



UNIVERSE

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WHAT
HUNTS THE
DARK
KNIGHT...

BATMAN

ANNUAL

...IN THE
SKIES ABOVE
GOTHAM
CITY?

TAYLOR
SCHMIDT

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THERE WAS
A CALL.

**RIIING
RIIING**

ONE PHONE
CALL.

**RIIING
RIIING**

THAT'S ALL
IT TOOK.

**RIIING
RIIING**

WAYNE
RESIDENCE. THIS
IS ALFRED
PENNYWORTH.

MR.
PENNYWORTH?

YES.
I'M AFRAID
THOMAS AND
MARTHA ARE
OUT FOR THE
EVENING.
HOWEVER, I
WOULD BE
HAPPY TO
TAKE--

MR.
PENNYWORTH.
THERE'S BEEN AN
INCIDENT.

ONE PHONE CALL
AND OUR LIVES
WERE CHANGED.

I HAD PLANS.



PLANS I FELT WERE IMPORTANT AT THE TIME.



I DID NOT INTEND TO STAY IN THE WAYNE'S EMPLOY FOREVER.



HOWEVER, MY INTENTIONS WERE OF NO CONSEQUENCE...



THERE ARE EVENTS ONE
CANNOT PLAN FOR.

NO.

MR.
PENNYWORTH?

WE NEED
YOU TO COME DOWN
TO THE CORONER'S
OFFICE TO IDENTIFY
THE VICTIMS. IF YOU
COULD--

THEY ARE
TWO OF THE MOST
PROMINENT FIGURES
IN THE CITY.
SOMEONE ELSE CAN
IDENTIFY THEM.

I HAVE A FAR
MORE PRESSING
RESPONSIBILITY.

WHERE IS HE?

VERY
WELL.







NOW
CHADWICK
AND NINTH.

YOU MOVED
FOUR BLOCKS
IN TWO
SENTENCES?

I'M STEERING
A PREDATOR
DRONE AWAY
FROM POPULATED
AREAS. OUT TO
THE HARBOR.

OF
COURSE
YOU
ARE.

DEET

TSHHH



I'M COMING IN.

AND STAYING IN?

NO.

NO. OF COURSE NOT.

I ASK BECAUSE I TRIED TO MAKE YOUR BED TODAY, AND FOUND IT WAS STILL MADE FROM YESTERDAY.

I ATE THE MINT I LEFT ON YOUR PILLOW.

