

The Conservative Batman versus the Joker

By John F. McGowan

Version: 1.0

Start Date: October 4, 2009

Last Updated: October 4, 2009

Home URL: <http://www.jmcgowan.com/batman.pdf>

The Conservative Batman saves Gotham City from his greatest enemy.

The scene opens with a panoramic shot of the Gotham Bank and Trust headquarters, a giant skyscraper in the financial district in Gotham City. The camera slowly zooms in on a bright flashy HDTV screen on the wall of the lobby of Gotham Bank and Trust, pausing for a moment at the Mainstream News newsstand in the lobby. The headlines for the liberal Gotham Times and the conservative Gotham Street Journal both scream: Recession Over. Happy Days are Here Again! The tabloid Gotham Post's headline reads Bruce Wayne Dates Angelina! Brad Jealous! The camera lingers for a moment over a rack of magazines with anorexic super-models in bikinis, lingerie, and fig leaves on the covers. The camera resumes zooming in on the HDTV screen on the wall. A twenty-four hour news show is playing on the screen. The logo reads GNN for Gotham News Network.

Voice Over (firm, confident): Gotham News Network. Fifteen minutes of news, four times each hour, twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. GNN 15/4 24/7!

The Announcer (bubbling over with happiness): Great news from the Gotham City Bureau of Labor Statistics! The municipal unemployment rate has risen a mere one percentage point, beating estimates from economists, yet another sign the recession is over! Bambi, tell our viewers what this means.

The HDTV cameras zooms in on a stunning blonde with a perpetual smile and perfect white teeth.

The Conservative Batman versus the Joker

Bambi: Well, Rex, statistics released today by the Gotham City Bureau of Labor Statistics show that only 50,000 Gothamites were thrown out of work last month, less than the 60-80,000 predicted by most economists. Most economists and financial experts agree that this latest employment report coupled with Gotham Bank and Trust's record quarterly earnings announcement yesterday show that Gotham City has turned the corner and is rapidly pulling out of the recession... SWUAWK...GTTGL.PZZZT

A burst of static fills the screen. Rex and Bambi are suddenly replaced by an aging white-haired hippie wearing a psychedelic Grateful Dead T-shirt and the infamous Catwoman in her skin tight black leather costume (complete with whip). The screen behind them shows Gotham City in flames, police and thugs dragging families from their homes, and long lines of the unemployed at the Gotham City Employment Advancement Office.

The Aging Hippie: Enough of that corporate propaganda! I am Bernie Weisberger, Super Hippie, and this is my co-host, Ms. Selina Kyle, better known as the Catwoman. And this is...the Dissident News Network. Our motto, the truth 24/7, whether you like it or not. **(dramatic pause)** Selina, tell our viewing audience what is really going on in Gotham City.

The camera pans to Selina, the Catwoman.

The Catwoman: Meowwr! Well, Bernie, a year ago Gotham City Bank and Trust nearly collapsed from reckless speculation in mortgage backed securities. However, Gotham Bank and Trust CEO Dillard Wentworth IV **(a picture of a slightly overweight preppie in a top hat and tuxedo with a blonde bimbo on each arm appears behind Bernie and the Catwoman)** convinced the Gotham City Council to borrow \$100 billion from the government of China to bailout Gotham Bank and Trust. Since then Gotham Bank and Trust has bought out or driven out of business every other bank in Gotham City, called in loans, hiked loan rates, and embarked on a program to raise capital (\$100 billion just wasn't enough to cover Wentworth's bets on mortgage backed securities) by foreclosing on over ten percent of Gotham City's population. Over 500,000 Gothamites have been evicted or face eviction. **(the camera shows police and thugs dragging protesting families from their homes).**

Bernie: Republican mayor Harlan Masterson **(a picture of a frowning man wearing a cowboy hat and dodging a hurled shoe**

The Conservative Batman versus the Joker

appears) was voted out of office along with the Republican majority on the City Council by the outraged public. The winner is Democratic reformer Mostafa Smith (**a picture of a spindly black man wearing a tweed jacket and wire frame glasses appears**) and his team of community activists including former Gotham Bank and Trust CFO Martin "Marty" Feinberg (**a picture of a pugnacious looking man wearing an extremely expensive suit appears**). After taking office Mostafa Smith and his team immediately borrowed an additional \$100 billion from China to "rescue" Gotham Bank and Trust.

The Catwoman: Many suspect that Gotham Bank and Trust has used its billions in bailout money to buy control of both the Gotham Republican and Democratic parties, ushering in an era of dictatorship and corruption not seen since the reign of Joe "Boss" Pendleton during the Great Depression.

Bernie: With democratic elections useless, reformed super-villain and community activist the Joker (**a poster of a crazed looking man wearing white paint over his entire face and strange red markings on either side of his mouth as if it had been cut open appears; SOCIALISM is printed on the bottom of the picture in giant red letters**) has come forward to lead a grass roots movement for the common man.

The Catwoman: The Joker is a homicidal psychopath.

Bernie (scowling petulantly): Well, at least he is doing something.

