

"Wild Card, Part Two" (12-12-02)

TEASER

FADE IN:

INT. JOKER'S CONTROL ROOM - NIGHT

Joker speaks directly to the camera.

JOKER

For those of you just tuning
in: Shame on you! Here's what
you've missed so far...

CUT TO:

RECAP MONTAGE

Joker explains he's hidden a time bomb in Vegas. Crowds try to evacuate. Batman disarms a bomb. Joker says he was lying there are lots of bombs. Royal Flush Gang impedes the Justice League. Batman tangles Jack in the helicopter. Green Lantern pushes Hawkgirl out of the path of the exploding bomb and is buried in debris. Hawkgirl reacts in horror.

CUT TO:

INT. JOKER'S CONTROL ROOM - NIGHT

The Joker concludes the recap.

JOKER

And now, back to the show.
Keep your eye on the ticking
clock!

Joker looks at the superimposed countdown clock at pretends to be concerned.

JOKER

Time's a-wastin'!

FADE OUT

END TEASER

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

EXT. AMOS FORTUNE'S CASINO - NIGHT

HAWKGIRL frantically digs through the pile of rubble where Fortune's Casino once stood.

HAWKGIRL

John! Where are you? John!

Hawkgirl paws through the debris, with no concern for herself. She pauses, did she find something?

ON THE RUBBLE

Part of Green Lantern's ARM sticks up through the debris. The arm is surrounded by his ring's glowing AURA (as will be the rest of his body).

ON HAWKGIRL

Relieved, she pushes debris off of Green Lantern's face and upper body. Green Lantern is unmoving. Her face falls

HAWKGIRL

John?

She grasps Green Lantern under the arms and pulls.

HAWKGIRL

(GRUNT of effort)

Green Lantern is wedged in too tight. Hawkgirl puts her wings into it, spreading them and flapping.

HAWKGIRL

(GRUNT of success)

She pulls Green Lantern free, then lays him gently on the ground.

HAWKGIRL

You okay? John?

Hawkgirl holds her palm just above Green Lantern's nose and mouth to see if he's breathing. He's not. She leans across him and tilts his head back to give him mouth-to-mouth. As she does, she rests her hand on his chest.

ON HAWKGIRL'S HAND

Resting on Green Lantern's chest, just over his heart.

WIDE

As Hawkgirl reacts, frantically searching Green Lantern's chest for a heartbeat.

HAWKGIRL

No!

Hawkgirl swings in position to begin CPR.

CUT TO:

INT. JOKER'S CONTROL ROOM - NIGHT

The Joker's watching the action on the monitors. He's putting on a doctor's smock and stethoscope as he speaks.

JOKER

Oooh! Medical drama! Life and death stakes. Compelling human conflict.

Joker snaps an over-sized, cartoonish reflector on his head and leers into the camera.

JOKER (CONT'D)

Ratings!

CUT TO:

EXT. AMOS FORTUNE'S CASINO - NIGHT

Hawkgirl is working steadily, giving Green Lantern CPR.

HAWKGIRL

(EXHALES of effort as she pumps)

ON HAWKGIRL'S HANDS

As she continues pumping. We can see Green Lantern's energy aura FLARE each time she compresses. The ring is "protecting" him from her "blows."

WIDER

Hawkgirl realizes what's happening. She switches tactics, pounding on Green Lantern's chest with her fist. The protective aura is even more evident here.

HAWKGIRL
(still pounding)
Can't get through his force
field. He's not even feeling
this.

CUT TO:

INT. JOKER'S CONTROL ROOM - NIGHT

Joker, still in his medical garb, paces back and forth, pretending to bark medical orders. He's enjoying this.

JOKER
IV, three-oh silk, intubate,
rib spreader. Stat! Stat, I
say!

CUT TO:

EXT. AMOS FORTUNES CASINO - NIGHT

Hawkgirl stops punching Green Lantern's chest. She pulls out her mace and looks at it for a beat, then makes a decision, thumbing it on. The mace crackles with electricity. Hawkgirl looks doubtful.

