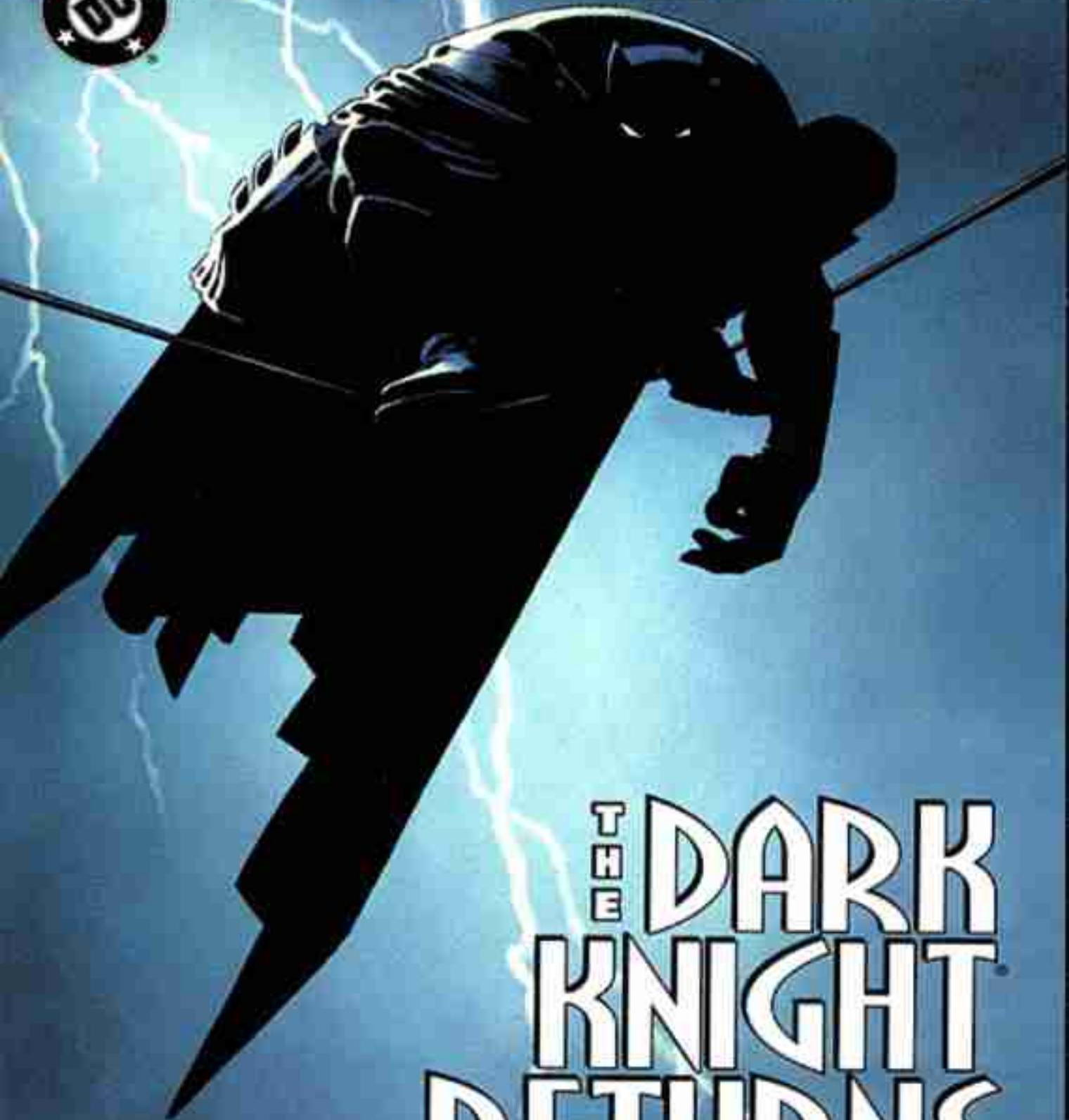




B A T M A N®



THE DARK KNIGHT RETURNS

TENTH ANNIVERSARY EDITION

FRANK MILLER
WITH KLAUS JANSON
AND LYNN VARLEY



THE DARK KNIGHT RETURNS



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**BATMAN: THE DARK KNIGHT RETURNS
TENTH ANNIVERSARY EDITION**

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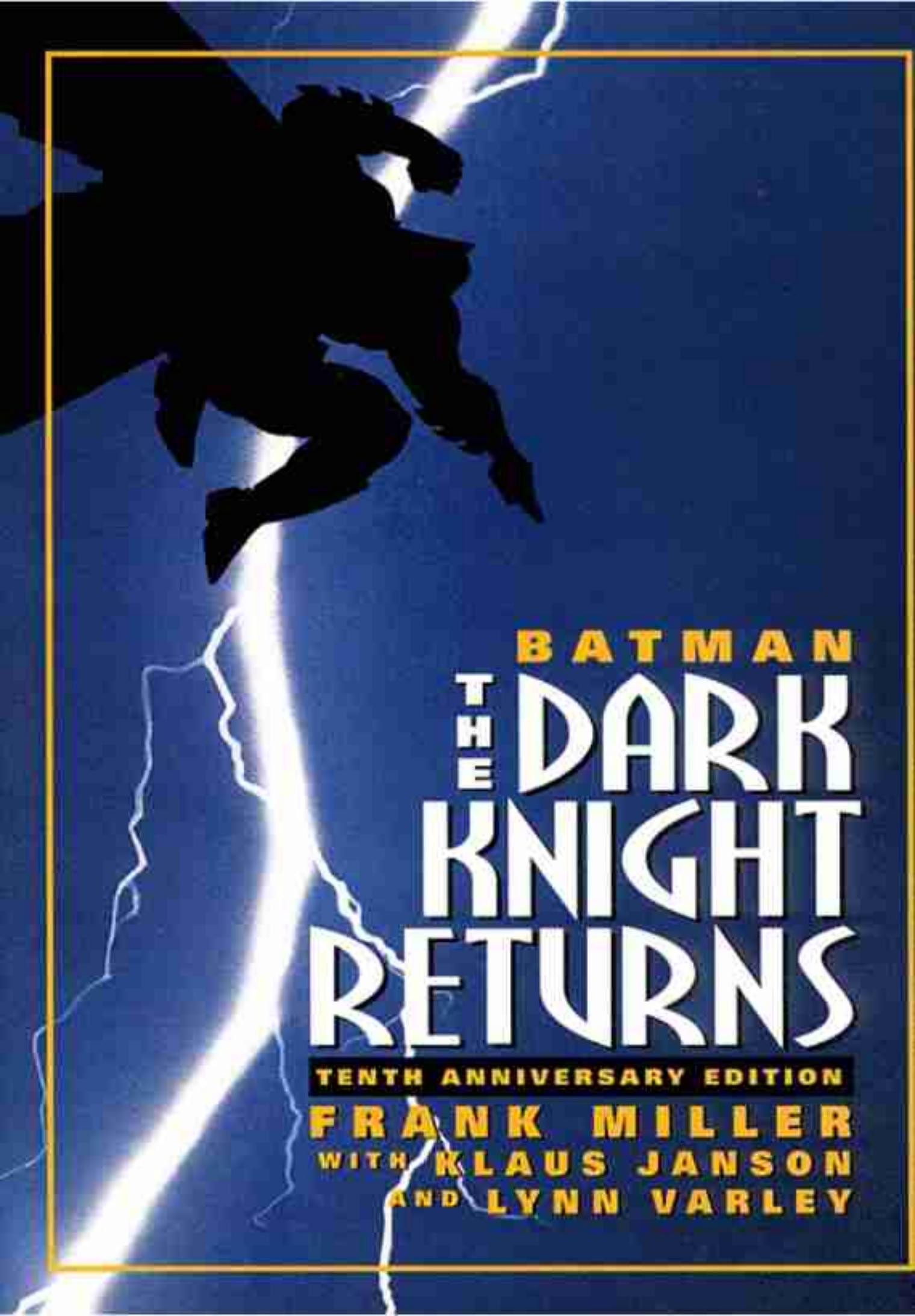
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Hardcover cover illustration
by Frank Miller and Klaus Janson.
Color art by Klaus Janson.
Trade Paperback cover illustration
by Frank Miller and Lynn Varley.

A large, dark silhouette of Batman is shown in flight, his cape billowing behind him. He is positioned against a background of jagged, white lightning bolts striking across a dark blue sky.

BATMAN THE DARK KNIGHT RETURNS

TENTH ANNIVERSARY EDITION

FRANK MILLER
WITH **KLAUS JANSON**
AND **LYNN VARLEY**

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DARK KNIGHT DAYS

BY FRANK MILLER
16 SEPTEMBER 1996

1963. (OR IS IT '64? THE EXACT YEAR IS UNCERTAIN. BUT THE MEMORY IS VIVID.)

A department store in Vermont. I'm 6 (or 7) years old. I come across an 80-page Giant comic starring Batman. I open it. I look it over. I fall in.

I wish I'd kept a diary. But who could've known? Nobody, that's who.

Well, maybe Dick Giordano. Maybe Dick had some idea where all this might take us. He was editor-in-chief of DC Comics at the time, and he'd been pushing this Batman thing for many a month. Whether Dick saw what might come of it or not, he was relentless. He was fixated.

1984. In any number of restaurants and hotel bars. Many times. Dick Giordano says sure. Batman's sales are flat. But look at what happens any time somebody conducts one of those reader surveys in the fanzines. Batman's just about everybody's favorite character. The time is more than ripe for a high-profile, all-out relaunch of the old war horse.

But that was just it. That was exactly what came to bother me about Batman. He wasn't old, damn him. Despite nearly-fifty years of continuous publication, there he was, unwrinkled, handsome, perpetually twenty-nine. Never a kink in that tree-trunk neck. Never a moment fretting the possibility that his athletic prowess would ever fade. Perpetually young, younger than Magic Johnson or Michael Jordan. Impervious to time itself.

1985. My apartment in New York City. A sudden realization, and not a pleasant one. My thirtieth birthday is right around the corner. I'm poised to turn one year older than Batman.

I've come to accept, in recent years, that Spider-Man is younger than my little brother, but Batman? Batman? My favorite childhood hero? That lantern-jawed, ever-wise father figure? I'm actually gonna be older than Batman?

This was intolerable. Something had to be done.

Later that same year. On board an airplane headed for Texas. Dick Giordano and I sip white wine and talk. Enthusiastically, if clumsily, I lay out to him the collection of ideas I've got for this Batman thing he's wanted me to do. The central notion is to simply move Batman through time, and chronicle his last case. Move him through time, and, just by happenstance, make him once again much older than I am.

I fire a barrage of scenes at Dick. He urges me on. It's a raw, rambling narrative I hit him with, not yet a story at all, a mixed bag of cool things Batman will do and say that winds up with an ending that could never work — and even, should it work, is one DC would never publish.

At this stage, *THE DARK KNIGHT RETURNS* is, to use the technical term, a mess. But it's a very enthusiastic mess. I'm red-hot to get started. And a good editor knows

when to let the process begin. Dick gives it a thumbs-up, no doubt praying he'll be able to keep me from doing too much damage.

Putting the team together was the easiest part. Your basic no-brainer. A piece of cake. When it came to working with other artists, I'd already been lucky as a fool, twice over.

My longtime partner Klaus Janson had brought a crackling energy and verve to my pencil art on Marvel Comics' *Daredevil*. By the time we'd finished our *Daredevil* run, Klaus had taken on the lion's share of the drawing, so much so that he took over as sole artist when I left the title. The question was whether he'd want to collaborate again. More luck: he did.

After leaving *Daredevil*, I went to work on my first comics novel, *RONIN*, published by DC Comics. Painter Lynn Varley joined me, and, chapter by chapter, set a brand-new standard of excellence in comic-book color. Lynn actually redefined the very role of color on the comic-book page, bringing such mood and temperature and draftsmanship to my linework that the black-and-white was plainly incomplete without her artistry. Even the story itself was a colder, unfinished thing before she took her brush to it. For color artists to come, Lynn raised the bar to the stratosphere.

A less visible member of the *RONIN* team was Bob Rozakis, DC production boss, who stayed up as late as we did during grueling press checks and solved countless unforeseen problems. This was an ambitious project and a wildly transitional time, and new challenges hit almost hourly. Bob's contribution was quiet, but crucial. With him on the job, we knew we could set our sights high.

Also crucial to the final look and feel of any book is the expertise of the art director. From the late Neal Pozner to Richard Bruning and onward, DC's made sure to have somebody awfully good in that position. As this edition should demonstrate, that's a practice DC continues to this day.

1977. DC President Jenette Kahn's apartment. A party. Curious to look over Jenette's collection of mystery novels, I run into an affable, witty fellow, writer Mike W. Barr. Almost instantly, a friendship begins. It doesn't take long before we find ourselves talking about *Batman*. Ideas fly back and forth. They will continue to fly just about every time Mike and I chat, for all the years to come.

1979. The editorial offices of Marvel Comics. "That's a *Batman* idea," says writer and then-editor Jo Duffy, responding to a scene I want to write into *Daredevil*. It's hardly the first time she's had to say that. Ever encouraging and expert in her suggestions, Jo is editor, colleague, consultant and friend. Of course, over the years to come, she has a lot to say about *Batman*.

Nothing is created in a vacuum, and brother! is that true when you're messing with a character who's loved by generations. Ideas flutter like muses through party chatter and dinner conversations and breaks in dime-ante poker games.

Leave us say if I were to try to list every other writer out there who had something to offer about *Batman*, there wouldn't be room in this volume for the story you're about to read.

It was a roller coaster ride, making *DARK KNIGHT* was, with lurching ups and downs, countless regrettable arguments and welcome surprises. Sometimes pulling it all together, I felt less like an author than a circus ringmaster. There was so much in the air, so many of those fluttering muses.

And there was Batman himself. He was the real boss. As he was quick to assert, Batman has a personality and purpose all his own, a definable core. He's neither petty nor petulant. He's no whiner; there's not a trace of self-pity in his soul. He's smart. He's noble. And most important, he's big. His passions are grand. Even his unhappiness is not depressing, but a brooding, Wagnerian torment. And his triumphs are Olympian.

He insists.

Then, paradoxically, all the goofy stuff, the on-the-face-of-it preposterous stuff, nudges its way back in. The Batcave just isn't complete without that fifty-foot penny. When Commissioner Gordon wants to summon his favorite outlaw, he doesn't do it discreetly, like anybody with a lick of sense would. Nah. He lights up the whole sky with the Bat Signal. Given a hundred more pages of *DARK KNIGHT* to write and draw, I might well have brought giant typewriters and the Bat-Mite into the mix.

I'd never intended to use Robin. But then, one day, I pictured a little bundle of bright colors leaping over buildings, dwarfed by a gray-and-black giant...and there she was, Robin.

Not that my version sprang into my head full-blown.

1985. At 30,000 feet, I talk to cartoonist John Byrne about Batman. John talks to me about Robin. "Robin must be a girl," he says. He mentions a drawing by Love & Rockets artist Jaime Hernandez of a female Robin. To prove his point, John provides me with a pencil sketch of his own.

But it took Lynn Varley to give Carrie Keane Kelley her true voice. It's no exaggeration at all to say that Lynn edited and co-wrote Robin's, and the other youngsters', dialogue. This is only one paltry example of what Lynn brought to *DARK KNIGHT*, even beyond her palette and brush. As much as this book is mine, it is hers.

Colleagues, friends, and those fluttering muses. They were all quite generous.

I got to scratch a whopper of an itch. With one hell of a lot of help, I got to send a gift back in time to that kid in Vermont who opened a Batman comic and fell in, never entirely to emerge.



DEDICATED TO
Will JUNGKUNTZ
1955-1985

B O O K O N E



THE DARK KNIGHT RETURNS

I'VE GOT THE HOME STRETCH ALL TO MYSELF SINCE THE RACEHIPS STOP MAKING SENSE. I SWITCH TO MANUAL--

--BUT THE COMPUTER CROSSES ITS OWN CIRCUITS AND REFUSES TO LET GO. I COOK IT.



IT SHOOTS HOT NEEDLES IN MY FACE AND TRIES TO MAKE ME BLIND. I'M IN CHARGE NOW AND I LINE IT.



THE ENGINE, ANGRY, ARRIVES

THE POINT WITH THE FINISH LINE AS CLOSE, IT ROADS TOO CLOSE.

THE LEFT FRONT TIRE DECIDES TO TURN ALL ON ITS OWN. I LAUGH AT IT AND JERK THE STEERING WHEEL TO THE RIGHT.

EVEN THE FRONT END LURCHES. ALL WRONGS, I KNOW WHAT'S COMING.

I'VE GOT JUST UNDER TWO SECONDS TO SHUT THIS MESS DOWN AND FORESTAY THE RACE.

THE ENGINE, ANGRY, ARRIVES

THE POINT WITH THE FINISH LINE AS CLOSE, IT ROADS TOO CLOSE.

THE LEFT FRONT TIRE DECIDES TO TURN ALL ON ITS OWN. I LAUGH AT IT AND JERK THE STEERING WHEEL TO THE RIGHT.



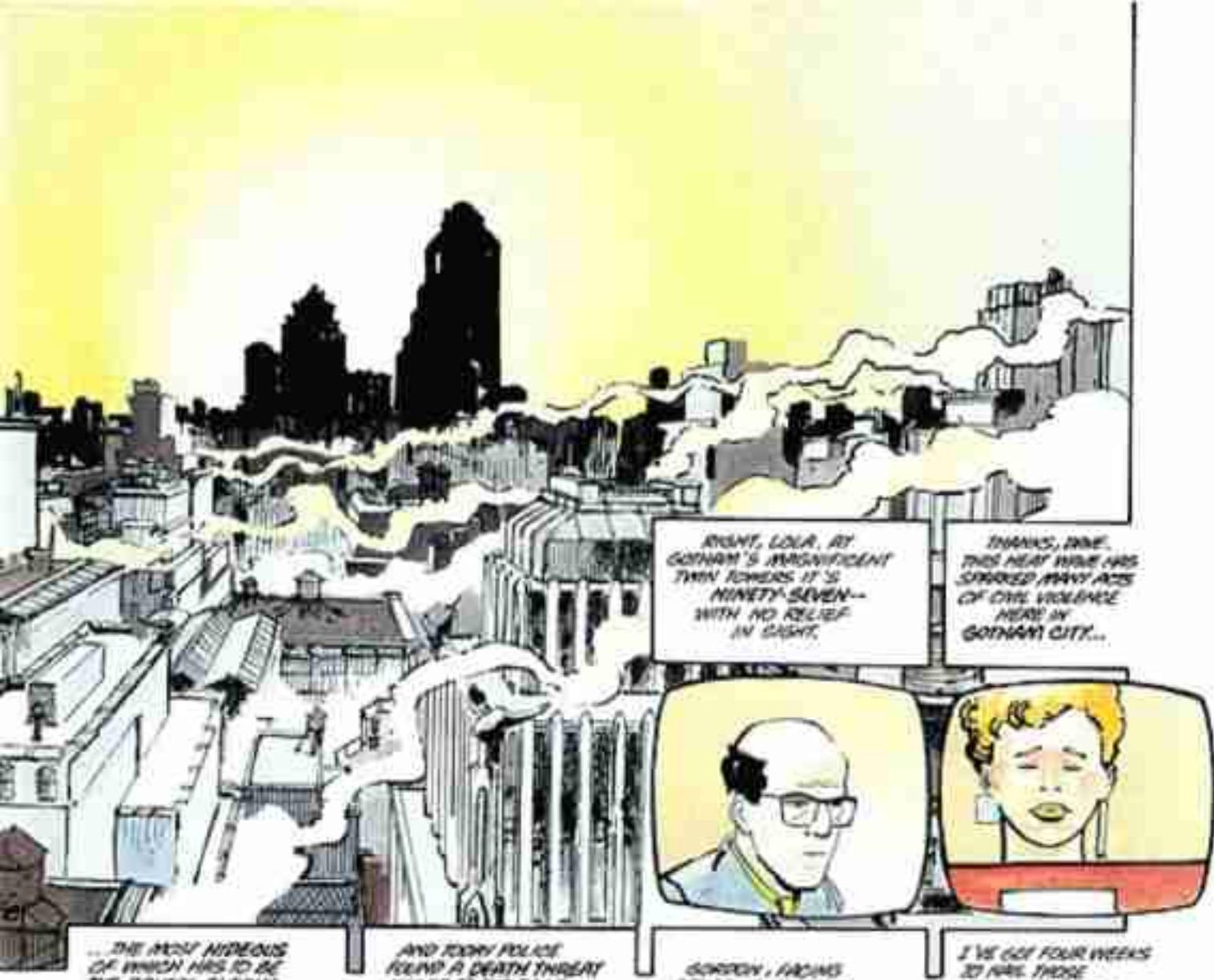
...BUT NOT GOOD ENOUGH.

SPECTACULAR FINISH TO THE NEUMAN ELLIMINATION, AS THE FERRIS 6000 SWINNELED ACROSS THE FINISH LINE, A FLAMING COFFIN FOR BRUCE IRVINE...

...OR SO EVERYONE THINKS. TURN OUT THE MILLIONAIRE BAILED OUT AT THE LAST SECOND. SUFFERED ONLY SUPERFICIAL BURNS. LOLA?

THANKS, BILL. I'M SURPRISED ANYONE CAN EVEN THINK OF SPORTS IN THIS WEATHER. RIGHT, GENE?





...THE MOST HIDEOUS
OF WHICH HAS TO BE
THE BRUTAL SLAYING
OF THREE AGES LAST
WEEK BY THE GANG
KNOWN AS THE
MURKINS.

AND TODAY POLICE
FOUND A DEATH THREAT
RANGED TO THE DOOR
OF THE OFFICE OF
POLICE COMMISSIONER
JAMES GORDON.

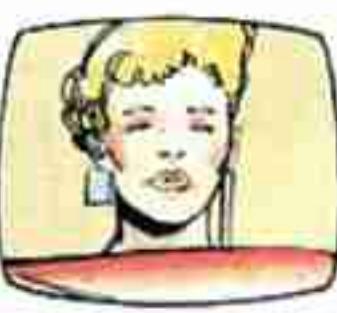
RIGHT, LORI, AT
GOTHAM'S INSIGNIFICANT
TWIN TOWERS IT'S
NINETY-SEVEN--
WITH NO RELIEF
IN SIGHT.

THANKS, DANE.
THIS NIGHT HAS BEEN
SPURRED MANY ACTS
OF CRIME VIOLENCE
HERE IN
GOTHAM CITY...



GORDON, FACING
RETIREMENT ON HIS
SEVENTIETH BIRTHDAY
NEXT MONTH, SPOKE
TO A NEWS TIME
REPORTER...

I'VE GOT FOUR WEEKS
TO FILE THESE
BANNERS. IF THIS
MEANS THEY'RE
WILLING TO PINE AND
ON, I'M PLEASED.



ANONYMOUSLY, TODAY ALSO
MARKS THE TENTH
ANNIVERSARY OF THE
LAST RECORDED SIGHTING
OF THE BATMAN. DEAD
OR RETIRED, HIS FATE
REMAINS UNKNOWN.

OUR YOUNGER VIEWERS
WILL NOT REMEMBER
THE BATMAN. A RECENT
SURVEY SHOWS THAT
MOST HIGH SCHOOLERS
CONSIDER HIM A MYTH.

BUT ADOL HE WAS. EVEN
TODAY, DEBATE
CONTINUES ON THE
RIGHT AND WRONG OF
HIS ONE-MAN WAR ON
CRIME.

THIS REPORTER
WOULD LIKE TO THINK
THAT HE'S ALIVE AND
WELL, ENJOYING A
CELESTIAL DRINK
IN THE COMPANY OF
FRIENDS...





AS WE PART,
JIM SQUEEZES MY
SHOULDERS AND
GOES, "YOU JUST
NEED A WOMAN,"
HE SAID.

...WHILE IN MY GUT
THE CREATURE HURTS
AND SNARLS AND
TELLS ME WHAT I
NEED...

I LEAVE MY CAR IN
THE LOT. I CAN'T
STAND TO BE INSIDE
ANYTHING. RIGHT NOW,
I WALK THE STREETS
OF THIS CITY. I'M
LEARNING TO WALK, THE
CITY THAT IS GIVEN UP,
LIKE THE VENDE
WORLD SEEMS TO
ARRIVE.

I'M A ZOMBIE. A
FOODING DUTCHMAN.
A DEAD MAN.
TEN YEARS DEAD.

I'LL FEEL BETTER IN THE MORNING. AT LEAST, I'LL FEEL IT LESS...



IT'S THE NIGHT. WHEN THE CITY'S SMELLS CALL OUT TO HIM, THOUGH I LIE BETWEEN SILK SHEETS IN A MILLION-DOLLAR MANSION MILES AWAY...



...WHEN A POLICE SIREN WAKES ME, AND, FOR A MOMENT I FORGET THAT IT'S ALL OVER...



BUT BATMAN WAS A YOUNG MAN. IF IT WAS REVENGE HE WAS AFTER, HE'S TAKEN IT. IT'S BEEN FORTY YEARS SINCE HE WAS BORN...



...BORN HERE.

ONCE AGAIN, HE'S BROUGHT ME BACK--TO SHOW ME HOW LITTLE IT HAS CHANGED. IT'S OLDER, DARKER, BUT--

--IT COULD HAVE HAPPENED YESTERDAY.

IT COULD BE HAPPENING RIGHT NOW.

THEY COULD BE DING AT YOUR FEET, THROTTLING, BLEEDING...



...AND THE MAN WHO STEALS ALL SENSE FROM YOUR LIFE HE COULD BE STANDING...



...RIGHT OVER THERE...



NOT HERE. HE FLINCHED WHEN HE PULLED THE TRIGGER. HE WAS SICK AND GUILTY OVER WHAT HE DID.

ALL HE WANTED WAS MONEY. I WISH MORE ENOUGH TO THINK HIM THE LOWEST SORT OF MAN.

THESE-- THESE ARE HIS CHILDREN. A PURPLE BREW...

...AND THIS MONEY IS THEIRS.



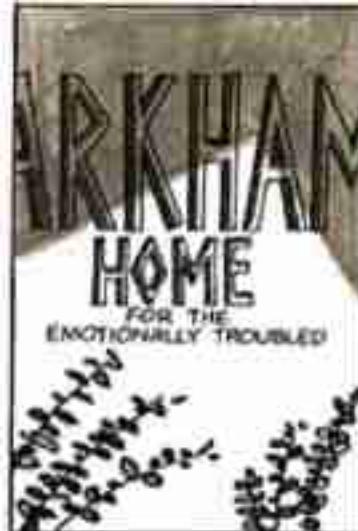
BUT NARY OF EVERY MEMBER OF THE FAMILY, THE MUTANT ORGANIZATION IS BELIEVED TO HAVE COMMITTED THIS ACTIVITY FOR MONEY THE FAMILY HAD...

...SOMETHING UNDER TWELVE DOLLARS. THIS IS CONSIDERED A MUG-RELATED CRIME AT PRESENT, BUT SURELY THIS MEAT WAVE IS A FADING RIGHT, INC.?

ABSOLUTELY, BILL. ROUGH MONTH IN THE BIG TOWN, RIGHT NOW THE MURKAY IS CLIMBING TO AN UNSEASONAL ONE HUNDRED AND THREE...

...AND IT LOOKS LIKE IT'S GOING TO GET WORSE BEFORE IT GETS BETTER...





WHAT
CAN I
SAY?

...THANK YOU, TOM.
A NEW LIFE
BEGINS TODAY
FOR
HARVEY DENT.

DENT, A FORMER DISTRICT
ATTORNEY, BECAME
OBSESSED WITH THE
NUMBER TWO WHEN
HALF HIS FACE WAS
SCARRED BY ACID.

DENT BELIEVED HIS
DISFIGURATION REVELED
A NODERN, EVIL SIDE TO
HIS NATURE. HE ADDED
AS HIS PERSONAL SYMBOL
A DOLLAR COIN...

...ONE SIDE OF WHICH
WAS DEFACED, TO REPRESENT
THE WARMING SIDES OF
HIS SPLIT-PERSONALITY.
A FLIP OF THE COIN
COULD MEAN LIFE OR
DEATH FOR HIS VICTIMS.

DENT'S CRIMES WERE
BRILLIANTLY PATHOLOGICAL.
THE MOST MEMORABLE
OF WHICH WAS HIS
LAST...

--THE KIDNAPPING AND
RANSOMING OF SIAMESE
TWINS, ONE OF WHOM
HE ATTEMPTED TO MURDER
EVEN AFTER THE
RANSOM WAS PAID.

HE WAS APPREHENDED
IN THE ACT BY GOTHAM'S
FAMOUS UGLIESTATE, THE
BATMAN, AND
COMMITTED TO
ARKHAM ASYLUM
TWELVE YEARS AGO.

FOR THE FIRST THREE
YEARS DENT HAS BEEN
TREATED BY
DR. BARTHOLOMEW HOLPER
FOR HIS PSYCHOSIS...

...WHILE NOBEL PRIZE-
WINNING PLASTIC SURGEON
DR. HERBERT WILLING
DEDICATED HIMSELF
TO RESTORING THE
FACE OF HARVEY
DENT.

SPEAKING
TODAY, BOTH
DOCTORS WERE
JUBILANT.

HARVEY'S READY
TO LOOK AT THE
WORLD AND SAY,
"HEY, I'M OKAY."

AND HE
LOOKS GREAT.

DENT READ A
BRIEF STATEMENT
TO THE MEDIA...

