



453

LATE AUG 90



PART TWO OF THREE

BATMAN®

DARK KNIGHT

DARK CITY



PETER MILLIGAN
KIERON DWYER
DENNIS JANKE

August 28, 1990

MIGNOLA
P.

DARK KNIGHT, DARK CITY

PART
II

PETER
MILLIGAN
writer

KIERON
DWYER
pencils

DENNIS
JANKE
inks

JOHN
COSTANZA
letters

ADRIENNE
ROY
colors

DAN
RASPLER
assoc. editor

DENNY
O'NEIL
editor

BOB
KANE
creator

Look what's coming out of the mud.

Its scent is as corrupt as its flesh is prettily pale and putrid.

And now it has shaken off its worms and its oblivion, has dragged itself from its cold bed, just to be with you.

For you are the Batman.

And I am Gotham.

And the sweet thing only wants to hold you, Batman.

And the sweet thing only wants to hold you, Batman. As I want to hold you. I want you, Batman.



THIS IS JUST GREAT. SURROUNDED.
BY CORPSES.

CORPSES!

YOU'VE FINALLY SURPASSED
YOURSELF THIS TIME, RIDDLER.

BOSSHH

GNNNN

UNGNNGH

FINGERS DIGGING INTO MY SCALP,
KNEE IN MY BACK, I'M EATING
GRAVE MUD. THIS ONE'S
STRONG. GOTTA PUT HIM AWAY..

BUT IF HE'S DEAD,
HOW DO I HURT
HIM?

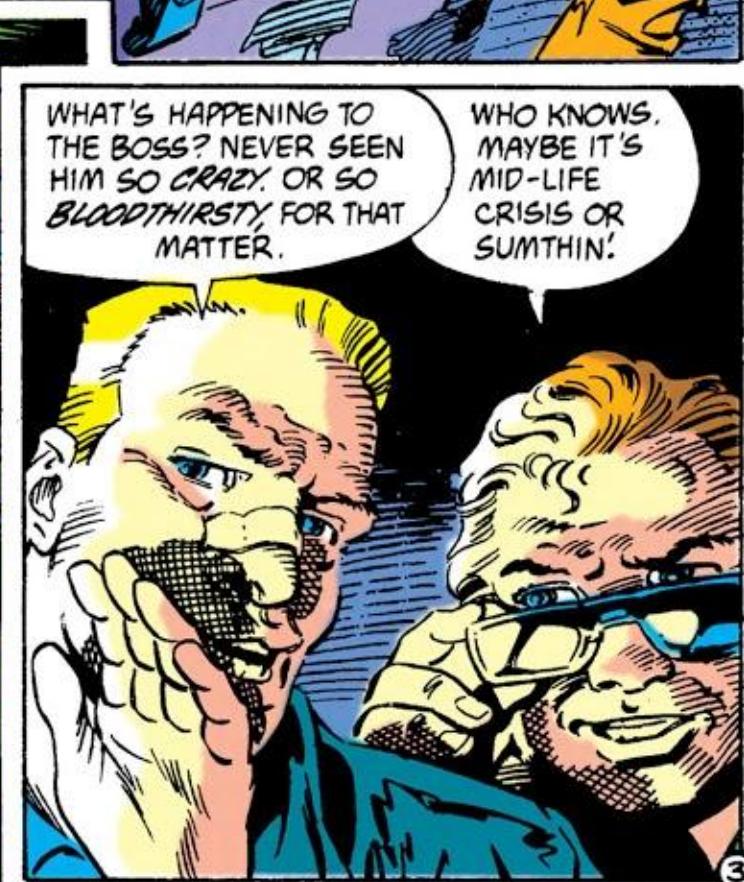
LIKE
THIS?

THAT WAS SOME
GROAN, FOR A
CORPSE.

LET'S SEE JUST HOW
DEAD YOU REALLY ARE,
MISTER...

