



BATMAN

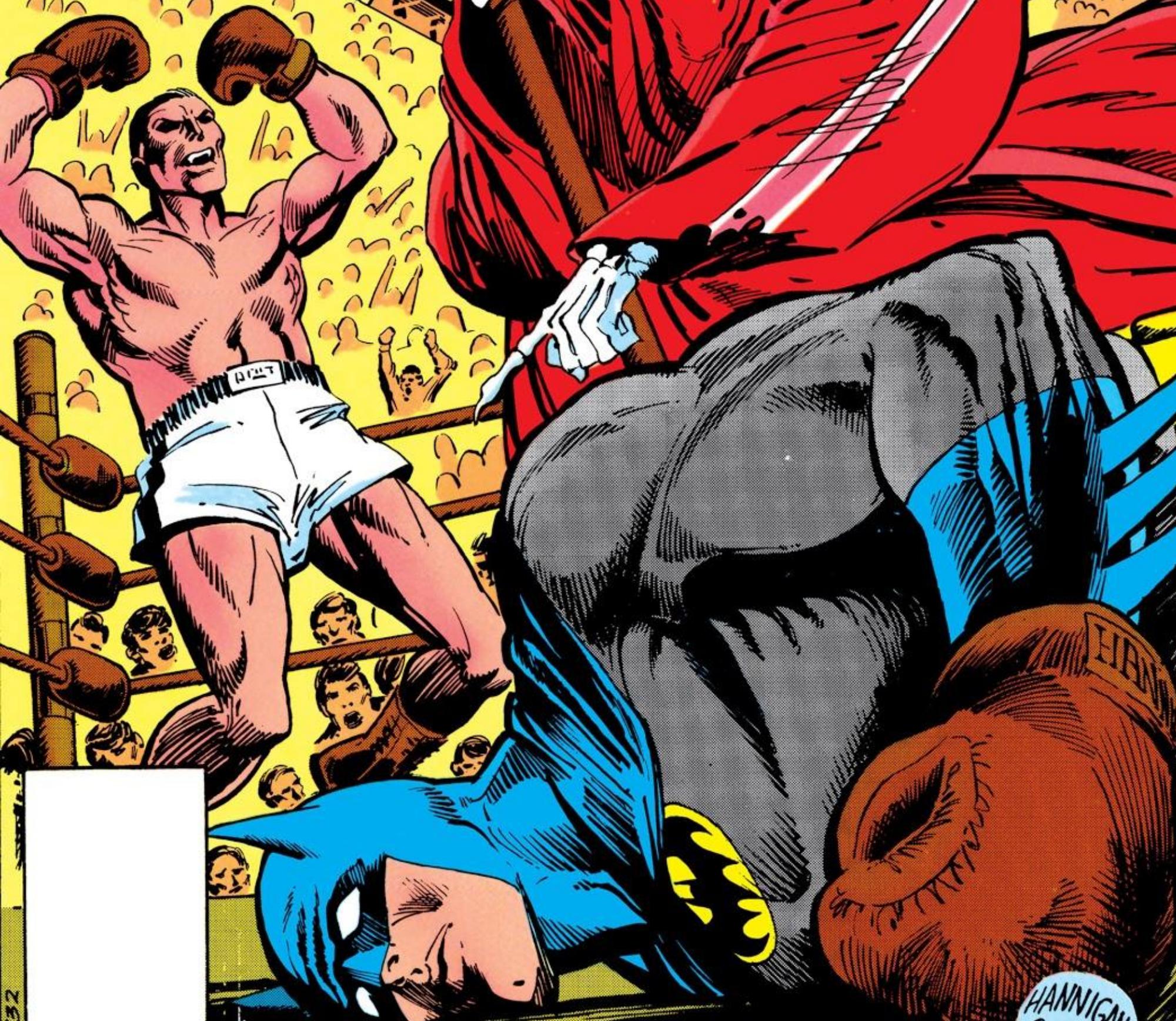
372
JUNE 84

APPROVED
BY THE
COMICS
CODE
 AUTHORITY

8

...9...10...

YOU'RE
OUT!



HANNIGAN
+
GIORDANO

IN A BASEMENT ON GOTHAM'S UPPER WEST SIDE, DR. FANG SWEATS.

THERE ARE THREE KINDS OF PEOPLE IN THE FIGHT GAME, WOAD.

THERE ARE THOSE WHO MAKE THE RULES--THE PROMOTERS, COMMISSIONERS, JUDGES, AND ALL THE OTHERS WITH BELLIES TOO FAT TO FIT BETWEEN THE ROPES.

THE FIGHTERS THEMSELVES ARE SUBSERVIENT TO THE RULES.



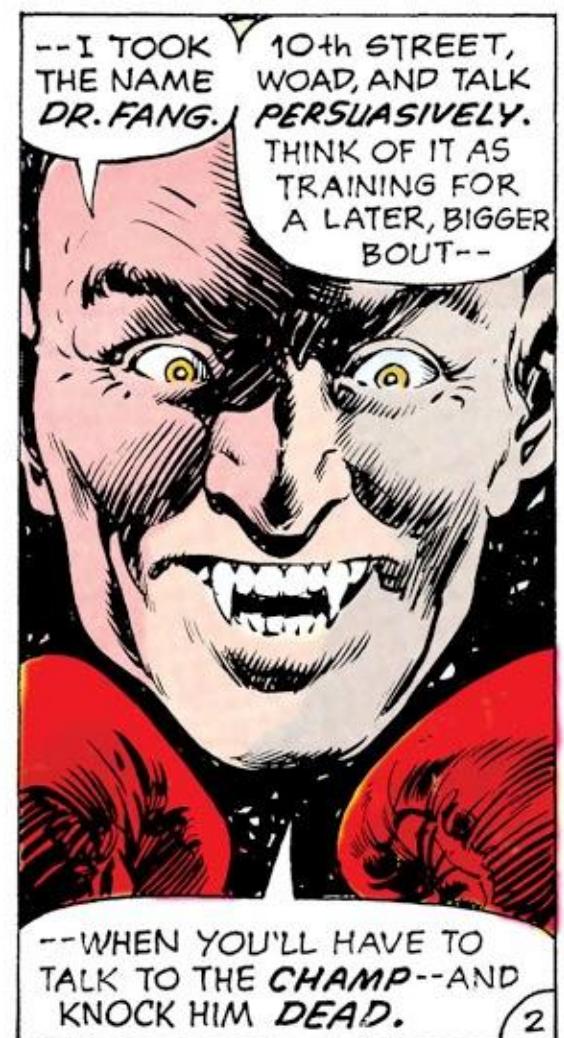
WHAT PRICE, THE PRIZE?

