

Bane (comics)

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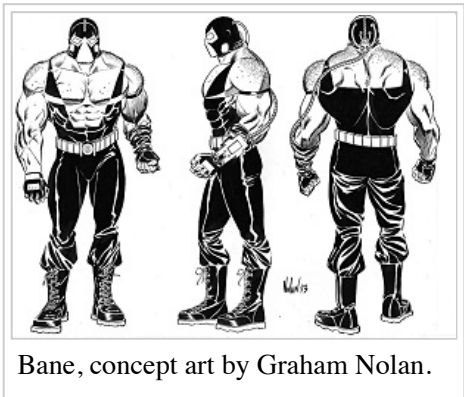
Bane is a fictional supervillain appearing in American comic books published by DC Comics. The character's origin was in *Batman: Vengeance of Bane* #1 (January 1993), and was created by Chuck Dixon, Doug Moench, and Graham Nolan.

Known for his mix of brute strength and exceptional intelligence, the character is often credited as being the only villain to have "Broken the Bat". IGN's list of the Top 100 Comic Book Villains of All Time ranked Bane as #34.^[1] Bane was portrayed by Robert Swenson in the 1997 film *Batman & Robin*, Tom Hardy in the 2012 film *The Dark Knight Rises*, and was voiced by Doug Benson in the 2017 film *The Lego Batman Movie*.

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Publication history



Bane, concept art by Graham Nolan.

Chuck Dixon, Graham Nolan and Doug Moench created the character for the *Knightfall* storyline, although it is uncertain what elements were introduced by each of the two

writers (Dixon and Moench). Dixon wrote the character's

Bane



Promotional art for *Batman: Vengeance of Bane* #1 (January 1993).

Art by Glenn Fabry

Publication information

Publisher	DC Comics
First appearance	<i>Batman: Vengeance of Bane</i> #1 (January 1993)
Created by	Chuck Dixon Doug Moench Graham Nolan

In-story information

Alter ego	Dorrance (first name unknown)
Team affiliations	Suicide Squad Secret Society of Super Villains Secret Six The League of Assassins
Abilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Genius-level intellectHighly accomplished athlete and martial artistVenom enhanced strength and durabilityAccelerated healing factor

first appearance (*Vengeance of Bane*),^[2] with art by Graham Nolan. It is also unclear how much input was provided by Denny O'Neil (veteran writer of the *Batman* books, then Group Editor for the *Batman* family of books, and author of the novel adaptation of *Knightfall*). O'Neil had previously created Bane's birthplace of Santa Prisca in *The Question* and the drug Venom in the storyline of the same name (published in the pages of *Legends of the Dark Knight* #16-20, and later reprinted as a trade paperback).^{[2][3]} In the pages of *Azrael*, O'Neil introduced Bane's perception of Venom as both an addiction and the weakness responsible for his earlier defeats.

Fictional character biography

"Vengeance of Bane"

Bane's origin story is established in the story "Knightfall". His father, Edmund Dorrance (better known as King Snake), had been a revolutionary who had escaped Santa Prisca's court system. The corrupt government decreed that his young son would serve out the man's life sentence, and thus Bane spent his childhood and early adult life in prison.^{[2][4]}

Though he was imprisoned, his natural abilities allowed him to develop extraordinary skills within the prison's walls. He read as many books as he could get his hands on, spent most of his spare time body building in the prison's gym, developed his own form of meditation, and learned to fight in the merciless school of prison life. Because of the cultural and supposed geographical location of Santa Prisca, Bane knew how to speak English, Spanish, Portuguese and Latin. Despite his circumstances, he found teachers of various sorts during his incarceration, ranging from hardened convicts to an elderly Jesuit priest, under whose tutelage he apparently received a classical education. Bane murdered this priest upon his return to Santa Prisca years later. He committed his first murder at the age of eight, stabbing a criminal who wanted to use him to gain information about the prison.^[4] During his years in prison, Bane carried a teddy bear he called Osito ("Little bear" in Spanish), whom he considered his only friend.^[5] It is revealed that Osito has a hole in his back to hold a knife that Bane used to defend himself.^[6]

