

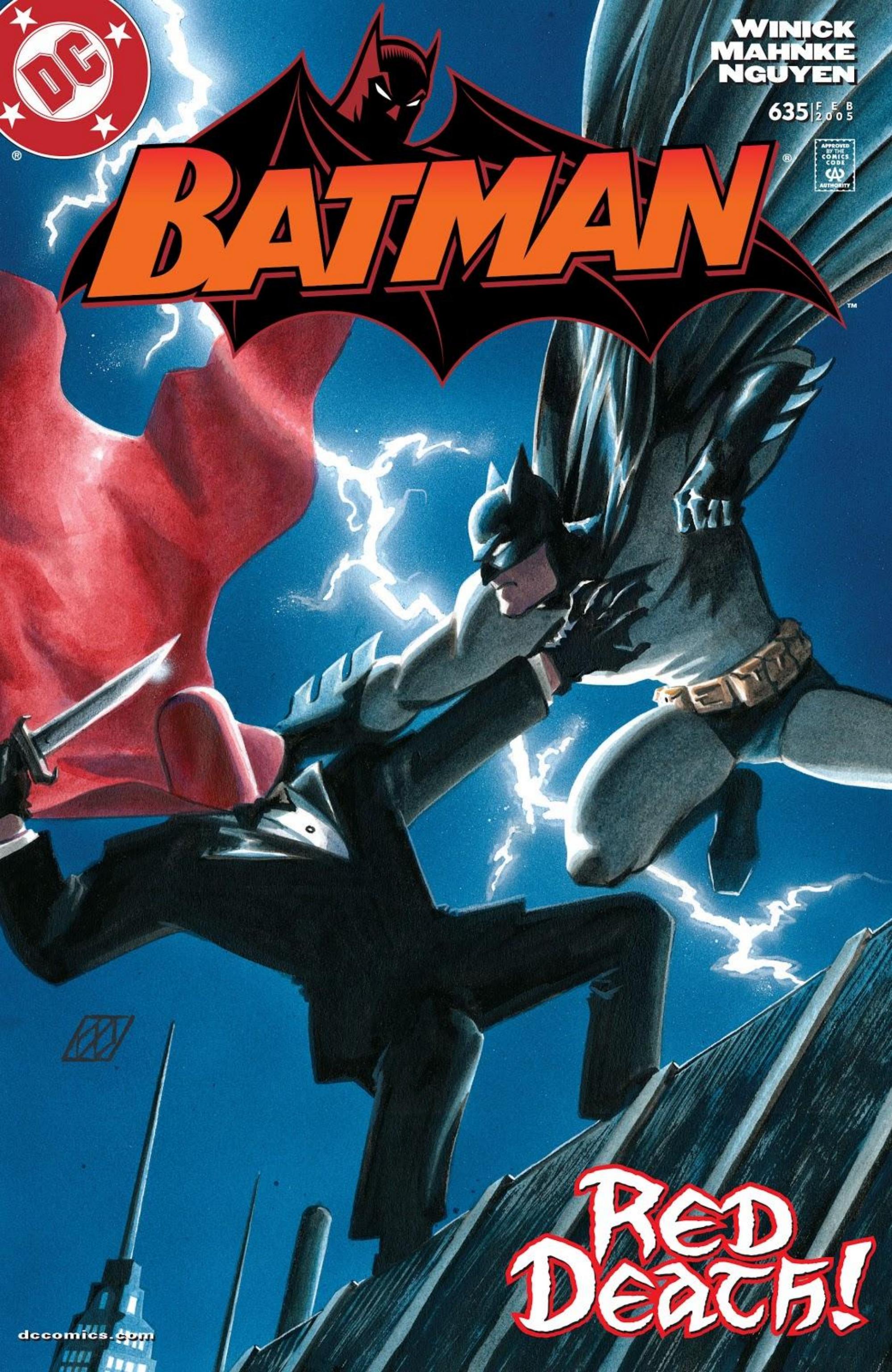


WINICK
MAHNKE
NGUYEN

635 FEB 2005



BATMAN



GOTHAM CITY.

IT'S A HARD CITY, AND
HARD CITIES MAKE
FOR HARD PEOPLE.

DAVID "TIPPER" COATES.
HE'S BEEN LIVING ON THE
STREETS FOR ALMOST
FOURTEEN MONTHS.

HE RAN AWAY FROM
AN ABUSIVE
ENVIRONMENT. HE
WAS THICK-SKINNED
WHEN HE LANDED
ON THE PAVEMENT
IN GOTHAM, AND IT'S
ONLY MADE HIM
TOUGHER.

HE'S SEEN
A LOT.

