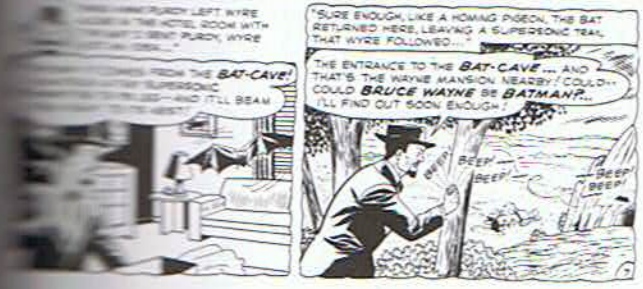
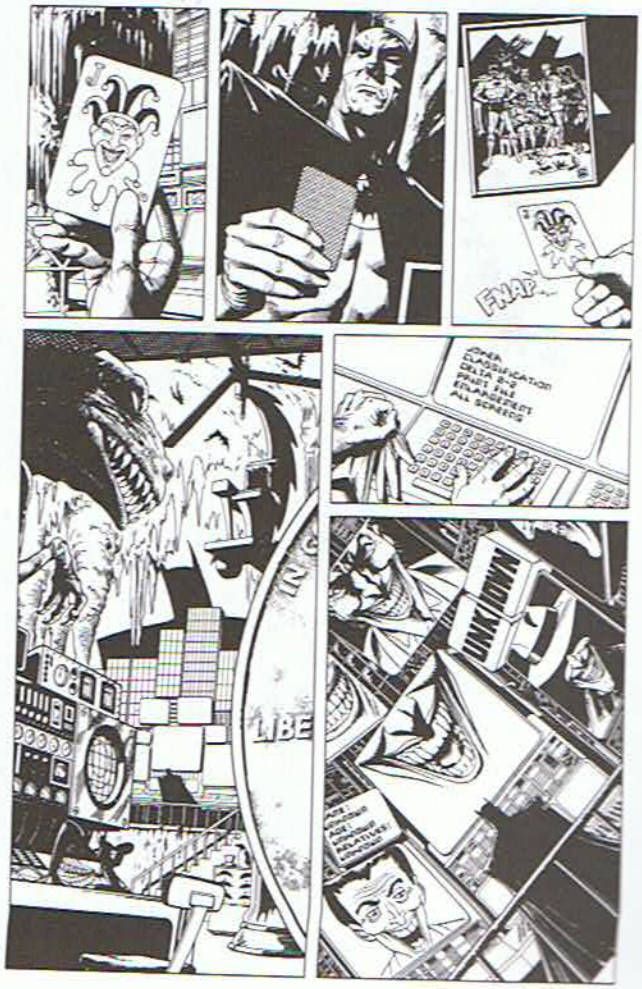


The mysterious Bat Cave has seen a few unwanted visitors over the years. Some of them ended up like the unfortunate Alec Wyre, pictured here. (Batman *#121, January 1959, "The Body in the Bat-cave," pp. 7–8 (reprinted).*) Bottom Left: *The pulse-pounding moment when Alfred Pennyworth discovers that his masters Bruce Wayne and Dick Grayson are really the crime-fighting Dynamic Duo.* (The Untold Legend of the Batman *#2, August 1980, "With Friends Like These . . . ," p. 14.*) Bottom Right: *The limits of technology: Even the Bat Cave's super computer can't answer the riddle of the Joker.* (The Killing Joke, *1988, p. 11.*)



The Hall of Trophies

More than one thousand trophies are displayed in this famous addition to the Bat Cave. Many of the items, souvenirs from completed assignments, are secured behind temperature-controlled glass cases.

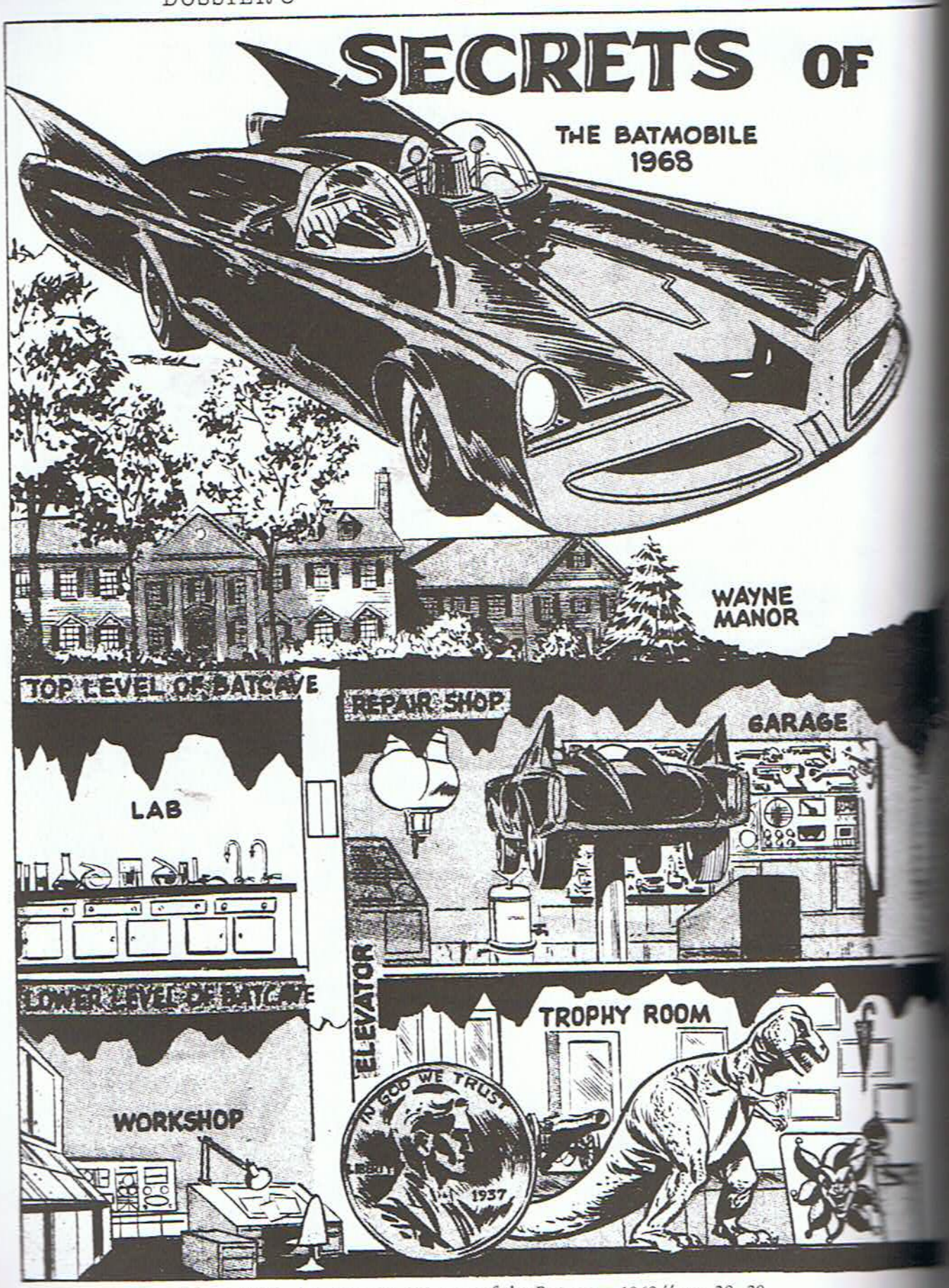
Some of the most famous items include the giant Lincoln-head penny from the "Penny Plunder Case," and the colossal dinosaur model from the "Dinosaur Island Case."

But one of the most prized items in the Hall is the old Batman costume Bruce Wayne once saw his father wear to a masquerade ball. In later years Bruce Wayne would credit that old, subconscious childhood memory with resurfacing the fateful day a bat flew in the window of Wayne Manor.

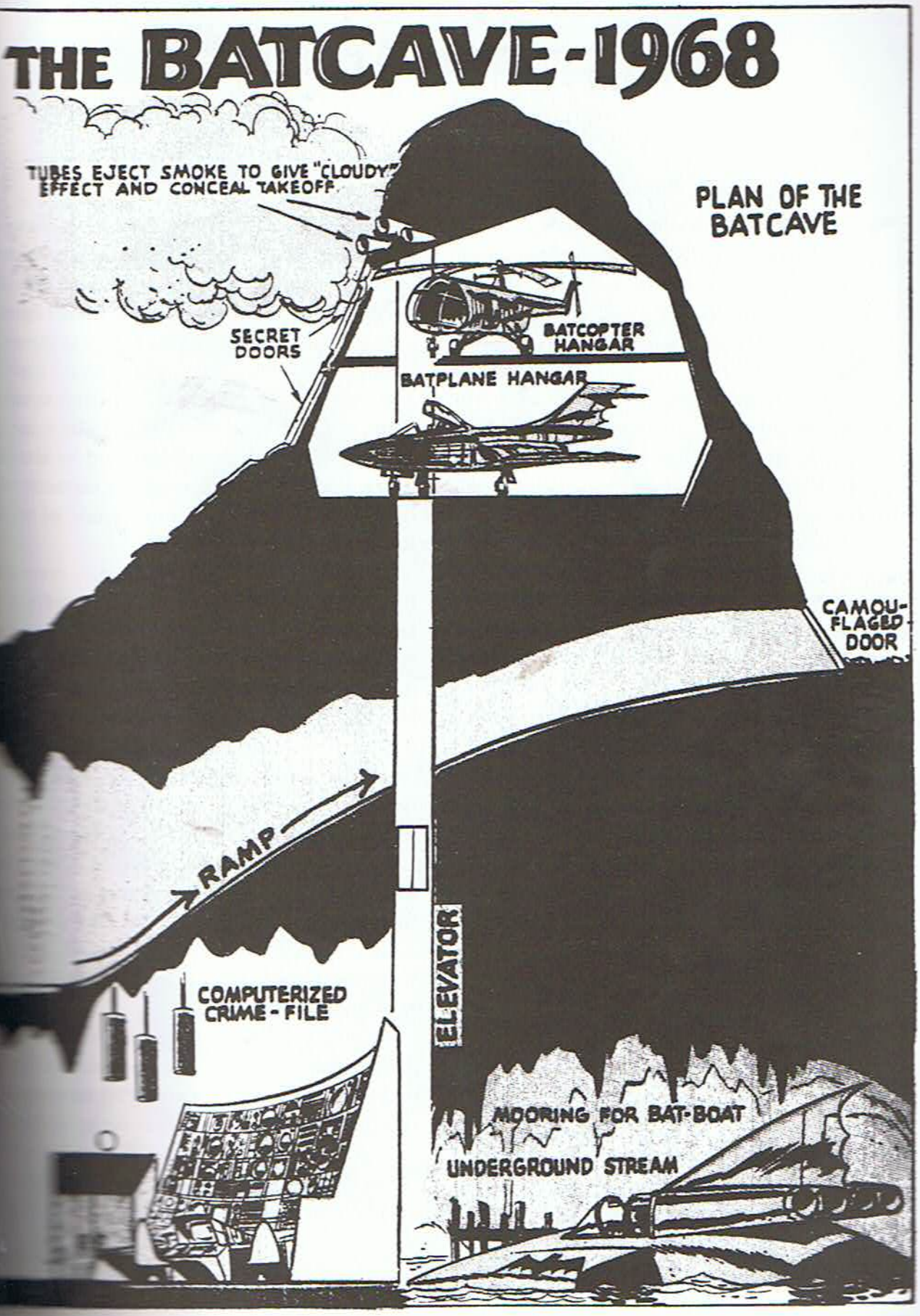
"Now I realize I adopted a Batman costume because I remembered my father wearing one," Batman once told Robin. (Batman once told Alfred the old costume was the most precious thing he has ever owned.)

