

BATMAN

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BRUBAKER • McDANIEL • STORY



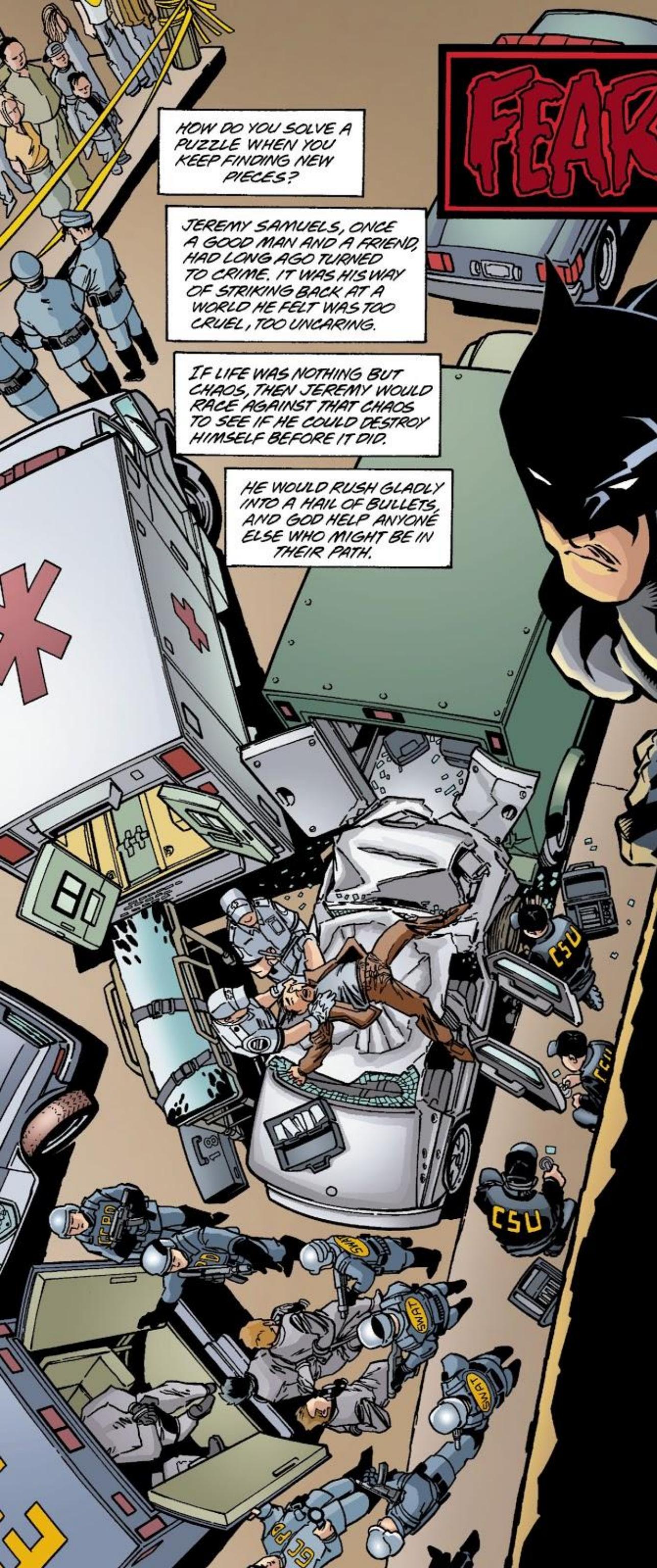
FEARLESS PART 2

HOW DO YOU SOLVE A PUZZLE WHEN YOU KEEP FINDING NEW PIECES?

JEREMY SAMUELS, ONCE A GOOD MAN AND A FRIEND, HAD LONG AGO TURNED TO CRIME. IT WAS HIS WAY OF STRIKING BACK AT A WORLD HE FELT WAS TOO CRUEL, TOO UNTAKING.

IF LIFE WAS NOTHING BUT CHAOS, THEN JEREMY WOULD RACE AGAINST THAT CHAOS TO SEE IF HE COULD DESTROY HIMSELF BEFORE IT DID.

