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44 PAGES
ALL NEW

BATMAN



APPROVED
BY THE
COMICS
CODE
CDA
AUTHORITY

JACKPOT! MY GAMBLE
PAID OFF--HERE'S WHERE
I PUT THE **DEATH'S-**
HEAD GANG OUT OF
BUSINESS!

DON'T TRY
TO COLLECT,
BATMAN!
YOU BET YOUR
LIFE AND
LOST!

EXTRA!
UNSOLVED
CASES OF
THE BATMAN!

5-2977



ORPHANED AS A CHILD WHEN HIS PARENTS WERE KILLED BEFORE HIS EYES, BRUCE WAYNE TRAINED HIMSELF TO WAGE RELENTLESS WAR AGAINST CRIME AS THE DREAD AVENGER OF THE NIGHT...

THE BATMAN

CREATED BY

BOB
KANE

AND THEN, IN THE MIDST OF THE USUAL, THE UNUSUAL --

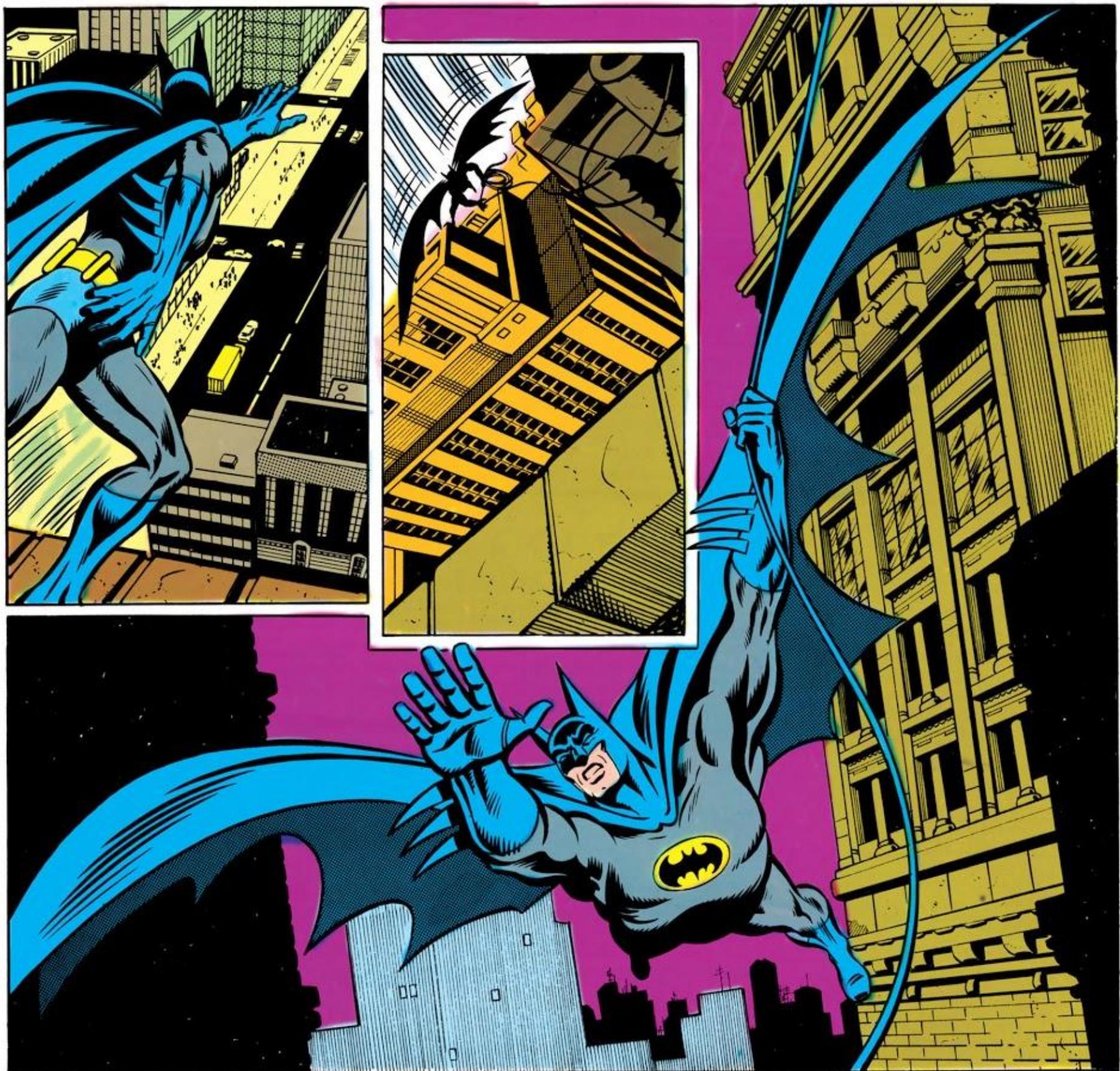
--A DULL, DISTANT THUMP OF HIGH EXPLOSIVES, AND THE FOLLOWING ROAR OF EXPANDING FLAMES...

A COOL AUGUST EVENING IN GOTHAM CITY, A NIGHT FILLED WITH THE USUAL URBAN SOUNDS: CAR HORNS, THE RUMBLE OF THE ELECTRIFIED TRAINS, THE FAR-OFF WAIL OF A TUGBOAT IN GOTHAM BAY, THE LOW AND EVER-PRESENT MURMUR OF VOICES...



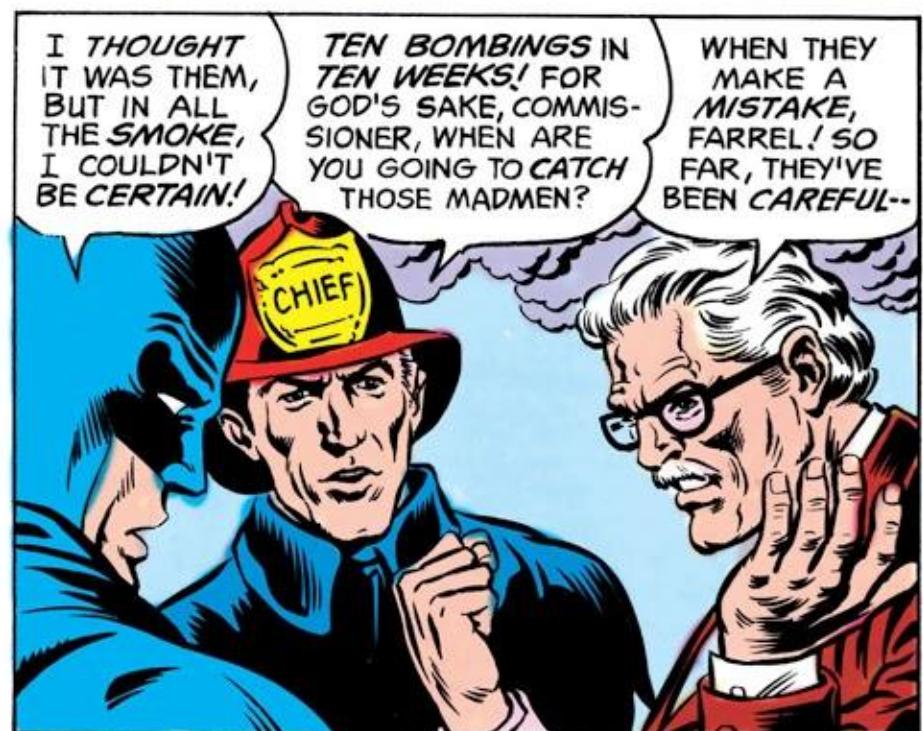
S-2956

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YOU-- AND ALL OTHER SYMBOLS OF AUTHORITY IN WESTERN CIVILIZATION! THE DEATH'S-HEAD BELIEVES IN THE TOTAL DESTRUCTION OF THE CAPITALIST POLITICAL ORDER!

AND YOU, BATMAN, ARE THE ULTIMATE REPRESENTATION OF THAT ORDER-- SI?

AN INTERESTING THEORY, MS.--?

LINA MULLER OF THE ITALIAN PRESS! I HAVE BEEN FOLLOWING THIS GROUP ON THEIR WANDERINGS ACROSS THE WORLD, BATMAN!