Alfred enjoys the brief spell of super powers as "The Eagle." (Batman #127, October 1959, *"Batman's Super-Partner," p. 4 [select panels].*)

[illegible] costume worn by Dr. Thomas Wayne. (Detective #235, September 1956, "The First Bat-[illegible])



Batman 80-page Giant #203, *August 1968, "Secrets of the Batcave—1968," pp. 28–29.*


THE BATCAVE-1968
TUBES EJECT SMOKE TO GIVE "CLOUDY" EFFECT AND CONCEAL TAKEOFF
PLAN OF THE BATCAVE
SECRET DOORS
BATCOPTER HANGAR
BATPLANE HANGAR
CAMOU-FLAGED DOOR
RAMP
ELEVATOR
COMPUTERIZED CRIME-FILE
MOORING FOR BAT-BOAT
UNDERGROUND STREAM

CHAPTER 11

DETECTIVE SCIENCE

DURING A 1987 CASE IN LONDON, THE DYnamic Duo, assisted by the Elongated Man and an aging Golden Age private eye named Slam Bradley, halted an assassination attempt on the royal family. The case closed with a historic meeting between the Batman and a legendary figure wearing a trademark deerstalker cap, an elegant pipe clenched in his teeth, and a familiar, proud profile—none other than a still spry and very much alive Sherlock Holmes!

The elevated climate of Tibet, where he kept his primary residence, and a special diet accounted for his remarkable longevity, Holmes explained (although one suspects that the esoteric spiritual practices of that fabled land played some part as well).

As the Elongated Man gushed and Slam Bradley and the rest just gawked, Batman stood silently to the side in deference to Holmes. And Holmes, gazing upon Batman, didn't need to waste words—his twinkling eyes and wise smile spoke volumes on the respect he had for Batman.[1]

It's important that Sherlock Holmes, whose very name is synonymous with the art of deductive reasoning, would have such respect for the hero who has been dubbed "the Darknight Detective." Whether decoding the cryptic crime messages of the Riddler, solving a murder mystery, or divining the crime patterns of a Joker or Two-Face, a major part of Batman's appeal has been his brilliance as a detective.

"I still remember the ritual of shining shoes for a dime, or collecting six soda pop bottles for the twelve cents deposit they would bring," Mark Hamill (Luke Skywalker of *Star Wars* fame) writes in his introduction to the *Son of the Demon* Batman book. "That would buy a comic book, through which I could be instantly transported to the Batcave and watch the world's greatest detective in action.... Batman's world was dark, mysterious and challenging. Oh, how I agonized over the panel that asked the reader to guess how Batman had solved the crime! Should I go back and examine everything in detail or just turn the damn page and get it over with? Show me, Batman, tell me how you did it. And he would, of course, patiently explaining the methods of his deduction as if each and every one of us were Robin (and we *were*)."[2]

Batman's greatness as a detective comes from his renaissance approach to criminology. The Dark Knight is adept at the mechanics of crime fighting, whether dusting for fingerprints or processing an important clue by chemical analysis. He is a superb master of disguise, has an eye for detail and a command of language from the most obscure dialect of distant lands to the underworld's street slang. His mind is not locked into one pattern of logic but is fluid and flexible. Even if a life hangs on the outcome of his reasonings, Batman can shrug off the pressures and mentally sift through the data of a case until the saving truth emerges. To top it off, the Dark Knight has an almost supernatural sense of intuition.

"I often think of him as an obsessed artist," Jenette Kahn reasons. "He has an artist's passion and commitment to his art.... He has incredible discipline, fire, and ferocity in his commitment.

"You would assume that he does not concern himself with crimes that the cop on the beat can solve," says Denny O'Neil. "He would concern

1. "The Doomsday Book," *Detective Comics* 572 (March 1987), pp. 52–53.

2. Mark Hamill, "Introduction," in *Batman: Son of the Demon* (New York: DC Comics, Inc., 1987), pp. 1–2.

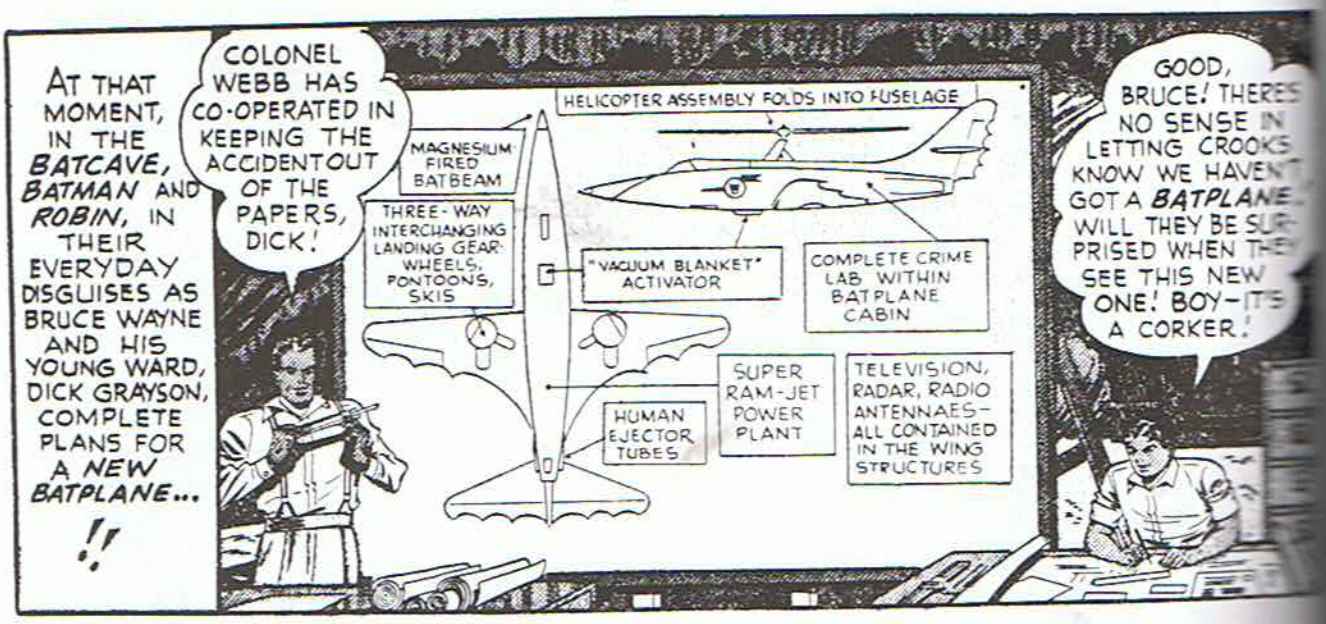
Batman meets Sherlock Holmes. (Detective #572, *March 1987, "The Doomsday Book," pp. 52–53 [select panels].*)

himself with crimes that wouldn't fall under simple police procedure. It's an idea that's in Rex Stout's Nero Wolfe novels where Wolfe is constantly saying, 'I am an artist or I am nothing,' operating as much by intuition as logic, which, oddly enough, makes him a scientific crime fighter....If you're a scientific crime fighter, you're going to operate by intuition."

O'Neil, who prior to his comic book career was a newspaper reporter assigned to the crime beat, recalls how often a cop's gut feelings cracked a case or uncovered an important lead—a special intuitive awareness shared by Batman.

When Denny O'Neil teamed with Neal Adams to return Batman to his Dark Knight roots in the post-TV show years, not only the art of detection but the tradition of mystery once again became a featured part of Batman's repertoire.

"When the TV show went out of business suddenly, they couldn't sell camp anymore and



Thanks to his engineering brilliance—and the family fortune—Bruce Wayne has always been able to maintain a high-tech edge against Gotham's evil underworld. (Batman *#61, October/November 1950, "The Birth of Batman II," pp. 5, 7 [select panels].*)

they [the DC editorial side], came to me and said, "What can you do with Batman?" Denny O'Neil recalls.

"At that point I was willing, even anxious, to do it. When I talked about it with editor Julius Schwartz, we decided we could not possibly do better than to go back to the basics—figure out what really constitutes this character."

"Batman in both of our minds was this Dark-Knight Detective, a combination of the best athlete in the world and Sherlock Holmes, whose parents were killed by a thief in the night in front of his eyes, and who grew up with a kind of schizoid paranoia that made him believe it was his role in life to track down—and at times even maim—the villains of the world," Neal Adams remembers of his early Batman story line discussions with O'Neil.

"...I believe any character that's any good represents the deeper parts of human beings in general," Adams continues. "...The idea of being able to figure out from very small clues how the world works, and becoming Sherlock Holmes, is very attractive to people. People put themselves in the part. Skulking around at night is part of every child's past. You know, going into the darkness and sneaking around and scaring people—that's a real solid, deep thing for human beings. It should be no surprise that Batman is a popular character. The surprise is when they don't make the most of it."

To Adams, "they" represented the editorial decisions prompted by television's pop-comedy camp depiction of Batman. When Julius Schwartz teamed Adams, who had been earning accolades for his realistic depiction of Batman during the character's regular appearances in *The Brave and the Bold*, with writer Denny O'Neil with Dick Giordano providing much of the inking, some of the landmark Batman tales resulted.

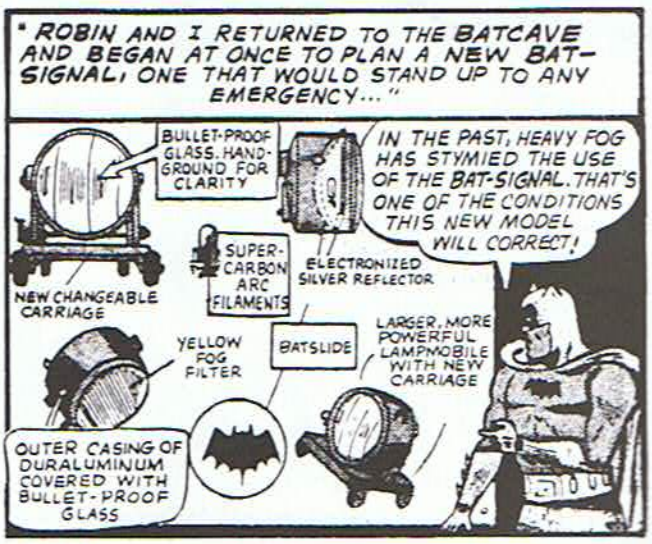
For instance, in one story line the team not only created one of the most memorable and original of villains in Ra's Al Ghul, but introduced a compelling a female character (and love interest for Batman) as has ever graced a comic book—Ra's's beautiful daughter, Talia.

The O'Neil/Adams formula was a return to the spirit of the Dark Knight version of Bob Kane and Bill Finger. And with the same intuitive fire as Batman's own crime-fighting artistry, O'Neil and Adams played off each other in fashioning their Dark Knight tales. And they didn't need to hold a lot of meetings to decide their direction. As was the style of the early 1970's, O'Neil would generally turn in a completed script to editor Schwartz, and then Adams would get the script and go to work with his pencils.

"Oddly enough, I probably worked less closely with Neal than almost anybody, and almost always got what I wanted...sometimes better," O'Neil remembers.

"I believe the best Batman stories I did were with Denny O'Neil," Adams says. "...It was just fortunate that we got together at that time."

Batman's world changed in many ways after the demise of the television show. For one, Batman finally decided to modernize his crime-fighting operation by sealing up the Wayne Manor Bat Cave and moving the Dark Knight's operations to another cave in the underground depths of Gotham City itself.



A hallmark of Batman's career has been his ceaseless search for an edge against the underworld. He's maintained that edge by constantly upgrading and modernizing his crimefighting devices. Here, Batman creates a new, improved Bat Signal. (Detective *#164, October 1950, "Untold Tales of The Bat Signal!" p. 7 [panel].*)

The new Bat Cave was actually an abandoned Depression-era subway station located below the Wayne Foundation building. And this was a new Bruce Wayne—no longer the idle rich cover for his Batman pursuits, but a wealthy, powerful, politically ambitious man as obsessed in his Foundation boardroom during the day as his crime-fighter persona would continue to be at night.

And then there was the matter of Dick Grayson growing up. The Dynamic Duo was finally breaking up so that Dick could attend Hudson University. By now Dick was no longer a boy, but a young man who stood tall and lean, with a chiseled profile that would set the hearts of Hudson coeds fluttering.

