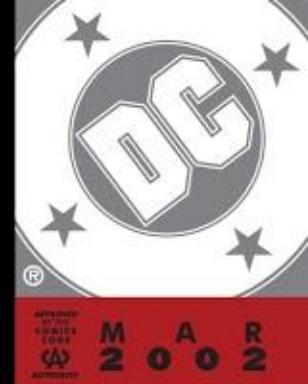


BATMAN

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Bruce Wayne™
MURDERER?

PART SEVEN

BY
ED
BRUBAKER,
SCOTT
MCDANIEL &
ANDY
OWENS





NO.
WE'RE
NOT.

THEN FORGIVE ME
FOR NOT UNDERSTANDING
WHY YOU WON'T SAVE
YOURSELF HERE.

YOU DO REALIZE
THAT ONE WAY OR
ANOTHER, BRUCE
WAYNE IS GOING
DOWN FOR THIS
MURDER, DON'T
YOU?

E 2
BLACKGATE
VISITOR

ACCORDING
TO YOU.

NO, NOT
ACCORDING TO
ME. ACCORDING
TO THE
EVIDENCE.

LET ME BE VERY
CLEAR ABOUT THIS,
MS. BORDEAUX, BECAUSE
THIS REALLY IS YOUR
LAST CHANCE AND
I WANT YOU TO
UNDERSTAND...

...BRUCE WAYNE
IS GOING TO BE
TRIED AND
CONVICTED
FOR FIRST
DEGREE MURDER,
AND YOU ARE GOING
TO GO AWAY FOR A
VERY LONG TIME
AS AN ACCESSORY.

THE EVIDENCE IS
SOLID, AND YOU
HAVE NO
ALIBI.

THE ONLY THING
YOU'VE GOT... IS ME.
I'M OFFERING YOU
A CHANCE TO
HELP YOURSELF.

YOU TESTIFY AGAINST YOUR BOSS AND EXPLAIN HOW YOU HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH IT, AND YOU CAN HAVE A "GET OUT OF JAIL FREE" CARD.

YOU'VE GOT A PRETTY BROAD DEFINITION OF FREE FOR A D.A. ... I THINK I'LL PASS.

IS THIS YOUR COUNSEL? FOR HER TO JUST GET JAMMED-UP LIKE THIS?

ACTUALLY, NO... BUT UNFORTUNATELY MY CLIENT HAS DECIDED TO DISREGARD HER LAWYER'S ADVICE.

I DON'T GET IT, SASHA... I REALLY DON'T... IF YOU'RE REALLY INNOCENT, AS YOU CLAIM...

... WHY THE HELL WOULD YOU TAKE THE FALL FOR SOME RICH PLAYBOY WHO'LL BE APPEALING THIS FOR THE REST OF HIS LIFE WHILE YOU ROT IN PRISON?

YET, ALL YOU CAN THINK ABOUT IS COVERING FOR THIS MURDERING PSYCHO... IT DOESN'T MAKE ANY SENSE...

Y'KNOW, I'VE HEARD THIS WHOLE ROUTINE A FEW TIMES NOW. DO YOU GUYS ALL WORK FROM THE SAME HOW-TO BOOK?

THAT'S RIGHT, BE A WISEGUY, SASHA... WHILE YOU THROW YOUR LIFE AWAY.

BUT I CAN GUARANTEE YOU ONE THING... BRUCE WAYNE ISN'T WASTING ANYTIME WORRYING ABOUT YOU...

THERE ARE THREE
DIFFERENT WAYS
OUT OF THIS CELL.

WITHOUT ANY
LOCK-PICKING
TOOLS, THAT IS.

BUT UNFORTUNATELY,
BRUCE WAYNE CAN'T
DO THE THINGS THAT
BATMAN CAN. IT
DOESN'T WORK THAT
WAY.

SO WE'RE BOTH
STUCK IN THIS
PLACE.

FROM THE INSIDE-OUT

ED BRUBAKER, writer • SCOTT McDANIEL, penciller • ANDY OWENS, inker
ROBERTA TEWES, colorist • WILDSTORM FX, separations • JOHN COSTANZA, letterer
MICHAEL WRIGHT, associate editor • BOB SCHRECK, editor • BATMAN created by BOB KANE

AND TIME MOVES SO SLOWLY HERE... I CAN FEEL EACH SECOND TICKING BY...

BEING WASTED...

WHILE I SHOULD BE OUT THERE... WORKING.

INSTEAD OF IN HERE... LOCKED UP WITH THE ANIMALS.

HEY,
FANCY PANTS... YOU CRYIN' YET, WAYNE?

