

DC BATMAN

NO. 240
MAR.
1943

52 PAGES 25c

BIGGER AND BETTER

DC BATMAN

S120

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BIGGER AND BETTER

D.C.A.

EXTRA!

A ROBIN-SOLO
ADVENTURE

PLUS

"BATMAN'S
GREAT
FACE-SAVING
FEAT!"

BATMAN

WITH ROBIN THE TEEN WONDER

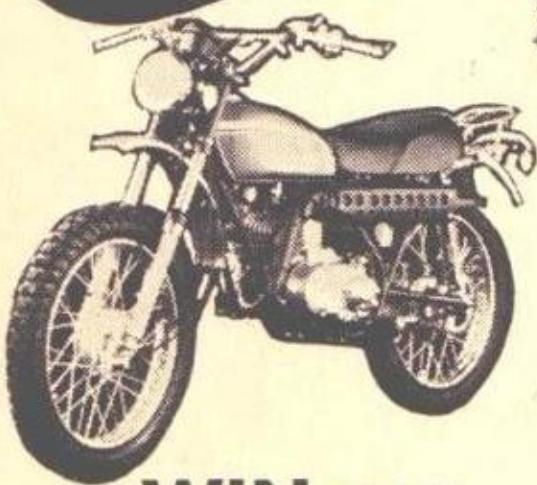
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BATMAN

IN THIS PLACE, THERE IS A SPECIAL SILENCE... A WAITING **REVERENT** SILENCE, AS THOUGH THE CRACKED WALLS AND HARD CONCRETE FLOOR AND MARBLE SLABS REVERE AND MOURN... FOR THIS IS THE **GOTHAM CITY MORGUE**, AT MIDNIGHT!

YOU'VE IDENTIFIED THE BODY, COMMISSIONER?

HE'S **MASON STERLING**... THE HEAD OF THE **RESEARCH INSTITUTE**... THE SO-CALLED **THINK-TANK!**

IT'S THE WAY HE DIED THAT BOthers ME... AND BAFFLES ME!

YOU SEE... HIS BRAIN HAS BEEN REMOVED!

SUCH IS THE BROODING QUIET THAT THE WHISPERED WORDS OF POLICE COMMISSIONER GORDON AND THE BATMAN REVERBERATE AND ECHO, DEFILING THE STILLNESS --- A STILLNESS WHICH PARADOXICALLY CRIES OUT FOR.....

STORY: DENNY O'NEIL
ART: IRV NOVICK &
DICK GIORDANO
EDITING: JULIUS SCHWARTZ

"VENGEANCE FOR A DEAD MAN!"

S-1026

I

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FRANKLY, BATMAN, MY MEN DON'T KNOW WHERE TO BEGIN! I THOUGHT YOU MIGHT HAVE AN IDEA OR TWO!

I HAVE, SIR! THE CONTENTS OF THIS ENVELOPE... THESE THINGS YOU FOUND IN STERLING'S POCKETS?



THAT'S EVERYTHING!

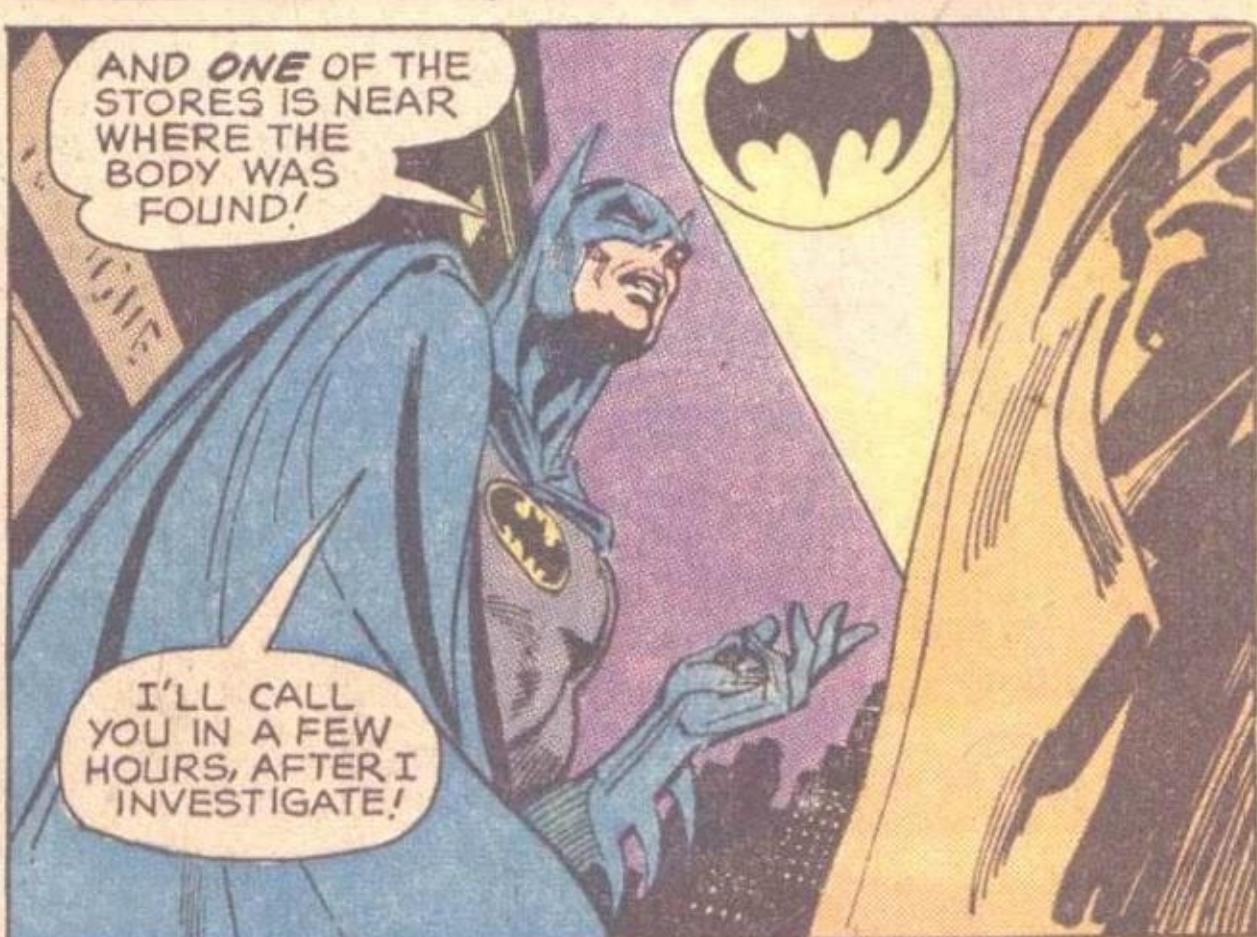
THERE ARE ONLY A FEW STORES IN GOTHAM THAT SELL THESE EGYPTIAN CIGARETTES!



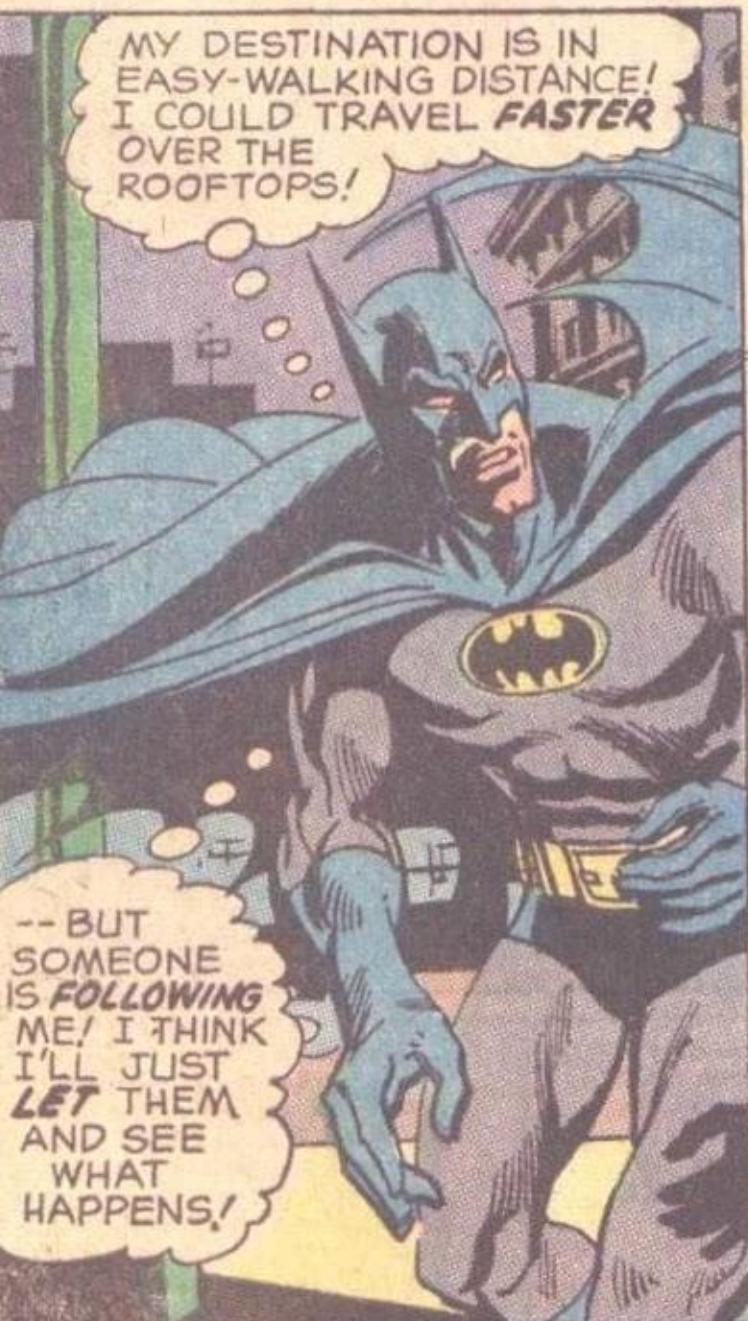
JUDGING FROM THE STAINS ON THE MURDERED MAN'S FINGERS, HE SMOKED A LOT OF THEM!

AND ONE OF THE STORES IS NEAR WHERE THE BODY WAS FOUND!

I'LL CALL YOU IN A FEW HOURS, AFTER I INVESTIGATE!

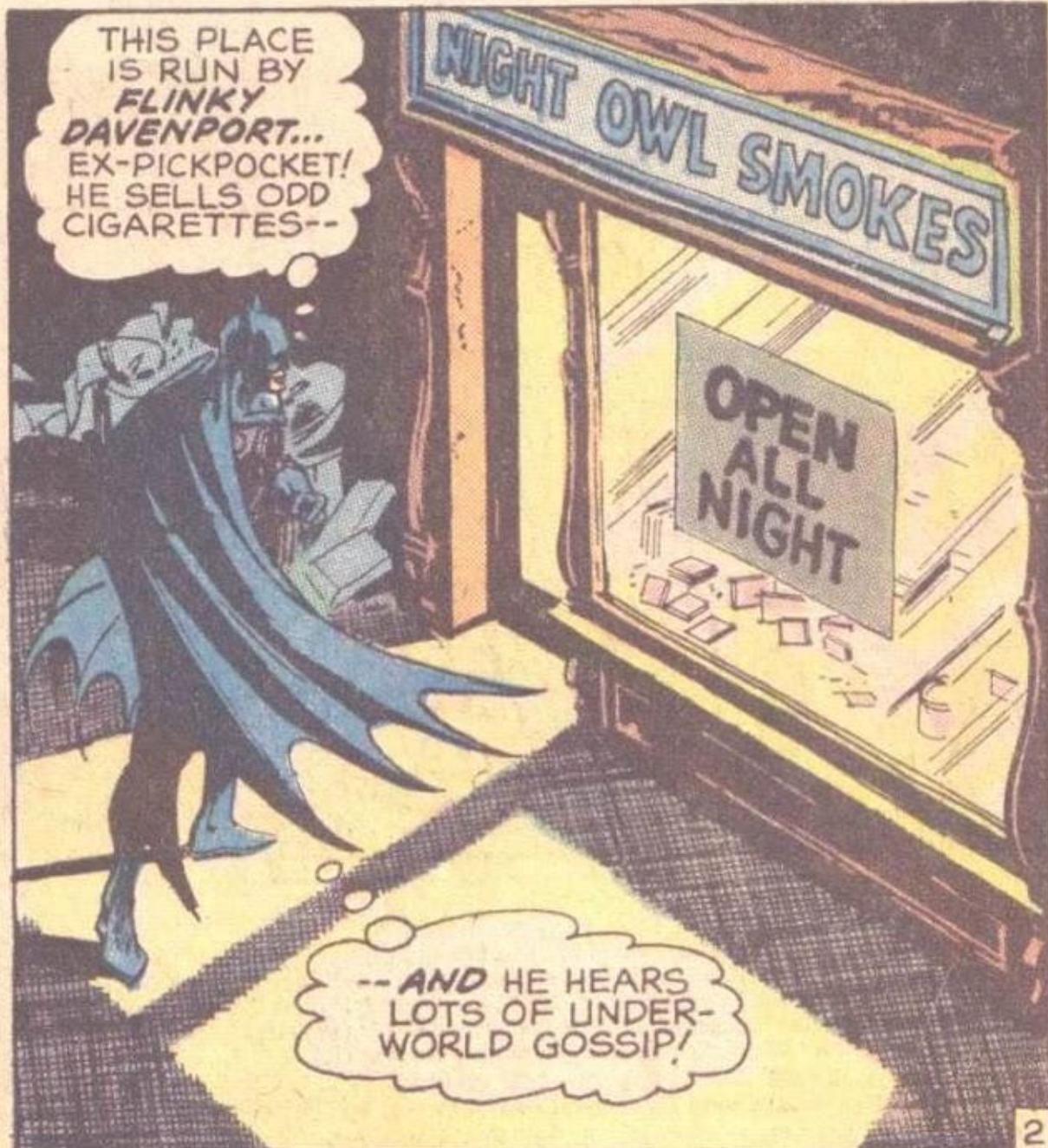


MY DESTINATION IS IN EASY-WALKING DISTANCE! I COULD TRAVEL FASTER OVER THE ROOFTOPS!



-- BUT SOMEONE IS FOLLOWING ME! I THINK I'LL JUST LET THEM AND SEE WHAT HAPPENS!

THIS PLACE IS RUN BY FLINKY DAVENPORT... EX-PICKPOCKET! HE SELLS ODD CIGARETTES--



-- AND HE HEARS LOTS OF UNDER-WORLD GOSSIP!

INSIDE THE STORE...

YOU RECOGNIZE THE MAN IN THIS PHOTO, FLINKY?

CHECK! HE'S A CUSTOMER... I SELL HIM THEM FANCY FOREIGN SMOKES!-- WHY? HE IN TROUBLE?

THE WORST KIND, ... THE LAST TROUBLE!

HEY, I GOT SOMETHIN' MIGHT INNEREST YOU! CHECK THIS... LOOKS LIKE AN ORDINARY CIGAR BOX, RIGHT?

ONLY, WHEN YOU OPEN THE LID--

--YOU GET A COUPLE EYES FULL OF BLINDNESS! -- IT'S A GIMMICK TO COOL OUT HOLDUP MEN--

--AN' I OWE YOU A HURTIN' FROM THE TIME YOU SENT ME TO THE SLAMMER, BATMAN!



I BEEN **WAITIN'**
FOR A CHANCE
TO GET
EVEN...

...**PRAYIN'**
FOR IT!

SUDDENLY THERE IS
THE MUFFLED COUGH
OF A SILENCED
PISTOL -- AND THE
GLITTERING BLADE
SPINS FROM NUMBED
FINGERS --



AND THE
WOULD-BE
ASSASSIN IS
CATAPULTED
THROUGH THE
WINDOW BY
THE BODY-
BLOCKING OF
THE ALMOST
SIGHTLESS
BATMAN!



Aurora rolls out a half dozen new A/FX heavies.



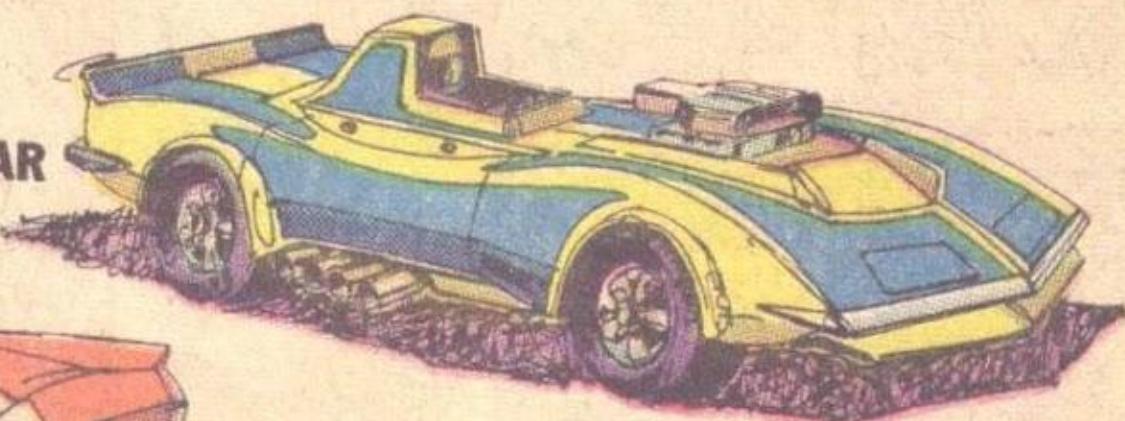
NO. 1762 A/FX NASCAR PLYMOUTH

NO. 1761 A/FX PINTO FUNNY CAR



NO. 1763 A/FX FERRARI 512 M

NO. 1766 A/FX CORVETTE FUNNY CAR



NO. 1765 A/FX JAVELIN TRANS AM



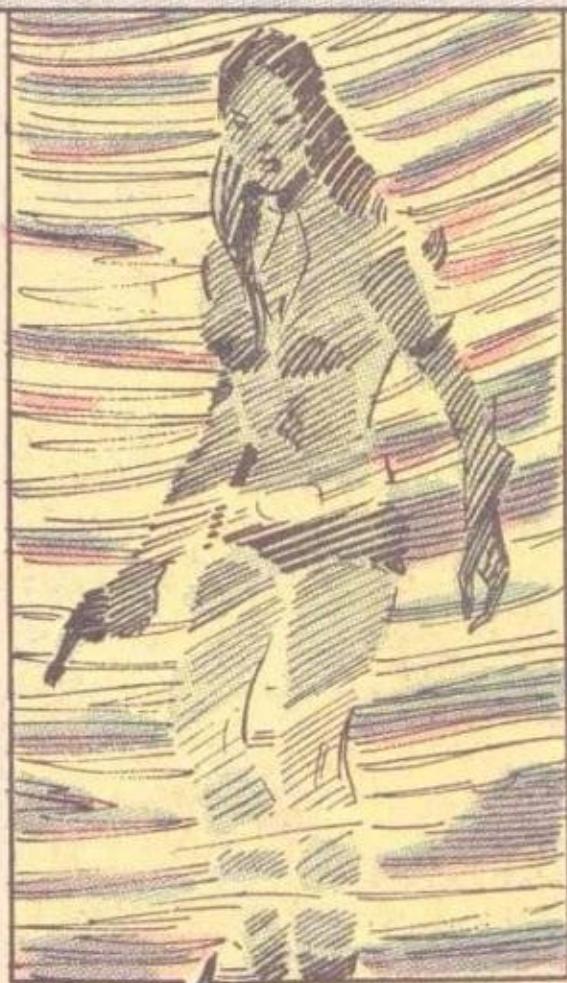
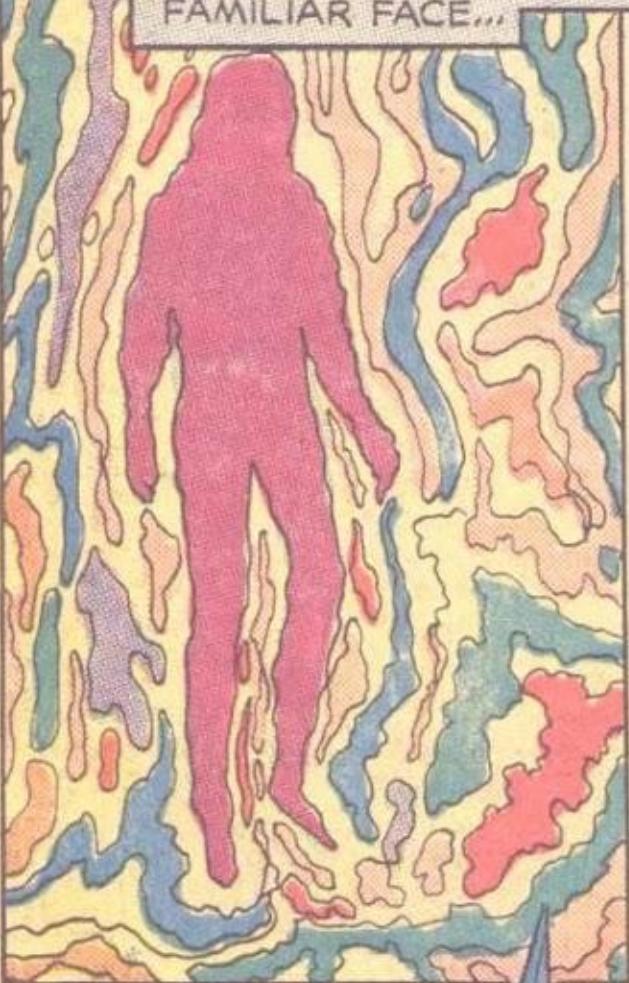
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SLOWLY, THE BATMAN'S VISION CLEARS... AND HE RECOGNIZES A LOVELY, FAMILIAR FACE...



