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BATMAN

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TEEN

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GOTHAM MARSHES. POST-ZERO YEAR.



Looking at the scene,
one thought goes
through his head:

*He will catch
someone for this.*

*He will punish the one
who did it, and stop it
from happening again.*



I'M STILL
HOLDING ON
TO THIS
HOPE...

...THAT YOU
CALLED ME
OUT HERE TO
SHOW OFF THE
BAT-SWAMP-
BOAT.

WHAT
DO WE
HAVE?



PETER DUGGIO.
FIFTEEN YEARS
OLD. FROM THE
NARROWS.

THE
CORNER, MORE
ACCURATELY, SHOT
FOUR TIMES AND
DUMPED HERE.

WHAT'S THE
I.D.? HE HAVE
A WALLET?

I CAN
SEE HIS
I.D.

"YOU'RE
UPGRADING."

"YOU SAID HE'S FROM THE CORNER. THE **FOUR FIVES** HAVE BEEN AGGRESSIVE THERE LATELY. FEUDING WITH THE BIRD. COULD BE THEM."

I'D
AGREE, IF
THE SHOTS
HAD KILLED
HIM.

BUT I SCANNED HIM.
HE DIED FROM A **FALL**.
DROPPED HERE, FROM
ABOUT A THOUSAND
FEET UP.

KANE MUNICIPAL
AIRPORT IS ON THE
OTHER SIDE OF TOWN,
AND ALL POLICE BLIMPS
WERE DECOMMISSIONED
WEEKS AGO. IT'S
RAINCLOUDS AND
GEESE.

NO ONE
FLIES OVER
THIS AREA.

SOMEONE
DID.

ALL RIGHT.
I'LL TRACK THE
SHOTS. YOU
HAVE LEADS?
BATMAN?

In the past few months, since he defeated the so-called Riddler, more and more enemies have risen. The city has barely recovered, and in some places, it hasn't recovered at all. Crime is at a peak. And now these "super-villains..."

Each has a vendetta with the city. And with each of them, he has tried to draw their fire, to become the target. Every day a new one. Every day the city in peril. He's almost used to it. A year in and it's a tale he knows by heart, one that ends with him.

MR. FREEZE
KILLER CROC
CLAYFACE

Now, in his mind, he moves through the gallery of these enemies, until he lands on the one with a connection to the Corner. And things airborne...



Oswald Cobblepot.
Affiliate of the Red
Hood Gang, now making
a play of his own.

His game: smuggling
contraband into the city
by means of airships.



In the aftermath of
the Zero Year attack,
with the city in ruins,
Cobblepot has begun
to build an empire
of his own.



Making deals with local
gangs, not the Falcons or
Maronis, but the younger
gangs, street gangs. He's a
modern gangster. Something
wilder than before. Something
to be made an example of.



Gangs Cobblepot deals
with, he gives an exotic
bird. A pet difficult to
care for. Should the
bird die, the deal is off.
Tests. All tests and
power plays.



THAT'S THE FUNNY THING ABOUT POWER, BATMAN. SOMETIMES THE KEY TO HAVING MORE IS GIVING A LITTLE BACK.

• ZZZZ

FEZTAAKKK

ARRRGH!



IF COBBLEPOT means the Gotham politicos who turn a blind eye while he lines their pockets, Batman knows all about them. He's read up.

But the Gazette has uncovered substantial links between well known, legitimate lobbyists and Gotham's own underworld. During a year-long investigation, the Gazette found that at

least three prominent advocacy groups regularly accepted donations from active criminal organizations looking to influence the city legislature.

One source, speaking anonymously, explained,

"Regulation... who profits from where a line sits. It moves according to who pays for it to move. The real criminals are the men and women who paint the line."

But today is not about them.



And the story begins with coils. Coils upon coils.

NOT A CHANCE. WE'RE GOING TO NEED AT LEAST A MILE MORE. LOOPED, WITH TRIPLE THE SURFACE AREA.

WE'RE TALKING ABOUT FREEZING A GOOD QUARTER MILE OF THE GOTHAM RIVER, AND THAT'S JUST THE DAMN GROUND FLOOR.

MR. COBLEPOT?

WHAT THE HELL DO YOU WANT FROM ME,...?

PETER.

PETER DUGGIO.

I WANT TO DO BUSINESS.

HEH. AND WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT BUSINESS, KID?

I KNOW I HAVE SOMETHING TO OFFER, AND YOU HAVE SOMETHING I WANT. SO WE SHOULD DO BUSINESS.

GROCERY

HIS GOTHAM DELI GROCERY

SANDWICH COFFEE

Turned out Peter was running a bodega. It wasn't much, but nothing in the Corner was. Still, it was one of the only businesses owned by a man who lived there in the 'hood. Peter's father.

