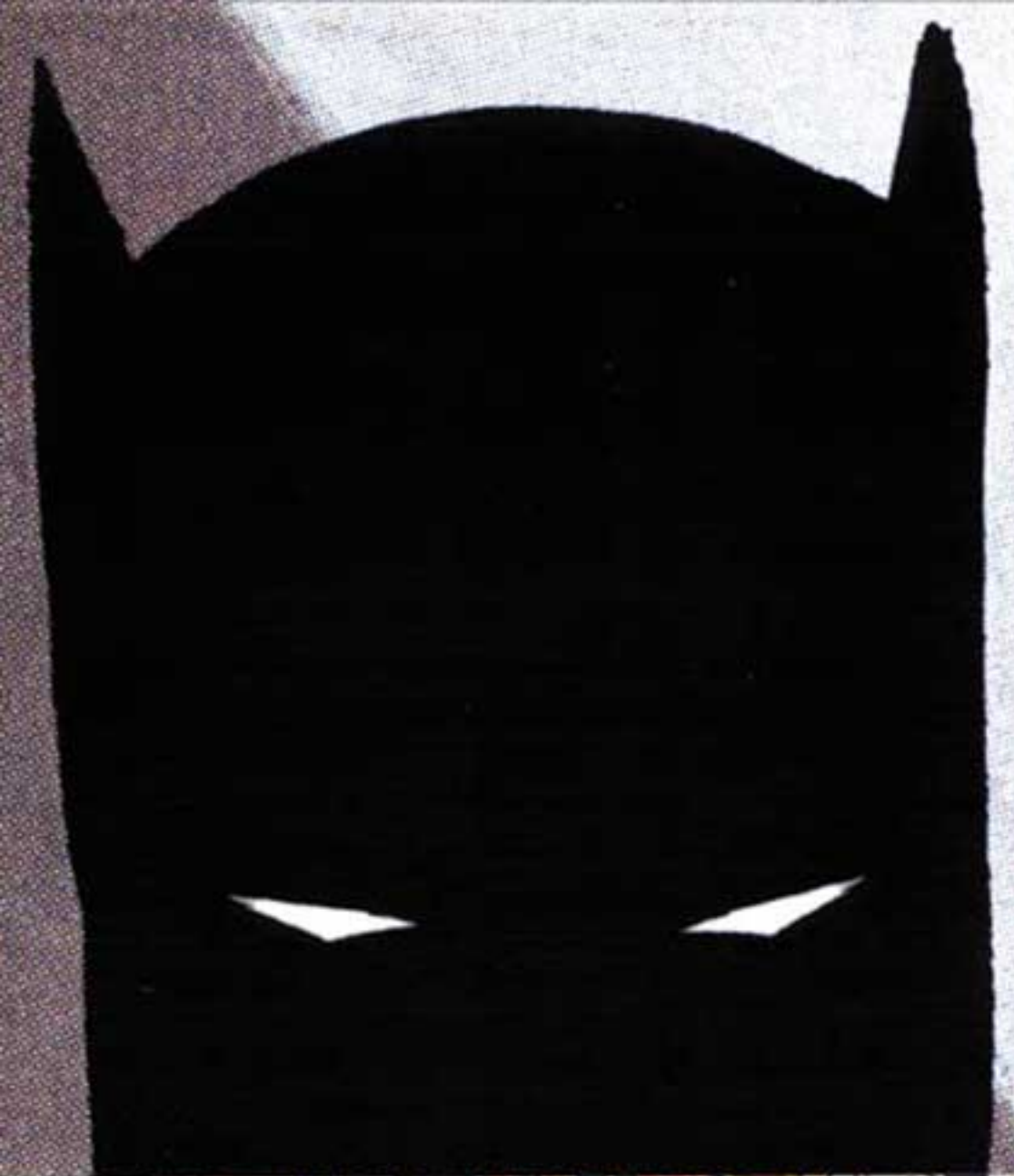




BATMAN: THE DARK KNIGHT RETURNS.



FRANK MILLER

with KLAUS JANSON and LYNN VARLEY

I'VE GOT THE HOME STRETCH
ALL TO MYSELF WHEN THE
ROADIES STOP MAKING SENSE.
I SWITCH TO MANUAL--



BRUCE, THIS IS CORKY.
YOU'RE GOING TOO
FAST!

--BUT THE COMPUTER
CROSSES ITS OWN CIRCUITS
AND REFUSES TO LET GO. I
CORK IT.



IT ISN'T PROGRAMMED
TO--
BRUCE!



BRUCE, YOU
SON OF A--

IT SHOWS HOT NEEDLES IN MY
FACE AND TRIES TO MAKE ME
BLIND. I'M IN CHARGE NOW
AND I LIKE IT.



THEN THE FRONT END LURCHES,
ALL WRONGS. I KNOW WHAT'S
COMING.



I'VE GOT JUST UNDER TWO
SECONDS TO SHUT THIS MESS
DOWN AND FORGET THE
RACE.



THE ENGINE, ANDRY, ABOLISHES
THE POINT WITH ME. THE
FINISH LINE IS CLOSE, IT
ROADS, 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 DROPS UP A CHAIN
OF INACADAM. I LOOK AT IT--



--THEN STRAIGHT INTO THE
EYE OF THE SUN.



THIS WOULD BE A GOOD
FEATH--



... BUT NOT GOOD ENOUGH.