CUT TO:

INT. JOKER'S CONTROL ROOM - NIGHT

Joker mimes spreading conductive gel on electric paddles he's pretending to hold. He carefully holds the "paddles" up at shoulder level.

JOKER
Clear!

Joker mimes thrusting the paddles down onto a patient's chest.

CUT TO:

EXT. AMOS FORTUNE'S CASINO - NIGHT

Joker's motion is a graphic match to Hawkgirl, who puts her crackling mace down on Green Lantern's chest. Green Lantern's body jerks from the charge. She removes the mace. Green Lantern's body is still.

HAWKGIRL
(demanding)
C'mon!

Hawkgirl gives Green Lantern a second jolt, longer this time. She pulls the mace back.

GREEN LANTERN
(huge GASP of breath)

Hawkgirl checks his breathing. He seems fine. Relieved, she sits back on her heels, exhausted and happy, near tears but not crying.

HAWKGIRL
(quietly)
I can't believe I almost lost
you without ever telling you.

Green Lantern's eyes flutter open. He looks directly up at Hawkgirl.

GREEN LANTERN
(weak)
Telling me what?

CUT TO:

INT. JOKER'S CONTROL ROOM - NIGHT

Joker tosses aside his doctor props.

JOKER

Enough with the mushy stuff.
We've finally got a camera
crew back to the hotel where
Batman lucked into an upset
victory over Jack ...and knocked
off a perfectly good
girlfriend.

CUT TO:

EXT. CASINO ROOF - NIGHT

Jack is hopelessly tangled in the rotors of the downed
helicopter. Batman looks up at him without sympathy.

JACK

("stretched" voice?)
Hey! A little help here?

BATMAN

You help me first. Where's
Joker?

JACK

He didn't tell us. You going
to help me?

BATMAN

What do you think?

HARLEY (O.S.)

(exaggerated MOAN)

Batman turns to see HARLEY, woozy but miraculously unharmed,
stumbling out of the wreck.

BATMAN

Harley, where's Joker?

HARLEY

After all these years, you
still think I'd give up Mr. J?

BATMAN

Why not? He gave you up.

HARLEY

That was a long time ago! He's changed. We've been to couples counseling!

BATMAN

I'm talking about right now. Or haven't you been watching the show? Haven't you seen the way he touches her hair-

CUT TO:

INT. JOKER'S CONTROL ROOM - NIGHT

Joker is frowning as he watches the feed. He's absent-mindedly rubbing Ace's shoulders.

BATMAN (CONT'D)

-Rubs her shoulders?

Joker self-consciously removes his hands from Ace's shoulders and takes a step back.

CUT TO:

EXT. AMOS FORTUNE'S CASINO - NIGHT

Harley is getting angry.

HARLEY

You mean Ace? She's just a tool.

BATMAN

Really? Then why is she with him, while you're out here in the cold?

Harley explodes with anger and PUNCHES Batman in the face.

HARLEY

(angry GRUNT)

BATMAN

(impact grunt)

Batman falls forward onto Harley before sliding face-first into the roof. He's out cold. Harley runs off. The camera follows her.

JOKER (O.S.)
No! You nincompoop! Batman!--

CUT TO:

INT. JOKER'S CONTROL ROOM - NIGHT

Joker is yelling at the poor Director.

JOKER (CONT'D)
--Keep the shot on Batman!

DIRECTOR
Camera 212.

THE SHOT

It's the spot on the roof where Batman was unconscious a moment ago. No Batman.

DIRECTOR
Uh, he's gone.

WIDE ON THE CONTROL ROOM

Joker is apoplectic.

JOKER
I can see that! Find him!

Director frantically scans the monitors.

DIRECTOR
Got him! Camera 93.

JOKER
I knew I should have paid the extra money for that guy who does all the award shows...

CUT TO:

EXT. AMOS FORTUNE'S CASINO - NIGHT

Batman is swinging down towards where Hawkgirl is cradling Green Lantern in her arms.

BATMAN

Hawkgirl!

HAWKGIRL

Can't talk now. Green Lantern
needs medical attention!

