KNIGHTFALL 19

BATMAN

500

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US $2.50
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APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY

# BATMAN

MOENCH
APARO
AUSTIN
MANLEY

KNIGHTFALL 19

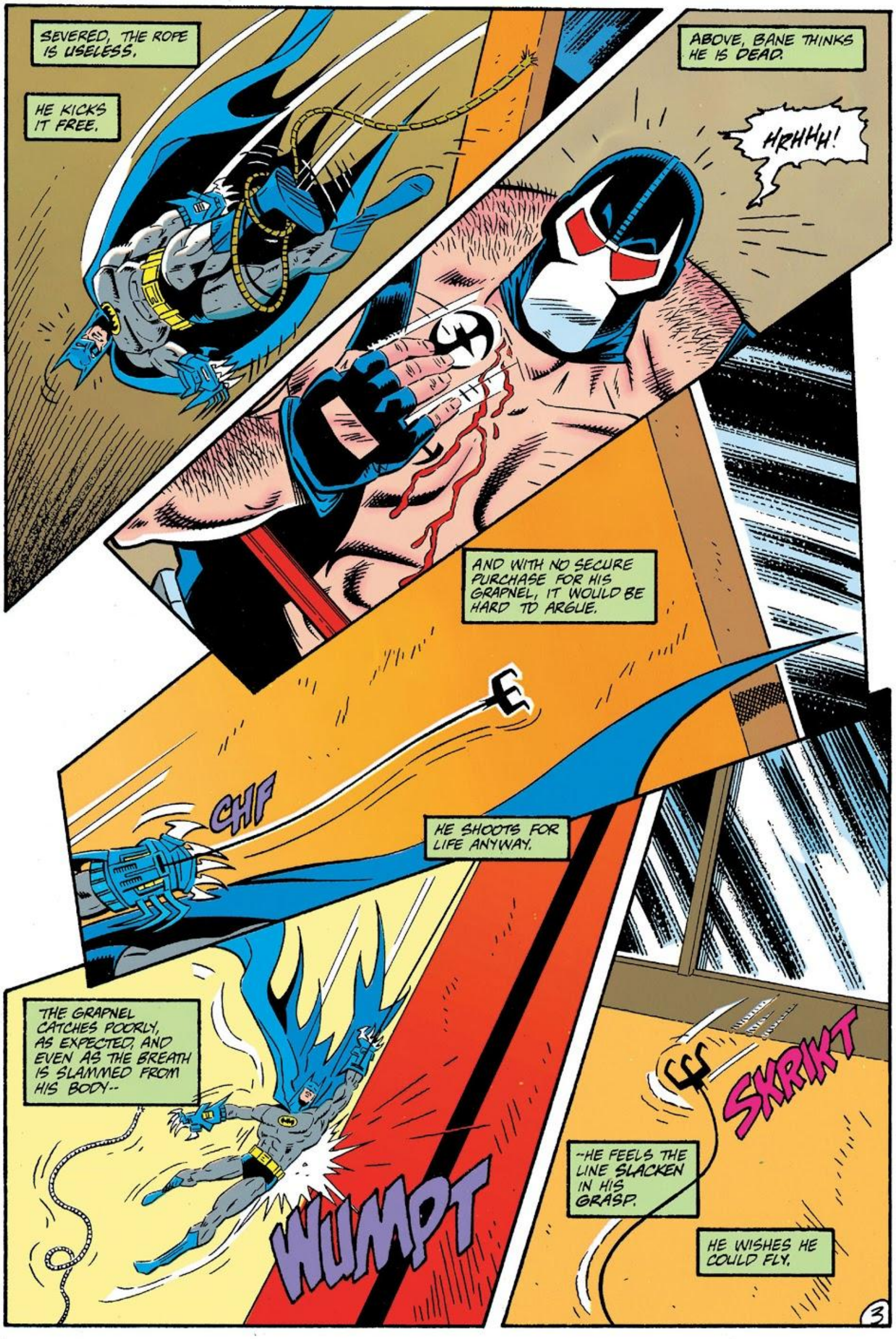
# BATMAN®

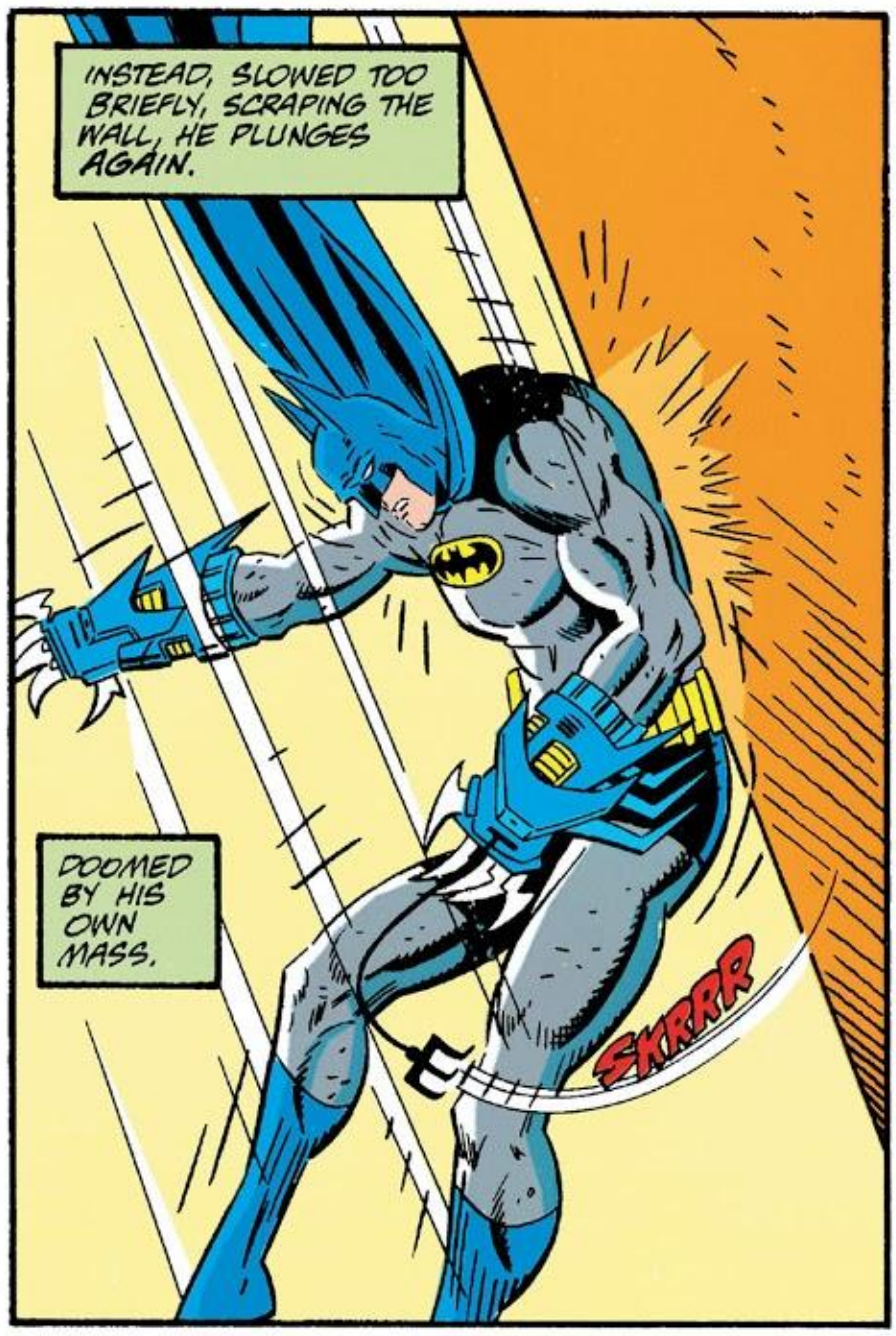
BATMAN
500 US $3.95
CAN $4.95

APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY

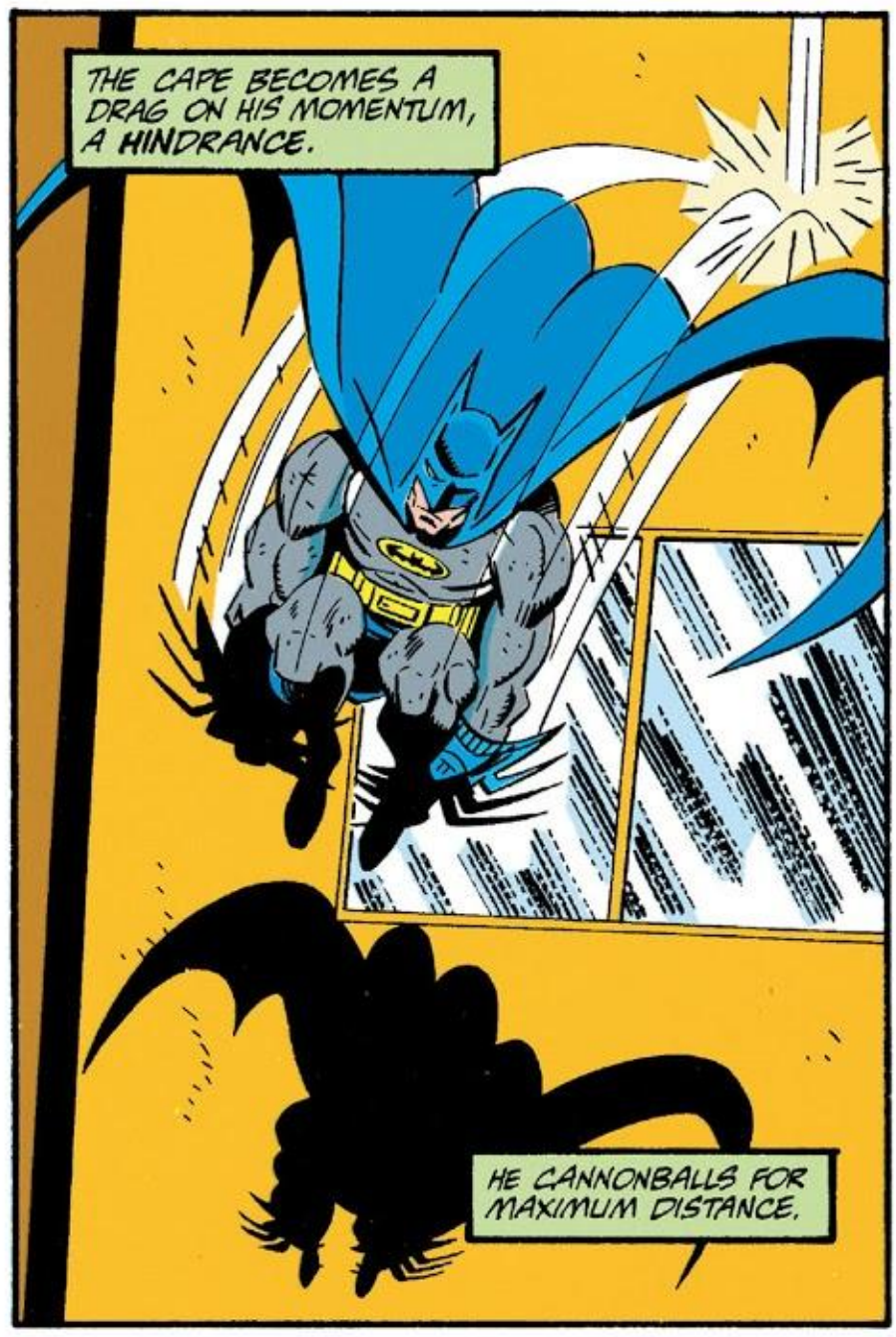
DARK ANGEL
1: THE FALL
HIS FIRST REAL TEST AS THE BATMAN--AND HE HAD HIM, HAD BANE UNDER HIS FIST.
COULD HAVE DROPPED HIM.
INSTEAD, HE FELL.
DOUG MOENCH--JIM APARO & TERRY AUSTIN--MIKE MANLEY
WRITER
Pages 1-28
ARTISTS
Pages 29-56
ADRIENNE ROY - KEN BRUZENAK - JORDAN B. GORFINKEL -- DENNIS O'NEIL -- BATMAN CREATED BY
COLORIST
LETTERER
ASSISTANT EDITOR
EDITOR
BOB KANE

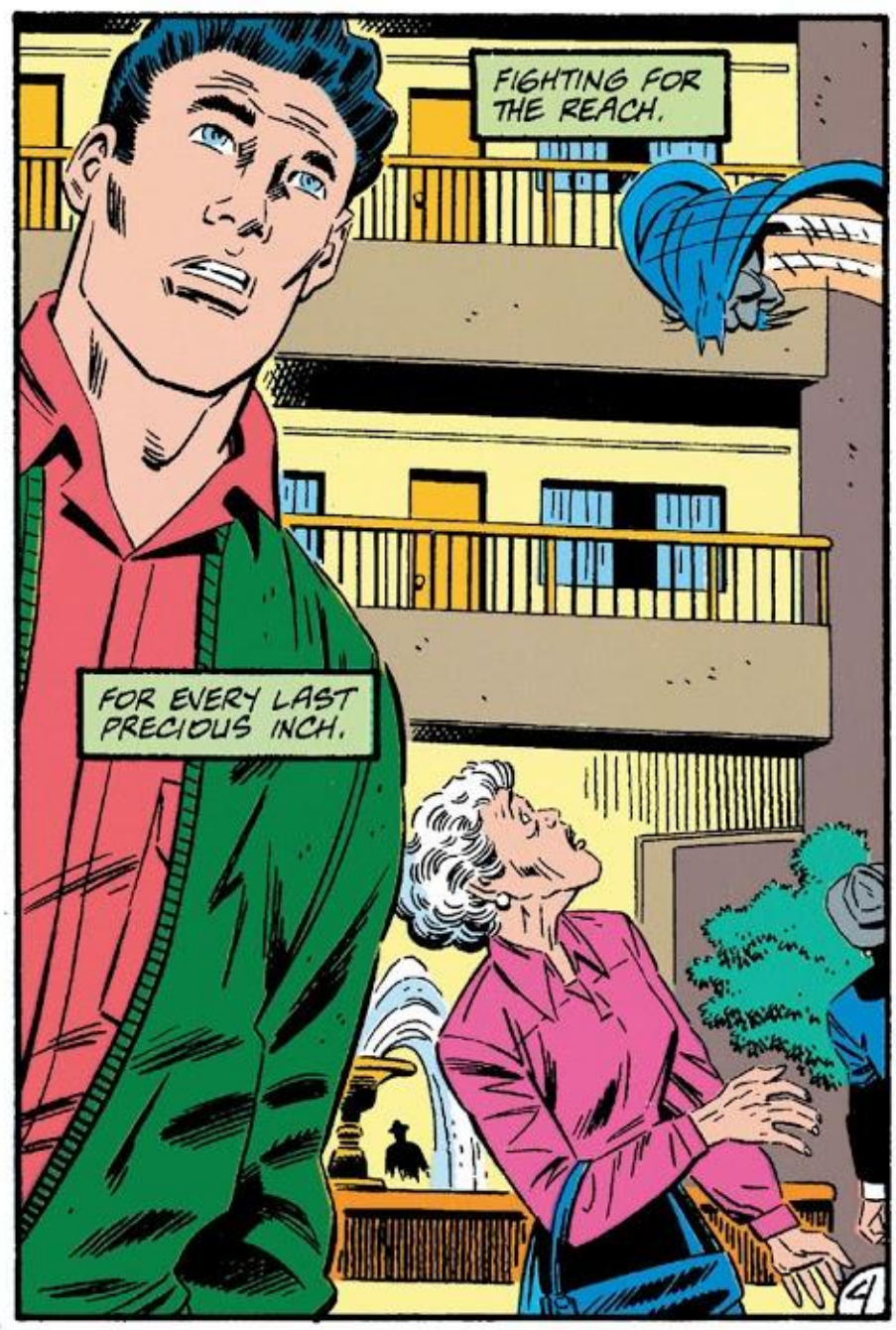
AND NOW BANE IS USING A SHURIKEN--ONE OF HIS OWN NEW WEAPONS--TO MAKE THE FALL PERMANENT.
RNCH
RNCH
TO HELL WITH BUYING TIME.
HE TRIES TO SMASH AND GRAB IT, SHOOTING MORE OF THE BLADES.
SHING
SHING
SHING
DRIVING BANE BACK.
PRESERVING THE ROPE.
CHTCH
CHUT
STING
THE RESPITE WON'T LAST LONG. HE MUST PULL HIMSELF UP SWIFTLY--BUT SMOOTHLY, WITH NO LURCHES.
THE ROPE IS ALREADY FRAYED.
CAN'T RISK MAKING IT--
SPAP

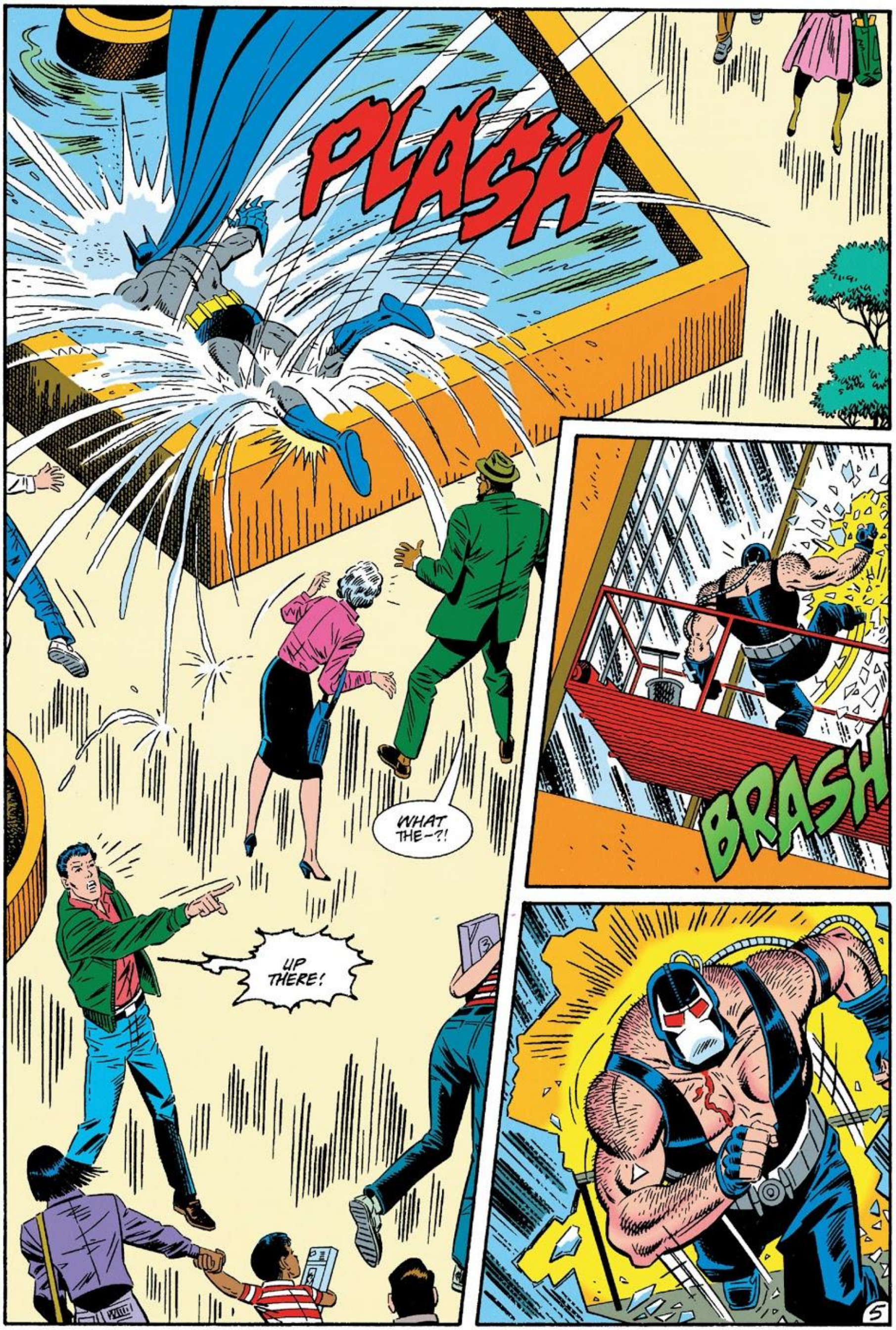

SEVERED, THE ROPE IS USELESS.
HE KICKS IT FREE.
ABOVE, BANE THINKS HE IS DEAD.
HRHHH!
AND WITH NO SECURE PURCHASE FOR HIS GRAPNEL, IT WOULD BE HARD TO ARGUE.
CHF
HE SHOOTS FOR LIFE ANYWAY.
THE GRAPNEL CATCHES POORLY, AS EXPECTED, AND EVEN AS THE BREATH IS SLAMMED FROM HIS BODY--
WUMPT
SKRIKT
--HE FEELS THE LINE SLACKEN IN HIS GRASP.
HE WISHES HE COULD FLY.
3

