

SPAWN BATMAN



FRANK
MILLER
TODD
McFARLANE



I M A G E ❖ C O M I C S

I M A G E ♦ C O M I C S

presents

SPAWN BATMAN

SPAWN VS. BATMAN IS A COMPANION PIECE TO DC COMIC'S
THE DARK KNIGHT RETURNS.
IT DOES NOT REPRESENT CURRENT DC CONTINUITY.



Writer

Frank Miller

Artist

Todd McFarlane

Letterer

Tom Orzechowski

Colorist

Steve Oliff

COMPUTER COLORS BY OLYOPTICS:

Tracey Anderson, Cathy Enis, Christ Wolfe, Patti Stratton Jordan,
Kirk Mobert, Abel Mouton, Lea Rude, Marie St. Clair, Mo Samson,
Quinn Supplee, Robyn Roberson, William Zindel, Stacy Cox,

FOR IMAGE COMICS:

Executive Director
LARRY MARDER

Publisher
TONY LOBITO

SPAWN CREATED BY TODD MCFARLANE

BATMAN CREATED BY BOB KANE

Cover By: Todd McFarlane and Kiko Taganashi

Pre-Press Production: Studio Colour Group

Director of Creative Development: Terry Fitzgerald

Graphics Coordinator: Julia Simmons

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A COLD
NIGHT.

A DARK
NIGHT.

AN UNFORGIVING
WIND.

A MERCILESS
CITY:

GOTHAM.

AT THE
WATERFRONT.

GOTHAM'S
DISTANT
ROAR.

THE LAPPING
OF BRINY
WAVES
AGAINST
ROTTED
WOODEN
PILINGS.

STARTLED
CURSES.

MUFFLED
GUNSHOTS.

HORRID
POUNDING.

SHRIEKS
OF PAIN.

DULL
MOANS.

NO
TRESPAS

NEAR
SILENCE.

INSIDE
A WARE-
HOUSE.

SALTY
SMELLS OF
BLOOD AND
SWEAT.

A SILENT
SHADOW
OF A MAN.

A COLD
NIGHT.

A DARK
KNIGHT:

BATMAN



MUSTY AIR
SUCKED INTO
LUNGS FILLED
WITH FIRE.

BLOOD SURGING
FROM HEART
TO SHOULDER
AND STREAMING
HOTLY DOWN
HIS ARM.

NOT A MOMENT
SPENT
ACKNOWLEDGING
THE PAIN.

NOT A MOVEMENT
WASTED.

BATMAN.

PROTECTOR.

AVENGER.

DETECTIVE.

CHAMPION.

PUNKS...

... YOU'RE
LUCKY I
WENT SO
EASY ON
YOU...

TONIGHT'S FOES
ARE LEFT BEHIND
HIM, BROKEN THINGS.

BUT THE TRUE
HORROR LIES
AHEAD.

WEAPONS-- SOLD BY
AGENTS OF A FALLEN
DICTATORSHIP TO
GOTHAM STREET GANGS.

WEAPONS-- BUILT
FOR A WAR THAT
NEVER HAPPENED.

GUNS.
GRENADES.
ROCKET
LAUNCHERS--

--AND STRANGE,
HIGH-TECH DEVICES
THAT HINT AT THE
SMALLER HORRORS
THAT WOULD HAVE
FOLLOWED THE
NUCLEAR
NIGHTMARE.

A PAIR OF
BATTLE
GLOVES,
HUMMING
WITH THE
PROMISE
OF
POWER.

THEN--
A SUDDEN
HISS, NOT
HUMAN...



THE ROBOT
PAUSES, STUPID
AS IT IS LETHAL,
THINKING
BATMAN DEAD.

NOT HUMAN-- NO
CHANCE AGAINST
THIS THING.

NO CHANCE--
UNLESS...

MOVE SLOWLY.

STAY CONSCIOUS.

IGNORE THE PAIN.

STAY CONSCIOUS...

...THE GLOVES.

HUMMING WITH
THE PROMISE
OF POWER.

NO TIME TO
STUDY THEM.
JUST PUT
THEM ON--

--AND PRAY THE
SOVIET SLAVE WHO
MADE THEM KNEW
WHAT HE WAS DOING.

NEURAL ENHANCERS
LOCK. A SUDDEN
SURGE OF SUPERHUMAN
STRENGTH-- AN ALMOST
DIZZYING WAVE OF
CONFIDENCE--

--AS THE ROBOT
HUNCHES, TAKING
AIM, BUILDING A
CHARGE THAT
COULD BLAST
BATMAN TO DUST.

NO HESITATION--
SINCE YEAR ONE
BATMAN HAS
KNOWN--

-- WHEN
THERE IS NO
DEFENSE--

--ATTACK.

SK
KR
K!
K!

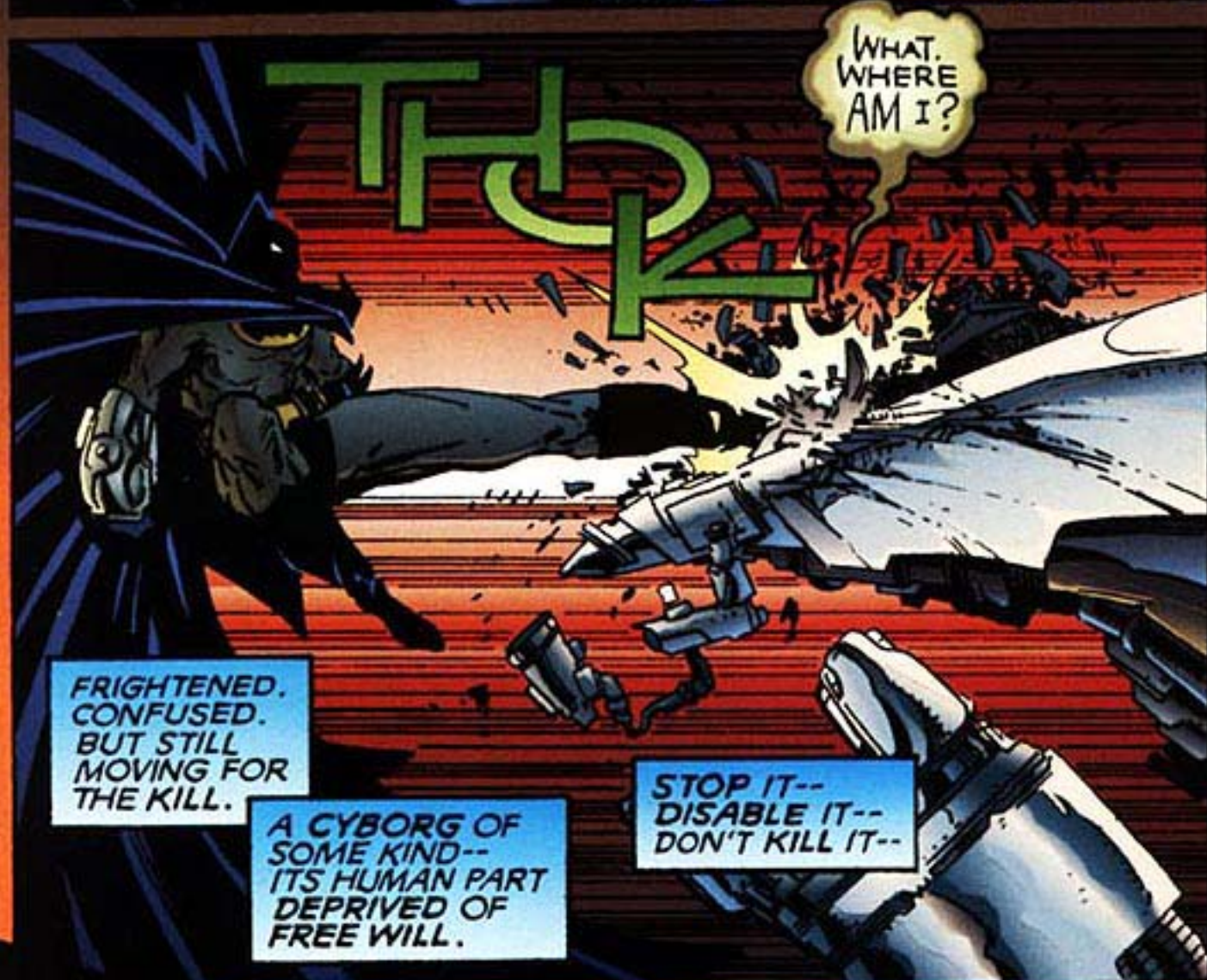


THE ROBOT STAGGERS, CONFUSED-- A VISOR SHATTERS, THE SOUND ALMOST PRETTY--

--REVEALING SOMETHING WARM AND SOFT AND FRIGHTENED INSIDE.

AT LEAST PART OF THIS THING IS HUMAN.

Khofff
-- WHAT. WHAT.



WHAT. WHERE AM I?

FRIGHTENED. CONFUSED. BUT STILL MOVING FOR THE KILL.

A CYBORG OF SOME KIND-- ITS HUMAN PART DEPRIVED OF FREE WILL.

STOP IT-- DISABLE IT-- DON'T KILL IT--



I DON'T KNOW WHERE I AM.



IT'S LIKE WRESTLING A JACK-HAMMER.

I DON'T KNOW WHERE I AM.

GET INSIDE-- GET PAST IT--

--TO HIM.



I CAN'T FEEL MY ARMS.

ENGLISH-- HE'S
SPEAKING ENGLISH,
NOT RUSSIAN--

--ENGLISH-- WITH AN
AMERICAN ACCENT--

--A BROOKLYN
ACCENT.

