

Journey Planet



Journey Planet December 2016



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Guest Editor's Introduction: A Batman for Every Fan by Chuck Serface

Although I've been reading Batman comics since age four or five, I didn't go into editing this special issue of *Journey Planet* thinking that I'd experienced every possible nuance of the character in question. Indeed, the contributors included herein have more than supported my belief on this matter. Each fan will interpret the Dark Knight in any number of ways. Hence, there's a Batman for every fan, whether he's psychedelic-sixties, animated, a member of a superhero team, interpreted by various directors, or, as you'll see, represented in a certain pair operating in Maycomb County, Alabama during the Great Depression. My great thanks to all who shared their visions with me and with the readers of this fanzine. I hope that you, the reader, will enjoy these entries as much as I have.

Special thanks to James Bacon and Christopher J. Garcia for allowing me to play in their sandbox. Christopher remains the Batman of Boulder City, with two Penguins in tow. Bruce Wayne only deals with one!

You can never escape me. Bullets don't harm me. Nothing harms me. But I know pain. I KNOW pain. Sometimes I share it. With someone like you.

~ Frank Miller, *Batman: Year One*



The First Frame of the First Batman Comic, *Detective Comics* #27 from May 1939 Introduces the Two Longest Running Characters in the Batman Universe:

The frame shows two men sitting in armchairs. The one facing the reader is in a blue chair and wearing a yellow checked suit. He is smoking a pipe. Facing away from the reader in a red chair is an older man in the middle of lighting a cigar. A phone is ringing. Although Bat-Man [sic] is mentioned in the dialogue, he does not appear in this frame. The two individuals are identified in the caption as Commissioner Gordon and his young socialite friend, Bruce Wayne. Based on the dialogue, Wayne is in the yellow suit and Gordon is in the red chair.



Wayne is subtly, or not so subtly, fishing for information from Gordon, asking him if there is anything exciting going. Unfortunately for Wayne, Gordon seems to have a sense of propriety and doesn't give Wayne the skinny on any of the cases the police are working on, instead merely noting that he is puzzled by a fellow who is being called "The Bat-Man." (Two frames later, Gordon throws propriety to the wind and invites Wayne to accompany him on a murder investigation that really the Commissioner of Police shouldn't even be a part of).

Bruce Wayne looks similar to the modern version of Bruce Wayne, he hasn't changed the much. More interestingly, Commissioner Gordon bears as strong resemblance in this frame to Neil Hamilton, who would go on to portray him in the 1966 television series and film. (Hamilton would be the second actor to portray Commissioner Gordon, following Lyle Talbot, who also bore a resemblance to the figure in this frame.)

The frame is interesting not just because it introduces two characters whose names would become known well beyond the world of comics readers, but also for what it tells us about the story.

Gordon's comment, which could equally apply to (many versions of) the modern day Gordon indicates that he doesn't know anything about the Bat-Man, but it is stated in a way that also tells the reader that the Bat-Man is new to the scene. He hasn't had a chance to become either famous or infamous for his deeds.

It is also unclear who named the Bat-Man. People call him that, obviously based on his silhouette and the bat shaped logo that he wears on his chest, but we don't know if the character has been going around the rooftops and announcing in a Keatonesque voice "I'm Batman" or if some intrepid reporter caught a glimpse of the vigilante and given him the moniker.

Although the story is typical of many of the early Batman stories, it is rather tame compared to what modern readers expect from the character. Very few other tropes associated with Batman are introduced in the first story. Gordon is the commissioner of police in an un-named city. The villains are not costumed criminals, but simple murderers. Batman isn't shown driving around in the Batmobile (he drives a red sedan), using a Batarang, or hiding out in the Batcave. Aside from Commissioner Gordon, there are no other recurring characters in the story. Although both Batman and Bruce Wayne appear throughout the story, they are not explicitly linked to each other until the final frame of the short comic.

The first recurring villain, Doctor Death, would appear in the third Batman story in July, 1939. The Batgyro and the first costumed villain, the Monk, appeared in September of 1939. Robin would join up with Batman in April, just less than one year after Batman made his debut. Immediately after Robin's appearance, Batman received his own book. *Batman #1* saw the return of Hugo Strange, provided the Batman's origin story, introduced a female burglar called the Cat, a forerunner to Catwoman, and introduced Batman's greatest nemesis, the Joker





Batman Comics #1: Worth the Price? Yes and Much More! by Bradford Lyau

When *Superman #1* hit the stands in 1939, it made comic book history. The issue is the first in the industry to be devoted to a particular character. The issue itself contains nothing really spectacular, even including reprints of stories from *Action Comics #2, #3, and #4*. And another story turns out to be based on the first story from the epoch-making *Action Comics #1*. This issue does contain one original story: "Clark Kent Gets a Job." As the first of its kind, this issue commands high prices for comic collectors, rising up to three-quarters of a million dollars! Meanwhile, what about *Batman #1*, certainly an important issue in its own right? Following the footsteps of his fellow crime fighter from Krypton, he too was given his own title, and collectors chase after this one as well. Top dollar so far is a half-million dollars. Granted this amount is nothing to sneeze at, but I think it should be equal in worth to Clark Kent's alter ego's first issue.

Here are my reasons:

- 1) All original stories.
- 2) The second telling of the origin of Batman (the first was in *Detective Comics #33*).
- 3) The first appearance of The Joker!
- 4) The first appearance of Catwoman (originally called "The Cat")!
- 5) An interesting Dr. Hugo Strange story.
- 6) The second Joker story.

There you go! *Batman #1* contains the first appearances of two of Batman's most famous arch-villains! This fact alone should make it equal (some would argue more) to *Superman #1* in terms of collecting price.

Of course, market value and intrinsic worth are two different ways of examining an artifact. The highest price for a top-ranked comic book far surpasses that for a first edition copy of Charles Darwin's *Origin of the Species* (1859), one of the most important texts of modern science as well as of modern society in general. The asking highest price I have seen for this book is \$250,000, while a copy of *Action Comics #1* sold for over \$3,000,000! Go figure.



No .1

SPRING ISSUE

BATMAN

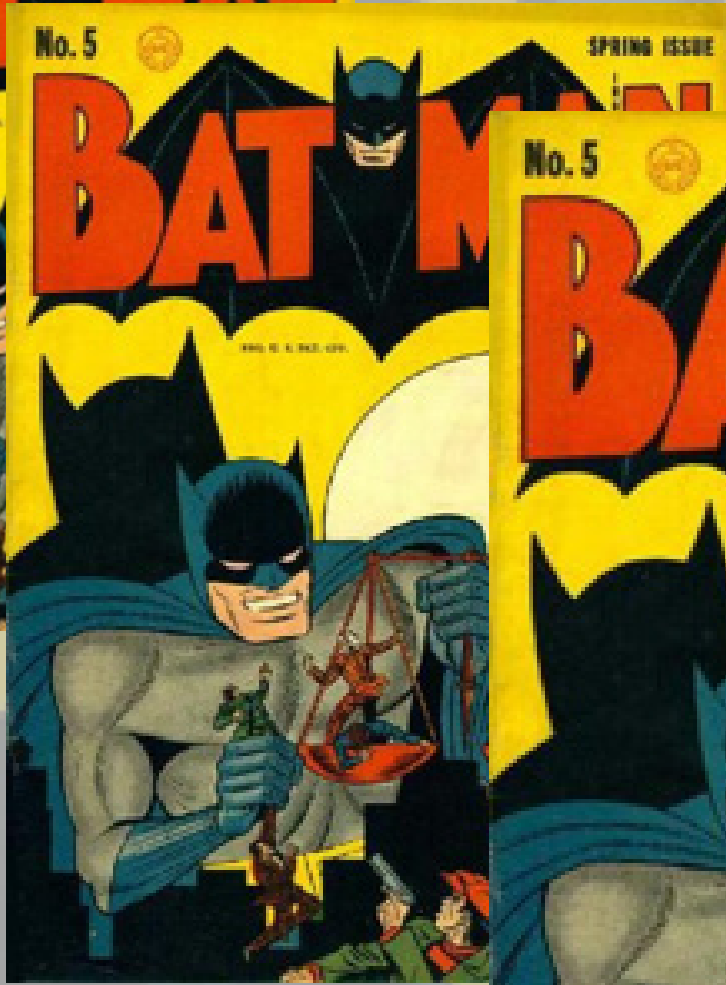
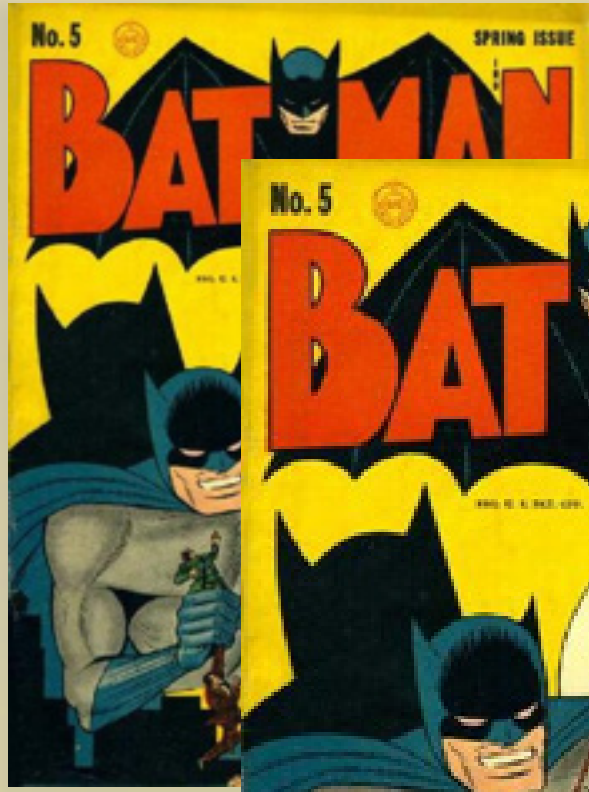
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BOB KANE



ALL BRAND NEW
ADVENTURES
OF THE BATMAN
AND ROBIN,
THE BOY WONDER!