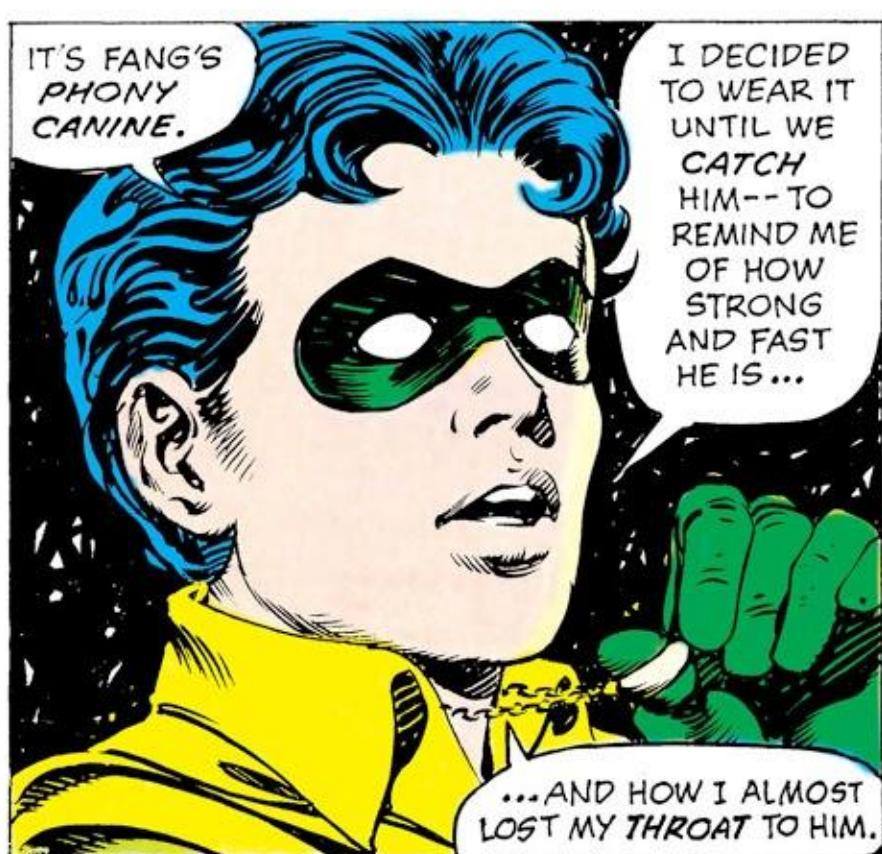
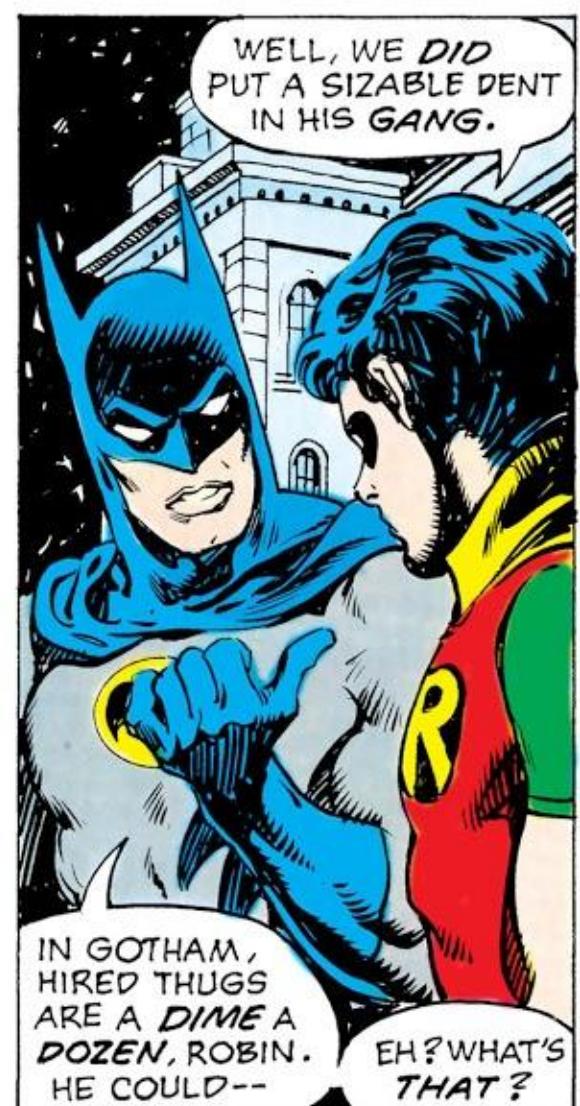
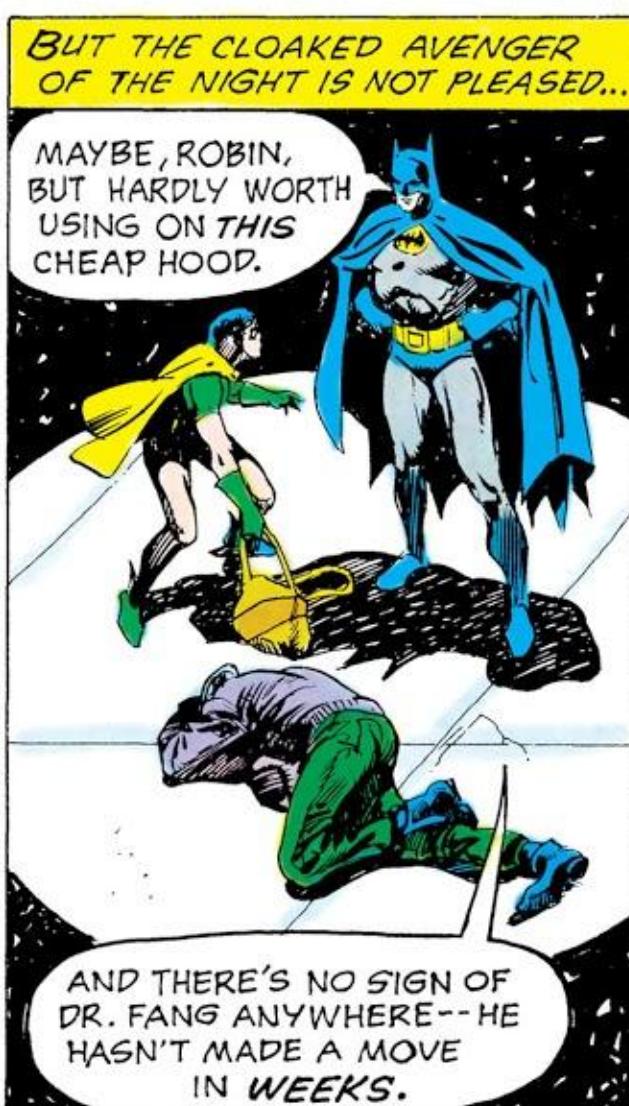
DOUG MOENCH & DON NEWTON
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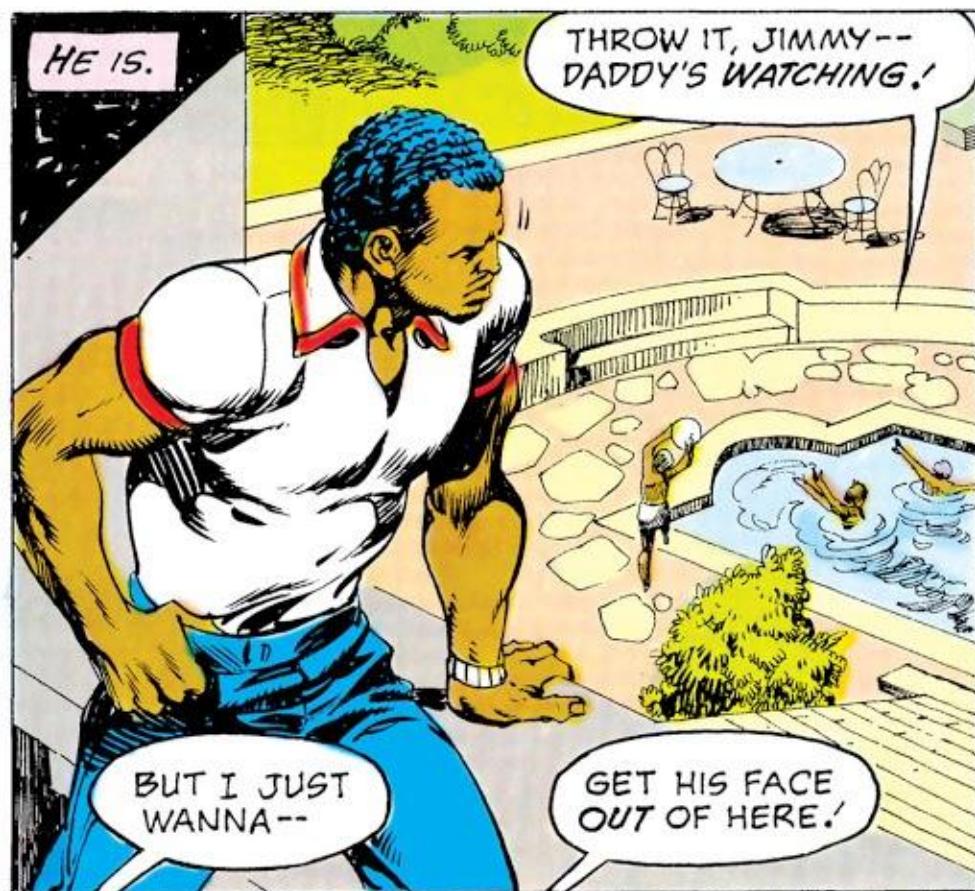
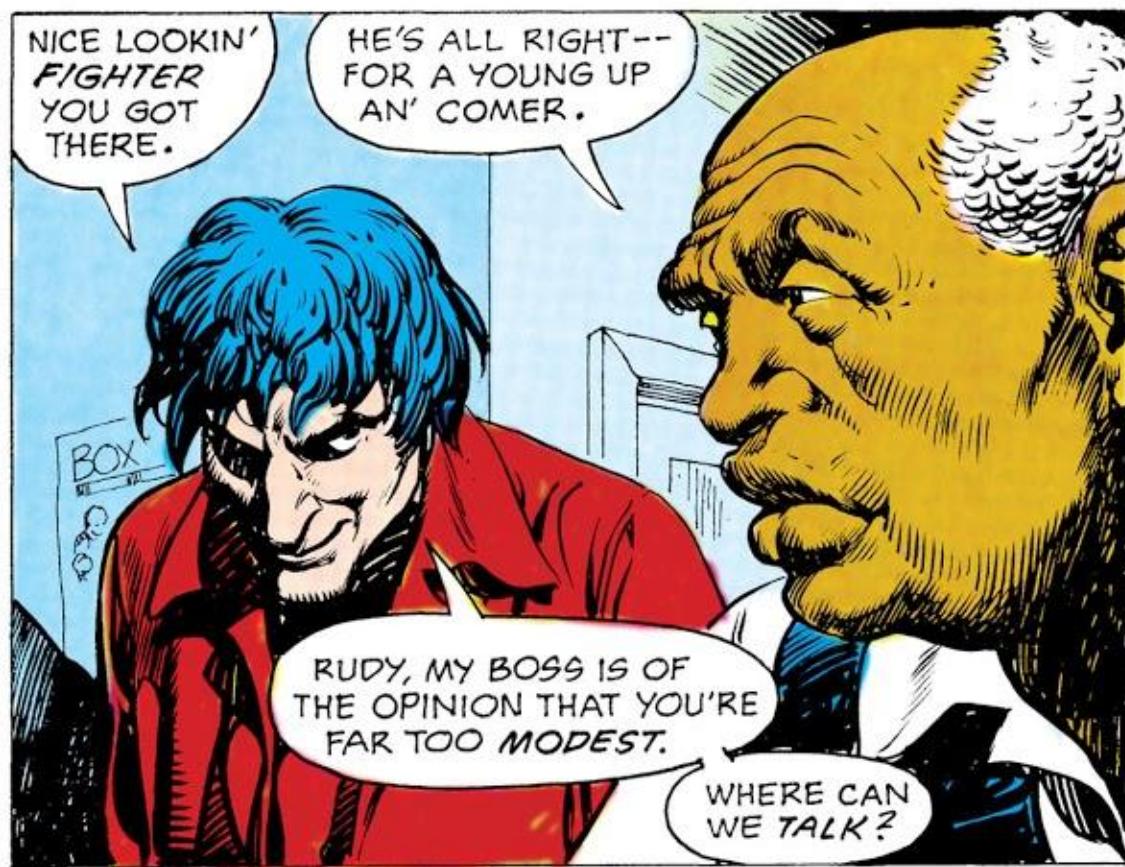
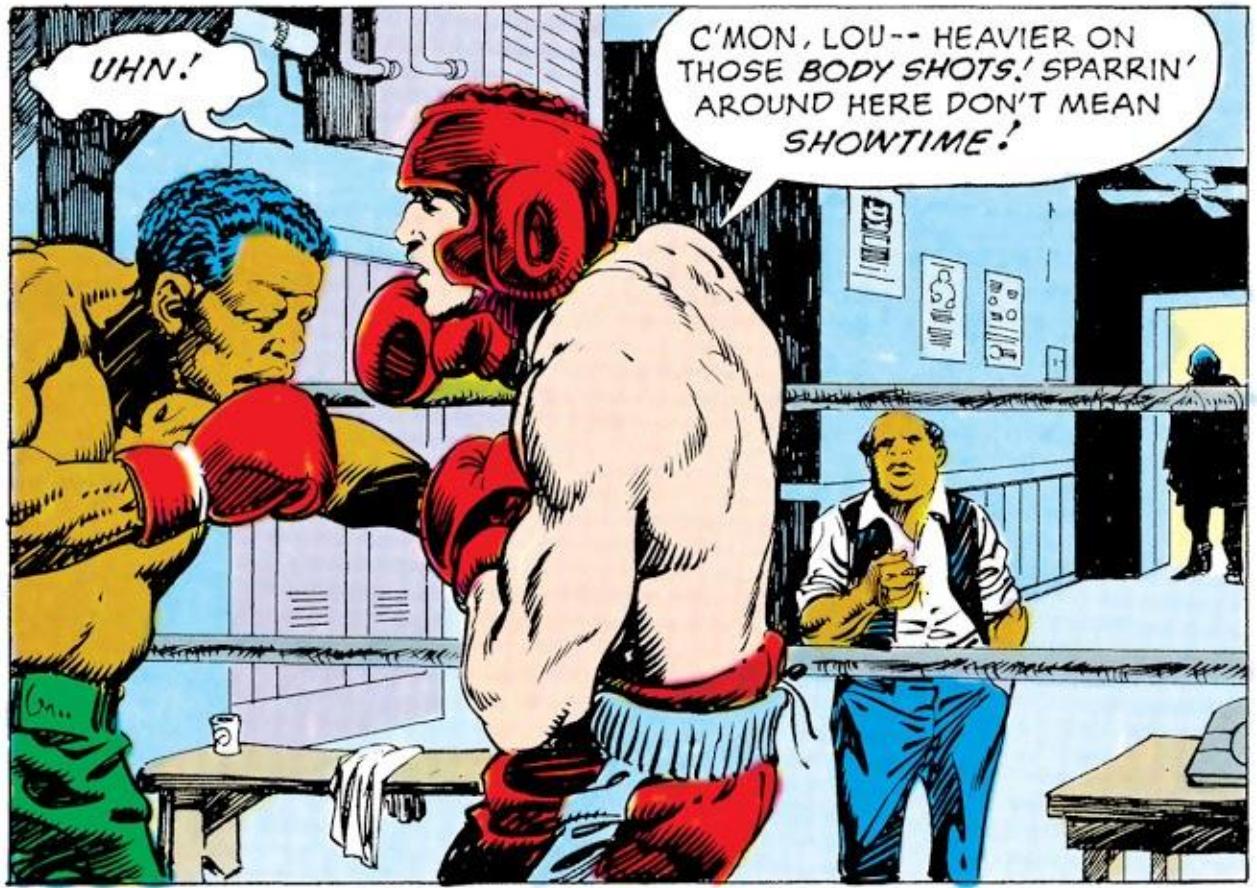
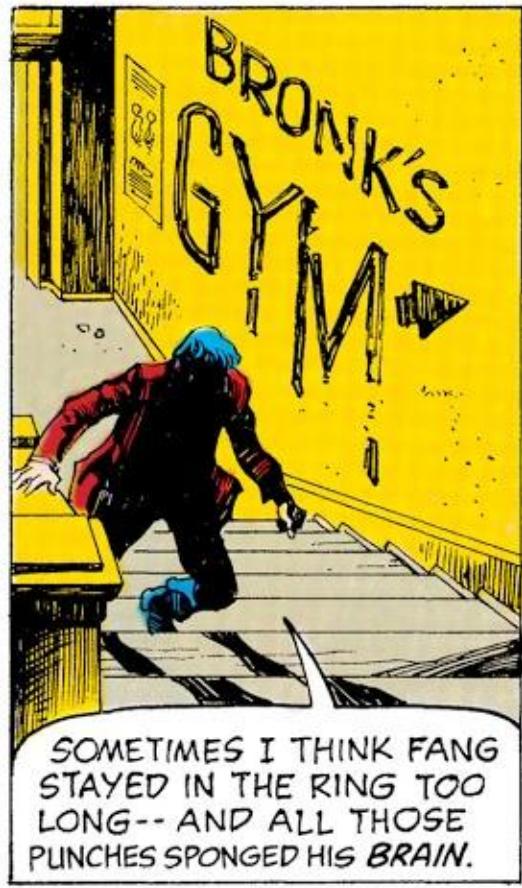
ALFREDO ALCALA
INKER/LETTERER