IN MY HUMBLE WAY, I'VE BECOME AN EXPERT ON THEM!

MS. MULLER IS HERE TONIGHT AT MY REQUEST, BATMAN, SHE'S BEEN IN GOTHAM SEVERAL WEEKS, COVERING THE BOMBINGS FOR HER LOCAL NEWSPAPER!

YES, I RECALL READING ABOUT YOU IN THE SOCIETY COLUMNS, MS. MULLER. YOU'VE BEEN SEEN QUITE A BIT WITH BRUCE WAYNE!

NOW--? I BELIEVE THEY WILL --AS YOU AMERICANS SAY-- LIE LOW FOR A FEW DAYS. THEY WILL NEED TO REGROUP, TO PLAN.

AN INTRIGUING MAN! IN FACT, I WILL BE DINING WITH HIM TONIGHT, ON GOTHAM ISLE!

THEN--ANOTHER BOMBING, PERHAPS? SOME OTHER ACT OF TERRORISM?

WHAT DO YOU THINK THE DEATH'S-HEAD WILL DO NOW, MS. MULLER?

WHO MAY SAY? THEY ARE DRIVEN MEN-- AND SUCH MEN ARE ALWAYS UNPREDICTABLE!

DO YOU THINK SHE'S RIGHT?

PROBABLY, WE'LL KNOW WHAT TO EXPECT ONCE WE FIND OUT WHAT THEY STOLE FROM THIS LAB.

IN ANY CASE, I'VE DONE ALL I CAN FOR TONIGHT.

BATMAN, BEFORE YOU GO-- YOU TOOK AN AWFUL CHANCE, ATTACKING THOSE SIX TERRORISTS ALONE! WE CAN'T RISK HAVING YOU KILLED BY--

BUT THEY HAD MACHINE GUNS --GRENADES--!

COMMISSIONER, I NEVER TAKE CHANCES!

THEY WERE ALSO WEIGHTED DOWN WITH THEIR "LOOT," HAMPERING THEIR FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT! AND ONE THING MORE--





GOTHAM ISLE: HOME OF THE MOST LAVISH MECHANIZED HOTEL IN THE HISTORY OF INN-KEEPING, THE GOTHAM STARSSCRAPER...

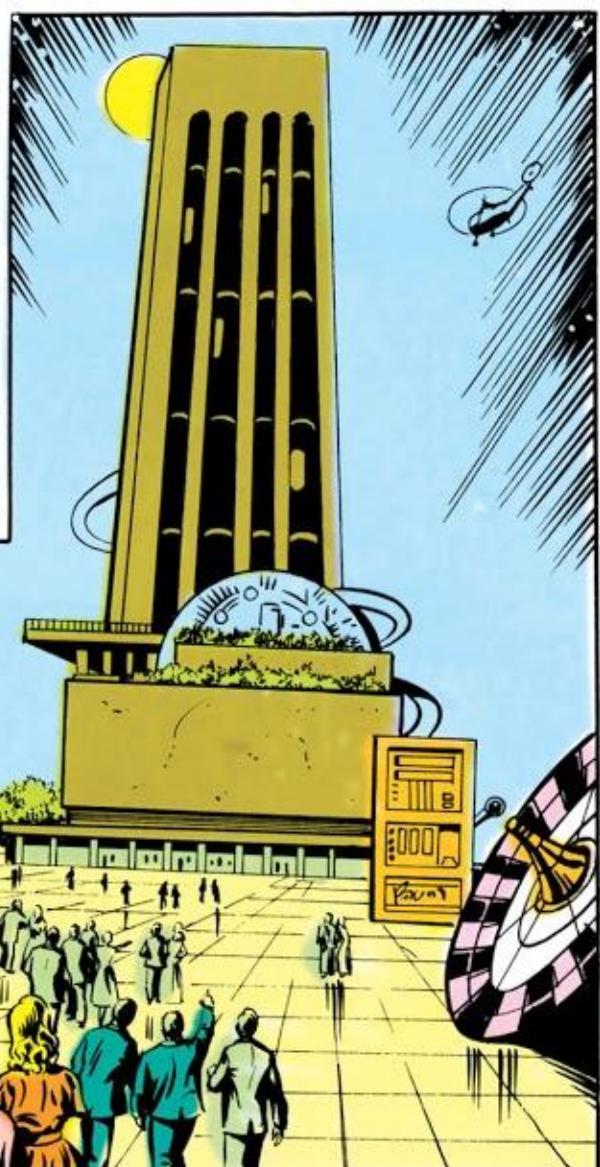
TWO MONTHS AGO, THIS ISLAND IN GOTHAM BAY WAS THE SCENE OF A DEADLY BATTLE BETWEEN THE JUSTICE LEAGUE AND THE DREAM MACHINE OF DOCTOR DESTINY*...

* AS TOLD IN JUSTICE LEAGUE #154! -- JULIE

TONIGHT, IT IS THE SCENE OF A MORE CHARITABLE KIND OF CONFLICT, BETWEEN THE WOULD-BE GAMBLERS OF GOTHAM'S UPPER CRUST--

--AND THE SPECTACULAR CASINO OF THE NEWLY-DUBBED "LAS VEGAS ON THE BAY"!

HOW POSITIVELY BOURGEOIS, BRUCE. GAMBLING FOR CHARITY--



--IN A CITY WHERE GAMBLING IS ILLEGAL!

--BUT WHEN DOCTOR DESTINY ALTERED THE BUILDING PLANS TO INCORPORATE HIS OWN DEVICES, HE MADE THE HOTEL UNINHABITABLE.

THE WAYNE FOUNDATION TOOK THE PLACE OVER, AND WE'RE TRYING TO TURN IT INTO A SPA FOR THE PHYSICALLY DISABLED--

--BUT THAT TAKES MORE MONEY THAN THE FOUNDATION CAN PROVIDE ALONE.

THE GOTHAM CITY COUNCIL PASSED A BILL PERMITTING LIMITED GAMBLING AT THE STARSSCRAPER LINA, AND ONLY FOR ONE MONTH.

ORIGINALY, THE HOTEL WAS PLANNED AS A COMBINATION LUXURY AND TOURIST-CLASS RESORT, WITH SPECIAL PROVISIONS FOR THE HANDICAPPED--



AND SO YOU HAVE THIS GAMBLING!

IT'S A WAY FOR GOTHAM'S RICH TO CONTRIBUTE AND HAVE FUN AT THE SAME TIME. LIKE ALL GAMBLING OPERATIONS, THE ODDS FAVOR THE HOUSE!

CARE TO TRY?
OF COURSE!

FOR THE NEXT HOUR, THE ITALIAN NEWSWOMAN LOSES HERSELF IN THE THRILL OF GAMBLING, WHILE GOTHAM'S BEST-KNOWN SOCIALITE LOOKS ON...



HIS EYES ROAM THE CROWDED ROOM, BUT HE FINDS NOTHING AMISS...

