

BATMAN

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APPROVED BY THE
COMICS CODE
AUTHORITY
JUN 2002

BRUBAKER • McDANIEL • OWENS





THE FULL EXPLANATION
IS MORE COMPLICATED
AND BEGINS A FEW
DAYS EARLIER...

GOOD EVENING,
GOTHAM, MY NAME IS
NICODEMUS, AND
I'VE COME TO ISSUE
YOU A WARNING...
THIS CITY IS A PLACE
OF EVIL AND WILL
BE DESTROYED...

... BURNED
FROM THE EARTH
AS IF IT NEVER
EXISTED.

TURNING THE TOWN RED

Part Two
of Two

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



AND WITH THOSE WORDS, THE WORDS OF AN OBVIOUS MADMAN, GOTHAM CITY WAS INTRODUCED LAST NIGHT TO ITS LATEST THREAT...



BUT WHO EXACTLY IS NICODEMUS, AND WHAT IS HE CAPABLE OF?
THIS MORNING'S PRESS CONFERENCE AT GOTHAM'S CENTRAL POLICE PRECINCT PROVIDED SOME ANSWERS...



NICODEMUS IS A COLD-BLOODED KILLER. PLAIN AND SIMPLE. HE WANTS TO DELUDE HIMSELF THAT HE'S ON SOME KIND OF HOLY MISSION...

BUT, MURDER... TERRORISM... THIS IS NOT HOLY WORK.



COMMISSIONER AKINS, HOW MANY PEOPLE HAS HE KILLED SO FAR?

FIVE, THAT WE KNOW OF... IT WOULD'VE BEEN SIX, BUT COUNCILMAN HART HERE WAS LUCKY ENOUGH TO HAVE ESCAPED LAST NIGHT...



CITY COUNCILMAN THOMAS HART WAS HELD FOR OVER A DAY IN AN UNDISCLOSED LOCATION, ALONG WITH NICODEMUS'S MOST RECENT VICTIM...

... LONG-TIME GOTHAM POLITICAL FIXTURE COUNCILMAN JACK MCKENNA, WHO DIED OF A MASSIVE HEART ATTACK DURING HIS CAPTIVITY...



JACK C. MCKENNA WAS A HERO TO GOTHAM. HE SPENT HIS LIFE FIGHTING FOR THE PEOPLE OF THIS CITY, AND NOW THOMAS HART WILL FOLLOW IN HIS FOOTSTEPS...

HE'S A MAN OF THE PEOPLE, AND HE DESERVES OUR GRATITUDE FOR HIS ORDEAL...



MAYOR DICKERSON PLANS TO HOLD A MEMORIAL FOR COUNCILMAN MCKENNA THIS SUNDAY, FOLLOWED IMMEDIATELY BY A CEREMONY TO HONOR COUNCILMAN HART...

... A MOVE THAT SOME MIGHT QUESTION IN LIGHT OF THE NICODEMUS SITUATION...



LOOK, THIS IS GOTHAM CITY. WE DON'T CANCEL OUR LIVES AND COWER IN A DARK CORNER BECAUSE SOME FRUITCAKE WANTS TO DESTROY US.

I, FOR ONE, WOULD LOVE IT IF THIS NICODEMUS SHOWED HIS UGLY FACE AT SUNDAY'S CEREMONY. THEN WE COULD TEACH HIM WHAT GOTHAM IS REALLY ABOUT...



... AND PUT HIM IN ARKHAM ASYLUM, WHERE HE BELONGS.



I SHOULD'VE KNOWN RIGHT THEN... KNOWN HOW BADLY THINGS WOULD GO...

BUT I WAS BUSY APPROACHING THE NICODEMUS SITUATION IN MY OWN WAY.



ON THE SURFACE, IT APPEARED THAT THE ONLY LINK BETWEEN NICODEMUS'S FIVE VICTIMS WAS THAT THEY WERE ALL CORRUPT--

-- TWO CROOKED COPS, A MOB DOCTOR, AN EXPERT WITNESS FOR CRIMINAL DEFENDANTS, AND FINALLY, ONE OF GOTHAM'S OLDEST POLITICIANS, WHO WAS A WELL-KNOWN CORPORATE MOUTHPIECE...



NICODEMUS CLAIMED HE WANTED TO DESTROY GOTHAM BECAUSE OF CORRUPTION, AND THESE FIVE MURDERS WERE APPARENTLY EXAMPLES OF THAT CORRUPTION--

BUT THEY DIDN'T FEEL RIGHT TO ME...