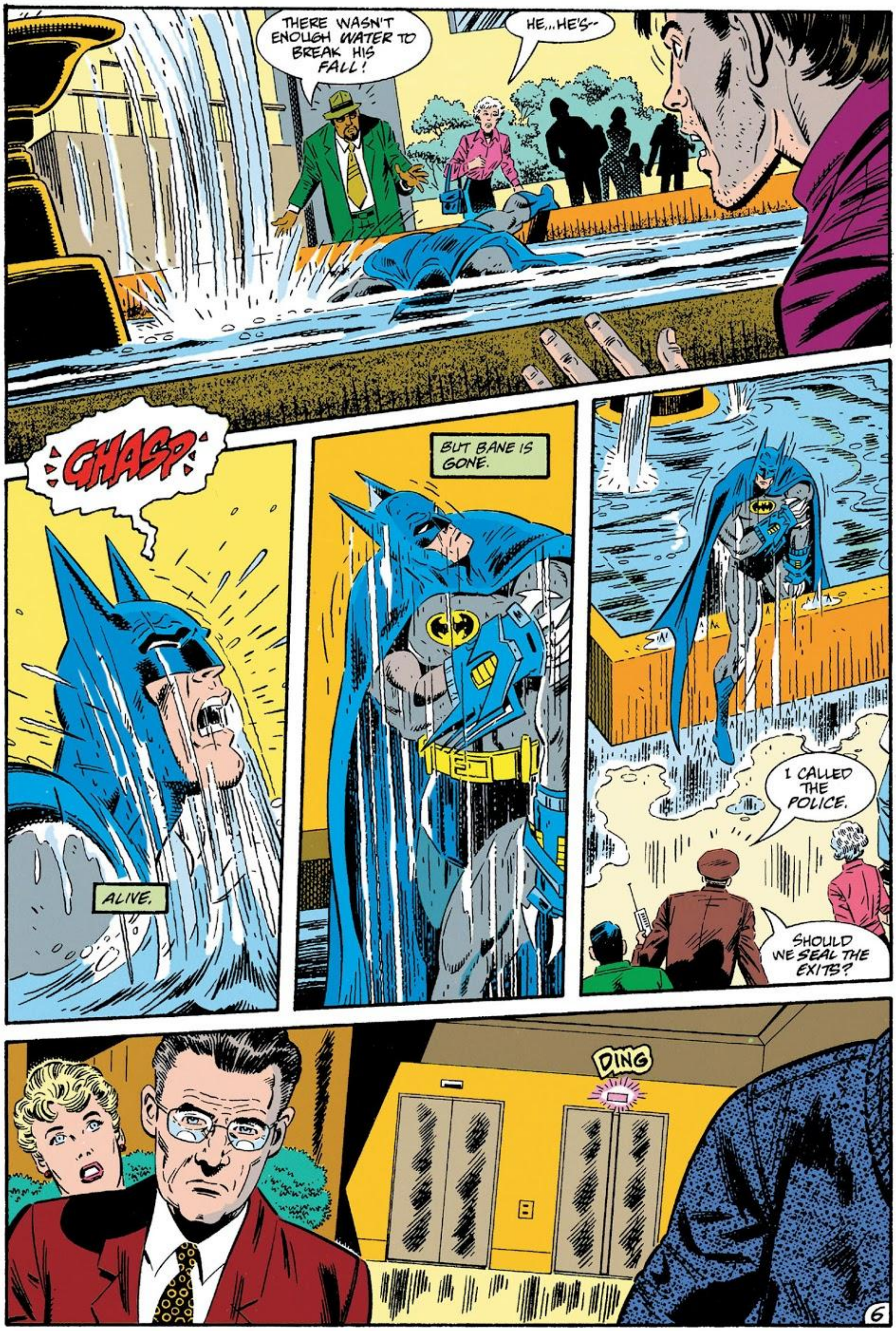

INSTEAD, SLOWED TOO BRIEFLY, SCRAPING THE WALL, HE PLUNGES AGAIN.
DOOMED BY HIS OWN MASS.
SKRRR

ONE CHANCE NOW. A BAD ONE.
CHUP
HE TAKES IT, KICKING HARD.


THE CAPE BECOMES A DRAG ON HIS MOMENTUM, A HINDRANCE.
HE CANNONBALLS FOR MAXIMUM DISTANCE.


FIGHTING FOR THE REACH.
FOR EVERY LAST PRECIOUS INCH.


PLASH
WHAT THE–?!
UP THERE!
BRASH
5

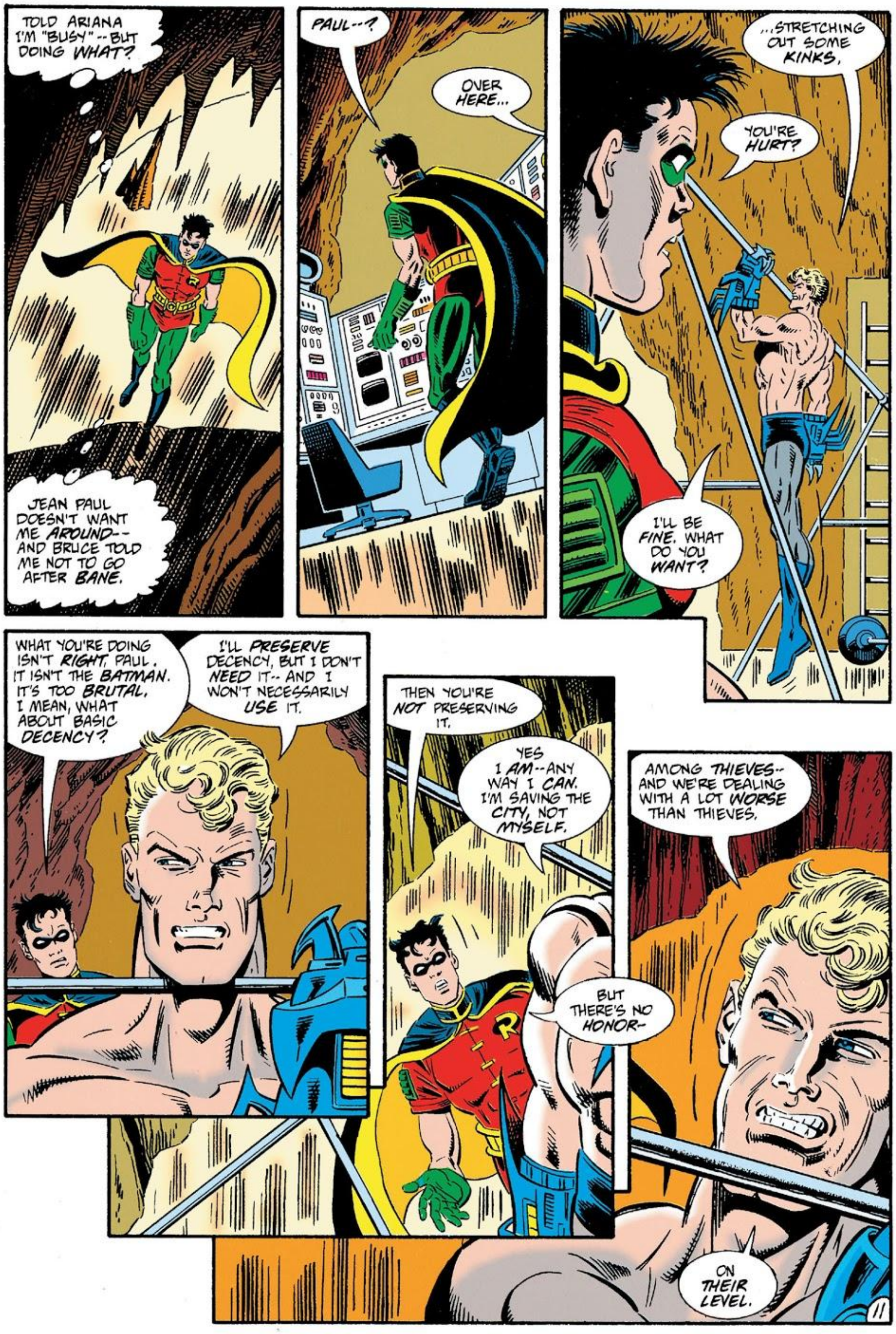

THERE WASN'T ENOUGH WATER TO BREAK HIS FALL!
HE...HE'S--
GHASP
ALIVE.
BUT BANE IS GONE.
I CALLED THE POLICE.
SHOULD WE SEAL THE EXITS?
DING

RUUAAAHH!
EEEEEEEE
LOOK OUT!
YAAAHHH!
HIS LEG IS NUMB, STIFF. RUNNING IS OUT OF THE QUESTION.
AND BANE IS TOO FAR AWAY.
NO WAY TO CATCH HIM. NOT NOW.
AND HE'S TOO CUNNING TO REMAIN TRAPPED IN THE ATRIUM.
7

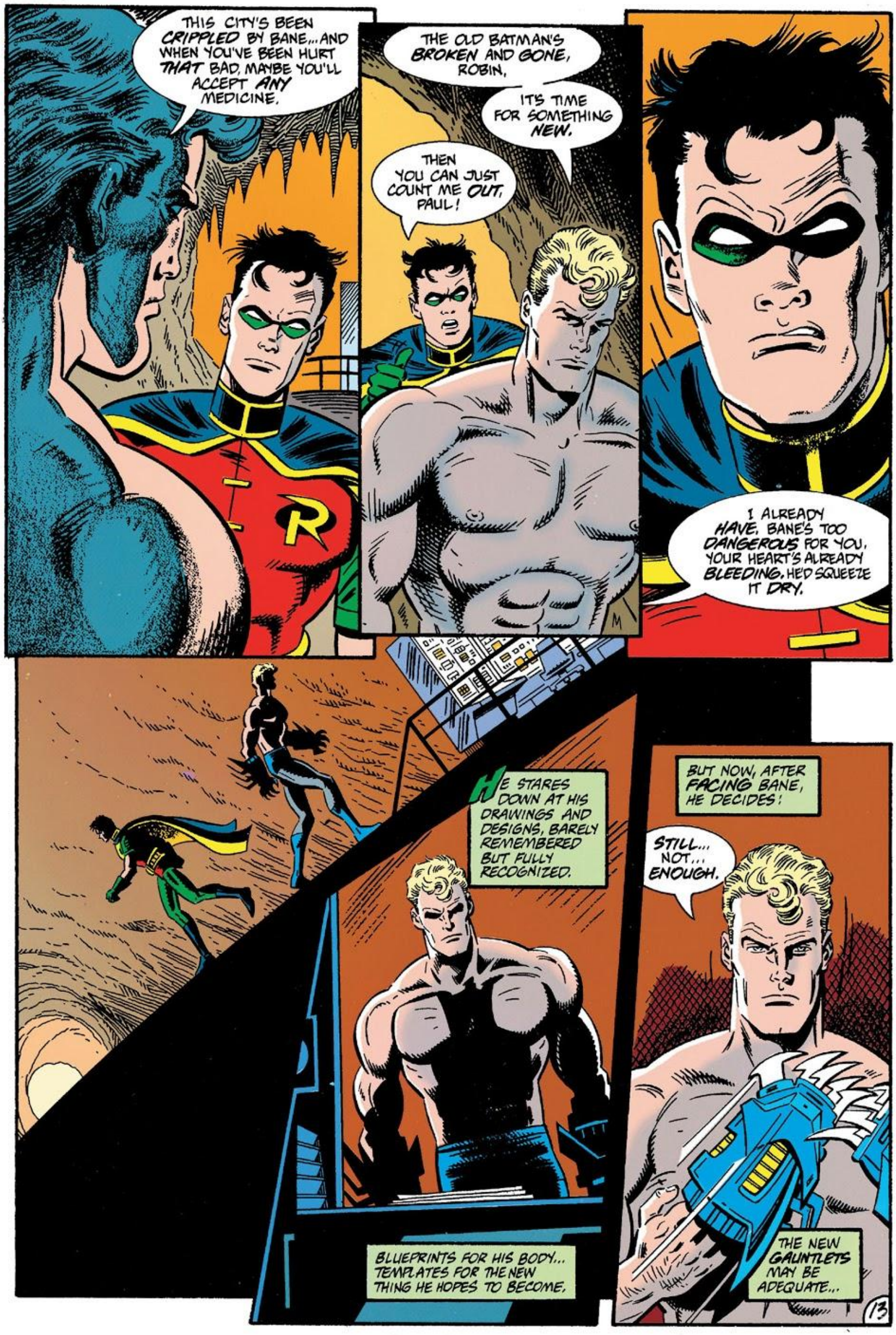
WHEN THEY NEXT MEET, IT WILL BE OUTSIDE, IN THE WILD.
HARBORGATE
TWO BEASTS HUNTING THE URBAN JUNGLE.
A LITTLE LATE FOR SEALING EXITS.
YOUR GUEST JUST CHECKED OUT.
BUT DON'T WORRY.
HE WON'T RUN FAR.
AND I'LL FIND HIM.
NEVER KNEW HE HAD...
...CLAWS.
8

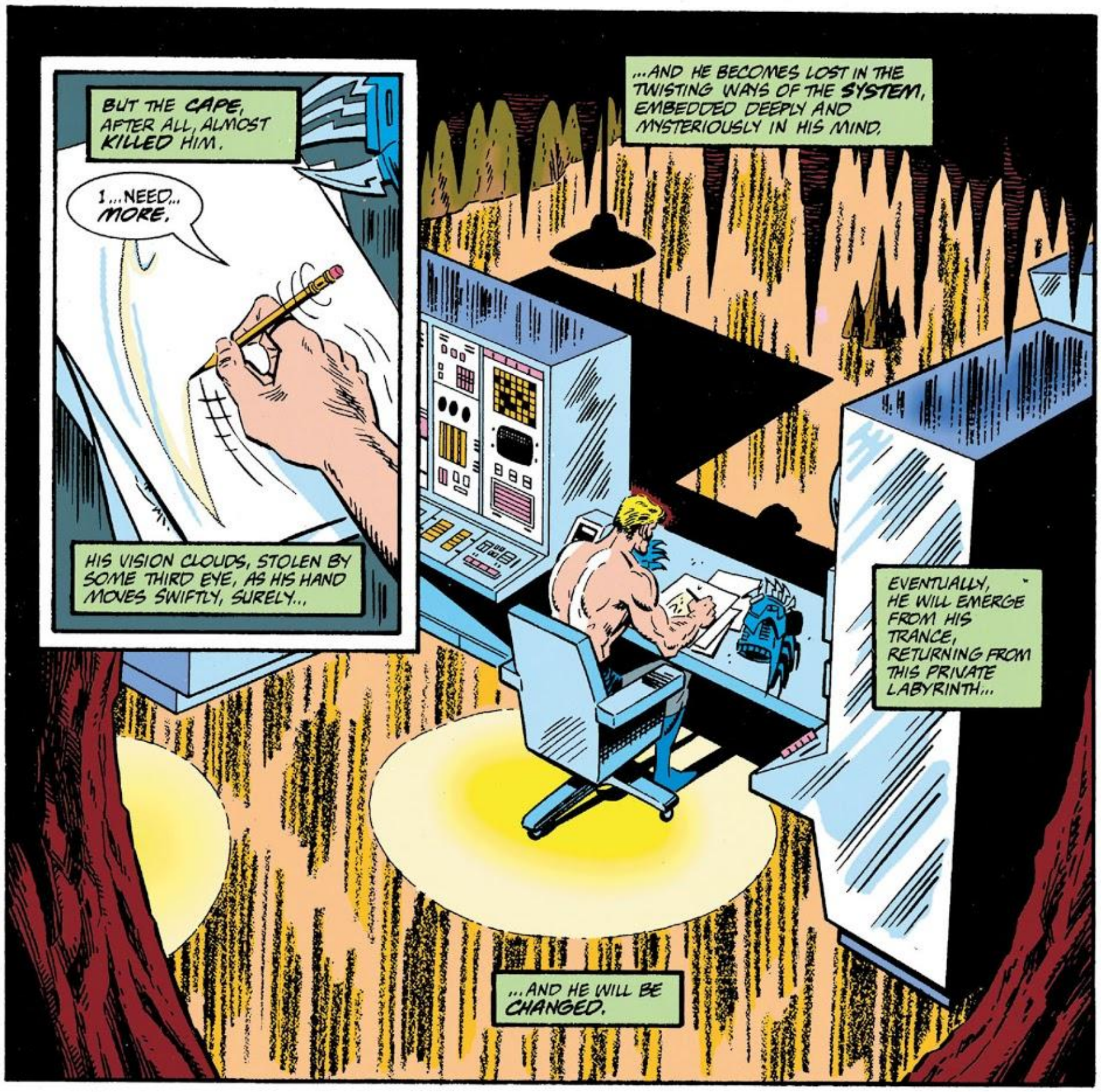
BRIINGG
HELLO?
TIM? IT'S BEEN SO LONG... CAN WE SEE EACH OTHER TOMORROW NIGHT?
AFRAID I CAN'T, ARIANA.
I'LL BE... BUSY.
AGAIN--?
THEN WHY DID YOU CALL, TIM?
I DON'T KNOW...I MISS YOU.
DAD'S GONE...AND I JUST LOST ...A FRIEND.
GUESS I'M LONELY.
BYE.
klik

WHAT'S THE SITUATION, SERGEANT BULLOCK?
BACK TO SQUARE ONE, LIEUTENANT--BATMAN DROPPED THE THREE STOOGES AGAIN, BUT BANE GOT AWAY.
DUNK & EAT
AND THE BATMAN?
HE'S GONE, TOO. WITNESSES JUDGE ROUND ONE A DRAW.
ROUND ONE?
DUNK & EAT
OF THE REMATCH-- AN' YA ASK ME, IT'S AN EVEN BET.
WAY I SEE IT, THAT FIRST LOSS WOKE THE BATMAN UP. SEEMS LIKE HE'S TOUGHER NOW, ALL BUSINESS. MIGHT EVEN BE THE GLOVES ARE OFF.
LIEUTENANT KITCH? WE JUST GOT A CALL. THE MAYOR WANTS TO SEE YOU-- NOW.
KROL WANTS ME?
WORD IS, HE AND COMMISSIONER GORDON AREN'T ON SPEAKING TERMS RIGHT NOW.
I CAN VOUCH FOR THAT--AN' THE COMMISH AIN'T CRYIN' OVER IT NEITHER.
ALL RIGHT, GET THESE THREE BACK TO LOCKUP-- AND DOUBLE THE SECURITY.
10


TOLD ARIANA I'M "BUSY"--BUT DOING WHAT?
JEAN PAUL DOESN'T WANT ME AROUND--AND BRUCE TOLD ME NOT TO GO AFTER BANE.
PAUL--?
OVER HERE...
...STRETCHING OUT SOME KINKS.
YOU'RE HURT?
I'LL BE FINE. WHAT DO YOU WANT?
WHAT YOU'RE DOING ISN'T RIGHT, PAUL. IT ISN'T THE BATMAN. IT'S TOO BRUTAL. I MEAN, WHAT ABOUT BASIC DECENCY?
I'LL PRESERVE DECENCY, BUT I DON'T NEED IT--AND I WON'T NECESSARILY USE IT.
THEN YOU'RE NOT PRESERVING IT.
YES I AM--ANY WAY I CAN. I'M SAVING THE CITY, NOT MYSELF.
BUT THERE'S NO HONOR--
AMONG THIEVES--AND WE'RE DEALING WITH A LOT WORSE THAN THIEVES.
ON THEIR LEVEL.