Hawkgirl rises into the sky, carrying Green Lantern. She flies up and out of sight.

CUT TO:

INT. JOKER'S CONTROL ROOM - NIGHT

Joker stares at the monitor, displeased.

JOKER

Well, since our news copter is
out of commission, we won't be
able to see whether Green
Lantern croaks or not,
although I'd like to think he
will.

Joker turns back to camera, all smiles again.

JOKER

This is a good time to catch
up with some of the rest of
our stalwart cast.

CUT TO:

EXT. VEGAS STRIP - CONTINUOUS

FLASH is a blur as he zooms from building to building disarming bombs at super speed. Multiple camera angles have been edited together to show his progress.

JOKER (V.O.)

Don't show the tape on fast
forward!

DIRECTOR (V.O.)
It's not a tape. It's live.

JOKER (V.O.)
Oh. Carry on then.

Flash zooms past fleeing SHOWGIRLLS. He blurs back into the shot, pausing to give them a second look, then continues with his mission, zooming to the next bomb.

CUT TO:

INT. JOKER'S CONTROL ROOM - NIGHT

Joker is counting on his fingers.

JOKER
What do you know, folks? By my count, the Justice League has disarmed or disabled all of my bombs but one.

Joker "looks" at the timer in the corner of the screen and frowns.

JOKER
I still don't think they're going to make it, though.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE SPHINX HOTEL - NIGHT

Establishing a sphinx-themed hotel. Flash zooms inside.

CUT TO:

INT. SPHINX HOTEL - NIGHT

Flash finds the last bomb and begins to disarm it. He's sucker-punched by 10 and is flung across the room by the force of the blow.

FLASH
(CRY of pain, then impact GRUNT)

10

Didn't think it was going to
be that easy, did ya?

Flash climbs unsteadily back to his feet.

FLASH

Stay out of my way, no-neck.
I've got a job to do.

Flash doesn't see KING behind him, until King speaks.

KING

You want the bomb, you'll have
to go through us both.

All react as the wall explodes inward. SUPERMAN has just
flown into the scene.

SUPERMAN

I don't think that's going to
be a problem.

Ten grabs a concrete pillar and TEARS it out of the floor.

10

(GRUNT of effort)

Charging forward, 10 uses the pillar as a battering ram and
slams Superman through the wall.

SUPERMAN

(impact GRUNT)

FLASH zooms towards the bomb, pulling up short when an
ENERGY BLAST from KING cuts across his path and scores the
floor in front of the bomb.

FLASH

Whoa!

KING

I think it's time we find out
just how fast you are.

King fires a flurry of one handed ENERGY BOLTS at Flash, who
stays just ahead of them. Flash is being forced away from
the bomb.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE SPHINX HOTEL - NIGHT

Superman is flat on his back on the street. 10 gloats, standing above him.

10
I'm stronger than anybody. I
knew I was stronger than you!

Superman brushes aside the crumbled remains of the pillar as he rises to his feet.

SUPERMAN
I've heard it before.

Superman tears a corner out of a PYRAMID, ending up with a car-sized chunk of concrete pressed above his head. He smashes it down on a surprised 10.

10
(CRY of pain)

10 goes down to his knees under the assault but doesn't fall. 10 smashes his fists into the ground, and lifts a big chunk of the concrete under Superman's feet, upending him.

10
(GRUNT of effort)

SUPERMAN
(falling CRY)

CUT TO:

INT. SPHINX HOTEL - NIGHT

Flash is still dodging energy blasts. He runs up the wall, just ahead of the barrage and tries to reverse direction. King fires a two handed blast ahead of Flash's path, blowing a hole in the wall. There's nothing to run on, Flash falls to the ground.

FLASH
(impact GRUNT)

Flash looks up to see King standing above him, about to blast him from point-blank range.

FLASH
Oops. Gotta run.

King fires, but Flash is too fast, blurring out of the way. The blast blows a crater in the floor. King throws up his arm, reflexively covering his eyes.

Flash runs towards a MUMMY and circles it at super speed, unwinding its bandages. Flash runs back towards King and circles him, cocooning him in the bandages. Unable to keep his balance, King topples over.

