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BATMAN

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BY THE
COMICS
CODE

AUTHORITY

I CAME
HERE TO
AVENGE
A FRIEND'S
MURDER--

--AND NO
SECRET
POLICE
ARE GOING TO
STOP
ME!

A CHILLING TALE OF
ESPIONAGE AND DEATH--
**"MURDER COMES IN
BLACK BOXES!"**



ERNIE
CHYA
1974

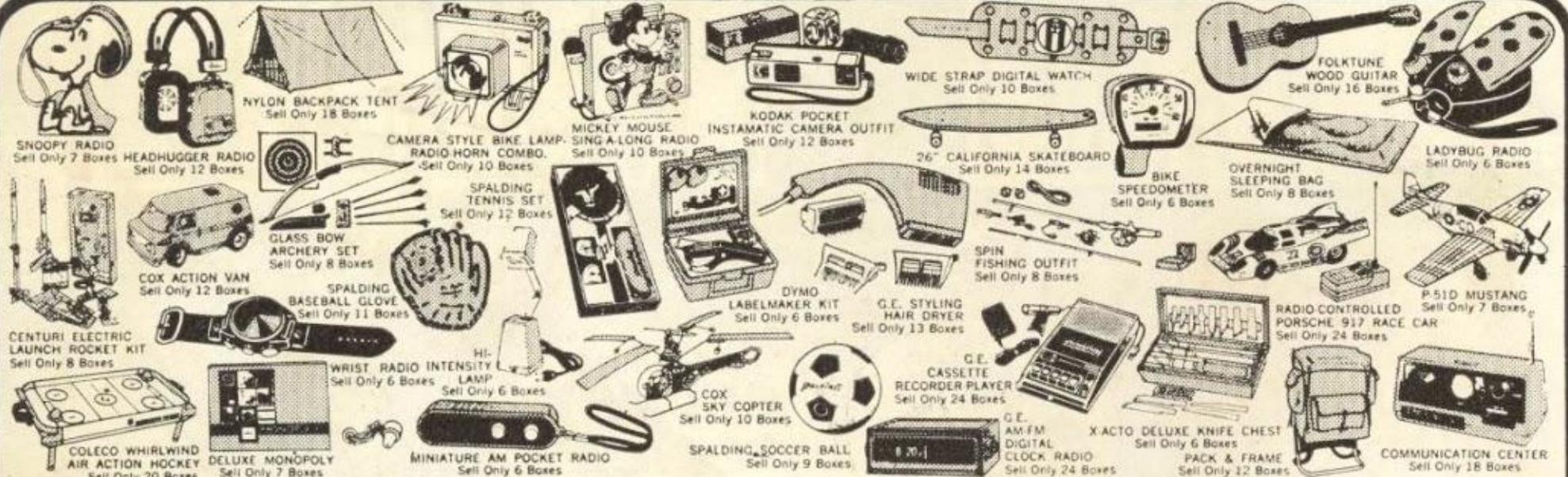
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BATMAN

WHERE ARE YOU
TAKING ME?

TO
VENGEANCE,
BATMAN!

TO THE GREATEST
ADVENTURE OF
YOUR LIFE--

--AND MAYBE
TO YOUR DEATH!

IT BEGAN WITH AN
APPOINTMENT FOR
MURDER AND BECAME
A BIZARRE AND
DEADLY GAME WITHOUT
RULES-- FOR STAKES
THAT STAGGERED THE
IMAGINATION!

STORY: DAVID V. REED
ART: ERNIE CHUA &
TEX BLAISDELL
EDITOR, JULIUS SCHWARTZ

MURDER COMES IN BLACK BOXES!

S-2389

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Advertising Representative,
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(212) 391-1400.

A WINDSWEPT RAIN DRENCHES GOTHAM CITY... THE GREAT METROPOLIS IS HUSHED. AT AN UNSHELTERED BUS STOP ON THE SOUTHEAST CORNER OF PARK AND EIGHTH, THE LONE FIGURE OF A MAN STANDS IN THE DRIVING DOWNPOUR...

WITHIN MOMENTS, ANOTHER MAN CROSSES THE STREET... AND STANDS ON THE SAME CORNER...

THEN A THIRD MAN APPEARS... AND JOINS THE OTHER TWO. THEY IGNORE EACH OTHER...



SUDDENLY--A BLACK LIMOUSINE COMES ROARING DOWN EIGHTH--TAKES THE CORNER AT HIGH SPEED--

SCREEECH



TWO OF THE MEN WERE DEAD ON IMPACT... THE THIRD DIED SOON AFTER. THE VEHICLE RESPONSIBLE FOR THEIR DEATHS WAS FOUND A FEW BLOCKS AWAY... IT HAD BEEN STOLEN. THERE WAS NO TRACE OF ITS DRIVER...

TWO HOURS
LATER, THE
GOTHAM
GENERAL
HOSPITAL
MORGUE--

YES, COMMISSIONER,
YOUR GUESS ABOUT
THEIR CREDENTIALS
WAS RIGHT... I DO
RECOGNIZE THEM! ALL
THREE WERE FOREIGN
INTELLIGENCE AGENTS!

THAT FIRST ONE
WAS ALDO FONDI,
FROM ITALY... THIS ONE
WAS JORGE ZAMORA,
FROM PANAMA...

... AND THIS WAS
NIKUMA SENGHOR,
WHO WORKED FOR THE
AFRICAN REPUBLIC
OF BURUNDI!

I KNEW THEM ALL
THROUGH INTERPOL...
BUT I'M CERTAIN
NONE OF THEM
KNEW EACH OTHER!

WELL, THOSE AREN'T
THE NAMES THEY WERE
USING! WE TRACED THEM
THROUGH THEIR HOTEL
KEYS... THEY ALL CHECKED
IN YESTERDAY!

IF THEY
WERE RUN
DOWN BY
ACCIDENT--

--WHY THE
FROWN,
BATMAN?

A RANDOM MEETING OF
THREE INTELLIGENCE AGENTS
-- FROM WIDELY SEPARATED
PARTS OF THE WORLD --
TOTAL STRANGERS TO
EACH OTHER --

--FINDING THEM-
SELVES ON THE SAME
CORNER IN GOTHAM
CITY AT NINE O'CLOCK
TONIGHT--

--PRECISELY
ON TIME
TO DIE?

NO, COMMISSIONER...
SUCH AN ACCIDENT
IS IMPOSSIBLE!

HOWEVER IT WAS
ARRANGED--
HOWEVER IT MAY
HAVE COME
ABOUT--

--THIS WAS
MURDER--BY
APPOINTMENT!

AT THAT
MOMENT--

WHO'S THIS,
SGT. BRENNER?

THE FIANCÉE OF ONE
OF THE DECEASED OR
SO SHE CLAIMS!

HOW DID SHE
LEARN ABOUT
THIS SO FAST?

FROM US! WE
FOUND HER IN
FONDI'S HOTEL
ROOM, WAITING
FOR HIM!

FONDI TOLD
HER HE HAD
TO GO OUT
FOR A
LITTLE
WHILE!

