

WHY THE IDENTITY OF THE BLACK HOOD IN RIVERDALE IS BOTH GREAT AND A MAJOR LETDOWN

By [Alane Lim](#) · December 15, 2017 9:00 am



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This article contains **major spoilers**. Stop reading right now if you don't want to find out one of the biggest reveals this season!

For those of us watching *Riverdale's* second season, the identity of the Black Hood has consumed much of our free time. Theories pinning everyone from Hal Cooper to Cheryl Blossom and Hiram Lodge as the Black Hood, or stating that "no, there were actually multiple Black Hoods," like we were all trapped in an Agatha Christie novel, swept over the Internet. It got to a point where even the most farfetched theories made sense.

Well, our wait is over. It turns out the janitor Mr. Svenson has been the killer all along, the one baiting Betty and instilling fear into all of Riverdale's citizens. Not only that, but he's gone – shot dead by Sheriff Keller. Unless, of course, it's a red herring for the *real* Black Hood(s). But we'll have to wait till at least next month to find out.

I have mixed feelings about this revelation. On the one hand, it would have been a lot more exciting for someone else – say, Sheriff Keller – to be the Black Hood. On the other hand, I'm very glad a majorly overlooked side character from the comics is getting his (admittedly perverse) turn in the spotlight. Let's go into the details.

WHY IT'S A LETDOWN (*RIVERDALE*)



"Don't look at me," Svenson says. "I'm just doing my job."

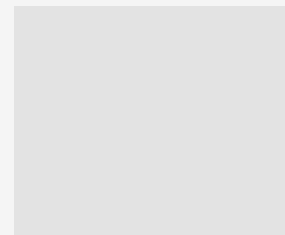
Svenson's reveal as the Black Hood was kind of disappointing. As a character who began appearing in the more recent episodes this season, we as viewers weren't really invested in him. Sure, Archie and Veronica might have pinned him for a moment as the Black Hood an episode back, but even then it seemed just like another distraction before the real Black Hood – perhaps Hal Cooper, who would be in a position to know all these details about Betty – was revealed.

Nevertheless, Svenson as the Black Hood wasn't entirely implausible. There are two parallel scenes in Season 2, Episode 7 that tangentially suggest Svenson is the serial killer. Josie is seen practicing her songs at the beginning of the episode, and later dreams her throat is slashed by the Black Hood.

Then there are the plots in Season 2, Episode 8 and this latest episode. The gang finds out about a previous serial killer, The Riverdale Reaper, and that Svenson is the lone survivor of a family the Reaper attacked. Svenson points the gunman out and the others kill him. The man he got, though, was innocent.

So why does Svenson take it upon himself to cleanse the town of sinners if he himself caused an innocent man to die? And how did he get into the sheriff's department if he was working at the school? There are still some mysteries there, but at the moment I can't bring myself to be as interested as I should be.

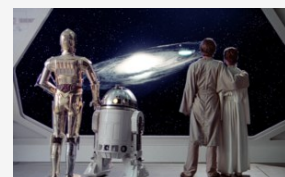
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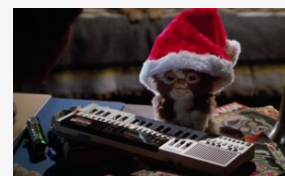
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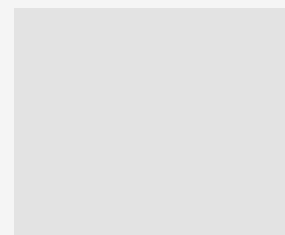
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Svenson's trying his best, Mr. Weatherbee!

I've always had a soft spot for the comic version of Svenson. Though he doesn't often appear in the comics, the bashful Swede is incredibly kind and hardworking. He's not the brightest bulb, but he knows how everything in the school works – like how you have to speak to the appliances in certain (very nice!) ways to get them to work properly, much to the astonishment of other janitors who might have taken his place (Mr. Weatherbee tried to let him go a few times). Most of all, he loves his job and the kids at school, and they love him back.

It was hard to dislike anything about Svenson. I know the older *Archie* comics generally focused more on family-friendly issues and encouraged us to be good people, with laughs and teenage hijinks in the middle, but this guy was at the top of the good-guys ladder.

Transforming him into someone who has the exact opposite of his personality, placing him at the possible center of a murder mystery, and making use of his status as janitor to keep him unnoticed but somehow ever-present is a pretty cool move by the creators.

It was interesting for me, anyway. I've always wanted Svenson to have his time to shine, and though this isn't quite what I imagined for him, it was certainly intriguing.

Riverdale's writers have put quite a spin on some of the characters, the most memorable for me being Ms. Grundy, but none have impacted me as much as Svenson. Again, because comic-book Svenson always got me right *right there*.

Truly, *Riverdale* has a lot of shadows underneath its peaceful exterior, if it's let one of its nicest people go so far down the dark side. I wonder what's next for Dark Betty?

WHY IT'S A TOSSUP (*RIVERDALE* AND *ARCHIE*)



Though not nearly as much of one as Betty versus Veronica!

Still, I wish they had built up Svenson some more before the big reveal, since I only have more questions now. It would have been nice to have a satisfying reveal for a character who's so often unnoticed in favor of the main cast – at least, in the comics.

That, and he was pinpointed as one of the more likely candidates, and I'd been hoping for a completely unexpected surprise. Still, it looks like a lot of things need to be wrapped up.

I'm looking forward to seeing what *Riverdale* brings us next!

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Her interests include indie games, Archie comics, and sci-fi/fantasy books.

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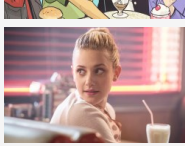
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