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COMICS
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BATMAN®

by DOUG MOENCH,
DENYS COWAN and
ALFREDO ALCALA



THE TRIUMPH OF
HUGO STRANGE!

BUSINESSMAN WARREN CARSTAIRS RESIDES IN GOTHAM'S CHAPEL HILL SECTION, WHERE "RESTRAINED DIGNITY" IS STILL THE FASHION FOR OLD MONEY, IF NOT NEW HEIRS...



MY ANSWER IS STILL NO! I WILL NOT SELL THAT STOCK!



OH, WHAT NOW?



6-24-76



MIDTOWN:

BUT YOU MUST ADMIT,
FRANKLIN, IT PICKED
UP IN THE THIRD ACT...

I WOULDN'T
KNOW-- I
FELL ASLEEP.

BROADWAY

T ST
SAM SHEPPARD
DENYS COYAN
CLINT EASTWOOD
BARBARA MERRILL '77

THEN AT LEAST IT TOOK
YOUR MIND OFF THAT
ATTEMPTED STOCK--

--GRAB?

:MMPHH!:

STOP IT! YOU'RE
HURTING HIM!
POLICE!!

WE GOT SOME
ADVICE FOR YOU,
MR. FRANKLIN
HERSCH...

SELL.

AND THE NORTH
GOTHAM STUDY
OF ERIC
HAMMOND
MAKES
THREE.

HMM... A VERY ATTRACTIVE SECOND OFFER...
ALMOST DOUBLE THE FIRST...

...BUT I
STILL THINK
NOT.

AND ENOUGH OF THIS
MUNDANE, MATERIALISTIC
BUSINESS.

THE OCCULT • COLIN WILSON

GHOSTS APPARITIONS

THE BOOK OF THE
DAMNED

TOPPIER

ICANUS MALEFICUM • A. ALHAZRED

CHARLES FORT

Home Smiles

WHAT DELICIOUS
HAUNTING SHALL I EXPERI-
ENCE TONIGHT, HM...?

SELL THE
STOCK,
ERIC
HAMMOND--

BAT MAN

CREATED BY BOB KANE

YAAAHHHHHH

--LEST I
HAUNT
YOUR COLD
BED FOR
THE REST
OF YOUR
NIGHTS!

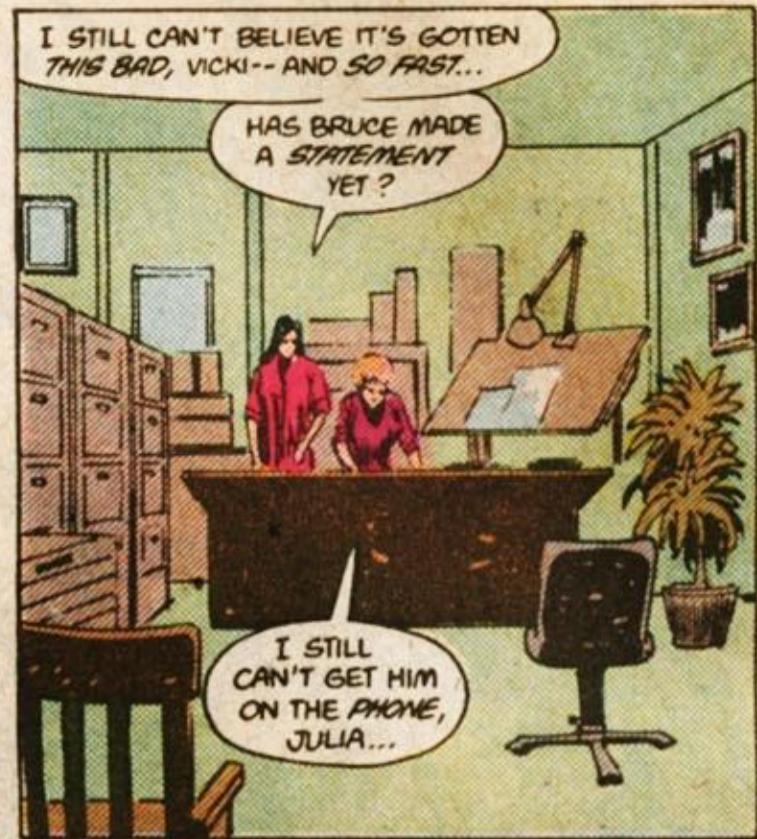
DOWN TO THE
BONE

DOUG MOENCH
WRITER

DENYS COWAN & ALFREDO
ALCALA
ARTISTS

JOHN COSTANZA
letterer
ADRIENNE ROY
colorist

LEN WEIN, EDITOR



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BUT IT HAS HAPPENED, AND IT'S CAUSED THE FOUNDATION'S STOCK TO PLUNGE--ALMOST AS IF THE PURCHASER WANTED IT THAT WAY...

A CHARITABLE ORGANIZATION RUNS UP LARGE DEBTS, BRUCE, AND IT DEPENDS ON TRUST.

IN THE PANIC OF THE PLUNGING STOCK, THAT TRUST IS GONE--THE MARKERS HAVE BEEN CALLED IN--AND ALL YOUR OTHER ASSETS CAN'T BEGIN TO COVER THEM.

LUCIUS, YOU COULDN'T KNOW HAMMOND AND THE OTHERS WOULD SELL THEIR SHARES AFTER THEY'D SHORN NEVER TO--

IT'S MY BUSINESS TO KNOW, BRUCE! IT'S WHAT YOU PAY ME FOR--AND NOW YOU'RE WIRED OUT BECAUSE OF ME!

I BLEW IT, MAN!

YOU WERE WORN DOWN, LUCIUS, WHAT WITH PEOPLE PRESSURING YOU TO LAUNCH A POLITICAL CAMPAIGN-

--TRYING TO DEAL WITH THEM WHILE STILL RUNNING THE FOUNDATION FOR ME...

AND WATCHING MY EVERY STEP, TO AVOID TREADING ON ANYONE'S PRECIOUS POLITICAL TOES...

THERE YOU GO--IT WAS LIKE HANDLING TWO FULL-TIME JOBS.

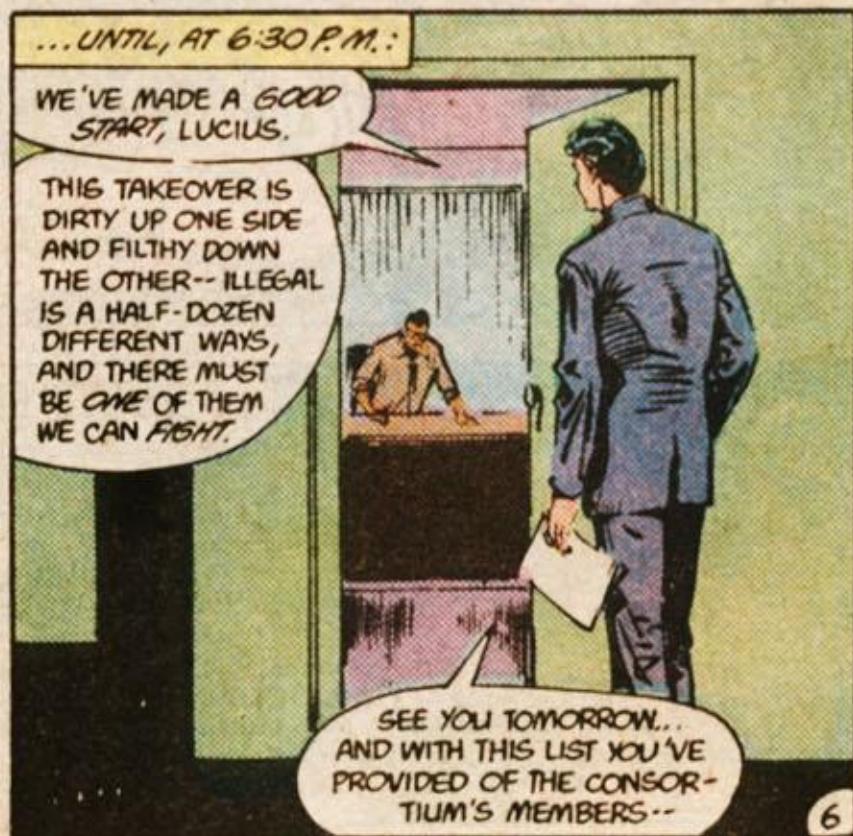
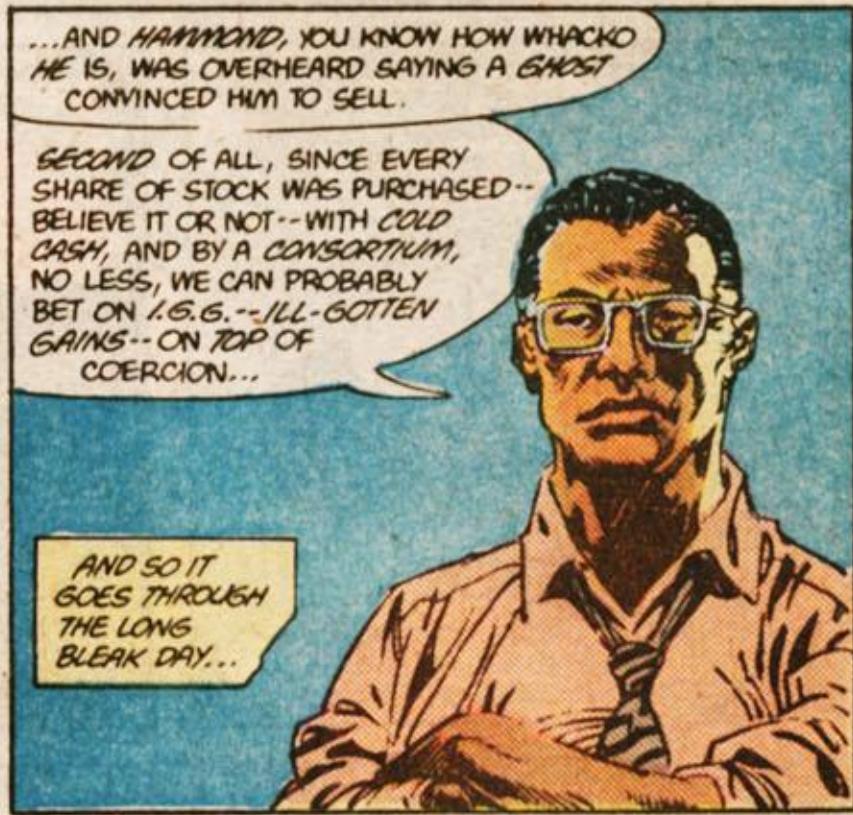
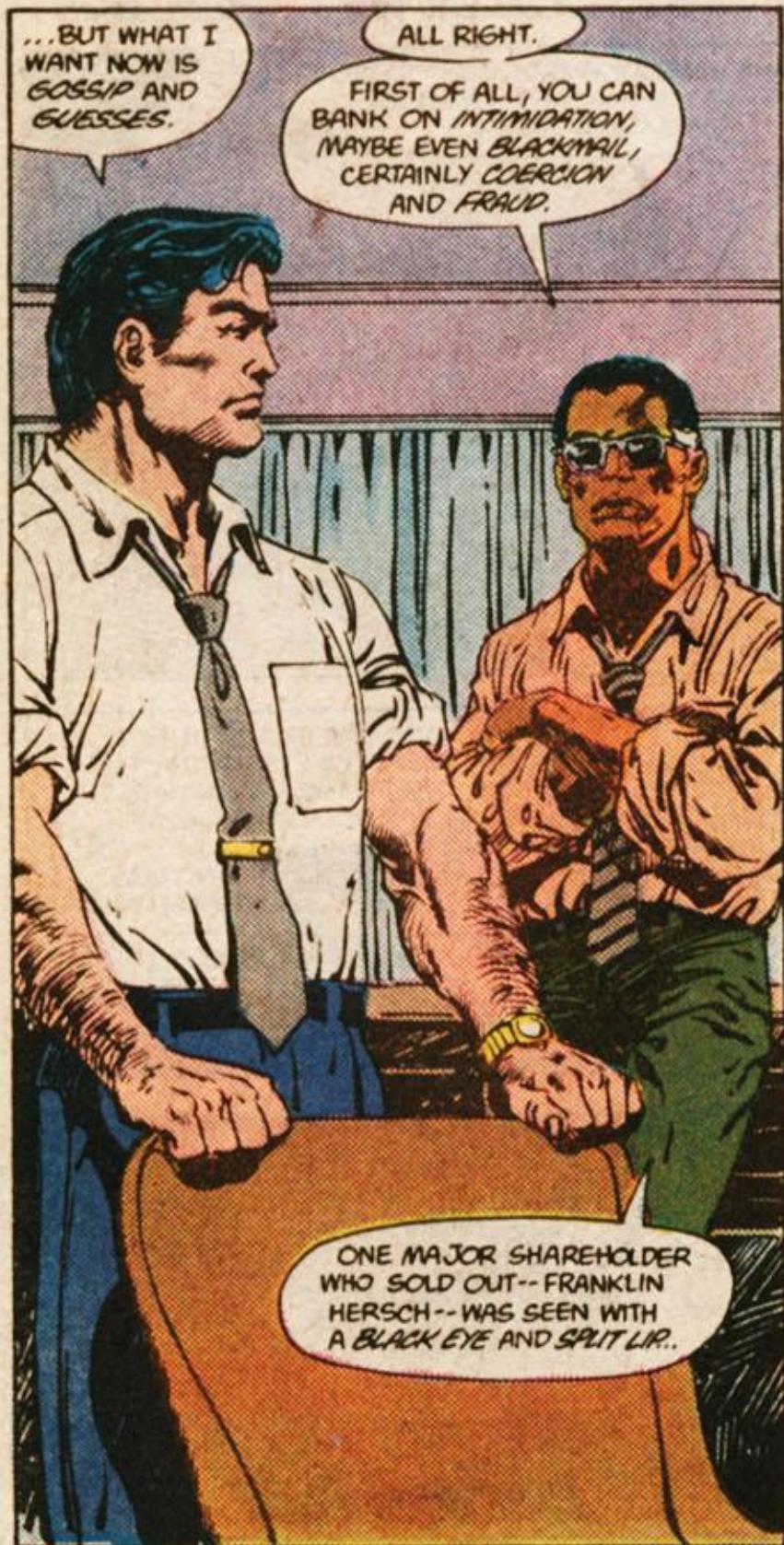
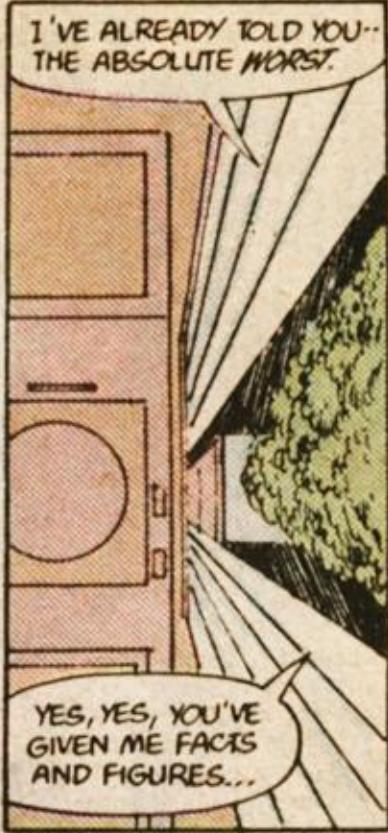
AND I'VE FAILED IN BOTH OF THEM--ONE OF GOTHAM'S "LEADING BLACK SUCCESS STORIES"--A FLOP.

