

"I loved THE KILLING JOKE...
It's my favorite. It's the
first comic I've ever loved."

— Tim Burton

SMILE!

ALAN MOORE
BRIAN BOLLAND
BATMAN
THE KILLING JOKE
THE DELUXE EDITION

INTRODUCTION
BY TIM SALE





BATMAN THE KILLING JOKE
THE DELUXE EDITION

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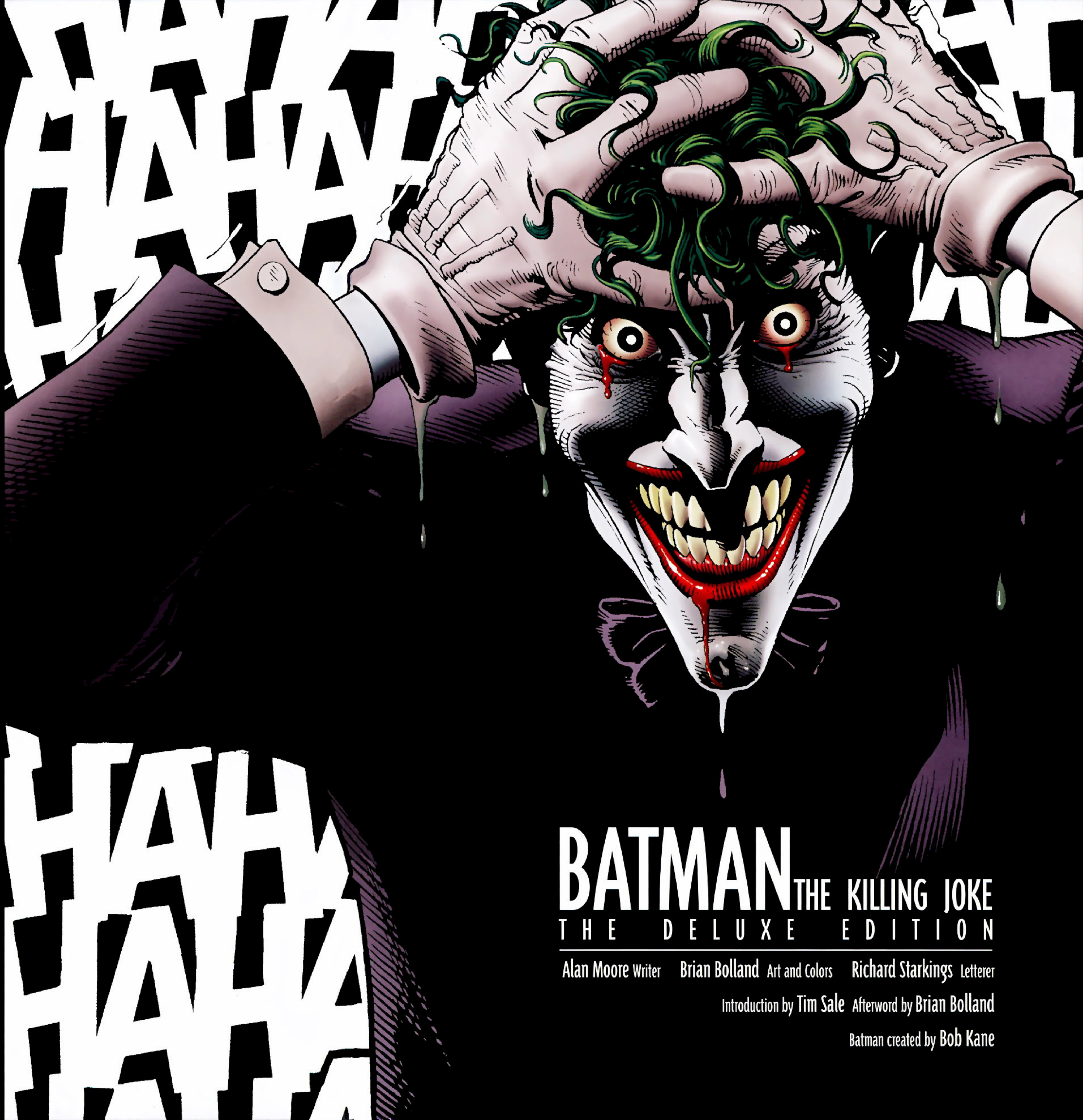
Cover by Brian Bolland

Batman: The Killing Joke: The Deluxe Edition

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BATMAN THE KILLING JOKE

THE DELUXE EDITION

Alan Moore Writer Brian Bolland Art and Colors Richard Starkings Letterer

Introduction by Tim Sale Afterword by Brian Bolland

Batman created by Bob Kane



INTRODUCTION

Man, how cool is this?

Like everyone who was in the mainstream comics field in the late 1980s, or — as was my case — had their noses pressed against the glass, the back-to-back-to-back-to-back of *DARK KNIGHT RETURNS*, *WATCHMEN*, *BATMAN: YEAR ONE*, and *BATMAN: THE KILLING JOKE*, completely reenergized the field. The characters (other than those in *WATCHMEN*) had been around for decades and, while many talented writers and artists had done much notable work in that time, there was an incredible sense of the new coming from Frank Miller and this handful of crazy Brits — Alan Moore, Brian Bolland, John Higgins, Richard Starkings and Dave Gibbons — who were seeing possibilities in them, in the kinds of stories that could be told, and not incidentally, in the way that a story could be presented.