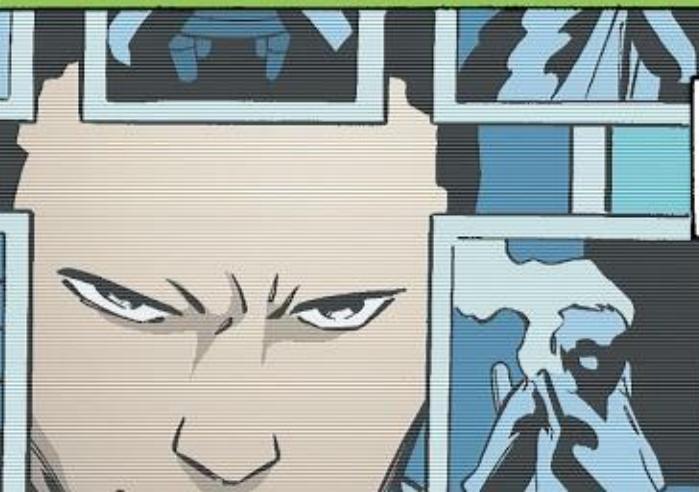
WHY MURDER FIVE PEOPLE-- AND ATTEMPT A SIXTH-- IN SECRECY, AND THEN MAKE A BIG PUBLIC STATEMENT AFTERWARDS?

IF HE REALLY WANTED TO TERRORIZE THE CITY, HE WOULD HAVE DONE IT THE OTHER WAY AROUND...



WHICH MEANT THERE COULD BE A CONNECTION BETWEEN THESE VICTIMS THAT THE POLICE JUST WEREN'T SEEING YET.

THEY MIGHT MEAN SOMETHING TO NICODEMUS.



AND IF SO, COUNCILMAN THOMAS HART WAS PROBABLY STILL IN DANGER.

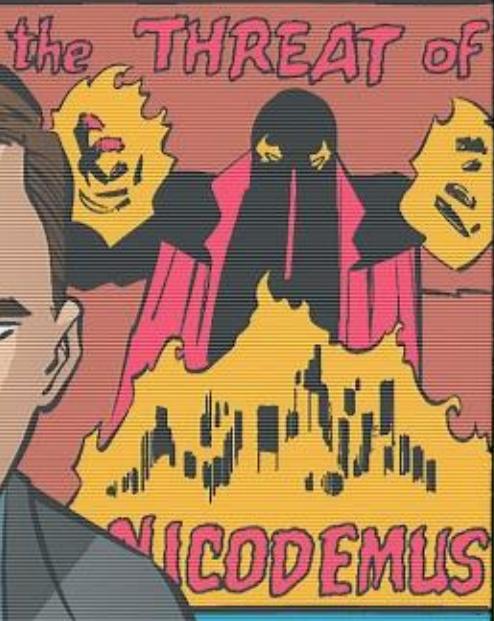
WHICH APPARENTLY
DIDN'T BOTHER
HART THAT MUCH...

FOR THE NEXT FEW
DAYS COUNCILMAN
HART WAS THE
DARLING OF THE
LOCAL MEDIA, THE
HERO WHO SURVIVED...

IF THE NEWS WASN'T SPECULATING
ABOUT WHEN AND WHERE NICODEMUS
WOULD STRIKE NEXT...

...THEY WERE
RECOUNTING THE
POLITICALLY
SPUN STORY OF
THOMAS HART'S
RISE TO FAME...

-- RAISED WITHIN
GOTHAM'S OWN CITY
WELFARE SYSTEM,
THOMAS HART KNEW AT
AN EARLY AGE THAT HE
WAS DESTINED FOR
GREATNESS...



...AND AS A GIFTED STUDENT
HE WON A FULL SCHOLARSHIP
TO GOTHAM STATE UNIVERSITY'S
LAW SCHOOL, WHERE HE
DISTINGUISHED HIMSELF AS
PRESIDENT OF HIS SENIOR
CLASS.

BUT IT WAS DURING THE NO MAN'S LAND,
AFTER THE QUAKE THAT BROUGHT GOTHAM
TO ITS KNEES, THAT HART TRULY FOUND
HIS CALLING...

