



PART THREE OF THREE

THE MANY DEATHS OF THE

# BATMAN

BYRNE • APARO • DECARLO

435  
JUL 89  
US 75¢  
CAN 95¢  
UK 50p



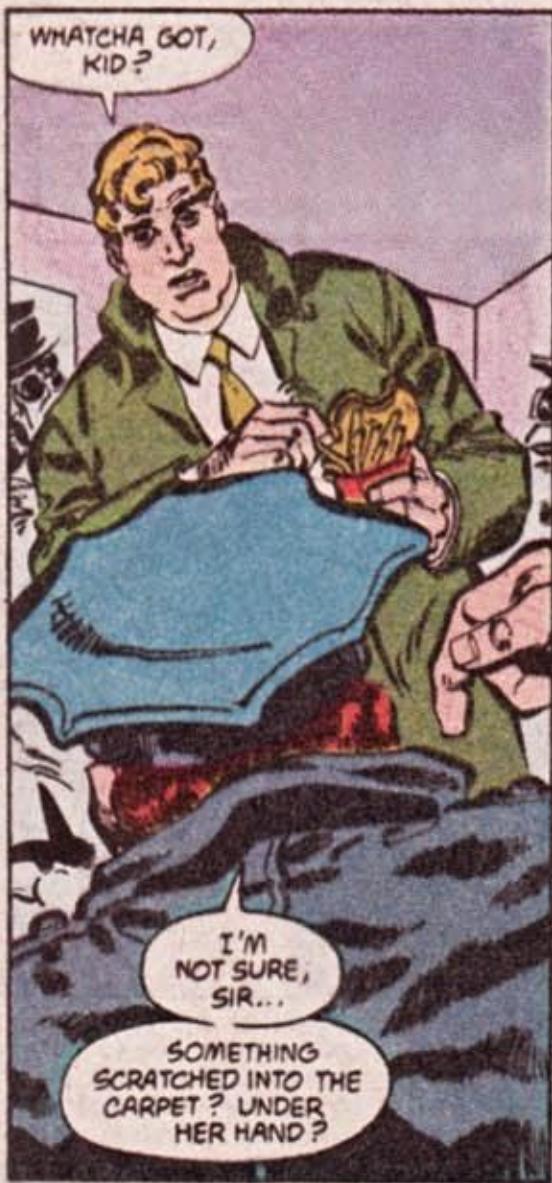
# THE MANY DEATHS OF THE BATMAN

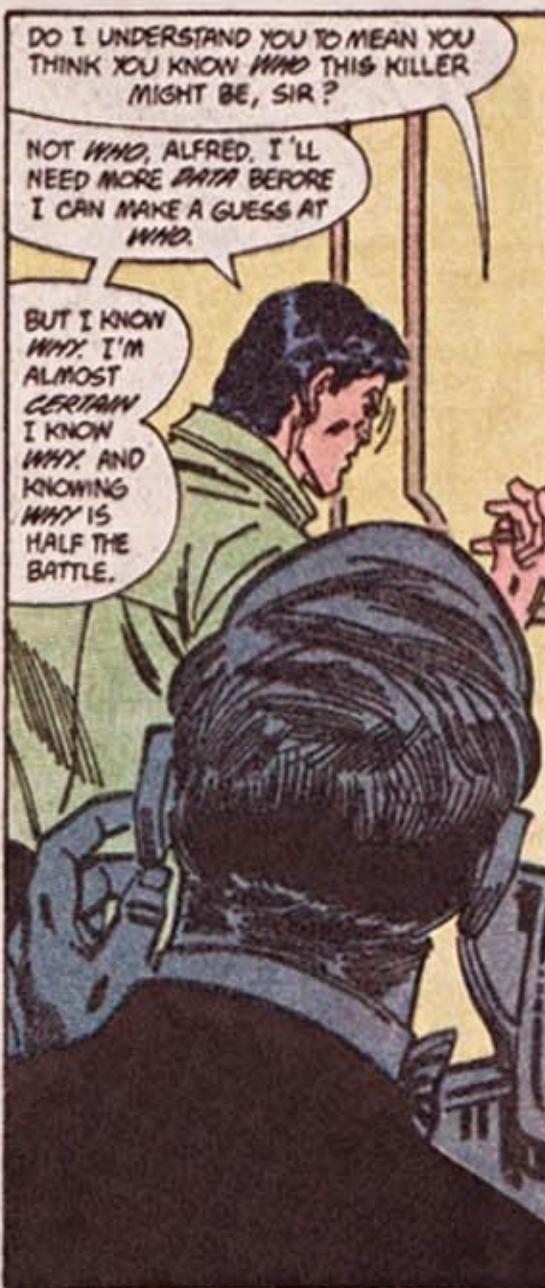
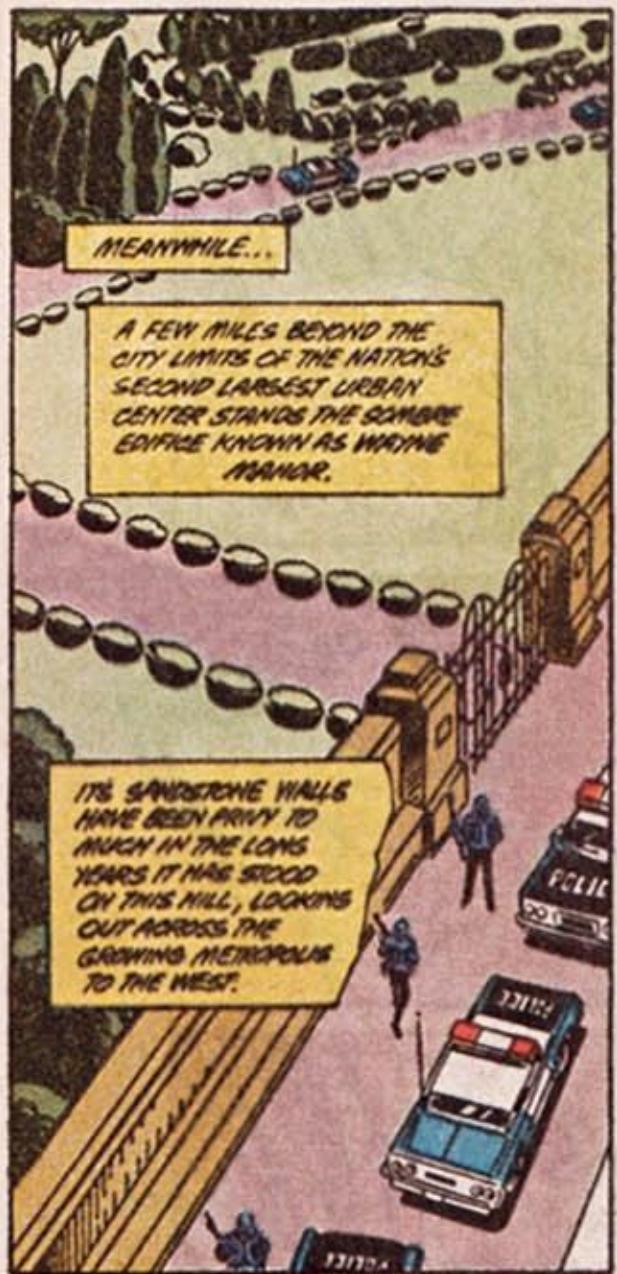


