AQUAMAN

IS CALIFORNIA SINKING?
IS CALIFORNIA SINKING?
OUR STORY BEGINS
HERE... IN THE HOME
OF CALIFORNIA
MILLIONAIRE, ELIOT
HARLANSON--

--AND THAT'S WHAT WILL
HAPPEN-- ALL OVER CALIFORNIA!
THE WHOLE STATE-- INCLUDING
YOUR FANTASTIC, SPACIOUS
HOME HERE-- WILL SINK
TO THE OCEAN FLOOR!

MY HOME??

NO! NO! THIS MUSTN'T
HAPPEN! NOT TO MY HOME!
I'VE SPENT MILLIONS
ON THIS PLACE!

ELIOT, DEAR--
DON'T GET EXCITED!
REMEMBER YOUR ULCER!

WHY? WHY IS THIS
GOING TO HAPPEN??
I-- I'VE ALREADY
TOLD YOU--

THE GREATEST MYSTICS
OF OUR AGE HAVE PREDICTED
THAT SOON ATLANTIS WILL
RISE! AND WHEN IT DOES,
CALIFORNIA WILL SINK TO
THE OCEAN FLOOR!

IT'S NATURE'S
WAY OF KEEPING
THINGS IN THEIR
PROPER BALANCE:

BUT-- BUT
WHAT CAN
I DO??

YOU CAN BUY AN
A-BOMB! AND
USE IT TO MAKE
SURE THAT
ATLANTIS
DOESN'T RISE!

AN A-BOMB??
YES! AS YOU KNOW I'M A SCIENTIST! AND I'M CERTAIN OF ONE THING -- IF AN ATOMIC MISSILE IS DROPPED ON ATLANTIS, IT WILL NOT RISE!

AND THEREBY, I CAN ASSURE YOU THAT CALIFORNIA WILL NOT SINK!

BUT--AN A-BOMB? I--I DON'T KNOW--

WHAT'S WRONG?? YOU CAN AFFORD TO PURCHASE ONE, CAN'T YOU??

YES, BUT--BUT--

ALL RIGHT! ALL RIGHT! I'LL DO IT! ANYTHING TO SAVE MY HOME!!

SHORTLY... NOT FAR FROM THE MILLIONAIRE'S HOME...

HOW'D IT GO, MAN?

GROOVY! HARLAN-SO N BOUGHT THE STORY! HE ACTUALLY THINKS I'M FROM SOME SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE! HE'S GOING TO BUY THE BOMB!

AH, THAT'S BEAUTIFUL, BABY O.G.R.E. DOESN'T HAVE THE RESOURCES, NOR THE CONNECTIONS, TO BUY AN A-BOMB! BUT WITH HARLAN-SON'S HELP, WE CAN BLOW ATLANTIS TO KINGDOM COME!!

AND WITH AQUAMAN OUT OF THE WAY, O.G.R.E. WILL HAVE NO TROUBLE AT ALL IN TAKING OVER AND CON- TROLLING THE WHOLE OCEAN FLOOR!

HOW CAN WE BE SURE THAT AQUAMAN WILL BE IN ATLANTIS WHEN IT'S BOMBED?

DON'T WORRY ABOUT THAT! THE BIG BOYS IN THE ORGANIZATION HAVE A PLAN! THEY KNOW JUST HOW TO HANDLE THAT LITTLE DETAIL!

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE FOLLOWING.
The scene you just witnessed took place two weeks ago. Now, as we bring our story up to date, let us join Harlanson and the two men from O.G.R.E., whom we now find on the Florida coast...

Hey, baby, I wanna talk to you a minute!

You have the bomb, then?

Yes! It's aboard the sub! We'll be ready to cast off within an hour!

Say--about making sure Aquaman will be in Atlantis...

I thought I told you not to get upset about that...

But if you must know--the big boys contacted one of Aquaman's old foes, Black Manta...

They didn't tell him about the bomb, but they did supply him with a certain weapon, with which the fool thinks he can defeat Aquaman!

Right now, Manta is probably attacking Aquaman! Aquaman will be engaged in battle when the bomb is dropped!

He'll never know what hit him--
Meantime -- far below on the ocean's floor...

All right, Manta! Talk and talk now! What's this all about? What are you doing here?

Remember -- I'm still the King of the Seven Seas! And, if I wish I can command all the creatures of the sea to attack you -- at once!

Go ahead, Aquaman! Have them attack me!

I'll be able to fend them off quite easily with this!

That?? A single weapon... against a whole army of fish!

...Don't make me laugh, Manta!

Okay, Aquaman! Try me!

He's trying to bait me! He wants me to have the fish attack him!

What's he up to??
OH WELL...I GUESS THERE'S ONLY ONE WAY TO FIND OUT! I'LL PLAY ALONG WITH HIS SILLY GAME!

