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# BATMAN

A  
SPECIAL  
25-PAGE  
THRILLER!

ONLY I KNOW  
THE ANSWER TO  
THIS QUESTION--

--AND IT'LL  
COST GOTHAM CITY A  
**BILLION DOLLARS**  
TO FIND OUT!

EXTRA GOTHAM GAZETTE  
**WHERE IS BATMAN?**





ORPHANED AS A CHILD WHEN  
A GUNMAN MURDERED HIS PARENTS,  
BRUCE WAYNE TRAINED HIMSELF  
TO WAGE RELENTLESS WAR AGAINST  
CRIME. MASQUERADEING BY DAY AS  
A MILLIONAIRE MAN-ABOUT-TOWN, HE  
PROWLS THE NIGHT TO PREY ON THE  
VERMIN OF THE UNDERWORLD AS  
THE DREAD...

# BAT-MAN

CREATED BY

BOB  
KANE

# "WHILE THE BAT'S AWAY..."

...IT'S NOT JUST THE  
MICE THAT COME OUT  
TO PLAY!

HEADS UP,  
SAM! HE'S GIVEN  
UP ON THE  
HOSTAGE BIT--

--AND HE'S  
COMIN' OUT!

POW!

KRAH!  
KRAH!  
KRAH!

BOB ROZAKIS, ROY THOMAS, JOSE GARCIA-LOPEZ & FRANK McLAUGHLIN  
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--HOT OFF THE PRESSES, COMMISSIONER GORDON!

I'D FIGURED YOU WANT TO SEE THEM PRONTO.

COMMISSIONER GORDON

YOU FIGURED RIGHT, PATRICK.

THANKS.

HMM... PATRICK'S LUCKY IT'S OUT OF STYLE TO KILL THE BEARERS OF BAD TIDINGS...

...OR ELSE I'D HAVE HAD TO SHOOT HIM.

NOT MUCH OF A JOKE, I'M AFRAID, COMMISSIONER.

WHERE IS THE BATMAN? WITHOUT HELPLESS BATMAN?

A WAVE OF CRIME ON THE STREETS OF GOTHAM CITY

NO-- AND NEITHER ARE THESE HEADLINES!

YOU REALLY CAN'T BLAME 'EM, SIR...

I DON'T BLAME THE PAPERS-- I BLAME US!

ONE MAN DROPS OUT OF SIGHT FOR A FEW WEEKS -- AND SUDDENLY WE'VE GOT A MAJOR CRIME WAVE ON OUR HANDS!

UH-- SHALL I ISSUE A DENIAL, COMMISSIONER?

NEGATIVE, FRED...

SINCE WE DON'T KNOW WHERE HE IS OR WHY HE'S GONE.

OR IF HE'S COMING BACK!

UH-- WHAT JERRY MEANS, SIR, IS--

I KNOW WHAT HE MEANS, BLAST IT-- AND THE BATMAN'S NOT DEAD!

I'D STAKE MY LIFE ON IT!

BUT THEN--

-- IT'S NOT YOUR LIFE WE'RE TALKING ABOUT, IS IT, GORDON?

IS BATMAN DEAD?



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THUS, NEXT DAY...

...SO I TOLD HER, YOU  
TELL THAT BLOOD-  
SUCKIN' MOTHER OF  
YOURS TO--

HEY! WHO IN  
BLAZES IS  
THAT??

I DUNNO, BUT--  
SOME KIND OF  
CRAZY CARTWHEEL  
ON HIS CHEST--  
SPINNING--

WH--?  
HE'S  
GONE!

IT'S SOME KIND 'A  
LIZARD--OR DRAGON--  
OR SOMETHING!

HURRY--  
SLAM ON THE  
BRAKES!

YEAH--BUT COOK WHAT  
JUST TOOK HIS PLACE!

THEY'RE  
SLAMMED!

THIS IS NUTTY! IT'S JUST CROUCHIN' THERE--  
NOT EVEN MAKIN'  
A SOUND!  
ACTUALLY, LADS, IT'S  
NOT EVEN DOING THAT...

...SINCE IT DOESN'T  
REALLY EXIST, EXCEPT  
IN YOUR EYES AND  
MINDS!

BUT THEN, YOU'LL  
UNDERSTAND ALL  
THAT WHEN YOU  
LEARN I'VE  
RELIEVED YOU OF  
BOTH KEYS--  
AND CASH.

BY THE TIME MY  
"DRAGON" VANISHES-

KEEP  
FIRIN',  
EDDIE!

--SO WILL  
THE  
SPELLBINDER!

IT IS NIGHT AMID THE GREY SPIRES AND SHADOWED CANYONS OF GOTHAM CITY...

...AS A NATTILY-ATTIRED MAN OF MIDDLE YEARS STEPS FROM A SECRET ELEVATOR, FAR BEHIND THE GLASS AND STEEL AND CONCRETE OF THE WAYNE FOUNDATION BUILDING...

...INTO A WORLD WHERE IT IS ALWAYS NIGHT, AFTER A FASHION.



AND ALFRED PENNYWORTH, DESPITE HIS EVER-PLACID EXTERIOR, HAS MOST DESPERATELY WANTED TO HEAR AN ANSWER.

I...WONDER IF IT COULD POSSIBLY BE TRUE, THEN...

WHAT THE NEWSPAPERS ARE ALL SAYING.

IF SO, I'LL NEVER FORGIVE MYSELF...FOR LINGERING IN EUROPE FOR SO LONG WHEN HE MIGHT HAVE NEEDED ME.\*



\* SEE DETECTIVE COMICS #501-502.—PAUL.

AND YET-- IT SEEMS IMPOSSIBLE!

