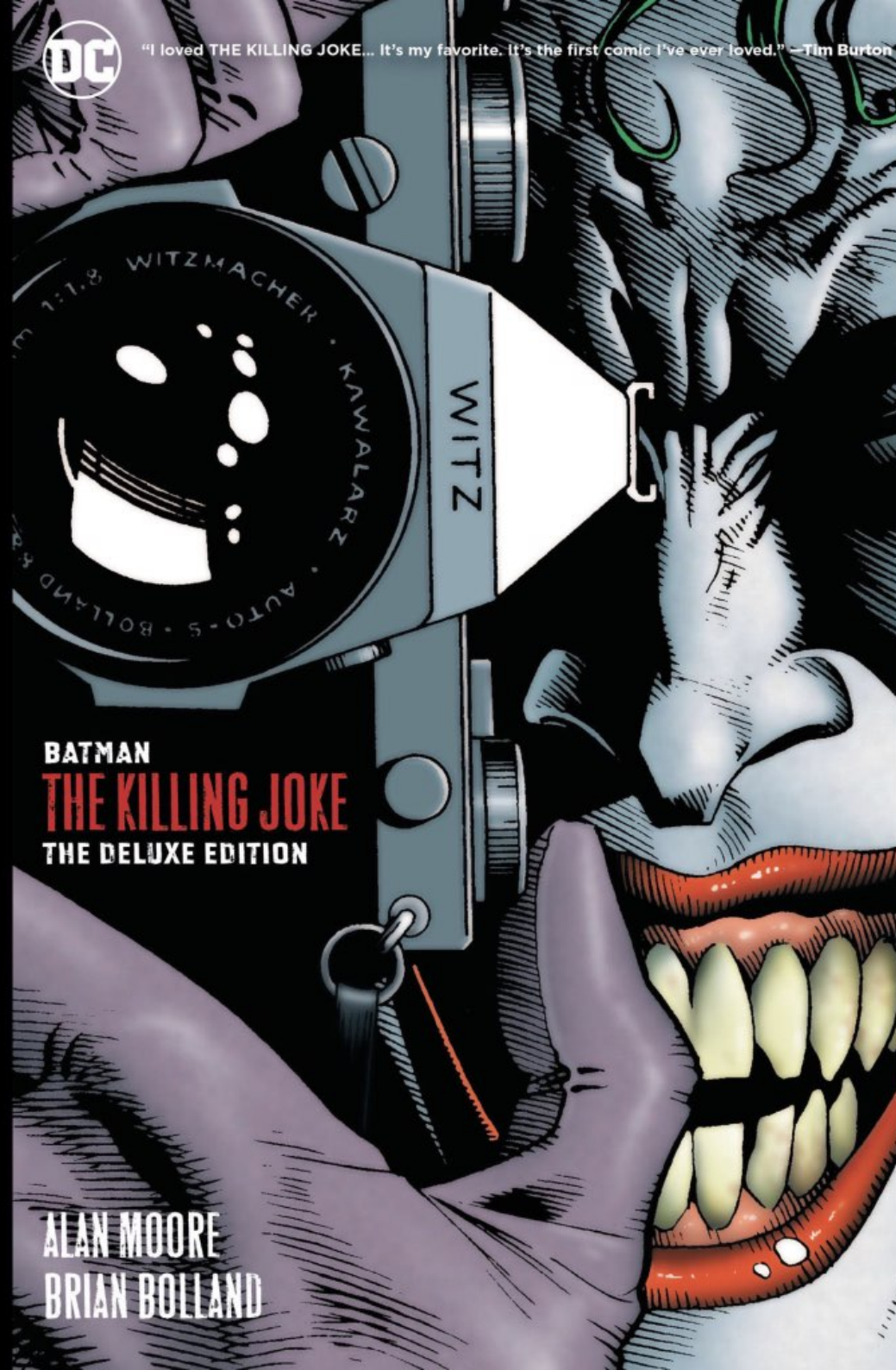


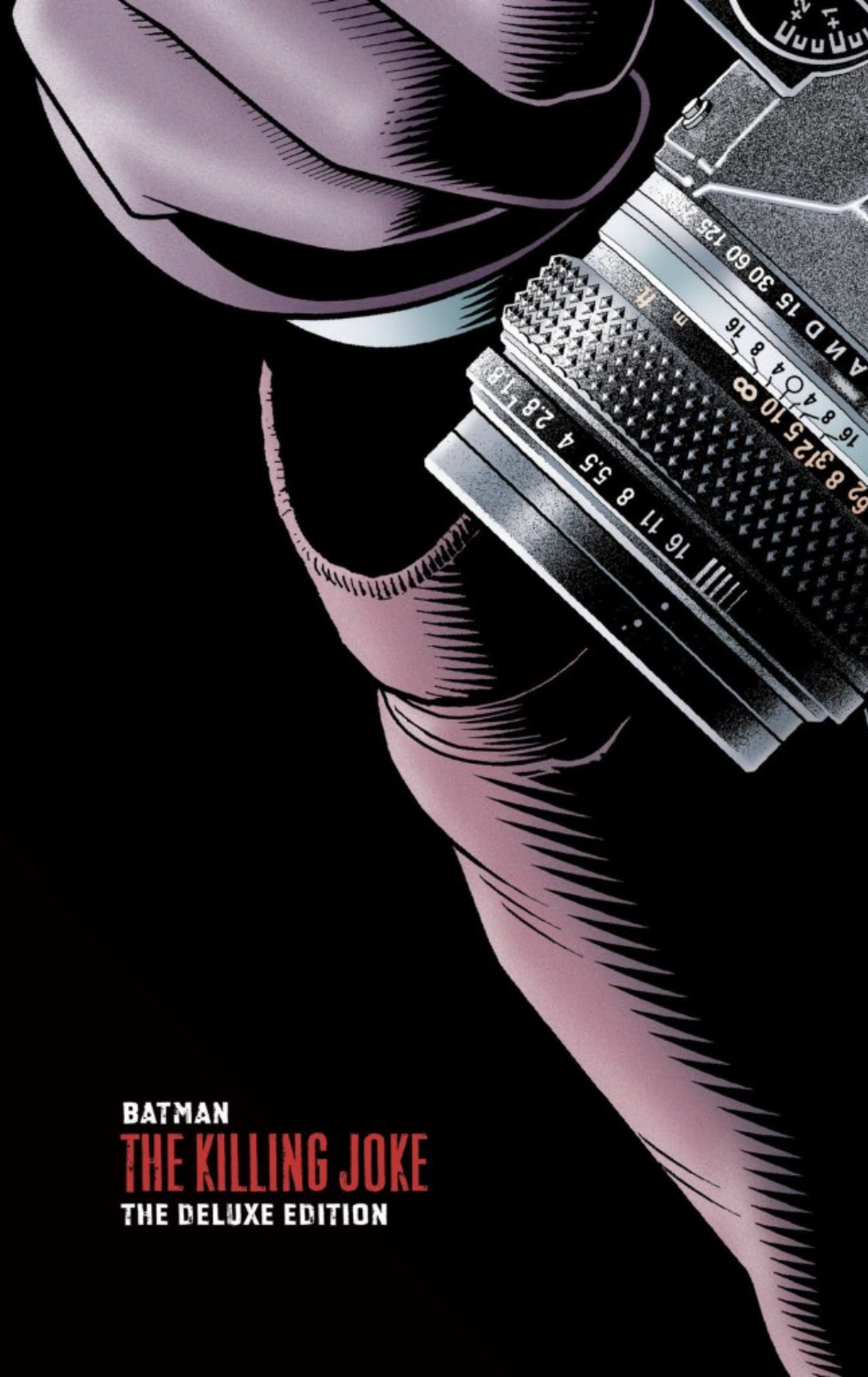


"I loved THE KILLING JOKE... It's my favorite. It's the first comic I've ever loved." —Tim Burton



BATMAN
THE KILLING JOKE
THE DELUXE EDITION

ALAN MOORE
BRIAN BOLLAND



BATMAN
THE KILLING JOKE
THE DELUXE EDITION

**THE
BATMAN
KILLING
JOKE**
THE
DELUXE
EDITION

ALAN MOORE writer
BRIAN BOLLAND artist
BRIAN BOLLAND colorist
RICHARD STARKINGS letterer
BRIAN BOLLAND collection cover artist
BATMAN created by BOB KANE with BILL FINGER

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 JEB WOODARD GROUP EDITOR - COLLECTED EDITIONS
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INTRODUCTION

TIM SALE

pasadena, ca 2008

MAN, HOW COOL IS THIS?

Like everyone who was in the mainstream comics field in the late 1980s, or—as was my case—had their noses pressed against the glass, the back-to-back-to-back of DARK KNIGHT RETURNS, WATCHMEN, BATMAN: YEAR ONE and BATMAN: THE KILLING JOKE completely reenergized the field. The characters (other than those in WATCHMEN) had been around for decades and, while many talented writers and artists had done much notable work in that time, there was an incredible sense of the new coming from Frank Miller and this handful of crazy Brits—Alan Moore, Brian Bolland, John Higgins, Richard Starkings and Dave Gibbons—who were seeing possibilities in them, in the kinds of stories that could be told, and not incidentally, in the way that a story could be presented. BATMAN: THE KILLING JOKE is the only one of the stories listed above that did not first exist in another format, as a series of comics that were eventually collected into that catch-all term, a “graphic novel.”

THE KILLING JOKE was a 46-page story, but it was crafted at such an astonishing level, and printed so much more cleanly and carefully, that it seemed to be a different beast altogether, not just a really great Batman comic, but something different. I didn't get it then, but I do now.

That is what authors of extraordinary craft can do: make the old seem new.

And thrilling. Don't forget thrilling.

