

META: The Nygmachine

Jonah Ostroff (ft. Scott Handelman & Adam Maresca)

Art by Ed Steckley

Answer: **ARKHAM TANGENT**

Every answer in the opening round can be associated with an idiom that uses one of the visible pieces of the machine to perform the “verb” on a hidden object. Follow the path of the machine’s operations to get the correct order for the idioms and their answers, and note where the shown letter appears in the “object” of the idiom.

Puzzle Answer	Icon	Verb	the	Noun	Letter	Index in Noun	Index into Answer
HASTE	ramp	JUMP	the	GUN	U	2	A
ENDURE	teeth	BITE	the	BULLET	E	5	R
CHECK IN	boxing glove	PUNCH	the	CLOCK	K	5	K
DEEP THROAT	bellows	BLOW	the	WHISTLE	L	6	H
AVANT GARDE	gloved hand	PUSH	the	ENVELOPE	V	3	A
EMBELLISH	gold bar	GILD	the	LILY	I	2	M
PARTY HARD	up pulley	RAISE	the	ROOF	F	4	T
PROPOSAL	toy plane	POP	the	QUESTION	O	7	A
AMENDS	shovel	BURY	the	HATCHET	C	4	N
HIGH PRICE	hammer	BREAK	the	BANK	N	3	G
LEADER	telephone	CALL	the	SHOTS	H	2	E
PASS ON	boot	KICK	the	BUCKET	T	6	N
TAX FRAUD	grill	COOK	the	BOOKS	B	1	T

Reading the position of the noun’s letter into the answer spells what this whole process has been: an **ARKHAM TANGENT**, while the Riddler is busy making things worse all over Gotham!

Author’s Notes

Jonah: This was the first meta written, but not for this answer! I wrote this as a proof-of-concept meta for a different theme proposal. When Batman was chosen, Scott pointed out that it would be a great fit for the Nygmachine. Despite being written first, this was the last meta to get a clean test due to how much it relied on art. I was worried that it would be hard to cleanly convey all of the verbs, but Ed did an amazing job.

In the original draft, answers were always verbs that were direct synonyms of the idioms. We found this to be a little too constraining and backsolvable, so we loosened it a bit for the final version. We also swapped out RUMOUR HAS IT (spill the beAns) after a test identified it as "spill the teA". Even though this extracted the same letter, it felt like a bad precedent to have this type of ambiguity in the opening round meta. (And if you're wondering why A-Sides seems to have been written for a longer answer, this is the reason.)

Adam: You know who does Rube Goldberg illustrations? Basically nobody. I first asked some artist acquaintances if they were up to it, but the insanely specific demands for the machine we had were (understandably) too much. I contact Ed in hopes he could refer us to someone, but he was such a stand-up guy that we ended up getting art done by a world-class illustrator. (I mean, if you’ve been in *MAD*, that’s about as it good as it gets, right?)

And yes, RIP to RUMOUR HAS IT/spill the (beans/tea), but compromise is how hunts get done.