

The Caped Crusader

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Based on Characters from the DC Comic Book Series and the  
films Batman Begins and The Dark Knight by Christopher Nolan

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INT. ARKHAM ASYLUM DAY

The camera follows a business suited man with very loud shoes clomping on the marble floor in Arkham Asylum. A door opens in front of the man when he stops at one of the cells. Jonathan Crane, wearing his Scarecrow costume, enters and sits down.

The Joker is sitting in the cell, in an orange jumpsuit that all the inmates of the asylum wear. A security guard/personal body guard for Crane walks in. The Joker gives the guard a little look, so subtle. The guard walks behind the Joker and "pretends" to lock his restraints behind his back. The Joker plays along.

JOKER

Evening, Mister Gas mask.

SCARECROW

Trust me. I don't want to be in this cell any more than you do. And seeing how you're already insane, I guess I can skip that part.

JOKER

(sarcastically)

Oh, really? Too bad. I was actually looking forward to hallucinating.

SCARECROW

I've dealt with thugs like you before and frankly, I'm not at all impressed with what I see.

JOKER

Oh... this coming from a man that just sprays his problems away.

SCARECROW

You didn't think you could get away with it, did you? You killed several of my clients, and swindled them out of their money. Money that could've supported their drug rings. You steal from the mob, you steal from me.

JOKER

Mmmmm, robbing the cradle. By the way, you wanna know how I got these scars?

(CONTINUED)

The Joker lifts up his hands, which are not chained together, and uses the pointer fingers to trace along the scars on his face. Scarecrow doesn't register the fact that the Joker is free at first, but backs away once he does.

The Joker jumps across the table in the room and grabs the Scarecrow by the neck. The Scarecrow hesitates.

JOKER

(Extremely menacingly)

I had a son. Smart, willing, he was an obedient little brat. One day some other 9 year olds start to push him around, because he was different. They edge him closer to the road, pushing and pushing, a car comes and hits my son, he's DEAD on impact. I go to him first, see that he's already gone, then I turn on the bullies. I take one of them and demand where his parents are. I go to their house and I go to the dad, grab his head and take it to the curb; I then take his mother and ask her why she couldn't control her son. I asked her why she had not cared for him enough that she was responsible for the death of MY son. I ask her, Why so serious? I put the knife to her lips. Let's put a smile on that face. She manages to wrangle the knife away from me, and does this. [He motions to the scars on his face.] So then I kill her...

He then looks into Dr. Crane's eyes, with a look of sick bereft.

SCARECROW

You're sick.

JOKER

I'm going to need your mask.

The guard walking outside is patrolling the halls. He rounds a corner and sees the Scarecrow mask behind the Joker's cell. The Joker (in the Scarecrow Mask) taps on the glass. The guard unlocks the door. The camera pans from the mask down to the orange prisoner suit, and the guard gets pummeled by the Joker. The Joker rips off the mask, picks up the guard's binoculars, and shoves them into his eyes.

(CONTINUED)

JOKER

To be the first of many! [He laughs hysterically.]

The Joker turns and skips out into the halls, rounding a corner while still laughing hysterically.

EXT. TV STATION DAY

SHOT OF GOTHAM CITY'S SKY SCAPE, WITH VOICE OVER PLAYED OVER SEVERAL SCENES.

The voice over is revealed to belong to a female reporter, for the GCN (Gotham City Network).

REPORTER

And the terrorist that police call the "Joker," has reportedly escaped from Arkham Asylum around 10 AM this morning. The GCPD is also looking for other inmates that might have escaped along with the Joker, although initial reports have come back negative. Police Commissioner Jim Gordon has issued a statement that the Gotham City Police Department has suspended all current active investigations and also that the Department is concentrating solely on the capture and detainment of the Joker. This includes the ongoing investigation involving the vigilante known as the Batman, who is believed to have murdered 5 people since last month.

EXT. ALLEYWAY NIGHT

The camera pans down from a Gotham City skyscraper. It reveals a deserted alley, drug dealers and miscreants are seen in the bowels of the alley. Batman makes a dramatic entrance, landing on the alley floor. He rises like a shadow from the darkness.