In that special tale (*Batman* 217), we saw Dick standing in the mansion foyer in his white Hudson University jacket over his turtle neck sweater and slacks. He was all grins waiting for the taxi

The Dynamic Duo have always been expert in the art of disguise. . . . (Batman *#31, October/November 1945, "Vanishing Village," p. 4 [select panels].*)

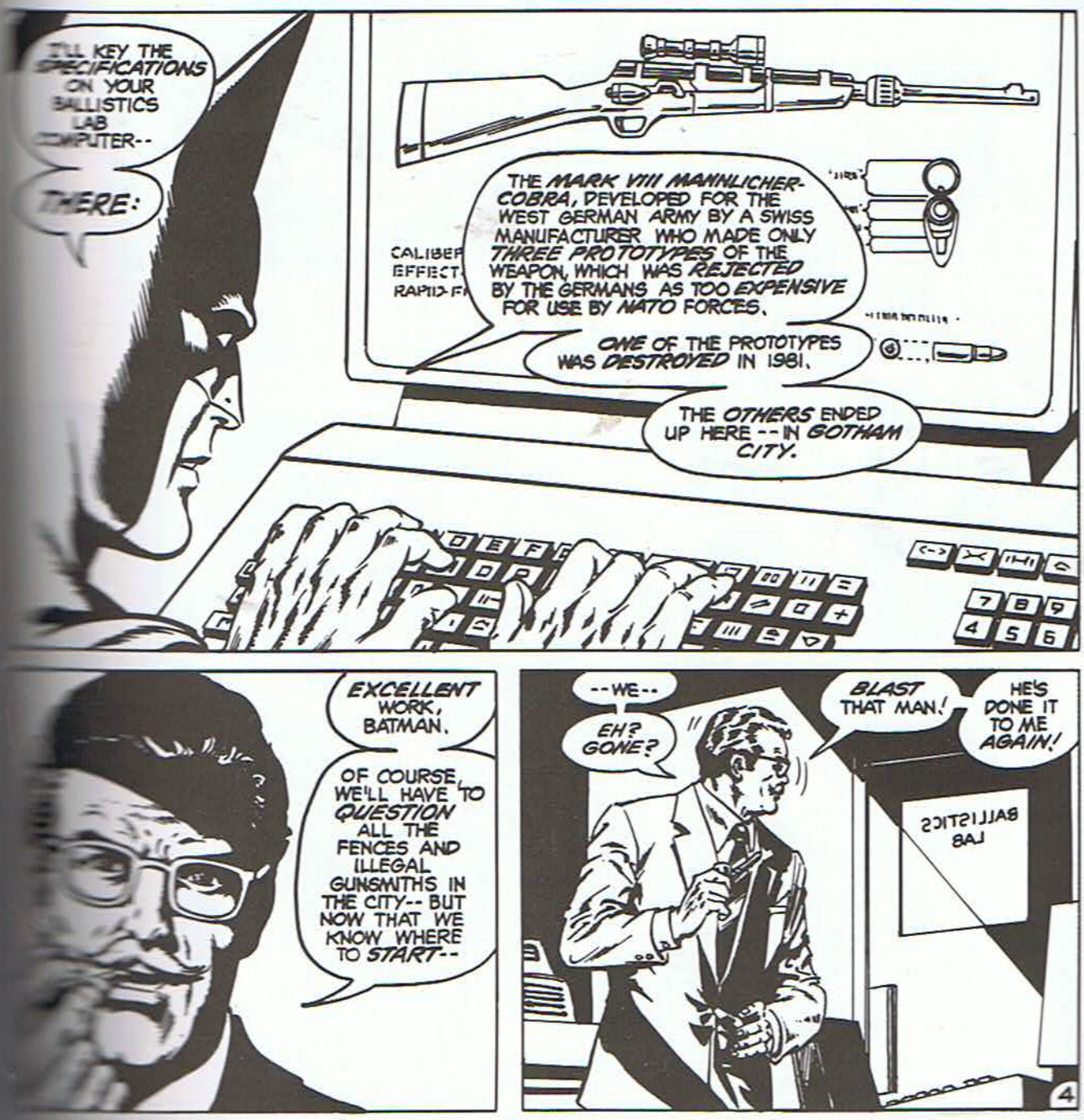
that would take him to the airport. But Bruce looked grim, and Alfred was losing a valiant battle to hold back tears.

"Aw, c'mon, fellas—we're all grown up now!" Dick said. "Stop acting like you're attending my funeral!

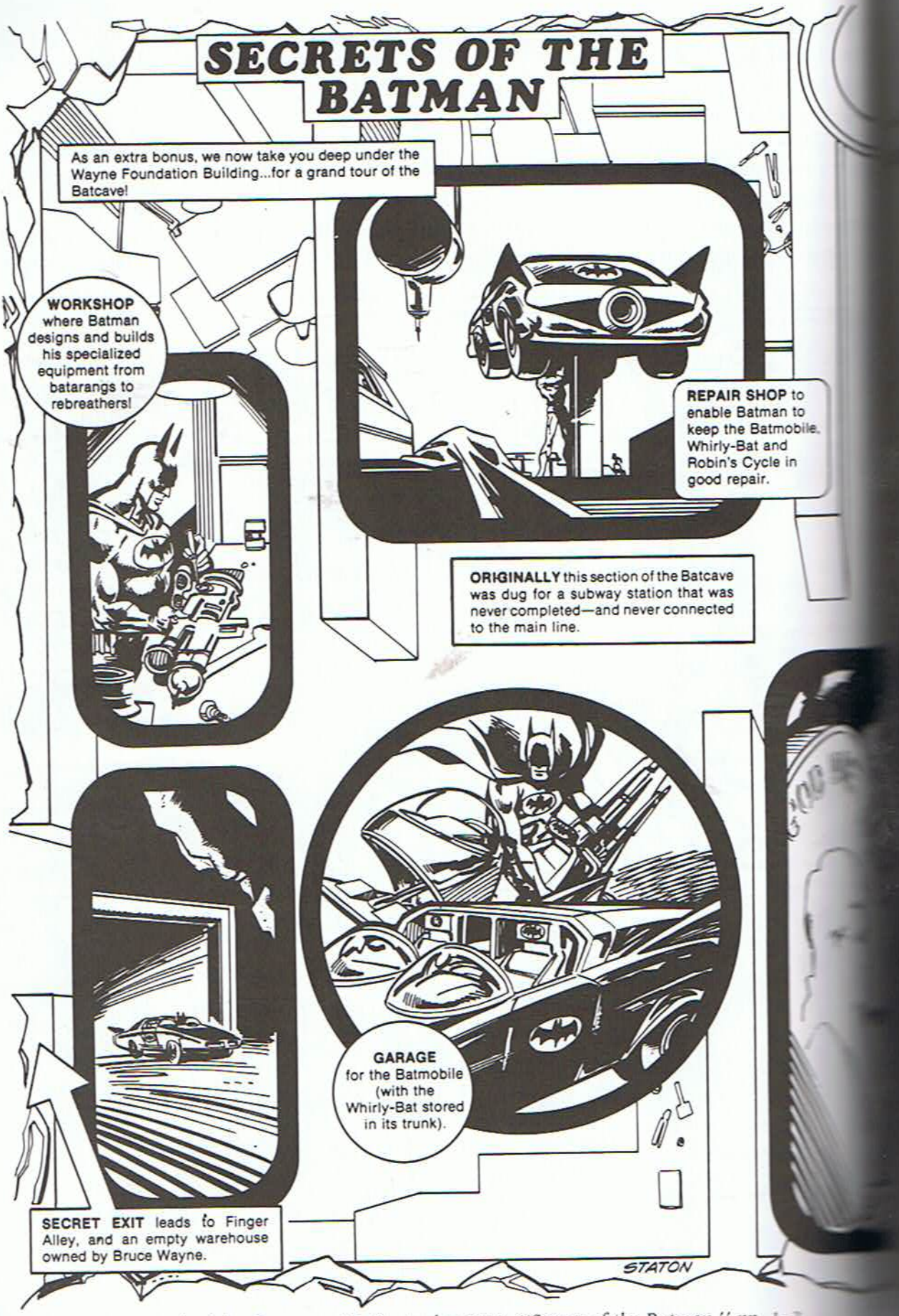
"I know it's going to be pretty rough on you guys—in the beginning!" Dick continued as the cab drove up. "Guess it's kinda hard for you to dig that only yesterday I was your 'young Master Dick,' Alfie, and your 'kid who needed a big-brother image,' Bruce.

"But—I'm a man now! 'Least that's what my draft-card says plus my acceptance at Hudson University. So...I'd prefer to go to the airport alone...."

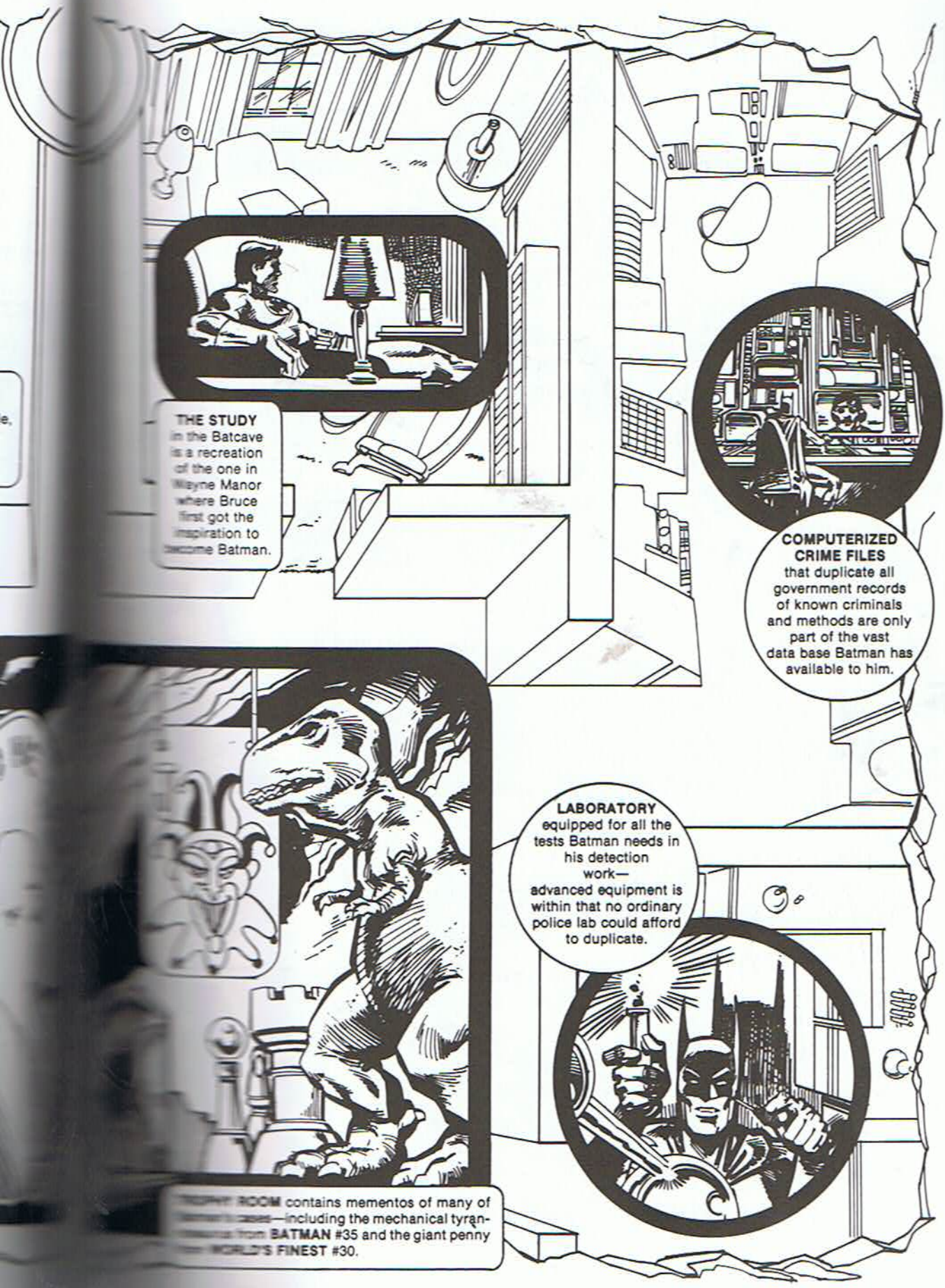
With barely a look back, he stepped into the taxi. But once inside and safely driving away, a

