Dedicated to
WILL JUNGKUNTZ
1955-1985

THE
DARK
KNIGHT
RETURNS
I've got the home stretch. All to myself when the readings stop making sense. I switch to manual—

Bruce, this is carpool. You're going too fast!

But the computer crosses its own circuits and refuses to let go. I coax it.

Bruce, you son of a—

It's not programmed to—

Bruce!

Then the front end lurches, all wrong. I know what's coming.

I've got just under two seconds to shut this mess down and forget the race.

The engine, angry, argues the point with me. The finish line is close, it roars, too close.

The left front tire decides to turn all on its own. I laugh at it and jerk the steering wheel to the right.

The nose digs up a chunk of macadam. I look at it.

...Then straight into the eye of the sun...

The engine heats up, turns over, a fire. I look at it.

...Spectacular finish to the human elimination. As the Ferris Good pinwheeled across the finish line, a flaming coffin for Bruce Wayne...

...or so everyone thought. Turns out the millionaire bailed out at the last second. Suffered only superficial burns, Lola?

Thanks, Bill. I'm surprised anyone can even think of sports in this weather. Right, Dave?
...the most hideous of which has to be the brutal slaying of three kids last week by the gang known as the Mutants.

And today, police found a death threat nailed to the door of the office of Police Commissioner James Gordon.

Gordon, facing retirement on his seventieth birthday next month, spoke to a news reporter...

I’ve got four weeks to nail those bastards. If this means they’re willing to take me on, I’m delighted.

Ironically, today also marks the tenth anniversary of the last recorded sighting of the Batman. Dead or retired, his fate remains unknown.

Our younger viewers will not remember the Batman. A recent survey shows that most high schoolers consider him a myth.

But real, he was. Even today, debate continues on the right and wrong of his one-man war on crime.

This reporter would like to think that he’s alive and well, enjoying a celebratory drink in the company of friends...

Right, Lola. At Gotham’s magnificent twin towers it’s ninety-seven... with no relief in sight.

Thanks, Dave. This heat wave has sparked many acts of civil violence here in Gotham City...
I
LEALE
MY
CAP

the
lot.

icany
stand

tcee

NOT FOR SEVEN
YEARS, JIM.
YOU KNOW
THAT.

NOW—WELL,
I’D ALMOST
WORRY.

SPOKEN
TO DICK
LATELY?

STILL, HUH?
I’M DOWN
SORRY
ABOUT
THAT.

ESPECIALLY
WITH
WHAT
HAPPENED
TO JASON.

I
walk

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i’m
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THAT’S,
gfl/EN

UP,

UKE
THE
WHOLE
WORLD
SEEMS
TO
HAVE.

I’M
A
ZOMBIE.
A
PLYING
DUTCHMAN.
A
DEAD
NAN,

TEN
YEARS
DEAD..

AS WE PART,
JIM SQUEEZES MY
SHOULDER, AND
SAYS, "YOU JUST
NEED A WOMAN," HE
SAYS.

WHILE IN MY GUT
THE CREATURE WRITHES
AND SNARLS, AND
TELLS ME WHAT I
NEED...

I LEAVE MY CAR IN
THE LOT. I CAN’T
STAND TO BE INSIDE
ANYTHING RIGHT NOW.
I WALK THE STREETS
OF THIS CITY. I’M
LEARNING TO HATE, THE
CITY THAT’S GIVEN UP.
LIKE THE WHOLE
WORLD SEEMS TO
HAVE.

I’M A ZOMBIE, A
FLYING DUTCHMAN.
A DEAD MAN;
TEN YEARS DEAD..
I'LL FEEL BETTER IN THE MORNING, AT LEAST. I'LL FEEL IT LESS...

IT'S THE NIGHT WHEN THE CITY'S SMELLS CALL OUT TO HIM, THOUGH I LIE BETWEEN SILK SHEETS IN A MILLION-DOLLAR MANSION MILES AWAY...

...WHEN A POLICE SIREN WAKES ME, AND, FOR A MOMENT, I FORGET THAT IT'S ALL OVER...

...AND THE MAN WHO SLEPT ALL SENSE FROM YOUR LIFE, HE COULD BE STANDING...

...AND THE MAN WHO SLEPT ALL SENSE FROM YOUR LIFE, HE COULD BE STANDING...

...RIGHT OVER THERE...

BORN HERE.

ONCE AGAIN, HE'S Brought ME BACK--TO SHOW ME HOW LITTLE IT HAS CHANGED IT'S OLDER, DIRTER, BUT--

--IT COULD HAVE HAPPENED YESTERDAY.

IT COULD BE HAPPENING RIGHT NOW.

THEY COULD BE LYING AT YOUR FEET, TWITCHING, BLEEDING...

COME ON, HONEY SLIDE AND DICE--

--I DON'T KNOW, MAN. HE'S AWFUL BIG--

SO MANY LOVELY WAYS TO PUNISH HIM...