Bane is tortured by a monstrous, terrifying bat creature that appears in his dreams, thus giving him an intense fear of bats. He ultimately established himself as the "king" of Peña Dura prison and became known as Bane. The prison's controllers took note and eventually forced him to become a test subject for a mysterious drug known as Venom,^[4] which had killed all other subjects. The Peña Dura prison Venom experiment nearly killed Bane at first, but he survived and found that the drug vastly increases his physical strength, although he needs to take it every 12 hours (via a system of tubes pumped directly into his brain) or he will suffer debilitating side-effects.^{[2][4]}

During the *Knightfall* storyline, Bane escapes Peña Dura, along with several accomplices based on the Fabulous Five (his minions Trogg, Zombie and Bird, all of whom are named after 1960s rock bands — The Troggs, The Zombies and The Byrds — and are designed to mimic three of Doc Savage's assistants Monk, Ham, and Renny).^{[2][4]} His ambition turns to destroying Batman, about whom he had heard stories from an inmate. Gotham fascinates Bane because, like Peña Dura, fear rules Gotham - but it is the fear of Batman. Bane is convinced that Batman is a personification of the demonic bat which had haunted his dreams since childhood. Therefore, Bane believes fate placed Batman on a collision course with him.^{[2][4]}

Aware that a direct assault on Batman would be foolish, Bane instead destroys the walls of Arkham Asylum—allowing its deranged inmates (including the Joker, Two-Face, the Riddler, the Scarecrow, the Mad Hatter, the Ventriloquist, Firefly, Poison Ivy, Cornelius Stirk, Film Freak and Victor Zsasz) to escape into Gotham City. Consequently, Batman is forced to recapture the escapees, a mission that takes him three months and drives him to the brink of mental and physical collapse. Exhausted, Batman returns to his home in Wayne Manor, only to find Bane waiting for him. Bane attacks Batman and beats him within an inch of his life, and delivers a brutal

coup de grace, he raises Batman up and throws him down upon his knee, breaking his back and leaving him a paraplegic. Bane thus becomes the only man to have "Broken the Bat".^{[2][4][7]} This iconic moment is incorporated in *The Dark Knight Rises*, Robot Chicken's *DC Comics Special* and alluded to numerous times in the DCAU cartoons.^{[8][9][10]}

While Bane establishes himself as the new ruler of Gotham's criminal underworld, Bruce Wayne passed the mantle of Batman to Jean-Paul Valley, also known as Azrael. Ignoring Bruce's warnings to stay away from Bane, Azrael attempts to confront the villain in his penthouse suite. Azrael has by now added a set of high-tech, heavy metal gauntlets to the Batsuit, and uses them to shoot sharp projectiles at Bane. However, Bane is able to get the upper hand in the fight after using Venom and taunting Azrael, making him angry enough to lose focus and, thus, give Bane the opportunity to best him. Nevertheless, Bane sustains deep lacerations in the battle and loses a great deal of blood. Unable to go to a hospital, Bane increases his Venom intake to temporarily block the pain and buy himself time to defeat the new Batman. Humiliated, Azrael returned to the Batcave and builds an advanced combat suit of metal, in place of the traditional Batsuit, with many chambers within the suit that fire razor-sharp weapons. Reduced to little more than a wounded animal fleeing for survival, Bane is no match against the "new" Batman. Bane is finally defeated when Azrael severs the tubes that pump Venom into his bloodstream, causing severe withdrawal. Commissioner James Gordon, Harvey Bullock, and Robin watch in horror as this new Batman tortures a defeated Bane, who begs his adversary to kill him. Azrael denies his innate urge to kill Bane, however, and leaves him to be arrested.^{[2][4]}

Legacy

Further following the events of *Knightfall*, Bane recovers from his Venom addiction while serving time in Blackgate Prison, as seen in *Vengeance of Bane II: The Redemption* (1995). He eventually escapes from prison and returns to Gotham, where he fights alongside the original Batman, who has by now recovered and taken his mantle back from Azrael, to take out a criminal ring that is distributing a Venom derivative to street-level thugs. Following a victory over the criminals (and the revelation that behind it is the same doctor that performed the surgery on Bane years earlier in Peña Dura), Bane proclaims that he is "innocent" of his past crimes and urges Batman to stop hunting him. He then leaves Gotham, without fighting Batman, to begin a search for his dead father.^[11]

