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BATMAN
DAILIES AND SUNDAYS
1966-1967 COMPLETE
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Batman created by Bob Kane

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BATMAN

The Silver Age Newspaper Comics

VOLUME ONE: 1966-1967

THE
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BATMAN: THE SILVER AGE NEWSPAPER COMICS VOLUME 1: 1966-1967

STORIES BY WHITNEY ELLSWORTH • ART BY SHELDON MOLDOFF, CARMINE INFANTINO, AND JOE GIELLA
LETTERING BY BEN ODA AND MILT SNAPINN

THE LIBRARY OF AMERICAN COMICS

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The strips reprinted in this volume were produced in a time when racial and social caricatures played a larger role in society and popular culture. They are reprinted without alteration for historical reference.



Signs reproduced on this page and opposite top were used in newspaper vending machines and display racks.

A History of the Batman and Robin Newspaper Strip

by JOE DESRIS



Although Batman first appeared in a newspaper comic strip from 1943-1946, and again for a very short stint in 1953, it is the 1966 incarnation which proved to be the most successful, outlasting any previous or subsequent version.

This syndicated series occurred during an unprecedented and eventful period for the character, due to the massive success of the *Batman* TV series. *Batman* comic books, which had been in a sales decline, reversed course and increased; an insatiable market for Batman merchandise single-handedly ushered in a new era of comic book and superhero licensing and promotion; Batman settled into the upper echelons of popular culture; the creative staff behind the character completely changed; the Caped Crusader went from detective to campy costumed adventurer to creature of the night; and even publisher DC Comics (then known as National Periodical Publications) itself evolved as a business entity.

• • • • •

Not long after the TV show's January 12, 1966 premiere, plans were underway to begin the newspaper strip.

“Ledger Syndicate wanted to make *Batman*,” recalled artist Sheldon Moldoff, who drew the character for Bob Kane at the time, “so DC Comics called up Bob, and said, ‘Do you want to do it?’ and he says, ‘Yes, I’ll do it!’ Bob got the script; he gave it to me. I penciled and inked it.”

Notes from Moldoff’s files indicate he was already working on daily and Sunday strips in March 1966. He ultimately produced fourteen Sundays and twelve weeks of dailies.

Whitney Ellsworth was the writer from its inception and into 1970. He had been involved with DC from its earliest days back in 1934, eventually serving as editorial director for all DC titles. He moved to California in 1954 to work more closely on the *Superman* TV show, thereby making him a less obvious choice to write the *Batman* strip since everything else related to it was based in New York. However, Ellsworth had worked in many capacities at DC, was familiar with all characters, and had written several *Superman* newspaper continuities during the 1940s. He also worked as an advisor to the *Batman* TV show while it was in preparation—all of which overshadowed any logistical problems of being on the “wrong” coast. The strip’s early storylines emulated the TV show more than the comic books.

Zowie! BATMAN starts next Sunday in the Chicago Tribune comics.

Batman is coming!

The legendary caped crusader, Batman, **WOW!** and the boy wonder, Robin, **ZOWIE!** are returning to newspapers, where they originated, to spoil and foil **ZAP!** the diabolical, sinister plots of **UGH!** the likes of The Cat Woman, The Joker, The Riddler and others!

Don't miss the exciting adventures **SCHZAM!** of Batman and Robin beginning Sunday, May 29, and continuing daily on the comic pages of your Minneapolis Tribune. **WHEE!** Order the Tribune today. See your carrier or farm service route salesman, call your dealer or write us. In Minneapolis or St. Paul call 372-4343.

Batman lands on the Tribune comic pages on Sunday, May 29

Minneapolis Tribune
MORNING and SUNDAY

Neither Ellsworth nor Moldoff were credited on the strip at the time, which, like the *Batman* comic books, carried Bob Kane's signature.

"Bob was always interested," Moldoff explained. "He didn't walk away from Batman. He wasn't hands on but he'd oversee. He liked to be there. He would come in and he might say to me, maybe that should be closer, or something like that. He would make suggestions. He didn't divorce himself from the comic."