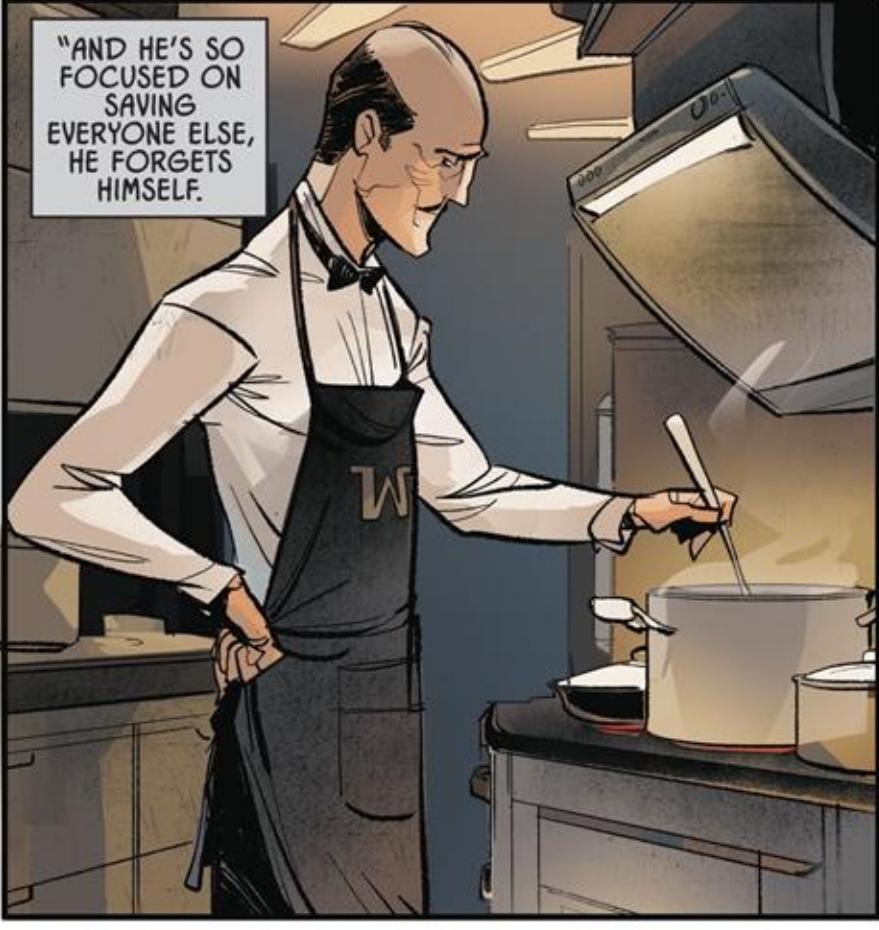
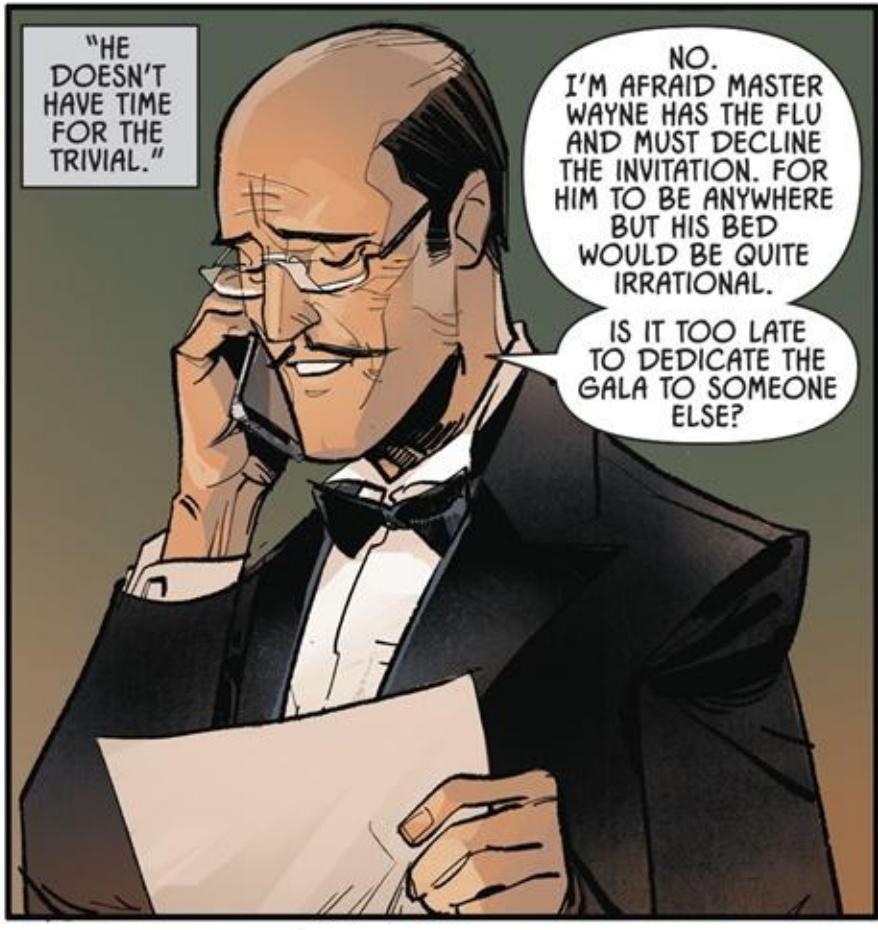
SO THERE'S NO MISUNDERSTANDING, MY MINT THEFT WAS MY PASSIVE-AGGRESSIVE WAY OF SAYING YOU SHOULD ACTUALLY USE YOUR BED FOR SLEEPING.

I WANTED TO MAKE THAT CRYSTAL CLEAR IN CASE MY AGGRESSIVE WAS TOO PASSIVE.

YOU HAVE THE FLU. YOU NEED TO REST.

NOTED. I NEED THE BATWING READIED.

YES, SIR.
BECAUSE, BEING SICK AND HAVING NOT SLEPT FOR TWO DAYS, YOU SHOULD DEFINITELY BE OPERATING HEAVY FLYING MACHINERY.



RRRN

WELCOME HOME, SIR.

LAST WEEK, THREE UNMANNED AERIAL VEHICLES CARRYING HELLFIRE MISSILES WENT MISSING. THIS HAS BEEN DENIED BY THE MILITARY, OF COURSE.

YES. I IMAGINE THAT WOULD BE QUITE EMBARRASSING FOR SOME VERY SERIOUS PEOPLE.