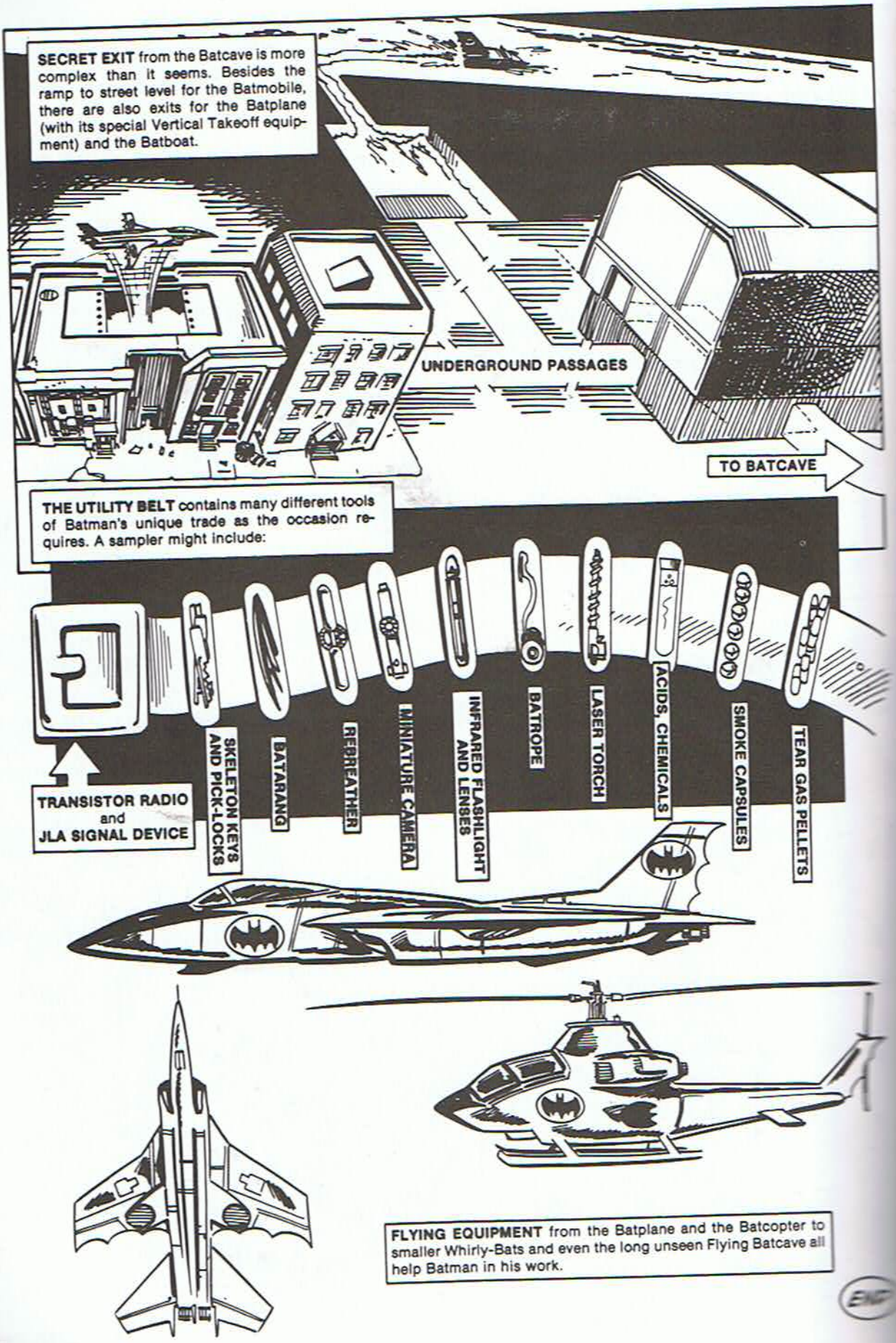


Glancing through a magnifying glass or working a crime lab computer, Batman will find a way to wrest murder weapons. (Batman #358, *April 1983, "Don't Mess With Killer Croc!" p. 4 [select panels].*)



The Untold Legend of the Batman *#3, September 1980, "Secrets of the Batman," pp. 1–3.*


THE STUDY in the Batcave is a recreation of the one in Wayne Manor where Bruce first got the inspiration to become Batman.
COMPUTERIZED CRIME FILES that duplicate all government records of known criminals and methods are only part of the vast data base Batman has available to him.
LABORATORY equipped for all the tests Batman needs in his detection work— advanced equipment is within that no ordinary police lab could afford to duplicate.
ROOM contains mementos of many of —including the mechanical tyran- from BATMAN #35 and the giant penny FINEST #30.


SECRET EXIT from the Batcave is more complex than it seems. Besides the ramp to street level for the Batmobile, there are also exits for the Batplane (with its special Vertical Takeoff equipment) and the Batboat.
UNDERGROUND PASSAGES
TO BATCAVE
THE UTILITY BELT contains many different tools of Batman's unique trade as the occasion requires. A sampler might include:
TRANSISTOR RADIO and JLA SIGNAL DEVICE
SKELETON KEYS AND PICK-LOCKS
BATARANG
REBREATHER
MINIATURE CAMERA
INFRARED FLASHLIGHT AND LENSES
BATROPE
LASER TORCH
ACIDS, CHEMICALS
SMOKE CAPSULES
TEAR GAS PELLETS
FLYING EQUIPMENT from the Batplane and the Batcopter to smaller Whirly-Bats and even the long unseen Flying Batcave all help Batman in his work.

trickled down the cheek of a manchild more comfortable battling an evil villain than dealing with the heartache of a long good-bye.

Once back inside the house, Bruce revealed, to Alfred's astonishment, his plan to close down the Bat Cave and move the entire Batman operation to Gotham City.

"Dick's leaving brought home the stark fact that our private world has changed," Bruce said with grim determination previously seen only when he was outfitted in his Batman costume. "We're in grave danger of becoming outmoded! We're dodos of the mod world outside! Our only chance for survival is to close up shop here!"

"Uh-h....no, Master Bruce!" Alfred interrupted. "H-how will—er—we function as the crimefighters of old?"

"By becoming new—streamlining the operation," Bruce answers. "By discarding the paraphernalia of the past and functioning with the wits on our backs...the wits in our heads! By establishing this trademark of the 'old' Batman—to strike new fear into the new breed of criminism sweeping the world!

"Today this new breed of rat uses the modern weapons of 'phony respectability,' 'big business' and 'legal cover-ups,' and hides in the forbidden towers of Gotham's metropolis. We're moving out of this suburban sanctuary, to live in the heart of that sprawling urban blight—to dig them out where they live and fatten on the innocent....

"We suffer great pain over true justice—'rights of the individual,' 'innocent until proven guilty'— all for the accused parties! But what about the 'proven' innocent—the victims?

"Innocent victims such as Dick and I were—when our parents were brutally slain! Their deaths were the births of Batman and Robin! We were in the fortunate position to claim justice for ourselves—but what of the less fortunates?"

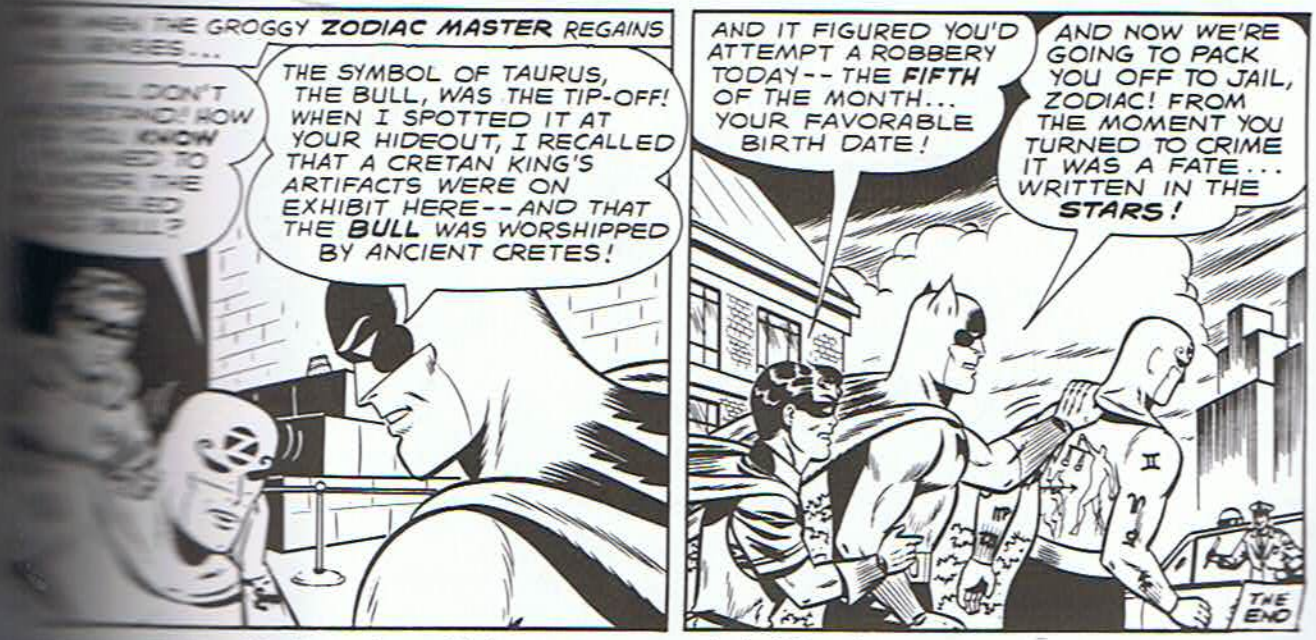
Almost in the same breath a determined Bruce Wayne described his vision of Wayne Foundation lobbying for public funds to aid victims of crime.[3]

This was a Batman renewal, a rededication to his "Crime Does Not Pay" idealism of the Golden Age.

But despite these changes of the late sixties and seventies (a time when the watchword was "relevance"), the thrills and chills would continue. Some things never change.

And that, of course, meant the constant challenge of those terrible traps.

3. "One Bullet Too Many," *Batman* 217 (December 1969), pp. 1–6.



Battle of wits with the underworld, bet on Batman to be holding the trump card at the end game. (Detective Comics, January 1964, *"The Zodiac Master!" p. 13 [select panels].*)

CHAPTER 12
TERRIBLE TRAPS/FANTASTIC ESCAPES

IMAGINE BEING SHACKLED WITH CHAINS AT a construction site while above you a monstrous werewolf gets set to pounce. Maybe you're locked in a mechanical prison as a deadly gas begins to pour in through unseen vents. Perhaps, in some horrible nightmare, you find yourself struggling in a pit that is filling up with water, the buoyancy lifting you up to a mounted machine gun blasting away overhead.

Such scenarios would surely mean death to us but are just a few of the on-the-job hazards the Dark Knight has survived.

The superhero who does not have the talent for trap busting will have a very short career, indeed. For a mortal crime fighter like Batman, it means that he must use his brain to figure a way out, while his willpower must eliminate any paralyzing panic as the seconds tick away and death gets closer.

"With Batman the hard part was getting him into a very clever trap and then having him do a more clever thing to get out of the trap," Julius Schwartz remembers. "It's like in the movies where boy meet girl, boy gets girl, boy loses girl, boy gets her back: Batman goes after villain, Batman gets caught in trap, escapes, and captures villain."

The difficulty the creators have in engineering a Batman deathtrap escape is the same factor that makes the Dark Knight prey to villainous ambushes: his mortal vulnerability.

Batman can't vibrate his atoms at superspeed to pass through containing walls, or use laser vision to cut through ropes, or punch through the offending obstacle with a mighty fist.

It's just the trap and Batman, with life or death in the bargain. Sometimes the Dark Knight's muscles or an adroitly mixed batch of chemicals from his utility belt have sprung him. But usually it has been his logic that figured a way to save the day. As Batman himself has said: "Every trap contains its own escape."