BATMAN: THE KILLING JOKE is the only one of the stories listed above that did not first exist in another format, as a series of comics that were eventually collected into that catch-all term, a “graphic novel.” *THE KILLING JOKE* was a 46-page story, but it was crafted at such an astonishing level, and printed so much more cleanly and carefully, that it seemed to be a different beast altogether, not just a really great Batman comic, but something different. I didn’t get it then, but I do now.

That is what authors of extraordinary craft can do: make the old seem new.

And thrilling. Don’t forget thrilling.

I am told that the origins of *BATMAN: THE KILLING JOKE* go back to a Batman/Judge Dredd proposal that Moore and Bolland had cooked up. When it fell through, Moore asked Bolland what else he wanted to do, and Bolland said, “The Joker, please.”

So polite. And thus a classic was born.

Moore is famous for many things, not the least of which are his maniacally controlled and precisely orchestrated scripts, requiring an equal and similar effort from his artist partner, and in the amazing Brian Bolland he found an artist his equal in talent, fanaticism, care, and expressiveness. Both excel in impressing with their rendering of the mundane, so that it never *feels* mundane. And then they blast into a reveal, a money shot so explosive that is it only then that you realize how well you, as a reader, have been lulled to rest *on purpose*, just to set you up.

The Joker’s reveal on page 11, the tragic event on page 18, the second reveal on page 37, all orchestrated and carried out in ways that astonish, and then astonish again when you go back and see just how much these artists have known and set things up from the beginning. How fun it is to be in the hands of creators who know so much about what they are doing.

Oh, and the joke (how cool is it that the book ends with a joke) at the finish?

Priceless, funny, and perfect for the characters of Batman and The Joker.

What you hold in your hands, though, is not the book that I own, that so inflamed(!) me and thousands of others back in 1988, because of one crucial element: the coloring.

This time around, you lucky buggers, you have the fantastic treat to see the book colored by the artist himself, and see his more complete vision of how the story should look. Side by side, the comparison is amazing.

Bolland’s colors are characteristically thoughtful and restrained. They fit the work more completely than Higgins’s state-of-the-art job in 1988 and are a joy to look at. Slow down and one can see how cool the palette is now, versus the warmer one of 1988, and how much better that reflects the somber tone of the story, and how, when Bolland retains a color from 1988 that has become iconic, like Barbara’s yellow shirt, he integrates that so well into the cooler colors in the scene, allowing the shirt to really pop and ratchet up the horror of the event.

But the biggest and most amazing change in this newly colored edition is in the flashback sequences.

Bolland washes out all color in each one, but chooses to spotlight an object in each — a bowl of tentacles, shrimp, and so on — in increasingly

intense shades of red, all leading up to (here’s that sense that everything has been planned from the start by masterful hands) the Red Hood that was posited to be The Joker’s mostly forgotten origin, *way back in 1951*, and the transformation of the milquetoast failed comedian to insane criminal mastermind.

Brrrrrr. I just got chills.

Anyone else get chills?

Man, how cool is this?