The Batman holds out a locator, which directs him to a drug dealer not far away. The dealer saw Batman drop, so started running the other way. Camera shifts so that the dealer is looking behind him, and he runs right into Batman's fist.

The camera looks back at the device Batman is holding, which is going off louder than ever before.

(CONTINUED)

DEALER

Ahh!

BATMAN

(stooping)

You've been dealing with Crane.

DEALER

Well, that's one villain even you can't keep down.

BATMAN

(looking at the dealer's stash)

He's giving you less.

DEALER

He doesn't have the time he used to.

BATMAN

Doesn't he? You have a choice. Get the maximum amount of years for pushing, or tell me what Crane's up to.

DEALER

(laughing)

Word is that the police don't even work with you anymore! What are you now? A nobody.

BATMAN

(angrily)

A nobody that wants information.

The Batman grips the dealers collar and hoists him up to his face. He stares into the dealer's eyes.

DEALER

Why you still worried about drug dealers when the clown's out of the box?

BATMAN

Because this city has more than one enemy.

Batman punches his fist at the dealer's hand that is flat against the brick wall of the alley. The bones crunch and the dealer lets out a cry of pain.

(CONTINUED)

DEALER

Oh my god. Oh my god. You  
freaking shattered my hand!

BATMAN

(angrily)  
Feeling chattier?

DEALER

I don't know much. Just a  
place. Overheard it while he was  
talking on the phone. OW! The  
Waterworks. Gotham  
Waterworks. Something there.

BATMAN

(angrily)  
That's it?

Batman shatters the dealer's other hand.

DEALER

Oh my... you're crazy, man! I... I  
swear to God that's all I know. I  
swear to God!

Batman puts him back down on the ground.

BATMAN

Good luck trying to peddle with two  
broken hands.

Batman disappears into the shadows.

EXT. LARGE BUSINESS BUILDING

Camera pans from sun to reveal a tower, presumably in Gotham  
City, with many windows.

A young man, in his early twenties, walks up to the building  
and opens the front door with a key card. He is dressed in  
business attire, and is somewhat stocky. He enters.

The man walks into a conference type room and sits down in  
the seat at the head of the large table. He looks at his  
watch, as if he is expecting somebody.

ANALYST

(surprised)  
Oh...

(CONTINUED)

Suddenly, two other men enter the room, sporting sunglasses and carrying between them a large television set. The set the television on the opposite end of the table, facing the young man.

The television clicks on. It reveals the Scarecrow sitting in one of his lavish desk chairs.

ANALYST

Dr. Crane.

They both are silent for a few seconds.

SCARECROW

Well, I suppose the first order of business is obvious...

ANALYST

Sir, the plan had to be set into motion earlier than expected because of the complications with the Batman.

SCARECROW

(sarcastically)

Oh, has the Batman been giving you too much trouble?

ANALYST

(unsure)

Uhh, yes... sir... he showed up on the...

SCARECROW

(angrily)

Batman has been at my doorstep whenever I turn my back. Ever since he put the Joker away he's turned all of his attention, and his knack for disruption, on me, and my operations. I gave you a simple task: to release the Joker on a specific date, and why could you not keep him in his cell until then?

ANALYST

Sir... we didn't plan on staging the breakout until the Sixteenth, and most assuredly we didn't mean for you to be in the cell with him, but the Joker was having a profound effect on the other inmates,

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

ANALYST (cont'd)  
including inmate number 10025,  
Mich...

SCARECROW  
I don't care what impact he had on  
the inmates. The arrangement was  
for the Sixteenth, not before. And  
I explained to you why it could not  
be before that. The people I'm  
working for have a very limited  
timetable to execute their plan...  
and you have failed them.

The other men in the room press a button on the television  
set and a stream of white smoke issues out from the box  
towards the business man. The man screams when he sees the  
Scarecrow coming out of the television set.

INT. WAREHOUSE BUILDING UNKNOWN TIME OF DAY

The scene opens up with the camera zooming around the floor  
of an open warehouse. Tied up in a metal chair is a  
prisoner, of no particular political interest. The Joker  
appears, laughing that maniacal laugh of his.

The Joker talks into a home camcorder, like the ones he uses  
to make statements that air on the news during his last  
spree.

