

ISSUE 16  
SPRING 2025

FREE!

THE COLUMBUS

Scribbler

CELEBRATING THE  
COMICS, CARTOONS  
AND CREATORS OF  
CENTRAL OHIO



Barbara Shermund

COVER ILLUSTRATION BY BARBARA SHERMUND



# A MESSAGE FROM THE SCRIBBLER

Welcome to the 16th issue of the *Columbus Scribbler*! We have an amazing issue ready for you to enjoy. We'd like to thank Caitlin McGurk for taking the time to talk with us about her career in comics and the life and work of cartoonist Barbara Shermund. Too many cartoonists have been lost and forgotten through the continuous march of time. Caitlin's tireless efforts to bring Barbara Shermund back to the public light are a true inspiration. We're honored to be able to help share the incredible talents of this forgotten artist whose work adorns this issue's cover.

We'd also like to thank all of our local cartoonists who have contributed their talents to this issue, many of whose work you can find at your local comic store. Don't forget **Free Comic Book Day (FCBD)** is right around the corner on May 3rd. Be sure to check with your local comic book store for details and events. It's the perfect time to celebrate this art form and all the creators that make it possible.

On that note, towards the end of 2024, we reached out to nearly 150 individuals from around the globe and from all walks of the comic industry, including cartoonists from the mainstream, alternative, indie, and small press scenes, comic store retailers, publishers, critics, and educators, asking them to share their top 10 favorite comic characters. The selections could be from comic strips, books, graphic novels, or manga. The only rule was that they couldn't vote for a character they created themselves. Now the tallies are in, and we're thrilled to announce that, in our next issue, we will reveal our list of the **Top 50 Greatest Comic Characters of All Time**.

One of our main goals with the *Columbus Scribbler* has always been to foster a love and appreciation for the comic art form and get more people to read comics in all their forms. We're excited to share this list with the world and give you more great comics to add to your reading pile.

The *Columbus Scribbler* is made possible by you, the readers. You have the power to help keep the scribbles coming by becoming a patron of the arts for as little as \$1 per month. Donate to our Patreon account or by PayPal on our website ([columbuscribbler.com](http://columbuscribbler.com)) today and help continue to make the *Columbus Scribbler* inspire the future of comics.

*Scribble on!*

- Brian Canini

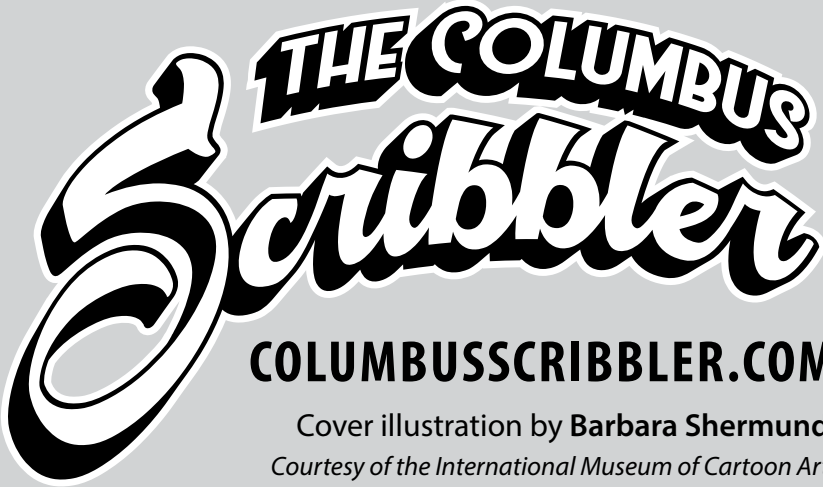
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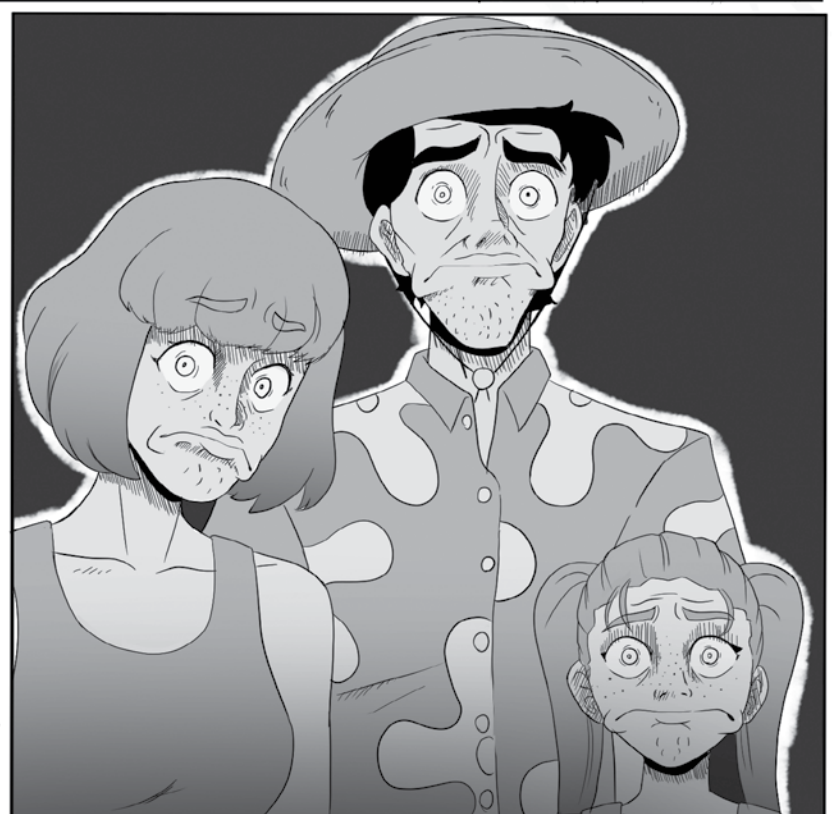
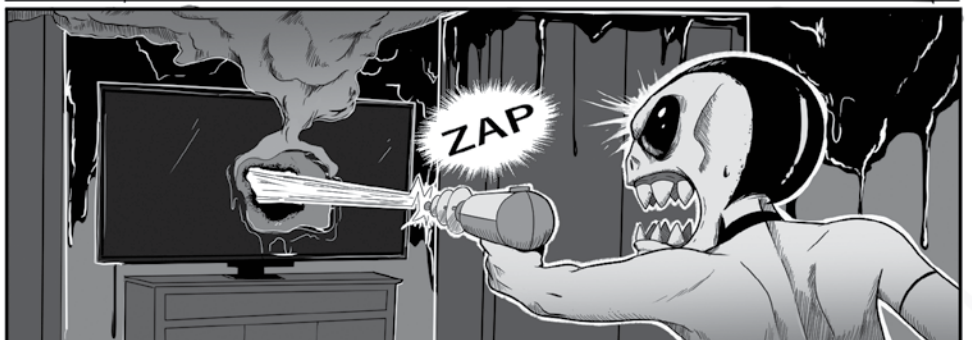
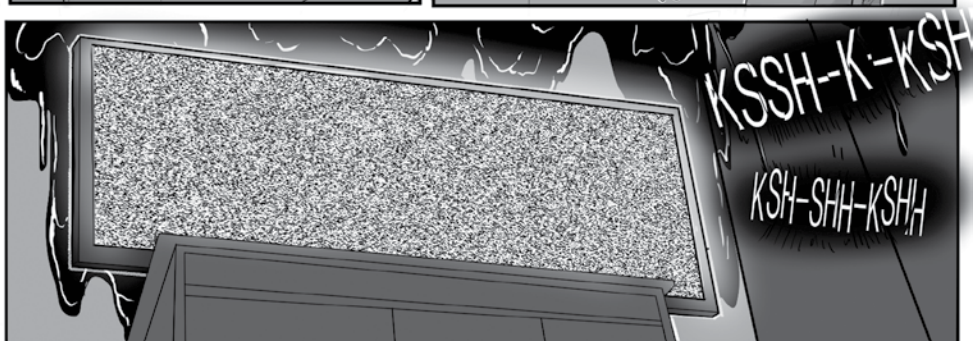
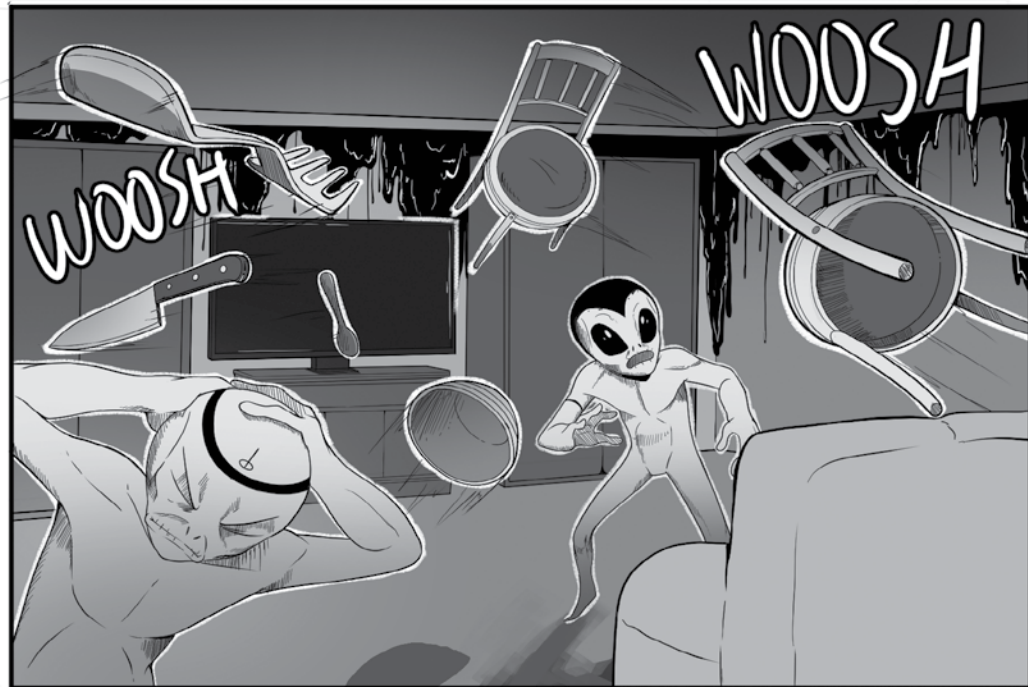
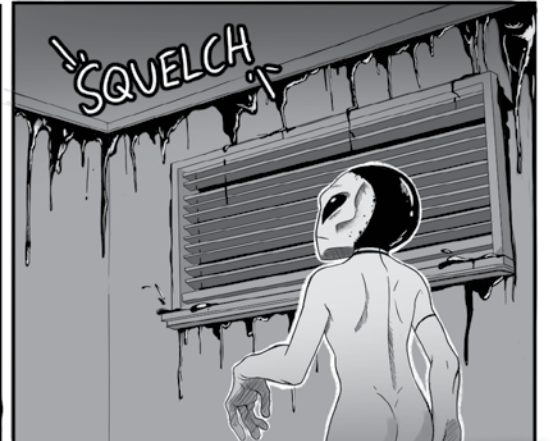
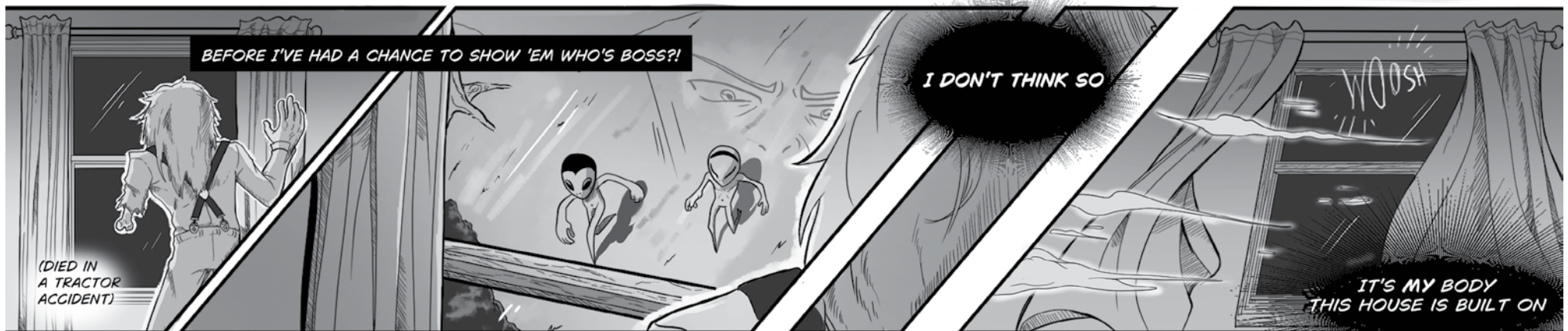
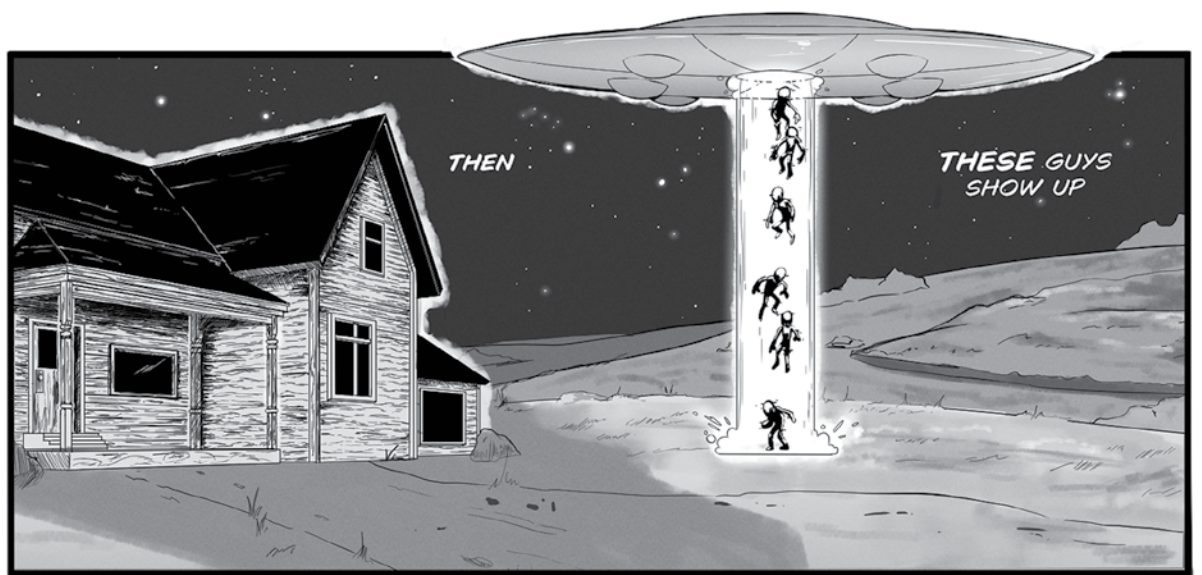
Cover illustration by **Barbara Shermund**  
*Courtesy of the International Museum of Cartoon Art (IMCA) Collection and Records, Billy Ireland Cartoon Library and Museum, The Ohio State University*