I am told that the origins of BATMAN: THE KILLING JOKE go back to a Batman/Judge Dredd proposal that Moore and Bolland had cooked up. When it fell through, Moore asked Bolland what else he wanted to do, and Bolland said, “The Joker, please.”

So polite. And thus a classic was born.

Moore is famous for many things, not the least of which are his maniacally controlled and precisely orchestrated scripts, requiring an equal and similar effort from his artist partner, and in the amazing Brian Bolland he found an artist his equal in talent, fanaticism, care and expressiveness. Both excel in impressing with their rendering of the mundane, so that it never feels mundane. And then they blast into a reveal, a money shot so explosive that it is only then that you realize how well you, as a reader, have been lulled to rest on purpose, just to set you up.

The Joker's reveal on page 11, the tragic event on page 18, the second reveal on page 39, all orchestrated and carried out in ways that astonish, and then astonish again when you go back and see just how much these artists have known and set things up from the beginning. How fun it is to be in the hands of creators who know so much about what they are doing.

Oh, and the joke (how cool is it that the book ends with a joke) at the finish?

Priceless, funny and perfect for the characters of Batman and the Joker.

What you hold in your hands, though, is not the book that I own, that so inflamed(!) me and thousands of others back in 1988, because of one crucial element: the coloring.

This time around, you lucky buggers, you have the fantastic treat to see the book colored by the artist himself, and to see his more complete vision of how the story should look. Side by side, the comparison is amazing.

Bolland's colors are characteristically thoughtful and restrained. They fit the work more completely than Higgins' state-of-the-art job in 1988 and are a joy to look at. Slow down and one can see how cool the palette is now, versus the warmer one of 1988, and how much better that reflects the somber tone of the story, and how, when Bolland retains a color from 1988 that has become iconic, like Barbara's yellow shirt, he integrates that so well into the cooler colors in the scene, allowing the shirt to really pop and ratchet up the horror of the event.

But the biggest and most amazing change in this newly colored edition is in the flashback sequences.

Bolland washes out all color in each one, but chooses to spotlight an object in each—a bowl of tentacles, shrimp and so on—in increasingly intense shades of red, all leading up to (here's that sense that everything has been planned from the start by masterful hands) the Red Hood that was posited to be the Joker's mostly forgotten origin, way back in 1951, and the transformation of the milquetoast failed comedian to insane criminal mastermind.

Brrrrrr. I just got chills.

Anyone else get chills?

Man, how cool is this?

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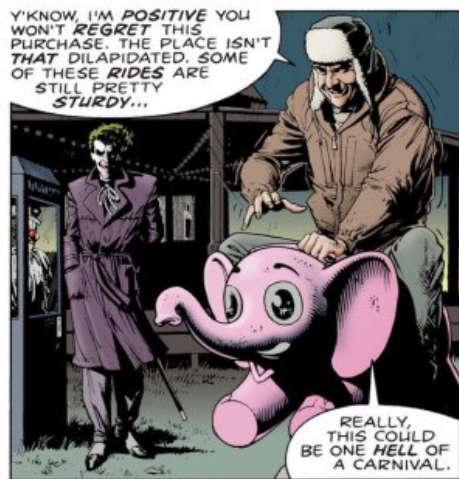
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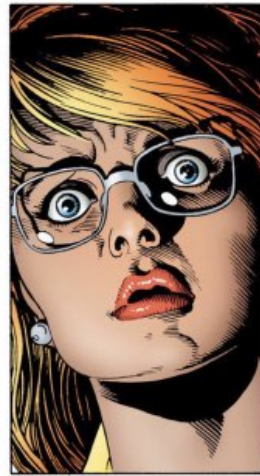


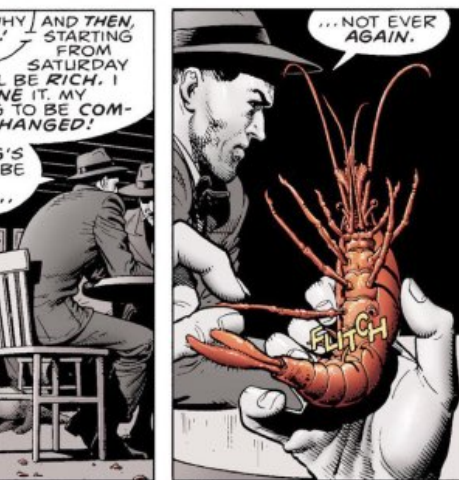
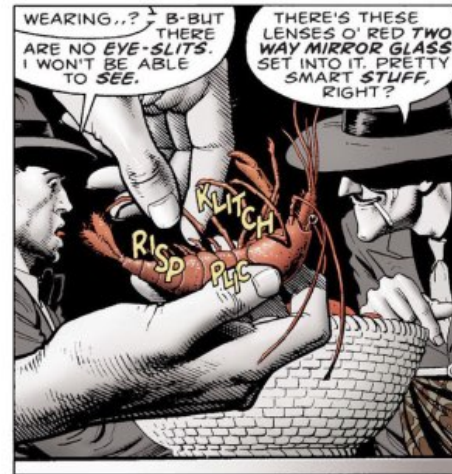


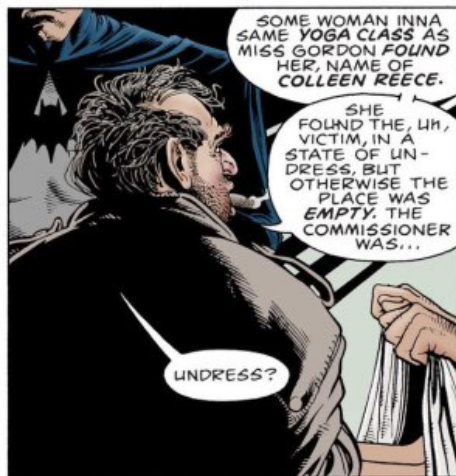
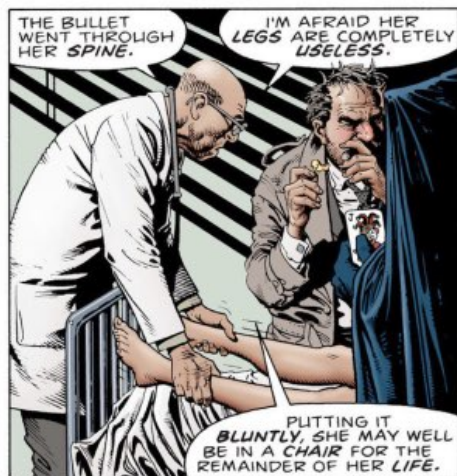




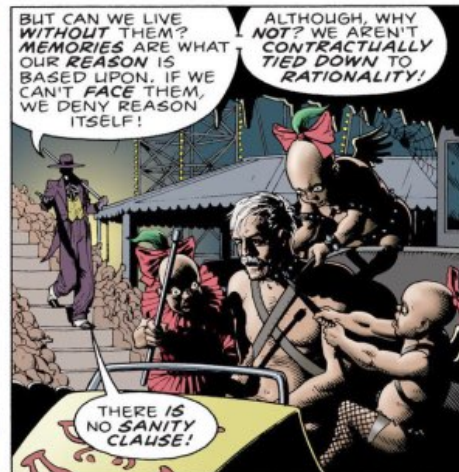
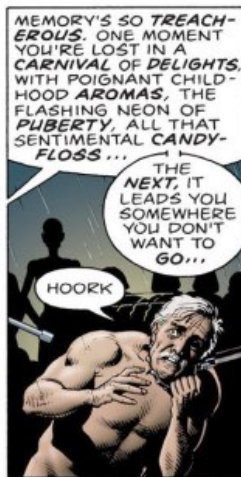
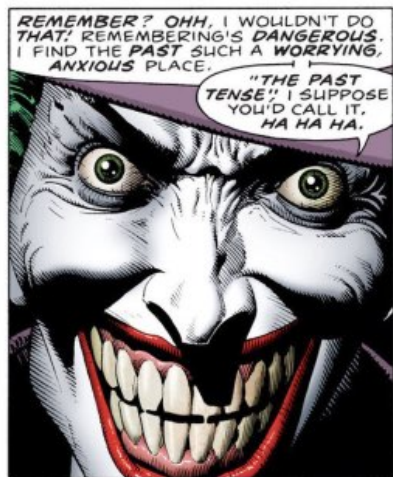


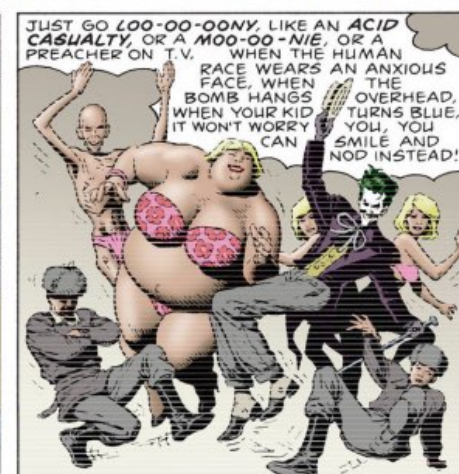
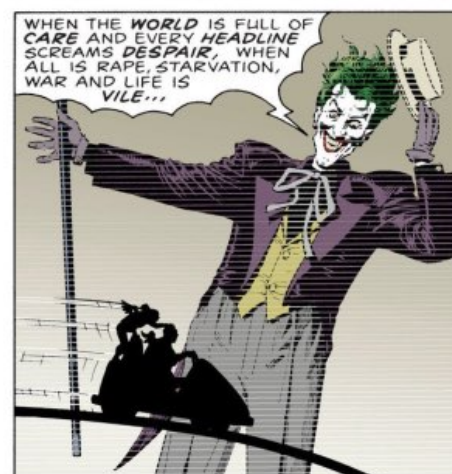
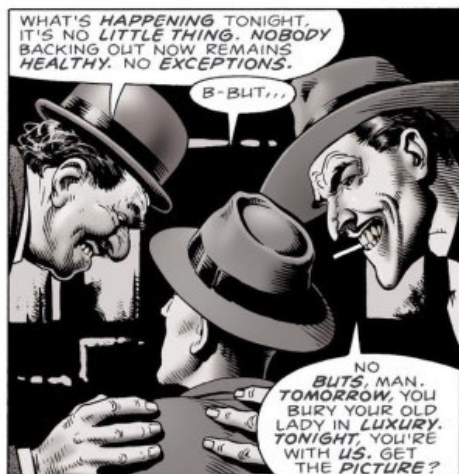