I DO NOT ASK
GOTHAM CITY TO
FORGIVE MY CRIMES. I
MUST EARN THAT, BY
DESERVING MYSELF
TO PUBLIC SERVICE.

FOR ME, THIS IS THE
END OF A LONG NIGHT.
MARY... AND THE FIRST
STEP ON THE LONG ROAD
TO ABSOLUTION.

NEST, DENT DREW FOND APPRECIATION BY PRODUCING A HARVEY-MINTED DOLLAR COIN.

IT WAS, OF COURSE, UNMINTED.

BUT POLICE COMMISSIONER JAMES GORDON'S REACTION TO DENT'S REVERSE WAS NOT ENTHUSIASTIC...

NO, I AM NOT SATISFIED. DR. WOLPER'S REPORT SEEKS OVERLY OPTIMISTIC--NOT TO MENTION SLOPPY.



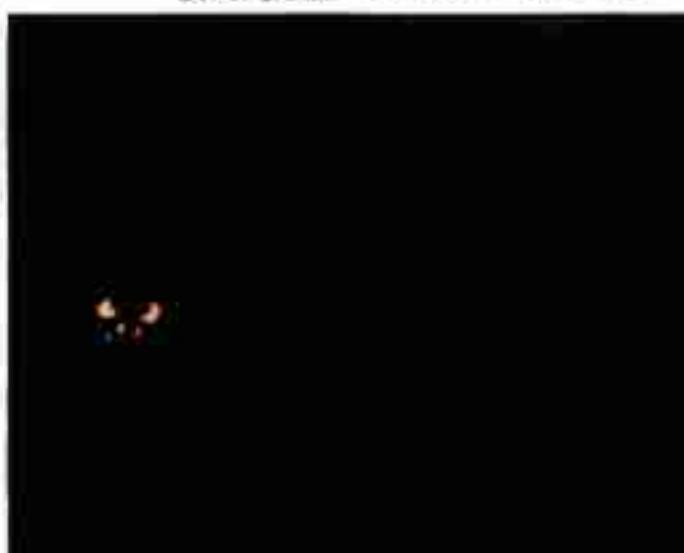
WHILE MILLIONAIRE BRUCE WAYNE, WHO SPONSORED GENT'S TREATMENT, HAD THIS TO SAY...

GORDON'S REACTIONS SEEM OVERLY PESSIMISTIC--NOT TO MENTION RUDE.

THE COMMISSIONER IS AN EXCELLENT COP--BUT, I THINK, A POOR JUDGE OF CHARACTER. WE MUST BELIEVE IN HARVEY DENT.

WE MUST BELIEVE THAT OUR PRIVATE DEMONS CAN BE DEFEATED...





GLARING WITH ANCIENT LIGHT...



UNWILLING TO RETREAT AS
HIS BROTHERS DID...



EYES GLARING, UNENCHED
BY LOVE OR Joy OR SORROW...



BREATH NOT WITH THE NOSE OF
FALLEN FOES... THE STENCH OF
DEAD FRIENDS, BURNED THROAT...



SURELY THE FIERCEST
SURVIVOR - THE FOREST
REBORN...



SHAKING, WAITING...



...GLARING AS HIS OWN...



DREAMING...

J. WAS ONLY SIX
YEARS OLD WHEN
THAT HAPPENED.
WHEN I FIRST
SAW THE CAGE...

...MUSE, EMPTY,
SILENT AS A CHURCH,
WAITING, AS THE
DUST HUNG IN THE AIR...

AND NOW THE
COURSES RACE AND
THE DUST THICKENS
IN HERE AS IT DOES
IN ME...

...AND HE LAUGHS AT
ME, CURSES ME,
CALLS ME A FOOL,
HE FEELS MY SLEEP,
HE DRINKS ME,
FORBIDS ME HERE
WHEN THE NIGHT
IS LONG AND MY
FEEL IS HEAVY, HE
STRUGGLES
RELENTLESSLY,
HATEFULLY, TO BE
FREE...

I WILL NOT
LET HIM. I GIVE
MY WORD.
FOR JASON.

NEVER.
NEVER AGAIN.



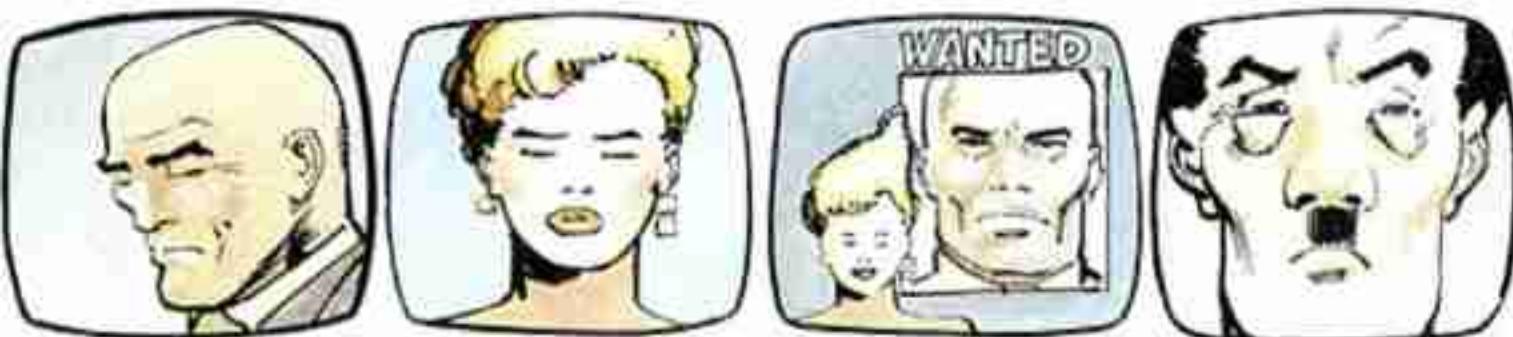


FOR ME, THIS IS THE END OF A LONG NIGHT-MARE... AND THE FIRST STEP ON THE LONG ROAD TO ABSOLUTION.

...THOSE WERE THE LAST WORDS SPOKEN IN PUBLIC BY HARVEY DENT BEFORE HIS DISAPPEARANCE THIS MORNING.

WHILE POLICE COMMISSIONER GORDON ISSUED AN ALL POINTS BUREAU FOR DENT, ONE VOICE WAS RAISED IN PROTEST...

...THAT OF DR. BARTHOLMEW WOLPER, DENT'S PSYCHIATRIST...





...FORTY-SEVEN CASES OF HEAT FRICTION. AS THE TEMPERATURE SOARED A RECORD-BREAKING THREE DEGREES PAST THE ONE HUNDRED MARK.



BUT THERE IS HOPE, FOOLS-- IN THE FORM OF A COOP MENT CHASSING FROM THE MIDWEST.

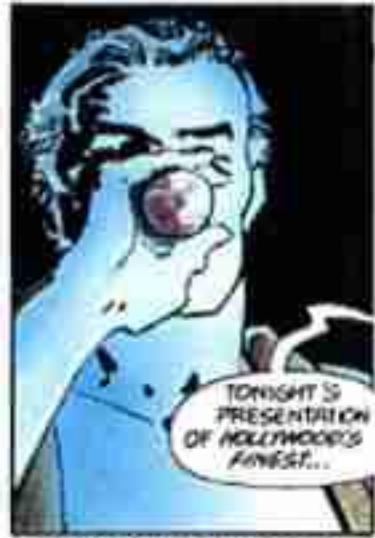
IT MAY REACH US AS EARLY AS TONIGHT...



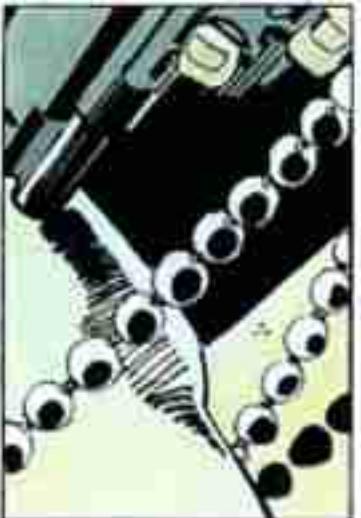
THAT WILL BE ALL, MASTER BRUCE. I'M FROPPING THAT THE NEXT GENERATION OF THE WAYNE FAMILY SHAN'T FACE AN EMPTY WINE CELLAR.

THOUGH GIVEN YOUR SOCIAL SCHEDULE OF LATE, THE PROSPECTS OF THERE BEINIS A NEXT GENERATION...

THAT WILL BE ALL, ALFRED. GOOD NIGHT.







THE
TIME
HAS
COME.

YOU
AND
IT IN
YOUR
SOUL.

FOR I
AM YOUR
SOUL...

YOU
CANNOT
ESCAPE
ME...

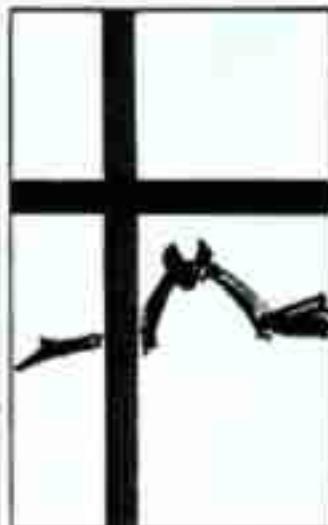
YOU ARE FUNY,
YOU ARE SMALL...

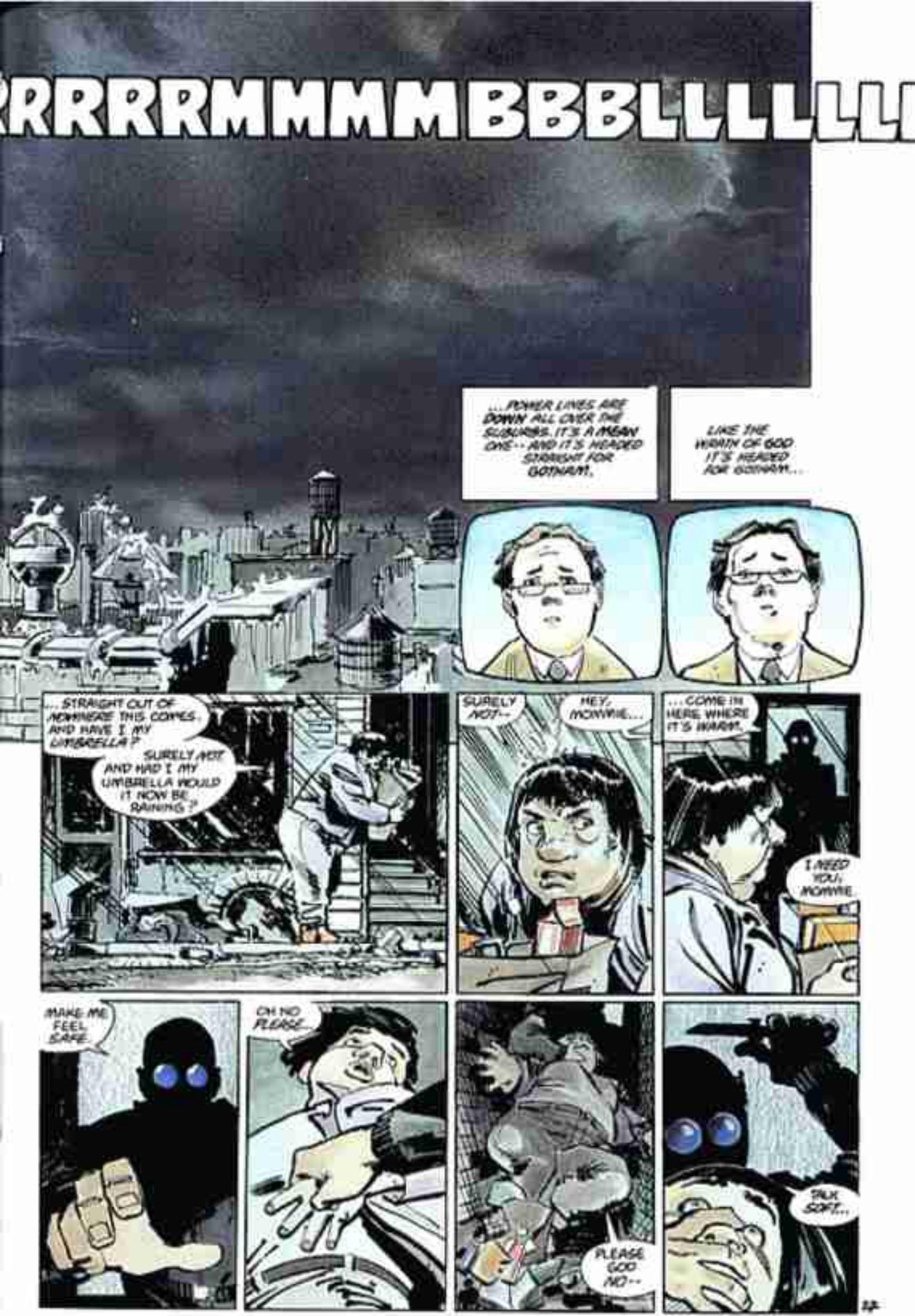
YOU ARE NOTHING--A HOLLOW
SHELL, A RUGGED TRAP THAT
CANNOT HOLD ME...

SIMPLYING, I BURN YOU--
BURNING YOU, I FLARE HOT
AND BRIGHT AND FIERCE
AND BEAUTIFUL...

YOU CANNOT STOP ME--NOT
WITH WORDS OR VENGEANCE OR
THE WEIGHT OF AGE--

YOU CANNOT STOP ME BUT
STILL YOU TRY--STILL
YOU RUN--





KRE SS SAH



KRE SS SAH



RRMBLK KKKKRRRAKKKK









THUNK
THUNK
THUNK
THUNKK





...BRIGHTENED IN
HAIR REPLACEMENT
TECHNIQUES, AND
THAT'S THE
EXCUSE I'M...

I'VE JUST BEEN
HANDED THIS BULLETIN:-
A LARGE, BAT-LIKE
CREATURE HAS BEEN
SIGHTED ON GOTHAM'S
SOUTH SIDE.



IT IS SAID TO
HAVE ATTACKED AND
SERIOUSLY INJURED
THREE CAT-BURGLARS
WHO HAVE PLUNGED
INTO NEIGHBORHOOD

YOU
DON'T
SURPRISE...



REPEAT
- ALL
LINES -
REBIRTH IN
PROGRESS AT
GOTHAM SECURITY
TRUST -



THIS JUST IN--
TWO YOUNG CHILDREN
WHO DISAPPEARED THIS
MORNING HAVE BEEN
FOUND UNARMED IN
A RIVERDECK
WAREHOUSE.

AN ANONYMOUS TIP
LED POLICE TO THE
WAREHOUSE, WHERE THEY
FOUND THE CHILDREN
WITH SIX MEMBERS
OF THE INSTANT
GANG.

ALL SIX ARE SUFFERING
FROM ABRAZEE CUTS,
CONTUSIONS, AND
BROKEN BONES. THEY
WERE RUSHED TO
GOTHAM GENERAL
HOSPITAL.

THE CHILDREN
DESCRIBED AN ATTACK
ON THE GANG MEMBERS
BY A MAN DRESSED
LIKE DRACULA...





POLICE PHONE LINES ARE JAMMED WITH CALLERS DESCRIBING WHAT SEEMS TO BE A BRIEFLY ON GOTHAM'S UNDERWORLD...

BY THE BATMAN.

ALTHOUGH SEVERAL RESCUED VICTIMS -- IN NAME DESIGNATED THE VIGILANTE -- TALKED PASSELY REPORTERS...

COMMISSIONER JAMES GORDON HAS DECLINED TO COMMENT ON WHETHER OR NOT THIS MIGHT MEAN THE RETURN OF THE BATMAN...



GORDON'LL HAVE OUR HEADS IF WE LOSE THEM...

JORDAN - THAT SUCKER CAN FROGIE!



HEE WHATE'S THAT?

WHAT'S THAT?

I CAN'T...



UP AGAIN?

IT'S...

SOMETHING...

WEIRD...

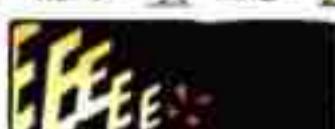
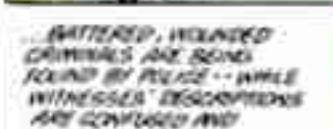
KID - THIS AIN'T THE TIME...



ALL RIGHT! ALL RIGHT! WHAT OF...



HOLY...



YOU'RE SLOWIN' DOWN,

JEFF...

HEY...

WE'RE IN

FOR A SHOW KID...



THIS SHOULD
BE AGONY.

I SHOULD BE A MASS OF
ACHING MUSCLE - BROKEN,
SPENT, UNABLE TO MOVE.

AND, WHERE I
AM OLDER
MAN, I SURELY
WOULD...

...HOLD ANIMALS,
GAMES, SHAKES,
WEREWOLF,
SCREECH.



...TRANSFORM LINE
WITH FAMILIES AND
FRIENDS AND IT
CAN FLY...



...BUT I'M A MAN
OF ENDLESS... OF
TWENTY AGAIN

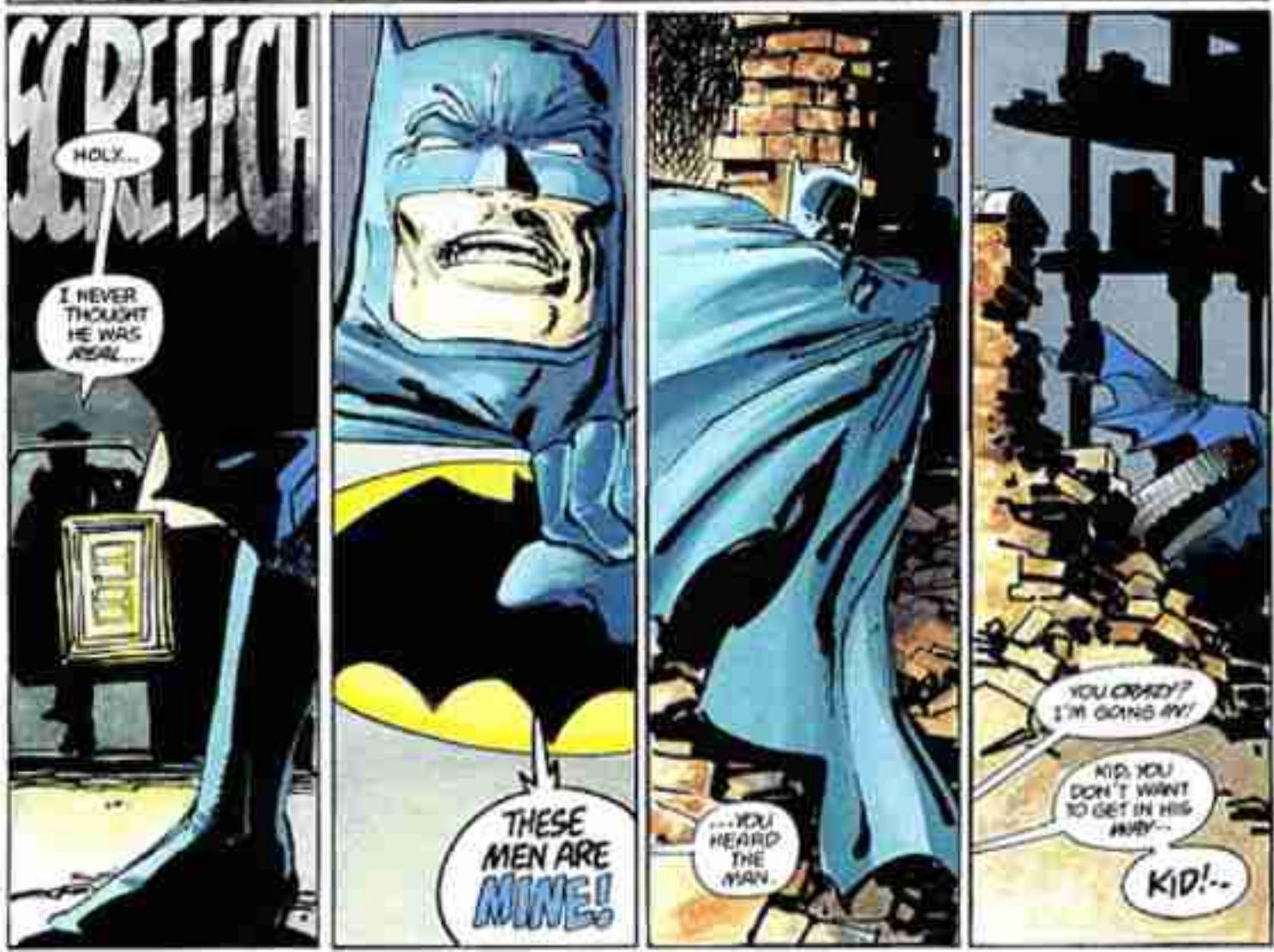
THE BRAIN ON
MY CHEST IS A
BARTON...

JIM
BORN
AGAIN...

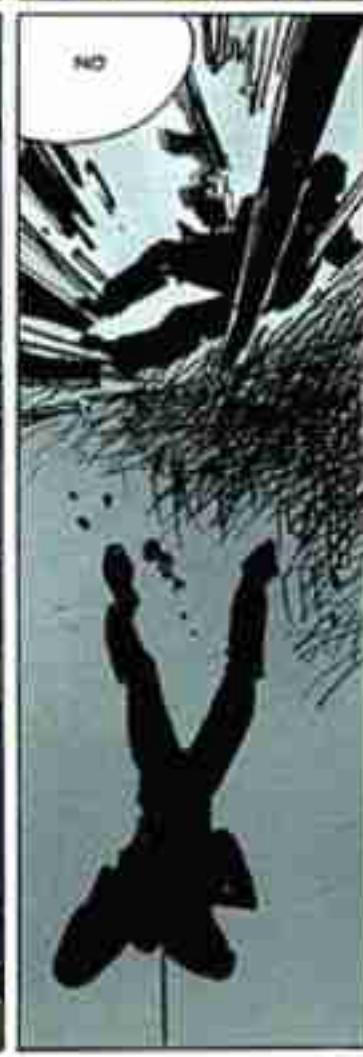
REALITY CHECK:
IN CHICAGO, JACK ABOUT
CONSIDERED TOTAL LACK OF
HE'S A MAN - ABOUT
THIRTEEN FEET TALL...















ONE AGAINST EXPRESSED
TO FACE THE BAT-SIGNAL
STRANDING THE SIDE OF
ONE OF GOTHAM'S TWIN
TOWERS. YES, HE GAVE
US QUITE A NIGHT...



SURE KEPT
THE MAFIOSOS
BUSY.

YES,
MORRUE.
BUT I THINK
IT'S A
MISTAKE...

...TO THINK
OF THIS IN
PURELY
POLITICAL
TERMS...

RATHER I
REGARD IT AS A
SYMBOLIC
RESURGENCE
OF THE COMMON
MAN'S WILL
TO RESIST...

BBAT...

A REBIRTH
OF THE
AMERICAN
FIGHTING
SPIRIT.

BATMAN.
EASE UP,
LARA. THE
ONLY THING HE
SIGNIFIES...

...IS AN
ABERRANT
PSYCHOTIC
FORCE...

DARLINS.

--MORALLY BANKRUPT,
POLITICALLY HAZARDOUS,
REACTIONARY
FIARMOID--

--A DANGER
TO EVERY
CITIZEN OF
GOTHAM!

PERHAPS,
MORRUE--
PERHAPS
THE
BATMAN
IS DANGEROUS...

...BUT HE'S HARDLY AS IMPASSED AS HIS ENEMIES, IS HE? TAKE HARVEY DENT, JUST TO PICK A NAME...

THAT IS CUTE, LANA, BUT HARVEY APROPOS, AND HARVEY FAIR TO AS TROUBLED A SOUL AS HARVEY DENT'S.

HE CERTAINLY IS TROUBLE FOR HIS VICTIMS.

WELL, LANA, MRS. IF HARVEY DENT IS RETURNING TO CRIME -- AND PLEASE NOTE THAT I SAID IF -- IT GOES WITHOUT SAYING THAT HE'S NOT IN CONTROL OF HIMSELF.



AND BATMAN IS?



CORINNE, HE KNOWS EXACTLY WHAT HE'S DOING. NO KIND OF SOCIAL FASCIST ANSWERS DENT'S.



THEN WHY DO YOU CALL HIM REVENGE? BECAUSE YOU LIKED TO USE THAT WORD FOR ANY URGENCE THAT'S TOO BIG FOR YOUR LITTLE MIND? BECAUSE HE FIGHTS CRIME INSTEAD OF PERPETRATING IT?



YOU DON'T CALL EXCESSIVE FORCE A CRIME? NOW ABOUT ASSAULT, AM I LADY? OR BREAKING AND ENTERING? HUN?

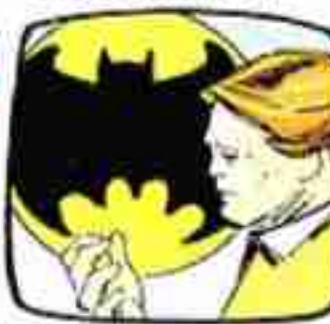
DING



SORRY, CORINNE, BUT WE'RE OUT OF TIME -- THOUGH I'M SURE THIS DEBATE IS FAR FROM OVER FOR THOSE OF YOU WHO CARE IN LATE, JERRY'S POINT VERSUS POINT...



...WAS CONCERNED WITH LAST NIGHT'S ATTACK ON DOZENS OF INDIVIDUALS WHO MAY HAVE BEEN CRIMINALS BY A PARTY OR PARTIES WHO MAY HAVE BEEN THE BATMAN.



ALSO OF CONCERN IS THIS MORNING'S ANNOUNCEMENT BY POLICE MEDIA RELATIONS DIRECTOR LOUIS GALLAGHER THAT A DEFACED DOLLAR COIN WAS FOUND ON ONE OF THE SUSPECTS...



...IN LAST NIGHT'S PAYROLL RAIDERS, THOSE WHO REMEMBER THE CRIMES OF HARVEY DENT WILL RECOGNIZE THIS AS HIS TRADEMARK.



POLICE COMMISSIONER GORDON HAS REFUSED TO CONFIRM THAT HE HAS ISSUED AN ARREST ORDER...

SCREW THE PRESS!



STILL HOT ON THE HEELS OF BATMAN'S APPARENT RETURN...

NO MORE LEADS, GALLAGHER -- OR I'LL HAVE YOUR HEAD ON A STICK!



THIS DOES GIVE ONE A SENSE OF DIGNITY...

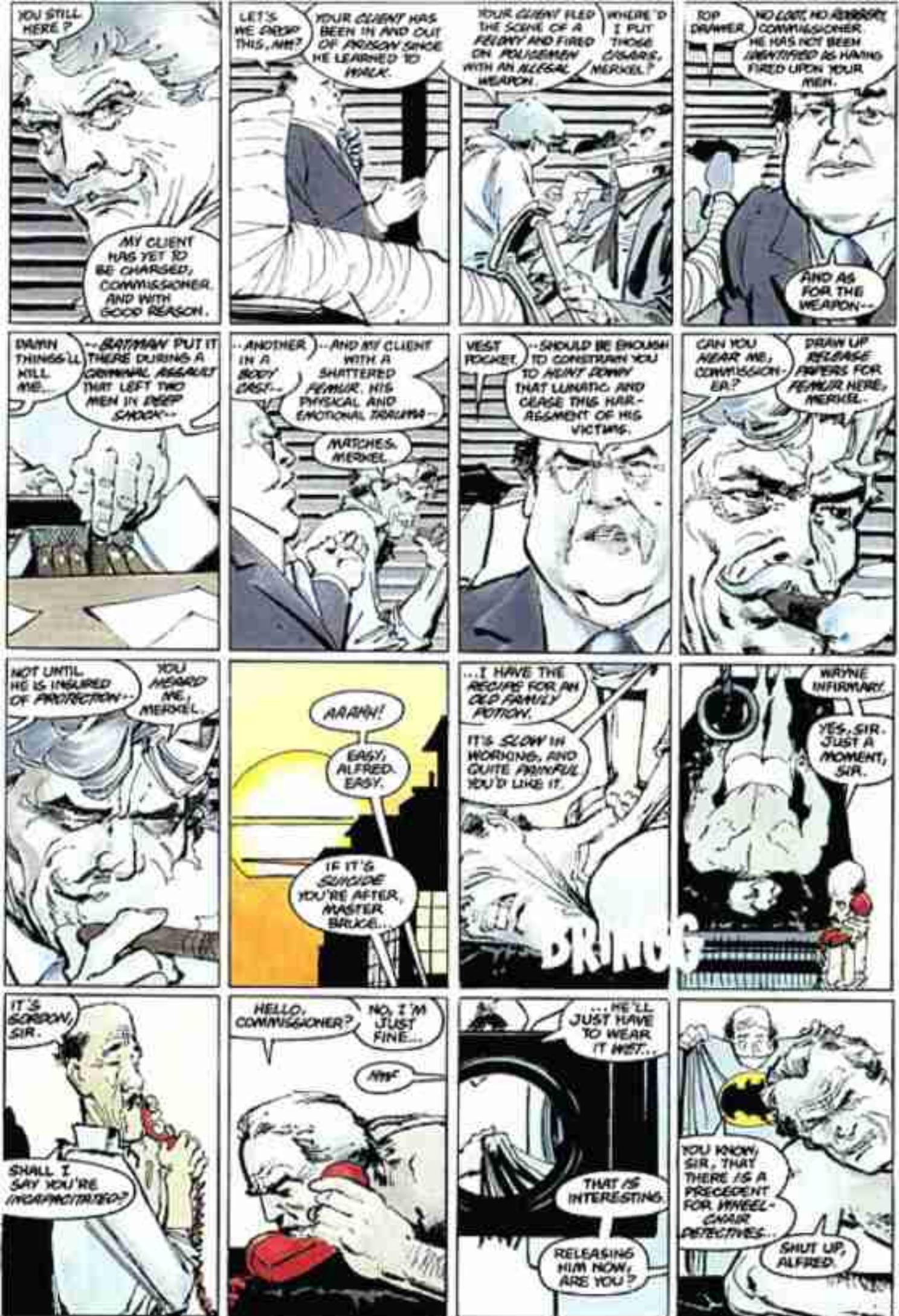


TURN THAT GOD DAMNED THING OFF, MURKEL...