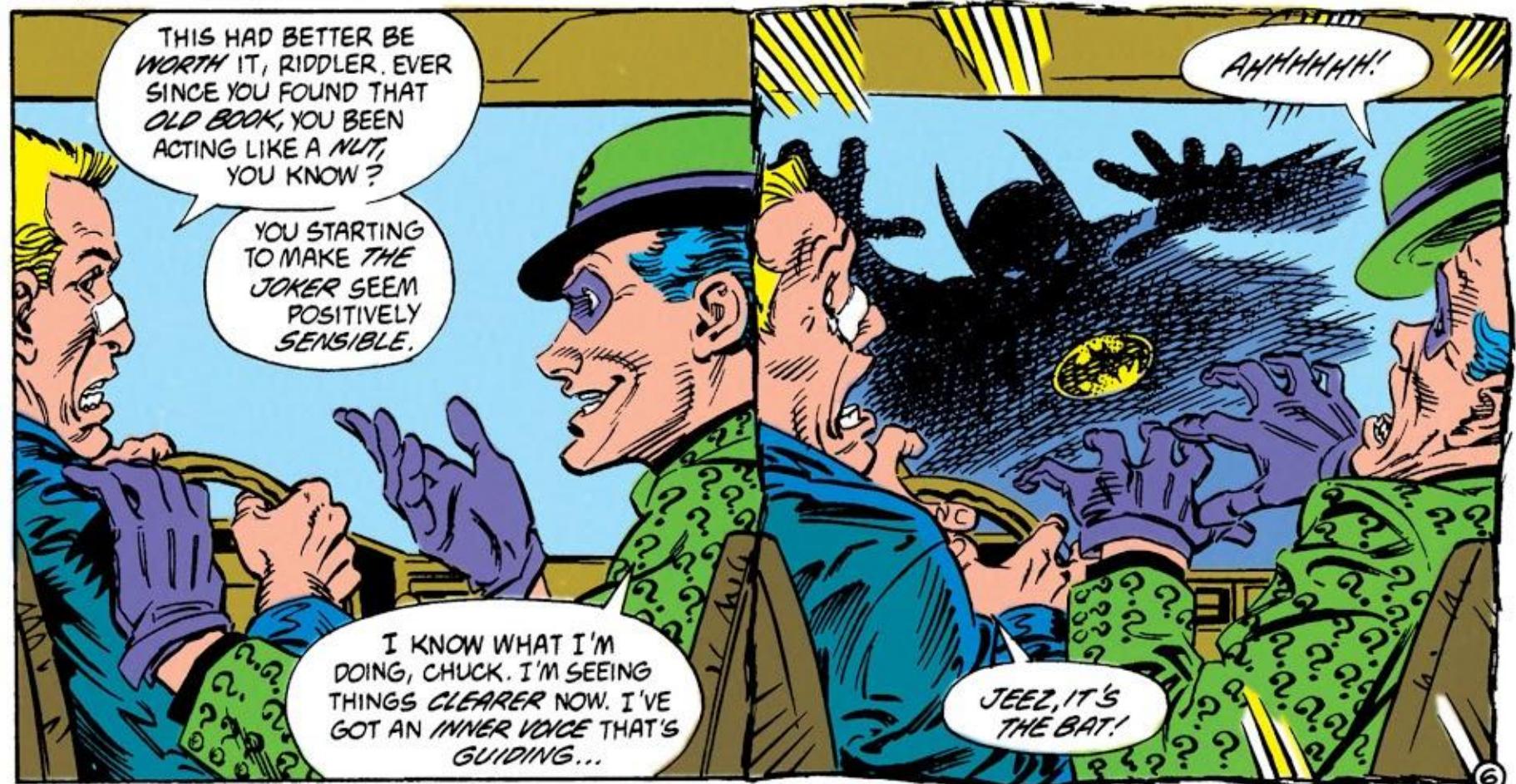
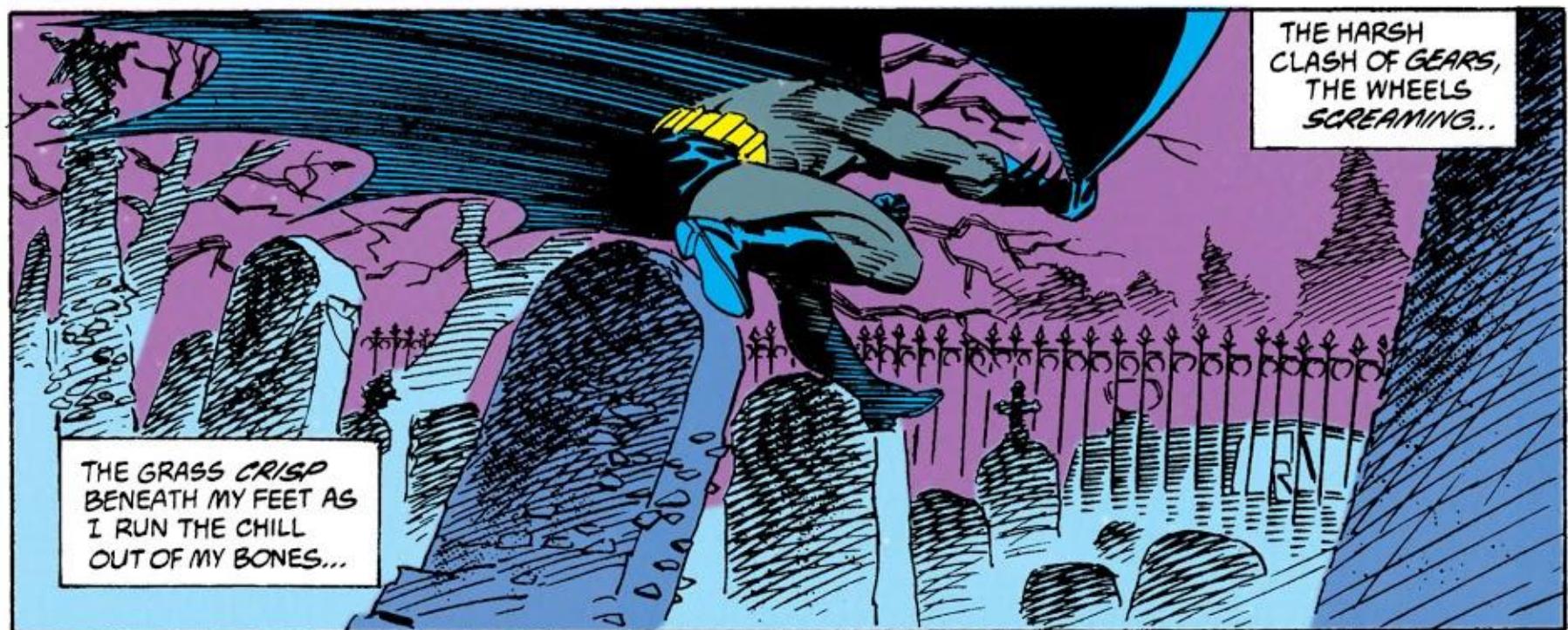


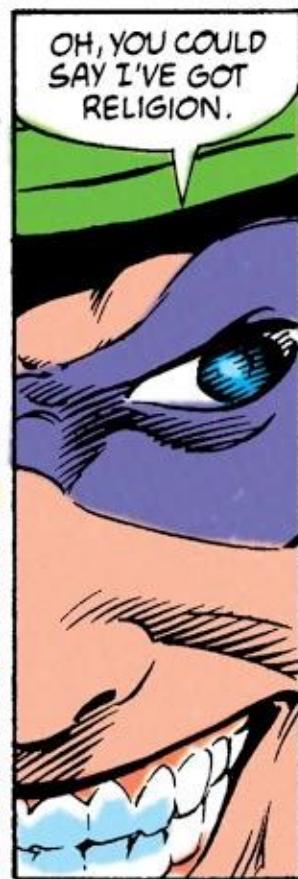
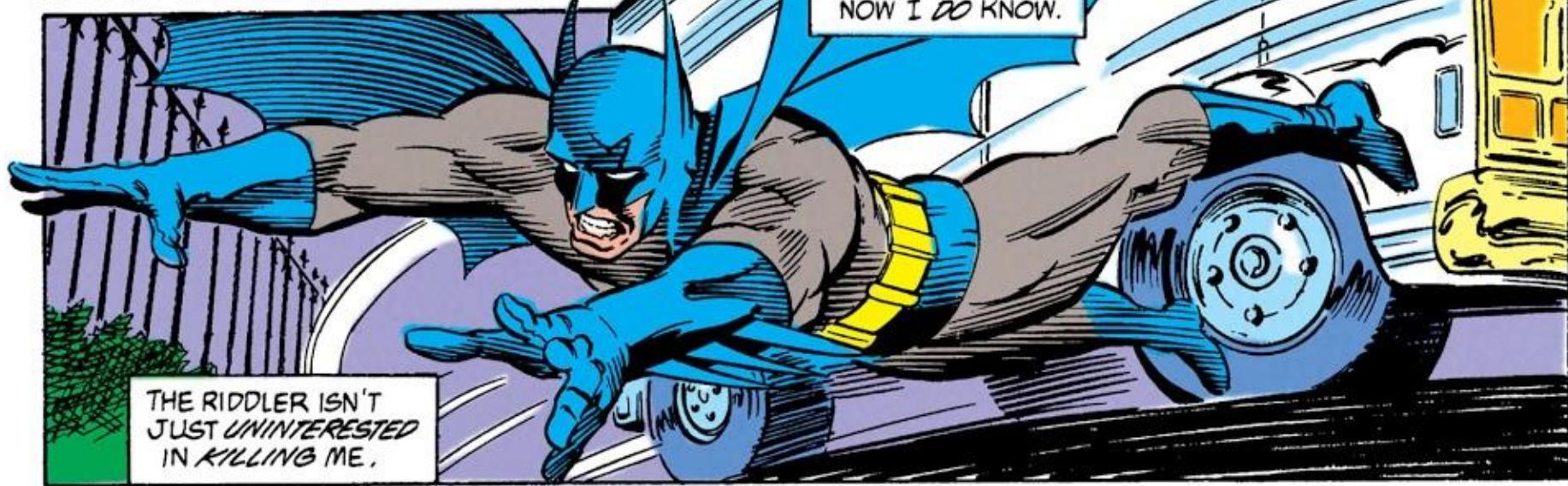
IT'S STICKING
TO ME. BREATH
LIKE A SEWER...