JOKER  
Hello Gotham! Three messages:  
First, to the wonderful folks at  
Arkham Asylum. I regret that I had  
to leave. The room service was  
great, but the other inmates,  
weren't crazy enough! Second, to  
the citizens of Gotham. Now, you  
know what I can do. Last time I  
made the mistake of giving you the  
power to demand the Batman's  
resignation. I've wised up since  
then. Take my word for it. If  
Batman doesn't reveal himself,  
there will not be a single  
cockroach living in the alleyways  
of our fair city. And third, to  
the Batman. I know you're no  
murderer. And I know Harvey Dent  
wasn't the White Knight that  
everyone thought he was.

The Joker licks his lips and tilts the camera upwards.

(CONTINUED)

JOKER

I really appreciate the Gotham Police giving me the credit for the late District Attorney's murder, and as much as I enjoy murder, I cannot take credit for another man's handiwork.

INT. GOTHAM POLICE DEPARTMENT

The police department is blatantly going for the Batman in their pursuit since his "murder" of Harvey Dent. Detective Campbell paces in his office, apparently contemplating the recent Joker video.

As the detective paces back and forth, the Batman appears suddenly without being seen.

BATMAN

Detective Campbell...

CAMPBELL

Uhh... Surprised you didn't clean this thing up already. You sure you want to be here? You know, you're our number two public enemy right now, behind Joker.

BATMAN

I have to at least let you guys do something.

CAMPBELL

We pretty much have our hands tied because of him. He hasn't been killing anyone yet, surprising. Basically he's just been making little appearances all day. The department's swamped. Don't have the manpower for anything else. And it's causing just a media frenzy, the way that the news runs this guy like Al Jazeera constantly running bin Laden. The media is the right hand of anarchy.

BATMAN

Just the way the Joker would want it.

(CONTINUED)

CAMPBELL

Right.

BATMAN

I have a feeling that there's something bigger than the Joker this time out there.

CAMPBELL

What do you mean? What could be bigger than the most lethal terrorist this city has ever known?

BATMAN

What is the story with Gotham Waterworks? What has changed recently?

CAMPBELL

Well, uh, that's where, uh, they stored that polluted water from a while back. The water with the hallucinogenic inhalant in it.

BATMAN

What happened with the water?

CAMPBELL

Well, I remember Loeb talking about it when he was commissioner. They stored it up in the Water Works, in an isolated tank, until they knew what to do with it.

BATMAN

Why?

CAMPBELL

They found traces of powdered uranium in the water. They found the hallucinogens of course, but why uranium too? Obviously they couldn't evaporate it or even clean it. EPA had a literal fit over it.

BATMAN

Tell your men to keep an eye on that holding tank.

CAMPBELL

Why? You think the Joker has something planned?

(CONTINUED)

BATMAN

No. I think it's someone else.

CAMPBELL

I'll keep in touch. What do you think is going on? Do you think the Joker...

But Campbell stops talking, Batman has already left the office. Campbell looks unsurprised.

INT. SUBURBAN HOME NIGHT

A pair of dirty hands with writing written on them rest on a stack of newspapers on a desk. The hands have letters on each finger, which spell out "Riddle" on them. The newspapers below them show articles about Harvey Dent, the GCPD, the Batman, and the Joker. The hands sift through the papers, circling several items.

The man stands up, but is cloaked in darkness. On the wall there is a large bulletin board with many pictures tacked on it. At the top of the board is a photo of Coleman Reese, and underneath it is several more photos in a column, and Bruce Wayne's photo is visible on "Possibles."

RIDDLER

The mole... Mr. Reese  
(mysteries)... how fitting.

INT. GOTHAM POLICE DEPARTMENT

Campbell sits at his desk, sifting through papers, a worried look on his face.

A junior detective comes into the office; Campbell looks up, then back down to his papers.

CAMPBELL

Are the cameras in place?

JUNIOR DETECTIVE

Yes sir.

CAMPBELL

And the patrols?

JUNIOR DETECTIVE

In place.

(CONTINUED)

CAMPBELL

Good. See to it that...