IT IS HIM, IT IS. AND WE KNOW SO MANY WAYS TO HURT HIM...

I DON'T KNOW, MAN. LOOK AT HIM. HE'S INTO IT--

NO, IT'S NOT HIM.

SLICE AND DICE, WE GOT A QUOTA--

SO MANY...
Not him. He flinched when he pulled the trigger. He was sick and guilty over what he did.

All he wanted was money. It was hard enough to think him the lowest sort of man.

These—these are his children. A pure breed...

...and this world is theirs.

...Butcher! Of every... Inspector of the family. The Mutant Organization is believed to have committed this atrocity for money the family had...

...Something under twelve dollars. This is considered a drug-related crime at present, but surely this heat wave is a factor. Right, Doc?

Absolutely, Bill. Rash month in the Big Town. Right now the mercury is climbing to an unseasonal one hundred and three...

...And it looks like it's going to get worse before it gets better...

...And this world is theirs.

This just in—A dead cat has been found stapled to the door of the first church of Christ the Redeemer. The Mutant Gang is suspected.
Yeah, well, you don't see him sweating.

Just look at him.

You look at him. He makes me sick.

Yeah, well, guess being crazy has its moments.

Been a long time since any of these guns had moments.

When I came here, they said—

I could never be cured.

WATER'S OUT IN MY BUILDING, TOO. COULDN'T EVEN TAKE A SHOWER THIS MORNING.

YOU KNOW WHAT I HATE MOST ABOUT THE HEAT?

IT'S THE WAY YOUR UNDERWEAR STICKS TO—

SHUT UP.

NO VISITORS

NINETY-NINE DEGREES AND THE AIR CONDITIONER BLOWS.

NONSENSE. SORCENSE JUST SENSILE.

WILLING ISN'T JUDGED.

THANK YOU, DR. VOLER, AND NOW HARVEY DENT—

OH, MY GOD...

WE KNOW WHAT THEY SAID, HARVEY. BUT THAT'S HISTORY. SURGICAL PROCEDURES HAVE IMPROVED—

...AS HAVE PSYCHIATRIC. YOU'RE FIT TO RETURN TO SOCIETY—NO MATTER WHAT OUR SEPTUAGENARIAN POLICE COMMISSIONER SAYS.

MAYBE GORDON... IS RIGHT ABOUT ME.

NONSENSE. GORDON'S JUST GONE SENSILE.

DR. WILLING ISN'T QUALIFIED TO JUDGE THAT—

— BUT I CONCUR.
Thank you, Tom. A new life begins today for Harvey Dent.

Dent, a former district attorney, became obsessed with the number two when half his face was scarred by acid. Dent believed his disfigurement revealed a hidden, evil side to his nature. He adopted as his personal symbol a dollar coin...

One side of which was defaced, to represent the warring sides of his split-personality. A flip of the coin could mean life or death for his victims.

Dent’s crimes were brilliantly pathological. The most horrendous, of which was his last—

—the kidnapping and ransoming of Siamese twins, one of which he attempted to murder even after the ransom was paid.

He was apprehended in the act by Gotham’s famous vigilante, the Batman, and committed to Arkham Asylum twelve years ago.

For three years, Dent has been treated by Dr. Bartholomew Wolper for his psychosis...

While Nobel Prize-winning plastic surgeon Dr. Herbert Willing dedicated himself to reconstructing the face of Harvey Dent.

Speaking today, both doctors were jubilant. Harvey’s ready to look at the world and say, “Hey—I’m okay.”

And he looks great.

Dent read a brief statement to the media...

I do not ask Gotham City to forgive my crimes. I must earn that, by dedicating myself to public service.

For me, this is the end of a long nightmare... and the first step on the long road to absolution.
Next, Dent drew fond applause by producing a newly-minted dollar coin.

It was, of course, un蚕rred.

But police commissioner James Gordon's reaction to Dent's release was not enthusiastic...

No, I am not satisfied. Dr. Wolper's report seems overly optimistic--not to mention sloppy.

While millionaire Bruce Wayne, who sponsored Dent's treatment, had this to say...

Gordon's remarks seem overly pessimistic--not to mention rude.

The commissioner is an excellent cop--but, I think, a poor judge of character. We must believe in Harvey Dent.

We must believe that our private demons can be defeated...

Gordons remarks seem overly pessimistic--not to mention rude.

The commissioner is an excellent cop--but, I think, a poor judge of character. We must believe in Harvey Dent.

We must believe that our private demons can be defeated...

Look at that boy run! We've got an athlete on our hands!

Bruce--what are you going to do with it when you catch--

Don't go in that hole--

Bruce!

...faster than a rabbit, mom! Just watch!
NO! GO WAY!

GO WAY!

OOF!

OWN!

SKREE SKREE SKREE

SKREE SKREE SKREE

SKREE SKREE SKREE

SKREE SKREE SKREE

SKREE SKREE SKREE

SKREE SKREE SKREE

SKREE SKREE SKREE

...SOMETHING SHUFFLES.