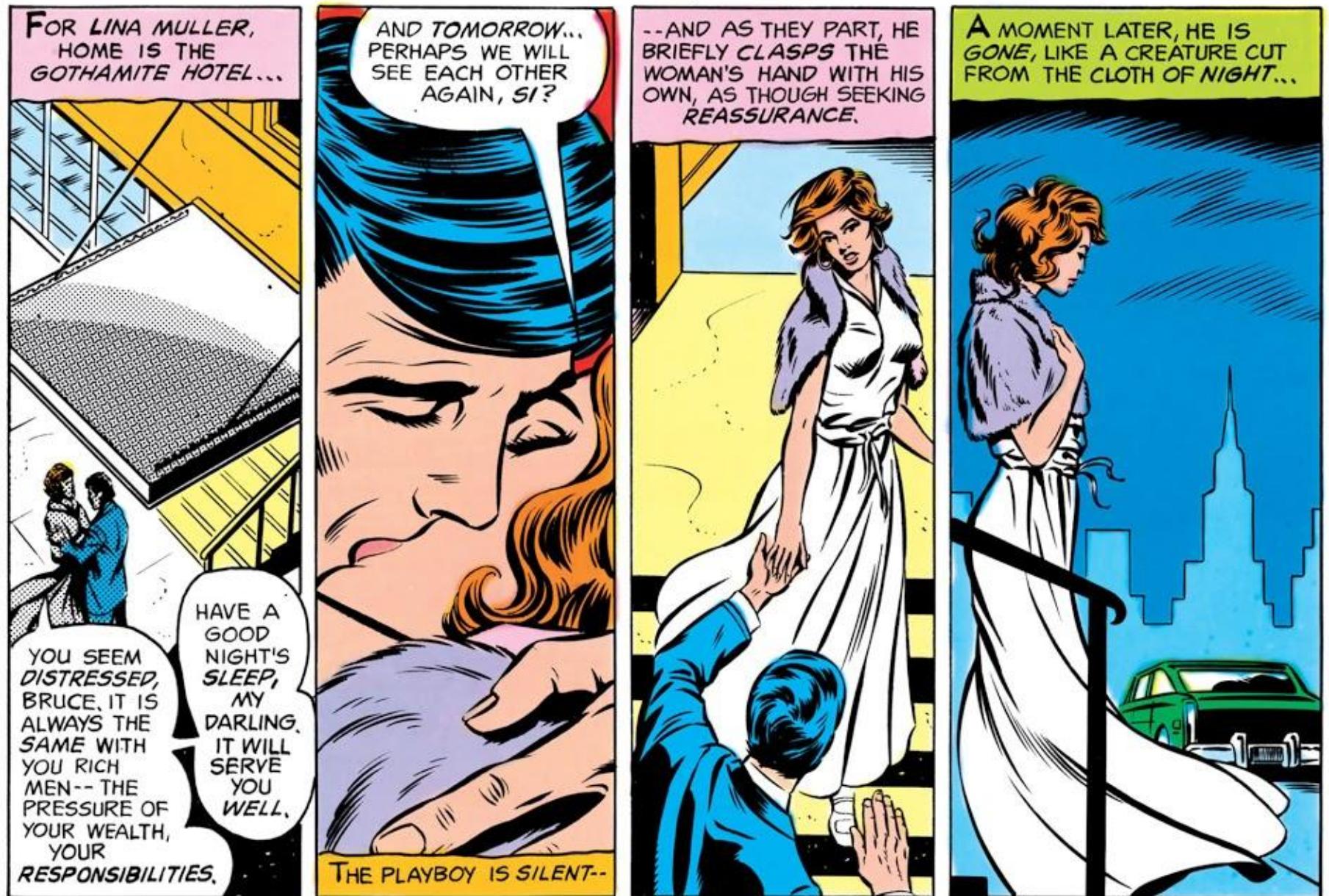


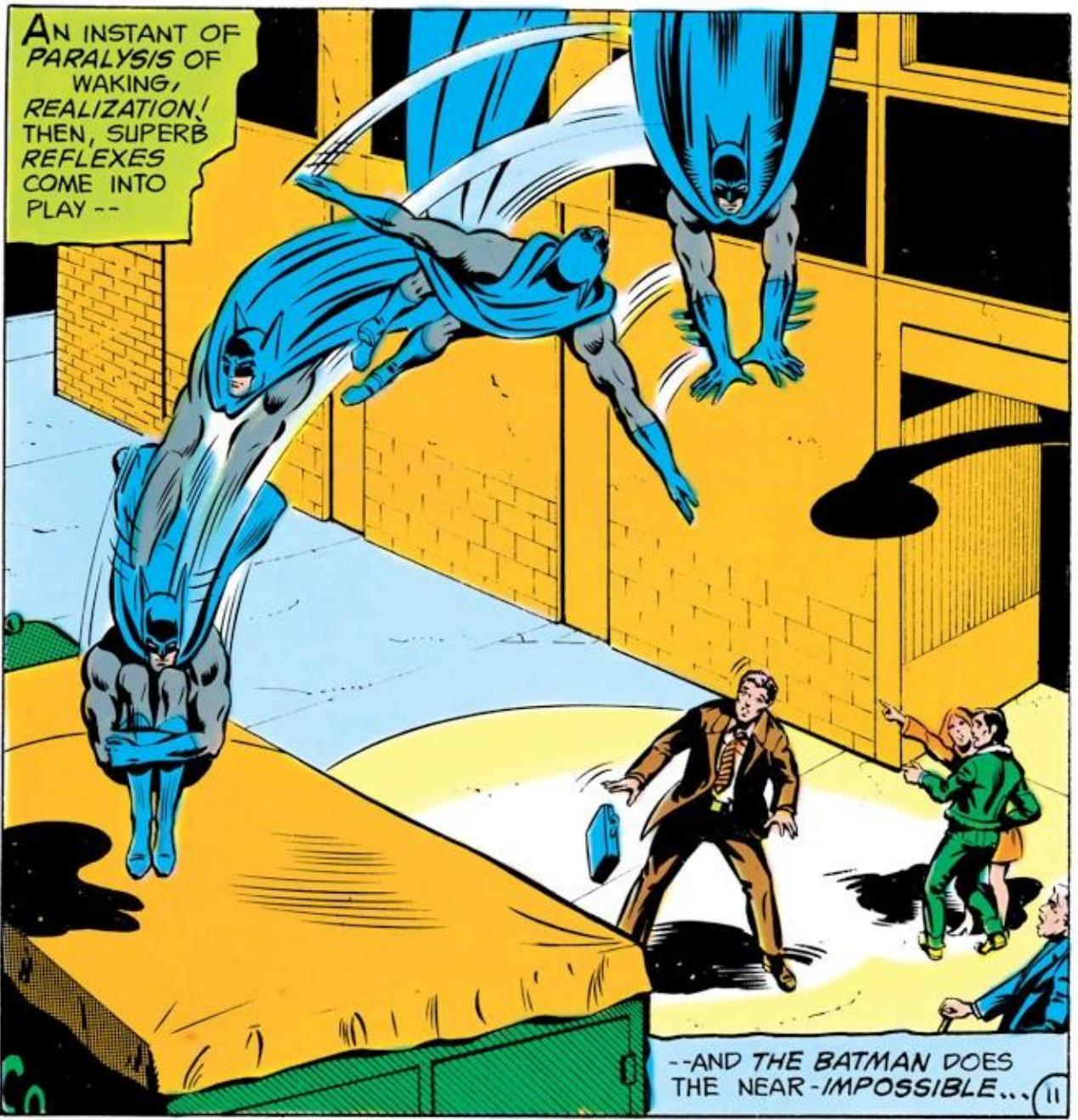
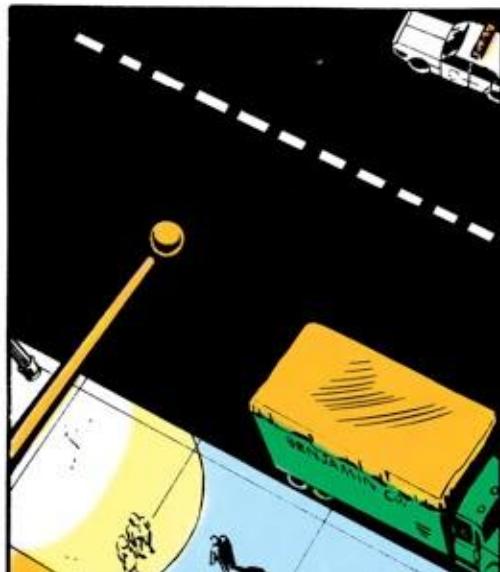
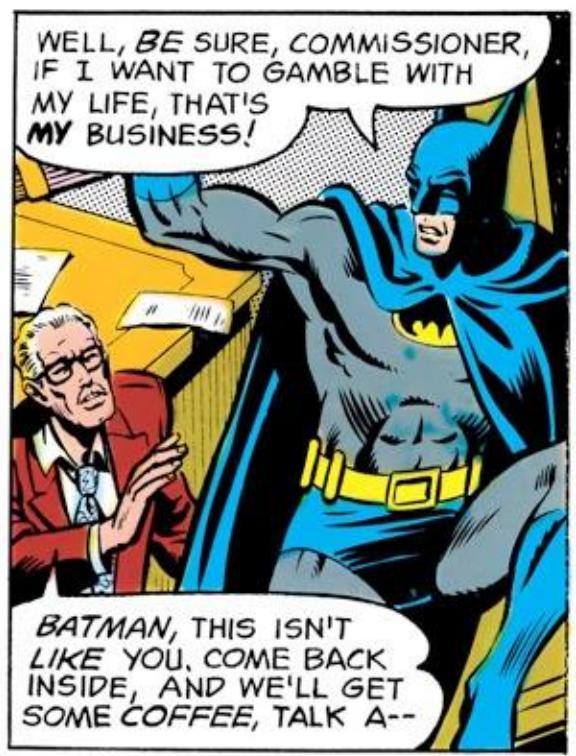
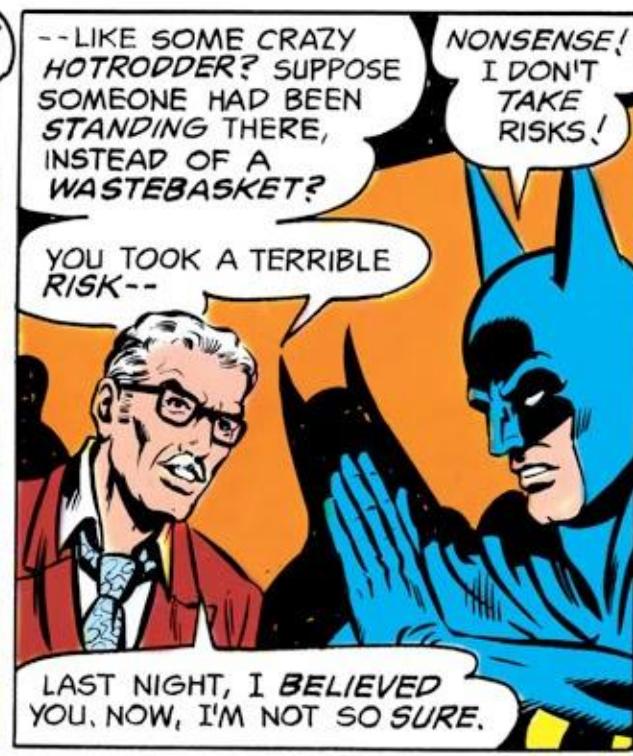
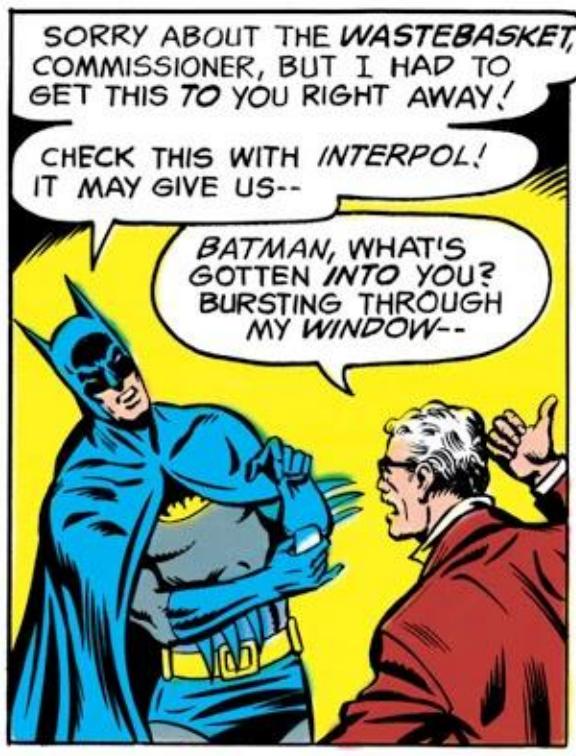
THEN, DURING A LULL IN A GAME OF ROULETTE--