But now, after the Zero Year attack, Peter's father was down. And unlikely to recover, and the bank, suddenly looking to invest in the rebuilding of the area, wanted the bodega and the building that housed it.

Admittedly, Cobblepot was amused by him. So he gave the boy thirty seconds to explain.

Vacant, the building would become a hub for the local gang, the Four Fives, with whom Cobblepot had been feuding.

The gang had claimed Peter's older brother--he'd gone down on his first day as a Four Five, his first day--and their father had made Peter promise, whatever happened, he wouldn't let the store or the building go to the Four Fives. He had promised his father and that meant something.

YOU CAN SELL THINGS THROUGH THE PLACE. I KNOW HOW TO RUN IT. I'VE BEEN RUNNING IT FOR YEARS. IT COULD WORK OUT FOR ALL OF US.

A business offer.

So the story starts with coils, ends with more coils, circling the boy.

SO YOU TOOK THE PLACE. YOU TOOK IT TO SPITE THE ONE GANG THAT WON'T WORK WITH YOU, AND YOU KILLED THE BOY, SHOT HIM AND DROPPED THE BODY FROM ONE OF YOUR DAMN BLIMPS.

NO, YOU MANIAC.

KID WAS ALIVE AND KICKING LAST TIME I SAW HIM.
YOU...
REALLY DON'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT THIS CITY,
DO YOU?



There was a game Bruce used to play as a boy. He'd heard anecdotes about how the Miagani Indians put their fingers to the ground to "listen" for coming changes in the land.

Bruce would put his finger to the tracks by his house. "Listening" for some message from Gotham City, trying to hear all it had to tell him.



What Cobblepot said, it stays with him.



He's been away for over a decade, training, but he knows this city. He grew up here, his family has been here for generations. And he's done his research.

