them.

Cop #1
Hey, this building's off limits-

Dick folds back the cop's wrist and sends him to the floor. The other cops react; however, Dick's not in the mood for games. He starts dishing out blows and sends five officers to their backs before --

A blur of RED catches him in the jaw, knocking him off his feet.

FLASH
That had to hurt.

The cops cuff Dick as Gordon enters the room.

GORDON
Stop! All of you! Take those cuffs off him...

O'HARA
Now wait one minute. That man just-

GORDON
That man is Dick Grayson!

O'HARA
Dick?
(to the cops)
Help him up.

The cops lift Dick to his feet, his lip now bleeding. O'Hara hands him a handkerchief.

O'HARA
I didn't recognize you. Not that it matters. You just assaulted six officers.

GORDON

And he got what he deserved. Now
let's remember why we're here.

O'Hara steps closer, invading Gordon's personal space.

O'HARA

Yes, and why is he here? It's
rather an inopportune time to allow
your son-in-law to tag along,
wouldn't you say?

WONDER WOMAN and a PATHOLOGIST enter the room.

WONDER WOMAN

Gunshot wound to the chest.

The cops mumble in disbelief.

GORDON

He's been shot before...

PATHOLOGIST

This was point blank. Forty-four
caliber. No signs of struggle, no
scratches, bruises or broken bones
that can't be attributed to the
fall.

The Pathologist gets a signature from O'Hara.

PATHOLOGIST

If it makes you feel any better,
Jim, he probably never saw it
comin'.

DICK

I want to see him.

O'Hara eyes Dick curiously - *why would he want to see him?*

SUPERMAN (O.S.)

No.

Superman enters the room. Without his trademark smile he's an
intimidating force, a living god dressed in primary colors.

SUPERMAN

No one sees him. That was his
request and we all will honor it.

CUT TO:

ROLL CREDITS OVER

A mason chisels stone. The onyx sculpture stands thirty feet tall, its features undefined.

INT. CITY HALL - DAY

Chief O'Hara storms down the hall with a throng of reporters in his wake, pictures flashing.

REPORTER

Is it true the Joker was at the
crime scene?

O'HARA

We will find Batman's killer and
bring him to justice. That is all.

CLARK KENT is among the reporters. He turns to see Dick watching from afar.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

Rain comes down as a crippled old man, ALFRED PENNYWORTH (87), exits a vehicle with the use of a WHEELCHAIR LIFT. He joins a procession of mourners, all following a casket bearing the Bat Symbol.

The pallbearers include, on one side, Commissioner Gordon, Aquaman, and the Flash; on the other side are Wonder Woman, Green Lantern, and Superman.

As the funeral plays out, Dick and Barbara stand among a privileged group of five hundred policemen and politicians. Thousands of others line the fence, their umbrellas entwined into an endless canopy that encircles the cemetery.

Among the crowd Barbara spots SELINA KYLE (41), a stunning brunette with wicked curves. Barbara leans closer to Dick, whispering...

BARBARA

She's got no business here.

Their attention shifts at the SOUND OF A MAN SOBBING. It's Gordon, his emotions send him to his knees. Barbara goes to his side, leaving Dick in the crowd. His expression doesn't blend with the sullen faces around him. There's an anger brewing...

And O'Hara notices. He watches in curiosity as Dick looks up at the GRAVESTONE towering over them.

It's an astounding monument, both beautiful and frightening. Lifting from its center are two massive wings, forming an ominous, black shape resembling neither man nor bat, but something in between. Along its base, reads, "Whatever evils come this way, we will be here to stop them - The Batman, Justice League of America." Dick gazes at the monument, a fire in his eyes.

INT. GORDON'S HOUSE - LATER THAT NIGHT

Friends gather to reminisce, O'Hara among them. At the opposite end of the room, Dick sits by himself and polishes off a bottle of Scotch.

GORDON

Whoa, slow down on that stuff while you still have the sense to.

DICK

You been reading the paper?

Gordon exhales a sigh and sits next to him.

GORDON

I read it this morning.

DICK

And?

GORDON

And... I suppose we should have suspected...

Dick beams him with a look. Gordon leans closer, attempting to keep the conversation private.

GORDON

Let's think it through. He escapes Arkham the same night - they find traces of his hair on Bruce's body, and forensics confirmed that the weapon used was his gun of choice, a Smith & Wesson large-frame revolver with a forty-four caliber round. Hell, an inch from his chest... even the strongest Kevlar can't compete with that.

DICK

You don't get it...

GORDON

Dick, I know how close you were,
and maybe, I don't know... you're
feeling guilty for having left
things the way you did...

DICK

The Joker was the exception to the
rule. With him, we had a strike-
first policy. That means no
warning, no chance to surrender,
just--

(smacks his fist)
--bring him down. Hell, Bruce would
never let that lunatic get right up
on him - and put a goddamn cannon
right up against his chest?!

Others in the room turn and stare.

GORDON

Dick, why don't we go for a walk-

Dick stands and stumbles into Gordon.

DICK

I know there's more to this.

He exits, slamming the door behind him.

BARBARA

Dick, honey...

Barbara hurries after him but he's already started the car
and pulled away from the house.

BARBARA

Dick! Wait! You've had too much to
drink!

O'HARA

Not to worry. We'll get him before
he hurts himself.

O'Hara motions for a few other cops to leave with him. They
get in separate cars and follow after Dick.

EXT. WAYNE MANOR - LATER THAT NIGHT

Dick stands outside the gates of Wayne Manor and stares at
the mansion, the rain hammering down. Car headlights pass,
only to turn back around. It's O'Hara. He eyes Dick curiously
before grabbing his umbrella and joining him.

O'HARA

What is it they say? "You can't go home again". *Hmff...* you were, what, eight years old when Bruce took you in?

Dick doesn't respond. O'Hara prods further...

O'HARA

Where is Mr. Wayne, anyway? I would've figured he'd show up at the funeral, what with the media attention and all. Of course, Bruce never really approved of the Batman's methods, did he? In fact, when you think about it, he was rather outspoken against him. You, on the other hand...

Dick turns and heads back to his vehicle.

O'HARA

Where you goin', Dick? Or should I call you... *Robin*?

Dick stops in his tracks.

O'HARA

Ohhhh, I saw the way you tore through half a dozen of my finest... like they were nothin' but little girls. And why? Why the sudden urge to see a dead super hero? Unless... he was more to you than that.

DICK

I don't know what you're talking about.

O'HARA

Bullshit. You're the circus boy in the yellow cape. It's hard to see with that beard of yours, but I'm as sure of it as I am my own name. What I'm wondering is, who else knows?

(look to the Manor)

Did you keep it from Bruce?

Dick doesn't answer.

O'HARA

No, you couldn't lie to him, could ya? He treated you like a son...

O'Hara's face turns white as he makes the realization.

O'HARA

Sure and Begorrah... the father and the son. Bruce Wayne and Dick Grayson, *the Dynamic Duo*.

Dick grabs him by the collar and throws him against the gate.

DICK

You start spreading nonsense like that and you're gonna wish the Batman was around to save you.

O'HARA

Laddy, I'm the Chief of Police. And while I have no interest in announcing your little secret...

Like a pit bull, he turns on Dick with surprising strength, freeing himself from his grip.

O'HARA

I'll not be threatened!

O'Hara picks up his umbrella.

O'HARA

Oh and a bit of advice. You've been out of that silly costume, for what now, a dozen years? I suggest you keep it that way.

He returns to his car and drives off, leaving Dick in the rain. Judging by Dick's expression, it's clear that he's not about to sit this one out.

INT. POLICE STATION - SAME NIGHT

Dick enters the lobby and heads for the stairs; however, he catches the eye of Desk Sergeant LAWRENCE JOHNSON, an elderly officer with a pencil-thin mustache.

LAWRENCE

Can I help you?

Dick walks over to the desk and shakes his hand.

DICK

Dick Grayson, how do you do.

LAWRENCE

Grayson... Bruce Wayne's nephew?

DICK

No, but I get that a lot.
Technically, he was my legal guardian.

LAWRENCE

Well, on behalf of the precinct, I want you to thank him for us. Mr. Wayne swooped in and bankrolled our pension fund when the Mayor said otherwise.

DICK

That sounds like Bruce.

LAWRENCE

A great man...

DICK

I'll make sure to pass that along.

LAWRENCE

Now what can I do for you, Mr. Grayson?

DICK

Oh, I was just gonna get some files out of the Chief's office.

LAWRENCE

Files?

DICK

The Chief's back at the house, we were planning to roll up our sleeves, burn a little midnight oil on this whole Batman thing, but his wife had a little too much to drink, though you didn't hear that from me.

LAWRENCE

Hear what?

The two men laugh.

LAWRENCE

Okay then...

Dick heads for the stairs.

LAWRENCE

Let me just get the Chief on the
line, to verify.

Lawrence picks up the phone and starts dialing.

DICK

Right, sure...

Dick pulls out his keys.

DICK

Sorry, he gave me the keys to his
office, I wasn't even thinking.

LAWRENCE

Gave ya the keys, eh?

Lawrence hesitates, then continues dialing.

LAWRENCE

Just to be sure...

Six policemen enter the station with a MOB OF PEOPLE to book,
all shouting and shoving. Lawrence helps with the mob,
allowing Dick to sneak past him.

IN THE UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - SAME

Dick nears an office door that reads CHIEF OF POLICE across
the glass. He pockets his keys and, with the aid of a credit
card, picks the lock.

INSIDE O'HARA'S OFFICE - SAME

Dick enters, only to discover --

A HOODED THIEF rummaging through the files. With cat-like
agility the thief escapes out the window. Dick hurries to the
ledge - it's a long way down, but he pursues.

ROOFTOPS

Dick's out of shape but manages to stay in the chase. This is
the ultimate in rooftop rundowns; pure adrenaline, with more
than a few near-fatal mishaps. The chase weaves its way
through a few apartments and builds to an astounding LEAP
between buildings. The thief displays a level of acrobatics
not found in most crooks.

Dick follows --

And comes up short, barely clearing the distance. He catches the fire escape, which BREAKS, leaving him dangling over the street, five stories up.

DICK

Selina!

Dick gets the reaction he was expecting, causing the thief to stop in her tracks, when - *CLINK!* A portion of the fire escape breaks and sends Dick falling.

WHAAAAAAM - he lands on a parked car, the windows exploding outward.

SMASH CUT TO:

MONTAGE:

1) A wire snaps and THREE ACROBATS go falling. An eight-year-old Dick Grayson grabs hold of the trapeze-platform and watches in horror as his parents fall to their death.

2) Bruce Wayne's hand comes down on Dick's shoulder. They stare at a pair of HEADSTONES marked Grayson.

3) Dick and Bruce share dinner. Without explanation, Bruce gets up from the table and leaves the room in a hurry. Dick turns to see Alfred closing the curtains, a glimpse of a SIGNAL in the night sky.

4) Dick admires a collection of antique weapons displayed on the wall in Bruce's study. Mixed in among them is an assortment of old photographs of MARTIAL ARTS MASTERS; great warriors dressed in traditional robes, their heads shaved bald. Dick scans the room, his eyes searching - *but for what?* He steps closer to a bookshelf and zeroes in on THE ART OF WAR, first edition. Glancing over his shoulder to make sure no one's watching, he pulls back on the book. As a result, the wall rotates out of the way, revealing the BATCAVE. Alfred and Batman are there to greet him.

5) Dick's hair is shaved from his head. Dressed in the robes of the Masters before him, he trains for combat. Bruce teaches him everything: Jujitsu, forensic science, etc...

6) Fully costumed, Batman and Robin swing into action, waging battle against a team of gunmen. Superman, Flash, Wonder Woman, Aquaman and Green Lantern join the fight.

7) A purple motorcycle screeches to a stop. Red hair flows from beneath the mask. This is BATGIRL and Robin is wowed.

8) Alfred tailors the Robin vest while Dick, who's now much older, reads a newspaper about Batman's "child sidekick". Disgruntled, he marches into the Armory, a chamber filled with capes and cowls. A pair of black gauntlets draw his attention.