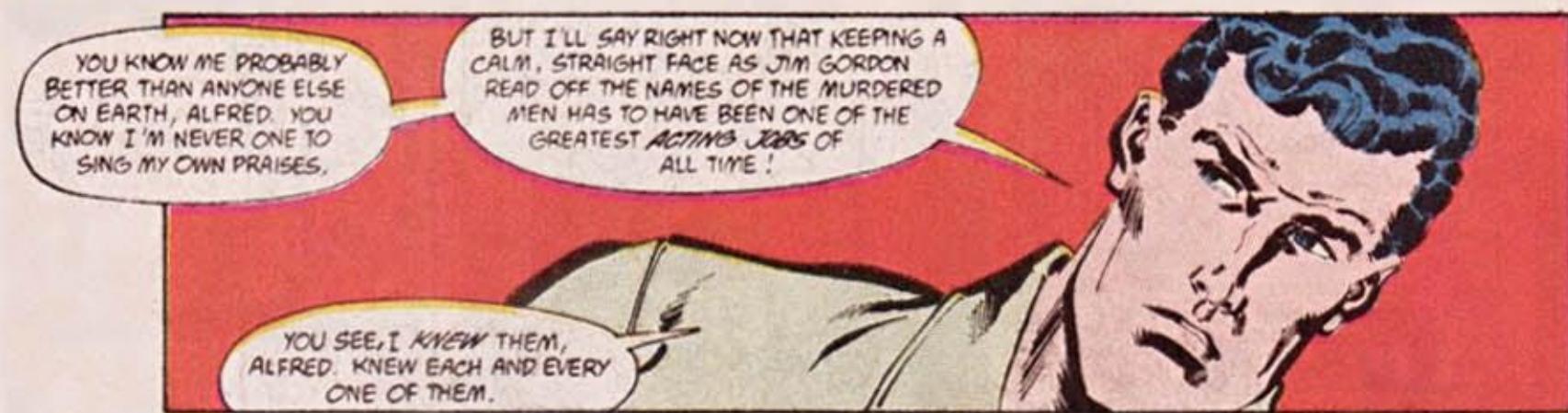
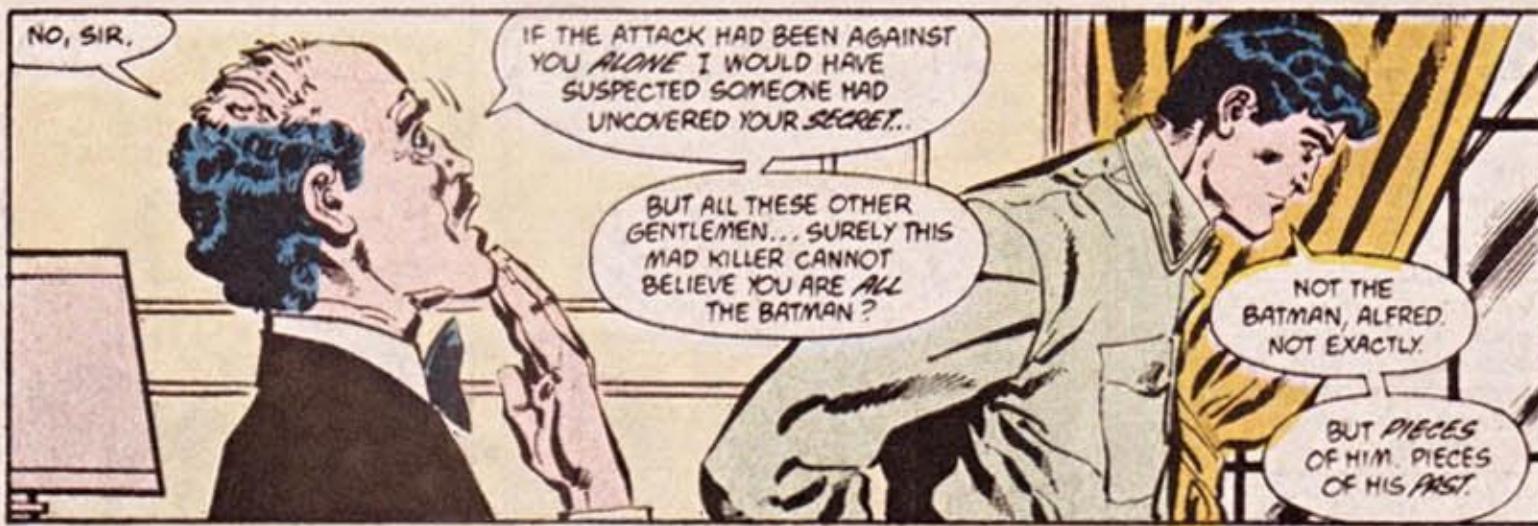
BATMAN 435 Published monthly by DC Comics Inc., 666 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10103. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to BATMAN, DC Comics Subscriptions, P.O. Box 0528, Baldwin, NY 11510. Annual subscription rate \$9.00, Canada \$14.00, all other foreign \$21.00. U.S. funds only. Copyright © 1989 DC Comics Inc. All Rights Reserved. The stories, characters and incidents mentioned in this magazine are entirely fictional. All characters featured in this issue and distinctive likenesses thereof are trademarks of DC Comics Inc. Advertising Representative: Print Advertising Representatives, 355 Lexington Avenue, New York, NY 10017 (212) 391-1400. Printed in U.S.A.

DC Comics Inc. A Warner Communications Company

G-4858









MEANWHILE...

IN THE QUIET RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOOD OF PARK RIDGE, JUST A FEW SHORT MILES FROM THE CITY LIMITS...

...AT THE FRONT DOOR OF ONE PARTICULAR HOUSE...

JERRY?

NOX NOX

JERRY, ARE YOU HOME?

JERRY?

IT'S ME, IT'S SALLY...

NOW WHERE CAN HE BE?

HE PROMISED HE'D BE ABLE TO COME AND HELP ME PICK OUT THE CHINA PATTERN TODAY.

CREAK

...JERRY...?



SAL?

WHAT ARE YOU DOING, DARLING? MESSING WITH THOSE SMELLY OLD CHEMICALS OF YOURS AGAIN?

YOU ARE GOING TO BE ABLE TO GIVE THAT UP, AFTER WE'RE MARRIED, LIKE YOU PROMISED?

OF COURSE, OF COURSE...

THERE'LL BE NO REASON FOR ME TO COME BACK TO THIS AFTER WE'RE MARRIED. JUST LIKE I PROMISED.

JUST LIKE I PLANNED...





THREE MINUTES LATER, FAR BELOW WAYNE MANOR...

NONE OF THE MURDER VICTIMS WERE GOTHAM NATIVES.

WHOEVER IT IS THAT'S KILLING THEM MUST ALSO HAVE BEEN BRINGING THEM INTO TOWN...

LURING THEM SOMEHOW.

WITH MY COMPUTER LINKS TO ALL THE MAJOR SYSTEMS IN GOTHAM I CAN EASILY TAP INTO THE VARIOUS TRAIN, BUS AND AIRLINE SCHEDULES...

AND PASSENGER LISTS.

TENS OF THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE COME INTO GOTHAM EVERY DAY.

FINDING A NEEDLE IN A HAYSTACK WOULD BE CHILD'S PLAY COMPARED TO THIS...