OUT OF SIGHT...

...SOMETHING SUCKS THE SPLEEN...

...AND HISSES.
GLIDING WITH ANCIENT GRACE...

UNWILLING TO RETREAT AS HIS BROTHERS DID...

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

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

SURELY THE FIERcest survivor—THE purest warrior...

GLARING, HATING...

...claiming me as his own.

Dreaming...

I was only six years old when that happened... when I first saw the cave...

Surely, empty, silent as a church, waiting, as the bat was waiting.

And now the corners grow and the dust thickens in here as it does in me...

...and he laughs at me, curses me, calls me a fool. He fills my sleep, he tricks me. Brings me here when the night is long and my will is weak. He struggles relentlessly, hatefully, to be free...

I will not let him. I gave my word.

For Jason...

Never...

Never again.

Huge, empty, silent as a church, waiting, as the bat was waiting.

And now the corners grow and the dust thickens in here as it does in me--
FOR ME, THIS IS THE END OF A LONG NIGHTMARE... AND THE FIRST STEP ON THE LONG ROAD TO ABSOLUTION.

...THOSE WERE THE LAST WORDS SPOKEN IN PUBLIC BY HARVEY PENT BEFORE HIS DISAPPEARANCE THIS MORNING.

WHILE POLICE COMMISSIONER GORDON ISSUED AN ALL POINTS BULLETIN FOR PENT, ONE VOICE WAS RAISED IN PROTEST...

...THAT OF DR. BARTHOLOMEW WOLPER, PENT'S PSYCHIATRIST...

GORDON’S REACTION IS ONE OF TEXT BOOK HYSTERIA...

I MEAN I DENT -- NOT DIP STICK HERE...

SO DO I. OUGHTA SEE IT OR FOLD.

...AND CHARACTERISTIC INSENSITIVITY. HARVEY, ON THE OTHER HAND, IS AN EXTREMELY SENSITIVE MAN...

SO -- WHAT DO YOU THINK?

I THINK IT’S TOO DAMN HOT...

--AND I THINK HE SHOULD SEE IT OR FOLD.

WE BEEN GETTING BY WITHOUT HIM.

,UH HUH.

I MEAN, IT AIN’T BEEN GREAT...

THAT’S RIGHT.

...IN EXTREMELY VULNERABLE EMOTIONAL CONDITION, I BELIEVE...
... AND WE
MADE SOME
GREAT SCORES
WITH OLD
"FACE"
NO DENYIN' IT.
NUTS, I'M
FOLDING.

... THAT HE
HAS SOUGHT
SOME MUCH-
NEEDED
PRIVACY...

BOUT TIME.
YEAH.

IS THAT
WHO I--
OH HUH.

HARVEY
NEEDS OUR
SUPPORT--OUR
CONCERN...

NOT TO
BE HUNTED
DOWN LIKE
SOME WILD

WHO
THE
HELL...

XKLIK

I'LL SEE
IT AND
RAISE.

... FOURTEEN CASES
OF HEAT PROSTRATION
AS THE TEMPERATURE
SOARED A RECORD
BREAKING TWELVE
DEGREES PAST THE
ONE HUNDRED MARK.

GOING FOR A
GUN--
I DON'T
THINK SO...

THAT WILL
BE ALL, MASTER
BRUCE? I'M
HOPING THAT THE
NEXT GENERATION
OF THE WAYNE
FAMILY SHANT
FACE AN EMPTY
WINE CELLAR.

THOUGH GIVEN
YOUR SOCIAL SCHEDULE
OF LATE, THE PROSPECTS
OF THERE BEING A
NEAT GENERATION--
THAT WILL BE
ALL, ALFRED.
GOOD NIGHT.

BUT THERE IS
HOPE, FOLKS--
IN THE FORM OF
A COLD FRONT
CHARGING FROM
THE MIDWEST.
IT MAY
REACH US
AS EARLY AS
TODAY...
TYRONE POWER IN "THE MARK OF ZORRO"

ZORRO, I SHOULD HAVE CHECKED THE LISTINGS. I
SHOULD TURN IT OFF-- RIGHT THIS SECOND--

JUST A MOVIE, THAT'S ALL IT IS. NO HARM IN WATCHING
A MOVIE....

TONIGHT'S PRESENTATION OF HOLLYWOOD'S FINEST...

YOU LOVED IT SO MUCH... YOU
JUMPED AND DANCED LIKE A
FOOL... YOU REMEMBER...

YOU REMEMBER THAT NIGHT...
CHILDREN WERE LAST SEEN WITH TWO YOUNG MEN...

WHO WERE DRESSED IN THE DISTINCTIVE COSTUME OF THE MUTANT GANG...

ANYONE WITH ANY INFORMATION REGARDING THE CHILDREN IS URGED TO CALL THE CRISIS HOTLINE...

