

EVENTS

Miller on his ‘Dark Knight Returns’: ‘I was rooting for Batman’

BY DAVID BETANCOURT
WASHINGTON POST

It was “devastating,” Frank Miller says. That is how the comics legend describes, with intentional hyperbolic flair, the event that helped him script and draw one of the greatest Batman tales ever told.

So you’ve got our attention, Mr. Miller. What was it that helped guide you to create “The Dark Knight Returns”?

Three decades ago, when he was 29, Miller says he was attempting to tell a type of Batman story that hadn’t been seen before. Sure, he was nervous about bringing “The Dark Knight Returns” to fruition, but what bothered him more was his upcoming birthday.

“To me, [turning 30] was becoming an ancient. Batman had to absolutely be older than I was,” Miller says. “Now, we all know Batman is eternally 29 [in the comics]. So I had to do

something about it.”

So Miller created his vision of Batman: older, wiser, edgier, a Dark Knight with battle scars and little patience for those who stood in his way. That version, of course, remains just as popular today as any current version of Batman.

“I made him as old as I could conceivably imagine a man could be,” says Miller, explaining why he chose age 50. “And by doing that, I made him older than me. I made him a lot crankier, and was able to move him through time into a world that much more resembled the world that I lived in, in 1986 in New York City.

“I was updating the character and aging him at the same time. And I thought I was making him old and cranky. But I didn’t learn what old and cranky was until I hit 50.”

Now, DC Comics is celebrating the 30th anniversa-

ry of “The Dark Knight Returns” with a special commemorative edition. As he marks the milestone himself, Miller can still remember the nerves he felt when creating the story’s concept and presenting it to people at DC, who at that time had a different mindset as to what Batman was and represented.

The two most important authorities at DC in the mid-1980s, Miller says, were Paul Levitz and Jenette Kahn — both of whom supported his “Dark Knight Returns” vision, he notes. It was the “lower-tier” people at DC that weren’t as supportive, says Miller, explaining that many times, his editor would tell him: “Jenette and Paul will never approve this.” But those at the top continually told Miller to keep going.

“Jenette and Paul were the ones that did approve it, and enthusiastically, and encouraged me to go

further with the violence in it,” Miller recounts. “It was the [other] people on the staff that resisted it, because I was playing with their childhood.”

And Miller’s alterations to the Bat-myths didn’t end with the Caped Crusader. Miller’s Robin is one of the more recognizable characters from his Dark Knight story, in part because he took the “boy” out of Boy Wonder and made Robin more than a sidekick. Miller says that the idea to create Carrie Kelley — whom the Maryland-born Miller considers Batman’s adoptive daughter in “Dark Knight Returns” — was sparked by a conversation with comics veteran John Byrne, while the two were flying to an Ohio comics convention.

“I told [Byrne] I had an idea for a Batman book where Batman was older and crankier ... and he said make Robin a girl, and he drew me a sketch,”

Miller recalls. “An idea of Robin as a girl, and how the costume would look better on a girl. The idea was so good I couldn’t resist it. It just seemed natural from then on.”

One of the memorable scenes in “The Dark Knight Returns” is the fight between the older Batman and Superman; the image of a Batman boot landing on Superman’s jaw has stayed with fans for generations.

Miller vividly remembers plotting that famed fight, which inspired next month’s “Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice.”

“Oh, yeah — I so much wanted Batman to win, I can’t tell you,” Miller says. “I wanted the bad boy to win. I wanted the guy who got by just on his brains to take down the superpowered schoolboy. I was rooting for Batman all the way as I was writing and drawing the story. I got to have my guy win.”

And what does Miller think of Ben Affleck, who is bringing Miller’s older, angrier Batman to the screen?

“I’ll be there in the audience — I can’t wait to see it,” Miller says. “I hope it’s good. I wish [Affleck] well.”

Reflecting on the past 30 years, Miller can appreciate just what “The Dark Knight Returns” universe has become at DC, inspiring live-action films, animation and more comic-book tales — including Miller’s “Dark Knight III: The Master Race.” And he can bask in the fact he got to deliver the Batman story he wanted to tell.