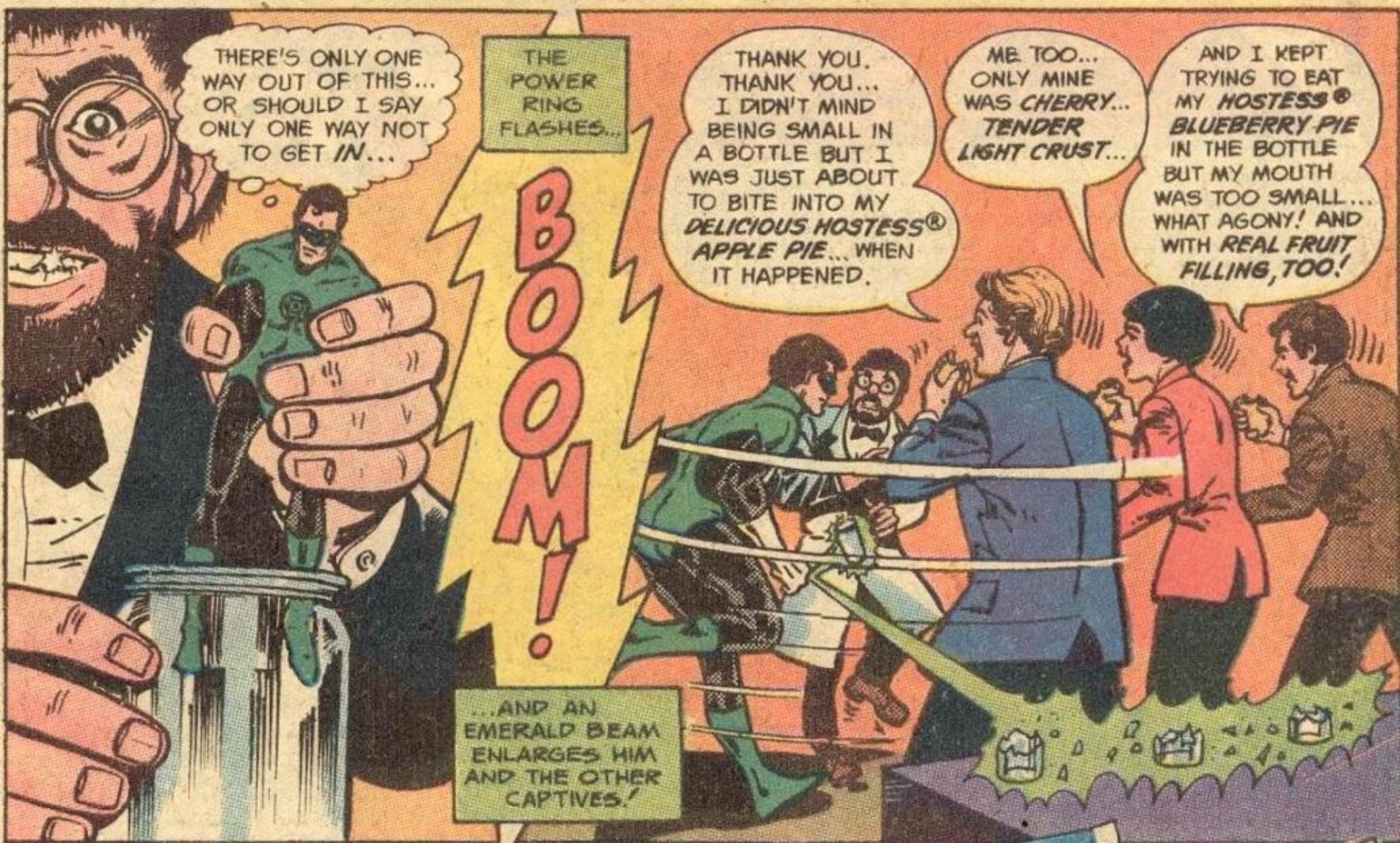


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ON SALE AUGUST 17TH!

TEEN TITANS:

TOMORROW'S HEROES--TODAY! AND DOCTOR LIGHT WANTS TO WIPE THEM OUT BEFORE THEY CAN GET THEIR CAREERS STARTED!

WILL MAL, THE NEWEST TEEN TITAN, BE ABLE TO STOP THE LUMINOUS LAWBREAKER--OR WILL DOCTOR LIGHT SUCCEED IN KILLING THEM... AND THE JUSTICE LEAGUE AS WELL?

ON SALE AUGUST 19TH!



COMMISSIONER GORDON-- KIDNAPPED! THE RANSOM? BATMAN'S SECRET IDENTITY--A SECRET EVEN COMMISSIONER GORDON DOESN'T KNOW! IS GORDON DOOMED... WILL BRUCE WAYNE BE SACRIFICED TO SAVE HIM... OR WILL "THE BEST-KEPT SECRET IN GOTHAM CITY" BE REVEALED?

ON SALE AUGUST 31ST!

AND DON'T FORGET OUR NEW

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--THE SWEATHOGGS STRIKE! ON AUGUST 5TH!

COMMISSIONER, SHE WAS RIGHT! ALL THREE MEN TRIED TO CONTACT ME -- IN ALMOST IDENTICAL MESSAGES--

Sgt. BRENNER-- WHERE'S THAT GIRL?

THAT'S WHAT I CAME TO TELL YOU, BATMAN-- I COULDN'T STOP HER --SHE JUST LEFT!

--SO HAVE IT!

WITHIN MOMENTS, THE BATMAN IS CAREFULLY POSITIONED AND SCREENED FOR PURSUIT!...

THE DECATUR BRIDGE! HEADING OUT TO THE SUBURBS?

ALL AT ONCE--

A TOW-TRUCK-- GOING LIKE BLAZES--

--WITH A SHOT-GUN STICKING OUT OF THE WINDOW!?

INSTANTLY-- THE BATMOBILE ACCELERATES LIKE A PROJECTILE-- THRUSTS ITSELF BETWEEN THE TWO VEHICLES!

RATATATAT

BAM BAM

IT'S SLOWING UP-- TO STAY EVEN WITH THE TAXI!

AND A MACHINE-GUNNER-- HIDDEN BEHIND THE WINCH!

AS THE HAIL OF LEAD SLAMS HARMLESSLY AGAINST THE BATMOBILE--

GOOD-- THE TAXI STOPPED!

NOW TO TIME THEIR NEXT MOVE-- WHEN THEY TRY SIDE-SWIPING ME OFF THE BRIDGE--

NOW--!

AGAIN--A LIGHTNING-SWIFT TOUCH ON THE BATMOBILE'S ACCELERATOR--



THEY GOT OUT...GOOD!

THE POLICE WILL HAVE THEM BY THE TIME THEY REACH SHORE!

BATMAN-- YOU SAVED OUR LIVES!

YOU'RE COMING WITH ME--I'LL TAKE YOU WHEREVER YOU WERE GOING!

THE BATMOBILE ROLLS EAST... MINUTES PASS IN COMPLETE SILENCE. THEN--

YOU HAVEN'T SAID WHERE TO YET...
THE BLUE HARBOR MARINA AT WOODSTON!

A MARINA--?

MY AUNT AND UNCLE HAVE A HOUSEBOAT THERE. I ALWAYS STAY WITH THEM WHEN I'M IN GOTHAM.

ANOTHER TEN SILENT MINUTES LATER--

SEEMS QUIET ENOUGH... WHO KNOWS YOU'RE HERE?

ONLY MY AUNT AND UNCLE! THEY'RE IN BOSTON FOR A FEW DAYS, BUT I HAVE MY OWN KEYS.

FIRST, LET ME SAY AGAIN--I NEVER GOT ALDO FONDI'S MESSAGE!... HIS TRANSMITTER WAS SABOTAGED!

HE WAS A FINE MAN. HIS DEATH HAS SADDENED AND SICKENED ME...

...AND NOW, OBVIOUSLY, YOU'RE A TARGET TOO-- IN DEADLY JEOPARDY!

BUT WHY, BATMAN?

PERHAPS YOU KNOW SOMETHING THAT MAKES YOU A THREAT!

I KNOW NOTHING!

MY NAME IS PAMELA DREW... I'M AN AIRLINE STEWARDESS FOR WTA, BASED IN LOS ANGELES.

I MET ALDO IN ROME A YEAR AGO... WE'D PLANNED TO GET MARRIED THERE NEXT WEEK...

YOU MAY KNOW MORE THAN YOU THINK! TELL ME-- WHO ARE YOU? HOW DID YOU KNOW ALDO FONDI?

YESTERDAY HE PHONED ME IN LOS ANGELES... TOLD ME HE WAS HERE AT THE GOTHAM PLAZA ON IMPORTANT BUSINESS.

WE'D HAVE TO POSTPONE OUR WEDDING... BUT I'D SOON HEAR FROM HIM. INSTEAD, I FLEW IN THIS MORNING--

QUIET! I HEAR SOMETHING!



CONTINUED ON 3rd PAGE FOLLOWING

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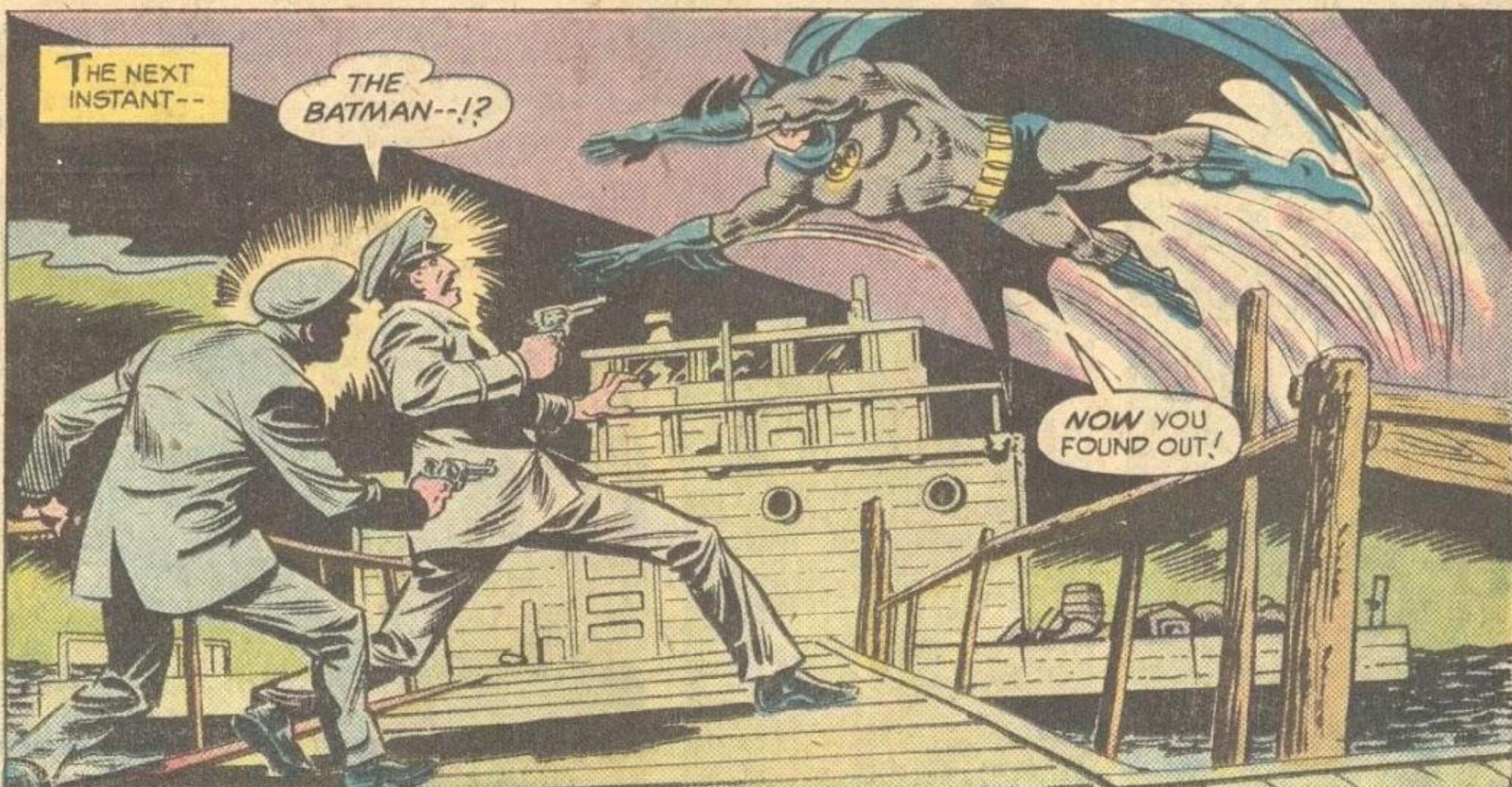
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WHAT TO SINK YOUR TEETH INTO WHEN YOU'RE HUNGRY AND YOU'RE NOT A WEREWOLF.