ADRIENNE ROY
COLORIST

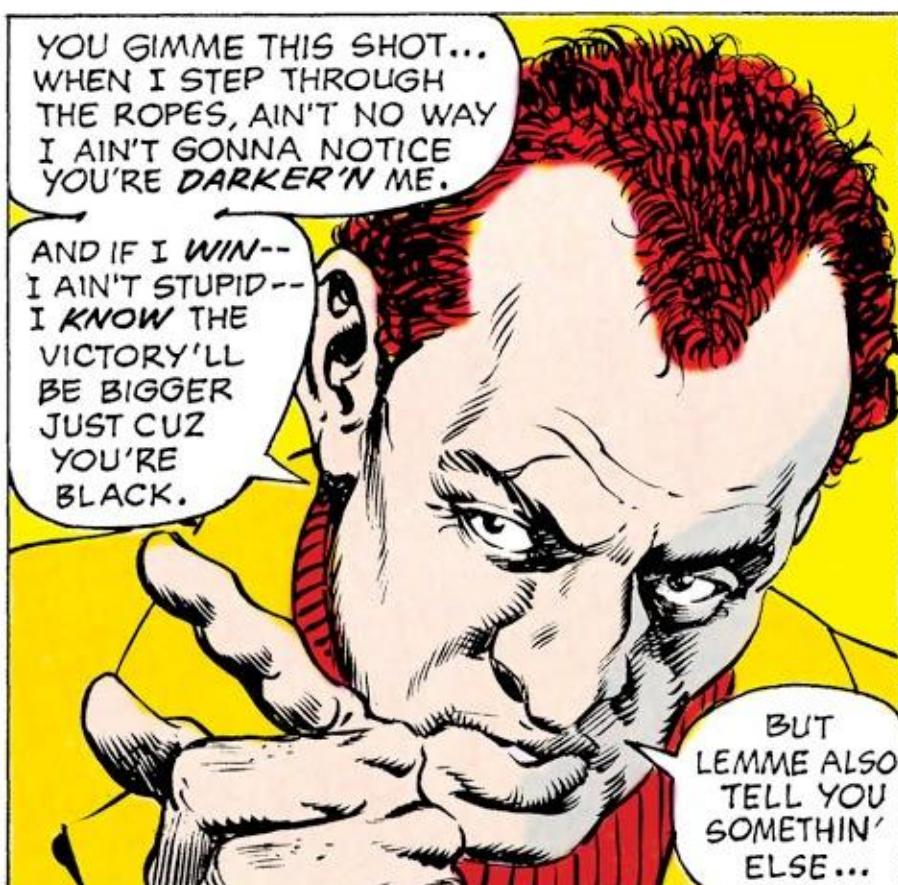
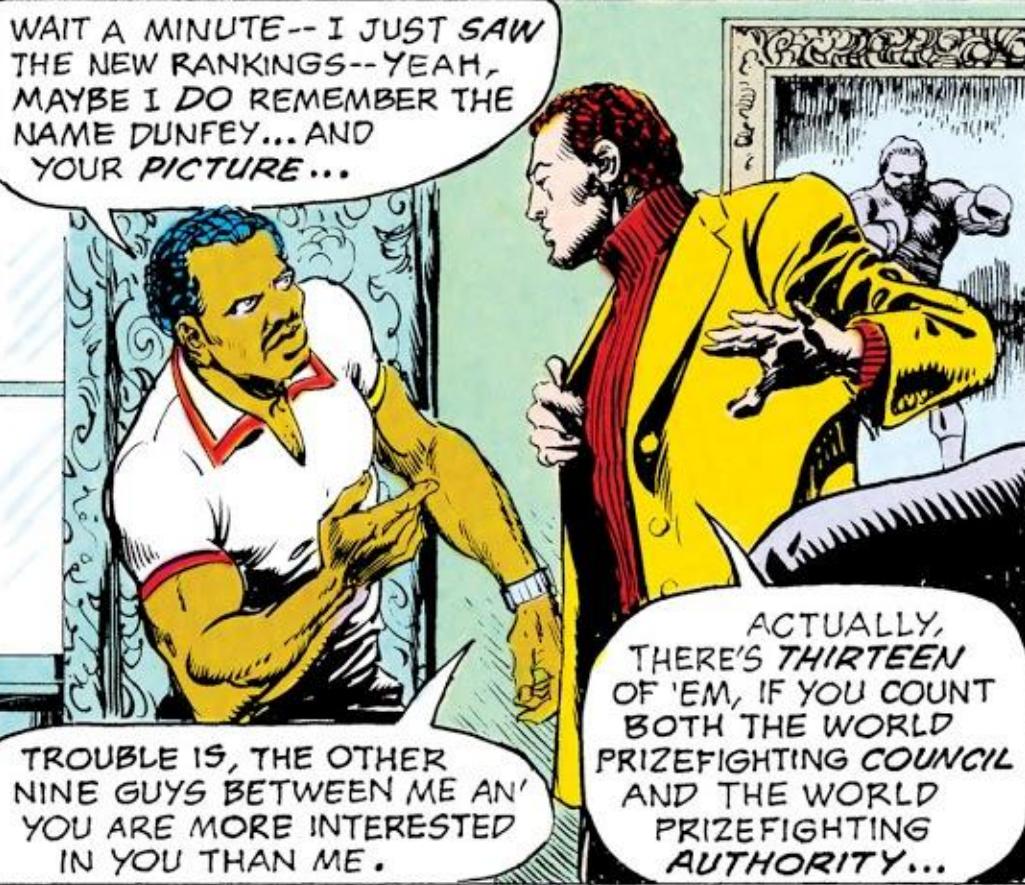
LEN WEIN
EDITOR

