

BECOMING THE NIGHT

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BLACK SCREEN. We hear gradually growing unnerving circus music in the far background, getting louder and LOUDER.

CUTTING TO...

EXT. HALY'S CIRCUS, GOTHAM CITY - NIGHT

An ENORMOUS circus tent with the words: *C.C. Haly and Norton Bros. Circus*, sits in the center of GOTHAM CITY on a FRIGID night.

INT. HALY'S CIRCUS, GOTHAM CITY - CONTINUOUS

A large, BEARDED ANNOUNCER is at CENTER stage...

ANNOUNCER

And now, lady's and gentleman. I give you the act you've all been waiting for-

A DRUM-ROLL...

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)

- they are the flying trio- thee most talented, entertaining family in the world... The Flying Graysons!

On the high tower, MARY GRAYSON, a mid-thirties, beautiful, thin, red head, SWINGS out on to the TRAPEZE... SWINGING tower to tower... She grabs her tall, muscular husband, JONATHAN GRAYSON, also in his mid-thirties. A dashing star couple.

The two SWING back and forth. The BOLTS holding the trapeze swing in place are getting LOOSER and LOOSER as they continue to swing.

On one of the towers waiting for his entrance, their son, DICK GRAYSON, a pre-teen, MASKED acrobat.

His mother SWINGS towards him almost GRASPING her son- the swing SNAPS... Dick watches his mother FALLING... CRACK! The second trapeze swing SNAPS as his FATHER falls behind her... Both falling tragically to their death.

Dick TAKES off his MASK and watches in horror, hanging off the tower of the trapeze. He DROPS his MASK, the MASK sails through the wind, LANDING where his parents lay lifeless. BLOOD surrounds their body along with Dick's MASK.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MATCH CUT TO...

INT. CANADA, S.T.A.R. LABS - DAY

A BLOODY, RIPPED MASK lays on the metal-grated floor of the BRIGHTLY lit room. PANNING UP SLOWLY from the MASK-- FEET are bound and enclosed in metal brackets.

As we slowly move up the bloodied, RESTRAINED legs, we see the LEGS and CAPES of other unknown bodies, moving FAST, BATTLING in front of the captive body.

An unconscious, BLOODIED, and bruised NIGHTWING, also known as DICK GRAYSON, awakes abruptly... WHEEZING for a breath... He is the battered prisoner restrained in this grueling machine --THE MACHINE OF DEATH--

THE MURDER MACHINE sits vast, resembling a bright metallic UFO with octopus tentacles- 8 metal arms into a metal backpack, BRACKETED into a STEEL-PODIUM. In this bright white, industrial style laboratory, we see the fast fists of DARK, MASKED, CRUSADERS... PUNCHING...

POW! CRACK! WHOMP!

The mysterious, cloaked crusaders are BATMAN and CATWOMAN they're fighting a group of 8 MAD SCIENTISTS, ARMED with AK-47'S while--

INT. CANADA, S.T.A.R. LABS - CONTINUOUS

--a bald, muscular, LEX LUTHOR and his Frankenstein-looking, steroidal-monster, BIZARRO, are on the lab's master computer. Lex Luthor types vigorously as he attempts to disarm the machine holding Nightwing prisoner.

INT. CANADA, S.T.A.R. LABS - CONTINUOUS

Batman FIRES his retractable GRAPPLING GUN, DISARMING one of the scientists... He SPRINTS over and ELBOWS him to the CROWN of his skull.

The scientist DROPS to the floor... THUMP...

Catwoman JUMPS- WRAPPING her legs around the SECOND MAD SCIENTIST'S neck, using her leverage, THROWING him into TWO other SCIENTISTS- KNOCKING them out as their GUN'S fire off aimlessly, shooting a loose bullet towards Lex and Bizarro--

INT. CANADA, S.T.A.R. LABS - CONTINUOUS

-- like smacking an annoying fly, Bizarro CATCHES the BULLET right before it almost hit Lex Luthor's face...

LEX LUTHOR
That was close.

Bizarro puts it in his mouth... INHALES a DEEP BREATH... SPITTING the BULLET toward the REMAINING SCIENTISTS as BATMAN and CATWOMAN fight together--

Just MISSING the Bat and the Cat... the BULLET goes through the rest of the Scientists, killing them in sync.

Bizarro's eyes light up BLUE... ICE BEAMS shoot out FREEZING the FINAL TWO SCIENTISTS in their tracks--

INT. CANADA, S.T.A.R. LABS - CONTINUOUS

--Batman and Catwoman stare at the frozen bodies while catching their breath...

The two approach Nightwing... they see a TIMER with WIRES making their way to Nightwing's Heart...

CATWOMAN
(to Batman)
It's attached to his heart. Every time it beats the timer counts down.

NIGHTWING
(agony)
Bruce. Just leave me.

BATMAN
No.

Lex Luthor and Bizarro approach them.

BATMAN (CONT'D)
Did you hack the main grid.

LEX LUTHOR
It's not possible. Nothing can be done.

There's BANGING at the large metal doors of the facility...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

NIGHTWING
(yelling, begging)
Leave! All of you! Just go.

Batman takes out a SAW from his utility belt and begins SPLICING the wires- trying to disarm the bomb... his saw BREAKS on the hard anodized metal--

NIGHTWING (CONT'D)
Bruce. The only way to stop this is
if my heart stops beating.

Batman looks at Nightwing with torment in his eyes... he continues trying to break the device--

Lex and Bizarro look at each other with covert eyes...

Lex Luthor picks up a BROKEN METAL POLE from the wreckage and WHACKS Batman as he's trying to free Nightwing--

Bizarro restrains Catwoman- THROWING her away from the action and then GRABS the injured Batman TOSSING him, LANDING on Catwoman... THUMP!