FLASH
That about wraps him up.

KING
(muffled COMPLAINT)

FLASH
(apologetic)
I know. It's all I could think
of on the spur of the moment.

Flash reacts as a very angry King BLASTS his way free of the bandages.

KING
I'm going to incinerate you!

FLASH
Hey, I'm usually pretty funny.
Ask anybody!

CUT TO:

EXT. SPHINX HOTEL - NIGHT

10 is throwing a series of cars dozens of yards towards Superman, who is flying down the street dead at him.

10
(throwing GRUNTS)

As Superman reaches a car flying towards him, he plows right through it. Nothing's going to stop him, or even slow him down.

SUPERMAN
(impact GRUNTS)

Superman reaches 10 and unleashes a flying right hand that catches 10 flush in the jaw.

SUPERMAN
(punching GRUNT)

10
(impact GRUNT)

The blow flings 10 into the air like a missile, he plows through the Sphinx's nose and flies out the back of its head. 10's arc takes him down into the base of a building that looks like a giant ROULETTE WHEEL. The building crumbles on him. He's out cold.

CUT TO:

INT. SPHINX HOTEL - NIGHT

The fight has moved a great distance from the bomb. Flash is still dodging blasts from King. Flash stops in place and whirls, creating a mini TORNADO. The Tornado moves relentlessly towards King. Flash repeats the stunt, producing a second Tornado, which likewise tracks King.

King fires two-handed energy blasts at the tornadoes. They EXPLODE, with shockwaves that throw both men off their feet. Flash is angry.

FLASH
Get out of my way or I'll have
to take you down hard! I don't
have time for this.

SUPERMAN (O.S.)
No you don't.--

All react to Superman, entering the scene.

SUPERMAN (CONT'D)
--So take care of the bomb.
I've got this guy.

Flash looks at King, shaking his head.

FLASH
Man, you're in trouble now.

Flash zooms to the bomb and carefully opens it. This is delicate work.

KING fires blasts at Superman. Superman flinches back from the impact but stands strong. He walks forward, relentlessly.

ON FLASH

Continuing to work on the bomb as we...

WIPE TO:

SPLIT SCREEN

JOKER'S CONTROL ROOM

Triumphant Joker gloats, ostentatiously looking at his watch (there are about 8 seconds left on the superimposed countdown clock).

JOKER

Look at the time! Even Flash
can't disarm one of my bombs
in less than ten seconds.

Joker holds out his open palm to his crew members.

JOKER

The Justice League loses! Pay
up suckers!

Crew members reluctantly begin handing the Joker twenties.

FLASH'S SIDE OF THE SPLIT SCREEN

Flash and the bomb DISAPPEAR in front of our eyes.

WIPE TO:

FULL SCREEN OF JOKER'S CONTROL ROOM

Joker looks up at the monitor. Flash is gone. Everyone reacts to the SOUND of an explosion, somewhere far off.

JOKER

(already suspects
the answer)
What just happened?

DIRECTOR
He uh, I think-

JOKER
Get me an instant replay,
super-slow motion!

CUT TO:

INT. SPHINX HOTEL - NIGHT

EXTREME SLOW MOTION. Flash is working on the bomb, we see the clock ticking down, three ... two ... one ...

Flash wraps his arms around the bomb and begins to run with it. We see the center of the bomb glow red, then white.

CUT TO:

A SERIES OF ANGLES

As Joker's cameras struggle to keep him in frame, Flash runs outside with the bomb and heads down the strip into the desert.

Flash is holding the bomb as the explosion blossoms like a flower in an Edgerton film.

Finally Flash has run out of the range of the cameras. We can only see his wake as he runs into the desert.

REGULAR SPEED FOOTAGE AGAIN. Extremely long shot as the bomb completes its detonation, exploding far off in the desert.

CUT TO:

INT. JOKER'S CONTROL ROOM - NIGHT

Joker is actually quite impressed.

JOKER
Huh.

