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BATMAN

"Mr. Zero" ~~Freeze~~

by

Max Hodge

*The Suspect Bosch
" mention reference*

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BATMAN

"Mr. Zero"

When one man, either by accident or on purpose, forces another man to exist in a world of ZERO temperature for the rest of his life -- never again knowing the heat of the noonday sun, nor the warmth of a glowing fire ...the man so inflicted in all probability will build up an intense hatred for the man who caused him this suffering.

So it was with MR. ZERO who could not breathe in any atmosphere where the temperature rose above the zero mark. He hated - with all his cold heart and soul - the man who had inflicted this hardship upon him, and swore someday he would have this man's hide -- the hide of:

THE BATMAN.

OPEN

A hot, steaming summer night in the deserted heart of Gotham City.

FADE IN on a brightly lighted, king-size self-service AUTOMATIC ICE DISPENSER filling the screen.

Suddenly: ssssst! A red flame, more concentrated than that from a flame thrower, criss-crosses the ice dispenser. Quicker than it takes to describe it, the flame dies, replaced immediately by a blue-white smokey substance that traces the same pattern. A tremendous SSSSS-ing sound is heard as steam pours out. When the steam clears away, the ice dispenser is revealed - cracked wide open like a hot pitcher suddenly doused with ice

water. Ice cubes are tumbling out of the machine, onto the ground. Another burst of flame - and the ice cubes melt instantly without even a 'wet' trace. A sinister laugh - like someone laughing in a well - is heard from off screen, and a moment later...the sound of a truck pulling away on squealing tires. Whip pan to:

Another ICE DISPENSER in a deserted parking lot. An ICE CREAM TRUCK pulls up beside the dispenser, a figure dressed not unlike an astronaut emerges from the rear door, aims a double barreled bazooka type weapon at the dispenser.

Again: first the flames shoot out...then the white-blue substance. Steam billows. The ice dispenser cracks wide open, the ice falling to the ground, instantly melting with a blast from the 'flame-ice' gun. That hollow laugh again as the truck speeds away. Whip pan to:

EXTERIOR of GOTHAM CITY ICE PALACE...a skating rink. The ice cream truck is parked outside. Suddenly loud screams echo from the ice palace as the astronaut-type figure emerges from the exit carrying his 'flame-ice' gun. He laughs the same hollow laugh as he leaps into the back of the ice cream truck. It speeds away as SEVERAL SKATERS, still wearing ice skates, hobble out to the street. They are dripping wet.

A motorcycle cop zooms into the picture, and the ice skaters - each saying a word or two - convey: "...some Maniac" - "~~Martian~~" - "melted" "the ice" - "like that". Fingersnap. The motorcycle cop speeds away in hot pursuit.

As the motorcycle gains on the truck, suddenly the back door of the truck opens and the astronaut-like figure sprays the pavement with the white-blue substance. Immediately the motorcycle starts skidding - whirling - slipping - sliding...finally hitting the curb and sending the cop skidding along the icy pavement on his backside. He is finally stopped by an ashcan, sits up, feels the pavement under him, utters with complete disbelief:

"Ice----?"

"...in July?" COMMISSIONER GORDON asks incredulously. In his office, Gordon - along with Chief O'Hara, ~~Inspector Basch~~ and other city lawmen - are questioning not only the motorcycle cop, but several other policemen who have reported acts of vandalism throughout the city...and all of the same nature:

Ice Dispensers split wide open, with no trace of the ice!

This is ridiculous, say the officials. Who would go to all this trouble to steal ice and melt ice rinks; then turn right around and ice up an entire street...unless ----?

THE RED PHONE in Bruce Wayne's study beeps, Bruce and Dickie answer the summons and in a flash they are speeding in their Batmobile to the Commissioner's office.

"It MUST be Mr. ^{Freeze} Zero," the BATMAN announces solemnly to the assembled lawmen. All gasp. But Mr. Zero has lived in the high Alps - high above the snow line ever since...the accident. How can he live in this climate...and why is he here?