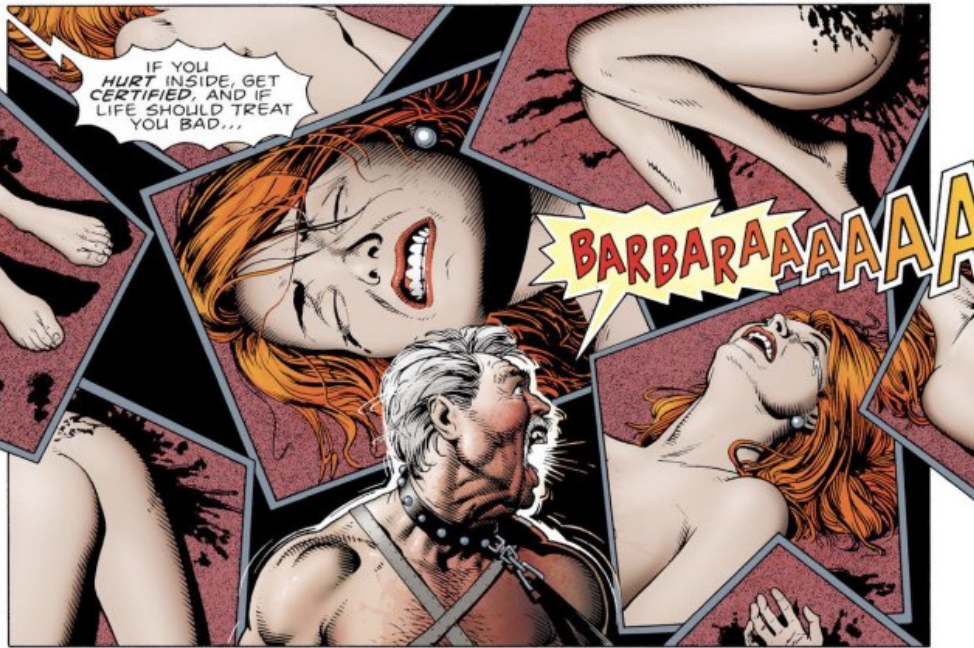
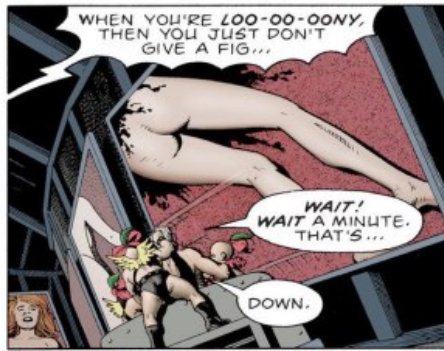


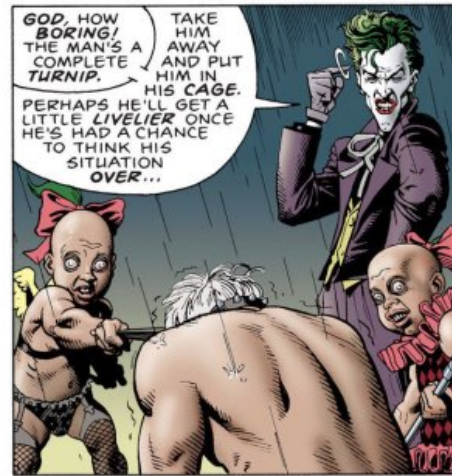
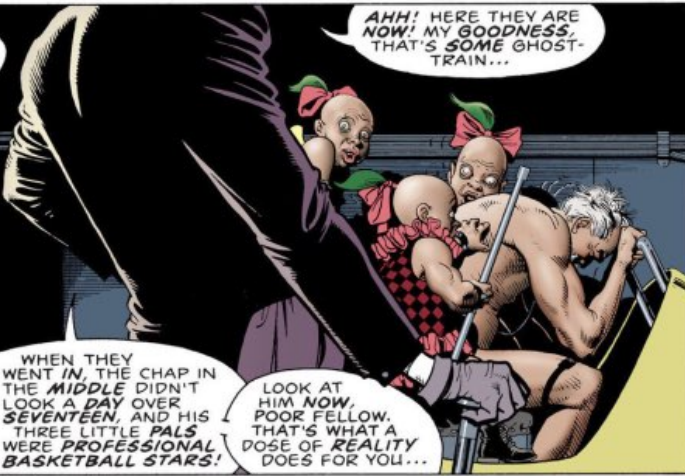


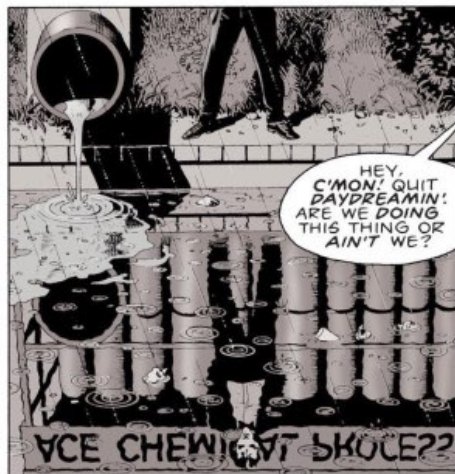




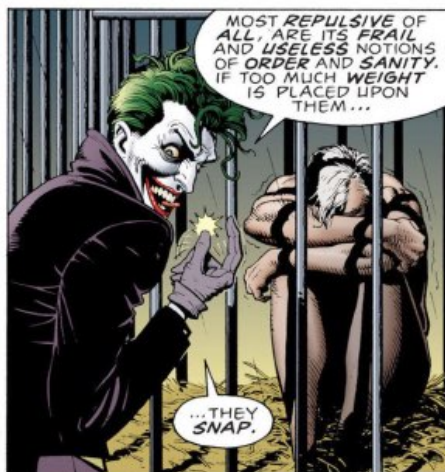
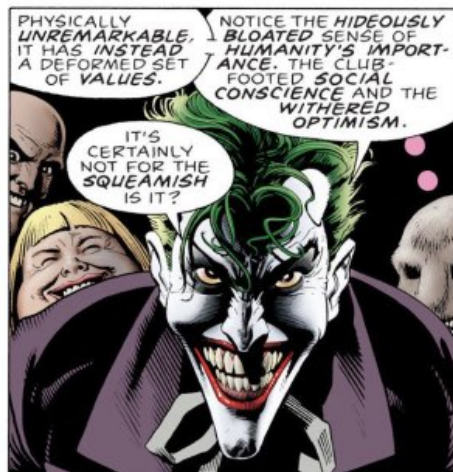


