



551 | FEB 98

BATMAN

MEETS THE VENGEFUL

RAGMAN

MOENCH
JONES
BEATTY





SUIT OF EVIL SOULS

BATMAN
CREATED BY
BOBKANE

DOUG MOENCH
WRITER
KELLEY JONES
PENCILLER
JOHN BEATTY
INKER

GREGORY WRIGHT, COLORIST
ANDROID IMAGES, SEPARATIONS
TODD KLEIN, LETTERER
JORDAN B. GORFINKEL,
ASSOCIATE EDITOR
DENNIS O'NEIL,
EDITOR

GOTHAM'S SOUTH SLUM--STILL
UNREDEEMED, STILL A PLACE OF
POVERTY AND DECAY, FRAGILE
PIETY AND VIGOROUS PERVERSION.









RABBI... I'M RORY REGAN. BENJAMIN MIZRAHI USED TO COME TO MY "RAGS 'N TATTERS" JUNKSHOP. I WAS NOTIFIED OF HIS MURDER, BUT--

...IN WHICH, I WARN YOU, THERE IS NO COMFORT TO BE FOUND.

I REALIZE THAT, BUT I STILL--

VERY WELL. I AM ISAAC BEN LURIA, BENJAMIN'S RABBI.

YOU WISH TO KNOW THE DETAILS...

IT HAPPENED ON THE SABBATH, OUTSIDE THE SYNAGOGUE, WITNESSED BY MANY...

...WHO WILL HAVE THE SIGHT FOREVER SEARED IN THEIR SOULS-- A HATE-CRIME, COMMITTED BY A MEMBER OF THE ARYAN REICH.

THE WHAT--?

YOU HAVE BEEN AWAY FROM THIS NEIGHBORHOOD, RORY REGAN?

IN NEW ORLEANS FOR A WHILE.

THE ARYAN REICH TOOK FORM IN BLACKGATE PRISON, WHERE VIOLENT MEN HAVE MUCH TIME AND OFTEN CHOOSE TO FILL IT WITH HATE.

WHEN PRISONERS ARE RELEASED, THEY TAKE THIS HATE WITH THEM, AND THEY BRING IT BACK HERE TO THE SLUM-- A DISEASE TO INFECT OTHERS.

THE ARYAN REICH IS NOW LIKE A STREET GANG, AND THEY DO NOT LIKE JEWS ON "THEIR" STREET.

THEY'VE DONE THIS BEFORE?



YOU DON'T KNOW IT, RABBI, BUT I'M MORE THAN THE POLICE--A LOT MORE.

GAINING ON HIM...

...BUT THE RAGS BEAT ME.

HUH--?

THE RAGS ALWAYS BEAT ME.

SENSING EVIL, THEY FLY TO IT.

WHAT IN THE--?

THEY PURSUE EVIL, WHEREVER IT MAY RUN.

AND THEN, IF I DON'T STOP THEM...

MMFF.

...THEY SMOOTHER IT.

IT'S MORE DIFFICULT LATELY, BUT I CAN CONTROL THE RAGS, DRAW THEM FROM EVIL TO ME...

...EACH SHRED A DIFFERENT SOUL, STOLEN IN THE PAST FROM A PERSON OF SIMILAR EVIL...

...EACH RAG SEARING TO MY FLESH, UNITING WITH ANOTHER AND ANOTHER--UNTIL, TOGETHER, THEY FORM A MYSTIC SUIT OF SOULS...



...FILLING ME WITH THEIR POWER, AND TRANSFORMING ME TO--

WHO THE--?!



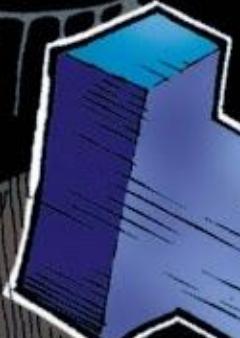
RAGMAN--
DEFENDER OF THE
WEAK AND OPPRESSED--PUNISHER
OF EVIL.

