

DC COMICS

THE NEW 52!

2

**SCOTT
SNYDER
GREG
CAPULLO
JONATHAN
GLAPION**

BATMAN



**RATED T
TEEN**

DEC 2011

dccomics.com

The original
Wayne Tower.

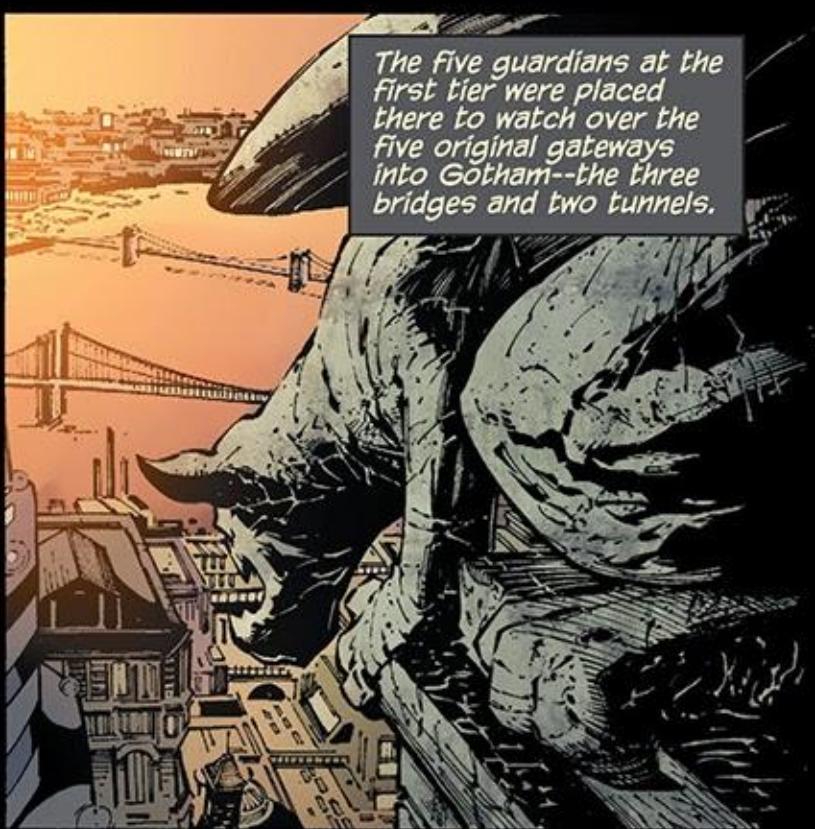
If you came to Gotham city today, right now, and took a tour of the building, here are some things your guide would tell you:

The tower was constructed in 1888, under the watch of my great, great grandfather Alan Wayne.

He built the tower to serve as a symbol of welcome to people coming to Gotham. And, as your guide will point out, from the ground up, it's designed to give visitors like you the feeling that they're cared for and protected.

For example, your guide will say, the building has twelve gargoyles or "guardians," as Alan insisted they be called--one to watch over each passageway into the city.

The five guardians at the first tier were placed there to watch over the five original gateways into Gotham--the three bridges and two tunnels.



Higher up the tower is a ring of seven guardians, one to protect each of the seven train lines that converge at Union Station, below Wayne Tower's base.



And at the top of the tower is the observation deck, which Alan insisted remain free and open to the public every weekend, all year round.

For the windows, Alan demanded that only the best glass be used. A kind of double-bonded, laminated float glass, designed to be crystal-quality, weatherproof. And, most important, unbreakable.



*Unbreakable, that is, unless--
like the assassin who just kicked
me through them--you know
how to hit the glass just right.*

*Make impact at the edge
of the plate, rather than
the center, where it's
designed to bend and flex.*

*The throwing knives
are perfectly placed,
too. Lodged tight in
my brachial arteries.*

*The pain and blood
loss make it almost
impossible to grab
on to anything
to break my fall...*

*...impossible to
do anything.*

*Except bleed
and drop...*

*...and watch the city
rise up to greet me.*

24 HOURS EARLIER...

...I'M POSITIVE! I HIT HIM WITH
TWO POUNDS OF SEMTEX.
TWO POUNDS!

