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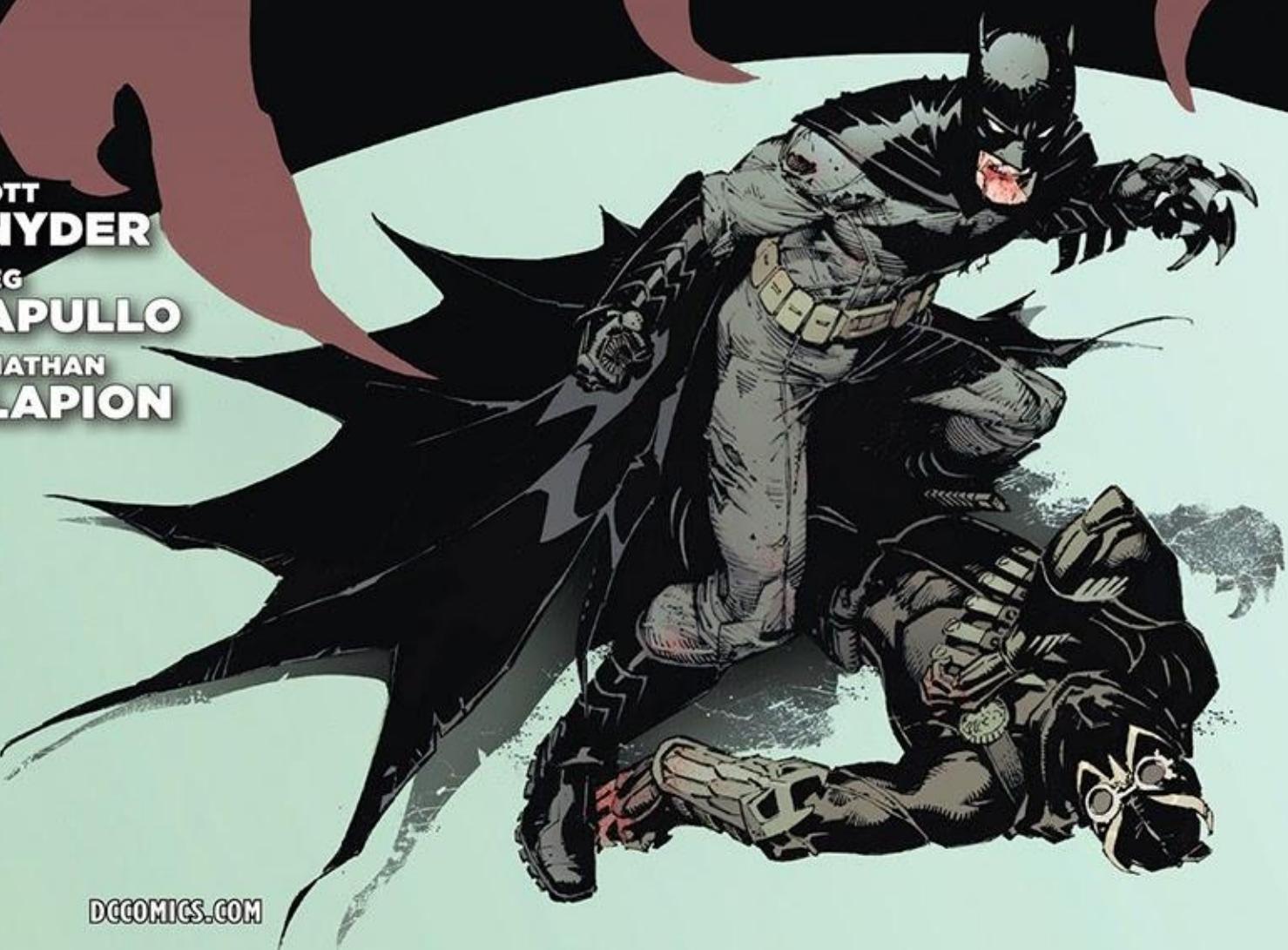
# BATMAN

SCOTT  
**SNYDER**  
GREG  
**CAPULLO**  
JONATHAN  
**GLAPION**

MAY 2012

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Capullo  
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"SOME ANCIENTS BELIEVED THAT THE MOMENT OF DEATH BROUGHT WITH IT VISIONS."