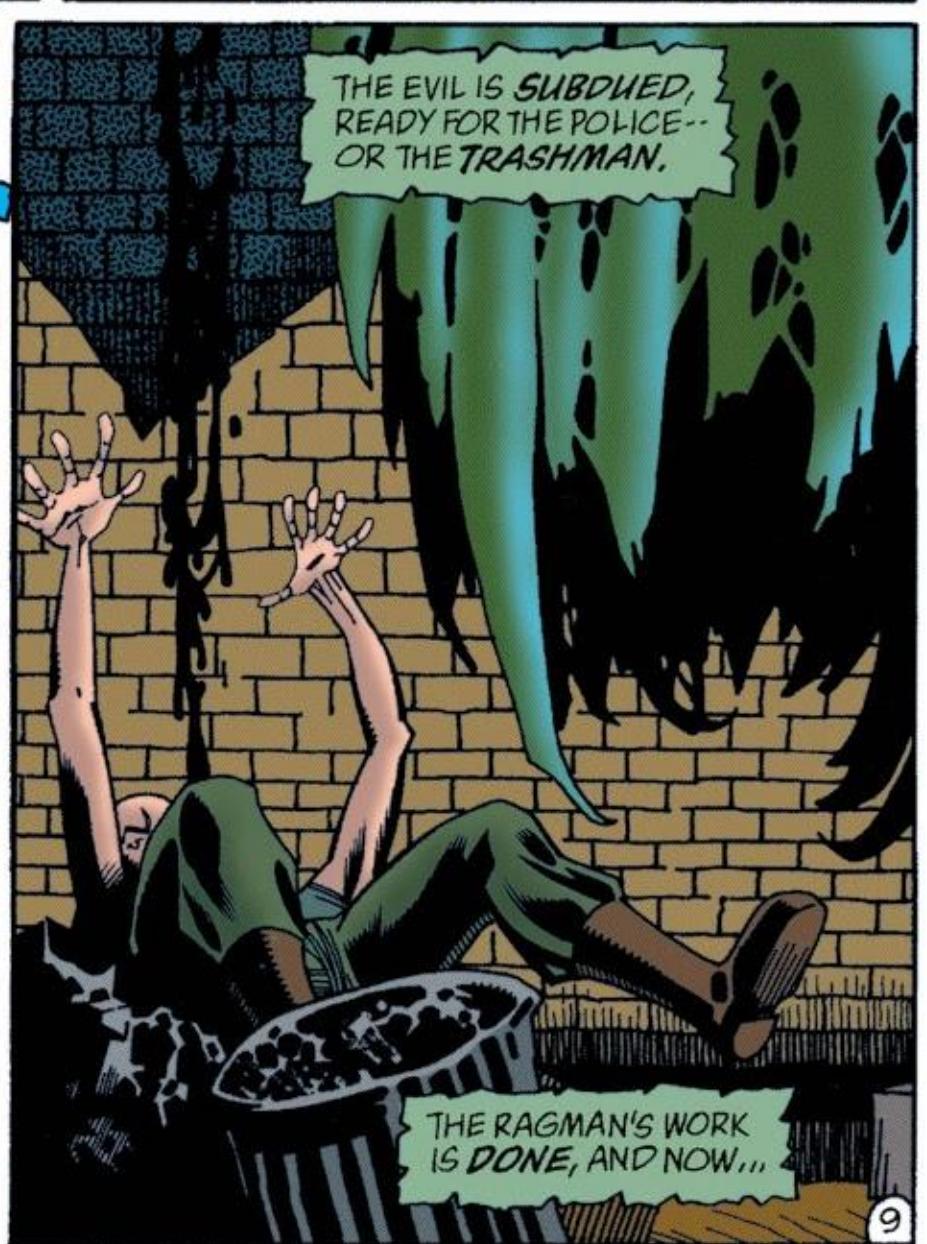