9) A team of burglars fall under attack from a man dressed in a black body suit - it's NIGHTWING, Dick's new alias. He puts a stop to the crooks, all except for one, who readies a machine gun. Dick throws a Batarang. It stabs into the robber's arm, forcing the gun up. A woman in a window overlooking the alley is hit and killed.

10) Dick throws his black costume into a roaring fireplace. Barbara wraps her arms around him, their days of crime fighting behind them.

11) *BANG!* Batman is shot in the chest.

INT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Dick wakes in a cold sweat. He turns to see Barbara sitting beside him, asleep. She awakens...

BARBARA

Dick? Oh thank god...

He tries to talk, his voice not responding.

BARBARA

It's okay. Everything's okay.

For a moment, Barbara just feels his face, overjoyed that he's alright.

DICK

(just a whisper)

Se... Selina...

BARBARA

Shh, it's okay...

Barbara pushes the nurse button as Dick grows restless.

DICK

Selina...

BARBARA

Dick, calm down.

Dick reaches for the phone, but Barbara pulls it out of his reach.

BARBARA
Listen to me-

DICK
We need to... find Selina...

BARBARA
The Joker killed Bruce.

The news hits Dick like a lead weight.

BARBARA
He confessed to the murder and is
serving an additional life sentence
because of it.

Dick starts shaking his head no.

BARBARA
Dick, it's done.

Dick pulls the IV out of his arm and tries to get up.

BARBARA
Goddamn it... Nurse!
(to Dick)
Stop! Listen to me. You almost
died!

Dick struggles to sit up but doesn't have the strength.

BARBARA
Think about your daughter. Think
about what you almost gave up.

The NURSE comes in.

NURSE #1
Relax, Mr. Grayson. Everything's
gonna be alright.

DICK
No...

BARBARA
Don't fight it, Dick.

NURSE #1
Listen to your wife, Mr. Grayson.
She's a smart woman - been by your
side this whole time.

Dick stops. He looks around the room, at the numerous crayon drawings taped to the wall, and spots a photograph of his daughter, now much older.

A tear slips from Barbara's eye.

BARBARA

You've been in this bed two years,
six months and three days.

Dick collapses, his mind whirling.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. HALL OF JUSTICE - NIGHT

Superman stands alone at the main computer and stares up at the big screen. He cycles through live satellite imagery, one horror show after another. Wars, famine, deforestation - the world at its worst. A voice crackles over his comm...

GREEN LANTERN (O.S.)

Clark, you there?

SUPERMAN

What do you need?

GREEN LANTERN (O.S.)

Did you forget about the race?

Superman grimaces. He pushes a button on the console and a portion of the ceiling opens. *ZOOM* - he takes flight.

EXT. STADIUM - DAY

An Olympic-size stadium is packed to capacity. Wonder Woman, Aquaman and Green Lantern stand on the track.

WONDER WOMAN

What'd he say?

GREEN LANTERN

Nothing.

Flash zips into their conversation.

FLASH

Well, is he coming or not?

Aquaman smiles and waves at a crowd of photographers snapping pictures.

AQUAMAN

Relax, Barry. We've all got more important things to do.

FLASH

Important, my ass. He probably just doesn't want to embarrass himself among all his fans.

The crowd ROARS with applause at the sight of Superman flying overhead. He descends to the track.

SUPERMAN

Let's get this over with.

FLASH

'Bout time.

Superman and Flash step up to the starting line. A RACE OFFICIAL raises a STARTING PISTOL in the air. The Flash crouches, while Superman doesn't bother with a stance. A dozen high-speed cameras come to life as the Official pulls the trigger. The hammer meets with the back of the round and-

Time seems to stop.

A BLUR OF RED AND BLUE tear around the track. The smoke hasn't even cleared the barrel of the gun before they cross the finish line - way too fast to see with the human eye.

At a second glance, the high-speed cameras reveal both men shoulder to shoulder, trading the lead with every step. Frame by frame, they get closer to the string, and we...

CUT TO:

A CRAYON DRAWING of Superman and the Flash is taped to the wall. We are at...

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Dick stares out the window while Barbara tapes yet another drawing to the wall - a picture of a little girl on a swing. The hospital TV flickers in the corner.

BARBARA

Last month she got her hands on a toy stethoscope. This, of course, meant that if you needed a band-aid, you'd have to steal one from Brown Bear. But once the swing set went in... well, so much for having a doctor in the family.

(MORE)

BARBARA (cont'd)
I swear, the way she jumps around,
she's your daughter alright.

Barbara sits beside him, curling her fingers around his.

BARBARA
She wants to know why she can't
come visit you. It's been weeks,
Dick. You're not listening to your
doctors, you're hardly eating... I
know you're upset, but why can't
you talk to me?

Dick pulls his hand away from hers and grabs the TV remote.
He turns up the volume. Barbara gets up and heads for the
door.

BARBARA
I've stuck by you. Don't give me a
reason not to.

She exits.

NEWSCASTER
Chinese officials are calling the
President's use of force excessive
and without provocation.

On the TV we see - a Chinese SUBMARINE rise out of the North
Atlantic ice.

NEWSCASTER
In response, the U.S. Secretary of
Defense issued a statement
reaffirming the President's
position, citing that any
subterranean exercises without U.S.
approval would be viewed as a
threat to national security.

Muscling the submarine out of the water is SUPERMAN. Dick
stares at the TV, a look of determination in his eyes.

INT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Dick works hard at strengthening his legs. Weeks pass.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Drenched in sweat, Dick struggles to walk without his crutches. He collapses into a chair and spots O'HARA watching from the corner.

DICK
Commissioner.

O'HARA
Yeah, well... it only took twenty-eight years and cost me my marriage, but I guess that was to be expected.

DICK
I guess.

There's an awkward silence...

O'HARA
Is that all you have to say? You break into my office, steal my files-

DICK
I did NOT steal those files.

O'HARA
Oh, right. Selina did.

DICK
Probably three crooks in the world that move like that.

O'HARA
But you didn't see her face.

DICK
Didn't need to.

O'Hara spots a stubby MEXICAN WOMAN mopping in the corner.

O'HARA
Selina!

While it's clearly not her name, she turns, startled. O'Hara exchanges a look with Dick. Too angry for words, Dick gets his crutches in order and heads for the door.

O'HARA
No more antics. From here on out, you leave the police work to us policemen.

(MORE)

O'HARA (cont'd)
And if ever we need help, we call
on the League, an affiliation of
which you're no longer a part of.

DICK
I think my gym membership expired
too, but thanks for reminding me.

EXT. GRAYSON HOUSE - DAY

Dick comes home from the hospital. He walks with the aid of a cane. Barbara and Bethany walk beside him. His daughter has grown quite a bit. She's almost five.

INT. GRAYSON HOUSE - NIGHT

They sit at the dining room table and eat dinner, laughing and carrying on like a loving family.

BETHANY
...and its tail went WOOSH,
knocking it over and SPLAM!

DICK
It didn't...

BETHANY
Mayonnaise everywhere!

DICK
No!

BETHANY
(laughing)
Yup!

BARBARA
(jokingly)
Now we're definitely not getting a
dog...

BETHANY
Come on, pleeeeeease! What if we get
a little one, with a tiny tail?

There's a knock at the door. It can be heard opening.

GORDON (O.S.)
Hello?

Barbara gets up from the table. Concerned.

BETHANY
Grandpa!

GORDON
There's my sack of potatoes...

They hug. Then, Gordon falls into a shelf - he's drunk.

BARBARA
Dammit, Dad...

BETHANY
Oooh, Mommy swore.

BARBARA
Bed time, let's go.

BETHANY
But I wasn't done with my corn.

BARBARA
Go on - go brush your teeth.

BETHANY
Awww, mom...

Dick sits there, completely taken aback by the haggard condition of Gordon.

BARBARA
Dick?!

Dick gets up and leads Bethany out of the room.

DICK
Come on. Show me where your bedroom is, I think I forgot.

INT. GRAYSON HOUSE - BETHANY'S ROOM

Bethany's in her pajamas, her teddy bear still covered in band-aids. She sits up in bed and points to a ribbon on the wall.

BETHANY
For this one, I had to spell fireman.

DICK
Fireman. That's a tough one. I know it starts with an O.

BETHANY

O?

DICK

OH my goodness! Look what time it is!

He smothers her in tickles and closes with a kiss.

DICK

Good night, you.

BETHANY

Dad, don't get hurt again. Okay?

Something about the way she says it knocks the wind right out of him.

DICK

Okay.

INT. GRAYSON HOUSE - LIVING ROOM

Dick comes downstairs to find the dining room empty. The SOUND of VOMITING can be heard down the hall.

IN THE BATHROOM - SAME

Dick peeks in the doorway to see Barbara caring for Gordon.

DICK

Why don't you take a break?

Barbara eagerly exits the room, adding...

BARBARA

Don't feel sorry for him.

Gordon wipes the slop from his chin.

GORDON

Welcome home, Dick.

INT. GRAYSON HOUSE - LATER THAT NIGHT

Barbara places a pile of blankets on the couch.

BARBARA

You're all set. But I mean it, this is the last time.

She heads to bed.

GORDON

She's a good girl, that one. Tried to get me help... went to the meetings and all that. I try to stay away from it - went a whole month once without a sip... but with Bruce gone and, well, you...

Dick pats Gordon on the shoulder and hands him a cup of tea. A comforting silence holds the room, when Dick asks...

DICK

Do you still believe it?

GORDON

Believe what?

Dick beams him with a look. Gordon hangs his head, he knows what he's asking.

GORDON

Doesn't matter what I believe. The case has been over for what now...

DICK

That's O'Hara talking.

GORDON

Yeah, well, you should listen. Times have changed, Dick. Sounds cliché, but goddamn if it isn't the truth. O'Hara's got the reins to the city. He's a political powerhouse with connections that run to the top of the food chain, and I mean to the very top.

DICK

The hell with O'Hara, we go straight to the League.

GORDON

Go straight to them with what? What do ya got?

DICK

Right now, nothin', but I know who will.

INT. MUSEUM - NIGHT

A stunning BLONDE strolls through a posh crowd. She struts past a trio of POLICE OFFICERS and the DISPLAY CASE OF DIAMONDS they're guarding. Her shapely hips don't go unnoticed as she enters...

THE WOMAN'S BATHROOM - SAME

She ducks into a bathroom stall and removes her skirt. On the flip side of the fabric is a detailed BLUEPRINT of the museum. It belongs to...

SELINA KYLE (44), aka CATWOMAN. She makes corrections to the blueprint and kicks the flusher. As she exits the stall, a HANDCUFF slaps down on her wrist and yanks her against the wall. Her assailant is--

DICK

Don't move--

WHACK! She knees him in the stomach.

Selina pulls off her earring, straddles his arm, and instantly picks the lock. She steps toward the door when Dick grabs her by the ankle. The exchange continues, each dishing out blows at an alarming speed, until finally Dick slams her against the wall. It's then she realizes...

SELINA

Dick?

DICK

Nice wig.

SELINA

Oh my god, Dick... that night on the roof - I never meant for you to get hurt.

DICK

Explain that to the cops.

He pulls down on a FIRE ALARM. A siren bellows.

SELINA

Goddammit...

She pulls him into a bathroom stall as a PAIR OF COPS enter the room.

COP #1

Let's go, everybody out.

IN THE STALL - SAME

They lower their voices to a whisper...

SELINA
What do you want?

DICK
I wanna know what you were doing
that night.

SELINA
Same as you - looking for answers.

DICK
Then show me what you found.

A COP kicks in the stall door to find --

Selina and Dick in an impassioned embrace, her top pulled
down, her chest pressed against his.

COP
I said let's go. Outside.

She fixes her blouse.

SELINA
He's relentless.

EXT. MUSEUM - NIGHT

Selina and Dick walk arm in arm down the museum steps, past a
gathering of police cars and fire trucks.

SELINA
I've been casing this exhibit for
months. If they find my gear,
they'll up and ship those diamonds
to Metropolis.

DICK
Gee, I'll feel real lousy about
that.

EXT. TENEMENT BUILDING - LATER THAT NIGHT

Selina pulls the wig from her head, letting her long, black
hair unfurl. They walk toward a rundown apartment complex in
a bad part of town. A few locals eye them as they pass.

SELINA

Relax.

DICK

Do I look worried?