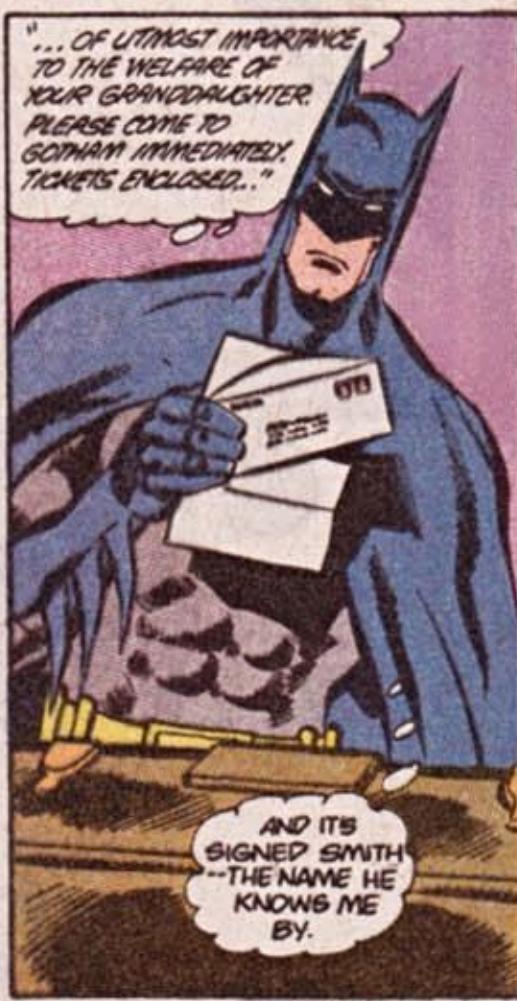
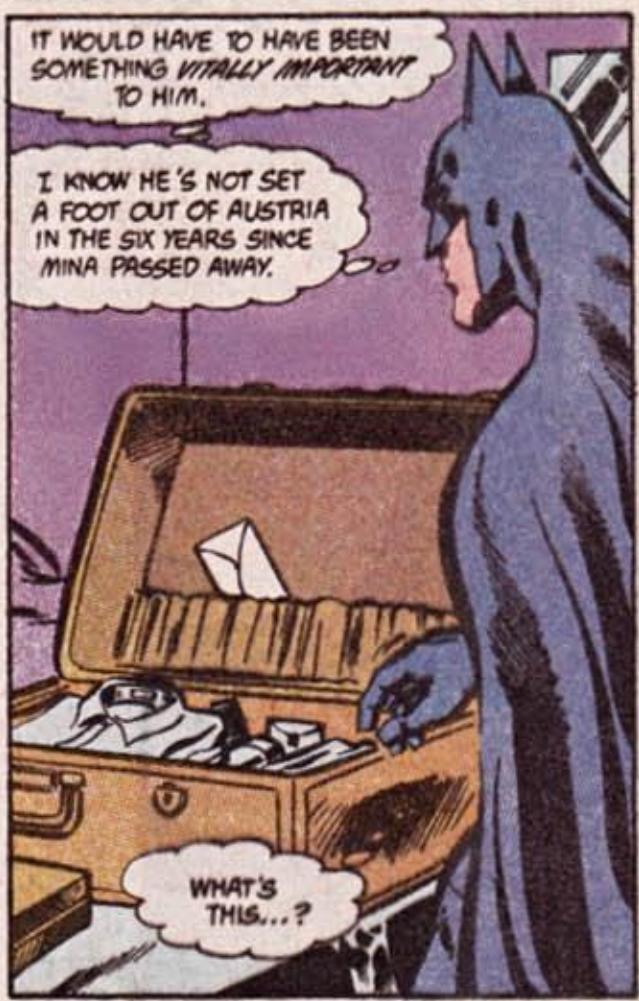
... IF I DIDN'T HAVE THE DISTINCT ADVANTAGE OF KNOWING EXACTLY WHICH NAMES I'M LOOKING FOR.

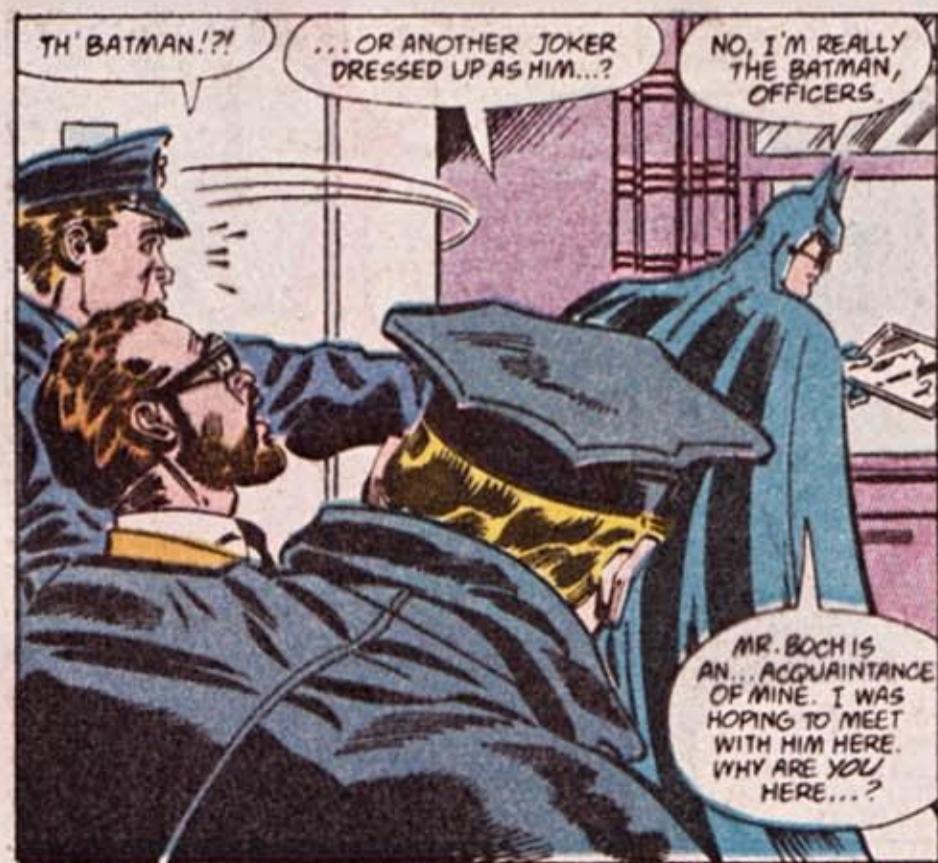
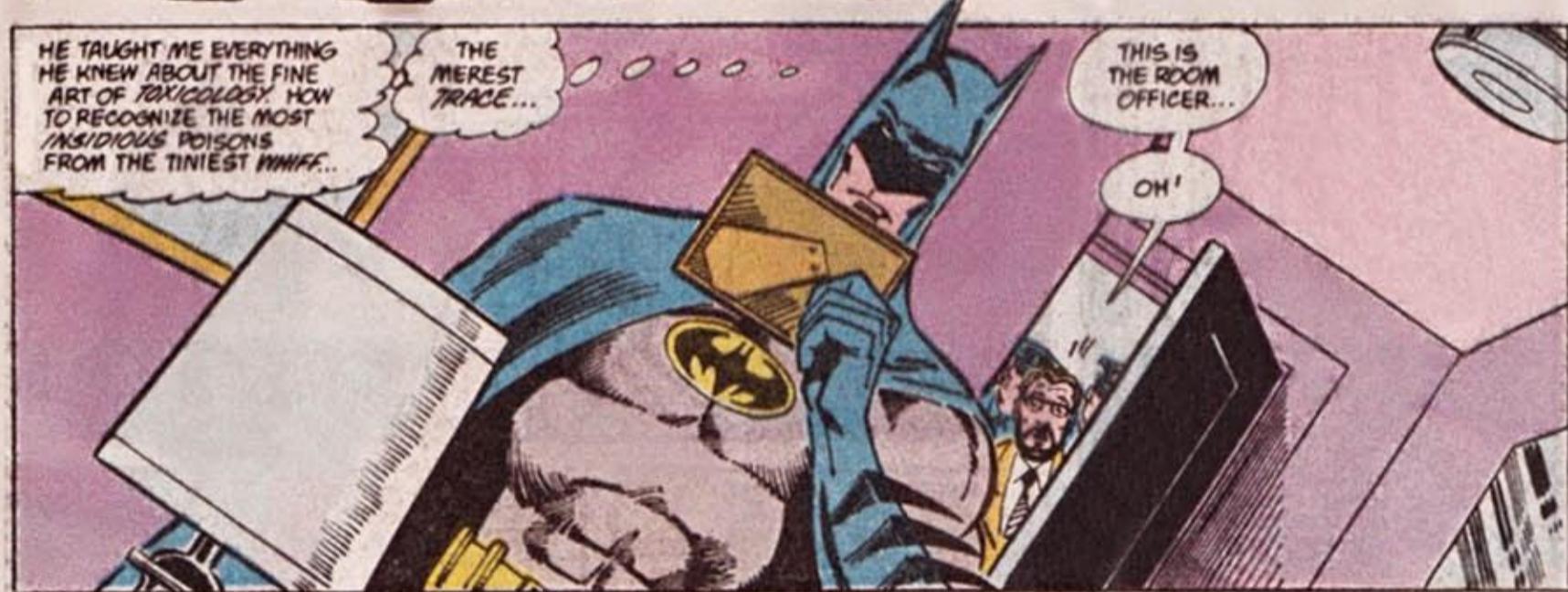
THIRTY FOUR MINUTES LATER...