I KEEP EXPECTING TO SEE HIM-- TO HEAR HIS VOICE-- TO FEEL--



WHAT--?



SORRY I DIDN'T  
SPEAK UP  
WHEN YOU CAME  
IN, ALFRED.

MASTER BRUCE! OR, PERHAPS  
I SHOULD SAY--

GUESS I WAS  
DEEP IN  
THOUGHT--  
MUCH AS  
YOU WERE,  
JUST NOW.

--THE  
BATMAN!

PLEASE PARDON  
MY OUTCRY, SIR--  
BUT AFTER WHAT THE  
TABLOIDS HAVE BEEN  
SAYING, I--I  
FEARED THAT--

THANK YOU. I TAKE IT, THEN,  
YOU'RE QUITE ALL RIGHT?

LET'S JUST SAY  
I'VE BEEN  
AWAY--

I'VE  
SEEN THE  
PAPERS.

OH YES...  
AND  
WELCOME  
HOME.

--BUT NOW  
I'M BACK!

I SHOULD SAY  
YOU ARE, SIR...

... MOST DECIDEDLY, TOO!

NOT LONG AFTERWARD...

YEAH-- HE JUST SENT IT TO  
THROW US OFF THE SCENT.

I STILL SAY  
IT'S A RED  
HERRING,  
COMMISSIONER.

I DON'T  
THINK SO...

THAT ISN'T  
THIS PARTICULAR  
GENTLEMAN'S  
STYLE.

41° 46' N.  
50° 14' W.  
APPLY YOURSELF!

The Cluemaster

I JUST WISH I KNEW  
WHAT KIND OF CLUE  
THAT BARGAIN-BASEMENT  
IMITATION OF THE  
RIDDLE MEANS TO  
GIVE US.

THERE'S  
NOTHING AT THAT  
LATITUDE AND LONGI-  
TITUDE... NOTHING BUT'  
SALT WATER  
AND SEALS!

OF COURSE,  
IT COULD MEAN  
SOMETHING  
ELSE BESIDES  
MARKINGS ON  
A MAP...

SOMETHING  
WRONG, SIR?

BUT  
WHAT?

I... JUST THOUGHT  
I SAW SOMETHING  
FOR A SECOND...  
OUT OF THE CORNER  
OF MY EYE...

...BUT I GUESS  
IT WAS JUST WISHFUL  
THINKING...!

# SUPERMAN

## IN "GOLD MINE RESCUE"

THEY'RE IN THERE, ALL  
RIGHT. BUT IT'S TOO  
RISKY TO BLAST,  
SO I'LL...



COMMISSIONER GORDON'S  
RIGHT ABOUT ONE THING--  
THE CLUEMASTER WAS  
A POOR-MAN'S RIDDLE,  
ALL RIGHT.

WE MET ONLY ONCE--  
SEVERAL YEARS  
BACK--

BUT THAT HASN'T  
STOPPED ME FROM  
FIGURING OUT HIS  
LITTLE CLUE--

--BOTH  
OF THEM,  
IN FACT!

Pretty obvious to  
one who's sailed his  
own BATSUB-- his  
spelling out the  
location of the  
long-sunken  
TITANIC--

--and for that  
"APPLY YOURSELF"  
REMARK--!

AT LEAST HE'S  
STOPPED GIVING OUT  
"TOPSY-TURVY"  
CLUES--

NOW, IF I CAN  
JUST CURE HIM OF  
PUNS AS WELL!

UH-- MAYBE NOT  
QUITE THAT  
LONG, BOSS!

--PROBABLY BECAUSE  
I DOPED THEM OUT  
AND SENT HIM TO  
PRISON.

NO NEED  
TO HURRY.

WE'VE GOT  
ALL NIGHT.

EH? WHAT  
ARE YOU  
TALKING--?

WAIT!  
THAT  
SHADOW!

AH, HOW  
QUICKLY THEY  
FORGET!

NO, NOT THE  
SHADOW,  
PUNK. HE  
RETIRE.

BATMAN!

THE  
BATMAN,  
TO YOU!

BUT,  
HE SAID  
YOU WERE--

WELL, NO  
MATTER.

THIS SMOKE-  
PELLET WILL TAKE  
CARE OF OUR  
ESCAPE--

--AND  
YOUR  
LUNGS!

Pop!

YOU  
DISAPPOINT ME,  
CLUEMASTER.

I CATALOGUED ALL  
YOUR LITTLE CAPSULES  
WHEN I HAULED YOU  
IN THE FIRST TIME,  
REMEMBER?