WHAT IS
GOING ON
HERE?

AND NOW IT
SHUDDERS
AND STOPS.
BATMAN HAS
WON--

--BUT THE AIR
GOES HOT AND A
STRIDENT SIGNAL
BRINGS A
RINGING TO
BATMAN'S EARS...

I CAN'T
FEEL MY
LEGS.

Vreeeee

...A SELF-DESTRUCT
SEQUENCE.

FREE WHAT'S
HUMAN.

SAVING HIS
LIFE MAY STILL
BE POSSIBLE.

I CAN'T
FEEL ANY-
THING.

I CAN'T--
GHEEAARGGHH

THEN THE
EARTH
TREMBLES
AND THE AIR
TURNS TO
FIRE AND WHAT
WAS ONCE A
MAN IS ONLY
A PIECE OF
EVIDENCE.

POON

--AND IT CAME AS NO SURPRISE THAT DR. MARGARET LOVE, FOUNDER AND PRESIDENT OF HEAL THE WORLD, WAS AWARDED THE LAIMBEER PRIZE FOR HUMANITARIAN ACHIEVEMENT "OUR WORK HAS ONLY BEGUN," SAID DR. LOVE, "I ACCEPT THIS HONOR--

"--NOT IN MY OWN NAME, BUT ON BEHALF OF THE THOUSANDS OF CARING AND SHARING VOLUNTEERS WHO HAVE BROUGHT THE REWARDS OF SELF-ACTUALIZATION, EMPOWERMENT, AND ATTITUDE ADJUSTMENT TO THE DISENFRANCHISED OF OUR TROUBLED PLANET..."



A DAMP PLACE, WHERE SOUNDS ECHO, UPWARD, TILL THEY ARE LOST IN THE ENDLESS DARKNESS.

THE BATCAVE.

I TOOK THE LIBERTY OF PREPARING HERB TEA FOR YOU, MASTER BRUCE.

IT'S CHAMOMILE. THE TEA, THAT IS. UTTERLY RENOWNED FOR RELIEVING STRESS IN VIGILANTES SUFFERING FROM OBSSIVE DISORDER.

NOT RIGHT NOW, ALFRED. JUST PATCH UP MY SHOULDER. THE BLOOD'S GETTING IN MY WAY.

VERY GOOD, SIR-- BUT YOU MIGHT CONSIDER REMOVING YOUR COWL, SO AS TO FACILITATE MY EFFORTS. AFTER ALL, YOU'VE NO NEED TO CONCEAL YOUR IDENTITY HERE.

SOMETIMES I'M MORE COMFORTABLE WITH THE MASK ON.

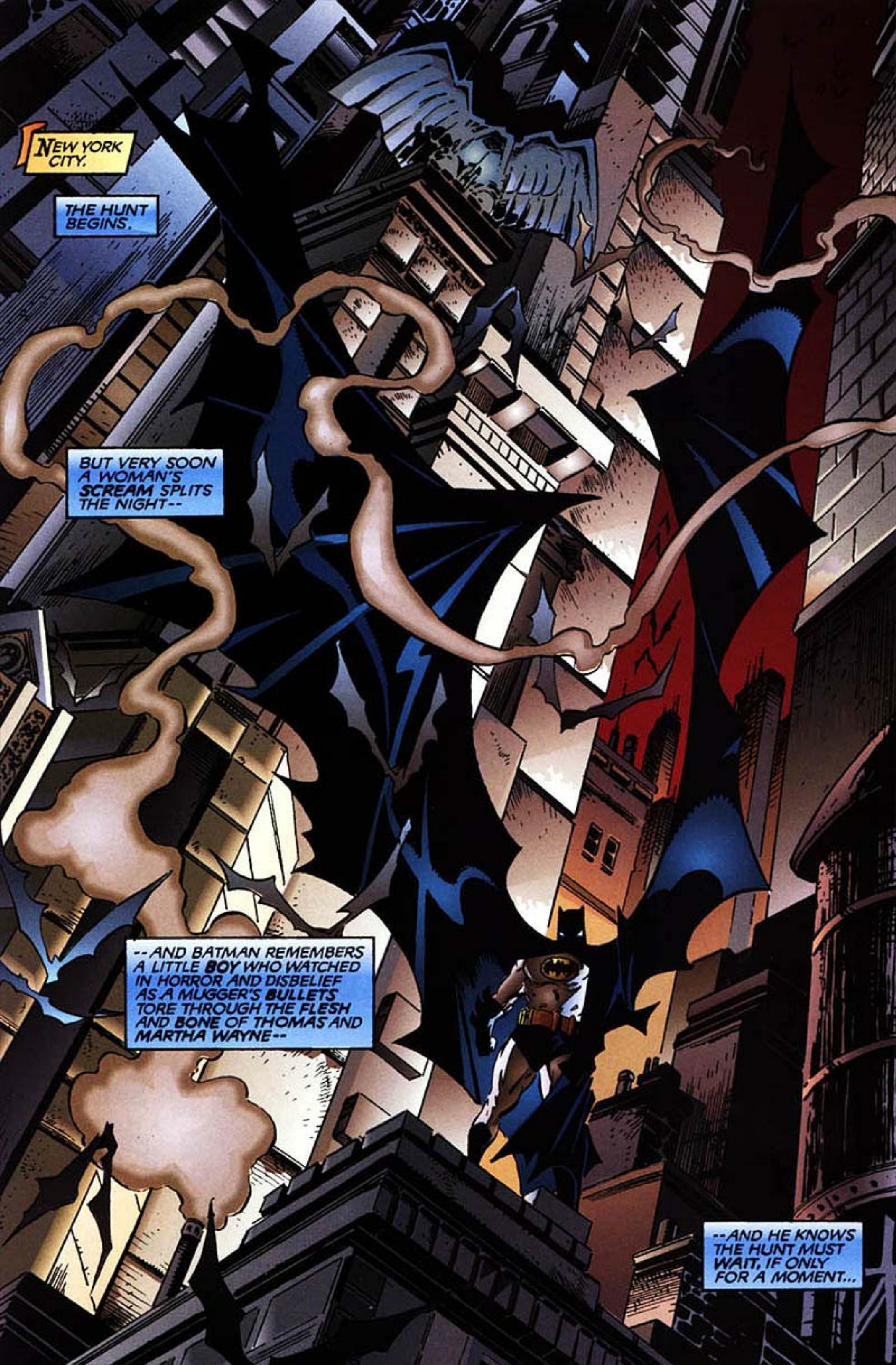
Hmm... NO FINGERS, SO NO FINGER-PRINTS. BUT HE'S STILL GOT HIS TEETH...



... LOUIS BACCHUS. AGE 42. VAGRANT. ACUTE ALCOHOLIC. LAST SEEN 42nd STREET MISSION, MID-MANHATTAN. PRESUMED DEAD.



A PLEASURE SPEAKING WITH YOU, AS ALWAYS.



NEW YORK CITY.

THE HUNT BEGINS.

**BUT VERY SOON
A WOMAN'S
SCREAM SPLITS
THE NIGHT--**

**-- AND BATMAN REMEMBERS
A LITTLE BOY WHO WATCHED
IN HORROR AND DISBELIEF
AS A MUGGER'S BULLETS
TORE THROUGH THE FLESH
AND BONE OF THOMAS AND
MARTHA WAYNE--**

**-- AND HE KNOWS
THE HUNT MUST
WAIT, IF ONLY
FOR A MOMENT...**

--AS HEAL THE WORLD'S PILOT PROGRAM PROVIDES NEW YORK'S HOMELESS NOT JUST WITH FOOD AND SHELTER, BUT WITH HOPE FOR A BETTER LIFE, THROUGH THE WONDERS OF ATTITUDE ADJUSTMENT AND SOCIAL REALIGNMENT--

--REPORTS ARE FLOODING OUR DESK FROM THROUGHOUT MIDTOWN OF MUGGERS STOPPED COLD IN THEIR TRACKS--OF INNOCENT NEAR-VICTIMS RESCUED BY A SHADOWY SAVIOR. COULD IT BE THAT A CERTAIN CAPED CRUSADER HAS COME TO THE BIG APPLE?



I HAD IT ALL. BUT I FORSAKE THE MATERIALISM OF OUR AGE AND FOUND SPIRITUAL ENLIGHTENMENT. PASS THAT BOTTLE, WILL YA?

...I SAW IT, MAN! THERE WAS AL, A HOLE RIGHT THROUGH HIM, STILL STANDING THERE LIKE HE DIDN'T NOTICE! NEXT THING I KNEW THE OTHER GUY WAS TOAST!

AMONG THE DREGS OF HUMANITY, BATMAN LISTENS--FOR ANY SCANT CLUE.

MOSTLY, HE HEARS SOB STORIES AND OUTRIGHT NONSENSE.

BUT NOW AND THEN HE HEARS LEGENDS OF ONE OF THEIR OWN NAMED "AL"--A BUM POSSESSED WITH MAGIC POWERS.

NONSENSE, HE THINKS.

A dramatic comic book illustration of Spawn, a character with a black and red suit and a skull-like face, suspended in the air by thick metal chains. He is positioned over a stylized, red-tinted view of the Manhattan skyline. The chains are attached to his wrists and waist, and he appears to be in a state of torment or capture. The background features sharp, angular lines and a deep red color palette, creating a hellish atmosphere.

BUT BATMAN
IS WRONG.

ANOTHER NIGHT CREATURE
GLIDES THROUGH
MANHATTAN'S CONCRETE
CANYONS, ON A QUEST OF
HIS OWN.

