

P R O J E C T

B

AN UNOFFICIAL BATMAN STORY

1



OLIVER
BURGES

JIMMY
G

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"PROJECT B"

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BATMAN
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Batman is a registered trademark of DC Comics and Warner Bros. Entertainment Company. This story is just a humble tribute to the greatest character ever. "Project B" is a non-profit comic book, created as passion project and not intended for sales of any sort. Come on, folks! We love you, let us tell this story!

"Who are you?"

What would **your** Batman movie be like? That was what somebody asked me in early 2012, when we were discussing "The Bat" movies. It was our lunch hour at the trade school where I used to teach. That sounded like I was being challenged so I replied: "By the end of this working day I will give you my version of a Batman movie". I've always been fond of the character — actually, it was because of Batman stories that I started collecting, drawing and writing comic books — but I've never really thought about the creating my own story for one of its movies. I already had experience writing my own independent comics for the past five years or so and I considered myself an expert as far as The Big Bat is concerned. After this reflection I entered the classroom where my students were waiting and... I don't know, it probably was the worst class I have ever taught, but that afternoon the "Project B" idea was born.

When I started taking it seriously, I was completely determined to show everyone who Batman really was and how the movies had gotten the essence of the character all wrong. So, I selected the best stories and graphic novels in my collection from the 80s and 90s, looking to improve my main idea with the cream of the crop. When I finished reading I realized that this was much bigger of a task than I had imagined.

By checking out every story which have been told in different periods I realized that there were "many" Batmen.

Facing such a grand accomplishment by others, I was lucky to quickly understand that I've been dealing with an icon. A symbol of about 75 years old (at that time) and quite different from other characters. Batman wasn't only depicted by writers, it had been felt and lived by each one of them. Batman was just the armor enclosing the soul of its writers and it inspired them to tell their version of the story.

From then on I could thoroughly comprehend that Batman's essence was not in the story that was being told, nor in the attitude that he took, nor in the catchphrases. Batman's essence was in the deepest spot of its soul, what touched everyone who knew the character, who have identified themselves with it and were conquered by it: Deep down, Batman is a lonely child frightened with the bitterness of the world. And it is pretty difficult for me to imagine someone not identifying with this feeling. At some point in their lives someone who appreciates the character may have asked "what would Batman do in this situation?". That's because he stands for strength, struggle, overcoming, willpower, intelligence, guts, skill, cunning, violence,



Oliver
BORGES
2020

vigor and, above all, justice. I came to think that all those wonderful authors that I used to venerate, while writing their Batman stories, they themselves were "Batmen". They incorporated the frightened children, afraid of a world of bitterness, even though they were different to one another. I was taken a back by my insight. To keep going with this project I needed to ground it — a concept, a starting point — in order to avoid unaware repetitions of what I used to read as a fan. And it was just by a brief comparison with Superman, one of the greatest icons of DC and superhero comic books that I found out the answer. I asked myself: what's the main difference between Batman and Superman, they being fighters for justice seeking the same ideals? My own answer was that the young boy who became Superman was raised by a couple of good sensitive and fragile people. They were the boy's models and when he grew up all he wanted to be was a simple human being just like the couple that raised him. On the other hand the young Bruce Wayne had lost his parents early in his life and he was raised with the help by his own friend and butler Alfred, who taught him to be someone else beyond his own weakness, something superior and unbeatable.

That's the difference between the two heroes to me: one wanted to be an ordinary human being with all its weakness although he is almost a deity; while the other, keep putting his best effort to be the strongest, canniest, most intelligent and unbeatable, despite being fragile and vulnerable like everyone of us. Finally, I've got my starting point.

I could spend time thoroughly breaking down my creative process, but I think the final product should speak for itself. My initial impetus was about how I would make my Batman movie, the one I would like to watch in the theatre. However, a movie production is rather expensive and, of course, I'm not a film-maker. To have this story out there I had no options than to tell this "Bat" saga in the original format, the same way he was created —as a comic book story. The adventure in your hands is the product of 8 years of hard work, including script creation, concept illustrations, final drawings, color, texts and everything else I have to work on to survive and support my family. This is only my version of Batman. There's no intention to compare with today's version or any other prior versions already released by its creators or the character rights-holders. I have no intention to sell this work or acquire any other form of financial profit. This work is just a fan's humble attempt at homage to the character who has changed his life and to celebrate the many authors who have made Batman so special by revealing a small part of themselves in each of the characters versions. Batman is a character whose rights belong to DC Comics/Warner Bros, but it is also a part of the soul of everyone who like the character, everyone who had the courage to open one of its comics and to spend a night in Gotham City. And if someone in the future asks me who do I think I am to risk such a bold attempt, I will be able to answer ironically: "I am Batman".

Good reading!

Oliver dos Santos Borges.

May, 2020





CHAPTER I

THE LIGHTS OF A DARK CITY



"Pain is in your flesh. It is a part of life. It is the mother of good and evil. All the worst and best things in this world have grown from it. Do not run away -- it's no use. Embrace your pain, and choose your own path..."



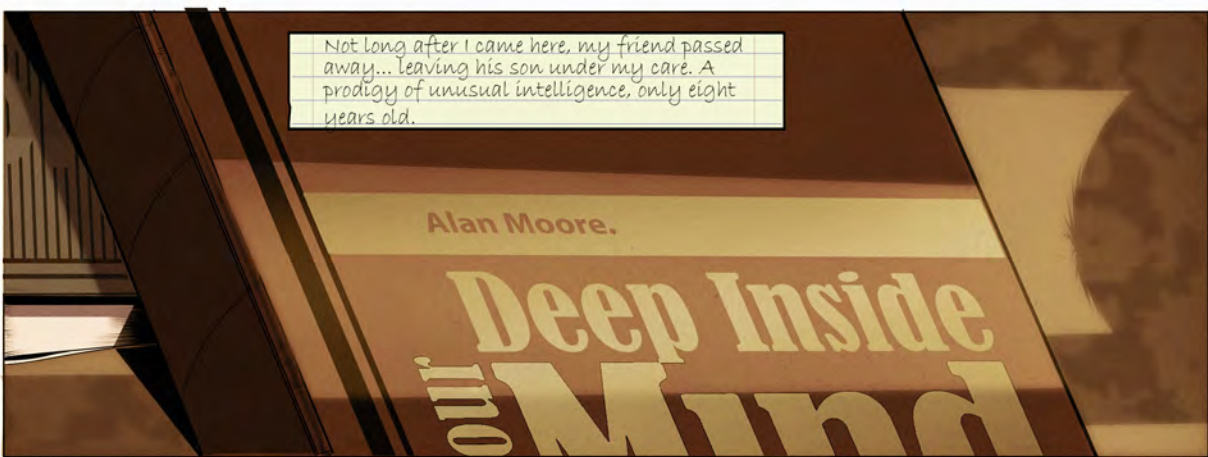
June 21 - 2012

My name is Alfred Pennyworth. I am a psychologist graduated from the University of Leeds in England. I never officially practiced my profession because of some... conflicts in my native country. But that is a story for another day. I was going through a very difficult phase, and in the search for meaning in my life, I found myself in Australia. I enlisted in the support forces for the United States and ended up in Khe Sahn, Vietnam. There I met a friend. I call him a "friend" because that is the name given to good people who change our lives forever. He saved my life twice, and I am only here today because of him.

He was a young doctor named Thomas. I have never in my life had the pleasure of meeting a better person. Energetic, altruistic, a man of integrity. He always knew how to value the most important moments -- the simplest moments. He never had to be a doctor -- he was born immeasurably wealthy -- but he was there anyway, trying to stop the blood being spilled in that war.

We spent eleven weeks together, but due to the wear and tear of the war, it felt like we had known each other for a lifetime. I helped him tend to the wounded in combat, until the day came that I became one of them, and Thomas tended to my wounds. That was the first time he saved my life.

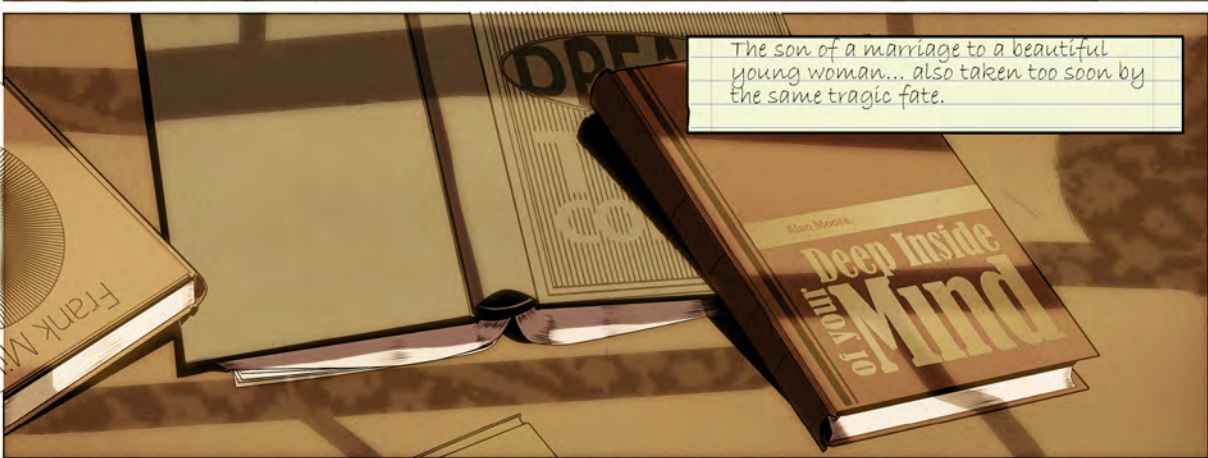
I admit that this war did not help me in the search for a purpose, but that man's words and dreams filled me with hope -- and a desire to know a land of opportunity called America. When the war was over and I had nowhere to go, he offered me a job as manager of his estate in America. I gladly accepted. And that was the second time Thomas saved my life.



Not long after I came here, my friend passed away... leaving his son under my care. A prodigy of unusual intelligence, only eight years old.

Alan Moore.

