

AVENGERS

15¢ 77 JUN



MARVEL COMICS GROUP

THE AVENGERS

APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY

FOR HIRE:
THE AVENGERS!

WORK, FOOLS, WORK!!
YOU'VE CONFIRMED
MY OPINION OF
HUMAN
NATURE!

JUST LIKE
ANYONE ELSE...
THE AVENGERS
CAN BE
BOUGHT!!



Telegram-Marvel comics
(Avengers)

THE MIGHTY AVENGERS!

HEROES FOR HIRE!

A MURKY MONDAY MORNING IN THE CITY OF NEW YORK... BUT, FOR A HANDFUL OF CONSTRUCTION WORKERS AND WIDE-EYED PASSERS-BY, DEFINITELY A MORNING TO REMEMBER..!

I...I CAN'T BELIEVE IT!

POST NO BILLS

GOLIATH JUST POPPED UP OUT OF NOWHERE... AND PUNCHED A HOLE IN THAT BUILDING!!

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PUNCH A HOLE IN IT, NOTHING!

HE'S DEMOLISHING THE WHOLE THING... WITH HIS BARE HANDS!

BUT, WHY? WHY?

NEVER MIND THE WHY AND WHEREOF, LADY!

SNEAK A PEEK INSIDE WHAT'S LEFT OF THE PLACE...



...THERE'S ANOTHER AVENGER!

IT'S THAT GUY QUICKSILVER... KNOCKING DOWN WALLS LIKE A HUMAN PIN-BALL!

PTAK!



THAT'S NOT ALL! WHO'S THAT GIRL... AND WHAT'S SHE DOING TO THE CORNERSTONE?

THAT'S THE ONE THEY CALL... THE SCARLET WITCH!

THEN, SHE'S BACK WITH THE AVENGERS... AND SHAKING UP THINGS WITH HER HEX POWER!



AVENGERS, MY EYE! THOSE HOOLIGANS ARE A MENACE TO PRIVATE PROPERTY!

COOL IT, GRANNY! MAYBE THIS IS THEIR NEW BAG!

IF IT IS... WHO'S GOING TO STOP THEM?

WAIT! LOOK... UP THERE IN THE SKY!



IT'S THAT ANDROID AVENGER... I THINK HE'S CALLED THE VISION!

BUT, HE'S JUST FLOATING OVER THE ROOF... LIKE HE WAS LIGHTER THAN AIR!

WHAT'S HE UP TO?

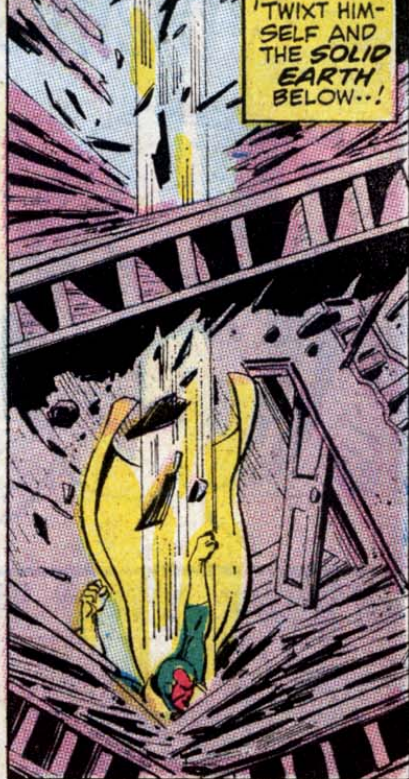
JUST THEN, THE VISION **ANSWERS** THE GAPING CROWD IN HIS OWN WORDLESS FASHION, BY BECOMING FAR, FAR **HEAVIER** THAN MERE AIR, AND DROPPING TO THE ROOF...



... NOT TO MENTION **THRU** THE ROOF...



...AND THRU THE FIVE INTERVENING FLOORS 'TWIXT HIMSELF AND THE **SOLID EARTH** BELOW...



HOLY TOLEDO! THE RADIO REPORT WAS **RIGHT!**



LOOKS LIKE WE GOT HERE **TOO LATE!**

YEAH! THAT PLACE IS AN INSURANCE-MAN'S NIGHT-MARE!

HOLD IT, BLUE-BOYS! THIS WHOLE SCENE AIN'T WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE!

OKAY, BIG BOY... THEN JUST WHAT IN BLAZES IS IT?

FILL ME IN QUICK... BEFORE I RUN IN ALL **THIRTY FEET** OF YOU!



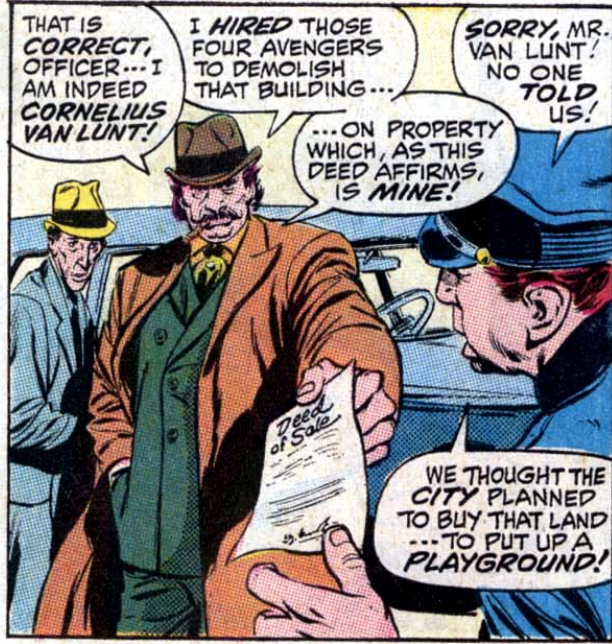
I SHALL FILL YOU IN, OFFICER... AS YOU HAVE **SELDOM** BEEN FILLED IN **BEFORE!**



HUH? HEY... I KNOW THAT CAR!

MISTER, EVERY TWO-WEEK **ROOKIE** ON A BEAT KNOWS THAT CAR...

AND YOU'D BETTER **BELIEVE IT!**



THAT IS CORRECT, OFFICER... I AM INDEED CORNELIUS VAN LUNT!

I HIRED THOSE FOUR AVENGERS TO DEMOLISH THAT BUILDING...

SORRY, MR. VAN LUNT! NO ONE TOLD US!

...ON PROPERTY WHICH, AS THIS DEED AFFIRMS, IS MINE!

WE THOUGHT THE CITY PLANNED TO BUY THAT LAND... TO PUT UP A PLAYGROUND!

