

BATMAN GETS A COFFEE

A short play by Michael Alberstadt

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Characters:

BATMAN, 40s, muscular, snugly dressed in a Batman costume

TRENT, 30s, average, casual in a trench coat and jeans

Lights up on BATMAN as he steps to the railing of the Staten Island Ferry. He adjusts his ample codpiece then leans on the railing and enjoys the view.

TRENT enters. He sees Batman and saunters over to him.

TRENT

You're a hard man to find, Mr. Simpson.

Batman is noncommittal.

TRENT

Dave Simpson? AKA Dave Simian, AKA The Gorilla...

BATMAN

(In a gruff, Batman voice)

No.

TRENT

Whaddya mean, no.

BATMAN

I'm not your guy.

TRENT

You are.

BATMAN

No.

TRENT

I made a positive I.D.

BATMAN

How so?

TRENT

You got a distinctive mole.

BATMAN

A mole?

TRENT

On your chin.

BATMAN

It's a birthmark.

TRENT

Whatever. It's shaped like Cape Cod.

BATMAN

You got a good look, did you?

TRENT

I was in line behind you at Dunkin' Donuts. You got an espresso.

BATMAN

Nothing like the smell of espresso in the morning. You?

TRENT

What?

BATMAN

You look like a frilly macchiato guy.

TRENT

I got a French Cruller and an orange juice... look, I know you're Dave Simpson.

BATMAN

No.

TRENT

Yes! You're the guy: Dave Simpson, aka Dave Simian, aka The Gorilla...

BATMAN

Nope.

TRENT

Okay, fine. I know what I know, and I know that you're the guy I'm here for. You gotta come with me.

BATMAN

For a coffee?

TRENT

Yes... NO! Not a coffee...

BATMAN

-- Because they took out the concession stand --

TRENT

-- NOT. A. COFFEE. You gotta come with me right now.

BATMAN

No.

TRENT

Okay, wise guy... look.

*Trent opens his trench coat, revealing a gun
in a shoulder holster.*

BATMAN

Nice piece.

TRENT

Thanks. It's a Walther PP.

BATMAN

I honestly expected you to flash me.

TRENT

This is the end of the line, pal. You can't steal \$10 million from the D'Agostino family and expect to get away with it.

BATMAN

I didn't.

TRENT

You did. And when this ferry docks, we will walk off together, I will shoot you in the head, and you will swim with the fishes.

BATMAN

No.

TRENT

What do you mean, no?!

BATMAN

Why don't you shoot me here?

TRENT

In front of 5,000 witnesses. Great idea.

BATMAN

Witnesses watch me beat up crooks all the time. The Joker, Copperhead, Nocturna...

TRENT

-- Is ComiCon in town this weekend? If I had wanted a cosplay experience, I would have rented a Superman suit.

BATMAN

Poor choice.

TRENT

You got something against Superman?

BATMAN

He's a pussy.

TRENT

He can fly, moron.

BATMAN

I can fly. I have a Bat-plane.

TRENT

Dave Simpson does not have a Bat-plane.

Batman shrugs. Enjoys the view.

TRENT

Okay, then... who are you?

BATMAN

I'm Batman.

TRENT

I suppose the Bat Cave is on Staten Island.

BATMAN

As far as you know.

TRENT

Does Alfred have dinner waiting for you?

BATMAN

Actually Robin cooks me dinner.

TRENT

I suspect it's not Tuna Helper.

BATMAN

Billionaires don't eat Tuna Helper.

TRENT

I am this close to shooting your ass right here and tossing you into New York Harbor.

BATMAN

With 5,000 witnesses?

TRENT

You're not getting off this ferry without me, buddy. We will ride past Lady Liberty 10,000 times if that's what it takes to pop a slug in your pumpkin.

BATMAN

It's a great view...

TRENT

-- You'll need to pee again. I can ice you in the bathroom. If a couple of innocent witnesses happen to wander in, it's their funeral.

BATMAN

All this over a mole?

TRENT

*(Stabbing a finger into
Batman's chest.)*

-- YOU STOLE \$10 MIL FROM THE D'AGOSTINO FAMILY..!

BATMAN

(Strong-arming Trent.)

-- Hey, boundaries, buddy! Respect the personal space!

TRENT

Okay, okay!

(Waving to witnesses offstage)

We're cool. Totally fine!

BATMAN

You give this attitude to your family?

TRENT

Leave my family out of this.

BATMAN

Your wife must wonder.

TRENT

I am a happily married man.

BATMAN

You have kids?

TRENT

You're trying to get into my head.

BATMAN

Nope.

TRENT

I am the D'Agostino's number two assassin. I've iced eleven people this year alone.

BATMAN

Who's number one?

TRENT

She works... international... you want a Coke, or beer, or some other large serving of beverage?

BATMAN

No concessions, bro.

TRENT

I saw a vending machine.

BATMAN

Does Miss Number One make the same as you?

TRENT

Yes... no... look, I have no idea.

BATMAN

Women make 70% of what men make on average.