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*The views and opinions expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of The Columbus Scribbler.*





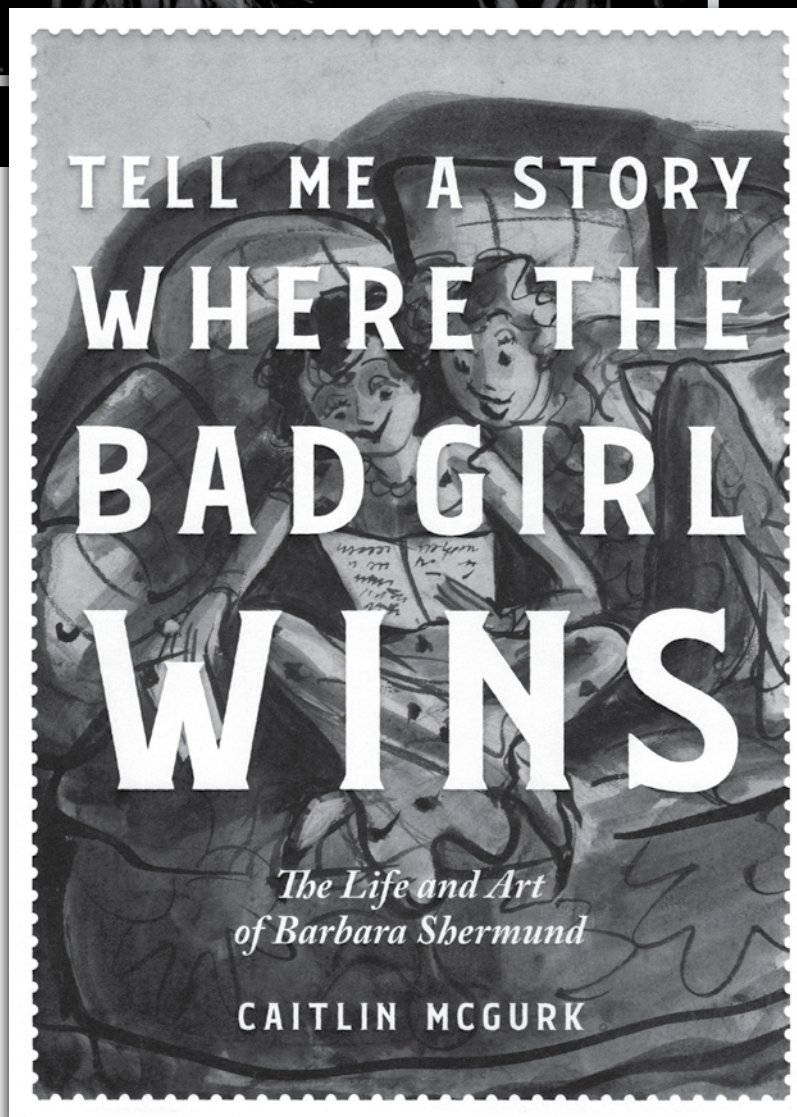




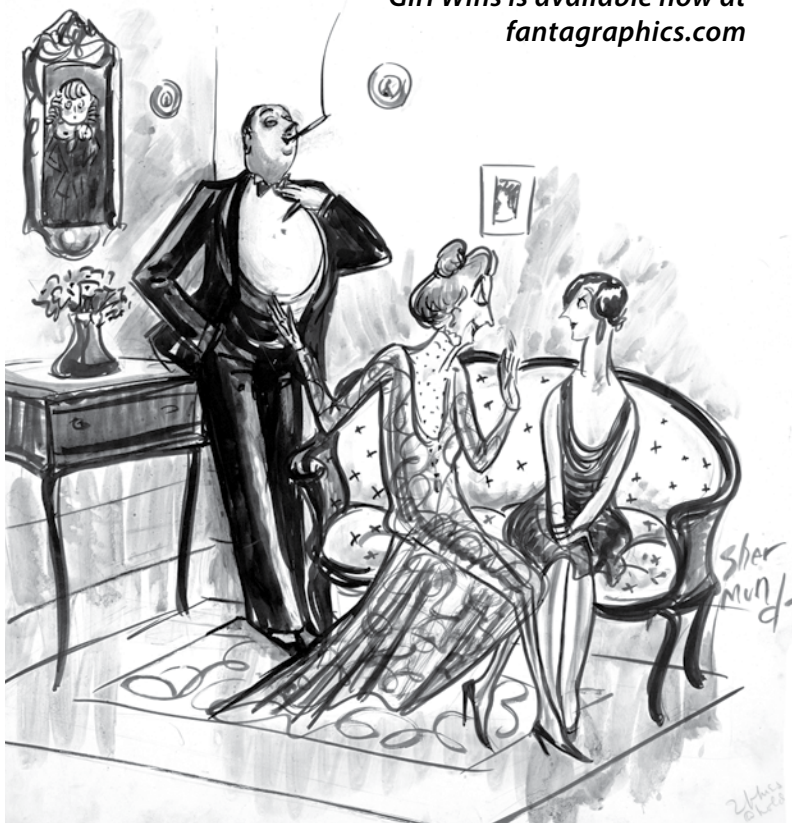
# 10 QUESTIONS WITH CAITLIN MCGURK

*In Caitlin McGurk's recently released book published by Fantagraphics Books, **Tell Me a Story Where the Bad Girl Wins**, she delves into the life of forgotten artist Barbara Shermund, one of the earliest female cartoonists. Shermund's remarkably long career spanned from the 1920s through the 1960s, and, for a time, her cartoons were mainstays in such publications as *The New Yorker* and *Esquire*. She illustrated books, magazine covers, advertising campaigns, and movie posters, yet despite this extensive body of work, Shermund drifted into obscurity following her death in 1978. McGurk's biography shines a new light on Shermund and restores her to prominence as one of America's great cartoonists.*

*Besides being an author, McGurk is also the Curator of Comics and Cartoon Art at the Billy Ireland Cartoon Library & Museum and The Ohio State University and is a well-known fixture within the Columbus comics community. Among the shows she has curated include **Behind the Ink: The Making of Comics and Cartoons**, **MAN SAVES COMICS! Bill Blackbeard's Treasure of 20th Century Newspapers**, and **Ladies First: A Century of Women's Innovations in Comics and Cartoon Art**.*



*Tell Me a Story Where the Bad Girl Wins is available now at [fantagraphics.com](http://fantagraphics.com)*



**1) What got you interested in comics? Who are some of your favorite cartoonists?**

I've been drawn to sequential art as long as I can remember: from Sunday newspaper comics to Saturday morning cartoons; the somewhat frightening, but beautiful carvings of the stations of the cross in the Catholic church I grew up attending (I stand by these as a form of comics!) to gag cartoons in issues of *Playboy* owned by a childhood friend's father that we'd sneak out of his room to ogle. I have an older brother who collected comic books when we were young, and we were both fond of *X-Men*. I'd go to the shop with him and read his issues, and also collect the trading cards and neatly organize them into binders – which I think of as the origin of my interest in collecting, organizing, and preserving the medium. In undergrad, I discovered underground and alternative comics and developed a lifelong love for the work of John Porcellino and Lynda Barry, and was introduced to graphic novels – my all-time favorite being *I Never Liked You* by Chester Brown. Of course, fast-forwarding many years later to a time when I became more immersed in the history of comics and cartoon art, artists like Barbara Shermund and Ernie Bushmiller have become deep loves of mine.

**2) You have a long history with various comic museums and libraries. What started you on that path? How do you feel your role at the Center for Cartoon Studies prepared you for your position as curator at the Billy?**

When I was an undergraduate student (20 years ago... oh god) at Long Island University, I had an English professor who happened to be a cartoonist on the side – Isaac Cates. Meeting him changed the trajectory of my life. While I enjoyed comics as a fan, I had never met someone who actually worked in the industry, and I had certainly never considered it as an academic field of study. I can still remember my shock and delight in discovering people actually took this stuff seriously! It opened an entire world to me. Cates guided me in making my own first mini-comic – which became the first of many autobio comics and zines I created – and introduced me to MoCCA and SPX festivals, which I began to attend and table at. In my senior year, I had to write a thesis and decided to focus on the way memory and consciousness are depicted in comics and graphic novels. When it came time for grad school, I decided to pursue a Masters in Library Science, with the distinct (and seemingly nuts) idea of focusing all of my class projects, internships, etc, around working with comics in a library setting. Lo and behold, it somehow worked out. I interned

at Columbia University processing a mini-comics collection; at Marvel Comics building a library of one issue of everything they'd ever published on their editorial floor; and then at the Center for Cartoon Studies (CCS) for one glorious summer – which later turned into a full-time job as the school's first official degreed librarian. My role at CCS was so radically different than what I do at the Billy Ireland, but I made lifelong professional and personal connections that exist to this day.

**3) As a curator for the Billy, can you explain your process for organizing a new show and deciding which pieces get displayed? Do you have any particular stand-out exhibitions you've been a part of?**

Curating exhibits is just one facet of my job at BICLM. We have a small team and a large mission, so we wear many hats. There's an Exhibits Committee that meets quarterly to assess schedules, pitch new shows, and review exhibit proposals. Sometimes we'll choose a theme because it connects with something going on in current events (immigration or free speech are recent examples). Other times it could be an anniversary like the Civil Rights movement or the centennial of women's suffrage or focused on a specific collection. Occasionally, we do a single-artist exhibit if we think it aligns well with our teaching and learning goal or elevates the work of a marginalized artist. My favorites have been *Ladies First: A Century of Women's Innovation in Comics and Cartoon Art* and *MAN SAVES COMICS: Bill Blackbeard's Treasure of 20th Century Newspapers* – they were so enjoyable to research, and we were able to shine a spotlight on lesser-known artists.

**4) When did you first come across Barbara Shermund's cartoons? What is it about her work that interested you enough to eventually write *Tell Me a Story Where the Bad Girl Wins*?**

I saw Shermund's work for the first time during my early months at the Billy Ireland. I immediately fell in love. So many things caught my interest: her seemingly effortless linework; the biting, relatable, and refreshingly modern sensibility of her humor; the way she draws women interacting with each other – nearly always as co-conspirators, never as competitors – and, frankly, the fact I'd never heard of her. I know better now, but at that point, I really thought I had the history of comics on lock (ha! so naïve!) and was shocked that someone with this large and notable of a body of work wouldn't have been on my radar. Then, as my research progressed, finding out just how holistically she'd been forgotten – both by history and by her own family – I just felt compelled to find out as much as I could and share it. I've always been attracted to an underdog story, and championing the work of under-recognized cartoonists feels like my calling as a curator and scholar.



Images courtesy of the International Museum of Cartoon Art (IMCA) Collection and Records, Billy Ireland Cartoon Library and Museum, The Ohio State University



**5) Shermund has such a large catalog of work, with over 600 cartoons published in the New Yorker alone, not to mention her syndicated Shermund's Sallies that ran weekly from 1944 to 1957. With that in mind, how did you select which cartoons were featured in the book? Are there any standouts you consider your personal favorites?**

Selecting which cartoons to leave out of the book was hard. There's a version of this book that's twice the length with all the images I initially hoped to include, but we didn't think many people would pay for a \$75 tome about an obscure cartoonist. In the end, I based my selections on some guiding principles: cartoons that felt most thematically representative of her work as a whole; cartoons offering some variety of settings; cartoons of the highest quality artistically; timeless jokes contemporary readers could understand; and other images showcasing facets of her career like advertising, plein air painting, and lithographs. My favorite Shermund cartoon is definitely the one I used on the cover, and my favorite cover is an unpublished one that shows a woman riding atop an open-air bus in the rain, smiling at the sky. So Shermund.

**6) Your book covers Shermund's life from her upbringing in turn of the century San Francisco to her later years living in a quiet oceanside town in New Jersey. Given that Shermund didn't have any surviving family or friends and many of her effects were lost, how difficult was it to research her history? How did you get started?**

Conducting the research for this book was difficult, and there were significant hurdles along the way that almost caused me to put the project down altogether. In the end, even when I couldn't track down answers to major questions I had about her life, I felt I was able to write enough about the world around her – the communities she was part of, the publishers she worked with, the times she lived through – in order to close in on a picture of who she was. And her voice speaks so strongly through her artwork, which helped a great deal. I pursued some unique methods of tracking down information beyond just visiting archives – including literal door-knocking in the neighborhood where she died to see if anyone was still around who knew her, joining and posting in Facebook community groups in the towns she'd lived in, putting myself in her shoes by spending time in places that were most important to her and retracing her footsteps. For example, there's a hand-drawn map in the book from 1926 that was created by a contemporary of hers in the art colony of Woodstock, New York. Although the town looks very different now, I spent days there walking around with a copy of this old map, trying to figure out where different things were that would've existed in her days and soaking up the environment in order to write about it. It's really easy to go down rabbit holes when you're researching – and more often than not they're fruitless – however, sometimes I'd start digging into a return address on an old envelope that survived from her scant personal effects, and it would lead to a major discovery. As for how I began my research, I felt that I needed to try to see as much of her artwork as possible and organize it in some way to use for reference. So, in addition to visiting every public or private collection that held her art and documenting it, I went through every single issue of *The New Yorker* and *Esquire* – page by page – from the decades that she worked at the magazines and created a massive index for myself of every contribution complete with photos, issues, dates, page numbers, and themes. Needless to say, this took a while!

