Black Mask (comics)

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Black Mask (Roman Sionis) is a fictional supervillain appearing in comic books published by DC Comics. [2] Created by Doug Moench and Tom Mandrake, he first appeared in *Batman* #386 (August 1985). [3] A brutally sadistic kingpin in Gotham City's criminal underworld who has a fixation with masks, Black Mask is one of the superhero Batman's most enduring adversaries, and belongs to the collective of enemies that make up his rogues gallery. [4]

The character has been featured in various forms of media, including the cartoon television series *The Batman*, the animated film *Batman: Under the Red Hood*, and the *Batman: Arkham* video game franchise.

Contents

- 1 Fictional character biography
 - 1.1 The New 52
 - 1.2 DC Rebirth
- 2 Powers and abilities
- 3 Other versions
 - 3.1 Crimson Mist
 - 3.2 The Batman Adventures
 - 3.3 The Batman Strikes!
 - 3.4 Batman: Arkham Unhinged
 - 3.5 *Injustice: Gods Among Us*
- 4 In other media
 - 4.1 Television
 - 4.2 Film
 - 4.3 Video games
 - 4.3.1 Lego series
 - 4.3.2 Batman: Arkham series
 - 4.4 Merchandise
- 5 See also
- 6 References

Fictional character biography

Black Mask's origin story was established in his first appearance. **Roman Sionis** was born to wealthy and utterly self-absorbed parents, who cared more about their social status in Gotham City than their own son. Moments after Roman's birth, the doctor carelessly dropped him on his head, and his parents covered up the entire incident so that their high society friends would not find out. Years later, he was attacked by a rabid

Black Mask



Cover art to *Batman* #636 (January 2005). Pencils by Matt Wagner.

Publication information

Publisher DC Comics

First appearance Batman #386 (August 1985)

Created by Doug Moench

Tom Mandrake

In-story information

Alter ego Roman Sionis

Team affiliations False Facers

Gotham mafia
The Society

Black Lantern Corps

Notable aliases Orpheus

Abilities

- Brilliant strategic mind
- Crime boss with powerful underworld connections
- Skilled marksman and hand-to-hand combatant
- Advanced stamina and endurance

raccoon at the Sionis family country estate, and his parents forbade him to mention the incident to anyone. Despite their dislike for fellow socialites Thomas and Martha Wayne, Roman's parents continued to associate with them to maintain their social standing, and forced Roman to befriend their son, Bruce. His parents'

- Mastery of torture and disguise
- Mind-control via mask^[1]

hypocrisy had a deep impact on Roman, and he grew to resent them and the "masks" that they wore in public.

After graduating from high school, Roman was given a high-ranking position in his father's company, Janus Cosmetics. There, he met and fell in love with working class model Circe, though his parents did not approve of the relationship and forced him to break it off. Enraged, Roman burned down his family mansion, killing both of his parents and inheriting their fortune and business. However, Roman lacked his father's business acumen and eventually ruined Janus Cosmetics by funding a failed line of face-paint make-up. Desperate, Roman had the staff chemists create a product that was rushed to the market without proper testing, disfiguring several hundred women. Circe, now Roman's fiancée, then broke up with him in front of his entire staff.

Bruce Wayne, now the head of Wayne Enterprises, offered to bail Janus Cosmetics out on the condition that Roman gave up control and allowed Wayne to appoint his own Board of Directors. Humiliated and furious, Roman broke into the cemetery where his parents were buried. Seconds before he could unlock the Sionis crypt, however, a lightning bolt struck him, blasting the door open and hurling Roman headfirst into a nearby stone. Roman took the incident as an omen of his "rebirth" and entered the crypt, smashing his father's ebony casket with the stone and using its shattered pieces to carve a skull-like mask, starting a new life as the crime lord Black Mask.

Within a month, Black Mask had assembled a group of dozens of criminals called the False Face Society, using the Sionis crypt as their base of operations. Each member of the False Face Society wore a distinctive mask, and the gang's crime spree spread rapidly throughout Gotham, eventually attracting the attentions of the police and Bruce Wayne, now operating as the vigilante Batman.

