

"I loved THE KILLING JOKE...
It's my favorite. It's the
first comic I've ever loved."

— Tim Burton

SMILE!

ALAN MOORE
BRIAN BOLLAND
BATMAN
THE KILLING JOKE
THE DELUXE EDITION

INTRODUCTION
BY TIM SALE





BATMAN THE KILLING JOKE
THE DELUXE EDITION

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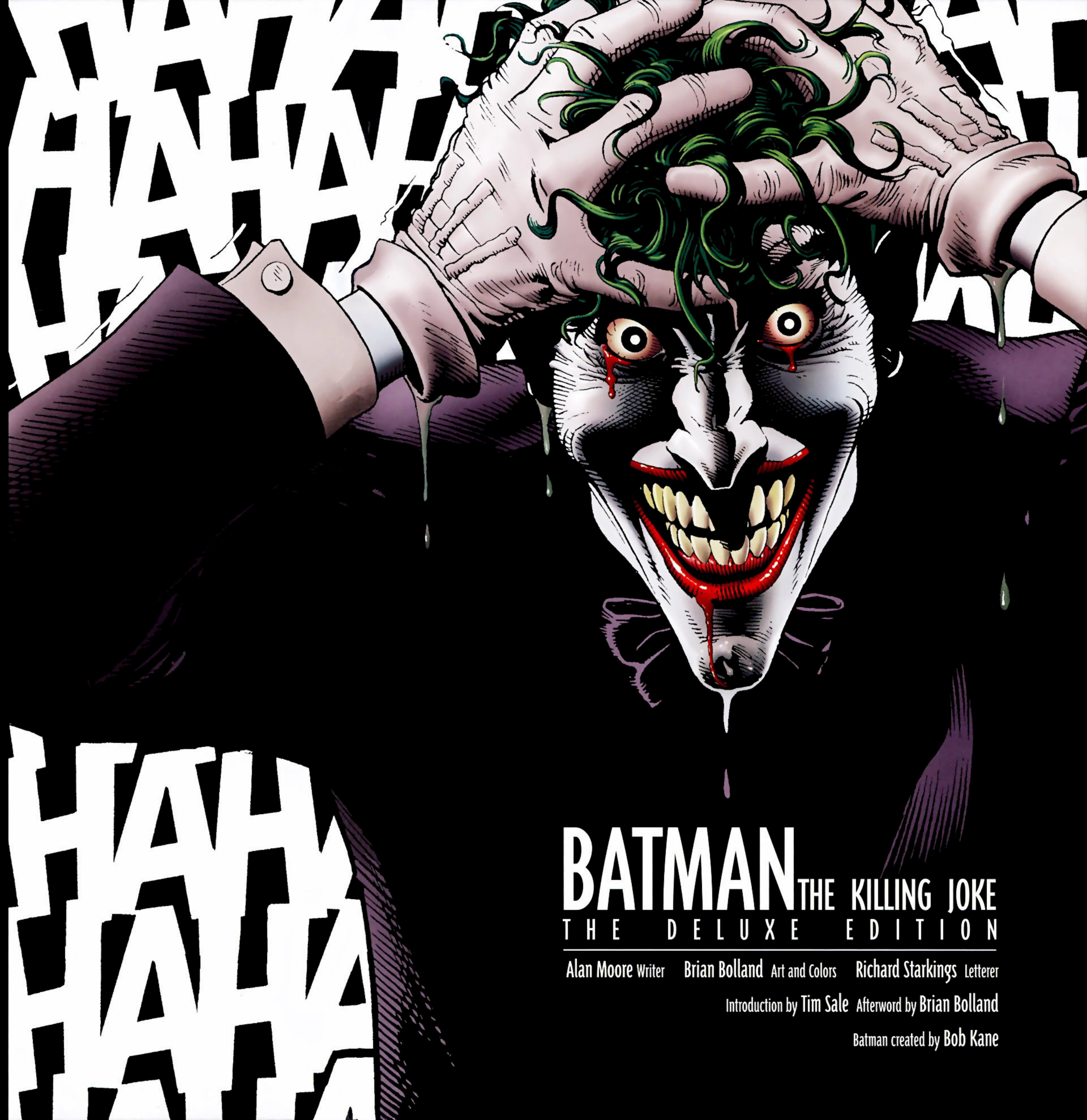
Cover by Brian Bolland

Batman: The Killing Joke: The Deluxe Edition

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BATMAN

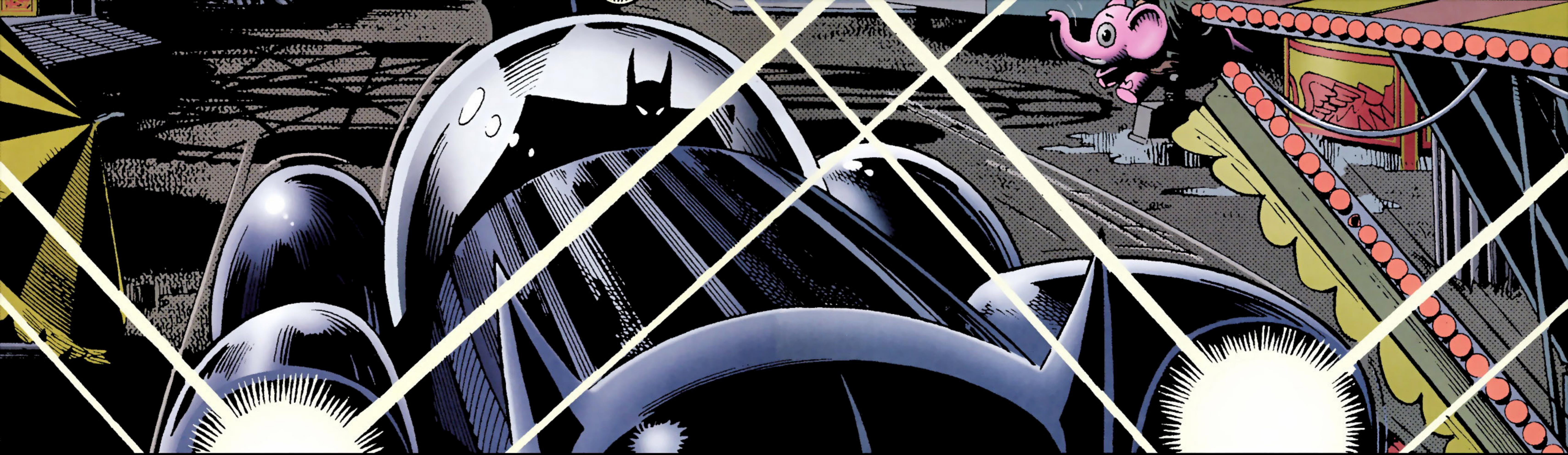
THE KILLING JOKE

THE DELUXE EDITION

Alan Moore Writer Brian Bolland Art and Colors Richard Starkings Letterer

Introduction by Tim Sale Afterword by Brian Bolland

Batman created by Bob Kane



INTRODUCTION

Man, how cool is this?

Like everyone who was in the mainstream comics field in the late 1980s, or — as was my case — had their noses pressed against the glass, the back-to-back-to-back-to-back of DARK KNIGHT RETURNS, WATCHMEN, BATMAN: YEAR ONE, and BATMAN: THE KILLING JOKE, completely reenergized the field. The characters (other than those in WATCHMEN) had been around for decades and, while many talented writers and artists had done much notable work in that time, there was an incredible sense of the new coming from Frank Miller and this handful of crazy Brits — Alan Moore, Brian Bolland, John Higgins, Richard Starkings and Dave Gibbons — who were seeing possibilities in them, in the kinds of stories that could be told, and not incidentally, in the way that a story could be presented.

BATMAN: THE KILLING JOKE is the only one of the stories listed above that did not first exist in another format, as a series of comics that were eventually collected into that catch-all term, a “graphic novel.” THE KILLING JOKE was a 46-page story, but it was crafted at such an astonishing level, and printed so much more cleanly and carefully, that it seemed to be a different beast altogether, not just a really great Batman comic, but something different. I didn’t get it then, but I do now.

That is what authors of extraordinary craft can do: make the old seem new.

And thrilling. Don’t forget thrilling.

I am told that the origins of BATMAN: THE KILLING JOKE go back to a Batman/Judge Dredd proposal that Moore and Bolland had cooked up. When it fell through, Moore asked Bolland what else he wanted to do, and Bolland said, “The Joker, please.”

So polite. And thus a classic was born.

Moore is famous for many things, not the least of which are his maniacally controlled and precisely orchestrated scripts, requiring an equal and similar effort from his artist partner, and in the amazing Brian Bolland he found an artist his equal in talent, fanaticism, care, and expressiveness. Both excel in impressing with their rendering of the mundane, so that it never *feels* mundane. And then they blast into a reveal, a money shot so explosive that is it only then that you realize how well you, as a reader, have been lulled to rest *on purpose*, just to set you up.

The Joker’s reveal on page 11, the tragic event on page 18, the second reveal on page 37, all orchestrated and carried out in ways that astonish, and then astonish again when you go back and see just how much these artists have known and set things up from the beginning. How fun it is to be in the hands of creators who know so much about what they are doing.

Oh, and the joke (how cool is it that the book ends with a joke) at the finish?

Priceless, funny, and perfect for the characters of Batman and The Joker.

What you hold in your hands, though, is not the book that I own, that so inflamed(!) me and thousands of others back in 1988, because of one crucial element: the coloring.

This time around, you lucky buggers, you have the fantastic treat to see the book colored by the artist himself, and see his more complete vision of how the story should look. Side by side, the comparison is amazing.

Bolland’s colors are characteristically thoughtful and restrained. They fit the work more completely than Higgins’s state-of-the-art job in 1988 and are a joy to look at. Slow down and one can see how cool the palette is now, versus the warmer one of 1988, and how much better that reflects the somber tone of the story, and how, when Bolland retains a color from 1988 that has become iconic, like Barbara’s yellow shirt, he integrates that so well into the cooler colors in the scene, allowing the shirt to really pop and ratchet up the horror of the event.

But the biggest and most amazing change in this newly colored edition is in the flashback sequences.

Bolland washes out all color in each one, but chooses to spotlight an object in each — a bowl of tentacles, shrimp, and so on — in increasingly

intense shades of red, all leading up to (here’s that sense that everything has been planned from the start by masterful hands) the Red Hood that was posited to be The Joker’s mostly forgotten origin, *way back in 1951*, and the transformation of the milquetoast failed comedian to insane criminal mastermind.

Brrrrrr. I just got chills.

Anyone else get chills?

Man, how cool is this?

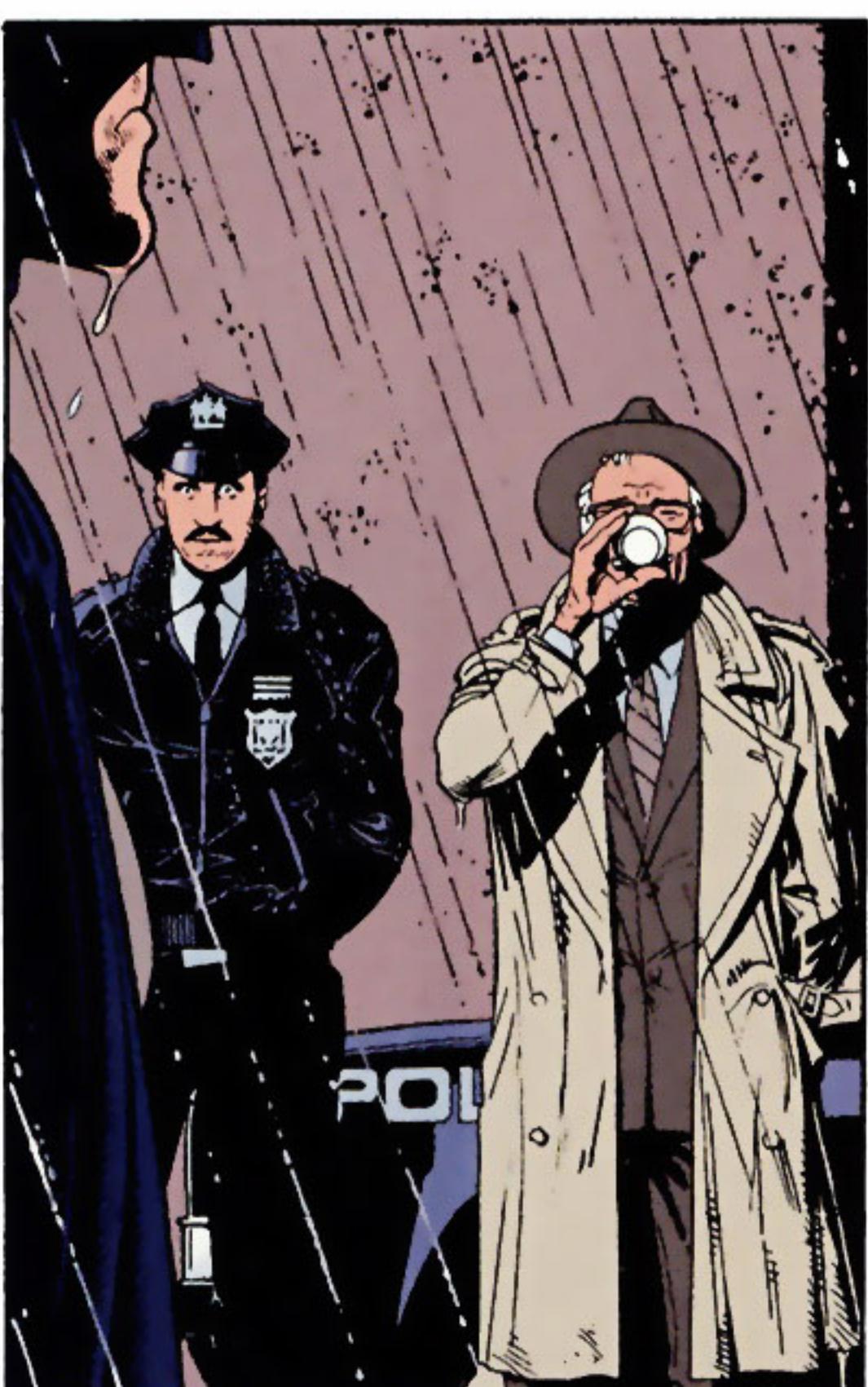
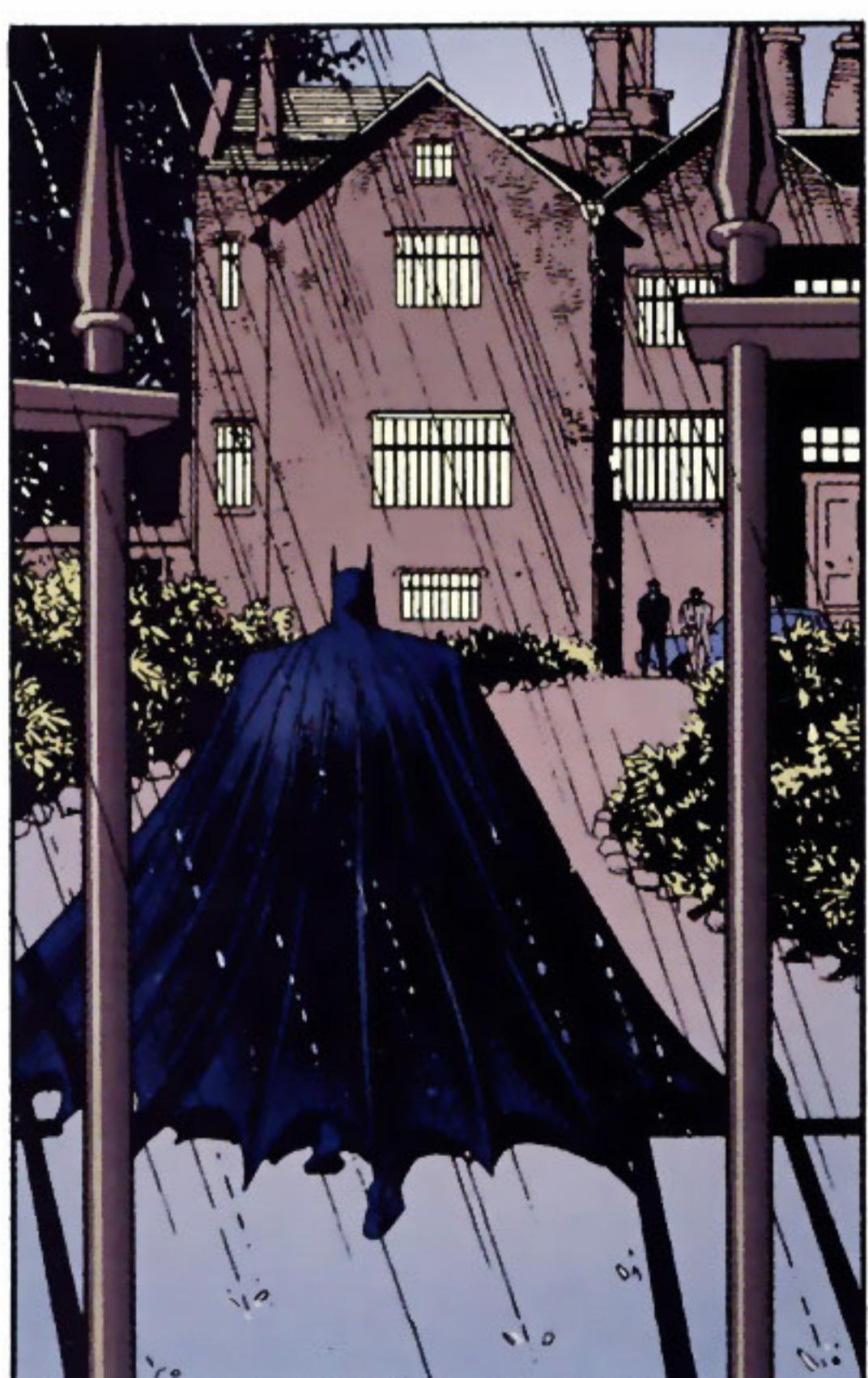
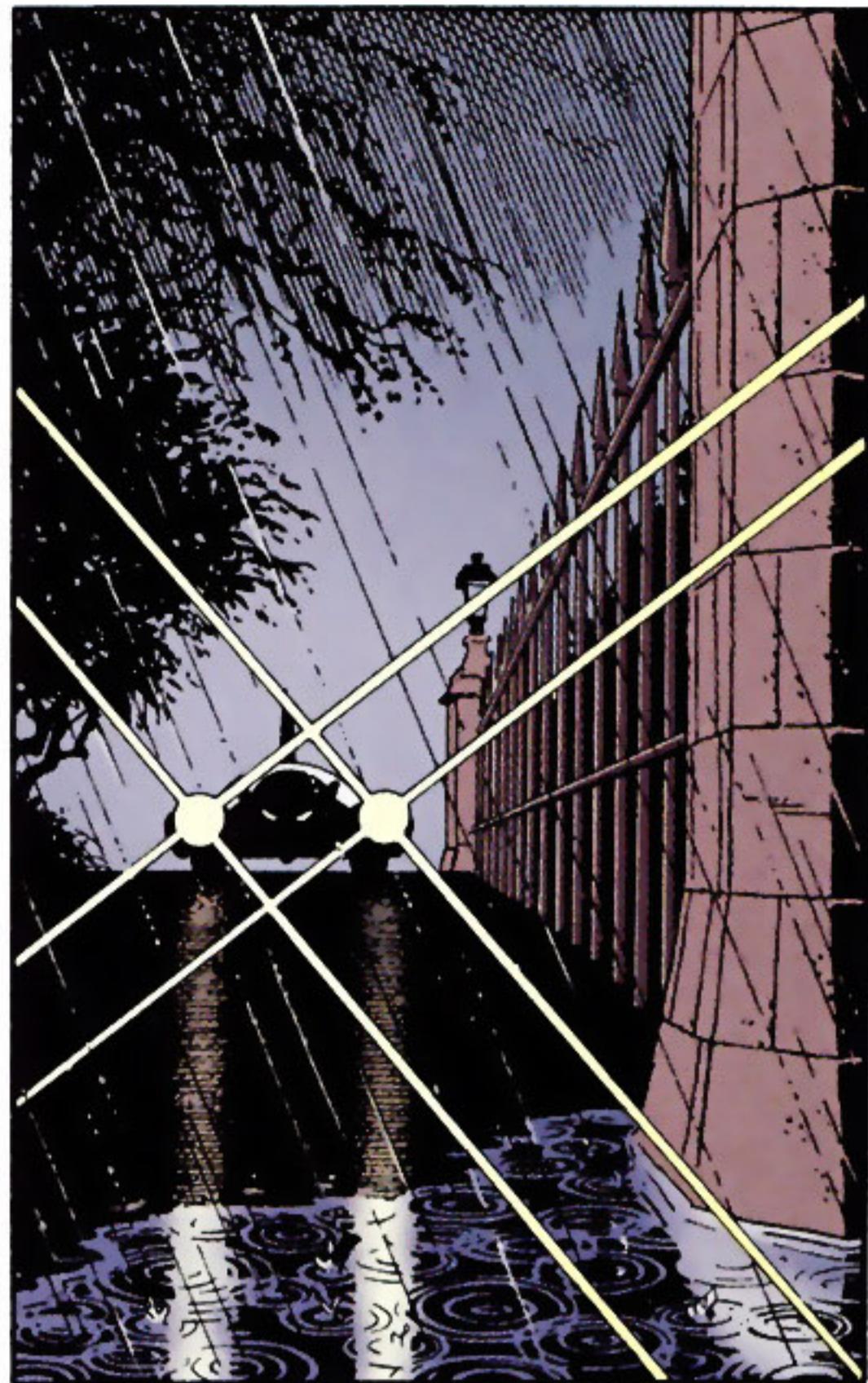
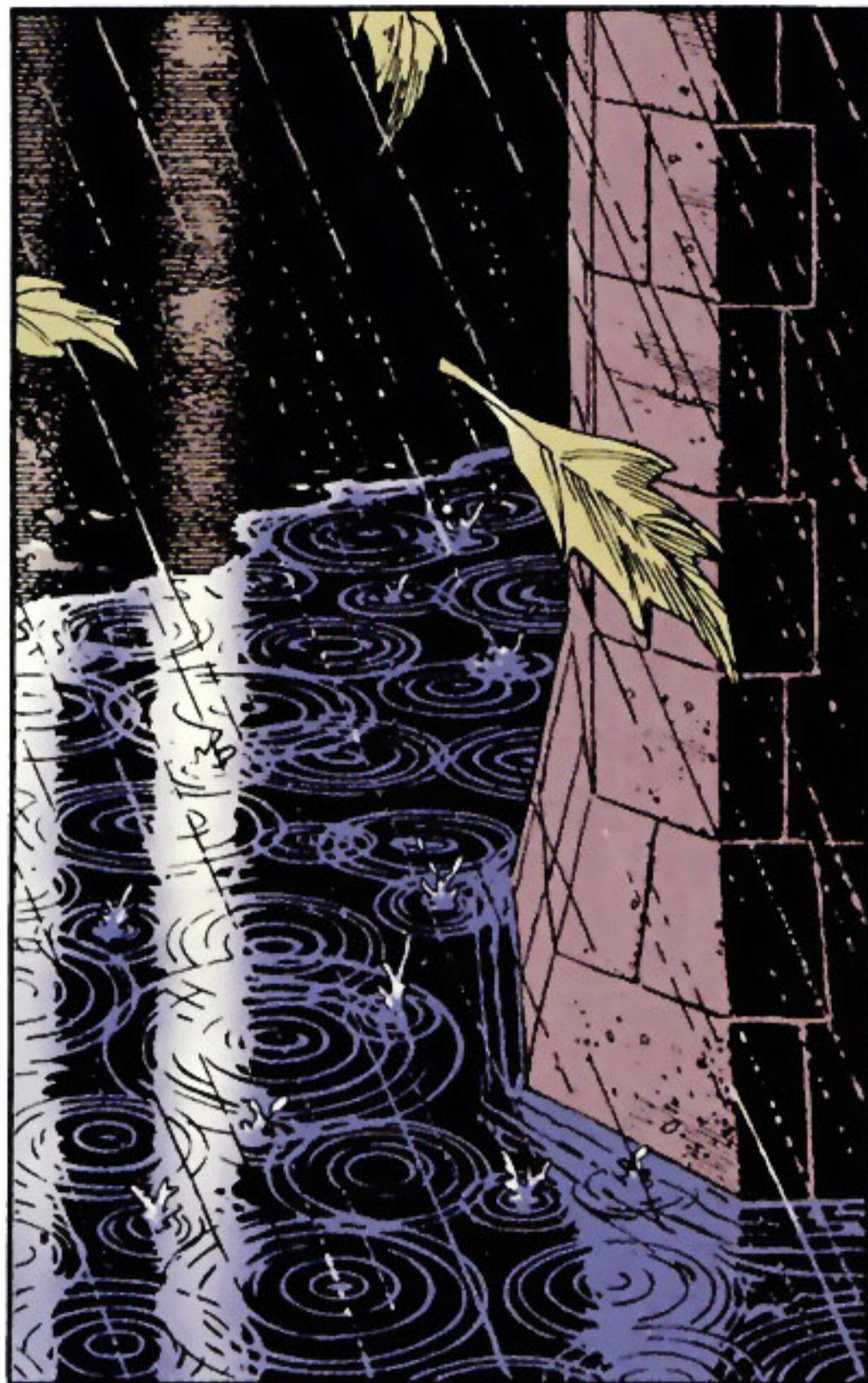
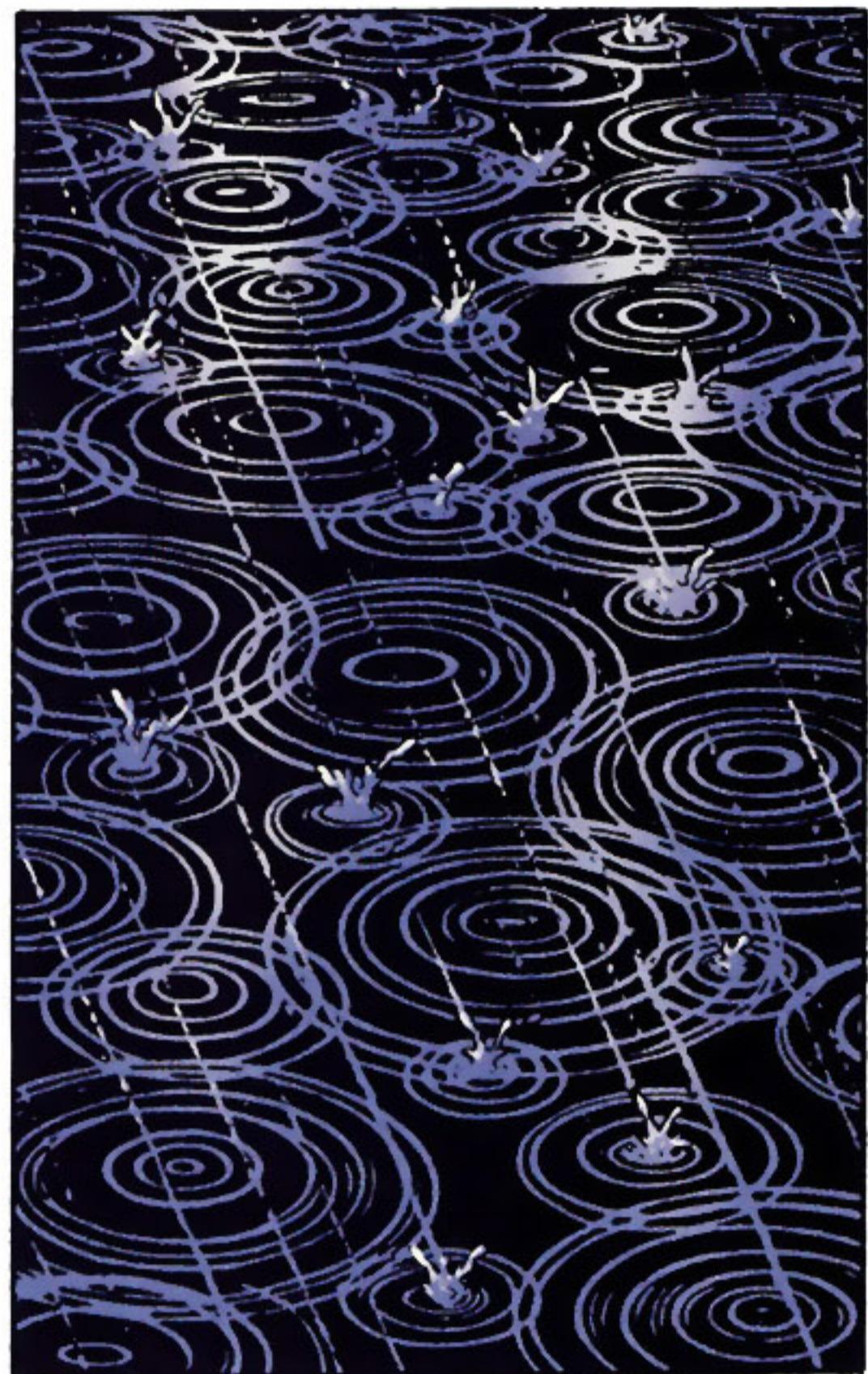
Tim Sale

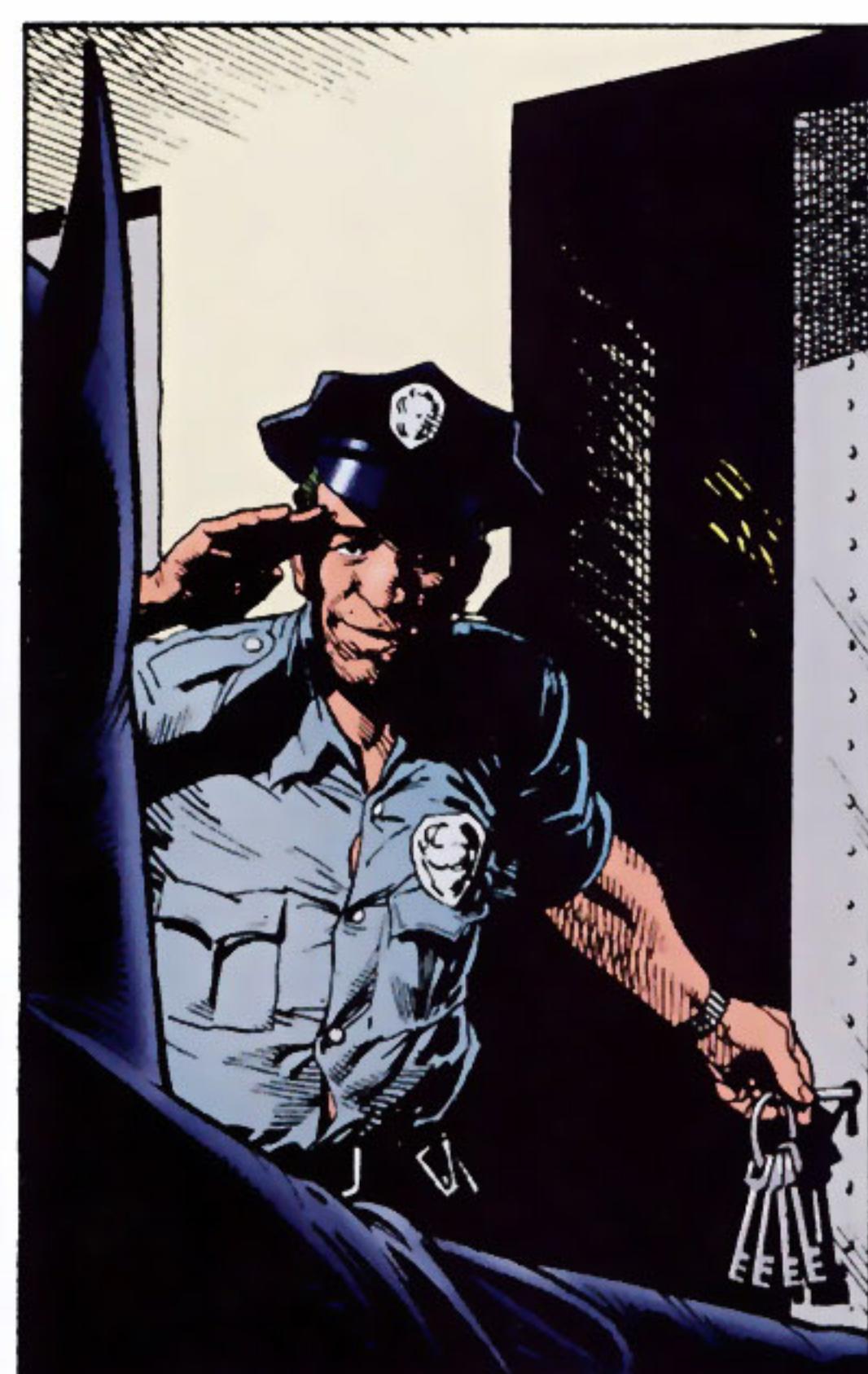
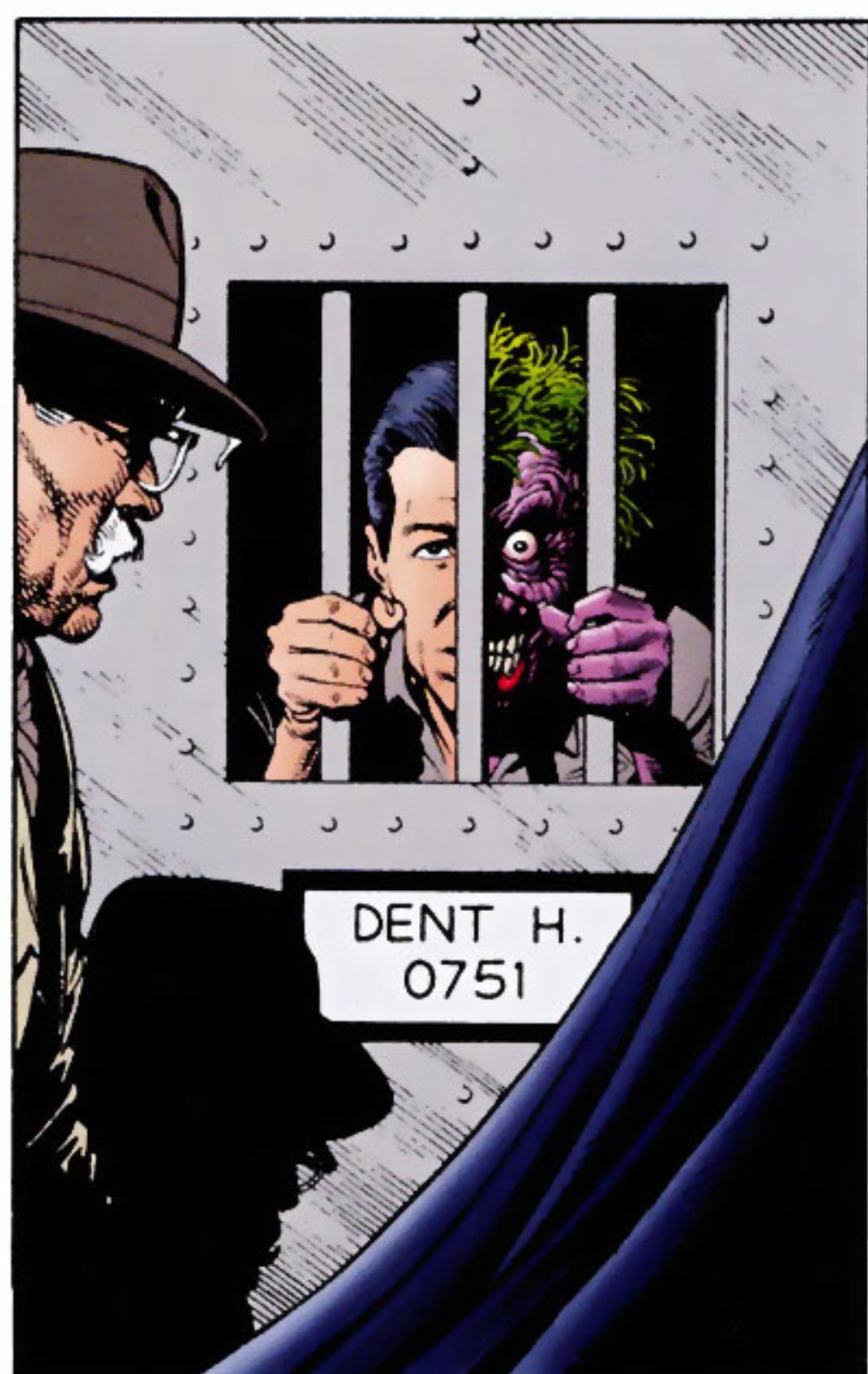
Pasadena, CA 2008

Tim Sale lives in southern California with his aged dogs Hotspur and Shelby. Raised in Seattle, he still finds California an odd place, though he hopes that will change someday.

Tim is the artist on BATMAN: DARK VICTORY, CATWOMAN: WHEN IN ROME, BATMAN: THE LONG HALLOWEEN and many other titles.

In 2006, Tim became the artist for the hit NBC television series Heroes.

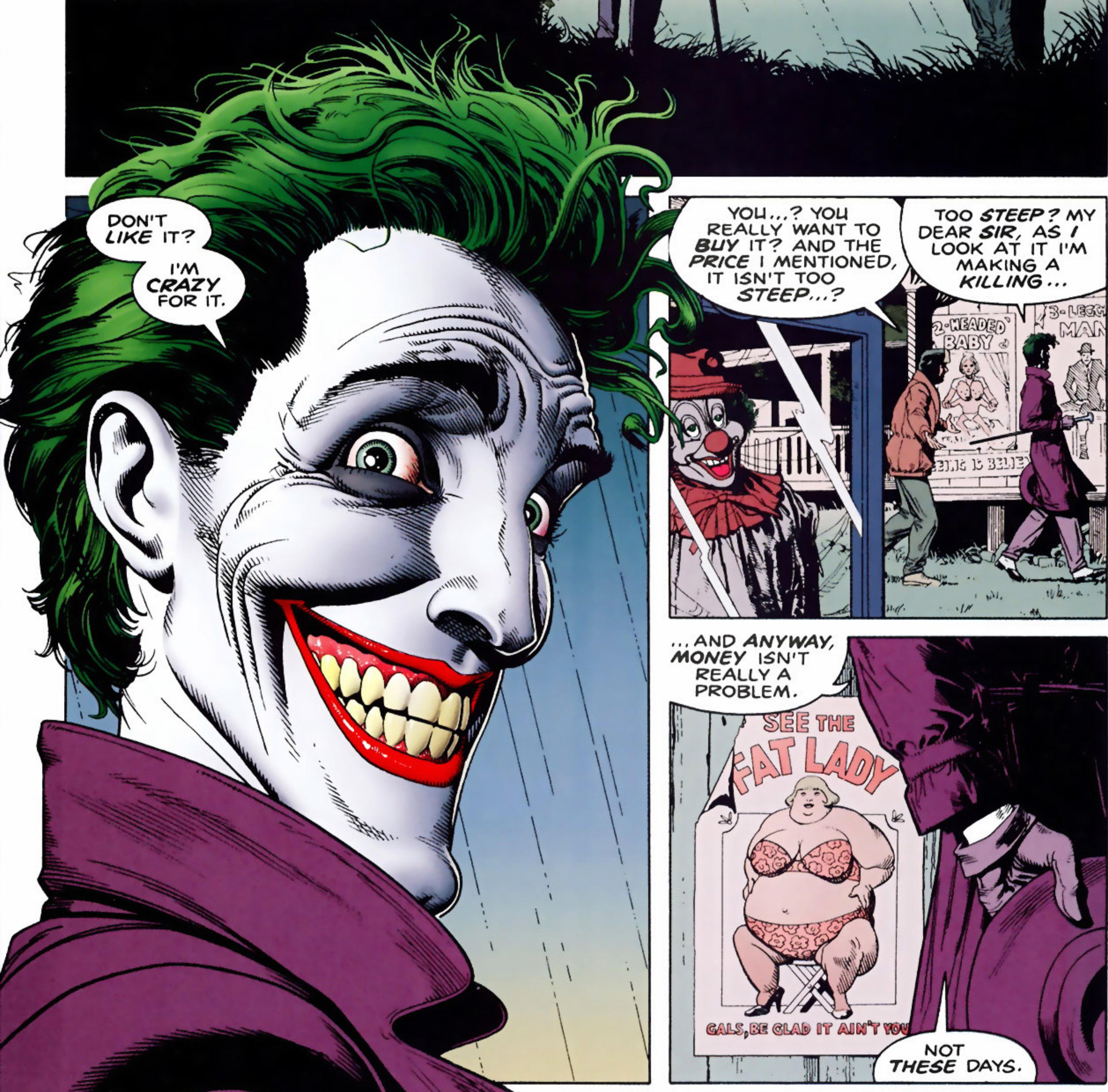
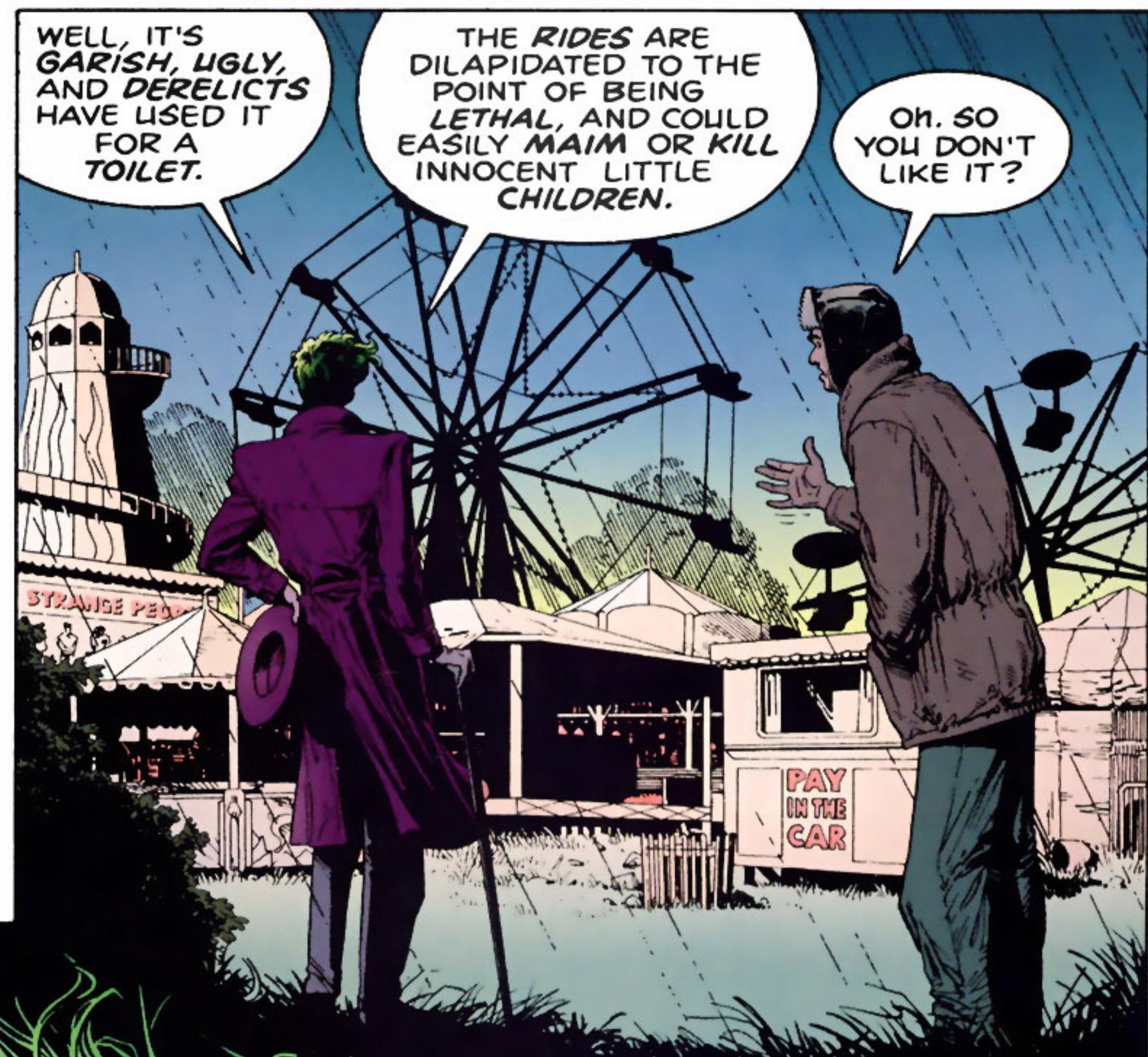


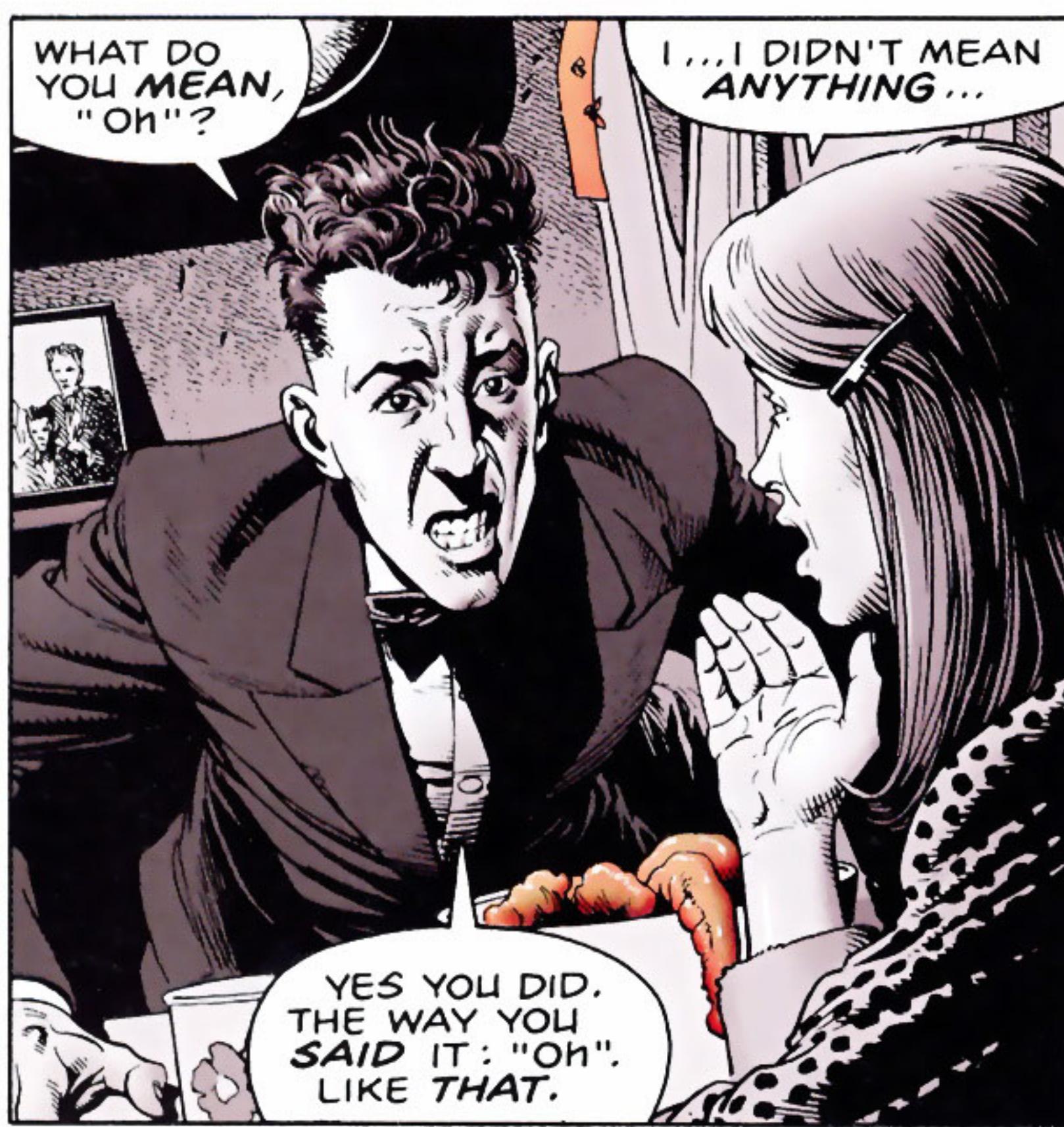
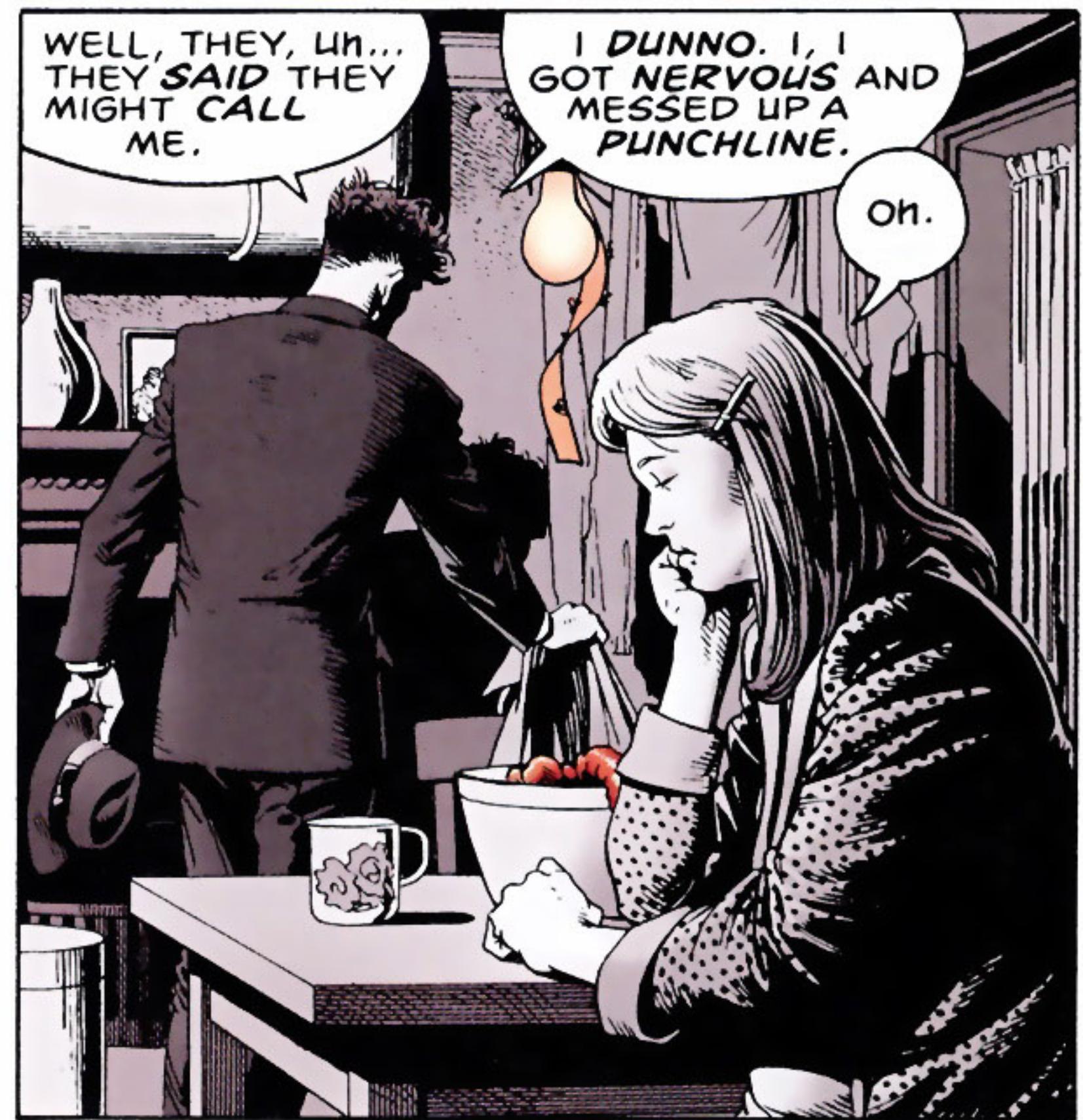