"NOT JUST VISIONS OF ONE'S PAST, OR OF THINGS KNOWN TO THE DYING..."

"...BUT VISIONS OF ONE'S SELF AS ONE TRULY EXISTED IN LIFE..."

YES...

...YES.  
FATHER,  
I SHALL  
BECOME A  
BAT.





"THEY BELIEVED, THE ANCIENTS,  
THAT THESE FINAL VISIONS OFTEN  
WENT BEYOND WHAT WAS KNOWN  
TO THE DYING MAN IN LIFE..."

"...THAT THEY CONSTITUTED *SECRET  
TRUTHS* ABOUT HIS LIFE, REVEALED.

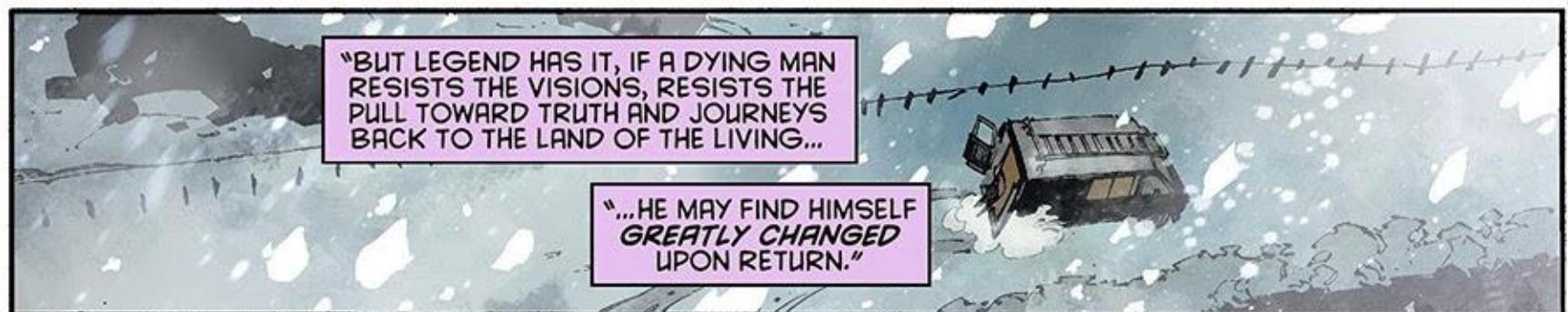
"EITHER WAY, THESE VISIONS  
WERE MEANT TO OFFER A SENSE OF  
*CLOSURE* SO THAT HE MAY LEAVE  
THE WORLD IN PEACE, KNOWING ALL  
THERE WAS TO KNOW ABOUT HIMSELF.

"SOME TRUTHS WERE  
COMFORTING... SOME WERE  
HEART-SHATTERING.

"A VISION OF HIMSELF AS HE  
TRULY WAS, REFLECTED IN THE  
BURNING EYES OF *HIS GOD*."

"COME BACK!"





"AND YOU--YOU WHO STAND BEFORE US NOW-- WILL CERTAINLY FIND YOURSELF CHANGED..."

"...WHEN YOU OPEN YOUR EYES.

"WHICH YOU WILL DO NOW..."

...YES, OPEN THOSE EYES FOR US. OPEN YOUR EYES FOR YOUR COURT!

YOU HAVE TRAVELED SO FAR, FROM THE BANKS OF THE RIVER LETHE, THE RIVER OF MINDLESSNESS, WHERE THE SHADES WALK, BACK TO THIS WORLD, TO YOUR CITY.

GOTHAM.