To settle old scores, Black Mask murdered three Wayne Foundation executives and kidnapped Circe, forcing her to don a mask laced with Janus Cosmetics' toxic makeup, sparing her life but permanently disfiguring her face. Black Mask then threatened Circe into rejoining him, giving her a "mannequin" mask intentionally designed to mock her former life.

Batman eventually managed to deduce Black Mask's identity, and correctly predicted that Bruce Wayne would be Sionis' next target. To set a trap for Black Mask, Bruce held a masquerade ball at Wayne Manor, and Sionis infiltrated the ball and lured Bruce to the mansion's conservatory to kill him. However, Bruce successfully disarmed Sionis, forcing the latter to retreat back to his hideout with Robin (Jason Todd) secretly following him. While Batman and Robin combatted his underlings at the graveyard, Black Mask escaped through a false bottom installed in his father's coffin and headed to his family estate. Black Mask then entered his old bedroom and set fire to the old toys inside, intending to burn the mansion to the ground. But before Black Mask could escape, Batman flung a Batarang-attached cable around the crime lord's knees, causing him to fall face-first on the burning floor just as the bedroom's rafters began to collapse. The rafters pinned Black Mask's face into the pile of burning toys, and although Batman and Robin were able to tow him out of the fire, Sionis' mask had been burned onto his face.

Black Mask was subsequently sent to Arkham Asylum, where he remained behind bars until the international terrorist Ra's al Ghul freed all of its inmates. Black Mask was not amongst the criminals who followed the Joker in searching for the one behind the breakout and thus, never took part in the "war" against Batman's allies and loved ones. As this tale was the last "canonical" one to take place on Earth-One, it can be assumed that Black Mask remained at large. [5]

Following *Crisis on Infinite Earths*, Jeremiah Arkham frees unleashes all of Arkham Asylum's inmates, including Black Mask, to attack Batman during the events of "The Last Arkham". Sionis then returns to crime after an unspecified breakout, evidently retaining most of his pre-*Crisis* history. He soon begins the False Face

Society anew, rising through the ranks of Gotham City's underworld while furthering his vendetta against Bruce Wayne. To stop the False Face Society, Batman poses as a new recruit to their ranks, christened "Skullface" by Black Mask himself. Black Mask later kidnaps Lucius Fox, who had a hand in Bruce Wayne's bailout of Janus Cosmetics. Although Batman is eventually able to save Fox, Black Mask manages to evade capture. [6]

Black Mask remains at large throughout the events of "Knightfall" and "Zero Hour", and resurfaces shortly thereafter to kill rival mobster "Dirty Dan" Doyle in an ambush shootout.^[7]

Black Mask is later approached by the Black Spider, who wishes to join the False Face Society. Black Mask demands the young man to "make his bones" first by crashing a masquerade ball being held at Wayne Manor. Batman later learns that the Black Spider is a double agent working for mobster "Turk" Ottoman, and tracks him down to an abandoned theater where he prevents him from shooting Black Mask, who subsequently escapes during the chaos.^[8]

Black Mask reappears as a crime boss in "The Cult" storyline, having given up his vendetta against Bruce Wayne. He controls a large portion of Gotham's criminal underworld until the city is destroyed by an earthquake in the "No Man's Land" story arc. Black Mask later becomes the leader of a cult, whose trademark is ritual scarring, until Batman and the Huntress dissolve it by defeating and imprisoning Black Mask in Blackgate Penitentiary, though the crime lord escapes before the city is made a part of the country again.

In *Catwoman* #16, Black Mask begins a drug trafficking ring and decides to move his organization into Gotham's East End. Catwoman soon begins interfering with Black Mask's plans, stealing money from him and giving it to the poor. Black Mask retaliates by forcing Sylvia Sinclair to reveal Catwoman's secret identity to him. After destroying Catwoman's youth center, Black Mask kidnaps her sister and brother-in-law, the latter of whom he tortures to death with power tools, before forcing the former to eat pieces of her husband's corpse, including his eyeballs. Catwoman arrives to find her brother-in-law dead, her sister insane, and her friend Holly Robinson on the verge of being tortured. Enraged, Catwoman engages Black Mask at his penthouse, where the crime lord falls from the top of the building.