A SAD, STRANGE CARNIVAL HAS HARVEY BECOME.



COMMISSIONER, IF YOU PLEASE...



WE WILL KILL THE OLD MAN GOTHAM. HIS WOMEN WILL BEG FOR MUR. WE WILL CHOP HIM. WE WILL GRIND HIM. WE WILL BRAVE IN HIS BLOOD.

I MYSELF WILL KILL THE FOOL BATMAN. I WILL RIP THE MEAT FROM HIS BONES AND SUCK THEM DRY. I WILL EAT HIS HEART AND DRAG HIS BODY THROUGH THE STREET.

DON'T CALL US A GANG. DON'T CALL US CRIMINALS. WE ARE THE LAW. WE ARE THE FUTURE. GOTHAM CITY BELONGS TO THE MAFIA. SOON THE WORLD WILL BE OURS.

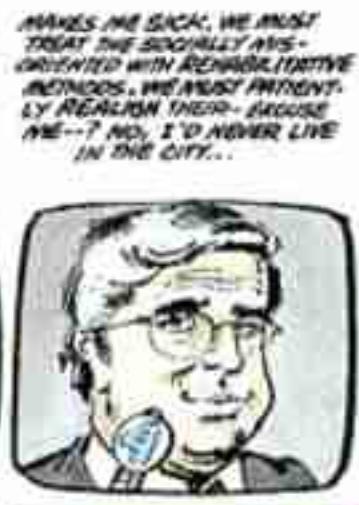
WITH THAT VIDEOTAPE MESSAGE, THE ANONYMOUS LEADER - MINDGE NAME AND FACE REMAIN A SECRET - HAS DECLARED WAR ON THE CITY OF GOTHAM... AND ON ITS MOST FAMOUS CHAMPION...



THE ROOM IS SPLIT BETWEEN LIGHT AND DARK, CLEAN AND DIRTY, BUT THE SPOT ISN'T EVEN IT FAVORS THE DIRTY.

IT'S AS IF THE CHAOS GAVE US CLAIMING THIS ROOM... AS IT DEFINED THE DIRT...







YES, MERV. I AM
CONVINCED OF
HARVEY'S INNOCENCE.
ABSOLUTELY. HOWEVER, I
WON'T GO SO FAR AS TO
SAY I'M SURE HE HASN'T
RETURNED TO CRIME.

I KNOW THAT SOUNDS
CONFUSING. THESE THINGS
OFTEN DO TO THE LAWMAN.
BUT I'LL TRY TO EXPLAIN
WITHOUT GETTING OVERLY
TECHNICAL. YOU SEE, IT
ALL GETS DOWN TO
THIS BATMAN FELLOW.

BATMAN IS PSYCHOTIC
SUBLIMATIVE / PSYCHO-
EROTIC BEHAVIOR PATTERN
IS LIKE A NET. WEAK-SKED
NEUROTICS, LIKE HARVEY,
ARE DRAINED INTO CORRESPOND-
ING INTERSTICING PATTERNS.

YOU MIGHT SAY BATMAN
COMMITTS THE CRIMES...
USING HIS SO-CALLED
VILLAINS AS PERCASSO-
TIC PROXIES...





I SHIFT MY LEGS
TO KEEP THEM
FROM CRAMPING
AND WHICH
NIGHT SETTLE
LIKE A CLOSE
FIRE ON THE
CITY OF SODAAN.

THE
NEW
NARRATIVE

--IS SURE TO BE IN
THE NEIGHBOR COPTER.
I'M HOPING HE'LL
LAND ON THE
TOWER I PICKED...
--

BUT I AM NOT
COUNTING COWS.



THEY SPLIT.
THE ANGRY
SURPLUS JOB
SOTLES DOWN,
SPUTTERING
LIKE A
GRANNY OLD
MAN READING
ME.

I REACHED
THE PENDLES
ROOF.



**GOOD
THINGS
CAN COME
FROM THE SHIN.**



THE NEW ONE
COMES IN LON,
A GLEAMING
METAL
DISC.

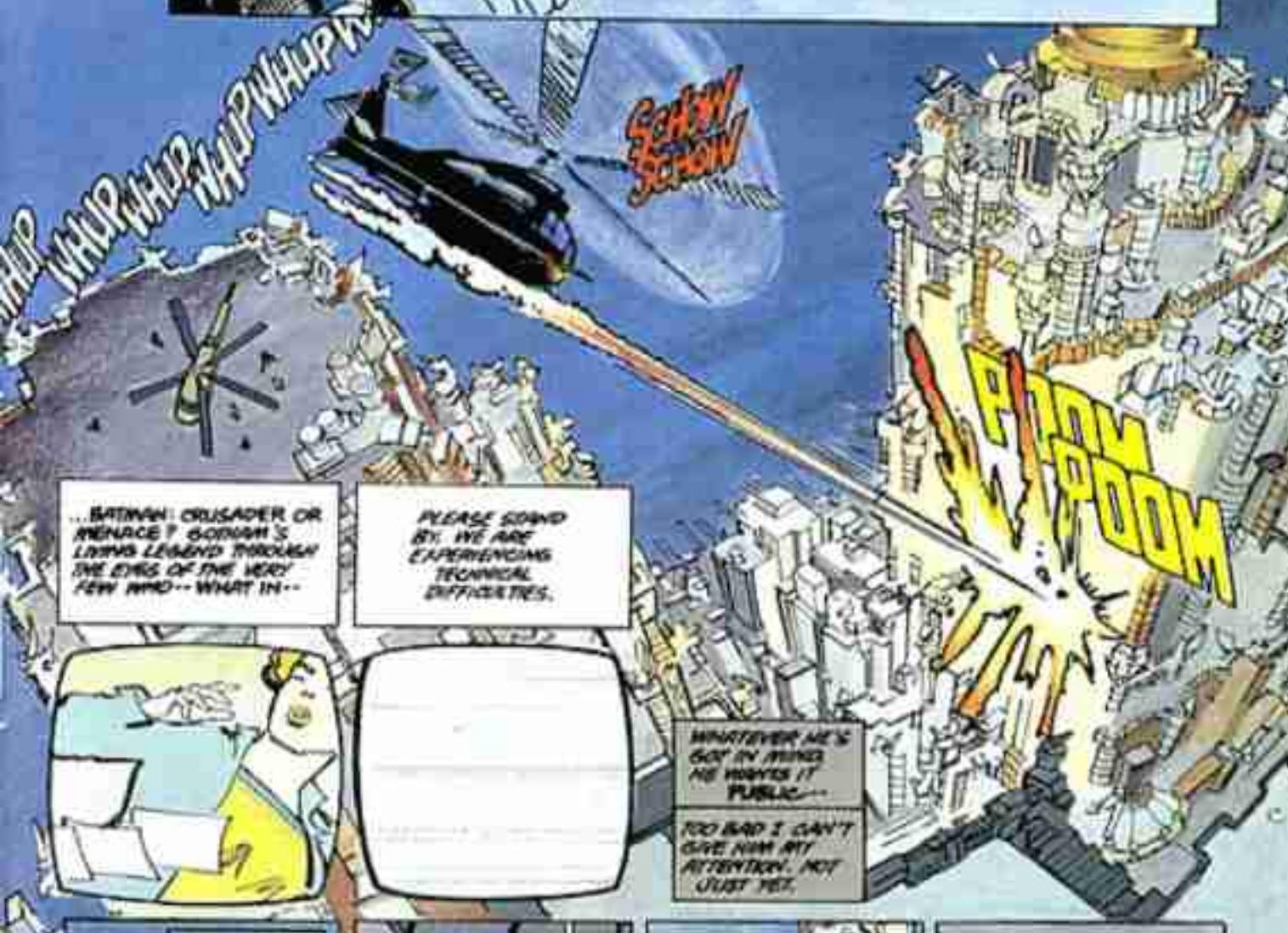
*I'LL NAME
THE WIFE*



GOOD EVENING.
I AM ALICE CHARM.
TONIGHT WE ARE
PLEASED TO BRING
YOU A
SPECIAL REPORT.



FROM THAT'S
THREE DAYS
OLD CARRIES
ACROSS MY
SKIN. I
FEEL THE
DUST FROM
MY JOINTS
AND GLEAMS.
IT USED
TO BE EASIER.



THE ONLY AFTER-EFFECT THE
NUKE HAS IS A MASSIVE INVASION
TO GUINEA, ANGOLA AND CANNIBAL
FIGHTERS.

AS I SUSPECTED
-- A BOMB.

WITH ENOUGH
CHARGE TO
DEMOLISH THE
BUILDING.

APPARENTLY A DETONATOR
WHICH HAD BEEN MADE
SILENT.

WAIT... IF THESE
READINGS
MEAN WHAT I
THINK THEY DO...

AM I ON?

THE ALARM PROCESS HAS
ALREADY STARTED. IT COULD
GO OFF ANY SECOND.

11:00

1-U2-7/46
0.0 -- 12

PEOPLE OF GOMBAK - LET
ME ADDRESS YOU ONE
LAST WORD FOR THE INTERRU-
TION OF YOUR HONORED
PLACETIME. THIS IS
HARVEY DENT SPEAKING.



BRILLIANT DESIGN--WORTHY
OF THE JOKER.



I AM NOT UP
ON THESE
SPECIAL WORDS.



I SENSE HERE ARE
GERMAN'S BEAUTIFUL TWIN
TOWERS, WITH TWO
BOOMS SWELLING OF
MAKING THEM RUMBLE.
YOU HAVE TWENTY MINUTES
TO SAVE THEM.



SO I FREEZE IT. AND IF
I HAD THE TIME OR THE
RIGHT...

-- I'D
SAY A
PRAYER



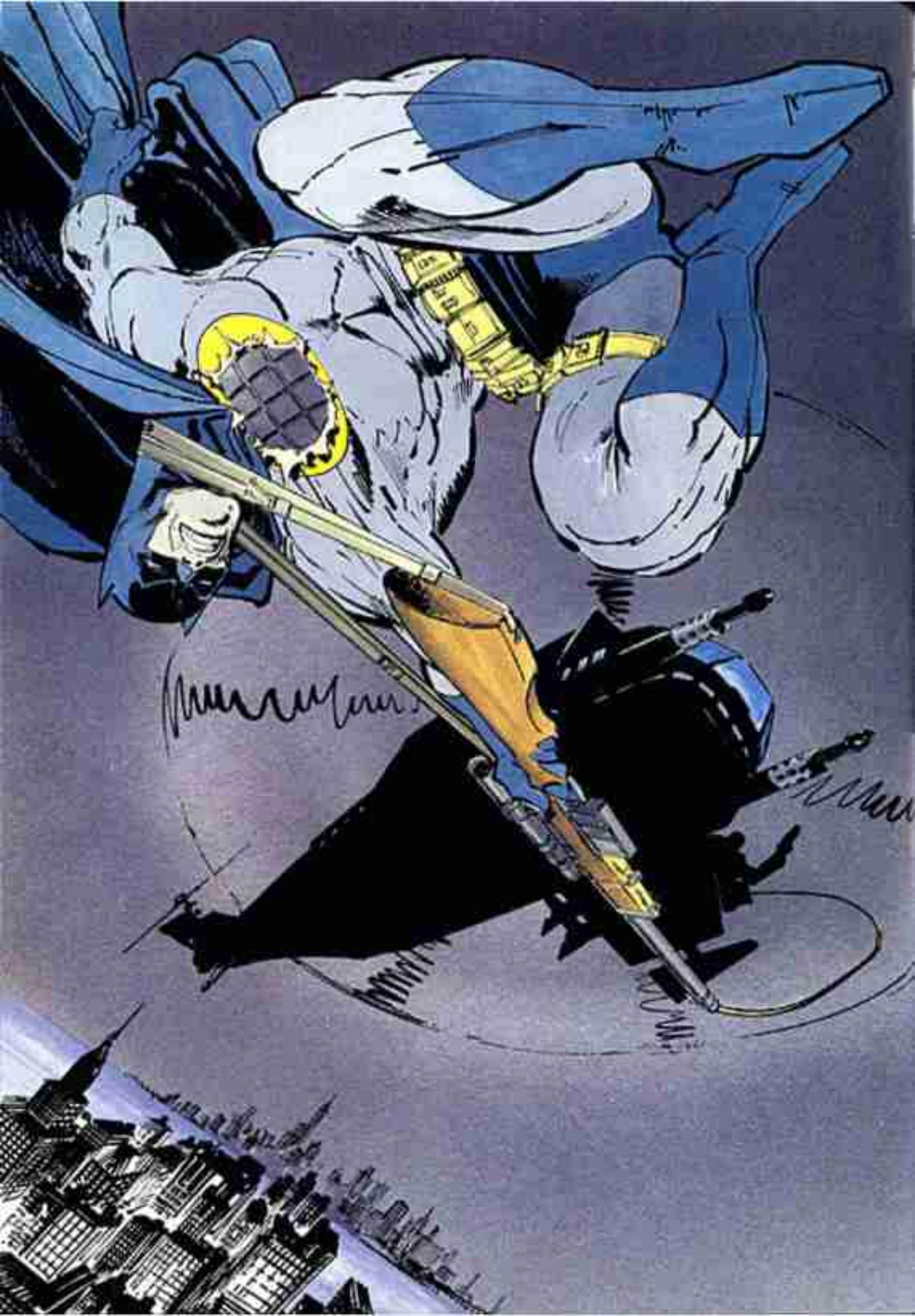
THE PRICE IS FIVE
MILLION DOLLARS. I
WOULD HAVE MADE IT
TWO -- BUT I'VE GOT
BILLS TO PAY...

TEN SECONDS LATER
BOTH THE BUILDINGS
AND I ARE SWINNING
AND EXACTLY THAT
MUCH IS RIGHT IN THE
WORLD. I TAKE IN THE
ACTION ON THE OTHER
SIDE.

HE'S TAPPED
INTO THE TV
ANTENNA--NO
DONOR
TRANSFORMING THE
LIVES OF
THOUSANDS--
WHILE THE
TOWER HE
DOESN'T KNOW
ABOUT IS
MOMENTS AWAY
FROM JUMPING
IT ALL OUT OF
HIS HANDS.
HARVEY, IF IT
IS YOU--YOU'VE
HAD EVERY
CHANCE THERE IS.







HE'S GOT YOUR STYLE,
HARVEY, AND YOUR GUNS.

UNFORTUNATELY FOR HIM,
HE'S GOT NO MORE SENSE
OF SELF-PRESERVATION
THAN YOU DID...

...AND INSPIRES THE
SAME LEVEL OF LOYALTY
FROM HIS MEN.

BLAM
BLAM

BLAM



IT TAKES NEARLY A MINUTE TO FALL FROM THIS HEIGHT. AND DESPITE
WHAT YOU MAY HAVE HEARD, YOU'RE LIKELY TO SLOW CONSCIOUSNESS
TILL THE very bottom.

ENDLESSES like
that keep me
warm at night.

THE
IMPACT IS
TREMENDOUS.
EVEN BONES
ARE TURNED TO
JELLY.

NOT MUCH
OF A CORPSE
LEFT.

MOSTLY
LIQUID.

PROBLEM
IS...

...THERE
MIGHT NOT
BE ANY
FINGER-
PRINTS.

EVEN DENTAL
RECORDS
WOULD PROBABLY
BE USELESS.

AND
LIKE I
SAID,
HARVEY...

...I HAVE
TO KNOW.

ARMED



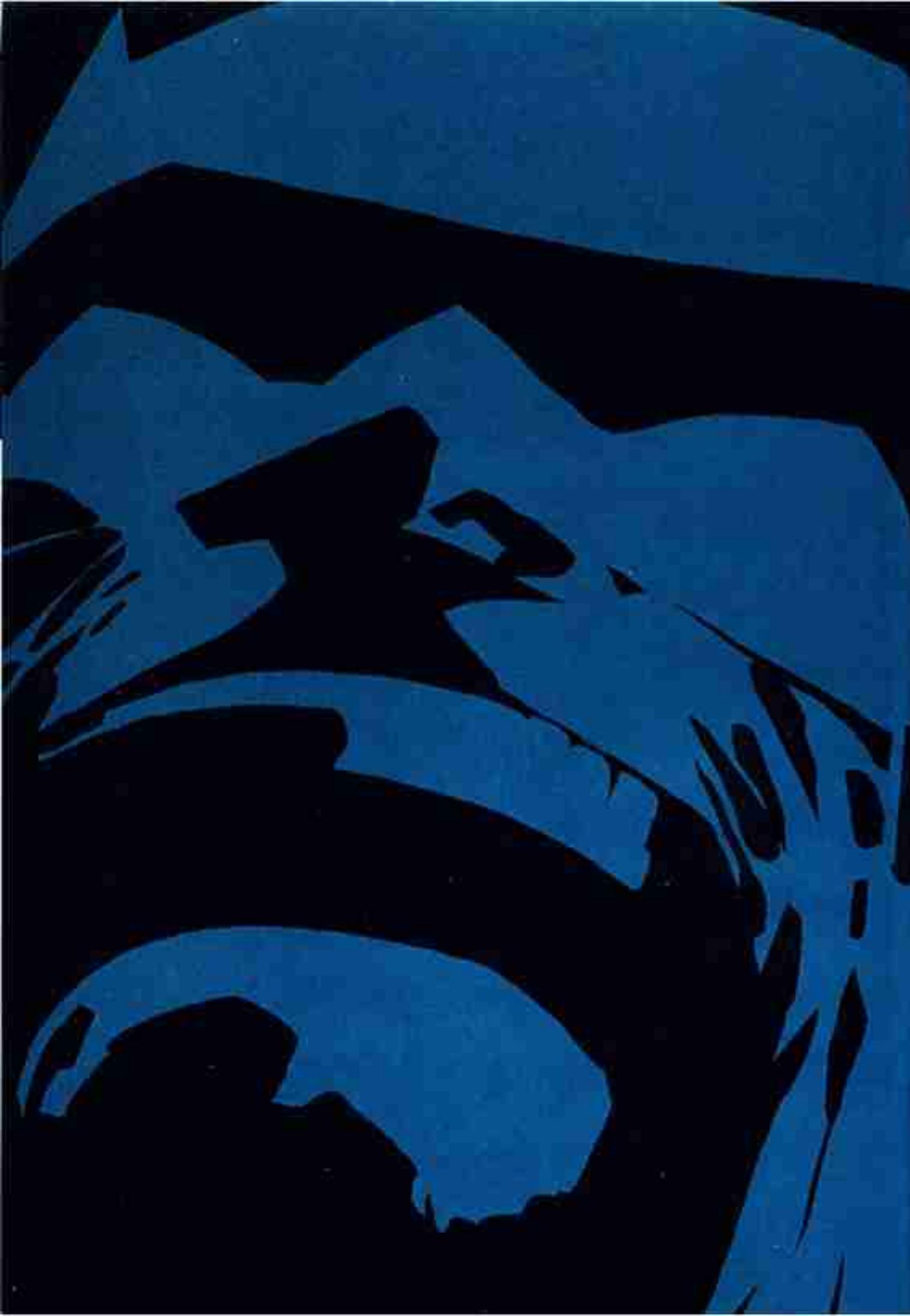
WE TUMBLE
LIKE LEAVES.



LEAVING THE
WORLD NO
POSSIBIL---

--FOUR MEN
DIE.





B O O K T W O



THE DARK KNIGHT TRIUMPHANT

PROBLEM WITH CRIME IS
THE MORE YOU KNOW, THE
MORE NERVOUS IT MAKES
YOU.

ME, I CAN'T LOOK AT THAT
DOORMAT OVER THERE
WITHOUT THINKING OF THE
SEVENTY-TWO CORPSES I'VE
FOUND IN SPOTS LIKE THAT...

...SHOT OR STABBED OR
JUST BEATEN TO DEATH
BECAUSE THEY WERE TOO
STUPID TO KEEP THEIR
DISTANCE.

TOO STUPID, OR TOO
CRAVED. ONE'S THE
SAME AS THE OTHER IN
GOHAM CITY.



I PASS A LIQUOR STORE,
RUMINATE ON THE DEAD
FEATURES OF THE MUNK OF
MEAN THAT USED TO BE A
FRIENDLY MERCHANT.

I WONDER HOW MANY MEN
HE'S HAD TO KILL, JUST
TO STAY IN BUSINESS.

I SEE A HIGH-PRICED CAR,
GLIMMERS LIKE NEW IN
THE STREETLIGHT, ONCE A
SYMBOL OF WEALTH AND
POWER, NOW JUST ANOTHER
TARGET IN A CITY OF
VICTIMS.

A YOUNG BOY DRESSES FIRST
ME, HEALTHY, DIRTY, AND
BEAUTIFUL. YOU DON'T
WANT TO KNOW
WHAT HE MADE ME THINK OF.



I CURSE SARAH, NOT
MEANING IT, FOR HER
HIPPIE VEGETARIAN
RECIPES AND THE BEAN
SPROUTS SHE FORGOT
TO PICK UP.

THEN MY CIGAR DOES ITS
USUAL AND I COUGH UP
A LOAD OF THE BROWN
STUFF.

I'M AMAZED--AS MY HERO
GOES LIGHT AND THE SPOTS
DANCE IN FRONT OF ME--
THAT SHE COMMISSIONED ME
NOT TO SMOKE IN MY OWN
HOME.

THEN I SUCK IT AGAIN.



DRAWS NEVER SEEMED
REAL TO ME WHEN I WAS
YOUNG...

FOR SOME REASON I WANT
TO SEE BRUCE--NOT TO
TALK, I MEAN SURE, TO
TALK, AND MAYBE TO
DRINK, EVEN THOUGH HE
SEEMS TO HAVE GIVEN
THAT UP.

SUDDENLY THE HAIR
BRISTLES ON THE BACK OF
MY NECK.

I HEAR A GIRLISH GIGGLE
AND THE COLD, CALLED
SOUND OF A GUN BEING
COCKED BEHIND ME.



I SEE THE FACE OF A KILLER WHO
CAN'T YET OLD ENOUGH TO SHAVE.

I THINK OF SARAH.

THE REST IS EASY.



...THE COUNCIL OF MORNERS TODAY PETITIONED THE JUDGE TO ISSUE A WARRANT FOR THE IMMEDIATE ARREST OF THE BATMAN, CITING HIM AS A HARMFUL INFLUENCE ON THE CHILDREN OF GOTHAM.

ANOTHER PETITION ON THE JUDGE'S DESK CAME FROM THE VICTIMS RIGHTS TASK FORCE, DEMANDING AN OFFICIAL SANCTION OF THE VIGILANTE'S ACTIVITIES...







COMMISSIONER--
YOU JUST SHOT A
BOY. HOW DOES
THAT FEEL?
COMMISSIONER?...

THANK YOU, HERNANDEZ.
THIS IS THE THIRD
ATTEMPT ON GORDON'S LIFE
IN THE THREE WEEKS SINCE
THE LEADER OF THE
MUTANT ORGANIZATION
MADE HIS VIDEOTAPED
DEATH TREAT...

WE WILL KILL THIS OLD
MAN GORDON. HIS WOMEN
WILL WEEP FOR HIM. WE
WILL CHOP HIM. WE WILL
GRIND HIM. WE WILL
BATHHE IN HIS BLOOD.

I MYSELF WILL KILL THE
FUCK BATMAN. I WILL
RIP THE MEAT FROM HIS
BONES AND SECK THEM
DRY. I WILL EAT HIS
HEART AND DRAG HIS
BODY THROUGH THE
STREET.



DON'T CALL US A GANG.
DON'T CALL US CRIMINALS.
WE ARE THE LAW. WE ARE
THE FUTURE. GOTHAM CITY
BELONGS TO THE MUTANTS.
SOON THE WORLD WILL
BE OURS.

GORDON, FACING ANNUAL
RETIREMENT LATER THIS
WEEK, HAS OFFERED TO
SAY AT THE JOB UNTIL THE
MUTANT CRISIS HAS BEEN
RESOLVED. POLICE MEDIA
RELATIONS DIRECTOR LOUIS
GALLAGHER HAD THIS TO SAY...

NICE OF JIM TO OFFER, BUT
I THINK WE ALL KNOW
THAT'S GONE COOL OUT ONCE
HE STEPS DOWN. THE
MUTANTS HAVE A THING
ABOUT HIM... AND, I THINK,
IT'S TIME FOR NEW BLOOD...

STRANGELY, THAT "NEW BLOOD"
HAS YET TO BE OFFICIALLY
ANNOUNCED. WHILE
INSPECTOR JOHN DALE
SEEMS TO BE THE OBVIOUS
CHOICE, THE AVATOR HAS
YET TO COMMIT HIMSELF...



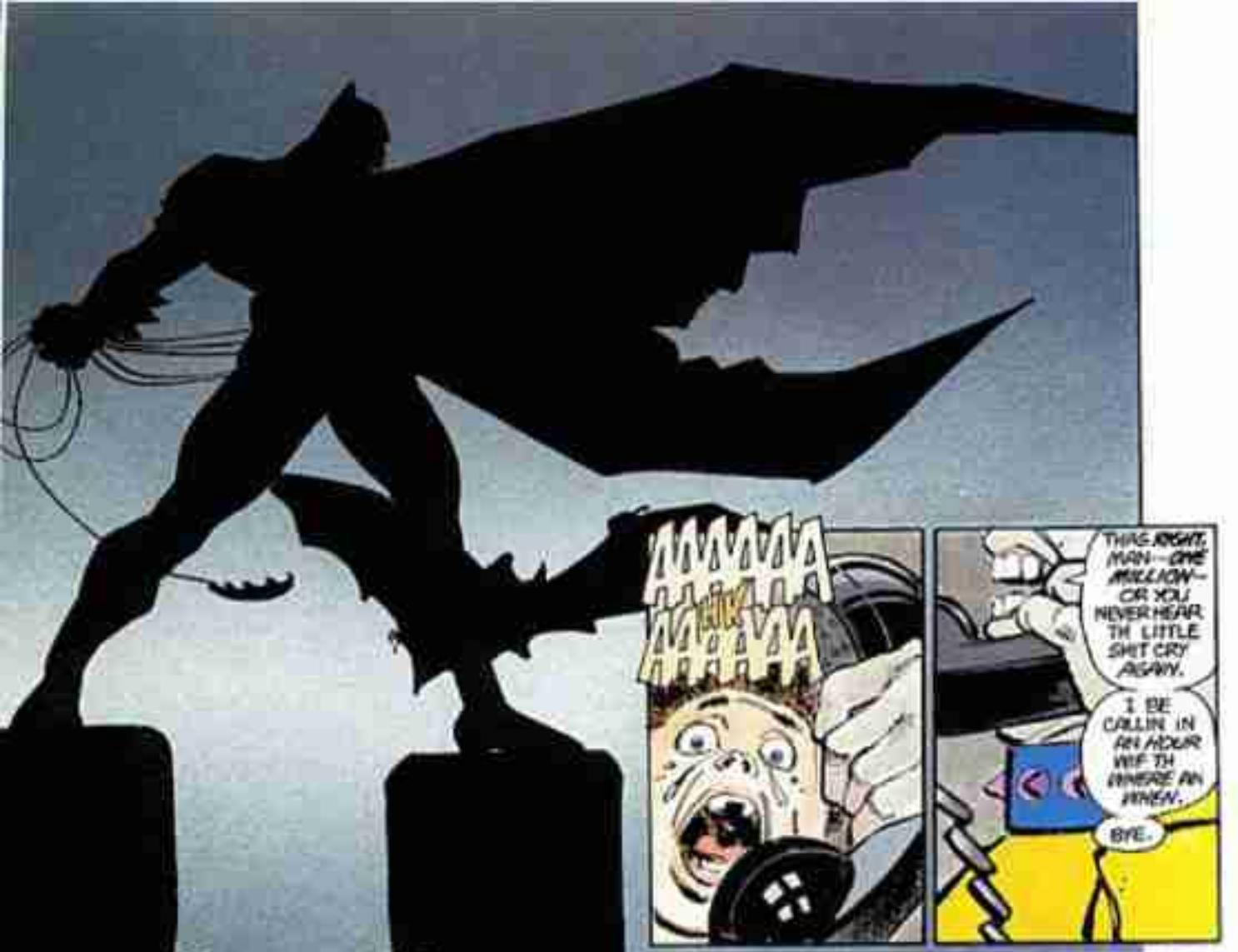
I'M STILL POOLING
OPINIONS.
I'M STILL POOLING
OPINIONS.

WITH A SCANT SIX HOURS
REMAINING, THE QUESTIONS
HANG IN THE AIR-- WHO
WILL REPLACE JIM GORDON?
AND WHAT WILL BECOME
THE OFFICIAL POSITION ON
THE BATMAN? TOM?

