

Something like A Dark Knight

by Damion Hamilton

Rob was having a hard time of it. His whole life was like that-- in and out of jail for assault, robbery and selling drugs. He tried to go straight. A career counselor, had set him up, with a job in a warehouse. But he just couldn't handle that type of work. He did it for a few weeks, and he got to the point to were he just couldn't wake up in the mornings to face the day. He couldn't relate to the people he worked with. The job paid the minimum wage, which was so different from selling crack. The money he got in cash instantly.

So he went back to that. He wasn't balling, but he was making enough to get by. But he knew that the cops, and rival dealers were always a threat, so this kept him paranoid most to the time. He tried to relieve the stress with weed and PCP and it worked most of the time. But after fifteen years of selling drugs, the police knew who he was, and what he did? So he was always being harassed and bothered by them when he set up shop to sell his dope.

They would often gang up on him, and bully him. Especially this one cop, named Anderson, who went to school with him, way back in the day. They would take him in for loitering, when they couldn't find any drugs on his person. They often man handled him, and pushed his face against a cement wall. He wasn't the brightest guy on earth, but knew that his rights were being violated. And the abuse was unnecessary.

A few days in the county jail for loitering or being high or drunk in public. He hated that because he couldn't make his living from the streets.

And even when he was not doing anything wrong. He seemed to always be getting pulled over for not having his car registered, for not having insurance, for speeding, and any other minor offense one could speak of. He got to the point, where he hated the police, and wanted to see his tormentors die.

He was very light skinned black man-- but he looked up to the black panthers, and the black Muslims. Anyone who spoke for minorities against the oppression of the majority.

He began to slowly unravel, he wasn't really rapped to tight to begin with. He was quick to get into a fist fight, over little provocation. He was stressed, because his mother was slowly dying from lung cancer. And getting into fights and getting drunk was an outlet for that kind of pain.

When his mother finally succumbed to the disease, something in him snapped. The tender side of him had shown, for he had went to see her in hospital the whole time she was in there. There was all kinds of tubes running through her body, and a lot of time she was unconscious. He felt guilty.

Along with his brothers, they had put their mother through a lot of stress, while she was alive, and had worried her to death.

Now she was gone.

He had a hard time selling drugs after that. He would just get high and hang out, which drew further police scrutiny. They would stop him because he looked like he was homeless, and intoxicated.

They would asked questions like: what is your name, where do

you live, what day of the week it was? And he couldn't answer any of these. Then they would take him down to little jail, where he would sit there, until he came down off his high.

He would be pissed off and screaming. And the forces that kept holding back, would be right there in front of him forming a white monolith of bureaucracy. That was a world he was born into, which he could not quite understand.

He got stopped one night, driving his car, high off PCP and naked. The police pepper-- sprayed him and tased him, and took him down to the emergency room, and after that, he was eventually taken to the psyche ward. Where the doctors gave him powerful sedatives, like Thorazine. Which kept him in a zombie like state, for a couple of weeks.

But once he was out the hospital, his doctors wrote him a prescription for the less powerful Valium. But some of his old thoughts and feelings were returning. The time he spent in jail, talking to the Black Muslims about hating the cops, and how the system was unfair, and one was trapped from the beginning. He had shot enemies on the street before, but he had never been arrested for a body.

He did a lot of time thinking. He was almost forty years old, and had felt that he had never did anything important with his life. Something big, he didn't have a name. And to get name in the world, one had to do something really BIG.

He had inherited his mother's home which was paid for. He brought in his girlfriend to live with him. She was plain looking, and fat, yet made a living by doing hair. She was someone he could talk

to. So he kept telling her that he wanted to shoot a police officer, especially while they were watching the show, Cops. That show pissed him off, so many people were living life, like how he was living it. And they were getting punked by the police. Black, White, Asian, Latino, it didn't matter. The cops were the ultimate gang.

His heroes became guys, who shot and killed police officers, and guys who just snapped and went on killing sprees.

One thing he knew for sure, was that it would be highly unlikely that he would get away, with such a crime. But he thought that he really didn't have that much to live for. The woman he had loved, most in his life was gone. His mother, and he didn't really love his girlfriend that much. So he wouldn't miss her if he lived or died. He had never been close to his brothers. So he wouldn't miss them at all.

He wanted to show the world that he had balls-- really had balls. So his plans about killing an officer, became more detailed. His girlfriend figured he didn't have the courage to do something like that. Even though he kept talking about it.

He saw a movie that changed his life, it was the Dark Knight. He could really identify with the Joker played by Heath Ledger. The Joker had balls, and he became kinda a hero to Rob. There was one line in the film that really stood out to him. "Some men just want to watch the world burn." He identified with that statement immensely. He wanted to see the whole establishment destroyed.

He knew the guy he wanted to murk. That man was Anderson, a twenty five year sergeant on the force. And the guy who had been arresting him, since he was a very young man.

He became obsessed with the idea of killing the man. He would just drive down the suburb where he was on patrol and just watch him, imagining himself, with a gun and pulling the trigger, and emptying rounds into him.

Those fantasies became a plan. One of his homeboys, he knew always had guns on him, which he stole from people's homes. He bought one off him--an ole .38 special for one hundred dollars. He knew that gun would not jam on him.

He would hold the gun in his hands, in the basement, and pretend to shoot an imaginary target. He kept reading about the Black Panthers and Malcolm X, while his girlfriend worked to support them both.

He made forays into the popular entertainment district, just to get out the house and watch people, and sometimes he would panhandle.

