



JEPH LOEB

JIM LEE

S. WILLIAMS

IT BEGINS HERE!

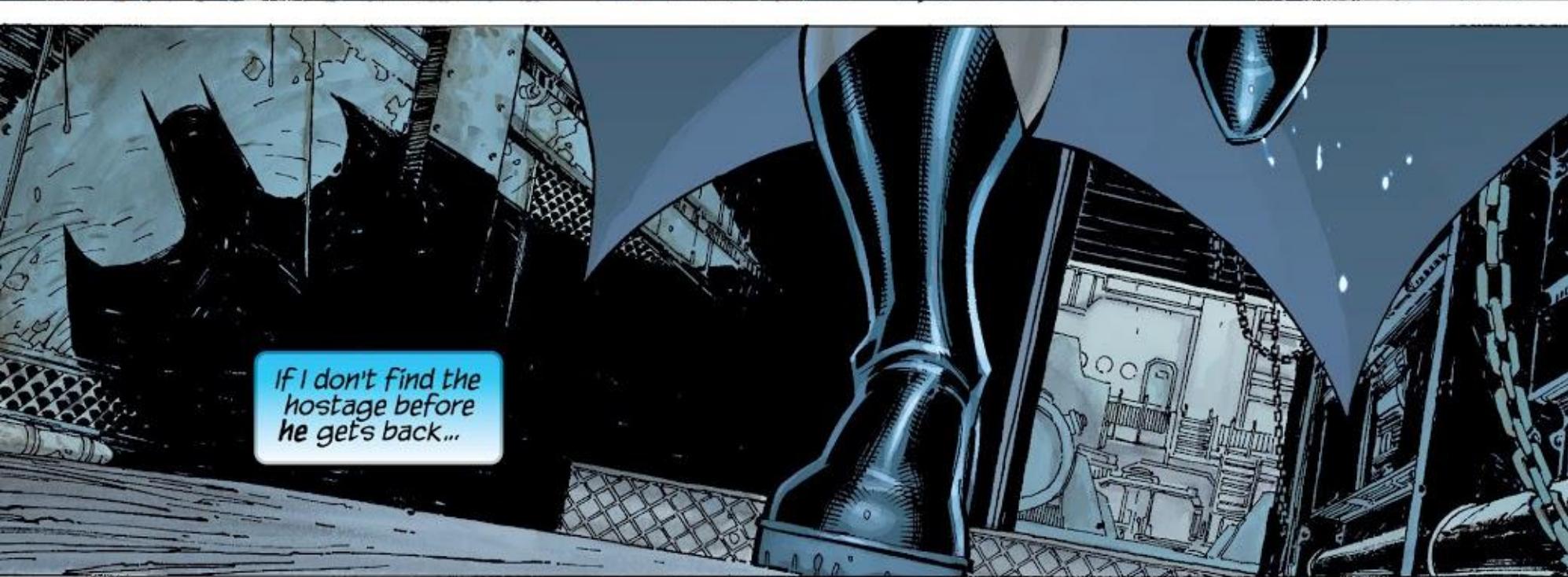
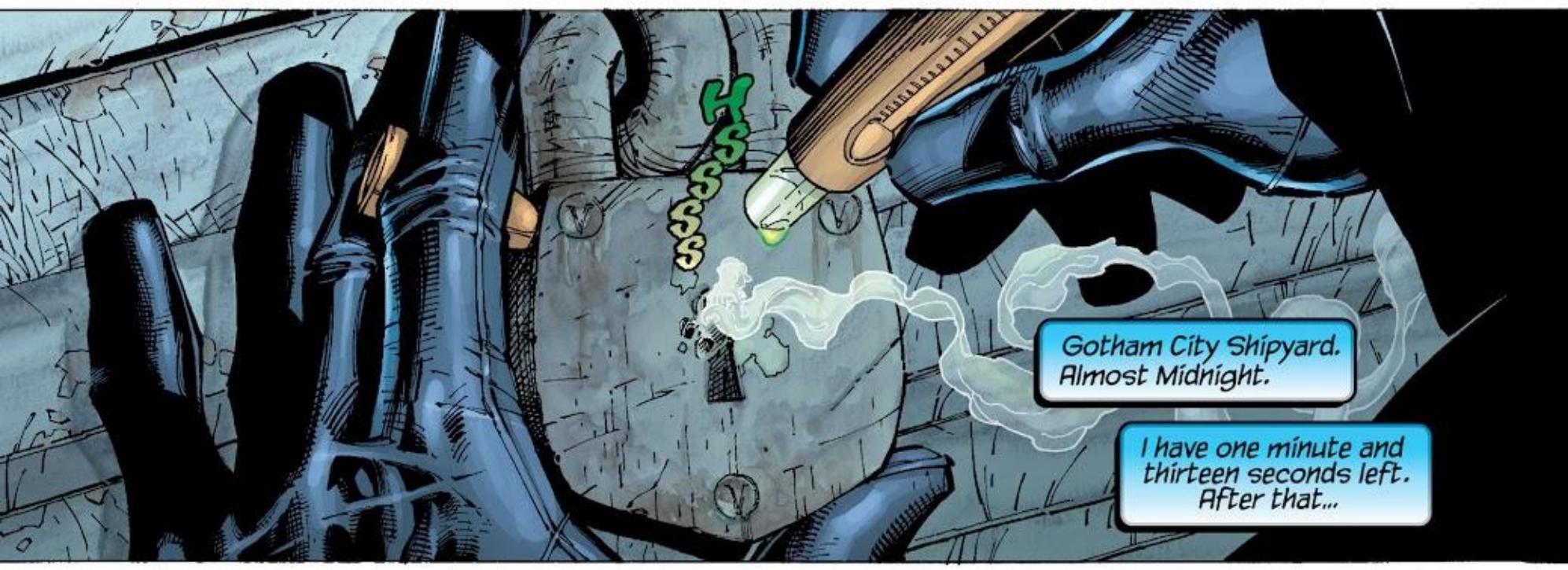