But the detective's comment is cut short as a rocket propelled grenade hurls into the Major Crimes Unit. The junior detective is thrown into the other room by the blast. Campbell takes shelter underneath his desk. A few seconds pass as the camera stays on Campbell. Large crashes are heard from the rest of the MCU. Campbell runs out.

The Joker clocks Campbell as he runs out of his office. Dazed and confused, he is picked up by two of the Joker's henchmen, wearing clown masks, one with a latex one used for Halloween, and one wearing a mask made out of pantyhose. The Joker walks up to him.

JOKER

Hi.

Campbell just looks at him.

JOKER

Where is our mutual friend,  
Commissioner Gordon?

Campbell doesn't say anything.

JOKER

Taking a personal day? Still  
trying to shut down the mob? Let  
me tell you something. You know  
... I've done more to eliminate the  
mob than this entire police force  
has. I burned half their  
money. I've killed their  
leaders. So really, I'm on your  
side. You can trust me.

The Joker smiles very wide. Campbell scoffs.

JOKER

So... You guys still think Batman  
killed those 5 people? Is he still  
your... target?

CAMPBELL

I can think of at least one who  
tops him.

JOKER

What drives a man to kill? Is it  
his bad experiences? Is it his  
aggressive tendencies? No, not me,

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

JOKER (cont'd)  
anyway. I kill people because in their final moments, people show you who they really are. I don't think I know YOU, very well, detective. Have you been speaking to Batman long? Have you formed a brotherly love with that Caped Crusader?

CAMPBELL  
No.

JOKER  
Oh well. See, I wanted to kidnap someone who was close to the Batman. But, he probably won't care anyway who I take. You see, he doesn't respond to limp bodies, he responds to kidnappings

The Joker, laughing manically, along with the clowns and detective Campbell, exit the smoking MCU.

EXT. GOTHAM WATERWORKS NIGHT

A patrolman, Jacob Miller Miller, strolls across the wide expanse in front of two very large water tanks. He looks up to the top of one of the tanks, obviously searching for something.

A second police officer comes around the corner, flashlight in hand. He looks at the first, surprised.

2ND OFFICER  
Oh... hey Jacob. Are you supposed to be on patrol tonight?

JACOB MILLER  
Oh hey. Actually no, but I knew that Detective Campbell would want me here.

2ND OFFICER  
What does that mean?

JACOB MILLER  
Nothing. [He smiles a quick smirk.] I'll take the south side if you wanna take the north side.

EXT. ALLEYWAY NIGHT

Batman wanders the alleyways, apparently listening to people's conversations through his telecommunications sensor. He puts his fingers to his ear.

BATMAN  
Campbell...?

JOKER  
You wanted to talk to him?

A look of instant horror flashes across Batman's face.

BATMAN  
Joker...

JOKER  
Look, listen. Let's save the theatrics and get down to brass tax. Now, see. I don't like it when I'm not the main attraction, and I really don't like it when you leave me out of the loop.

BATMAN  
This town is not a one man show...

JOKER  
I want this town to know who runs it though, until their spirit breaks completely...

BATMAN  
This city has already showed you it believes in good.

JOKER  
An isolated incident, and I assure you, this will not be.

BATMAN  
(thinking)  
What do you want?

JOKER  
(laughing)  
Oh, not much. I just want my best friend to come over and play for a while.

(CONTINUED)

BATMAN

I'll be at the Waterworks. That's the only place I'll be. I'm not playing your games, Joker.

Batman clicks off his communicator. He touches it again.

BATMAN

Alfred?

Alfred Pennyworth on the other line: Yes, master Wayne?

BATMAN

I need you to get a hold of the GCPD. Tell them to head towards the Gotham Waterworks.

Alfred on the other line: Yes, of course, master Wayne.

BATMAN

Tell them the Joker will be there, and to bring a bomb squad. Use the secure line. And tell them to not accept an 'All Clear' from any of their officers at the Waterworks.

Alfred on the other line: Right away, master Wayne.

INT. ARKHAM ASYLUM NIGHT

The Scarecrow talks into a cell phone, his voice modulator still on.

SCARECROW

Yes, and Jacob Miller is down there. He will get the job done.