“I just mainly wanted to do my version of Batman and see if I could get it out, and see if anybody liked it,” Miller says. “I had no idea what was coming or where it was going to go, and that there’d end up being so many [stories]. It’s been a real thrill ride.”

Things to Do

BANGOR — “Search Images,” woodblock prints by artist Amy Guadagnoli, through April 14, Robert E. White Gallery, Husson University, Amy Guadagnoli at 370-9202 or art@amyguadagnoli.com, or Kathi Smith at smithk@husson.edu.

BAR HARBOR — “Long-Term Climate Dynamics Provide Surprising Clues About Maine’s Future” with Dr. George Jacobson, former Maine state climatologist and professor emeritus of biology, ecology and climate change, University of Maine, 7 p.m. Friday, Feb. 26, at Jesup Library. 288-4245 or kchagnon@jesuplibrary.org.

BELFAST — “Bodies,” exhibition of work by nine New York-based artists, Perimeter Gallery, 96 Main St. Through March 10. 338-0555 or perimeter96@gmail.com.

BLUE HILL — Exhibit of colored pencil drawings, “Crystal Gems” by 7-year-old Bean Fitzpatrick, during library hours through February, children’s Larchwood exhibit case, Blue Hill Public Library, 5 Parker Point Road. Libby at 374-5515.

BREWER — Bangor Singles Club dances, 8 p.m.-midnight Fridays, Brewer Eagles Club, 22 Atlantic Ave.: Wildwoods, Feb. 26. Marilyn, 827-5751.

BREWER — Storytime for preschool children and caregivers, 10:30-11:15 a.m. Wednesday, Feb. 24, Brewer Public Library. Read, sing, do crafts and have a snack with Miss Shelley. 989-7943.

BREWER — Experienced or new knitters, crocheters or needleworkers invited to Brewer Public Library 9:30-11 a.m. Fridays. Bring your own

yarn projects and socialize in conference room. 989-7943.

CAMDEN — Knitting circle for adults of all abilities, 6-8 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 25, Camden Public Library. Bring a project, learn new skills. Group meets second and fourth Thursdays of each month. 236-3440.

EASTPORT — Sunday Afternoons at the Eastport Arts Center series, 3 p.m. Sundays, except Easter: Benjamin Brigham, “Maine Educators and the Golden Door: Working Toward an Outstanding Education for All,” Feb. 28. Free and open to all. Hot drinks and refreshments offered. Donations accepted.

EASTPORT — Stress-relieving dancing, 5-6 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 24, Eastport Arts Center, 36 Washington St. Open to all. Wear loose, comfortable clothing, bring water to drink. Robin, 853-9211 or coastalmephotography@gmail.com.

ELLSWORTH — High-definition simulcast performance from The National Theatre of London of Shakespeare’s “As You Like It,” 2 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 25. General admission tickets, \$17, \$16 seniors, \$15 Grand members, \$13 students, \$10 children 12 and under, available by calling 667-9500, or go to grandonline.org.

ELLSWORTH — Judy Pancoast: “Weird Things Are Everywhere!” 6 p.m. Friday, Feb. 26, The Grand. General admission tickets \$10, \$5 children 12 and under. 667-9500 or grandonline.org.

MACHIAS — Valerie Aponik and Robin Rier dual art show, through Feb. 24, University of Maine, Machias Powers Hall Gallery.

MILLINOCKET — Soup luncheon, 11 a.m.-12:30

p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 24, St. Andrew’s Episcopal Church, 40 Highland Ave. Soups, biscuits, cakes and beverage. \$7. 907-3115.

PORTLAND — Paul Sacaridiz, executive director of Haystack Mountain School of Crafts on Deer Isle, speaking noon-1 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 25, Osher Lecture Hall, Maine College of Art, 522 Congress St. 775-3052 or info@meca.edu.

PORTLAND — Costume historian and author Jacqueline Field giving an illustrated talk exploring fashion trends of “Downton Abbey” era at a tea 5:30-7 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 24, Maine Historical Society, 489 Congress St. Also exhibit “Fashionable Downton Abbey: Selections from the Maine Historical Society Costume Collection” on view through Saturday, March 12. \$15 Maine Historical Society members, \$25 others. Information or tickets, 774-1822, ddipolito@mainehistory.org or eventbrite.com/e/an-evening-with-downton-abbey-era-fashions-tickets-21562760798.