HE WOULD RUSH GLADLY INTO A HAIR OF BULLETS, AND GOD HELP ANYONE ELSE WHO MIGHT BE IN THEIR PATH.



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BUT NOW HE HAD ADDED A NEW TWIST TO THINGS. THIS FALSE ROBBERY HE HAD STAGED HADN'T JUST BEEN A DIVERSION TO DRAW ME AWAY FROM HIS ACTUAL TARGET.



NO, THESE MEN HAD BEEN HIRED TO PUT ON A SHOW.

THEY HAD SACRIFICED THEIR FREEDOM SO SOMEONE COULD WATCH ME IN ACTION, AND I'M FAIRLY CERTAIN THAT KIND OF SACRIFICE DOESN'T COME CHEAPLY.



SO WHO WAS THE MAN IN THE GOGGLES? AND WHY WAS JEREMY WORKING FOR HIM?



HE HAD ALWAYS RUN HIS OWN GAME IN THE PAST, SO THERE HAD TO BE A REASON FOR THIS CHANGE OF DIRECTION.

UNLESS IT WASN'T
ACTUALLY A CHANGE
AT ALL. MAYBE THIS
WAS JUST A DIFFERENT
MEANS TO THE SAME
END.

WITH JEREMY, YOU HAD
TO EXAMINE A PROBLEM
FROM SO MANY ANGLES
IT WAS HARD TO BE SURE
OF ANYTHING.

ORACLE,
DO YOU HAVE
ANYTHING ON
THAT DESCRIPTION
YET?

NOTHING.
MAYBE IF I HAD
A LITTLE MORE TO
GO ON THAN HIS
HEIGHT AND
GOGGLES... BUT...

I KNOW. JUST KEEP SEARCHING
ANYWAY. HE'S A PROFESSIONAL,
SO HE MUST BE IN THE SYSTEM,
SOMEWHERE.

I'LL KEEP ON IT, BUT
DON'T GET YOUR HOPES UP,
BATMAN. I'M A BIT TOO MUCH
IN THE DARK ON THIS ONE,
I THINK.

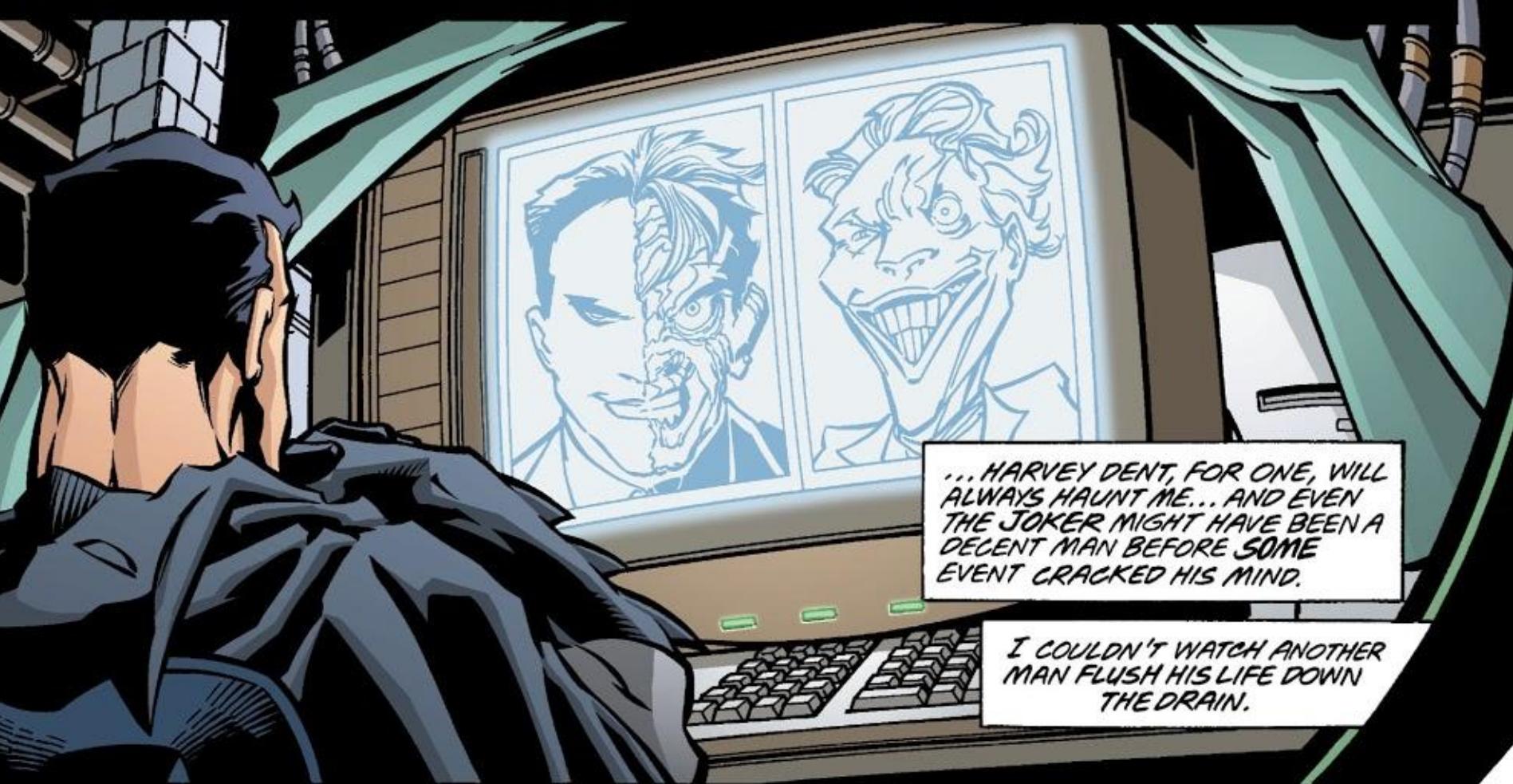
I KNOW THE
FEELING.