SELINA

Most of the time.

DICK

Just curious. You don't exactly
blend in.

SELINA

I keep to myself...

TWO THUGS lean out from an alley and block their way.

THUG

Pretty necklace-

WHACK - WHACK - she lays them both out.

SELINA

...for the most part.

INT. TENEMENT BUILDING - SAME

Deep shadows run the length of the hall, obscuring most of
the graffiti.

SELINA

How's Barbara?

Dick

Fine.

SELINA

I hear she made a full recovery.

DICK

Not full.

SELINA

I can't imagine. Tell her I said
hello.

DICK

Sure... "Honey, how was your day?
Catwoman says hello."

They round a corner and approach an apartment door. She slides a board aside and reaches in, pushing a release. The door opens opposite its hinges.

INSIDE HER HIDEAWAY

The room is filled with drills, grappling hooks, glass-cutters, everything a professional thief could ever want.

DICK

Looks like you're keeping busy.

Selina struts across the room and retrieves a file.

SELINA

Here. First forty-eight hours of the investigation.

DICK

Anything stand out?

Selina pulls off her coat and sinks into a comfy chair.

SELINA

I'm the thief. You're the detective.

Dick thumbs through the file.

SELINA

I loved him, you know. He pulled me off the streets, right out of the gutter. I owe Bruce everything.

DICK

(sarcastic)

Yeah, well, I'm sure you made him real proud.

Dick makes for the door.

SELINA

There's something else.

Her tone has changed, her eyes saddled with guilt.

SELINA

I don't usually do breakouts but, at that price...

DICK

Who did you break out?

SELINA
Under normal circumstances, I
wouldn't have considered it...

DICK
Who?

SELINA
I was in over my head with other
debts that had to get paid...

DICK
WHO?

CUT TO:

INT. BOILER ROOM - NIGHT

Nothing moves down here. Until...

A DRILL whirls through a sewage pipe. It cuts a wide circle,
spilling excrement. Lifting from the filth is CATWOMAN. Steam
rises from her wet suit, her face completely covered by a
protective mask with re-breather. We are in...

INT. ARKHAM ASYLUM - MAIN PRISON

Polished black loafers walk down the hall. Selina now wears a
prison security outfit.

She enters the SECURITY BOOTH and incapacitates the GUARDS.
Her attention turns to the main control panel. She runs her
finger down a line of numbered switches, stopping at #42.
With the push of a button...

ELSEWHERE IN THE PRISON

Cell door #42 unlocks and creaks open.

BACK TO:

INT. SELINA'S APARTMENT

SELINA
I tried to look at it like any
other job, but-

Dick pushes over a table full of gear - angry beyond words.
Selina hangs her head in shame.

DICK
How much were you paid?

SELINA
Twelve, up front.

DICK
Twelve million?
(she nods "yes")
Who was your contact?

SELINA
I don't know.

DICK
What do you mean, you don't know?

SELINA
The whole thing was odd. Even the
breakout. When I got to his cell,
it was like he had no idea I was
coming.

DICK
How was it arranged?

SELINA
It was all done in code. Want ads.
Gotham Times.

Dick takes off his coat and grabs a newspaper off the floor.

DICK
Show me.

INT. GRAYSON HOUSE - 3:10 A.M.

Dick enters his house with the file tucked under his arm.

BARBARA (O.S.)
Are those O'Hara's files?

He turns to see Barbara sitting at the dining room table.
Judging by her expression, she's been waiting here all night.

DICK
Yes.

BARBARA
How did you find her?

DICK
That's what I do.

BARBARA

Not anymore.

DICK

Listen, I need to do this.

BARBARA

I loved him too, Dick. But nothing you do is gonna bring him back.

DICK

Then what's the harm? If what they say is true, then-

BARBARA

Every minute you work on this case, you put our daughter's life further at risk.

DICK

And if we don't know the truth, how much less is she at risk?

BARBARA

Oh don't give me that bullshit about fighting for what's right. Who do you think you're talking to?

DICK

What do you expect me to do, Barb, just walk away?

BARBARA

YES, and you better. Learning the truth about Bruce's death won't make the world a better place for our daughter if it gets her father killed in the process.

She marches past him and up the stairs.

IN THE STUDY - SAME

Dick turns the light on at his desk and opens the file. He stares at it for only a second before closing it.

IN THEIR BEDROOM

Dick crawls in bed and puts his arms around his wife.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. GRAYSON HOUSE - BEDROOM - MORNING

As the sun peeks through the curtains, Barbara awakens to discover that her bed is empty. From her perspective she can see into the bathroom. Resting on the sink is an electric razor.

DOWN IN THE BASEMENT

Dick does pull-ups, his beard shaved off, his head now bald.

MONTAGE:

-Dick visits the crime scene, taking pictures.

-Dick works out with rusted weights.

-Barbara watches as Dick goes over the case files.

-Dick jogs in the rain. He's clearly getting fit.

EXT. GRAYSON HOUSE - AFTERNOON

Dick returns home from his jog to find O'Hara's car parked out front.

INT. GRAYSON HOUSE - SAME

Barbara shares coffee with O'Hara in the living room.

O'HARA

Dick.

DICK

Don't let me interrupt.

Dick heads for the kitchen. Barbara doesn't hold back...

BARBARA

Have you been to the crime scene?

DICK

It's not a crime scene anymore,
it's just an alley. More coffee?

Dick exits the living room and storms into...

THE KITCHEN

Barbara follows in after him. Her voice hushed.

BARBARA
That was rude.

DICK
That was me being nice.

BARBARA
What's gotten into you? He's here
because he cares.

DICK
That's endearing.

BARBARA
Don't think I don't know what
you're doing. The running every
morning, that rusted old weight
bench... it's like you're training
for a war.

O'HARA (O.S.)
I appreciate the hospitality, but I
really should get going.

Dick empties the coffee pot into the sink.

DICK
Just as well, we were out of coffee
anyway.

Barbara storms out of the kitchen. Dick listens as she
apologizes to O'Hara and he opts for a different approach.

IN THE FOYER

O'Hara has one foot out the door, when...

DICK
What's the rush?

Dick closes the door and steers O'Hara into the living room.

DICK
Sit down, have a second cup.

O'HARA
I really don't have the time-

DICK
Make the time.

They lock eyes. O'Hara reluctantly takes a seat. Dick hands Barbara a coffee cup and she heads back into the kitchen.

O'HARA
You've got two minutes.

DICK
You need to tell me what you know.

O'HARA
About?

DICK
That night in the alley. Tell me what you saw.

O'HARA
I thought I made myself perfectly clear...

DICK
I need to hear it from you.

O'HARA
I am the Commissioner of Gotham and you are a stay-at-home dad.

DICK
You have access to every source of information-

O'HARA
Information not privy to people outside of the department.

Dick pounds his fist against the table.

DICK
Goddamn it, tell me!

Barbara reenters the living room - *is everything alright?* O'Hara calms her with a wave and she goes back into the kitchen. He swallows his pride and sits up in his seat.

O'HARA
I arrived in the alley at 11:37 PM. We found strands of green hair on the roof as well as on the victim's body.

(MORE)

O'HARA (cont'd)

Three days later we caught the Joker, whose DNA matched the hair found at the crime scene and who later confessed to the crime.

DICK

He claims to have shot Batman in the chest and watched him fall off the roof, landing, and I quote, "Flat on his back like a wingless bat."

O'HARA

And?

DICK

And the autopsy report says he shattered both ankles.

O'HARA

So?

DICK

So he didn't land on his back, he landed feet first and fell forward, accounting for the contusion to his skull.

CUT TO:

INT. ALLEY - NIGHT

WHAM - Batman meets with the pavement, shattering his ankles and cracking his skull.

BACK TO:

INT. GRAYSON HOUSE

O'HARA

I don't give a shit what he says...

DICK

Good, because his confession is worthless. It's nothing more than a ploy to gain him status among his peers.

O'HARA

Forensics can put the Joker on the roof at the time of the murder.

(MORE)

O'HARA (cont'd)
And if that's not enough, the gun
used to commit the crime was the
same make and model he used to
shoot your wife.

CUT TO:

INT. BARBARA'S APARTMENT - FRONT DOOR

The Joker levels his gun at Barbara's abdomen and pulls back
on the trigger - *BANG!*

BACK TO:

INT. GRAYSON HOUSE - SAME

DICK
How do you account for the powder
burns on his chest?

O'HARA
The gun was fired point-blank.

DICK
Right, except Bruce would *never*
allow the Joker within arm's length
of him. *Never.*

CUT TO:

EXT. BUILDING ROOFTOP - NIGHT

The barrel of the gun goes off an inch from Batman's chest.

BACK TO:

INT. GRAYSON HOUSE - SAME

O'HARA
We all get old, Dick, and we all
slip up.

DICK
There's a witness who hears-

O'HARA
(dismissive)
A drunk in the alley.

DICK

He hears a single gunshot followed by Bruce nearly landing on top of him. But there's no mention of hearing any laughter after Bruce hit the pavement.

O'HARA

What does that even mean?

DICK

You've seen the Joker in his cell. That maniac laughs at everything. He laughs at the goddamn walls.

O'HARA

Christ, Dick, is that all you got?

DICK

I'm telling you, he didn't pull the trigger.

O'HARA

Well, a jury disagreed with you. And your two minutes are up.

O'Hara stands and heads for the door.

DICK

At the very least, reopen the case.

O'HARA

Please thank your wife for the coffee.

DICK

If you reopen the case, we can-

O'HARA

Let it go, Dick. Your crime-fighting days are over.

INT. GRAYSON HOUSE - STUDY - NIGHT

Dick sits at his desk, trying to unravel the mystery behind the want ads and who hired Selina. A picture of a PUDDLE OF BLOOD sends his mind reeling...

FLASHBACK TO:

EXT. ALLEY - NIGHT

NIGHTWING sends a Batarang whirling - it connects, forcing the gunman's hand up. Above, a woman overlooking the alley is hit and killed.

BACK TO:

STUDY - SAME

Dick shakes the memory from his thoughts and HEARS Bethany giggling down the hall.

UPSTAIRS IN THE BATHROOM

Dick watches from the hall as his wife scrubs Bethany in the tub.

BARBARA

Did you get your elbows?

BETHANY

When can we go back to the market?

BARBARA

That's on Thursdays.

BETHANY

I wanna buy daddy some flowers.

BARBARA

What color?

BETHANY

Red and yellow. And orange. And purple...

Dick takes it all in, considering...

BACK AT HIS DESK

The crime scene reports are boxed up and thrown in the closet.

EXT. GRAYSON HOUSE - BACK YARD - DAY

Bethany plays on a swing set.

BETHANY

Dad, watch this.

Dick breaks from raking the leaves to watch his daughter hang from her legs. Barbara gazes from...

THE KITCHEN WINDOW

She smiles at the sight of her husband and daughter playing. Before she finishes making lunch, the doorbell rings.

AT THE FRONT DOOR

Barbara is greeted by...

BARBARA

Alfred!

She bends down to his wheelchair and gives him a hug.

ALFRED

How good to see you, Miss Barbara.

BARBARA

What brings you out this way?

INT. GRAYSON HOUSE - KITCHEN - LATER

Alfred sets a KEY on the table in front of Dick. Barbara sits next to him.

ALFRED

Master Bruce wanted you to have this. He expressed a hope that you would continue to donate a portion of his earnings to the charities he supported. However, it is entirely up to your discretion. Wayne Enterprises, the estate... everything now belongs to you.

Dick exchanges a look with Barbara before reaching for the key. As he picks it up, her hand comes down on top of his.

BARBARA

We don't want it.

DICK / ALFRED

What?

BARBARA

We don't need this. A garage full of cars, a stable full of horses - you can't even ride a horse.

DICK

Barb...

BARBARA

Besides, I have a good job and we're paying down your medical bills-

DICK

Bethany's college fund, what about that? We dipped into that account to keep up the mortgage.

BARBARA

I know...

DICK

Where's that money gonna come from?

BARBARA

She'll have to work towards a scholarship.

DICK

Barb, by this time tomorrow we could afford to have your back looked at by the best doctors in the country.

BARBARA

Give the money to Clark.

DICK

Clark...

BARBARA

He'll do something good with it.