Ben Oda, who was a regular letterer for DC, lettered the strip. "He lived in my neighborhood, in Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, and he did jobs for me. When I did a commercial job, for an advertising company, or I did *The Little Woman*, and stuff like that, he did my lettering."

The eighth week of completed dailies were submitted on May 31st, just two days after the strip premiered.

Less than a month later, however, change was in the air. The eleventh week of dailies, submitted June 22nd, was only penciled and lettered, and was completed by the DC staff. The twelfth week, along with Sundays for weeks thirteen and fourteen, had only been penciled and were submitted to DC around the end of the month.

"Ledger wasn't happy," recalled Moldoff. "[The strip] wasn't selling the way it was supposed to sell. Bob said, 'They're going to change the artist on it.' I said, 'Why don't they change the writer?' You know, they always pull that; they always change the artist. Change the writer!"

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The **GREATEST** promotion and circulation **BUILDING** comic strip **EVER** presented to newspapers with an awaiting, clamoring readership.

DON'T MISS IT!!



Legendary caped crusader returns to newspapers from whence he originated.

GIVE YOUR PROMOTION AND CIRCULATION DEPARTMENTS A FIELD DAY WITH THIS UNPRECEDENTED WINNER!!

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Serviced daily in 4 and 5 column width
Sunday color in standard half, third and tabloid
First week of daily, optionally, 8 columns for promotion

MOST LARGE CITIES AND TERRITORIES ARE ALREADY CLOSED. BOUGHT SIGHT UNSEEN. WIRE, PHONE COLLECT OR USE ENCLOSED CARD FOR RATE AND TERRITORY AND AVAILABILITY.



THE LEDGER SYNDICATE, INC.

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Above: Front and back of the 14.5" x 22" Ledger Syndicate brochure, which opens to a massive 29" x 22" and reproduces the original, uncorrected, first three weeks of dailies.

Opposite: Ad in the Minneapolis Tribune, May 15, 1966, two weeks before the premiere.





Below: Ad in the *Minneapolis Tribune*, May 29, 1966, the day of the strip's premiere.

Left: Ad from the Cincinnati *Enquirer* comic section, May 29, 1966.

Opposite top: Front and back of a membership card from the Batman Club established in conjunction with the strip by the *Oklahoman* newspaper.

Opposite bottom: The "New Look" begins, *Detective Comics* #327, May 1964.

What Ledger actually wanted was for the strip to look the same as the comic books. What brought about that “look” has its genesis nearly three years earlier.

Batman's New Look

In the fall of 1963, a change of creative staff ushered in a new approach to the character. That October, Julius Schwartz replaced Jack Schiff as editor of *Batman* and *Detective Comics*.

“Because of my success in reviving The Flash and Green Lantern” recalled Schwartz, “when I took over Batman, they allowed me to do anything I wanted. When I was asked to [assume control], which I was reluctant to do because I hadn't read Batman [stories], I said I'll do it if I can use Carmine Infantino on the art.” However, Executive Vice President Irwin Donenfeld indicated that Bob Kane would continue to provide pages to DC, so Schwartz “compromised by having Carmine do every other story in *Detective Comics* [and] he did the covers.”

Schwartz's new staff was responsible for shaping the “New Look,” which was heralded on the cover of *Detective Comics* #327 (May 1964). Penciler Infantino introduced a more angular and graphic style to the series. Inker Joe Giella provided consistency, since some stories were penciled by Infantino while others continued to be drawn by Sheldon Moldoff. Covers were inked by Giella, and sometimes by Murphy Anderson.

Schwartz was responsible for numerous innovations. “When [the assignment] was given to me,” he recalled, “I said, okay, but I'm going to change things around; I'm going to update him. I'm going to give him a new Batmobile, a new way to get down to the Batcave. That Batsignal he has on his uniform can hardly be seen; I'm going to surround it with a yellow ellipse. That was my idea. It happened to be in conjunction with the twenty-fifth anniversary of Batman.”