BACK IN THE CEMETERY I LOOK AT THE BODIES. NO BLACK MAGIC, JUST CYBERNETICS. MECHANICAL ZOMBIES. TECHNO MAGIC.

THIS WOULD TAKE MONEY, TIME, PLANNING. ALL THIS, TO LEAD ME HERE, JUST TO PUT ON A CORPSE SHOW? DOESN'T MAKE ANY SENSE.



THE MAN WITH THE HOLE IN HIS THROAT WAS PROBABLY HERE TO ADD A LITTLE MUSCLE, KNOCK ME ON THE HEAD, MAKE THE SHOW LAST LONGER.



THE RIDDLER GOT RID OF HIM. THE GIRL ON THE ROOFTOP, THE BABIES, THE SECURITY GUARDS, NOW THIS GUY... THE RIDDLER'S CHANGED.

BECOME A PSYCHO.



IT'S SUCH A FILTHY NIGHT. NO MOON. NO STARS. WAIT. A SOUND, BEHIND ME...



I TURN SLOWLY. I AM STARTING TO KNOW WHAT TO EXPECT.

I'M STARTING TO KNOW HOW THE GAME IS PLAYED, EVEN THOUGH I DON'T KNOW WHAT GAME WE'RE PLAYING...

THE SECOND BABY. NOW ONLY TWO BABIES MISSING OF THE FOUR THE RIDDLER ABDUCTED.

AND THERE'S SOMETHING ELSE. COME ON, RIDDLER. I KNOW THERE'LL BE SOMETHING ELSE, TO LEAD ME FURTHER INTO THE MAZE...



OF COURSE. CARVED IN STONE.

YOU'LL FIND ANOTHER LITTLE TOT AT THE 25th WHO WAS SHOT

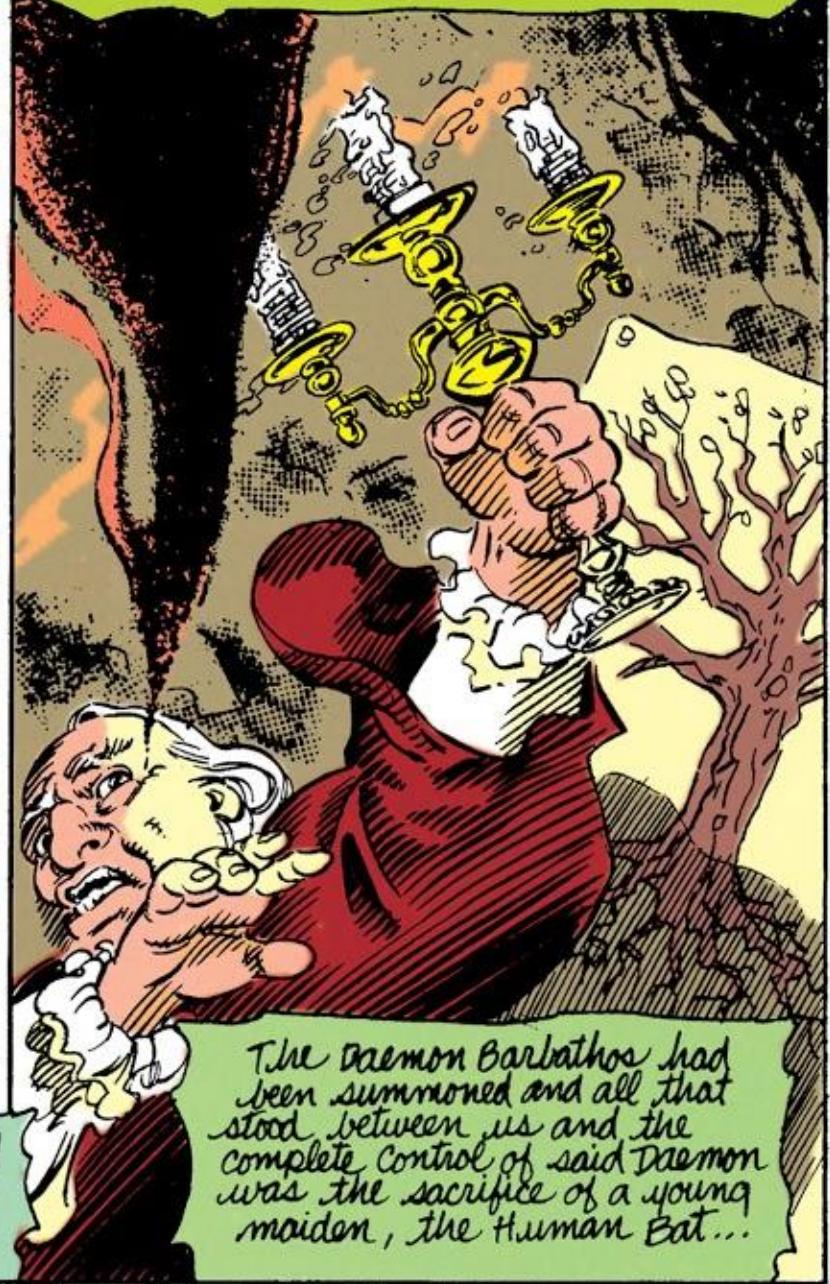
From the confessions of Jacob Stockman, 1793.

A great winged creature did fill the doorway of my temple, surely a creation of the Daemon, intent on our Mortal destruction.