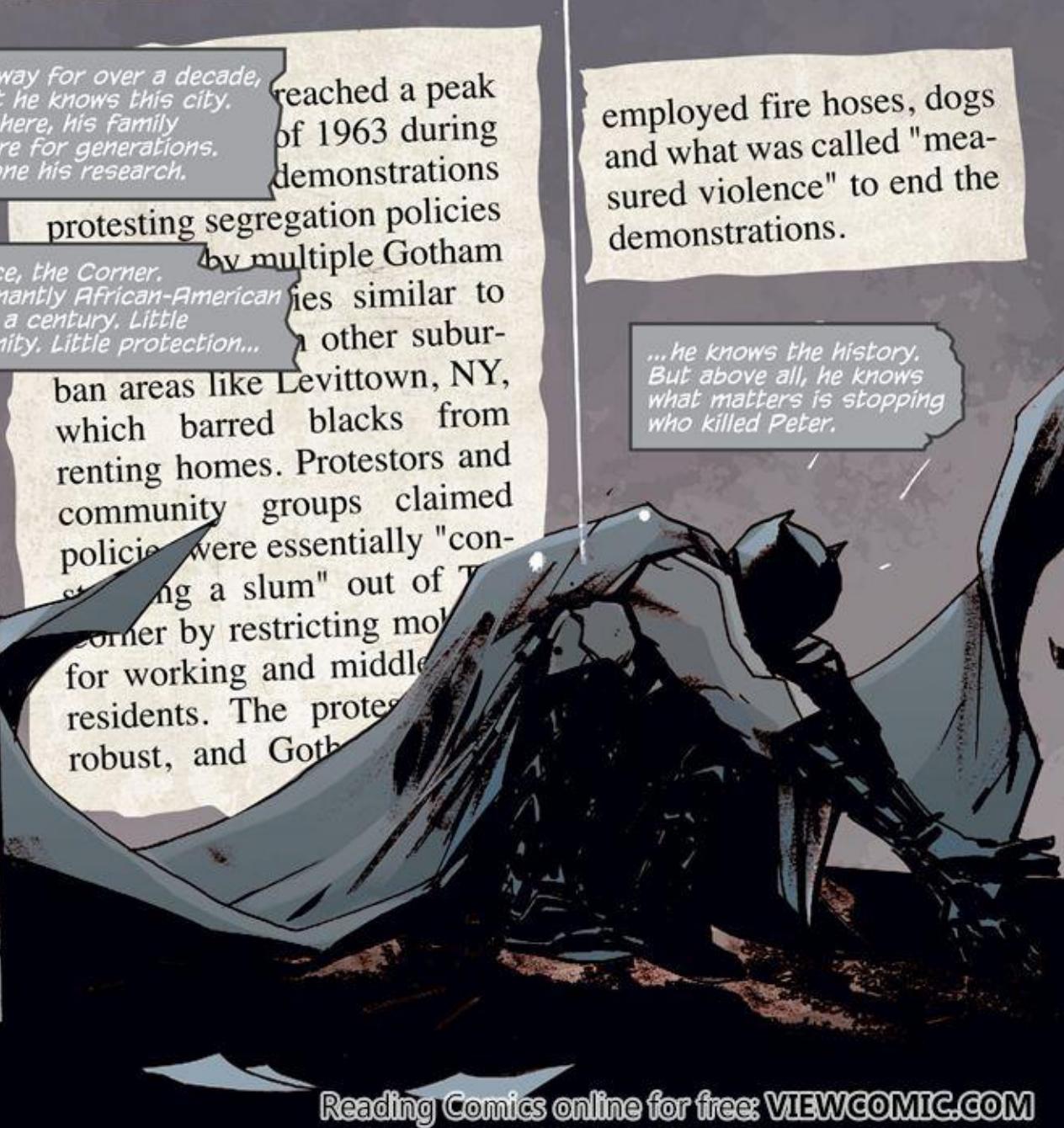
protesting segregation policies

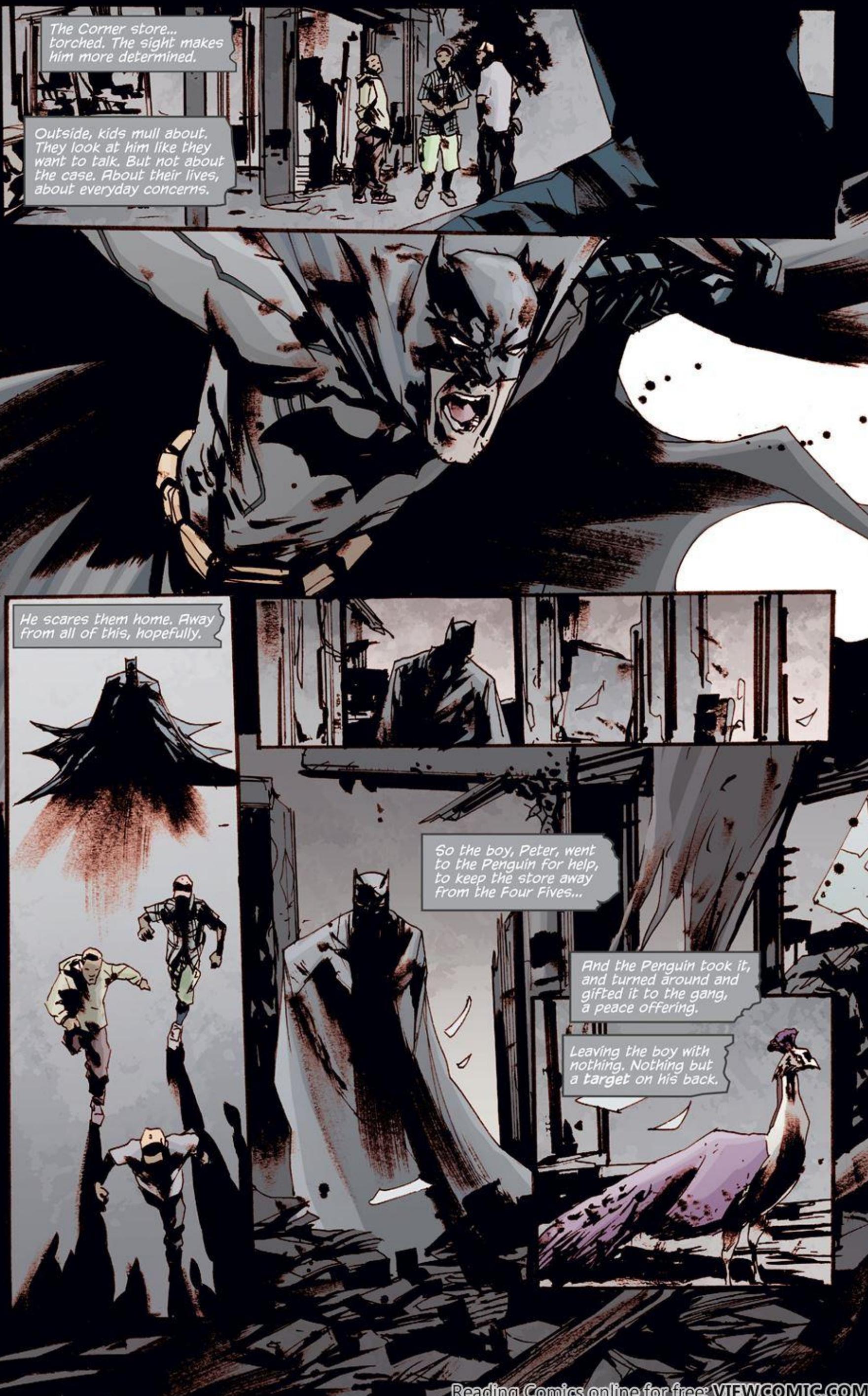
This place, the Corner. Predominantly African-American for over a century. Little opportunity. Little protection...