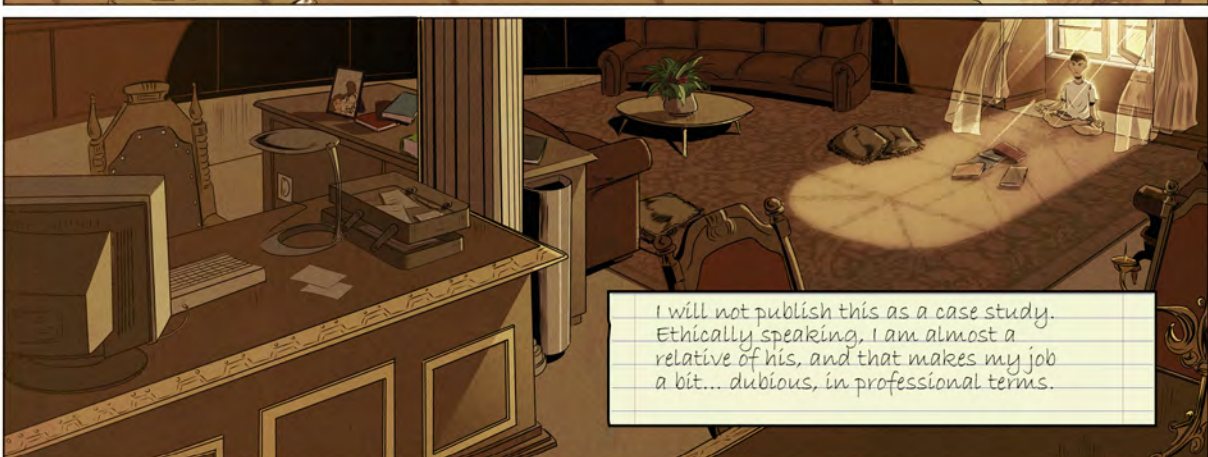
Deep Inside of your Mind



The son of a marriage to a beautiful young woman... also taken too soon by the same tragic fate.



The purpose of this manuscript is to talk about this boy -- who lost his parents in such a brutal way -- and how much that disturbed him.



I will not publish this as a case study. Ethically speaking, I am almost a relative of his, and that makes my job a bit... dubious, in professional terms.

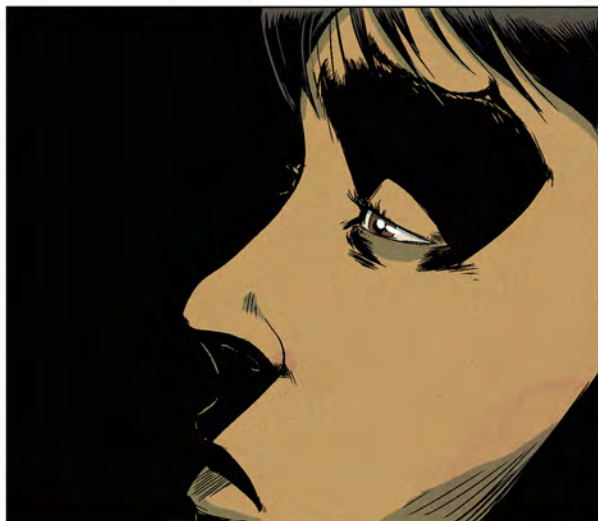
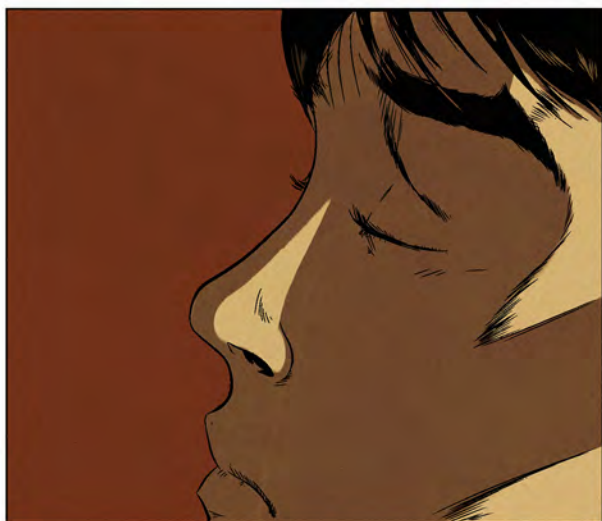


The boy was distraught after having seen his parents killed before his eyes.



My hope in recording this story is for someone - after all this ends - to be able to tell me who was more insane -- him for taking everything to such hellish lengths...

...or me for allowing it.

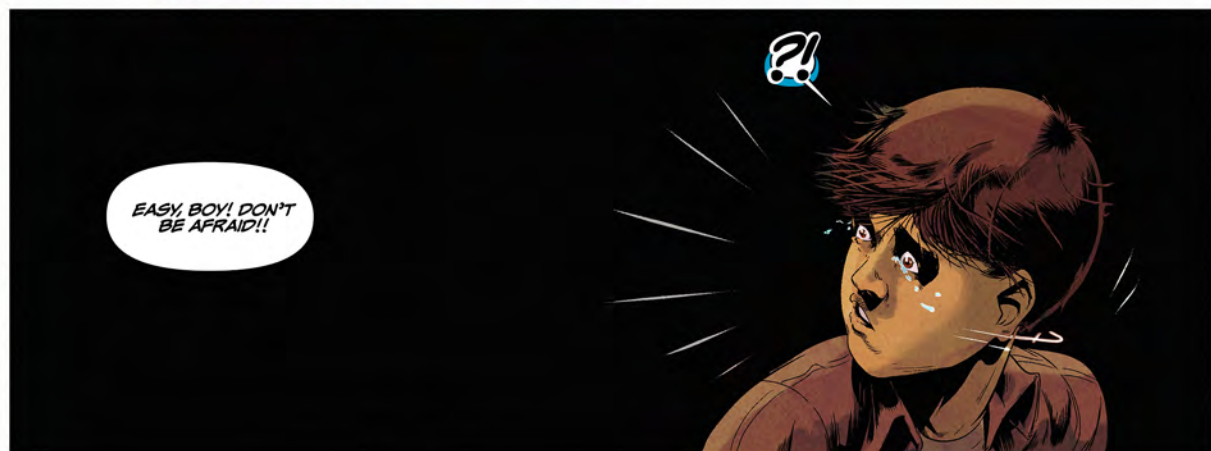


NO! NO! NO! NO!
NO ... NOT AGAIN!



DADDY..
MOMMY!?







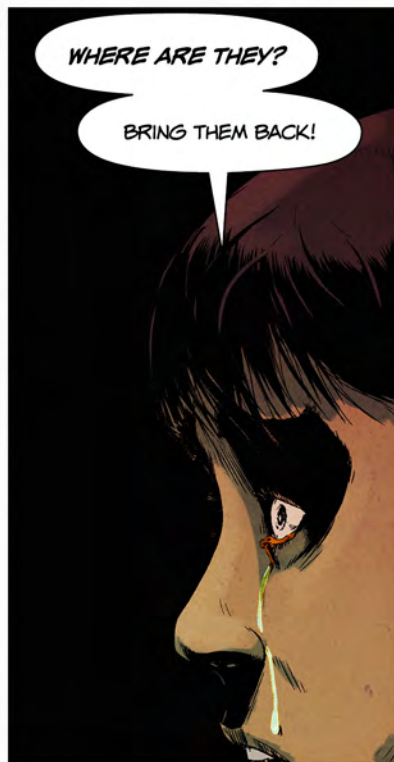
WHO ARE YOU!?

WHERE
DID YOU
TAKE
THEM?



I DIDN'T TAKE THEM.

WHEN I GOT HERE, THEY
WERE ALREADY GONE.



WHERE ARE THEY?

BRING THEM BACK!



WHERE THEY WENT, EVEN I
CAN'T REACH THEM.

TIME IS THE GREAT ADJUDICATOR.
NO ONE CAN FIGHT AGAINST IT. WITH
EACH PASSING DAY, YOUR PARENTS
WILL BECOME MORE AND MORE
DISTANT, UNTIL ALL THAT'S LEFT IS...
ECHOES OF MEMORIES.

BUT I'M NOT HERE FOR YOUR
PARENTS, I'M HERE FOR YOU. YOU
HAVE TO BE STRONG

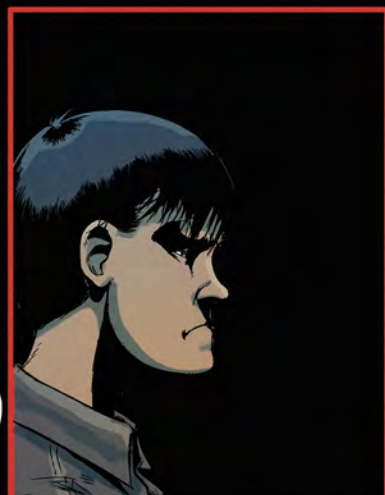
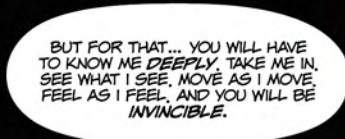
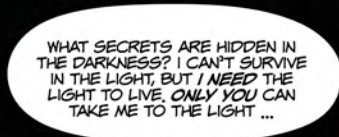
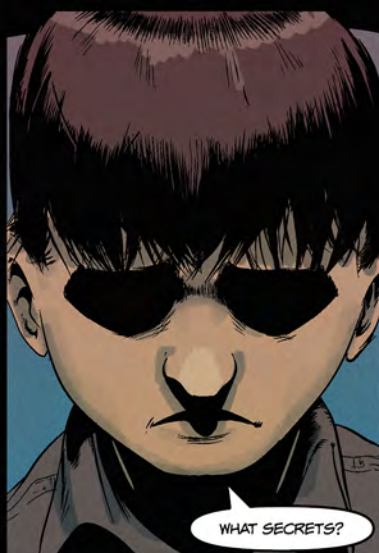
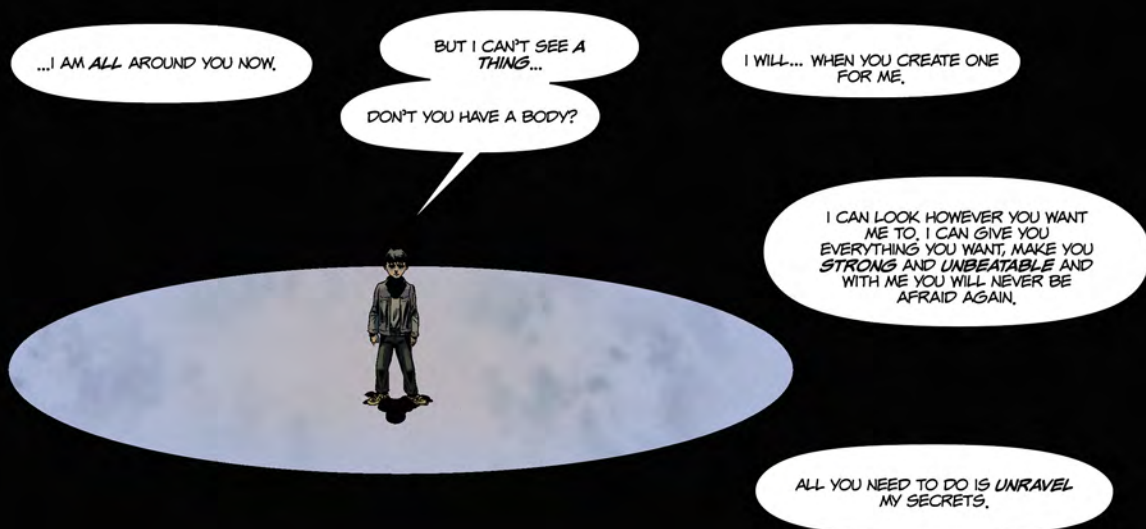


BUT HOW? I'M ALL ALONE.



