

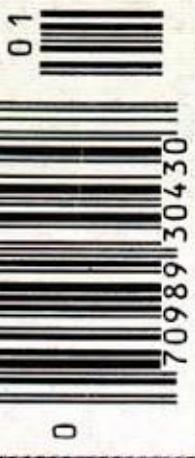
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BATMAN

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AUTHORITY

THEIR
CAMOUFLAGE
IS **PERFECT!**

HOW CAN I
BEAT
AN ENEMY
I CAN'T EVEN
SEE?

CHUB
Collecta



THIS WAS IT--THE MOST CRUEL AND COMPLEX CRIMINAL CONSPIRACY IN GOTHAM'S HISTORY--WITH THE BATMAN AS CHIEF CONSPIRATOR--PLAYING A DIABOLIC GAME OF FOLLOW-THE-LEADER FOR BILLION DOLLAR STAKES!

OMEGA BOMB TARGET: GOTHAM CITY

S-2440

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BATMAN, Vol. 38, No. 283, January, 1977. Published monthly by NATIONAL PERIODICAL PUBLICATIONS, INC., 75 Rockefeller Plaza, New York, N.Y. 10019. Second Class Postage paid at New York, N.Y. and Additional Mailing Offices. Copyright © 1976 by National Periodical Publications, Inc. All Rights Reserved. The stories, characters and incidents mentioned in this magazine are entirely fictional. No actual persons, living or dead, are intended or should be inferred. Printed in U.S.A.

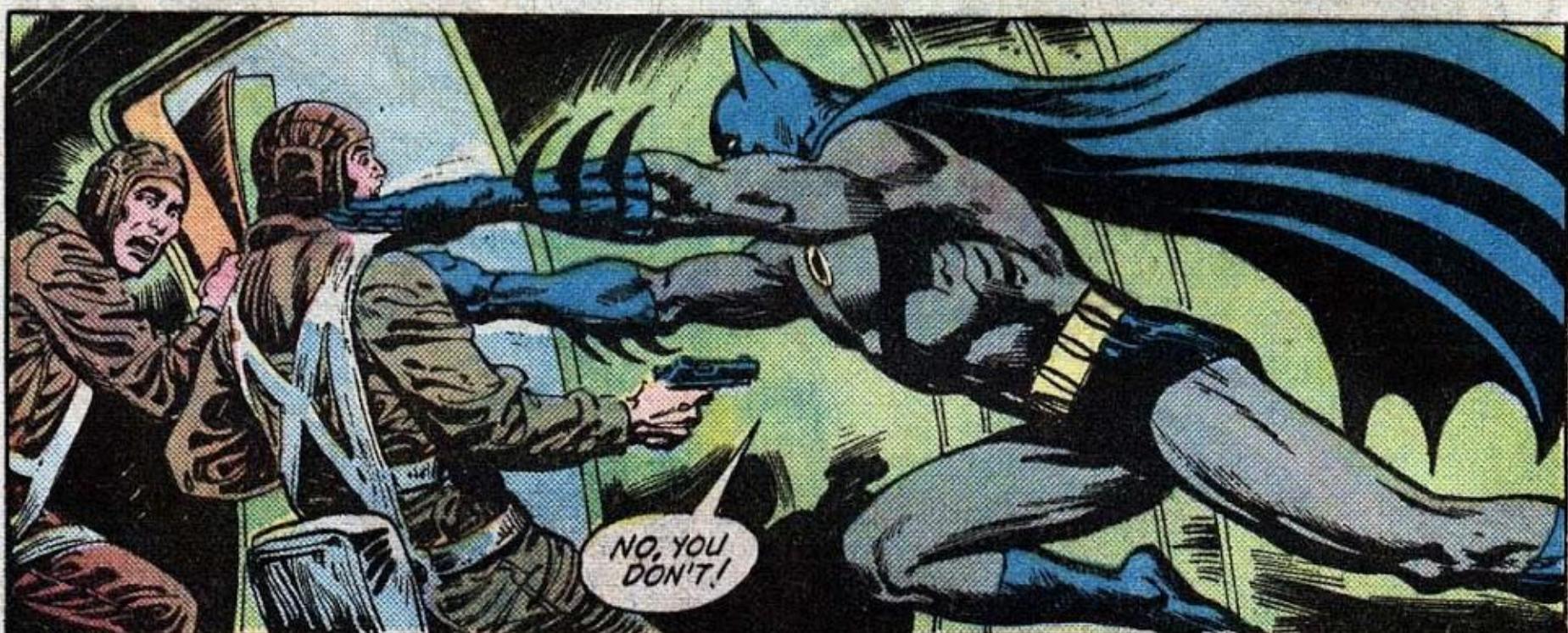
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355 Lexington Avenue,
New York, N.Y. 10017
(212) 391-1400

SUBSCRIPTION DEPT.: National Periodical Publications, Inc., 155 Allen Blvd., Farmingdale, N.Y. 11735. Rate \$3 in U.S.A. (\$4 elsewhere). Subscription is for consecutive issues totalling \$3.00 of their cover prices.



THE PARALYZING
PULL OF A
FORCE SEVERAL
TIMES GRAVITY IS
SUDDENLY
SUSPENDED--

--AND FOR
A BRIEF
INTERVAL,
EVERYTHING
BECOMES
WEIGHTLESS!

READY FOR THE
PHENOMENON--
THE BATMAN
MAKES THE MOST
OF IT-- HIS FURY
UNLEASHED, LETHAL!



THEN, AS THE PLANE LEVELS OFF AND FULL GRAVITY RETURNS...

FOR A MOMENT, THE BATMAN PAUSES IN GRATEFUL RECOLLECTION...

THANKS, ALFRED--FOR MAKING ME PROMISE TO WEAR THIS MAGNESIUM CRASH-HELMET WHEN I FLEW THIS SHIP!

THEN--BACK TO THE TASK AT HAND...

STRANGE UNIFORMS--NO IDENTIFICATION WHATEVER ON EITHER OF THEM!

FIVE MINUTES LATER, OVER ANGOLA...

THEY'RE STILL FIGHTING A WAR DOWN THERE!

THEY'LL KNOW HOW TO DEAL WITH THESE TWO UNIDENTIFIED PARACHUTISTS!

NOW--AS THE MASKED MANHUNTER WINGS HIS WAY OVER THE SOUTH ATLANTIC--THIS LAST DESPERATE EPISODE HAS WROUGHT A BASIC CHANGE IN HIS THINKING!

IT'S IMPOSSIBLE FOR ANYONE TO HAVE FOLLOWED ME! I'VE MOVED TOO FAST AND TOO FAR!

I'M BEING ANTICIPATED AND LED ALL THE WAY! EVEN AT THIS VERY MOMENT--CHASING THE MIRAMAR TO PANAMA!

CONCLUSION: I'VE GOT TO BUST OUT OF THEIR TIME-TABLE!

AND JUST AS I'M POSITIVE THAT ALL THIS BEGAN IN GOTHAM CITY, THAT'S WHERE IT MUST END!

SO GOTHAM IT IS!-- ONLY I'LL BE SHOWING UP SOMEPLACE BEFORE I'M DUE THERE!

CONTINUED ON 3RD PAGE FOLLOWING.

TWO HOURS LATER, AS THE BATMAN ARRIVES AT COMMISSIONER GORDON'S OFFICE, HE FINDS AN UNEXPECTED WELCOMING COMMITTEE ... AND AN OMINOUS WELCOME!

AS I ASSURED YOU, MR. MAYOR, THE BATMAN'S HERE IN TIME!

YES, COMMISSIONER— AND NOW WE'LL SEE WHETHER YOU WERE RIGHT ABOUT HIS BEING ABLE TO HELP US REACH A DECISION... IN TIME!



READ THIS, BATMAN! IT WAS DELIVERED TO THE MAYOR FOUR HOURS AGO!

ULTIMATUM TO GOTHAM CITY FROM OMEGA

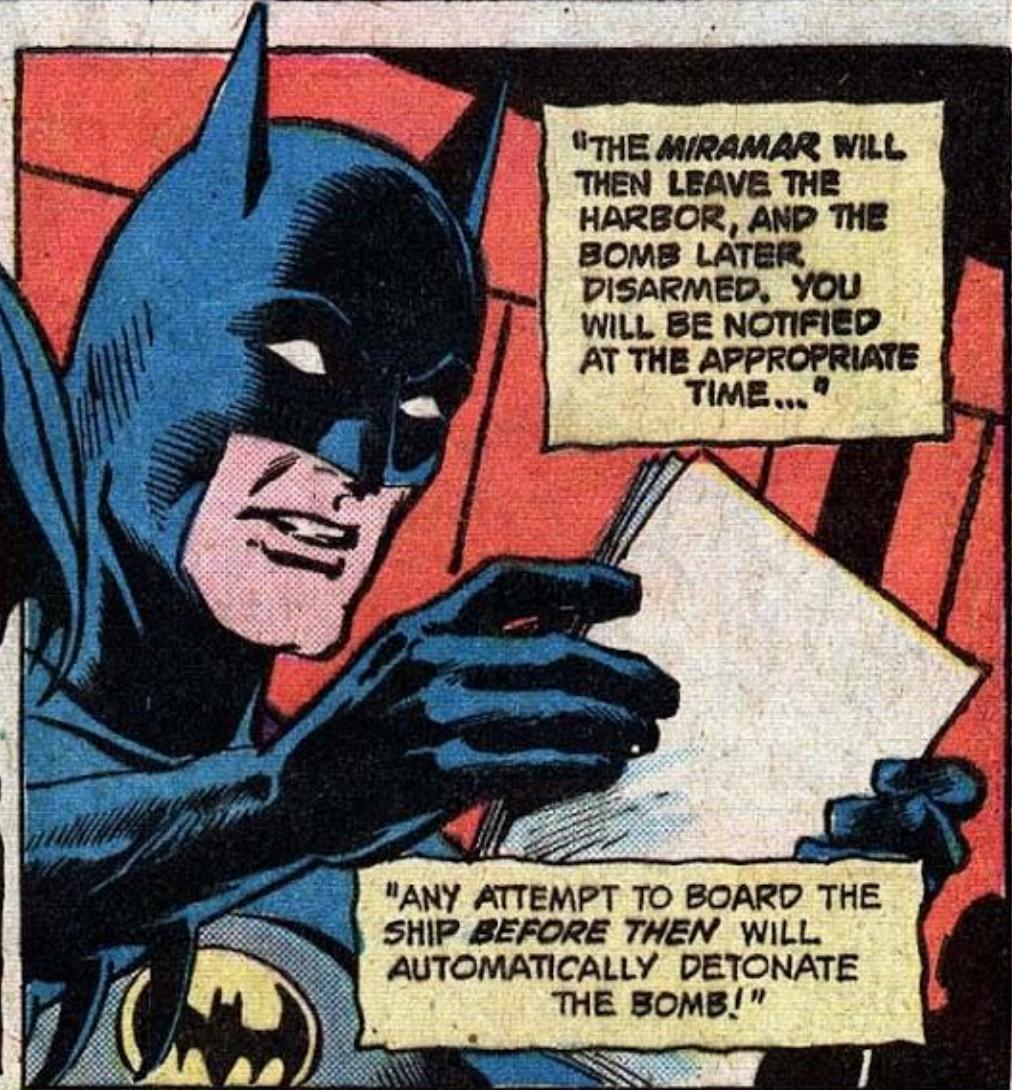
Our unmanned radio-controlled ship, the Miramar, is anchored in Gotham Harbor! Her cargo consists of a 20-megaton nuclear bomb, constructed by a member of Omega! The fate of Gotham City is in our hands!