*Batman #5: An Iconic Story
by Bradford Lyau*

If any old-comic-book fan knows about *Batman Comics #5*, he/she will probably recall that it is the issue in which the Batmobile first appeared with a streamlined, finned look with the signature bat-head ornament on the front.

For me, however, this issue's most memorable aspect will be one its stories, "The Case of the Honest Crook."

Here is the synopsis taken from the DC database:

A thief is captured by Batman right after robbing a shop. It turns out that he stole only six dollars. To explain his strange action, the young man tells his story. He was engaged and was saving money for the wedding while working at a garage. One night mobsters stopped at this garage with a 'hot' car and promised him 200 dollars for silence. When his girl had discovered the source of the money, she insisted on not accepting it. So explaining the situation to the mobsters, he refused the money. That aroused their suspicions about him, and to play it safe, the crooks framed him with a drunk-driving charge.

Spending two years in custody gave him two things: a wife, who married him right after the release, and hate for the mobsters, who framed him. With a prison sentence behind him, he cannot hold any job for a long time and is running out of money. And then his wife gets ill. That's why he stole only six dollars to buy the medicine. Batman gives him money to save the wife and begins to work on revenge against the mobsters. Batman recognizes one of the mobsters described, and pays a visit to Smiley Sikes' mob to find out who is responsible for the frame. The visit leaves mobsters shattered and the place shuttered. The recognized mobster, Matty Link, barely misses Batman's visit and plans to get away from the city. But to stop him from talking to Batman, Smiley orders his death. Bruce sees this result in the morning pages and goes to Commissioner Gordon for information. Meanwhile, Robin must search Link's room for any clues.

Concerned with Robin's absence, Batman arrives at Link's place and finds Robin badly injured. He even he's dead for a moment, which causes a great rage in the Dark Knight. He delivers the boy to a doctor first, and then races to Smiley's hideout. There he overtakes the mobsters and force a confession out of Smiley, despite being shot three times. The doctor operates on Robin, and then on Batman without revealing their identities.

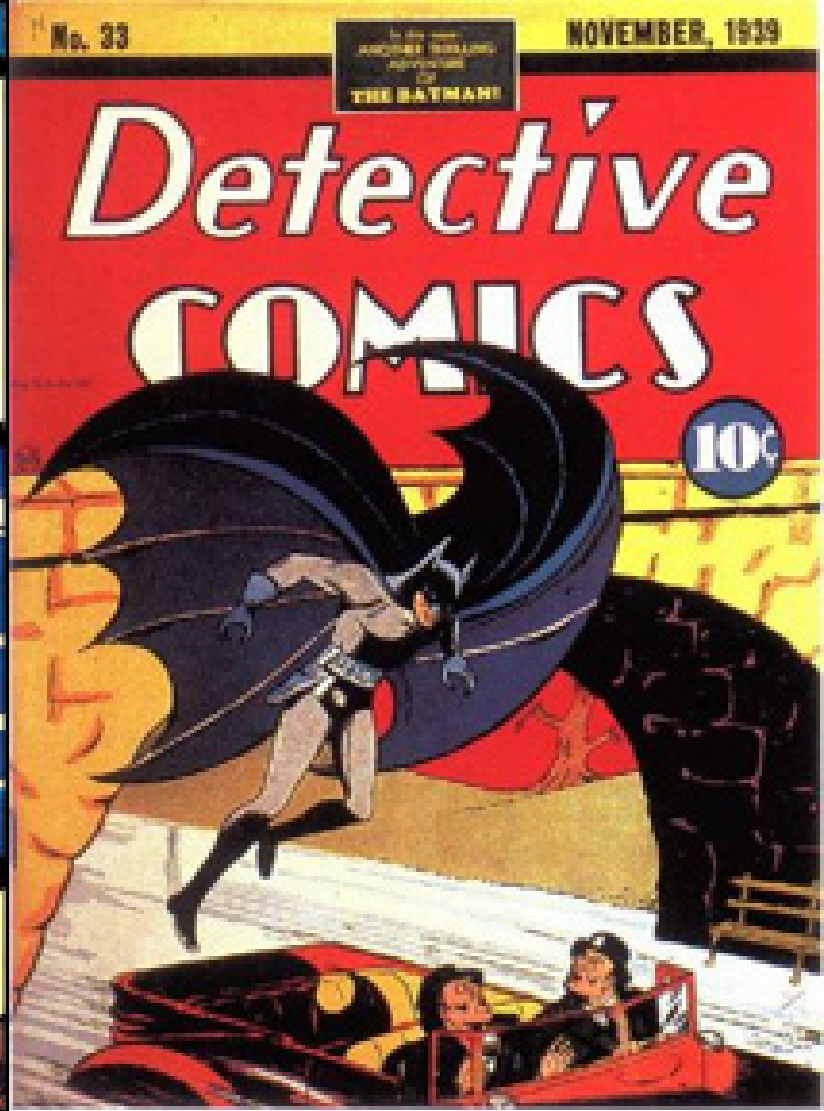
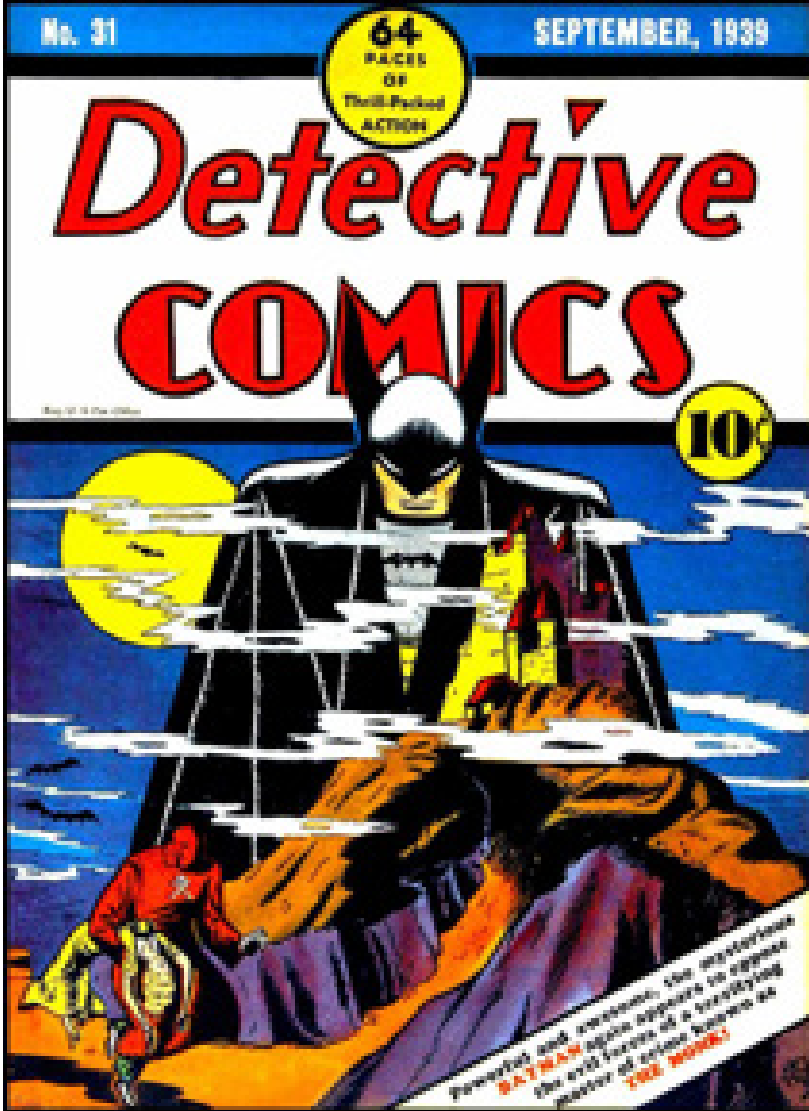
The next day the 'thief' visits them at the doctor's place and he informs Batman that he got a job at the store he had tried to rob, and his wife is going to be all right.

I wish I could include the artwork.

I consider this story the first one I would use to describe the Batman character as first presented during the Golden Age. Batman has been through so many changes during the last 77 years, one sometimes forgets the original version. When Frank Miller developed the Dark Knight character, people praised him for bringing more depth and revealing the dark side of crime fighting and of Batman himself. And all the praise is justifiable.

However, I would argue that what Miller did was what Bob Kane, Bill Finger, and Jerry Robinson tried to do back in the day, but under far more restrictions to which the comic book medium was subjected. Batman was an avenging creature of the night who tried to stop crime. Both the police and the criminal world did not know him and feared him. Just look at the memorable covers of *Detective Comics #31* and *#33*, where the dark and often violent side of Batman's crusade against evil (*Detective #33's* even has Batman having a holstered gun on his utility belt). In these early stories, Batman even killed with no remorse.