**7) The process of writing a book is long and arduous. How did you go about that task? Did you set up a daily word count? Can you tell us how writing a book was different from writing the articles and essays you've done in the past?**

Arduous indeed! I have a full-time job, so much of the writing of this book was relegated to nights and weekends,

**OPPOSITE PAGE - An undated cartoon whose original caption read "Raymond was a beautiful baby!"**

**ABOVE - A cartoon created sometime during the 1920s. The caption read "And my wind's sounder today than it ever was!"**

**RIGHT - A self-portrait Shermund painted of herself in 1935**

**BOTTOM RIGHT - A New Yorker cover illustrated by Shermund dated 1939**

which is why it took many years. However, I'm very fortunate that I get one day per week at my job to focus on writing, and I was able to schedule a few writing retreats for a week here or there to carve out chunks of focused time. As anyone can tell you, especially after a long work day, there's no "creativity switch" you can just flip on, and writer's block is very real. I've never written anything of this length, so it was truly a learning process, both about the mechanics of it and about myself. Not having the shorter delivery/reward cycle an article offers was hard to get past and made it challenging to stay motivated. One thing that helped me out the most was letting go of "self-editing" along the way. What I mean is, I would get really bogged down on tough writing days where it would take me seemingly hours to craft a few good sentences. I eventually had to take on a sort of filmmaking approach instead, like, write however and whatever you can each day, whether it's poorly crafted or not, and then "fix it in post". This really helped me just get words down on paper rather than perfecting them. In the moment, it would feel like rambling on a page, but when I'd come back to those paragraphs when it was time to edit (sometimes months or even years later), they were actually better than I'd thought at the time, and easier to tweak with distance and perspective.

**8) One of the more touching and somewhat surprising anecdotes from your book was that Shermund's ashes sat unclaimed in a funeral home for decades. Tell us a little bit of your experience connecting with Shermund's niece and crowdfunding money to finally lay her to rest beside her mother.**

Shermund's half-niece, Amanda Gormley, found me around 2017 after googling her aunt's name. She came across a blog post I'd written in 2012 about my love for Shermund's work, and we started sharing our research with each other. I'd always wondered where Shermund was buried, and during our first phone call, Amanda told me the story. When Shermund passed in 1978, she had outlived her closest friends and was estranged from her family, so her ashes sat unclaimed on a funeral home shelf for almost 40 years. Amanda was able to claim them, and after the success of my initial Shermund exhibit in 2018, I felt like there was enough interest in her work and her story to raise funds to properly lay her to rest. The GoFundMe was successful, supported by cartoonists, feminists, and art lovers all over the world, and in May 2019, we buried her alongside her mother. Similar to Shermund, I lost my mom when I was very young, so needless to say, reuniting the two of them and giving them a proper headstone was deeply emotional.



**9) Are there any other subjects or artists you're interested in bringing to a bigger audience? Any future books on the horizon?**

I doubt I will ever take on another project quite like this one again, though never say never, I suppose. In the short-term, I'm looking forward to focusing on smaller projects like articles and exhibits, and if the work of another brilliant, unsung artist comes my way, we'll see where that takes me!

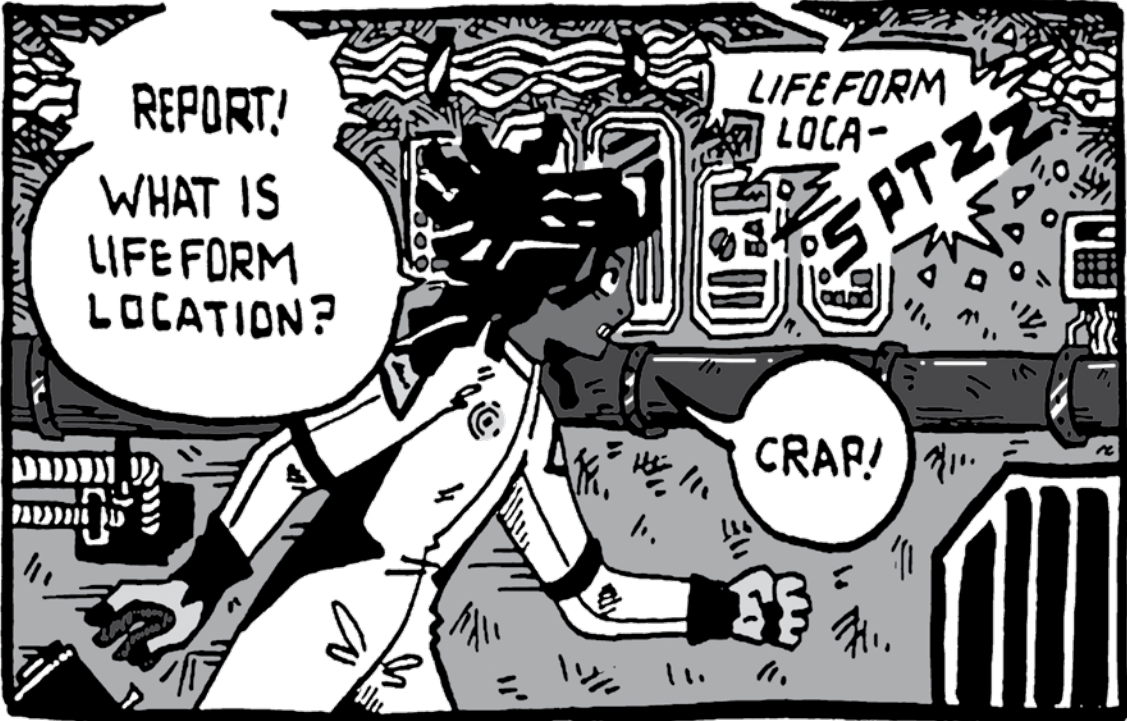
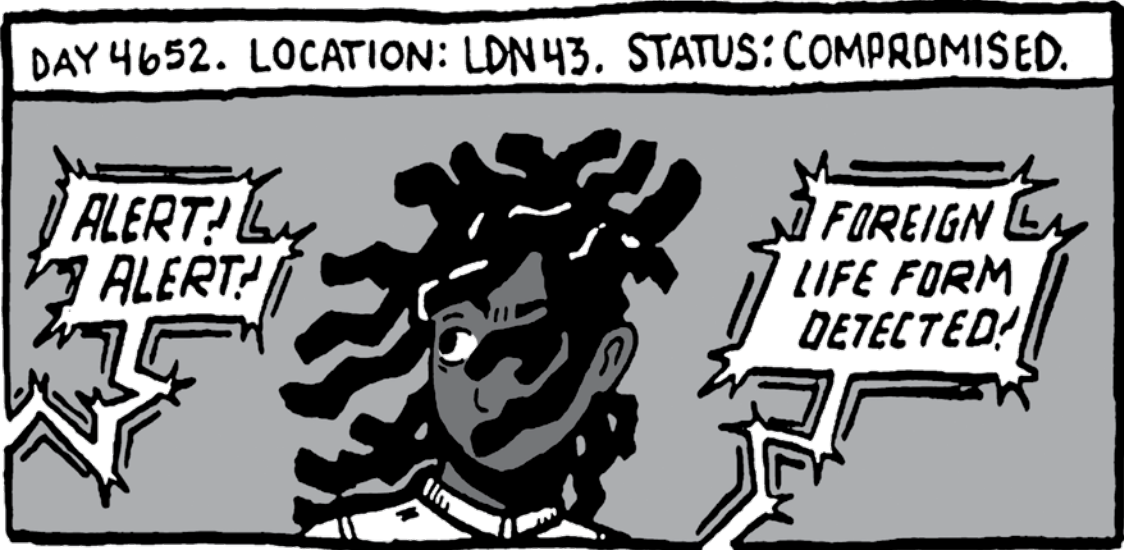
**10) Barbara Shermund rarely put down roots, preferring to travel frequently. If you could board a steamer ship with her, what would your preferred destination be?**

Shermund spent a lot of time in the early 1930s traversing Europe, and I would love for her to show me around Basque country in Spain. This was a favorite location of hers, right on the coast, and it's a dream of mine to visit someday.



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MEET THE PEOPLE OF COLUMBUS: MARILYN COLEMAN

MARILYN COLEMAN GREW UP ON THE EAST SIDE OF COLUMBUS, THE YOUNGEST OF THREE SISTERS. WHEN HER LAST SISTER GRADUATED, SHE HAD TO WALK FROM CHAMPION AND LEONARD TO EAST HIGH SCHOOL, WHERE SHE WAS A NATIONAL AND FRENCH HONOR SOCIETY MEMBER. SHE GRADUATED IN 1975.



SHE SPENT HER FIRST YEAR OF COLLEGE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF DAYTON BUT SPENT THE REMAINDER OF HER COLLEGE TENURE TAKING NIGHT CLASSES AT FRANKLIN UNIVERSITY, RECEIVING A BSBA AND AN AA DEGREE IN COURT REPORTING FROM THE ACADEMY OF COURT REPORTING. SHE WORKED FULL-TIME AS A METER READER FOR COLUMBIA GAS AND WAS THE FIRST WOMAN AND AFRICAN AMERICAN TO HOLD THE POSITION.



MARILYN MOVED TO LOS ANGELES IN THE 1980'S. AFTER BOUNCING FROM PLACE TO PLACE, SHE FOUND HER FOOTING AS AN OFFICE MANAGER FOR COMPUCORE IN SANTA MONICA. LATER, SHE BECAME A FOOD REP, GIVING HER ACCESS TO LOADS OF EXPIRED CANDY, MAKING HER VERY POPULAR WITH THE NEIGHBORHOOD KIDS.




SHE TAUGHT TYPING CLASSES AT THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE, GIVING OUT CANDY AS A REWARD FOR CLASS ATTENDANCE. LATER, SHE WORKED AS A TEMP IN THE HUSTLER MAGAZINE LEGAL DEPARTMENT, WHERE THEY CONSISTENTLY FOUND THEMSELVES IN LEGAL TROUBLE.



SHE FOUND AN AD ONE DAY IN THE LA WEEKLY OFFERING AN APARTMENT LISTED AS "PREFERRED NUDIST TYPE." THIS IS HOW MARILYN FOUND HERSELF LIVING IN A CLOTHING-OPTIONAL COMPLEX. SERVICE CALLS OF EVERY VARIETY WERE PROMPTLY ATTENDED TO. SHE WAS THE ONLY BLACK WOMAN IN THE COMPLEX.



MARILYN JOINED HER FRIEND GAYLE ON "SUPERMARKET SWEEP". HER TEAM CAME IN THIRD OUT OF THREE. SHE AND GAYLE HAD A GREAT TIME, WON SOME WRISTWATCHES, AND CREATED A MEMORY THAT LASTED A LIFETIME.



SHE MOVED BACK TO COLUMBUS IN '89 TO CARE FOR HER AGING MOTHER. SHE FOUND WORK AT A COMPANY THAT BUILT FOOD CARTS. SHE MET SAX JOHNSON, WHO OWNED 98.5 WSAX, COLUMBUS' ONLY FULL-TIME JAZZ STATION AND HE OFFERED HER A SHOW. SOON AFTER, SHE STARTED PLAYING ANY JAZZ MUSIC SHE DESIRED.



MARILYN RETIRED IN 2020. THOUGH HER DAYS OF WORKING HAD ENDED, SHE VOLUNTEERED TO HELP HER FORMER BOSS IN HIS WORK AT THE CLASSIC CAR CLUB. SHE HELPED ORGANIZE MEETINGS AND LUNCHEONS FOR THESE FORMER RESTORERS OF PAST ICONS.



FEW OF US HAVE LIVED A STORIED LIFE AS MARILYN COLEMAN. WE COMMEND HER BRAVERY IN ACCOMMODATING WHATEVER CHALLENGES LIFE THROWS AT HER. THOUGH LOS ANGELES MAY LAY PARTIAL CLAIM, COLUMBUS IS HER HOME, AND WE'RE ALL THE LUCKIER FOR IT.





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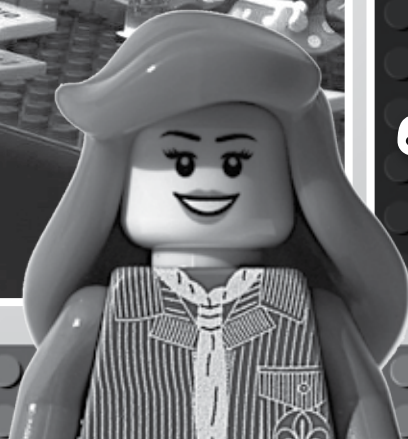
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# WELL BLOW ME DOWN

## THE ORIGINS OF E. C. SEGAR & POPEYE

By Brian Canini

Two men plot quietly on a seedy dock. The tall man with innocence in his eyes, Ham Gravy, sits on his luggage while the short man, Castor Oyl, surveys the area. They're on their way to Dice Island, home of a casino that they intend on scoring big at, thanks to the good luck of a magic whiffle hen. All they need is a crew for their ship and their fortunes will soon follow. Castor Oyl approaches a swarthy man in a sailor suit sucking a pipe with an anchor tattooed on his large forearm. "Hey there! Are you a sailor?" he asks. "D'ja think I was a cowboy?" the sailor replies.

With one feisty comment, a star is born. Popeye began life as a side character in a comic strip that had already been active for ten years and, in a matter of a few short weeks, proceeded to change the landscape of the strip he was introduced in and, some have argued, become the first superhero in comics. He would go far beyond the expectations of anyone who saw him, especially the two men who hired him on the docks, and even reach that rarefied air of cultural icon.

Much like his creation, Elzie Crisler Segar was born from humble beginnings on December 8, 1894, in the small town of Chester, Illinois. He was the son of Jewish parents Erma and Amzi Segar, a handyman by trade. Segar started work young, often assisting his father in painting houses or hanging wallpaper. He was a skilled drummer, which allowed him to provide musical accompaniment to films and vaudeville acts in the local theater. He would eventually be given a job as a film projectionist at the Chester Opera House.

In between these odd jobs, the young Segar daydreamed of becoming a cartoonist. Reportedly, he would send cartoons to a local paper with a note:

"Please publish my cartoons on account of I have an uncle working in your press room." Segar would receive rejection after rejection, but this would never diminish his perseverance.

Determined to gain the skills needed to become a newspaper cartoonist, Segar enrolled in the W.L. Evans Correspondence Course in Cartooning. He has said that after work, he "lit up the oil lamps about midnight and worked on the course until 3 a.m." He would also begin studying the work of cartoonists he admired, such as Rube Goldberg, George McManus, and George Herriman.

Then, in early 1916, after having completed the Evans course, Segar headed north to Chicago with his pencils and dreams in tow. There, Norris, Segar's older half-brother, worked as a clerk at the Congress Hotel and connected Segar with one of the most famous cartoonists in America at the time, Richard F. Outcault. As the creator of *The Yellow Kid* and *Buster Brown*, Outcault was likely in Chicago to manage his merchandising and advertising interests. He took a shine to young Segar, encouraging him and introducing him to Robert Keeley, publisher of the struggling *Chicago Herald*.

Keeley liked the youngster, and when Stewart Carothers, cartoonist for the *Herald's* feature comic strip *Charlie Chaplin's Comic Capers*, tragically died, Segar was called upon to replace him. His first strip in the series premiered on February 28, 1916.