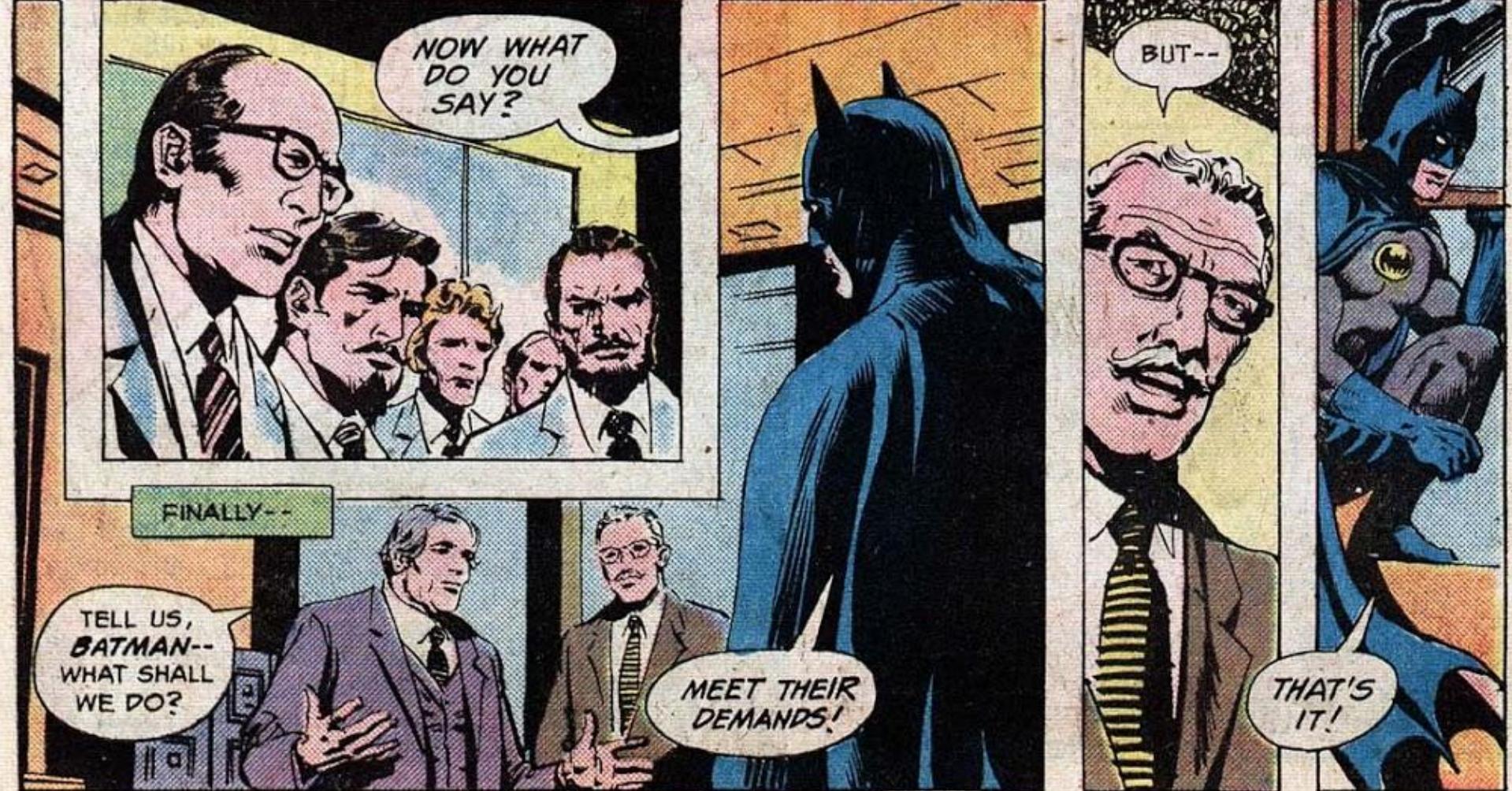
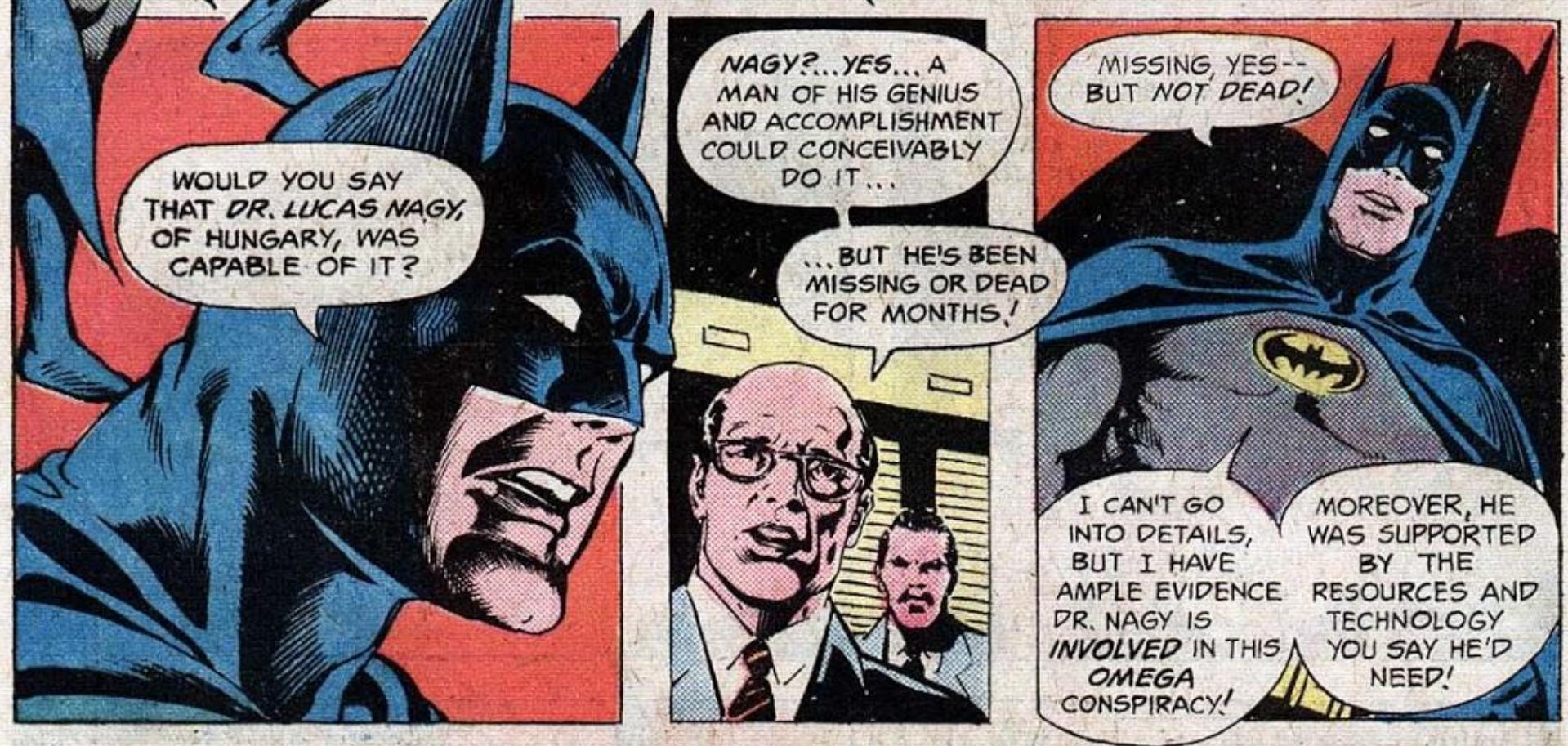
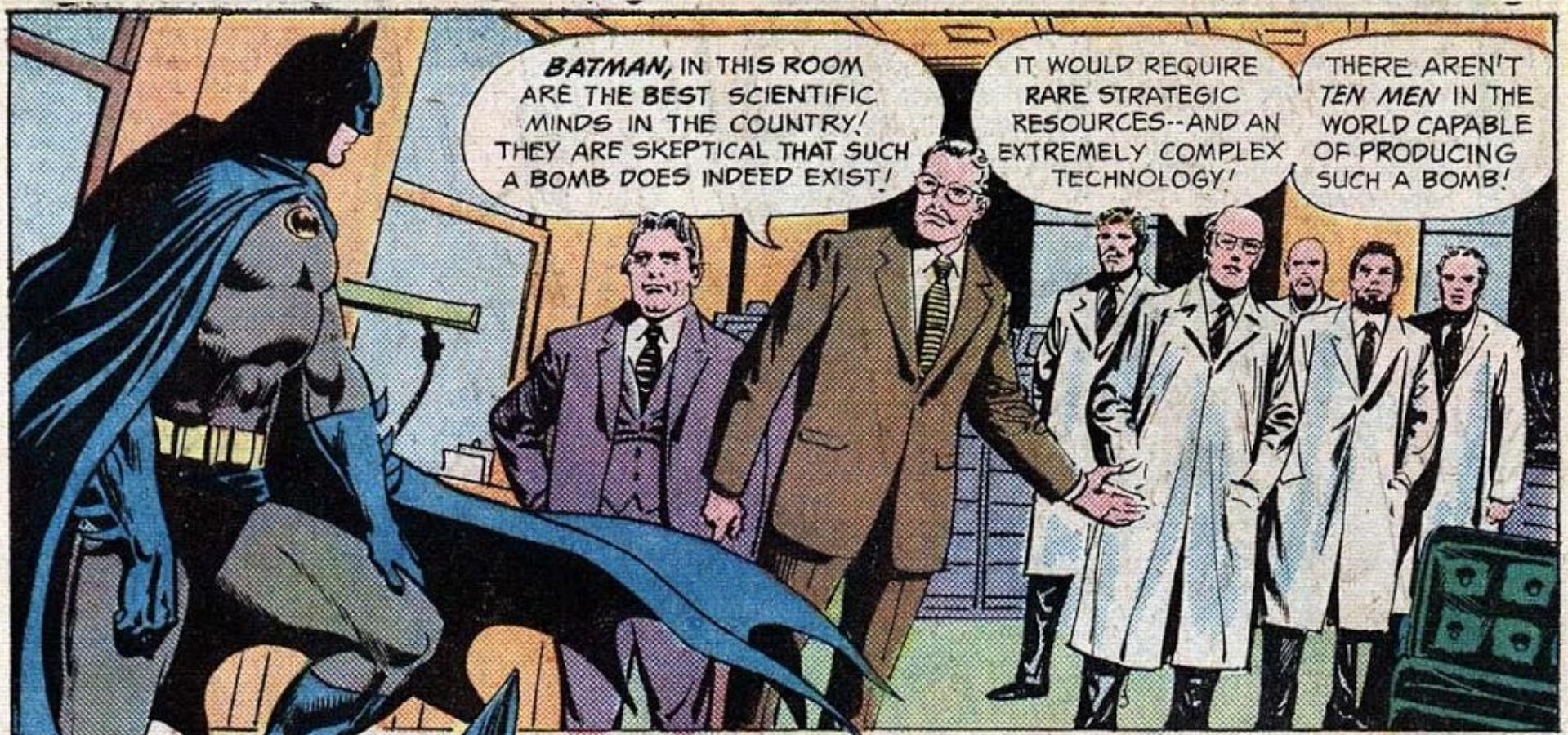
"UNLESS WE ARE PAID A RANSOM OF ONE BILLION DOLLARS IN GOLD AT MIDNIGHT, THE BOMB WILL EXPLODE ONE HOUR LATER..."