HE IS A DEAD MAN
BROUGHT TO WRETCHED
LIFE-- A SLAVE OF HELL
WHO SEEKS REDEMPTION.

AND SOME OF
HIS FRIENDS
ARE MISSING.

SPAWN

NOT FAR AWAY.

A COUPLE OF SICK JERKS OUT FOR WHAT SICK JERKS CALL A GOOD TIME.

I'M GONNA DO IT, GORKY. I'M GONNA DO IT.

DO IT, MAN. DO IT.

Z





IT'S WEIRD, MAN. MAGIC OR SOME-THING--

OOF!

OOF!

YES. MAGIC.

MAGIC BREWED IN THE DEPTHS OF HELL.



WHICH IS WHERE YOU TWO ARE GOING--UNLESS YOU GIVE ME A DAMN GOOD REASON NOT TO SEND YOU THERE.

HURK!

DUST THIS FREAK, GORKY!



I SAID DUST HIM, MAN! DO IT!

YOU'RE BEING STUPID.



BLAM!
BLAM!

BLAM!

LIKE I SAID.

STUPID.



WHEN
YOU MEET
SATAN--

--SAY
HELLO
FOR ME.



A TINY
BURST OF
HELLBORN
POWER
SQUANDERED...



YAAA

GAAA

TO SPAWN,
A FIT OF
PIQUE--



--BUT TO THE
EYES OF THIS
LATECOMING
WITNESS--



--A WANTON
ACT OF
MURDER.



YOU
MUST BE
AL.

THERE'S ONE
GOOD THING ABOUT
MURDERERS--
YOU DON'T FEEL
BAD ABOUT TAKING
A CHEAP SHOT
AT THEM.

LIKE GETTING GOOD
MOMENTUM FROM A
THIRTY FOOT DROP--
AND DRIVING YOUR
HEEL INTO THE
MURDERER'S KIDNEY.

SHOULDN'T
CAUSE TOO
MUCH DAMAGE.

SIX MONTHS IN
THE HOSPITAL
AND HE'LL BE
READY TO FACE
THE JUDGE.

A comic book page depicting a fight between Batman and Al Bano. Batman, in his iconic black suit and cowl, is shown in various dynamic poses. Al Bano, a large, muscular man with a red mask and a black cape, is the primary antagonist. The fight takes place in a dark, industrial setting with debris and chains. The action is intense, with Al Bano delivering powerful kicks and punches to Batman. Batman is shown being thrown back and hitting a wall. The page is filled with sound effects like 'KUNK!' and 'KLUDD!' and dialogue bubbles that provide context to the fight.

THIS IS
MY TURF,
BATMAN.

BACK
OFF!

IMPOSSIBLE--
THIS "AL"-- HE
SHOULD BE
JUST THIS SIDE
OF CRIPPLED--

--BUT HE PIVOTS,
EXPERTLY--

-- DELIVERING A
KICK OF HIS OWN
THAT MAKES ALL
THE AIR LEAVE
BATMAN IN A
RUSH.

KEEP HIM OFF-
BALANCE-- DON'T
BOTHR TO CATCH
YOUR BREATH--

-- PRESS THE
ATTACK.

KUNK!

OOF!

LIKE KICKING
A SLAB OF
GRANITE.

YET STILL HE
HISSES LIKE A
MAN, "AL" DOES--
HE BREATHES
LIKE A MAN--

--WHAT
IS HE
MADE
OF?

IT'S LIKE
PUNCHING A
BRICK WALL.

KLUDD!



SNAK!

SNAK!

SNAK!

"AL" CAN TAKE
PUNISHMENT--
OF THE SUPER-
HUMAN VARIETY.

NO REASON
TO BE NICE.

BATMAN AIMS
FOR THREE
WOUNDS--

--THE RESULTS
SHOULD BE
JUST SHORT
OF LETHAL--

KNOCK IT
OFF, BATMAN.
I'M NOT IN THE MOOD--
AND I DON'T HAVE
THE TIME.

CHING!

CHING!

CHING!

GOT
TIME
FOR
THIS,
PUNK?

ANOTHER KICK
AT THAT SLAB
OF GRANITE--
THE SPINE OF A
MAN WOULD
SHATTER--

--BUT HE ISN'T EVEN
BREATHING HARD--

--BREATHING
--THAT'S IT--

--WHATEVER HE IS,
HE STILL BREATHE--

--HE STILL
NEEDS TO
BREATHE--



-- GIVE THE MAN
SOME NERVE GAS--

-- ENOUGH
TO MAKE A
MOB TAKE
A NAP.

-- THERE'S A
REASON YOU
CARRY YOUR
UTILITY BELT
YOU IDIOT,
BATMAN TELLS
HIMSELF--
USE IT--

GET SOME
DISTANCE--



KHOFF

KHAKK



IT SEEMS TO
SLOW HIM DOWN.

IT SEEMS TO
SOFTEN HIM UP.



WHOKK

HAD
ENOUGH?



IN YOUR
DREAMS.

IT FEELS
LIKE
CHEATING.
THINKS
SPAWN--

-- IT IS
CHEATING--

-- USING
THE
MAGIC--

-- TO MAKE
HIMSELF
STRONG--

-- TO BEAT
THE CRAP
OUT OF
BATMAN.

WHUK!

SWAK!

KRAK

SMEK
SMEK
KOOGH

THUD

POK!

TUNCH
TUNCH
TUNCH

KAK

WHAP

WHUK!

I'M OVERPOWERED,
BATMAN REALIZES--
IT'S RETREAT OR
DIE--

-- AND IF I'M
DEAD, HE
TELLS
HIMSELF--

-- I'M NO USE
TO ANYBODY.

SHOWED HIM.
I SHOWED HIM.

JESUS.
THAT GAS. WHAT
WAS IN IT?

HUK
HUK
HUK

BLAGG
GG

...AND DON'T
YOU COME BACK
HERE-- YOU GOT YOUR
TURF-- AND I
GOT MINE--

KHUFF

I'LL BE BACK
ALL RIGHT, YOU
LITTLE PUNK...
COUNT YOUR
BLESSINGS I LET
YOU OFF SO
EASY...

KHAGG

SPAWN RELAXES
HIS MAGIC-- AND
HIS STOMACH.

IT'S WORSE WHEN
YOU HAVEN'T
EATEN. IT TAKES
THAT MUCH
LONGER TO CON-
VINCE THE OLD
GAG REFLEX THAT
THERE'S NOTHING
LEFT TO PUKE...

A comic book panel showing Batman on a rooftop at night. He is wearing his iconic suit and cowl, with the bat symbol on his chest. He is looking down at a large, dark, crumpled object on the roof. In the background, there is a city skyline with several tall buildings, including one with a large cross on its roof. The scene is lit with a mix of dark and light colors, creating a dramatic atmosphere.

BATMAN
GETS TEN
BLOCKS
BEFORE HIS
KNEES
GIVE OUT.

HE SPENDS THE NEXT FEW
MINUTES TEACHING HIM-
SELF HOW TO BREATHE
WITHOUT COUGHING.
THEN HE GOES TO WORK
ON HIS RIGHT ARM, FITTING
IT BACK INTO ITS SOCKET.
THEN HE TWISTS HIMSELF
AROUND UNTIL THE BONES
OF HIS SPINE ARE A BIT
LESS TANGLED.

ALL THIS IS VERY PAINFUL,
WHICH IS GOOD. IT KEEPS
HIS MIND OFF THE
HUMILIATION.

THE PUNK
WAS
HOLDING
BACK.

MEANWHILE.

THE BUILDING IS
OLD AND CRUMB-
LING. THE DOOR
LOOKS LIKE IT
WOULD BREAK IF
YOU LEANED
AGAINST IT.

BUT ONCE YOU
SCRAPE OFF THE
FAKE RUST--
THE LOCK IS A
BRAND NEW
PATAKY.

STATE-OF-THE-
ART SECURITY--
FOR A MISSION?

BACK WHEN HE
WAS A SOLDIER--
BACK WHEN HE
WAS ALIVE--AL
SIMMONS
COULD PICK ONE
OF THESE BEAUTIES
IN TEN SECONDS
FLAT.

NOW IT
TAKES HIM
TWELVE.

A JUNKIE NAMED
SYLVIO LED SPAWN
HERE. HE SEEMED TO
KNOW SOMETHING.