KLIK

--FOUR KILLED IN A SENSELESS ATTACK ON--

--SUBWAY DEATHS REACHED AN ALL-TIME HIGH THIS--

--RAPE AND MUTILATION OF--

--HERE'S DAVE WITH SOME GOOD NEWS, DAVE--

RIGHT, LOLA. RIGHT AS RAIN. THE HEAT'S FINALLY GOING TO BREAK--

--BUT WE'RE IN FOR A WHOPPER OF A
THE TIME HAS COME.
YOU KNOW IT IN YOUR SOUL.
FOR I AM YOUR SOUL...
YOU CANNOT ESCAPE ME...

YOU ARE PUNY, YOU ARE SMALL--
YOU ARE NOTHING--A HOLLOW SHELL, A RUDE TRAP THAT CANNOT HOLD ME--
SMOLDERING, I BURN YOU--BURNING YOU, I FLAME, NOT AND BRIGHT AND FIERCE AND BEAUTIFUL--
YOU CANNOT STOP ME--NOT WITH WINE OR VOWS OR THE WEIGHT OF AGE--
YOU CANNOT STOP ME BUT STILL YOU TRY--STILL YOU RUN--
YOU TRY TO DROWN ME OUT...

...BUT YOUR VOICE IS WEAK...

MR. WAYNE, THIS IS HARVEY DENT. I JUST WANT TO THANK YOU...

YOU'VE DONE SO MUCH. I FEEL SO WHOLE, SO FREE. I WANT YOU TO KNOW THAT, SOMEDAY...

—I'LL FIND A WAY TO REPAY YOU.

KLIK

I'LL BE OUT OF TOWN FOR THE NEXT FEW WEEKS. WAY OUT OF TOWN.

SEEP

SEELA, BRUCE, I'M LONELY.

KLK

BEPEE

BRUCE? CLARK, JUST THOUGHT YOU SHOULD KNOW...
... power lines are down all over the suburbs. It's a mean one-- and it's headed straight for Gotham...

...straight out of nowhere this comes. And where is my umbrella?

Surely not. And where is my umbrella, would it now be raining?

Surely not-- Hey, Mommy...

...come in here, where it's warm...

I need you, Mommy.

Make me feel safe.

Oh no. Please...

Please God no--

Talk soft...
Get you ugly ass in there, bitch. We takin a ride.

You pamin’ me, you messin’ wif my livelihood.

Not my face, silk... please...

Aaaaah... look it you, Joannie, you went an’ grew another, noshir.

Hey, man—take it someplace else. I don’t need the grief.

Shut you hairy face in drive. Yeah, all right. Just make it quick.
YOU LEF US ONE UN-PLEASURED CUSTOMER BACK THERE, JOANNIE...

... JUST HAD THIS BABY TUNED.

... DOG EAT DOG WORLD...

DON'T STICK US... THAT WAS ON TH' ROOF.

... TH' ROOF, AN IF IS SOMEONE ASSASSIN WIF ME...

TH' ROOF AN IF IS SOMEONE ASSASSIN WIF ME...

WHAT THE...

WHUMP

EASE UP BACK THERE, MAN. I'M STILL PRAYING FOR THESE WHEELS.

OH MAN OH MAN START ALREADY...

GNAA

GNAA

GNAA

GNAA

GNAA
But, Carrie—nobody comes here, not anymore.

Brad says he saw the Mutants here.

Chill out, Michelle. It’s only a block.

And I figure I don’t mind my notes getting all wet...

Just like I figure I did do double study hall for fun.

So you flunked the chemistry test, go what? Your computer scores’ll bring your grade point AV back up.

And Brad said... I know, Michelle.

But—

But even Mutants’d know to go home in the rain, and besides—

—It’s too bright here for trouble.

Don’t go all Billy, Michelle. It’s just the storm.

Lights’ll come back on...

Come here, come here come here, chicken legs...

Chick chick chick.

Chick chick chick.

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Chick chick chick.
THUNK
THUNK
THUNK
THUNKK

START LIT LITTLE ONE--
NO!

CARRIE ON GUY!
SHH--

SLICE AND DICE MAN SLICE AND DICE--

JESUS MY ARM--
SOMETHING STUCK IN MY ARM--
OKAY MAN I GOT MY NINE--

ANYTHING MOVES I SHOOT--
WH--

AAAH--

SPIKE-- WHAT'S HE DO--
WH--

NO-- PUT ME DOWN--
NO--
...breakthrough in hair replacement techniques, and that's the-- excuse me...

I've just been handed this bulletin-- a large, bat-like creature has been sighted on Gotham's south side.

It is said to have attacked and seriously injured three cat-burglars who have plagued that neighborhood.

You don't suppose...

This just in-- two young children who disappeared this morning have been found unharmed in a Riverside warehouse.

An anonymous tip led police to the warehouse, where they found the children with six members of the Mutant Gang.

All six are suffering from multiple cuts, contusions, and broken bones. They were rushed to Gotham General Hospital.

The children described an attack on the gang members by a huge man dressed like Dracula...
Police phone lines are jammed with citizens describing what seems to be a menace on Gotham's underworld...