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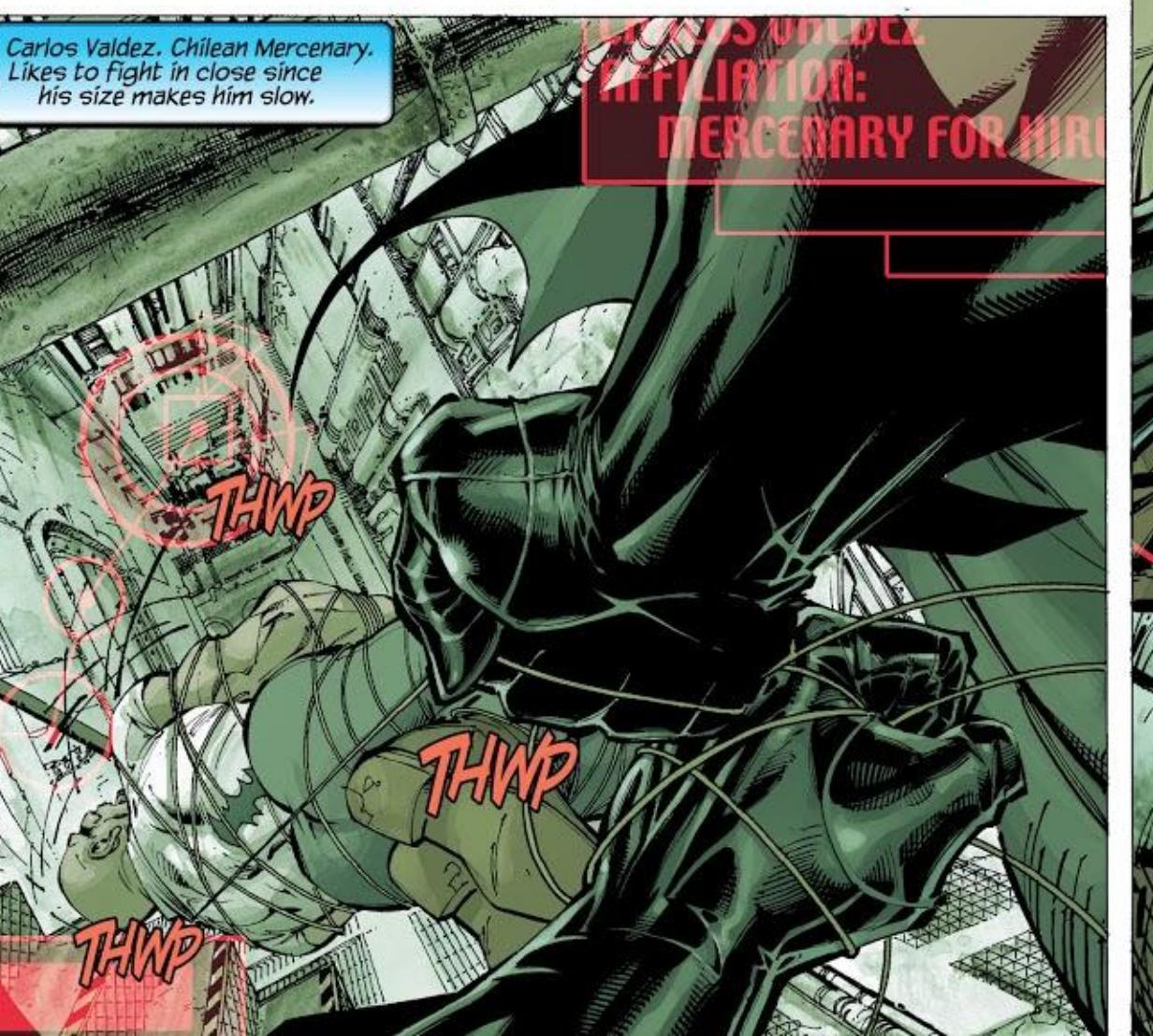