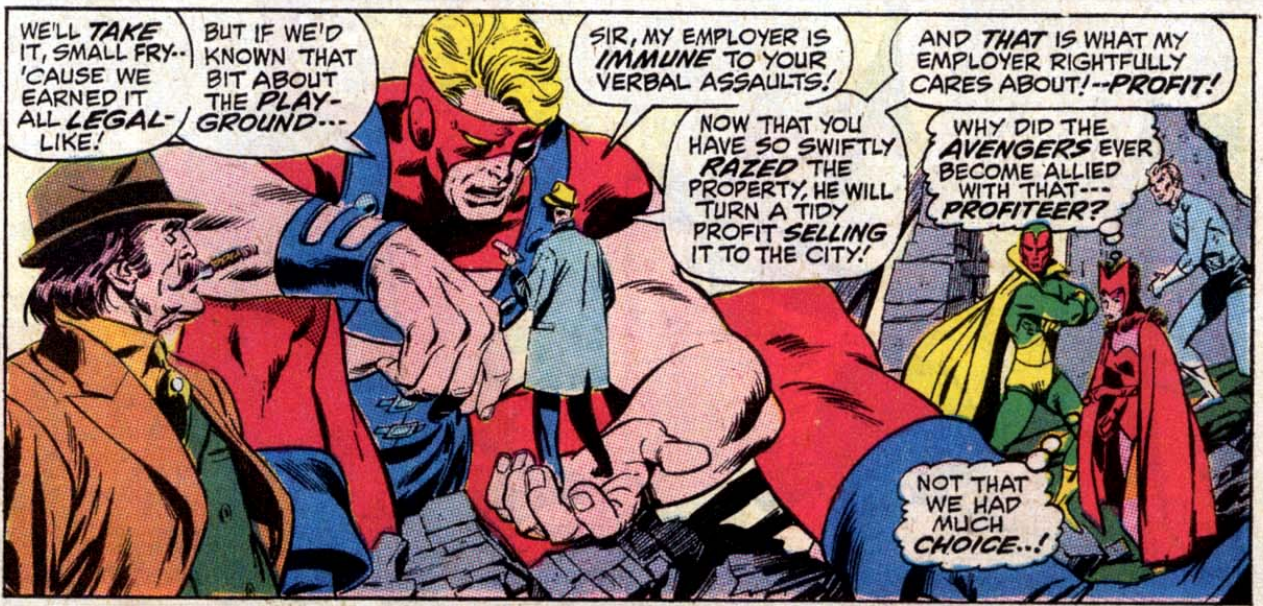


SO IT DID.. UNTIL I PURCHASED THE LAND OUT FROM UNDER IT THIS MORNING!

WILKINS, GIVE OUR SUPER-ENDOWED FRIENDS THEIR MONETARY REWARD! I DON'T WANT TO RISK STUMBLING OVER A STRAY BRICK!

WHATEVER YOU SAY, MR. VAN LUNT!

AND THAT, WILKINS, IS WHAT I SAY!



WE'LL TAKE IT, SMALL FRY.. 'CAUSE WE EARNED IT ALL LEGAL-LIKE!

BUT IF WE'D KNOWN THAT BIT ABOUT THE PLAYGROUND...

SIR, MY EMPLOYER IS IMMUNE TO YOUR VERBAL ASSAULTS!

NOW THAT YOU HAVE SO SWIFTLY RAZED THE PROPERTY, HE WILL TURN A TIDY PROFIT SELLING IT TO THE CITY!

AND THAT IS WHAT MY EMPLOYER RIGHTFULLY CARES ABOUT!--PROFIT!

WHY DID THE AVENGERS EVER BECOME ALLIED WITH THAT---PROFITEER?

NOT THAT WE HAD MUCH CHOICE..!



"IT BEGAN WITH A LATE-NIGHT VISIT FROM TONY STARK, THE MUNITIONS MAGNATE WHO LEGALLY OWNS AVENGERS MANSION...!"

WHY, MR. STARK... WHAT AN UNEXPECTED PLEASURE!

UNEXPECTED, JARVIS... BUT HARDLY A PLEASURE!

I MUST SPEAK TO THE AVENGERS -- AND TO YOU... AT ONCE!



...SO THAT'S THE STORY, PEOPLE!

TO KEEP ON AN EVEN KEEL, MY LAWYERS TELL ME I'LL NEED TO CALL ON ALL MY FINANCIAL RESOURCES...

I'M FIGHTING OFF A FINANCIAL POWER PLAY BY A GUY NAMED VAN LUNT, WHO'S OUT TO TAKE OR BREAK STARK INDUSTRIES!

--INCLUDING THE BACK RENT THAT'S TECHNICALLY DUE ON AVENGERS MANSION!



A HEALTHY SUM...AS I RECALL! BUT IF WE MUST RAISE IT, THEN WE SHALL!

DIG PIETRO! BACK IN THE AVENGERS FOR TWO DAYS, AND ALREADY HE'S MAKIN' WITH THE LEADER-SOUNDS!

WHILE I, SIR, SHALL GLADLY SERVE WITHOUT PAY FOR THE DURATION!

I KNEW I COULD COUNT ON YOU... ALL OF YOU...!

STILL, HE'S TELLIN' IT LIKE IT IS!

AT MOST, I SHOULD NEED THE MONEY FOR ONLY A FEW WEEKS!

BUT, IF STARK INDUSTRIES GOES UNDER, IT'LL BE DISASTROUS TO THE NATION'S DEFENSE EFFORT!



YOUR HOT COCOA, SIR!

THANKS, JARVE! LISTEN, STARK...IF THIS VAN LUNT CREEP IS TRYIN' TO NAIL YOUR HIDE TO THE WALL...

WHY DON'T YOU HAVE YOUR BODY-GUARD IRON MAN LEAN ON 'IM?

I WISH I COULD HELP YOU, STARK... WITH THE UNTAPPED WEALTH OF THE WAKANDAS!

WHAT'S WORSE... I'LL BE LUCKY IF I CAN CONTRIBUTE MY SHARE TO THE AVENGERS' FUND-RAISING ACTIVITIES!

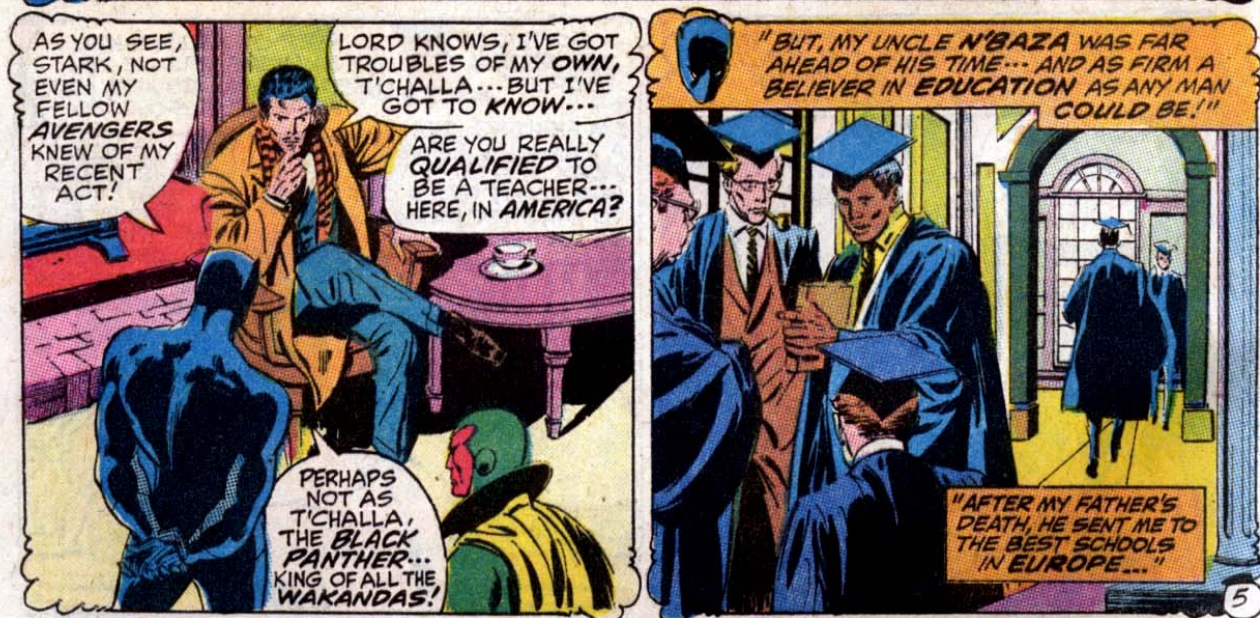
BUT I HAVE SWORN NOT TO USE IT FOR ANYTHING BUT THEIR OWN NEEDS!

