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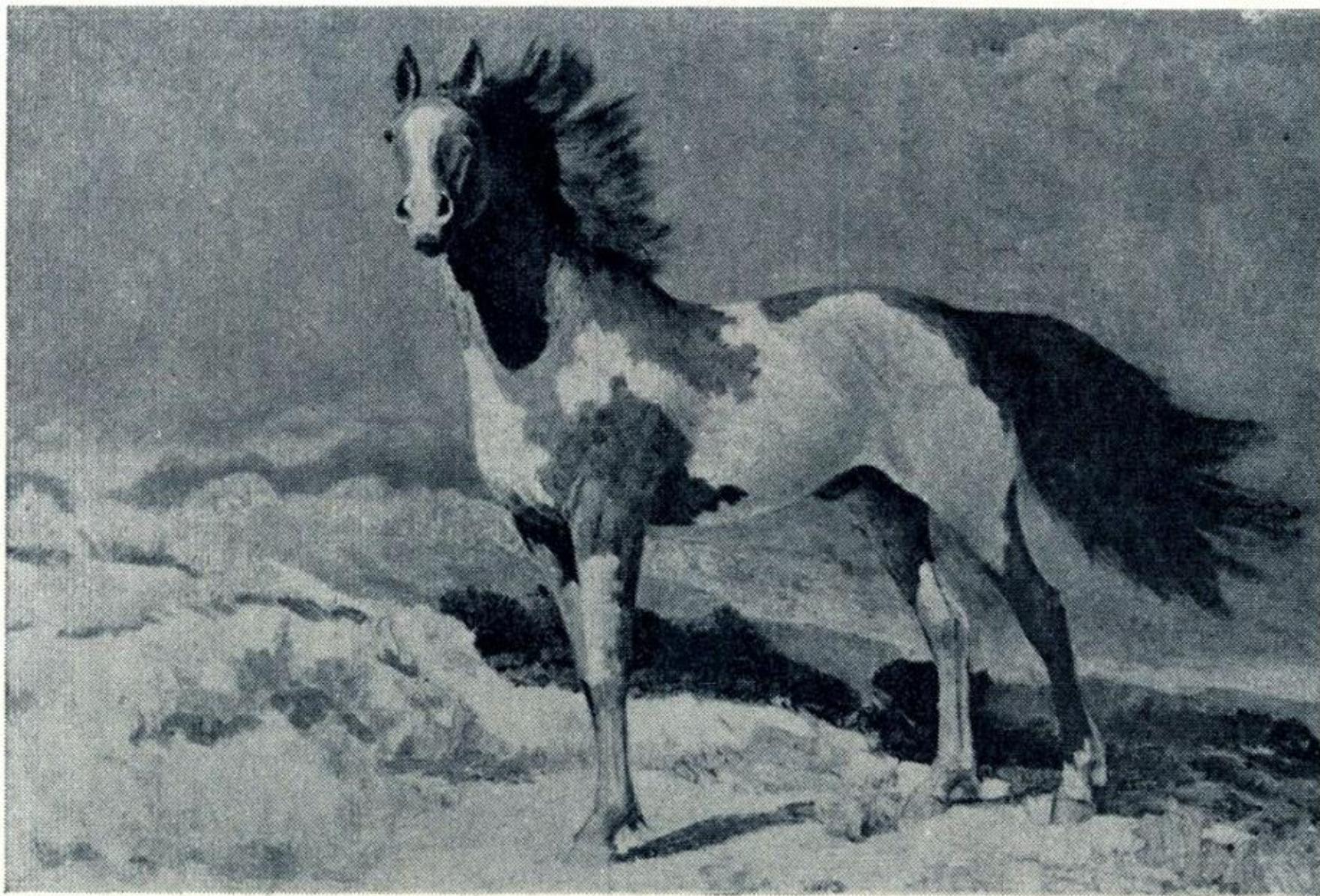
MAY
NO. 221

BATMAN



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FREE!

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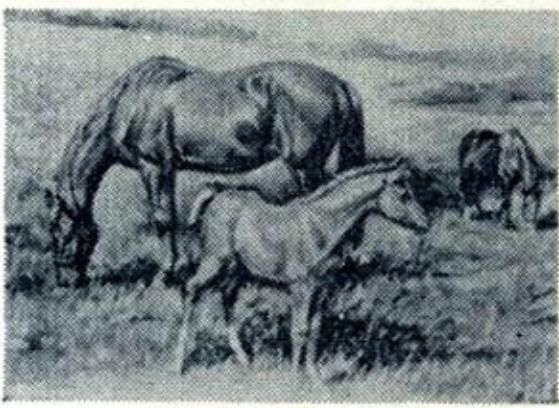
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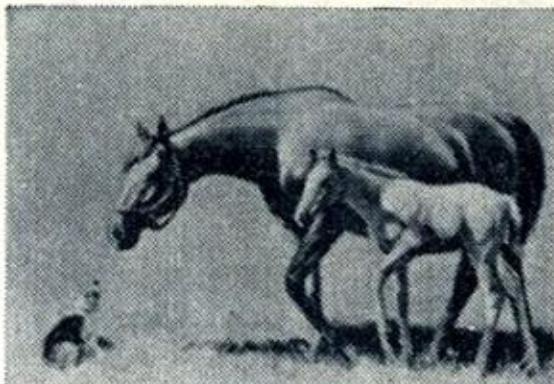
Aristocracy Lady



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Lady Gallant

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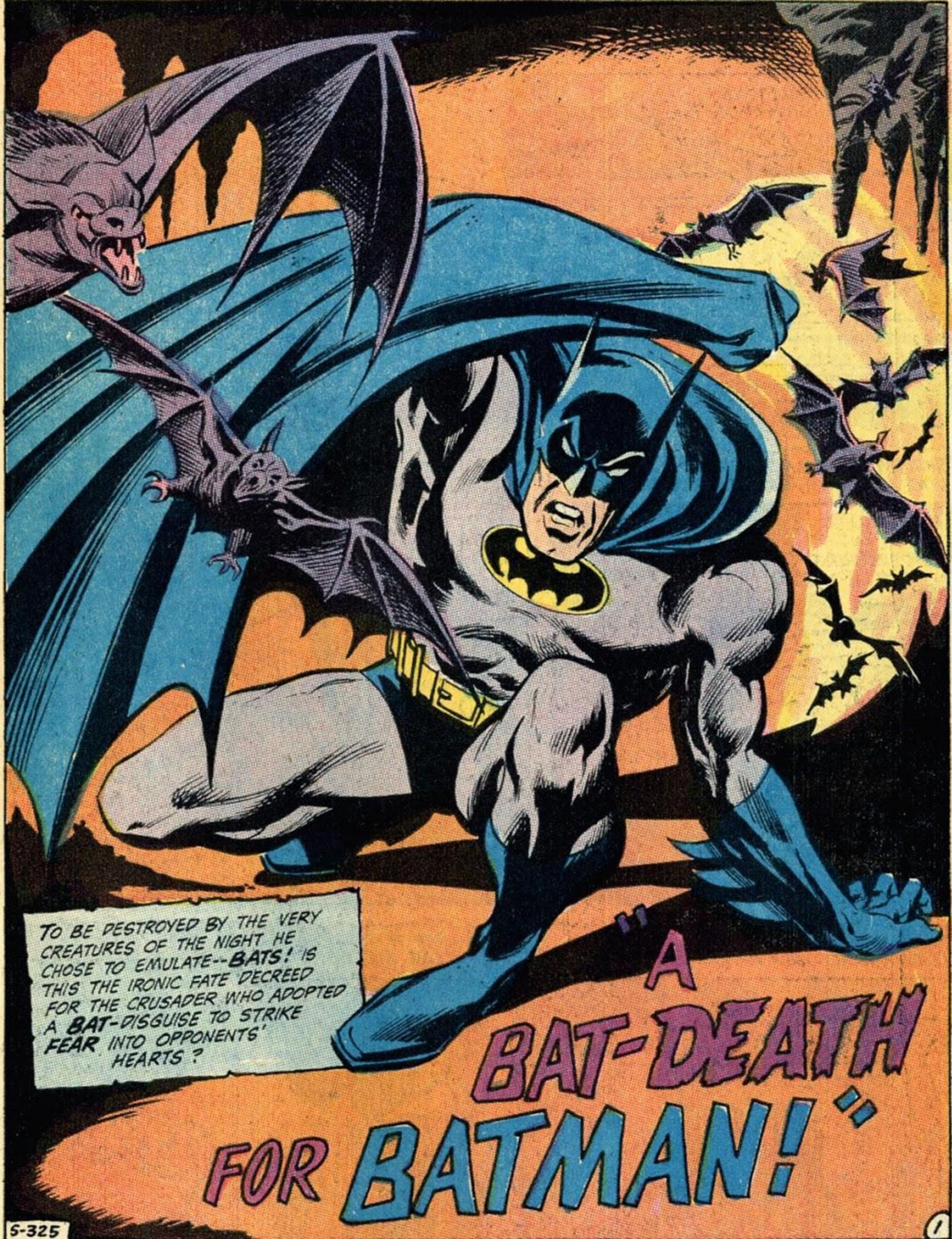
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S-325

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"IT WAS JUST ANOTHER TRANQUIL MORNING ON THE RHINE RIVER--A PATIENT FISHERMAN AND HIS SON WAITING THEIR FIRST BITE...AND THEN IT CAME!"

HIMMEL--WHAT HAVE I CAUGHT--?!

PULL IT IN--!

"INSTEAD, THE SURPRISED FISHERMAN WAS YANKED OVERBOARD..."

ACH--SUCH STRENGTH!

"SUDDENLY THE PLACID CURRENT TURNED INTO A BOILING, DEVOURING TURBULENCE..."

IT PULLED HIM IN!
D-DEVOURING HIM....!