"THE MIRAMAR WILL THEN LEAVE THE HARBOR, AND THE BOMB LATER DISARMED. YOU WILL BE NOTIFIED AT THE APPROPRIATE TIME..."

"AT MIDNIGHT, OUR RADIO-CONTROLLED PLANE WILL LAND AT GOTHAM INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT. THE GOLD IS TO BE PLACED ABOARD AND THE PLANE ALLOWED TO DEPART..."

"ANY ATTEMPT TO BOARD THE SHIP BEFORE THEN WILL AUTOMATICALLY DETONATE THE BOMB!"





IT IS 9:30! AS THE CAPE CRUSADER SWINGS ACROSS THE NIGHT SKY, GOTHAM CITY SEEMS UNNATURALLY VIBRANT AND ALIVE... UNAWARE THAT ITS VERY EXISTENCE HANGS IN THE BALANCE!

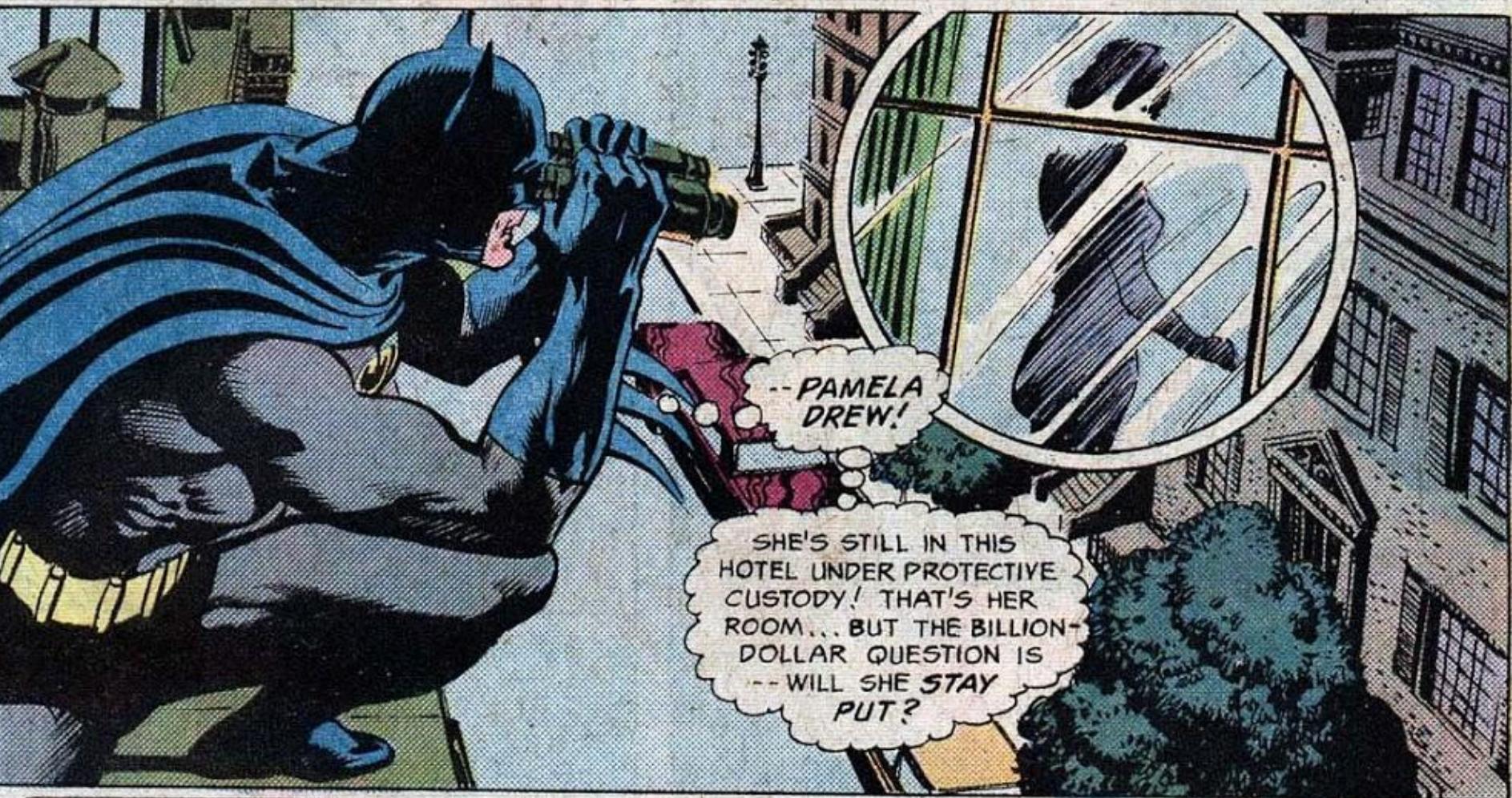
I WAS RIGHT! THE MIRAMAR CHANGED COURSE IN MID-OCEAN... AS I WAS SUPPOSED TO DISCOVER IN PANAMA!

GOTHAM WAS THE TARGET ALL ALONG! IF ONLY I COULD ACT ON WHAT I THINK!

BUT WITHOUT ABSOLUTE PROOF, I DARE NOT TAKE RESPONSIBILITY!