BUT THAT'S WHERE YOU'RE DIFFERENT FROM BRUCE! THE OLD BATMAN WOULD NEVER DESCEND TO THEIR LEVEL!
THE OLD BATMAN WAS CREATED FOR OLDER TIMES.
THERE'S NO PLACE FOR KID GLOVES NOW-- EVIL HAS LOST ITS PATIENCE.
OBEYING CODES AND RULES THE OTHER SIDE HAS TRASHED IS STUPID.
MAYBE BRUCE WAS THE DARK KNIGHT, BUT THIS IS NO JOUSTING TOURNAMENT AND BANE DOESN'T PLAY GAMES.
HE'S OUT FOR BLOOD-- AGAIN-- AND CHIVALRY'S NOTHING BUT A HANDICAP.
FORGET THE "KNIGHT" AND REMEMBER THE "DARK."
IF I'M GOING TO MAKE IT-- IF I HAVE A PRAYER-- IT'LL BE BECAUSE I'M DARKER THAN ANY DARKNESS I FACE.
ONLY LIGHT CANCELS DARKNESS, PAUL.
THEN YOU GRAB A FLASHLIGHT AND GO AFTER HIM WHILE I FIGHT FIRE WITH FIRE-- THE ONLY LIGHT I NEED.
AND YOU'LL BE JUST LIKE HIM-- JUST LIKE BANE HIMSELF!
MAYBE SO--AND MAYBE GOTHAM WILL FEAR AND HATE ME WHEN IT'S DONE.
BUT MAYBE NOT...


THIS CITY'S BEEN CRIPPLED BY BANE... AND WHEN YOU'VE BEEN HURT THAT BAD, MAYBE YOU'LL ACCEPT ANY MEDICINE.
THE OLD BATMAN'S BROKEN AND GONE, ROBIN.
IT'S TIME FOR SOMETHING NEW.
THEN YOU CAN JUST COUNT ME OUT, PAUL!
I ALREADY HAVE. BANE'S TOO DANGEROUS FOR YOU. YOUR HEART'S ALREADY BLEEDING. HE'D SQUEEZE IT DRY.
HE STARES DOWN AT HIS DRAWINGS AND DESIGNS, BARELY REMEMBERED BUT FULLY RECOGNIZED.
BLUEPRINTS FOR HIS BODY... TEMPLATES FOR THE NEW THING HE HOPES TO BECOME.
BUT NOW, AFTER FACING BANE, HE DECIDES:
STILL... NOT... ENOUGH.
THE NEW GAUNTLETS MAY BE ADEQUATE...


BUT THE CAPE, AFTER ALL, ALMOST KILLED HIM.
I...NEED... MORE.
HIS VISION CLOUDS, STOLEN BY SOME THIRD EYE, AS HIS HAND MOVES SWIFTLY, SURELY...
...AND HE BECOMES LOST IN THE TWISTING WAYS OF THE SYSTEM, EMBEDDED DEEPLY AND MYSTERIOUSLY IN HIS MIND.
EVENTUALLY, HE WILL EMERGE FROM HIS TRANCE, RETURNING FROM THIS PRIVATE LABYRINTH...
...AND HE WILL BE CHANGED.

--CAN'T APPROVE OF THE CHANGE IN BATMAN'S TACTICS, MR. MAYOR.
I'VE GONE BY THE BOOK EVER SINCE I BECAME A COP--
--AND THERE'S NO CHAPTER COVERING RUTHLESS VIGILANTES.
FORGET THE BOOK, LIEUTENANT KITCH! THIS IS REALITY-- AND I'VE JUST LIVED IT! EVERY MOMENT I WAS HELD BY SCARECROW AND THE JOKER WAS A NIGHTMARE!
I STARED RIGHT INTO THE EVIL HEART OF EVERYTHING BATMAN FACES EVERY NIGHT.

HE SAVED MY LIFE, KITCH--AND HE DIDN'T DO IT BY FOLLOWING ANY BOOK!

YOU'RE NOT SUGGESTING THE POLICE FORCE SHOULD CHANGE ITS--
OF COURSE NOT! YOU HAVE TO FOLLOW THE BOOK, KITCH--CHAPTER AND VERSE--NO MATTER HOW MUCH IT HAMPERS YOU.
BUT THEY DON'T-- AND NEITHER DOES HE.

THAT'S WHY I'M GLAD HE'S OUT THERE--AND THAT'S WHY YOUR PEOPLE WILL NOT INTERFERE.

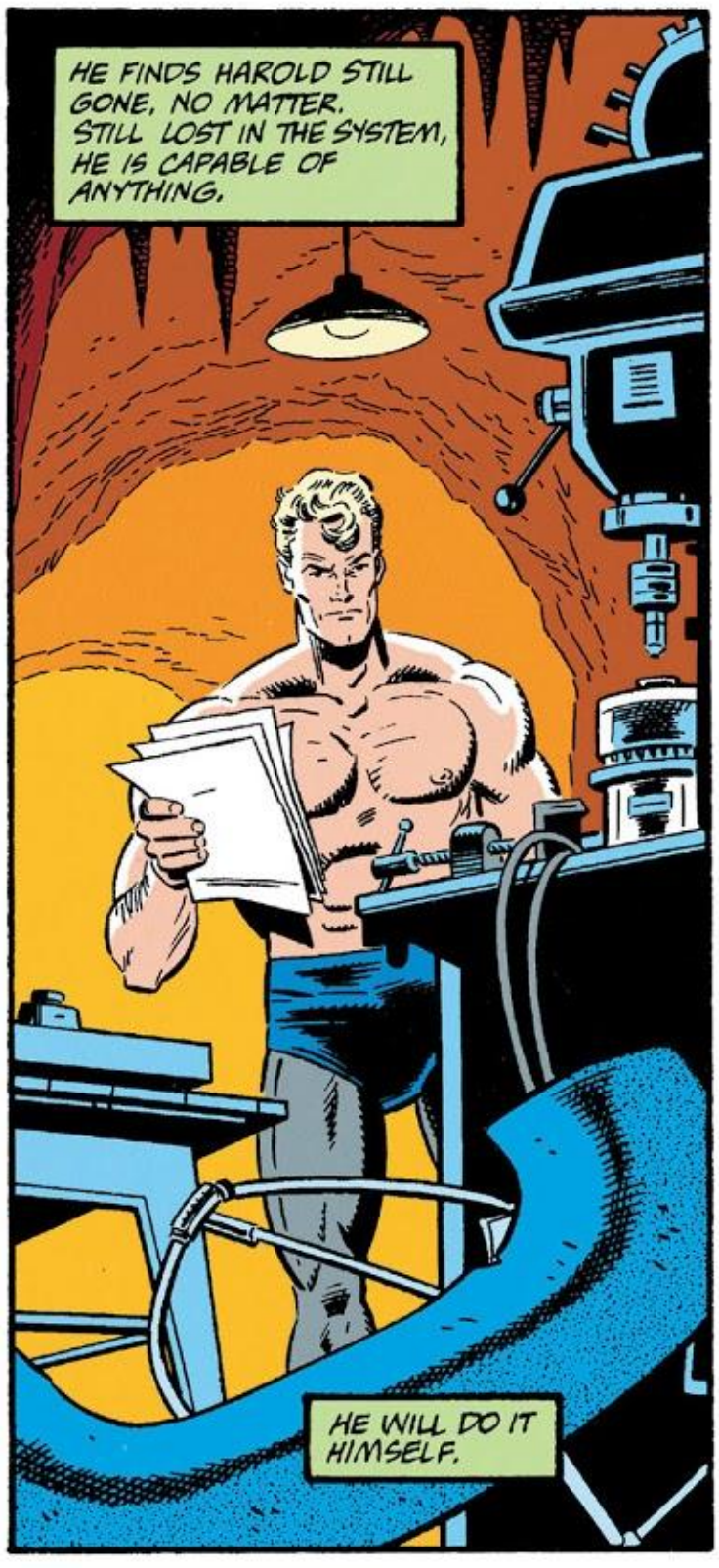
BUT IF YOU'RE NOT COMING HOME, JAMES, THEN WHAT ARE YOU--
NOTHING, SARAH...THERE'S NOTHING I CAN DO NOW...

...NOTHING BUT SIT HERE AND WAIT.
FOR HIM. FOR THE BATMAN.

YES... FOR HIM TO MAKE A MOVE... AS EVER.
HE'S NEVER LET YOU DOWN BEFORE.

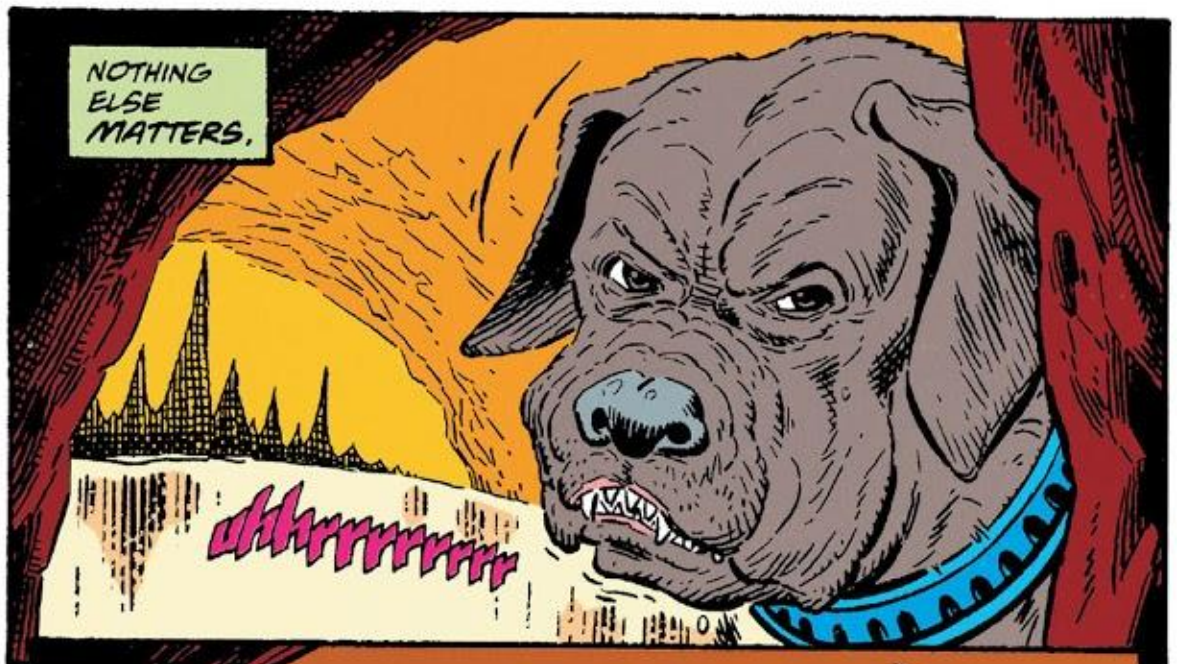
YOU'VE NEVER LET ME DOWN EITHER, SARAH, AND NOW... JUST AS YOU'RE PREPARED TO ACCEPT THE BATMAN...
YOU'RE HAVING DOUBTS?

HE'S NOT THE SAME, SARAH. SOMETHING'S HAPPENED TO HIM.
HE'S CHANGED.
HE'S DIFFERENT.


HE FINDS HAROLD STILL GONE, NO MATTER. STILL LOST IN THE SYSTEM, HE IS CAPABLE OF ANYTHING.
HE WILL DO IT HIMSELF.

AND HERE IN THESE COOL CAVERN DEPTHS HE WILL FIND THE HEAT TO FORGE SOMETHING NEW.

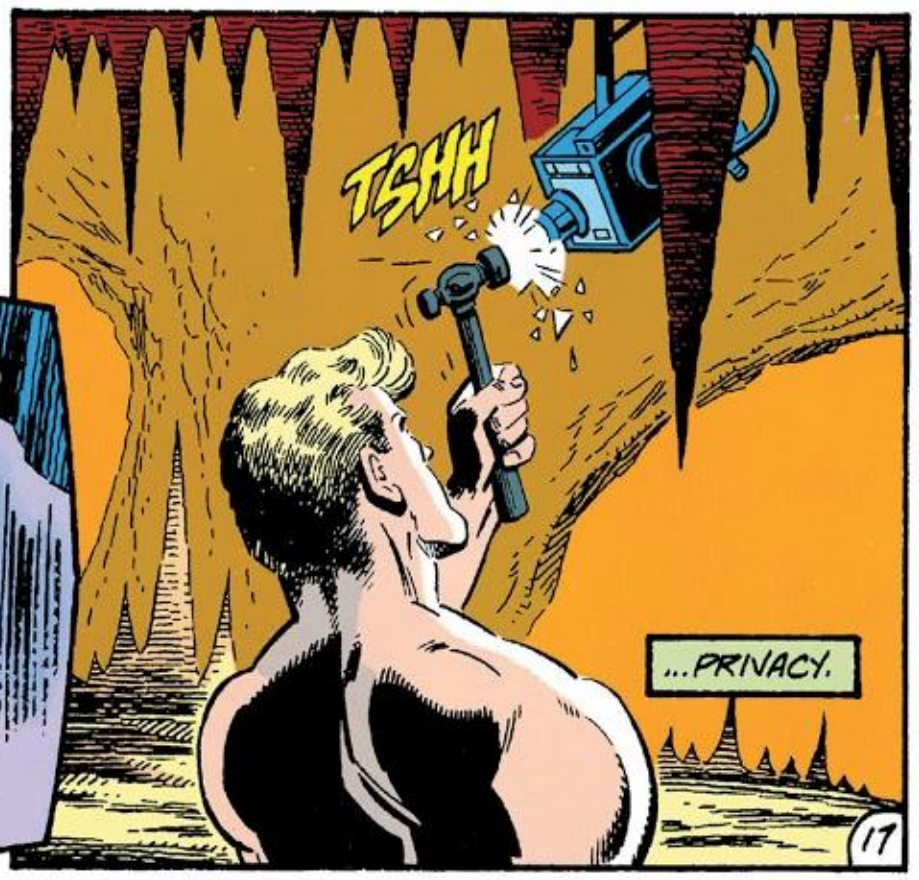
SOON HE IS AWARE OF NOTHING BUT THE TASK AT HAND.

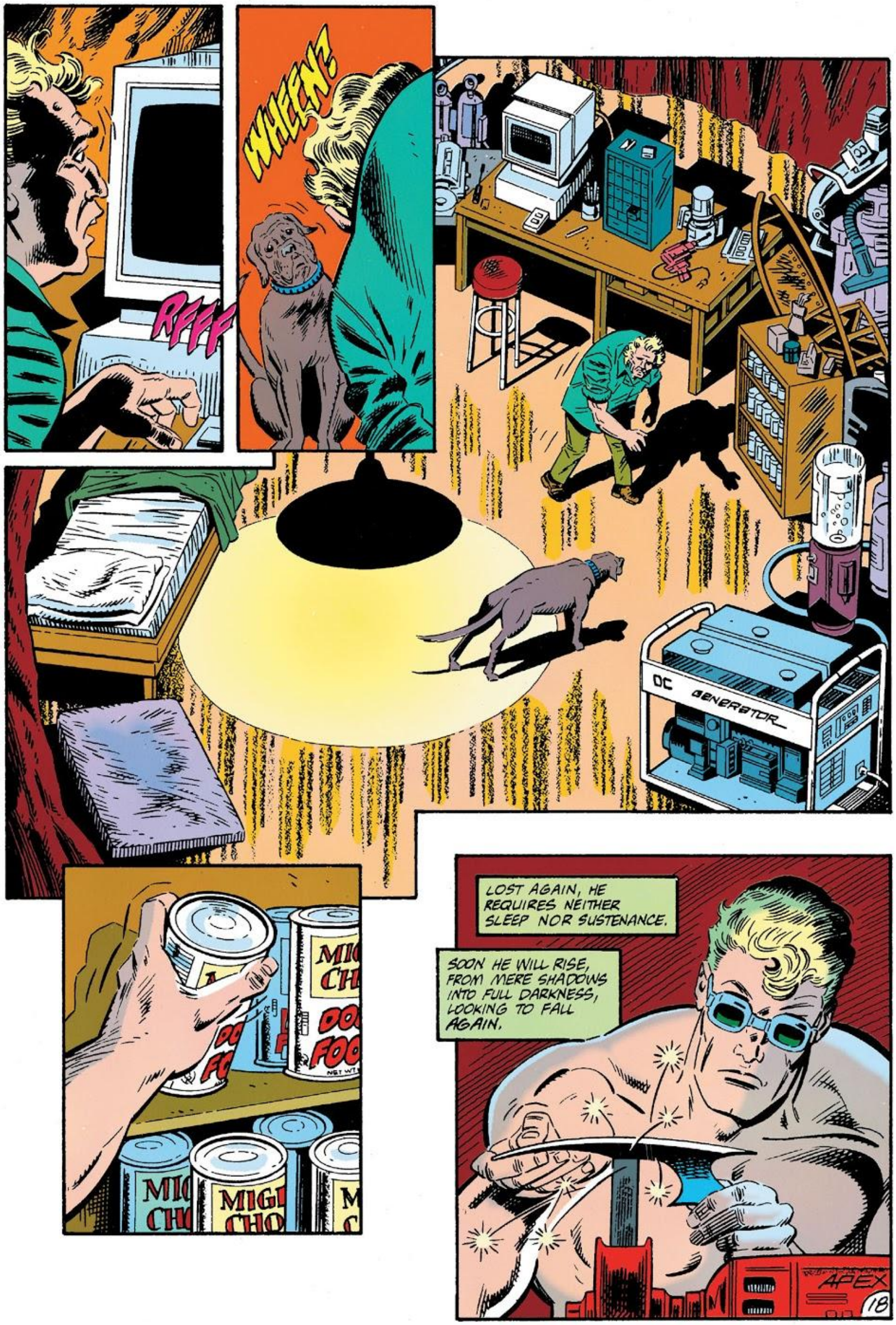

NOTHING ELSE MATTERS.
uhhrrrrrrrrr

ALONE WITH HIS SECRET SKILLS, NOTHING ELSE IS IMPORTANT.

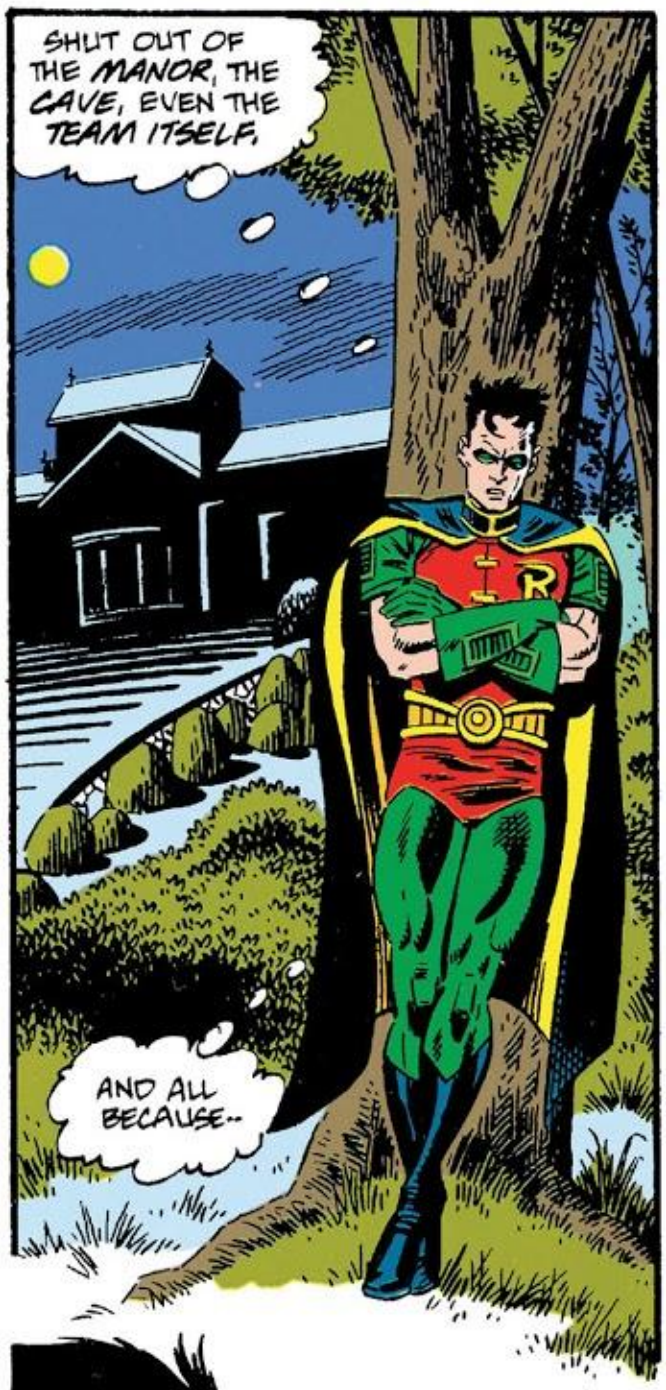
NOTHING BUT FINDING HIS WAY THROUGH NEW REGIONS OF THE SYSTEM'S LABYRINTH.