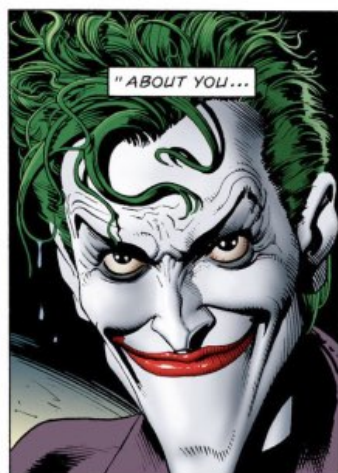






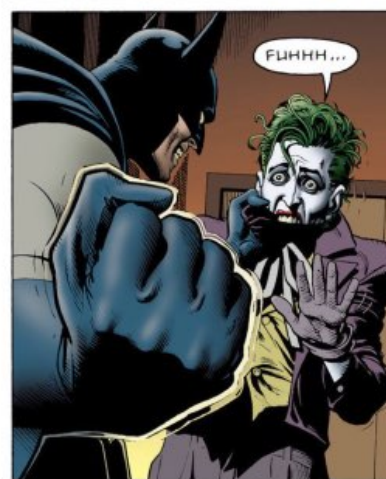


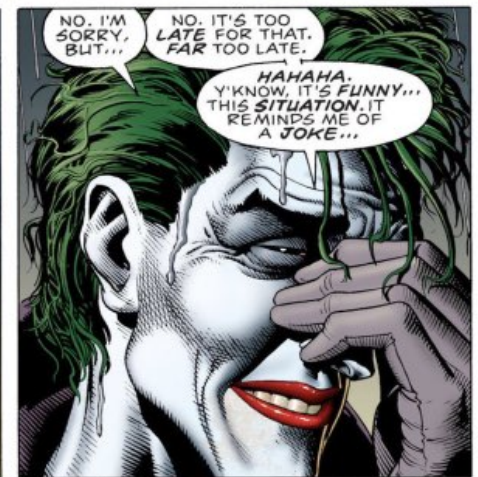
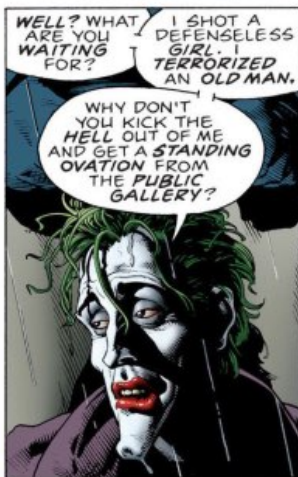
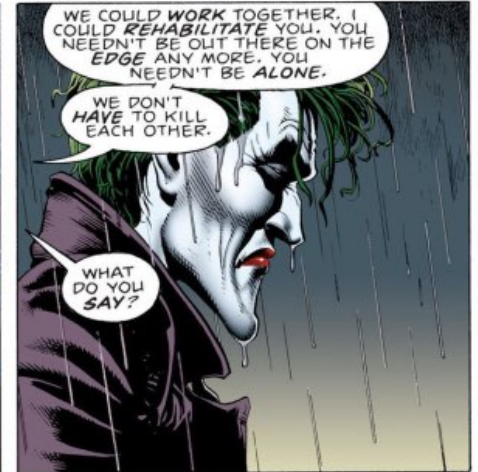
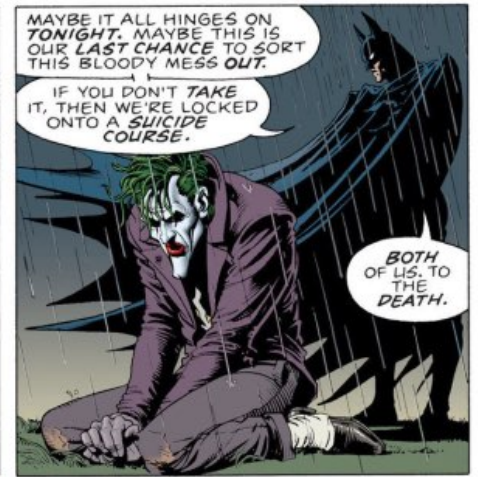


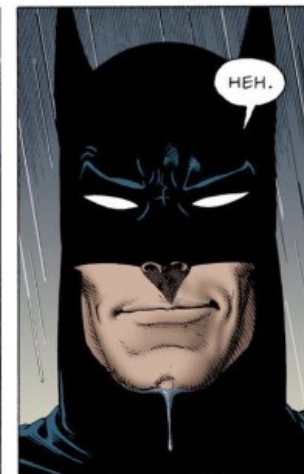
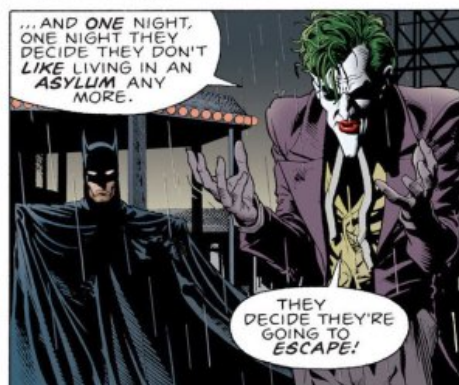












AFTERWORD

I've been asked to write the "afterword" to this book—or should that be the "in between"? I'm told by my editor, Bob Harras, that there's room for up to 800 words. If I go on longer we have to start dropping pages of art and we wouldn't want that, would we? So, reader, if I should stop in mid-sentence it's because I've run out of space.

I've just read Tim Sale's generous introduction. Of all the introductions I've ever received, it's without doubt the most... recent. Having just sat with my 11-year-old son watching the hit TV show *Heroes*, it's pretty cool being introduced by its star artist. It seems additionally cool to me that all the writing in this book has been given over not to writers but to artists, a breed of people not known for their ability to string a sentence together—but so far so good.

There's a minor detail that Tim got wrong, actually. It was me that asked Alan to write the book and not the other way 'round. *THE KILLING JOKE* was not a project instigated by Alan, nor was it, as far as I know, a labor of love for him, and it doesn't usually appear in a list of his greatest works. I was glad he agreed to write it, though. At the time we'd known each other for quite a while and narrowly missed working together a couple of times. In a peculiar form of homage to him I haven't drawn a comic book story written by any other writer in the last 22 years. When you've worked with the best, anything else would seem like a backward step.

The script for *THE KILLING JOKE* was very good, but I must admit I had to grit my teeth a couple of times during the drawing of it. I, for instance, would never have chosen to reveal a Joker origin. I think of this as just one of a number of possible origin stories manifesting itself in the Joker's fevered brain. Also, I wouldn't have done such terrible harm to poor Barbara. The story, though, does contain some great iconic moments, my favorite being the scene when the Joker discovers that the gun—as far as we know the same one that maimed Barbara—is empty. People seemed to find the last page of the story ambiguous, so before I conclude this text, remind me to reveal what actually happened.

I want to thank John Higgins, *THE KILLING JOKE*'s original colorist, for jumping in when he did and finishing the book so promptly. Back in the pre-computer days of "blue line," airbrush and poster colors, even though I had specific views on how I wanted it to look, I wouldn't have been able to color it myself. It's probably well known that John's choice of colors turned out to be startlingly at odds with what I had in mind so, in February 2007, when Bob Harras told me about this edition, I said, "PLEASE can I recolor the whole thing?"

Technical wizard Jeb Woodard sent me files of the line art which, through some computer alchemy only he understands, he'd isolated from the printed color pages—the original *KILLING JOKE* artwork has long since disappeared into the hands of collectors—and as I got on with the coloring process on my Mac it was tempting and easy to make changes to the line art itself—a bit of feathering here, a completely redrawn face there. The eagle-eyed may notice that every page has something slightly different on it from the *KILLING JOKE* of 20 years ago. There's at least one figure that wasn't there the first time around. Think of it as a Spot-the-Difference book.

"An Innocent Guy" (that's what it's called even though it doesn't say so on it) is of special significance to me. As I became less inclined to work with writers or colorists it was particularly tempting to write a Batman story that was, for better or worse, completely by me. It gave me the opportunity to draw all the scenes I hadn't had a chance to draw in *THE KILLING JOKE*, including my homage to the unsettlingly surreal Dick Sprang-era Batman that I loved as a kid but combine it with a darker, more morally ambiguous theme that I'd stolen shamelessly from other sources. In so doing I managed to upset at least one mother of a seven-year-old boy who wrote me a letter of protest. Jeb supervised the meticulous painting out of the Zipatone that covered the artwork for the original black-and-white printing (he didn't quite get it all; you'll see bits of it lingering here and there) and I colored it up for the first time ever. I hope you enjoy these and the preceding 46 pages.

Speaking of which, it's time I revealed what really happened at the end of *THE KILLING JOKE*: as our protagonists stood there in the rain laughing at the final joke, the police lights reflecting in the pools of filthy water underfoot, the Batman's hand reached out and...

**BRIAN
BOLLAND**

not far from six mile bottom, uk, 2008



THE JOKER

Alter Ego: Unknown
Occupation: Professional Criminal
Known Relatives: None
Group Affiliation: None
Base of Operations: Gotham City
First Appearance: BATMAN #1 (Spring, 1940)
Height: 6'5"
Weight: 192 lbs.
Hair: Green

HISTORY

He is the Batman's most unpredictable and ruthless foe, a psychopath who will kill anyone—even his own associates—at a moment's notice, merely for his own amusement. Reporters in Gotham City long ago stopped referring to him as the "Clown Prince of Crime," for even they have realized that there is nothing funny about the Joker.

The Joker's history prior to his first clash with Batman and the Gotham police force is an enigma, and even he has difficulty remembering the details of his previous life, filtered as they are through his insanity. One of the Joker's memories suggests that he was once a failed comedian, a sad, pathetic loser and widower who was conned into accompanying some hoods on a robbery that led them through a chemical factory. As the account went, his accomplices were gunned down by the police, and the man who would become the Joker, disguised under a red hood, dived through a vat of chemical waste in order to avoid capture by the Batman. Washed out into the river, he made his way to shore only to discover that the strange mixture of chemicals had bleached his skin chalk-white, had made his hair green and had turned his smile into a permanent, frightful grin. The shock of the transformation hurled him far past the edge of sanity...and the Joker was born.

Regardless of what events truly created the Harlequin of Hate, he established himself as the Batman's number-one foe during their first encounter, when he extorted millions from Gotham City's wealthiest citizens before being brought to justice by the Batman. From that point on, the egomaniacal Joker decided that he had found an opponent worthy of his criminal genius and took far greater satisfaction in outwitting the Batman than he might in simply killing him. Unfortunately, this "courtesy" does not extend to the Batman's friends and allies. Breaking into Commissioner Gordon's home, the Joker shot and crippled Barbara Gordon, the former Batgirl, paralyzing her from the waist down. Several months later, he took down Jason Todd, the second Robin, when Batman and his young sidekick uncovered the Joker's scheme to sell nuclear arms to Iranian terrorists.

Despite—or perhaps because of—his insanity, the Joker is without question the Batman's most brilliant opponent. He trusts no one and quickly eliminates those who are foolish enough to trust him. The Joker often organizes his crimes around themes or cryptic patterns that only the Batman, after years of harrowing experiences, can deduce. Whenever he is taken into custody, however, his mental instability keeps him out of the penal system and he is remanded to the custody of Arkham Asylum, from which he inevitably escapes.

POWERS & WEAPONS

The Joker's manic inconsistency is what makes him truly threatening. Frequently, he has used weapons as macabrely frivolous as deadly exploding cigars or high-voltage electric joy buzzers; at other times, he has taken up whatever weapon lay at hand, be it a crowbar or a submachine gun, and laid waste to all in his path.

An average hand-to-hand combatant, the Joker has nevertheless demonstrated the abnormal strength of a madman from time to time. His most infamous weapon is his "Joker Venom," a poison of his own invention that, when introduced into the bloodstream, leaves its victims' faces pulled back in a ghastly grin not unlike the Joker's own.

*Text: MARK WAID
 Art: BRIAN BOLLAND*



THE ORIGIN OF

The JOKER

writer **MARK WAID**
artist **BRIAN BOLLAND**
colorist **MATT HOLLINGSWORTH**
letterer **JARED K. FLETCHER**

PICK A CARD.
ANY CARD.