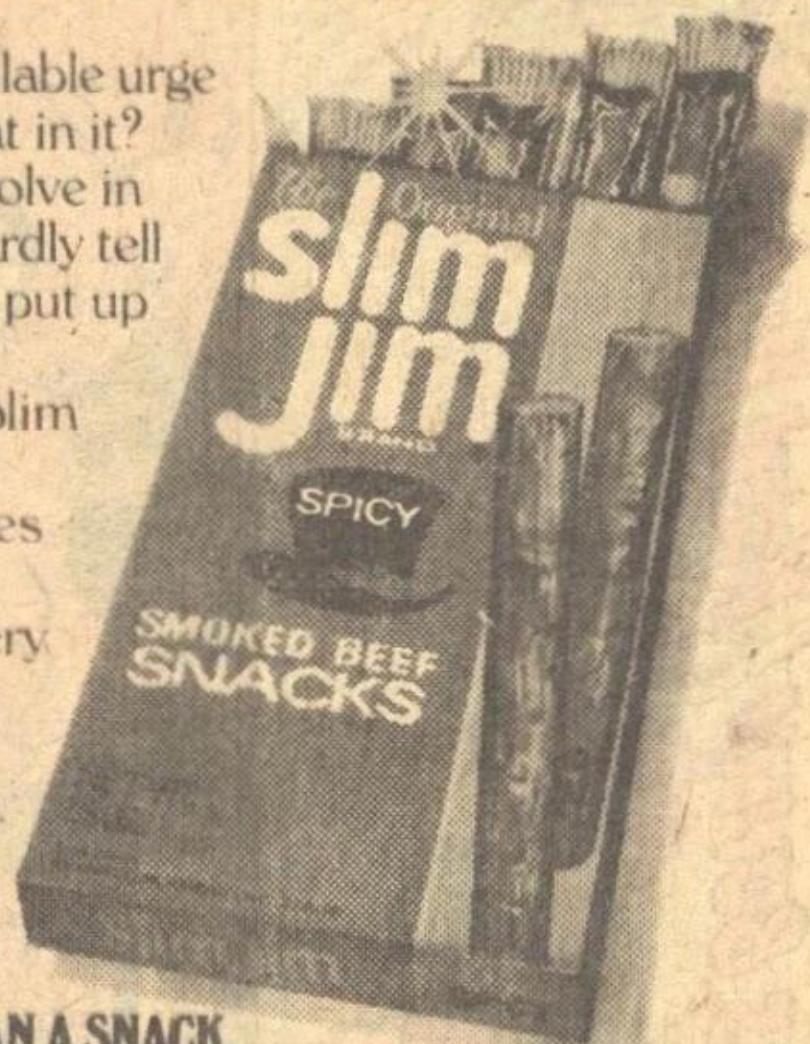
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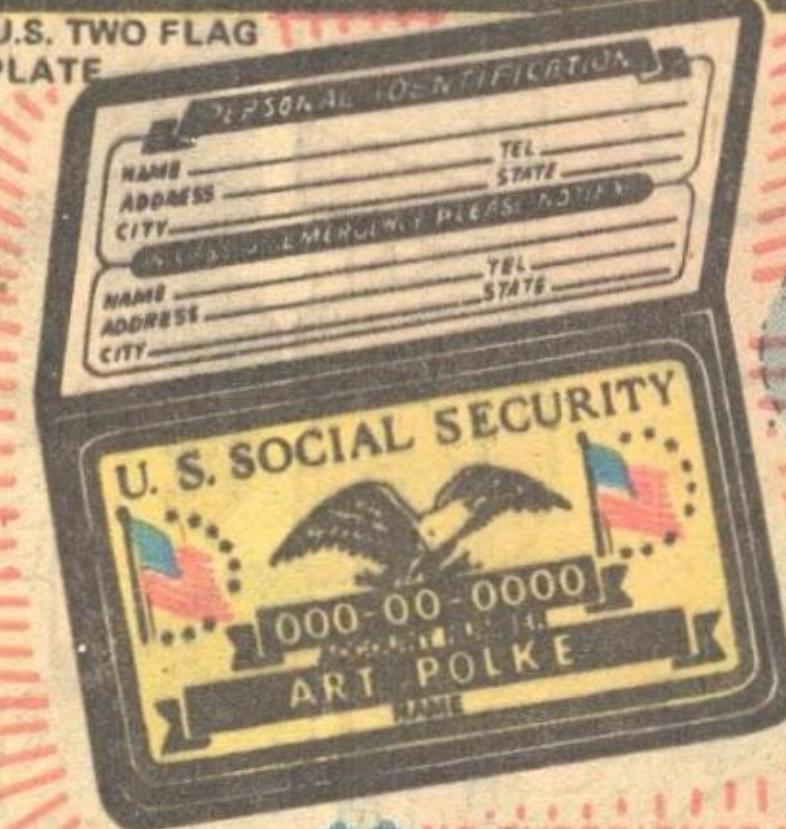
You might want to carry a few extra ones, too. Then, if you meet a werewolf, you can give him something to sink his teeth into instead of you.



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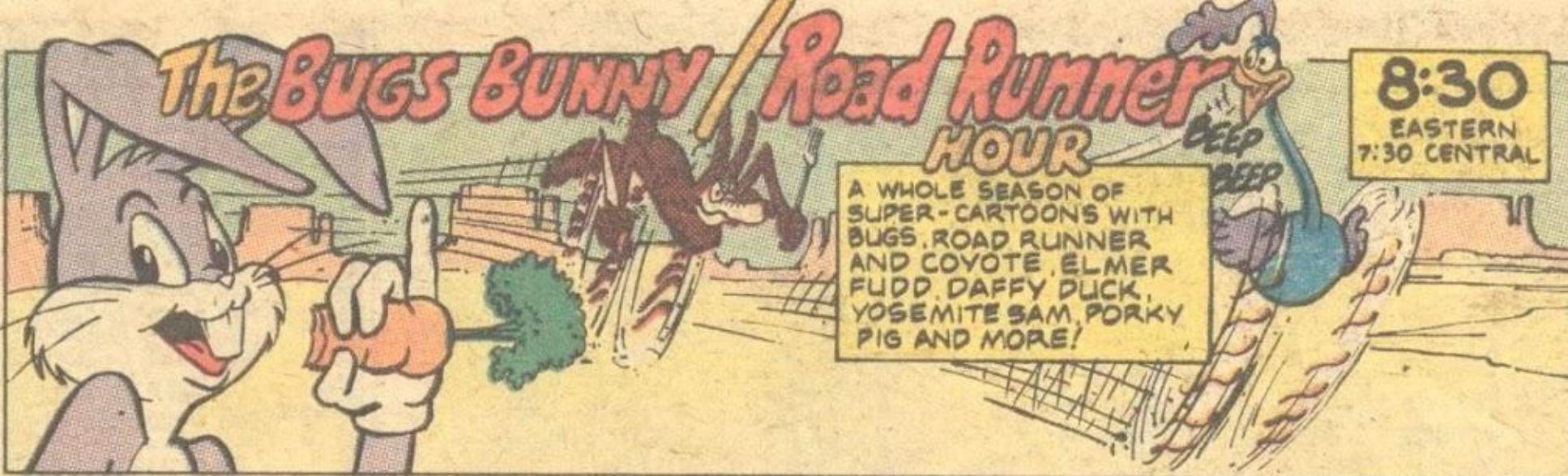
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IN THE NEWS

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CBS
SATURDAY

10:00
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LIVE

THE SUPER-HEROINE RETURNS FACING A MULTITUDE OF NEW DANGERS AS SHE FIGHTS TO BRING LIGHT TO THE WORLD.

SHAZAM!
ISIS
HOUR

10:30
EASTERN
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THE WORLD'S MIGHTIEST MORTAL IN MANY NEW ADVENTURES. GRIPPING ACTION AND EXCITEMENT FOLLOW HIM WHEREVER HE GOES!

10:00
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THE SUPER HEROINE
RETURNS, FACING A
MULTITUDE OF NEW
DANGERS AS SHE
FIGHTS TO BRING
RIGHT TO THE WORLD.