...by the Batman.

Although several rescued victims-to-be have described the vigilante to news twelve reporters...

...Commissioner James Gordon has declined to comment on whether or not this might mean the return of the Batman...

Gordon'll have our heads if we lose them...

Damn—that sucker can move!

Hey—what's that?

What's what? I can't--

Up ahead—IT'S--something weird...

Kid—this ain't the time--

But it's--

All right! All right! What is--

Battered, wounded criminals are being found by police--while witnesses' descriptions are confused and conflicting...

...most descriptions seem to match the method and appearance of the Batman--or at least the impression he was known to make...

Holy...

You're slowing down...

Heh—Yeah—we're in for a show, kid.
This should be agony.

I should be a mass of aching muscle—broken, spent, unable to move.

And, were I an older man, I surely would...


...Monster! Like with fangs and wings and it can fly...

...But I'm a man of thirty—of twenty again.

The pain on my chest is a baptism—

I'm born again...

I smell their fear—and it is sweet.

--What the hell is--

--Can't see--

--Jesus slow down--

--Stop the car--

--But what is that--

--It'll get us--

--Hit the brakes--

---SSSSKKREEEEE---

---SSSSKKREEEEE---

---SSSSKKREEEEE---

---SSSSKKREEEEE---

---SSSSKKREEEEE---

---EEEEECHHH---

---EEEEECHHH---
OMG! ON MY GOD! ON MY GOD! ON MY GOD! ON MY GOD!

LEAVE HIM! THAT WAS BATMAN!

BATMAN?

SOON TO BE BUILT ON THIS SITE... BEAUTIFUL... SPACIOUS.

HOLY...

I NEVER THOUGHT HE WAS REAL...

SCREEECH!

THESE MEN ARE MINE!

YOU CRAZY? I'M GOING IN!

YOU HEARD THE MAN.

KID, YOU DON'T WANT TO GET IN HIS WAY...

KID!—
...Couldn't be Batman, Turk said he killed Batman...

Turk says lots.

Four of them. One in the car, leg broken, in shock.

Other three are armed... and smart enough to hang close together.

Blam! Blam! Blam!

Over there...

Fire... Now... They're fast.

We get him?

Hard to tell. Have to assume we didn't.

Wait. What's that sound...
...He never used to make sounds...

Get your own goddamn clip, hey! There's that cop car...

Klik klik krik

Welcome to hell!

Aaa...

I don't like this. You got a spare clip?

grrrrrrrrr

You might hit Mackie—might.

DID YOU?

Mackie? Yeah.

But I don't see--

Hrrrk

No
The last ones usually the one to lose it so I let him...

...kill him.
I'll kill him...

And I let him come to me.

Then I hear the rookie’s footsteps, coming up fast behind me.

I'll have to keep him from getting killed.

The rookie’s safe for the five seconds. It will take him to find his pistol.

I play the shadows, forcing the hood to come close. He makes less noise than a truck.

--- Hurts.---

You're under arrest, mister.

You've crippled that man!

He's young. He'll probably walk again.

But he'll stay scared—won't you, punk?

Jesus. Sweet Jesus...
I mean it, man—get away from him!

I'll shoot.

Don't try it, kid. He's being patient with you as it is.

Nice to have you back, Bats.

Let's see what you've got.

Cigarettes, no wonder you're so slow...

Oh Christ, I can't stand it...

Go to their car, kid. Fetch the payroll.

I don't believe this...

It isn't in the car. It's nowhere around here.

Pills, no end to your bad habits...

Y'know, Bats--I saw you once--back when I was working the East End.

I was a rookie--like Shlick Face here.

It was a long time ago.

At the Bank--was there a second car?

Car? Yeah. An old jalopy. Didn't think--

Anyway, it was a rainy night, just like this. I was walking my beat.

---I mean, I was just a kid back then...

---and I saw this guy draw a gun on--

Tell Gordon we have to talk.

You weren't supposed to.

Sure thing, Bats. But how's he supposed to get in touch with--

Oh, yeah! Now I remember...
Sure kept the hospitals busy. Yes, Morrie, but I think it’s a mistake...

To think of this in purely political terms...

BB...

Rather, I regard it as a symbolic resurgence of the common man’s will to resist...

A rebirth of the American fighting spirit.

...one almost expects to see the Bat-Signal striking the side of one of Gotham’s twin towers. Yes, he gave us quite a night...

Sure kept the hospitals busy. Yes, Morrie, but I think it’s a mistake...

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...but he's hardly as dangerous as his enemies. Is he? Take Harvey Dent. Just to pick a name... 

That's cute, Lana. Not hardly apropos, and hardly fair to as troubled a soul as Harvey Dent's.

He certainly is trouble for his victims.

Was, Lana. Was, if Harvey Dent is returning to crime -- and please note that I said if -- it goes without saying that he's not in control of himself.

And Batman is?

