

DETECTIVE COMICS #801

Written by David Lapham and Mike Carey; Art by Ramon Bachs and Nathan Massengill
and John Lucas; Cover by Lapham



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CRIMINALS ARE A
SUPERSTITIOUS AND
COWARDLY LOT.



I SHALL
BECOME
A BAT.

GOTHAM CITY. *SIX MILLION* PEOPLE RESIDE WITHIN HER CONFINES.

HER LARGEST VERTICAL STRUCTURES RIVAL IN HEIGHT *EVEN* THOSE OF GREAT *METROPOLIS*.

BUT WHERE THE GOLDEN TOWERS OF *THAT CITY* REACH TOWARD HEAVEN, GOTHAM'S PEAKS AND SPIRES SEEM POISED AS A *DEFENSE*. A *WARNING*.

FOR HER *ROOTS* EXTEND DOWN DEEPER THAN WAYNE TOWER'S *ONE-HUNDRED-AND-SEVEN-STORY* REACH TO THE SKY.

HER *ROOTS* BURROW STRAIGHT DOWN INTO *HELL*.

A *SERPENTINE MAZE* OF *NARROW* STREETS AND ALLEYWAYS TRAP *EVERY SIN, EVERY VICE, EVERY* MURDEROUS THOUGHT AND DEED.

KEEPING THEM SECRETLY HIDDEN TO *FESTER* AND *ROT* AND *GROW*.

LAYER UPON LAYER, PILED SO HIGH, THAT, AT TIMES, THIS CITY, FOUNDED ON THE *SITE* OF A *MAD-HOUSE*, SEEMS *GLEEFULLY* WILLING TO CONSUME HERSELF.

AND GO *LAUGHING* ALL THE WAY.

SHE IS *TRULY SICK*. SHE NEEDS A *PILL*. SHE NEEDS *MEDICINE*.

HE IS THAT *MEDICINE*.



City of *CRIME*

DAVID LAPHAM RAMON BACHS NATHAN MASSENGILL
writer & layouts penciller inker
JARED K. FLETCHER JASON WRIGHT NACHIE CASTRO BOB SCHRECK
letters colors assoc. editor editor
BATMAN created by BOB KANE

part 1

HE THINKS SHE'S *THIRTEEN*.

WHEN YOU GONNA *INTRODUCE* ME?

RELAX. *ENJOY* THE *STARS*. *BABY*.

THERE *AIN'T* NO *STARS*. Y'KNOW, I *AIN'T* NEVER *SEEN* *STARS*.

YOU *ARE* A *STAR*. *BABY*.

WHAT *THE?*--

OH, *GOD...* IT'S *LOOKING* AT ME.

UH. *BABY*, I *THINK* YOU'D *BETTER* GO *HOME*.

WHADDA YOU *THINK* I *AM?*!



C'MON, BABY, JUST OVER HERE...

BUT THE CITY IS CLEVER. SHE WILL NOT TAKE IT WILLINGLY.

BUDDY ROACH, 32, CASANOVA, LOSER, LEADS SIXTEEN-YEAR-OLD JENNIFER CONWAY TO "THE SPOT."

HE'D BEEN WORKING HER FOR A WEEK AT THE ARCADE, AND, TONIGHT, HE'S FINALLY SCORED.

THE JOKE'S ON HIM.

A PIECE OF DIRT?!

YOU THINK I'M A PIECE OF DIRT! I KNOW ALL ABOUT YOU AN' THAT--

I THINK YOU'D BETTER SHUT UP, OR I'M GONNA--

I'LL SHOW YOU DIRT...

OH, FOR-- I'M WATCHIN' THE TV--





I GOT A NEW RECIPE!



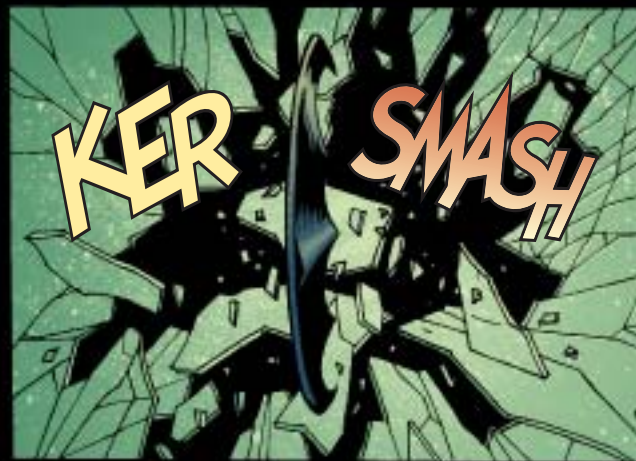
YOU'RE DRUNK! PUT DOWN THE KNIFE!