At this point in his career, Segar was still very much an amateur, and the public was largely indifferent toward his work. Charlie Chaplin, famed actor and the strip's namesake, was reportedly so annoyed by the handling of his persona that he withdrew his permission to continue the comic series. Ending with the final Sunday page on

September 16, 1916.

The cancellation led to Segar scrambling to invent a new title practically overnight for the *Herald*. Thus *Barry the Boob*, a strip about an incompetent soldier, was born. *Barry the Boob* would lumber along until mid-1918, when the *Herald* went out of business.

William Randolph Hearst, father of yellow journalism and owner of the nation's largest newspaper chain and media company, swooped in, buying the *Herald's* circulation and its cartooning and writing staff for a song. Although Segar had been a Sunday page cartoonist when the paper was under Keeley's ownership, Hearst, from his New York offices, saw little promise in him. Hearst put Segar to work as a staff cartoonist doing filler bits in the daily theatre and movie section of one of his newspapers, the *Chicago American*.

It was here, amidst theatre and film ads, in a column-wide and few inches high satiric strip dubbed *Looping the Loop* that Segar caught the public's attention. The strip's title referenced Chicago's famous "Loop," a series of streets in the entertainment district. As for its content, Segar dedicated the strip to lampooning the current drama productions utilizing good-natured humor and terrible puns.

With the daily feature, Segar's artwork grew by leaps and bounds. By 1919, it was hard to see any resemblance between the amateur who produced *Chaplin's Comic Capers* and the cartoonist producing the sophisticated *Looping the Loop*. Segar soon found himself being praised by Chicago's influential theatrical crowd and it wasn't long until word found its way to Hearst.

Hearst had always given special attention to his chain's comic strips, keeping a sharp eye out for promising new talent. He knew full well that having the right comic could make or break a newspaper and determine how healthy its circulation figures were. Hearst told the 25-year-old Segar to pack his bags and catch a train to Manhattan; he had a new job waiting for him.

Segar had the exact skills that Hearst needed at that moment. His papers had just lost cartoonist Ed Wheelan to a rival syndicate. Wheelan had pioneered the small-panel comedy strip with his *Midget Movies*. Hearst wanted Segar to do a daily satire strip to replace Wheelan's in the theatre section of the paper.

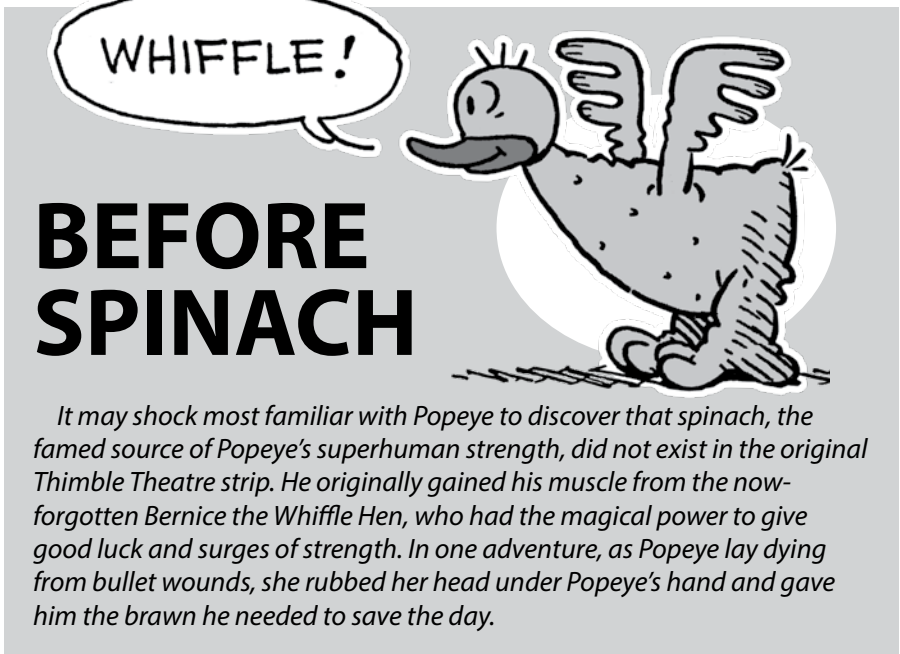
This new strip was to satirize the then still-popular melodrama stage companies in which top-hatted villains curl their mustaches, heroines weep, and cleft-chinned heroes save the day. It would be only 5-6 inches in height, run the full horizontal width of a standard newspaper page, and feature 5-6 little panels daily. Hearst suggested it be called *Thimble Theatre*.

*Thimble Theatre* debuted in the *New York Journal* on December 19, 1919. In the earliest weeks of the strip, it featured a rotating cast of characters, many of which only appeared once, parodying various melodrama stories, as per Hearst's request. The strip's first main characters were the lanky, long-nosed slacker Harold Hamgravy, soon shortened to simply "Ham Gravy," and his scrappy, headstrong girlfriend Olive Oyl.

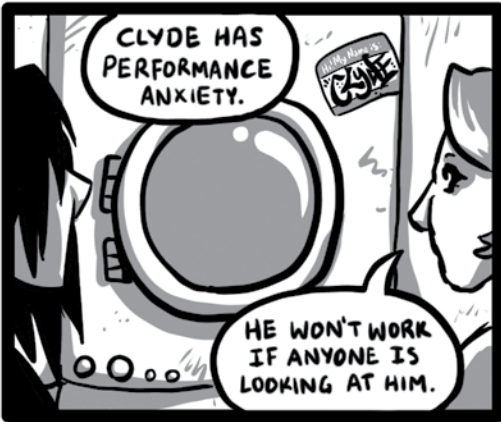
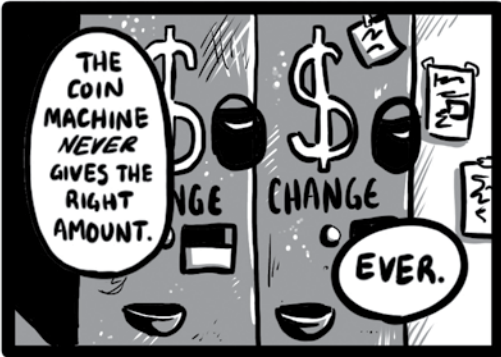
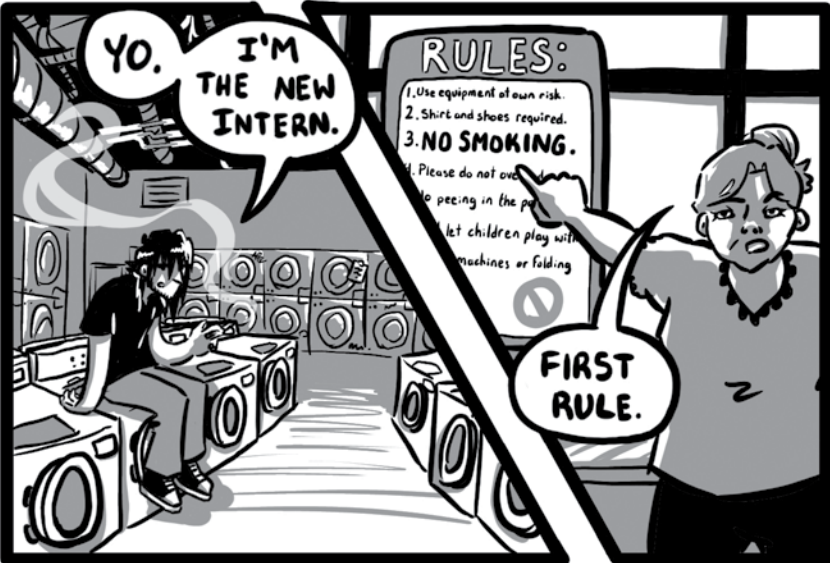
CONTINUED ON PAGE 29



