

CASE STUDY  
Based on the Short Story by  
Alex Ross and Paul Dini

Screenplay By Justin Dombrowski

The screen is PITCH black:

**CUT TO:**

The fuzzy screen of an old 50's style television.

An older news anchor appears on the screen. He is short and stout. He looks at the television, adjusting his glasses.

He clears his throat.

TELEVISION ANCHOR  
Good Afternoon Gotham.

**INT. GOTHAM CREATIVE ARTS CENTER -- LATE NIGHT**

There is a large crowd situation inside the center.

On stage stands a man dressed in a tuxedo, with a scantily clad woman in a crystal white dress, standing behind a glass podium.

The man walks up to the podium, smiling.

Suddenly.

BAM! A gunshot is heard. The man looks towards the aisle.

A tall, slender man, dressed in a long light trench coat, with a hat covering his head makes his way down the aisle, with arms extended into the air.

TELEVISION ANCHOR(Cont.)  
It has been one week since  
The attack on the Gotham  
Creative Arts Center.

Pulling back, the shot reveals the man waving his hand into the air as he approaches the podium.

A shot from the back of the theater reveals HARLEY QUINN, with her hand extended in the air, Holding a pistol.

Man are around her, holding sub-machine guns.

TELEVISION ANCHOR(Cont.)  
And the entertainment  
World is still reeling from  
An attack made by the Joker.

Below the podium, dressed guests scatter around in the foreground as JOKER raises his hand into the air holding an award, LAUGHING.

TELEVISION ANCHOR(Cont.)  
Accompanied by a gang of  
Underlings....

Some of the Joker's thugs move through the rows, aiming their guns at the guests.

TELEVISION ANCHOR(Cont.)  
The madman shot his way  
Upon the stage

Joker removes his hat to reveal a far receding hairline, a large forehead with protruding veins, as he smiles into the screen.

He looks down at the Award in his right hand.

TELEVISION ANCHOR(Cont.)  
Where upon he presented himself  
With the lifetime achievement  
Award. For as he put it...

The Joker speaks into the microphone. At the same time he mouths the same phrase as the TELEVISION ANCHOR.

TELEVISION ANCHOR(Cont.)  
So many lifetimes ended.

The Joker looks offstage as there is a THUNDEROUS BOOM.

Joker looks into the air and SMILES.

TELEVISION ANCHOR(Cont.)  
The hysteria peaked as  
The Batman appeared on the  
Scene.

Batman glides down, landing on top of some of the abandoned theater chairs. Surrounded in black.

TELEVISION ANCHOR(Cont.)  
Scattering the already  
Terrified crowd and putting  
Joker's gang to flight.

The thugs notice BATMAN and drop their guns, fleeing into the throng of people.

TELEVISION ANCHOR(Cont.)  
However the Joker himself,  
Stood his ground, seeing to  
Expect, if not, welcome  
Batman's intrusion.

Joker walks towards BATMAN as he begins to rise.

Joker pulls out a colt .45.

TELEVISION ANCHOR(Cont.)  
It was over with as soon as it  
Started.

Batman RACES towards Joker.

Joker AIMS his gun at Batman, FIRING shots through his cape as he charges Joker.

TELEVISION ANCHOR(Cont.)  
With the madman once more  
Delivered into the hands of  
Police.

Batman tackles Joker to the stage, with his hands around his neck.

Joker looks up at Batman, smiling. Blood Oozes down his cheek.

The camera FOCUSES in on Batman's eyes as he is surrounded by DARKNESS.

TELEVISION ANCHOR(Cont.)  
While there has yet to be an

Official statement, it is  
Expected that Gotham's most  
Notorious Criminal.

**EXT. OUTSIDE OF ARKHAM ASYLUM -- MIDNIGHT/ THUNDERSTORM**

There is a shot of Arkham Asylum, sitting in the darkness  
surrounded by the forests that abound it.

TELEVISION ANCHOR(Cont.)  
Will be found mentally  
Unstable, and returned  
To Arkham Asylum.

**INT. RUBIN'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER**

The television sits on top of a filing cabinet. Suddenly a  
hand in the foreground CLICKS a remote. Shutting the  
television off.

RUBIN(O.S.)  
God in heaven.

DOCTOR RUBIN reclines back in his chair, inside of his  
office, with his hand under his chin.

A cup of GOTHAM'S BEST coffee graces the top of his desk.

RUBIN  
How many times are we  
Expected to play zookeeper  
For that animal?

Rubin looks down onto his desk.

The GOTHAM TRIBUNE'S headlines read:

JOKER FOILED BY BATMAN

RUBIN  
We can't suffer another  
Bloody spree.

There is a KNOCK on Rubin's door. Rubin turns in his chair  
to see AHMET, standing in his doorway with a set of files.