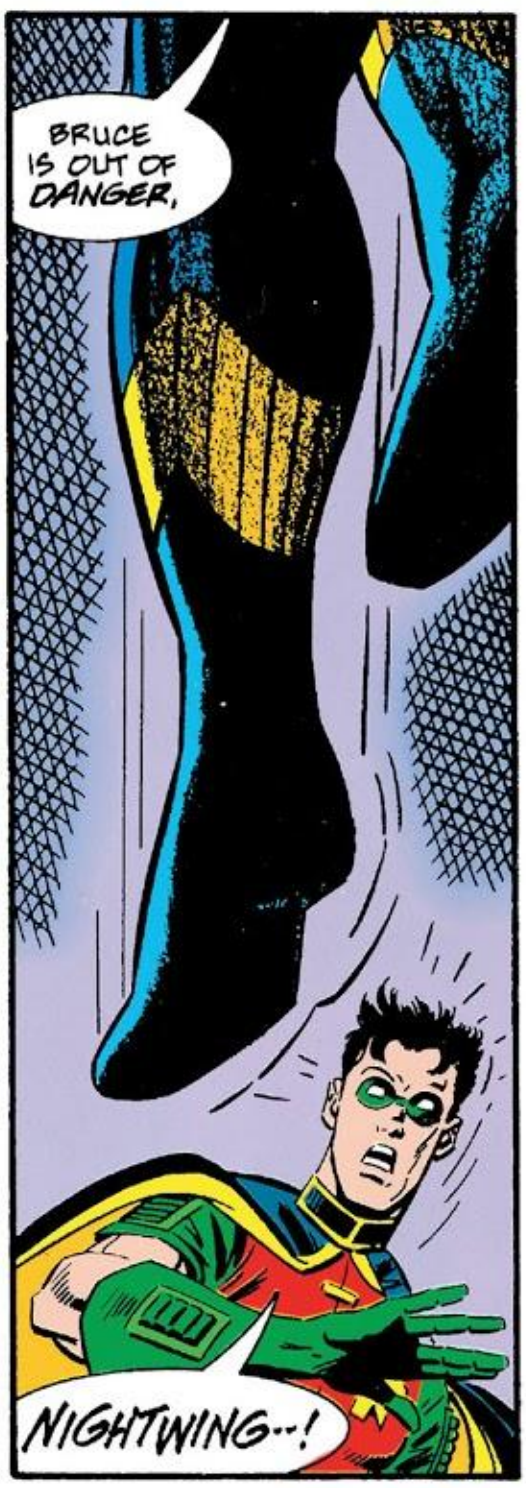
NOTHING BUT...


TSHH
...PRIVACY.


RFFF
WHEEN?
DC GENERATOR
LOST AGAIN, HE REQUIRES NEITHER SLEEP NOR SUSTENANCE.
SOON HE WILL RISE, FROM MERE SHADOWS INTO FULL DARKNESS, LOOKING TO FALL AGAIN.
APEX

PLP
I'M LOSING BLOOD, ZOMBIE.
I NEED MORE VENOM.
I HAVE SUPPLIES CACHED IN SEVERAL LOCATIONS, BANE--THE LARGEST IN THE LIQUOR WAREHOUSE WE TOOK FROM TOUGH TONY BRESSI.
WAIT--AREN'T YOU GOING TO BREAK US OUT?
NO.
HE'S MINE.


SHUT OUT OF THE MANOR, THE CAVE, EVEN THE TEAM ITSELF.
AND ALL BECAUSE--


BRUCE IS OUT OF DANGER.
NIGHTWING--!

HOW DID YOU KNOW HE WAS--
I HAD TO LEARN IT FROM ORACLE.

UH, SORRY... BUT BRUCE FIGURED IT'D BE BEST TO KEEP IT SECRET.
EVEN FROM ME?
HEY, IT'S BEEN KINDA FRANTIC AROUND HERE.

NO DOUBT--BUT I'LL LET BRUCE TELL ME ABOUT IT.
HE'S NOT HERE-- AND NEITHER IS ALFRED.

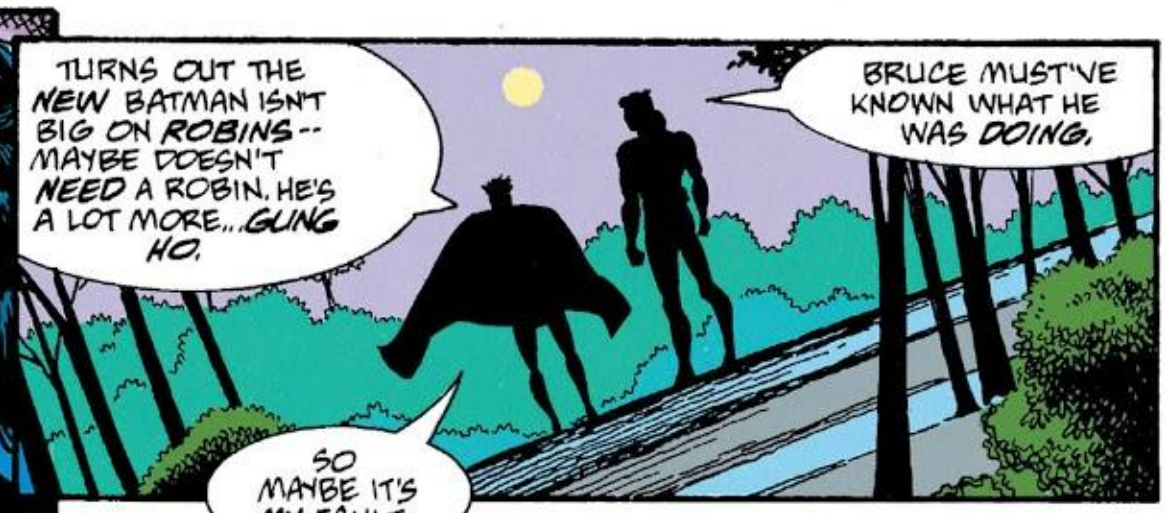
AND YET THE BATMAN LOOMS LARGE IN TODAY'S NEWS.
IT'S NOT HIM, NIGHTWING.
HE'S OUT OF DANGER, BUT... HE'S STILL IN A WHEELCHAIR.

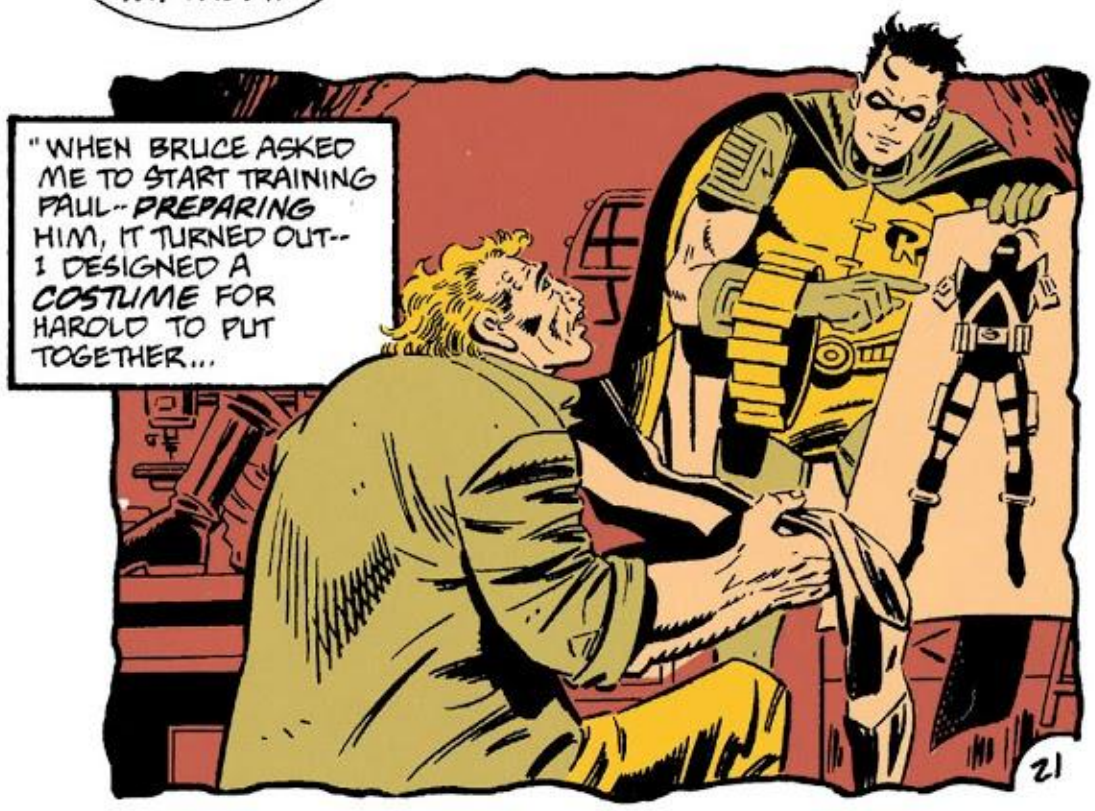
HE ASKED SOMEONE TO FILL IN FOR HIM.
JEAN PAUL VALLEY-- FORMERLY KNOWN AS AZRAEL.

AND HE DIDN'T ASK ME?
WOULD YOU HAVE ACCEPTED?
IF HE NEEDED ME.

ALL RIGHT-- BUT WOULD YOU HAVE WANTED TO ACCEPT?
NO.
AND HE KNEW THAT, NIGHTWING. HE SAID YOU'VE BECOME YOUR OWN MAN-- BEYOND HIS SHADOW.

SO HE ASKED JEAN PAUL VALLEY--A GUY WITH LESS HISTORY.
AND EXPERIENCE.
SOUNDS LIKE NEITHER ONE OF US IS TOO HAPPY ABOUT IT. WHAT'S YOUR EXCUSE?


TURNS OUT THE NEW BATMAN ISN'T BIG ON ROBINS-- MAYBE DOESN'T NEED A ROBIN. HE'S A LOT MORE...GUNG HO.
BRUCE MUST'VE KNOWN WHAT HE WAS DOING.
SO MAYBE IT'S MY FAULT.


"WHEN BRUCE ASKED ME TO START TRAINING PAUL--PREPARING HIM, IT TURNED OUT-- I DESIGNED A COSTUME FOR HAROLD TO PUT TOGETHER...

"I FIGURED IT WAS A GOOD CROSS BETWEEN THE AZRAEL AND BATMAN OUTFITS...

"...BUT MAYBE I MADE IT TOO SIMILAR TO A BAD GUY BRUCE HAD JUST PUT AWAY.
"LOOKING BACK, ASIDE FROM METALHEAD'S NASTY SPIKES, THE TWO OUTFITS WERE ALMOST IDENTICAL."

MAYBE IT GAVE PAUL SUBLIMINAL CUES--AND COMBINED WITH ALL THE WEIRD STUFF HIDDEN IN HIS HEAD...
COMBINED WITH WHAT?
HE CALLS IT "THE SYSTEM"...

"...SOME SORT OF MIND-PROGRAMMING HE UNDERWENT BACK WHEN HE WAS AZRAEL.
"EVEN NOW HE ISN'T AWARE OF EVERYTHING THAT WAS FORCE-FED INTO HIM..."

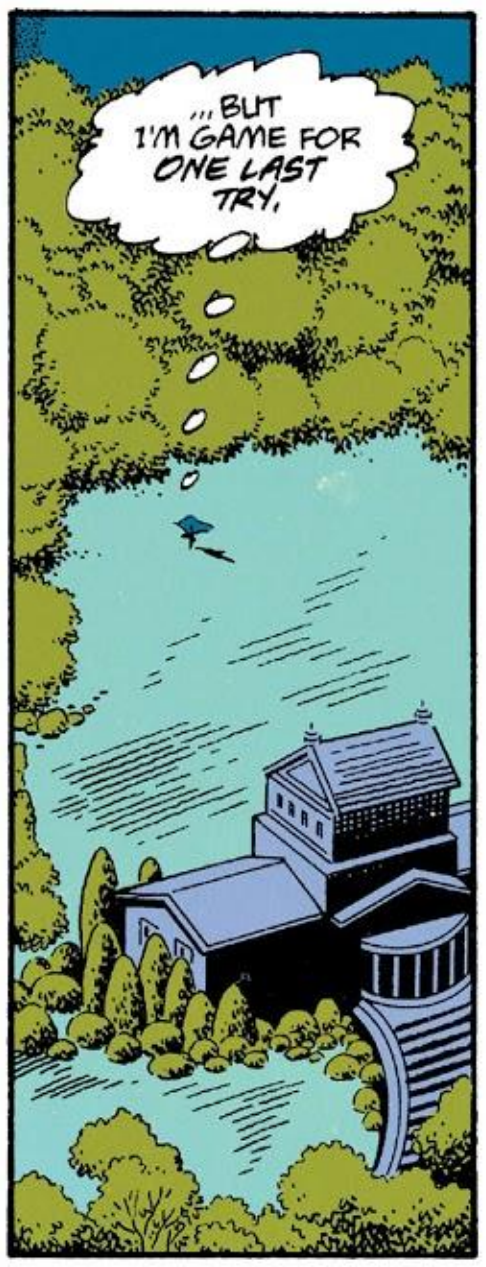
...BUT SINCE THE ORDER OF SAINT DUMAS WAS CREATING AN "AVENGING ANGEL"--AN ASSASSIN--IT CAN'T BE ALL GOOD...
...EVEN THOUGH IT ENABLES HIM TO DO AMAZING THINGS WITHOUT KNOWING HE CAN DO THEM.

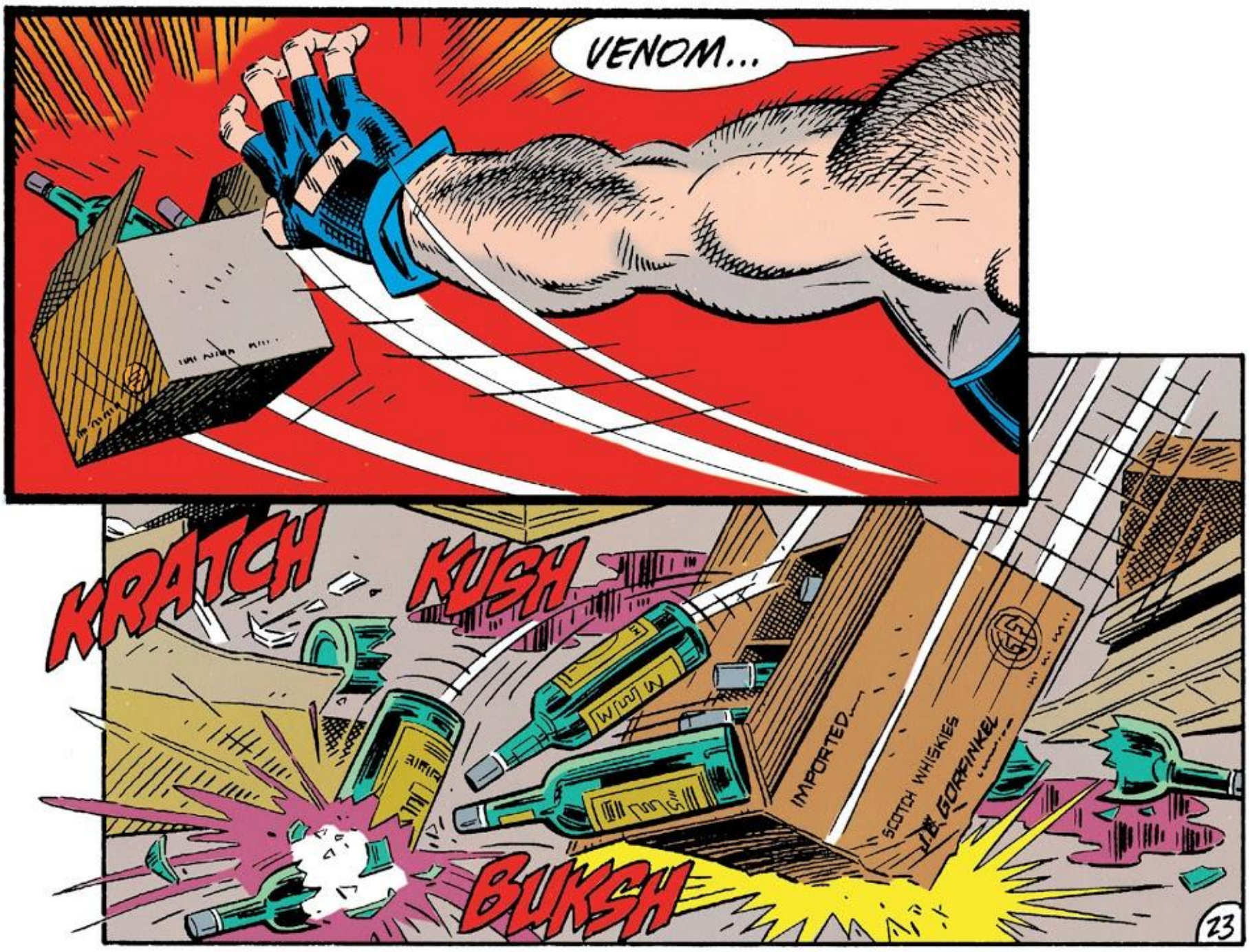
ANYWAY, THAT COSTUME HAROLD AND I PUT TOGETHER--MAYBE IT TRIGGERED SOME STUFF FROM "THE SYSTEM" AND MADE HIM--
NO--IT'S STUPID TO BLAME YOURSELF.

EITHER THIS JEAN PAUL VALLEY IS GOOD ENOUGH OR HE ISN'T.
BRUCE THINKS HE IS.
THEN THAT'S IT--

--AND THERE'S NOTHING HERE FOR EITHER OF US TO DO.

MAYBE NOT...

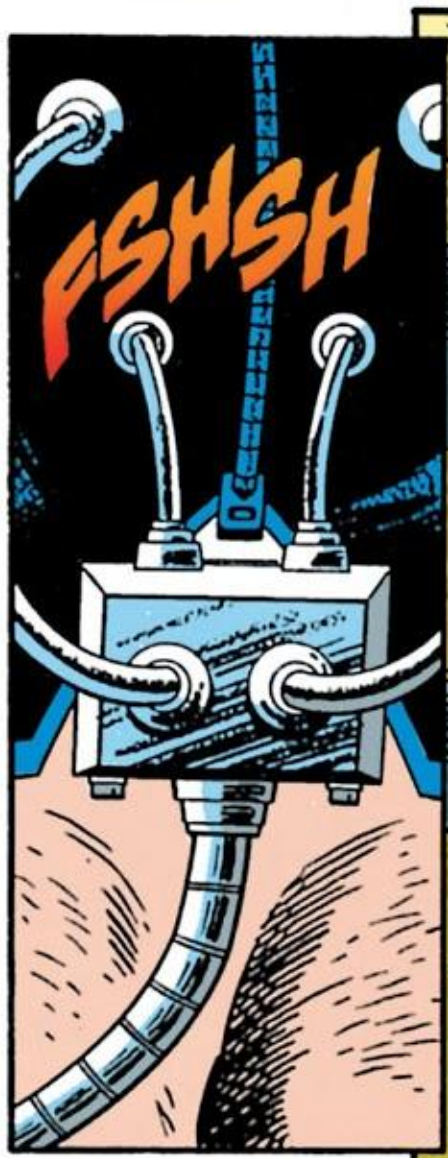

...BUT I'M GAME FOR ONE LAST TRY.