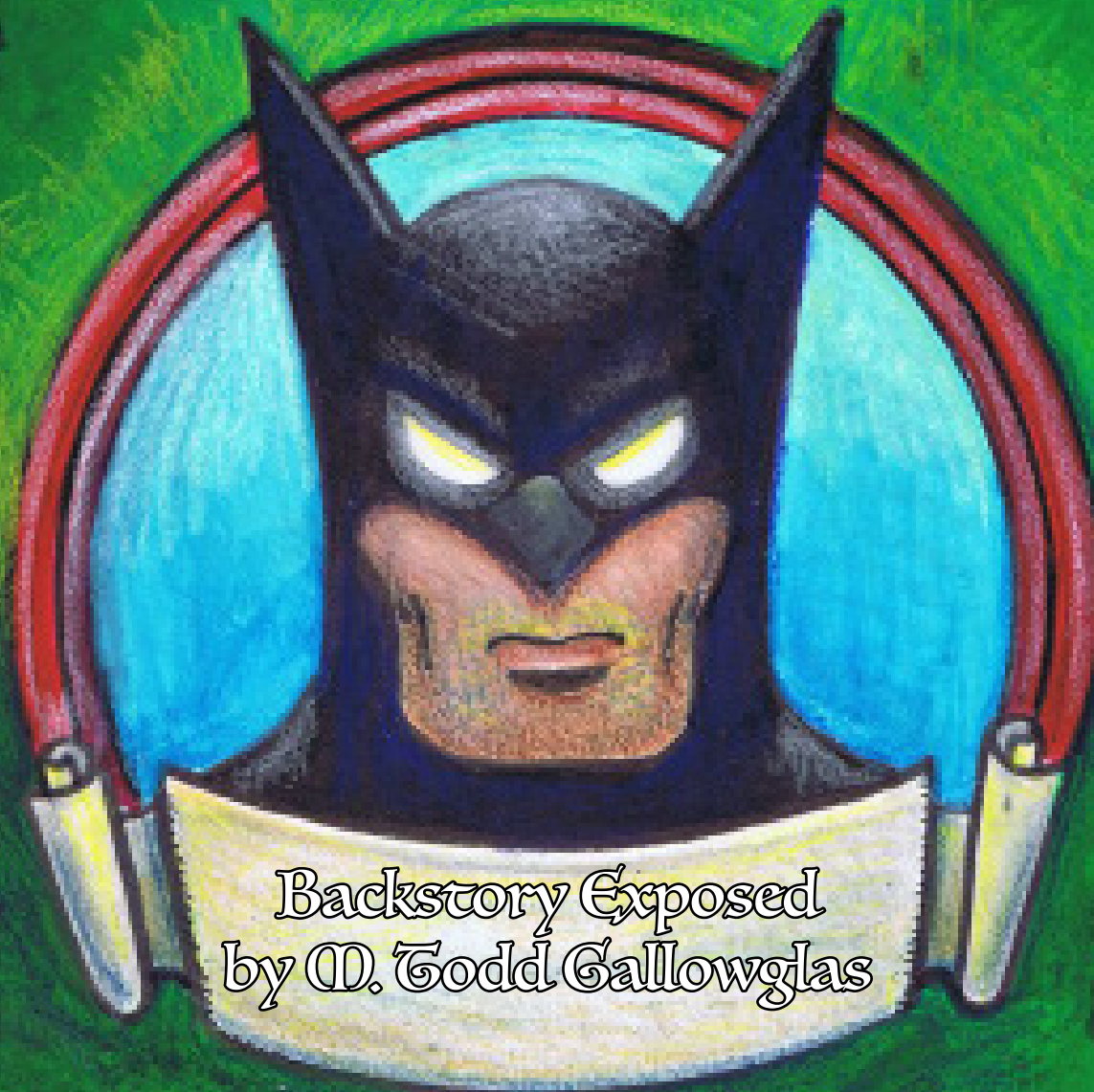
Meanwhile, during this early character development, a common theme persisted: Batman's pursuit of JUSTICE. He will right wrongs, paying no mind to the police, city hall, or any acceptable social institution. He will attain justice by himself if need be.

"The Case of the Honest Crook" best represents this version of Batman's character. The title alone gives a hint of the ambiguity inherent in fighting crime during the Great Depression when doing what is right may not necessarily mean obeying the law or adhering to society's norms. The honest crook is a person who has paid his debt to society (and for a crime he did not commit) and cannot escape the stigma of being an ex-con. The vigilante aspect of Batman is obvious. And Batman's resolution literally involved blood and guts--his! What I like especially about this story is that no super-villains or new weapons are involved, just a lone crusader pursuing justice in a world stacked against people who are only trying to make a living.

This story may have been reprinted. If you chance upon it, please read and appreciate and enjoy the original Dark Knight.

You believe you can change the way of things, Batman. It is why you are who you are.

~ The Phantom Stranger



Backstory Exposed
by M. Todd Gallowglas



*After Bob Kane
2016 Mawin Starky*

“And we’re going live in, five, four, three . . .” The director completed the countdown in silence by holding up two fingers, then one, then the catchy theme music hit.

Steve Stewart looked into the camera and read from the prompter, “Welcome back to the show. Thanks for waiting through the two opening segments to get to this big moment. Please welcome to the Daily Report, for his first televised interview, the Avenging Shadow, the Bringer of Justice, Mister X.”

The crowd erupted into cheers and applause unlike anything Steve Stewart had heard in Daily Report history.

Mister X came out from back stage, wearing his gray superhero costume, highlighted with white and black and with the large black “X” across his chest. His cowl covered most of his face, but just in case, he also wore a mask covering everything but his eyes. But seeing those wouldn’t help identify him. He had contacts that made his eyes look completely red.

The crowd grew even louder. Steve Stewart realized they’d made the right call in hiring the extra security.

After a few minutes, the audience finally calmed down to where Steve Stewart could ask his first question.

He and the writing team had gone round and round about the first question. Was the joke too much, too far past the line? Then one of their new interns asked, “What’s that you always say, boss? If you’re worried about crossing the line, it’s a line that needs to be crossed. That’s what political comedy does.” And that decided the matter.

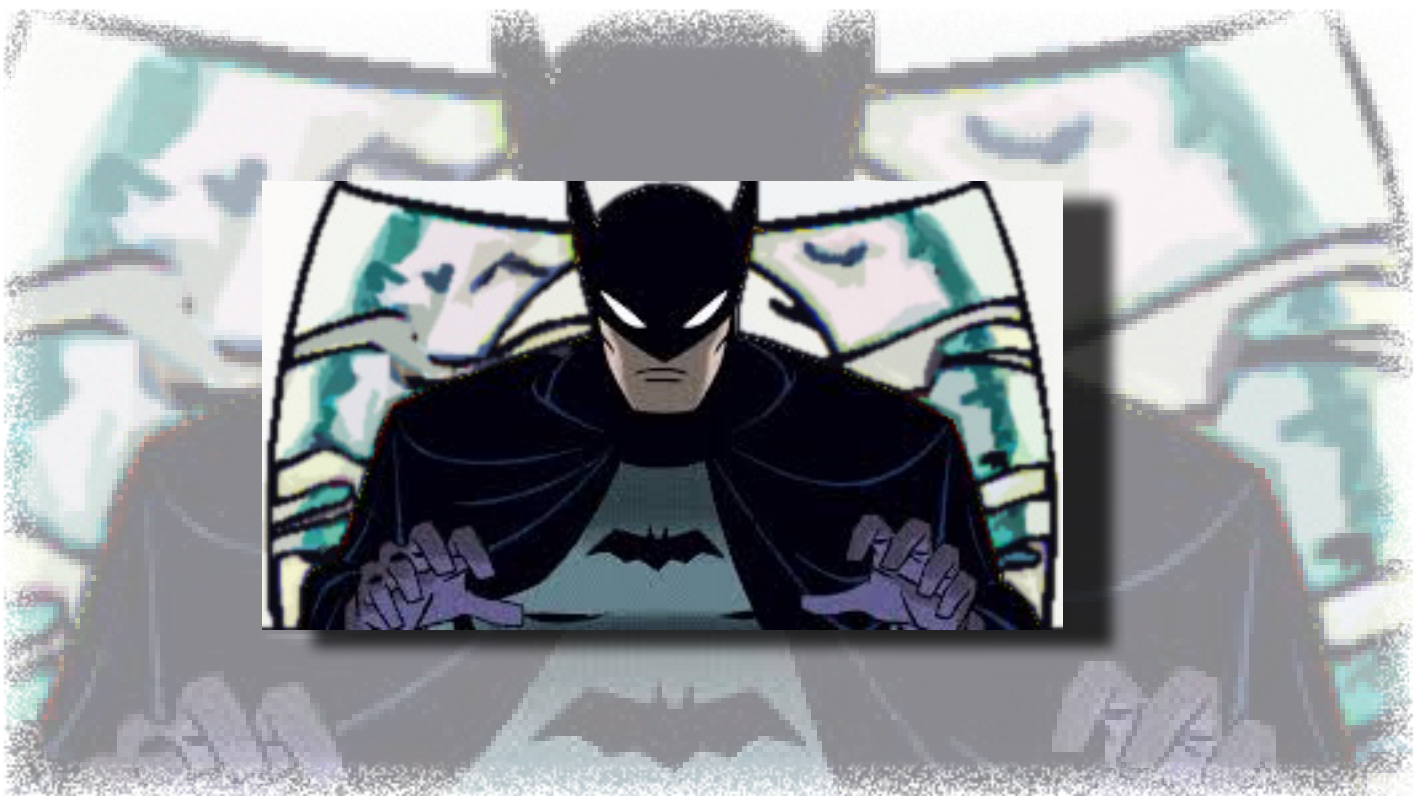
“So, Mister X,” Steve Stewart said. “Everyone knows your back story. Parents killed by a burglar while you were having a family movie night.”