AND NOW PEOPLE WILL THINK IT'S BECAUSE I'M--

THEN LET THEM THINK IT! YOU KNOW IT'S NOT TRUE! YOU'VE DONE A SUPERB JOB IN A POSITION I WALKED AWAY FROM!

AND STOP WORRYING ABOUT ME--BRUCE WAYNE WON'T STARVE.

AS FOR YOUR MAYORAL CAMPAIGN, POLITICS IS NOT AN ARENA IN WHICH MISTAKES ARE EASILY FORGIVEN--NOT UNLESS YOU'RE RONALD REAGAN, ANYWAY--BUT I KNOW THE TRUTH, TOO.



"--PERHAPS A FRIEND AND I CAN DIG UP SOMETHING TONIGHT."

BETTER HURRY, BATMAN-- BEFORE THAT GUARD COMES AROUND AGAIN.

ALL DONE, ROBIN.

ACCORDING TO THESE FILES, EVERY MEMBER OF THE TAKEOVER CONSORTIUM IS SQUEAKY CLEAN--

--AT LEAST INsofar AS THE GOTHAM SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION IS CONCERNED.

GOOD-- PUTTING AN END TO THE MOST BORING NIGHT EVER SPENT IN THIS COSTUME.

NOT EXACTLY MY IDEA OF FUN EITHER, YOU KNOW.

YEAH-- SO HOW DOES IT FEEL TO HAVE AN ALTER-EGO WHO JUST WENT BROKE?

NO MORE THAN AN ANNOYANCE AT THIS POINT-- BUT ONE I CAN HARDLY AFFORD TO TAKE LIGHTLY.

AND NOR CAN YOU, CHUM-- NOT IF YOU HOPE TO ATTEND COLLEGE.

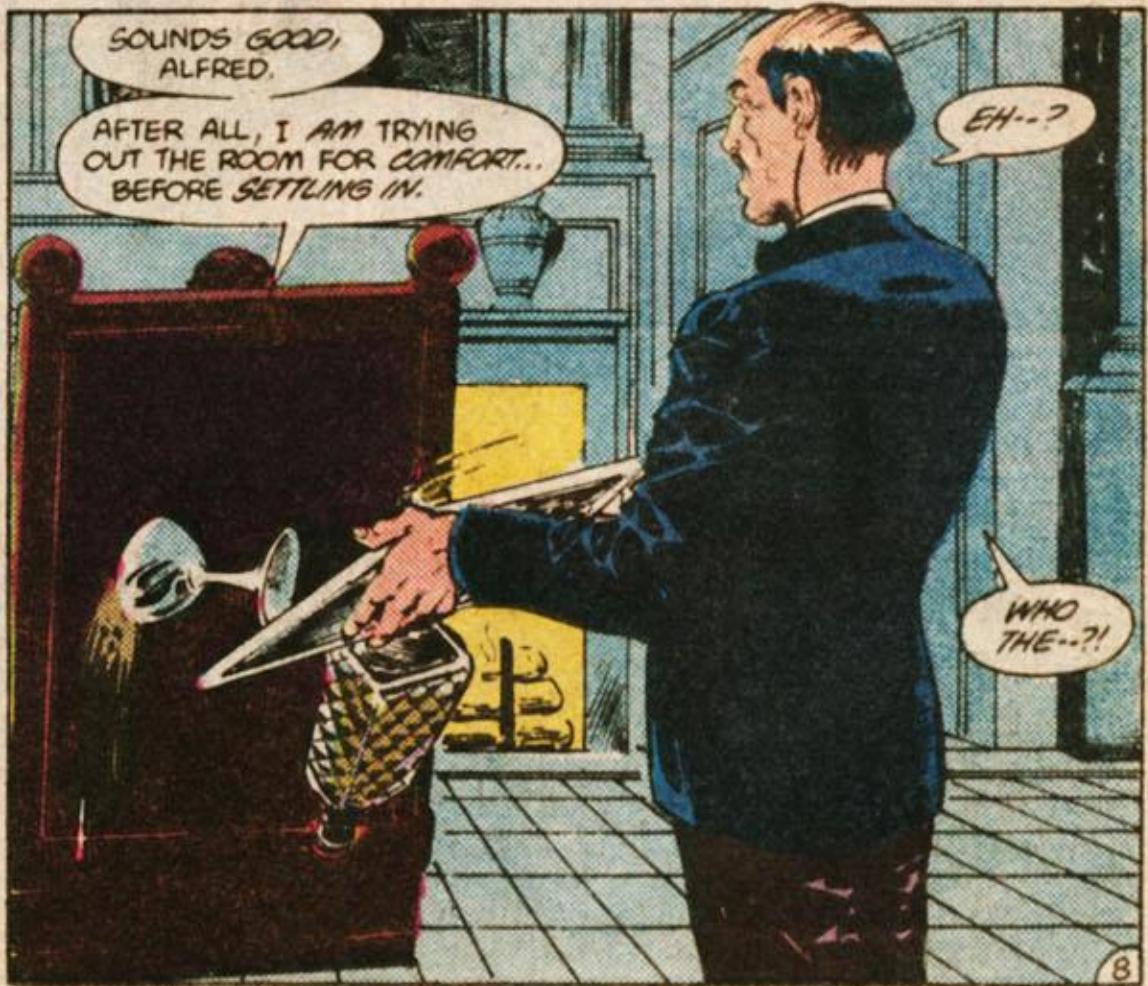
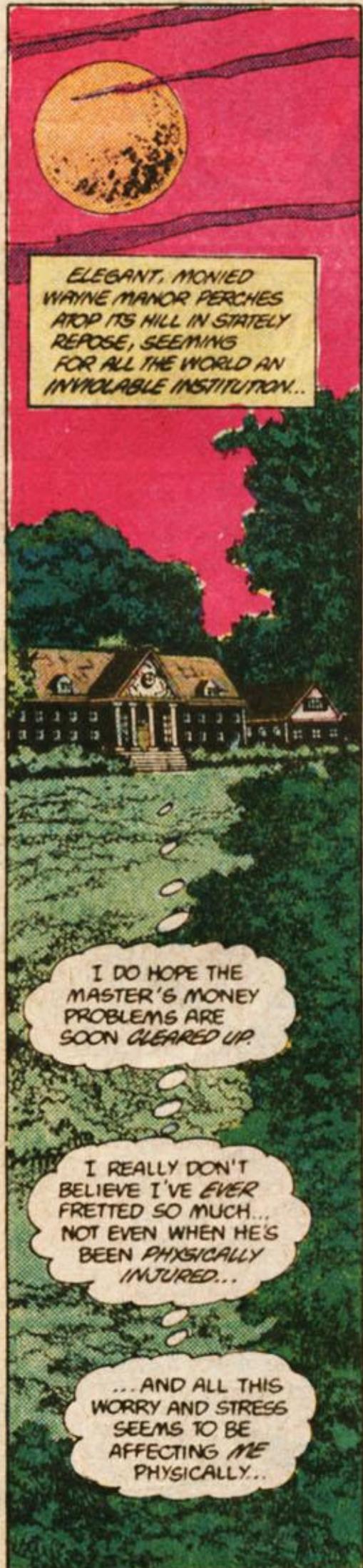
DON'T WORRY 'BOUT THAT, BOSS...

I'LL WIN A SCHOLARSHIP ON THE "BOY WONDER" TEAM!

ANYWAY, NOT MUCH MORE WE CAN DO TONIGHT-- MAY AS WELL HEAD BACK TO THE BATCAVE.

BATCAVE, NOTHIN'-- I CAN'T WAIT TO GET UP TO THE BATHTUB IN THE MANOR...

WASH OFF ALL THE MUD FROM THAT MOLDY FILE ROOM.



G-GOOD LORD!

BUT YOU...
YOU'RE DEAD!

AM I,
INDEED?

AND WHAT, THEN,
DOES THAT MAKE
YOU, DEAR
ALFRED?

THE
BATCAVE
BELOW:

-- THE ONES WHO SOLD OUT,
TRIGGERING THE MARKET PLUNGE
AND BRUCE WAYNE'S RESULTANT
BANKRUPTCY.