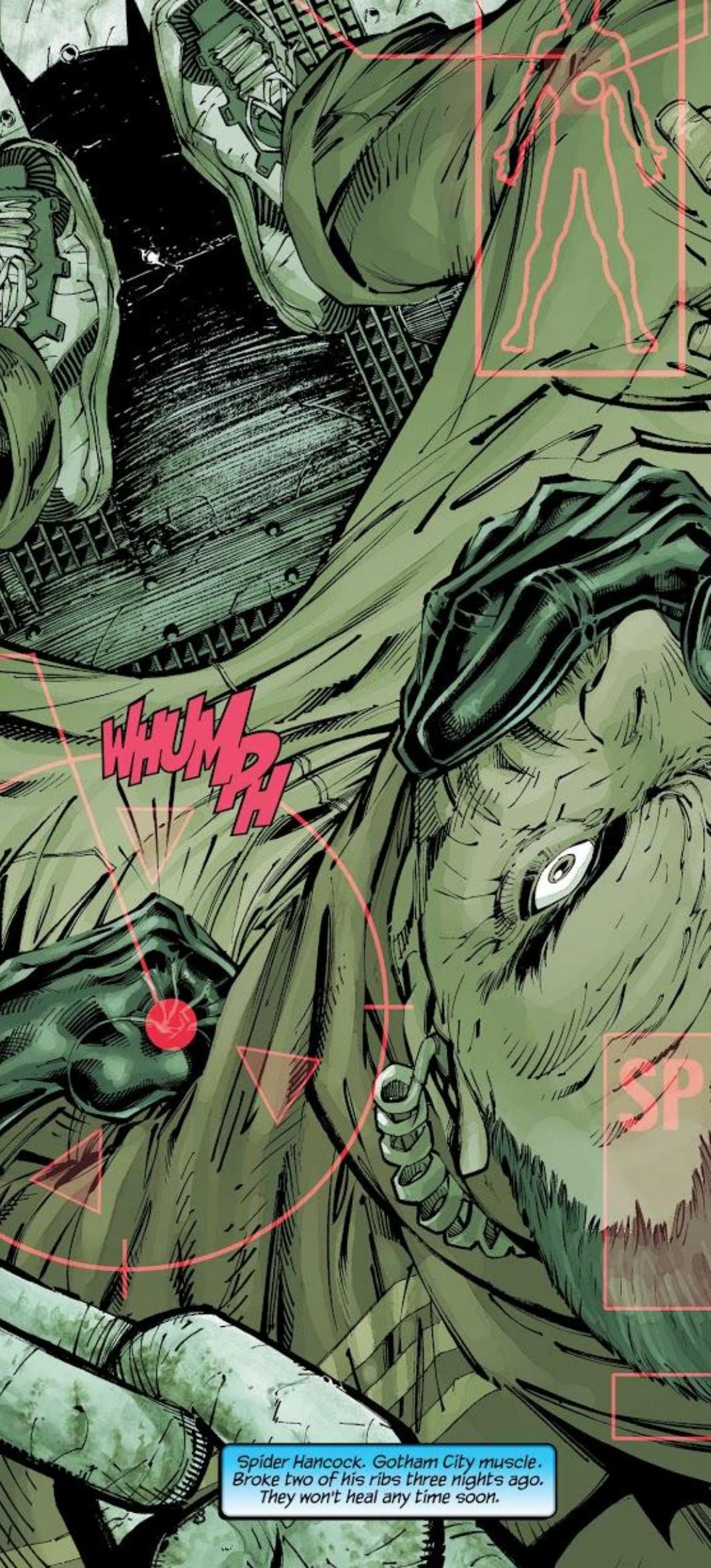
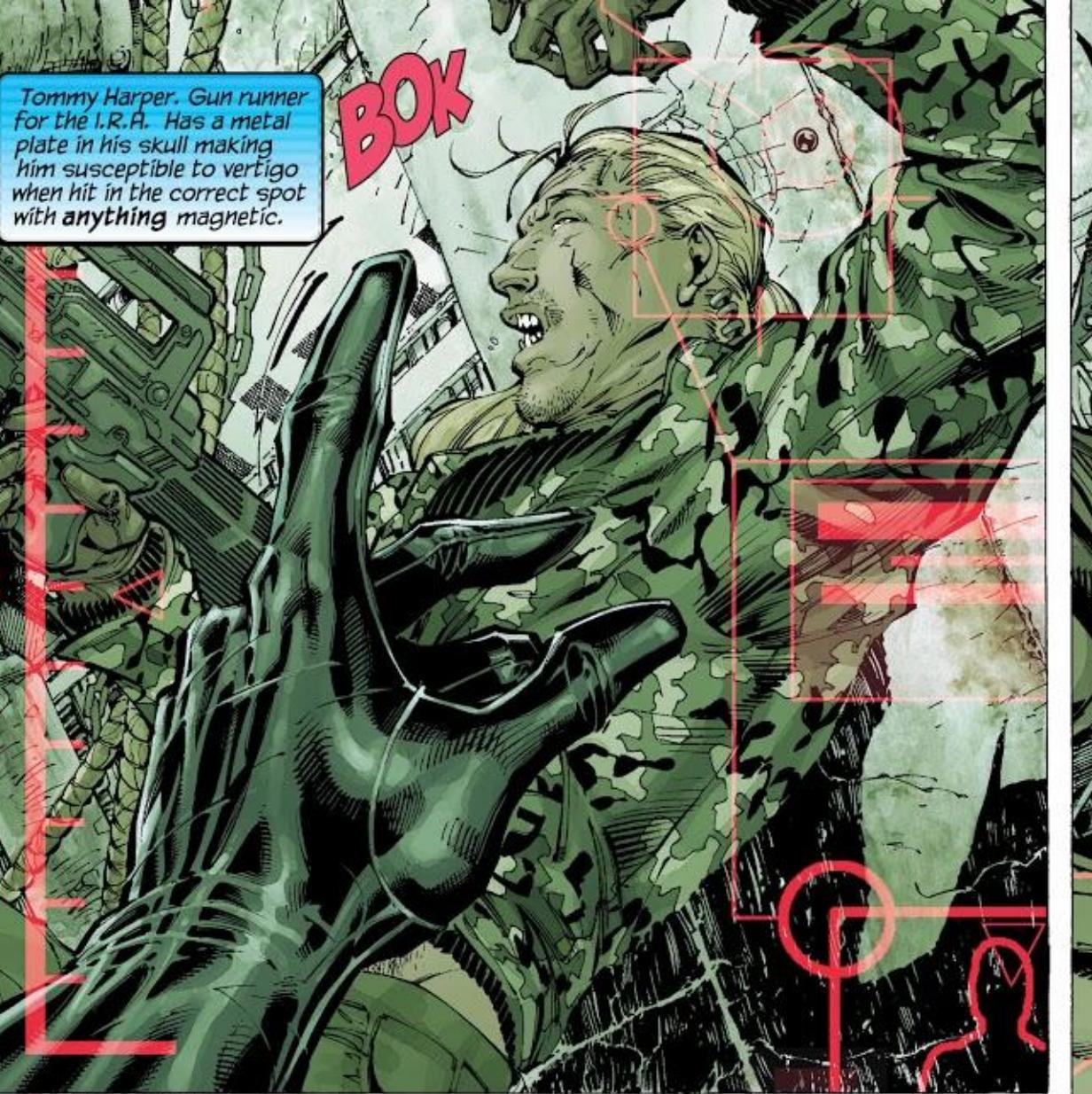
APPROVED  
BY THE  
COMICS  
CODE  
AUTHORITY

