



YOU ARE CORDIALLY INVITED  
TO THE JOKER'S BIRTHDAY!

APPROVED  
BY THE  
COMICS  
CODE  
AUTHORITY

40¢  
ALL NEW!  
NO. 321  
MAR.

# BATMAN



SINCE 1899, GOTHAM POLICE HEADQUARTERS HAS STOOD AT THE JUNCTION OF THE AREA CALLED FIVE POINTS, ON THE LOWER EAST SIDE OF THE CITY...

IN THE PAST 17 YEARS, COMMISSIONER JAMES W. GORDON HAS COME TO KNOW THE MARBLED CORRIDORS OF THIS PROUD OLD BUILDING WELL; IT HAS BECOME A SECOND HOME TO HIM--

--BUT TONIGHT, AS THE LEGENDARY BAT-SIGNAL SLASHES ACROSS A STORM-SWEPT SKY, IT MAY ALSO BECOME HIS TOMB!

# BAT MAN

CREATED BY

BOB  
KANE

COMMISSIONER GORDON! I THINK THIS IS FOR YOU, SIR!

## DREADFUL BIRTHDAY, DEAR JOKER!

LEN  
WEIN  
WRITER

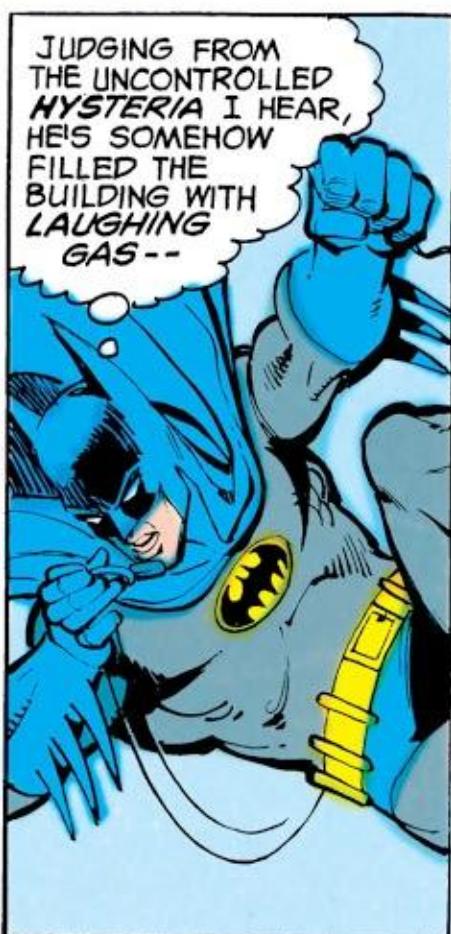
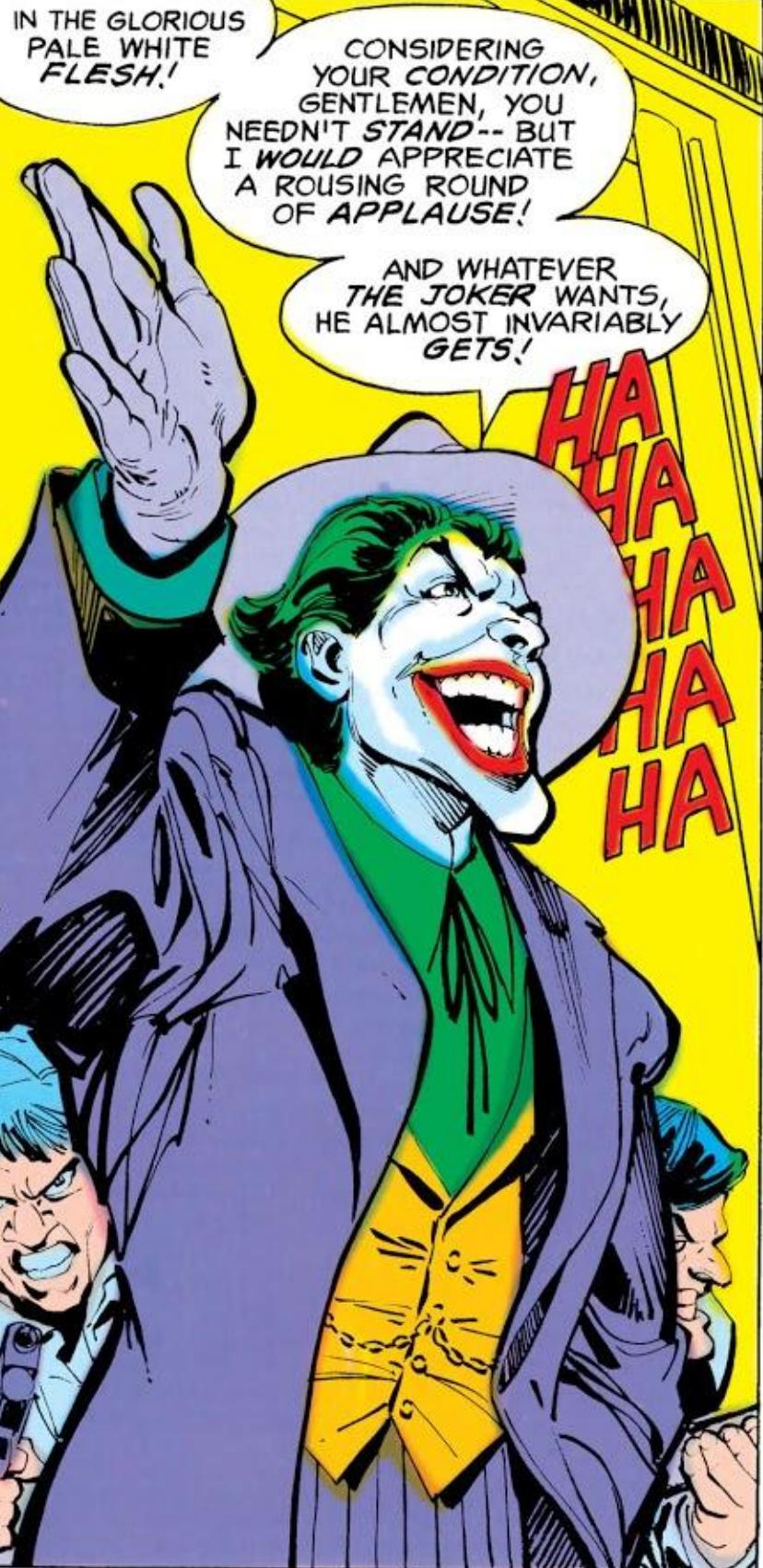
GLYNIS  
WEIN  
COLORIST