YOU DON'T NEED TO BE ALONE.

I'M HERE WITH YOU.



His name is... Bruce Wayne.

CHAPTER ONE

"THE LIGHTS OF A DARK CITY"



... and this is his story.

Story and Artwork
OLIVER BORGES

Colors
JIMMY G

PRESENT DAY
GOTHAM CITY

We live in Gotham.

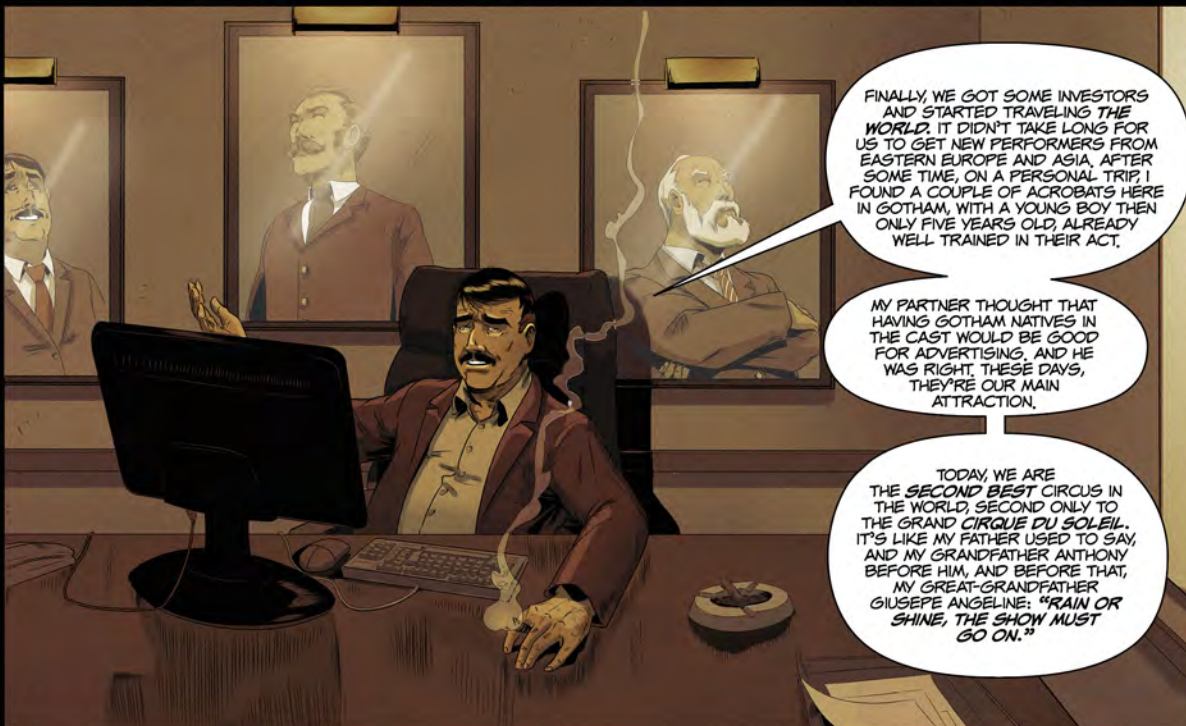
Known worldwide as the "City of Lights" of America ... a city that claims to be the historical cradle of art and culture in the U.S.

Dreams of a bright beginning for many. A tragic and cruel ending for others. Today, I call it the "City of Lies." Its spotlights and luminous advertisements obscure the real, tangible light that glimmers under the weight of encroaching darkness, hiding rain-slick streets that seem to hold unspoken promises.

It is through these streets that the cheerful and adventurous boy walks.









WELL, LOOK HERE, JACK I HOPE YOU UNDERSTAND WHAT I'M TRYING TO SAY IS:



YOU'RE A GREAT PERFORMER, TALENT LIKE I'VE NEVER SEEN. BUT AFTER WHAT HAPPENED...



...I CAN'T HAVE YOU ON THE SHOW. YOU MUST UNDERSTAND THAT, AFTER YOUR ARREST, WE ALMOST HAD TO CLOSE THE DOORS. IT WOULDN'T BE GOOD TO HAVE YOUR IMAGE LINKED TO THE CIRCUS RIGHT NOW.



BUT I WANT YOU TO KNOW THAT I'M GOING TO TALK TO MY PARTNER, AND IF EVERYTHING GOES WELL, I CAN GET SOMETHING BEHIND THE SCENES, A MORE DISCREET JOB AND--



DAMN YOU, MIKE! I HELPED THIS CIRCUS BECOME WHAT IT IS. IF IT WEREN'T FOR ME, YOU WOULD'VE HAD TO CLOSE ITS DOORS LONG AGO!! AND NOW YOU TRY TO HUMILIATE ME LIKE THIS?! I'M AN ARTIST!





YOUR OPENING NIGHT WILL BE UNFORGETTABLE FOR THE WHOLE CITY... AS FOR ME, I KNOW HOW TO GET BY.



I CAN'T SAY THE SAME FOR YOU, MICKIE... ANYWAY, BREAK A LEG!



THERE HE IS!

HEY JACK! DID YOU MAKE IT?



NOW GIANFRANCO'S SON CALLS THE SHOTS. MICHAEL ANGELINE THAT SON OF A BITCH HAS ALWAYS ENVIED ME. HE WON'T BACK DOWN.

AND WHAT ARE YOU GONNA DO NOW?



WHAT ANY ARTIST WOULD DO... SHOW HIM MY TALENT.



AND AFTER TOURING AROUND THE WORLD, G.I.C. RETURNS TO GOTHAM ONCE MORE! THERE ARE A LOT OF CELEBRITIES ARRIVING NOW, AND THE SHOW WILL BEGIN SHORTLY! NOW A WORD FROM OUR SPONSORS AND WE'LL BE BACK IN A MINUTE.

WELCOME BACK TO GOTHAM TALKS, GOTHAM'S ONLY 24 HOUR NEWS RADIO STATION.

33-YEAR-OLD BROTHERS, JONATHAN AND GERARD GOOSEMAN, SONS OF REAL-ESTATE TYCOON TERRANCE GOOSEMAN AND THE MAIN SUSPECTS IN THE RAPE AND MURDER OF 15-YEAR-OLD GRACE DOWNE, WERE REPORTED MISSING YESTERDAY MORNING.

THE BROTHERS WERE ACQUITTED BY JUDGE JEREMY DEVON LAST THURSDAY DUE TO INSUFFICIENT EVIDENCE.

AFTER SEVERAL UNSUCCESSFUL ATTEMPTS AT COMMUNICATION, THE BROTHERS' FAMILY CONTACTED THE AUTHORITIES, WHO FOUND THEM THIS MORNING IN AN ABANDONED JUNKYARD ON THE NORTH SIDE.

THE BROTHERS HAVE BEEN TAKEN TO BENJAMIN RUSH HOSPITAL, WITH REPORTS INDICATING THAT JONATHAN HAS SUFFERED A CRANIAL TRAUMA, AND GERARD HAS SUSTAINED TWO FRACTURED VERTEBRAE. DOCTORS ARE UNSURE IF HE WILL EVER WALK AGAIN. POLICE REPORT THAT THE BROTHERS HAVE NOW CONFESSED TO THE ENTIRE CRIME, WHEN QUESTIONED ABOUT WHAT HAPPENED TO THEM, GERARD GOOSEMAN SAID THEY WERE ATTACKED BY... OH MY... A DEMON WITH BAT WINGS!

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, THIS ISN'T THE FIRST WE'VE HEARD ABOUT THIS SUPPOSED "BAT DEMON"! COULD THESE RUMORS BE TRUE? OR IS THIS JUST A NEW URBAN LEGEND? STAY TUNED TO GOTHAM TALKS, THE VOICE OF THE CITY! WE'LL BE BACK SHORTLY WITH MORE SENSATIONAL NEWS!

GOTHAM IS A CITY OF MANY LAYERS. IT WOULD BE TOO EASY TO CALL IT A GOOD OR BAD PLACE.

THERE'S THAT TOP LAYER WHERE THE SPOTLIGHTS FOCUS ON. IT'S FULL OF SHINE AND GLAMOUR, WHERE EVERYTHING IS BEAUTIFUL AND ATTRACTIVE...

USUALLY INDIVIDUALS FROM ALL LAYERS BELOW THIS BELIEVE THAT THEIR DESTINY IS TO BE PART OF THAT UPPER LAYER. THAT'S WHEN EVERYTHING MIXES...