SAY
WHAT YOU WANT, I'LL
SPIKE THE BALL WHEN
WE'RE OVER THE HARBOR.
OUR GUY IS SUPPOSED TO
BE WAITING JUST PAST
THE STRAITS TO TAKE
THE STATUES.



WHY ARE
WE GOING SO
DAMN SLOW?
I THOUGHT THIS
THING WAS
SUPPOSED TO
CRUISE AT
TWO-HUNDRED
KNOTS!

IT IS. BUT HE
DESTROYED THE
COAXIAL WITH THAT
"BAT" THING.

YOU
WANT FASTER?
DUMP A FEW OF
THE PRETTY
LADIES.

BUT OUR GUY
SAID ALL TEN OF THESE
THINGS FROM THE
HELLENISTIC WING. TEN.

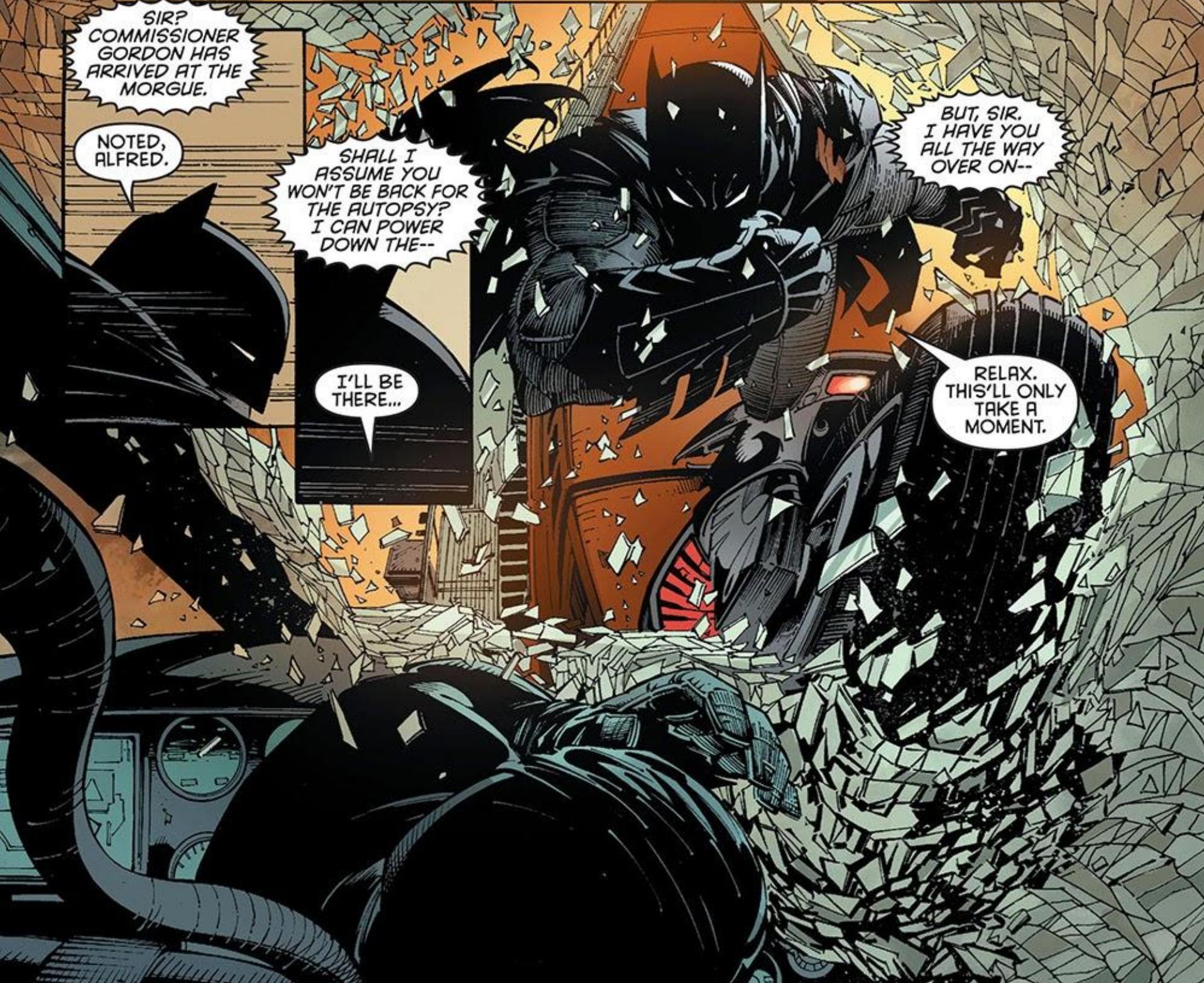
HE ISN'T
THE ONE ABOUT
TO GO DOWN IN
THE MIDDLE OF THE
AVENUE. START
TOSSING
THEM!