CUT TO:

INT. SPHINX HOTEL - NIGHT

King is still blasting Superman with energy bursts. Superman walks forward, less and less affected by the blasts until he grasps King's fists in his hands. Superman bears down on King's hands, containing his blasts and causing him great pain.

KING
(CRY of pain)

King slumps to the ground, defeated. Superman reacts to Flash, who is coming in from off camera.

FLASH (O.S.)
Hey, Supes! --

FLASH zips into the shot, dusting off his palms.

FLASH (CONT'D)
-- By my count that's the last
of the bombs. We win!

Superman warmly clasps Flash's shoulder.

SUPERMAN
That was a heck of a stunt you
just pulled off.

FLASH
I know. I can't wait to catch
the rerun.

Flash and Superman look up at a huge DIAMONDVISION SCREEN and see themselves in infinite regress.

CUT TO:

INT. JOKER'S CONTROL ROOM - NIGHT

Joker is standing right next to Ace.

JOKER
Was that great or what? Let's
give a big hand to the Justice
League for foiling my bomb
plot. C'mon!

WIDE as the crew uneasily joins the Joker in applause.

JOKER

And big ups to the crew. I
gave them a hard time but
they've done a wonderful job
bringing you all the action.

Joker applauds harder. The Director looks over at a crew
member who is slumped face down over a console.

DIRECTOR

"Hard time"? You killed four
of them.

Joker stares the Director down threateningly.

JOKER

The night is young.

Joker turns his attention back to the camera.

JOKER

You know, tonight's little
spectacular was picked up by
all the news channels--

CUT TO:

A SERIES OF ANGLES

A montage of images from Joker's broadcast. It's like a
highlight reel at the end of a sports broadcast:

SUPERMAN punches Ten through the Sphinx.

BATMAN brings down Harley's helicopter.

GREEN LANTERN disarms a bomb underwater.

HAWKGIRL gives Green Lantern CPR.

FLASH runs with the exploding bomb.

JOKER (V.O)

And the last 15 minutes or so has been running on the broadcast networks. According to my projections, we've got somewhere between 60 and 70 million people watching right now.

CUT TO:

INT. JOKER'S CONTROL ROOM - NIGHT

Joker continues his speech. Suddenly the other shoe drops. He's still smiling but the smile is sinister.

JOKER (CONT'D)

And that was the point, all along. You don't really think my plan was to blow up a bunch of tacky architecture, do you? Of course not! This whole thing was a stunt to get as many of you watching as possible. And it worked! My Royal Flush gang provided the conflict. The Justice League brought the star power.

Joker walks over behind Ace and puts his chin on her shoulder. The camera comes in until only their faces fill the frame.

JOKER (CONT'D)

And I brought the surprise ending.

Joker stands up. The shot goes wide, trying to keep up with him.

JOKER

Everyone watching the show right now is the punchline to my greatest joke ever. In just over five minutes, you'll all be hopelessly, incurably insane!

FADE OUT

END ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

INT. CONTROL ROOM - NIGHT

A VERY TIGHT CLOSEUP of Joker as he speaks to CAMERA:

JOKER

Can't stop looking, can you?
Wish it was animal magnetism,
but it's really my little ace-
in-the-hole over there...

He turns to look over his shoulder; ANGLE ADJUSTS to find Ace sitting a few feet away, staring at CAMERA. CAMERA now pushes past Joker and moves in CLOSE on Ace. WEEPY MUSIC begins to play.

JOKER (O.S.)

(mock sentimental)

Different, they called her.
Some even said she was a
monster...

MATCH DISSOLVE TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY (FLASHBACK, B&W)

A CLOSEUP of BABY ACE, on her back in a playpen. She appears to be a normal infant as she peers into CAMERA... except she's not smiling.

PULL BACK from Baby Ace, until we're looking over the shoulders of a man and woman who are sitting on a couch, looking at Baby Ace. The man has his arm around the woman.

JOKER (V.O.)

Now I ask you, is this a
monster?

REVERSE

The man and the woman both look dazed: bugged-out eyes, lolling heads, sagging jaws.

JOKER (V.O.)

Uh, don't answer that.