WHATEVER
TURNS YOU ON,
BOSS.

NEVER THOUGHT ABOUT
MY MONEY VERY MUCH--
IT WAS ALWAYS THERE.

... LEAVING
THE
DARKNIGHT
DETECTIVE
FINALLY
ALONE.

TOMORROW
NIGHT WE'LL
CHECK OUT THE
FORMER
SHAREHOLDERS,
ROBIN--

AND NOW THAT IT'S GONE,
I CAN'T QUITE DECIDE
HOW I FEEL.

MOST OF IT'S ALWAYS GONE TOWARD
CHARITABLE ENDS...

AND AS FOR
THE REST OF IT,
ASIDE FROM THE
UPKEEP OF THE MANOR,
IT HAS IRONICALLY
BEEN THE BATMAN--
RATHER THAN "PLAYBOY"
BRUCE WAYNE--WHO
SPENDS THE MOST...

BUT RIGHT NOW I'M
GONNA GO UP AND GET
ME A MUG OF ALFRED'S
HOT CHOCOLATE
BEFORE MY BATH...

NEW LAB
EQUIPMENT,
COMPUTERS...

... REPLACING
TOTALLED
BATMOBILES...

BATMAN!!



GOTHAM GENERAL HOSPITAL:

I'M AFRAID MR. PENNYWORTH HAS SUFFERED A STROKE, BUT A VERY MILD ONE, AND WITH ANY LUCK WE MAY EXPECT FULL RECOVERY...

HOWEVER, MR. WAYNE, I ADVISE A FULL WEEK'S STAY FOR OBSERVATION.

WHATEVER IT TAKES, DOCTOR.

I WANT ALFRED TO RECEIVE THE BEST MEDICAL ATTENTION POSSIBLE, AND MONEY IS NO...

UH... THAT IS...

OH, THANK GOD.

YES, MR. WAYNE?

UH... NOTHING, DOCTOR.

I... I WAS JUST SAYING THAT MONEY IS... NO OBJECT.

BUT THAT, OF COURSE, IS PRECISELY WHAT IT IS. IN THIS MODERN WORLD, OBJECTIVE AND SUBJECTIVE ARE ONE AND THE SAME, INEXTRICABLY IMBEDDED, THE SYMBOL SUPPLANTING REALITY.

MONEY IS NOT JUST YACHTS AND VCRS--IT IS FOOD AND SHELTER AND EVEN THE LIFE-SUSTAINING CARE WHICH SHOULD COME FROM LOVE AND CONCERN...



...BUT WHICH ACTUALLY DERIVES FROM THE GOAL OF A PHYSICIAN'S PAYCHECK...

...BECAUSE PHYSICIANS MUST EAT TOO, AND THEY SURELY DO LOVE YACHTS AND VCRS, AND MONEY IS THEREFORE...

A CRUTCH--AND THE CRUTCH HAS BECOME AN OBSTACLE GETTING IN THE WAY OF EVERYTHING REAL AND IMPORTANT, MAKING US FORGET WHAT'S REAL AND IMPORTANT...



SAY WHAT, BOSS?

OH, UH... NOTHING, JASON-- LET'S JUST GET IN THE CAR AND GO HOME.

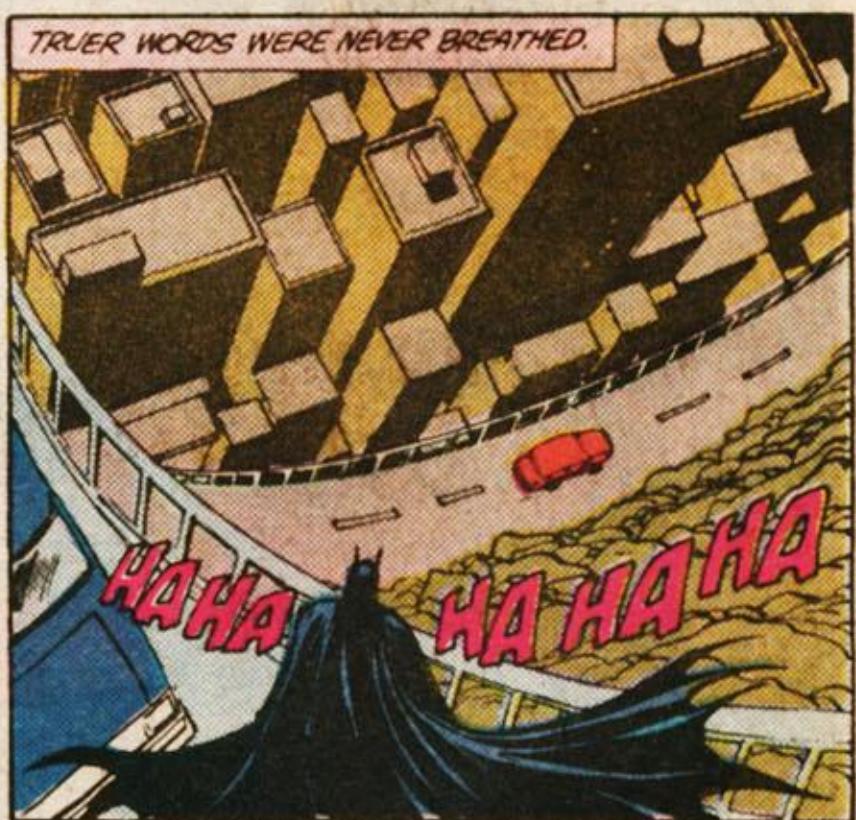
SO... GREAT NEWS ABOUT ALFIE, HUH, BRUCE?

YES... YES, JASON... THE BEST NEWS POSSIBLE...

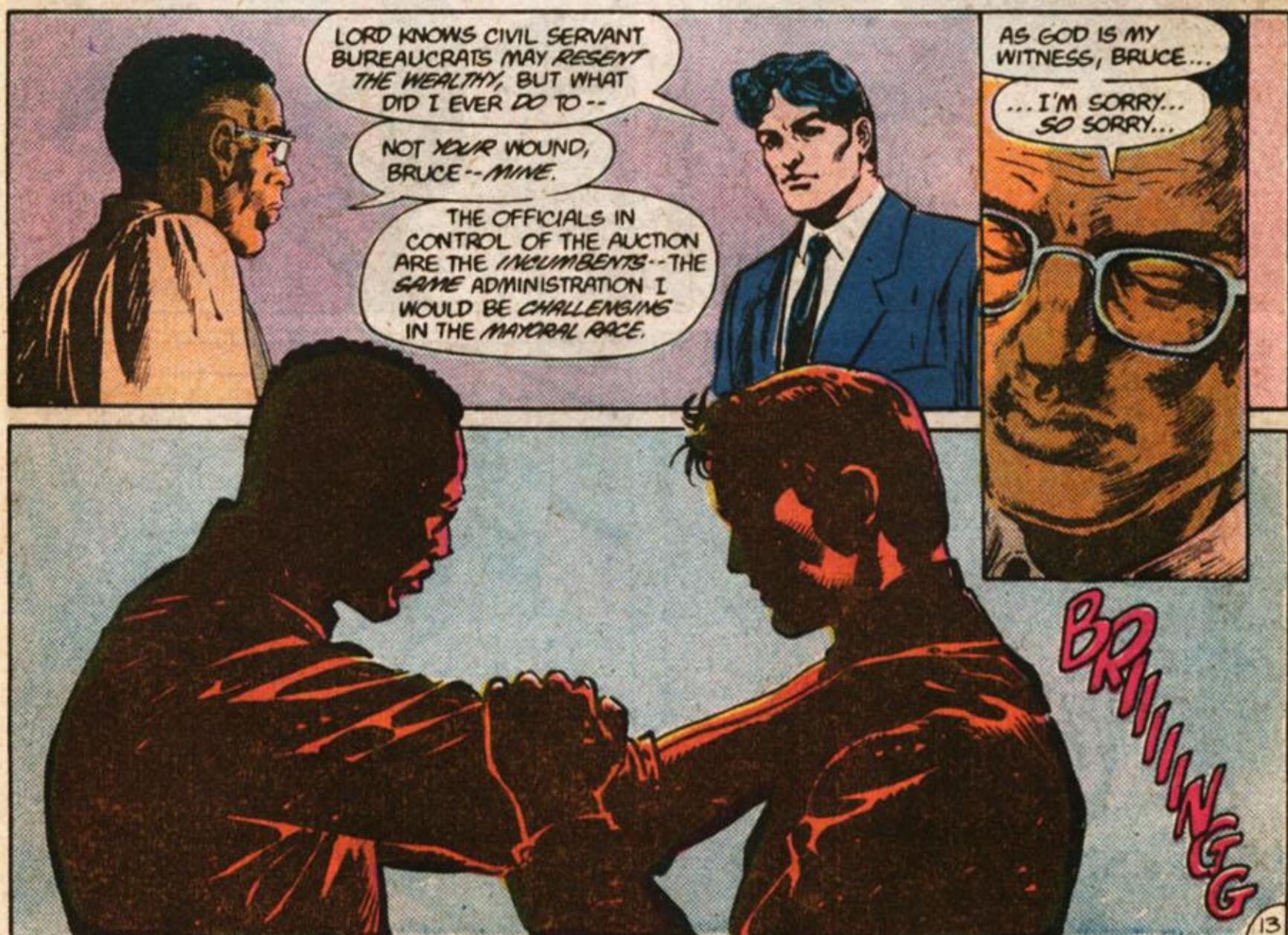
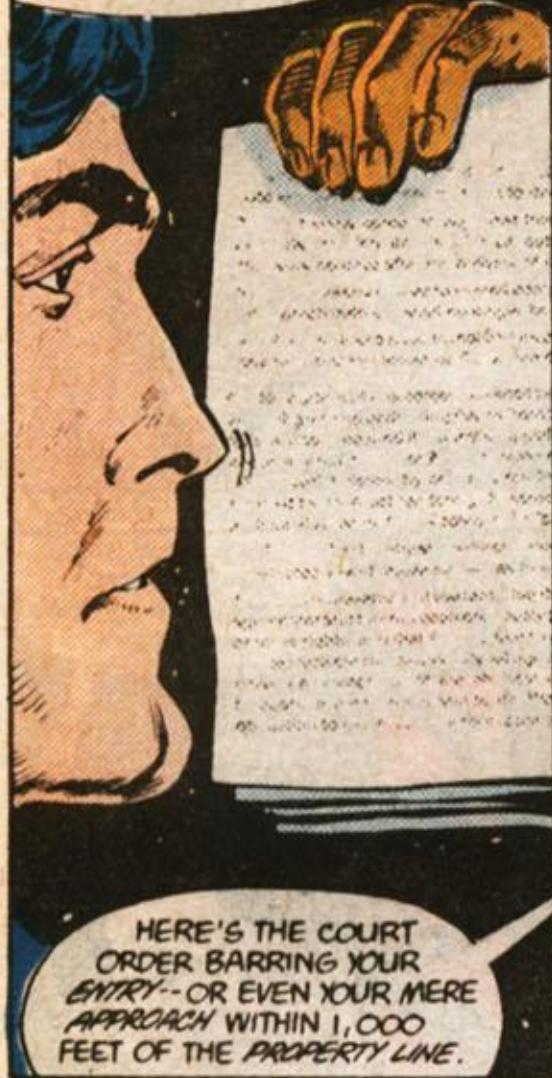
LOSING ALL THE MONEY IN THE WORLD IS NOTHING, NOTHING... IN THE FACE OF ALMOST LOSING SUCH A FRIEND.