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THE WORLD'S
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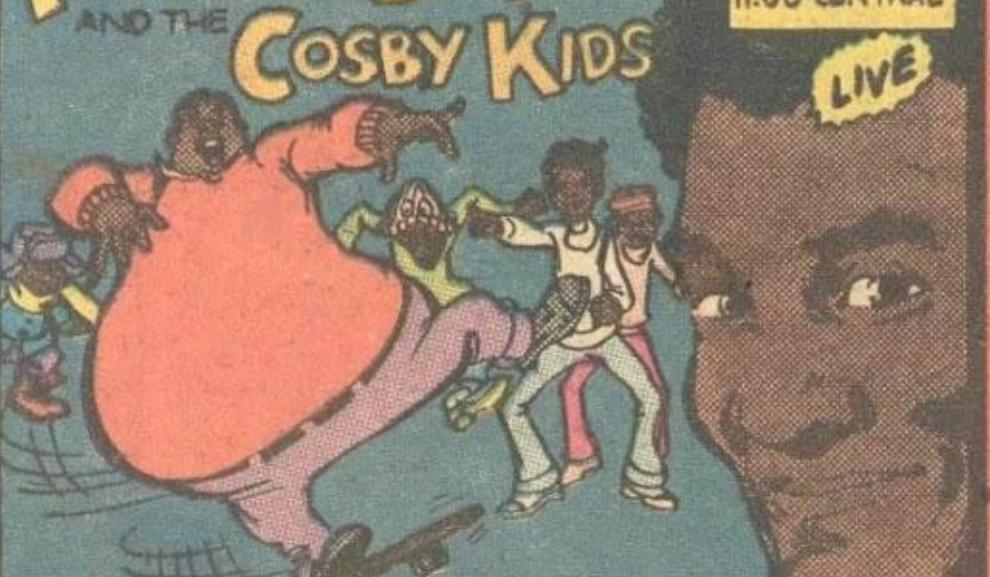
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WAY OUT GAMES

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EASTERN
11:30 CENTRAL

LIVE



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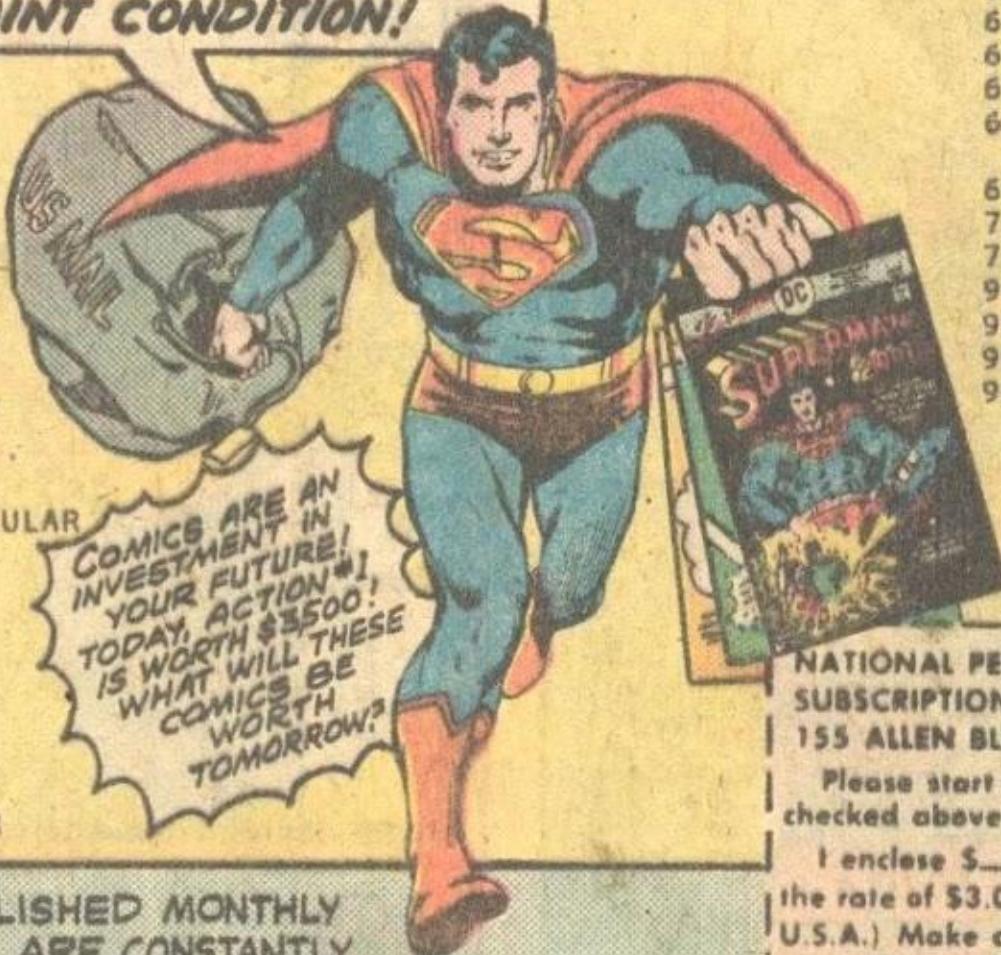


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FROM THE AIRPORT, SO I CAME HERE.
THEN I WENT INTO TOWN AND WAITED
ALL THIS AFTERNOON IN THE
GOTHAM PLAZA LOBBY.

HE CAME IN AT
SIX...AND WE HAD
DINNER IN HIS
ROOM...

AT EIGHT-THIRTY, ALDO
WENT OUT... SAID HE'D
RETURN IN AN HOUR
OR SO...

BUT... HE...
DIDN'T...

DID HE REFER
AT ALL TO HIS
"VERY IMPORTANT
BUSINESS"
HERE?

NO... ONLY THAT
PHRASE! HE SEEMED
VERY ANXIOUS AND
PREOCCUPIED...

THAT'S IT?
--NOTHING
ELSE?

YES... THIS ADDRESS
BOOK! I FOUND IT IN
ALDO'S SUITCASE
AFTER HE WENT OUT.

I WAS IN A
TERRIBLE STATE
ABOUT OUR
MARRIAGE BEING
POSTPONED. I
WONDERED IF THERE
WASN'T PERHAPS
ANOTHER REASON...

...ANOTHER
WOMAN!

... SO I SPIED ON HIM...
AND I STILL HAD THE BOOK
WHEN THE POLICE APPEARED
AT HIS ROOM!

IT WAS
CONTEMPTIBLE
OF ME TO
MISTRUST
ALDO...

I'LL TAKE YOU BACK
TO TOWN AND MAKE
ARRANGEMENTS FOR
YOUR PROTECTION.

YOU BELIEVE
ME NOW ABOUT
BEING A TARGET?