In Act Two of *War Games*, the Spoiler seeks Orpheus out, hoping to get Batman control of all of Gotham's crime lords. However, Black Mask murders Orpheus by slitting his throat, and proceeds to torture Spoiler to obtain information about the rest of her plan. Black Mask then assumes Orpheus' identity using face putty and padding, fooling even Batman and Onyx. As Orpheus, he goes on a mission to kill any member or associate of the Batman Family. As Black Mask returns to continue torturing Spoiler for entertainment, he finds that she has escaped and subsequently tracks her down. Although she escapes his clutches once again, Spoiler supposedly dies due to the injuries inflicted on her and the willful negligence of Leslie Thompkins.

Black Mask later infiltrates Oracle's Clocktower in an attempt to expose her to the mob, and Batman attacks him in a blind rage. Fearful that Black Mask will kill Batman, Oracle activates a self-destruct device in the tower to get Batman to save her. Black Mask then becomes the overlord of Gotham's underworld, gathering enough financial resources to purchase an Amazo android and a large supply of kryptonite. Allied with reporter Arturo Rodriguez, Black Mask begins a campaign to discredit Batman; while Rodriguez slams Batman in the press, Black Mask commits a series of murders disguised as the Dark Knight. The real Batman eventually exposes Rodriguez and captures Black Mask, but the crime lord kills the escorting officer transporting him to jail and escapes again.

The assassin Deathstroke later approaches Black Mask, offering him a place within The Society. Eager to strengthen his increasingly tenuous grip on the underworld, the crime lord accepts. Black Mask then continues to threaten the most important people in Catwoman's life, prompting her to retaliate by shooting Black Mask's jaw with her gun, killing him. After the shooting, Selina Kyle passes the mantle of Catwoman to her friend Holly, who is soon arrested for Sionis' murder. During the *Gotham Underground* storyline, dozens of would-be crime bosses attempt to fill in the vacancy created by Black Mask's death. [9]

In *Blackest Night*, Black Mask is resurrected as a Black Lantern, and attempts to show Catwoman why "shooting him in the head, was a bad idea". In an attempt to scare Catwoman, Black Mask goes after her sister once more. He demonstrates the ability to fly and reorganize the structures of buildings. Poison Ivy manages to stop Black Mask by trapping him inside a mutated Pitcher plant, its digestive juices dissolving his body as fast as his ring could regenerate it.^[10]

In the *Battle for the Cowl* storyline, a second criminal using the Black Mask alias emerges. His identity is eventually revealed to be **Dr. Jeremiah Arkham**, who took up Roman Sionis' mantle after suffering a psychotic breakdown from exposure to a variety of mind-altering chemicals from various Batman villains.^[11]

The New 52

In The New 52 reboot, Roman Sionis is re-established as the Black Mask, and his history with the False Face Society remains somewhat intact. This version of the character has split personality disorder, with Roman Sionis being one personality and Black Mask being the other, and the technology in his mask grants him the ability to control "the weak minded." Roman Sionis is first seen in Arkham Asylum's infirmary being treated by Dr. Jeremiah Arkham during the Night of the Owls; Sionis attempted a hunger strike to try and regain his mask. When the Talons attack the Asylum, Dr. Arkham gives Sionis his mask back to telepathically influence the inmates into attacking the Talons and keep anyone from following Arkham to his safe room. Black Mask then attempts to use his abilities on Batman, but fails and is forced to escape the Asylum. Black Mask later resurfaces to re-assemble the False Face Society, coming into conflict with the Mad Hatter while doing so (who considers Black Mask an enemy due to their similar mind control abilities). Batman intervenes and puts an end to their battle, and Sionis is sent back to Arkham Asylum. During the *Forever Evil* storyline, Black Mask appears as a member of the Secret Society of Super Villains when the Crime Syndicate arrive from their Earth. Black Mask and his False Face Society crash the Rogues's battle against Mr. Freeze and Clayface to claim the bounty on the Rogues.