GOOD QUESTION, LOUR.
MRS. JOYCE RIDLEY WAS
ADMITTED TO A PRIVATE
HOSPITAL, UPTON PARK
PSYCHIATRIC OBSERVATION
FOLLOWING HER COLLAPSE
THIS MORNING.

HER TEN-MONTH BABY,
KEVIN, HEAR TO THE
RIDLEY CHAINING GREAT
FORTUNE, IS STILL
MISSING. ANYONE WITH
INFORMATION IS URGED
TO CALL THE CRISIS
HOTLINE...







BRAKA
BRAKA
BRAKA
BRAKA
BRAKA





BRAKK



I BELIEVE YOU.

...A RUINLESS, MONSTROUS
VIGILANTE, STRIKING AT
THE FOUNDATIONS OF OUR
DEMOCRACY—IMBECILELY
OPPOSED TO THE PRINCIPLES
THAT MAKE OURS THE MOST
MOBILE NATION IN THE WORLD—
AND THE KINDEST...

...FRANKLY, I'M SURPRISED
THERE AREN'T A HUNDRED
LIKE HIM OUT THERE—A
THOUSAND PEOPLE ARE FED
UP WITH TERROR—with
SUICIDAL LAWS AND SOCIAL
COWARDICE. HE IS ONLY
TAKING BACK WHAT'S OURS...



THESE—and many,
many others—are
THE REACTIONS TO A
PHENOMENON THAT HAS
STRUCK A NERVE CENTER
IN OUR SOCIETY—THE
RETURN OF THE BATMAN.

TONIGHT, WE WILL EXAMINE
HIS IMPACT ON OUR
CONSCIOUSNESS. FROM
METROPOLIS—WE HAVE
LANA LANG, MANAGING
EDITOR OF THE DAILY
PLANET...

...JOINING US FROM
GOTHAM CITY—DR.
BAUHOLEMEN WOLPER,
POPULAR PSYCHOLOGIST AND
SOCIAL SCIENTIST, AUTHOR
OF THE BEST-SELLING
“HEY—I’M OXY!”...

...WITH US TONIGHT
FROM HIS OFFICE IN
WASHINGTON—
PRESIDENTIAL MEDIA
ADVISOR
CHUCK BRICK.



DR. WOLPER—YOU HAVE
CLAIMED THAT THE BATMAN
IS HIMSELF RESPONSIBLE
FOR THE CRIMES HE FIGHTS.
STILL, CRIME RATES HAVE
SHOWN A STEEP DROP IN
THE WEEKS SINCE HIS RETURN.
HOW DO YOU EXPLAIN THIS?

I'M GLAD YOU ASKED ME THAT
QUESTION, TED. IT IS TRUE THAT
THIS BATMAN HAS TERRORIZED
THE ECONOMICALLY DIS-
ADVANTAGED AND SOCIALLY
IMBALANCED—BUT HIS
EFFECTS ARE FAR FROM
POSITIVE...

PROBABLY THE PUBLIC FORGE
AS A VAST, MOIST MEMBRANE
—THROUGH THE MEDIUM
BATMAN HAS STRUCK THIS
MEMBRANE A VICIOUS BLOW,
AND IT HAS DECODLED. HENCE
YOUR MISLEADING STATISTICS.

BUT YOU SEE, TED, THE
MEMBRANE IS FLEXIBLE—
AND PERMEABLE. HERE
THE MORE SIGNIFICANT
EFFECTS OF THE BLOW
BECOME CALCULABLE, EVEN
PREDICTABLE TO WIT—



EVERY ANTI-SOCIAL ACT CAN BE TRACED TO IRREGULARABLE MEDIA INPUT. GIVEN THIS, THE PRESENCE OF SUCH AN ABERANT, VIOLENT FORCE IN THE MEDIA CAN ONLY LEAD TO ANTI-SOCIAL PROGRAMMING.

JUST AS ANGRY DENT WHO'S RECOVERING STEADILY, THANKS FOR AIDING, ASSUMED THE ROLE OF IRREGULAR DOPPELGANGER TO THE BATMAN, SO A WHOLE NEW GENERATION, CONFUSED AND ANGRY...

-- I'LL BE GONE TO THE MATRIX OF BATMAN'S PARADOXAL SELF-DELUSION. BATMAN IS, IN THIS CONTEXT-- AND Pardon the term-- A SOCIAL DISEASE...

THAT'S THE DUMBEST LOAD OF...

LAW-- PLEASE-- THE NETWORK--



AN' BREAK-- THE PRESIDENT HAS REMAINED SILENT ON THIS ISSUE. DON'T YOU-- AND ME-- FEEL THAT THE NATIONAL UPRISER OVER THE BATMAN INJURIES, IF NOT ACTION, A STATEMENT OF POSITION?

HECK, TED. HE'LL GET AROUND TO A PRESS CONFERENCE SOONER OR LATER. BUT THE PRESIDENT'S GOT TO KEEP HIS EYE ON THE BIG PICTURE, Y'KNOW? AND THIS BATMAN FLAPDOD, WELL...

IT'S NOISY ALL RIGHT, THAT BIG CAPE AND POINTY EARS-- IT'S GREAT SHOWbiz. AND YOU KNOW THE PRESIDENT KNOWS HIS SHOWbiz. YOU JUST KEEP YOUR SHORTS ON, TED...

Pretty soon now the ratings will drop on this one and it'll blow over. Besides, I think the whole thing's just as likely a hoax. Networks be done worse.



I MEAN, MURKIN'D BE PUSHING SIXTY BY NOW-- IF HE EVER WAS REAL. FUNKY HORNBY'S EVER TAKEN A PICTURE OF HIM... MIGHTY FUNKY, I SAY.

MURKIN, YOU ARE THE BATMAN'S MOST VIOLENT SUPPATER. HOW CAN YOU CONDONE BEHAVOR THAT'S SO BLATANTLY ILLEGAL? WHAT ABOUT DUE PROCESS-- CIVIL RIGHTS?

WE LIVE IN THE SHADOW OF ODEME, TED. WITH THE CHILDREN UNDERSTANDING THAT WE ARE VICTIMS-- OF FEAR, OF VIOLENCE, OF SOCIAL IMPERFECTION.

A MAN HAS Risen TO SHOW US THAT THE POWER IS, AND ALWAYS HAS BEEN, IN OUR HANDS. WE ARE UNSTOPPABLE-- HE'S SHOWING US THAT WE CAN RESIST.



LANA -- YOU
HAVEN'T EXACTLY
ANSWERED MY
QUESTION...



NEXT UP...
FIGHTING
CRIMES.

DO YOU
KNOW
WHO I
AM? I
PUNK?

I'M THE
WORST
MISERABLE
YOU EVER
HAD. KIND
THAT MADE
YOU WAKE UP
SCREAMING
FOR YOUR
MOTHER.

YOU'VE
GOT A
MOTHER,
DON'T YOU?
EVERY PUNK
SHOULD
HAVE A
MOTHER.

QUITE AN
ARSENAL
YOU AND
YOUR BUDDIES
HAVE...

THE ARCS
WERE NOTHING
SPECIAL, OF
COURSE.

WHY...

WHY...
WHERE AM I...

C... CAN'T
SEE, MAN...

WHAT'S ON
MY FACE...

I THINK
I'M BLEEDING
NOW. I NEED
A DOCTOR...

-- BUT THAT
ISN'T A
MESSAGE OR
YOUR TYPE WHAT
CARrying --

-- YOU KNOW
WHICH ONE
THE ONE YOU
AUTHORIZED --

-- THAT
PATROL WAS
OFG...

WHY...

ESPECIALLY SINCE
IT WAS ADAPTED
FOR A SQUEAKER.
YOU DON'T
RUN ACROSS THAT
NOT OUTSIDE OF
ANNUALY
INTELLIGENCE.

BUT THAT
MUG OF YOURS
-- THAT'S
CRAZY
INDEPENDENT.

SAME MIND
AND OTHER MEMBER
OF YOUR GANG
TRIED TO USE ON
JIM GORDON.

SO FULL ME
IN, PUNK -- THE
MURKIES HAVE
A INNOVATOR
DEAL WITH THE
ARMY?

YOU'VE GOT
A LOT OF
TEETH LEFT,
AND I HAVEN'T
EVEN ADDRESSED
YOUR TONGUE.

S... SOOO
MAN... I'LL
TELL YOU...

-- DEAL
IT...

NO DAYS,
BURNIN' 2
WEEKS...

WHAT
DO YOU SAY,

MANN?

I DON'T THINK
YOU UNDERSTAND
THE SITUATION.
YOU'RE NOT IN
A POSITION TO
NEGOTIATE.

LET ME
SHOW YOU...



"I WOULD
BEGG YOU, CRADDOCK,
TO MURDER AND
MURDER FIFTY
PEOPLES OF SODOMIN TO
THE END OF SODOMIN
TOWERS--THE
MURKISH LOST IN
THE CITY!"

"THE SCREAM ALONE
IS WORTH IT."

"WATCHA
RED CARD,
MAN, WATCHA
RED CARD..."

"I HEARD
THIS IS
A CON
GAME."

"SEE FU
YOURSELF,
MAN--
WATCHA
RED CARD..."

"MAN...
WHAT THE
HELL..."



IT'S THE PAIN, THINKS MARGARET CORCORAN. MY LEGS NEVER HURT LIKE THIS WASHTIME I WROTE THE TUBES.

THE PAIN--
IT WON'T LET
THE PAIN GIVE
IN MY CALVES
WHERE I'M
USED TO IT.

SHE FEELS THE METAL
SQUARE INSIDE HER PURSE
AND SMILES.

NEARLY NOBODY TIPS
ANYMORE--BUT AN UPTOWN
DRINK LEFT TEN DOLLARS
ON THE TABLE TONIGHT. WHAT
WITH THE TURN-OFF NOTICE
IT WAS WRONG TO SPEND THE
TIP ON THE PAIN.

MARYDOSE MEANS, THE DOCTOR
SAID, EASY FOR HIM TO TELL
HER TO QUIT HER JOB. EASY
FOR HIM TO TALK ABOUT
SURGERY.

SURGERY WITH NO INSURANCE
AND TWO PAYMENTS LEFT ON
JAWING IS EXPENSIVE, AND THE
TURN-OFF NOTICE FROM THE
ELECTRIC COMPANY WITH
WINTER ON ITS WAY.

SHE PICTURES ROBERT'S
FABLE LITTLE HANDS,
HIS EAGER SMILE...



HER PURSE STRAP BITES
INTO HER SHOULDER...

...AND MARGARET CORCORAN,
WHO HAD NOT READED
WITH BLUE CROSS WHEN
THEY CANCELLED HER
INSURANCE OR WITH
CITICORP WHEN THEY
REPOSSESSED HER CAR...



SHE FEELS HER PURSE HIT HER
STOMACH AS THE TRAIN
RUMBLIES TO A STOP. SHE
HEARS THEM LAUGH.



SHE LANDS HARD ON THE
CEMENT, BUT IT ONLY
HURTS.

SHE FEELS THE SQUARE OF
METAL AND SWINGS GOD
AND CAN'T HELP BUT CRY.

THEN SHE FEELS SOMETHING
HEAVY AND ROUND LIKE AN
APPLE IN HER PURSE...

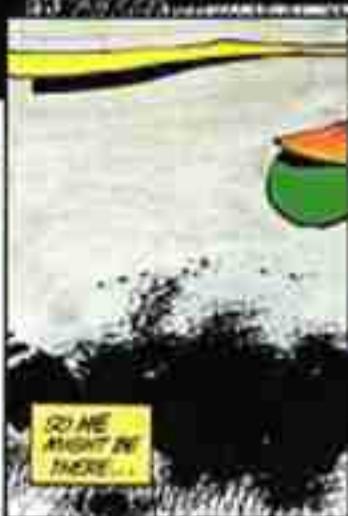
WOMAN
EXPLODES IN
SIGHTLY SEASIDE--
FILM AT ELEVEN.



THE GENERAL'S RECORD
IS AN ANTHEM OF
ORDERS MARKED
BETWEEN DEAFENING
EXPLOSIONS, OF A
STEELY, REASSURING
VOICE ABOVE THE
CRIES OF WOUNDED
MEN.

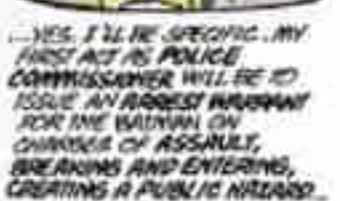
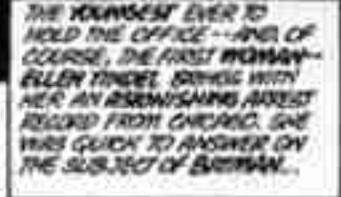
...AN ANTHEM
SHATTERED INTO
DISCORD IN ITS
LAST FEW NOTES--
BY MISappropriated
WEAPONS, SOLD
TO THE MUTANTS.

I ALMOST
ASKED
ANTI-MONY.



...PLEASE, I'M IN DIRECTOR,
LOUIS GALLAGHER WHO
PROPOSED MY ANSWER
SOON TO THE QUESTION THAT'S
ON EVERYONE'S MIND--WHO
WILL BE THE NEW POLICE
COMMISSIONER OF GOTHAM
CITY?...





THE DUMP
STRETCHES OUT
OF SIGHT FROM
THE FAR BANK
OF THE WEST
RIVER. I'M
TOLD IT ENDS
SOMEWHERE
BEFORE THE
FARMLANDS.

IT SMELLS OF
ROT AND RUST--
IT'S A BREEDING
GROUND FOR
INSECTS AND
RODENTS.

I CUT THE
ENGINE AND
LISTEN TO ONE
OF THE
RODENTS.



MUTANTS!
SURRENDER
NOW... OR BE
DESTROYED!

THE GATEKEEPER... THAT'S
WHAT YOU CALL IT, DICK.

KIND OF NAME A
ROD WOULD COME
UP WITH...

BLAM **BLAM** **BLAM**
BRAKABRAKABRAKABRA
BLAM

PWING
PWING
PWING

POOM
POOM

THEY DON'T
EVEN WAIT
FOR THE
ORDER.

THOSE PEOPLE,
THOSE GUYS...

...NO RESPECT
FOR HISTORY.

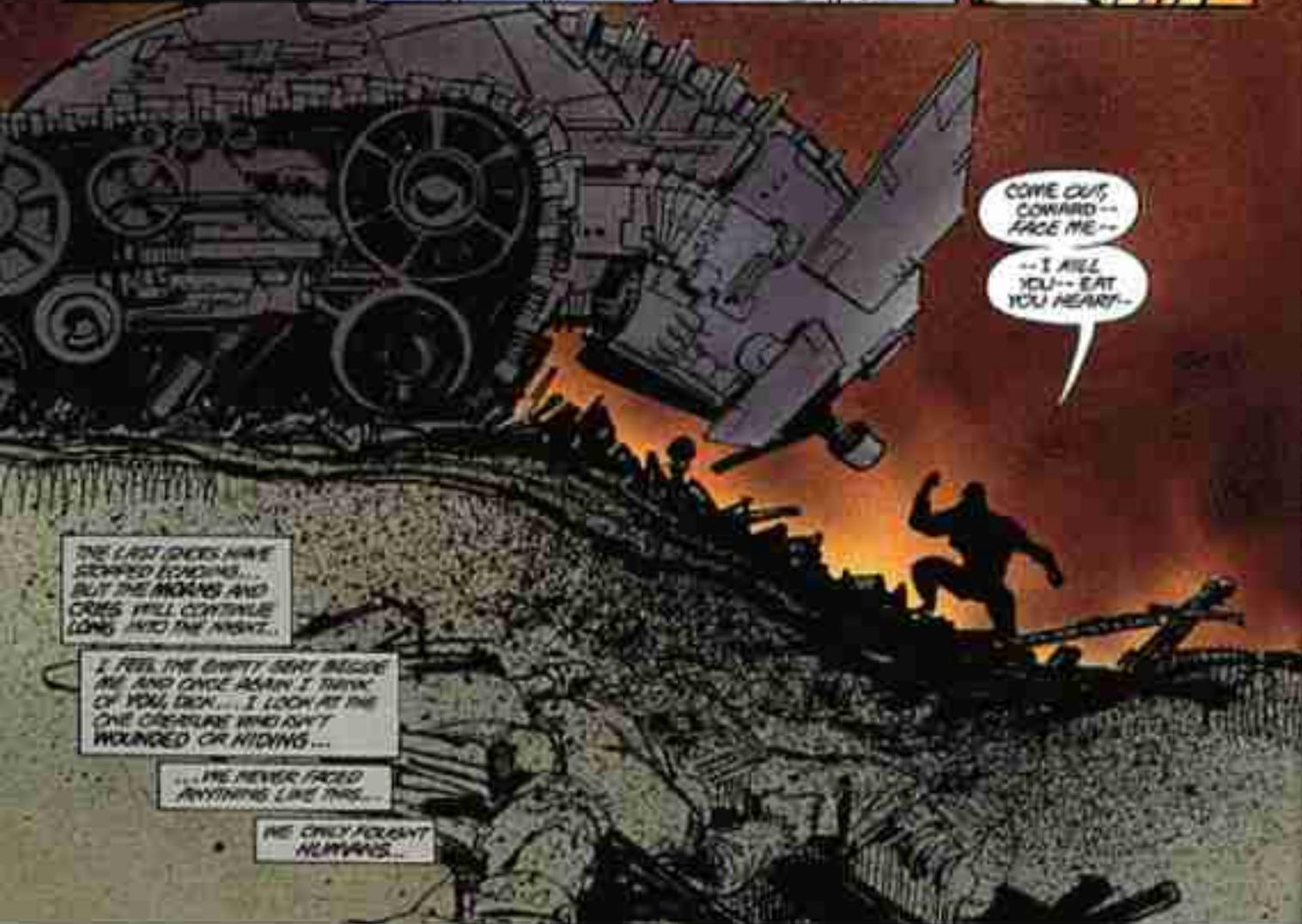




I MURKED HER DURING
SOME ANGSTY RIOTS
FIFTEEN YEARS AGO. THE
ONLY THING I KNOW OF
THAT CAN CUT THROUGH
HER HIDE ISN'T FROM
THIS PLANET.

THE MILITANTS USE HAND GRENADES.
THEY USE ROCKET LAUNCHERS.
NOTHING BOUNCES OFF THE
HULL THAT MUST HAVE COME FROM
A SAMOVAR.

THEY DO EACH OTHER
A LOT OF DAMAGE.



MASTER
BRUCE--COME
IN, PLEASE
--MASTER
BRUCE--

BUT THERE
HE IS, DICK
--THE
MILITARY
LEADER

A KIND
OF EVIL HE
NEVER
DREAMED
OF...

THERE
WE ARE--
SQUARE
IN MY
SIGHTS

AND THERE'S
ONLY ONE
THING TO
DO ABOUT
HOW THAT
MAKES ANY
SENSE
TO ME--

--JUST PRESS
THE TRIGGER
AND BLAST
HIM FROM
THE FACE OF
THE EARTH.

THOUGH THIS MEANS
CROSSING A LINE I
DREW FOR MYSELF
THIRTY YEARS AGO...

EVERTY MUSCLE
A STEEL SPRING--
READY TO
LASH OUT--

--I DON'T THINK
OF A SINGLE
PERSON TO LET
HIM LIVE--

--AND HE'S
YOUNG--

...GREATNESS IS
EXACTLY THE KIND
OF BODY I WISH HE
DON'T HAVE...

...ON HIS
PHYSICAL
FRAME...

POWERFUL, MUSCULAR,
ENORMOUS BULK TO SLOW
HIM DOWN...

--AND I
HONESTLY
DON'T KNOW
IF I COULD
BEAT HIM.

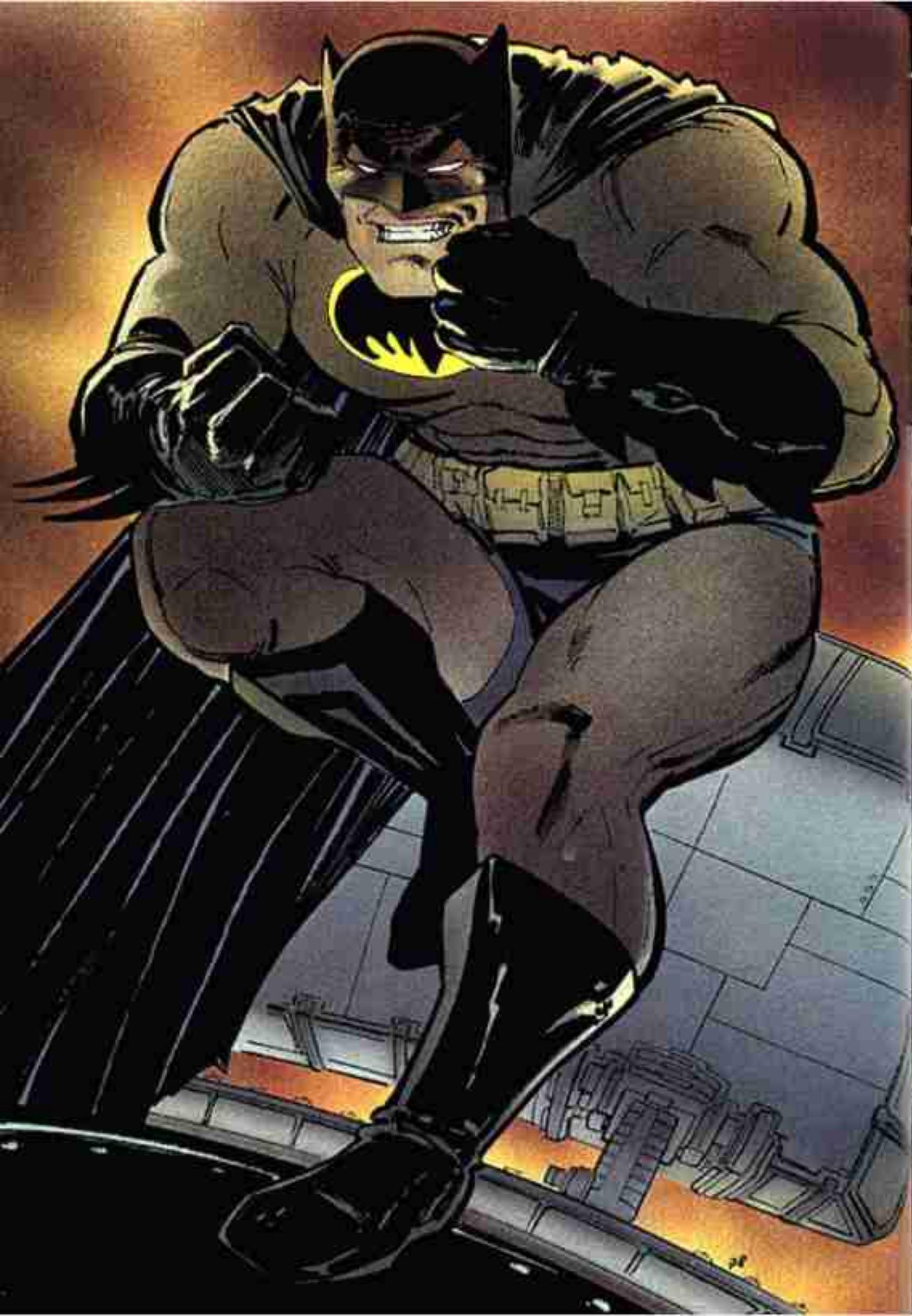
MASTER
BRUCE--
YOU'VE SHOT
DANNY
THE
WEAPON!

COME ON,
MAN--YOU
BETTER
ME--

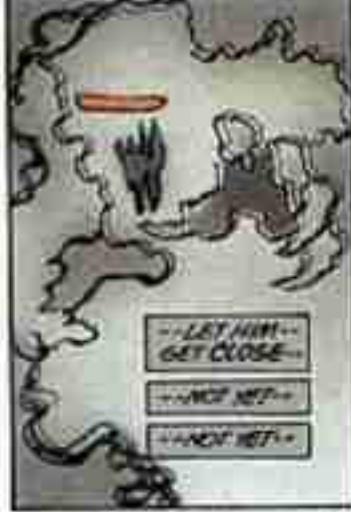
CAN'T HAVE
A BACK
DOOR, ALFRED.
MIGHT BE
TEMPTED TO
USE IT.

SIR, YOU
CAN'T BE
SERIOUS--

SIR...
FEEL
WELL
YOU--













FROM STAR NOT GATES,
RODRIGUEZ SHARDED A TWELVE-MILLION-DOLLAR CONTRACT WITH LANDMARK FILMS TO MAKE IN A SCREEN VERSION OF SNOW WHITE. "I'M DOING IT FOR THE KIDS," SAYS GATES...

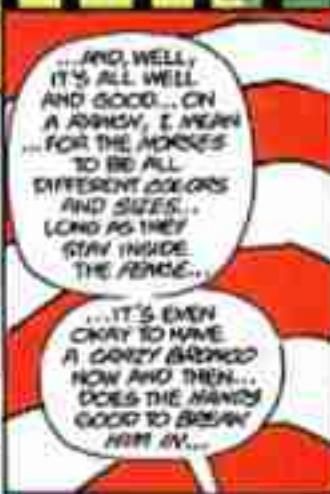
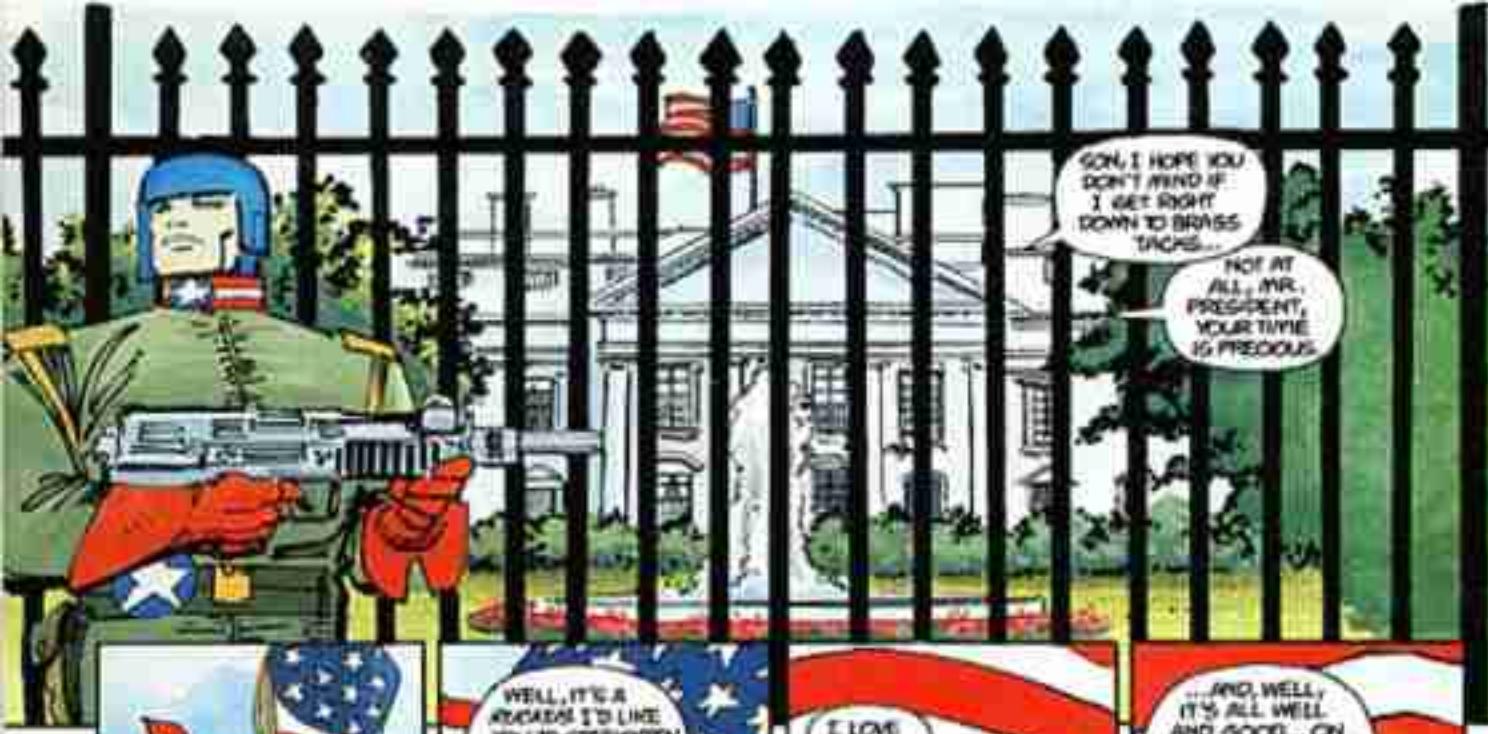
IN OTHER NEWS, GALAXY BROADCASTING PRESIDENT JAMES DEXON ASSURED VIEWERS THAT THE TELEVISION INDUSTRY'S CRIME, NOW IN ITS FOURTH REAP, WILL NOT AFFECT THE YEAR'S PROGAMMING...



THE POLITICAL PERFORMANCE COMMISSION HAS AWARDED THE PRESIDENT AN UNPRECEDENTED FIVE CREDIBILITY POINTS FOR HIS HANDLING OF FOREIGN RELATIONS DURING THE ECONOMIC CRASH...

THIS JUST IN—EVENWITNESSES REPORT EXPLOSIONS RUMBLING AGAINST THE BOTNAM DRUM. A NEWS TOUR HELICOPTER IS ON ITS WAY, FOLKS...