THE SANDBERG HOTEL...

DOESN'T LOOK LIKE HE'S HERE. IF I'M TOO LATE...

THIS IS BOCH'S ROOM.





POLICE MORGUE, LATER...

THIS IS THE LAST ONE, WEBBER. DEATH BY SNAKEBITE. I DON'T EVEN HAVE TO DO THE AUTOPSY. THE SIGNS ARE PLAIN.

THEN IT ALL COMES BACK TO STONE, TO THE ONE WHO MAY HAVE ALREADY BEEN DEAD...

OR WHO MAY NOT HAVE BEEN STONE.



BATMAN!

WHAT DO YOU MEAN...  
NOT STONE?"

IT'S THE OTHER PIECE THAT DOESN'T MATCH THE SHAPE OF THE REST OF THE PUZZLE, COMMISSIONER.

IN ADDITION TO BEING ALREADY DEAD AT THE TIME-- YES, I'VE READ YOUR REPORT, DOCTOR--STONE WAS THE ONLY ONE KILLED IN THE MANNER OF HIS EXPERTISE.



BUT ALLISON, THE GYMNAST, WAS SHOT WITH A RIGGED CROSSBOW. HIS DEATH WAS FOLLOWED BY DIGIORDA'S, THE EXPERT BOWMAN WHO WAS POISONED...

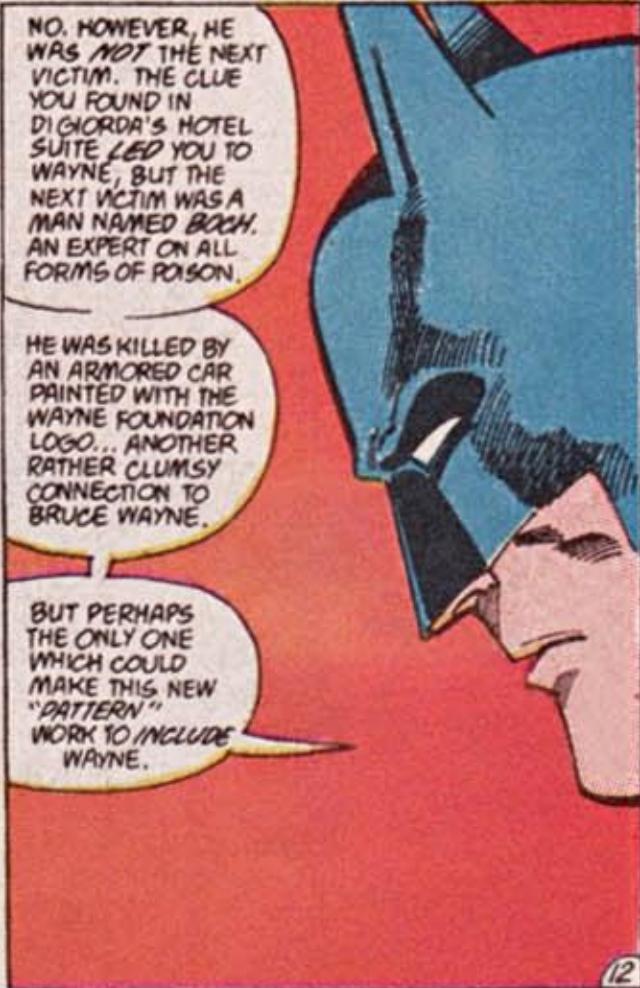
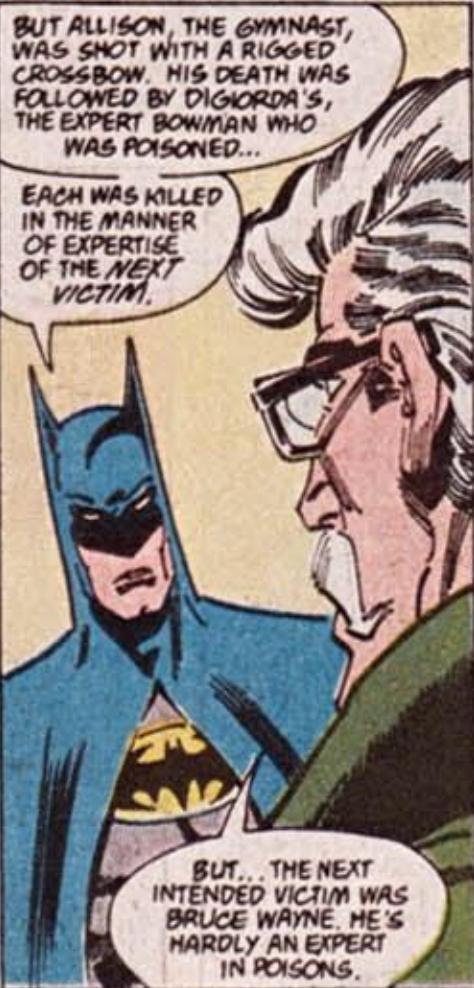
EACH WAS KILLED IN THE MANNER OF EXPERTISE OF THE NEXT VICTIM.

