



Screenplay by

Jerry Vasilatos

Inspired by Batman #584

By Ed Brubaker

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REVISED FINAL SHOOTING SCRIPT

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ON A BLACK SCREEN, WE HEAR THE VOICES OF LIEUTENANT JIM GORDAN AND BATMAN IN THE FINAL MOMENTS OF "BATMAN BEGINS"

GORDON

Now take this guy. Armed robbery, double homicide, got a taste for the theatrical, like you... leaves a calling card.

BATMAN

I'll look into it.

The rustle of Batman's cape can be heard as we:

FADE UP FROM BLACK

To see the silhouette of Batman swoop down from the top of police headquarters and OVER THE CAMERA (STOCK SHOT).

HARD CUT TO:

1. EXT. GOTHAM CITY NARROWS OVERPASS– NIGHT

The skyline of GOTHAM CITY at night. The din of traffic, and distant sirens can be heard. PAN DOWN from the skyline onto the steel suspension bridge connecting MIDTOWN with NARROWS ISLAND.

Two figures cross the bridge amongst the swell of other pedestrians, a teenaged boy and girl, MIKEY AND HEATHER, respectively. Both are bundled up for chilly weather, and Mikey carries a VIDEO CAMERA in one hand with the camera bag slung over his shoulder. Nearby, an elderly NEWS VENDOR on the corner barks "EXTRA, EXTRA..." to passers by as the kids converse.

MIKEY

I'm telling you Heather, it's gotta be the cops. They're just trying to scare all the scumbags off the streets at night. What else are they gonna do to try and control all the people running around crazy from that stuff that got into the water supply?

HEATHER

Yeah, like that's stopped any of the psychos who've been attacking people since the rioting in the Narrows.

MIKEY

Which is exactly why I told you it wouldn't be safe for you to wander around at night trying to prove this guy exists...

HEATHER

Come on Mikey... why do you think I asked you to help me with this? It's not just because you've got a camera, I knew you'd make a great bodyguard too!

Heather shoots Mikey a smile... he's heard it all before.

MIKEY

Yeah, yeah...

NEWS VENDOR

Get your evening edition here... Batman saves entire family in mob shootout!

Heather and Mikey stop and look at the Gotham Times newspaper that the vendor holds up with the headline: CITY AT WAR. A grainy photo of BATMAN silhouetted soaring over the street graces the front page.

Heather pulls some change from her jacket pocket to pay the vendor.

HEATHER

I'll take one... hey, would you mind going on camera to talk to us? We're filming a documentary.

The vendor takes Heather's change and passes her a paper.

NEWS VENDOR

Yeah I'll talk to ya. This gonna be on TV?

HEATHER

Well it's a class project for now.... We're trying to be the first to catch Batman on video.

MIKEY

If he even exists. I think it's a big load but she thinks he's for real.

NEWS VENDOR

Whad'dya mean "if he's for real"? Don't ya got eyes kid? It's all over the front page!

Heather and Mikey examine at the front page photo.

MIKEY

It's just a photo... anyone could fake that.

HEATHER

A fake picture? In the Gotham Times? I don't think so.

NEWS VENDOR

Get outta here... "fakes"... what'aya think, the Times is some tabloid rag like the Globe? Forget about what the papers say though. I'm telling you I saw this Batman fella with my own two eyes... from this corner, the night all those whack jobs busted outta Arkham!

Heather gestures Mikey to point the camera at the news vendor.

HEATHER

Are you getting this?

Mikey lifts his camera up, and aims through the eyepiece.

P.O.V. OF NEWS VENDOR IN CAMERA EYEPiece

NEWS VENDOR

He was hanging from that monorail that flew by and went off the track in front of the Wayne Building down on Midtown Avenue. Now whenever there's trouble, people are seein' him drop outta the sky at night helping the cops round up all those crazies that are still poisoned from that fear toxin.

HEATHER

(offscreen)

So if he's for real, do you think he's a help, or just provoking more trouble?

NEWS VENDOR

Trouble? He saved an entire family... that's more than I can say for these cops who can't stop any of the punks running around mugging people wearing those ugly clown masks let alone round up all the other maniacs on the loose!