AND AGAIN, AND AGAIN, THE HOUSE ODDS WIN OUT... AND BRUCE WAYNE CONTINUES TO LOSE, UNTIL--







IF HE HEARS, THE DARKNIGHT DETECTIVE GIVES NO SIGN...

KRAASSH

HE GOES THROUGH THE LOBBY DOORS LIKE A MISSILE, AND ROLLS, GRABBING AT HIS UTILITY BELT EVEN AS A MAN SWINGS AROUND ON THE BALCONY ABOVE HIM...

BULLETS STITCH A PATTERN THROUGH THE LOBBY FLOOR, BUT BEFORE THEY CAN REACH THEIR TARGET, THE COWLED CRUSADER THROWS--

--AND A GAS-CAPSULE EXPLODES WITH A NEAR-SILENT POP!

...AMOS FORTUNE, OF ALL PEOPLE! THE LAST I HEARD, YOU'D BEEN NABBED BY THE JUSTICE LEAGUE!*

BY MAKING SELECTED BUSINESSMEN BELIEVE THAT THEY HAVE INFALLIBLE LUCK--GIVING THEM GAMBLER'S FEVER--FORTUNE WAS ABLE TO PLAY JACKAL.

HOW LONG DOES THE FEVER LAST, AMOS? A WEEK? A MONTH?

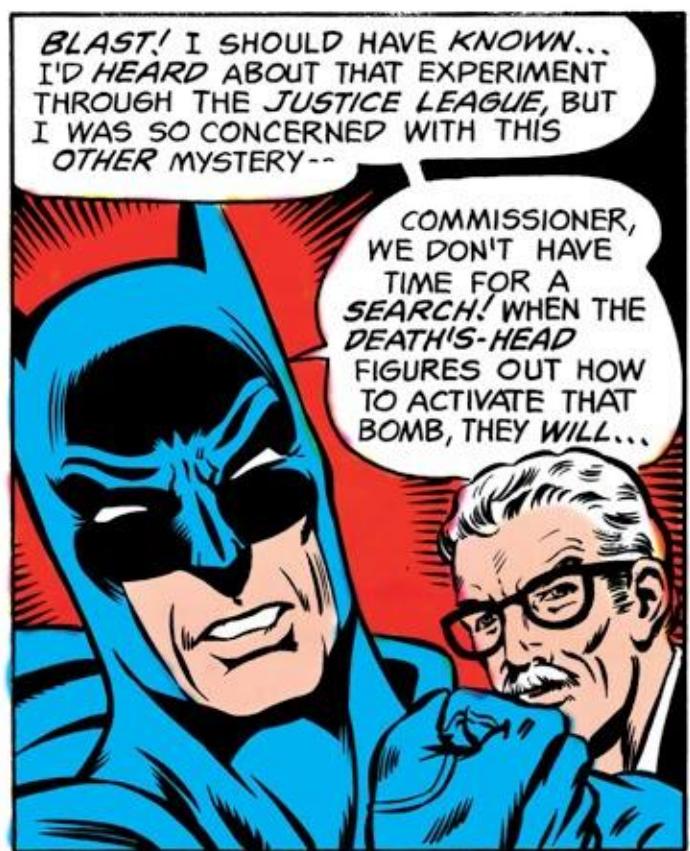
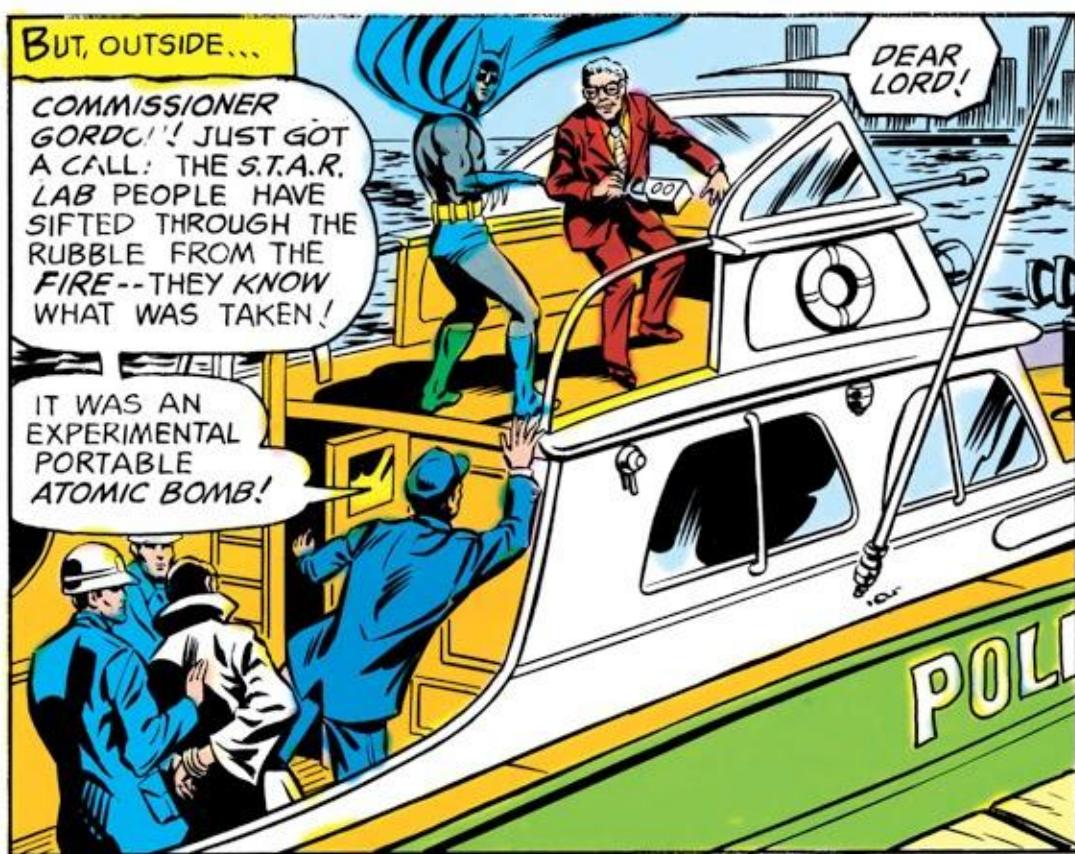
JUST A WEEK, BATMAN. MORE THAN ENOUGH TIME FOR ME TO PICK MY VICTIMS CLEAN!