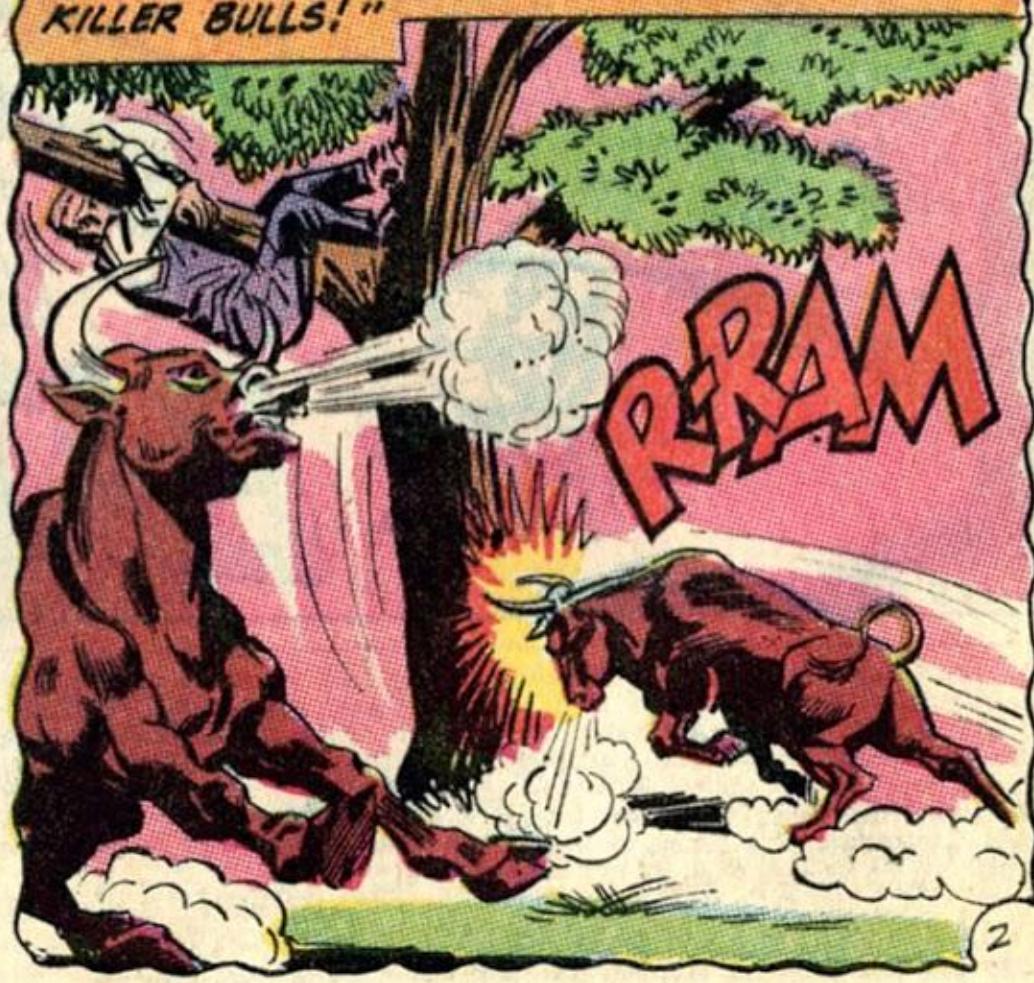
BUT THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE,
HEALTH INSPECTOR ORDWEIN!
PIRANHAS--
IN THE RHINE?

NEIN, HERR WAYNE--COMMON RIVER TROUT!
JUST AS COMMON...

"...AS THE BRACE OF LETHARGIC OXEN THAT FARMER PLATT WAS WATERING ONE MORNING..."



"...AND WHO MOMENTS LATER TURNED INTO-- KILLER BULLS!"



THESE ARE TWO OF MANY INCIDENTS TOO GRUESOME TO DETAIL-- WHERE FORMERLY MEEK, TAME ANIMALS VICIOUSLY TURNED ON THEIR MASTERS!

WE CHECKED --AND THIS MYSTERIOUS AILMENT IS NOT RABIES, HOOF-AND-MOUTH, NOR ANY OTHER DISEASE!

BUT IT'S TURNING "LAMBS" INTO "LIONS"! WHY ARE YOU TELLING ME ALL THIS?



BECAUSE YOU MAY BE OUR ONLY HOPE IN TRACKING DOWN THE SOURCE OF THIS EVIL POLLUTION, HERR WAYNE!

BUT I'M ONLY HERE AS HEAD OF WAYNE FOUNDATION TO CONSULT WITH...

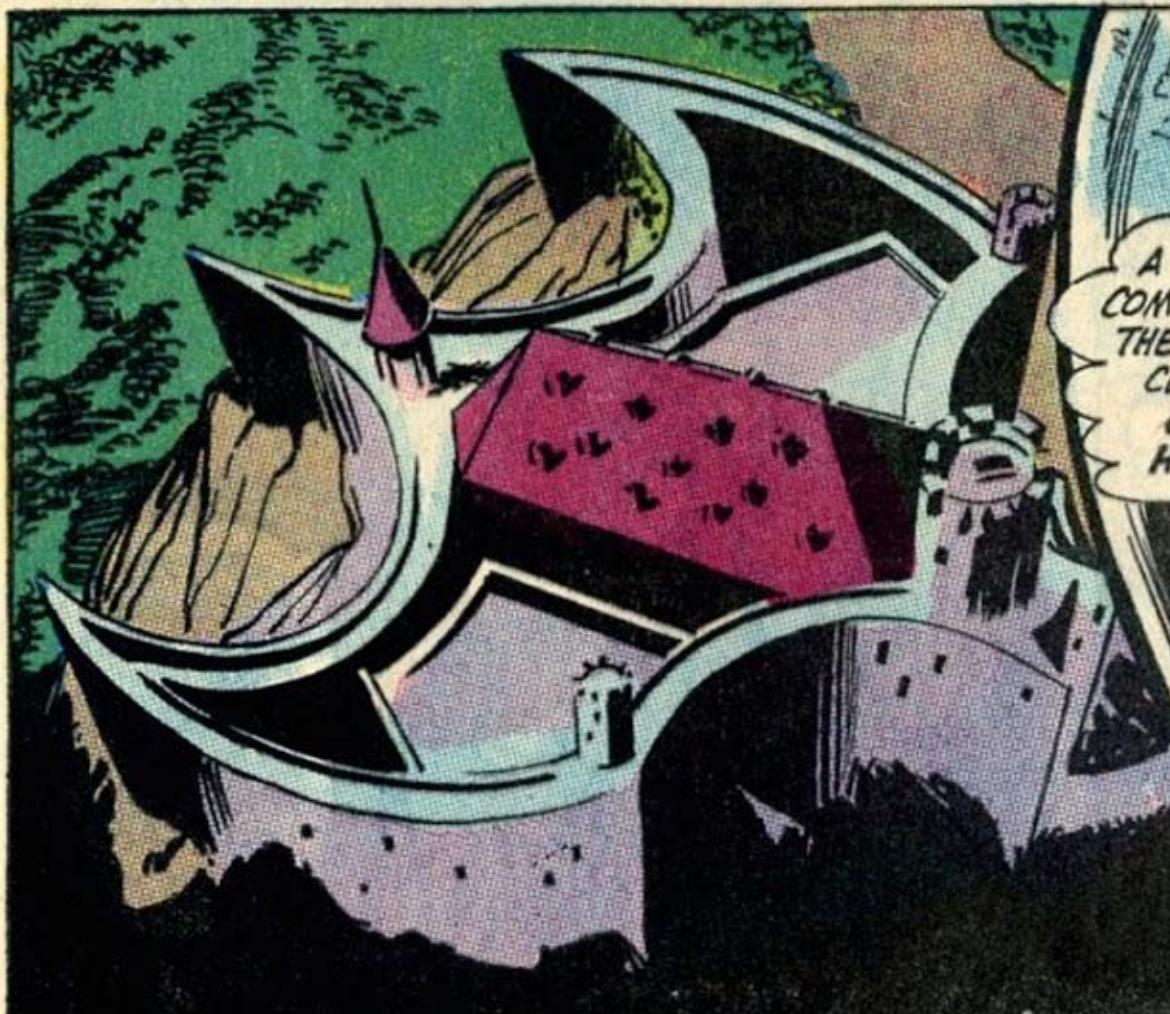
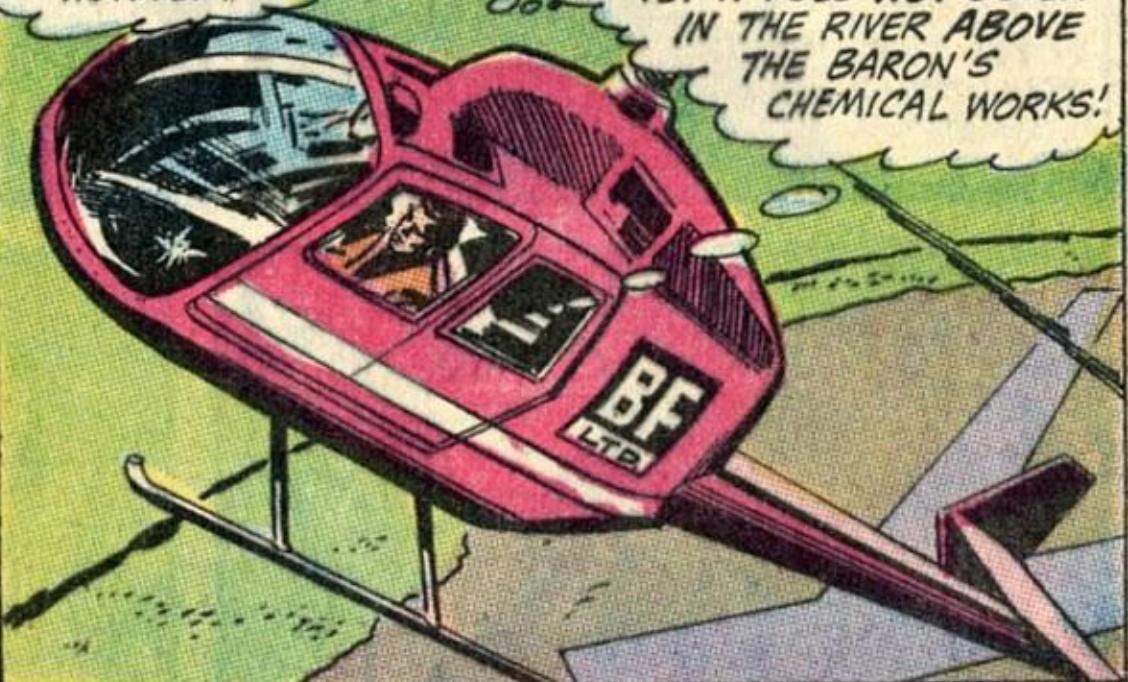
...WITH BARON WILLI VON RITTER, HEAD OF BIOCHEM-FABRIK, LTD.! PRECISELY WHY I HAVE TAKEN THE LIBERTY TO DETAIN YOU HERE IN CUSTOMS!

WE HOPE THAT AS GUEST OF THE BARON, YOU CAN DISCOVER WHAT WE HAVE BEEN UNABLE TO!

A SHORT TIME LATER, BRUCE WAYNE IS CHAUFFERED ALOFT IN THE BARON'S HELICOPTER...