...SPECTACULAR FINISH TO
THE NEUMAN ELIMINATION,
AS THE FERRIS GOOD
PINWHEELED ACROSS THE
FINISH LINE, A FLAMING
COFFIN FOR BRUCE WAYNE...

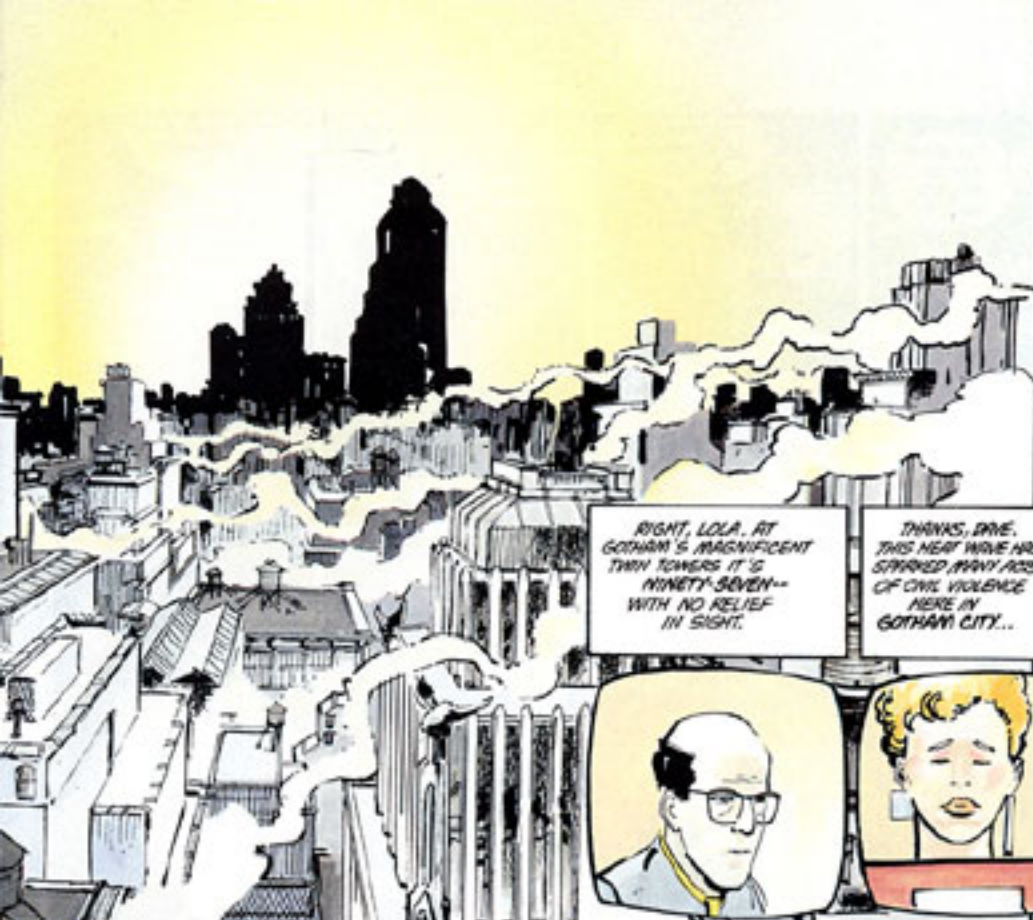


...OR SO EVERYONE
THINKS. TURNING OUT THE
MILLIONAIRE BAILED OUT
AT THE LAST SECOND.
SUFFERED ONLY SUPERFICIAL
BURNS. LOLA?



THANKS, BILL.
I'M SURPRISED ANYONE
CAN EVEN THINK OF
SPORTS IN THIS
WEATHER. RIGHT,
DAVE?





RIGHT, LOLA. AT GOTHAM'S MAGNIFICENT TWIN TOWERS IT'S NINETY-SEVEN-- WITH NO RELIEF IN SIGHT.

THANKS, DAVE. THIS HEAT WAVE HAS SPURRED MANY ACTS OF CIVIL VIOLENCE HERE IN GOTHAM CITY...

...THE MOST HIDEOUS OF WHICH HAS TO BE THE BRUTAL SLAYING OF THREE NUNS LAST WEEK BY THE GANG KNOWN AS THE MUTANTS.

AND EVERY 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 TWO 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 SLAYING 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...





TO BARRYMAN.

IT'S GOOD
THAT HE
RETIRED--
ISN'T IT?

TINK



I'M GRATEFUL
HE SURVIVED
RETIRES.



HE DIDN'T, BUT
BRUCE WAYNE
IS... ALIVE
AND WELL.



GLAD TO HEAR THAT.
YOU'VE CERTAINLY
LEARNED TO
DRINK.

REMEMBER THE
OLD DAYS, BRUCE?
THAT PLAYBOY
ROUTINE...



YOU WITH YOUR
GRIMSY ALE,
PRETENDING IT
WAS CHAMPAGNE,
FOOLING
EVERYBODY--

--ALMOST.



NOW-- WELL,
I'D ALMOST
FORGOTTEN.

SPOKEN
TO JACK
LATELY?



NOT FOR SEVEN
YEARS, JIM.
YOU KNOW
THAT.

STILL, HUH?
I'M DAMN
SORRY
ABOUT
THAT.

ESPECIALLY
WITH WHAT
HAPPENED
TO JARVIS...



LET'S
CALL IT
A NIGHT,
JIM.



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

...WHILE IN MY GLIT
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
ANYMORE. 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..