HELL, I
NEVER WAS MUCH
FOR PALE GIRLS,
ANYHOW.

AND AT
LEAST THESE
ONES WON'T
SCREA--

CRASH







I'M AFRAID
THERE'S LITTLE MORE
TO RELAY THAN THE OBVIOUS.
OUR JOHN DOE WAS STABBED
MULTIPLE TIMES, LIKELY IN
AN ACT OF TORTURE.





RIGHT WISDOM TOOTH. GOT IT.

HUH... TAKE A LOOK.

SAME EMBLEM ON THE THROWING KNIVES USED TO KILL HIM.

IT'S AN ATHENIAN OWL. IT APPEARED ON COINS IN ANCIENT GREECE. IT WAS A SYMBOL OF WEALTH AND POWER.

"BEWARE THE COURT OF OWLS, THAT WATCHES ALL THE TIME, RULING GOTHAM FROM A SHADOWED PERCH, BEHIND GRANITE AND LIME. THEY WATCH YOU AT YOUR HEARTH, THEY WATCH YOU IN YOUR BED, SPEAK NOT A WHISPERED WORD OF THEM, OR--"

--THEY'LL SEND THE TALON FOR YOUR HEAD."

I KNOW THE NURSERY RHYME, JIM. BUT THE COURT OF OWLS IS JUST A LEGEND.

TO BE BLUNT, SO WERE YOU FOR A WHILE.

THEY DON'T EXIST.

AND YOU KNOW THAT BECAUSE...

I JUST KNOW.

WELL, WHOEVER THE KILLER IS, HE WANTS US TO BELIEVE THE GHOST STORY.

SO WHAT WE'VE GOT IS A VICTIM WHO WAS SOME KIND OF SECRET HIGH-LEVEL BAD-GUY TRAINER, A KILLER WHO'S EVEN TOUGHER THAN HIM, APPARENTLY OUT TO GET BRUCE WAYNE...

...AND ALL WE REALLY KNOW ABOUT EITHER OF THEM IS THAT THEY HAVE A THING FOR OWLS.

AND THE TISSUE BENEATH THE VICTIM'S FINGERNAILS-- FORENSICS CAME BACK EMPTY-HANDED. ANYTHING ON YOUR END?

CAVE ACCESS GRANTED TO... NIGHTWING.

NO...

KNOCK KNOCK.

...BUT I'M LOOKING INTO IT. I'LL BE IN TOUCH.

WHOA. YOU INSTALLED A PHOTOGRAMMETRIC SCANNER IN THE CITY MORGUE....?

IT SIMPLIFIES THINGS.

NO MORE SNEAKING IN AND OUT. COME ON, THOUGH. ADMIT IT. YOU'RE GOING TO MISS THAT VENTILATION SHAFT. THE ONE WITH--

THIS IS THE JOHN DOE I BRIEFED YOU ON, DICK. THE ONE WHO HAD YOUR DNA UNDER HIS FINGERNAILS.