Robin is curious about the accident. It is hinted at - but not explained - that the Batman was somehow involved in an incident some time ago that had turned a man into ...a HUMAN ICICLE.

MEANWHILE - in a remote MOUNTAIN RETREAT some fifty miles by freeway from Gotham City - in a house built from pre-fabricated materials, mysteriously erected in three days, MR. ZERO is taking off his special refrigerated outfit and expounding - in a low guttural voice - to his butler: "...ah, Adolph, it is goot to get out of dis air-conditioned suit into nize zero degree temperature vere a man can breathe".

Mr. Zero - now revealed as a billiard-ball-bald, bullet-head, stocky character - cautions his butler not to step into the zero zone, but to keep in special 76 degree areas and paths, heated by powerful red ceiling rays. Several thugs enter along a heated path, and MR. ZERO points out that they left enough 'calling cards' around town so by now the Batman will know they are here.

"I vill toy with Batman like a cat with a mouse," says Mr. Zero, sinisterly. "I vill toy --- und den....DESTROY!"

FADE OUT.

FADE IN

WAYNE MANOR - the home of Bruce Wayne and his ward, Dickie Grayson, known to the world as Batman and Robin.

Inside the manor, Aunt Harriet is watching the live telecast of a parade on the Avenue of International Peace, Gotham City's main thorofare.

Bruce Wayne is toying with the ice cube in his lemonade, thinking perhaps of Mr. Zero? Dickie Grayson is trying for a hundred pushups... 'ninety-six-ninety-seven-ninety-eight---'.

"Look!" Aunt Harriet enthuses. "A group of marchers dressed like that Batman fellow."

This is of mild interest to Bruce - even children wear Batman costumes to imitate their hero - so he glances superficially at the tube. But suddenly something catches his eye. Directly behind the Batman Brigade is another band of marchers wearing astronaut-like outfits. The motorcycle cop had described a similar costume...worn by Mr. Zero. Something clicks in Bruce's brain. He signals Dickie. Surreptitiously they head for the bat cave.

IN THE BATMOBILE speeding toward Gotham City, Robin tunes the batscope to the commercial channel telecasting the parade. Batman is certain that Mr. Zero is planning some sinister deed involving the parade. But what? Ice? Ice? Ice? And why?

AT PRECISELY THE SAME TIME, a villainous looking ice vendor is explaining to potential customers: "...sorry, sold out!" as he stands guard on an ice truck parked near the HENRY TISH BUILDING... 'the House that Diamonds Built'.

Inside the truck, MR. ZERO is climbing into his air-conditioned outfit and checking the progress of the parade on a portable TV set. Here come the Batmen and the Mr. Zeros (HIS contribution to the parade). They should be passing by the TISH building in exactly... six minutes.

The sinister plan unfolds. One of Mr. Zero's henchmen sets up a large, four by six souvenir display board in front of the entrance to the Tish Building (which is closed for the day). Mr. Zero quickly moves from the truck to a position behind the display board where he uses his 'first-hot-then-cold' treatment on the iron-barred door, snapping off the bars and lock with no effort. He enters the building followed by several 'vendors'...his henchmen.

Inside the plushly-furnished building, Mr. Zero cracks the safe with his 'flame-ice' gun. The burglar alarm goes off. Surprisingly, Mr. Zero seems pleased instead of worried by the racket. An elderly guard appears on the scene. Mr. Zero turns the ice-gun on the guard, and for the first time we see the terrible potential of this gun:

THE GUARD 'INSTANT-FROZEN'... a dead, human statue.