HE COULD TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THEIR POOR DECISIONS TO STEAL THEIR COMPANIES, JUST AS A JACKAL STEALS A LION'S KILL!

COMMISSIONER, GET HIM OUT OF HERE... BEFORE I DO SOMETHING WE'LL BOTH REGRET!

I THINK WE'LL FIND HE BROKE OUT OF PRISON, COMMISSIONER, WITH A NEW SCAM TO USE HIS MASTERY OF LUCK!

* JLA #151! -- JULIE



SO THE BATMAN WANTS TO CHALLENGE US, DOES HE? THE HERO-WARRIOR OF THE BOURGEOIS... VERSUS THE PEOPLE'S LIBERATION ARMY!

WE'LL ACCEPT THAT CHALLENGE!

IT SHOULD PROVE MOST... FASCINATING!

THE STARSSCRAPER IS SILENT AND DARK THIS EVENING; THERE ARE NO REVELERS HERE TONIGHT, THOUGH THERE ARE GAMBLERS OF A DIFFERENT KIND...

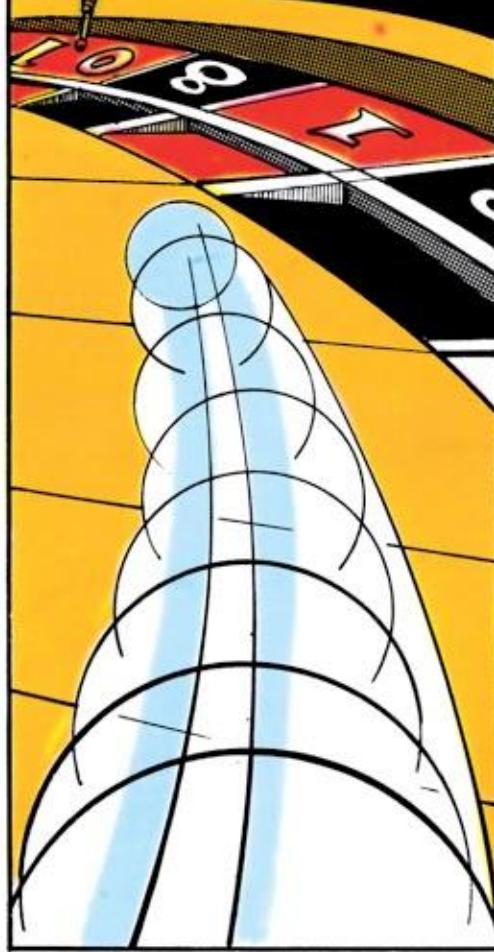
AT THE FERRY LANDING, A MOTORBOAT DOCKS, AND SIX WARY FIGURES DEBARK, GRINNING LIKE WOLVES PREPARING FOR A SLAUGHTER...

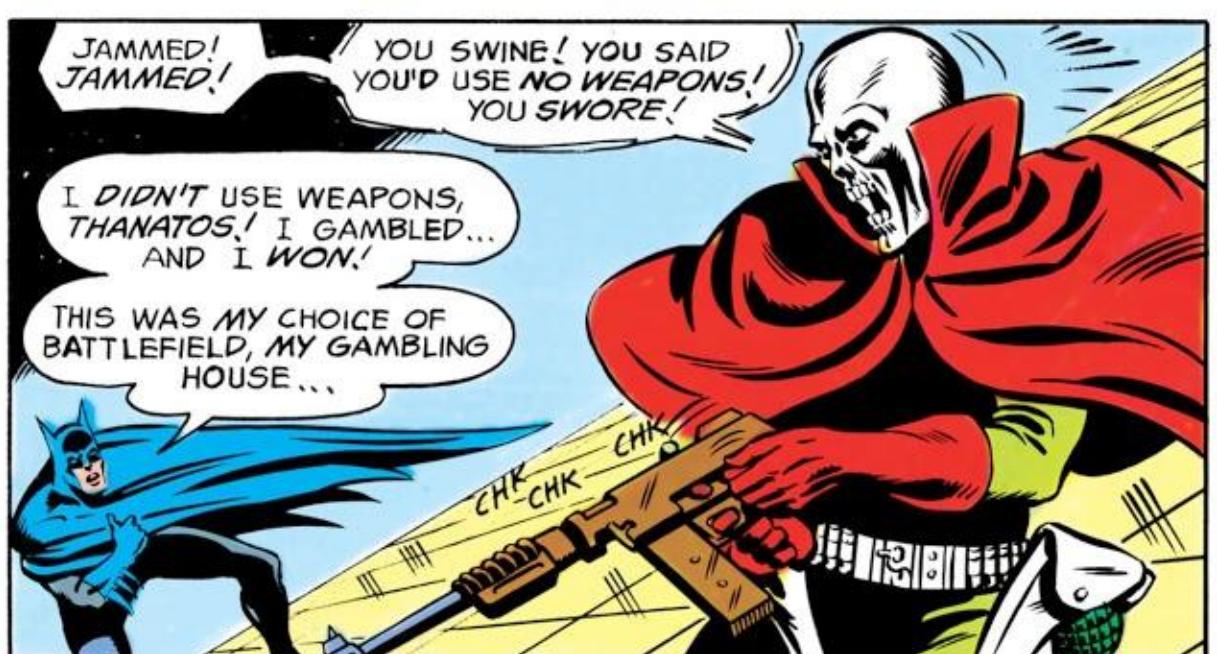
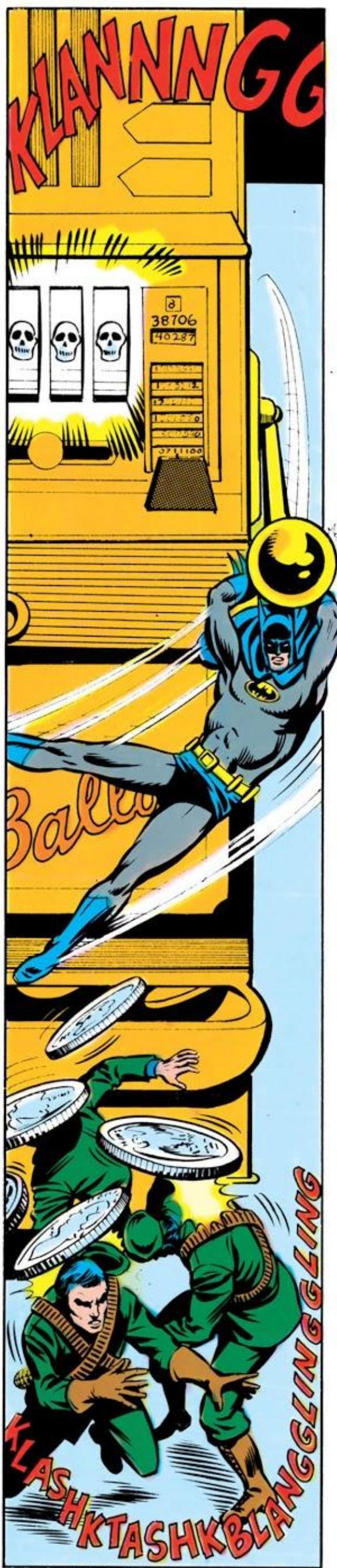
BUT THEY AREN'T THE ONLY WOLVES HERE THIS MIDNIGHT--



--AND THE SEVENTH WOLF HAS WITS FOR CLAWS...