TOO BAD YOU  
DIDN'T SPEND YOUR  
TIME BEHIND BARS  
IMPROVING EITHER  
YOUR ACT--

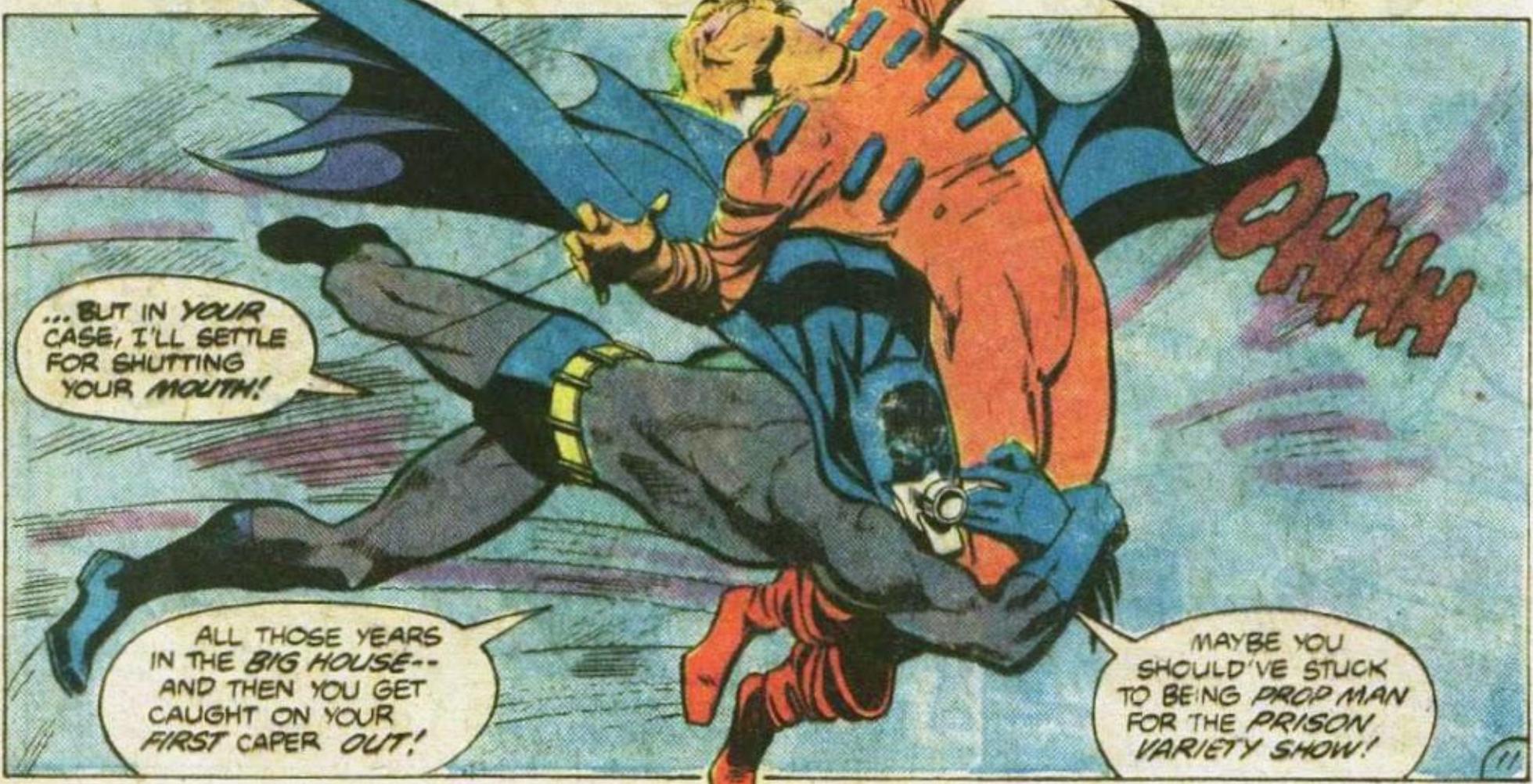
PINK!

--OR AT LEAST THE  
COMPANY YOU KEEP!

UHHHHNNNN

WHOP!

SPLAT!



MINUTES  
LATER...

CLUEMASTER AND COMPANY  
SHOULD BE NICE AND COZY  
FOR A WHILE WHERE I  
LEFT THEM.

MAYBE ONE  
OF THEM  
WILL EVEN  
CRACK  
AND TELL  
ME WHO'S  
BEHIND  
THIS CRIME  
WAVE.

WELL,  
WOULDN'T  
YOU JUST  
KNOW!

HURRY  
UP WITH  
THAT  
GLOWSTICK  
TONIGHT!

THERE'S  
STILL COPS  
IN THIS BURG,  
Y'KNOW.

YEAH,  
BUT THE  
MONARCH  
OF MENACE  
SAID --

MEANWHILE,  
I'LL SEE IF I CAN  
SCRUNGE UP ANY  
MORE HOODS WHO  
THINK I'M MISSING  
IN ACTION.

THE MONARCH  
OF MENACE,  
EH?

NOW  
THERE'S A  
NAME THAT  
CONJURES  
UP MEM-  
ORIES--  
ALL  
BAD!

IT--IT CAN'T  
BE! YOU'RE  
SUPPOSED TO  
BE LOCKED  
UP SOME-  
WHERE!

YEAH?  
WELL, I'LL  
MAKE HIM  
WISH HE WAS--

--WHEN I TURN HIM INTO  
FRYCAKED BAT!

MY CAPE'S JUST A BEEF  
RETTARDANT ENOUGH TO  
PROTECT ME FOR MAYBE  
THREE SECONDS--

SOOSH

--WHICH, LUCKILY,  
IS ABOUT TWO  
SECONDS LONGER  
THAN IT NEEDS  
TO BE!

I'LL KEEP  
THESE LOWLIFES  
ON ICE A FEW  
HOURS, TOO--

--TILL  
I FINISH MY  
PATROL.

SKOKE!

AH,  
BATMAN,  
YOU'VE  
FORGOTTEN  
ONE  
LITTLE  
ITEM:

EVEN RAVENS  
HAVE BEEN  
KNOWN TO POST  
AN OCCASIONAL  
LOOKOUT.

THUS, ERE LONG...

YOU HEARD ME, MONARCH! I WANT  
SOME 'A THAT COOT THE OTHERS BEEN  
GIVIN' YOU -- OR I'M BLOWIN' THE  
WHISTLE ON YOU!

-- BUT HE SURE WASN'T  
TALKIN' LIKE YOU'D EVER  
HAD HIM LOCKED UP!

NOT ONLY IS  
THE BATMAN  
RUNNIN' AROUND  
FREE AS A  
BIRD--

DO I GET  
MY HUSH-  
MONEY  
OR---?