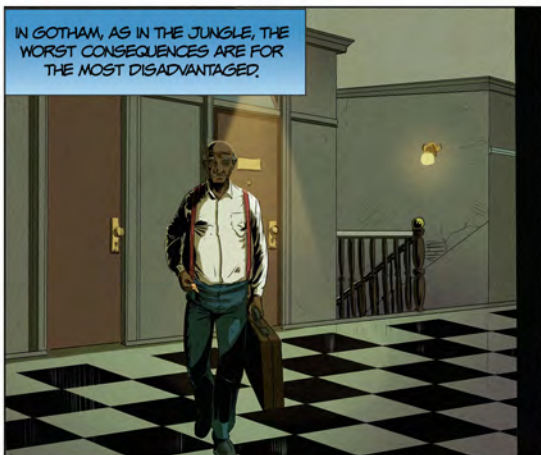
LIFE BECOMES AN ENDLESS BATTLE IN SEARCH FOR SPACE, A PLACE, EVEN IF TEMPORARY, IN THE WORLD OF DREAMS.

AND LIKE SALMON AGAINST THE CURRENT, THEY STRUGGLE, DAY IN AND DAY OUT.

BUT THE RISKS ARE MANY, AFTER ALL, THE LAW OF THE JUNGLE ISN'T FORGIVING...

...AND THERE IS ALWAYS A PREDATOR LURKING.

IN GOTHAM, AS IN THE JUNGLE, THE WORST CONSEQUENCES ARE FOR THE MOST DISADVANTAGED.



JEANIE!?

IN GOTHAM EVERY DAY A LIGHT GOES OUT, A LIGHT OF HOPE AND JOY, BUT BECAUSE OF THE BRIGHTNESS OF THE SPOTLIGHT...



...NO ONE NOTICES.



DAD..

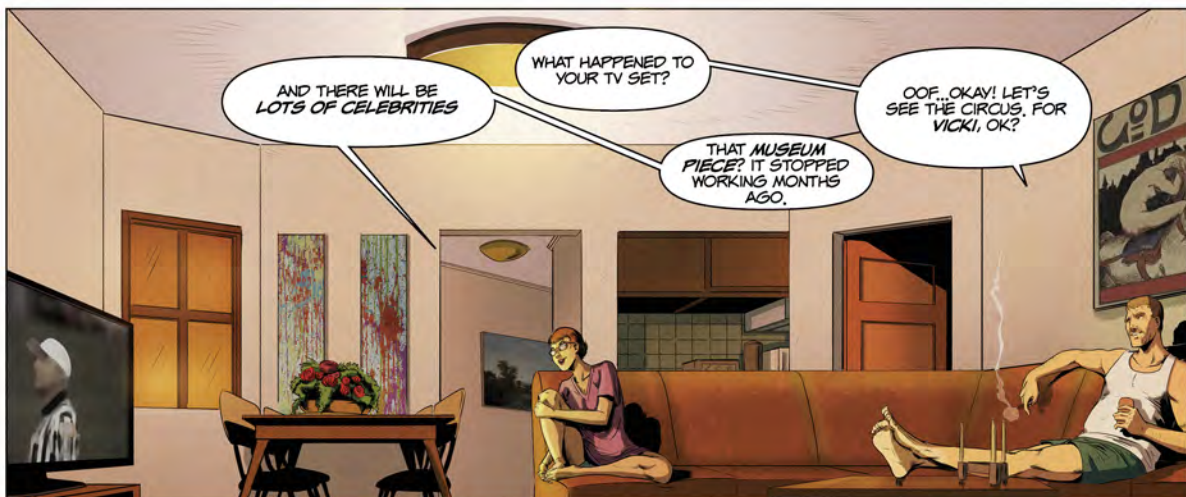
DAD?!

DON'T PRETEND YOU'RE NOT LISTENING TO ME! YOU PROMISED TO LET ME WATCH THE G.I.C. RED CARPET SPECIAL. VICKI IS PRESENTING.

DAAAAAD! THIS IS A FOOTBALL RERUN, YOU ALREADY KNOW THE MATCH RESULT... COME ON, DAD! MY BEST FRIEND IS ON TV!

FOR HEAVEN'S SAKE! CAN'T A MAN WATCH A GAME ON HIS DAY OFF?!





AND THERE WILL BE
LOTS OF CELEBRITIES

WHAT HAPPENED TO
YOUR TV SET?

OOF...OKAY! LET'S
SEE THE CIRCUS, FOR
VICKI, OK?

THAT MUSEUM
PIECE? IT STOPPED
WORKING MONTHS
AGO.



SHE'S GOING
TO INTERVIEW
THE MAYOR
TODAY, SINCE THAT
BASTARD HAS
THE TV STATION
IN HIS HANDS.
WHO KNOWS, HE
MAY HELP HER
GET A BETTER
POSITION...

...NO ONE
DESERVES TO
BE A CELEBRITY
REPORTER
FOREVER.



EARNING A LIVING ON
GOSSIP... JESUS!

HEY, REMEMBER
IT WAS THE MAYOR
WHO GOT YOU YOUR
INTERNSHIP AT THE
COURT.



I KNOW, AND IT'S THE LEAST HE CAN DO.
YOU'RE THE BEST EMPLOYEE HE HAS.
COMMISSIONER JAMES GORDON THE
FACE OF GOTHAM CITY JUSTICE.

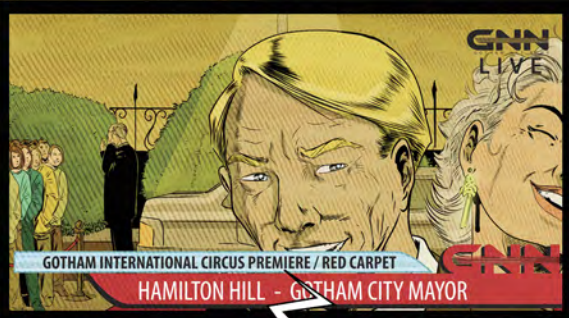
WELL, WE'RE BACK! THIS IS A NIGHT THAT
WILL BE REMEMBERED FOR A LONG TIME
TO COME.



I'M NOT THE FACE -- I'M
THE HAND. THE FACE
IS HARVEY, YOUR NEW
BOSS, AND HE SEEMS
TO BE A GOOD MAN, BUT
WE'RE NOT ALONE, WE'RE
GONNA HAVE YOU NOW.



THE ONE THIS
CITY HAS BEEN
WAITING FOR.



LOOK WHO'S JUST ARRIVED! MAYOR HAMILTON HILL, FIRST LADY HELEN, AND THEIR SON MICHAEL. LET'S HAVE A WORD WITH MAYOR HILL.

IT IS WITH GREAT HONOR THAT GOTHAM WELCOMES THE G.I.C. BACK TO OUR FAIR CITY. THIS SPECTACLE SHOWS THE ENTIRE WORLD HOW VALUABLE OUR CITY IS TO THE CULTURE OF THIS COUNTRY.

SPECTACLE INDEED! THANK YOU VERY MUCH, MR. MAYOR! AND WASN'T THE FIRST LADY BEAUTIFUL AS ALWAYS, IN HER WONDERFUL DRESS!

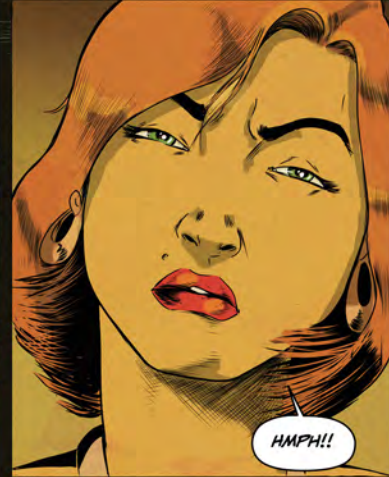
THE G.I.C. HOLDS THE GUINNESS WORLD RECORD FOR THE LARGEST CIRCUS STRUCTURE IN THE WORLD! IT HAS SEATING CAPACITY FOR 15,000 PEOPLE AND SUPPORTS OVER 400 EMPLOYEES...

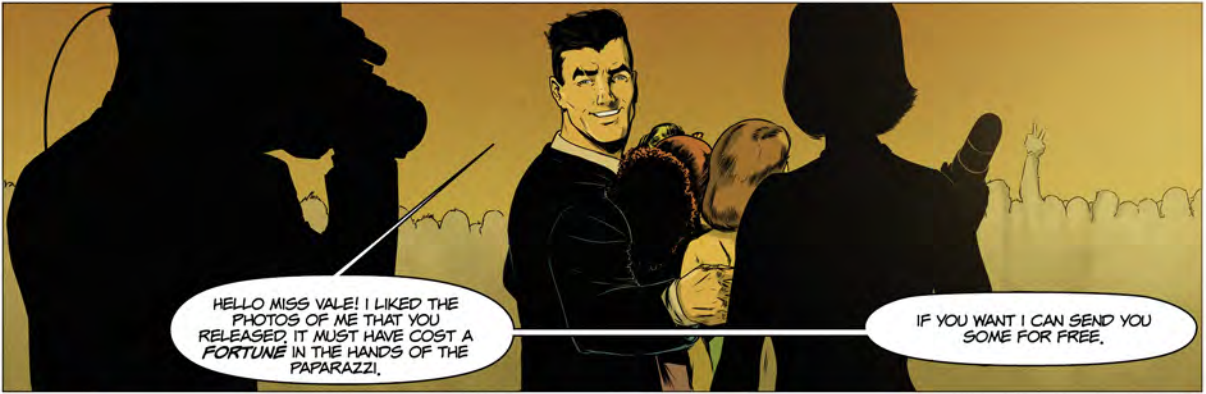
...WHO STRIVE DAILY TO BRING ATTENDEES THE GREATEST SHOW ON EARTH! ISN'T IT AMAZING?! GNN IS COVERING THIS MEMORABLE PARTY HERE ON THE RED CARPET AS WELL AS FROM ABOVE! OUR REPORTER IN THE SKY, JERRY SUMMER, WILL TELL US HOW THINGS ARE LOOKING UP IN THE GNN NEWS CHOPPER, JERRY?

THANKS, VICKI. IT'S NOT EVERY DAY THAT WE SEE GOTHAM'S ROBINSON PARK LOOKING SO BEAUTIFUL. MORE PEOPLE ARE ARRIVING EVERY MINUTE, WITH A PARADE OF CARS...

...AND LIMOUSINES LINED UP AROUND THE BLOCK, VICKI, WHO HAS BEEN THERE WITH YOU?

JERRY, THE DAWSON SISTERS, FROM THE TWINS TOO MUCH SERIES, HAVE PASSED THROUGH HERE... SINGER HENRIQUE SABRINE... OUR HOST LARRY THOMPSON... AND NOW--





HELLO MISS VALE! I LIKED THE PHOTOS OF ME THAT YOU RELEASED. IT MUST HAVE COST A FORTUNE IN THE HANDS OF THE PAPARAZZI.