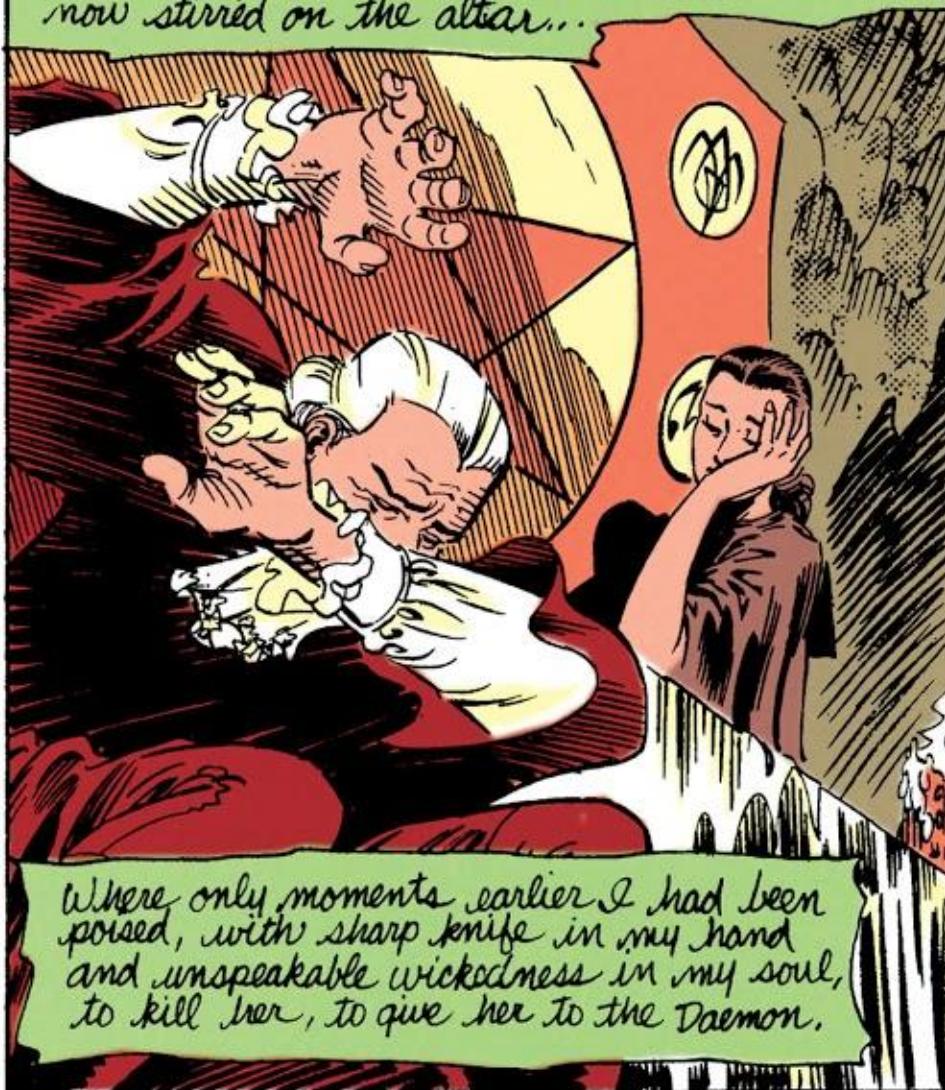
Thomas Jefferson, whose rashness had first opened the door, did fall back, into mine own arms, and there was much screaming and panicking...

You will remember, charitable reader, how I and my colleagues had performed a black and vile ritual, the ceremony of the bat.



The Daemon Barbathos had been summoned and all that stood between us and the complete control of said Daemon was the sacrifice of a young maiden, the Human Bat...

...the sacrificial victim, who had undergone the prescribed preparations of the ritual, and who now stirred on the altar...



Where only moments earlier I had been poised, with sharp knife in my hand and unspeakable wickedness in my soul, to kill her, to give her to the Daemon.

I saw--oh how my tears fall onto the page as I write!--I saw the young girl gaze in terror as the effect of the potions we had given her began to subside...



But we cared only for our own safety. All notion of controlling the Daemon forgot, we wished only to save our worthless selves...



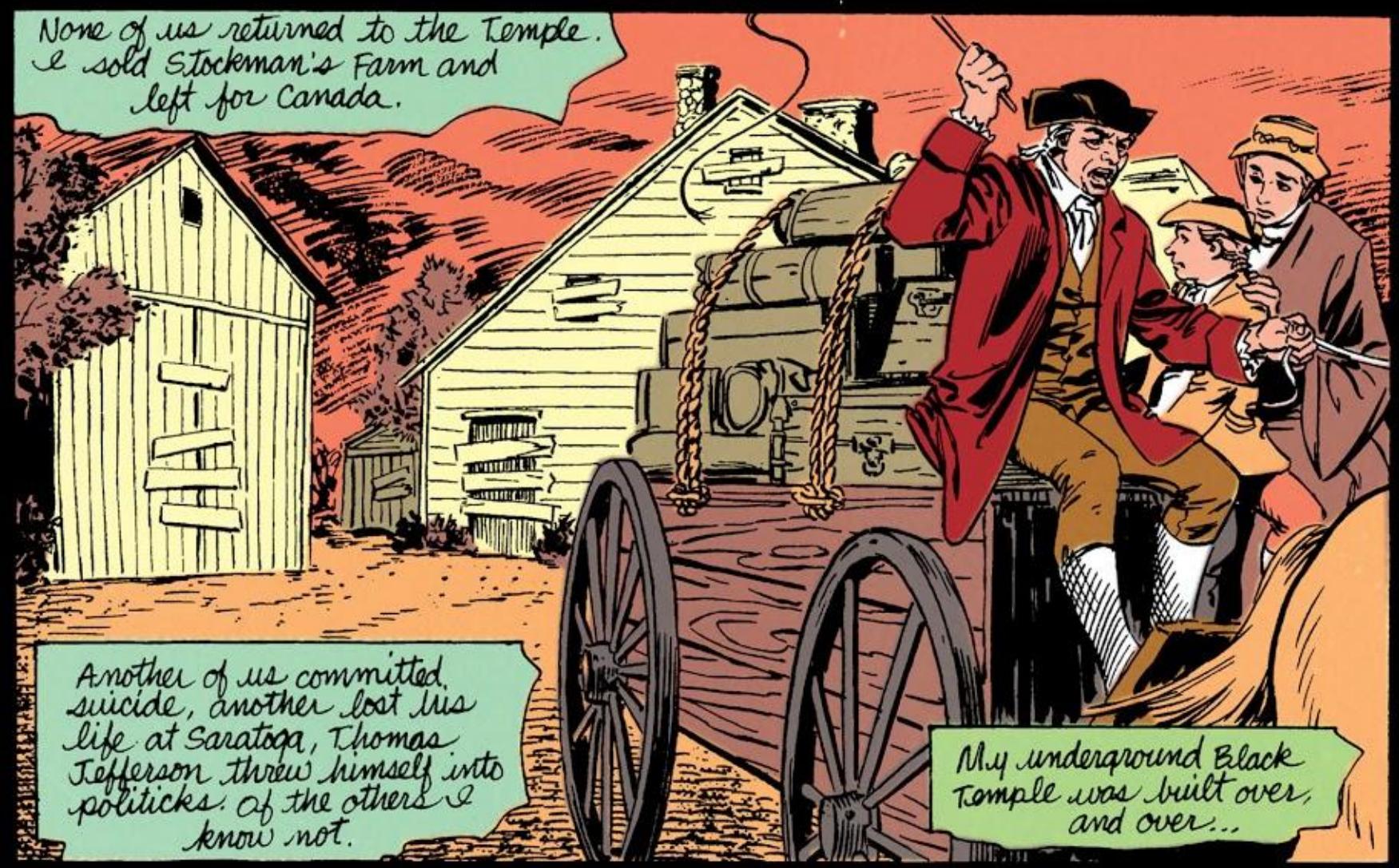
We all did scurry like rats through the temple door. Like rats, I say.