"OKAY, SO, THERE'S THIS COMIC WHO CAN'T MAKE AN AUDIENCE LAUGH... I THINK THAT'S HOW THIS ONE GOES, I FORGET SOMETIMES..."

"OH, YOU'VE HEARD THAT ONE? ALL RIGHT."

"AH, I CAN'T KEEP 'EM STRAIGHT. HOW ABOUT THE ONE WHERE A MOB KILLER NAMED NAPIER COMES TO GOTHAM AND--"

"NO, WAIT, YOU'RE TOO YOUNG FOR THAT ONE."

"I KNOW. THIS ONE ALWAYS WORKS. SO A SMALL-TIME YUTZ IN A RED HOOD WALKS INTO A FACTORY, RIGHT?"

"HE'S THERE TO STEAL THE PAYROLL."

"BUT THEN THIS GIANT FLYING RODENT KNOCKS HIM INTO A VAT OF CHEMICAL WASTE... (OR MAYBE HE JUST FELL)..."

"...ANYWAY, EITHER WAY, HE REALLY, REALLY WISHES HE REMEMBERED HOW TO SWIM."

"NEXT THING HE KNOWS, HE'S BEEN SPIT OUT INTO THE RESERVOIR, WHERE... GET THIS..."

"...THOSE NASTY, NASTY CHEMICALS HAVE TURNED HIS FACE WHITE AND HIS HAIR GREEN!"

"ON THE PLUS SIDE, HOWEVER, HE'S BEEN GIVEN A LO-O-OVELY SMILE!"

"IT'S ALSO CREATED IN HIM A DEEP, DEEP DISDAIN FOR URBAN BATS. SO HE MURDERS THE BIGGEST ONE IN ALL OF GOTHAM."

"OR MAYBE HE HASN'T YET. I'M NOT SURE."

IT ALWAYS DEPENDS ON HOW YOU SHUFFLE THE DECK.

WHAT? NOT LAUGHING YET? JUST WAIT 'TIL I GET TO THE PUNCH LINE.

IT'LL KILL YOU.

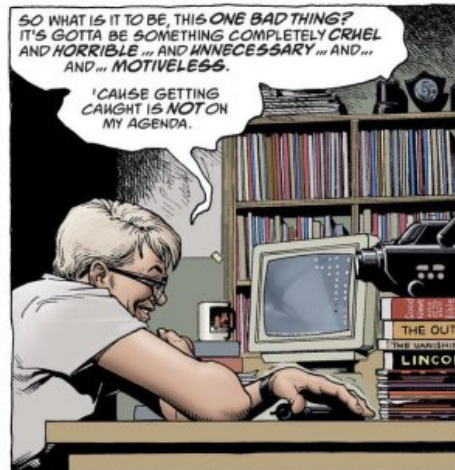
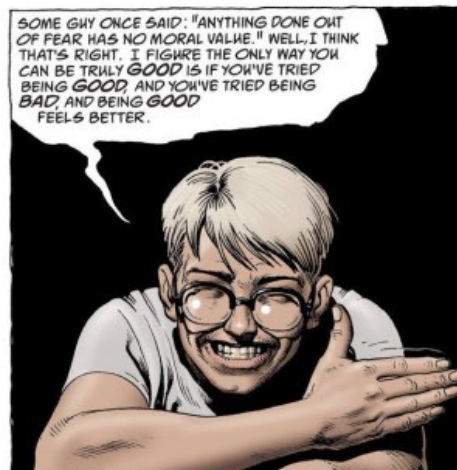
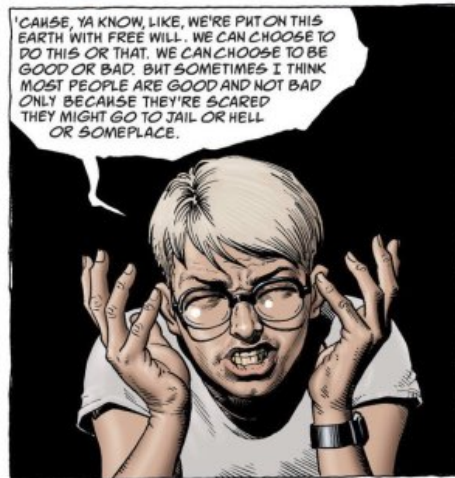
HAHAHAHAHAHA

Powers & Weapons:

THE JOKER HAS NO SPECIAL POWERS, BUT HIS UNIQUE PSYCHOSES MAKE HIM THE MOST DANGEROUS KILLER IN THE WORLD. HIS CHIEF WEAPON IS JOKER VENOM, A FATAL TOXIN THAT KILLS ITS VICTIMS ON CONTACT--BUT NOT BEFORE SENDING THEM INTO FITS OF SICK LAUGHTER AND LOCKING THEIR FACES INTO A SMILING DEATH RICTUS.

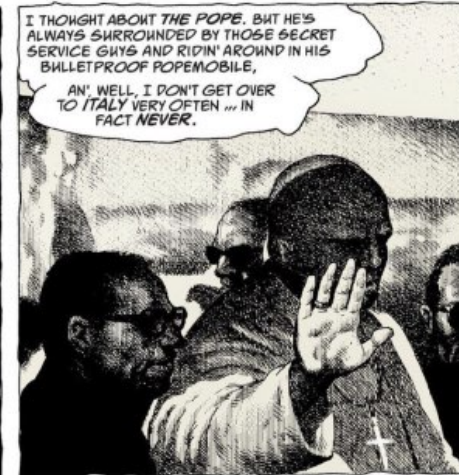
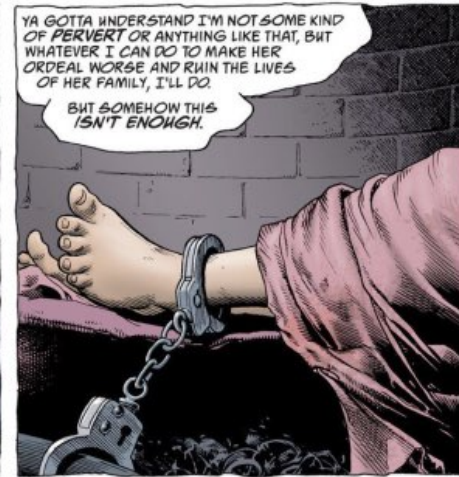
Essential Storylines:

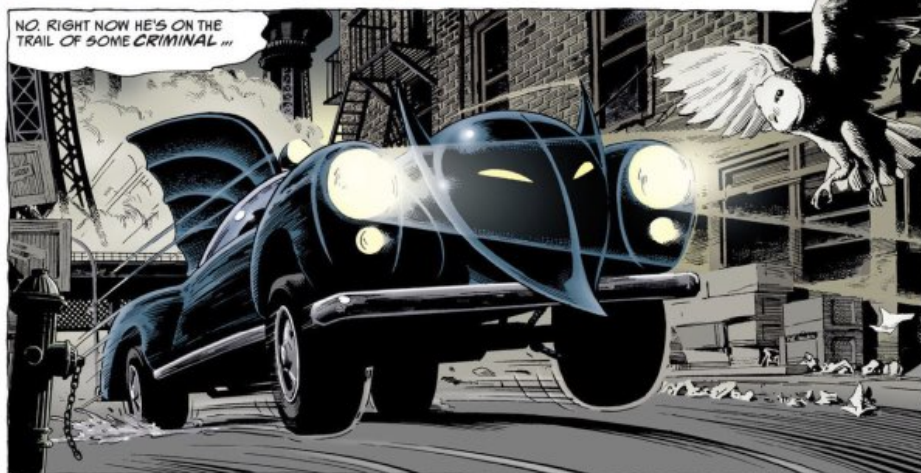
- BATMAN: THE KILLING JOKE
- BATMAN: A DEATH IN THE FAMILY
- JOKER: THE DEVIL'S ADVOCATE
- BATMAN: THE MAN WHO LAUGHS



Writer & Illustrator: Brian Bolland

Letterer: Ellie DeVille





AT LAST THE VILLAIN WILL
KNOW THE GAME'S UP

THROW DOWN YOUR
UMBRELLA, PENGUIN.

AWWWWWK!

MAKE
ME!

THERE'LL BE A
FIGHT, AND A
THRILLING CHASE
INVOLVING AN
ENORMOUS
TYPEWRITER OR
SOMETHING.

A SWIFT AND
DECISIVE CLIMAX.

THE GOOD GUY'LL MAKE
A DRAMATIC EXIT

LEAVING THE BAD GUY
TO PONDER THE ERROR
OF HIS WAYS.

'CAUSE, LET'S FACE IT,
CRIME DOESN'T PAY.

AND JUST FOR ONE MOMENT
THE BATMAN WILL PAUSE. THRN
HIS FACE ILLUMINATED BY A SINGLE
LIGHT... A SPLENDID AVENGER
OF THE NIGHT.

AND THEN FROM A DARK ALLEY,

OR A WINDOW
HIGH UP,

OR A GRASSY
KNOLL,

OR SOME OTHER
PLACE,

THERE'LL BE
A GLINT,

AND THEN

BANG



AND HE'LL
BE DEAD.



YES, I SHALL MISS
HIM ALL RIGHT.

I DON'T MEAN, I WON'T
HIT HIM. NO, THE BULLET'LL
FIND ITS MARK ALL RIGHT.

BUT, AS I SAID
BEFORE I'LL MISS
HIM.

I'VE ALWAYS BEEN HIS
GREATEST FAN.

I'M ALSO HIS
GREATEST ENEMY.