AND SO, THE SEA KING CONCENTRATES AND TELEPATHIC EMANATIONS BEGIN TO RADIATE FROM HIS BRAIN...

THEN, CREATURES FROM ALL OVER THE SEA BEGIN TO CHARGE AQUAMAN'S SUPREMELY CONFIDENT FOE...

MANTA WHIRLS ABOUT, AND A RAY FROM HIS STRANGE WEAPON STRIKES EACH OF THE CREATURES...

THEN--CONFUSION!

HE'S DONE SOMETHING TO THE SEA CREATURES! THEY'RE NO LONGER ATTACKING! THEY'RE SWIMMING IN ALL DIRECTIONS!!
That was just a sample of what I can do, sea kings! This gun scrambles brain waves!

And it works as well on humans as it does on fish!

And now we're coming in there—my men and I! We're gonna take control of your little city!

And no one will oppose us! Because if anyone tries, I'll hit him with this ray and he won't be able to think straight!

Gotta do something— or else he just might be able to pull this off! He's got enough men with him to take care of the few who might not be hit by the ray!

But I have telepathic powers! Perhaps they can somehow counteract that ray!
I'd better go out there and face him alone! Before he gets a chance to enter the city!

Thus, seconds later...

---

EXCELLENT! EXCELLENT!

---

So— you've decided to oppose me yourself, eh, Aquaman??

---

And even as Black Manta swings his weapon toward Aquaman---miles away, a certain sub submerges and leaves the Florida coast...

---

It's destination: Atlantis! It's cargo: the aforementioned A-bomb!

---

Hurry up, captain! Hurry up! I must get this over with! To insure that my beautiful, wonderful, spacious home will be safe!
MUST CONCENTRATE AS HARD AS I CAN— ON ONE THING— GETTING MANTA!

STAY BACK, MEN! I'LL HANDLE THIS ALONE!

I'VE BEEN WAITING A LONG TIME FOR THIS MOMENT!

NOW WATCH... AS THE GREAT SEA KING STARTS AIMLESSLY SWIMMING AWAY— LIKE A BLATHERING IDIOT!

H-UH?

H—HE'S STILL COMING... S—SOMETHING WENT WRONG! THE RAY— IT—

CONTINUED ON 2 RD PAGE FOLLOWING...
IT WORKED! MY POWER OF CONCENTRATION COUNTERACTED THE RAY!

KILL HIM! KILL HIM-- NOW! WHILE HE'S STILL--

NO YOU DON'T, MANTA--

CALL YOUR MEN OFF, OR YOU'LL BE MINUS ONE ARM!

ARRRGGH!

DON'T WORRY ABOUT HIS MEN, AQUAMAN...

WE'VE GOT THEM UNDER WRAPS!

AH, GOOD WORK, AQUALAD!

HOW MUCH FURTHER, CAPTAIN??

DON'T FRET, SIR! WE'RE NEARLY THERE!
I DON'T WISH TO HOLD YOU, MANTA! SO I SUGGEST YOU GATHER YOUR MEN TOGETHER--AND GET OUT OF HERE AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE!

I'LL KEEP THIS WEAPON HERE--FOR SAFETY'S SAKE!

NO! THIS CAN'T BE HAPPENING! THEY SAID I'D HAVE NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT!

AQUALAD--HOLD THIS WEAPON!

C'MON, MANTA! TALK!

SOMEONE DID PUT YOU UP TO THIS! SOMEONE DID SUPPLY YOU WITH THIS WEAPON!!

I SAID TALK!! WHO??

Okay--Okay--

WHO?!

HE...HE WAS AN AGENT OF AN ORGANIZATION CALLED O.G.R.E. OR SOMETHING LIKE THAT!

ER--NO! I--I--

THEY?? WHO ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? WAS SOMEONE IN ON THIS WITH YOU??
O.G.R.E.!! You’re putting me on, Manta! They wouldn’t be mixed up in something as petty as this! Unless...

Aquaman! Guard Manta till I get back!

There’s something I must attend to... immediately!!

Check!

There’s only one way to figure it! O.G.R.E. is up to somethings!

And this was just a small part of a much bigger scheme!

Apparently they wanted me kept busy here while they put somethings into operation elsewhere! But what?? And where??

Nothing much to go on! All I can do is keep scouting around! See if I spot anything that smells like O.G.R.E.!!

--or anything else that looks suspicious!
Hey, man—why are we just standing around? Why don’t we get back to the ‘office’?

The big boys want us to stay here... just to make sure Harlan doesn’t chicken-out and come back without us hearing a big explosion!

And what explosion might that be?

Uh-oh! Government agents! Hunt cover!

Stay right where you are, boys! Don’t move or we’ll shoot!

Okay, you asked for this!

Blam! Blam! Blam!

Whoa! Almost got me on that one!