And when we were without, did we not shut and seal that door? Did we not entomb, in the Black Temple, the young girl, with the Winged Beast, and with the summoned, yet uncontrolled Daemon?



Aye, we did. We did, and may we all be damned for doing so...

None of us returned to the Temple. I sold Stockman's Farm and left for Canada.



Another of us committed suicide, another lost his life at Saratoga, Thomas Jefferson threw himself into politics. Of the others I know not.

My underground Black Temple was built over, and over...

And was soon lost to the memory of all but those still living...

...who partook in the Ceremony of the Bat.



THE HANGED SECURITY GUARD AT THE LIBRARY. THE EXPLOSIONS AT THE BLOOD BANK. THE CORPSE SHOW AT THE CEMETERY. THE FOUR BABIES...

AND NOW THIS NEW RIDDLE. THERE IS A PATTERN, SOMEWHERE. THE INTRICATE WALLS OF A LABYRINTH...

WHAT IS IT ABOUT THIS PART OF TOWN? A SHIVER DOWN MY SPINE? OLD GOTHIC HORROR CLICHÉS... BUT TRUE. A SHIVER...

FEELING OF BEING WATCHED. A WATCHER, WAITING, KNOWING I MUST GO DEEPER INTO THE LABYRINTH, I MUST FOLLOW THE RIDDLER INTO HIS MAZE...

IT'S GOOD TO GET HOME.

TO WANDER THE CORRIDORS OF WAYNE MANOR. TO FEEL THE GHOSTS THERE, LET THEM FORTIFY YOU...

"YOU'LL FIND ANOTHER LITTLE TOT, AT THE 25TH, WHO WAS SHOT..."

"THE 25TH, WHO WAS SHOT."

I KNOW THE ANSWER. A SCHOOLBOY ANSWER, BUT MY MIND FEELS SHOT.

SHOT TO PIECES.
SHOT

SHOT...
SHOTS...

SHOTS. I HEAR SHOTS, ECHOES OF SHOTS NOT YET FIRED. BUT I KNOW THEY WILL BE FIRED.

MY PARENTS AND I LEAVE THE MOVIE AND WE WALK DOWN UNKNOWN, UNLIT STREETS...

A LABYRINTH OF STREETS, MOVING, SHIFTING, CAJOLING, BECKONING, FORCING US ONWARD AND ONWARD TOWARD THE PLACE...

I WANT TO WARN MY PARENTS BUT I CAN'T SPEAK. I'M MUTE WITNESS, GALLOPING TOWARD MY OWN MISERY, TOWARD THE ANVIL ON WHICH MY LIFE WILL BE BENT OUT OF SHAPE...

THE CITY WON'T LET US GO. IT'S PUSHING US TOWARD THE PLACE...

THE MUGGER, THE GUN, THE SHOTS, MY MOTHER'S EYES...

I CANNOT STOP THEM. THE CITY IS PULLING US TO WHERE HE WAITS. IN THE SHADOWS.

HIM. THE ONE. THE ONE WHO IS WAITING FOR ME...

THE CITY HAS MADE ME...

NO!!!!

MY GOD. A DREAM. THE OLD DREAM... BUT DIFFERENT, BUT...

THE ANSWER. THE ANSWER TO THE RIDDLE. THE DREAM HAS GIVEN IT TO ME...

"THE 25TH, WHO WAS SHOT..."

MCKINLEY STREET. THAT NIGHT, YEARS AGO, WE PASSED MCKINLEY STREET. THE MIND STORES EVERYTHING...

MCKINLEY, TWENTY-FIFTH PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES, ASSASSINATED, SHOT. BUT...

BUT DOES THIS MEAN THE RIDDLER KNOWS ABOUT THE DEATH OF MY PARENTS NEAR MCKINLEY? ABOUT ME BEING BRUCE WAYNE?

MCKINLEY STREET COFFEE SHOP SODA FOUNTAIN CANDY CIG.

OR IS IT A COINCIDENCE. YES. IT MUST BE. HE CAN'T KNOW.

HE CAN'T KNOW. BUT IT'S TOO CLOSE TO BE A COINCIDENCE.

THE CITY HAS
MADE ME.

WHAT DID THAT
MEAN?

WE'RE GONNA
SCORCH HIM,
THAT IT? RUN
HIM RAGGED,
THEN BURN
HIS BUTT?

HAVE US A
BAT BARBECUE.
I LIKE IT.

WHAT A SPLENDID IMAGINATION
YOU HAVE, CHUCK. BUT I
MERELY TOLD YOU TO SEE THE
FLAMETHROWERS WERE
PREPARED.

WE WON'T BE USING THEM,
JUST YET. ONE OR MORE
TURNS OF THE SCREW
FIRST.

BUT WE
DO GET TO
BURN HIM,
EVENTUALLY?

HAVE NO FEAR, THE BATMAN
SHALL BE KILLED.

AND HOW IS THE LITTLE
ONE, FRATER?

YOU'RE SURE THESE TINY
PING PONG BALLS ARE
JUST THE RIGHT SIZE?

YEAH, RIDDLER,
BUT I THINK
THE BRAT'S
JUST DONE A...

THEN CHANGE HIM,
IMBECILE, AND BE CAREFUL.
WE MUST KEEP THEM
ALIVE...

"THREE BABIES WERE
STOLEN BUT WERE NOT
KILLED BUT INSTEAD GIVEN
BACK TO THEIR MOTHERS..."

INSURANCE, CHUCK.

ARE THE... PETS
READY?