(ABOVE) Popeye's first appearance, published January 17, 1929







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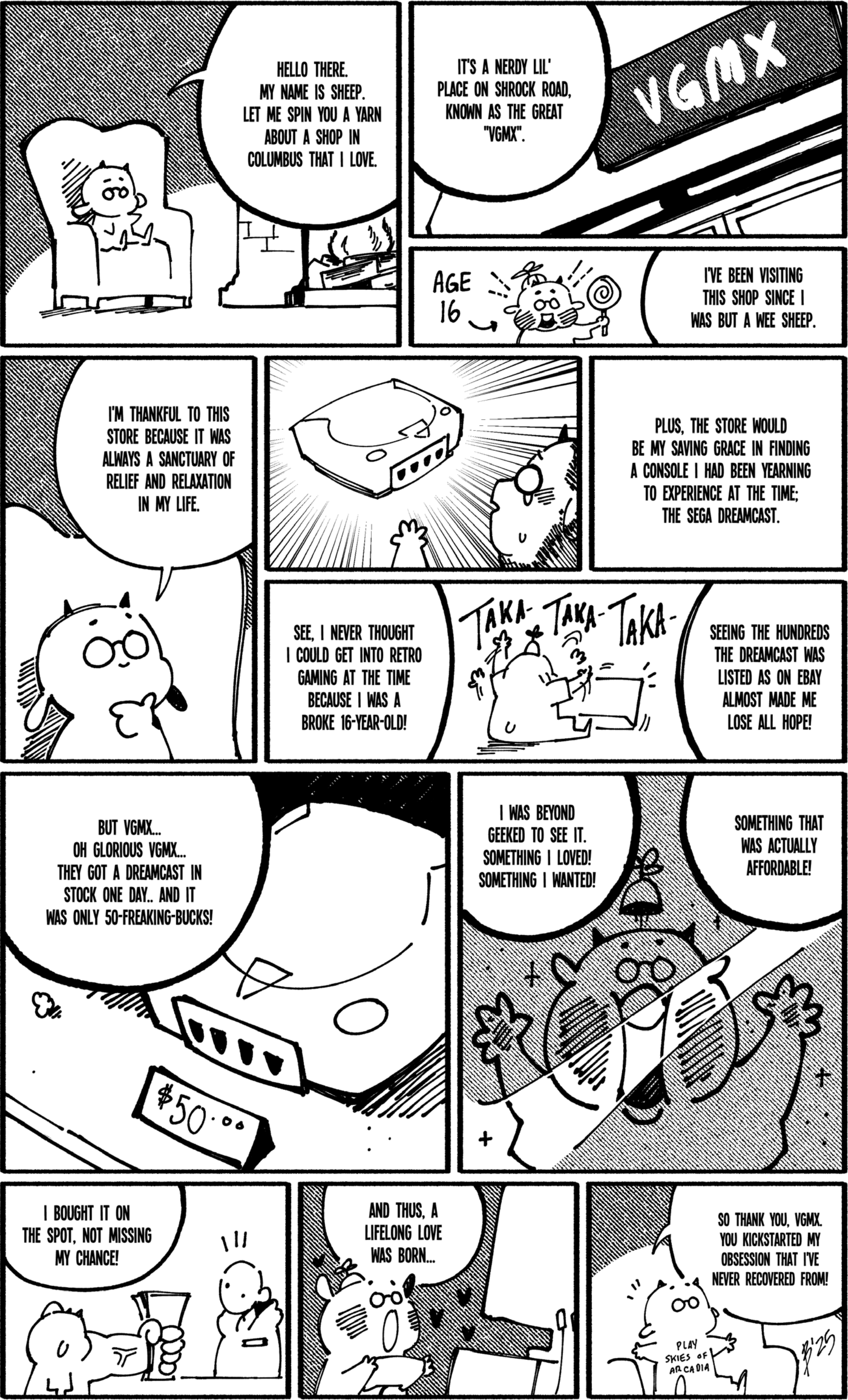
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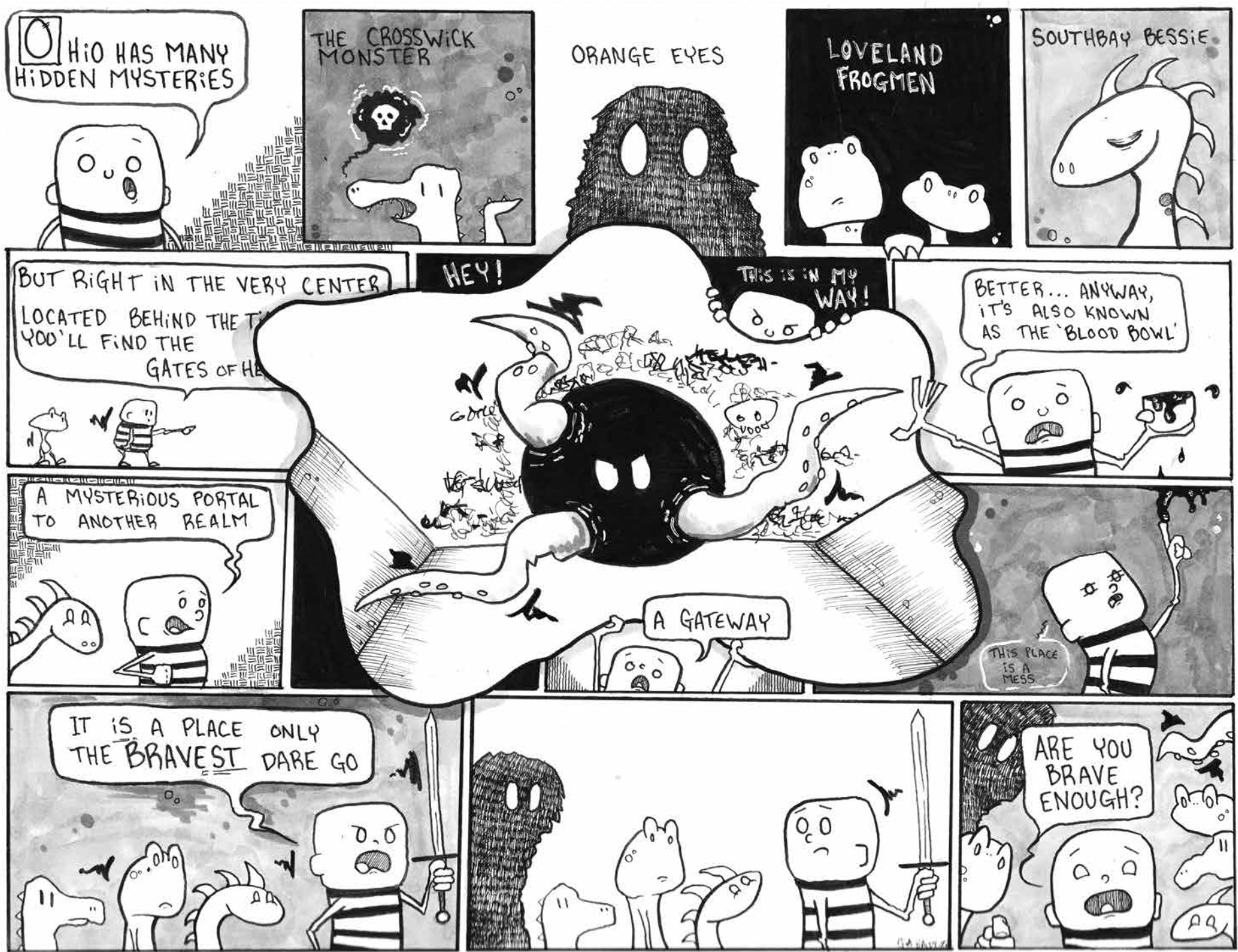
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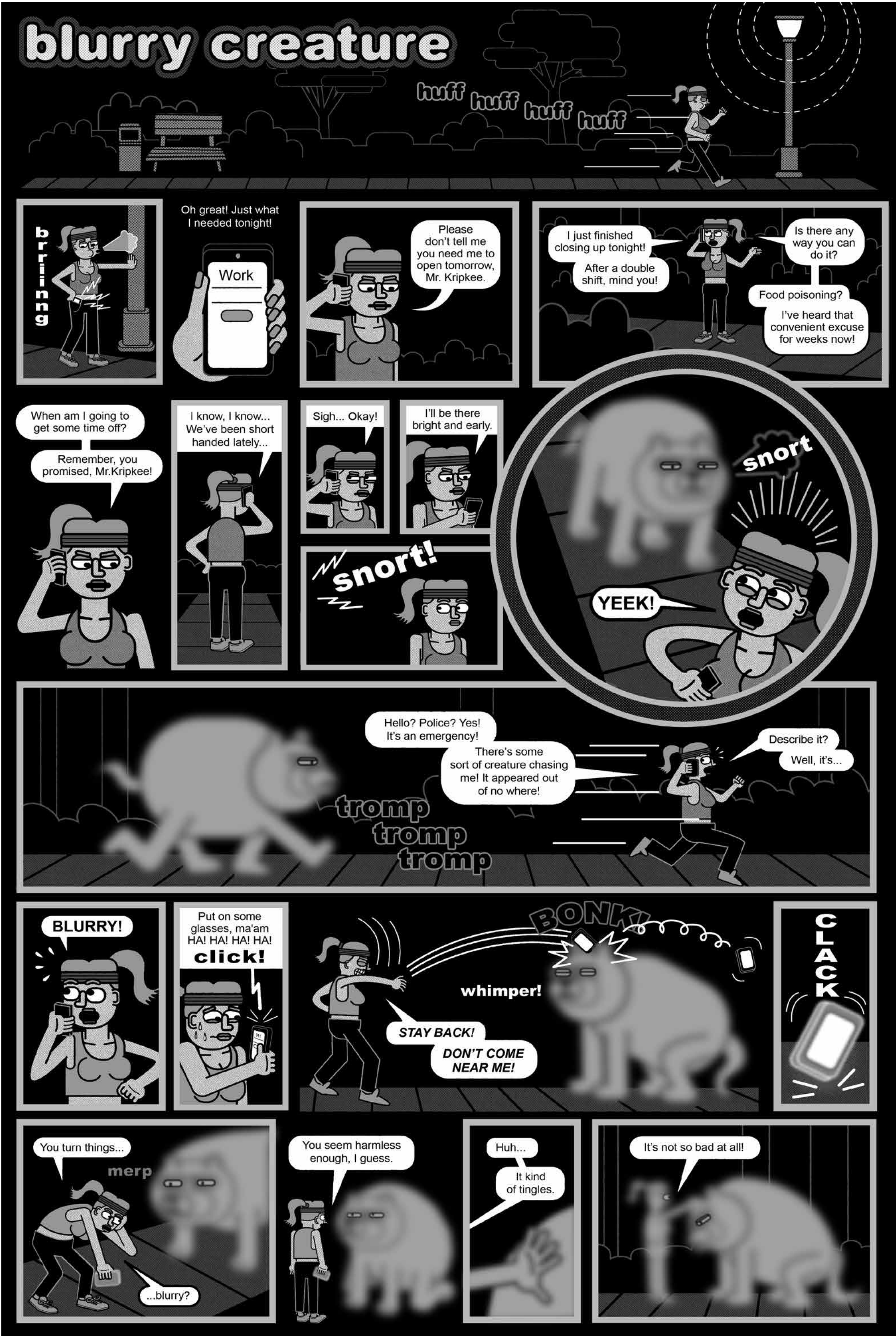
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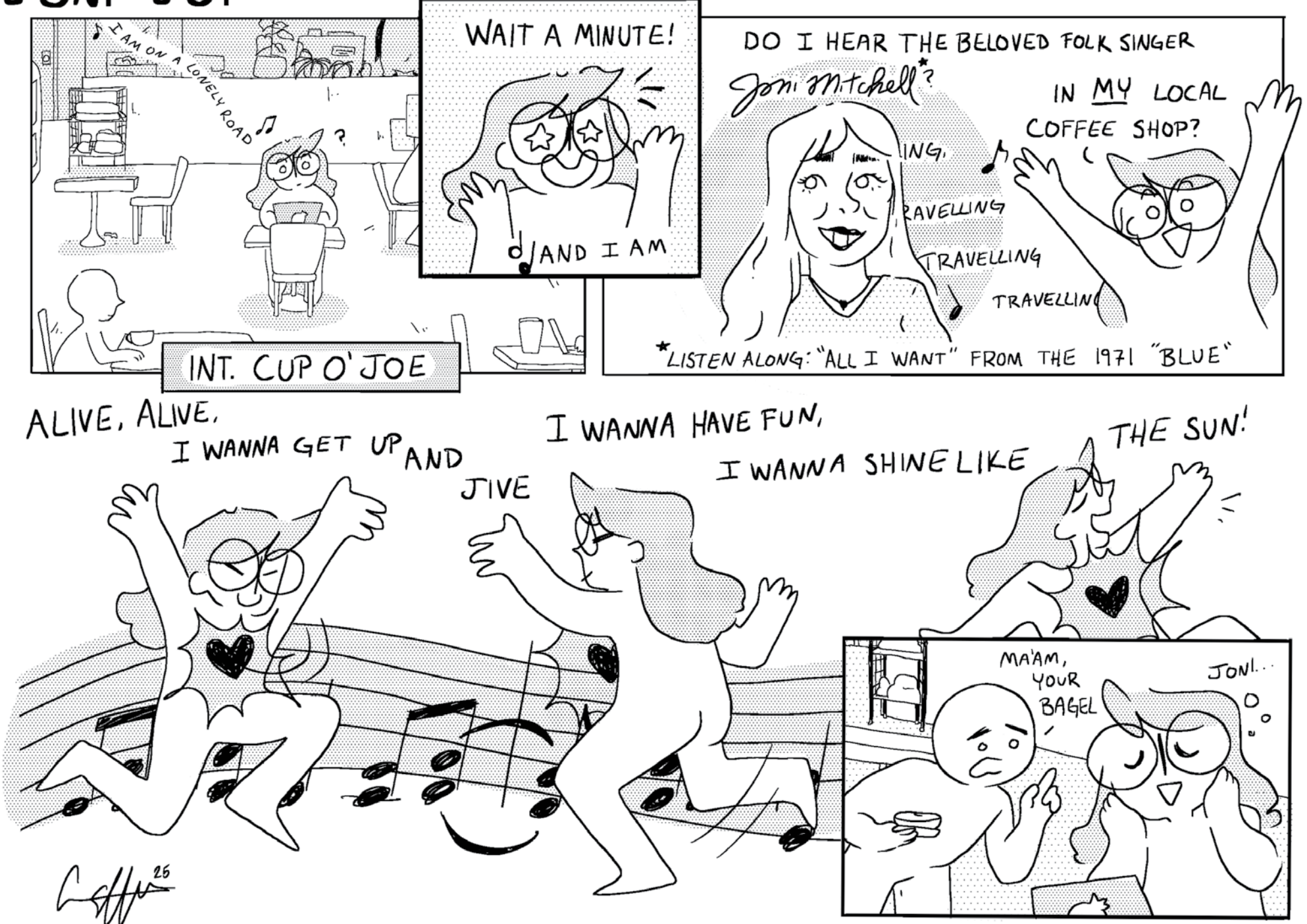
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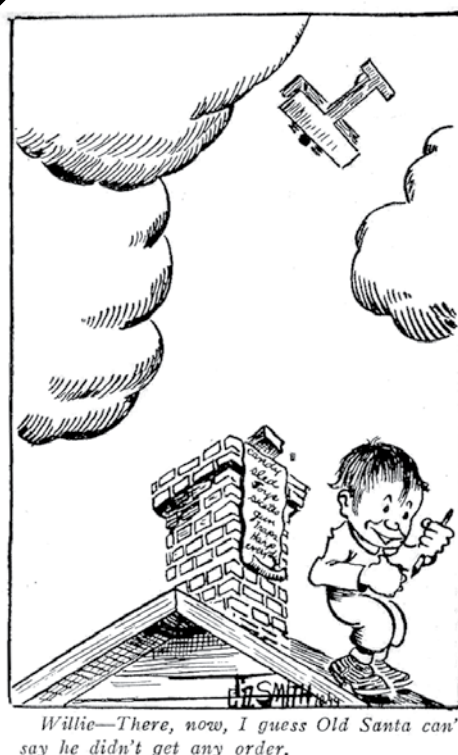
# CHARLES DANTE SMITH

## *A Scribbler of Yore*

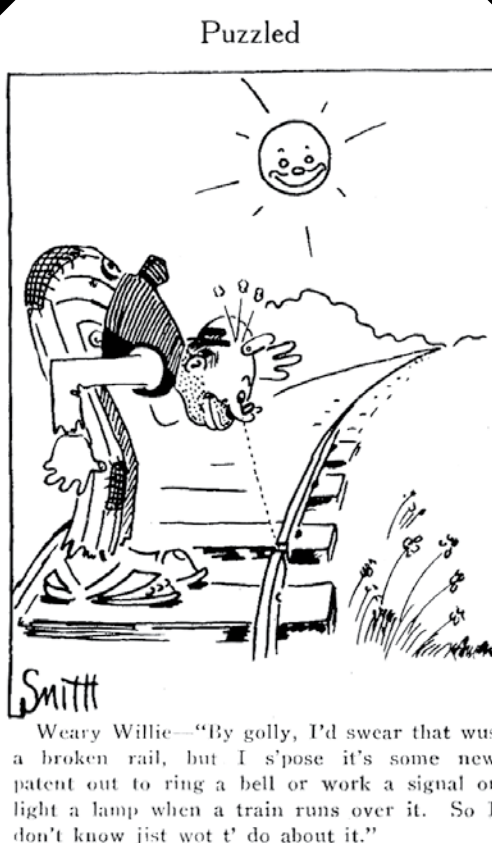
by Stephen Meininger

**C**harles Dante Smith, born in 1886, was an early Ohio Scribbler and a true Renaissance man. Born in Dayton, Ohio, to John Smith (1850 - 1922) and Margaret Jacques (1848 - 1912), Charles was one of six siblings growing up in a naturally artistic family. In 1905, Smith embarked on a new chapter in his life by enrolling in the Sharps School of Telegraphy in Huntington, Indiana. His training there led to a position with the Erie Railroad Company, marking the start of a long career with the railroad.

Smith's creative talents were not confined to drawing alone. He also composed and copyrighted music. Lead plates of his song "The Operator's Sweetheart" still survive. He copyrighted the song in 1906, the same year he married his sweetheart Geneva Miner (1891 - 1975). The couple settled in Marion, Ohio, where they had three children: Thelma (1906 - 1966), Eugene (1910 - 1992), and Paul (1913 - 1983).



In 1919, Charles's artistic skills caught the attention of the *Erie Railroad Magazine* after the magazine sought contributions from its staff for a safety campaign. Charles began producing cartoons regularly, earning him the esteemed but honorary title of "Safety First Artist."



In or around 1930, the Smiths relocated to Kenton, Ohio. Having never driven a car, he commuted from Kenton, OH, to Huntington, IN, for work by train. For leisure, he would buy oats from the grain elevator, grind them by hand, take them to the park to feed the birds, and spend the day drawing there, often giving the pictures to the local kids.

He continued working as a telegrapher and switch operator with the Erie Railroad until his retirement in 1955 after 50 years of dedicated service. His long tenure with the railroad earned him a gold pass, which allowed him free travel across the entire Erie Railroad line.



50 YEARS SERVICE—C. D. Smith (right) good for the entire Erie Railroad Company trainmaster at Huntington, honoring his service as a telegraph operator and signalman. Smith has held that position in Rochester coming here from Kenton, O., where he





His passion for drawing was evident early on. One of his earliest surviving drawings included a man and woman, completed in 1911 (left).

The Erie Railroad Magazine was a corporate publication for the Erie Railroad that ran from 1905 to 1960 and was later renamed the Erie-Lackawanna Magazine. The magazine was primarily intended for Erie Railroad employees and covered various topics, including employee news such as births, weddings, and deaths; lists of retired or deceased employees, including years of service and position titles; and discussions of practices, problems, and future plans. The magazine was considered a valuable source of information about railroaders' lives and is sometimes used as a substitute for personnel records.



### A Safety First Artist

HERE'S a regular cartoonist just located at Marion. His name is Charles D. Smith, and he is telegraph operator at M. J. tower. Mr. Smith's letter, herewith published, is interesting for the reason that he says this work (if used) will be the first of his ever published.

We have put him on the Magazine staff with the title "Safety First Artist."

Editor ERIE RAILROAD MAGAZINE:

I am enclosing two original comics, which you can use in the ERIE RAILROAD MAGAZINE. I noticed in the last issue that you were letting amateur artists in on the game, so I had to butt in. I like that kind of work, and if this is put in print it will be the first of my pictures that I ever have been lucky enough to see reproduced. If I succeed this time I am going to send some more next month. Then I will try to send one or two to the old reliable magazine each month. You will notice that the trend of

the pictures leans toward the safety drive, which, to my notion, is the greatest movement on earth. I have already contributed two suggestions for bulletins toward that cause.

The cartoons are published on this page.

#### "Safety Foist"

PAT—Mike, are ye doin' eny thing t' help the safety-first drive?  
MIKE—Sure! Iviry toim oi see oim goin' t' git hoit I close me eyes!