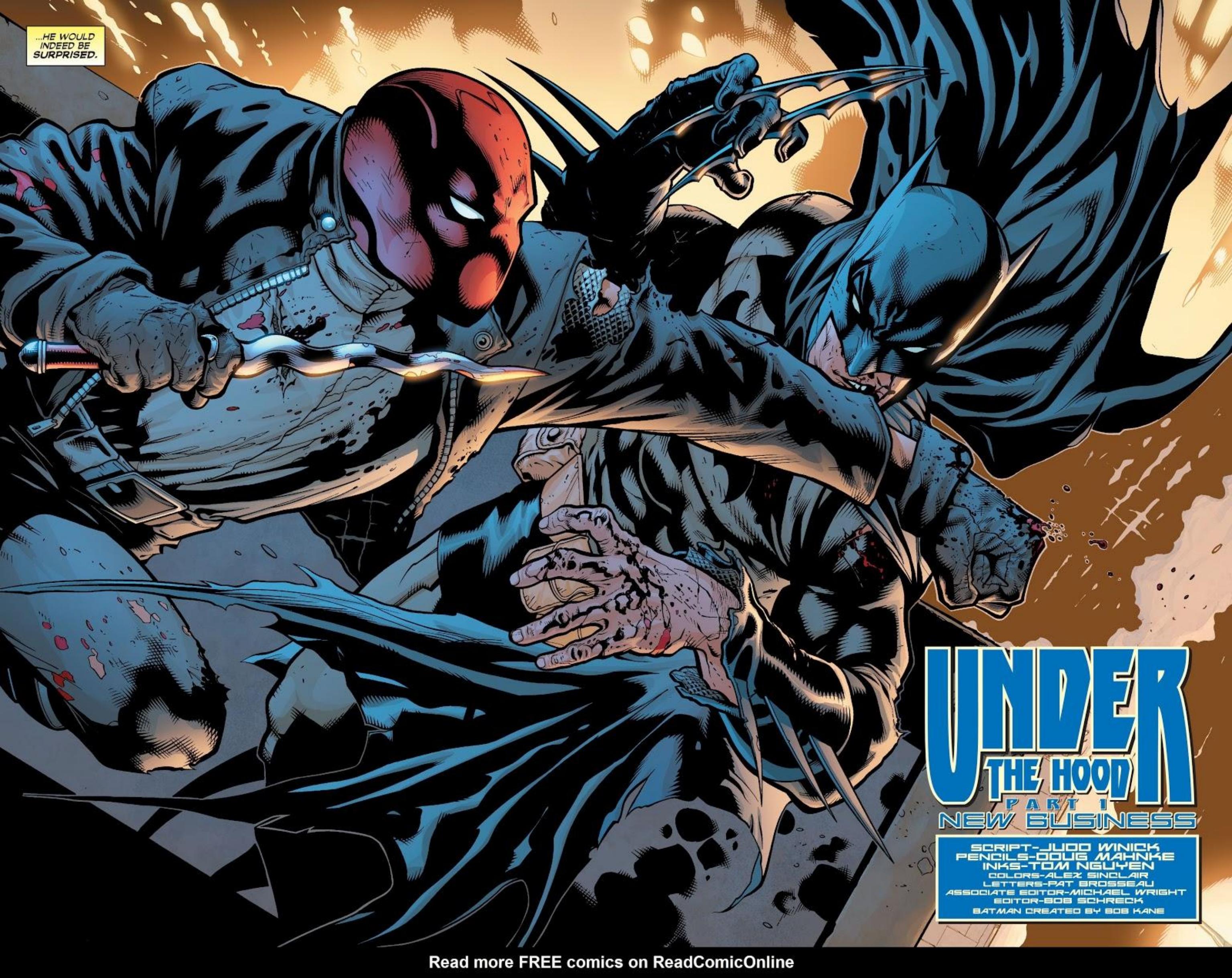
HE'S SEEN
BEATINGS, DRUG
USE, SEX OF ALL
KINDS.

HE'S SEEN A
FEW DEATHS.

VERY LITTLE
WOULD
SURPRISE HIM.

BUT IF HE COULD
GET THE FULL
VIEW OF THE
GOINGS-ON JUST
FIVE STORIES
ABOVE HIM...

...HE WOULD
INDEED BE
SURPRISED.