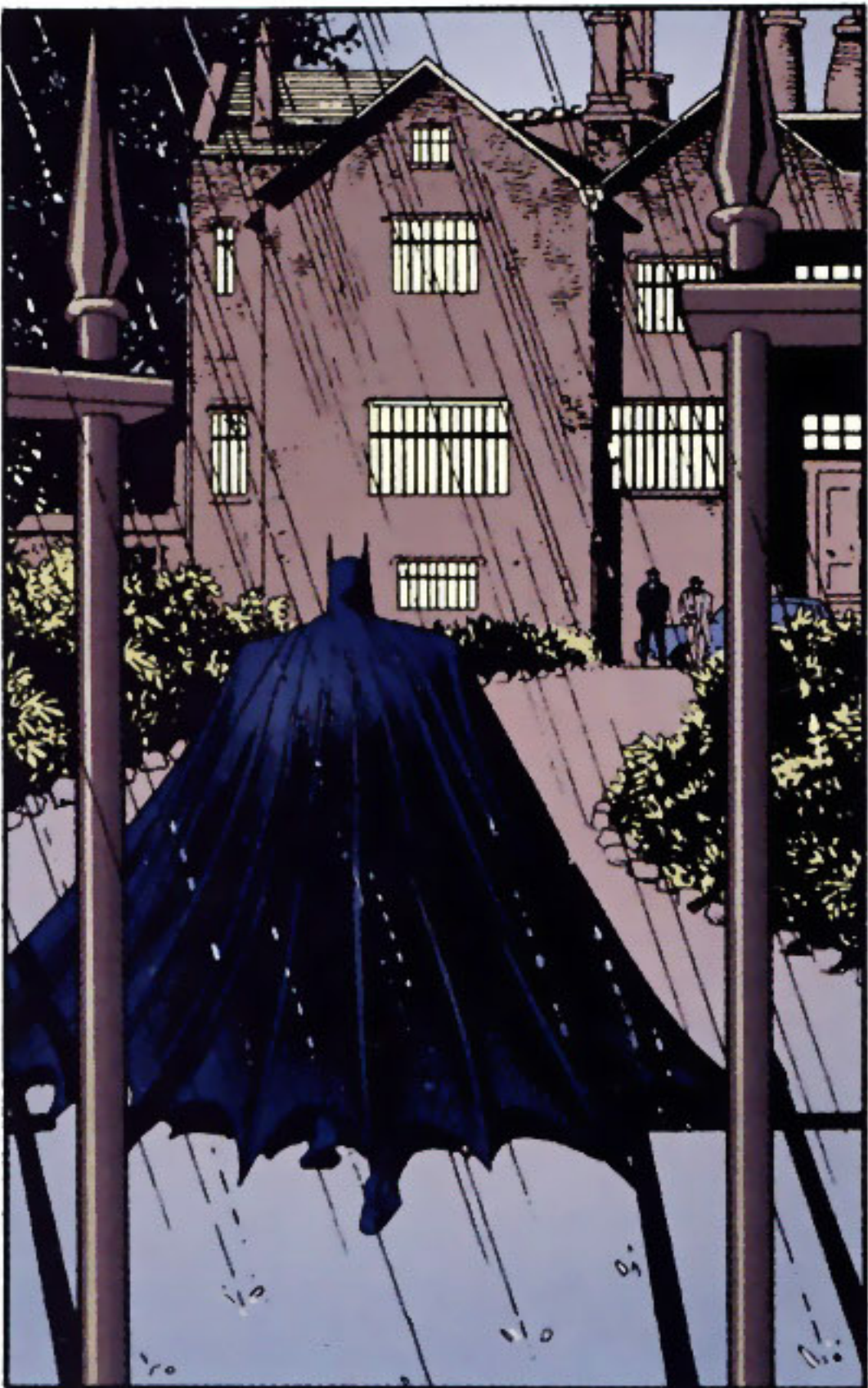