Certainly, he knows exactly what he's doing. His kind of social fascist always does.

Then why do you call him psychopathic because you like to use that word for any motive that's too big for your little mind? Because he fights crime instead of perpetrating it?

You don't call excessive force a crime? How about assault, fat lady? Or breaking and entering? Huh? Try reckless en... DING.

Sorry, Morrie, but we're out of time -- though I'm sure this debate is far from over. For those of you who came in late, Morrie's Point versus Point...

...was concerned with last night's attack on dozens of individuals who may have been criminals by a party or parties who may have been the Batman.

Also of concern is this morning's announcement by police media relations director Louis Gallagher that a defaced dollar coin was found on one of the suspects...

...in last night's payroll robbery. Those who remember the crimes of Harvey Dent will recognize this as his trademark.

Police Commissioner Gordon has refused to screen Commissioner. He has issued an arrest order...

Still hot on the heels of Batman's apparent return...

No more leaks, Gallagher--or I'll have your head on a stick!

Son of a... This does give one a sense of déjà vu...

Turn that god damned thing off, Merkle.

A sad, strange criminal was Harvey?

Commissioner, if you please...
YOU STILL HERE?

MY CLIENT HAS YET TO BE CHARGED, COMMISSIONER, AND WITH GOOD REASON.

YOUR CLIENT HAS BEEN IN AND OUT OF PRISON SINCE HE LEARNED TO WALK.

YOUR CLIENT FLED THE SCENE OF A FELONY AND FIRED ON POLICE WITH AN ILLEGALLY ACQUIRED GUN, MERKEL?

TOP DRAWER, NO LOST, NO ROBBED, COMMISSIONER. HE HAS NOT BEEN IDENTIFIED AS HAVING FIRED UPON YOUR MEN.

AND AS FOR THE WEAPON---

DAMN THINGS WILLL KILL ME...

--'BATMAN PUT IT THERE DURING A CRIMINAL ASSAULT THAT LEFT TWO MEN IN DEEP SHOCK--

--AND MY CLIENT WITH A SHATTERED VEST POCKET FROM A SHATTERED, FEMUR. HIS PHYSICAL AND EMOTIONAL TRAUMA MATCHES, MERKEL.

VEST POCKET SHOULD BE ENOUGH TO CONSTRIVE YOU TO HUNT DOWN THAT LUNATIC AND CEASE THIS HARASSMENT OF HIS VICTIMS.

CAN YOU HEAR ME, COMMISSIONER?

DRAW UP RELEASE PAPERS FOR FEMUR HERE, MERKEL.

NOT UNTIL HE IS INSURED OF PROTECTION, YOU HEARD ME, MERKEL.

AAAHHH!

EASY, ALFRED. EASY.

IF IT'S SUICIDE YOU'RE AFTER, MASTER BRUCE...

...I HAVE THE RECIPE FOR AN OLD FAMILY POTION. IT'S SLOW IN WORKING, AND QUITE PAINFUL. YOU'D LIKE IT.

WAYNE INFIRMARY.

YES, SIR. A MOMENT, SIR.

IT'S GORDON, SIR.

HELLO, COMMISSIONER? NO, I'M JUST FINE...

HNN

...HE'LL JUST HAVE TO WEAR IT WET...

YOU KNOW, SIR, THAT THERE IS A PRECEDENT FOR WHEELCHAIR DETECTIVES...

SHUT UP, ALFRED.

THAT IS INTERESTING

RELEASING HIM NOW, ARE YOU?
WE WILL KILL THE OLD MAN GORDON. HIS WOMEN WILL MOURN FOR HIM. HE WILL CHOP HIM. WE WILL GRIND HIM. WE WILL BATHE IN HIS BLOOD.

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

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

WITH THAT VIDEO TAPE MESSAGE, THE MUTANT LEADER—WHOSE NAME AND FACE REMAIN A SECRET—HAS DECLARED WAR ON THE CITY OF GOATHAM... AND ON ITS MOST FAMOUS CHAMPION...

THE ROOM IS SPLIT BETWEEN LIGHT AND DARK, CLEAN AND DIRTY. BUT THE SPLIT IS EVEN—IT FAVORS THE DIRTY.

IT'S AS IF THE DARK SIDE IS CLAIMING THE ROOM... AS IT CLAIMED THE COW...

FACE... IT WAS BATMAN.

WH...

YOUR BOSS LEFT. HE KNEW I'D TRACK HIM.

IF HE IS HARVEY DENT, HE'S A MENSCH TO EVERY LIFE IN GOATHAM.

I KNOW YOU'RE VERY CONCERNED ABOUT THAT.

GET AWAY FROM ME...

YOU'RE GOING TO TELL ME EVERYTHING YOU KNOW, SOONER OR LATER.

IF IT'S LATER—

—I WOHN'T MIND.

NO!... STAY BACK!

— I GOT RIGHTS...

