



MCU: Gotham

A series kit for *Primetime Adventures*



This document is a fan-created work for players of Matt Wilson's *Primetime Adventures*.
The author is associated with neither the game nor Dog-eared Designs.
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They didn't seem too interested in the dungeon crawl game I had brought to the monthly game day. "...Or I have another game where you're playing cops in Batman's Gotham City," I continued. I instantly had a full table. We ran a session of the series that day, complete with a large audience. Next month, some of the players wanted to continue the game, so we did. A few players came and went, but we had a core crew that stuck with the game. By the time we were done, we had completed two seasons of *MCU: Gotham*.

PREMISE

Inside the Gotham City Police Department, there is a task force that deals with some of the city's worst cases. These are the stories of the Major Crimes Unit.

MCU: Gotham is a police procedural. While the pursuit of justice for a crime can span episodes, there is an overarching theme to each season, and the character's interactions drive most of the stories.

THE THREE RULES OF MCU: GOTHAM

One: The Batman does not exist. Batman is an urban legend, a story that criminals tell their children to scare them to sleep. If a civilian claims that Batman saved him, the proper response would be "Sure, and then he and Bigfoot jumped into their UFO and lew off to meet up with the Jersey Devil, right?" Batman does not exist.

Two: It's early in Batman's career. There is no Robin. There is no Bat-Signal on the roof of GCPD. No Ace the Bat-Hound. Very few people have even heard of him yet. Maybe there's a rumor in the criminal underworld of someone hunting them down. Maybe some street people tell stories of a monster that flies between rooftops. If we see Batman in the show at all, it's a shadow in the background that moves. While we're in Gotham and focusing on the cops, we probably won't hear anything about Superman, Wonder Woman, or the Flash.

Three: There are criminals and then there are Criminals. Freaks get names like The Zodiac Killer. The Unabomber. The Mad Hatter. The Riddler. Mister Freeze. But they're just criminals with fancy gadgets and dementia, nothing more.

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In addition to the regular line of Batman comics DC has put out over the years, MCU: Gotham is heavily based off of Gotham Central (DC), Powers (Oni), and the movies No Way Out and L.A. Confidential.
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THE MAJOR CRIMES UNIT

Here's how the MCU was structured in the original series with DC regulars in interesting positions. Your MCU could be completely different.

The MCU is headed by Lieutenant Jim Gordon, new to the unit. Gordon refused to testify against his former partner, Harvey Bullock, a dirty cop through and through. Harvey Dent, current Head of Internal Affairs, thinks that Gordon is dirty as Bullock. Dent is pressured by the city's mayor, Oswald Cobblepot, to bring down Gordon. (In the pilot episode, we had Maggie Sawyer in charge of the MCU, but we all wanted Jim Gordon there.)



THE CAST

This isn't the actual cast that played in the original series, but something close. Six different cast members you can choose from to get your series started, plus four more concepts for you to flesh out.

SARAH ESSEN, DETECTIVE

Detective Sarah Essen transferred from Homicide well over a month before Jim Gordon was picked to head up MCU, which means that now she's working directly for the man she's sleeping with on the down low. As far as she knows, nobody in the MCU knows about the affair. She's a capable detective, possibly the smartest officer in the room. Her issue deals with her status in the unit. Sarah is the first female detective in the boys-only detective club. Her gender, intelligence, and drive are seen as an attack on the established order.

*Is Jim Gordon still married?
Which co-worker really has it
out for you?*

Concept: The only female detective in the MCU.

Issue: Self-Worth

Impulse: Sarah often takes more risks than necessary to show that she's just as good as the others.

Edge: "All that and brains, too."

Edge: Former Homicide Detective

Connection: Jim Gordon

Personal Set: Her small walk-up apartment

Spotlight Episode: in mid-season after a screen presence 2 episode

ELLORY "HURRICANE" HAMILL, DETECTIVE

This new guy, Gordon, doesn't appreciate how things are supposed to be done. Sometimes perps "resist arrest" or "slip and fall" or "he came at me with a knife". He's used to working the streets with his fists. Sometimes he thinks that's all he's good at. His wife of five years and three-year old child are the two calm spots in his life. Ellory's issue manifests in his temper: small things tend to set him off, but he would never hurt his family.