YES, LOOK... LOOK AT YOUR BODY. IT HAS BEEN RESTORED, AND MADE STRONGER THAN BEFORE. MUCH STRONGER.

YOU DRANK FROM THE CUP OF IMMORTALITY, AND YOU CANNOT BE KILLED. YOUR WOUNDS IN BATTLE WILL HEAL.

YOU ARE FASTER, STRONGER THAN EVER.

AND WE ARE STRONGER, TOO. YOUR COURT. WE HAVE BEEN GATHERING OUR RESOURCES, OUR POWER, AND WAITING AS THE GREAT OWL WAITS-- IN PLAIN SIGHT.

UNTIL NOW...

...FOR NOW IT IS TIME FOR US TO STRIKE...TO RECLAIM THIS CITY...







LOOK UPON  
HIS IMAGE.

LIKE  
YOU, HE HAS JUST NOW  
JOURNEYED UP FROM THE  
UNDERWORLD.

BUT WHILE  
YOU HAVE RETURNED  
STRONGER, MORE  
POWERFUL, HE HAS  
RETURNED BROKEN  
AND WEAK.

WE HAVE  
MOVED YOUR  
ARMOR HERE,  
YOUR ARMS.

WE ASK  
YOU NOW TO  
LET US ARM YOU,  
ARM YOU FOR  
BATTLE.

