

# EARTH 12. THEN.

IT WAS SUPPOSED TO BE THE FINAL WAR. THE LAST BATTLE BETWEEN GOOD AND EVIL.

WE FOUGHT IT TOGETHER, DIANA. WE THOUGHT IT WOULD BE THE END.

IF ONLY WE KNEW...THE REAL WAR HAD JUST BEGUN.

These are the stories from the DARK MULTIVERSE that should NEVER be...

Witness the rise of the Dark Knights...

# BATMAN THE MERCILESS IN WRATH CHILD

PETER J. TOMASI STORY AND WORDS  
FRANCIS MANAPUL ARTIST TOM NAPOLITANO LETTERER  
JAY FABOR AND BRAD ANDERSON COVER  
ANDREW MARINO ASSISTANT EDITOR EDDIE BERGANZA EDITOR  
SPECIAL THANKS TO SCOTT SNYDER, GREG CAPULLO AND JAMES TYNION IV  
BATMAN CREATED BY BOB KANE WITH BILL FINGER  
SUPERMAN CREATED BY JERRY SIEGEL AND JOE SHUSTER.  
BY SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT WITH THE JERRY SIEGEL FAMILY.

# NOW. EARTH-O, OUR WORLD. Langley, Virginia. HQ of A.R.G.U.S. The WAR ROOM.

OKAY, PEOPLE, THE FACT THAT BY EXECUTIVE ORDER, A.R.G.U.S. HAS BEEN CHARGED WITH GATHERING THE HEADS OF S.H.A.D.E., THE D.E.O., TASK FORCE X AND OUR OWN MILITARY, LETS YOU KNOW WE'VE NOT ONLY FORMED THE MOST UN-EASIEST OF ALLIANCES...

...BUT ARE ALSO OPERATING UNDER *CRISIS PROTOCOLS*.

WITH ALL KEY MEMBERS OF THE JUSTICE LEAGUE M.I.A. OUR GOAL'S TO LAY OUT OPTIONS FOR COUNTER-MEASURES.

LET'S START WITH THE MILITARY. GENERAL LANE?

WE'RE ALL ADULTS HERE-- NO OFFENSE MEANT, *FATHER TIME*--SO NO NEED TO SUGAR-COAT THIS MESS.

PURE AND SIMPLE, WE'RE ROYALLY SCREWED.

WE'VE GOT US A FULL-SCALE INVASION AS WE SIT HERE.





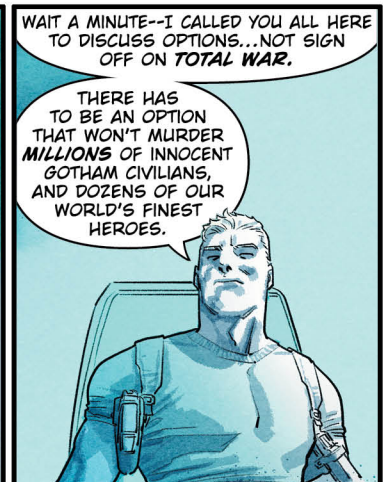
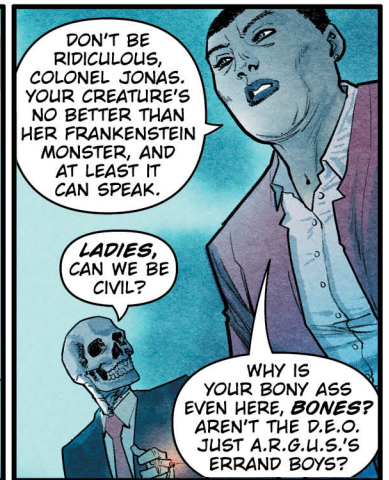
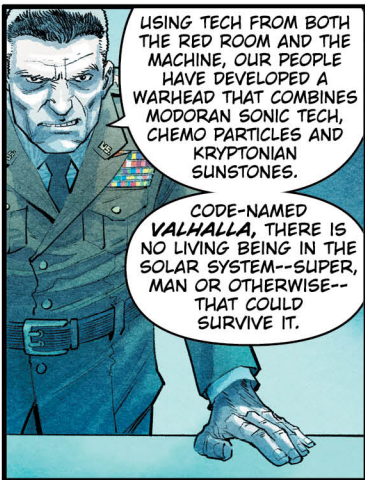
IN THE FIVE DAYS SINCE THAT MOUNTAIN POKED UP IN THE MIDDLE OF GOTHAM CITY WE'VE SEEN METROPOLIS, CENTRAL CITY, DETROIT, COAST CITY, AMNESTY BAY AND EVEN THE LEAGUE WATCHTOWER BE SYSTEMATICALLY TAKEN OUT BY THESE UNKNOWN FORCES.