MEANWHILE, BACK IN THE POLICE PRECINCT, the direct connection to the Tish Alarm System is buzzing which sets up a flurry of activity. Via the bat phone in the Batmobile, Batman and Robin are alerted as they move through the heavy parade traffic. Burglary in the Tish diamond building? Immediately Batman's brain triggers the answer to his question: "Ice?" Of course. The fabulous 'ICE-blue-Star-of-Kashmir' diamond...second most valuable diamond in the world. It is stored in the safe of the Tish building. Shock cut to:

MR. ZERO in the Tish building drooling over the huge, glittering diamond which he has just taken from the shattered safe. His henchmen are worried: "...the fuz'll be here any second". Worse. Batman himself.

"Let him come!" muses the sadistic Mr. Zero as he and his henchman move toward the exit. Suddenly another guard appears, fires, hitting one of the henchmen. Another henchman whips out a pistol, but Mr. Zero - in one movement - knocks the pistol from his hand, turns the ice-gun on the hapless guard. Another stiff stiff. Mr. Zero wants his adversaries to die only by catching extreme colds.

OUTSIDE THE TISH BUILDING confusion reigns. Onlookers are worried by the alarm. As Zero and his henchmen rush out, the BATMEN and ZERO MARCHERS are passing directly in front of the building. At Zero's pre-arranged signal, all the marchers break out of step and start infiltrating among the parade watchers.

Batman and Robin who have hot-footed it to the Tish building arrive at this very moment. Zero has iced the sidewalk. Onlookers are slipping, sliding, falling. Batmen and Zero-type characters are going every which way. Will the real Zero stand up, please? Will the real Batman stand up? All is chaos. And to top it off:

IN THE SKY, five planes are spelling out with puffs of smoke NOT 'Laura Scudders Potato Chips' but "STRIKE ONE ON BATMAN" for millions of onlookers to see.

"THAT'S IT!" Commissioner Gordon expounds in his office. Mr. Zero is in Gotham City to steal all the BIG ICE (diamonds that is). But what is even more obvious to a chagrined Batman is the plain fact: Zero is out to ruin Batman's reputation as a crime buster. Question: what will be Zero's next move?

TO FIND THE ANSWER, Batman and Robin are working with computers and a large map of the city to try and outguess Mr. Zero. Where will he strike next? All diamond establishments are pinpointed, but none have a jewel as fabulous as the Star of Kashmir. If Mr. Zero is to acquire a reputation, he must top his last exploit.

Only one diamond in the world is more valuable than the Star: the famed GHIACCIO CIRCOLO owned by Princess Sandra, the American girl who married the Prince of Molino. Ghiaccio Circolo - translated from the Italian - means "Ice Circle" (...circle or Zero?) No, muses Batman. It is too obvious. Besides, the Princess is in Europe ---

But wait! As a one time rabid baseball fan, she is coming to America to pitch the first ball in the Charity Game between the World Champion Gotham City Eagles and the Windy City Niners. Wasn't it announced on TV she would be arriving tonight ---?

TONIGHT!

Times a'wastin'! The Batmobile hurls down the dark road. Destination: Gotham City Hotel - the Royal Suite. If Mr. Zero DOES intend to steal the G.C. Diamond - would he strike tonight? Or tomorrow? Or when? Perhaps they should have notified Commissioner Gordon of their hunch; still, that is all it is....a hunch.

BUT IS IT JUST A HUNCH? At this very moment, a COLD STORAGE VAN has backed up to the Service Entrance of the hotel, and four men are carrying a crate marked 'Frozen Beef - Air Freight from Molino' to the freight elevator for delivery to the Princess.

IN THE BATMOBILE, Batman and Robin thread their way through traffic. As they approach the Gotham City Hotel, they see the great flickering shadow of a bat projected on the cloud in the sky. The bat signal from the roof of City Hall. Trouble has already started. Robin immediately contacts City Hall via the Batmobile's mobile bat phone and gets the Commissioner's report:

"... someone is frozen to that special warning signal we've rigged up in the Princess suite".