Bane's search brings him back to Santa Prisca.^[12] In search of leads, Bane questions the Jesuit priest who had taught him while he was in Peña Dura. The priest explains that there were four men who could possibly have been his father: a Santa Priscan revolutionary, an American doctor, an English mercenary and a Swiss banker. While searching for the Swiss man in Rome, Bane encounters Talia al Ghul and the League of Assassins and eventually impresses Ra's al Ghul so much that he chooses Bane to marry Talia and become his heir.^[12]

Ra's al Ghul then launches a plague attack on Gotham in the "Legacy" storyline, with Bane at his side, who is posing as Ubu. Batman gets his rematch with Bane in *Detective Comics* #701 and finally defeats him in single combat.^[13] Disappointed by his protégé's failure, Ra's calls off the engagement to Talia and disowns Bane.^[14]

Following the "Legacy" storyline, Bane appears in a one-shot publication called *Batman: Bane* (1997) with the intent of destroying Gotham City using a nuclear reactor. Batman foils the plot, however.^[15] Bane fights Azrael in the "Angel and the Bane" storyline.^[16] Bane then surfaces in the story arc "No Man's Land", serving as an enforcer for Lex Luthor during Luthor's attempts to take control of Gotham under the cover of helping it to



Bane breaks Batman's back in a splash page from *Batman* #497 (July 1993). Art by Jim Aparo. This particular image was recreated in other Batman media.

rebuild, but Batman convinces Bane to leave after a brief confrontation between Bane and the Joker. Following the fallout with Ra's al Ghul, Bane embarks on a campaign to destroy Lazarus Pits around the world, and in the process, encounters Black Canary.^[17]

"Veritas Liberat"

In the "Tabula Rasa" storyline, Bane learns from the Jesuit priest that there is a possibility that his biological father is an American doctor.^[12] In researching this issue, Bane comes to the conclusion that he and Batman share a biological father: Thomas Wayne, who had been close to Bane's mother during his time in Santa Prisca. Bane alerts Batman to this possibility and, during the time that the DNA tests are being performed, stays at Wayne Manor and fights alongside Batman on the streets of Gotham. Ultimately, it is revealed that Dr. Wayne is not Bane's father, and Bane leaves Gotham peacefully - and with Batman's blessing and financial backing - to pursue leads in the snowy mountains of Kangchenjunga.^{[18][19][20][21]}

Bane eventually finds his father, who turns out to be the unscrupulous King Snake,^[22] in the "Veritas Liberat" storyline. Bane, with Batman looking on, helps foil King Snake's plans to unleash a powerful weapon upon the world. Bane saves Batman from being shot by King Snake, but is mortally wounded in the process. Batman then saves Bane by bathing him in a Lazarus Pit, and leaves him with a clean slate.^{[23][24][25][26]}

Infinite Crisis & One Year Later

In *Infinite Crisis* #7, Bane fights alongside the villains during the Battle of Metropolis. During the battle, he breaks the back of the hero Judomaster, killing him. No reason was given for his actions in #7, though in *Infinite Crisis*' collected edition, one of the many changes made to the original series was Bane saying "I finally know who I am. I am 'Bane'. I 'break' people."^[27]

Bane resurfaces in the *One Year Later* continuity of *JSA Classified* #17-18 searching for the Hourmen (Rex and Rick Tyler), asking them for help. To win their trust, he tells them how, prior to the Battle of Metropolis, he returned to his homeland to put an end to the drug lords' government and in the process discovered that a new, more addictive strain of Venom had been created. In his furious carelessness to wipe out the drug trade, he was captured, and re implanted with the cranial tubes, hooked to the new Venom, and now unable to shake off his addiction without dying from the withdrawal. Bane was forced to work as an enforcer for the drug cartel, unable to escape. Believing that Bane sought Rex Tyler's expertise in chemistry, Rick lets him approach his father, only to discover that the story is a ruse. Bane, who had never truly been addicted to Venom, had in fact wiped out the drug lords, and destroyed every research note on Venom. He discovered in the process both strains of Venom derived from Rex Tyler's early research on Miraclo. He discovers from the Tylers that no written notes exist of Rex' work, captures Rex, and steals Rick's equipment, planning to kill Rex and force Rick to take the last of the new Venom, living forever as an addict. Rick manipulates Bane into using Miraclo and demolishing the building as he and his father escape, burying the mercenary in the rubble of the very same Santa Priscan penitentiary where his story began.^[28]