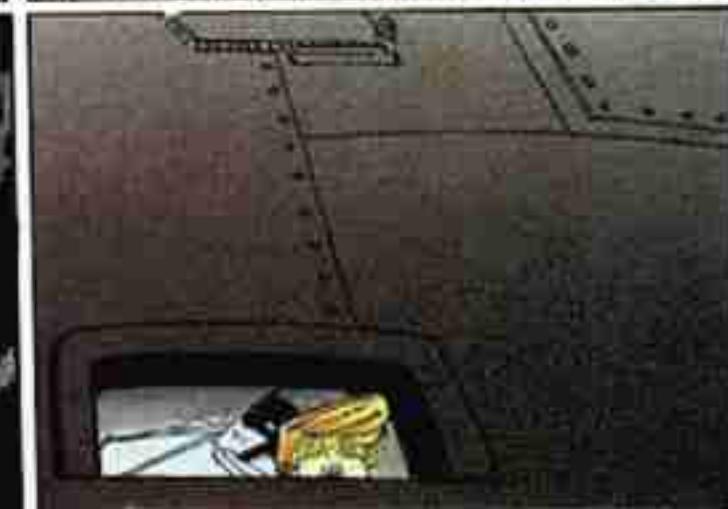
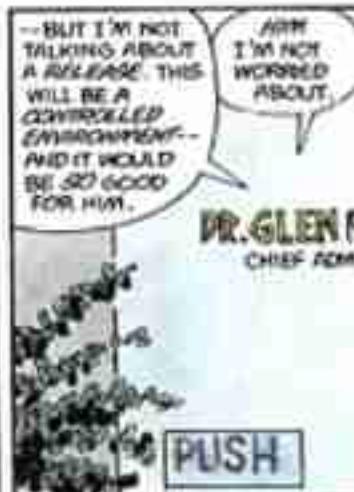


BATMAN IS A COWARD.
I BROKE HIS BONES. I
CONQUERED THE FOOL. I
MADE HIM SICK FOR MERCY.
ONLY BY CHEATING DID
HE ESCAPE ALIVE.

LET HIM GO TO HIS
WOMEN. LET HIM LACK
HIS WILNESS. HIS DAY
IS DONE. GOTHAM
CITY BELONGS TO THE
MUTANTS.



THE REST OF
THE MUTANT LEADERS
SILENTLY SIT
UNFINISHED
FOR BROADCAST.







WE WILL COME FOR OUR LEADER. WE WILL RAPE GOTHAM. WE WILL RAPE GOTHAM. WE WILL DRINK GOTHAM'S BLOOD.

ON HEARING THIS MESSAGE FROM THE MAYOR, COMMISSIONER GORDON PUT HIMSELF AND HIS MEN ON TWENTY-FOUR HOUR ALERT - WHILE THE MAYOR WAS GUCH TO SPEAK OUT...

THIS WHOLE SITUATION IS THE RESULT OF GORDON'S INCOMPETENCE - AND OF THE TERRORIST ACTIONS OF THE BATMAN. I WISH TO SIT DOWN WITH THE ANTI-LEADER... TO NEGOTIATE A SETTLEMENT...

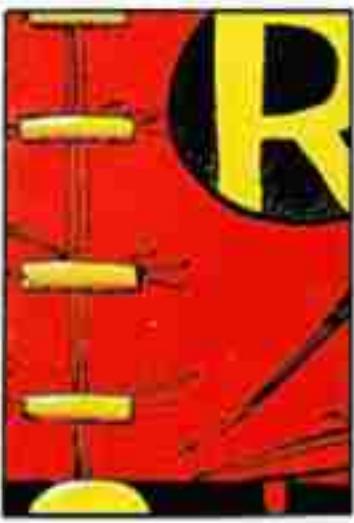
WHAT DO YOU THINK, TRISH? HIS HONOR GONE NUTS?



NOT AT ALL, BILL. FINNALLY I EXPECT THE MAYOR'S CREDIBILITY IS GOING TO GO THROUGH THE ROOF, ESPECIALLY IF HE'S SUCCESSFUL IN THE NEGOTIATIONS.

THIS, COMBINED WITH HIS STRONG STAND ON BATMAN... AND MAKING A WOMAN THE NEXT POLICE COMMISSIONER - WELL, I THINK WE'VE GOT A WHOLE NEW ARMOR ON OUR HANDS...

...PUBLIC PEACEKEEPER... WISE, THAT IS.



ARNOLD CRIMP FUMBERS THE
COLD STEEL DING IN HIS POCKET
AND STARES AT THE MOVIE
MARQUEE AND DOES NOT
THROW UP.



ARNOLD CRIMP TOOK
THE IR-BURN FROM
THE RECORD STORE
WHERE HE WORKED
UNTIL THEY FIRED
HIM THIS AFTERNOON
AND TOOK OVERHEAD
"STAIRWAY TO HEAVEN"
TO RAVE.

HE THINKS ABOUT LED ZEPPELIN
AND HOW THEY ARE TRYING
TO KILL HIM.



HE HAD NOT
KNOWN ABOUT
LED ZEPPELIN
UNTIL FATHER
BENIGNI HAD
EXPLAINED IT
LAST NIGHT.

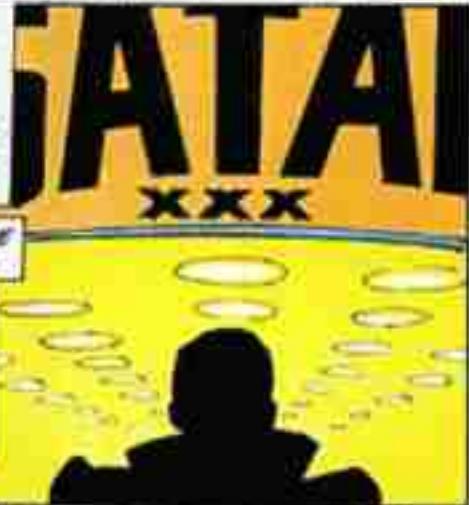
FATHER DON
SAID THAT LED
ZEPPELIN HAD A
PRAYER TO
SATURN IN THEIR
SONG "STAIRWAY
TO HEAVEN."

THEY HAD IT
VERY WELL.
THEY RECORDED
IT BACKWARDS.



THEY HE PLAYED THE
SONG BACKWARDS.

HE PLAYED IT
FORTY-SEVEN
TIMES UNTIL HE
WAS ABSOLUTELY
CERTAIN THAT
FATHER DON WAS
RIGHT.



HE LOST HIS TEMPER AND
BROKE THE RECORD INTO FOUR
PIECES THAT WERE EXACTLY
THE SAME SIZE.



ROW ON ROW ON ROW
ON ROW OF PICTURES OF
WOMEN AND WORDS
AND WORDS AND WORDS.
HE STOPPED AT THIS
ONE. THE ONE HE IS IN
RIGHT NOW AND READ
THE TITLE. THAT DID NOT
MAKE HIM BREAK UP.

THE TITLE AS
"MY SWEET SARAH,"
WHICH IS WHAT
ARNOLD CRIMP IS
ABSOLUTELY CERTAIN
HE HEARD WHEN HE
PLAYED "STAIRWAY
TO HEAVEN"
BACKWARDS.

THE YOUNG GIRL WHO HAD
PRINTED JUST LIKE A WHORE
SCREAMED FOR THE MANAGER
AND THE MANAGER WALKED
OUT FROM THE BACK ROOM
AND WOULDN'T EVEN LISTEN
AND FIRED ARNOLD CRIMP.



THAT WAS THIS AFTERNOON,
IN THE STORE.



ON THE SCREEN A NUN RADIN
IS DOING SOMETHING AND
SHE IS PRINTED EXACTLY LIKE
A WHORE--



THAT WAS THIS AFTERNOON, IN
THE STORE. HE EXPLAINED
IT TO HER VERY CAREFULLY.
SHE SAID AWFUL WORDS.



EVERY MORNING AND EVENING
UNTIL TONIGHT OF COURSE
HE HAD RELEASED SIX BLOCKS
OUT OF HIS WAY TO AVOID
THIS NEIGHBORHOOD.



THREE SLAIN IN
BATMAN-INSPIRED
POVY INSATIABLE
SNAP-OUT
DETRES TO
FOLLOW--





HE PUSHES THROUGH THE COTTON IN HIS HEAD AND REMEMBERS THE LAST TIME HE FELT SOMETHING.

IT WAS IN THE FIRST AND ONLY ROUND OF HIS LAST FIGHT, HIS LAST FIGHT WHEN CAPTAIN WARRIOR HIT HIM ACROSS THE NOSE.



BROKEN NOSE VASQUEZ, BIGGERS HAD CALLED HIM, JUST LAUGHED WHEN IRON MAN CRIED LIKE A BABY AND ASKED FOR ANOTHER FIGHT.

THEY BRODERS PUT HIS FAT ARM AROUND IRON MAN'S SHOULDER AND TOLD HIM THE ONLY WAY HE COULD MAKE MONEY AGAIN

SUDDENLY HIS EYES STING AND IRON MAN PUNCHES ALL OVER AND REALIZES HE'S RECKLESS ABOUT A MAN

A MAN WHO DRESSES UP LIKE A MONSTER AND MAKES THINGS RIGHT.



THE NEXT TIME IRON MAN VASQUEZ FEELS SOMETHING, HE IS STANDING IN A RESTAURANT WITH SCREAMS ON HIS FACE AND A GUN IN HIS HANDS.

HE HEARS A TRUCK BACKFIRE...



CARVED HOLES-BE KILLER DRESSES AS BATMAN-- AFTER THIS--



A DEVOUT CATHOLIC, PEPPI SPANDECK CAN'T SAY HE APPROVES OF THIS BATMAN.



AND WHEN HE HEARS THE WOMAN SCREAM DOWN THE STREET, HE KNOWS HE SHOULD BE AWAKE.

INSIDE HE'S LOOKING AT THE ALARM CLOCK THAT COST HIM TWO MONTHS PROFIT AND THE IRON BARS OVER HIS WINDOWS THAT MAKE HIS BEAUTIFUL SHOP LOOK LIKE A PRISON...



HE CAN FEEL HIS PULSE JUST BELOW HIS EARS. HE KNOWS HE'S DONE CARRY BUT THE MURDER IS ALARMING, AFRAID. AFRAID OF PENNY.

PENNY IS HEART BARELY ENOUGH FOR THIS TO MAKE THE NEWS.



AN LIPSENTE—THE MAYOR IS THIS ANNIKE IN CONSIDERATION WITH THE MUTANT LEADER, WHO HAS FORCED TO MEET HIM ALONE. MEANWHILE, THE MARCH'S LEADERSHIP QUOTIENT HAS SOARED—EXCUSE ME...

I'D EXPECTED THEM TO BE SCREAMING AND FIGHTING. BUT THEY SOUND LIKE A CAPTION ARMY. I'D LIKE TO THINK THEY'RE CARRYING...

BUT HERE I AM, WAITING THE MAYOR TO MEET THEIR LEADER...

--WITH ALL THE CEREMONY OF A MILITARY CONFERENCE.



THE CELL DOOR OPENS. THE AIR GOES TRASH. I FEEL THE MAYOR SHUDDER, IN TIME WITH ME...

I ASK HIM ONE MORE TIME IF HE IS SURE HE WANTS TO GO IT ALONE. HE SURPRISES, AND NODS.

I DON'T KNOW IF I'D CALL IT COURAGE.



I HEAR A NERVOUS GIGGLE AND AN ANIMAL GROWL.

I HEAR MANOCLUFF LUNNIS SNAP.



...THE MAYOR IS DEAD.

THE MUTANT LEADER RIPPED THE MAYOR'S THROAT OUT WITH HIS TEETH. THE MAYOR HAS BEEN RETURNED TO HIS CELL. MORE ON THIS AS WE GET IT.





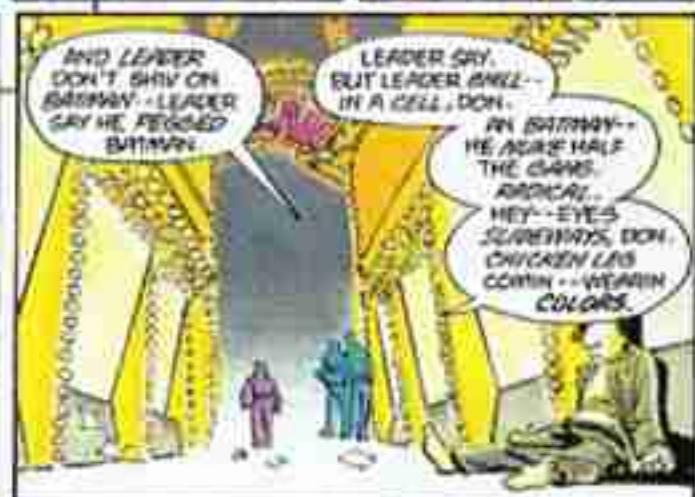
THAT'S RIGHT--WE'VE GOT POLICE VIDEO TAPE OF THE MAYOR'S MURDER! ONLY ON CHANNEL TWO! NOT FOR THE SQUEAMISH STORY TUNED.

SOVIET DESTROYERS HAVE BEEN SIGHTED IN THE WATERS OFF CORIO MALTESE-- AND, IN GOTHAM CITY, IT ALSO LOOKS LIKE CYBERNETIC WAR-- AS THE CITY GUARDS ITSELF FOR THE INIMIGT ATTACK...

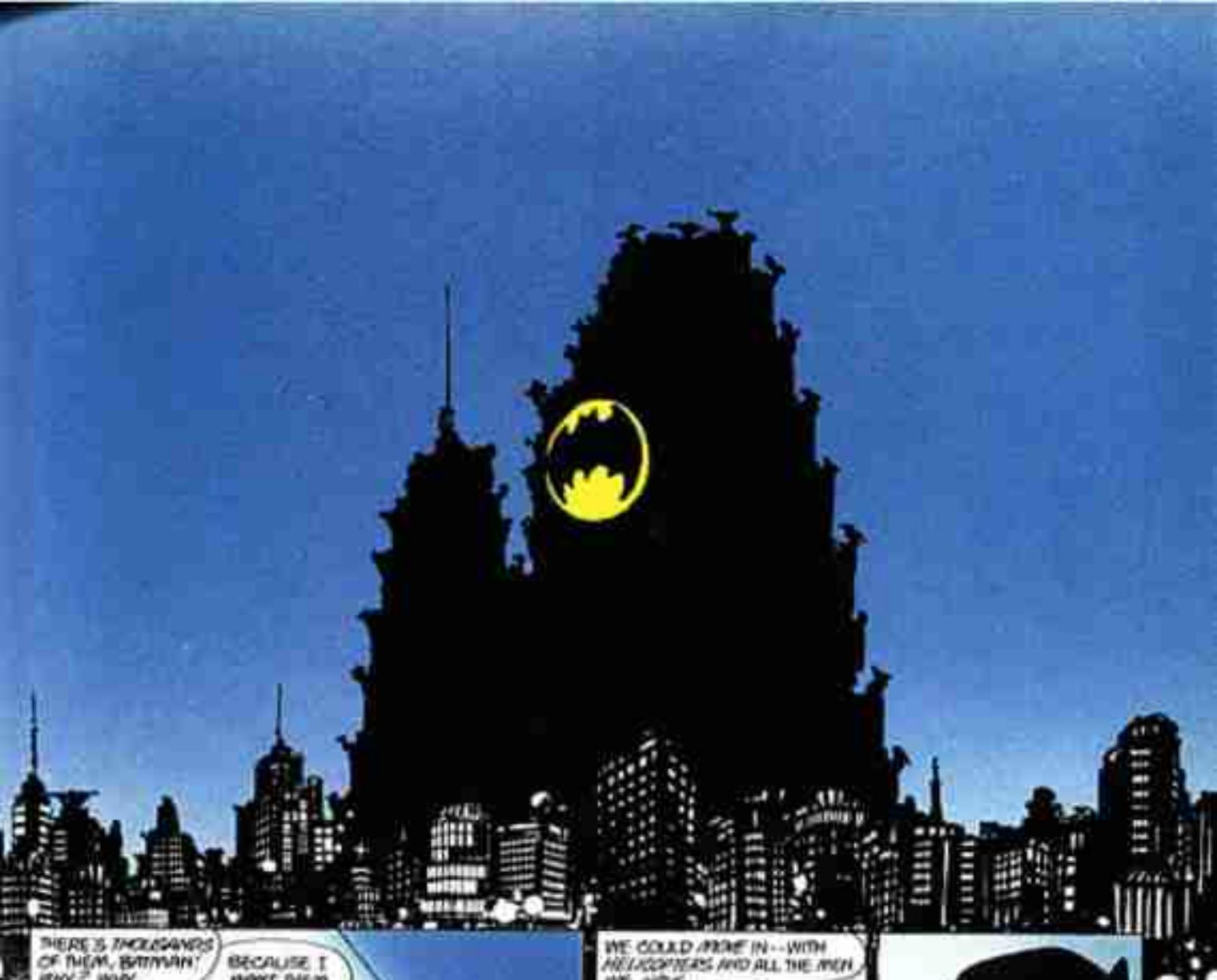


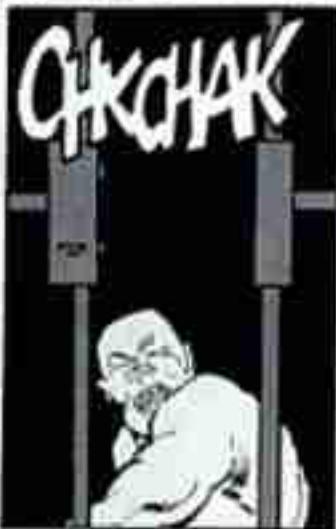
...PLEASE...











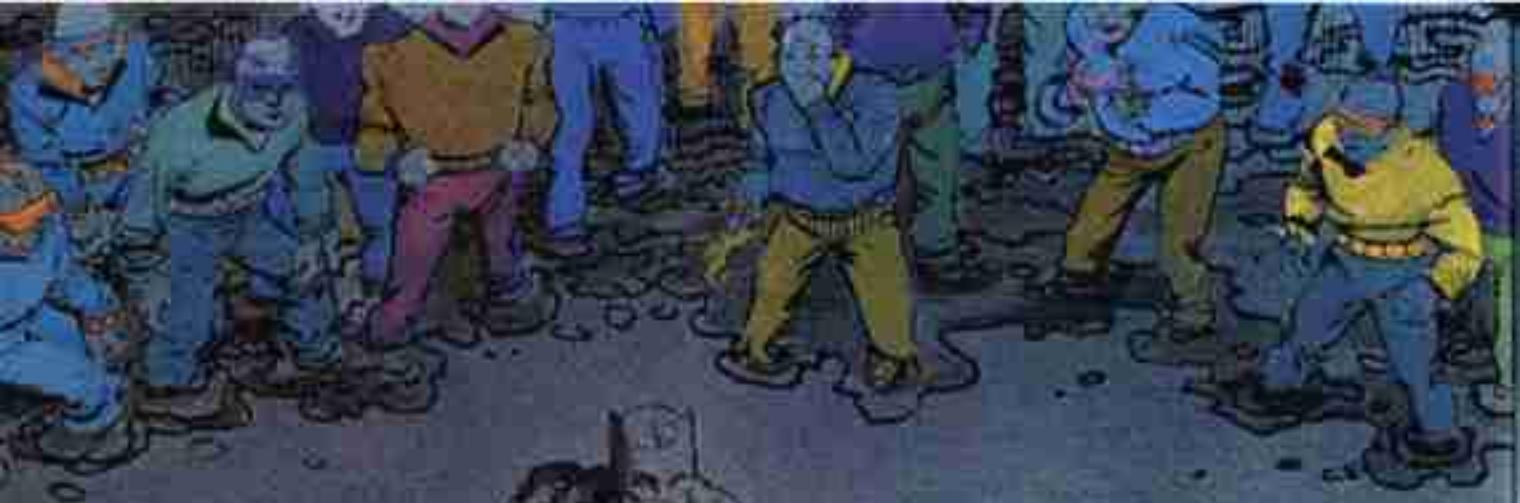






RAKKEE





THE INHABITANTS ARE DEAD! THE
INHABITANTS ARE MISSING! THIS
IS THE DAWN OF THE FUTURE.
GOTHAM CITY BELONGS TO
THE BATMAN!



JUST AS I PREDICTED - THE
MUTANT HAS INFECTED
THE MOUTH OF GOTHAM -
POISONED THEM WITH AN
INSIDIOUS BACKACHE FOR
THE MOST VIOLENTLY AN-
SOCIAL BEHAVIOR.

WE ARE NOT TALKING ABOUT
LEAVING THE MUTANT LEADER
GO. ONCE HE IS MOBILE
HE WILL BE ARRANGED -
TO SEE IF HE IS FIT TO
SHOOT MORE, OR THE
VICTIM OF MENTAL ILLNESS.

BATMAN? I'M PLAIN TIRED
OF HEARINGS ABOUT HIM.
HIM AND HOW HE DOESN'T
LET THINGS STOP HIM OR
JUST LET THINGS GO THE
WAY HIS NEIGHBORS DO. WE
COUNT TOO.

THORAH SURROUNDED
BY ENEMIES AND
TEARFUL, WE MUST NOT
BECOME SO EMBITTERED
THAT WE SELL GOTHAM'S
MOTHERS AS COTTON ONLY.



DO NOT EXPECT ANY
FURTHER STATEMENTS. THE
SONS OF THE BATMAN DO
NOT TALK. WE ACT. LET
GOTHAM'S CRIMINALS
BEWARE. THEY ARE ABOUT
TO ENTER HELL.



SO A BUNCH OF
ADVOCATES TURN ON
CRIMINALS, INSTEAD OF
INNOCENTS. FOR THIS
YOU WANT TO BLAME
BATMAN?



THE PRESIDENT IS CONCERNED.
YOU CAN BANK ON THAT, MR.
BUT DON'T EXPECT HIM TO GO
JUMPING IN ON GOTHAM'S
OWN FINE MAYER AND
GOVERNOR. NO, SIR. THIS IS
AMERICA.



I SAID
NO
COMMENT.



LET ME TELL YOU MY SECRET.

SEEING EVERYBODY
WAVES TO KNOW
WHAT IT IS.



**ELLEN
YINDEL**
COMMISSIONER
OF POLICE

COMMISSIONER
OF POLICE

LIFE WILL BE EASIER NOW. I WON'T FEEL LIKE DAD TO AN ENTIRE CITY OF SOULS. I WON'T BLEED WITH EVERY SINGLE ONE OF MY CHILDREN.

WHEN I THINK OF BRUCE—AND
WHAT HE IS IN FOR... I DON'T
THINK HE CAN POSSIBLY KNOW
HOW MUCH I BENT AND
BROKE THE RULES FOR HIM,
ALL THESE YEARS...

REFERENCES



WHEN I THINK OF BRIDGE--
THEN, I WISH THEY HADN'T
RETIRING ARE. HE IS FINISHED.
AND THERE'S NO WAY TO
TELL HIM THAT.

AND NO
POINT,
I GUESS.



I WON'T BE SEEING HIM AGAIN. I MEAN, SURE, I'LL SEE HIM--HE'S THAT CLOSE TO POLICE, BUT I'M OUT OF THE PICTURE NOW, OUT OF HIS PICTURE.



I WAS GOING TO TELL YOU MY SECRET. THE ONE I'LL TELL
NOMBODY AT THE BANQUET.

-- GOD, WHAT WILL
I SAY AT THE
BAPTISM? --

...IT'S A
SAMPLE
COCKET.





B O O K T H R E E



HUNT THE DARK KNIGHT







BOYS, BOYS, BOYS...
ONE AT A TIME NOW...
HOW NOW ABOUT
THAT SWARILY DRESSED
KNEELESS IN THE
FRONT ROW
THERE...

MR. PRESIDENT - WE'RE ALL
ANXIOUS TO HEAR YOUR
PLANS FOR THE COUNTRY.
APPROVE OBAMA, BUT FIRST,
ANOTHER QUESTION: WHAT
IS YOUR POSITION ON THE
BATMAN CONTROVERSY?



WELL, I DON'T THINK THAT'S
MY BILL TO -- MY TURN TO ACE.
BOB, HEN, YOU SEE, THAT'S
A RIGHT BIG STATE, ALL IT'S
OWN, AND IT'S GOTTA DAY
SOLID, CLEAR-HEADED
GOVERNOR, HES, IT DOES...

SORRY, GUY, I'M THE
GOVERNOR, GOT A WHOLE
STATE TO LOOK AFTER. I
TRUST THE JURIMENT
OF THE ARMY OF GOTHAM
CITY IMPLENTY.

AS GOV, IT IS MY
DUTY TO ADMINISTER --
NOT TO INTERFERE.
JOHNSON, DON'T ASK
ME TO INTERFERE WITH
THE DECISION-MAKING
POWER OF OUR NEW
FEDERAL COMMISSIONER.

AND SO THE BATMAN BUCK
IS PASSED -- TO ELLEN
WYNNE, WHO REPRESES
JAMES GORDON AS POLICE
COMMISSIONER TONIGHT.
WILL SHE FULFILL HER PROMISE
TO ISSUE AN ARREST WARRANT
FOR THE BATMAN?



CHRIS FRED HILL BROADCAST
THE BANQUET LATE, GORDON
IS CONSIDERED TO INTERFERE
WITH -- A SENSITIVE SITUATION.
CONSIDERING THEIR
DIFFERENCES, WE MAY
SEE SOME SHAKES PEN TOM?

THAT ME ANY, LOLO.
WE'LL BE RIGHT BACK,
AS JOHNSON MAKES
BRIEFS US A STORY.
WE DON'T KNOW WHETHER TO
CLASSIFY AS AN ARMED
SHOOTOUT OR SOMETHING -- OR
A DIRTY SITUATION.





TONY SUNFLOWER SCORCH
HAS OPERATED HIS CORNER
NEWSPAPER FOR ANOTHER
YEAR. HE'S NEVER SEEN
THE LIKE OF WHAT STATION
SEVENTY-FIVE HAD THIS
EVENING. HAVE YOU HEARD
SCORCH?

NOT WITHOUT A COUPLE, I MEAN,
NO--I DIDN'T SEE IT, MY
MAGAZINES AND NEWSPAPERS
--THEN I SAW, BLOWING LIKE
LEAVES, BUT I DIDN'T SEE IT.
IT WAS TOO FAST--IT WAS
FASTER THAN ANYTHING.





ANOTHER BREAKDOWN INCIDENT--THIS ONE IN THE SOUTH STREET SUBWAY SECTION. ADVERTISING AGENT ERIC BRAUNERLLIS TOLD REPORTERS...

I DIDN'T DO ANYTHING WRONG. I WAS JUST TRYING TO PROTECT MYSELF. THE SUBWAYS ARE DANGEROUS. YOU DON'T NEED ME TO TELL YOU THAT, SO THERE I WAS, ALONE IN THE SUBWAY EXCEPT FOR THIS 'BERKART--I WANT THAT IN QUOTES--

WHAT?...HOW WAS I TO KNOW HE DIDN'T HAVE A GUN? THEY NEVER SHOW YOU THAT CATE THEY'RE READY TO KILL YOU-- WHAT?...ONE SECURE. THE CARDSTONES. A LOT OF THEM GOT CARDSTONES, YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN.





--HAVEN'T SEEN A DOCTOR YET, BUT I'M SURE I SURFED A DISC LANDING ON THE BACKS... NO, I COULDN'T SEE. NOT A FRICKING THING. THAT WIND KNOCKED ME TOO MUCH SOON. SPENT A SECOND LISTENING TO THAT BRRRRR PISSEY LIKE AN IDIOT...

--YES, I AM RELIGIOUS, BUT I'VE GOT THE DECENCY TO KEEP IT IN CHECK. THEN I HEARD THE SCREAM OF TWISTING METAL-SCREWS FROM INSIDE THE CRASH. PEOPLE CRIED. FINALLY THE SOOT SETTLED...



--AND THERE IT WAS-- THE TRAIN, I MEAN-- ITS FRONT END CRUSHED AWAY, LIKE IT RAN INTO SOMETHING. HELL, SOMETHING...



SOMETHING MORE POWERFUL THAN A ZOOGRINDIN', RIGHT, TOM?

LOL-- THE LAST THING WE NEED IS TROUBLE WITH THE FED...

SOFTENING UP-- SHELL START TALKIN' SOON...

--WHAT'S THAT SOUND...

--THE FLOOR...
--IT'S SHAKIN'--

--NOT AN EARTHQUAKE.
DO NOT PANIC.
WHATEVER IT IS, IT IS
LOCATED-- AND ROLLING
ACROSS GORHAM'S SOUTHERN
SIDE...



R R R R R R P M M M B B B B





SOVET REPRESENTATIVES STERNED OUT OF THE HALL REPEATING THIS LATE-BREAKING SOVIET-U.S./SOVET TRUCE ON THE COATED MURKIE CRISIS HAVE BROKEN DOWN.

DEFENDING U.S. MILITARY SUPPORT OF THE REGIME OF GENERAL MACHIBAN AS "FROST AGGRESSION," THE SOVIETS PLEADED A "REAL MILITARY COMMENCEMENT." THIS HAS BEEN A HIGHLY SPORADIC REPORT.

BODIES OF A FRESHMAN AND JUNIOR FOUND HANGED TO PIPES IN A WEST END TENEMENT. MEMBERS OF THE DISBANDED MURKIE GANG ARE CARRYING OUT THEIR SHOT TO SOVIET INDEPENDENCE.