Hey! Grab your gun, baby, and shoot back!

We can’t afford to be taken! We’re wanted for everything from genocide to Jay-walking!
I'm gonna blast the-- ungh!!

GOT HIM! THAT'S ONE DOWN!

ALL RIGHT IN THERE...

GOOD WORK! THE PRESIDENT'D BE PROUD OF YOU!

Okay, baby, okay! Don't get up-- tight! I know when I'm licked!

Give it up! C'mon out with your hands high! You haven't got a chance-- alone!

Okay, baby, okay! Don't get up-- tight! I know when I'm licked!

It's all over, punk!

We've been following you two for some time now! But this is the first chance we've had to move in on you!

Well, you made your move too late, fuzz!

You may have caught up to us! But you can't stop the plan! It's too late for that!

Any second now, all of Atlantis will be destroyed! And Aquaman will be finished too!

And baby, you just ain't gonna be able to do a thing about it!
Meantime... A Sub... Heading directly toward Atlantis!

That could be what I've been looking for!

That sub showing up here and now COULD be coincidence but I'm not taking any chances!

I'm gonna stop the sub and find out what they're doing in this part of the ocean!

So, once again telepathic waves radiate from the sea king's brain...

And shortly, from out of an octopus's garden a giant squid streaks upward...!
GOOD GOD!

WHAT'S WRONG??

A GIANT SQUID--
HEADING TOWARDS US!
LOOKS LIKE IT'S
ATTACKING!!

WELL THEN,
YOU FOOL!
PULL UP!

WE'RE TRYING!
WE'RE TRYING!!!

HOWEVER---
DO SOMETHING, YOU IMBECILE! GET THAT BEAST OFF OF US AND GET THIS TUB MOVING!

I CAN'T!
The squid's holding us two tightly! We've been stopped!

STOPPED??
But we can't be stopped! Not now!

ELIOT, DARLING--DON'T GET YOURSELF ALL WORKED UP!

THERE MUST BE SOME WAY TO GET US GOING AGAIN! TRY HARDER, YOU FOOL!

GOOD GOD! YOU PRESSED THE LEVER!

YOU ACT LIKE YOU DON'T CARE WHAT HAPPENS TO MY BEAUTIFUL, SPACIOUS HOME!

SO WHAT?!
WHAT LEVER IS IT?? WHAT DOES IT DO??

HEY! WATCH IT! DON'T HIT THAT LEVER!!

HUN?? SOME KIND OF BOMB--DROPPING FROM THE SUB!

AND OUTSIDE...
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YOU... YOU MEAN I LET IT LOOSE??

Y-YES... AND WE'RE T-TOO CLOSE TO THE BOTTOM! WHEN THE BOMB GOES OFF, W-WE'LL BE BLOWN TO P-PIECES!!

YOu MEAN, IT-- WE-- US--

NO! HELP ME! YOU CAN'T LET ME DIE! I'M TOO RICH TO DIE! DO SOMETHING! GET US OUTTA HERE!

MY ULCER!!

YOU PEA-BRAINED IDIOT! THIS IS HARDLY THE TIME TO WORRY ABOUT MY ULCER!

WE'RE CLOSE TO ATLANTIS!

IF THAT THING IS AN A-BOMB, ALL ATLANTIS IS DONE FOR!

GOTTA CATCH UP TO IT AND FIND SOME WAY TO STOP THAT THING FROM STRIKING BOTTOM AND BLOWING UP!

BUT... BUT...
AT A SPEED WHICH ONLY THE SEA KING CAN ATTAIN, AQUAMAN STREAKS AFTER THE DEADLY MISSILE...

BUT... I'LL NEVER REACH IT IN TIME!

LOOKS LIKE THIS IS IT!
Dear Mr. Giordano,

It's been a while since I've read Aquaman, since I've always considered the Sea King one of D.C.'s lesser efforts. However, the presence of Deadman and Neal Adams caused me to buy issues 50 and 51. WOW! Adams was his usual tremendous self, but it was Jim Aparo's Aquaman that really knocked me out. He captures Aquaman, the super swimmer, better than anyone else ever has. Nearly every panel has Aquaman taking a monster-sized stroke with his lanky, powerful arms. Though I think he could improve his female faces (particularly Mera's) in many other respects, including backgrounds, proportions and panel size, Mr. Aparo is refreshingly different and just plain good! Keep Deadman, continued stories, and above all, Jim Aparo!

Jonathan Kuntz
University of Calif., Berkeley, Calif.

I don't know about Deadman, (Neal is heavily committed to Batman and Green Lantern) but continued stories (in moderation) and Jim Aparo (in his entirety) are here to stay!

Dear Seer Giordano,

Neither troglobyte man nor ophidian beast hath witnessed a periodical such as the likes of yours. Or as the commoners put it, "That was a groovy ish of Aquaman you just put out!"