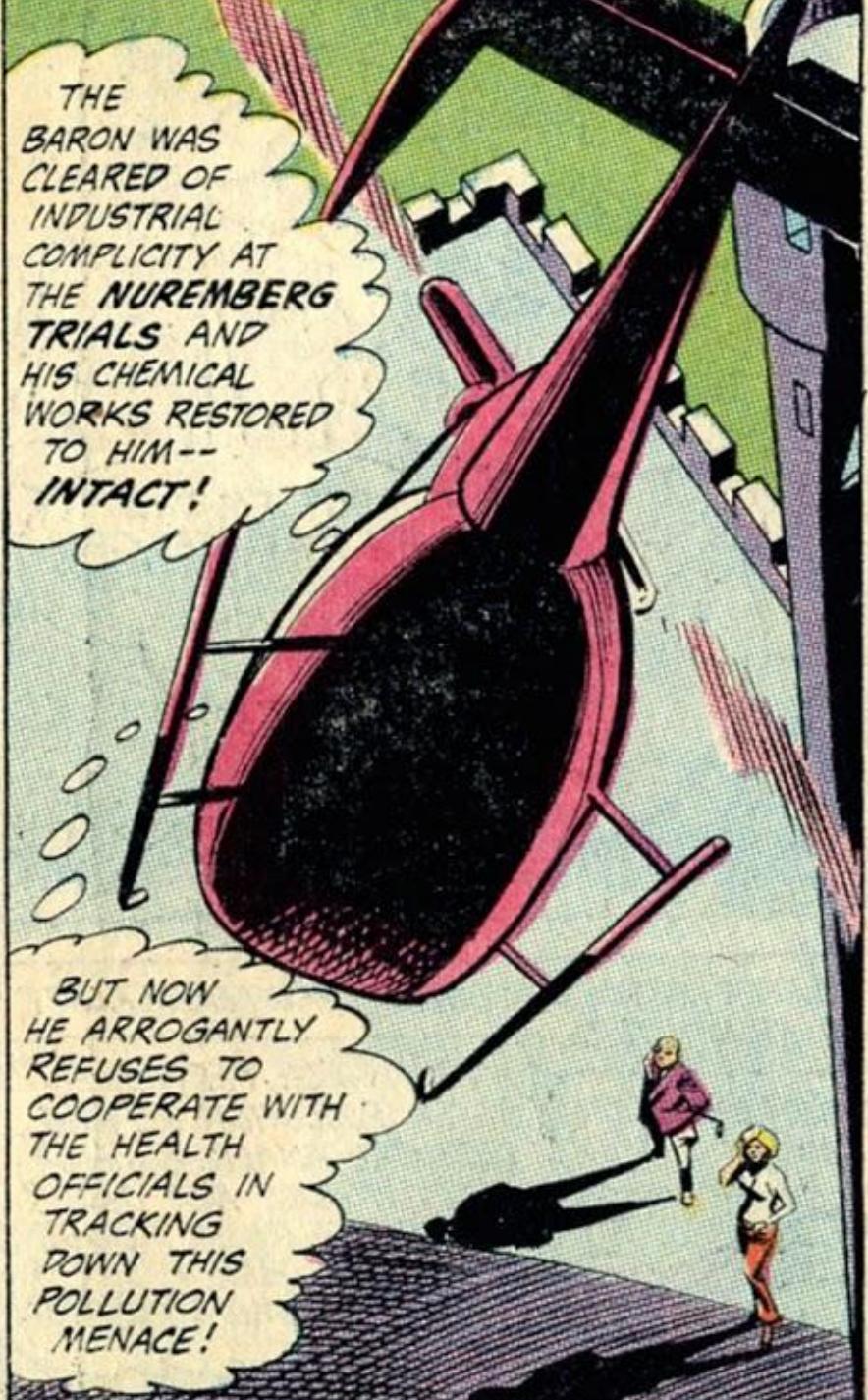
THE PUBLIC HEALTH INSPECTOR HAS GOOD CAUSE TO BE WORRIED!

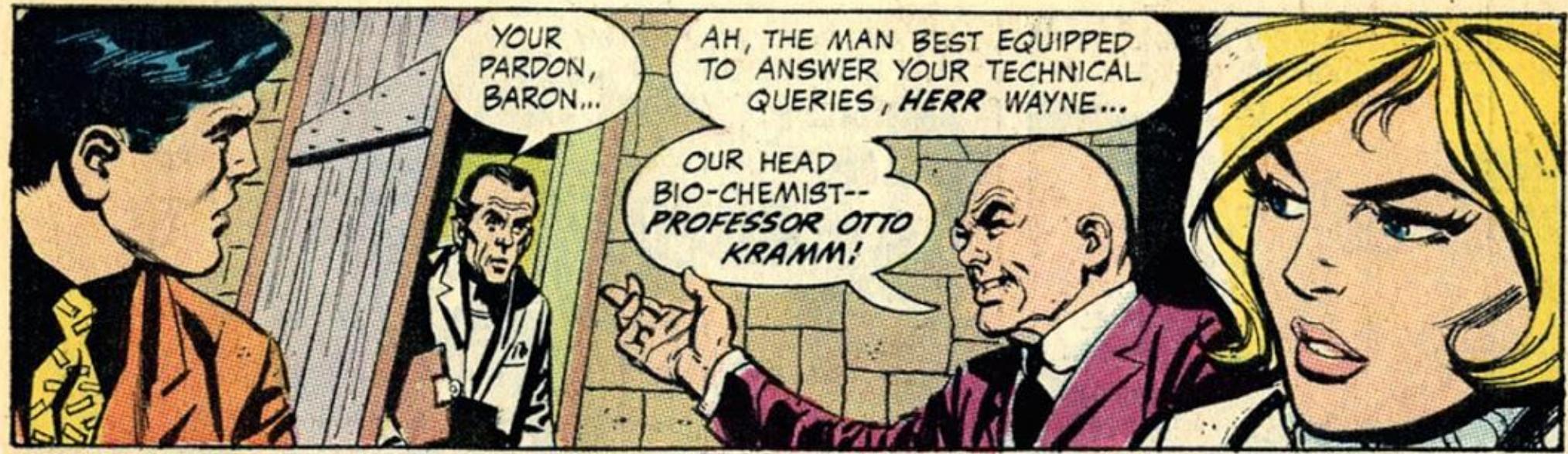
AN INVISIBLE, PERVERSIVE WATER POLLUTION, DEFYING CHEMICAL ANALYSIS... AND YET IT DOES NOT OCCUR IN THE RIVER ABOVE THE BARON'S CHEMICAL WORKS!



A VAST UNDERGROUND COMPLEX CARVED INTO THE SOLID, BOMPROOF CLIFF UNDER FLEDERMAUS CASTLE DURING HITLER'S INFAMOUS REGIME!

IRONIC! FLEDERMAUS-- THE GERMAN WORD FOR BAT!





THAT WORLD-HUNGRY MANIAC,
HITLER, SURE SET UP THINGS LIKE
HE'D LIVE FOREVER!

PROBABLY
HAD HIS
SLAVE-
CHEMISTS
RESEARCHING
BIOLOGICAL
WEAPONS...

...TO BE PRODUCED IN MIXING
VATS LIKE THESE!

LUCKY
WE GOT TO
HIM FIRST!

HMM, LOOKS LIKE NOT
EVERYBODY IS
ASLEEP!

ACCORDING TO
THE GROUND-
PLAN, THAT'S THE
RESEARCH LAB
AHEAD!

LAB-TEST ANIMALS
SLEEPING PEACEFULLY--

WHAT'S THAT BEDLAM?
SOUNDS LIKE--LIKE A RAGING
LION AND A LAMB!

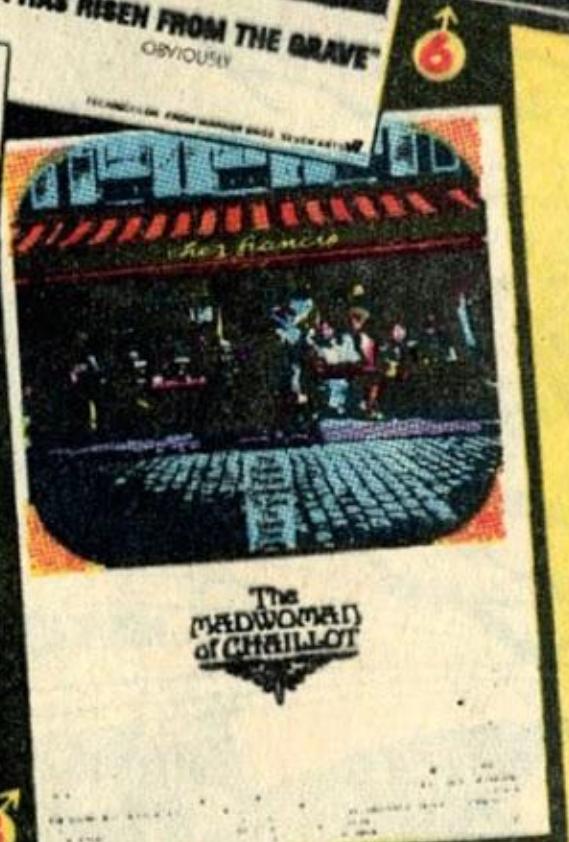
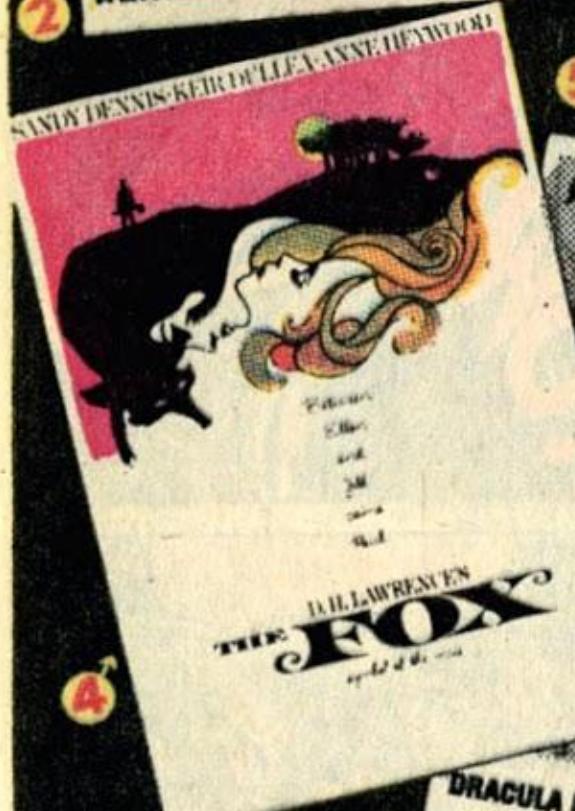
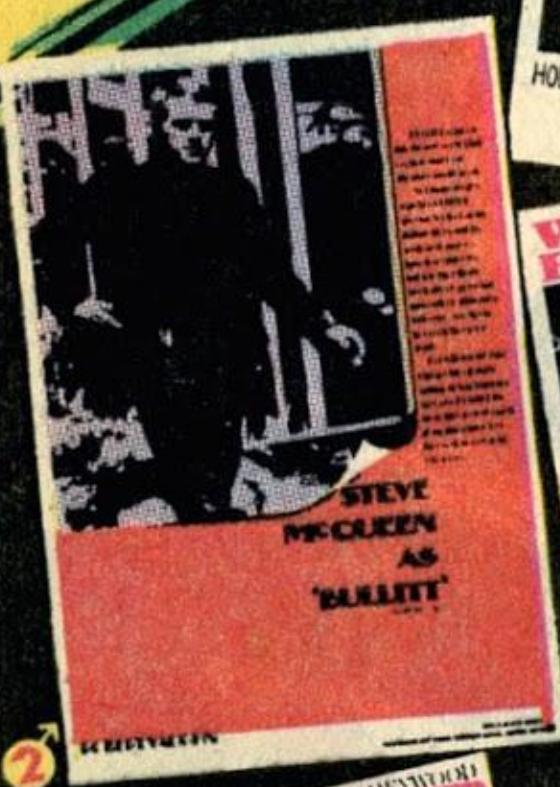
R-ROAR
RAWR
BA-A-A-
BA-A!