Let's once again thrill to Batman's incomparable escape techniques.

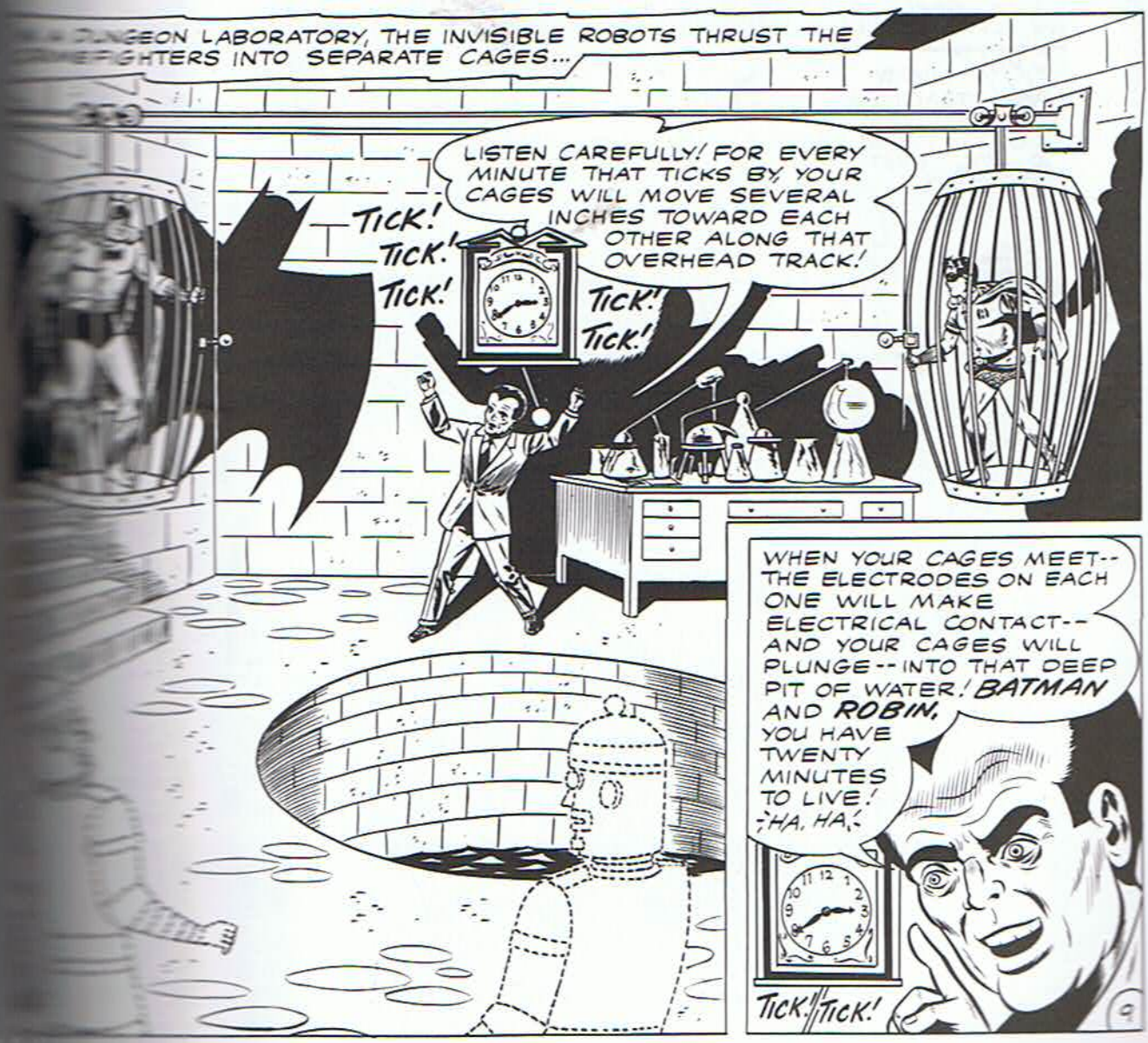
Batman cracks the Big Chill trap of Mr. Zero. (Batman #121, *February 1959, "The Ice Crimes of* [illegible]) **Left:** *A hungry werewolf adds a bit of tension as Batman tries to unshackle himself* [illegible] *hard to deal with this kind of pressure!).* (Batman #255, *March/April 1974, "Moon of the* [illegible])

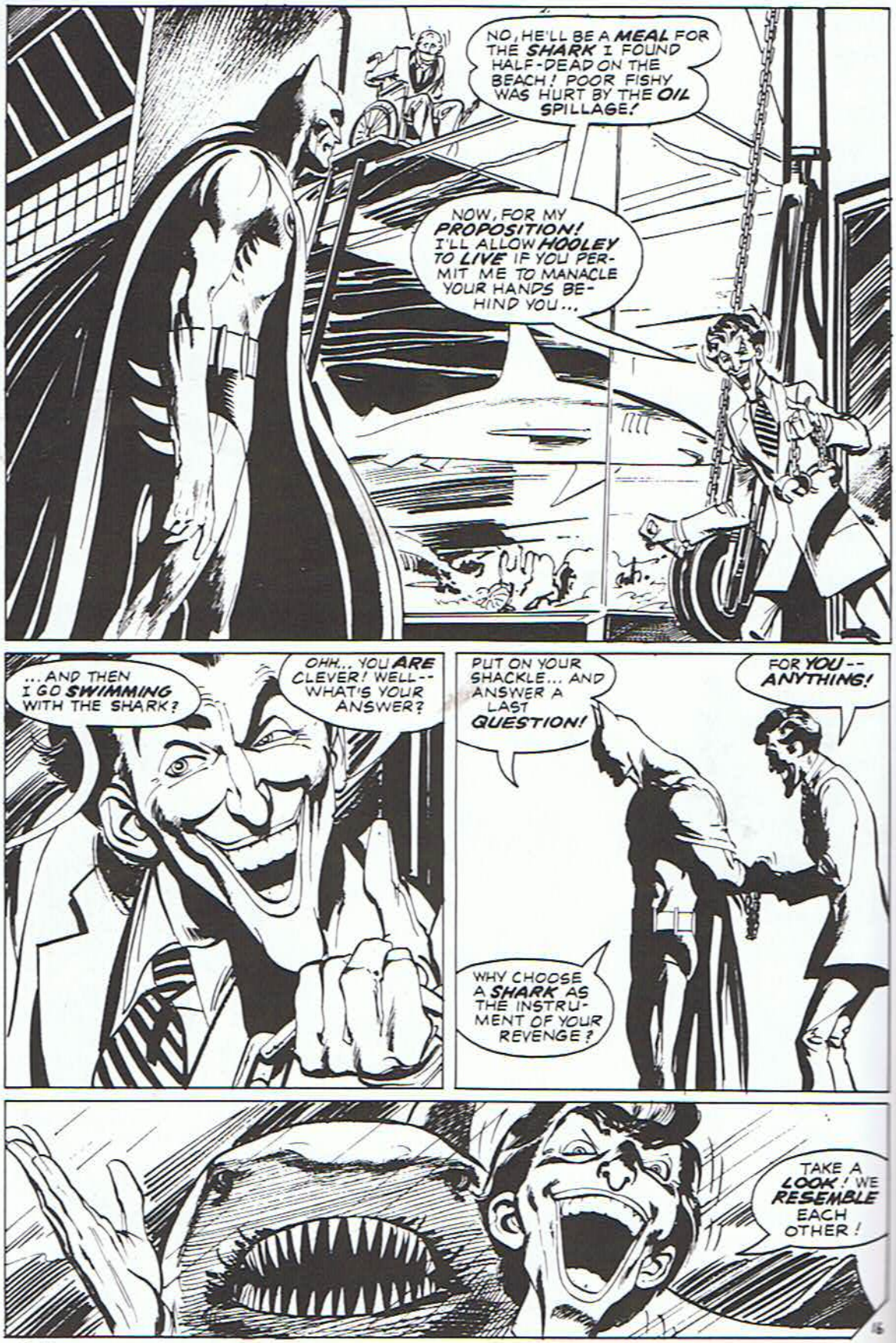
The Jason Todd Robin and Harvey Dent happily experience the Dark Knight's masterful escape technique. (Detective #581, *December 1987, "One Out of Two . . . Isn't Bad . . . ,"p. 5.*)

[illegible] talent of keeping his head in a crisis has helped him find a way out of the most dangerous [illegible] here a well-thrown bucket of bolts stops Catman's robot monster. (Detective #311, *January [illegible] "Challenge of the Cat-Man," p. 12.*)

INDEED, AT THIS VERY MOMENT...
HAWTREE'S SECRET IS MARKED UP THERE, AND THE THIEF'S ALREADY AFTER IT! MUST STOP HIM!
World Building
SPEEDING TO THE SKYSCRAPER TOP, THE BOY WONDER BEGINS A DIZZY CLIMB...
ARGENTINA
Atlantic
FIRST TIME I EVER CLIMBED THE ANDES MOUNTAINS BUT IT'S A SMALL WORLD! HE MUST BE OUT OF SIGHT AROUND THE CURVE OF "THE EARTH"!
BUT FROM ABOVE THE "EQUATOR", A MASKED, MENACING FIGURE SUDDENLY APPEARS...
THIS WILL TEACH YOU NOT TO CLIMB MOUNTAINS, BRAT!
MY FINGERS-- NUMB! CAN'T HANG ON OR GRAB ANOTHER HOLD...
JUST THEN, ARRIVING ON THE ROOFTOP BELOW...
HOLD TIGHT, ROBIN-- JUST A FEW SECONDS LONGER! I'VE GOT MY ROPE AROUND MOUNT EVEREST, AND I CAN SWING OVER!
BATMAN! CAN'T HANG ON!
Atlantic Ocean
Indian Ocean
NEXT INSTANT...
GOT ME!
AND JUST IN THE NICK OF TIME! BUT WHOEVER THE THIEF WAS, HE GOT AWAY!
UPON INVESTIGATING, THE DUO FINDS A SECRET GONE...
THE SECTION OF GLOBE-SURFACE ON WHICH GUY HAWTREE MARKED HIS LOST CITY'S LOCATION-- THE THIEF CUT IT COMPLETELY, INSTEAD OF JUST QUICKLY DEFACING IT!
PERU
NOW HE KNOWS THE SECRET LOCATION AND WE CAN'T EVER LEARN IT!

Right: *Hey kids! Stick with those science classes and you too can master the best-laid traps of evil villains!* (Batman #8, December/January 1942, *"Stone Walls Do Not Prison Make!" p. 11 [panel].*) Bottom: *The Dynamic Duo will defeat even this seemingly unbeatable trap.* (Detective #309, August 1962, *"The Wizard of 1,000 Menaces," p. 9 [select panels].*) Left: *Another cliff-hanging predicament—another thrilling escape.* (Batman #91, April 1955, *"The Map of Mystery!" p. 6.*)





Of all Batman's foes, the Joker has consistently set the deadliest traps. Thrill to this Joker masterpiece—and say a prayer for the Dark Knight. (Batman *#251, September 1973, "The Joker's Five-Way Revenge!" pp. 16–20.*)

YOU REALIZE YOU'LL HOPE INSANE!
BYE-BYE, BATMAN! HAVE A NICE DINNER... I MEAN--HAVE A NICE DINNER!
HA HA HA HA
FOR DESSERT, SHARKY CAN HAVE HOOLEY!
HAHAHAHA
YOU... PROMISED--
I'M A NOTORIOUS LIAR!
TA-TA, ALL!
HAHAHA HAHAHA HAHAHA HAHAHA HA
NEITHER OF US CAN LAST A MINUTE WITH THAT HUNGRY BEAST PURSUING US!
IT'S GOING FOR HOOLEY... ATTRACTED BY HIS BRIGHT RED JACKET!

I'VE NEVER HAD TO FIGHT SO UNPREPARED! I'VE NEVER MET A SEA PREDATOR IN HIS OWN ELEMENT!
STILL THERE MAY BE A WORKABLE MANEUVER--
...USE THE CHAIN-LINKS TO PUT ITS TEETH OUT OF COMMISSION AND...
--HEAVE! HEAVE!! ...MAYBE SNAP ITS SPINE... OR SOMETHING!
BREAK BLAST YOU!-- BREAK!!