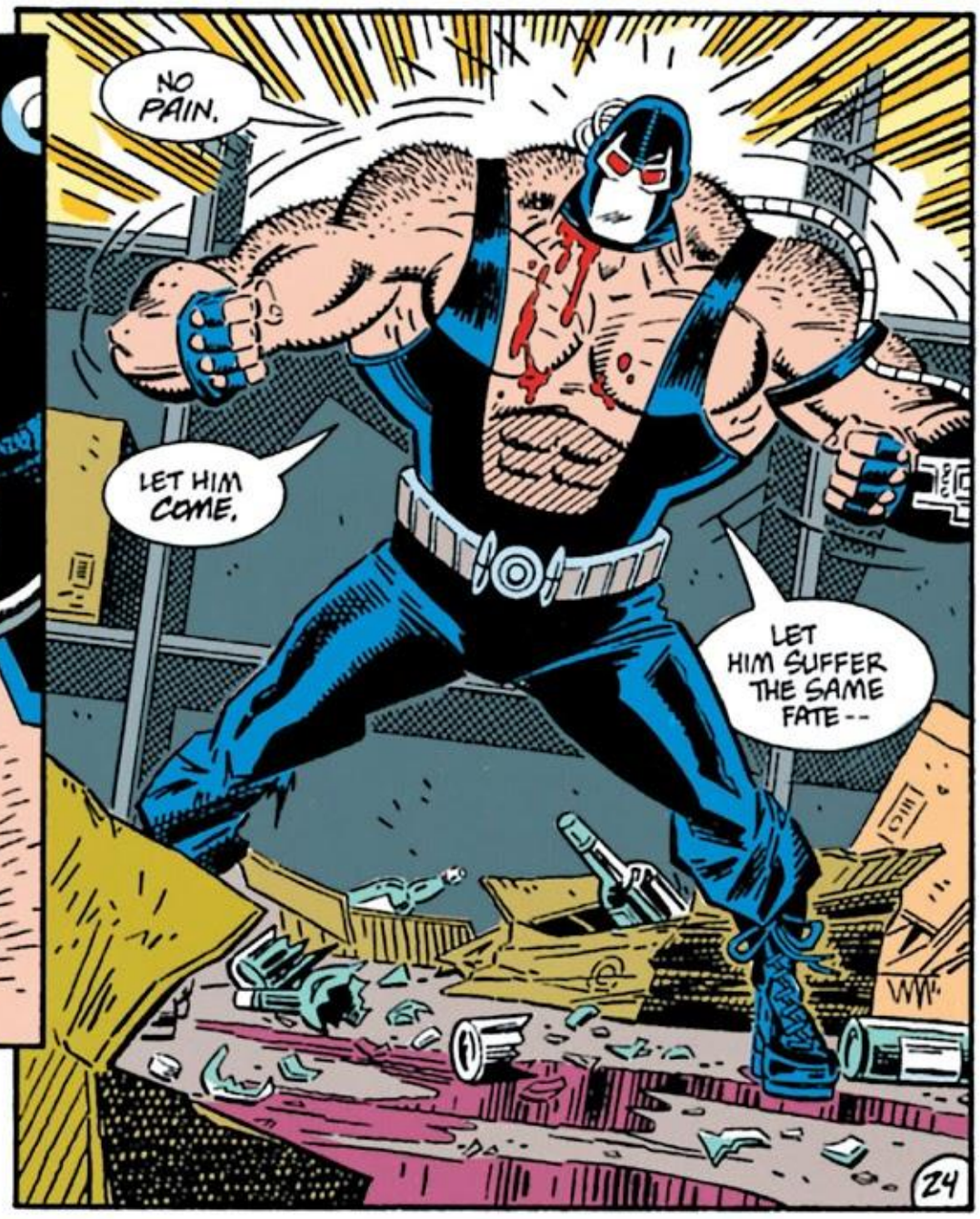

VENOM...
KRATCH
KUSH
BUKSH
IMPORTED
SCOTCH WHISKIES
J.B. GORFINKEL

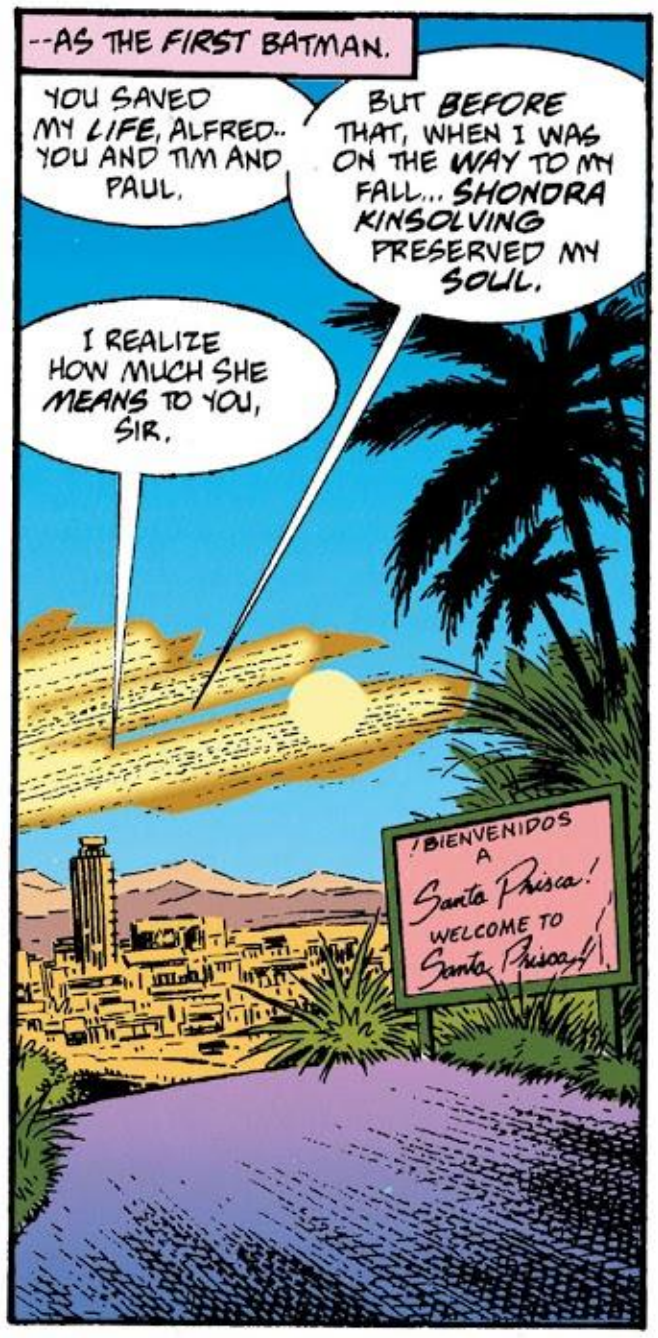
HERE.
England
SCOTCH WHISKIES
J.B. GORFINKEL

CHAK

TEK


FSHSH


NO PAIN.
LET HIM COME.
LET HIM SUFFER THE SAME FATE--


--AS THE FIRST BATMAN.
YOU SAVED MY LIFE, ALFRED.. YOU AND TIM AND PAUL.
BUT BEFORE THAT, WHEN I WAS ON THE WAY TO MY FALL... SHONDRA KINSOLVING PRESERVED MY SOUL.
I REALIZE HOW MUCH SHE MEANS TO YOU, SIR.
¡BIENVENIDOS A Santa Prisca!
WELCOME TO Santa Prisca!

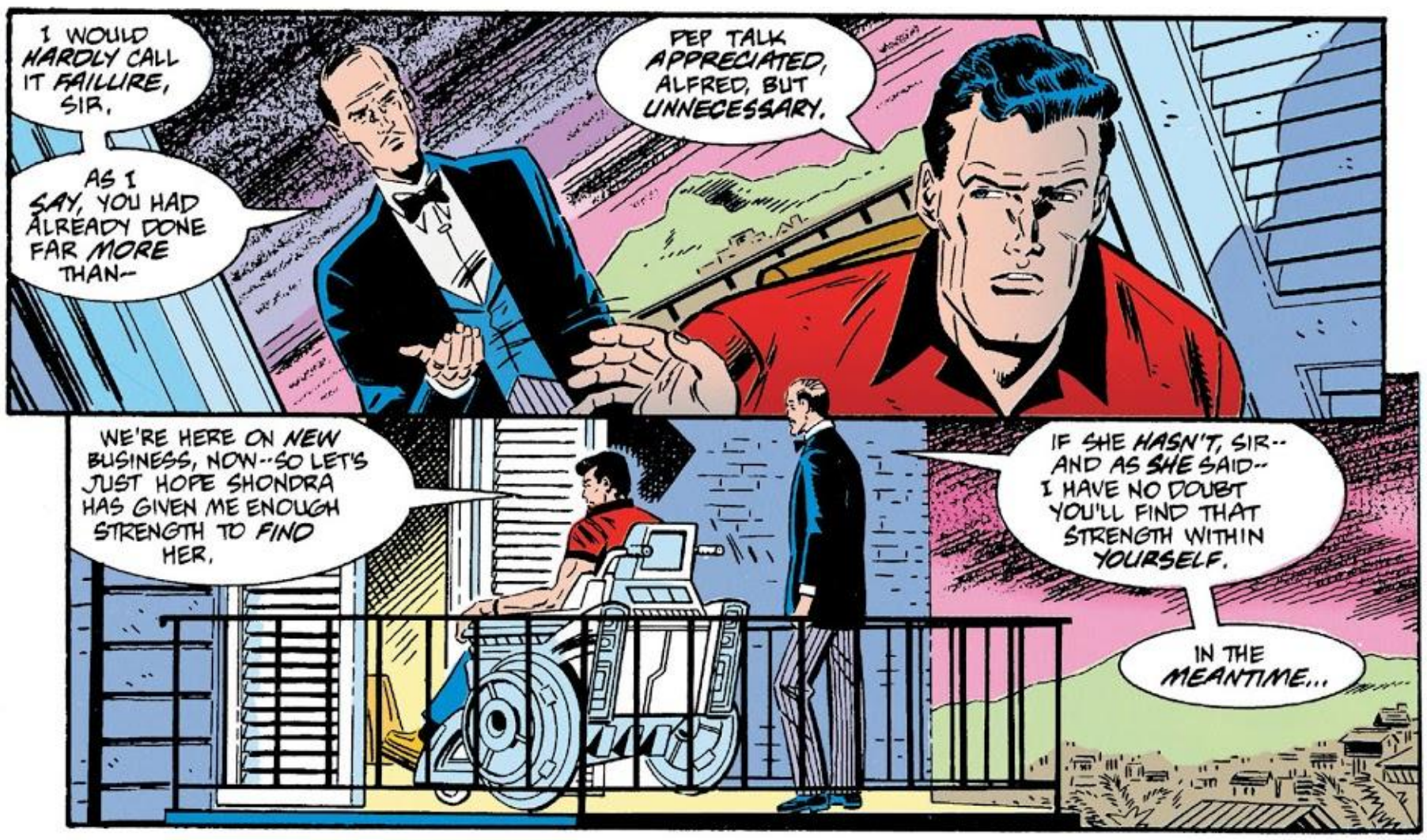
NO, ALFRED, YOU CAN'T... BECAUSE UNTIL NOW, UNTIL SHONDRA WAS ABDUCTED, EVEN I DIDN'T REALIZE IT.

"I WAS DEAD ON MY FEET WHEN I WENT TO HER, READY TO COLLAPSE, EVEN IF I WOULDN'T ADMIT IT..."
IF ANY MAN HAS THE STRENGTH TO OVERCOME THIS, BRUCE, IT'S YOU.

"BUT SHE TOOK ME IN HER HANDS, ALFRED, AND LIFTED ME UP."

SHE'S A TRUE HEALER, ALFRED.
WITHOUT HER, I'M NOT SURE I COULD HAVE GONE ON... NOT SURE I COULD HAVE FACED ALL THOSE ARKHAM INMATES FREED BY BANE...
YOU DID FAR MORE, SIR, THAN COULD BE EXPECTED OF ANY MAN.

AND THEN I FAILED, LEAVING BANE STILL AT LARGE... AND SHONDRA A PRISONER SOMEWHERE HERE IN SANTA PRISCA...ALONG WITH TIM'S FATHER...



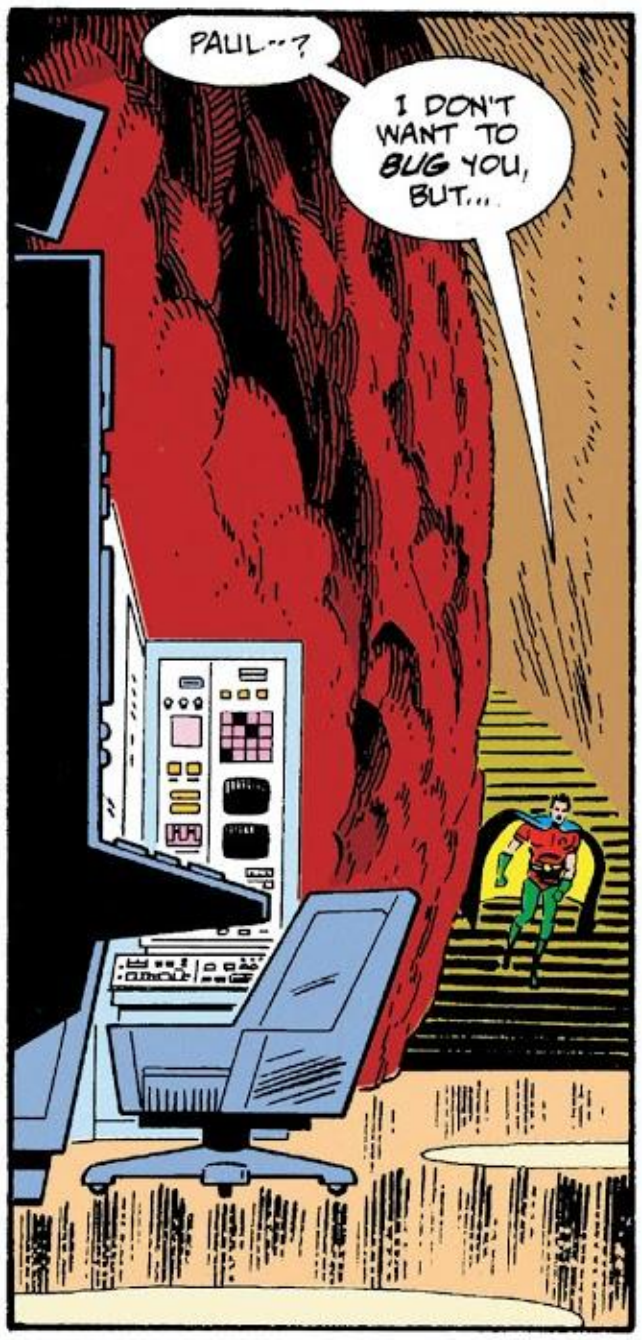

"...LET US HOPE ALL IS WELL BACK HOME."

WELCOME TO GOTHAM

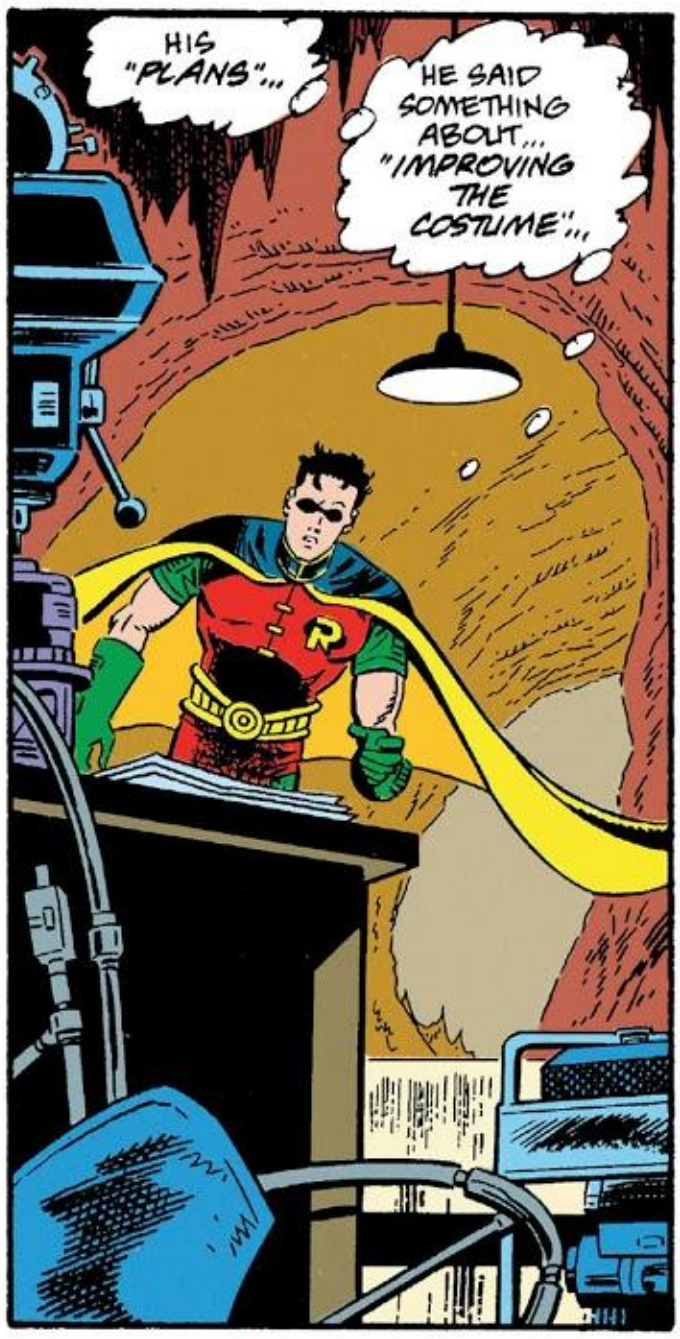
MAJESTIC

YOUR MESSAGE HERE FOR DETAILS:

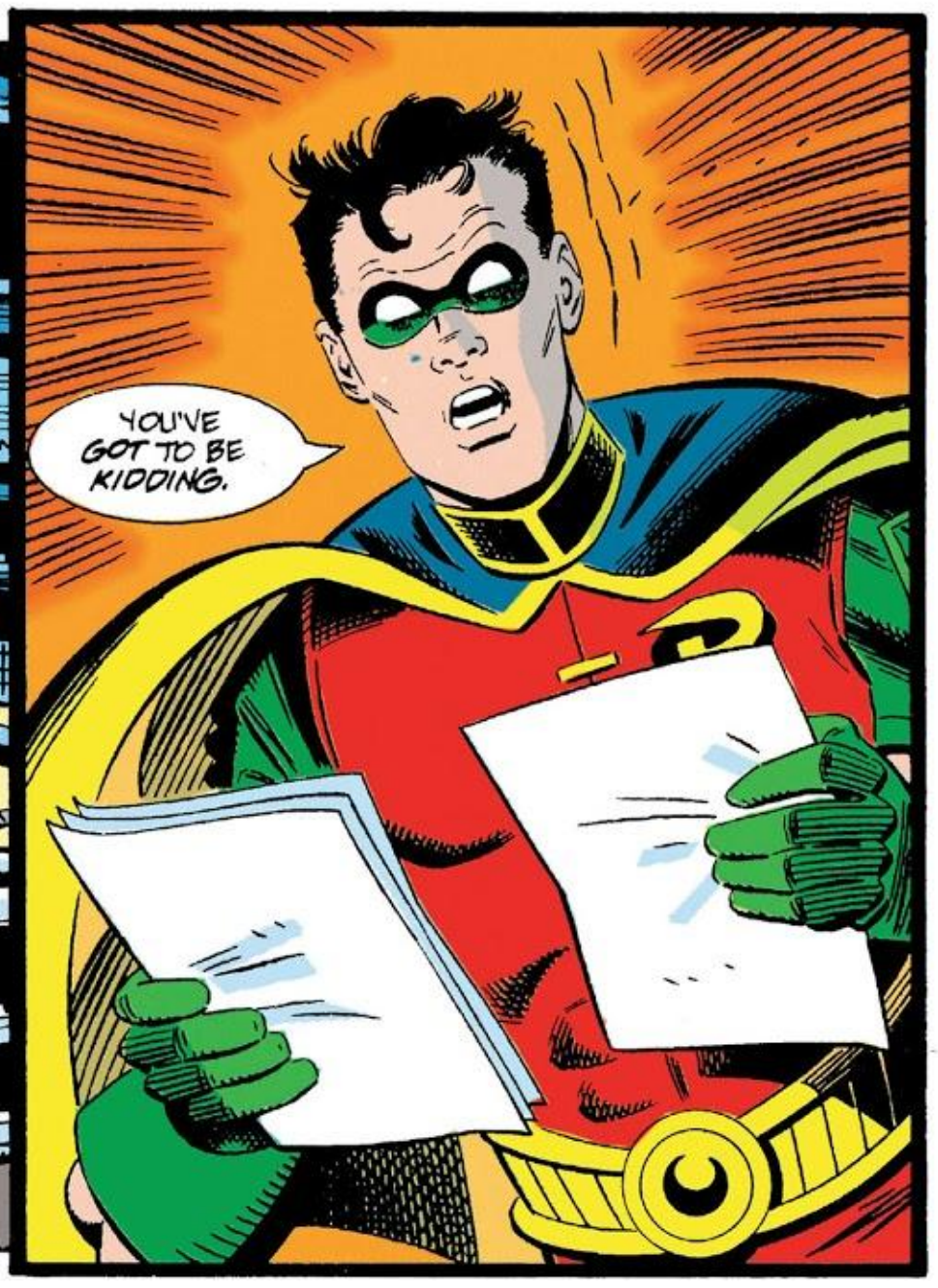
WHAT'S NEXT? NEWS AND WEATHER, OR ANOTHER AD?
AN AD, OF COURSE, AND FOR NOTHING LESS THAN GOOD OLD--
AGH-K!
DEATH.
KRAKT
NO MORE RUNNING.
K-KLUMP
TIME TO END IT.
27