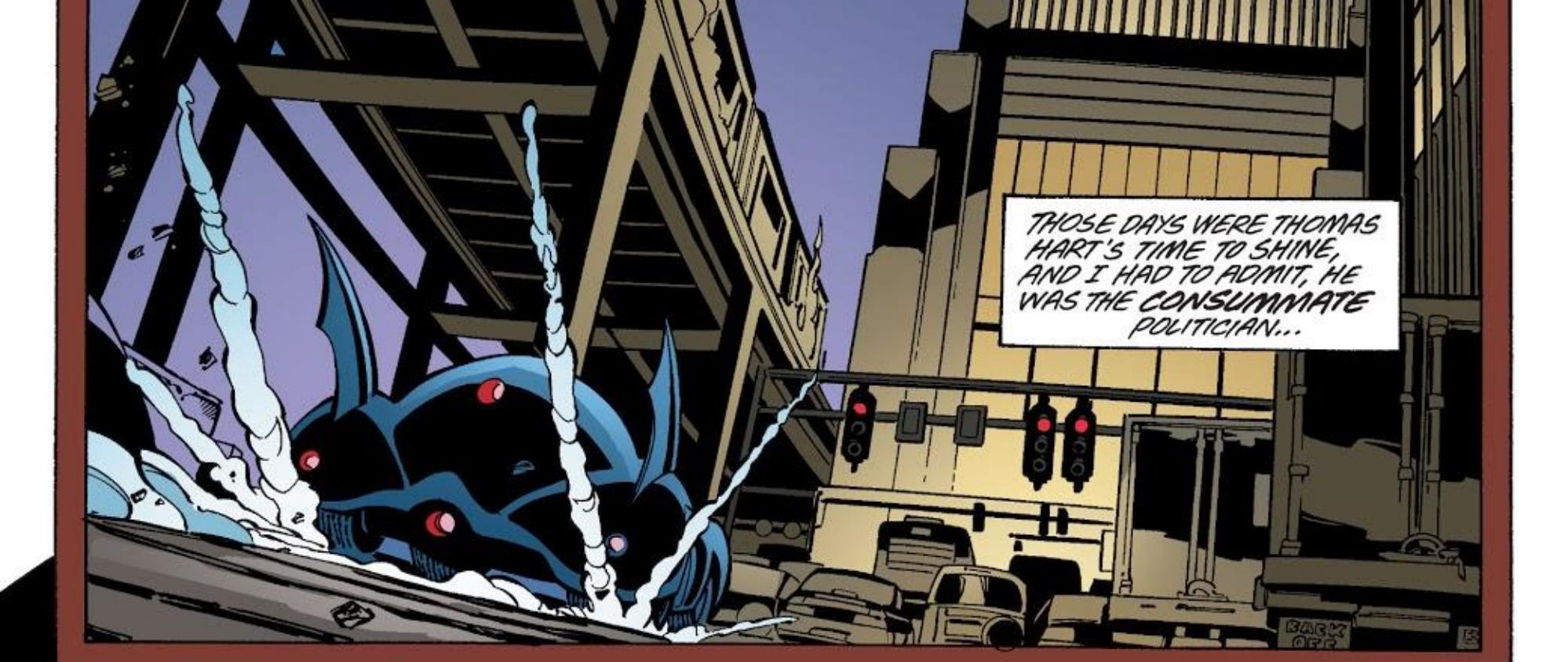
THE QUAKE CHANGED
ME, IT CHANGED ALL OF US
WHO LIVED THROUGH IT... BUT
FOR ME, I THINK I FINALLY
SAW WHAT MY CITY WAS
REALLY MADE OF, SAW THE
SOUL OF GOTHAM...

G.S.U. LAW SCHOOL

GOTHAM

THERE'S
REALLY NO OTHER
PLACE LIKE IT ON
EARTH.





THOSE DAYS WERE THOMAS HART'S TIME TO SHINE, AND I HAD TO ADMIT, HE WAS THE CONSUMMATE POLITICIAN...



...EVERY WORD PERFECTLY SCRIPED, EVERY SMILE PERFECTLY TIMED.



OF COURSE, IT WAS ALL LEADING UP TO A DISASTER OF POTENTIALLY BIBLICAL PROPORTIONS.



BECAUSE WHEN
NICODEMUS DID
STRIKE, IT WAS
QUICK AND
DEADLY...



...AND GOTHAM WAS SO BUSY
PAYING ATTENTION TO ITS NEW
MAN OF THE HOUR...

...THAT IT FORGOT
SOMEONE ELSE
WAS WATCHING A
DIFFERENT CLOCK
COUNT DOWN TO
DOOMSDAY.

BUT IF THE REST OF
GOTHAM HAD FORGOTTEN,
I HADN'T.

THOUGH I WAS FINDING
MY INTEREST FOCUSING
ON THOMAS HART, AS
WELL...

HART WAS NEARLY TWENTY YEARS YOUNGER THAN ANY OF NICODEMUS'S OTHER VICTIMS, AND HIS CAREER, ALTHOUGH PROBABLY LITTERED WITH BAD FAITH TO HIS CONSTITUENCY, WAS FAIRLY SHORT...