“Yes,” Mister X replied in a monotone.

“But what people don’t know is that you staged the burglary,” Steve Stewart said, and even as he added, “Isn’t that right?” he knew that he’d hit on the truth.

After years of performing in dimly-lit comedy clubs and dive bars, he’d learned to judge people by their posture, since he couldn’t see most of the audience’s faces beyond the bright lights. He’d honed that talent to an instinctive level in his years hosting the Daily Report. Mister X shifted, subtly, almost imperceptibly, but enough to tell Steven Stewart that this wasn’t a joke. It was the truth. He’d just revealed the deepest darkest secret of one of the most dangerous men on the planet on world-wide television.

Mister X shifted again, and while Steven Stewart’s body couldn’t react in time to save himself, his mind was more than capable of realizing that with one question, he had inadvertently turned one of the world’s greatest superheroes into a villain.





Everybody knows that the night Bruce Wayne's parents were killed, the family had gone to see *The Mark of Zorro*. In a weird and twisted way, because after that night it seems like everything that would happen to Bruce would be weird and twisted, it became his favorite movie. If not his favorite, it was at least the one that most influenced him, and quite possibly was the last movie he ever saw, though you can imagine he might have gone in for the occasional Errol Morris documentary.

In the 1990 mini-series *World's Finest* by Dave Gibbons and Steve Rude, Clark Kent even gave Bruce a copy of *The Mark of Zorro*. To balance out how we are shaped by cinema, Gibbons suggested that Clark's favorite movie was *To Kill a Mockingbird*, and that he took inspiration from Gregory Peck's portrayal of Atticus Finch.

Go back and watch that film, and the parallels are obvious. Watch that movie and be sad that nobody took Superman seriously enough as a character in the 1960s for a big budget production that could have landed Peck in the role. His baritone communicates warmth, intelligence, and, when necessary, sternness, often all at the same time. Behind his glasses lie keen eyes that could judge us, but don't. If you're familiar with the story, you know, too, that Atticus Finch fights for justice.

He is the Superman of Maycomb County.

But he is not the only force for justice there. It didn't occur to me until a few months ago when I watched the movie for the first time in well over a decade. Atticus Finch is always in light – even when guarding Tom Robinson's cell at night, he carries a light with him. If not a yellow sun, it's probably a yellow lightbulb. While he takes care of the main injustice of the story, there is a figure lurking in the shadows, protector of the weak and defenseless children of Maycomb County, even as he's their boogey man.

If Atticus Finch is Superman, Arthur "Boo" Radley is Batman.

Boo enters the narrative as a myth – he's real enough, but the children of Maycomb have built him up to be a frightening creature of darkness. His origins stem from an act of violence, one that certainly caused fright and gossip in its time, but has now faded. The adults of the town don't speak of him; they barely acknowledge Boo even when the children bring him up. Since the night of violence, it seems like no one has seen him. But the children know he's there. Scout, Jem, and Dill even venture to the edge of the Boo-Cave (the Radley House) to prove their courage.

Though neither of the Finch children could fairly be called Robin, it's obvious that Boo has an affection for them. Like Batman, Boo Radley has a trauma in his youth, and the Finches and their friend Dill may remind him of the simpler time before the light got taken out of his soul. Boo may not live in a mansion, but he does have wonderful toys.

It's Jem that discovers that – in his quiet way, Boo converses with the kids, though they don't always get the message. He leaves offerings for them in a tree in his front yard – lucky pennies, a broken watch and chain, and carved soap figures of them. Boo doesn't mean to strike terror into their hearts, but also like the Bat, he knows how to use symbolism. The message is clear to us, even if it's not clear to the kids: he's watching out for them. (The film also adds medals – giving an extra layer of heroism to Boo somewhere in his past.)

That's a portion of the Batman mythos that often gets overlooked, easy to do when you think about how many kid sidekicks he's endangered on a regular basis. Batman is determined to do what he can to make sure that what happened to him won't happen to anyone else. (That's literalized by Alan Brennert in his classic Batman story, "To Kill a Legend." Hmm. Just noticed THAT parallel.)

It's bluntly stated in the last episode of the animated series *Batman: Brave and the Bold*. At the "wrap party," the Dick Sprang-inspired Batman addresses the audience – the children – and reminds them that he will always be there to protect them. Voice actor Diedrich Bader admitted that was a tough line for him to say without choking up, as a Batman fan and a parent.

Batman is there to protect the children. Always.

"A hero can be anyone. Even a man doing something as simple and reassuring as putting a coat around a young boy's shoulders to let him know that the world hadn't ended."

To Kill a Mockingbird has a villain: Bob Ewell, a drunken ne'er do well and bigot who rails against anyone who stands up against his racism. Determined to get revenge against Atticus Finch for "humiliating" him in court, the vile Ewell plans a Halloween attack on Atticus' children as they walk home from the school pageant. It's a dark night, and Ewell assaults them, but they have a dark knight to spring to their defense.

Ewell manages to break Jem's arm before Boo Radley can wrestle him away. Scout falls down, dressed as a giant ham for the pageant (a detail that had to have happened in some *Batman* story by Bill Finger). She cannot see what happens, but pieces together that her savior is the fearsome Boo.

He carries Jem home, followed by Scout, and then slips into the shadows of Jem's room to watch and make sure that the boy is okay. To complete the parallels, Sheriff Heck Tate appears as our Jim Gordon, who understands that some vigilante justice may be necessary. He reveals the truth to Atticus – that Boo Radley killed Bob Ewell to save Atticus' children.



Atticus recognizes the truth of his children's benefactor, the secret identity, if you will. He suggests Scout take Boo to the front porch instead of the living room, as she realizes ". . . the living room lights were awfully strong." But Atticus also wants the truth to come out, which Heck Tate argues against. Boo Radley must stay shrouded in darkness for his own sake. Granted, not so he can continue fighting for justice, but because it really is better that way. Atticus stands in the light; Boo slips back into the night, and Scout never sees him again. Of course this isn't a perfect parallel. I doubt Dave Gibbons was putting that much thought into it by his reference. However coincidentally, in the last pages of Harper Lee's novel Scout returns from the Radley house to find Atticus reading a novel from her brother Jem's bookshelf. The title? *The Gray Ghost*, which on *Batman: The Animated Series* was used as the character who influenced Bruce Wayne rather than Zorro.

The book Atticus reads is likely a boys' adventure novel, but it can serve as a reminder: there's good in the world, even if it doesn't always appear the way we want it. And Boo Radley is there to protect the children. Always.





There's an episode of *Batman* that has always been my thing. It's called "Pop Goes the Joker", and it basically takes a very, very smart look at the art world and places into the whacky world in which the 1966 *Batman* inhabited. The Joker, played with particular glee by the great Cesar Romero, runs into an art gallery and defaces all the paintings. He then wins an international art contest by painting a blank canvas while the others make various Abstract Expressionist works. The Joker then founds an art school and begins teaching wealthy people how to make art.

This is, in fact, exceptionally subversive.

You see, by the middle 1960s, Modern Art had moved into the forefront of American art, and specifically Pop Art, was what people were reacting to. In the 1950s, it had been Abstract Expressionism from Pollock and Rothko. While modern artists were not entirely accepted, they were certainly celebrities. In Pop Art, the names that were biggest were Warhol and Lichtenstein, and the two of them were MASSIVE stars by 1966. The naming of the episode certainly calls Pop Art to mind.

When the Joker goes into the gallery, it's filled with all sorts of realistic paintings (kind of Grant Wood/Edward Hopper style), and he sprays them with paint. In essence, he was saying that his vision of art was more important than those that had come before him. This is, of course, paid homage to in the 1989 film *Batman*. The art critics accept it as an improvement, which isn't too far away from reality. The classic example is *Erased de Kooning* by Robert Rauschenberg. It is literally a drawing that Rauschenberg simply erased (though it wasn't easy to erase) and then framed. It is the destruction that is the art piece, and it is the same here.

Looking at the contest, you can see what they were trying to say. The contest has several artists with inside-joke names, and they make what people at the time might have thought of as “modern art,” and when the Joker comes along and gives a blank canvas called *Death of the Mauve Bat* and it wins and ultimately seems to genuinely confirm the fears of mainstream America – that modern artists are simply destroying “real” art and passing it off nothing as being impressive and important.

The episode is really interesting when you look at it as an art geek. Plus, there’s nothing better than Cesar Romero, who really was an amazing painter, just going for it!





Batman Reads!
Cosplay by Bill
Howard

Photos by
Mette Hedin







No archetype presents a more significant figure across *Community*, my favorite TV series ever, than that of Batman. His name alone conjures up images that showrunner Dan Harmon used brilliantly to convey a lot of different things, but mostly awesomeness. The living embodiment of Batman in the series, though, is the hero of my life, my dream-self perhaps – Abed.