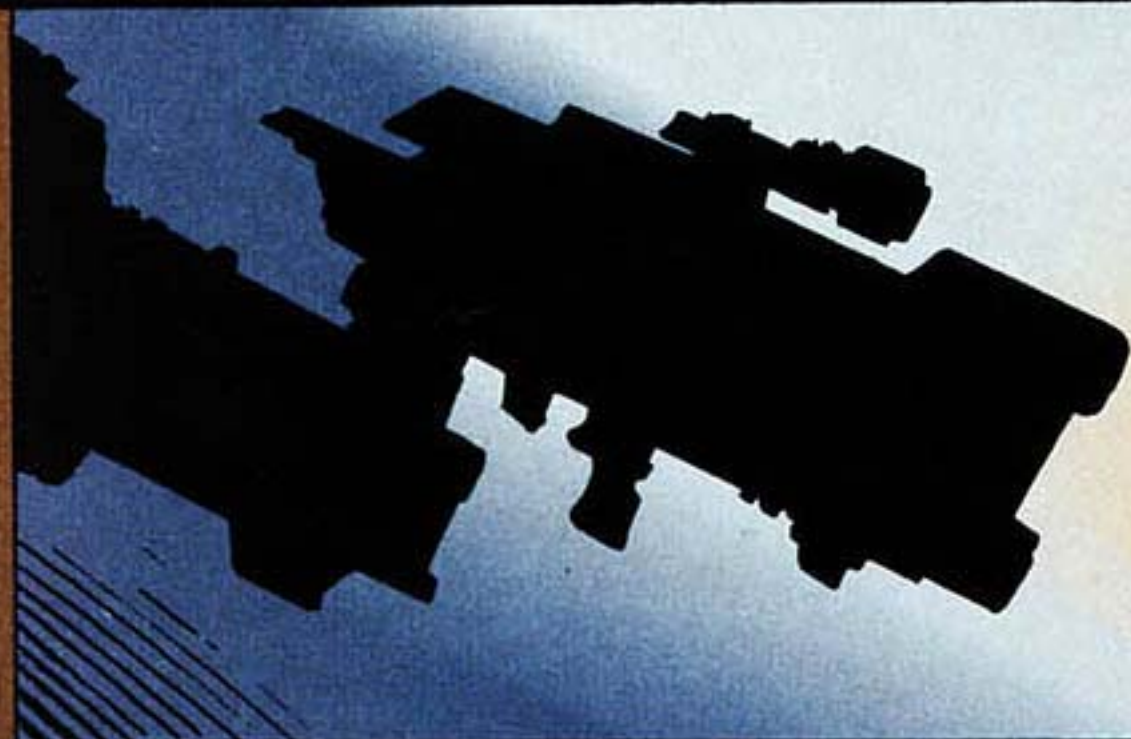
"YOU CAN CHECK
IN," SAID SYLVIO,
"BUT YOU CAN'T
CHECK OUT."



WHATEVER THIS
PLACE IS-- IT'S
BUILT FOR MORE
THAN FEEDING
PEOPLE.



BEHIND HIM--
OILED SERVOS
WHIRR, ALMOST
SILENT...





POOM!

RAKKA
RAKKA
RAKKA
RAKKA
RAKKA

WHUMP!

NCRK

ANOTHER
PRECIOUS LITTLE
PIECE OF HELL
RELEASED...



... RELEASED.
WASTED.

BETTER
TO USE THE
WEAPON
AT HAND.



BOOM!

BOOM!



FROM THE WRECKAGE--
SOMETHING LIVING--

WHAT.
WHAT.



...CHUCK.

I DON'T
KNOW
WHERE I
AM.



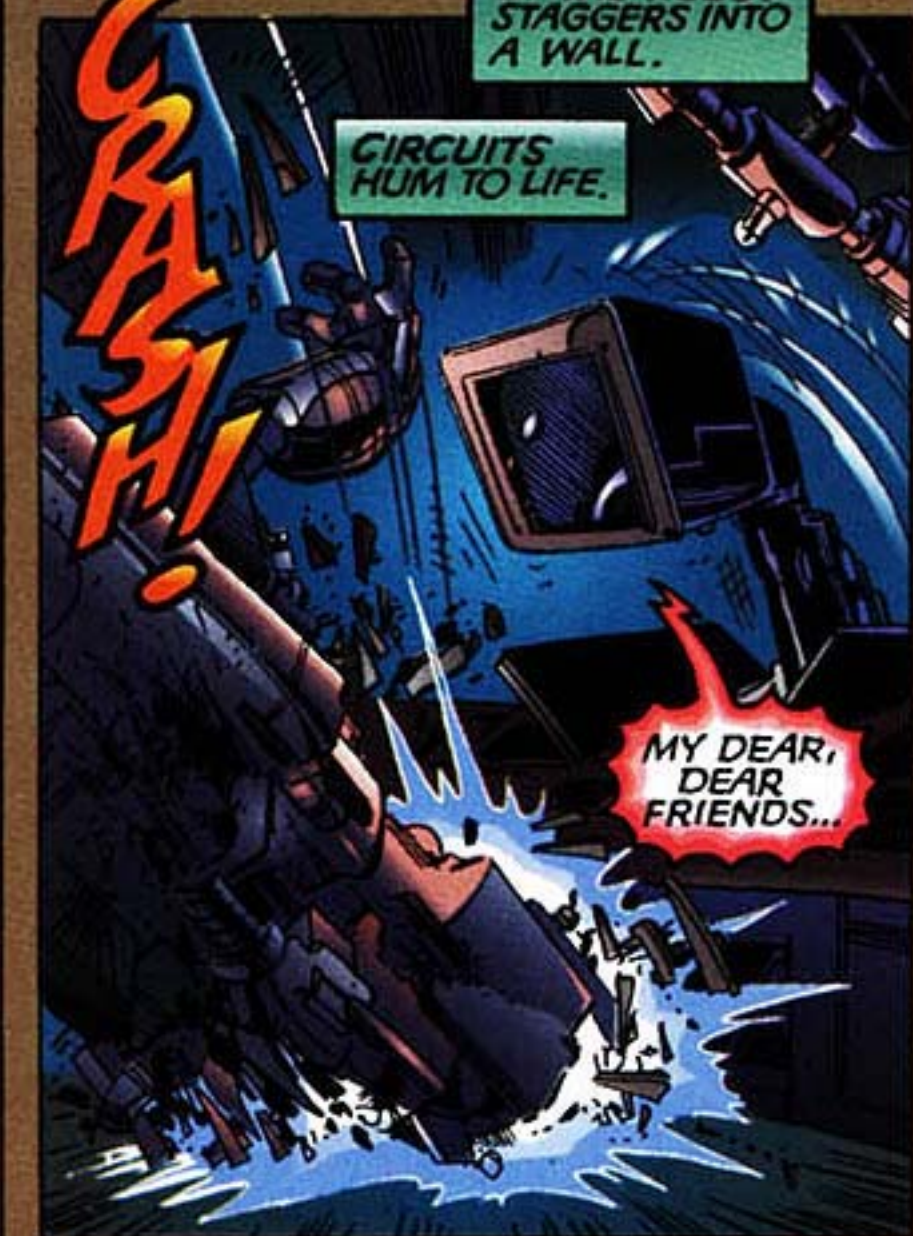
CHUCK. WHAT
THE HELL...

...WHO
DID THIS
TO YOU,
PAL?

I DON'T
KNOW
WHO
I AM.

THE LAST
MOVING PIECE
OF THE ROBOT
STAGGERS INTO
A WALL.

CIRCUITS
HUM TO LIFE.




MY DEAR,
DEAR
FRIENDS...



...YOU'VE WORKED
SO VERY HARD, ALL
THESE MONTHS. I'M SO
VERY PROUD OF YOU. YOU
ARE READY, NOW-- FOR
THE FINAL STAGE OF
YOUR REHABILITA-
TION...

I CAN'T
FEEL MY
ARMS.



HER VOICE IS
LIKE MUSIC.
HYPNOTIZING.

THEN-- LIKE
A THUNDER-
CLAP--

-- A FRAGMENT
OF MEMORY--
THE MEMORY OF
AL SIMMONS--
SOLDIER-- ON
SOME GHASTLY
FOREIGN
BATTLEFIELD--

-- SHE WAS
SMILING.

...PREPARE
TO SHED YOUR
POISONED BODIES
AND BECOME
PERFECT SERVANTS
OF SOCIETY. FREE
FROM GUILT AND
PAIN. FREE FROM
CHOICE...

MEN
SCREAMED
AND DIED
AND SHE WAS
SMILING.

I CAN'T
FEEL MY
LEGS.

AND NOW--
HERE-- HER SICK
EXPERIMENTS
CONTINUE.

THE HELLPOWER
SURGES, BEGGING
FOR RELEASE.

SPAWN
DOES NOT
FIGHT IT.

THE PUNK WAS
HOLDING BACK.

HUMILIATING.

DON'T DWELL
ON IT.

PATCH
YOURSELF
UP.

YOU'LL BE
READY--

--WHEN
DUTY
CALLS.

A STRANGE
SIGHT-- THE
BAT SIGNAL
OVER THE
SKYLINE OF
MANHATTAN.

A STRANGE
SIGHT-- BUT
A WELCOME
ONE.

IF BATMAN
IS STILL IN
PAIN, HE
DOES NOT
KNOW IT.



A MAKESHIFT
BATSIGNAL--
A PLEA FOR HELP--


--FROM AN
EXQUISITE ANGEL
OF MERCY.

HIS HEAD
ALMOST SPINS,
LOOKING AT
HER, LISTENING
TO HER.

WERE HE NOT
WHAT HE IS,
HE WOULD CALL
THE FEELING
DESIRE.

BUT HE IS
WHAT HE IS.

A SECURITY
CAMERA SPOTTED
THE THING THAT
DID THIS, BATMAN.
IT WAS ALL RED
CAPE AND CHAINS--
IT REDUCED MY
BEAUTIFUL MISSION
TO RUBBLE--



HE WILL
BE STOPPED,
DOCTOR. HE
WON'T GET
ANYWHERE
NEAR YOUR
SHIP.

THE PUNK WAS
HOLDING BACK.

BATMAN HAS TO
EVEN THE ODDS.

A PHONE CALL
TO ALFRED--
AND, TWO
HOURS LATER,
A PACKAGE.

AND BATMAN
IS READY.



...oh,
BATMAN--
ALL MY
DREAMS
ARE IN YOUR
HANDS.

--AND NOW I
FEAR IT WILL DO
WORSE. TONIGHT--
A FUND RAISER ABOARD
THE HEAL THE WORLD
SHIP-- IT'S RUMORED
THE PRESIDENT MAY
ATTEND. IF ANY-
THING SHOULD
HAPPEN...

IN THE FILTHY ALLEY
SPAWN CALLS HOME.