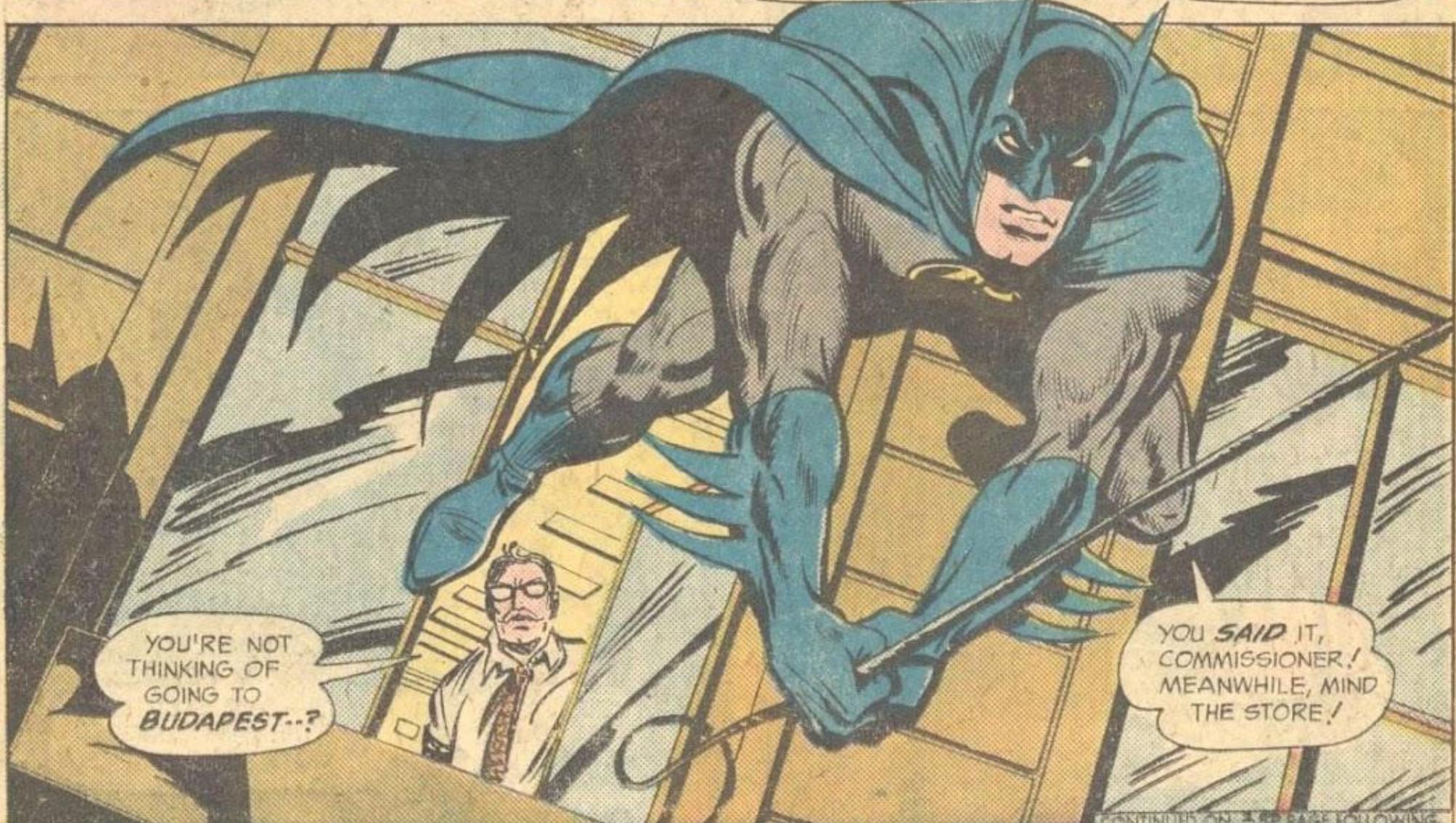
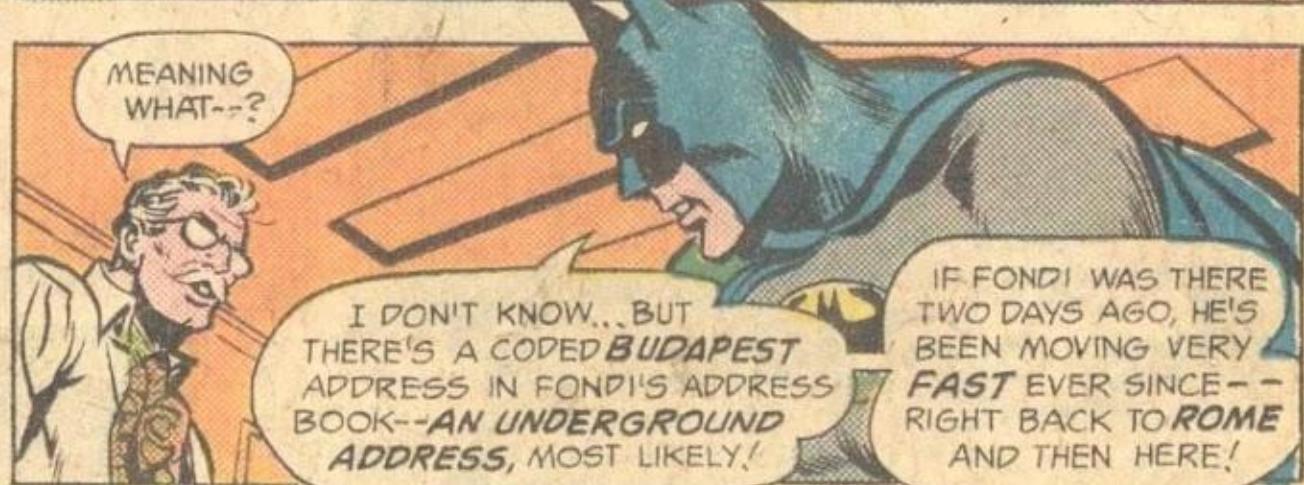
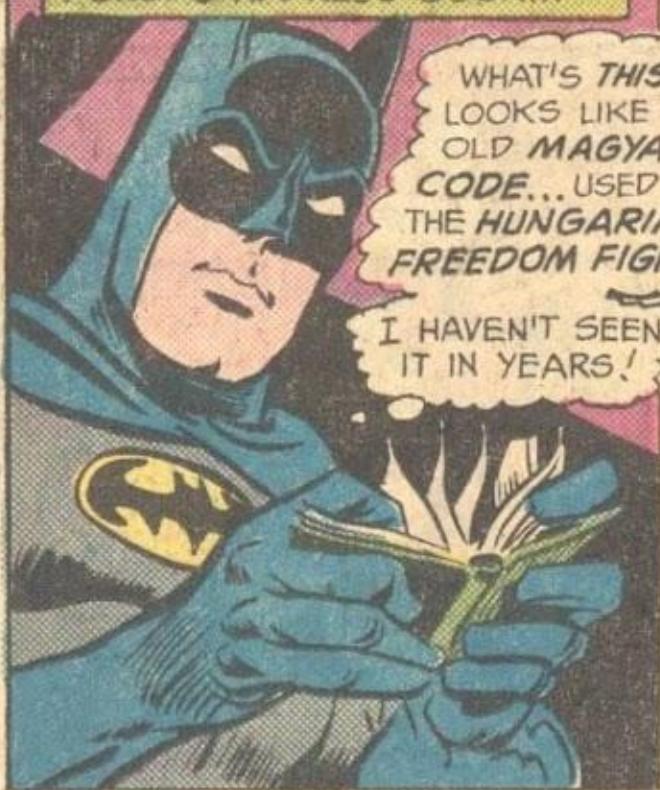
YES... AND
NOW YOU'VE
BECOME A
TARGET TOO!

ME?-- I'VE BEEN ONE
FOR THE LAST HUNDRED
YEARS... SEEMS LIKE!

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1 A.M... AT
POLICE
HEADQUARTERS
... WHERE THE
BATMAN HAS
JUST FINISHED
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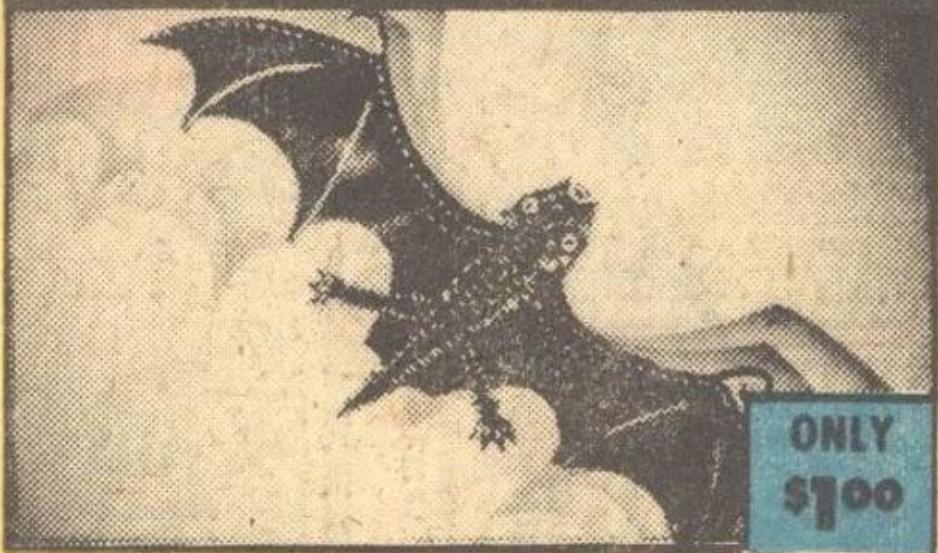
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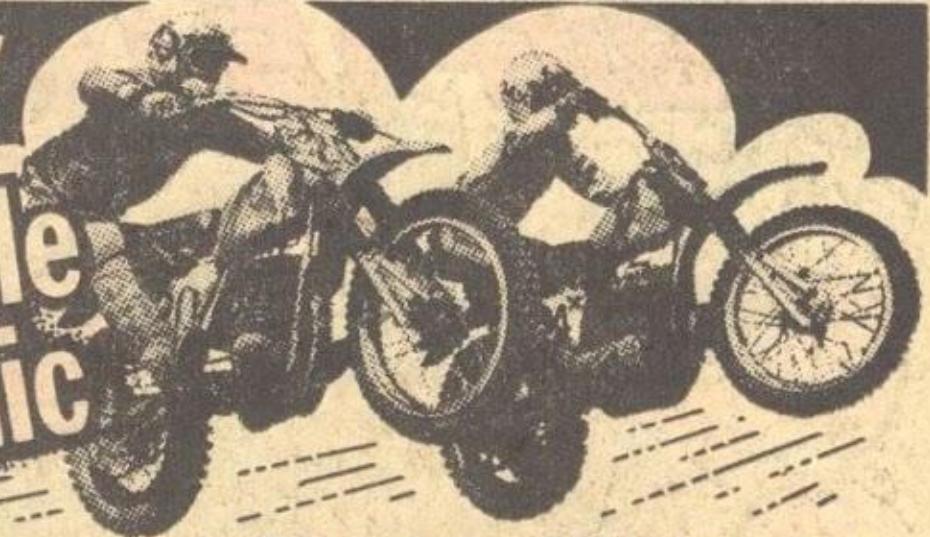
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--FROM WHICH THE MAN WITH THE FLOWERS IS SOON REPLACED BY STILL ANOTHER--

--AND AS DUSK SETTLES OVER THE CITY, A HALF-HOUR'S STROLL BRINGS THE BATMAN TO HIS DESTINATION--

THE BATMAN'S COMMAND OF HUNGARIAN IS HARDLY FLUENT --BUT IT MORE THAN SERVES--

CAN I HELP YOU, SIR?

YES, THANK YOU... I WANT THE SAME BRAND THAT MR. ALDO FONDI GOT HERE ABOUT THREE DAYS AGO!