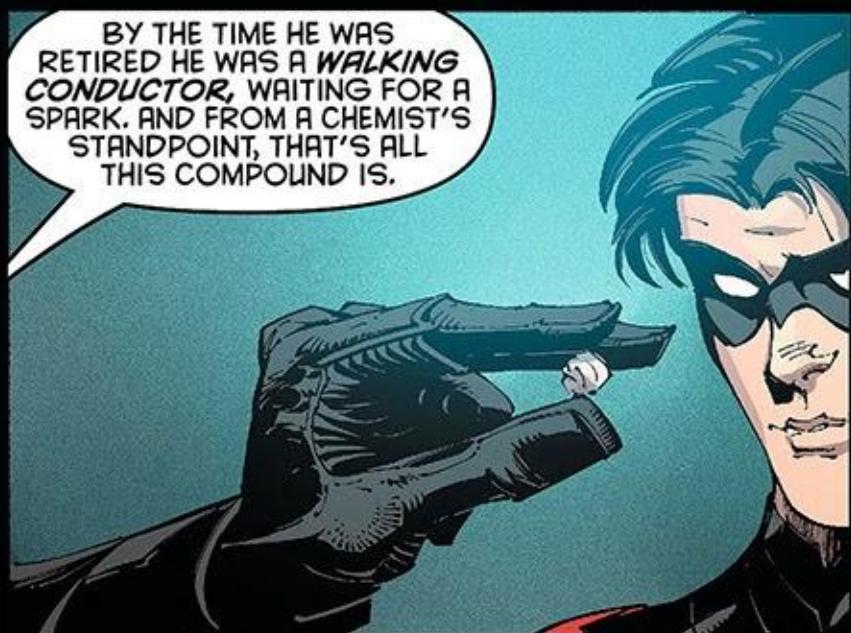
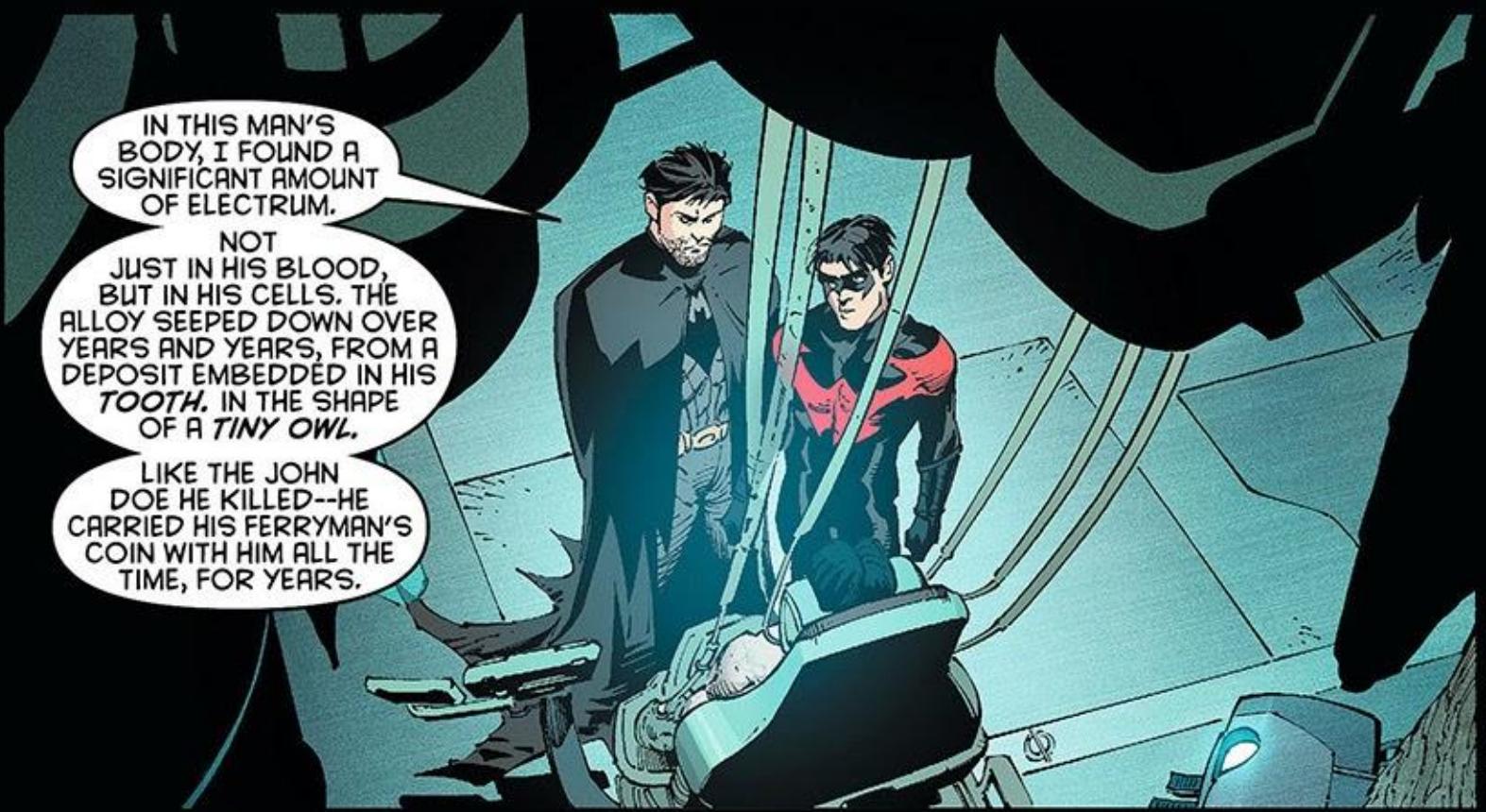
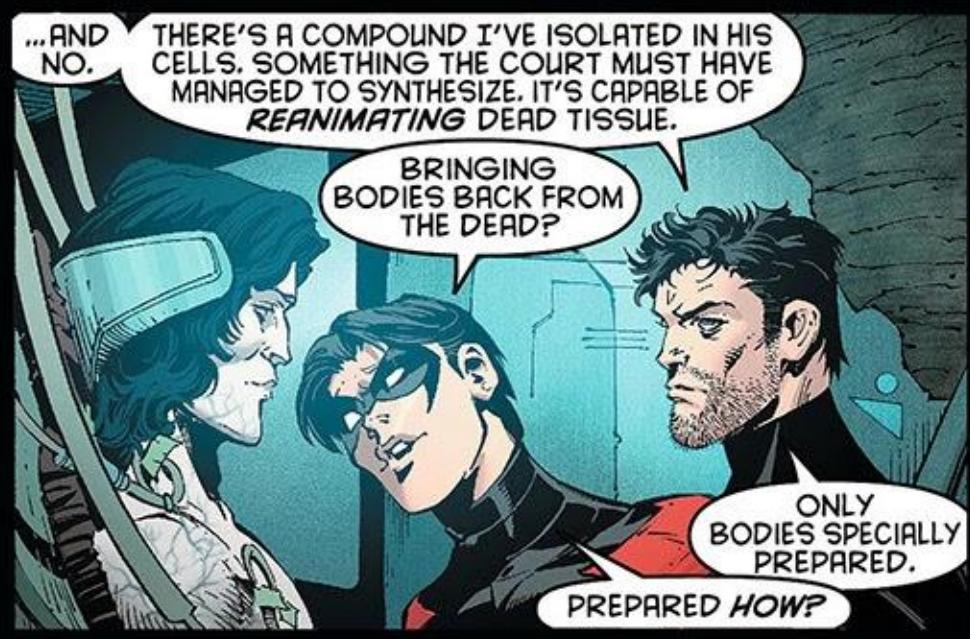
FOR  
TONIGHT,  
WE WILL  
**STRIKE**  
DOWN OUR  
ENEMY.

