

BATMAN

604



BRUBAKER • McDANIEL • OWENS

APPROVED
COMIC CODE
AUTHORITY
AUG 2002



McDANIEL

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SOMETIMES, TO MOVE FORWARD, YOU HAVE TO GO BACK TO THE BEGINNING.



THERE ARE MANY BEGINNINGS
TO THE PLACE I HAVE ENDED
UP, BUT MOST OF THEM ARE
HERE...

...IN GOTHAM'S
EAST END.



THE PARTIALLY FORGOTTEN
SLUMS THAT BORDER
HISTORIC OLD GOTHAM... A
HUNDRED YEARS AGO,
THESE TENEMENTS
HOUSED IMMIGRANTS
FRESH OFF THE BOATS
AND FULL OF HOPE...



NOW THEY ARE
MOSTLY HOME TO
MISERY AND FEAR.

YEARS AGO, BEFORE
THE BAT FOUND ME
AND TOLD ME WHO
I WAS...



WAS I BATMAN
THEN? OR JUST
BRUCE WAYNE IN
A DISGUISE,
TRYING TO BEGIN
A MISSION HE'D
WAITED ALL HIS
LIFE FOR?

THE MOVES, THOUGH
ROUGHER AND LESS
SURE, WERE SOME
OF THE SAME I
USE TODAY...

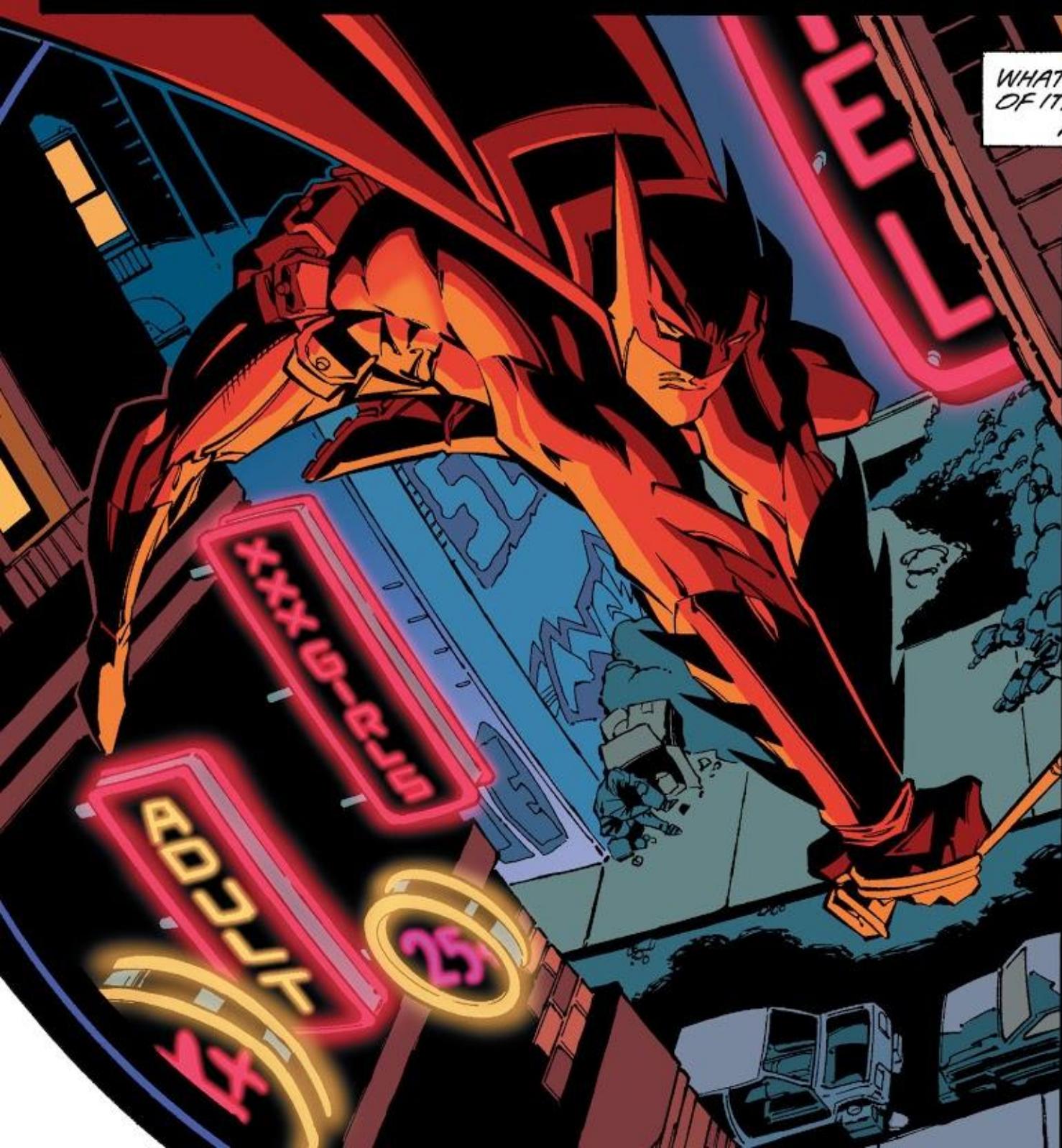
THE MOTIVE WAS THE
SAME ONE THAT
DRIVES ME STILL...