...AND TOO THICK TO BREAK WITH MY BARE HANDS! --NEED A TOOL...
...AND THERE IT IS!
HOOLEY'S WHEEL-CHAIR... GOOD STURDY STEEL FRAME --AND HEAVY! NOT THE BEST THING...
BUT THE ONE I HAVE!
BUT THE SHACKLES ARE TOO!
...ALL BUT SCATTLA OF THE POWER LOCKED IN HIS INCREDIBLE ... TO OVERCOME WATER-RESISTANCE, THE BAT-... SWINGS THE CHAIR FORWARD ... AGAIN-- AND AGAIN!..

WOOOSH
HE'S STRONGER THAN I GUESSED! HE IS BREATHING... HE'LL BE OKAY!...
...WHICH LEAVES ME FREE TO CONCENTRATE ON...
--THE JOKER!
OHHH... BATMAN! I'VE SEEN YOU ANGRY LIKE THIS--OFTEN! NOBODY ALIVE CAN BEAT YOU WHEN THE ANGER IS UPON YOU!
YOU'LL GET NO BATTLE FROM ME! I MAY BE INSANE... BUT I'M NOT CRAZY!
SO I'LL RUN AWAY-- AND LIVE, TO PUT EGG ON YOUR FACE ANOTHER DAY!
OUTSIDE, THERE IS DAWN... AND DESPERATION...
HE HASN'T LOST ANY OF HIS CUNNING! HE HAS A GETAWAY CAR WITH BALLOON TIRES FOR RIDING ON SAND!
HE REACHES IT AND... HE'S GONE!

CHAPTER 13

THE LOVES OF BATMAN

Beneath the dark denim of that stern figure of the night . . . Batman! . . . beats a tender, generous heart! A heart that can be merciful to the unfortunate . . . and that can soften to the whispers of love!

—Batman *15, February/March 1943*

FOR A VIRILE, PASSIONATE MAN SUCH AS Batman, it must be frustrating to steel himself against love's siren call, giving himself totally to his crime-fighting obsession. Part of that frustration stems from Bruce Wayne's millionaire playboy role, which has invited the attention of the most beautiful women in Gotham City.

Some students of the chronicles have read all sorts of hidden meanings into the bachelorhood of Batman/Bruce Wayne.

"The sudden, violent loss of his mother while he was still a boy, during the period of his childhood when his psyche was grappling with the complexity of his affectional and erotic feelings for her, left Bruce Wayne with a deep reservoir of unconscious hostility toward women," opines writer Michael L. Fleisher. "Like many orphaned children, he saw the death of his mother as a personal desertion. He loved and needed his mother, and yet she left him."[1]

It's perhaps more to the point that the Caped Crusader's only negative attitude toward women has been an old-fashioned chivalrous manner around the ladies. And although the Batman side has often inhibited the flowering of love, his crime-fighting vow did not prevent Bruce Wayne from romantic entanglements.

Early in his crime-fighting career, Bruce Wayne was briefly betrothed to Julie Madison, a raven-haired high-society beauty who constantly compared idle Bruce to the exciting Batman,

1. Fleisher, *Batman*, p. 95.

Top: Batman #5, Spring 1941, "The Riddle of the Missing Card," p. 11 [select panels]. Bottom: *Well—what do [illegible] when crimefighters double date?* (Batman #153, February 1963, "Prisoners of Three Worlds," pp. 16; [illegible] panels].)

By the 1980s Batman and Selina "Catwoman" Kyle were lovers. Here the two discuss their relationship in the shadow of the pyramids. (Top: Detective #508, *November 1981, "Secret of the Sphinx Sinister," p. 19 [panel].* Bottom: Batman #355, *January 1983, "Never Scratch A Cat," p. 23 [select panels].*)

Alfred broaches the matter of his daughter's interest in Bruce Wayne. . . . (Batman *#384, June 1985, "Broken Dates," p. 13 [select panels].*)

and eventually left Wayne because of her disapproval of his playboy ways.

There was Linda Page, the daughter of a wealthy oilman, who was Bruce Wayne's love interest after the dissolution of his relationship with Julie Madison. But Page also compared Bruce to Batman—and found her handsome, but lazy, playboy wanting.

News photographer Vicki Vale had a long relationship with Bruce Wayne—but here, too, the specter of Batman has interfered, as Vicki often sought to prove her suspicions that Bruce Wayne was Batman.

Nocturna casts her spell. . . . (Batman #377, *November 1984, "The Slayer of Night," p. 16.*)

[illegible] duel in the desert to Talia's sweet surrender. (Batman *#244, September 1972, "The Demon [illegible] pp. 13–15.*)

...A FINAL KISS!
AN ACRID, BITTER TASTE...A BITTERNESS THE DYING BATMAN IS BARELY AWARE OF AS IT TOUCHES PARCHED LIPS...
...UNTIL--MIRACULOUSLY--HE FEELS STRENGTH FLOODING HIS TORTURED LIMBS, HIS PULSEBEAT QUICKENS!...
TREMBLING, HE STANDS...
...DRIVEN BY AN INSTINCT HE CANNOT NAME--AN INSTINCT BEYOND UNDERSTANDING--HE STRIDES TOWARD A CERTAIN DESTINATION...
...TO WHERE RĀ'S AL GHŪL STANDS ALONE, LOST IN SOLITARY THOUGHT!
RĀ'S!
BY THE GODS! YOU PURSUE ME PAST YOUR DYING...!
ARE YOU MAN--OR FIEND FROM HELL?

HE DIDN'T MOVE... DIDN'T EVEN TRY TO RESIST!
PERHAPS, BELOVED, HE RECOGNIZED HIS... MASTER!
WILL YOU TAKE HIM TO THE AUTHORITIES?
I MUST! I AM SORRY!
AND I? AM I ALSO TO BE IMPRISONED?
15

The dual identity business has been a tightrope walk for Batman. The stress only intensified as Bruce Wayne matured into the hard-driving head of the Wayne Foundation and the leading philanthropist in Gotham. But it was still his Batman identity, and the call of the night, that would rule his being.

"The Batman...becomes alive with the night," Jenette Kahn has written. "It is then that he can drop all pretense, then that he can stalk his prey. When he pursues criminals, his senses are at their keenest, his reflexes most acutely tuned, his mind a cutting edge, his courage and daring and stamina untinged by fear.

"How then, could a woman compete with the exhilaration of these nights? Especially when the women are attracted to Bruce Wayne, the inconsequential beard for the complex detective avenger...how can an ordinary woman, no matter how beautiful or cultured or rich excite a man who craves to have every fiber in his being challenged? Out of that necessity we all have to be appreciated for our true selves, he is drawn irresistibly to those women who, because they live on the razor's edge as he does, sense the Batman within Bruce Wayne. So, too, are these women drawn to him. Both know they have met their match."[2]

Women "on the razor's edge" that Batman himself has dallied with, particularly in the 1980s, include the wealthy Natasha "Nocturna" Knight (known for her seductive charm, unnatural pallor, and penchant for "classy crimes") and Selina "Catwoman" Kyle (who has been a sweet temptation to Batman ever since the Golden Age).

In the 1980s his Bruce Wayne persona would be romantically occupied by a stormy relationship with Vicki Vale. The appearance of Alfred's daughter, Julia, who would fall in love with Bruce Wayne, would further muddle an already complicated romantic picture.

And then there was Talia, the daughter of Ra's al Ghul, the man whose name means "demon's head" in Arabic. Given the formidable challenge of dueling Ra's al Ghul, Batman was initially wary of Talia's advances.

The mission of the Demon's Head is to purify a polluted planet, to restore nature to the dominion abridged by the human species. While he works to achieve his dream, Ra's al Ghul is drawn to wastelands of limitless emptiness. There his heart can find solace, unrestrained by the arbitrary physical and spiritual borders that mankind erects.

For the Dark Knight the Demon's dream was just another disastrous bid for world conquest.

But despite his opposition to Ra's, there could be no denying his attraction to Talia. With the body of an Olympic sprinter and a face sculpted with high cheekbones and framed with swirling tresses, moist, pouting lips and emerald eyes alive with an enchanting, childlike gaze, her charms are considerable.

Talia is something more than just another beautiful woman: at once innocent and regal, she is also a warrior who has stared through the portals of death, having brought her father back from the dead many times through the power of the rejuvenating Lazarus Pit.

It's perhaps the love she has for her obsessed father that has given her the understanding to unlock the heart of Batman, the one she calls "beloved."

Of all the loves who tried to win the heart of Batman, from Vicki Vale to Batwoman to Catwoman, it was Talia whom the Dark Knight agreed to wed. They were married in the traditions of Ra's al Ghul's own country, where only the consent of the bride was needed to institute a marriage. Their union would be brief, but beautiful.

But all the women Batman has known have helped soften the brutal edge of his obsession. None of their sweet songs of love have captured the heart of the Dark Knight—but they will always haunt him.

Opposite: *The Dark Knight surrenders to Talia* (Batman: Son of The Demon, *1987, p. 31.*)

2. Jenette Kahn, correspondence with Mark Canton of Warner Brothers, Inc., October 18, 1982.

3. *Batman: Son of the Demon*, 1987.

...AND I CONSENTED READILY.
I REMEMBER. BUT IT'S HARD FOR ME TO CONSIDER THAT MARRIAGE REAL.
BELOVED, YOU GIVE TOO MUCH THOUGHT TO WHAT IS "REAL," AND WHAT IS NOT, TO WHAT IS "TRUE," AND WHAT IS "FALSE..."
I REALIZE THAT IS YOUR WAY, BUT JUST THIS ONCE, ACCEPT THINGS AS THEY ARE...
FORGO YOUR CONTROL, YOUR DISCIPLINE...
...JUST ONCE, LET YOURSELF GO...
"...AND TAKE ME WITH YOU."

HA HA HA! LOOK AT THE JELLY FISH! TEN AGAINST ONE AND STILL THEY RUN! HA HA HA!

CHAPTER 14

THE WARRIOR BATMAN

In *THE UNTOLD LEGEND OF THE BATMAN,* a three-part 1980 miniseries, there is a sequence in which the Dark Knight is heading straight into the heart of the underworld to get information, and God help the guilty. This Batman is a pure, primal fighting machine. The Warrior Batman.

He drives to the Gotham oceanfront, bringing the Batmobile to a screeching halt in front of The Last Resort, a weathered-looking bar that long ago lost its battle against the elements.

Inside, the place is thick with longshoremen, seedy drifters, and tough-looking cutthroats sipping beers, smoking cigarettes, and conducting muted conversations. But all talk stops as the Dark Knight makes his entrance and heads for the bar.

The men seated on the bar stools move away, opening a path to a hopped-up man at the bar dressed in a white suit and wearing a white fedora. He's alternating between sips from his mug of ale and drags from a cigarette that will soon join the mess of stamped-out butts filling the ashtray in front of him.

The man turns with a jittery start to face the Dark Knight. He has a thin, haggard face that hasn't seen a razor blade in days. And despite the darkness, he's wearing dark glasses.

"I figured I'd find you here, Snitch," Batman says, a stern edge in his voice.

"Hey, I—I been keepin' my nose clean, Batman. Whaddaya want from me?"

"What I always want, Snitch—information," the Batman says, leaning forward, taking Snitch's cigarette and dropping it into his drink.

As they talk, a man tries to sneak behind the Dark Knight, a blackjack in his right hand. The man raises the blackjack and is ready to bring it crashing against Batman's skull when Batman inexplicably turns and grabs the attacker's wrist.

"If you want to play rough, punk—you picked a bad night for it!" Batman growls as, in one smooth motion, he lifts the man up and sends him over the bar with a crash.

"That wasn't very smart, Snitch," Batman says angrily, walking toward the cowering man who has just fallen off his bar stool. "I just wanted to talk—but now I'll get my answers another way!"

"Stay away from me, Batman—I'm warning you," the shaken Snitch cries as he pulls himself up by the bar and reaches inside his jacket. With a trembling hand he pulls out a gun and points it at Batman.