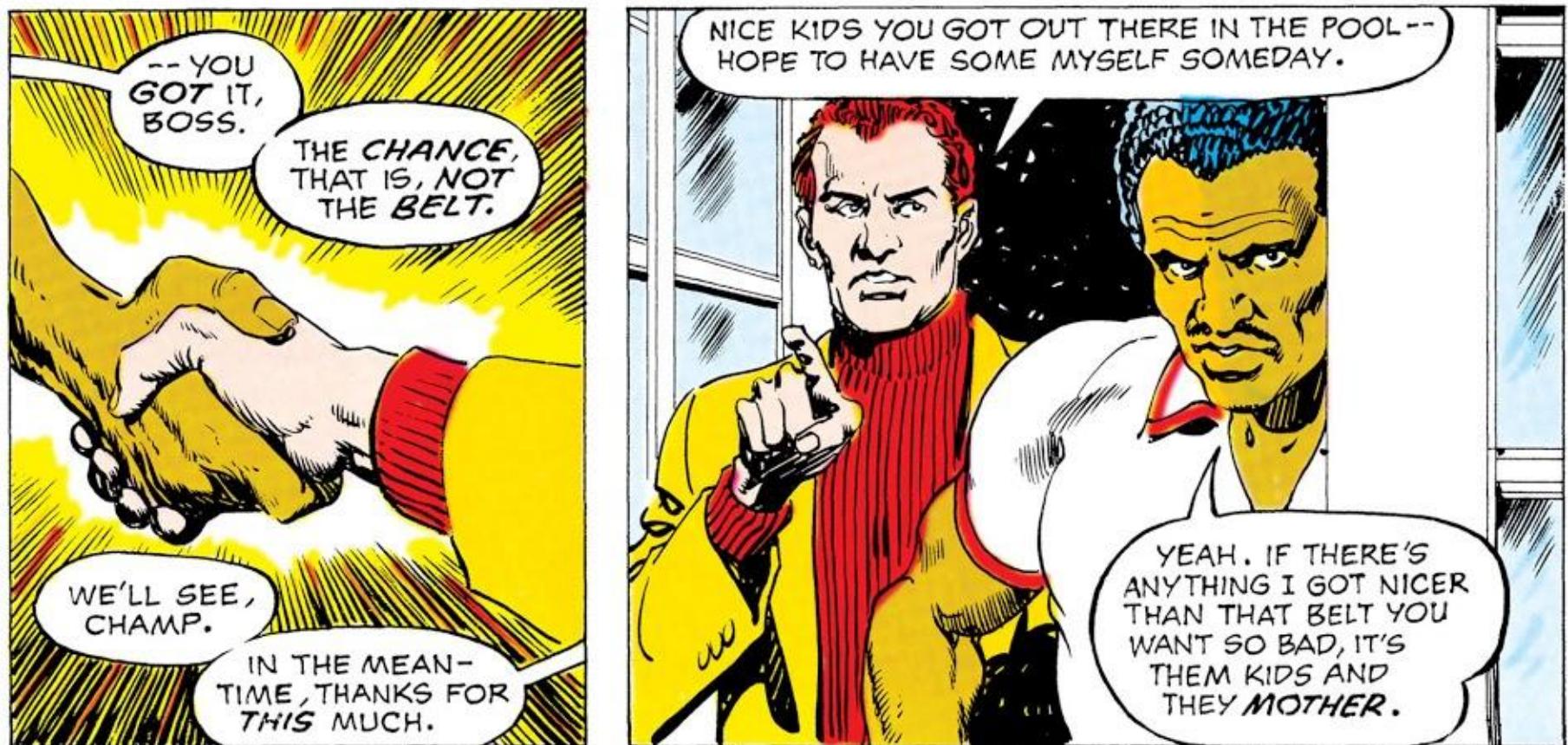




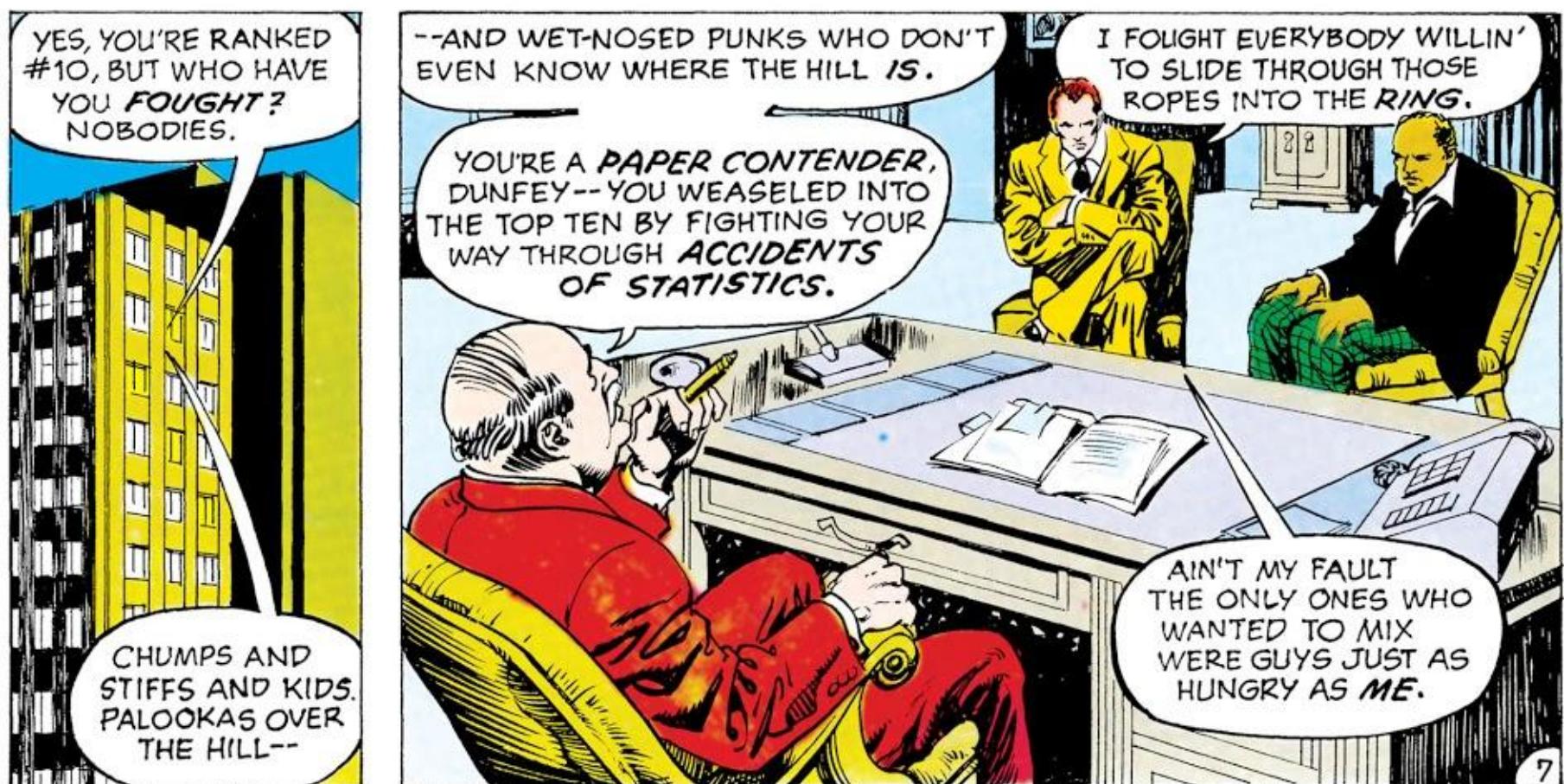


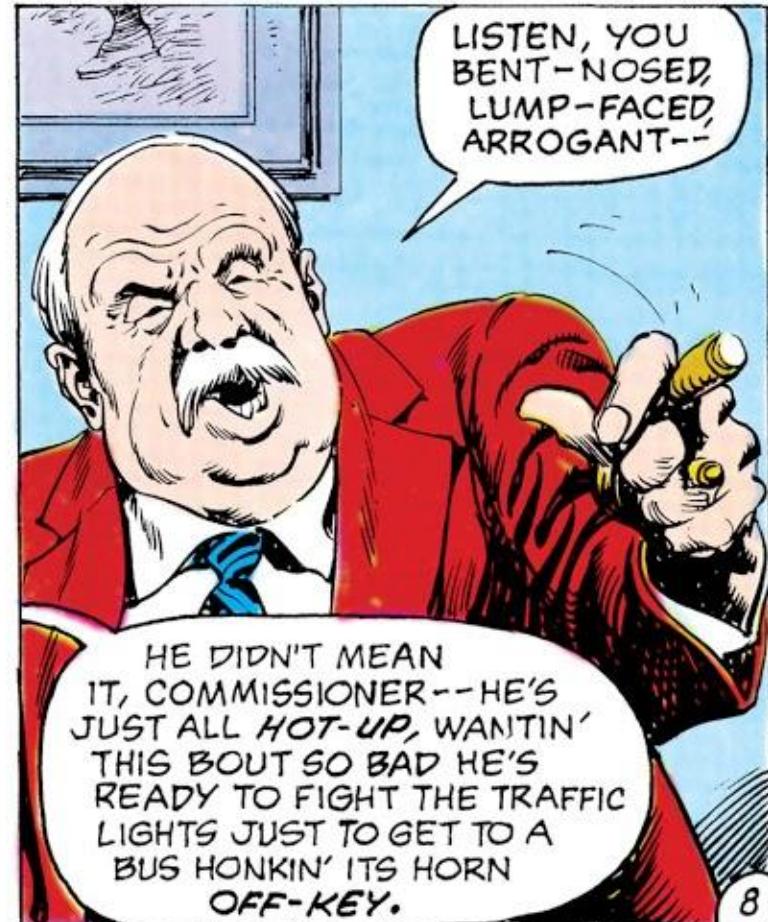


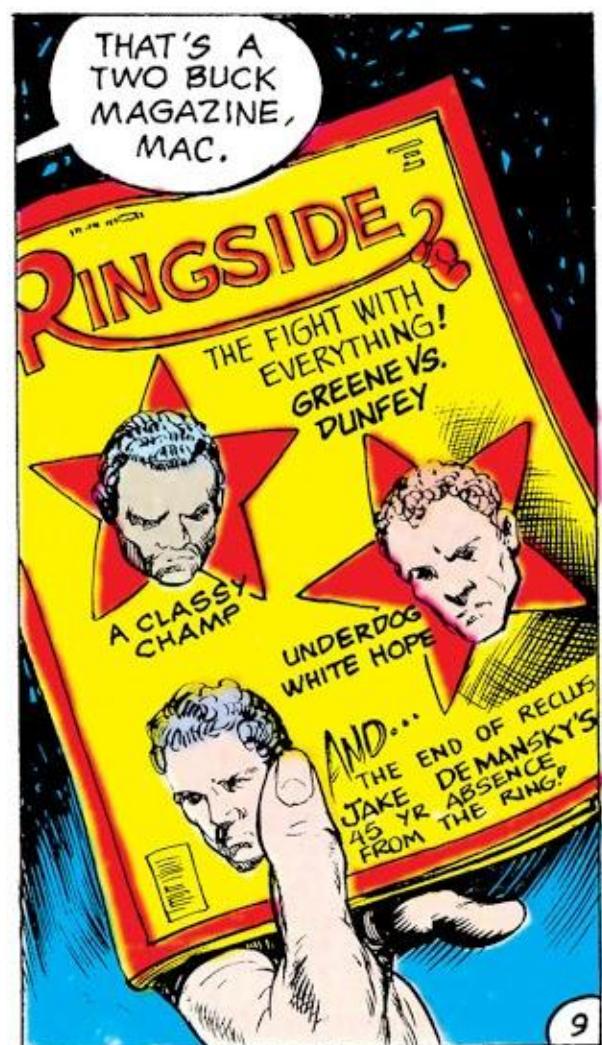
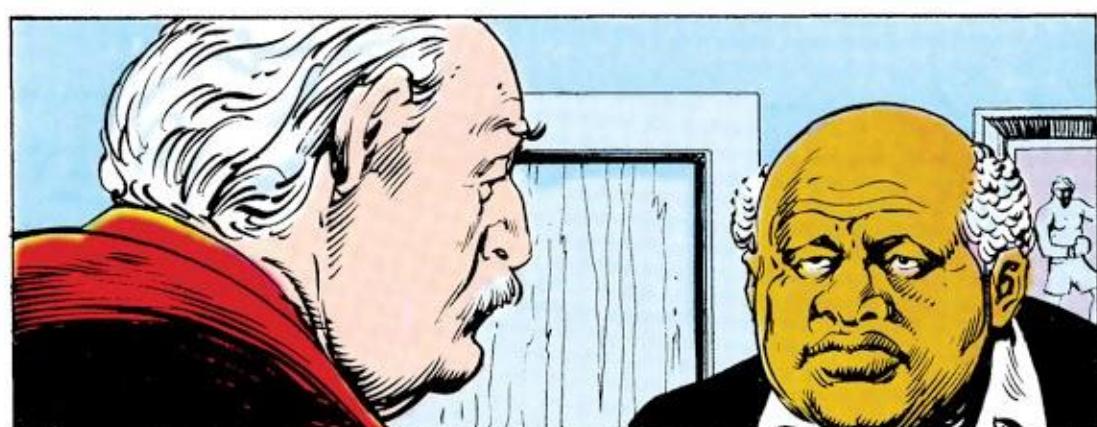