Clearly, Schwartz was overseeing a vastly different Batman, although the Rogues Gallery of villains continued in full force as he and his staff mined the classic archenemies. “That I decided to do right off the bat,” he joked. “I simply returned to the ones Schiff had been neglecting to use in the past: Joker, Catwoman, Penguin.”

Schwartz also developed new villains, introduced new logos, heightened Batman's detective skills, and established the Hot-Line to Police Commissioner Gordon. Schwartz placed an “automatic elevator” in the Batcave and modified the exterior Batcave exit that had existed since the early 1950s to now have a camouflaged doorway which resembled the surrounding hillside. “I [also] kill[ed] off Alfred in my second story because I wanted to get a woman in, and that turned out to be Aunt Harriet,” Schwartz added. Faithful butler Alfred gave his life to protect Batman in *Detective Comics* #328 (June 1964), the same issue which introduced overprotective, middle-aged Aunt Harriet. She did not appear in this newspaper strip.

Hollywood Needs Alfred

Alfred's death soon proved problematic. During a meeting in early 1965 between Donenfeld, editor Mort Weisinger, and representatives of the TV series (probably producer William Dozier and possibly others), a need for Alfred surfaced. “Mort and I helped create the family in the *Batman* show,”





**NOW!
BATMAN**
is on the comic pages
7 days a week!

The legendary caped crusader, Batman, and the boy wonder, Robin, (**ZOWIE!**) have returned to newspapers, where they originated, to foil (**THUNK!**) the diabolical plots of the likes of The Cat Woman, The Riddler, The Book Worm, Mister Freeze and other dastardly demons. (**UGH!**)

Don't miss the explosive adventures (**KAPOW!**) of Batman and Robin, today and every day in the Tribune as they prove that "crime does not pay." (**ZONK!**)

Turn to the comic pages of today's Minneapolis Tribune for the first episode of Batman and Robin. To keep up with the whirl-wind action of Batman and Robin, be sure you receive the Tribune each day! See your carrier or farm service route salesman, call your dealer or write us. In Minneapolis or St. Paul call 372-4343.

**FOLLOW BATMAN TODAY
AND EVERY DAY!**

**Minneapolis
Tribune**
MORNING and SUNDAY

Minneapolis Tribune • Picture • Sunday, May 27, 1944 19

recalled Donenfeld. "For instance, we needed his house, Wayne Manor. In the comic books it just existed and they left it. In the *Batman* show, we created the idea of an Aunt and a butler. We needed somebody in the house to create the situation for them to leave, and for them to talk to somebody other than themselves."

It wasn't the first time Hollywood affected Alfred's role in comic books. The 1940s heavysset butler was changed to match the slim servant seen in the 1943 movie serial and 1943 newspaper strip.

"They came to me," recalled Schwartz, "and said, 'You've got to bring Alfred back to life,'" and so editor Schwartz figured out a way to bring him back from the dead. In a storyline spread over several issues and with hints dropped along the way in letter columns, Alfred eventually reappeared in *Detective Comics* #356 (October 1966).

By this time, the "New Look" had been in place for slightly more than two years. Moldoff and Infantino were penciling Batman stories published in *Detective Comics* and *Batman*, and almost every story was inked by Joe Giella, with occasional assignments given to inker Sid Greene. Giella also inked covers until he began working on the strip. It would have been Giella's finishes that executives at the Ledger Syndicate saw and most likely expected when looking at the comic books.

Carmine's Close Encounter

Carmine Infantino's part in Schwartz's successful reincarnation of Flash and then Batman did not go unnoticed by the competition, specifically Stan Lee at Marvel Comics. "Stan wanted me to come over," recalled Infantino. "Stan was courting me, so DC put me on salary right away."

