



DC
UNIVERSE

102



GRAPPLE
WITH THE
GHOST-
MAKER!

AGES 13+
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TYNION IV
PAGULAYAN
D'ANDA
MIKI
BARON

Jorge Jimenez
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GOTHAM CITY.
OLD TOWN.
PRESENT DAY.

I HATE
THIS CITY. I REALLY
DO.

YOU'D THINK
IT'S ALL JUST
PERSONAL, BUT I
DIDN'T KNOW **HIM** WHEN
I FIRST CAME HERE.
I WAS A TEENAGER,
LOOKING TO
IMPROVE
MYSELF.

IT DIDN'T
TAKE ME LONG
TO REALIZE I WASN'T
GOING TO IMPROVE
HERE.

NO ONE
DOES.

THE CITY
STINKS OF TRASH,
SWEAT, URINE, AND
BLOOD. IT **STINGS** IN
YOUR NOSTRILS. YOU
NEVER STOP TASTING
IRON IN THE
AIR.

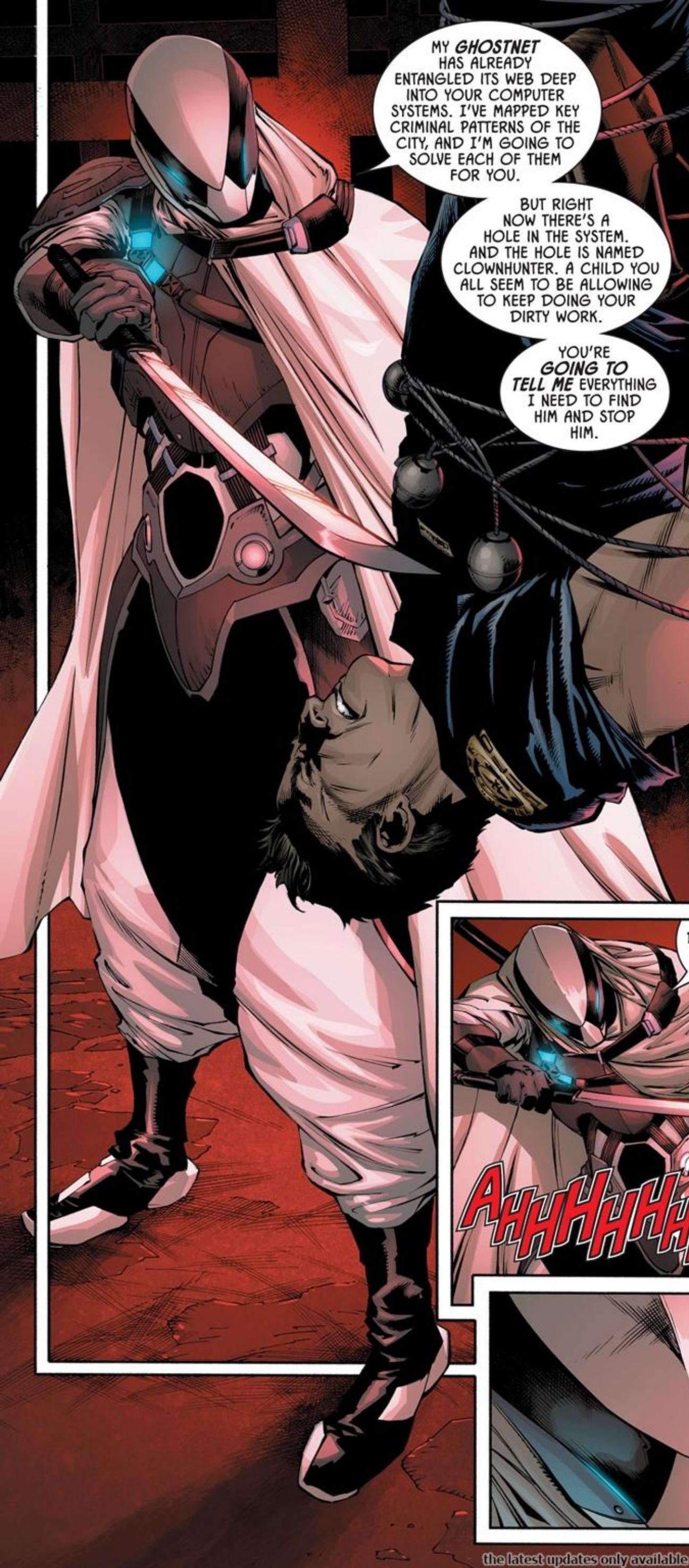
ITS BUILDINGS
ARE GARISH
MONSTROSITIES, TWISTED
AND STRANGE, AND NOW
IT ALL SEEMS ENTWINED IN
SCAFFOLDING. THE SOUNDS
OF THE CITY SCREAM AT
YOU WITHOUT STOPPING.
IT OFFENDS EACH OF
YOUR SENSES
IN TURN.