WAS THAT DAY--THAT FAILURE...
WHAT BEGAN THE SPLIT? THE
NEED FOR ANOTHER FACE?



WAS THAT WHEN
BRUCE WAYNE
BECAME NOTHING
MORE THAN A
MASK?



WHATEVER THE TRUTH
OF IT... ONE THING
IS CERTAIN...



...THE REASON
I CHOSE THE EAST
END TO MAKE MY
START.



BECUSE EVERYTHING
BEGAN HERE...

...IN A SMALL LANE CONNECTING
OLD GOTHAM TO THE EAST END...

...A PLACE THAT CAME TO BE
KNOWN AS CRIME ALLEY.

Reasons

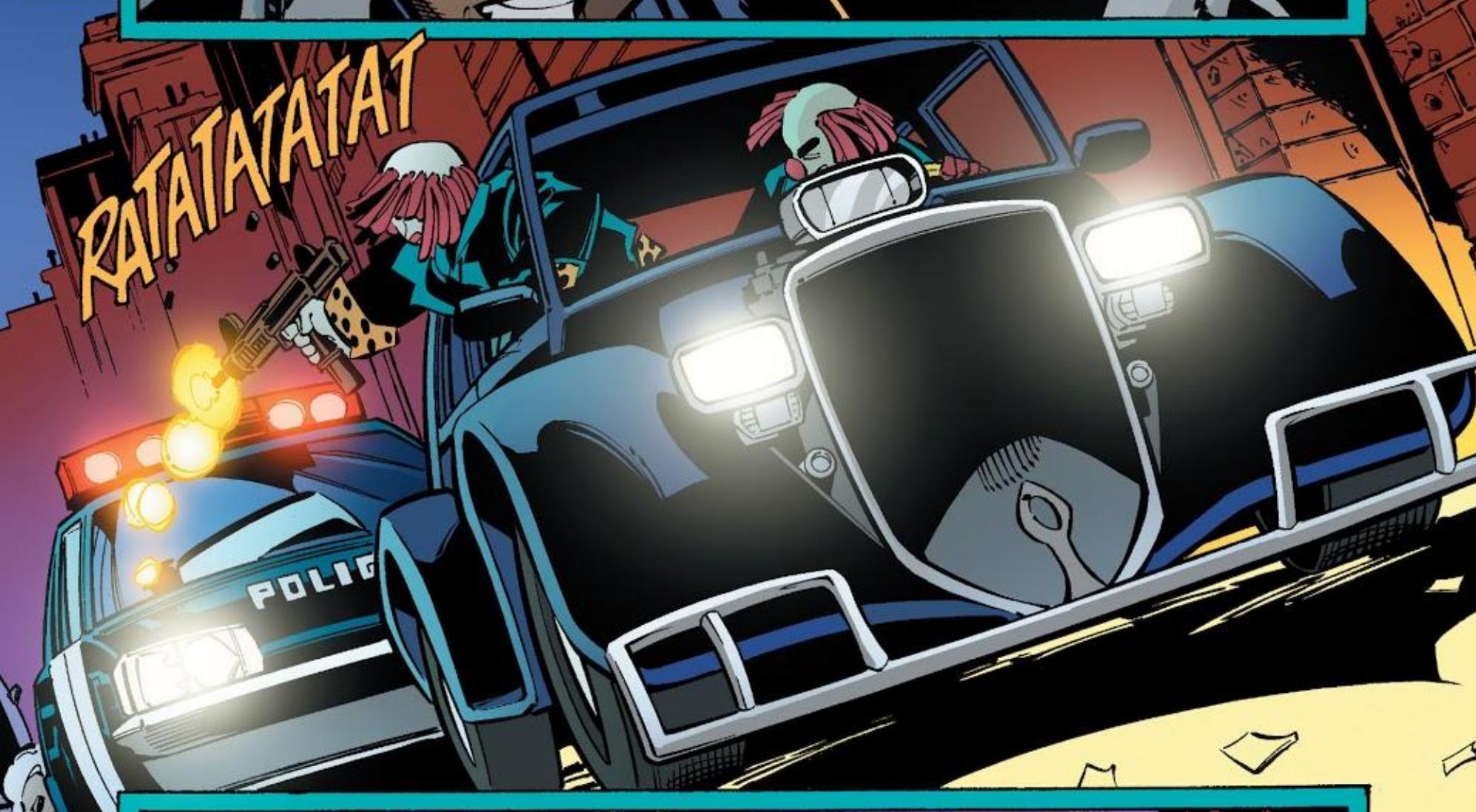
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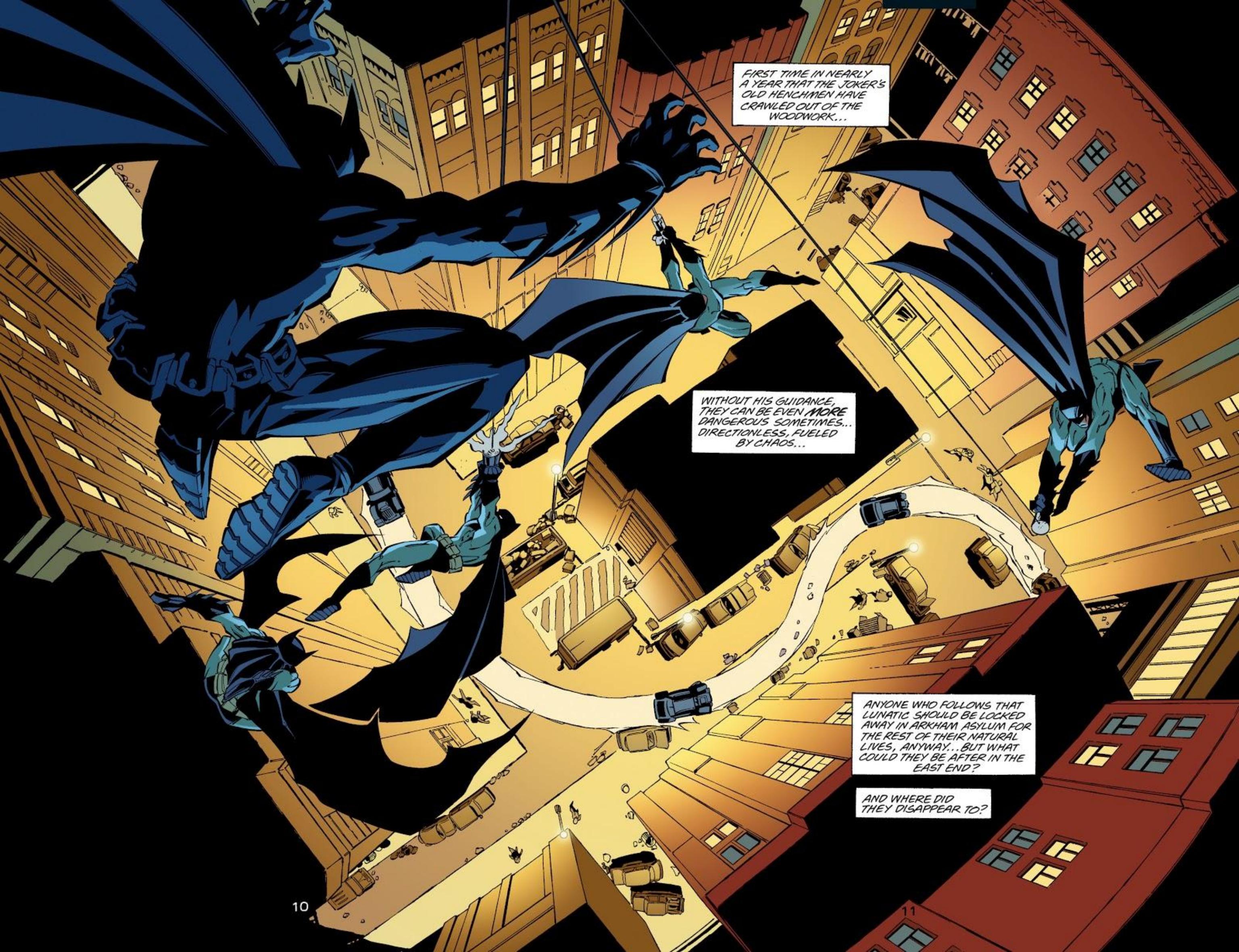