FOR, I'VE JUST TAKEN A JOB... AS A TEACHER!

THAT'S NEITHER MY WAY... NOR YOURS, CLINT!

EVERYTHING VAN LUNT'S DONE IS LEGAL... AT LEAST, EVERYTHING I KNOW ABOUT!

WHAT?



AS YOU SEE, STARK, NOT EVEN MY FELLOW AVENGERS KNEW OF MY RECENT ACT!

LORD KNOWS, I'VE GOT TROUBLES OF MY OWN, T'CHALLA... BUT I'VE GOT TO KNOW...

ARE YOU REALLY QUALIFIED TO BE A TEACHER... HERE, IN AMERICA?

PERHAPS NOT AS T'CHALLA, THE BLACK PANTHER... KING OF ALL THE WAKANDAS!

"BUT, MY UNCLE N'BAZA WAS FAR AHEAD OF HIS TIME... AND AS FIRM A BELIEVER IN EDUCATION AS ANY MAN COULD BE..."

"AFTER MY FATHER'S DEATH, HE SENT ME TO THE BEST SCHOOLS IN EUROPE..."

... AND HERE IN AMERICA...!

HOW **FORESIGHTED** OF MY UNCLE... TO SEE THAT I HAVE A LEGAL **AMERICAN** NAME AS WELL AS MY **TRIBAL** ONE!

FOR, WHO CAN KNOW WHAT **DESTINY** MAY HOLD IN STORE FOR THE HEIR OF THE **BLACK PANTHER** THRONE?

BUT NOT EVEN **N'BAZA** COULD HAVE GUESSED THAT, ONE DAY, I WOULD COME TO THIS COUNTRY... TO **STAY!**

OR THAT I WOULD VIRTUALLY **SURRENDER** THE PANTHER THRONE... TO HELP MANKIND FIRST AS AN **AVENGER**...

ALL OF WHICH, AVENGERS, ONLY MAKES ME **SADDER** ABOUT THIS **BLASTED RENT BUSINESS**...

ESPECIALLY SINCE IT COMES TO ... **\$2,000** A MONTH!

AS WE SAID, MR. STARK, WE SHALL **RAISE** IT... AND **QUICKLY!**

-- AND THEN, AS A **TEACHER!**

AND NOW, FORBEARING ONE, WE MUST **ABANDON** THE VIEWPOINTS OF THE AVENGERS THEMSELVES ... AND SWITCH TO A SCENE THAT WAS TRANSPIRING ELSEWHERE AT THAT SELF-SAME **MOMENT**...

... AMONG A SOMEWHAT LESS **SAVORY** BAND OF INDIVIDUALS...

DEAR ME-- I DO BELIEVE I HEAR OUR ESTEEMED **EMPLOYER** APPROACHING!

HE WON'T **LIKE** IT, WHEN HE FINDS WE'VE BEEN PLAYING **CARDS** AGAIN... ON **HIS** TIME!

OH YEAH? WELL, A FAT LOT THAT **MASKED SLOB** CAN DO ABOUT IT!

YOU **TELL** 'EM, **PODNUH!**

THERE IS NO **NEED** TO TELL ME, **PECOS**... SINCE I **HEARD** EVERY WORD THAT YOU AND JOE THE **GORILLA** **UTTERED!**

STILL, IF YOU'D CARE TO **REPEAT** IT TO MY **FACE**...

N-NO, THANKS, **BOSS**... WE WAS JUST **HOSSIN'** AROUND...!



OH YEAH?
WELL, JOE THE
GORILLA
AIN'T THE
YELLA-BELLY
THAT PECOS
IS!

AND NEITHER IS CAP'N
SKRAGG!

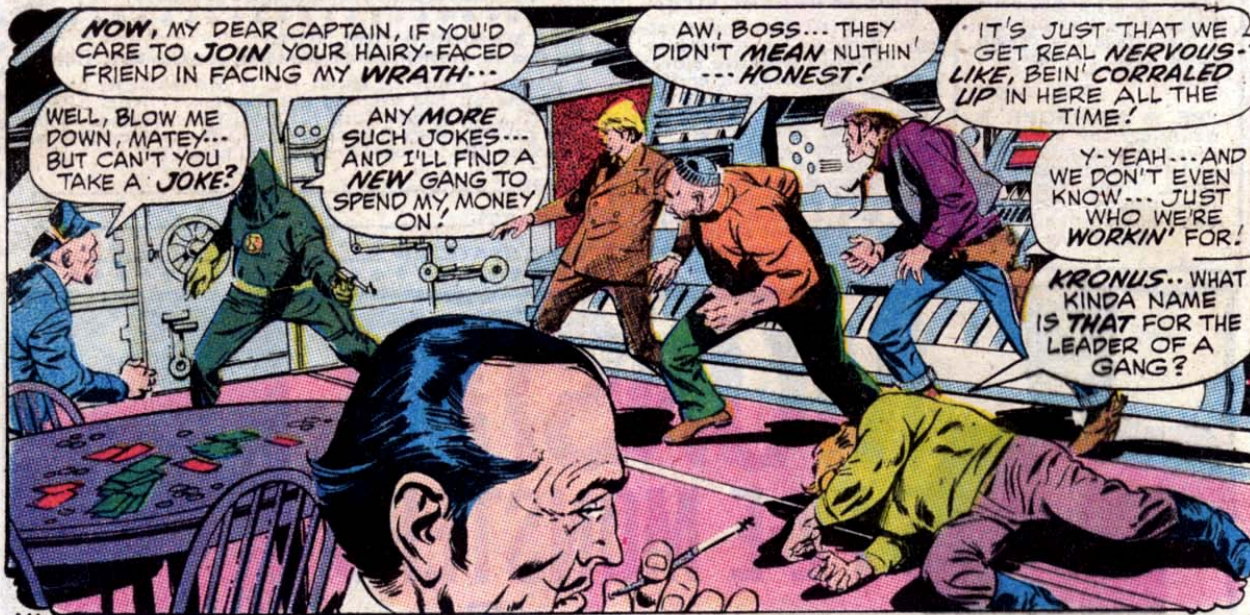
IN MY DAY WE KNEW HOW
TO DEAL WITH LUBBERS
LIKE YOU!

WELL, THIS
IS *NOT*
YOUR DAY
ANY MORE...



IT'S
MINE!!

FRAP!