YES, DEAR BATMAN, IT IS YOUR OWN TALIA!

SO YOU WERE FOLLOWING ME! - WHY?

I KNEW OF MASON STERLING'S DEATH-- MY FATHER HAS MANY SOURCES OF INFORMATION...

... AND I SAW THE POLICE SIGNALING YOU IN THE SKY! IT WAS SIMPLE TO DEDUCE YOU WOULD BE AT THE MORGUE!

I WISHED TO... KISS YOU AGAIN!

I ALSO MAY BE ABLE TO AID YOU IN LOCATING STERLING'S SLAYER!

HIS PARTNER?

MY FATHER'S INFORMANTS SAY HIS PARTNER WAS RESPONSIBLE!

YES--INDEED! THE CO-OWNER OF STERLING'S RESEARCH INSTITUTE!

THEN WE'LL PAY A CALL ON HIM TOMORROW! UNTIL WE MEET... THANKS FOR THE TIMELY SHARP-SHOOTING!

MY PLEASURE, DEAR BATMAN!

SO, AT DUSK THE FOLLOWING EVENING...

THE MAN WE WANT IS BEHIND THIS **FENCE**! THE QUESTION IS... HOW DO **WE** GET **PAST** IT?

IT'S TOO HIGH TO JUMP... AND CHARGED WITH **ELECTRICITY!**-- AND THE GROUNDS ARE PATROLLED BY **KILLER DOGS!**

NO PROBLEM IF YOU COME **PREPARED!** FIRST WE ELIMINATE THE ELECTRICAL CHARGE WITH THIS SPECIAL GADGET...

...AT THE SAME TIME IT SILENCES ANY **ALARMS!**

NEXT, THE **MINI-LASER** FROM MY **UTILITY BELT** CUTS US A **GATE**--

--AND IN WE GO!

...A DOG! SHALL I SHOOT?

NO NEED FOR FIREWORKS!



ANOTHER LITTLE DEVICE I BROUGHT WILL HANDLE THE CANINE!

IT EMITS ULTRASONIC WAVES THAT CONFUSE THE BEAST!



EVEN AS THE BATMAN AND HIS LOVELY COMPANION APPROACH THE HEADQUARTERS OF THE RESEARCH INSTITUTE...

I TELL YA, MR. KEENER, OUR ONLY CHOICE IS TO **RUN!** THE WORD HAS GOTTEN **OUT--**

--TOO MANY GUYS KNOW YOU HIRED ME TO GUN YOUR PARTNER!

BUT IF I DO RUN--

--IT WOULD BE THE SAME AS **ADMITTING** MY GUILT! I'D NEVER GET AWAY WITH IT...

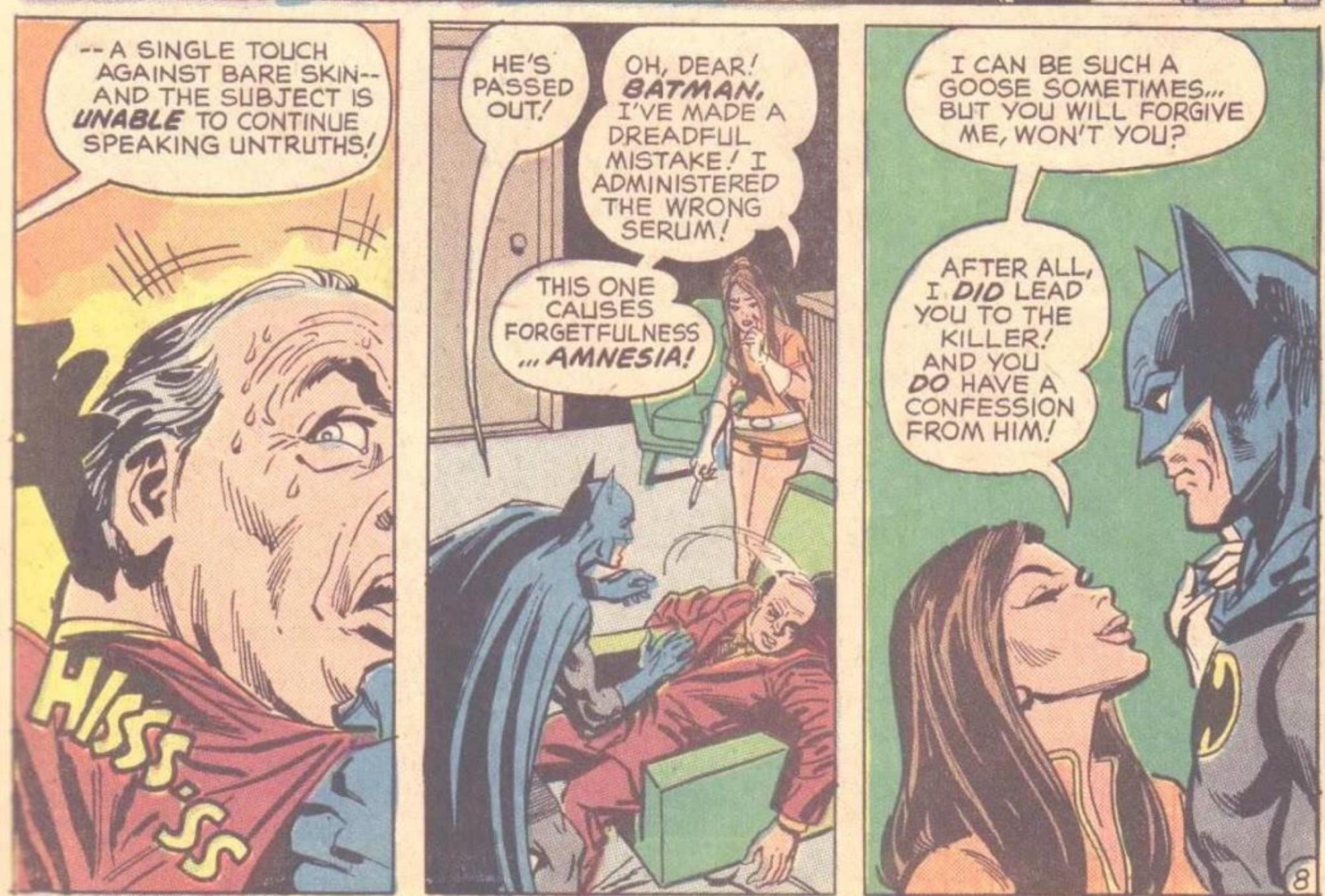
CORRECT! YOU **WOULDN'T--**

--AND YOU **WON'T!**

SOMEHOW, THE SECOND I **LOOKED** AT YOU I WAS CERTAIN YOU'D PULL A GUN--

--THE BATMAN!

--AND I WAS **EQUALLY** CERTAIN YOU'D BE ASLEEP BEFORE YOU COULD FIRE!



NOTHING MORE WE CAN DO EXCEPT PHONE COMMISSIONER GORDON AND TELL HIM WHERE TO PICK UP HIS CRIMINALS!

THEN I'LL DRIVE YOU BACK TO GOTHAM!

THUS, A SLEEK ROADSTER SPEEDS THROUGH THE THICKENING DARKNESS--

--AND HALTS AT A PIER ON THE GOTHAM RIVER...

I'M LIVING ON MY FATHER'S YACHT! I'LL BID YOU A FAREWELL... PROVIDED YOU PROMISE TO SEE ME TOMORROW!

IT'S A DATE! SLEEP WELL, TALIA!

SECONDS AFTER TALIA LEAVES, THE BATMAN LIFTS A RADIOPHONE FROM BEHIND THE DASHBOARD, AND SPEAKS TENSELY...

ALFRED! LISTEN... I NEED HELP! I'VE CAUGHT A MURDERER-- BUT I HAVEN'T SOLVED THE CRIME!

I WANT YOU TO LAND THE SMALL CHOPPER NEAR PIER SEVENTEEN AND...

SOON AFTER, ON THE DECK OF THE LUXURY VESSEL...

DOCTOR MOON! AREN'T YOU SUPPOSED TO BE AT THE LABORATORY?

THEN LET US NOT DELAY! I PRESUME TRANSPORTATION IS WAITING?

YOUR FATHER IS ATTENDING TO MATTERS THERE! I HAVE INSTRUCTIONS TO RETURN WITH YOU!

ALL IS IN READINESS!

DOWN, DOWN GO THE GIRL AND THE MAN KNOWN AS MOON... TO A HATCH IN THE KEEL OF THE YACHT!

SLIPPING
THROUGH, THEY
ENTER A TINY
SUBMARINE
FIXED TO THE
LARGER HULL!
THERE IS
THE WHINE
OF AN
ELECTRIC
ENGINE...



...AND TALIA
GUIDES THE
CRAFT INTO
THE MURK
OF THE
MIDNIGHT
RIVER...



AND ON THE
RIVER'S EDGE...



THAT'S IT,
ALFRED!
LET'S
MOVE!



I'M
AFRAID I'M
BAFFLED,
SIR! WHAT'S
"IT"?

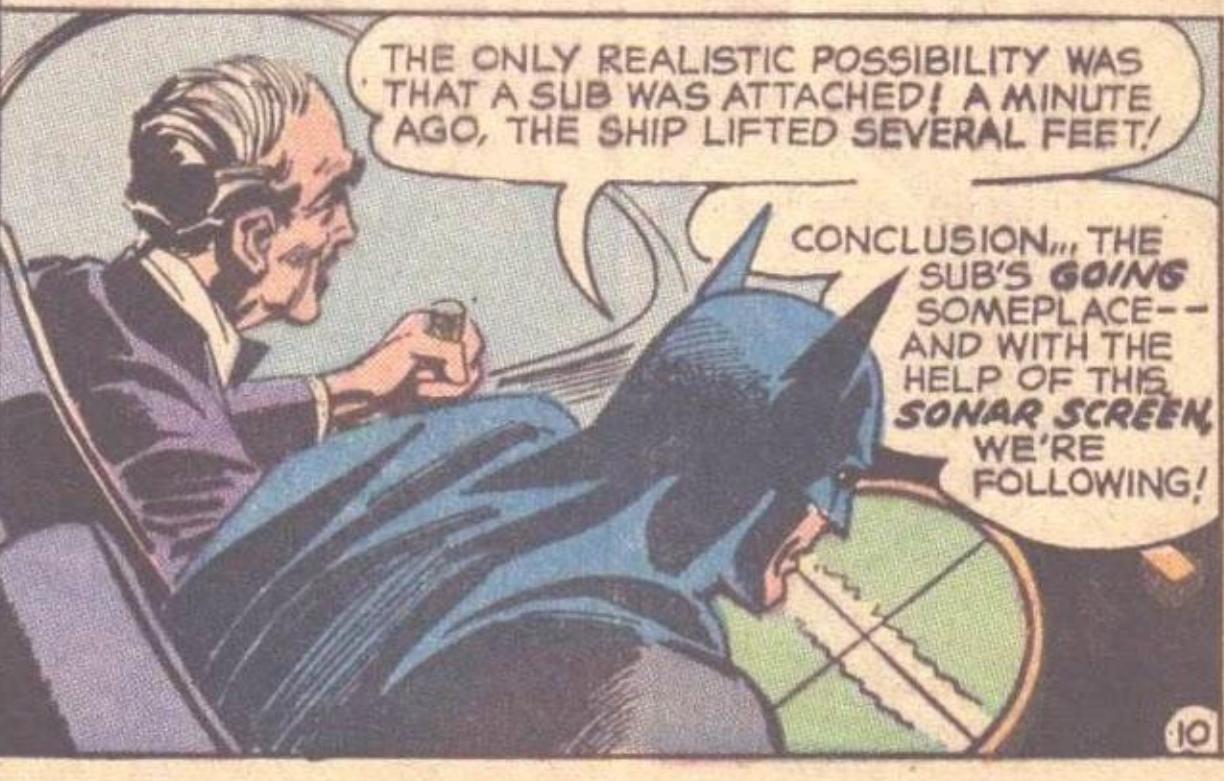


WHEN I SAW
THE SHIP, I
NOTICED IT
WAS RIDING
LOW IN THE
WATER--
TOO LOW!



THE ONLY REALISTIC POSSIBILITY WAS
THAT A SUB WAS ATTACHED! A MINUTE
AGO, THE SHIP LIFTED SEVERAL FEET!

CONCLUSION... THE
SUB'S GOING
SOMEPLACE--
AND WITH THE
HELP OF THIS
SONAR SCREEN,
WE'RE
FOLLOWING!



YOU HAVE REASON
TO SUSPECT **MISS**
TALIA OF BEING
DISHONEST WITH
YOU?

SURE... A WOMAN
THAT SMART--
THAT **TOUGH**--
DOESN'T MAKE
STUPID MISTAKES
LIKE MIXING UP
SERUMS!

SHE **WANTED**
KEENER TO
LOSE HIS
MEMORY!

EXTRACTING HIS MINI-BREATHING APPARATUS FROM HIS **UTILITY BELT**, THE BATMAN ADJUSTS IT INTO POSITION-- AND...

SEE YOU LATER,
ALFRED--
I HOPE!

WITH ARROW-SWIFTNESS HE DIVES--

--AND WITH STRONG, STEADY STROKES PLUNGES TOWARD A LIGHT WHICH SHINES IN THE GLOOM...

THE BLIP OF THE SCREEN HAS **STOPPED**... WHICH MEANS THE SUB HAS DONE LIKEWISE --

THIS IS WHERE I GET OFF!

THERE'S THE UNDERWATER BOAT...
DOCKED AT THE ENTRANCE TO
SOME SORT OF CAVERN!

AS I SUSPECTED, IT BEARS
THE DEMON'S HEAD INSIGNIA--
THE MARK OF TALIA'S FATHER...
RA'S AL GHUL!

AND HERE'S
THE GUARD I
SHOULD HAVE
FIGURED RA'S
WOULD
STATION...

...UNDoubtedly
TRAINED FOR
SUB-SEA
COMBAT!

HE'S TRYING TO
DISLodge MY MINI-
RESPIRATOR!

FISTS ARE USELESS
IN THIS KIND OF
SITUATION...

...BUT JUDO
CAN WORK!

I'LL PUT A
PIECE OF PAIN
INTO HIS
FOREARM!

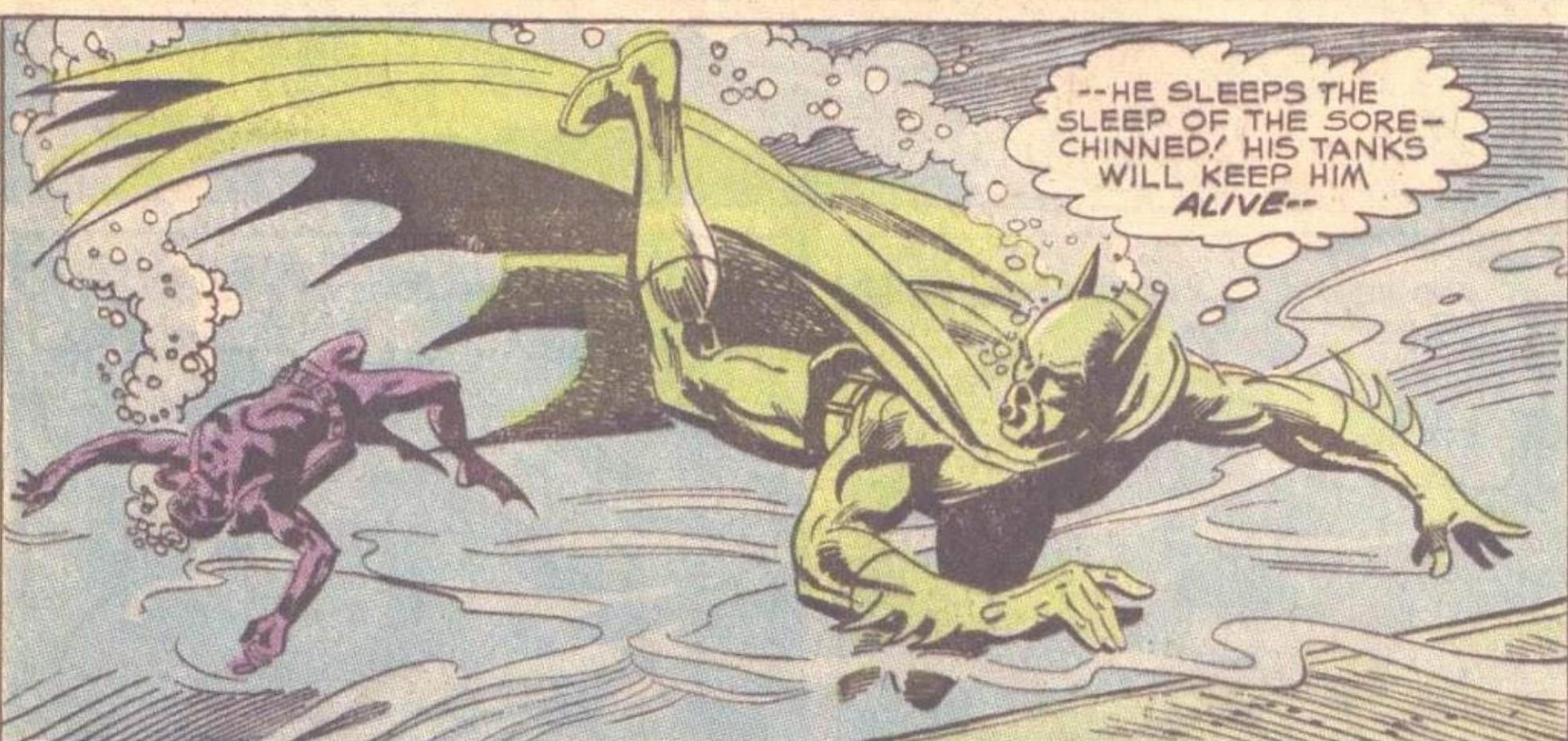
AN ORDINARY PUNCH
WOULDN'T EVEN HAVE
THE FORCE NEEDED
TO STUN HIM--

--BUT IF I YANK HIM TOWARD
ME--HARD--

--AND HE MEETS
A KARATE JAB
COMING THE
OTHER WAY--



--HE SLEEPS THE
SLEEP OF THE SORE-
CHINNED! HIS TANKS
WILL KEEP HIM
ALIVE--



--WHILE I FIND
OUT WHERE THE
AIRLOCK LEADS!

INCREDIBLE!--
A WHOLE LABYRINTH
HIDDEN WHERE
NOBODY WOULD
SUSPECT... ON
THE BOTTOM OF
THE RIVER!

RĀS AL GHŪL
NEVER CEASES
TO AMAZE ME...
AND PUZZLE
ME!