STORY CONTINUES ON
2ND PAGE FOLLOWING!

read...
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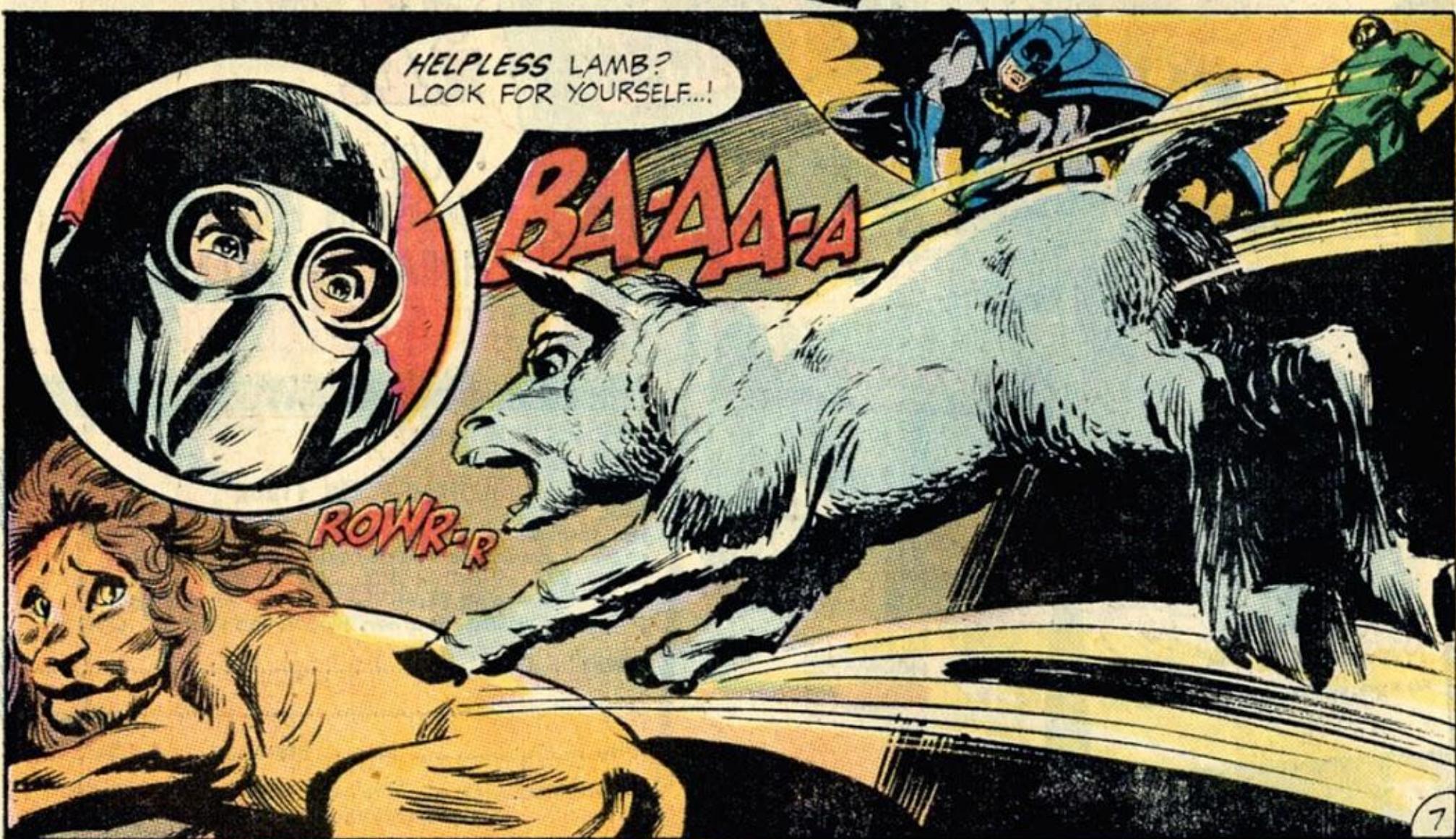
City State Zip

Age Sex This offer expires Oct. 1, 1970.
Allow 3 weeks for delivery

A Bat-Death FOR BATMAN

PART
II

AS BATMAN'S QUICK EYES TRACE THE SOURCE OF THE BLOOD-CURDLING SOUNDS TO A SECRET WALL-SECTION PARTLY AJAR....



UNDER BATMAN'S INCREDULOUS EYES, THE TRANSFORMED "GENTLE" LAMB STRIKES AT ITS COWERING FOE WITH THE SHATTERING FORCE OF A BATTERING RAM...

WHAM!



GREAT SCOTT! THE "KING OF BEASTS" DESTROYED BY A GENTLE LAMB!

JA, FLEDERMENSCH! BUT ACH, A PITY I CANNOT TURN A PLANT-EATER INTO A MEAT-EATER! HERE, VICTORIOUS ONE, YOUR REWARD-- FRESH ALFALFA!



WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?

WHAT MANY HAVE TRIED TO DO BEFORE--AND FAILED! I HAVE SYNTHESIZED THE ESSENTIAL CHEMICAL ELEMENTS THAT TRIGGER THE KILLER INSTINCT IN PREDATORS...

...INFUSED IT INTO ALL MANNER OF GENTLE CREATURES-- TRANSFORMING THEM INTO RAVENING BEASTS!

CONTINUED ON 2ND PAGE FOLLOWING

here's a fabulous collection of **ORIGINS**

HOW SUPERBOY FOUND KRYPTO!
THE DISCOVERY OF KRYPTONITE!
THE FIRST PHANTOM ZONE STORY!
THE START OF THE LANA-LANG-LOIS LANE FEUD!

plus
ONE FATAL ENDING!

THE DEATH OF MA AND PA KENT!



ON SALE MARCH 5th

AND A SPECIAL ALL-KRYPTONITE ISSUE OF **GIANT SUPERMAN!**

ON SALE APRIL 14

AND--YOU USED THE RHINE AS YOUR TESTING GROUND?

NEIN--THAT WAS AN UNFORTUNATE BY-PRODUCT OF MY LAB EXPERIMENTS HERE!

A CHANCE OVERFLOW OF THE "KILLER" SERUM THROUGH OUR DRAINAGE-SYSTEM INTO THE RIVER! BUT, EVEN IF THEY DISCOVER THE SOURCE... IT WILL BE TOO LATE!

NOT IF I STOP...

NOTHING CAN STOP US NOW! SEE-- I HOLD YOU AT BAY!

WE WERE DEFEATED LAST TIME BECAUSE OUR ARMIES WERE MERELY MEN...



...WITH THE WEAKNESSES OF MEN! FEAR--GUILT--ALL THE SO-CALLED ATTRIBUTES OF "CIVILIZED" MEN!

BUT THIS TIME THEY WILL POSSESS NONE OF THESE! THEY WILL BE PRIMAL PREDATORS-- WITH NO INSTINCT OTHER THAN TO KILL! KILL! KILL!

THEN YOUR FINAL PHASE IS TO ADMINISTER THIS MONSTROUS SERUM TO-- HUMANS?!

YOU WOULD MAKE AN IDEAL SUBJECT, FLEDERMENSCH-- BUT I CANNOT RISK IT! YOU MUST DIE... NOW!



I DON'T DIE
THAT EASILY--

I DON'T INTEND TO
KILL YOU! I AM TOO
HUMANE--WITH TOO
MUCH TENDERNESS!

KTHUNK

BUT "THEY" ARE
NOT! "THEY" HAVE
NO SUCH
WEAKNESS!

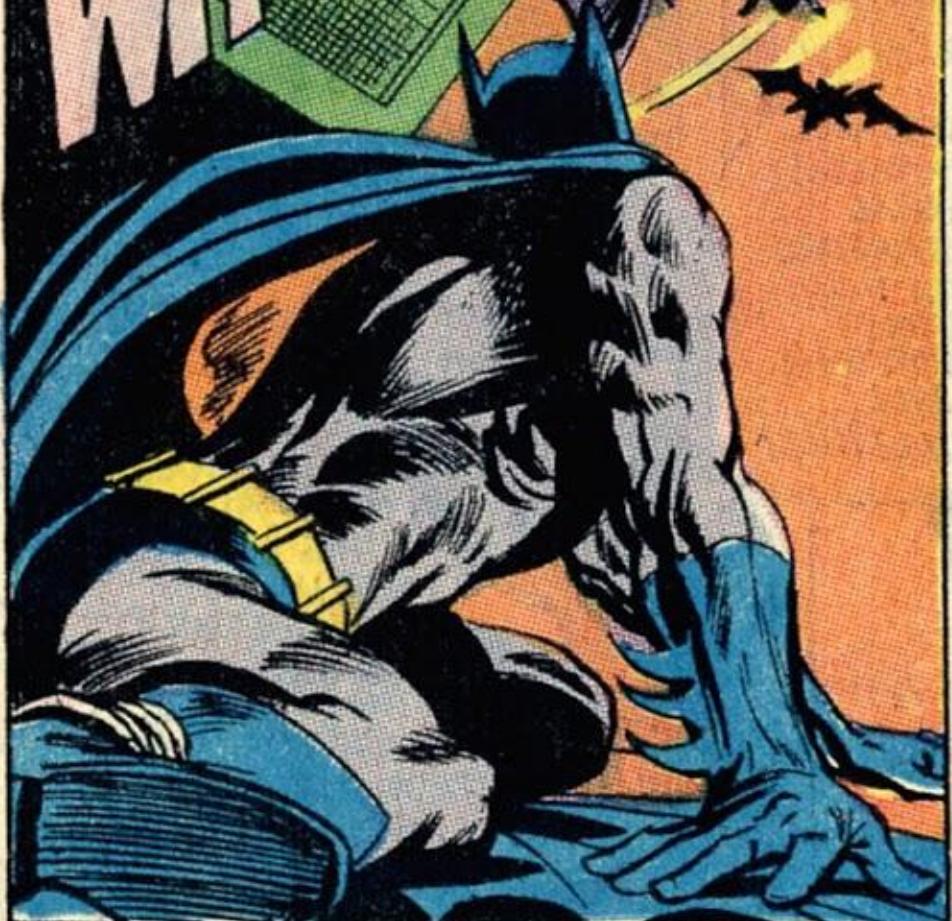
AS THE LEVER
IS THROWN, A
CEILING SCREEN
SWINGS DOWN--
FOLLOWED BY
THE EERIE
WHIR OF
COUNTLESS
LEATHER-LIKE
WINGS!...

NEIN, THEY ARE NOT
VAMPIRES, ONLY
COMMON CAVE-BATS!

BUT NOW POSSESSING
THE FEARLESSNESS--
THE LIGHTNING ATTACK--
OF HUNTER FALCONS!

I FEAR I DO
NOT HAVE THE
STOMACH TO WATCH
THIS! BESIDES, I
HAVE A MORE
PRESSING
APPOINTMENT!

WHIRR



AS THE SECRET DOOR CLANGS SHUT, LEAVING A HOBBLED BATMAN TO COPE WITH COUNTLESS SELF-GUIDED MISSILES...

GOT TO REGAIN MOBILITY OR I DON'T STAND A CHANCE!



FRENZIEDLY, THE CAPED CRUSADER FIGHTS AGAINST OVERWHELMING ODDS AS THE TINY, FURRED MENACES NIP AT HIM...

UGH! TO BE DESTROYED BY THE VERY CREATURES I CHOSE TO EMULATE--BATS!



I COULD PLUNGE THE CAVE INTO COMPLETE DARKNESS BY SMASHING THAT BULB--BUT THAT WOULD ONLY MAKE MATTERS WORSE!

EVEN NOW--THEIR WEAK EYES BLINDED BY THE LIGHT--THEY'RE ZEROING IN ON ME BY USING THEIR PRIMITIVE SONAR!