NOW, MY DEAR CAPTAIN, IF YOU'D
CARE TO **JOIN** YOUR HAIRY-FACED
FRIEND IN FACING MY **WRATH**...

WELL, BLOW ME
DOWN, MATEY...
BUT CAN'T YOU
TAKE A **JOKE**?

ANY MORE
SUCH JOKES...
AND I'LL FIND A
NEW GANG TO
SPEND MY MONEY
ON!

AW, BOSS... THEY
DIDN'T **MEAN** NUTHIN'
--- **HONEST!**

IT'S JUST THAT WE
GET REAL **NERVOUS-
LIKE**, BEIN' **CORRALED
UP** IN HERE ALL THE
TIME!

Y-YEAH... AND
WE DON'T EVEN
KNOW... JUST
WHO WE'RE
WORKIN' FOR!

KRONUS... WHAT
KINDA NAME
IS **THAT** FOR THE
LEADER OF A
GANG?



A **CODE NAME**,
YOU FOOL... AND
THE ONLY ONE YOU
NEED KNOW ME
BY!

NOW, WITHOUT **MORE
TIME-WASTING**... STUDY
THESE **FILMS** I JUST
DEVELOPED...

AND PERHAPS WE
SHALL ALL **PROFIT**
FROM THE EXPERIENCE!

OH DEAR
-- **MORE
FILMS**?

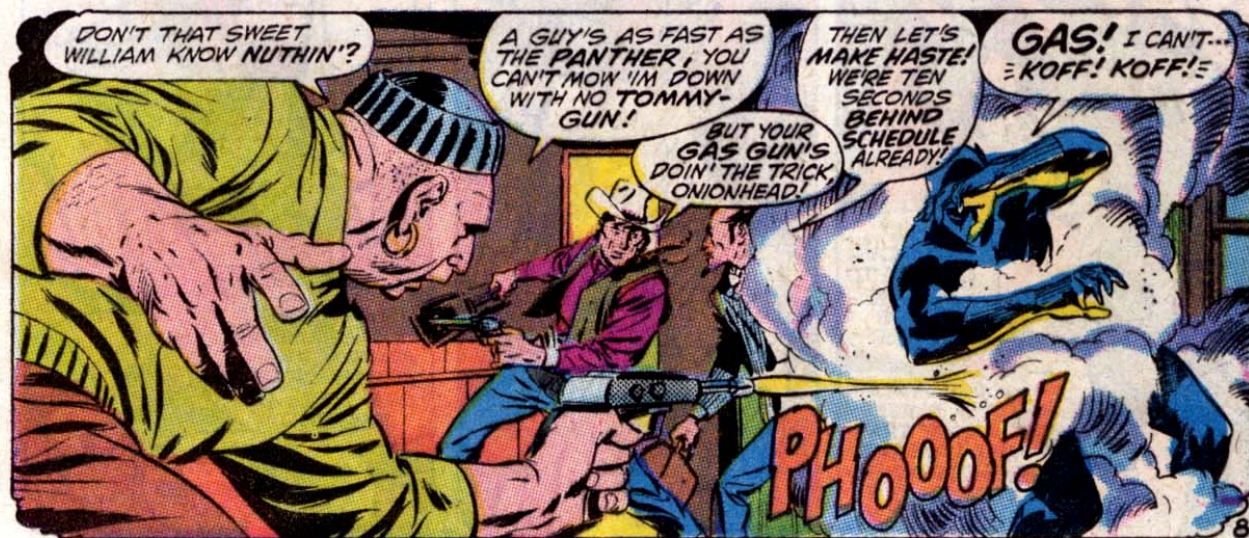
I **DO** HOPE
THEY'RE NOT TOO
VIOLENT!



SILENCE! I GATHERED
YOU **PACK-RATS** TOGETHER
BECAUSE EACH OF YOU
HAD SPECIAL **SKILLS**...
AND I CHRISTENED YOU THE
SPLIT-SECOND SQUAD!

YOU KNOW THESE
"**HOME-MOVIES**"
YOU TAKE OF EACH
JOB ARE DESIGNED
TO IMPROVE YOUR
EFFICIENCY. YOUR
TIMING!

FOR INSTANCE, ALL
WAS GOING **SPLENDIDLY**
IN THIS RECENT **BANK
HOLD-UP** UNTIL...



I SUPPOSE I SHOULD BE GRATEFUL FOR **SMALL FAVORS**, YOU INEPT BUMBLERS!

AT LEAST YOU MANAGED TO SALVAGE THE **MOVIE CAMERA** --- IF NOT THE **BANK LOOT!**

YOU DID NO BETTER THE WEEK **BEFORE...** WHEN THE LUMBERING **GOLIATH** ALMOST CAPTURED YOU!

IT SEEMS OUR **FATE** IS ALWAYS TO BE ENTWINED WITH THAT OF THE ACCURSED **AVENGERS!**

AND **AGAIN** THEY FOILED YOU... IN YOUR LAST **WATERFRONT** OPERATION!

IF NOT FOR THE **JETS** ON YOUR CRAFT, THE **VISION** COULD EASILY HAVE OVERTAKEN YOU!

THEM GUYS IS A PAIN, CHIEF!

WITHOUT **THEM** AROUND, WE COULD REALLY **OPERATE!**

AND, IRONICALLY, THE VERY **NEXT MORNING...**

IT DON'T SEEM **POSSIBLE, VIZH!**

THE **AVENGERS...** **WORKIN'** FOR A LIVING... JUST LIKE MY OLD DAYS IN THE **CARNY!**

YOU'LL HAVE YOUR CHANCE TO **PROVE** THOSE WORDS!

FOR, A PLAN IS ALREADY **AFOOT** THAT WILL HAVE THE **AVENGERS** WORKING THEMSELVES INTO AN **EARLY GRAVE...** FOR US!!

AS AN **ANDROID** WHO HAS NEVER KNOWN THE STRAIN OF **REGULAR TOIL**, MY FRIEND...

I SHALL CONSIDER IT... AN **INTERESTING DIVERSION!**

FOR HIRE... THE AVENGERS

THAT EVENING, AS IF TO **UNDERSCORE** THE SKYBORNE BANNER'S MESSAGE...

..YES, JOHNNY, WE HAVE VOWED TO PAY THE FULL SUM WITH- IN THE **WEEK!**

AS I SAID, THE AVENGERS' RENT IS TECHNICALLY SOME \$120,000 IN ARREARS!

I HATE TO ASK YOU ABOUT YOUR **PHONE BILL!**

YOU PEOPLE DON'T NEED **JOBS.. YOU NEED KEEPERS!**

AND SPEAKING OF KEEPERS, HERE'S **ED**, WITH A WORD ABOUT OUR FAVORITE **DOG FOOD..!**

AND, THE MORNING AFTER THAT...

THOSE AVENGERS OF YOURS ARE SURE **POPULAR** ALL OF A SUDDEN!

OH DEAR, ALL THIS **MAIL!** I HOPE IT HASN'T UNLUCKILY CLUTTERED THE **PARLOR!**

ARE YOU **KIDDIN'**, JACK? THE **BIG SACKS** ARE STILL ON MY **TRUCK!**

... MANY OF THE POSITIONS OFFERED ARE QUITE **LUCRATIVE...** EVEN **WORTHWHILE!**

SOME OF THEM WOULD PAY **WELL...** BUT THERE ARE NO **GUARANTEES** THEY'D BE **PROMPT** ENOUGH!