I HONESTLY
BELIEVE THAT THIS
CITY IS DRIVING EACH
OF YOU **INSANE**. BUT I
SUPPOSE IT'D HAVE TO,
FOR ANY OF YOU TO
WANT TO LIVE
HERE.

IF I HAD
BILLIONS OF
DOLLARS AT MY DISPOSAL,
I'D PAY EACH OF YOU TO
MOVE SOMEWHERE NICE,
AND BURN IT ALL TO THE
GROUND, SO THEY
COULD START
OVER.

THAT'S WHAT
HE SHOULD HAVE
DONE, IF HE REALLY
CARED ABOUT
YOU.

WH-WHY ARE
YOU SAYING ALL
THIS? WHAT DO
YOU WANT?



MY GHOSTNET HAS ALREADY ENTANGLED ITS WEB DEEP INTO YOUR COMPUTER SYSTEMS. I'VE MAPPED KEY CRIMINAL PATTERNS OF THE CITY, AND I'M GOING TO SOLVE EACH OF THEM FOR YOU.

BUT RIGHT NOW THERE'S A HOLE IN THE SYSTEM. AND THE HOLE IS NAMED CLOWNHUNTER. A CHILD YOU ALL SEEM TO BE ALLOWING TO KEEP DOING YOUR DIRTY WORK.

YOU'RE GOING TO TELL ME EVERYTHING I NEED TO FIND HIM AND STOP HIM.



"NOW
TALK."

THEY CALL
THEMSELVES
GRINNERS.

MOST
OF THEM HAVE
PARTIAL FACIAL
PARALYSIS DUE TO
EXPOSURE TO
VARIOUS JOKER
TOXINS.

THESE
ARE THE
DIEHARDS.

MOST OF
THE HIRED GUNS
WORKING FOR THE
COSTUMED SET IN
GOTHAM FLOAT FROM
BOSS TO BOSS, BUT THE
GRINNERS ARE A BIT TOO
STRANGE AND TOO
LETHAL TO
RELY ON.

MOST OF
THEM HAVE
SPENT STRETCHES IN
ARKHAM OR OTHER
PSYCHIATRIC
HOSPITALS.

THE SMILE BAR HAS BEEN THEIR
HANGOUT SPOT OF CHOICE FOR
YEARS, GOING BACK TO THE
HARLEY DAYS. THEY TEND TO
STAY QUIET DURING THE
ULLS BETWEEN JOKER'S
BIG CRIMES.

THWOK

THAT'S WHY I
NEVER SHUT THE
PLACE DOWN BEFORE.
IT'S VALUABLE TO KNOW
EXACTLY WHEN THEY
START GETTING READY
FOR A BIG
ATTACK.

THAT'S A
CLEVER WAY OF
SAYING YOU ALREADY
KNOW EVERYTHING I'M
TELLING YOU, BATMAN.
DON'T MAKE ME GUESS MY
WAY THROUGH IT. WHY
DID YOU LOOP ME
IN?

SOMETIMES THERE ARE A FEW DOZEN OF
THEM. ALL ARMED. ALL EAGER TO PROVE
THEMSELVES TO JOKER. I WANT EYES
ON THE INSIDE.