reached a peak of 1963 during demonstrations by multiple Gothamies similar to other suburban areas like Levittown, NY, which barred blacks from renting homes. Protestors and community groups claimed policies were essentially "constructing a slum" out of the corner by restricting mobility for working and middle-class residents. The protests were robust, and Goth

employed fire hoses, dogs and what was called "measured violence" to end the demonstrations.

...he knows the history. But above all, he knows what matters is stopping who killed Peter.

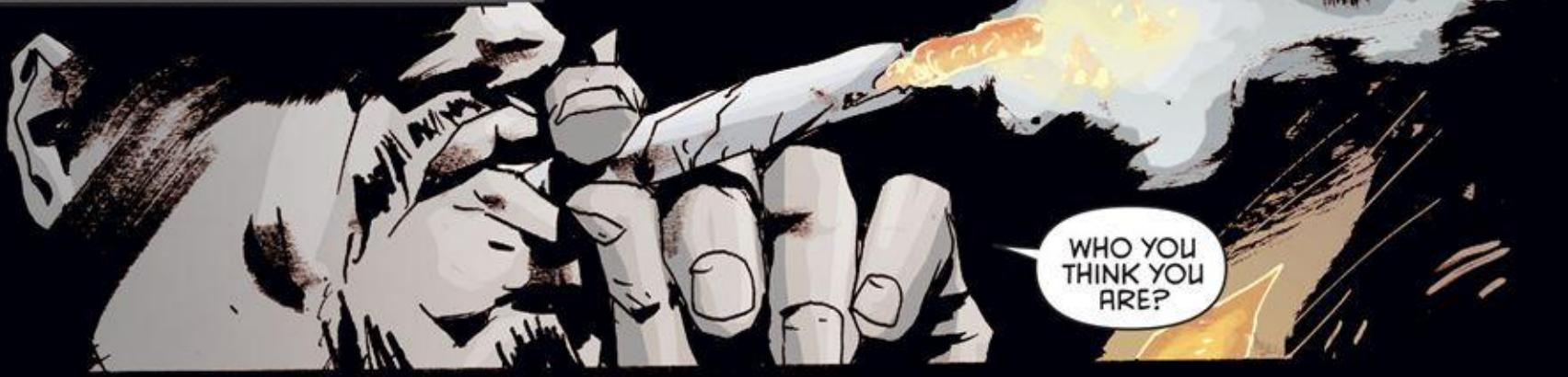


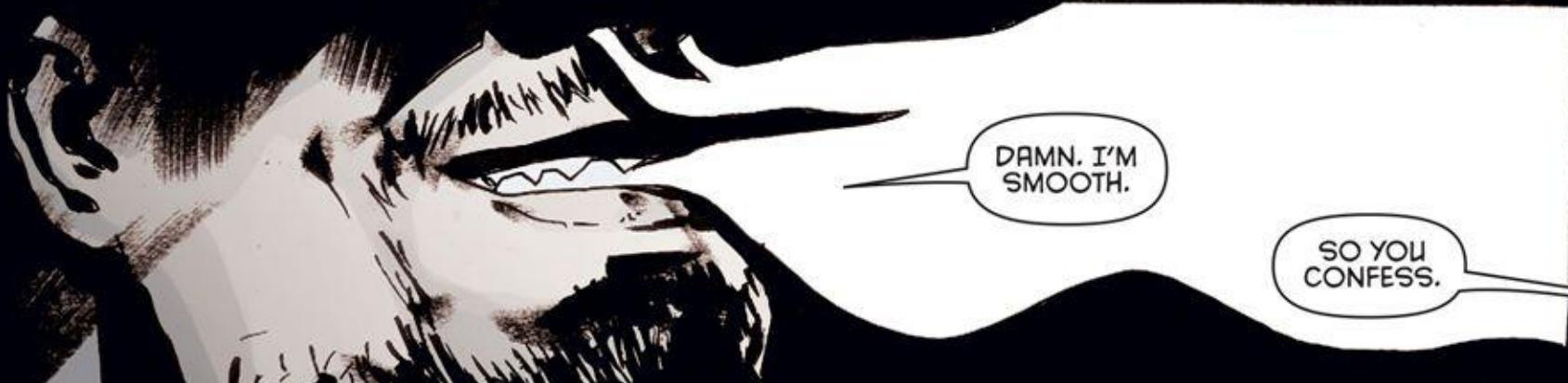






TAND CANACOO. HERO OF THE FOUR FIVES.