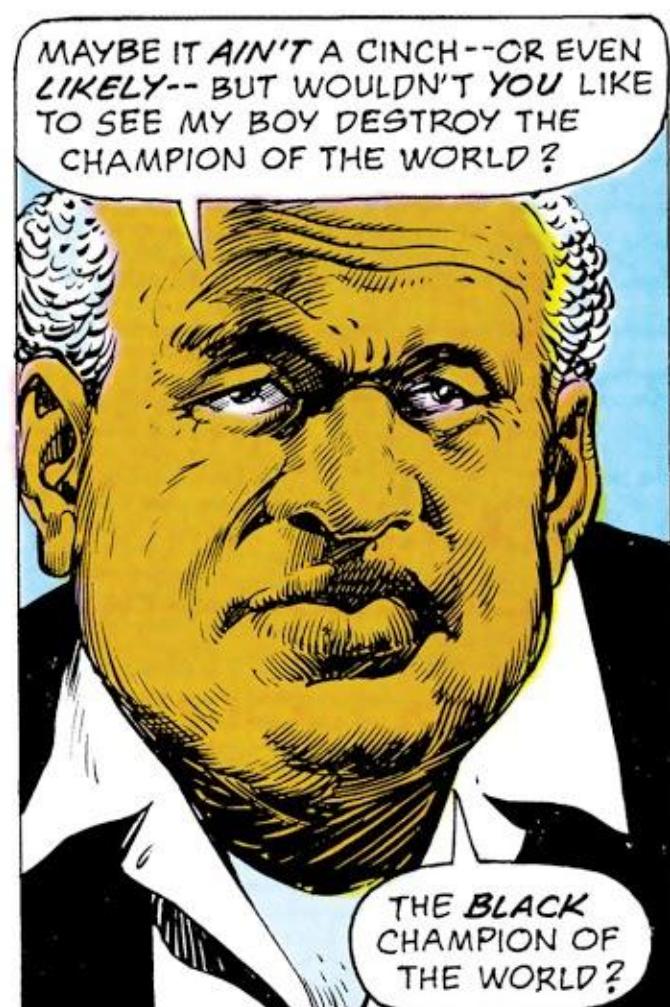
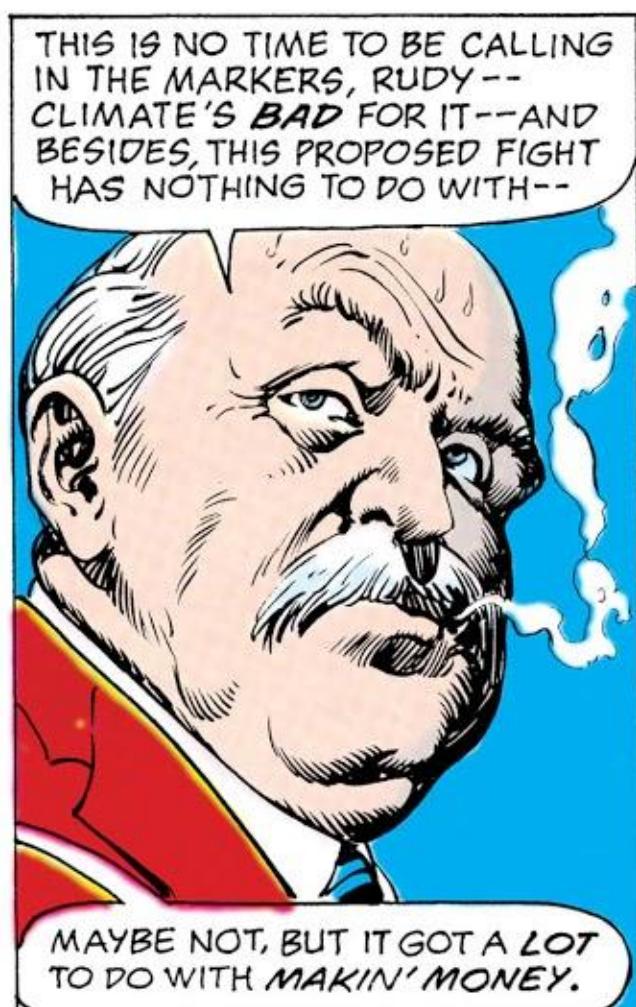
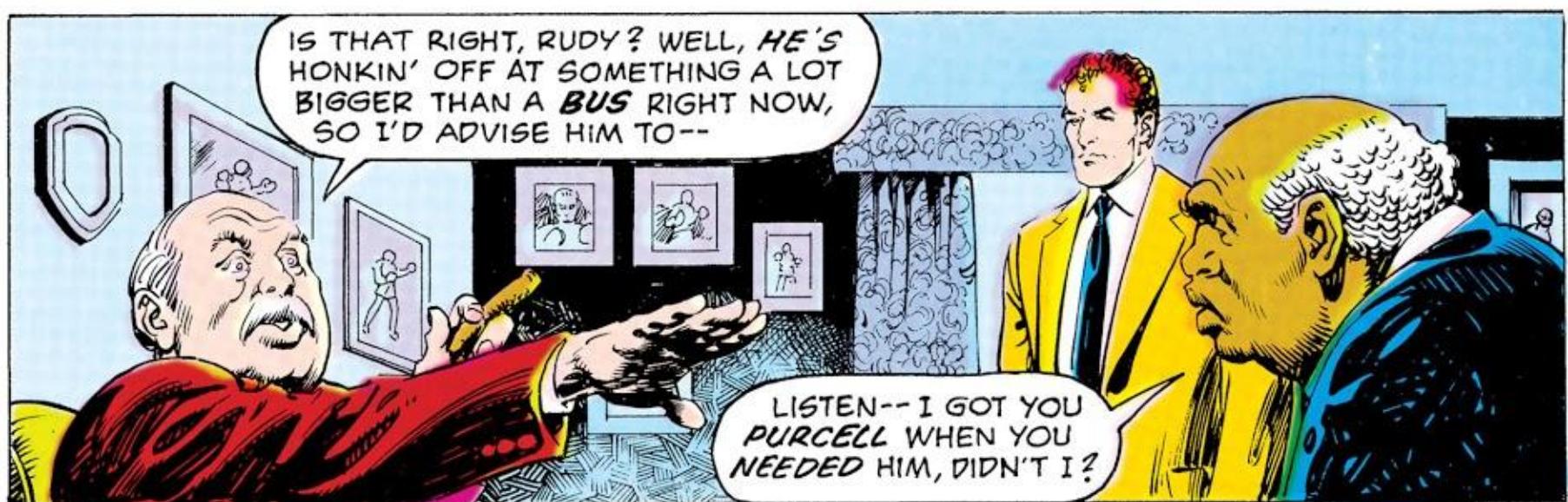


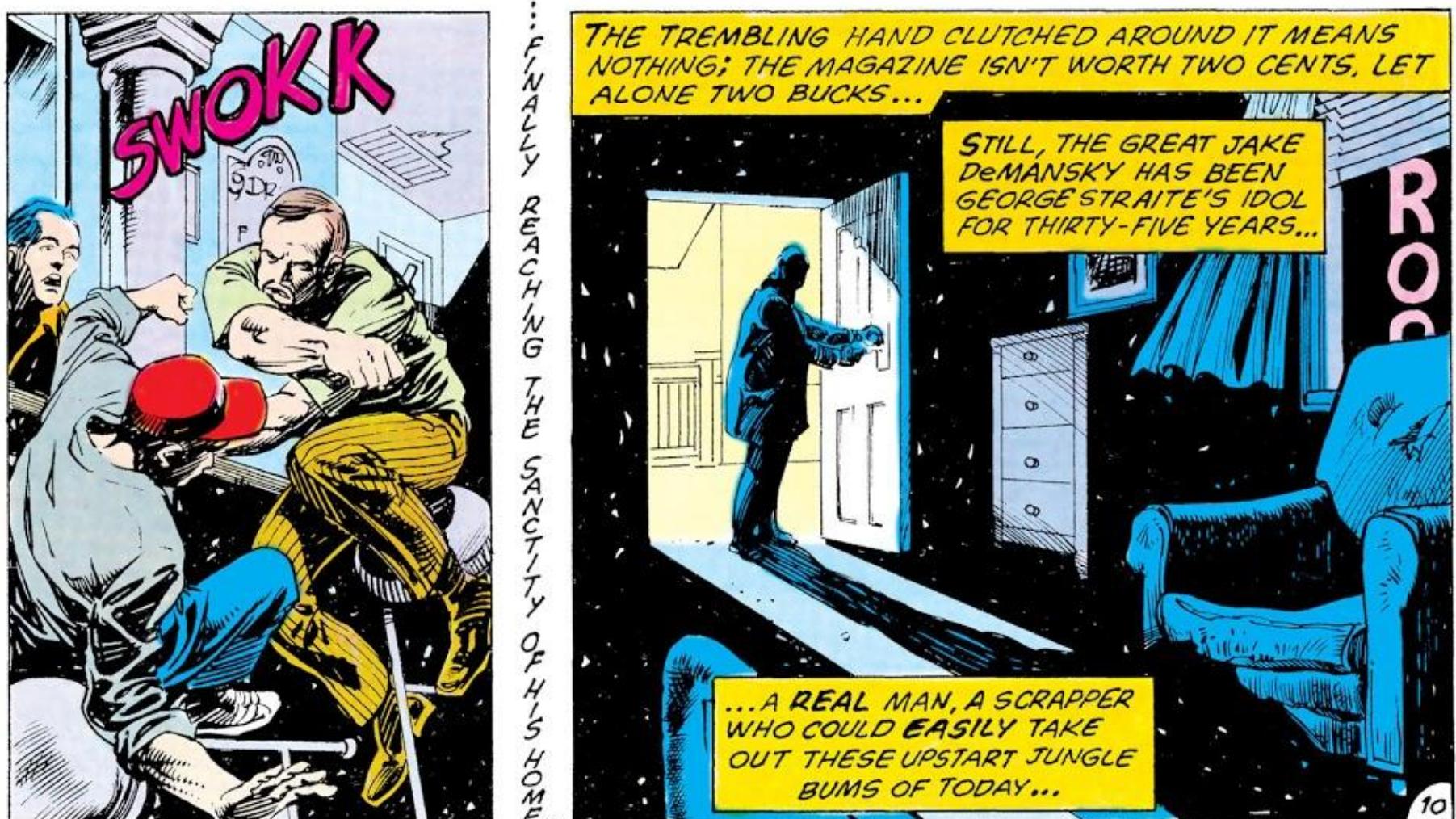
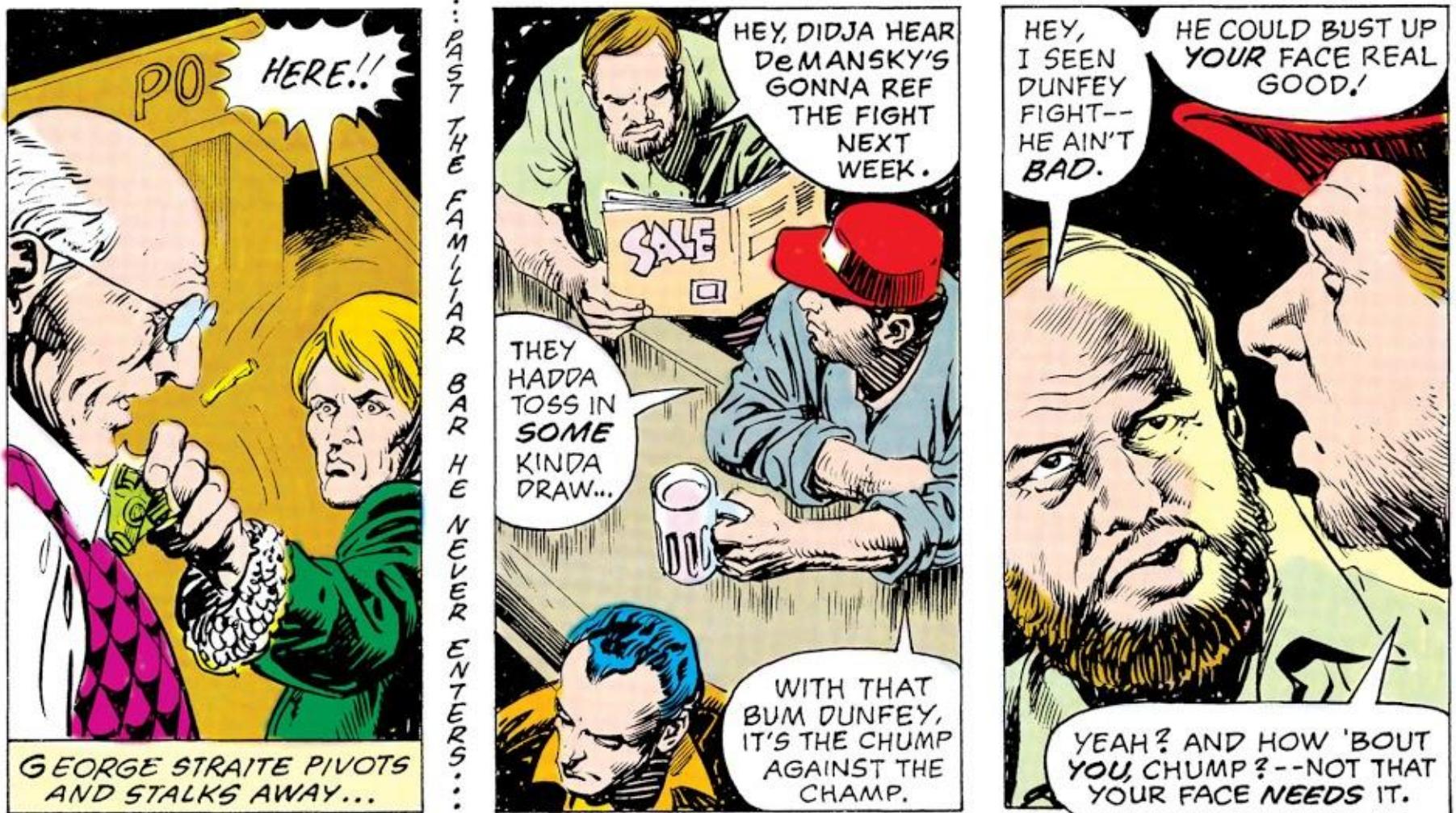
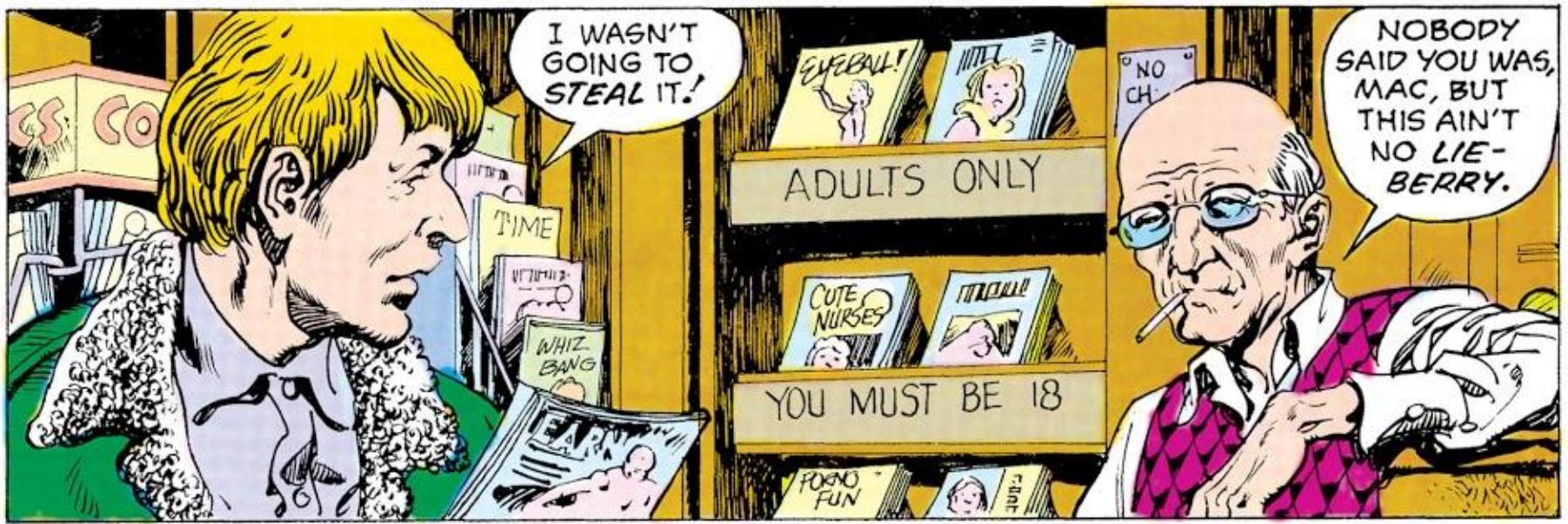