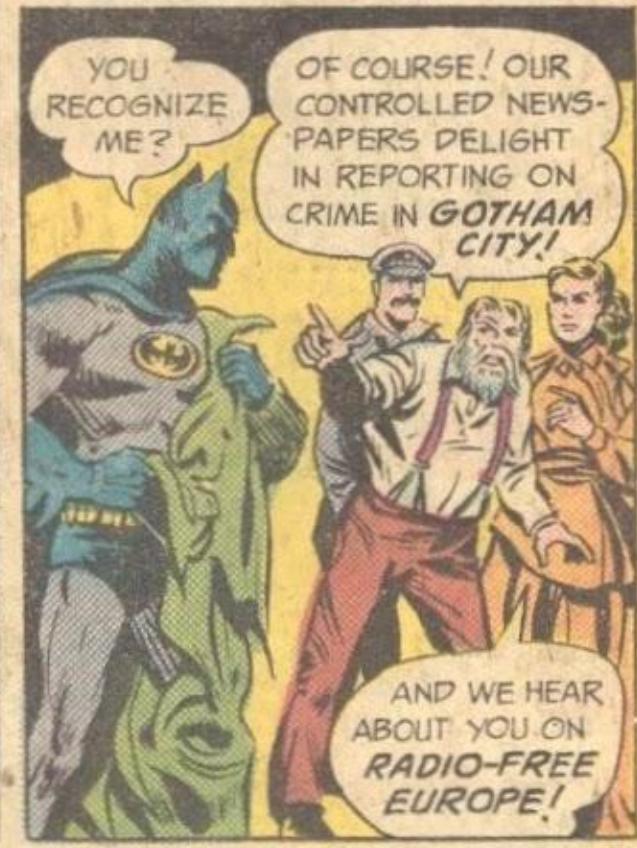
FONDI? I DON'T RECALL HIM, BUT PERHAPS MY EMPLOYER WILL KNOW!

THIS WAY, PLEASE...

AFTER YOU, SIR...

A RETAIL COFFEE SHOP--AT THE CODED NAME AND ADDRESS IN FONDI'S BOOK! NOT A BAD FRONT...

LET'S SEE IF THEY HAVE ANYTHING THAT'S WORTH FLYING 4500 MILES!



QUICKLY,
THE BATMAN
GIVES AN
ACCOUNT OF
THE STRANGE
AND DEADLY
CIRCUMSTANCES
THAT HAVE LED
HIM TO
BUDAPEST...



DO YOU
KNOW WHY?...
CAN YOU
GUESS?

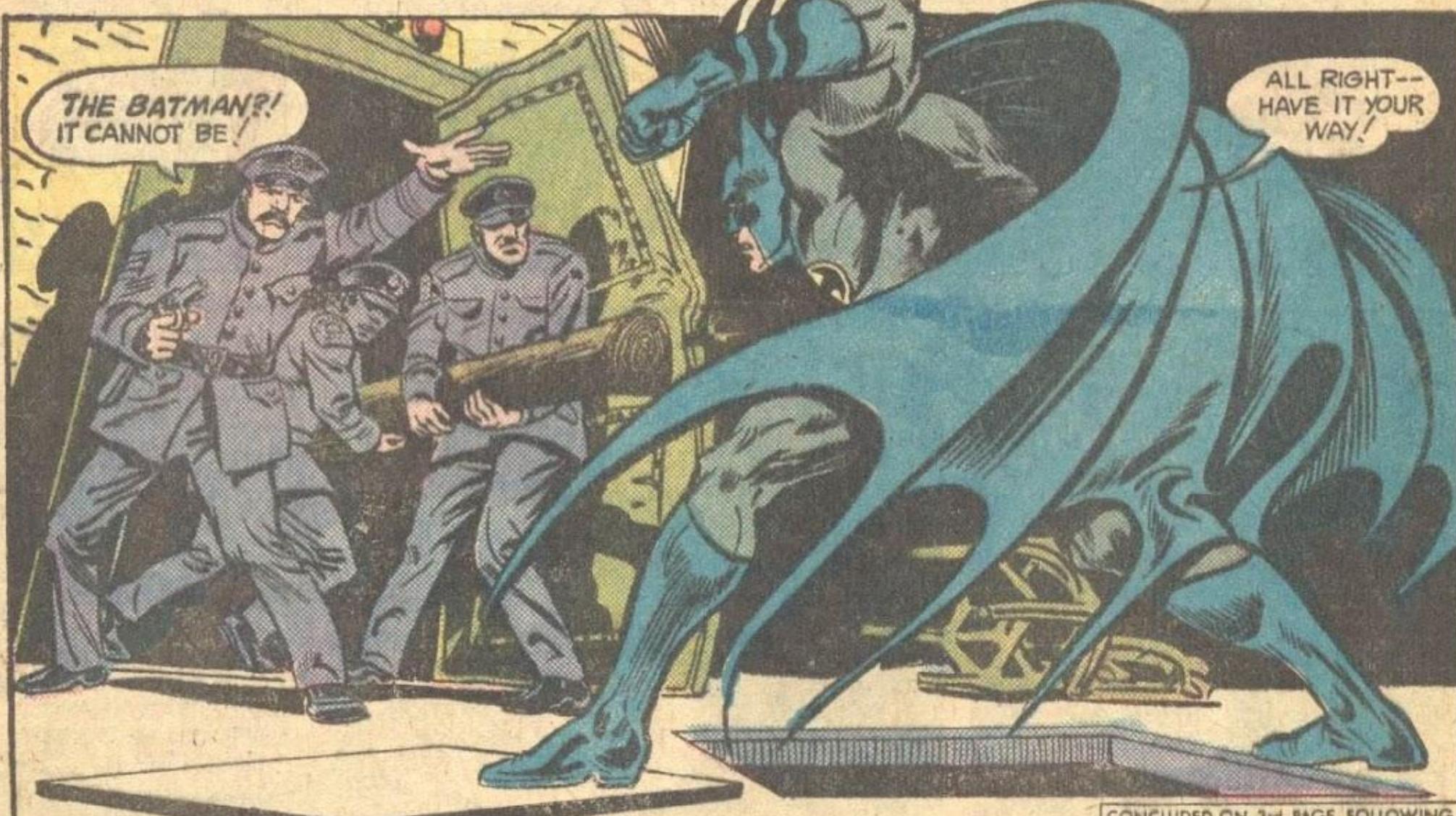
NEITHER... IT
OBVIOUSLY HAD
TREMENDOUS
IMPORTANCE AND
MEANING FOR HIM
... BUT HE SAID
NOTHING AND WE ASKED
NOTHING!

HE WAS COMPLETELY
SATISFIED WITH OUR PROOF,
AND HE RETURNED TO **ROME**
AT ONCE... AND THAT'S ALL
WE OR ANYONE KNOWS!

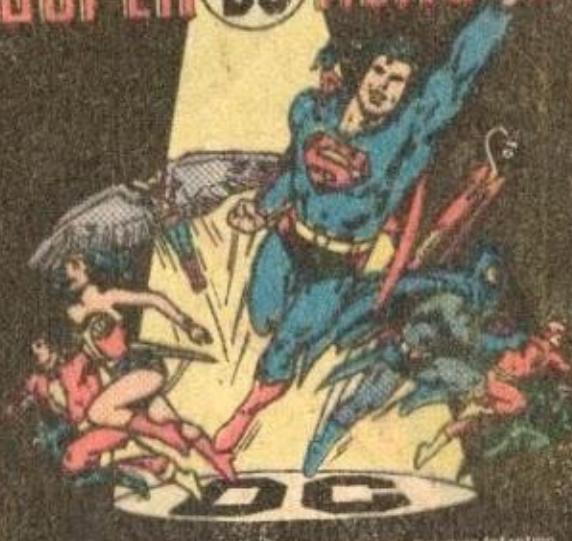
DO YOU MIND
IF I KEEP...

LOOK!--THE
RAID SIGNAL!

THE
SPECIAL
POLICE!



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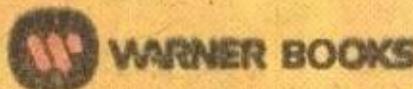
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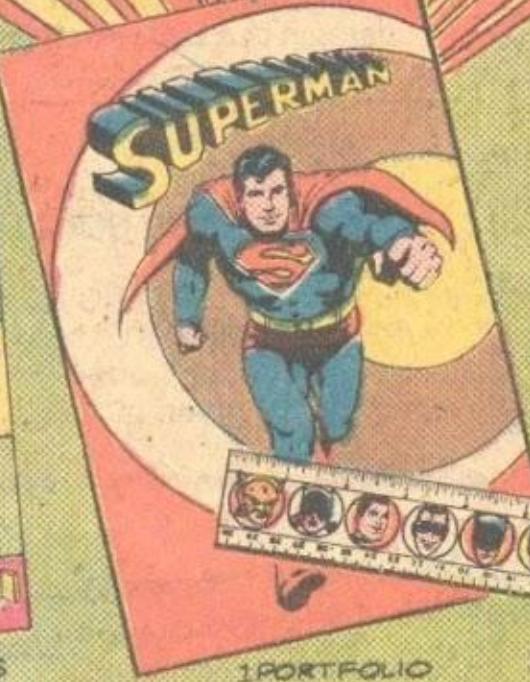
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LETTERS to the

BATMAN

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me David V. Reed wrote it and I'll groan. Then let me read the story and I'll ask for one large slice of humble pie!

What I'm trying to say is that "Riddle of the Man Who Walked Backwards" (not a top title, Mr. Reed) was good. It contained all the elements that spell a good Batman story. First of all, it had a knockout, wordless, action-filled cover by Ernie Chua. It was, to say the least, a fantastic work of art and I hope you plan more silent covers in the future.