WALT &  
DICK  
SIMONSON GIORDANO  
ARTISTS

BEN  
ODA  
LETTERER

PAUL  
LEVITZ  
EDITOR





THEN, GAS FILTER CLENCHED TIGHTLY IN HIS TEETH, THE DARK KNIGHT ENTERS THE BESIEGED BUILDING--

--IN SINGULARLY SPECTACULAR FASHION!



BUT THE BATMAN DOES NOT REPLY--



AH -- THE BATMAN! WHAT AN EXPECTED SURPRISE! AND WHAT A WASTE OF A PERFECTLY GOOD WINDOW!

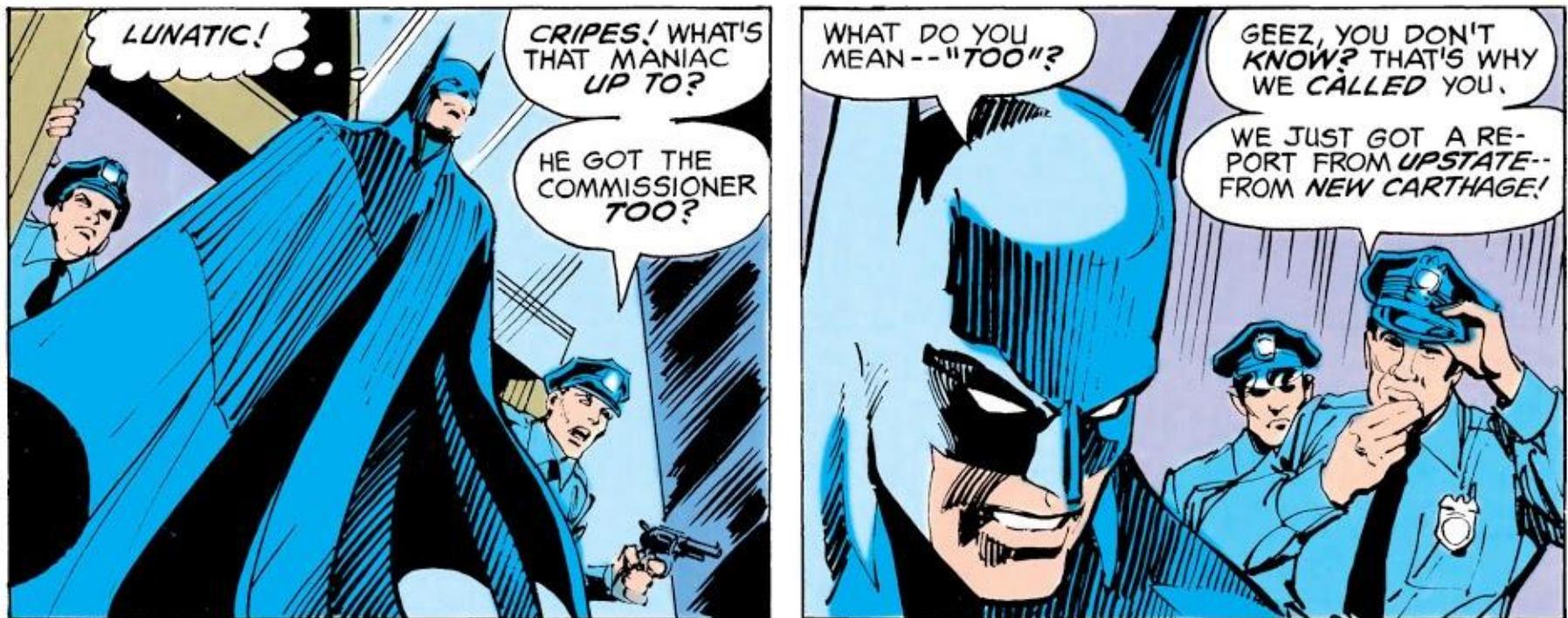
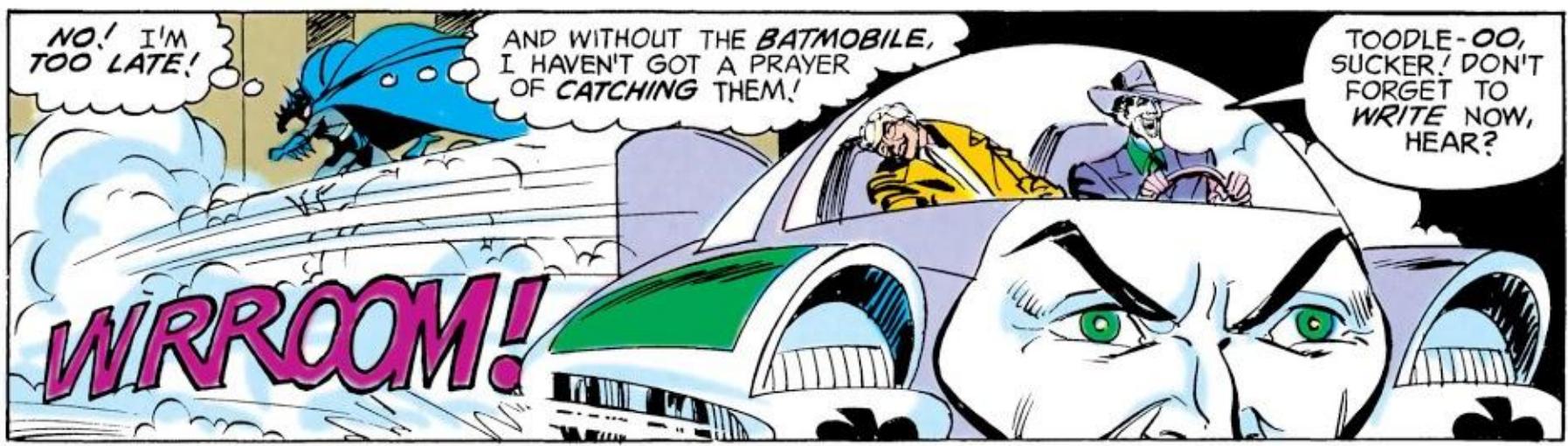
COULDN'T YOU HAVE USED THE DOOR?



THAT'S ANOTHER THING ABOUT THE JOKER THAT HASN'T CHANGED--!

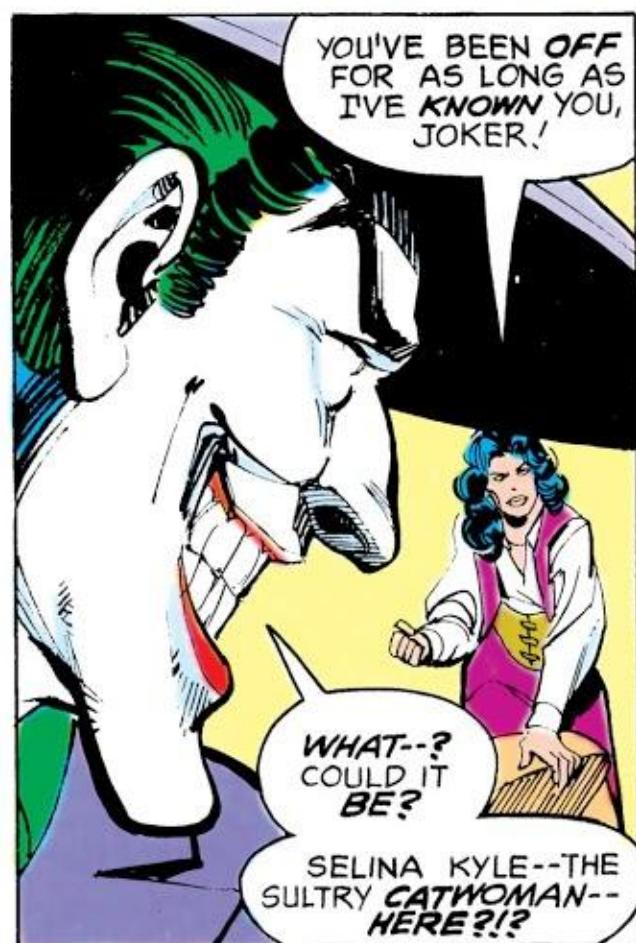
HIS HIRED MUSCLE IS STILL AS INEPT AS EVER!

