Twitter Thread by Sean Kelly



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At some point, Batman probably started an algorithm to keep track of any and all kids being orphaned in the Gotham City metropolitan area, just in case he needs a new one.

Bruce Wayne wandering around the Gotham City orphanages asking weird questions like "What's your stance on revenge?" and "How much do you bench?"

Calling up their files on the Batcomputer, swiping left and right like he's on Tinder, going "Maybe, maybe, no, too chubby, parents didn't die tragically enough, not sure if I'm ready for a non-white..."

Seriously though, Batman's picks for Robin have all had to look like Dick Grayson, because otherwise all of Gotham City will know that he's going through little boys the way a drunk college girl goes through iPhone screens.

For a while there (not sure if this is currently true in the tangled comics mythology) he actually made Jason Todd dye his hair black to match Grayson's because Todd was a redhead and it would be too obvious.

It's kind of a shame, really, because there are some pretty lit storylines you could come up with from Batman picking a non-white Robin.

A black Robin whose parents got wrongly murdered by police in a no-knock raid.
A latinx Robin whose immigrant parents have been lost by ICE.

"Yes, this one's perfect! He was captain of his junior high gymnastics team, he knows hapkido, he fits into the suits I already have, and... ah, his parents died of cancer. He's probably gonna be a doctor." *sigh* "Alfred, set him up with an anonymous college fund."

Something a lot of people don't remember about Robin is that he's supposed to look like Robin Hood. Like his costume is supposed to call to mind the traditional outfit worn by Errol Flynn.

Which sounds like a much better sidekick for Green Arrow than Batman, really.

Not Errol Flynn specifically, mind you, just like, the common portrayals of Robin Hood in the early years of the 20th century.

A sidekick modeled off a guy who robs from the rich, following around a millionaire who beats up robbers.

This is... thematically confused.

A supervillain whose whole deal is that he's an orphan who figured out he was a Robin candidate who didn't get picked who wants revenge for the hard life he had to live instead of getting to go on adventures with his favorite superhero ah shit this is just Buddy from Incredibles

"Alfred, has the Riddler killed any loving fathers lately? How about Two-Face?"

"Master Wayne, you just GOT a new Robin, where is he?"

"...I broke it."

A lot of this stuff comes down to how Batman hates change, when you think about it. He goes out there, finds a kid who matches a similar psychological profile, dresses them up in the same clothes, calls them by the last one's name...

...oh god it's "Vertigo."

Really though, I think a lot of girls have dated guys like Batman, particularly the "thirty-year-old-guy-who-keeps-dating-college-girls" type of guy.

"That's what I love about Robin, I keep getting older, but they stay the same age, all right all right all right"

There were a bunch of scandals in the 1950s revolving around the idea that Batman and Robin were gay - Wertham cited the point that Batman and Robin slept in the same bedroom.

This was because artists are lazy.

"What, draw three panels showing Bruce walk down the hall?"

A really gay Batman would be cool AF though. All rainbow-themed, perched dramatically on the rooftops of Boystown in Chicago, beating the shit out of a different member of the Westboro Baptist Church every week.

I mean that probably wouldn't work on a lot of levels, but there'd definitely be a visceral satisfaction to the Goddamn Batman showing up to make one of those guys eat their fucking protest sign.

"Hey, kid, I'm here because your parents were murdered by Two-Face, and I think that..."

"My parents are fine, what are you talking about?"

"Hmm? Oh, fuck. Um, when the officers from GCPD show up in about twenty minutes try to sound surprised."

Really though, the perfect Robin is someone who, if Batman didn't intervene, WOULD become a supervillain.

Someone who has the skills, the physique, the intelligence, and the tragedy, but is too young to have learned to direct that responsibly.

Like yeah, in a general sense it's irresponsible for Batman to bring a kid along crime-fighting. But there is like a 40% chance that if Batman doesn't recruit him the kid is getting initiated into a clown-themed street gang inside of a week.

There's a weird parallel actually between Robin and Harley Quinn, two younger, vulnerable people who got taken in and molded into the perfect companion for an older, more-powerful personality.

One of the most common storylines for both characters is their struggle to emerge from the shadow of their mentor figure to become a person in their own right. Of course, Dick Grayson and Harley Quinn are both way more well-adjusted than their older counterparts.