VOICES COMING FROM
DOWN THE CORRIDOR...
THE VOICE OF RA'S
GHŪL HIMSELF!

I OUGHT TO
BE ABLE TO
LOCATE HIM
WITHOUT
ANOTHER OF
HIS HENCHMEN
INTERFERING!



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INDEED, IT IS AWESOME RĀS AL GHŪL
THAT THE BATMAN HAS HEARD! FOR...

YOU ARE
PREPARED,
DOCTOR MOON?

YES, MASTER!
TRUTH DRUGS
HAVE BEEN
ADDED TO
THE SUBJECT'S
NUTRIENT
FLUIDS!

HE WILL
ANSWER
YOUR
QUESTIONS!

YOU CAN
HEAR ME?

YES!

I WOULD KNOW THE
NATURE OF THE WORK
YOU WERE DOING FOR
THE UNITED STATES
GOVERNMENT!

WE PLANNED
DIPLOMATIC
MANEUVERS...
FOR THE WAR
IN SOUTHEAST
ASIA!

AND THE EXACT
NATURE OF THESE
MANEUVERS?

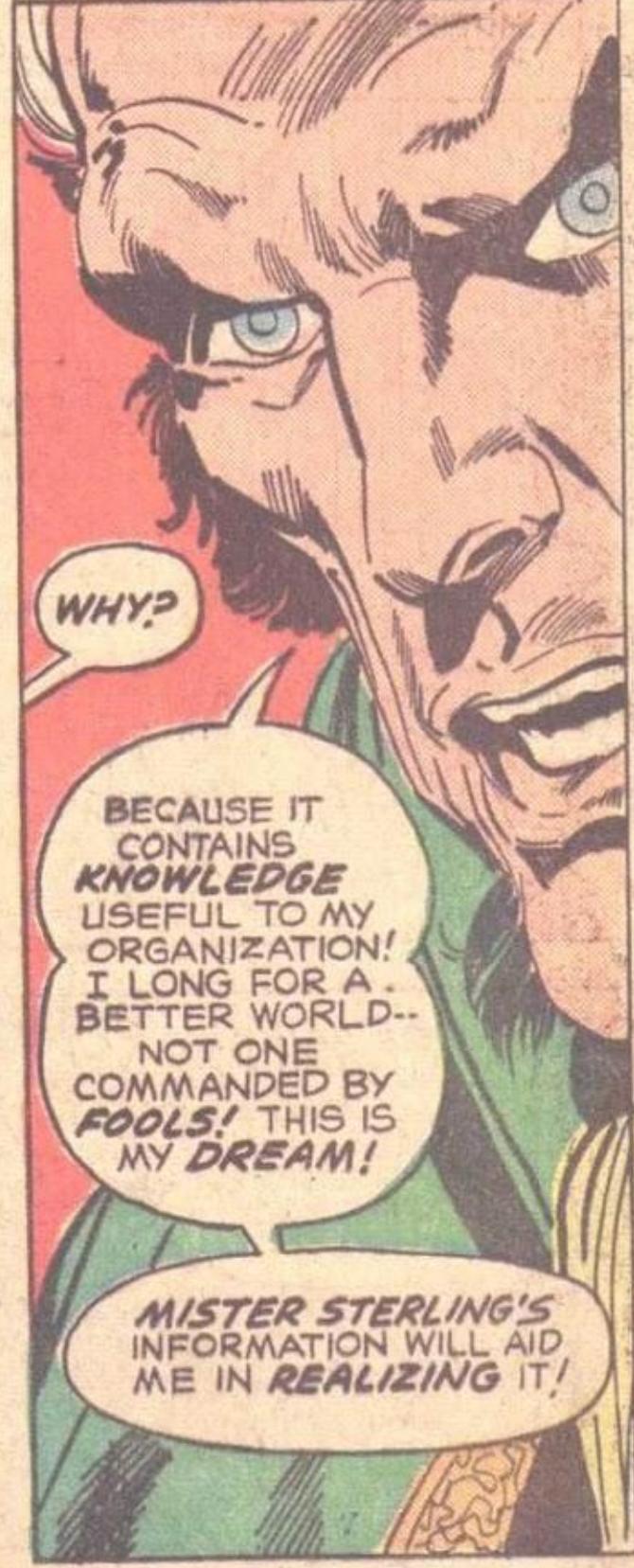
DON'T
ANSWER!

AH, OUR FRIEND THE
MASTER DETECTIVE!
ONCE MORE YOU
DEMONSTRATE YOUR
PROWESS! I HAD
IMAGINED THIS
FORTRESS SECURE!

SAVE THE FLATTERY!
FROM YOU, IT'S
INSULTING... UNLESS
I'M WRONG ABOUT
WHAT'S IN THAT
TANK!

NO, I FEAR NOT! DETECTIVE,
LOOK UPON ALL THAT REMAINS
OF THE LATE MISTER STERLING...
HIS BRAIN!





A SINGLE LONG STRIDE TAKES THE BATMAN TO THE FLEEING SCIENTIST--



--AND HIS ROCK-HARD KNUCKLES STRIKE UNERRINGLY!



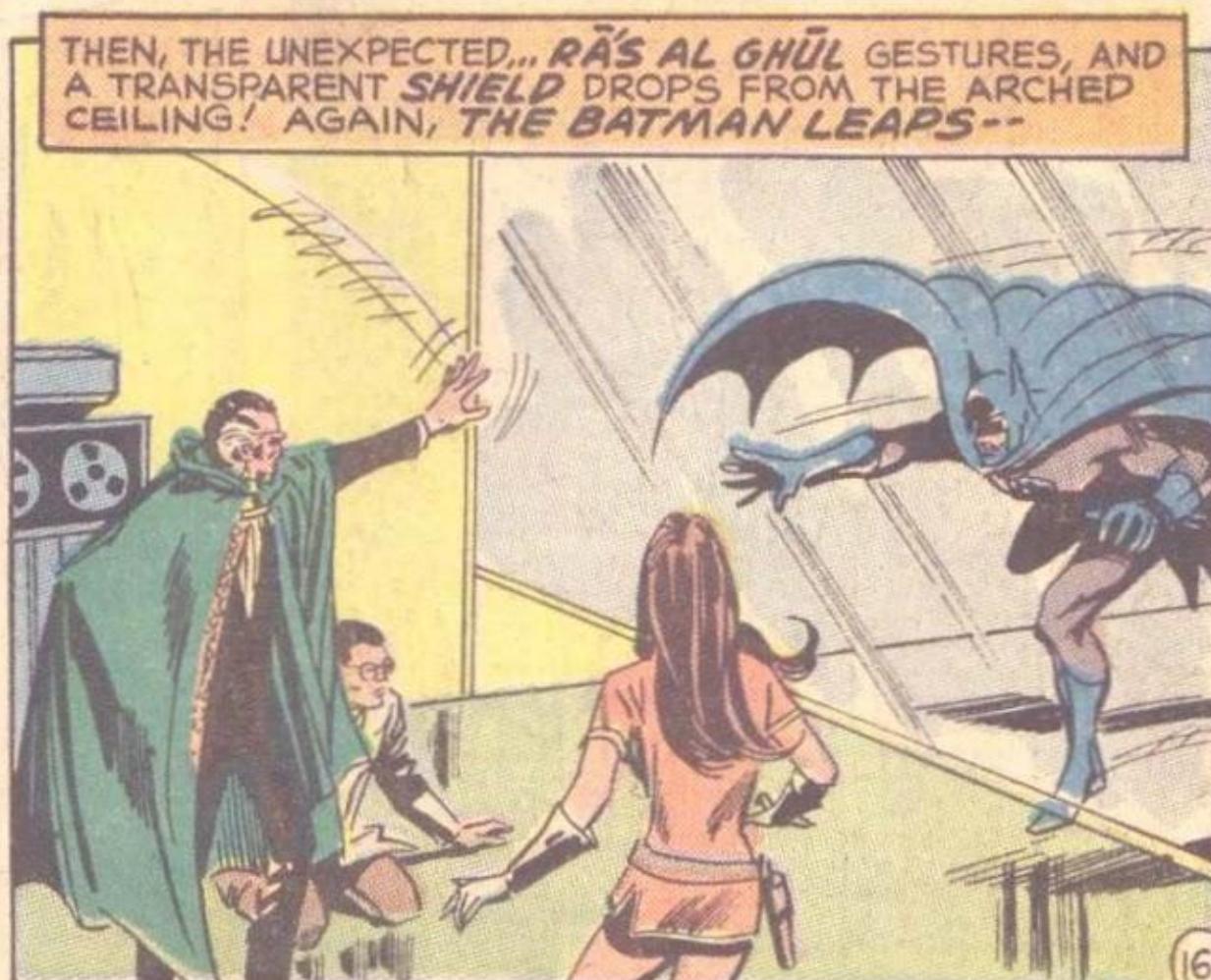
YOU'RE GOING TO THE AUTHORITIES, RĀ'S! YOU'LL CONFESS YOUR SCHEME-- AND THE CRIMES YOU'VE COMMITTED TO FURTHER IT!

DON'T RESIST... YOU EITHER, TALIA! I'D HATE TO HARM YOU...

...BECAUSE YOU LOVE ME AS I LOVE YOU! ADMIT IT, DEAREST!

MAYBE SO... BUT IT MAKES NO DIFFERENCE!

THEN, THE UNEXPECTED... RĀ'S AL GHŪL GESTURES, AND A TRANSPARENT SHIELD DROPS FROM THE ARCHED CEILING! AGAIN, THE BATMAN LEAPS--



--**TOO LATE!** HIS BLOWS ARE FUTILE AGAINST THE STEELY PLASTIC--



HELPLESS, FURIOUS, HE WATCHES HIS QUARRIES ESCAPE! AND A RASPING SOUND REACHES HIS EARS...



INSTANTLY, THE BATMAN OBEYS--

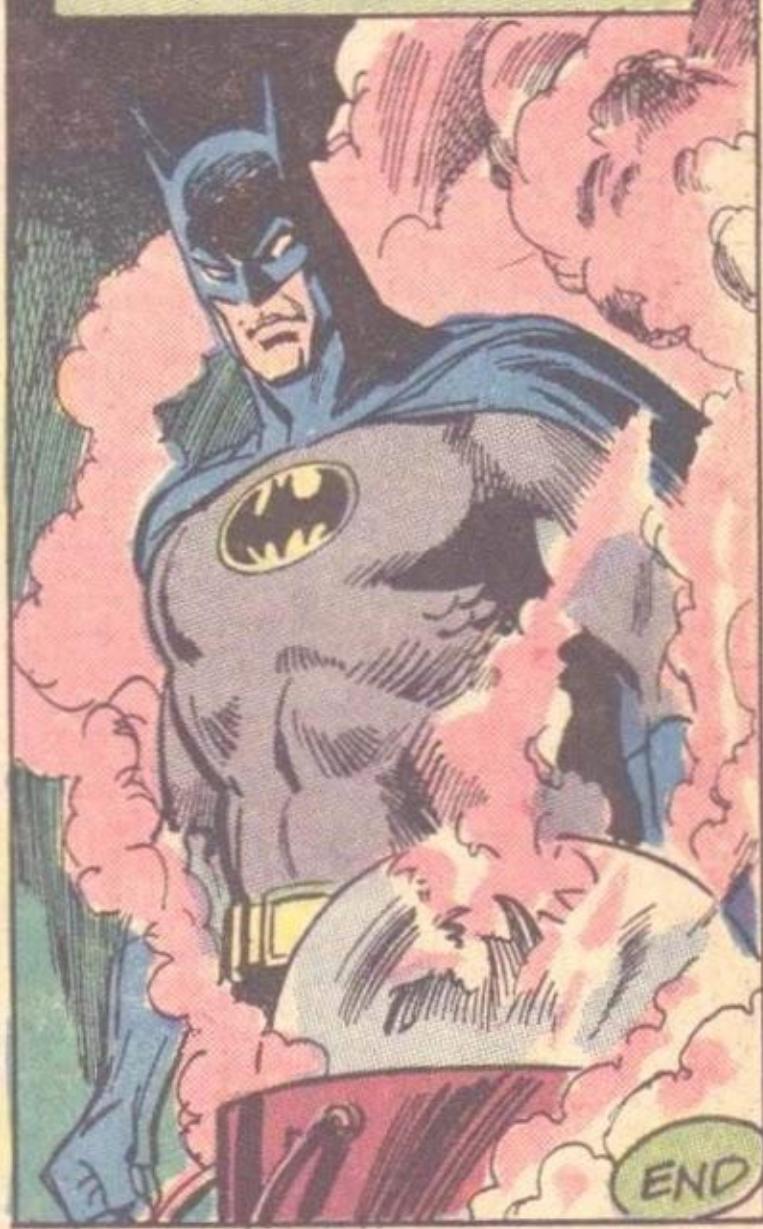
THERE IS A DULL EXPLOSION AND IMMEDIATELY THE BRAIN OF MASON STERLING IS ENCASED IN FLAMES...

YOU LIED! YOU KNEW YOU'D... DIE!

COULD NOT CONTINUE TO... EXIST... LIKE THIS...



IN THE CHAMBER, THERE IS THE COLD, UNMISTAKABLE PRESENCE OF DEATH! THE BATMAN STANDS SILENT AND SEETHING WITH ANGER, VOWING VENGEANCE... FOR A DEAD MAN...!



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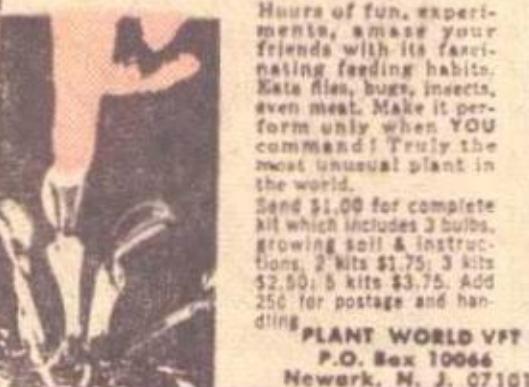
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ONCE AGAIN NIGHT'S BLACK CANVAS IN
GOTHAM CITY IS SPLASHED WITH FAMILIAR RED-
'N' - YELLOW--

--COLORS OF THE
YOUTHFUL, FORMER
PARTNER OF A
CERTAIN CRIME-
AVENGING
**DARKNIGHT
DETECTIVE...**

THIS TIME, THOUGH, THE **TEEN
WONDER** FLIES SOLO-- BUT
THE VENGEANCE-SCREAM
ECHOES JUST AS DEEPLY
WITHIN HIM!

A CRIME HAS
BEEN COMMITTED--
AND IT MUST BE
CORRECTED!
JOIN US IN THE
MYSTERIOUS...

STORY:
MIKE FRIEDRICH
ART:
RICH BUCKLER

THEATER OF THE MIND!
TAKE A PART... IF YOU DARE!

MEMORIES FLASH AND
STREAK LIKE FALLING
METEORITES THROUGH
ROBIN'S MIND...

"EVENTS SEEMED
TO STRIKE WITH
THE SUDDENNESS
OF AN UNEXPECTED
TORNADO..."

--ONLY TO FIND THE
CENTER OF THE
ARGUMENT, RICK ASHER,
COLLAPSED IN A STATE
OF PHYSICAL AND
EMOTIONAL SHOCK..."

"FIRST, A
SCUFFLE WITH A
COUPLE OF OVER-
ZEALOUS JESUS-
PEOPLE--"

--THEN THE WEIRDEST
HAPPENING OF ALL --
BY SOME PSYCHIC
MEANS..."

--I WAS DRAWN INTO A DREAM--
APPARENTLY BY TERRI BERGSTOM!"

--I FOUND A MAJOR WOUND HAD BEEN
INFILCTED BY RICK'S FATHER, ONE WHICH
WOULD SCAR THE SON'S MIND, HIS
EMOTIONS, HIS LIFE--"

NOW I FIND
MYSELF TRACKING
DOWN HIS FATHER--
TO SEE IF SOMETHING
CAN BE WORKED OUT!

AND... I
DON'T EVEN
WANT TO
THINK ABOUT
HOW TERRI
DRAGGED ME
INTO THE DREAM--
IT SCARES ME...

...'CAUSE THOUGH
I'VE HAD SUSPICIONS
--IF I SHOULD
DISCOVER THAT
SWEET GIRL IS
REALLY INVOLVED
IN THE OCCULT--

--I... I
MIGHT
JUST TURN
INTO THE
FABLED
TOAD!

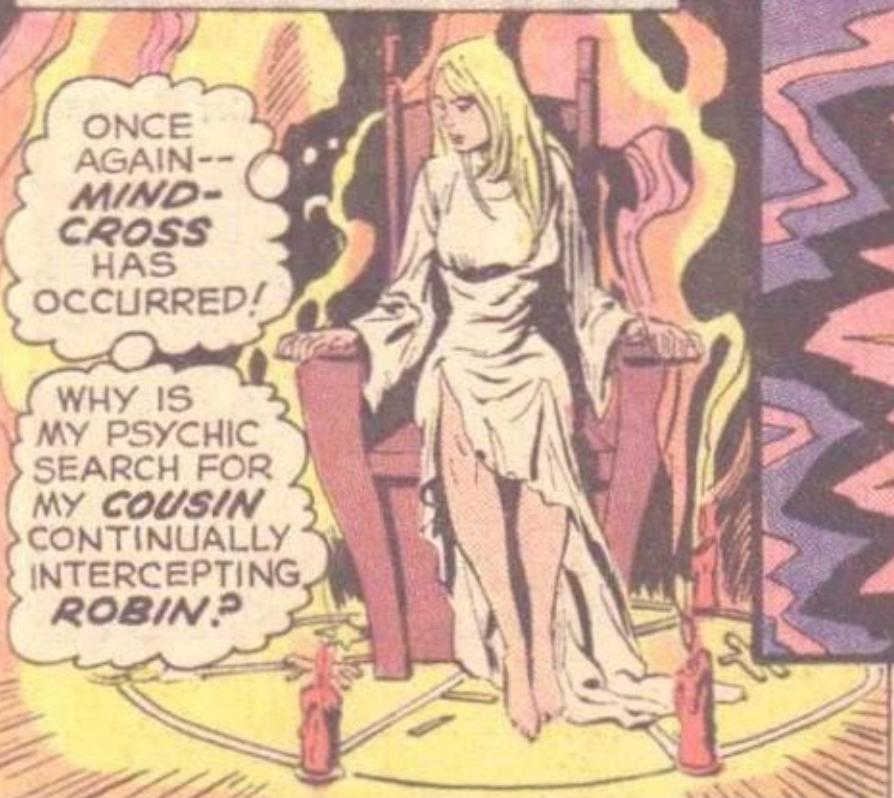
WE WONDER, **ROBIN**... WHAT SHAPE YOU WOULD TAKE IF YOU COULD SEE THE SUBJECT OF YOUR THOUGHTS **BELLOW** YOUR SKYWAYS FLIGHT?

ONCE AGAIN-- MIND-CROSS HAS OCCURRED!

WHY IS MY PSYCHIC SEARCH FOR MY **COUSIN** CONTINUALLY INTERCEPTING **ROBIN**?

BUT THE DECISIONS OF CHANCE ARE NOT MINE TO MAKE--!

ONCE AGAIN AM I CALLED TO AID ANOTHER'S CAUSE-- THAT OF A **RICK ASHER**!



THE SHAPE OF THINGS TO COME-- THE MYSTERIOUS MANSIONS OF THE MIND, THE UNKNOWN CAVERNS OF THE HEART, THE UNEXPLORED DEPTHS OF THE SOUL...



SO THIS IS THE **ASHER PENTHOUSE**-- QUITE A PAD! A QUICK CHECK WITH BRUCE WAYNE'S **ADDRESS BOOK** WAS ALL I NEEDED--

•43•
ASHER



--SINCE I HAD RECOGNIZED RICK'S DAD FROM THE DREAM-- **GORDON ASHER**, CUT-THROAT FAT CAT OF THE FASHION BIZ!

--YES--?

ULP! MAY I SPEAK TO MR. GORDON ASHER, PLEASE?

WHEW! THIS BUTLER MAKES **ALFRED** LOOK LIKE **PETER PAN**! I'LL BET NOBODY GETS BY HIM WITHOUT PERMISSION!