VYTH THAT VIDEO TAPE MESSAGE, THE MUTANT LEADER—WHOSE NAME AND FACE REMAIN A SECRET—HAS DECLARED WAR ON THE CITY OF GOATHAM...
Yeah, I think he's a cop. He's kicking just the right butts... Butts the cops. Ain't kicking, that's for sure. Hope he goes after the homos next.

Makes me sick. We must treat the socially mis-oriented with rehabilitative methods. We must patiently realize their... excuse me? No, I'd never live in the city...

... Can't believe you jad it put back, Commissioner. If Gallagher knew...

Gallagher doesn't run this department yet, Merkel!

But isn't there some other way to call him? At least a dozen.

Then why? To let them know, Merkel, to let everyone know.

Hit it.

Obviously a fascist. Never heard of civil rights. The TV just love him.

They all love him. The American conscience died with the Kennedys. Too true...

All the marching we did... It's like it never happened. Now...

I know... I know...

Sometimes I despair...

Give me another hit of that, huh?
The payroll robbery was committed to sponsor it. That doesn't make sense.

Then it's going to be a crime by air -- using something else more costly.

He's not careful, whoever he is.

You still don't think it's Dent?

"Twice as big as you can imagine" -- that's all he had to say.

That's all he knew, Jim.

But tomorrow is the second -- and a Tuesday.

If it's Harvey, we'll catch him... The trick will be to keep him alive. He's possessed, Jim. Out of control.

I think he wants to die.

Two helicopters were stolen today. One, a state-of-the-art military fighter -- the other, an old army surplus job. That's got to be Dent's work.

With that payroll he could have bought them.

I hope not. Harvey wrestled long and hard with his other side. To have it devour him now...

But if it is...

We are talking about Harvey Dent...

It shouldn't be difficult to find his target. Accessible by helicopter and twice as big as... 

... twice as big...
Yes, Merv. I am convinced of Harvey’s innocence. Absolutely. However, I won’t go so far as to say I’m sure he hasn’t returned to crime.

I know that sounds confusing. These things often do to the layman. But I’ll try to explain without getting overly technical. You see, it all gets down to this Batman fellow.

**Batman’s Psychotic Subliminal Psycho-Erotic Behavior Pattern** is like a net, weak-veined neurotics, like Harvey, are drawn into corresponding patterns. You might say Batman commits the crimes... using his so-called villains as narcissistic proxies...

All the other guys’d given up on you, Boss.

But I knew you was gonna be okay. You look good.

Bet you got some kinda keen escape planned. Well, you can count on me...

...but I got a problem.

You know I like to make stuff. It’s all I’m good at...

You know, I’m always looking for something to do. I mean, I’m not just sitting around waiting for something to happen.

...well, Harvey Dent wants to pay me a lot of money to make him some bombs.

He needs them tonight. That’s if I’m going to make them...

I haven’t said yes yet...
ONE MORE TIME I CHECK MY UTILITY BELT.

NERVE GASP AMPULES, FREEZING COMPOUND, CABLE
GRAPPLING HOOKS, STETHOSCOPE, PAIN KILLERS.

NONE OF IT’S GONE ANYWHERE IN THE LAST TEN MINUTES.

I SHIFT MY LEGS TO KEEP THEM FROM CRAMPING AND WATCH NIGHT SETTLE LIKE A CLAW ON THE CITY OF GOTHAM.

THEN I HEAR IT.

WHUP WHUP WHUP WHUP WHUP WHUP WHUP

POKITAPOKITAPOKITAPOKITAPOKITAPOKITAP

THEN THE NEW ONE COMES IN LOW, A GLEAMING METAL DRAGONFLY.

I’LL HAVE TO BUY ONE OF THOSE...

GOOD EVENING. I’M LOLA CHONG. TONIGHT WE’RE PLEASED TO GIVE YOU A SPECIAL REPORT...

NEWS 2

THEY SPLIT. THE ARMY SURROUNDS JOB. SETTLES DOWN, GUTTERING LIKE A CROOKED OLD MAN BEHIND ME.

I PICKED THE WRONG ROOF.

GOOD THING I BROUGHT THE GUN.
PAIN THAT'S THREE DAYS OLD CRAWLS ACROSS MY BACK. I KICK THE DUST FROM MY JOINTS AND CLAW IT USED TO BE EASIER.

BATS: CRUSADER OR MENACE? GOTHAM'S LIVING LEGEND THROUGH THE EYES OF THE VERY FEW WHO—WHAT IN—

PLEASE STAND BY. WE ARE EXPERIENCING TECHNICAL DIFFiculties.

WHATEVER HE'S GOT IN MIND, HE WANTS IT PUBLIC—

TOO BAD I CAN'T GIVE HIM MY ATTENTION. NOT JUST YET.

THIS STUFF HAS A NAME THAT IS AS LONG AS YOUR ARM.

IT WAS DEVELOPED BY THE MILITARY DURING ONE OF OUR MORE CONTEMPTIBLE WARS.

A STRONG DOSE AND YOU DIE OF FRIGHT IN FIFTEEN SECONDS.