IF YOU WANT I CAN SEND YOU SOME FOR FREE.



JUST LET ME KNOW YOUR CONTACTS DETAILS.



RIDICULOUS...



VICKI... VICKI...!

GOTHAM INTERNATIONAL CIRCUS PREMIERE / RED CARPET
VICKI VALE - CELEBRITY REPORTER.



WE ARE STILL ON.

GOTHAM INTERNATIONAL CIRCUS PREMIERE / RED CARPET
VICKI VALE - CELEBRITY REPORTER.



HEH... WELL... AND THAT WAS... BRUCE WAYNE, GUYS.

GOTHAM INTERNATIONAL CIRCUS PREMIERE / RED CARPET
VICKI VALE - CELEBRITY REPORTER.



IN TODAY'S SHOW, WE WILL HAVE THE PRESENCE OF A UNIQUE PERFORMER, THE YOUNGEST ACROBAT ON EARTH...

GOTHAM INTERNATIONAL CIRCUS PREMIERE / RED CARPET
VICKI VALE - CELEBRITY REPORTER.



RICHARD GRAYSON IS KNOWN FOR PERFORMING INCREDIBLE ACTS AT JUST 12 YEARS OLD!

GOTHAM INTERNATIONAL CIRCUS PREMIERE / RED CARPET
RICHARD GRAYSON - G.I.C. PERFORMER



RICHARD IS THE SON OF ACROBATS JOHN AND MARY GRAYSON, THE CIRCUS PERFORMERS WHO STARTED THEIR CAREERS IN GOTHAM AND TODAY ARE THE APPLE OF G.I.C.'S EYE.

GOTHAM INTERNATIONAL CIRCUS PREMIERE / RED CARPET
FLYING GRAYSONS - G.I.C. PERFORMERS

LET'S WATCH AN EXCERPT NOW FROM AN INTERVIEW RECORDED EARLIER TODAY AT OUR CHANNEL 6 STUDIOS. HERE'S THE YOUNG RICHARD GRAYSON SPEAKING TO OUR OWN LARRY THOMPSON ON **GOTHAM LATE NIGHT**.

GOTHAM INTERNATIONAL CIRCUS PREMIERE / RED CARPET

VICKI VALE - CELEBRITY REPORTER.



AND I'VE BEEN TOLD THAT IN EACH CITY IN WHICH YOU PERFORM, YOU LEAVE BEHIND SEVERAL **BROKEN HEARTS**.



MY GOD! BRUCE, THIS IS BEAUTIFUL!

YEAH... I GOTTA ADMIT... THEY PULLED IT OFF.



TELL ME RICHARD ... WHAT IS THE SECRET OF YOUR SUCCESS?

HAHAHA! THE SUCCESS ISN'T JUST MINE, LARRY, IT'S MY WHOLE FAMILY'S. THEY TAUGHT ME EVERYTHING I KNOW.



I THINK THE SECRET IS THAT WE ARE ALWAYS TOGETHER, NO MATTER WHAT.







WHAT COMES NEXT IS A SHOW THE
LIKES OF WHICH HAVE NEVER BEEN
SEEN BEFORE IN THIS CITY.

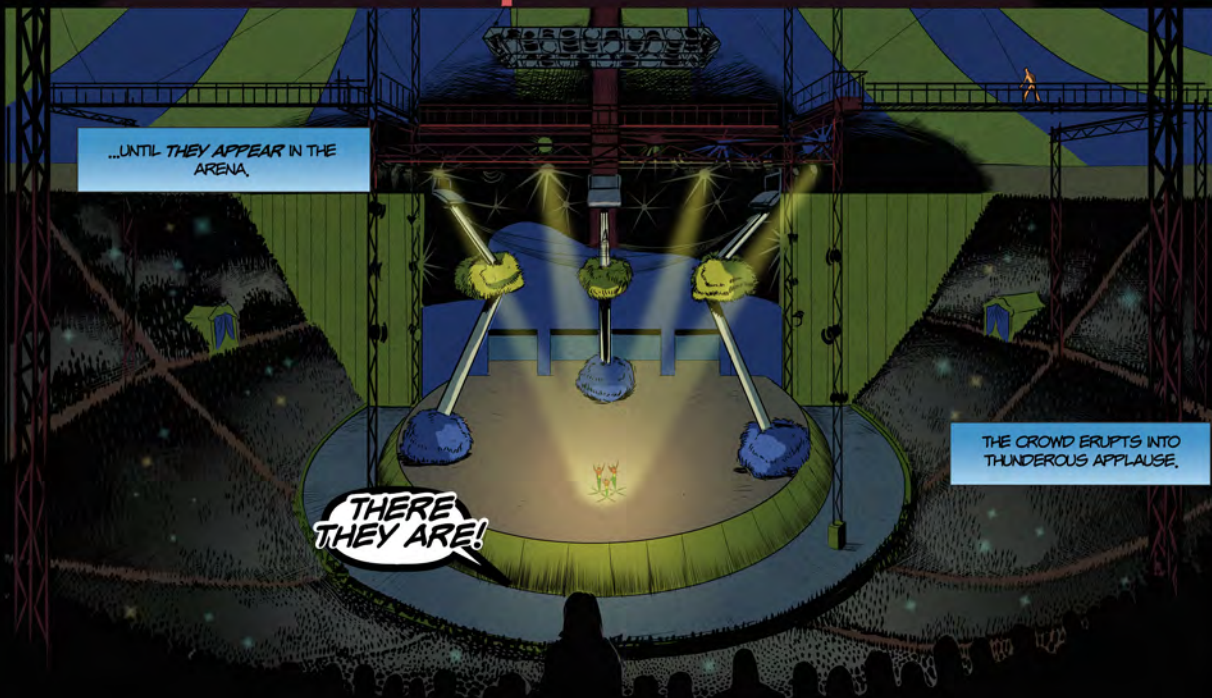
A WORK OF ART, LIGHT, MUSIC,
AND THE GREATEST ACROBATS
ON THE PLANET PERFORMING AN
ADAPTATION OF A STORY ABOUT A
FLOWER AND A HUMMINGBIRD THAT
FALL IN LOVE.

THE HUMMINGBIRD AND FLOWER
CANNOT LIVE APART. THEY WANT
TO SHARE THE BEST OF THEIR
WORLDS WITH EACH OTHER.
THE HUMMINGBIRD KNOWS
THE FLOWER'S WORLD QUITE
WELL... BUT THE FLOWER KNOWS
NOTHING BEYOND HER GARDEN,
LIMITED TO HOW FAR HER EYES
CAN SEE...

...UNTIL THE HUMMINGBIRD TAKES
THE FLOWER TO DISCOVER THE
WORLD OF BIRDS.



THE SHOW GOES OFF WITHOUT A HITCH AND NO SURPRISES...



...UNTIL THEY APPEAR IN THE ARENA.

THERE THEY ARE!

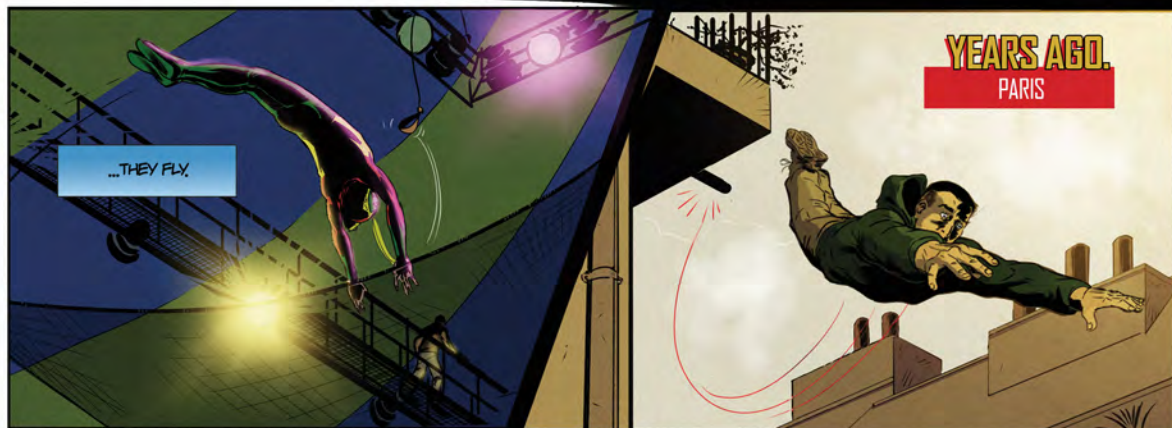
THE CROWD ERUPTS INTO THUNDEROUS APPLAUSE.



THERE THEY ARE:

THE FLYING GRAYSONS.







PARKOUR — DERIVED
FROM THE FRENCH
"LE PARCOURS"...

...WHICH MEANS
"ROUTE" —



IT IS A DANGEROUS
ACTIVITY.

SPEED AND ENDURANCE
ARE REQUIRED...



...AS IS A THOROUGH
UNDERSTANDING OF
THE ROUTE.



AND WHERE DOES THIS ROUTE LEAD?



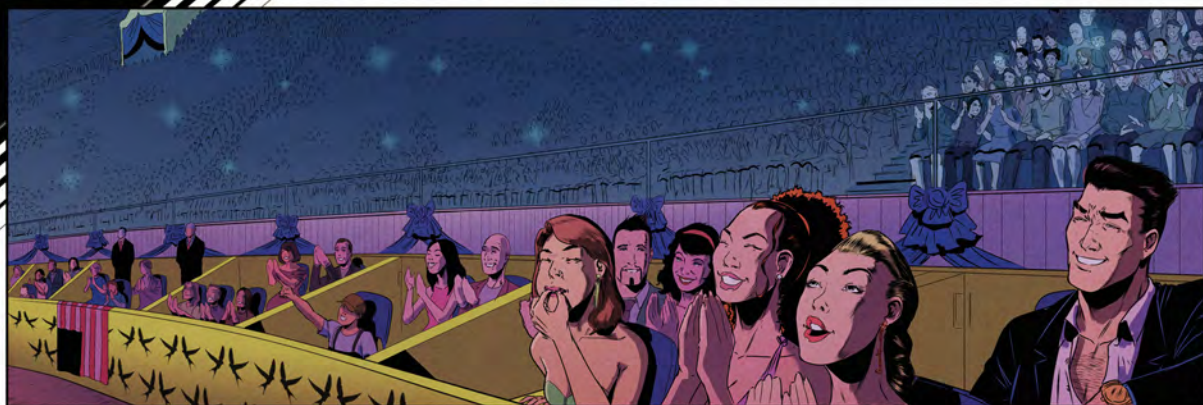
BUT WHAT IS "LE PARKOUR" SPIRIT?



IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO SAY THE PATH CAN CHANGE AT ANY MOMENT, IT REQUIRES CONSTANT IMPROVISATION.



AND IMPROVISATION IS ALWAYS RISKY.





WHO AM I, IF NOT AN
OUTCAST FROM
SOCIETY? LIKE
A *STRAY DOG*,
SOMEONE
WORTHLESS
HIDING IN THE
DARKNESS,



BUT IT WASN'T ALWAYS LIKE THIS...



...I USED TO BE UNDER THE
SPOTLIGHT,



BEFORE IT ALL FELL APART...



...THE ADDICTION...



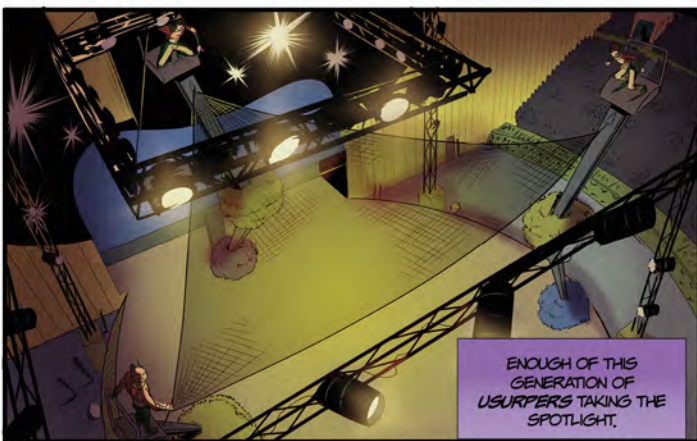
...THE BETRAYAL...



...THE HUMILIATION.



BUT THIS PHASE I'M IN IS ABOUT TO END...



ENOUGH OF THIS GENERATION OF USURPERS TAKING THE SPOTLIGHT.

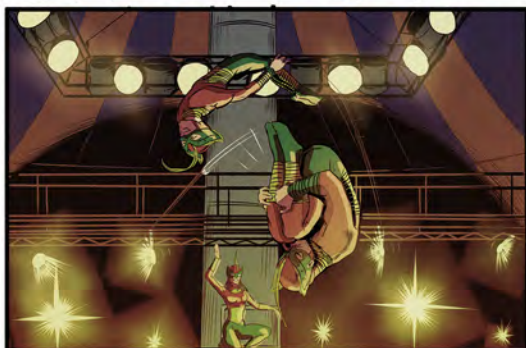


IN MOMENTS, THE BOMB WILL EXPLODE, AND THE SHOW WILL GO DOWN THE DRAIN... AND THEY WILL NEED MY HELP MAKING THE CIRCUS RISE AGAIN!



IT'S TIME FOR OLD JACK TO SHINE ONCE MORE.

A TOAST TO THAT...





JOHN! DID SOMETHING HAPPEN?

MAYBE A SHORT CIRCUIT, THE LIGHT JUST BLEW UP...



IT LOOKS LIKE MY PLATFORM IS DAMAGED.



SHOULD WE STOP, OR...?



I DON'T KNOW, THEY DIDN'T TURN OFF THE MUSIC...



FOR THE LOVE OF GOD! WHAT IS GOING ON?

NOT SURE, SIR, LIGHT FIXTURE NUMBER 8 IS ON FIRE, LOOKING INTO IT NOW.



WHATEVER HAPPENS, THEY CAN'T STOP!!

NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT, SIR.



THEY'RE BRINGING DOWN THE BACK-UP LIGHTING.



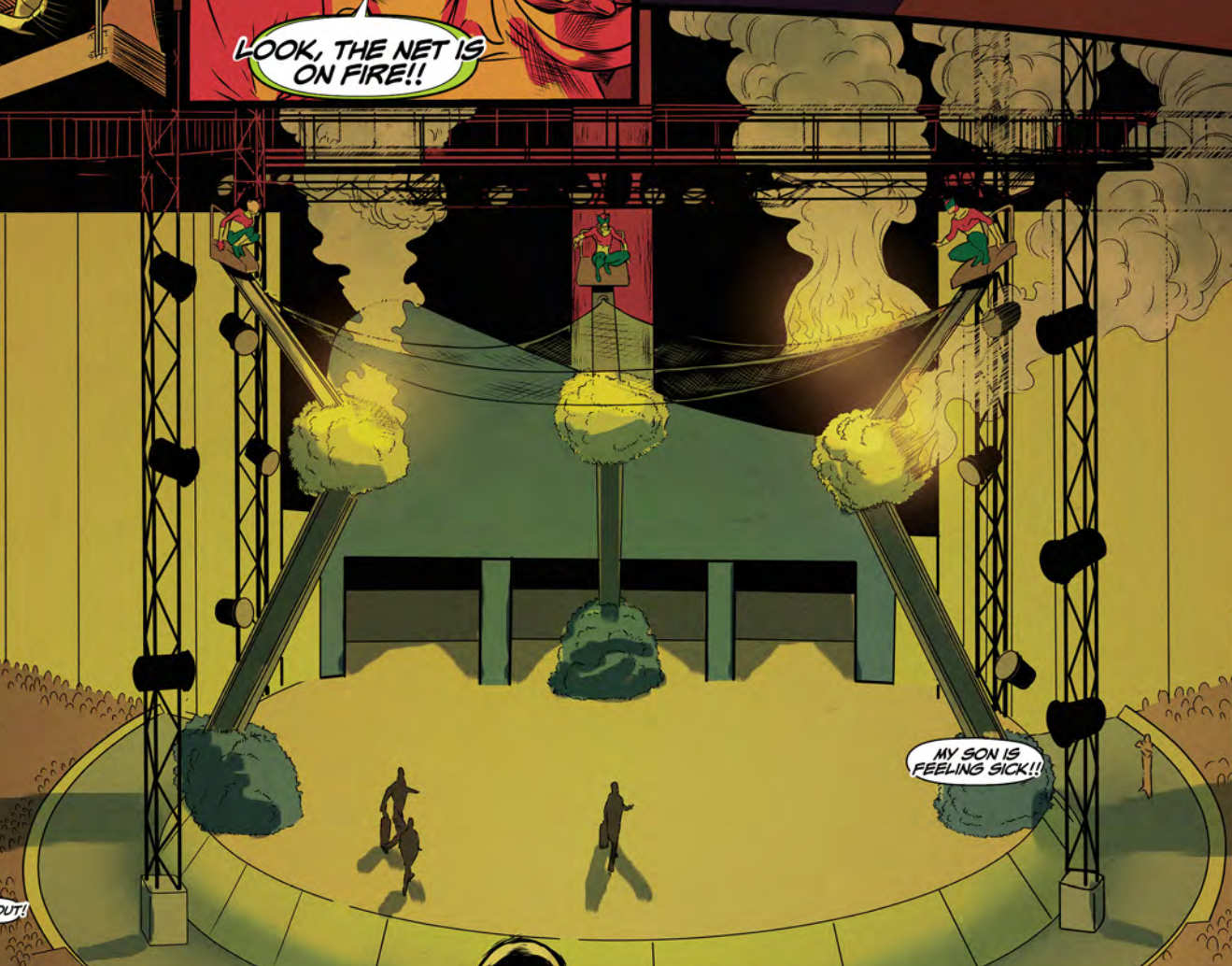
DAD, WHAT--!?



LOOK, THE NET IS ON FIRE!!



FIRE!! WE GOT TO GET OUT OF HERE!!



GET OUT!

MY SON IS FEELING SICK!!

GET OUT OF MY WAY!!
GODDAMMIT!!

LET'S GO NOW!!

I DON'T WANT TO DIE!



OH BRUCE, WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO?



BRUCE?!



COME IN, OLD OWL. DO YOU COPY?
WE HAVE A CODE 3 EMERGENCY.

IS THIS REAL?!



THIS IS THE OLD OWL. READ YOU LOUD AND CLEAR. WHAT'S THE SITUATION?

I THOUGHT YOU WERE STILL AT THE CIRCUS. WHY DIDN'T YOU TELL ME YOU WERE LEAVING?

I DIDN'T LEAVE, BUT I'M LEAVING NOW... TAKE THE CAR TO THE EAST EDGE OF THE PARK. I WANT TO AVOID THE EYES OF THE CROWD.



DAMN VICKI, WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?

I DON'T KNOW, CHANG, BUT IT LOOKS LIKE IT'S OUR CHANCE TO COVER SOME REAL NEWS FOR ONCE!



ARE YOU WITH ME, PARTNER?



I'M 25 SECONDS AWAY FROM THE POINT.