I ACQUIRED THE RELEVANT PENTAGON REPORTS FROM A RUSSIAN HACKER.

THAT'S A TROUBLING SENTENCE FOR A NUMBER OF REASONS.

A REMOTE PILOT OF THESE UAVS CLONED THE CONTROL SYSTEM, DISCONNECTED THE TRACKING SYSTEM, AND SIMPLY FLEW THEM AWAY.

FROM WHAT I'VE LEARNED, THIS UAV OPERATOR DEVELOPED SOMETHING VERY DANGEROUS FOR THIS LINE OF WORK.

WHAT'S THAT, SIR?

A CONSCIENCE.

HIS NAME IS PETER HARRIS. HIS TARGETS WERE SUPPOSED TO BE KEPT FROM HIM.

BUT HE SAW A NEWS REPORT ABOUT A STRIKE AND PUT TWO AND TWO TOGETHER.

HE LEARNED HE BOMBED A MARKET. THIRTY CIVILIANS DIED. IT BROKE HIM.

HE SENT HIS FORMER EMPLOYERS A MESSAGE.

YOU WANT TO PLAY GOD WITH NO REPERCUSSIONS?

YOU THINK YOU CAN RAIN HELLFIRE FROM THE HEAVENS WITH NO ACCOUNTABILITY?

I AM HOLDING YOU ACCOUNTABLE.

NOW YOU WILL FEEL HOW THEY FEEL...

...AFRAID OF THE SKY.

HE CALLS HIMSELF THE DRONE.

WELL, THAT'S UNFORTUNATE.

ACCORDING TO HIS PSYCHOLOGICAL PROFILE, IT'S HOW HE FELT. NOT JUST A DRONE OPERATOR, BUT ANOTHER POWERLESS PAWN IN THE MACHINE.

HE DESCRIBED HIMSELF AS A "POINT-AND-CLICK" PERSON. HE OBEYED ORDERS, AND PEOPLE DIED.

AND WHY HAS THIS MAN TAKEN HIS NEWFOUND COMPASSION, AND DECIDED HIS RIGHTEOUS CAUSE SHOULD INCLUDE DRONE STRIKES ON GOTHAM?

THE UAVS
WERE MADE IN
GOTHAM BY
SINACO.

THERE ARE WORKERS,
DESIGNERS AND
MANUFACTURERS ALL LIVING HERE
IN THE CITY.

ANY ONE OF
THEM COULD BE
HIS TARGET. ALL
OF THEM
COULD BE.

THE PROBLEM IS
THESE DRONES ARE
DESIGNED TO BE
UNDETECTABLE TO
RADAR.

I NEED
TO BE IN
THE AIR.

SIR...

ALFRED.
I KNOW
WHAT
YOU'RE
GOING TO
SAY.

BUT I WILL
SLEEP WHEN THIS
IS OVER. PEOPLE
WILL DIE IF I
DON'T STOP
THIS.

I KNOW. YOU
NEED TO DO
WHAT NEEDS TO
BE DONE.

HOWEVER, SIR, YOU ARE
UNWELL. AND, WHILE I ACCEPT
YOU CAN'T SLEEP, I WOULD
APPRECIATE IT IF YOU ATE
SOMETHING.

YOU
WANT ME TO
TAKE A HOT
BOWL OF
SOUP INTO
A JET?



NO. I TOOK THE LIBERTY OF PREPARING A FLASK OF SOUP WHICH CAN CONVENIENTLY FIT BESIDE THE BATWING'S MISSILE SWITCH.



IT CAN BE CONSUMED ONE-HANDED, SIR. LEAVING YOUR OTHER HAND FREE TO CONTINUE TO FIGHT THE FORCES OF EVIL.



I WOULD ADD THAT CHICKEN SOUP WOULD ALSO BE THE PERFECT ACCOMPANIMENT TO PERCHING ON A GARGOYLE IN THE COLD.

I UNDERSTAND A THERMOS WOULD RATHER RUIN THE IMAGE, SIR. BUT I PROMISE NOT TO LET ANY OF YOUR MAJOR VILLAINS KNOW.



EVERY TIME HE LEAVES...



THIS CITY DEMANDS
SO MUCH OF HIM.

TOO
MUCH.

ANY TIME
GOTHAM IS
THREATENED,
NOTHING ELSE
MATTERS.

IT'S ALL-
CONSUMING.

THERE
YOU
ARE.

HE SEES GOTHAM'S
SAFETY AS HIS
RESPONSIBILITY.

AND ANY TIME
GOTHAM COMES
TO HARM...