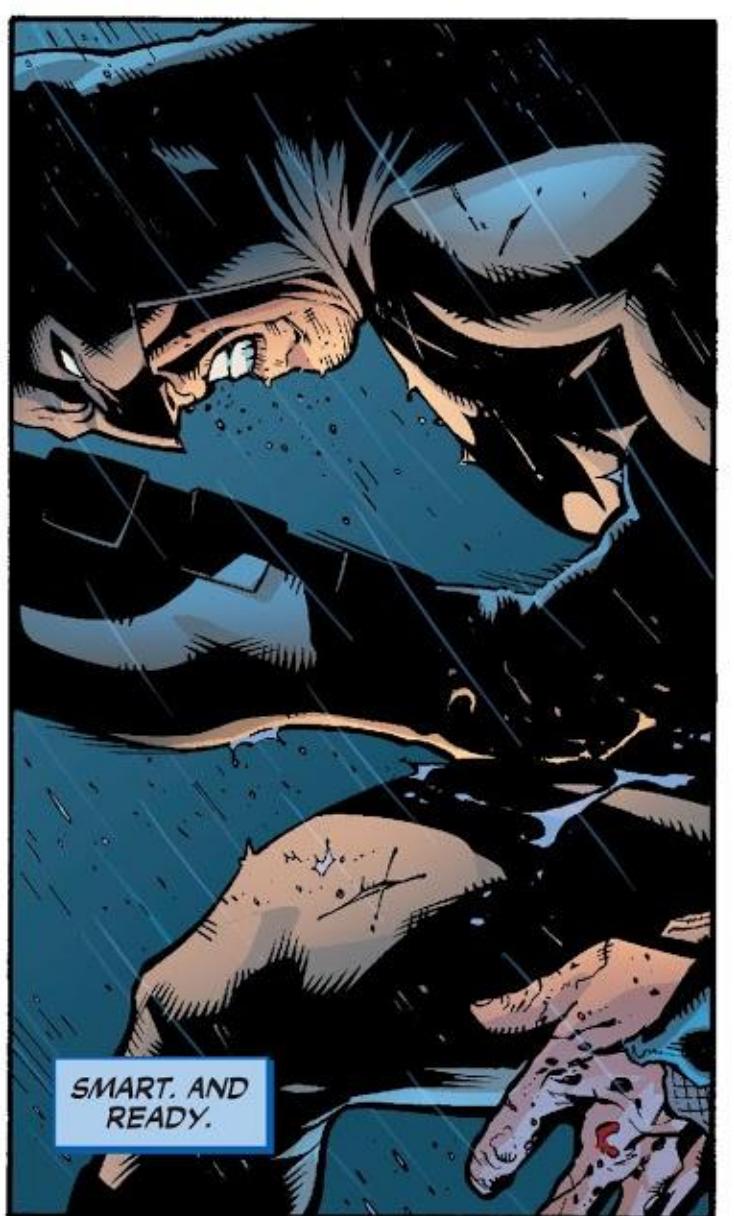


UNDER THE HOOD

PART 1
NEW BUSINESS

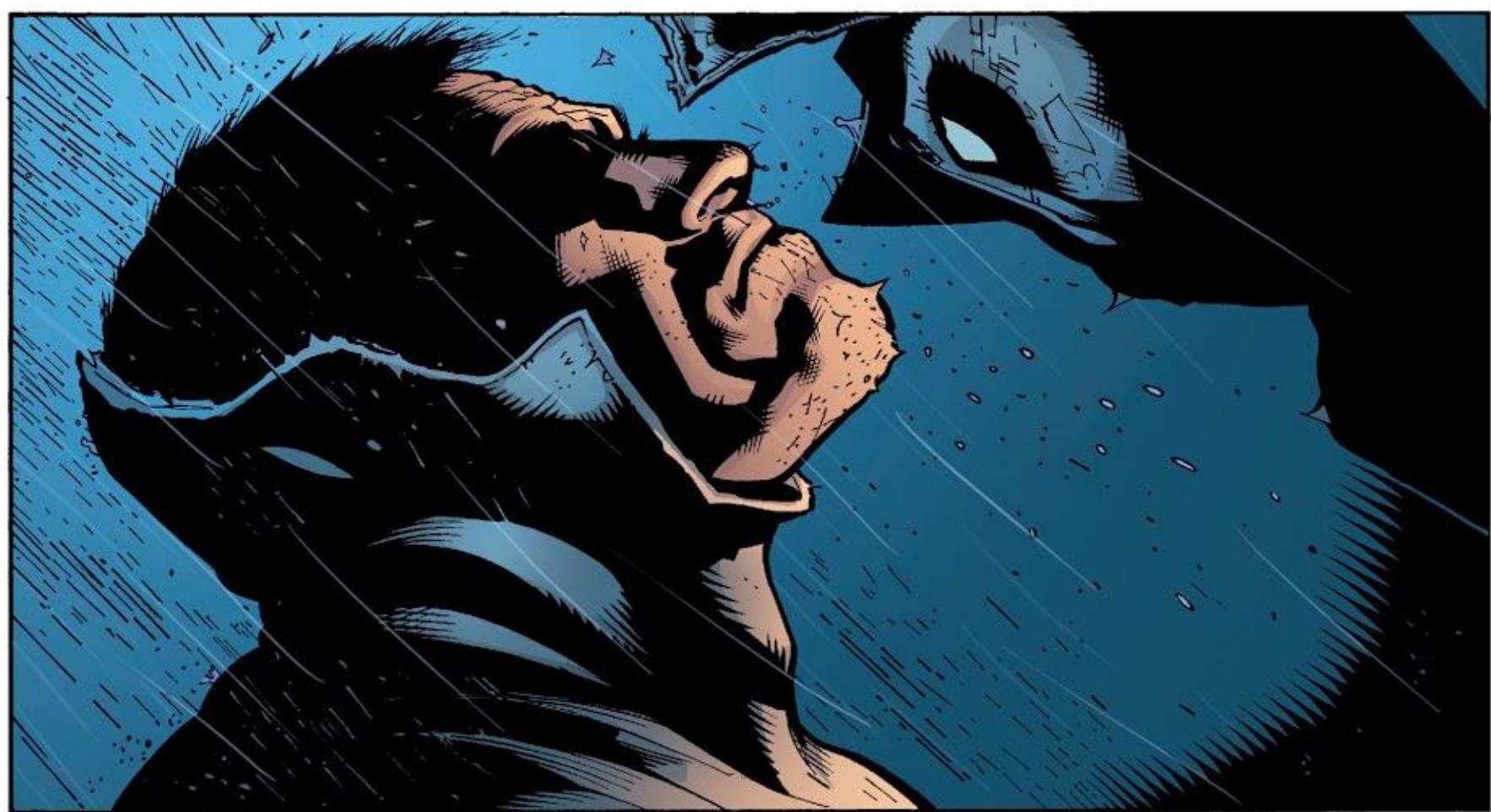
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BATMAN CREATED BY BOB KANE