THE INCIDENTS ARE DEADLY. THE INJURIES ARE HORRIFIC. THIS IS THE MARK OF THE FUTURE. GORNIA'S COY BELONGS TO THE BATMAN.

BATMAN SPECIAL REPORT

NINJA SPECIAL REPORT

ISSUES WITHIN ISSUES

DO NOT EXPECT ANY FURTHER STATEMENTS. THE SOVIETS OF THE BATMAN DO NOT TALK. WE ACT. LET GORNIA'S OPPONENTS BEWARE. THEY ARE ABOUT TO ENTER HELL.

BATMAN'S CREDIBILITY FOR THIS ACTIVITY IS OUR SUBJECT TONIGHT. WITH US IS THE WORLD'S LEADING EXPERT ON THE SOCIOLOGICAL IMPACT OF THE BATMAN—DR. BARTHOLOMEW WILPER.

BATMAN
IS A
MENACE
TO
SOCIETY

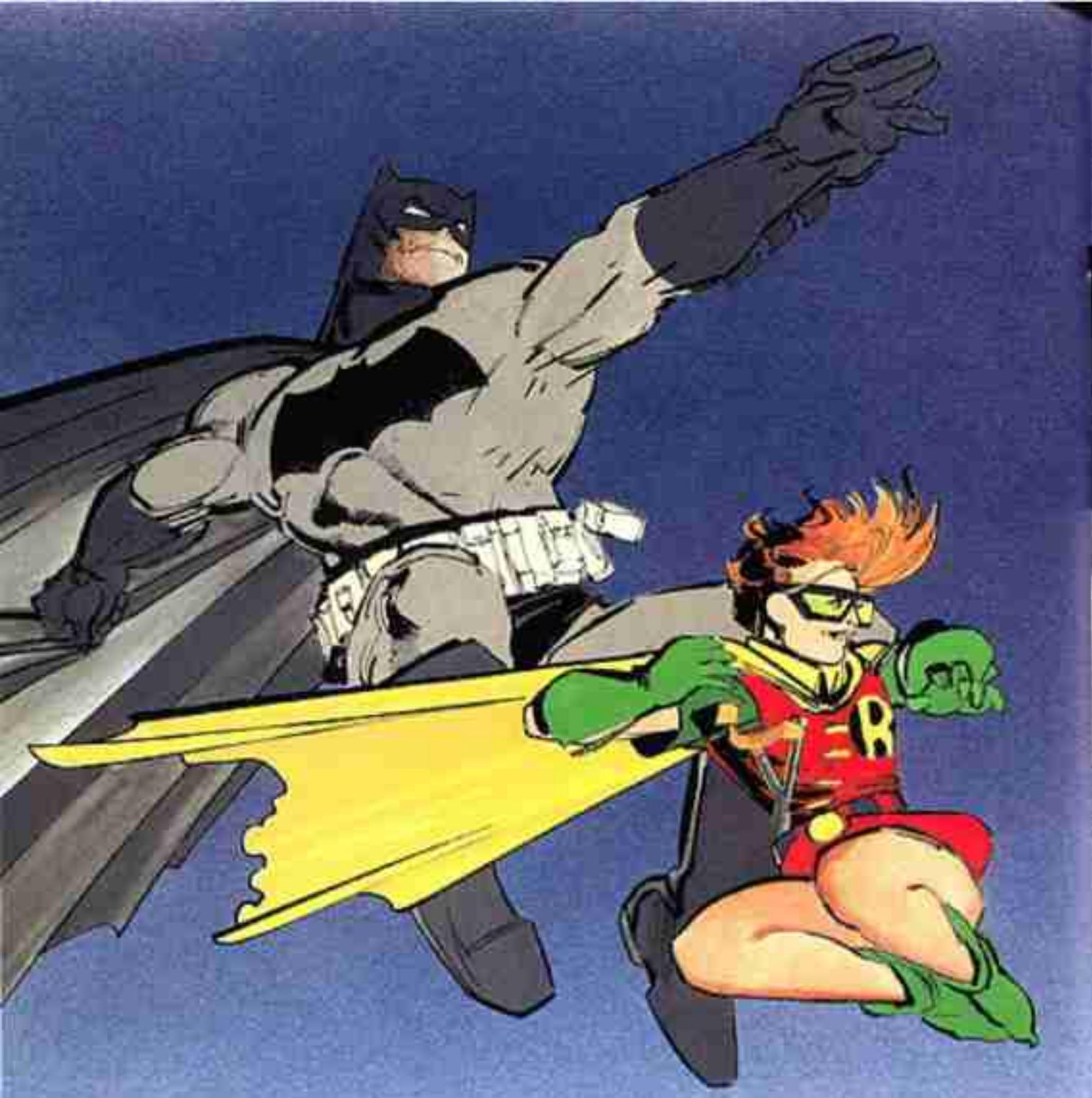
NOW, I KNOW THAT'S SOMETHING OF AN OVERTURNED TERM. SURE SOVIET SCORNISH COMES OUT OF MY MOUTH. Nonetheless, it applies, despite my allowing the city to the inevitable consequences...



"...MORNINGS HAS BEEN DONE TO STOP HIS PSYCHOLOGICAL INFECTION. BATMAN SHOULD BE CONSIDERED PERSONALLY RESPONSIBLE FOR EVERY MURKIE BEING ANSWERED BY THIS GANG."

"MY FRIENDS
WERE SPECIAL.
WATCH IT..."
"YEAH,
BUT..."





--STILL, YOU MADE YOURSELF FISHER
TO BRUNO. I WILL NOT TOLERATE
MANIPULATION--

--CAREFUL--

BUT BACK
THAT-- WAS
THAT AHE?

...THE HILL IS SILENT.
AS THE MAN WHO HAS
BEEN POLICE COMMISSIONER
OF GOTHAM CITY FOR
TWENTY-SIX YEARS
STEPS TO THE PODIUM...

NICE
MOTION.

JAMES GORDON
THROWS A ROLL
CHOCOLATE FROM
THE AUDIENCE...

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN...
IT IS MY PLEASURE TO
INTRODUCE YOU TO YOUR
NEW POLICE COMMISSIONER.
I DO NOT ENVY HER THE NEXT
FEW YEARS. THE JOB HAS
FEW REWARDS.

THE BEST YOU CAN ADOPT FOR
IS THAT, WHEN YOU'RE
FRIENDED WITH IT, FRIENDS
AREN'T AS LOVING AS THEY
WOULD'VE BEEN WITHOUT
YOU. ELLEN TYNDELL IS
EMINENTLY QUALIFIED FOR
THIS JOB...



TO ATTEMPT TO QUADRILL HER
OUTSTANDING RECORD IN THE
MINUTES I AM ALLOWED
WOULD BE A DISRESPECT TO
HER. RATHER, I OFFER MY
SUPPORT, IN THE KNOWLEDGE
OF WHAT SHE FACES.



IF YOU
DISRESPECT
EVER
AGAIN--

--YOU'RE
FIRED.

SHE ARSES A CITY OF THIEVES
AND MURDERERS AND HONEST
PEOPLE TOO FRIGHTENED TO
HOPE. SHE FACES LIFE-AND-
DEATH DECISIONS EVERY
HOUR TO COME. SOME WILL
TORTURE HER.



TO THE ONLY
SOLID LEAD I'VE
GOT LEFT, ROBIN.

A MAN
NAMED
ARMER

HE LIVES
SOMEWHERE
OR WHAT?



SHE WILL FACE A MAN WHO IS THE LIVING SPIRIT OF... SOMETHING WE NEVER GAVE HIM HIS ENERGY. SHE MAY LEARN FROM HIM. I WISH HER WELL. THANK YOU -- AND GOOD-BYE.

THERE IS
STRAINED
APPRAISE FOR
JAMES GARDNER...

FIGURE WE'VE
BEEN DOING
THE SPIDER
HERE FOR
LESS THAN
THREE
YEARS.

AMENDEE,
ROBINN, IT'LL
KEEP YOU
ALIVE.
ROBINN ISN'T
HOME.



ROBIN!

NO!

...AND THIS -- A
SOMETHING OMISSION
FOR POLICE
COMMISSIONER
MURKIN!

THANK YOU... I AM
INSTRUCTED TO SHARE
THE SAME WITH JAMES
GARDNER HE SPOKE OF
REGARDS. NOW I
MUST MAKE MY WAY.



EYEWASH



EYEWASH
YOURSELF, BITCH.



IT
FEELS--

DESPITE GOVERNOR'S PLEAUE OF
GRANIE, I BELIEVE OUR ONLY
RESCOURSE IS CONFRONTMENT.
I WILL NOT ANTHONY IN THE
ACTIVITIES OF A VILAIN.
THEREFORE, AS YOUR RESPECT
COMMISSIONER--

-- I ISSUE THIS ARREST
ORDER FOR THE BATMAN ON
CHARGES OF BREAKING AND
ENTERING, ASSAULT AND
BATTERY, CRATING A
FUGITIVE AVENGE--



TILL ONE
MORNING

I'LL HELP THE
DEADLY DEAD AS
BEST I CAN!

I'LL COUNT
THE DEAD
ONE BY
ONE.

I'LL ADD
THEM TO
THE LIST,
JOKER.

THE LAST OF
ALL THE
PEOPLE I'VE
MAKED...

- BY
LETTING
YOU
LIVE.

THE DAY
COMES

FESTIVAL OF ENTERTAINMENT
TOMORROW NIGHT WITH DR.
ROTH MEISTERHEISTER, THE
WET HAMBURGER BUN
CONTEST, AND A MAN WHO'S
BROUGHT A LOT OF GAMES
TO THE WORLD WHO TO BET.



TWELVE KILLED IN A
MYSTERIOUS EXPLOSION
THAT LEVELED A DAY
TRIE APARTMENT BUILDING.
THE RESCUE TEAM
SIGHTED BATMAN AT THE
SCENE...

FOLLOWING HER ARREST
ORDER FOR THE BATMAN,
COMMISSIONER JAMES
FILED A FORMAL PROTEST
WITH THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
AGAINST THE JOKER'S
APPEARANCE ON THE DAVID
LETTERMAN SHOW...

THE COUNCIL DENIED HER
PROTEST... THE BODY OF
THREE-TIME JOKER
HELEN MEISTER, WAS
FOUND IN AN EAST SIDE
ALLEY. HE HAD BEEN
LITERALLY SKINNED
ALIVE...

THE AMERICAN PRISONERS
CALLED HIS DECLARATION
A GENERAL STRIKE, IN
RESPONSE TO TREATMENT
OF THEIR MEMBERS IN THE
RECENT LIBYAN INCIDENT.



DESPITE MASSIVE SOVIET ARMS BUILDUP IN THE HINTERLANDS SURROUNDING COMBANIA, THE PRESIDENT PROclaims THAT AMERICA WILL NOT BE THE FIRST TO DEPLOY ADVANCED WEAPONS...

GOOD MORNING GOTHAM!

THERE'S VEGGIE
THE SUN AND THE
SKY AND AURA
LIKE ME IS THE ONLY
PERSON IT'S ALL HERE.

THEN HE REACHES
EVERYTHING BY
TASTEFULLY.

YOU'RE NOT A
DEADER MAN
ANYMORE.
BRUCE.

...BUT TIMES
HAVE CHANGED
AND YOU...

MAYBE
IF YOU'D
LEARNED
TO SLOW
DOWN,
FIND YOUR
MAGIC...

WELL, IT'S
JUST NOT
MAGICALLY
YOU'LL BURN
YOURSELF
OUT.

I KNOW, I
KNOW. YOU
LOOK BETTER
THAN YOU HAVE
IN YEARS.
BUT...

YOU'RE
GOING TO
MAKE ME
COME RIGHT
OUT AND SAY
IT, AREN'T YOU?





THE REST
OF US LEARNED
TO SWIM

THE REST OF US
RECOGNIZED THE
DANGER OF
THE DENTS
BUT CHANCE
NOT AVERTED.



DARK ROCK
BACKED HOR
PEOPLE

AND HEFTY A
THE CRAGS

AND I HAVE
WALKED THE
ANCHOR'S EDGE
FOR SO LONG



BUT YOU
REACH
— SOON
THAT
YOU FIND
CARRION...





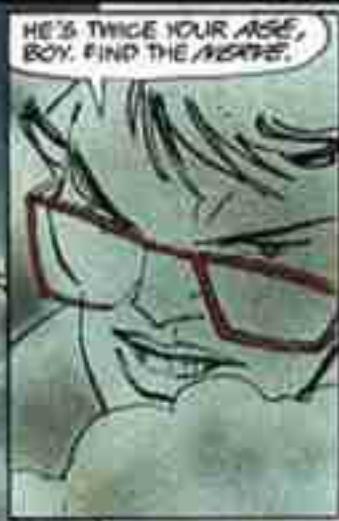
"SEVEN POINT FIVE
ON THE ANXIETY SCALE...
HAVE THOSE IDIOTS
FINALLY DONE IT?"

"THIS IS STRICTLY AN
EXCUSE-ME MESSAGE FOR
YOU, ROBIN. YOU WILL JOIN
IN THE CAPTION."

"YOU ARE NOT TO
TOUCH THE
CONTROLS."







WHAT CAN I SAY
ABOUT OUR NEXT
GUEST THAT HASN'T
BEEN SAID BEFORE?
PAGE?

HE IS A RODON, DAVE.
A MANIAC. A REAL
EGOMATIC. NO, I
MEAN IT. HE'S A
MUT.



YOU'RE SAD TO HAVE
ONLY KILLED ABOUT
SIX HUNDRED PEOPLE,
JOKER. NOW DON'T TAKE
THIS THE WRONG WAY,
BUT I THINK YOU'VE BEEN
HOLDING OUT ON US.

THIS IS A
SENSITIVE
ADAMAY
THING
HERE.
DANE, I
DON'T LET
YOU APPROACH...

I
DON'T
KEEP
COUNT.

I'M
GOING TO
KILL
EVERYONE
IN THIS
ROOM

NOW THAT'S
DAWN RIDE

CAN'T BELIEVE IT--

--I'M
ALREADY
BREATHING
HARD--

ME...AH...
HE IS JUST
AH...
TRYING TO
BREAK
THE
TENSION...

RIGHT, DR.
HOOPER--YOU
HAVE EXCUSED
JEZEBEL FOR
ZEE KILLINGS,
HEH?

YES YES MY
PATIENT IS
A FROG OR
BREWERY'S
PSYCHOSE.

AND WHAT
IS THE
NATURE OF
BREWERY'S
PSYCHOSE?

HMM
SEXUAL
REPRESSION
OF COURSE

REGARD
REPRESSION
--THIS IS
A TERRIBLE
ZINC

YOU'RE RIGHT;
WE MUST
NOT RESTRAIN
OURSELVES.

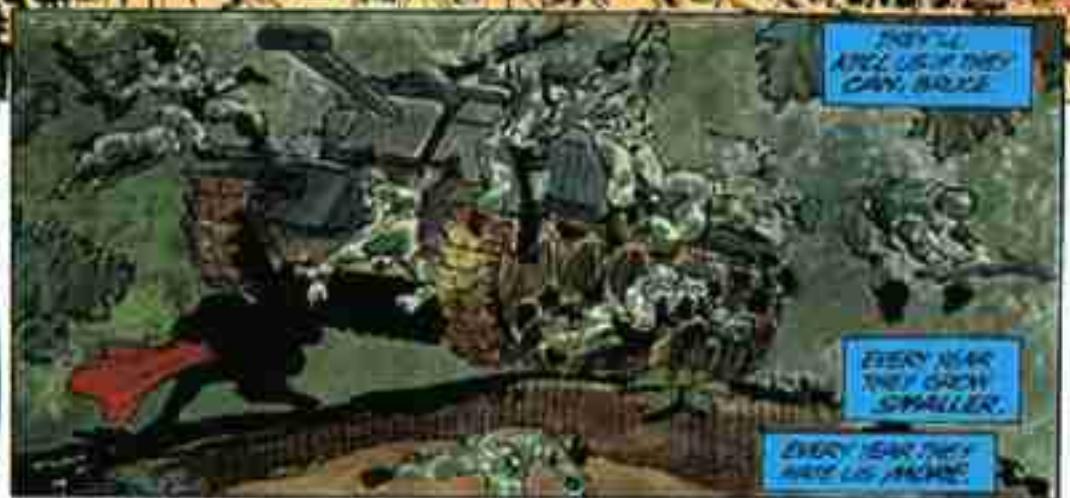


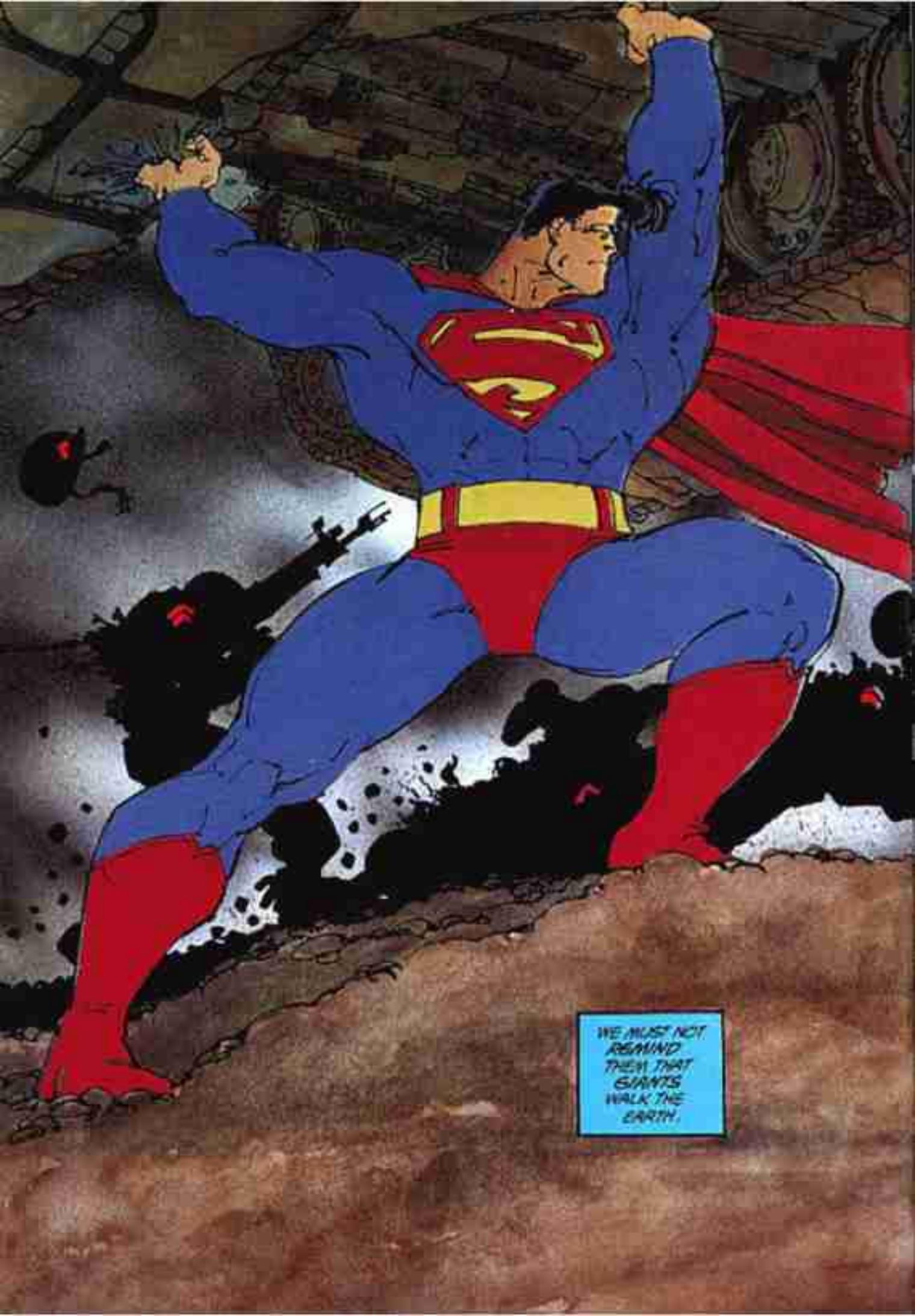




KRAAK!







WE MUST NOT
REMAND
THEM THAT
GIANTS
WALK THE
EARTH.

DRIVING THE PUBLIC NOT TO
MURK, THE PRESIDENT HAS
PLACED STRATEGIC AIR
COMMANDS ON AND AWAY.
"WE HAD TO MAKE THE FIRST
MOVE," SAID THE PRESIDENT.
"BUT WE'RE READY TO MAKE
THE LAST."

THE POPE TODAY DECLARED
THAT THE CHURCH'S STAND
ON CONTRACEPTION WILL
NOT CHANGE, DESPITE
WEDNESDAY'S FIREBOMBING
OF ST. PETER'S SQUARE
AND, IN LATER NEWS...

MY HEAD GOES LIGHT AND THE
SMOKE COVERS THE INSIDE OF
MY MOUTH AND LEAVES A PATH
OF RED-HOT GRANITE AT THE
BASE OF MY THROAT.

I STOPPED
DOING THIS TO
MYSELF FIVE
YEARS AGO...



COMMISSIONER
— KIRKMAN'S GONE
ALL SICK

SEND HIM
HOME, MERKEL.
TELL HIM IT'S
ALL RIGHT.

TWO MURDERED AND SIX
WERE SLAIN DURING THE
JOKER'S ESCAPE FROM THE
DAVID LETTERMAN SHOW
INCLUDING HOST LETTERMAN
AND DR. BARTHOLOMEW
HOLMES.

THE JOKER REPORTEDLY USED
HIS DEADLY SMILE GAS
ON THE CROWD. COMMISSIONER
KIRKMAN REAGGED TO COMMENT
ON THIS, OR ON THE ESCAPE
OF THE BATMAN WHICH LEFT
TWO POLICE OFFICERS
HOSPITALIZED.



THE SONS OF THE
ARMED HAVE STRUCK
AGAIN. IN FRONT OF A
DOZEN WITNESSES,
THEY ASSASSED A
SHOPKEEPER AND
CHOPPED HIS HEADS
OFF...

THE SHOPKEEPER IS SAID
TO HAVE BEEN CARRYING
SEVERAL MAGAZINES
AND A DANDY BAR. AS
YET, POLICE REPORT NO
EVIDENCE TO DIRECTLY
LINK THE ARMED TO
THESE CRIMES...



FOR THE HUNDRED
THOUSANDTH TIME--

...MY FRIENDS
DIE...

UHH...THIS
I DIDN'T SAY
FOR ELSE--

SAY...

NO--I MEAN IT--
I'M A HAPPILY
MARRIED MAN...

THERE IS SOMETHING YOU
HAVE TO DO FOR ME,
CONGRESSMAN. LISTEN
CLOSER...

YES...
CLOSELY...

THIS UNIT HAS
ITS OWN COMMAND
PHONE IT.
DETROIT?

I DON'T
HAVE A
LICENSE
YET, BUT--

GUYET--I'M
PICKING
SOMETHING
UP--

--A TELEVISION
TRANSMISSION--

--HE'S STILL UP THERE, LOOK--
DRESSED IN NOTHING BUT
AN AMERICAN FLAG,
CONGRESSMAN MARCHES,
FLAILING FOR A FULL
REVERSE KICKIN' ON
GORD MARSHALL--



--HE'S DOWN, LORI. HE'S STREET FIGHTER.
COMMISSIONER KENDRICK IS ON THE SCENE--LET'S SEE IF WE CAN GET HER TO SAY A FEW WORDS...

COMMISSIONER --DO YOU THINK THE JOKER--
GET THIS CLOWN OUT OF HERE

CHALLORIAN IS HEARING ABOUT THIS!

CHALLORIAN, MAYBE. SETH PRECINCT. WHAT'VE WE GOT?

IT IS NO JOKER, LIEUTENANT.



THE GIRL WITH HIM IS FROM ANGEL ESTATE. SHE'S BEEN ENDURED SHUT THE JOINT DOWN AND PICK UP SECOND ADGE.

YES, MAYBE. THANK YOU, MAYBE.
COMMISSIONER

CHALLORIAN, MAYBE. SETH PRECINCT. ANYTHING I CAN--
--SOMETHING INHERE. COMMISSIONER?

STOP THAT MAN!
WHAT THE...



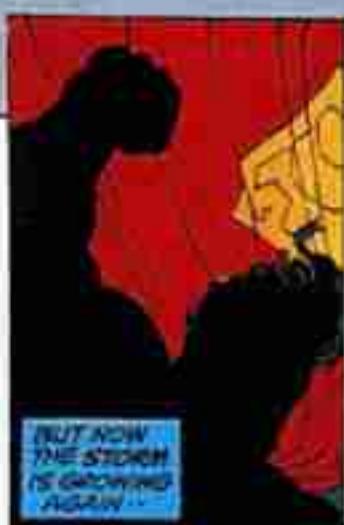












COMMUNICATIONS BLACKOUT CONTINUES AT GATES OF HELL. AS DO THE BIZARRE AND VARIOUS DISTURBANCES. ALIENED-HELD ANOMALIES UNREST LASH THE PORT OF SAN CONDEONIANA, SIXTY MILES SOUTH OF COATO...

...COULD PUT THEM IN A POSITION TO END THE WAR. AND ONCE THEY DO IT, THEY CAN TURN ON THE GROUP IN ORDER TO COVERING UP WHAT'S BEEN GOING ON. JANE, WE'RE GOING TO HAVE...

...AND I HOPE
WE'RE GOING TO...

...NOT DON'T LEAP
OVER THE CLOUDS.

...NOT



FREE COTTON CANDY

FREE COTTON CANDY



PENTAGON CHIEF GENERAL GREGG COOKED UP CONSPIRACY THAT STRATEGIC AIR COMMAND SQUADS AT B-52 COV DENSE-A HEARTBEAT FROM DEATH. "WE'RE PROUD," SAYS COOKED.

APPREHENDED WHILE TRYING TO REACH THE COCONUT AVOCADOES! WERE FORMER MEMBERS OF THE MURKIN GANG. THIS COIN WAS PAINTED CHALK WHITE, THEIR HAIR DYED BROWN...

SOMETHING A MEDIAN CILLS OUT FOR HER SON...

SOMETHING A COLLAGE PAYS THE SAME TIME AGAIN AND AGAIN...



CHEM, YOU ADDICTIVE ME. FIFTEEN POLICEMEN HAVING HAD -- ADDICTIVE DEAD -- AND STILL YOU CLING TO THIS ADDICT WORKSHOP, THOUGH NOW ANYONE CAN DRINK OF A BENZO! ADDICTIVE AS A ADDIC...

BUT MAN
ISN'T
KILLED
ANYBODY
MORE.



...IT'S
ENDLESS
DROWNED
LONER.



PERHAPS HE AIN'T--
REMEMBERED THAT IS WHAT
I SAID TO FRED, LANA.
DEAR, SURE, IT'S HARDLY
A CONVENIENCE THAT ONE
OF YOUR DADS CAME OUT OF A
TEN-YEAR CAVERNAT--
MOM, OF ALL TIMES...

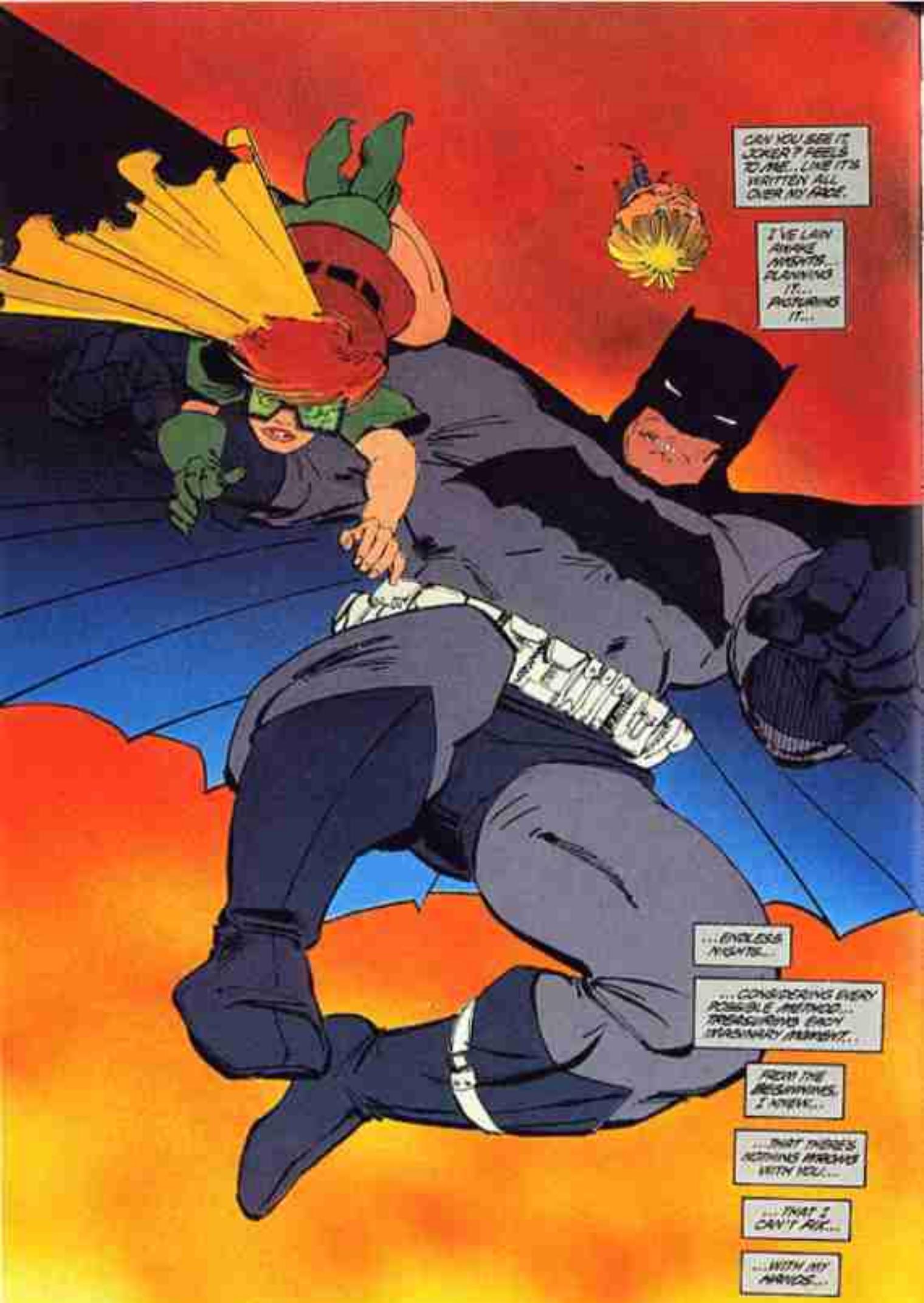
THANK
THE NICE
MAN,
DONALD.