KRAKOOOM

...HE SEES IT AS
HIS FAILURE.

NO.

ALFRED.
NOTIFY
EMERGENCY
SERVICES.

EXPLOSION AT
BARLOW STREET.
BETWEEN
ELEVENTH AND
TWELFTH.

CASUALTIES?

THE BUILDING
LOOKS TO BE
ABANDONED.
NO SIGN OF
PEOPLE.

I'M GOING
AFTER THE
UAV.

CK

Tooom
om

Fwooom

UAV
DESTROYED.



I DON'T
KNOW WHY THE
DRONE WOULD
CHOOSE TO HIT
AN ABANDONED
BUILDING. IT
MAKES NO--

WAIT, THERE
IS SOMEONE
DOWN
THERE.

ALFRED, MAKE
SURE THERE'S AN
AMBULANCE ON
THE WAY.

YES,
SIR.

CAN
YOU
HEAR
ME?

HNNNG.

I'M
COMING.

I'M
GOING TO
GET YOU
OUT OF
HERE.

ALFRED. ONE
SURVIVOR. NO SIGN
OF ANYONE ELSE.

CROSS-REFERENCE
THIS ADDRESS WITH
ALL SINACO
INDUSTRIES HOLDINGS
AND EMPLOYEES.

I WANT TO KNOW
WHY THE DRONE
CHOSE THIS
SITE FOR AN
ATTACK.



SIMPLE.

HNNNG!

SHNK

TO GET
YOU OUT IN THE
OPEN AND TAKE
YOU OFF MY
MAP.

I CAN'T
HAVE YOU
STOP ME.

KRAK

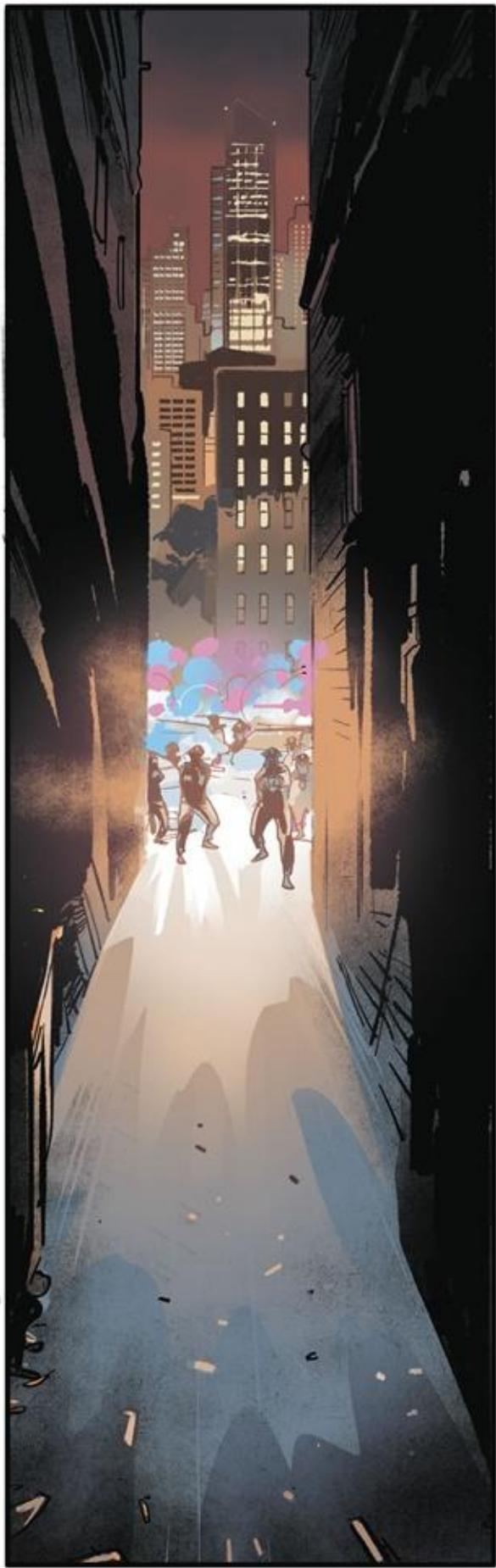
CRUNCH

CLK

TSSSSS

PHNK

THD





HEY.

HEY.
YOU REALLY
BATMAN?

CHECK HIS
BELT. SEE
WHAT HE HAS
ON HIM.

HANG ON.
I WANNA
SEE WHO
HE IS.

RNNNN

WERE YOU
TRULY PLANNING
ON MUGGING
BATMAN?