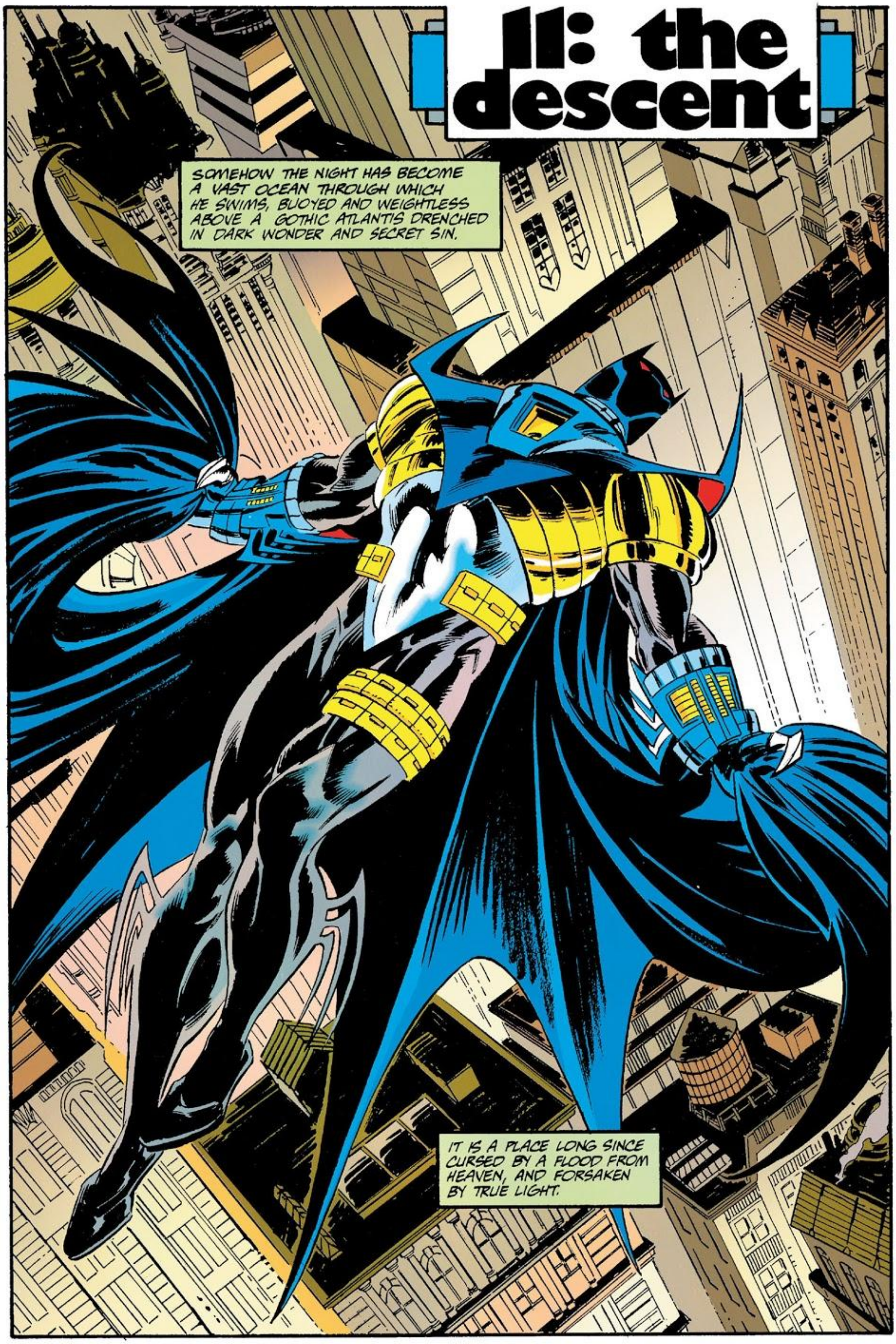

PAUL--?
I DON'T WANT TO BUG YOU, BUT...

PAUL--?


HIS "PLANS"...
HE SAID SOMETHING ABOUT... "IMPROVING THE COSTUME"...

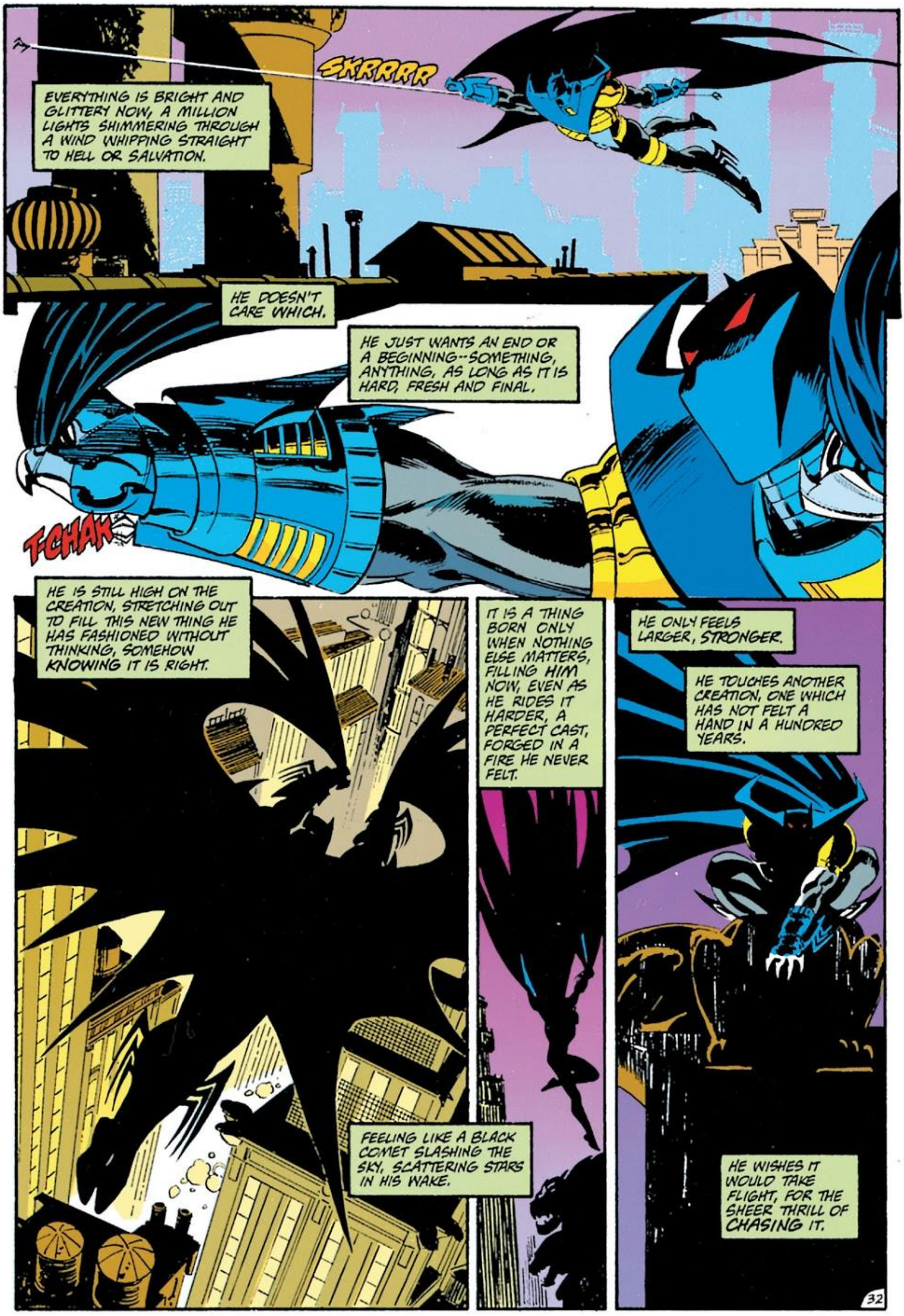
WHAT THE--?

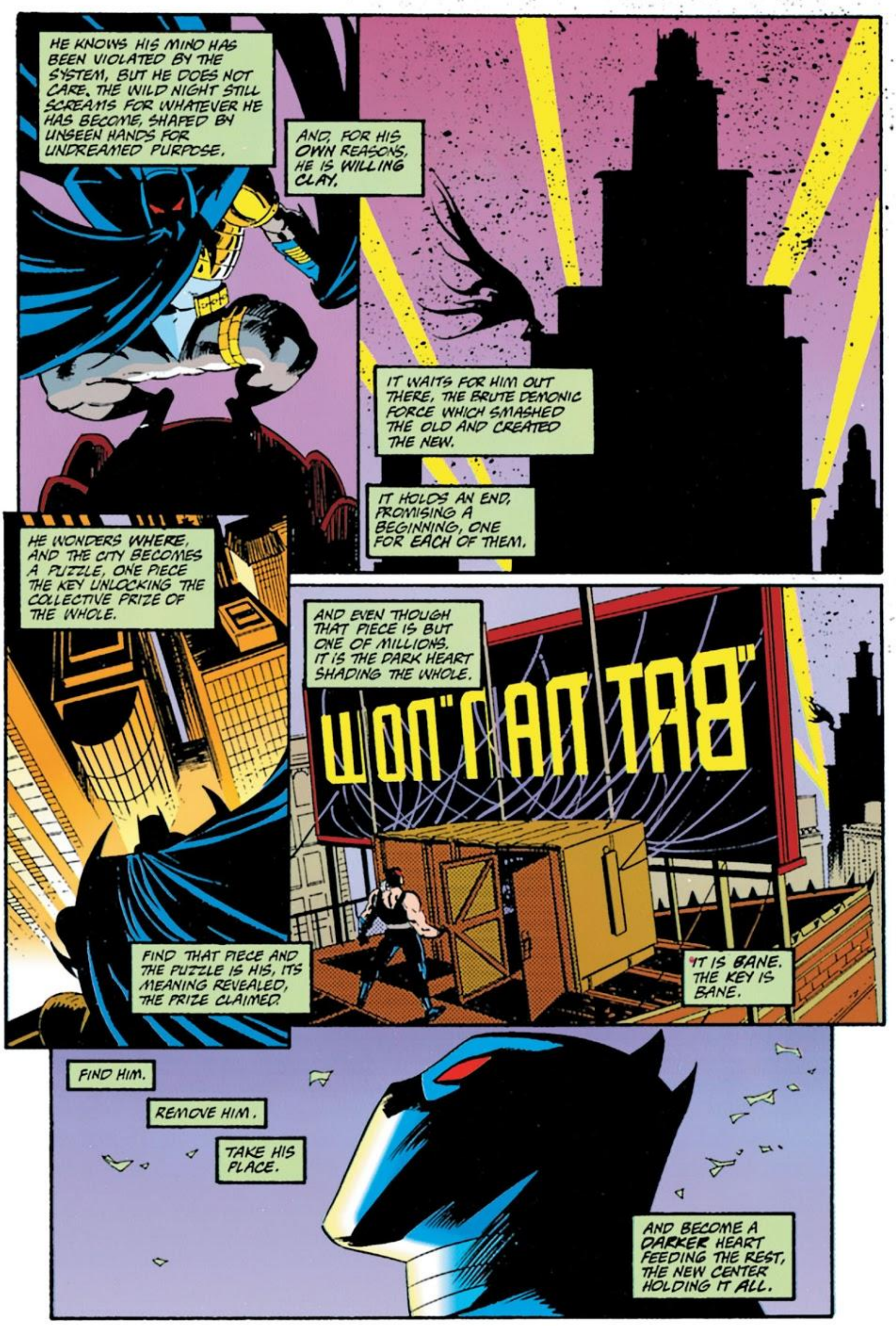

YOU'VE GOT TO BE KIDDING.


II: the descent
SOMEHOW THE NIGHT HAS BECOME A VAST OCEAN THROUGH WHICH HE SWIMS, BUOYED AND WEIGHTLESS ABOVE A GOTHIC ATLANTIS DRENCHED IN DARK WONDER AND SECRET SIN.
IT IS A PLACE LONG SINCE CURSED BY A FLOOD FROM HEAVEN, AND FORSAKEN BY TRUE LIGHT.

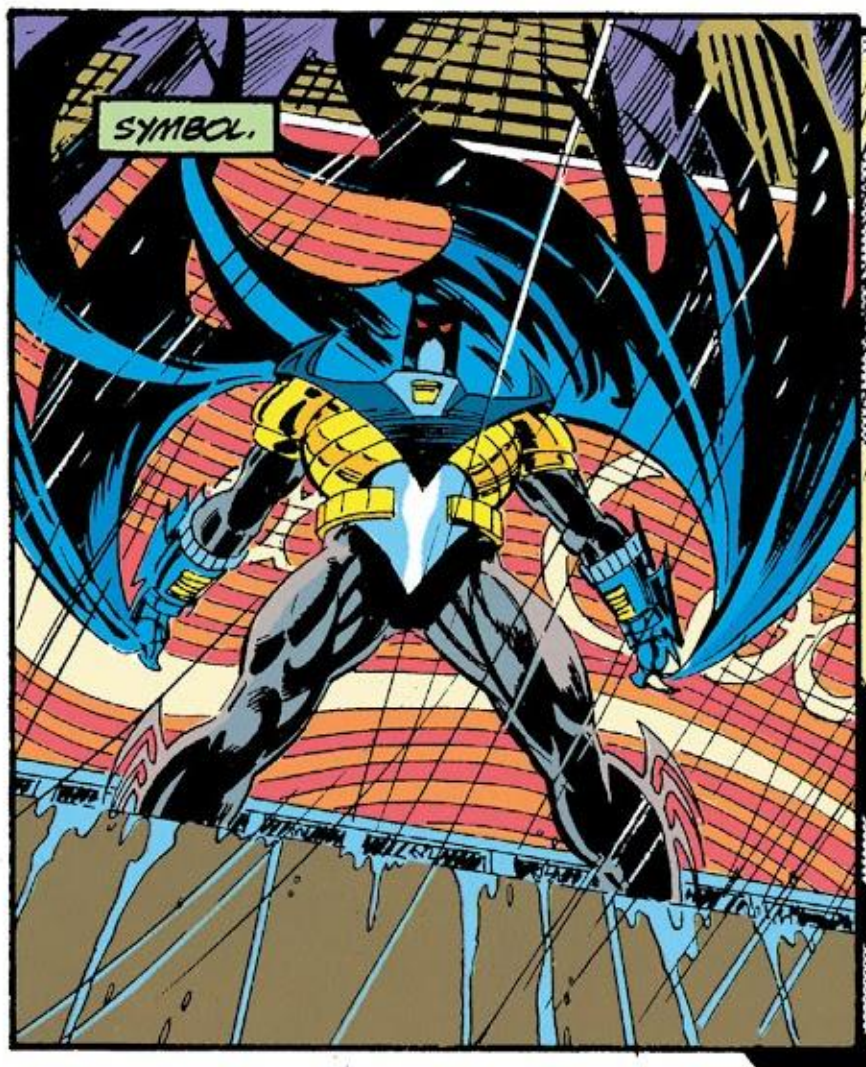
A DARK ANGEL ON SPREAD WINGS, HE FALLS CLOSER TO THE CORE, THE ONLY ONE WILLING TO DESCEND DEEPER...
...ALL PAIN AND STIFFNESS WASHED AWAY BY THE SEA, LOST IN A PART OF HIS MIND HE NO LONGER KNOWS, AS HE SEARCHES.
KCHIK
CHAKT
FOR A SIGN.
YOUR MESSAGE HERE
FOR DETAILS
2323
SON
AND MY MESSAGE IS...
"BAT.
"BATMAN" NOW
SON

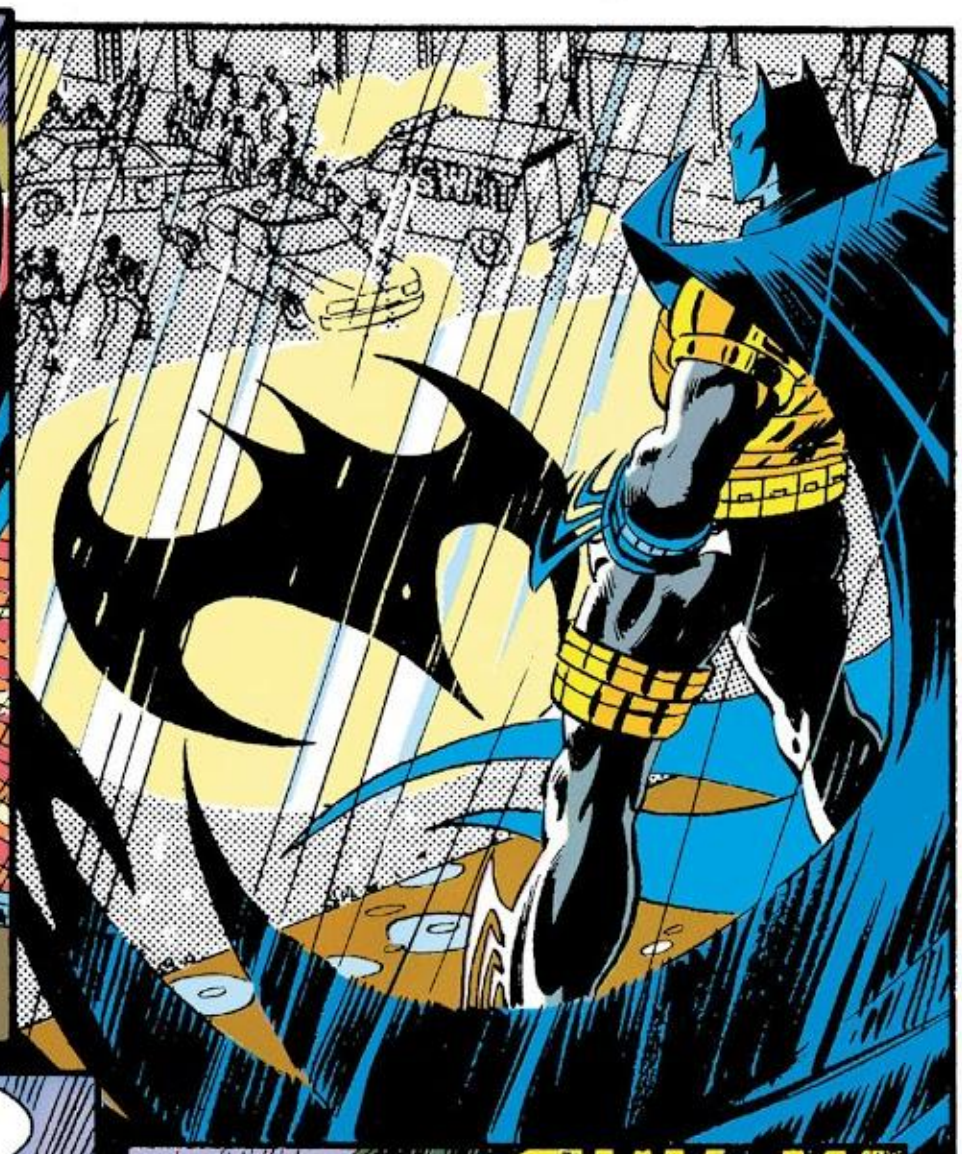
THE OCEAN RECEDES NOW, DISPLACED BY BRACING WIND.
CHUP
IT CLEARS HIS MIND OF THE DREAMLIKE SLEEP.
HE IS ALERT NOW, OUT OF THE OCEAN, OUT OF THE COCOON, A NEW CREATURE DRYING IN THE BITING AIR.
HIS NEW CAPE GRABS THE WIND, SWELLING ON ITS LIFT, NO LONGER A HINDRANCE.
CHFF
CHAK
HE HEARS IT AS HE GLIDES, SOFTLY AT FIRST, DISTANT AND ECHOING.
HAUNTING.
THEN IT RISES, A SOUND NOT UNLIKE A WOMAN'S VOICE, KEENING HIGHER AND LOUDER AND CLOSER UNTIL IT FILLS HIS HEART WITH ITS UNEARTHLY THRILL.
CHFF
IT IS THE WILD NIGHT SCREAMING FOR HIS SOUL.
HE RIDES IT.