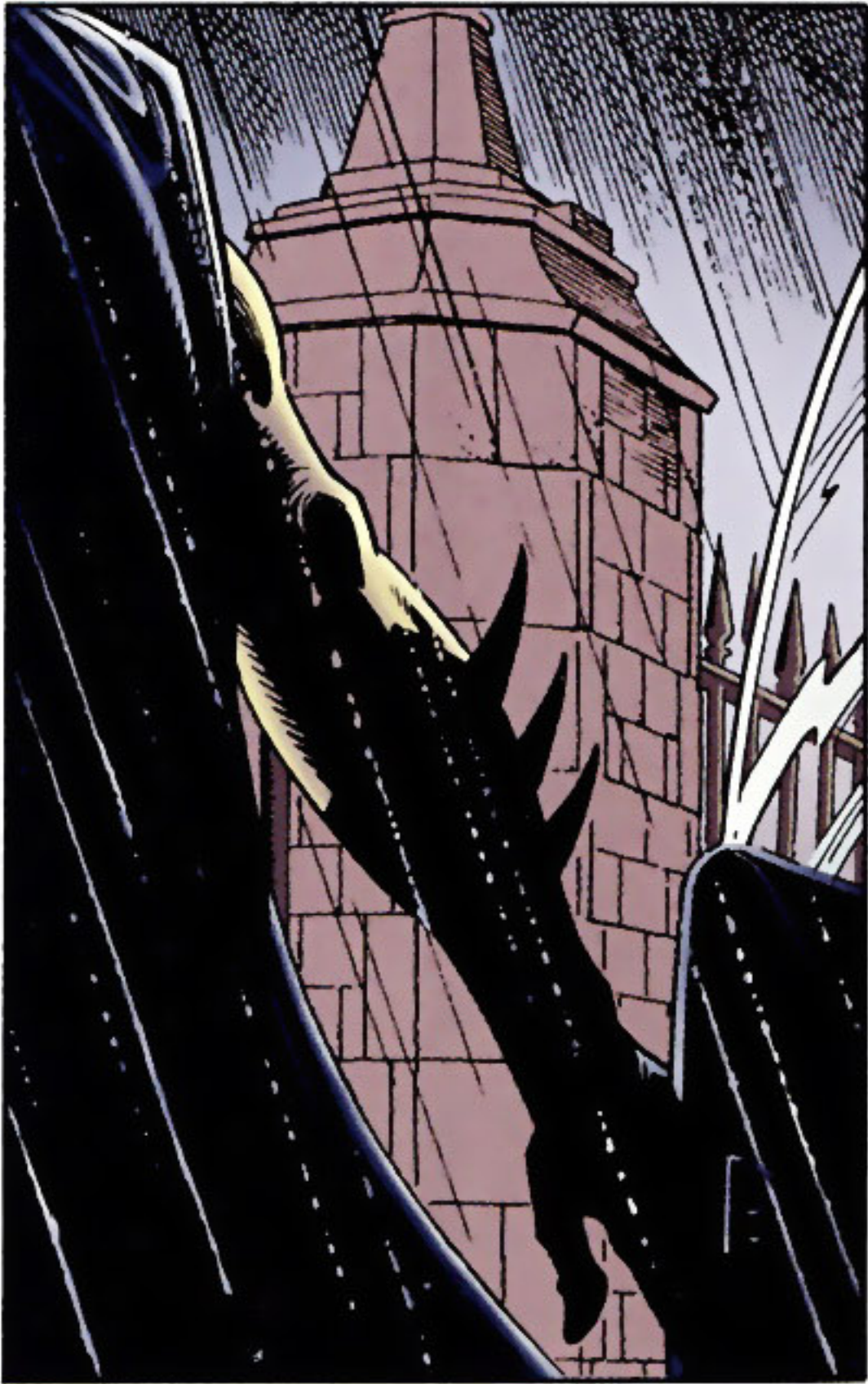
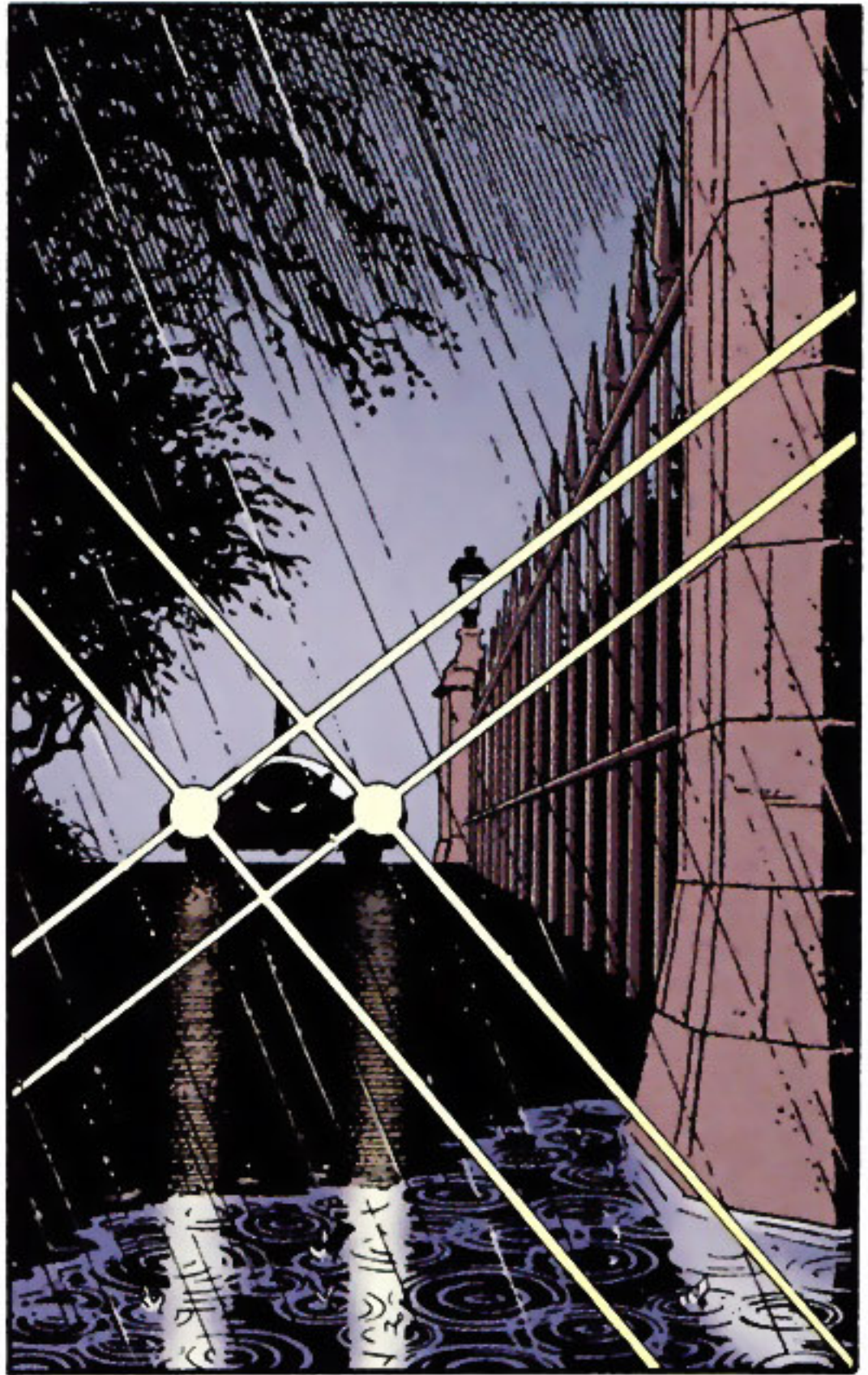