-- OR PERHAPS I  
SHOULD SAY,  
"NIGHTED"--

ARRRH

-- SINCE YOU  
WILL NEVER  
AGAIN SEE THE  
LIGHT OF  
DAY!



NOW,  
LET  
ME  
SEE...

I MUST  
PLAN...

MORNING COMES, AFTER A NIGHT BOTH LONG AND SLEEPLESS...



...AND FOOTSTEPS UNHEARD IN THIS HALLWAY FOR SOME DAYS...



...ECHO THERE AGAIN:

GOOD MORNING, GENTLEMEN.



FIRST OFF, I WISH TO THANK YOU ALL FOR ARISING SO EARLY...

...AND TO APOLOGIZE FOR THE CIRCUMSTANCES THAT HAVE MADE NECESSARY THIS MEETING OF ALL FIRMS IN WHICH WAYNE ENTERPRISES HAS AN INTEREST.



IS EVERYONE HERE, LUCIUS?

EVERYONE, SIR.

GOOD! AS ALL OF YOU KNOW, WE'VE BEEN HURT BY THE RECENT MANIPULATIONS OF GREGORIAN FALSTAFF, AND...\*

UH, PARDON ME, MR. WAYNE, BUT OF COURSE YOUR ABSENCE THESE PAST FEW WEEKS HAS ADDED FUEL TO RUMORS OF FINANCIAL PROBLEMS.

PERHAPS, IF YOU COULD ISSUE A STATEMENT AS TO WHAT YOU'VE BEEN UP TO....

...BUT NOW I'M BACK!

LET'S JUST SAY, BILL, THAT I'VE BEEN AWAY...

AS ALFRED PENNYWORTH WOULD SAY... "MOST DECIDEDLY!"

NIGHTFALL:

WE'RE SURE HONORED TO  
HAVE YOU RIDING WITH US  
ON PATROL, COMMISSIONER  
GORDON.

THE PLEASURE'S MINE, TOM...

...BUT I'M NOT JUST  
ALONG FOR THE  
RIDE.

AFTER ALL, WITH ALL THESE "BATMAN  
IS DEAD" RUMORS FLYING AROUND, I  
FIGURED IT'D BE GOOD FOR MORALE  
IF AT LEAST I MADE AN APPEARANCE.

SIR, DO YOU THINK  
HE'S REALLY--?

HOLD IT! WHAT'S  
THAT UP AHEAD?

LOOKS LIKE A ROBBERY  
IN PROGRESS! YOU'VE  
GOT A SHARP EYE,  
SIR.

I WAS A  
COP BEFORE  
I WAS A DESK  
JOKEY, SON.

LET'S  
MOVE  
IN!

HOLY CATS! WHERE'D THAT  
COP-CAR COME FROM-- EVEN  
AFTER WE JIMMIED THE  
BURGLAR ALARM?

COOL IT! THE  
BOSS'LL TAKE  
CARE OF THOSE  
CLOWNS.

HE  
BETTER!

KEEP OUT OF SIGHT,  
SIR! WE CAN--

BLAST IT, TOM--  
I TOLD YOU,  
I'M NOT JUST  
ALONG FOR  
THE RIDE!

ALL RIGHT,  
YOU CHEAP  
HOODS!  
COME OUT  
WITH YOUR  
HANDS UP!

THIS IS  
THE POLICE  
COMMISSIONER  
TALKING!

WELL,  
WELL,  
BOYS!

LOOKS AS IF  
WE HAVE A CLASS  
AUDIENCE ON  
HAND TO CATCH  
MY OPENING  
ACT!

WHO THE  
DEVIL--?