# BATMAN®

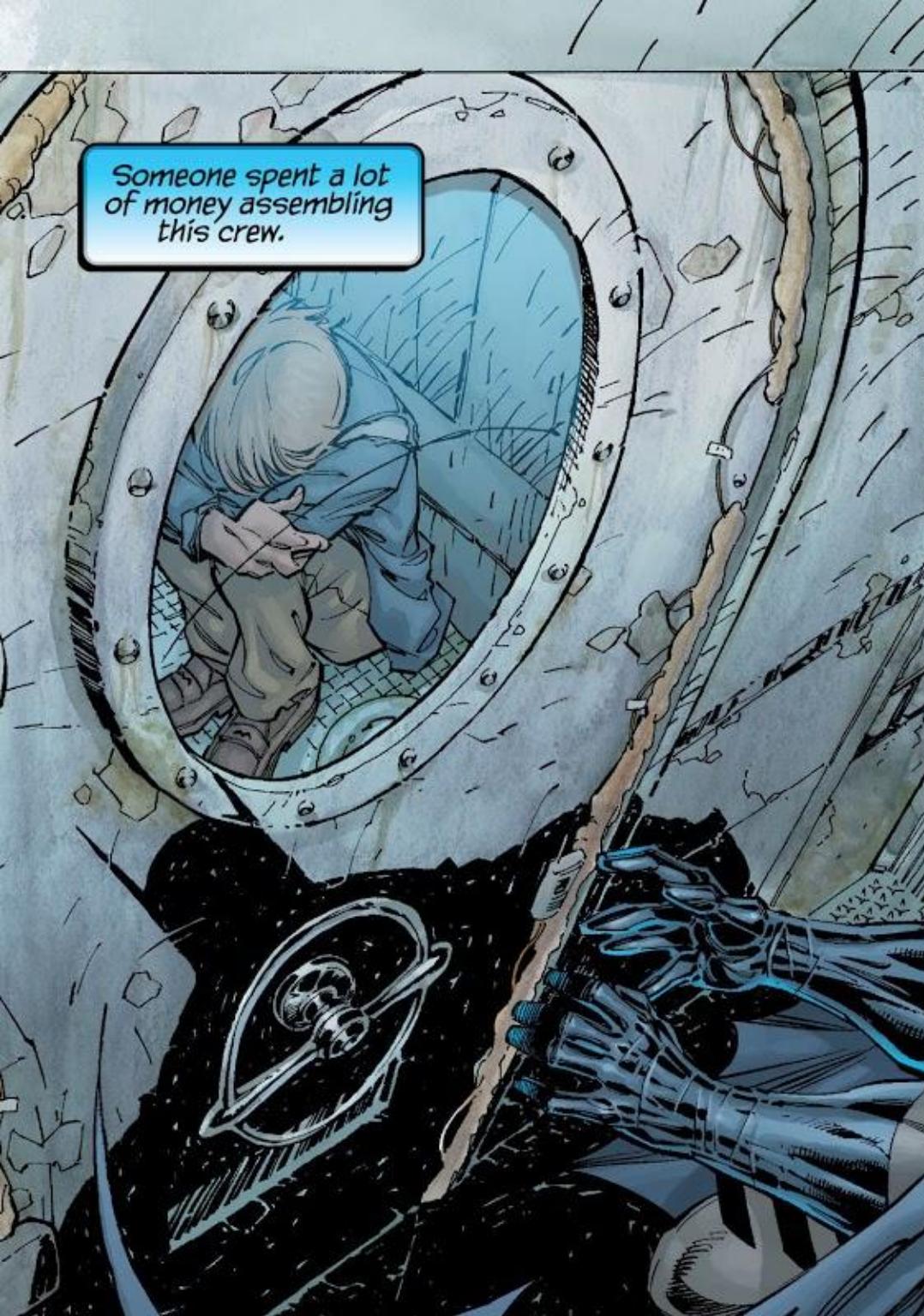


JIM  
LEE  
2001  
WILLIAMS

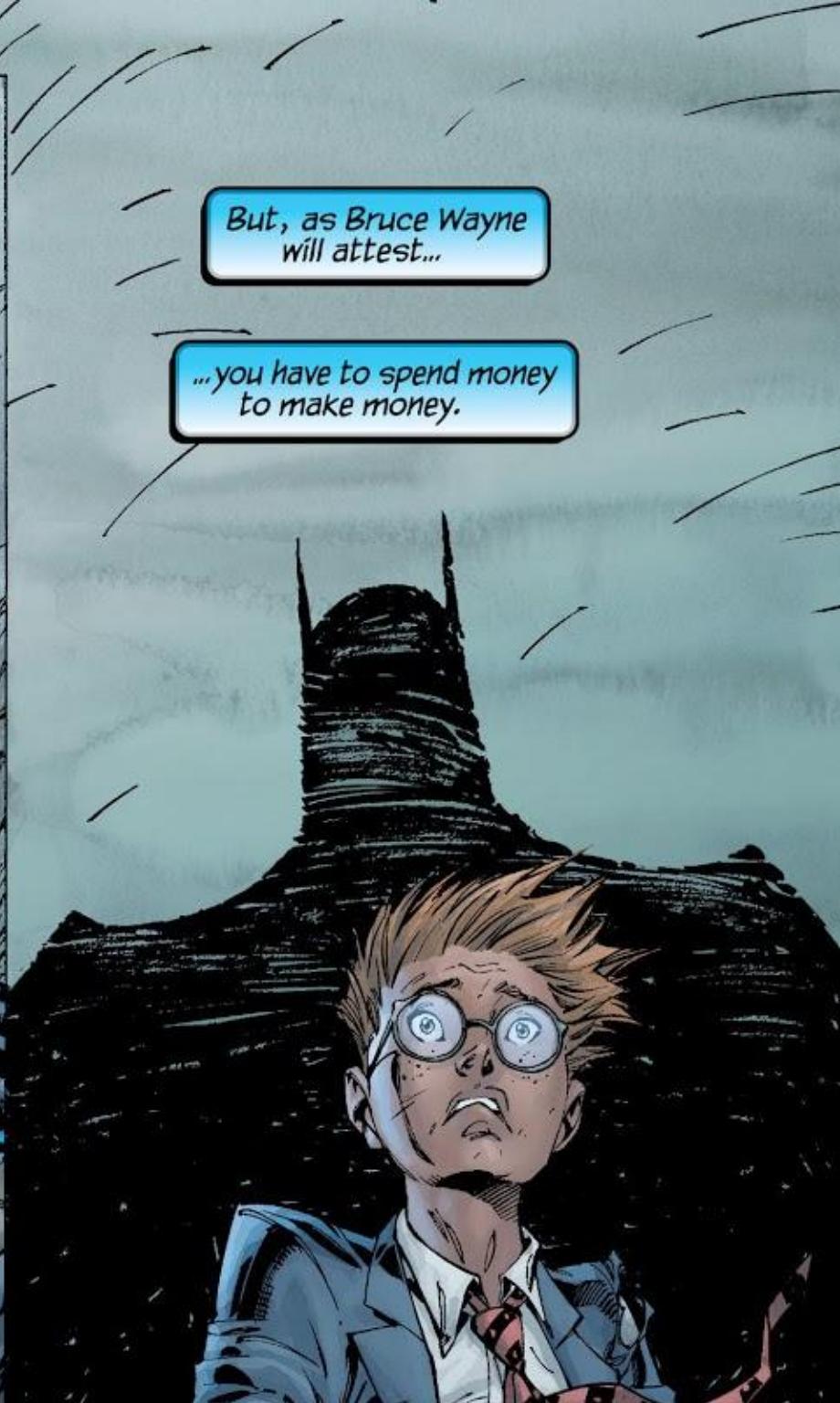








Someone spent a lot  
of money assembling  
this crew.