IN MIDTOWN A FEW DAYS LATER, WHERE GOTHAM'S RENTS ARE HIGHEST...











BUT WHY, RUDY? IF THE COMMISSIONER, DEEP IN HIS HEART, WOULD LIKE TO SEE A WHITE GUY BEAT THE BLACK CHAMP, WHY DOESN'T THE OPPOSITE HOLD TRUE FOR--

YOUR EARS AIN'T GOT CAULIFLOWERS YET, BOY.

OR... MAYBE I GOT A LOT TO PROVE-- TO MYSELF.

SUCH AS?

SUCH AS... I AIN'T LIKE THE COMMISSIONER.

BUT YOU'RE NOT SURE?



MAYBE I MORE SECURE IN MY SKIN-- WITH THE LUXURY OF HAVIN' NOTHIN' TO PROVE...

OR--? THERE WAS AN "OR" IN YOUR VOICE.

THE TRUTH, BOY? NO... I DO MY BEST, BUT NO... I AIN'T SURE.

I ONLY KNOW NONE OF US WAS AROUND BEFORE WE WAS BORN PICKIN' OUT ANY COLORS.

HEY--EASY ON THAT BAG.



THAT WAS HONEST, RUDY-- AND THAT'S ALL A FIGHTER CAN ASK FROM HIS TRAINER.



WAYNE MANOR:

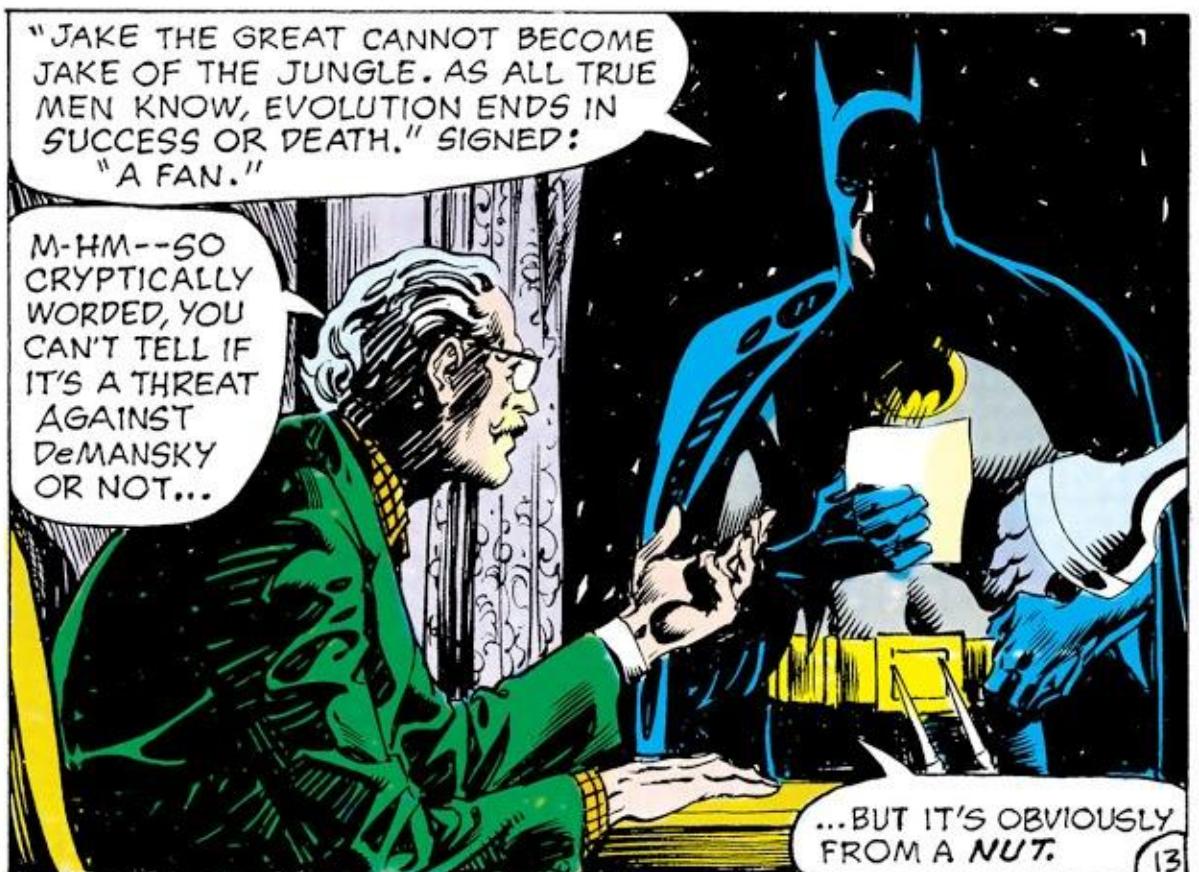
BIG FIGHT TOMORROW NIGHT, ALFRED.