Dramatic MUSIC begins as we

CUT TO:

EXT. DESERT - NIGHT

A black sedan passes CAMERA.

JOKER (V.O.)
Condemned for something she
could barely comprehend, our
little Ace soon found herself
a guest of the government...

CAMERA CRANES up to reveal the government facility. The
sedan is on a road that lead directly to it.

JUMP CUT TO:

INT. THE FACILITY - NIGHT

Two men in high tech helmets are now dragging Child Ace into
the facility. She's struggling violently.

JOKER (V.O.)
... But even they were afraid
of her strange power.

Ace abruptly stops struggling when she sees:

THE HEADMASTER

He's standing in her path, and he, too, is wearing a high
tech helmet. He's also holding the headband we saw earlier.
He raises it.

BACK TO ACE

She begins to struggle again, but when the headmaster puts
the headband on her, she stops.

THE HEADMASTER

The headmaster takes off his helmet and continues to look at
Ace. The other men, now helmet-less, too, lead Ace away.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CONTROL ROOM - NIGHT (END FLASHBACK)

Joker is now massaging Ace's shoulders.

JOKER

My poor, poor Acey. All your
life, people have been
recoiling in fear from you.
Oh, can I relate! Maybe
that's why I'm the only one
who's never been scared of
you.

(fast, to CAMERA)

Ya see, Ace can send out
thoughtwaves that alter
perception...

NEW ANGLE - CLOSE ON ACE

She sits quietly, staring into CAMERA.

JOKER (V.O.) (CONT.)

...but enough with the jargon.
She can make you crazy just by
looking at you. In person, or
on TV.

WIDER

To include Joker.

JOKER (CONT.)

Even as a I speak, millions of
you slack-jawed couch potatoes
are losing your grip on
reality -- which, in my
opinion, is highly overrated
anyway. But you can't look
away, even though you know
something's terribly wrong.

CLOSE ON JOKER

He's starting to MORPH. The flesh on his face becomes a
churning cubist fantasy; his hair turns into hissing green
snakes.

JOKER (CONT.)
The best part? I'm immune to
all this... because I'm
already crazy!
(laughs)

He continues to laugh, but his image is suddenly shattered
as the Batwing crashes through it from behind, and we're
finally OUT OF JOKER'S SHOW and at:

EXT. VEGAS STRIP - NIGHT (SAME TIME)

The Batwing has crashed through the back of a giant diamond
vision screen that was showing Joker's show.

NEW ANGLE

Superman and Flash are standing below the screen; as debris
falls from the shattered screen, they snap out of their
trances. Then Batman lands near them.

BATMAN
You all right?

FLASH
I haven't seen anything like
that since college.

He rubs his eyes.

SUPERMAN
(to Batman)
I'll fly up and take out the
satellites--

BATMAN
No. Too much collateral
damage.

FLASH
But how else--

BATMAN
I'll deal with Joker. You
take care of them.

He points o.s.

NEW ANGLE - THE SIDEWALK

Manic, flipped-out pedestrians are fighting with each other.

PEDESTRIANS
(insane walla)

BACK TO SCENE

Flash is looking at them, shaking his head.

FLASH
You must have me confused with
Prozac-Man.

BATMAN
Go!

Flash zips off.

SUPERMAN
I'll smash some more TV's.
Looks like fun.

He flies o.s. HOLD ON Batman for a beat, then he moves
o.s., too.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. TV STUDIO - NIGHT

FOLLOWING Harley as she marches determinedly down a
corridor. Soon, she reaches the Joker's control room and
stops; over her shoulder, we can see Ace staring into a TV
camera -- and Joker right behind her, massaging her
shoulders.

CLOSE ON HARLEY

Boiling over.

HARLEY
You worthless, lying, two-
timing piece of--

ON JOKER

Turning to see her and putting on a big, fake grin.

JOKER
Harley, please, this is
television. No foul language.
Just plenty of foul deeds.

WIDE

Harley marches toward Joker.

HARLEY
I'll give you foul deeds...

She rolls up her sleeves, but Joker holds up his hands.

JOKER
Uh, before you do, mind if I
have a look at...