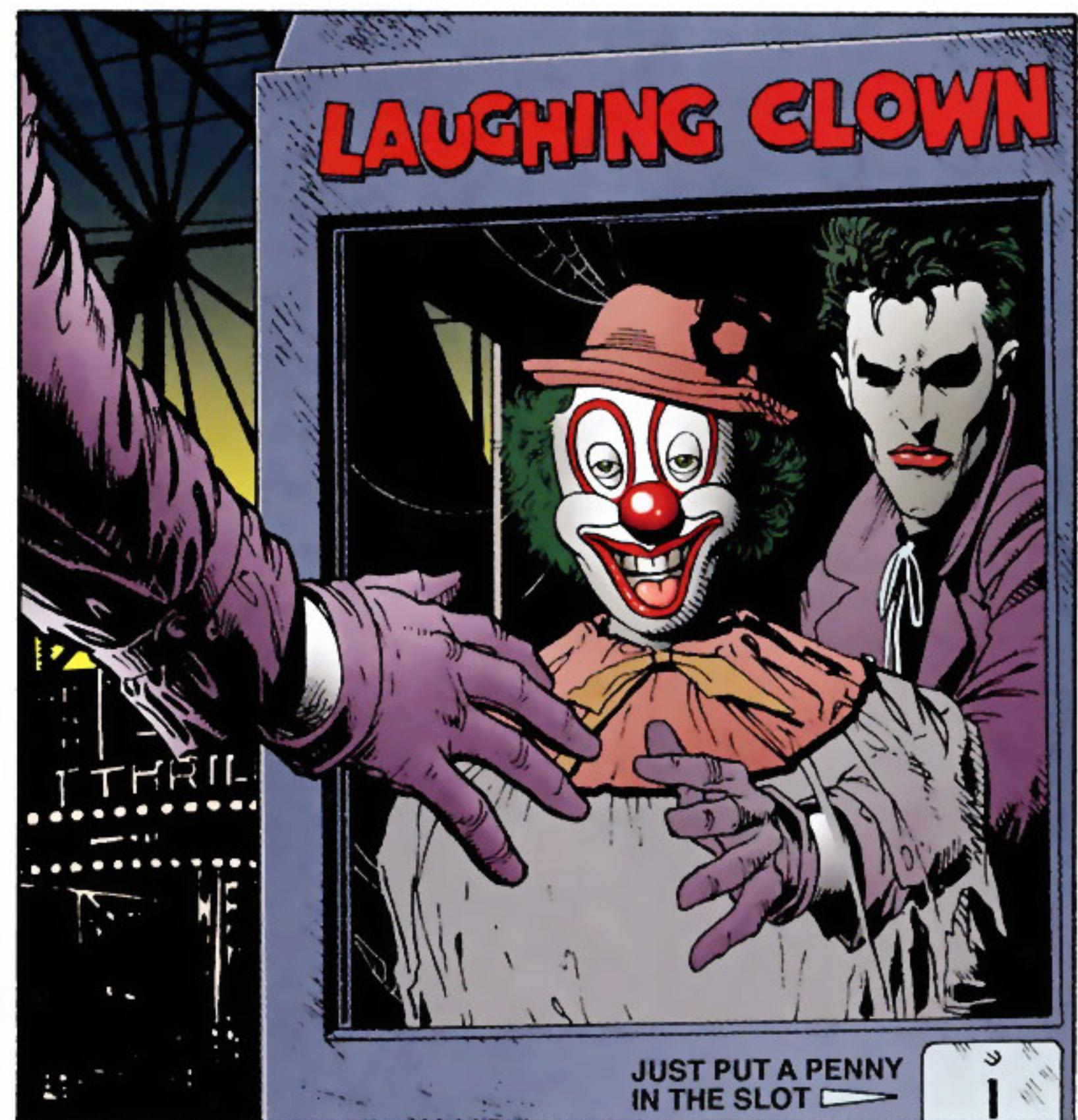
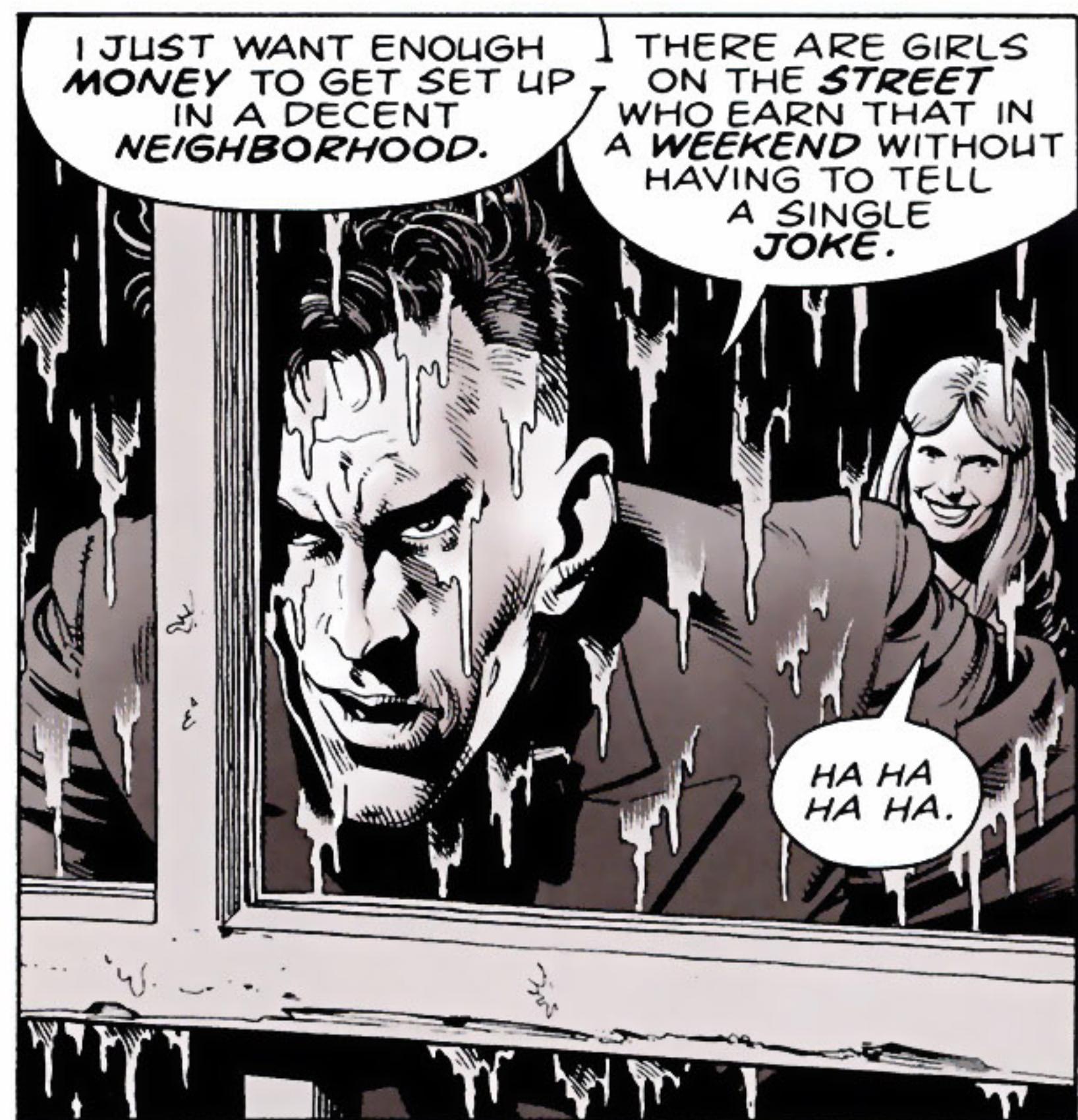




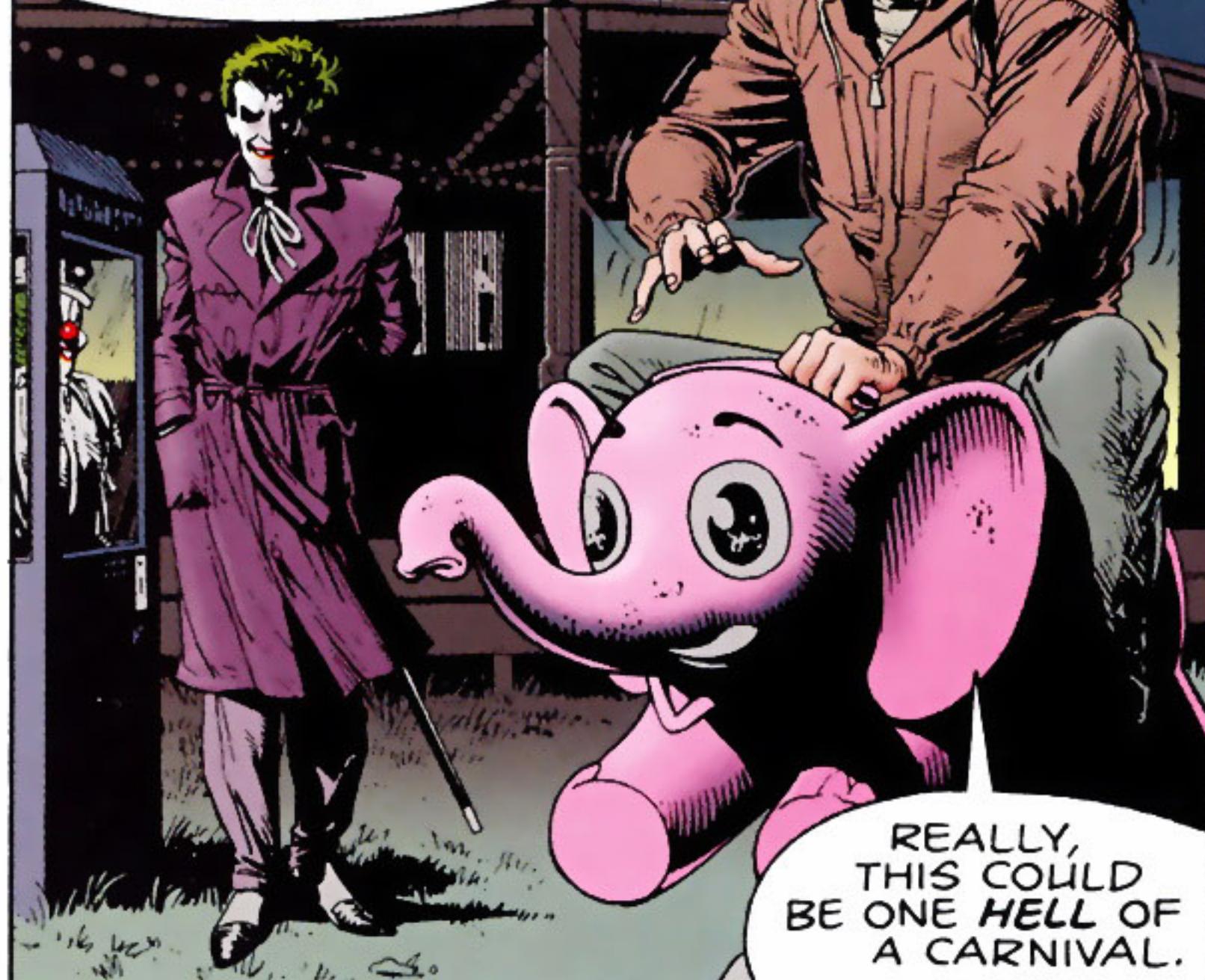






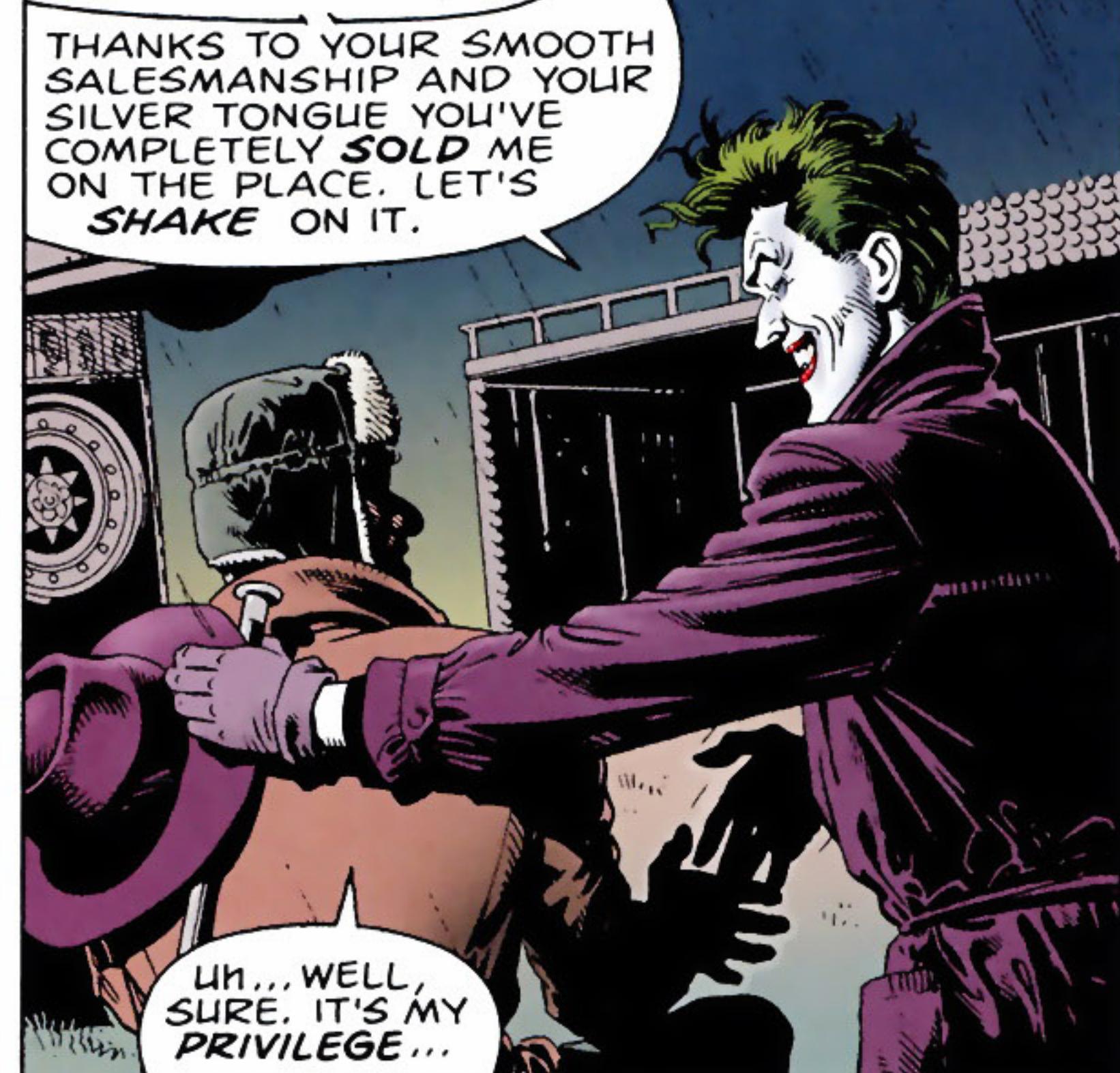


Y'KNOW, I'M POSITIVE YOU WON'T REGRET THIS PURCHASE. THE PLACE ISN'T THAT DILAPIDATED. SOME OF THESE RIDES ARE STILL PRETTY STURDY...



OH, YOU'RE SO RIGHT.

THANKS TO YOUR SMOOTH SALESMANSHIP AND YOUR SILVER TONGUE YOU'VE COMPLETELY SOLD ME ON THE PLACE. LET'S SHAKE ON IT.



INDEED IT IS.

NATURALLY, I WON'T BE PAYING YOU ANYTHING. MY COLLEAGUES PERSUADED YOUR PARTNER TO SIGN THE NECESSARY DOCUMENTS JUST OVER AN HOUR AGO.

THE PROPERTY'S MINE ALREADY.

YOU'RE HAPPY WITH THAT, I TAKE IT?

I CAN SEE THAT YOU ARE. I'M SO GLAD.

YOU KNOW, WHEN YOU SEE THE IMPROVEMENTS I HAVE PLANNED FOR THIS PLACE, I GUARANTEE YOU'LL BE ABSOLUTELY SPEECHLESS!

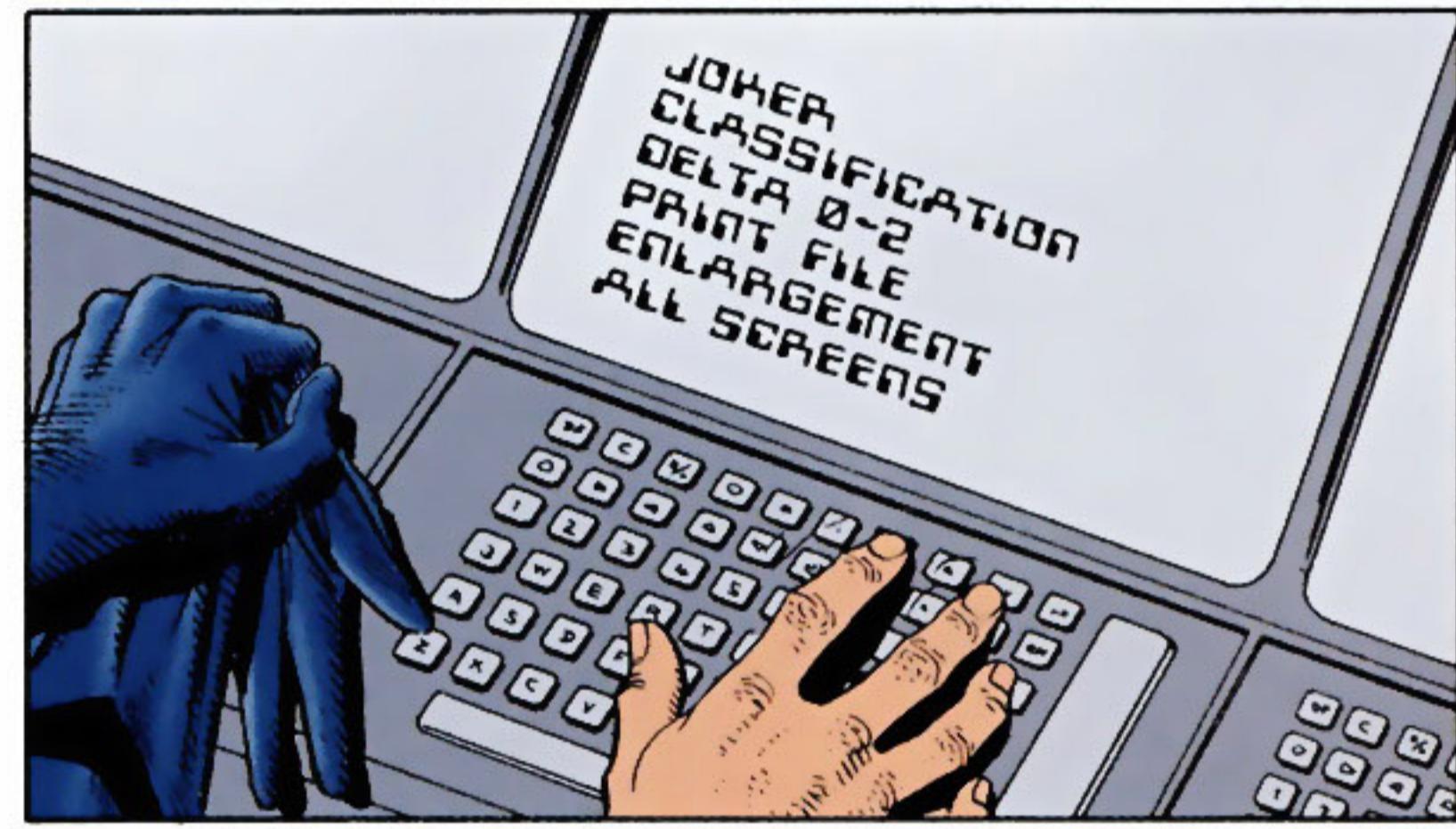
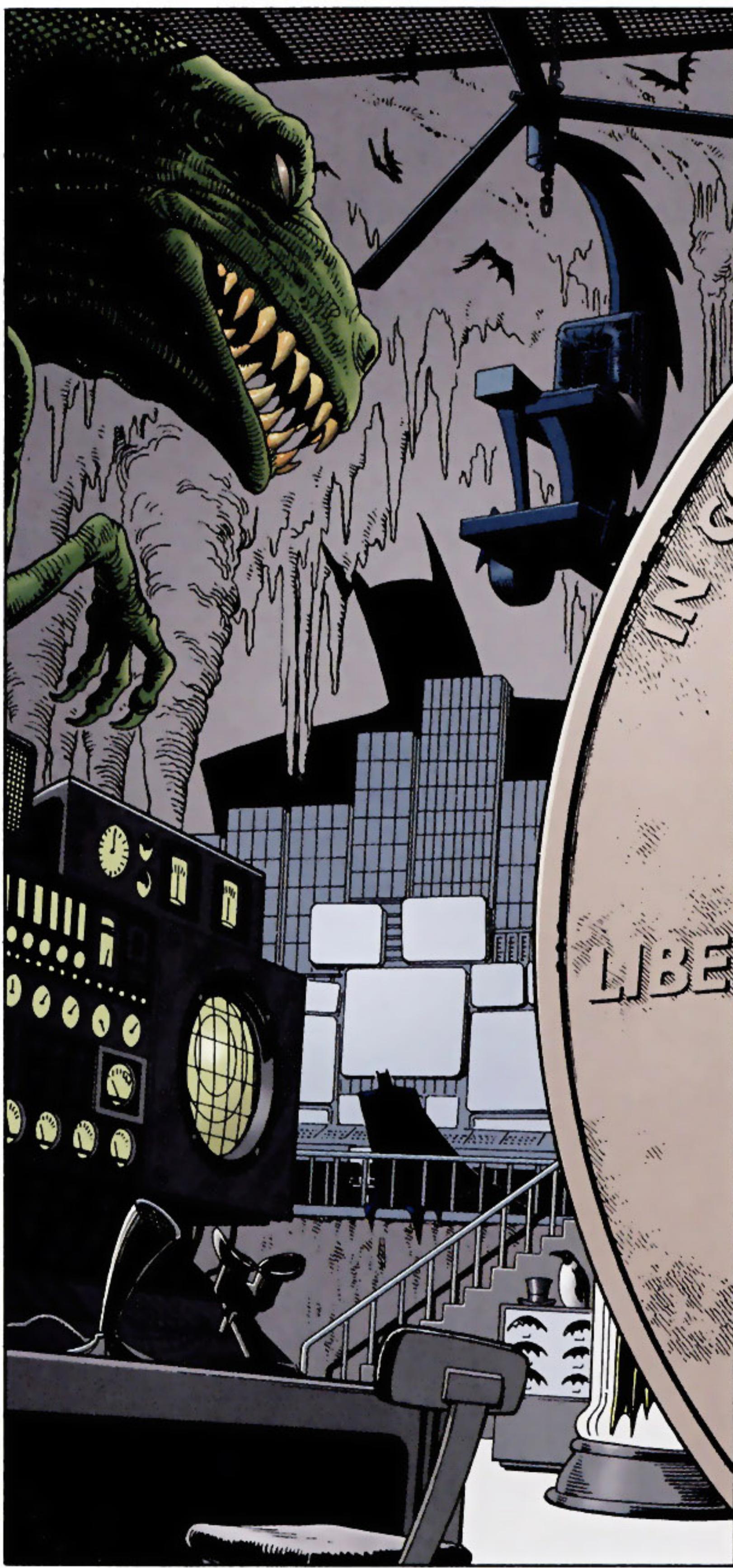
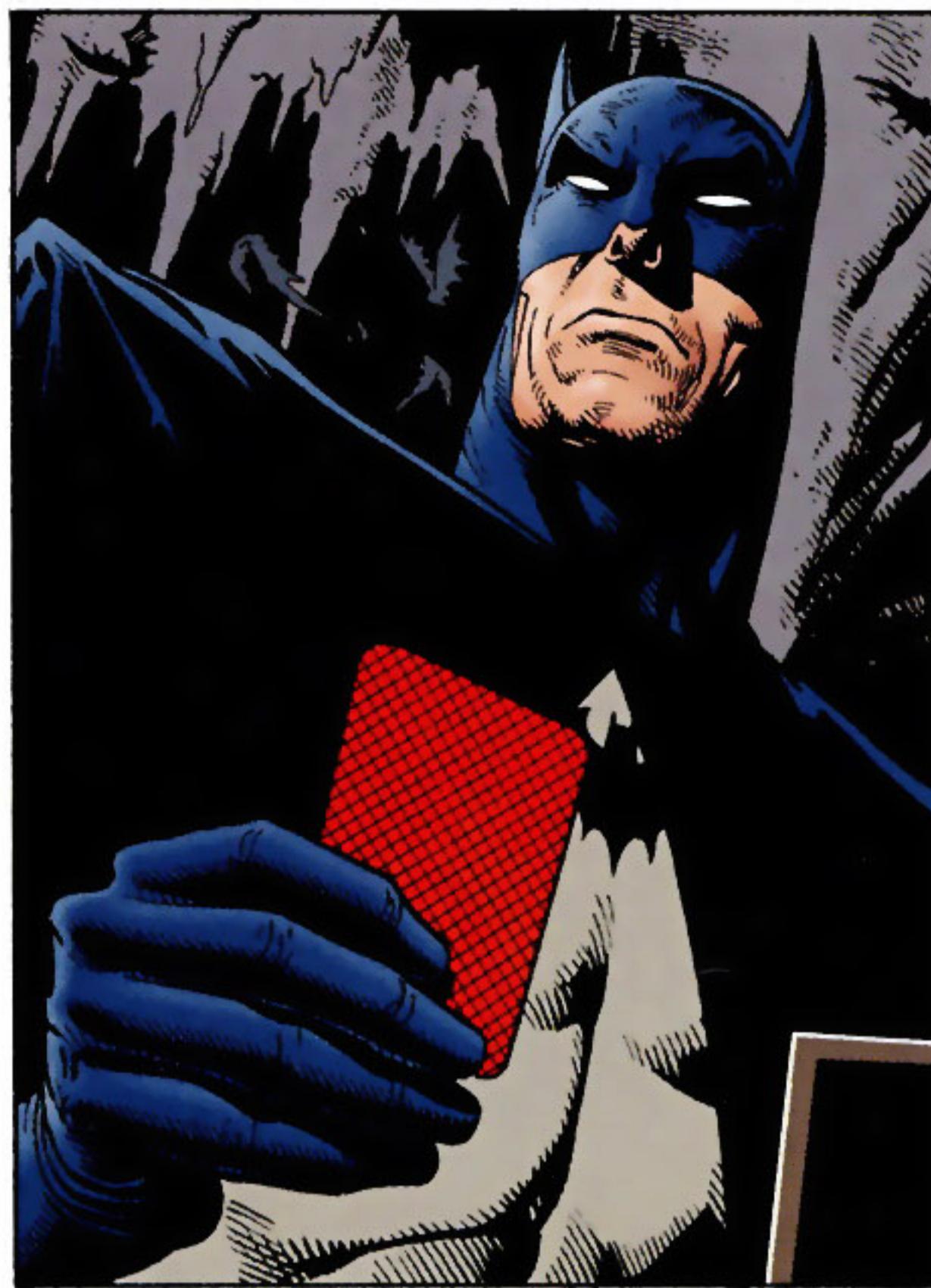
AND INCIDENTALLY, THAT'S A LIFETIME GUARANTEE...

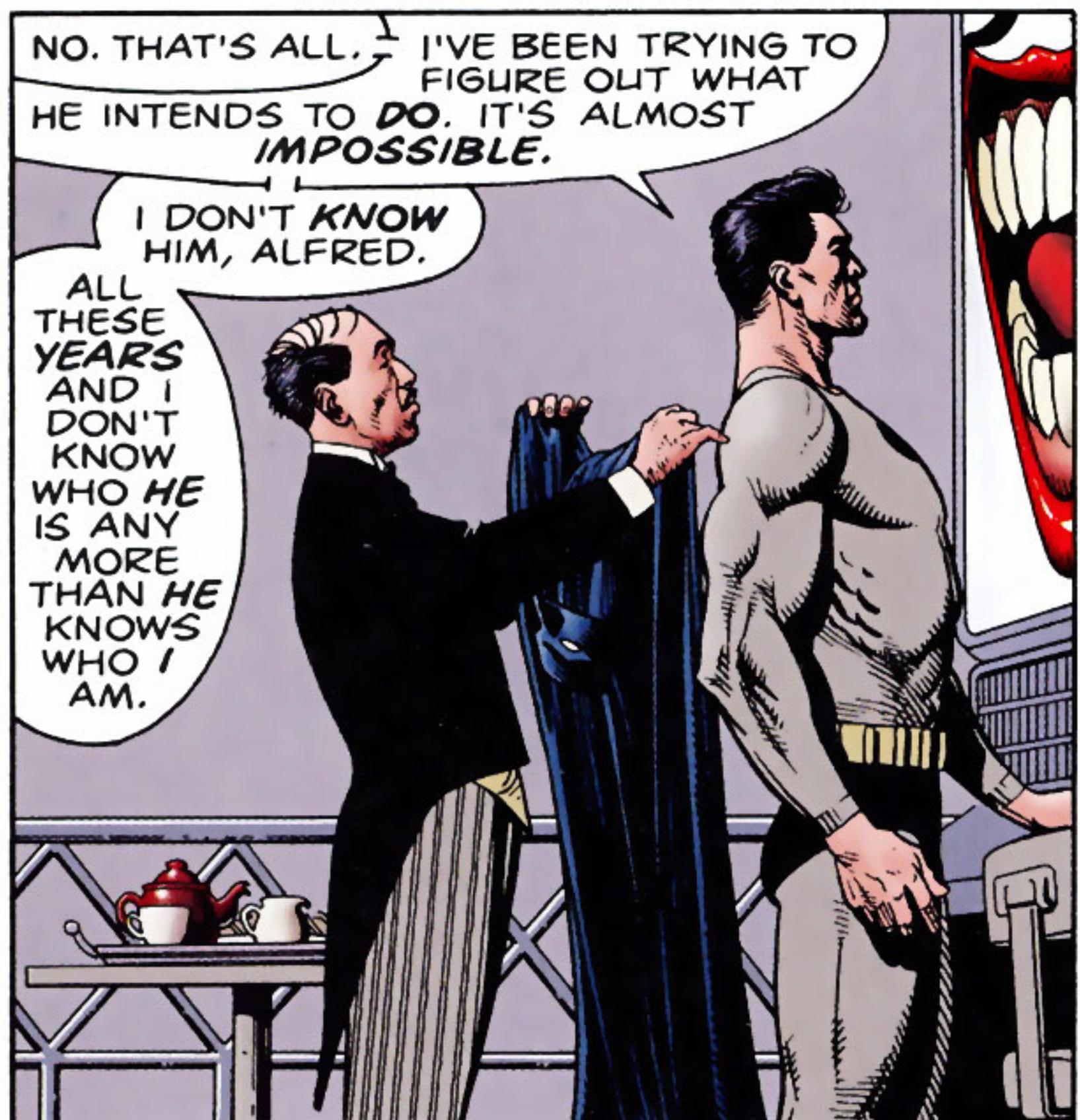
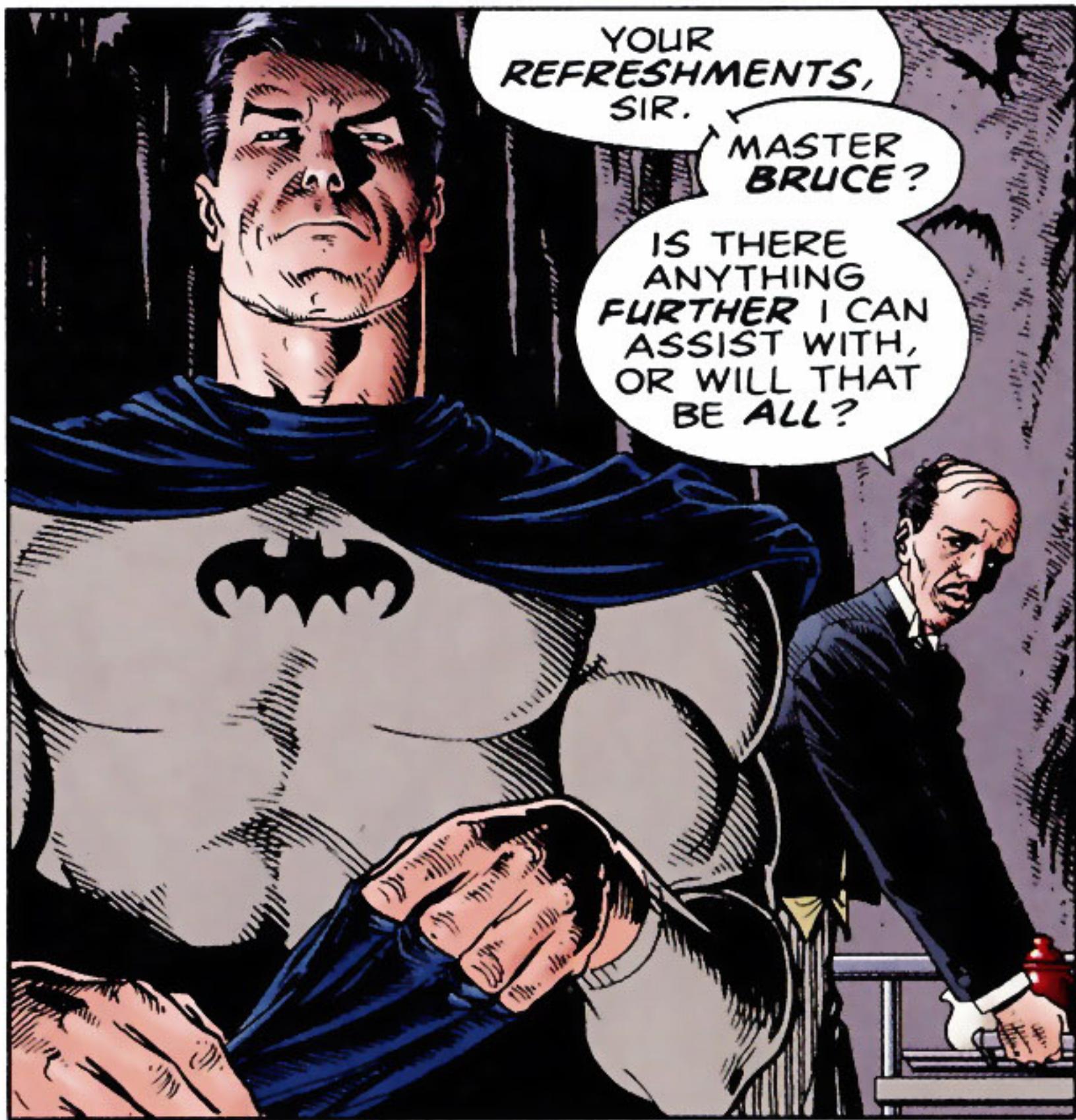
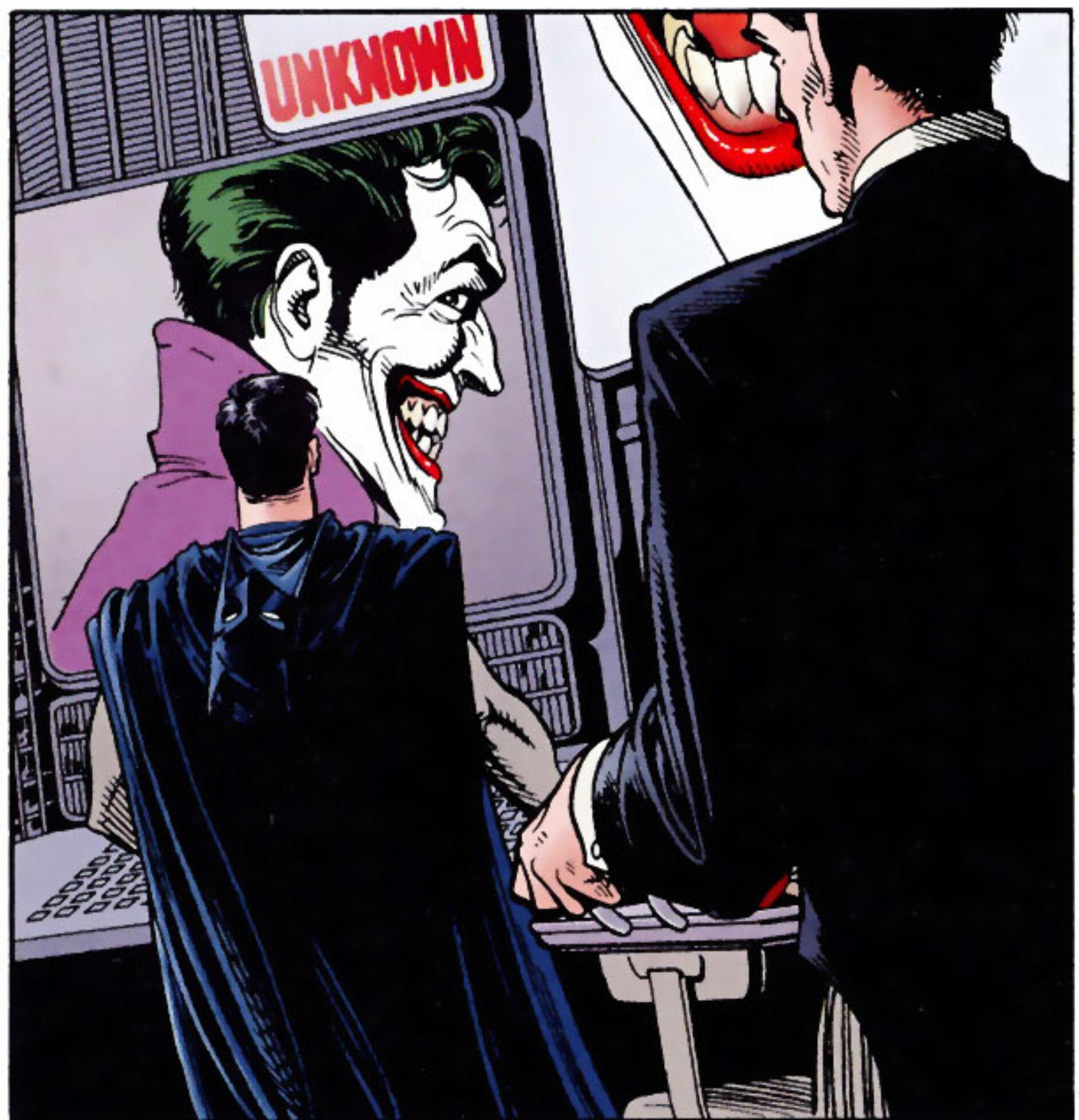
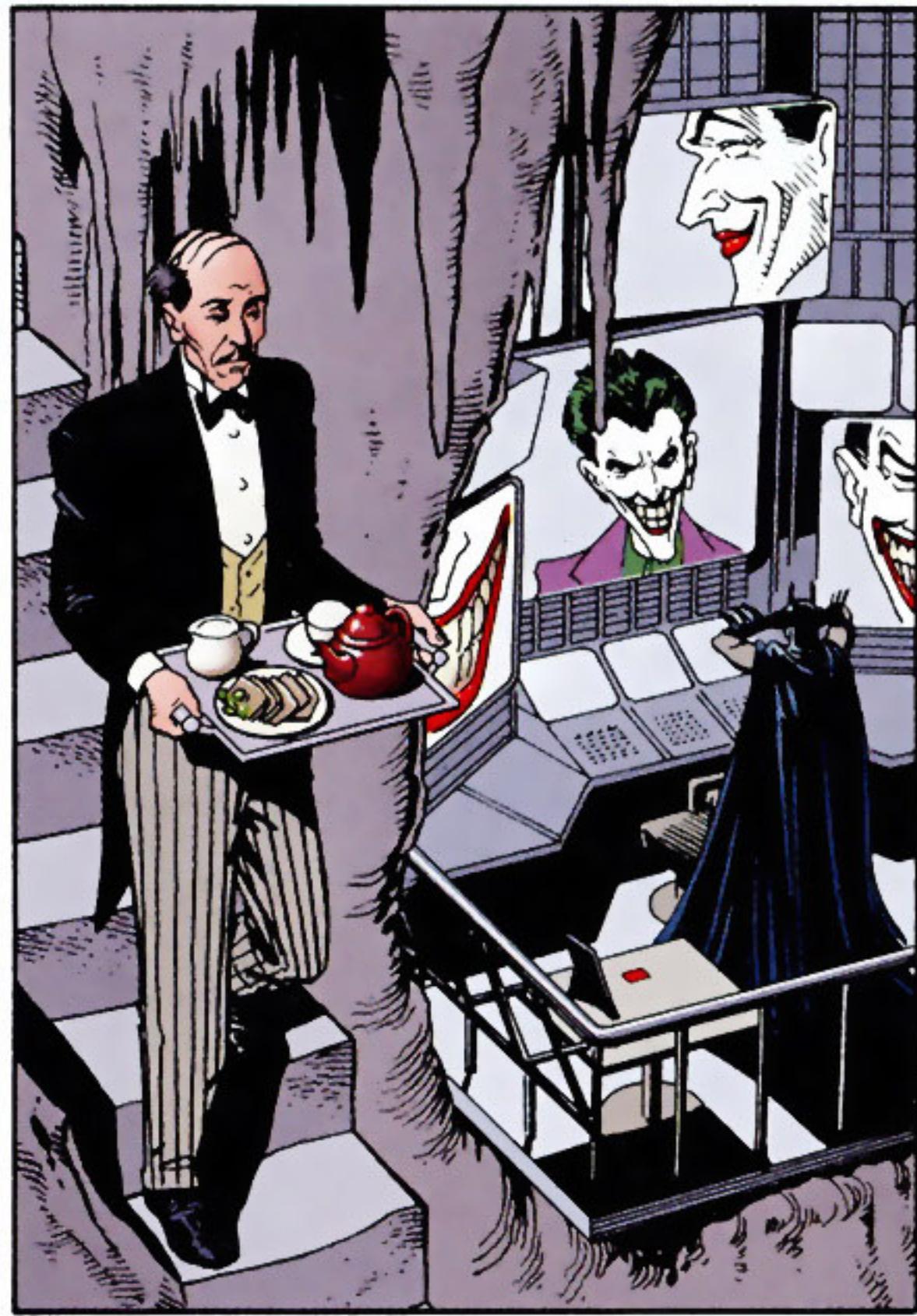
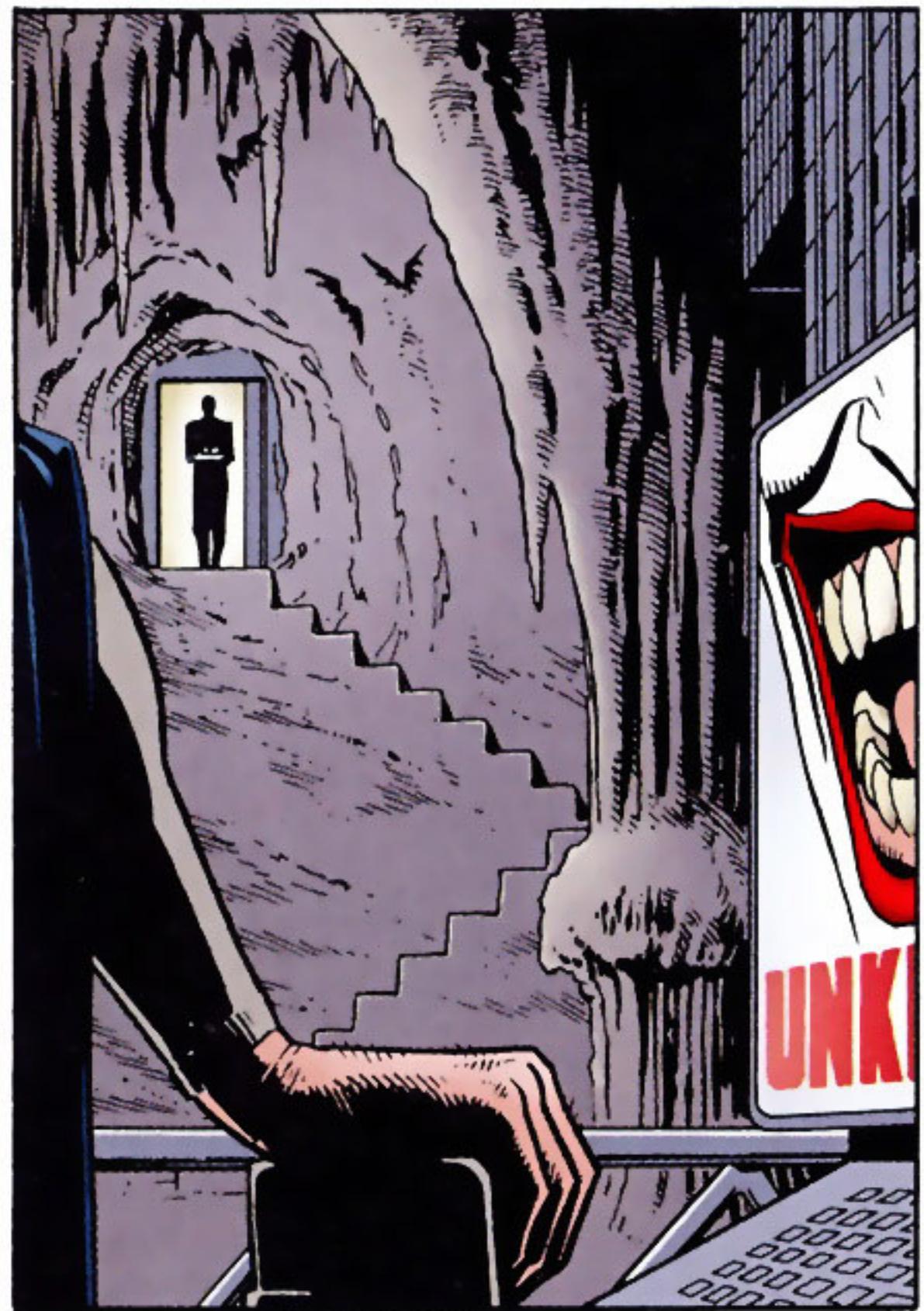
WELL, I MUST DASH. THERE'S EQUIPMENT TO HIRE, PLUS WORKERS WHO'LL SUIT THE GENERAL TONE OF THE ESTABLISHMENT...

... AND THEN, OF COURSE, I'VE YET TO SECURE MY MAIN ATTRACTION.

DO FEEL FREE TO STICK AROUND.







I HATE THIS. WHENEVER WE JAIL HIM, I THINK "PLEASE GOD, KEEP HIM THERE." THEN HE ESCAPES AND WE ALL SIT ROUND HOPING HE WON'T DO ANYTHING TOO AWFUL THIS TIME.

ASYLUM EXAMINER MANIAC ESCAPES AGAIN

CRIMEFIGHTER UNAVAILABLE FOR COMMENT
VICKI VALE EXCLUSIVE

I HATE IT.

DAD, JUST ONCE COULD YOU LEAVE YOUR WORK AT THE OFFICE AND RELAX? I MADE YOU COCOA.

THANK YOU, SWEETHEART. I'LL DRINK IT WHEN I'VE PASTED THIS LATEST CLIPPING IN.

Y'KNOW, I FOUND THAT CAT-WOMAN SCRAPBOOK YOU SAID WAS MISSING. IT WAS BEHIND THE WARDROBE.

SOME DAY YOU OUGHT TO LET ME WORK OUT A PROPER FILING SYSTEM, LIKE WE USED AT THE LIBRARY.

Hmm.

URRGH. LOOK, YOU LISED TOO MUCH PASTE! IT'S ALL SQUIDGING UNDER THE EDGES OF THE CLIPPING. YOU'RE GOING TO GET IT ON YOUR PANTS...

BARBARA, YOU'RE FUSSIER THAN YOUR MOTHER WA...

WAS THAT THE DOOR?

YEAH. IT'LL BE COLLEEN FROM ACROSS THE STREET. TONIGHT'S OUR YOGA CLASS.

C'MON, DAD... COMPANY! PUT YOUR SCRAPBOOKS AWAY.

BAT-GARBED VIGILANTE CRITICALLY INJURES MURDERER

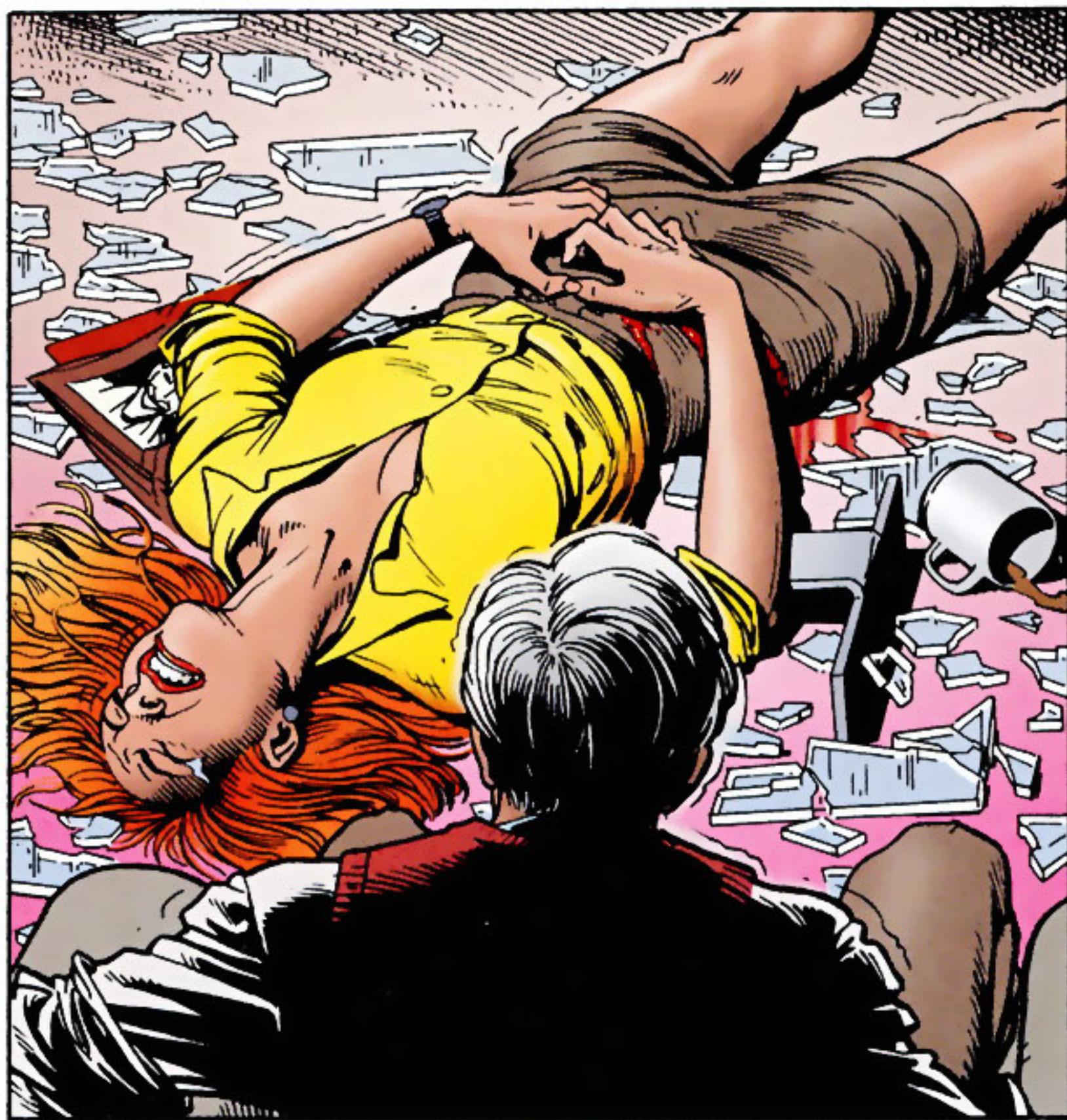
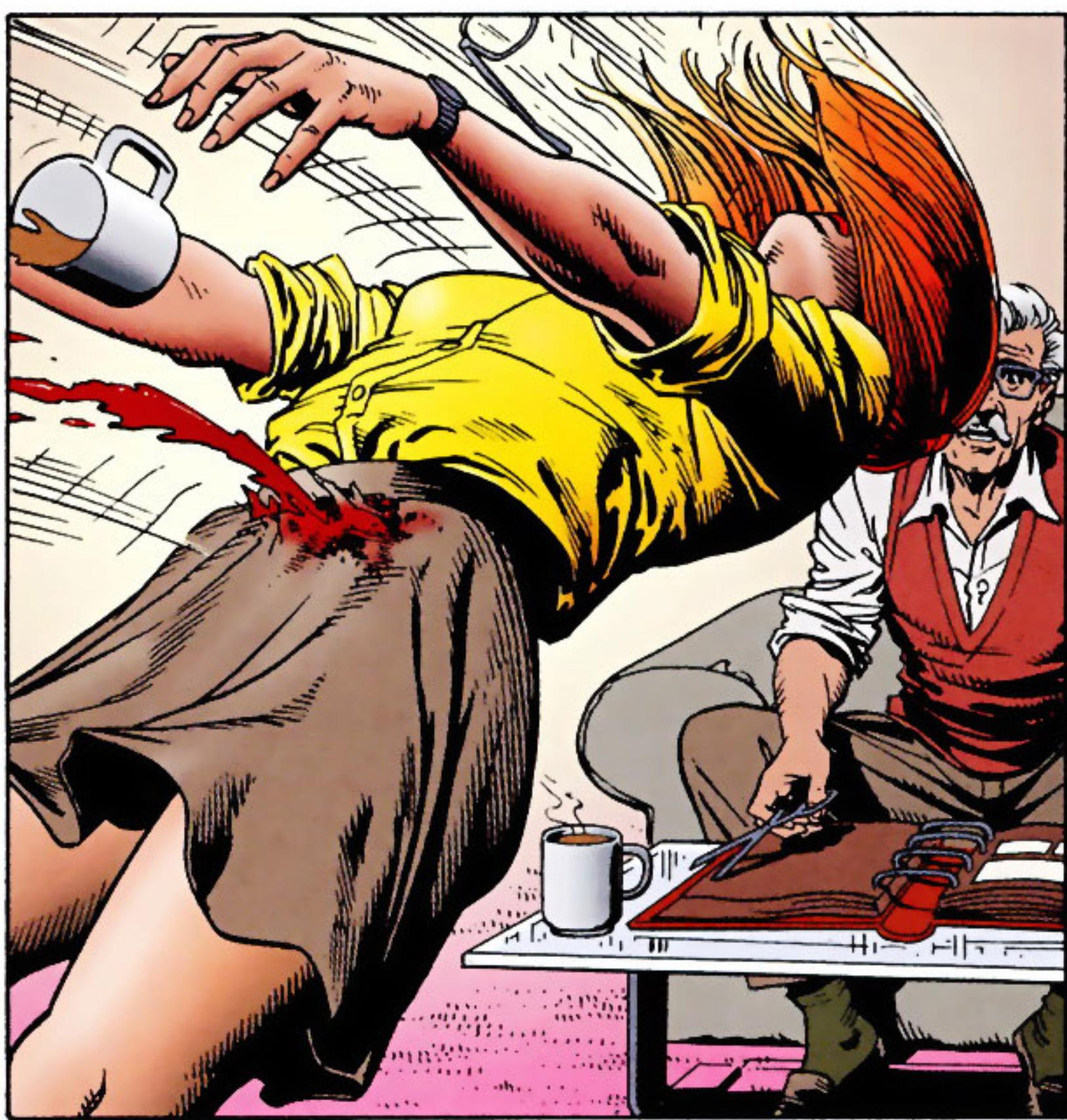
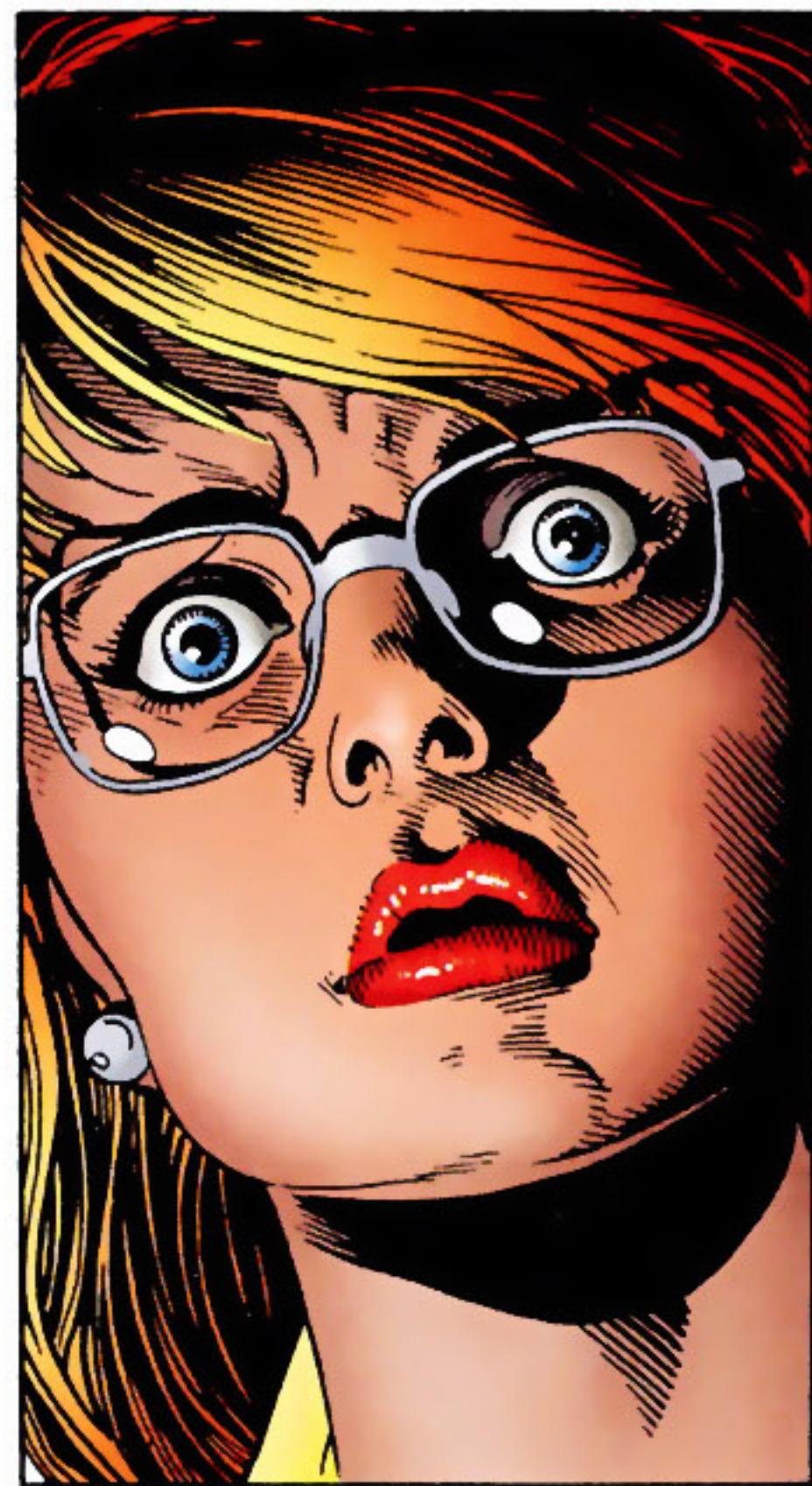
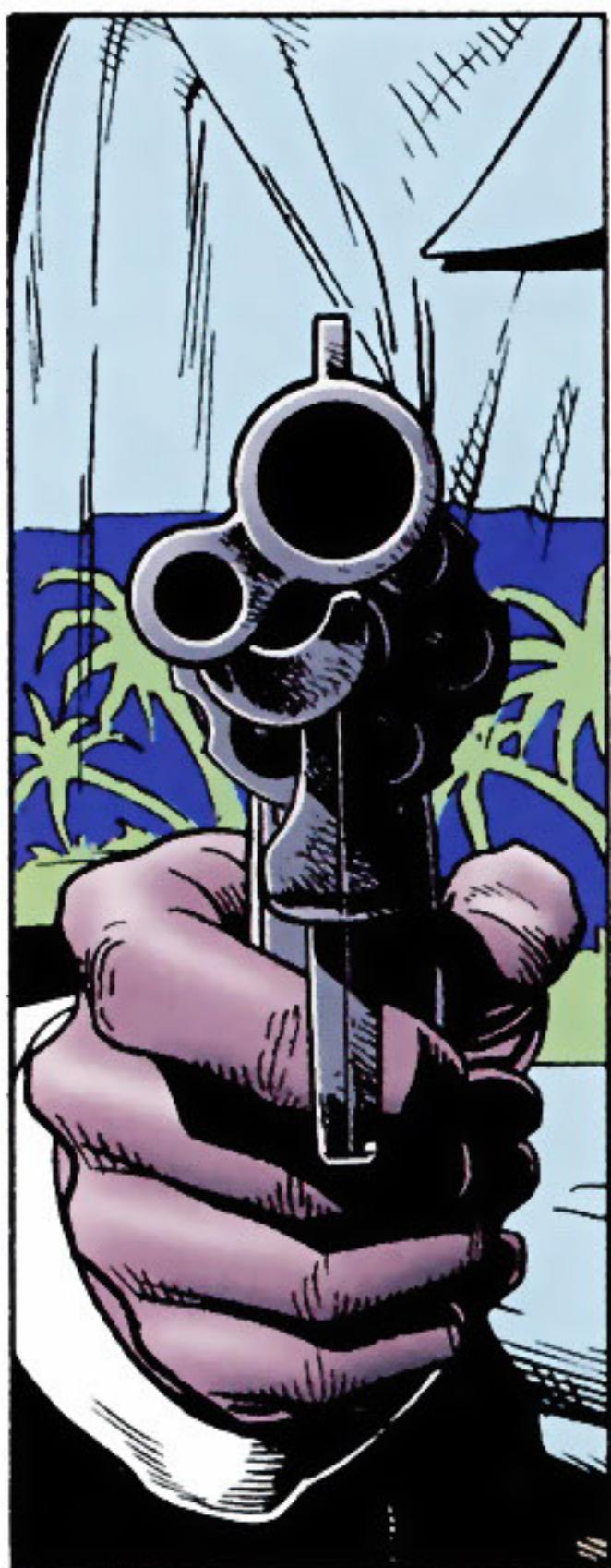
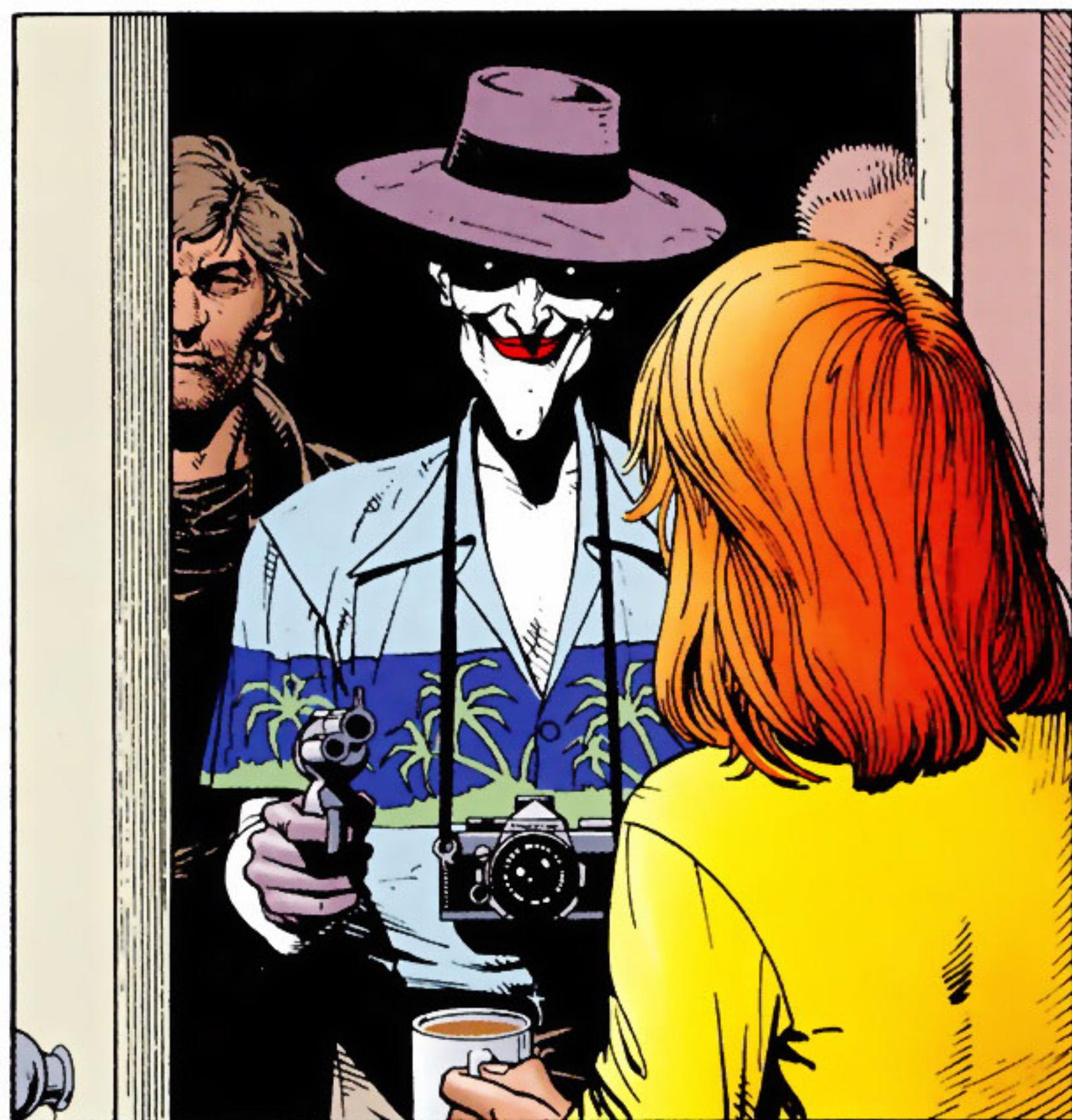
DISFIGURED HOMICIDAL MANIAC IN HOSPITAL