FROZEN IS RIGHT. In Princess Sandra's Royal Suite, a uniformed lackey is frozen stiff, his dead eyes staring in horror as he clutches the decorative cord which triggers the alarm system. The PRINCESS SANDRA with her entourage are all 'frightened' stiff (if not 'frozen') as they face Mr. Zero and his henchmen. Zero laughs as he cuts the cord above the dead man's hand with a short flame burp from his 'flame-ice' gun. The lackey falls like the cake of ice he is...with a cracking thud.

"The Ghiaccio Circolo if you please?" says the overly polite Mr. Zero, hand outstretched. The PRINCESS' hand goes to the pendant at her throat. Mr. Zero becomes more insistant: "The Ghiaccio Circolo! Now!"

MEANWHILE, THE BATMOBILE has pulled up behind the COLD STORAGE VAN. Batman and Robin quickly hop out, head for the hotel. Freight elevator? The pointer indicates it is on the fifth floor. Too slow. Batman tosses up the batarang with the attached bat-rope to the terrace of the Royal Suite five stories above. Before you can say Robin, son - Robin is climbing the rope, Batman following close behind.

IN THE ROYAL SUITE, Mr. Zero has lost patience with the Princess. Savagely he jerks the pendant from her neck. He examines the diamond, his eyes aglæam, the gleam quickly fading as he faces the Princess:

"Tell Batman what happened when he arrives... if he arrives!"

"Tell him yourself!" exclaims Batman as he and Robin dramatically enter from the terrace. Quick as a wink, Batman has thrown another batarang with bat-rope attached, wrapping up Mr. Zero and two of his henchmen like bundles for Sing-Sing. They fall struggling to the floor.

But Zero, as he falls, quick-freezes a gigantic Molino National Flag suspended from the ceiling. The sudden weight from the added ice coating causes the flag to fall, a veritable guillotine blade plunging into the floor, just inches from Batman and Robin who have started their move toward Zero. The jumbo-size frozen flag momentarily blocks their way. Zero triggers the flame barrel of his gun for a quick burp to break the bat-rope binding him, and another burp toward the flag...just enough to instant thaw the flag, causing it to enmesh Batman and Robin. Before Batman and Robin can become dis-entangled, Zero has iced the floor and escaped into the hallway. The slick floor is to hazardous to maneuver:

"Down the bat-rope!" Batman commands Robin as they race for the terrace.

DOWN ON THE STREET LEVEL, Zero and his henchmen rush for the COLD STORAGE VAN. Zero looks up, sees Batman and Robin starting their descent down the bat-rope. A neat, pencil thin line of sudden cold from the ice barrel of Zero's gun freezes the rope, causing Batman and Robin to start slipping. Down, down, down they go, faster and faster - surely to their doom - except...

fate has placed several canvas window canopies between them and the ground. With the dexterity of old Doug Fairbanks (Sr.), they manage to flip - like circus trapeze artists - from one canopy to the next to the next until they reach terra firma.

Too late! The COLD STORAGE VAN is already careening down the street in the distance; still, no truck could possibly outdistance the Batmobile.

THE CHASE. Through the streets the VAN twists and turns, the callous driver unmindful of pedestrians quickly leaping out of the way and small cars forced up over the curbs. Close behind, and getting closer -- speeds the Batmobile. Watch for tricks, Batman warns...but too late.

Through a hole in the rear door of the van, a sudden blue-white spray instantly frosts up the windshield of the Batmobile.

INSIDE THE BATMOBILE , the opaque windshield makes driving impossible: "...emergency brake!" orders the cool, calm Batman. "Can't take a chance of killing innocent pedestrians!"

Outside the car, the emergency parachute brake instantly stops the Batmobile. Batman and Robin jump out, hail the patrol car which has joined the chase and jump into the patrol car on the dead run.

With sirens wailing and red lights flashing, the patrol car resumes the chase. Once more the gap closes between the Van and Patrol car.