"Keep back—or I'll blow you away!!"

"You dare!?! You DARE to pull a gun on me?!" the Dark Knight demands.

And in a blur of motion the Batman has his right hand gripped on Snitch's jacket, his other hand knocking the weapon loose.

"Don't you EVER point a gun at me again!" Batman shouts, his left hand slapping the hood's face, sending the dark glasses flying after the lost gun.

"Never, do you hear me?" the Batman almost screams, another clap crashing against Snitch's cheeks.

"Never!!" the Dark Knight shouts with yet a third punishing slap.

"That's enough," comes a voice from the other end of the bar. It's Robin, who has followed the Batman to The Last Resort.

"Just protecting your back, Batman," Robin

Opposite: The young warrior often taunted his mistaken opponents. (Batman *#4, Winter 1941, "Boldwood's Crew and the Yacht Society," p. 11 panel.*)

says grimly. "Don't you think you've done enough here?"

"Y-yes, of course," Batman says in a slow voice. "There's nothing more this punk can tell me."

He removes his fist from Snitch's jacket, and the man falls to the floor. The bar crowd watches with a combination of hatred, respect, and relief as the Dynamic Duo turn and leave.[1]

That scene provides a rare, but revealing, look at the Warrior Batman. Rare because it is one of the few times that Batman has come close to losing control. Revealing because it shows the awesome physical strength of an unleashed Dark Knight.

Another, even bloodier, battle took place way back in the Golden Age (*Batman* 5, Spring 1941), when Batman discovered a wounded Robin and believed his faithful friend and sidekick had been murdered by the underworld.

"For the first time, the Batman knows rage, bleak, grim rage," went the text. "Woe to all criminals, for now, the Batman has become a terrible figure of vengeance!"

Sure enough, when Batman tracked the offending criminals to their lair, he made it clear he was in no mood to be messed with. He splintered open the door to their hideout with his shoulder and, despite taking a bullet in the shoulder (no more than a "flea bite" to the furious crime fighter), proceeded to toss the crooks around like rag dolls.

For decades Batman has been taking criminals with the surprise, if not always the ferocity, of his brutal interrogation at The Last Resort and the Robin reprisal. Many a Batman bust has caught criminals in the middle of a heist, dropping them before they have a chance to go for their guns. Many an underworld poker game has been interrupted by Batman crashing down through a hideout skylight, demanding information or the return of ill-gotten gains.

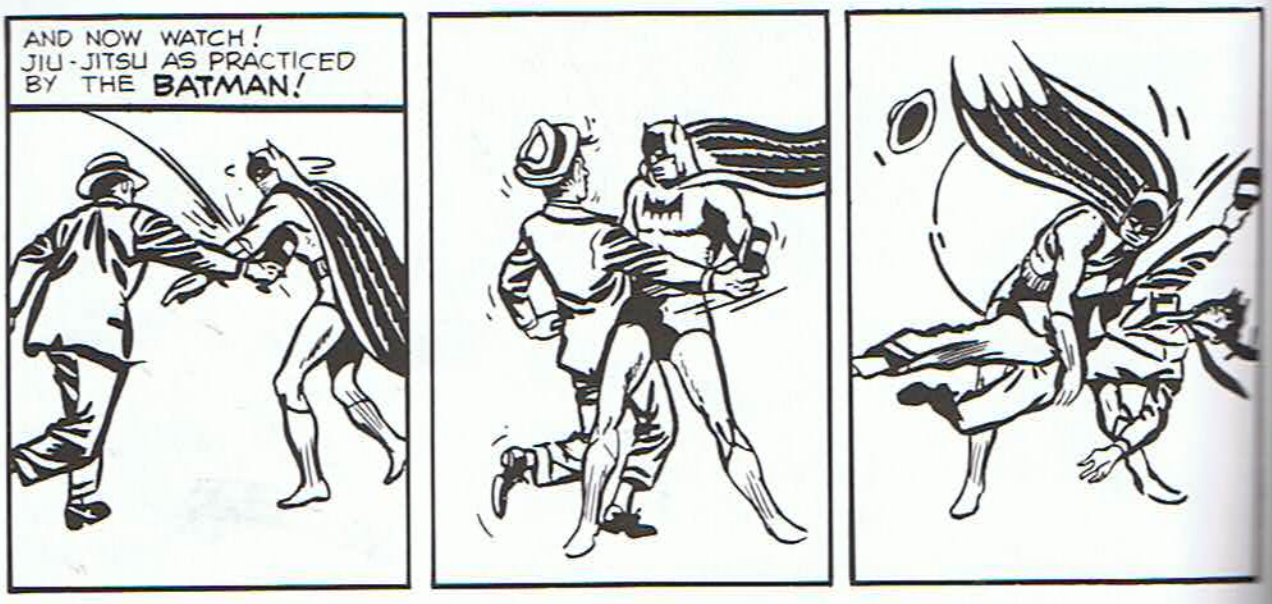
How such unexpected attacks have sent shivers of fear throughout the criminal underworld? But such has been Batman's strategy from the beginning. Criminals are "a superstitious, cowardly lot" to him. And like the virtuoso crime fighter he is, Batman jams his imagery of darkness and retribution into the mainline of their fear.

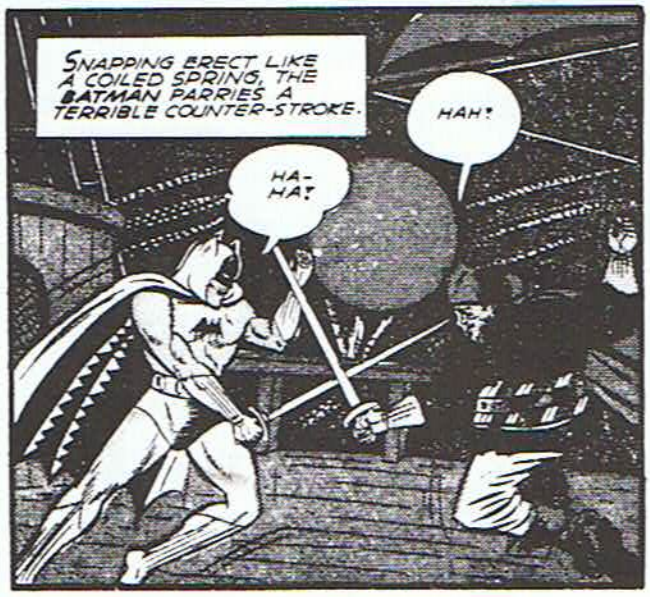
His mastery of instilling a psychology of fear, his supreme sense of strategy, and his physical

1. *The Untold Legend of the Batman* 2 (August 1980).

The Untold Legend of the Batman *#2, August 1980, "With Friends Like These. . . . ," p. 3 [select panels]*

Batman developed his warrior prowess with a training regimen that would stagger a team of Olympic athletes. (Detective *#526, May 1983, "All My Enemies Against Me!" p. 7 [select panels].*)





Left: *The Dark Knight has always had a talent for swordplay. Here he disarms a modern-day buccaneer.* (Batman #4, Winter 1941, *"Blackbeard's Crew and the Yacht Society,"* p. 12 *[select panels].*) Above: Batman #31, October/November 1945, *"Trade Mark of Crime!"* p. 5 *(select panels).* Right: *The Warrior Batman.* (Batman #393, March 1986, *"The Dark Rider,"* p. 12)

THE STOREHOUSE OF ANTIQUITIES IS JUST AHEAD-- AT THE END OF THE STREET...
CHUD
THEY MUST HAVE BEEN WAITING FOR ME EVER SINCE SHE REACHED A PHONE...
WAUMP
... AND A LARGE WELCOME IT IS.
TOO MANY OF THEM-- TOO MANY GUNS!

power emulate the samurai and ninjutsu of feudal Japan, the adepts of Shaolin Temple, and other well-rounded warrior cultures of old.

But the Batman's very renown as a warrior crime fighter has caused many foes to battle him just for the thrill of dueling the best. The Joker has been known to not only match wits, but stand his ground and exchange punches with the Dark Knight. Many foes in the 1980s, such as the deadly Croc, have the muscle to pose a physical threat to Batman.

But the deadliest, most ruthless killer the Dark Knight has faced in the eighties must surely be the KGB agent known as the Beast. The cybernetically enhanced martial artist and weapons master put the Dark Knight to the test in the four-part "Ten Nights of the Beast" series (*Batman* 417–420, 1988).

As the story goes, when the Beast slips into Gotham without the approval of his Soviet superiors to begin systematically eliminating the American architects of the Reagan administration's Star Wars program, Batman jumps into the case.

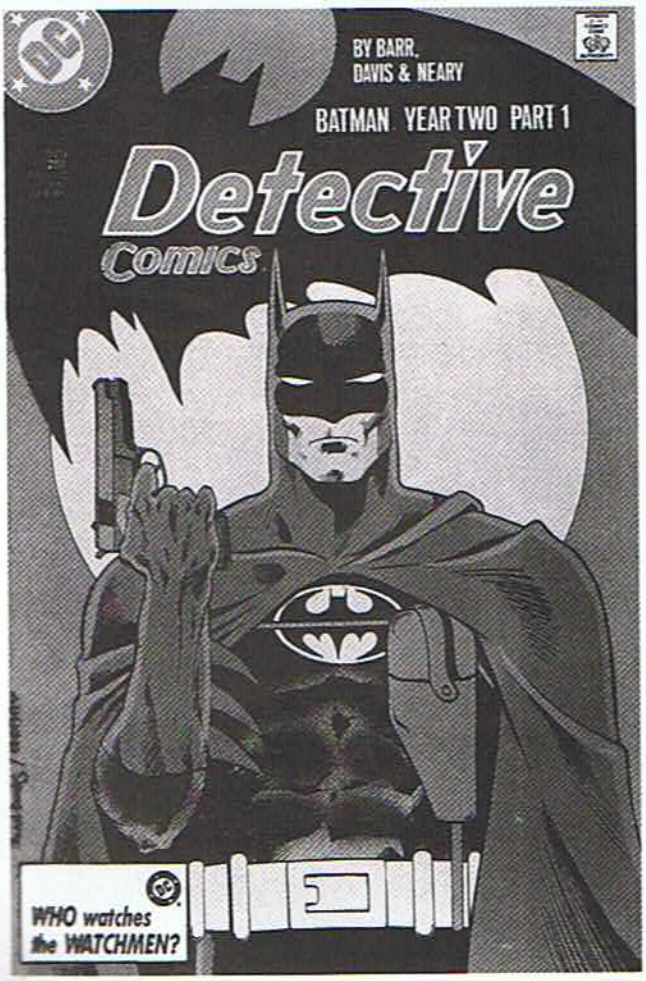
But the Beast is always one step ahead of the Dark Knight. Whenever Batman arrives on the scene of a Beast strike, it's to get the body count, not save the day.

And when they finally do battle, the Beast comes close to defeating Batman.