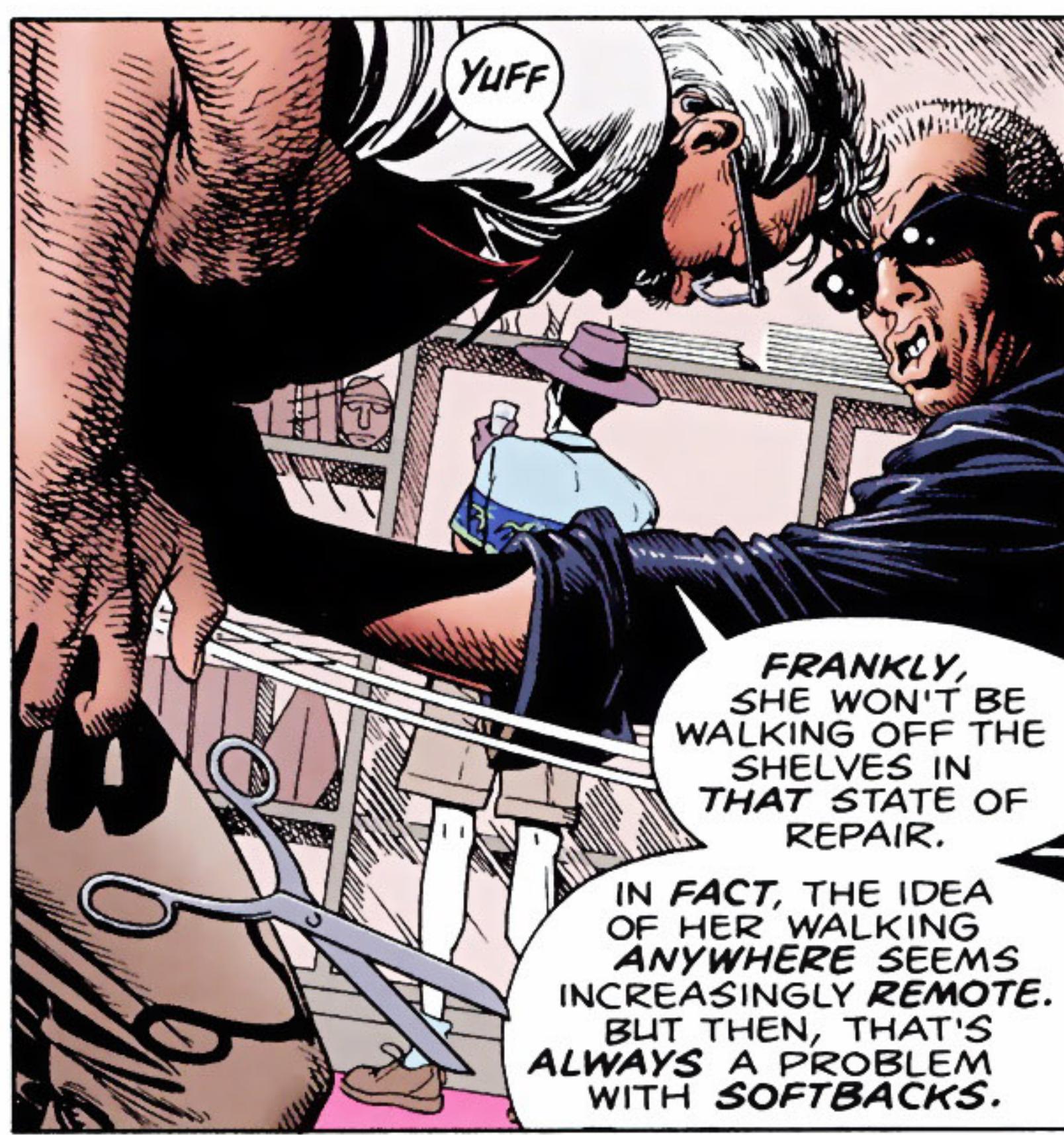
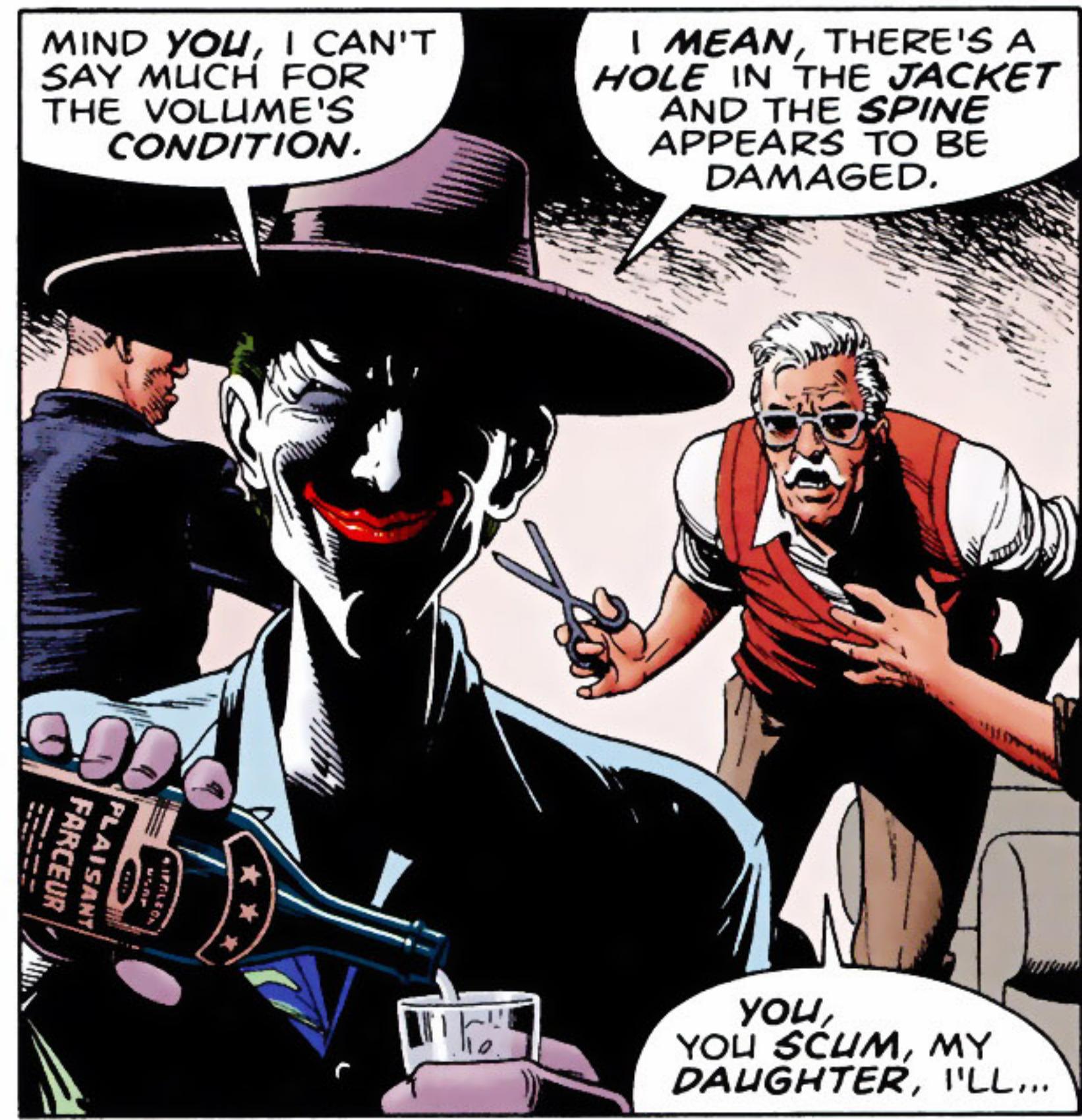
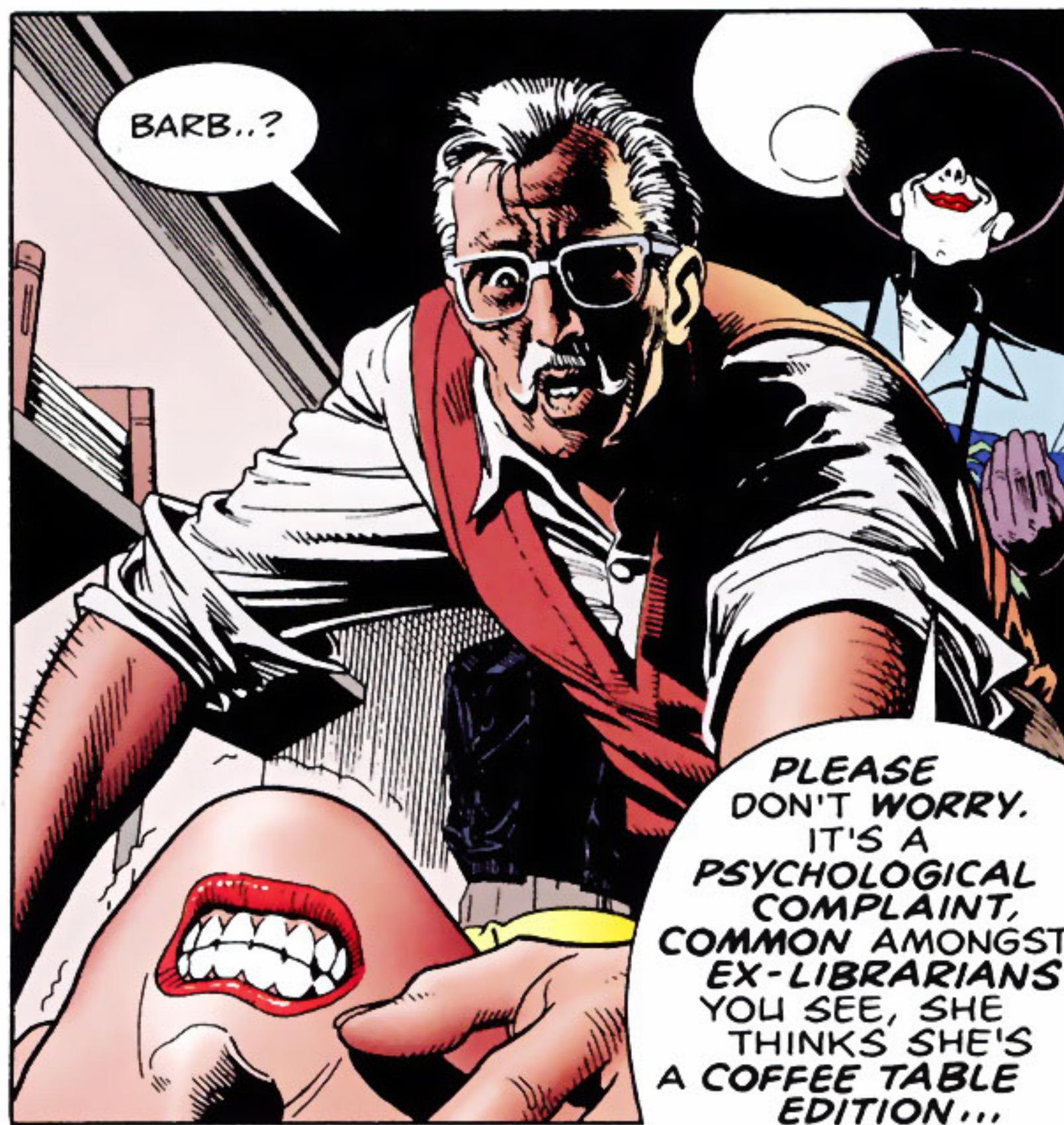
HEH. LOOK AT THIS ONE. FIRST TIME THEY MET. NOW WHAT YEAR WAS THAT?

WELL, I REMEMBER YOU DESCRIBING THE WHITE FACE AND THE GREEN HAIR TO ME WHEN I WAS A KID. SCARED THE HELL OUT OF ME.

I THOUGHT YOU'D BE INTERESTED...

YEAH, WELL, I HAD SOME INTERESTING NIGHTMARES.





Y'SEE... Y'SEE, I HAVE TO PROVE MYSELF. AS A HUSBAND, AND, AND AS A FATHER!

I MEAN, I, WELL, I WOULDN'T BE DOING THIS SORT OF THING IF, IF IT WASN'T SOMETHING IMPORTANT.

IT'S LIKE, I BEGAN AS A LAB ASSISTANT, RIGHT? WAS A GOOD JOB. REAL GOOD JOB.

SO, WHAT I DID, I QUIT TO BECOME A COMEDIAN. I WAS SO SURE. SO SURE I HAD TALENT.

BUT, HA, WELL, LOOK AT ME. I GUESS MY TALENTS DIDN'T LIE IN THAT DIRECTION.

SO, YOU SEE, LIKE, IF I JUST DO THIS ONE BIG CRIME...

HEY, JEEZ, MAN, BE COOL.

I'M SORRY. I'M SORRY, I DON'T USUALLY DRINK LUNCHTIMES...

IT'S JUST, IF YOU'RE SURE WE CAN GET AWAY WITH THIS THING AND THAT NOBODY WILL KNOW I WAS INVOLVED...

DON'T WORRY, FRIEND. WE'LL TAKE CARE OF YOU.

WE NEED YOUR HELP GETTING THROUGH THAT CHEMICAL PLANT WHERE YOU WORKED TO THE PLAYING CARD COMPANY NEXT DOOR.

WE REALLY APPRECIATE YOUR EXPERTISE.

SO, LIKE, TO ABSOLUTELY GUARANTEE NOBODY CONNECTS YOU WITH THE ROBBERY...

...YOU'LL BE WEARING THIS.



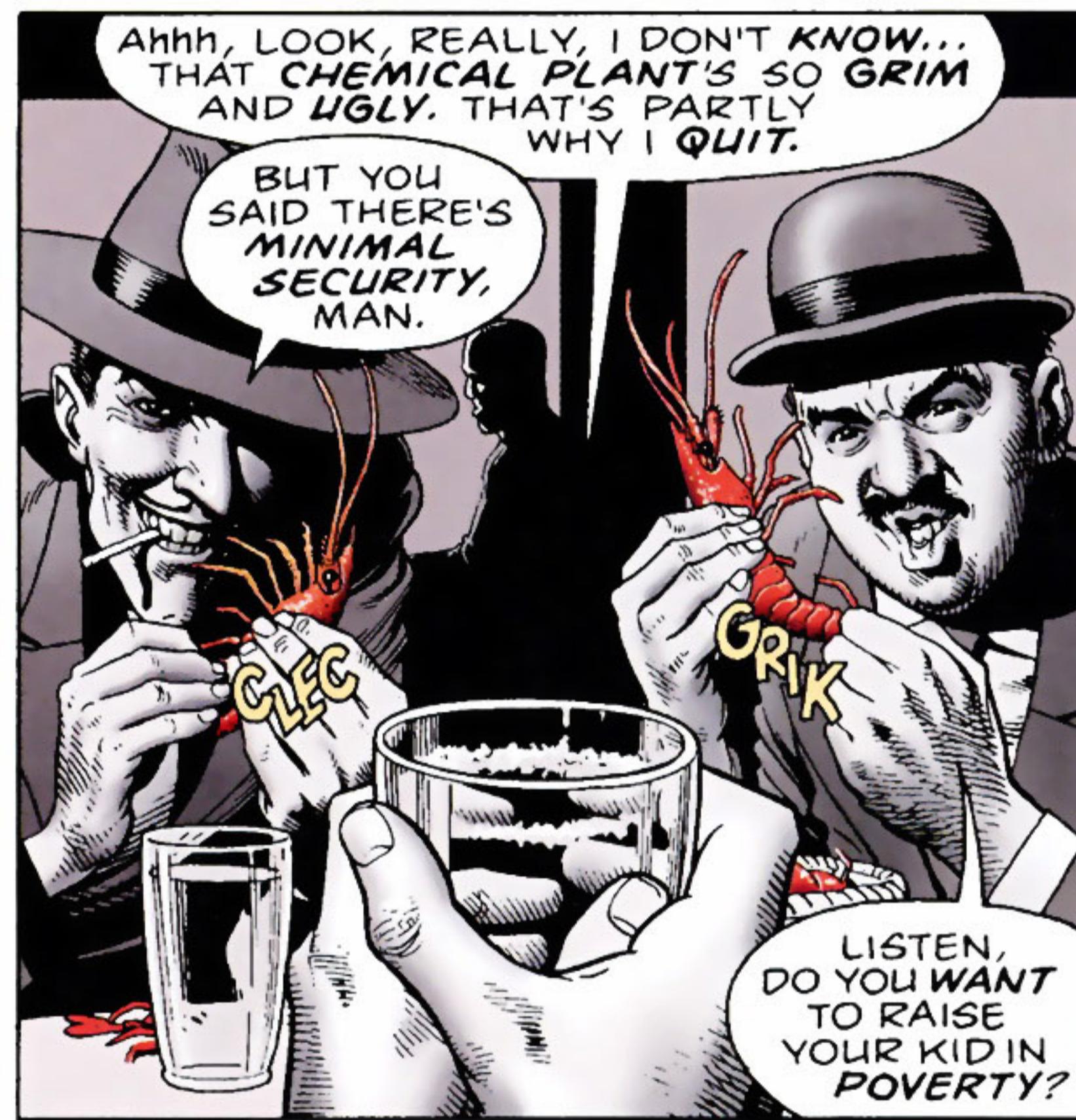
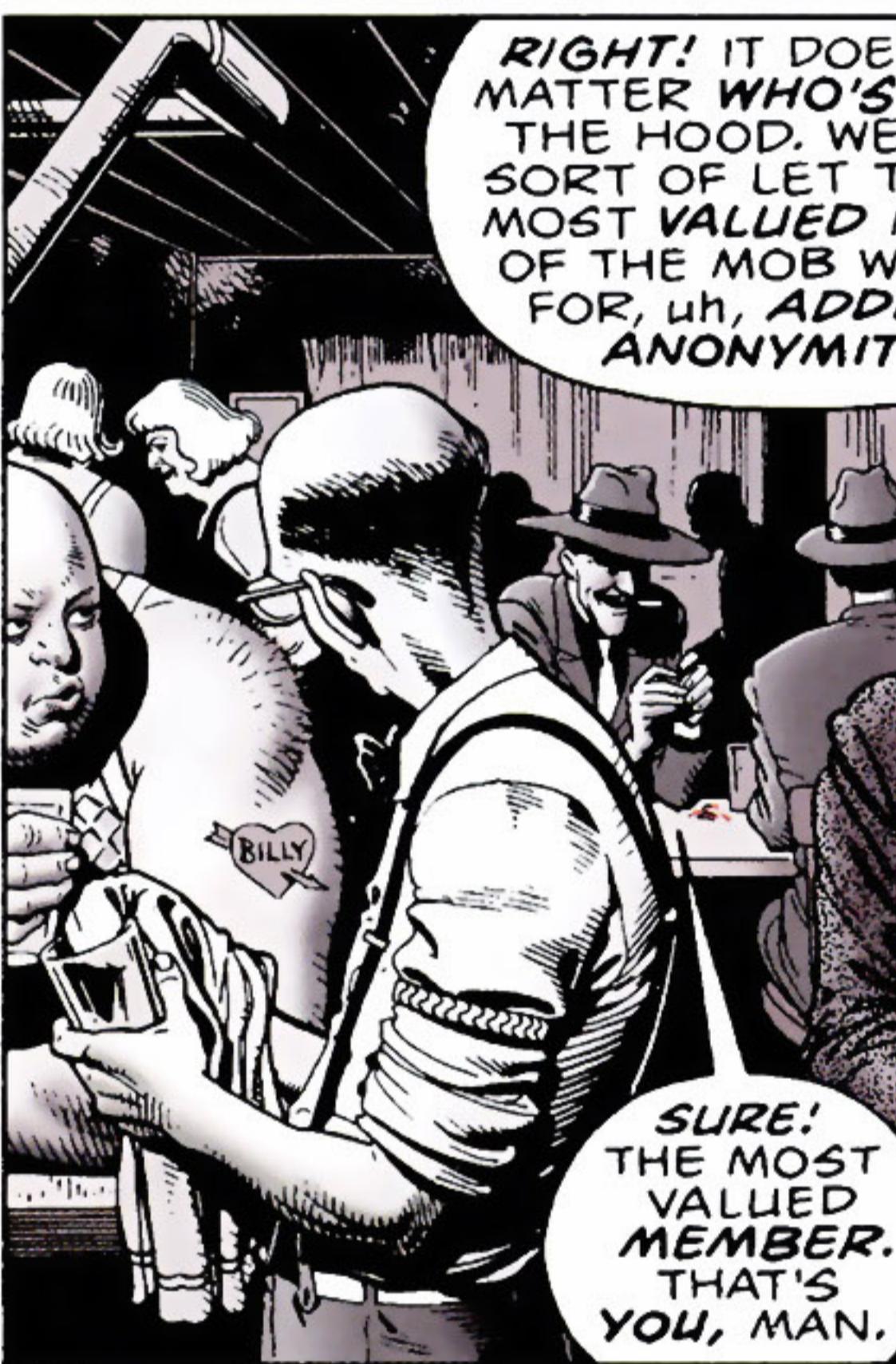
WEARING..? B-BUT THERE ARE NO EYE-SLITS. I WON'T BE ABLE TO SEE.

THERE'S THESE LENSES O' RED TWO-WAY MIRROR GLASS SET INTO IT. PRETTY SMART STUFF, RIGHT?

I, I DUNNO, THAT MASK... ISN'T IT THE ONE THAT RED HOOD GUY WEARS WHO RAIDED THAT ICE COMPANY LAST MONTH?

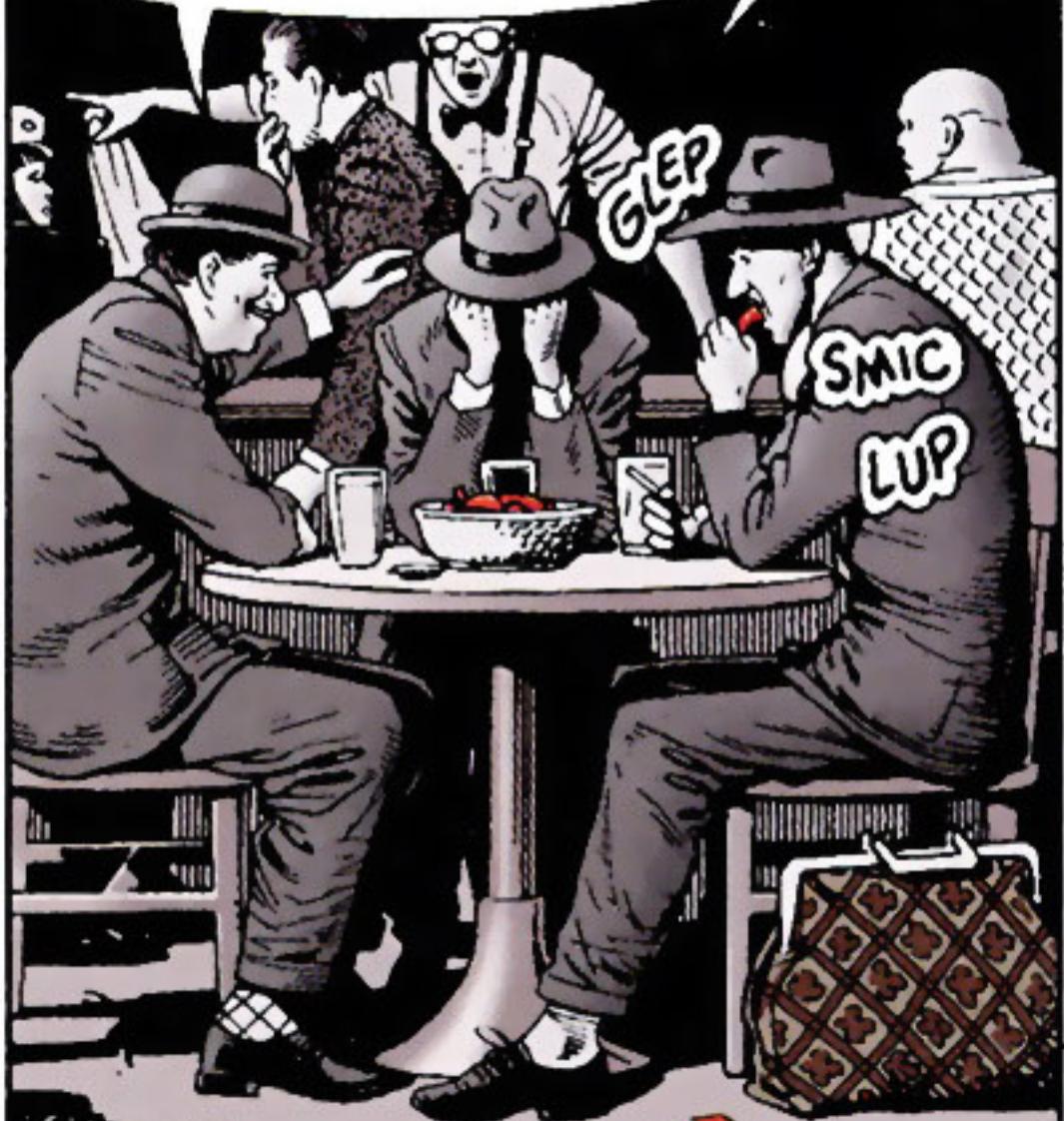


SMARTEN UP. THERE AIN'T NO "RED HOOD". THERE'S JUST A BUNCHA GUYS, ANNA MASK.



NO, NO, OF COURSE I MEAN, IT'S NOT. YOU'RE RIGHT. JUST THIS ONCE, THEN I CAN SWITCH NEIGHBORHOODS AND START A PROPER LIFE...

THAT'S THE ATTITUDE! SO... NEXT FRIDAY NIGHT, AT ELEVEN?



SURE. SURE, WHY NOT? HA HA! AND THEN, STARTING FROM SATURDAY

MORNING, I'LL BE RICH. I CAN'T IMAGINE IT. MY LIFE'S GOING TO BE COMPLETELY CHANGED!

NOTHING'S GOING TO BE THE SAME...



...NOT EVER AGAIN.



THE BULLET
WENT THROUGH
HER SPINE.

I'M AFRAID HER
LEGS ARE COMPLETELY
USELESS.

PUTTING IT
BLUNTLY, SHE MAY WELL
BE IN A CHAIR FOR THE
REMAINDER OF HER LIFE.

SOME WOMAN INNA
SAME YOGA CLASS AS
MISS GORDON FOUND
HER, NAME OF
COLLEEN REECE.

SHE
FOUND THE, UN,
VICTIM, IN A
STATE OF UN-
DRESS, BUT
OTHERWISE THE
PLACE WAS
EMPTY. THE
COMMISSIONER WAS...

UNDRESS?

THEY DIDN'T
TELL YOU?
HE'D
REMOVED HER
CLOTHING AFTER
SHOOTING HER.
WE, UH...

WELL, WE
FOUND A LENS-
CAP ON THE FLOOR
THAT DIDN'T FIT ANY
CAMERA IN THE PLACE.
WE BELIEVE THAT, UHH...

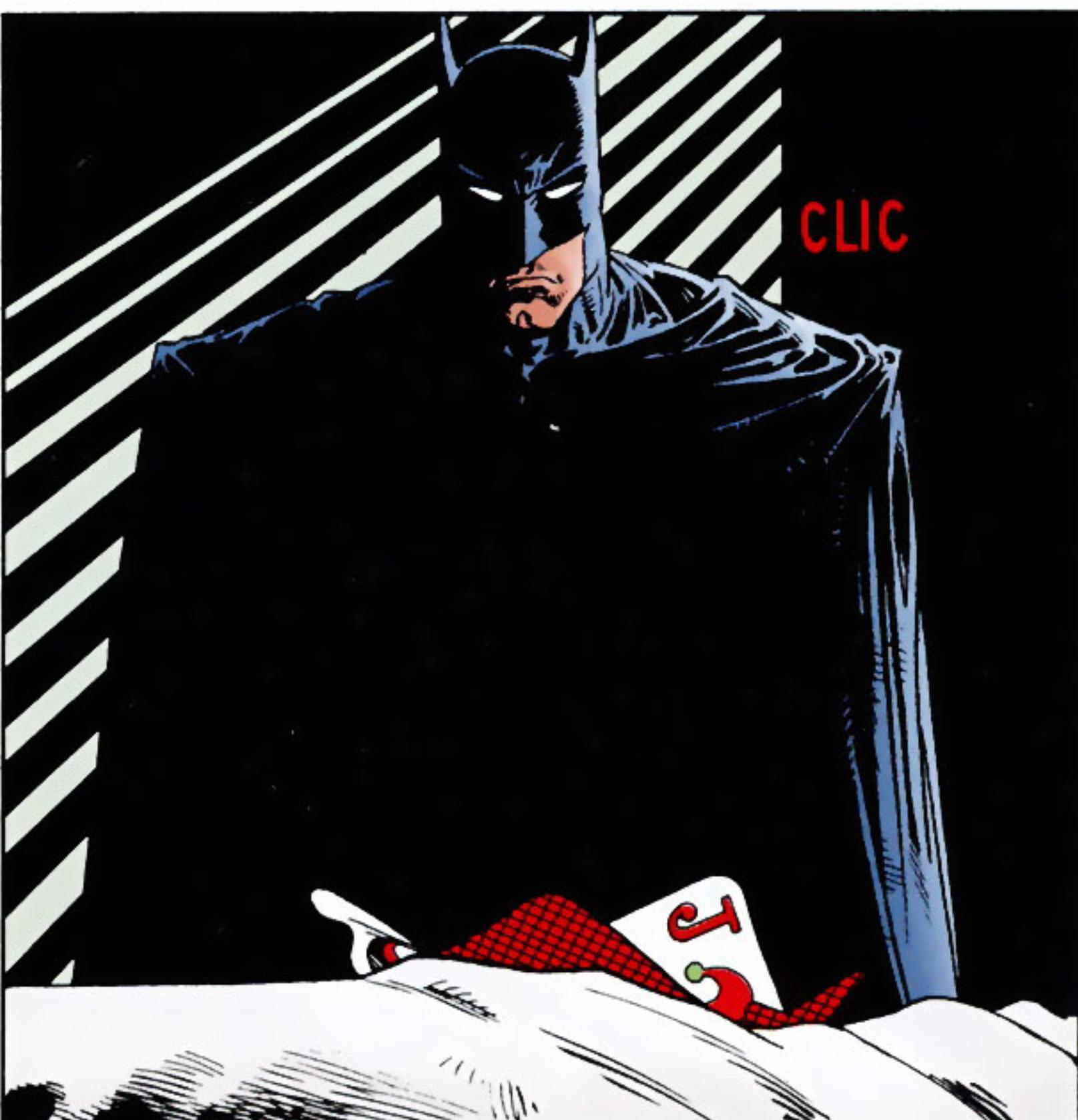
WELL, THAT
HE TOOK SOME
PICTURES.

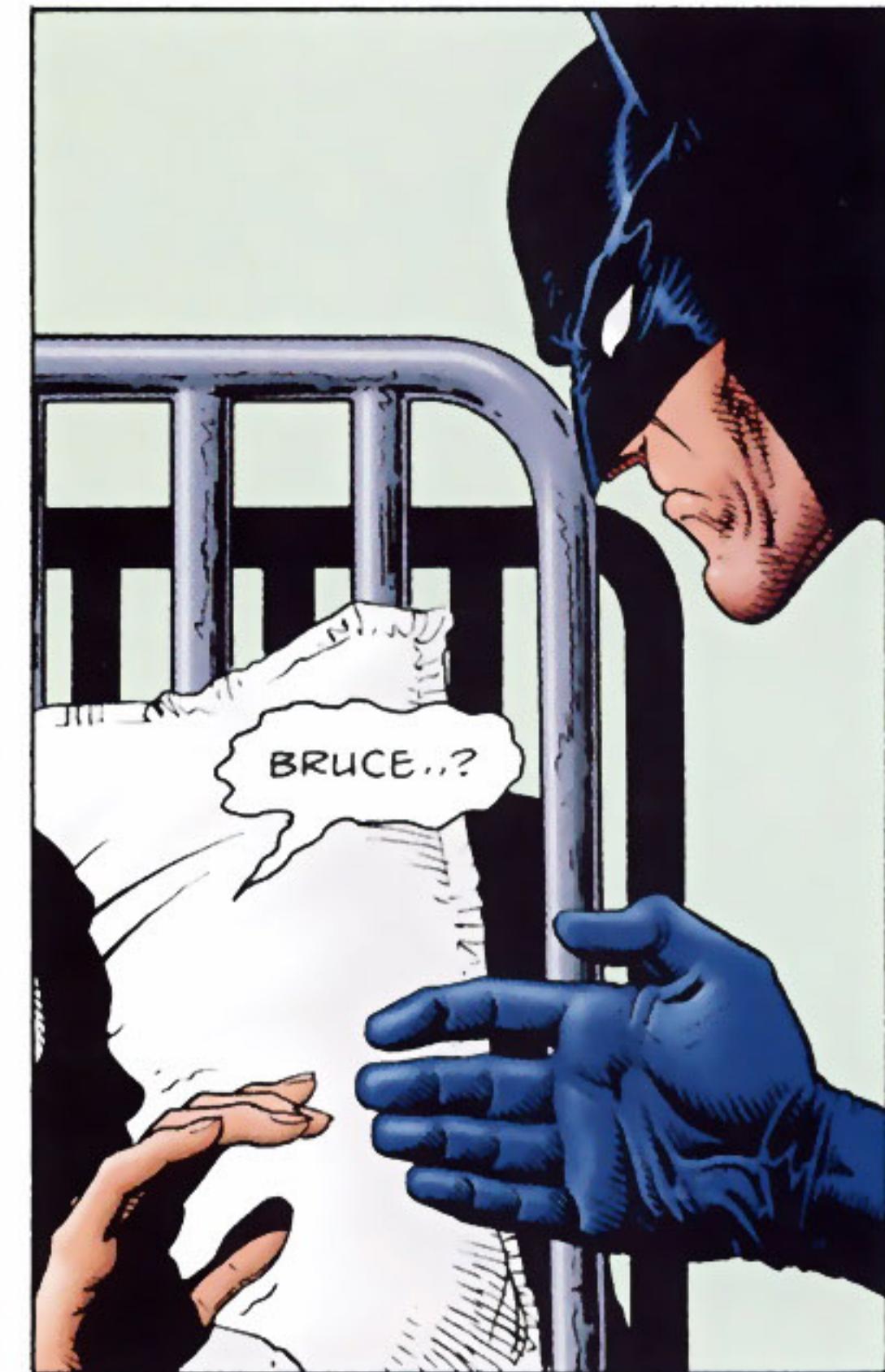
OF
HER.

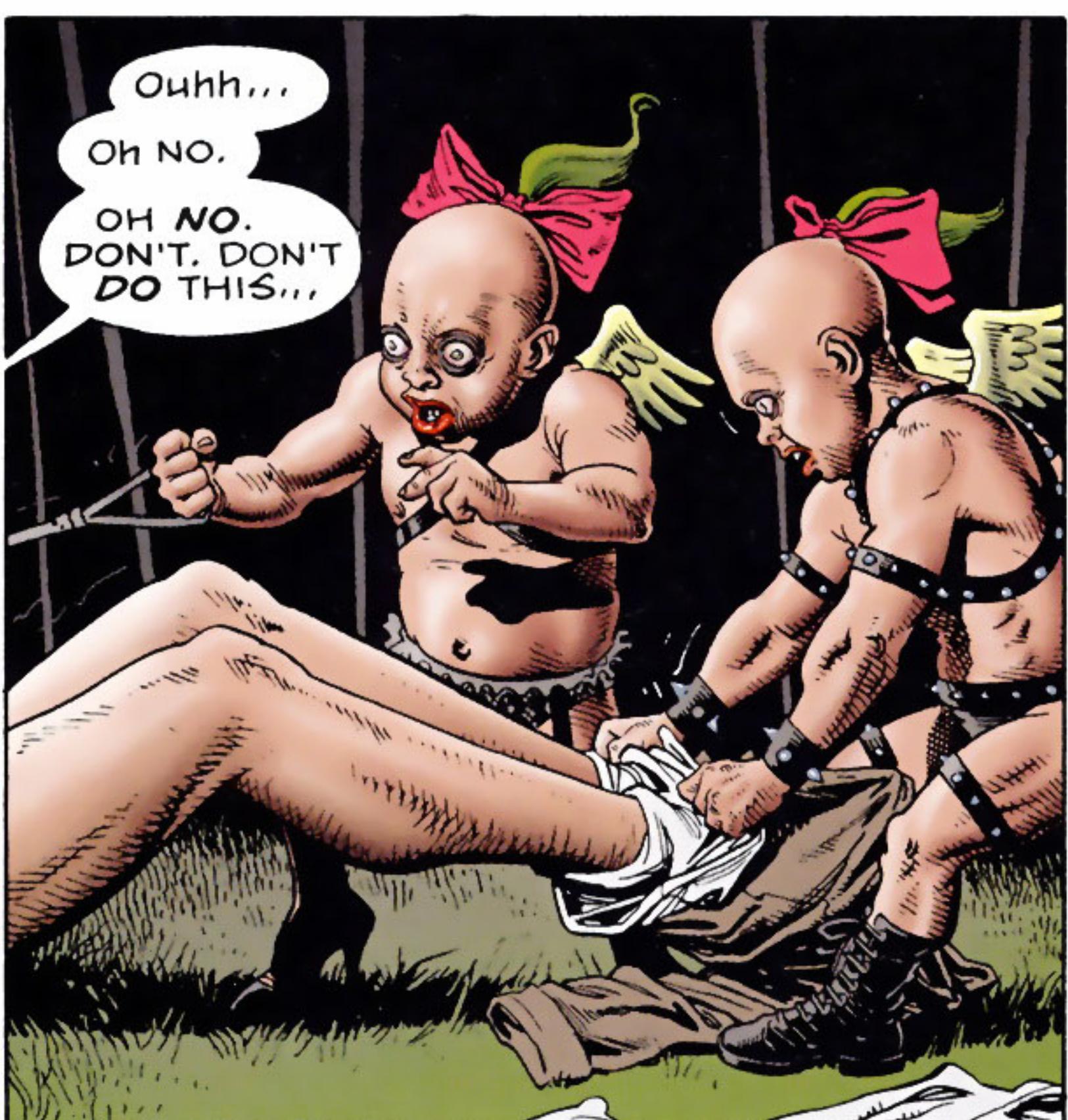
JEEZ, LOOK,
REALLY, I'M SORRY. I
THOUGHT YOU KNEW. IT'S
PRETTY SICK, AIN'T IT?

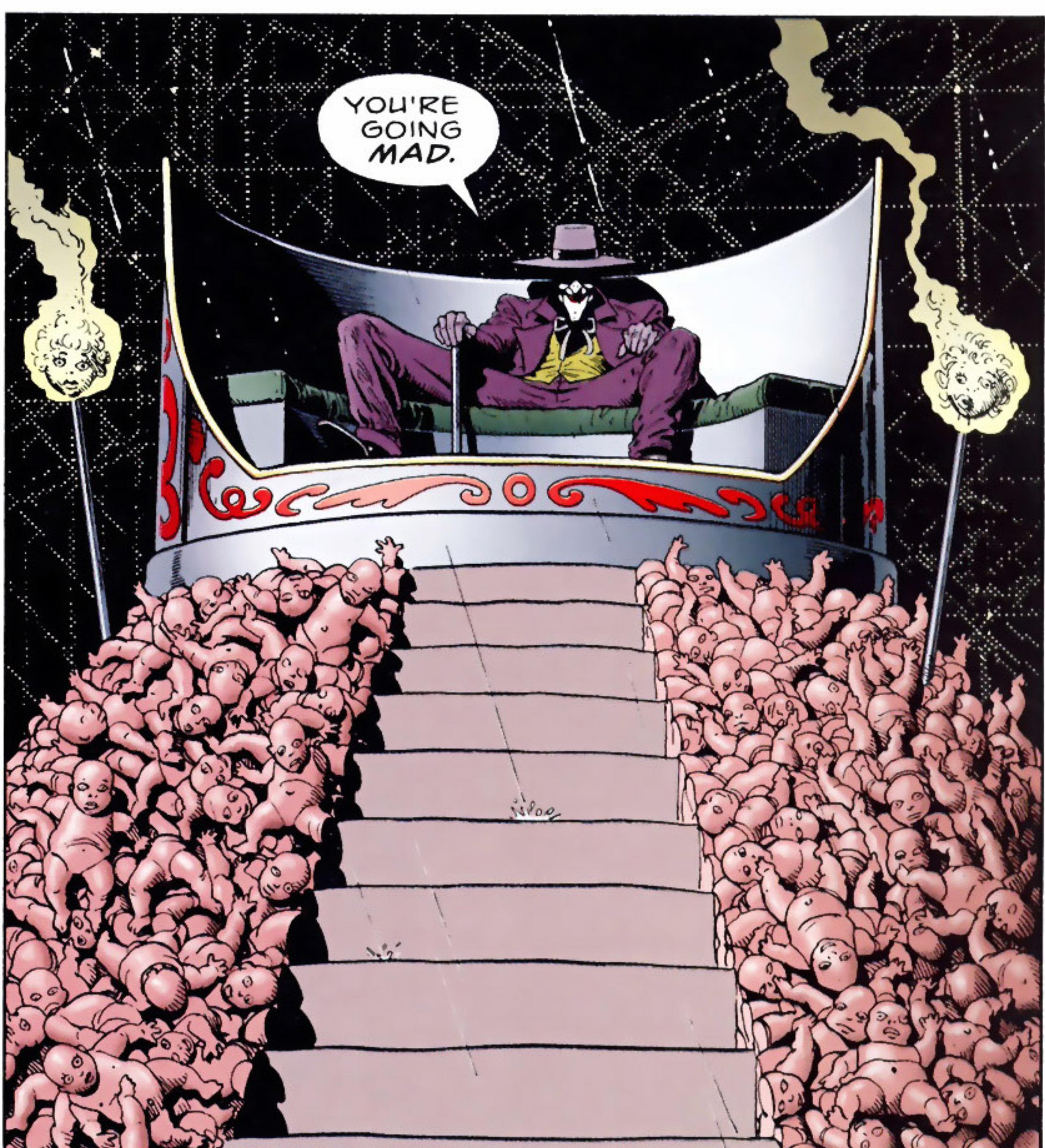
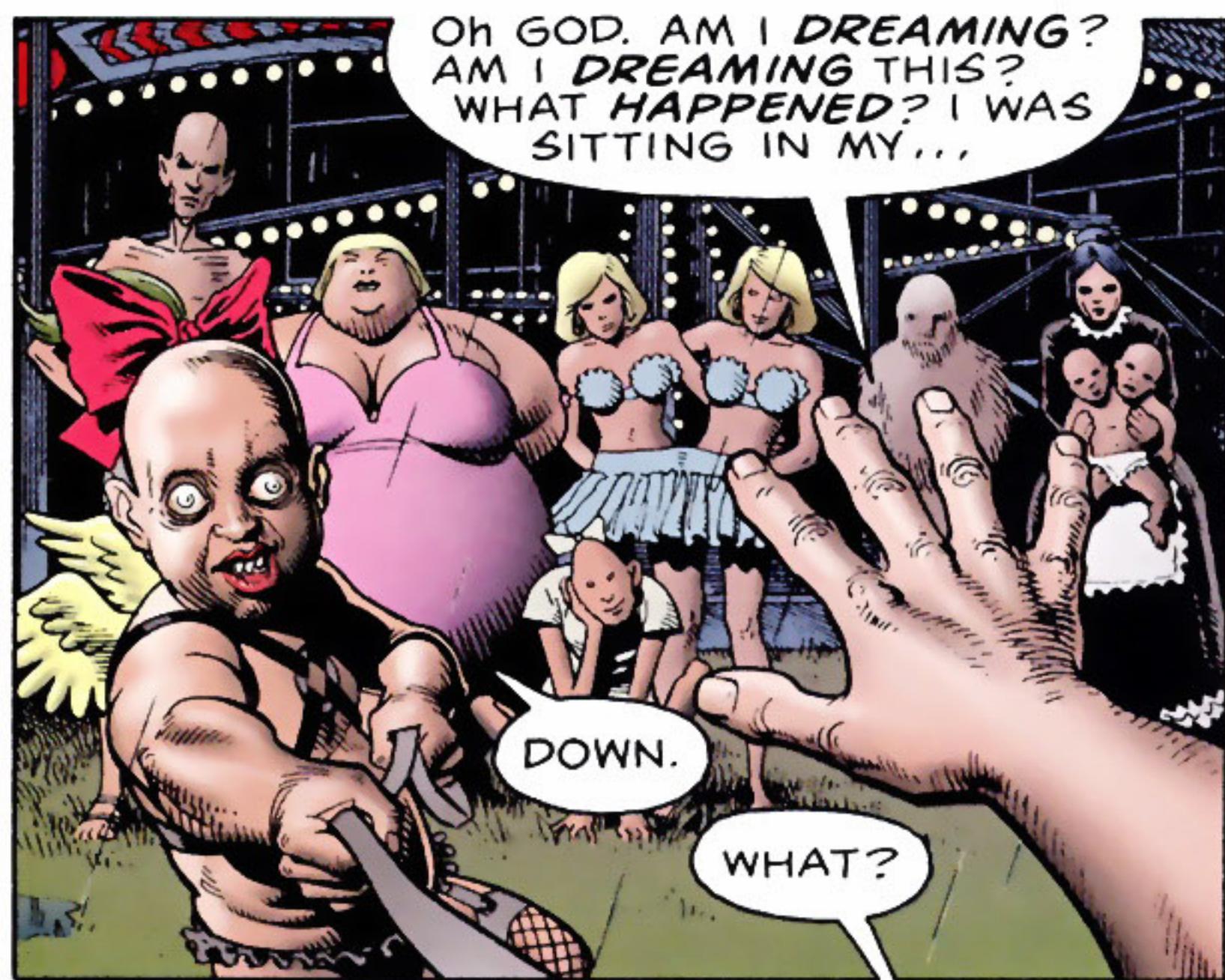
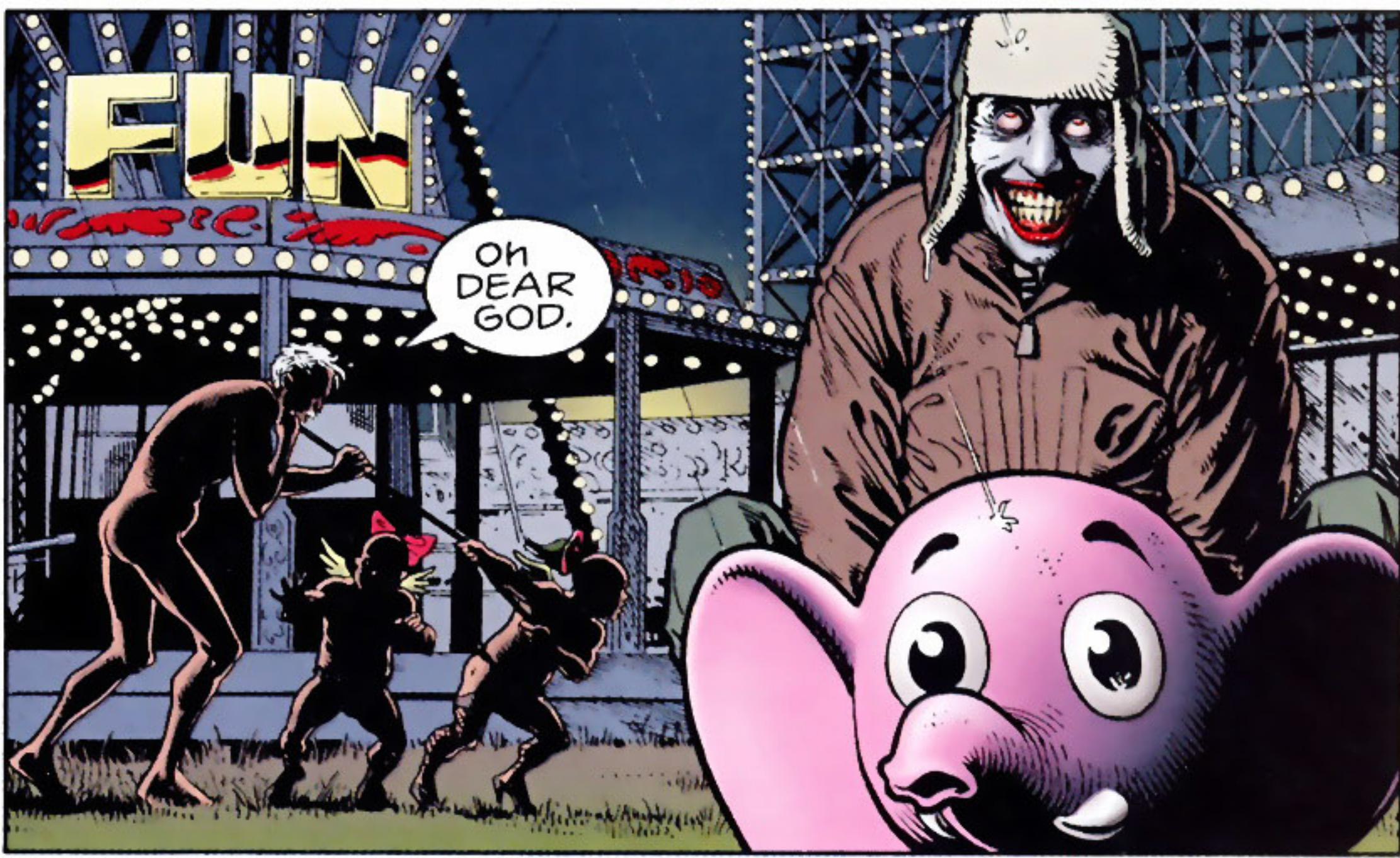
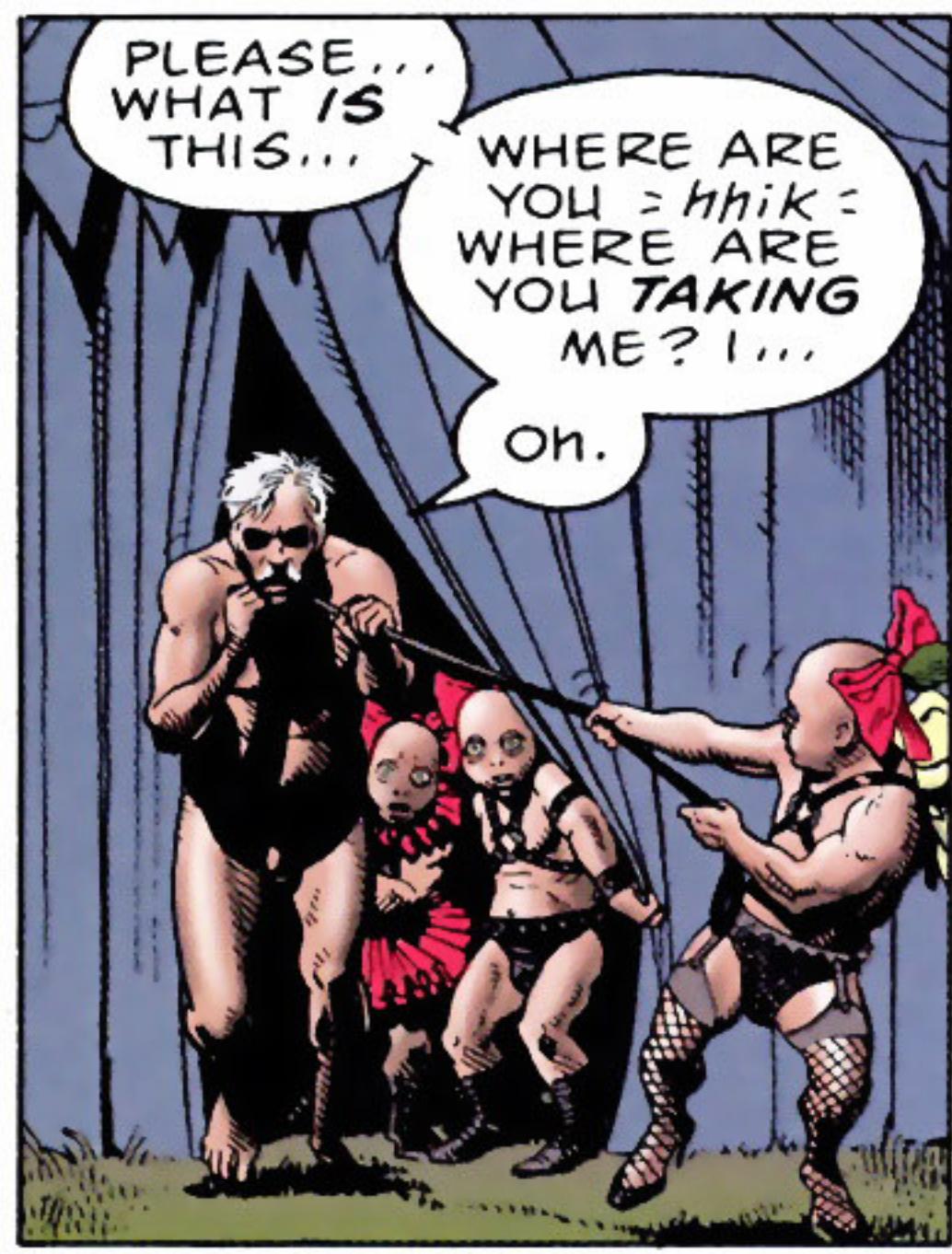
YES.
PRETTY
SICK.
PLEASE
LEAVE US
ALONE FOR A
MOMENT.