Eventually, Bane resurfaces in Santa Prisca and leads the country to democratic elections. Upon discovering that the elections were rigged by Computron, he uses his influence to enforce martial law, plunging the country into a civil war. Computron offers information to Checkmate who ordered him to rig the elections in exchange for their help to escape the country. Fire and Judomaster's son, Thomas Jagger, are sent on the mission, with Jagger debating whether or not to seek revenge for his father's murder. He fights Bane in order to allow Fire to escape, defeating him easily, but chooses not to kill him.^[29]

At the end of the miniseries *Suicide Squad: Raise the Flag*, Amanda Waller recruits Bane into the Squad. In *Outsiders* #50, he appears once more to be wearing the tubing system to apply Venom.^[30]

In *Salvation Run* #2, Bane is tricked by his fellow squad members, and sent to the prison planet.^[31] In *Salvation Run* #3, Bane remains with Lex Luthor's faction after the Joker's faction rebels against Luthor's leadership. He attacks Thunder and Lightning when they were attempting to feed Martian Manhunter.^[32]

Superman/Batman #53-#56 reveals Bane is trading his Venom supplies with drug lords around the globe. One of his shipments includes a trip to Gotham. Batman, who was temporarily endowed with Superman's powers, responded by attacking Bane at his home. Not only was the Dark Knight able to easily defeat the villain, the hero nearly killed him with his far superior strength. Bane survived his injuries due to the enhanced stamina from his Venom supplies.

Secret Six

Since September 2008, Bane has appeared as a regular character in the ongoing Secret Six series. In the first issue, Bane is depicted as a stoic devil's advocate for the group, offering alternative points of view for both Deadshot and Catman on the subject of love.^[33] He is later shown to have an almost father like concern for Scandal Savage's well-being.^[34] Although this is largely played for laughs in the early issues, the first arc's final issue displays the depth of Bane's affection. When the Six are attacked by an army of supervillains, a wounded (and seemingly dying) Bane's concern for Scandal results in temporarily breaking his vow to never take Venom again in order to save her.^[35] Bane is later shown to have recovered from his ordeal, appearing in Gotham City with Cat-Man and Ragdoll in an attempt to stem some of the chaos caused by the apparent death of Batman. During the team's several escapades, Bane reveals both a deep respect for his onetime adversary and a painful yearning to assume the mantle of Batman, telling a trio of rescued citizens to tell people that it was the Batman who saved them. Bane ultimately gives his blessing to Dick Grayson, praying that "God help him."^[36] Following a near-disastrous mission, Bane assumes leadership over the Six. His first act as leader is to remove Scandal from active duty, not wishing for her to be endangered.^[37] In the latest issue of *Secret Six*, Bane's Secret Six and Scandal Savage's Secret Six finally square off against each other. Bane and Scandal engage in a one on one fight where he refuses to fight back until Scandal uses her Lamentation Blades to slash his throat.^[38] The card is ultimately used to resurrect Knockout.^[39]

Driven to near madness, Bane decides to lead the Secret Six to Gotham in an attempt to psychologically break Batman by killing several of his closest allies. The team kidnaps the Penguin, who Bane pumps for information about Batman's partners.^[40] In the final issue of the series, Bane ultimately decides on Red Robin, Azrael and Batgirl as his victims. Before the Six can make their move, Penguin betrays their location, resulting in a massive army of superheroes ranging from Green Lantern, Batman and the Superman family to the Justice League, Birds of Prey, and Booster Gold converging on Gotham. The Secret Six stage a desperate last stand, but are quickly defeated. With the fates of the other Secret Six members left ambiguous, Bane is last shown being driven away in a Gotham police van. The ending of the issue implies that he plans to escape.^[41]