Let me start with a simple premise and from there move into new territory; I wish I was Abed. Yes, he's a character who seems to exhibit every stereotypical marker of a fan – hyper-memorization, uber-fixation, and the inability to cook anything but buttered noodles. I have none of those things. I often forget which one's *Star Wars* and which one is *Star Blazers*, I dance between my interests like Gene Kelly tripping balls, and am a better-than-passable cook. Why would I want to be Abed then? Because he's the ultimate example of someone who has conquered his world. He has abilities that I don't have and will never have. He sees a series of problems, and he solves them. He maintains a smooth, calm exterior until the moment the narrative requires he become as extreme as the situation he is facing. One of my favorite episodes involves Abed and his best friend, Troy, being recruited by Annie, the Day Planner, to participate in a classic psych experiment in which they are asked to wait for it to start, are kept waiting, and then told to continue waiting again and again. Abed remains outwardly calm, and after Annie asks him why he didn't get up and leave, she asks him "weren't you angry?" He responds, "I was livid." And then on follow-up, says, "Because you said we were friends." His Gotham City is his group of friends, and when Annie declares herself his friend, she becomes a citizen. She had used him for her own goals, but he remained her Batman.

The first appearance of Batman imagery is in the first Halloween episode. This was either the second or third episode I saw, in the midst of an infection-induced fever that left me almost entirely bedridden from Christmas day until the New Year. I watched five episodes on Hulu over and over and over again, dozens of times, and the Halloween episode was the first of these. It featured Abed dressing as Batman (while Troy was

Eddie Murphy from his years as a rock star), but not merely donning the cape and cowl, but assuming the role of Batman. He has the voice, the brave-and-bold entrances and exits, and when Chevy Chase's Pierce (dressed as the Beastmaster) has constructed a rickety desk fort, he rushes in to save him and Jeff, dragging them out just as the fort collapses around them. Abed is mysterious, a master of so many different skills that no one would imagine him having. In a way, he has a secret identity underneath his detached personality. The episode also features Batman looking over the party from high above, intoning the following in his best Christian Bale:

"If I stay, there can be no party. I must be out there in the night, staying vigilant. Wherever a party needs to be saved, I'm there. Wherever there are masks, wherever there's tomfoolery and joy, I'm there. But sometimes I'm not 'cause I'm out in the night, staying vigilant. Watching. Lurking. Running. Jumping. Hurtling. Sleeping. No, I can't sleep. You sleep. I'm awake. I don't sleep. I don't blink. Am I a bird? No. I'm a bat. I am Batman. Or am I? Yes, I am Batman. Happy Halloween."

Abed returns as Batman two seasons later, when Abed and Troy are living with Annie, the Day Planner. Accidentally, she steps on Abed's \$200 special edition of *The Dark Knight* which includes exclusive commentary and a four-word personalized message from Christian Bale. Annie attempts to hide the fact that she broke it by claiming to have been robbed. They call the cops, and after hearing Annie's account of what was taken, he assumes that the landlord stole it. He then dresses as Batman and using the grappling hook given to him by Troy as a Christmas gift he rappels down the building, into his landlord's apartment, where he discovers that the landlord has stolen various tenants' shoes.

Here Abed is using his Batman outfit in much the same way that Bruce Wayne uses his outfit. He is using the image of the bat, the terror that the darkness of the outfit brings, to draw the confession out of his landlord. This actually shows that showrunner Dan Harmon understands the concept of Batman more than most producers, including many of the folks who were put in charge of actual Batman franchise movies. The most important aspect of Batman that appears in *Community* is actually not directly tied to Abed. When something is terrible, awful, and not and just plain wrong, the characters on the show have a simple phrase for that thing – The opposite of Batman.





Batman & I by Juan Sanmiguel

My first encounter with Batman was on television. It was *Super Friends*, Hanna-Barbera's animated adaptation of the *Justice League of America*. This was the time when violence on television cartoons was toned down. The censors did not allow anything like punching or using realistic weapons. Batman was a gadgeteer in these stories. He would use all sorts of devices and vehicles, usually with the word "bat" in their description, to incapacitate the antagonists in those stories. The show did not look into the character of Bruce Wayne or really any of the heroes' real identities. That would come later.

Occasionally, I would see an episode of the 1960s television show. The show did not have a regular station where I lived at the time. There was more action in the show, and it had Batman using the Bat tools a lot. Hanna-Barbera must have got the gadgeteer idea from that. I did not realize how goofy the show was at the time. It seemed to have been the same character I saw in the cartoons.

Filmation then revived their *Batman* cartoon. The Filmation show was a slightly straighter version of the *Batman* live action show. Most of the humor came from Bat-Mite, an extra dimensional alien fan of Batman and Robin, getting into trouble. Batman still had to rely on Bat devices to save the day rather actually hitting a villain with his fists. The show also employed Adam West and Burt Ward, the actors from the 1960s television show, as the voices of Batman and Robin. It was a success and was rerun on Saturday morning for years.

At the same time as the Filmation show, *Challenge of the Super Friends* came out. It was a breakthrough series of the *Super Friends* franchise. In the previous incarnations of the show, most of the antagonists were not really evil. They were trying to do good but by bad methods and our heroes would set them straight after stopping them. *Challenge* got some of the most dangerous villains of the DC Universe to team up and fight our heroes. Batman rogues The Scarecrow and Riddler were on the team though not as dangerous as they were in the comics. The Joker was going to be included, but Filmation had the rights to him while making their show. The show still had the same rules about violence, so Batman and his teammates continued to use fantastic methods to fight their foes.

At this time, I would find Batman in the comics. It was a bit disorienting since there were differences between what was on the screen and the page. There were not as many gadgets, and Robin at the time was not

in all the stories. I was amazed at the origin story. He was just a human who trained to fight crime on his own terms. Yes he was a millionaire, but besides that Batman could be anyone.

I never followed the comics on a regular basis. My public library got a lot of single issue comics. I would buy comics from writers that I liked or a highly hyped Bat comic. The Batman comics in my collection included *Batman: The Dark Knight Returns*, *Batman: Year One*, *Batman: Year Two*, *Batman: Son of the Demon*, *Batman: The Killing Joke*, *Batman: Arkham Asylum*, *Batman: Seduction of the Gun*, and *Batman: The Cult*. I read *Legends of the Dark Knight* for a few years since they had a wide array of writers and artists doing stories out of continuity, and Paul Dini's run on *Detective Comics*.

While I was getting into comics, there was a change in Batman's media image. The last two incarnations of the *Super Friends*, *Super Powers Team* and *Galactic Guardians*, took a more serious take on our heroes. Batman was using his wits to fight his foes and the gadgets were reduced to the bare minimum. There was even an episode called "The Fear" that depicted the origin of Batman for the first time in any medium. Adam West provided the voice for this serious Batman. This Batman acted like the Batman in the comics. This and the comics of the time, set the scene for the next part of Batman's screen presence.

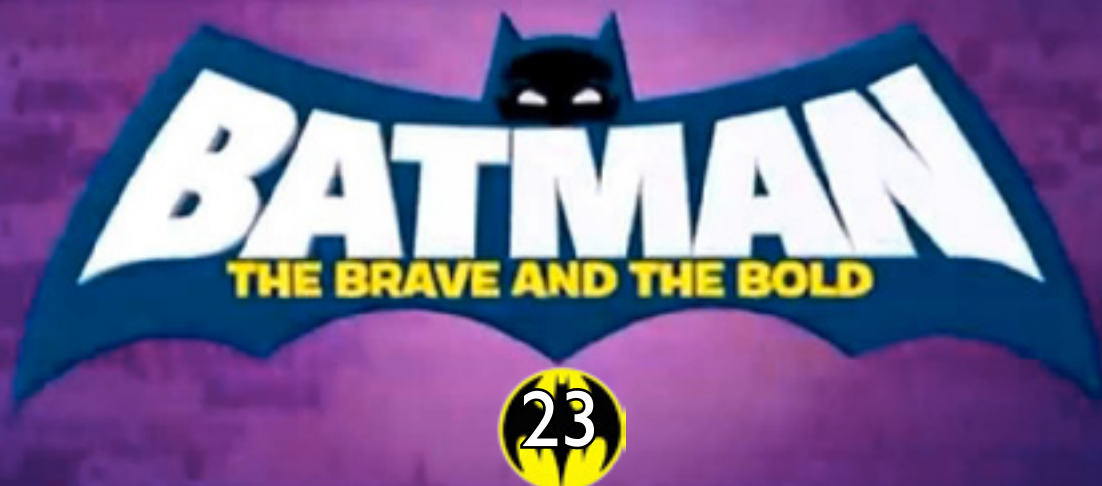
There was trepidation with the first Tim Burton film. Burton had previously directed comedies like *Pee Wee Herman's Big Adventure* and *Beetlejuice*. Burton had casted Michael Keaton, also known for comedy, as Batman/Bruce Wayne. Many thought that this film was going to be a rehash of the 1960s television show. I wanted to give the film a chance and the first trailer looked promising. The film was a serious take on Batman. It was tremendous success and led to a great sequel. After Burton left, the campiness from the 1960s show seemed to creep in and *Batman and Robin* did so badly there were no major comic book for three years.