IT'S THE
SECOND
GARAGE ON
THE RIGHT.



YOU ARE
AFTER THE IDIOT
CLOWN POSSE,
RIGHT?

YES, WHAT
ARE YOU DOING
HERE?



HEY, THIS IS MY
NEIGHBORHOOD,
REMEMBER?

WELL,
ANY IDEA WHAT
THEY'RE
DOING HERE,
THEN?



NO.
LET'S
FIND
OUT,
SHALL
WE?





LOOKS
LIKE WE'RE
GONNA
HAFTA
CUT THIS
SHORT,
PAL...

NOOO...

KA-BAM!

OW...

HEY--
NO
FAIR...



KEVLAR
PROTECTS ME,
BUT MY RIBS
ARE
CRACKING...

ALL
RIGHT,
DAMN IT...
THIS HAS GONE
FAR
ENOUGH...

OUTTA
THE WAY!
OUTTA
THE WAY!

BLAM
KA-BAM





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YOU
SURE YOU'RE
OKAY?

WE COULD
WAKE UP LESLIE
IF YOU NEED TO
BE LOOKED AT...
IT'S EARLY,
BUT--

I'LL BE FINE,
SELINA... I
JUST NEEDED
A FEW MINUTES
TO GET MY
BREATH BACK...

Y'KNOW, YOU
DIDN'T HAVE
TO LET HIM
SHOOT YOU
THAT MUCH...

IF I'D
DODGED HE
WOULD'VE HIT
RULYANCHIK...

I JUST DON'T
UNDERSTAND
YOU
SOMETIMES...

YOU STAND
THERE AND TAKE
POINT BLANK
SHOTS FOR
ONE OF THE
BIG SCUZZBALLS
IN GOTHAM...

I MEAN, I COULD
UNDERSTAND IF HE WAS
A DECENT HUMAN
BEING, OR A FRIEND...
I'D JUMP IN FRONT
OF A BULLET FOR
A FRIEND...

THAT'S
NOT WHAT
IT'S ABOUT...

WHAT IS IT
ABOUT THEN,
BOY SCOUT?

IT'S
COMPLICATED.

I THOUGHT YOU
WERE THE BIG
PROTECTOR OF
THE INNOCENT--

-- WHAT'S
COMPLICATED
ABOUT THAT?

EVERYTHING.

LIFE
COMPLICATES
EVERYTHING.

SO, Y'KNOW, YOU
NEVER DID TELL
ME WHAT YOU
WERE DOING IN
THE EAST END
TONIGHT IN THE
FIRST PLACE...

THAT'S
SORT OF
COMPLICATED,
TOO.

UH HUNH...
LOOK, IF YOU WANTED
TO SEE ME, YOU DON'T
NEED TO MAKE UP
EXCUSES...

OKAY, YOU
CAUGHT ME...

SOMEHOW,
I DON'T THINK
SO...

IT'S BEEN
FUN, BOY SCOUT...
LET'S DO THIS AGAIN
SOMETIME...