DON'T CRY,
FANCY PANTS... JUS' WAIT 'TIL LATER...

YEAH,
DEN WE GIVE YA SUMP'IN TA CRY 'BOUT.

WATCHING THE SIGNAL JUST SHINE THERE... LIKE A PHONE RINGING IN A BAD DREAM...

AND NO MATTER HOW MUCH I WANT TO, I CAN'T ANSWER IT.



HOPE
YOU READY
FOR A ROUGH
NIGHT, FANCY
PANTS...

THE KIND OF DEGRADATION
THAT PEOPLE LIKE BRUCE
WAYNE ARE SUBJECTED
TO IN HERE...

I CAN'T
ALLOW IT.

YOU
LISTENIN';
FANCY
PANTS?

LOOKS LIKE WE
GOT US A GENUINE
FANCY PANTS HERE,
BOYS...

RICH LOUSE
THINKS HE CAN
GET AWAY WITH
MURDER...



I DON'T WANT ANY TROUBLE.
SHOULDA THOUGHT ABOUT THAT BEFORE YOU BLEW AWAY THAT PRETTY WHITE WOMAN, SHOULDN'T YOU?

LISTEN, THIS IS YOUR FIRST DAY IN BLACKGATE, SO I'M GONNA CUT YOU SOME SLACK...

BUT THERE'S A SYSTEM INSIDE, Y'KNOW?

PEOPLE GOTTA STICK TOGETHER IN HERE. YOU'RE A WHITE MAN, SO I GOTTA MAKE THE OFFER.

THE ARYANS'LL PROTECT YOU, IF YOU WANT... AND WE'LL LET THE WHOLE MURDER THING SLIDE FOR NOW.

AND HOW MUCH DOES THIS PROTECTION COST?

WELL, MAN LIKE YOU, HELL... FIGURE YOU CAN AFFORD TWO GRANDA WEEK, FOR STARTERS.

I DON'T THINK SO. NO OFFENSE, BUT I'M SURE THIS WHOLE MESS WILL BE CLEARED UP INN TIME...

MY LAWYER IS ALREADY--



WHAT?!



I OFFER
MY HAND
AND YOU SLAP
IT AWAY?!



LISTEN UP, FANCY
PANTS... YOU BELONG
TO THE ARYANS, AND
ONE WAY OR
ANOTHER, WE'RE
GONNA HAVE YOU.

LEAVE
ME
ALONE...



ALL RIGHT,
WHAT THE HELL
IS GOIN' ON
HERE?

LOOKS
LIKE THE NEW
BLOOD HAD AN
ACCIDENT,
SARGE...



IT WOULD HAVE TAKEN
LESS THAN A SECOND
TO DISABLE ALL THREE
OF THEM...

ANOTHER SECOND
TO INSURE THEY'D
NEVER DO ANYTHING
LIKE THAT AGAIN.

BUT EVEN OUTSIDE
THIS CELL, I'M
CAGED.

BET YOU
WANT YOUR
MAMA, DON'T
YOU?

IT'S ONE THING TO HAVE
TO ACT LIKE BRUCE
WAYNE IN THE REAL
WORLD.

BUT IN HERE...

OOPS,
MY BAD... I
FORGOT...

IN HERE, BRUCE WAYNE
IS NOTHING BUT A LIABILITY...

...YOUR MAMA GOT
BLOWED AWAY JUST
LIKE YOUR GIRLFRIEND,
DIDN'T SHE?

--AND WHILE THE BRUTAL MURDER OF REPORTER VESPER FAIRCHILD IS STILL UNDER INVESTIGATION, POLICE LIEUTENANT MARGARET SAWYER HAD THIS TO SAY...