*What caused you to be filled
with such rage? What calms
you down?*

Concept: Leftover brute from the previous administration; husband.

Issue: Wrath.

Impulse: Ellory is prone to angry outbursts and can be downright scary, even to those who know him well.

Edge: Family Man

Edge: "Sometimes the blood just doesn't come out."

Connection: "Matches" Malone, criminal informant

Personal Set: The men's room on the third floor of HQ with the chipped tiles on the wall and the broken mirror over the filthy ceramic sink

Spotlight Episode: in late season. If possible, just before Natasha Hamill's if she is a protagonist

LIAM MCTAVISH, DETECTIVE

Everyone is dirty, it's just a matter of how much. Liam has been well compensated for doing all the things you're supposed to like letting some rules slide here, turning a blind eye there. That's just how Gotham is, you know? Family life—his actual family, mind you—hasn't been so good. His wife moved out and, well, there hasn't been any paperwork filed. Yet. Maybe there is time to change things. His issue as a dirty cop is forefront. He's trying to get out, but it won't be easy.

*Which mafia family are
you working for? Can you
reconcile with your wife? Can
you trust her?*

Concept: Cop on the take trying to get out.

Issue: Divided Loyalties

Impulse: Liam can be paranoid, and with good reason. He's keeping secrets and it's showing.

Edge: Did a stint in Afghanistan

Connection: Harvey Bullock, all around good guy who's got your back no matter what, winds up getting kicked from the GCPD on some trumped up B.S. charge. Can you believe that?

Connection: Family connections

Nemesis: Harvey Dent, the two-faced s.o.b. that heads up Internal Affairs

Personal Set: A photo of his estranged wife

Spotlight Episode: in early season

NATASHA HAMILL, FORENSIC TECHNICIAN

The lead tech in GCPD's forensics department, Natasha has been with the GCPD for seven years and married for the last five. Nearly two years ago, she was kidnapped by someone the MCU was tracking down; after rescue, Natasha turned to using drugs to cope with the stress. Her issue deals with that dark temptation: She has been clean for exactly six months at the start of the series, but the anniversary of the kidnapping is coming up.

*Which capital-C Criminal
kidnapped you? Is he or she
locked up or still on the loose?
How did your husband find
out about the drug use?*

Concept: Crime Scene Unit Forensic Technician; wife.

Issue: Temptation—drugs

Impulse: Natasha can be overly-controlling, trying to keep her life in a regimented order.

Edge: Six Months Sober

Edge: Science!

Connection: Amelia Weston, childhood friend and sponsor

Nemesis: That capital-C Criminal

Personal Set: Sobriety Pin

Spotlight Episode: in late season. If possible, just after Ellory Hamill's if he is a protagonist



KAT O'DONNELL,
ASSISTANT DISTRICT ATTORNEY

From the well-to-do slice of society, Kat has her eye set on the Governorship. With a large social circle (including old college friend Bruce Wayne), Kat is confident in her chances with attaining her goal. Currently working from the DA's office, she's already on her way to the top. Her issue manifests in what steps she will take to get there.

*Where is your ex in all this?
What is your next step in the
grand plan: the DA's office or
straight to the Mayor's office?*

Concept: Divorcee with political ambitions

Issue: Temptation—power

Impulse: Kat can be manipulative and dishonest. Her over-confidence can cause her to veer into recklessness.

Edge: Assistant District Attorney

Edge: Knows the right people

Connection: Bruce Wayne, philanthropist

Personal Set: Her smartphone

Spotlight Episode: early or mid-season

*Liam, Natasha, and Kat all
have personal sets that aren't
actual places. Instead of a
location, consider using an
object that signifies a scene
has something to do with
the protagonist.*

BRYCE ROSSLAND,
EMBEDDED REPORTER

Bryce Rossland is possibly best known for his four books covering his journalism experiences around the world. As part of Mayor Cobblepot's recent reforms of the GCPD, Bryce reports from the front lines of law enforcement in a weekly column, which will surely be book number five (and hopefully a mini-series). He begins the ride-along just before or just as the series begins. His issue deals with the public perception: he wants to be known as successful and competent. Everything doesn't have to be about him, but Bryce knows the real story isn't Gotham, it's Bryce's experience in Gotham.