—AND YOU SPEND TWO OR THIRTY MINUTES RELIVING YOUR LEAST FAVORITE NIGHTMARE.
THE ONLY AFTER EFFECT I’VE NOTICED IS A MARKED AVersion TO GUNS, KNIVES AND CRIME-FIGHTERS...

APPLENTLY A DETONATOR JOB, THAT WOULD MAKE SENSE.

WAIT—if these EREEDNESS MEAN WHAT I THINK THEY DO...

AM I ON?

THE IGNITION PROCESS HAS ALREADY STARTED. IT COULD BLOW ANY SECOND.

PEOPLE OF GOTHAM--LET ME APOLOGIZE RIGHT OFF THE BAT FOR THE INTERRUPT-ION OF YOUR VIEWING PLEASURE. THIS IS HARVEY DENT SPEAKING.

BRILLIANT DESIGN--WORTHY OF THE JOKER.

I STAND HERE ATOP GOTHAM’S BEAUTIFUL TWIN TOWERS, WITH TWO BOMBS CAPABLE OF MAKING THEM RUBBLE. YOU HAVE TWENTY MINUTES TO SAVE THEM.

SO I FREEZE IT, AND IF I HAD THE TIME OR THE RIGHT--

--I’D SAY A PRAYER.

THE PRICE IS FIVE MILLION DOLLARS. I WOULD HAVE MADE IT TWO--BUT I’VE GOT BILLS TO PAY...

I’M NOT UP ON THESE DIGITAL JOBS...

I STAND HERE ATOP GOTHAM’S BEAUTIFUL TWIN TOWERS, WITH TWO BOMBS CAPABLE OF MAKING THEM RUBBLE. YOU HAVE TWENTY MINUTES TO SAVE THEM.

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TEN SECONDS LATER, BOTH THE BUILDINGS AND I ARE STANDING AND EXACTLY THAT MUCH IS RIGHT IN THE WORLD. I TAKE IN THE ACTION ON THE OTHER SIDE.

HE’S TAPPED INTO THE TV ANTENNA--NO DOUBT RANSOMING THE LIVES OF THOUSANDS--WHILE THE THUGS HE DOESN’T KNOW ABOUT IS MOMENTS AWAY FROM TAKING IT ALL OUT OF HIS HANDS. HARVEY, IF IT IS YOU--YOU’VE HAD EVERY CHANCE THERE IS.
IN TEN YEARS I'VE NEVER FELT SO CALM. SO RIGHT.
THIS WOULD BE A FINE DEATH...

-- MAGNUM LOAD HAS TO BE HITS ME LIKE A FREIGHT TRAIN-- THE PLATE HOLDS --

-- WHY DO YOU THINK I WEAR A TARGET ON MY CHEST -- I CAN'T ARMOR MY NECK -- LEFT ARM NUMB --
-- IF IT'S A HEART ATTACK I'M FINISHED --

... A FINE DEATH, BUT THERE ARE THE THOUSANDS TO THINK OF...

... AND HARVEY...

... I HAVE TO KNOW
HE'S GOT YOUR STYLE, HARVEY, AND YOUR GUTS.

UNFORTUNATELY FOR HIM, HE'S GOT NO MORE SENSE OF SELF-PRESERVATION THAN YOU DID...

AND INSPIRES THE SAME LEVEL OF LOYALTY FROM HIS MEN.

IT TAKES NEARLY A MINUTE TO FALL FROM THIS HEIGHT. AND DESPITE WHAT YOU MAY HAVE HEARD, YOU'RE LIKELY TO STAY CONSCIOUS ALL THE WAY DOWN.

THOUGHTS LIKE THAT KEEP ME WARM AT NIGHT.

NOT MUCH OF A CORPSE LEFT.

...THERE MIGHT NOT BE ANY FINGERPRINTS. EVEN DENTAL RECORDS WOULD PROBABLY BE USELESS.

MOSTLY LIQUID.

AND LIKE I SAID, HARVEY...

PROBLEM IS...

...I HAVE TO KNOW.

THE IMPACT IS TREMENDOUS. EVEN BONE IS TURNED TO POWDER.
WE TUMBLE LIKE LOVERS.

THE AIR IS COLD.

THE NIGHT IS SILENT.

LEAVING THE WORLD NO POORER--

--FOUR MEN DIE.
... What are you so mad about, Bat? I've... been a sport...

You have to admit that— I played along.

And you... you took your joke about as far as it could go...

... Got the whole world to smile at me... got them all to keep their lunches down when they saw my... my face... saying I was cured... saying I was fixed...

Take a look... have your laugh. I'm fixed all right.

At least... both sides match...

The scars go deep too deep...

I close my eyes and listen... not fooled by sight, I see him...

Have your laugh, Batman— take a look!

... As he is...

I see him... I see...

... I see... a reflection, Harvey.

A reflection.
NEXT:
THE DARK KNIGHT TRIUMPHANT