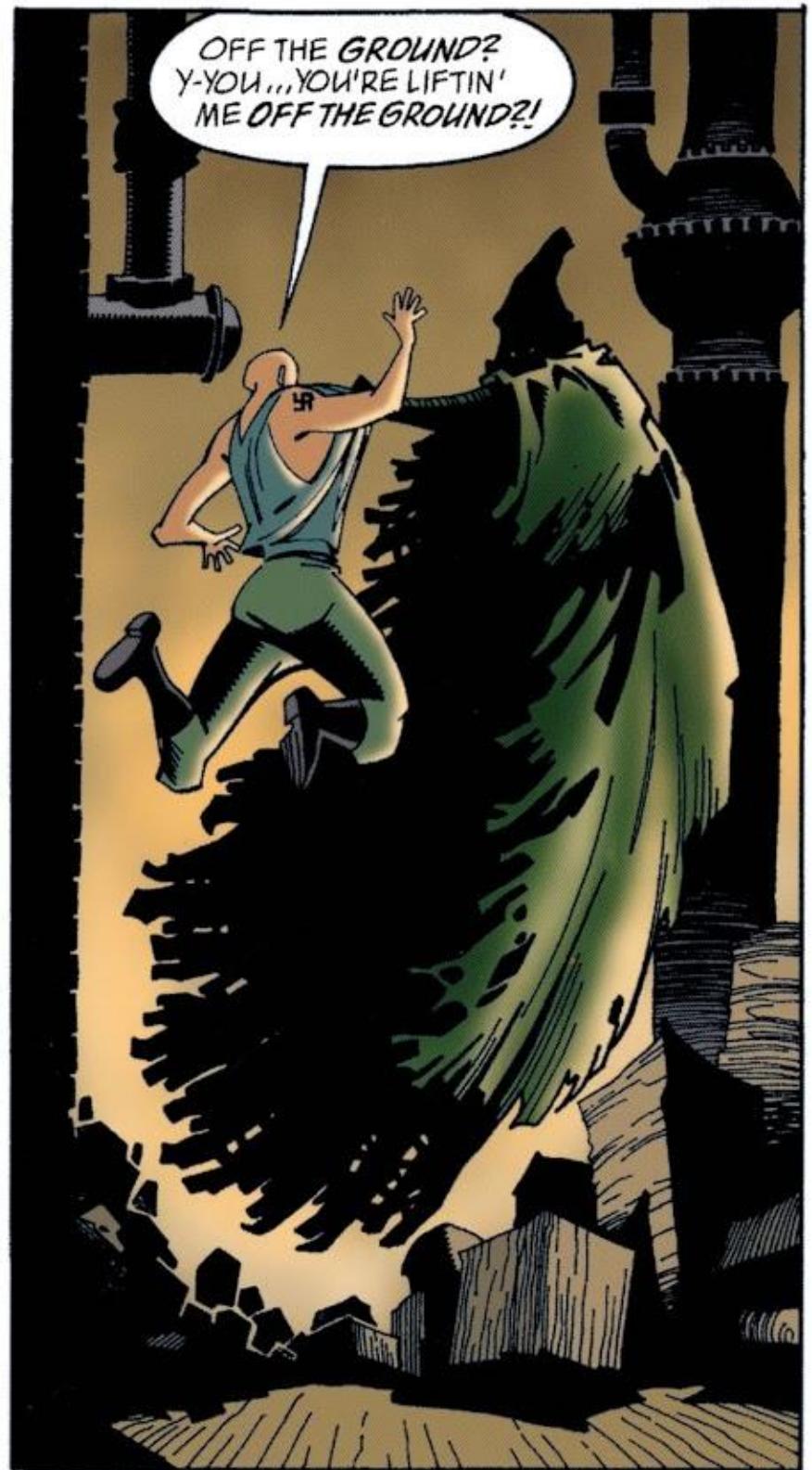
AND
YOU... ARE
EVIL.