With Infantino in the office and already working on Batman stories, he would have been a logical choice for the newspaper strip. "Donenfeld thought the strip was slipping," recalled Infantino. "So he called me in. He says, 'I want you on the strip.'...So that's when they stuck me on it. Then they were very happy.



Above: Alan Napier as Alfred with Ethel Merman as Lola Lasagne from "A Horse Of Another Color," episode #99 of the *Batman* TV series, first broadcast October 12, 1967.

Left: Minneapolis Tribune ad.

"I didn't do that many of them, actually. They offered me the whole thing. I was on salary at that point. I was doing the *Flash*, *Flash* covers, I was doing that one *Detective* a month, all the Batman covers. That's a lot of stuff, then this was on, so I couldn't handle it because I didn't have the time. I was very fast. But the licensing really broke my back, because Murphy and I were doing all the [art for the] licensing. All kinds of stuff. They didn't want anybody else to touch it, so I had to drop [the strip].

"I got a call from the syndicate, I remember that. They were irritated. I said, 'Listen, I'm out of it. I don't care what you do.' He says, 'Well, you're freelance.' I says, 'I'm not freelance, I'm a salaried employee.'"

What Ledger Really Wanted

"Ledger wanted the artist they were accustomed to seeing on Batman [comic books]," recalled Joe Giella,

Along with Boy Wonder, Robin

Batman Is Coming! Starts Monday in Capital Times

Holy Newsprint! Batman and Robin are coming to Madison! The Dynamic Duo's activities will be pictured daily in The Capital Times in a comic strip starting Monday.

New chapters in the cunning criminal activities of the arch foes of society — Catwoman, Joker, Riddler, and Penguin — will be revealed.

The capable Caped Crusader Wonder, will be shown as they cope with the crooked capers cooked up by the criminals. There will be ever new challenges for Batman and his ward.

The callous crooks, who are embroiled in various escapades that result time after time in the star destruction of the Masked Manhunters, will always be brought to justice. As Batman says: "Crime Never Pays."

The crooks will never be aware (Continued on Page 4, Col. 4)



Batman In Action



Above: Pencil sketches of Batgirl's head and cowl by Carmine Infantino, made while developing the character. Top left: Promotional article in the Madison (Wisconsin) Capital Times. Left: Advertising mats provided subscribing newspapers with ready-to-use layouts in several sizes for promoting the comic strip. Made of thick, compressed paper, ad mats were part of the printing process, requiring only an additional line or two of typesetting by the newspaper.

“and that was me.... The final finish, the inking, is what’s reproduced and that’s what they were interested in.

“Mort Weisinger asked me if I wanted to try out for the strip,” Giella continued. “I did some pencil samples at the beginning, and then I did some penciling and inking samples.”

.....

Giella’s first published work on this newspaper comic was the August 8, 1966 daily. During most of his nineteen-month involvement with the strip, he continued to ink Batman comic book stories, and kept busy with several other assignments. However, records kept by editor Schwartz indicate a lull in comic book work given Giella in late-1967,

perhaps due to the strip's workload. On October 16th, Giella was given a twenty-two-page story to ink, and returned it November 22nd. On November 27th, he only picked up a ten-page story to ink, returning it December 21st. His next story assignment did not come until February 5, 1968, a point when Giella likely had already left the strip (his last daily was published March 16, 1968).

"My letterer was Milt Snapinn," recalled Giella. "Milty. He lived about ten, fifteen minutes from here. He would come over and pick up [penciled pages]. It was a mutual thing; sometimes I'd drop it off." Snapinn worked at the DC offices and this arrangement freed Giella from having to make frequent drives from his home on Long Island into Manhattan. Giella also sent work to DC by messenger.

Giella also enjoyed working with writer Whit Ellsworth. "He was the gentleman, a terrific guy," Giella said, fondly recalling Whit. "Once in awhile he'd call me up and say, you know, in that third panel, I want to make a change. Or I'd call him because I wasn't clear on the verbiage or something. Whit was a good writer and I enjoyed working on [his scripts]. Everything was a lot of action, a lot of color, and it really moved. He really was into it."