PORTLAND — Author, professor of history and former professional mariner W. Jeffrey Bolster discussing black mariners in the 18th century, 1:30-2:30 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 27, Wishcamper Center, University of Southern Maine. Free and open to all. spiritsalive.org.

PORTLAND — “Focus:Printmaking,” invitational group show featuring Maine printmakers, through Feb. 27, Greenhut Galleries. Artists talk and demonstrations, 1:30 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 20, at the gallery. 772-2693 or info@greenhutgalleries.com.

ROCKLAND — Snow Day Camp for ages 5-10 on

days school is canceled because of snow, 8 a.m.-5 p.m., First Universalist Church, 345 Broadway. Breakfast, lunch and two snacks. Organized activities. Deposit of \$15 per child to reserve space and \$15 per child per snow day. If there are no snow days, the deposit will be returned. Limited to 30. 370-7887 or uursnowdaycamp@uurockland.org.

SOUTH PORTLAND — Reza Jalali, writer and essayist, discussing challenges a displaced writer faces in writing about “home,” 5:30-6:30 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 25, McKernan Center, Southern Maine Community College, 2 Fort Road. 773-5051 or info@mainehumanites.org.

SOUTHWEST HARBOR — Brenda Merritt paintings, “A Tribute to Dad,” through February, Southwest Harbor Public Library. Art sold during

exhibit will support library’s children’s programs. 244-7065.

TRESCOTT — Free talk and discussion with Paula Kovecses of The Way It Grows, followed by potluck lunch, 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 27, Cobscook Community Learning Center, 10 Commissary Point Road. Bring food to share. http://www.cclc.me/articles/55-623/permaculture-design-course/14.

UNION — Ashwood Waldorf School early childhood teacher Beth Lunt leading seasonal puppet play, simple morning circle and-or simple craft activity for young children, 10:30-11:30 a.m. Friday, Feb. 26, April 8 and 29, and May 6. Free and open to the public. 785-4733 or voselibrarian@voselibrary.org.

UNITY — “Barbara Pea-

body: On the Water and

in the Woods,” a show of paintings, through April 1, Leonard R. Craig Gallery, Unity College Center for the Performing Arts, 42 Depot St. Refreshments provided. Free and open to all. Gallery hours: 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Monday through Friday, and by appointment. 509-7239 or bpotter@unity.edu.

WINTER HARBOR — Workshop on turning your vision into a photograph with photographer Nate Levesque, 1-3 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 28, Schoodic Institute at Acadia National Park, 65 Acadia Drive. Beginner and intermediate photographers urged to attend. Takes place inside and out of doors. Dress for the weather. \$25. acadiaawinterfestival.org or 288-1356.

For a complete listing of calendar items or to submit your event, visit www.bangordailynews.com.