The news vendor is interrupted by the sudden sound of POLICE SIRENS followed by FLASHING SQUAD CAR LIGHTS that shine in the street behind him. The CAMERA EYEPIECE swings away from the news vendor towards the source of the lights... A GOTHAM POLICE SQUAD CAR THAT SCREECHES PAST AND ACROSS THE BRIDGE into Midtown.

BACK ON HEATHER AND MIKEY

As they watch after the squad cars.

MIKEY

Talk about right place at the right time...

Heather's view has drifted upwards however. She taps Mikey on the shoulder, pointing towards the sky.

HEATHER

Mikey...

Mikey looks up-

HEATHER AND MIKEY'S POV

Past the rooftops, as the BAT SIGNAL shines against the clouds in the sky.
(STOCK SHOT)

BACK ON HEATHER AND MIKEY

as Mikey aims his camera heavenward.

HEATHER

Did you get that?

MIKEY

Yeah, yeah... but I don't see him dropping out of the sky yet...

HEATHER

Come on, let's catch up with those cops and maybe we will...

Heather and Mikey dart off in the direction of the departing police cars, as the old news vendor calls out after them.

NEWS VENDOR

Hey, when's this gonna be on TV?

2. EXT. GOTHAM CITY BOULEVARD – NIGHT

Heather and Mikey run down Midtown Avenue as more police car sirens sound. Heather points at the opening between the street lanes revealing Lower Midtown Avenue and more police cars speeding by underneath them.

HEATHER

Down there, get that!

Mikey lifts his camera up and aims it towards Lower Midtown Avenue.

MIKEY'S POV FROM THE CAMERA LENS

On a trio of GPD Police cars that speed by. (YOUTUBE STOCK SHOT)

BACK ON MIKEY AND HEATHER

As they hear the sound of a police helicopter overhead. Heather points up.

HEATHER

Up there!

Mikey once again swings his camera up towards the sky.

MIKEY'S POV FROM THE CAMERA LENS

The police copter hovers near an under construction skyscraper with a SWAT team rappelling down the side. (YOUTUBE STOCK SHOT)

MIKEY (O.S.)

Holy crap!

BACK ON HEATHER AND MIKEY

HEATHER

Let's try to get closer!

3. EXT. GOTHAM CITY MIDTOWN AVENUE – NIGHT

Heather and Mikey round the corner as a crowd of people pass them heading in the opposite direction. The avenue is already cordoned off to the public as a squad car blocks off the street and police officers reroute pedestrians and traffic. A POLICE OFFICER approaches, blocking their path.

HEATHER

Hey!

POLICE OFFICER

You kids gotta turn around, this is sealed area and I can't let you go through. Sir, you have to turn your camera off...

HEATHER

But why?

POLICE OFFICER

It's for your own safety miss. Please turn around and leave the area...

MIKEY

Hey we have a right to be here, we heard about it in civics, freedom of the press!

HEATHER

Yeah, it's for our class project!

As the officer engages Heather and Mikey, a tall, blond woman in a trench coat with a badge approaches, a police radio clutched in her hand coordinating the scene. Her badge identifies her as "ESSEN". DETECTIVE SARAH ESSEN.

VOICE ON POLICE RADIO

Bomb squad's in place and awaiting orders...

ESSEN

(into her radio)

Midtown Avenue is sealed off. Just dealing with crowd control, stand by...

POLICE OFFICER

(to kids)

Shut that camera off now!

Essen notices the commotion and approaches the kids and officer.

ESSEN

What's the trouble here officer?

POLICE OFFICER

These two kids refuse to clear the area...

HEATHER

We're not kids, we're in high school. We just need to get a few shots for our documentary!

Heather and Mike turn to Essen, aiming the camera at her. She sizes them up and turns to the officer.

ESSEN

It's alright officer. I'll take care of this.

POLICE OFFICER

They're all yours Detective Essen.

The policeman moves on, as Essen faces Heather and Mikey.

ESSEN

And exactly what kind of documentary is this?

MIKEY

We just want to get some footage of what's happening. What's with that signal? Is that "Batman" guy part of what's going down?