IT WAS HARD TO BELIEVE THAT HE HAD ATTRACTED NICODEMUS'S ATTENTION FOR HIS SHADY POLITICS ALONE...

SO WHAT ELSE WAS BURIED IN THOMAS HART'S PAST THAT HIS PUBLICITY DEPARTMENT HAD LEFT OUT OF THE OFFICIAL BIOGRAPHY?

WHAT WAS IT THAT COULD CONNECT HIM TO ALL THE OTHER VICTIMS?

CHILD
WELFARE
CARE

HART, THOMAS J.

DAMN...
HOW DID
THEY
MISS
IT?

POLICE & GEND REPORT

SEARCHED INDEXED SERIALIZED FILED
HART, Thomas J.
Parents:
(a) Hart, Franklin DECEASED
(m) Hart, Eleanor DECEASED

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HOMICIDE
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--THOUGHT
DANNY WAS ON
LATE SHIFT
TONIGHT?

NAH, HIS WIFE'S ON
SOME COMMISSION OR
SOMETHIN' LIKE THAT,
SCHOOL BOARD...
SO SHE WRANGLED AN
INVITE TO THE MAYOR'S
PARTY...

THAT
THING FOR
TOMMY
HART?

YEAH...

WHAT'RE THEY, GIVIN' HIM
THE KEYS TO THE
CITY NOW?

YEAH, REALLY... I'LL
BE GLAD WHEN
HIS FIFTEEN
MINUTES ARE UP
AND WE CAN GET
BACK TO THE
REAL WORLD,
Y'KNOW?

YOU SAID IT... HEY,
MAYBE WE'LL GET
LUCKY AND THAT
NICODEMUS GUY'LL
TAKE ANOTHER
WHACK AT HIM.

LIKE WE
GOT THAT
KINDA
LUCK...

UNLESS I WAS MISTAKEN, I HAD
FOUND MY LINK, AND IT WASN'T
A PRETTY ONE... BUT IT STILL
LEFT ME WITH SOME DIGGING TO DO.

SO I'D HAVE TO HOPE THE GOTHAM
POLICE DEPARTMENT COULD
HANDLE SECURITY AT THE MAYOR'S
BANQUET UNTIL I HAD ALL THE
ANSWERS...

...OR I COULD JUST
HOPE THAT I WAS
WRONG... BUT I KNEW
I WASN'T.

TNK
TNK
TNK

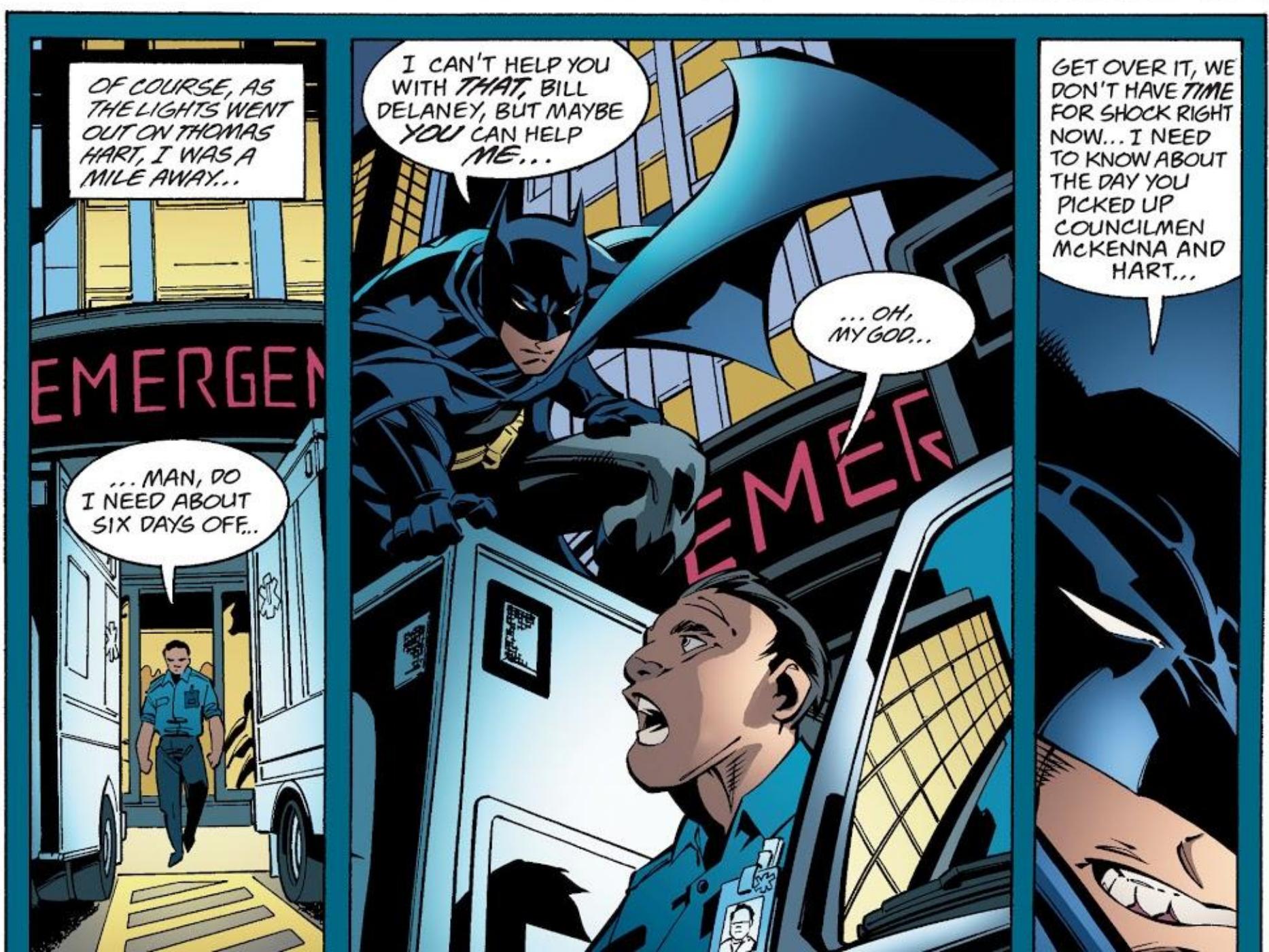
IF I CAN HAVE
YOUR ATTENTION...
I'D LIKE TO SAY
A FEW WORDS...