He reaches behind Harley's collar, feels around it for a moment, then pulls out something.

JOKER (CONT.)
...this?

CLOSE

He's holding a bat-tracer.

HARLEY (O.S.)
(gasps)

ON JOKER AND HARLEY

JOKER
Bats planted this on you when
he let you knock him out.
Then, like an idiot, you went
right where he thought you'd
go.

HARLEY
(ashamed)
Mr. J, I... I--

JOKER
Did you ever think that maybe
I'd be more monogamous if you
were less moronic?

We HEAR an o.s. door being kicked open. Joker reacts to the sound and turns his head.

NEW ANGLE - JOKER'S POV

Batman's in the doorway.

BACK TO JOKER

He reacts, then looks o.s. to Ace.

JOKER

My dear? Why don't you show
my old friend some
hospitality?

He points toward Batman.

ON ACE

She looks away from the TV camera, toward Joker at first, and then at Batman. She begins to concentrate.

CLOSE ON BATMAN

He takes a step forward, but then he stops.

HIS POV

The control room is now a brightly-colored hallucinogenic nightmare of writhing snakes and huge crawling bugs.

ON BATMAN

He rubs his eyes, then hesitantly steps forward.

ON JOKER (NON-HALLUCINOGENIC)

He's reacting gleefully:

JOKER

Even he isn't immune!
(to Ace)
Turn it up!

ACE

Leans forward, concentrating harder.

ON BATMAN

Grimacing in pain, he tries to continue forward, but stumbles, then begins to crawl.

HIS POV

Now Ace's face is serving as the backdrop to the hallucinations. Joker moves toward CAMERA, leering. His image distorts until just his teeth fill the frame.

JOKER
(echoey, phased)
Now you know how I see you.

NEW ANGLE - NON-HALLUCINOGENIC

Joker backhands Batman.

BATMAN
(impact grunt)

Batman hits the floor. Joker begins to kick him.

BATMAN
(more impact grunts)

As Joker continues to kick Batman, this non-hallucinogenic perspective becomes hallucinogenic. It's as if the whole world has now gone crazy.

JOKER
(out of breath)
Well, this is fun, but it
can't last forever.

He stops, looks around, sees a heavy lightstand and grabs it.

JOKER
Mmm, nice heft.

He lifts it over Batman.

CLOSER

He starts to bring it down on the seemingly dazed Batman, but Batman suddenly thrusts both hands up and catches the stand. Joker strains against him:

JOKER
(straining)

BATMAN
(straining)

VERY CLOSE ON BATMAN

He notices something directly in front of him.

HIS POV

Joker's jacket. There's something metallic peeking out from it. But is it just an hallucination?

WIDER

Keeping one hand on the lightstand, Batman lets go with the other and reaches into Joker's coat. He pulls out something, but an instant later, Joker is able to force the lightstand down on him.

BATMAN
(impact grunt)

Batman falls away.

CLOSE ON JOKER

Exultant.

JOKER
I haven't felt this good since
I got out of Arkham. The
sixth time.

He raises the lightstand again, but:

ACE (O.S.)
What did he take out of your
jacket?

Joker's smile fades as he turns to see...

WIDER

Ace is approaching.

JOKER
Why... nothing.

ACE
I saw him take something out
of your jacket.

Joker feels inside his jacket for something. Finding nothing, he looks down at Batman.

BATMAN

Is dazed, but he's got Ace's high tech headband in his fist.

JOKER

Reacts in horror, but then pastes on a smile.

JOKER
Just a little trinket, that's
all.

He bends to retrieve it from Batman. But:

ACE
Don't.

Joker stops cold.

WIDER

Ace comes closer, so she can get a good look at the headband.

ACE
That's the headband they had
me wearing back in the desert.
What were you doing with it?

JOKER
I... uh...

CLOSE ON BATMAN

Now awake again.

BATMAN
(weak, to Ace)
He's afraid of you.

WIDER

JOKER
Nnn... Nonsense!

ACE
You are, aren't you?

JOKER
(fast, nervous)
Why would I be afraid of you?
We're two of a kind, remember?
Outcasts...