Lex Luthor STEPS onto the Machine where Nightwing is held. He looks in his eyes. Luthor places his HAND over Nightwing's mouth and PINCHES his nose--

LEX LUTHOR
(sincere)
I'm sorry.

Batman and Catwoman see this in their groggy state- trying to make their way towards them... Bizarro's eyes SHOOT frozen ice beams--

Batman OPENS his CAPE guarding himself and Catwoman... Batman PRESSES a button on his wrist IGNITING his cape on FIRE, MELTING the ice... Revealing Nightwing, lifeless...

Batman's eyes go frantic as he looks for Lex and Bizarro...

The laboratory door EXPLODES open... entering in the SMOKE, a stealth, military soldier named JOHNNY QUICK, and a beautiful, dead-eyed, tall, woman with a name to match her looks, ATOMICA. She enters the room along with their BLACK CAMOUFLAGED SOLDIERS.

CATWOMAN
We have to go.

A beat.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BATMAN
(grabbing from his utility
belt)
Follow me.

He PULLS out a CUBE, PRESSING a button and THROWING it towards the enemy--

EXPLODING with RED GAS and ELECTRIC NEEDLES, stunning their OPPONENTS... They PUNCH and KICK their way out the door--

EXT. CANADA, S.T.A.R. LABS - SUNSET

The Science and Technology Advance research center sits in a DENSELY wooded area of the deep Canadian forests. All is quiet until from the front of the building --EXPLODES--

Batman and Catwoman storm out- BUSTING through the building on a BLACK MILITARY STEALTH JEEP with a .30 CALIBER MACHINE GUN... Catwoman mans the GUN as BATMAN drives--

BACK TO...

INT. CANADA, S.T.A.R. LABS - CONTINUOUS

As the remaining BLACK SOLDIERS leave the room, Bizarro and Lex re-appear after being under Bizarro's INVISIBLE CAPE.

Nightwing is lifeless, prisoner to the machine.

LEX LUTHOR
(to Bizarro)
Get him down from there. We don't
have much time.

CUT TO...

EXT. WOODED AREA, S.T.A.R. LABS - CONTINUOUS

DASHING through the dense woods, SHOOTING down TREES that obstruct their way...

BLACK SOLDIERS on MOTORCYCLES and QUADS are approaching FAST...

Catwoman TURNS the machine mounted gun and begins firing at them. A BLACK SOLDIER JUMPS from a MOTORCYCLE landing on the JEEP...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Catwoman and the Soldier PUNCH throwing VIOLENT swings at one and other- Catwoman KICKS, getting her leg caught by the man--

THROWING her down on the REAR of the JEEP, climbing on top of her, PINNING her BACK down tightly, Catwoman GASPS for air as she's CHOKED--

Re-situating herself, she gets her LEGS under the SOLDIER'S torso- PRESSING him towards the sky, HITTING a large TREE BRANCH, LAUNCHING him into the other GOONS on their MOTOR VEHICLES causing them to CRASH into a FIERY FLAME--

They're approaching a CLIFF... Batman PRESSES several BUTTONS on the dashboard causing a BLINKING Beacon to go off.

A QUAD with Two Men FIRING at them pull up beside them, BATMAN presses AUTO-PILOT, lifting out of his seat, POUNCING onto the TWO MEN--

PUNCHING... HEAD BUTTING... CRACKING... THROWING them off their FAST moving VEHICLES...

CATWOMAN sees the quick approaching cliff!

CATWOMAN
(worried)
Bruce.

Batman looks UP to the SKY, seeing a BLACK BLIMP... he JUMPS back onto the JEEP... GRABBING Catwoman... SHOOTING his GRAPPLING HOOK into the sky... just at the very edge of the cliff, they lock eyes and get yanked into the sky, the hook CATCHING the BLIMP lifting them off as the...

JEEP launches off the CLIFF- hitting the bottom with an EXPLOSION... Batman and Catwoman glide into the SETTING SUN, disappearing like smog from a jet.

AS WE DISSOLVE TO BLACK...

We hear the sounds of THUNDER. It begins to get louder and LOUDER...

Distressed, jagged letters of the alphabet begin appearing like a messy game of scrabble... Re-arranging themselves into-

TITLE UP: BECOMING THE NIGHT

Amongst the THUNDER... We hear BATS using their echolocation... Leaves BLOWING in the GUSTS of the storm.

EXT. WAYNE MANNOR, GOTHAM - NIGHT

LIGHTING and THUNDER crack down upon the grounds of Wayne Manor. The colossal Victorian castle sits in the stormy night sky, storm clouds cover part of a glowing FULL MOON.

INT. WAYNE MANNOR, GOTHAM - BATCAVE

A NEWSPAPER sits upon a burnt, wooden desk... It reads the HEADLINE: *Nightwing unmasked, Dick Grayson, the famous acrobat, beaten and exposed.*

ALFRED, a middle-aged, dark haired, sly man enters with tea on a sterling silver tray.

ALFRED
2 Months and the head lines don't
change.

BRUCE WAYNE (The Batman) is SHIRTLESS, revealing SCARS and battle wounds as he fiddles with his new mask.

BRUCE
There's other things in the world.
In this city to write about.
(as he's suturing wires in
his mask)
They just don't want to let
Nightwing die.

ALFRED
(consoling)
And neither do you.

Bruce looks up at Alfred with unsure eyes.

ALFRED (CONT'D)
There's many evils in this world.
And there's only the few who
protect us.

BRUCE
We're out numbered.