I HOPE YOU HAVE A GOOD EXCUSE FOR BURSTING IN UPON MY BROTHER AT THIS HOUR, **ROBIN**!

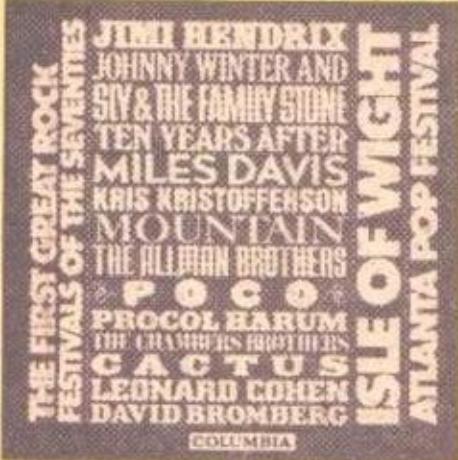
NOW, BURTON, LET THE LAD HAVE HIS SAY! WE SHOULD AT LEAST LISTEN TO THESE YOUNG PEOPLE, YOU KNOW!



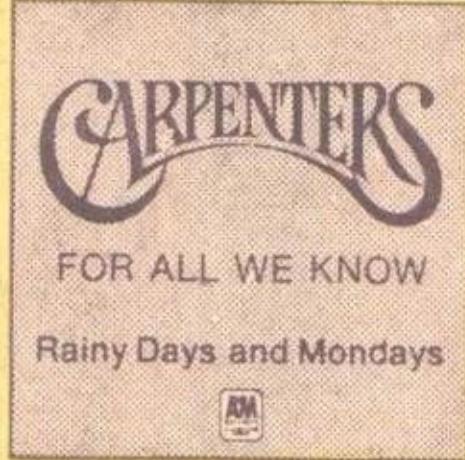
NOW—YOURS FROM COLUMBIA—

Any 14 of these

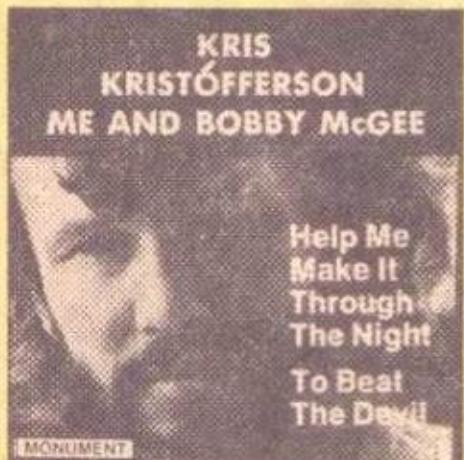
if you join now and agree to buy ten more records (at regular Club prices)



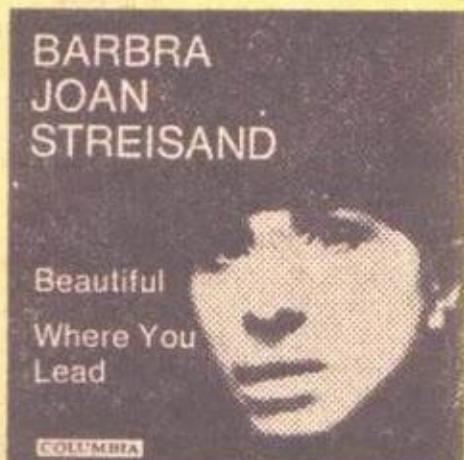
208025
3 records count as 2



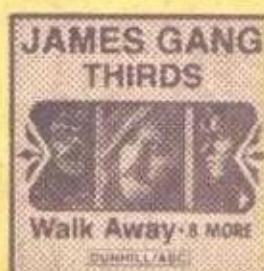
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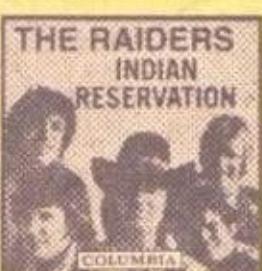
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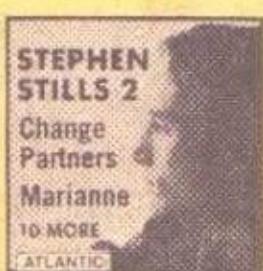
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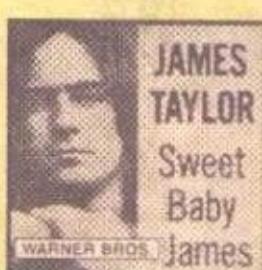
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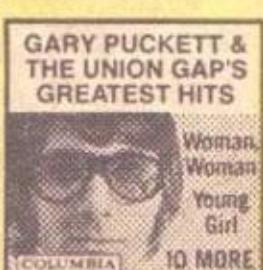
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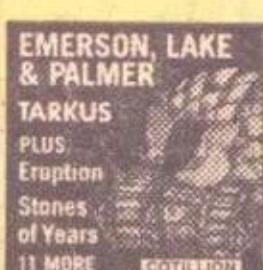
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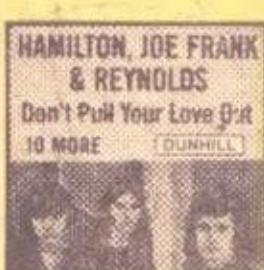
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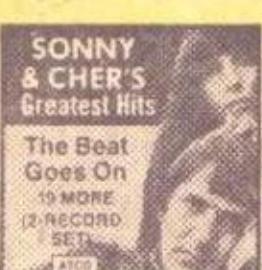
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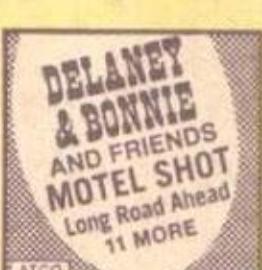
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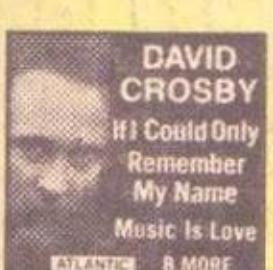
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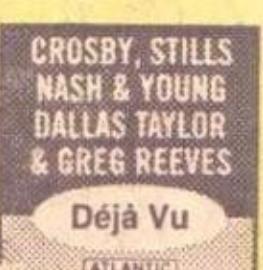
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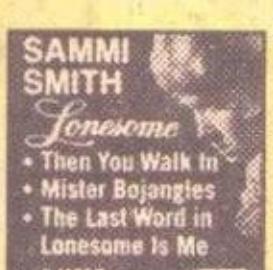
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207456



207944



196725

PRESENTING
HIS STORY...

-- AND SO,
IF YOU'LL COME
WITH ME TO
GOTHAM
VILLAGE...

PREPOSTEROUS!
WHAT MY NEPHEW'S
DONE SINCE HE STALKED
OUT OF THIS HOUSE--

-- JOINED HIS RABBLE
GROUP OF FRIENDS --
IS NONE OF OUR
BUSINESS!

NOT UNLESS YOU
CONSIDER A FATHER TO
BE A BUSINESS-- SIR!

HARUMPH!
ENOUGH OF THIS
NONSENSE!
THOMAS-- DISPOSE
OF HIM IN THE
CUSTOMARY
MANNER!

A CHAUFFEUR ENTERS, AND...

I'LL HANDLE
HIM, SIR...
BULP!?

THINK
I'LL SIT
THIS
ONE OUT...

...AT LEAST
TILL THIS
ONE IS
OUT!

AND
NOW,
GENTLE-
MEN...
I'LL GO--
UNDER MY
OWN
POWER!

BUT
REMEMBER
THIS-- I'LL
BE
BACK!

HOWEVER, ONCE OUTSIDE, COOL, WHITE FURY GIVES WAY TO THE SLICING SHARP WINTER WIND...

RICK'S UNCLE BURTON WOULDN'T LET GORDON GET A WORD IN EDGEWISE!

ROBERT HEINLEIN WOULD LABEL BURTON A "FLAPPER"...

...BUT TO ME HE'S JUST A BIG, FAT ROADBLOCK! IF I COULD GET GORDON ALONE, I MIGHT CONVINCE HIM TO SEE HIS SON!

--YEAH, I KNOW THE WAY TO DO JUST THAT!

ACROSS THE ROOFTOPS FLIES THIS BIRD OF NIGHT, MOVING FOR ALL THE WORLD LIKE THE BATMAN HIMSELF...

AND THROUGH IT ALL, THE TEEN TITAN CAN'T HELP BUT FEEL HE MISSES THE SENSATION!

NO TROUBLE GETTING INSIDE-- WHO'D EXPECT A PROWLER AT FORTY STORIES?

NOW FOR MY DISGUISE-- OTHERWISE KNOWN AS "BLACK LIKE ME"!

I NOTICED THE CHIEF QUALIFICATION FOR A SERVANT HERE IS BLACK SKIN!

NOT THAT I THINK THE ASHERS ARE BIGOTS...

...JUST A MITE RACIST --A HUGE MITE!

THEN...

SAY, BOY-- I THOUGHT
YOU COLORED FOLKS HAD
GONE ON TO **BED?**

UH-OH!

MASTER
ASHER
CALLED
FOR ME,
SIR!

OKAY, MY
BROTHER'S
IN HIS
STUDY!

I WAS
COMPLETELY
BENEATH
BURTON'S NOTICE!
HIS KIND THIS
WORLD CAN DO
WITHOUT!

WHA--?
WHAT IS IT?
WHAT DO
YOU--?

HUH?

ROBIN?

SORRY FOR
THE DECEPTION,
SIR, BUT I HAD
TO SEE YOU
ALONE--

--WITHOUT
YOUR
BROTHER!

WHY? I HIDE NOTHING
FROM BURTON! HE TOOK
MY HOLE-IN-THE-WALL
SHOESTORE...

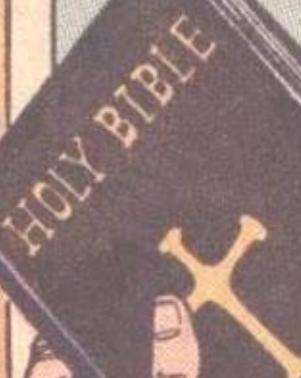
...AND BUILT
IT INTO A
**FASHION
EMPIRE!**

BUT,
RICHARD,
**YOUR
SON--**

--**MY SON?**
I RAISED
HIM UNDER
THE **GOOD
BOOK--**

BUT SOMEWHERE
ALONG THE WAY
HE WENT **SOUR...**
TURNED AWAY
FROM ME, FROM
OUR CHURCH!

PERHAPS
HE COULDN'T
STOMACH
THE **WORDS**
WHEN THE
ACTIONS
DIDN'T
FOLLOW!



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NOW, OUR STORY FOLDS AND BENDS UPON ITSELF, RETURNING US TO YOUNG, MYSTERIOUS TERRI!...

AT THIS POINT, MY PATH BECOMES CLEAR! HOW BLIND HAVE I BEEN...

...TO WHAT WAS IN FRONT OF ME AT ALL TIMES! ROBIN IS THE PSYCHIC LINK TO MY COUSIN!

MY PHYSICAL ABILITIES ARE USELESS IN SUCH AN EMOTIONAL CONFLICT!

I MUST ATTEMPT A PSYCHIC FEAT I NEVER DARED BEFORE-- TO BRING TOGETHER THE MINDS OF THESE FOUR UNLIKE PEOPLE!

ROBIN BEGAN THIS ADVENTURE IN A DREAM AND HERE AGAIN HE IS FATED TO END IT--

T-TERRI!

YOU-YOU'VE DONE IT AGAIN-- PULLED US INTO A DREAM WORLD!

I... KNOW! YOU ARE NOW IN THE THEATER OF THE MIND! TAKE A PART, ROBIN.. IF YOU CAN!

I NEVER KNEW YOU TO BE SO UGLY, BURTON-- SO FULL OF HATRED!

YOU ALWAYS WERE A WHIMPERING FOOL, GORDON--

--ALONG WITH YOUR VILE SON! I'LL CRUSH YOUR SPIRIT NOW-- AS I'VE DONE ALL YOUR WORTHLESS LIFE!

I MUST ACT-- TO PROTECT THEM!

AH... I SENSE STRENGTH FLOWING LIKE AN OCEAN CURRENT, COMING FROM ABOVE-- AND YET FROM WITHIN!

KCHUNK!

OWWFFH!

THANKS, ROBIN.. BUT IT'S HIGH TIME I STOOD ON MY OWN FEET!

SO THE DRAMA ENDS... BUT CAN YOU TELL WHERE THE DREAM ENDED AND REALITY BEGAN?

THEN... AS DAWN CRACKS THE BRITTLE FOG OF MORNING, IT'S TIME TO BEGIN A NEW DRAMA...



ROBIN IS COMING... I... KNOW!

HE IS POWERLESS TO RESIST--

--BECAUSE I HAVE SUMMONED HIM TO ME!



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- FEATURING A SURPRISE GUEST- STAR!

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HOW COME
YOU NEVER
MISS YOUR
COMICS?

SIMPLE--
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STRAIGHT
FROM D.C.!
THEY'RE MAILED
DIRECT TO ME--
PERSONALLY!
RIGHT TO MY
HOUSE!

AND
D.C.
PAYS THE
POSTAGE!

SOUNDS
GREAT!--BUT
HOW MUCH
EXTRA DOES
THAT COST
YOU?

NOTHING EXTRA!
SAME PRICE AS THE
NEWSSTAND--

AND THIS WAY I'M
SURE NEVER TO MISS
A SINGLE ISSUE OF
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JUST THINK--I CAN ORDER
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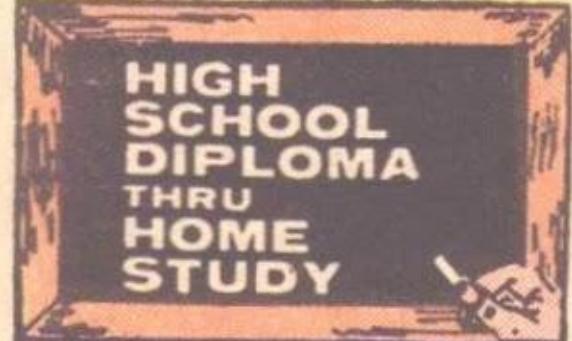
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A BATMAN SPECIAL



RE-INTRODUCING...
the MYSTERY ANALYSTS
OF GOTHAM CITY !

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RECORD THE NUMBER OF "REVIVALS"
IN THE CAPED CRUSADER'S
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INTRODUCED IN 1964. THIS STORY IS THE
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AS THEY DELVE INTO GOTHAM CITY'S
GREATEST MYSTERY--

BATMAN'S GREAT FACE- SAVING FEAT!

BETTER HIDE
YOUR EYES,
BATMAN!
THAT FLARE SHOT
OFF BY THE CROOKS
COULD TEMPORARILY
BLIND YOU!

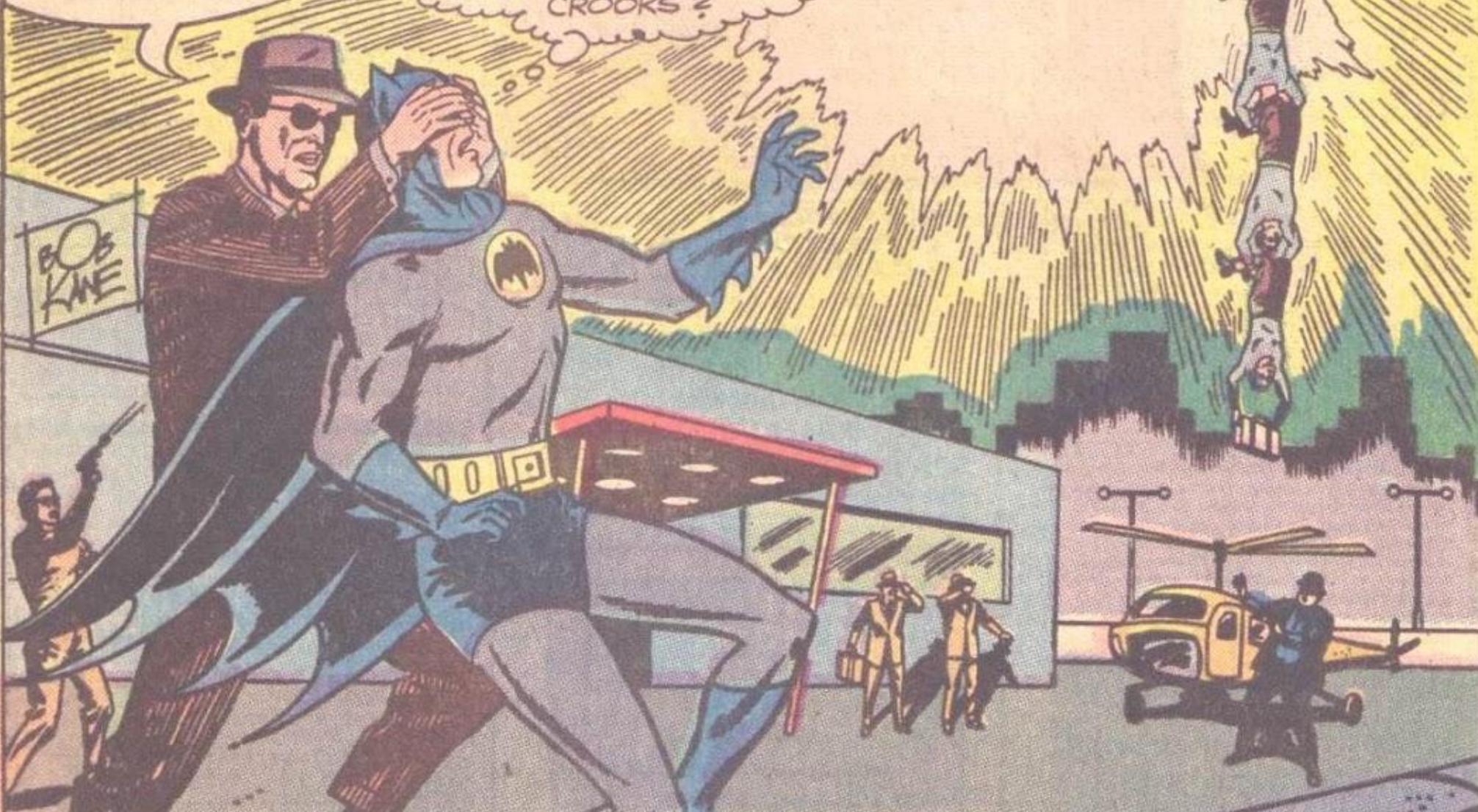
TH-THANKS,
RANKIN!

RANKIN'S VERY
HELPFUL--BUT IS HE
HELPING ME OR THOSE
CROOKS?