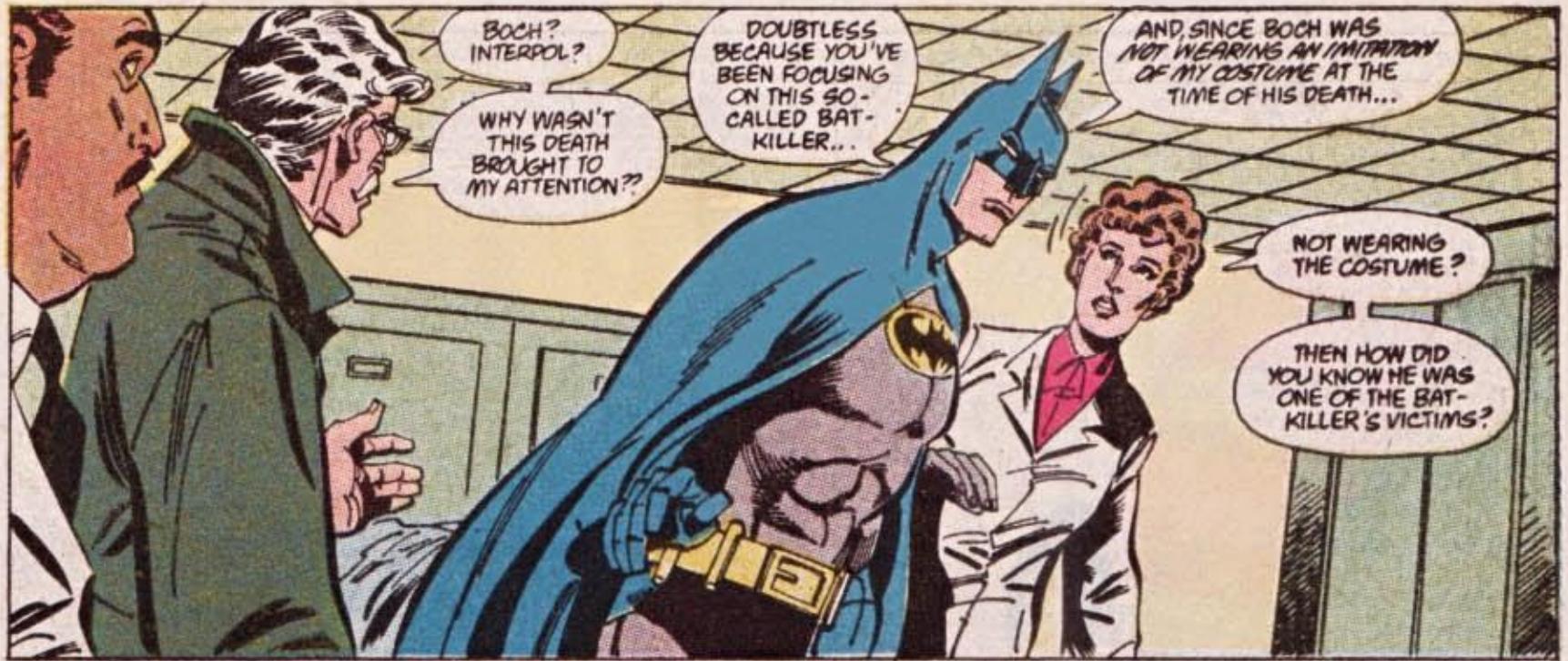
BUT... THE NEXT INTENDED VICTIM WAS BRUCE WAYNE. HE'S HARDLY AN EXPERT IN POISONS.

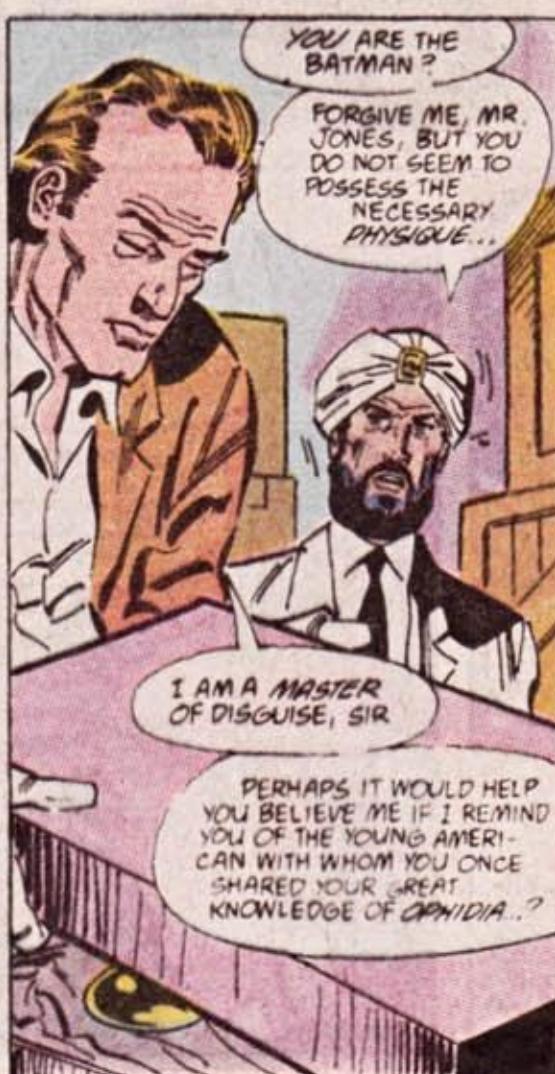
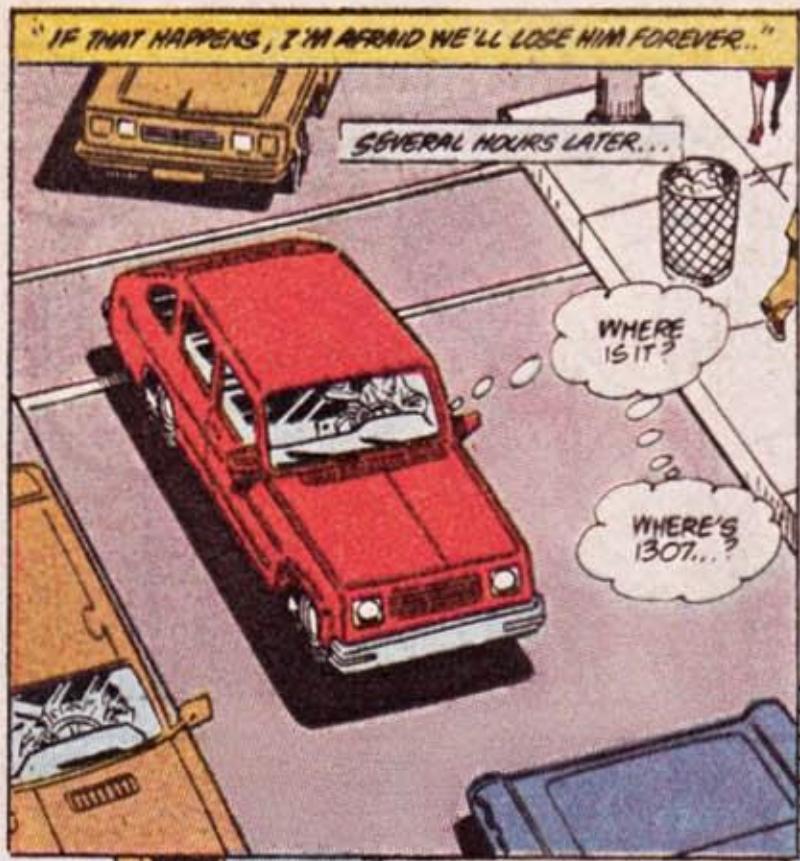
NO, HOWEVER, HE WAS NOT THE NEXT VICTIM. THE CLUE YOU FOUND IN DIGIORDA'S HOTEL SUITE LED YOU TO WAYNE, BUT THE NEXT VICTIM WAS A MAN NAMED BOCH. AN EXPERT ON ALL FORMS OF POISON.

HE WAS KILLED BY AN ARMORED CAR PAINTED WITH THE WAYNE FOUNDATION LOGO... ANOTHER RATHER CLUMSY CONNECTION TO BRUCE WAYNE.

BUT PERHAPS THE ONLY ONE WHICH COULD MAKE THIS NEW "PATTERN" WORK TO INCLUDE WAYNE.









ONE HOUR LATER...

BUT, MASTER BRUCE, IF YOU KNOW THIS MAN STONE IS THE KILLER, WHY DON'T YOU JUST GO OUT AND PICK HIM UP?

BECAUSE HE WAS TELLING THE TRUTH, ALFRED.