BEFORE ANYONE FINDS HIM LYING THERE
I'LL BE LONG GONE. I'LL DESTROY THIS
TAPE. I WON'T HAVE A MOTIVE. I WON'T
LEAVE A CLUE. I'M JUST AN
INNOCENT GUY.

THEN I THINK I'LL FINISH MY COLLEGE
EDUCATION. MARRY MY GIRLFRIEND AND
HAVE A COUPLE OF KIDS. A BOY AND
A GIRL WOULD BE NICE. LIVE A
GOOD AND BLAMELESS
LIFE, AND GO TO HEAVEN
WHEN I DIE.



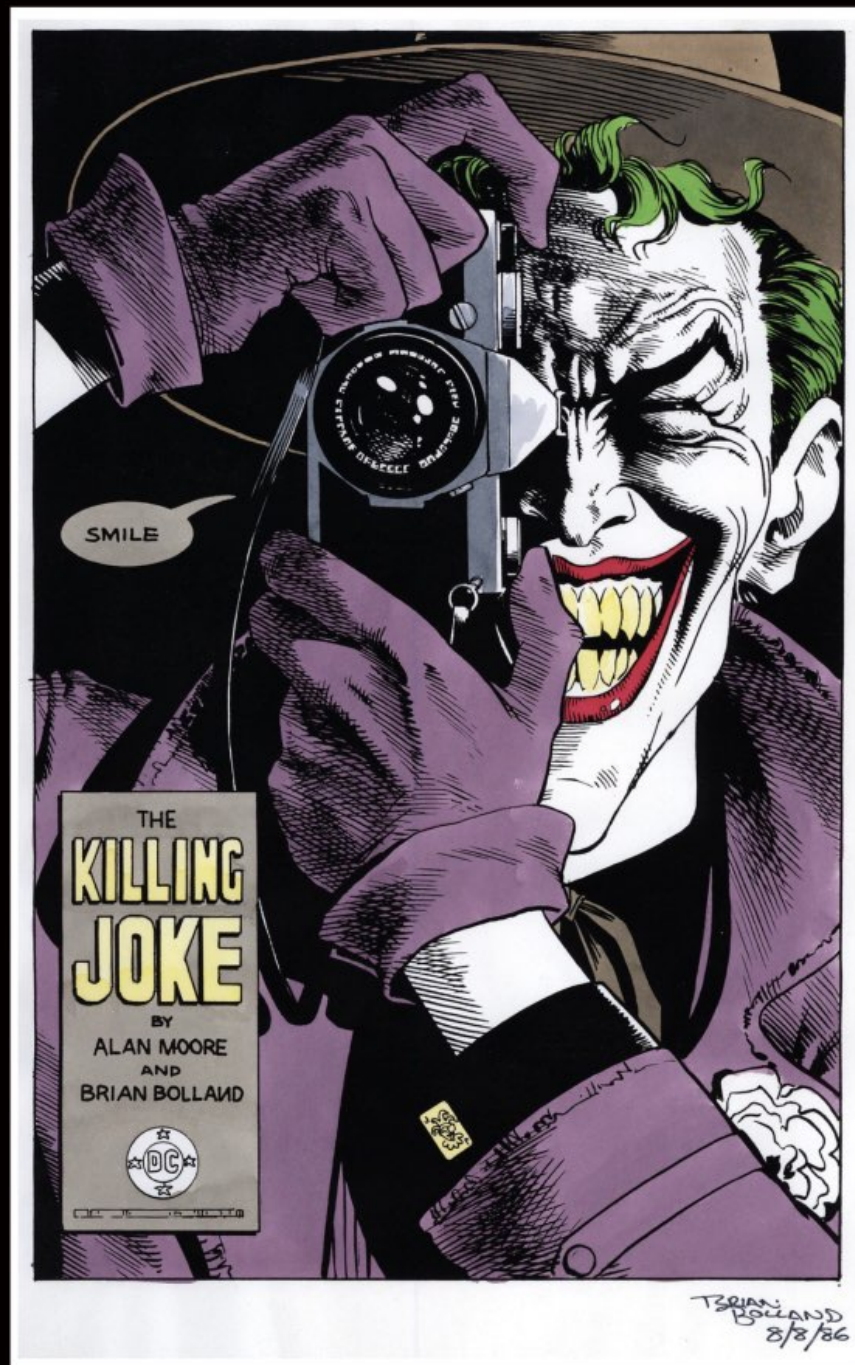


THE KILLING JOKE: THE COVER STORY

The following pages show Brian Bolland's process from reference to sketch to the final cover.

"We are giving away a closely guarded professional secret. Yes, I did use photographic reference for the cover of THE KILLING JOKE! Since it's a mirror image of me in the photo you'll notice that it's actually the thumb of my left hand that's pressing the button to take the picture. The resulting sketch is probably the most thorough cover rough I've ever drawn and the only one in color. I must have been very keen to push the idea."

-Brian Bolland



COVER, ORIGINAL PENCIL SKETCH



IT'LL BE NO PROBLEM, I GOTTA GUN. MY DAD GAVE IT TO ME. HE'S GOT A WHOLE COLLECTION. HE'S A GREAT BELIEVER IN A CITIZEN'S RIGHT TO BEAR ARMS. ITS A GUN JUST LIKE A MILLION OTHERS IN THIS CITY.

I'LL DO THE DEED ... MY DAD TAUGHT ME HOW TO SHOOT, TOO ... THEN I'LL LEAVE THE SCENE. I WON'T LEAVE A CALLING CARD, A DOUBLE-HEADED COIN, A CODED RIDDLE AND I WON'T LAUGH LIKE A MADMAN. I'LL JUST LEAVE WITHOUT A TRACE.



I MEAN, FOR ALL I KNOW, RIGHT NOW HE COULD BE IN HIS SECRET HIDE-OUT SOMEWHERE HUNGRED OVER HIS SECRET SURVEILLANCE SYSTEM, MONITORING EVERYTHING I RECORD ON THIS TAPE.

BUT I'M SURE HE ISN'T. 'CAUSE HE'S ONE OF THE GOOD-GUYS, AND SPYIN' ON INNOCENT PEOPLE WOULD BE WRONG.



NO. RIGHT NOW HE'S ON THE TRAIL OF SOME CRIMINAL ...



HIS GREAT BAT-WINGS UNFURLED AGAINST THE NIGHT SKY,

STRIKING TERROR INTO THE HEARTS OF THE GUILTY,

AN INSPIRATION AND A COMFORT TO THE INNOCENT.

HE'LL BE SADLY MISSED ESPECIALLY BY ME.



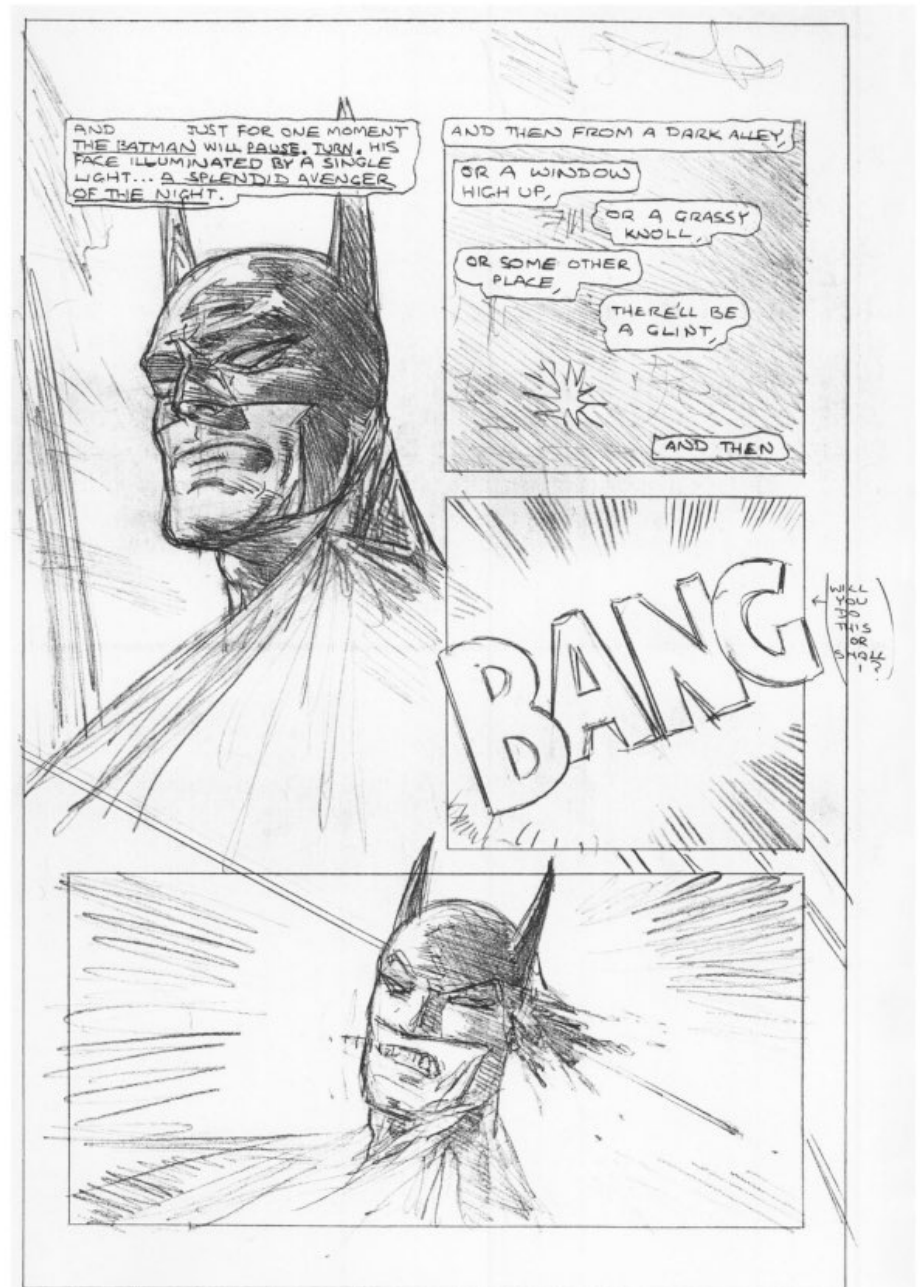
ONE DAY HE'LL BE FACE TO FACE WITH TWO-FACE ...