ON BATMAN

BATMAN
Romantic. So why did you want
to make everyone just like
you?

JOKER

JOKER
I need a reason?

BATMAN

BATMAN
I think you had one. You
finally got sick of being a
freak. You just wanted to be
like everyone else.

ON JOKER

Busted. A long beat, then:

JOKER
(sighs)
If you prick me, do I not
bleed?

ON HARLEY

By a work table.

HARLEY
Let's find out!

She picks up a pair of scissors... but Ace now steps in front of her.

ACE
I've got something better.

HARLEY
Go, girl.

Ace now turns to look at Joker, o.s.

ACE
(sarcastic)
'I know what it's like to
frighten other people. That's
why I'm not afraid of you.'
'I'm the only one...'
(beat)
You were using me, just like
the government. And when you
were done, you were going to
put that thing back on my
head.

WIDE

She points at the headband, still firmly clasped in Batman's hand.

JOKER
Let's not jump to
conclusions--

ACE
You were right to be afraid of
me. What I did tonight was
just a fraction of what I can
do. Here's the rest.

Ace starts toward Joker.

JOKER

Kneels down next to Batman. He reaches for the headband,
but Batman won't let go.

JOKER

Come on, give it up, Bats.
You know I'm the lesser of the
two evils.

BATMAN

Can't hear you. My ears are
still ringing from the beating
you gave me.

Ace's shadow now falls on Joker. He looks up at her.

JOKER

(gulp)

Joker starts to back away; Ace continues toward him.

JOKER

Is backing away, hands held up.

JOKER

Now Har-- I mean Ace--

VERY CLOSE ON ACE

Her eyes widen in anger, but then her pupils expand, until
each eye is entirely black. She bends her head forward,
concentrating.

ON JOKER

He starts to tremble. He clasps his head with both hands.

JOKER

(cries of pain)

He falls to his knees.

JOKER

(more cries)

Then he collapses.

JOKER

(moans)

The hallucinogenic effect now fades away as Joker lies there
on the floor.

ON BATMAN

Still on the ground, too. He now looks around.

THE CONTROL ROOM (BATMAN'S POV)

QUICK PAN: all is normal again.

ON BATMAN

Sitting up, he sees:

ACE

Standing over Joker.

BATMAN (O.S.)
What are you going to do?

ACE
Nothing.

She turns and walks toward an exit door. She pauses by the door, and it opens... by itself. She steps out.

BACK TO BATMAN

He reacts to this, then lies back down, exhausted.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. WATCHTOWER - SICK BAY - NIGHT

CLOSE ON Hawkgirl, talking on a communicator.

HAWKGIRL
...and you're sure you're
okay?... And Superman?
Flash?... Uh huh, uh huh.
(beat)
He'll be all right, but it was
real close.

Keeping Hawkgirl in the f.g., MOVE CAMERA IN AN ARC until we see GL resting in a hospital bed in the b.g.

HAWKGIRL (CONT.)
The hard part now'll be
keeping him here long enough
to get some rest.

(beat)
I will.

She clicks off.

GL
I'm in no hurry to leave...

She turns to look at him.

GL (CONT.)
... We've got some things to
talk about.

HAWKGIRL
We do...

NEW ANGLE

She leans in close to him.

HAWKGIRL (CONT.)
(whispering)
We've got so much unfinished
business.

GL
But now we don't need to leave
it unfinished, do we?

She backs away a bit.

HAWKGIRL
I can't.

GL
Why not?

HAWKGIRL
I have reasons.

GL
Something to do with me? That
we work together?

HAWKGIRL

No.

He leans toward her.

GL

Look, sometimes we forget
we're not just spandex suits
and energy weapons; we're
people, too. And if we
learned anything from what
happened today, it's that we
need to grab the moment,
'cause there might not be
another one.

He reaches for her mask.

NEW ANGLE - OVER HER SHOULDER

She remains calm as GL pulls off her mask. Then he sits up
and kisses her. A beat, then she kisses him back.
Passionately.

FADE OUT

THE END