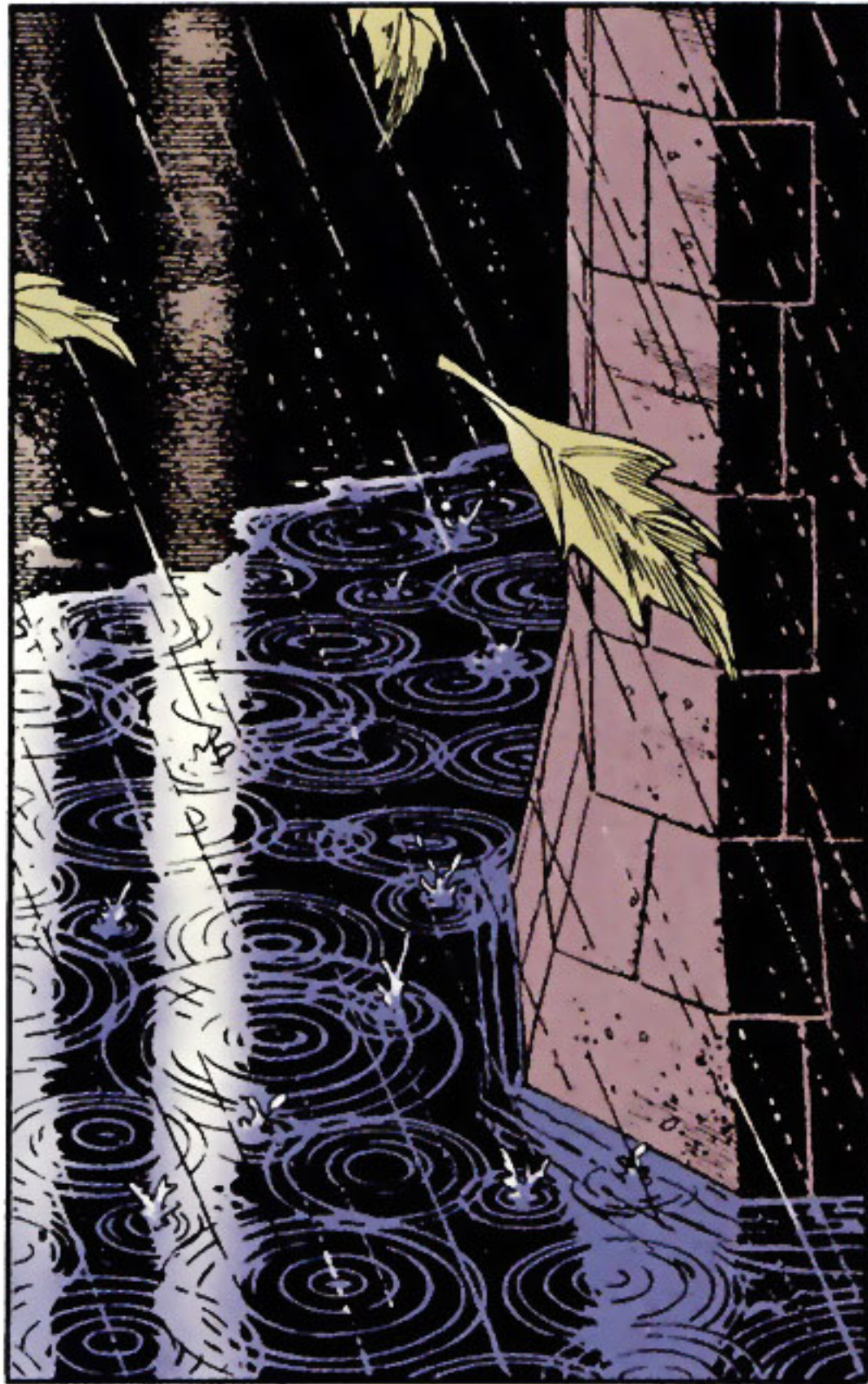
Tim Sale