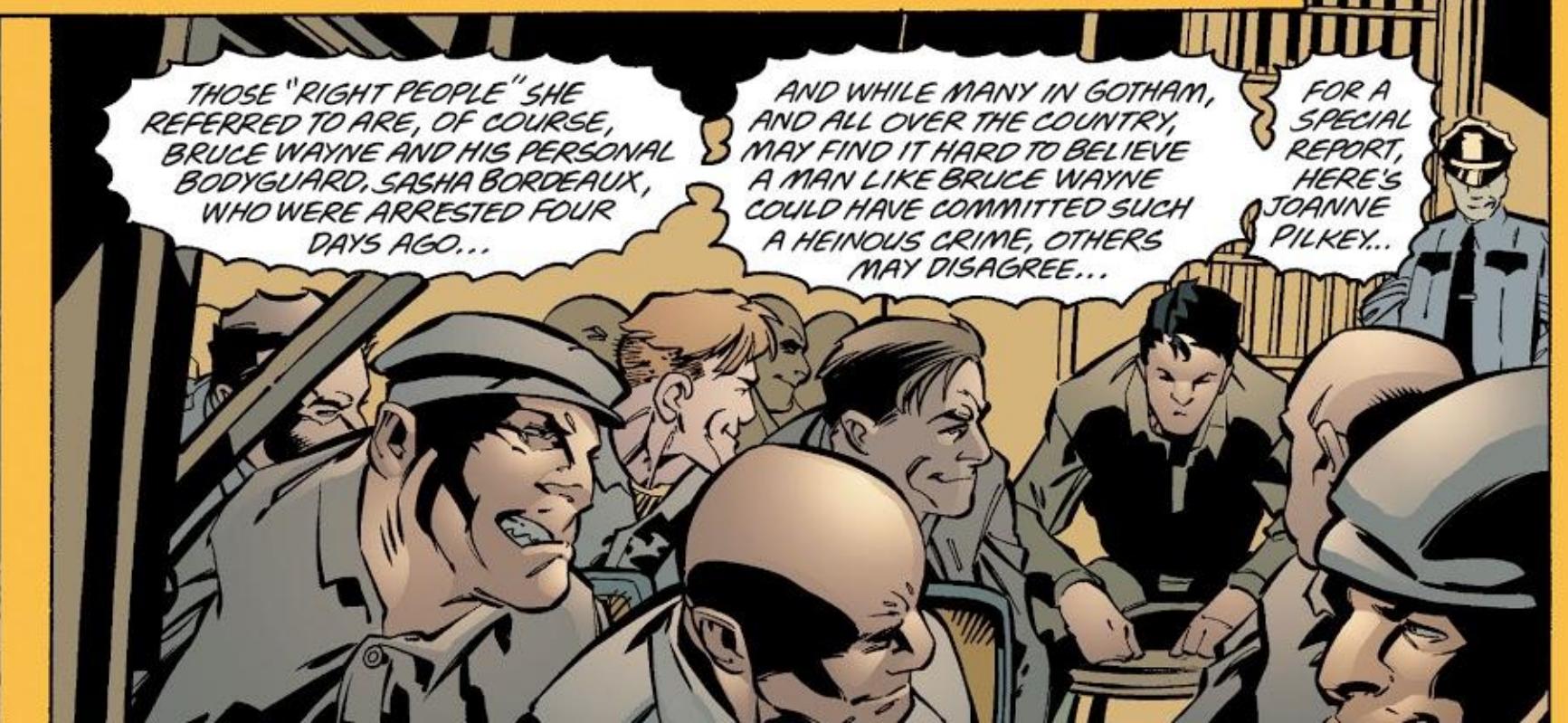
ARE WE PURSUING OTHER SUSPECTS?
NO.

THE G.C.P.D. ARE CONFIDENT WE HAVE THE RIGHT PEOPLE IN CUSTODY FOR THIS CRIME, AND THAT THE EVIDENCE WILL BEAR THIS OUT AT TRIAL...

THOSE "RIGHT PEOPLE" SHE REFERRED TO ARE, OF COURSE, BRUCE WAYNE AND HIS PERSONAL BODYGUARD, SASHA BORDEAUX, WHO WERE ARRESTED FOUR DAYS AGO...

AND WHILE MANY IN GOTHAM, AND ALL OVER THE COUNTRY, MAY FIND IT HARD TO BELIEVE A MAN LIKE BRUCE WAYNE COULD HAVE COMMITTED SUCH A HEINOUS CRIME, OTHERS MAY DISAGREE...

FOR A SPECIAL REPORT, HERE'S JOANNE PILKEY...



THREE SHOTS RING OUT... AND A BOY LOSES HIS PARENTS...

ROOT of the CRIME

A WGLX Special Report

IT'S A STORY THAT SHOOK GOTHAM TO ITS CORE NEARLY TWENTY FIVE YEARS AGO...

...ON THE NIGHT THAT BRUCE WAYNE'S PARENTS WERE MURDERED DURING THE COMMISSION OF A RANDOM STREET CRIME.

NEWSLINE
TRAGEDY IN GOTHAM

BUT WITH RECENT EVENTS, WE'RE FORCED TO ASK, WAS THAT NIGHT THE BEGINNING OF A LARGER CYCLE OF VIOLENCE?

DID THOSE TRAGIC EVENTS SCAR THE PSYCHE OF BRUCE WAYNE AT A YOUNG AGE, AND TURN HIM INTO A MURDERER HIMSELF?

WAYNE

REMEMBER ME
TO GO ON

Prof. TAMARA LIGHTENBERG
Psychiatric Studies Dept. G.S.U.