BATMAN

WITH
ROBIN
-THE BOY WONDER-

STORY: FRANCE E. HERRON
ART: BOB KANE & JOE GIELLA



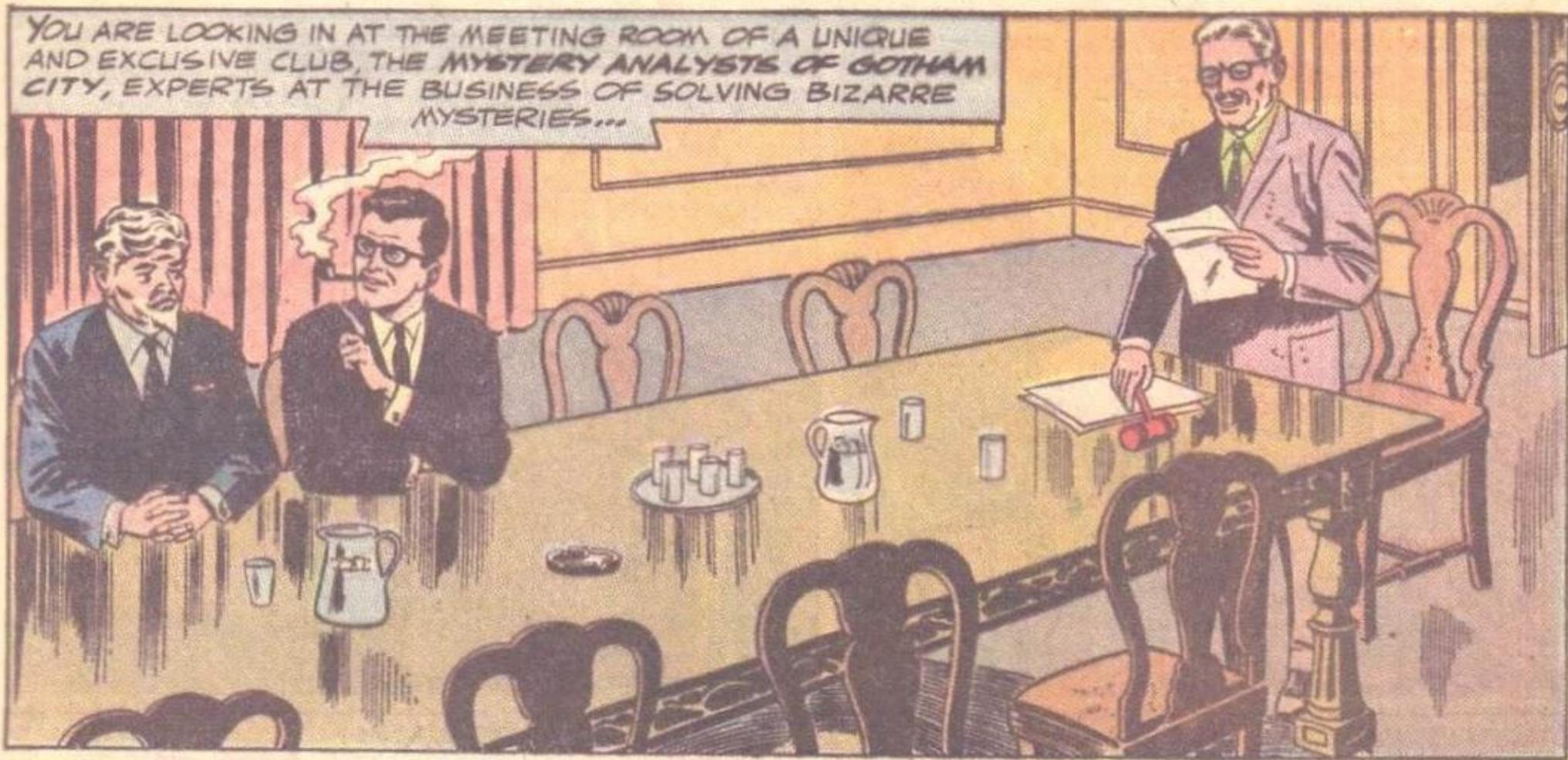
ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED IN BATMAN #164 - JUNE, 1964.



A BATMAN SPECIAL



YOU ARE LOOKING IN AT THE MEETING ROOM OF A UNIQUE AND EXCLUSIVE CLUB, THE MYSTERY ANALYSTS OF GOTHAM CITY, EXPERTS AT THE BUSINESS OF SOLVING BIZARRE MYSTERIES...



AS YOU WAIT FOR OTHER MEMBERS TO ARRIVE, OBSERVE THE TWO MEN SEATED NEAR THE END OF THE TABLE... PROF. RALPH VERN... WHOSE LABORATORY SLEUTHING LED TO THE CONVICTION OF A SCORE OF CRIMINALS--AND REPORTER ART SADDOWS, WINNER OF THE "FRONT PAGE AWARD" FOR HIS SUCCESSES IN CRACKING UNSOLVED CRIME CASES...



THERE IS NO TIME TO INTRODUCE THE REST OF THE MEMBERS, FOR POLICE COMMISSIONER GORDON HAS CALLED THE MEETING TO ORDER...

WE'RE HERE TONIGHT TO CONSIDER A MEMBER APPLICANT WHOSE CREDENTIALS MERIT SERIOUS DELIBERATION--AH, HERE HE COMES NOW...



ENTERING NOW ARE MYSTERY NOVELIST KAYE DAYE, WHOSE FICTIONAL VERSION OF JUDGE BLADER'S STRANGE DISAPPEARANCE LED TO THE SOLUTION OF THAT REAL-LIFE MYSTERY... AND BATMAN, DUBBED THE WORLD'S GREATEST DETECTIVE...



ALL EYES TURN TO THE DOORWAY, AS...

SOLUTION TO EXCEPTIONAL MYSTERIES IS AN ESSENTIAL QUALIFICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP, AND PRIVATE INVESTIGATOR HUGH RANKIN IS CONVINCED HE'LL BE VOTED IN TONIGHT, BECAUSE...

...BECAUSE I HAVE SOLVED GOTHAM CITY'S GREATEST MYSTERY!





A BATMAN SPECIAL



IN THE ENSUING QUIETNESS, THE PRIVATE DETECTIVE MAKES AN EXPLOSIVE ANNOUNCEMENT...

I KNOW WHAT BATMAN LOOKS LIKE IN HIS REGULAR IDENTITY-- WITHOUT HIS COWL AND MASK ! I HAVE THE PROOF WITH ME !



AN IMMEDIATE CLAMOR GOES UP...

HOLD ! ASSUMING HE HAS SOLVED BATMAN'S IDENTITY SECRET--I DON'T THINK IT SHOULD BE REVEALED-- JUST LIKE THAT !

I AGREE ! LET'S NOT GO ANY FARTHER WITH THIS !

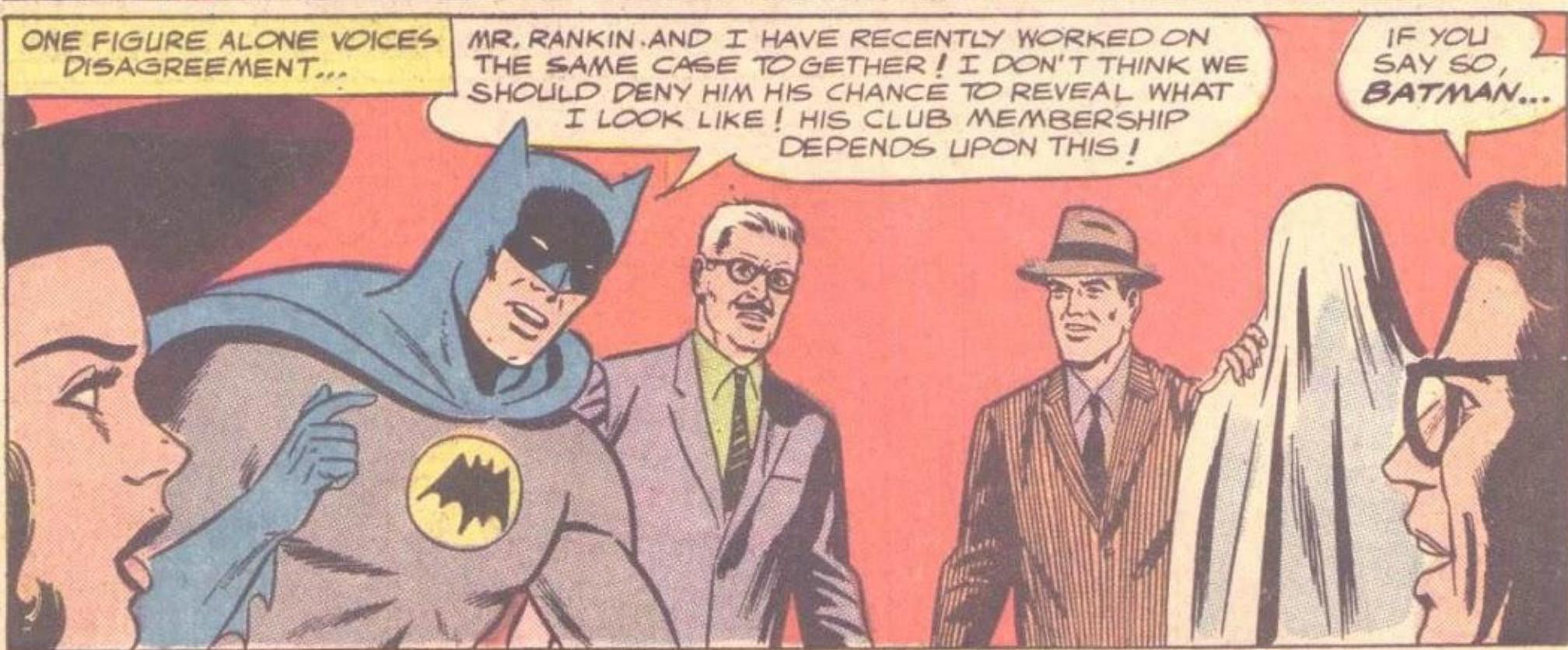
RIGHT ! WE CAN'T BE A PARTY TO IT !



ONE FIGURE ALONE VOICES DISAGREEMENT...

MR. RANKIN AND I HAVE RECENTLY WORKED ON THE SAME CASE TOGETHER ! I DON'T THINK WE SHOULD DENY HIM HIS CHANCE TO REVEAL WHAT I LOOK LIKE ! HIS CLUB MEMBERSHIP DEPENDS UPON THIS !

IF YOU SAY SO, BATMAN...



DRAMATICALLY, RANKIN WHIPS AWAY THE DRAPE--REVEALING...

THERE ! WITHOUT HIS MASK ON, THIS IS WHAT BATMAN LOOKS LIKE ! I CALL UPON HIM TO CONFIRM OR DENY MY FINDINGS !



ONLY BATMAN KNOWS IF RANKIN IS RIGHT OR WRONG !

WHAT ABOUT IT, BATMAN ?



WITHOUT REPLY, BATMAN RISES--AND IN THE HUSHED SILENCE, WALKS TO THE DUMMY FIGURE...

WH--WHAT'S BATMAN GOING TO DO ?



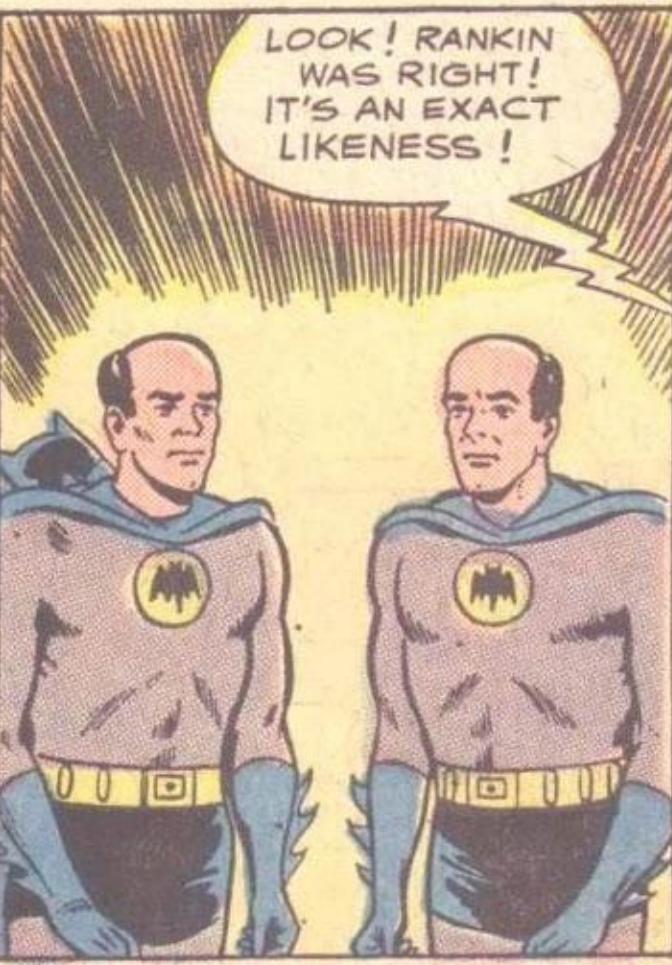
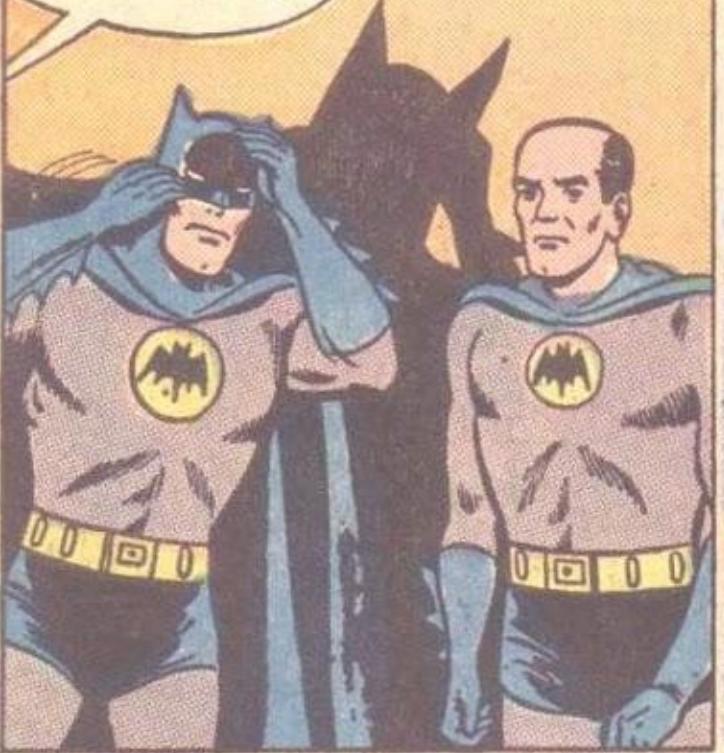


A BATMAN SPECIAL



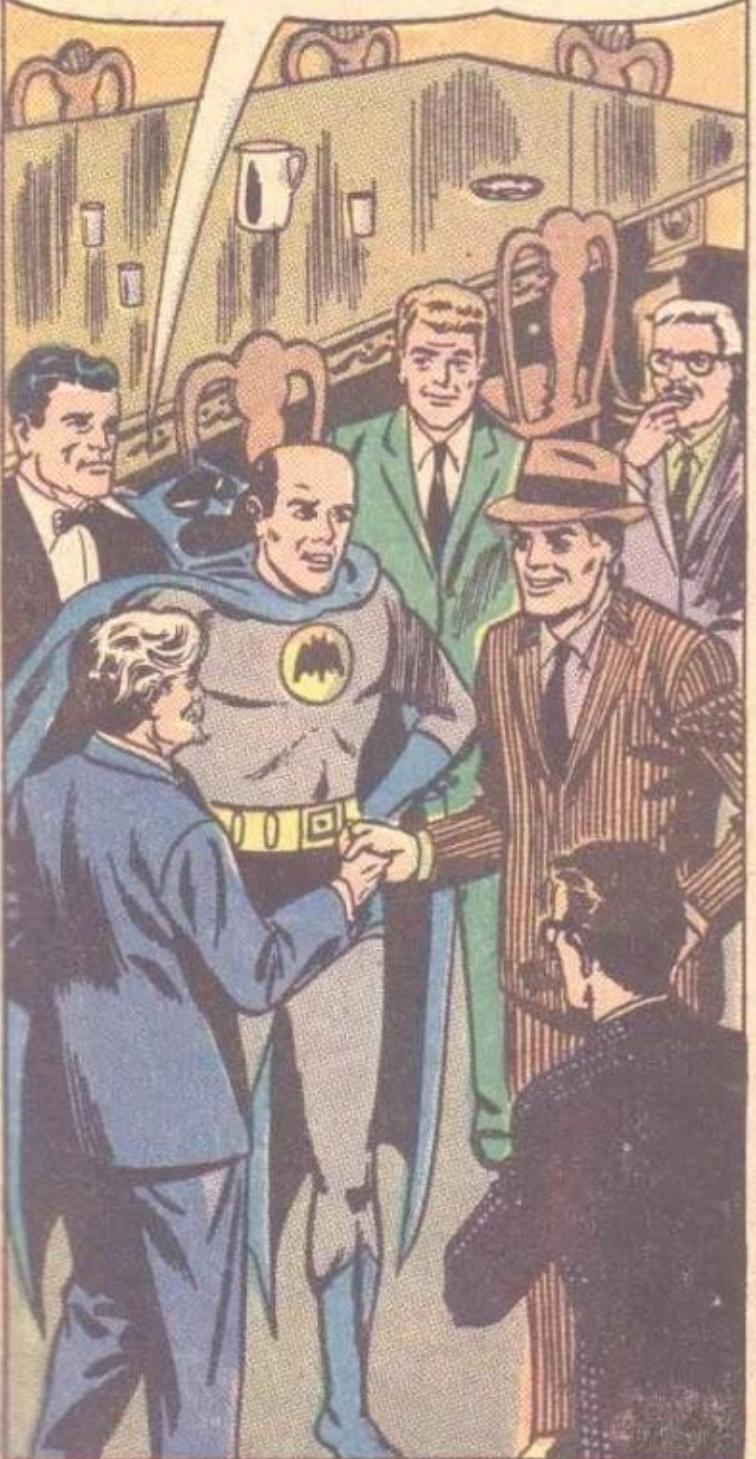
BEFORE THE STUNNED AUDIENCE,
THE CRIME-FIGHTER BEGINS TO...

H-HE'S LIFTING
HIS MASK!



SHOCKED AT FIRST BY THE SEN-
SATIONAL REVELATION, THE OTHER
MEMBERS GATHER EXCITEDLY AROUND
THE PRIVATE DETECTIVE ...

YOU MUST TELL US -- IN DETAIL --
HOW YOU KNEW BATMAN'S
MASKED FEATURES SO THOROUGHLY
THAT YOU WERE ABLE TO CONSTRUCT
A LOOK-ALIKE FIGURE OF HIM !



IN THRILLING DETAIL, RANKIN
UNFOLDS HIS STARTLING STORY.
THEN ...

TELL US,
BATMAN, WHO
ARE YOU IN THIS
OTHER IDENTITY?

THAT MUCH
AT LEAST
WILL
REMAIN MY
SECRET!



JUST PRIOR TO THE
SECRET VOTING, A
CUSTOMARY REMINDER
IS MADE ...

REMEMBER,
A WHITE BALL MEANS
ACCEPTANCE OF THE
CANDIDATE--
WHILE EVEN
A SINGLE
BLACK BALL
MEANS RE-
JECTION !

HOW CAN
RANKIN
MISS--
AFTER THE
DISCOVERY
HE'S MADE?



BUT FOLLOWING THE BALLOTTING--TO THE ASTONISHMENT OF
NEARLY EVERY ONE THERE ...

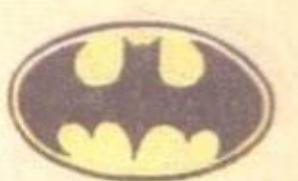
ONE LONE BLACK BALL!
RANKIN HAS BEEN
REJECTED !

BUT WHY... AND BY WHOM?





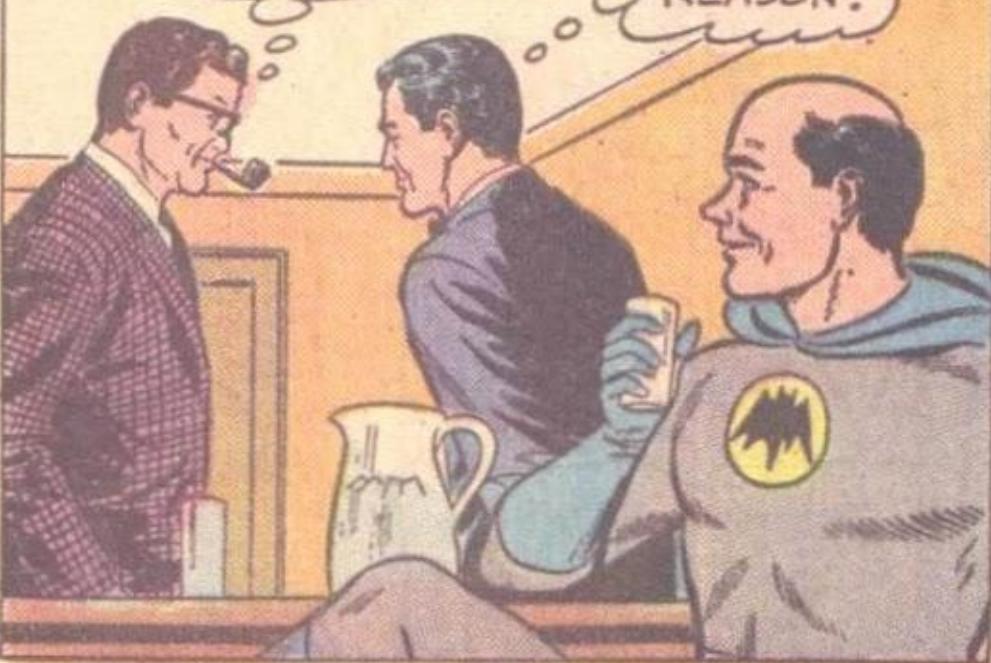
A BATMAN SPECIAL



PUZZLED MEMBERS SEARCH IN VAIN FOR THE MOTIVE BEHIND THE MYSTERIOUS BLACK-BALLER...