LUCIUS TOLD
YOU HE WON'T KEEP
REPAIRING YOUR SUITS,
AND YOU DON'T WANT
TO DO IT YOURSELF,
DO YOU?

ORACLE.

I'M UPLOADING A DIGITAL MAP OF THE INTERIOR TO YOUR COWL NOW. USING THEIR **CELL PHONES**, I'D SAY THERE ARE TWELVE OF THEM TOTAL, INCLUDING THE BARTENDER.

THE MOOD IN THERE IS CALM. A FEW OF THEM PLAYING POOL. A FEW OTHERS SITTING AT THE BAR. IT'S A QUIET NIGHT FOR THEM.

I'M GOING IN. STAY IN MY EAR?

SURE. THE CITY'S CHANGING SO FAST RIGHT NOW, I DON'T KNOW WHETHER I DO MORE GOOD OUT ON THE STREETS AS BATGIRL, OR AT THE COMPUTER AS ORACLE.

SEEING CASSANDRA AND STEPHANIE WEARING THE BAT-SYMBOL GAVE ME SOME IDEAS. BUT IT FEELS LIKE I'M TRYING TO SOLVE AN EQUATION WITH TOO MANY VARIABLES.

IT FEELS LIKE EVERYTHING IS CHANGING.

THIS IS ALL ABOUT THAT KID, ISN'T IT? THE CLOWNHUNTER OF THE NARROWS. YOU'RE TRYING TO GET RID OF HIS TARGETS, BEFORE HE KILLS ANYONE ELSE.

HH. KEEP THE CHANNEL QUIET, ORACLE.



THAT'S STRANGE. YOU'RE
NOT REGISTERING ON
MY BODY MAP...

IT'S ON A
LOOP. DAMMIT. WE'VE
BEEN PLAYED. GET OUT OF
THERE, BATMAN. IT'S A TRAP.

NO.

IT'S A
MESSAGE.



DUBLIN, IRELAND.
MANY YEARS AGO.

DRUID'S CAVERN









YOU WANT
THIS TRAINING? YOU
WANT THIS TEACHER?
THEN YOU'RE GOING
TO HAVE TO **BEAT**
ME, BRUCE.

THAT'S
HOW THIS GAME
WORKS.

I KNOW.
NOW SHUT UP
AND FIGHT
ME.

-HICC-

I
@#\$@ HATE
TEENAGERS.

GOTHAM CITY.
LITTLE SANTA PRISCA.

LOOK. I'M
REASONABLE.

DON'T LOOK REASONABLE.
REASONABLE PEOPLE
DON'T DRESS UP IN
COSTUMES.

YOU
KIDDIN'
ME? YOU TURN
ON THE NEWS
LATELY, OLD
MAN?

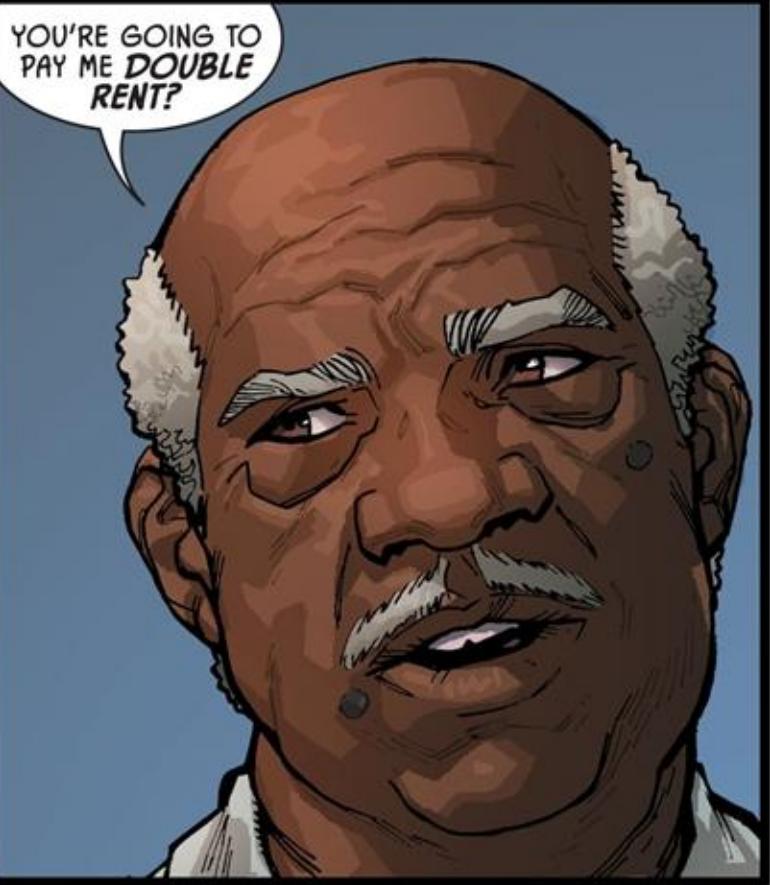
I THINK THE
ONLY REASONABLE
PEOPLE IN THIS WHOLE
NUTJOB WORLD DRESS
UP IN COSTUMES. YOU
TELLIN' ME YOU WOULDN'T
GIVE **SUPERMAN** AN
APARTMENT?