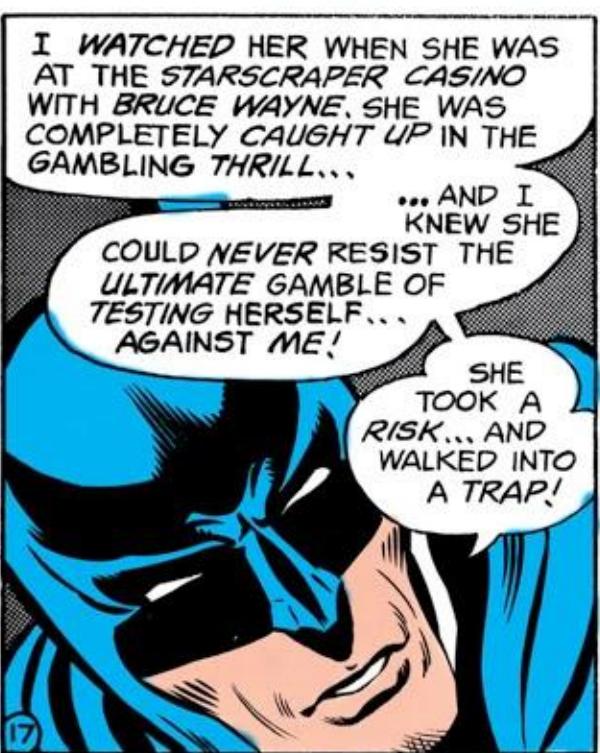
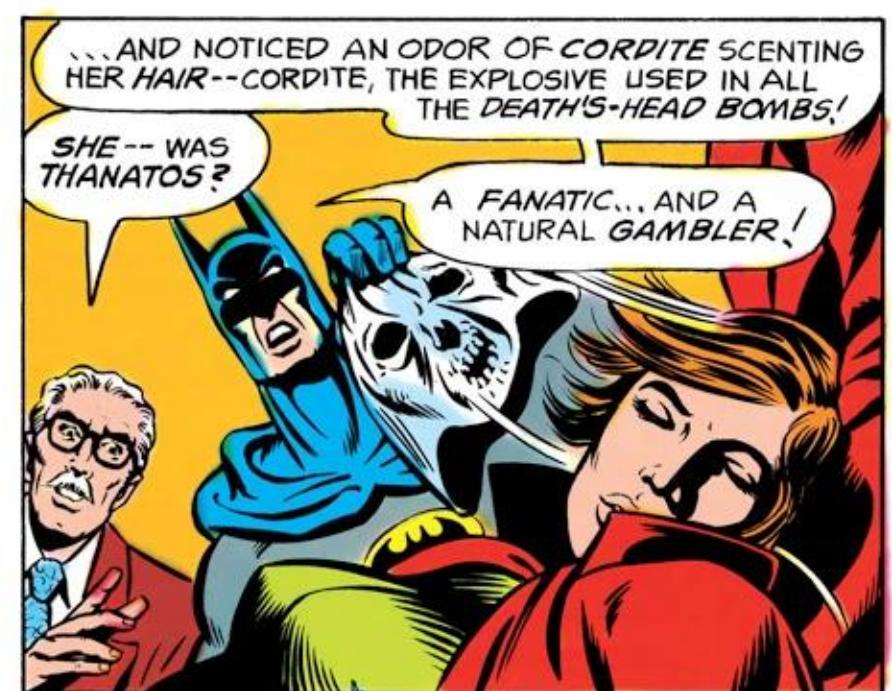
WHAT'S THAT? A GIANT ROULETTE BALL! --DUCK!







EPILOGUE



DUSK ON A MUGGY AUGUST DAY! THE SKY IS ALIVE WITH ELECTRICITY... AND THE WIND WHIPS THE CLOUDS INTO THUNDERHEADS!

IN OTHER PARTS OF GOTHAM CITY, MEN AND WOMEN HURRY HOME AHEAD OF THE ONCOMING STORM... BUT IN AN ALMOST-FORGOTTEN CORNER OF GOTHAM CEMETERY, A LONE FIGURE STANDS UNMOVED BY THE WEATHER!

"WITH THIS RING FIND ME DEAD!"

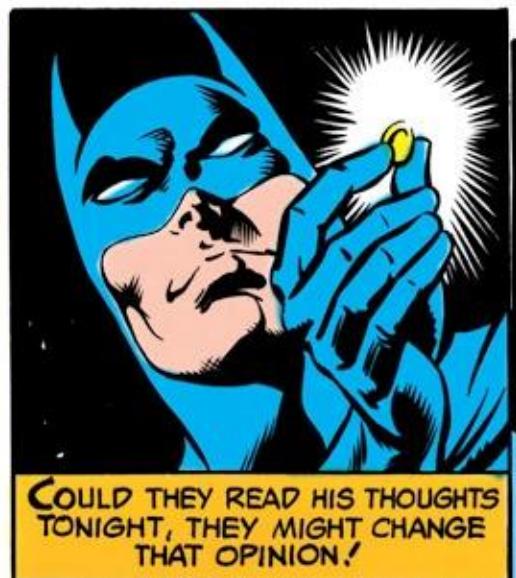
UNSOURED CASES

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JOHN CLARK
1882-1951

MANY BELIEVE THE BATMAN TO BE A COLD, UNCARING CREATURE... DEDICATED TO THE RUTHLESS PURSUIT OF CRIMINALS--



COULD THEY READ HIS THOUGHTS TONIGHT, THEY MIGHT CHANGE THAT OPINION!



EVER SEE THIS BEFORE, BATMAN?

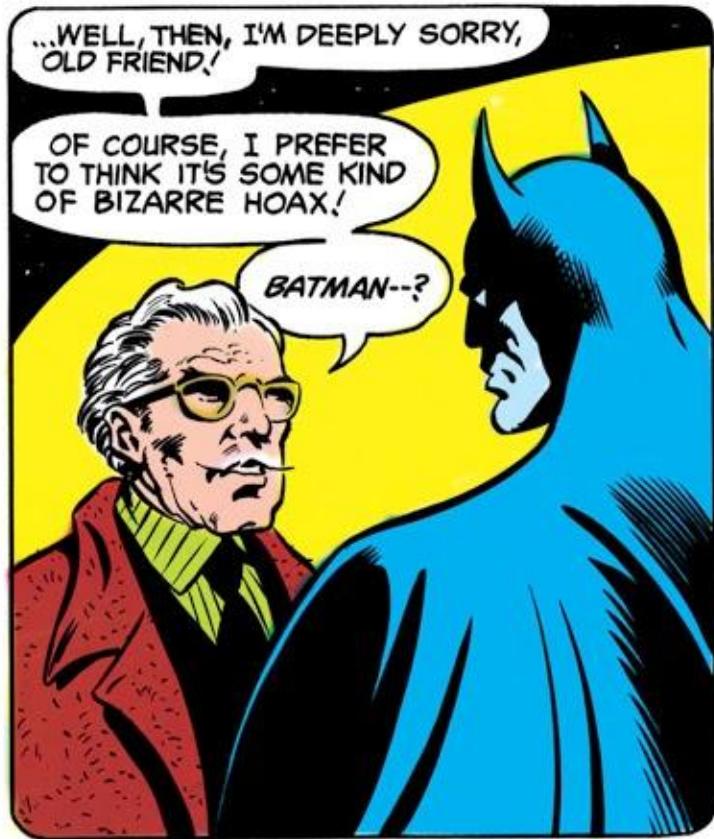


ONLY REASON I ASK IS BECAUSE OF THE INSCRIPTION--



"TO MY DARLING WIFE,
LOVE, THE BATMAN."