RANKIN
LOOKED LIKE A SHOO-IN!
WHY WAS HE BLACK-BALLED?

WHOEVER VOTED
AGAINST HIM
MUST HAVE HAD
A GOOD
REASON!



LATER, WHEN BRUCE (BATMAN) WAYNE ARRIVES HOME TO TELL DICK GRAYSON OF THE INTRIGUING EVENT AT THE CLUB...

I KNOW YOU CAST THE BLACK BALL -- BECAUSE RANKIN WAS WRONG! BUT HOW DID YOU EVER MANAGE TO DISGUISE YOUR FACE TO THE EXACT LIKENESS OF RANKIN'S DUMMY?

THAT'S THE STORY I'VE BEEN HOLDING OFF TELLING YOU, DICK--TILL I HAD ALL THE FACTS!

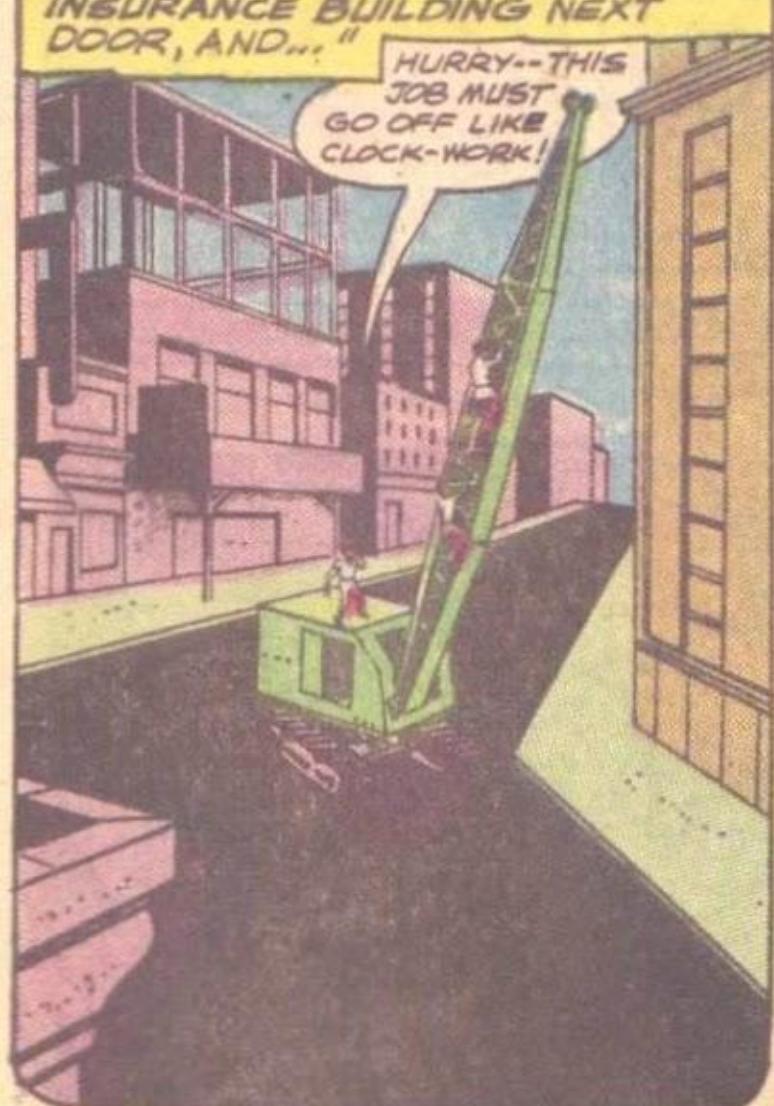


"IT ALL BEGAN THAT NIGHT WHEN, AS BATMAN AND ROBIN, WE WERE PATROLLING THE ROOFTOPS IN SEARCH OF THE NEW SENSATIONAL GANG, THE TRAPEZE TEN..."



"YOU'LL REMEMBER THAT THE GANG HAD TURNED A DERRICK FROM A CONSTRUCTION SITE TO WHERE IT REARED UP NEAR THE GOTHAM INSURANCE BUILDING NEXT DOOR, AND..."

HURRY--THIS JOB MUST GO OFF LIKE CLOCK-WORK!



"WHEN WE REACHED AN ADJACENT ROOF..."

THE INSURANCE COMPANY'S SAFES ARE ON THAT FLOOR, ROBIN -- WHERE THE CROOKS CAUGHT THE LEDGE WITH A GRAPPLING HOOK! GET TO THE DERRICK--SO THEY CAN'T ESCAPE DOWN IT...

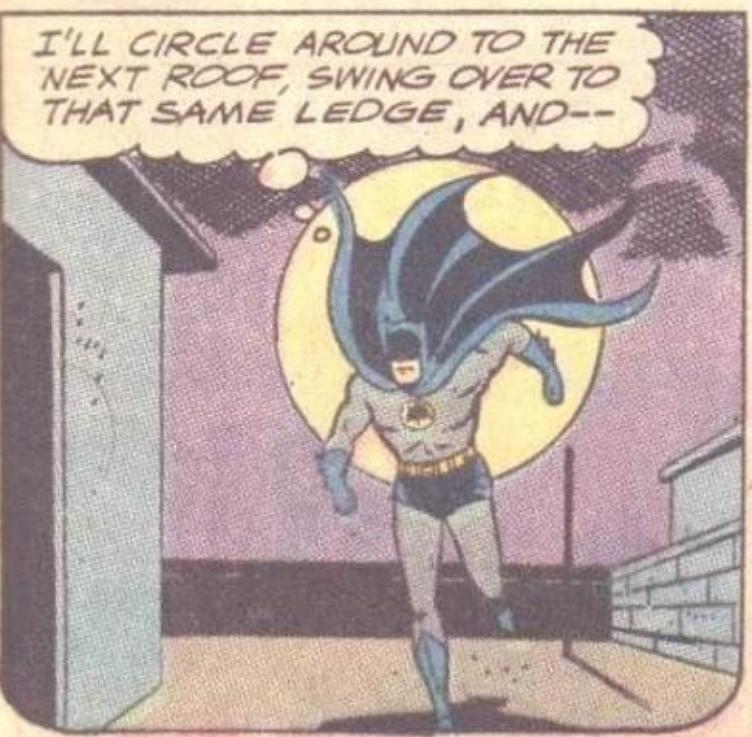




A BATMAN SPECIAL



"I'LL CIRCLE AROUND TO THE
NEXT ROOF, SWING OVER TO
THAT SAME LEDGE, AND--"

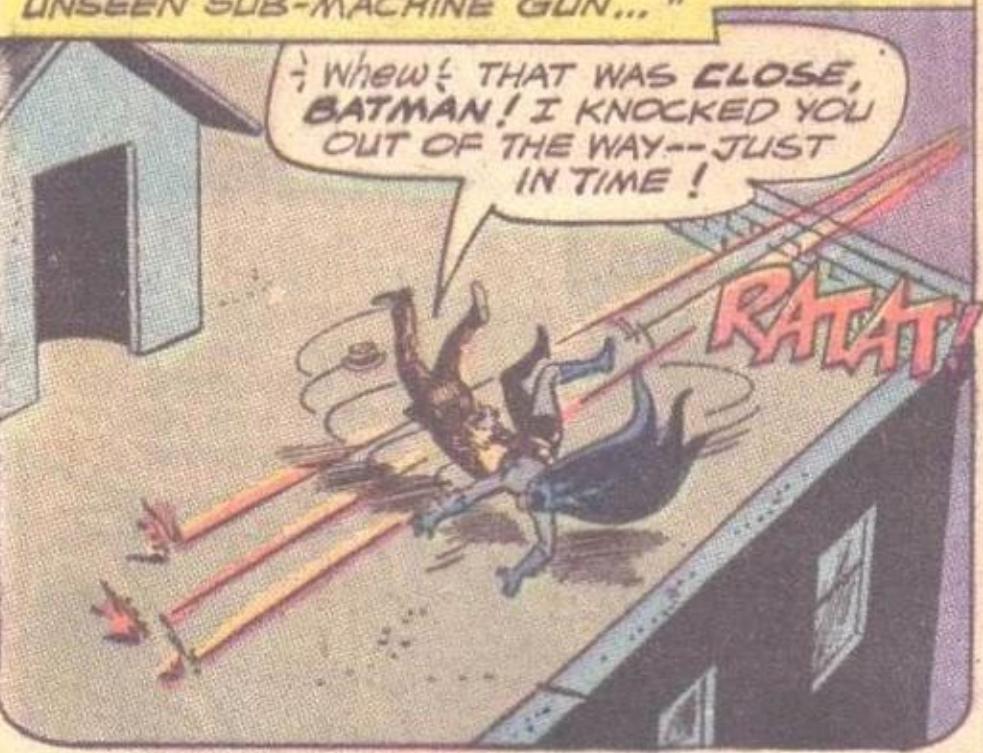


"OUT OF NOWHERE A FLYING FIGURE HIT ME--
LIKE A TACKLE SMEARING A QUARTERBACK..."



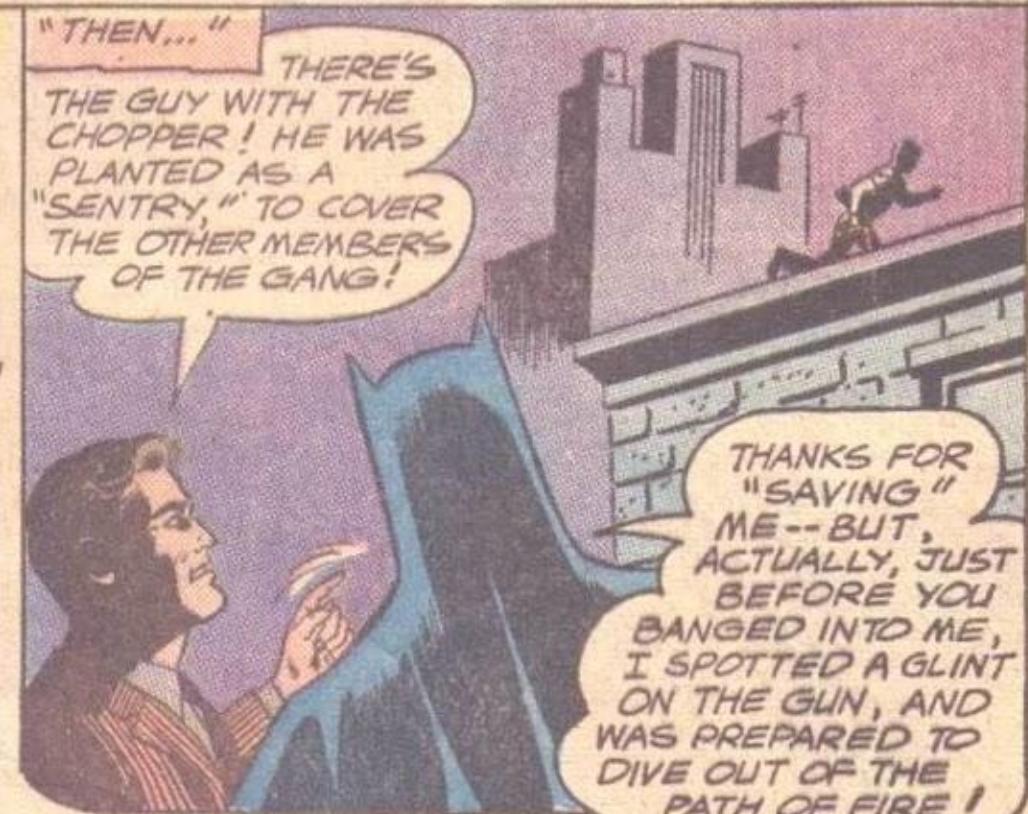
"NEXT CAME THE ROARING CHATTER OF AN
UNSEEN SUB-MACHINE GUN..."

"Whew! THAT WAS CLOSE,
BATMAN! I KNOCKED YOU
OUT OF THE WAY--JUST
IN TIME!"



"THEN..."

THERE'S
THE GUY WITH THE
CHOPPER! HE WAS
PLANTED AS A
"SENTRY," TO COVER
THE OTHER MEMBERS
OF THE GANG!



THANKS FOR
"SAVING"
ME--BUT,
ACTUALLY, JUST
BEFORE YOU
BANGED INTO ME,
I SPOTTED A GLINT
ON THE GUN, AND
WAS PREPARED TO
DIVE OUT OF THE
PATH OF FIRE!

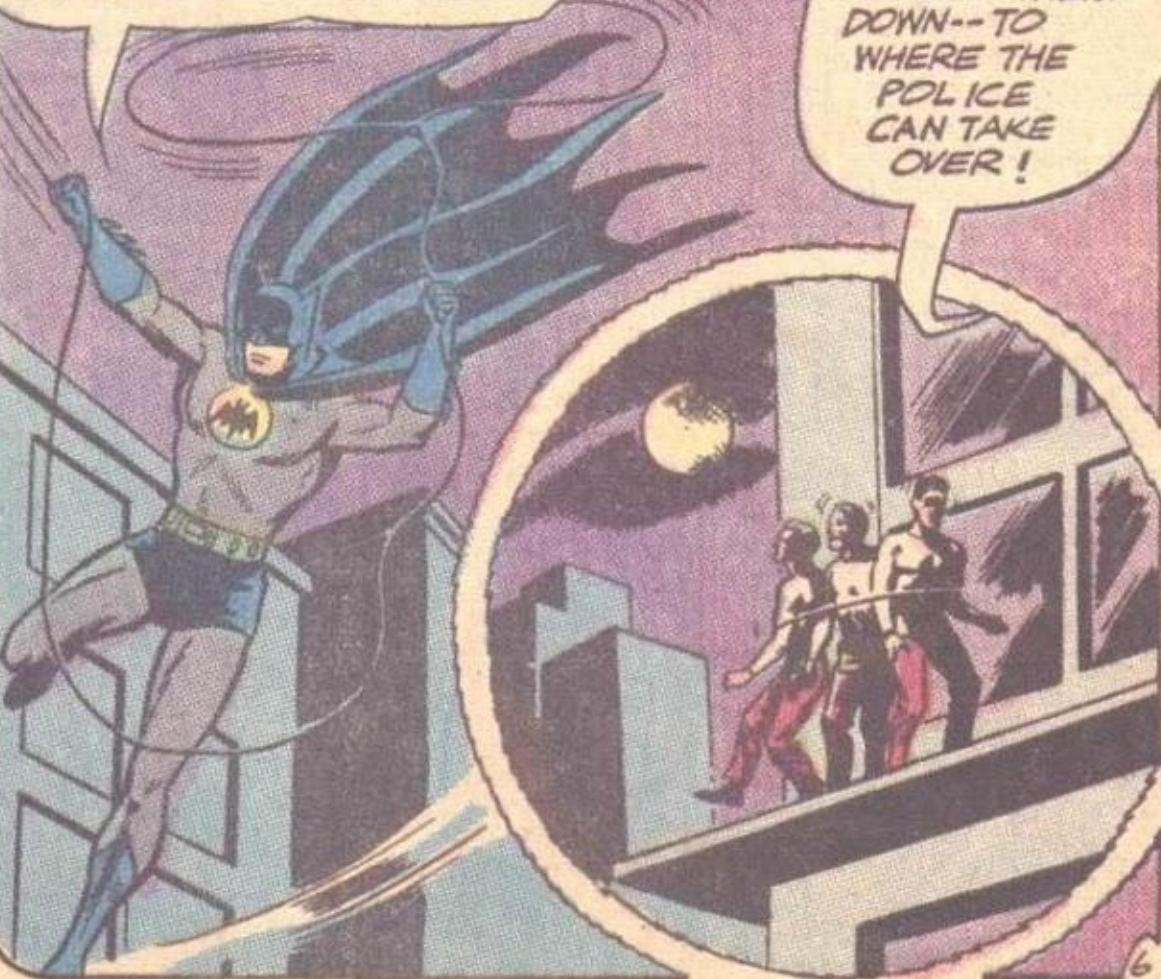
"WITH NO TIME TO TALK, I SNARED A
JUTTING FLAGPOLE WITH MY SILK
ROPE, AND..."

IT'S BATMAN!
LUKE MISSED HIM WITH THE
CHATTER GUN--BUT I'LL GET
HIM!



"I HAD PREPARED A LARIAT, AND AS I SWUNG THROUGH
THE AIR--FEELING LIKE A COWBOY WITHOUT A HORSE
UNDER ME..."

THIS HAD
BETTER WORK THE FIRST
TIME--THEY'LL NEVER GIVE
ME A SECOND CHANCE...



THAT DOES
IT! NOW--
TO GET THEM
DOWN--TO
WHERE THE
POLICE
CAN TAKE
OVER!



A BATMAN SPECIAL



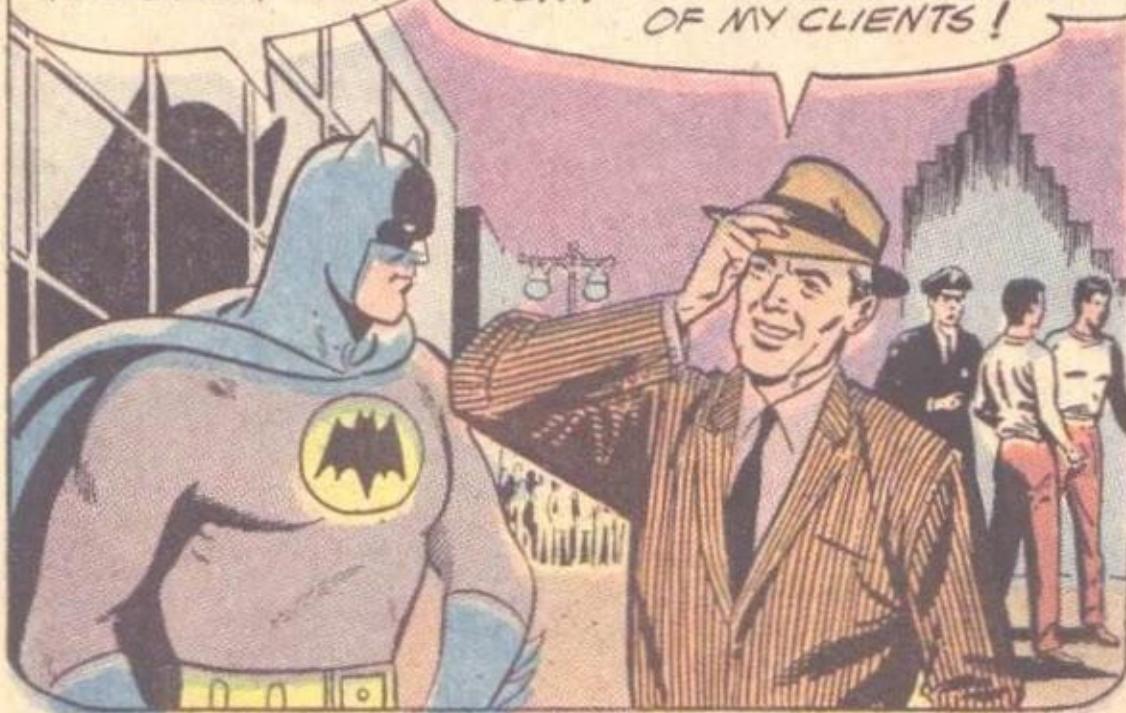
"LATER, BELOW, I GOT MY FIRST GOOD LOOK AT THE MAN WHO HAD SLAMMED INTO ME ON THE ROOF..."