OR HE'LL BE TANGLING WITH POISON-IVY ...



OR IN THE LAIR OF ... THOSE THREE GUYS WITH ANIMAL MASKS WHOSE NAMES I CAN NEVER REMEMBER.





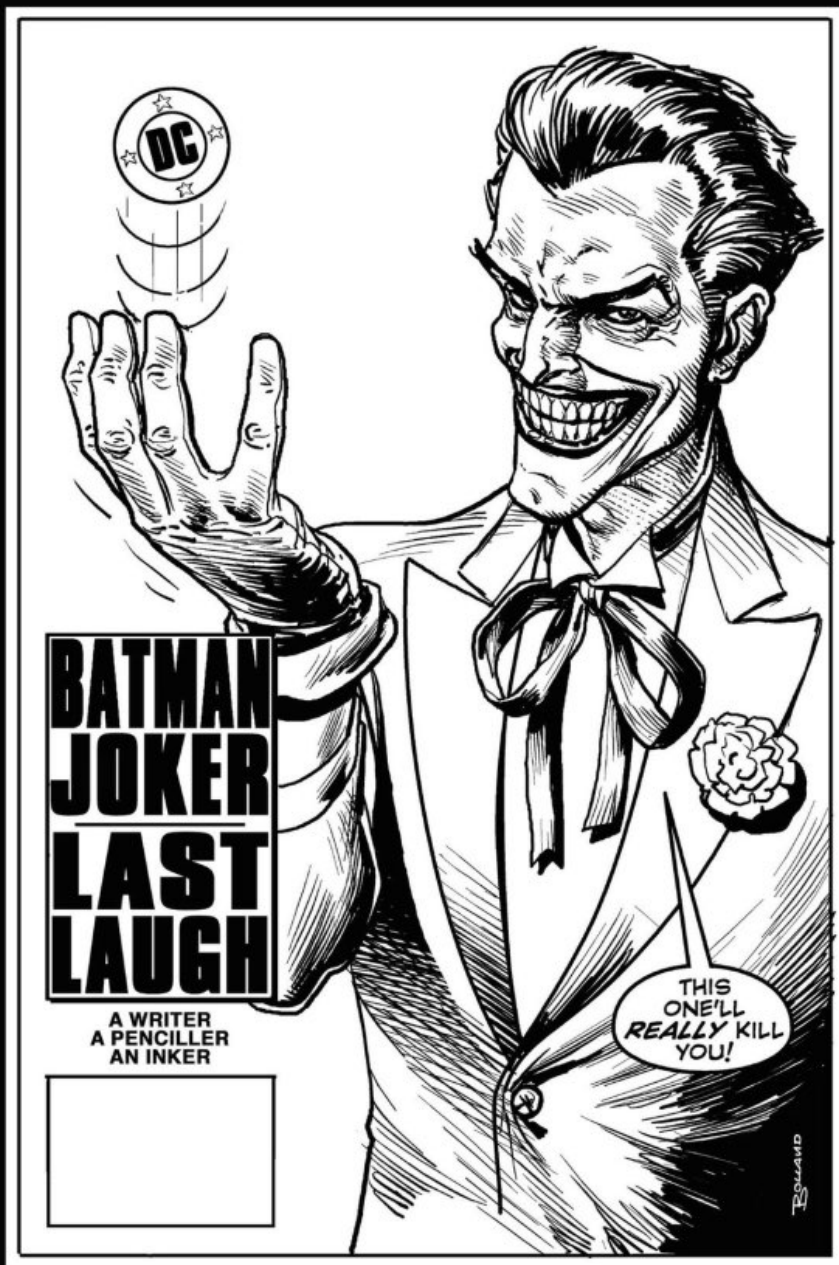
A JOKER ART GALLERY



THE GREATEST JOKER STORIES EVER TOLD TRADE PAPERBACK, 1989

Above: Final inks and preliminary pencil sketch

Opposite: Final colors



"During my GOTHAM KNIGHTS run I was asked by DC's Bat-department to draw the covers for a six-issue miniseries entitled JOKER: LAST LAUGH. The Joker hadn't turned up for me to draw in GOTHAM KNIGHTS and I was feeling a bit possessive of him, so I took the assignment even though the tight deadline meant that I'd have to miss an issue or two of GOTHAM KNIGHTS. I like doing unbroken runs of covers if possible, but sometimes you have to make sacrifices. For the first issue we went with a big pinup shot. After I'd sent in the artwork an e-mail came back to me containing a version of my cover with the almost black background replaced by bright yellow. I'm glad they took my answer of 'No!' to heart."

—Brian Bolland

JOKER: LAST LAUGH #1 COVER, 2001

Opposite: Rough sketch

Above: Final cover

BOLLAND

JOKER: LAST LAUGH #6 COVER, 2002

Bottom & Right: Rough sketches
Opposite: Unaltered final cover



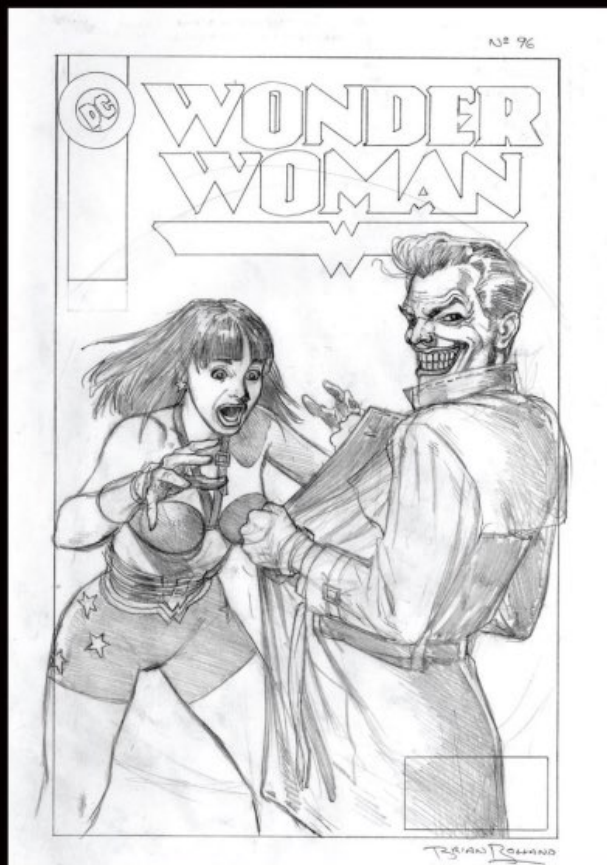
"Scripts and reference images arrived for the rest of the issues, and I discovered that there was something about the characters, all of them new to me, which didn't fit into how I saw the world of Batman and the Joker. I just couldn't find the willpower to draw the cover to #2. It's always a very bad time for me when, having said I'd do something, I have to take it back. I agonize about it for a day or two and then make the call, feeling a failure. I imagine that people must see me as unreliable, a prima donna, that the trust between myself and my editor has been eroded. In this case, however, I was asked to round off the series with the cover to #6. A simple two-head shot. The original artwork I sent in was considered too bloody, so I supplied a slightly cleaned-up version. You can see the original here."