THANK
YOU...

THE LAST WEEK
HAS BEEN TOUGH ON
GOTHAM. WE HAD TO
BURY ONE OF OUR
BEST-LOVED SONS...
AND WE HAD TO WORRY
ABOUT WHEN HIS
KILLER MIGHT
STRIKE NEXT...

LIKE A COWARD
HIDING IN THE NIGHT...
BUT THIS CITY HAS
SHOWN ITS BACKBONE.
WE'VE GIVEN THE HIGH-
HAT TO THIS COWARD,
AND GONE ON WITH
OUR LIVES...

AND NONE
MORE SO THAN
THE MAN WE'RE
HERE TO HONOR
TONIGHT...

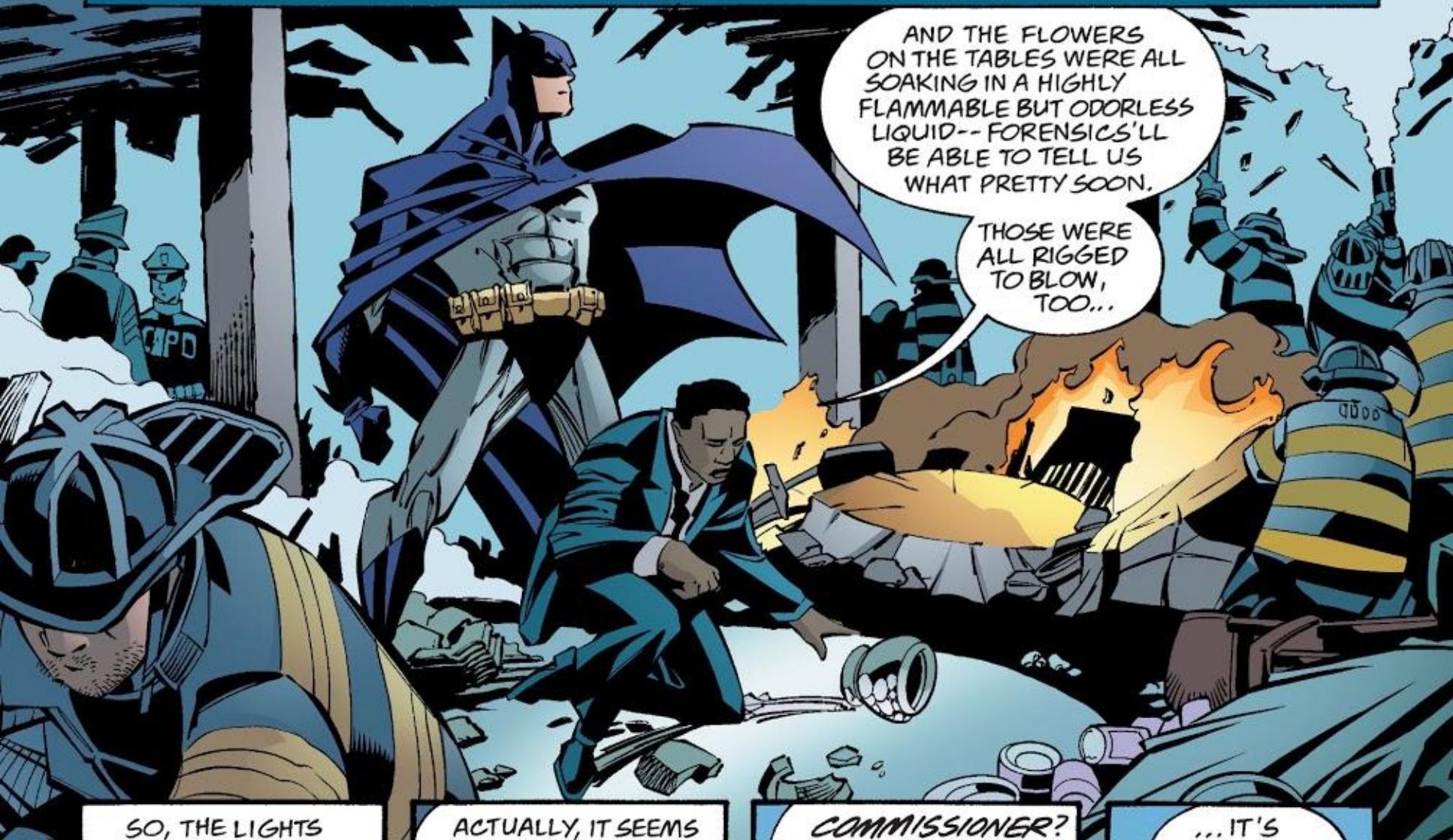
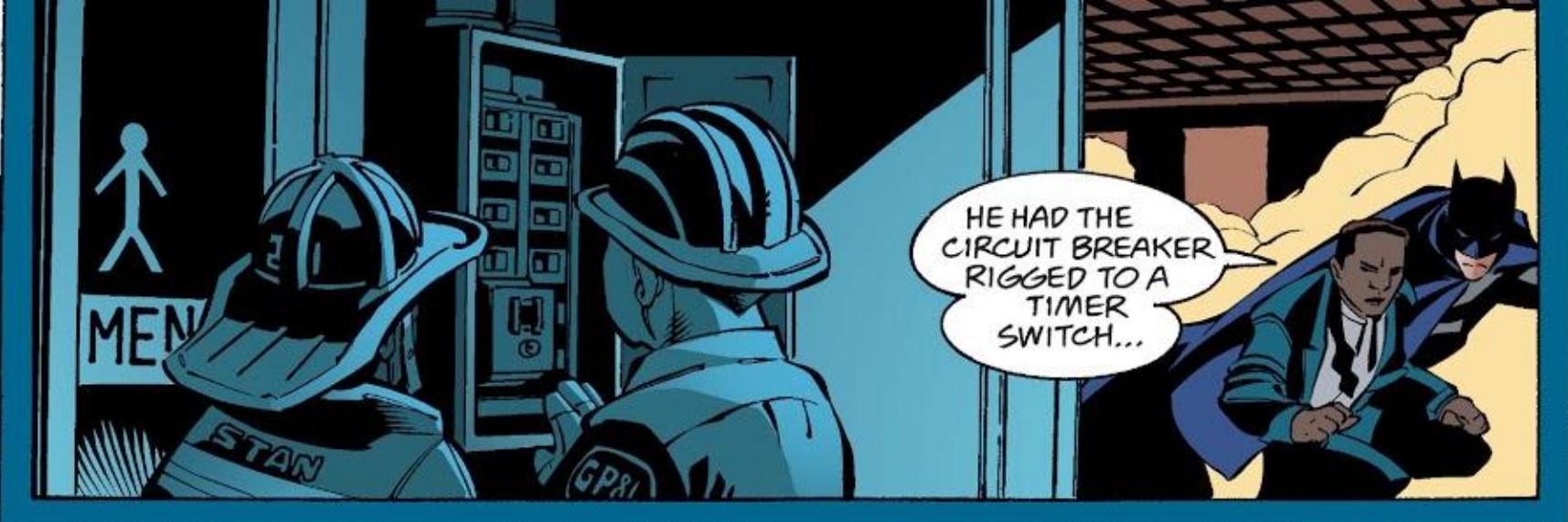






I TOLD YOU
THIS CITY WOULD
BURN...