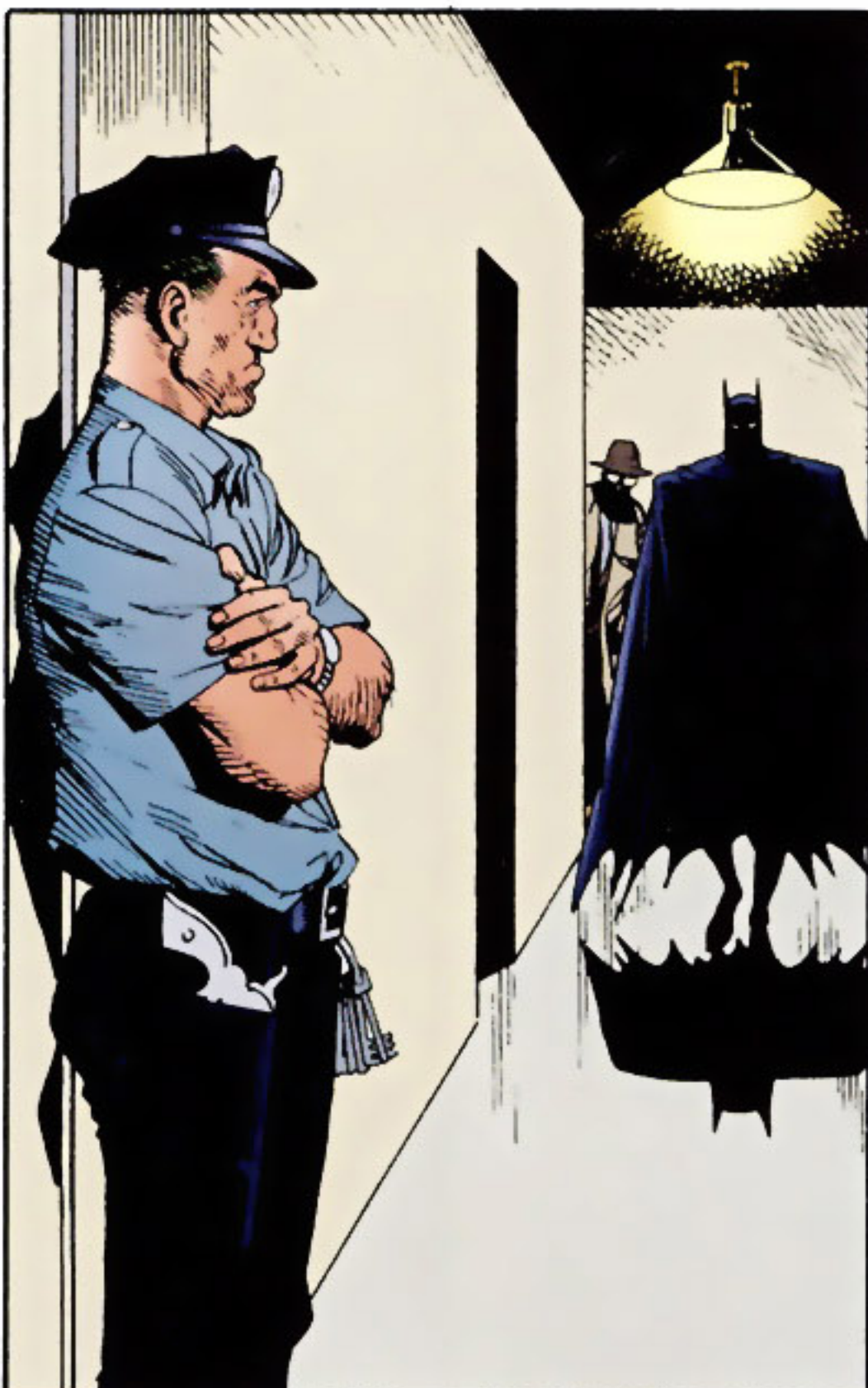
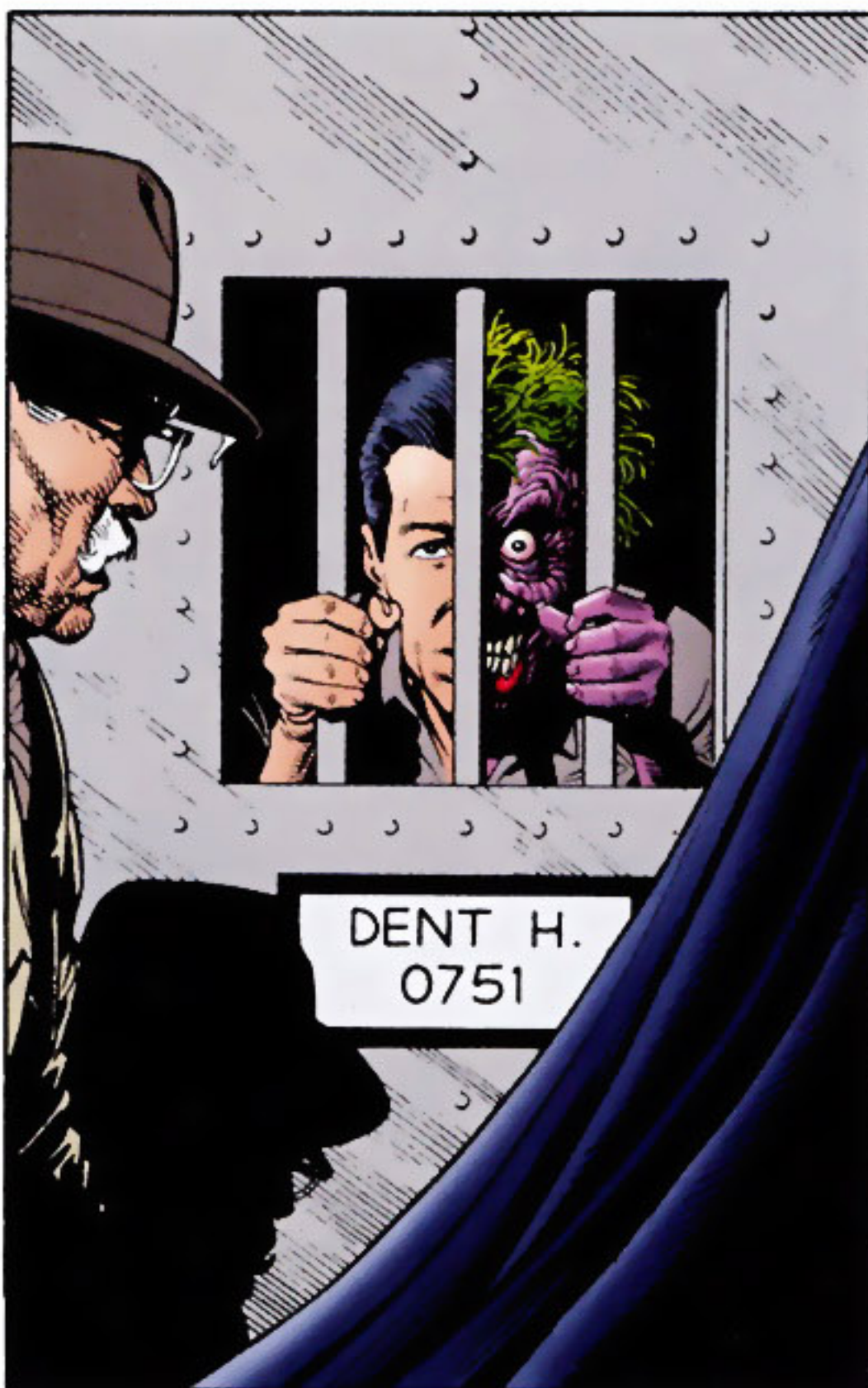
Pasadena, CA 2008