"I sent the strip up to DC," said Giella, "and from there, they did what they had to. Put the labels on. They took care of the mechanics of it. ...I think it was colored at DC by Sol Harrison or Eddie Eisenberg...one of those two."

Daily strips did not need a color guide for the engraver, but to provide some illusion of color and depth, gray shading was applied. The early dailies by Moldoff used Zip-a-tone, an adhesive-backed sheet with black dots printed on front. After the artwork was inked, Zip-a-tone was applied wherever needed (such as Batman's costume), with any excess areas carefully trimmed with a knife and removed.

When Giella took over penciling, he used Craftint Singletone drawing board, which had a nearly invisible dot pattern pre-printed on one side. After the artwork was inked, a liquid developer was applied to the surface with a

brush, darkening the dots. "They supplied me with Craftint paper," Giella pointed out. "It's a good way to work; a very good quality paper. The only problem [is] it's not a kid finish. It's more of a slick finish. When you erase or when you pencil, it has a tendency to smudge. And when you're inking, the paper doesn't absorb the ink. It sits on top because it's like a plate. But the ink flowed beautifully on there with a pen, and penciling on it was no problem.

"I used an H pencil," Giella continued, "sometimes an F. On the brush, a Winsor Newton Series 7. We use a lot of pens. 659 Gillotts, 291s, the cartoon pen..."

• • • • •

"You have to be ahead [on deadlines]," explained Giella, for both comic books and syndicated strips. "Julie Schwartz never gave you a phony deadline. He used to kid the other artists: you could set your clock on when Joe will come in. I never missed a deadline, except when my dad died. And so we had a good rapport. DC was fine and I had no problems with Irwin Donenfeld. He also was a friend of mine. In fact, me and Carmine used to go on his boat on weekends. He was a nice guy."

About six months after Giella started on the *Batman* strip, Ledger editor John Higgins offered him additional work. "I was a little skeptical because I thought, I don't have time to do much anything else other than what I'm doing now.

"He said, 'How about [drawing] a one-panel cartoon,'" Giella recalled. "It's called *Character Clues*.' [Things like,] 'What does it mean if a guy's got protruding ears or a long nose, or he's bald.' A humorous daily. So I did this gag cartoon for the Ledger Syndicate while I had *Batman*. It was written by this woman that worked up at the syndicate."



Assistance, Not Assistants

“When I was in the comics, I was [also] doing work for advertising agencies. Many times they gave me a project which required additional help. Notoriously, their deadlines [were] unbelievable. And a lot of times you’re going to have to get help, otherwise you’re not going to get the job. So [if] it would pertain to a comic deal, I would hire guys who were in comics...Mike Sekowsky would give me a hand, or Gil Kane.

“[Sometimes] I’d get involved with a comic book job and I’d find myself getting behind with the strip. Or if I had to go somewhere. Usually it arose when Julie gave me a job. When I needed the help, I got it. They may have taken my layouts and maybe tightened them up. I don’t want to give the impression that these guys were assistants on the strip, because they weren’t. The finish had to be mine. Nobody but me.”

Giella continued, “I had Bob Powell help me out. Maybe three or four weeks. He never did any of the dailies, just a few Sunday pages. The way it worked with Bob, when I got behind a little bit, I’d call him up. I’d say ‘Bob, can you do me a favor?’ He says, ‘Well I don’t know, Joe, let me see what I can do.’ You know, he never turned me down. He always worked with me. I had to go to a wedding one time. I was in the wedding party, I think I was Best Man, and I was getting behind, because you got to go to the church, the rehearsal, the whole bit.

“Powell had a cartoony style. The way he helped me out wasn’t really that much help. He did some layouts on a tissue overlay, and then I would either rub it down or just redraw it on the original. He never worked on the original, always on the tissue.”

“Werner Roth helped me out a few times, too,” noted Giella. “It may have been tightening my layouts.”