SO, THE LIGHTS GO OUT, AND THEN HE SETS OFF COUNCILMAN HART LIKE A FIRE-CRACKER, GRABS THE MAYOR BEFORE ANYONE CAN GET A SHOT OFF...

POOR HART HERE NEVER HAD A CHANCE...

ACTUALLY, IT SEEMS LIKE YOU WERE THE ONES WHO GOT SET UP, COMMISSIONER AKINS...

WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

COMMISSIONER? THERE'S A CALL COMING IN THAT I THINK YOU'LL WANT TO HEAR...

...IT'S ABOUT THE MAYOR.





THE CALL IS ANOTHER
WARNING... AND THIS
ONE IN DETAIL...



...ALL ABOUT THE
MAYOR AND THE TRAIN...

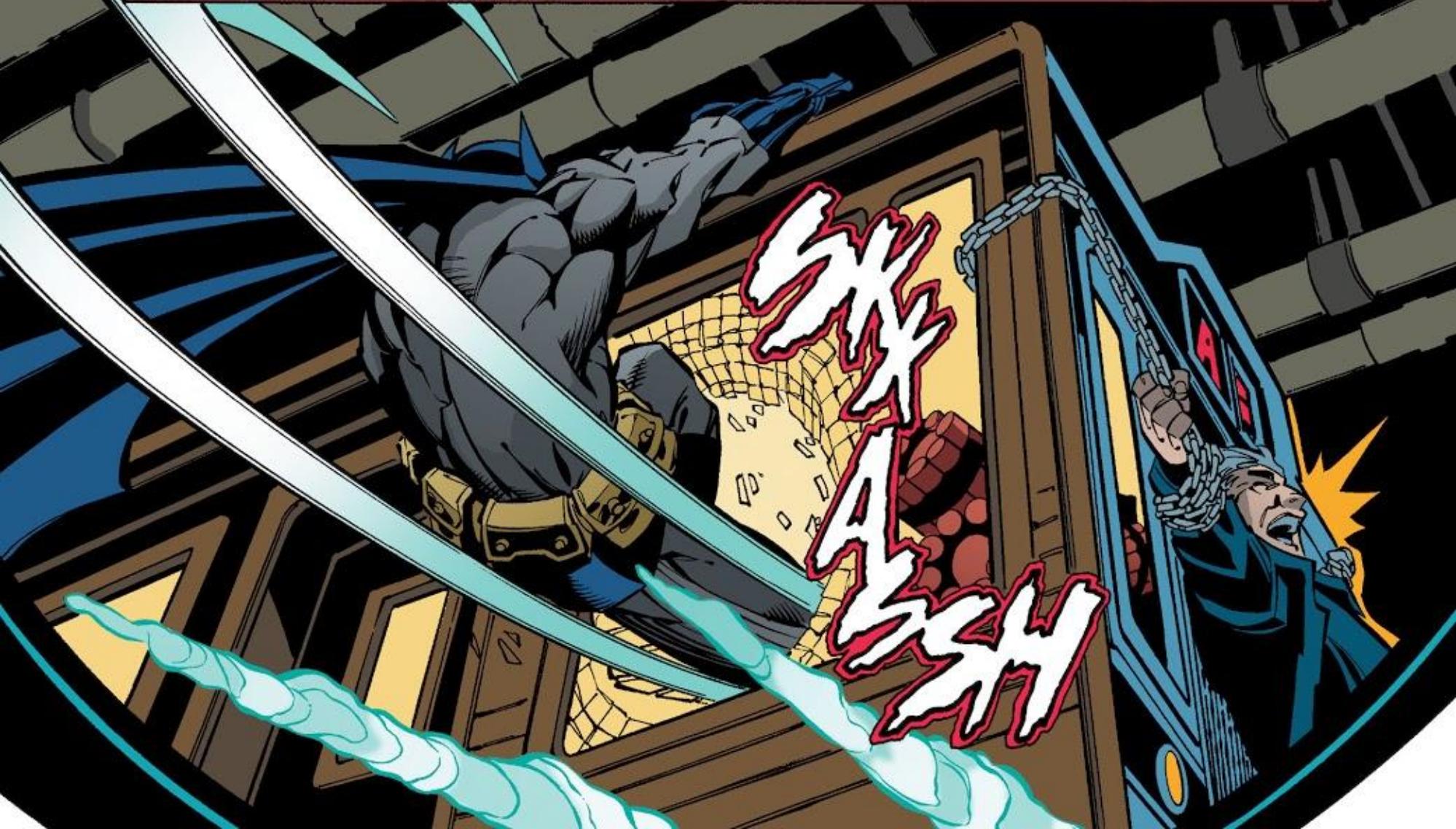
...AND THE EXPLOSIVES...