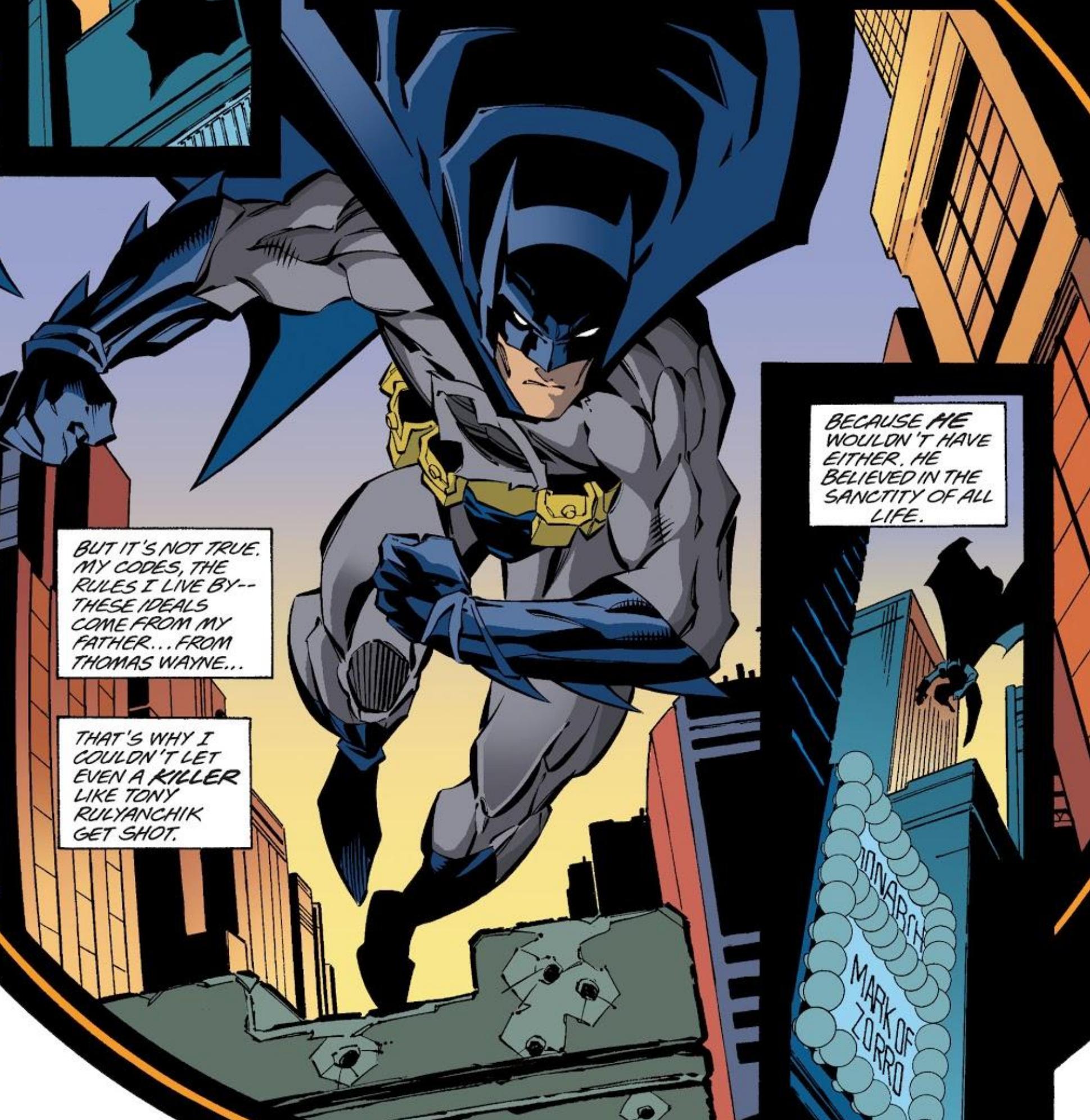
MONARCH
MARK OF
ZORRO

WHY DID I
COME HERE
TONIGHT?

I THOUGHT IT WAS
TO TRY TO FIGURE
THINGS OUT... TO GO
THROUGH IT ALL IN
MY HEAD FOR THE
MILLIONTH TIME...

I THOUGHT THAT IN MANY WAYS BRUCE WAYNE DIED ALONG WITH HIS PARENTS...

AND THE MASK I'VE SHOWN THE WORLD ALL THESE YEARS IS THE REMNANT OF WHAT THAT CHILD WAS BEFORE THAT NIGHT.





I'VE BEEN
SO BLIND...
ALL THIS
TIME.

I THOUGHT THE
REAL BRUCE
WAYNE WAS THAT
HAPPY CHILD OF
MEMORY...

BUT NOW THAT
EVERYTHING HAS
BEEN STRIPPED
AWAY FROM HIM,
I REALIZE THAT
MASK IS NOT
BRUCE... NOT
AT ALL.

I AM BRUCE WAYNE.

I ALWAYS HAVE BEEN.

TO BE CONTINUED