DCEU BATMAN: TO KILL A LEGEND

Based on Detective Comics No. 500. Written by Alan Brennert. With Art by Dick Giordano, John Costanza, and Adrienne Roy. Adapted by Ben Wan.

Cast

Batman/Bruce Wayne (Affleck)

Narrator/The Phantom Stranger

Joe Chill

Thomas Wayne

Jack Napier (Batman 89 cameo)

Thomas Wayne (Begins Version cameo, but can be the same as the Thomas Wayne in this story)

Gordon

Young Bruce Wayne

Martha Wayne

Lew Moxon

Gunman

Sound Effects

The sound of two gunshots.

The sound of a car driving.

The sound of wind passing through as he's transported to another world.

The sound of an explosion.

The sound of screams.

The sound of a man fainting.

The sound of sirens.

The clicking of several guns.

The sound of Batman fighting off the cops.

The sound of Batman's cape flapping.

The sound of a toy breaking.

The sound of breaking glass. Then the sound of gunfire.

The sound of another explosion.

The sound of Batman punching Moxon.

The sound of a gun clicking.

The sound of paper tearing as Gordon gives the address to Batman.

Chill takes his last breath.

The sound of a Batarang. The sound of a gunshot.

The sound of the man crying out and running.

The sound of the wind passing by.

The sound of knocking at a door.

The sound of young Bruce working out.

NARRATOR/THE PHANTOM STRANGER
DCEU Batman: To Kill a Legend.

BRUCE
"Barry, these scars we have make us who we are. We're not meant to go back and fix them. And there's nothing broken with you that needs to be fixed. Take it from an old guy who's made a lot of mistakes. Don't live your past. Live your life. Don't let your tragedy define you." That was the advice I gave Barry Allen. Or, as he's better known, The Flash. With his superspeed, he discovered he could travel anywhere in time. When we talked that night in Central City, he was thinking of going back into the past. To stop his mother's murder. That's when he offered to go to 1981 and save my parents, too. Over forty years ago, we had walked out of a movie theater when a gunman I'd come to know as Joe Chill emerged from the shadows.

JOE CHILL
I'll take that necklace you're wearin', lady.

BRUCE
My father tried to defend us.

THOMAS WAYNE
Leave her alone!

BRUCE
But Chill shot him. And then my mother.

The sound of two gunshots.

BRUCE (CONT'D)
It was the moment that defined my entire life. So when Barry offered to go back and change it...I admit, I was tempted. But I didn't take it. We couldn't change the past. And yet, I had no idea how prophetic his offer would be.

The sound of a car driving.

BRUCE (CONT'D)
As I drove from Central City back home, a fog started clouding the deserted highway. I passed right through it when suddenly everything changed around me. I was Batman now, driving the Batmobile in Gotham, right along the street where my parents died. I stopped the car, wondering how I had gotten there so quickly. Was it Barry? Then, a man in a hat and cloak appeared through the fog, calling my name.

THE PHANTOM STRANGER
Bruce Wayne...

BRUCE
My first theory was that I had fallen asleep at the wheel. Maybe I was dreaming. But then, as if reading my mind, the man in the cloak responded...

THE PHANTOM STRANGER
This is no dream, Bruce Wayne.

BATMAN
Who are you? How do you know my name?

THE PHANTOM STRANGER
I am called The Phantom Stranger. And I know everyone. On every earth. Come. Observe.

BATMAN
What's happening? What are you showing me right now?

THE PHANTOM STRANGER
There are worlds beyond worlds. Hundreds of earths like your own, existing in as many different dimensions. But certain events on these earths come in cycles. Years before your own tragedy...on another earth, a different Bruce Wayne saw his parents die. Gunned down by a madman.

The sound of two gunshots. The Elfman Batman theme kicks in.

JACK NAPIER
Tell me, kid...You ever dance with the devil in the pale moonlight?

THE PHANTOM STRANGER
Like you, that Bruce would become Batman, fighting crime in a time far earlier from your own. Now observe another Bruce Wayne. His parents gunned down when leaving early from an opera. His father's dying words...

Two gunshots again. The Dark Knight theme kicks in.

THOMAS WAYNE (BEGINS VERSION)
Don't be afraid...

THE PHANTOM STRANGER
This Bruce became his own Dark Knight. There are others. Many who came before you. And many who came after. But now on another earth, the cycle is about to repeat itself. Thomas and Martha Wayne will die again. Unless you intervene.

BRUCE
(narration)
This was different from what Barry had offered me. I wasn't changing my own past. I was changing the future of another earth. Nothing about my past would change. But the Bruce Wayne of this other earth...perhaps he'd be spared of pain. I asked The Phantom Stranger-

BATMAN
Why are you offering me this?