Again...that blue-white ice spray! This time it hits the grill and hood of the patrol car causing an instant engine freeze-up. The engine immediately conks out, the patrol car comes to a sudden stop. Has Mr. Zero outsmarted Batman again?

"Roadblocks!" Batman barks into the patrol car microphone.

Back at the precinct, Chief O'Hara and his men leap into action. Roadblocks are set up as directed by the Batman: "...find that Cold Storage Van - license UP-7000 -- and find it fast!"

SEVERAL BLOCKS AWAY, the Cold Storage Van has deliberately slowed up. In a closeup we see the license plate flip over to a new number: AB 6113. At the same time, the panels on each side of the Van flip over, and COLD STORAGE VAN has magically become: GOTHAM CITY BAKERY GOODS.

BACK AT THE PATROL CAR where Batman is directing operations over the police radio, the bad news is reported: Cold Storage Van seems to have disappeared. Vanished in thin air.

For once Batman is annoyed...and shows it. Are they stopping all trucks? Well -- no, comes back the Chief's report. After all there are a lot of trucks in that area, and they want only one specific truck.

"Inspect all trucks!" Batman orders. The Chief concurs.

MEANWHILE, AT A ROAD BLOCK, the Gotham City Bakery Goods Van has pulled up, and the police officer is questioning the driver. Another officer is monitoring the walkie talkie: "Yes, Chief! Right away, Chief!" He hurries to the barricade just as the inspecting officer has OKed the Gotham Bakery Goods van to go through.

"Search all trucks!" the walkie-talkie officer relays the Chief's orders. The inspecting officer tries to call back the Bakery Goods van...but too late. It is already disappearing in the distance.

INSIDE THE VAN, Mr. Zero is chortling with glee as he examines the fabulous Ghiaccio Circolo diamond. Once again he has outwitted Batman. Over the loud speaker in the van connected to the driver's compartment he gets the word: "Dirigible overhead, boss!" Good, thinks Mr. Zero. Now the whole world will know it is ----

STRIKE TWO ON BATMAN. That's what the electric sign on the side of the dirigible keeps flashing as it circles over Gotham City. Already the story is breaking in the press and on TV.

sky writing

"For the second time in a row, Batman has been beaten again!" observes the TV commentator on the late newscast which BRUCE, DICKIE, ALBERT and AUNT HARRIET are watching in the confines of Wayne Manor.

Strike two on Batman? What does it mean? Three strikes and he's out? What will be the third strike? When will Mr. Zero pitch it to the Batman? What more precious gem IS there in the world than the Ghiaccio Circolo? Is it possible Batman has finally met his match?

END OF PART ONE

cliff-hanger

PART TWO

We open with the customary brief reprise of Part One, emphasizing the ominous "Third Strike Theme". And now -----

DOWN IN THE BATCAVE - where Batman clearly shows the wear and tear from his exhaustive research the past thirty-six hours, trying desperately to analyze the information from the crime computer. Robin is a sympathetic helper.

No use! The computer is void of any more information that might help them out-guess the next move of Mr. Zero. The computer 'cuts no ice'. Gives no new clues. Robin diplomatically suggests that perhaps a breather is in order to 'clear the mind'. It is not difficult for Batman to guess what the extremely athletic Robin has in mind: the CHARITY BALLGAME between the Gotham City Eagles and the Windy City Niners.

GOTHAM CITY is in a festive mood. The area around the Eagles Stadium is charged with the electric enthusiasm of World Series time. Scalpers are making a killing. Ice Cream is selling like Hot Cakes. Inside the park, BRUCE WAYNE, DICKIE GRAYSON and ALFRED take their customary places in the Wayne box directly behind the dugout.

With elaborate fan fare and much popping of flash bulbs, the PRINCESS SANDRA makes her grand way to her seat in the box next to Wayne's. Bruce winces when he sees her, thinking of how he had failed her. She smiles at him ('what a handsome man' she is thinking).