ALL DATA ON FREDRICK STONE ENDS WITH HIS APPARENT DEATH.

BUT IF MR. STONE IS ONE OF THE MEN YOU CONTACTED, YEARS AGO, TO HELP YOU IN YOUR TRAINING...

WHY WOULD HE BE KILLING OFF ALL THE OTHERS WHO HELPED TO THAT SAME END... INCLUDING HIMSELF? AND WHY WOULD BRUCE WAYNE BE ON HIS LIST OF VICTIMS?

I'M NOT SURE WHAT HIS EXACT MOTIVE IS JUST YET.

AS TO HIS INCLUSION OF BRUCE WAYNE, I SUSPECT THAT WAS A RESULT OF HIS PROCESS OF DEDUCTION IN FINDING ALL THE OTHERS.

I LEARNED ABOUT EXPLOSIVES FROM STONE.

HE MUST'VE READ OF MY USING A METHOD ONLY HE COULD HAVE TAUGHT ME. AND FROM THAT, HE REASONED OTHER EXPERTS MUST HAVE TAUGHT ME OTHER SKILLS.

AS FOR BRUCE WAYNE... WELL, AS AL GHUL ONCE DEDUCED MY IDENTITY BY LOCATING THE ONE MAN WHO WAS BUYING ALL THE THINGS BATMAN WOULD NEED.

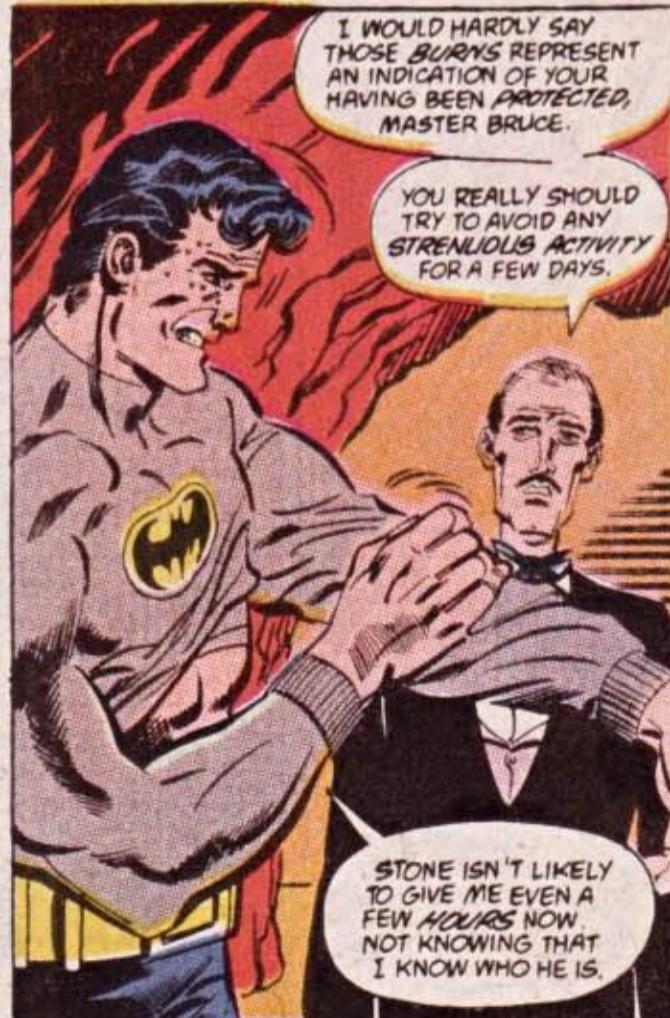
STONE COULD HAVE MADE A SIMILAR DEDUCTION. PERHAPS HE DECIDED WAYNE WAS SOMEHOW FINANCING THE BATMAN.

WHEN STONE WAS THROWN BY MY PRETENDING SHASTRI WAS NOT ONE OF THE MEN WHO'D TRAINED ME, I REALIZED HE WAS WORKING ON GUESSWORK RATHER THAN DEDUCTIVE REASONING.

IT'S MOST FORTUNATE YOU WERE ABLE TO CONTACT MR. SHASTRI AND TAKE HIS PLACE, SIR.



LUCKILY THE HEAVY LATEX MAKEUP I NEEDED FOR MY IMPERSONATION PROTECTED ME FROM THE ELECTRIC SHOCK THAT WAS MEANT TO KILL SHASTRI.



I WOULD HARDLY SAY THOSE BURNS REPRESENT AN INDICATION OF YOUR HAVING BEEN PROTECTED, MASTER BRUCE.

YOU REALLY SHOULD TRY TO AVOID ANY STRENUIOUS ACTIVITY FOR A FEW DAYS.

STONE ISN'T LIKELY TO GIVE ME EVEN A FEW HOURS NOW. NOT KNOWING THAT I KNOW WHO HE IS.

"EVEN IF I DON'T HAVE A CLUE AS TO WHERE HE IS..."

BUT... BUT JERRY, I DON'T UNDERSTAND.

WHAT'S WRONG? WHAT HAPPENED AFTER YOU DROPPED ME OFF DOWNTOWN?



I DID IT TO PROTECT YOU, SALLY. ALL TO PROTECT YOU.

I KNEW THAT IF I COULD GUESS WHO WE ALL WERE, HIS ENEMIES COULD GUESS. AND THAT MEANT I'D BE IN DANGER... WE'D BE IN DANGER, FOR AS LONG AS I LIVED.

GUESS WHAT, JERRY? WHOSE ENEMIES?

YOU'RE NOT MAKING ANY SENSE!

I KNEW HE COULD ONLY HAVE LEARNED THE TRIPLE INSERT MANEUVER FROM ME, DON'T YOU SEE?

THE BATMAN!

BECAUSE I HELPED TRAIN HIM. HAVEN'T YOU BEEN LISTENING?

JERRY, YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT THE BATMAN! HIS ENEMIES. BUT WHY WOULD HIS ENEMIES TRY TO HURT YOU? TRY TO KILL YOU?

...OR ME?

I TAUGHT HIM EVERYTHING I KNOW ABOUT EXPLOSIVES. EVERYTHING INCLUDING THE TRIPLE INSERT. I ONLY EVER TAUGHT THAT TO ONE OTHER MAN, AND THAT MAN HAS TO BE THE BATMAN.

THAT'S WHEN I GUessed HE'D LEARNED ALL HIS OTHER SKILLS FROM OTHER PEOPLE, OTHER EXPERTS.

AND THE MOMENT I REALIZED THAT, I KNEW SOMEONE ELSE MIGHT MAKE THE SAME GUESS. THE JOKER, MAYBE. TWO-FACE. THE PENGUIN. THEY'RE ALL HOMICIDAL MONSTERS. THEY'D THINK NOTHING OF KILLING US, KILLING ME TO GET TO HIM.

ONCE I GUessed THAT IT WAS EASY TO FIND THE OTHERS, I KNEW EXACTLY WHEN I'D ADDED MY PART TO HIS TRAINING, YOU SEE. SO I KNEW WHEN IT WAS HE WOULD HAVE BEEN GATHERING ALL THE INFORMATION THAT MADE HIM THE BATMAN.

I MADE MYSELF A LIST OF ALL THE BATMAN'S SKILLS. ALL THE THINGS I'D READ ABOUT, SEEN ON TV. I STUDIED. LEARNED A TINY PART OF EACH OF THOSE SKILLS.

YOU'RE NOT AN EXPLOSIVES EXPERT, JERRY. YOU'RE A FLORIST! THE MOST HARMLESS PROFESSION UNDER THE SUN!

A FLORIST, YES!