HEATHER

(exasperated)

We're trying to be the first to get real footage of him. The papers say he's real and the police department won't comment even though you guys use that signal almost every other night!

ESSEN

I see. So you kids want to know if the "Bat" is for real or not. Tell you what. I'll answer your questions as long as you two move along when we're done, okay?

The kids nod.

HEATHER

You got this Mikey?

MIKEY

Yeah, I got it.

HEATHER

So what's the story Detective? Is he for real or is the department just making him up?

P.O.V. OF ESSEN IN CAMERA EYEPiece

ESSEN

Would it matter? What if I told you that it was just a department decision, meant to help us in our efforts to regain some control after the attack in the Narrows?

HEATHER

(offscreen)

So the police department is just trying to scare off criminals before they commit crimes?

ESSEN

Exactly. Not such a bad idea is it?

MIKEY

(offscreen)

Well judging by this seven square blocks you've closed off, it doesn't really seem to be working does it?

Essen's expression sours. He's right.

ESSEN

Okay, interview's over. You two need to clear this area now. Given how spooked the crooks in this town already are, it's probably not such a great idea to be poking around asking a lot of questions about ANYTHING let alone the Batman. Now MOVE!

BACK ON HEATHER AND MIKEY

Their expressions register disappointment. They move away as the police officer from earlier re-approaches and gestures to Essen.

POLICE OFFICER

Detective Essen, Lieutenant Gordon is trying to raise you...

Essen raises her police radio.

ESSEN

Go for Essen.

Essen's radio crackles with the voice of JIM GORDON.

GORDON

(on radio)

Sarah, we've got a bad situation up here... quadruple homicide, forensics is sealing the scene. Four neighborhood bosses, I've never seen corpses left like this before, not even by Falcone's hitmen. They've all got smiles carved into their faces, and we're finding more of those damned Joker cards...

Essen's face goes ashen.

4. EXT. GOTHAM CITY MIDTOWN BANK – NIGHT

Heather and Mikey walk dejectedly down the street past GOTHAM MIDTOWN BANK, disappointed at getting so close to the unfolding crime scene and having to leave without anything exciting.

HEATHER

Better believe if we were with Gotham Cable News they'd have let us through.

MIKEY

Yeah. I don't know Heather. The cops deny it, but people swear they've seen some guy flying around dressed like a bat. How the hell could he do it if he WERE real? "Batman", THE "Batman", I'm not even sure what to call him if we came face to face with him.

HEATHER

How about "sir"...

As Heather and Mikey pass the alley next to the BANK, dim SHADOWS dance along the alley walls illuminated by flashlights. Heather catches sight of them, as does Mikey.

HEATHER

Maybe the night isn't a total wash. We can try to salvage something to edit into the documentary... real street crime?

MIKEY

How 'bout we just call it a night?

Heather dodges away from Mikey and across the street towards the alley, intent on getting her story. Mikey chases after her in protest...

MIKEY

Wait Heather... I don't think this is such a good
Idea... Heather, WAIT!

5. EXT. GOTHAM CITY MIDTOWN BANK ALLEY - NIGHT

Heather and Mikey cautiously step into the alley, their eyes darting back and forth to try and catch sight of what the shadows suggested... but it's quiet. Dead quiet.

MIKEY

(whispering)

This is a really BAD idea...

HEATHER

Shhhh! Do you have that thing on?

MIKEY

No! I don't think I could get a decent exposure
if I wanted to... now can we get out of here?

Heather brings her index finger up, silently signaling Mikey to keep quiet. She moves slowly into the alley, assessing the scene. Mikey follows close, as they both come upon a metal enclosure box on the wall, that looks like it's been tampered with.

HEATHER

What is it?

MIKEY

I don't know... looks like a fuse box?

She examines the loose door.

HEATHER

But there's telephone wires...

A gravelly VOICE permeates the silence of the alley.

VOICE

Close sweetie pie. Try silent alarm.

Heather and Mikey turn to see FIVE FIGURES, wearing frightening CLOWN masks emerge from the shadows. DAPPER, SMILEY, ANGRY, CRAZY, AND GRUMPY.