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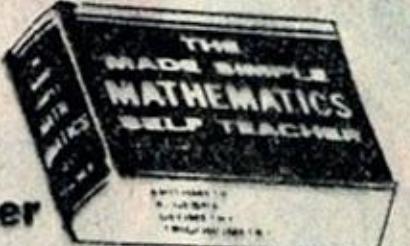
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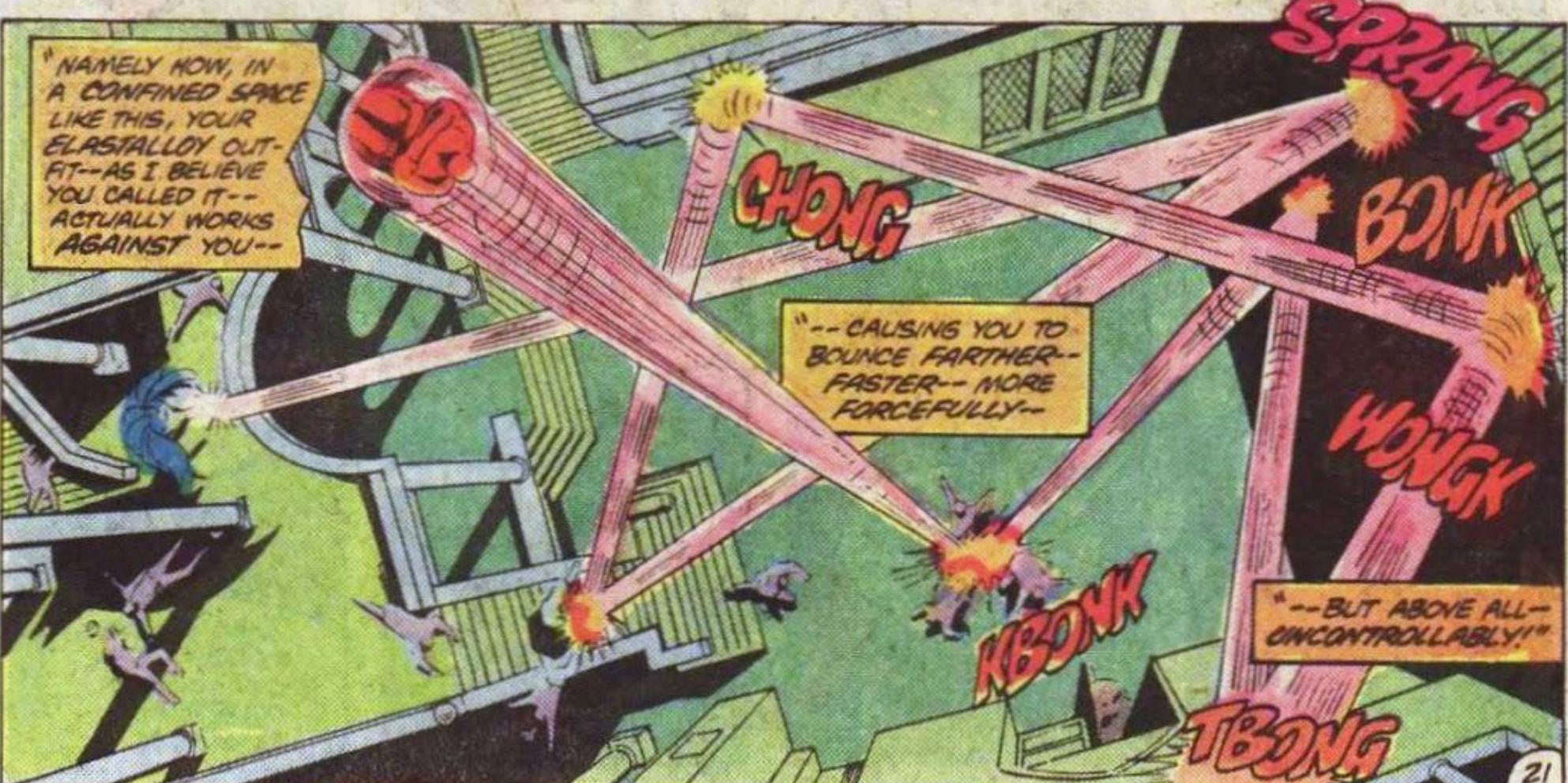
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AND WHILE THAT ONE-MAN  
FLUBBER FACTORY'S  
DOING MOST OF MY JOB  
FOR ME--

NOT  
NOW,  
PUNK!

OOOF!

**SPLONG!**

--I CAN  
CONCENTRATE  
ON "HIS  
HIGHNESS."

GIVE IT UP,  
MONARCH!

YOU'LL  
NEVER MAKE  
IT IN THE UNDER-  
WORLD WEARING  
THOSE THREADS,  
ANYWAY...

BURGER  
KING WILL  
SUE YOU FOR  
TRADEMARK  
INFRINGEMENT!

HOPED TO GOAD HIM  
INTO MAKING A STAND--  
BUT NO GO, SO FAR.

YOUR OLD  
PALS WON'T  
LIKE THIS ONE  
BIT--

I WAS SCARCELY  
FLEEING, CHURL!

CAN YOU  
HEAR ME IN  
THERE, MONARCH?

-- YOU  
RUNNING OFF  
AND LEAVING  
THEM HOLDING  
THE BAG.

WHAT--?

I KNEW  
YOU WOULD  
ESCHEW THE  
OTHERS AND  
FOLLOW ME...

...AND I SIMPLY  
WISHED TO KILL  
YOU... WITHOUT  
UNDUE INTER-  
FERENCE!

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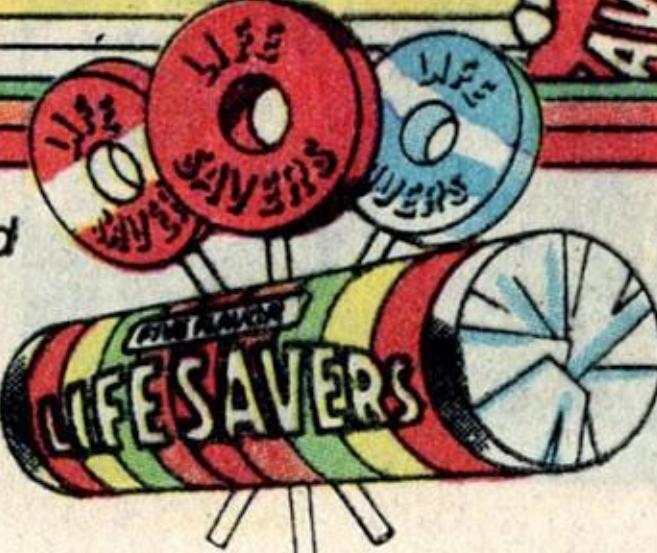


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YOU TALK BIG, MONARCH--FOR A GUY WHO LETS OTHERS DO HIS DIRTY WORK FOR HIM.

IS THAT NOT TRADITIONALLY THE WAY OF KINGS, VARLET?

AND HOW'D YOU KNOW I WOULDN'T SHOW UP AND BLOW YOUR COVER STORY?

I HAVE MY WAYS, BATMAN...

...WAYS OF KNOWING YOU HAVE BEEN ADVENTURING ALL OVER OUR TROUBLED GLOBE THESE WEEKS PAST.

BY THE TIME YOU RETURNED--  
IF YOU RETURNED--I INTENDED  
TO RELIEVE THOSE FOOLS OUT  
THERE OF A KING'S  
RANSOM.

WHO  
KNOWS?  
IF YOU HAD  
PERISHED  
ABROAD--

AND, AS THE MONARCH RANTS ON...

GOT TO  
BE READY  
FOR ANY  
OF HIS  
GIMMICKS...