At one point Giella asked DC to suggest someone to assist with penciling, and they linked him up with Superman artist Curt Swan. “They gave me the right guy,” said Giella. “I went to see him at his home in Connecticut. When Swan gave me back the art, let me tell you, it was just like Superman in the comic books; the drawing was all there. But he only helped me a few weeks. I wish he would have done more.”

Stay tuned for more of this fascinating history in our next Bat-Volume!



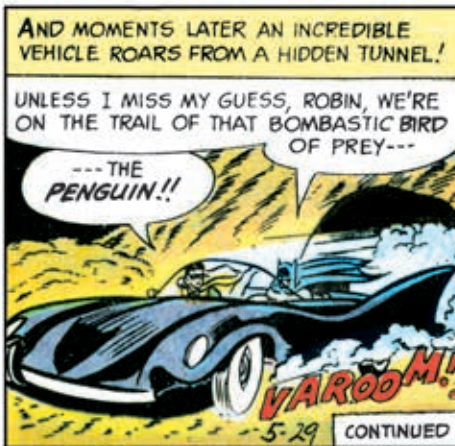
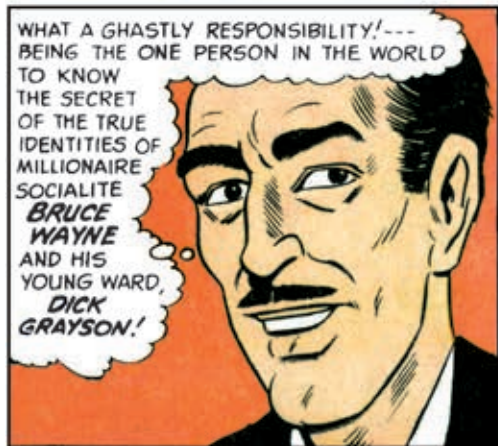
Above: The Sacramento *Union*, which carried the newspaper strip, ran a cross-promotion with a local TV station, offering “Bat Bills.” A serial number would be shown during the *Batman* television program. If a viewer’s Bat Bill number matched what was shown on TV, or was printed in the newspaper, there was a \$10.00 prize. Note that the front is signed by “B.W. Robin” and “A.W. Batman.”



Originally, the Sunday strips contained storylines separate from the daily continuity.
The Sundays-only stories from May 29 - December 18, 1966 begin on the following page.

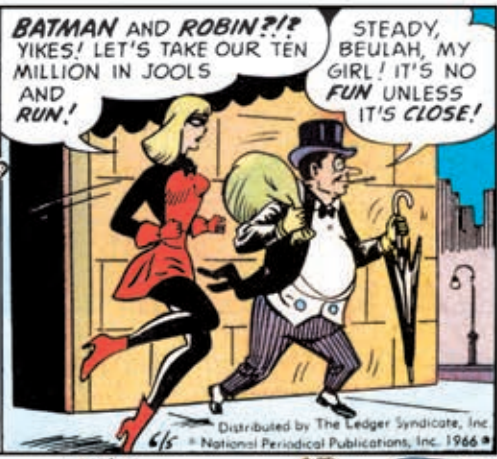


MIDNIGHT IN GOTHAM CITY, OUTSIDE SPIFFANY'S STYLISH STONE STORE, THE PENGUIN PERPETRATES A PRANK...