FIVE WEEKS
EARLIER.

WAYNE
MANOR.

This is a house
that has long sat
in shadow.

*It is a place of near
constant mourning,
proverbial mirrors draped
in pitch black cloth.*



*But, due to recent
events...I would say that
this abode is steeped in
a darkness we will not
soon escape.*

*Ties have been
severed.
Familial ties.*

*The myth seems
more like a man.*



He talks of another lost soldier. He talks of battlefields. He talks of a war.

He does not allow himself to see it for what it is.

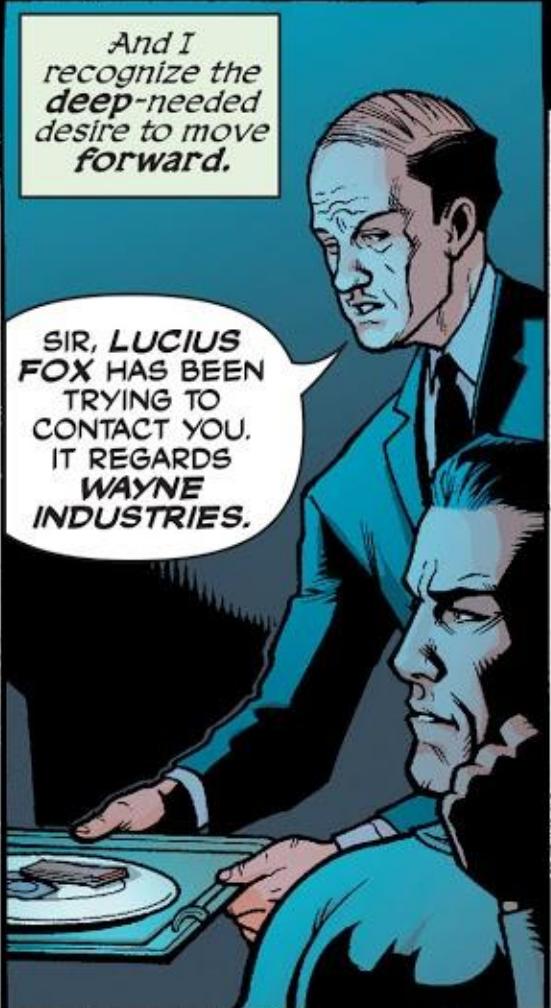
A loss of someone he cares for. Another blow to an already very battered heart.

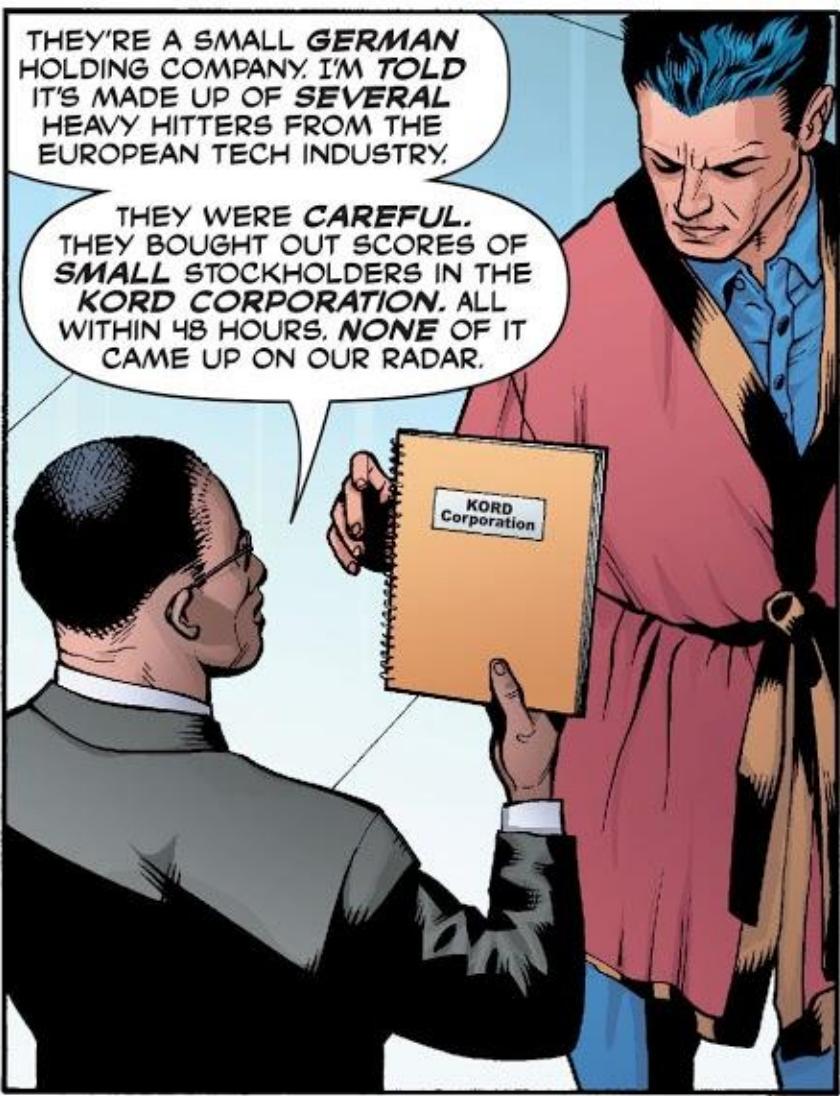
It is not my place to shed light on this. I serve him best by serving.