The other person on the line, which is on speaker, is clearly a woman.

TALIA

Good, and make sure you're far enough out of the blast radius when it goes off. The League of Shadows wouldn't want one of our chief operatives killed...

SCARECROW

You never divulged me on how much this explosion is going to destroy...

(CONTINUED)

TALIA

Oh... all of Gotham, that's for sure. Some of Trenton, the outskirts of Metropolis...

SCARECROW

That is too much! Your father would never allow other cities to pay for the crime that...

TALIA

Do not talk about my father! You didn't know him. And besides, he WOULD have wanted corrupt cities to pay for the sins they have committed. They are all guilty. They should pay. Don't you know what we do? Our way of life, our whole crusade is to restore the balance that the human race needs. Whenever a civilization reaches the pinnacle of its decadence, we restore the balance. My father failed to destroy Gotham twice, and I assure you, it won't take me but once.

SCARECROW

As you wish. [He scoffs.] I will report to you after we've cleared our people from the tanks.

EXT. GOTHAM WATERWORKS NIGHT

Officer Jacob Miller is shown strapping bombs to the outside of the Waterworks tank structure. The other officer approaches him from behind.

2ND OFFICER

Hey! What are you doing?!

Officer Jacob Miller takes out his sidearm and shoots the 2nd Officer. He takes out a cell phone and dials a number.

JACOB MILLER

Yes, they are set and there are no more police around.

A van pulls up next to the water works. Joker's van.

(CONTINUED)

JACOB MILLER

Wait, boss. Someone just arrived. Friends of yours?

The Scarecrow's voice is barely heard through the receiver.

JACOB MILLER

Hold on.

The officer pulls out a set of binoculars. He stares into them as the people from the van pile out. Most of them have clown masks on, and some just have pantyhose over their heads. All of them carry semi-automatics as their weapons.

The Joker steps out of the van also. He shouts some orders to the other clowns. Officer Miller talks back on the cell phone.

JACOB MILLER

It's the Joker. And he's brought his clowns.

The Scarecrow is shown in his car driving with his posse.

SCARECROW

We'll be there momentarily. Keep hidden.

The Scarecrow hangs up the phone. He speaks with the people in the van.

SCARECROW

This is exactly what should NOT have happened. We released the Joker to run rampant in Gotham so we could accomplish our goal here. And how did he know to go to the Water Works?

EXT. GOTHAM WATERWORKS NIGHT

The Joker waves his hand around to set up a perimeter, and the clowns spread out.

The Batman is shown rounding the corner towards the Waterworks. He drives his Bat pod straight at the Joker, but his men step in. Batman jumps off the bike and flies at one of the clowns, while the Bat pod skids on top of one of the other clowns.

The Batman uses his fighting skills as all of the clowns draw around him. The Joker hangs back while his goons fight the Batman, and shoot at him.

(CONTINUED)

The Joker lunges at Batman, and they trade blows. Batman is able to unhook a cable from his utility belt, and wraps hands up. He trips Joker up, and the Joker lands on his backside.

JOKER

Yay. Now we can talk.

BATMAN

The only person you'll be talking to is another psychiatrist.

JOKER

Hah. Anywhere is better than here. You want to know a secret? I hate the outside. Here, out here in this urban stink hole. See, this is where the real evil takes place. Murder, money, drugs. It's all a big joke to me. But to these average people, to the John Smiths and the Jane Does, evil is everywhere. And you think that you can keep me in Arkham? It's true that from time to time it's inmates escape, but they all return- for the world outside is truly frightening.

BATMAN

I don't know about the security of Arkham, but I warn you Joker, I know the security of MY city.

Batman gets up and the Joker laughs hysterically. A white van suddenly rounds the corner into the vicinity of the Waterworks tanks.

JOKER

I hope you already called the popo.

The van stops abruptly. Out of the back of the van pile out sharply dressed henchmen of the Scarecrow. The men swarm around the Joker, still bundled up in front of the van. Batman is nowhere to be found.

Batman shows up out of the shadows and takes two of the henchmen by complete surprise. They scream as the Batman drags them off. The men's semiautomatics go off randomly as they are dragged off.