EARLY BATTLEFIELD REPORTS DESCRIBED THE INVADERS AS "NIGHTMARE BATMEN."

WE SENT WALLER'S "SUICIDE SQUAD" INTO GOTHAM TO CONFIRM AND TERMINATE, BUT ALL CONTACT'S BEEN LOST.

THE SPECIAL GPS UNITS WE IMPLANTED IN THEM ALL WENT OFFLINE, SO WE ONLY CAN PRESUME THEY'VE BEEN COMPROMISED OR KILLED.

RIGHT, SO WITH ALL THE COLORFUL SUPER-FOLKS SCRATCHED FROM THE LINEUP, AND POTUS MOVED TO AN ORBITAL SECURE ZONE ABOARD AIR FORCE ONE, IT'S TIME FOR US TO DO WHAT WE ALWAYS DO, WHICH IS TAKE OVER AND CLEAN UP THIS MESS.



LOOK AT THEM PLAYING AT WAR.

ME, I'VE LIVED IT PRACTICALLY MY WHOLE LIFE.

I WAS ONLY EIGHT YEARS OLD WHEN MY WAR BEGAN, WITH A SHOT FIRED IN A GOTHAM CITY ALLEY...

...BEGAN WITH AN OATH TO MYSELF THAT WHAT HAPPENED TO ME COULD NEVER HAPPEN AGAIN.

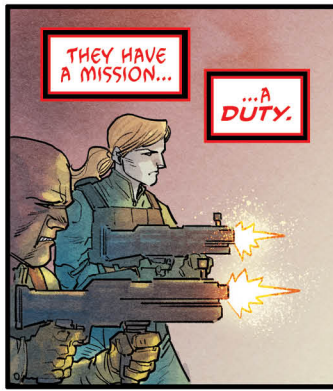
AN OATH THAT I WOULD WAGE MY BATTLE JUSTLY, WITH RULES, WITH MERCY, UNLIKE MY ENEMY.

WHAT A FOOL I WAS, BACK THEN.

OH GOD...



THEIR EYES SHINE WITH FERVOR AND FEAR.

