

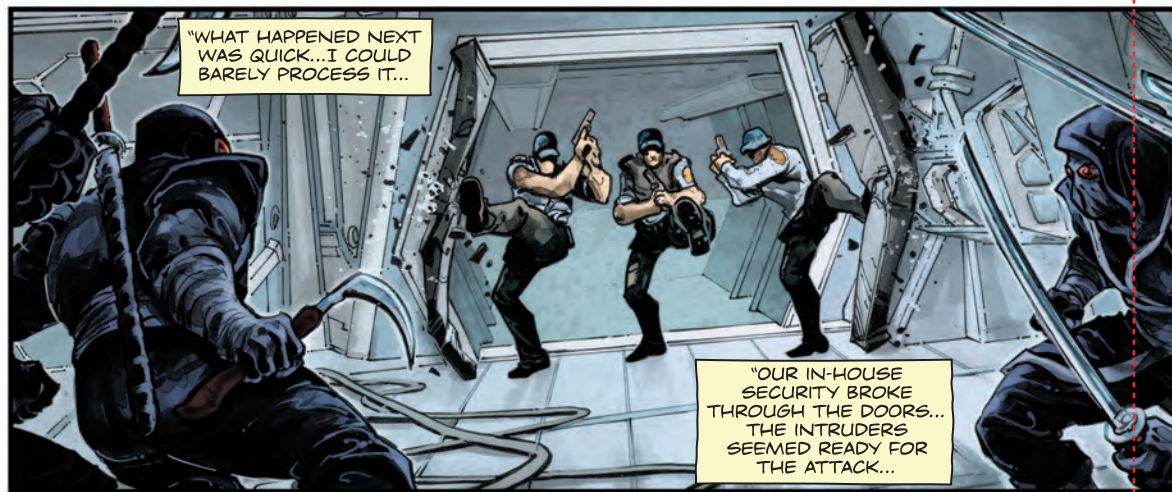
"WE COULD HEAR THE GUARDS POUNDING ON THE DOOR, BUT WE COULDN'T MOVE. I COULD SCARCELY BREATHE.

"THE MEN IN BLACK, THEY HAD COME OUT OF THE SHADOWS. WE HADN'T HEARD A THING UNTIL THEY UNSHEATHED THEIR BLADES.

"IT WAS LIKE I HAD FALLEN INTO ANOTHER WORLD. SOME PLACE STRANGE AND IMPOSSIBLE. WE WEREN'T BUILDING WEAPONS, WE DIDN'T DEAL IN DEATH...

"WE WERE THERE TO SAVE LIVES, TO BUILD AN ENERGY SOURCE THAT WOULD BURN BRIGHT AND CLEAN FOR DECADES. A GENERATOR THAT COULD CHANGE THE WORLD.

"BUT THERE WE WERE, AND I KNEW THAT WE WOULD NEVER SEE THAT FUTURE. IT WAS THE END. THE END FOR ALL OF US.



"WHAT HAPPENED NEXT WAS QUICK...I COULD BARELY PROCESS IT..."

"OUR IN-HOUSE SECURITY BROKE THROUGH THE DOORS... THE INTRUDERS SEEMED READY FOR THE ATTACK..."



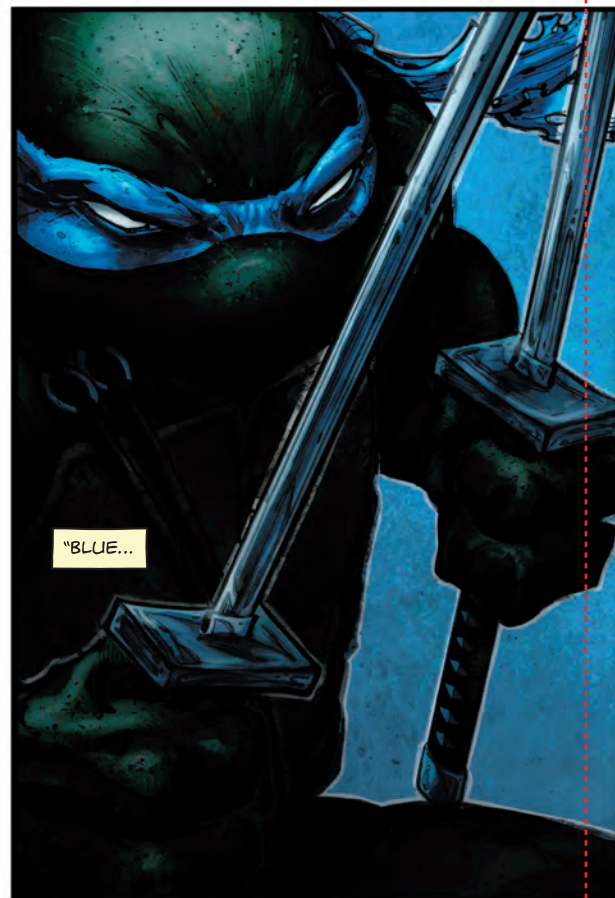
"AND THEN THE LIGHTS CUT OUT ENTIRELY. I THOUGHT IT WAS A POWER SURGE, BUT THERE WAS SOMETHING WRONG IN THE AIR."