HEY.
BACK
OFF,
MAN.

I WOULDN'T.
THE COWL IS
CHARGED.

IT WON'T
KILL YOU, BUT
IT CERTAINLY
WON'T TICKLE
EITHER.

ALL HE'S DONE
FOR THIS CITY. ALL HE'S
SACRIFICED.

DON'T GET
ANY CLOSER,
OLD MAN.

ALL THE
TIMES HE'S
SAVED YOU
DESPICABLE
INGRATES. AND
YOU WERE
GOING TO ROB
HIM IN AN
ALLEY?





CAN
YOU HEAR
ME?

HNN.

WELL, A GRUNT
IS BETTER THAN
NOTHING.

HOME.

YOU'RE
BLEEDING MORE
THAN YOUR
CUSTOMARY
AMOUNT, SIR.

HOME.
I...

SIR?

BRUCE?!

R RRRR RRRR



CAR. AUTO-DRIVE.

HEAD TO
38 WEST 44TH
STREET.



SEAT B.
FULL RECLINE.

WRRRRR



SEAT A.
RETRACTION.



ACTIVATE
MED BAY.



MASTER BRUCE.
TRY TO STAY
CONSCIOUS.



YOU'RE
LOSING TOO
MUCH BLOOD,
SIR.



CALL AHEAD.
LESLIE
THOMPKINS.



O NEGATIVE.



DEET DEET DEET



BATMAN?



IT'S
ALFRED.

CODE
BLACK.
CODE
BLACK!