(CONTINUED)

The Scarecrow stands behind the remaining henchmen and whispers to them. The two henchmen lunge at Batman, going for his abdomen. They use the butts of their guns to ram into Batman's chest. The Batman lets his mouth open for a split second to let out a gasp. That's all the Scarecrow needs.

Scarecrow lunges forward and sprays Batman right in the mouth with spray. Batman chokes.

Batman starts to hear sounds and see images from his fearful past. The Scarecrow chuckles to himself.

SCARECROW

It's a lethal dose. I didn't want to allow you to ruin any more of my plans, Bat.

Batman continues to see visions of what he fears most. His eyes flash with visions of his parents, of Rachel Dawes dying, of Joe Chill, of the Joker. Of Ras Al'Ghul.

Ras Al'Ghul: What do you fear?

Of Scarecrow's mask. Of Carmine Falcone. Of the man in prison with him in Nepal. Of Harvey Dent. Of Gotham itself.

BATMAN

I wanted to save Gotham.

In flashback: Alfred Pennyworth: Why do we fall sir? So we can learn to pick ourselves back up.

Somehow, Detective Campbell crawls out of the van and yells to Batman.

CAMPBELL

You did!

Batman gets up, in a fit of rage. It seems he has conquered his fear, and now only gets angrier because of it. In a flash of pure blackness, the other two henchmen are on the ground and bleeding.

The Batman goes for the Scarecrow's neck, and seeing the ornamental noose that completes the costume, goes for that and tightens it around his neck.

CAMPBELL

Batman, NO!

(CONTINUED)

BATMAN  
This man killed me!

CAMPBELL  
And you have to be better than him.

BATMAN  
I already have blood on my  
hands. What would a little more  
do? Why do I have to be better?

Police sirens are heard nearby and flashes of blue and red  
can be seen entering the Water Works complex.

CAMPBELL  
For Gotham.

Flashes of Bruce Wayne's parents flash across his mind.

The Gotham City Police Department surround the complex and  
exit their cruisers. The Batman releases Scarecrow and  
throws his mask off of the villain. It is not Jonathan  
Crane under the mask.

BATMAN  
It's not Crane. Detective... I  
need you to do something for me.

The Batman is shown saying something to Campbell, then  
slumps over on the ground. More police arrive around the  
three bodies of the Batman, faux-Scarecrow, and Campbell.

EXT. GOTHAM CEMETARY

A handful of U.S. Marines drape an American flag over the  
casket of Batman. They are seen lifting it into a Hearst  
nearby. Detective Campbell presides over the ceremony.

CAMPBELL  
He was the hero that Gotham needed,  
but not the one that we cried out  
for. He did not ask anything from  
the people, nor did he have to. He  
heralded in a new era for this  
great city, when we all needed a  
change. We let the corrupt and the  
evil take a hold of us. He pried  
that loose and showed us what we  
could truly be. We all wanted the  
world to change, but when he  
changed it, we witnessed our world  
get worse before it got better. We

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CAMPBELL (cont'd)  
ridiculed him, we called for his head. Despite this, he battled unrelenting terrorists and corruption, all with the decency that this city would like to be based upon. But we cast the first stone. And he took it, because he thought he wasn't a hero.

Several shots of people putting things on the Batman's casket - including a little boy's hand drawn card simply saying 'Thank You.'

CAMPBELL  
We have chosen to conceal his identity from everyone. No one will know who the Batman was, and they shouldn't have to. And the least this city can do now is to remember what this Caped Crusader did, and emulate his example. It's up to us now. We have to take the torch. Take his example, and don't be afraid to be brave. Be brave for the bat. Continue his valiant Crusade.

EXT. GOTHAM CEMETERY

Six days later...

A man with "R-I-D-D-L-E" on each of his fingers approaches the mausoleum that houses Batman. Outside the mausoleum is a plaque. The Riddler reads it out loud.

RIDDLER  
To the Caped Crusader, the unknown protector of Gotham City, who gave his life so that its citizens could remain free...

The Riddler gets up, and enters the mausoleum. Inside he notices the casket. He breaks open the locks placed on it. He lifts the lid and there is nothing inside.

RIDDLER  
Very nice, Batman.