MY MIND PICKED AT EVERY CLUE, EVERY POSSIBLE IDEA, FOR WHAT WAS GOING ON BEHIND THE SCENES.

I WAS CONVINCED THERE WAS SOMETHING THAT I WAS OVERLOOKING, SOMETHING THAT WOULD HAVE BEEN OBVIOUS TO ME IF I HADN'T BEEN BLINDED BY OUR FRIENDSHIP...

...AND BY MY NEED TO STOP JEREMY'S SELF-DESTRUCTION.

THAT'S WHAT IT WAS, THOUGH, NOT A DESIRE, A NEED. I HAD SEEN TOO MANY GOOD MEN GO BAD...



...HARVEY DENT, FOR ONE, WILL ALWAYS HAUNT ME... AND EVEN THE JOKER MIGHT HAVE BEEN A DECENT MAN BEFORE SOME EVENT CRACKED HIS MIND.

I COULDN'T WATCH ANOTHER MAN FLUSH HIS LIFE DOWN THE DRAIN.

AND IT'S FUNNY, NOW THAT IT'S TOO LATE, I CAN RECALL THE EXACT MOMENT WHEN THE FIRST SIGN OF WHAT JEREMY WOULD BECOME APPEARED.

IT WAS OVER TEN YEARS AGO...

SO THERE YOU ARE... WE'VE BEEN WONDERING WHERE YOU GOT TO. WHY DON'T YOU COME BACK OUT AND JOIN THE PARTY?

I DON'T KNOW, I'M NOT REALLY IN THE MOOD FOR FUN AND SUN, RIGHT NOW.







STILL, I CAN'T
IMAGINE IT. SOMETIMES
I THINK MY FAMILY'S
THE ONLY THING KEEPING
ME SANE...

... I DON'T
KNOW HOW I COULD
GO ON WITHOUT
THEM.



SUCH AN INNOCUOUS STATEMENT, BUT
SO TELLING. AND COMING FROM A
MAN WHO HAD THE WORLD IN THE
PALM OF HIS HAND.

IT'S NOT HARD TO SEE HIM
GOING FROM THAT TO THE
MAN I TALKED TO THE
OTHER DAY...