—Brian Bolland





COVER STORY: THE DC COMICS ART OF BRIAN BOLLAND DUST JACKET, 2011



WONDER WOMAN #96 COVER, 1995

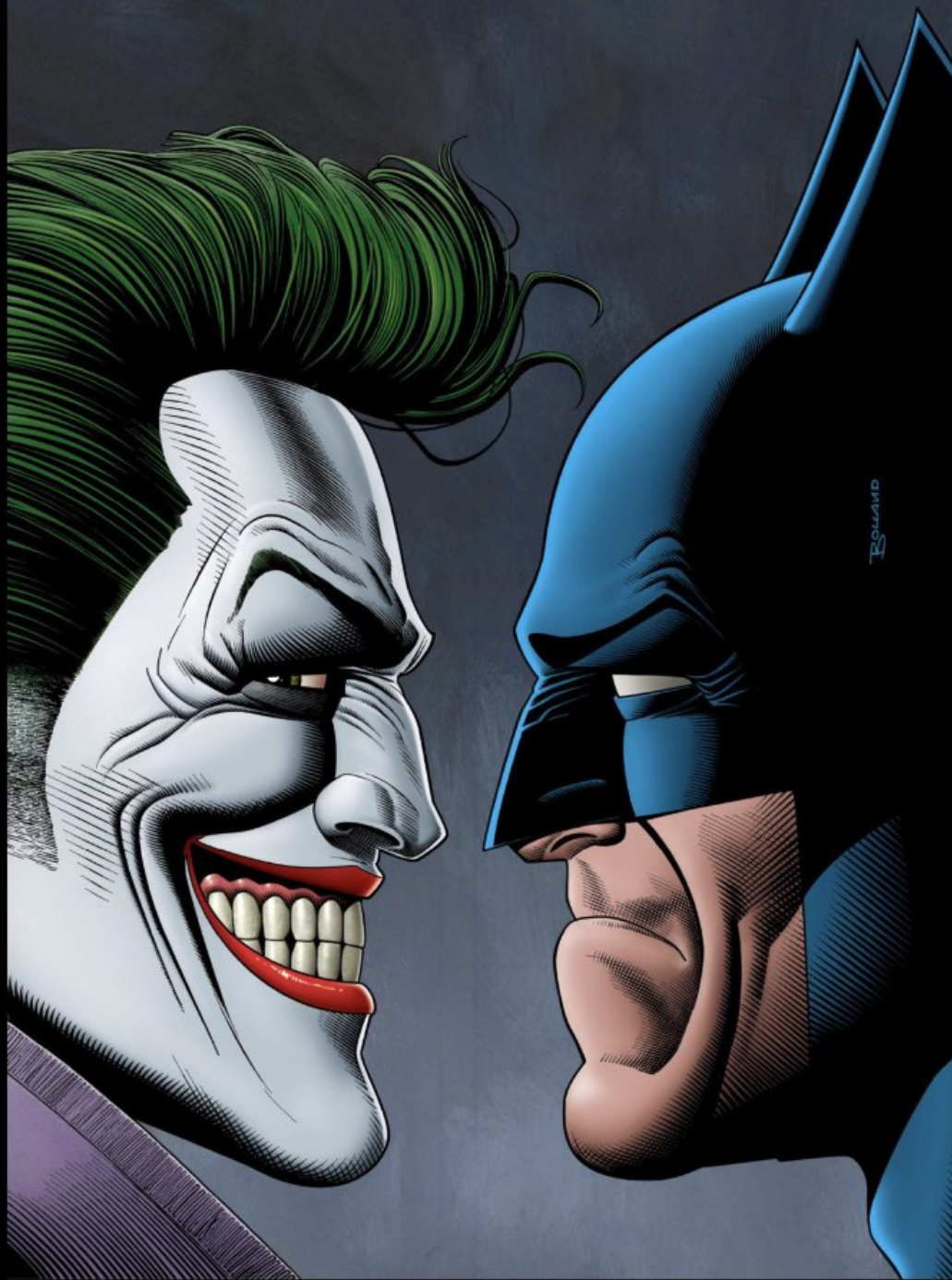
Above: Original rough pencil sketches
Opposite: Final colors

"To some extent, I felt that I had made the Joker my own—so I was pleased to see him in a Wonder Woman story. In #96 he turns up in a scene and opens his coat to reveal an explosive vest. The best visual gag, I thought, was in my first rough where he appears to be flashing Wonder Woman. That was judged to be too risqué for a mainstream DC comic, so I tried a couple of J.C. Leyendecker homages. We settled for the fourth and final choice (and my least favorite). The 'flashing' rough proved very popular, however, and I've been commissioned a couple of times by comics art collectors to draw finished ink versions with Wonder Woman wearing her original costume."

—Brian Bolland

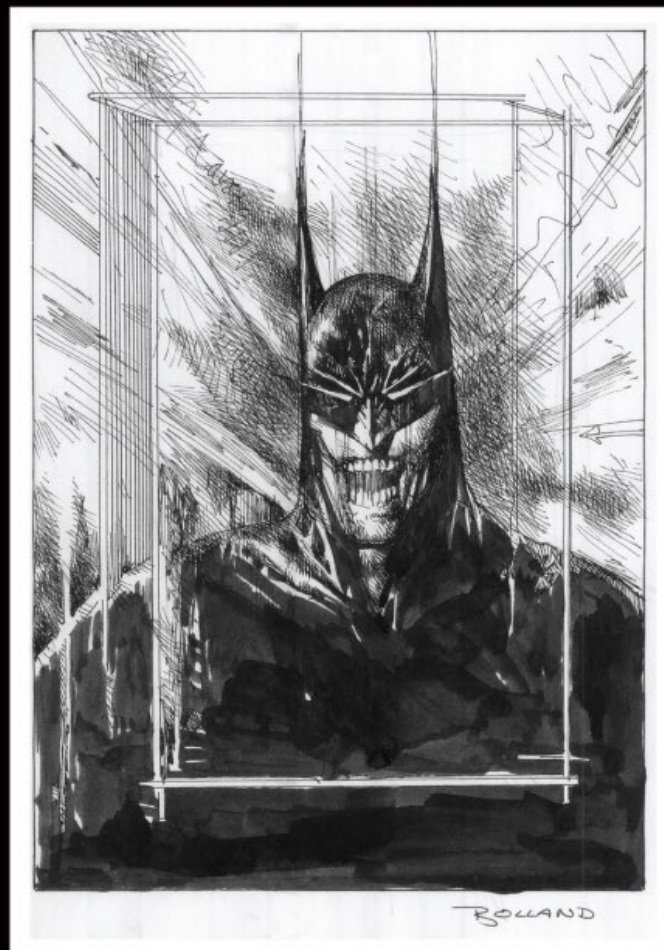








A BILL SIENKIEWICZ-STYLE BATMAN SKETCH BY BRIAN BOLLAND



"The above sketch was drawn in Paris (with a series of markers that were running low on ink, by the looks of things), and Italian artist Tanino Liberatore produced a painted version of it for the French edition of THE KILLING JOKE."

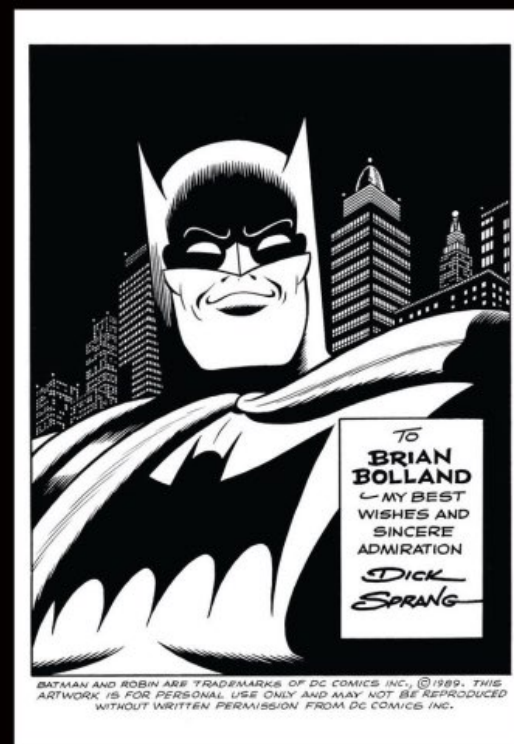
—Brian Bolland





BRIAN BOLLAND

After making his professional debut in 1975, artist Brian Bolland perfected his clean-line style and meticulous attention to detail on a series of popular strips for the British comics magazine *2000 AD*, most notably its signature feature *Judge Dredd*. He went on to illustrate the 12-issue maxiseries *CAMELOT 3000* and the Alan Moore-written graphic novel *BATMAN: THE KILLING JOKE* for DC before shifting his focus to work almost exclusively on cover illustrations. Since then, he has earned a reputation as one of the best cover artists in the industry, and his elegantly composed and beautifully rendered pieces have graced a host of titles, including *ANIMAL MAN*, *BATMAN*, *THE FLASH*, *THE INVISIBLES*, *WONDER WOMAN* and many more.



"This Sprang piece was a gift from an art collector who was in contact with a lot of artists. He knew I was a Sprang fan so he commissioned Dick to come up with this and paid him for it. Dick also included a very nice letter. He'd clearly seen my work and complimented me on the crispness of my line."

—Brian Bolland



ALAN MOORE

Alan Moore began working as a cartoonist in 1979 with several humorous strips in *Sounds* music weekly. After a year, he turned to writing, contributing to *Doctor Who Weekly* and *2000 AD*. This was followed by *Marvelman* (published in the United States as *Miracleman*) and the political thriller *V FOR VENDETTA*, which earned him the British Eagle Award for Best Comics Writer in 1982 and 1983. His groundbreaking run on *SWAMP THING* revolutionized comics and won him several industry awards. He is also the writer of the Hugo Award-winning *WATCHMEN*, a landmark series that firmly established him as the most influential writer in contemporary comics. In 1999 Moore launched his own comics imprint, America's Best Comics, through which he has created (along with many talented illustrators) *THE LEAGUE OF EXTRAORDINARY GENTLEMEN*, *PROMETHEA*, *TOM STRONG*, *TOMORROW STORIES* and *TOP TEN*.

"Easily the greatest Joker story ever told, *BATMAN: THE KILLING JOKE* is also one of Alan Moore's finest works. If you've read it before, go back and read it again. You owe it to yourself." — IGN

ONE BAD DAY.

According to the grinning engine of madness and mayhem known as the Joker, that's all that separates the sane from the psychotic. Freed once again from the confines of Arkham Asylum, he's out to prove his deranged point. And he's going to use Gotham City's top cop, Commissioner Jim Gordon, and his brilliant and beautiful daughter Barbara to do it.

Now Batman must race to stop his archnemesis before his reign of terror claims two of the Dark Knight's closest friends. Can he finally put an end to the cycle of bloodlust and lunacy that links these two iconic foes before it leads to its fatal conclusion? And as the horrifying origin of the Clown Prince of Crime is finally revealed, will the thin line that separates Batman's nobility and the Joker's insanity snap once and for all?

Legendary writer **Alan Moore** redefined the superhero with *WATCHMEN* and *V FOR VENDETTA*. In *BATMAN: THE KILLING JOKE*, he takes on the origin of comics' greatest super-villain, the Joker—and changes Batman's world forever.

Stunningly illustrated, *BATMAN: THE KILLING JOKE THE DELUXE EDITION* has been lushly recolored by artist **Brian Bolland**, presenting his original vision of this modern classic. This new edition includes *BATMAN: THE KILLING JOKE* and stories from *BATMAN: BLACK AND WHITE* #4 and *COUNTDOWN* #31, along with numerous Batman and Joker covers and sketches by Brian Bolland, including artwork only previously published in the Absolute edition!