AND THE BEST PART,
THE RAIL SWITCH
THAT IS JAMMED OPEN
SO THE TRAIN WILL
SMASH INTO THE TUNNEL
WALL RIGHT UNDER
CITY HALL...



IT'S A WARNING TO
EVACUATE THE AREA.
NICODEMUS WANTS
TO GIVE THE INNOCENTS
ONE MORE CHANCE,
HE CLAIMS.



SMASH

UNSAFE
SPEED

ACCORDING TO THE GOTHAM UNDERGROUND RAIL-CAR SPECS, THE WHEELS SHOULD LOCK UP IF THEY LOSE THE HYDRAULICS.

LET'S HOPE THEY TESTED THAT ONE OUT.

SKREEEE

AAAEEEEEE-



BY THE TIME I GET THERE, THE POLICE HAVE GOT THE BUILDING LOCKED DOWN TIGHT...

...BUT IT'S TOO LATE.

YOU WERE RIGHT...

PRELIMINARY REPORTS SHOW THE CORPSE WAS ACTUALLY BEN JAMIN LUTES... THE GUY WHO WAS SITTING RIGHT NEXT TO HART...

...THEY WERE WEARING THE SAME TUXEDO.

SO, HOW'D YOU KNOW...?

HOW'D YOU KNOW THOMAS HART WAS NICODEMUS?

IT WAS RIGHT THERE IN HIS PUBLICITY... HART WAS RAISED IN THE WELFARE SYSTEM. I SEARCHED THROUGH THE RECORDS AND FOUND THE REPORT ON HIS PARENTS' DEATHS.

THE TWO EX-COPS -- BLAYLOCK AND SIMON -- WERE THE INVESTIGATING OFFICERS IN THEIR MURDERS... FROM WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE, THEY WERE COVERING IT UP.

BEFORE THEIR DEATHS, HART'S FATHER WAS A CITY ACCOUNTANT, AND HE WAS SET TO TESTIFY BEFORE A GRAND JURY ABOUT PAYOFFS THAT JACK MCKENNA WAS RECEIVING.

SO HART WAS OBVIOUSLY THE LINK BETWEEN THE VICTIMS...

THE DOCTOR AND THE PSYCHIATRIST BOTH WORKED IN THE DETENTION HALLS THAT THOMAS HART WAS RAISED IN...

...SO I FIGURE HE ADDED THEM INTO HIS REVENGE SCHEME FOR REASONS KNOWN ONLY TO HIM...

I SHOULD'VE KNOWN
RIGHT AWAY, DURING MY
FIRST ENCOUNTER
WITH HIM...

"I DIDN'T REALIZE IT,
BECAUSE OF ALL THE FIRE,
BUT I PASSED NICODEMUS'S
DISGUISE BURNING ON THE
FLOOR AS I WAS RUSHING
TO SAVE HART..."

HE'D SET THE WHOLE
THING UP AS A DIVERSION
SO NO ONE WOULD BE
LOOKING AT HIM TOO
HARD...

SO, WAIT...WHAT
ARE YOU SAYING? THIS
WAS ALL AN ELABORATE
PLOY TO COVER UP
THOMAS HART GETTING
PAYBACK FOR LOSING
HIS PARENTS?

NO, I THINK HE'S
SERIOUS ABOUT HIS
DESIRE TO DESTROY
GOTHAM... I THINK HE
WAS JUST SETTLING
OLD DEBTS BEFORE
HE GOT STARTED...

WHATEVER HAPPENED
TO THOMAS HART
WHEN HE WAS GROW-
ING UP TWISTED HIM
BADLY... WE MIGHT
NOT EVER KNOW JUST
HOW MUCH...

COMMISSIONER?

WHAT IS IT, DETECTIVE
MONTOYA?

WE'VE
FOUND A SECRET
ROOM IN THE
CELLAR... I THINK
YOU'LL BOTH WANT
TO SEE THIS...



BATMAN -
BY NOW YOU'VE FIGURED ME OUT,
WHICH MEANS YOU UNDERSTAND
THAT I AM NOT GOING TO BE GONE
FOR LONG. YOU DO ADMIRABLE WORK
IN THIS CITY, BUT IT IS FAR TOO LATE
TO SAVE. YOU SHOULD KNOW THAT BY
NOW. SEE YOU SOON, NICODENMUS