Wednesday prime time

MOVIES

	7 PM	7:30	8 PM	8:30	9 PM	9:30	10 PM	10:30	11 PM
BROADCAST	2 NBC 207 Inside Ed.	The Mysteries of Laura	Law & Order: SVU	Chicago P.D. (N) (HD)	News				
	4 CBC Dragons' Den (N)	X Company (N)	The National (N)	CBC Coronation	Rick Mercer				
	5 CBS Big Bang	Broke Guy	Survivor (N) (HD)	Criminal Minds (N)	Code Black (N) (HD)	News			
	52 CW Family Guy	Family Guy	Arrow (N) (HD)	Supernatural (N)	News Seinfeld	Cougar			
	6 NBC 207 Inside Ed.	The Mysteries of Laura	Law & Order: SVU	Chicago P.D. (N) (HD)	News				
	7 ABC Wheel	Jeopardy!	The Middle	Goldbergs	Mod Fam	blackish	American Crime (N)	News	
	WAGM FOX The Insider	Ent. Tonight	American Idol (N)	:(01) Hell's Kitchen (N)	News	Big Bang	Big Bang		
	8 ABC Wheel	Jeopardy!	The Middle	Goldbergs	Mod Fam	blackish	American Crime (N)	News	
	MPBN PBS PBS NewsHour (N) (HD)	Nature (N) (HD)	NOVA (N) (HD)	Human Face of Big Data	C. Rose				
	9 IND Code Black (N) (HD)	Arrow (N) (HD)	Criminal Minds (N)	News-Lisa	CTV News	Daily Show			
LEARN	13 CBS Ent. Tonight	The Insider	Survivor (N) (HD)	Criminal Minds (N)	Code Black (N) (HD)	News			
	22 FOX Mod Fam	Mod Fam	American Idol (N)	:(01) Hell's Kitchen (N)	FOX 22 News at 10 (N)	The Closer			
	33 IND M*A*S*H	M*A*S*H	Andy Griffith	Happy Days	Laverne	Hogan Hero	Hogan Hero	C. Burnett	
	38 IND Big Bang	Big Bang	The Closer	The Closer (HD)	WBZ News (N) (HD)	Seinfeld			
	NICK Paradise	Henry	Henry	Nicky, Ricky	Full House	Full House	Full House	Full House	
	DISN Best Fr.	Jessie	** Nanny McPhee (2005) (PG)	:(35) Jessie	Liv-Mad.	K.C. Under.	Girl Meets		
	FREE (6:00) Monster-in-Law	Young	Baby Daddy	*** Freaky Friday (2003)	Jamie Lee Curtis. (PG)	700 Club			
	HIST American Pickers	American Pickers	American Pickers (N)	Pawn Stars	Join or Die	:(03) Vikings			
	DISC Dual Survival	Dual Survival: Untamed	Dual Survival (N)	Venom Hunters (N)	Survival				
	TLC My 600-Lb. Life	My 600-Lb.	My 600-Lb. Life (N)	:(02) Fat Chance (N)	My 600-Lb.				
SPORTS	A&E Duck D.	Duck D.	Duck D.	Duck D.	Duck D.	Jep	Duck D.	Join or Die	
	ANPL North Woods Law: Hunt	Alaska: The Last Frontier	Alaska: The Last Frontier	Alaska: The Last Frontier	Alaska: The Last Frontier	Alaska			
	CSNE SportsNet	Early	College Basketball	Ski Journal	Post Game	SportsNet	Sports		
	ESPN SportCtr	NBA	NBA Basketball	Washington Wizards at Chicago Bulls. (N)	CL	NBA Basketball			
	ESPN2 College Basketball	Mississippi State at Texas A&M.	College Basketball	Arizona at Colorado. (N)	CL	SportCtr			
	NBCSP NHL Live (N)	NHL Hockey	Pittsburgh Penguins at Boston Bruins. (N)	CL	NHL Hockey: Sharks at Avalanche				
	NESN Bruins	C. Moore	Spotlight	All Access	Behind B	Bruins	Sports	Sports	
	CNBC Restaurant Startup	Shark Tank	Shark Tank	Shark Tank	Restaurant Startup (N)	Shark Tank			
	CNN Erin Burnett OutFront (N)	Anderson Cooper 360	Anderson Cooper 360	CNN Tonight	Tonight				
	FNC Greta Van Susteren	The O'Reilly Factor (N)	The Kelly File (N)	Hannity (N)	O'Reilly				
VARIETY	MSNBC Hardball	Chris Matthews	All In With Chris Hayes	Rachel Maddow Show	The Last Word	All In With			
	AMC (5:30) *** Top Gun	*** Enemy of the State (1998, Suspense)	Will Smith, Gene Hackman. (R)	Marshals					
	BRV Housewives/Potomac	Real Housewives/Beverly	Housewives/Atl.	Newlyweds	Happens				