GOOD THING WE KEEP ALL OF OUR BAT-FAMILY DNA PROTECTED.

DO YOU RECOGNIZE HIM?

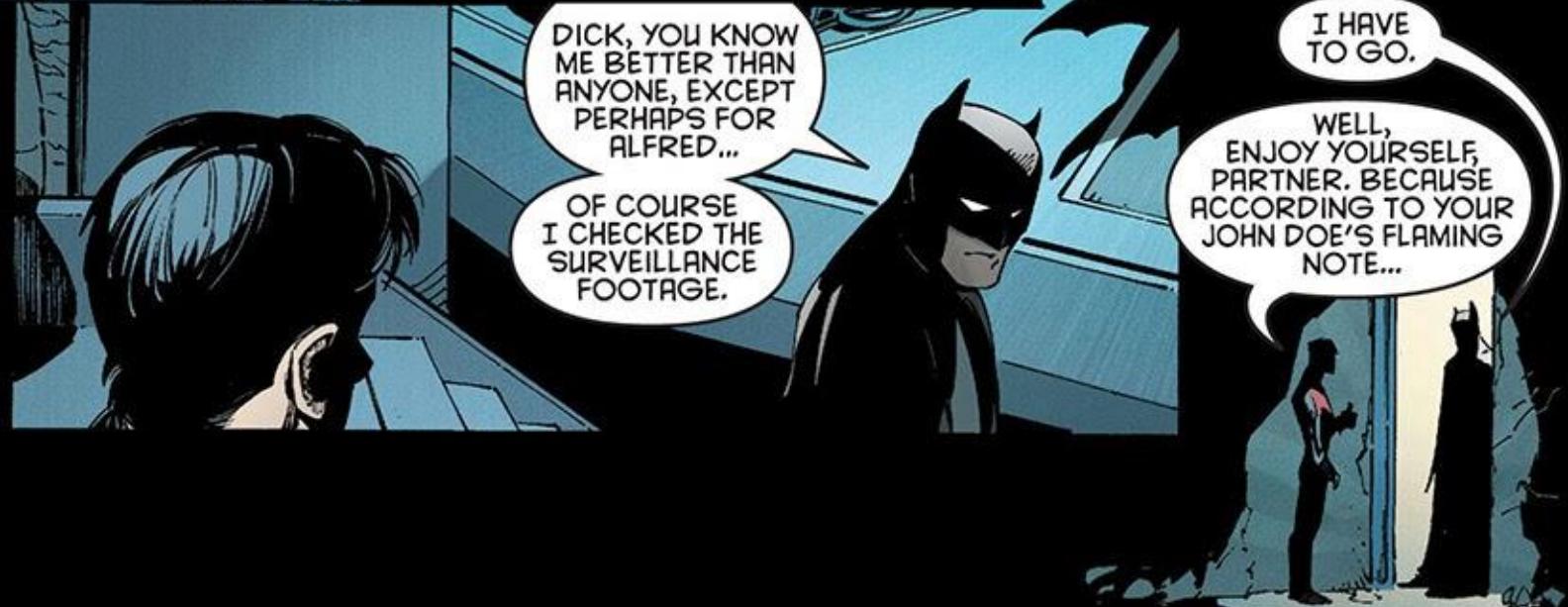
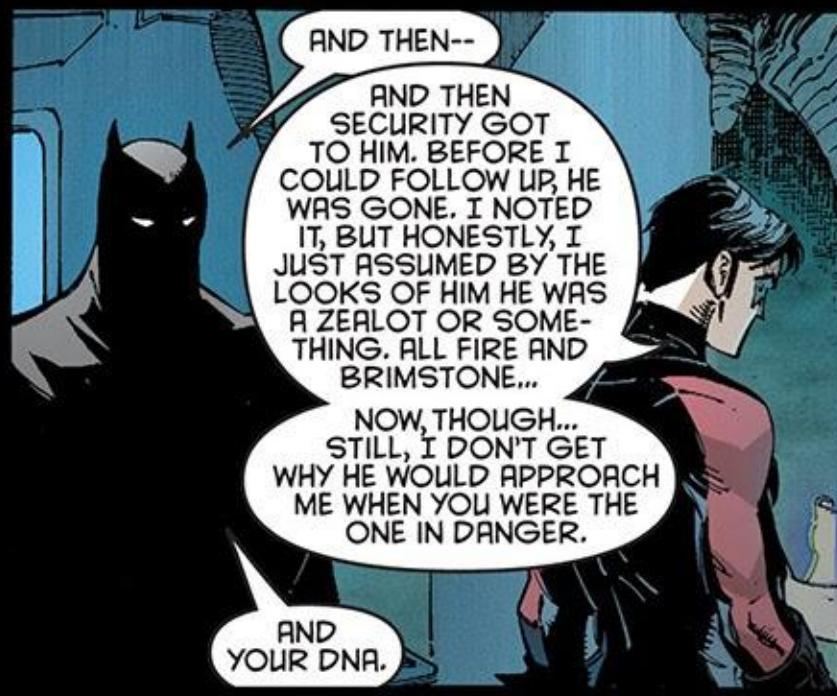
I...DO.