The New 52

In the company relaunch called The New 52, Bane is re-introduced in the DCU by Paul Jenkins, and David Finch's run on *Batman: The Dark Knight* Volume 2.^[42] As Bruce Wayne is unable to keep up with the various legal conspiracies involving Batman Incorporated, he decides to investigate a breakout in Arkham. There he finds criminals being fed a modified fear toxin that is mixed in with Venom which makes the criminals extremely strong and immune to fear. He finds it being given to criminals by a new foe named the White Rabbit, when Batman approaches her she quickly defeats him and injects him with the fear toxin which she then gives to the Flash. Bruce then finds Bane to be behind the new fear toxin and combats him, Bruce manages to burn the fear toxin out of his and the Flash's bodies by getting pushed to the limit. Bruce manages to defeat Bane and knock him off an edge, but is left confused by the White Rabbit. Bane is then washed away by the tide.^[43]

Bane later appears in *Detective Comics* (Vol. 2) #19, in the story "War Council".^[44] There, his look had been altered to include a vest and cargo pants, and he now has an army serving him. In the story, it's revealed in flashback that prior to his appearance in *Batman: The Dark Knight*, Bane had intended to steal a nuclear device to threaten Gotham City, only to have a run-in with the Court of Owls, who prevented him from stealing the device and didn't want him to interfere with their plans. Later, after Batman defeats Bane, a mysterious figure confronts the villain and informs him that the Court of Owls had undermined his plans. Bane returns to Santa Prisca to lead his army against them.

During the *Forever Evil* storyline, Scarecrow learns that Bane may be the cause of the Blackgate uprising and will be their leader in the impending war, and that Talons were stored at Blackgate on ice.^[45] Bane, having escaped Peña Dura Prison in Santa Prisca, ships his Venom to Gotham City to be there for when he arrives. As he is traveling to Gotham, he orchestrates the release of Blackgate's prisoners during the Crime Syndicate's broadcast to the world. Later, on board his ship, he prepares his men for the impending war with Scarecrow, and with Gotham in the distant, claims it will be his.^[46] Bane enters Blackgate through the sewers to join the prisoners there. While there, he comes across where the Talons are stored hoping to make them in to his weapons. While the attack on Gotham City begins between Bane's men and the GCPD, Bane also approaches Professor Pyg, forcing him to join his cause, and spread word that everything in Gotham is now controlled by Bane.^[47] Bane arrives at Blackgate as Man-Bat and his fellow bats are attempting to transport the Talons to Mr. Freeze and is able to keep one from leaving.^[48] Bane retrieves Emperor Penguin for the Penguin as part of their agreement. When Bane brings Emperor Blackgate to the Penguin, the Penguin tells him that the Arkham fighters are not scared of Bane, as he does not instill fear as Batman did. Realizing this, Bane constructs a Batsuit for himself and heads to Wayne Tower to confront Killer Croc. Bane fights Killer Croc and is able to defeat him, setting his sights on retrieving the Talons.^[49] Bane wakes up the Talon William Cobb and takes him through Gotham where he fights various inmates of Arkham Asylum. Bane begins recruiting Gotham citizens to his side, offering his base at Wayne Tower as a haven to the people to escape the rule of the Arkham inmates. He tells Cobb his plan to turn the city over to the Court, in exchange for use of Talons at his disposal to be powered by his Venom.^[50] The Talons attack Bane's men, and eventually set their target on Bane. With Cobb's help, Bane is able to injure the Talons enough to activate their regenerative powers to remove the mind-control technology.^[51]

DC Rebirth

Powers and abilities

Bane is highly intelligent; in *Bane of the Demon*, Ra's al Ghul says that Bane "has a mind equal to the greatest he has known" (although he dismisses Bane's intellect as the cunning of an animal rather than the cultured, trained intellect of Batman). His strength gives him more ways to go against Batman. Bane has shown to be capable of lifting 15 tons.^[12] In prison, he taught himself various scientific disciplines equal to the level of understanding of leading experts in those fields.^[4] He knows ten active languages and at least four additional arcane and dead ones. Among these are Spanish, English, French, German, Russian, Mandarin, Persian, Dari, Urdu, and Latin.^{[12][52]} The *Bane of the Demon* storyline reveals that he has an eidetic memory. Within one year, he is able to deduce Batman's secret identity.^[12]