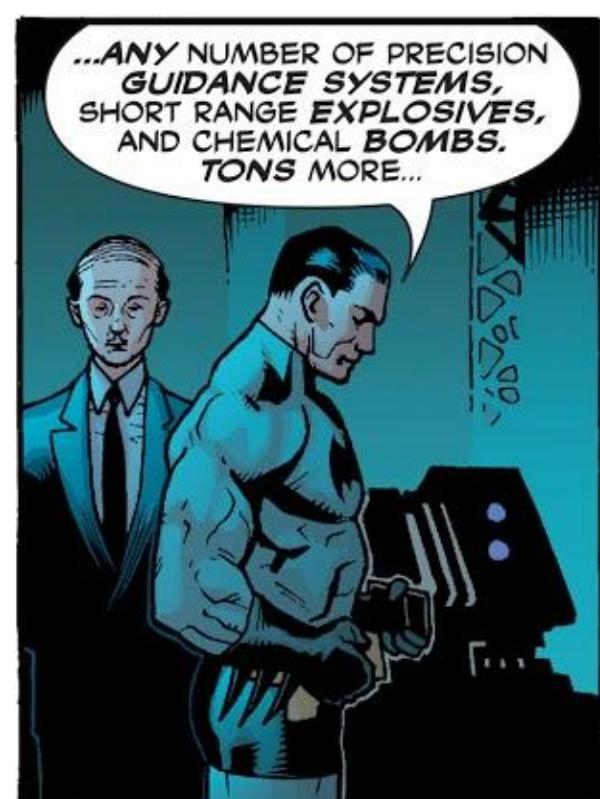
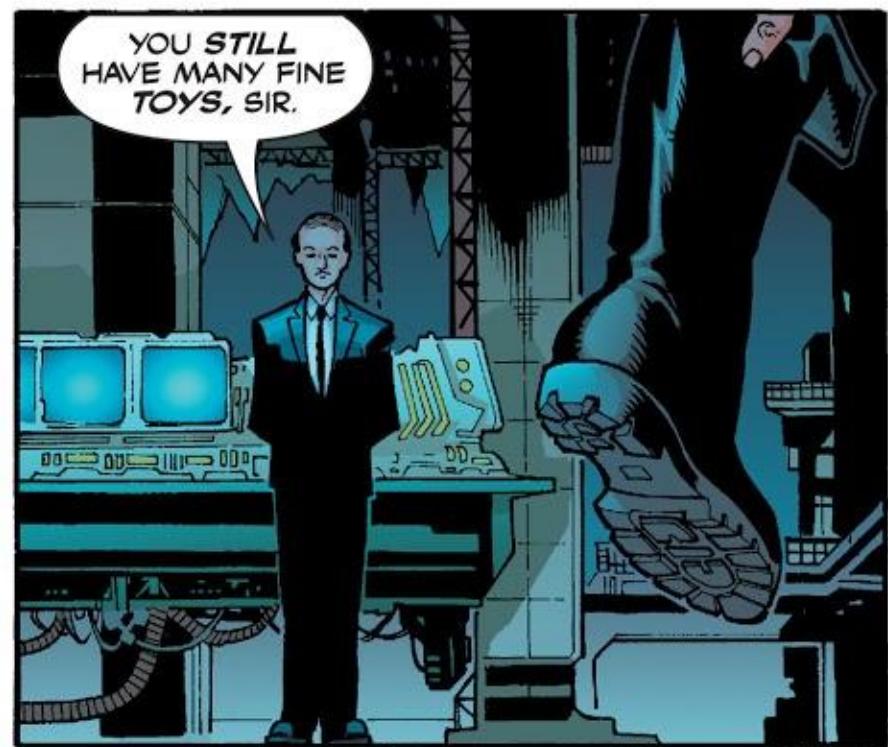
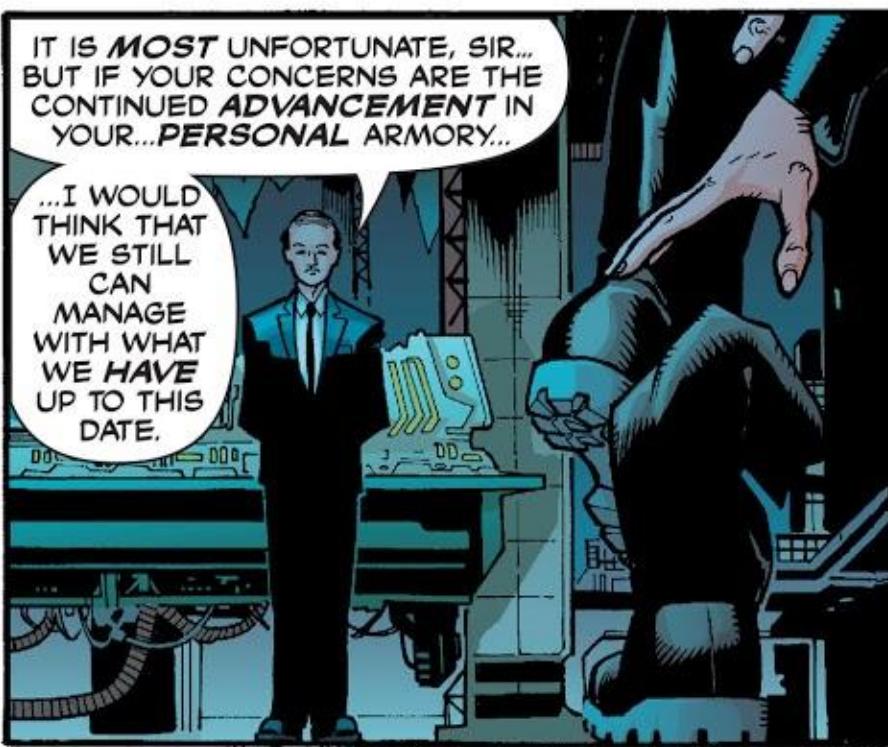
And I recognize the deep-needed desire to move forward.