Did I say "Riddle of the Man Who Walked Backwards" (not a top title, Mr. Reed) was good? I'm sorry—it was excellent! From the supernatural beginning to the logical explanation at the end and including every panel in the middle, "Riddle of the Man Who Walked Backwards" (not a top title, Mr. Reed) was fast-paced, well characterized and realistically dialogued. I especially enjoyed that pipe trap on page 11. It seemed perfect and inescapable, although I hold that it would have been more interesting if the pipe had filled with water due to an oncoming high tide.

As a matter of fact, out of all the various ingredients that comprised "Riddle of the Man Who Walked Backwards" (not a top title, Mr. Reed), there was only one that I strongly disliked. I challenge the DC lords of the lettercols to deduce what it is.

ADAM CASTRO, New Rochelle, N.Y.

(Not a hard problem, Mr. Castro! But you'll be interested to learn that Dave's original title was "Make Way for a Monster!" Ye editor Julie Schwartz supplied the one which was used!—BR)

Dear Julius,

Only David V. Reed could manage to fit dope smugglers, one-legged sea captains, sea monsters and Bruce Wayne's vacation into one 17 page story. "Riddle of the Man Who Walked Backwards" in BATMAN #277 isn't the sort of fare that will win a lot of ACBA awards, but it will keep the readers happy. I was glad to see Dave return to what has become his comic trademark: mystery with a series of unusual twists.

Ernie Chua deserves a round of applause for his usual devastating pencilwork, but I found Tex Blaisell's inks a bit sketchy. But it didn't affect the overall quality of the issue!

KEVIN L. CALLAHAN, Brea, Cal.

(Sea Monster and all, #277 drew mixed reviews, as evidenced by the letters above and below!—BR)

Dear Editor:

Sorry, gentlemen, but I have trouble believing the month-after-month mountain of praise that readers lavish on David V. Reed's Batman tales. How can they applaud Reed who, issue after issue, flaunts his contempt for every Batman story written in the past six years?

Mr. Reed virtually wrote his own condemnation on the first page of BATMAN #277. Maybe Reed's Caped Crusader operates on crime with the skill of a surgeon. Denny O'Neill's Batman, however, battles it with the fury of a demon. The Batman I remember struck terror into the hearts of underworld minions. Now he merely matches wits with them. Despite Ernie Chua's fearsome-looking Batman, the Gotham Guardian never acts in a fearsome manner. Gone is the strange figure of the night who stalks his prey with uncanny determination, who intimidates his victims with a few menacing words, who appears and inevitably vanishes in a shroud of mystery. I want these things back and it just doesn't seem reasonable that—out of several thousand readers—only Adam Castro (whose letter appeared in #276) agrees with me!

PAUL D. EMRATH, Milwaukee, Wis.

(Sorry to disappoint you, Paul, but even Adam Castro doesn't agree with you this time, as evidenced below!—BR)

Dear People,

Give me a story entitled "Riddle of the Man Who Walked Backwards" (not a top title, Mr. Reed) and I'll wince. Give me a story entitled "Riddle of the Man Who Walked Backwards" (not a top title, Mr. Reed) and tell

Dear Editor:

A few days ago I was looking over my small collection of 1940's pulp magazines and in various issues of AMAZING STORIES I found short stories entitled "Kid Poison", "The World of Miracles" and "The Girl From Venus". What caught my attention was that they were all written by one David V. Reed. Is this the same Mr. Reed who 35 years later is scripting Batman?

THOMAS D.N. ZAENGER, Toledo, O.

... David V. Reed is Avram Davidson!

MASHURI CLARK, New York, N.Y.

... After reading and comparing "Riddle of the Man Who Walked Backwards" in BATMAN #277 and "Slow Down—and Die" in DETECTIVE #460, I think I have the answer to the ever-present "Who is David V. Reed?" mystery.

How did I deduce this? Well, no one has brought out the forcefulness of The Batman like David V. Reed and that 'TEC' story has the very same style. Therefore, David V. Reed is YOU, Bob Rozakis!

MIKE STOECKIG, Forsyth, Mont.

(While Dave is indeed the author of those old AMAZING STORIES, he is not mystery/sf writer-editor Avram Davidson. As we revealed last issue, legally he's David Vern, a separate entity entirely from ye assistant editor—Bob Rozakis!)

TEEN TITANS TACKLE DR. LIGHT!

VILLAIN USES JUNIOR HEROES TO GET AT JLA

(Titans HQ)—Dr. Light, the master villain who has tried time and again to defeat the *Justice League*, has come up with a new scheme to get at the world's greatest super-heroes.

The Lord of Luminescence sends out a signal to Robin, Wonder Girl, Kid Flash, Speedy and Mal to lure them into their *Teen Titans* headquarters and then traps them. With the junior heroes as hostages, Dr. Light hopes to gain entrance to the *Justice League* satellite and thereby trap the *JLA*ers in their own home base.

Can Dr. Light really become "The Man Who Toppled the Titans" or will he be foiled? Paul Levitz, Pablo Marcos and Bob Smith have the answers in *TEEN TITANS* #44, on sale the week of August 16th. Plus in this issue, see what happens when Mal decides to become a full-fledged super-hero!



TRIVIA QUIZ #15

Batman's been teaming up with lots of the DC Super-Stars in *BRAVE & BOLD*. Can you name the one crimefighter who's worked with him most often in that magazine? And do you know which prominent DC hero has never joined the Caped Crusader in *B&B*? The answers will be in next week's *PLANET*!

ANSWERS TO LAST WEEK'S QUIZ: Jimmy Olsen knows Batman and Robin's identities. Commissioner Gordon knows his daughter Babs is Batgirl. Iris Allen knows The Flash is her husband Barry. Green Lantern's Hal Jordan identity is known to Carol Ferris. And the father-son team of Pete and Jonathan Ross know Superman is Clark Kent, but neither Jon nor Supie knows that Pete has that knowledge.

"What Haunted Herbert?" by Al Case and Jess Jodloman; and "Escape to Treachery" by Jack Philips and Gerry Talaoc.

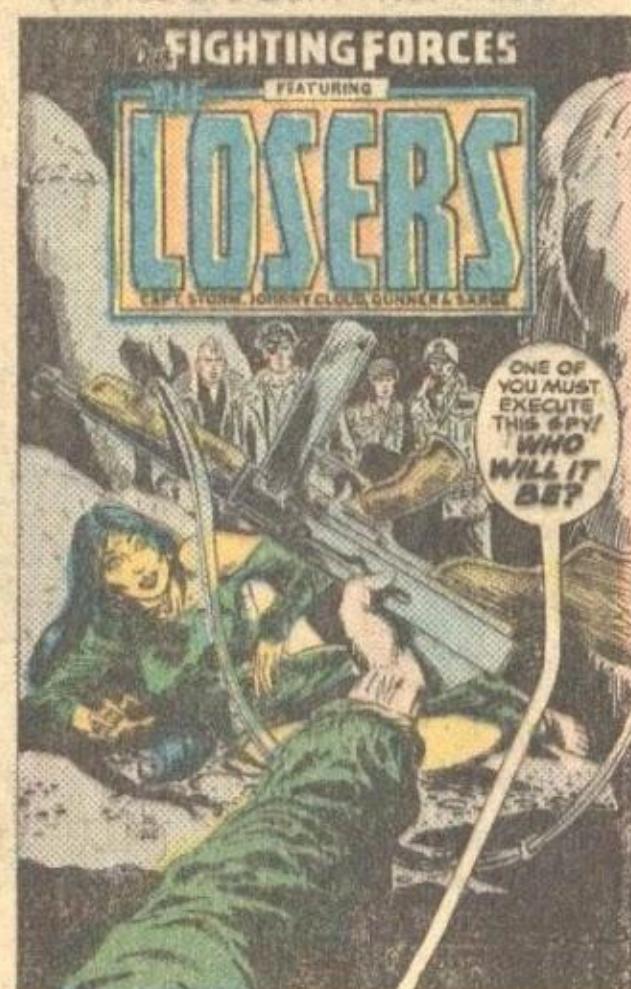
WEIRD WAR TALES #49—Four stories of the weirdest wars ever: "The Face of the Enemy" by Jack Oleck and Leo Duranona; "Mark of the Conqueror" by Oleck; Ernie Chua and Bill Draut; "The Day After Doomsday" by Steve Skeates, Steve Ditko and Vince Colletta; and "A Rite to Die" by George Kashdan and Ricardo Villamonte.

WEIRD WESTERN TALES #37—*Jonah Hex* stars in "Requiem for a Gunfighter" by Michael Fleisher, Rich Buckler and Frank Springer.

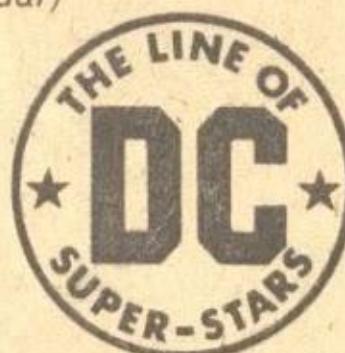
LOSERS STALK CHINESE WARLORD

(China, World War II)—*The Losers*, Captain Storm, Johnny Cloud, and Gunner and Sarge, are off on a mission to China. Their target—the invincible Chinese warlord, General Yin, who is causing more trouble for the Chinese army than the invading Japanese! It's another Bob Kanigher/George Evans battle blockbuster coming your way in *OUR FIGHTING FORCES* #170 on sale the week of August 16th. Don't miss "A Bullet for the General!"

And also in the issue, Sarge goes on a solo mission, courtesy of Andy Furey and E.R. Curz, and proves that "Marines are Born—Not Made!"