"SOMETHING MORE THAN DARKNESS."



"AND THEN THEY CAME."

"A FLASH OF RED..."



"BLUE..."



"PURPLE..."



"ORANGE..."

"THERE WAS THE GLINT OF METAL. THE SOUND OF BLADE ON BLADE... FLESH HITTING FLESH."




"IT SEEMED LIKE THEY WERE FIGHTING THEM. FOR A MOMENT, I THOUGHT I WAS SAVED...BUT AS THE LIGHTS CAME BACK ON, I SAW THE GENERATOR WAS GONE..."

"AND I SAW THEM TURN TOWARDS ME, ANGRY...MORE FRIGHTENING THAN ANYTHING I'D FACED THAT NIGHT."



"I SAW THEIR EYES...THEIR INHUMAN EYES..."



I'VE SEEN A LOT OF STRANGE THINGS IN GOTHAM CITY, BATMAN. BUT I'VE NEVER SEEN ANYTHING LIKE THIS...

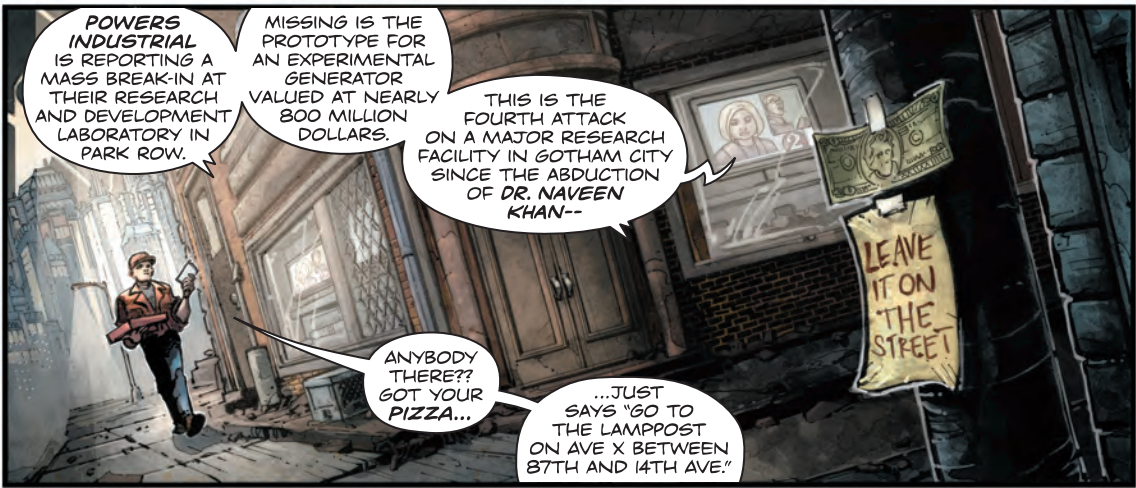
THE GENERATOR... I CAN'T IMAGINE WHAT IT COULD DO IN THE WRONG HANDS. YOU HAVE TO STOP THEM.