But, as Bruce Wayne  
will attest...

...you have to spend money  
to make money.



STAY DOWN  
ON THE FLOOR  
AND COVER YOUR  
EARS.

**WHAROOOM**

I made a promise on the grave of my parents to rid this city of the evil that took their lives. By day, I am Bruce Wayne, billionaire philanthropist. At night, criminals, a cowardly and superstitious lot, call me...

# BATMAN

CREATED BY  
BOB KANE

# JUSTICE

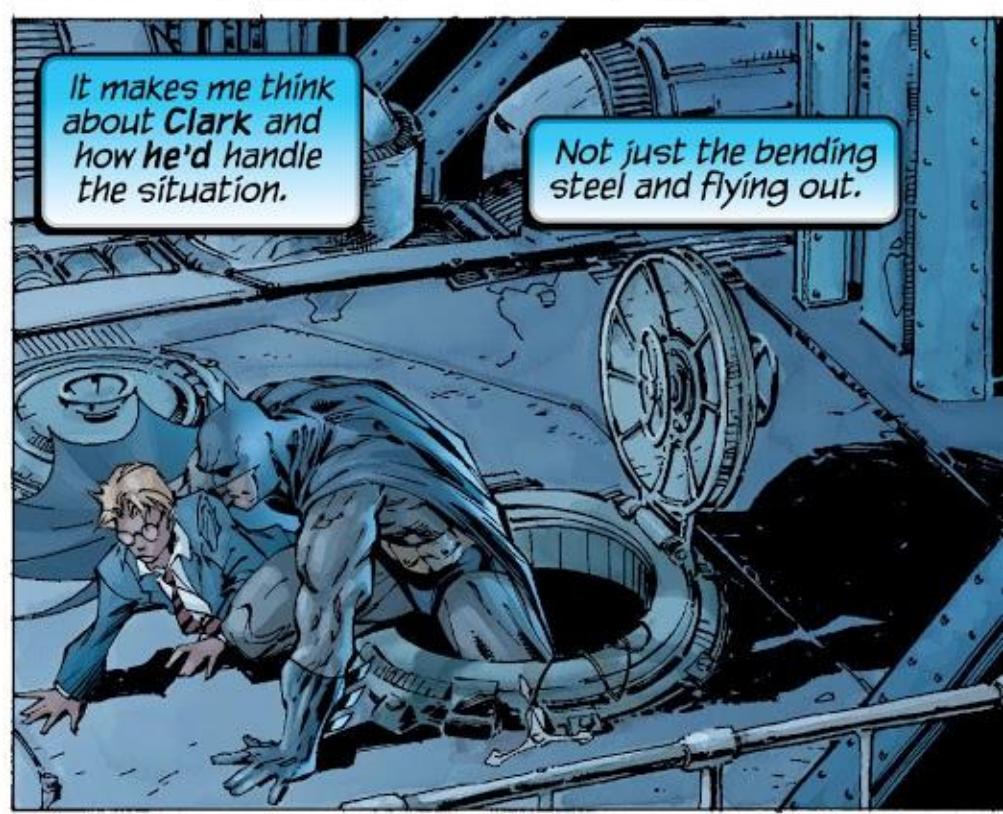
I'M GOING TO GET YOU OUT OF HERE.

Chapter One  
**THE RANSOM**

Teph LOEB  
writer

Tim LEE  
pencils

Scott WILLIAMS  
inks  
Richard STARKINGS  
letters  
Alex SINCLAIR  
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Bob SCHRECK  
edit  
Morgan DONTANVILLE  
assistant edits  
special thanks to  
Mark CHIARELLO



None of this was  
the boy's fault.  
He didn't ask to be  
born Edward Lamont IV,  
heir to the Lamont  
chemical fortune.

Lamont Chemical being  
the LexCorp acquisition  
that created RC-60,  
a defoliate that makes  
napalm look like lipstick.

Edward was walking home  
from school two days ago  
when a large man in a  
raincoat snatched him off  
the streets and vanished.

The large man was  
**KILLER CROC.**

YOU  
SHOULDN'T  
HAVE COME  
HERE.  
THIS  
DOESN'T  
INVOLVE  
YOU.

The vanishing act involved the  
Gotham City sewer system.

Within six hours, a demand  
for ten million dollars was made.  
The Lamont family, the Mayor,  
The G.C.P.D. and even the F.B.I.  
all wanted to pay the ransom  
to get the boy back.