He is also highly devious and a superb strategist and tactician.^[4] In prison, Bane also invented his own form of calisthenics, meditation, and a fighting style that he uses against other well-known martial arts fighters within the DC Universe. Bane creator Chuck Dixon's early tales portray Bane as a very calm, centered warrior akin to Bruce Lee; in as much that he draws strength through calm meditation, and the spiritual energy of the "very rock of Peña Dura". Dixon imbued Bane with an almost supernatural quality when he explained that Bane triumphed in all of his prison fights by employing these abilities, while his opponents had only rage and greed to propel them. Multiple scenes in "Vengeance of Bane" explore this aspect when it explains that Bane's

mastery of meditation techniques "made time and space playthings to him." A subsequent scene that reinforces this ability comes when Bird first comes to Bane for help, because he heard from other inmates that Bane has "magic... the kind that allows him to travel beyond the prison walls."^[12] Usage of Venom enhances his physical abilities, including his strength and healing process, to superhuman levels.^{[5][53][54]} In most incarnations of the character, Bane requires a specialized tank to help control the amount of Venom which he injects into his body.

Although Bane had sworn off using Venom in *Vengeance of Bane II* in 1995, and his character is actually written as having kept that promise to himself, it is still not uncommon for artists to draw Bane as still wearing the tube leading from his old wrist device to the back of his head, as well as almost all media adaptations of the character show him actively using the Venom compound. Writer Gail Simone explained these lapses in the continuity of Bane's appearance in an issue of *Secret Six*, in which Deadshot remarked that Bane merely kept his old Venom equipment with him out of habit, even though Bane states that he would sooner die than use it again.^[55]

Other versions

In the *Amalgam universe*, Bane was combined with Marvel Comics' Nuke as HYDRA's Bane Simpson,^[56] Another version of Bane was merged with Punisher called the "Banisher" appeared. He's described as a "gun-toting, drugged up anti-hero who broke Bruce Wayne's back."^[57]

In the *Kingdom Come* reality, an aged Bruce Wayne mentions to Superman that Bane and Two-Face broke into Wayne Manor and destroyed it, after Batman's identity was exposed, leaving only the Batcave intact.^[58]

Bane appeared in numerous *Elseworlds* including *Batman: Nosferatu* as a low-level criminal,^[59] a dead Bane appears in a brief cameo in *JLA: Riddle of the Beast*, killed by Green Arrow.^[60]

Bane appears in *Smallville* comic *Smallville Season Eleven*.

In *Batman/Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*, Bane was mutated into a humanoid mutant African elephant by Shredder. Bane is eventually defeated by Batman and the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles and returns to normal along with the other villains while in A.R.G.U.S. custody.^[61]

Bane makes his first appearance in Year Five of the *Injustice: Gods Among Us* comic series. He decides to ally himself with Superman's Regime that will give him a position of power, so he aides High Councillor Superman and Wonder Woman in subduing Doomsday. While initially suspicious of Bane's motivations, Superman is convinced Bane could be a valuable asset to the Regime and agrees. However, this decision does not bode well with the rest of the Regime, who openly resent the idea of working alongside their former enemies.

The *Batman '66* comic features a version of Bane in the universe of the 1966 *Batman* TV Series. This version is a professional luchador and also the dictator of Skull City, Mexico. He allies himself with the Riddler, who stole an artifact from the Gotham museum called the Crystal Skull. The Crystal Skull is the source of Bane's powers and creates Venom similar to an ancient Aztec practice Batman researched about. He imprisoned the mayor of Skull City after the mayor destroyed the first Crystal Skull and became the city's new leader. In Gotham, he challenged Batman to a wrestling match and was victorious when he appeared to break Batman's back, but Batman had a batarang on his back to prevent his spine from getting snapped. Batman challenged him to a rematch in Skull City and attached a device to Bane's face to prevent him from drinking the Venom. Batman gets the upper hand and allows Bane to be defeated by the luchadores of Skull City to reclaim their home from the tyrant.^[62]

In other media

See also

- List of Batman Family adversaries

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43. *Batman: The Dark Knight* (vol. 2) #4-7 (February–May 2012)
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External links

- Bane at the DC Database Project
- Bane (<http://www.comics.org/search.lasso/?sort=chrono&query=Bane&type=character>) at the Grand Comics Database
- Bane (<http://comicbookdb.com/character.php?ID=525>) at the Comic Book DB
- Bane at the Internet Movie Database

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