GET AWAY FROM
ME, MAN! LEAVE ME ALONE!
I DID NOTHIN' TO YOU!

I SERVE NOT
MYSELF...

...BUT
THOSE WHO
NEED ME.







NO!



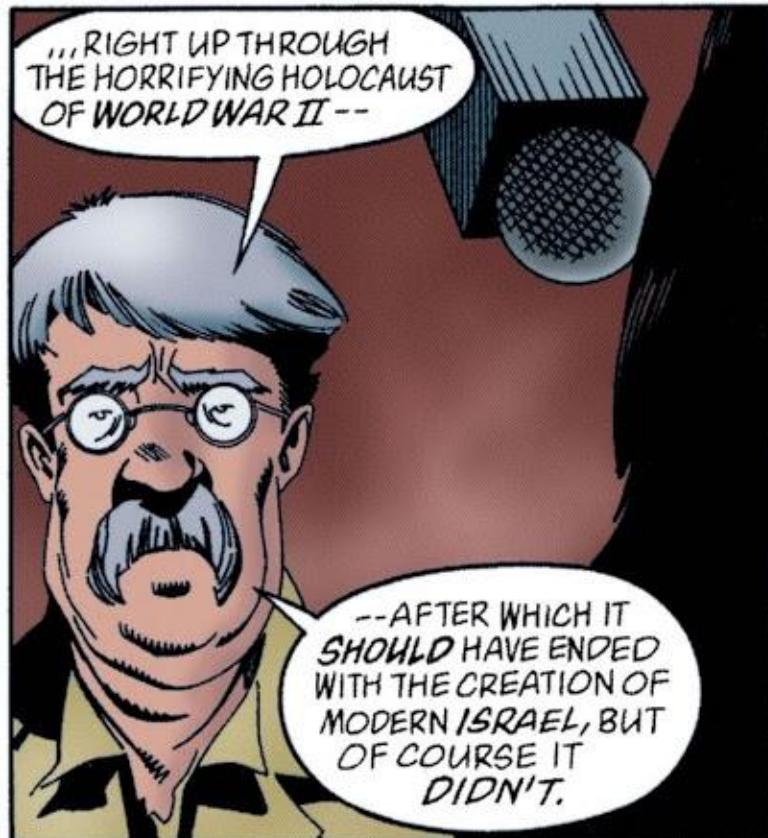
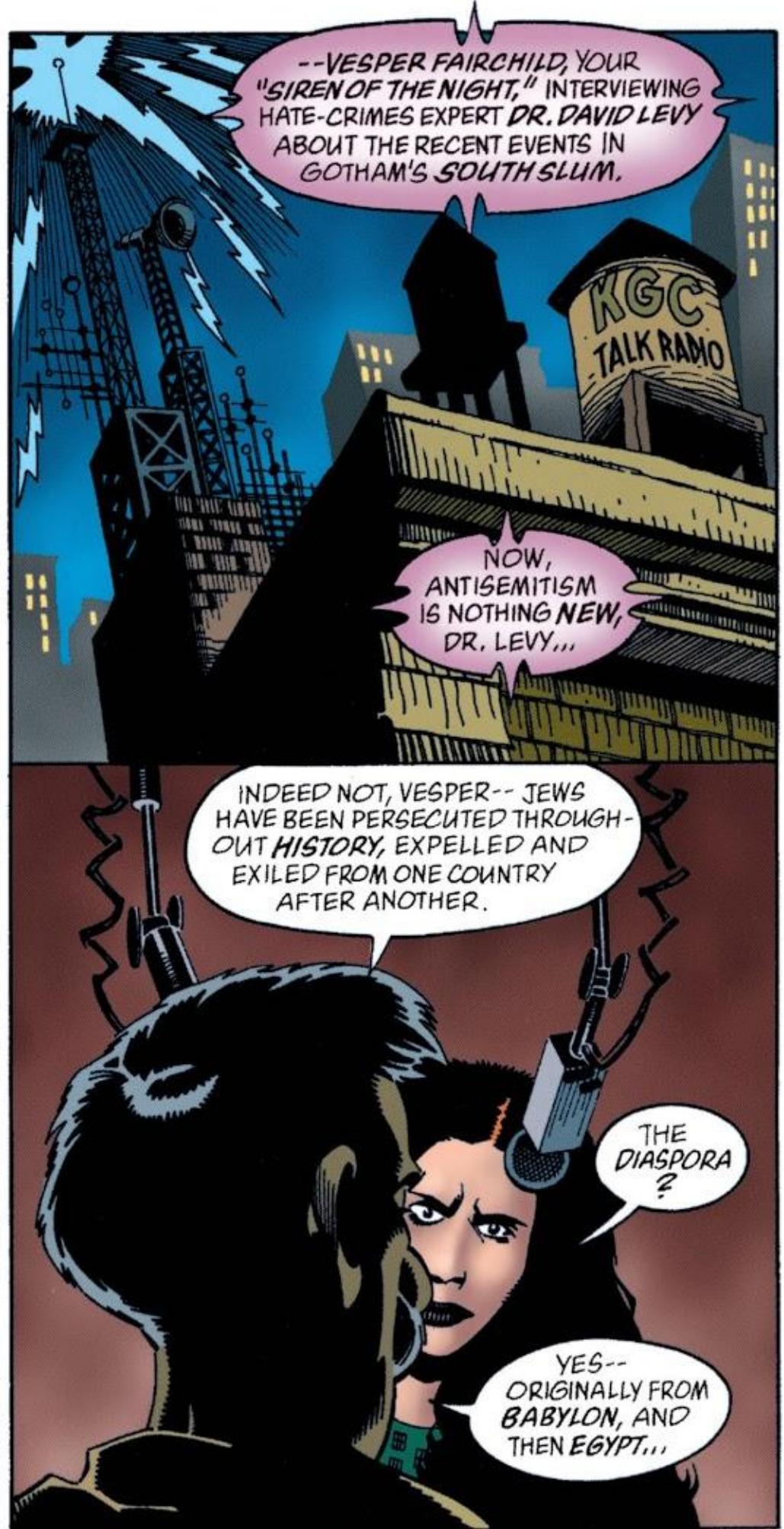
RELEASE
HIM! OBEY
ME!!