While Batman's success wavered at the box office, he had constant success as a television animated series. *Batman: The Animated Series* combined the imagery of the Burton films and the story sensibilities of the comics. This would lead to the creation of the DC Animated Universe that consisted of *Superman: The Animated Series*, *Batman Beyond*, *Justice League*, and *Justice League Unlimited*. The show secured the idea of a serious Batman in the public psyche.

The Christopher Nolan films came out and offered a different take on Batman. Gone were the outlandish designs and monstrous villains of Burton. There was a feeling a realism to these films.

A new animated series came around this time. *The Batman* series had a distinct look. The villains were more outlandish than in previous shows. The tone was still serious, but it was off. The first season never grabbed me so I watched it occasionally. At the time, I was judging it against *Batman: The Animated Series* and the older show felt superior.

The next television show, *Batman: The Brave and the Bold*, went to the era of the Silver Age comics and had fun with the tropes of that era. The show featured Batman teaming up with another hero to solve a case. The



show was ambitious story wise. They would do season arcs and specials looking at Batman in other forms like his manga version. It achieved a tight balance between humor and drama.

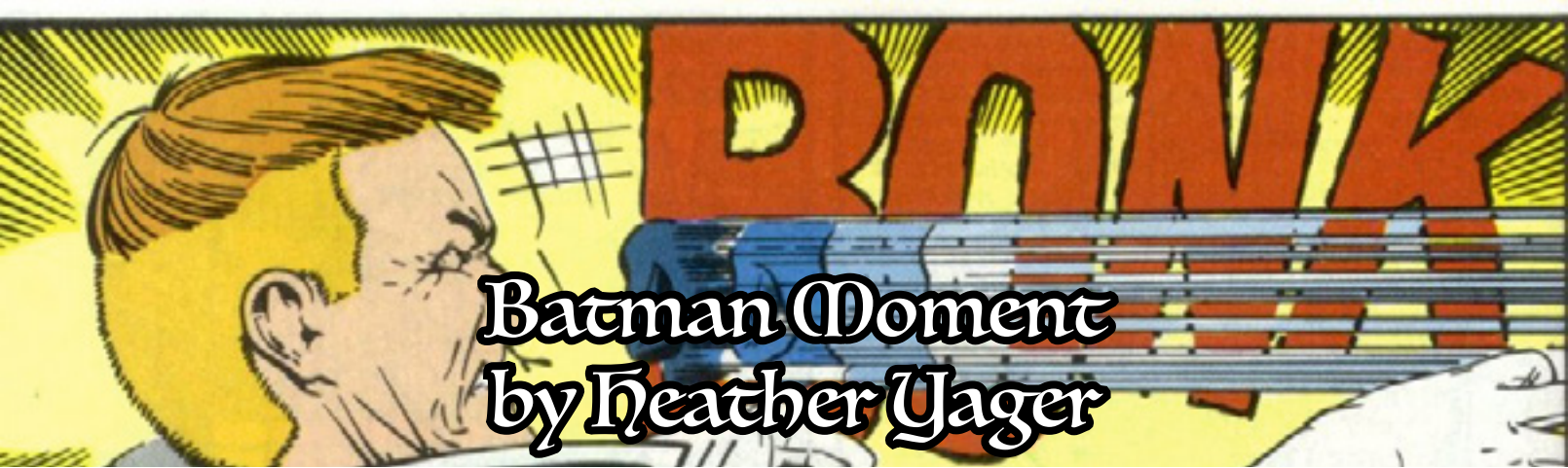
Beware the Batman was also an ambitious production. It was completely done with CGI animation, and the production team decided to use lesser known DC villains rather than favorites like Joker, Penguin, and Two-Face. The show teamed up Batman with Katana and lead up to the creation of the *Outsiders*, a superhero team Batman assembled in the comics in the early 1980s. Sadly this show was cancelled after one year.

Now thanks to Marvel's success at the box office, Warner Brothers (DC's parent company) tried to start their own cinematic universe. They decided to do a crash program instead of the long game approach Marvel used. Rather than making five films before a major team up, Warner decided to do it with one film. *Batman v. Superman: Dawn of Justice* was a very flawed film with scenes that would only satisfy longtime fans. This led to an appearance of Batman in the *Suicide Squad* film. This Batman was very intense. The presence of Batman was one of the better parts of these films.

On television, Batman took an odd turn. The series *Gotham* is a prequel that starts with the murder of Bruce Wayne parents. We follow a young Bruce Wayne and James Gordon explore the intricacies of Gotham City to find the answers they are looking for. It is odd since if the plot and characters are examined closely the show does not work as prequel. Given the effects and stunts they have used on the show, they could have a superhero like Batman in the show. The show works as noir story with elements of the Batman legend.

Given the financial success of Batman on film and television the Dark Knight's career is secure in the media. Batman's next live action appearance will be back where I found him as part of a team of superheroes. I doubt he will be using as many Bat gadgets as he did all those years ago.





Batman Moment by Heather Uager

I was a senior in college, getting nervous about the prospect of going out into the real world, and I would spend a lot of time in bookstores, reading and drinking coffee. I remember one afternoon I walked past the graphic novel section, and they had Trina Robbins' *Great Women Cartoonists* on display. Prior to that point I'd never given a moment's thought to cartoons, and I didn't even know graphic novels existed. But I saw this book and thought, "There are great women cartoonists??!!!" And I bought it, and I read it over and over, and started getting really into Jessica Abel, and Sarah Dyer, and Aline Kominsky, and Phoebe Gloeckner, and reading about folks like Gail Simone who actually worked on superhero comics.

I remember the panel exactly that introduced me to Batman, the one in which he knocks out Green Lantern and then the rest of the Justice League makes fun of him, and from there I was hooked. And so I started inching towards the capes section of the store. I think the first superhero comic I bought was Kevin Smith's run on *Green Arrow*, which had come out in hardcover only a few months prior. I remember telling a friend about how into *Quiver* I was, and he pointed me towards *Watchmen* and *Dark Knight Returns*, and THEN right around the same time, *Dark Knight Strikes Again* started coming out and that was it for me, my Bat-future was set in stone.

I think it was a combination of coming across the character at exactly the right time (feeling alienated, struggling to start understanding dark stuff from the past, figuring out how to be a grownup and a force for good in the world) and finding some comfort in the routine of going to the comics shop every Wednesday for my subscriptions.

Batman remained a touchstone perfect little comic shop (where the cats-to-lights ratio hovers somewhere around 5:3), and I KNEW they'd have *Batman*, and *Love and Rockets*, and *Castle Waiting*, and I could usually scrape together \$2.50 a week to spend on a story. I don't retain a lot of detail about that time in my life, but I remember exactly the smell, layout, staff, and vibe of each of my comic shops in Syracuse, Rochester, Portland, Pittsburgh, and Philadelphia. Add in the whole Barbara Gordon / librarian thing a few years later, and there you have it :)





How I Met My Batman A Facebook Sourced Article

I asked a simple question: in what form did you first encounter Batman (ie. comics, film, radio, novels, stained-glass windows, etc)? I got a lot of answers, more than 150, in fact, and not just from my comic-loving friends, but from folks I know through work, through Cinequest, through wrestling, through school, and even some family members! It was incredible.

Several things popped up. First, the most common response was Adam West on the old TV series. Next was comics, and then it was pretty much scattered between the movies, the Super Friends animated series from the 1970s, and then there were the really fun ones, including some delightfully smartass responses! Here now are a sampling of some of the most interesting responses!

Daniel M. Kimmel: Comic books. Definitely.

Derek McCaw: It's so hard to tell -- honestly, it feels like I always knew who Batman was. It's probably from watching *Batman '66* or the Filmation series from '68 (which would have been about when I could turn the TV on and off myself) because I can't remember having Batman comics until I was in elementary school.

Jason Salazar: Underoos.

David Weingart: Adam West. The One True Batman

Curt Phillips: TV. Adam West *is* Batman . . .

Curt Phillips: Hey, I was wrong. It wasn't the TV show. It was the bubble gum cards for the TV show. That's where I first encountered Batman.

Rob Imes: Probably the *Super Friends* cartoon in the 1970s.

Charlie Cockey: Radio? There was a Batman radio show? Me - comics, 1940s. Early 1950s at the latest.

Diana Sherman: Uncle Stan! Which is to say, the TV series with Adam West.

Lauren Clough: The 1960s TV show. It was in syndication after school when I was a kid. I was madly in love with Robin.

Karen Sue Francis: Comics first, then I saw old films dated back to the 40's

Kevin Roche: I had a much-thumbed and dog-eared paperback collection of old strips. I don't know whether I got it before or after seeing the TV show.

Kevin Roche: I tracked down the book I remembered . . . it was a Signet PB collection branded as a tie-in to the TV series, which means it was TV first, book second.

James Shields: Not certain, but it was almost certainly the camp '70s TV show. I do vaguely recall being deeply disappointed that the show wasn't animated like the opening credits.

Kevin Roche: '60s. '66 – '68 to be precise.

James Shields: Seriously? I thought it was later. I guess it was reruns I was watching since I wasn't born till 1970.

Eric Schultheis: Comic books. Probably *The Brave and the Bold*. Jim Aparo's Batman is the one for me.

Bridget Coila: Reruns of the camp TV show. I remember it being on the TV while my dad watched it long before it held major interest for me personally. (This was also the case for my first intro to *Dr Who*. Dad and Grandad both watched it while they were supposedly watching me.)