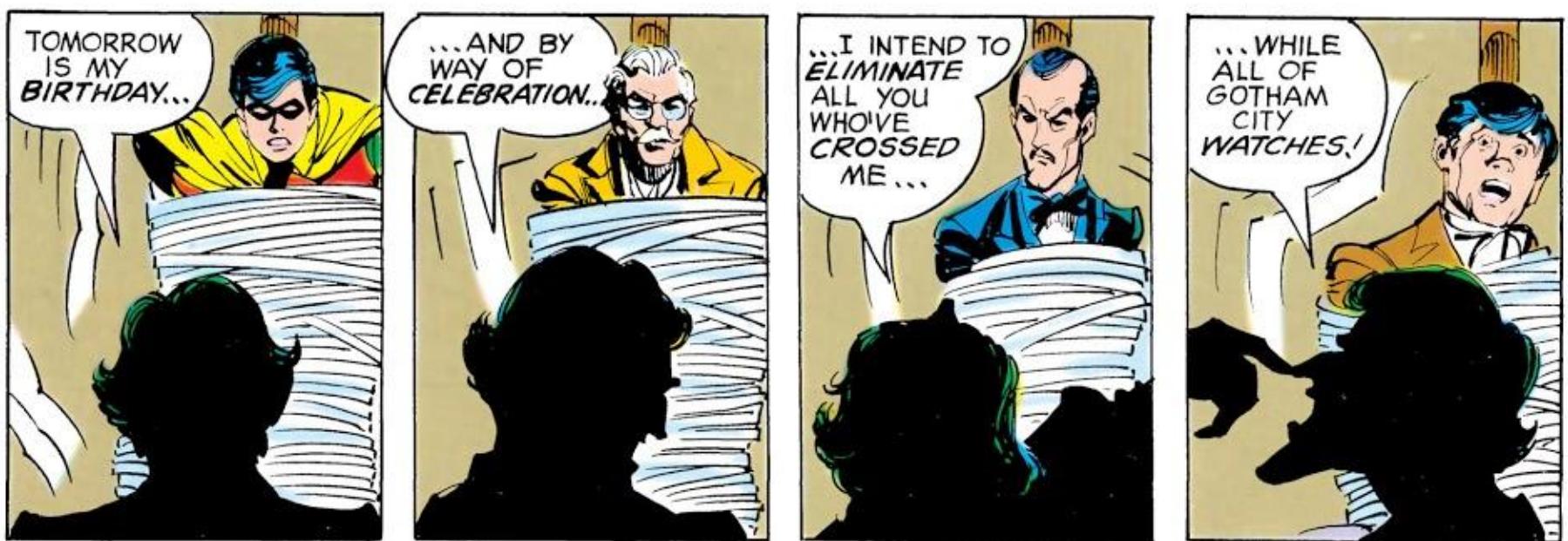




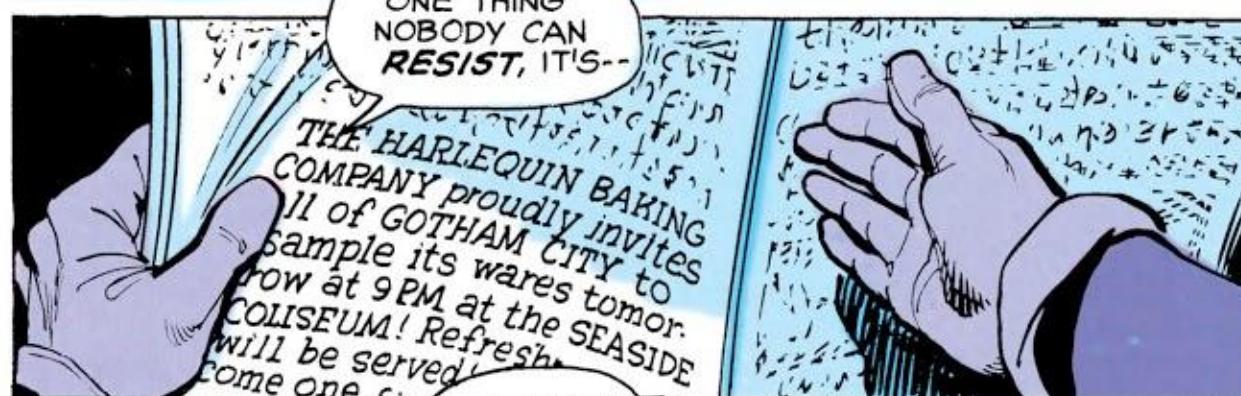
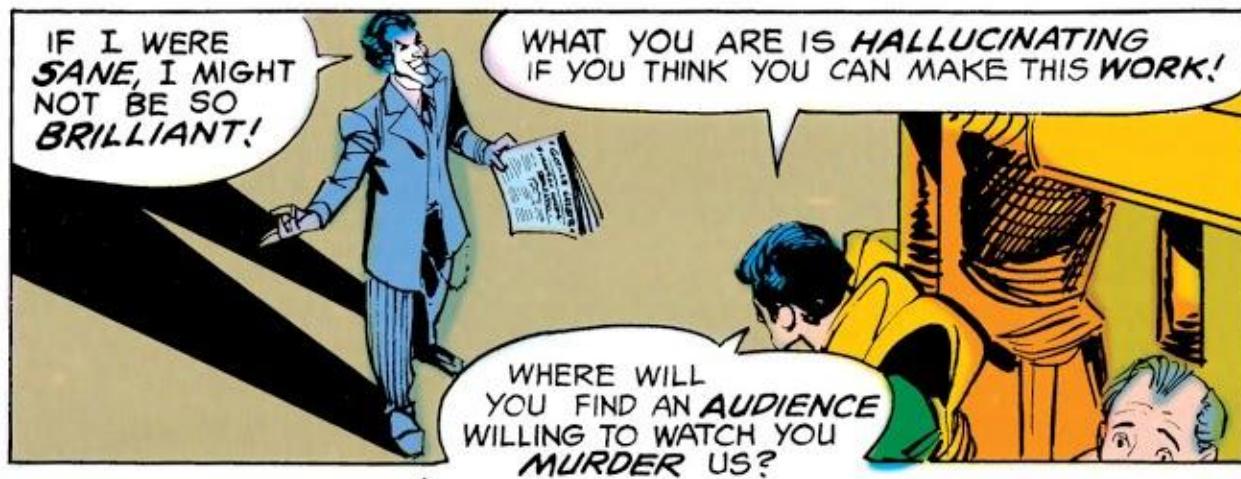
SHORTLY, AT BRUCE WAYNE'S PENTHOUSE APARTMENT ATOP THE WAYNE FOUNDATION BUILDING, AS AN ODD BLACK SHAPE ECLIPSES THE COOL FULL MOON...











AND LIKE LEMMINGS, THEY COME,  
LURED BY THE PROMISE OF  
SOMETHING FOR NOTHING--

--PEOPLE WHO'VE  
CHOSSEN TO IGNORE  
THAT WISE OLD ADAGE:

"THERE'S NO SUCH  
THING AS A  
FREE LUNCH!"

THE  
COLISEUM  
IS COMPLETELY  
FILLED LONG  
BEFORE THE  
DESIGNATED  
HOUR...

AND AT PRECISELY 9:00PM,  
THE BUILDING'S HEAVY STEEL  
DOORS CLICK SHUT--

--OMINOUSLY!

FOR SEVERAL LONG MINUTES,  
THE CROWD BEHAVES AS CROWDS  
ARE WONT TO DO--

--SOME SILENT, SOME  
FIDGETING--

--SOME ALREADY  
STAMPING THEIR  
FEET WITH  
IMPATIENCE--

--AND THEN, ABRUPTLY,  
THEIR LONG WAIT IS OVER!

HEY,  
WHAT--?!?

IT'S SOME  
KIND'A  
GAS--

--COMIN'  
FROM THE  
AIR-VENTS!