I CARE BECAUSE I
USED TO HAVE FAITH IN
YOU, AND I'D LIKE TO
AGAIN, BUT YOU'RE
MAKING IT DIFFICULT.

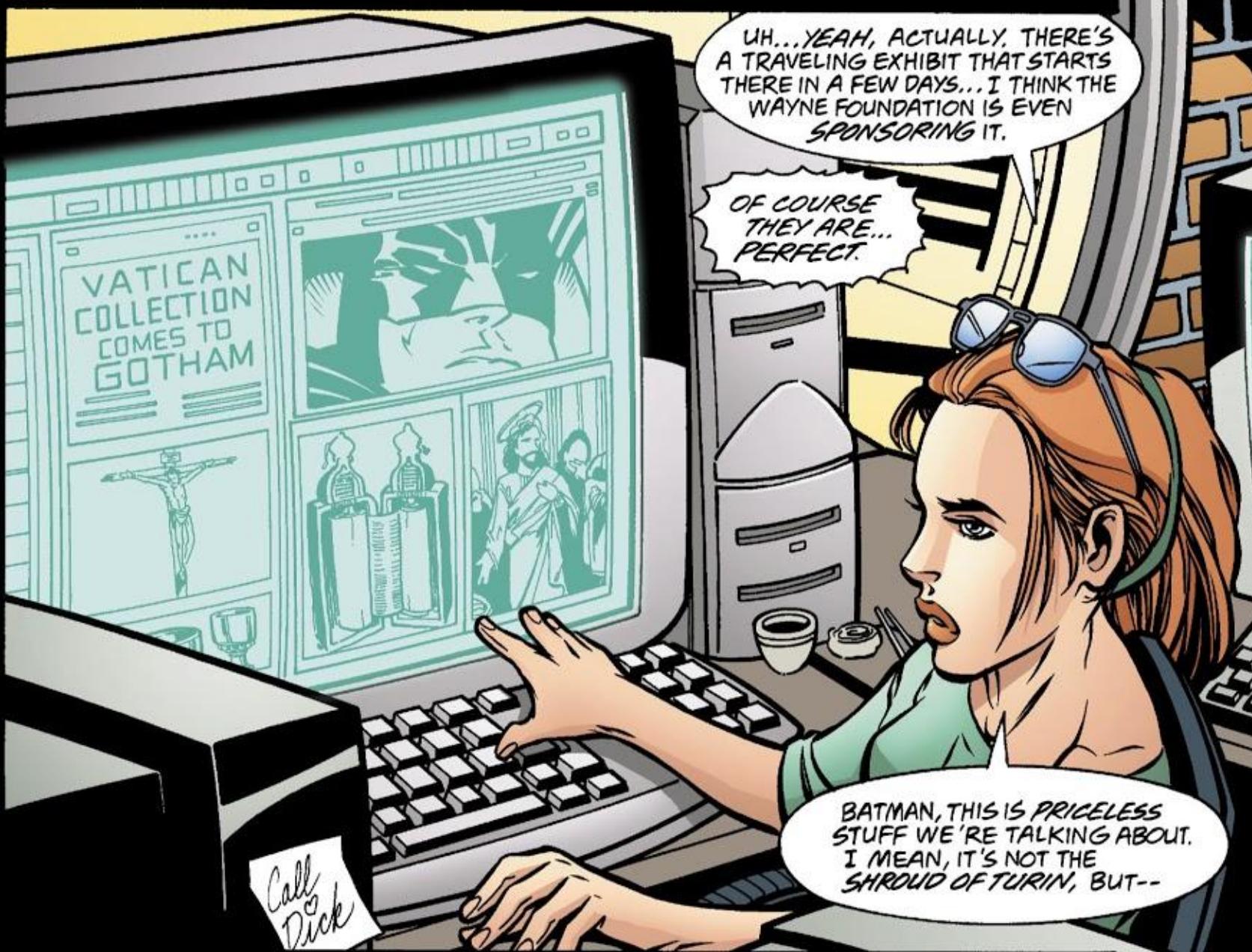
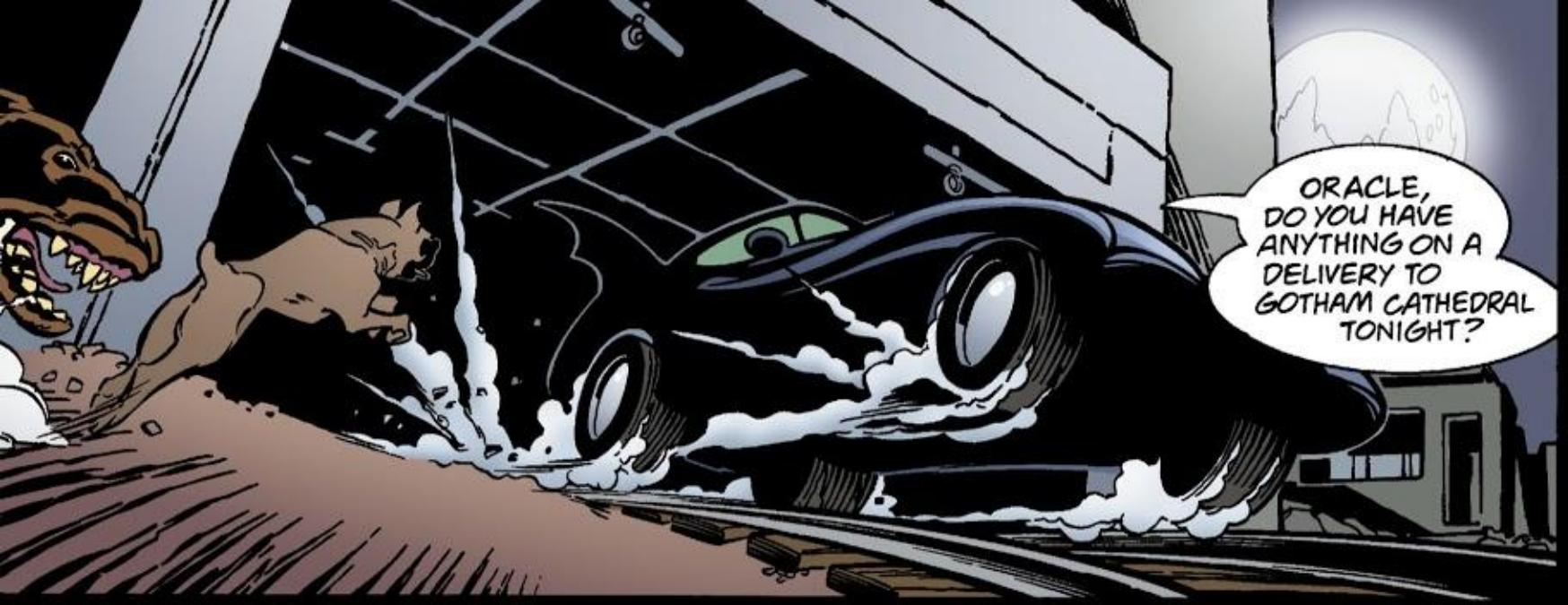
FAITH... YEAH,
I'LL HAVE TO LOOK
INTO THAT
SOMEDAY.