DICK

Clark turned his back on us a long time ago.

BARBARA

I don't care, I don't want it!

ALFRED

Please, please...

Alfred takes hold of Barbara's hand.

ALFRED

Miss Barbara, with all due respect, this inheritance is not meant for Clark Kent.

(MORE)

ALFRED (cont'd)

(to Dick)

And you... you should know that despite their falling out, Master Bruce held Mr. Kent in high regard. And rightfully so, when you consider the complexity of his obligations. It's not every man who can handle the weight of the world on his shoulders.

DICK

No offense, Alfred, but we all have burdens to carry.

ALFRED

Yes, and you should be thankful you are not required to carry his.

CUT TO:

Polished RED BOOTS walk across a field of HUMAN BONES. We are in...

EXT. AFRICA - THE CONGO - DAY

The boots belong to SUPERMAN, who wanders through a valley LITTERED WITH CORPSES. An emptiness consumes his eyes, as if he's walked through a thousand of these fields. When...

A blood-curdling SCREAM spins Superman on his heels. There, springing from the tree line, is a WOMAN COVERED IN BLOOD, her dark skin lacquered red.

GUNSHOTS ring out and a bullet tears into her shoulder, sending her headlong into Superman's arms. He pivots to protect her as more gunfire erupts from the brush, the bullets ricocheting off his back - not that it will matter. The woman's last breath trickles from her lungs.

Superman gently sets her down and turns to face the culprits. A dozen machine guns blaze from the safety of the trees.

The Man of Steel lifts back his arms and CLAPS HIS HANDS. A SONIC BOOM fills the air and a SHOCK WAVE shakes the jungle.

An eight-year-old BOY stumbles from the tree line. He drops his rifle and falls to the ground, his ears bleeding. Superman watches in horror as a dozen other gunmen topple out from hiding, all of them children.

INT. WAYNE MANOR - DAY

The front door opens and Dick steps inside. Sheets cover everything. He makes his way to the library and reaches for a book on the shelf. When pulled, a portion of the floor slides back - revealing a HIDDEN STAIRWELL.

Descending through darkened hallways, he enters...

THE BATCAVE

With his first step, Dick sinks into a foot of water. A portion of the cave is flooded. He continues farther into the cavern. His fingers follow the contours of one in a series of ten Batmobiles, all gathering dust. Relics of the past consume every corner; a giant Joker card, a titanium Mech robot, an oversized penny, a rack of umbrellas...

And that's when he sees it - the ROBIN COSTUME, hanging in a glass display case.

ALFRED (O.S.)
A bit colorful, I admit.

Dick turns to see Alfred sitting in a motorized wheelchair at the far end of the cave.

ALFRED
Still, a fine suit of armor.

Alfred wheels himself over to a tool bench and continues his work, re-wiring some sort of handheld, electronic GIZMO.

DICK
Why can't you play Bingo, like all the other old timers?

ALFRED
Ha, that's a game best played with friends. These days I'm very much alone. However, I do enjoy tinkering with these things. Helps keep the mind sharp.

DICK
What's this one do?

Alfred

Oh, just another toy. Similar in function to an E.M.P., only, instead of emitting a frequency that overloads circuitry, it radiates a subsonic modulation that can rupture steel.

(off Dick's look)

Ha ha... I forget. You never had a love for science. No, your area of expertise was in leaping off heights with never a care as to where you might land. Always the acrobat, eh, Master Dick?

DICK

In my youth, Alfred. In my youth.

Dick spots a table overrun with UTILITY BELTS.

DICK

Did you ever get around to putting those audio devices into the belts, like Bruce always talked about?

ALFRED

Oh yes. Several versions, in fact.

DICK

Would he have had one on him that night?

ALFRED

I would assume so.

Alfred wheels closer to the table, grabs a belt and disconnects a MICRO PROCESSOR from the back.

ALFRED

Should look something like this.

He tosses it to Dick. It's no bigger than a dime.

ALFRED

Of course, you'll need to retrieve the right belt.

DICK

If I can get the belt that Bruce wore that night, I'll hear the whole thing... it can't really be that easy, can it?

ALFRED
Hmff, nothing ever is.

Alfred wheels himself to the cave elevator.

ALFRED
It's good to have you home, sir.
Now if you'll excuse me, I'll leave
the two of you alone.

DICK
What?

The elevator door closes. Dick looks around. There's no one else in the cave. That's when he notices...

A blinking RED LIGHT.

Dick steps closer. He brushes away the cobwebs and lays his hand on a scanner. There's a *CLUNK* as power floods into a hulking machine - this is the BAT COMPUTER.

Dick removes the KEY given to him by Alfred, its distinct shape matches a tumbler on the Bat computer. He slides the key into the console and gives it a twist, not expecting to hear...

BRUCE WAYNE (V.O.)
Hello, Dick. If you're listening to
this, it means I'm dead.

The sound of Bruce's voice echoes through the cave.

BRUCE WAYNE (V.O.)
Let me start by saying that the day
you left, I was filled with such...
relief. Just to know that you would
get the chance to live a normal
life. I know you feel guilty for
having gone, but it takes courage
to begin again, and for that, I've
never been more proud of you.

A VAULT automatically unlocks across the room.

BRUCE WAYNE (V.O.)
This vault, the one you always
wanted to see the inside of as a
boy, well... I'm afraid it's not
filled with any of those exciting
things you once imagined. Inside it
is paperwork.

(MORE)

BRUCE WAYNE (V.O.) (cont'd)

The documentation you'll need to bring all of this, the house, the stocks, my entire worth, into your name. As for Bruce Wayne, well, for now he's very much alive. You'll even hear accounts of him popping up from time to time. In fact, he'll live for several more years until he tragically dies in a plane crash North of the Himalayas. A fitting death for a billionaire, I suppose. All that I do ask is that you continue with my contributions to the companies in this city that are still out to do good. They're listed on the second shelf, red folder.

A RED FOLDER sits in the vault.

BRUCE WAYNE (V.O.)

And while I know I don't need to say this, it was an honor to have fought beside you. You're a smart detective, an honest man, and a true son.

EXT. GOTHAM COURTHOUSE - DAY

A black sedan pulls up to the curb and O'Hara gets out, rain falling. He's quickly swarmed by REPORTERS.

REPORTER #1

Is it true Superman will now be patrolling the streets of Gotham?

O'HARA

Yes and we are lucky to have him.

REPORTER #2

Who in Washington commands the authority over where Superman-

O'HARA

The decision was that of the Attorney General.

REPORTER #3

Should the citizens of Gotham be worried that Superman now answers to you?

O'HARA

Superman does what's best for the good of this country. And no, the people of Gotham should never fear his presence. Not unless they're criminals.

The reporters all laugh. Looking past them, O'Hara thinks he sees Dick across the street. However, at a second glance, Dick is nowhere to be seen.

FROM INSIDE A NEARBY BANK

Dick stares at O'Hara through the window, using the bank as cover.

BANK TELLER

Can I help you?

DICK

No, thank you.

Before exiting, Dick spots GORDON at the teller window.

DICK

Jim...

GORDON

Dick - you bank here?

DICK

No.

Gordon collects his things.

GORDON

What's wrong?

DICK

Nothing the League can't answer.

INT. HALL OF JUSTICE - OBSERVATION DECK - DAY

A TOUR GROUP is paraded through a section of the facility overlooking the main council room. WONDER WOMAN strides into the main room, garnering elated chatter from the tourists.

TOUR GUIDE

Now there's a woman who needs no introduction.

(MORE)

TOUR GUIDE (cont'd)
 Standing five feet eleven inches
 tall and capable of lifting over
 twelve thousand tons, she's one of
 the team's founding members, though
 you'd never know it to look at her.

Wonder Woman presses a button, fogging the glass along the
 observation deck.

TOUR GUIDE
 Sorry folks, but not even we get to
 see what goes on behind the
 curtain. Now if you'll follow me,
 you'll catch a glimpse of what an
 invisible jet really looks like.

As they walk out of the viewing area, one of the tourists
 lingers behind and admires a heavy BUST OF THE FLASH. With
 the force of his shoulder, he muscles it over. The bust
 topples into the viewing window, shattering the glass.
 Alarms bellow as the tourist leaps through the window frame
 and lands in--

THE MAIN COUNCIL ROOM

Before he can take a step, he's surrounded by a towering
 circle of GREEN FIRE. GREEN LANTERN eyes his captive. It's
 none other than...

DICK
 Got a minute?

INT. HALL OF JUSTICE - HALLWAY

Green Lantern escorts Dick down the hall.

GREEN LANTERN
 Quite the dramatic entrance.

DICK
 Maybe next time you'll try
 returning my calls.

GREEN LANTERN
 We get a little busy around here,
 in case you've forgotten.

DICK
 Well, then I won't waste your time.

Dick stops outside of THE MORGUE.

DICK
I want to see him.

GREEN LANTERN
What? We buried him.

DICK
The casket we buried was empty.
Don't talk to me like I'm some
outsider. I need to see him.

Green Lantern sighs. He puts his palm on a scanner. An
ELEVATOR opens and they both get in.

GREEN LANTERN
I'm afraid you're going to be
disappointed.

The doors close.

INSIDE THE ELEVATOR

They ride the elevator down.

GREEN LANTERN
There's nothing to see. Clark took
care of it.

DICK
Took care of it how?

GREEN LANTERN
Per Bruce's wishes - he torched it.

CUT TO:

INT. HALL OF JUSTICE - THREE YEARS AGO

Superman engulfs Batman's body in HEAT VISION.

BACK TO:

INT. HALL OF JUSTICE - ELEVATOR

The elevator doors open and Green Lantern points.

GREEN LANTERN
That's all that's left.

Dick steps off the elevator and enters...

AN UNDERGROUND WAREHOUSE

The room is overflowing with antiquated Bat-gadgets and vehicles. At the far corner of the room sits Batman's UTILITY BELT. Dick looks it over, it's a charred mess.

GREEN LANTERN

Haven't been down here in a while.
Look at that...

Green Lantern grins at the sight of an old BATMOBILE with stylish tail fins.

GREEN LANTERN

Voice recognition, atomic battery -
don't make 'em like this anymore.

DICK

Yeah, fancy car. You remember the
man who drove it?

Green Lantern's comm suddenly crackles with the VOICE of...

FLASH (O.S.)

Hal, you better have a serious talk
with Wonder Bra before I'm made to
teach her a lesson.

DICK

How is Barry these days?

FLASH (O.S.)

I'm telling you, I'm one-tenth of a
second away from taking that lasso
of hers and-

Green Lantern shuts off his comm.

GREEN LANTERN

Should've kicked him out years ago.

DICK

And Clark?

Green lantern

Spends most his time on the front
lines, cleaning up the President's
mess.

DICK

Clark's a pawn, just like Diana.

GREEN LANTERN
We're all pawns in some way or
another.

DICK
That's a great motto.

GREEN LANTERN
We're a different League now, Dick.

DICK
That's what happens when you sit
O'Hara at the head of the table.

Green Lantern takes the Utility Belt from Dick's hands.

GREEN LANTERN
I don't like what you're
insinuating.

DICK
This building used to stand for
something - WE used to stand
together.

Again, Green Lantern's comm signals and we hear...

WONDER WOMAN (O.S.)
O'Hara's asking to speak with you.

DICK
I'll let myself out.

Dick storms out of the room. Unbeknown to Green Lantern, Dick
has pulled the MICRO PROCESSOR out of the Utility Belt.

INT. BATCAVE - NIGHT

Dick watches on intently as Alfred connects the micro-
processor to the Bat computer.

ALFRED
That should do the trick...

Dick's cell phone rings. He checks the number and answers.

DICK
Perfect timing. You want to hear
what happened that night?

ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE LINE

Gordon listens from home.

GORDON
What night?

DICK (O.S.)
Listen...

Dick puts the phone on speaker and Alfred activates the recording. It begins with the JOKER LAUGHING.

Gordon sits wide-eyed, listening...

INT. BATCAVE

The JOKER'S LAUGHTER fills the cave, followed by...

BATMAN (O.S.)
Put down the gun.

The audio suddenly becomes indiscernible.

GORDON (O.S.)
What happened?

A WARNING illuminates on the Bat computer, indicating damage.