ALFRED
(laughing)
Yes we are. Yes we are Bruce. But
soon the numbers will be changed,
evil will be out numbered. You have
the power to do that. Remember
that. It's up to you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BRUCE

I can't be everywhere Alfred.

ALFRED

You can. You'll figure it out. My father didn't send me here for no reason. I believe in you. Richard believed in you.

Alfred exits, getting into a metal, freight-elevator. The elevator doors shut- leaving Bruce alone.

Bruce puts on the matte-black unsullied mask. The lights begin FLICKERING.

In the SHADOWS a figure appears. Bruce Wayne is SHIRTLESS wearing ONLY the BAT-MASK and his BLACK COMBAT PANTS.

The figure exits the shadows --REVEALING-- Nightwing.

Batman (Bruce)gets up and walks toward Nightwing.

BATMAN

Could've rang the bell. Or knocked.

NIGHTWING

It's not that type of night.

Nightwing slowly walks toward Batman.

Batman SPRINTS at Nightwing- THROWING a quick right-hand... Nightwing DODGES, slipping the PUNCH- COUNTERING with an UPPERCUT... KNOCKING Batman back... Batman SPITS out a tooth.

BATMAN

How many times do you want to do this?

NIGHTWING

As many as it takes.

Nightwing KICKS Batman in the CHEST sending him to the FLOOR.

Batman RUNS at Nightwing- he BLOCKS a PUNCH and throws COMBINATIONS, LEFT... RIGHT... UP... DOWN... PUNCHING in EVERY direction- KNOCKING Nightwing down.

BATMAN

You let them capture you!
(kicking Nightwing)
You didn't listen to me.

Nightwing takes Batman's leg, FLIPPING him back.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

NIGHTWING

I did what I had to do. You choose
not to be there.

Batman gets up and sternly approaches Nightwing.

They throw PUNCHES, TOSSING each other all over the BATCAVE.

BATMAN

I need you to stay dead. You can't
wear your mask anymore.

NIGHTWING

Never.

Nightwing ELBOWS Batman... KNEEING him... TOSSING him onto
the Bat Cave's COMPUTERS-

Batman RISES. Both the men attempt to catch their breath. The
continuous FLICKERING LIGHTS reveal them both covered in
BLOOD and SHARDS of GLASS...

Batman REMOVES his MASK.

BATMAN

Dick. I need you to go away for a
while.

NIGHTWING

Why?

BATMAN

SPYRAL. I need an inside man.

NIGHTWING

I'm not taking off my mask. I'm not
living in the shadow of you,
fighting by your rules. You know
that.

BATMAN

They're extracting information.
Every hero, every masked vigilante.
They're trying to control us. Use
our identities as leverage.

(walking closer to
Nightwing)

I need you inside. Just for now.
They can destroy everyone of us.

A beat.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

The lights continue flickering as the two stare at each other. The Bat Cave is a complete mess.

NIGHTWING

I win.

Nightwing walks away, disappearing into the shadows.

Batman walks over to his desk PLACING his BLOODY mask down. Alfred's voice chimes in from the computer.

ALFRED (V.O.)

That was some visit.

BRUCE

I'm gonna need a lot of coffee
Alfred.

ALFRED (V.O.)

Of course Master Bruce. Better
beaten than dead.

Bruce nods his head.

EXT. GOTHAM CITY, MCU - NIGHT

In the center of Gotham, Gotham City's Major Crime Unit sits in the vibrant city. POLICE CARS zip by with their LIGHTS and SIRENS.

INT. GOTHAM CITY, MCU - NIGHT

The busy police office is filled with COPS and PERPETRATORS... An OFFICE WORKER walks by with papers in hands... A FELON sticks his leg out TRIPPING the worker... An OFFICER sees, YELLING ensues...

INT. GOTHAM CITY, MCU - CONTINUOUS

BARBRA GORDON, a blonde, gorgeous, toilsome looking woman, walks past LT. BULLOCK'S office... He calls out to her;

LT. BULLOCK

Detective Gordon.

Barbara walks into--

I/E. BULLOCKS OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

-- the lieutenant's office.

BARBARA
(leaning on the door way)
Yes.

LT. Bullock sits at his desk with a CIGAR hanging out of his mouth. He dons a silly topee, SMOKE fills the office...

LT. BULLOCK
I need you to go to Arkham and question some people, in regards to the fucked up freak week we've been having... As usual.

BARBARA
I was on my way out.

LT. BULLOCK
It doesn't have to be tonight. Tomorrow is just fine.

BARBARA
(taking out a pad)
All right. Who am I questioning?

LT. BULLOCK
Catherine.

BARBARA
A last name?

LT. BULLOCK
No last name. She goes by Cat. You can't miss her. She's covered in tattoos.

Barbra nods. She turns around.

LT. BULLOCK (CONT'D)
And Barb?

Barbara turns back around, already irked by what will come out of his mouth.

LT. BULLOCK (CONT'D)
How about dinner tomorrow night?

Barbara gives him the MIDDLE finger and walks away. Bullock smiles.

EXT. BLUDHAVEN, TRIUMPH TOWERS - NIGHT

We're up high in the night sky amongst one of the valiant Triumph Towers. We see Nightwing CROUCHING on the ledge of the high-rise... He REMOVES his mask...

EXT. BLUDHAVEN, GROVE APARTMENT BUILDINGS - NIGHT

Barbara exits her car. She walks up the steps to her apartment entering--

INT. BARBARA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

-- she turns her lights on --REVEALING-- an OPEN window. She looks around hesitantly as she reaches into her purse. She removes a GUN.