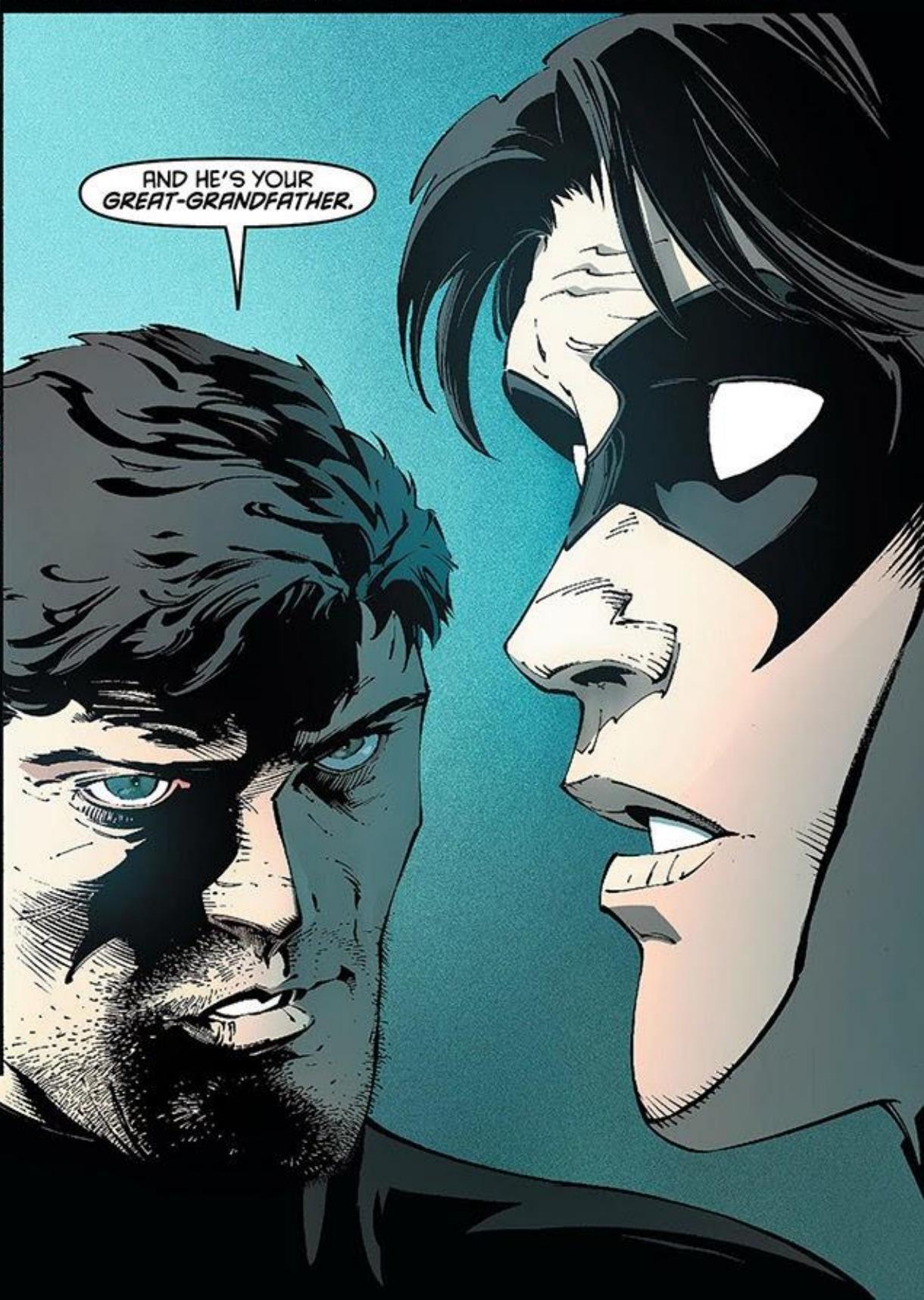
NOT JUST  
STRIKE HIM DOWN,  
BUT TEAR HIM  
APART.