	CMT Last Man	Last Man	Last Man	*** Gran Torino (2008, Drama)	Clint Eastwood, Bee Vang. (R)				
	COM South Park	South Park	South Park	South Park	South Park	Broad City	Broad City	Daily Show	
	E! E! News (N)	The Kardashians	The Kardashians	The Kardashians	The Kardashians	E! News			
	FOOD Diners	Diners	Diners, Drive	Diners	Diners	Vacation	Diners		
	FX (5:00) American Hustle (R)	*** World War Z (2013, Horror)	Brad Pitt. (PG-13)	*** World War Z					
	GAC Going RV	Going RV	Big Time RV	Big Time RV	Flippin' RVs	Flippin' RVs	Flippin' RVs	Flippin' RVs	
	HALL Last Man	Last Man	Last Man	Last Man	The Middle	The Middle	The Middle	Golden Girls	
PREMIUM	HGTV Property Brothers	Property Brothers	Property Brothers (N)	Hunters	Hunters Int'l	Property			
	LIFE Little Women: Atlanta	Little Women: LA (N)	Little Women: LA (N)	Little Women: Atlanta	Little				
	MTV Catfish: The TV Show	Catfish: The TV Show	Catfish: The TV Show	Catfish: The TV Show (N)	Suspect				
	OXY Preachers of Atlanta	Preachers of Atlanta	Preachers of Atlanta	Preachers of Atlanta (N)	Preachers				
	SPIKE (6:00) ** Transformers: Revenge of the Fallen (2009) (PG-13)	**** The Dark Knight (2008) Christian Bale.							
	SYFY Indiana Jones:Kingdom	Face Off	Face Off (N)	The Magicians	Face Off				
	TBN Greg Laurie	Potters	John Gray	Prince	S. Furtick	Living Proof	Blessed Life	John Gray	
	TBS Big Bang	Big Bang	Big Bang	Big Bang	Big Bang	Big Bang	Big Bang	Conan (N)	
	TCM (6:00) All the King's Men	*** A Little Romance (1979) Laurence Olivier. (PG)	*** Bandits (2001) (ESP) Bruce Willis. (PG-13)	:(05) ** Lucky Number Sleivn (2006)					
	TNT Castle	Castle	Castle	Castle	Castle	Castle	Castle	Castle	
STARZ	TRAVEL Expedition Unknown	Expedition Unknown	Expedition Unknown (N)	Wild Things With Dominic	Expedition				
	TRU truTV Top Funnies	truTV Top Funnies	Carbonaro	Carbonaro	Billy-Street				
	TVL Andy Griffith	Andy Griffith	Raymond	Raymond	Younger	Teachers	King		
	USA NCIS	NCIS	NCIS	Suits (N)	Law-SVU				
	VH1 Mob Wives	Mob Wives (N)	Big Ang	Big Ang	Big Ang	Big Ang	Big Ang	Big Ang	
	WGN-A Person of Interest	Person of Interest	Person of Interest	Person of Interest	Person of Interest	Outsiders			
	ENC (6:10) ** Blue Chips (1994) Nick Nolte. (PG-13)	**** The Terminator (1984, Science Fiction) (ESP) Arnold Schwarzenegger, Linda Hamilton. (R)	(9:50) ** Entrapment (1999, Action) (ESP) Sean Connery. (PG-13)						
	HBO (6:40) *** Furious 7 (2015) Vin Diesel. A dead man's brother seeks revenge on the Toretto gang.	VICE Eutha-	Girls (ESP)	Vinyl	Richie delivers a bombshell. (ESP)	** Annabelle (R)			
	MAX (6:35) ** Let's Be Cops (2014, Comedy) (R)	(20) *** Neighbors (2014, Comedy) (ESP) Jake Johnson, Rob Riggle. (R)	(ESP) Seth Rogen, Zac Efron. (PG-13)	** The Transporter (2002, Action) (ESP) Jason Statham, Shu Qi. (PG-13)					
	SHOW (6:00) ** Into the Blue (2005) Paul Walker.	*** The Imitation Game (2014, Historical Drama) (ESP) Benedict Cumberbatch, Keira Knightley. (PG-13)	Michael Jackson's Journey From Motown to Off the Wall "Off the Wall" (2015, Comedy) (ESP) Kevin Hart, Josh Gad. (R)						
	STARZ (6:35) ** The Guardian (2006, Drama) (ESP) Kevin Costner, Ashton Kutcher, Sela Ward. (PG-13)	Black Sails Silver pushes Flint to take action.							