WAIT A
MINUTE...

I HAD MONToya
ON HIM, BUT HE GAVE
HER THE SLIP NEAR
CATHEDRAL SQUARE.

FAITH...
YEAH, I'LL HAVE
TO LOOK INTO
THAT SOMEDAY.







OKAY,
WE MOVE
ON MY
SIGNAL.

WHAT
SIGNAL?

THAT
ONE.



NO TROUBLE BACK
HERE... GET MACAVOY
RUNNING THESE CASES
BACK TO THE VAN.

HERE, NOW GRAB
THE OTHERS AND --
WHAT'S THE
PROBLEM?

I GUESS
THAT WOULD
BE ME,
JEREMY.

NICE
OUTFIT.

SAME
TO YOU.

WHAT ARE YOU
WAITING FOR?
SHOOT HIM!





OF COURSE, I WAS EXPECTING HIM, TOO, BECAUSE I FINALLY FIGURED OUT WHY JEREMY WOULD BE CONTRACTING HIS SERVICES.



HE DOESN'T WANT ME TO STOP HIM THIS TIME. AND I DON'T MEAN THE ROBBERY. HE DOESN'T WANT ME TO STOP HIM FROM DYING.



I JUST WASN'T EXPECTING HIS BACKUP TO BE THIS GOOD. MY MISTAKE.



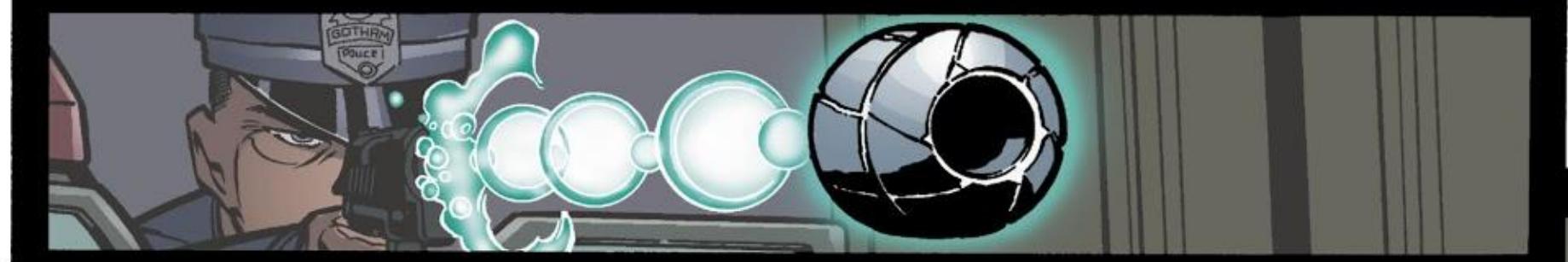
HE'S HARDLY EVEN MOVING. EFFICIENT COMBAT STYLE, WHATEVER IT IS.



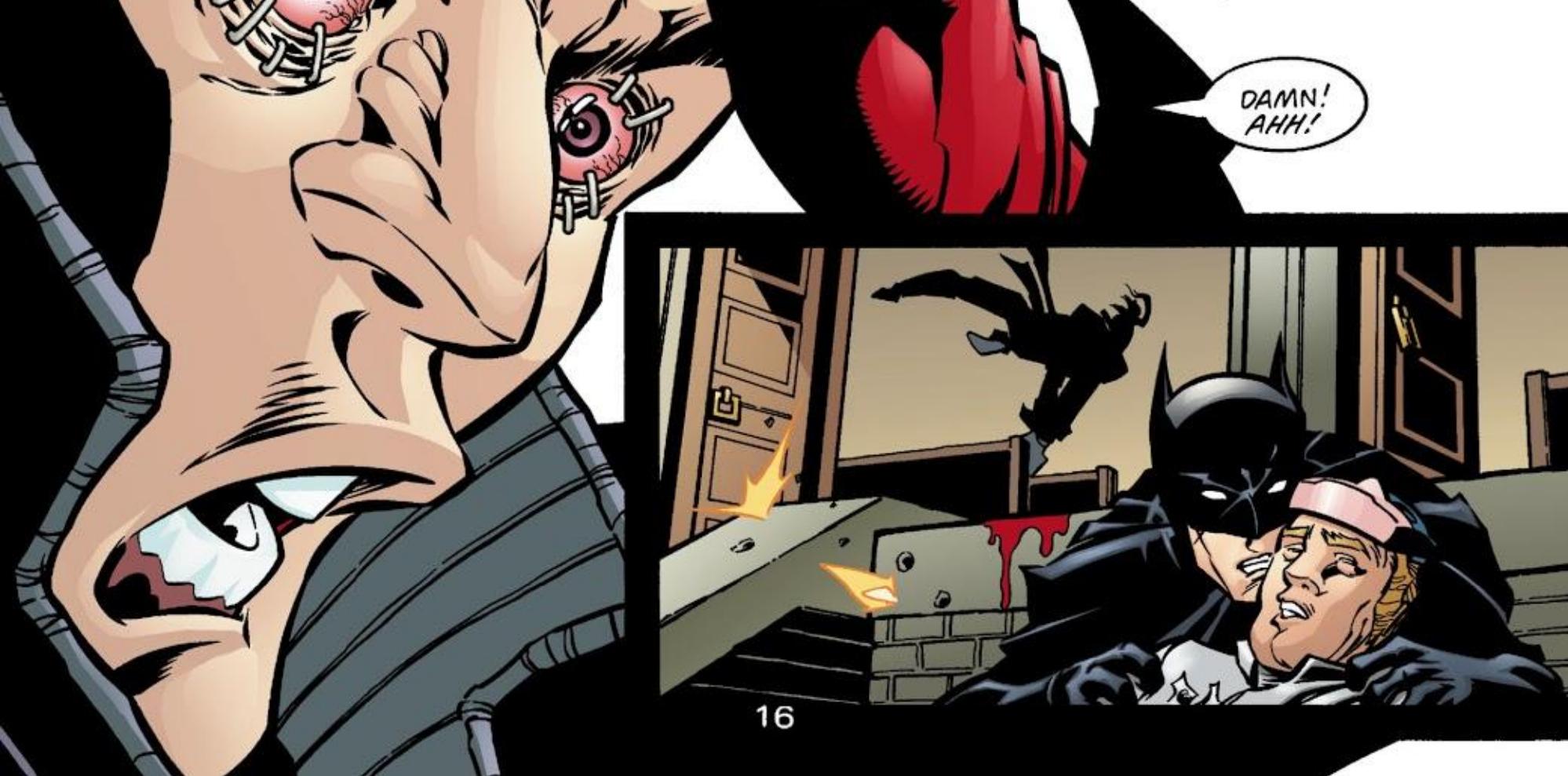
EVERY MOVE I MAKE, HE COUNTERS. LIKE HE'S ANTICIPATING THEM.