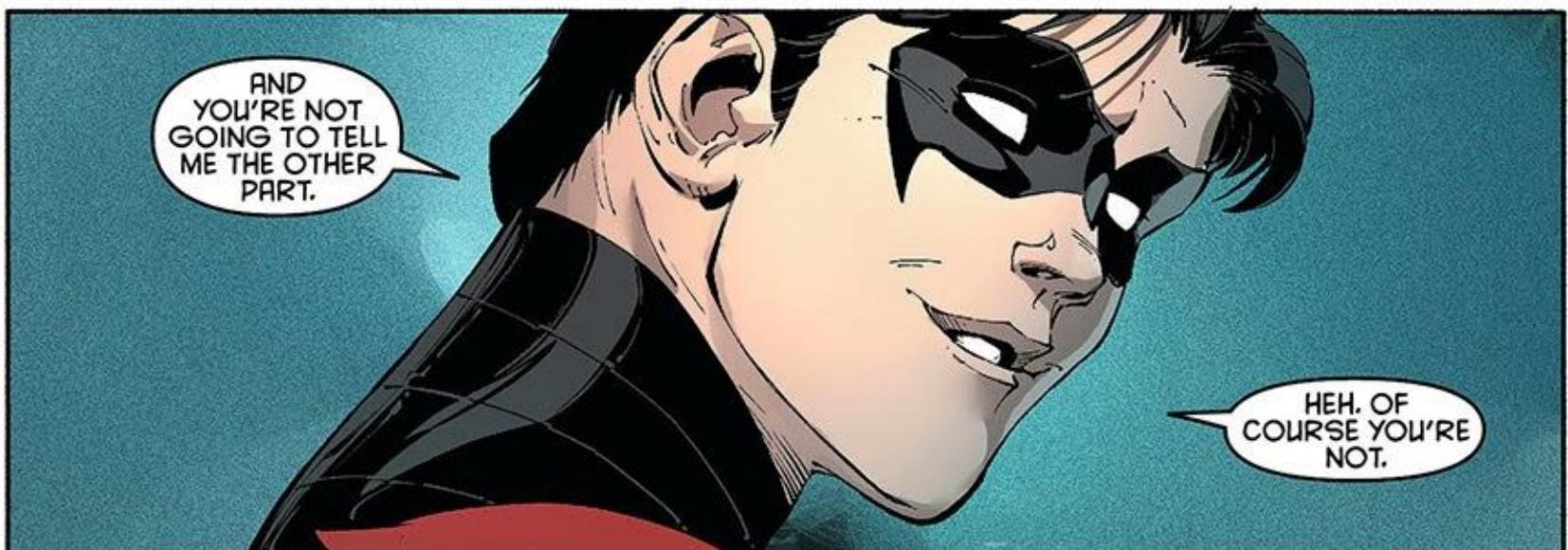
LIMB FROM  
LIMB.