An arm GRABS her GUN, disarming her. She THROWS the intruders body against the wall- PULLING a KNIFE from her CLEAVAGE... THUMP! She quickly realizes it's an unmasked DICK GRAYSON (Nightwing).

DICK

(playful)

I knew you didn't want to marry me
but Jeez-

BARBARA

(sternly)

What are you doing here?

DICK

(nodding his head towards
the bedroom)

I need a favor.

BARBARA

(still with the knife to
his throat)

What else is new?

Barbara releases the KNIFE. They walk to her--

INT. BARBARA'S APARTMENT, BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

-- bedroom, only to see a BABY on her bed.

Dick comes up behind her.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DICK
Keep him here. Watch him for me,
please?

BARBARA
(concerned)
What are you up to?

DICK
I need him out of Gotham. I can't
raise another kid under the harsh
rule of that city.

BARBARA
Dick-

DICK
Please. What I'm doing is
important. I don't know if I'll be
back.

A beat.

BARBARA
Okay.

Dick walks over to his baby boy. He takes his mask out from
his pocket. He places the mask next this little bundle of
life- KISSING his son's forehead.

NIGHTWING
(to his son)
I love you.

Nightwing turns around, walking past Barbara, towards the
window--

INT. BARBARA'S APARTMENT, WINDOW - CONTINUOUS

-- he lunges onto the edge of the window sill, about to
jump...

BARBARA
(bothered)
I say okay to watch the child that
you had with your model
girlfriend... If you can even call
her that.

Dick turns around and walks toward Barbara--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BARBARA (CONT'D)

You just leave me, nothing but a-

Dick pulls Barbara towards him. KISSING her passionately.

NIGHTWING

(pulling away,
sarcastically)

You didn't want to marry me,
remember.

Dick turns around, RUNNING and JUMPING out the window,
vanishing.

Barbara watches out the window. Apprehensiveness fills her
face.

FADE TO BLACK...

ON SCREEN: GOTHAM CITY 2034

27 YEARS LATER

DISSOLVING TO...

EXT. GOTHAM, WAYNE MANOR - DAY

The once flourishing land of Wayne Manor ceases to exist. The mansion has been neglected. Grass grows ramped and weeds run wild on the still beautiful, but unkept Victorian castle. Not one light is lit in the empty, dreary estate.

INT. GOTHAM, WAYNE MANOR - DAY

The unkept, cob-webbed, dusty mansion looks as if it's been vacant for years... It has been. 12 years. The corridors of the home are vast. A large chandelier. Picture's of the Wayne family. Through the halls. Walking. TWO UNIDENTIFIED PEOPLE, dressed in BLACK, they walk past our view.

INT. LIBRARY, WAYNE MANOR - CONTINUOUS

Following their feet. They approach a book shelf. Beneath an elaborate color scheme of tiles. The feet press 4 different tiles, lighting up and opening the book shelf. They enter--

INT. CORRIDOR, WAYNE MANOR - CONTINUOUS

-- into the corridor. We see them from behind as we PAN UP... They're masked. They wear BUG MASKS. A FLY and a BEE.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Their backs are facing us as they walk down a tight corridor to an awaiting elevator. They get in the--

INT. ELEVATOR, WAYNE MANOR - CONTINUOUS

-- chamber like elevator. We see GLOVED HANDS press the down button.

INT. BAT CAVE, WAYNE MANOR - CONTINUOUS

The elevator doors open. A prehistoric Bat-Cave sits tranquilly. Following one of the masked people, we walk through the cave. We see weapons and a gutted out Bat-Craft, only the frame of the vehicle sits intact.

INT. BAT CAVE, WAYNE MANOR - CONTINUOUS

The MASKED PERSON 1 approaches a large safe. Pressing the code. A BANG! Masked Person 1 looks behind to see MASK PERSON 2 had dropped something. In both their hands are WIRES and a DETONATOR. Masked Person 1, bothered, shakes their head. Pressing the set of buttons again, OPENING the safe.

Inside the safe: Jewels. Maps. Money. Passports. Credit Cards. Hard-drives. Masked Person 1 sees a BURLAP SACK. Grabbing it. SLAMMING the safe, turning around to Masked Person 2. They nod. Making their way to the elevator--

INT. ELEVATOR, WAYNE MANOR

The TWO BUG MASKED BANDITS face us as the elevator doors close...

INT. GOTHAM, WAYNE MANOR - CONTINUOUS

They walk the halls towards the front exit. Stopping at the Wayne family picture. Masked person 1 pauses. Lifting up their mask and SPITTING on the family picture. They continue to walk out. Exiting we see them walking off disappearing to the vast property of Wayne Manor.

INT. BAT CAVE, WAYNE MANOR - MOMENTS LATER

We see a DETONATOR attached to the wall of the Cave. BLINKING.

INT. GOTHAM, WAYNE MANNOR - CONTINUOUS

Through out the house is silence. We start to hear a BEEP. Getting louder and LOUDER. We're focused on the Wayne Family Portrait. BANG! The halls become engulfed in flames.

EXT. GOTHAM, WAYNE MANNOR - DAY

The large castle EXPLODES. Windows SHATTER. The soon to be rubble building begins waft SMOKE. The formally imposing building CRUMBLES...

CUT TO BLACK...

ON SCREEN:

Gotham City 2 Years Later

World War III has broken out, partially due to bad judgement of the American people electing a dictatorial President. With resentment and blame for the choice of the American public, Batman Incorporated gained most of the World's and Major Cities trust. Gotham City has deteriorated. Only a few major landmark buildings survive. Wayne Memorial Hospital was formally Wayne Manner. Batman Incorporated is one of the prominent standing buildings left to the once fine city. Gotham has become a lost cause. Unrecognizable. Bludhaven and the surrounding cities follow in the footsteps of the once Bat-patrolled city.