# KNIGHTS IN A HALF SHELL

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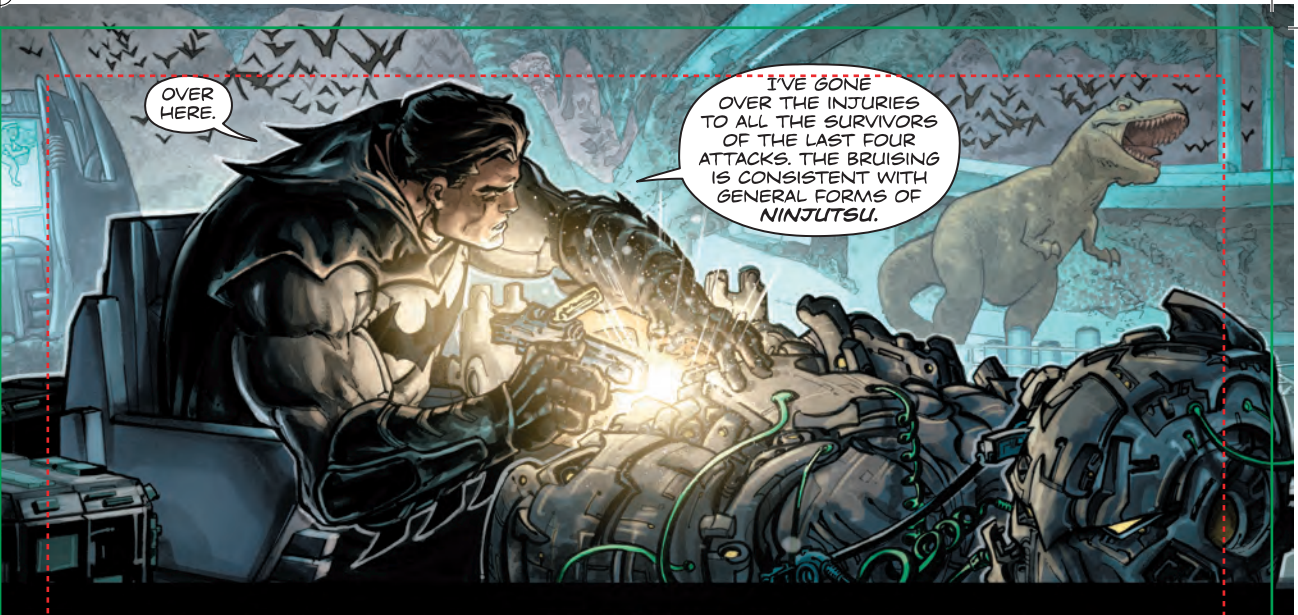


I WILL.





MASTER BRUCE?  
I'M AFRAID I'VE MISPLACED YOU SOMEHOW.



OVER HERE.

I'VE GONE OVER THE INJURIES TO ALL THE SURVIVORS OF THE LAST FOUR ATTACKS. THE BRUISING IS CONSISTENT WITH GENERAL FORMS OF NINJUTSU.

THE LEAGUE OF ASSASSINS, PERHAPS?

THE LEAGUE USES MANY FORMS OF MARTIAL ARTS. FIGHTING STYLES FROM EVERY CORNER OF THE WORLD. THIS CLAN IS MORE SPECIALIZED.

AND THEY DON'T WANT TO BE SEEN.

ISN'T THAT RATHER THE POINT OF BEING A NINJA?

HH.

RA'S WOULD HAVE MADE A PLAY AGAINST ME BY NOW. THIS ISN'T AN ATTACK ON THE CITY ITSELF, THIS IS MORE DELIBERATE.

THIS IS SOMEONE NEW. AND THERE ARE METAHUMANS INVOLVED...SOME KIND OF MONSTROUS CREATURES.

THEY'VE TAKEN FOUR PIECES OF EXPERIMENTAL MILITARY-GRADE TECHNOLOGY SO FAR, BUT NO WEAPONS.

THEY MUST BE BUILDING SOMETHING.

SOMETHING DANGEROUS.

WELL, WE WOULDN'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT THAT, NOW, WOULD WE?

WE'RE NOT HAVING THIS ARGUMENT AGAIN, ALFRED.

IT'S HARDLY AN ARGUMENT, SIR. MERELY AN OBSERVATION.

ALFRED...

IT'S ONE WEEK UNTIL THE ANNIVERSARY OF YOUR PARENTS' MURDER.

EVERY YEAR AT PRECISELY THIS TIME YOU THROW YOURSELF INTO A LITTLE PET PROJECT.

I'M STILL TRYING TO GET THE SCORCH MARKS OFF THE CAVE WALL FROM THE FLAMETHROWER DEBACLE LAST YEAR.

THE INTIMIDATOR SUIT IS MORE THAN A PET PROJECT, ALFRED.

OF COURSE, AND IF YOU HAD ENLISTED LUCIUS FOX'S HELP, PERHAPS YOU WOULD HAVE FINISHED--

I DON'T NEED HELP ON THIS.

OF COURSE NOT.

I SUPPOSE YOU STILL HAVEN'T CONSIDERED CALLING YOUNG MASTER DAMIAN BACK FROM HIS MISSION ABROAD.