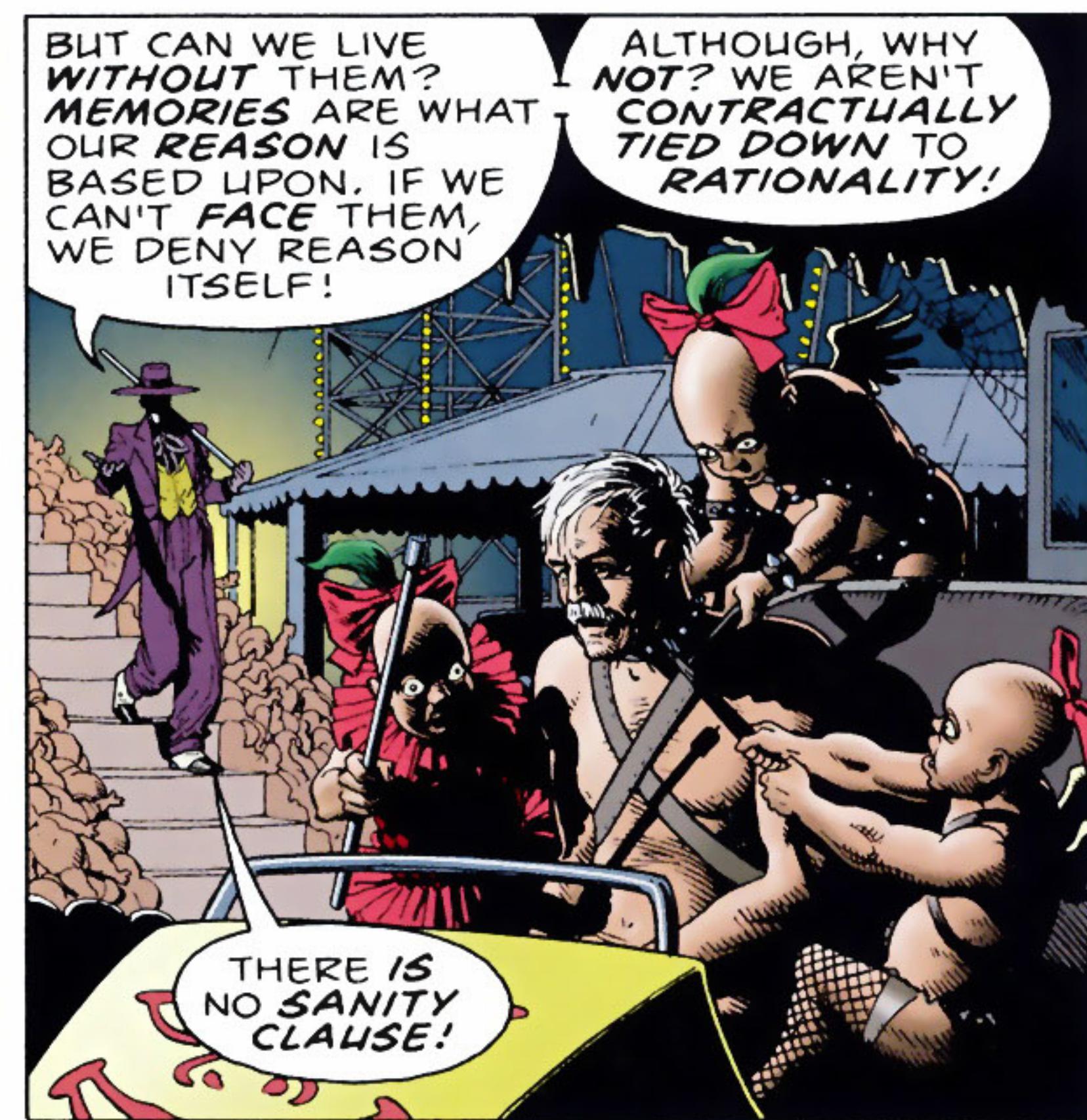
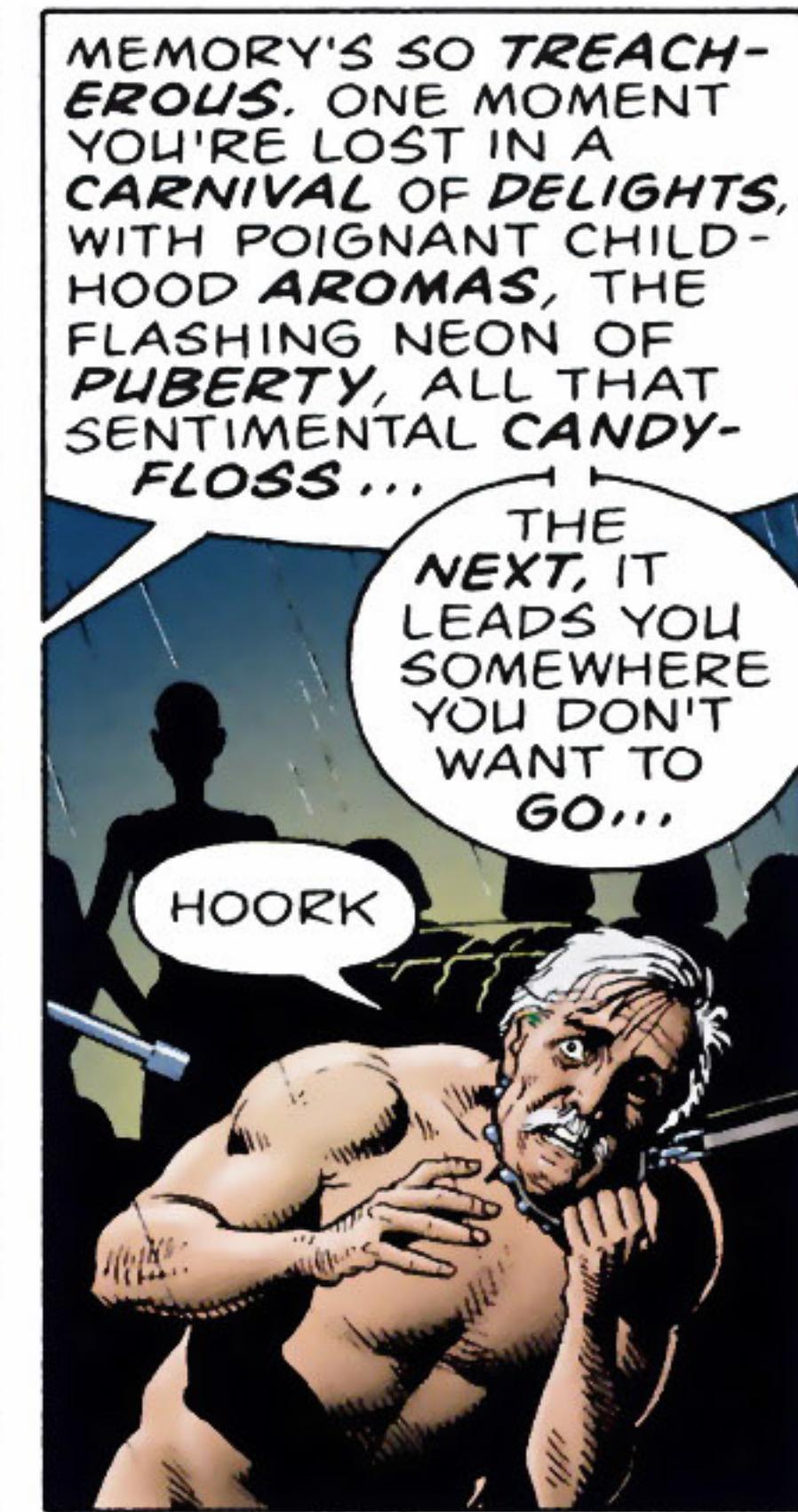
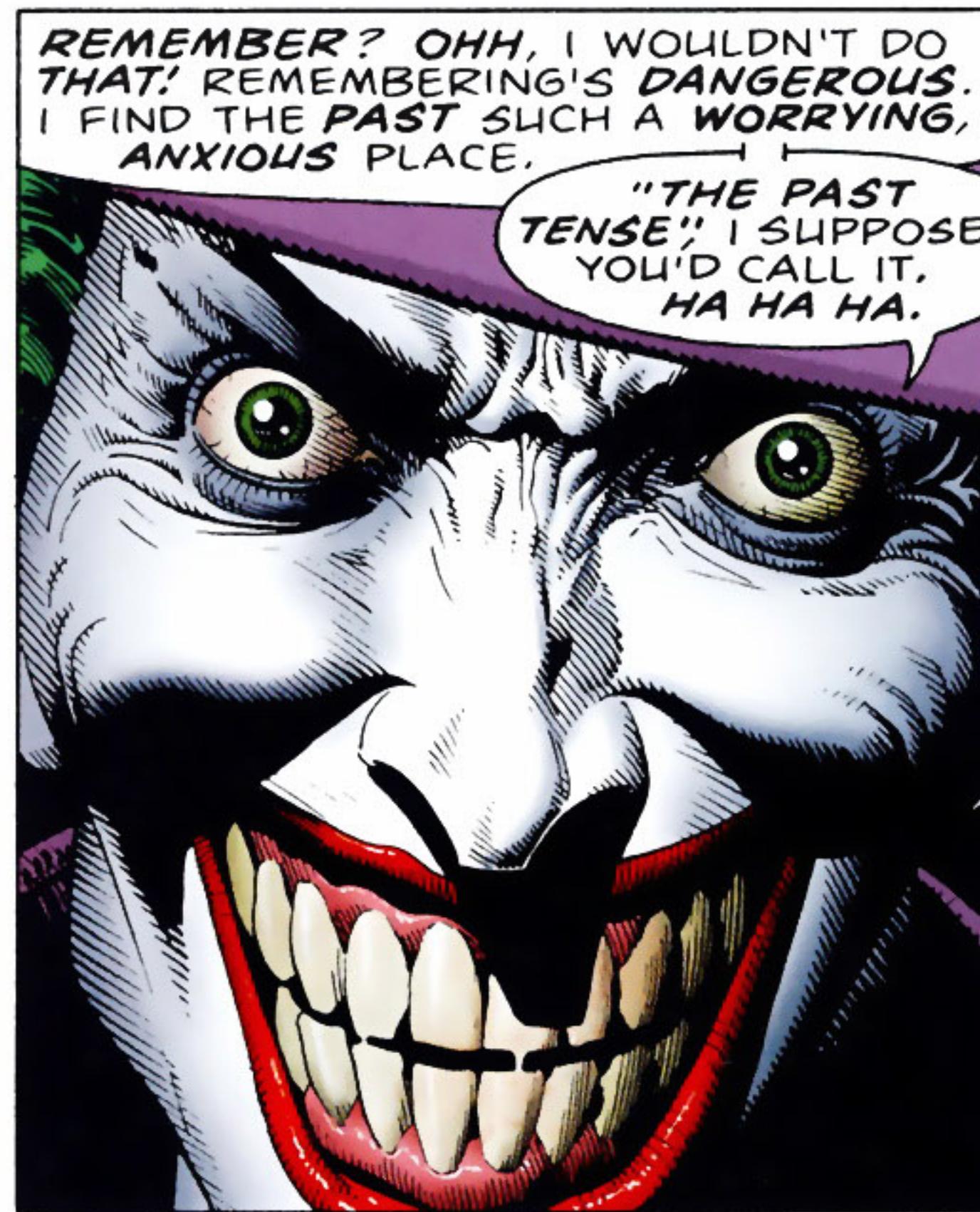
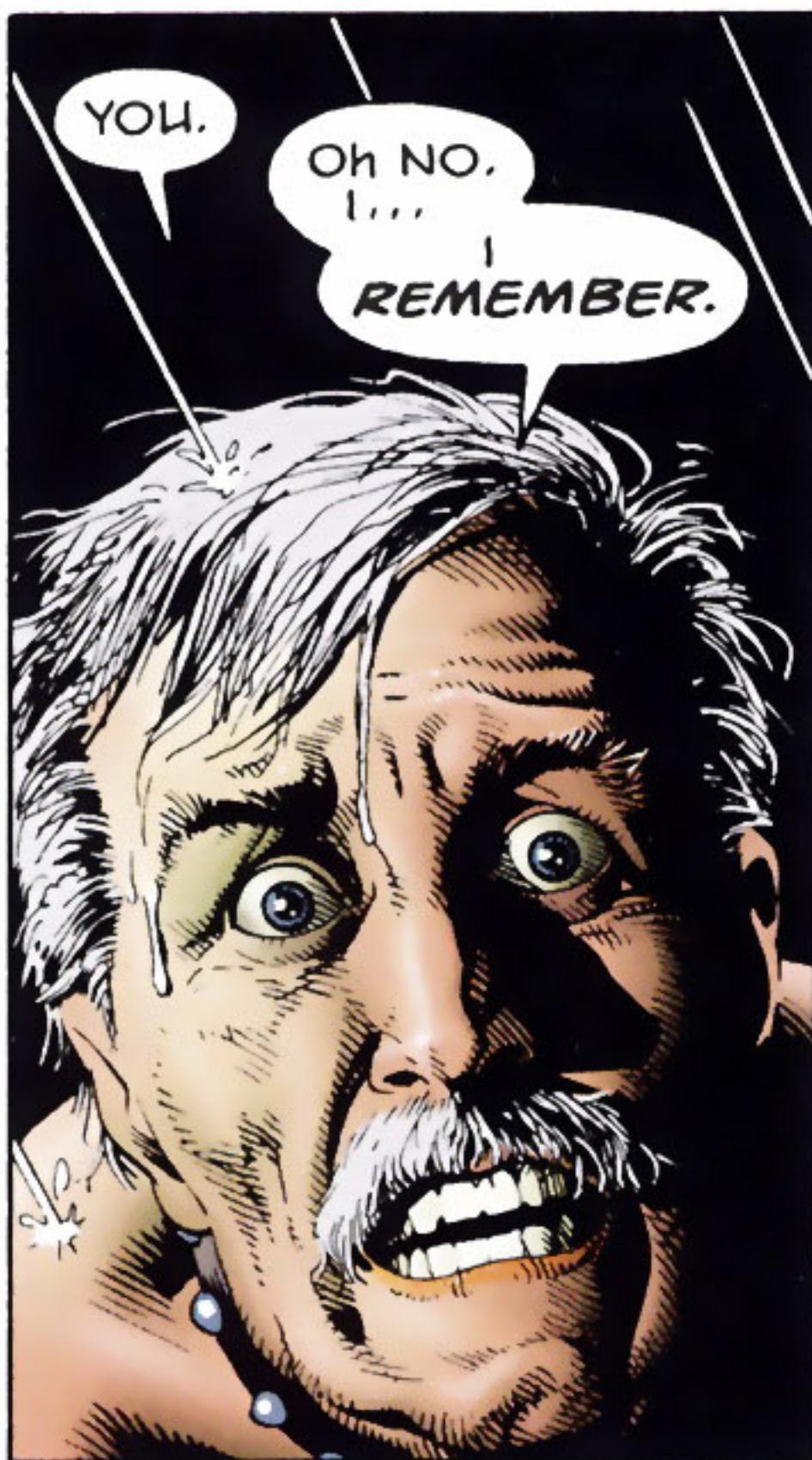
CLIC

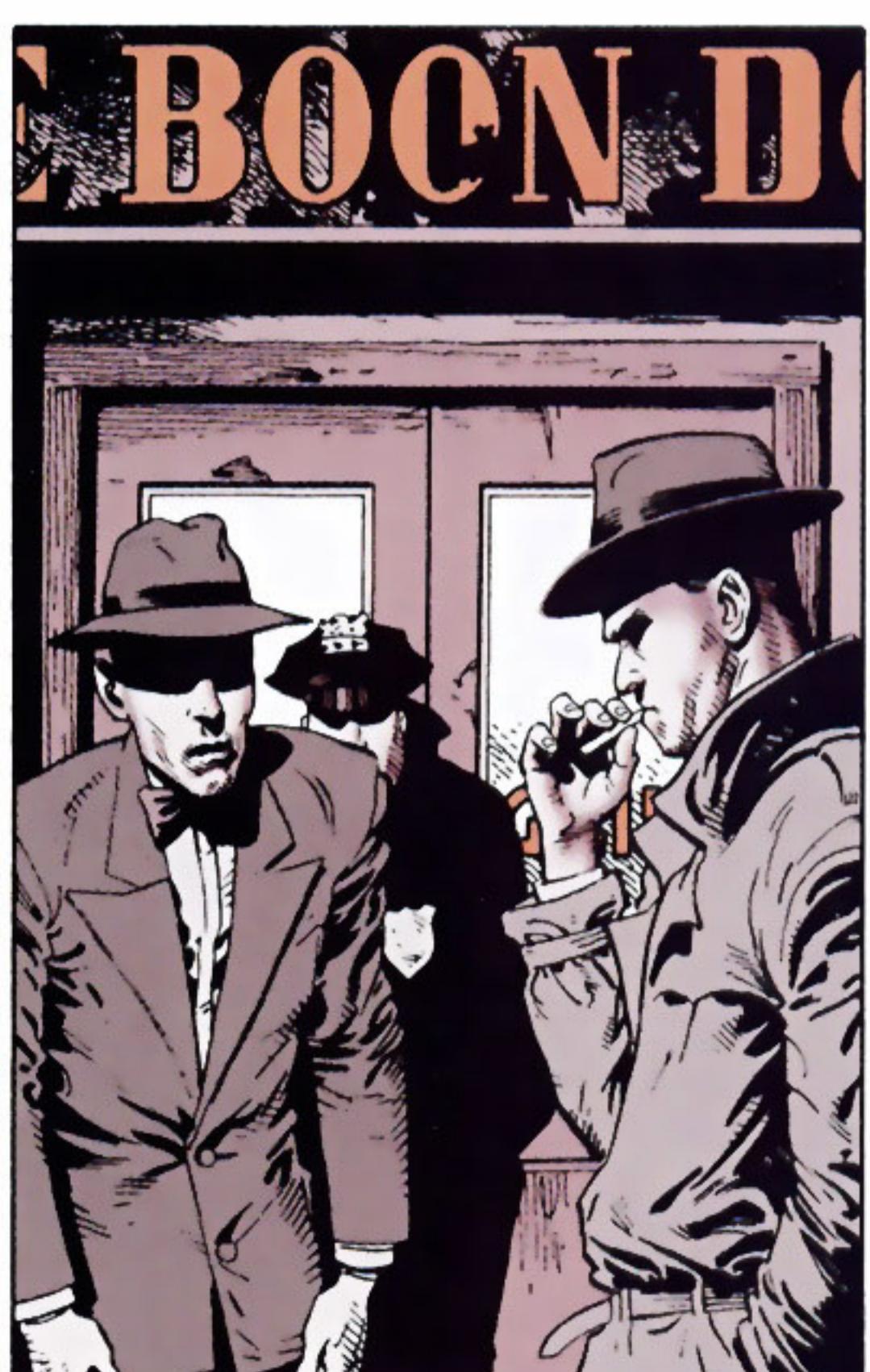
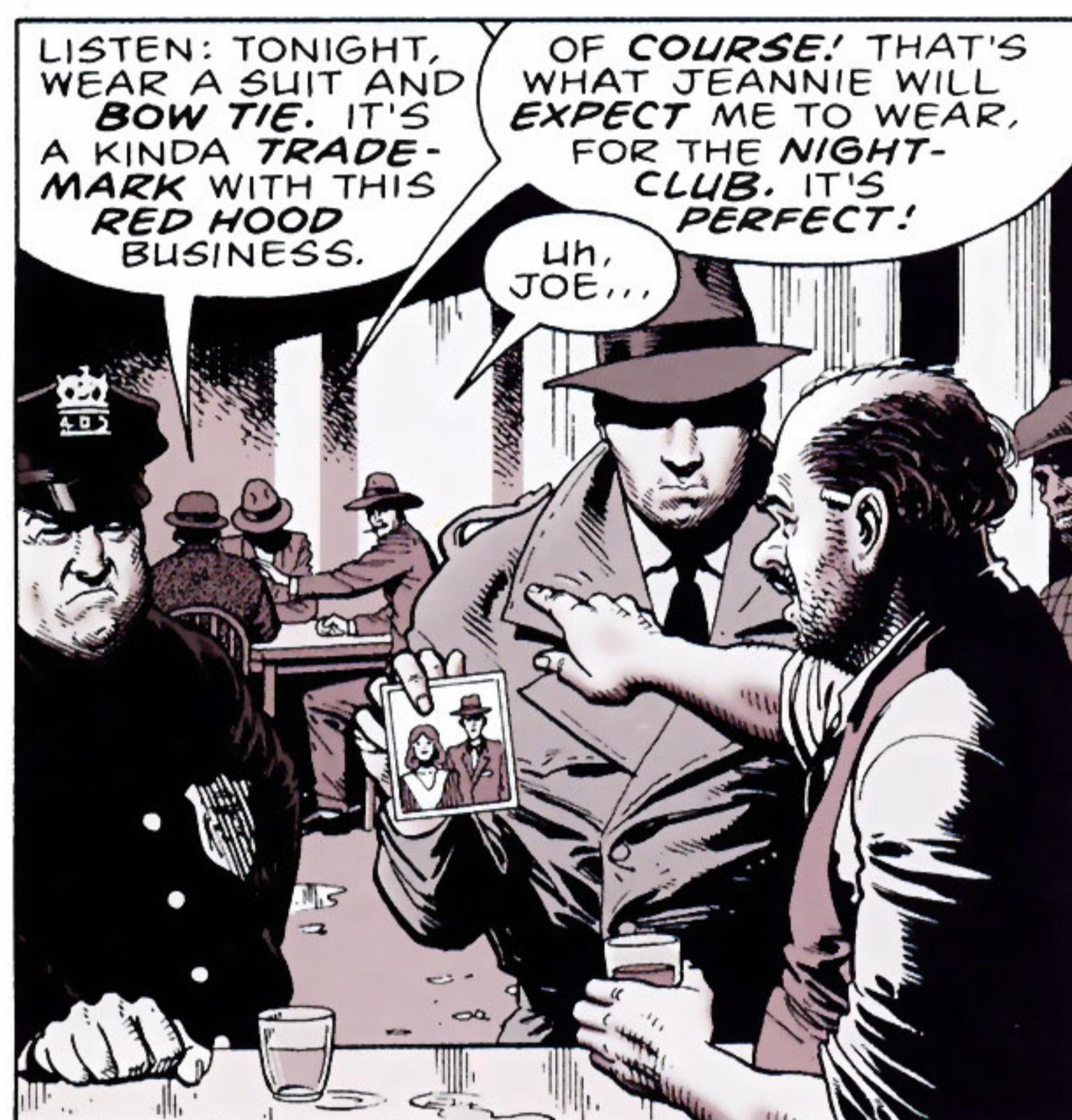
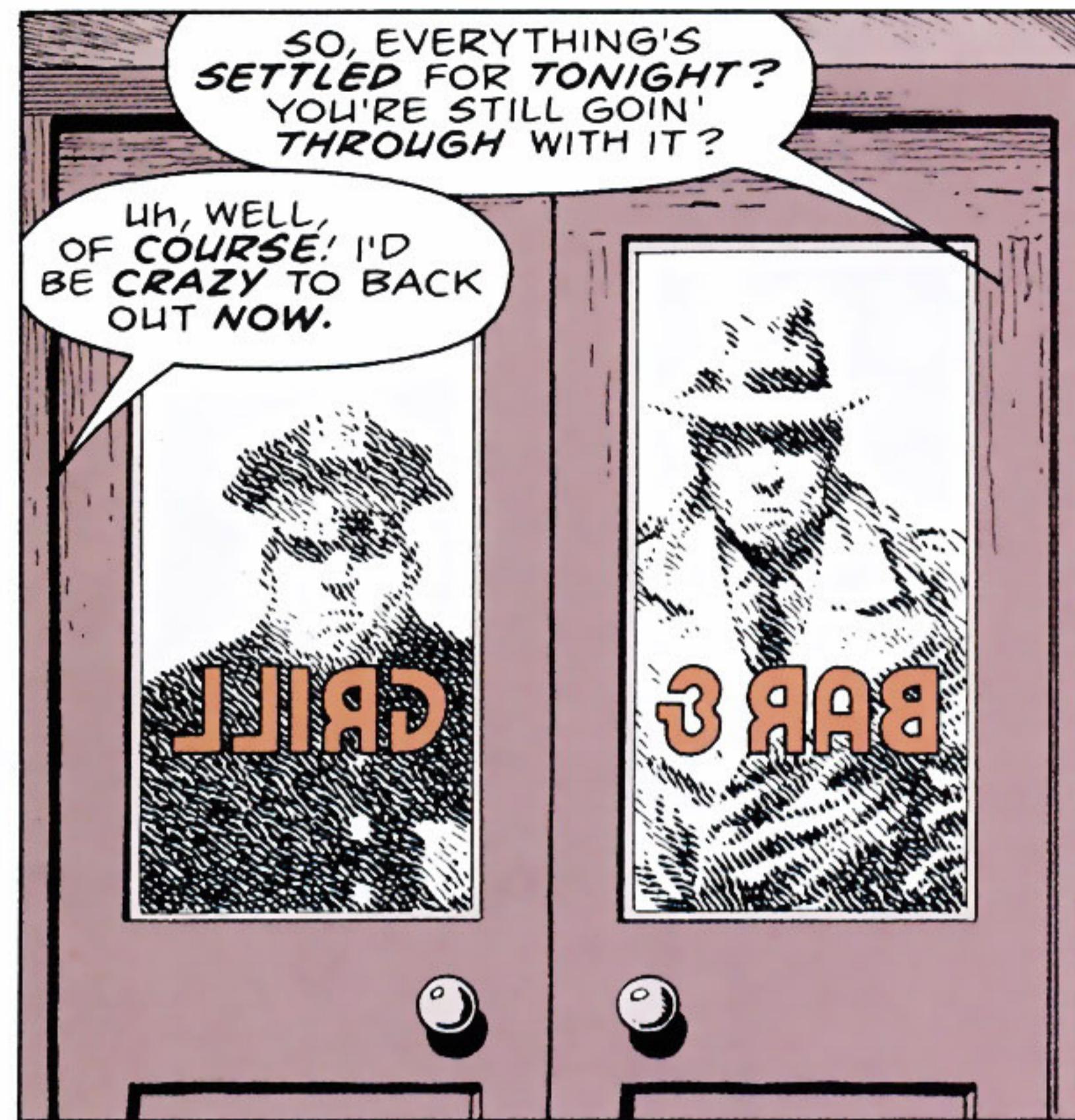


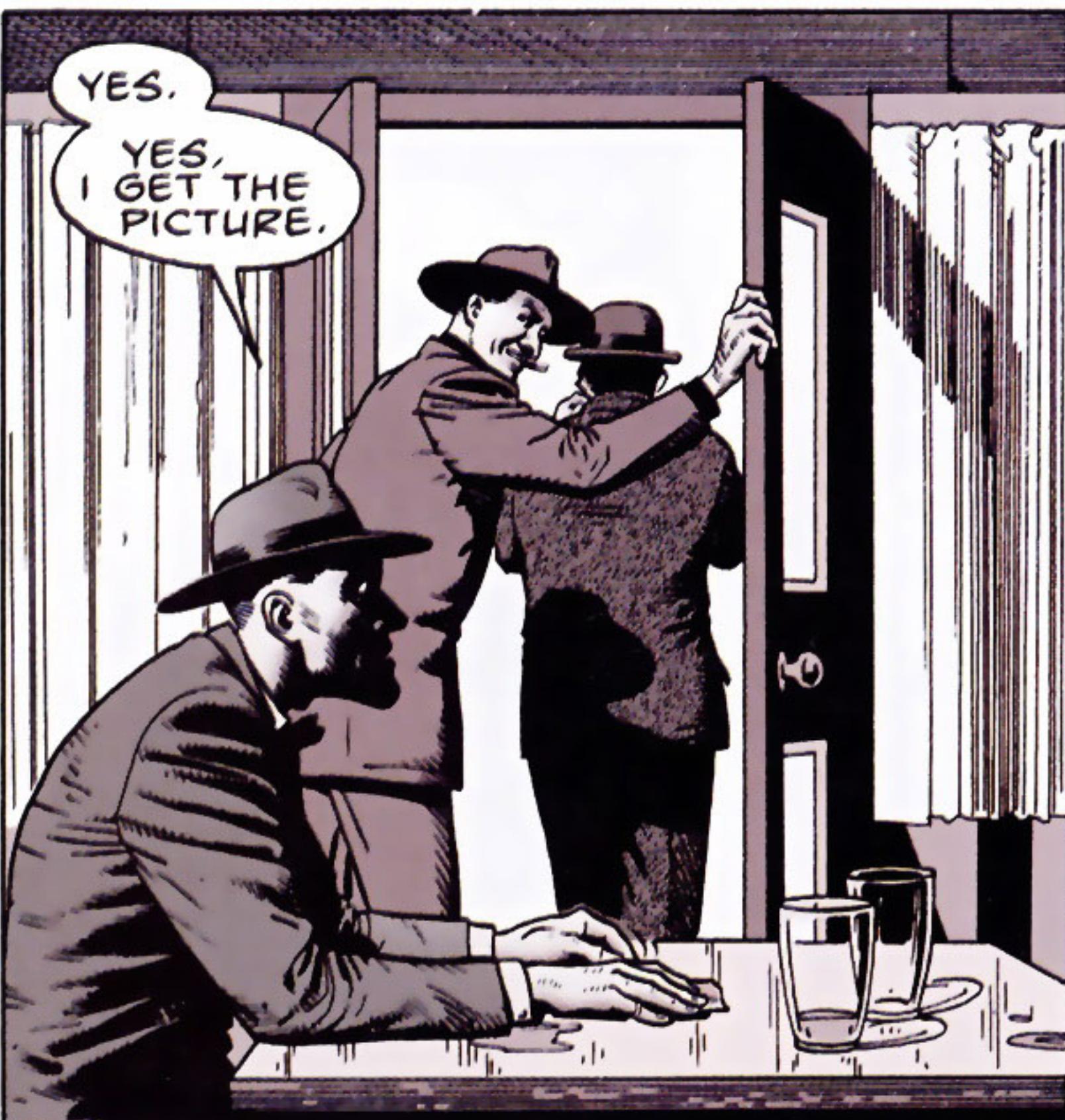
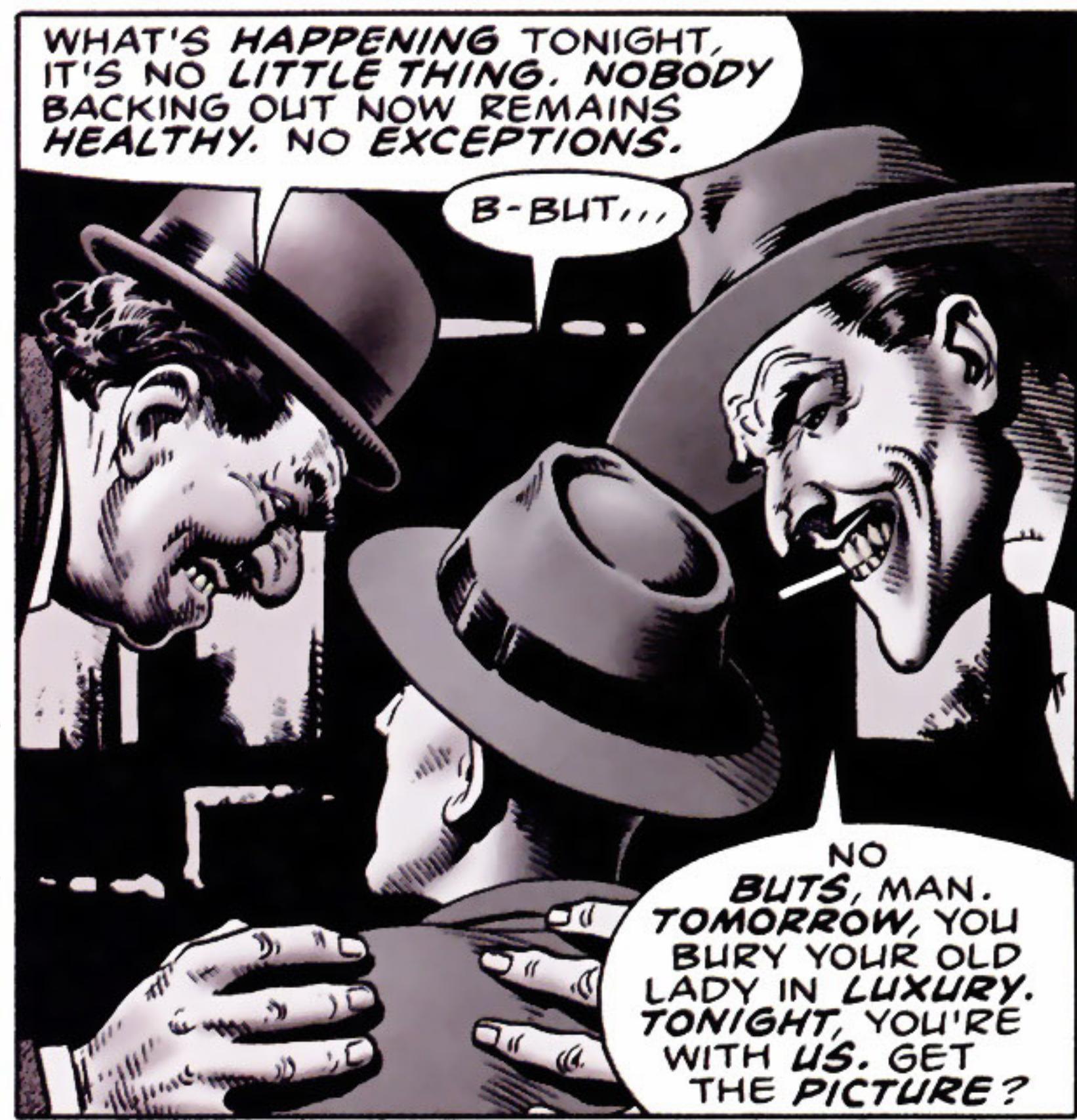
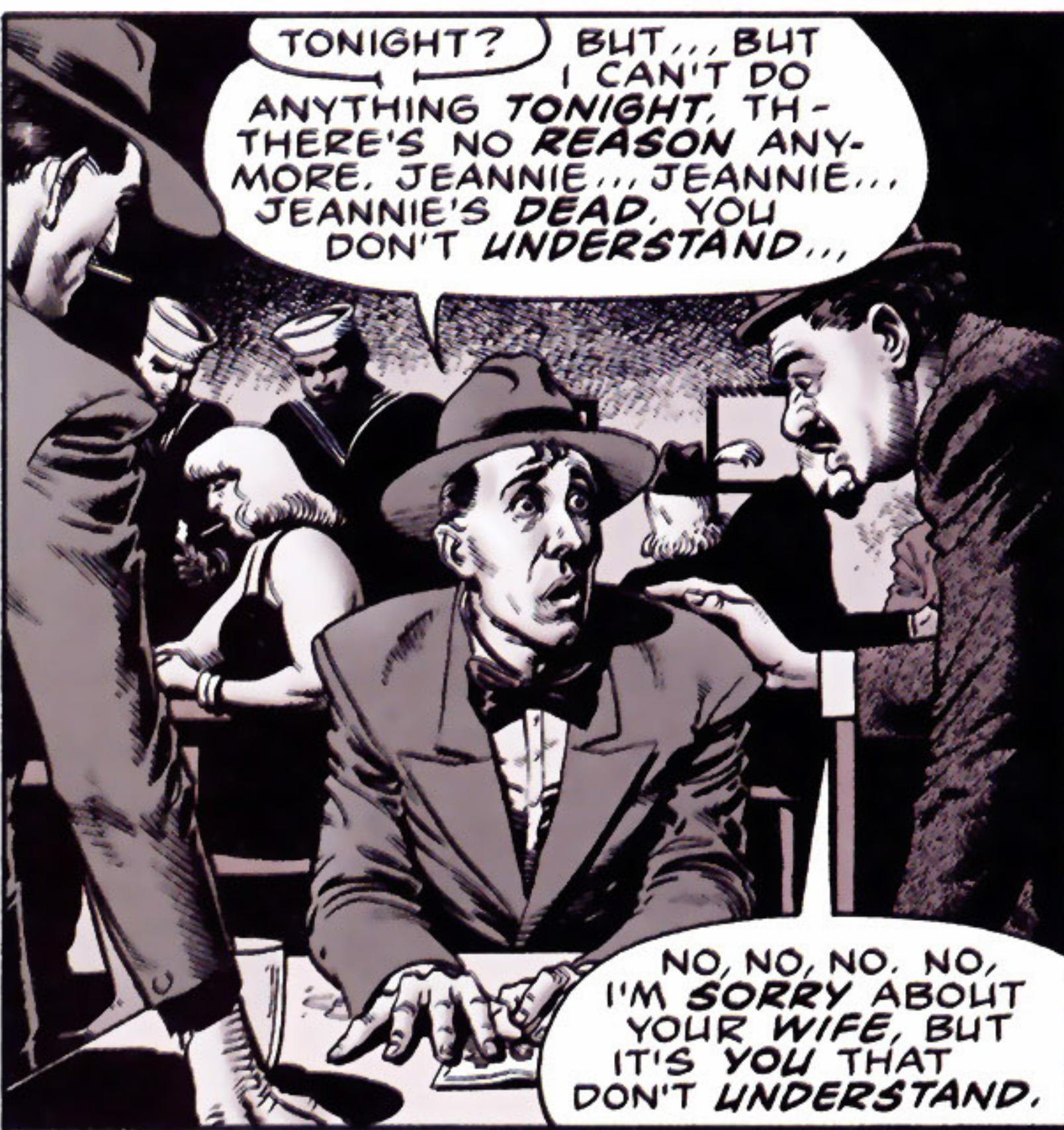
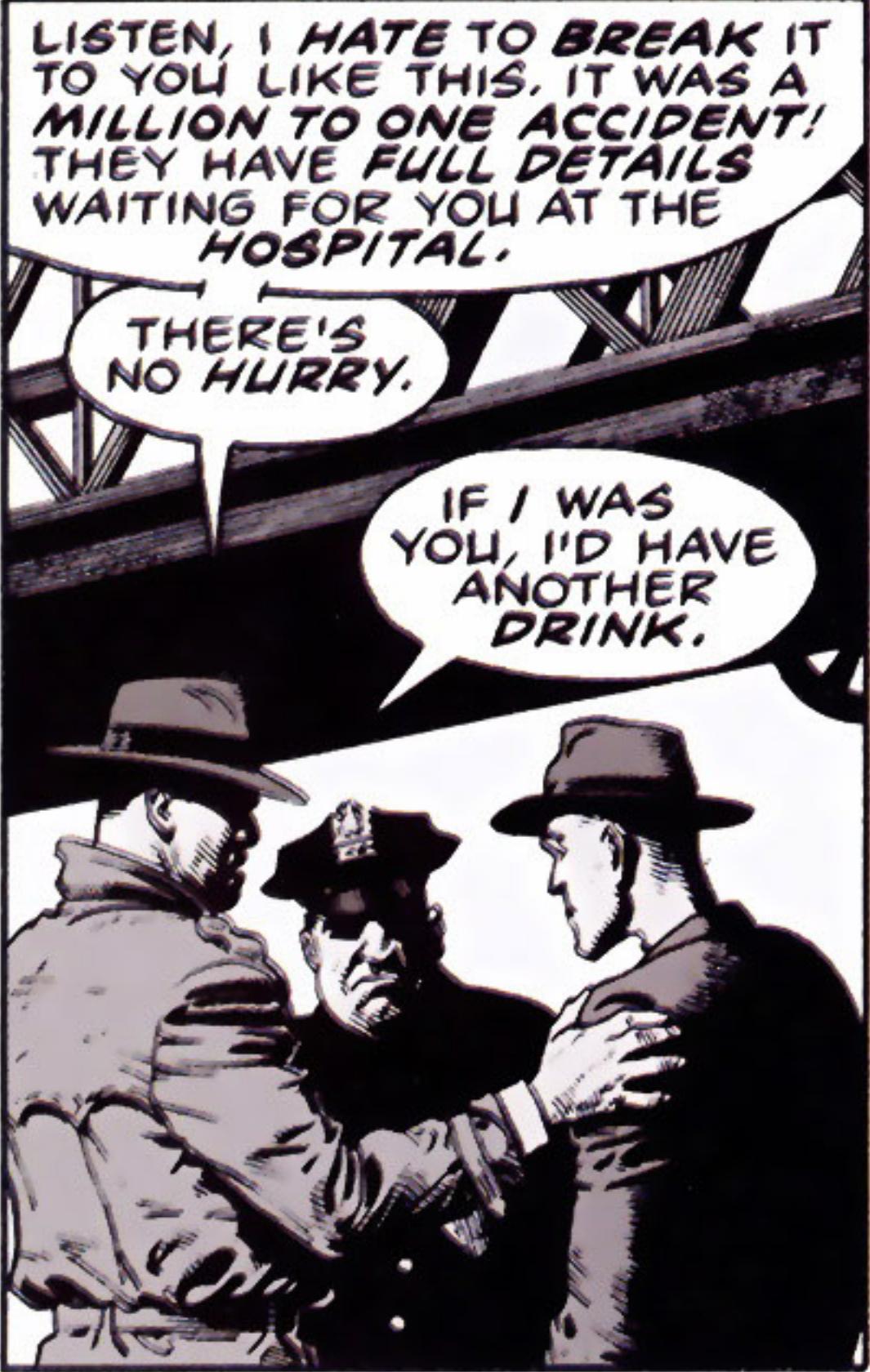












A-A-AH! HEADS UP, COMMISSIONER!
NO FAIR HIDING
YOUR EYES ON THE
GHOST TRAIN, YOU
OLD FRAIDY
CAT!

UP.
UP!

GAA!

B
D
U
M
P

OH, I KNOW...
YOU'RE CONFUSED,
YOU'RE FRIGHTENED.
WHO WOULDN'T BE?
YOU'RE IN A HELL
OF A SITUATION!

BLIT,
Y'KNOW, THOUGH
LIFE'S A BOWL OF
CHERRIES AND THIS
IS THE PITS, ALWAYS
REMEMBER THIS...

MUSIC,
SAM...

WHEN THE WORLD IS FULL OF
CARE AND EVERY HEADLINE
SCREAMS DESPAIR, WHEN
ALL IS RAPE, STARVATION,
WAR AND LIFE IS
VILE...



THEN THERE'S A CERTAIN THING
I DO WHICH I SHALL PASS ALONG
TO YOU, THAT'S ALWAYS
GUARANTEED TO MAKE ME
SMILE...

I GO
LOO-OO-OONY
AS A LIGHT-BULB
BATTERED BUG,
SIMPLY LOO-OO-
OONY, SOMETIMES
FOAM AND CHEW
THE RUG...

B
D
U
M
P

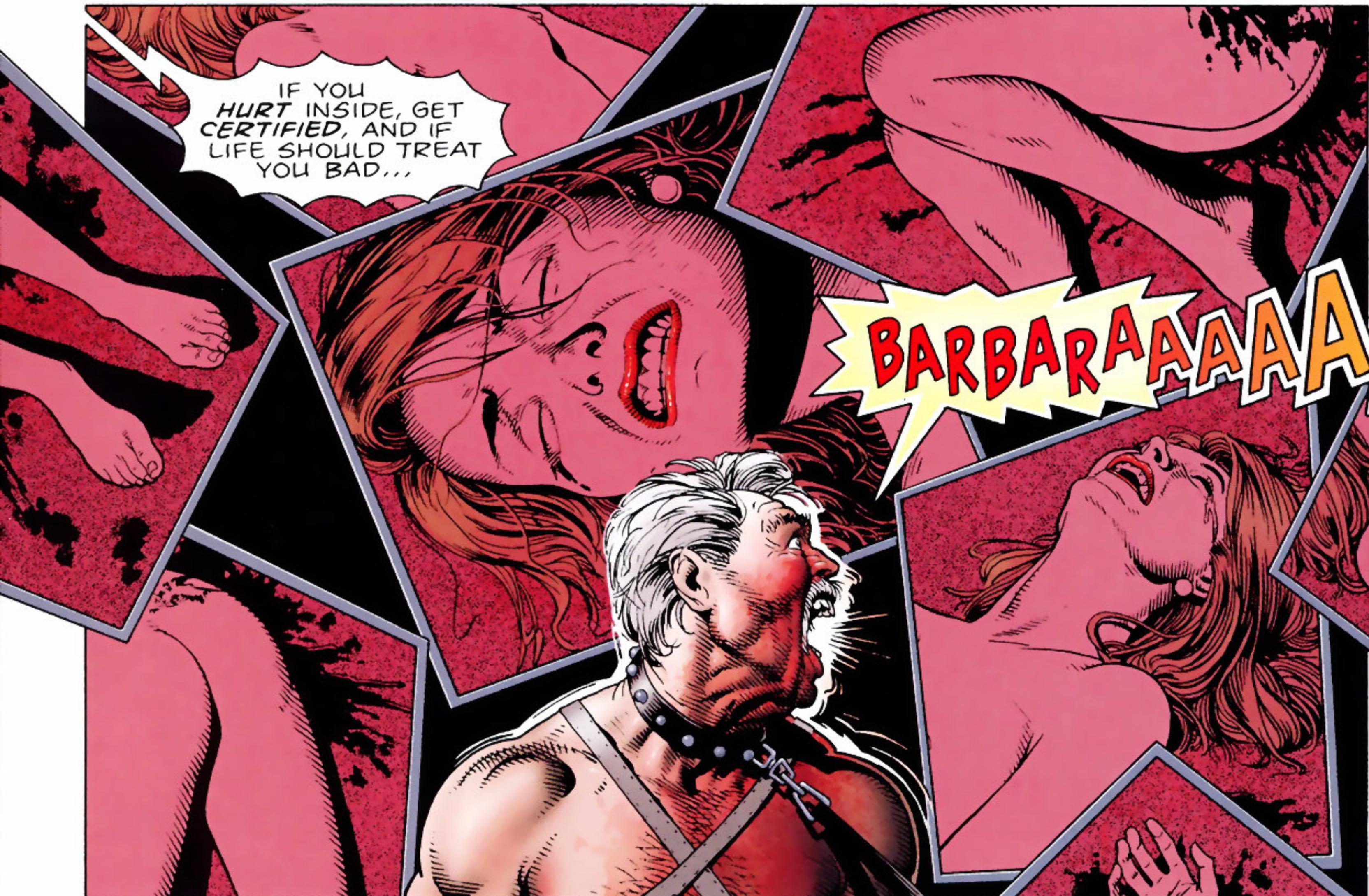
MISTER, LIFE IS
SWELL IN A PADDED
CELL, IT'LL CHASE
THOSE BLUES AWAY...

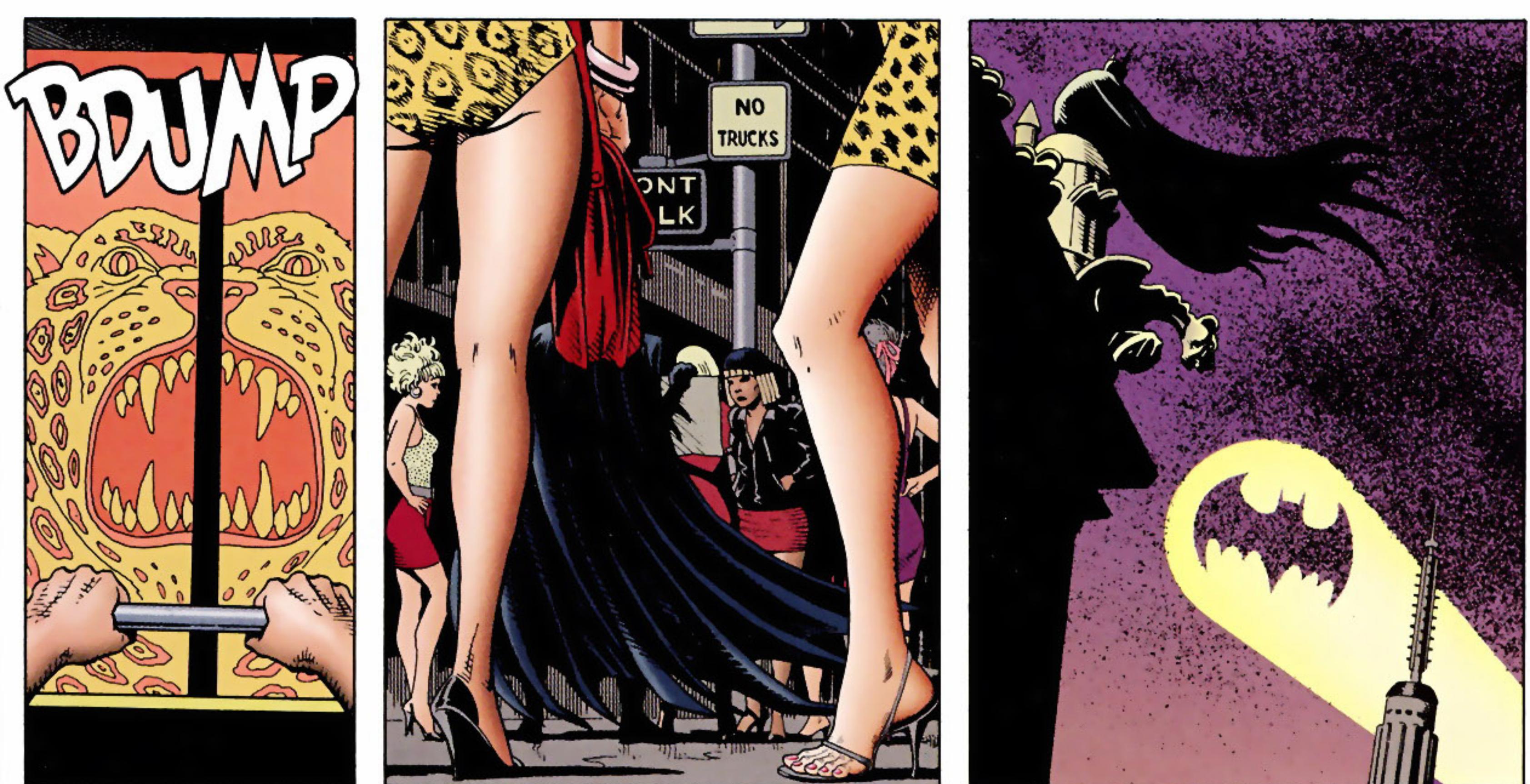
YOU
CAN TRADE
YOUR GLOOM FOR
A RUBBER ROOM,
AND INJECTIONS
TWICE A
DAY!

