

## **GOTHAM CITY v. BATMAN**

### **PARTS TO ASSIGN:**

District Attorney

Two Batman enemies (Joker, Riddler, Penguin, Catgirl, etc.)

Defense Attorney

Batman (defendant)

Commissioner Gordon (defense witness)

### **THE CASE**

This is a criminal case because we find the kids understand “guilty” and “not guilty” better than they do comparative negligence. Remember as well that for most of these kids, they will know Batman from the recent movies and not the campy 60s show.

It is easier to pretend that we are in Gotham City and not Stroudsburg.

### **THE FACTS**

Batman broke into the secret hideout of enemies (Joker, Penguin – depends on who you get to play the parts) where they were planning a new bank robbery. Crashing through a plate glass window and miraculously not getting cut, he swooped in and engaged in a fist fight with these villains and their henchmen.

Soon after the police arrived. Surprisingly, after interviewing everyone, they arrested Batman on charges of Trespassing and Assault.

Don't get too complicated so as not to confuse the kids. Let's not get into definitions of whether the bad guys were already “conspirators” and whether character evidence should be excluded.

Before calling Commissioner Gordon as a character witness, the defense should first call for “Bruce Wayne” who will, for some reason, not show up.

## **EXHIBITS**

You are encouraged to come up with whatever exhibits you can create; it never fails that when we write these things, great ideas we never thought of come out of the teams. If you do come up with a great idea for an exhibit, please share these with the other teams.

Some exhibit ideas include:

- A rap sheet for the prosecution witness (probably on a long roll of paper)
- Message from the Riddler
- A map of the bank with escape routes and other notes

We will try to provide many of these but make no guarantees; they are not necessary for the case but will help explain to the kids how a trial works.

Coordinators should distribute this entire packet to all their actors since there is information in everyone's testimony that will be important.

## **THE CONCLUSION**

It might be fun to have something happen after the verdict is read. If Batman wins, the bad guys can get upset and attack him and if Batman loses, well, the bad guys can attack him anyway just to taunt him. Batman music should play and a fight can break out, accompanied by signs saying "Bam!" and "Pow!" The deputies can eventually grab the bad guys and haul them away.

## **BATMAN (DEFENDANT)**

I am The Batman. I must keep my identity secret in order to protect myself and those I love. I wear a costume in order to strike fear into the hearts of criminals, a cowardly and superstitious lot.

Since I started patrolling Gotham City, crime has fallen greatly. I have been able to accomplish things the police never could. The police thank me for helping them and in fact sometimes use the “bat signal” to let me know if there is something important I need to do for them.

I do not work for the police however and accept no compensation or assistance from them.

Recently, I received a message from the Riddler which said “Riddle me this, Batman: What is it that has hands and a face but no body?” Well, I knew at once that it was a clock! Obviously, he was telling me that the First Bank of Gotham was going to be robbed that night, since that is where the biggest clock in Gotham is!

I knew that criminals often hid in abandoned warehouses down by the docks so I hopped in the batmobile and headed to the waterfront. Sure enough, I found a building where I could hear plans being made for the robbery! They were gathered around a table with a large map of the bank, with escape routes planned out.

The doors were all locked, so I broke in and was immediately set upon by the bad guys and their goons! They were no match for me, and soon they were all knocked out and tied up with my batrope.

It was then that the police arrived and I was arrested. I of course did not fight the police, and have appeared voluntarily for my trial today, knowing that the good citizens of Gotham will never find me guilty – for that would guarantee that the criminals would run rampant over the city!

## **COMMISSIONER GORDON (DEFENSE CHARACTER WITNESS)**

I am Police Commissioner Gordon. I have known Batman for years, and often call him using the batsignal. He is honest and trustworthy.

The District Attorney wanted to make a name for himself and told other officers to arrest Batman the next chance they could get. I never approved of this.

Yes, Batman does technically break the law when he does these things but we have never prosecuted him because the benefits outweigh the negatives. Besides, it's only breaking the law because he is not an officer. If one of my officers had been outside that warehouse and heard what was going on and then broke in, there would be no problem at all.

It would not be a good idea if everyone was allowed to go around being a vigilante. People can be wrong after all. We don't want people breaking into other people's homes trying to arrest everyone.

It is true that technically, none of the evil bad guys that Batman tied up that day had broken any laws at that point. It's not illegal to talk about robbing a bank, it's only illegal to do it.

## **BAD GUY #1 (PROSECUTION WITNESS)**

*This is a generic guide for the two Batman villains who will testify. Each group may have different ones, and the actors portraying them should ham it up appropriately for each character.*

I am (Batman bad guy). As a purely hypothetical intellectual exercise, my friend and I met in an abandoned warehouse to discuss a game we are planning to produce called "Bank robber". You use a map, and you roll the dice, and you see if you can steal the money. It's just a game. We're hoping Milton Bradley takes an interest.

We didn't want anyone to steal our game idea, so we met in the warehouse. Since so many criminals hang out in the docks, we hired bodyguards to protect us and gave them all matching costumes. We do have class, don't we?

We were working on the rules of this game when this crazed crusader broke the window and starting attacking us for no reason! We tried to protect ourselves but he beat us senseless and then tied us up! What is this city coming to when innocent people get attacked for no reason?

Well, yes, technically we were trespassing I suppose, but no one has used the warehouse for years, and even if we were, that means Batman was too! And we're not on trial here.

Yes, I do have a long record of crime but I've done my time and I'm off parole now. I've mended my ways! Trust me.

## **BAD GUY #2 (PROSECUTION WITNESS)**

*Bad Guy #2 should echo the same information, with a different personality, but at one point should let something slip:*

Well, (Bad Guy #1) had this great idea that if we didn't want to ever get in trouble any more, we should get the new District Attorney on our side! So we told the DA that he should arrest Batman and he'd be sure to get lots of publicity for his re-election campaign! So we had the Riddler send Batman a message and then we pretended we were going to rob a bank, knowing Batman would show up! It's brilliant plan! But don't tell anyone.