Though the storyline was as old as time (a hero is separated from the one he loves), Jim Aparo's illumination and Steve Skeates insights into the customs and communication of "the city" were a breath of fresh air. And Aquaman's tripping through "extra-dimensional" cities is reminiscent of E.R. Burroughs' "John Carter of Mars" series (by all means keep it up!).

I notice that in the past few issues, Jim is turning into an avant-garde type illustrator. He's improved 942% over the stuff he turned out at Charlton. By the way, soon you'll have to change the masthead to read "Cameos Unlimited." With #49's prolific Deadman, #50's listing of the "DC universe" and #51's cameo appearance of Jimm and Steev (not to mention Dikk), this is becoming a pleasant trend.

As for Neal's story, it traversed the abyss of my mind and other "New Wave" cliches. Neal's use of half-tones and black makes him one of the most erudite artists in the field. In fact I call him the "Al Williamson of the 70's." I don't mind Tatsinda (not at all) that much but remember Boston is basically a "bogie" type character.

So keep these meager thoughts in your cerebellum and I'll be looking forward to the conclusion of your trilogy...

Yours truly,

Eric F. Knight, Mt. Vernon, N.Y.

Glad you dig us! I enjoy the little cameos too... a little fun is always in style. Hey! If Neal Adams is the "Al Williamson of the 70's"... who is Al Williamson?

Yours truly,

Dear Editor:

Issue 51 of Aquaman was very good! One of the things we like most about Steve Skeates story was the fact that he showed the beginning of what will probably be AQUAMAN'S next adventure in which he will fight Black Manta. He does this in practically all his stories.

By the way, we are overjoyed with the Deadman series.

Thank you and good afternoon.

Paul and Alan White, Medford, Mass.

Thank you. Paul...and good afternoon. Alan.
Days later, a strange meeting takes place on shore...

Here! I believe you government boys can make better use of this than I can! Thanks!

Oh, by the way, from now on you won't be having any more trouble with O.G.R.E. --

We've finally located O.G.R.E.'s secret headquarters! We'll be moving in and mopping up shortly!

They'll be having so much trouble with us, they simply won't have time to bother you!

That's good to know!

And what about Mr. Harlanson?

He's gone back to California!

As far as we can see, he was completely innocent! He was duped! He actually thought he was going to save California! And he was unaware that Atlantis is populated!

I see...

But there's still one thing I don't understand!

About the bomb turning out to be a dud -- was that just an act of fate -- or...

You see, we had an inside man working with us!

...or rather, an inside woman! It was her job to --

Hi, boys!

No! It wasn't fate! We were responsible for that...

Huh?!
JUST LIKE A WOMAN TO SHOW UP FASHIONABLY LATE!

AQUAMAN, THIS IS AGENT O3, HONEY JAMES! AS SOON AS WE FOUND OUT O.G.R.E. AGENTS HAD BEEN SEEING ELIOT HARLANSON, WE ASSIGN-ED HER TO STICK CLOSE TO MR. HARLANSON!

AS SOON AS SHE FOUND OUT WHERE HARLANSON WAS BUYING THE BOMB, SHE PASSED THE INFORMATION ALONG TO US!

THEN, IT WAS AN EASY MATTER FOR US TO SEE TO IT THAT HARLANSON RECEIVED A FAKE INSTEAD OF A MEAL BOMB!

YES... I SEE...

GUESS WE'VE FOUND OUT JUST ABOUT EVERYTHING, THEN!

SO-- WE MIGHT AS WELL BE LEAVING! WE DON'T LIKE TO STAY OUT OF THE WATER ANY LONGER THAN NECESSARY!

BUT YOU STILL HAVEN'T TOLD US WHAT YOU DID ABOUT BLACK MANTA!

WE LET HIM GO! THE WAY I FIGURED IT-- KNOWING HE HAD BEEN USED WAS ENOUGH PUNISHMENT FOR HIM! IT CERTAINLY TOOK HIS EGO DOWN A FEW PEGS!

AND NOW, IF YOU'LL EXCUSE US --
ONE THING STILL BOTHERS ME, AQUAMAN!

What's that, Minnow??

--- And, well, if it does rise, what will we do? Will our people be able to adjust to becoming air-breathers -- to becoming surface-dwellers??

I don't know.

But I wouldn't worry about it now! Most predictions say it won't be until WAY after the year 2000 that Atlantis will reach the surface!

So we have plenty of time to make plans!

WELL, THERE'S CERTAINLY BEEN A LOT OF TALK LATELY ABOUT ATLANTIS RISING -- AND BECOMING A SURFACE CONTINENT.

And so, our story ends. Yet, one question remains unanswered --

"IS CALIFORNIA SINKING?"
Okay, the good guys are closing in on the bad guys! I'll take a break, then call Murray back for the wind-up!