DAMN. I'M SMOOTH.

SO YOU CONFESS.



WHY THE HELL
YOU THINK I GOT
ACCESS TO A
HELICOPTER??!



"I MEAN
SERIOUSLY...

"YEAH, THIS JOINT
WAS A GIFT. SO WHAT,
AN' WHO THE HELL
CARES? YOU? BULL."



"THIS IS
NOWHERE TO
NOBODY."



TANO,
THE LITTLE
BROTHA WOULD
LIKE SOME
WORDS...



"NEVER SAW THE
LITTLE BROTHA LIKE
THAT, ALL AMPED'N..."

"RAGE."



"WOULD HAVE,
MIGHT A OFFERED
HIM A SPOT IN
THE CREW..."



"KID WAS
ON FIRE."







*It's all there in his sneer.
Between his teeth.*

...sum, the Four Fives, originally the Green Line Fours ...
1971 in *Between the lines.* Corner district ...named for 4th street and 5th avenue, the intersection at the edge of the neighborhood and the group

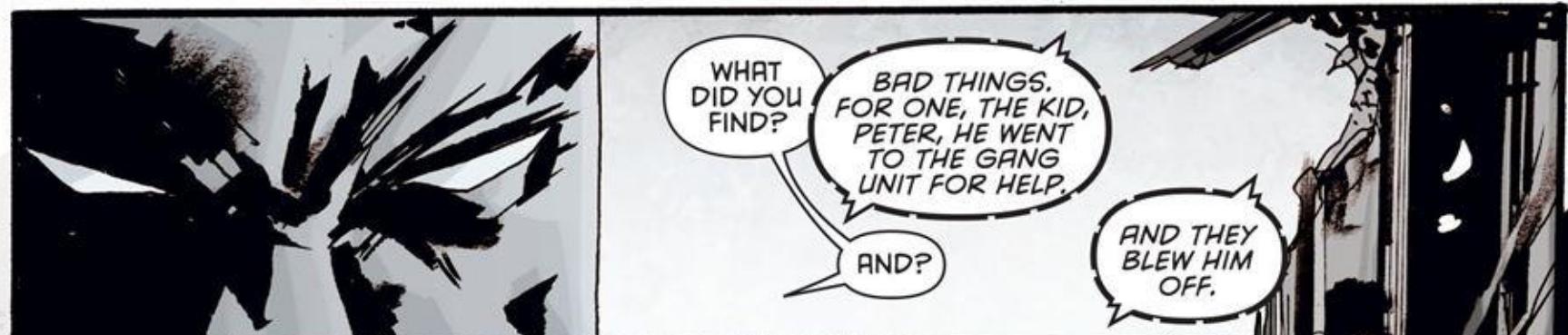
nia ...people today would be surprised to know the Four Fives originated as a neighborhood watch group. With the Corner les

also provided ... wasn't until the 1980's and the infusion of cheap, hard drugs that the group became known as a

et gang." In fact, the

Some line of defense that Batman already knows.

None of it matters in this burned-out place. And he's about to tell Tano so, when the call comes.



GOOD
Service



His name is Ned Howler. He's a ten-year veteran of the GCPD. Celebrated twice, but a lot of gray--a lot of gray, likely a lot of dark, papered over.

"THE PROBLEM WITH AUTHORITY" Continued

the NAACP reported that out of 45 officer-involved shootings in the city in the last two years, 37 of those shots were black. None were white. One-third of the shots resulted in fatalities. And weapons were not found in 40

percent of cases, the NAACP found, no charges were filed.

...about how many cops have been shot in the area. About guns.