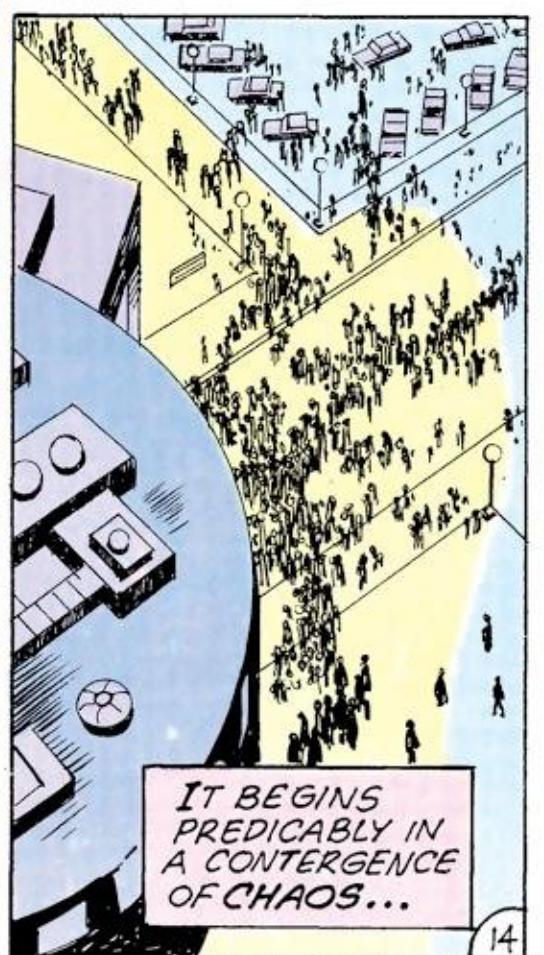
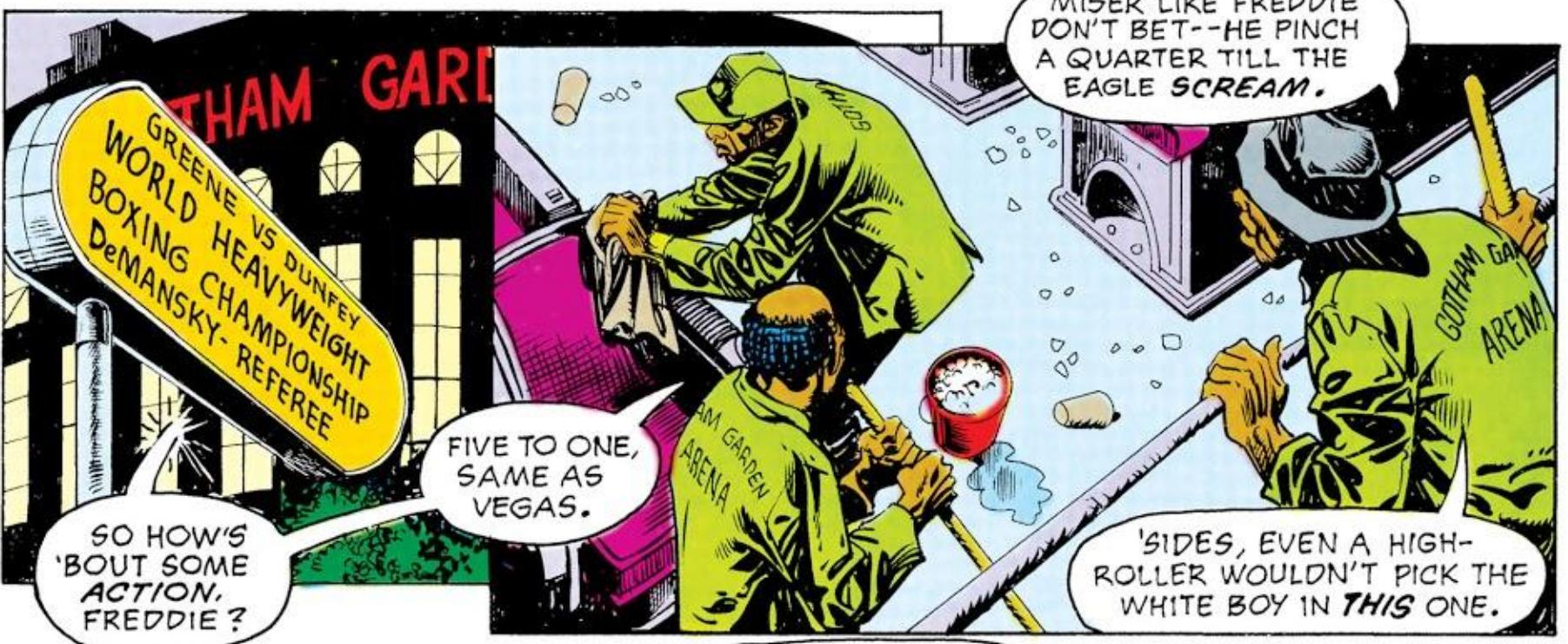
YES, SIR, I PLAN TO WATCH IT ON THE TELEVISION--

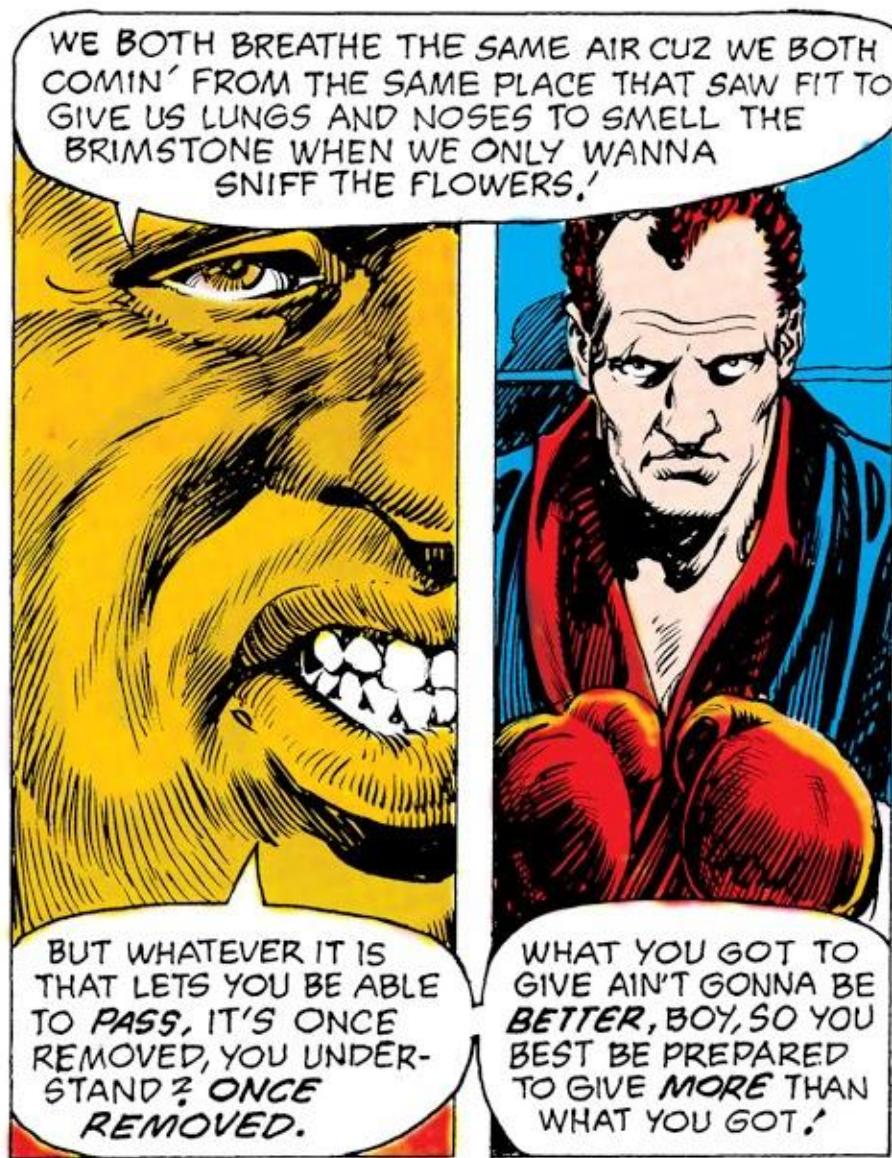


BUT YOU EVER FIGURE IT OUT? WHY GOD HADDA PUT SKINS IN THE WAY OF HEARTS?

--IF ONLY TO SEE MR. DEMANSKY GRACE THE RING AGAIN.









"WAIT A MINUTE--HERE HE IS--THE IMMORTAL, THE GREAT, THE LEGENDARY LIVING LEGEND HIMSELF--FORMER HEAVY-WEIGHT CHAMPION OF THE WORLD AND VETERAN OF SOME OF THE GREATEST WARS EVER STAGE, ON CANVAS..."



"JAKE DEMANSKY!"

"IF WE COULD TURN THE CLOCK FORTY YEARS BACK ON THIS MAN, NOW THEN WE'D HAVE A FIGHT!!!"



"IN SILENCE, GEORGE STRAITE SCREAMS THE LOUDEST OF ALL."



"YOU WANTED MY BELT, BOY, BUT YOU IN HELL, BOY, AND YOU SURE AIN'T NO BAT, BOY."

"AND YET THE WORDS ARE OVERPLAYED, TOO THEATRICAL..."



"...MAKING IT FITTINGLY IRONIC, THEN, THAT THE MAN WHO SPURNED BOTH STAGE AND RING HAS TURNED THE GREATEST FIGHTER ALIVE INTO A MERE HAM ACTOR."

"HE'S PLAYING HIS PART WELL, WOAD."

HANDS TREMBLING, A PIECE OF COLD HARDNESS PRESSED INTO HIS LEFT KIDNEY, GEORGE STRAITE TENSES FOR THE DRAMA SOON TO BE UNLEASHED...



"AND THEN THERE'S THE BELL FOR THE FIRST ROUND!"

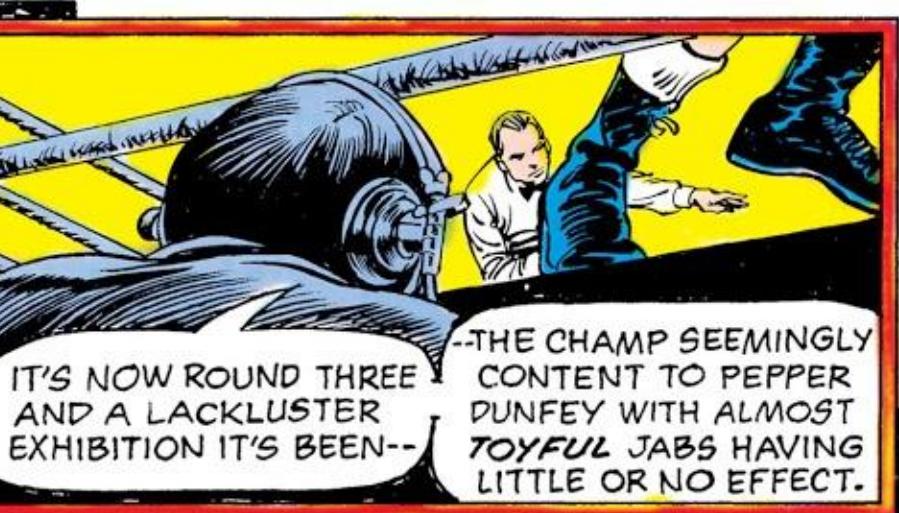
"BOTH MEN MISS WITH OPENING LEFT JABS--GREENE SMOOTHLY, DUNFEY WITH LUMBERING AWKWARDNESS..."



"AND NOW THEY BACK OFF TO CIRCLE EACH OTHER MORE WARILY..."



"ROUND TWO AND-- THERE-- GREENE FINALLY SCORES WITH A CHOPPING RIGHT AS DUNFEY BORES IN!"



IT'S NOW ROUND THREE
AND A LACKLUSTER EXHIBITION IT'S BEEN--

THE CHAMP SEEMINGLY CONTENT TO PEPPER DUNFEY WITH ALMOST TOYFUL JABS HAVING LITTLE OR NO EFFECT.

"I'LL SAY THIS-- IT'S BEEN A CLEAN FIGHT, AND WE'VE SEEN REMARKABLY LITTLE OF REFEREE DeMANSKY..."

"...BUT I SUSPECT THE CHAMP IS SIMPLY PROLONGING THE SHOW TO JUSTIFY HIS TEN MILLION DOLLAR PURSE."