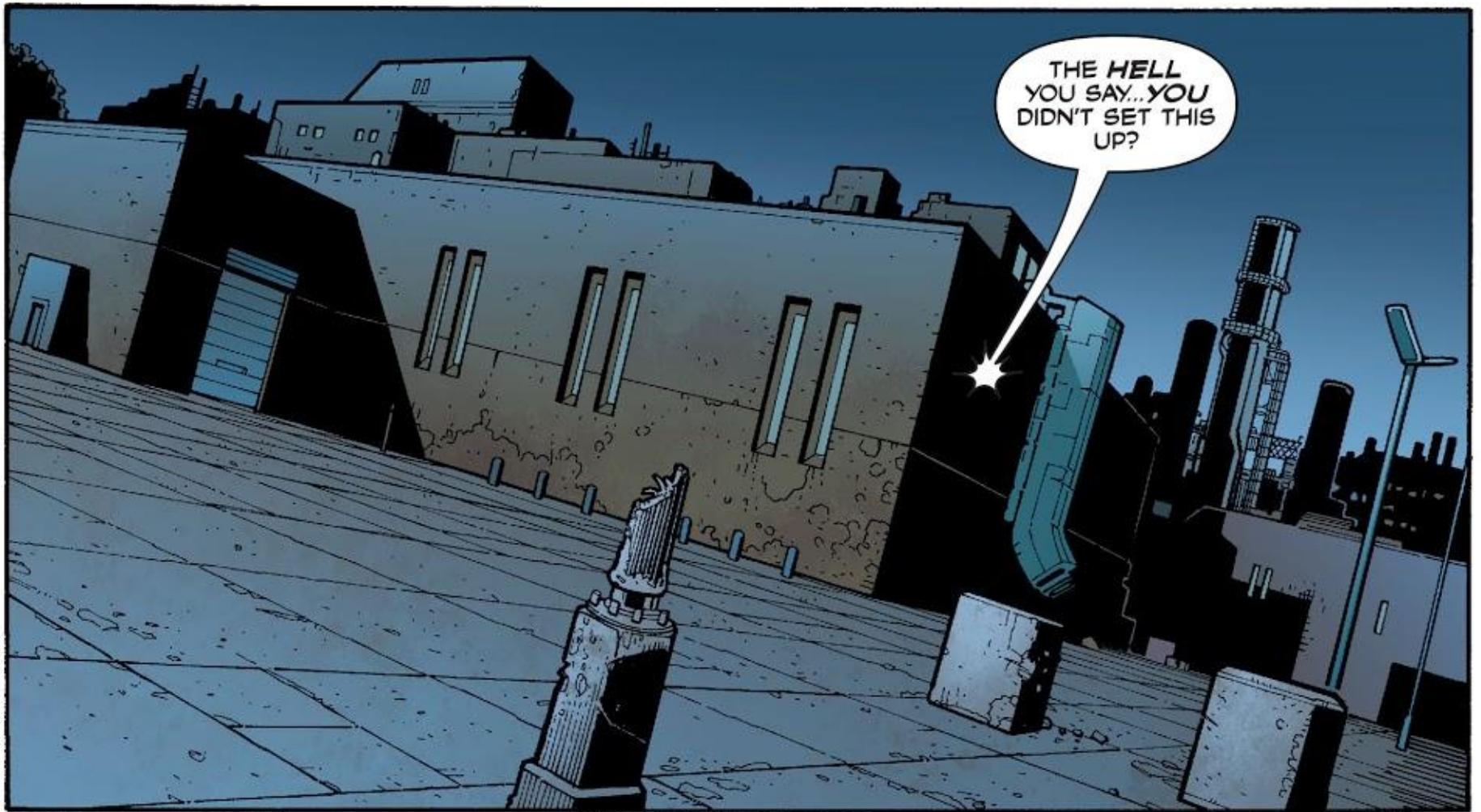
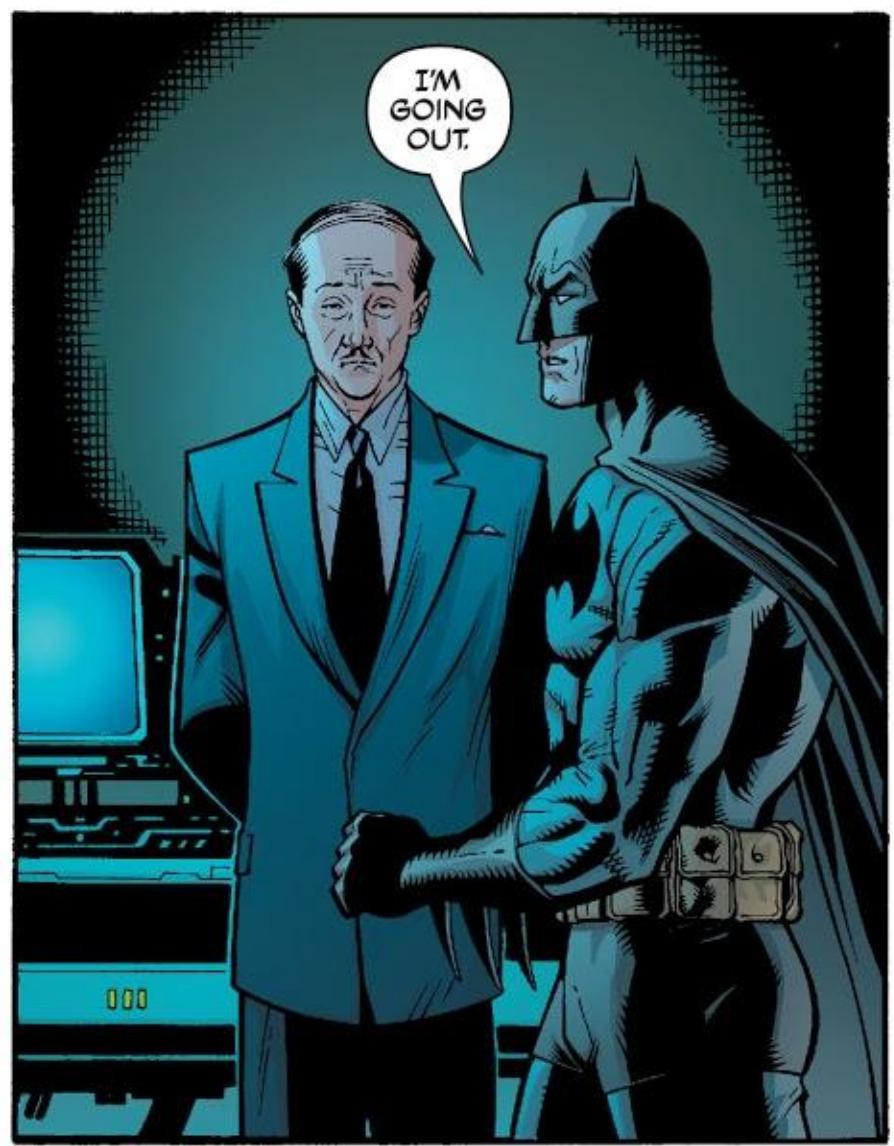
SIR, LUCIUS FOX HAS BEEN TRYING TO CONTACT YOU. IT REGARDS WAYNE INDUSTRIES.