TRENT

Actually we're paid a set fee.

BATMAN

Still, the gender thing.

TRENT

Look, I should have killed you by now.

BATMAN

Your kids must be proud.

TRENT

My kids think I sell insurance.

BATMAN

Auto?

TRENT

Life.

BATMAN

There's some irony.

TRENT

Granted, though an assassin and a vigilante meeting on a ferry has a bit of its own.

BATMAN

We should be walking into a bar. Perhaps with a priest.

TRENT

You're kids must love what you do. Big man. Big hero.

BATMAN

They're in the dark about the specifics.

TRENT

You're away a lot, I imagine.

BATMAN

*(His gruff voice slips into
Jersey Italian.)*

It's lonely, y'know? Sittin' on top of buildings, huntin' for criminals. Sometimes you just wanna be there for the bedtime stories.

TRENT

Right? *Where the Wild Things Are* and all that shit.

BATMAN

Mine are just tots. They like them Little Golden Books... *Poky Little Puppy* and such.

TRENT

And Robin keeps the home fires burning.

BATMAN

Yeah, Robin's a peach, she is. Best gal a guy could ever have.

TRENT

Bruce Wayne never had children.

BATMAN

Say what?

TRENT

In the DC Comics. Bruce Wayne was a bachelor.

BATMAN

Well, shit... he was a billionaire, right? He got around.

TRENT

And I thought Robin was a dude.

BATMAN

He is. I mean, uh, in the DC Comics he's a guy, but...

TRENT

We're not in the DC Comics.

BATMAN

Yeah... NO, no, this is real life. The real Batman...

TRENT

-- Do you suppose Batman would speak in the third person? Or with a Jersey accent?

Batman realizes his error.

BATMAN

(In his gruff, Batman voice)

No.

TRENT

No, he would not.

BATMAN

I use different voices for different occasions.

TRENT

O-kay...

BATMAN

Is that the Bat Signal? I think Gotham needs me.

TRENT

Look, can we put this charade to bed? We know the story here. We know how this ends.

BATMAN

Do we?

TRENT

We do. I take Dave Simpson, aka Dave Simian, aka The Gorilla off this ferry, put a bullet in his head and introduce his mortal remains to Charlie the Tuna.

BATMAN

Huh.

They both look at the view for a moment.

BATMAN

Robin is a baby-momma with big boobs.

TRENT

I assumed that.

BATMAN

And my kids need their dad.

TRENT

And the D'Agostinos need their \$10 million. No one involved here is going to get what they want except me.

BATMAN

Yeah...

Batman assessed Trent for a moment.

BATMAN

You suppose your kids respect what you do?

TRENT

Selling insurance is a respectable career.

BATMAN

You know what I mean.

TRENT

My kids won't ever know what you mean.

BATMAN

Yeah, but you know what your kids would think if they knew what I mean.

TRENT

Surely you have to go to the john by now...

BATMAN

-- Would they think you were heroic?

TRENT

Is that the inspiration for the Caped Crusader costume?

BATMAN

Robin suggested it. She's a bit kinky.

TRENT

There's that irony again.

BATMAN

Nobody in New York City gives a stud in a super suit a second glance. I can get things done, incognito.

TRENT

Bummer about that Cape-Cod-shaped birthmark --

BATMAN

-- I want to be heroic to my kids, y'know? To be something...

TRENT

-- If you start monologuing on me, I'll have to kill myself. And to answer your stupid question, no, I'm not proud of what I do but the money is good and the kids can go to Ivy League schools and I can make love to my wife on beaches in Fiji and...

Trent pauses at Batman's wry smile.

BATMAN

I see why you're number two.

Trent takes in the view, disgusted with himself.

BATMAN

Alternate plan. I jump from this ferry and swim to Lady Liberty.

TRENT

And drown in your rubber suit? Have at it.

BATMAN

The Bat-Sub might be waiting.

TRENT

In your wet dreams.

BATMAN

I could introduce you to The Joker.

TRENT

Hard pass.

BATMAN

How can I convince you the I'm the Batman?

TRENT

Okay, look. As your last, dying request I will humor you. Call Alfred, summon Bat Boy, whatever... do something Batman-y.

Batman examines the tools hanging from his belt uneasily. He yanks a bat-like boomerang from it and swings it in a wide, dramatic arc. It accidentally smacks Trent in the head and Trent collapses, unconscious.

BATMAN

Oh, shit...

Batman glances around and waves politely at some tourists off stage. He checks Trent for a pulse, pulls Trent's gun from its holster and drops it into the Hudson.

He yanks a cell phone from his codpiece and surreptitiously hits speed-dial.

BATMAN

(In the Jersey accent.)

Robin! No, no... listen! The Batman suit was swell cover for a while, but I've been made. Grab the bug-out bag, get the kids from daycare and hightail it to JFK. I'll meet youze in Bogota in a week.

Batman hangs up.

BATMAN

God, I would kill for an espresso right now.

He hurries off stage.

CURTAIN.