BATMAN'S NERVE
GAS PROVES TO BE
THE GIFT THAT KEEPS
ON GIVING.

THAT'S RIGHT.
JUST LET IT OUT.
DON'T FIGHT IT.
IT'S THE ONLY
WAY.

BLAGG

COUNT YOUR
BLESSINGS, AL.
THE REST OF US
FEEL LIKE THAT
EVERY DAY.

KHOFF

YEAH. I
GUESS
YOU DO.

THE CREEP
WHO DID THIS
TO ME...

IT'S NOT JUST
A STORY. IT WAS
BATMAN. AND IF HE'S
WORKING FOR NADIA
VLADOVA-- OR
MARGARET LOVE,
AS SHE'S CALLING
HERSELF--

--THEN HE'S
NOT THE HERO
EVERYBODY
SAYS HE IS...

KINDA
LIKE "ELSE-
WORLDS," huh?

WHAT'RE
YOU TALKING
ABOUT,
MICK?

HEY--
LOOK...

...AND
I'LL DO TO
HIM WHAT
I'LL DO TO
HER...

Uh, AL,
MAYBE
YOU OUGHT
TO TURN
AROUND.

...BATMAN...
IF HE'S NOT AN
IDIOT, HE'S
LEARNED HIS
LESSON...

BATMAN.
RIGHT. YOU
TELL THE
BEST STORIES,
AL...



WHUDD
WHUDD
WHUDD
WHUDD

THE POWER OF
THE GLOVES--
IT STREAMS
THROUGH BATMAN--

-- HE CAN LAUGH
AT WOUNDS THAT,
JUST HOURS AGO,
LEFT HIM
HELPLESS--

-- AND, MOST
DELIGHTFUL
OF ALL --

WHUDD
WHUDD
WHUDD
WHUDD

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HELPLESS--

-- AND, MOST
DELIGHTFUL
OF ALL --

A comic book panel showing Batman in a physical struggle with Superman. Batman is on the left, wearing his iconic black suit with a yellow bat emblem on the chest and a utility belt. He is holding a large, metallic, gauntlet-like device. Superman is on the right, wearing his red and blue suit with a yellow 'S' shield. He is being held back by a chain. The background is a dark, stylized cityscape. Two speech bubbles are present: one from Batman saying "-- HE FACES AN OPPONENT WHO CAN TAKE A WORLD OF PUNISHMENT." and another from Superman saying "NO NEED THE US RESTR".

A comic book panel showing Batman in a physical struggle with Superman. Batman is on the left, wearing his iconic black suit with a yellow bat emblem on the chest and a utility belt. He is holding a large, metallic, gauntlet-like device. Superman is on the right, wearing his red and blue suit with a yellow 'S' shield. He is being held back by a chain. The background is a stylized orange and yellow sky with a large white bat symbol. Two speech bubbles are present: one from Batman saying "-- HE FACES AN OPPONENT WHO CAN TAKE A WORLD OF PUNISHMENT." and one from Superman saying "NO NEED THE US RESTR". The image is a high-contrast, black and white illustration with color accents.



KRAK!

CK
CK!

KRAK!

IN YOUR
DREAMS.

BACK WHEN HE
WAS A SOLDIER--
BACK WHEN HE
WAS ALIVE--

--AL SIMMONS
DIDN'T NEED
MAGIC--




--AND NOW--
WITH LITTLE MAGIC
TO SPARE-- HE
FIGHTS THE WAY
HE WAS TRAINED
TO FIGHT:

DIRTY.



SKRAKK

GAAA



BREAK
YOU IN HALF.
I'LL BREAK YOU
IN HALF.

SLOPPY
FIGHTER.
STUPID
FIGHTER. NO
DISCIPLINE.

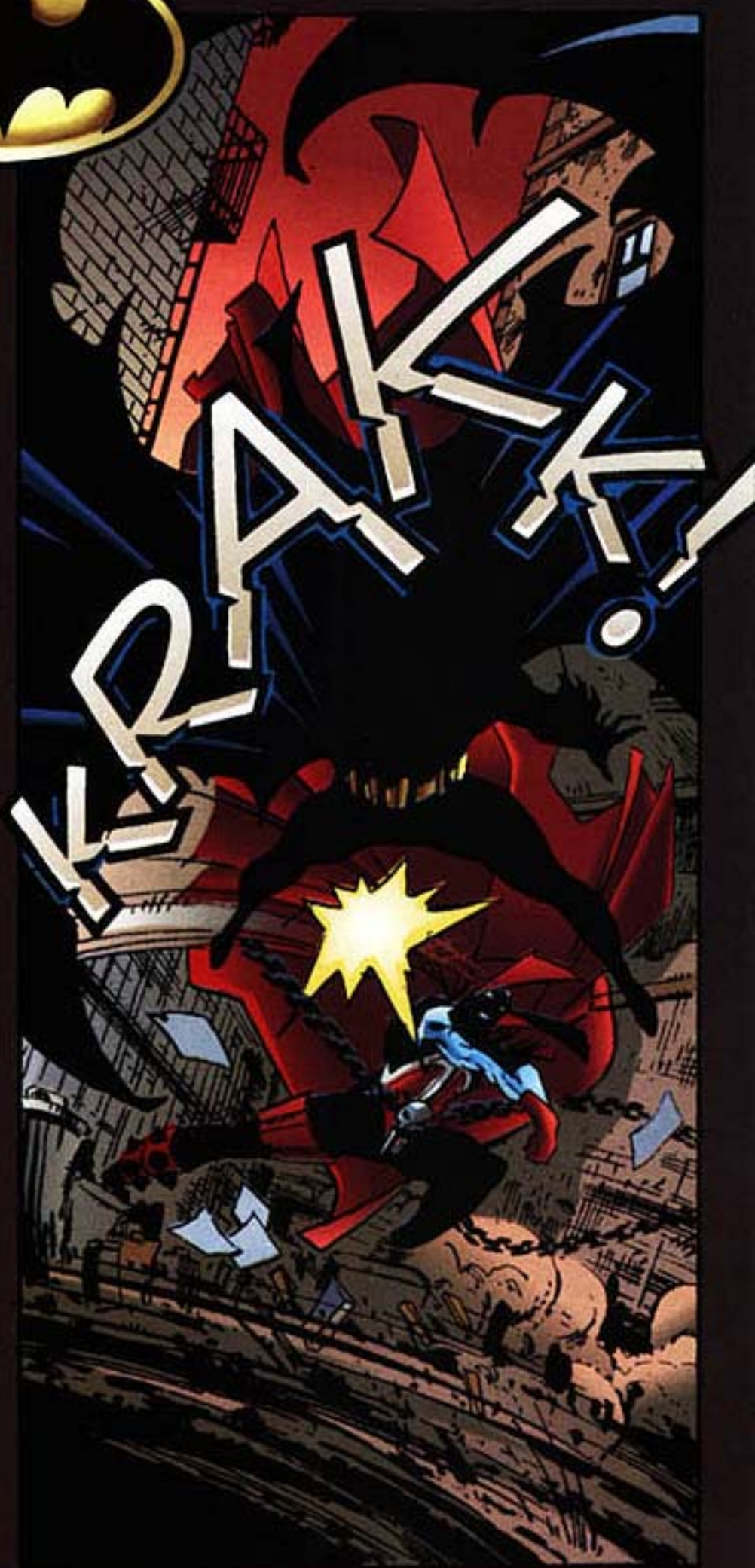


TALKING
TRASH. YOU'RE
TALKING TRASH.
IT WON'T HELP
YOU.



TUNCH!

NO
DISCIPLINE.
STUPID
FIGHTER.
STUPID
PUNK.



HAD IT.
YOU'VE HAD IT.
YOU'RE DONE.

JUST
WARMING UP
YOU STUPID
PUNK.

CHUD

CHAKK

KRUNCH

CHUD

KWUGG



CLANK! CLANK! CLANK! CLANK!

AND, JUST
WHEN THEY'VE
BEATEN EACH
OTHER NEARLY
SENSELESS--

--THE ALLEY
SHUDDERS.

CYBORG
MIND
SLAVES--
SENT BY
MARGARET
LOVE--

--TO MAKE
SURE THERE
AREN'T ANY
LOOSE
ENDS.

SHE CAN'T BE EXPOSED--
AND SHE CAN'T BE
STOPPED-- IF BATMAN
AND SPAWN ARE DEAD.

THEY CAN'T
GET UP.

THEY
CAN'T
FIGHT.

BATMAN'S
JAW
SHATTERS
LIKE
GLASS.

COLD
STEEL
LANCES
HIM.

AN ARTERY
BURSTS.

A MORTAL
WOUND.

AS BATMAN
FEELS A FINAL
COLDNESS
FILL HIM--

-- AND HEARS
THE WET SOUNDS
OF WHAT THEY
DO TO HIM--

KILLING
HIM. CHRIST,
THEY'RE KILLING
HIM.

-- SPAWN REACHES
DEEP WITHIN
HIMSELF TO FIND
THE STRENGTH TO
STAY CONSCIOUS--

-- TO FIND THE
WILL TO RISE--

--AND HE
REACHES ALL THE
WAY TO HELL TO
FIND THE POWER.



I JUST
HOPE YOU
APPRECIATE
THIS,
BATMAN.

STUPID PUNK.
UNDISCIPLINED.



YOU'RE NOT MAKING SENSE. YOU'RE IN SHOCK. IT LOOKS REALLY BAD.

MAGIC TRICKS. NO WAY TO FIGHT. NO DISCIPLINE--
HUKKK

HIS HEART STOPS.