SKRRRR
EVERYTHING IS BRIGHT AND GLITTERY NOW, A MILLION LIGHTS SHIMMERING THROUGH A WIND WHIPPING STRAIGHT TO HELL OR SALVATION.
HE DOESN'T CARE WHICH.
HE JUST WANTS AN END OR A BEGINNING--SOMETHING, ANYTHING, AS LONG AS IT IS HARD, FRESH AND FINAL.
T-CHAK
HE IS STILL HIGH ON THE CREATION, STRETCHING OUT TO FILL THIS NEW THING HE HAS FASHIONED WITHOUT THINKING, SOMEHOW KNOWING IT IS RIGHT.
FEELING LIKE A BLACK COMET SLASHING THE SKY, SCATTERING STARS IN HIS WAKE.
IT IS A THING BORN ONLY WHEN NOTHING ELSE MATTERS, FILLING HIM NOW, EVEN AS HE RIDES IT HARDER, A PERFECT CAST, FORGED IN A FIRE HE NEVER FELT.
HE ONLY FEELS LARGER, STRONGER.
HE TOUCHES ANOTHER CREATION, ONE WHICH HAS NOT FELT A HAND IN A HUNDRED YEARS.
HE WISHES IT WOULD TAKE FLIGHT, FOR THE SHEER THRILL OF CHASING IT.


HE KNOWS HIS MIND HAS BEEN VIOLATED BY THE SYSTEM, BUT HE DOES NOT CARE. THE WILD NIGHT STILL SCREAMS FOR WHATEVER HE HAS BECOME, SHAPED BY UNSEEN HANDS FOR UNDREAMED PURPOSE.
AND, FOR HIS OWN REASONS, HE IS WILLING CLAY.
IT WAITS FOR HIM OUT THERE, THE BRUTE DEMONIC FORCE WHICH SMASHED THE OLD AND CREATED THE NEW.
IT HOLDS AN END, PROMISING A BEGINNING, ONE FOR EACH OF THEM.
HE WONDERS WHERE, AND THE CITY BECOMES A PUZZLE, ONE PIECE THE KEY UNLOCKING THE COLLECTIVE PRIZE OF THE WHOLE.
AND EVEN THOUGH THAT PIECE IS BUT ONE OF MILLIONS, IT IS THE DARK HEART SHADING THE WHOLE.
WON'T AN TAB
FIND THAT PIECE AND THE PUZZLE IS HIS, ITS MEANING REVEALED, THE PRIZE CLAIMED.
IT IS BANE. THE KEY IS BANE.
FIND HIM.
REMOVE HIM.
TAKE HIS PLACE.
AND BECOME A DARKER HEART FEEDING THE REST, THE NEW CENTER HOLDING IT ALL.

BATMAN NOW
THERE.
RAIN.
RAIN MAKES IT PERFECT.
THE FLOOD FROM HEAVEN.
BEGINNING ANEW, AND NOW FOR REAL.
HE'S UP THERE SOMEWHERE!
CLEAR THE AREA!
CORDON OFF THE ENTIRE SQUARE!
LIEUTENANT KITCH--OVER THERE! IS THAT THE BATMAN--?

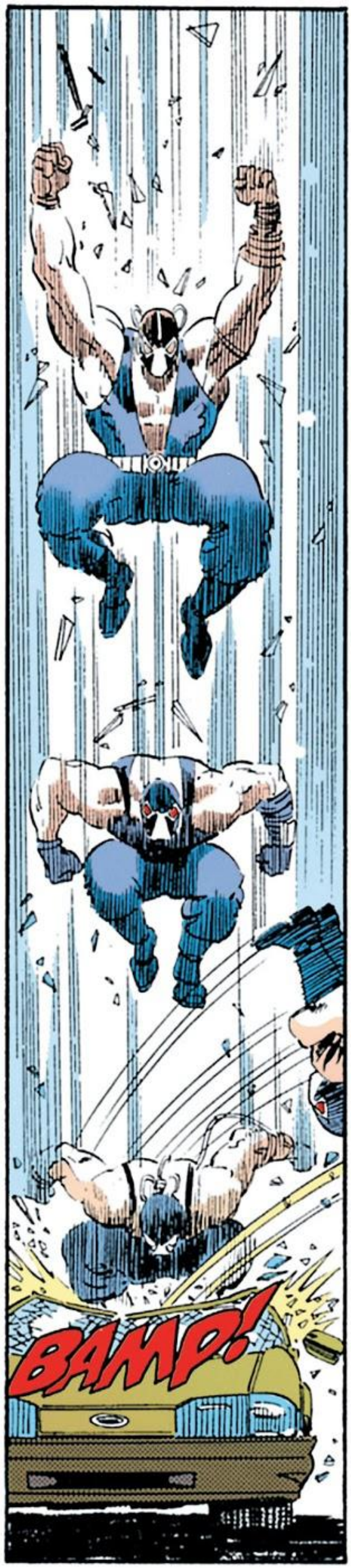

SYMBOL.

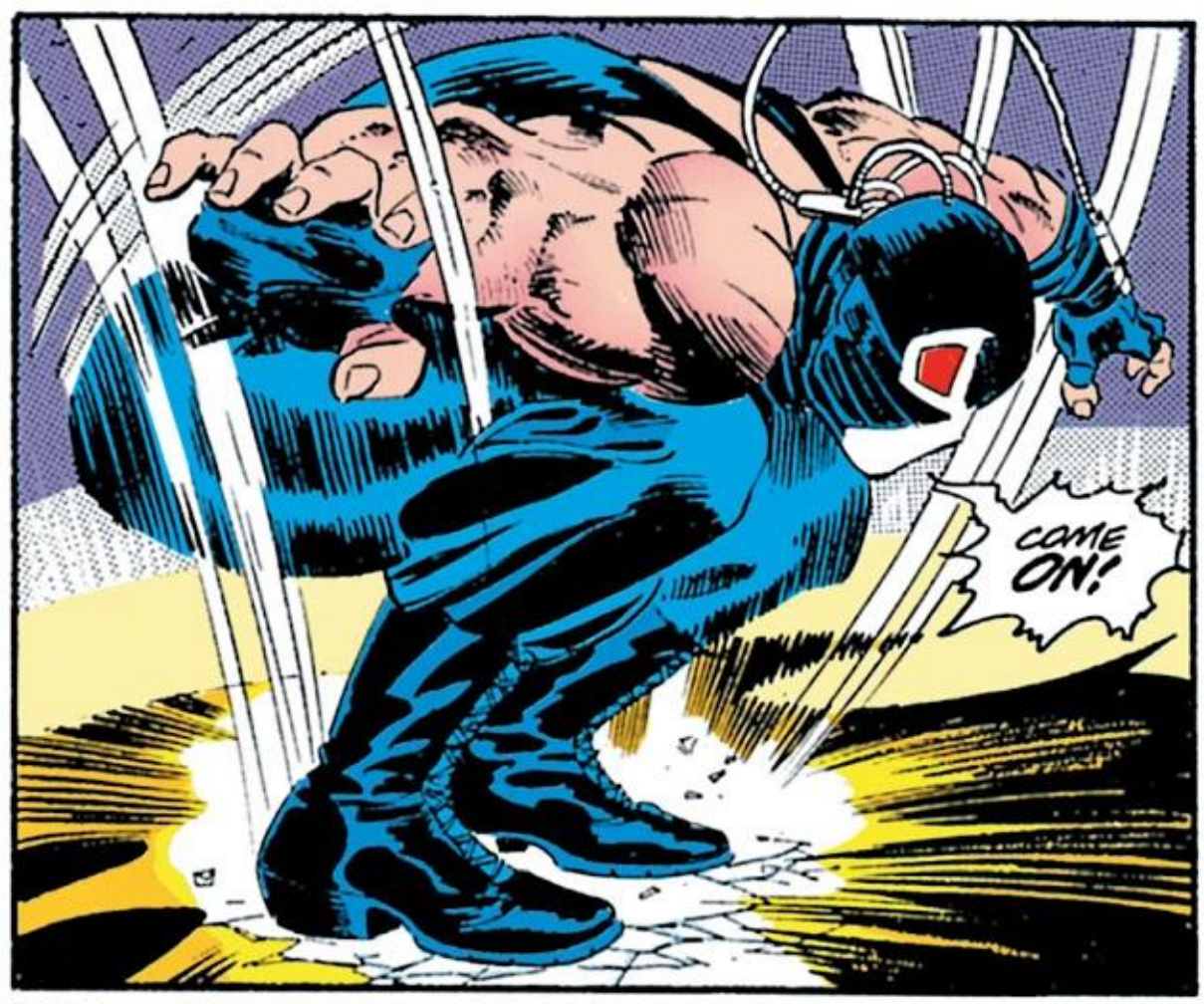


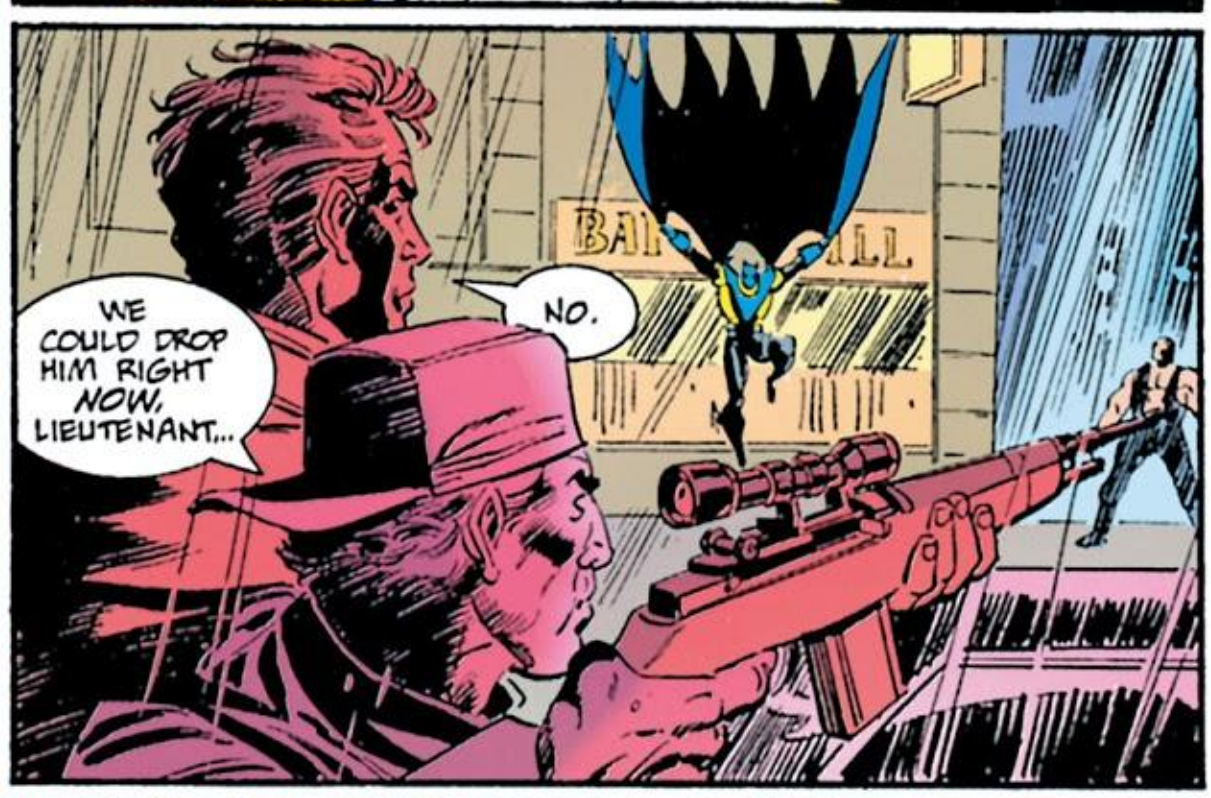
LOOKS LIKE ROUND TWO'S ABOUT TO RESUME, LIEUTENANT.
BUT, WHAT... HAPPENED TO HIM?
DRESSED FOR BATTLE NOW--TOLD YA HE WOKE UP.

BANE! SHOW YOURSELF!

SPRAK
FZZZT
KZZZZT


BAMP!


COME ON!


WE COULD DROP HIM RIGHT NOW, LIEUTENANT...
NO.

SIR--?
IS HE COMMITTING A CRIME FOR WHICH LETHAL FORCE IS JUSTIFIED?
NO, BUT--
IS HE FLEEING THE SCENE OF A CRIME FOR WHICH LETHAL FORCE IS AUTHORIZED?

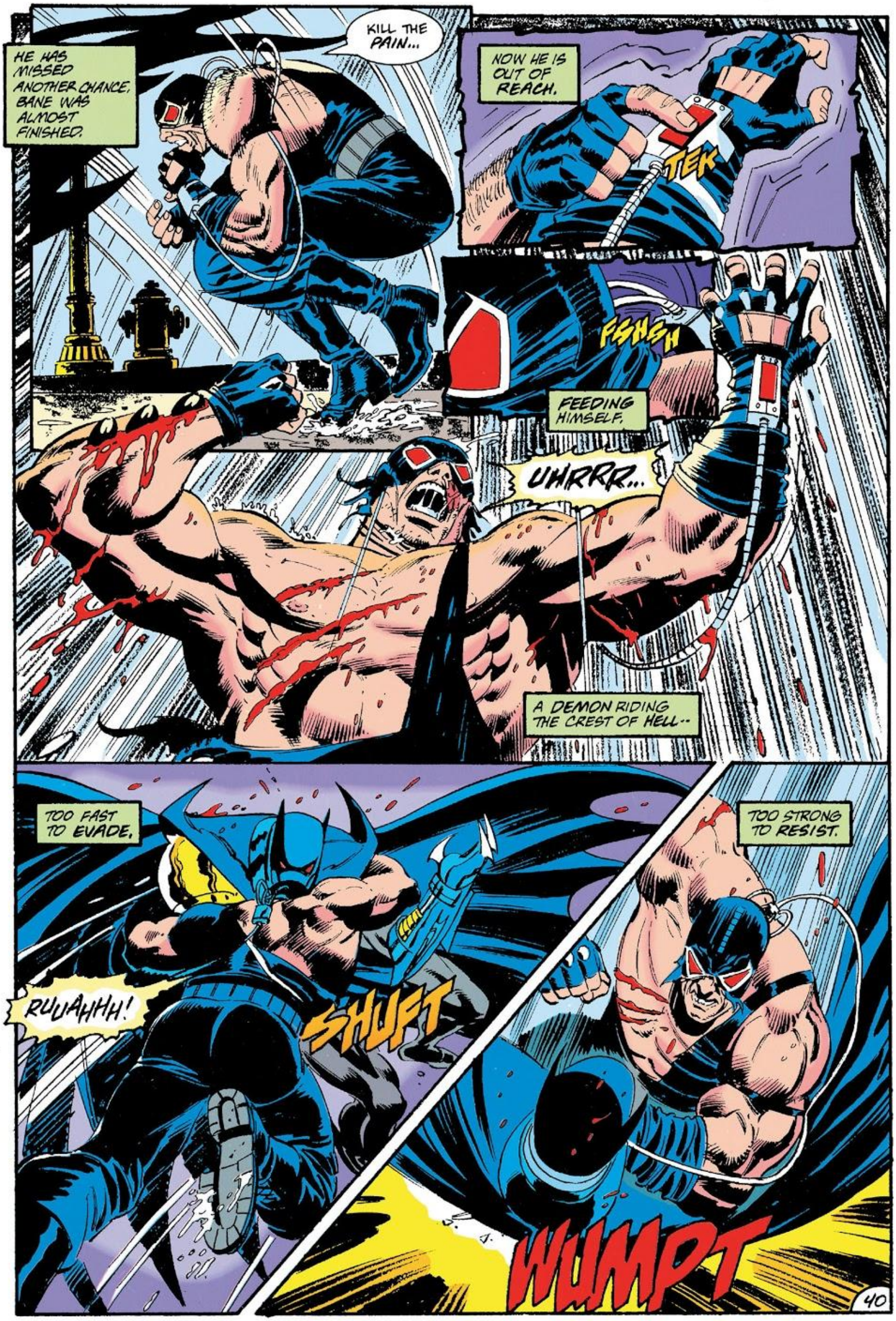
WELL, NOT EXACTLY, BUT--
THEN WE DON'T INTERFERE.

END OR BEGINNING, HE APPROACHES IT.

IT APPROACHES HIM.

YOU'RE DIFFERENT... BUT STILL PRETENDING TO BE THE BATMAN.
CHANGE THE COSTUME ALL YOU WANT, AND YOU'RE STILL NOTHING BUT A COSTUME--NOT HIM.
EH? WHAT DID BANE JUST SAY, BULLOCK?
COULDN'T HEAR FROM THIS DISTANCE, COMMISH...
NO, I'M NOT HIM-- I'M A LOT MORE--AND A LOT WORSE.
I'M A LOT LIKE YOU, BANE...EXCEPT I'VE STOPPED MY FALL, JUST SHORT OF THE BOTTOM.
GOTHAM IS MINE--IN MY POCKET.
PREPARE TO BE MUGGED.
SHING
SHING
SHING
CHT
CHT
CHT
38

AHRRR!
SHHEK
HWUKK
SHWUCKK
VENOM...
SWFFFF


HE HAS MISSED ANOTHER CHANCE. BANE WAS ALMOST FINISHED.
KILL THE PAIN...
NOW HE IS OUT OF REACH.
TEK
FSHSH
FEEDING HIMSELF.
UHRRR...
A DEMON RIDING THE CREST OF HELL--
TOO FAST TO EVADE.
RUUAHHH!
SHUFT
TOO STRONG TO RESIST.
WUMPT

SWUK

SWAK

SWOKK

OOTCH!
SHARPSHOOTERS, READY.
JUST SAY THE WORD, SIR.
K-CHAK

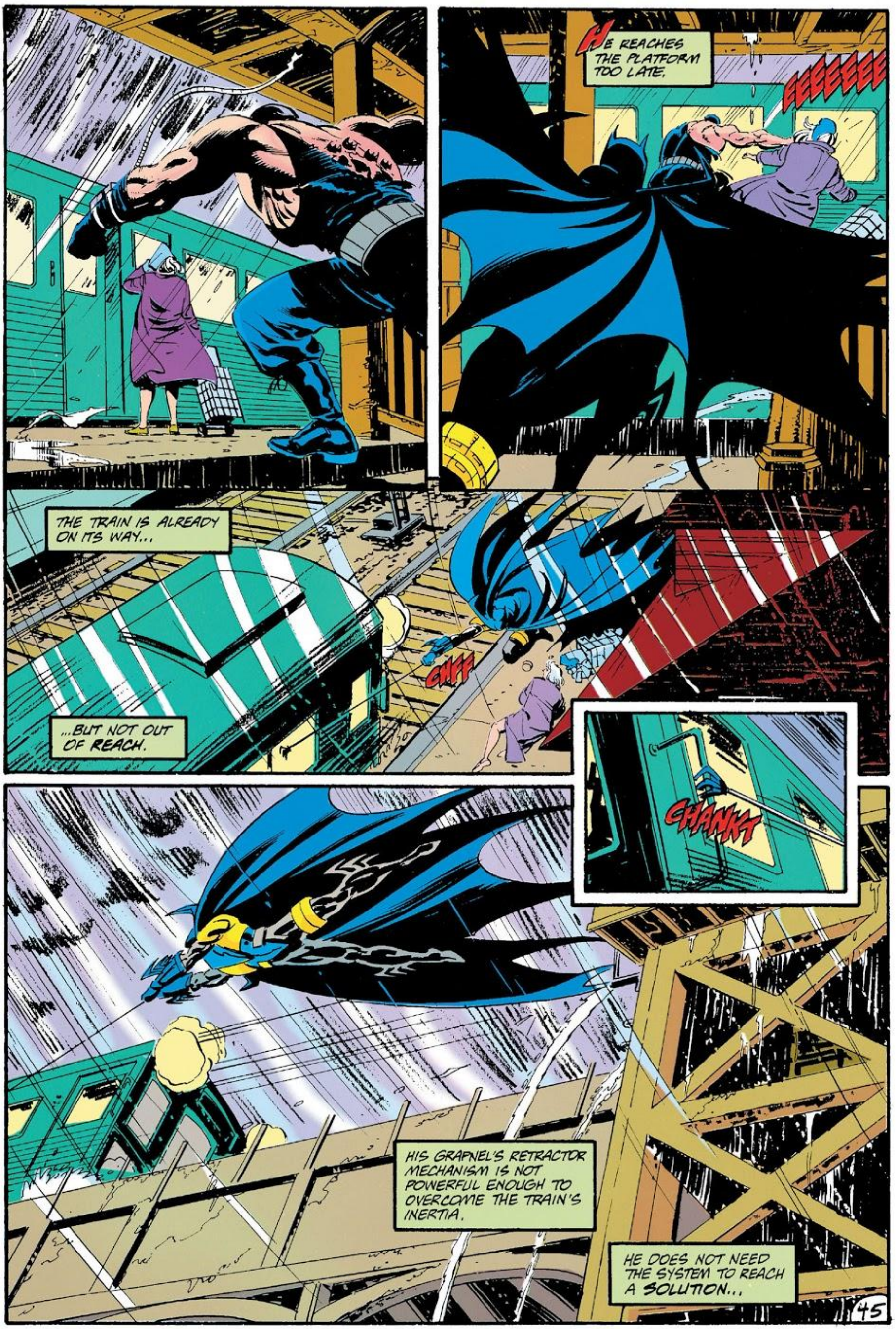
L-LIGHT.