The Catwoman: As Gotham City slides into corruption and chaos, many pin their hopes on the city's masked hero, the Batman.

Bernie: You are still in love with that masked lackey of the Establishment!

The Catwoman: I am not. I tried to kill him last week.

Bernie (looking just a tad jealous): A lover's spat. (**glances down at a flashing red light**) Oops! Got to go! The FCC is homing in on our location. You can see more at our web site and blog. H-T-T-P colon slash slash double-u double-u double-u dissident news network (all one word) dot org PZZZT...BLEEP..GRRWALAK!!!!

There is a burst of static. Rex and Bambi appear again.

The Conservative Batman versus the Joker

Voice Over (firm, confident): Gotham News Network. Fifteen minutes of news, four times each hour, twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. GNN 15/4 24/7!

Rex (bubbling over with happiness): Great news from the Gotham City Bureau of Labor Statistics! The municipal unemployment rate has risen a mere one percentage point, beating estimates from economists, yet another sign the recession is over! Bambi, tell our viewers what this means.

The HDTV camera zooms in on a stunning blonde with a perpetual smile and perfect white teeth.

Bambi: Well, Rex, statistics released today by the Gotham City Bureau of Labor Statistics show that only 50,000 Gothamites were thrown out of work last month, less than the 60-80,000 predicted by most economists. Most economists and financial experts agree that this latest employment report coupled with Gotham Bank and Trust's record quarterly earnings announcement yesterday show that Gotham City has turned the corner and is rapidly pulling out of the recession...

Meanwhile a giant bat symbol appears projected on the clouds above Gotham City: the Bat Signal! A bat-winged black aircraft appears out of nowhere and flies toward the towering Gotham Police Headquarters building. It makes an astonishing vertical landing on the roof of the building. The Batman in his black cowl and cape emerges and is greeted by the ashen-faced Commissioner Gordon.

Commissioner Gordon: Batman, Thank God you are here! It is the Joker!!

The Batman: What is it this time? Is he holding a school bus full of children for ransom?

Commissioner Gordon: No! Worse!!

The Batman: He has planted another nerve gas bomb in the Gotham City Stadium, set to go off at half-time?

Commissioner Gordon: No! Worse!!

The Batman: Not another diabolical scheme to poison the Gotham City water supply? I told you people can just buy bottled water from the private sector. You don't need to call me.

The Conservative Batman versus the Joker

Commissioner Gordon: No! Worse!!

The Batman (shaking his head): Don't tell me it is another crack-brained plan to unleash anthrax on the city? I can't keep bailing Gotham City out like this! It is creating a dangerous moral hazard! If Gotham City keeps relying on me to bail you out, you will never learn to take responsibility and stand on your own two feet. Well, what is it this time?

Commissioner Gordon (turning even paler): The Joker is offering free health care to Gotham City's poor!

The Batman (looking slightly puzzled): I'm not sure I see the problem here.

Commissioner Gordon: The Joker has set up a free..free Gotham Community Hospital where anyone can get health care for *free!!!*

The Batman (looking slightly puzzled): Oookay! And for this I cut short my date with...(Batman clears his throat)...?

Commissioner Gordon: Don't you see? If it is free and anyone can get health care at Gotham Community Hospital, paying customers from Gotham General Hospital Inc. and Gotham Health Network Inc. will quit paying and take their diseases to the Joker's hospital!!

The Batman: Oh My God! My trust fund owns twenty-two percent of Gotham General Hospital Inc.!

Commissioner Gordon: Now you get it! Every investor from Dillard Wentworth IV on down is on my case to shut down the Joker's free hospital!!!

The Batman: I'll take care of this menace to civilization at once!

The Batman turns and runs back to his batwinged airplane which rises vertically upward into the air with a strange whirring sound and then shoots off toward the slums of Gotham City.

Commissioner Gordon (pulling out his cell phone and speaking into it): Yes, Mr. Wentworth, he is on the case!!

The Conservative Batman versus the Joker

Batman soars over the burning city. The slums are amongst the hardest hit, second only to the idyllic McMansion Valley in the suburbs where thousands of middle class office workers, managers, engineers, and others were talked into buying million dollars homes that are now being foreclosed by Gotham Bank and Trust.

There is a look of grim determination on Batman's face. The Joker is his most dangerous and diabolical enemy. But who would have imagined that even the Joker would stoop to offering free health care? An abandoned factory comes into view. A giant sign on the roof reads:

**GOTHAM COMMUNITY HOSPITAL
FREE FOR ALL.**

A giant banner with the picture of the Joker and SOCIALISM in scary red vaguely Russian letters at the bottom hangs on one wall of the former factory. Batman flies over the building

On the street below, millionaire radical film maker Michael Moore is interviewing the Joker for his next documentary: The Socialism Solution.

Michael Moore: Tell us about what you are doing here, Mr. Joker.

The Joker: Just Joker is fine, Mike. What we are doing here and this is a community grass roots effort. I am just one man among many. Here at Gotham Community Hospital we are throwing off the chains of the patriarchal hierarchical system of mainstream Western medicine in favor of an egalitarian non-judgmental gender neutral ... and did I mention 100%, yes 100% free medical system!