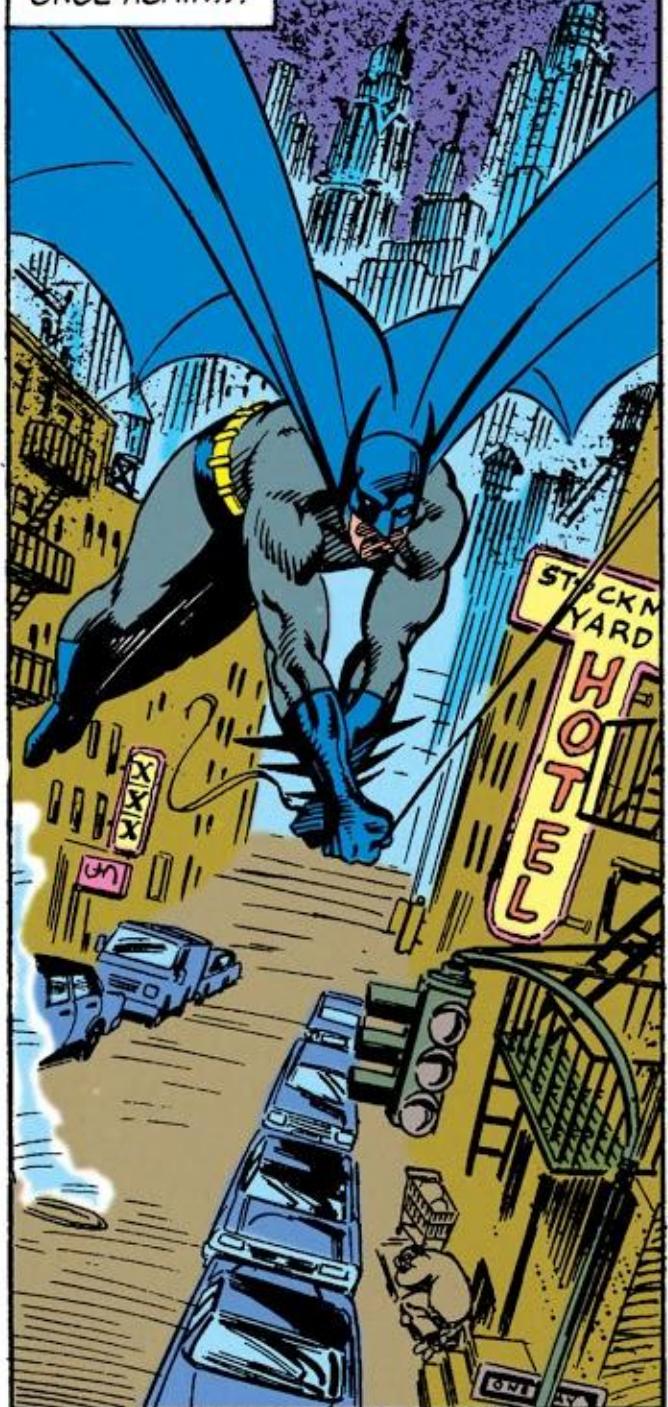
YEAH, WE MANAGED TO
GET THEM INTO THE
BACK OF THE VAN.

WEREN'T EASY,
THOUGH...

THREE BABIES?
BUT WE STOLE
FOUR...

"THEY TOOK HALF OF STEFAN'S
ARM WITH THEM..."

IT'S GETTING LIGHTER NOW, THE WORLD ROLLING SLOWLY TOWARD THE SUN, AGAIN, ONCE AGAIN...



MCKINLEY STREET. NICE NEIGHBORHOOD. IF YOU'RE A COCKROACH.



I WISH IT WEREN'T SO COLD. WISH IT WERE OVER. RIDDLER, AND WHOEVER ELSE MIGHT BE WATCHING, LET'S GET IT OVER...



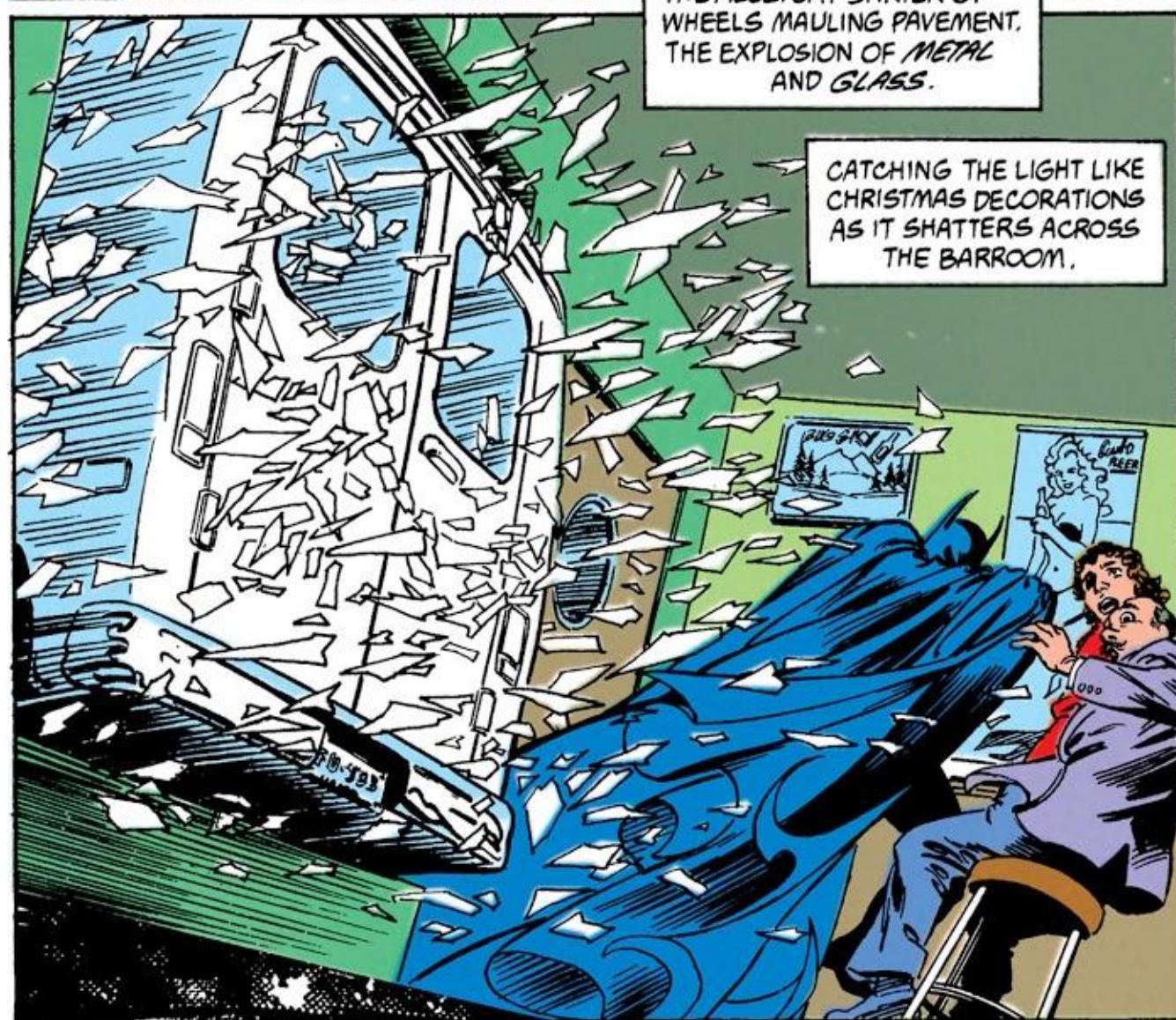
HEY! LOOK WHO IT AIN'T! WANNA DRINK, BATTO?

SEEN ANYTHING ODD TONIGHT, BARTENDER? ANYTHING OUT OF THE ORDINARY?

A MAN WITH A BABY, PERHAPS. OR...

THE ALLEYCAT SHRIEK OF WHEELS MAULING PAVEMENT, THE EXPLOSION OF METAL AND GLASS.

CATCHING THE LIGHT LIKE CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS AS IT SHATTERS ACROSS THE BARROOM.