THE PHANTOM STRANGER
You're a brave man, Bruce Wayne. But despite all your courage, all the good you've done to save Gotham, even save the world...you still feel as if you failed the ones you loved the most. I sense the pain you carry with you and offer you this second chance. Do you choose to take it?

BRUCE
Behind my mask, I considered the offer. Here was a chance to do what I've dreamed of doing my whole life. A chance I'd never get again. I had to take it. So I agreed to The Phantom Stranger's offer.

THE PHANTOM STRANGER
Then proceed...

BRUCE
I walked through the fog and into another world.

The sound of wind passing through as he's transported to another world.

BRUCE (CONT'D)
I found myself soon at Gotham Harbor. It looked familiar, yet different at the same time. Was I really on another world? Or was it all an illusion from The Phantom Stranger?

The sound of an explosion.

BRUCE (CONT'D)
Then, I heard an explosion from the cargo hold of a ship and went to investigate. A gang of thieves were attacking it, stealing ancient Incan artifacts. Even if this was another world, I couldn't let criminals get away with this.

The sound of screams.

BRUCE (CONT'D)
I went in, ready for a fight. But something bizarre happened. One man fainted before I could put a hand on him.

The sound of a man fainting.

BRUCE (CONT'D)
The others ran off quickly, not putting up a fight at all. I hadn't seen anyone react that way in over twenty years. Not since I first donned the cowl.

The sound of sirens.

BRUCE (CONT'D)
Then, I had another familiar experience. The police arrived, pointing their guns at me. They thought I was the one who broke into the ship.

The clicking sound of several guns.

GORDON
GCPD, put your hands up!

BRUCE
The lead officer looked familiar.

GORDON
What exactly are you supposed to be in that costume?!

BRUCE
The greys weren't in his hair yet, but it was clearly a young Jim Gordon. That's when I knew for sure I was on another earth. There was probably no convincing Gordon of who I really was.
(MORE)

BRUCE (CONT'D)
Not when a Batman hadn't existed yet. As much as I hated to do it, I had to fight my way out.

BATMAN
I'm sorry. You've given me no choice.

The sound of Batman fighting off the cops.

BRUCE
I escaped, but as I fled, I heard Gordon put out an APB for my arrest.

GORDON
All units! Suspect is dressed like a giant bat.

BRUCE
I made sure to change out of the suit and used what money I had in my belt to buy clothes. As I walked the streets during the day, I noticed all the small differences this city had from the Gotham I knew. I couldn't assume this world worked exactly like it did in my past. So I went to the local library to learn about the Thomas and Martha Wayne who lived here. As I researched, I found myself reading the news. There was plenty of crime, terrorism, and war. But not a single costumed hero. That wasn't completely strange. I knew Diana had existed for over a century. Yet Wonder Woman sightings throughout history were too sporadic for anyone to connect them until she joined the League. But what was stranger was, there didn't seem to be any heroic mythology either. No Robin Hood nor Camelot. No Hercules, Odysseus, nor Gilgamesh. As I looked into the star atlas, I discovered that the red star which Krypton was supposed to orbit didn't seem to exist. If there was no Krypton in this dimension, then there'd be no Superman. Perhaps no other superpowered heroes and all.
(MORE)

BRUCE (CONT'D)
No Clark, Diana, Arthur, Barry, or Victor. I realized this was more supposition than deduction, however, and made myself focus at the task at hand. Soon, I found the address to Wayne Manor. Sure enough, it was the same as on my earth. I took a cab to the area, but packed my work clothes along with me.

The sound of Batman's cape flapping.

BRUCE (CONT'D)
I arrived at the manor and changed, using the suit to blend myself into the shadows as I peeked in. The first person I saw was...myself. A younger version of me.

The sound of a toy breaking.

YOUNG BRUCE
I don't want it! Take it back!

BRUCE
I could hardly recognize the spoiled boy inside. He was complaining about a toy train set that he'd been given as a gift. I hadn't remembered being like that at all. I wondered then that if I stopped his parents' murder, would he grow up to become the bored playboy I only pretended to be? And yet, as I looked over, I couldn't prepare myself for what I saw.

THOMAS WAYNE
Your mother went to a lot of trouble to get that, Bruce!

MARTHA WAYNE
Thomas, relax. It's just a phase he's going through.