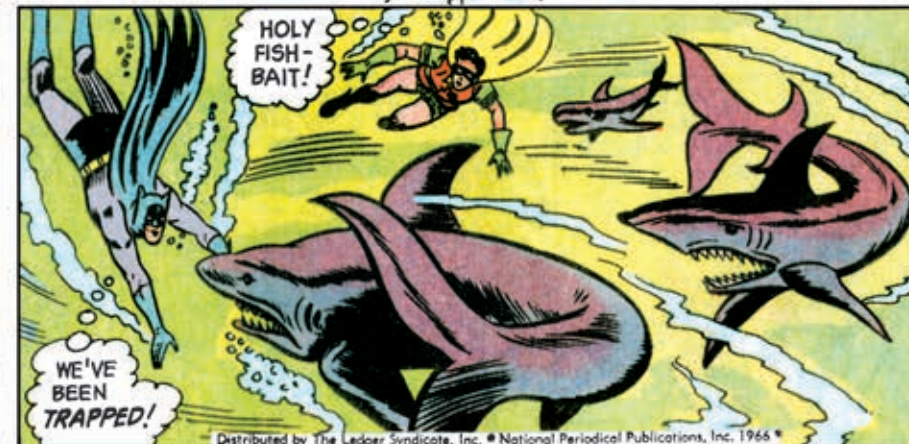
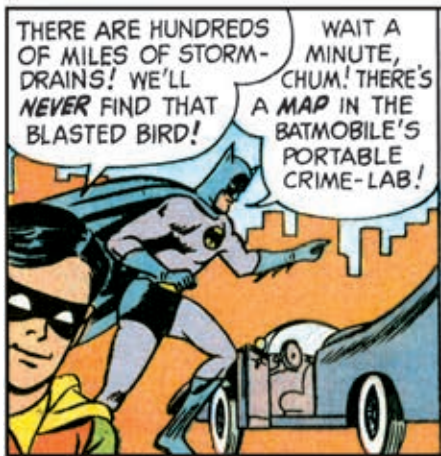


THE PENGUIN IS PLUNDERING THE PLUSH PREMISES OF SPIFFANY'S STYLISH STONE STORE....