DICK
Goddamn heat vision...

GORDON (O.S.)
What are you talking about?

ALFRED
It seems the audio processor has sustained some damage.

DICK
DAMMIT!

GORDON (O.S.)
Can it be fixed?

A RED LIGHT FLASHES on the security system.

ALFRED
It appears we have a visitor.

DICK
No visitors. Keep the gates closed.

ALFRED

The gates are closed, sir, but it won't make a bit of difference.

INT. WAYNE MANOR - THE FRONT DOOR

Dick opens the door to reveal SUPERMAN. Rain or no rain, Dick doesn't invite him in.

SUPERMAN

Richard.

DICK

Kent.

Superman pushes past Dick and begins looking around the foyer.

SUPERMAN

I don't enjoy this, but it seems you're upsetting a lot of people.

DICK

Well, I appreciate you coming all the way over here to tell me that. Maybe you can do me a favor and tell those people to go to hell.

SUPERMAN

Save the tough talk, I'm not the enemy.

DICK

No? You came here to warn me, didn't ya? Is that the sort of thing you do with a friend? Warn them not to step out of line?

SUPERMAN

I need you to listen to me...

DICK

I got news for ya, I'm gonna tear this goddamn city apart until I get to the truth.

SUPERMAN

You're in over your head.

DICK

I'm not interested in your opinion.

SUPERMAN

Bruce didn't want to hear it either
and it cost Jason his life.

DICK

GET OUT.

Superman makes for the door, stopping to add...

SUPERMAN

You can live in this house and play
with his toys, but you'll never be
him. Don't make me remind you.

He exits the house and lifts into the night sky.

MONTAGE:

-Alfred toils with the micro-processor, carefully pulling it
apart while Dick pounds away at a heavy bag.

-Dick studies dozens of newspaper clippings, still trying to
crack the code.

-Sprinting through the woods, Dick snaps out a Batarang and
hurls it toward the treetops. As it angles back, he flips
over a fallen tree and...

EXT. GRAYSON HOUSE - MORNING

Dick catches the PAPER thrown at him by the paperboy.

LATER THAT MORNING

The newspaper lies across the kitchen table as Dick studies
the personals. An advertisement for the CIRCUS catches his
eye. Bethany sits across from him and struggles with a word
jumble on the back of her cereal box.

BETHANY

Dad, what's a...
(she counts the spaces)
Seven-letter word for "scary"?

DICK

Umm... I don't know. Ask your
mother.

Bethany picks up the box and exits the room.

BETHANY (O.S.)
Mom, will you help me with this
riddle?

Dick looks up from the paper - *riddle...*

INT. BATCAVE

Dick enters a chamber filled with KEYS and removes a set marked ARKHAM.

INT. BATCAVE - LATER

A BLUEPRINT of Arkham Asylum lies across a wide table. Dick studies the schematic and places a key on each door it'll open.

EXT. ARKHAM ASYLUM - NIGHT

The building looms like a weathered castle, overrun with gables and wrapped in barbed wire. High atop the wall, Dick scales the stonework; no ropes, he does it the hard way. He disappears into a smokestack.

INT. ARKHAM ASYLUM - FURNACE ROOM

Dick exits out the furnace and disrobes.

INT. ARKHAM ASYLUM - HALLWAY

Now DRESSED AS A JANITOR, Dick unlocks a steel-plated door and enters a corridor. On either side of him are solitary confinement cells, numbered sequentially.

He passes door #42, hearing the faint SOUND OF LAUGHTER. A thin window is the only visual access into the room. Dick peers in the window. The cell appears empty, however...

INSIDE THE PADDED CELL

What Dick doesn't see is the JOKER (72) lying with his back against the door, his arms bound in a straightjacket, his mouth splayed wide and ROARING WITH LAUGHTER.

IN THE HALLWAY

Dick moves farther down the hall and comes to cell #63. A wall of glass separates Dick from a thin man facing the corner. Crossword puzzles cover the floor.

DICK

Riddler...

EDWARD NIGMA (78), aka THE RIDDLER, looks up from his puzzle, his green eyes sparkling.

INSIDE THE MAIN CONTROL ROOM - SAME

Dick can be seen standing outside the Riddler's cell on one of thirty monitors. Two SECURITY GUARDS take notice.

SECURITY GUARD #1

What's Darrel doing?

DARREL (O.S.)

You say somethin'?

The guards turn to see DARREL THE JANITOR wheel his cart into the room.

AT THE RIDDLER'S CELL

Dick holds the personals against the glass.

RIDDLER

Hmm... not a very clever code,
that's for sure.

AN ALARM bellows. Dick panics...

DICK

Who placed these ads?!

RIDDLER

And why would a janitor care to
know?

DICK

Can you read the code or can't you?

RIDDLER

The coveralls fit you a bit tight
and bear a softer yellow embroidery
in the patch - a subtle distinction
from the new uniforms, though an
adequate disguise nonetheless.

DICK
You can't read the code...

RIDDLER
You're left-handed, far-sighted,
and your accent makes it apparent
that you are not originally from
this city. Yet here you are,
determined to uncover the truth
about Gotham's greatest champion
with a fire in your eye as though
you knew him personally.

DICK
You're wasting my time!

RIDDLER
Oh come now, DICK GRAYSON, what's
the rush?

A pack of SECURITY GUARDS can be heard racing down the
adjacent hallway. Dick turns to leave, when...

RIDDLER
What was the payout?

DICK
Twelve million.

RIDDLER
Ah... therein lies your answer.

DICK
I don't understand.

RIDDLER
Look about and sniff around, it's
someone rich within this town.

DICK
No riddles!

RIDDLER
For he who spends and pays out
millions, has himself some extra
billions.

The door to the hallway opens and EIGHT SECURITY GUARDS
enter, guns out and pointed.

SECURITY GUARD
STEP AWAY FROM THE GLASS AND GET
DOWN ON THE GROUND! DO IT NOW!

Dick steps away from the glass and raises his hands above his head, his back facing the guards to keep them from getting a look at his face.

SECURITY GUARD
DOWN ON YOUR KNEES!

Dick does as ordered. Two security officers try to push him to his chest, but Dick counters, disabling both men.

Another guard aims a STUN GUN --

Dick swipes his legs out from underneath him. The stun gun fires its electrodes and clamps onto ONE OF THE CELL DOORS, setting off an array of sparks.

Another officer aims a shotgun, but Dick pushes it up--

BANG - it fractures an overhead pipe, adding a DOWNPOUR to the frenzy. Dick works his way through the guards, one by one, laying them all out. He rounds the hall, only to see--

MORE GUARDS arriving in riot gear.

Dick heads back the way he came, grabs the shotgun off the floor, empties three rounds into a wire-mesh window and DIVES THROUGH IT. Landing...

OUT ON THE ROOF

He tumbles across the tiles and rolls over the ledge. Luckily, he grabs the gutter and keeps from taking the fatal plunge. He pulls himself up on the roof, only to see --

Security guards at the window. They don't waste time with a warning and open fire - BANG - BANG - BANG!

Dick drops back down, only the gutter breaks and sends him swinging into the wall. He falls to the lower roof and rolls to the ground.

Out come the dogs - TWO DOBERMANS running full steam.

Dick gets up and heads for the police bus, the dogs snapping at his heels. He pushes through the passenger door and makes a quick exit out the driver's door, trapping the dogs in the vehicle.

He scales the perimeter fence and throws himself over the barbed wire. But he's not out of it yet. There's a second fence. He starts climbing, as--

A security guard steps out on a guard tower. He loads a SNIPER RIFLE and takes aim.

Dick clears the second fence, when --

BANG - a bullet tears through his shoulder and he collapses to the ground. Three POLICE CARS skid to a stop in front of him. Dick hangs his head in defeat. The cops rush in and twist his arms behind his back. Before he can muster a scream, the butt of a rifle knocks him cold and his MEMORIES flash before us...

CUT TO:

1) NIGHTWING sends a Batarang whirling. It stabs into a robber's arm, forcing the gun up. Above, a woman overlooking the alley is killed. Her six-year-old son, JASON TODD, witnesses it all.

2) Jason is brought through the halls of a foster home. Unbeknownst to him, Dick watches from a distance.

3) To Bruce's surprise, Dick leads Jason into the Batcave.

4) Dick trains Jason. Bruce watches, unsure.

5) The Joker levels his gun through a doorway and shoots Barbara in the abdomen.

6) Gordon arrives at Barbara's apartment to find her sprawled across the living room floor, blood everywhere.

7) Nightwing chases the Joker into a factory filled with Joker dolls. Batman and a new Robin arrive on the scene. For a moment, they work as a team - Batman, Nightwing and Robin - all three fighting as one. That is...

Until Jason meets with a CROWBAR-WIELDING Joker. Steel cracks against bone, spraying blood. And to make matters worse - a BOMB ticks down the seconds...

BOOM - the building collapses. When the smoke settles, Batman rises from the rubble with Jason in his arms - DEAD.

8) The Robin costume is sealed in a glass case and hung in the Batcave.

9) Superman stands at the head of the Justice League table, surrounded by his peers. Batman stands opposite him. Though we can't hear their conversation, they're having the kind of argument that dissolves friendships. Batman walks out. Losing his cool, Superman throws the table across the room.

10) Dick tosses his Nightwing costume into a roaring fireplace. Barbara wraps her arms around him. She's confined to a WHEELCHAIR.

11) *BANG!* Batman is shot in the chest.

INT. ARKHAM ASYLUM - MEDIC WING

Dick awakens, handcuffed to the bed, his wound dressed.
O'Hara enters.

O'HARA

I've taken the liberty of calling
your wife. She's already at the
station and she's not all that
pleased.

DICK

You stay away from my family.

O'HARA

It'll be you who has to stay away.
You're going to jail, Dick. This
stunt was the last of it.

(to the guards)

Bring him to County and have him
booked. Eight-man surveillance at
all times.

INT. POLICE STATION - LATER

Dick goes through processing, undergoing mug shots and fingerprints. As a result of the gunshot to his shoulder, his left arm rests in a sling. Once he's booked, he's locked in a...

JAIL CELL

The door echoes as it closes.

FADE TO BLACK:

The darkness becomes a black robe belonging to a JUDGE. We
are in...

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

Dick stands beside a court-appointed DEFENSE ATTORNEY as the
arraignment plays out.

JUDGE

Let the record show that the defendant has entered a plea of guilty on all sixteen counts pending against him. This court will reconvene three weeks from today, on May sixteenth at eleven o'clock, to carry out sentencing. In agreement with the prosecution, bail is set for five million dollars.

DEFENSE ATTORNEY

Five million?! Your Honor, this is my client's first offense-

JUDGE

His first of sixteen offenses. Bail is set for five million dollars. Court is adjourned.

The gavel bangs.

INT. COURTHOUSE - HALLWAY - LATER

The defense attorney gathers his things when a man in a wheelchair pulls up alongside him.

ALFRED

That was five million, was it?

INT. GRAYSON HOUSE - DAY

Barbara looks out the window to see a black sedan pull up to the house. Dick exits the car.

BETHANY

I can't find my red sweater.

BARBARA

I have your green one. Let's go.

BETHANY

But I want my red-

BARBARA

NOW.

Bethany follows in her mother's lead and exits the house via the side door.

IN THE DRIVEWAY - SAME

The two get in the car.

BARBARA
Seat belt.

Bethany buckles in, when --

BETHANY
Daddy!

Bethany undoes her seat belt and rolls down her window.

BARBARA
Put your seat belt back on.

BETHANY
Why?

BARBARA
PUT IT ON.

Dick notices the SUITCASES piled in the back seat.

DICK
Barb, wait...

BETHANY
Hi daddy.

BARBARA
(to Bethany)
I will NOT tell you again!

Bethany buckles in as Barbara puts the car in reverse.

DICK
Barb, I need your help. I can't do
this alone.

BARBARA
I won't be a part of it, Dick. Not
again.

She pulls away, leaving him in the driveway.

INT. BATCAVE

Dick slaps a RED FILE to the table. It reads WAYNE ENTERPRISES, DONATIONS. He pours through it, searching. His finger comes to rest on a company called GOTHAM SECURITIES. Their allotted donation: twelve million.