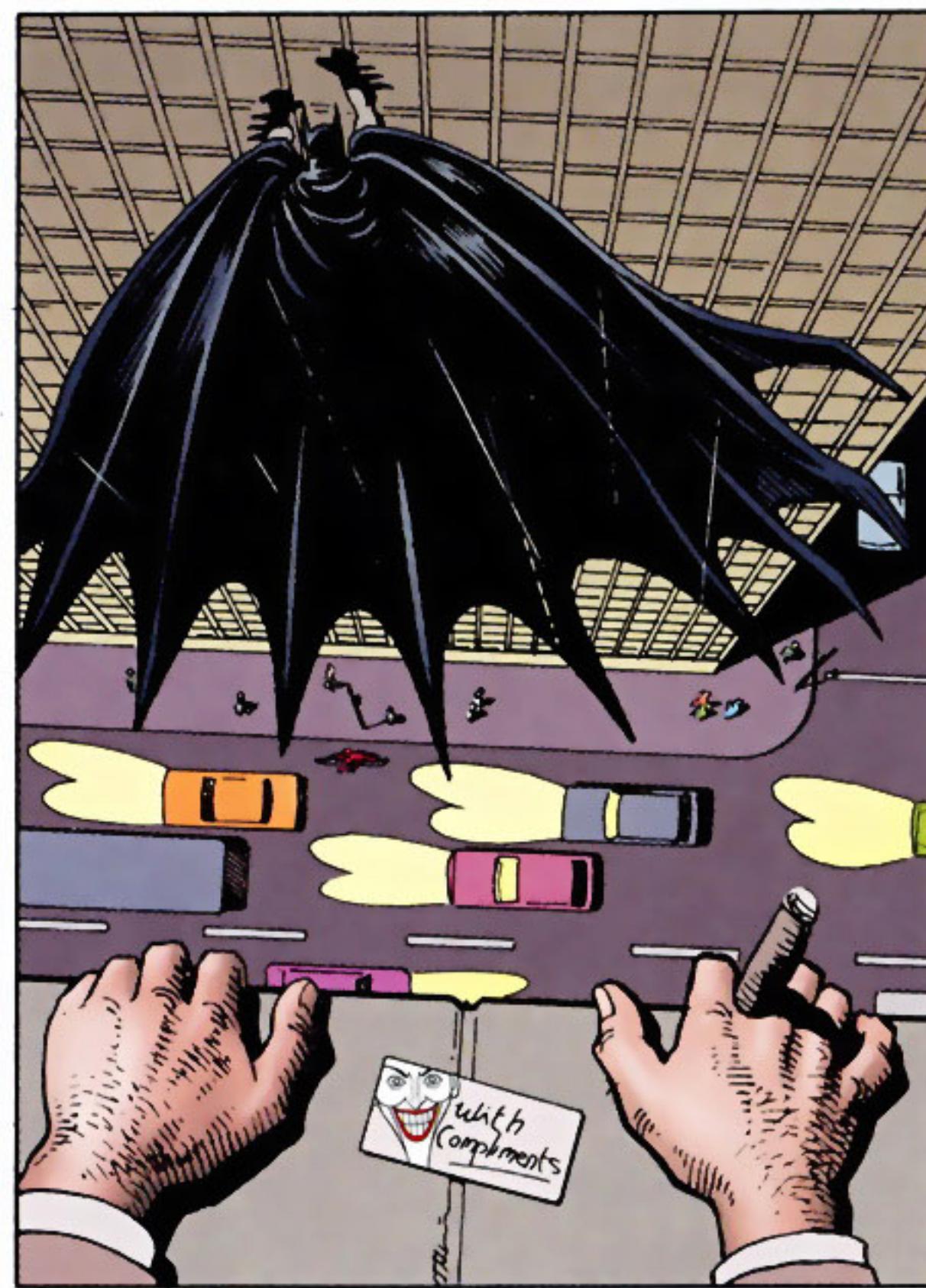
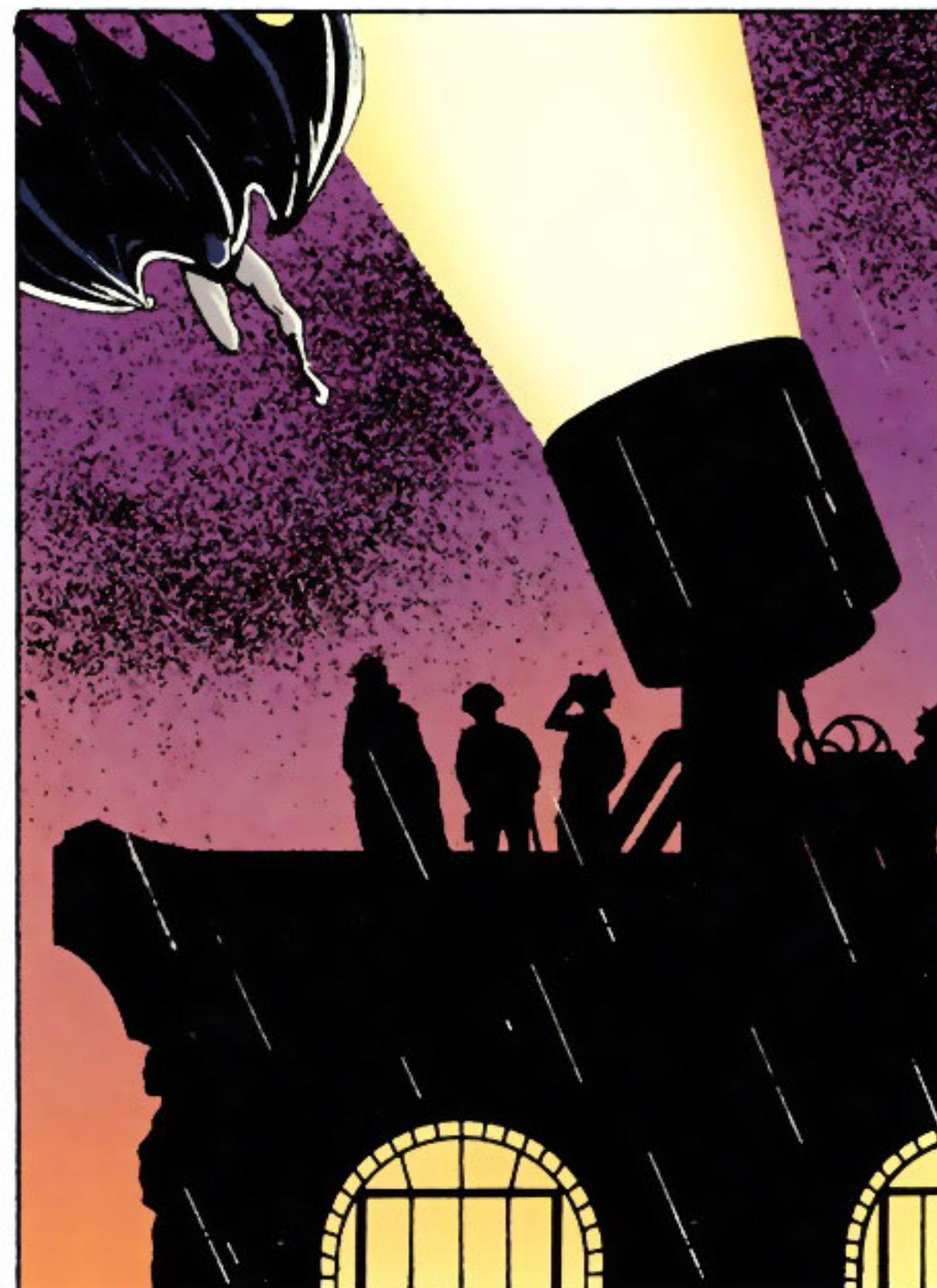


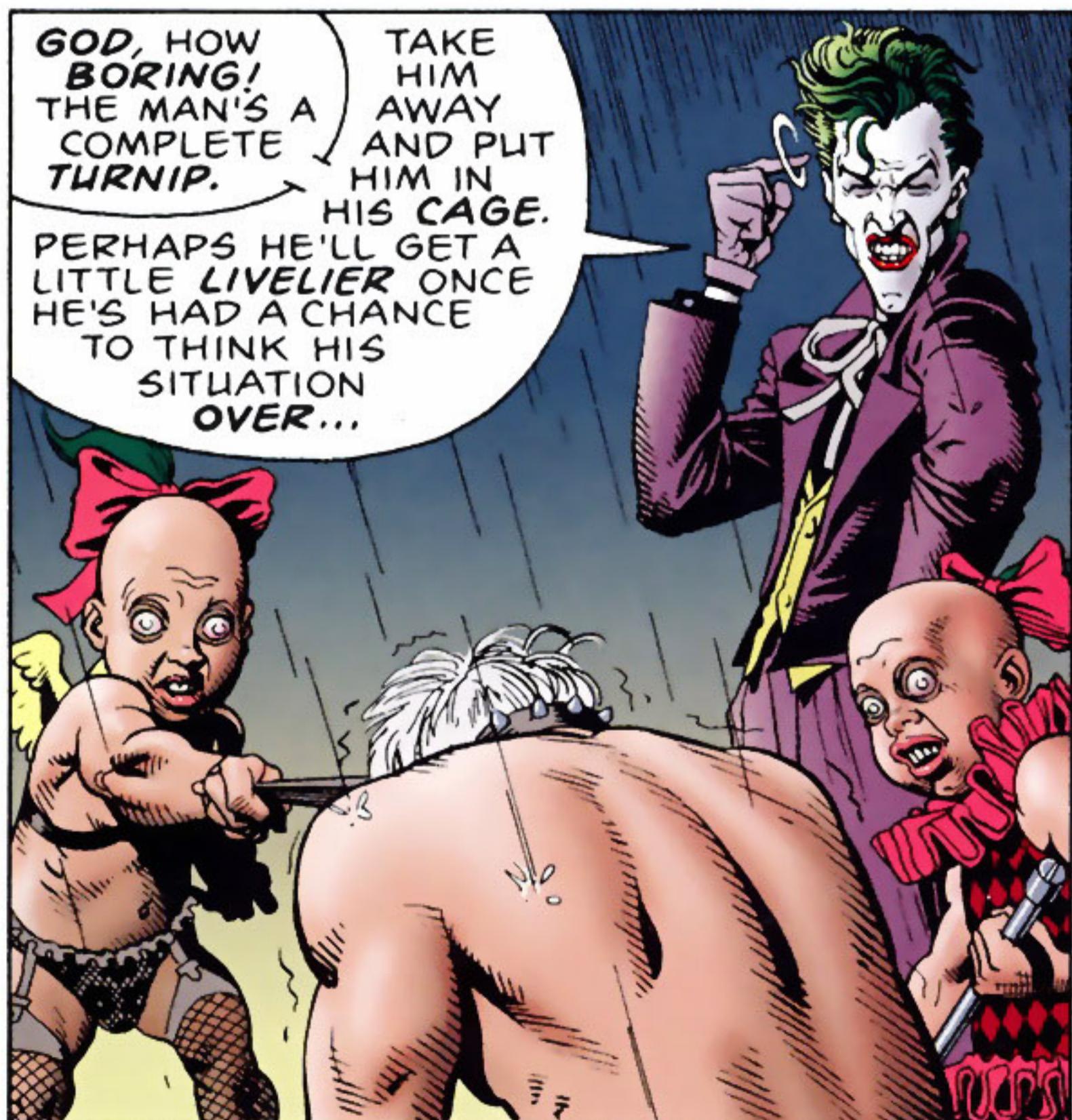
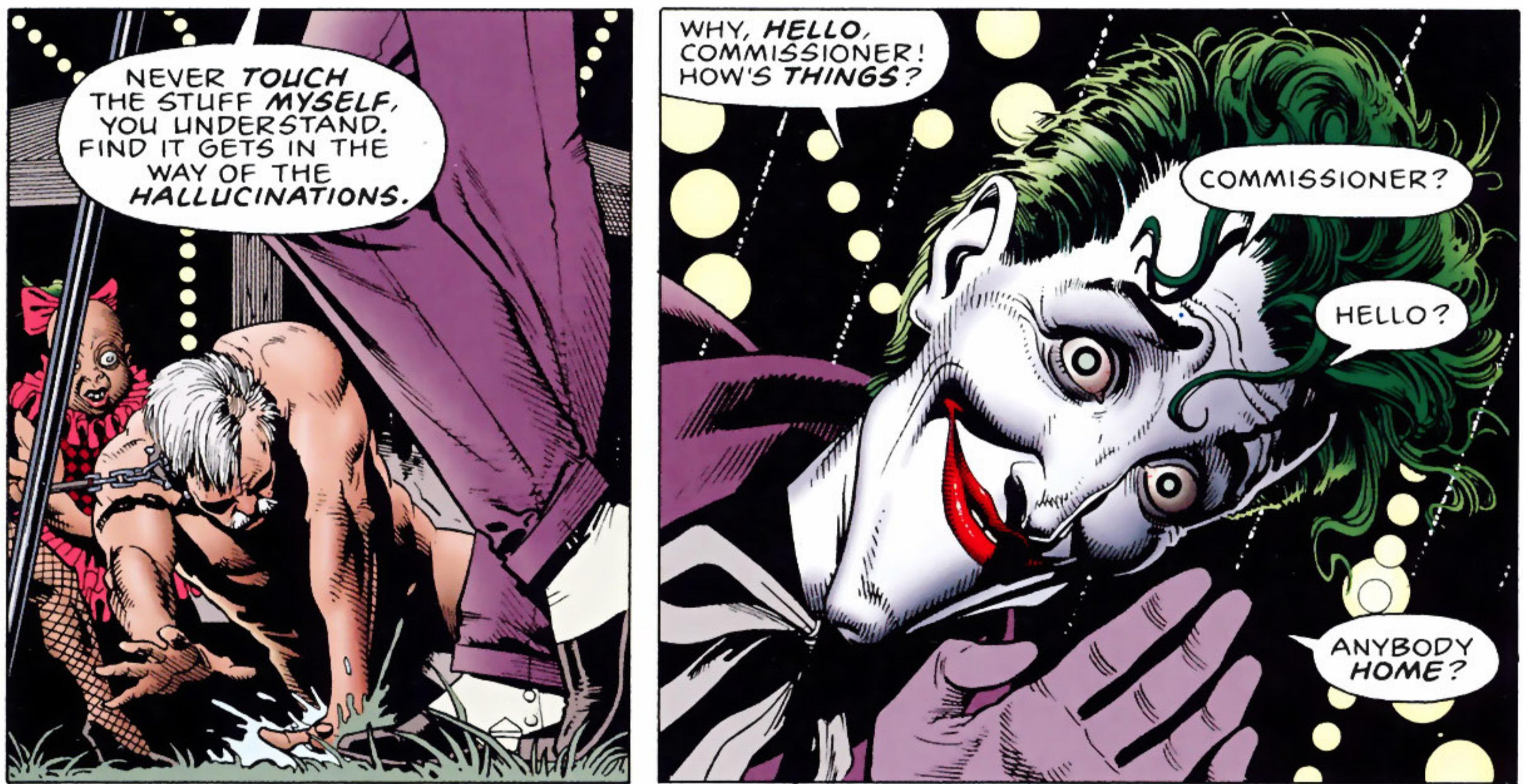
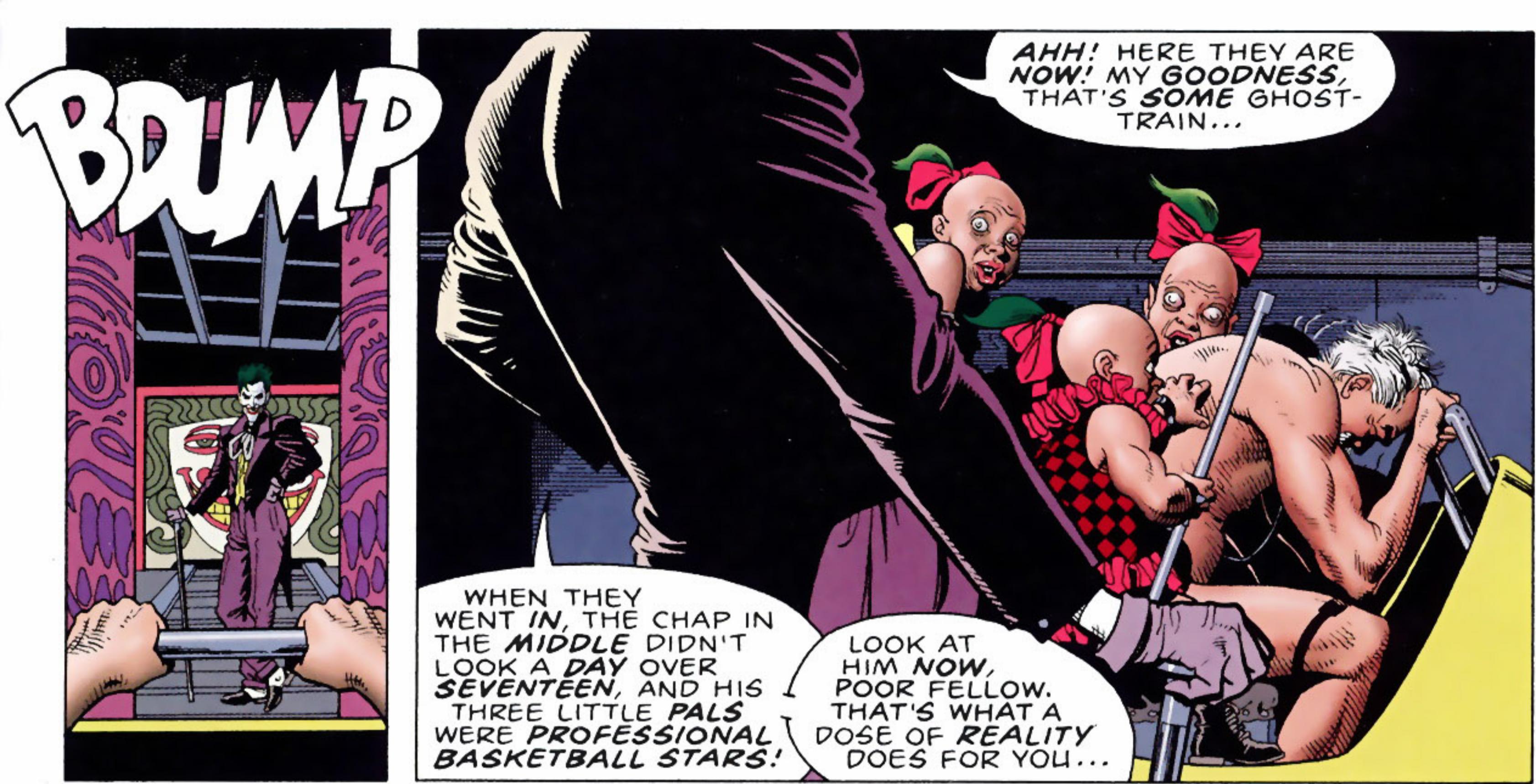
JUST GO LOO-OO-OONY, LIKE AN ACID
CASUALTY, OR A MOO-OO-NIE, OR A
PREACHER ON T.V. WHEN THE HUMAN
RACE WEARS AN ANXIOUS
FACE, WHEN
THE BOMB HANGS
OVERHEAD,
WHEN YOUR KID
URNS BLUE,
YOU, YOU
CAN
SMILE AND
NOD INSTEAD!

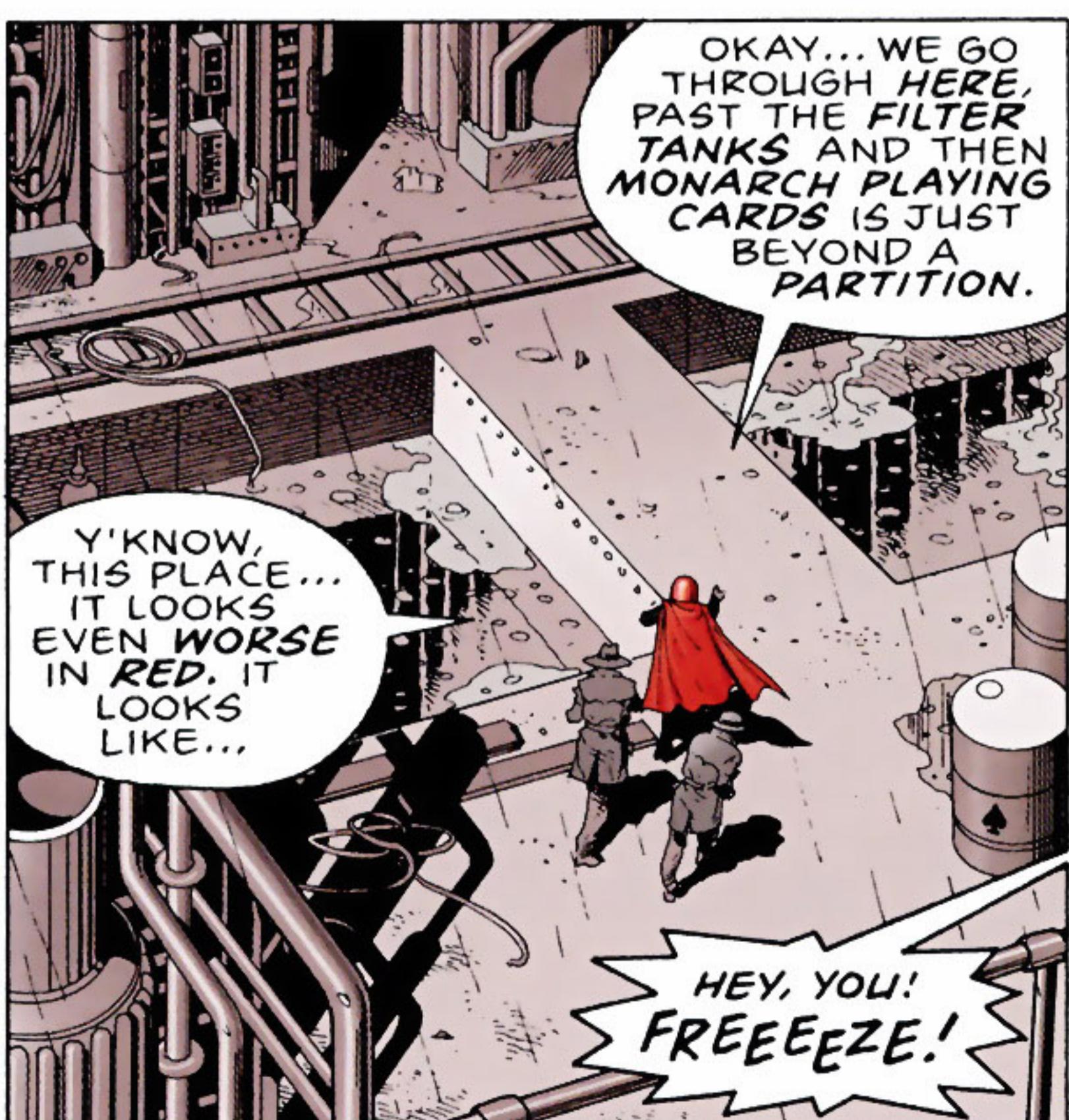
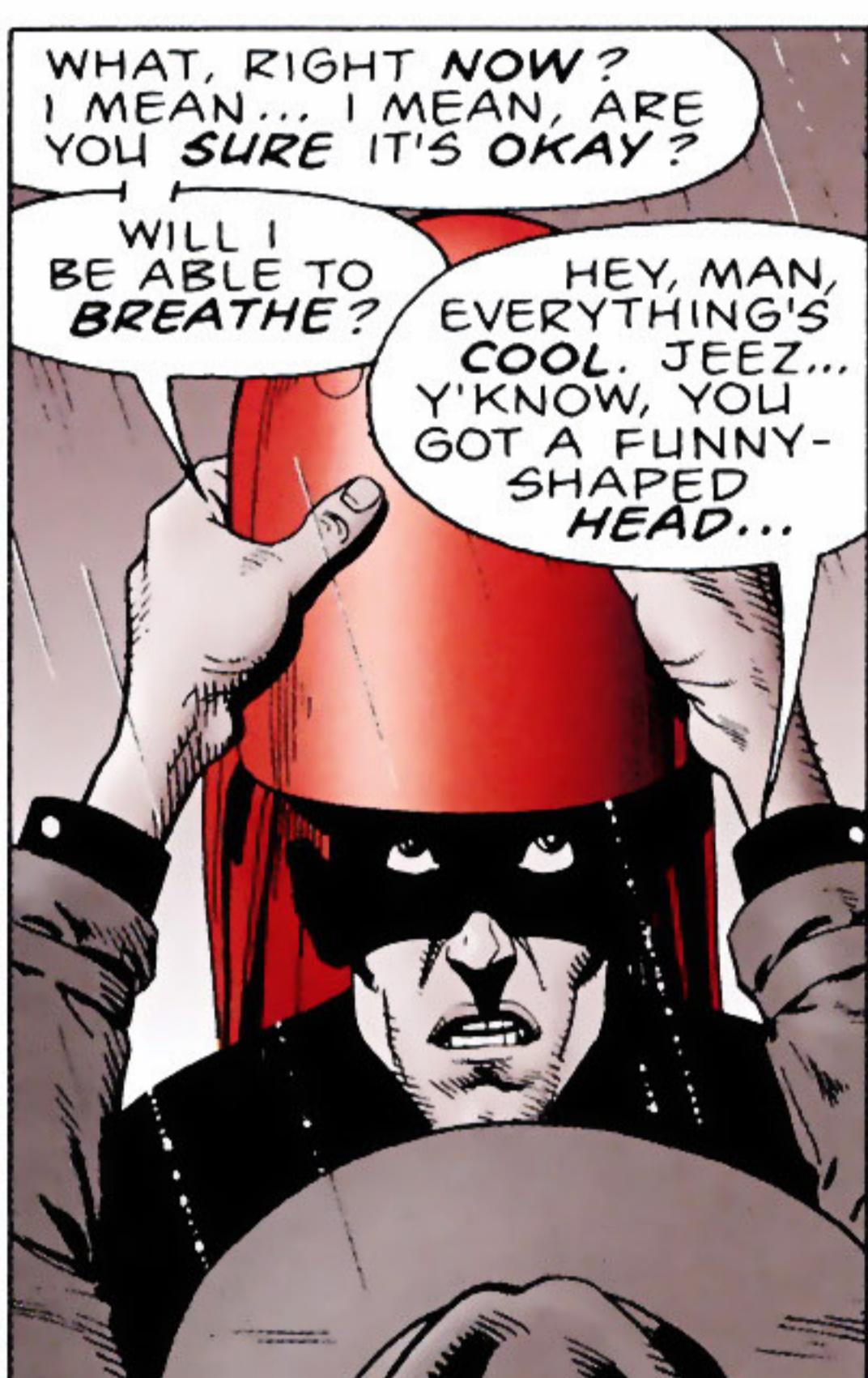


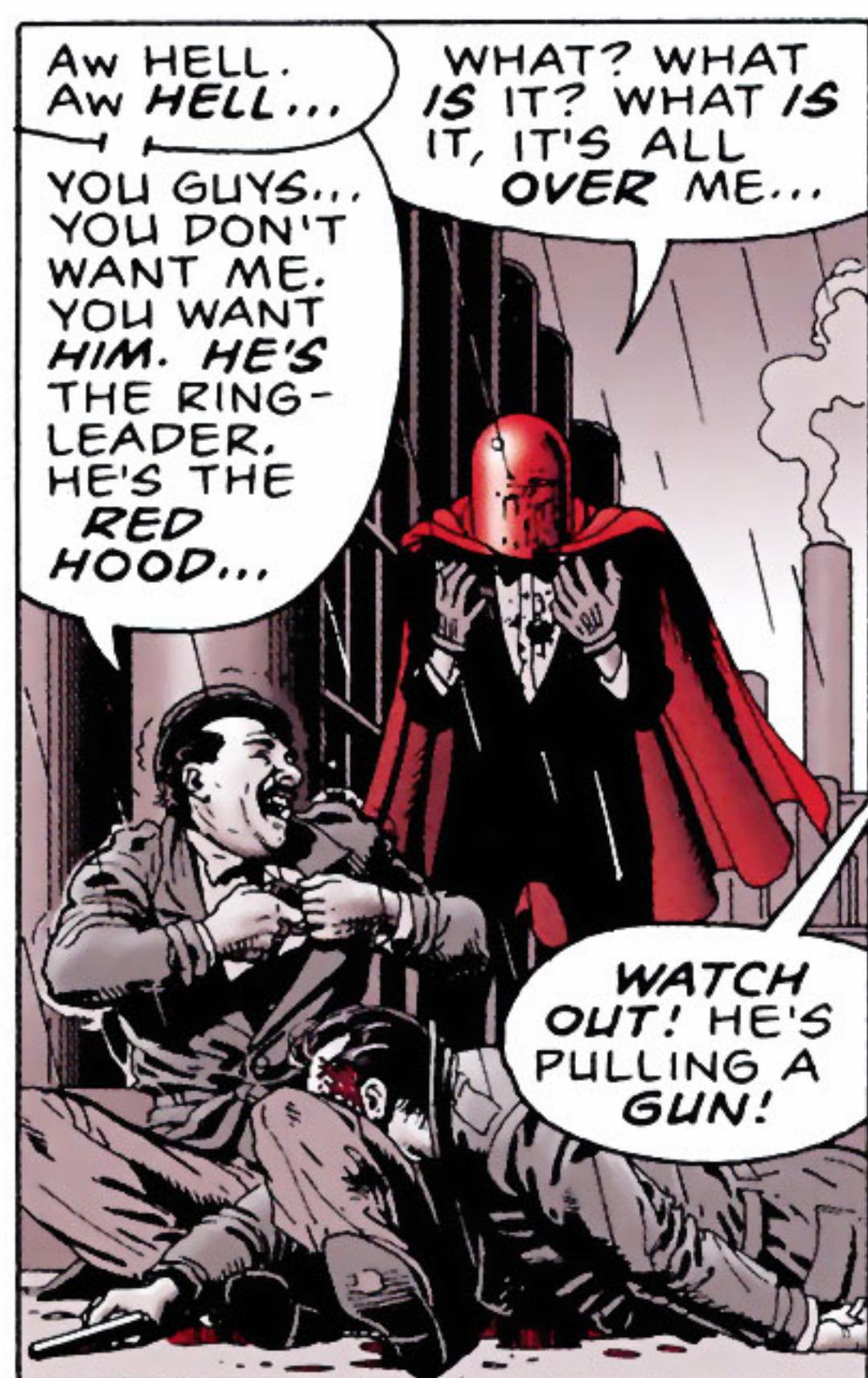
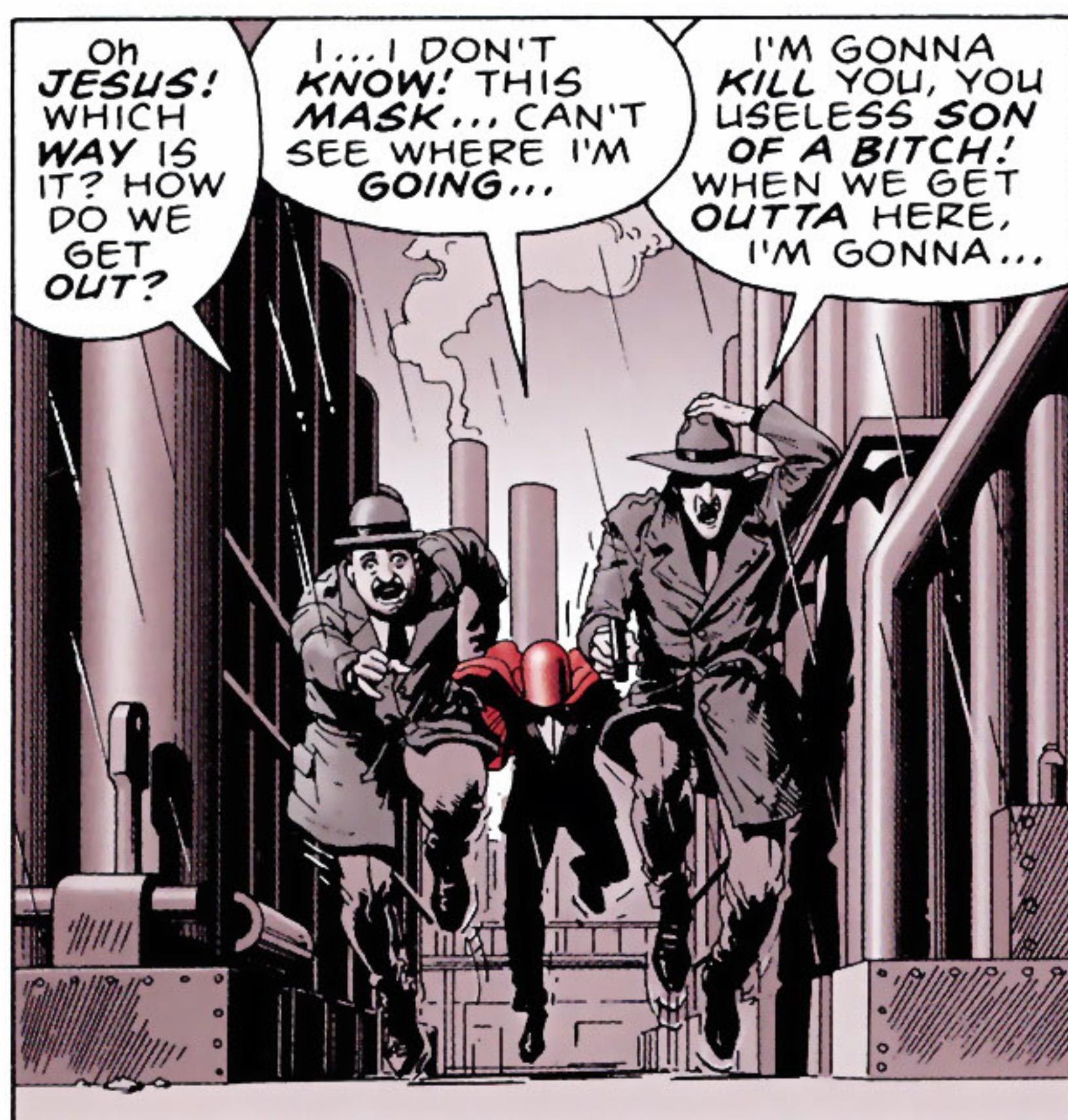
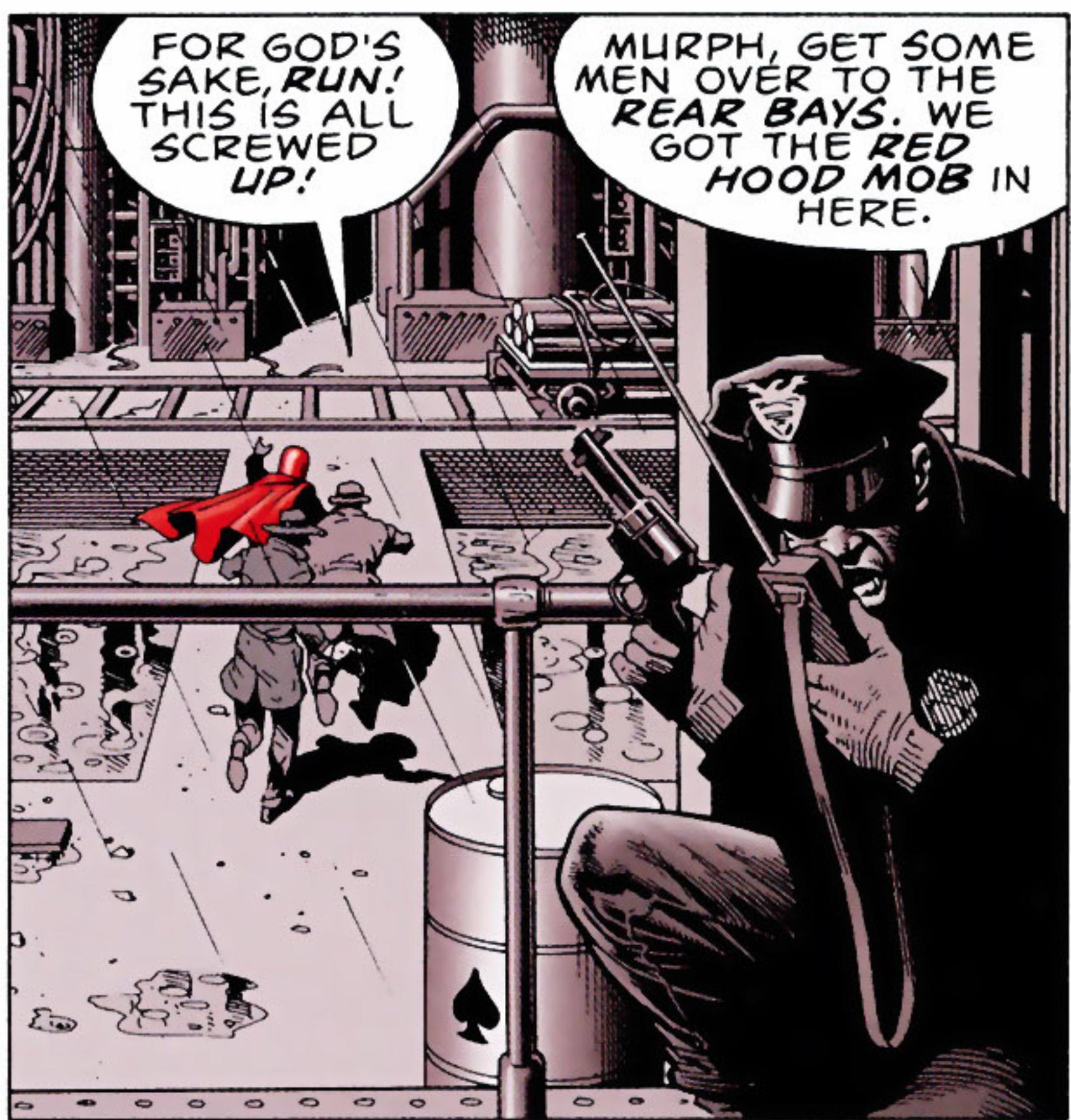
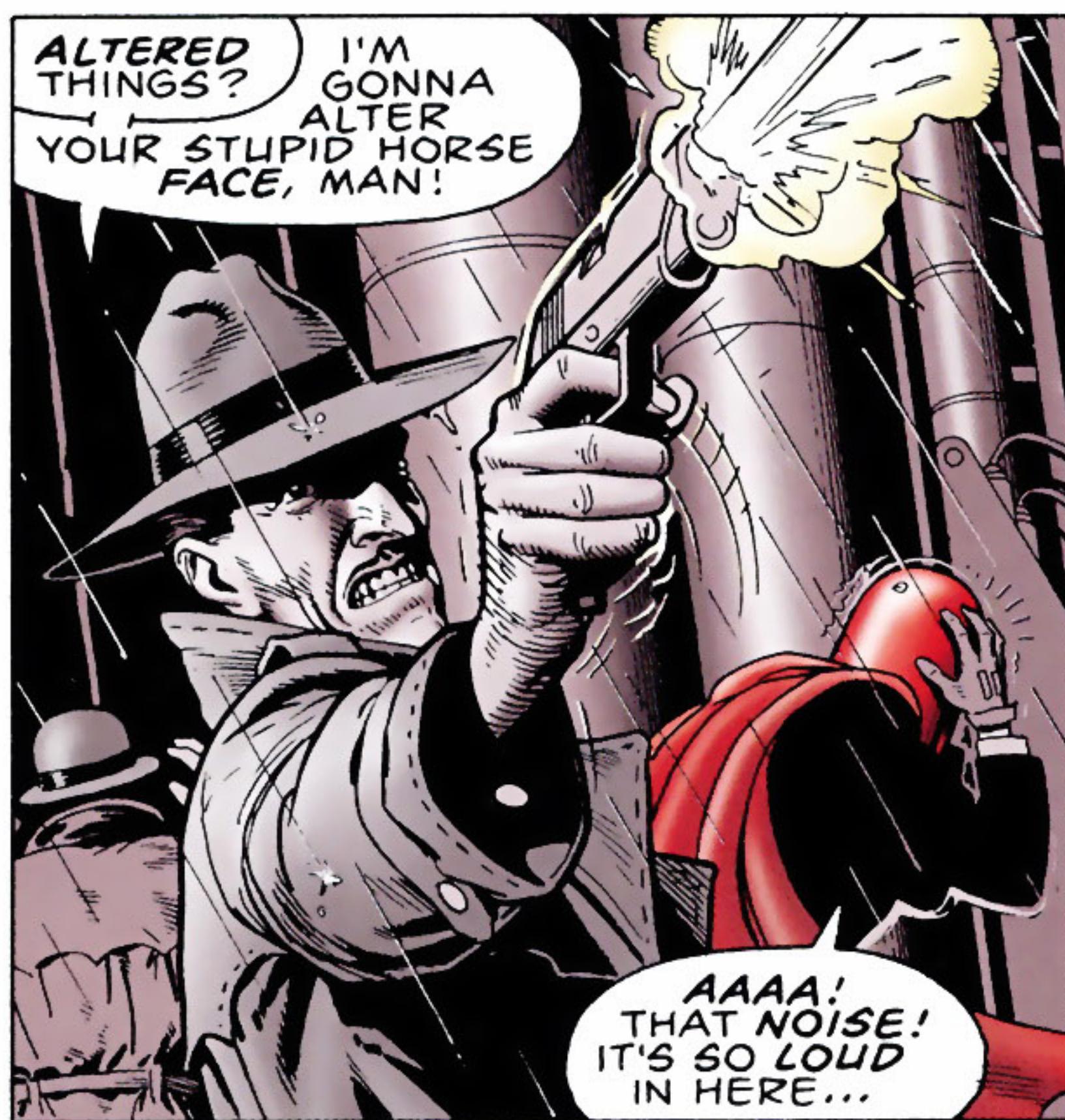


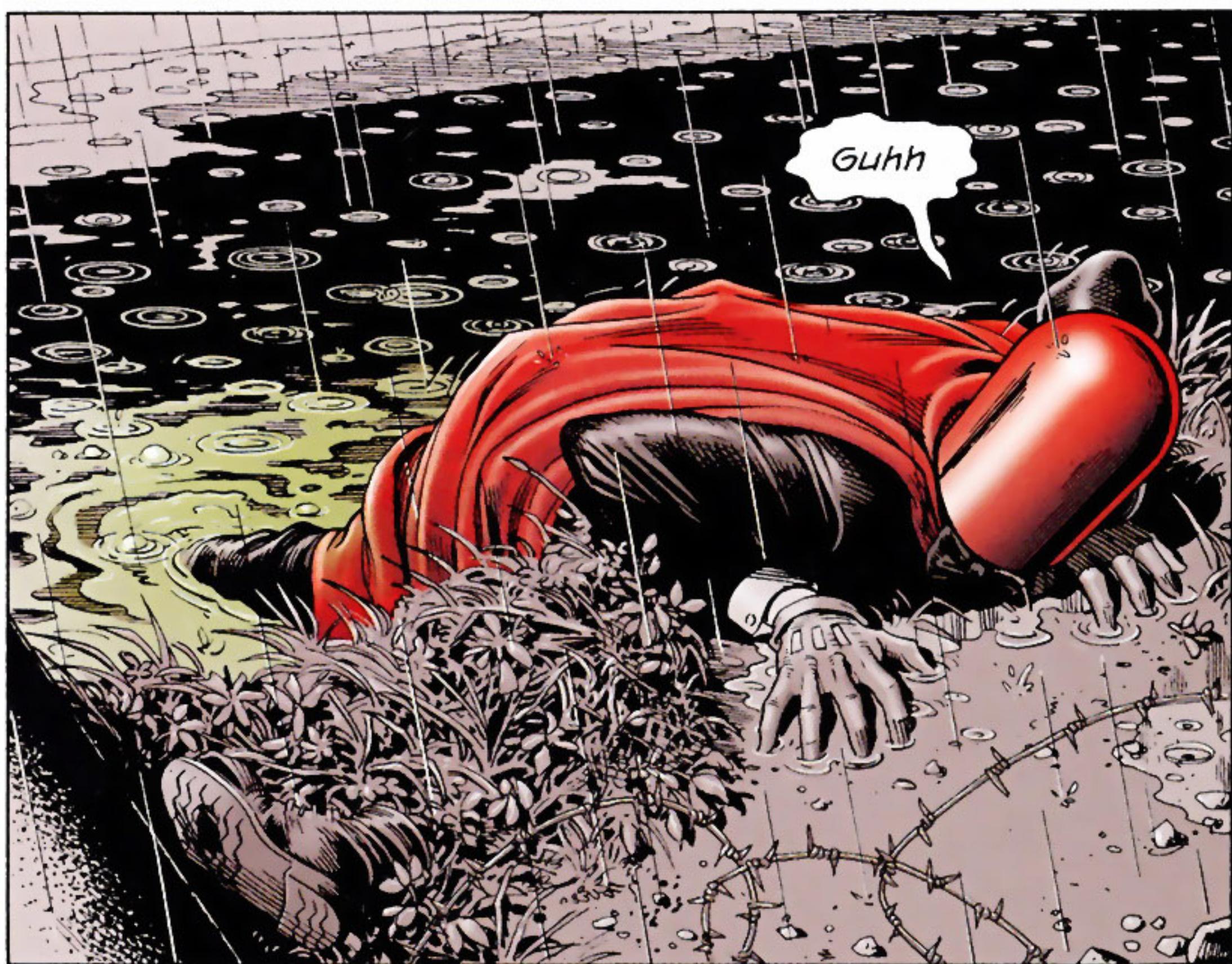
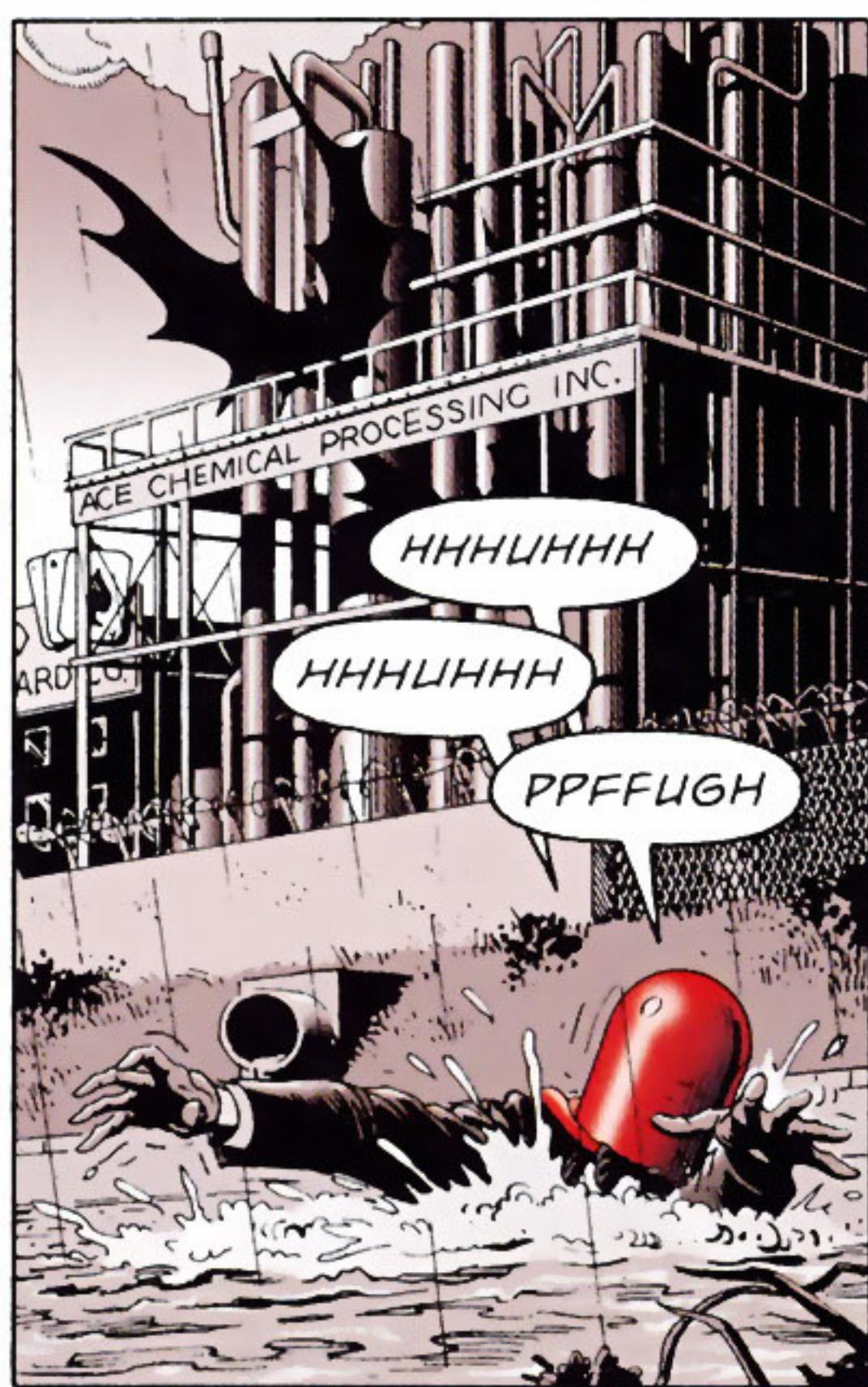