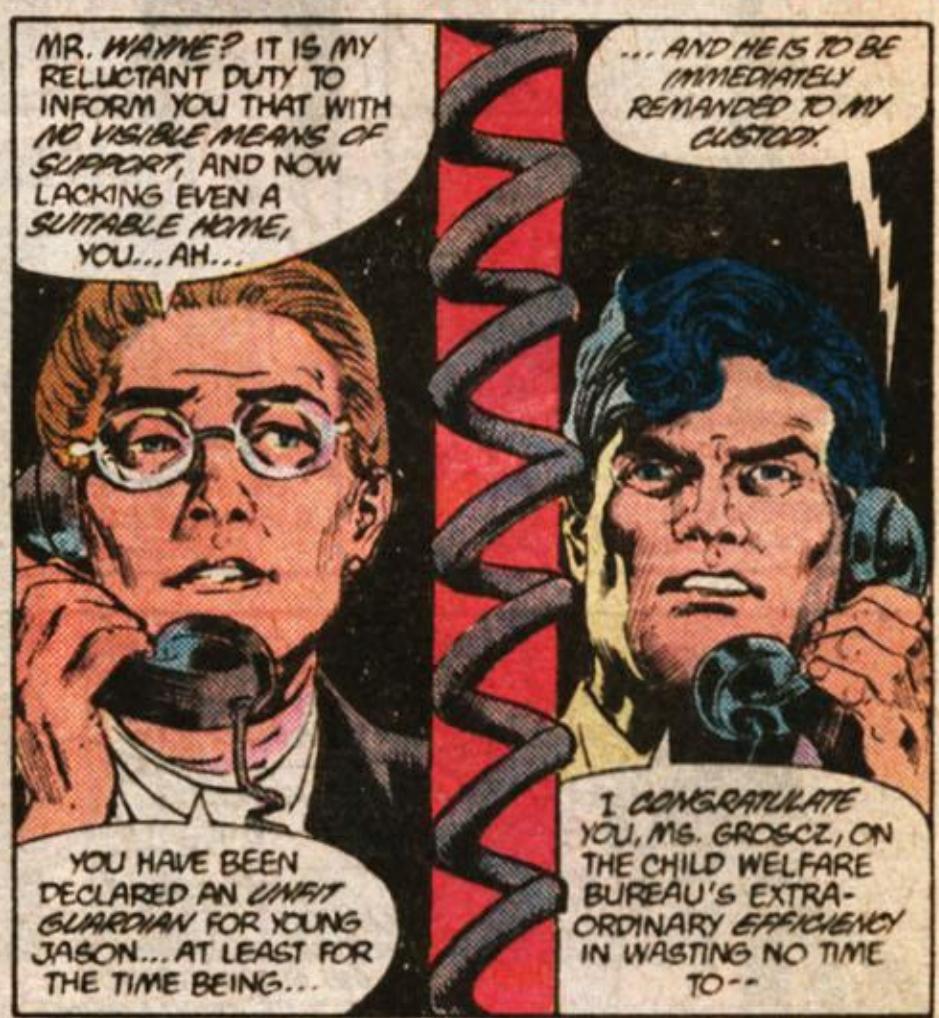
RIGHT. UH... MIND IF I JUICE THE RADIO?

BRUCE SHRUGS, AS IF NEVER HAVING HEARD OF SUCH A THING AS A "RADIO," LET ALONE THE \$3000 CUSTOMIZED SOUND SYSTEM INSTALLED WITHIN THESE WHEELS...



A LOT OF THINGS THIS WEEK HAVE GOT TO BE DAMNED ILLEGAL, BUT THE PREMISES ARE NEVERTHELESS SEALED TO YOU.





LUCIUS, YOU'RE LOOKING AT A MAN STRIPPED TO THE BONE. I'VE LOST MY MONEY, THE FOUNDATION, MY HOUSE AND POSSESSIONS...

...EVEN ALFRED... AND NOW JASON AS WELL-- EVERYTHING.

BUT SOMEHOW... I DON'T QUITE FEEL FREE AS A BIRD.

WHERE... WILL YOU GO?

SEARCH ME--MAYBE CRAZY.

IF THERE'S ANY WAY I CAN HELP...

MAYBE THERE IS... BUT LEAVE YOUR WALLET ALONE.

THE NAMES OF ALL BIDDERS -- ONE BIDDER IN THIS CASE -- ARE KEPT STRICTLY SECRET...

AND FAR BE IT FROM US, LUCIUS, TO DO ANYTHING IRREGULAR IN THIS PARTICULAR MATTER?

VERY WELL, BRUCE... CALL ME, SAY, TOMORROW NIGHT--AT MY HOME.

AND ONE LAST THING...

"... I'VE BEEN ORDERED TO RELIEVE YOU OF THE FOUNDATION OR YOU COME IN."

WELL... WALKING AS GOOD EXERCISE...

... IF I ONLY HAD SOMEPLACE TO WALK TO...

THE SUM TOTAL OF MY REMAINING FORTUNE -- THIRTY-SEVEN DOLLARS AND CHANGE.

HAVEN'T BOUGHT GROCERIES IN YEARS -- NO IDEA WHAT THIRTY-SEVEN DOLLARS WILL BUY OR HOW LONG IT'LL FEED ME...

FIND OUT WHO NOW "OWNS" MY HOUSE.



BUT THERE'S ONE THING HE DOES KNOW...

HE'LL KEEP RIGHT ON GOING TILL HE DROPS--
IF NEED BE, LITERALLY DOWN TO THE BONE.



THAT'S \$19.95
FOR THE HOTPLATE...
\$3.29 FOR THE
BATTERIES...

IT HITS HIM IN THE SUPERMARKET: HE HAS BEEN SHORN OF EVERYTHING FROM THE TOP OF WAYNE MANOR'S HIGHEST CHIMNEY RIGHT ON DOWN TO ITS FOUNDATIONS -- AND THE BATCAVE BELOW.

THUS, HE HAS LOST NOT ONLY THE WEALTH OF THE WAYNE FOUNDATION AND WAYNE ENTERPRISES... BUT THE VERY BASE AND BASIS OF THE BATMAN, THE SYMBOLIC MAVEN OF THAT GRIM AND RELENTLESS IDEAL HE HAS CHOSEN TO ANIMATE.



YET IF BRUCE WAYNE IS FAR MORE THAN THE MERE SLIM OF HIS ERSTWHILE HOLDINGS, THEN THE BATMAN NEEDS NOTHING BUT THAT IDEAL TO EXIST.



AND SO, SPENDING LITERALLY DOWN TO HIS LAST THREE CENTS, HE FINDS HIMSELF THE PROUD OWNER OF NOTHING NOW...

NOTHING BUT THE SECOND SKIN OF HIS COSTUME, AND THE ULTIMATE BOY SCOUT FANTASY OF HIS UTILITY BELT, AND HIS STRENGTH AND HIS WILL.



AND THESE HE WILL USE TO REGAIN EVERYTHING ELSE... AND TO PUNISH WHOMEVER HAS MADE THE EFFORT NECESSARY.



NOT BECAUSE HE NEEDS EVERYTHING ELSE, BUT BECAUSE IT HAS BEEN STOLEN.

AND IN THE MEANTIME--

HARDLY THE HIGH RENT DISTRICT... BUT AT THE MOMENT, JUST MY SPEED.



A BAT IN A BELFRY.

GUESS I HAVE GONE CRAZY...

...BUT WITH THE HEADFUL OF THOUGHTS I'VE GOT... IT'S ALLOWED.

THOUGHT NUMBER ONE: WHAT HAPPENS IF THE NEW OWNER OF WAYNE MANOR DECIDES TO REPLACE THE GRANDFATHER CLOCK?

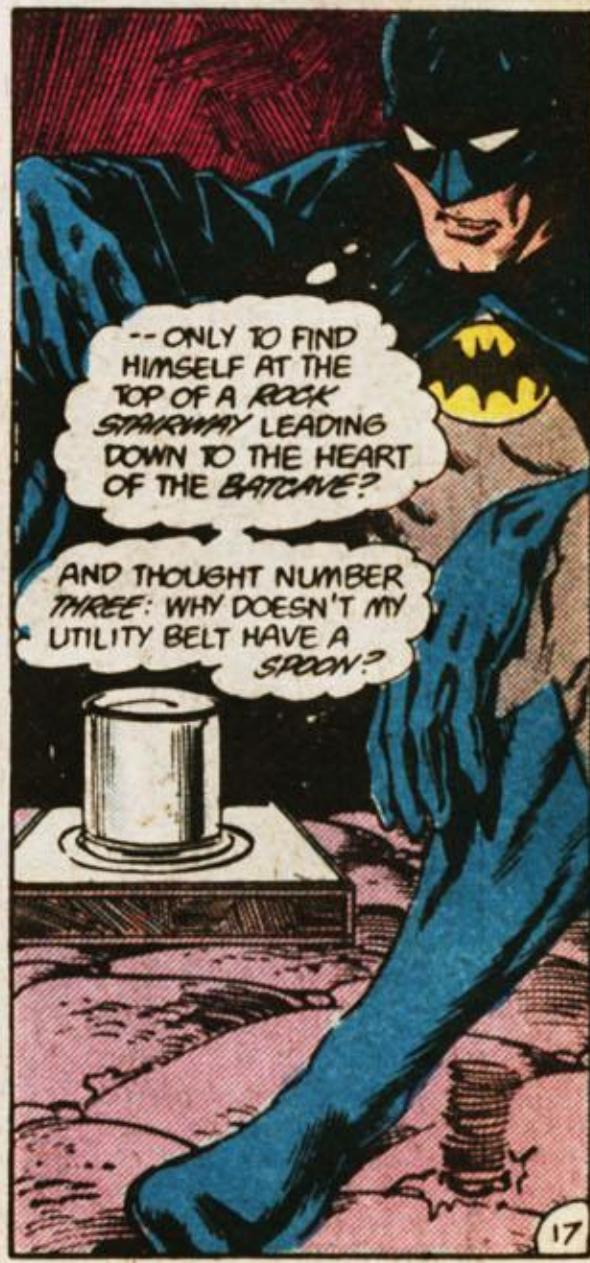
THOUGHT NUMBER TWO:

WHAT HAPPENS IF SAID NEW OWNER THEN DECIDES TO OPEN THE SECRET DOORWAY FORMERLY CONCEALED BY THE GRANDFATHER CLOCK--



--ONLY TO FIND HIMSELF AT THE TOP OF A ROCK STAIRWAY LEADING DOWN TO THE HEART OF THE BATCAVE?

AND THOUGHT NUMBER THREE: WHY DOESN'T MY UTILITY BELT HAVE A SPOON?



AT THE GOTHAM MUSEUM
OF NATURAL HISTORY...



DRIIIIIINNGGG

...ANOTHER
CRIME IS
COMMITTED...

...THE THIRD OF THE NIGHT.



LOOK--
UP ON THE ROOF
OF THE MUSEUM!
THE BATCOPTER!

THE BELFRY:

BETTER THAN
SOME GOURMET
MEALS I'VE
CHOKED DOWN,
MR. DINTY MOORE...

...BUT NOW,
DOWN TO BRASS
TACKS BY
MOONLIGHT.



THUS FAR, THERE
ARE ONLY TWO WAYS TO
PROVE THE TAKEOVER
WAS ILLEGAL--EITHER BY PROVING
THE STOCK WAS PURCHASED WITH
I.G.G., OR THAT THE FORMER
SHAREHOLDERS WERE COERCED
INTO SELLING.



BE A LOT EASIER
WITH ACCESS TO THE
BATCAVE'S FILES AND
EQUIPMENT... BUT
THERE IS SOMETHING
TO BE SAID FOR
THIS STYLE...

...A CERTAIN
SATISFACTION IN
GETTING DOWN TO
REAL BASICS.

FIRST THING IS TO LIST
THE FORMER MAJOR
SHAREHOLDERS AND WHAT-
EVER I CAN REMEMBER
ABOUT THEM FROM THE
DAYS WHEN I STILL RAN
THE FOUNDATION MYSELF...

...AND THEN MAKE
A FEW UNINVITED
VISITS...