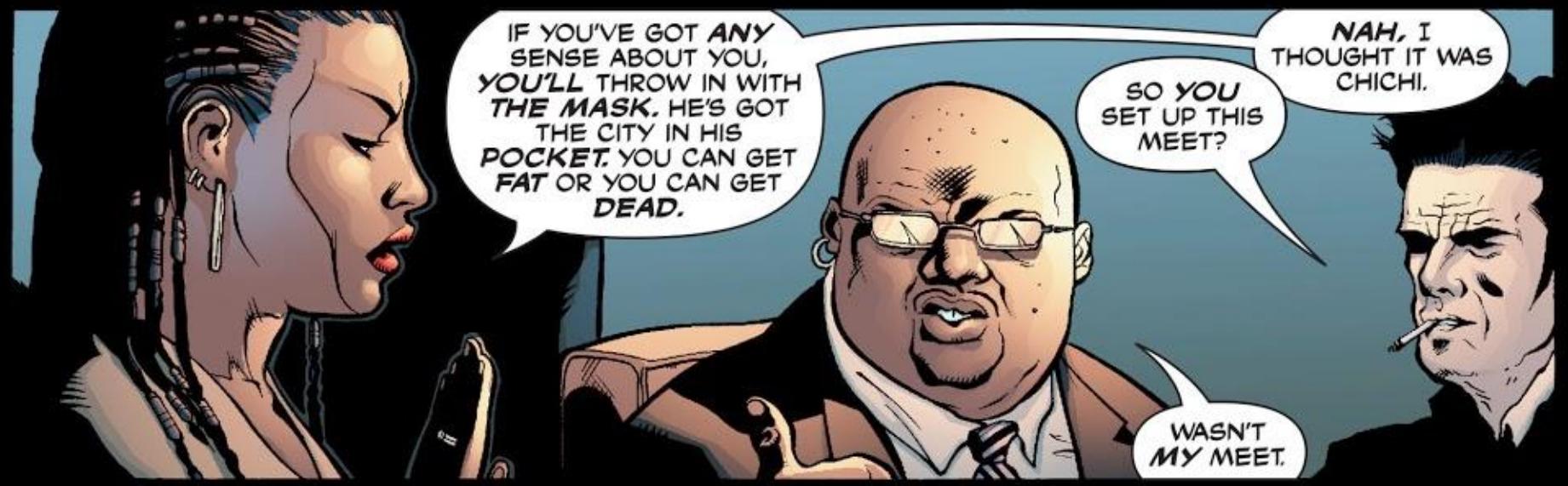
GET RID OF HIM.