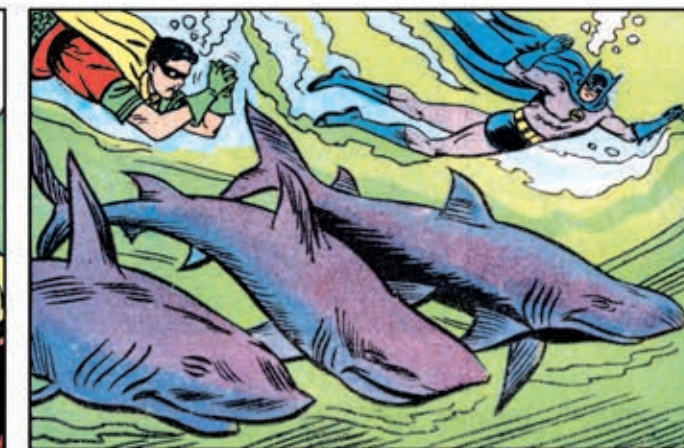
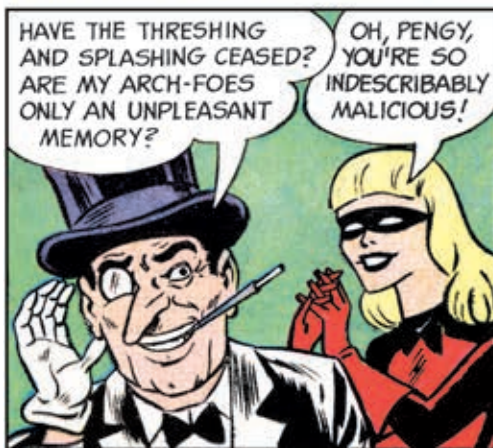
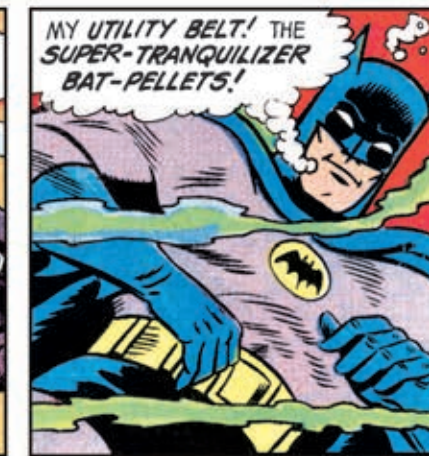
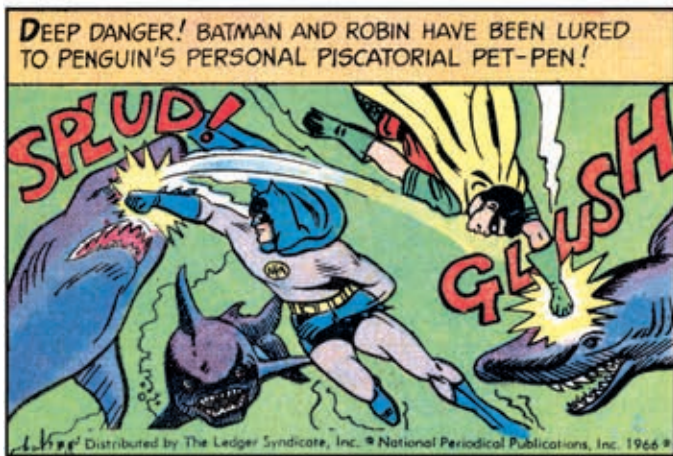
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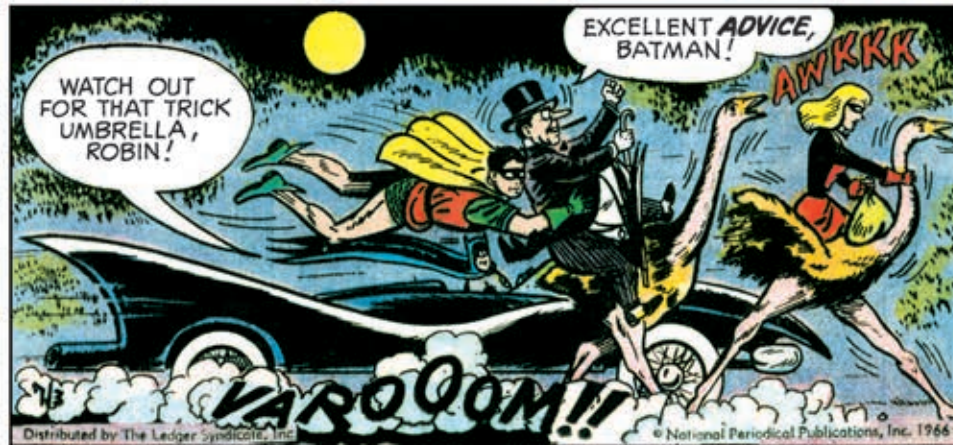
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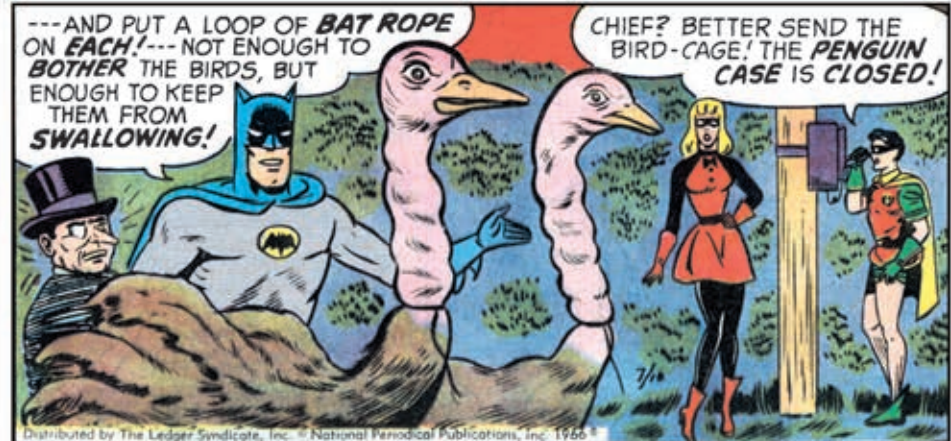


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