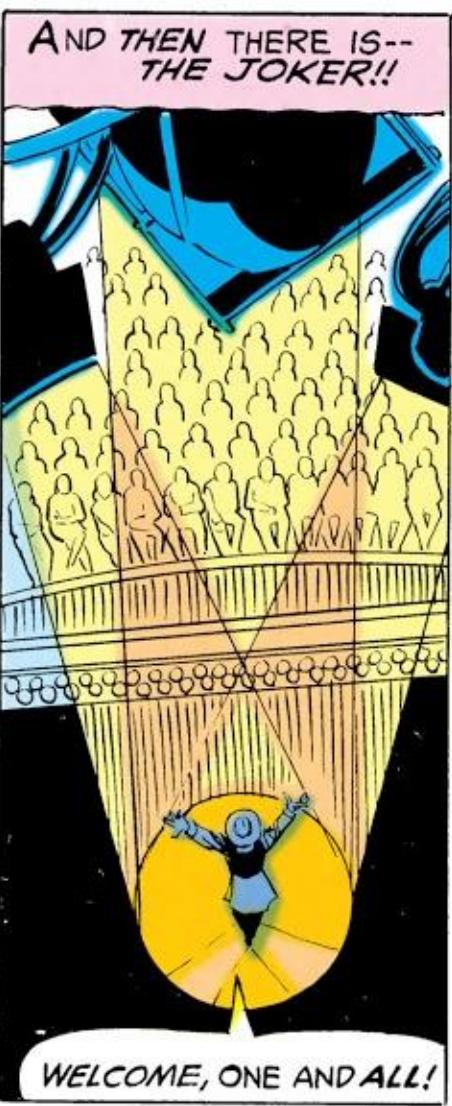
THE PARALYZING FUMES SPREAD SWIFTLY, AND  
WITHIN SECONDS, THERE IS NO MOVEMENT WITHIN  
THE SPRAWLING HALL--

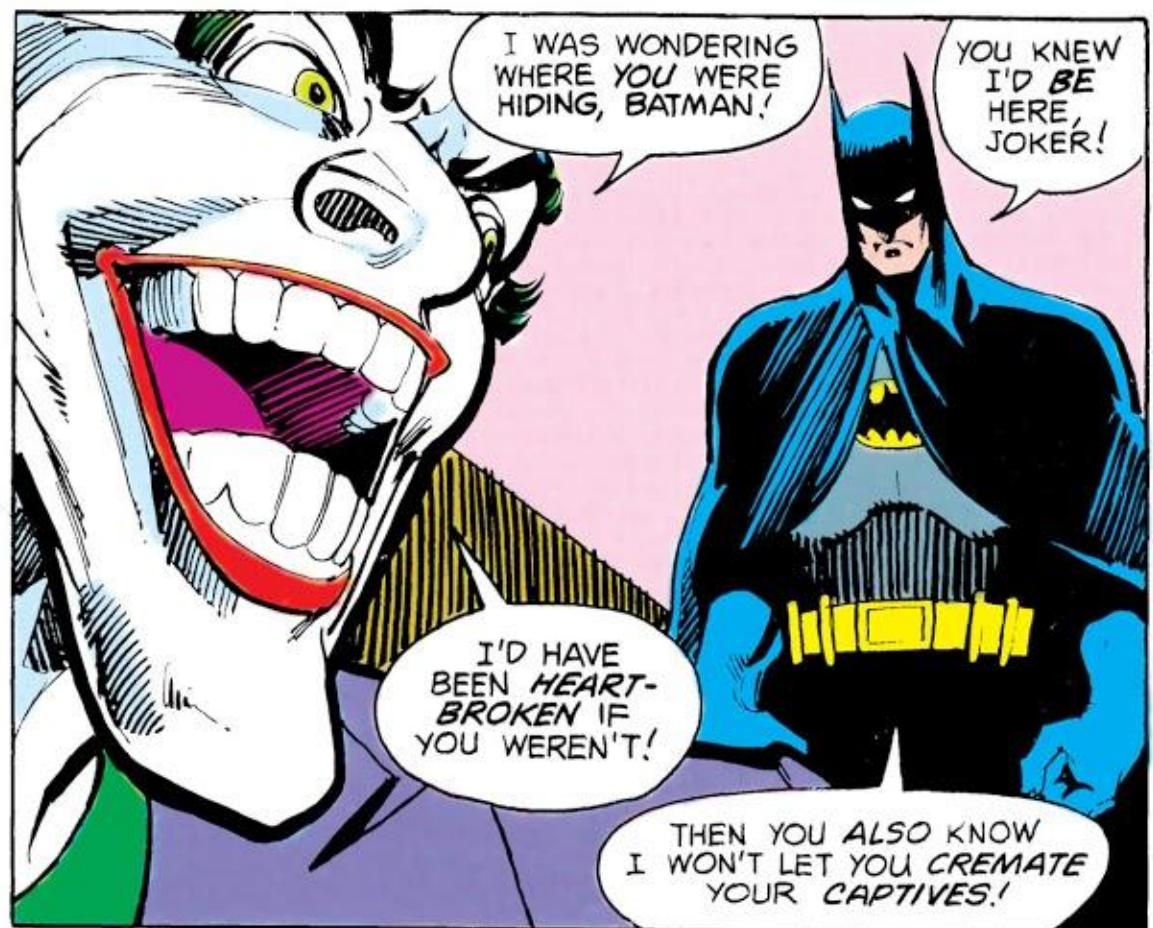
--SAVE THE FRENZIED BEATING  
OF SEVERAL THOUSAND  
FRIGHTENED HEARTS!