FADE TO...

EXT. GOTHAM CITY, HARBOR - DAY

We see a heavily polluted and destructed part of the world, along with an eerie view of the large body of water that sits between Gotham and Bludhaven. It's completely overcast, NO SUN, a heavily polluted mess. It looks as if "God" just took a dump on a once prominent city.

EXT. GOTHAM CITY VIEW - DAY

A T-SHAPED glass building sits in the SMOG covered sky. BROKEN and ABANDONED. Once known as THE TEEN TITANS CRIME UNIT.

EXT. BLUDHAVEN, FREEWAY - DUSK

We hear a ROARING engine... A MOTORCYCLE zips by. We see a sign that reads: *Welcome to Bludhaven*

EXT. BLUDHAVEN, DONUT SHOP - NIGHT

A BILLBOARD with a beautiful red-headed, green-eyed model (whom we will learn later) sits above the DONUT-HOLE. A BLACK ARMOR PRISON VAN (Property of Lockhaven Prison) sits in front of the DONUT-HOLE in a brightly lit lot, accompanied by a large DONUT MASCOT.

EXT. BLUDHAVEN, DONUT SHOP - NIGHT

An overly excited, OVERWEIGHT COP exits with a BAG of donuts in hand. He enters his VAN.

E/I. BLUDHAVEN, DONUT SHOP - CONTINUOUS

The Armed OVERWEIGHT COP sits in his van enjoying his donut... A THUMP on the roof startles him.

He exits the car, gun in hand--

EXT. BLUDHAVEN, DONUT SHOP - CONTINUOUS

-- with his HAND on his GUN, he checks around the VAN...

EXT. BLUDHAVEN, DONUT SHOP - CONTINUOUS

Entering back in his van, he sees a LETTER placed on his steering wheel. The WRITING on the letter is TINY--

DONUT COP
(confused)
What the hell?

-- he gets closer to the letter, seeing that it reads:
object's in mirror are closer than they appear

The COP looks quickly to the SIDE-VIEW MIRROR.

In his REAR-VIEW MIRROR we see a SHADOWY FIGURE appearing from the backseat... A grizzled voice speaks;

SHADOWY FIGURE
Wrong mirror.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The COP quickly looks into the REAR-VIEW MIRROR to see just EYES of the shadowy figure... The shadowy figure JOLTS forward--

CUT TO...

EXT. BLUDHAVEN, DONUT SHOP - CONTINUOUS

The BLACK PRISON VAN drives away --REVEALING-- the OVERWEIGHT COP. He has a T SPRAY-PAINTED in PURPLE on his UNIFORM, he leans unconscious against the DONUT MASCOT.

EXT. GOTHAM CITY, NEWS BUILDING - EVENING

Lines of people cover the dirty streets as they wait to enter the busy pharmacy located below the large news building. Signs posted everywhere: *Mandatory vaccines free, Meta-Humans Welcomed*, along with Batman Incorporated insignias.

INT. GOTHAM CITY, NEWS ROOM - EVENING

We come into a bustling newsroom, workers TYPING away at their computers. PETER, a lean, dark-haired man, early-thirties, leans over his co-worker TORY'S chair, observing her work on the computer. Tory, in her early-thirties as well, is a reserved, pretty but never done up type of gal.

PETER

We need more on the Rebels. That's been selling the most papers. People like this uprising.

TORY

Yes sir. Do you?

PETER

Do I what?

TORY

Like the uprising?

PETER

(thinking for a moment)
I definitely think something needs to be done.

TORY

Me too.

Peter nods, about to turn and walk away.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PETER

Oh, and let's have some before and after photos to show the comparison of the pollution... the effect on bees and why scientists feel there is something that still can be done about saving what's left of Genuine Crops...

TORY

I also found some good crop spraying photos.

On Tory's COMPUTER SCREEN: Men in HAZMAT SUITS (hazardous material attire) spraying crops.

TORY (CONT'D)

I thought maybe we should headline it, 'what are they tainting our food with?' ...And also I found a large sum of money on public tax records of a write-off to Bludhaven Laboratories.

PETER

Who from?

TORY

Batman Incorporated.

Peter pauses a moment with a look of curiosity.

PETER

You don't say?

The phones RINGS--

INT. GOTHAM CITY, NEW ROOM - CONTINUOUS

-- a FEMALE JOURNALIST answers, she gets up and walks fast over to Peter--

INT. GOTHAM CITY, NEWS ROOM - CONTINUOUS

PETER

You know, this world has gone to shit. No one ever thought it would. But it did.

The female journalist pardons herself in a frenzy;

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOURNALIST

Sir, we have another anonymous tip about the Ladybug, she's destroying another orphanage.

PETER

All right, ill go.
(putting his jacket on)
Tory, you coming?

Tory excitedly puzzled, grabs her jacket.

TORY

Yeah. Of course.

INT. GOTHAM CITY, NEWS ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Peter and Tory walk through the busy newsroom.

PETER

So much for Ladybugs being good luck.

The two exit.

INT. BLUDHAVEN ORPHANAGE - NIGHT

We see a RECEPTIONIST doing paperwork at her desk... Large wooden doors to the orphanage sit quietly... An EXPLOSION of GUNFIRE begins to open them, creating DEEP BULLET-HOLES as wood splinters from the old doors--

INT. BLUDHAVEN ORPHANAGE - CONTINUOUS

-- the RECEPTIONIST nearby runs for her life...

INT. BLUDHAVEN ORPHANAGE - CONTINUOUS

-- a mysterious SHADOW walks through the SMOKE past OUR VIEW and OFF SCREEN as MASKED MEN enter behind her. The men are wearing BUG masks: a FLY, CRICKET, ROACH and SPIDER.