THE ONLY CHANCE LEFT OF GETTING THAT PROOF IS THROUGH MY ONLY POSSIBLE LINK TO OMEGA--

--THE ONE WHO GAVE ME THAT FIRST CLUE TO THE HUNGARY-BURUNDI-PANAMA TRIANGLE--



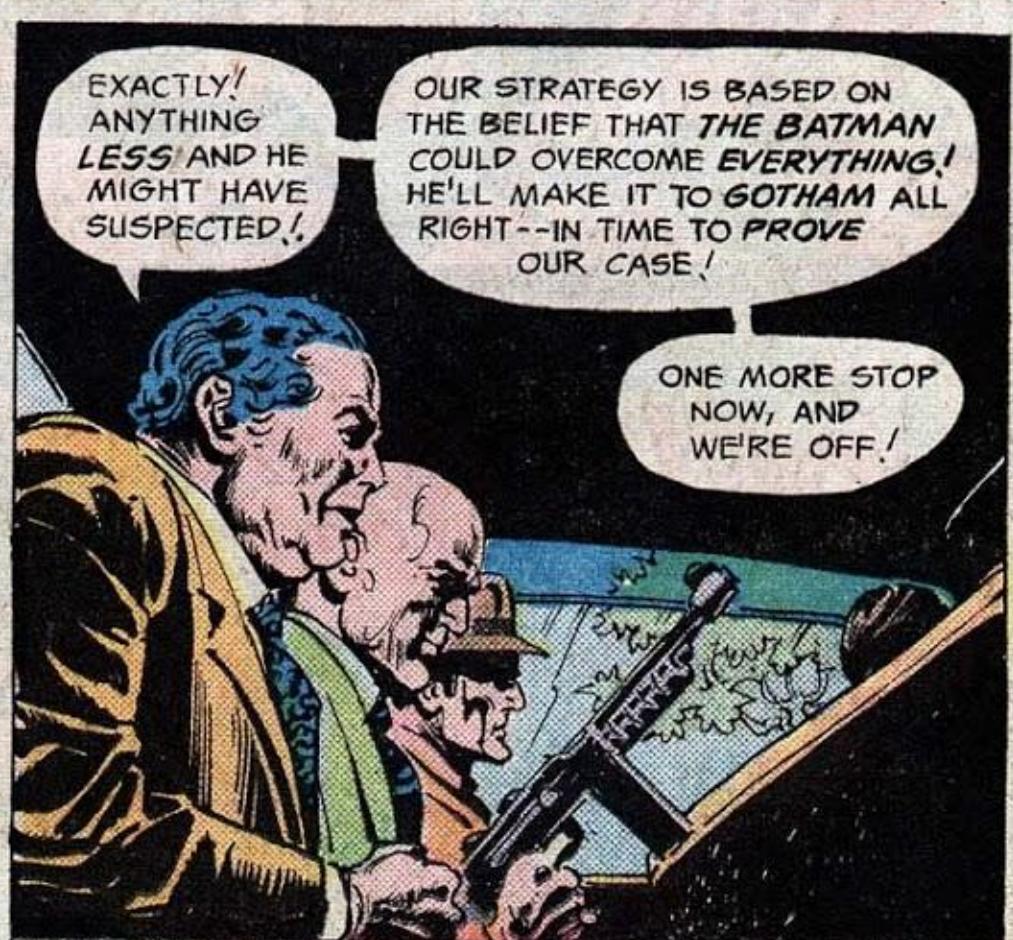
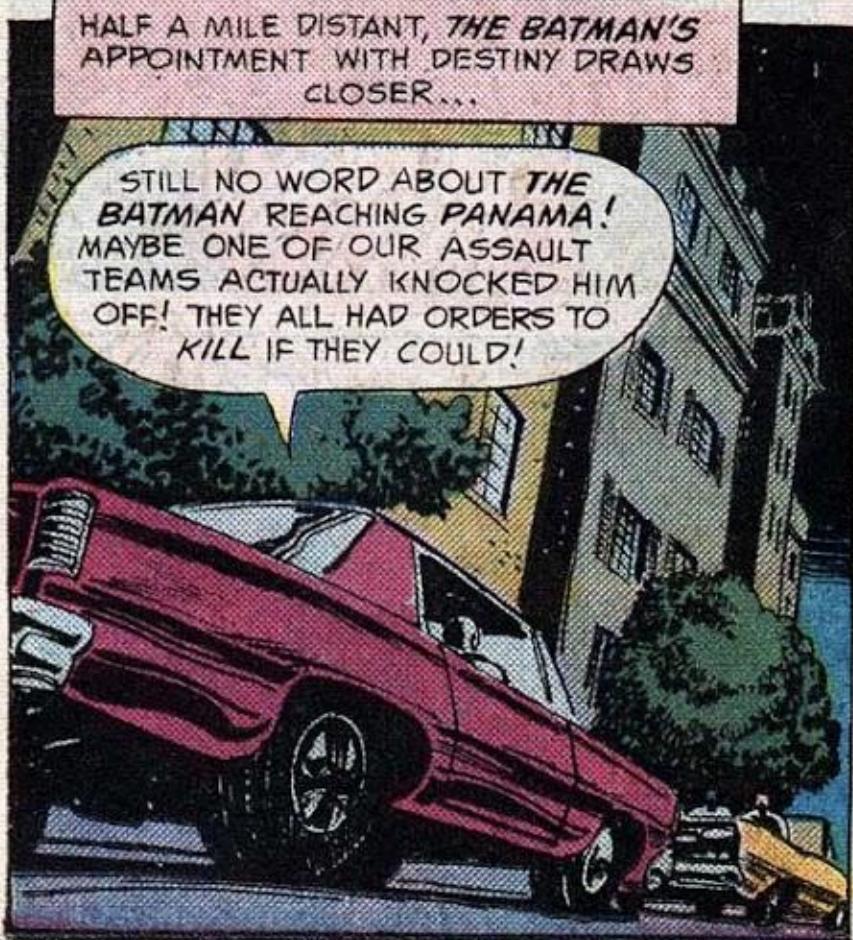
HALF A MILE DISTANT, THE BATMAN'S APPOINTMENT WITH DESTINY DRAWS CLOSER...

STILL NO WORD ABOUT THE BATMAN REACHING PANAMA! MAYBE ONE OF OUR ASSAULT TEAMS ACTUALLY KNOCKED HIM OFF! THEY ALL HAD ORDERS TO KILL IF THEY COULD!

EXACTLY! ANYTHING LESS AND HE MIGHT HAVE SUSPECTED!

OUR STRATEGY IS BASED ON THE BELIEF THAT THE BATMAN COULD OVERCOME EVERYTHING! HE'LL MAKE IT TO GOTHAM ALL RIGHT--IN TIME TO PROVE OUR CASE!

ONE MORE STOP NOW, AND WE'RE OFF!