YOU HAVE TO REMEMBER THAT EVERYTHING ABOUT WHO WE WILL BE IS FORMED INSIDE US WHEN WE ARE CHILDREN...

AND TO LOSE ONE'S PARENTS IN SUCH A SHOCKING FASHION, THAT KIND OF EVENT IS EXACTLY THE KIND OF TRAUMA WE LOOK FOR IN THE EARLY YEARS OF VIOLENT CRIMINALS.

YOU GOT A GUY WHO WATCHES HIS OWN PARENTS GET SHOT TO DEATH AT NINE YEARS OLD... WE CAN'T UNDERSTAND WHAT THAT DOES TO A PERSON.

I'M ACTUALLY KIND OF SURPRISED THAT HE HASN'T KILLED ANYONE BEFORE THIS...

Former F.B.I. Agent GREG McGRUDER
Behavioral Science Profiler

AND IF I WERE A BETTING MAN, I'D SAY HE PROBABLY HAS. A GUY WITH THAT KIND OF MONEY CAN COVER UP A LOT.

POLICE REFUSE TO COMMENT ON WHETHER THEY ARE LOOKING INTO ANY SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY IN BRUCE WAYNE'S PAST, BUT THE QUESTION REMAINS.

... DID THIS EARLY TRAGEDY TURN A BOY INTO A KILLER?

IT APPEARS ONLY A JURY CAN ANSWER THAT NOW.

AND IN A RELATED STORY, WAYNE ENTERPRISES TODAY MADE A PUBLIC STATEMENT... ACTING C.E.O. DELILAH WAGNER HAD THIS TO SAY...

WE AT WAYNE ENTERPRISES STAND BEHIND BRUCE WAYNE IN HIS TIME OF NEED... WE'RE DOING EVERYTHING WE CAN TO HELP HIM UNTIL THIS WHOLE MESS CAN GET SORTED OUT.

MS. WAGNER, ARE YOU SAYING WAYNE ENTERPRISES BELIEVES BRUCE WAYNE TO BE INNOCENT OF THESE CHARGES?

THAT'S NOT FOR US TO SAY. I WOULD BE STUNNED IF THESE ALLEGATIONS BEAR OUT, THOUGH.

ACCORDING TO A WAYNE ENTERPRISES STATEMENT, MS. WAGNER STEPPED INTO THE C.E.O. POSITION THIS WEEK, AS A PRIMARY STOCKHOLDER IN THE COMPANY...

... AND IN LIGHT OF FORMER C.E.O. LUCIUS FOX'S STILL-CRITICAL CONDITION FOLLOWING HIS HEART ATTACK LAST MONTH...

RECENT STOCK MARKET PERFORMANCE SHOWS CONSUMER CONFIDENCE IN WAYNE ENTERPRISES IS SLIPPING, DUE TO THE SUDDEN LOSS OF ITS DRIVING FORCE, AND THE PUBLIC SPECTACLE OF--

AWW, LOOKA THE KILLER... WHAT A HARD LIFE HE HAD... BOO-HOO...

THIS WORLD, THIS PLACE, TAKES EVERYTHING AWAY FROM ME, PIECE BY PIECE.

I CAN'T HELP IT... THE MASK IS SLIPPING.

DUDE, HE FROZE YOU... DAMN.

NAW... NAW... I JUST...

DUDE'S SCARED OF FANCY PANTS... OH, MAN.

I REMEMBER HOW THIS FELT BEFORE -- RIGHT AFTER MY PARENTS DIED.

THE REPORTERS AND THE PHOTOGRAPHERS... EVERYONE WANTING A PIECE OF ME. EVEN AFTER EVERYTHING I HAD ALREADY LOST.

THE WOMAN ON THE NEWS YESTERDAY, SHE WALKED ON THEIR GRAVE...

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THOMAS · MARTHA

WAYNE ENTERPRISES IS FALLING APART...

VESPER WAS MURDERED IN MY HOME...

PEOPLE ARE WALKING ON MY PARENTS' GRAVE...

THIS HAS TO STOP.

WON'T BE LONG NOW, WAYNE...

...WON'T BE LONG...

NO, IT WON'T... I MADE CERTAIN OF THAT EARLIER TODAY...



VISITORS



-- HOPE THAT THEY HAVEN'T BEEN MAKING YOU WATCH ANY OF THIS VILE TELEVISION COVERAGE... THAT CRUEL CARICATURE OF YOUR LIFE...

IT DOESN'T MATTER WHAT THEY SAY ABOUT BRUCE WAYNE...

HOW'VE YOU BEEN?

UH... BUSY TO SAY THE LEAST, MASTER BRUCE...