AND EAT HIS  
BONES.









YOU KNOW,  
BRUCE, I GET THAT  
YOU THINK YOU'RE  
PROTECTING ME BY  
KEEPING YOUR  
SECRETS.

OR RATHER, I GET  
THAT YOU *WANT* TO THINK  
THAT'S WHY YOU KEEP  
SECRETS LIKE THIS.

BUT SINCE WE'RE  
BEING SO HONEST AND  
UP FRONT--RIGHT? LET'S  
JUST ADMIT THAT *BOTH* OF US  
KNOW THE PERSON YOU'RE  
REALLY PROTECTING  
IS YOURSELF.

FROM  
NEEDING TO HAVE  
A DAMN HUMAN  
EMOTION!

BUT YOU HAVE NO IDEA  
WHAT I'VE BEEN THROUGH  
THESE LAST FEW WEEKS!  
*NO IDEA!* THE THINGS  
I'VE HAD TO DEAL  
WITH!

AND I'LL TELL  
YOU WHAT, BRUCE, IF  
YOU THINK LEARNING  
MY ANCESTOR,  
SOME GUY I NEVER  
EVEN KNEW, WAS A  
*CRIMINAL*--

--IF YOU THINK  
THAT'S GOING TO  
*FAZE* ME, THEN  
FRANKLY, YOU DON'T  
KNOW ME AT--





YOU KNOW, SOME NIGHTS, DICK, ON PATROL, I'VE FELT THE CITY LOOKING AT ME. I ALWAYS THOUGHT IT WAS WATCHING OVER ME, THOUGH, LIKE A PARTNER, OR EVEN FAMILY...

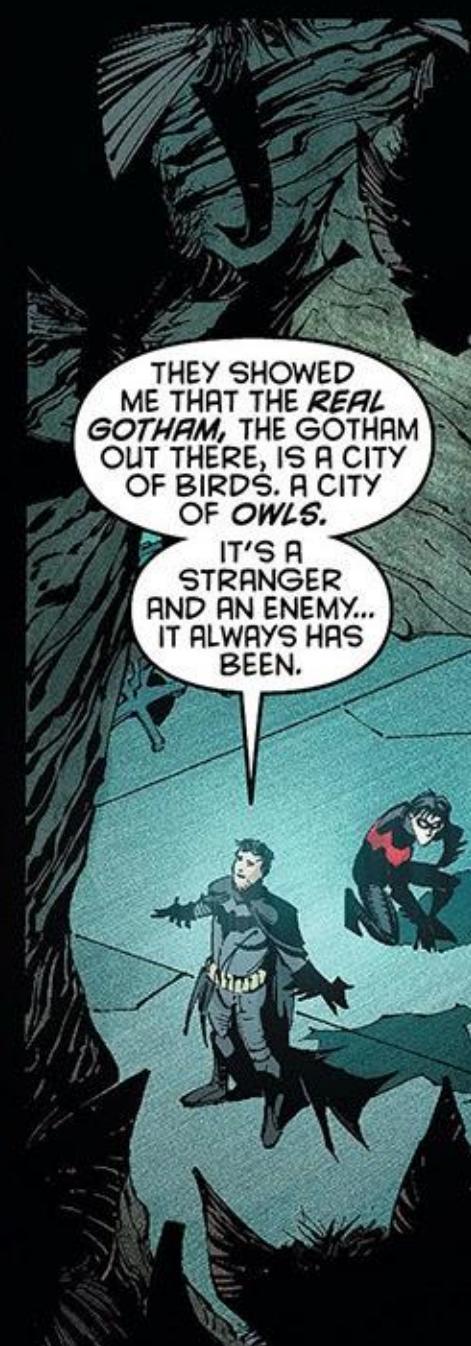
...YOU ASKED ME BEFORE, WHAT THE COURT DID TO ME.