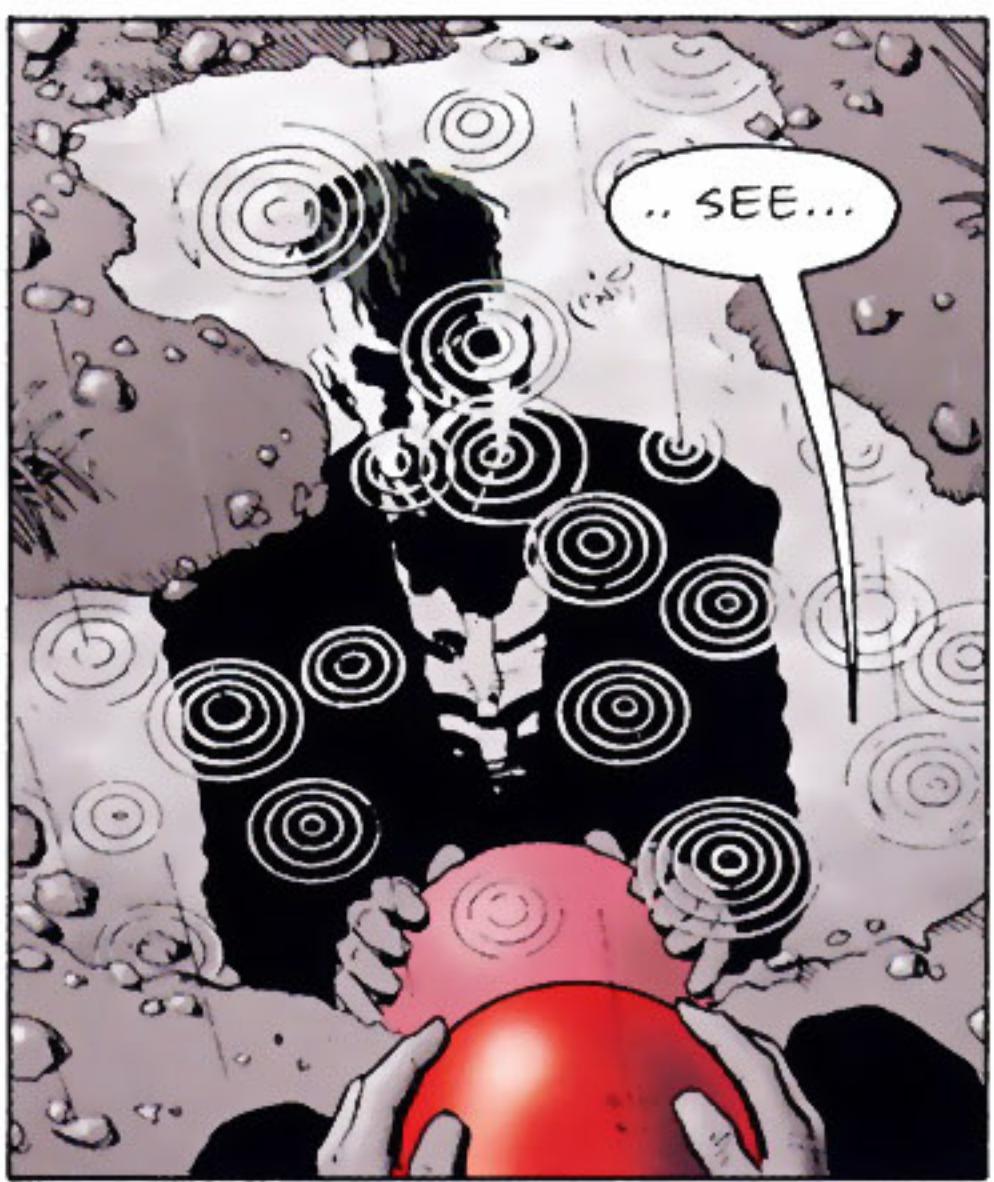


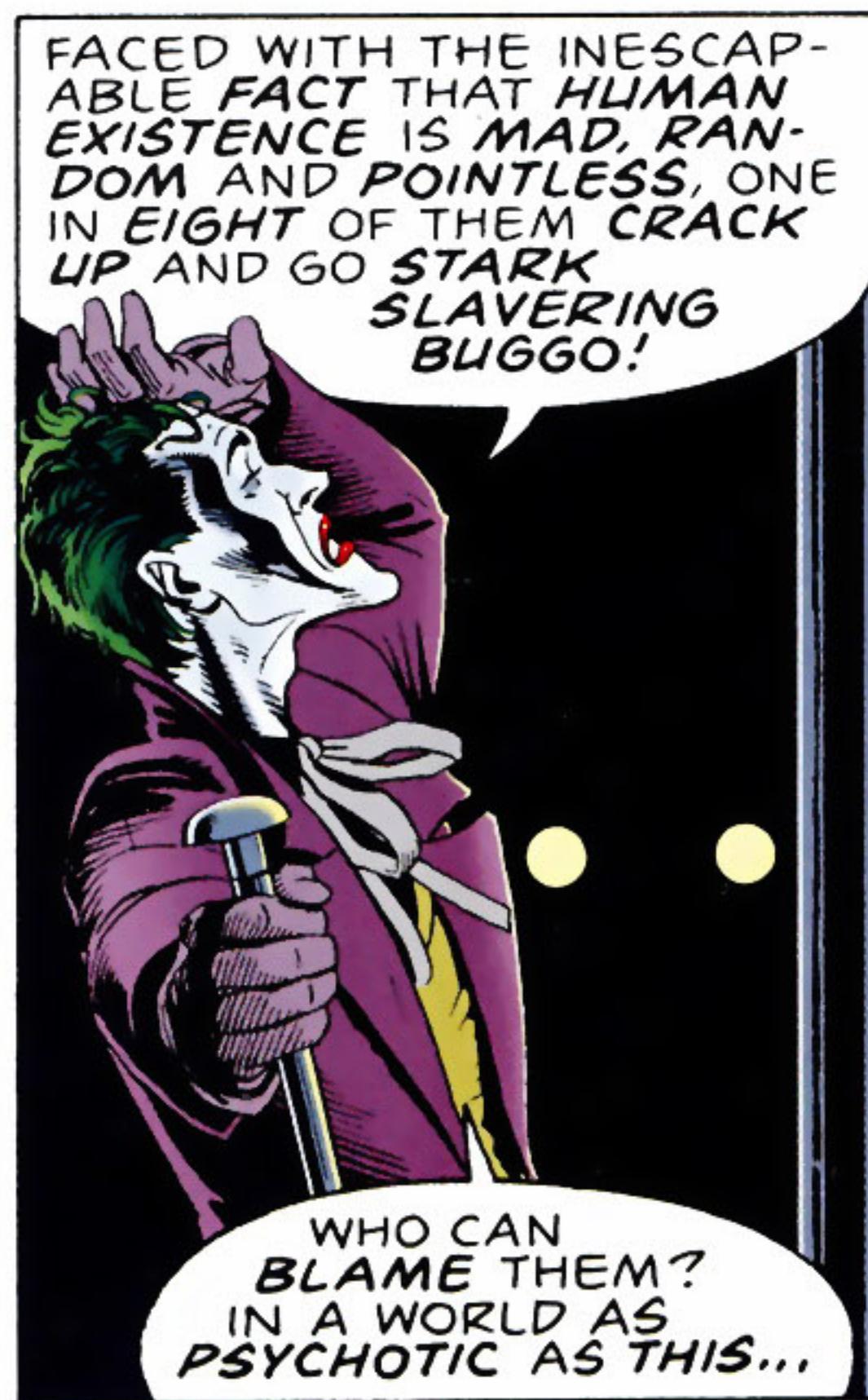
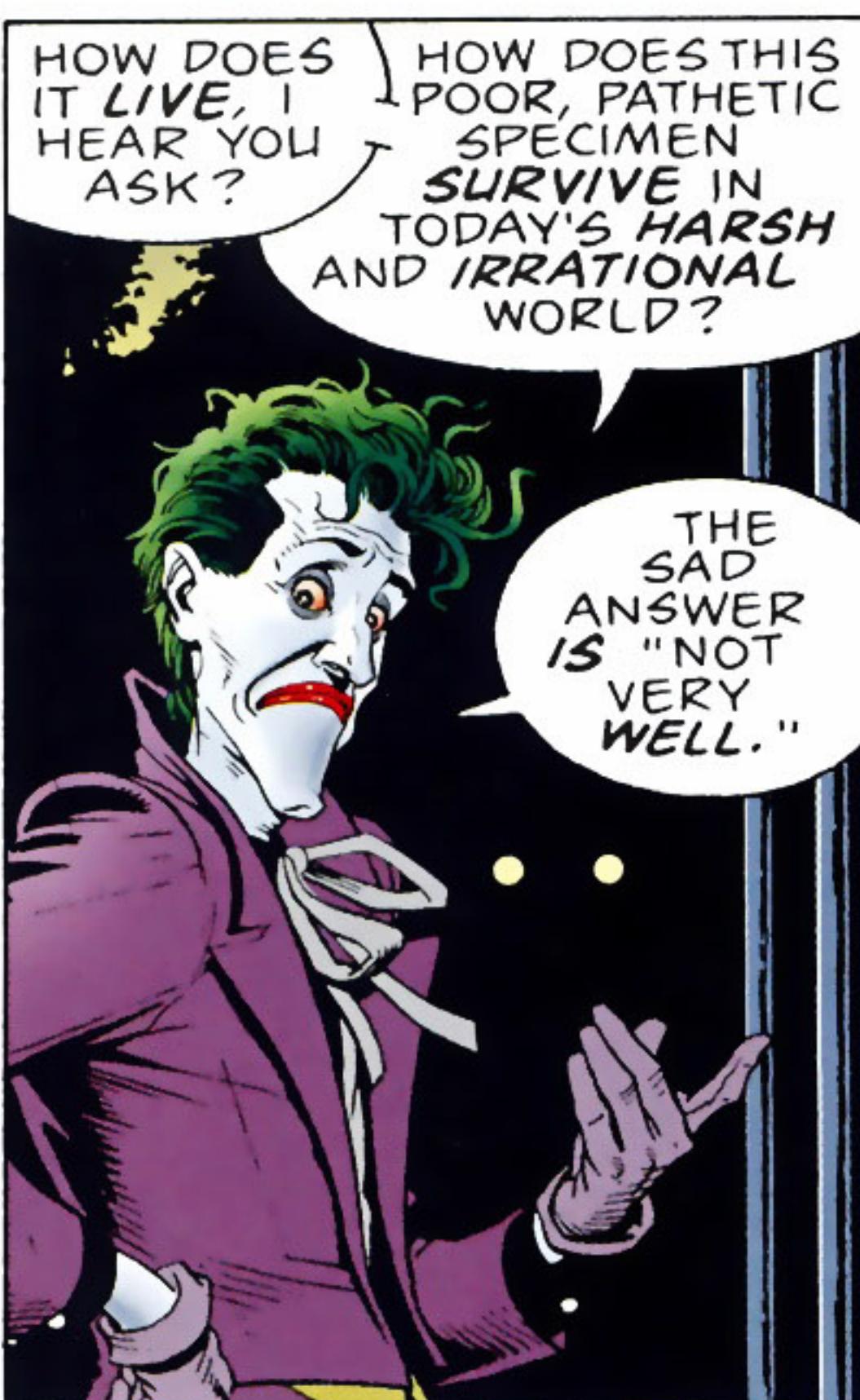
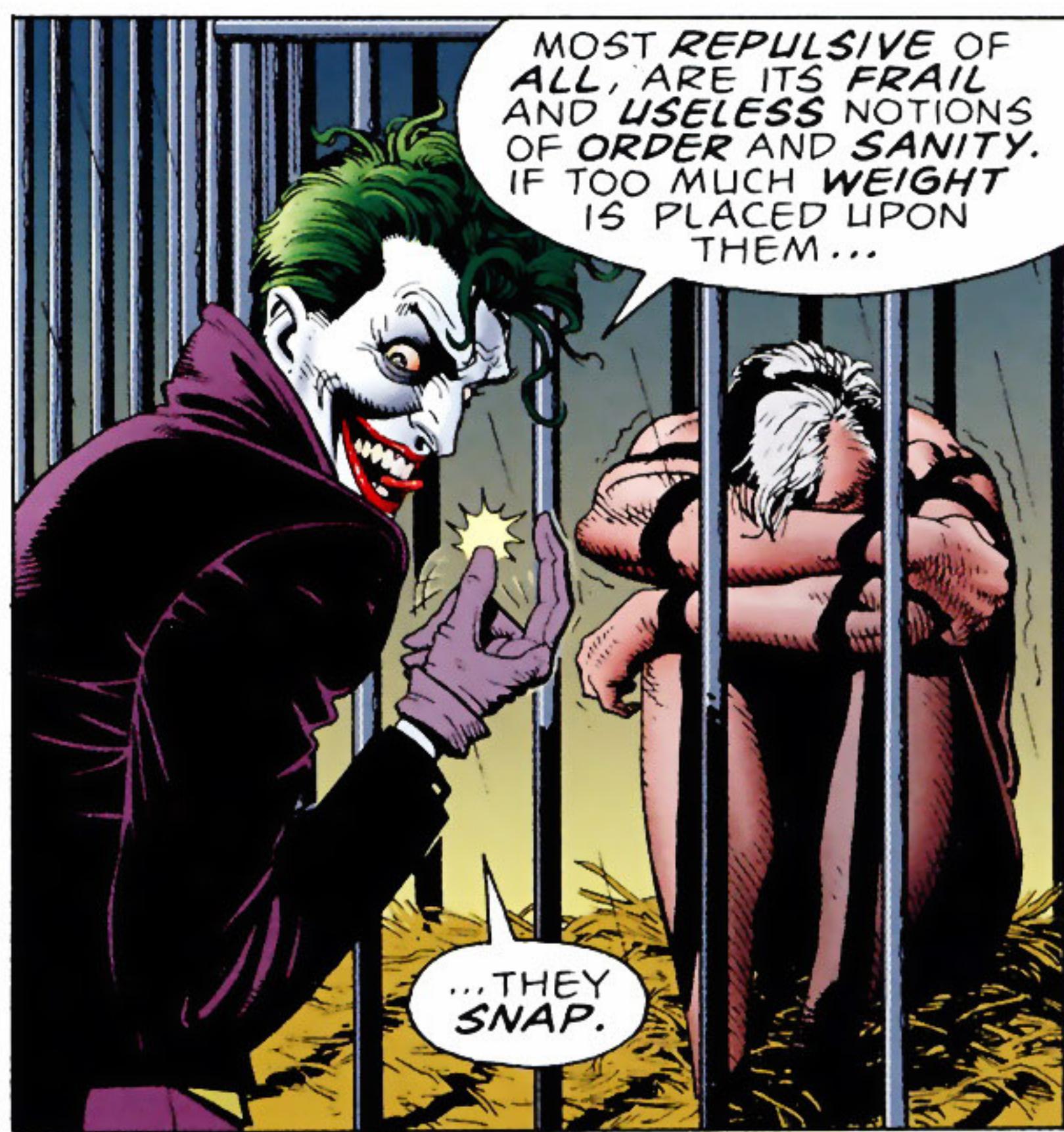
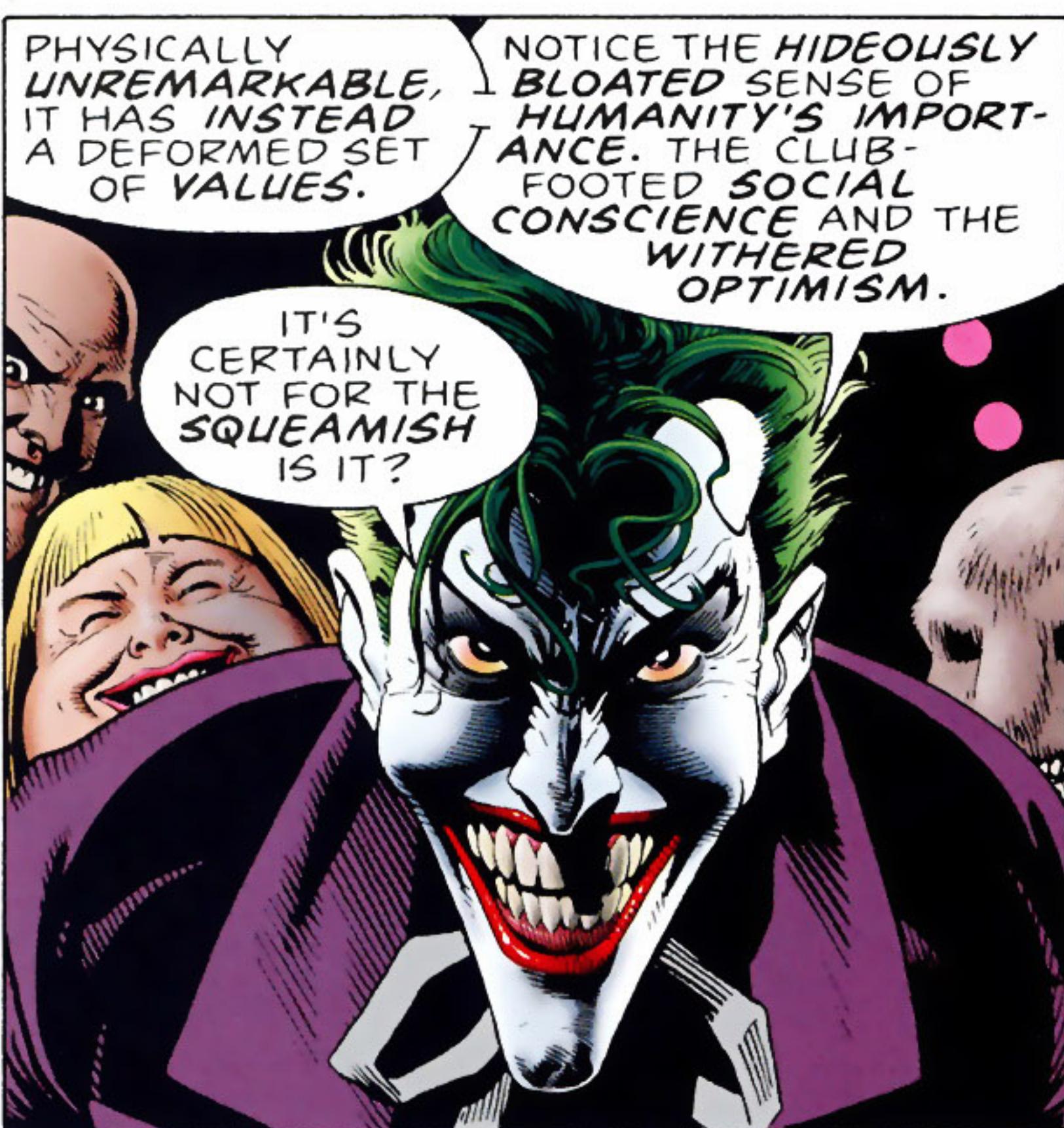
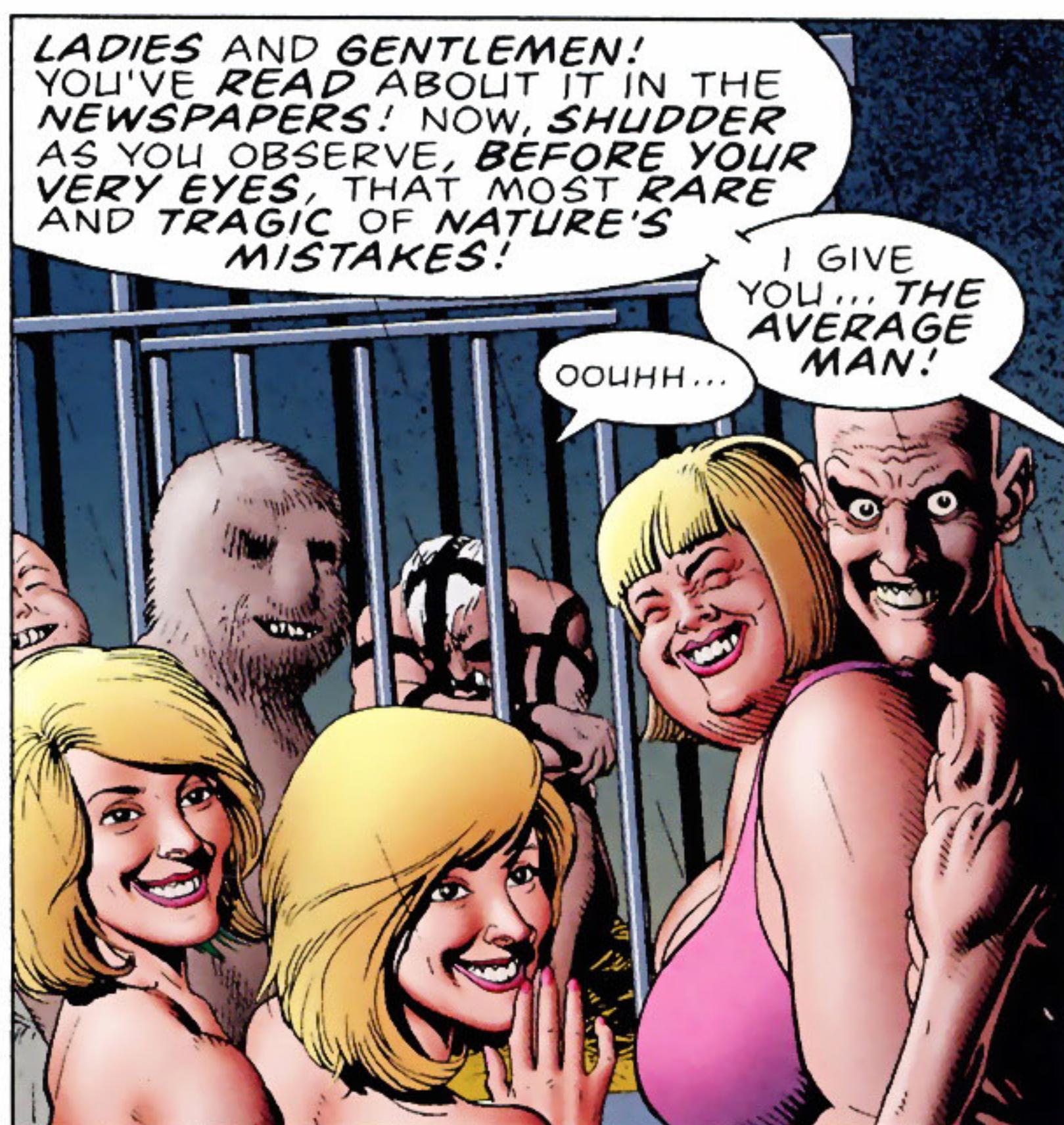


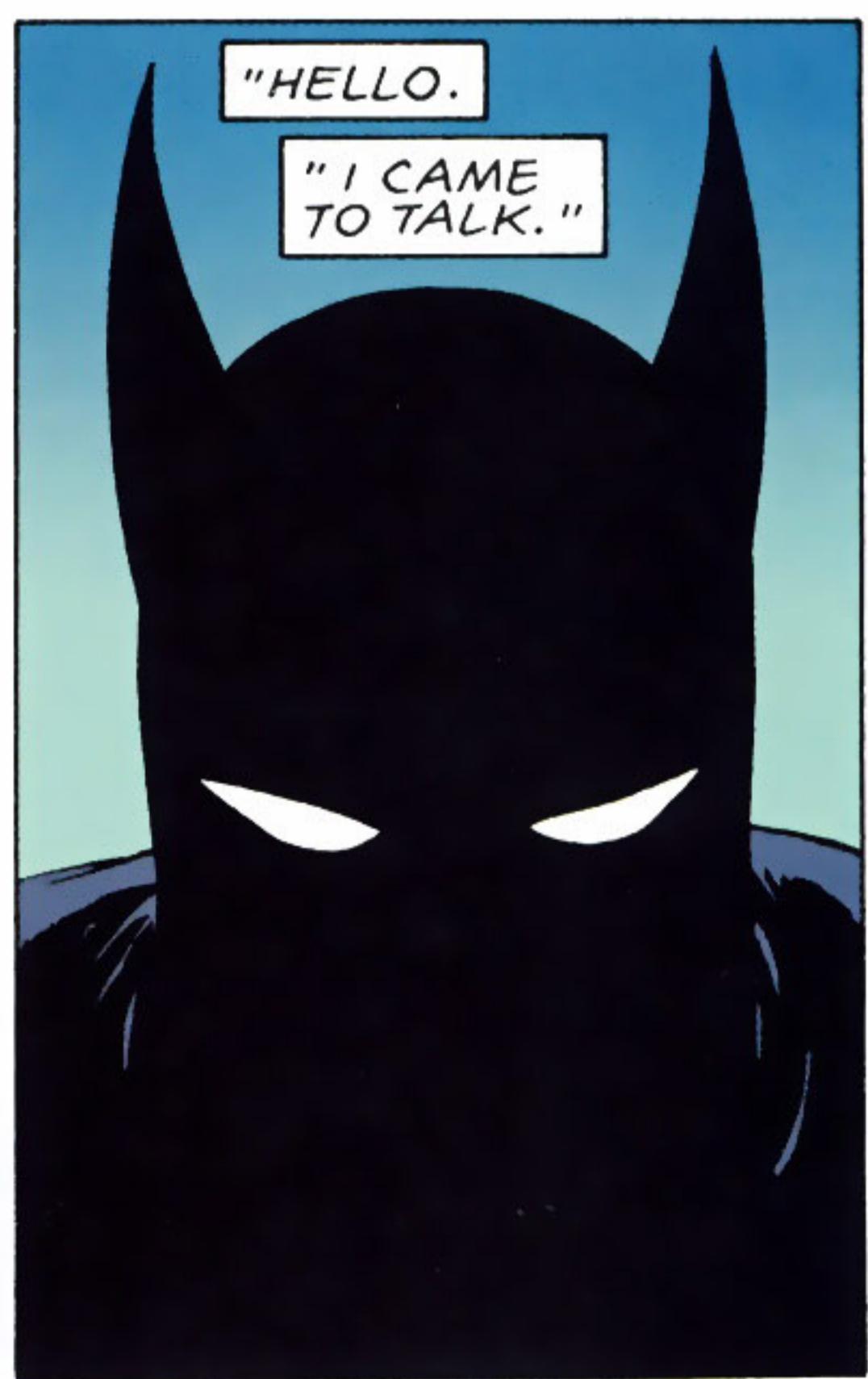
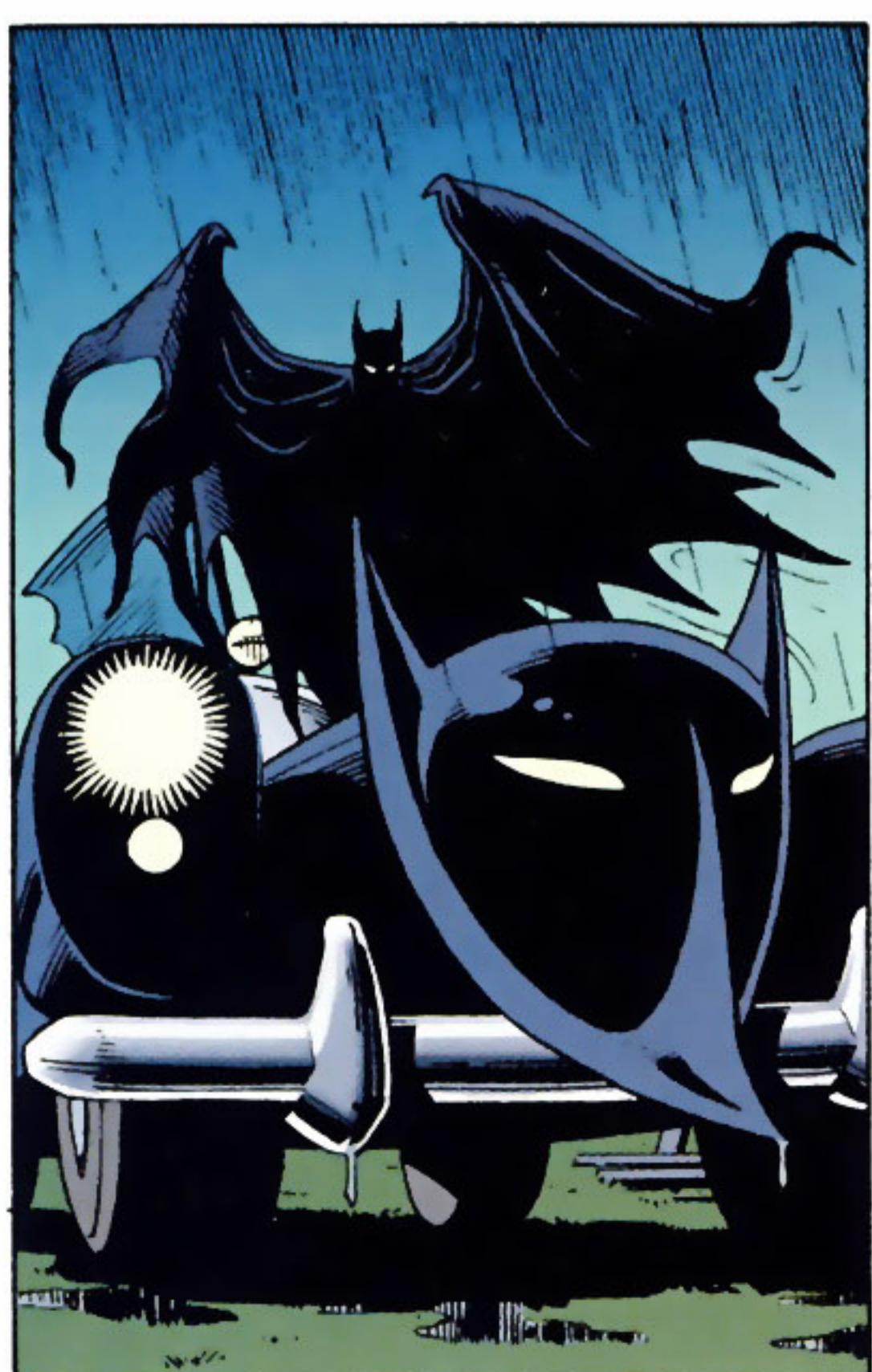


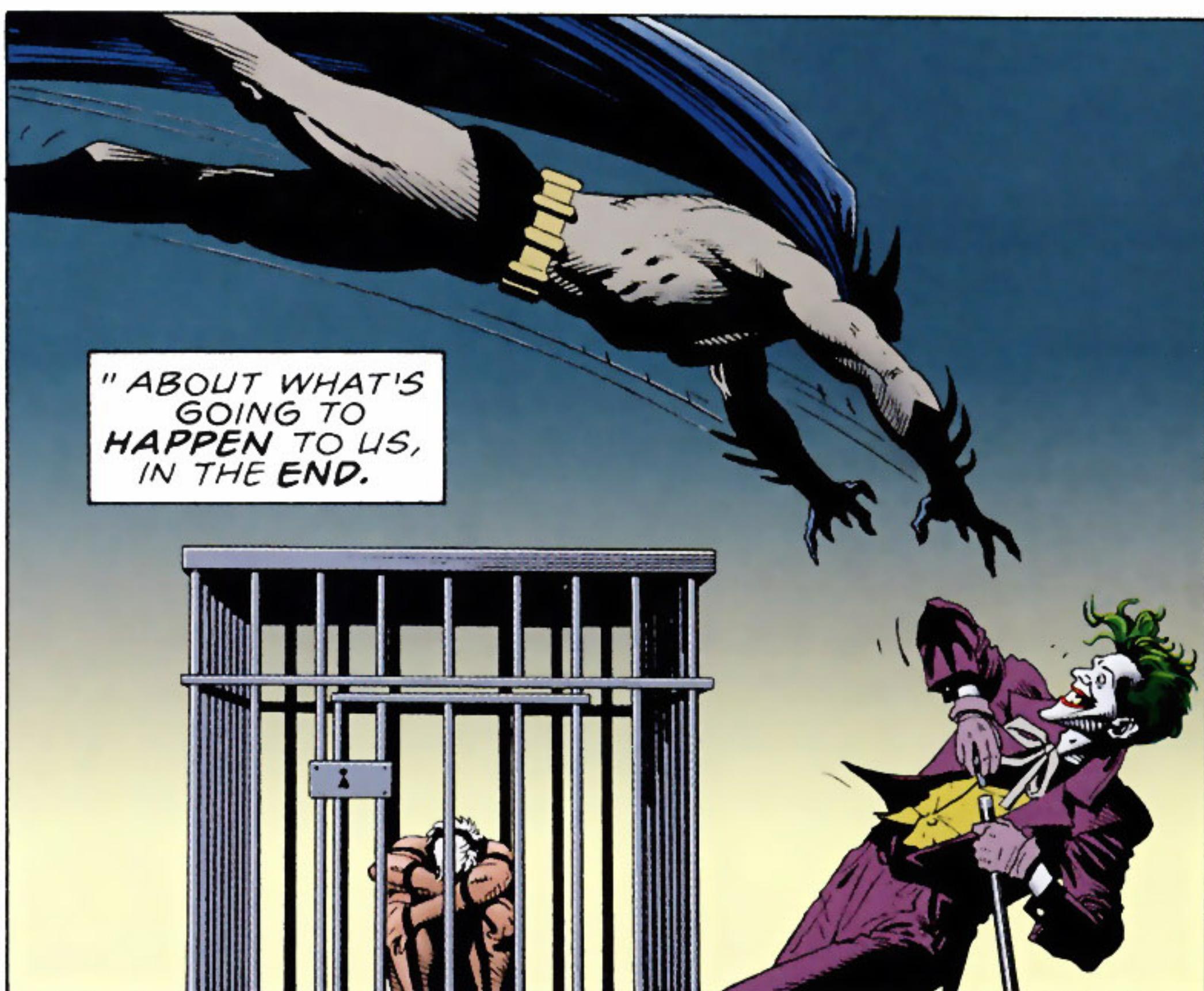
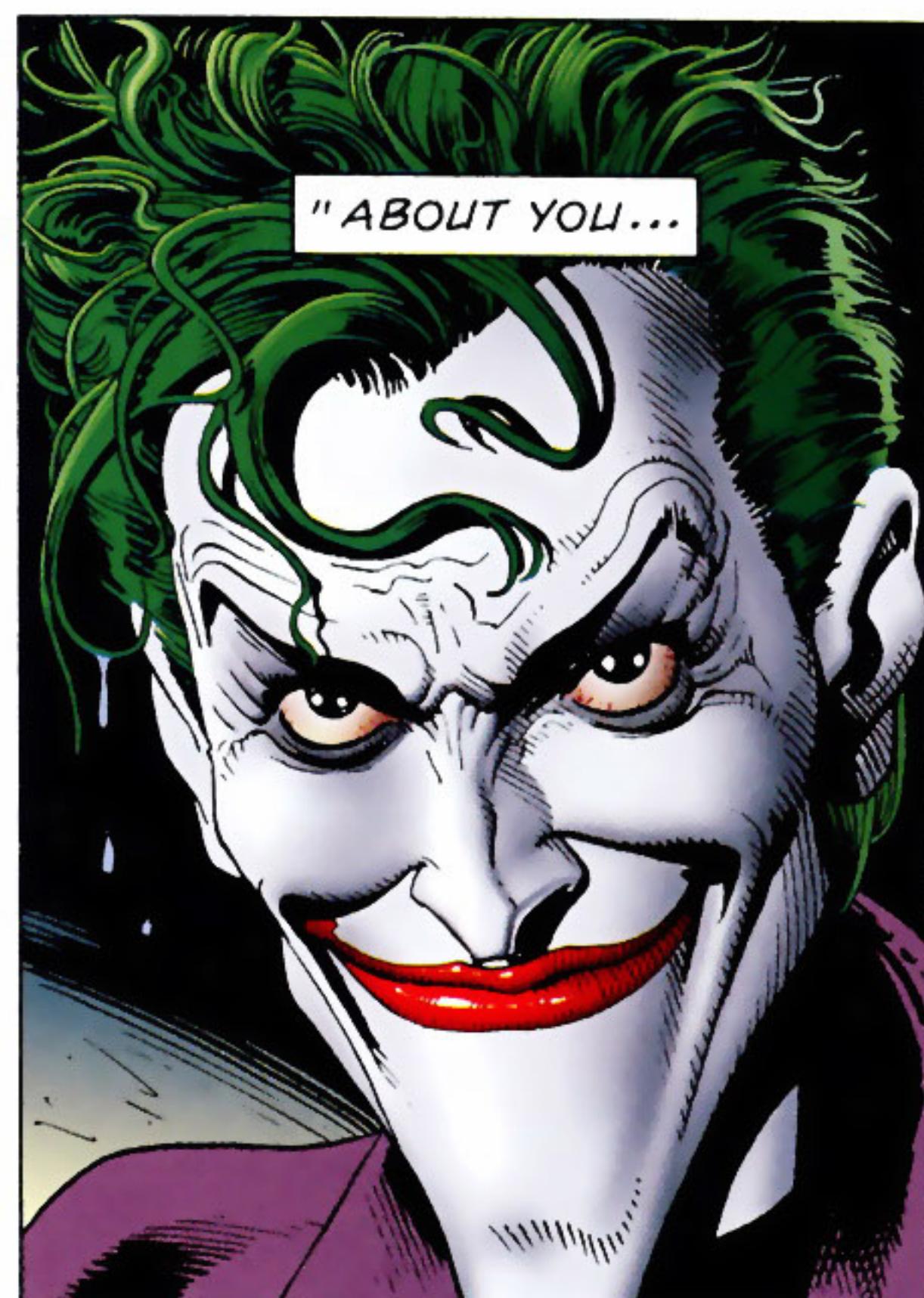
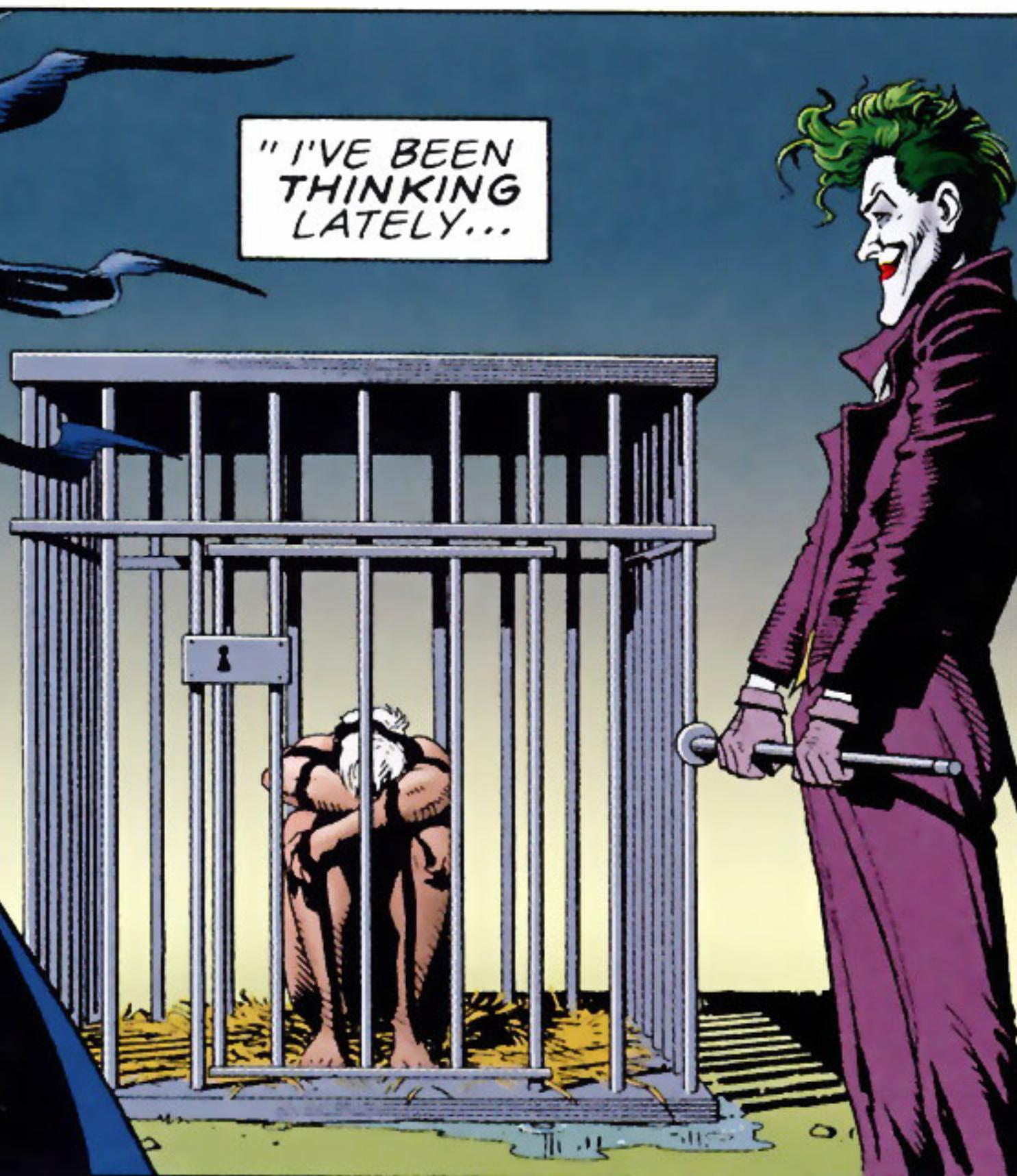


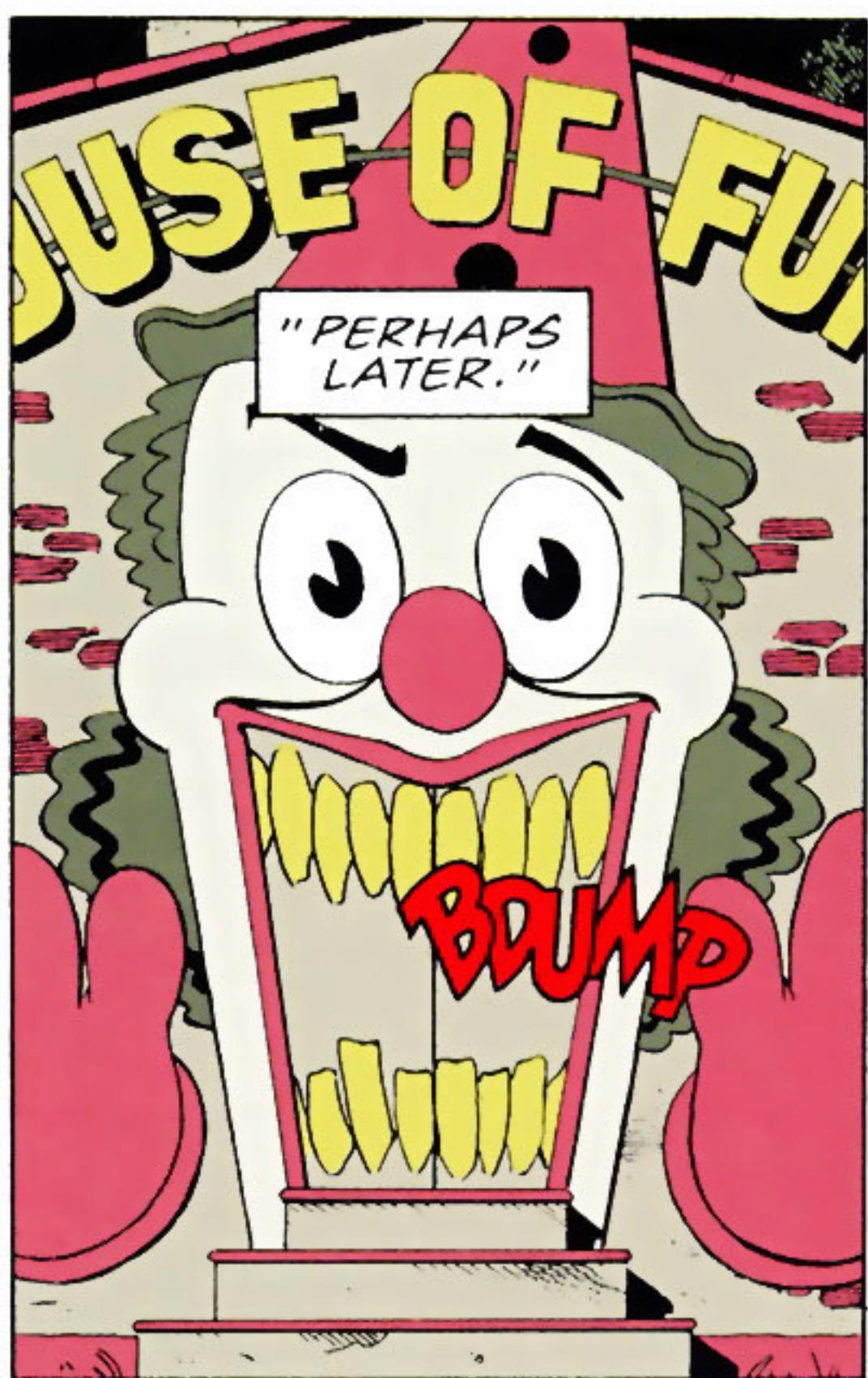


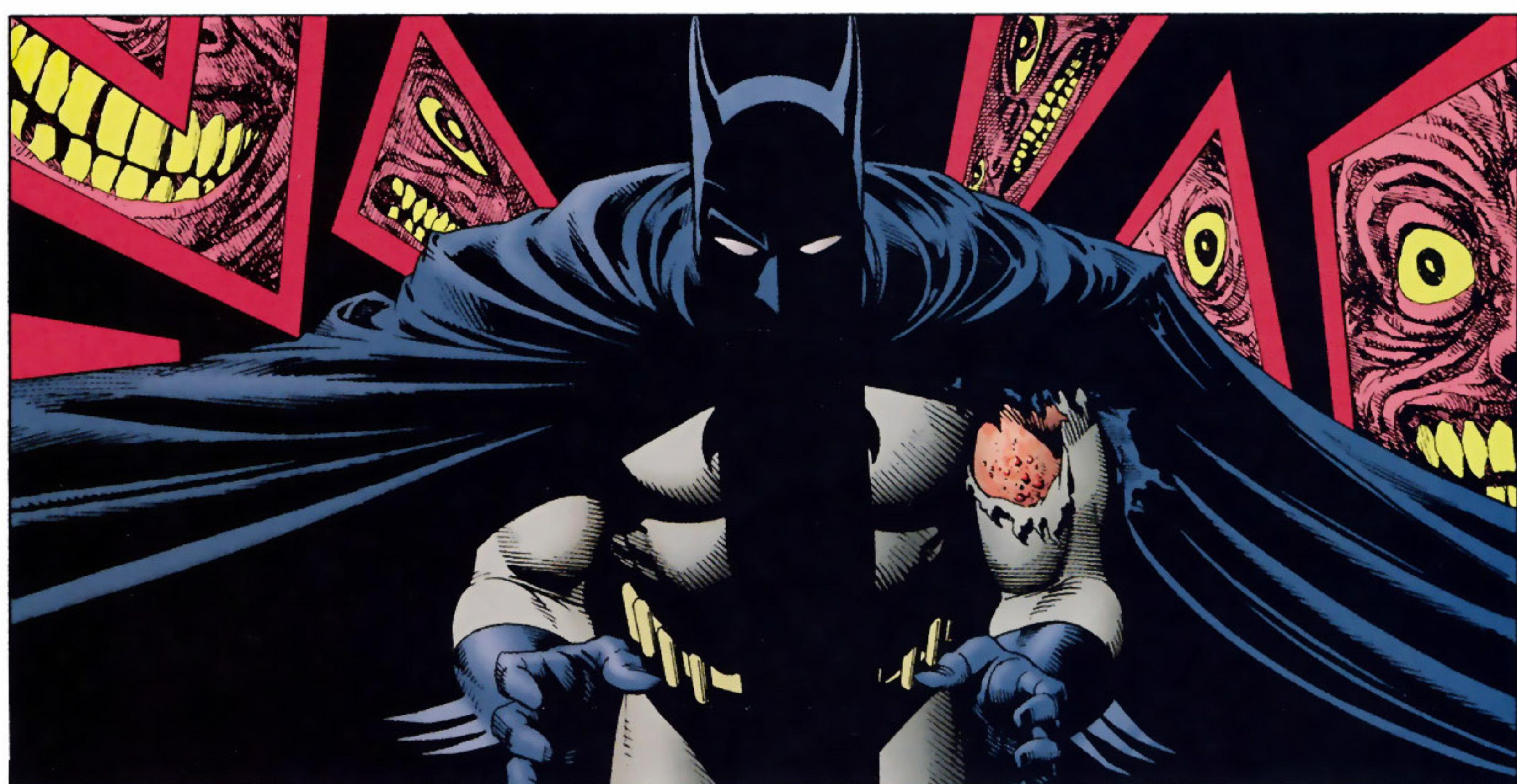
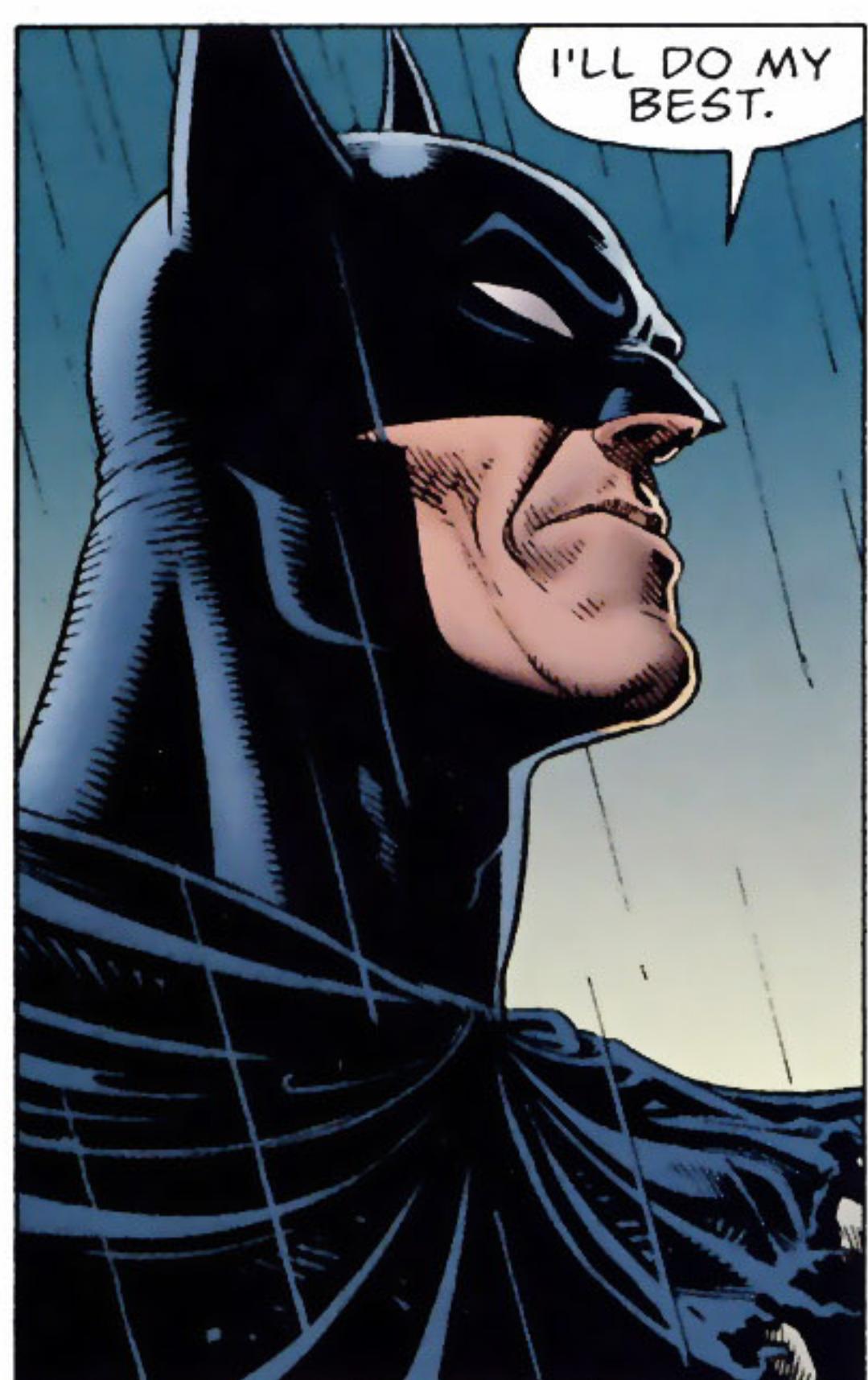


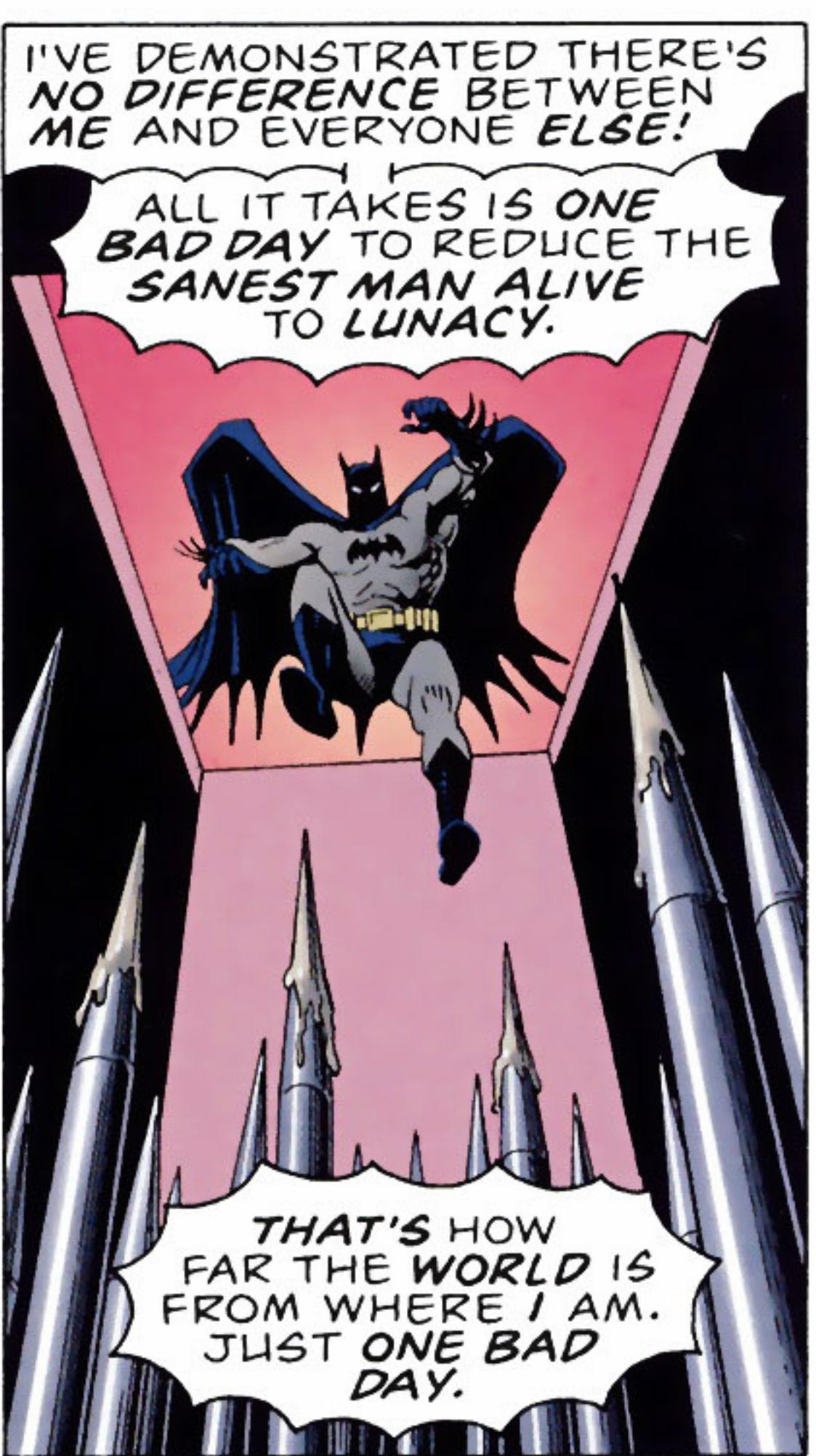












I MEAN, WHAT IS IT WITH YOU? WHAT MADE YOU WHAT YOU ARE?

GIRLFRIEND KILLED BY THE MOB, MAYBE? BROTHER CARVED UP BY SOME MUGGER?

SOME-
THING LIKE
THAT, I BET.
SOMETHING
LIKE THAT...

SOMETHING LIKE THAT HAPPENED TO ME, YOU KNOW. I... I'M NOT EXACTLY SURE WHAT IT WAS. SOMETIMES I REMEMBER IT ONE WAY, SOMETIMES ANOTHER...

IF I'M GOING TO HAVE A PAST, I PREFER IT TO BE MULTIPLE CHOICE! HA HA HA!

BUT MY POINT IS... MY POINT IS, I WENT CRAZY.

WHEN I SAW WHAT A BLACK, AWFUL JOKE THE WORLD WAS, I WENT CRAZY AS A COOT! I ADMIT IT!

WHY CAN'T YOU?

I MEAN, YOU'RE NOT UNINTELLIGENT! YOU MUST SEE THE REALITY OF THE SITUATION.

ALL OF MIRRORS

DO YOU KNOW HOW MANY TIMES WE'VE COME CLOSE TO WORLD WAR THREE OVER A FLOCK OF GEESE ON A COMPUTER SCREEN?

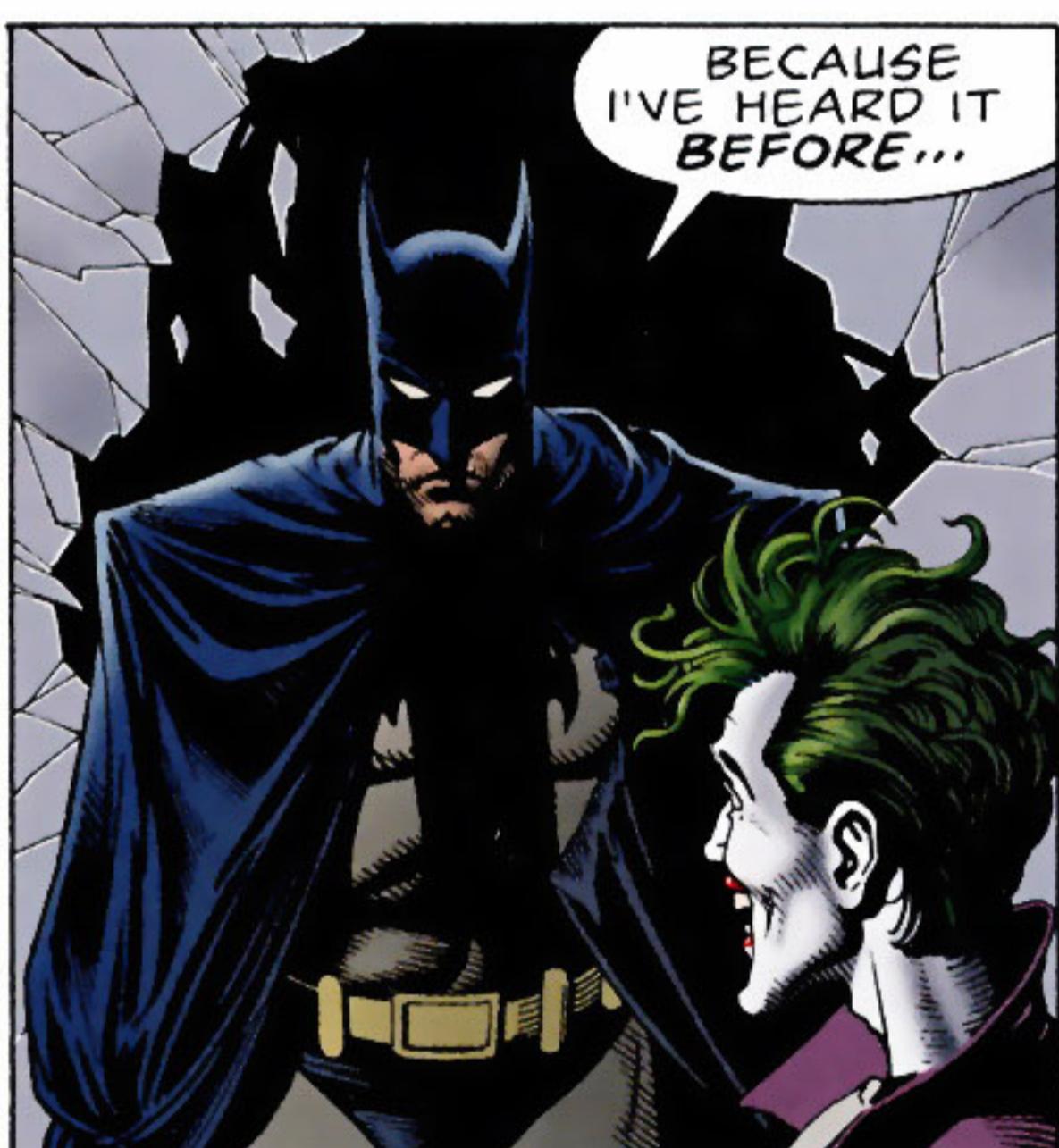
DO YOU KNOW WHAT TRIGGERED THE LAST WORLD WAR? AN ARGUMENT OVER HOW MANY TELEGRAPH POLES GERMANY OWED ITS WAR DEBT CREDITORS!