AHN..!

SHUP
UNFF!
KWUMP
YEAH! BETTER'N ROCKY!
SHREKK
VENOM...!
MORE VENOM...!
TEK
SHREP
REP.
PEP
PEPT
42

THE KICK IS WILD.
NO!
SHOKK
IT SURPRISES BUT DOES NOT HURT HIM.
HE HAS FOUND BANE'S WEAKNESS-- DEPENDENCY ON POISON.
WITHOUT IT, THE DEMON LOSES HIS FANGS.
I ALREADY WON! I ALREADY BROKE THE BATMAN!
NOT THIS BATMAN.
SHING SHING SHING SHING
CHUT
CHUT
CHUT
CHUT
43

DON'T SHOOT!
CHECK
YOU MIGHT HIT HIM!
HOLD YOUR FIRE.
TOKENS
HEY!
NO CHANGE
A TRAIN? YOU CLEARED THE SQUARE--BUT NO ONE TOLD THEM TO HOLD THE ELEVATED TRAINS?
IT ALL HAPPENED FAST, COMMISSIONER.
OOPS.


HE REACHES THE PLATFORM TOO LATE.
EEEEEEE
THE TRAIN IS ALREADY ON ITS WAY...
...BUT NOT OUT OF REACH.
CLIFF
CHANKT
HIS GRAPNEL'S RETRACTOR MECHANISM IS NOT POWERFUL ENOUGH TO OVERCOME THE TRAIN'S INERTIA.
HE DOES NOT NEED THE SYSTEM TO REACH A SOLUTION...

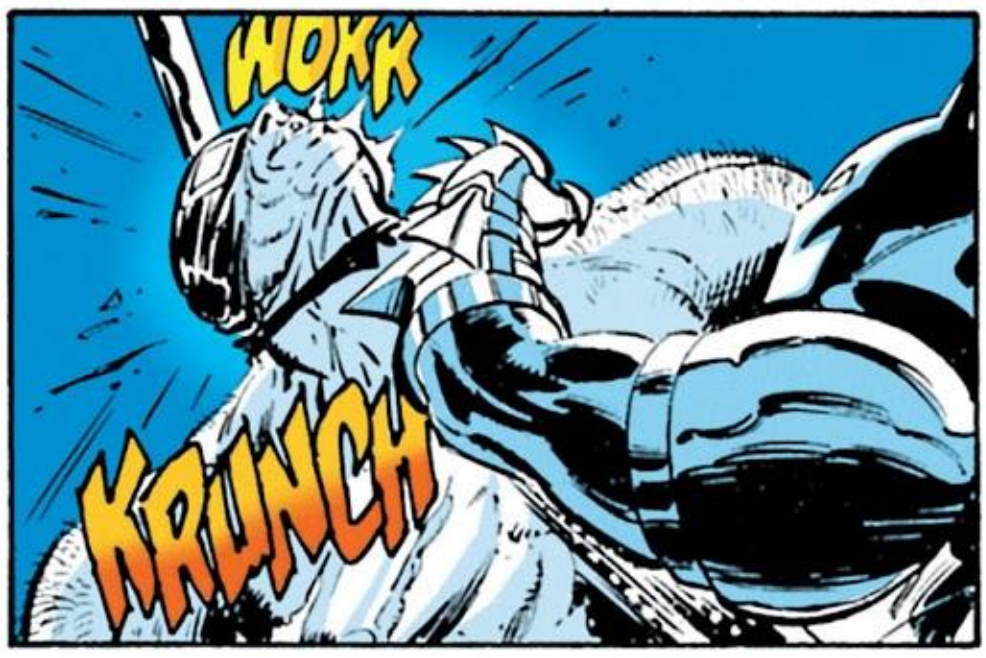
HE SIMPLY DIGS IN.
SPROKT

PROKT
AND HAULS.

EVERYONE OUT-- INTO THE NEXT CAR!
NOW!!

WHAT THE--? ONE OF THE HEADLIGHTS JUST WENT OU--
CHUSH

BKUSHH
WRAKK
MAX
DID YOU FEEL THAT?! WE RAN OVER SOMETHING!
NO-- WE'RE JUST GOING FASTER! HOLD ON!
KEESH

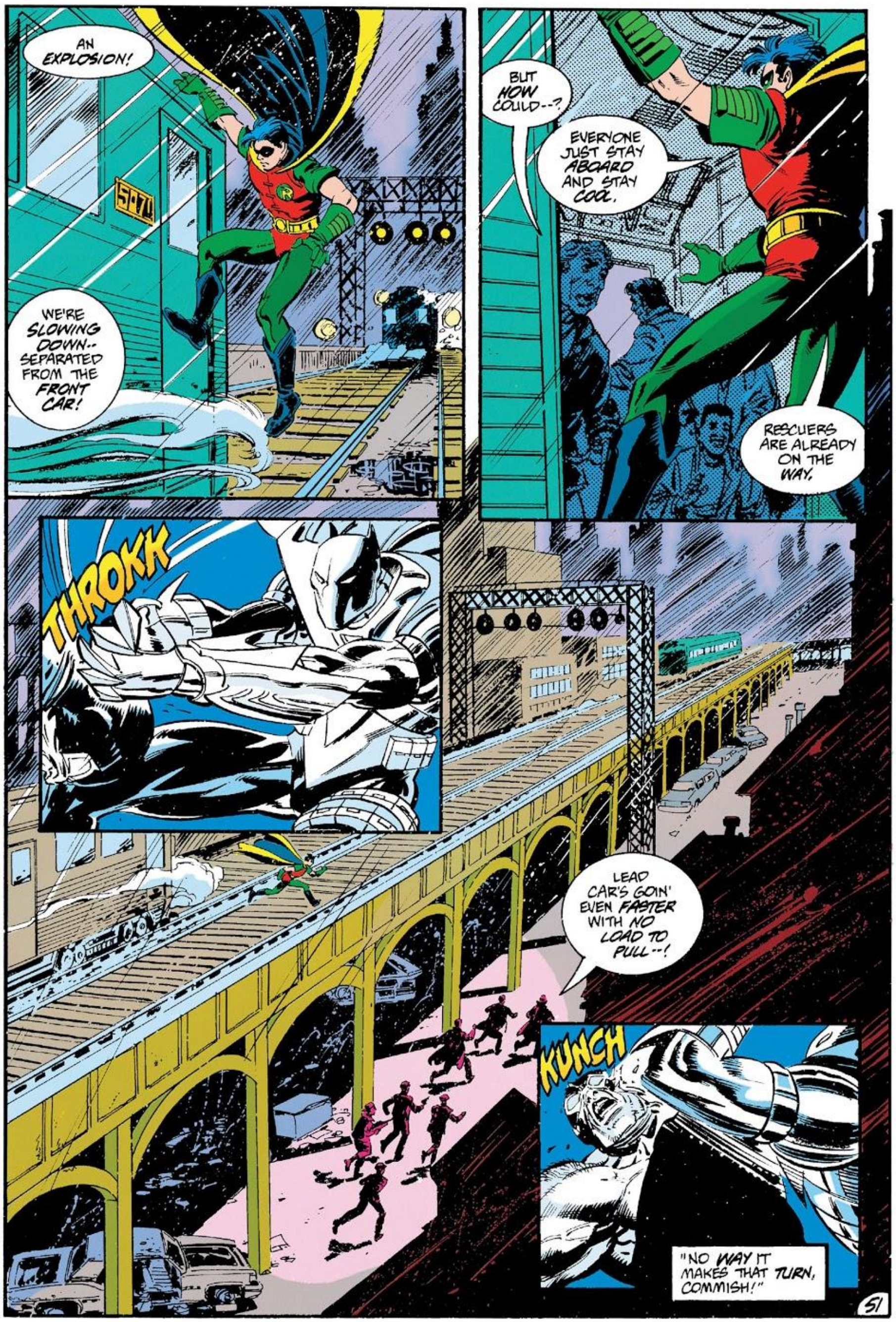


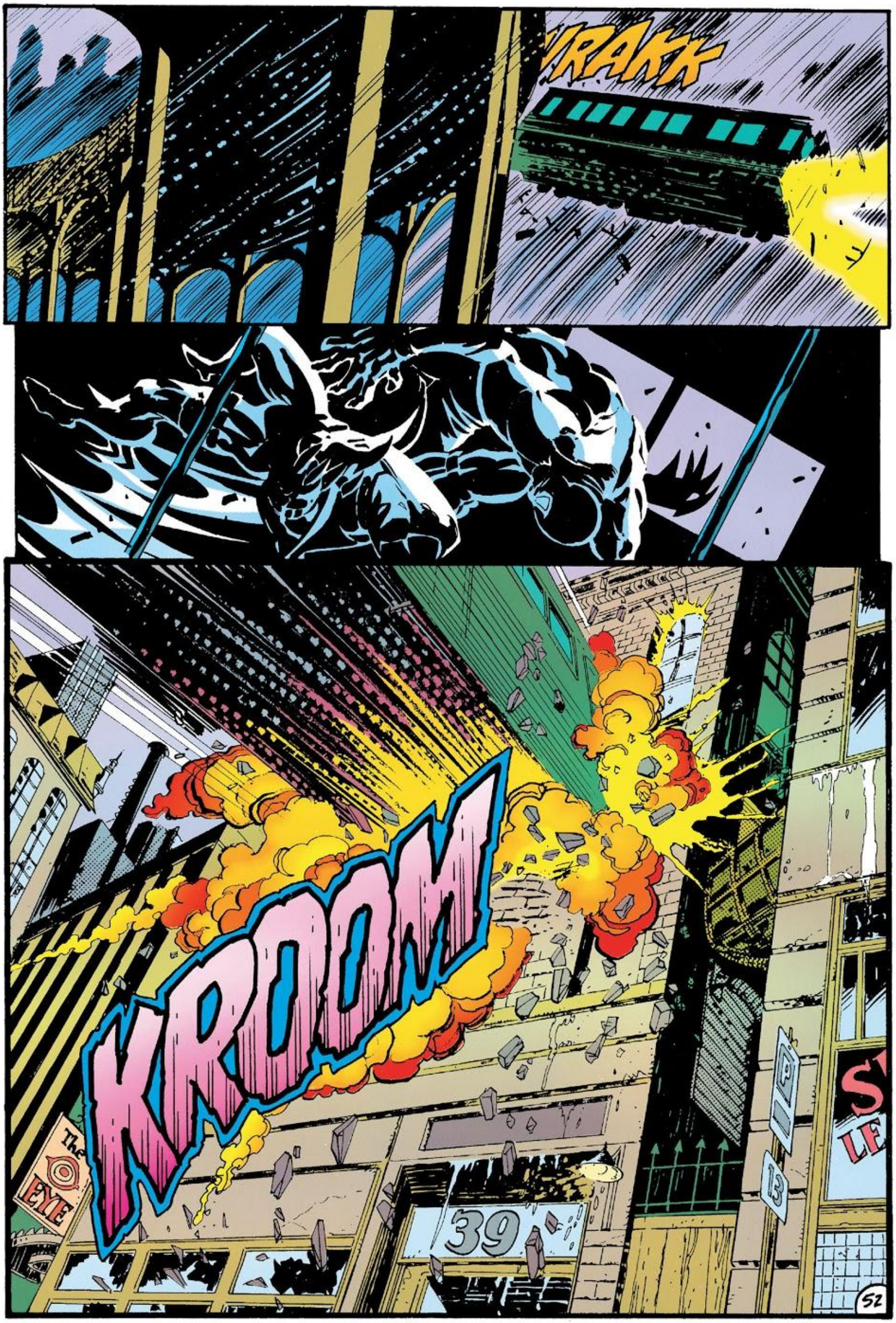
THIS AIN'T GOOD, COMMISH! THAT TRAIN JUST LOOPS AROUND THE SQUARE-- FOLLOWIN' THE STREETS, SO THE TURNS ARE RIGHT ANGLES-

-AN IT'S GOIN' WAY TOO FAST TO MAKE 'EM!

HE'S FIGHTING SOMEBODY UP THERE--LOOKS LIKE... THE BATMAN!
WE'RE GONNA CRASH! WE'RE GONNA DIE!
WHY DOESN'T SOMEBODY DO SOMETHING TO STOP THIS TRAIN?
NEWS REPORTS WEREN'T KIDDING ABOUT A "DISTURBANCE" IN THE SQUARE.
KILLLLL YOU!
MAYBE IN THE NEXT LIFE.
STUP
SKUNCH

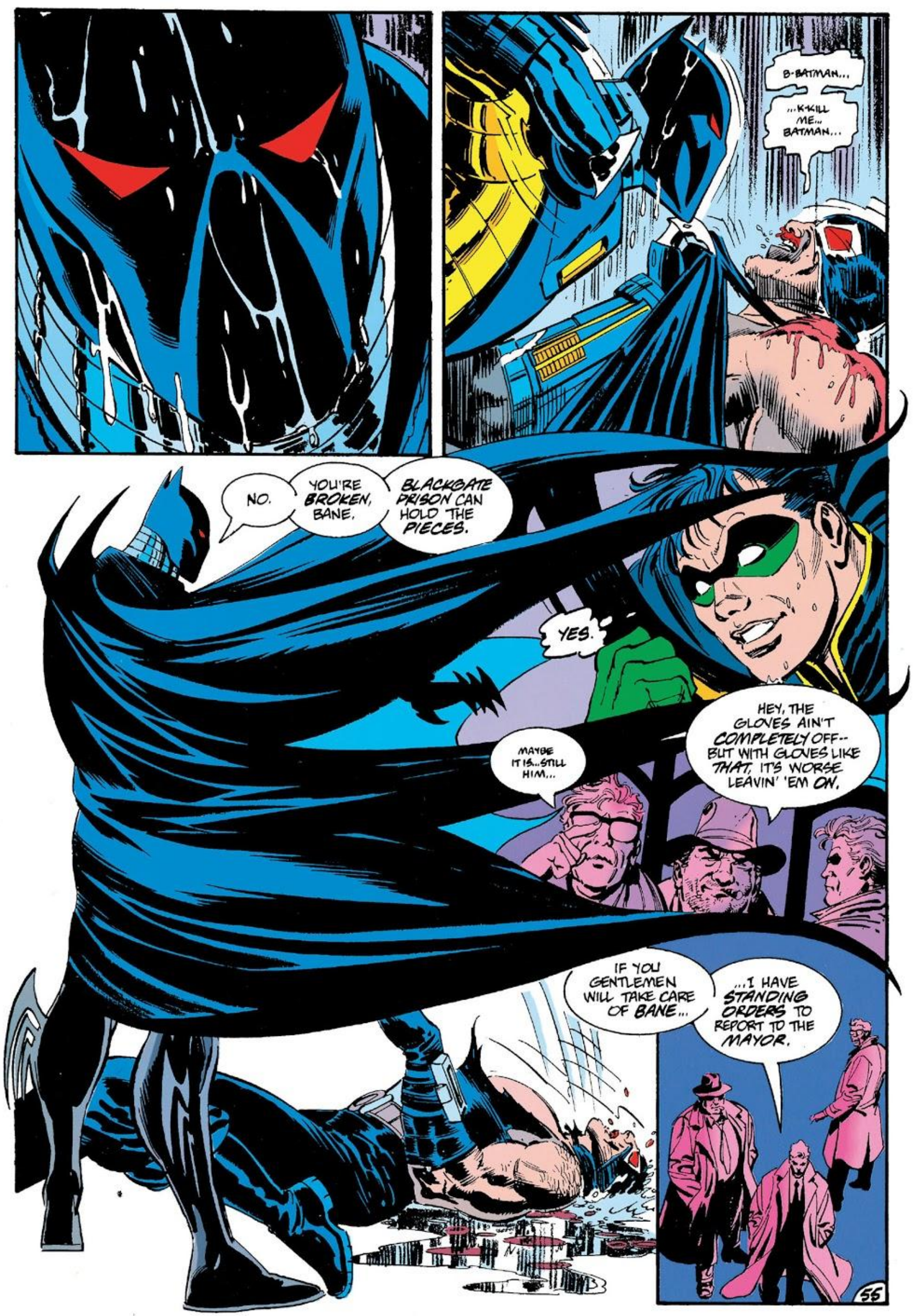
GOTTA CUT BANE AND JEAN PAUL LOOSE...
FLK
BAOUM
WHAT WAS THAT?!
GOTHAM


AN EXPLOSION!
WE'RE SLOWING DOWN-- SEPARATED FROM THE FRONT CAR!
THROKK
BUT HOW COULD--?
EVERYONE JUST STAY ABOARD AND STAY COOL.
RESCUERS ARE ALREADY ON THE WAY.
LEAD CAR'S GOIN' EVEN FASTER WITH NO LOAD TO PULL--!
KUNCH
"NO WAY IT MAKES THAT TURN, COMMISH!"


VRAKK
KROOM
The
EYE
39
13
52

SHRASH
V-VENOM...
...ANOTHER...
J-JOLT...
CHWOKK
SWAKT

K-KILL... ME...
HE WON'T DO IT.
I DON'T CARE WHAT BANE DID TO HIM—HE'D NEVER KILL... UNLESS HE'S NOT...
COME ON, PAUL-- BEAT THE SYSTEM, MAN...
OVERCOME IT... PLEASE...
54


B-BATMAN...
...K-KILL ME... BATMAN...
NO.
YOU'RE BROKEN, BANE.
BLACKGATE PRISON CAN HOLD THE PIECES.
YES.
HEY, THE GLOVES AIN'T COMPLETELY OFF-- BUT WITH GLOVES LIKE THAT, IT'S WORSE LEAVIN' 'EM ON.
MAYBE IT IS...STILL HIM...
IF YOU GENTLEMEN WILL TAKE CARE OF BANE...
...I HAVE STANDING ORDERS TO REPORT TO THE MAYOR.

WAIT...
I STILL DON'T LIKE THE WAY YOU DO THINGS, BUT THEY GET DONE... AND AT LEAST YOU DIDN'T GIVE IN AT THE END.
THAT MAKES ME WRONG ABOUT ONE THING.
YOU HAVE EARNED IT--EARNED THE RIGHT... EARNED THE COSTUME, NEW OR OLD.
AND I GUESS YOU ARE... THE BATMAN.
THANKS, KID.
AND HIS DARK HEART POUNDS--AS THE WILD NIGHT SHRIEKS LOUDER.
END

EMPIRE
McFARLANE