IF ONLY ONE OF THEM MET OUR **PRECISE SPECIFICATIONS...**

BUT WE **CAN'T** LET TONY STARK DOWN, IN HIS **FINANCIAL STRUGGLE** WITH **VAN LUNT!**

SPEAK OF THE **DEVIL!** LOOK AT THE JOHN HANCOCK ON **THIS OFFER**, QUICKIE!

THE SIGNA- TURE OF... **CORNELIUS VAN LUNT!**

AND THE OFFER IS SO **GENEROUS** ... WE CANNOT AFFORD **NOT** TO CONSIDER IT!

.. TH-- THE AVENGERS ARE WAITING TO SEE YOU, MR. VAN LUNT!

AS I **KNEW** THEY WOULD BE!

WHEN CORNELIUS VAN LUNT SPEAKS, **EVERYONE JUMPS!**

AS YOU KNOW, WILKINS, BETTER THAN ANY MAN **ALIVE!**

SEND THE AVENGERS **IN!**

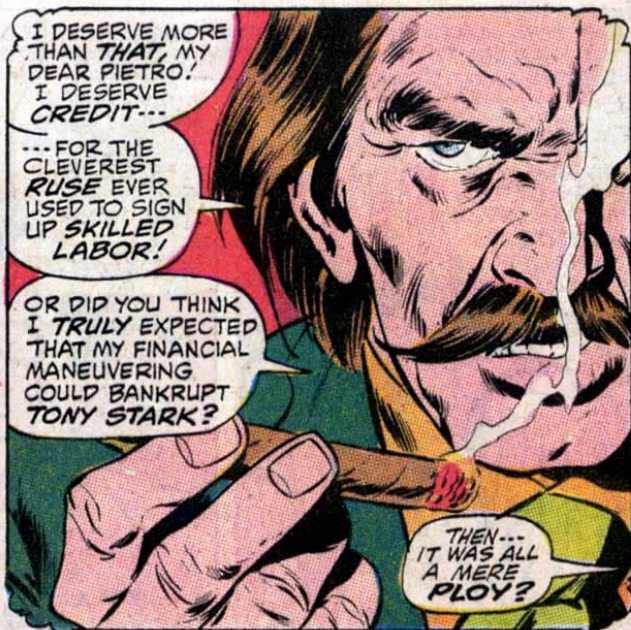


ALL RIGHT, VAN LUNT...
SO WHAT'S THE **PITCH**?

YOU WANT US TO
HELP YOU **SHOVEL
DIRT ON TONY
STARK'S GRAVE?**

IF YOU PERSIST
IN **THAT** ATTITUDE,
MY FRIEND, WE CAN
END THIS AUDIENCE
RIGHT NOW!

HE'S **RIGHT**,
GOLIATH! HE
DESERVES A
HEARING!

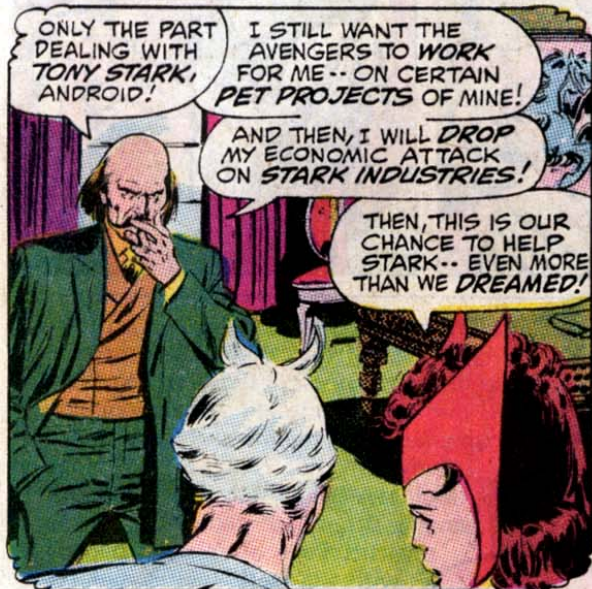


I DESERVE MORE
THAN **THAT**, MY
DEAR PIETRO!
I DESERVE
CREDIT...

...FOR THE
CLEVEREST
RUSE EVER
USED TO SIGN
UP **SKILLED
LABOR!**

OR DID YOU THINK
I **TRULY** EXPECTED
THAT MY FINANCIAL
MANEUVERING
COULD BANKRUPT
TONY STARK?

THEN...
IT WAS ALL
A **MERE
PLOY?**

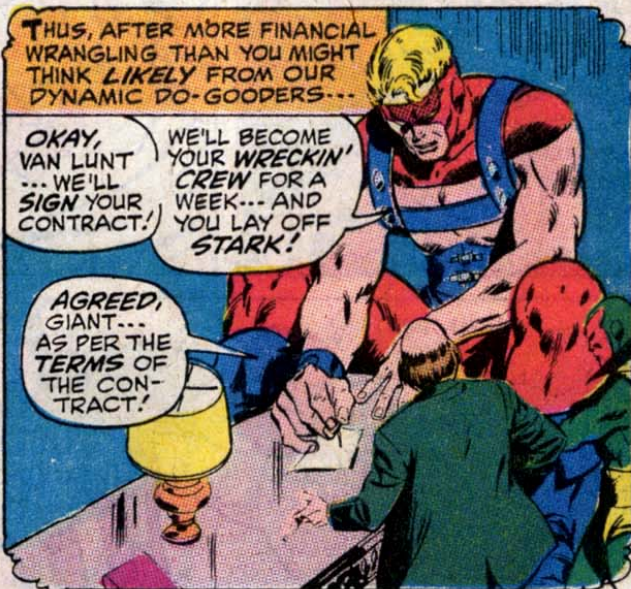


ONLY THE PART
DEALING WITH
TONY STARK,
ANDROID!

I STILL WANT THE
AVENGERS TO **WORK**
FOR ME... ON CERTAIN
PET PROJECTS OF MINE!

AND THEN, I WILL **DROP**
MY ECONOMIC ATTACK
ON **STARK INDUSTRIES!**

THEN, THIS IS OUR
CHANCE TO HELP
STARK... EVEN MORE
THAN WE **DREAMED!**



THUS, AFTER MORE FINANCIAL
WRANGLING THAN YOU MIGHT
THINK **LIKELY** FROM OUR
DYNAMIC DO-GOODERS...

OKAY,
VAN LUNT
... WE'LL
SIGN YOUR
CONTRACT!

WE'LL BECOME
YOUR **WRECKIN'**
CREW FOR A
WEEK... AND
YOU LAY OFF
STARK!