BRUCE
Both my mother and father were there. Looking just like they did from my memories. It was as if they had come alive again. As if I could reach out and touch them again. That's when I made a promise to myself: I wouldn't let them die.
(MORE)

BRUCE (CONT'D)
Not this time. I headed back into the city. Since the Waynes here were similar to my parents back home, I figured they'd be targeted by the same killer. Awhile back, I had discovered the murderer of my parents was a hitman named Joe Chill. Now, on this alternate earth, I snuck into the GCPD records room to see what they had on him. But Chill didn't have a file. Not yet. He must've kept relatively clean at this point. All I could do now was operate on what I knew about the Chill from my earth. At the time, he had been working for a mob boss named Lew Moxon. In fact, Moxon was the one who hired Chill to kill my parents. My father had been a key witness in sending him to prison. Chill was then the instrument of his revenge. So I checked the police files and found that the Lew Moxon of this earth ran a trucking company on Canal Street. I decided to drop over.

The sound of breaking glass. Then the sound of gunfire.

BRUCE (CONT'D)
Moxon's goons put up more of a fight than the men from the other night. So I took cover in one of his trucks and sent it driving into the wall.

The sound of an explosion.

BRUCE (CONT'D)
With everyone stunned by the blast, I found Moxon and interrogated him.

BATMAN
Where's Joe Chill?!

MOXON
Who?!

BATMAN
Joe Chill. The thug you hired to kill Thomas Wayne. Where is he?

MOXON
I never heard of any Chill!

BATMAN
You're lying.

MOXON
I swear, I dunno what you're talkin' about!

BATMAN
Listen carefully. If any harm comes to the Waynes, I'll be back. And next time, I'll do a lot more than blow up one of your trucks.

The sound of Batman punching Moxon.

BRUCE
I left him hanging from a light post with a warning. Time was running out. I knew the date of my parents' murders was approaching. But I couldn't predict if it'd fall on the same exact day on this earth. So if I couldn't find Chill, I'd follow the Waynes. I watched over Wayne Manor again. In my vigil, I wondered if I had the right to interfere. Especially when there didn't seem to be any superpowered heroes on this earth. It seemed like this world could need a Batman more than any other. And yet, could I really let my parents die? Could I let young Bruce suffer the same pain that I had been through all these years? He would never forget what he saw. Never lose the anger or the anguish. I wondered what else I could do to stop the murder. Chill could be anywhere. That's when it hit me. I assumed that Joe Chill, like on my earth, was from Gotham City. But I hadn't checked the interstate computer records at the GCPD. I rushed back to their headquarters...not knowing that inside the manor, my parents were preparing to take the young version of me to a movie.
(MORE)

BRUCE (CONT'D)
Over at the GCPD, I discovered an interstate bulletin out for Chill, with the authorities believing he was headed for Gotham. As I tried to read more, I heard someone behind me.

The sound of a gun clicking.

GORDON
Enjoying yourself?

BRUCE
It was Officer Gordon. He was aiming his gun right at my head.

GORDON
How bout you back into the light and tell me what you're doing here.

BRUCE
I didn't want to hurt him. So I tried another approach. Thankfully, I had disabled the voice changer in my cowl awhile back to sound more human. I turned around and, in my own voice, called him...

BATMAN
Jim.

GORDON
How do you know my name?

BATMAN
I don't have time to explain. But I'm trying to stop a man named Joe Chill. He's on his way to Gotham to kill two innocent people. Thomas and Martha Wayne.

GORDON
How do you know he's going after the Waynes? How can I take your word for it?

BATMAN
Jim...in another world, another time...we're friends. If you can feel even a hint of that...trust me. Let me go. Please.

BRUCE
I studied his face as he considered. Maybe it was what I said. Maybe it was his instinct. But without fully knowing why, he lowered his gun. And decided to trust me.

GORDON
We've had informants spying on Chill since he came in town. He's holed up in a hotel on Dumont Street. Here. The address.

The sound of paper tearing as Gordon gives it to him.

BATMAN
Thank you.

BRUCE
With one last nod, I took off to face the man about to murder my parents.

The sound of Batman's cape flapping.

"Beautiful Lie" begins.

BRUCE (CONT'D)
But I was in for another surprise. When I arrived at the hotel, Joe Chill was lying on the floor with bullets in his chest. He was still breathing. But not for long.

JOE CHILL
You...You're the one he was talking about...

BATMAN
Who was talking about? What happened?

JOE CHILL
M-Moxon. I came to see him...he threw me out. Said some...maniac in a batsuit was after me. I got back...one of his goons was waiting...on his way to another hit.

BATMAN
Another hit? Who?

JOE CHILL
Some doctor. Guy named Wayne.

BATMAN
The hit on the Waynes...it's tonight.

JOE CHILL
Yeah. Guy said...something about... going to the movies...