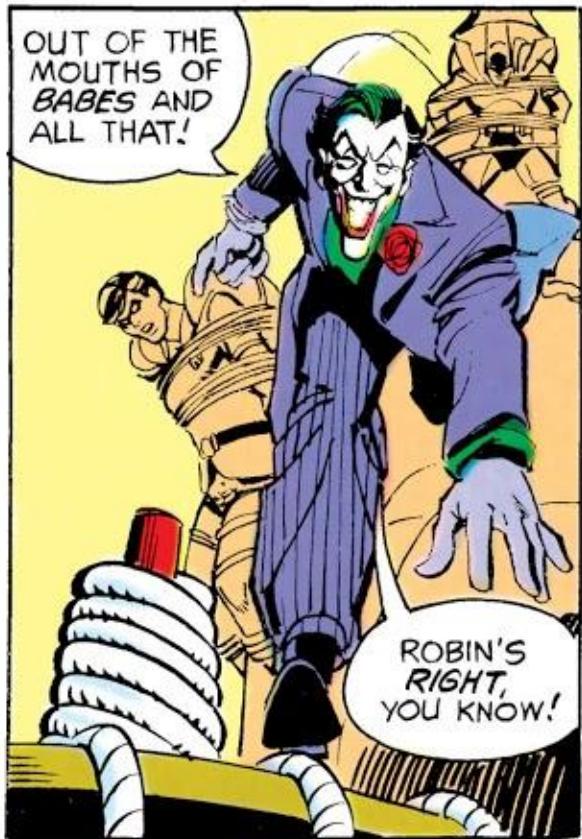
SUDDENLY, THE HOUSE-LIGHTS BEGIN TO FLICKER  
AND DIM--



--AND THERE IS  
DARKNESS!







BUT EVEN AS INFERNAL DEATH CRACKLES ACROSS THE STAGE--

--THE BATMAN EXPLODES INTO ACTION!

COULDN'T RISK TRYING TO FREE ROBIN AND THE OTHERS WHILE THEY WERE UNDER THE JOKER'S GUNS--

--BUT I STILL GOT HERE EARLY ENOUGH TO RIG MY CANDLE'S INCENDIARY JETS--

--TURNING THE WHOLE THING INTO A MAKESHIFT ROCKET!

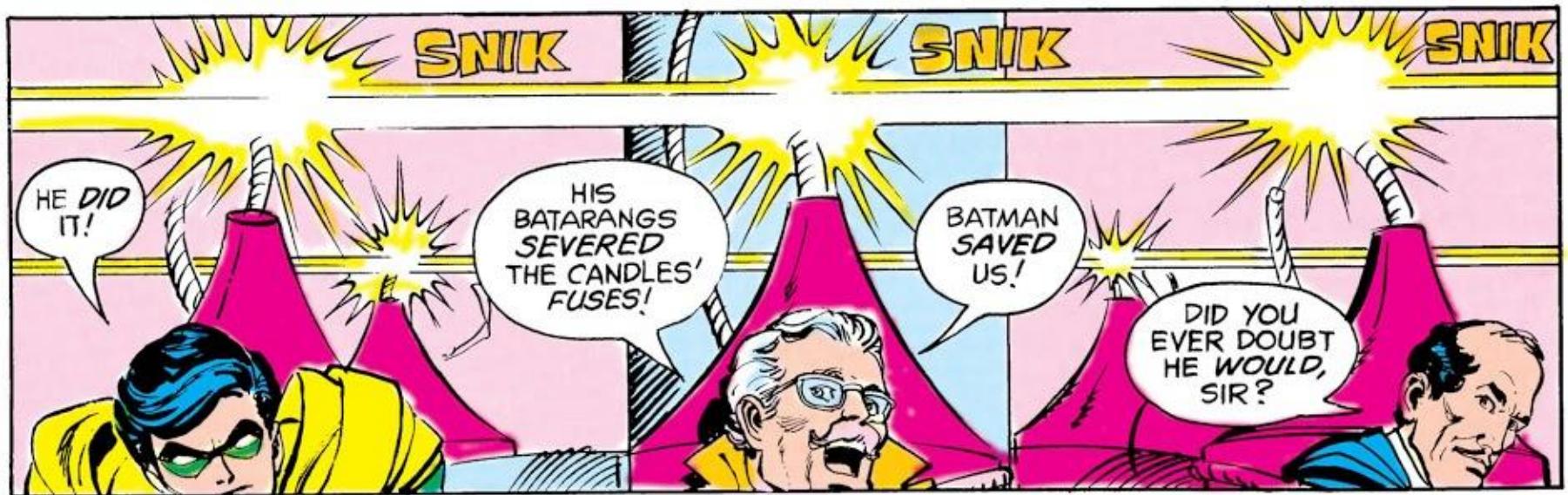
IT WAS RISKY-- BUT WHEN YOU'RE UP AGAINST THE JOKER, YOU DON'T HAVE MUCH CHOICE!