ALFRED
Master Dick, Mr. Gordon is here,
sir.

DICK
Any luck on that recording?

ALFRED
Some. The computer has identified
the damage, but it may take some
time to reconstruct.

DICK
Stay on it.

ALFRED
Of course, sir. And Mr. Gordon?

DICK
Let him in.

Dick heads to the Bat computer and types in "Gotham Securities" - generating very little information. Gordon enters the cave. Having never been down here, he's a bit overwhelmed.

GORDON
My god... he always called it a
cave, but I thought he was kidding.

DICK
Gotham Securities, ever hear of it?

GORDON
Umm, should I have?

DICK
No address, no employees. Just an
offshore account.

GORDON
Dick, I know you don't want to hear
this right now, but I think you
need to take a deep breath and
just... slow down.

Dick isn't listening.

GORDON
Dick...

DICK
Son of a bitch did it right under
our noses...

Gordon slams the file to the table.

GORDON

HEY. I've gone down this road. Lost it all... hell, I thought I lost my mind. Not a day goes by when I don't think of it. My daughter, lying in all that blood...

Gordon shakes off the memory.

GORDON

You listen to me. You need to think about Barbara now. Think about your marriage - of what this could do to Bethany. Is it worth losing your family over?

The phone rings. Alfred answers - a look of panic washes over him.

DICK

What?

ALFRED

He's escaped.

FLASHBACK TO:

INT. ARKHAM ASYLUM

A security guard aims a STUN GUN --

Dick swipes his legs out from underneath him. The stun gun fires its electrodes and clamps onto ONE OF THE CELL DOORS, setting off an array of sparks. This is cell #42.

INSIDE CELL #42

The JOKER slowly turns, his eyes wide. With a resounding CLANK, the lock retracts and the DOOR CRACKS OPEN.

BACK TO:

INT. BATCAVE

GORDON

Oh my god.

Dick

Barbara.

Gordon picks up a phone and dials out...

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

Barbara's cell phone rings, only - she's forgotten it in the car. She and Bethany can be seen walking toward a bustling market.

INT. BATCAVE

GORDON
She's not answering.

Dick rips a covering off the BATCYCLE. He punches the ignition and the engine roars to life.

EXT. MARKET - DAY

Flower vendors, vegetable stands, juggling clowns - with so much excitement, Barbara doesn't notice the one CLOWN making his way toward them.

INTERCUT:

-The Batcycle blasts to the street and tears down the road.

-The clown stalks closer...

-Dick steers through traffic at breakneck speed.

-Barbara turns for a split second and... Bethany's gone.

BARBARA
Bethany?

Dick zooms onto the scene and skids to a stop, the tires smoking. The sight of him on the Batcycle sends a chill through Barbara's veins.

BARBARA
Oh my god...
(yelling over the crowd)
BETHANY?!

Barbara weaves through the market and spots --

BARBARA
Her sweater!

Dick grabs it, not expecting--

DICK

AHH!

He recoils, revealing a DOLL'S HEAD with painted green hair and an elongated smile. Jutting from its face are dozens of NEEDLES.

Barbara covers her mouth in horror, her worst nightmare has come true - the Joker has her daughter.

INT. POLICE STATION - NIGHT

A Xerox machine copies Bethany's picture, adding to a stack of leaflets already printed. Dick sits with his shirt unbuttoned and two DOCTORS checking his vitals. He's sweating uncontrollably.

DICK

I need to get out of here.

DOCTOR #1

Sit still, Mr. Grayson, the police are doing everything they can.

DICK

I'm telling you, I can find him.

DOCTOR #2

Whatever was in that needle is sending your heart rate through the roof.

A third doctor joins them.

DOCTOR #3

The Toxicology report says it's something called Bolinium.

DOCTOR #2

Never heard of it. Is that like a-

DICK

It's a neurotoxin.

Dick stands and buttons his shirt.

DOCTOR #2

Mr. Grayson, please sit down. Identifying the compound is only the beginning. We need to get you to an ICU, start flushing your blood, and administer a vaccine.

DICK
You won't find one. Not around
here.

DOCTOR #1
Please, further activity will only
speed the toxin through your body
faster.

DICK
Then I guess I better get going.

A heavysset cop, RUSS DAWSON, gets in Dick's way.

RUSS
Get some coffee and have a seat,
'cause you're not going anywhere.

Russ puts his hand on his nightstick. Dick wipes the sweat from his eyes and contemplates what it'll take to put Russ down, when Gordon enters the room and pulls him aside.

GORDON
I've made calls to everybody from
the East River to Cathedral Square,
nobody's seen or heard anything. If
the Joker's still in Gotham, he's
gone underground.
(sees the sweat)
How ya feeling?

DICK
I'm fine.

GORDON
You want me to check the harbor?

DICK
Sit tight. Alfred should be calling
with the information we need.

GORDON
What? How?

CUT TO:

INT. BATCAVE - SAME

Alfred opens a chamber filled with dated electronic gadgetry. He pulls a RADAR-SCOPE from the shelf and throws in a new battery. It beeps to life and pinpoints the Joker's location.

BACK TO:

INT. POLICE STATION - SAME

GORDON
(astonished)
There's a tracer on the Joker?

DICK
It's in one of his teeth.

GORDON
What? When?

DICK
Years ago, after Barbara was shot.
Bruce was determined to make sure
the Joker would never hurt anyone
again.

GORDON
But... surely the Joker knows-

DICK
Maybe, but hell, he'd have to pull
out all his teeth to be sure. The
inmates at Arkham have a better
dental plan than I do.

GORDON
A tracer...

DICK
With the tracer inside him, the
minute he goes loose, Bruce is
there.

Gordon is floored. *A tracer implanted in the Joker?*

Barbara exits from a room full of investigators, her face
swollen from crying. She locks eyes with Dick and approaches.

SLAP - her hand comes across his face. She tries to hit him
again but the cops intervene.

BARBARA
You bastard!

She goes hysterical, crying and screaming. It takes three men
to restrain her. They usher her into another room and close
the door.

The commotion draws O'Hara into the room.

Dick lunges at him --

He only gets a hand on O'Hara's shoulder before a swarm of cops tackle him against the nearest desk.

DICK
You did this! First Batman--

O'HARA
Get him out of here!

DICK
AND NOW MY DAUGHTER!

O'HARA
Put him somewhere to cool off!

Russ and three other officers drag Dick down the hall.

DOWN THE HALL - JAIL CELL

Dick is thrown into a cell, the door locked shut. He stares back at the men who put him there, his chest heaving.

RUSS
Let me get you that coffee.

The cops head back the way they came, chatting among themselves.

COP #1
You alright?

RUSS
Yeah, he clipped me good though.

COP #2
You see that motorcycle of his we impounded?

COP #3
Yeah, it's hard to believe that guy's Robin.

RUSS
I'll say, he didn't put up much of a fight.

Russ feels his pockets - something's missing. He races back down the hall and rounds the corner to see Dick's jail cell open, his KEYS in the door.

INT. POLICE STATION - ROOF - NIGHT

A POLICE HELICOPTER touches down on a landing pad. Dick kicks the pilot from his seat and takes the controls. Gordon, O'Hara, and an army of cops race out onto the roof and watch as the helicopter takes flight.

Russ pulls his sidearm and opens fire--

GORDON

Stop!

Gordon barrels into Russ; however, not before he gets off a clean shot and punctures the fuselage - the chopper now leaking gas.

GORDON

What the hell is wrong with you guys?!

O'Hara turns to the nearest officer.

O'HARA

Put out a warrant for Dick Grayson's arrest and get a SWAT team over to Wayne Manor.

GORDON

What are you doing?

O'HARA

(ignoring Gordon)

Contact every precinct south of the river and get their pilots airborne. They should have ample time to secure the area and prohibit him from landing.

The officer hurries off to carry out the order.

GORDON

For god's sake, you're gonna get Dick killed!

O'HARA

GET HIM OUT OF HERE!

GORDON

Oh, I'll leave...

Gordon unclasps his revolver, hands it to another officer, and *WHACK* - punches O'Hara.

GORDON
After I kick your ass!

O'Hara quickly recovers, but the other officers intervene.
Desk Sergeant LAWRENCE JOHNSON races out onto the roof.

LAWRENCE
Commissioner!

Both Gordon and O'Hara turn.

GORDON / O'HARA
WHAT?

LAWRENCE
The phone's ringing.

O'HARA
So take a message!

LAWRENCE
No, sir - *thee* phone.

INT. POLICE STATION - O'HARA'S OFFICE

A RED ROTARY PHONE illuminates in the corner of the room.
O'Hara answers...

O'HARA
Commissioner.
(beat)
Who is this?

O'Hara writes down an address.

O'HARA
And you're certain he's there?

The phone goes dead. O'Hara hangs up and glares at Gordon.

O'HARA
Who the hell was that, Gordon?! The
Batman is supposed to be dead!

GORDON
Did he give you a location on the
Joker?

O'Hara passes the address to one of the officers.

O'HARA
Call in a second SWAT team and send
them to this address.

GORDON
What address?!

O'HARA
I THOUGHT I SAID, GET HIM OUT OF
HERE!

CUT TO:

EXT. POLICE STATION - NIGHT

Gordon is marched out of the building.

GORDON
Get your hands off me!

They push him to the pavement and go back inside. He barely has time to collect himself before a throng of POLICE CARS AND SWAT VANS exit the building. Gordon jumps in his car and follows after them.

INT. HELICOPTER - SAME

Dick sits at the controls, sweat pouring off his face, and dials out on his cell...

INT. BATCAVE - SAME

Alfred casually sips tea and answers the phone...

ALFRED
Wayne residence.

DICK (O.S.)
Alfred, prepare an antiserum for
Bolinium, I'm coming in.

ALFRED
Right away, sir. But I'm afraid
you'll need to take the back
entrance. We have quite a few
uninvited guests.

From a farther vantage we see that Alfred is seated in front of a dozen security monitors, each providing a different angle on the manor - a SWAT TEAM running from room to room. Exterior cameras display an army of helicopters and police cars surrounding the estate. They scour every inch of the grounds, police dogs sniffing.

INT. HELICOPTER - SAME

Dick
I figured that, which is why I'm
already on route to the Hall. The
only question is...

EXT. NIGHT SKY - SAME

In the distance, the HALL OF JUSTICE shines like a beacon
under the Metropolis skyline.

DICK (O.S.)
...do I still have any friends
there?

INT. HALL OF JUSTICE - NIGHT

The Flash sits at the League computer, his costume on, save
for the mask. With a beer in hand, he skims a nudie mag when
a PRIORITY ALERT flashes across the screen.

FLASH
Get a load of this...

Aquaman nears the screen and reads it for himself.

AQUAMAN
(horrified)
The Joker's got Dick's daughter.

FLASH
Not that, this - there's a warrant
out for Dick's arrest.
(snickers)
Looks like he stole a-

A blip appears on their scope. Dick's voice crackles over the
airwaves.

DICK (O.S.)
Zero, Gamma, Pelican, Twelve.
Repeat, Zero, Gamma, Pelican,
Twelve...

FLASH
What the hell is that?

AQUAMAN
An old distress signal. Open the
hangar.

Aquaman grabs a headset...

INT. HELICOPTER - SAME

Dick nears the Hall of Justice - two hundred yards up ahead.

AQUAMAN (O.S.)
We hear you, Pelican, you have
permission to land.

DICK
Roger that, I'm comin' in.

The FUEL LIGHT comes on and the engine sputters.

DICK
Holy shit.

INT. HALL OF JUSTICE - SAME

Aquaman watches on the monitor as the chopper starts to pitch.

AQUAMAN
Something's wrong.

EXT. HALL OF JUSTICE - SAME

The chopper drops from the sky. Dick straps on his seat belt as *KA-RAAAAAAAAAASH* - the helicopter collides with the earth, tearing up the League's front courtyard.

INT. HALL OF JUSTICE - SAME

FLASH
Guess we're due for a new
fountain.

EXT. HALL OF JUSTICE - SAME

Dick stumbles from the wreck, a wicked cut across his left eye. Aquaman opens the main door and ushers him inside.

INT. HALL OF JUSTICE - SAME

Dick's hands twitch uncontrollably, the poison is taking its toll.