CAN'T HAVE MEMORIZED MY MOVES FROM THE OTHER ROBBERY AND LEARNED THEM THIS QUICKLY, COULD HE? IT WOULD TAKE MORE THAN AN AVERAGE PHOTOGRAPHIC MEMORY.









...HEH... I
THOUGHT HE HAD
YOU... WASN'T
THINKING...

BUT WHY?
WHY WOULD
YOU...?

...TOLD YOU
BEFORE... NEVER WANTED
TO HURT ANYONE BUT
MYSELF...



...GUESS
YOU WERE RIGHT
TO HAVE FAITH IN
ME... AFTER ALL
...BRUCE...



YOU KNEW?

...HAD A
LOT OF TIME
TO FIGURE IT
OUT... BUT...
DON'T
WORRY...



...YOUR
SECRET'S
SAFE WITH
ME...





I'M USED TO IT. DON'T GIVE IT A SECOND THOUGHT.

NO, YOU'RE A FRIEND... AND I'M STARTING TO REALIZE I SHOULD APPRECIATE THE ONES I'VE GOT.

OKAY... SO WHAT NOW? ANY IDEAS WHO PLANNED THIS JOB?

IT WAS SOMEONE NEW-- I DIDN'T GET A NAME, BUT I'VE GOT A FEW IDEAS ON WHO HOOKED HIM UP WITH JEREMY SAMUELS.

CARE TO SHARE THEM?

NOT RIGHT THIS SECOND, NO.

ORACLE, ARE YOU THERE?

ALWAYS.

SEE IF ROBIN CAN GET AWAY FOR A LITTLE WHILE. I NEED SOME ASSISTANCE.







IF YOU SAY SO. I WOULD'VE BEEN HAPPY TO ELIMINATE HIM.

BUT, IN ANY CASE I KEPT MY PRESENCE IN GOTHAM VIRTUALLY UNKNOWN, AND IF THINGS GO ACCORDING TO PLAN, AND WE DO RETURN...

...I DON'T THINK THE BATMAN WILL BE POSING MUCH OF A PROBLEM.

Next Issue:
BATMAN or BATMOUTH