She's sweet in his Bat

Naturally she does not know that Bruce Wayne is also Batman who had tried so courageously to save her diamond night before last.

As the crowd roars, PRINCESS SANDRA tosses the first pitch to the waiting catcher...not as good as the Eagle's fantastic pitcher, Don Diamante might do -- but then who can compare to the flashy Don, the best southpaw in any league, the best pitcher since...who? Bob Feller? Dizzy Dean? Walter Johnson? You name it. The odds are four to one in favor of the Eagles - with Diamante scheduled on the mound.

Play ball!

But...hold it! An announcement. A sensational announcement over the loudspeakers. Diamante is NOT pitching. Repeat. NOT pitching. Why? What happened? Where's our boy Don? How come he's not pitching?

Suddenly the scoreboard lights up with a mysterious message: "DIAMANTE IS 'ON ICE' " and underneath a large '0'.

Confusion! Excitement! What does the message mean? The announcer is apologizing over the loudspeakers. No one knows how that message flashed on the scoreboard. No one knows what it means. No one, that is, but BRUCE WAYNE as the sickening reality surges over him.

Now it adds up! Biggest diamond in Gotham City? Gotham City Baseball Diamond! And what is 'Diamante'? A ballplayer, sure, but it also means Diamond in Spanish. So obvious. The greatest gem in all Gotham City - at least according to a million rabid ball fans: the one -- the ONLY...Diamante! Obviously Diamante is in the clutches of the arch villain Mr. Zero. As Bruce looks up, he needs no further proof. It is written in the sky:

THREE STRIKES AND YOU'RE OUT, BATMAN

the planes are puffing out their sky writing.

Even more sensational than the scoreboard message concerning Diamante is the sky message about Batman. The stadium is in an uproar. Does it mean Batman has been killed? Disappeared? Kidnapped? Who is this mysterious adversary? These questions pop around BRUCE WAYNE as he bounds up the steps toward the exit, followed by DICKIE and ALFRED.

IN THE COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE, Batman and Robin are quickly briefed on the mysterious disappearance of the Eagle's pitcher, Diamante. His landlady reports four strangers visited his apartment last night. She didn't hear or see them leave, but when she went up to clean Diamante's apartment this morning, the bed had never been slept in...and Diamante was missing. A ransom note had been left on the dresser: "You will soon hear my terms".

Signed: 'O'. *Jockey*
or Scicle

As though on cue, the phone rings and the guttural sounds of Mr. Zero are quickly transferred to the telephone loud speaker system so all can hear. His terms? Simple. No money. Not one red cent. All he asks in exchange for ONE BALL PLAYER is ----

ONE BATMAN

Fair exchange?

Commissioner Gordon thinks not and is ready tell Mr. Zero 'no deal', but Batman steps to the phone first:

"I accept your terms," Batman says crisply. "Tell me where and when the exchange takes place."

Alone! Mr. Zero demands.

Alone! Batman echoes.

Batman cuts off the loud speaker system, insists the conversation is strictly between Mr. Zero and himself and no one is to monitor the conversation as he listens to instructions from Mr. Zero. After a few moments of listening he nods his head:

I'll be there! he says simply.

LATE THAT NIGHT. It is dark, so dark it is almost impossible to make out the location clearly. BATMAN - looming big on the screen - is setting up the signal: four beam-type flashlights set on the ground at the four corners of a six foot square. Now he turns them on, steps into the center of the square so the full power of the four searchlights are concentrated on him. The CAMERA QUICKLY PULLS BACK to reveal the entire surroundings, and we realize for the first time that Batman is standing approximately on second base of the Gotham City Eagles stadium....in the diamond.

It is quiet. Peaceful. Serene. But Batman is tense, knowing that he is a splendid target for...death. He strains his eyes, trying to pierce the darkness around him. He listens. Now the faint drone of a Copter approaching can be heard, growing louder and louder. Batman looks up.