BY EMITTING HIGH-PITCHED SOUNDS, THEIR SENSITIVE EARS PICK UP THE ECHO BOUNCING BACK OFF OF ME...

...LIKE RADAR USES HIGH-FREQUENCY RADIO-WAVES TO DETECT PLANES AND MISSILES!

RADAR-SONAR--THE SAME PRINCIPLE, USING DIFFERENT WAVE-LENGTHS FOR ECHO-DETECTION!

THAT'S MY ONLY HOPE-- IF IT WORKS!



MEANWHILE, SAFE INSIDE THE LAB--THE MYSTERIOUS PADDED FIGURE PREPARES FOR HIS PRESSING DATE...

MY BELOVED WILL BE HERE AT ANY MOMENT! I MUST GET THE SERUM READY...

OTTO--ARE YOU THERE? I BRING YOU OUR #1 GUINEA-PIG!

ILGA--ADORED ONE!

IS THIS TO BE OUR FIRST PROTOTYPE SUPER-MENSCH? THIS FAWNING, CRINGING EXCUSE FOR A MAN?

WHAT BETTER CHOICE, DEAR OTTO, THAN MY HUSBAND'S VALET?

TOGETHER, OTTO, WE WILL BRING ABOUT A NEW WORLD--ONE THAT MY SPINELESS BARON WAS UNABLE TO ACCOMPLISH!

AND THIS MIRROR-IMAGE OF HIM HAS "VOLUNTEERED" FOR THE TRANSFORMATION! HE HAS MANY GRUDGES TO SETTLE WITH WILLI...

VICTORY IS AT HAND! TONIGHT MY HUSBAND-- TOMORROW THE WORLD!

BARONESS, YOU JUST LOST YOUR TOMORROW--TONIGHT! COOL IT, OTTO--ONE TIME AROUND IS ENOUGH FOR YOUR KIND!

FLEDERMENSCH?! BUT YOU SHOULD BE DEAD! THE KILLER-BATS...

UH-HUH, THEY WOULD HAVE, IF YOU HADN'T LEFT ME ONE POTENT WEAPON!

OTTO, YOU DUMMKOPF! NOW WHAT WILL DESTROY THIS COSTUMED MENACE?

WE MUST HAVE A SUPER-
CHAMPION TO DEFEND
US! GIVE ME THAT
SERUM...!



AS THE "KILLER" SERUM EATS AWAY THE
PROTECTIVE BARRIERS OF OTTO'S
"CIVILIZED" CONSCIOUSNESS...



MOMENTARILY IGNORING THE THREAT OF BATMAN-- THE
TRANSFORMED OTTO... LIKE A BETRAYED PET... TURNS ON
HIS TORMENTOR!



YOU HAVE
INTERFERED
WITH ME
ONCE TOO
OFTEN--

WHUMP



I DESTROY
YOU FOR SURE--
MYSELF!

HIS STRENGTH... LIKE A
MADDENED GRIZZLY--AND
HIS PADDING
PROTECTS
HIM LIKE
ONE!



ONLY CHANCE--
HIS UNPADDDED
HEAD!

URF!

TUNG



HIS MOMENTUM UNCHECKED AS THE SECRET DOOR PIVOTS OPEN...



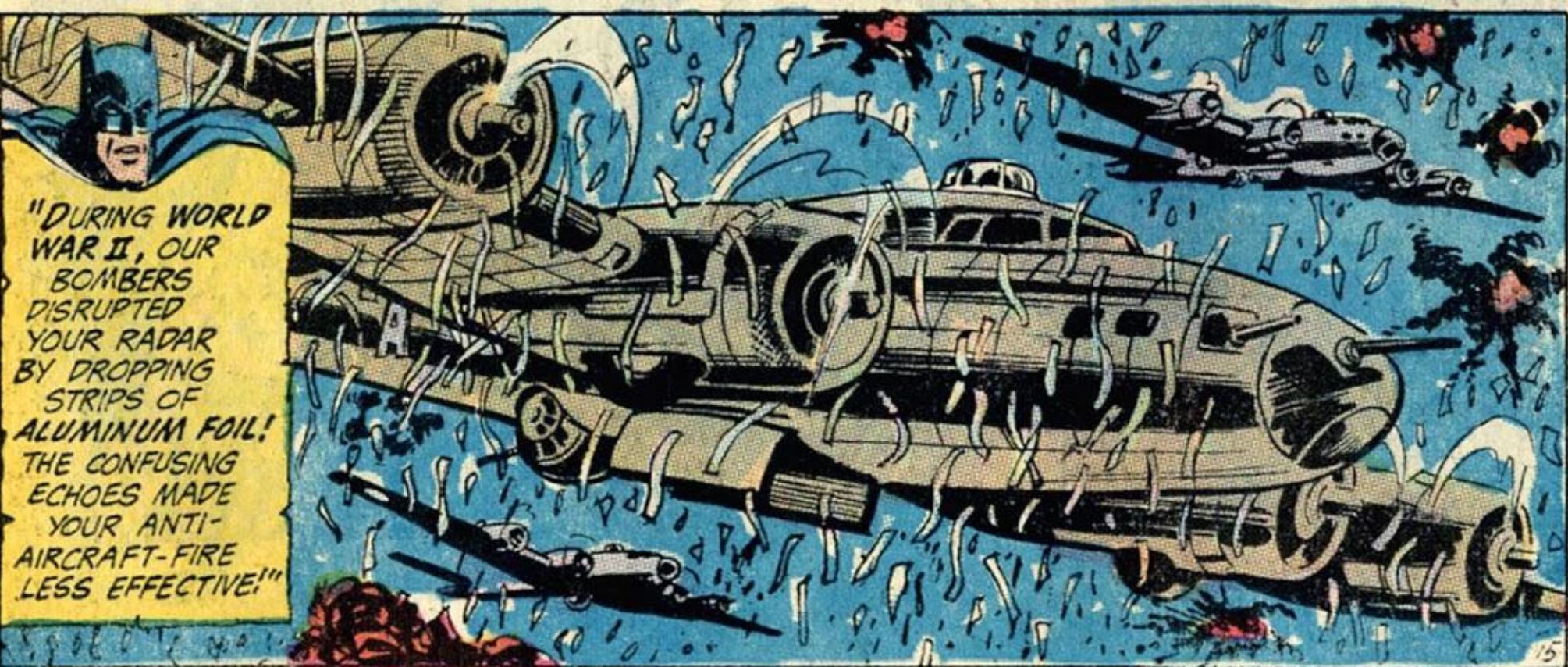
...FATE CARRIES HIM TO A FITTING JUDGMENT!



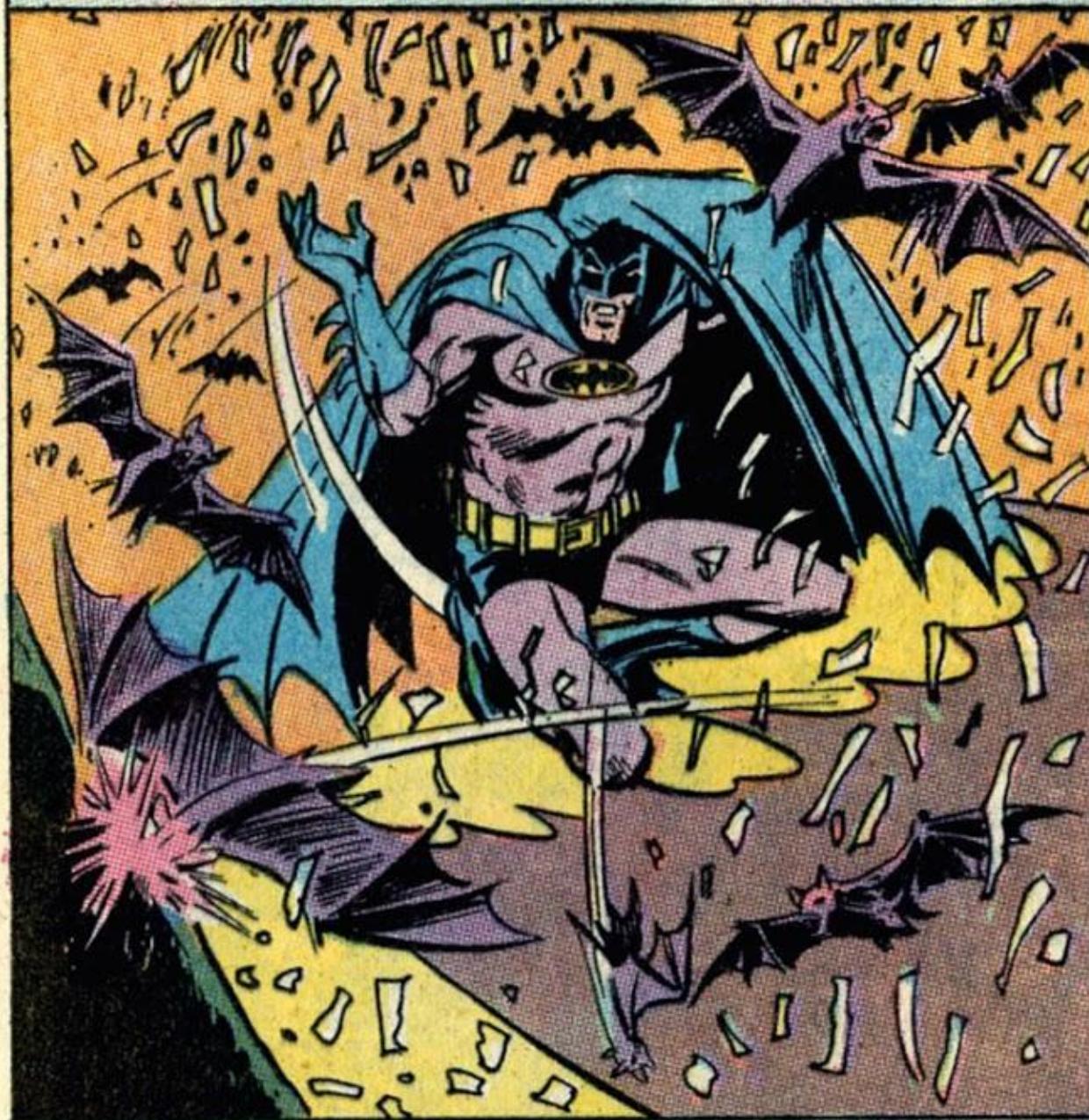
BEFORE I COULD MOVE
TO STOP IT--THEY
DESTROYED EACH OTHER!
ARE YOU "PROUD" OF
WHAT YOU ACCOM-
PLISHED, ILGA...?

TOO LATE--BE PROUD--OF ANYTHING!
I--I AM DYING...

BUT--BEFORE
I... HOW DID
YOU ESCAPE--
KILLER-BATS?



"I ACHIEVED THE SAME RESULTS WITH TORN UP
PIECES OF FOOD-WRAPPING FOIL--THAT OTTO
LEFT BEHIND! IN THE CONFUSION, I WAS FREE
TO FIND A NARROW OPENING IN THE CAVE-ROOF...
ENLARGED IT...THE REST YOU KNOW!"



I KNOW NOW--
WE NEVER COULD
HAVE--BEATEN
YOU!



STORY BY FRANK ROBBINS; ART BY IRV NOVICK & DICK GIORDANO

16

WE'VE HIT THE BULLSEYE!