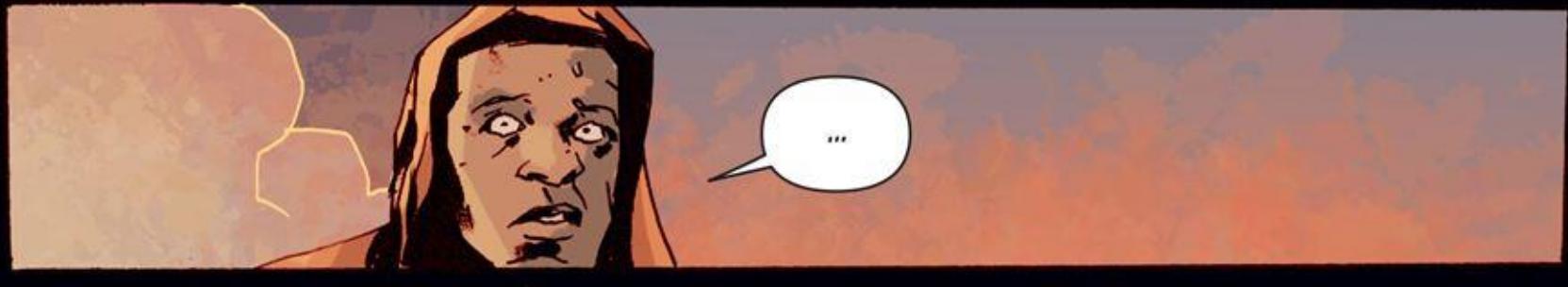
And he knows this. He also knows how many young black men have been shot by cops, unarmed, in the Corner in the last two years. How many cops have gone unpunished.

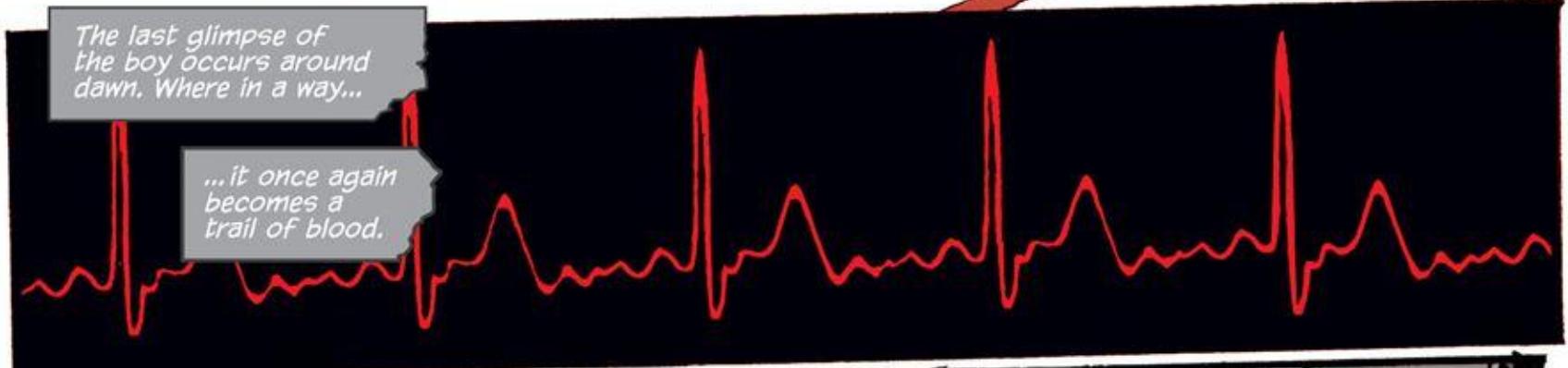
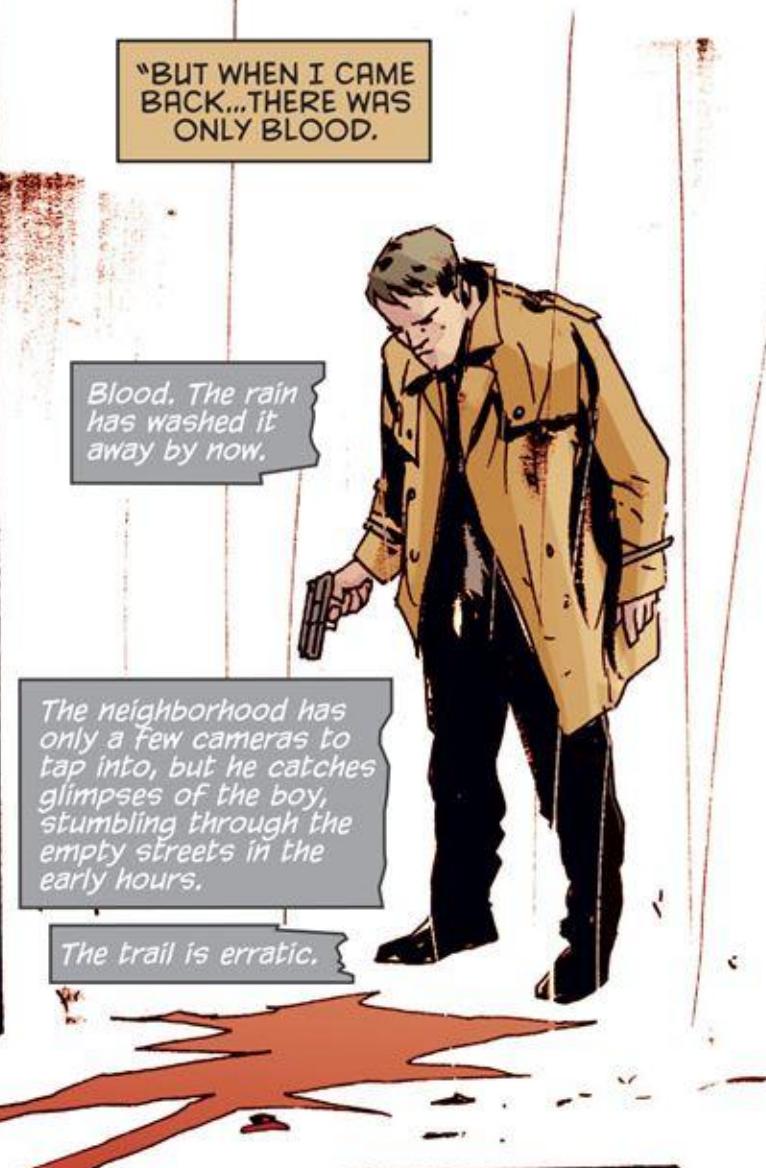
It's too much to bear.