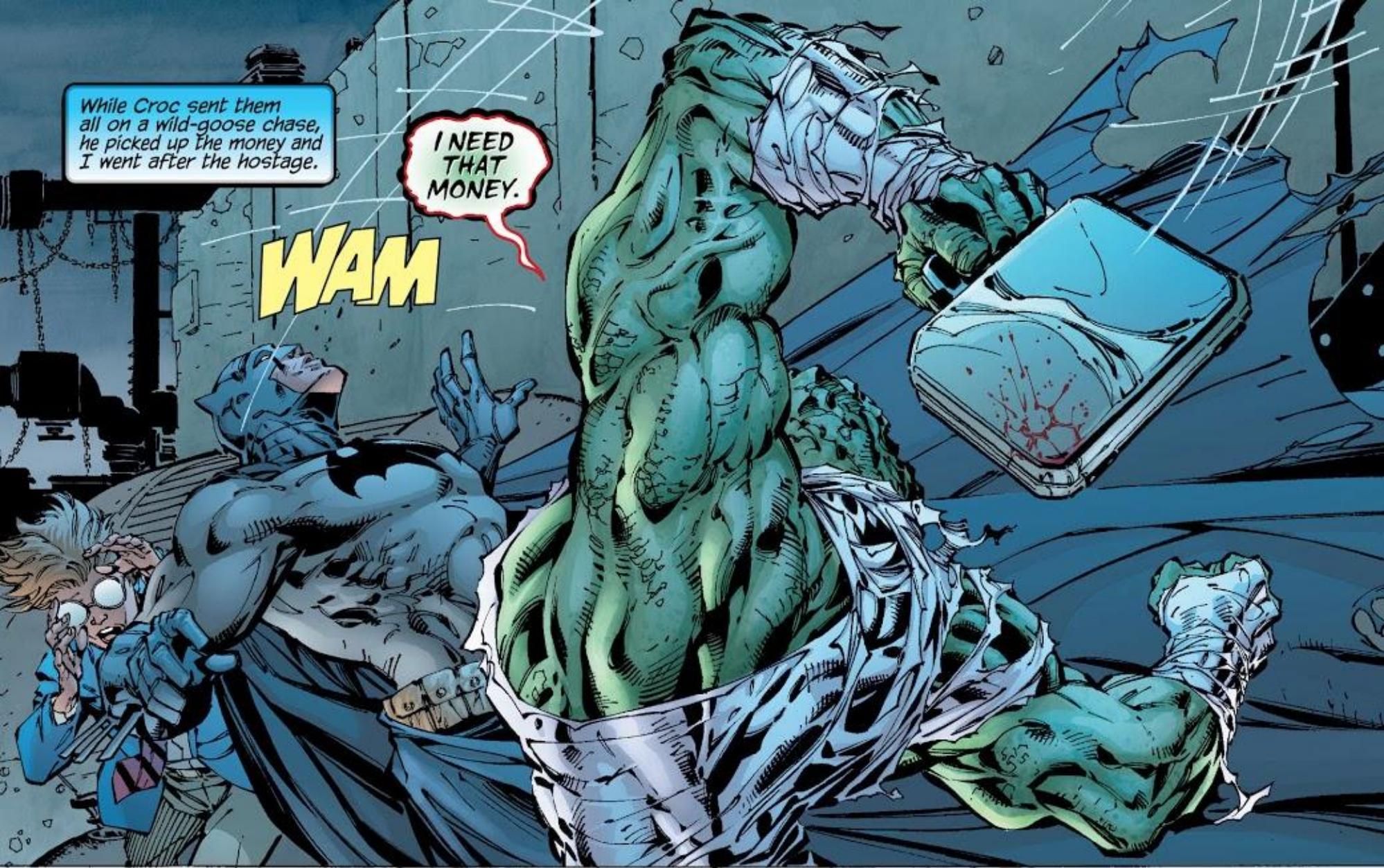
Everyone but me.

**SLASHH**

While Croc sent them all on a wild-goose chase, he picked up the money and I went after the hostage.

I NEED THAT MONEY.

**WAM**



I thought I had two minutes before Croc would get back and find the boy was missing.

**BRAK**



I was off by eleven seconds.

I'M GONNA EAT YOU ALIVE!

**DUSCHK**



This was planned. Timed. Well executed.  
The real question is "Why?"

**SLAK**

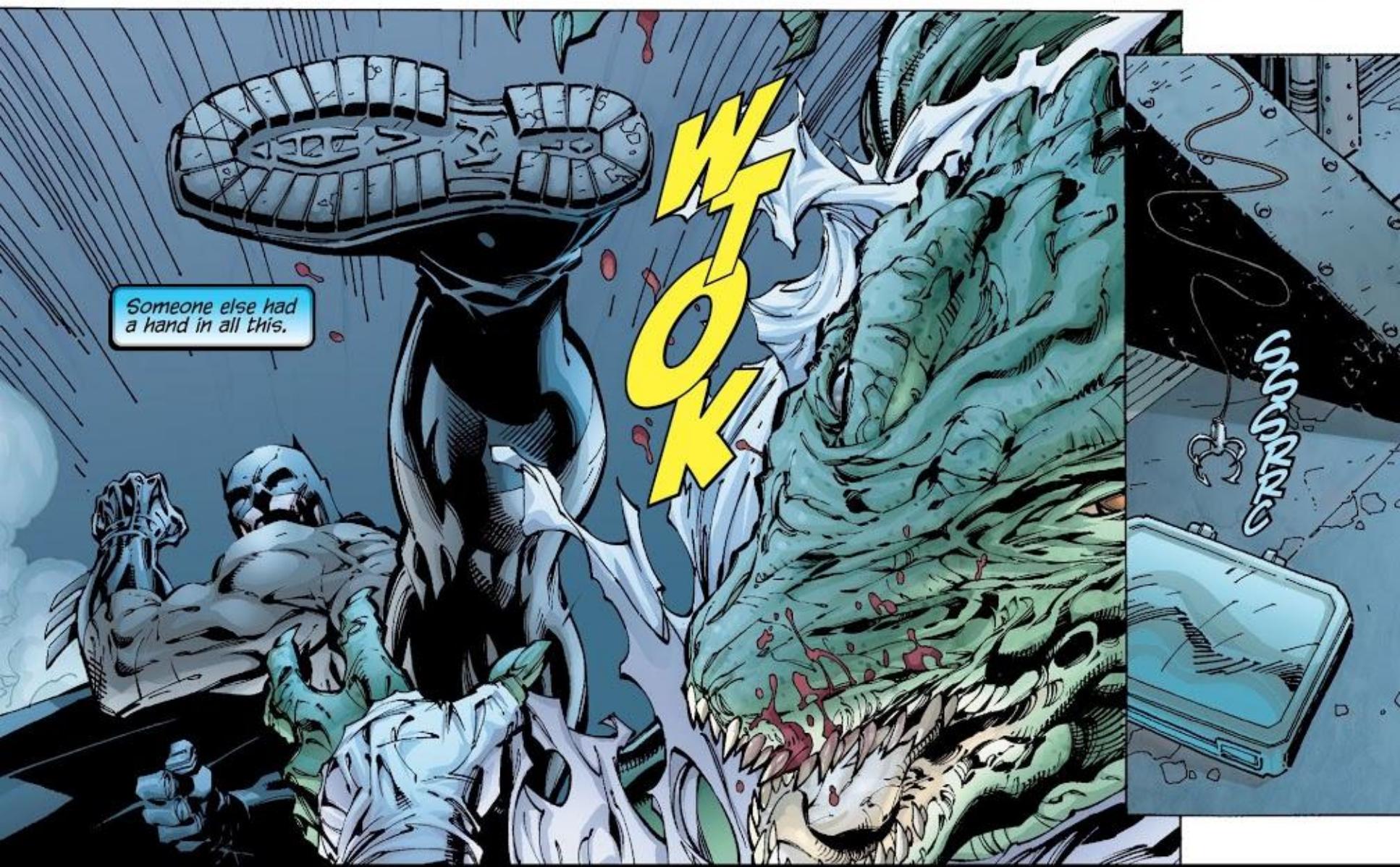


**BDOK**



Someone else had a hand in all this.