IT'S MY
MEETING. I
INVITED
YOU.



I AM OFFERING YOU A DEAL. I WILL BE RUNNING THE DRUG TRADE FROM NOW ON. YOU WILL GO ABOUT YOUR BUSINESS AS USUAL.

YOU WILL KICK UP FORTY PERCENT TO ME. THAT IS A MUCH BETTER DEAL THAN THE BLACK MASK WILL GIVE YOU.

IN RETURN, YOU WILL HAVE TOTAL PROTECTION FROM BOTH THE BLACK MASK AND BATMAN.

THE CATCH? YOU STAY AWAY FROM KIDS AND SCHOOL YARDS. NO DEALING TO CHILDREN, GOT IT? IF YOU DO, YOU'RE DEAD.

OKAY, CRAZY MAN. THIS IS ALL VERY GENEROUS, BUT WHY IN THE @#%\$ SHOULD WE LISTEN TO YOU?



DAMN...

INSIDE THE DUFFEL BAG ARE THE HEADS OF ALL YOUR LIEUTENANTS. THAT TOOK ME 2 HOURS. YOU WANT TO SEE WHAT I CAN GET DONE IN A WHOLE EVENING?



THE BLACK MASK. GOTHAM CITY'S NEW CRIME LORD.

I HEARD. IT'S JUST THE STREET STUFF. IT'S NOT WORTH MY TIME.

STILL, WHERE THERE'S SMOKE THERE'S FIRE.

NO. WHERE THERE'S FIRE THERE'S FIRE, AND AT THE MOMENT I HAVE ALL THE GASOLINE.

IF SOME IDIOT WANTS TO PICK UP THE PARKING METER CHANGE BY RUNNING THE CORNERS, I'VE GOT NO PROBLEM WITH THAT.

LET THEM DART AROUND THE BASES FOR A WHILE. THEN, IF THEY'RE ACTUALLY DOING A HALFWAY DECENT JOB--WE'LL EITHER FOLD THEM IN OR KILL THEM.

DEPENDS ON MY MOOD.

I REALLY PREFER BURNING A WHOLE HOUSE DOWN RATHER THAN TRYING TO ROOT OUT A FEW RATS. IT'S EXTREME, BUT Y'KNOW, I'M NOT A VERY NICE PERSON.



...MR.
FREEZE?

MONEY'S
NICE. WHAT'S
THE BODY
COUNT?

DEEP.

I'M GOING
TO NEED
SOMETHING TO
WEAR.

To Be Continued...