Out of the gloom, the Copter takes shape as it settles down closer and closer to the diamond. As it lands on the pitcher's mound, clouds of dust obscure it entirely for several seconds. Batman fights his way through the dust to the Copter.

In a quick exchange shouted over the roar of the propellor, Batman wants to make certain Diamante is released, and Zero's affirmative answer

is punctuated by the limp form which is dumped from the plane to the ground. Batman kneels down beside the form, unties Diamante's hands and removes the gag from his mouth. Before Batman can straighten up, he is struck down with a judo chop from one of Zero's henchmen who picks him up and dumps him - unceremoniously - into the Copter.

As the Copter takes off, Diamante groggily gets to his feet and stares vacantly at the Copter disappearing into the night. What happened? What IS happening? His drugged mind can not focus on reality.

Suddenly -- seemingly from out of nowhere -- a BAT-COPTER swoops down and lands very close to the startled, confused Diamante. (NOTE: This is assuming the Bat-Copter is in operation. If not - another method will be substituted.) ROBIN leaps from the Bat-Copter, ascertains that Diamante is OK, instructs him to get in touch with Commissioner Gordon immediately, then hops back on his Bat-Copter and heads off in the direction of the Copter carrying Mr. Zero and Batman.

SEVERAL HOURS LATER, in Mr. Zero's modernistic hideout, BATMAN gradually regains consciousness. The room begins to come into focus. He is stretched out on a bed in an extremely modern, tastefully decorated bedroom. Heat lamps cast a warm glow over the bed area... but ONLY the bed area. The rest of the room seems cold with its bluish overcast.

Automatically Batman feels for his Utility Belt. Gone! Where am I? What is this? Groggily he maneuvers his legs over the side of the bed, plants his feet on the floor preparing to rise when a voice o. s. cautions him:

"If I were you, Batman, I would not try to move from the heated area!"

Mr. Zero is standing in the doorway. More determined than ever, Batman now rises, starts toward Mr. Zero, then suddenly backs away, shuddering as he falls onto the bed. Zero warns him that suddenly going from a 76 degree temperature to zero temperature is not only foolhardy..it can be most dangerous. Zero demonstrates how he has control over the lighting using the remote control 'light-switch' board which he carries, and how he can 'create' a 'hot path' to the dining area. In purring tones, Mr. Zero explains they have a 'surprise guest' for dinner...one the Batman should be pleased to see.

IN THE DINING AREA, a long table surrounded by chairs sets under the 'hot lamp' area (except for one end of the table which is bathed in the cool blue light of Zero temperature for Mr. Zero's benefit). The tall backs of the chairs 'hide' the guest as Batman and Mr. Zero enter, Mr. Zero triggering the lights so as Batman approaches the table, the area in front of him 'heats up'.

Suddenly Batman stops - stares - as he sees the guest for the first time. Instead of being pleased (as Mr. Zero promised) he is very upset.

Sitting in the chair, tight-lipped, erect, with 'egg-on-his-face' is ---

ROBIN.

DINNER IS SERVED. Elegantly. Tastefully. Mr. Zero is a most amiable host. Witty, charming and agreeable. And why not? Hasn't he caught the mouse between his paws -- to toy with as long as it pleases him -- and when it displeases him ---? Squash! The mouse it put out of its misery.

Mr. Zero is so contented he even condescends to tell Robin the story of his earlier meeting with Batman...the fatal meeting which changed his whole life.