I'LL COOK YA SOME DIRT. DROP YER SHORTS!



ALICE. PUT DOWN THE KNIFE!

PUT DOWN THE G--



KER

SMASH



THUNK



SHATTER



FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE THAT WEEK IN ARIZONA TWENTY-TWO YEARS AGO HAROLD AND ALICE GREEN GET A MUCH DESERVED REST.



AT LEAST UNTIL TOMORROW NIGHT.



A **THIN LINE**, STRONG AS STEEL, SNAKES OUT THROUGH THE **BLACKNESS**.



DESCENDING DOWN INTO THE **BOWELS** OF GOTHAM'S WORST NEIGHBORHOOD.

THE **BOWERY**.

IT **ISN'T** A LINE FOR **CLIMBING**.

IT'S A LINE FOR **DESCENDING**.

BUT **HE** IS NOT AFRAID OF **THEM**.

WHERE EVERY **DARK THOUGHT** AND **UNSPEAKABLE ACT** **IMAGINABLE** LIVE IN THE **HEARTS** OF ITS CITIZENS.

HERE, **THEY** ARE AFRAID OF **HIM**.



RIGHT ABOUT NOW, LLOYD WISHES HE **HADN'T** TOLD HIS WIFE **HED** BE HOME LATE.

MUMBLE...
MUMBLE...
MUMBLE...



HE **CAN'T** EVEN **UNDERSTAND** WHAT THE **GIANT** WANTS FROM HIM.

EXCEPT HE **KNOWS** IT'S NOT MONEY.

BUSINESS MEETING.



HAVING NOTHING ELSE, HE TRIES MONEY.

MUMBLE...
MUMBLE...
MUMBLE...



KLAK



P-PLEASE...
I HAVE A **WIFE...**



I HAVE A COLD-- E- EVEN MY WIFE SAYS I'M NO GOOD IN--



HELLO?... SIR?



VROOM



IT NO LONGER MATTERS IF ANYONE CAN UNDERSTAND WHAT THE MUMBLING GIANT WANTS.

AAAAAAHHHHH

AFTER TONIGHT, IT'S NOT SOMETHING HE'LL BE CAPABLE OF DOING ANYWAY.



WOW.



THE CITY IS RELENTLESS.

FOUR BLOCKS AWAY, A WINDOW SHATTERS.

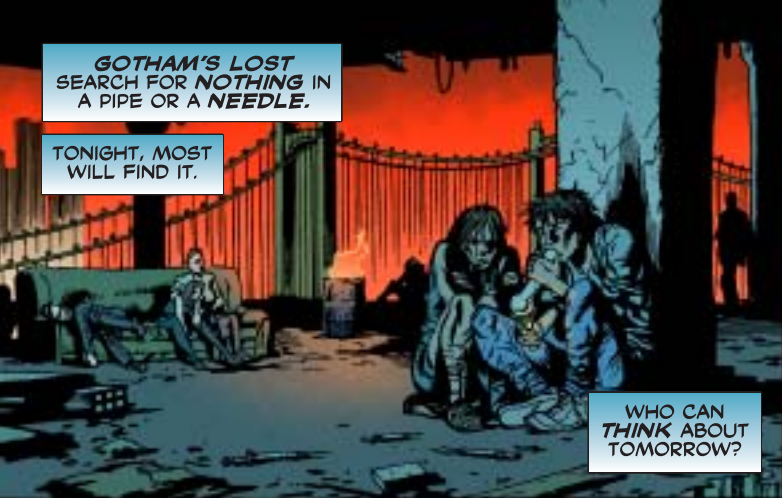


PAWN SHOP KWAN UN

THEY WILL NOT BE CAUGHT THIS NIGHT.

GOTHAM'S LOST SEARCH FOR NOTHING IN A PIPE OR A NEEDLE.

TONIGHT, MOST WILL FIND IT.