Michael Moore: Some, even some of my viewers, may have doubts about the sincerity of a man who tried to poison the entire city of Gotham. Can you explain your change of heart?

The Joker: Well, Mike, first of all, let me set the record straight. I did not try to poison Gotham City. I threatened to poison the water supply if I did not receive one billion dollars in small unmarked non-sequentially numbered bills. It was just a threat. There is a difference between threatening to poison five million people and actually poisoning five million people. **(Michael Moore nods sympathetically)** Now, I did try to wipe out the city with weaponized

The Conservative Batman versus the Joker

anthrax powder from Fort Dix, but that annoying Batman foiled my scheme.

Michael Moore: How much did you expect to make from slaughtering the city with anthrax?

The Joker (looking puzzled): Make? I don't get that.

Michael Moore: Well, you must have had some plan to profit from the deaths of over five million men, women and children?

The Joker (looking even more puzzled): Whatever for? Look, Mike, I am...was a super-villain. The real artists like myself don't do what we do for...money!

Michael Moore (looking just a tad alarmed): Well, what did you try to kill over five million people for then?

The Joker: I get a sick twisted thrill from hurting other people. **(explodes into peals of insane laughter)**

Michael Moore (looking just a tad more alarmed): So why are you providing free health care to the oppressed masses!

The Joker: Look, Mike. I was a very angry person. I might add that it took months of psychotherapy with Dr. Robert Eagleton at the Arkham Asylum to get to the point where I can admit that: I was a very angry person. It was a real breakthrough in my therapy. I realized I was angry with other people, especially my father, and even more with the system. A system that herds innocent people into these slums and denies health care to the needy! A system in which millionaires like you and me live in luxury while babies starve! What kind of a system is that?

Michael Moore (looking relieved): So you decided to channel your anger into ending that system and providing free health care?

The Joker (smiling insanely): Exactly!

Batman (using the loudspeaker in his Bat Plane hovering above): This is the Batman! Please evacuate the Gotham Community Hospital immediately! Please leave in an orderly fashion! Do not run! Walk calmly to the nearest available exit.

The Conservative Batman versus the Joker

Michael Moore (turning frantically to his camera man): Get this on film! It is the Batman, spoiled lackey of the Establishment!

The Joker (smiling insanely): Don't listen to him! He is going to destroy my beautiful free hospital! Don't leave!!

The patients begin to evacuate the building. "It's the Batman! Batman is our friend! Our hero!" Michael Moore films as the Joker runs around vainly trying to stop his patients from fleeing the converted factory.

Michael Moore (shaking his head): One thing is certain the Joker cannot convince people to ignore the Batman's directions! Who would you trust, a super-hero or a reformed super-villain?

Finally, the hospital is empty. Batman flies around the hospital in an arc and then shoots a guided missile into the base of the building. Astonishingly the entire building collapses at free fall speed into a neat pile of smoking rubble.

Batman (puzzled): Well, that was easy. I must have gotten lucky and hit a key structural member leading to a progressive pancake collapse of the building.

Michael Moore: Did we get that on film?

Michael Moore's Camera Man: YEAH BOSS!

Michael Moore: Batman destroys free hospital for the poor!!! I smell an Oscar! Let's get out of here before the corrupt Gotham City police show up and smash my camera.

The Joker is sitting despondently on the smoking rubble. He begins to sob.

The Joker: My beautiful free hospital! All the lives that could have been saved! Think of the babies that will die because they did not receive adequate health care! WAUGH! SOB! SNIFF!

The Batman: Poor people below. Please disperse! You have been deceived by the diabolical socialist Joker! I have done you a favor by eliminating the menace of free health care!

The Conservative Batman versus the Joker

The Batman flies off as the survivors begin to shout and throw rocks impotently into the air. A heavily armored SUV with blacked out windows drives up. The Joker gets up and staggers, still sobbing disconsolately, to the SUV. He slips inside as the people begin to riot. The SUV drives off.

Inside the SUV is Dillard Wentworth IV wearing his signature tuxedo and holding a cashier's check for \$10 million.

Dillard: Bravo! An excellent performance, Joker! This health care side show will keep the gullible masses, not to mention the Batman, distracted from my diabolical scheme to plunder the city!

Dillard hands the check to the Joker.

The Joker: Yes (**insane laughter**) this will discredit the Batman in the eyes of the poor and the Loony Left while at the same time fanning the flames of bloody class warfare! (**rubs his milk white hands together**) I see a blood stained Revolution in the future: guillotines, Robespierre, the Great Leap Forward!!!

Dillard: Hunh! What are you talking about...COUGH, SNEEZE, GURGLE...

The Joker (smiling insanely): You don't really think I helped you out for a mere ten million dollars? That is cyanide you are breathing by the way! And yes I am immune!

The SUV races through the slums of Gotham City as Batman flies triumphantly back across the burning city to stately Wayne Manor.

The Batman (on the radio to Commissioner Gordon): Mission accomplished!

© 2009 John F. McGowan