WHAT THEY DID WAS SHOW ME THE *TRUTH*. THAT THE GOTHAM CITY I THOUGHT I KNEW, MY CITY... DOESN'T EXIST.

THEY SHOWED ME THAT THE *REAL GOTHAM*, THE GOTHAM OUT THERE, IS A CITY OF BIRDS. A CITY OF OWLS.

IT'S A STRANGER AND AN ENEMY... IT ALWAYS HAS BEEN.

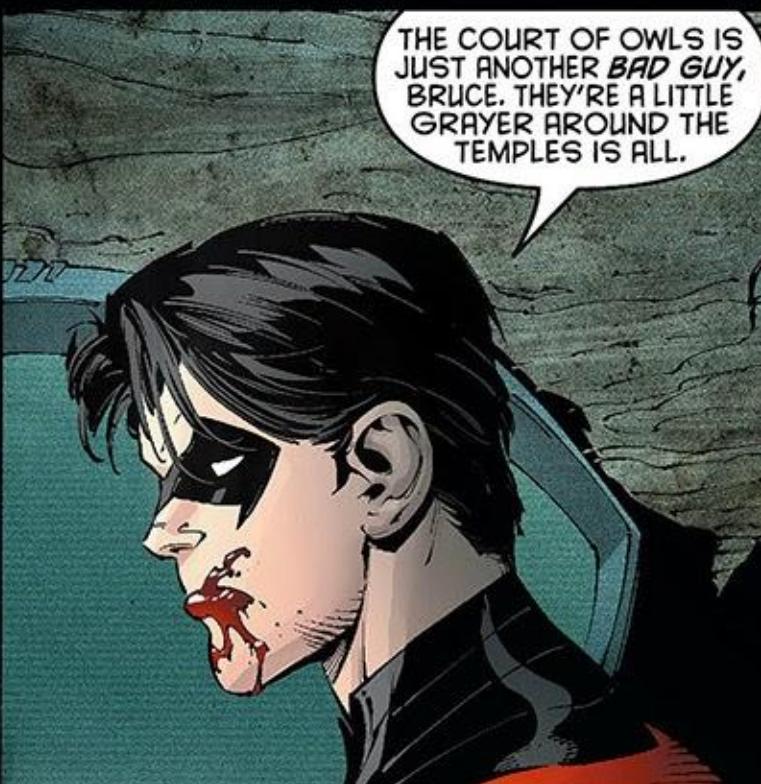
AND I'LL TELL YOU, DICK, IF SOMEONE COULD'VE PROTECTED ME FROM THAT TRUTH, I'D HAVE BEEN GRATEFUL.



WELL, HERE'S SOME TRUTH FOR YOU.

YOU MIGHT BE SEEING SIDES ALREADY, ALL OF US BIRDS ON ONE AND YOU, THE BAT, ON THE OTHER. HELL, YOU'RE PROBABLY THROWING UP WALLS RIGHT AND LEFT.

BUT THE FACT IS, I DON'T CARE WHO MY ANCESTOR WAS. OR WHAT THE COURT OF OWLS WANTED ME TO BE. I DON'T. WE ARE WHO WE CHOOSE TO BE, BRUCE. NOT THE ROLE THE PAST SAYS WE SHOULD PLAY.



YES, YOU MADE A MISTAKE AND UNDERESTIMATED THEM...



Writer SCOTT SNYDER Pencils GREG CAPULLO Inks JONATHAN GLAPION

# The TALONS STRIKE!

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NOW  
GO! GO  
AND TAKE  
GOTHAM  
CITY!

NEXT: ATTACK ON WAYNE MANOR!