DAPPER

Talk about the wrong place at the wrong time.

CRAZY

Shouldn't you kids be home on a school night?

ANGRY

Or at least minding your own business.

The fifth clown, GRUMPY says nothing, but watches the other four as they surround the kids. Mikey lowers his camera, stepping in front of Heather to block the thugs from her. Stammering at first, he quickly musters his courage in the face of overwhelming odds.

MIKEY

The streets are our business. Whatever you guys are doing, there are cops just a few blocks from here and we've got it on tape so you won't get away with it.

DAPPER

(laughing)

Listen to this kid, thinks he's some kind of crime fighter. Who do you think you are, the Batman?

The clowns draw closer to Heather and Mikey as they step back.

HEATHER

Mikey...

Mikey looks around them for an escape route, but they're stuck.

MIKEY

Damn dead ends...

Mikey and Heather draw near to each other as the three clowns surround them, bracing for the worst.

Suddenly though, a LAMP BULB illuminating the alley shatters, throwing the dead end into more darkness. As the CLOWNS whirl into a defensive circle, Heather and Mikey look up to see a WINGED SILHOUETTE drop down from the rooftop and on top of the clowns. The metal BATARANG that shattered the light clanks on the ground and as the clowns scatter, BATMAN lands in front of them.

ANGRY

It's the BAT!

CRAZY

Smoke him!

DAPPER is the first to attack, but Batman wastes no time in knocking a PISTOL the clown has drawn OUT OF HIS HAND with the razor sharp tips of his GAUNTLETS.

As DAPPER'S head turns to watch the gun fly, Batman grabs him by the shoulders and HEAD BUTTS HIM HARD against the forehead, pulling him backwards and knocking the clown to the ground unconscious as ANGRY, CRAZY and SMILEY circle.

Heather elbows Mikey once she's regained her senses at the unfolding scene.

HEATHER

Are you getting this?

Mikey's eyes are wide as saucers watching Batman, but he quickly recovers, bringing his camera up.

Once Dapper is down for the count, Batman whirls around to face ANGRY who is holding a large CROWBAR. As the two begin to circle each other, CRAZY jumps Batman from behind, wrapping his arms around the Dark Knight's neck in a choke hold. Batman instantly reacts by barreling backwards, bucking up against the alley wall, and smashing CRAZY into it, and into another unconscious heap on top of Dapper. Batman then turns to face ANGRY, SMILEY AND GRUMPY.

BATMAN

The Joker. Where is he? I want answers NOW.

ANGRY laughs, sizing up Batman and tossing his crowbar to the ground. As the heavy metal bar clanks loudly against the cement, Angry slowly removes his coat, revealing enormous biceps as his arms are exposed. He RUSHES BATMAN, grabbing the caped crusader with both hands by the neck and slamming him up against the alley wall.

ANGRY

Joke's on you pal. The boss promised extra to the one who takes you down...

Batman struggles a moment, hissing as he stretches his arms out on each side of Angry's head.

BATMAN

You're already overpaid.

Batman balls his hands into fists and BOXES each side of Angry's skull, causing the clown to drop in pain. As Batman scrambles to regain footing as he lands, Angry is up again with SMILEY at his side.

It's MANO E MANO as the two exchange blows. Strangely, GRUMPY just stands still and watches as Batman takes on Angry and Smiley in an astonishing display of combat. In his hand, a small but deadly SWITCHBLADE appears from his jacket pocket at the ready.

Although Angry TOWERS over Batman, he is still no match for the speed and stealth of the bat. Batman disables Smiley, tossing him into the heap with Smiley and Crazy and then continues the brawl with Angry. As Angry starts to stagger, Batman turns and stalks towards GRUMPY but in an instant Angry is back on him. As Batman turns to finish off Angry, GRUMPY decides he'll wait to face Batman another day and pocketing his blade, he then turns and flees away from the fight, OUT OF THE ALLEY as Batman TWIRLS in a blurring ROUNDHOUSE KICK that finally knocks ANGRY to the pavement like a ton of bricks. Mikey and Heather watch from nearby in awe.