"I've finally run into someone who's better at this game than I am," Batman thinks after their first battle.[2]

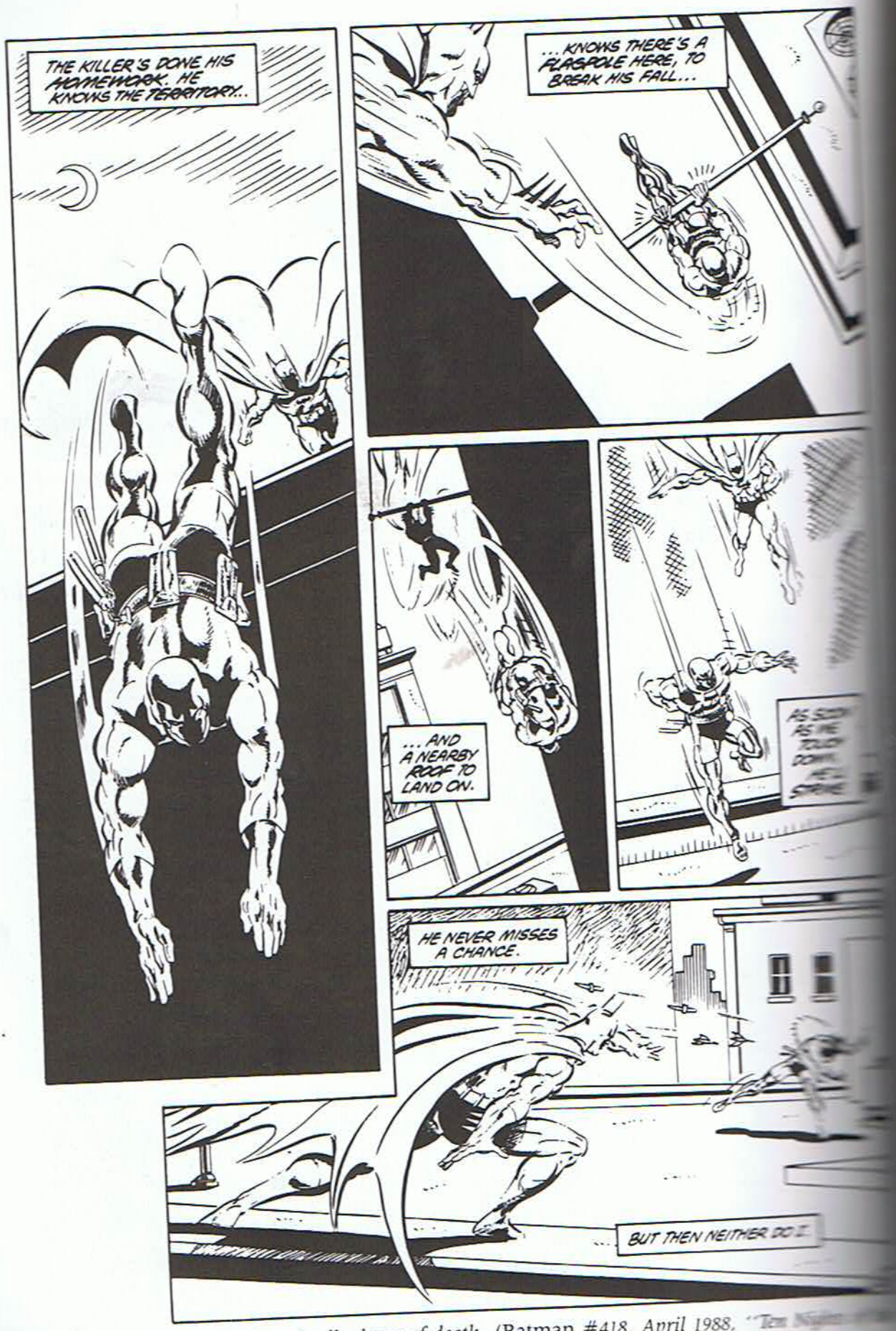
In their final sequence the Beast is on the run through the maze of the Gotham City sewer system with Batman in pursuit. The Beast has tried gunfire and tear gas, but each time the Dark Knight has parried the attacks. The Beast runs through the sewer's dark passages looking for a new position.

2. "Ten Nights of the Beast," *Batman* 418 (April 1988).



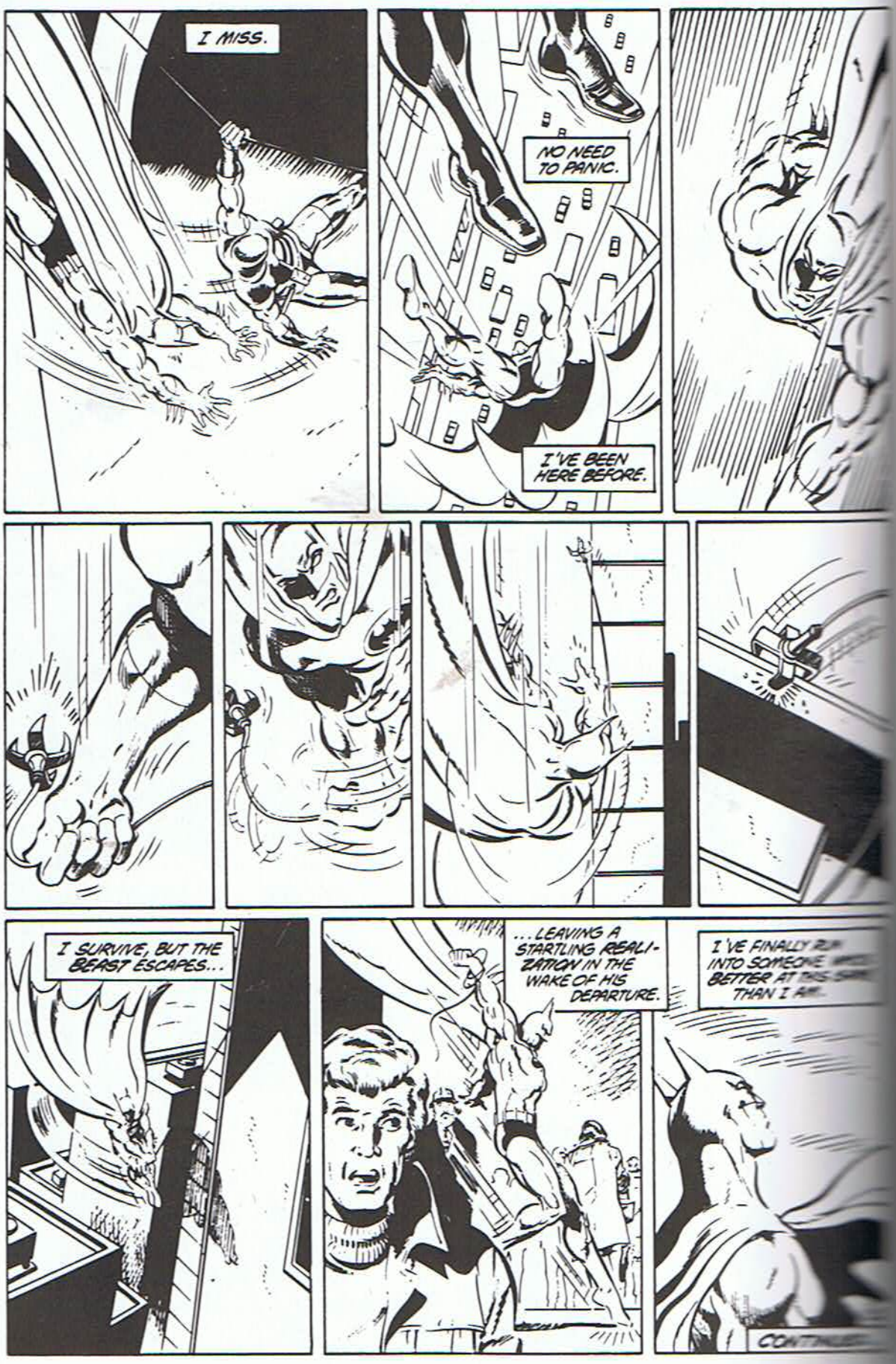
Left: *In 1987 there was a special look back on Batman's gun-wielding days.* (Detective #575, June 1987.) Right: *Batman uses a martial artist's leverage and angles to break the holds of his assailant.* (Detective #355, September 1988, "The Hooded Hangman!" p. 8 [select panels].)

[illegible] gets a taste of Batman's swift, deadly reflexes. (The Killing Joke, *1988, p. 43.*)



Batman and the Beast in a deadly dance of death. (Batman #418, April 1988, "Ten Nights

Beast," Part II, pp. 20–22.)


I MISS.
NO NEED TO PANIC.
I'VE BEEN HERE BEFORE.
I SURVIVE, BUT THE BEAST ESCAPES...
...LEAVING A STARTLING REALIZATION IN THE WAKE OF HIS DEPARTURE.
I'VE FINALLY RUN INTO SOMEONE WHO'S BETTER AT THIS STUFF THAN I AM.

Batman sees the Beast running toward a steel door and slows down, knowing it only leads to a dead end.

When the Dark Knight approaches and stands in the doorway, he finds the Beast brandishing a wicked length of lead pipe. At last the two evenly matched warriors face each other. But how will the Dark Knight survive, much less humble and apprehend this killing machine?

"Well, my worthy opponent, a time of reckoning is upon us," the Beast says. "Time for us to find out which of us is the best—the best at this game of life and death."

The Batman, a faceless shadow framed in the doorway, says nothing.

"What are you waiting for?" the Beast demands. "Come! Let us play out this black game!"

"Why should I?" comes the voice of the Dark Knight. "A few years ago I would have jumped at this chance to test myself against you. But time has taught me many valuable lessons."

And we watch, mesmerized, as the Dark Knight begins to slowly close the steel door.

"There's no reason for me to risk my life, coming in there after you. It would neither accomplish nor prove anything worthwhile," the Dark Knight says, closing the door, jamming it [illegible].

And with the sounds of the Beast frantically pounding on the door of his prison, the Dark Knight turns and slowly walks away into the [illegible].

"Sometimes you have to ignore the rules," the Dark Knight whispers, revealing his true warrior's sense of strategy. "Sometimes circumstances are such that the rules pervert justice.

"I'm not in this business to protect the rules. I serve justice."[3]

Enact strategy broadly, correctly and [illegible].

Then you will come to think of things in a wide sense and, taking the void as the Way, you will see the Way as void.

In the void is virtue, and no evil. Wisdom has existence, principle has existence, the Way has existence, spirit is nothingness.

—Miyamoto Musashi.[4]

Batman always had a sense of strategy to go with his muscles and intuition. (Batman #414, *December 1987, "Victims!" p. 22 [panel].*)

[illegible] of the Beast." *Batman* 420 (June 1988).

[illegible] Musashi, *A Book of Five Rings* (Woodstock, New York: [illegible] Press, 1982), p. 95.

DOSSIER 4

BAT-NOIR

The word *noir,* whether used in connection with a work of film or literature, has come to stand for a dark, fatal vision. The world of noir (French for black and gloomy) can claim its victims in many ways: it's a suicidal drive to the bad side of town; it's the stray bullet that hits you when you think the game is won; it's the caper gone sour; it's the unexpected betrayal, the false accusation, the deadly seduction, the endgame.

Noir, particularly in film, is a vision of a nocturnal urban inferno. In this bleak landscape no one is safe, everyone is doomed. Even when the hero of a noir piece emerges triumphant, some price, usually the early loss of a loved one, has been paid.

The Batman mythos has been steeped in such noir traditions from the very beginning.

"I remember Batman as being very dark and ominous and quirky," notes screenwriter Sam Hamm, who wrote a very noir *Batman* screenplay for Warner Brothers. "...That really makes the strongest impression on you when you're a kid...Just how basic a level does the character tap into some intriguing myth?...

"Batman is a mysterious guy; he's essentially a vigilante, and he's a fairly disturbed character. His whole gimmick is, he wants to be menacing, he wants to be frightening, he wants to be shadowy."

Batman's noir world has always been troubling. Since fate plays no favorites in this domain, even a handsome, heroic figure such as district attorney Harvey Dent can become transformed into the evil Two-Face. Even a young, wealthy couple, such as Thomas and Martha Wayne, can end up as just another homicide statistic.

Batman can only try to tip the scales for justice. He can never promise salvation. Although Batman lives by a strict code of ethics, he is such a part of these shadows that even he often feels the pull of the dark side.

Even during the days when Batman and Robin battled aliens, received civic citations from a grateful populace, or grinned their way through another round of gangster bashing, there was the sense of darker streams running just below the surface. (Certainly, the murder of his parents would forever cast over Batman's landscape that hint of primal evil lurking in the shadows.)

This noir menace is the glue that holds the whole of the Batman oeuvre together. Noir is the element that transforms the ordinary into the extraordinary—or nightmarish.

In the following commentary writer Frank Hirsch describes the essential elements of film noir. It just as easily describes Batman's world.

"Dramas of people in crisis, noir illuminates the night world of the other self that bedevils all," Hirsch writes. "...In the verve and color

Above: Batman #400, October 1986 (Steve Rude pin-up, last page of book). Left: *Batman and Terry Tremayne evoke Sam Spade and Brigid O'Shaughnessy in this homage to Dashiell Hammett.* (Batman #269, November 1975, "The Daily Death of Terry Tremayne," p. 18 [select panels].)