IT WAS ABOUT A WEEK AGO, AT THE END OF THE GROUND-BREAKING FOR OUR NEW WEST SIDE PROMENADE. I WAS LEAVING...

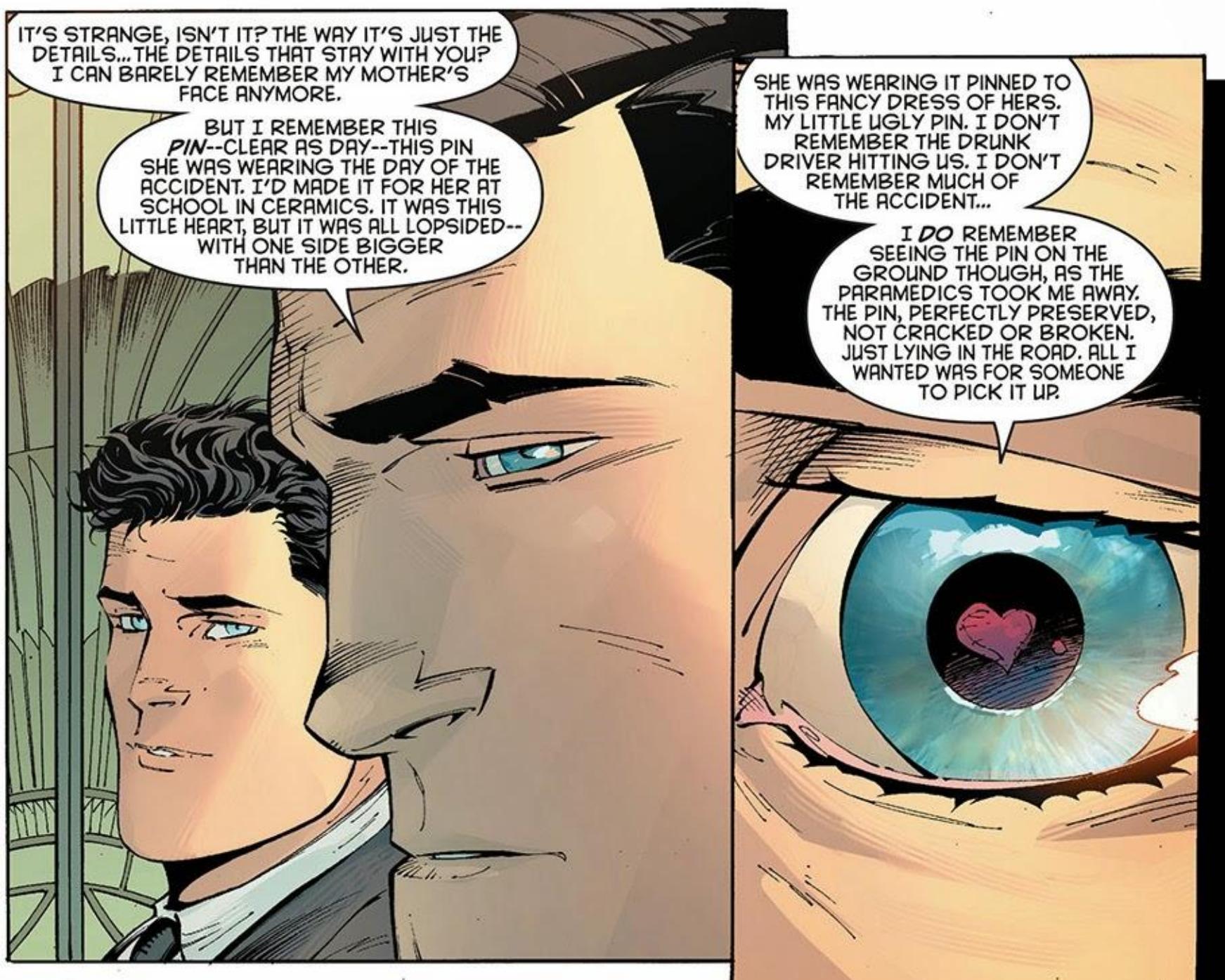
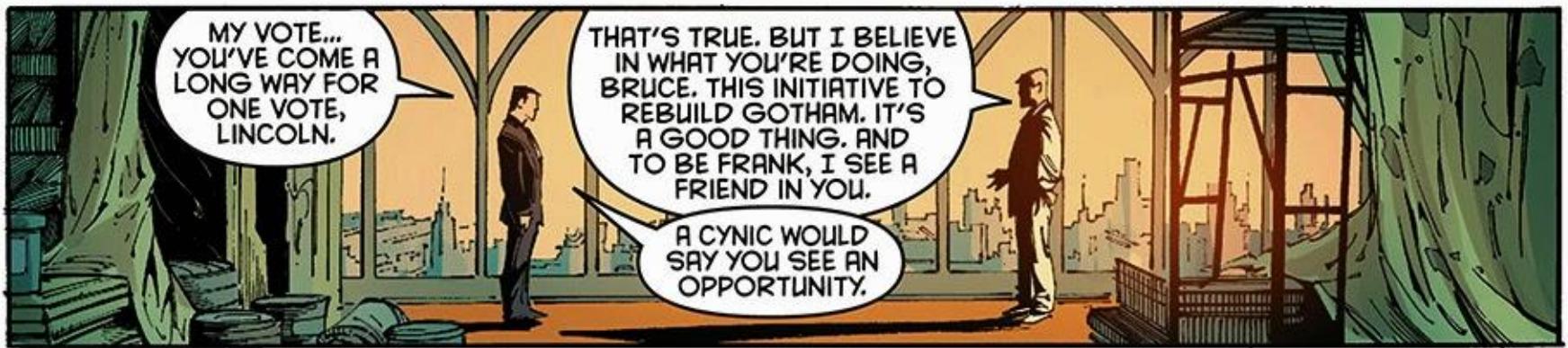
...THE PRESS WAS TAKING PICTURES, ASKING ABOUT YOUR NEW GOTHAM INITIATIVE, AND I WAS HIGHTRAILING IT OUT OF THERE AND ALL OF A SUDDEN THIS STRANGER--YOUR JOHN DOE--CAME UP TO ME AND GRABBED MY ARM.

HE LOOKED HAGGARD. REALLY AT THE END OF HIS ROPE. AND THEN, BEFORE I COULD GET AWAY FROM THE PRESS AND TALK TO HIM, HE SAID SOMETHING LIKE...

"...THEY'RE REAL. THEY'RE EVERYWHERE. AND THEY'RE SENDING HIM FOR YOU--ALL OF YOU."









CRASH

WHAT THE--

YOU...
IF YOU THINK
YOU CAN
SCARE--

UNH!

THUCK

LINCOLN!





Doesn't make sense.
It only takes eleven
pounds of pressure to
collapse a windpipe.