Christopher Hensley: Adam West (though I may be one of the youngest people who can say so).

Christopher J Garcia: That was how the Batkid of San Francisco first encountered Batman and he's eight!

Christopher Hensley: Adam West is a good Batman for eight-year olds (though I've heard good things about "The Brave and the Bold"). While the DC Animated Universe Batman is one of the definitive interpretations it is skewed to a slightly older audience.

George Van Wagner: The thoroughly emasculated and trivialized by the CCC early '60s DC books.

Micah Best: Murdered his parents in a dark alley.

Richard Von Busack: Skywriting. In LA, before the series debuted, they hired planes to type out "BATMAN IS COMING" in the skies. My mom knew who he was, but I didn't.

Christopher J Garcia: That is the greatest first meeting ever!

James Langdell: The comic books. I started following regularly shortly after the New Look began in the early 1960s. I had read some Batman comics in years earlier, but these seemed a lot better.

James Langdell: When the TV show started soon afterwards, I enjoyed it a lot, but thought the current comic books were smarter.

James Langdell: Nice Tom Lehrer reference in your question. Bring on the Batman movies, murals, postcards, neckties, samplers, stained-glass windows, tattoos, anything! More, more, I'm still not satisfied!

Jade Falcon: Adam West, then Super Friends, then I also remember getting some digest-sized comic books of Batman that relatives would get me from supermarkets.

Michael David Lynch: Bam! Pow! Adam West and *Super Friends*.

Danielle Vintschger: *Super Friends* and Adam West

Douglas E. Berry: The TV series. Which scared the hell out of me as a toddler.

James Konijn: The movie with Adam West

Bradley Cozzens: Adam West as a child. I got stitches playing Batman with my brother when my cowl didn't quite do the job of protecting me.

Vernon Putman: *Scooby-Doo*, Adam West, and *Super Friends*, all at about the same time

David Braught: The '89 film

Eric Larson: Comics, then TV. Even then, I enjoyed the contrast.

Johny Buckhanan: *Super Friends* here too.

Jory Michael Phillips: Nipples.

Christopher J Garcia: You poor, poor soul...

Karen Junker: Comics. 1958.

Julie Shepard: A children's book with an accompanying audio cassette that my brother had.

Ulrika O'Brien: Too long ago to remember with any certainty, but I believe it would have been Swedish-language comics, so as *Läderlappen*.

Jim Mann: Comics.

Ashley Cox: Uh...Michael Keaton in 1989's Batman.

Michael Rabehl: My dad is Batman.

Andrew Hooper: The show appeared when I was four-years old, so that has to have been it. My parents took me to a circus in Detroit, which concluded with a personal appearance by Batman. No idea if Adam West was in the suit; probably not.

Christopher J Garcia: He wrote about having to tour as Batman, which was apparently hell!





Charlie Irons: Far back as I can go, I believe it was this:

Charlie Irons: First serious comic was this, though ...

Micah C Brown: He kicked my ass after I attempted a bank robbery..

Charlie Irons: Camped out overnight at Century 22 in '89 with like a couple hundred other fans in a huge party

Christie Yant: TV show in the 70s, followed by Batman: Year One in '89 or '90.

Sandra Johnson: Comic books ...

Johny Buckhanan: Nope, I was wrong ... it was Filmation's stuff before the *Super Friends*. It was '72, before I watched him with Marvin ... I remember Batman, The Flash, the Teen Titans, the Justice League, and Hawkman ... did I mention I was two-years old in '72?

Steve Frankel: Old comics

Amy Sundberg: T-shirts

Joel Zakem: Comic Books

Max Lehmann: TV animation for kids in the early '80s, I think.

Guy Lillian: *World's Finest* comics, 52 pages for a dime. It was the issue with the cover showing the three heroes getting their boots polished.

Guy Lillian: I think my previous comment got erased. I first remember Batman from a *World's Finest* comic, 52 pages long, cost a dime. It was the issue with the cover showing the three heroes -- Bats, Supes and Robin -- getting their boots polished at a shoeshine stand. Little did I dream that the day would come when I'd interview the man who first drew Batman.

Arian Hormozi: As a young child I fell through an abandoned well on my family property ...

Petréa Mitchell: Probably elementary-school classmates with merchandise of some sort.

Ian Williams: Comics, 1950s.

Stellan Lagerström: Comics, late 1960's. The earliest I still own is from 1969.

Karen Kroslowitz: Adam West. Why is there no "Pow!" emoji!?!?

Alissa McKersie: That's the first memory I have, too

Rebekah Davis: The old TV show. Watched it in reruns with my mom.

Gayle Davis: The old TV show. Loved it as a kid, then got to share it with my kid!

Tom Galloway: I think comics just barely beat out the first episode of the Adam West series when it first aired. FYI, when I interviewed Neil Gaiman at the Montreal Worldcon about his fannish history, he told me that his first introduction was when 5.5 year old Neil ... See more: https://www.facebook.com/search/top/?=batman&filters_rp_author=me

Justin Calkins: *Batman* '89 about the same time as the Animated Series

Johanna Mead: Adam West :) When I was, gosh, seven- or eight-years old, I guess. Telly reruns in the late '70s. 1980 at the latest.

Colin Harris: Adam West probably slightly before comics. Early '70s as a pre-teen.

James Bacon: TV show. Adam West.

Stefan Amshey: Adam West was the first guy I saw wear the suit, but I don't think I really internalized what Batman was really all about until I read the Dark Knight graphic novels, and then I think I really understood how important the psychology is to the character.

Leslie Evers: Comic books, the Poison Ivy issue. I know, lucky me.

Ken Meshke: Comics. I was a bit disappointed with Adam West's level of fitness compared to the "real" Batman, but after the first few annotated fist fights I got over it

Dennis Murray: I met him in a dark downtown alleyway. He let me live, but he gave me a message for all my friends.

Susie Rodriguez: He was a Super Friend.

Stephen Nelson: Almost certainly it was the Adam West TV show. My parents used to have a reel-to-reel tape of four-year-old me claiming to be Batman.

Hershey Harris: My cousin's comic books. in the late '70's

Бойчо Пейчевъ: A toy car. It had a "blade" which came out of the front ... not a cow-catcher, but a cow-slicer type thing. It also had three tiny pipes, from which pieces of toothpicks would fly out.

Бойчо Пейчевъ: A Batmobile from the 1970s.

Бойчо Пейчевъ: There are kids around nowadays who would answer "the Nolan movies ..."

Pat Turner: Comics, somewhere in the '50s.



Tansy Rayner Roberts: I definitely saw the TV show as a kid, but that was at like 10 and I'm pretty sure I already knew about Batman. Comics, I think, though more likely pics of comics, toys, etc., because I didn't get into properly reading superhero comics until my teens -- as a kid it was all *Archie*, and *Donald Duck*, and *Bunty*, and those sorts of things.

June M. Moffatt: In comic books.

Tom Frankenberger: A very large comic book when I was 6. Glossy cover, probably 18x12.

Rory O'Donnell: In a dark alleyway. He was with his parents. I . . . I don't want to talk about it . . .

Gary Farber: Comics, circa 1961-1962, when I was three-years old.

Rachel Young: Michael Keaton. Followed by the animated series. Then Frank Miller. I think as he grew darker I grew to love him more.

Brittany Clark: My first memory of Batman that I can recall was seeing the 1992 *Batman* at age five or so, the year after it was released

Mike Miyake: Detective Comics?

James Ersted: Porn.

Craig Smith: The TV Batmobile will be forever my favorite. Back around 1966 a Seattle car show advertised that the car would be there. When I attended with a friend it turned out not to be the "real" one, but some duplicate for special events and car shows I suppose. The Batphone inside was a plastic princess phone for one thing. Such disappointment.

Neil Rest: Comic books when dimes were silver.

Jim Rittenhouse: What Neil said.

Jim Linwood: The old serial at Saturday children's cinema: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Batman_\(serial\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Batman_(serial))

Robert Whitaker Sirignano: I saw the comics before I could really read. In 1956.

Anne K Gray: Probably the movies. Or it might have been cartoons. Or lunchboxes. Later, I entered the world of actual Batman comic books, drawn in by the drawings of Joseph Conat.

David Clark: Comic books, in the late '50s.

Chuck Serface: A pile of comics in my two oldest brothers' bathroom, circa 1970. I also discovered the Martian Manhunter on that fateful lay. I was looking for their stag magazines. Oh, well.

Carl Disher: Comics, of course.