The FBI CRIME LABORATORY

NOWHERE ELSE IN THE WORLD ARE CONCENTRATED SO MANY SCIENTISTS AND SO MUCH EQUIPMENT ENGAGED IN SCIENTIFIC CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION AS IN THE 40,000 SQUARE FEET OF THE FBI LABORATORY ON THE 7TH FLOOR OF THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE BUILDING IN WASHINGTON, D.C. . . .



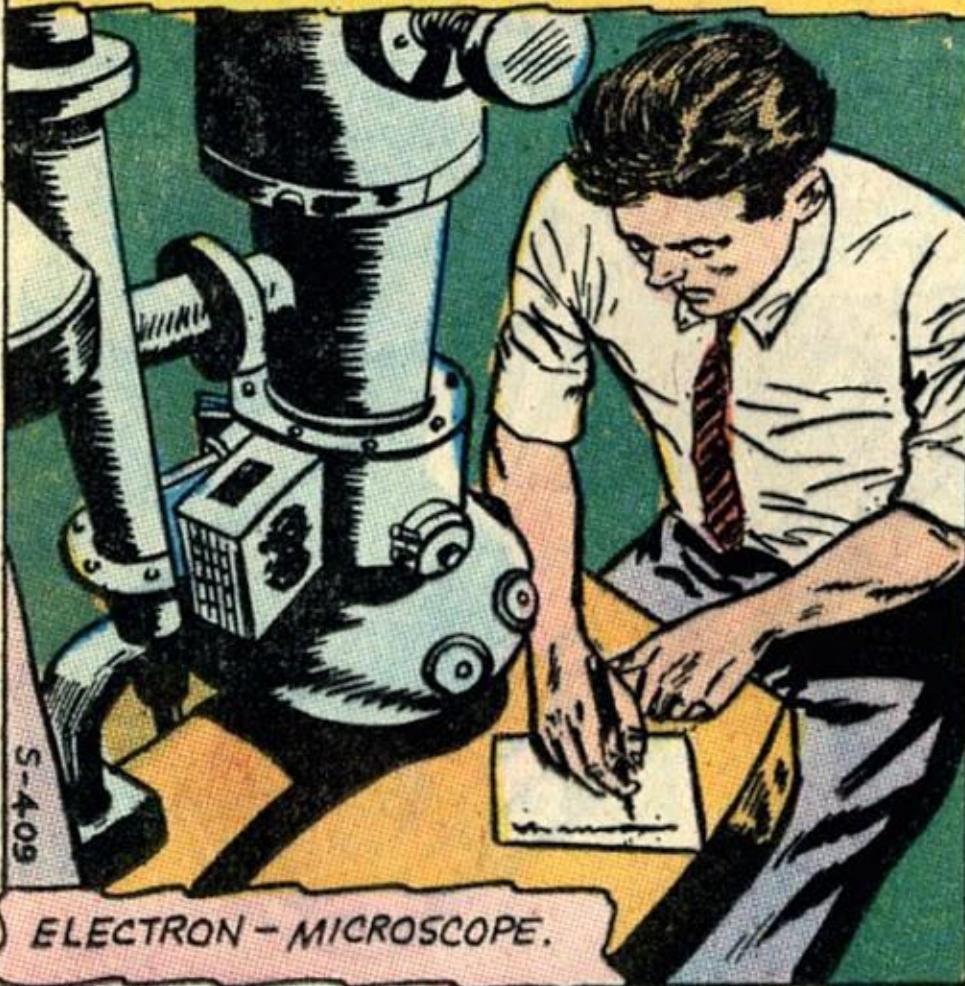
FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION.

MORE THAN 200 TECHNICIANS--REPRESENTING PRACTICALLY ALL OF THE PHYSICAL AND BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES--PORE OVER EVIDENCE UNCOVERED AT THE SCENE OF A CRIME...



FBI TECHNICIAN USES COMPARISON MICROSCOPE TO MATCH MARKINGS OF BULLET FROM SCENE OF CRIME WITH TEST BULLET FIRED FROM SUSPECT'S WEAPON.

THE TOOLS USED BY THESE SCIENTIFIC DETECTIVES RANGE FROM A SMALL TWEEZER TO THE MIGHTY ELECTRON-MICROSCOPE, WHICH CAN MAGNIFY A TINY SPECK OF EVIDENCE MORE THAN 200,000 TIMES . . .



ELECTRON - MICROSCOPE.

DURING THE COURSE OF A SINGLE YEAR (1963), ABOUT 235,000 SEPARATE SCIENTIFIC EXAMINATIONS WERE PERFORMED, ONE-FOURTH OF WHICH WERE DONE FREE-OF-CHARGE FOR AGENCIES OTHER THAN THE FBI (MOSTLY FOR LOCAL POLICE FORCES) . . .



IN THE PETROGRAPHY UNIT OF THE FBI, SOIL IS REMOVED FROM A SUSPECT'S SHOES FOR MINERAL ANALYSIS.

BATMAN

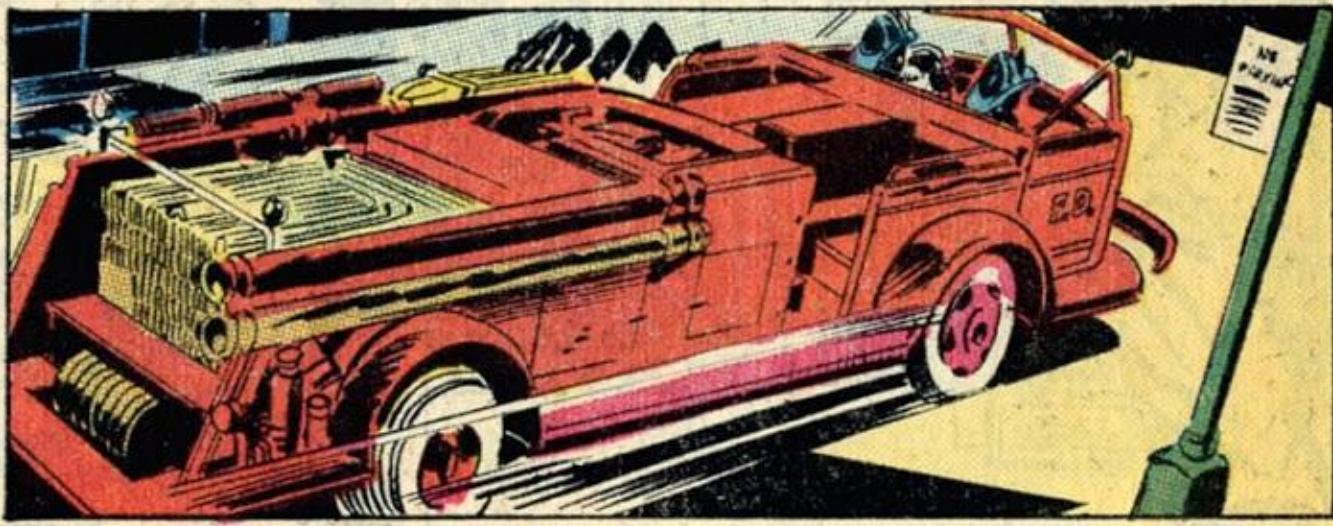


GOTHAM CITY
TOSSES AND
TURNS IN ITS
BED AS A
MID-SUMMER
HEAT WAVE
LINGERS
THROUGH THE
LONG NIGHT...

KLANG-
KLANG

C'MON, HARRY,
WE GOTTA
MOVE!

THESE MEN, THOUGH, AREN'T SLEEPING, FOR THEIR JOB IS TO PREVENT
THE "HEAT-WAVES" CAUSED BY THE FOUR-SEASON CREATURE-MAN!



BUT
SOMETIMES
THERE EXIST
DECIDEDLY
UNNATURAL
FORCES--AND
THEN
IT'S A...

HOT TIME in GOTHAM TOWN TONIGHT!

STORY:
MIKE FRIEDRICH
ART:
IRV NOVICK AND
DICK GIORDANO

5-314

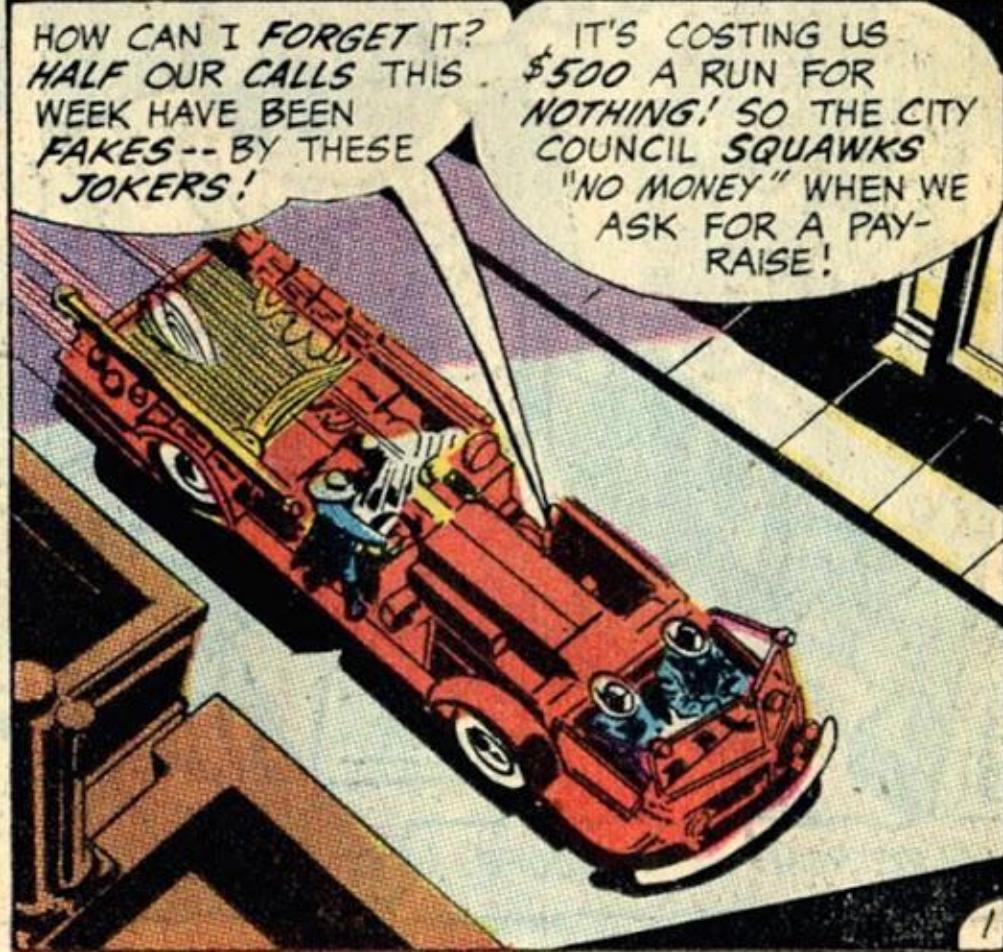
--FALSE ALARM!
BLAST! LOOK AT
THOSE SMIRKING
KIDS! I OUGHTA--

LAY OFF, HARRY!
YOU WANT TO
START A RIOT BY
HAVING THEM
ARRESTED? AND IF
WE TRIED TALKING
TO THEM, ALL WE'D
GET WOULD BE A
LOT OF GUFF!
JUST FORGET
IT!