A LUXURY CONDO ACROSS TOWN.

-- AND WHEN I GOT HOME, SGT. BULLOCK, I FOUND MY WALL-SAFE OPEN AND EMPTY...

...AND THIS LYING ON THE FLOOR.

UH-HUM...

AIN'T THE FIRST TIME SOME GEEK'S COUNTERFEITED A GLOVE LIKE THIS TO CONVENIENTLY LEAVE BEHIND AS "EVIDENCE"...

...BUT I WONDER WHO'S TRYIN' TO FRAME THAT BAT NOW?

AND IN NORTH GOTHAM, ERIC HAMMOND GOES ON THE PROWL...

MY PSYCHIC VIBES HAVE YET TO FAIL ME--

--AND I SENSE A DEFINITE PRESENCE IN MY LIBRARY NOW...

BUT WHEN THE DOOR IS THRUST OPEN...

EH--?

HUH?! IT'S ONLY THE BATMAN? BUT WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THIS?

ARE YOU AWARE OF BRACE-MOUNTINGS IN THE BACK OF THIS SHELF, MR. HAMMOND?

THERE REALLY IS SOMEONE IN HERE?!

ARE... ARE YOU A... GHOST?

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

HOW DARE YOU INVADE MY LIBRARY LIKE SOME COMMON THIEF? WHAT ARE YOU DOING TO MY BOOKS?

EVER HAVE SOME KIND OF SPECIAL LIGHT INSTALLED BACK THERE?

OF COURSE NOT!

OR AN ALARM, PERHAPS?

THE WHOLE HOUSE IS WIRED WITH ALARMS, AND HOW YOU BREACHED THEM TO GET IN HERE, I'LL NEVER--



THANK YOU, MR. HAMMOND.

I'LL TROUBLE YOU WITH ONLY ONE OTHER QUESTION BEFORE LEAVING...

ARE YOU AWARE OF BREAKING A SOLEMN TRUST-- YOUR PERSONAL PROMISE TO BRUCE WAYNE THAT YOU'D NEVER SELL YOUR SHARES IN HIS CHARITABLE ORGANIZATION?

OF COURSE I'M AWARE OF THAT-- BUT MR. WAYNE IS HARDLY A GHOST!

I'M AFRAID YOU'RE WRONG ABOUT THAT, MR. HAMMOND... AT LEAST FOR THE DURATION.



WHAAAT?!

TWENTY MINUTES LATER:

YOU HEARD ME.

I WAS NOT BEATEN OR PRESSURED IN ANY WAY TO SELL.

I SIMPLY FELL DOWN.

VERY WELL, MR. HERSCH.

IN THE FUTURE, THEN, I SUGGEST YOU WATCH YOUR STEP.

GOOD NIGHT.

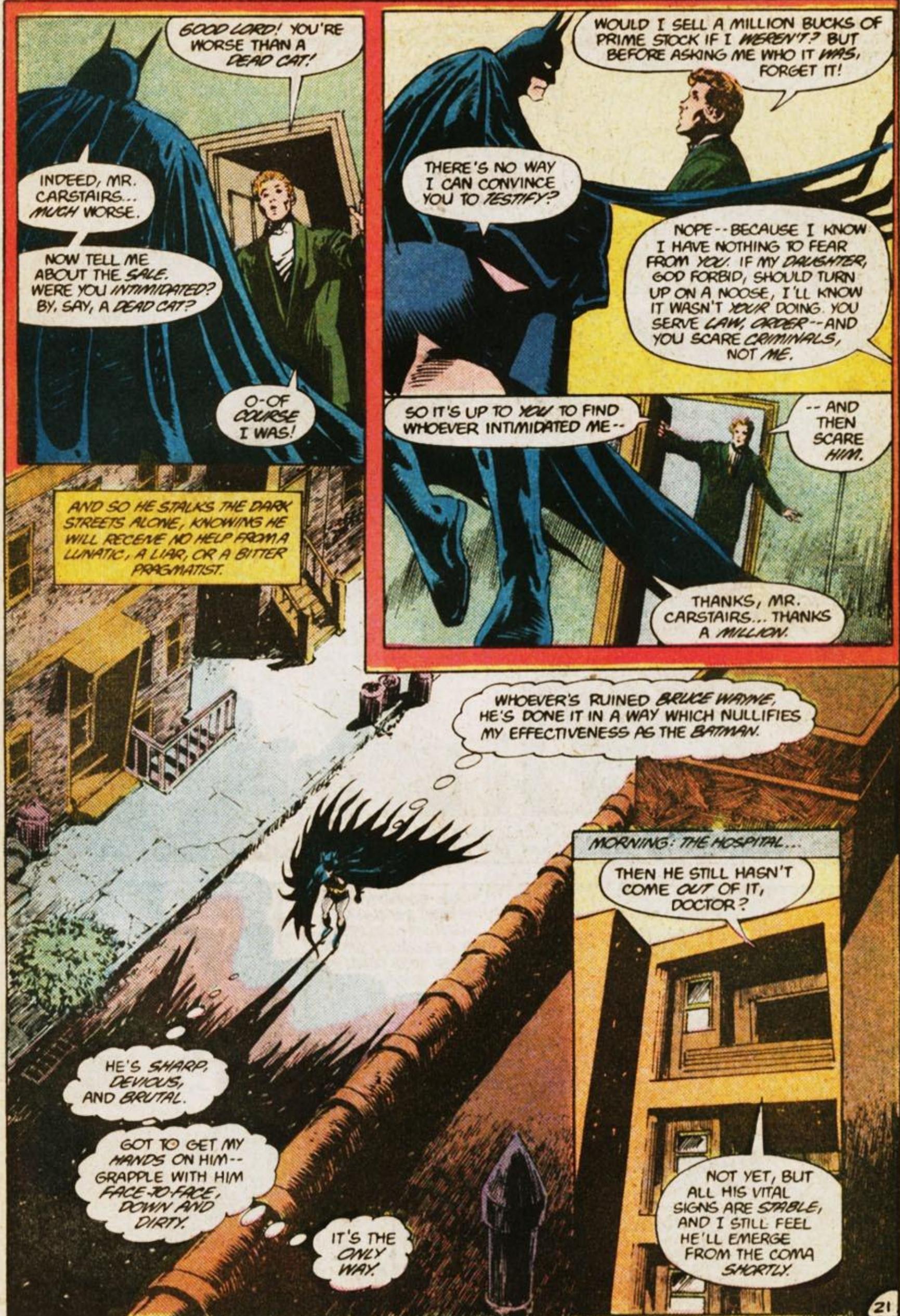
CHAPEL HILL,
AN HOUR LATER:



BING BONG

OH, WHAT THE HELL IS IT NOW?

I SOLD THE Lousy STOCK, DIDN'T I?



AND WHEN THE DOCTOR LEAVES...

I'D LIKE TO... THANK ALL OF YOU FOR COMING, AND DEMONSTRATING YOUR CONCERN.

ALFRED WOULD BE TOUCHED IF... IF HE...

WE KNOW, BRUCE.

BUT LIKE THE OLD BEATLES' TUNE SAYS, MONEY CAN'T BUY YOU LOVE... SO IT SURE LOOKS LIKE ALFIE'S EARNED IT, HUH?

WHY DON'T THE REST OF YOU GO FOR COFFEE?

I'LL STAY HERE WITH DAD.

AND I'LL KEEP YOU COMPANY, JULIA--I'VE HAD ENOUGH COFFEE FOR A WEEK.

POOR BRUCE... IF ONLY HE'D ASK FOR HELP, OR AT LEAST LET US OFFER IT.

NEVER, KIDDIO. I'VE KNOWN HIM LONGER THAN YOU, AND HE'S JUST NOT THAT KIND OF MAN.

WELL, I GOTTA GET BACK TO HEADQUARTERS AN' TAKE CARE OF--

THAT HEADLINE--! YEAH--SOMEONE'S FRAMIN' THE BATMAN AGAIN--AN' THE PRESS HAS POLUNCED ON IT, BABY, WITH DOUBLE-OOMPH.

AIN'TCHA BEEN LISTENIN' TO YER RADIO, WAYNE?

AH... NO, SGT. BULLOCK...

I HAVEN'T BEEN LISTENING... TO MY RADIO...

NIGHT:



"AN OBVIOUS
FRAMEUP ATTEMPT,
BATMAN--"

-- BUT THAT WON'T
KEEP THE PRESS
AND EVEN SOME
OF THE PUBLIC FROM
SCREAMING.

THERE ARE THOSE,
REMEMBER, WHO
DON'T LIKE THE
BATMAN.

ARE YOU ARRESTING
HIM, COMMISSIONER
GORDON?



-- IS SWIFTLY
FOLLOWED BY A
SWARMING, FULL-
PRESS ASSAULT.

IT'S GOING TO
GET HOT... AND
FRANKLY, I DON'T
KNOW HOW LONG I'LL
BE ABLE TO SHUT
IT DOWN IF--

HOWEVER IT WAS
LAUNCHED, THE SALVO
OF FLASHBULBS--

YOUR
STATEMENT,
COMMISSIONER?

IT'S A TRANSPARENT
ATTEMPT TO DISCREDIT THE
BEST MAN IN GOTHAM.

ISN'T THAT
RIGHT, BATM--

EH? HE'S
GONE!

AS FOR THE SO-
CALLED "EVIDENCE,"
ANYONE WITH ENOUGH
MONEY COULD EASILY DUPLI-
cate A "BATMOBILE" OR
EVEN A HELICOPTER...

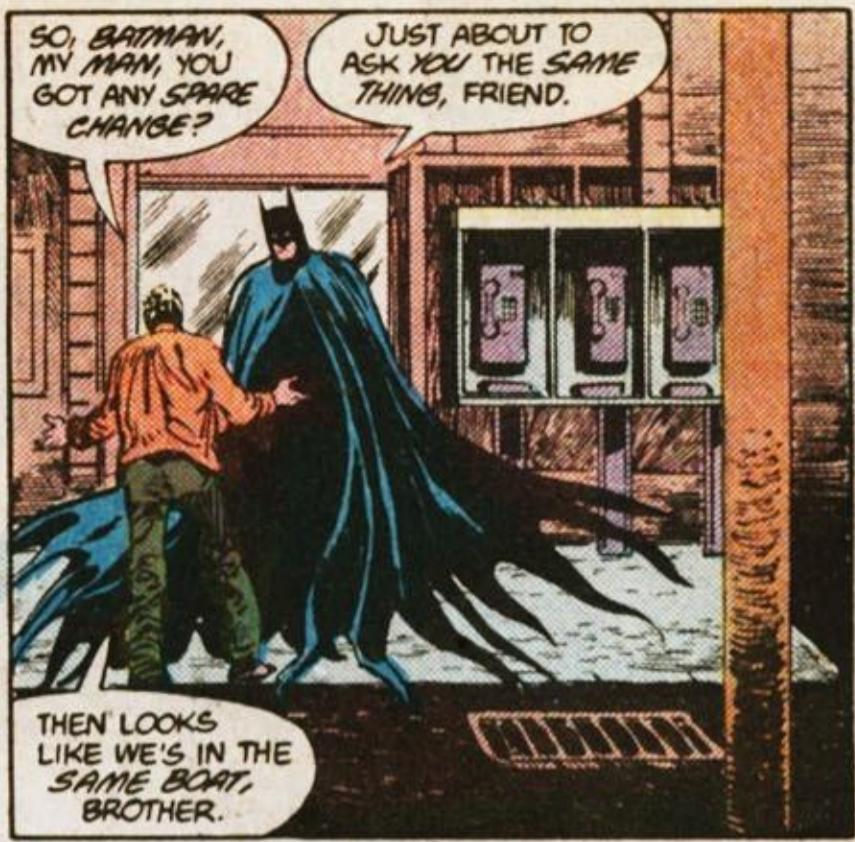
BUT... HE
WAS JUST
HERE!