IT'S THE ONLY IDENTIFICATION WE FOUND ON HER, AND IF IT REALLY MEANS WHAT IT SAYS...



...WELL, THEN, I'M DEEPLY SORRY, OLD FRIEND!

OF COURSE, I PREFER TO THINK IT'S SOME KIND OF BIZARRE HOAX!

BATMAN--?



WE'VE ALREADY RUN A PRELIMINARY CHECK ON THE GIRL'S FINGERPRINTS -- NO RECORD!

THERE ARE STILL DENTAL RECORDS, OF COURSE... AND THE CHANCE SOMEONE WILL BE ABLE TO IDENTIFY THE BODY!

WELL, BATMAN--?



I'LL HANG ON TO THE RING, COMMISSIONER... AND I'LL BE IN TOUCH!



BUT WHAT ABOUT THE DEAD GIRL? DO YOU KNOW HER?

IS SHE... MRS. BATMAN?

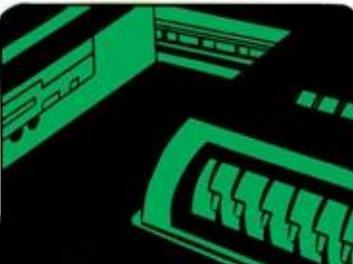
NOT LONG AFTER, IN THE BATCAVE
BENEATH WAYNE MANOR...



THE RING ISN'T
VERY DISTINCTIVE
TO THE NAKED
EYE--BUT THIS
ENLARGED
VIEW WILL GIVE
ME SOMETHING
TO FEED THE
COMPUTER!

CLKITACLAKITA

NEUTRON
ACTIVATION
ANALYSIS WILL
GIVE ME A
BREAKDOWN
OF THE RING'S
COMPOSITION--



QUARTZ .00217%
SODIUM CHLORIDE .00105%
VEGETABLE MATTER .00078%
(CLASSIFICATION:
SEAWEED --TYPE: KELP)

SOLID GOLD...
WITH THE USUAL
ALLOWANCE
FOR TRACE
METALS...

GOLD 98.7%
LEAD .6%
IRON .3%...

QUARTZ, SALT AND
SEAWEED, EH?
NOW TO HAVE
THE COMPUTER
FILTER THAT
INFO AND
GIVE ME A
PROBABLE
LOCATION!

CLKITACLAK

TAK TAACLAKITA+

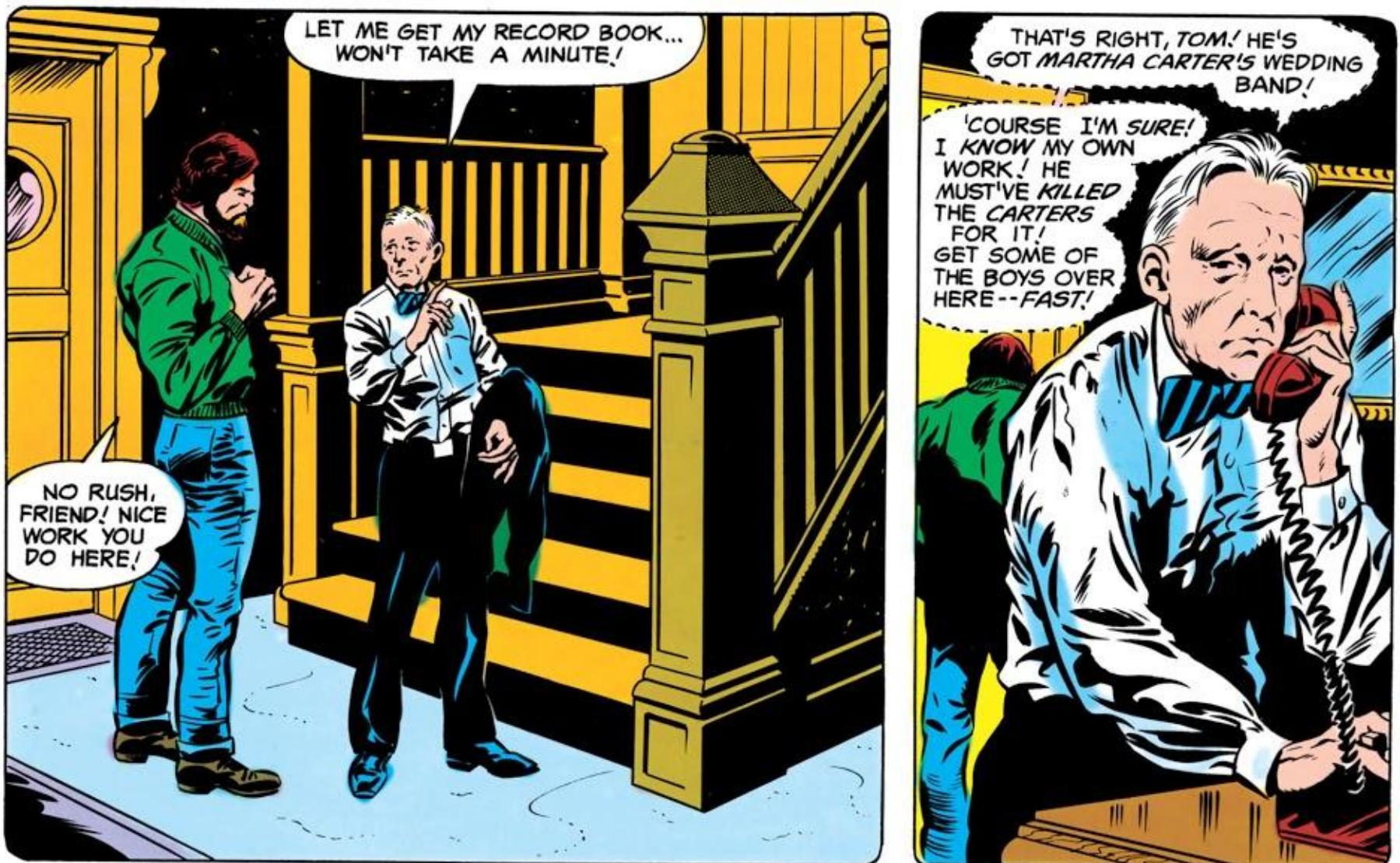
CLOSING IN
ON IT...