THERE'S ALMOST NO BLOOD LEFT IN HIM.

IT WOULD TAKE A MIRACLE TO SAVE HIM.



WHAT ARE YOU
DOING?

SAVING YOUR LIFE--
AND DROPPING IN
FOR A VISIT.

GET OUT OF MY HEAD.

HEAR THAT, BATMAN? THAT'S
YOUR HEARTBEAT. YOU DIDN'T
HAVE ONE FOR A WHILE THERE.
YOU'RE WELCOME.

GET OUT OF MY
HEAD YOU TWIT.

I COULD DO THAT. BUT
THEN I'D JUST HAVE TO
BEAT THE CRAP OUT OF
YOU ALL OVER AGAIN.

YOU DIDN'T BEAT ANY-
BODY YOU PUNK. YOU
WERE ON THE ROPES.
YOU WERE FINISHED.

MAN, I FLATTENED YOUR
ASS. I ONLY LET UP OUT
OF PITY. A STRAY CAT
WOULD'VE GIVEN ME
MORE TROUBLE THAN
YOU DID.

AT LEAST I
COULD KEEP MY
DINNER DOWN.

OKAY. YOU MADE
ME PUKE. I'LL
GIVE YOU THAT.
BIG DEAL.

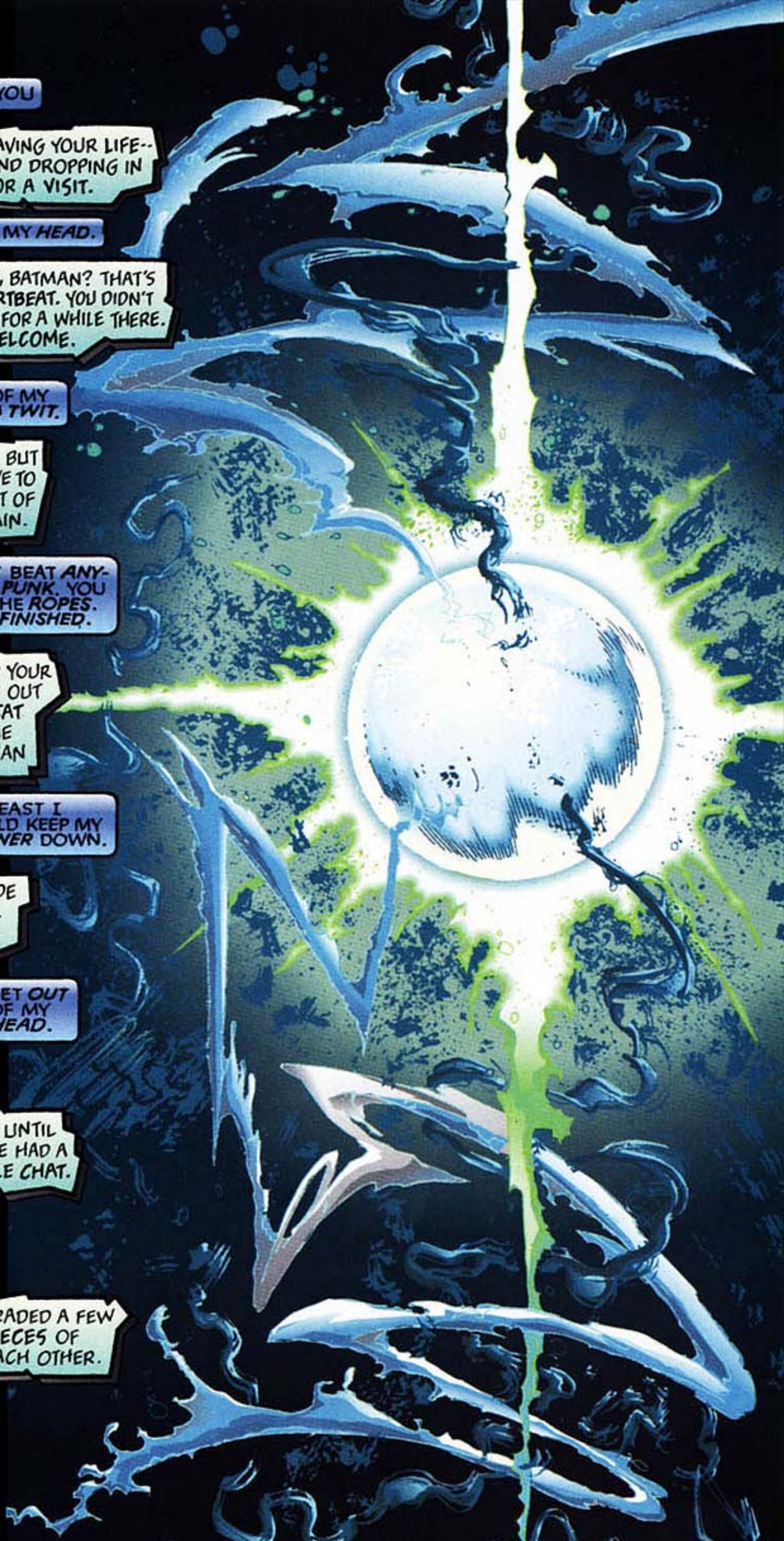
GET OUT
OF MY
HEAD.


NO.

NOT UNTIL
WE'VE HAD A
LITTLE CHAT.

SWAPPED
A FEW
STORIES.

TRADED A FEW
PIECES OF
EACH OTHER.





MURDERER. YOU'RE A
MURDERER. A HUNDRED
TIMES OVER. YOU'RE
DETESTABLE.

I WAS A SOLDIER-- I
FOUGHT AND I DIED-- I
WASN'T SOME RICH KID
WITH A HANGUP ABOUT
BATS.

A SOLDIER--
FACING BULLETS--

--BULLETS--
YOUR PARENTS--

GET OUT OF
MY HEAD!

NOT UNTIL
YOU KNOW!

LOOK AT HER, BATMAN!
LISTEN TO THE SOLDIERS
GIBBER LIKE IDIOTS AND
SCREAM AND DIE! THAT'S
MARGARET LOVE AND
HER DAMN MIND
EXPERIMENTS!

SHE SMILED,
DAMN HER!

**SHE
SMILED!**

DO YOU
GET IT,
NOW?

YES.

I MEAN, I KNOW
YOU'RE A LITTLE
THICK, BUT DO YOU
UNDERSTAND WHAT
SHE IS-- AND WHAT
WE HAVE TO DO?

YES.

NOW GET
OUT OF MY
HEAD, YOU
TWIT.

NOTHING
I'D RATHER DO.
IT'S NOT A VERY
NICE PLACE.

YOU EVER
THOUGHT ABOUT
GETTING
HELP?

IF THERE'S
ONE THING I
CAN'T STAND,
IT'S A DEAD
PUNK THAT
WON'T
SHUT UP.

WE'VE
GOT WORK
TO DO.
LET'S GO.





MEANWHILE, THE PRESIDENT DIDN'T COME TO THE FUND-RAISER, BUT EVERYBODY ELSE WHO'S ANYBODY DID.

MARGARET LOVE INSISTS THAT EVERYONE TRY THE PUNCH.

THE PUNCH IS A NON-ALCOHOLIC DELIGHT THAT TICKLES THE NOSE AND MAKES THE MIND VERY OPEN TO SUGGESTION.

HER VOICE DOES THE REST, SMOOTH AS SILK AND SWEET AS HONEY...

DISTINGUISHED COLLEAGUES. HONORED GUESTS. MY DEAR, DEAR FRIENDS. GOD BLESS YOU ALL.

WHEN I WAS JUST A LITTLE GIRL, I SAW THE SADNESS AND SUFFERING AROUND ME--AND I DECIDED TO DEDICATE EVERY HOUR OF MY LIFE TO HEALING THE PAIN OF OUR TROUBLED PLANET. AS YEARS PASSED, AN ACHING EMPTINESS FILLED MY SOUL... A VAST, HOPELESS BLACK HOLE...

...FOR EVERY MOUTH WE FED, THERE WERE MILLIONS, STILL HUNGRY. FOR EVERY MIND WE TURNED TO LOVE AND JOY, THERE WERE NATIONS OF SLAVES TO BIGOTRY AND HATRED. IT ALL SEEMED POINTLESS, IMPOSSIBLE--

--TRULY, HOW CAN ANYONE HEAL THE WORLD?

A SYMPATHETIC SOB FROM THE ATTORNEY GENERAL.

LOW MURMUR OF SAD AGREEMENT FROM A SENATOR.

THEN, ONE DAY, AN EPIPHANY. LIKE A LIGHTNING BOLT IT STRUCK ME. ALL THE CONFUSIONS AND COMPLICATIONS FELL AWAY. IT'S ALL SO SIMPLE, SO OBVIOUS.

THE VICE PRESIDENT NODS VIGOROUSLY.

THE PROBLEM IS PEOPLE.

PEOPLE. SWEATING, FARTING, MEAT-EATING, LAND-DESTROYING, CRUEL, STUPID, MURDEROUS PEOPLE.

PEOPLE. SPRAWLING ACROSS THE PLANET, CLUTTERING ITS NATURAL PERFECTION WITH ENDLESS FLESH, COUNTLESS FACTORIES AND DINERS AND MINI-MALLS AND TOXIC WASTE DUMPS AND CONCENTRATION CAMPS...

WITH A RUMBLE A TWELVE TON HATCH GLIDES OPEN...



... PEOPLE.
COMMITTING
ENDLESS
HORRORS.
RUINING
EVERYTHING.

THE PROBLEM
IS PEOPLE.