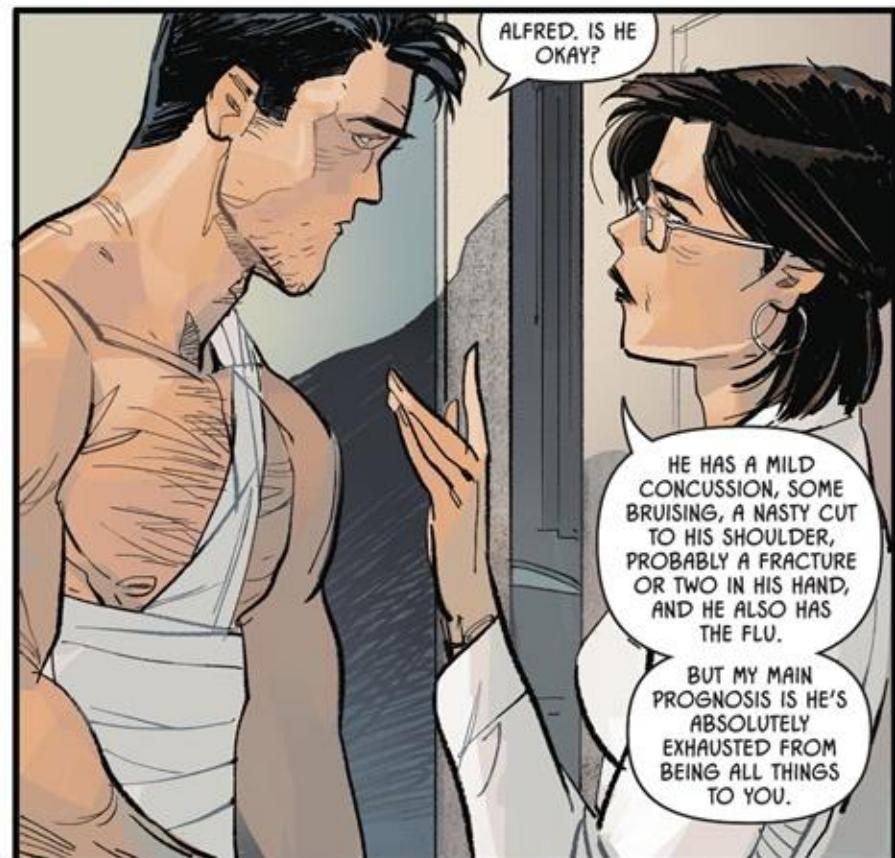




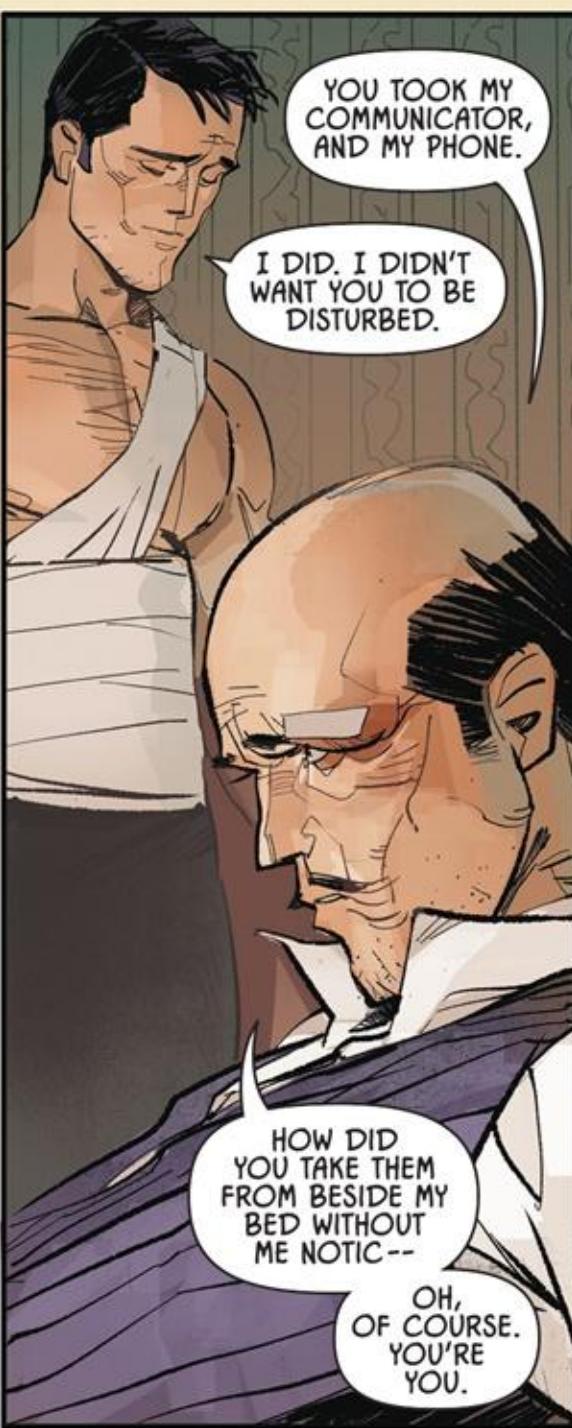
"EVERY TIME HE CALLS...IT'S NOT THAT CALL."



HOURS LATER.



THE NEXT MORNING.







I DIDN'T
WANT YOU
TO HAVE TO
WORRY
TODAY.

REALLY? AND
WHY IS TODAY
SPECIAL?

GET
SOME REST,
ALFRED.

Father's Day

TOM TAYLOR Writer OTTO SCHMIDT Artist

A LARGER WORLD'S TROY PETERI Letters BRYAN HITCH & ALEX SINCLAIR Cover

DAVE WIELGOSZ Asst. Editor

JAMIE S. RICH Group Editor

BATMAN created by BOB KANE with BILL FINGER

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He's back
to finish what
he started in

DARK NIGHTS

METAL



SCOTT SNYDER
JOCK

THE
BATMAN
WHO LAUGHS

DECEMBER



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ARKHAM ASYLUM!