#### The Buckwheat Cake

SOON will the toothsome buckwheat cake,  
With color gold and sunny,  
Regale our appetites and make  
Us smile when smeared with honey.

The road to success is strewn with thorns, but when success is once achieved the surface of the road appears to have been covered with a veneer of concrete.

#### Beware of the Dog!

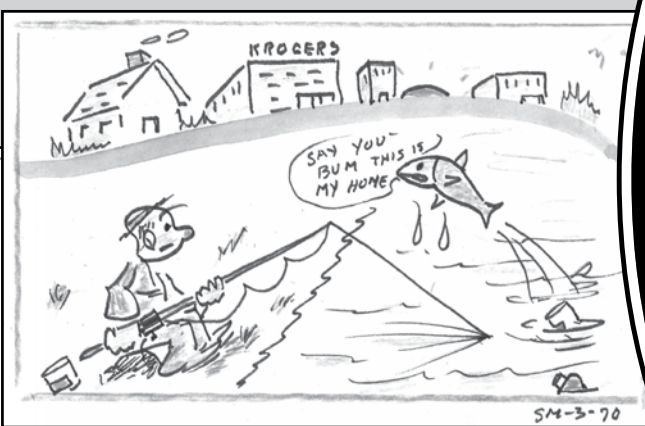
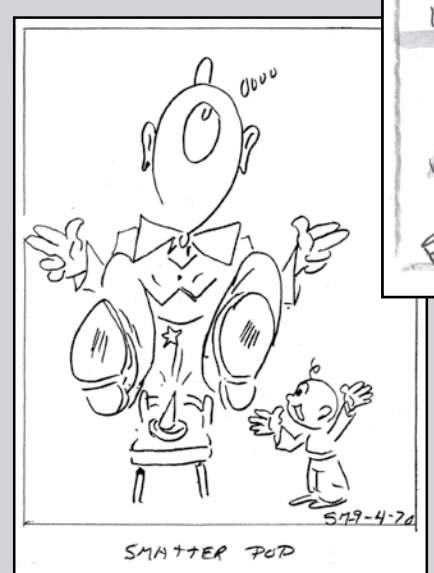
BOOK AGENT—Well, now I guess here's a pretty good chance for an argument.

We are past the halfway mark in our 10 year program to gain 1,000,000 new members and raise \$1,000,000 for Century fund. High goals have been set before and reached and they can be again. How is your union progressing in this ONE IN A MILLION Program? With world conditions today each one of us knows how important it is to be a ONE IN A MILLION member.

Among his works, Smith created cartoons that supported the Women's Christian Temperance Union in their battle against hard liquor (above).



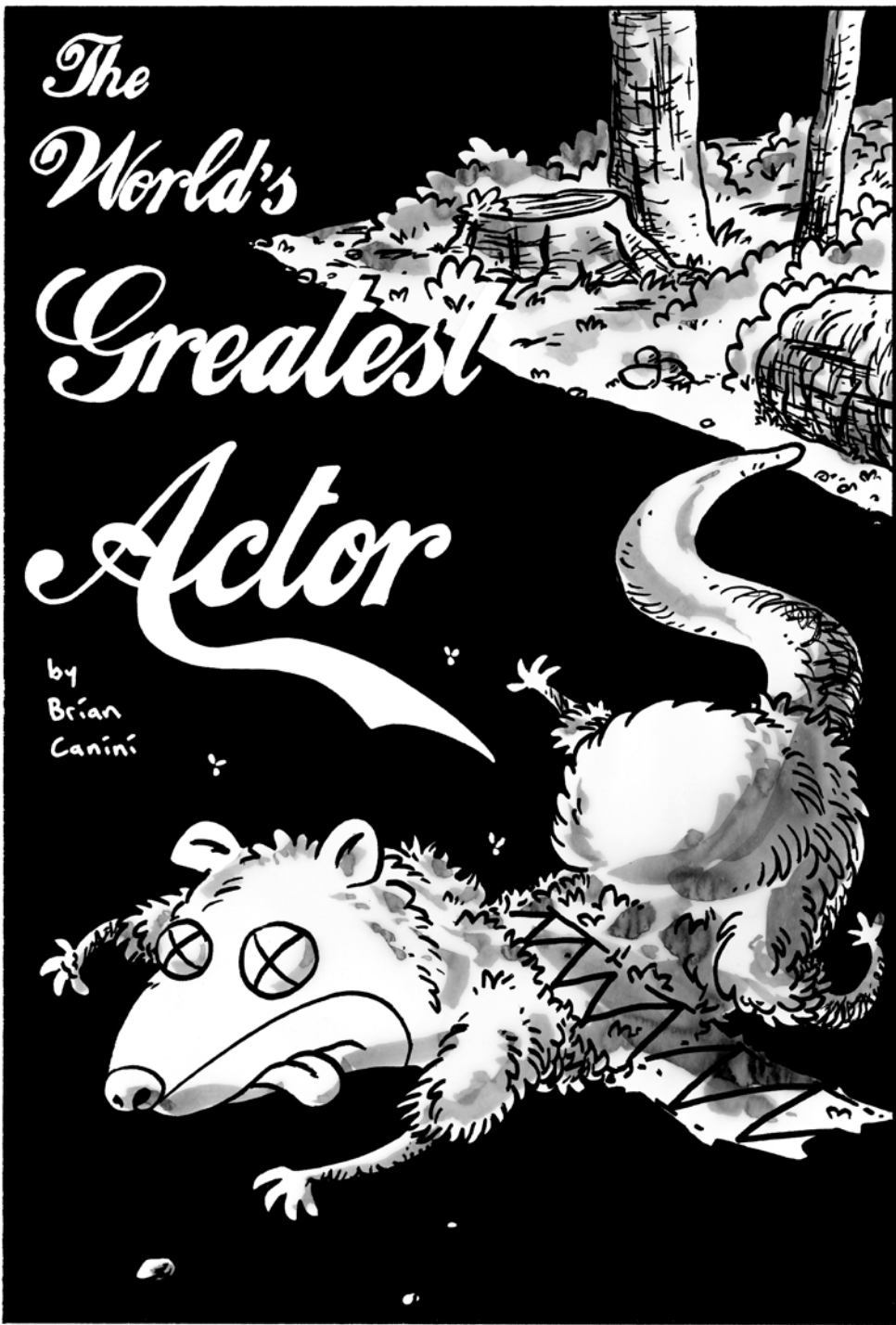
Even after retiring, Smith's passion for drawing never waned. He continued to produce art into his 80s.



Charles Dante Smith died in 1975, leaving behind a legacy that blended his career with the railroad with the richness of his artistic pursuits. His work is a testament to his creativity, versatility, and dedication, reflecting a fully lived life.









A 6-panel comic strip in black and white. The characters are a customer (a man with a beard and a hoodie) and a clerk (a man with a cap and a t-shirt) in a comic book store.

**Panel 1:** The customer says, "MAN, I GOTTA CUT BACK ON HOW MANY COMICS I'M BUYING EACH MONTH, IT'S GETTING TOO EXPENSIVE." The clerk, behind a counter with a computer, says, "LET ME TAKE A LOOK AT YOUR PULL LIST."

**Panel 2:** The clerk shows the customer a comic titled "Lady Werewolf". The customer asks, "WHAT IF YOU CUT LADY WEREWOLF?" The clerk replies, "I CAN'T STOP COLLECTING THAT! GRANT MORTON JUST STARTED THEIR RUN, IT'S BEEN AMAZING."

**Panel 3:** The clerk shows the customer another comic titled "Amazing Bug-Man". The customer asks, "WELL WHAT ABOUT AMAZING BUG-MAN?" The clerk replies, "THE QUALITY IS TERRIBLE NOW, BUT I'VE BEEN COLLECTING IT FOR YEARS. IT WOULD BE WEIRD TO HAVE A GAP." The customer says, "EH..."

**Panel 4:** The clerk shows the customer a comic titled "Mutant Men". The customer asks, "MUTANT MEN?" The clerk says, "IT'S MY FAVORITE." The customer asks, ".38 SPECIAL?" The clerk replies, "LIMITED RUN, CAN'T STOP NOW."

**Panel 5:** The clerk shows the customer a comic titled "Captain Power!". The customer asks, "CAPTAIN POWER?" The clerk replies, "BIG FAN OF THE ARTIST."

**Panel 6:** The customer asks, "SO WHAT ARE YOU GONNA STOP BUYING?" The clerk replies, "AT THIS RATE? FOOD."

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# FROM PITCHING TO PUBLISHING

*Everything you need to know about pitching your book*

by Jack Wallace

**M**ost artists consider pitching a story to a publisher at least once in their lives, but the whole process can feel as mystic as some archaic ritual. Most publishers won't accept unsolicited materials with good reason. Namely, they don't want to get sued for releasing a book that seems close to a submission they received even by happenstance. Between editors, agents, and marketing groups, it can feel like an army of gatekeepers keeping you from success in the industry. Each publisher has a brand and an audience they cater to, and each is looking for something different. All of this can make the whole process so intimidating that it makes any creator want to throw their arms up and quit before they've started. We get it.

We want to give you the tools to make your best pitch possible. Remember, there is no best way to make a pitch, but the goal is to help the editor of your target publisher see your vision and what the final product will look like.

In writing this, it's important to disclose

that I've never successfully had a pitch accepted by a publisher; not many of us have. However, I've compiled this article on the subject from several web sources, editorial feedback that I've received from past pitch packets, and the things I picked up from my time putting together pitch packets for clients working in animation (Shout out and thanks to Essence Cartoon).

I have written an all-ages trade paperback book called *Chimera: Island of Dreams*. With the help of Huitzi Trujano and Chris Allen, we brought the book to life and put together a pitch. I'll be using this pitch to provide an example. To my dismay, I've read from several sources that it's best not to have a completed book when submitting a pitch. Ideally, you should complete the script, but the only completed art should be the ones for review so editors can still provide feedback.

**Here is a list and description of everything you'll need to assemble your pitch package.**

## COVER LETTER:

An effective but concise cover letter is not out of the question, though it is also not always mandatory. A cover letter lets the reader know why you think your work would be perfect for them. You could remind an editor how you met or explain what makes your team of creators so unique.

## LOGLINE:

Consider all those short descriptions you read when looking through the movies on a streaming service. It's often good to include your protagonist, antagonist (if there is one), the inciting incident, and the protagonist's goal. We need to know the source of conflict.

**Example:** *Four kids find an island where their greatest fantasies come true, but must win four competitions against the island's only ghostly inhabitant to return home.*

## CHARACTERS:

Having interesting and well-developed characters is absolutely essential to any pitch. You must break down your major characters and describe their personal journeys. How will they grow from the beginning of the story to the end? If you have an artist attached to the story, it can help relay the book's aesthetic to the publisher.

**Example:** *Ashante is our group's leader, brainiac, and moral center. She's analytical and brilliant but lacks the creativity and confidence of her younger brother.*

*Freddy, Ashante's little brother, is a force of nature. His mental focus rests solely on his favorite hero, Captain Galaxy. Freddy can be erratic but usually good-natured.*

*Harriet is on the track team and hopes to make it to the state championship. She often stays late after class to run drills. She's focused and determined but not always confident in her abilities.*

*Colin can be moody and depressed but also adventurous. His parents are wealthy and often absent, leaving Colin to be raised by a series of servers. He loves*

*to break the rules and frequently gets the group in trouble.*

## SETTING:

This section may be optional, but if your world acts differently than ours, explaining how would be helpful. What is the world your characters are inhabiting? Is it a far-off planet with monsters galore, or maybe it is a post-apocalyptic hellish landscape?

**Example:** *In Chimera, you don't have to eat or sleep. The island is a giant playground where you never have to leave, and you can become anything your heart desires. Time moves much faster, so a day in Chimera may only be an hour in our world.*

## SCOPE OF THE PROJECT:

If it doesn't fit in the confines of the story, it belongs here. How many pages do you envision (and does this meet market standards for books in this age range)? Is it part of a series or a standalone graphic novel? If it's a series, how many issues or volumes is it? If this is your first project, we suggest starting with a shorter project as there's less risk involved to the publisher.

What genre will your story fall into? Everyone likes to think their story transcends genres, but when did you last see a section at Barnes and Noble that said "transcends all genres?" Publishers need to know how to sell your book. Help them.

Include your demographic. Is this for Early Readers, Middle Graders, Young Adults, Adults, or Mature readers? Researching the publisher you pitch to is crucial to knowing if they would be open to your type of story.

Including books comparable to yours may be helpful. What successful attributes does your book share with those titles?

## SUMMARY/DETAILED SYNOPSIS:

You should include both a summary and a detailed synopsis for your pitch. These are typically separate sections; however, for the case of brevity for this article, I'm condensing them down to one section.

Your summary is a simplified one to two-paragraph summary of your story. Think of what you'd read on the back of a book or graphic novel. Concise, catchy, and alluring. Ideally 2-3 paragraphs long. You want to entice

readers (aka editors, agents, publishers) with this.

The detailed synopsis is typically one to five pages long and takes an in-depth look into each chapter. Make sure you don't leave anything out. Remember that these are not readers you hope to entice but editors who need to know how the story ends. Please don't leave them with an ending without revealing the twist. For longer books, break the book down into chapters describing what happens in each. Try to be engaging and concise. If you are pitching a series, add a section with a paragraph's worth of information for each future book.

## SAMPLE SCRIPT:

You should have a completed script ready to go should a publisher or agent request it. Some companies may ask for the first fifty pages, and some may ask for the completed work. If this is an ongoing series, I'd recommend having the first three issues written at a minimum.