THEY COME OUT LIKE
CREATURES FROM HELL,
ALL TEETH AND NECK...

HOLY...

PIT BULL
TERRIERS!

FIRST ONE GOES FOR A LANKY
SOAK BY THE PINBALL MACHINE.

IT'S ON HIM BEFORE
HE CAN DROP HIS
BEER...

I DROP THE DOG...

HIT HIM CLEAN
BEHIND THE EAR...

GET THE OTHER
BY THE LEGS.
PULL HARD.

TRY TO BREAK SOMETHING.
PUT HIM OUT OF ACTION...

BLIMM

BLIMM

SERGEANT McCARTHY.
GOTHAM POLICE
DEPARTMENT.

I'M
OFF
DUTY.



THE RIDDLER WILL MAKE A MISTAKE, SOONER OR LATER...

THEN THE WALLS OF HIS MAZE WILL CRUMBLE...

SOONER OR LATER...

BATMAN? YOU
HERE YET, BATMAN? THIS
IS THE RIDDLER SPEAKING.

BETTER HURRY, BATS. THE LIFE
OF A LITTLE BABY DEPENDS
UPON YOU.

HERE'S AN EASY
RIDDLE FOR YOU,
DARK KNIGHT...

I'M JUST
BELOW
HAMILTON
EAST ON
WRIGHT...

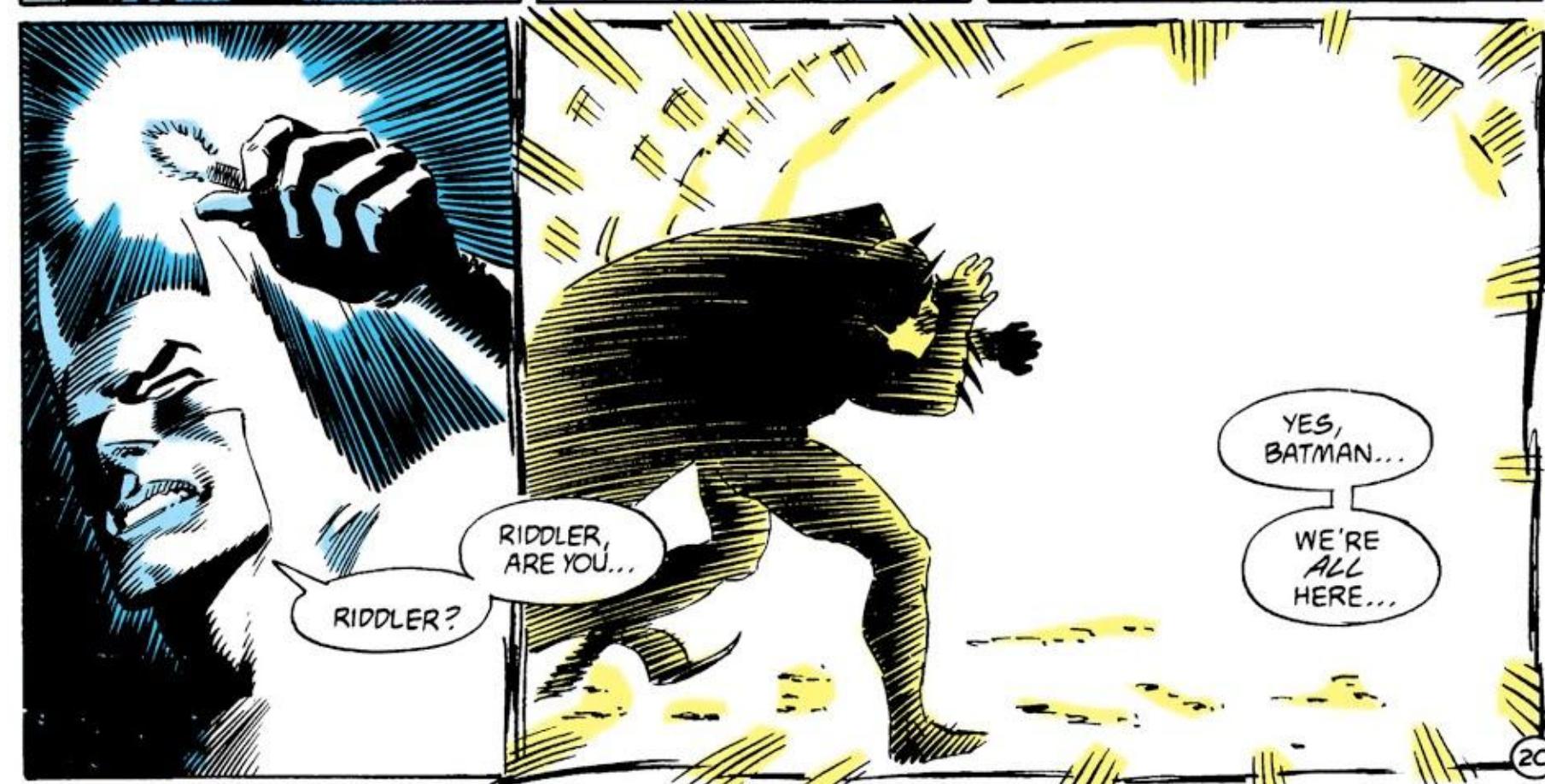
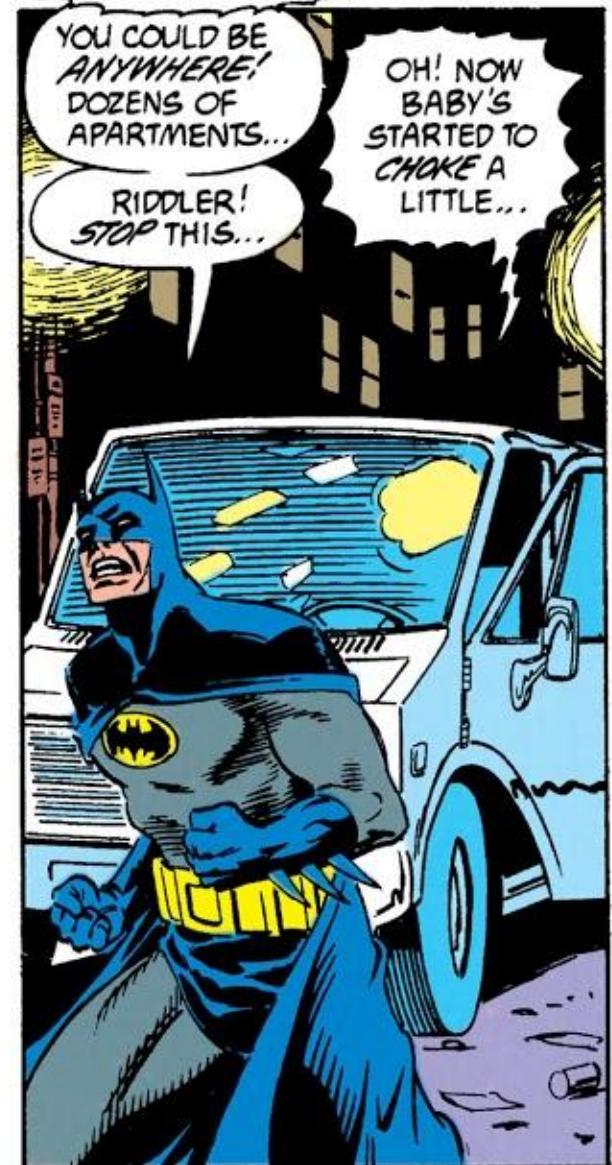
I TAKE THE CORNER
IN FOURTH. HAMILTON
EAST ON WRIGHT.