I WANT
THE KIND
THAT
PLEASE.

BIG
CUP
OFF.

OH, BOSS--
THERE'S A BIG
HEADING OUR
WAY.
IT'S BIG--
IT IS...





CAN YOU SEE IT,
JOKER? FEELS
TO ME... LIKE IT'S
WRITTEN ALL
OVER AD PARK.

I'VE LAIN
AWAKE
MONTHS
PLANNING
IT...
PLANNING
IT...

...ENDLESS
NIGHTS...

...CONSIDERING EVERY
POSSIBLE METHOD...
INTRIGUING EACH
POSSIBLY PERTINENT...

FROM THE
BEGINNING,
I ATE...

...THAT THREES
ACTIONS ARCHER
WITH NOW...

...THAT I
CAN'T FIND...

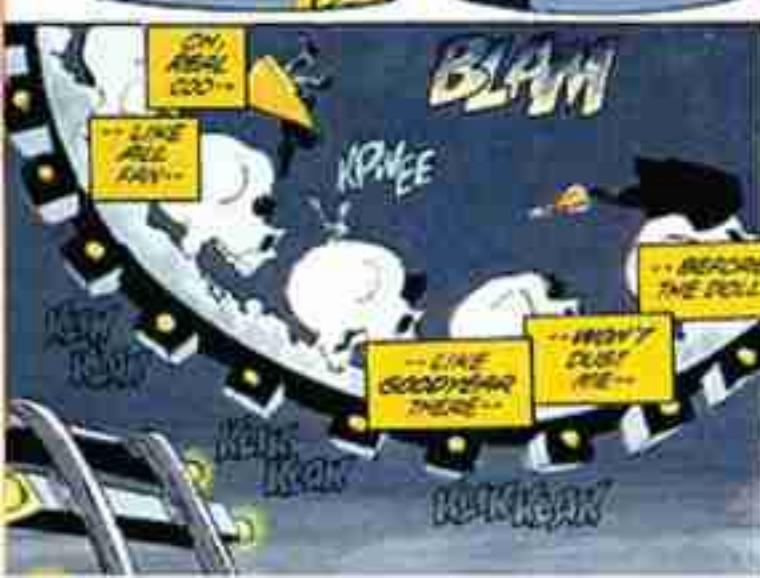
...WITH MY
ARMS...





IT'S NOT A JOKER,
REALLY--I THOUGHT
HE DESERVES TO BE THE
ONLY ONE WITH BRAINS
ENOUGH TO FIGURE IT.

WHO GAVE THIS RADIO
THE RIGHT TO DECREE
WHAT'S GOOD FOR IT?
LAST I HEARD, THAT
TAKES AN ACT OF
CONGRESS.





-- CHILD ENDANGERMENT IS THE LATEST CHARGE AGAINST THE BATMAN. REPORTS POLICE-MEDIA RELATIONS DIRECTOR ROBBIE GRILLACHER. BATMAN HAS BEEN SIGHTED LURING A YOUNG BOY...

-- AS A SONGED AGAINST POLICE COMPARE, COMING UP--COMMISSIONER YOUNGIE SAVES THE GOVERNOR FROM LITERALLY STRANGLING HIMSELF WITH RED TAPE...







BLAM

BLAM LOVE

НА НА

НА НА НА НА НА

VERY
BAD...

YOU'VE
BEEN
VERY
BAD...

TOO LATE

FOR ME
TO GET THE
JEWELRY...

TOO LATE
TO DO...

KLIK KLIK

KLIK KLIK

THE
LAST
THING
JOKER

SO...
SO...
SO...

IT IS
DONT
KNOW HOW
LONG I
Cry Gonna
ARRIVE...

SO...
SO...
SO...

ARE TO
CRASH
HIM QUICKE

HOW MANY JOKES
DO I HAVE TO SAY
IT, MORON?
BATMAN HASN'T
KILLED
ANYBODY...



OOOO...
WINTER'S
COLD...
AC...

IT ISN'T
WINTER
HERE...



SPANGG
KLIK KLIK

SPANGG

- BUT IT'S SO FROZEN -
- EVERYBODY'S SCREAMING -

- KLIK KLIK -

SPANG

- ANYONE
GOES PANT -

KLIK KLIK



- THE SPONGE
BREAKING
ON ME -

KLIK KLIK









BOOK FOUR



THE DARK KNIGHT FALLS

THAT'S RIGHT, CAPTAIN--
THE COMMISSIONER GOT
TIRED OF WAITING, TOOK
A SQUAD IN MENSOLA.

--GOT THE ORDER
END SEALED--
NO WARY THEY'LL
GET PAST US--

--GET SOME
BODY BAGS--
GOT TWO
COLD ONES--

YOU ARE
THAT BITCH,
DON'T YOU,
MURKEL?

MURKELSES
SAY THEY
BOTH GOT
GONE--

--KEEP AN
EYE OUT--

TUNNEL OF
LOVE

...SHOWDOWN AT THE
COUNTY FAIR, WHERE THE
JOKER IS SAID TO HAVE
KILLED AT LEAST
FIFTY. SIGHTED WERE
THE GUARDIANS, AN NOT
PLACED BY THE JOKER...

LED BY COMMISSIONER
MURKEL, POLICE WERE LAST
SEEN CONVERSING ON
THE RAILROAD OF LOVE,
WITH ARREST ORDERS FOR
BOTH THE JOKER-- AND
FOR SCARFACE'S FUGITIVE...



SO DARN,
MAN...

CAREFUL,
NOW...
QUIET...

--CAN'T SEE
A DARN
THING--

--SO
DARN--

TAKE
IT SLOW...

THE ARRESTORDERS
ARE IN PLACE...

THE JOKER IS
SCREAMING AWAY...



I WASTE ONE
SECOND... WITH A GOOD-JOKE...

IT'S THE
JOKER...

--IT'S NO
SURPRISE--

SERGEANT
--DON'T
TOUCH IT--



WHILE MY BODY
ARE STILL
WHERE THEY
BECOME...



CLOSER - MOVE IN CLOSER -
LALA - CAN YOU SEE
IT? - LIVE FROM THE
NEWS TWO CENTER -
IT'S ROBIN - THE
BOY WINGER!

HE'S YOUNG - CAN'T
BE OLDER THAN
THIRTEEN - HE'S
RIDING THE ROLLER
COASTER - HE'S
FAST - HE'S...





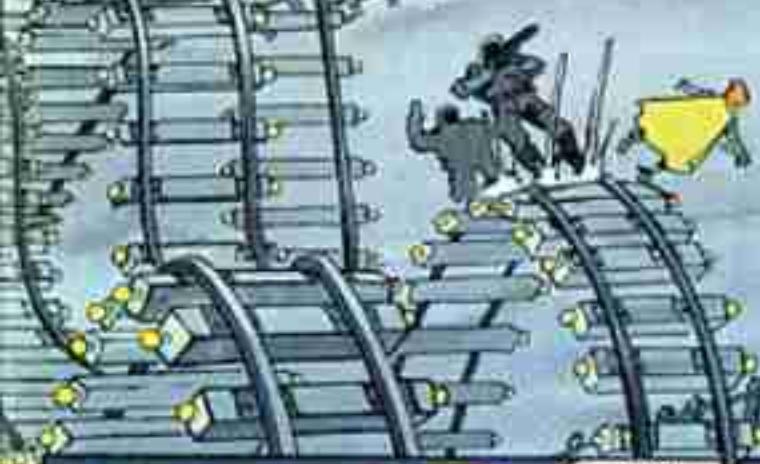
...HE SEEKS CONFIDENT
--WHAT THE --THAT'S
NOT ONE OF Ours...
COMING RIGHT AT US...
BRAKK, YOU AREN'T...
BANK...

WHUP WHUP WHUP



BRAKABRAKABRAKAB

WHUP WHUP



WHFF



BRAKABRAKABRAKK

SKREKK

WHUP

WHUP

FIND
HIM.







GOTHAM CITY WILL NO LONGER TOLERATE THIS RECKLESS VIOLATION OF THE LAW--THIS VIOLENT ASSAULT ON THE VERY UNDERPINNINGS OF OUR SOCIETY...

BY ATTACKING GOTHAM'S PEACE, BATMAN HAS REVEALED HIMSELF AS AN UNQUALIFIED THREAT. I HAVE INSTRUCTED THE ATTORNEY GENERAL TO PLACE THE GOTHAM POLICE AT GOTHAM'S DISPOSAL.



...THE JOKER'S BODY FOUND MUTILATED AND BURNED.. ANOTHER IS ADDED TO THE CHARGES AGAINST THE BATMAN...



YOU CAN SAY WHAT
YOU WANT. YOU CAN
CALL HIM WHAT YOU
WANT. YOU DON'T
HAVE TO BREAK
DOWN AVENUE D AT
NIGHT.

YOU DON'T HAVE TO HEAR
THE SHREWDING SOUNDS
THEY MAKE EVERY TIME
YOU WALK BY. THIS ONE,
HE'D BEEN WORKING THE
NERVE UP FOR NEARLY
BEFORE HE WAS HORNY
ENOUGH...



...NO, HORNY HE WASN'T.
HE WAS JUST LOOKING
TO HURT SOMEBODY
AND HE'S THE KIND WHO
HURTS WOMEN. I WISH
THEY WERE ALIVE. HE
GAVE HIMSELF AN
EXCUSE...



SO NOW HE'S GROWLING
LIKE HE'S TURNED ON!
I FIGURE HE'S SERIOUS
ENOUGH TO RUN AFTER
ME. I GO FOR THE
MACE.





DO NOT EXPECT ANY FURTHER STATEMENTS. THE SONS OF THE BATMAN DO NOT TALK. WE ACT. LET GORNAM'S CRIMINALS BEWARE. THEY ARE ABOUT TO ENTER HELL.

THE MUTANTS ARE DEAD. THE MUTANTS ARE HISTORY. THIS IS THE MARCH OF THE FUTURE. GORNAM CITY BELONGS TO THE BATMAN.

... THE SONS OF THE BATMAN HAVE STRUCK AGAIN. JEFF STRONKEY WAS CLOSING UP THE SOUTH STREET 7-11 WHEN HE BECAME BOTH MYNESS-- AND MECESS...

THEY'RE YOUNGER THAN YOU'D THINK--THIS ONE WAS, ANYWAY. COULDN'T HAVE BEEN OLDER THAN SIXTEEN... THAT'S RIGHT, THERE WAS JUST ONE OF THEM...



...BUT I'M GETTING AHEAD OF MYSELF. IT ALL STARTED WHEN THREE NINJOS CAME INTO THE STORE. HMM... NO, I DID NOT GO FOR THE ALARM. THEY DON'T PAY ME ENOUGH FOR SWINDLE.



THE TALL NINJO
WENT FOR HIS PIECE.

MORE THUNDER.

I WAS CLEARING OUT THE REGISTER WHEN THAT OFF-DUTY COP CAME UP FROM THE BACK.

HE ONLY
SAW TWO
OF THE
NINJOS.



THE COP WAS
STILL PATROLING
WHEN THEY
HEADED FOR
THE DOOR.

I HEARD A
THUNDERCLAP.



THE LAST ONE HITCHED
THE S.O.B. RECORD HIS
SHOOTOUT AND DIDN'T
SAY A WORD.



THEN THE S.O.B., HE TOLD
ME I SHOULD'VE PUT UP A
FRONT WITH THE NINJOS.
SAID I DIDN'T DESERVE
TO RUN A GROCERY REGISTER.
HE GRABBED A PAIR OF
WIRES CUTTERS--

THE NINJOS ARE THE
NEWEST SPIONAGE GROUP
OF THE BATMAN ARMY,
WHICH EXPERTS BELIEVE
DISMANTLED WHEN THE
BATMAN DEFEATED THEIR LEADER, TOM?



THANK YOU, LOLA. STILL HELD AT COOTHAM JAIL ARE EIGHTY-SEVEN MEMBERS OF THE MUTANT GANG, WHO WERE CAPTURED BY BATMAN.

COMMISSIONER YINDEL HAS REQUESTED THAT THEY BE MOVED TO THE STATE PENITENTIARY WHILE THEY AWAIT TRIAL...

NO--NO THERE'S, COMMISSIONER... THEY'RE STILL JUST HARMLESS TV...

YINDEL'S REQUEST WAS CUT SHORT BY A COURT ORDER ACQUIRED BY THE MUTANTS' ATTORNEY...

MY CLIENTS ARE YOUNG PEOPLE--MUTANTS. MOST OF THEM, IF THERE ISN'T ROOM IN THE JAIL, THEY SHOULD BE RETURNED TO THE CARE OF THEIR PARENTS.

FOLLOWING THE ATTORNEY'S STATEMENT, A PETITION SIGNED BY SEVENTY-ONE OF THE MUTANTS' PARENTS, URGED THE MAYOR NOT TO RELEASE--

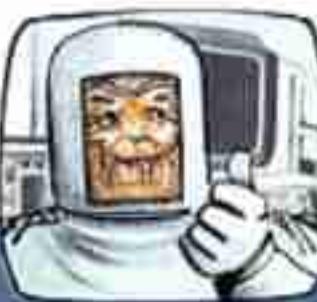
WE INTERRUPT THIS BROADCAST FOR A NEWS TWO SPECIAL REPORT
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES.



WELL, FOLKS, I'VE GOT SOME GOOD NEWS -- AND SOME BAD NEWS... HEH... THE GOOD NEWS IS THAT THE SICKLES HAVE WITHDRAWN THEIR FORCES FROM THE ISLAND OF COCOA MELTSEE...

SOMETHING HAD TO GO, KENT?

...AND THE BAD NEWS, WELL... IT LOOKS LIKE THOSE SICKLES ARE PRETTY BAD LOSERS, HEH, THEY ARE...





TWENTY
MILLION
DIE BY
FIRE...

...IF I
AM WEAK...

TWENTY-THREE DADS ANTIPHOBIC.
EVERYBODY'S PROUD AS HELL.

ONE CIGAR AND
EVERYTHING WOULD
BE RIGHT WITH THE
WORLD...

WHAT...
WHAT'S SHE
SAYING...
OH GOD,
NO...

QUIET...
I CAN'T
HEAR...

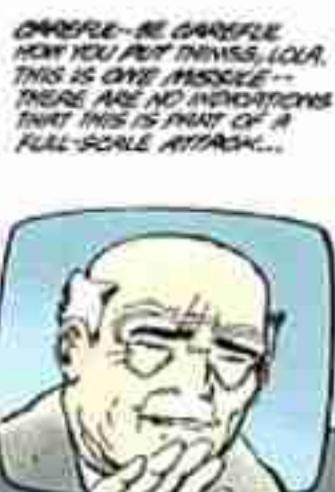


I COULD BE SITTING AT HOME,
CHECKING UP ON MY ABSURD--
YES, SOME OF US STILL READ--
IF NOT FOR JORDAN AND THE ONE
SPECIFIC THING SHE ALWAYS NEEDS
FROM THE GROCERY STORE.



I NEED A
CIGAR.





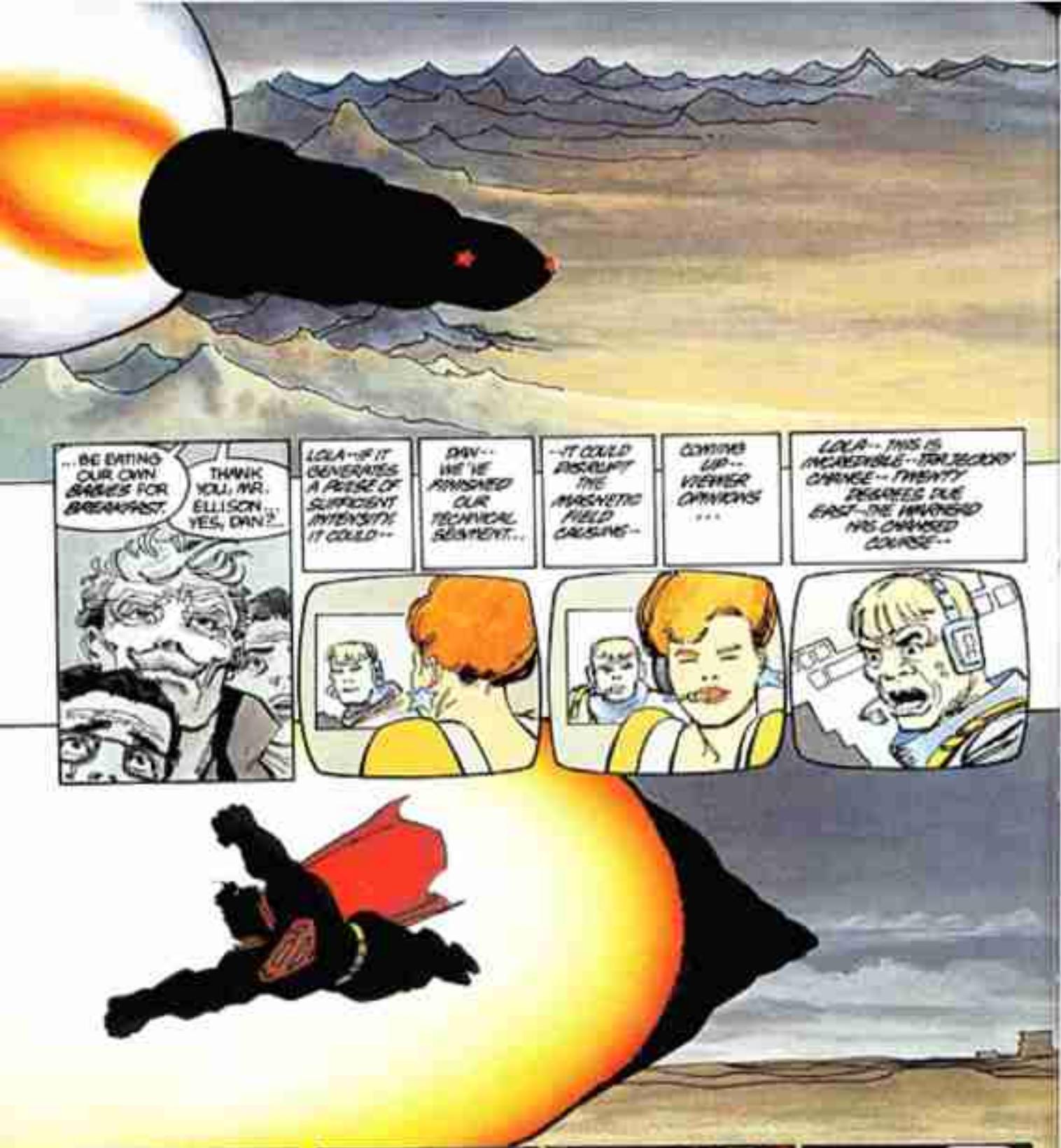
HOLD IT... WE'VE JUST
GOTTEN WORD THAT IT'S
NOT A CONVENTIONAL
NUCLEAR WARHEAD—WE
SHOOT YOU NOW TO JAPAN
AS WELL, ABOARD THE NEWS
TWO SHUTTLE. WHAT'S
THE WORD, DAN?

STILL COLLECTING, LOLA...
BUT IT'S A BIG ONE—
ARMED NUCLEAR WARHEAD—
WITH EXTENSIVE COMPUTER
ACTIVITY—WE CAN'T BE
CERTAIN OF ITS DIRECTION...

...AT THE VERY LEAST,
OCEAN WILL BE LIVELLED—
THE FIRES MIGHT
SPREAD TO MAINLAND
SOUTH AMERICA—
SHOULD IT GENERATE A
SUFFICIENT MAGNETIC
FIELD, THERE MIGHT...

THANKS FOR THE DASH,
DAN, BUT WE'LL ALL
ARRIVE SOON ENOUGH
WHEN IT CAN DO, RIGHT
NOW. WE'VE GOT
AUTHOR ANDREW
ELLISON IN THE STUDIO...



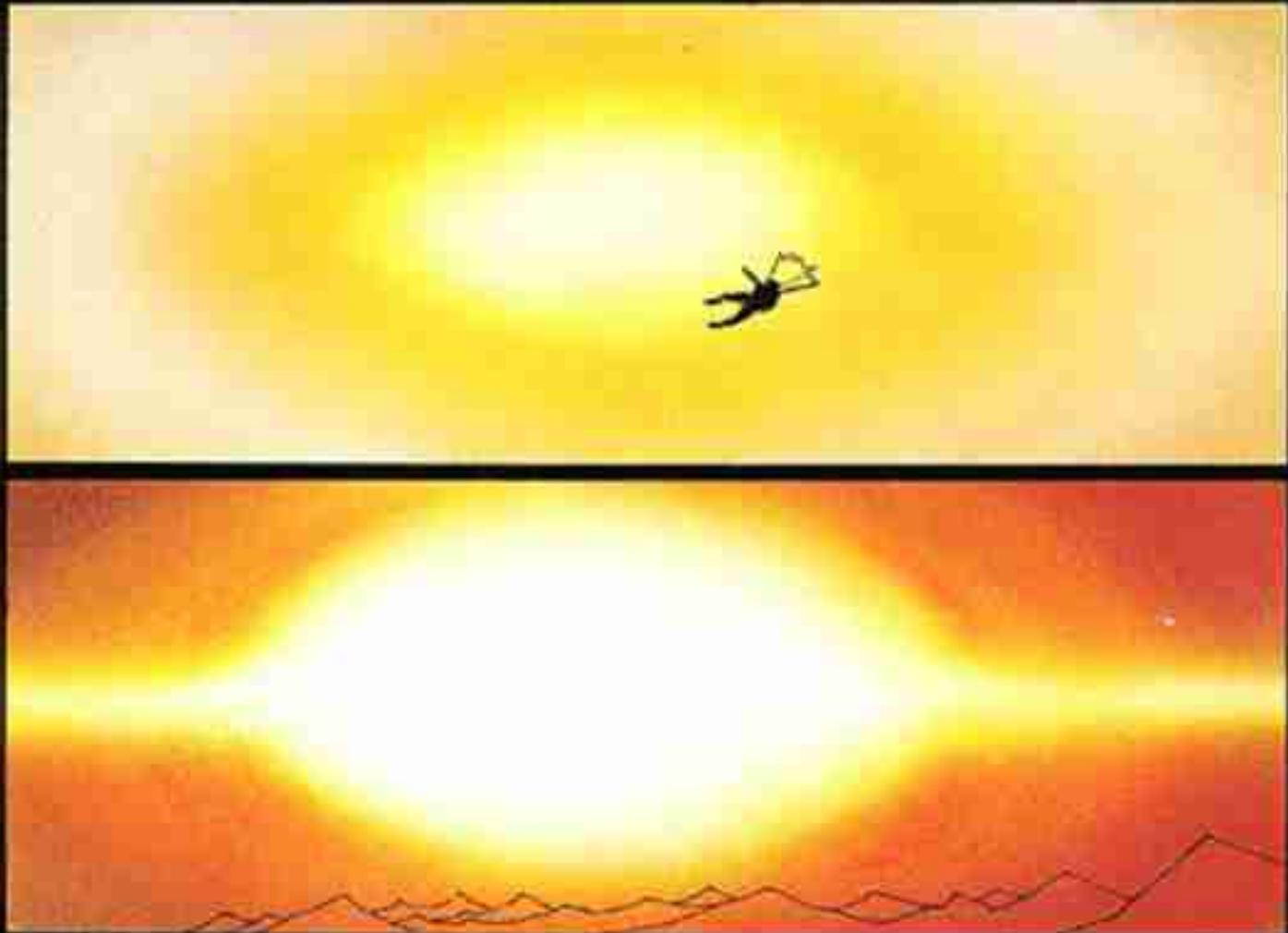


YOU HEARD IT HERE FIRST-- THE WARHEAD HAS SOMEHOW BEEN DISARMED-- IT WILL EXPLODE HARMLESSLY IN-- WHAT'S THE NAME OF THAT DESERT?...

IT MIGHT NOT BE HARMLESS, LOLA--IF THAT PULSE IS STRONG ENOUGH, IT COULD DISRUPT ALL ELECTRICAL

HEY...

WHAT THE DEVIL...



MAYBE DURING A BREAK BETWEEN ADVICE-
FESTS, ONE OF YOUR
MILITARY FRIENDS
TOLD YOU WHAT AN
ELECTROMAGNETIC
PULSE IS. AND MAYBE
YOU LISTENED, CLARK.

ALL YOU NEED TO
GENERATE THE PULSE
IS THE ORGANIZED
DETROITMENT OF A
FEW DOZEN
NUCLEAR WARHEADS.

THAT, OR A PERSONAL
KIND OF ALIVE THAT
BOTH SIDES HAVE
BEGUN TRYING TO
DEVELOP...

Sweetheart,
the last of the
readings gave a hint of
what would happen.



When the computer
failed, I knew for sure...

Failed. I knew for sure.
There's no point
in explaining it to
the crew. We're all
dead anyway—of
dead as this
shuttle.

You'll never get
to read this.

You'll never get
to read this letter.
It'll burn up with me
when our orbit
deteriorates. Still, my
last thoughts will be
a prayer for you, for
humanity...



...and for planet Earth.

Nothing could stop the
Russians from capturing
their sites at us now.
We'd have no defense,
no way to retaliate.



The one hope we have
is that the decision
to murder billions has
to be made by a human
being.

...YES, CLARK.
BOTH SIDES.

THE AMERICAN NAME FOR
IT IS GORBYHOLE.
IT'S DESIGNED TO CAUSE
INCREASING DAMAGE
TO THE ENVIRONMENT...
ALL THE WHILE SAVING
THE INDUSTRIAL SITES
YOUR FRIENDS REQUIRED
SO MUCH.

SINCE MY
CARRY ADDS
AREN'T BOUNCING
AROUND THE
STREETS ANYMORE...



...SINCE GOTHAM CITY
BRIGHTS LIKE A GREAT
BLACK GRAYHOLE...

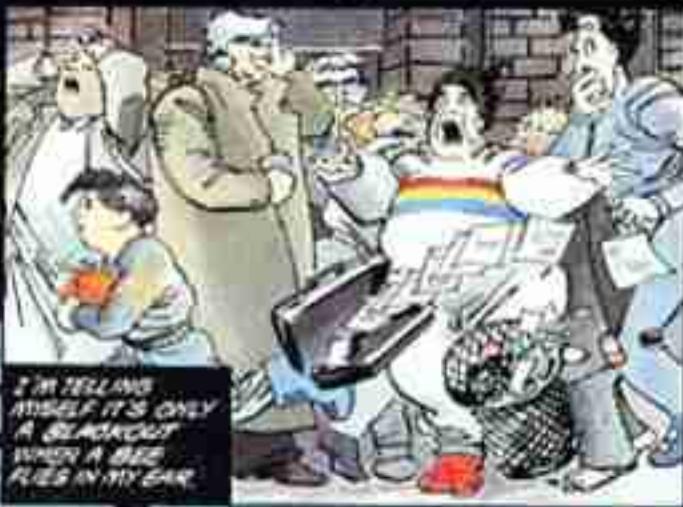


...SINCE MORE THAN A
HUNDRED BILLION
AREN'T KILLED UP—AND
ROBIN'S MARCH HAS SHIFTED.



...I'LL ASSUME
RUSSIAN FIRE
TAKES THE
LEAD IN THE
ARMED RACE.











THE WIND RIGS UP,
SPREADING THE FLAMES
ACROSS THE WEST
SIDE -- TOWARD MY
HOME -- IN HARD...

--TONIGHT SADLY--

JESUS CHRIST
ALMIGHTY JESUS--

RISK

NGGAA



KKKREEEEEEE



JUST HIS
VOICE.

JUST
ARM.



EEKKKKKK



ALL RUNNIN'S AWAY--LOOKS
BAD... ...I'M COMIN'
BUT IT'S JUST
THE SINGLES...