70° WEST
44° NORTH

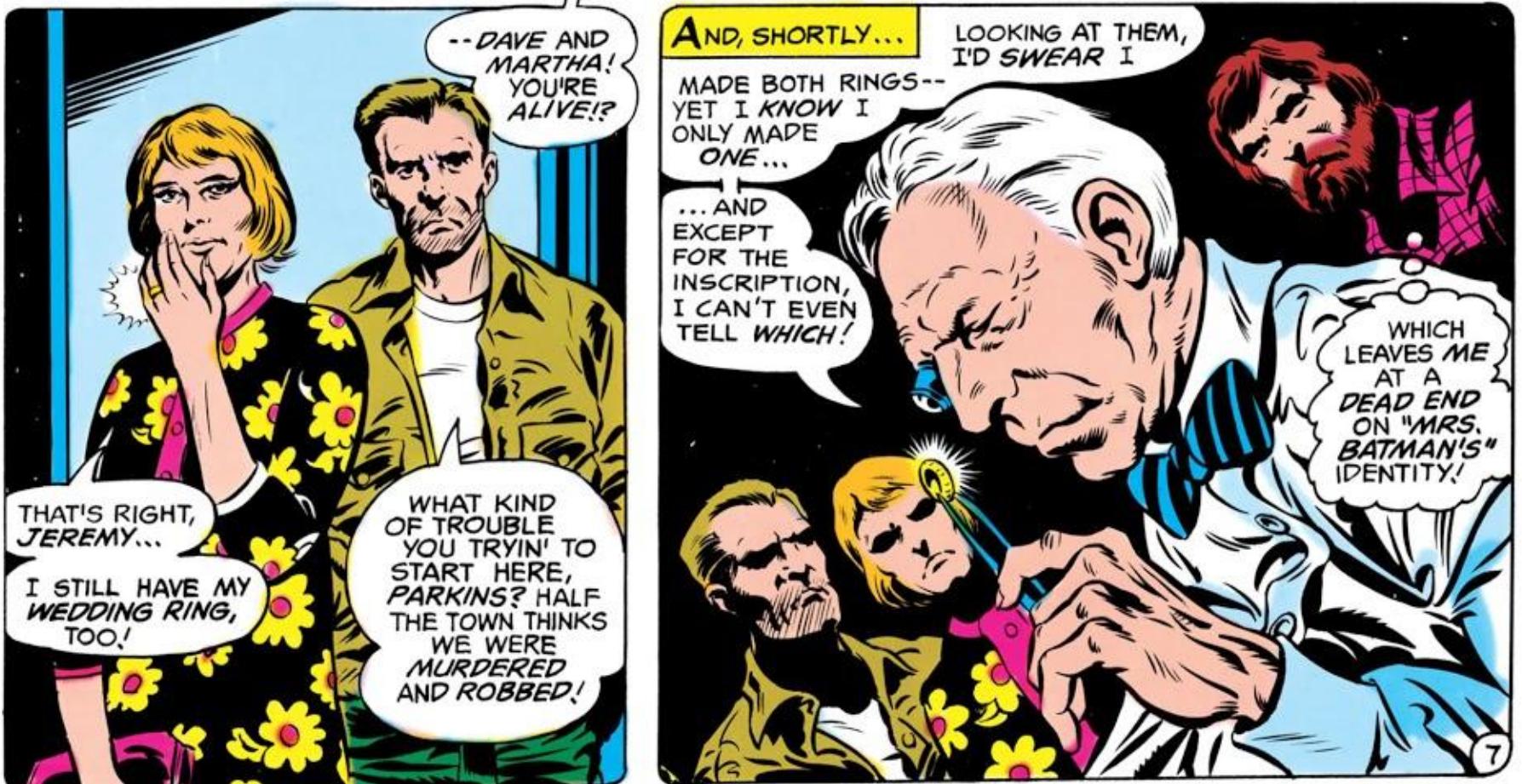
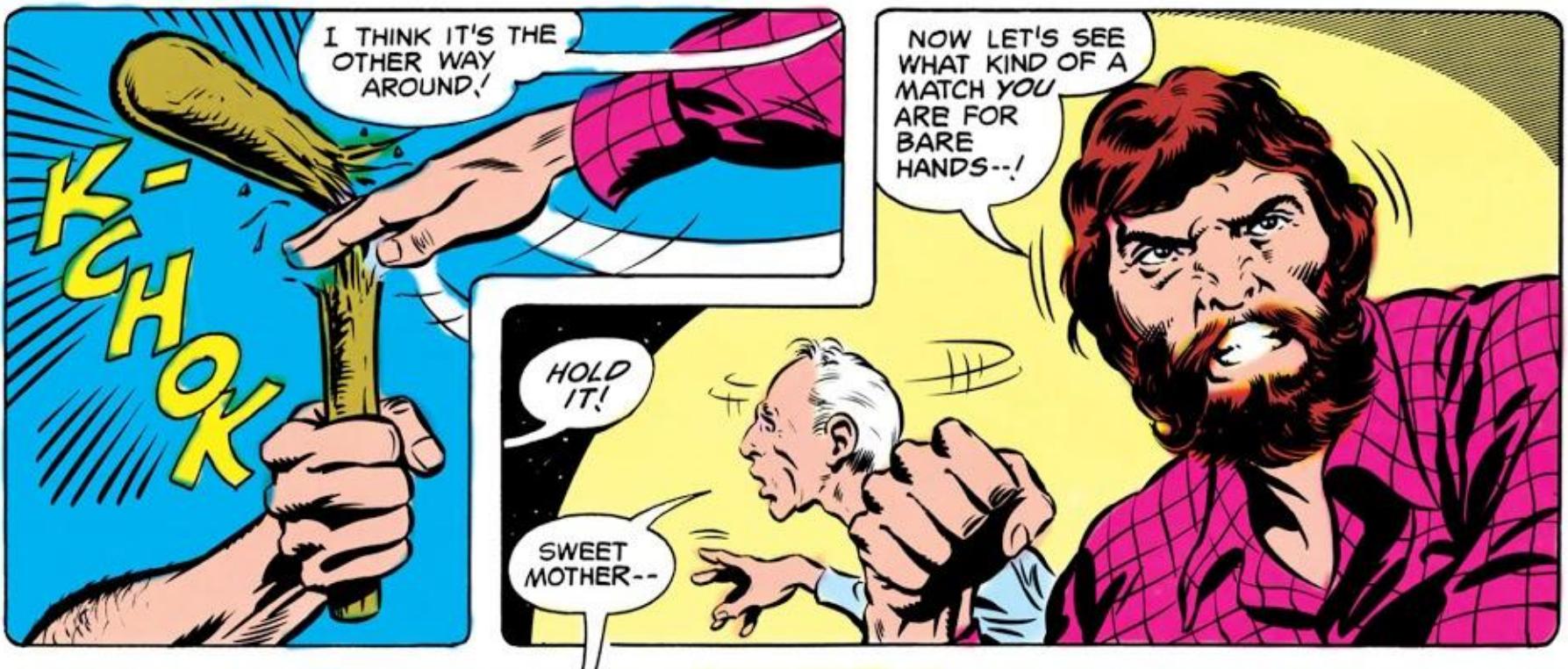
THE COAST
OF MAINE--
NEXT STOP!



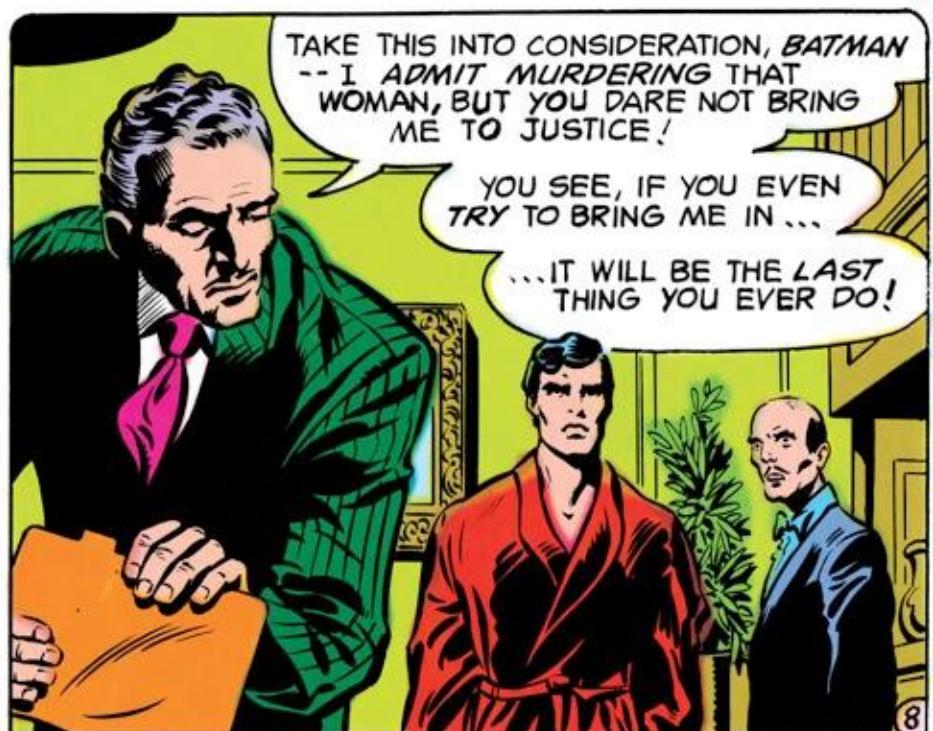








WITHOUT REVEALING HIS TRUE IDENTITY OR MISSION, A PUZZLED BATMAN RETURNS TO GOTHAM...



READER -- WHAT WOULD YOU DO? PONDER YOUR ANSWER AND THEN JOIN US NEXT ISSUE TO LEARN THE BATMAN'S DECISION IN THE MYSTERY MURDERER OF "MRS. BATMAN"!



novus
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