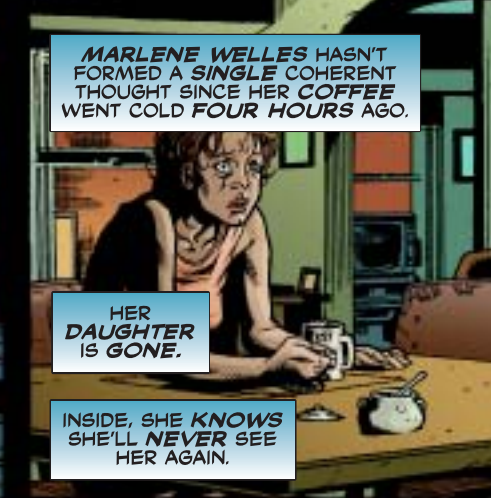


WHO CAN THINK ABOUT TOMORROW?

MARLENE WELLES HASN'T FORMED A SINGLE COHERENT THOUGHT SINCE HER COFFEE WENT COLD FOUR HOURS AGO.

HER DAUGHTER IS GONE.

INSIDE, SHE KNOWS SHE'LL NEVER SEE HER AGAIN.

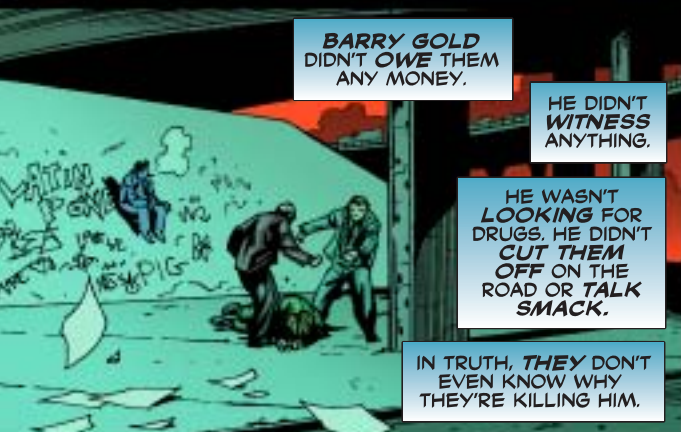


BARRY GOLD DIDN'T OWE THEM ANY MONEY.

HE DIDN'T WITNESS ANYTHING.

HE WASN'T LOOKING FOR DRUGS. HE DIDN'T CUT THEM OFF ON THE ROAD OR TALK SMACK.

IN TRUTH, THEY DON'T EVEN KNOW WHY THEY'RE KILLING HIM.



THE WAR WILL LAST ELEVEN MINUTES.

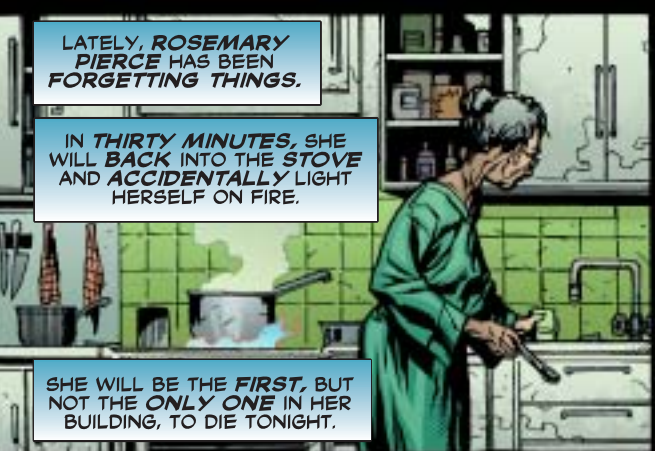
TWO OF THEM WILL NOT SEE SIXTEEN.



LATELY, ROSEMARY PIERCE HAS BEEN FORGETTING THINGS.

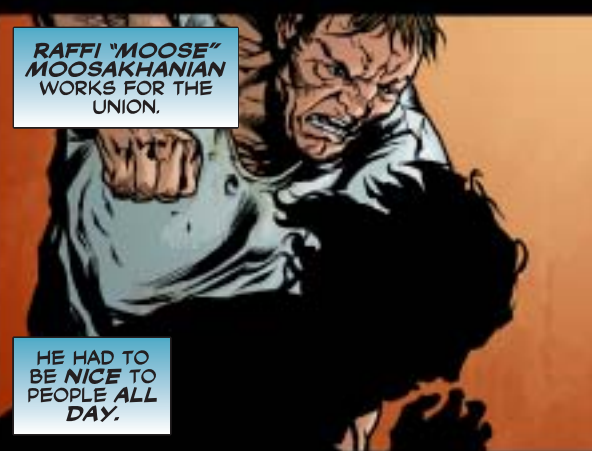
IN THIRTY MINUTES, SHE WILL BACK INTO THE STOVE AND ACCIDENTALLY LIGHT HERSELF ON FIRE.