**WTOK**





**YARRRRCXH!**

**SLAM**

Ten thousand  
bumblebees at  
one thousand  
decibels.

**CHNK**

**CHNK**

**CHNK**

**SPRAK**

-- What did  
he need the  
money for?

He was willing  
to kill me --  
and the boy,  
for certain --

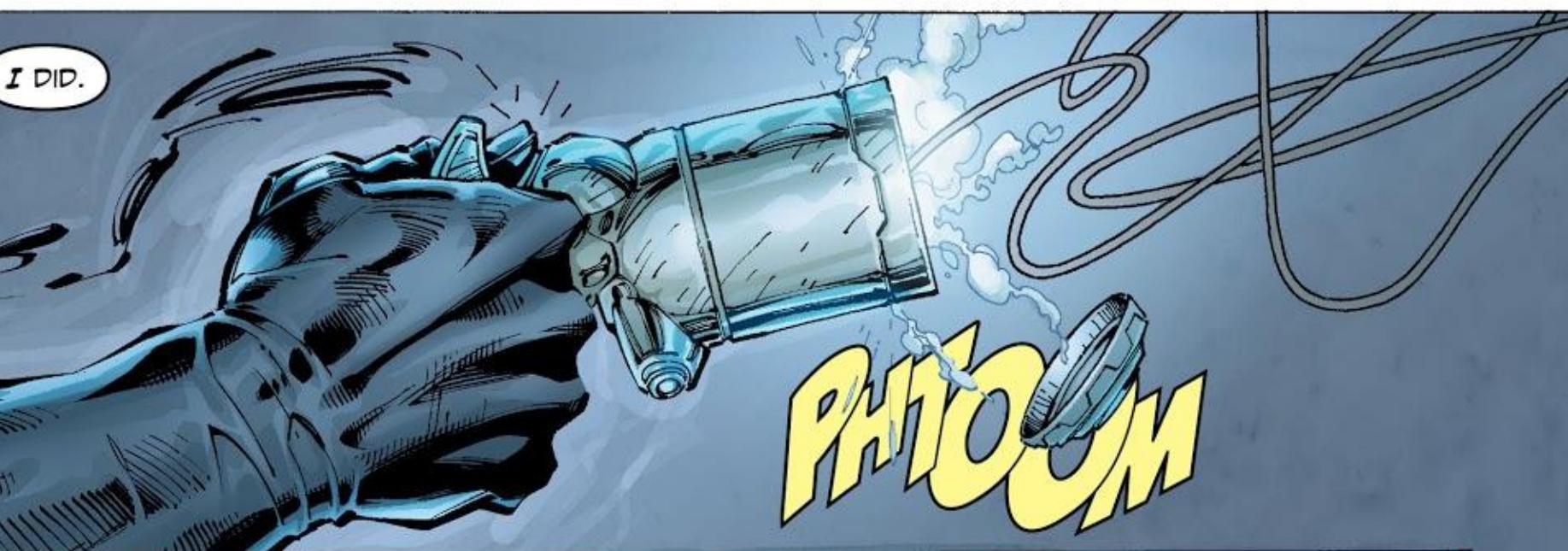
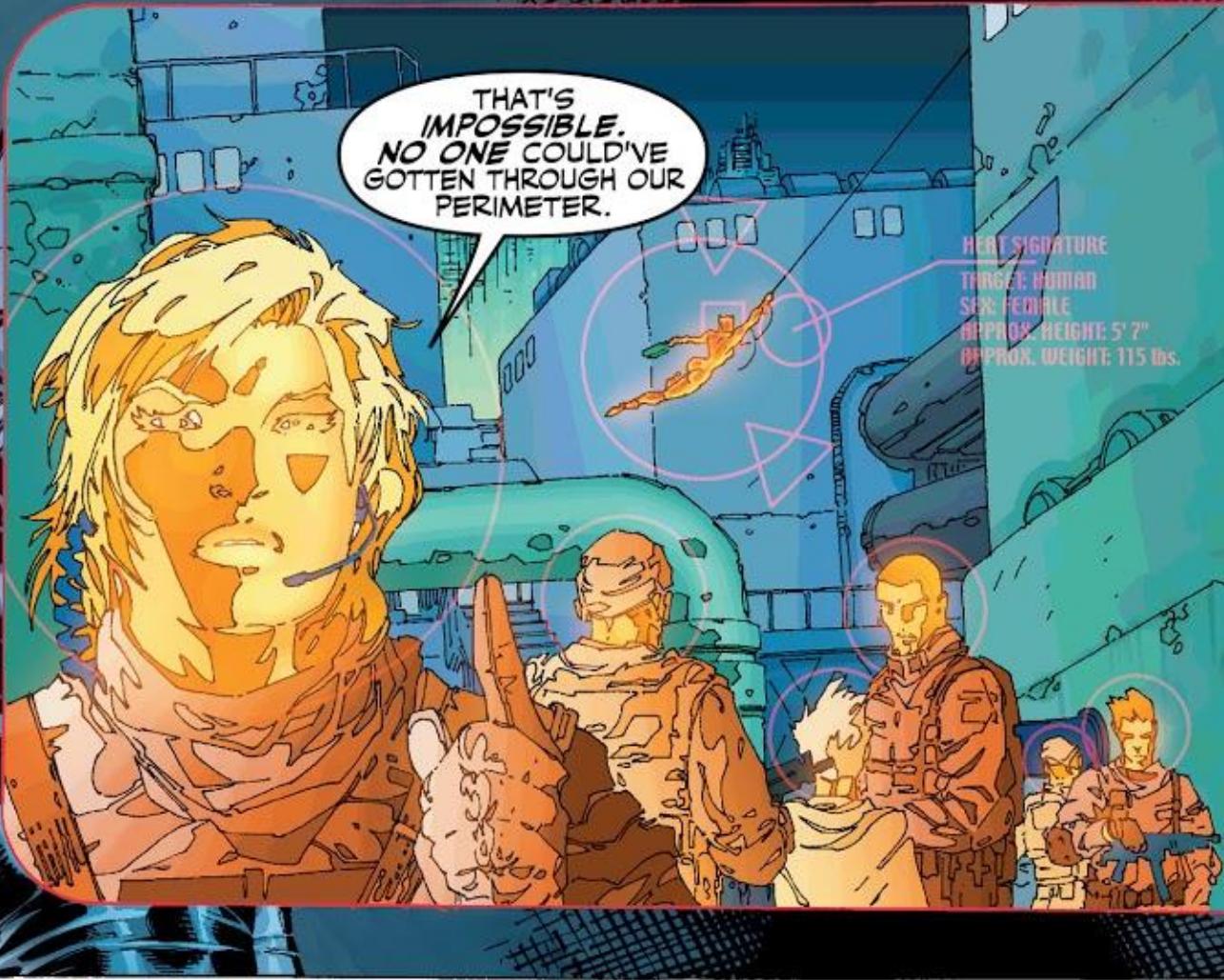