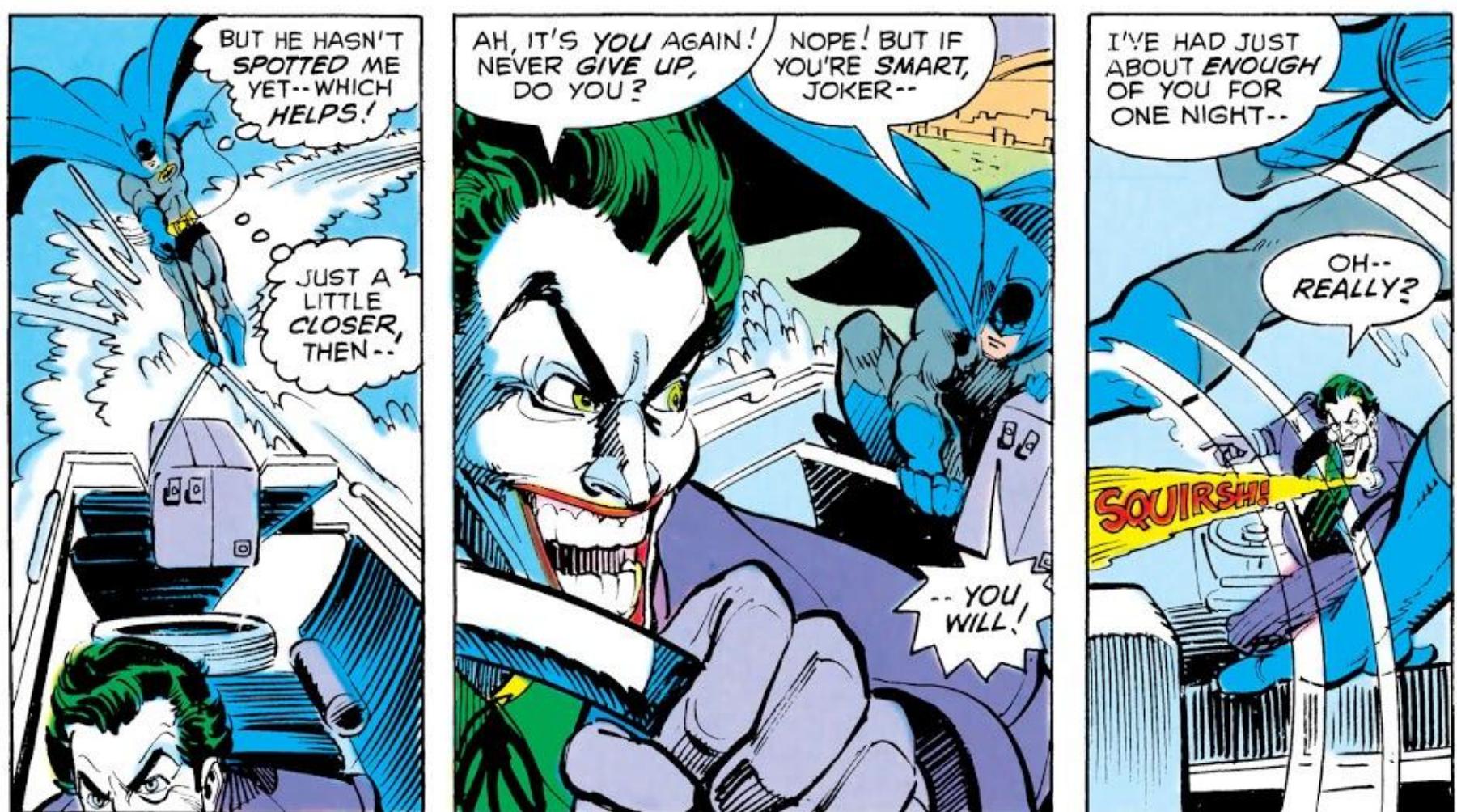
YOUR FRIENDS ARE GOING TO BURN, BATMAN -- BURN!!

HAHA HA

NO, JOKER--

--NOT IF I CAN HELP IT!







NEXT  
ISSUE:

SELINA KYLE'S LIFE STARTS TO  
COME APART AT THE SEAMS--  
WHILE THE CAPED CRUSADER BATTLES  
CAPTAIN BOOMERANG!

"CHAOS-- COMING  
AND GOING!"



**novus**  
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