THE FLY grabs the heavy metal CHAIN from around his shoulders, he hands it to the SPIDER. They CHAIN the DOOR shut--

INT. BLUDHAVEN ORPHANAGE - HALLWAY

--in the halls of the orphanage, lights are FLICKERING... CLICK-CLACK... We hear the FOOTSTEPS of a woman's POINTY HEELED SHOES... We SLOWLY MOVE UP to her spotted, deep red-cape with her burgundy-red leather spandex as she walks with her back turned away from us. She stops by a door. The room is LIT by the FLICKERING light of a TV.

She walks in, her back still facing us...

I/E. ORPHANAGE, HALLWAY/TV ROOM - CONTINUOUS

There are EMPTY COTS along with a large GROUP OF CHILDREN surrounding the TV. They turn to look at her, except for one child sitting cross-legged in his cot--

INT. ORPHANAGE, TV ROOM - CONTINUOUS

-- she approaches him, stopping in front of him as he continues to read.

The woman squats to his level and moves the book from the child's hands with her sharp-red fingernails --REVEALING-- her face, a heavily SCARRED face, marking a once gorgeous woman. She wears a sadistic smile, her eyes are large and black, filled with anguish and rage. She is the LADYBUG.

LADYBUG

You don't fear me?

BOY

What's to fear? Aren't ladybugs good luck?

The BOY continues reading the book. Ladybug looks at him, an excessive smile fills her face;

LADYBUG

You know... I was once in a place like this... No wanted me... But I made a decision to help the world and myself, and help myself and the world I did. Do you know how I helped the world? I got rid of everyone that is weak, because weakness is debility, and in order to evolve as a society, there can be no weakness. Now I'm always wanted... now I am fulfilled. Do you want to be wanted?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The Boy inexpressively looks at her.

EXT. BLUDHAVEN ORPHANAGE, POLICE SCENE - NIGHT

The old Puritanical Castle-like building sits with NEWS CREW and BLUDHAVEN POLICE surrounding the premises.

Peter and Tory stand around the CAUTION marked police tape surrounding the scene. Peter goes under, Tory watches with angst--

EXT. BLUDHAVEN ORPHANAGE, POLICE SCENE - CONTINUOUS

-- he approaches a tall, middle-aged, mustached man with blonde hair, DETECTIVE DRAKE.

DETECTIVE DRAKE
You can't be in here FETTER.

PETER
Is anyone going in?

DETECTIVE DRAKE
The doors are bolted shut from the inside. No ones getting in there.

All is quiet until... BANG... BANG... BANG... GUN SHOTS are fired...

Detective Drake and Peter duck for cover along the side of the police cars--

EXT. BLUDHAVEN ORPHANAGE, ROOFTOP - NIGHT

CRICKET loads his SNIPER RIFLE... COCKING to fire another round--

EXT. BLUDHAVEN ORPHANAGE, POLICE SCENE - CONTINUOUS

-- Detective Drake spots the shooter on the roof...

DETECTIVE DRAKE
He's on top.

BANG! Another shot is fired, IMPLODING the SIDE-VIEW MIRROR of the police car they use for shelter...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PETER
(concerned)
Shoot him!

DETECTIVE DRAKE
I can't make that shot.

PETER
What kind of cop are you?!

CUT TO...

I/E. BLUDHAVEN ORPHANAGE, HALLWAY/TV ROOM

Ladybug exits the TV room holding the child's hand. The remaining CHILDREN watch them walk towards the door. They stop at the opening of the door. She hands the child a GRENADE.

LADYBUG
(to the Boy)
Start the new day right.

The Boy PRESSES a button- THROWING it into the room filled with children. The two continue walking--

INT. BLUDHAVEN ORPHANAGE, HALLWAY/TV ROOM

-- the two walk the dreary rubble filled halls as an EXPLOSION fills the hallway behind them...

EXT. BLUDHAVEN ORPHANAGE, POLICE SCENE - CONTINUOUS

--GUNSHOTS hit the police vehicles...

EXT. BLUDHAVEN ORPHANAGE, ROOFTOP - CONTINUOUS

...Cricket LOADS his rifle... LOOKING through the SCOPE of his gun.

EXT. BLUDHAVEN ORPHANAGE, POLICE SCENE - CONTINUOUS

PETER
Give me your gun.

DETECTIVE DRAKE
No. Are you crazy?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PETER

Does anything really sane exist in
this city?

Detective Drake hands Peter the GUN.

Peter aims up towards the roof. He FIRES... BANG... BANG...
BANG... Unloading the clip--

EXT. BLUDHAVEN ORPHANAGE, ROOFTOP - CONTINUOUS

-- HITTING Cricket... The bug faced villain drops...

EXT. BLUDHAVEN ORPHANAGE, POLICE SCENE - CONTINUOUS

-- Detective Drake is in awe. Peter releases the clip,
handing it back to him...

DETECTIVE DRAKE

Where the hell did you learn that?

PETER

Practice.

INT. BLUDHAVEN ORPHANAGE, HALLWAY

Ladybug, the child and her goons open a vent, entering--

INT. BLUDHAVEN ORPHANAGE, UNDERGROUND TUNNELS

-- they climb down the ladder and continue walking toward the
light at the end of the tunnel...

EXT. BLUDHAVEN ORPHANAGE, POLICE SCENE - NIGHT

The POLICE OFFICERS are using a BATTERING RAM to open the
DOOR--

INT. BLUDHAVEN ORPHANAGE, UNDERGROUND TUNNELS - CONTINUOUS

-- at the end of the tunnel, a large pool of water sits...
The water becomes uneasy... --A YELLOW SUBMARINE-- RISES from
the depths of the murky water...