GAS  
VENTS  
FROM HIS  
CAPE...

ELECTRIC  
SHOCKS  
FROM HIS  
SCEPTRE...

CROWN  
JEWELS THAT  
HYPNOTIZE....!

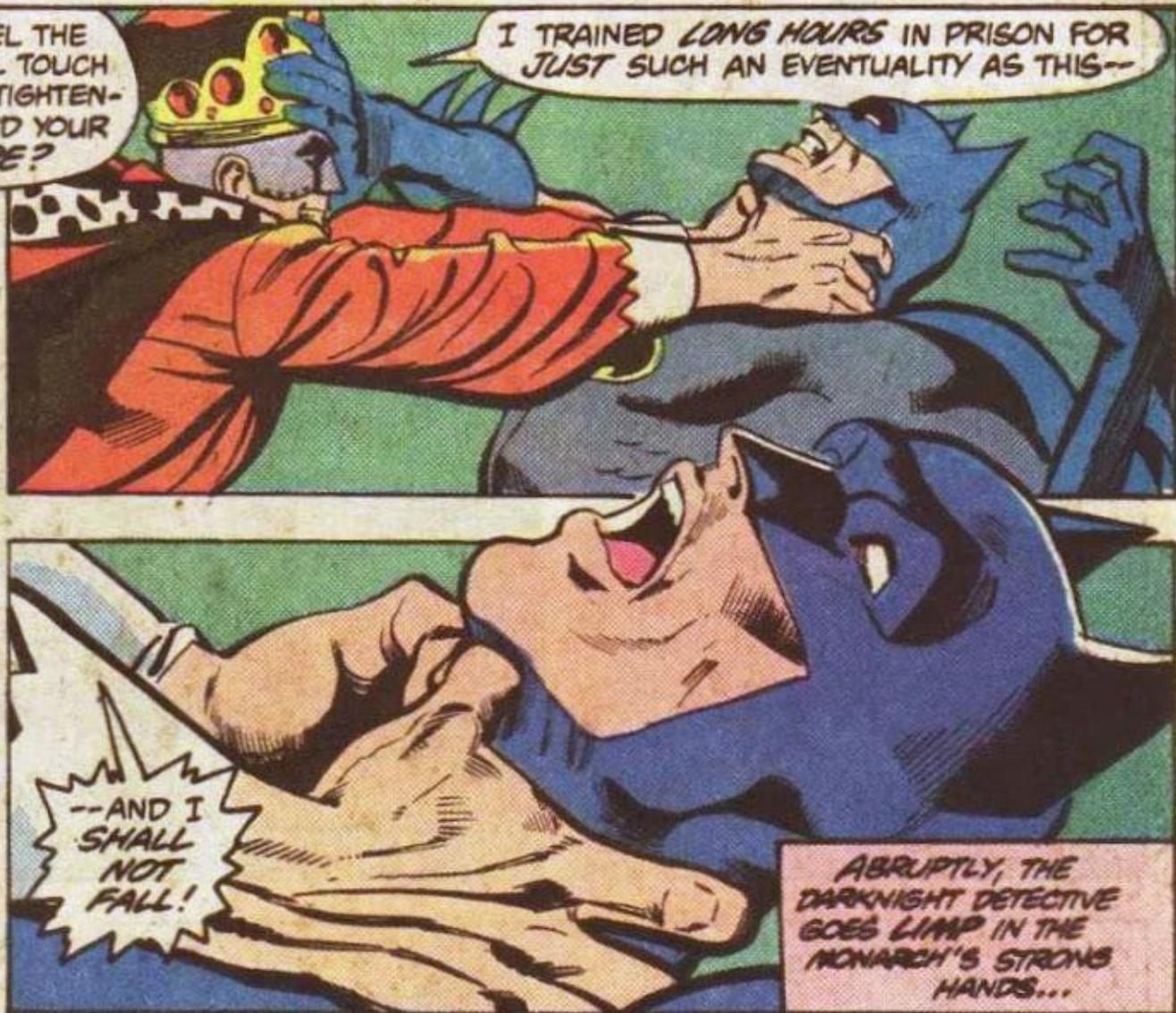
I CAN ALMOST  
SENSE YOUR MENTAL  
PROCESSES, KNAVE.

THUS, SINCE YOU  
ARE DOUBTLESS  
PREPARED TO COUNTER  
ANY OF MY ROYAL  
DEVICES--

--I MIGHT  
EVEN HAVE  
FOUND A WAY  
TO TAKE  
CREDIT FOR  
YOUR DEATH!

--I HAVE DECIDED  
TO THROTTLE  
YOU INSTEAD--

--WITH MY  
BARE  
HANDS!



THAT'S QUITE A  
HAIL YOU  
BROUGHT US  
TONIGHT,  
BATMAN...

FOUR COSTUMED  
CRIMINALS... AND A  
GOOD HANDFUL OF  
TOP HOODLUMS  
TO BOOT!...

OF COURSE, A FEW OF THEM  
MAY GET OFF THROUGH THE  
COURTS, CLAIMING YOU  
VIOLATED THEIR CIVIL RIGHTS...

...BUT AT LEAST  
IT'LL BE A WHILE  
BEFORE THEY SHOW  
THEIR FACES IN  
GOTHAM CITY  
AGAIN!

CHECK,  
COMMISSIONER!  
LET SUPERMAN  
AND THE REST  
HAVE A CRACK  
AT THEM, EH?

ALL THE SAME,  
I WISH YOU HAD  
LET US KNOW  
YOU WERE  
SKIPPING TOWN  
FOR A WHILE.