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Too much for today especially, because here, now, Batman is just out to get the story, to catch the one who put Peter down.





For a moment, Batman wonders if it wouldn't be better if the man stayed like this. If he slipped away never knowing...

But no. He'll give the man an ending. Whether he wakes or not. Some sense of justi--

THEY SAY HE LOST ONE OF HIS SNEAKERS.

IS THAT TRUE? PETER ONLY HAD ONE SNEAKER WHEN YOU FOUND HIM?

IT IS.

I TOLD HIM NOT TO DO IT. I'M HIS COUSIN. I TOLD HIM...

IT'S ALL RIGHT.

NO IT'S NOT. PETER IS DEAD. HE WENT TO THE ROBBERS--AND THE COPS WHEN HE SHOULD OF GONE TO THE MONEY, LIKE I SAID.

THE BANK?

THE BANK? THE BANK DOESN'T LISTEN TO FOLKS WITH NO MONEY. I TOLD HIM GO TO THE MAN BEHIND IT...



"PETER'S STORE WAS ONLY WORTH SOMETHING ONCE BRUCE WAYNE ANNOUNCED HE WAS GONNA DEVELOP THE NEIGHBORHOOD. I SAID TO PETER, I SAID, 'YOU SHOULD TRY TALKING TO THE MAN.' ASKING HIM TO HELP, OR NOT TO BUILD. I DON'T KNOW..."

While some think an infusion of capital is needed, others question whether private developments -- even ones like Wayne Apartments, designed to provide upscale living conditions for lower-middle class families in the Corner -- might drive up property values and force out longtime residents. The debate

"BUT IT DIDN'T WORK."

"AND THAT WAS IT. NO MORE OPTIONS. THAT'S WHEN HE STARTED TALKING ABOUT IT."



...
HOW?



THERE'S
A PLACE,
BATMAN...



And now the story takes a turn toward an alley at the edge of the Corner. No name now, but long ago it was called Blossom Row.



Batman knows its history.

And now he learns its present... It cuts through a part of the Corner no one has bothered to clean up since Zero Year.

It's overgrown and wild.

A place you go when you've had it with things, such as they are.

A special place. A garden. Where new things can be grown.





The report comes back from Jim, and it's as Batman suspected.

In Peter's blood, a substance, culled from the work of Dr. Kirk Langstrom, and bonded with steroid venom and other components. A back-alley mixture. Sophisticated and raw, all at once.

It would have given him strength and speed... and with a trigger, some catastrophic damage, it could have even mutated, changed him.

The man who gave Peter the stuff is long gone, no trace.



But the mixture he gave Peter, it made him...into something more than he was, for a little while at least, until it wore off.

So a bad man in an alley,
selling something monstrous
to a desperate kid.

In the end, a
simple case.



people today the 19th infusion hard drug group. With the Corner hood radicalized watch known as a gang." In fact, formed in 1985, Gotham's originated as a neighborhood group. With the Corner named for 4th street and 5th venue, the intersection edge of the neighborhood, less policed than nearly four-fives.

Provide upscale living conditions for lower-middle class families in the Corner - might drive up property values and force out longtime residents. The debate has fierce proponents on both sides, but in the end, the Corner

THE PROBLEM WITH AUTHORITY* Continued

the NAACP reported that out of 45 officer-involved shootings in the city in the last two years, 37 of those shot were black. None were white.

in fatalities. Although

were not found in 40

percent of cases, the NAACP found, no officers were charged, not one

for "mobilis

Constucting a sum

out of the

Constucting a sum

He knows it. As simple as a boy who wanted to cut through it all.