IT CAN'T GET MUCH HOTTER
THAN THAT AND EVEN
THOUGH GORDON SHUT IT
DOWN WELL... I'M
BEGINNING TO THINK
THERE'S NO NEED FOR A
DUPLICATE BATMOBILE.

THE COINCIDENCE
IS JUST TOO MUCH--
FIRST BRUCE WAYNE
IS ATTACKED, AND NOW
THE BATMAN...

I'D BETTER
PHONE
LUCILLE...



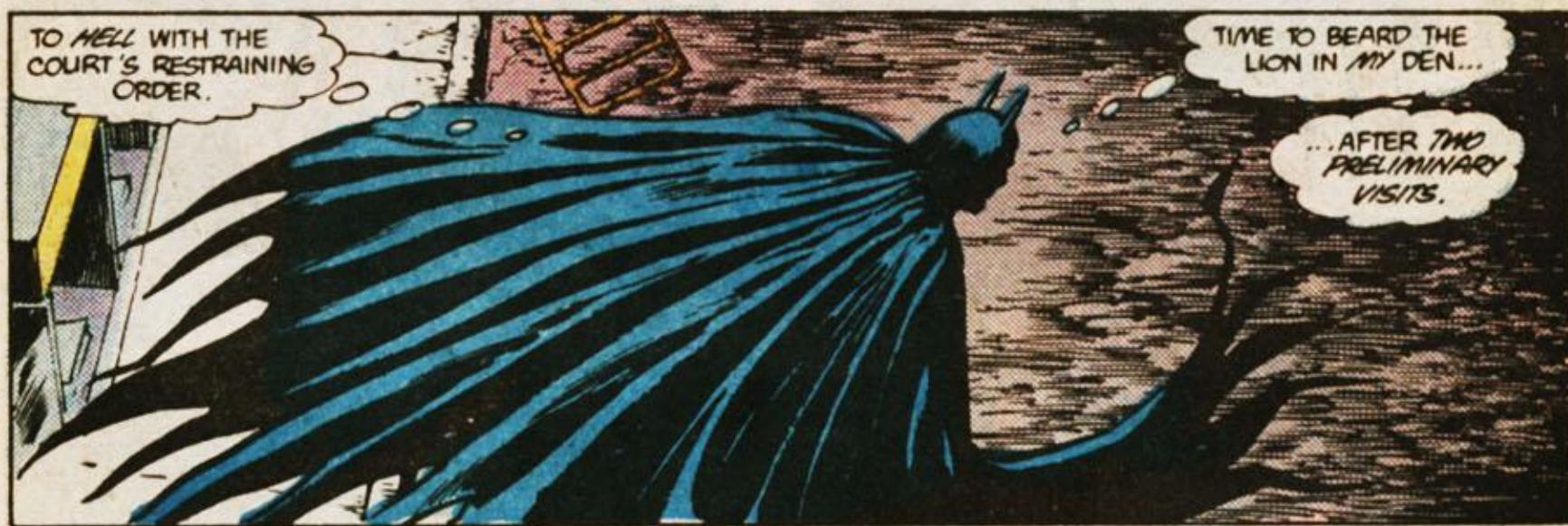


YES, I'VE GOT IT, BRUCE--
THE MAN WHO BOUGHT
YOUR HOUSE IS NAMED
STEVEN STRANGWAYS.

AND WHAT'S MORE, IT TURNS
OUT HE'S THE SAME MAN
WHO ACTUALLY BOUGHT THE
FOUNDATION STOCK, USING
THAT "CONSORTIUM" AS
A FRONT.

THEN THERE WAS
NO COINCIDENCE
INVOLVED-- AND
IT WAS THE REAL
BATMOBILE, NOT
A "DUPLICATE."

AND SINCE ONLY TWO OF MY
FOES EVER LEARNED MY
SECRET IDENTITY-- AND THIS
IS HARDLY RĀ'S AL GHŪL'S
STYLE-- THIS "STRANGWAYS"
MUST BE THE OTHER ONE.



AREN'T YOU
LOOKIN' TOUGH.

LEAN AND
MEAN, PARTNER,
AFTER MY LAST
CAN OF BEANS
YESTERDAY.

AND IT'S
NOT THE
WORST I'VE
FELT.

AS LONG AS I DON'T
START SEEING SPOTS,
IT GIVES ME A VERY
NICE EDGE.

NOW HOW
'BOUT IT, KID?
READY TO GO
HOME?

AS THOMAS WOLFE
SAID, IT WON'T BE
EASY.

FIRST WE'LL HAVE
TO EVICT A CERTAIN
PROFESSOR HUGO
STRANGE.

HUH? BUT
I THOUGHT
HE WAS
DEAD!

AM I!

AND SOON, AT
THE BARN
CONCEALING
THE BATCAVE'S
EXIT...

SO HUGO STRANGE NEVER
REALLY DIED THAT TIME HE TRIED
TO BLOW UP YOU AND DICK
GRAYSON?

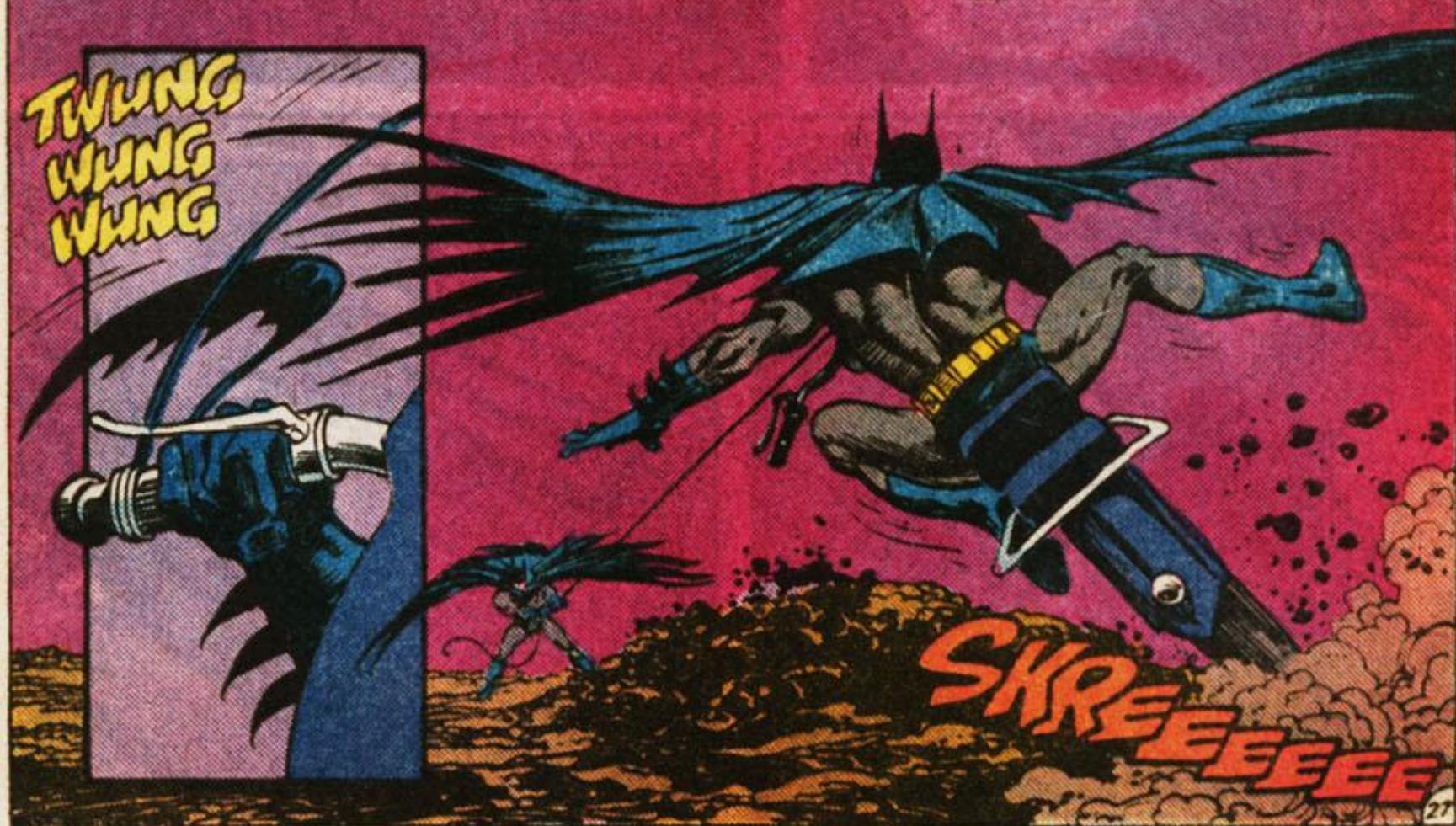
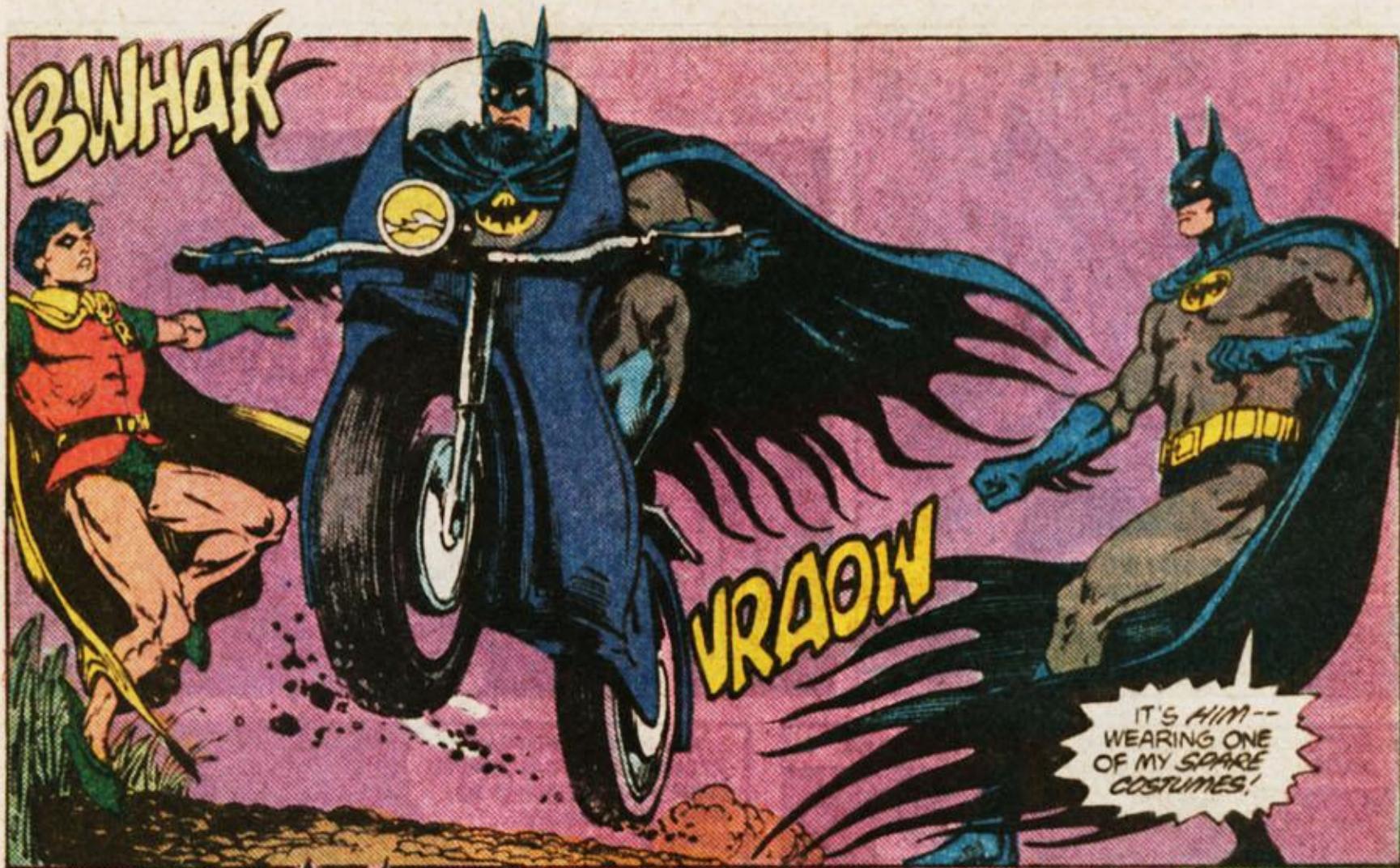
WHAT DOES
IT COOK LIKE,
PARTNER?