ALL THOSE  
"BATMAN IS  
DEAD" STORIES--  
--WERE SLIGHTLY  
EXAGGERATED,  
AS A MAN FROM  
MISSOURI ONCE  
SAID.

THESE THINGS  
DON'T ALWAYS  
COME OFF AS  
PLANNED.

BESIDES, THOSE RUMORS BROUGHT  
MORE RATS OUT OF HIDING THAN  
A DERAILLED CARLOAD  
OF CHEESE...  
AND YOU KNOW  
IT, OLD FRIEND.

AND NOW,  
IF YOU'LL  
EXCUSE ME...

...I'VE GOT SOME MUCH-  
NEEDED SLEEP TO CATCH  
UP ON!

SURE,  
BATMAN...  
SURE.

AS FOR ME, I  
INTEND TO TAKE A NICE  
LONG, LEISURELY READ  
OF THE MORNING  
PAPERS...

... AGAIN!

Gotham News  
**BATMAN ALIVE!**

THE CAPED  
STRIKES

NEXT ISSUE ON SALE DURING THE SECOND WEEK IN APRIL

# BAT SIGNALS

c/o DC COMICS, INC.  
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NEW YORK, N.Y. 10019

L-741

Dear Editor:

Over the last two years I have started to read *BATMAN* and *DETECTIVE COMICS* again and I can't help but notice a radical change in the Batman and in comics in general.

I started collecting comics and *BATMAN* in particular from about 1962 to 1966. I always enjoyed reading them, and next to *GREEN LANTERN*, I thought the Batman artwork was very good. About two years ago I started picking up comics again, and I just had to find out what the Batman was up to. To my surprise I saw a completely changed Batman. Gone was that sort of playful, adventurous sort of criminal pursuit. Instead I now find a Batman who seems to be almost obsessed with the pursuit and capture of criminals. He is almost a "Dirty Harry" type when he confronts them, and on more than one occasion he came within a hair's-breadth of violating their civil rights.

In many ways, I am glad to see the character of the Batman change and become more believable, but I keep getting the sense that there is a deep psychological reason for everything he does. I wonder if the type of fantasy and "escape from reality" which I associate with Batman will ever return. Has our culture and society affected us so much that they affect our heroes as well?

In closing, I would just like to say that if things go in cycles, will there be a return of some of the "fantasy" of the *BATMAN*?

Joseph Rettura  
5 West 63 Street  
New York, NY 10018

*Changes in society clearly change the nature of heroes, Joseph. The myths and legends of any culture, or even the choice of current living culture heroes is a direct reflection of the beliefs of the people. Thus we believe that there can indeed come a return of the more "fantasy"-oriented Batman, as you describe him. The mirror through which the culture acts to reflect its beliefs is, of course, the creative people involved in shaping the myths, and that too can cause change in how a character is defined.*

*Beginning this issue, a new writer takes over *BATMAN*, as we welcome Roy Thomas to DC. Most comic fans are well acquainted with Roy's accomplishments, but on the off chance that a few of you have been so loyal to DC as to ignore our competition on Madison Avenue, here's the bio in brief:*

*After being one of the founders of comic fandom and fanzine publishing in the early sixties, Roy sold a few scripts to Charlton, worked momentarily for DC, and then went to Marvel where in a sixteen-year career he rose to Editor-In-Chief, wrote every major feature, effectively created the comic book genre of sword & sorcery by bringing Robert E. Howard's CONAN to the four color page, and clearly established himself as one of the two or three best writers in comics in the past decade or two. He's now come to DC to script *BATMAN*, a revived ALL-STAR SQUADRON, and a new sword & sorcery comic...among other projects.*

*It seems clear to us that as unique a talent as Roy will have a personal view of Batman's character which is certain to effect the book in the months to come. This issue's story, ably plotted by Bob Rozakis to ease Roy's schedule during his transition from Marvel to DC, will show some seeds of what is to grow in the future. Unfortunately, we can't give you any additional clues to that future, as *BATMAN* will be getting a new editor as well as a new writer. Beginning next issue, Dick Giordano*

*takes over the editorial chores, as ye editor ceases to be an editor in order to devote more time to the ever-expanding business end of DC. Besides Dick's experiences as an award-winning editor in the sixties and early seventies, and his long time association with the Batman as an artist, his abiding love for the character abundantly qualifies him to take over the three Bat-books. We regard it as a rare pleasure in a world of scarce talent to turn our editorial "children" over to a better editor.*

*Having gone on so long, we'll turn the rest of the page over to reader's uninterrupted comments, and close our editorial tenure with a simple thanks for reading.*

—Paul Levitz.

\*\*\*\*\*  
Dear Paul,

Although the Electrocutioner (which was spelled wrong on the cover, by the way) was a new twist to an old idea, that's not what I'm writing about. What I am writing about is all the various subplots Marv Wolfman has introduced and the ones that he has continued from Len Wein's stay on this book.

It is about time this Falstaff thing came into the open. I must admit I made the same mistake as Steve Gawkowski did. I thought Caroline Crown was going to be Bruce Wayne's new romantic interest. Was I shocked when I learned that she was a plant last issue! As for Talia, thanks for bringing her back. Ra's Al Ghul is my favorite DC villain so I'm looking forward to his return next issue. Batman's disagreements with Robin have been portrayed very well and I'm anxiously awaiting the resolution of this plot-line, either here or in Teen Titans. As a teenager, I agree with Dick, but I can also see Bruce's point of view.

"Closed Circuit" seemed like a set-up issue, so I'm looking forward to next issue's resolutions and developments. You know, this book has come a long way since David V. Reed was writing it!