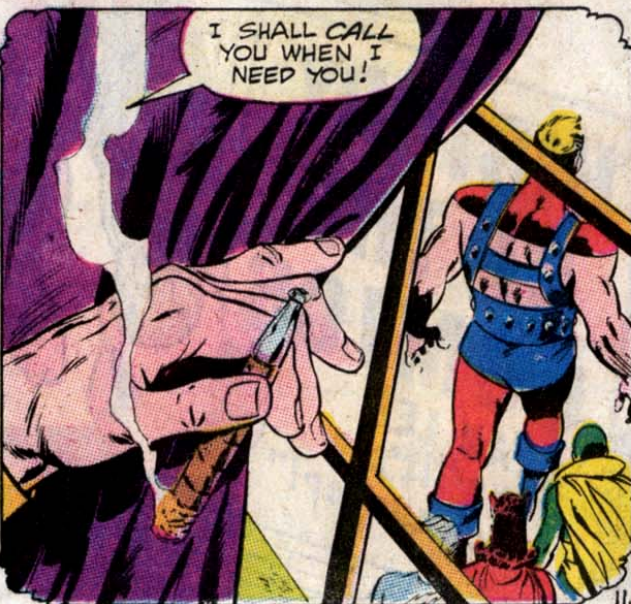
AGREED,
GIANT...
AS PER THE
TERMS OF THE
CONTRACT!



AND NOW,
YOU'LL HAVE
TO **FORGIVE**
ME!

IT'S NOT MY POLICY TO
FRATERNIZE WITH THE...
HIRED HELP!

GOOD
DAY!



I SHALL CALL
YOU WHEN I
NEED YOU!

AND NOW, OUR FATEFUL FLASHBACK ENDED, WE RETURN YOU TO THE **PRESENT**... AND A PROVOCATIVE GLIMPSE INTO A CERTAIN GHETTO HIGH SCHOOL...!

-- AND THIS **TRIBAL MASK** WAS WORN BY THE VILLAGE **WITCH DOCTOR**, TO WARD OFF **EVIL**!

NOW, ANY **QUESTIONS?**

JUST ONE, TEACH-- WHO'D THE WITCH-MAN EXPECT TO **SPOOK** WITH THAT THING?

AND WHERE'D YOU COME UP WITH THAT RIG, ANYHOW?

FAT ALBERT?

OH, LET'S JUST SAY, JOEY...

-- THAT I PICKED IT UP **SECOND-HAND**!

NOW, AS I WAS SAYING...

12

"I BROUGHT THIS TO CLASS TO MAKE YOU AWARE OF YOUR **HERITAGE**... ONE AS ANCIENT AND PROUD AS THAT OF ANY PEOPLE IN THE **WORLD**..."

"-- A BIRTHRIGHT THAT LAYS AS GREAT A **STRESS ON COURAGE** -- ON **BRAVERY**... AS MEDIEVAL EUROPE DID ON **CHIVALRY**..."

YOU SOLD US, MR. CHARLES?

BY THAT, JOEY, I TAKE IT YOU MEAN...?

NOW, HOW ABOUT TELLIN' IT LIKE IT IS ABOUT A GREAT-BLACK-WARRIOR OF THE **NOW** GENERATION?

YOU KNOW IT, MAN! THE **FALCON**!!

HMMM--!

"FOR IN ANY LAND... ANY CLIME-- A MAN MUST STILL BE... A **MAN**!"

13

WHILE, SOME BLOCKS TO THE SOUTH, A SLIGHTLY MORE **SINISTER** SCENE IS BEING ENACTED...

AT LAST...
THE HOUR IS
AT HAND!

THE TIME WHEN
WE SHALL **DESTROY**
THE INFERNAL
AVENGERS... **FOR-
EVER!**

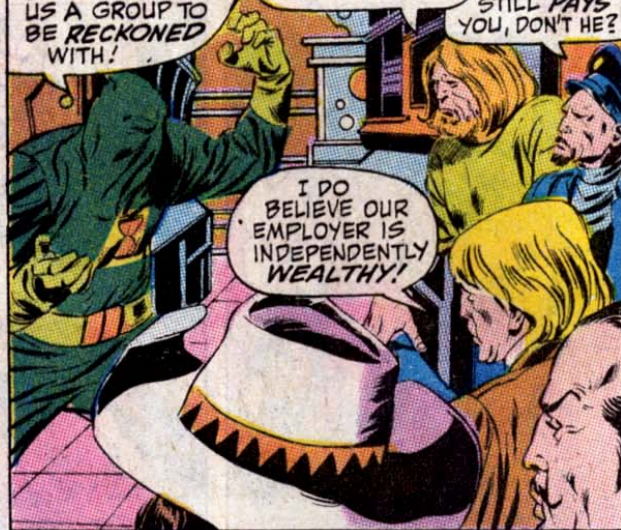


TODAY'S CRIME
SHALL NET US NOT
JUST **MONEY...**
BUT SHALL MAKE
US A GROUP TO
BE **RECKONED**
WITH!

JUST MONEY?
WE AIN'T PULLED
OFF A WINNIN'
JOB IN **WEEKS!**

WHAT DO
YOU CARE,
MATEY?
THE CHIEF
STILL **PAYS**
YOU, DON'T HE?

I DO
BELIEVE OUR
EMPLOYER IS
INDEPENDENTLY
WEALTHY!

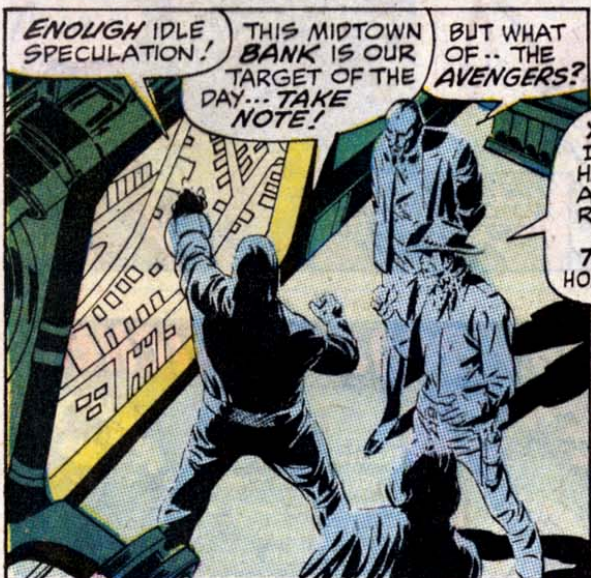


ENOUGH IDLE
SPECULATION!

THIS MIDTOWN
BANK IS OUR
TARGET OF THE
DAY... **TAKE
NOTE!**

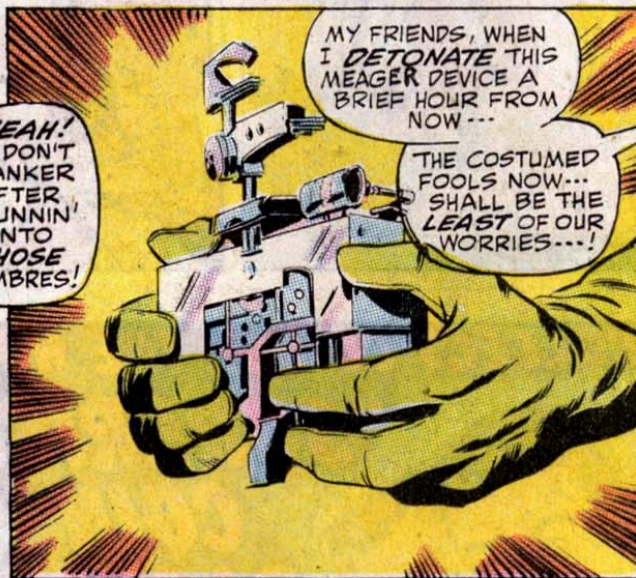
BUT WHAT
OF... THE
AVENGERS?