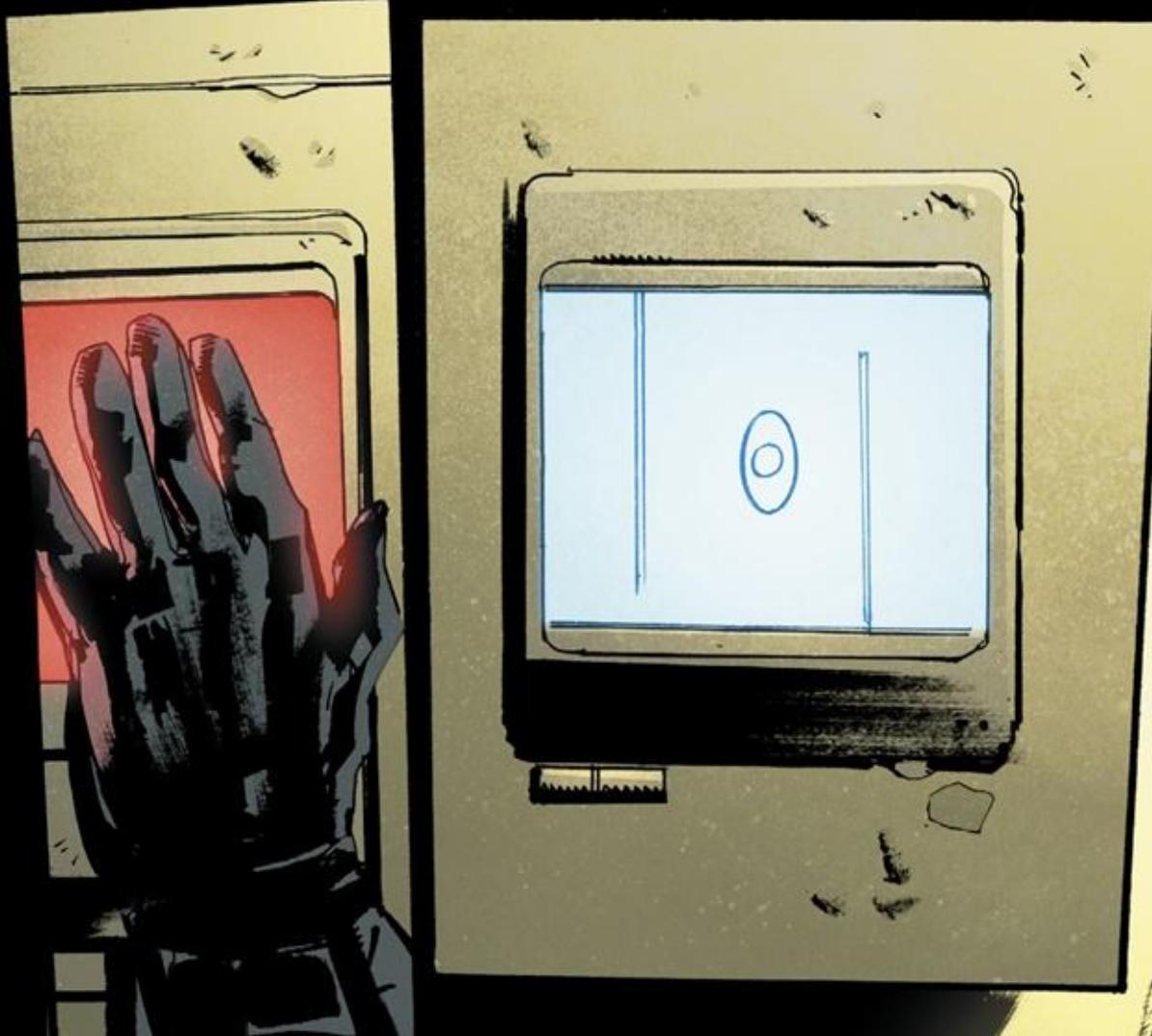
THE
BATMAN
WHO LAUGHS
#1





THE BATMAN
WHO LAUGHS





BATMAN
WHO LAUGHS



BATMAN
WHO LAUGHS

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To be continued in

**BATMAN
WHO LAUGHS**
#1

on sale in December

SCOTT SNYDER Writer JOCK Artist
BATMAN created by BOB KANE with BILL FINGER

BETWEEN THE PANELS: **PETER J. TOMASI**



The DETECTIVE COMICS writer details his plans for the Dark Knight as he reunites with artist Doug Mahnke and builds toward the landmark issue #1000

DC Nation: You've been involved with Batman on some level as an editor and writer for almost two decades. What is it about this character and his world that keeps you coming back with more to say each time?

Hands down, Batman's my favorite character. He was the first to be burned into my comics-reading DNA during my all-important formative years by writers like Bill Finger, Gardner Fox, Denny O'Neil, Steve Englehart, Len Wein, Gerry Conway, Doug Moench, Mike W. Barr and the great Frank Miller, whose BATMAN: YEAR ONE is still a story I read once a year to remind myself how to tell a lean and mean Batman tale. What I love about being involved with Batman, be it when I was an editor or now as a writer, is that he transcends all genres. You can put Batman anywhere and he works.

The first scene in your initial arc of DETECTIVE COMICS involves the bodies of Bruce Wayne's parents reappearing in an unexpected way. What can you tell us about this shocker and how it affects Batman?