BUT...

HOW CAN I FORGET IT?
HALF OUR CALLS THIS
WEEK HAVE BEEN
FAKES--BY THESE
JOKERS!

IT'S COSTING US
\$500 A RUN FOR
NOTHING! SO THE CITY
COUNCIL SQUAWKS
"NO MONEY" WHEN WE
ASK FOR A PAY-
RAISE!



JUST THEN--

--COLD BOX FROM
ALDRIN-COLLINS
DISTRICT--CORNER
OF ARMSTRONG
AND COLUMBIA--

HARRY--
THAT'S MY
HOME
CORNER!

IF IT'S THOSE...
PUNKS AGAIN, SO
HELP ME--

CUT IT OUT, HARRY! MY
BROTHER JUST GOT OUT OF
THE ARMY YESTERDAY AND
HE'S BEEN YAPPING ABOUT
THE WAR--AND NOW I HAVE
TO SUFFER THROUGH YOU!

HOPE THAT
FALSE ALARM DIDN'T
DELAY US TOO LONG
TO GET IT UNDER
CONTROL--

THIS ONE'S
FOR REAL!

MY BABY--SHE'S UP
THERE--TRAPPED!
HEAVEN HELP
HER--

GET THE AERIAL
LADDER GOING--
I GOTTA GET
UP THERE!

LOOK!



CONTINUED ON 2nd PAGE FOLLOWING

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- 1958—U.S.S. Patrick Henry
- 1942—U.S.S. Eddy County
- 1944—U.S.S. Wm T. Powell
- 1947—U.S.S. Bortes Island
- 1943—U.S.S. Yatamaca
- 1953—Picket Boat
- 1956—Picket Boat

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- 1912—R.M.S. Titanic
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- 1900—Tramp
- 1871—Celtic
- 1866—City of Paris
- 1857—Vanderbilt
- 1850—Atlantic
- 1838—Great Western
- 1891—Corsair
- 1807—Clermont
- 1818—Savannah
- 1866—Robert E. Lee

MODERN PASSENGER AND CARGO FLEET

- 1946—H.M.S. Queen Elizabeth
- 1952—S.S. United States
- 1950—S.S. Liberte
- 1960—T.V. Leonardo Da Vinci
- 1955—T.S.S. Rotterdam
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- 1950—S.S. Varicello
- 1853—T.S.S. Olympia
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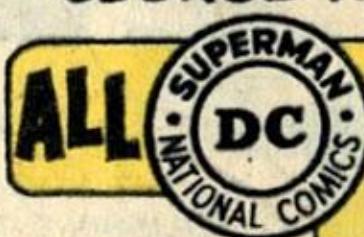
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LETTERS to the BATCAVE



Dear Editor:

Thirty years and the ever-changing world of *Batman* moves on...

Purposely, I refrained from listening to the fandom grapevine on the "Big Change" due for comics' greatest hero. I wanted no hint as to how the stories and/or art would change. For when the December 1969 *Batman* appeared I wanted to see and read a fresh, new story without coming to some prior conclusion.

Thus the cover of this issue was a true masterpiece: *No Robin*; a weeping Alfred; a grim, determined *Batman*. That dynamic drawing of *Batman* by Neal Adams told me the editors at National were thrusting ahead with a bold, new presentation.

Opening the cover to page one—I received my first feeling of satisfaction. The team of Novick-Giordano was handling the art. This is undoubtedly the best duo that ever rendered a *Batman* adventure. Storywise, Frank Robins is the heart of the modern *Batman*. With this in mind, I entered into "One Bullet Too Many" eager to see if this was the end, or the beginning of *Batman*.

Twenty-three pages later I was relieved that the new editorial policy was never near the radical "Death of Alfred" type of story. Yet there was a vast departure from the *Batman & Robin* team I've loved so long. But anyone reading *Batman* in the last two years or so has seen the slow change taking place. *Robin* was out. *Batman* was a crime-fighter, a character of some realism, not a cardboard fighter of costumed clowns.

Finally, Bruce Wayne is a living part of the *Batman* saga. Having him set up the *Victims, Inc. Program* is a most commendable venture on behalf of the Wayne Foundation. To think that all these years there has existed the great story-line possibilities of such an organization, to only now be brought into focus! The use of *Batman* thinking, superimposed with, or behind, Bruce Wayne in a panel lets the reader know *Batman* is there—even though he's not in costume.

It's been a long time since *Batman* stopped a bullet, and the one fault with the story was *Batman's* ineptness with the single villain. However, stopping the bullet was necessary to the story. But I remind myself with panel 2, page 8 as Bruce states: "All big ambitious programs start small..." Thus, as the new cases tally up in the *Batman* casebook, I'm convinced *Batman's* career has really only begun.

—BILL J. WHITE, Columbia, Mo.

(It is only fitting that the name of "Biljo" White, editor-publisher of *Batmania*, be signed to the lead-off letter of comment on the "Big Change in *Batman*"! The mail ran about 70% in favor, 20% disapproved, and 10% had both good-and-bad things to say about it.—Editor)

Dear Editor:

Comic magazine editors must be a rare breed. Any one who can entice I-don't-know-how-many fans with little subtle reminders ("The Big Change is coming to

Batman! You've got to see it to believe it!") and then give us a perfectly mediocre mag like *Batman* #217, has to be!

"One Bullet too Many" had one flaw too many—the biggest of which was that not one "change" came as a surprise. *Robin's* departure was previewed in the November *Detective Comics*, so that didn't come as a surprise; after all, a 30-year-old kid sidekick has to go to college sometime! It was a good move, yes, but not earth-shaking enough to be called a "Big Change"!

The phasing-out of *Wayne Manor*, the *Batcave*, the *Batmobile*, etc., was expected—things like that always seem to accompany "fond farewells". It's an unwritten rule in comicdom that whenever a super-hero loses his kid partner, he goes into a fit of nostalgia and depression, and promptly decides to cut all ties with the past—to "start a new life"! And, who's to say *Batman* should be any different?

The Wayne Foundation's new role in *Batman's* life was unexpected, as was "Victims, Inc."; but that doesn't necessarily make it a good move. While the idea of the *Batman* prowling at night is noteworthy, and of Bruce Wayne operating in the daytime equally good, I can't say I like the connection between *Batman* and Bruce: "I have this friend who just happens to be a super-hero, and..." Come on, now! That went out with George Reeves' *Clark Kent/Superman* explanation! *Batman* should be more at home with the night, not friendly with anyone to any extent, and generally the *Batman* of 1939-1940. But then, mine is a lost and lonely voice...

So congratulations! This is another fine mess you've gotten us into!

—ALAN BRENNERT, Haledon, N.J.

Dear Editor:

If you expect me to explode in a frenzy of either enthusiasm or disgust over *Batman* #217, I'm afraid I must disappoint you. Strangely, I took the whole thing quite calmly. In order to give an opinion of any value in this, perhaps the biggest thing ever to hit the *Batman* magazine, I cannot allow emotion to overpower me. Actually, I can neither say I liked it or disliked it. Let us say this—it interests me!

Basically, "One Bullet too Many" was masterfully written, as befits a Robbins script. He obviously gave the details of the plot a lot of thought before he committed them to paper and typewriter ink. Some of them have possibilities, while some I feel to be questionable as to their reason or existence.

There is the matter of *Robin's* elimination from the team, due to the graduation and enrollment in college of Dick Grayson. I like the idea somehow, but I am unsure as to why the decision was made to oust him. It does fit well with further developments, such as Bruce Wayne's residency in the city. This makes sense, for what better place for a crime-fighter to reside than in the heart of the very activities he has vowed to quell? But though he no longer has access to the *Batcave*, why must it cease to function alto-

gether? There will come many a time when its crime-files that have pulled him out of a thousand sticky situations will be needed to yank him out of another one. I concede the value of his ultra-quick wits, but he strikes me as kind of conceited to think he can do everything himself.

—GARY SKINNER, Columbus, Ohio

Dear Editor:

What are the elements that make up *Batman*?

First, he is Bruce Wayne, a lonely man who lost his parents in his youth, who remains unmarried, who has only two true friends in the world; a compassionate man who understands the suffering of others through his own sufferings; a man of enormous strength of will, who has found this strength in trying to help others.

Second, he is a detective, with an ever-alert mind, always asking, searching, probing any detail for the possibility of a clue, a tool to use against his prey.

Third, he is a creature of the night; he is a figure of mystery who lashes out at criminals on their own grounds of fear and darkness—but with the strength of justice always behind him.

These elements, of course, have always been *Batman's* basic constitution. But somehow, over the years, *Batman* slipped out of his heritage and into the rank of super-heroes—those characters whose identities are not their human qualities, but their super-powers.

Finally, after years of searching for a new identity for *Batman*, we find again his original identity: one man—a fiercely aggressive individual, but one man none the less—devoting his entire being to others, that they make escape the sadness he has known.

I raise my hat to those gentlemen behind *Batman* #217: for this issue will surely become a classic that will change the course of comic magazines. *Batman* has finally been raised from the numberless ranks of super-heroes to the singular rank of hero. May he retain this position.

—EDWARD BRODERICK, Arlington Hts., Ill.

Dear Editor:

What are you doing? It took *Batman* about 26 years, exactly January 12th, 1966 (three historic years before *Broadway Joe* pitched the Jets to a 16-7 Super Bowl win) to win the fame it deserved. Then what do you do—destroy an image! Okay, so Dickie boy flew off to college; that's no reason to take away the *Batcave*, *Wayne Manor*, and the *Batmobile*! Okay, so maybe *Batman* finally discovered that the "sophisticated" criminal is dead—some of *Batman's* old image must live.

—DANN JAMROSE, Whiting, Ind.

Dear Editor:

To quote the man from "Laugh-In": "Verry interesting!"

And by that I mean *Batman* #217.

So you've finally gotten rid of *Robin*! Well, it's about time! I've been reading *Batman* for about 10 years and have never felt that *Robin* belonged with *Batman*. Besides, junior partners are a hold-over from the '40's and '50's. I'm glad to see that after 15 years of foot-dragging you have followed the fashion.

There was another interesting aspect about this issue: that being a job for Bruce Wayne after 30 years as a lazy loafer.

Also—please eliminate completely the super-villains such as Joker, Penguin, Scarecrow.

Finally—you're a BIG HIT in the barracks here at the Naval Hospital Corps School.

—DAVID COX, Great Lakes, Ill.

Dear Editor:

Having the Dynamic Duo separated is like having Popeye stop eating spinach. Will the *Teen Wonder* and the *Caped Crusader* get back together again? Man, I hope so!

—DONNIE PITCHFORD, Memphis, Tenn.

(*Batman* and *Robin* WILL be back together again—at least for the next issue—along with *Wayne Manor*, the *Batcave*, and *Batmobile*...all necessary ingredients to help solve the tantalizing puzzle of whether a certain member of a world-famous rock-and-roll group is dead or alive!—Editor)

Dear Editor:

I predict that *Batman* #217 will bring more mail than practically any other *Batman* comic ever printed. I salute you for daring to make such a long-needed change. I won't scream and yell that it was the best *Batman* tale I ever read. It might have been at that, but I am one who likes to look at things calmly. Dick's graduation from high school to go to college was something I've been waiting for quite awhile now. I believe this will increase the popularity of *Batman* and *Robin*. Bruce and Alfred moving into the city was unexpected and pleasing. However, I believe the *Batmobile* should be kept close by—for emergencies and for going to JLA cases. I approve of the change 100%.