AREN'T YOU HUGH RANKIN, PRIVATE INVESTIGATOR?

RIGHT, BATMAN! I, TOO, HAVE BEEN AFTER THE TRAPEZE TEN! THEY ROBBED A COUPLE OF MY CLIENTS!

I'VE LEARNED A LOT ABOUT HOW THE GANG WORKS. HOW THEY PLANT "SENTRIES" TO COVER THE MAIN OPERATION-- HOW THEY...

WHERE'S ROBIN? I JUST REALIZED I HAVEN'T SEEN HIM SINCE ALL THIS STARTED!



"AND THAT WAS THE FIRST I LEARNED YOU HAD BEEN HIT, ROBIN..."

I'M OKAY! ONE OF THEIR BULLETS GOT MY LEG --

SURE, HE'S OKAY!-- BUT I'LL BET WHEN THE AMBULANCE ARRIVES, THE DOC'LL TELL EVEN THE BOY WONDER TO STAY OFF HIS FEET FOR AWHILE!



I KNEW THAT PART OF THE STORY, BRUCE. BUT HOW DOES IT TIE IN WITH THAT DISGUISE YOU WORKED OUT TO LOOK LIKE RANKIN'S DUMMY? I DON'T GET IT!

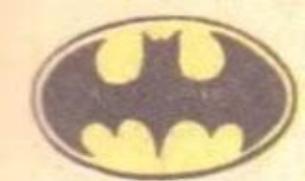
YOU WOULDN'T-- SINCE YOU WERE OUT OF THE REST OF THE ADVENTURE... BUT HERE'S WHAT HAPPENED NEXT...

"BEFORE I LEFT RANKIN THAT NIGHT..."

WITH ROBIN OUT OF ACTION, IT LOOKS LIKE I'LL HAVE TO CARRY ON ALONE TO NAIL THE REST OF THE TRAPEZE TEN!

NOT ALONE, BATMAN! REMEMBER, I HAVE AN INTEREST IN THIS CASE, TOO!





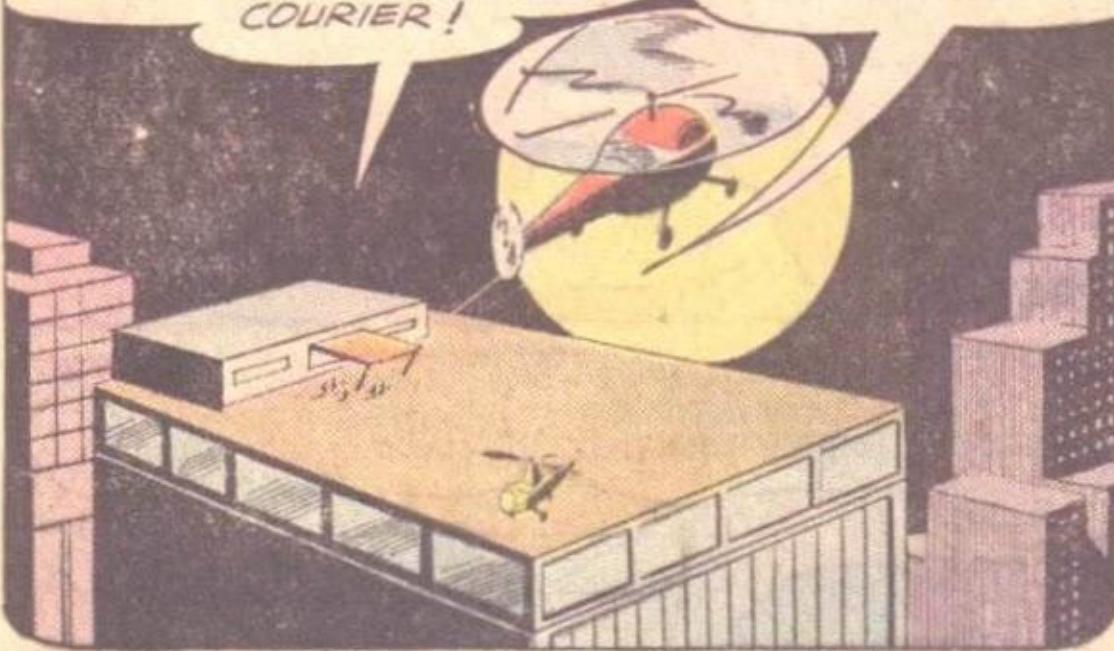
A BATMAN SPECIAL



"FOR NEARLY A WEEK, THE REMAINING MEMBERS OF THE TRAPEZE TEN LAID LOW. THEN, ONE NIGHT AT THE GOTHAM SKYSCRAPER HELIPORT..."

I'D LIKE TWO GUARDS ASSIGNED TO ME FOR MY FLIGHT TO THE AIRPORT! I'M A DIAMOND COURIER!

YES, SIR. WE'LL HAVE YOUR MEN IN A FEW MINUTES.



"SUDDENLY, HANDS REACHED FROM ABOVE..."

WE'LL MAKE YOUR PROBLEM SIMPLE, MISTER! IF YOU HAVE NO DIAMONDS TO CARRY--YOU WON'T NEED ANY GUARDS!

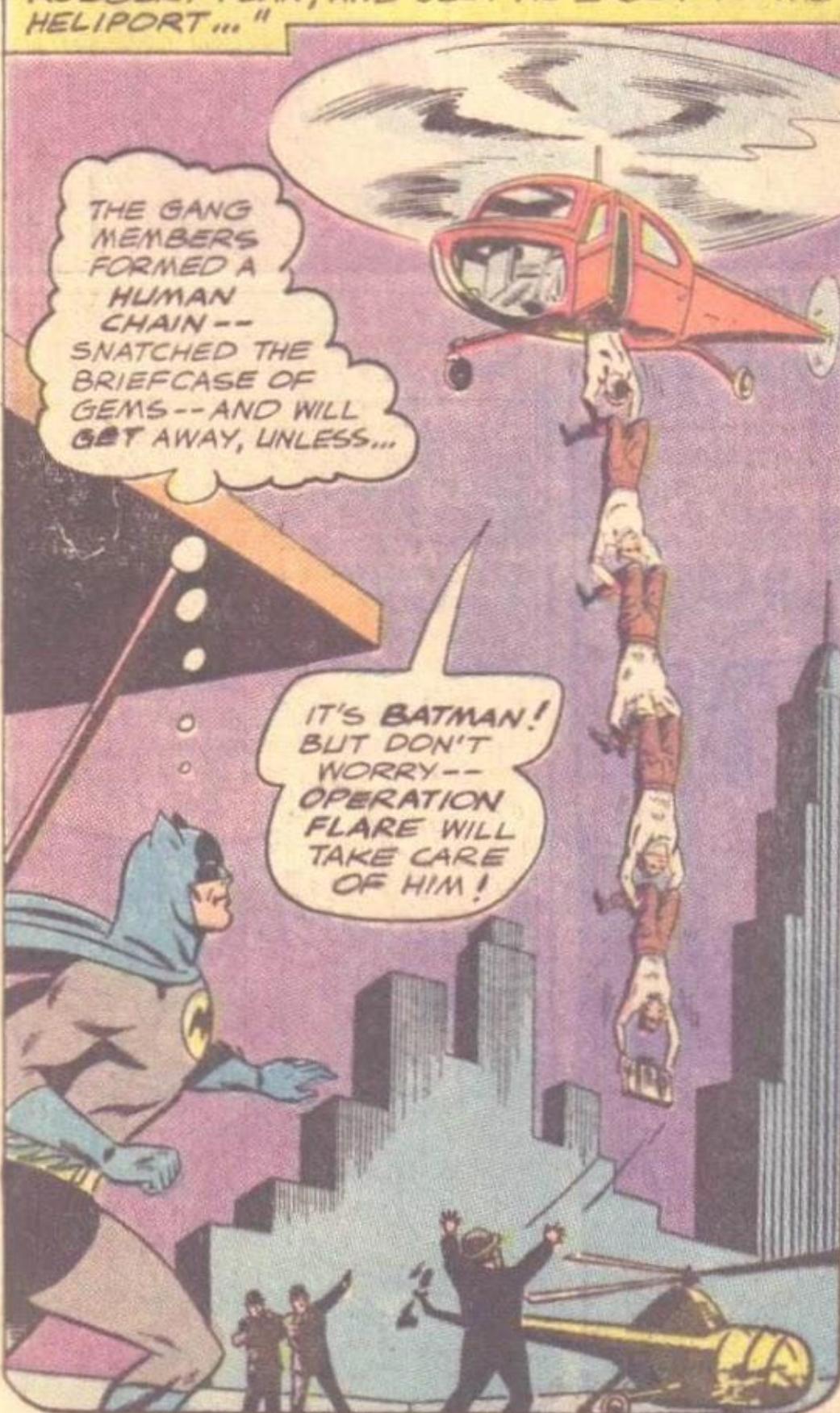
HUH--??!!



"AT POLICE HEADQUARTERS, I HAD RECEIVED A CALL FROM A TIPSTER ABOUT THE DIAMOND ROBBERY PLAN, AND JUST AS I GOT TO THE HELIPORT..."

THE GANG MEMBERS FORMED A HUMAN CHAIN-- SNATCHED THE BRIEFCASE OF GEMS--AND WILL GET AWAY, UNLESS...

IT'S BATMAN!
BUT DON'T WORRY--
OPERATION FLARE WILL TAKE CARE OF HIM!



"FROM THE SHADOWS, A GANG MEMBER SENTRY FIRED AN ODD PISTOL..."

VLOOP!



"AND A SPLIT-SECOND BEFORE A BLINDING EXPLOSION SHATTERED THE NIGHT SKY ABOVE THE HELIPORT..."

I RECOGNIZED THAT "VLOOP" SOUND, BATMAN--KNEW THE FLARE WOULD EXPLODE! IT'S A TRICK THE GANG USES TO TEMPORARILY BLIND ANYBODY TRYING TO STOP THEM! GOT TO COVER YOUR EYES!

RANKIN,
YOU AGAIN!





A BATMAN SPECIAL

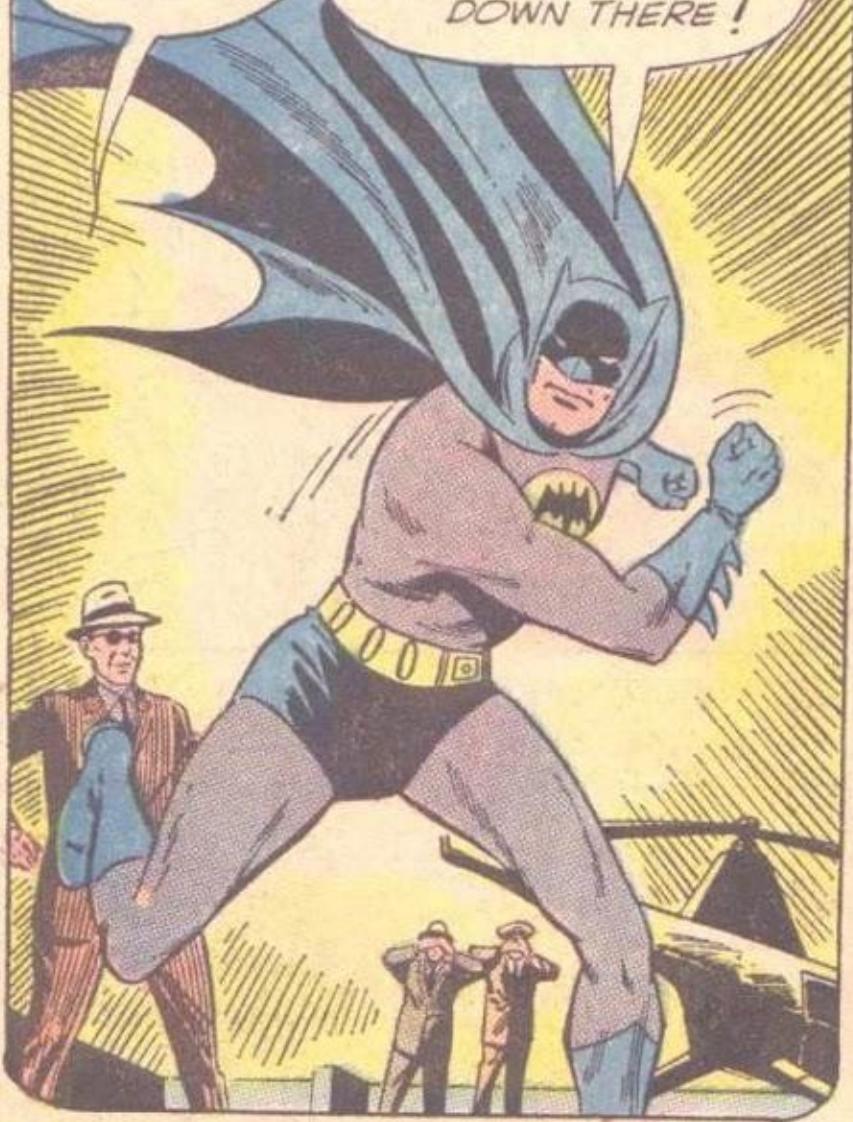


I KNEW ABOUT THE DIAMOND COURIER, AND FIGURED THE GANG WOULD STRIKE HERE...

NO TIME FOR EXPLANATIONS! CALL THE POLICE HELICOPTERS! THEY'LL FORCE THE GANG TO LAND -- WHERE I'LL BE WAITING BELOW! JOIN ME DOWN THERE!

"BUT WHEN I WAS ALONE..."

THIS SUBSTANCE FELL DOWN THROUGH THE EYE OPENING OF MY MASK WHEN RANKIN CLAMPED HIS HAND OVER MY EYES! IT'S A PARTICLE OF PLIABLE WAX!



"SHORTLY, THE GANG LANDED-- BUT NOT BECAUSE POLICE 'COPTERS FORCED THEM DOWN! INSTEAD..."

THEY HAD A SURPRISE GETAWAY PLANNED ON THE GROUND, RANKIN--THROUGH THAT ABANDONED SUBWAY TUNNEL! COME ON...

"DOWN WE WENT--INTO THE OMINOUS SILENCE OF THE GLOOMY OLD SUBWAY TUNNEL..."

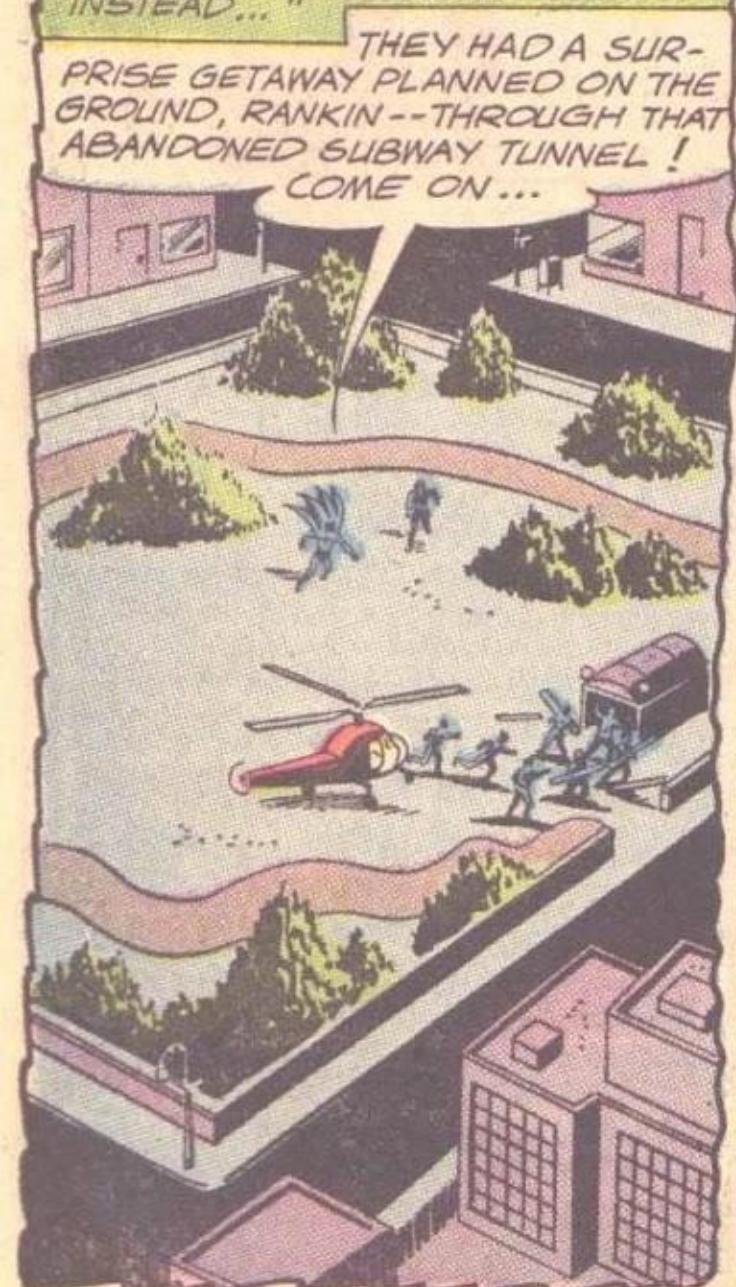
NOT A SIGN OF THEM!

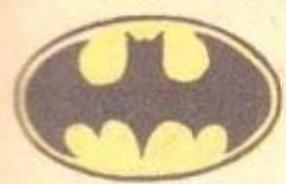
BATMAN! HEAR THAT SOUND? I KNOW WHAT IT IS! WE'VE GOT TO WORK FAST!

"MOMENTS LATER, A DELUGE OF WATER POURED IN FROM THE TUNNEL'S ROOF..."

CUTE LITTLE PLAN--THE GANG WAS PREPARED TO OPEN A DUCT THAT WOULD FLOOD THE PLACE WITH RIVER WATER--TO CUT OFF ANYBODY FOLLOWING THEM! I BROUGHT AN EXTRA BREATHING MASK--PUT IT ON!

YOU SURE KNOW THAT GANG'S EVERY MOVE! THANKS--BUT I CARRY A MINIATURE BREATHING APPARATUS IN MY UTILITY BELT!



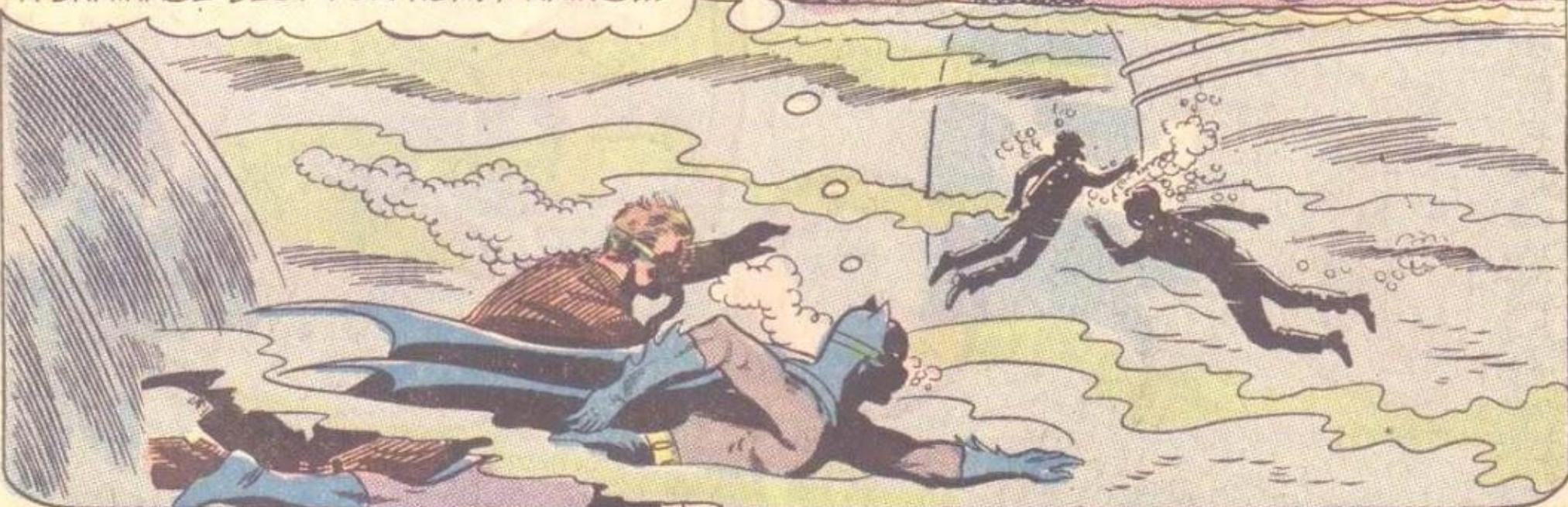


A BATMAN SPECIAL



"SWEPT ALONG BY THE FIERCE CURRENT THAT NOW RACED THROUGH THE TUNNEL, WE COULD SPOT THE GANG MEMBERS AHEAD..."