BRUCE
For years, I had seen this man as a monster. I'd spent my whole life forging myself into a bigger monster to take him down. To make him pay. Make him suffer. But here, in this room...all I saw was a dying man. The fear in his eyes had nothing to do with the costume I wore. It was fear of what lay ahead of him on the other side.

JOE CHILL
W-Who are you? How do you know me?

BATMAN
...You and I go a long way back.

JOE CHILL
Mister...Could you...could you just stay a little? I don't wanna die alone. Please...

BRUCE
For twenty years, The Batman had struck fear in criminals. But Bruce Wayne? Bruce Wayne was a doctor's son. A doctor who believed in relieving the suffering...

JOE CHILL
You...you still there?

BATMAN
I'm here...Chill...You did a good thing tonight, telling me about the Waynes.

JOE CHILL
Good thing, huh? How bout that...never done a good thing before...Never done a good thing my whole life.

Chill takes his last breath.

BRUCE
And with that, Joe Chill was gone. The man who murdered my parents on one earth was now the one who'd help me save them. I just hoped I wasn't too late.

The sound of Batman's cape flapping.

BRUCE (CONT'D)
It was about to happen all over again. Just like it always did in my nightmares. Thomas and Martha Wayne walked out of a movie theater, with their son, Bruce, when a gunman emerged from the shadows.

GUNMAN
Gimme your wallet. And that necklace too!

BRUCE
My father tried to defend his family.

THOMAS WAYNE
Leave her alone!

BRUCE
So the mugger raised his gun, his finger on the trigger. Except this time, his shot...missed.

The sound of a Batarang. The sound of a gunshot.

The sound of the man crying out and running.

BRUCE (CONT'D)
He took chase but I ran after him. Yelling the words I've wanted to say night after night for over forty years...

BATMAN
Not this time, you hear me?! This time...YOU'RE NOT GOING TO WIN!

The sound of Batman punching the gunman.

BRUCE
This time...I didn't fail them. Fog formed around me. The Phantom Stranger emerged.

THE PHANTOM STRANGER
Your task is ended. We must leave.

BATMAN
Just a little longer. Please.

THE PHANTOM STRANGER
I can keep you only a few more seconds. But I must return you home. Something has happened to your world...

BRUCE
From what it sounded, I was needed. I took one last look at the family I had saved. My family. There was my younger self staring back at me with a mix of terror and wonder. But there was my father and mother...still alive. Alive for longer than they had been on any other earth.

THOMAS WAYNE
Thank you. You saved our lives.

MARTHA WAYNE
Who are you?

BATMAN
I'm...I'm The Batman.

BRUCE
I wish I could've told them who I really was. I wish I could've shared everything I've done in their name. Instead, I looked at them one last time before the fog closed around me. And as Bruce Wayne, not The Batman, I whispered...
(dialogue)
Good-bye.

The sound of the wind passing by.

NARRATOR/THE PHANTOM STRANGER
Bruce Wayne didn't get to see what happened to the family he saved.
(MORE)

NARRATOR/THE PHANTOM STRANGER (CONT'D)
Or the boy whose life was no longer marked by tragedy. But perhaps...I can show you. Let us go to Wayne Manor, three weeks later. In the room of young Bruce Wayne...

The sound of knocking at a door.

MARTHA WAYNE
Bruce? How would you like to go shopping for some new toys?

YOUNG BRUCE
No thanks, Mom! Got some things to do. Couple of books to read.

NARRATOR/THE PHANTOM STRANGER
Martha Wayne looks at the new books that line Bruce's shelf. There are new interests that fill his life now. Books on the criminal mind. The psychology of crime. She stares, not knowing what to make of it all. She goes to her husband...

MARTHA WAYNE
Thomas, have you noticed how...different Bruce seems since that robbery?

THOMAS WAYNE
If by different you mean quieter? More studious? I think it's an improvement. Maybe we ought to get mugged more often!

NARRATOR/THE PHANTOM STRANGER
Outside, young Bruce ventures into the garden and begins doing pull-ups on a tree branch.

The sound of young Bruce working out.

NARRATOR/THE PHANTOM STRANGER (CONT'D)
For as long as he lives, *this* Bruce Wayne would remember the night he *almost* lost his parents. And the bat-winged creature that swooped down from the sky, saving the lives of himself and his family. That night, *this* Bruce Wayne learned what death was. And he learned it could be averted, at least temporarily.

The Batman theme begins.

NARRATOR/THE PHANTOM STRANGER (CONT'D)
Years from now, he will make a decision. Choose a direction for his life. And when he does, it will not be a decision born of grief, or guilt, or vengeance. But of awe...and mystery...and gratitude.

Music carries us over into the credits...

NARRATOR/THE PHANTOM STRANGER (CONT'D)
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