...IN THE HOLD,
AN ARSENAL--

-- BUILT FOR
A WAR THAT
WAS NEVER
FOUGHT.

A HUSH FALLS
OVER THE CROWD.
TWO GENERALS
TRADE HIGH-FIVES.

WE STAND
AT THE *BRINK*
OF A *GREAT*
DESTINY, MY
FRIENDS.



THEN, WHEN THE
FIRES HAVE DIED, OUR
HISTORIC WORK WILL
TRULY *BEGIN*. USING A
TRINITY OF METHODS--
THERAPY-- TECHNOLOGY--
AND FORCE-- WE WILL
OFFER FREEDOM FROM
CHOICE TO EVERY
LIVING SOUL.

WE WILL
FREE THE
WORLD!

WE WILL
HEAL THE
WORLD!



JUBILANT
APPLAUSE.

ARRIVING TWENTY
MINUTES LATE,
THE PRESIDENT
OF THE UNITED
STATES TAKES
HIS FIRST SIP OF
PUNCH.

HIS FRIENDS
BEGIN TO
FILL HIM IN.

WE HAVE
A *GLORIOUS*
OPPORTUNITY--
TO USHER IN A NEW
WORLD-- A WORLD
FREE OF PAIN AND
FEAR AND WAR AND
CRIME AND ALL THE
OTHER EVILS
OF HUMAN
WILLFULNESS.

AND ALL
IT WILL TAKE
IS A WAR THAT
WILL *GROW* AND
GROW UNTIL THE
FIRE IS EVERY-
WHERE.





MOVE IT, BATMAN!
YOU'RE TAKING TOO
LONG WITH THE
GUARDS!

WHAT THE
DEVIL ARE
YOU DOING
BACK IN MY
HEAD?

I THOUGHT WE SHOULD
COORDINATE OUR
EFFORTS AND THIS SEEMED
LIKE THE BEST WAY,
ALL RIGHT?

JUST FOLLOW
MY LEAD,
BOY. I'VE BEEN
AT THIS A FEW
YEARS LONGER
THAN YOU
HAVE--

-- AND I'M A WHOLE
LOT *SMARTER*
THAN YOU. FROM
ALL *INDICATIONS*,
YOU'RE DUMBER
THAN *CLARK*.

WHO'S
CLARK?

NONE
OF YOUR
BUSINESS.

A comic book page featuring Batman and Robin in a scene of urban devastation. The top panel shows Batman, with his iconic yellow bat emblem on his chest, looking down at Robin, who is chained to a large, jagged piece of wreckage. The middle panel shows both characters running through a field of debris, with a bright yellow starburst indicating a recent explosion. The bottom panel shows Batman lying on the ground, looking up at the sky. The background is filled with twisted metal, shattered concrete, and the skeletal remains of buildings.

WE'RE IN--
WE'RE
THROUGH
THE HULL--

--NO THANKS
TO YOU.

YOU'RE A *BLUNT*
INSTRUMENT, KID-- SO
GO *AHEAD*-- KICK UP
ALL THE NOISE YOU
WANT--

--THOUGH IT'S A
WONDER YOU CAN
EVEN MOVE WITH
ALL THOSE STUPID
CHAINS.

THAT WAS A
CHEAP SHOT,
MAN.

YOU MAKE NOISE.
I'LL DO THE REAL
WORK.

JESUS-- LOOK AT ALL THIS
SHIT. IT COULD LEVEL A
CONTINENT.

JUST SMASH
CYBORGS AND SHUT
UP. I'LL DO THE
THINKING HERE.

THIS IS A DAMN
ARSENAL! THERE'S EVEN
NUKES! SHE'S OUT TO
KILL EVERYBODY!

Oh, GREAT. PERFECT.
THAT WAS EXPERT,
BOY--



-- YOU WERE A SOLDIER. YOU SHOULD'VE KNOWN THAT EXPLOSIVES TEND TO BLOW UP IF YOU'RE NOT CAREFUL WITH THEM.

YOU BE CAREFUL, OLD MAN--

--YOU BE NICE AND SWEET AND CAREFUL.



THAT WOMAN'S OUT TO END EVERYTHING AND I'M STOPPING HER AND I DON'T CARE IF IT KILLS ME ALL OVER AGAIN TO DO IT.



NO-- YOU FOOL--

--SHE DOESN'T HAVE TO DIE!



WHY NOT?

BATMAN
HAS NO
ANSWER.

HE MOVES
TOWARD THE
DYING WOMAN,
HEARING HER
LAST, PATHETIC
GASPS...

...NOT
REALIZING
UNTIL IT IS
FAR TOO
LATE--

MY
DREAMS.

ALL MY
DREAMS.

A BETTER
WORLD.

A
PARADISE.

--THAT SHE
HAS ONE
LAST
OPTION
LEFT TO
HER, THIS
MADWOMAN--

-- ONE
LAST
WEAPON.

AN OLD
WEAPON.

A FINAL
WEAPON:

A
NUKE!

HEADING
STRAIGHT
FOR THE
CENTER OF
TOWN!

DO
SOMETHING,
YOU
TWIT!

BAILING
YOU OUT AND
I'VE GOT TO PUT
UP WITH THIS
ABUSE.

HOLD ONTO
YOUR GUTS,
BATBOY. THIS
IS GOING TO
SUCK.

A SURGE OF
HELLPOWER.

TELEPORTATION.

IT'S THE
WORST.

BATMAN
AND SPAWN
ARE RIPPED
TO ATOMS.

RIPPED TO ATOMS.

SHREDDED.

REBUILT--

--AND REGURGITATED FROM THE ETHER TO THE SIDE OF A SPEEDING SOVIET MISSILE THAT PROMISES THE DEATH OF ALL NEW YORK'S MILLIONS.

BATMAN'S HANDS STOP SHAKING. THEY HAVE TO.

HIS MIND CLEARS. IT HAS TO.

IT'S A MESS. REDUNDANT CIRCUITRY.

WATCH IT-- I KNOW THIS MODEL-- THAT'S NOT A REDUNDANCY--

--IT'S A TRICK-- TOUCH IT WRONG AND EVERYBODY DIES!

I WON'T TOUCH IT WRONG. AND DON'T YOU TOUCH MY CAPE. EVER. NOBODY TOUCHES MY CAPE.

GENIUS AT WORK.

A MIND SO BRILLIANT IT MIGHT HAVE REVOLUTIONIZED THE FIELD OF PHYSICS.

HANDS SO SKILLFUL THEY COULD HAVE SERVED A CONCERT PIANIST-- OR A SAFECRACKER.

BATMAN.

DETECTIVE.

VIGILANTE.

SAVIOR.

THAT'S IT. IT'S DEAD. GET US OUT OF HERE.

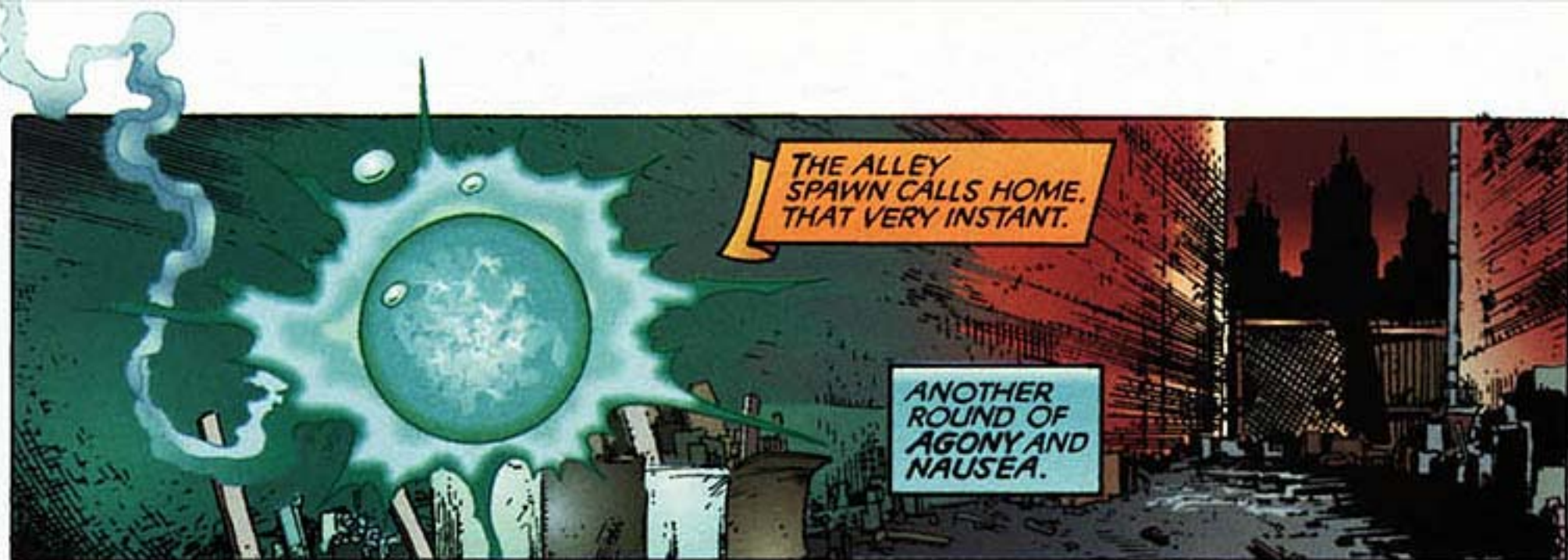
AL--

--GET US OUT OF HERE.

HARMLESS, NOW--

--THE MISSILE CUTS THE WATER OF THE EAST RIVER.