To pretend like none of it mattered.



Until it all caught up to him.



Until all of it mattered.



And he thinks about how the boy must have felt then, how badly he must have wanted to run, to fly away.





The boy flew.

But Batman
will stay.

Because he got it wrong.

He sees that now.

Because there
was someone
to catch.

Cobblepot.

Tano.

Howler.

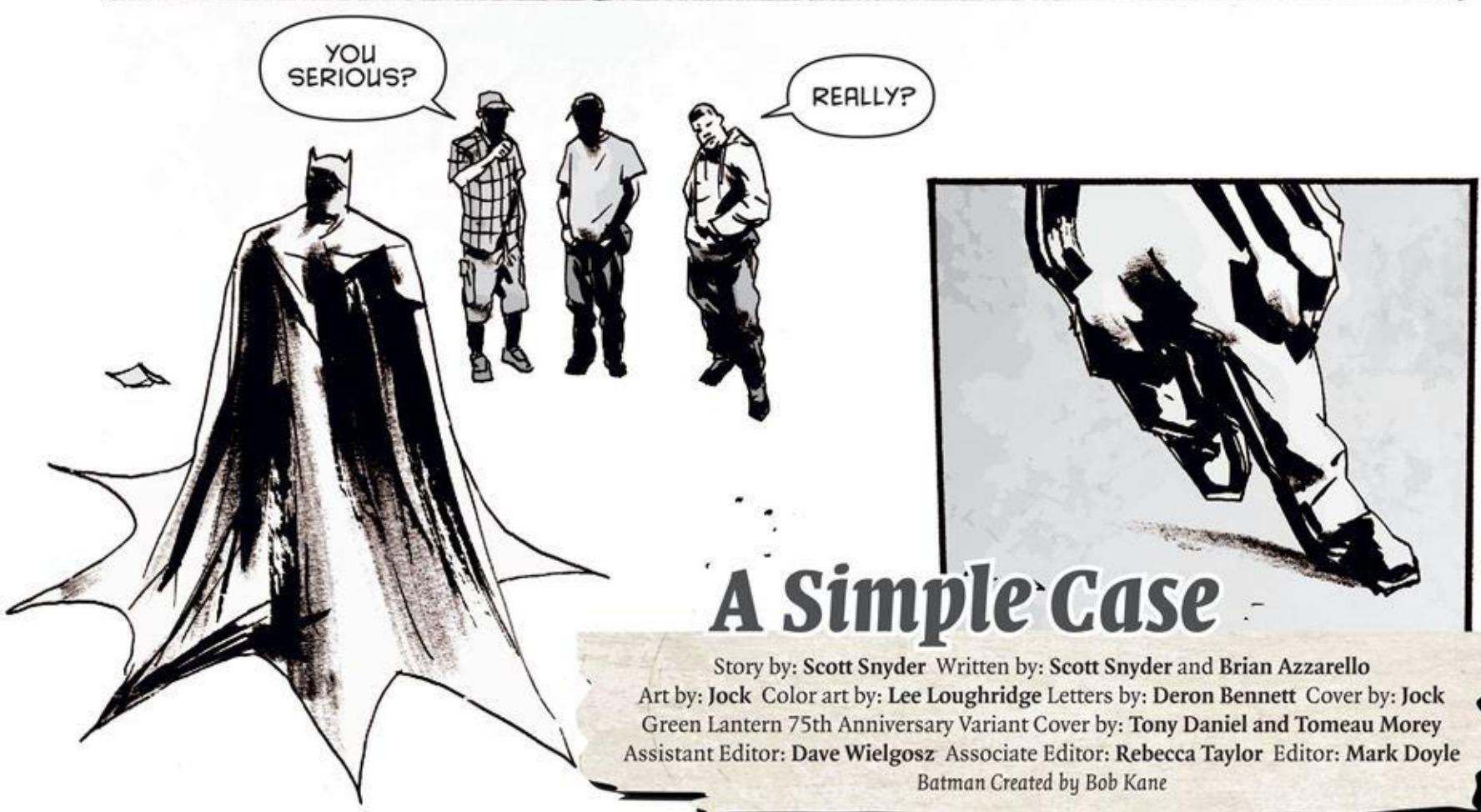
The man in the alley.

Bruce Wayne.

The whole city.
Everyone and no one.

But above all, the one
to catch was the boy.

Before he fell.



A Simple Case

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