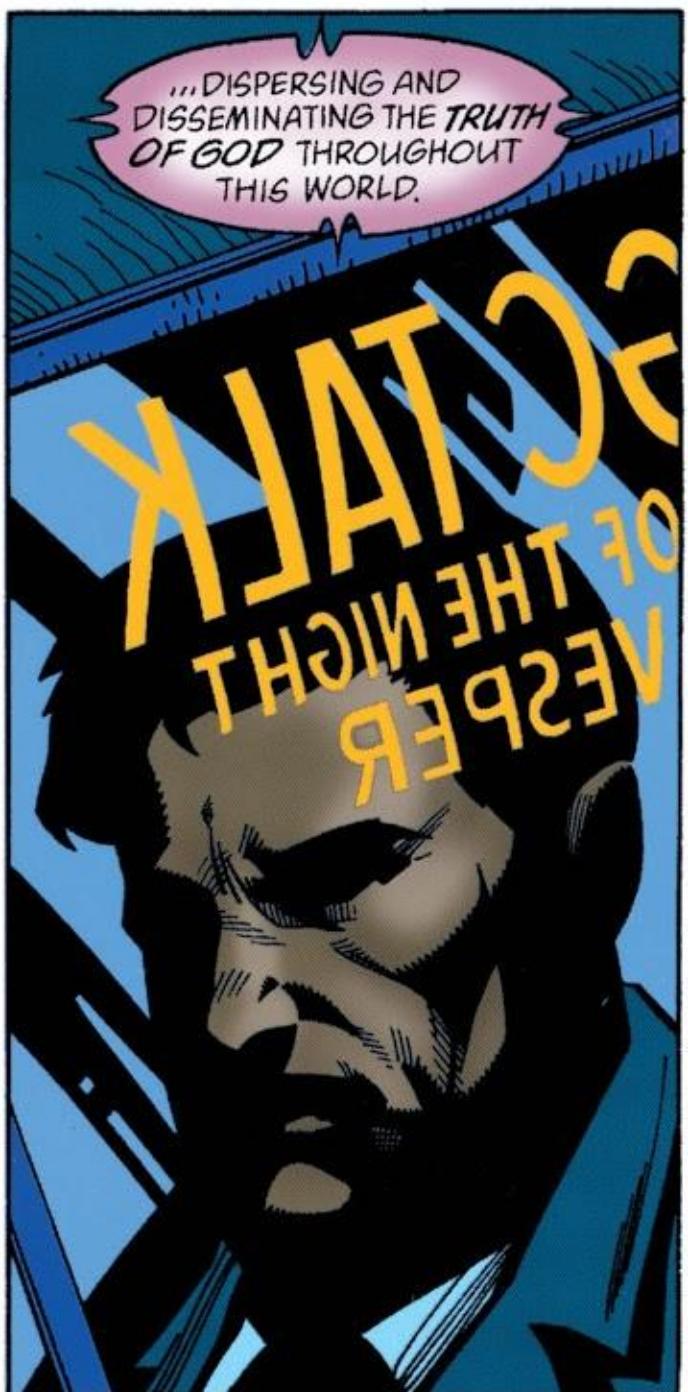
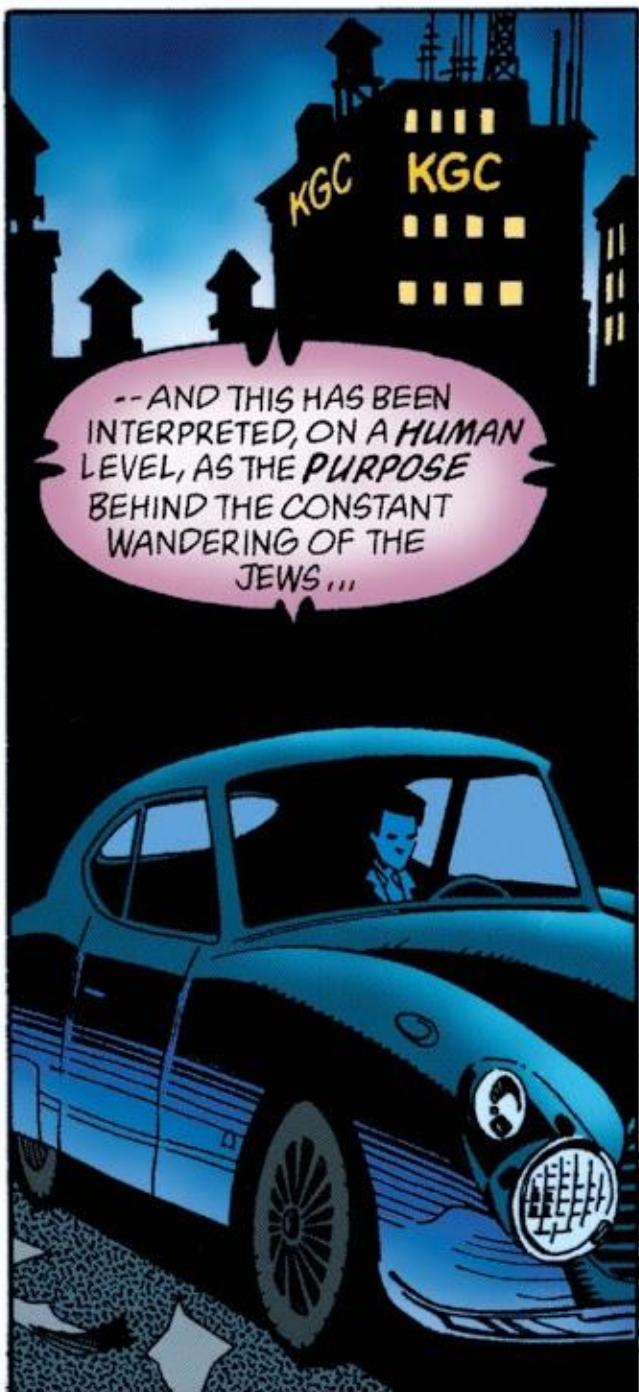
BUT IT'S
NO USE...