LADYBUG

(sadistically cheerful)

All aboard the yellow submarine.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Ladybug, the child and her goons all enter...

INT. BLUDHAVEN ORPHANAGE, POLICE SCENE - CONTINUOUS

-- breaking the door, the police enter the orphanage. They search the halls of the orphanage only to find chaos and mass destruction... a YOUNG GIRL holding a TEDDY BEAR emerges from one of the scorched rooms. Detective Drake runs to console her... He HUGS her tight.

INT. BLUDHAVEN ORPHANAGE, UNDERGROUND TUNNELS - CONTINUOUS

-- the grandiose YELLOW SUBMARINE submerges --DISAPPEARING-- Only bubbles from the submergence are to be seen...

FADING TO...

EXT. GOTHAM CITY, BATMAN INC - DAY

Batman Incorporated sits in the heart of Gotham. At the very top of the high-rise building the BATMAN SYMBOL. At the base of the building men in suits and ties enter. A large statue of Batman sits at the heart of the center piece for a gargantuan water fountain.

INT. GOTHAM CITY, BATMAN INC - DAY

On a cherry wood desk, the NEWSPAPER. The front page story reads: *'The so-called Ladybug strikes again'*

The desk sits in a large oval office. A thin, muscular, well-dressed man wearing a pin-striped suit sits behind the desk as he SIPS his coffee... His name plate reads DAMIAN MORRISON.

He picks up the paper. A RECEPTIONIST enters in a panic;

RECEPTIONIST

Sir-

DAMIAN

Susie. Relax.

RECEPTIONIST

But sir-

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DAMIAN
(admiring the paper)
Isn't it amazing that after all
these years, this still exists.

The receptionist, SUSIE, nods her head in fear.

DAMIAN (CONT'D)
With all the technology we have,
paper still rules. I'll always
prefer getting my news from the
paper rather the computer. I'm old
school. Some things just never die.

A beat.

RECEPTIONIST
Our corporations in Dubai and
China, along with Russia, they were
all simultaneously attacked by the
New 13.

DAMIAN
(mocking)
They have a name now.

RECEPTIONIST
That's what they're calling
themselves.

DAMIAN
Did our team take care of it?

RECEPTIONIST
Yes.

Damian continues reading the paper.

DAMIAN
Okay... Well... Then there's no
problem.

RECEPTIONIST
This has been happening more than
frequently. Don't you fear-

Damian puts the paper down sternly.

DAMIAN
(interrupting)
I fear nothing.

A beat.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

RECEPTIONIST

I'm sorry.

Damian takes out a file.

DAMIAN

Richard... Dick... Gordon Jr...
He's only one of many to be
euthanized tonight at midnight.
But, he is surely the most
important. Make sure everyone is on
high alert.

Susie nods with fear.

RECEPTIONIST

What if he doesn't come sir?

DAMIAN

He will... He let him rot long
enough in his cell... If taking his
life is something I need to do, to
get him out from under his rock.
Then that's what I'll do.

The receptionist turns around.

DAMIAN (CONT'D)

Dim the lights on your way out. I'm
going to whine down.

She nods her head, dimming the lights.

RECEPTIONIST

(turning around)

Oh and sir the Secretary of Defense
would like to meet with you.

DAMIAN

Sure. Now go please...

She exits.

Damian PRESSES a button under his desk... From the WALL, a
BED OF NAILS lowers down slowly.

He unbuttons his shirt, REMOVING it, revealing a large raised
SCAR on his chest. He GRABS a heavy, metal plate in the
corner of his office.

He looks at a large picture of Bruce Wayne, mounted on the
wall above his fireplace. He begins to lay down on the nails,
showing no pain... BLOOD drips from his back.

EXT. BLUDHAVEN, LOCKHAVEN PRISON - NIGHT

A large, metal, barbwire fence guards the massive stone prison. We see guard towers and prison vehicles driving around the grounds.

INT. BLUDHAVEN, LOCKHAVEN PRISON - NIGHT

Confined to a shadowy corner in a tiny cell sits RICHARD GORDON JR... also known as DICK JR... Now twenty-seven years old, he's a dark haired, rough bearded man. He lays in his bed, he's dressed in all white with a small, SCRATCHED BAT-LOGO on his shirt pocket, as if he tried to deface it.

He's reading the Bludhaven newspaper... His cell is covered in books and newspapers... We begin to PAN from one paper to another, starting with what he's reading...

On the COVER:

'The so-called Ladybug Strikes again. More children missing from orphanages, mental institutions, what's next?'

PANNING to a table beside his cot... An issue of *The Daily Planet*...

On the COVER:

The date **July 2036** *'The Death of Legendary Louis Lane. A tribute to her life's work.'*

BENEATH IT: *'Superman gone, disappears after death of Louis Lane, will he return? Meta-human race now an endangered species.'*

A GUARD approaches his cell WHISTLING *'when the saint go marching in'*, while JINGLING his KEYS.

The guard takes out a piece of gum from his front pocket and begins to CHEW loudly.

CHOMP... CHOMP... CHOMP

GUARD

You ready for your last meal boy?

Dick continues to lay on his cot, ignoring the guard.

The guard continues to CHEW his gum, BLOWING bubbles in between his irksome CHOMPS, each bubble STICKING his TONGUE out, like an elementary school girl on the blacktop playing double dutch.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GUARD (CONT'D)
You deaf boy?

The guard UNLOCKS the cell. He SLIDES it OPEN and enters.