SKREEESSHHH

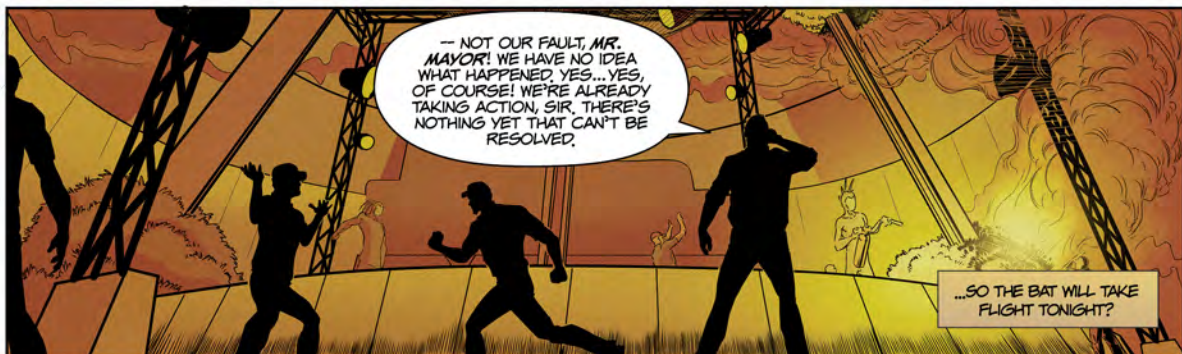


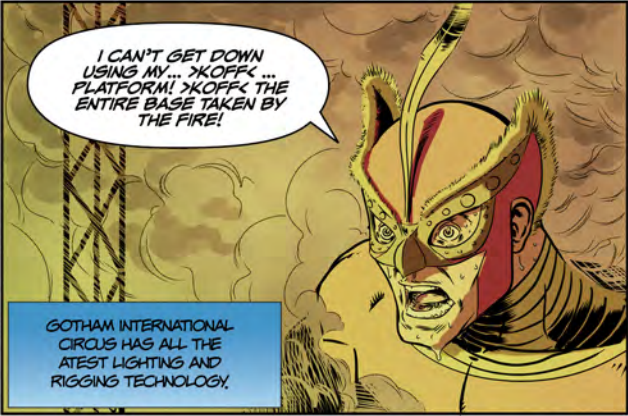
GREAT TIMING, ALFRED. LET'S GO!



EXECUTE A TYPE 12 MANEUVER.

BUT... WE HAVE NOT YET TESTED THE TYPE 12 MANEUVER.





I CAN'T GET DOWN
USING MY ... *KOFF* ...
PLATFORM! *KOFF* THE
ENTIRE BASE TAKEN BY
THE FIRE!

GOTHAM INTERNATIONAL
CIRCUS HAS ALL THE
ATEST LIGHTING AND
RIGGING TECHNOLOGY.



... I NEED TO USE YOURS
TO GET DOWN.



...THOSE REFLECTORS
ARE DESIGNED TO HAVE
LED LIGHT CANNONS AND
ISOLATED CIRCUITS...

KRINK!!



I'M GOING
DOWN!

...WHICH MEANS IT
WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE
FOR THOSE FIXTURES
TO SHORT CIRCUIT OR
EVEN EXPLODE.



KRINK!!

SURELY THEY WOULD
HAVE A SAFETY PLAN
FOR A POSSIBLE FIRE,
ALFRED...



THE BAT IS IN THE
AIR.

HOWEVER, IT'S NOT
POSSIBLE FOR
SOMEONE TO PREPARE
HIMSELF FOR THE
IMPOSSIBLE.



THEY'LL BE TRAPPED.

JUMP TO THE
RIGHT JOHN!

NO! WAIT, THE FIRE
DEPARTMENT IS
COMING!

JOHN STAY CLEAR!

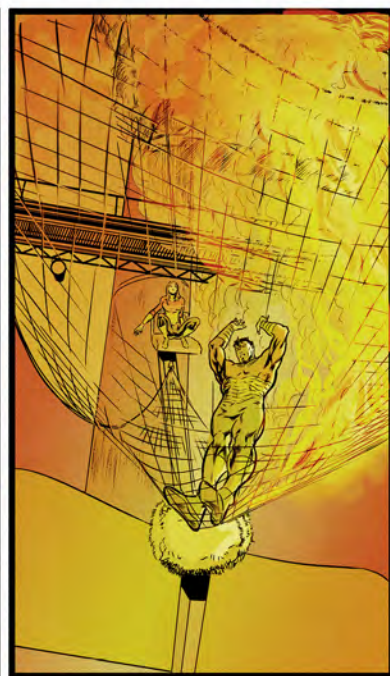
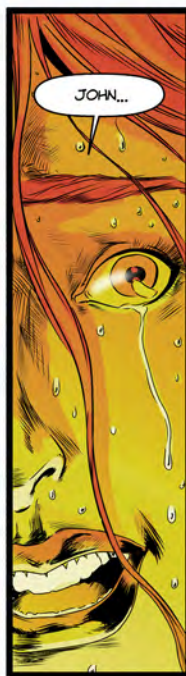
I'LL JUMP...

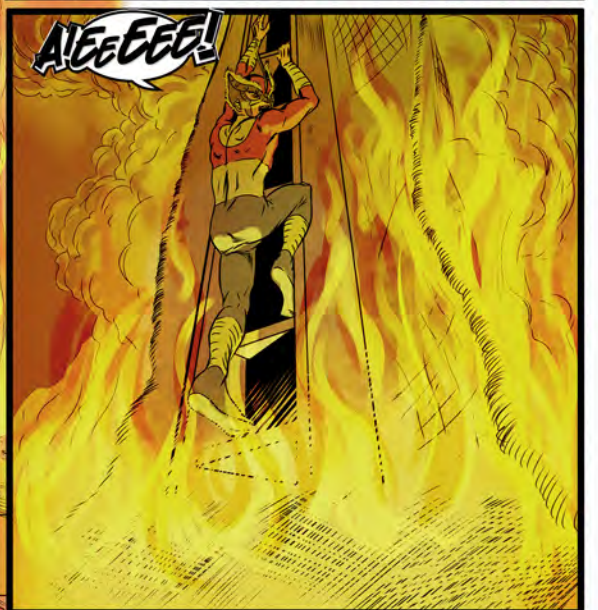


I HAVE TO BE FAST!

!!EAGHHH!!!

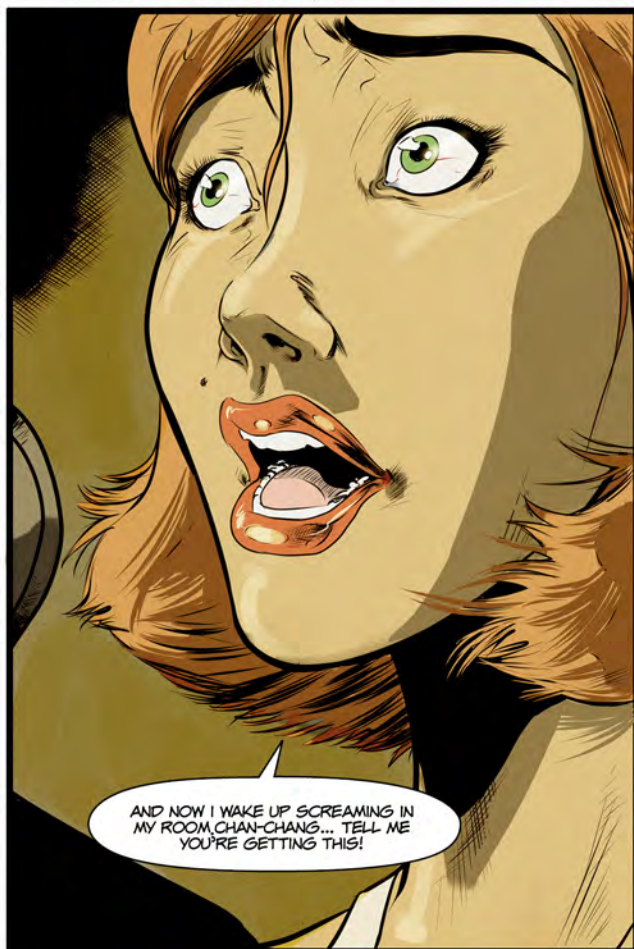
JOHN...















WELL, WELL... OUR
CRAZY FRIEND IS
BACK!



>PANT< >PANT< WE
GOT... >GASP< ...
GO >PANT< NOW!!

WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?
YOU WERE SUPPOSED
TO JUST TURN
OFF A FEW LIGHTS.



WELL, MY FRIEND,
I THINK THIS TIME...



...YOU'VE GONE
TOO FAR.



HEH!

HOLD ON TIGHT,
JOHN!!!



OH MY GOD! NO!