Anyplace in a city, where there is a large crowd passing through is a good place to panhandle.

He would hang out by himself sometimes, and would just take in the scene of city life. The other panhandlers, the street musicians, the people going in and out of the bars and restaurants.

He would smoke some weed or get something to drink from one of the bars and just chill, and beg people for money.

Sometimes he would hit on the young girls or bully some of the young kids, or get together with some of his other homies and plan

some things. New ways to get money.

Kids tried to sell drugs in the area, but the cops were always around, and would search and seize their stuff and take them in. People couldn't stay out of jail trying to sell junk in this area of the town. Ten or twelve police cruisers constantly patrolled the streets.

One day, his mind was bent on PCP and weed. He was just sitting on a bench in the middle of the afternoon. A couple of bull cops approached him to see what he was doing there. He was obviously high. Officer Anderson was one of them.

"eh, my man, what are doing out here. It's three in the afternoon, shouldn't you be at work or something?"

"I'm just chilling dog, it's a nice day, look at the sunshine and shit man."

"yeah it is a nice day, but you can't sit here loitering my man."

"what's loitering?"

That's when you hang out in front of a business for hours, and you are not purchasing anything. It's bumming around, and that is exactly what your are doing."

"I thought this was a free country. They told me that shit in school."

"it was a free country, but you can't hang out in front of a local store front and pan handle. it's against the law."

"I wasn't panhandling."

"that's bullshit. We got several complaints from people in the area."

"who tole on me?"

"that don't matter my man."

The officers padded him down, and found a few packets of weed, on him.

We can take you down, on this a lone, along with the panhandling charge.

The officers grabbed him, hand cuffed him, and put him in the back of the police car. And took him to local municipal jail.

He spent a couple days in there. Before the judged fined him, and sent him along his way.

This short jail sentenced only served to add fuel to the fire, that was burning inside of him. He hated the judge and the police even more. His time in jail was boring, and he thought about killing himself the whole time he was in jail.

His girlfriend picked him up from jail, he didn't like walking to the car with no shoe laces in his shoes. She could sense his sullenness.

"you okay baby? She asked?"

"Naw, I m tried of these pigs fuckin wit me, that's it. They always fuckin wit black people. You go down to the court house, and all you see is black muthafuckas. I swear man, I gon kill one of these muthatfuckas. Why not? We kill each other everyday. Might as well murk one of dem white niggaz."

"you talkin crazy, Rob. Like always."

"what? You think I don't got the heart, to do the shit?"

She remained silent, and kept driving.

When they got home, they watched a movie. They had purchased a bootlegged copy of the film, The Dark Knight, from the Batman series. Rob really identified with the Joker Character played brilliantly by Heath Ledger.

The Joker had a philosophy, and it made sense to Rob. "Fuck Everything, destroy everything. Don't let authority get in the way." There was nothing socially redeemable about the character. There was that line that stood out for him in the movie, "some men just wanted to watch the world burn."

It was a powerful statement, and something Rob had never heard

another human being say before. But he had thought it, and felt it his whole life. Now it was being communicated in a movie.

He went to bed and the line kept playing over and over again in his head, "some men just want to watch the world burn."

He thought about the Joker and how powerful he was, and didn't really care about money, he just wanted to cause as much destruction as possible, and to obliterate authority.

A few weeks went by, and he decided that he was ready to die, which was the worst case scenario. He had an escape plan he didn't tell his girl friend about. He had a brother in Arizona, that he was going to go live with; if he was able to make it out of Missouri, if his plan went well.

Halloween night would be the night he planned to murder Anderson.

What better night he told himself? Everyone would be dressed in costumes, there would be a large crowd around. The police would be busy doing a lot of other things.

He watched television, smoked a blunt, and drank a forty ounce of Olde English.

He took his girl friend's car, who had just finished braiding his hair to the back. He was hoping that they would throw any witnesses off a bit. He was known for sporting a huge afro.

He got down to the popular entertainment district and there was scores of people out hanging around in costumes: dressed as zombies, skeletons, ghosts, with fake blood on their faces and the Joker, white face with painted lips, which resembled a demented clown was really huge that year.

He held the gun tight in his waistband, with his belt.

He saw the guy he wanted to kill, sitting parked in a police cruiser, looking at his computer. He thought about doing it instantly, but he couldn't. He had parked his car in a parking lot, and figured he better have the thing ready and running, to make a quick get away.

He got back to parking lot, put the keys in the ignition and took off. He knew that his life would never be the same afterwards.

He parked a little down the block from where the cruiser was parked, underneath a small tree, outside of a coffee shop.

Rob got out of his car, and began walking towards the coffee shop. He figured he might have something to drink while he pondered.

He came outside, and instead of drinking his coffee on the outside patio, he sat down near some bushes of an adjacent apartment complex. And watched officer Anderson for sometime. Who would look up, every once in a while, but his eyes were glued to the laptop mostly.

Rob held his breath for a count of ten, withdrew his gun from his waste band, ran up to the car from a sitting position, let off three shots rapidly, from less than a foot away, and missing with the other two rounds. He dropped the gun in the car and took off to his own blue Buick.

Anderson had been shot in the chest, the neck and the face. He was still breathing though, as Rob ran down the street, and got in his car. Another officer, who had been in the area rushed to check

Anderson, who was not moving. “officer down,” he yelled into his radio.

Rob had sped away into the night. With a long head start on the police, who would not catch him this night.

Anderson was latter pronounced dead at a local hospital.