Finished with Angry, Batman turns to face the Grumpy, but sees that he's gone. In the distance, a bone chilling CACKLE cuts through the silence of the night. Stepping forward, Batman looks down and spots a JOKER CARD lying on the pavement next to his batarang.

He looks back up and almost starts after Grumpy, but upon hearing a moan from Angry, he turns and kicks the thug one last time making sure he's down. It's too late to go after Grumpy, and Batman kneels to pick up the card.

Nearby, Heather and Mikey slowly approach, speechless but grateful.

BATMAN

Little past your curfew isn't it?

Examining the card, he looks towards the kids, noticing Mikey's CAMERA.

HEATHER

You're real.

Batman turns to the three unconscious clowns, dragging them together quickly and binding their wrists and ankles with plastic nylon restraint cuffs.

BATMAN

So the papers say. But I'd prefer people be left to wonder. Especially the ones like these four. Ups the element of surprise.

MIKEY

Who are they?

Batman tears the masks off the three bound thugs, revealing their anonymous bruised faces. In the distance, police sirens can be heard approaching.

BATMAN

At this point, I'll leave the interrogation to the professionals.

He turns towards Heather and Mike, gesturing towards their camera.

BATMAN

I can't let you keep that tape.

HEATHER

But why? Why do the police use that signal if you want to keep yourself a big mystery? I mean, you're helping...

BATMAN

Fear of the unknown gives me an edge when the odds are stacked against me.

MIKEY

But the papers already printed pictures of you.

Batman towers over the two, considering.

HEATHER

And it's for a school project!

Despite his normally grim demeanor, Batman almost allows himself a smile. As the kids await his response, distant lightning flashes over the rooftops.

BATMAN

Alleys are no place for children. You kids get home.
There's a storm coming.

MIKEY

And we can keep the tape?

Mikey turns to Heather.

MIKEY

He's actually letting us keep the tape...

They turn towards Batman, but he is GONE.

MIKEY

Damn.

Heather looks up towards the rooftops and calls out.

HEATHER

Thanks!

6. EXT. GOTHAM CITY MIDTOWN AVENUE – NIGHT

Police seal off the alley of the attempted bank break-in as officers seal the crime scene.

Nearby, two live NEWS REMOTES broadcast from the sidewalk. The first reporter, LORRETTA SANCHEZ, faces the lens of her NEWS NINE CAMERAMAN...

LORETTA SANCHEZ

We've just now been told by the police that the bomb scare on Midtown Avenue was thankfully, a false alarm, despite the bodies found on the 30th floor of the new Midtown Tower, still under construction...

Next to Loretta, reporter MARIA DALLAS of GOTHAM CABLE NEWS holds up a microphone and speaks to her audience...

MARIA DALLAS

Other officials on the scene report their suspicions that the brutal murders of prominent gang leaders found in the building was a diversionary tactic meant to draw attention away from this attempted bank break-in... that along with other recent attempts, was once again foiled by Batman.

As Maria Dallas continues her remote, we pan away from her and reveal MIKEY videotaping HEATHER as she does her own WRAP-UP of their night, being the first in Gotham, to capture BATMAN on video...

P.O.V. OF HEATHER IN CAMERA EYEPiece

HEATHER

And so we can share, with incontrovertible evidence, that the cloaked vigilante known as the "Batman" is real. And while he may rely on the superstitions of the cowardly to maintain an edge, only a fool would believe that they could escape, let alone best a man dedicated to protecting the innocent and maintaining a sense of justice in the streets of Gotham.

(beat)

You got that?

BACK ON HEATHER AND MIKEY

MIKEY

It's a little melodramatic Heather, but if this doesn't get us an "A" I'm dropping out.

The CAMERA PANS UP from the two towards the rooftops.

7. EXT. GOTHAM CITY ROOFTOP – NIGHT

We SETTLE on what appears to be the silhouette of a stone gargoyle on the edge of a building ledge, that suddenly SPRINGS TO LIFE as the BATMAN leaps out into the night against the brightly lit skyline of Gotham.

HARD CUT TO BLACK