DC Rebirth

In the DC Rebirth reboot, Roman Sionis remains one of Gotham's most powerful crime lords. This version of the character dons a gray metallic mask, and is allied with Penguin and Great White in an alliance known as "The Blacks & Whites". Together, they hire KGBeast to kill Batman.^[17]

Powers and abilities

Black Mask's mastery over various firearms makes him an extremely proficient and resourceful marksman, particularly with his signature twin automatic pistols, though he occasionally uses melee weapons as well; various comic books have shown him wielding a medieval sword. Black Mask is an expert in many forms of hand-to-hand combat, displaying a regular talent for improvisation and a high tolerance for pain that allow him to hold his own against accomplished martial artists, such as Batman and Catwoman. A skilled and relentless tactician with vast wealth and resources at his disposal, Black Mask is one of the most powerful men in Gotham City's criminal underworld; he eliminates his opposition and consolidates power using fear and intimidation. He is renowned for his brutally sadistic physical and psychological torture techniques, which he often uses either to extract information, or simply to torment his enemies. Black Mask is also a highly gifted businessman, impersonator, actor, and escape artist.

His ebony black mask, per the events of the New 52, possesses hypnosis-like mind-control abilities that extend through the material of the masks of his gang, rendering them under his direct control. He has also killed his victims by applying toxin-filled masks to their faces, poisoning them to death and leaving their faces hideously blackened and shrivelled.

Other versions

Crimson Mist

In the Elseworlds storyline *Batman: Crimson Mist*, Black Mask attempts to stave off a rampage by the maddened vampire Batman, who later assaults Black Mask's hideout and butchers his False Face Society, leaving their severed heads outside Blackgate Penitentiary.^[18]

The Batman Adventures

In *The Batman Adventures*, Roman Sionis is depicted as a businessman who turned his company into a corporate juggernaut, until Wayne Enterprises results in the loss of his industry. An associate of Red Hood then approaches Roman, convincing him to become the Black Mask and lead the False Face Society, though he is ultimately apprehended by Batman.

The Batman Strikes!

In *The Batman Strikes!*, Black Mask extorts Bruce Wayne into making a deal with him, and attempts to take complete control of Gotham's criminal underworld by ridding it of its other villains.

Batman: Arkham Unhinged

In issues #35–37 (storyline "Evidence Notice") of *Batman: Arkham Unhinged*, Black Mask is evicted by the Joker from his factory; he plans to kill him with the Penguin's help but is recaptured and re-sent to Arkham City.^{[19][20][21]}

Injustice: Gods Among Us

In *Injustice:* Gods Among Us, Black Mask is seen fighting against the Justice League during Harley Quinn's riot, and later appears in Year Five, where he gathers with six other criminals. When Damian Wayne intervenes their meeting, the villains knock him into unconsciousness until Dick Grayson saves him.

In other media

Television

- Black Mask was originally considered to appear in *The New Batman Adventures* by producer Paul Dini, who wanted actor James Earl Jones to voice the character, though he ultimately did not feature in the series.^[22]
- Black Mask appears in *The Batman*, voiced by James Remar. Portrayed as a powerful, cruel crime boss with a vast organization of henchmen, this version's mask is unremovable and he has no fingerprints or distinguishing features, making it impossible to identify him. In "The Breakout", Black Mask steals a powerful shock-wave generator and holds Gotham City hostage, but he is apprehended by Batgirl and Robin while Batman deactivates his device. In "Rumors", Black Mask is one of the many villains captured by the new vigilante Rumor. In "The Batman/Superman Story (Part One)", Lex Luthor hires Black Mask, Clayface, Bane, and Mr. Freeze to kill Superman, but Batman and Robin show up to stop them. In "What Goes Up...", Black Mask employs the Shadow Thief to break him out of Arkham Asylum and steal a rare Nth element meteor, which he uses to lift Gotham's gem depository from the ground, though his heist is ultimately foiled by Batman, Robin and Hawkman.
- Black Mask appears in *Batman: The Brave and the Bold*, voiced by John DiMaggio.^[23] In "The Plague of the Prototypes!", Black Mask reprograms Batman's Bat-Robots and uses them to steal powerful explosives in an attempt to destroy half of Gotham, only to be defeated by the Dark Knight himself. In

"Shadow of the Bat!", Black Mask is bitten by a vampire Batman whilst robbing a bank, though the ending suggests that the episode was only a dream.