BETWEEN THE POLICE AND WHOEVER IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS DREADFUL MESS YOU SEEM TO BE IN, THE MANOR WAS A DISASTER AREA.

THE MANOR...?

THEN, YOU'VE... I MEAN...

PLEASE, SIR, LET'S NOT DISCUSS IT ANY FURTHER. I'VE COME BACK BECAUSE IT'S OBVIOUS YOU NEED ME.

THAT'S WHY I WAS IN THE COURTROOM LAST WEEK.

JUST TELL ME WHAT I CAN DO TO HELP?

ACTUALLY, THERE IS ONE THING I NEED...

TAP TAP... TAP...

AND THEN, OF COURSE, HE NOTICES WHAT I'VE BEEN TRYING TO TELL HIM SINCE HE SAT DOWN...

I'D LOVE SOME OF THAT FRENCH COLOGNE I KEEP IN THE UPSTAIRS BATHROOM...

TAP TAP TAP... TAP

THE CODE IS SOMETHING HE TAUGHT ME HIMSELF, FROM HIS DAYS IN THE BRITISH SECRET SERVICE... TELLING HIM WHERE AND WHEN TO GO, WHAT TO DO...

...YOU KNOW THE ONE, I THINK.

AND THE FACT THAT I'M SENDING HIM THE CODE AT ALL TELLS HIM EVERYTHING ELSE HE NEEDS TO KNOW...

ARE YOU CERTAIN THAT'S WHAT YOU NEED, SIR?

IS EVERYTHING ELSE ALL RIGHT? FOR BRUCE WAYNE, I MEAN.

NO, REALLY, ALFRED, I'M FINE... I JUST CAN'T WAIT FOR THIS ALL TO BE SORTED OUT. I'D REALLY LIKE TO GET BACK TO WORK.

HE DOESN'T LIKE IT... BUT IT HAS TO BE DONE. THERE ARE TOO MANY QUESTIONS I CAN'T ANSWER FROM IN HERE.

VERY WELL, MASTER BRUCE... I'LL SEE YOU IN A FEW DAYS.

THE CELL DOORS OF MY THREE ARYAN FRIENDS SLIDE OPEN FIFTEEN MINUTES BEFORE LIGHTS OUT...

...THE GUARD HAVING BEEN PAID OFF DURING LUNCH.

IN MY CELL, THOUGH, IT'S BEEN LIGHTS OUT FOR A WHILE NOW...

...AND THE LAST PIECES OF MY MASK ARE LOST IN THE DARKNESS WITH ME.

...I TOLD YOU WE'D--

HEY,
WHAT'S WITH
THE
LIGHTS?

OH,
FANCY PANTS...



I TAKE MY TIME,
BECAUSE I CAN...

...BECAUSE THEY HAVE
NO IDEA WHAT THEY'VE
WALKED INTO.

THEY THINK BRUCE WAYNE SHOULD BE ON HIS KNEES... BEGGING FOR MERCY.

ON HIS KNEES IN AN ALLEY...

ON HIS KNEES IN HIS PARENTS' BLOOD...

... ALWAYS WEAK.

BUT RIGHT NOW, FOR THESE SHORT SHARP MOMENTS IN THIS DARK CELL...



...THERE IS NO
BRUCE WAYNE.

DON'T
MAKE A MOVE,
WAYNE!

KEEP
YOUR HANDS
WHERE WE CAN
SEE THEM!

GOOD GOD, WAYNE...
WHAT THE HELL'D YOU
DO IN HERE?

OH, MAN...
LOOK AT THIS,
HE'S BARELY
BREATHING...

RIGHT
NOW,
WAYNE!

WAYNE, ARE
YOU HEARING ME?!
I'M TALKING TO
YOU, YOU...

IT WON'T BE
LONG NOW...

GOOD NEWS
AND BAD NEWS,
SASHA...

... GOOD NEWS IS THE
D.A.'S OFFICE HAS EXTENDED
THEIR OFFER TO YOU UNTIL
TOMORROW. MAYBE YOU CAN
USE THIS TIME TO ACTUALLY
RECONSIDER?

NO THANKS,
WHAT'S THE STORY
ON THE
EXTENSION?

WELL, THAT'S THE
BAD NEWS... THEY'RE
LOOKING INTO A
RELATED MATTER.

THIS REALLY
DOESN'T LOOK
GOOD, SASHA...
NOT FOR A NOT
GUILTY PLEA...

Gotham Gazette

WAYNE GOES CRAZY IN BLACKGATE

Sends Three to Infirmary

OH,
NO...

TO BE CONTINUED IN
DETECTIVE COMICS #767!