I FOUND MARKS IN ONE OF
HAMMOND'S BOOKSHELVES
WHERE A LASER-PROJECTOR
COULD HAVE BEEN
MOUNTED, TO
CREATE THE
ILLUSION OF
A GHOST--

-- PERHAPS TRIGGERED
BY THE REMOVAL OF
A BOOK OR--

VRM-VROOM

GET
BACK!

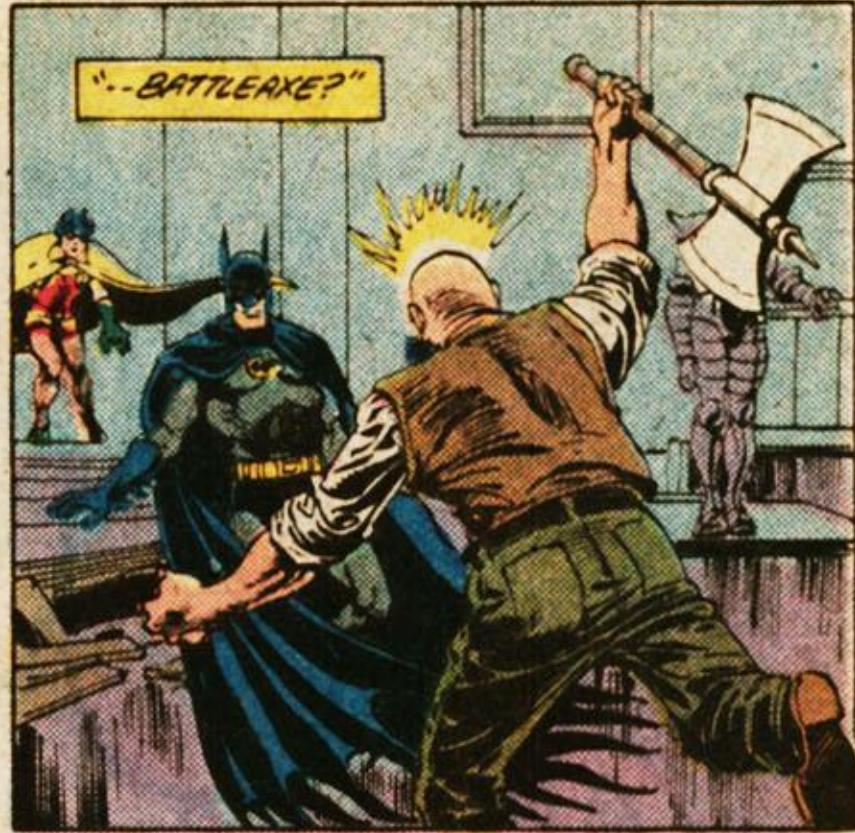




BAOUUM

SO MUCH
FOR THAT NICE
SOLID OAK...

FORGET THAT!
JUST GO IN FAST
AND READY TO
FIGHT!

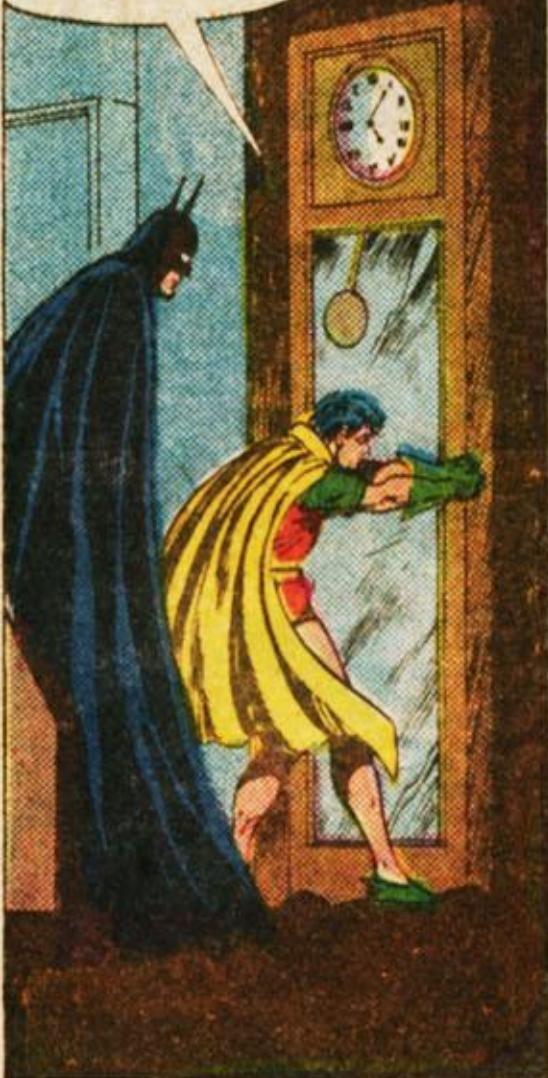


DOWN IN THE BATCAVE,
THEN, BUT... CINGH...
THE GRANDFATHER
CLOCK'S AWFUL
HEAVY THIS TIME...

NO WONDER -- A SACK
OF LOOT HANGING ON
THE BRICK.

AND NO DOUBT HUGO
STRANGE INTENDS
TO PLANT IT ALL IN
THE BATMOBILE --
BEFORE LEAVING
IT PARKED IN FRONT
OF POLICE HEAD-
QUARTERS.

BRING IT ALONG,
ROBIN -- JUST IN
CASE ATTEMPTED
MURDER MAY NOT
BE ENOUGH.



CASH, JEWELRY,
SOME KIND OF
LITTLE IDOL
STATUE...

INDEED -- BUT
SUCCESSFUL
MURDER WILL BE.



STRANGE! BUT
IS IT REALLY YOU
THIS TIME?

THEY NEVER
FOUND MY BODY,
DID THEY?

NO... THE EXPLOSION...
IT WAS SO DEVASTATING,
EVERYONE ASSUMED --



THAT I'D BEEN
BLOWN TO
UNRECOGNIZABLE
ATOMS?

THEY ASSUMED
WRONG, BATMAN!

THERE'S GOOD
REASON MY
REMAINS WERE
NEVER RECOVERED --
GOOD REASON
THEY FOUND
NOTHING BUT
TWISTED PIECES
OF MY VARIOUS
MANDROIDS...

YOU... YOU WERE
NEVER EVEN
THERE!

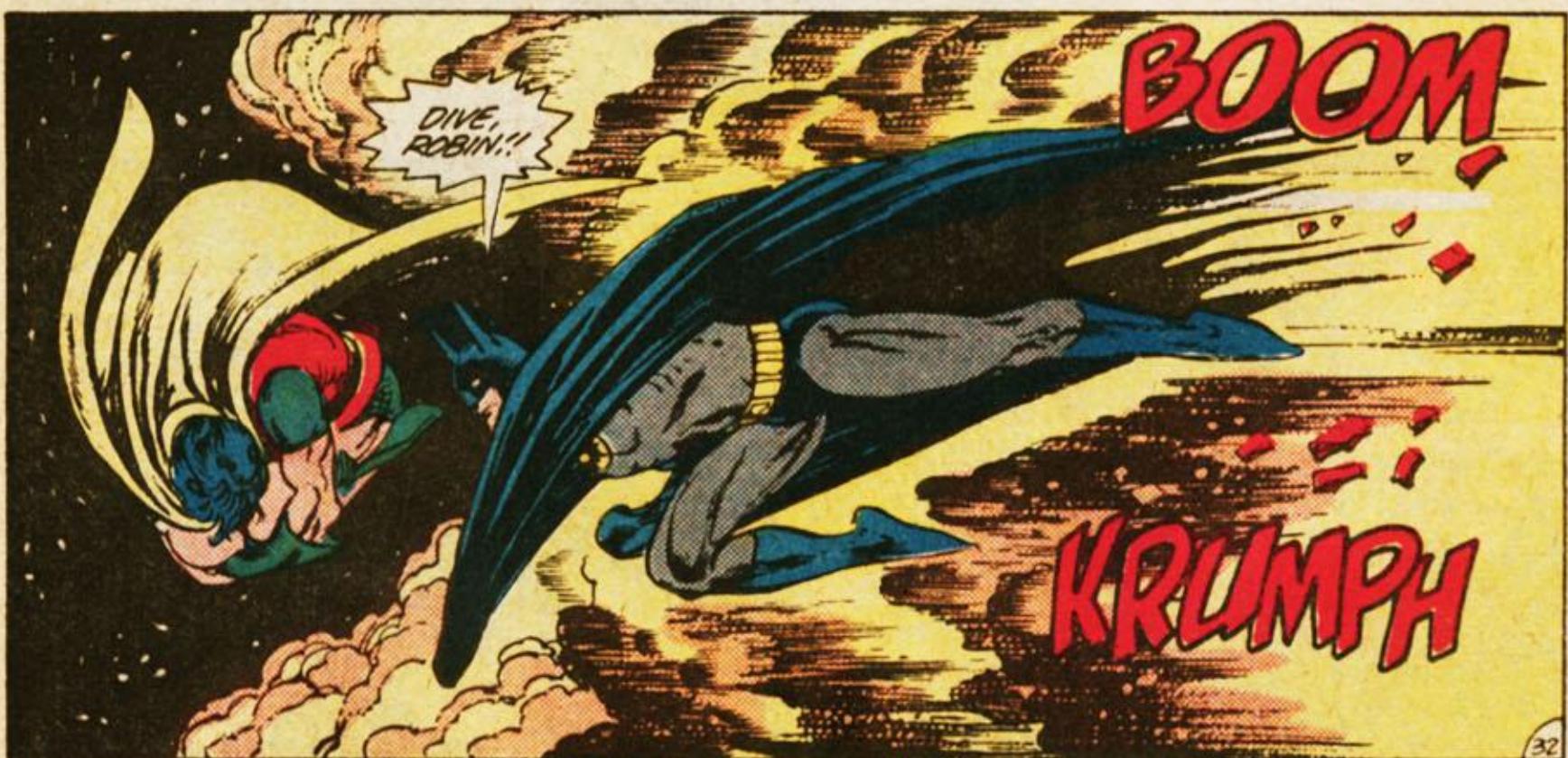
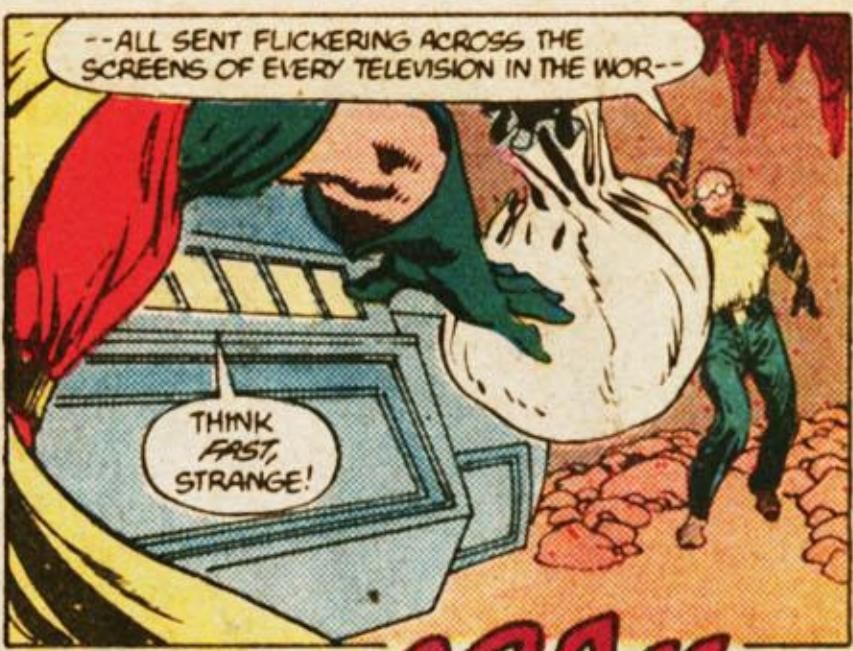
I NEVER FACED
ANYTHING
MORE THAN
ANOTHER
MANDROID
OF YOU...