YEAH!
I DON'T
HANKER
AFTER
RUNNIN'
INTO
THOSE
HOMBRES!



MY FRIENDS, WHEN
I **DETONATE** THIS
MEAGER DEVICE A
BRIEF HOUR FROM
NOW...

THE COSTUMED
FOOLS NOW...
SHALL BE THE
LEAST OF OUR
WORRIES...



MEANWHILE... TO COIN A PHRASE...

IT IS
TIME,
AVENGERS!

ONE FINAL TASK TO
PERFORM FOR CORNELIUS
VAN LUNT, AND OUR OBLIGA-
TION TO HIM WILL BE
COMPLETED!

PIETRO...
WHY DO YOU
BROOD SO
GLUMLY?



YOU **KNOW**
THE REASON,
ANDROID...

I DO NOT
LIKE AIDING
A MAN LIKE
VAN LUNT... FOR
WHATEVER
REASON!

WE ALL **SHARE**
YOUR FEELINGS,
MY BROTHER...
BUT WE HAVE
PLEGGED
OUR **WORD!**

COME...
WE MUST
GO!



YOU GO **AHEAD**,
AVENGERS... AND
I SHALL FOLLOW
WHEN I **CAN**!

BUT FIRST...
THERE IS SOME-
THING THAT I
MUST **DO**...!

WITHIN MINUTES, MIDTOWN MANHATTAN **GASPS**, AS...

I KNOW, MISTER, I KNOW!
I'D ARREST 'EM FOR JAY-
WALKIN'...

...EXCEPT THAT THE
BIG GUY STEPPED FROM
SIDEWALK TO
SIDEWALK!

...YOU'RE THE SO-CALLED
MIGHTY AVENGERS...
JUST THE **THREE** OF YA?

THE **BLACK
PANTHER'S**
BUSY SOME-
WHERE ELSE,
FELLA!

AN'
QUICKSILVER...

...IS PRESENT AND
ACCOUNTED FOR,
GOLIATH!

WHEW! I'LL SAY
THIS FOR YOU,
BUDDY...

YOU
SURE
COME ON
STRONG!

OKAY, NOW HERE'S
THE **SCOOP**...AS
VAN LUNT'S FLUNKY
GAVE IT TO ME!

THAT **TUNNEL** UNDER THE
EAST RIVER'S BEEN **CON-
DEMNNED** FOR YEARS AS
UNSAFE... REGULAR WORK-
CREWS WON'T GO **NEAR**
THE THING!

BUT VAN LUNT
CONTRACTED FOR
YOU GUYS TO
FIX IT UP!

SO WHAT'RE YA
WAITIN' FOR...
OVERTIME?

THE MORE I **THINK**
ABOUT THIS...THE
MORE I DON'T
LIKE IT!

IT'S GOT ALL
THE MARKIN'S
OF A **BIG FAT
TRAP**!

IT IS TOO
LATE TO **CON-
CERN** OUR-
SELVES WITH
THAT!

PIETRO IS RIGHT! LET US
MERELY DO WHAT WE CAME TO DO!

OUTSIDE, WHEN THE QUARTET ARE **THIRTY SECONDS** INTO THE LEAK-STUPPED TUNNEL---

THAT'S IT! PULL HER UP RIGHT HERE!

YOU ARE EXACTLY ON SCHEDULE... A GOOD SIGN!

BOSS, FOR THIS PAY-OFF, WE HADDA BE ON TIME!

YEAH! AFTER TODAY, THEM AVENGERS WON'T FOUL UP NO MORE OF OUR JOBS!

PRECISELY WHAT I HAD IN MIND, MY DEAR GORILLA!

THE OTHER TASKS WHICH OUR COSTUMED STALWARTS PERFORMED WERE BUT THE BUILD-UP!

THIS, AS YOU SO ACCURATELY STATED...

... IS THE FINAL PAY-OFF!

THE AVENGERS SHOULD BE AT EXACTLY THE CENTER OF THE TUNNEL BY NOW!

THUS, A SINGLE TOUCH OF THIS DEMOLITION SWITCH---

"... AND THEY SHALL NEVER BOTHER US AGAIN!!"

KABOOO OOM!

THEN, PROMPTLY AT THE STROKE OF NOON...

MY, UH, CIVILIAN CONTACTS HAVE INFORMED ME OF A LARGE SHIPMENT OF GOLD BARS WHICH ARRIVED AT THIS BANK THIS MORNING!

BUT, YOUR OWN PRIVATE BLITZKRIEG SHALL SWIFTLY RELIEVE THEM OF IT... UNDER MY PERSONAL SUPERVISION!

ALL RIGHT, YOU LUBBERS... STAND STILL, AND NOBODY GETS HURT!

EXCELLENT! WE ARE OPERATING PRECISELY ACCORDING TO OUR TIME-TABLE!

COVER THEM... WHILE I RELIEVE THE VAULT OF ITS CONTENTS!

HAH! THERE IT IS!

SO FEW PEOPLE KNEW OF ITS ARRIVAL, THE BANK DID NOT BOTHER TO TAKE ADEQUATE SAFE GUARDS!

SO, IT TOOK NOTHING BUT PLANNING AND THE ELEMENT OF SURPRISE TO...

HEY, BOSS-MAN!

WHILE YOU'RE PALAVERIN' ABOUT THE ELEMENT OF SURPRISE...

LOOK WHO JUST PULLED ONE ON US!!

YOU SHOULDN'T BE SO STARTLED!

WHERE EVIL LURKS... THERE STRIKES THE BLACK PANTHER!

IT'S THE AVENGER WE DIDN'T KILL! GET HIM!

ZRAPT!

AH--AH'M TRYIN'! BUT HE MOVES LIKE A CON-SARNED JACKRABBIT!



I PREFER THE ANALOGY OF A JUNGLE CAT!

STRANGE... BATTLING THESE THIEVES NO LONGER GIVES ME THE PLEASURE IT ONCE MIGHT HAVE!

NOW, I KEEP THINKING OF MYSELF AS A TEACHER... ON HIS LUNCH HOUR!



DON'T WORRY, CHIEF! AFTER ALL, THERE'S ONLY ONE OF HIM!

THAT WILL BE ENOUGH, FOOL... IF YOU DON'T GUN HIM DOWN!

BUT.. HOW DID HE KNOW WE'D BE HERE? HOW?



"I THINK I CAN ANSWER THAT QUESTION... AFTER I DISPOSE OF THAT FORMIDABLE WEAPON!"

WHAT? WHO..?



I CONTACTED THE PANTHER... WITH WHAT YOU AMERICANS SO CRUDELY CALL A WALKIE-TALKIE!

QUICKSILVER!

THEN... ONE OF THE AVENGERS SOMEHOW ESCAPED MY TRAP!



CORRECTION, SOCK-HEAD! ALL OF 'EM DID!