Tim Sale lives in southern California with his aged dogs Hotspur and Shelby. Raised in Seattle, he still finds California an odd place, though he hopes that will change someday.

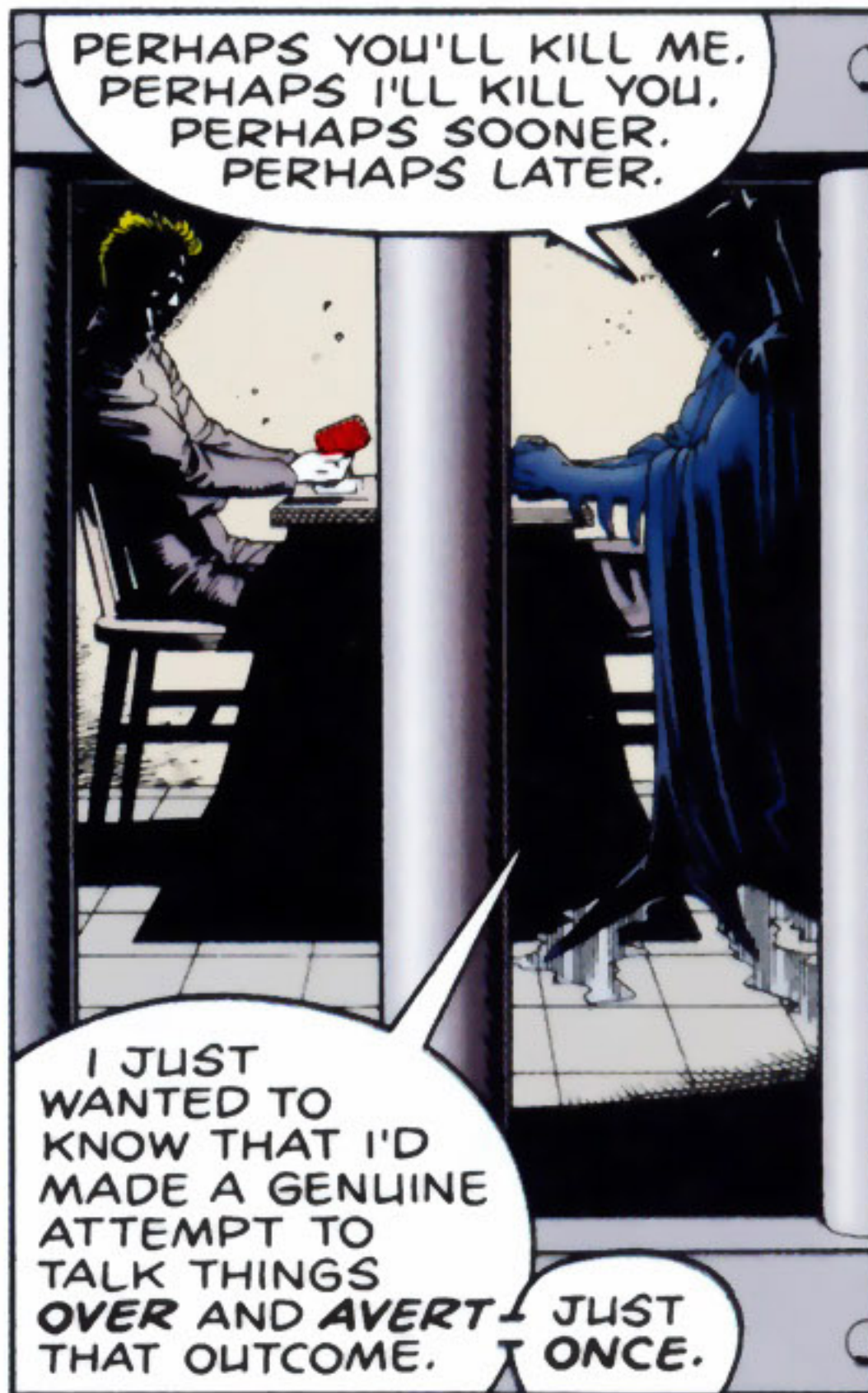
Tim is the artist on BATMAN: DARK VICTORY, CATWOMAN: WHEN IN ROME, BATMAN: THE LONG HALLOWEEN and many other titles.