AHMET

The Joker problem again  
 , Dr. Rubin?

Rubin swivels in his chair, looking at Ahmet.

RUBIN  
What else? I have given up  
On my patient, Ahmet.

Ahmet walks in and sits on Rubin's desk.

RUBIN(Cont.)  
But after so many years, and  
So many failures, I don't  
Think that there's any way to  
Pierce that mans psychosis.

Ahmet walks out of the office, and leans over to a small  
tray in the hallway, grabbing another folder.

He hands it to Rubin.

AHMET  
Then let me volunteer a rather  
Unconventional theory.

Rubin looks surprised, at Ahmet.

AHMET(Cont.)  
What if the Joker is not insane?

RUBIN  
That's not possible.

Rubin brushes the file off, throwing his hands through the  
few strands of hair left on his head.

RUBIN(Cont.)  
Anyone who acts with such  
Disrespect for human life  
Can't differentiate between  
Right and wrong.

Ahmet looks at the newspaper on Rubin's desk.

RUBIN(Cont.)  
Credible doctors in trial

Have certified this, Ahmet.

AHMET

I understand that sir. But while  
Going through old files on  
The Joker, I've recovered parts  
Of a report that suggest  
Otherwise.

Ahmet hands Rubin the folder.

RUBIN

Who's the recording doctor?

Rubin opens the folder to a MUGSHOT of the JOKER, with a  
written Case Study on him.

AHMET

There's no name on the report.  
But the note reveals observations  
Gathered not only through a  
Study of the Joker himself.

Rubin takes a sip of his coffee.

AHMET (Cont.)

But also through interviews with  
Other criminals who remember the  
Man before his, how shall we say,  
Transformation.

Rubin looks down at a snapshot of Joker, only in his  
"human" form. Outside of a nightclub, surrounded by thugs.  
A hat is over his eyes but his chin and nose are noticeable.

Ahmet points to the Joker in the photograph.

AHMET

That's him in the middle. The  
Man on the right is Eddie Marcone.  
An old-time hood who agreed to  
Be interviewed for the report.

Rubin stares at the photograph.

MARCONE (V.O.)

Sure. I remember the Joker.

**EXT. OUTSIDE OF NIGHTCLUB/FLASHBACK SCENE - NIGHT**

The Joker stands amongst the men standing outside. The scene plays out slowly.

MARCONE (V.O.)

Only we didn't call him the Joker then.  
But damned if I can remember what his  
Real name was. Sonny. Jackie. Hap, he  
Always seemed to have a different  
Handle dependin' on who he was workin'  
For.

The Joker looks around and slowly grins. The brim of the hat covers his eyes in darkness.

MARCONE (V.O.)

He was a hard guy to pin down, but I  
Guess he liked it that way.

The Joker slips a cigarette into his mouth.

MARCONE (V.O.)

He never had no home crew, but  
Was always on the fringes of a  
Dozen different gangs.

The Joker turns and looks behind him, amongst the people.

MARCONE (V.O.)

He was first to come in when  
There was something dirty to be done.  
First, to take his cut, first to  
Split. He liked keeping his hands  
Clean.

The Joker's hand encloses a females hand. She has an engagement ring on her finger.

Joker looks around, smiling with a beautiful blonde woman next to his side.

MARCONE (V.O.)

I remember this one time, He  
Starts up with this chick named  
Debbie. She happens to be one



Of the sweethearts of Kingpin  
Tommy Doyle.

Doyle sits in a room, looking furiously towards a screen,  
with two other men behind him.

MARCONE (V.O.)  
Now Doyle is the only toughest  
Mob boss in Gotham at the time.  
And a flippin psycho when it  
Comes to mooks hittin on his  
Women.

Doyle SLAMS his fists on the table, surrounded by men. He  
stands up, shaking his fist, ANGRILY.

MARCONE (V.O.)  
Now instead of keeping his fling  
On the down low, Joker practically  
Announces it to the world, Showin  
Debbie off at Nightclubs, you name  
It. No way Doyle's gonna stand for  
That.

**EXT. GOTHAM THEATER - NIGHT/ POURING RAIN**

Joker steps out of a car, enshrouded in his trench coat.

MARCONE (V.O.)  
Joker lays low for about a month.  
One night he insists on dragging  
Debbie out to some new night club.  
Well some how or another Deb's  
Mink gets pinched.

Inside the Theater, Joker puts his Trench coat over Debbie,  
including his hat as well.

MARCONE (V.O.)  
So our boy gallantly bundles up  
The lady in his own hat and coat  
To wear back to his place.

**EXT. OUTSIDE OF APARTMENT - MOMENTS LATER**

Joker unlocks the door as DEBBIE heads in before him.