THE CITY IS SAVED.



THE ALLEY
SPAWN CALLS HOME.
THAT VERY INSTANT.

ANOTHER
ROUND OF
AGONY AND
NAUSEA.



YOUR METHODS
ARE *REVOLTING*.
YOUR *DISRESPECT*
FOR *HUMAN LIFE* IS
DETESTABLE. YOUR
LACK OF *DISCIPLINE*
IS NOTHING
SHORT OF
EMBARRASSING.

WE'LL
MEET
AGAIN.

YOU'D BETTER
HOPE WE DON'T. I
COULD HAVE YOU FOR
BREAKFAST-- AND IF
YOU STEP ON MY TURF
AGAIN, I WILL.

I DON'T
HAVE THE POWER
IN HAND TO BRING
YOU DOWN RIGHT
NOW, BOY-- BUT
I'LL GET IT--

-- AND
WE'LL MEET
AGAIN.



WOULD
YOU JUST
KNOCK IT OFF?
FOR JUST ONE
SECOND?

YOU AND ME, WE
JUST SAVED THE WHOLE CITY--
MAYBE THE WHOLE WORLD. WHEN
THE CHIPS WERE DOWN, WE WOUND
UP ON THE SAME TEAM. AND NEITHER
OF US COULD HAVE PULLED
THIS OFF ALONE.



WHAT
DO YOU
SAY WE JUST
BURY THE
HATCHET?



BURY
THIS.



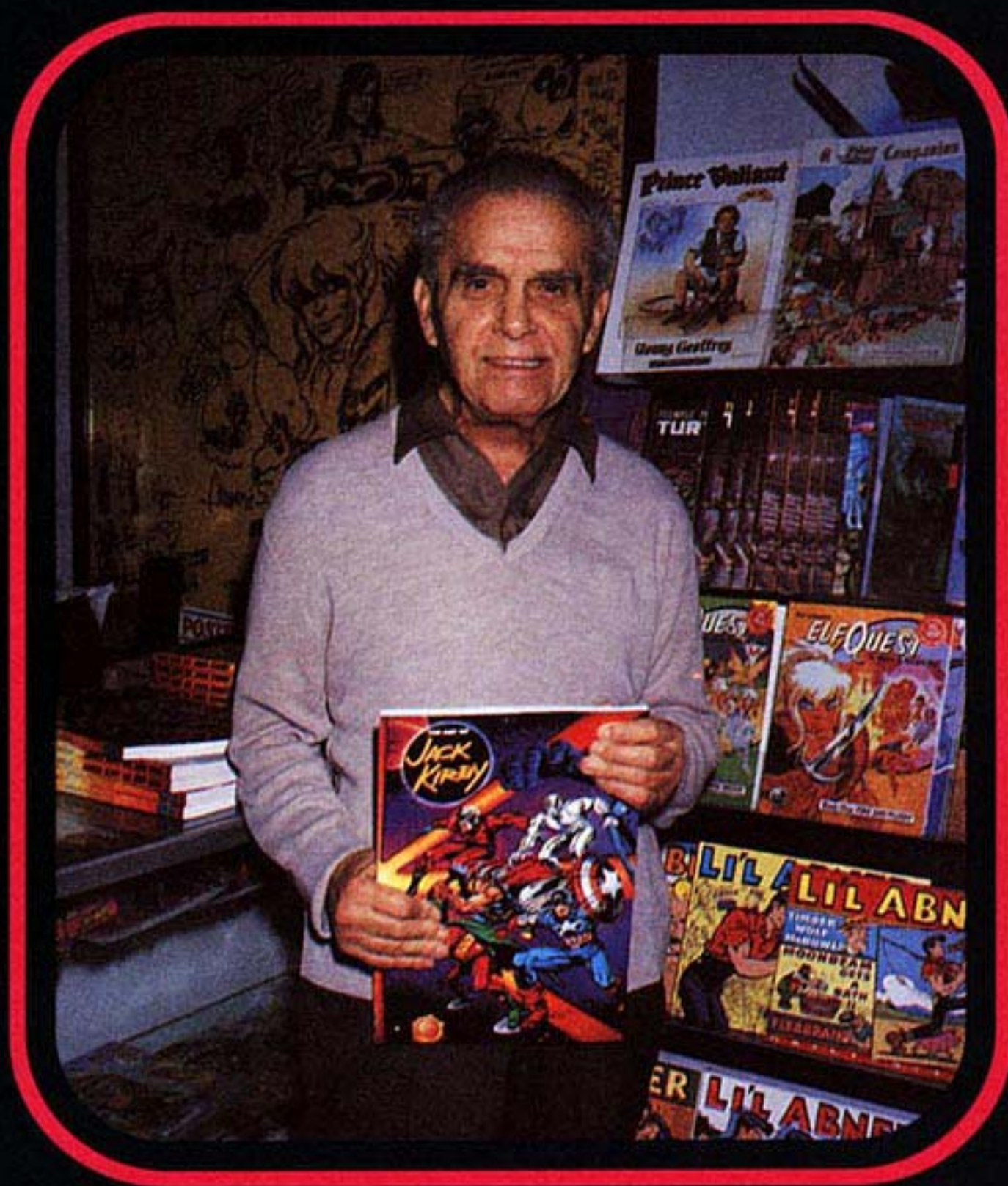
The END







In Memory of



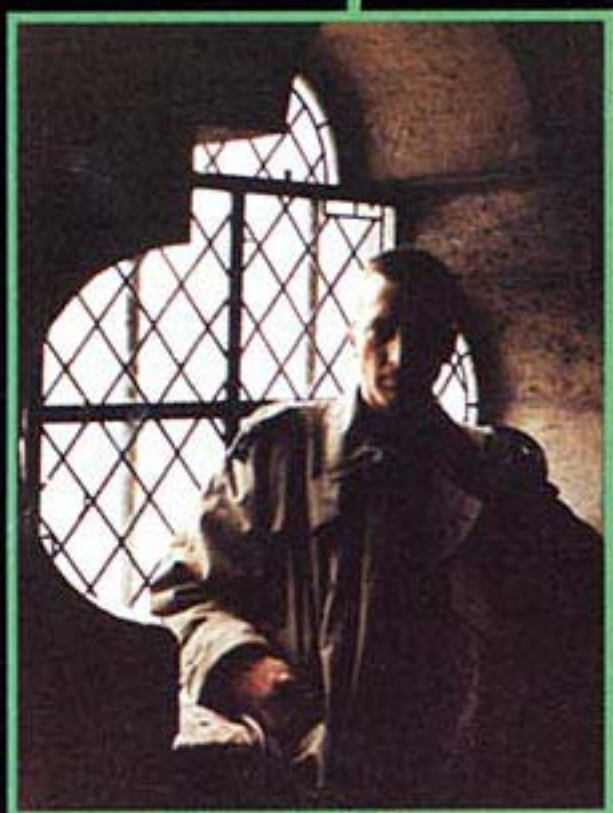
Jack Kirby

1917-1994

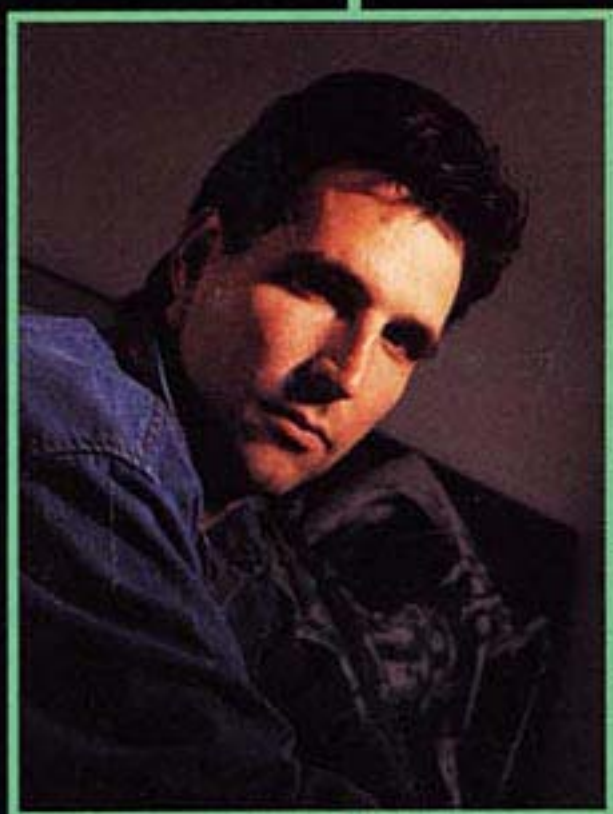
JACK KIRBY was the greatest artist in the history of comics. This effort is dedicated, with respect, to the finest talent any of us have ever witnessed.

TODD M'FARLANE

\$3.95 u.s.
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Frank Miller is the author of THE DARK KNIGHT RETURNS, BATMAN: YEAR ONE, ELEKTRA LIVES AGAIN, GIVE ME LIBERTY, HARD BOILED, and SIN CITY. Miller is currently at work on SIN CITY: A DAME TO KILL FOR. Upcoming projects include MARTHA WASHINGTON GOES TO WAR, with Dave Gibbons, and THE BIG GUY AND RUSTY THE BOY ROBOT, with Geof Darrow.



Todd McFarlane entered the comic book field in 1985 and has since worked on such books as Amazing Spider-man, the Incredible Hulk, Spider-Man, and countless pin-ups and covers. Todd has won numerous awards worldwide, but his most recent and biggest claim to fame is the title Spawn for Image Comics. McFarlane's goal is to make Spawn and all related characters household names.