AND ON SALE RIGHT NOW: *BATMAN* #281/*BLACKHAWK* #249/*BLITZKRIEG* #6/*HOUSE OF MYSTERY* #247/*SECRET SOCIETY OF SUPER-VILLAINS* #4 (guest-starring Green Lantern)/*SHAZAM* #26/*SUPERMAN* #305 (The original Toyman returns)/*TARZAN FAMILY* #66 (Korak, John Carter of Mars, and Pellucidar)



DIRECT CURRENTS

ON SALE WEEK OF AUGUST 16th
ALL STAR COMICS #63—"The Death of Doctor Fate" is the title and that's only the beginning. Add the *Injustice Gang*, Zanadu the Chaos-Maker and a mysterious guest hero and you've got the *Super-Squad* story of the decade, courtesy of Paul Levitz, Keith Giffen and Wally Wood!

CLAW #10—Our hero wraps up his battles with everybody in "Epilogue" by David Michelinie, Keith Giffen and Bob Layton.

SUPERMAN FAMILY #180—The Girl of Steel suffers amnesia blackouts, making it awfully hard for her to discover "The Secret of the Spellbound Supergirl" in this tale by Cary Bates and Kurt Schaffenberger. Plus: "The Nine Lives of Jimmy Olsen" and "The Girl That Almost Married Clark Kent!"

UNEXPECTED #176—A trio of tales: "Having a Wonderful Crime" by George Kashdan and E.R. Cruz;

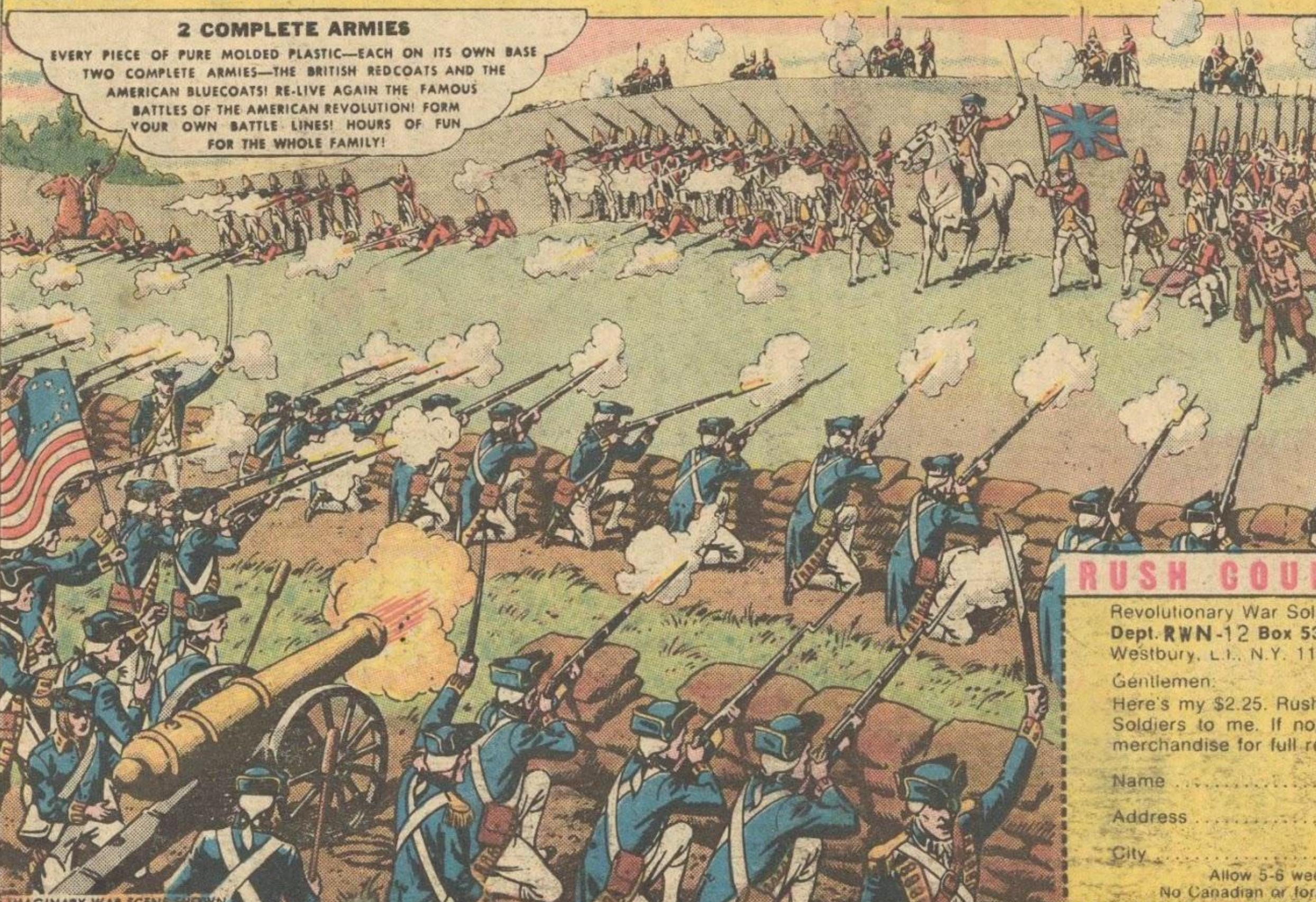
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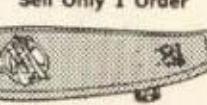


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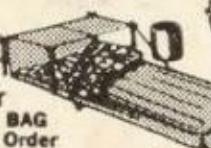
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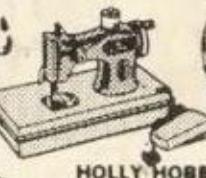
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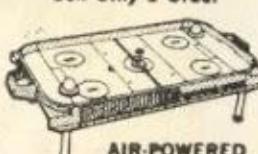
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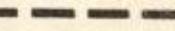
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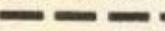
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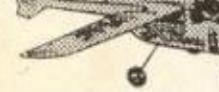
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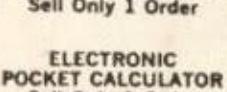
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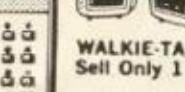
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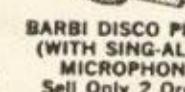
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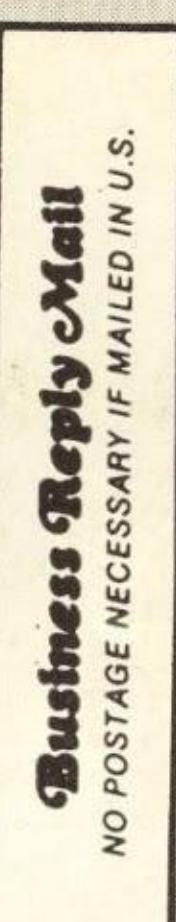
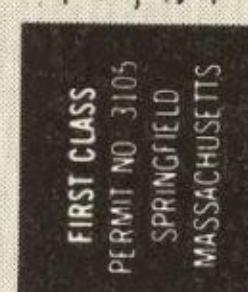
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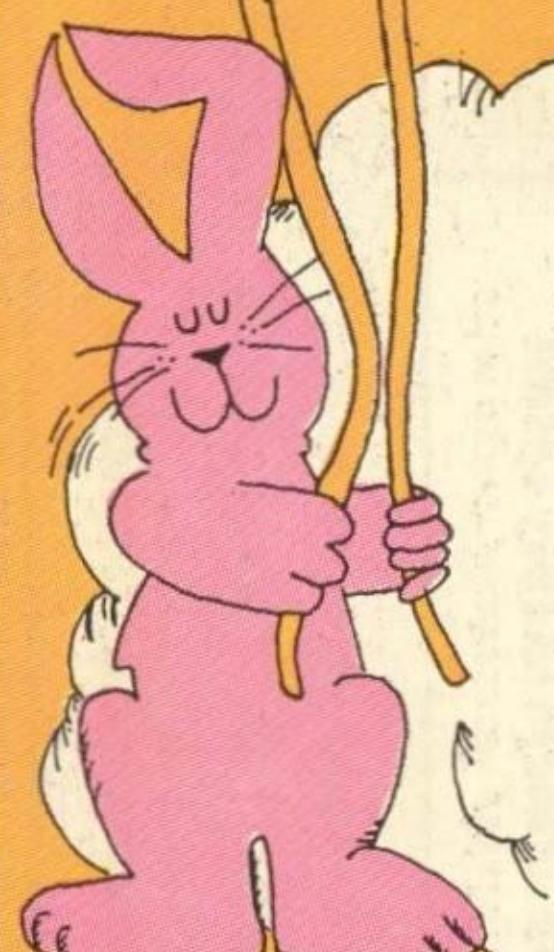
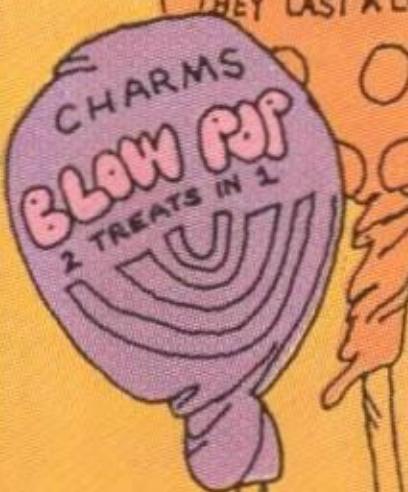
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