*How well do you know
Gotham, really? What would
you do to get the real story?*

Concept: Veteran Reporter here as a publicity stunt

Issue: Pride

Impulse: Bryce can be a gloryhound, diminishing the efforts of others.

Edge: "I've reported from Afghanistan and Iraq. Gotham's a cakewalk."

Edge: Ride-along

Connection: Victoria Vale, reporter for the *Gotham Tribune*

Personal Set: 30, a newshound's bar near the *Tribune*

Spotlight Episode: early to mid-season

JULIANA CHRISTINOPOLI, FBI LIAISON

With Gotham City on the state line, the MCU has to coordinate with the FBI whenever dealing with crime that could cross the river. Agent Christinopoli has held this position for almost two years.

DAVID MOORE, DETECTIVE

Freshly transferred from Metropolis. Gosh, does it ever stop raining here?

THOMAS DIDYMUS, INTERNAL AFFAIRS

Thomas works directly under Harvey Dent, helping to clean house in the “newer, more gentler” GCPD.

STACY BLACK, GCPD LIAISON TO THE MAYOR’S OFFICE

She works for Hizzoner Mister Mayor Cobblepot. The money is good, the working conditions aren’t, and she knows she was hired more for her looks than anything else.

GETTING STARTED

There are detectives in your cast or the reporter is in your cast: Put one or two in an unmarked police car with the embedded reporter in the back seat (even if Bryce Rossland isn’t a protagonist). It’s Bryce’s first day as a ride-along and everything is being recorded. Allow for a line or two of banter as the players find their characters. Suddenly, an explosion from the storefronts ahead! Dark greenish clouds of gas pour out of the building as a van pulls up and masked gunmen rush out, heading into the smoke!

There are no detectives in your cast: Well, that’s odd, but okay. Two members of the cast most likely to be going to coffee together or coming back from an off-site

meeting together are walking by One Police Plaza, back to the HQ. Allow for a line or two of banter as the player find their characters. Up on the steps, the police commissioner is giving an impromptu news conference to a gaggle of reporters. Suddenly, gunshots are heard! A van pulls up and masked gunmen rush out, firing at the commissioner and uniformed police officers!

For either scenario, possible conflicts could include looking competent (yourself or the GCPD) in front of the reporters, the overall impression of the GCPD in the public (i.e., “If I fail, it looks I used excessive force to take these guys down.”), your protagonist’s relationship with the GCPD.

KEEP GOING

Stuck for a scene? With *Primetime Adventures*’ emphasis on creating interesting characters, just putting those protagonists next to each other should provide fodder for the next scene.

MCU: Gotham at heart is a police procedural: Move detectives to a crime scene. Have the Forensic Technician discover something important in the evidence. Have the people that report to the DA, Internal Affairs, FBI Chief, or the Mayor be called in and get yelled at because progress hasn’t been made on their boss’ agendas.

But life isn’t all about the actual investigation: It’s the end of shift and some of the cast are heading out to drink the day away. There is a secret rendezvous in the evidence room. Someone shows up and needs help. Someone shows up to collect a debt. Someone shows up to send a message. Someone stole our undercover car. Sexist remarks in the locker room. Showing off at the target range. Called in to go over your testimony.

If all else fails, ask yourself which two characters would most hate to be stuck in an elevator with each other. You know what to do.



CRIMINALS

Adapting Criminals from the Batman lore to *MCU: Gotham* is surprisingly easy for the majority of Batman's villains. Most of Batman's Rogues Gallery is full of normal people with twists. The Riddler is just this guy. The Joker is just this guy. Killer Moth is just this guy in a stupid suit. Here is a look at some of the more colorful people from the *Batman* comics for your own *MCU: Gotham* game.

THE PENGUIN

Oswald Cobblepot is a short, obese, toad of a man from a family of old money. His connections with the criminal underworld didn't stop him from becoming Gotham's mayor. Now, he uses his position to avenge slights against him and settle old grudges, but he's clever, always keeping his hands clean. He doesn't see himself as Mayor of Gotham. He sees himself as king.