THEIR POWER IS NOW
GREATER THAN MINE...









PERHAPS-- BUT JEWS BELIEVE THESE INSULAR CUSTOMS DERIVE FROM ANCIENT TRADITIONS OF FOLLOWING GOD'S LAW.



AND TO A JEW, OF COURSE, IT IS EVERYONE ELSE WHO IS "DIFFERENT."

WHICH IS WHY XENOPHOBIA NEVER MAKES SENSE-- ASK ANY BLACK.

AND GOTHAM'S INCREASING HATE CRIMES, RECENTLY INCLUDING MURDER--

ARE NOTHING NEW, VESPER...



SUCH CRIMES STAND TODAY AS THEY HAVE ALWAYS STOOD-- AS PERHAPS THE GREATEST EVIL OF ALL.

PRECISELY.



THE MAN WHO SHATTERED THE WINDOW... THE POLICE TELL ME HE WAS FOUND NEARBY... DEAD.

MURDERED, RABBI...

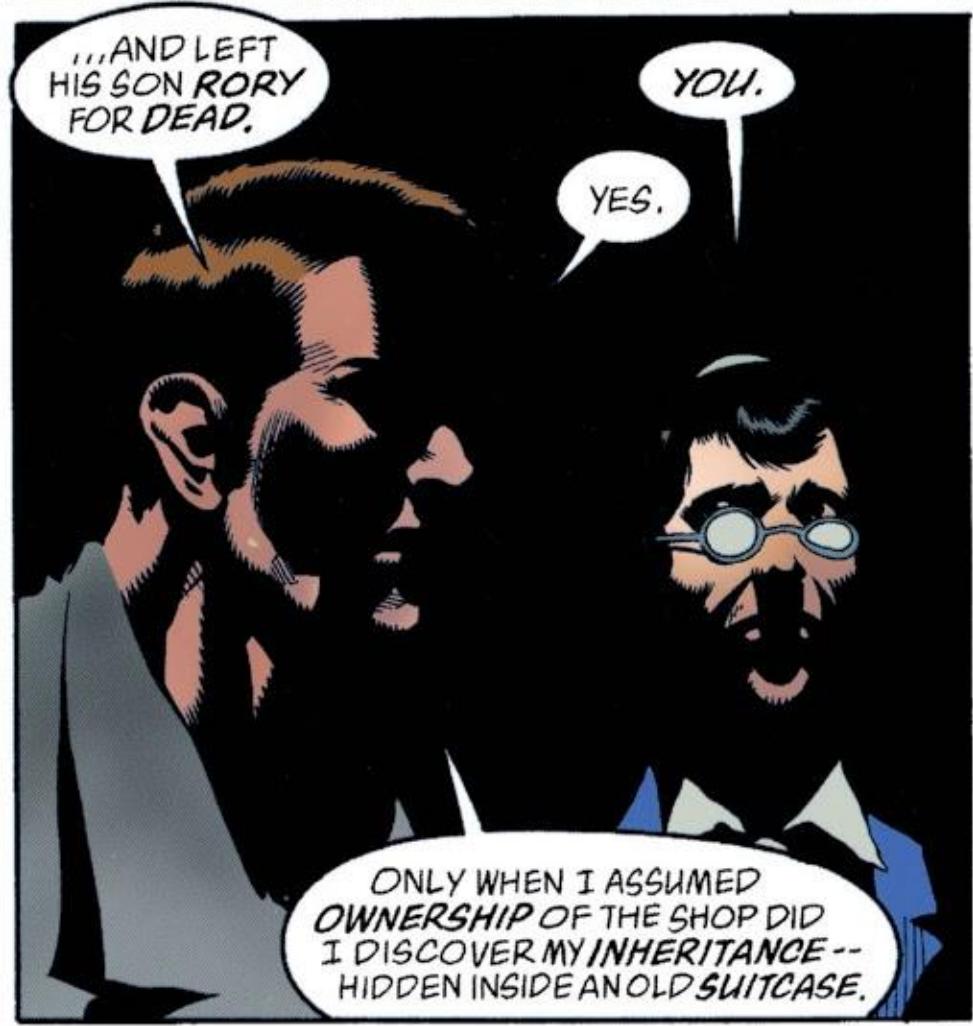
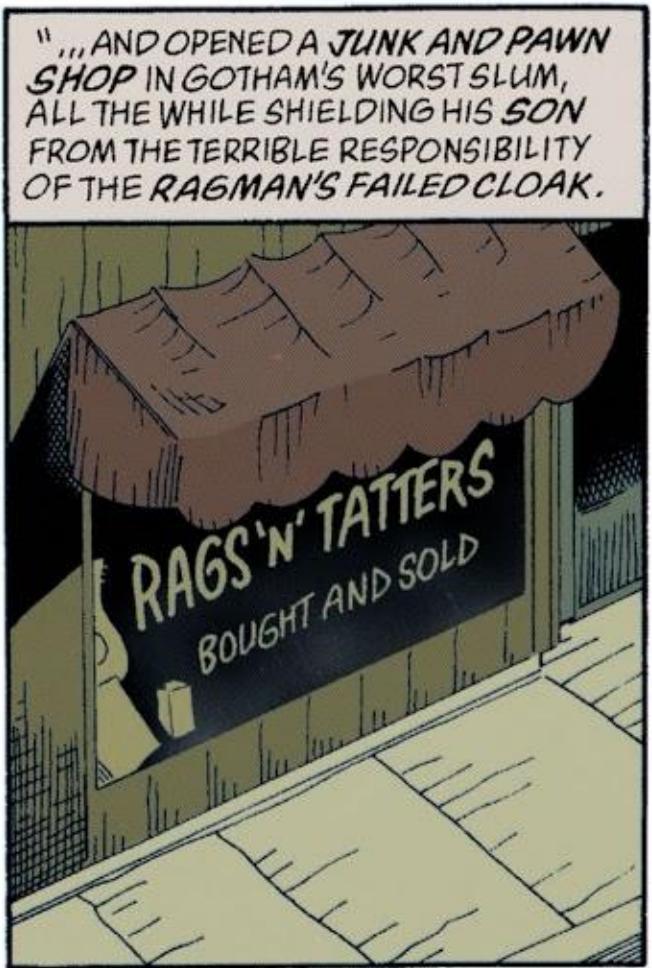
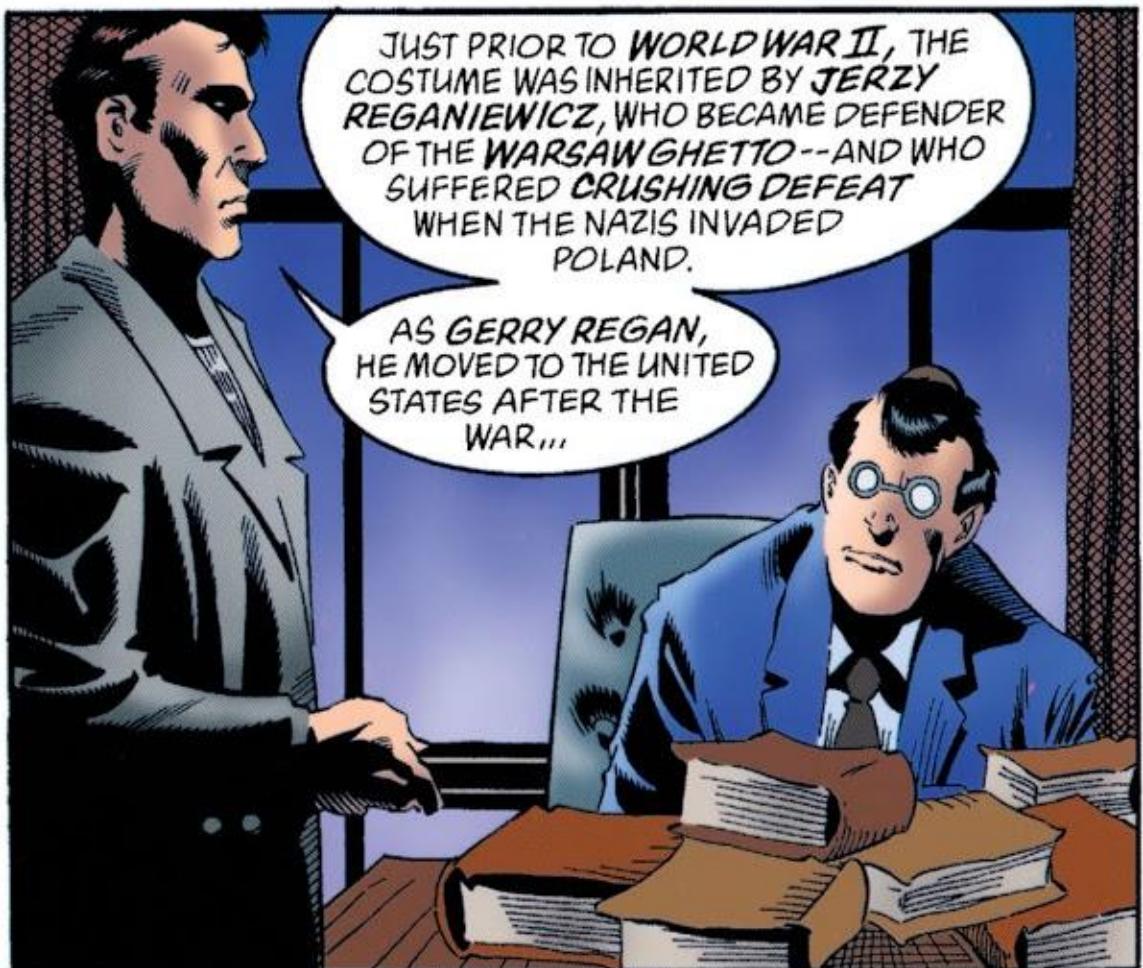