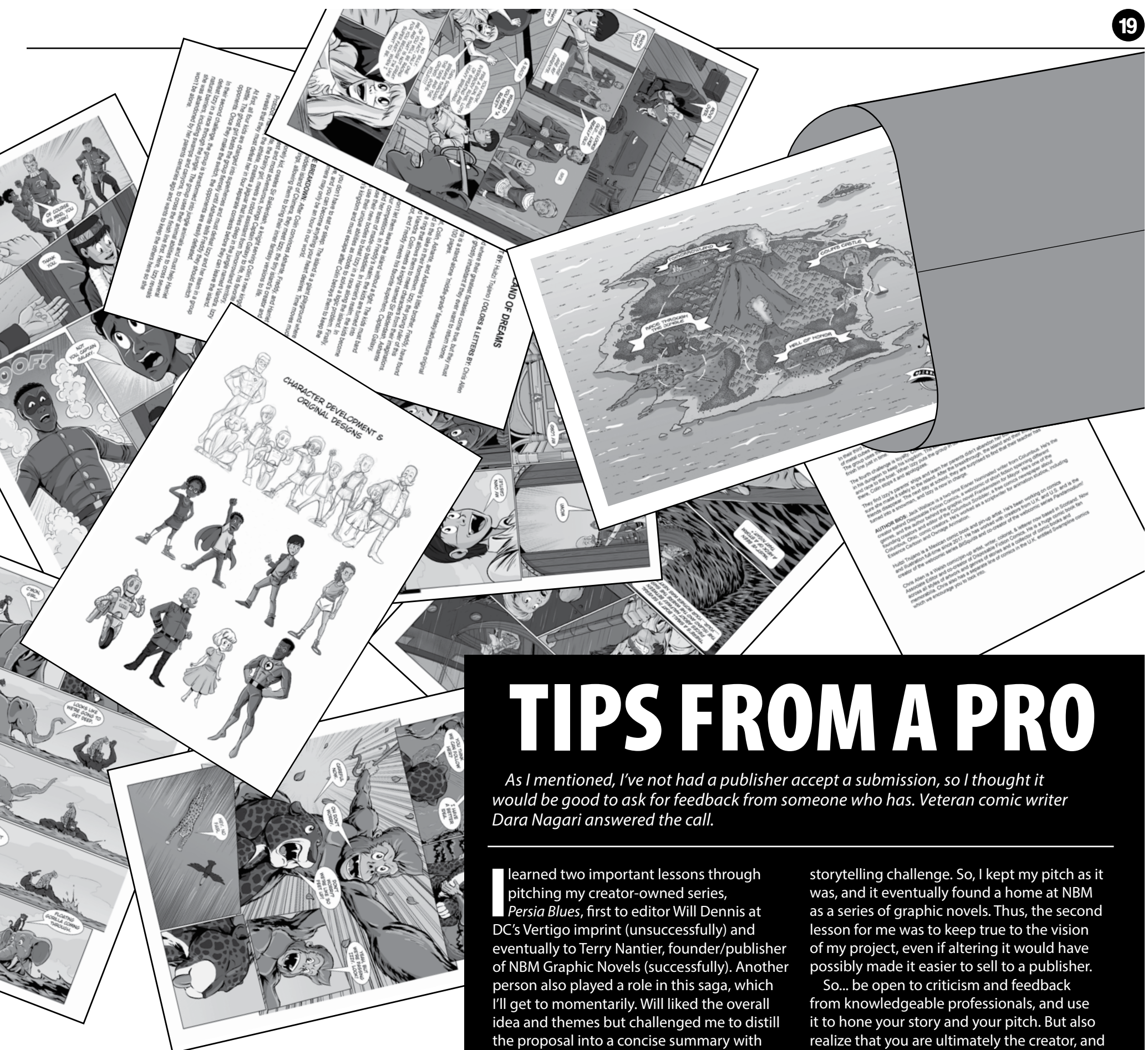
The question of whether to include a full script or a detailed synopsis is a tricky one. If your script is over 200 pages long, a detailed synopsis may save the reader hours of reading. If you are both the writer and artist, you may not write complete scripts, but a detailed synopsis would help give the full vision of the story from start to finish. If you are starting out, the publisher or agent will want to see that you can finish a product. Try getting feedback from as many trustworthy people as possible before submitting.

## ART:

Concept art will go a long way in helping get your project sold. It can do more than help show the visual imagery you're trying to project; it can also show that you're serious about this project enough to hire an artist out of pocket. Almost all publishers require anywhere between three and ten preview pages. Some people choose the first pages as an excellent introduction to the story. I recommend selecting pages from later in the book as they can be more expressive once the action heats up. The choice is yours.







**AUTHOR BIOS:**

The author bio page should express who your team is and why you are the best person to tell this story. Ensure you include links to your portfolio, website, and social media so the reader can learn more about you.

If you are collaborating with a team, having a contract outlining ownership splits and calculating royalties is beneficial before a publisher offers you a deal. You'd hate to have a deal blow up over squabbles about money.

You should include any previous work, including zines or independently published works. It may not be professional credits, but it can show that you know how to do this and can complete what you start.

**COVER PAGE:**

A great way to make a first impression on a publisher or agent is to include a cover page. A catchy title will help grab attention. Remember to include the names of all your creators. The cover not only helps immediately provide a look at the type of book you're going for but can also show up as a tempting email tidbit waiting to be clicked. You'll want the cover to catch the editor's attention, even when it's just a thumbnail on an email.

**WRAP UP:**

The rest is all up to you. Start with your strongest asset, but it's your decision if that's a manuscript or the sample art. It's typically best to send everything in a single PDF. Consider separating the manuscript if it's over forty pages.

Ensure your file is under 20 MB so email servers don't reject it for being too large.

Unfortunately, pitches are not one size fits all. Think of it as sending a resume for a job. You may use the same essential information in a document to send repeatedly, but you want to tailor it each time for a different audience. If you ever get a contract, have a lawyer read through it before you sign anything. You don't want your lightning in a bottle to end up in someone else's container.

*Happy Hunting!*

# TIPS FROM A PRO

*As I mentioned, I've not had a publisher accept a submission, so I thought it would be good to ask for feedback from someone who has. Veteran comic writer Dara Nagari answered the call.*

I learned two important lessons through pitching my creator-owned series, *Persia Blues*, first to editor Will Dennis at DC's Vertigo imprint (unsuccessfully) and eventually to Terry Nantier, founder/publisher of NBM Graphic Novels (successfully). Another person also played a role in this saga, which I'll get to momentarily. Will liked the overall idea and themes but challenged me to distill the proposal into a concise summary with an easy-to-understand high concept. "It needn't be one line, but it needs to be more succinct/clear...dare I say obvious?" he told me, apologizing for sounding "shallow" but explaining that that's what DC was looking for at the time in order to easily sell their concepts to Hollywood. Ultimately, he ended up passing on the series. But through our many email conversations, I was able to refine my pitch and boil down my (admittedly convoluted) plot into an easier-to-understand summary, complete with a logline that I hoped would intrigue a publisher. More importantly, I learned how to take feedback and critique and use it to improve my pitch without changing the core of my story.

After retooling my pitch packet, I asked legendary editor Bob Schreck (with whom I had been fortunate enough to work on several projects at IDW Publishing) to give me his thoughts before sending it to other publishers. Without getting into all the details, *Persia Blues* follows the life of a young woman in modern times, as well as in a fantasy setting, with the narrative jumping back and forth between those worlds (and even in time). Bob's advice was to pick one setting or the other - the slice-of-life exploration of modern Iran or the fantasy adventures in mythic Persia - instead of trying to juggle the complexity of both. While his advice made all the sense in the world from the point of marketability, and I absolutely respected his experience and instincts, I ultimately couldn't bring myself to make that drastic change. What interested and excited me about the project was precisely that complexity, that

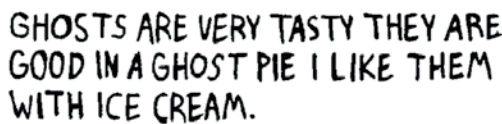
storytelling challenge. So, I kept my pitch as it was, and it eventually found a home at NBM as a series of graphic novels. Thus, the second lesson for me was to keep true to the vision of my project, even if altering it would have possibly made it easier to sell to a publisher.

So... be open to criticism and feedback from knowledgeable professionals, and use it to hone your story and your pitch. But also realize that you are ultimately the creator, and if you love your vision and want to bring it to life, don't compromise on it. It may absolutely be a harder sell, and in fact, you may fail to ever find it a home, but at least you put your effort into something you're passionate about rather than settling for some watered-down version. Put another way, the question to ask yourself is this: do I want to bring my personal vision to life, or do I just want to get something, anything, published just so I can see my name in print?

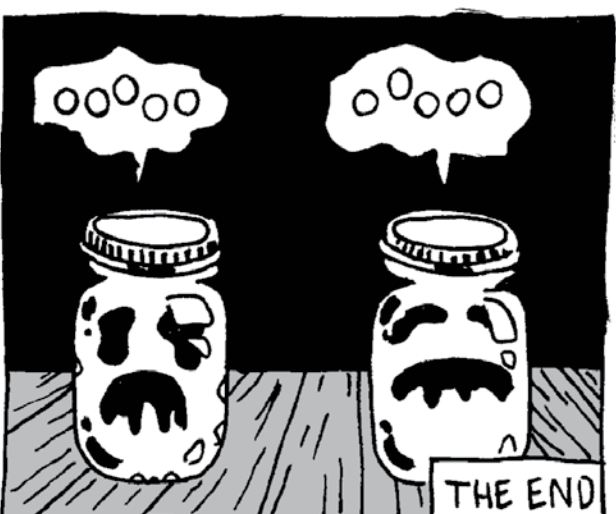
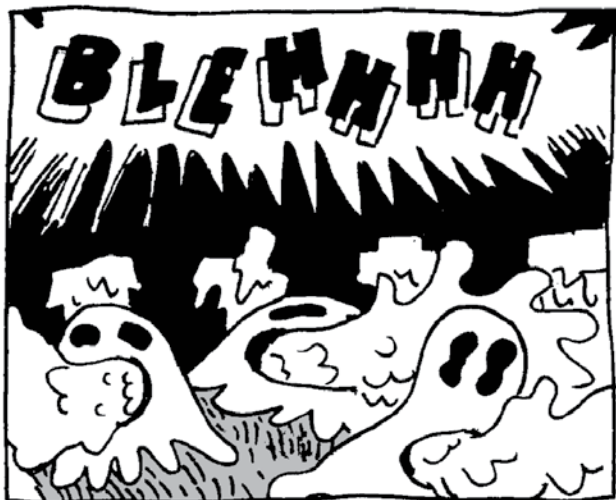
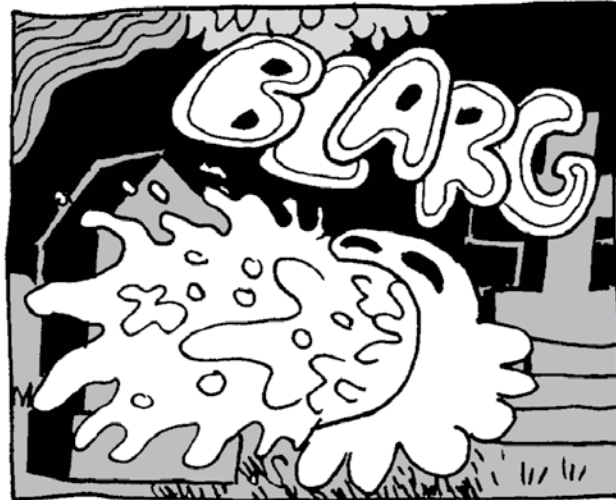


*Dara Naraghi has written comics and graphic novels of all types, from self-published zines to New York Times best sellers. His work has been published by The OSU Alumni Magazine, DC Comics, IDW Publishing, Dark Horse Comics, Image Comics, NBM Graphic Novels, and others. His Persia Blues graphic novel series has won the SPACE prize for best graphic novel twice. Dara lives in Columbus, Ohio, with his wife, and the world's coolest corgi and craziest mutt.*





“我”在“我”的“我”中“我”

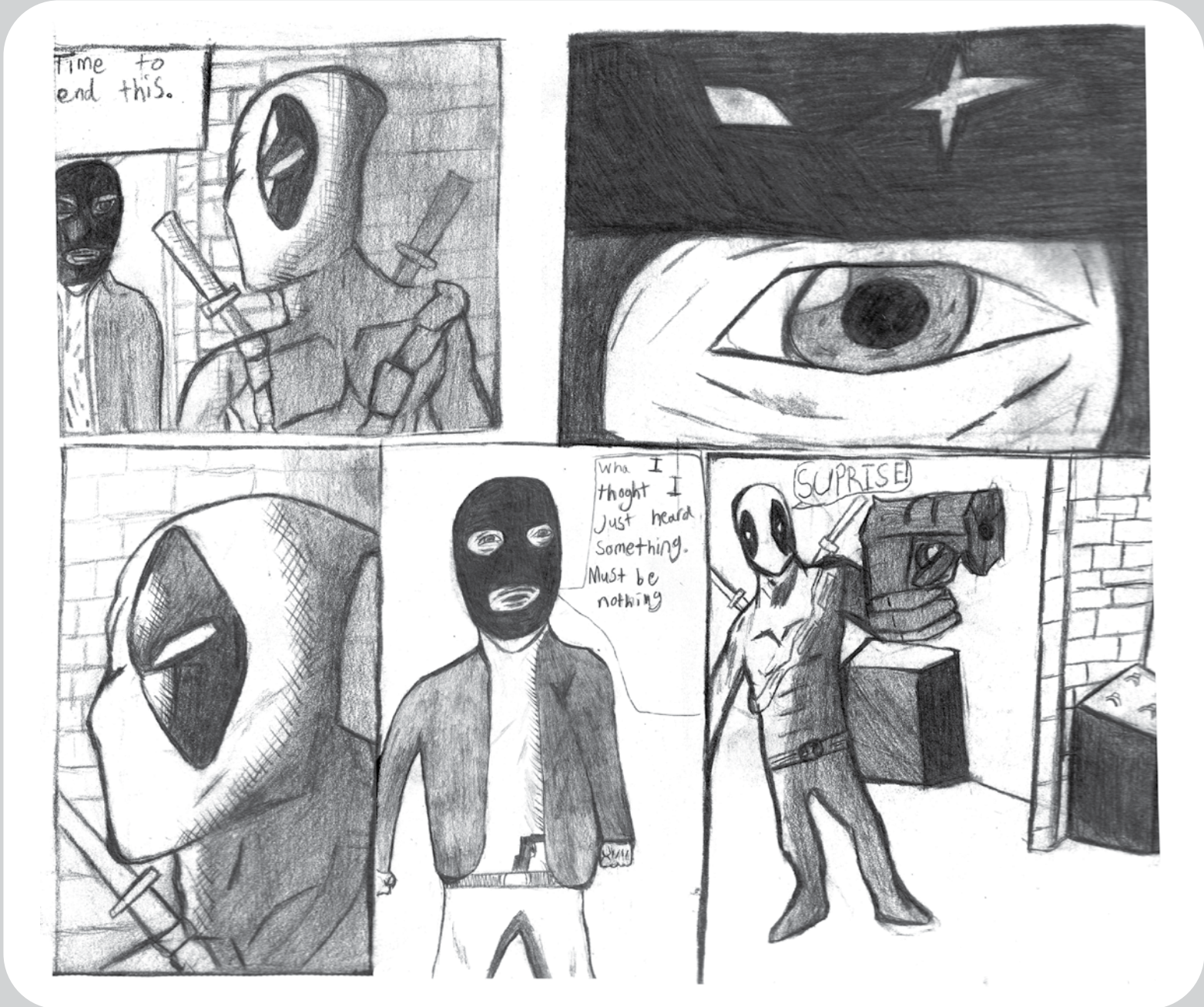


THE END



# KID'S KORNER

By Dyson D. • Age 12



KATE E. LORE





# PICKS FROM THE SHELF

*Comic Reviews by Steve Steiner*

## MAPLE TERRACE

*by Noah Van Sciver*

The 1990s were quite a time for comics. Who can forget such classics like *X-Force*, *WildC.A.T.s*, *Youngblood*, and the *Death of Superman*? Cartoonist Noah Van Sciver takes us back to this memorable era in *Maple Terrace*. I've long been a fan of Van Sciver's work, and I picked up my copy from publisher Uncivilized Books' table at Cartoon Crossroads Columbus (CXC) last year.