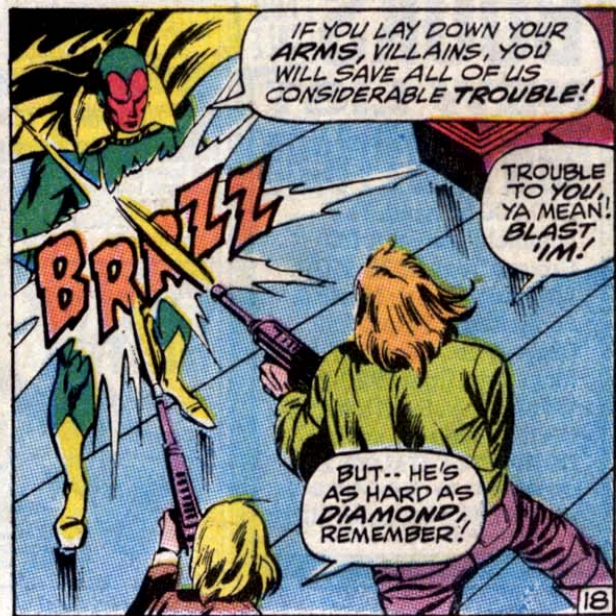


THAT FAST-GUY WASN'T LYIN'... THEY JUST GRABBED THE CHIEF!

THEN LET'S MAKE TRACKS OUTTA HERE, BEFORE...

DON'T LOOK NOW, MY FRIEND...

BUT ONE OF THEM IS BLOCK-ADING THE DOOR-WAY!



IF YOU LAY DOWN YOUR ARMS, VILLAINS, YOU WILL SAVE ALL OF US CONSIDERABLE TROUBLE!

TROUBLE TO YOU, YA MEAN! BLAST 'IM!

BUT.. HE'S AS HARD AS DIAMOND! REMEMBER!

THE VISION SAYS
NO MORE... BUT
RAISES ONE BULKY,
BOOED FOOT...



...AND, INCREASING
ITS **MASS** A HUNDRED-
FOLD, BRINGS IT DOWN
LIKE SOME LEAD-
WEIGHTED TRIP-
HAMMER...



...WITH SINGULARLY DEVASTAT-
ING RESULTS!



THE OTHERS ARE **DOWN**, MATEY
-- BUT I'VE STILL GOT A **LAUNCH**
DOWN BY THE DOCKS!



IF WE CAN BLAST
OUR WAY **THERE**,
IT'S CLEAR SAIL-
ING ALL THE WAY TO
THE **CARIBBEAN**!

AN' ONLY
THAT **DAME**
STANDS IN
OUR WAY!

DAME? DON'T MOUTH THAT
CREAKING ARCHAIISM AT ME,
YOU--!



EVEN THE SULTRY **SCARLET**
WITCH DOES NOT KNOW PRE-
CISELY WHAT DAMAGE HER **HEX**
SPHERE WILL NEXT INFLICT--
BUT THE TWO SEA-FARING
SCOUNDRELS SOON LEARN--!

OKAY, HEAD-RAT-- NOW WE'LL SEE HOW
YA DIG OL' GOLIATH'S VERSION OF THE
SQUEEZE PLAY!



NO, GOLIATH--
DON'T **HARM** HIM!
I WANT TO **UNMASK**
HIM!

I WAS JUST
MAKIN' HIM
SWEAT A
LITTLE, JUNGLE-
MAN!

BESIDES, WE ALL
KNOW IT'S **VAN**
LUNT-- THE LAST
OF THE RED-HOT
TYCOONS!

IS HE, GIANT?
LOOK AGAIN!



HOLY TOLEDO! IT
AIN'T **VAN LUNT**--
IT'S HIS **FLUNKY**!

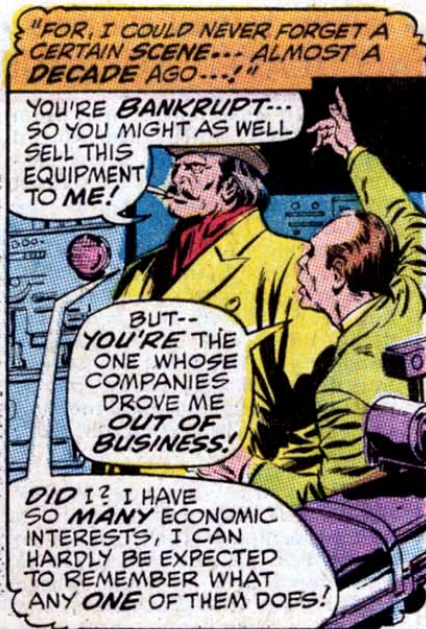
IT'S--HEY! I
CAN'T EVEN
REMEMBER
THE CREEP'S
NAME!



YOU COSTUMED CLOD... YOU JUST STATED THE REASON WHY I FIRST TURNED TO CRIME...

I INTENDED TO FRAME HIM -- FOR WHAT HE'D DONE TO ME!

... WHY I DESIGNED THIS **OUT-FIT** WHICH GAVE ME THE SAME BUILD AS **VAN LUNT!**



"FOR, I COULD NEVER FORGET A CERTAIN SCENE... ALMOST A DECADE AGO..."

YOU'RE **BANKRUPT**... SO YOU MIGHT AS WELL SELL THIS EQUIPMENT TO ME!

BUT-- YOU'RE THE ONE WHOSE COMPANIES DROVE ME OUT OF BUSINESS!

DID I? I HAVE SO MANY ECONOMIC INTERESTS, I CAN HARDLY BE EXPECTED TO REMEMBER WHAT ANY ONE OF THEM DOES!



YES, HE'D RUINED ME, WITHOUT EVEN KNOWING WHO I WAS!

IN FACT, HE HAD FORGOTTEN ME-- BY THE TIME I APPLIED FOR THE JOB OF HIS **FLUNKY!**



THEN, YOU HAD A SCHEME UP YOUR SLEEVE...

-- TO PIN OUR MURDERS ON VAN LUNT!

YES! BUT -- I STILL DON'T SEE HOW YOU SURVIVED THAT **BLAST!**

WE DIDN'T, FRIEND--!



"WE SMELLED A RAT.. SO PIETRO HAD OUR AUTOMATIC SUB STANDING BY NEAR THAT **SUNKEN TUNNEL**..."

... AND WE WERE NOT INSIDE WHEN IT WAS DESTROYED!"



SO, WILKINS, YOU MISERABLE MOUSE.. YOU TRIED TO FRAME ME TO SETTLE AN OLD DEBT!

WELL, HE'S GOT HIS JUST **DESSERTS**, EH, AVENGERS?



NOW, HERE'S YOUR MONEY FOR... EH? WHY ARE YOU ALL **WALKING AWAY** FROM ME LIKE THAT?

CAN YOU NOT GUESS, HUMAN... EVEN NOW?

WILKINS SHALL PAY FOR HIS CRIMES, VAN LUNT.. BECAUSE IT IS **RIGHT** THAT HE DO SO!



BUT, YOUR CRIMES ARE AGAINST THE HEART-- THE VERY **SOUL** OF MAN!

AND ONE DAY YOU SHALL PAY FOR THEM AS SURELY AS THERE IS **JUSTICE** LEFT IN THE WORLD!

THUS SWEAR... THE **AVENGERS!!**

AND ON THAT DAY, PILGRIM... YOU'LL BE RIGHT HERE TO SEE IT!

Fine