AND I... I NEED HELP... GUIDANCE...

THEN YOU, RORY REGAN... YOU ARE THE ONE WHO--

FIRST, RABBI, I MUST EXPLAIN WHO AND WHAT I AM...



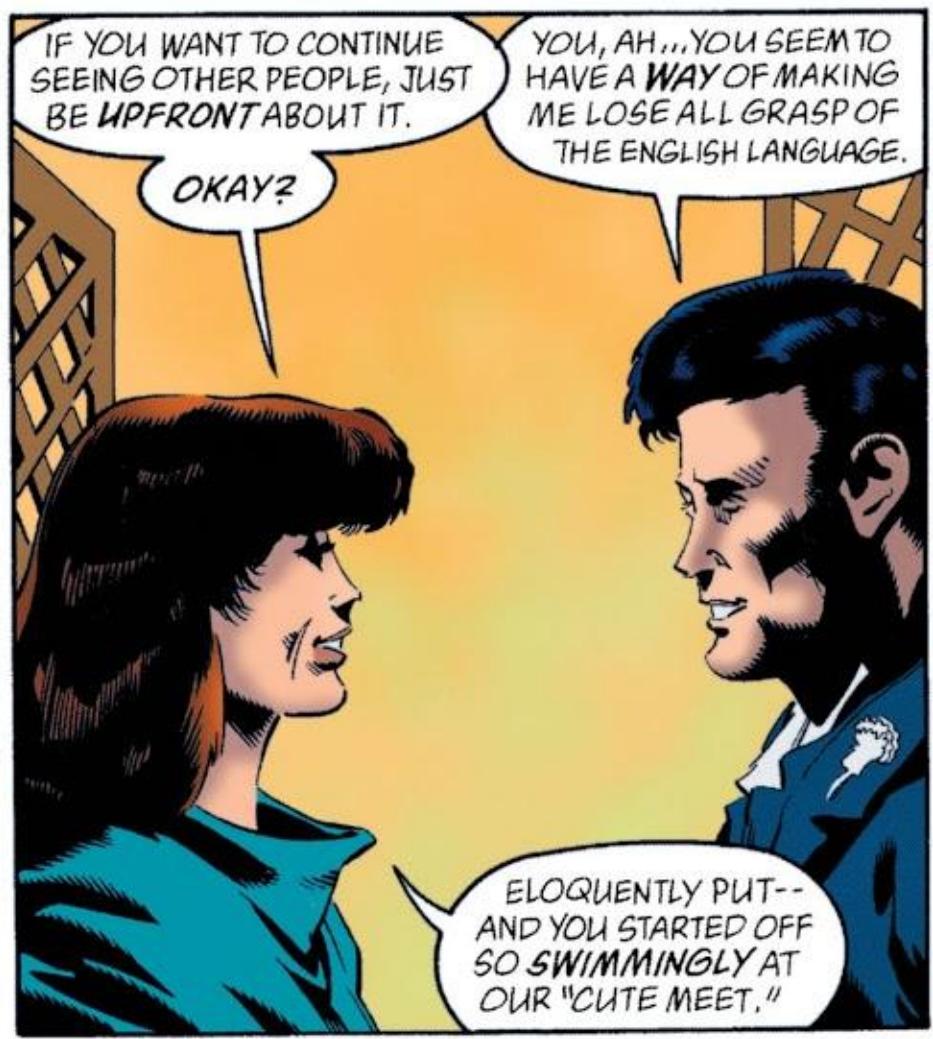


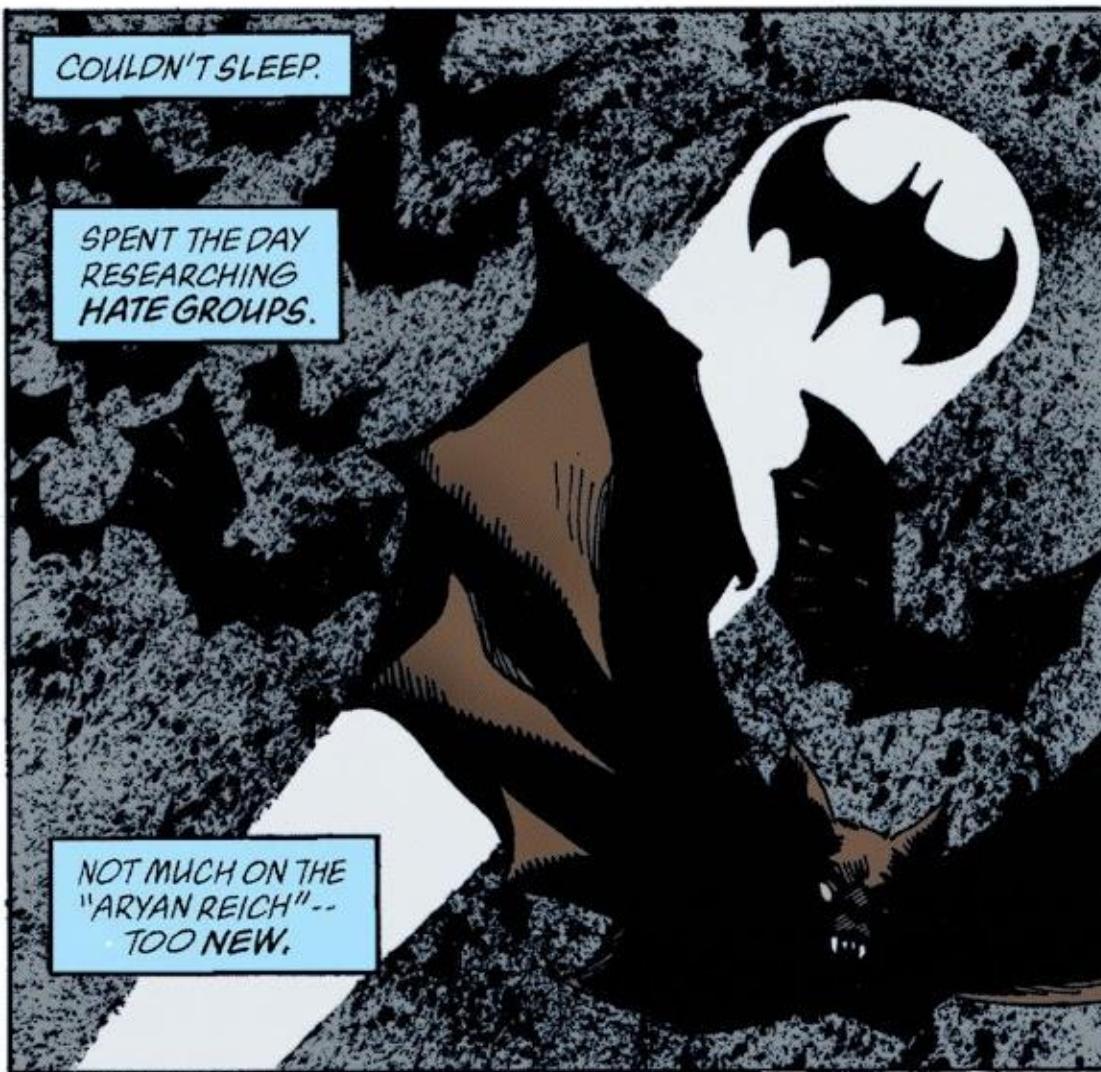












Deadman Wade

"THIS IS WHAT
AWESOME
LOOKS LIKE"

DCP