Five Moments That Define My Batman

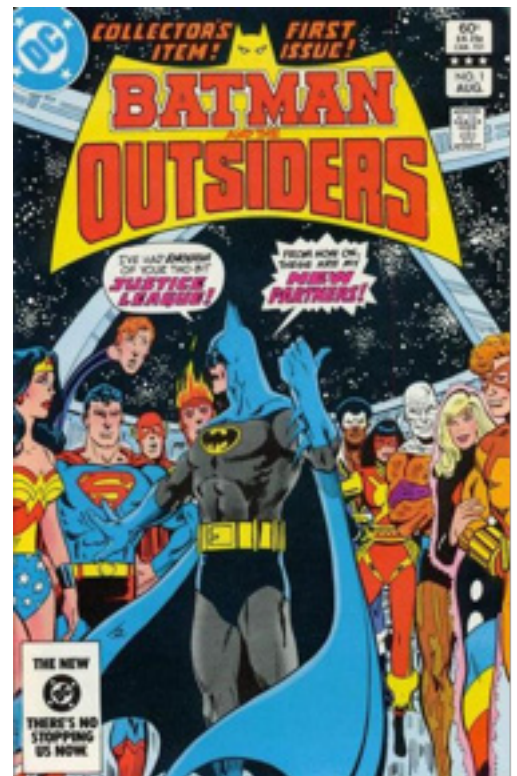
by Chuck Serface

I can't limit myself to one Batman moment, because my Batman has evolved over several decades, continuities, and authors and artists into a lawful-neutral hero unwaveringly dedicated to law and order, so much so that he'll often bend rules when they stand in the way of his achieving or preserving this code. Much like the Count of Monte Cristo, Batman at times employs dubious means and shadowy networks, all in the pursuit of a personal ideal the he follows without question. Get with him or get out of his way. His will be done, and the world at large becomes all the more inspired. The following are five moments in recent Batman history that I hope illustrate what I mean.

Moment One: Batman Quits the Justice League of America

While on a business trip, Lucius Fox, high-ranking employee of Wayne Enterprises and friend to Bruce Wayne, finds himself captured by freedom fighters. Batman approaches the Justice League of America for help in rescuing fox, and the League refuses. Superman especially cites the time-honored League rule about not involving themselves in political matters. Incensed, Batman quits the League. To hell with fretting about possible diplomatic nightmares. Loyalty to his friend outweighs organizational bylaws, and so he resigns to rescue Fox on his own.

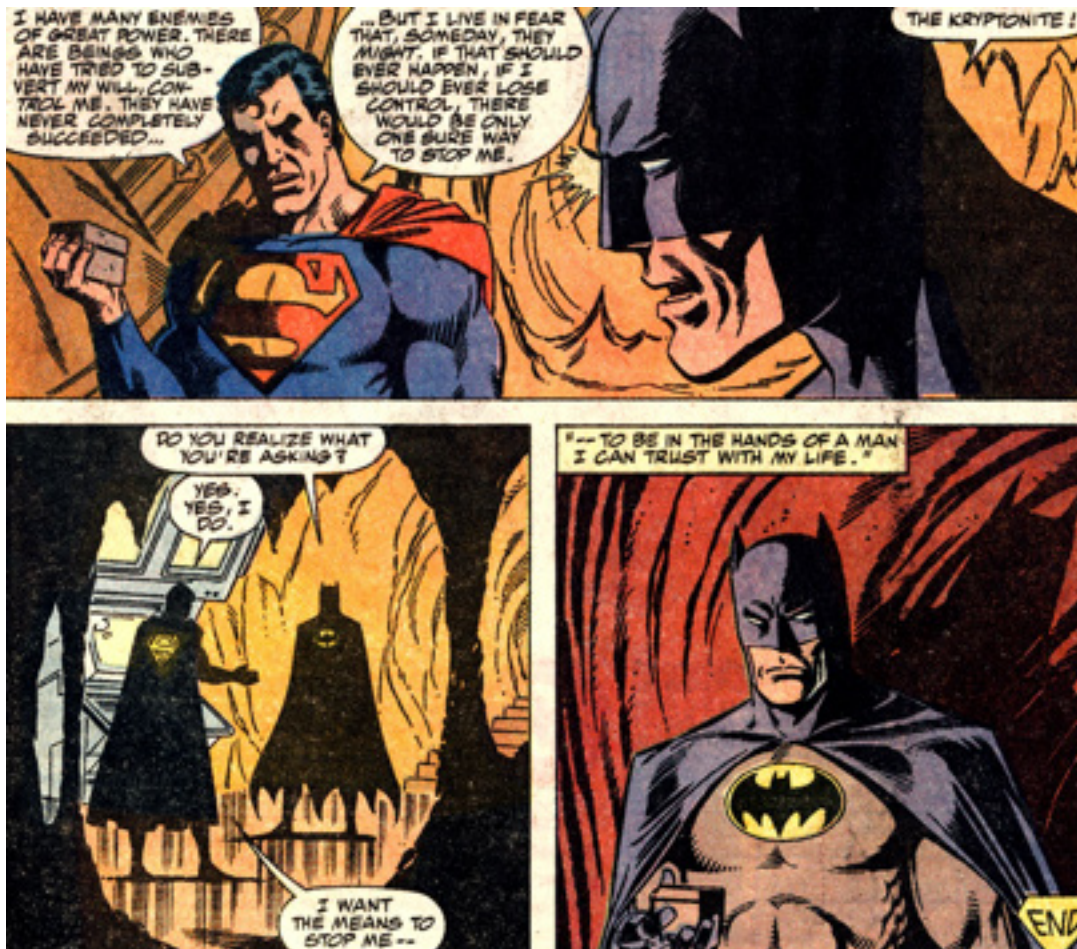
This resignation occurs in *Batman and the Outsiders (Vol. 1) #1* (1983), and over the course of the series Batman forms and directs his own team, one he controls implicitly, the members of which act as part of his informal network even after he leaves them. The Justice League won't meet Batman's expectations regarding loyalty? *International Incident?* Fair enough. He'll either work alone or form a team that will.





Moment Two: Superman Gives Batman a Kryptonite Ring

After the events comprising the three-part story, “Dark Knight Over Metropolis” that takes place in *Action Comics (Vol. 1) #652 – 4* (1990), Superman and Batman meet in the Batcave, and readers witness an amazing interaction. Superman gives Batman a ring set with a kryptonite stone, telling him to use it if he somehow loses control and endangers the world. Batman wants to be clear: does Superman know what he’s asking? Because if it comes to that, Batman will not balk. Superman fully understands this, because he understands that Batman’s dedication to law and order, justice, and, yes, loyalty. If the situation dictates it, Batman will use that weapon without moral quibbling and without compunction. He is, after all, lawful neutral, and will do whatever necessary to maintain his personal code. And, really, isn’t he remaining loyal to Superman by honoring this wish?





Moment Three: Tower of Babel

Mark Waid loves over-the-top plots, and he doesn't disappoint with "Tower of Babel," *JLA (Vol. 1) #43 – 6 (2001)*. How could a superhero who values law and order as deeply as Batman not have files detailing how to neutralize each member of the Justice League? Should any one or all of them step out of line, Batman's got it covered, until Ra's al Ghul hacks Batman's computer and unleashes havoc. Down goes the League!

Here we learn Batman's vulnerability as well – his parents' remains. Ra's steals them to manipulate Batman, offering to dip them into a life-restoring Lazarus Pit. Oh, yes, Batman feels tempted . . . but no. He sticks to his code, ever lawful neutral, and the League defeats the villain. The repercussions for Batman, however, once again involve bringing his team membership into question. The others vote on whether or not to expel him, with Superman, of course, casting the tie breaker. Batman vacates the scene before we learn the results.



“The only thing that thrives outside these walls are the six billion shortsighted parasites who continue to ravage our planet’s natural resources. On its own, humanity is a destructive force. It needs a master.”
~ Ra’s Al Ghul
in *Tower of Babel*



Moment Four: Batman Incorporated

In 2010, Grant Morrison expanded Batman's to global proportions. Batman franchises his image, selecting and training individuals from all over the world who will carry his image and answer to him alone. The Count of Monte Cristo with his extensive cadre of spies and informants couldn't match the scope of Batman Incorporated. And his influence wouldn't stop there.

DC rebooted *Batman Incorporated* to fit into its New 52 continuity, which included several Batman titles and titles including characters loyal to Batman and his adamant ethical codes. After years of continuity changes in recent decades, one thing remains clear: Batman believes his code stands above all else. He'll quit teams, form teams, train operatives, devise methods to take out allies, and bring his act international to preserve that vision, because it's his way or no way, and he'll do what it takes to maintain his sense of order. Superman may be the poster child of truth and justice, but only Batman can make the hard choices to bring those concepts into reality. Let's face it. The heroes of the DC Universe work for Batman, whether they realize it or not.



Moment Five: Batman in the Real World

We in this reality may work for Batman as well.

Over the past few years, the Batman ethos has leaked into the real world in interesting and not always successful ways. For example, there's Mark Wayne Williams, the Petoskey Batman who dons his cape and cowl to patrol his Michigan town on a nightly business. He's been arrested for police interference, but on he perseveres. As of this writing, his Facebook page has 6,385 likes. Other Batmen have appeared in New Jersey, Las Vegas, and most recently in Cumbria, England, where a Batman confronted that region's killer clown, one of many that were stalking towns seemingly everywhere during Halloween season 2016.



The most successful representation of Batman in the real world is, hands down, Batkid, Miles Scott, a young cancer survivor who wanted to be the sidekick of Batman. On November 15, 2013, San Francisco became Gotham City when the Make-A-Wish foundation made the boy's dreams come true. Miles rode in a Batmobile, confronted famous Batman villains, and aided in rescuing a damsel in distress. Mayor Ed Lee even presented Batkid with a key to the city. The documentary, *Batkid Begins: The Wish Heard Around the World*, relates all the details, and Julia Roberts is producing and starring in a film based on these events.

Lawful neutral? Most certainly. Willing to play outside the rules to insure justice and law and order, but never so far as to defile that code? Most definitely. Sometimes this angers his allies, but so be it. If that enduring images inspires children like Miles Scott to inspire others, then I say long live the reign of the Batman!