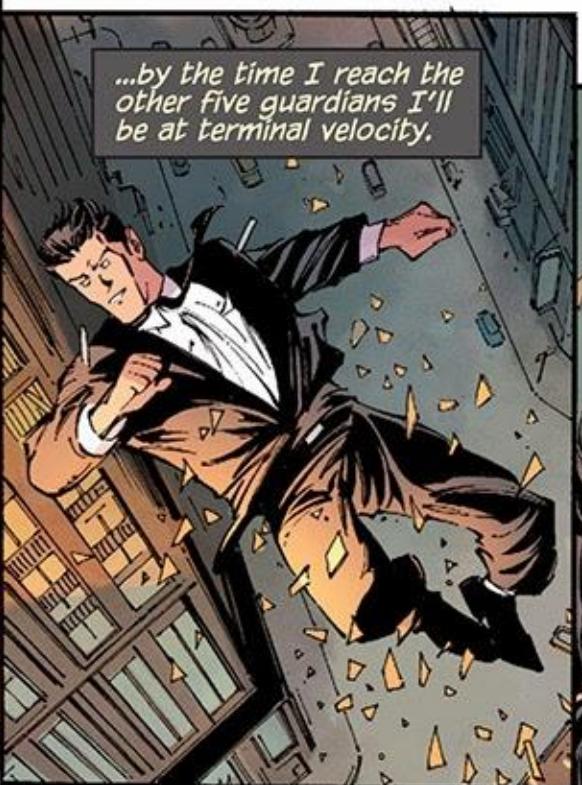
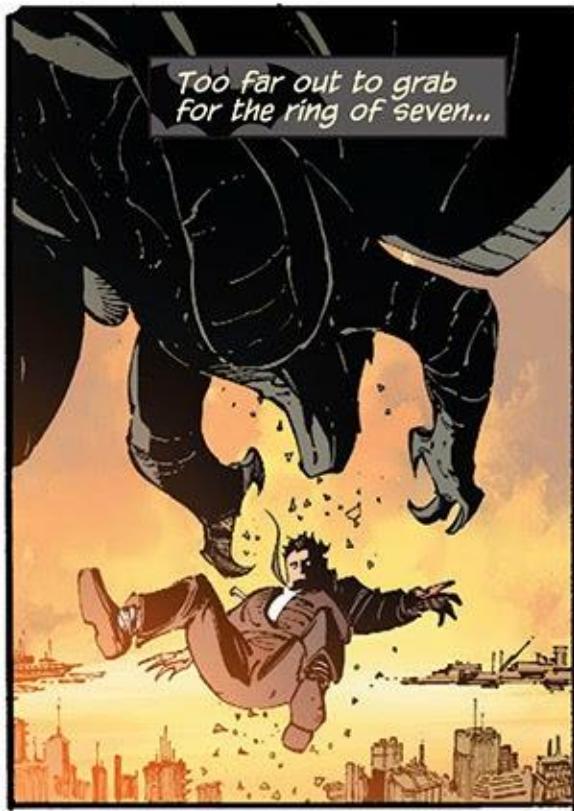
I'm applying over one hundred
and he's not even flinching.

Must be on
something.

Some kind of venom?

BRUCE
WAYNE. THE
COURT OF OWLS HAS
SENTENCED YOU
TO DIE.





There's something I didn't mention earlier, about the design of Old Wayne Tower.

Something your tour guide wouldn't mention, either. Because there's one guardian people don't tell you about, when you visit.

They don't bother to mention it because it was added later, in 1930, and because it sits in the middle of the building and can't be seen from the elevators or the deck.

The thirteenth guardian. Installed by Alan's son, Henry, my great-grandfather.

The guardian for visitors to Gotham arriving by air.



Whoever it was that just tried to kill me, he was good.

But he made one mistake.



But I'm the only legend this city needs.

In many ways,
it's my oldest
and truest friend.

And it knows me better than
anyone, just as I know it.



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Not in Gotham.

Not in my city.