JUST BELOW.

WHAT DOES HE
MEAN, JUST
BELOW?
A FEW DOORS
BELOW?

BETTER HURRY! BABY'S
GOT SOMETHING IN HIS
HAND. YOU KNOW WHAT
BABIES ARE LIKE...

THEY PUT EVERYTHING
STRAIGHT INTO THEIR
LITTLE MOUTHS...



BLIND.

WHITE LIGHT

NOW ALL
COLORS
AS THE
PAIN HITS.

AND
SHADOWS...

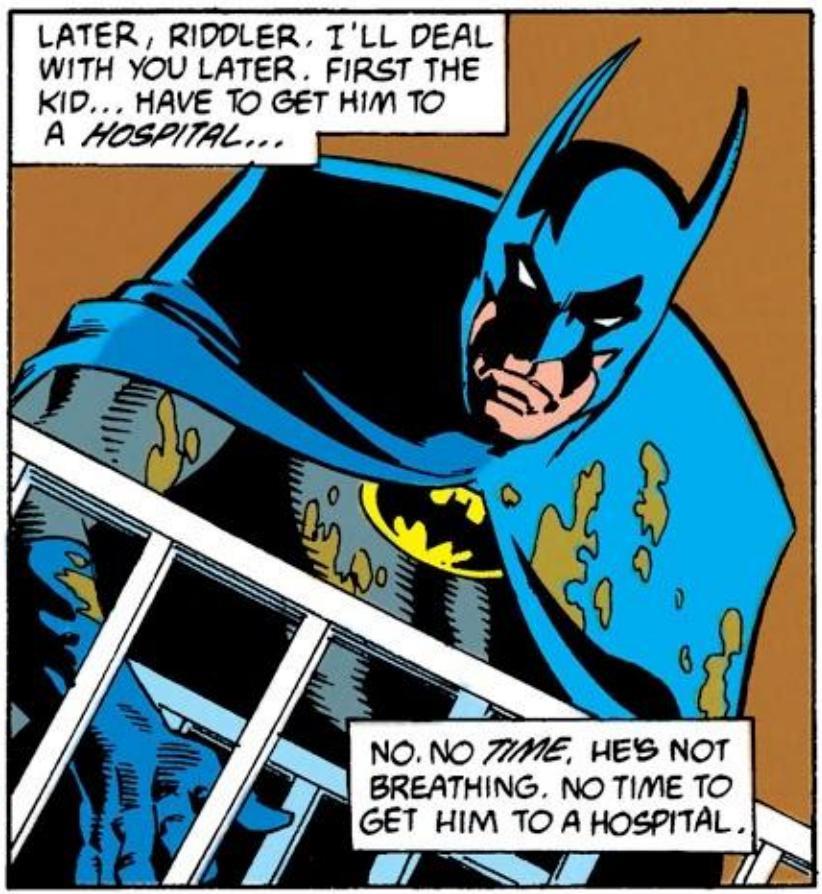
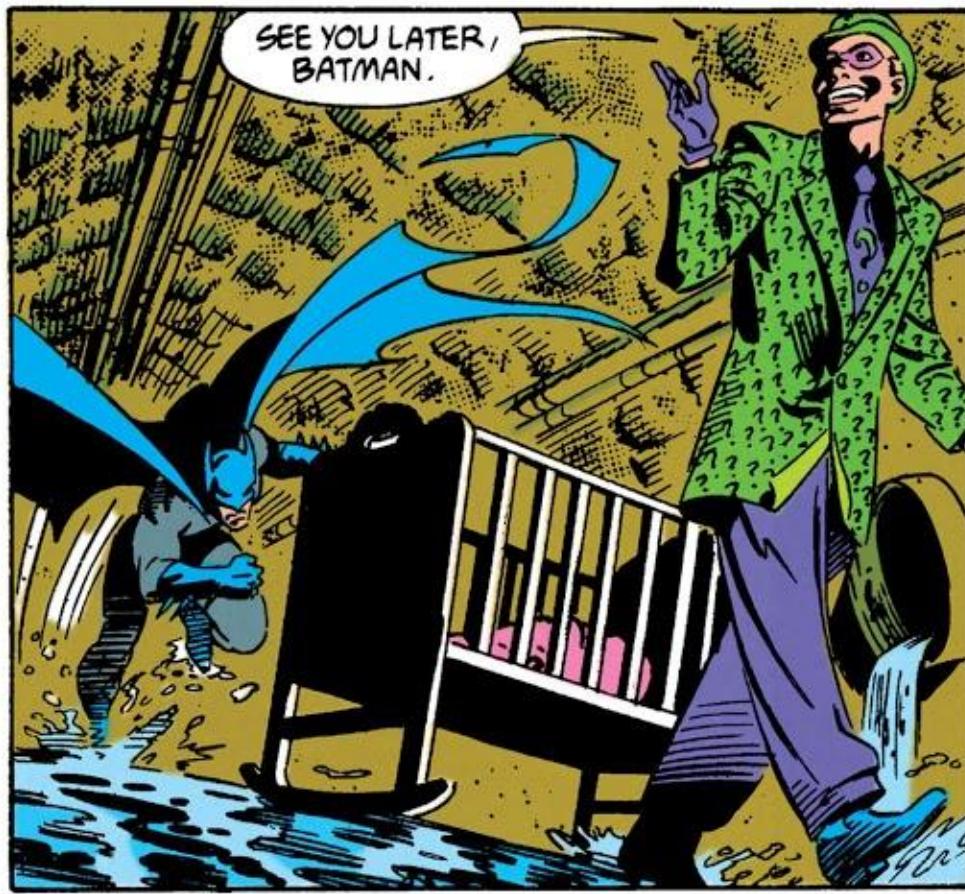
THUD

YES, THEY'RE
PLAYING WITH
ME.

I'LL SHOW
THEM HOW A
BAT PLAYS...

OKAY,
THAT'S
ENOUGH...

BABY'S IN TROUBLE, BATS.
STARTING TO TURN BLUE.
THE
PING PONG
BALL'S STUCK
CLEAN IN HIS
THROAT...



THE SADISTIC RUNT'S PLANNED IT THIS WAY...





novus
Distributions