OF COURSE NOT.
WHY WOULD I SO
NEEDLESSLY ENDANGER
MYSELF?

AND WHY THIS
TIME, STRANGE?
WHAT'S THE
POINT OF ALL
THIS?



CAN YOU THINK OF BETTER VENGEANCE? CRUSHING BRUCE WAYNE... FRAMING BATMAN AS A CRIMINAL... AND THEN CONDUCTING A MEDIA TOUR THROUGH THE FAMED BATCAVE TO REVEAL THAT WAYNE IS THE BATMAN?



AND JUST SO
YOU'RE NOT
TEMPTED TO
SHOW US ANY
MORE OF
YOUR HOME
IMPROVEMENTS,
STRANGE--

--LET'S MOVE THIS LITTLE
DISPUTE AWAY FROM
THAT CONSOLE!

GUH-H!

CHUD

DON'T BE A FOOL,
BATMAN! YOU CAN'T PROVE
ANYTHING AGAINST ME --
NOT WITHOUT ALSO PROVING
THAT BRUCE WAYNE IS
THE BATMAN!

NOW GET OUT OF MY HOME!
YOU'RE TRESPASS --

SHUT--

SHAK

--UP!!

WOK

WHAT THE--?
ANOTHER
MAN-ROBOT!

BWAH

WEIRD--LIKE
PUTTIN' HURT ON
MY OWN MUG!

PERHAPS LACK OF
FOOD HAS WEAKENED
THE BATMAN.

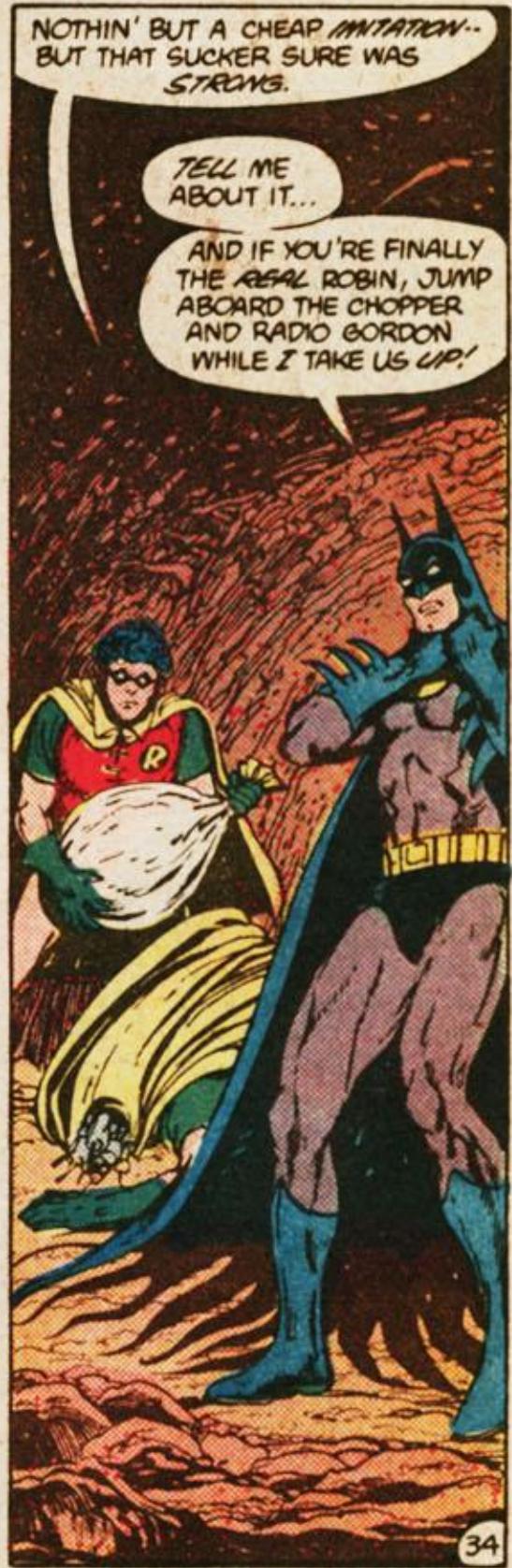
SPOOM

A VICIOUS UPPERCUT
SENDS HUGO STRANGE
FLYING, YET DOES NOT
PUT HIM OUT...

AND EVEN AS ONE ROBIN FALLS, THE BIZARRE USURPER MAKES HIS BREAK, SPRINTING DEEPER INTO THE CAVERN SHADOWS...



BUT BEFORE THE BATMAN CAN REACH THE CHOPPER--



AND, MINUTES
LATER --

THERE HE GOES!

AS SOON AS I
GET US LOW AND CLOSE
ENOUGH, ROBIN, YOU
TAKE OVER THE
CONTROLS!

NOW,
ROBIN!

AND EVEN AS THE BOY
WONDER GRABS THE
STICK, THE LEAP FROM
CHOPPER TO SPEEDING
BATMOBILE IS TIMED
PERFECTLY...

THIS IS A STOLEN
VEHICLE YOU'RE
DRIVING, STRANGE...

I... I DON'T
BELIEVE IT!

AND WHAT'S MORE, IT
BELONGS TO ME!

THIS TIME,
WEAKNESS IS
NOT AN ISSUE.

KUNCH

HUGO
STRANGE
GOES OUT
FOR
HOURS...

...AND THE BATMOBILE
SWERVES WILDLY
OUT OF CONTROL...

S
KRE
EEEEE

ROBIN BOLTS FROM THE LANDED CHOPPER,
SCREAMING LOUDER THAN THE METAL
AND GLASS...

BATMAN!
ARE YOU ALL
RIGHT?

SKRASH

I'M FINE, ROBIN... FOR A
MAN WHO'S JUST
REPOSSSESSED A WRECK.

NOW HURRY AND PUT
THAT SACK OF LOOT IN
THE PASSENGER SEAT
--I HEAR GORDON'S
SIRENS!

DONE, BATMAN, BUT WHAT
ARE YOU GONNA--

JUST STAY COOL
WHEN GORDON
GETS HERE-- AND
DON'T EVEN MAKE
A FALSE BLINK.

GOTCHA,
BUT WHAT
ARE YOU
PLANNIN'
TO--

YOU'LL SEE--
JUST PLAY ALONG
WITH ANYTHING
I SAY.

THERE, GORDON -- PROOF
THAT IT WAS HUGO STRANGE
WHO TRIED TO DISCREDIT
ME, AND I'LL TESTIFY HE
ALSO TRIED TO
MURDER ME.

AFTER THAT, I'LL PRODUCE
AT LEAST ONE WITNESS TO THE
FACT THAT HE TOOK OVER THE
WAYNE FOUNDATION THROUGH
FRAUD AND WITH ILL-GOTTEN
GAINS.

Pretty neat
package, Batman...

IT GETS BETTER--
I JUST HYPNOTIZED
HIM.

DO TELL.

IT WAS
NECESSARY.

HE LEARNED
MY SECRET
IDENTITY.

A SOLUTION
FOR EVERYTHING.
ANYTHING ELSE?

YES-- I WANT A SAMPLE OF HIS
BLOOD TESTED. HIS MANDROIDS ARE
STUNNINGLY LIFELIKE AND SOME OF
THEM, BELIEVE IT OR NOT, ARE
ENGINEERED TO ACTUALLY "BLEED."

TESTING HIS BLOOD IS THE ONLY WAY TO MAKE
SURE HE REALLY IS HUGO STRANGE -- SHORT OF
RIPPING OFF HIS HEAD OR STRIPPING HIS
FLESH DOWN TO THE BONE.

WELL, FROM
THE LOOKS OF
HIM, A STOP AT
THE HOSPITAL'S
IN ORDER
ANYWAY.

EPILOGUE:

GORDON? IT'S ME. ANY RESULTS ON THAT BLOOD TEST YET?

YES, AND X-RAYS TOO. HE'S THE FLESH-AND-BLOOD HUGO STRANGE, ALL RIGHT-- AND HE SHOULD BE WAKING UP ANY TIME NOW...

"WHEN HE DOES, HE'LL FIND HIMSELF IN THE HOLDING TANK-- GUARDED BY BULLOCK PERSONALLY..."

BUT I TELL YOU BRUCE WAYNE IS THE BATMAN! I KNOW HE IS!!

SURE YA DO, STRANGE-- CUZ THE BATMAN HYPONOTIZED YA INTO KNOWIN' IT, PICKIN' THE ONE NAME THAT'D MOST CONFUSE YA.

WH-WHAT...? COULD IT BE... THAT MY TAKEOVER OF BRUCE WAYNE'S WEALTH... WAS NOT PART OF A BIGGER PLAN? AM I LOSING MY MIND?

DON'T WORRY 'BOUT IT, GEEK...

"YOU WON'T NEED A MIND WHERE YOU'RE GOIN' ON CHARGES OF BRIBERY, EXTORTION, FRAUD, THEFT, ASSAULT, AN' A WHOLE SLEW O' SECURITIES AN' EXCHANGE VIOLATIONS."

BUT... B-BUT...

IF BATMAN WANTS ME TO BELIEVE HE'S BRUCE WAYNE...

...THEN HE CAN'T BE BRUCE WAYNE...

...UNLESS... COULD IT BE A DOUBLE-WHAMMY... OR...

...OR... WHAT?

AND BY THE WAY, BATMAN...

IF YOU HAPPEN TO RUN INTO A MUTUAL ACQUAINTANCE OF OURS, TELL HIM I CHECKED ON A FRIEND OF HIS WHILE I WAS AT THE HOSPITAL...

THE DOCTOR REPORTS A FULL RECOVERY--AND HE SAYS ALFRED CAN GO HOME TOMORROW.

AH... THANKS, GORDON -- IF I GET THE CHANCE, I'LL PASS IT ALONG.

THE NEXT DAY, IN THE RUINS OF WAYNE MANOR:

GOOD LORD, SIRS! WHAT A... TRAGIC MESS! SO MANY OF YOUR PRECIOUS OJBETS D'ART... THE FURNISHINGS... AND--

AS WE WARNED YOU, ALFRED, NOT MUCH OF A HOMECOMING, BUT... WELCOME HOME.

ALREADY FORGOT OUR LITTLE DISCUSSION AT THE HOSPITAL, ALFIE?

AH... QUITE RIGHT, MASTER JASON.

EVERYTHING TRULY PRECIOUS HAS BEEN REGAINED AND REMAINS INTACT. THE REST IS...

STUFF, ALFRED. ELEGANT, EXPENSIVE, LUXURIOUS, AND UTTERLY MEANINGLESS... STUFF.

STILL, SIR... IT IS GOOD TO BE BACK.

EXCEPT FOR ONE THING, ALFRED-- SINCE HOME IS WHERE THE HEART IS...

"...SOME OF US NEVER LEFT."



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