AQUAMAN
You don't look so good.

DICK
I need to get back to the cave.
Does the sled still work?

AQUAMAN
Your guess is as good as mine. Come on.

In the blink of an eye, the Flash crosses the room, obstructing their path.

FLASH
What are you doing?

AQUAMAN
Get out of the way, Barry.

FLASH
What part of "warrant for his arrest" don't you understand?

AQUAMAN
Step aside.

FLASH
You're gonna have to do better than that, blondie.

AQUAMAN
I said, STEP ASIDE.

Aquaman angles his stare.

FLASH
Ha... save that telepathy crap for the fish.

The Flash suddenly feels a dizzying sensation. His expression goes blank and he steps out of the way.

AQUAMAN
Works on whales too, asshole.

INT. HALL OF JUSTICE - UNDERGROUND WAREHOUSE

Aquaman and Dick enter the warehouse filled with old Batman equipment and approach THE SLED - a thin, rocket-shaped pod resting on a track.

AQUAMAN

Let's hope there's power.

Dick brushes away the cobwebs and pushes a button, but it doesn't power up.

AQUAMAN

Nothin'.

DICK

I can run a patch.
(to the Batmobile)
Atomic batteries to power.

The classic '66 BATMOBILE registers his VOICE COMMAND and the engine revs to life. Dick pops the hood and runs a cable from the motor to the sled console.

DICK

Try it again.

Aquaman flicks a switch and the sled hums with power. Dick opens the cockpit and shakes Aquaman's hand.

DICK

Thanks, Arthur.

AQUAMAN

Anytime-

WHACK - a whirl of red catches Aquaman in the jaw, knocking him cold.

WHAM - Dick is kicked to the floor. His assailant is...

FLASH

Hey there, Dick. Good to see ya.

BAM - he hits Dick with another lightning-fast punch.

DICK

Barry... my daughter...

FLASH

Well, you should have thought about
her before you got yourself mixed
up in all this.

He delivers six more punches that leave Dick gasping for air. His body starts to twitch, the poison taking effect.

DICK

Don't... make me... hurt you.

KRACK - the Flash wallops him again.

FLASH

There it is, that attitude.

Dick crawls toward the pod, his nose bleeding.

FLASH

Bruce had the same thing... always
made me want to set the record
straight - show you what it means
to have real power.

Dick tries to fight back, but he's no match. The Flash
pummels him to the ground.

FLASH

So much for that attitude, eh,
Dick? What's the matter? Nothin'
else to say?

What the Flash doesn't realize is --

Dick has lead him around to the tail of the BATMOBILE.
Through swollen lips, he utters...

DICK

Turbines to speed.

The Batmobile's engine ignites, engulfing the Flash in
FLAMES.

FLASH

AHHHHHHHH!

The Flash takes off running to smother out the flames and
slams straight into a low hanging pipe - knocking himself
unconscious. He'll live; however, he'll be moving a lot
slower.

Dick climbs into the pod, his body convulsing. He closes the
cockpit and, with the push of the button, sends the pod
whizzing down the track.

INT. JOKER'S HIDEAWAY - NIGHT

Hundreds of dolls consume this one-story house. Bethany
admires a marionette when the Joker exits the kitchen with a
tray of sweets.

JOKER

Candy, candy, candy! Ha ha! What
sugary, sweet bliss!

(MORE)

JOKER (cont'd)
 (offering)
 For you, my queen...

Bethany's eyes light up; gum drops, lollypops, taffy...

JOKER
 Oh, so many to choose, but which?
 Such a dilemma.

He looks out the window to see a line of POLICE CARS AND SWAT VANS converge on the house. GORDON parks alongside them. The SWAT TEAM prepare their assault and move in.

The Joker pulls down on a marionette. The SWAT team is suddenly greeted by a pair of FIFTY-CALIBER MACHINE GUNS. RAT-A-TAT-TAT-TAT-TAT-TAT-TAT-TAT! It tears them to shreds.

JOKER
 HOOOOOOOO HA HA HA!

Bethany shudders at the SOUNDS OF MEN DYING. The Joker pushes the tray of candy against her.

JOKER
 Oh, don't be frightened. Go on, try one of each! After all, you don't have to brush all your teeth...

He raises a rusted pair of PLIERS.

JOKER
 ...just the ones you want to keep.

INT. BATCAVE - SAME

The SLED comes zipping into the cave. Dick lies without moving, his skin white, his lips blue. Alfred unlocks the canopy and injects the antiserum into Dick's neck.

His eyes spring to life.

ALFRED
 Welcome back, sir.

CUT TO:

INT. BATCAVE - MINUTES LATER

The case enshrining the Robin uniform SHATTERS against the floor. Dick grabs the utility belt. His cell phone rings. He answers, only to hear--

GORDON (O.S.)
There's no getting inside!

INTERCUT WITH:

EXT. JOKER'S HIDEAWAY - SAME

Sprinklers lift from the lawn and WOooooooooosh - SPRAY FIRE in every direction.

GORDON
The whole place is rigged!

BACK TO:

INT. BATCAVE - SAME

Dick unlocks a chamber filled with BATMAN ATTIRE - boots, gloves, capes, etc.

DICK
Jim, listen to me...

GORDON (O.S.)
That insane son of a bitch. He's laughing at us right now.

DICK
Jim! It was all O'Hara's plan...

CUT TO:

EXT. ROOFTOP - NIGHT

O'HARA steps from the shadows, his gun drawn and pointed at the Joker.

BACK TO:

INT. BATCAVE - SAME

Dick straps on a pair of Batman's thickest boots.

DICK
O'Hara hires Selina to free the Joker. Bruce takes the bait and when he's not expecting it...

CUT TO:

EXT. ROOF TOP - NIGHT

BATMAN arrives on the scene. He nears O'Hara, who suddenly turns, and - *BANG* - the barrel goes off an inch from Batman's chest.

BACK TO:

EXT. JOKER'S HIDEAWAY - SAME

GORDON
O'Hara? Why? What's his motive?

DICK (O.S.)
He's been second in command his whole career. Even with your retirement, if it's power he's after, then Batman has to die.

GORDON
I don't know, Dick. I'm as sick of that Irish asshole as much as you are, but-

DICK (O.S.)
It's O'Hara and I can prove it.

GORDON
Prove it how?

INT. BATCAVE - SAME

DICK
Gotham Securities, a dummy corporation set up to receive money from the Wayne Foundation. The same money O'Hara used to hire Selina. Link O'Hara to Gotham Securities...

Dick types on a keypad and a platform raises one Batmobile above the others.

DICK
...and we catch our killer.

EXT. WAYNE MANOR - NIGHT

Policemen confer outside on the lawn.

COP #1

There's nothing in there but a lot
of expensive rugs and fancy
paintings.

The men are suddenly caught in the lights of an oncoming
vehicle. Too bad for them, this is no car...

A secret passage gives way to a ferocious TANK. THE BEAST, as
it's appropriately called, tramples everything in its path
and takes to the street. Two POLICE HELICOPTERS give chase.

HELICOPTER PILOT

We've got him. Moving south by
southeast towards Gotham Harbor.

The pilots aren't prepared for the Beast to drive off the
pier and vanish beneath the Gotham River.

UNDERWATER

Fully suited in a mix of old and new armor, ROBIN steers the
Beast along the bottom of the riverbed.

EXT. JOKER'S HIDEAWAY - NIGHT

The mayhem continues as GRENADES roll out of the mailbox.

GORDON

Get back!

BOOM - bodies and metal are thrown every which way, when--

THE BEAST roars onto the scene. It plows over the Joker's
defenses and slams into the porch. Robin springs from the
vehicle and dives into the window.

INSIDE THE JOKER'S HIDEAWAY

He rolls to his feet. However, before he can take a single
step, the floor gives way, dropping him into --

THE BASEMENT

Wicked traps line the hall. Robin makes his way through a
sinister maze, dodging darts and ducking axes. The traps keep
coming, including blow torches, bullets and a twelve-ton
EIGHT BALL that comes rolling toward him.

Robin survives it all and ends up getting *WHACKED* by a large BOXING GLOVE. It knocks him across the room, into a wooden chair - where a bola wraps around him. Before he can catch his breath, he's sent falling into a --

WATER TANK

The lid to the tank seals shut, imprisoning Robin in an underwater tomb. The enclosure's made of solid steel, with no other points of entry. Robin's only hope...

The electronic GIZMO. He pulls it off his belt and activates the trigger.

OUTSIDE THE WATER TANK

The metal tank TEARS DOWN THE MIDDLE, spilling thousands of gallons of water into the basement, and Robin along with it. He's a mess, but at least he's still breathing. However, panic sets in at the sight of--

TWO DOZEN TEETH sitting on the floor. A message, painted in blood, is scrawled across the wall, it reads, "FOR ONE NIGHT ONLY! THE AMAZING GRAYSONS TAKE FLIGHT! LET'S HOPE THIS BABY BIRD CAN FLY! HA HA HA!"

Robin knows exactly what it means. He races outside...

EXT. JOKER'S HIDEAWAY - SAME

Robin bounds across an overturned SWAT van and flips onto a lamp post. Perched above the street, he spots a CIRCUS TENT looming in the distance.

EXT. CIRCUS - PARKING LOT

The Joker steers his white '73 Cadillac into a parked car, generating a hearty laugh; his gums bleeding - all his teeth removed.

JOKER

(singing)

The wheels on the bus go 'round and
'round...

He grabs Bethany by the hair and drags her toward the tent.

She bulldozes Wonder Woman through a row of parked cars and into a building, knocking the amazon cold.

CATWOMAN
Republican bitch.

Catwoman hops to the street and helps Robin to his feet.

CATWOMAN
You can thank me later.

A HAND comes from out of nowhere and grabs Catwoman by the neck. IT'S SUPERMAN. He throws her into a car trunk and slams it closed. A quick blast from his HEAT VISION seals it shut.

His eyes shift to Robin.

SUPERMAN
Easy, boy.

ROBIN
Stay out of this, Clark!

SUPERMAN
You're coming with me.

Robin musters all his strength and lays into Superman with a right hook. We hear BONES SNAP.

SUPERMAN
All that optimism just cost you
your wrist.

Out come the BATARANGS. Robin hurls four, one right after another. Superman catches the first three and lets the fourth one continue past.

SUPERMAN
Are we done playing?

ROBIN
Just about.

The fourth Batarang cuts through an ELECTRICAL CABLE and sends the wire swinging down. It strikes Superman - erupting sparks and forcing him to his knees.

When the fireworks subside, the power's gone out across five city blocks and Superman lies in the street, smoldering.

Robin heads for the Beast. Only...

Superman recovers. He slams his FIST into the cement, cracking it like porcelain.

The crevice zigzags up the pavement, caving in the street and dropping the Beast into a gaping fissure. Robin rolls to safety and tries to get away, however--

Superman grabs hold of him. His fingers curl around the emblem on Robin's vest, a grip no earthly power could pry free of, when --

WHAAAAAAAAAACK! A ghostly, GREEN WRECKING BALL wallops into Superman, tearing the "R" clean off Robin's vest and sending the Man of Steel into the nearest building.

GREEN LANTERN has arrived. He eyes Robin as he walks past him. Like a lone sheriff in an old western, he marches across the street, ready for a showdown.

Gordon squeezes through the crowd and hurries over to Robin.

ROBIN

The circus... he's taken her to the circus...

Superman lifts from the rubble.

ROBIN

Go!

Gordon heads off down the street as the two titans come face to face.

GREEN LANTERN

I see I got your attention.

SUPERMAN

And?

GREEN LANTERN

And the Joker's got Dick's daughter!

SUPERMAN

Do you know how many daughters are dying around the world right now? You don't seem too concerned about them. Or is that just my job?

GREEN LANTERN

I understand your frustration and I'm sorry if you ever felt like you had to go it alone...

Superman pushes Green Lantern aside, when - ZUMMP - a GREEN CAGE envelopes him.

GREEN LANTERN
 ...but either you get your
 priorities in line, or I line them
 up for you.

Superman grabs hold of the bars and bends them with ease.

SUPERMAN
 Cute.

GREEN LANTERN
 You don't want to do this.

Green Lantern's ring shimmers, spawning a GREEN CANNON, the barrel aimed straight down at Superman.