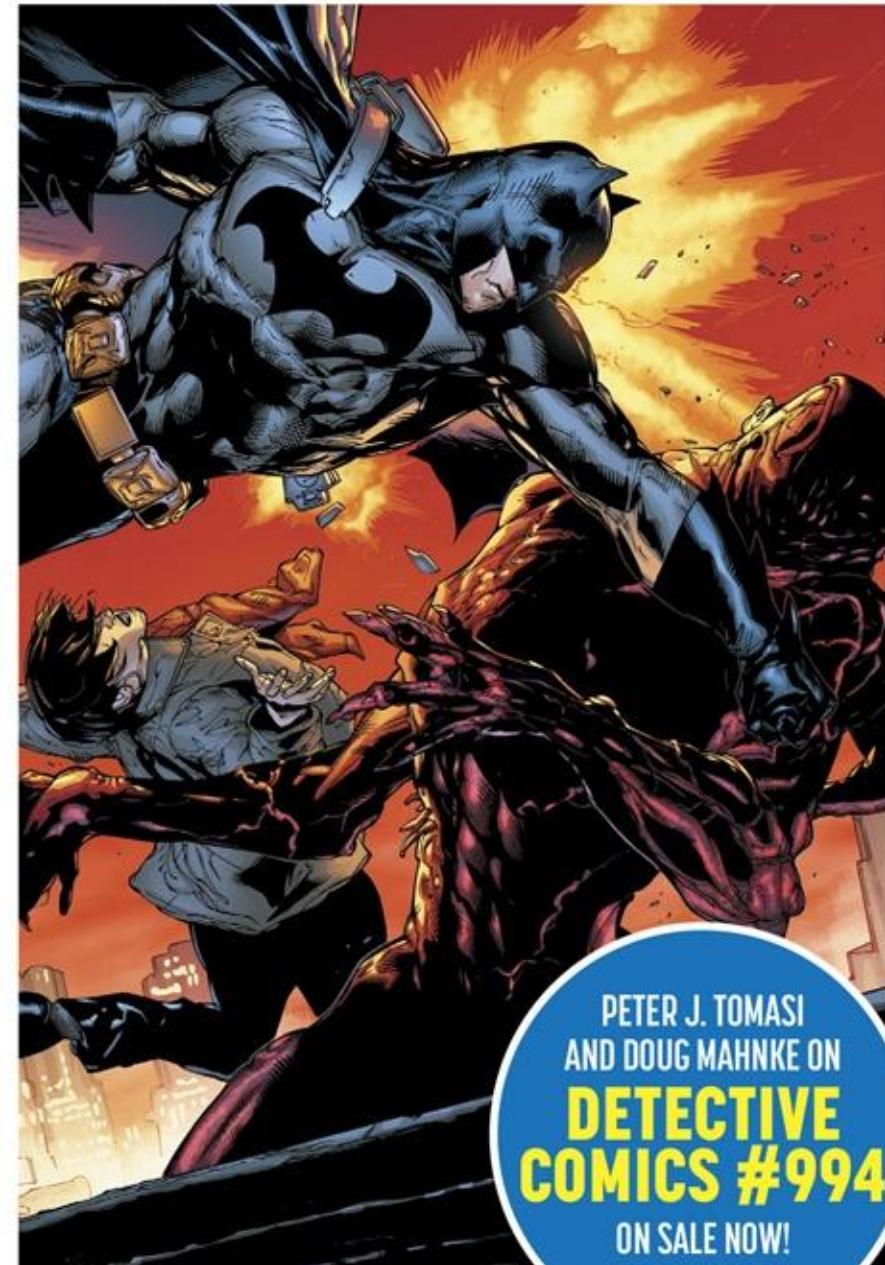
That opening scene lights the fuse of a big mystery. I love to pull the layers back on Batman as to what makes him tick. The yellow sticky note on my computer this time around says: to wear the cape and cowl sometimes you have to wage war on yourself. I always like to keep the main idea in front of my eyes when writing; it keeps me focused and always steers me back toward the central idea if I find myself getting off track.

Who's your personal favorite of Batman's extensive rogues gallery?

I loved writing the Joker and Two-Face during my Batman and Robin run. Those "Death of the Family" issues were a blast, and Patrick Gleason scared the crap outta me with his renditions of the Clown Prince of Crime and Two-Face in our "Big Burn" story line. Not only do I want to play with the classic baddies, I also want to crash a few new rogues into Batman's gallery along the way and see what has staying power.

You've collaborated with artist Doug Mahnke in the past, but this is the first time you've booked a trip together to Gotham. What are Doug's greatest strengths and how have your past partnerships prepared you for this project?

Doug's greatest strength as an artist is exactly what makes an amazing comic book: he's a natural born storyteller. What I like best about Doug's work is that he's a perfect fit for the way I approach my own storytelling: character comes first. Doug can deliver on the smallest dramatic moment or a massive epic battle without missing a beat. ■



PETER J. TOMASI
AND DOUG MAHNKE ON
**DETECTIVE
COMICS #994**
ON SALE NOW!



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