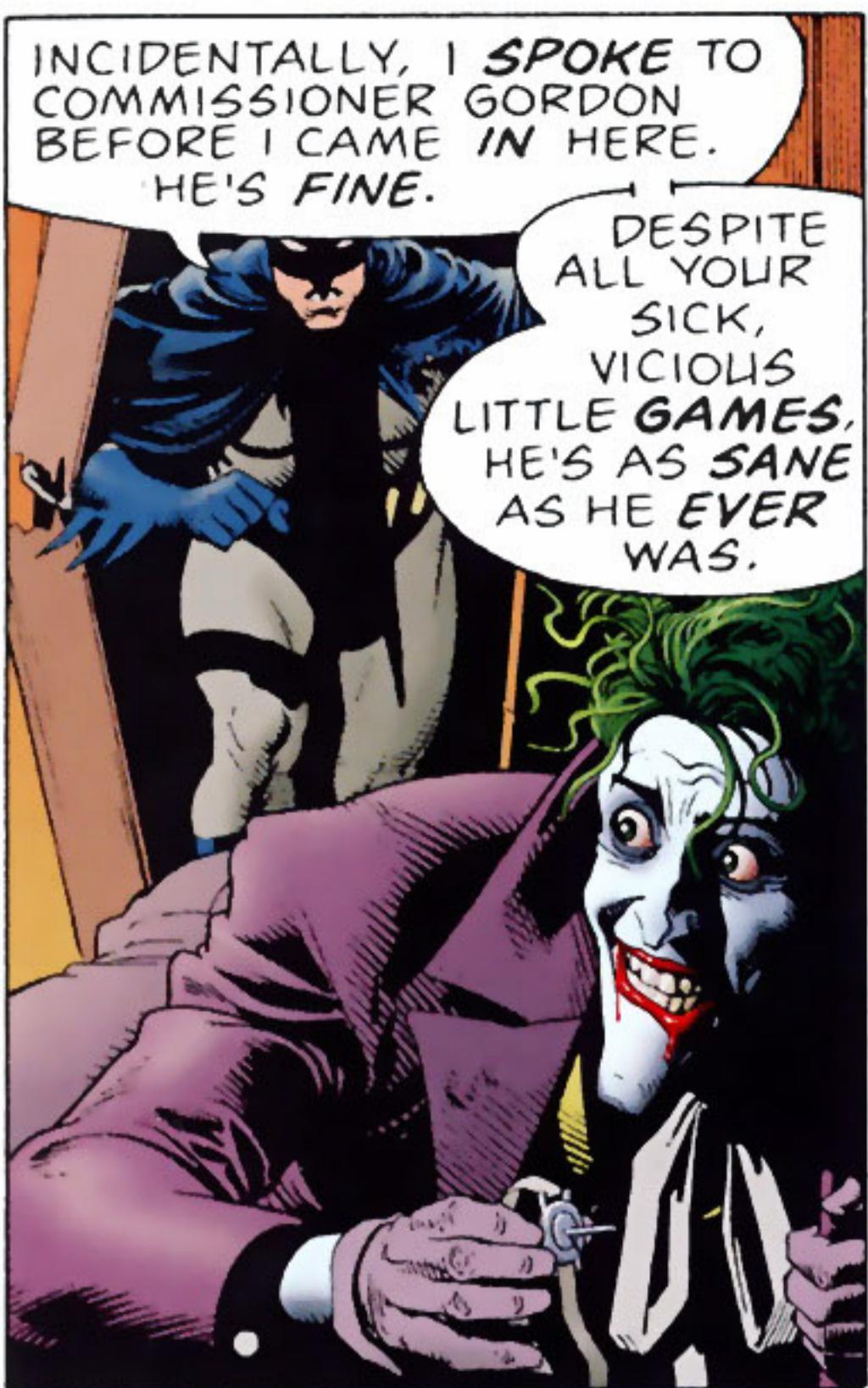
TELEGRAPH POLES! HA HA HA HA HA!

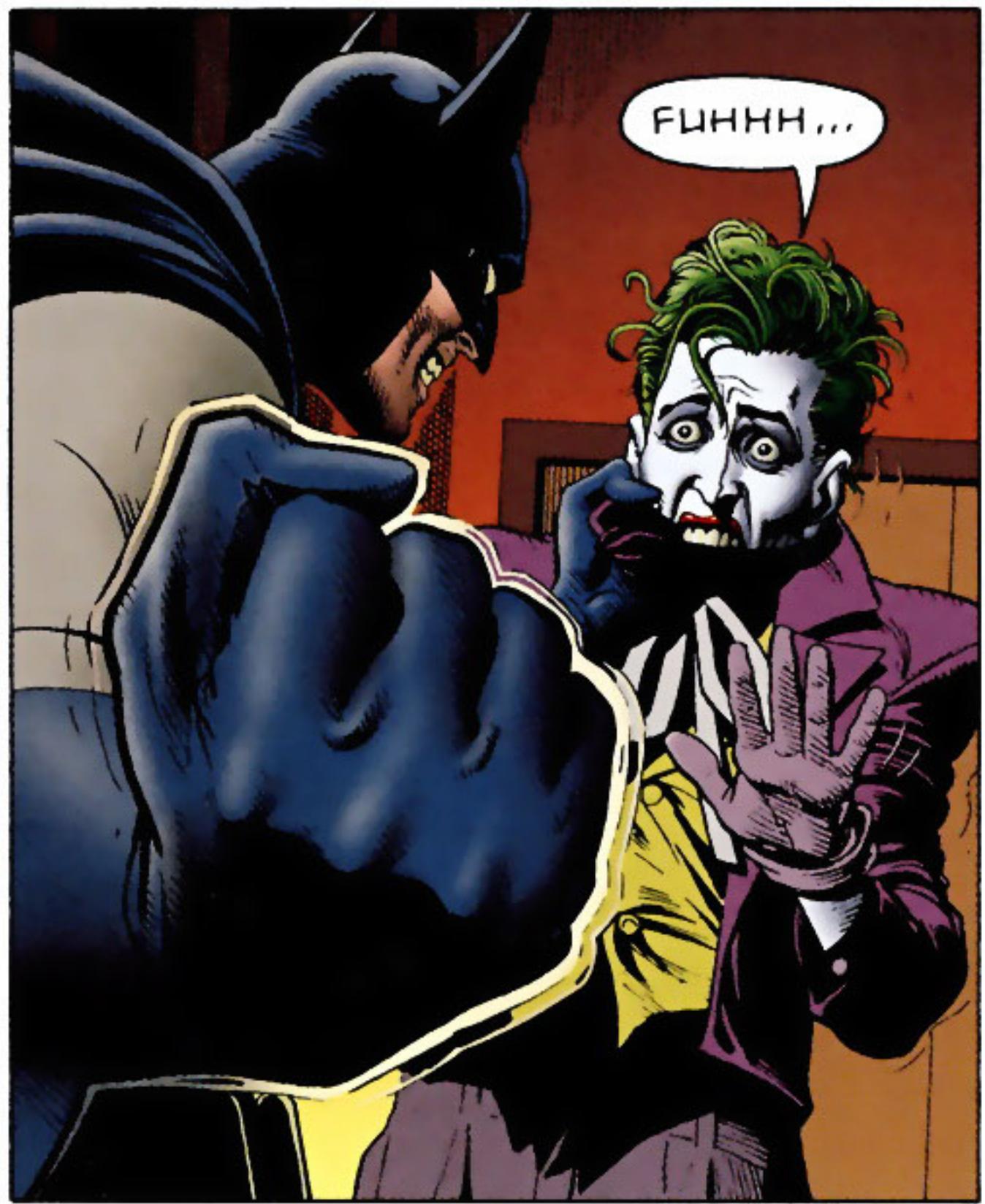
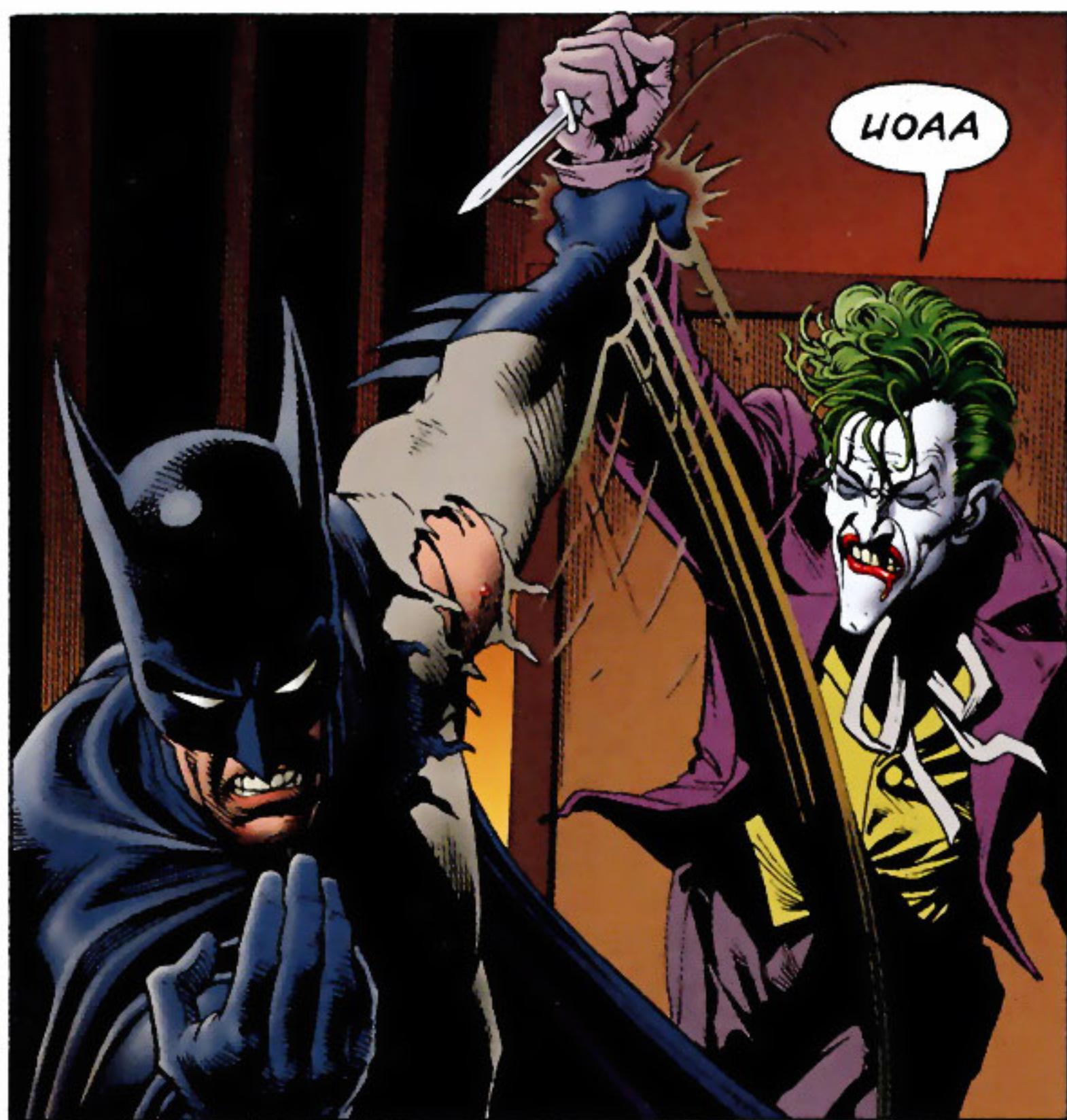
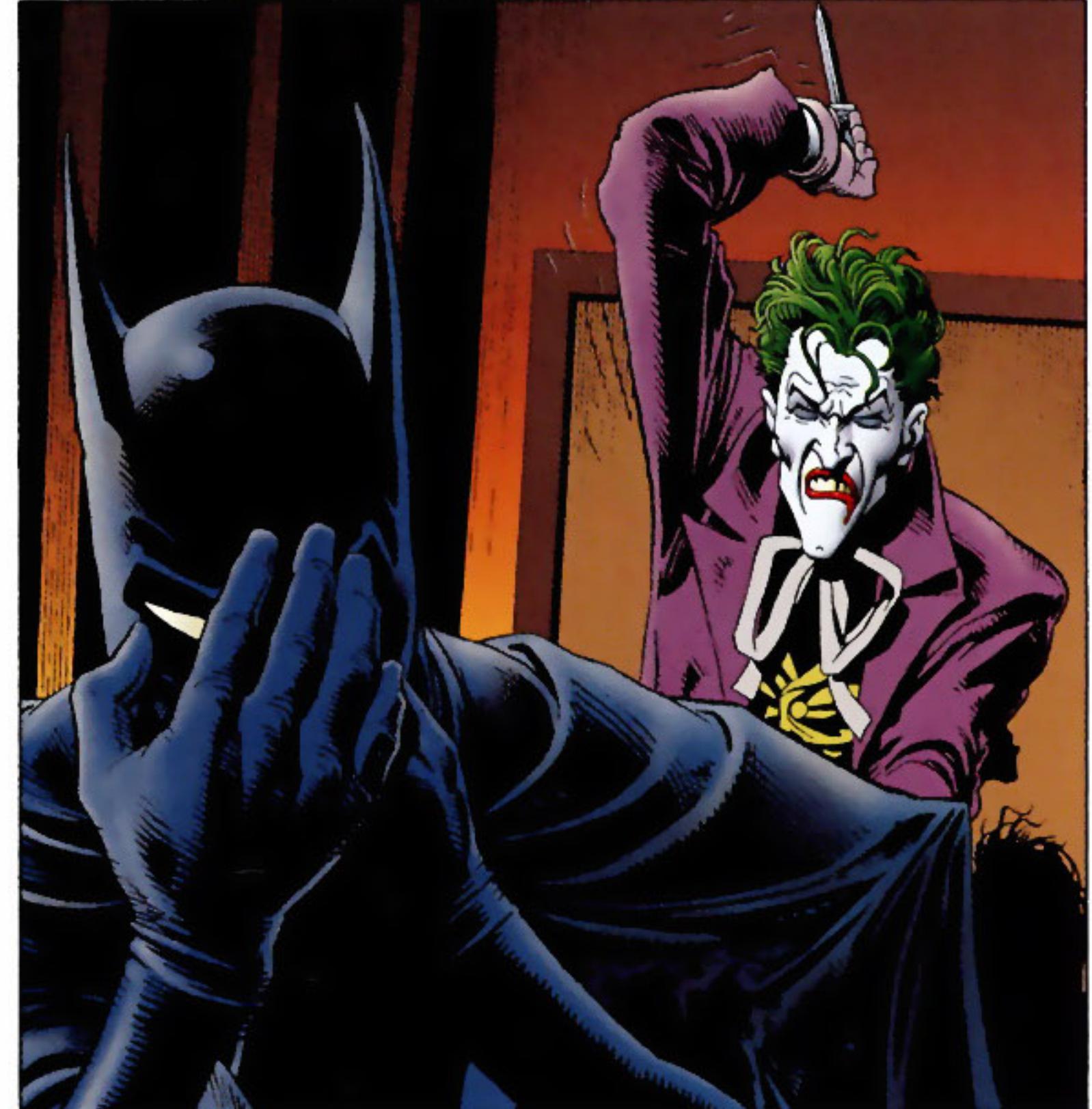
IT'S ALL A JOKE! EVERYTHING ANYBODY EVER VALUED OR STRUGGLED FOR... IT'S ALL A MONSTROUS, DEMENTED GAG!

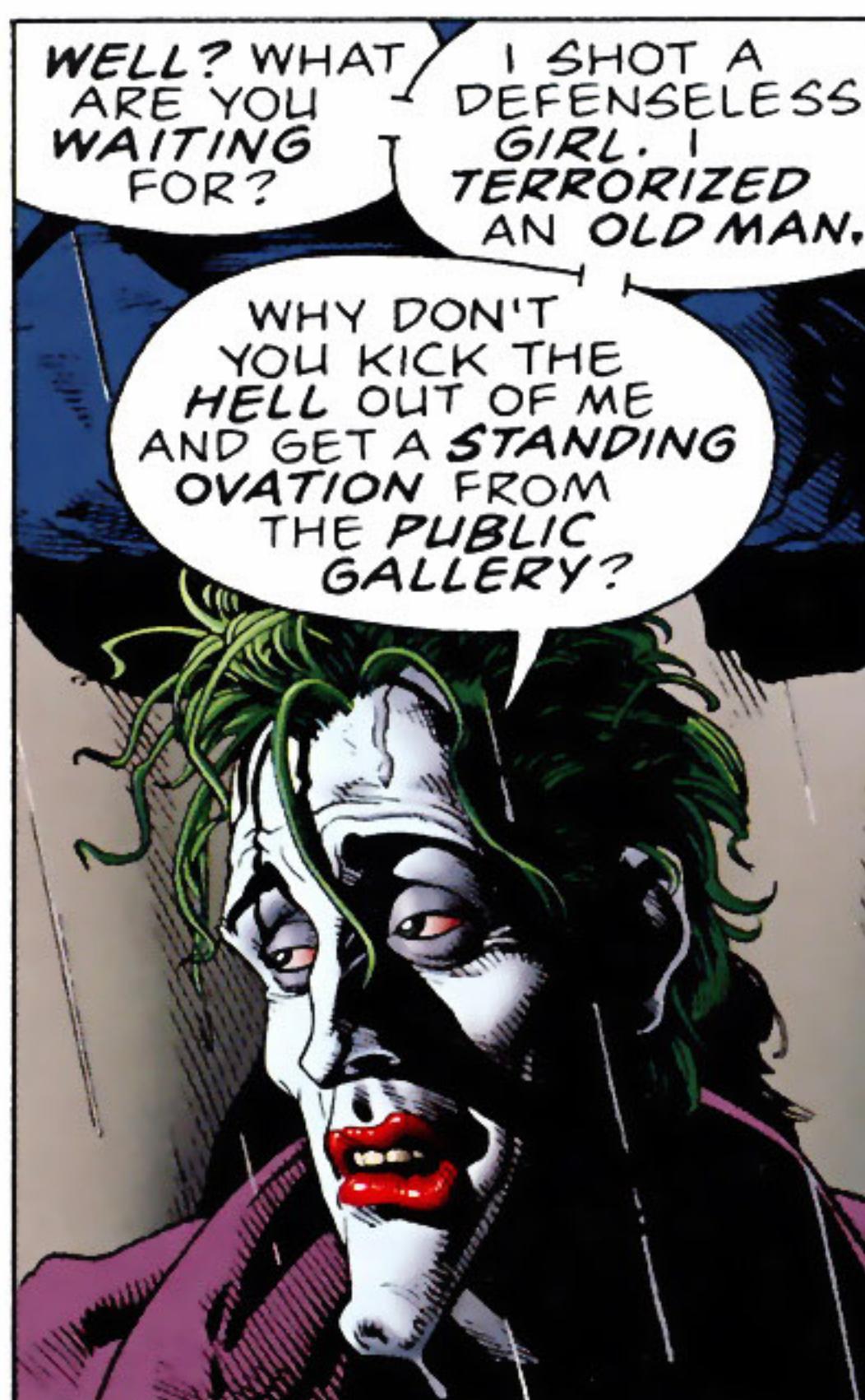
SO WHY CAN'T YOU SEE THE FUNNY SIDE?

WHY AREN'T YOU LAUGHING?









DO YOU UNDERSTAND?
I DON'T WANT TO HURT
YOU. I DON'T WANT
EITHER OF US TO END
UP KILLING THE
OTHER...

BUT
WE'RE BOTH
RUNNING OUT OF
ALTERNATIVES...
...AND
WE BOTH
KNOW IT.

MAYBE IT ALL HINGES ON
TONIGHT. MAYBE THIS IS
OUR LAST CHANCE TO SORT
THIS BLOODY MESS OUT.

IF YOU DON'T TAKE
IT, THEN WE'RE LOCKED
ONTO A SUICIDE
COURSE.

BOTH
OF US. TO
THE
DEATH.

IT DOESN'T
HAVE TO END
LIKE THAT. I
DON'T KNOW
WHAT IT WAS
THAT BENT
YOUR LIFE
OUT OF
SHAPE, BUT
WHO
KNOWS?

MAYBE
I'VE BEEN
THERE
TOO.

MAYBE
I CAN
HELP.

WE COULD WORK TOGETHER. I
COULD REHABILITATE YOU. YOU
NEEDN'T BE OUT THERE ON THE
EDGE ANY MORE. YOU
NEEDN'T BE ALONE.

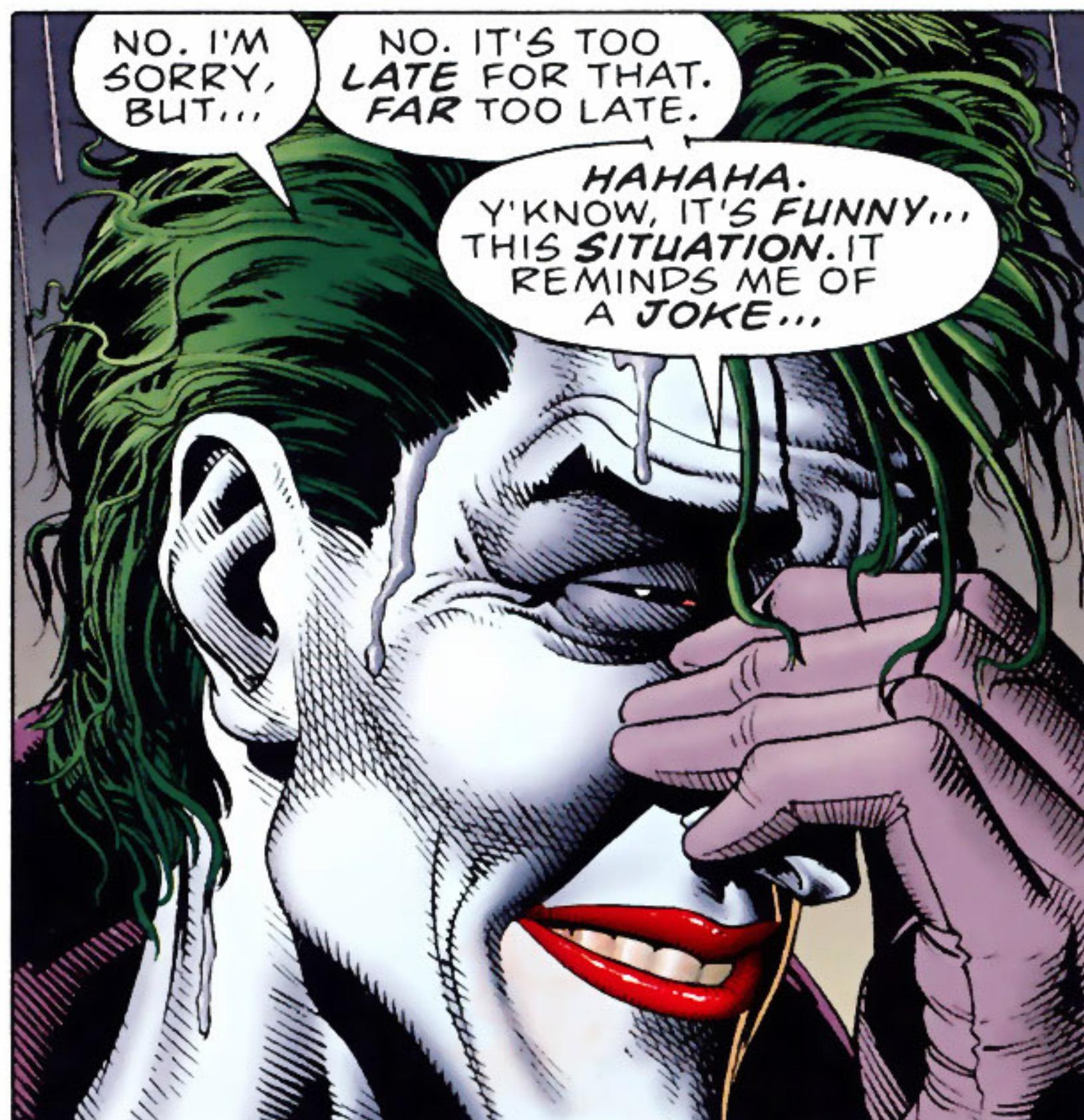
WE DON'T
HAVE TO KILL
EACH OTHER.

WHAT
DO YOU
SAY?

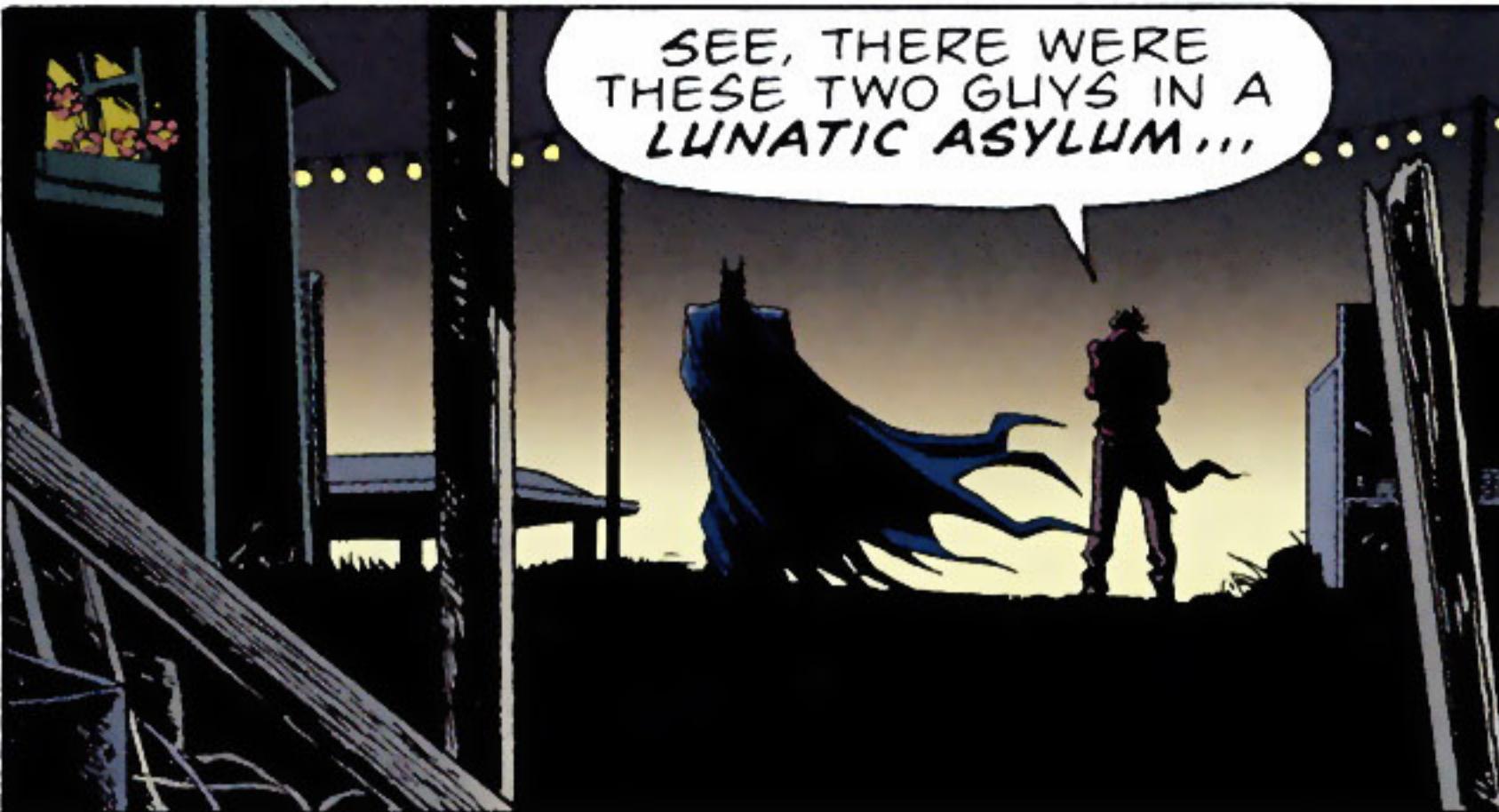
NO. I'M
SORRY,
BUT...

NO. IT'S TOO
LATE FOR THAT.
FAR TOO LATE.

HAHAHA.
Y'KNOW, IT'S FUNNY...
THIS SITUATION. IT
REMINDS ME OF
A JOKE...



SEE, THERE WERE
THESE TWO GUYS IN A
LUNATIC ASYLUM...



...AND ONE NIGHT,
ONE NIGHT THEY
DECIDE THEY DON'T
LIKE LIVING IN AN
ASYLUM ANY
MORE.



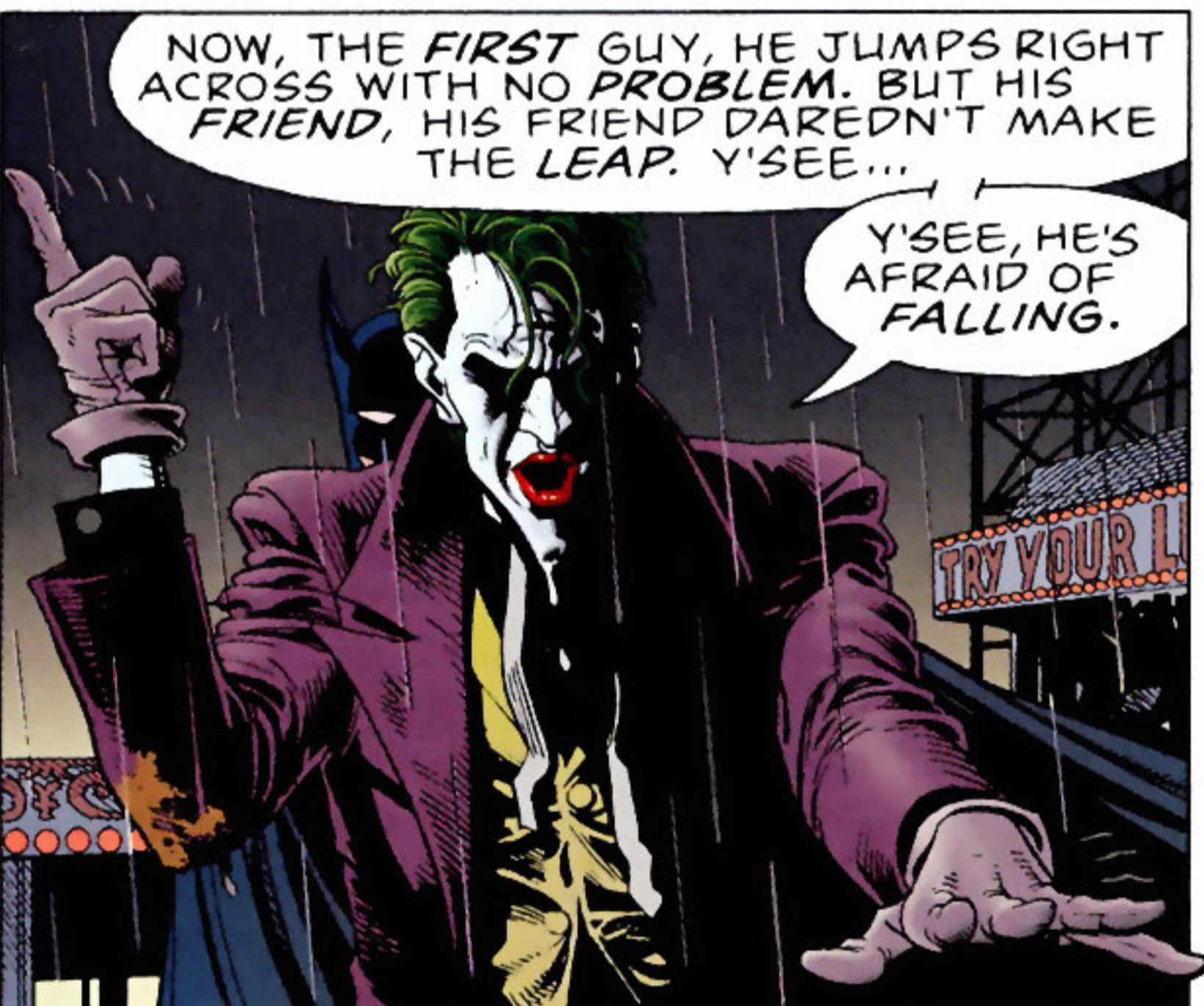
THEY
DECIDE THEY'RE
GOING TO
ESCAPE!

SO, LIKE, THEY GET UP ONTO THE ROOF,
AND THERE, JUST ACROSS THIS NARROW
GAP, THEY SEE THE ROOFTOPS OF THE
TOWN, STRETCHING AWAY IN
THE MOONLIGHT...

STRETCHING
AWAY TO FREEDOM.

NOW, THE FIRST GUY, HE JUMPS RIGHT
ACROSS WITH NO PROBLEM. BUT HIS
FRIEND, HIS FRIEND DAREDN'T MAKE
THE LEAP. Y'SEE...

Y'SEE, HE'S
AFRAID OF
FALLING.



SO THEN,
THE FIRST
GUY HAS AN
IDEA...

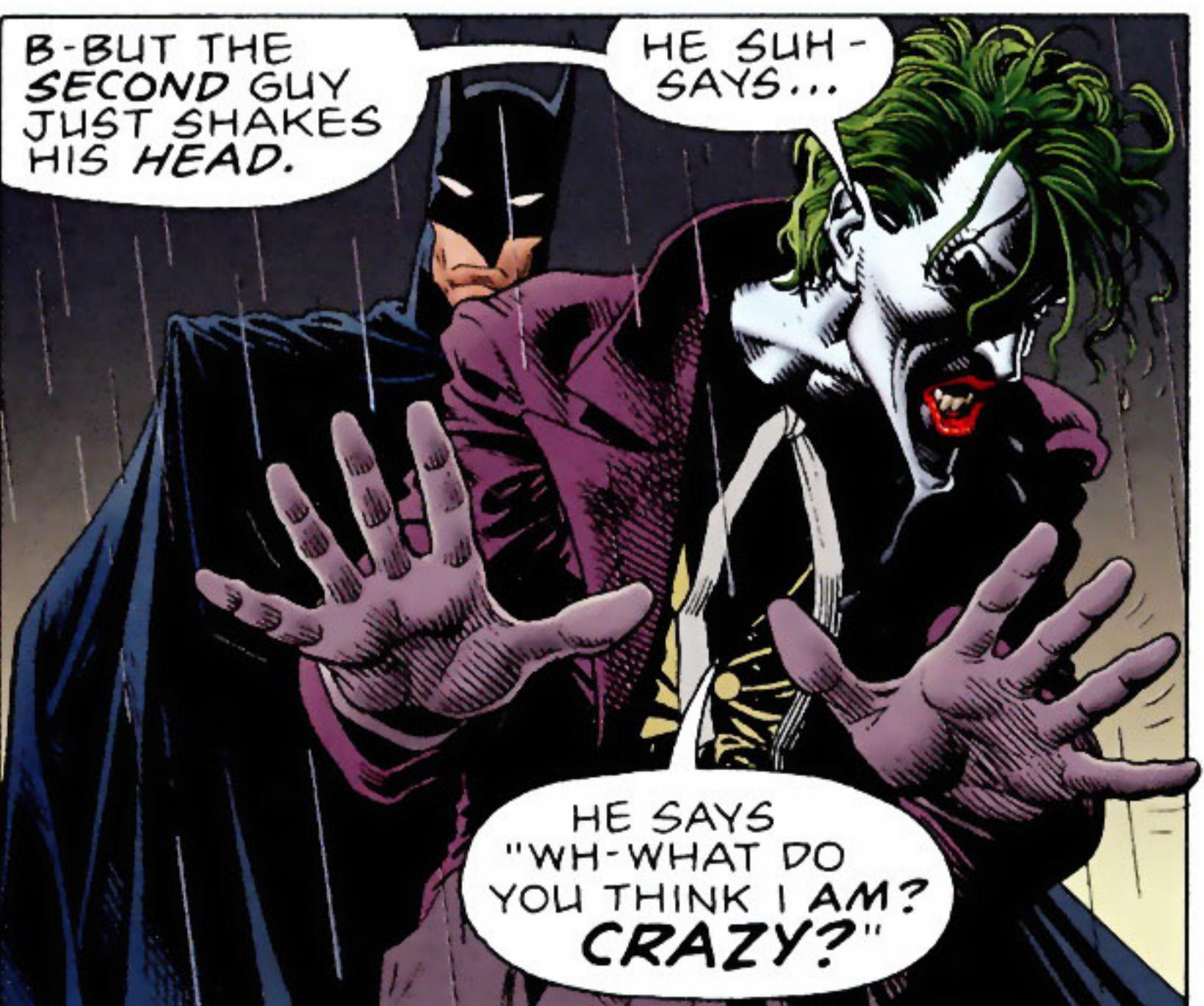
HE SAYS
"HEY! I HAVE
MY FLASHLIGHT
WITH ME! I'LL
SHINE IT ACROSS
THE GAP BETWEEN
THE BUILDINGS.
YOU CAN WALK
ALONG THE BEAM
AND JOIN
ME!"

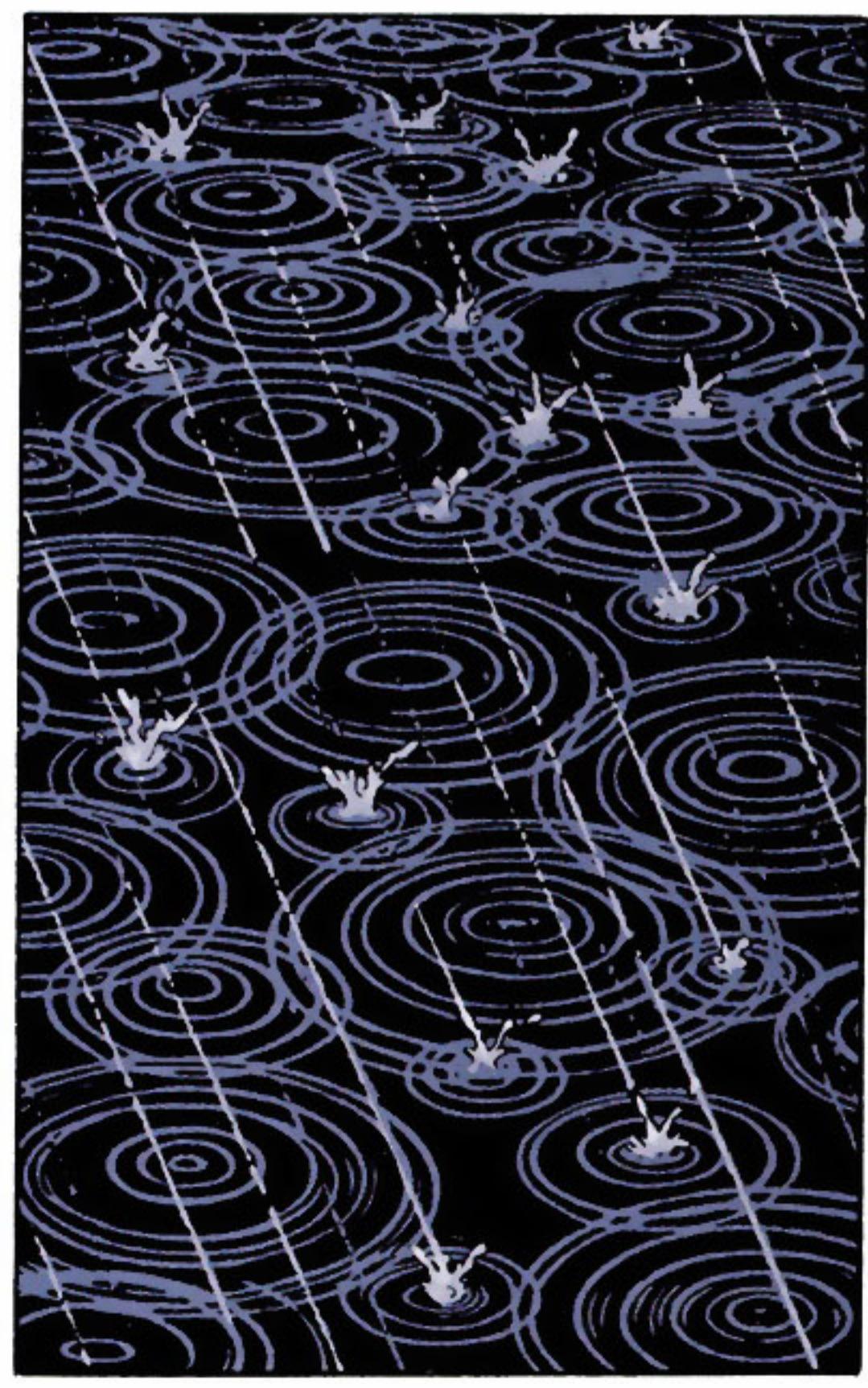
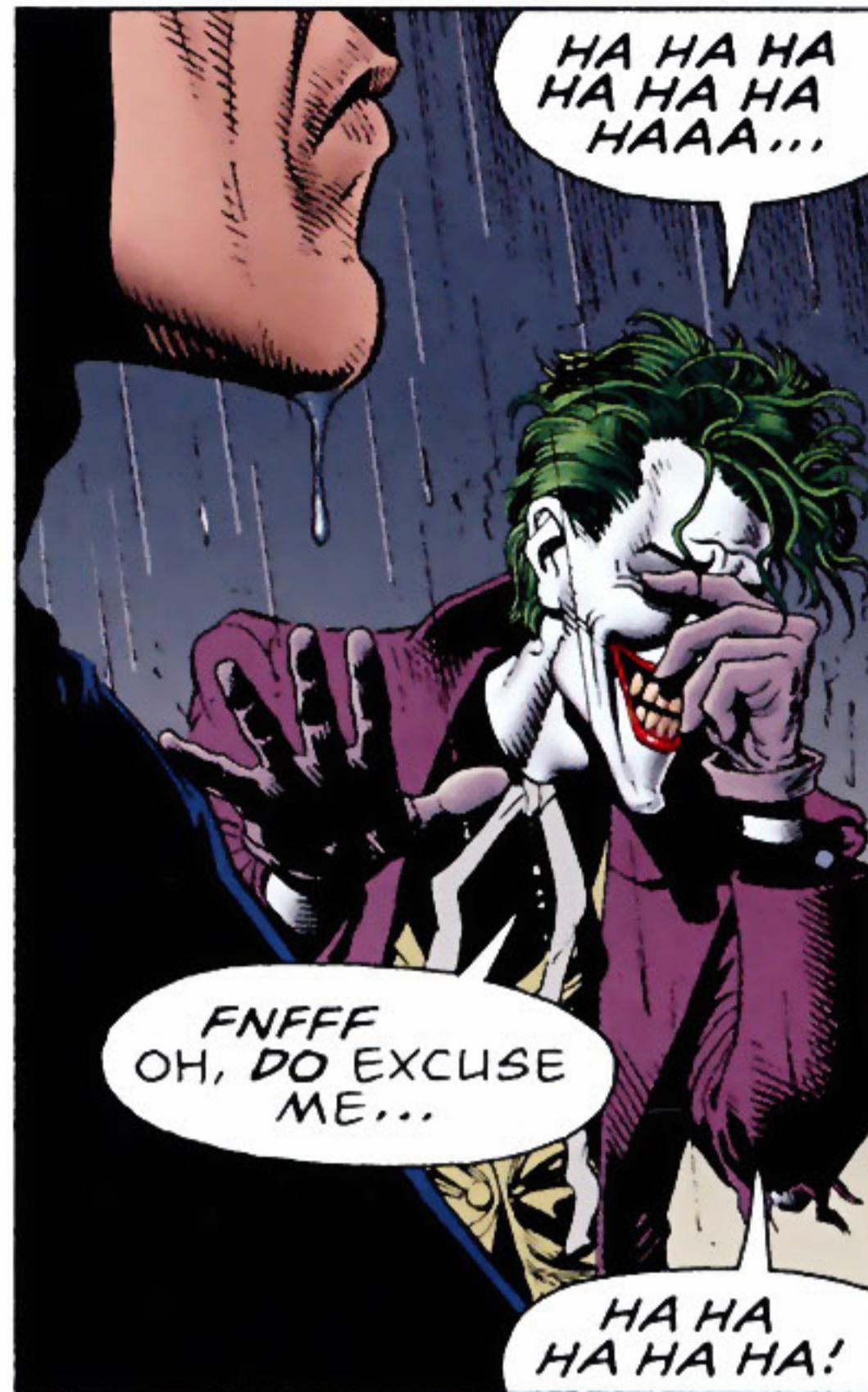
B-BUT THE
SECOND GUY
JUST SHAKES
HIS HEAD.

HE SUH-
SAYS...

HE SAYS
"WH-WHAT DO
YOU THINK I AM?
CRAZY?"

"YOU'D TURN IT
OFF WHEN I WAS
HALF WAY
ACROSS!"







A F T E R W O R D

I've been asked to write the "afterword" to this book — or should that be the "in between"? I'm told by my editor Bob Harras that there's room for up to 800 words. If I go on longer we have to start dropping pages of art and we wouldn't want that, would we? So, reader, if I should stop in mid-sentence it's because I've run out of space.

I've just read Tim Sale's generous introduction. Of all the introductions I've ever received, it's without doubt the most....recent. Having just sat with my 11-year old son watching the hit TV show *Heroes*, it's pretty cool being introduced by its star artist. It seems additionally cool to me that all the writing in this book has been given over not to writers but to artists, a breed of people not known for their ability to string a sentence together — but so far so good.

There's a minor detail that Tim got wrong, actually. It was me that asked Alan to write the book and not the other way round. THE KILLING JOKE was not a project instigated by Alan, nor was it, as far as I know, a labor of love for him, and it doesn't usually appear in a list of his greatest works. I was glad he agreed to write it, though. At the time we'd known each other for quite a while and narrowly missed working together a couple of times. In a peculiar form of homage to him I haven't drawn a comic book story written by any other writer in the last 22 years. When you've worked with the best, anything else would seem like a backward step.

The script for THE KILLING JOKE was very good, but I must admit I had to grit my teeth a couple of times during the drawing of it. I, for instance, would never have chosen to reveal a Joker origin. I think of this as just one of a number of possible origin stories manifesting itself in the Joker's fevered brain. Also, I wouldn't have done such terrible harm to poor Barbara. The story, though, does contain some great iconic moments, my favorite being the scene when the Joker discovers that the gun — as far as we know the same one that maimed Barbara — is empty. People seemed to find the last page of the story ambiguous, so before I conclude this text, remind me to reveal what actually happened.

The most notable absentee from this edition is THE KILLING JOKE's original colorist, John Higgins, and I want to thank him for jumping in when he did and finishing the book so promptly. Back in the pre-computer days of "blue line," airbrush and poster colors, even though I had specific views on how I wanted it to look, I wouldn't have been able to color it myself. It's probably well known that John's choice of colors turned out to be startlingly at odds with what I had in mind so, in February 2007, when Bob Harras told me about this edition, I said, "PLEASE can I recolor the whole thing?"

Technical wizard Jeb Woodard sent me files of the line art which, through some computer alchemy only he understands, he'd isolated from the printed color pages — the original KILLING JOKE artwork has long since disappeared into the hands of collectors — and as I got on with the coloring process on my Mac it was tempting and easy to make changes to the line art itself — a bit of feathering here, a completely redrawn face there. The eagle-eyed may notice that every page has something slightly different on it from

THE KILLING JOKE of 20 years ago. There's at least one figure that wasn't there the first time around. Think of it as a Spot-the-Difference book.

"*An Innocent Guy*" (that's what it's called even though it doesn't say so on it) is of special significance to me. As I became less inclined to work with writers or colorists it was particularly tempting to write a Batman story that was, for better or worse, completely by me. It gave me the opportunity to draw all the scenes I hadn't had a chance to draw in THE KILLING JOKE, including my homage to the unsettlingly surreal Dick Sprang-era Batman that I loved as a kid but combine it with a darker, more morally ambiguous theme that I'd stolen shamelessly from other sources. In so doing I managed to upset at least one mother of a seven-year-old boy who wrote me a letter of protest. Jeb supervised the meticulous painting out of the Zipatone that covered the artwork for the original black and white printing (he didn't quite get it all. You'll see bits of it lingering here and there) and I colored it up for the first time ever. I hope you enjoy these and the preceding 46 pages.

Speaking of which, it's time I revealed what really happened at the end of THE KILLING JOKE: as our protagonists stood there in the rain laughing at the final joke, the police lights reflecting in the pools of filthy water underfoot, the Batman's hand reached out and.....

Brian Bolland

Not far from Six Mile Bottom, UK 2008

I DON'T CONSIDER MYSELF
A BAD PERSON,

ON THE WHOLE I
CONSIDER MYSELF A
GOOD PERSON,

I'M GOOD TO MY PARENTS.
I TREAT MY GIRL RIGHT... TAKE
HER OUT AND BUY HER STUFF.
AND I GO TO CHURCH
EVERY SUNDAY,

BUT I'VE DECIDED THAT JUST
ONCE I WANNA DO A REALLY
BAD THING. I MEAN A REALLY
SERIOUSLY BAD THING.

'CAUSE, YA KNOW, LIKE, WE'RE PUT ON THIS
EARTH WITH FREE WILL. WE CAN CHOOSE TO
DO THIS OR THAT. WE CAN CHOOSE TO BE
GOOD OR BAD. BUT SOMETIMES I THINK
MOST PEOPLE ARE GOOD AND NOT BAD
ONLY BECAUSE THEY'RE SCARED
THEY MIGHT GO TO JAIL OR HELL
OR SOMEPLACE.

SOME GUY ONCE SAID: "ANYTHING DONE OUT
OF FEAR HAS NO MORAL VALUE." WELL, I THINK
THAT'S RIGHT. I FIGURE THE ONLY WAY YOU
CAN BE TRULY **GOOD** IS IF YOU'VE TRIED
BEING **GOOD**, AND YOU'VE TRIED BEING
BAD, AND BEING **GOOD**
FEELS BETTER.

SO WHAT IS IT TO BE, THIS **ONE BAD THING**?
IT'S GOTTA BE SOMETHING COMPLETELY CRUEL
AND HORRIBLE... AND UNNECESSARY... AND...
AND... MOTIVELESS.

'CAUSE GETTING
CAUGHT IS NOT ON
MY AGENDA.

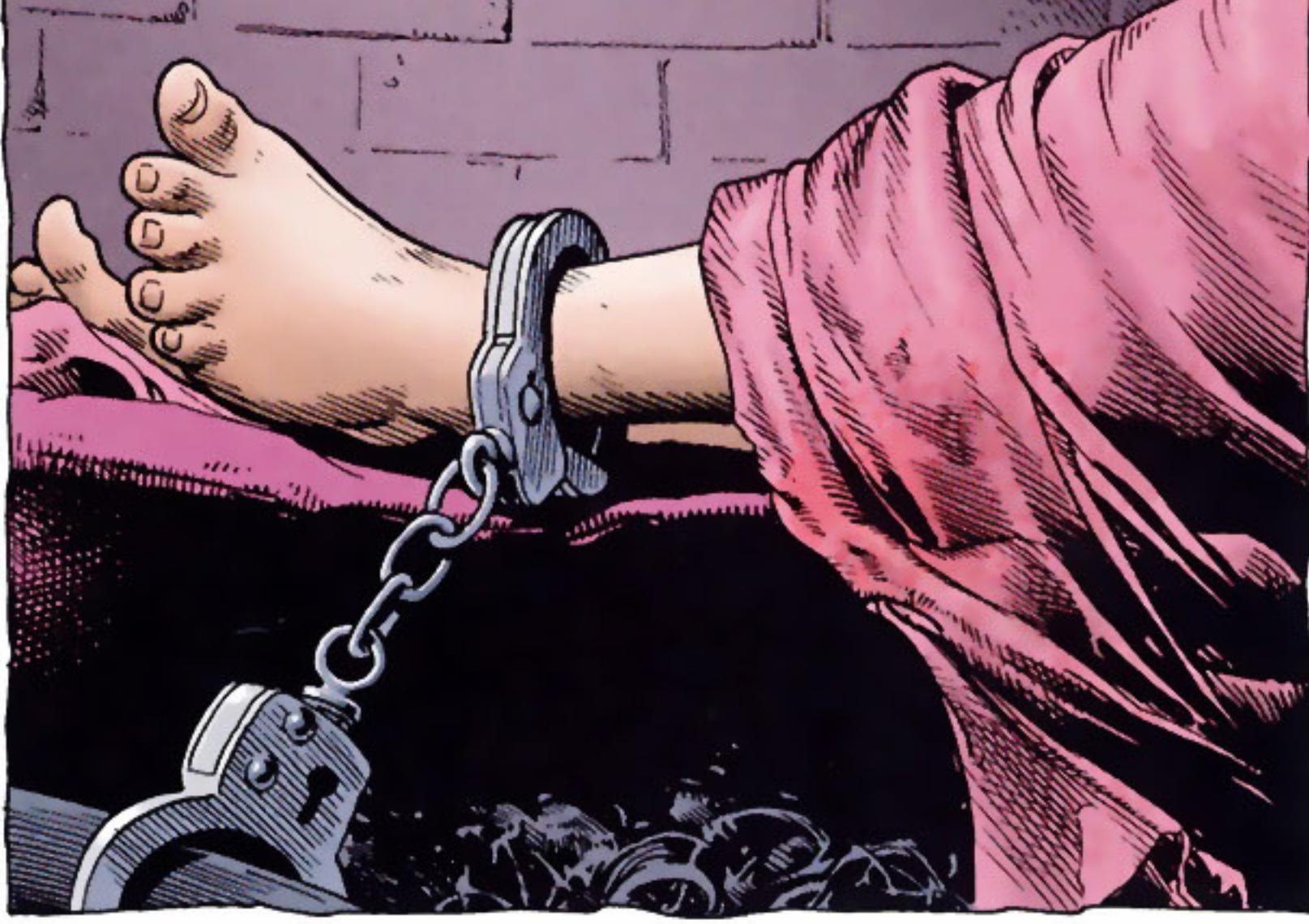
THERE'S AN OLD DISUSED SEWER SHAFT OUT IN A PLACE I KNOW WHERE NO ONE EVER GOES.

I THOUGHT I'D KIDNAP A LITTLE GIRL AND CHAIN HER UP DOWN THERE AND LEAVE HER THERE WEEPING AND WAILING IN THE DARK TILL SHE STARVED TO DEATH.

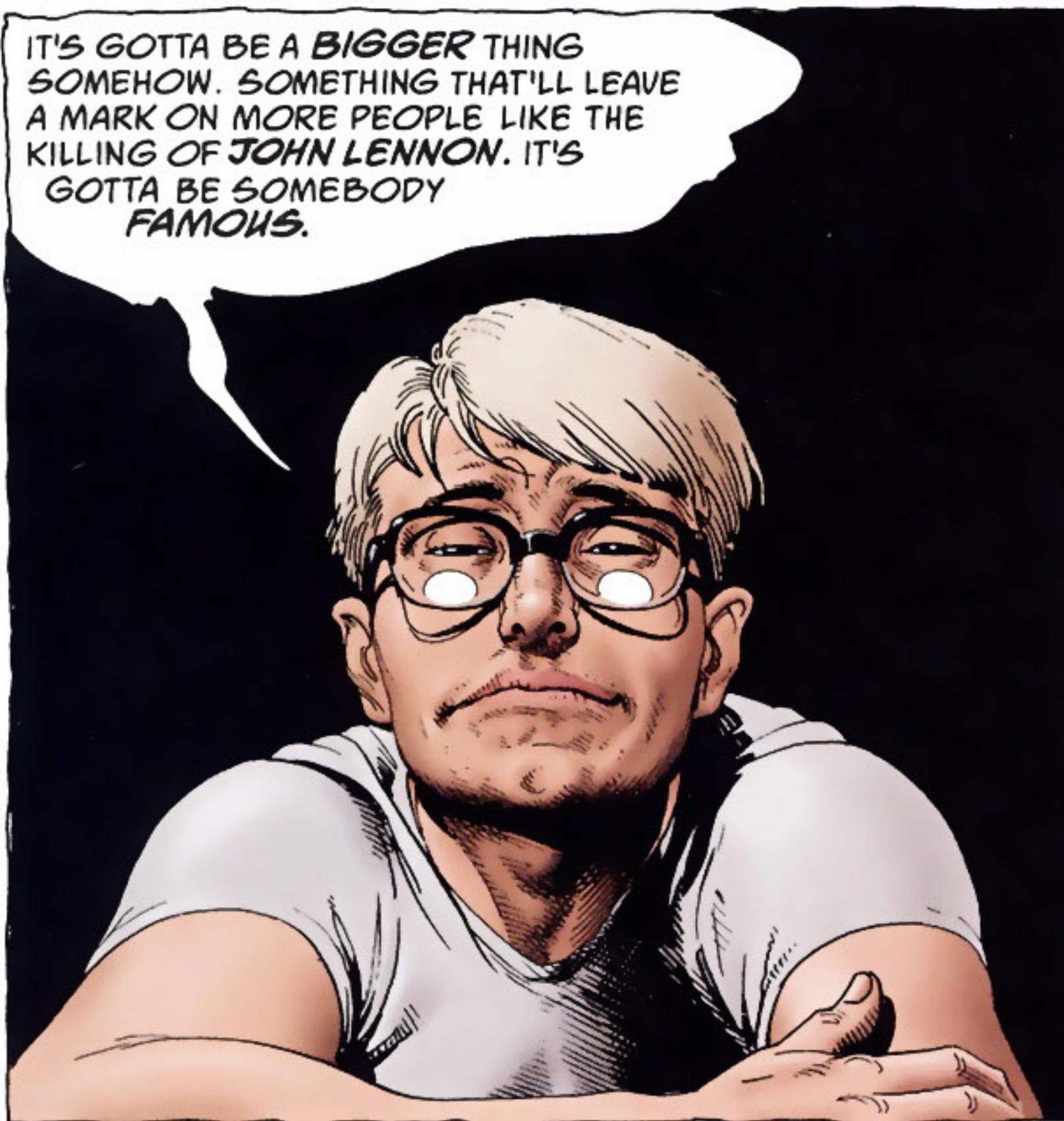


YA GOTTA UNDERSTAND I'M NOT SOME KIND OF PERVERT OR ANYTHING LIKE THAT, BUT WHATEVER I CAN DO TO MAKE HER ORDEAL WORSE AND RUIN THE LIVES OF HER FAMILY, I'LL DO.