GUARD (CONT'D)
You know... For a son of a cop. You really are a Dick.

Dick sits up from his cot. A shadow COVERS his face.

GUARD (CONT'D)
They named you right. Dick Junior.

The guard gets closer to Dick.

GUARD (CONT'D)
Now, let me ask you again. Are you ready for your last meal?

Revealing his face from the shadows.

DICK JR.
Are you?

The guard CHUCKLES- BLOWING his FINAL bubble... Dick quickly GRABS his TONGUE and OPEN-FIST UPPER-CUTS his JAW... Hitting him, hard and fast, like a punch from Floyd Mayweather...

SEVERING his TONGUE... BLOOD splattering everywhere...

The Guard SCREAMS in pain, GARGLING on his own blood.

INT. LOCKHAVEN PRISON, CORRIDORS - NIGHT

Hearing the SCREAMS, other PRISON OFFICERS storm the halls toward the cell.

I/E. LOCKHAVEN PRISON, CELL - CONTINUOUS

Dick lays in his bed as if nothing is wrong, the guard is still SCREAMING, ROLLING on the floor in agony...

FIVE GUARDS approach his cell baring NIGHT-STICKS--

INT. LOCKHAVEN PRISON, CELL - CONTINUOUS

-- Dick RIPS his sheets off his bed... WRAPPING it around ONE of the guard's arm, PULLING him, TAKING the NIGHT-STICK...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WHACKING the other guards... another GUARD grabs him from behind- CHOKING him... Dick THROWS himself backwards into the wall... KNOCKING the guard out... He RUNS up the wall FLIP-KICKING and knocking TWO GUARDS down... One guard left...

A TASER-GUN is shot ELECTROCUTING Dick... He walks toward the guard ZAPPING him and GRABS him- ELECTROCUTING him with the electric-current of energy running through his body and SLAMS him into the wall... Dick is left standing PANTING heavily... He rips out the electric teeth from his skin, pulling it out of his chest, tossing the electric wires... He exits the cell into--

INT. LOCKHAVEN PRISON, CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

-- the halls... He stands covered in blood. More GUARDS armed with weapons approach him;

GUARD
(yelling)
We will shoot to kill.

DICK JR.
(uttering)
What do I have to live for?

Dick is about to CHARGE at them like a tortured bull... WHACK! Dick falls to the ground... Behind him stands a sexy, studious, woman in her late-thirties, wearing a metallic figure-flattering suit. This is YARITA. She wields the NIGHT-STICK that clunked Dick in the back of the head, KNOCKING him to the ground out-cold.

YARITA
I did what all of you armed men
couldn't do.

Yarita walks past the guards.

GUARD 1
They didn't want him dead.

The guards DRAG his body down the halls... A BLOOD TRAIL is left from Dick's body as he's dragged OUT OF FRAME...

BEGIN FLASHBACK:

INT. BLUDHAVEN CASINO AND HOTEL, BOXING MATCH (FLASHBACK)

In a crowded arena, Dick Grayson Jr is BOBBING and WEAVING around the ring, DODGING punches from the OPPONENT...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

... As he is SLIPPING and JABBING, he hears a NOISE from outside the ring. He gets CRACKED with a LOOPING right-hand...

Regaining his focus, he looks outside the ring into the AUDIENCE revealing--

INT. BLUDHAVEN CASINO AND HOTEL, AUDIENCE (FLASHBACK)

-- his loving family. His wife, CAMILLA, a beautiful dark-skinned woman in her late-twenties and his two daughters. OLIVIA, six-years old, and ANNA, eight-years old. They're all CHEERING in fright outside the ring--

INT. BOXING MATCH - CONTINUOUS (FLASHBACK)

-- Dick SNAPS back into the fight... The OPPONENT approaches him... Dick has a FLASH-VISION of his father's masked face (Richard Grayson- Nightwing) taking on the OPPONENT'S FACE... As if he's fighting his father...

DICK JR.
(screaming with ferocity)
Ahhhh--

He PUNCHES the opponent... Knocking him out... He drops like a dead tree, hitting the ring--

ENDING FLASHBACK.

INT. BLUDHAVEN, LOCKHAVEN PRISON, DEATH ROOM

-- Dick wakes up abruptly from his nightmare, we hear his wife and daughter's YELLING for him... He is SHACKLED to a metal table--

INT. LOCKHAVEN PRISON, DEATH ROOM OBSERVATORY

-- his wife Camilla restrains her young daughters as they're about to watch their father's death...

ANNA
He did nothing wrong!

INT. LOCKHAVEN PRISON, DEATH ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Dick tries to move his arms, SHAKING the shackles violently. The surrounding guards grin.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A man approaches... He looks like Death... An EXECUTIONER wearing a BLACK CLOAK has a SYRINGE... He takes a RUBBER-BAND tying it TIGHT around Dick's arm...

DICK JR.

(to daughter)

It's okay baby. It'll be fine.

(to guards)

I don't want them to see this! Why do they need to see this?!

(shaking vigorously)

What kind of barbaric ancient shit is this!?

Dick looks out to the crowd to see--

INT. LOCKHAVEN PRISON, DEATH ROOM OBSERVATORY

-- a ghostly figure of his mother, BARBARA GORDON, now in her early-sixties. She's holding her hand up, COUNTING DOWN on her fingers... 3... 2... 1--

INT. LOCKHAVEN PRISON, DEATH ROOM - CONTINUOUS

-- Dick's face goes white... The Executioner gets closer with the SYRINGE... PIERCING the skin and entering his PULSING VEINS... --DARKNESS ENSUES-- The lights go out... We hear a GASP followed by a--

CRACK... THUMP ... CRASH...