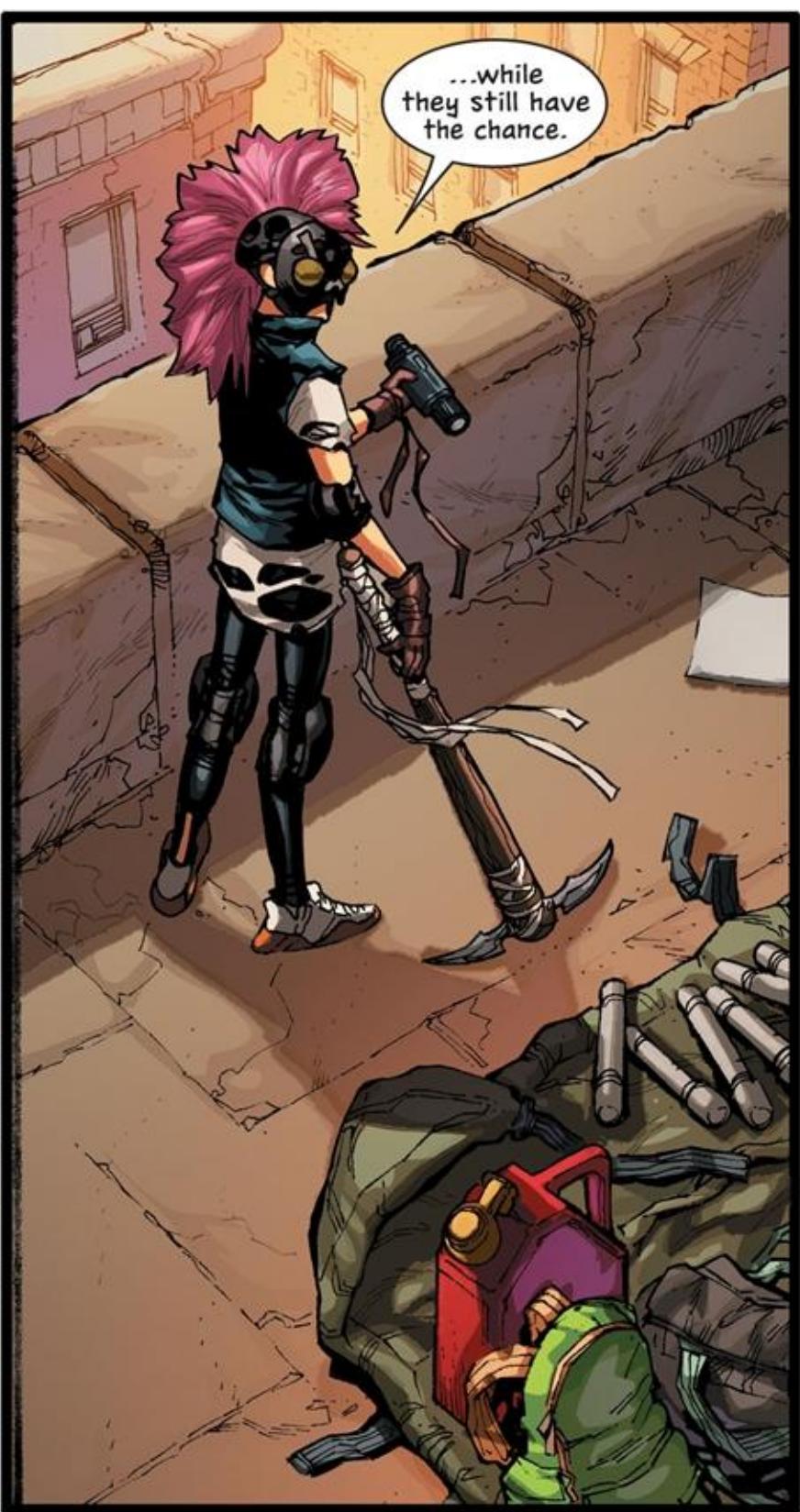
YOU'RE NOT
SUPERMAN!