WITH A FEW MORE WEEDS TO TAKE CARE OF BEFORE MY GARDEN IS SAFE!

THEN I SOUGHT OUT THE NAMES OF THE MEN WHO COULD HAVE ADDED THEIR PART OF HIS TRAINING, AS I DID MINE.

BUT... YOUR PART? EXPLOSIVES?

JERRY... !!



ROOM SERVICE?

I DIDN'T ORDER ANY...

SHUT UP!

I DON'T HAVE THE TIME FOR FINESSE. NO TIME FOR GAMES.

YOU'RE GOING TO DIE, CAMPBELL. THAT'S WHY YOU CAME TO GOTHAM, ALTHOUGH YOU HAD NO IDEA WHEN YOU RESPONDED TO MY INVITATION.

AND BEFORE YOU DIE YOU'RE GOING TO PUT THIS ON!

WHAT IN THE NAME OF...??

THE COSTUME IS MY SIGNATURE, CAMPBELL. THE MARK I CHOSE TO LET THE BATMAN'S ENEMIES KNOW WHY THIS WAS BEING DONE. WHY THESE MEN WERE DYING.

YOU HAVE TO DIE SO I CAN LIVE.

PUT IT ON--

SOON--

ALL RIGHT! I'M WEARING THE WRETCHED THING! NOW, WHAT DO YOU MEAN TO DO?

YOU SEE THIS DAGGER, CAMPBELL? IT'S AN EXACT COPY OF A CEREMONIAL DAGGER USED BY THE CHAWALDRA PEOPLES OF NORTH-EERN TIBET.

IT USED TO BE USED IN HUMAN SACRIFICES, BUT THEY'VE BECOME MORE CIVILIZED IN THE PAST FEW YEARS.

THERE ARE PROBABLY ONLY TWO AMERICANS WHO WOULD RECOGNIZE THIS DAGGER ON SIGHT, CAMPBELL, MY NEXT VICTIM, AND...

PLEASE... NO... I HAVE A WIFE...

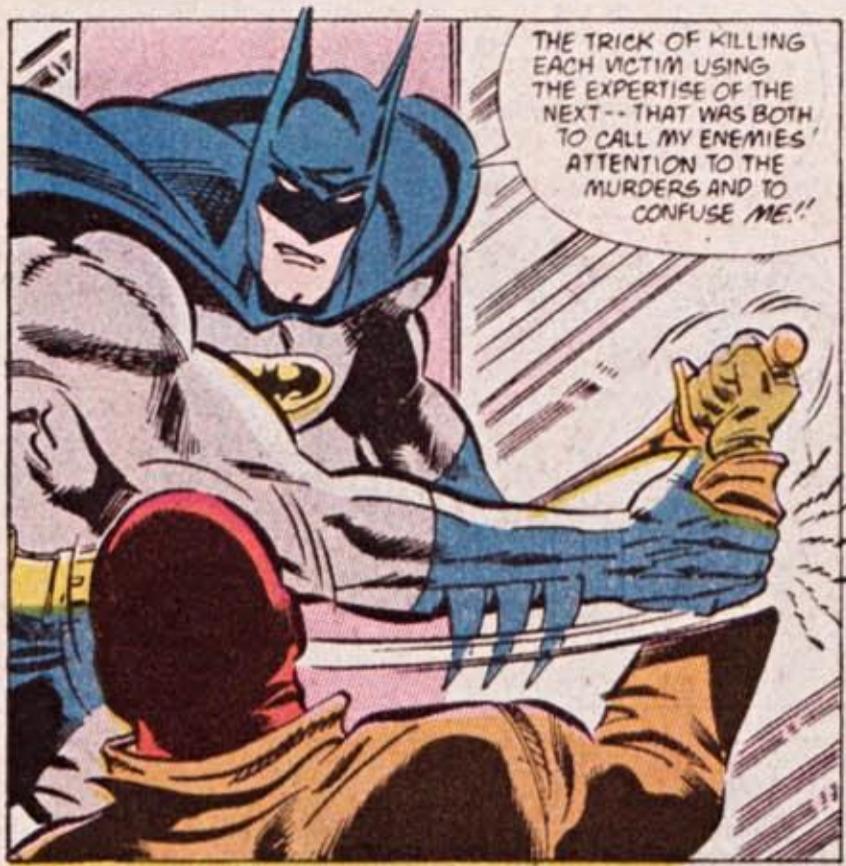
AND ME.



YES, STONE... OR  
WOULD YOU PREFER "SAWYER"?  
YOU WENT TO A LOT OF TROUBLE  
TO CREATE THAT IDENTITY...

BUT IT WON'T SERVE  
YOU NOW. YOUR SO-CALLED  
SIGNATURE WAS MEANT TO FOOL MY ENEMIES  
INTO THINKING ALL THE MEN WHO TRAINED ME  
WERE DEAD WHEN CORPSES WEARING MY  
COSTUME STOPPED TURNING UP.

YOU WANTED  
EVERYONE THINKING  
YOU WERE GONE. NO  
LONGER ANY SORT  
OF TARGET FOR  
VENGEANCE BY  
MY ENEMIES.





JOHN BYRNE-writer  
JIM APARO-pencil  
MIKE DeCARLO-inker  
JOHN COSTANZA-letterer  
ADRIENNE ROY-colorist  
DAN RASPLER-asst. editor  
DENNY O'NEIL-editor  
BOB KANE-creator

# BAT-SIGNALS

Dear Denny and Daniel,

After reading BATMAN #432, I must express my gratitude to all of you, and especially to James Owsley, for presenting "Dead Letter Office," a story of the kind I thought I might never see again following the death of Robin.

All the justification I had read for killing Jason Todd boiled down to motivating Batman to become a grimmer, more inhuman character, a figure to inspire fear in all, innocent and guilty. This was a scenario I dreaded. I have always cherished the images of Batman as friend to the good citizens of Gotham while striking terror into the hearts of those choosing to break the law. You can imagine my pleasure upon reading "Dead Letter Office," which showed a thoroughly human and humane caped crusader (literally). Owsley, in fact, used the death of Robin to strengthen the compassion of Batman and I hope Jim Starlin will bear this in mind when he returns to writing the series.

I also enjoyed the portrayal of Batman's relationship with Max Kelly throughout the story. I was impressed with the way Batman anticipated Max's reactions to his sudden and unexplained appearances in her apartment, and with the way he proceeded to work with her. In the right kind of story, I think Max is a character worth using again. Also, I think James showed he has a good handle on the relationship between Batman and Gordon. The exchanges between them were nicely written, and I'll even forgive Jim for using that old "I hate it when he does that" line.

All in all, a very satisfying tale, nicely enhanced by pleasing Aparo/DeCarlo art. Jim rarely lets me down on Batman, though I would like to see him do pencils and inks again, as he did in the *Brave and Bold* days. Consider that an earnest entreaty

All the best,

Dale Coe  
Warrington, Cheshire  
England

.....

Dear Denny.  
I have just finished reading BATMAN #432, "Dead Letter Office," and for the first time I have nearly accepted Jason Todd's death. Maybe I'm stupid, but when Max asked the Dark Knight, "Do you have any idea of what it feels like to lose your own son?" my first thought was that, "No, but I lost my parents." would be Batman's response. When Batman looks at Jason's letter on the

final page, however, I sat back and closed my eyes and mourned Jason Todd. How else can I put it? You guys hit home!

Congratulations to all for the most human story in some time.

Lee Barnett  
London, England

Well, sounds like they appreciate a little creative pathos in England. In truth, we felt as well that it was important for it to be clear that no matter what his public image, Batman's loss of Jason had an effect that was ultimately humanizing. We're glad you noticed.