SHE WILL BE THE FIRST, BUT NOT THE ONLY ONE IN HER BUILDING, TO DIE TONIGHT.



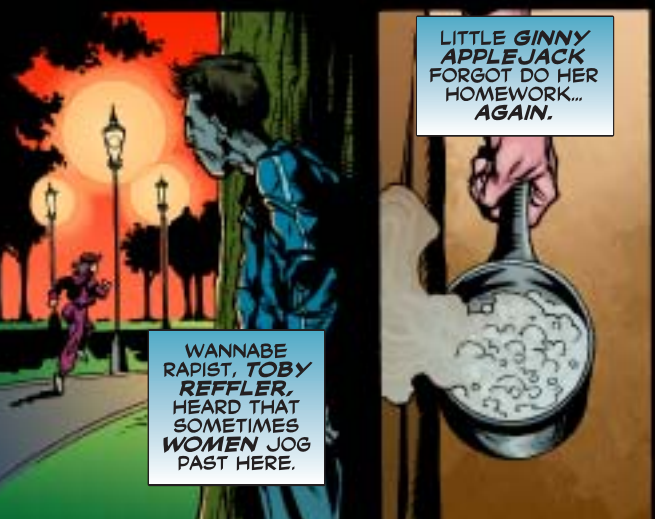
RAFFI "MOOSE" MOOSAKHANIAN WORKS FOR THE UNION.

HE HAD TO BE NICE TO PEOPLE ALL DAY.

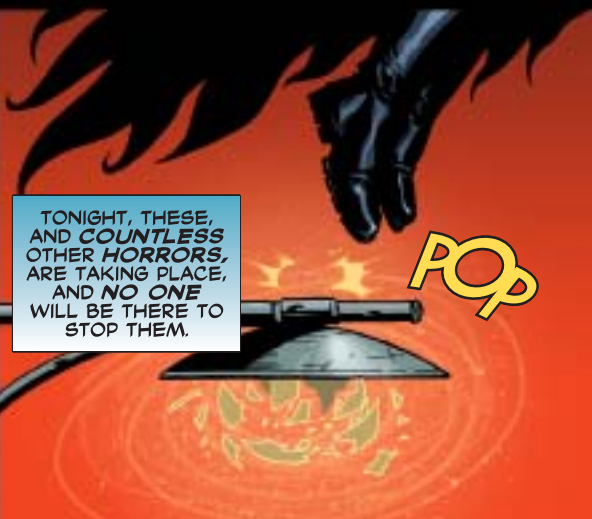



LITTLE GINNY APPLEJACK FORGOT DO HER HOMEWORK... AGAIN.

TONIGHT, THESE, AND COUNTLESS OTHER HORRORS, ARE TAKING PLACE, AND NO ONE WILL BE THERE TO STOP THEM.



WANNABE RAPIST, TOBY REFFLER, HEARD THAT SOMETIMES WOMEN JOG PAST HERE.





TONIGHT, *JENNIFER, HAROLD, ALICE, AND LLOYD* ARE THE *LUCKY ONES*. SAVED BECAUSE THEY WERE IN *HIS* PATH.

AND HE CANNOT LOOK AWAY.

THE CITY IS CLEVER. A *KILLER CLOWN*, A *TWISTED HALF-MAN*. A *PLANT* FORMED LIKE A *BEAUTIFUL WOMAN*.

MONSTERS. SHE BREEDS THEM. SENDS THEM INTO THE *NIGHT*.

THEY STAND OUT LIKE A *SORE THUMB*.

THE *MONSTERS* ARE *EASY* COMPARED TO THIS.

BUT SHE WILL *NOT* DISTRACT HIM *THIS* NIGHT.

TONIGHT, HE IS *HUNTING*.

THE PICTURE OF A *DEAD GIRL* DRIVES HIM ON. THE NAME OF A *MURDERER* DEFINES HIS PURPOSE.

MICKEY GRAVESLY.

SHE CANNOT HIDE *HIM*.