YEAH, BUT HE WOULDN'T OFFER YOU DOUBLE
RENT FOR THIS @\\$#@%\\$#@. HE'S
GOT CLASS.

ME, I'VE
GOT NO CLASS. I'M
LIKE A COCKROACH THE
UNIVERSE KEEPS STOMPIN' ON
AND I KEEP POPPING
BACK UP.

BUT THIS
COCKROACH WANTS
TO SETTLE DOWN IN A
NICE, RUN-DOWN APARTMENT
SITUATION, AND LIVE OFF
GARBAGE AND ALL
OF THAT.





are you...
reading my phone's
mind?

HEH.

NOT
PERSONALLY.
BUT MY SUIT
CERTAINLY
IS.

YOUR SEARCH
HISTORY IS A REAL
TREAT, I MUST SAY.
INSPIRATIONAL, EVEN.
AS ALWAYS, THE NEXT
GENERATION BLAZES
BOLD NEW TRAILS
THROUGH
TABOO.

i don't
think i like
you.

SEE...I
DON'T COME FROM
A **BACKWARD** PLACE
LIKE GOTHAM. I COME
FROM THE WORLD
OUT THERE.

AND OUT
THERE, WE DON'T
JUST THROW OUR
KILLERS BACK INTO
THE WATER WITH
THE OTHER
FISH.

WE GUT
THEM.

AND YOU SHOULDN'T, I'M
AFRAID. YOU'RE ABOUT TO BLOW
UP AN APARTMENT. YOU'RE A CRIMINAL.

yeah.
really don't
like you.



THAT
MAKES TWO
OF US.



THIS CITY IS ROTTING FROM THE INSIDE OUT, BUT YOU STILL WON'T DO WHAT **MUST** BE DONE TO SAVE IT.

WHY IS THIS BOY STILL ON THE STREETS, BATMAN? YOU COULD HAVE LOCKED HIM AWAY, OR INCAPACITATED HIM. INSTEAD, YOU'VE LEFT HIM FREE TO KILL AGAIN.

EVEN A CITY AS AWFUL AS GOTHAM DESERVES **BETTER** THAN YOU.

THEN WE'LL DO IT LIKE WE DID WHEN WE WERE YOUNG. HOW ABOUT IT, BATMAN? I'LL FIGHT YOU FOR IT.

I WON'T PLAY A GAME FOR HIS LIFE.

YOU'RE MISSING THE WHOLE SCALE OF THE THING. I'M NOT SAYING THE WINNER TAKES THE BOY...

THE
WINNER TAKES
GOTHAM.

HOST STORIES PART 1

JAMES TYNION IV writer CARLO PAGULAYAN pencils
DANNY MIKI inks CARLOS D'ANDA artist (pages 13-16)

NEXT: RIVAL RUMBLE!

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