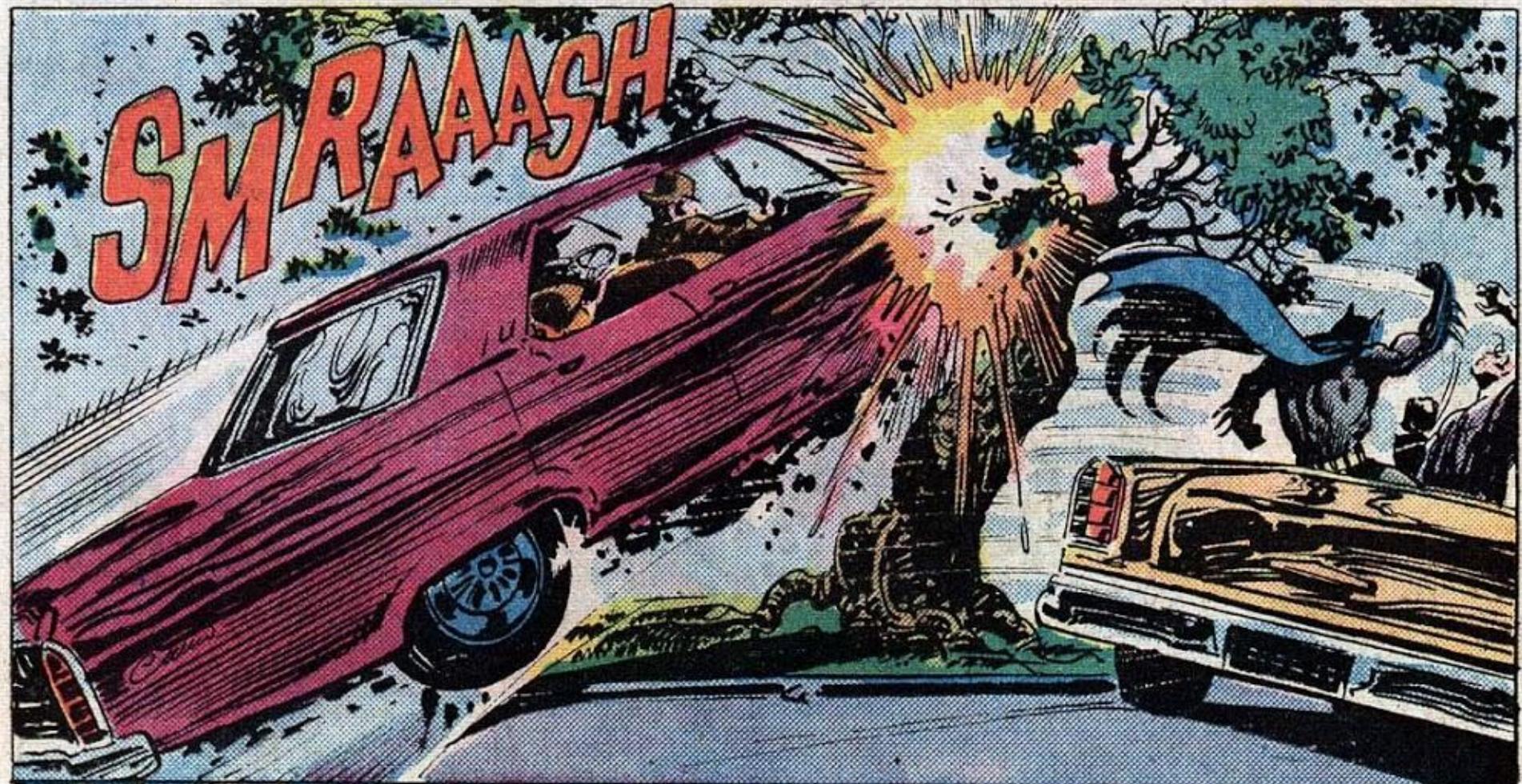
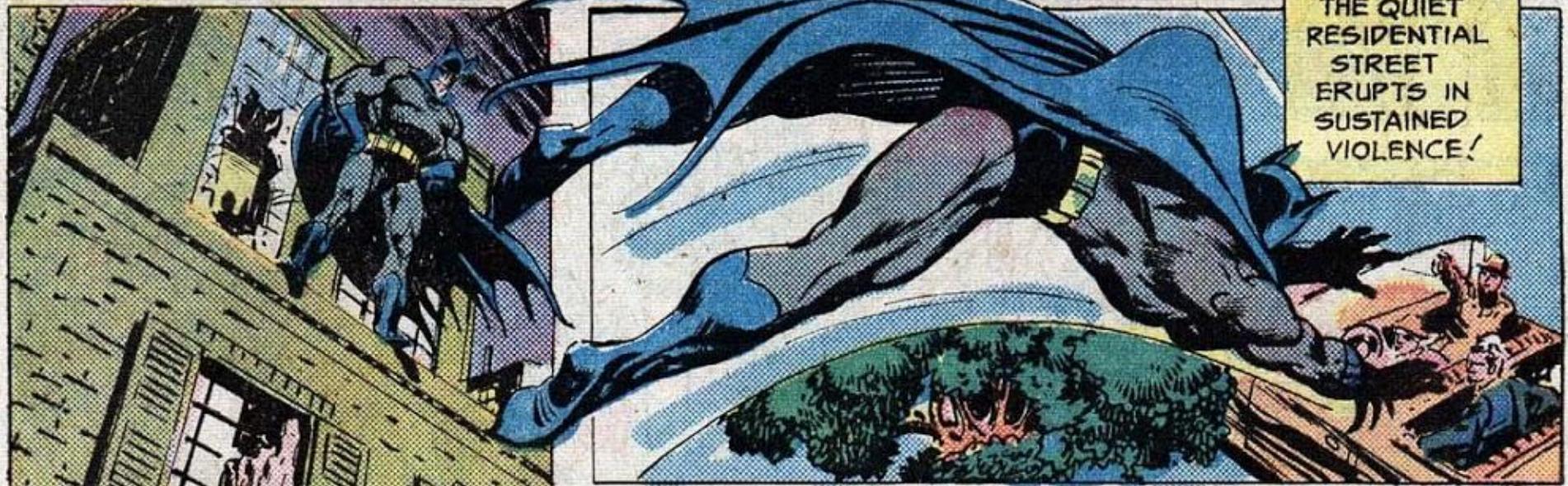
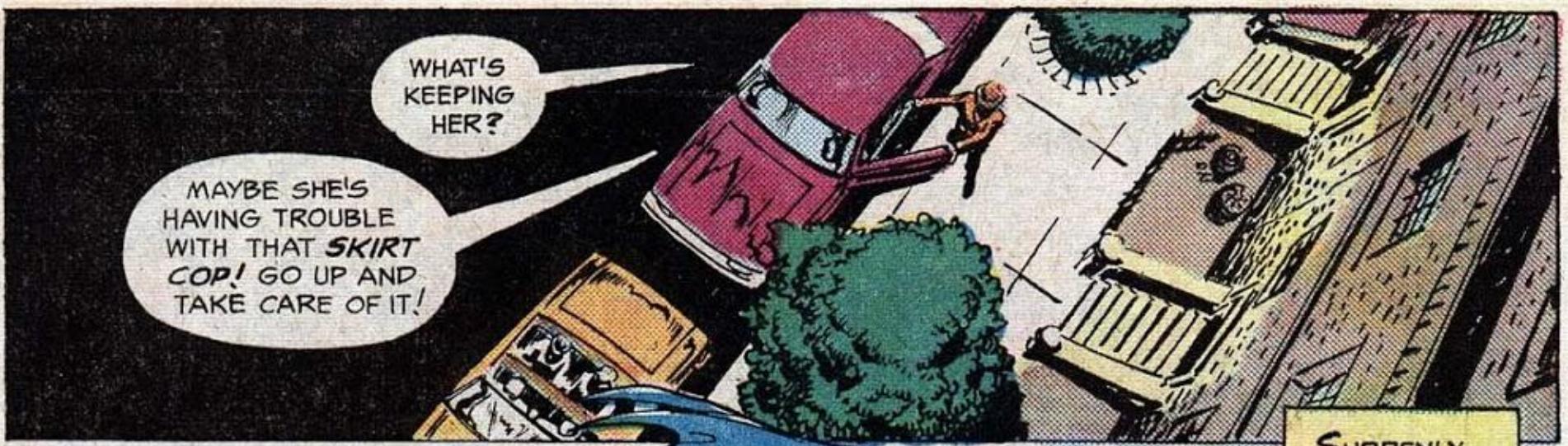


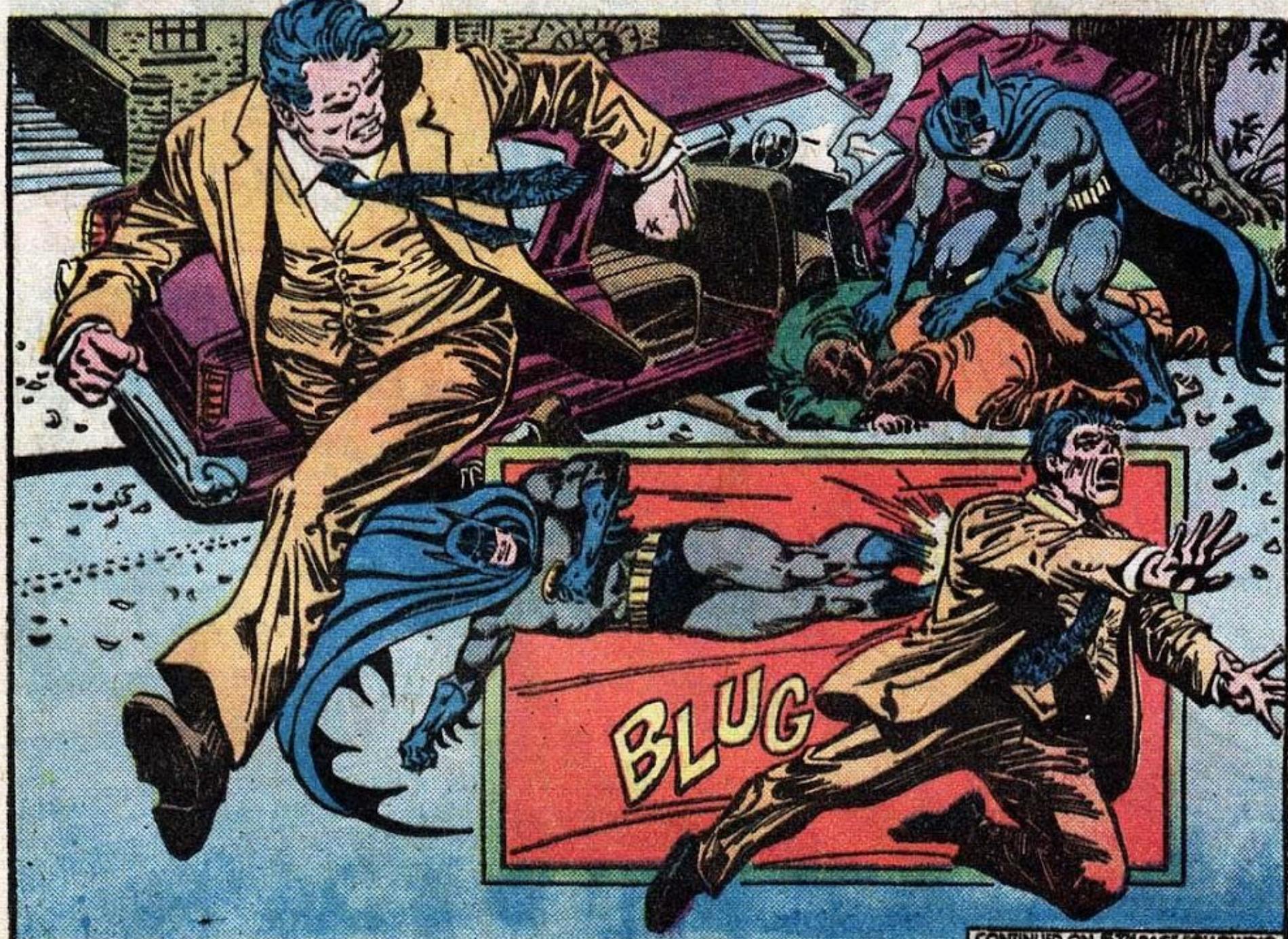
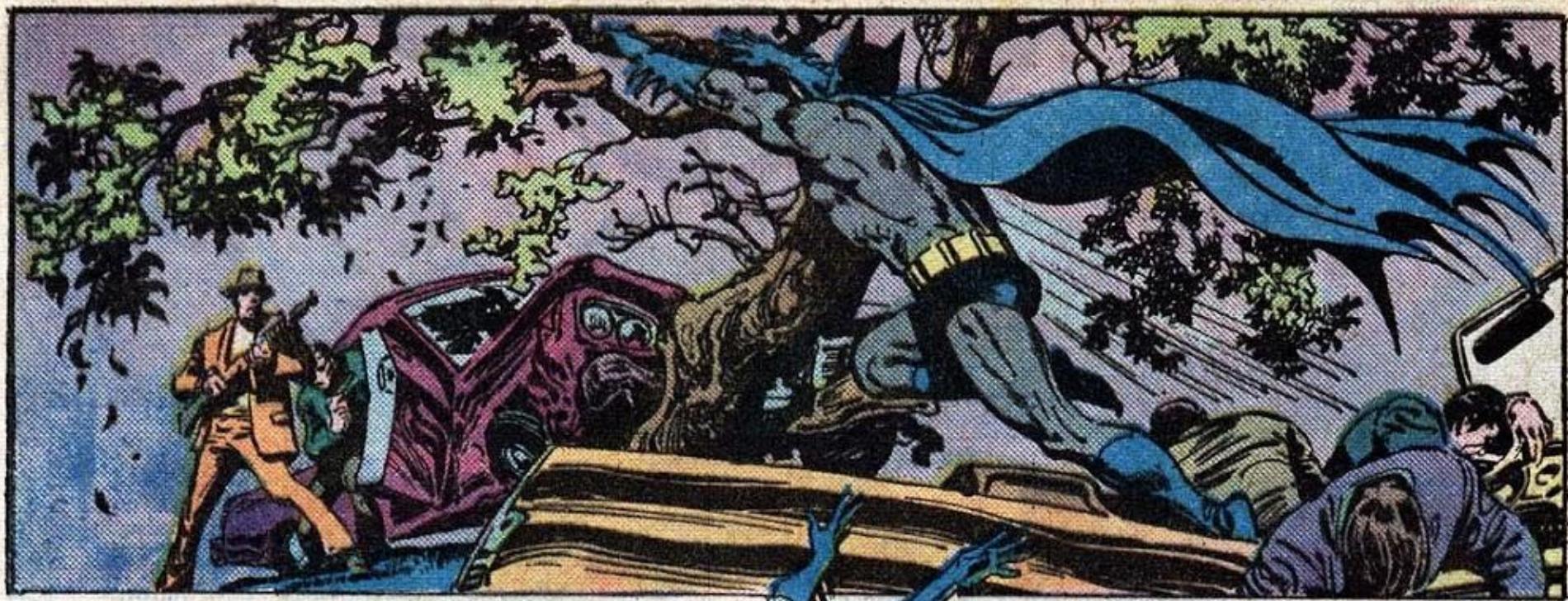
AT THAT
MOMENT...