KK

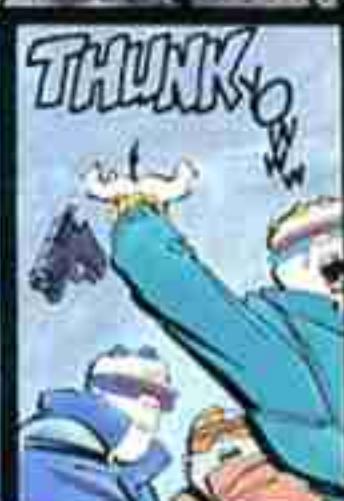


SOMETHIN'
ELSE COMES--



BUDDA







A HORROR GRABS
A LUGGAGE RACK
FROM THE BACK OF HIS
DEAD TRUCK AND
SMASHES OPEN A
FIRE HYDRANT.

THE MAN AT THE
HARDWARE
STORE PLAYS HIS
SHOULDER AWAY
AND EXPRESSES
FRUIT
BAGGERS
ALL OVER HIS
NEW TIE
FLOOR.



...BEEHIVES,
WHO SLEEP
FOR HOURS IN
DEFENSIVE
POSITIONS.
THEY ARE
THERE TO
DO THE
GUARDING
DUTIES FOR
KINGDOM
CAME...

...WHEN
MOM IS
OVER
WALKED
THROUGH



...AND LADY
GIGI

...OUR
MUSIC
SHOULD
YOU
CRUSH
AT
THEM.

THEY
CAN DO
THAT...
AND YOU
LAUGH...



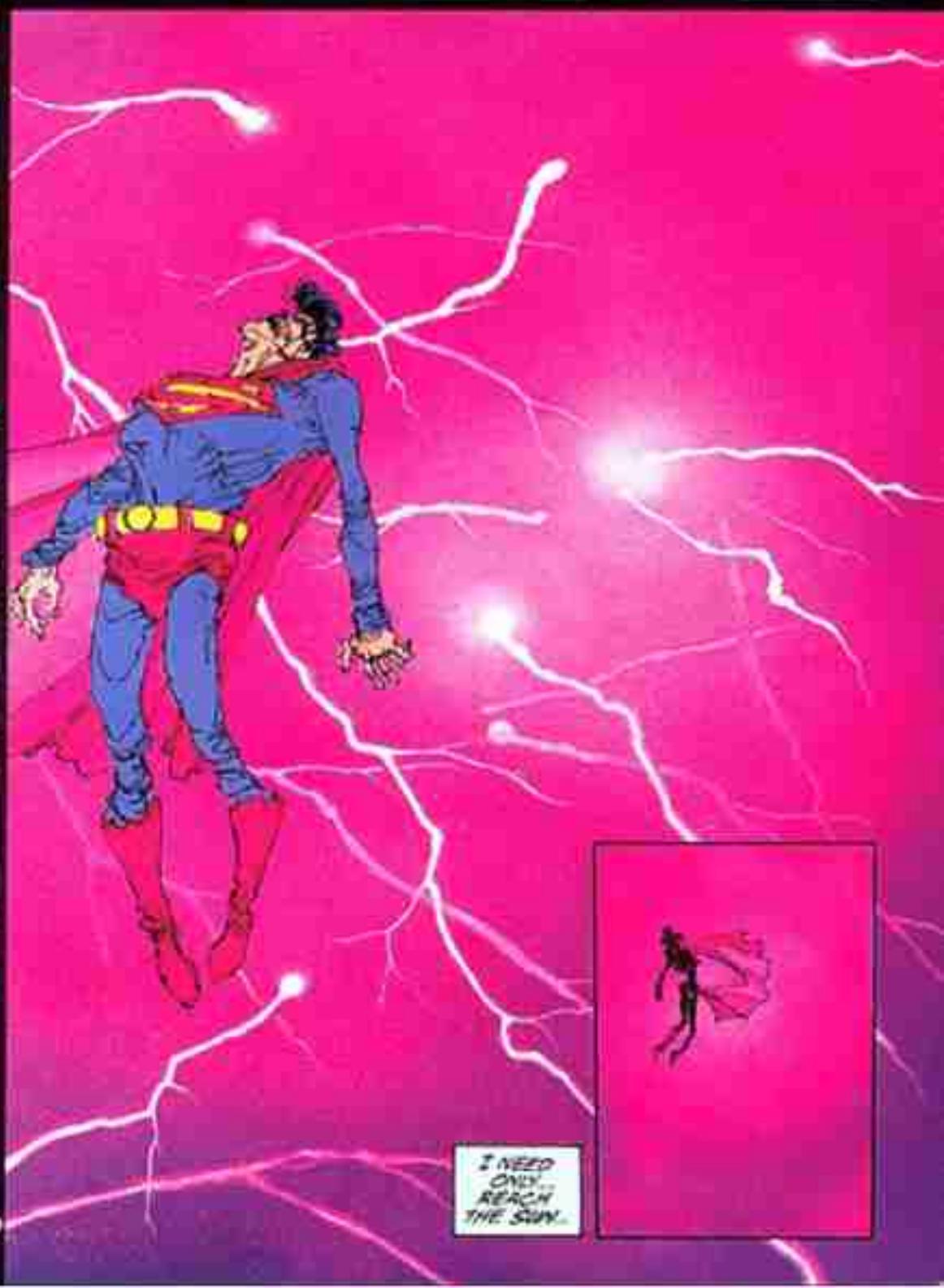
...THEY CAN SPIT
THE VERY FABRIC
OF REALITY...
BLAST A HUNDRED
THOUSAND JAVES
OF SOUND INTO
THE SKY...

...BURNING OUT
THE SOUNDS OF
ALL MY FEARS...
THE HOME
FOR SCREAMING
MILLIONS...

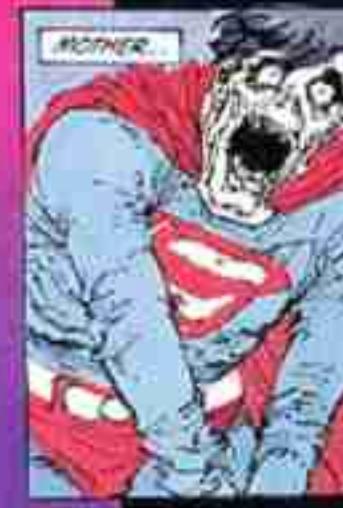
MAGNETIC STORM
...YOU HAVE
EVERY ABILITY
TO BE DISAPPOINTED,
ANOTHER EARTH...
YOU HAVE GIVEN
THEIR...
EVERYTHING...

THEY ARE TINY AND
SIMPLE AND HARMLESS
BUT PLEASE...
LISTEN TO THEM...

PLEASE... I AM
GROWING AND
DRIVING...



I NEED
ONLY...
REACH
THE SUN...





I'M BARELY
ON MY FEET
RIGHT NOW. THAT GUY
IS ALL OVER
THE BALCONY
ABOUT INVADED
MUR PHASE.

I DON'T LIKE
BEING TALKED
--AND LIKE I
SAID, I'VE GOT
MY OWN
PROBLEMS.
--BUT SHE
HON'T SHUT
UP--



GUESS I JUST LOST
CONTROL. I... I'D BEEN
HAVING NIGHTMARES
ABOUT THE BOMB...
READ UP ON IT A LOT.

...AND WHEN THE
LIGHTS WENT OUT



WELL, I KNEW IT HAD TO
BE THE ELECTROMAGNETIC
FIELD. AND ALL THE
BOOKS SAY THAT'D
ONLY HAPPEN DURING
A FULL-SCALE EXPLOSION.

...AND WHEN I
HEARD THAT
EXPLOSION...



...I MEAN, I
FOUND OUT IT WAS A
PLANE CRASHING INTO
THE JOURNALIST BUILDING...

BUT JUST THEN, I... I
MEAN NOT ANYMORE,
BUT... IT WAS DUNNE,
BUT WHEN I HEARD
THE EXPLOSION, I
THOUGHT...

...AND WHEN
THE CAR STARTED
GOING UP...



Nobody told me about
any nightmare. The cars
were popping off like
firecrackers--
EVERYBODY SCREAMED...

--IT WAS EVERY
MAN FOR
HIMSELF.

OH, RIGHT. THE CAR.
LISTEN, I'VE NEVER
BROKEN THE LAW--NOT
IN ANY WAY THAT I CAN...

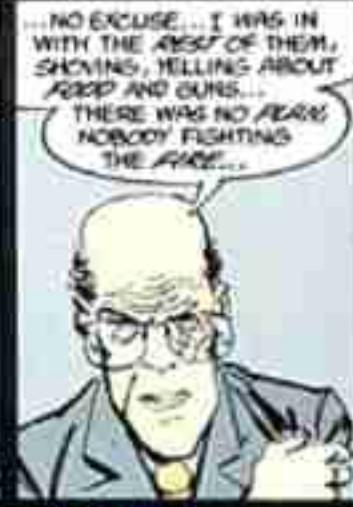
AND IT WASN'T ME WHO
TOLD HIM TO TRY TO
HELP THAT CRAP BITCH
OUT OF HER NIGHTMARE.



SLOW DOWN, SCHNEIDER.
YOU WAS GOING TO GET HIS
GUN. ME SURE DIDN'T
HAVE ANY USE FOR IT.

THAT ASSHAT.
HE DIDN'T SEE
IT MY WAY...









LIKE THE GROPSIES THEY
MOVED IN ON US--"GUTHMAN"
AND THAT ARMY ARMY OF
HIS-- YOU'D HAVE THOUGHT
WE WERE GUTHMANNERS.

I TRIED TO DEFEND
MYSELF--HE SHRIEKED
ME OFF--



BROKE THREE ARMS-- AND
THIS GUTH ISN'T FOR
LAUGHING. WHENEVER THEY
GETHIM THAT LUNATIC, HE'LL
HEAR FROM MY ATTORNEY.

WHO GAVE ARM
THE FIGHT?

WHEN HE SHRIEKED--
GUTHMAN, I MEAN-- IT
WAS... IT IS HARD TO
DESCRIBE-- THERE WAS
SOMETHING IN HIS VOICE

...ANYWAY, HE
TOLD US WE COULD
SPEND THE NIGHT
TIED UP-- OR HELP
FIGHT THE FIRE...



SHE
ONLY GOT
TO SCREAM
ONCE. IT WAS
TOO LATE
TO HELP
HER.



SHE DONT
SAYIN.
I DONT
KNOW
HER.

IT'S ONLY ONE.
IN THE WHOLE
ARMY, THAT IT
SHRIEKS.

HE'S GIVEN
GUTHS AND
ALL THE MORTARS
AND SLEES
AND GUTHMANNY
ARE GONE FOR
A MINUTE...

HE JUST SAYS
IN HIS SLEES
LINE AN OLD MAN...

...THEN HE STRAIGHTENS
UP AND LOOKS AT ME LIKE
IT'S FUNNY.

HE CAN'T
SEE...

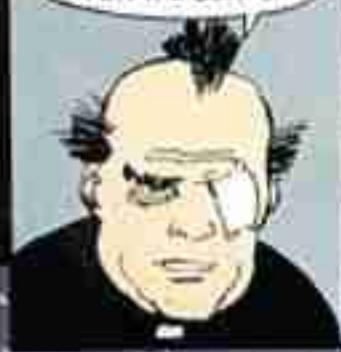
TURN'S OUT
SARAH
FORGOT TO
TELL ME SHE
NEEDS
MILK.

ONE
MORE
THING.



AFTER THE ANGELS LEFT, THE EXPLOSIONS CONTINUED. THE FLAMES WERE EVERYWHERE...

I WAS BARELY CONSCIOUS... IF NOT FOR THE BOY I...



THAT'S RIGHT. THE BOY WITH THE ANGELS. HE PULLED ME CLEAR. SAVED MY LIFE. WHEN JEREMY DROPPED OFF THE MEDICAL SUPPLIES, THE BOY PASSED THEM AROUND...



BUT, OF COURSE,
THERE WASN'T ANY
MEDICAL...

...ONE WEEK LATER, IT'S STILL DARK AT MIDNIGHT IN GOTHAM CITY. IT'S STILL WINTER IN AUGUST. HERE'S CAROL SWANSON TO EXPLAIN...



LOLA, THE SOVIET
COLD-BRINGER WAS
DESIGNED TO INDUCE
THE ENVIRONMENTAL
EFFECTS OF FULL-SCALE
NUCLEAR WAR. FIRST,
IT GENERATED THE PAUSE
THAT BLACKED OUT...

ON THAT PAUSE-- DON'T
MISS OUR SPECIAL
TONIGHT -- YOUR
FAVORITE SPOTS ARE
RAISED. WHERE WERE
YOU WHEN THE LIGHTS
WENT OUT? "CARLA?"

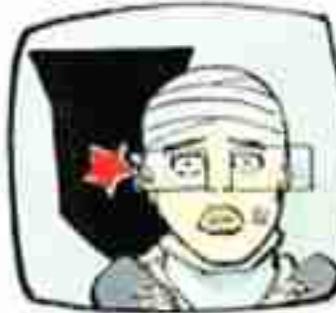
LOLA, THE PAUSE WAS
ONLY THE BEGINNING.
WEATHER PATTERNS
ACROSS THE ATMOSPHERE
WERE BEING COMMUNICALLY
DISRUPTED--

THEY SURE HAVE.
CARLA, AND SO
HAS MY WARDROBE.
THIS IS THE COLDEST
DAY OF THE YEAR.
I DON'T KNOW
WHAT TO WEAR
THESE DAYS...



THE COLDEST, LOLA...
LIVELIEST TOMORROW. THE
BOMB'S BLAST THREW
MEMBERS OF MILLIONS
OF TONS OF SOOT INTO
THE STRatosphere--

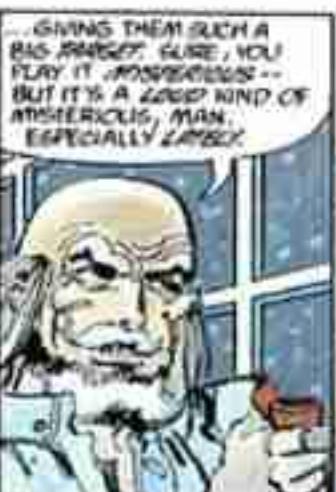
--CREATING A BLACK
CLOUD THAT COVERS
THE AMERICAS,
BLOTTING OUT THE SUN--
DENYING US OF LIGHT
AND HEAT--



PEOPLE ARE FREEZING
TO DEATH BY THE
THOUSANDS... THE
DAMAGE TO CROPS
COULD WELL ENDURE
A FRIGGIN...

I'M SURPRISED HE
TOOK THE CHARGE
OF COMMAND
AMERICA-- WITH
CLARK IN THE
COUNTRY--

--BUT CLARK
HAS ALWAYS
LIVED BY HIS
IMPULSES.





WHERE?

--AND IT
ENDS...



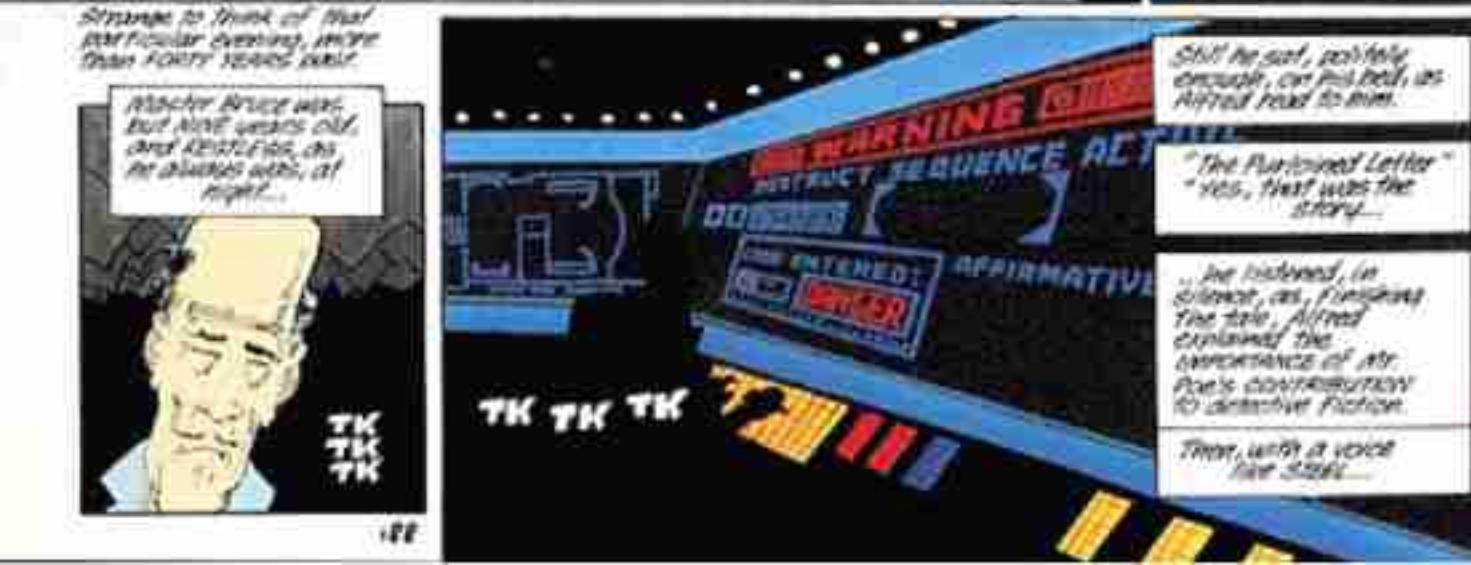
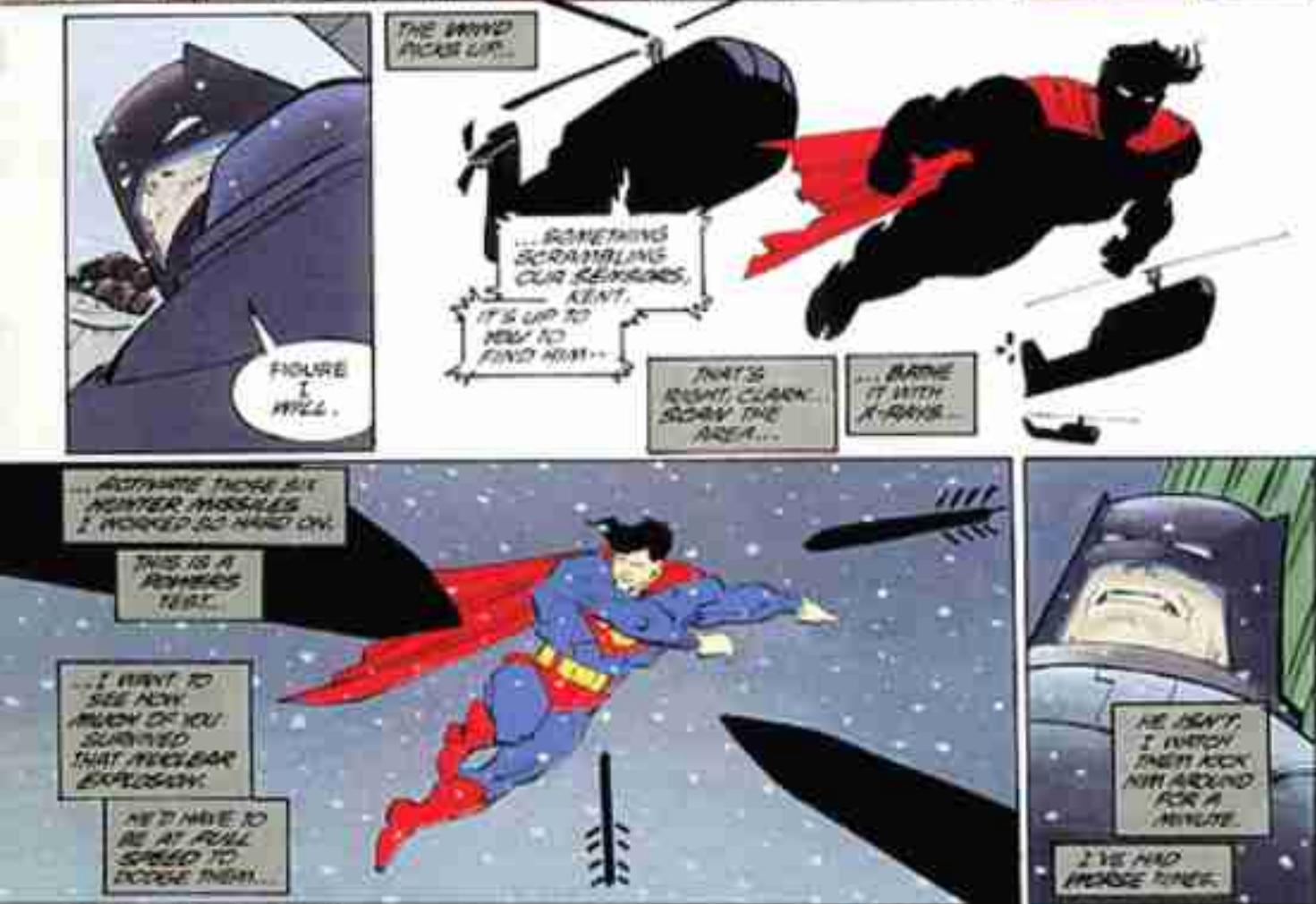


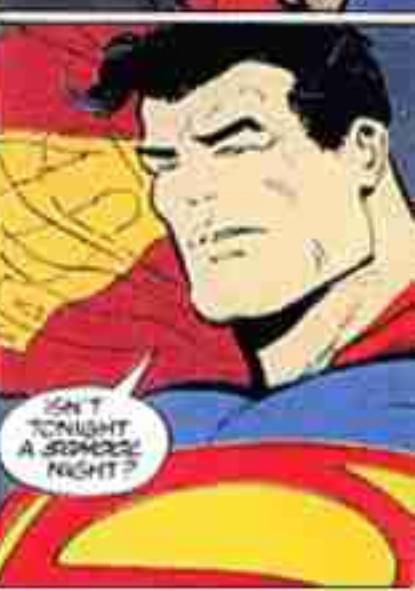
IN THE PAST WEEK, SEVENTY THREE VIOLENT ATTACKS ON WOULD-BE LOOTERS HAVE BEEN ATTRIBUTED BY WITNESSES TO THE BATMAN AND HIS GANG...



THAT MEANT... BEGAN THIRTY YEARS OF HUNTING THIEVES AND MURDERERS...

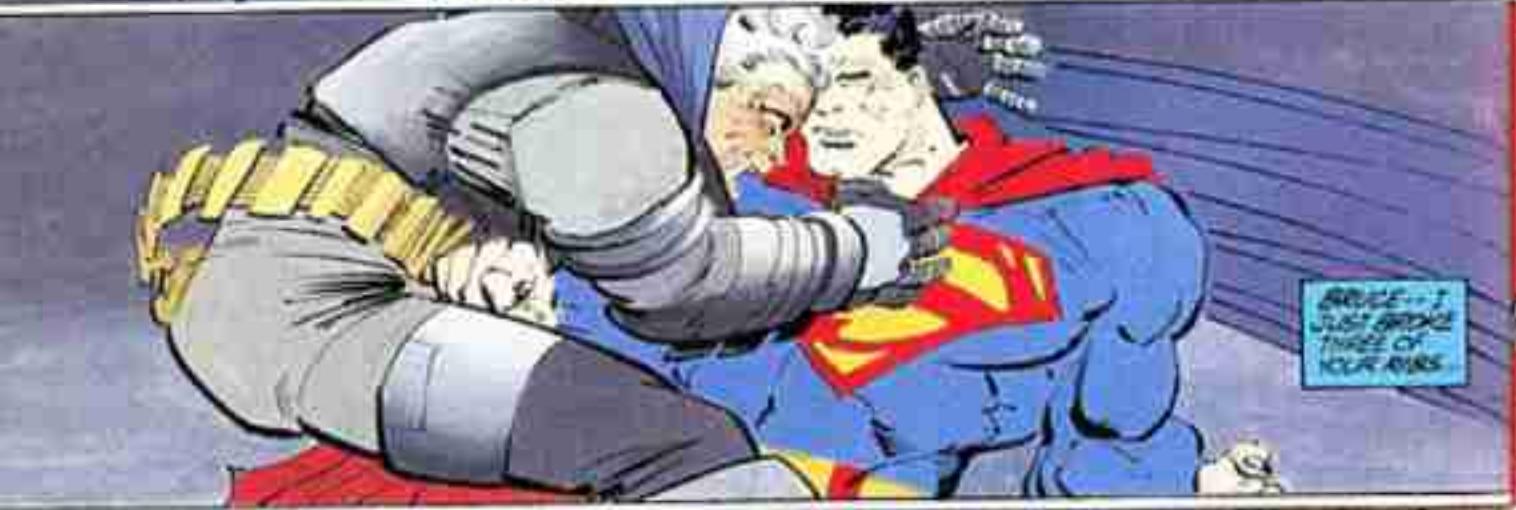


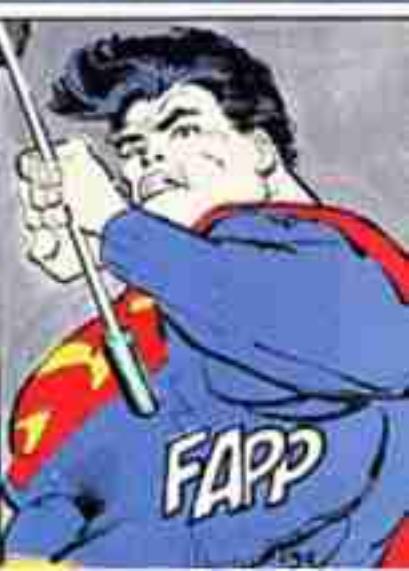


















Mrs. Wayne's priceless collection of porcelain shatters, miraculously...

The central mass of
burning armor shudders,
as if alive...

The world turns rubid
red; the manor itself
roars, madly into
the sky, firing a
cannon of flame.

A jet from the
mouth of Arthur is
spewing, of course, an
avalanche, so the great
snow stops.

empty spaces
are burst like
balloons now...

Then vanishes
into a flash, bright
as the sun.



Now utterly
broken.



...COMMAND HIS SOUL...

CLOUDS ARE ALMOST
COMPLETELY CLEARED IN
THE FIRST SEVENTY-TWO
HOURS. THE PRESIDENT
HAS DECLARED A STATE
OF STABILIZED
EMERGENCY...

REPEATING THE WEEK'S
TOP STORIES -- THE
SPECTACULAR CAREER
OF THE BATMAN
CAME TO A TRAGIC
CONCLAVION...

AS THE CRIMEFIGHTER
SUFFERED A HEART
ATTACK WHILE
BATTLING GOVERNMENT
TRIADS.

HE HAS BEEN
IDENTIFIED AS
FIFTY-FIVE YEAR OLD
BILLIONAIRE BRUCE
WAYNE -- AND HIS
DEATH HAS PROVEN
AS MYSTERIOUS AS
HIS LIFE...



GOD OF A
BITCH -- I KNOW
WHO KILLED
HIM --

SELINA --
THIS IS NO
GOOD...



WAYNE MANOR WAS
LEVELLED BY A SERIES
OF EXPLOSIONS, SET
APPARENTLY BY INNATE
BUTLER, FOUND DEAD
FROM A STROKE AT
THE SCENE...

FLAMES DESTROYED
WHATEVER EVIDENCE
MAY HAVE EXISTED AS
TO BATMAN'S IDENTITY.
ALSO MISSING, IT
SEEMS, IS THE WAYNE
FORTEUNE...

INTERNAL REVENGE
AGENTS INVESTIGATED
WAYNE'S RECORDS,
FINDING HIS EVERY
BANK ACCOUNT
EMPTY. EVERY SICK
SOLD...



WHERE THE MONEY
WENT IS ONE MORE
SECRET WHERE HIS
BAGS TO HIS GRAVE...
NO BODY WAS CLAIMED
BY HIS ONLY LIVING
RELATIVE, A DISTANT
COUSIN...



MY MIND'S
HADN'T GONE
ANYWHERE
EXCEPT...

CLARK
ANSWER

THAT WAS
THE FIRST
THING ROBIN
TOLD ME...

...WHEN SHE
DIED MY CAR

NOT THAT IT
MATTERED. HE'D
HAVE OVEREATED
SOONER OR
LATER.

HE ANSWERS
HOW GOOD I
AM WITH
CHEMICALS.

I WAS GOING
ON HURT
COURT

SAD,

AND WITH A
WINK--

--CLARK
PROPOSED
OLIVER
RIGHT.

WE'LL LEAVE ME
ALONE, NOW. IN
RETURN, I'LL
STAY QUIET.

SO I'LL REMAIN--
AND THE REST...

THERE--SEE
THAT LEDGE?
GET A LADDER
UP THERE.

RIGHT,
BOSS.

CAREFUL
WITH
THAT...

RIGHT, ALL.
SET, BOSS.

GOOD. NOW
GATHER ROUND.

WE HAVEN'T
GOT ALL NIGHT,
BOY.

THIS IS
NOT
PEACE

...WE HAVE YEARS--
AS MANY AS WE
NEED...

FIRST WE SET A
STEADY SUPPLY OF
WATER. THERE'S
A SPRING RIGHT
BENEATH--

--ROBIN!
SIT UP
STRAIGHT.



YEARS--TO
TRAIN AND
STUDY AND
PLAN...

...HERE, IN THE ENDLESS
CAVE, FOR FIRST THE
BLUNT REMAINS OF A
CRIMEFIGHTER WHOSE
TIME HAS PASSED...

IT BEGINS NOW--AN
ARMY--TO BRING
SENSE TO A WORLD
FEASLED BY MORSE
THAN THIEVES AND
MURDERERS...

THIS WILL
BE A
GOOD
LIFE...

YES--
SIR.



...GOON
EXCUSE