And keep reading for further ramifications.

.....

Dear Dan and Denny,

'Get dressed, Max. I need you.' A simple statement, to be sure, but one that lingered long after I'd finished BATMAN #432. In spite of what most readers may think, Batman needs some sort of companionship, even if he does work best on his own.

It looks to me like Batman and Maxine'd be perfect for each other, if only because their first meeting was so endearing. They both work for the same goals and use essentially the same methods; in fact, Max almost could've been Batman (Batwoman?), if Bruce hadn't beaten her to it, and if Max could "stomach the outfit."

In any case, I hope we'll be seeing more of Max. Considering that he actually let her into the Batcave, I have a feeling we will.

Just one question, off the subject: Does Jim Gordon know that Bruce Wayne is Batman? If not, why was he at Jason Todd's funeral?

Sincerely,  
Ed "Wildside" Casey  
Tallahassee, FL

Ed, Commissioner Gordon doesn't know who Batman is. He went to Jason's funeral out of respect for his friend Bruce Wayne.

.....

Dear Bat-Signals.

BATMAN #432 was Batman the way it oughtta be! I really like Max. She was not your typical P.I. She played off Batman very well. I'd really like to see more of her.

It was also nice to see Batman play detective again, instead of the avenging geek he's been since Jason died. A tip of the pointy-eared cowl to Jim

DC COMICS INC.  
665 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10103

JENETTE KAHN President and Publisher  
DICK GIORDANO V.P.-Executive Editor  
DENNIS O'NEIL Editor  
DAN RASPLER Asst. Editor  
RICHARD BRUNING Art Director  
TERRI CUNNINGHAM Mgr.-Editorial Admin  
PAT BASTIENNE Mgr.-Editorial Coordinator  
BOB ROZAKIS Production Director  
PAUL LEVITZ Executive V.P.  
JOE ORLANDO V.P.-Creative Director  
BRUCE BRISTOW V.P.-Sales & Marketing  
MATT RAGONE Circulation Director  
PAT CALDON Controller

L-3785

Owsley for breaking the ice. And as always, Jim Aparo's art was superb. Don't let this man go! In the future, I would love to see Batman and Max take on a real threat, like the Scarecrow.

Sincerely,  
Mark Goodman  
Jericho, NY

.....

Dear Dan and Denny,

As a fan of the hard-boiled mystery genre, I was more than pleased to see the introduction of a new private detective character Max Kelly manages to combine the best of the Sam Spade school and the best of '80s cool.

James Owsley is certainly an excellent choice to pick up the reins; in fact, he seems more at home on the streets of Gotham than he has in the galactic sprawl with Green Lantern. Jim Aparo remains one of my favorite Batman artists of all time. It amazes me that he can still do it so well after all these years.

Keep up the good work, gentlemen.

Andrew Karl  
White Plains, NY

.....

Dear Dan,

Batman's fervent search for the missing boy in BATMAN #432 captured his compulsive-obsessive tendencies well, and gave the reader some understanding of the guilt and repercussions he is facing after Jason Todd's death. This all is welcome and appreciated.

Over in the Superman titles, we see the Man of Steel wrestling with his conscience over moral choices he made. Rather than cope with them, he runs away, banishing himself into space. Batman is handling his guilt and grief differently. It appears his character is stronger, more vigilant, as he fights himself, his feelings, as he continues his self-appointed role. Through saving the boy, he redeems a part of himself, knowing that even though Jason is dead, his memory serves as a catalyst to rescue others who may not have had the opportunities afforded him. By saving one child, Batman saves his soul. Fine work, Mr. Owsley!

Mahalo,  
Mark Lucas  
San Francisco, CA

.....

Dear Denny and Dan,

I could easily learn to live with the creative team of Owsley, Aparo, and

DeCarlo on Batman. Issue #432 was another bit of proof that James Owsley has finally made it big. After years of being a consistently good writer who never got much attention, Mr. Owsley is really making a name for himself now that he's writing the character that every writer hopes to get a crack at someday, myself included. The focus on Batman's detective abilities is a refreshing change of pace from the usual thug-punching creature-of-the-night scenario.

I am looking forward to the John Byrne three-parter with a great deal of enthusiasm, but I hope the Owsley, Aparo, DeCarlo team returns to chronicle the dark knight's adventures on a regular basis.

Until next time,  
Robert Luggibihl  
Fountain Valley, CA

\*\*\*\*\*

Dear Denny,

Man, I could get used to these Owsley/Aparo stories. As with the previous issue, "Dead Letter Office" was yet another superb Batman story, strong in all the elements that have made the Darknight Detective the enduring literary figure that he is: daring escapes, unsolved mysteries, amazing feats of physical prowess, dazzling displays of detection and intelligence, and of course, Batman scaring the bejeezus out of folk. I was in ecstasy for the entire 22 pages.

I was also quite taken with the character of Maxine Kelly. She reminded me quite a bit of Kinsey Millhone, the female p.i. from the superb Sue Grafton novels. (And when you look at it, Kinsey's initials are K.M., while Max's are M.K. Coincidence, Mr. Owsley, or are you a Grafton fan, too?)

Please, Denny, convince Messrs. Owsley and Aparo that they should stay

with this title. They are the perfect counterpoint to all the weirdness that is going on over in "Detective." Also, keep Max around, will you? Batman could use her sarcasm to keep things in perspective.

Thanks for listening,  
Sean Twist  
London, Ontario

Well, gang, it seems old Maxie was a hit with you. We've got one more letter that was a hit with us, to wit:

\*\*\*\*\*

Hey, Denny and Dan,

I just finished BATMAN #432 and enjoyed it as I do most of them.

Afterward, I began thinking it would be great if there really were superheroes.

Like an Aquaman patrolling our oceans.

Or a Superman protecting our planet.

Maybe even a whole band of gallant super-heroes to guard our Galaxy.

Yeah, it'd sure be great.

Oh well, at least the Batman's real!

Terry

Jackson, MS

Thank you, Terry, whoever you are.

NEXT ISSUE: It's bi-weekly for the next two months, both in BATMAN and in DETECTIVE COMICS. In DETECTIVE #604-607 we give you "The Mudpack," the slimiest bunch of Batman villains ever to team up against the Caped Crusader. Numbers 604 and 607 of TEC will contain fully-painted mini-posters of Batman by Norm Breyfogle, so I'm sure you won't miss a single issue.

Oh yes. And here in BATMAN? What's happening here over the next four issues, now that the Dark Night Detective is at the end of his rope?

BATMAN: YEAR THREE.

Be there.

## From the Den



Snow came and went like a reluctant visitor paying a formal call this past winter. On the ground for a day, and then gone.

There is a hole in the ozone layer that would not repair itself for 300 years if we stopped spewing chemicals into the atmosphere today.

We're losing hundreds of acres of forest a week, mostly to lumbermen's axes.

And a few days ago, a man who should have been piloting a tanker wasn't, and so the ship floundered and spilled 10,000,000 gallons of oil into the sea, polluting 500 square miles.

The ozone layer protects us from the sun's hard radiation. Forests and oceans provide the oxygen we breathe.

I wonder if there's any connection between our almost-snowless winter and what we're doing to the global environment. I wonder if the dry winter isn't the first and mildest of many symptoms to come.

And I wonder why we keep electing people who refuse to acknowledge that the damage being done to the planet might be a problem.

Occasionally I think about these matters, and when I do, I feel I have to say something.

DENNY



# BATMAN®

The Legend lives on each month in DETECTIVE and BATMAN Comics.