PAMELA'S
MAKING HER
MOVE--!

SO AM
I--!







CONTINUED ON 5TH PAGE FOLLOWING

TWENTY
MINUTES
LATER,
POLICE
H.Q.--

YOU FOOL, HOW
LONG CAN YOU HOLD
US AGAINST OMEGA--
A POWER THAT CAN
FORCE GOTHAM TO
PAY A BILLION--

NOBODY'S PAYING
OMEGA ANYTHING!

HAVE YOUR
LITTLE JOKE,
BATMAN!

JOKING? YOU
MISSHAPE MASS
OF BLUBBER--WHAT
MAKES YOU THINK
I'M JOKING?

YOU'RE
INSANE!
DON'T YOU
UNDERSTAND?
--GOTHAM
CITY WILL BE
BLOWN UP!

WITH
YOU IN
IT--?

ABSOLUTELY!
WE'RE WORTHLESS
AS HOSTAGES!

UNLESS THE
RANSOM IS PAID,
NOTHING WILL STOP
THE LEADER OF
OMEGA FROM
CARRYING OUT
THAT THREAT!

YOU HAVE NO RIGHT TO KEEP
US HERE--TO CONDEMN US
TO DEATH!

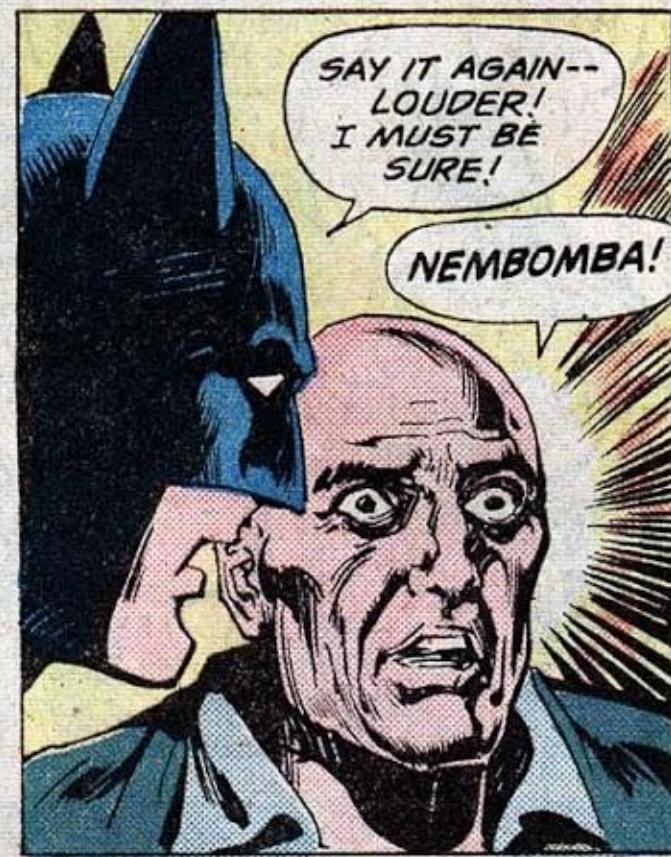
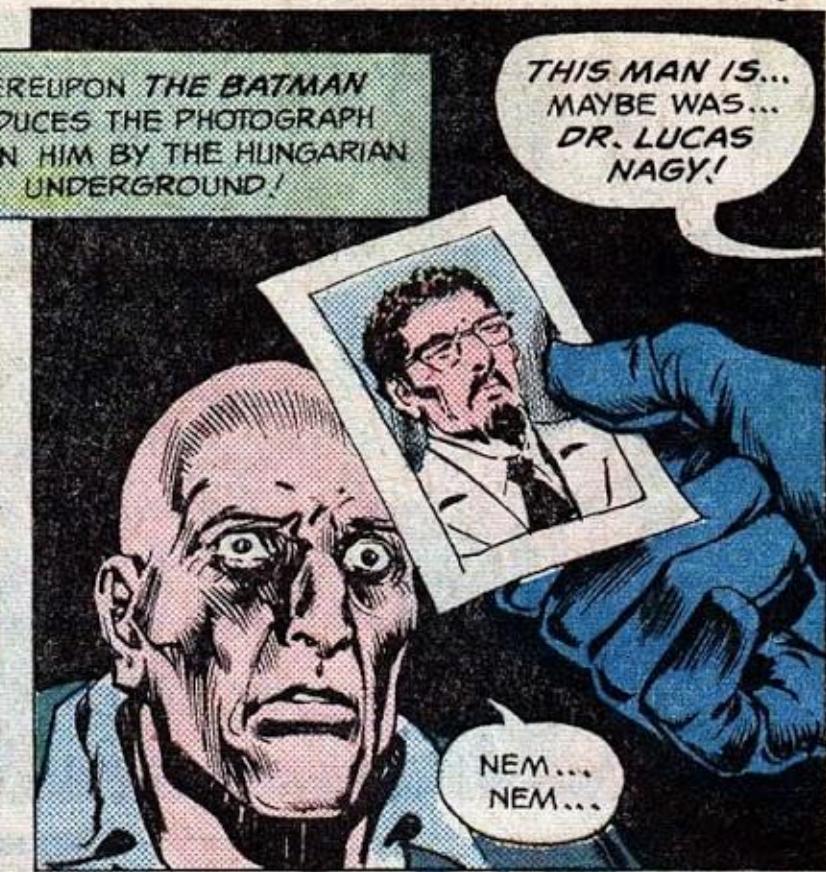
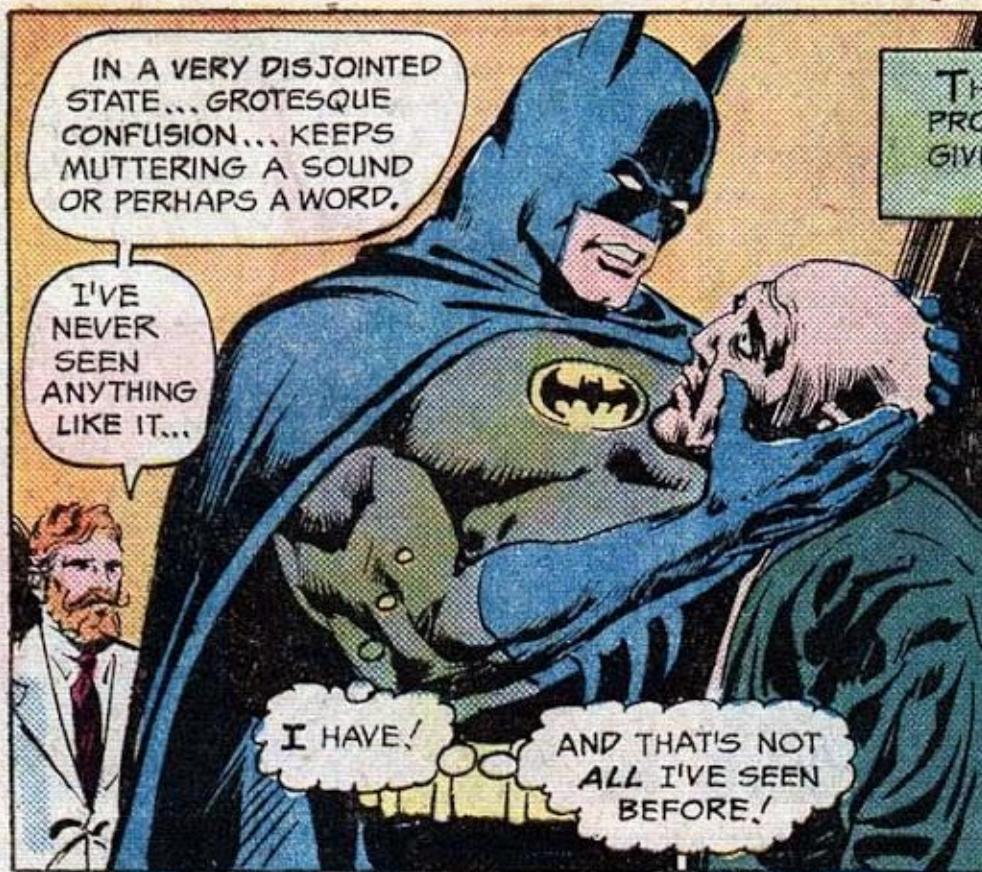
YOU'VE CONDEMNED
YOURSELVES! YOU'LL
TAKE YOUR CHANCES
WITH THE REST OF US!