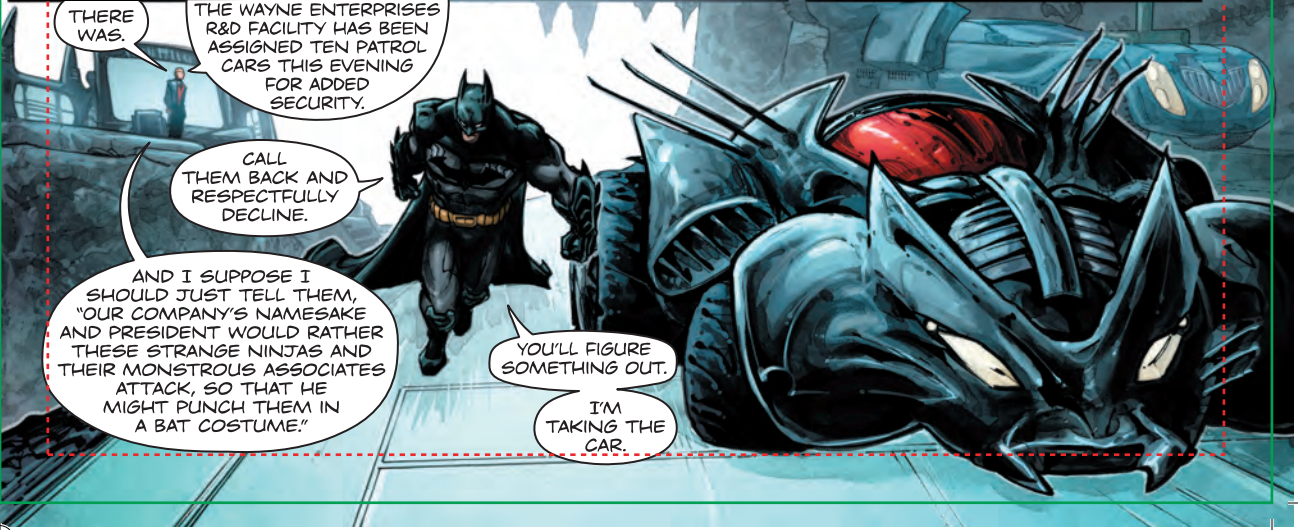
HE'S DOING IMPORTANT WORK.

FORGIVE ME, SIR. BUT THIS WEEK IN PARTICULAR I THINK YOU SHOULD BE WITH YOUR FAMILY.



... WE'RE NOT DISCUSSING THIS ANY FURTHER, ALFRED. THERE'S WORK THAT NEEDS TO BE DONE.

THERE SHOULD HAVE BEEN A CALL FROM THE GCPD.



THERE WAS.

THE WAYNE ENTERPRISES R&D FACILITY HAS BEEN ASSIGNED TEN PATROL CARS THIS EVENING FOR ADDED SECURITY.

CALL THEM BACK AND RESPECTFULLY DECLINE.

AND I SUPPOSE I SHOULD JUST TELL THEM, "OUR COMPANY'S NAMESAKE AND PRESIDENT WOULD RATHER THESE STRANGE NINJAS AND THEIR MONSTROUS ASSOCIATES ATTACK, SO THAT HE MIGHT PUNCH THEM IN A BAT COSTUME."

YOU'LL FIGURE SOMETHING OUT.

I'M TAKING THE CAR.



HEY THERE, BATS...  
GOOD TO SEE YOU AGAIN.

SO IT WORKS?

'COURSE IT WORKS. PAID EIGHTY THOUSAND DOLLARS FOR THE DAMN THING, DIDN'T I?



DOESN'T MEAN THAT IT WORKS.



LOOK. THIS RED DOT RIGHT HERE? THAT'S THE BATMOBILE, RACING THROUGH GOTHAM CITY...OFF TO SAVE THE DAY...

AND HE'S HEADED RIGHT OUR WAY.

HOW'D YOU KNOW WHERE HE'D GO?



I'M SMART LIKE THAT. FOLKS GET A GLIMPSE OF ME AND THINK OH, THAT KILLER CROC, HE'S JUST BRAVN, NO BRAINS.

BUT THEY'RE WRONG. THOSE LABORATORY RAIDS MEAN THAT'S WHERE BATS WILL BE TONIGHT.

AND GUESS WHICH LAB HAS THE LEAST COP PROTECTION?



WAYNE R&D.

LOTS OF LOOT IN THERE...

YEAH, BUT THERE'LL BE A BAT IN THERE, TOO. WE DO IT MY WAY, AND WE WON'T EVEN HAVE TO FIGHT HIM.

THE PRIZE ISN'T WHAT'S INSIDE THE BUILDING, IT'S WHAT HE'S GOING TO PARK RIGHT OUTSIDE.

I TALKED TO A FEW GUYS ON THE BLACK MARKET, AND THEY SAY JUST ONE SMALL PIECE OF THE BAT'S CAR WOULD GO FOR HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS.



WE STRIP IT FOR PARTS AND WE'RE GOING TO BE RICH FOR LIFE.

DID WE REALLY HAVE TO COME THROUGH DOWN HERE?

YOU WANT HIM SPOTTING US? NO. THE SEWERS ARE THE WAY TO GO.



THIS BETTER WORK, CROC...WE LEFT A GOOD GIG WITH THE PENGUIN FOR THIS.

IT'S GONNA WORK.

AND HE'S PARKED. PERFECT.

WE CAN GET UP RIGHT THROUGH... HERE?