In 2006, Tim became the artist for the hit NBC television series Heroes.











H-HEY...



HEY! WAIT A MINUTE!
DON'T YOU TOUCH ME!
I GOT RIGHTS!

YOU'RE NOT
ALLOWED
TO...



...TOUCH
ME...



WHERRRRRE
IS HE?

AAAAA! OH GOD, NO...



DO YOU
REALIZE? DO
YOU REALIZE
WHAT YOU'VE
SET FREE?
WHERE
IS HE?

EEEEEEEGH!
GET HIM OFFA
ME!

DEAR GOD,
HE'S GONE
BERSERK. OPEN
THAT DOOR, MAN!



OKAY, THAT'S
ENOUGH!

YOU KNOW THE
LAWS REGARDING
MISTREATMENT OF
INMATES AS WELL
AS I DO!

IF YOU
HARM ONE HAIR
ON HIS HEAD...



COMMISSIONER, IF
YOU'RE CONCERNED
ABOUT IT, IT'S YOURS.
TAKE CARE
OF IT.

NOW, YOU
WHIMPERING LITTLE SMEAR
OF SLIME, I'M GOING TO
ASK YOU POLITELY JUST
ONE MORE TIME...



"WHERE IS HE?"

AH! THERE YOU ARE!

HAVE YOU HAD A CHANCE TO INSPECT THE PROPERTY AND DECIDE IF IT'S WHAT YOU WERE LOOKING FOR?

WELL, IT'S GARISH, UGLY, AND DERELICTS HAVE USED IT FOR A TOILET.

THE RIDES ARE DILAPIDATED TO THE POINT OF BEING LETHAL, AND COULD EASILY MAIM OR KILL INNOCENT LITTLE CHILDREN.

Oh. SO YOU DON'T LIKE IT?

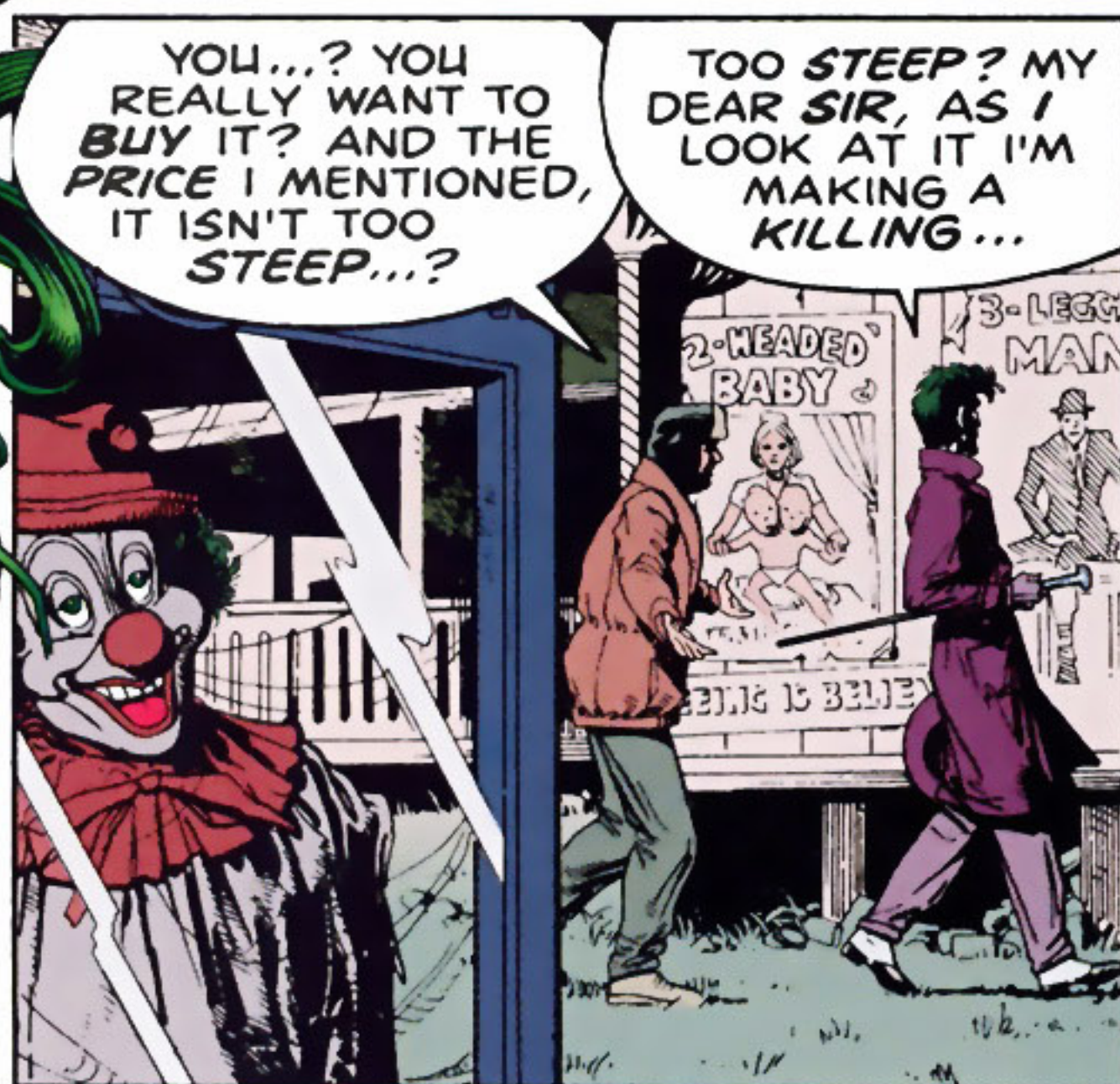


DON'T LIKE IT?

I'M CRAZY FOR IT.

YOU...? YOU REALLY WANT TO BUY IT? AND THE PRICE I MENTIONED, IT ISN'T TOO STEEP...?

TOO STEEP? MY DEAR SIR, AS I LOOK AT IT I'M MAKING A KILLING...



... AND ANYWAY, MONEY ISN'T REALLY A PROBLEM.



NOT THESE DAYS.