Film

- Black Mask appears in the 2010 animated feature film *Batman: Under the Red Hood*, voiced by Wade Williams. ^[24] He is depicted as the first crime lord ever to take complete control of Gotham City. As a massive turf war escalates, a mysterious vigilante called the Red Hood surfaces and attempts to overthrow Black Mask, who is eventually pressured into breaking the Joker out of Arkham Asylum to kill the new crime-fighter. In the epilogue, Batman once again apprehends the Joker and the Red Hood disappears, while Black Mask awaits trial for his alleged involvement in the Joker's escape.
- Black Mask appears in the 2016 DC Animated Movie Universe film *Batman: Bad Blood*, voiced by Steve Blum. He is seen carrying out an arms deal when he is confronted by Nightwing (disguised as Batman) and Robin. Black Mask's mask is burnt onto his face in the ensuing battle, and he is subsequently taken into custody.

Video games

- Black Mask appears as a boss in *Batman: Dark Tomorrow*, voiced by Michael Wright.
- Black Mask appears in *DC Universe Online*, sporting his classic, gangster-esque appearance.

Lego series

- LEGO pieces to create Black Mask in the character creation feature can be unlocked in Lego Batman: The Videogame after obtaining all the mini-kits in the villain chapters. He is also featured as an unlockable character in the "Villain Hunt" minigame in the Nintendo DS version.
- Black Mask appears in the Nintendo 3DS version of *Lego Batman 2: DC Super Heroes*.

Batman: Arkham series

Roman Sionis/Black Mask is featured in the *Batman: Arkham* franchise.^[25] This version of the character is afflicted with paranoia, and is known for using body doubles in situations that may endanger his own life.^[26]

- Sionis' eponymous mask appears in *Batman: Arkham Asylum* as an answer to one of the Riddler's riddles; it is found hanging in a frame in Dr. Penelope Young's office, and scanning it unlocks Black Mask's profile.
- Black Mask appears in *Batman: Arkham City*, voiced by Nolan North. ^[27] In the intro, Bruce Wayne sees the newly-captured Black Mask being beaten by Professor Hugo Strange's TYGER guards. A crudely-covered hole in the Arkham City containment wall can be found in the Industrial District, along with several wanted posters for Black Mask. Scanning it reveals that Black Mask had used stolen explosives to create the aforementioned hole and escape from Arkham City, before being recaptured at a meat-packing plant. Black Mask is later featured in several exclusive challenge maps released by the game's producers.
- Black Mask appears in the prequel *Batman: Arkham Origins*, voiced by Brian Bloom. ^[28] He breaks into Blackgate Prison with Killer Croc and several of his thugs on Christmas Eve. There, he kills the corrupt Commissioner Loeb before escaping on a helicopter, while Croc stays behind to fight the vigilante Batman, who learns that Black Mask has hired seven other assassins (consisting of Bane, Deathstroke, Deadshot, Firefly, Copperhead, Shiva, and Electrocutioner) to kill him. After defeating Electrocutioner and Deathstroke on the Penguin's freighter, Batman investigates a double homicide at Lacey Towers and realizes that Sionis has been taken prisoner by a mysterious criminal known as the Joker (voiced by Troy Baker), who has been posing as "Black Mask" since capturing the crime lord to access the cash stored at the Gotham Merchants Bank. Batman later frees the real Black Mask at his own Steel Mill, and begins interrogating him regarding the Joker's whereabouts when he is attacked by Copperhead, allowing Sionis to escape into the night. Black Mask later appears in a "Most Wanted" mission, as he rebuilds his empire by stashing several drug canisters throughout the city. After destroying all the canisters, Batman is

- confronted by Black Mask and his henchmen at the church, where Sionis is ultimately defeated and taken into custody. Black Mask also appears in *Batman: Arkham Origins Blackgate*, where he takes control of the prison's Industrial Building.
- Black Mask is featured in the Red Hood story pack of *Batman: Arkham Knight*, with Bloom reprising the role. ^[29] The campaign centers around the Red Hood interfering with Black Mask's illegal operations. Sionis is last seen presumed dead by the vigilante after being thrown from a window.

Merchandise

- A 7-inch Black Mask action figure was released in Series 1 of DC Collectibles' *Batman: Arkham Origins* line, based on his appearance in the video game. This statue was sculpted by Gentle Giant Studios, and includes two automatic pistols. [30][31]
- TriForce has released a *Batman: Arkham Origins* Black Mask Arsenal Full Scale Replica consisting of the character's mask and knuckleduster, crafted and cast in polystone. The replica measures 18 inches in height and weighs in at 15 pounds, and is limited to 500 pieces worldwide. [32]



Roman Sionis / Black Mask in a promotional image for *Arkham Origins*.