The difference, of course, is that Robin is the perfect companion for Batman because of the ways he's *not* like Batman. His independence and relative sanity and innocence are the things that pull Batman back from the brink and keeps him from going too far.

Meanwhile Harley Quinn is never good enough for the Joker in the Joker's eyes because of the ways she's *not* like the Joker. He doesn't view her as an important check on himself (though she often serves that function against his will) but as an extension of his persona.

The thematic confusion of the Robin costume actually works well here. He doesn't dress like a Bat. He's not Batboy. He doesn't even wear dark colors. It's almost like Batman let him choose his own costume and superhero name, even if it clashed with his ENTIRE vibe.

Robin was VERY popular back when he was first introduced, because it gave kids a way to imagine themselves going along on the adventure, being Batman's friend, and I think a lot of that comes down to the idea that Batman would be cool letting you be your own guy.

Like, Bucky, Captain America's sidekick, had to have a flag-themed costume. Green Arrow's sidekick had a virtually-identical costume in a different color scheme.

But Batman's like "Sure dress up like a medieval archery-themed burglar even though you don't carry a bow and arrow."

This kind of continues in that, by and large, Batman's sidekicks don't become Batman and, if they do, it doesn't stay permanent. They become Nightwing, Red Robin, they continue the trend of being their own person.

Meanwhile the other sidekicks generally ascend to becoming the main hero at some point when the other one dies and they want to shake up the comics. Wally West got to stop being Kid Flash and became The Flash for real. Bucky was promoted to Captain America.

Some of those roll back too, of course - Bucky isn't Cap anymore, but I think when they're all dressed like they're members of the same organization it becomes obvious that they're next-in-line for the job.

Bruce Wayne opening a series of orphanages that just have an irresponsible amount of weightlifting equipment and books on hand-to-hand combat laying around.

"Come on kids, it's 11:00, time for your protein shakes!"

"Sister Mary, why do I have to read all these books?"

"Now Stevie, you know that no parent wants to adopt a little boy that doesn't know about fingerprint analysis."

That's right motherfuckers we're talking about Batman today.

Of course the real truth of how Batman gets his Robins is more that each Robin presents himself as being the exemplar of some aspect of Batman.

Dick Grayson was an acrobat and therefore, like Batman, a perfect physical specimen.
Jason Todd was a criminal and had his vengeance.

Tim Drake deduced all on his own that Bruce Wayne was Batman and was therefore even smarter than the "World's Greatest Detective."

And Damien Wayne was a Wayne.

Each Robin represents a different part of Batman.

Really though, that Latinx Robin would be a badass storyline. Like totally-temporary, Batman trains up this kid to be as big a badass as any Robin, just so they can crash the Batmobile through the front gates of a detention center and free the kid's parents.

Bruce Wayne has been trying to get them sprung through legal channels, but the administration is stonewalling, playing dumb, insisting they don't know where the kid's parents are.

But the Batcomputer knows.

So Batman and Petirrojo go cracking skulls, save the kid's parents, and then, courtesy of Bruce Wayne, go to a new city with clean identities to start over, while the kid gradually starts to become their own superhero in an immigrant community in Metropolis or Central City.

That's the cool thing about Batman. Whereas other superheroes keep a single sidekick around until such a time as they can take over the main role, Batman sets up *franchises.* He keeps training up new sidekicks and they keep going off to do their own thing.

Anyway, thanks for reading, my name is Sean, I quit a six-Red-Bull-a-day caffeine habit while I had COVID last month so this thread is either proof that my brain fog has finally lifted or that I'm deeply, deeply broken.

Oh, one last thing: this should absolutely be an Elseworlds story, where Batman is training Billy Batson to be Robin at the same time as he gets selected to be the new SHAZAM

https://t.co/mgvD7jLjIi

> Alfred, cross Billy Batson off the list. Dammit, he would've been perfect, look at his name Alfred!
>
> Yes Master Bruce. Will there be anything else?
>
> Bat-son
>
> *sigh* Indeed Master Bruce. If that is all then.
>
> — Mistress Emma Evans (@MelanieMoore) December 7, 2020