WHY DID YOU
SAY THAT ABOUT
NOT PAYING?

TO FIND
OUT WHAT
I HAD TO
KNOW!

THAT'S HIM,
BATMAN-- WE
FOUND HIM IN THE
BACK OF THE LIMOUSINE,
JUST SITTING THERE!

HOW IS HE,
DOCTOR?

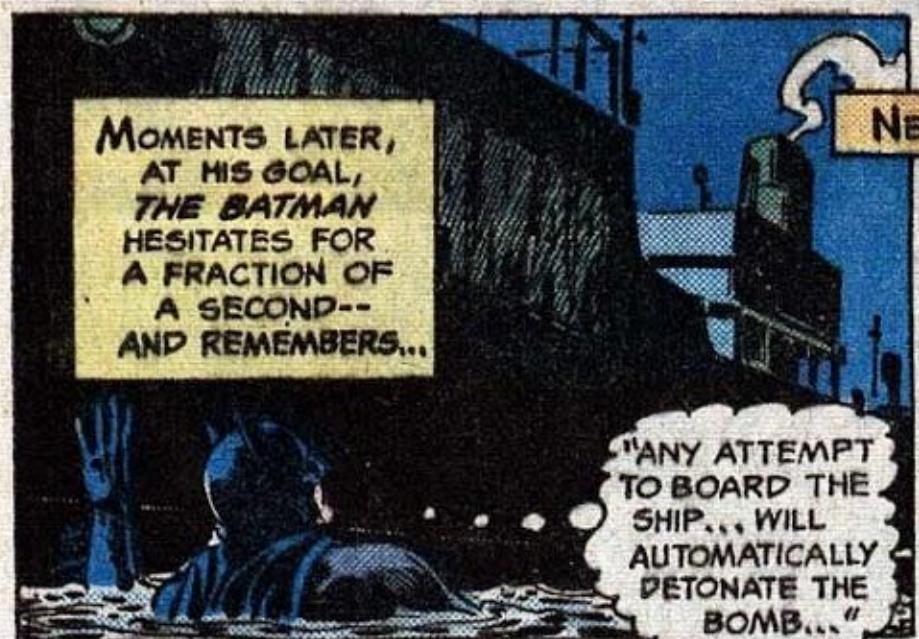


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GOTHAM HARBOR...
11:05 P.M. A
GATHERING FOG
SWEEPS ACROSS
THE LOWER BAY,
AS THOUGH TO
DEADEN AND
OBSCURE THE
TERRIFYING DRAMA
RACING TOWARD
ITS CLIMAX IN THESE
DARK WATERS...



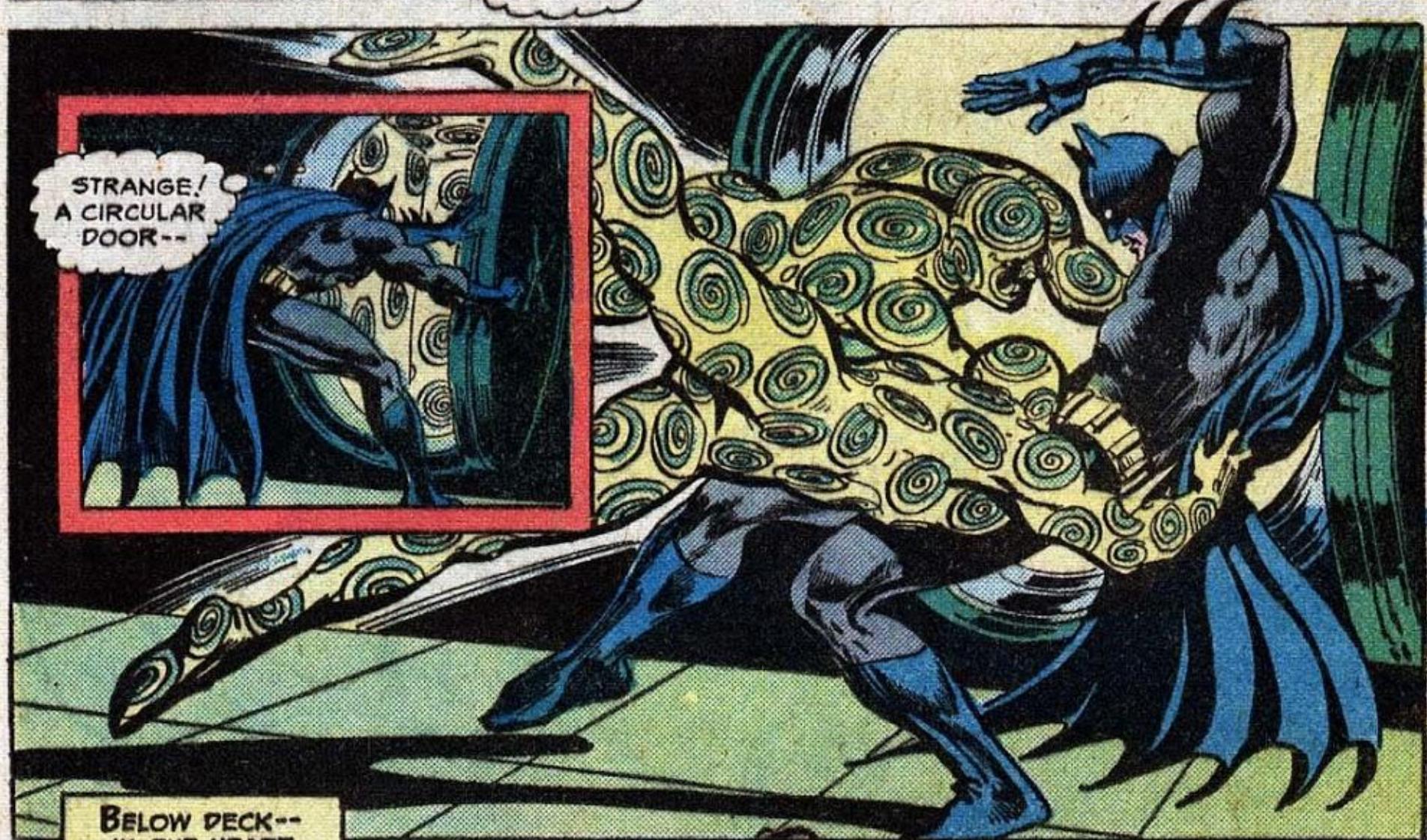
MOMENTS LATER,
AT HIS GOAL,
THE BATMAN
HESITATES FOR
A FRACTION OF
A SECOND--
AND REMEMBERS...



