

In the film 'The Dark Knight', directed by Christopher Nolan there are many important moments that develop the movie, however I found one scene to be particularly important. This is the scene in which the Joker has kidnapped both Rachel and Harvey Dent, strapped them up to oil drums, in separate locations and attached a timer to a bomb. Nolan uses aspects including dialogue, character actions, lighting and soundtrack to emphasise the importance of this scene, and to build fast paced, high intensity action.

The main purpose of this scene is to further reveal the Joker's master plan and to illustrate to the viewer that the Joker really is an evil, psychotic killer.

This scene proves the extent to which he is willing to go to cause chaos for Gotham City, get what he wants and toy with his enemies, "But don't worry; I'm going to tell you where they are. Both of them, and that's the point – you'll have to choose." This dialogue shows that the Joker uses mind games because he knows Batman doesn't want to kill someone, but forces him to play his 'little game'. Although Batman would like to save them both, he is forced to choose between his friend 'the District Attorney – Harvey Dent' and Dent's blushing bride to be 'Rachel'. The Joker is aware that Batman and Rachel have had a thing before; "for a while I thought you really were Dent, the way you threw yourself after her", and he is using this knowledge to his advantage. This dialogue and associated character actions helps the audience to see the lengths to which the Joker is willing to go to create total mayhem in Gotham and his cunning in being able to use what he knows to control Batman (1).

In order for the purpose of this scene to be effective character actions played a major role. Batman put his feelings for Rachel before the good of the city by trying to save her instead of Harvey Dent. It was this decision that the Joker was hoping for, this being the reason that the Joker had switched their locations because in order for his master plan to come into effect he needed Rachel to be the one to die. This helped his plan because with Rachel out of the picture Batman would be motivated by anger and grief to continue chasing the Joker, which all adds to the fun that the Joker has mindlessly committing crime. Rachel's death caused Dent to go crazy with grief his actions changed from those of upholding justice to those of revenge. This greatly helped the Joker, because not only was Harvey Dent killing people unstopably that were involved with Rachel's death, but now that he was no longer part of law enforcement, criminals in Gotham would feel a sense of freedom to do as they wish. This scene also showed how much Harvey Dent and Rachel loved each other through their dialogue because as the Batman stormed into the room in which Harvey was being kept, the words that broke the silence were "NO! Not me, why did you come for me", explaining to the viewer how willing he was to sacrifice his life in order for Rachel to live, and showed that he didn't want to live without her. Rachel also felt this way; "I don't want to live without you, because I do have an answer and my answer is yes." This helped the audience to understand Harvey Dent's reason for becoming a criminal. We begin to understand his actions later on in the film when he kidnaps Gordon's family – he is one of the people he holds responsible and he wants to take away all that is precious to Gordon, forcing him to feel the same all consuming grief (2).

The use of lighting also helped show what the Joker was doing, and how he always had control over the situation. The warehouse in which Harvey was being kept had the lights on, and was in brightness. However the warehouse where Rachel was, was dark. Light in this scene symbolises life and hope for survival. It was as if the Joker had already decided their fates because he knew how Batman would act. Shown because as Gordon asks Batman, "which one are you going after?", he replies, "Rachel" which is exactly what the Joker knew he would do (3).

Another key aspect in this scene is the sense of action and tension. Two techniques are used to create this effect. The first is soundtrack. As Batman jumps onto his bike, the music that was quietly in the background starts to increase in pace and as he gets closer to their locations the deep pounding gets louder, to pick up heart rate. Then suddenly the music stops as Batman reaches the warehouse in which we think Rachel's location is, he kicks down the door and the sudden silence emphasises the shock that the Joker has deceived Batman, as we see Batman staring at Harvey Dent's half-submerged face on the floor, but also to create a sense of a sinking feeling as the audience realises that Rachel is about to die. The camera work in this scene also helps build tension, as cross cutting and parallel editing are used, flickering from Batman's /The police mad rush to the locations, to Harvey and Rachel sitting helplessly in the warehouse. This increases the tension because the viewer is nervous which one will be saved and whether they will be reached in time.(4).

This scene was one of the major climaxes in the film and I think the most shocking. It helped the viewer to understand the extent of the Joker's psychotic killing where he can just kill Rachel without a care in the world but on the contrary show excitement. Christopher Nolan has used many techniques to illustrate the importance in what happened during the scene, and created suspense in what I think was one of the most effective scenes in the film.