—ROGER SCHOOLCRAFT, Follansbee, W.Va.

Dear Editor:

I'm going to miss it. The *Batcave*, that is. That immense, fantastic subterranean retreat of the *Batman* and *Robin*, reached only by a secret elevator and unattainable to gangsterdom-at-large. Housing the secret crime-files and the blinking, buzzing computers...not to mention the sleek *Batplane*, the swift *Batboat* and the stream-lined *Batcopter*. And the *Batmobile*. That impressive, impregnable jet-turbine automobile with its batlights and batfins and its countless "new looks". I'm going to miss it.

Or am I? Bruce Wayne is now returning to the element that he should have been associated with all the time. Night in the big city. Ferreting out human vermin. Chasing down dark alleyways and onto slummy wharves. Appearing on a rooftop, silhouetted against a full moon, spreading the cape and "wings" of an immense, fearsome bat. Bruce Wayne...fighting as much crime and injustice without costume as with it. The *Wayne Foundation*...noble organization for truth and righteousness the world over. The *Batman*...discarding his expensive and familiar bat-junk to fight crime bare-handed, with only "the clothes on his back and the wits in his head"! Ye Editor...discarding a familiar format for the *Real Old Look*; the one that super-villains wounded in the late '40's and '50's and a TV comedy program finally killed in the '60's. The *Batman*...the '70's. *Batman* #217...Magnificent! This letter...finished!

—STEVE BEERY, Alma, Mich.

Address communications to LETTERS TO THE BATCAVE, National Periodical Publications, 909 Third Ave., New York, N.Y., 10022.

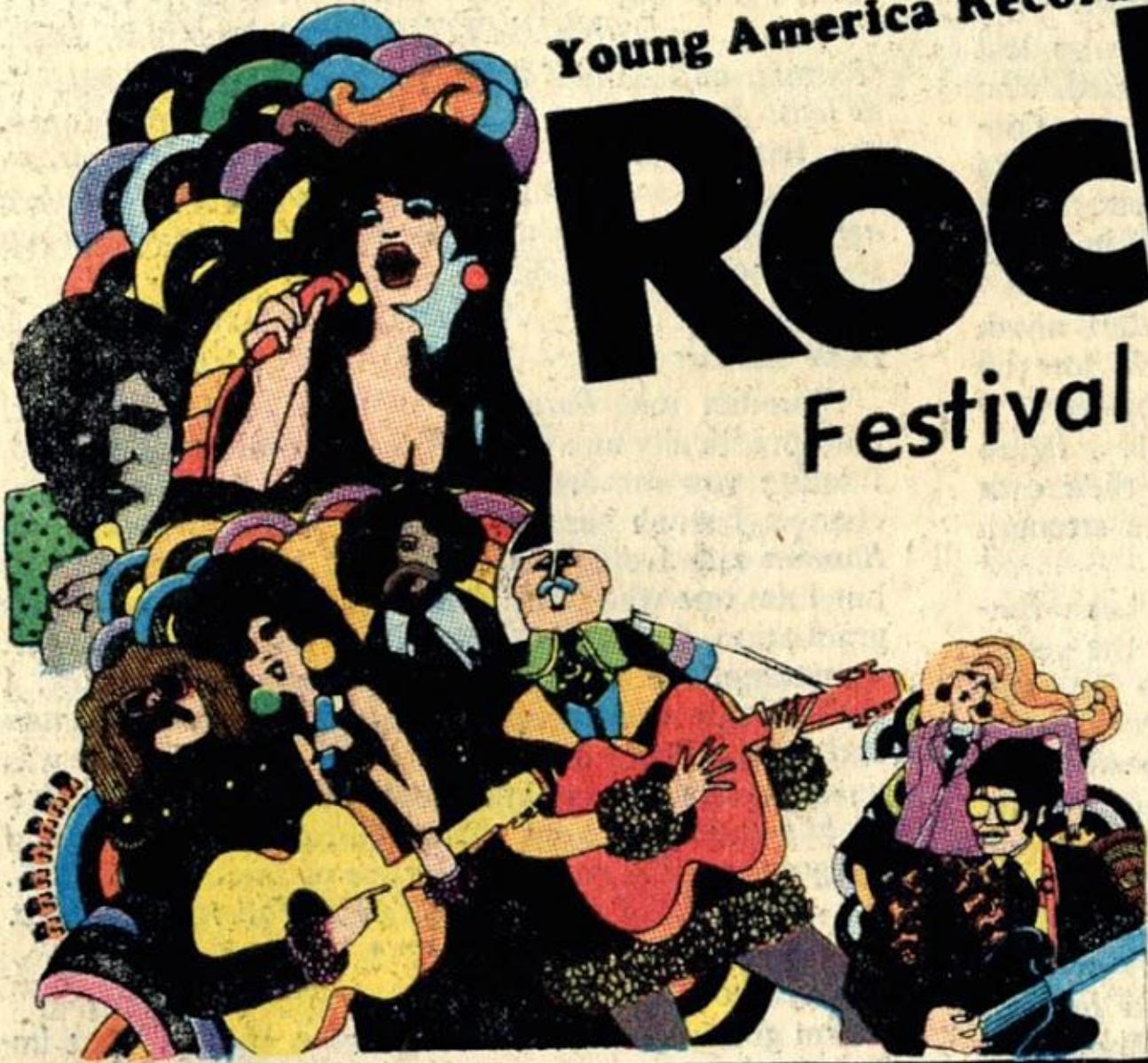
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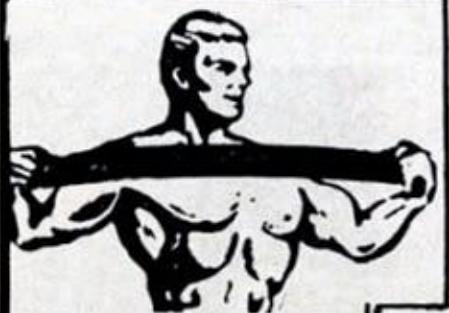
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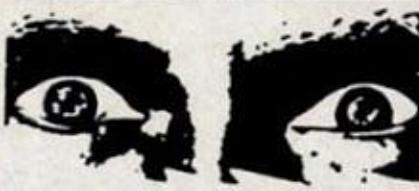
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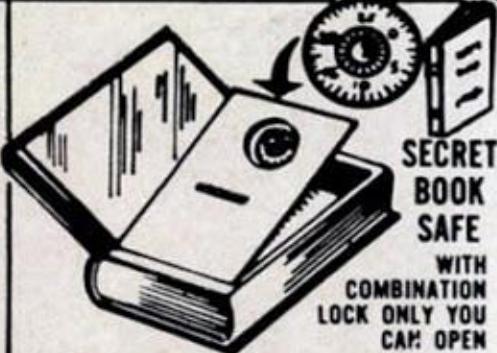


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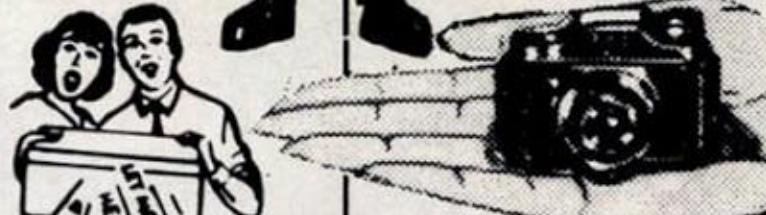


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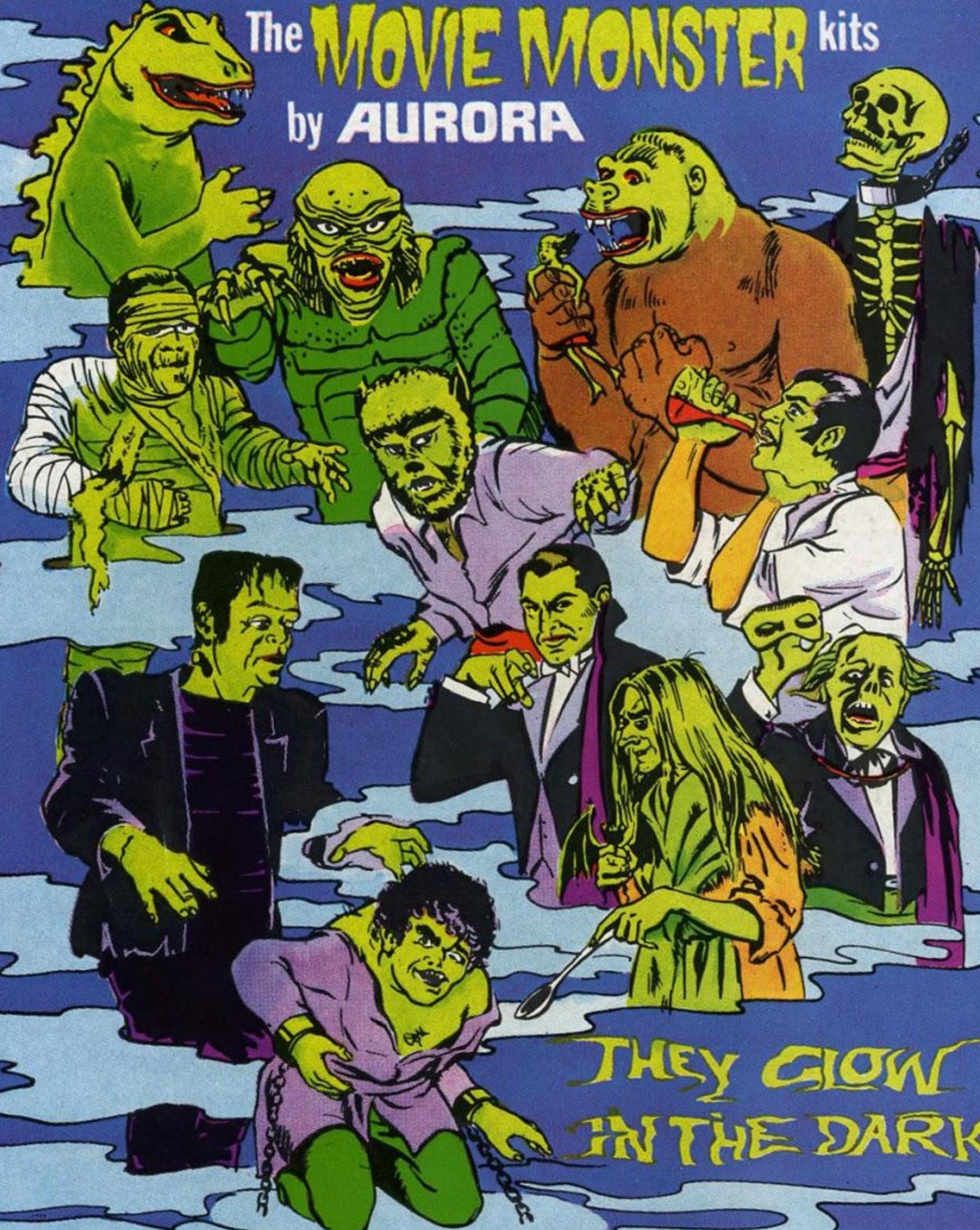


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