BUT SOMEHOW THIS ISN'T ENOUGH.

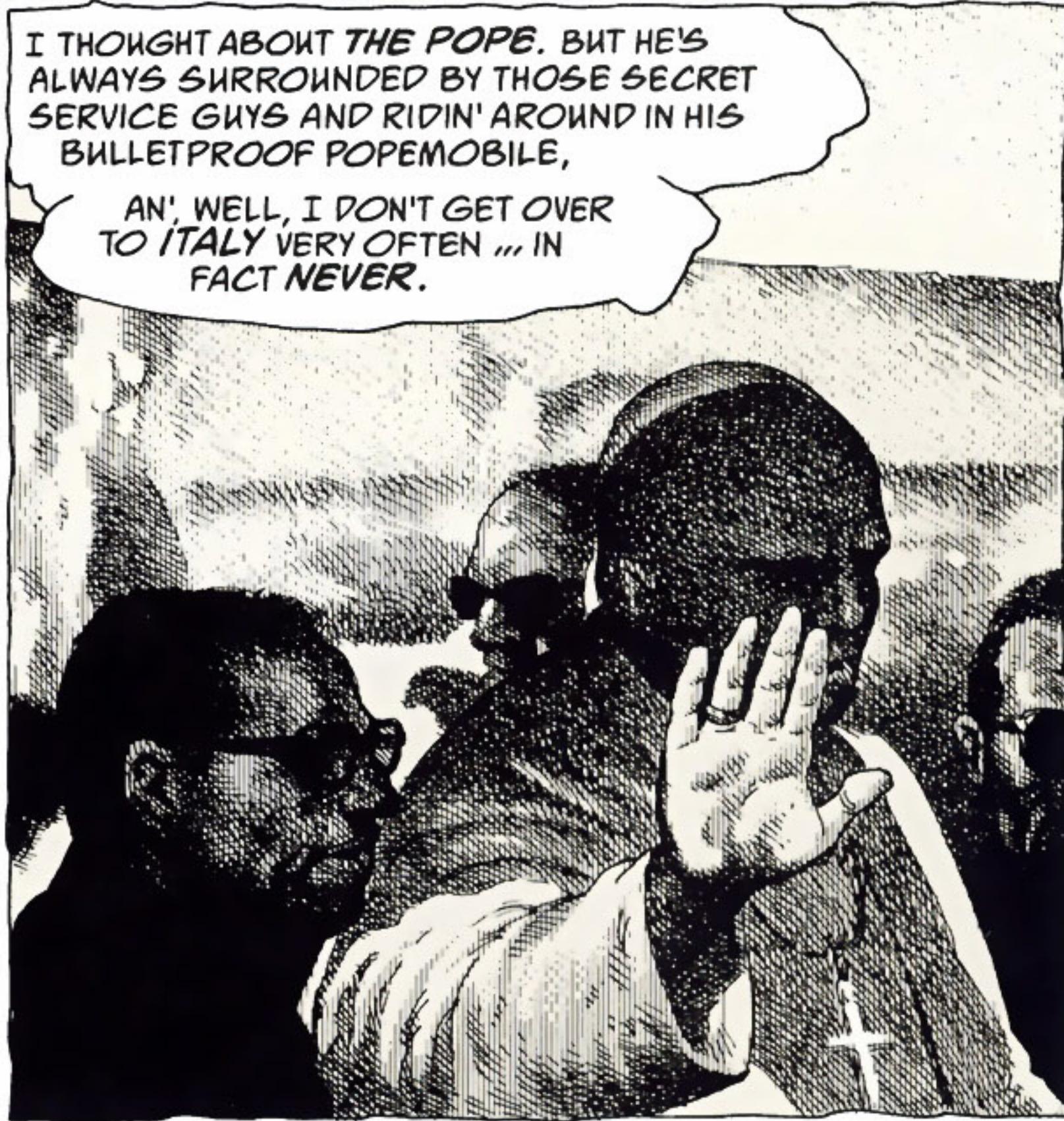


IT'S GOTTA BE A BIGGER THING SOMEHOW. SOMETHING THAT'LL LEAVE A MARK ON MORE PEOPLE LIKE THE KILLING OF JOHN LENNON. IT'S GOTTA BE SOMEBODY FAMOUS.



I THOUGHT ABOUT THE POPE. BUT HE'S ALWAYS SURROUNDED BY THOSE SECRET SERVICE GUYS AND RIDIN' AROUND IN HIS BULLETPROOF POPEMOBILE,

AN', WELL, I DON'T GET OVER TO ITALY VERY OFTEN ... IN FACT NEVER.



I'VE GOTTA CHOOSE MY VICTIM FOR THE SAKE OF CONVENIENCE. IT'S GOTTA BE SOMEONE WHO DOESN'T HAVE AN ARMED GUARD. SOMEONE RIGHT HERE IN GOTHAM.



IT'S GOTTA BE THE BATMAN.

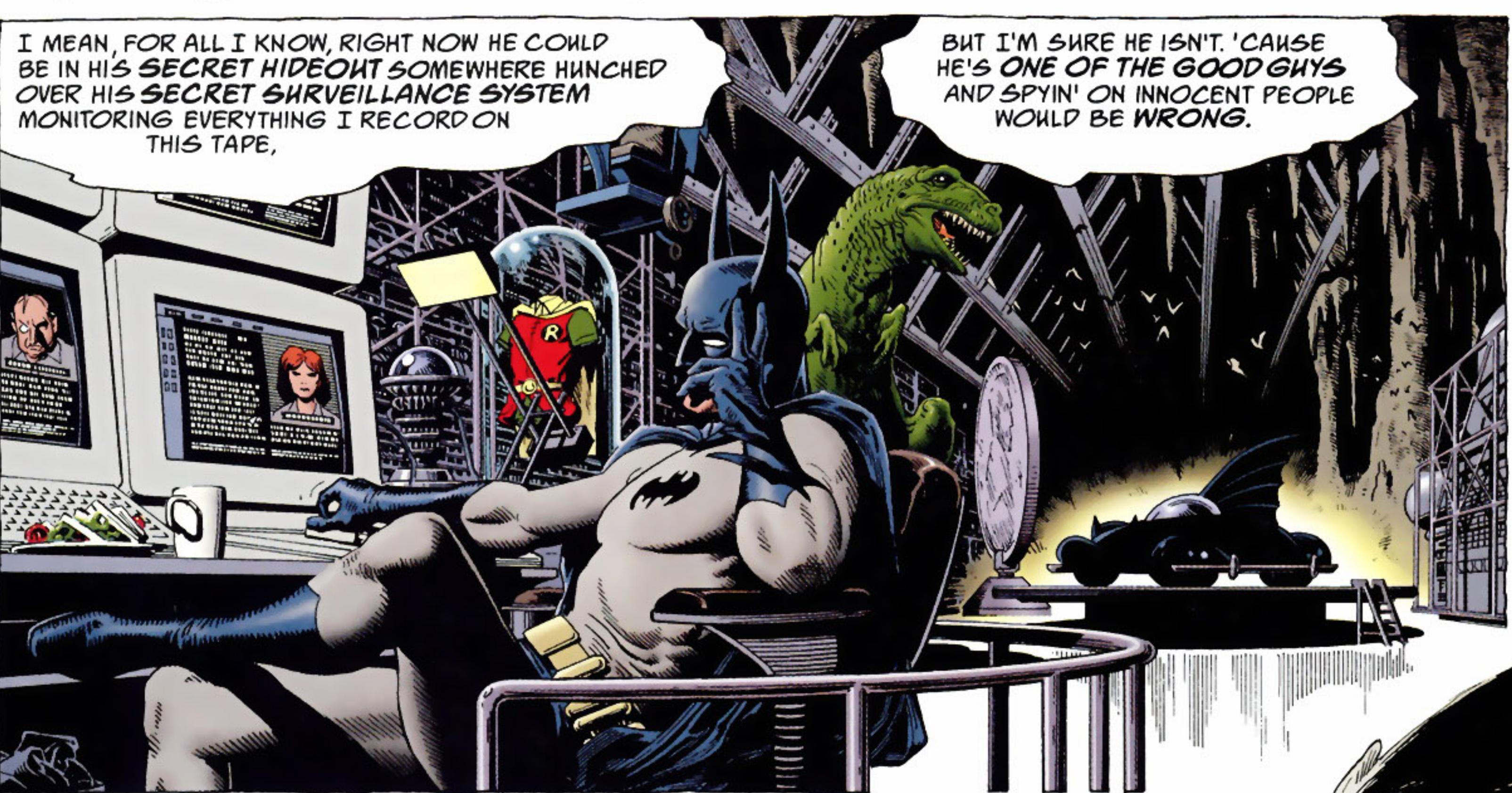
IT'LL BE NO PROBLEM. I'VE GOT A GUN. MY DAD GAVE IT TO ME. HE HAS A WHOLE COLLECTION. HE'S A GREAT BELIEVER IN A CITIZEN'S RIGHT TO BEAR ARMS. IT'S A GUN LIKE A MILLION OTHERS IN THIS CITY.

I'LL DO THE DEED... MY DAD TAUGHT ME HOW TO SHOOT, TOO... THEN I'LL LEAVE THE SCENE. I WON'T LEAVE A CALLING CARD, A DOUBLE-HEADED COIN, A CODED RIDDLE, AND I WON'T LAUGH LIKE A MADMAN. I'LL JUST LEAVE WITHOUT A TRACE.

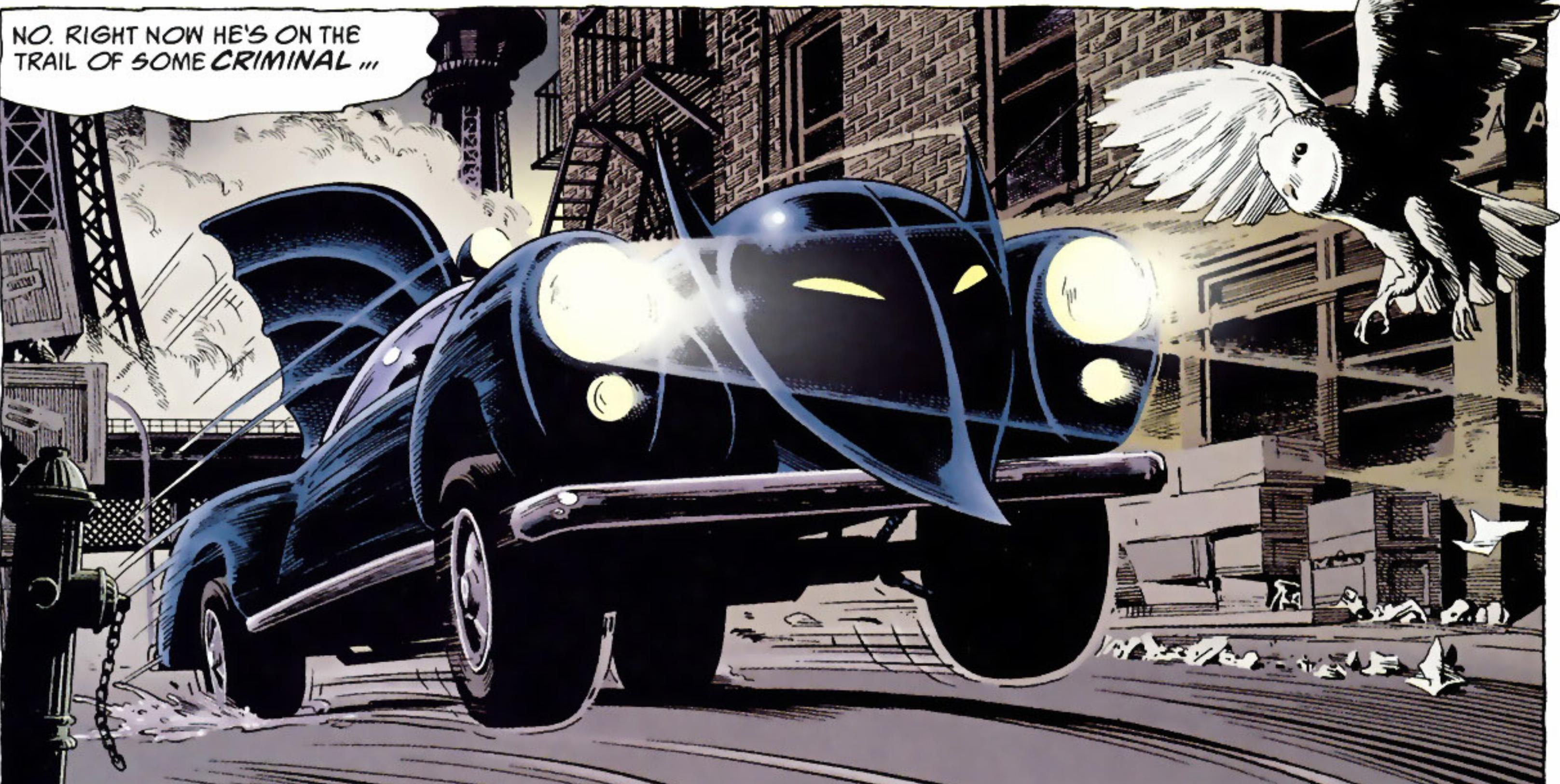


I MEAN, FOR ALL I KNOW, RIGHT NOW HE COULD BE IN HIS SECRET HIDEOUT SOMEWHERE HUNKED OVER HIS SECRET SURVEILLANCE SYSTEM MONITORING EVERYTHING I RECORD ON THIS TAPE,

BUT I'M SURE HE ISN'T. 'CAUSE HE'S ONE OF THE GOOD GUYS AND SPYIN' ON INNOCENT PEOPLE WOULD BE WRONG.



NO. RIGHT NOW HE'S ON THE TRAIL OF SOME CRIMINAL ...



HIS GREAT BAT-WINGS UNFURLED AGAINST THE NIGHT SKY...

STRIKING TERROR INTO THE HEARTS OF THE GUILTY,

AN INSPIRATION AND A COMFORT TO THE INNOCENT.

HE'LL BE SADLY MISSED.

ESPECIALLY BY ME.

ONE DAY HE'LL BE FACE TO FACE WITH TWO-FACE...

OR HE'LL BE TANGLING WITH POISON IVY...

OR IN THE LAIR OF... THOSE THREE GUYS WITH ANIMAL MASKS WHOSE NAMES I CAN NEVER REMEMBER!

AT LAST THE VILLAIN WILL KNOW THE GAME'S UP.

THROW DOWN YOUR UMBRELLA, PENGUIN.

AWWWWWK!

MAKE ME!

THERE'LL BE A FIGHT, AND A THRILLING CHASE INVOLVING AN ENORMOUS TYPEWRITER OR SOMETHING,

A SWIFT AND DECISIVE CLIMAX.

THE GOOD GUY'LL MAKE
A DRAMATIC EXIT

LEAVING THE BAD GUY
TO PONDER THE ERROR
OF HIS WAYS.

'CAUSE, LET'S FACE IT,
CRIME DOESN'T PAY.



AND JUST FOR ONE MOMENT
THE BATMAN WILL PAUSE. TURN.
HIS FACE ILLUMINATED BY A SINGLE
LIGHT... A SPLENDID AVENGER
OF THE NIGHT.

AND THEN FROM A DARK ALLEY,

OR A WINDOW
HIGH UP,

OR A GRASSY
KNOLL,

OR SOME OTHER
PLACE,

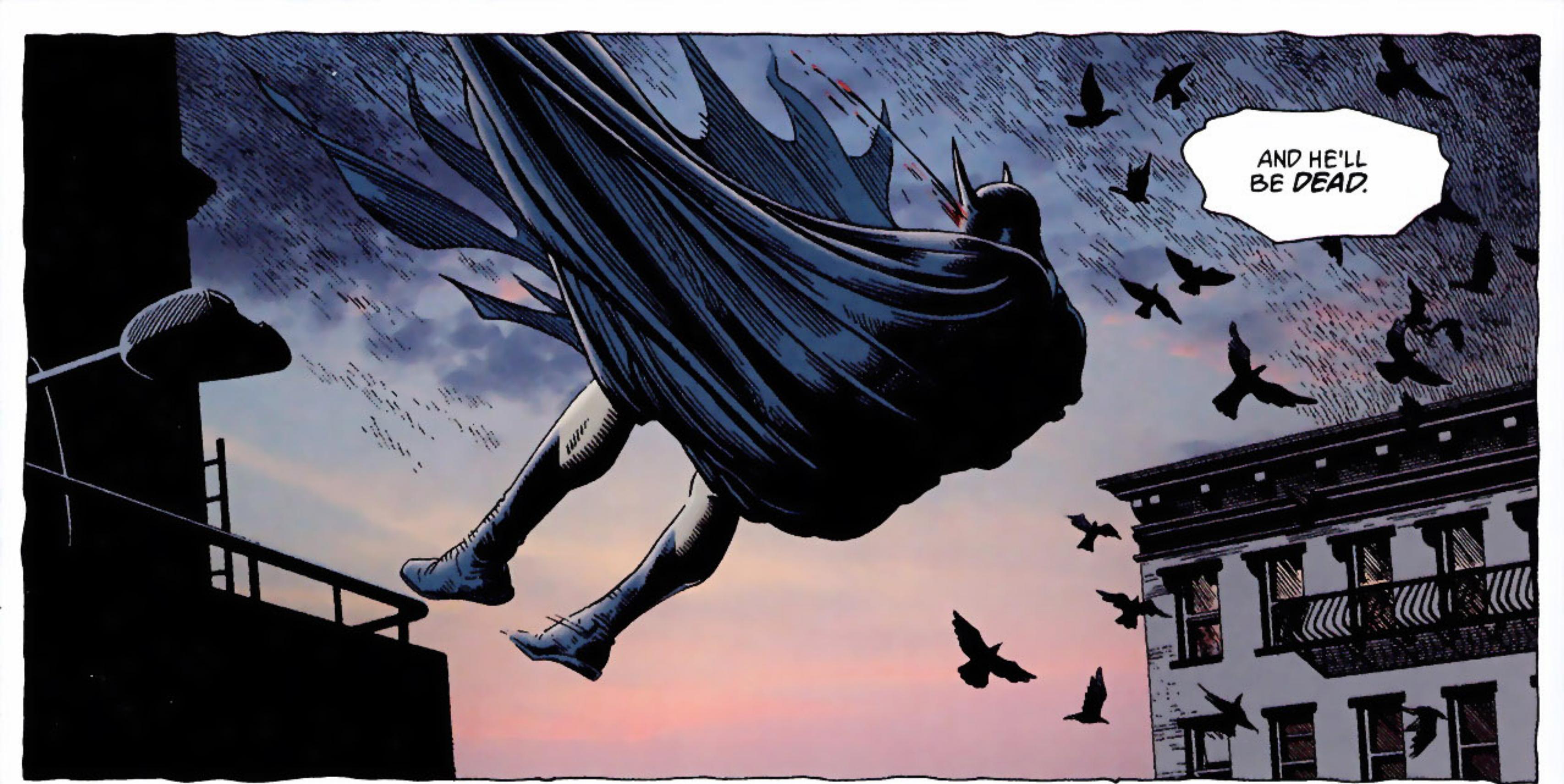
THERE'LL BE
A GLINT,

AND THEN

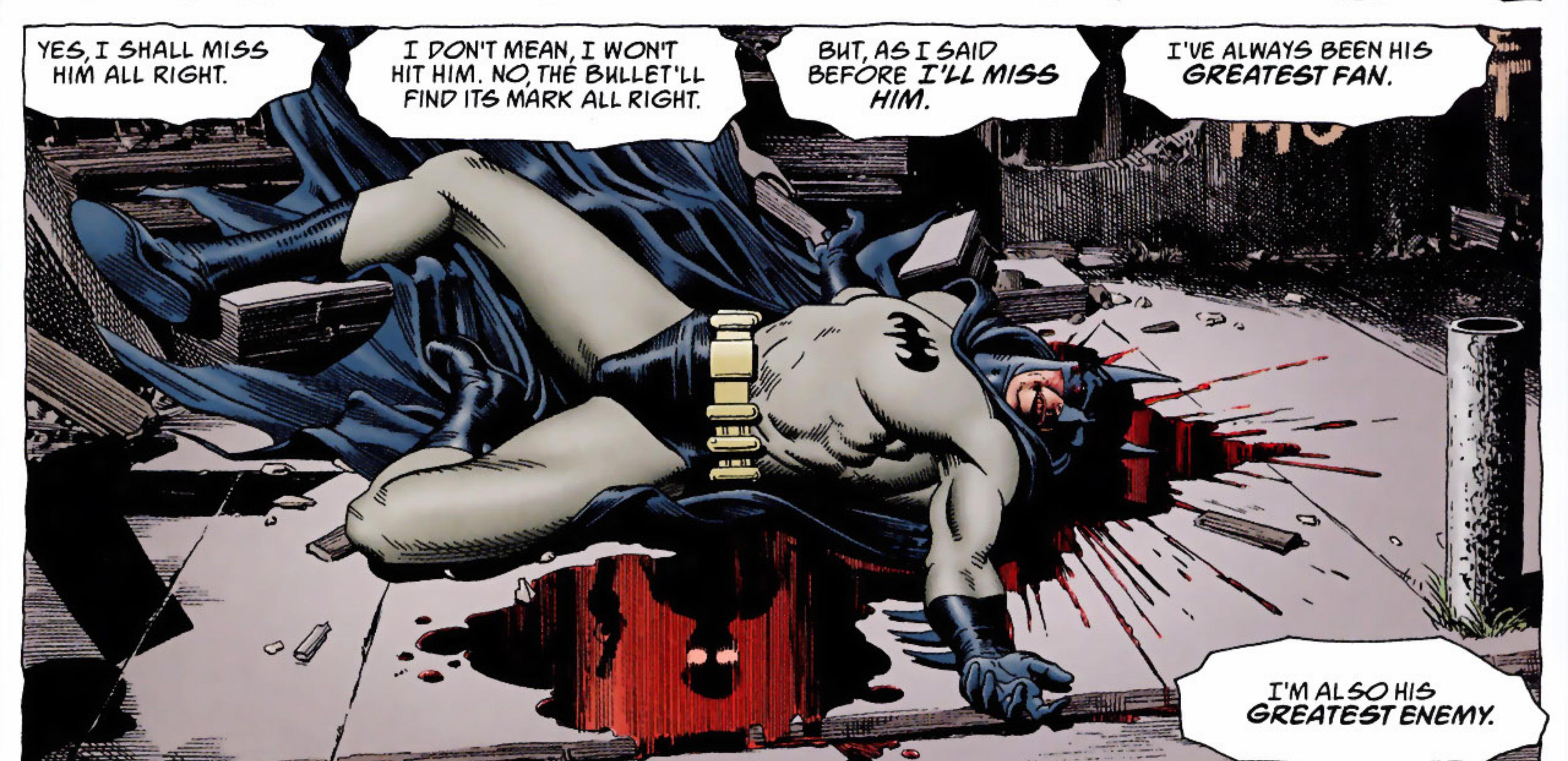


BANG





AND HE'LL
BE DEAD.



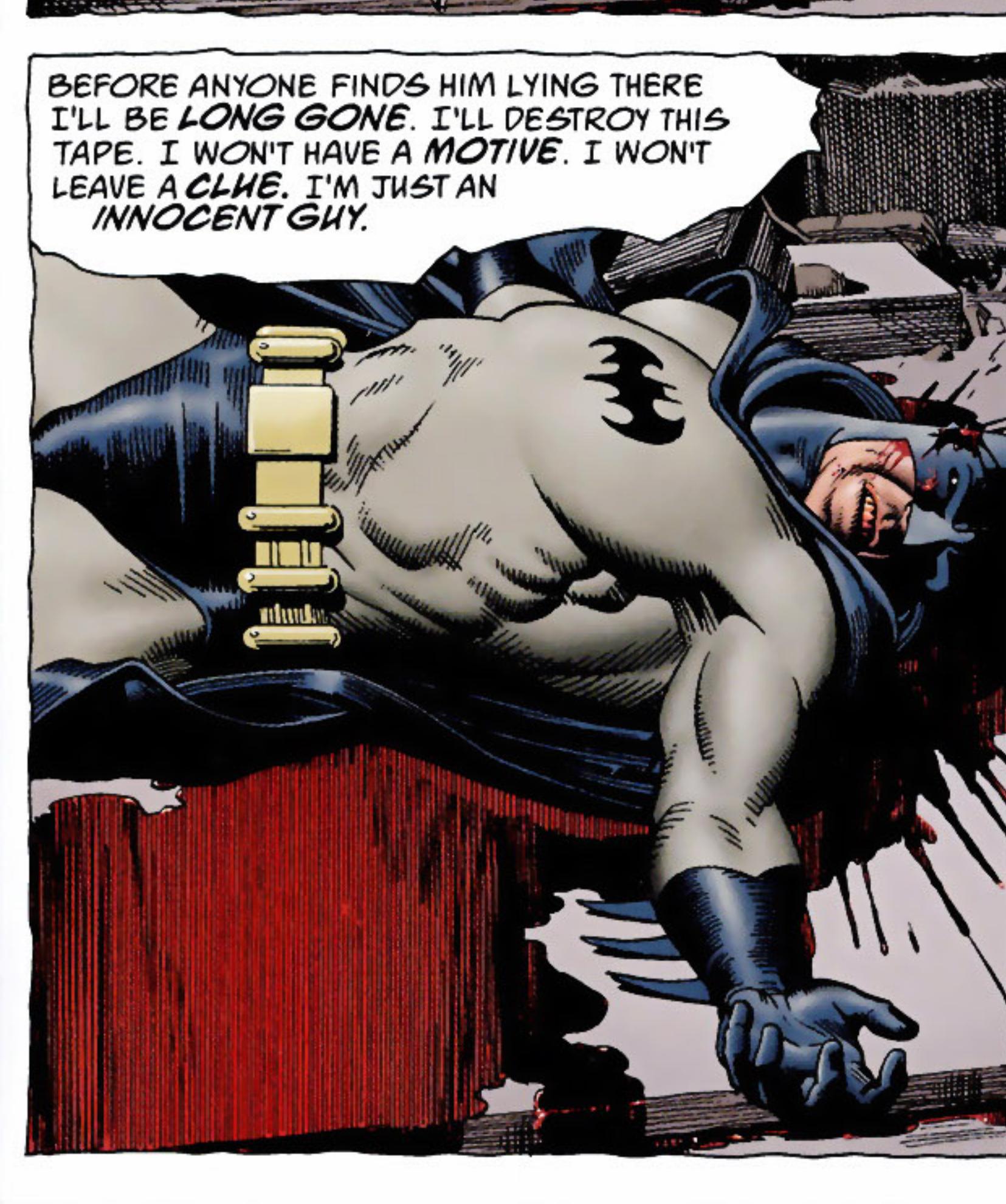
YES, I SHALL MISS
HIM ALL RIGHT.

I DON'T MEAN, I WON'T
HIT HIM. NO, THE BULLET'LL
FIND ITS MARK ALL RIGHT.

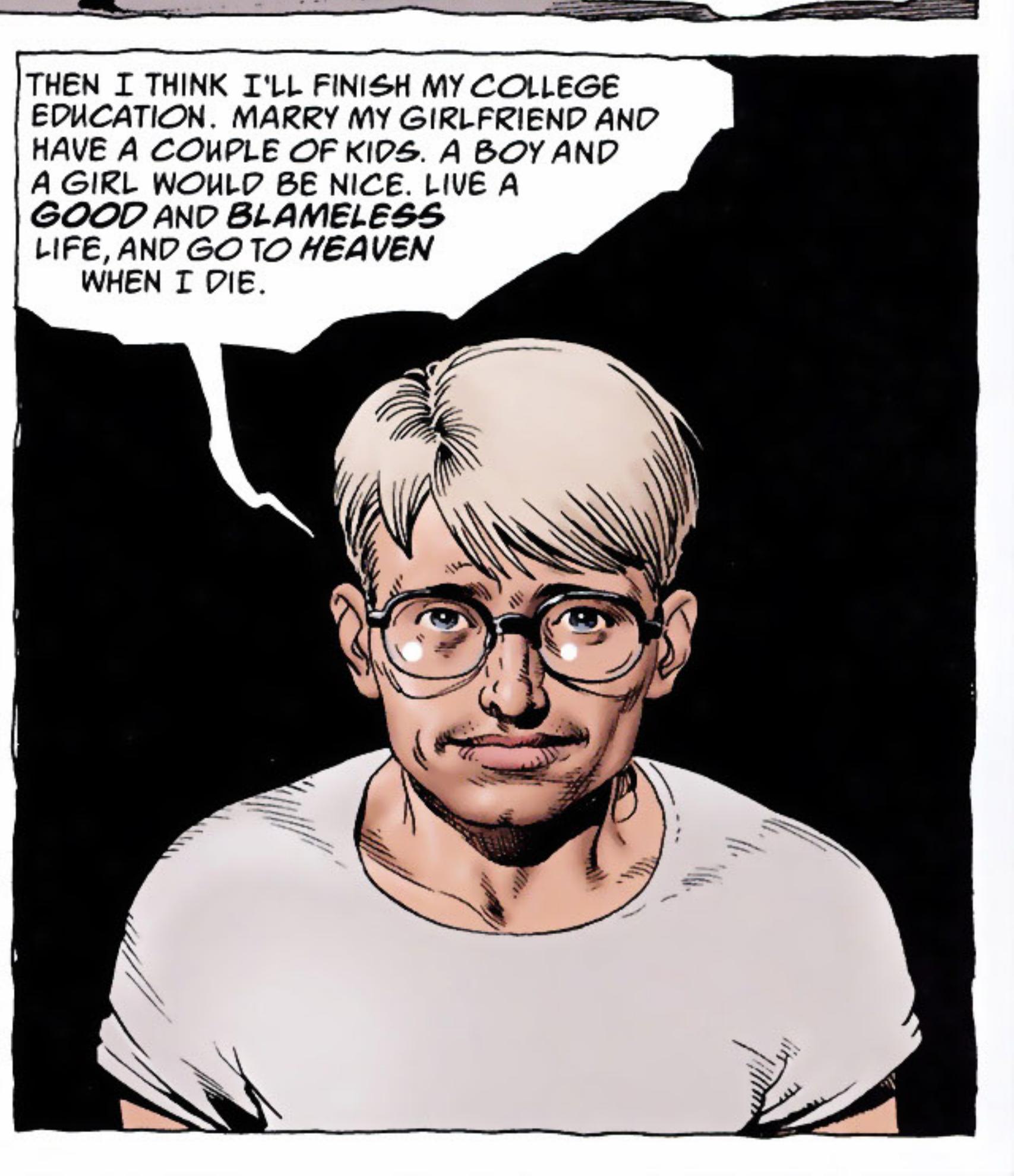
BUT, AS I SAID
BEFORE I'LL MISS
HIM.

I'VE ALWAYS BEEN HIS
GREATEST FAN.

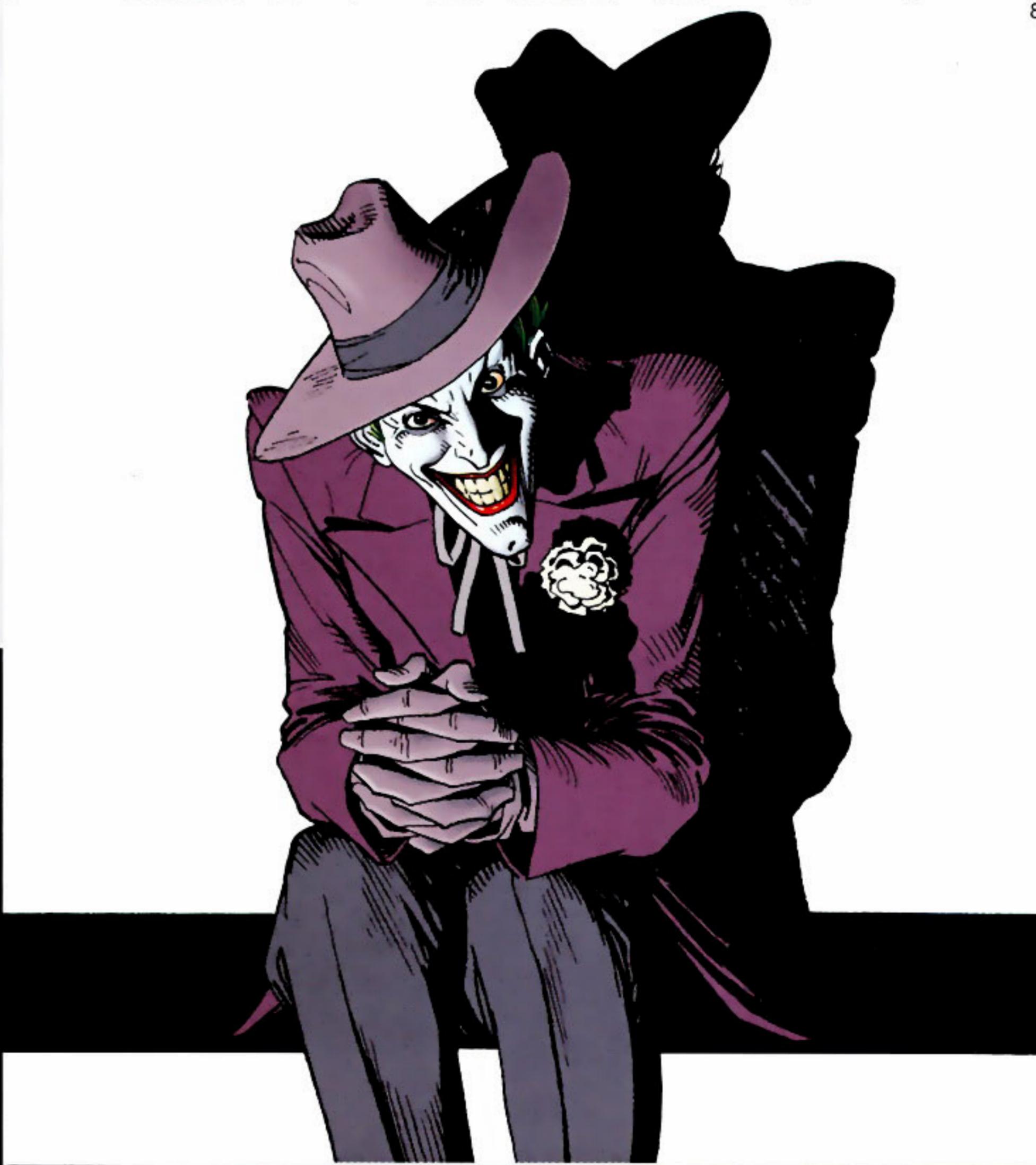
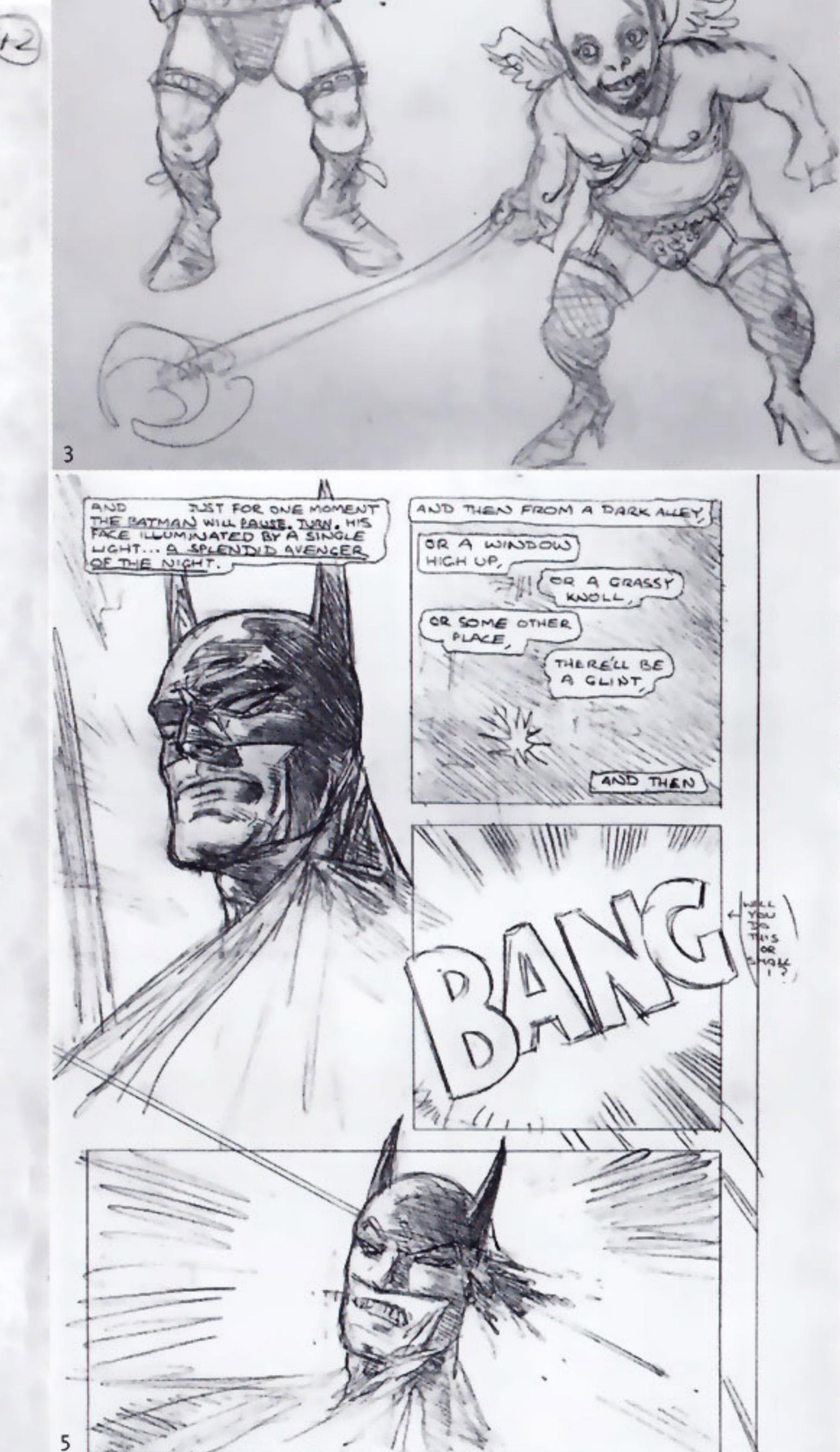
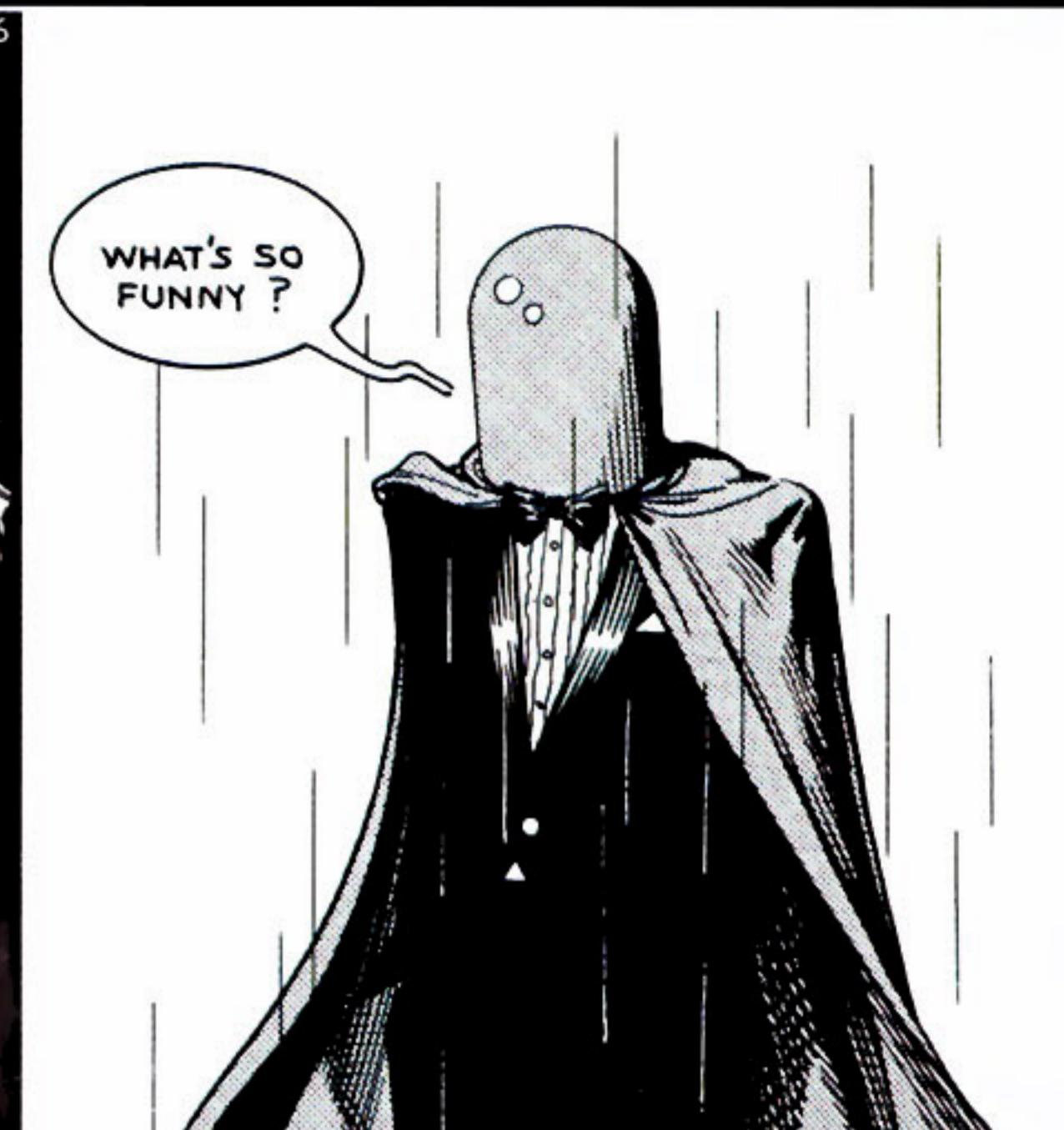
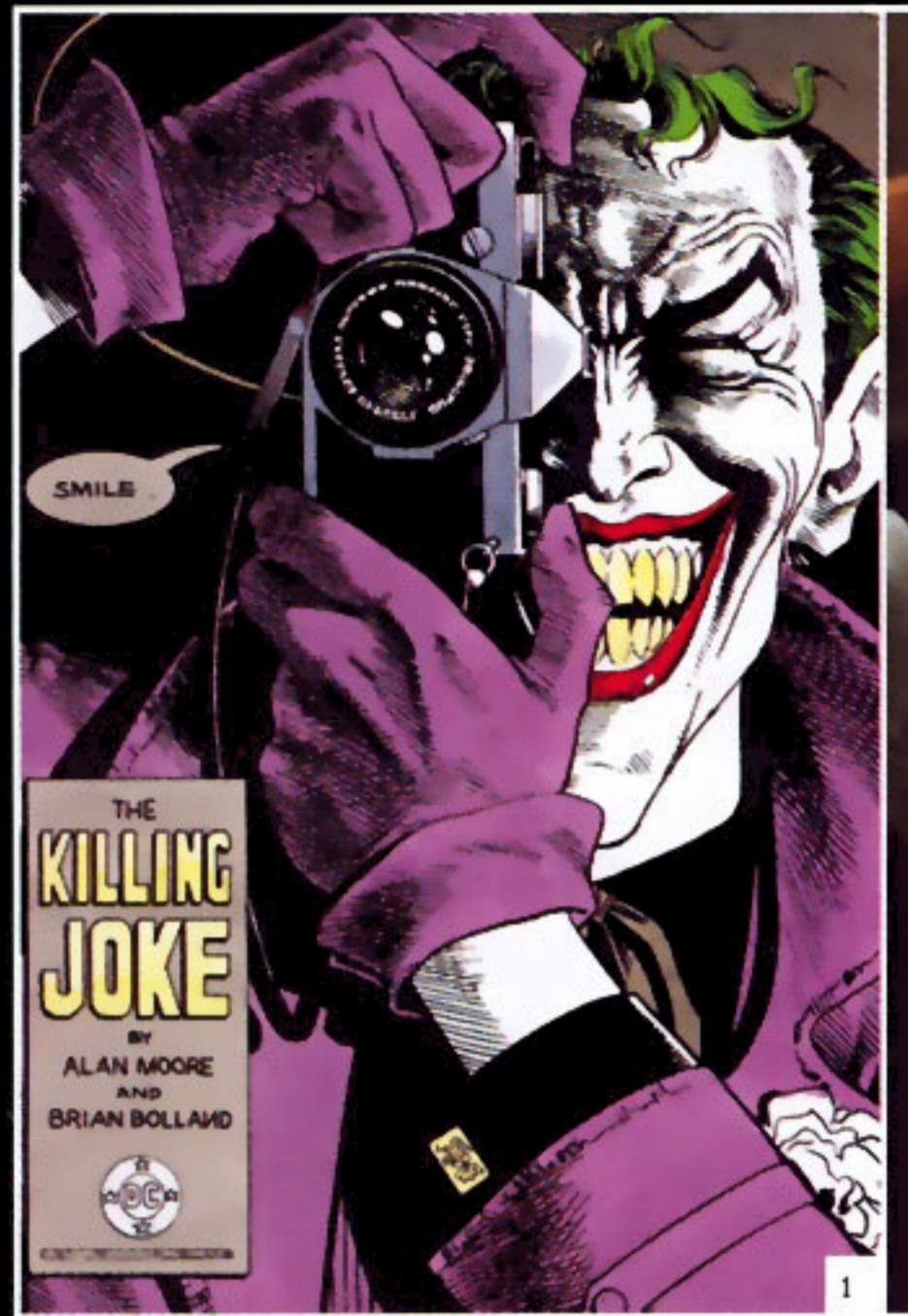
I'M ALSO HIS
GREATEST ENEMY.



BEFORE ANYONE FINDS HIM LYING THERE
I'LL BE LONG GONE. I'LL DESTROY THIS
TAPE. I WON'T HAVE A MOTIVE. I WON'T
LEAVE A CLUE. I'M JUST AN
INNOCENT GUY.



THEN I THINK I'LL FINISH MY COLLEGE
EDUCATION. MARRY MY GIRLFRIEND AND
HAVE A COUPLE OF KIDS. A BOY AND
A GIRL WOULD BE NICE. LIVE A
GOOD AND BLAMELESS
LIFE, AND GO TO HEAVEN
WHEN I DIE.



From the files of Brian Bolland

Figures 1 and 2 are giving away a closely guarded professional secret. Yes, I did use photographic reference for the cover of *THE KILLING JOKE!* Since it's a mirror image of me in the photo you'll notice that it's actually the thumb of my left hand that's pressing the button to take the picture. The resulting sketch is probably the most thorough cover rough I've ever drawn and the only one in color. I must have been very keen to push the idea.

The evil dwarves (**figure 3**) were written into the script by Alan and given the names of three characters owned by another major company — so they can't be repeated here. I always wanted to apologize to any persons of diminutive stature who might be reading this for our lack of political correctness.

As with the artwork, all the small "prelim" pages are now in the hands of collectors, and **figure 4** is the only one we could track down. I had more success with the *Innocent Guy* prelims. I have copies of some of them here (**figures 5,9,10**). This, incidentally, was the form in which I originally wrote the story and presented it to my editor, Mark Chiarello.

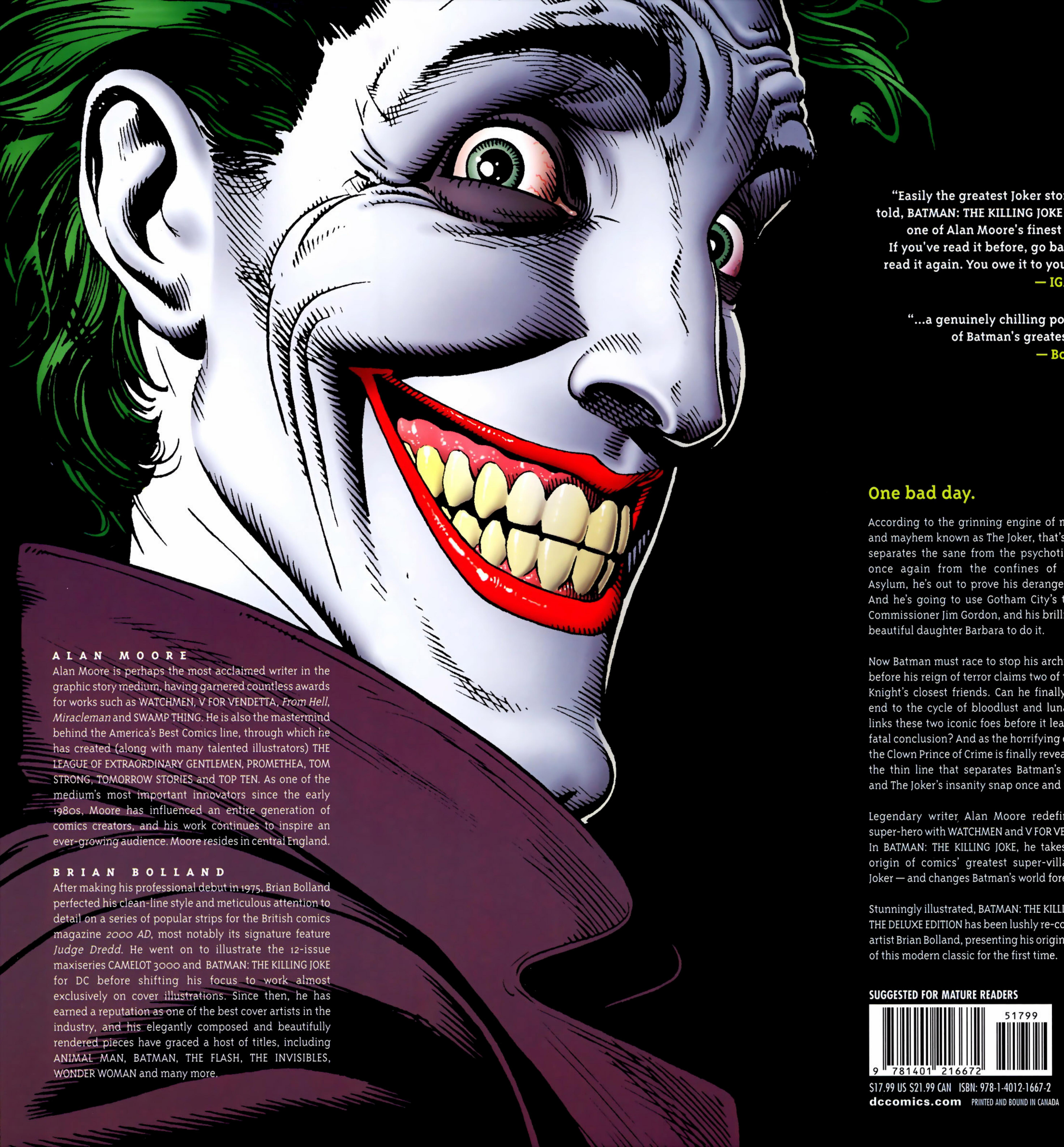
Figure 6 was drawn in Paris (with a series of markers that were running low on ink, by the looks of things) and Italian artist Tanino Liberatore produced a painted version of it for the French edition of *THE KILLING JOKE*. **Figures 7 and 8** are sketches of the Joker in his various guises.

ALAN MOORE

Alan Moore is perhaps the most acclaimed writer in the graphic story medium, having garnered countless awards for such works as *WATCHMEN*, *V FOR VENDETTA*, *From Hell*, *Miracleman* and *SWAMP THING*. He is also the mastermind behind the America's Best Comics line, through which he has created (along with many talented illustrators) *THE LEAGUE OF EXTRAORDINARY GENTLEMEN*, *PROMETHEA*, *TOM STRONG*, *TOMORROW STORIES* and *TOP TEN*. As one of the medium's most important innovators since the early 1980s, Moore has influenced an entire generation of comics creators, and his work continues to inspire an ever-growing audience. Moore resides in central England.

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"Easily the greatest Joker story ever told, *BATMAN: THE KILLING JOKE* is also one of Alan Moore's finest works. If you've read it before, go back and read it again. You owe it to yourself."

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"...a genuinely chilling portrayal of Batman's greatest foe."

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Now Batman must race to stop his archnemesis before his reign of terror claims two of the Dark Knight's closest friends. Can he finally put an end to the cycle of bloodlust and lunacy that links these two iconic foes before it leads to its fatal conclusion? And as the horrifying origin of the Clown Prince of Crime is finally revealed, will the thin line that separates Batman's nobility and The Joker's insanity snap once and for all?

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BATMAN THE KILLING JOKE

ALAN MOORE BRIAN BOLLAND

BATMAN THE KILLING JOKE

THE DELUXE EDITION

INTRODUCTION
BY TIM SALE

DC
COMICS

"I loved *THE KILLING JOKE*... It's my favorite. It's the first comic I've ever loved."

—Tim Burton

SMILE!

DC
COMICS

Twenty years ago, writer Alan Moore and artist Brian Bolland gave the world a glimpse of the events that made The Joker who he is. Now their brilliantly nightmarish vision returns in a new, definitive edition.

He's the Batman's most implacable foe, a mad criminal genius whose bizarre rampages baffle even the world's greatest detective. But The Joker was not always this way. Before he became the Clown Prince of Crime, before a single, fateful day scarred his face and warped his mind forever, he was just the sort of person the Dark Knight has dedicated his life to protecting — a common man.

What happened to transform this average citizen into the greatest evil Gotham City has ever known? Can Batman stop the Joker from dragging Commissioner Gordon and his daughter Barbara into his world of murderous madness? And can these two enemies put a stop to their eternal duel before it's too late for both of them?

Presented for the first time with stark, stunning new coloring by Bolland, *BATMAN: THE KILLING JOKE* is Alan Moore's unforgettable meditation on the razor-thin line between sanity and insanity, heroism and villainy, comedy and tragedy.



BATMAN: THE KILLING JOKE
ALAN MOORE
BRIAN BOLLAND



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