Stu Krull  
28 Kettle Creek Rd.  
Freehold, NJ 07728

\*\*\*\*\*  
Dear Paul:

*BATMAN* #331 boasted two entertaining stories, one original new villain, three (or is it one?) sub-plots, and the return of Talia (for which last month's cover was designed!). Add 'em all up, and the sum is a superlative issue of a superlative comic. Want to see my calculations? Okay, here goes:

Two entertaining stories: "Closed Circuit" by Wolfman and Fleisher was the headliner, and it was a fine action drama tempered with just the right amounts of characterization. Batman (for once) didn't play the grim avenger of the night as much and relied even less on his detective skills. I don't criticize this, I laud it; I like to be reminded that The Batman, besides his other attributes, is a trained athlete and a superb fighting machine. "Wolf in the Fold" by Mike Barr was almost actionless, but with a disguised Batman and an alert Commissioner Gordon on the scene, it certainly wasn't dull. Batman was surprised that he learned a few tricks from Gordon's lecture, but after all, the Commish does have decades of experience over him.

The original new villain was The Executioner, who was head and shoulders over most recently-debuting comic foes. His premise, to seek out and destroy killers who have been let loose by legal technicalities, was most satisfactory, but even I started to balk at the unusually high number of killers "freed on technicalities" in the story. Talk about unbelievable coincidences!

The sub-plots are really starting to command a large part of the story, but to paraphrase an old axiom: "All roads lead to Falstaff." He is involved in nearly all of them, except maybe Robin's quitting college and the re-emergence of Talia. Which leads me to...

Talia is back? Yep, there she is; but like the Catwoman plot, the question is, is she good or evil? I think time will tell (as usual), but frankly, I'm getting impatient.

I told you they added up to a superlative magazine! Why did you doubt my calculations?

Mark Lagasse  
R.D. #1, Box 116  
Hoosick Falls, N.Y. 12090

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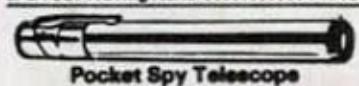
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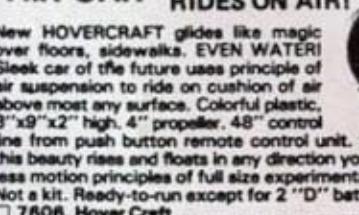


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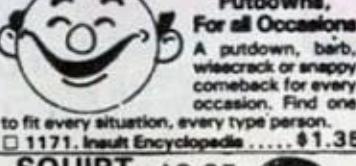


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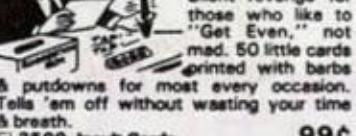
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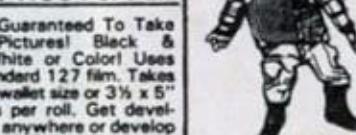
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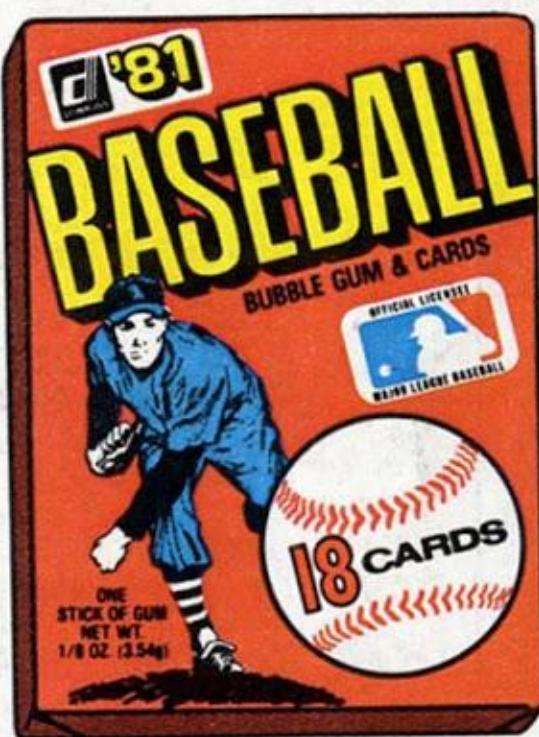
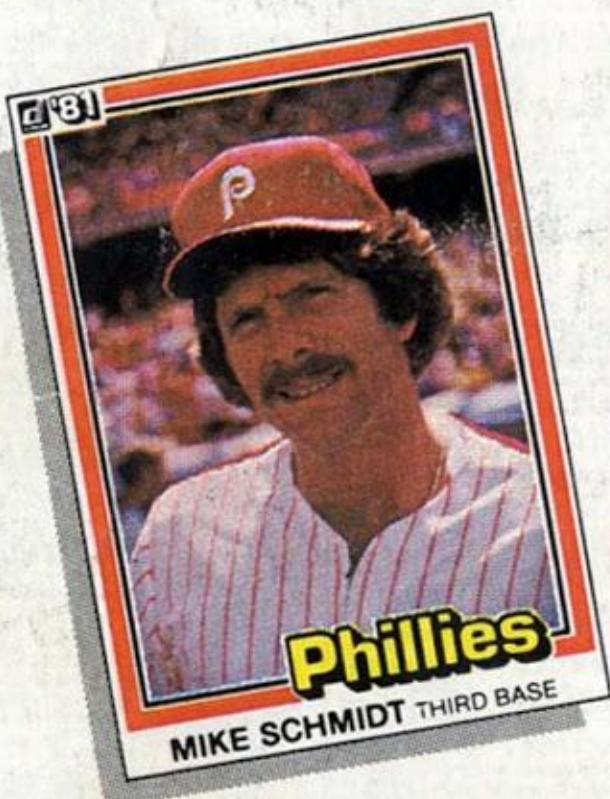


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