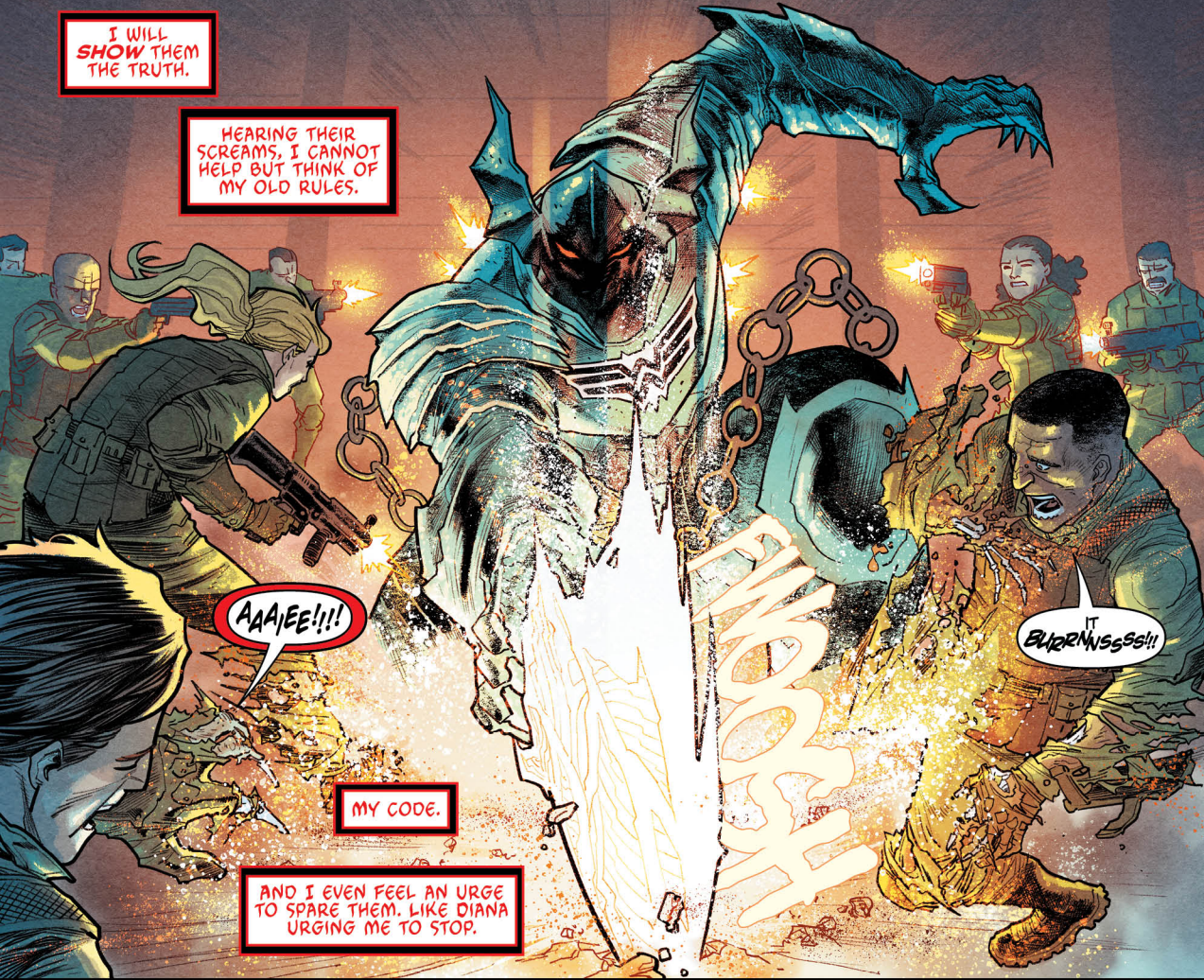


THEY HAVE A MISSION...

...A DUTY.



JUST AS I DID, YEARS AGO.



I WILL SHOW THEM THE TRUTH.

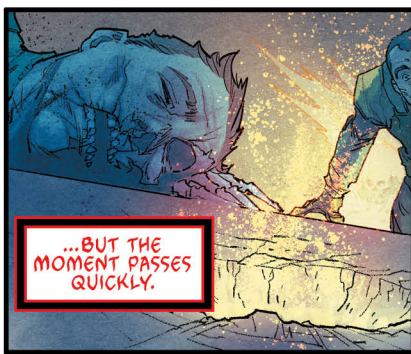
HEARING THEIR SCREAMS, I CANNOT HELP BUT THINK OF MY OLD RULES.

AAAIEEE!!!

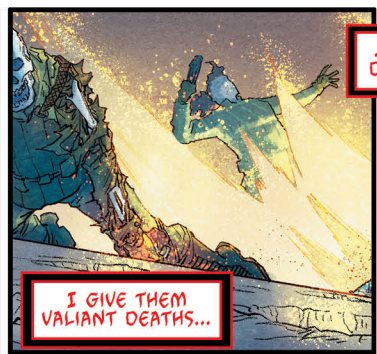
IT BURNSSSS!!!

MY CODE.

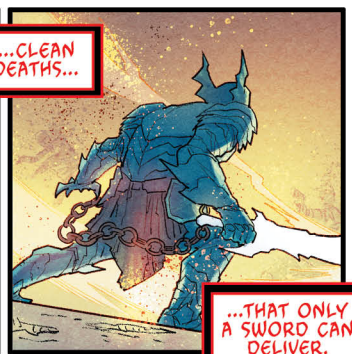
AND I EVEN FEEL AN URGE TO SPARE THEM. LIKE DIANA URGING ME TO STOP.



...BUT THE MOMENT PASSES QUICKLY.



I GIVE THEM VALIANT DEATHS...



...CLEAN DEATHS...

...THAT ONLY A SWORD CAN DELIVER.