Activating heat sensor.

DURING  
THE FIGHT...  
SOMEONE  
ELSE TOOK  
IT.

THAT'S  
IMPOSSIBLE.  
NO ONE COULD'VE  
GOTTEN THROUGH OUR  
PERIMETER.

HEAT SIGNATURE  
THREE: HUMAN  
SEX: FEMALE  
APPROX. HEIGHT: 5' 2"  
APPROX. WEIGHT: 115 lbs.









The batrope.  
Something.  
Someone.  
Cut the line.

YOU WERE  
SAYING...?

BATMAN...?

One chance.

My shoulder  
breaks.

First, my body  
betrays me.

ARGHK!

DRRRRBBBL

Then, my city  
Follows suit.

WHOOPH



We have both  
grown too old  
together...

KRASH

WELL.  
WELL.  
WELL.

LOOK  
WHAT  
FELL INTO  
HELL.

The Gotham Tower Apartments.  
The City's finer side.

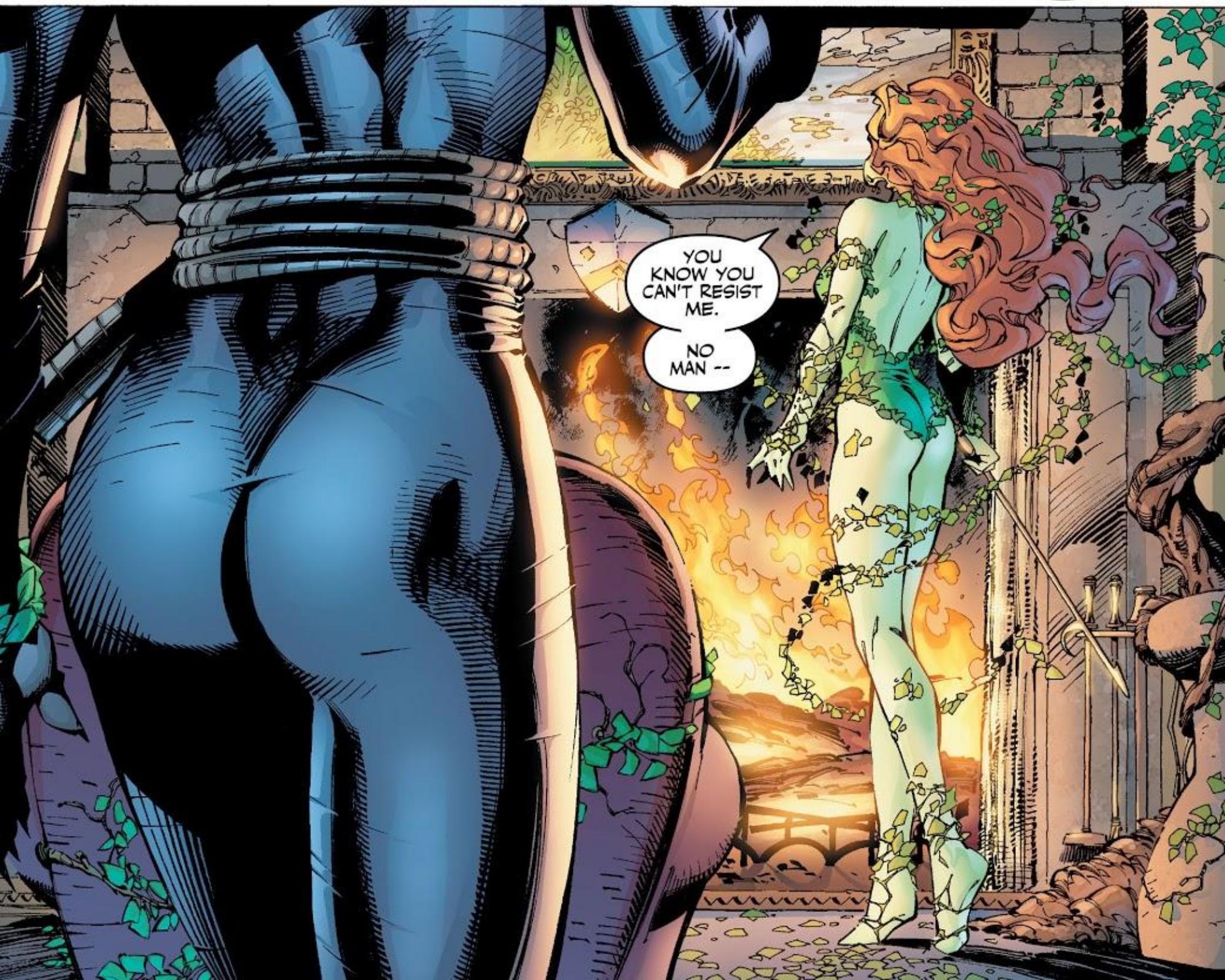
ANY  
PROBLEMS?

BATMAN.

AND...?

HE...  
COULDN'T  
KEEP UP.

YOU SOUND  
DISAPPOINTED...



-- OR  
WOMAN  
CAN.

To Be Continued