She looks up, with a expression of shock on her face. Doyle sits in a recliner in front of her.

He stands up and pulls out his gun.

He AIMS it.

BLAM. BLAM. BLAM. BLAM. BLAM.

Debbie's body falls to the ground with a thud, as she is dressed in Joker's coat and hat. Blood drains all over the floor.

MARCONE (V.O.)

Naturally Tommy was waitin for the  
Joker. And you can guess the rest.

Doyle stands up, in shock, looking down at Debbie's dead body.

MARCONE (V.O.)

Poor dumb Tommy. He's still  
Starin down in shock at  
Debbie as the cops pull him  
Away.

#### **INT. INSIDE OF PRISON CELL**

Doyle sits amongst a black silhouette. Looking into the distance.

MARCONE (V.O.)

Pretty good joke actually as  
, as long as it didn't happen to you.  
Before you know it, Tommy's on death  
Row and Laughin' boy is runnin his  
Mob. Like I said. The guy was smart.

#### **CUT TO:**

#### **INT. RUBINS OFFICE**

Ahmet is leaning over the case study. With his finger stuck on the transcript.

AHMET

The interviewing doctor concluded  
That while the man who would become

The Joker possessed a cunning mind  
Melded with a pronounced sadistic  
Streak, they did not classify him  
As insane.

RUBIN  
Go on.

**INT. GOTHAM POLICE HEADQUARTERS LOBBY - MORNING**

The Joker is walking away from a police officer, with his  
hand triumphantly in the air.

Officers stand around him in the lobby.

AHMET (V.O.)  
The next statement is from one dink  
Fox. A known associate of the Joker's  
Who took part in the so-called Red  
Hood Robberies.

**EXT. GOTHAM POLICE STATION**

Joker exit's the building.

FOX  
Once Joker took over Doyle's Territory  
, he was careful to keep himself a step  
Back from the dirty work. Even those  
Few times the cops brought him in for  
Questioning, the boss always  
Covered his tracks so cleanly  
That they could never hold him.

The Joker walks up to a small, nerdy guy who is a LAWYER.  
He wraps his arm around him, gleaming.

FOX (V.O.)  
He was smart enough to hire the  
Slickest mouthpieces and they  
Always got him off.

**CUT TO:**

Up close shot of Ahmet's mouth.

AHMET

Hardly the act of a man who has  
Said he understands no difference  
Between right and wrong.

INT. INSIDE OF UNKNOWN DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT

Joker is seen from behind. He is dressed in a tux, and  
holding a RED HOOD.

FOX(V.O.)  
Even though the boss was able to keep  
Himself clean, he still missed the  
Thrill of the early days.

Joker puts the red hood ON. Standing behind him are some of  
his thugs.

FOX(V.O.)  
He always was a wiz at inventing  
Things so he came up with a  
Disguise.

RED HOOD pulls out a colt .45 and loads a clip into it.

FOX(V.O.)  
A big metal hood. Kind of like a  
Two way infrared glass. He could  
See out, but no one could see in.  
Even if he was photographed, no  
Cop could ID him.

Red Hood turns around, to the gang.

FOX(V.O.)  
For a while the Red Hood gang  
Had a run of the town. Then one  
Night...

**INT. MONARCH PLAYING CARD FACTORY/ CATWALK - NIGHT**

The Red Hood walks down the Catwalk, moving the men around,  
ordering them.

He is surrounded by men dressed in suits with machine guns.

FOX(V.O.)  
We decided to hit the payroll  
At the Monarch Playing Card  
Factory.

One of the gang members is hit with a batarang. He goes down instantly.

The Red Hood turns to view BATMAN land on top of another.

FOX(V.O.)  
The Bat got wind of it,  
And he was waiting for us.

The BATMAN runs towards The Hood, grappling to an object, and floating through the air towards him.

Red Hood FIRES repeatedly at BATMAN.

FOX(V.O.)  
Knowing it would all be  
Over if he was unmasked, the  
Boss took the only way out.

Red Hood turns around in front of a railing and leaps over the edge.

FOX(V.O.)  
He dove into the chemical  
Vat, swam through the waste  
Drain and escaped down the  
River.

Batman REACHES for the Red Hood, but his body disappears into the waste, below.

**INT. INSIDE OF DIRTY OLD APARTMENT - MIDNIGHT**

A man leans hunched over the sink in front of a mirror. A lone light bulb LIGHTS the area.

The man grabs at his face, we cannot see.

The man begins to chuckle a little bit. Then he begins to laugh maniacally.

He takes his fist and pounds it into the mirror, shattering

it into a thousand pieces.

Looking into the mirror, Joker, now fully transformed, smiles into the broken glass as he continues to chuckle.