CLAYFACE

That cosmetics company that horribly scarred Mark Hagan was run by one of Gotham's many mafia families and now Clayface is out for revenge. In order to alleviate the constant pain from the "accident", he coats his body with a special type of cosmetic mud, which just turns out to be toxic.

CALENDAR MAN

A serial killer that tied deaths to holidays (but not always on holidays), forcing the victims to ingest a lethal dose of poison. Victims included a woman with the last name of Nieujahr, found with confetti in her stomach for New Years Day; three members of the King family, for Three Kings Day; and so on.

KILLER CROC

Jordan "Killer" Croc is a wrestler in an underground fight club. He's a huge guy with a skin condition that makes him shed dead layers of skin off, as if he's constantly sunburned. His teeth are filed to points (although that's really a prosthesis). "The win-nar and still champ-y-ohn... *KILLLLLLLLLLLLLLLER CROC!*" He has anger management issues. (Killer Croc is played by Brock Lesnar.)

DEADSHOT

All members of the GCPD's SWAT unit have nicknames. Floyd Lawton's is "Deadshot". He pulls in side jobs that aren't exactly legal, like murder-for-hire. With his knowledge of police procedures and close quarters combat, Deadshot is a deadly foe.

THE JOKER

You really don't need to change the Joker at all. He would completely fit within a Batman-less Gotham.

CATWOMAN

You don't need to change Selina Kyle, either. She's a world-class cat burglar that works for herself.

TWO-FACE

During the first season, we keep Harvey Dent as Harvey Dent, head of Internal Affairs. A duplicitous and smug s.o.b., he is convinced that Jim Gordon is a dirty cop and is egged on by the mayor's office to remove the only good cop from the GCPD. After the accident that creates Two-Face, he wouldn't need many changes from traditional Batman lore.

POISON IVY

Similar to Calendar Man, Pamela Isley is a poisoner. Take away the magical man-eating plants and focus on the plant-based poisons and ecowarrior ethos. She is an Earth-first fanatic and willing to destroy anyone that harms the living earth. The city is a blight, an affront to nature. Eventually she will work her way up to ridding the world of the cesspit that is Gotham. She is secretly backed by Ra's Al Ghul.

THE RIDDLER

Edward Nigma is the smartest man alive and he's going to prove it. Having already stolen a fortune via wire fraud, he's still in town because they haven't recognized his genius. While any incarnation of The Riddler would work well in an *MCU: Gotham* game, I am particularly fond of the mastermind of deadly traps from the Arkham series of video games.

RA'S AL GHUL

Ra's al Ghul is an eco-terrorist fanatic, but not as direct as Poison Ivy. Where she takes drastict, direct action, Ra's plays the long game. If we include both her and Ra's in the show, Ivy is a pawn in Ra's greater goal: to destroy Gotham to return the world to a perfect environmental utopia. He heads a group of killers—The League of Assassins—and charges them to affect change one body at a time.

FIREBUG

An arsonist-for-hire working for one of Gotham's many criminal families. You won't need much to change him to fit into *MCU: Gotham*—just as the name and suit have traded hands many times in the Batman comic books, you could give the suit to just about anyone.

THE ROYAL FLUSH GANG

The five members of the Hoyle criminal family uses cards as codenames during their heists: armed car robberies, bank thefts, and other low-level “that's where the money is” crime. The King and Queen of Diamonds are husband and wife; Jack and Ace of Diamonds are their sons; Ten of Diamonds is Jack's wife. They wear custom-painted hockey goalie masks that feature their playing card.

Optional Rule: If a Royal Flush Gang member's card is revealed to resolve a crisis, that card counts for the Producer. The Royal Flush gang cheats at cards.

THE HUNTRESS

Another person we don't need to change much: Helena Bertinelli seeks revenge on the mafia families that ordered her parents' murder over a decade ago. With her in the show, we have to ask if the criminal scum of Gotham deserve the protection of the law, just like civilians?

HARLEY QUINN

Iris Harleen Quinzel, MD, is a respected psychiatrist at Arkham Asylum. She implants post-hypnotic suggestions in her patients to commit crimes in order to impress the one inmate she is utterly infatuated with...

words and stuff

Thomas Deeny

special thanks to

primetime adventures

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mcu: gotham players

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