SUPERMAN
 Most days, I don't want to do any
 of it...

ZIP - Superman is instantly behind him, locking Green Lantern in a CHOKE HOLD.

SUPERMAN
 ...but I still do.

In a panic, Green Lantern triggers the cannon - *BOOM!* It misses Superman but tears through the street. The force of the blast knocks them both through a cement pillar, shattering the foundation of a twenty-story building.

Despite the damage, Superman maintains his grip around Green Lantern's throat. When--

WHAAAAAAAAAAAAAAM! A gargantuan GREEN SLEDGEHAMMER slams into Superman, driving him beneath the pavement.

GREEN LANTERN
 GO!

Robin pushes up to his feet and commandeers a HORSE from a city policeman.

ROBIN
 Can't ride a horse, she says...

He jumps into the saddle. With a swift kick, the steed springs into an all-out sprint. Robin rides the horse through the bustling city-scape, leaving behind...

SUPERMAN, who punches up through the street. There's an unsettling look in his eye as he wipes the asphalt from his lips. However, before he can give chase --

A massive GREEN SNAKE wraps around his wrist. As more of it comes into view, we discover...

This is no snake. It's a colossal GREEN ELEPHANT - a fearsome creation of Green Lantern's ring. Pedestrians scurry for cover as the elephant's trunk tightens around Superman's arm and wields him like a mace, flattening cars as if they were made of tin.

INT. CIRCUS - SAME

The Joker steps into the center of the ring. He drags Bethany behind him, disrupting the show.

JOKER
(to Bethany)
Oh, how your father just LOVES this place!

The Joker heads for the trapeze, as...

Gordon enters the tent. He scans the crowd and spots the Joker dragging Bethany to the top of trapeze.

GORDON
Oh my god.

AT THE TOP OF THE TRAPEZE

The Joker SHOOTS an acrobat at the top of the platform and sends him falling. The audience panics.

Gordon climbs the spiraling stairwell. Before he can reach the platform, the Joker gives the high bar a push and grabs Bethany by the back of her shirt.

JOKER
On three! One - two - six - nine -
forty-seven - HA HA HA! THREE!

Gordon doesn't make it to the platform in time.

GORDON
NOOOOOO!

The Joker hurls Bethany toward the high bar. Her fingers outstretch --

But don't grab hold.

Luckily, a BAT CABLE winds around her leg. The other end of the cable ensnares the high bar and sends her rocking back and forth high above the circus floor.

The Joker looks down to see --

ROBIN mid-way up the spiraling staircase. He rips off his mask and calls to his daughter.

ROBIN
Hang on, honey!

JOKER
THAT'S NOT FUNNY!

The Joker leans over the platform and opens fire. *BANG* - Robin takes a bullet in the thigh.

BANG - he takes another in the arm.

GORDON
NO!

Gordon tackles the Joker. They wrestle for the gun --

BANG! The gun goes off, shattering the high bar. The two halves of the bar swing out wildly, causing the Bat cable to unravel - Bethany mere seconds away from falling to her death.

Crazed, Gordon tightens his grip around the Joker's throat.

GORDON
That bullet was meant for you! THAT
BULLET WAS MEANT FOR YOU!

Robin's face goes white as he makes the realization...

INT. BATCAVE

Alfred makes an adjustment to the MICRO-PROCESSOR and the Bat computer commences playback. FLASHBACKS follow...

EXT. ROOFTOP - NIGHT

It's not Chief O'Hara, but rather --

GORDON who steps out of the shadows and aims his gun at an unsuspecting Joker. To his disappointment...

BATMAN swings onto the scene. Before his cape can even settle, his heel meets with the Joker's chin.

The force of the blow knocks the Joker into a SKYLIGHT. He shatters the glass and falls twenty feet to the floor below.

Gordon hurries to the skylight and sees the Joker lying face down in a pile of debris, his leg broken at the knee. Oblivious to the threat looming over him, the Joker cackles like a wounded hyena.

JOKER

Ha Ha Ha...

Again, Gordon raises his gun.

BATMAN

Put down the gun.

GORDON

This has to end!

BATMAN

And it will. Just give me the gun.

GORDON

NO! He'll just escape again! And when he does, more families will be made to suffer!

Images of BARBARA LYING IN A MESS OF BLOOD flash through Gordon's mind.

GORDON

He needs to pay for all the blood he's spilled! For all the pain he's caused!

A church bell strikes the hour.

BATMAN

He'll pay, but not like that.

GORDON

He needs to die... HE NEEDS TO DIE!

BATMAN

Jim...

Tears cascade down Gordon's face and he lowers the gun.

GORDON

I... I...

Batman reaches for the gun, when --

A vision of BARBARA LYING IN A POOL OF BLOOD flashes through Gordon's mind. He tenses...

BANG! Both Gordon and Batman are equally horrified. Batman slips backwards and falls off the roof. Gordon watches from the ledge as Batman hits the pavement, nearly crushing a homeless man beneath him.

Gordon pulls back from the ledge, so not to be seen. A surge of fear and anger sweep over him and he hurries to the skylight, only to discover--

The Joker is gone. Sirens can be heard in the distance.

CUT TO:

INT. GORDON'S HOUSE

The sink faucet turns on. Upon closer look, Gordon wasn't doing the dishes when he got the call about Batman's death - he was washing the BLOOD from his hands.

CUT TO:

INT. BANK

Dick spots Gordon managing his check book - at a closer look, the top of the check reads: GOTHAM SECURITIES.

BACK TO:

INT. CIRCUS - SAME

Robin and Gordon lock eyes.

GORDON

It was an accident. You have to believe me... AN ACCIDENT!

The Joker muscles the gun against Gordon's chest --

BANG! Gordon pulls away from the Joker, a circle of red widening across his shirt. His eyes beg for forgiveness as he steps off the platform and reaches for Bethany.

SNAP! Her cable gives way--

Gordon dives after her, the ground quickly making its way toward them. He catches her and pivots to his back, absorbing the impact.

JOKER
HA HA! TWO FOR THE PRICE OF ONE!

Gordon and Bethany lie without moving.

ROBIN
NO!

JOKER
OH YES! AND IT'S TIME YOU JOINED
THEM!

The Joker aims his gun at Robin's face when --

A BAT-SHAPED FIGURE swoops down and knocks the Joker off his feet. No, it's not Batman...

It's BATGIRL. Barbara's dressed in the uniform, her hair spilling out the back. She proceeds to beat the Joker senseless. Before she's through, she grabs him by the collar and leans him over the platform.

Lucky for him, Bethany lifts her head; she survived the fall.

Batgirl opts for cuffing the Joker to the railing and rappels to the floor. She rips off her mask and engulfs Bethany in a hug.

BARBARA
Bethany.

Despite his wounds, Robin breathes a sigh of relief, when...

SUPERMAN DRIVES GREEN LANTERN THROUGH THE TENT AND INTO THE GROUND. The trapeze supports rupture, sending Robin and the platform to the floor.

The chaos of it all sends the Joker into a laughing craze.

JOKER
HAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHA!

He roars in delirium, that is, until a trapeze WIRE snaps and-

SHLUNK - severs his head from his neck.

When the dust settles, Green Lantern lies unconscious. Superman proves the victor, though he doesn't look it. Bruises mark his face and nothing's left of his cape. In his hand he holds Green Lantern's RING, which he throws to the dirt and steps toward Robin.

Beaten beyond all measure, Robin lies on the ground, incapable of moving. Barbara comes to his defense; however, Superman pushes her to the floor.

BETHANY

No!

Bethany gets between her father and Superman.

BETHANY

Please! Stop! Pleeeeease!

Superman pushes past her and grabs Robin by the throat. He lifts him off his feet, his eyes gleaming red, when --

Bethany wraps her arms around Superman's leg and lets out a bloodcurdling scream...

BETHANY

SOMEBODY HEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEELP!

Her voice echoes throughout the tent and awakens Superman from his frenzied state. His eyes return to their blue luster before welling up with tears. What's left of the crowd watches in silence as Superman sets Robin on the floor and slumps down beside him.

The two men sit without speaking.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

In the shadow of Batman's monument sits a conservative headstone. It bears the name JAMES GORDON. Dick replaces the wilted flowers with a fresh bundle and stands alone at the grave, his wounds nearly healed.

INT. GRAYSON HOUSE - SAME DAY

Dick pulls into the driveway and parks.

He walks up the stoop; however, before he has the chance to open the front door, a car pulls up to the curb. Smiling in the backseat is...

BETHANY

Daddy!

Bethany races out of the car and tackles him with a hug.

BETHANY
I missed you.

DICK
I missed you too.

BETHANY
And mommy?

Dick looks to the car and sees Barbara standing beside it.
Their stare speaks volumes.

DICK
And mommy.

BETHANY
Does that mean we can come back
home?

DICK
I don't know... I moved someone
else into your room.

BETHANY
You what?!

DICK
Maybe the two of you can share
it...

BETHANY
Share it?! With who?!

Dick opens the front door, giving way to a PUPPY. It races
over to Bethany and licks her face wildly.

INT. GRAYSON HOUSE - LATER THAT NIGHT

Barbara and Dick clean up after supper while Bethany plays
with the dog on the living room floor, the TV glowing in the
background.

BARBARA
I almost forgot how well you cook.

Barbara goes in for a slow kiss.

BARBARA
Mmmmm... spicy.

BETHANY (O.S.)
Daddy, look! I made him roll over!

Dick exits the kitchen and gives Bethany an audience.

DICK

Let me see...

Bethany tries to command the puppy while her father watches, when something on the TV catches his eye.

It's an emergency news bulletin. The reporter runs for cover as a gray BEAST OF A MAN tears apart the city. His abnormally large fists pummel cars and buckle the pavement. Beneath an open-faced helmet, his red eyes emit a pulsating laser that lays waste to everything caught in its fury. This is DARKSEID, an alien invader hellbent on destruction.

SUPERMAN attempts to restrain him, but fails.

Dick watches from the comfort of his living room as Darkseid bares down on Superman and --

CLICK. Barbara shuts off the TV with the remote.

Dick looks at her, his eyes wide, his blood pumping through his veins. She stares back at him, her head titled as if to say, "I thought we settled this?"

Oblivious, Bethany chimes in...

BETHANY

(regarding the dog)

He did it! Did you see it, Dad?

DICK

Umm...

BETHANY

Did you see him roll over?!

Dick exhales a cleansing breath and sits down on the couch.

DICK

Show me again, honey.

Bethany attempts to train the dog while her father watches. He offers a few suggestions, his attention focussed as best he can, when Barbara leans closer and whispers in his ear...

BARBARA

What are you waiting for?

Dick looks at her, in shock.

BARBARA
He's gonna need your help.

CUT TO:

EXT. CITY - NIGHT

Superman and Darkseid tangle like a pair of feuding gods, reducing the city to ash. Things go from bad to worse when GREEN LANTERN and WONDER WOMAN join the fight and are quickly subdued.

Darkseid appears unstoppable. He envelopes Superman in a laser blast that sears off his trademark curl and brings him to his knees. Superman screams in pain, the laser overpowering his senses, when --

KA-WHAAAAAAAAAAAAAAM! A METALLIC FIST slams into Darkseid and knocks him on his ass. The fist belongs to...

THE BAT-MECH, a titanium robot. Dick pilots it from within its thick, metal shell, only; he's not dressed as Robin...

He is now the new BATMAN.

BATMAN
Need a hand?

SUPERMAN
He's too strong, Dick. Get clear or you're gonna get yourself killed.

BATMAN
I don't know what you're talking about. I'm just out for a stroll.

SUPERMAN
This is no time for jokes. Get out of here!

BATMAN
Fine. I guess you don't need to know his weakness.

Batman turns to leave.

SUPERMAN
What weakness?!

Darkseid gets to his feet, knocking over a pair of fire trucks in the process.

BATMAN

No, no, you've got this. You're right, he's strong. That's keen detective work there...

SUPERMAN

All right!

Batman stops and turns. The two men lock eyes...

SUPERMAN

We work together.

Batman lets the words hang in the air before stepping up beside him.

BATMAN

Together.

Darkseid ROARS with the force of a thousand lions as our two heroes ready for a fight.

THE END