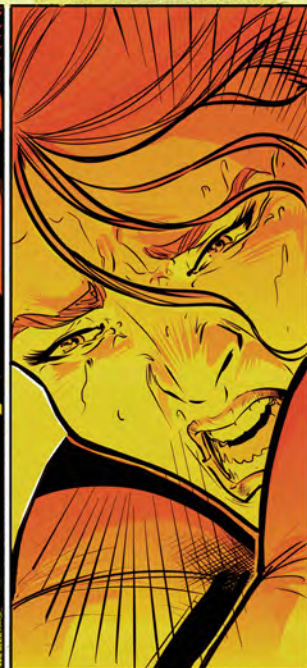
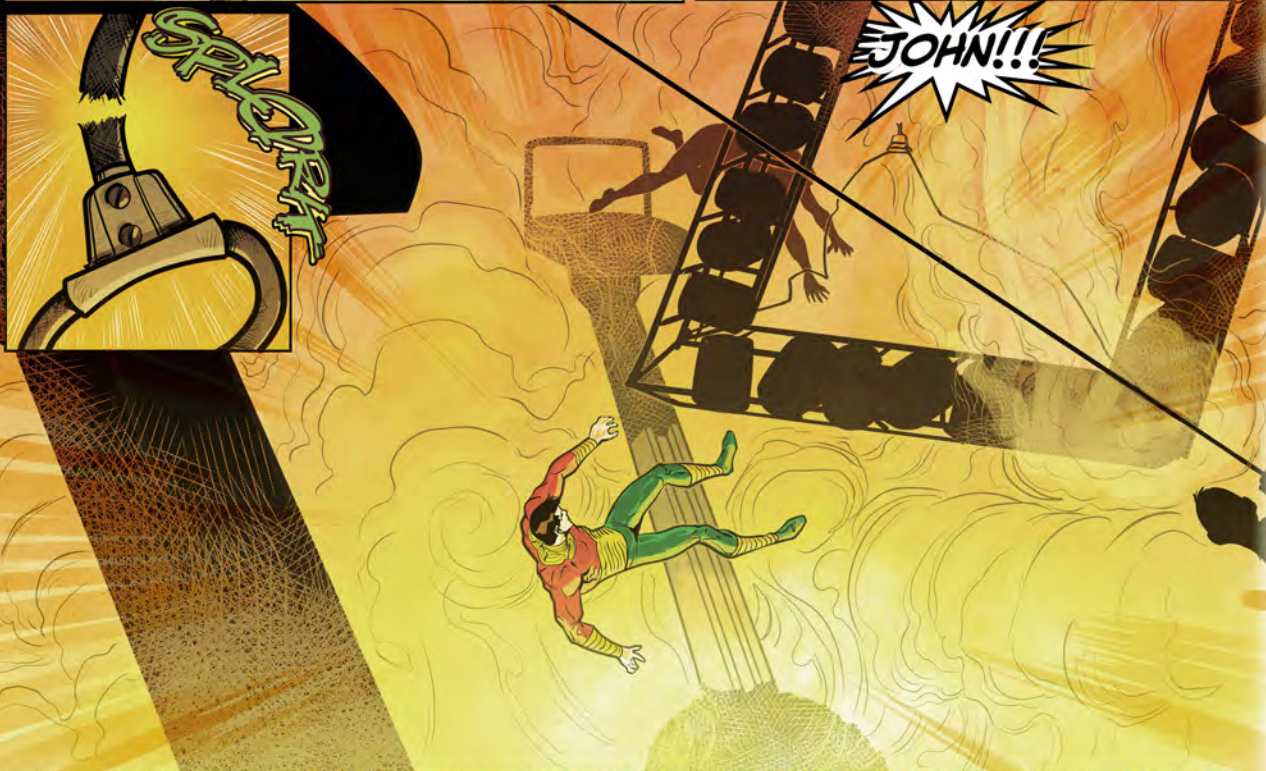
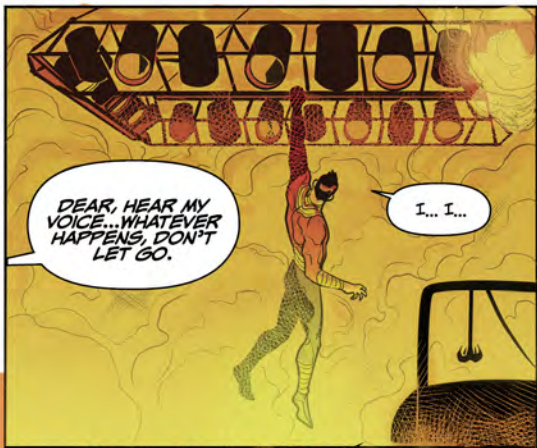
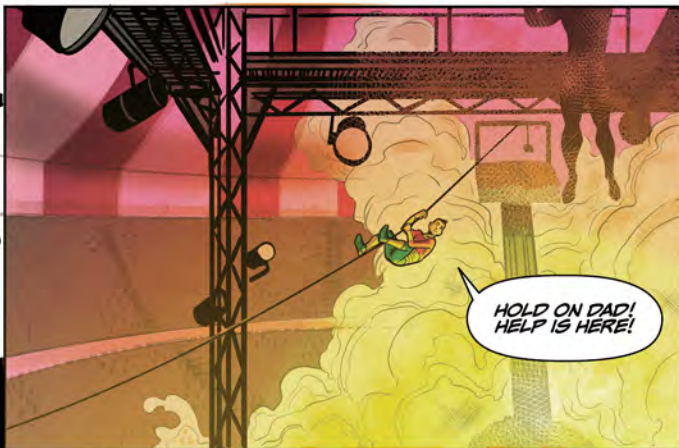
YOU CAN DO IT!! JOHN,
YOU NEED TO GET OUT OF
THERE. THE STRUCTURE
WON'T LAST LONG.

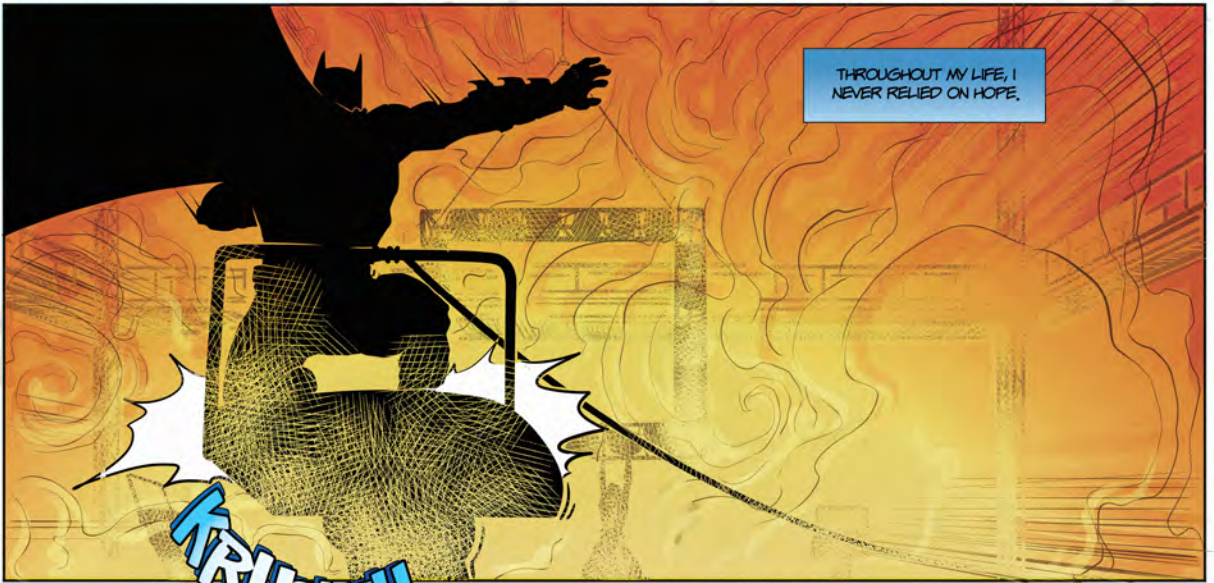
VICK VALE! WHAT ARE YOU DOING
HERE?! THIS ISN'T YOUR JOB! GET OUT!
DON'T GET YOURSELF KILLED FOR A
NEWS STORY!

JOHN! LISTEN TO
ME!!

I CAN'T STAND IT
ANYMORE!

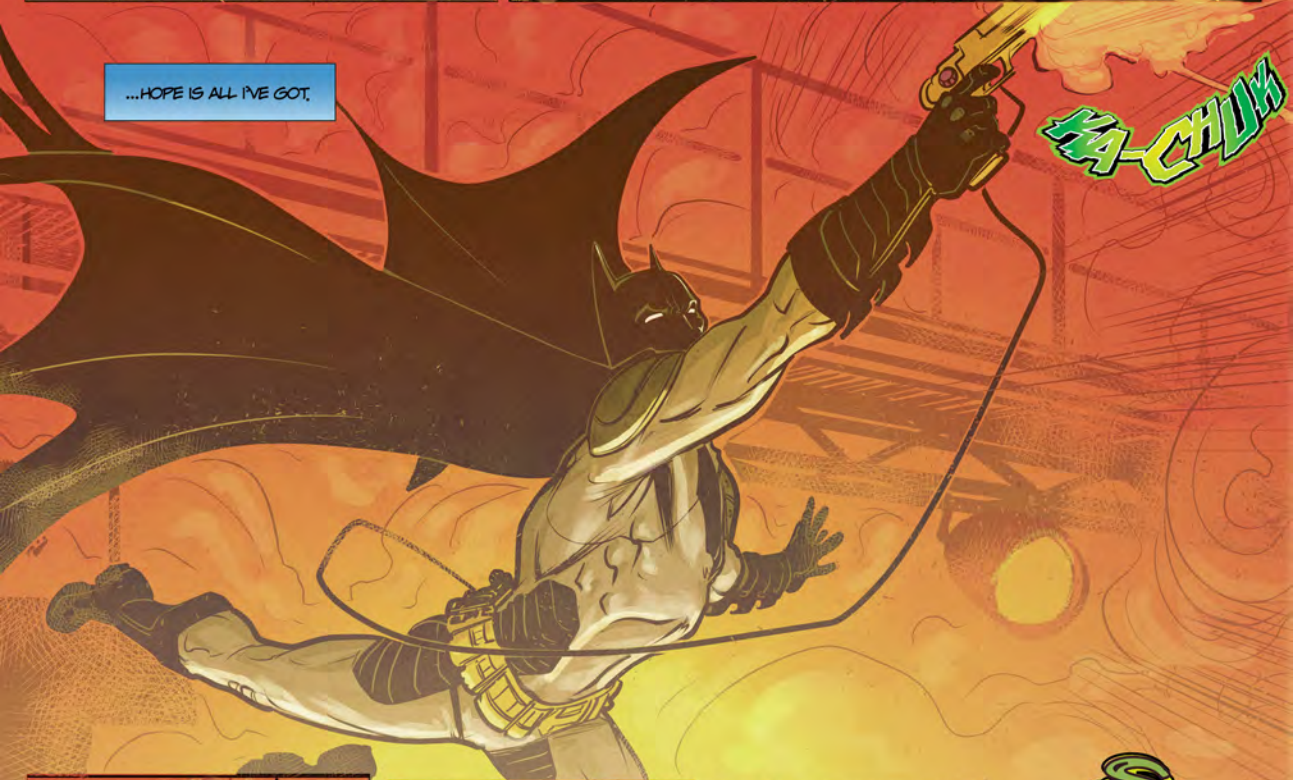




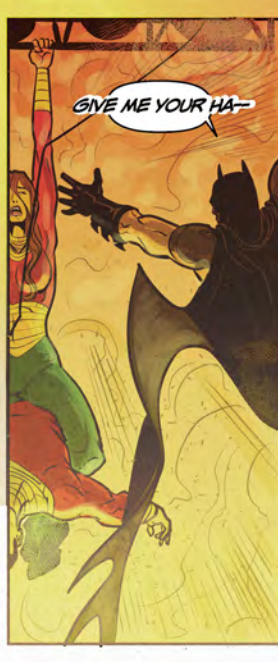




...HOPE IS ALL I'VE GOT.



KA-CHUNK



GIVE ME YOUR HA-



SPLAT



BUT IT'S NOT ENOUGH.



...MOM!!

TO BE CONTINUED...

This issue is dedicated to my beautiful and intelligent wife, Isis
Caroline, who since the beginning has supported me, closely
following each stage of the production of this story. She gave
me decisive opinions at crucial moments in the process.

Special Thanks:

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For presenting me the universes of comics and cinema. This project would never have happened without this introduction.

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For his amazing talent in 3D modeling, rendering and animation.

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For their kindness and extreme competence reviewing this comic book.

Natália Pimenta (daughter)

For her help typing at the beginning of this project.



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Uccelli



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Next chapter: "GEARS"

On "Project B" issue #02.
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