IN FLASHBACK (optional), we SEE what happened as Zero describes the action:

Batman would never be a St. Moritz *A nearby mountain resort*
Adriatic

That winter in St. Moritz - when Batman was tracking down an international jewel-thief, namely Mr. Zero (only then he was Mr. Schimmel. 'Mr. Zero' came after the accident). It happened in the Swiss Chateau of a crazy inventor where they were all trapped by an avalanche. The inventor was working on an Instant-Freeze gun, and Mr. Zero - realizing the potential of the gun - tried to steal it...unfortunately killing the inventor in the process. Batman corners Zero in the lab and during the scuffle, knocks over a large test tube, the contents of which saturate Mr. Zero. The effect was immediate. He couldn't breathe. He couldn't feel anything. In a wild effort to get air into his tortured lungs he rushed into the sub zero cold, plunging deep into the snowdrifts. Surprisingly -- he found relief. For two months he hid in a cave, exposed to the elements until Batman had left the country. At the late inventor's chateau, Zero took over the lab (he had been a scientist at one time), managed to perfect an air-conditioned outfit to maintain zero temperature, and began - on a big scale - his life of crime.

Zero concludes his story by asking the question: "Do you sink I carry a grudge all dese years for you, Batman?"

He pauses meaningfully before he finally answers his own question with an exploding fist smashing the table and a loud, resounding, guttural: "YAH!"

During this flashback we have cut in reaction shots of Batman and Robin to the story. It is apparent that both are taking advantage of the time it takes to tell the story to cook up a plan between them. They have exchanged several knowing glances.

Now with Mr. Zero's sudden, emphatic "Yah" and change of personality from pleasant to violent, Batman and Robin leap into action.

Robin hits the remote control by Zero's chair - the one regulating the 'heat' lights at the same instant Batman sends Mr. Zero sprawling backward out of his chair.

Robins operation is successful as the red heat lamps suddenly glow from the entire ceiling, flooding the room with a uniform 76 degree temperature. Batman has been struggling with Mr. Zero who suddenly starts gasping for breath. He tries screaming for help...but no sound comes from his lips. Batman releases his hold on Mr. Zero and Zero starts backing away -- a helpless, defeated almost pathetic man, holding one hand in front of him to ward off another attack, and clutching his other hand to his throat as though trying to force air to his tortured lungs.

Batman, the true gentleman and advocate of Fair Play doesn't attempt to follow up the attack as Mr. Zero continues to back away into a corner.

Batman's mistake!

Stashed away in the corner is a 'flame-ice' gun which Mr. Zero suddenly brings into play, squirting the deadly blue-white instant-ice-making fumes toward Batman and Robin.

Both manage to sidestep in the nick of time.

Now Mr. Zero is the cat playing with two mice this time. By threatening with burps of hot flame and instant cold from the gun, he manages to maneuver back to the remote control regulating the heat lights.

Suddenly he plunges the whole room back down to zero temperature, then quickly heats up an eight foot square area of 76 degree temperature. Batman and Robin, shivering from the intense cold, jump into the friendly glare from the heat rays.

They are trapped.

Once more Zero has found his voice. He laughs, a long, loud sinister laugh as he punches the remote control panel to reduce the heated area from an eight foot square to a four foot square area. Batman and Robin move closer together. Zero chides them for thinking they could best him.

Now he narrows the area down to three feet -- two square feet -- one and a half! With fiendish delight, Mr. Zero turns on the gun, gradually pointing the deadly instant ice fumes closer and closer to the trapped pair.

If only he had his utility belt, Batman is thinking. Now he feels something pressed into his hand. Pellets? Robin is handing him pellets? Is it possible -- they overlooked Robin's utility belt?

It IS possible! They DID overlook Robin's utility belt. At precisely the same moment, Batman and Robin hurl the GAS PELLETS toward Mr. Zero, at the same time maneuvering like two football ends headed for a pass.

The exploding gas pellets momentarily throw Zero off guard. He coughs, he sputters, but manages to sweep the room with his deadly ice-gun, hoping to hit Batman and Robin.

But the pair outmaneuver him. Robin again plunges the room into a uniform 76 degree temperature, and Batman manages Mr. Zero. Batman - because of his humanitarian attitude - instructs Robin to quickly 'turn off' an eight-foot-square zero temperature area for Mr. Zero until they can put him away:

"...in a proper 'COOLER'!"

THE END