FOX(V.O.)  
Once again. The boss had  
Gotten away clean.

**INT. INSIDE OF RUBINS OFFICE - NIGHT**

Ahmet has now grabbed a chair and is sitting on the opposite side of the table across from Rubin.

AHMET  
The interviewing doctor goes on  
To hypothesize that since the night  
His face was scarred, the man who  
Calls himself Joker became in some  
Ways more rational than before.

**INT. INSIDE OF ROOM - NIGHT**

Joker looks down all around him. There are a couple of men with smiles around their faces. Abound them are sticks of dynamite with the Joker symbol on them.

AHMET(V.O.)  
Gone was the gangsters anonymity and  
With it the cruelly largely effortless  
Way he ran his usurped empire.

Joker looks up towards the camera, smiling and laughing as he holds a gun in his right hand, and a Joker card in his left hand.

**INT. GOTHAM BANK - AFTERNOON**

Joker busts through the door as his gang members run around the place with their guns drawn.

Harley is at his side, smiling the entire way through the Bank Lobby.

AHMET(V.O.)  
He had a new mission now, born  
Out of a personal trauma possibly

Akin to whatever dark circumstances  
Shaped the batman's life.

Joker steps on top of a DEAD Gotham cop.

He waves his hand, holding his hat, into the air, smiling.  
The thugs around him look into the air as BATMAN comes  
swirling down towards them.

Joker looks up smiling, as if a kid opening his Christmas  
presents.

Joker aims a handgun at Batman, firing.

Batman blocks himself.

AHMET (V.O.)

Just as Batman adopted a  
Fearsome wage war on crime,  
The Joker would hide behind a  
Mask of madness to carry out  
A very calculated campaign  
Of revenge.

Batman rushes towards Joker, who is glaring at him, and  
smiling.

Batman SLAMS his fist into Joker's mouth, knocking him to  
the ground.

Joker laughs as Blood POURS out of the side of his cheek.

**INT. INSIDE OF RUBINS OFFICE - SECONDS LATER**

Ahmet sits behind Rubin's desk looking down at the profile,  
reading it.

AHMET

It was the physicians opinion that  
The joker chose to enact the  
Vendetta against batman in ways that  
Seemed irrational, but were in fact  
Meticously researched and  
Brilliantly orchestrated.

Rubin sips his coffee.

AHMET (Cont.)  
These are not the acts of a  
Madman unable to control his  
Urges.

Ahmet holds the folder into the air.

AHMET  
What we have here is a credible  
Profile of a man who willing fully  
Causes anguish and clearly enjoys it.  
I agree with this doctors final  
Summarization that the joker should  
Be retried as mentally competent.

There is some shuffling in the hallway. Ahmet and Rubin  
look towards the doorway to see Harley being dragged by two  
nurses.

HARLEY  
Declared sane, sent to state  
Prison and executed.

AHMET  
Harleen, how do you know what's  
In his file?

HARLEY  
It's mine, silly! I started compiling  
Those theories when I first interned  
Here. Back when I thought I knew all  
The answers.

Camera shoots to a view of the nurses leading Harley down  
the hallway from behind.

HARLEY (Cont.)  
But it wasn't until I started doing  
Personal sessions with Mr. J that  
I discovered how complex he is.  
How deep he is. How wonderful.

Rubin looks over at Ahmet, smiling.



RUBIN

Here Ahmet. Lock it away or burn it.  
I don't care which.

AHMET

You don't believe it?

Rubin looks over outside his window. He looks down at a small van that has arrived.

A couple of armed guards arrive outside the van, armed with shotguns.

**EXT. STEPS OF ARKHAM ASYLUM - NIGHT**

The van opens the back up to show two orderlies bringing the Joker out of the back of the van.

RUBIN(V.O.)

Every word. As sure as I believe  
He left that file where we would  
Just find it someday. The truth is  
Reported by the doctor he eventually  
Drove mad.

The orderlies, one on each side, slowly process Joker up towards the main entrance into Arkham.

RUBIN(V.O.)

He knew it would never stand up  
In court, but allowed us to a  
Moment of hope before yanking the  
Big rug out from under us.

The Joker steps closer to the foreground. We begin to see his white forehead and green hair.

RUBIN(V.O.)

As Eddie Marcone used to say. It's  
Good as long as it doesn't happen to  
You. No my friend. Whether he is truly  
Sane or not, I'm afraid there's only  
One certainty of the Joker that  
Applies to us.

AHMET(V.O.)

What's that?

RUBIN (V.O.)  
He's back.

Joker looks up at the screen and suddenly breaks into an evil grin smile as he looks up towards Rubin.

**CUT TO:**

**ROLL CREDITS**

**THE END**