See also

List of Batman Family adversaries

References

- 1. Detective Comics (vol. 2) #9 (May 2012)
- 2. "Gotham: Who Is The Black Mask?". comicbook.com.
- 3. Wallace, Dan (2008). "Black Mask". In Dougall, Alastair. *The DC Comics Encyclopedia*. London: Dorling Kindersley. p. 52. ISBN 0-7566-4119-5
- 4. "It's BATMAN vs. the Black Mask's master plan in BATMAN #696". *dccomics.com*.
- 5. Batman #400
- 6. Batman #485-486
- 7. Detective Comics #684
- 8. Batman #518-520
- 9. Gotham Underground #1
- 10. Catwoman #83 (January 2010)
- 11. Batman #697 (March 2010)
- 12. Detective Comics (vol. 2) Annual #1
- 13. Detective Comics Vol. 2 #9
- 14. Detective Comics Vol. 2 Annual #1
- 15. Forever Evil #1
- 16. Forever Evil: Rogues Rebellion #4
- 17. All-Star Batman
- 18. Batman: Crimson Mist
- 19. Batman: Arkham Unhinged #35 (July 2012)
- 20. Batman: Arkham Unhinged #36 (July 2012)
- 21. Batman: Arkham Unhinged #37 (August 2012)
- 22. [1] (http://www.worldsfinestonline.com/WF/sections/backstage/unused/batman/blackmask.php)
- 23. "Schedule for Channel 9, Oct. 31st, 2010".

 Tytonight.com.au. 2010-12-19. Archived from the original on 2010-06-05. Retrieved 2010-12-29.

- 24. "The World's Finest New Cast Details For Upcoming "Batman: Under The Red Hood" Animated Feature". Worldsfinestonline.com. 2010-03-23. Retrieved 2010-12-29.
- 25. "Batman Meets Deathstroke, Deadshot, And Black Mask In First Trailer". *gameinformer.com*.
- 26. WB Games Montréal (October 25, 2013). *Batman: Arkham Origins*. Warner Bros. Interactive
 Entertainment. Scene: Gotham City Police
 Department Sewers. "**Batman**: Roman's always been
 paranoid. It's probably why he's lasted this long. He'd
 sent in a decoy, giving himself the element of
 surprise."
- 27. Mitha, Sameer (November 9, 2011). "Review: Batman Arkham City". NDTV. Archived from the original on February 4, 2013. Retrieved January 30, 2017.
- 28. Miller, Matt (April 15, 2013). "The Nemesis Of Batman: Arkham Origins". *Game Informer*. GameStop. Archived from the original on April 15, 2013. Retrieved January 30, 2017.
- 29. Carter, Chris (July 3, 2015). "The Red Hood DLC pack for Arkham Knight is disgustingly short". Destructoid. Archived from the original on July 3, 2015. Retrieved January 30, 2017.
- 30. Goeliner, Caleb (July 18, 2013). "DC Collectibles Debuts More 'Batman: Arkham Origins' Action Figures [SDCC 2013]". ComicsAlliance. Archived from the original on April 20, 2014. Retrieved February 18, 2017.

- 31. "Black Mask Action Figure". Amazon.com. Retrieved 2017-01-23.
- 32. "Black Mask Arsenal Full Scale Replica". Projecttriforce.com. Retrieved 2017-02-12.

Retrieved from "https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Black_Mask_(comics)&oldid=776714139"

Categories: DC Comics supervillains | Characters created by Doug Moench | Comics characters introduced in 1985 | Fictional crime bosses | Fictional gangsters | Fictional cult leaders | Fictional business executives | Fictional patricides | Fictional matricides | Fictional mass murderers | Fictional serial killers | Fictional torturers | Video game bosses

- This page was last modified on 22 April 2017, at 20:34.
- Text is available under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike License; additional terms may apply. By using this site, you agree to the Terms of Use and Privacy Policy. Wikipedia® is a registered trademark of the Wikimedia Foundation, Inc., a non-profit organization.