NEVERTHELESS--

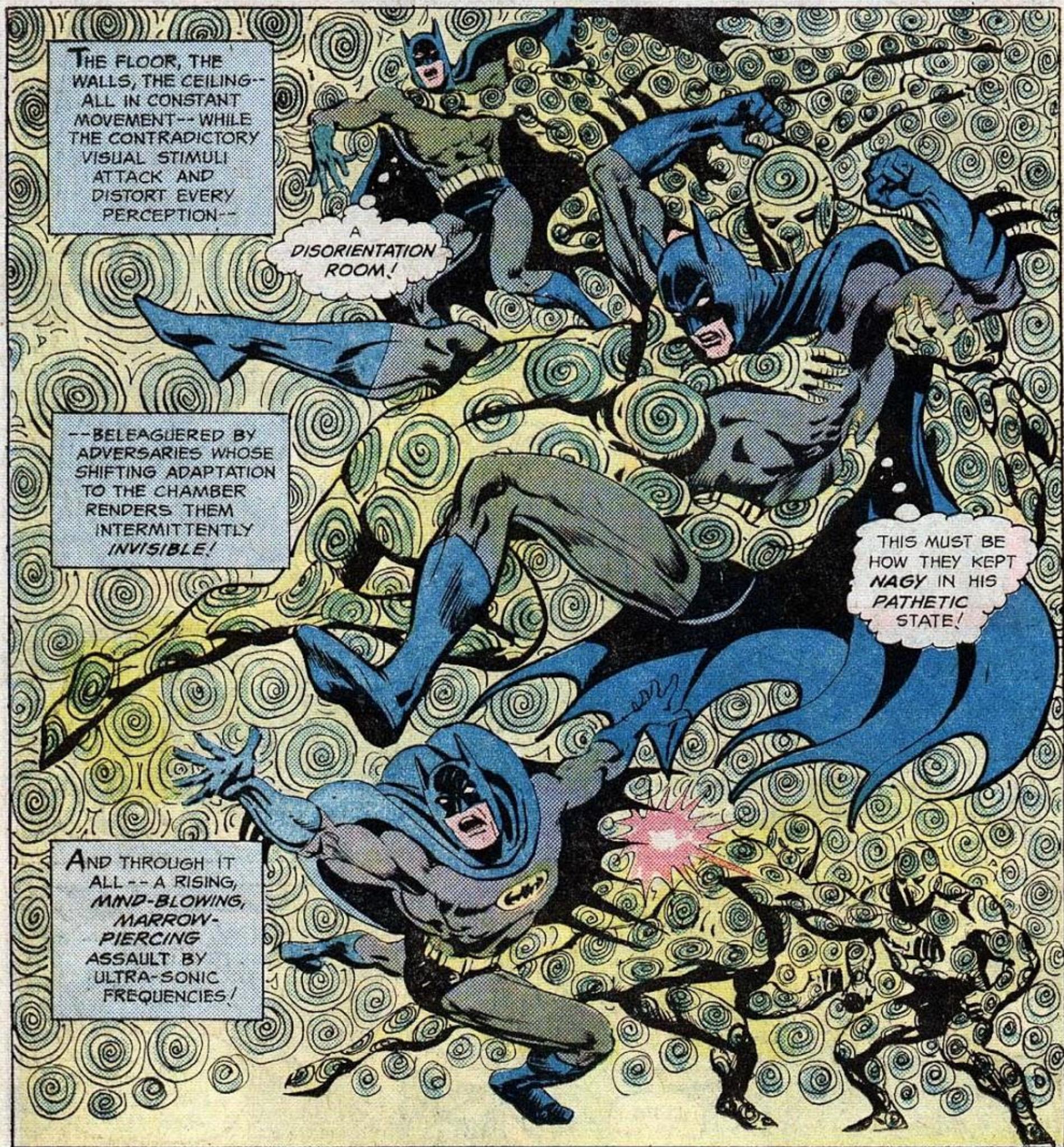
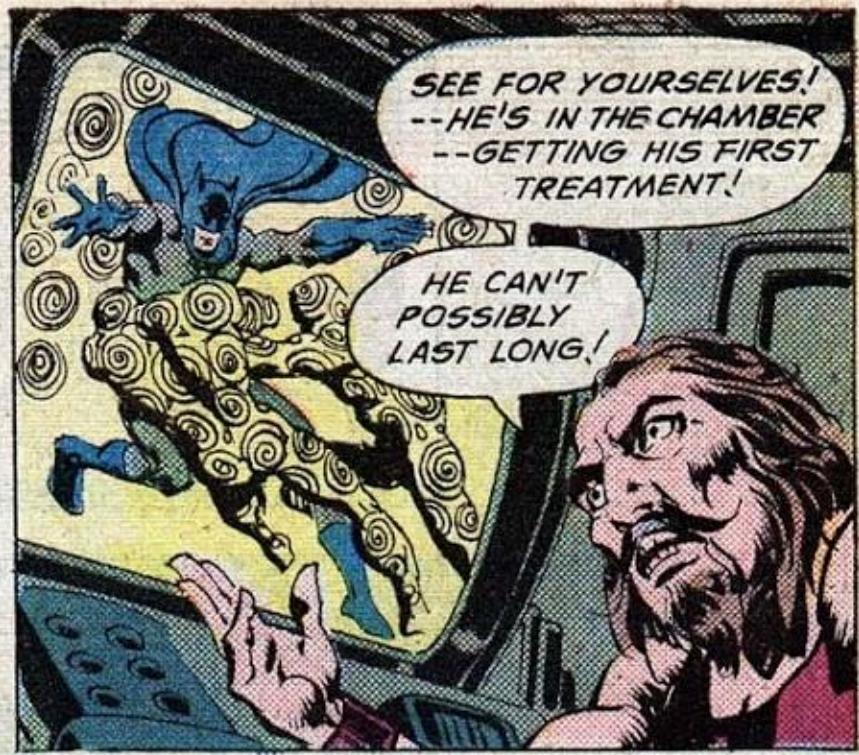
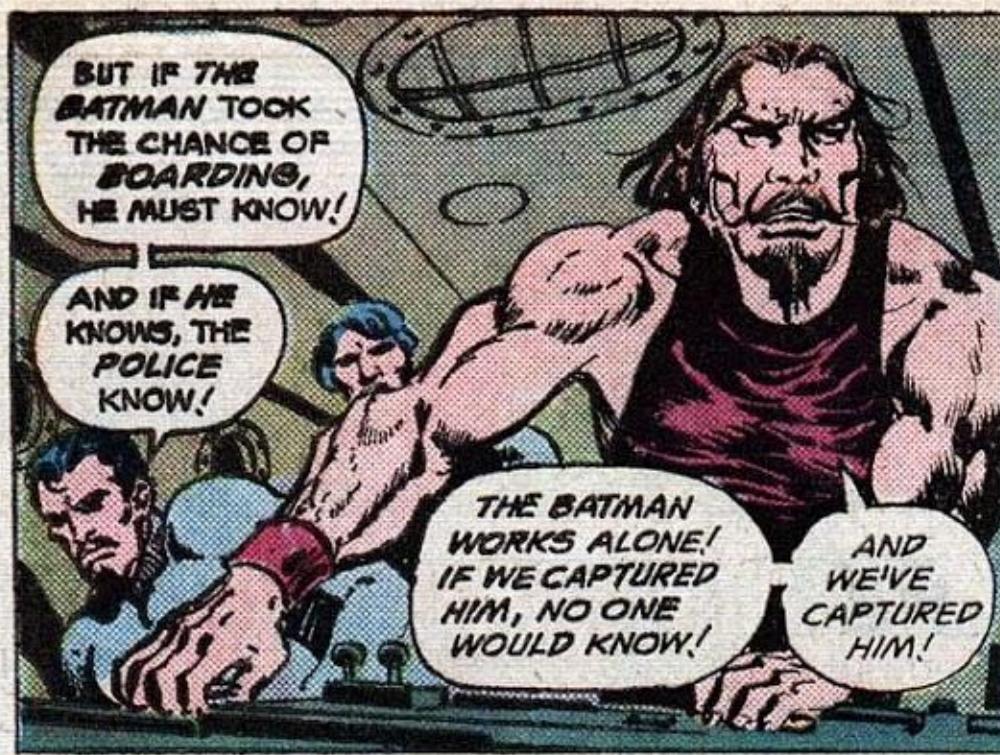


STRANGE!
A CIRCULAR
DOOR--



BELOW DECK--
IN THE HEART
OF THE SHIP--
THE ALARM HAS
SOUNDED!





AGAIN AND AGAIN
THE BATMAN LASHES
OUT AT HIS TORMENTORS
--ONLY TO FLAIL THE
AIR!

CAN'T SEE...
CAN'T THINK...

MUST...GET
THEM...FAST...
BEFORE I...
PASS OUT...

MAYBE...THIS
WILL EQUALIZE
THINGS...LONG
ENOUGH!

MOMENTARILY INSULATED
AND UNCONSTRAINED,
THE BATMAN UNLEASHES
A WHIRLWIND FURY--

WATER--COMING
THROUGH THOSE
BULKHEADS!

THEY'RE SCUTTLING
THE SHIP!

BURSTING THROUGH
A DOOR, THE
CAPED CRUSADER
IS CONFRONTED BY
A REMARKABLE SCENE...

HIS MAJESTY
HIMSELF -- THE
LEADER! READY
TO GO DOWN WITH
THE **MIRAMAR**--
AND THE END OF
HIS CAREER!

BUT I'LL SAVE
HIM--FOR A
WORSE FATE!

THEN--WITHIN
SECONDS--A
SIGHT SCARCELY
PARALLELED IN
HIS EXPERIENCE!

A CARGO-HOLD--ORDINARILY SEALED
OFF--WHICH SLIDES APART AT THE
KEEL--AND BECOMES A LAUNCHING
BERTH FOR A **MINI-SUB**!

THERE MUST
BE OTHERS
ESCAPING IN
IT!

I'LL CLOSE THE
HOLD AT TWO-THIRDS
--ENOUGH TO LET
THE WATER **IN**--BUT
KEEP THE SUB FROM
GETTING OUT!

SHORTLY AFTERWARD--FROM
OUTSIDE THE SEALED AND COMPLETELY
FLOODED HOLD--THE BATMAN
VIEWS THE RESULT...

AN HOUR AGO, THE
MIRAMAR WAS THE SAFEST
PLACE ON EARTH! TOMORROW
THEY'D HAVE SCUTTLED HER
IN THE ATLANTIC DEEPS...

...RETAINING ENOUGH
CREDIBILITY FOR NUCLEAR
TRIBUTE WHEREVER
THEY CHOSE!

BUT NOW--LIKE
A SHARK IN A TANK--
NO WAY OUT!

POLICE H.Q.,
11:55 P.M.--

OMEGA
NEVER HAD
A BOMB!

THEIR KIDNAP VICTIM,
DR. NAGY, HAD
REFUSED TO UNDERTAKE
IT, NO MATTER WHAT
THEY DID TO HIM! SO
THEY TOOK A NEW
APPROACH--

WHAT WAS JUST
AS GOOD AS HAVING
THE BOMB? HAVING
PEOPLE CONVINCED THEY
HAD THE BOMB!

MANIPULATING
INNOCENT
PEOPLE ALONG
WITH THEIR OWN,
THEY BRILLIANTLY
FAKED THE
TRAIL I
FOLLOWED--
GATHERING THEIR
EVIDENCE--
UNTIL I
BECAME
OMEGA'S PRIME
WITNESS!

ONCE I DEDUCED MY
ROLE IN THE SCHEME, I
FIGURED THERE WAS NO
BOMB-- EVEN WHEN THE
FAT MAN AND PAMELA DREW
SHOWED GENUINE TERROR
OF IT--

--BECAUSE THEY
REVEALED THEY HAD
A LEADER-- AND I
REALIZED THE SECRET HAD
BEEN KEPT FROM THEM!

WHEN WAS I
ABSOLUTELY
CERTAIN THERE
WASN'T ANY
BOMB?

WHEN I DISCOVERED
THAT THEIR SILENT
"PARTNER" WAS DR. NAGY
-- THE ONE PERSON WHO
COULD--AND DID--TELL
ME THE TRUTH!

BUT ALL NAGY
SAID WAS SOMETHING
ABOUT A PLACE IN
AFRICA--
NEMBOMBA!

NO, COMMISSIONER,
NEMBOMBA HAS
NOTHING TO DO WITH
AFRICA!

IT'S TWO
HUNGARIAN
WORDS--**NEM**
AND **BOMBA**--
MEANING **NO**
BOMB!

EPILOGUE AT MIDNIGHT...

MR. MAYOR,
ON CLOSED
CIRCUIT--
HERE COMES
THE RANSOM
PLANE!

BEAUTIFUL--
A TEN-MILLION-
DOLLAR JOB,
AT LEAST!

WE'LL SELL
IT AT AUCTION
ALONG WITH THE
MIRAMAR!

BATMAN--WHO'D HAVE
THOUGHT WE'D SHOW A
PROFIT ON THIS DEAL?

NEXT ISSUE ON SALE DURING THE SECOND WEEK IN NOVEMBER