IT'S WORSE THAN GEORGE STRAITE IMAGINED...



"AND YET, IT WAS NOT A CRUSHING BLOW!"



"AND INCREDIBLY, IT SENDS THE CHAMP TO THE CANVAS!"



BUT WAIT-- PERHAPS WITH ENOUGH PATIENCE, MIRACLES CAN HAPPEN...

GET UP AN' FIGHT, GREENE-- I DON'T WANNA "WIN" THE TITLE THIS WAY!



"THERE ARE NO RULES NOW--
NO HOLDS BARRED--"

"IT'S HOPELESS NOW--
THE REFEREE UTTERLY
HELPLESS AGAINST
THESE TWO MEN
LITERALLY TRYING
TO KILL EACH OTHER!"

"JAKE DeMANSKY'S
RETURN TO THE
RING HAS BECOME
A CHARADE--"

--AND THE FANS HERE
AT RINGSIDE --NOW
ANIMAL-LIKE --ARE
GOING POSITIVELY
BERSERK IN A BLOODY
ORGY OF UNRESTRAINED
VIOLENCE.

"A MOCKERY OF THE SPORT HE
MADE GREAT AND THEN LATER
ESCHEWED--AND THE MAN HIMSELF
NOW RESEMBLES A FEEBLE SHELL
OF HIMSELF, CAUGHT IN THE MIDST
OF THIS SHAMEFUL CARNIVAL
OF CARNAGE!"

THAT GLINT
FROM THE
CROWD...

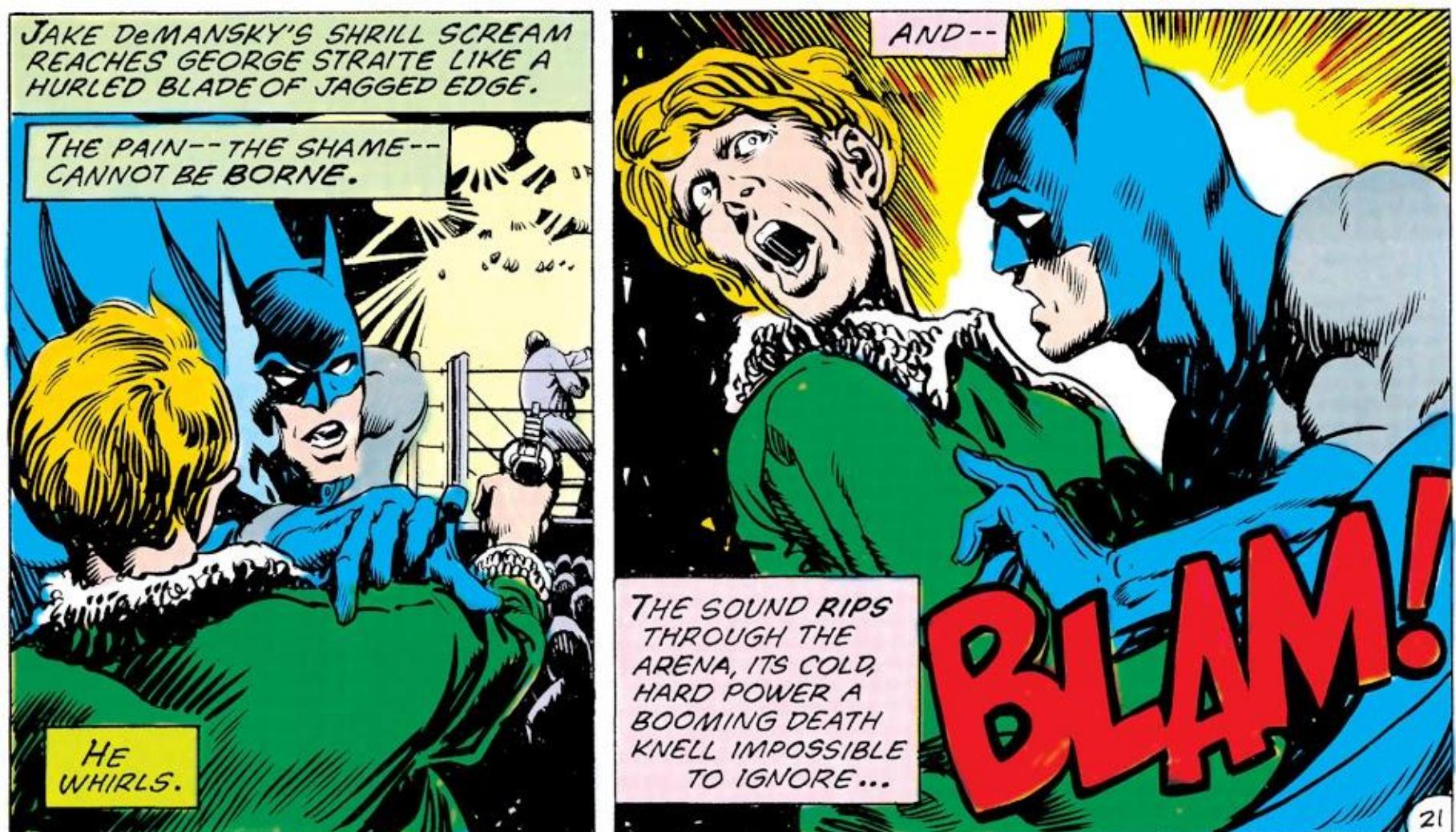
NOT A GOLD
RING...

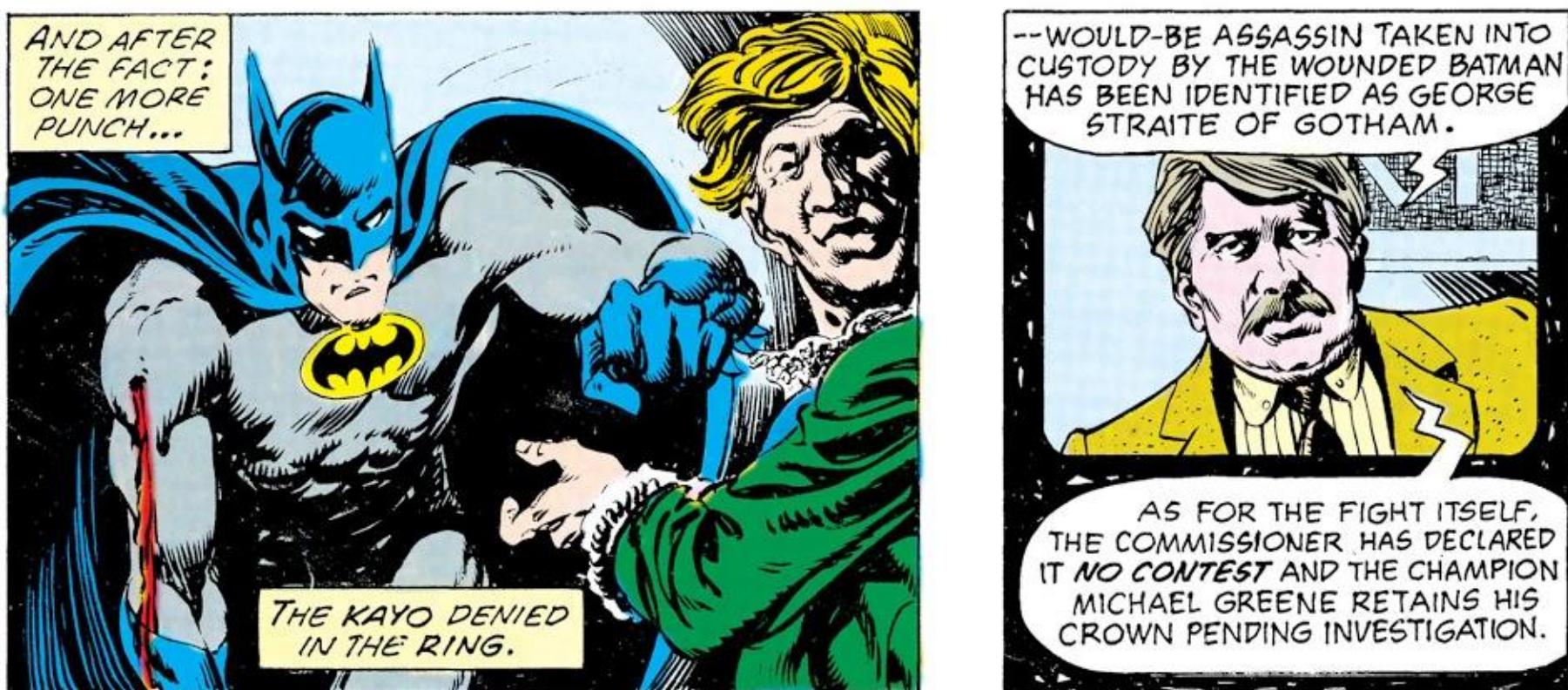
...AND NOT
A CIGARETTE
LIGHTER...

A
GUN

LOOK AT THAT
BLOOD!

"THAT PUNCH
WAS ENOUGH
TO FELL A
MULE--AND
YET DUNFEE
TAKES IT!"





...BUT AS MUCH AS I WANTED
TO WIN THAT *BELT*... FOR PRIDE,
FOR ACHIEVEMENT...

...I COULDN'T BEAR TO SEE
YOU *LOSE IT* FOR SOMETHING
AS CHEAP AS MONEY.

IN THE GLOOM, THROUGH
DARK GLASSES AND EYES
SWOLLEN NEARLY SHUT,
IT IS LIKE LOOKING INTO
MIRRORS OF X-RAYED
GHOSTS.

I TOLD YOU,
DUNFEY...

TWENTY PACES INTO
THE NIGHT, SOMEONE
ELSE GETS HIS SHOT
AT THE CHAMP--

MY GOD, GREENE--I WAS
BLIND! ALL THE MONEY
IN THE WORLD ISN'T
WORTH WHAT YOU HAD...

MAYBE, IT CAN'T BE
DEFENDED WITH
EUPHEMISTIC
PLATITUDES
ABOUT SOME
MANLY ART.

IT WASN'T
FOR MONEY.

--AND MICHAEL
GREENE FALLS,
STRIPPED OF BELT,
CROWN, AND TITLES
FOREVER.

AND THAT THING
BLEEDS FROM HIM, IN
WANING GOUTS.

MAYBE THE FINAL
PRIZE, AND THE
ULTIMATE PRICE,
IS NOTHING BUT MORE
OF THE SAME, COLORED
BY THE DESPERATION
OF PRIDE, VENGEANCE
... AND YES, HATE.

IF SO, THEN THERE ARE
AT LEAST TWO MEN THIS
NIGHT WILLING AND
EAGER TO TAKE UP
THE GAUNTLET, FOR
VIOLENCE DOES
BREED MORE OF
THE SAME.

ANYTHING LESS WILL
ALLOW KILLERS TO
ROAM BLACK STREETS
WITH THE ARROGANCE
OF MAD DOGS.

SUCH...
NICE...
KIDS...

IN THE NEXT
DETECTIVE:
THE EXPLOSIVE
CONCLUSION--
BOXING!



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Distributions