AS I REMEMBER THIS TUNNEL, WHEN SUBWAY SERVICE WAS STOPPED, AN OPENING WAS MADE THAT LED OUT NEAR THE BAY... IN CASE IT WAS NEEDED AS A DRAINAGE DUCT FOR HEAVY RAINS...



MY GUESS IS THE GANG WILL EXIT THERE -- AND HEAD FOR THE BAY ! BUT THERE'S ALSO AN EMERGENCY EXIT UP AHEAD -- AND IF WE CAN GET OUT THERE -- WE CAN TAKE A SHORT CUT ! HOPE RANKIN FOLLOWS MY LEAD ...



"RANKIN GOT MY HAND SIGNAL, AND OUT WE WENT ... "



"MINUTES COUNTED NOW..."

HURRY ! WHEN THEY COME OUT, THEY'LL HAVE TO HEAD DOWN AN ALLEY NEAR HERE ! IT'S THE SHORTEST WAY TO REACH THE BAY--WHERE THE GANG PROBABLY HAS A SPEED BOAT WAITING !



"WE SPED DOWN THE ALLEY, TO..."

THEY'LL COME RUNNING PAST THIS SPOT, RANKIN--SO ONE OF US WILL HAVE TO STAY HERE AND HOLD THEM, WHILE THE OTHER CARRIES OUT A PLAN I HAVE IN MIND ! Hmm-- THAT WINDOW ...



CONTINUED ON 2ND PAGE FOLLOWING.

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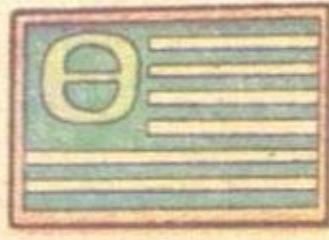
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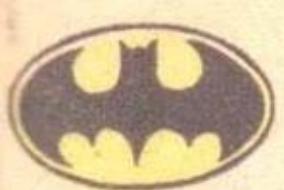
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A BATMAN SPECIAL



"WHEN I EXPLAINED MY PLAN."

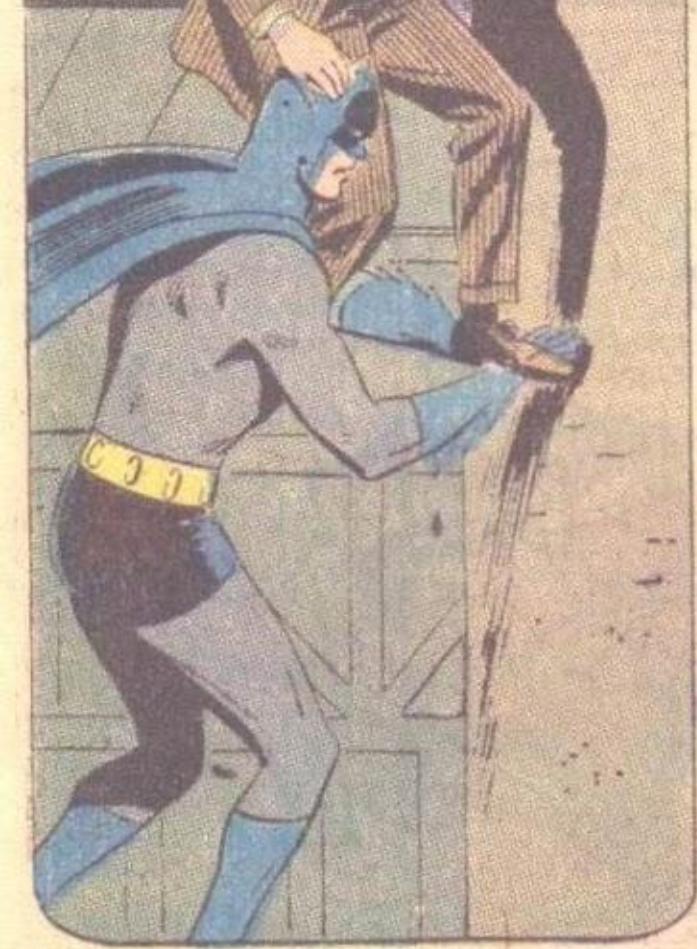
UP YOU GO ! REMEMBER--LET ME MANEUVER THEM INTO POSITION BEFORE YOU MAKE YOUR MOVE !

GOTCHA ! DON'T MIND IF I BALANCE MYSELF... I'M NOT MUCH AT CLIMBING...

"RANKIN HAD BARELY MADE IT INTO THE WINDOW, WHEN..."

HA, HA ! LOOK AT THAT--
BATMAN FORMING A ONE-MAN
"ROADBLOCK"! LET'S RUSH
'IM !

YEAH, WE OWE HIM PLENTY
FOR GETTING IN OUR HAIR!
HERE'S OUR CHANCE--
WITH HIM ALONE !



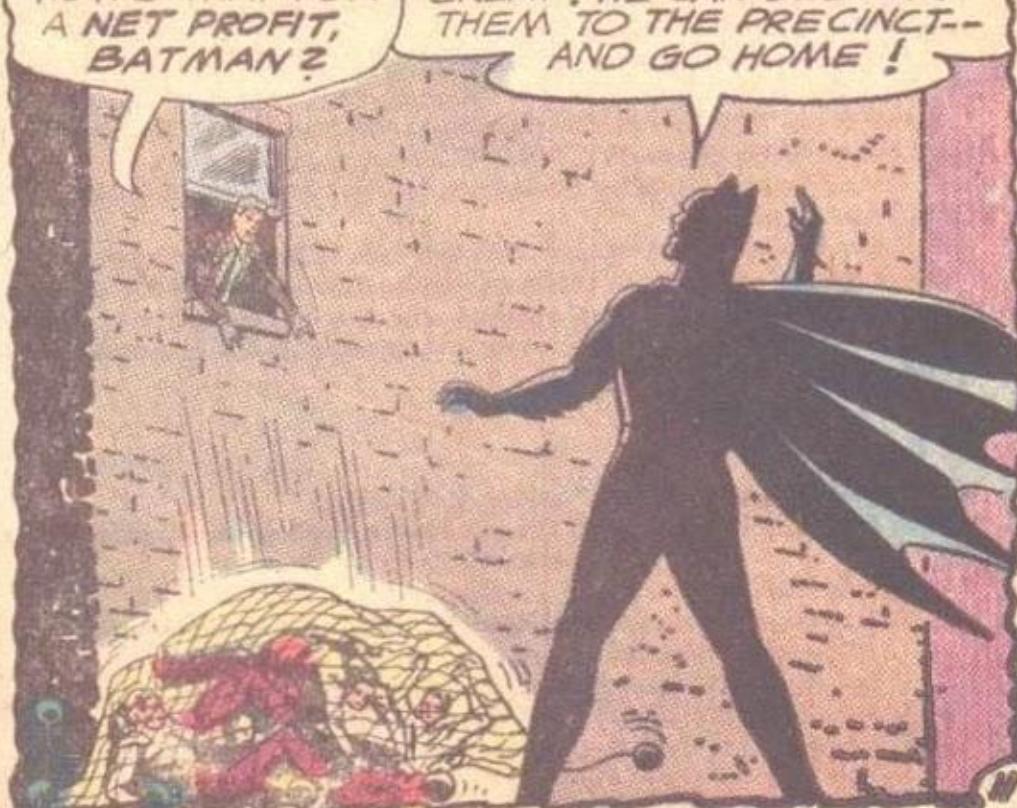
"THEY WERE AFTER ME LIKE A PACK OF WOLVES
AFTER A RABBIT--AND THAT'S WHEN I TWISTED
MYSELF FREE, ROLLED AWAY ... "

NOW,
RANKIN--
NOW!!

"RANKIN CAME THROUGH--IN SPADES!"

HOW'S THAT FOR
A NET PROFIT,
BATMAN?

GREAT ! WE CAN DELIVER
THEM TO THE PRECINCT--
AND GO HOME !





A BATMAN SPECIAL



I'VE GOT THE ANSWER! RANKIN, PLANNING ALL ALONG TO JOIN THE **MYSTERY ANALYSTS**, THOUGHT HE'D KILL TWO BIRDS WITH ONE STONE -- HELP CATCH THE **TRAPEZE TEN**-- AND SOLVE THE MYSTERY OF THE FACE BEHIND YOUR MASK!

RIGHT-- SO FAR!



WITH HIS EXPERT SENSE OF TOUCH,* RANKIN WAS ABLE TO DETERMINE YOUR **WEIGHT** AND **FIGURE** WHEN HE HALF-LIFTED, HALF-SHOVED YOU OUT OF THE WAY OF THE SUB-MACHINE GUN FIRE AT THE DERRICK SCENE ... AND USED **WAX** TO GET AN **IMPRESSION OF YOUR EYES** WHEN THE **FLARE** WENT OFF...



*Editor's Note: THE PERCEPTION OF THE FORM, WEIGHT, etc. OF A SOLID BODY BY HANDLING AND LIFTING IT IS TECHNICALLY KNOWN AS **STEREOGNOSIS**.

YOU TUMBLED TO HIS SCHEME WHEN YOU FOUND THE PARTICLE OF WAX--THEN YOU **DELIBERATELY DISGUISED YOURSELF**, AFTER YOU SEPARATED BRIEFLY FROM RANKIN AT THE HELIPORT! WHEN RANKIN GAVE THE BREATHING MASK TO YOU --HE FELT YOUR **NOSE**... TO GET ITS SHAPE...



FINALLY, WHILE YOU WERE HELPING HIM UP TO THE WINDOW, RANKIN TOOK THE OPPORTUNITY OF FEELING THE SHAPE OF YOUR "**BALD HEAD**"! THAT'S HOW YOUR GREAT "**FACE-SAVING**" FEAT AT THE **ANALYST** MEETING SAFE GUARDED YOUR IDENTITY!



STILL AND ALL, RANKIN DID SUCH A NEAT PIECE OF WORK, HE'LL MAKE THE **MYSTERY ANALYSTS** ONE OF THESE DAYS!

The End 12

NEXT ISSUE ON SALE ON OR ABOUT MAR. 14TH

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244,215	232,914
273	1,091
244,488	234,005
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233,410	240,410
477,898	474,415
227	585
478,125	475,000

I certify that the statements made by me above are correct and complete, BERNARD KASHDAN, Business Manager.



S-1130

Dear Editor:

Just about three years ago. A man named Robbins joined the DC ranks. He started to write lousy *Batman* tales. Even though they were old yarns rewritten National still held phenomenal sales. Then he stayed his pen at "Frash" stories. And though what some fans did is somewhat Gory, most said, "Oh, Lord, we're stuck with Robbins again!" But a little while back He hit the track with *Man-Bat* epics. And has written some tremendous things since Like "Wail of the Ghost-Bride" in *Batman* #236 With great art and clever plot twists. The fans say, "Oh, Lord, we're stuck with Robbins, hooray!" (The above is to be sung to the tune of "Lodi", by John Fogerty)

—JOE FARARA, Canton, Mass.

(Harara for Farara!—JS)



Dear Editor:

As perhaps southern Massachusetts' only registered, card-carrying Denny O'Neil freak, I feel myself more than qualified to pass judgment on *Batman* #236, which lacked O'Neil but somehow came through despite it all. Frank Robbins and Mike Friedrich seem to have broken their customs of, shall we say, planned mediocrity, that I identified them with over the past few months. I feel that it's safe to assume that whatever lack of inspiration marked their stories up to now has been poured into this issue.

What is this? No Robbins-isms in "Wail of the Ghost-Bride"? He's put together a perfect combination of mystery, humor (loved the bit with the hardhats), and the mandatory action, and the result was the best *Batman* epic of the year.

The lack of relevance—a term that has been commercialized to death of late—was a good idea. I have come to the conclusion that relevance can only be handled by a handful of writers. Bob Kanigher, Mike Friedrich, and of course Denny O'Neil do it beautifully. But the inherent lack of sincerity (sorry, Frank) with Frank Robbins knocks you out of the game before you start. It's the expert story construction, the suspense, and the nutty climax scenes that constitute Robbins' forte, and all of these are what went into "Wail of the Ghost-Bride."

On the other side of the spectrum—the relevant side—was Mike Friedrich with the third and best

LETTERS to the BATMAN

chapter in his commune series. "Rain Fire" had everything the first two installments lacked, including the absence of the stereotypes Friedrich peopled the first two with. Though the "productive people" speech at the end was just a hair bitter to the radical element in me, everything else made it easy to forget about it.

—CLEM ROBINS, Sheffield, Mass.



Dear Editor:

"Wail of the Ghost-Bride" was a farce.

I am bored silly by the current rage of supernatural garbage being rammed down our throats. The *Batman* attempt to capitalize on the trend of the occult breeds contempt and (worst of all) unoriginality! I won't ask for—I expect originality from DC!

—MATT GRAHAM, Granada Hills, Ca.



Dear Editor:

To read a lot of the current crop of *Batman* adventures, you have to decide whether or not you want to believe in ghosts. Most of the stories involving spectral visions and the like leave the reader to decide whether there is a logical explanation or whether it must be credited to an outside force. "Wail of the Ghost-Bride" was a typical example of this and you play up the readers' decision with the epilogue.

But do we really get to make that choice? Isn't it really *Batman* who must decide for us? After all, he is the one who saw the ghost-bride. Is it coincidence that the manikin saves him or was it really an outside force? If we accept the idea that there are no real ghosts, then we must also assume that *Batman* is slowly but surely going insane. A man who sees these spirits as often as the *Caped Crusader* has is evidently not in full possession of his faculties. However, if he were to say that he does believe in ghosts, he will become the target of people who will say all this night-prowling has affected his mind.

I would like to believe that the ghosts do exist and that *Batman* believes in their existence, but that he will not tell anyone how he feels. If anyone would like to dispute this, I am open to debate on the subject. (Provided that the men in the white coats let me near the typewriter again!)

—BOB ROZAKIS, Elmont, N.Y.



Dear Editor:

"Wail of the Ghost-Bride!" Who dreams up Frank Robbins' closing lines?—"Be my ghost-guest!"—Gad!

—MARK M. THOMASE, Denver, Co.



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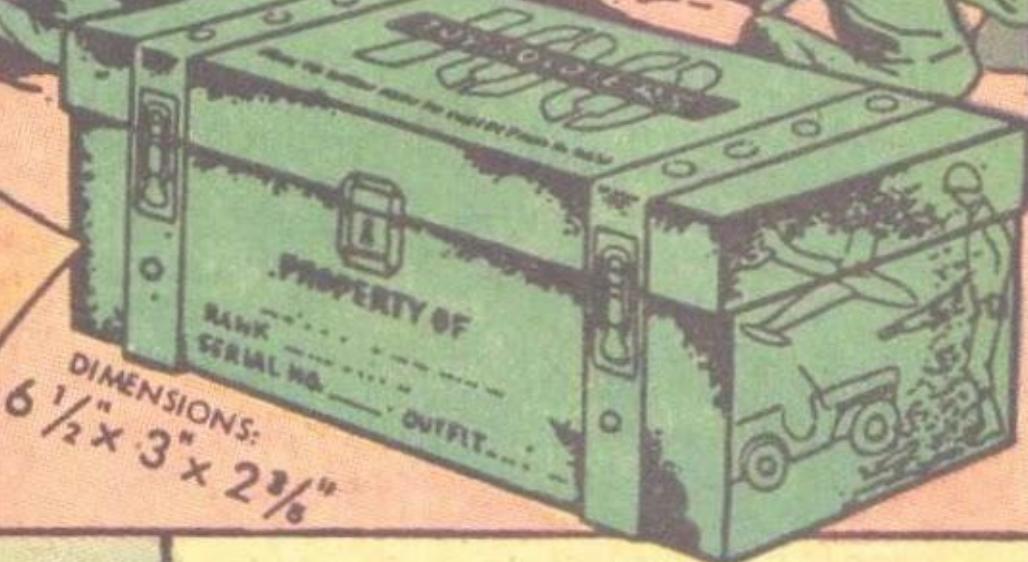
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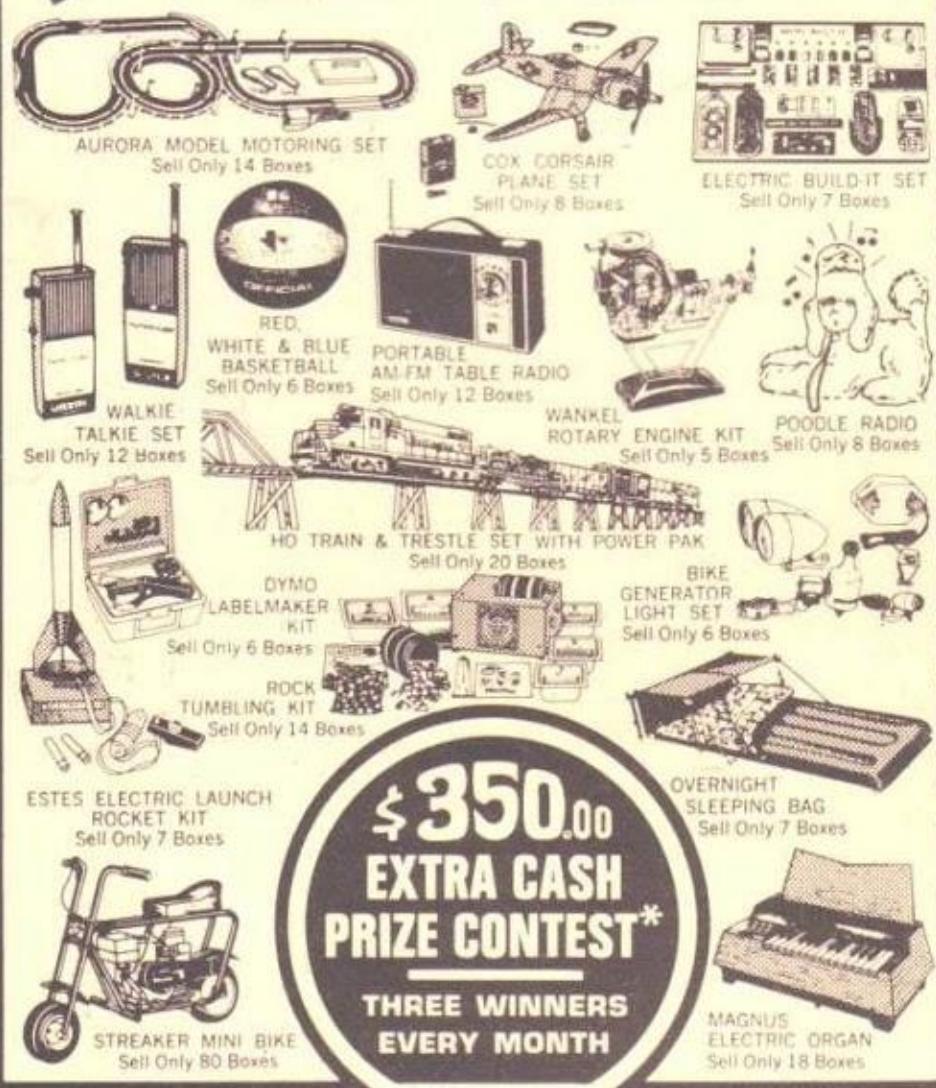
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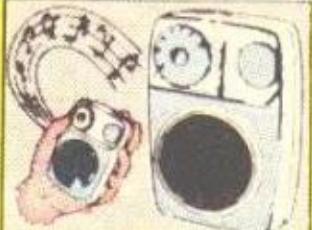
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