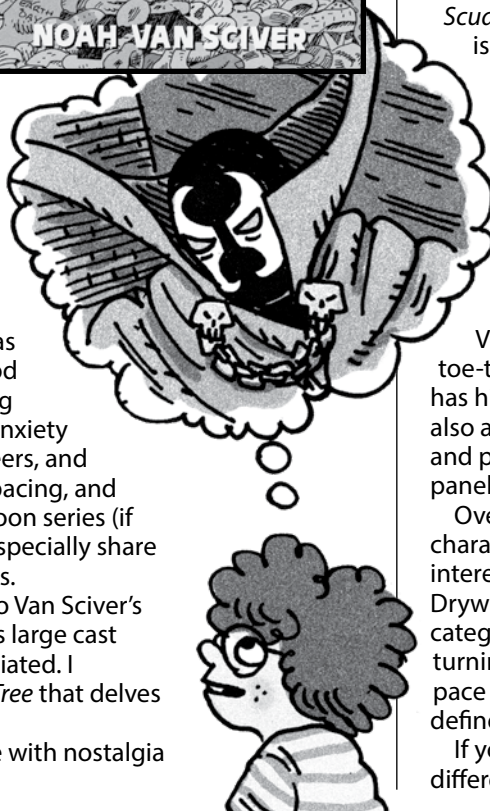
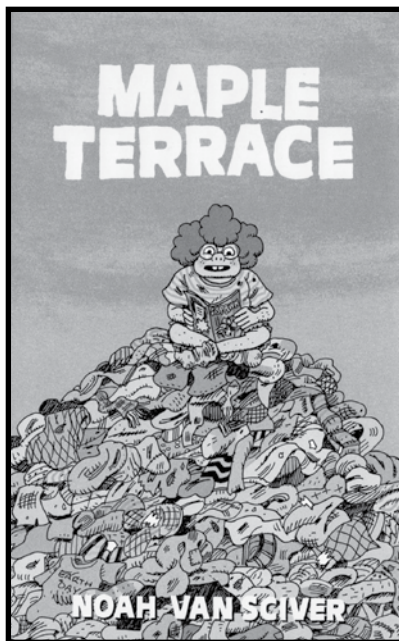
Based in part on his own childhood experiences, young Noah must navigate the complex hierarchy of both school and his large Mormon family in his quest to read *Spawn* #5. For those not in the know, this infamous issue from Todd MacFarlane depicts the grisly demise of child predator Billy Kincaid, an indelible scene for a generation.

Van Sciver's humor hits a sweet spot for me, as I was one of those 90s kids. He gently mocks all the things we thought were cool at the time, like the over-the-top violence, the gritty anti-heroes, and of course, the overabundance of pouches on everyone's costumes. He even manages to poke fun at those who thought these floppies would be worth a ton of money someday. Sadly, none of us who own all five covers of Jim Lee's *X-Men* #1 have been able to retire yet.

For anyone who wasn't even born yet, there's no need to get all the references to enjoy *Maple Terrace*. I mean, how many among us really remember what *Doom* 2099 was anyway? Van Sciver draws on universal aspects of childhood that are relatable to everyone. Throughout the book, young Noah deals with typical fare in coming-of-age stories like anxiety over the consequences of his actions, rejection from his peers, and learning his place in the social pecking order. His writing, pacing, and artwork would translate well into a Saturday morning cartoon series (if those still existed). The scenes involving his schoolmates especially share a similar vibe to the cartoon *Recess* that aired in the late 90s.

If there's any critique I can muster, it's that readers new to Van Sciver's work may be a little lost when it comes to his home life. His large cast of brothers and sisters may be a bit confusing to the uninitiated. I recommend first reading his more serious work *One Dirty Tree* that delves into his poverty stricken upbringing for more insight.

*Maple Terrace* is a fun, quick read custom-made for those with nostalgia for the 1990s in their hearts.



## SCUD THE DISPOSABLE ASSASSIN

*by Rob Schrab*

While we're in a 90s state of mind, I present to you *Scud, the Disposable Assassin*. Need someone killed pronto? Just insert your money in the Scud vending machine, give it a target, and once the victim is eliminated, the robot self-destructs for easy cleanup! Or so that was the plan until this particular Scud model cleverly found a way to survive. Instead of killing his target, a bizarre monster of patchwork parts named Jeff, Scud merely blew off its limbs. Now he must constantly take more jobs to pay the hospital to keep Jeff alive on life support or else they're both dead!

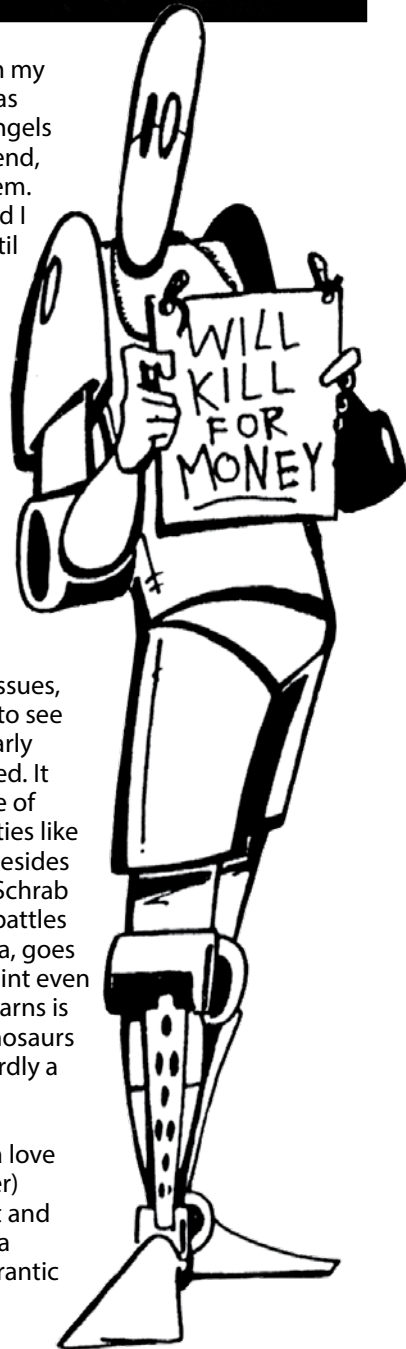
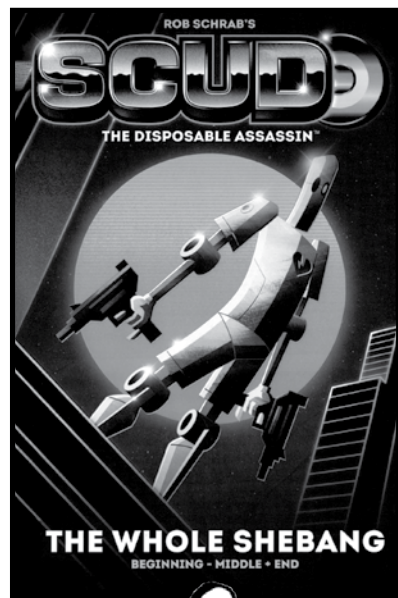
Curious about the series, I picked up an issue from my local comic book store back around 1998 when it was current. It ended on a great cliffhanger. A cabal of angels were holding God hostage. They killed Scud's girlfriend, and, in grief, he agreed to kill the entire Earth for them. After that, I couldn't find anything. For years, I figured I had just missed out on the finale to the storyline until I finally learned the truth.

Creator Rob Schrab, along with his creative partner Dan Harmon, moved to Los Angeles to pursue careers in Hollywood, doing very well for themselves in the film industry. Schrab even has directing credits for some shows you may have heard of like *Parks and Rec*, *Community*, and *Mystery Science Theater 3000*, yet his *Scud* masterwork remained unfinished. It took Schrab until 2008, roughly a decade from his abrupt hiatus, to finish the last four issues and conclude the series.

Fortunately today, if you're interested in reading *Scud* you don't have to hunt down the individual issues one-by-one. I picked up the *Whole Shebang*, which collects the entire run, all 24 issues, into a single thick tome. It's really interesting to see how Schrab's storytelling evolved from his early days. The first issue is especially under-cooked. It revels in juvenile violence tinged with a type of gonzo humor influenced by popular properties like *Earthworm Jim*, *Sam and Max*, and *The Tick*. Besides rendering action-packed fight scenes, what Schrab does well is lay his imagination to bare. Scud battles Voodoo Ben Franklin, works for the cyborg mafia, goes toe-to-toe with another Scud model, and at one point even has his arm replaced with a human arm that Scud learns is also a werewolf. There are gunfights and zombie dinosaurs and prison breaks and floating laser giraffes with hardly a panel to catch your breath.

Over time, Schrab manages to develop his cast of characters, introducing bounty hunter Sussudio as a love interest as well as sidekick (and my favorite character) Drywall, a little cloth guy who was created to collect and categorize stuff. Drywall's origin story stands out as a turning point where the series begins to forgo the frantic pace and starts to mature with a much more defined direction.

If you're looking for something a bit different, then give *Scud* a try.



## THE SONG OF AGLAIA

*by Anne Simon*

*The Song of Aglaia*, the first graphic novel by French cartoonist Anne Simon, is one of the more intriguing comics I've read lately. Simon draws on a multitude of inspirations, weaving together satire, allegory, historical events, and classic literature into a charming rags-to-riches fairy tale. She creates an entire fantasy kingdom populated by a host of anthropomorphic characters.

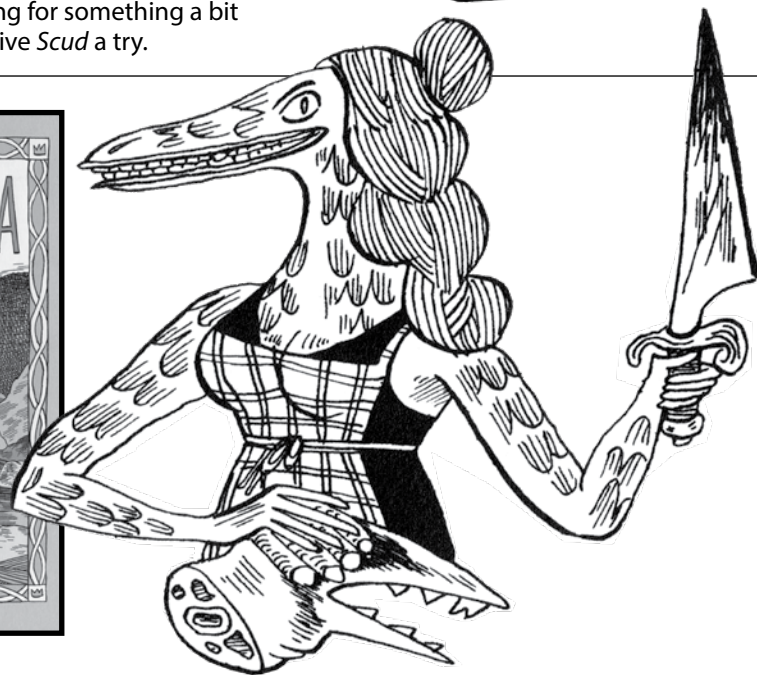
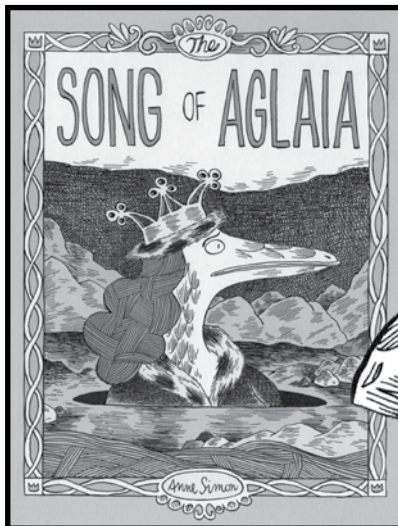
Protagonist Aglaia is a water nymph who, after a brief relationship with a mer-man, finds herself abandoned and pregnant. Consequently, her father exiles her, forcing Aglaia to wander the countryside until she arrives in Barbarann, a land ruled by cruel despot Von Krantz. She escapes the notice of the king by joining up with a circus and marrying its proprietor, Mr. Kite, who raises her three daughters as his own. And so they live like this for years until Von Krantz kidnaps Aglaia's children and enslaves them to do his domestic chores.

One thing leads to another and Aglaia beheads Von Krantz, taking his crown for her own. She assumes the throne as queen, much to the delight of everyone in the kingdom. Under the influence of her new secretary, Simone, Aglaia focuses on reforming the absurd laws decreed by Von Krantz, undoing his sexist policies to foster equality between men and women.

If the story ended right there, it would be a rather straightforward tale of female empowerment. To that point, Aglaia had been hard pressed into a life she didn't want, rejected by both her lover and father, banished from her home, and forced to marry a man to appease the draconian laws of the cartoonishly misogynistic Von Krantz.

As the story progresses, however, Aglaia proves to be no hero. While to no degree is she as bad as Von Krantz, Aglaia is still selfish, conceited, and, at times, wholly unlikable. For instance, once she's queen she wastes no time in taking a new lover, a curious immovable man of stone named Philip who is unable to leave the hole he calls home. When Philip resists her advances, she threatens him with death. Later, she justifies her affair to Simone, who can not condone her actions. Her husband, Mr. Kite, still loves her and simmers with resentment. The daughters she once killed for are ignored.

Eventually, Aglaia gives birth to her and Philip's love child, Boris, and her entire personality changes. She sacrifices all to satisfy the whims of her extraordinarily bratty



son. This includes severing ties with Philip, Mr. Kite, and the other residents of the kingdom. Ultimately, she even renounces her crown. And that's how the story ends. Aglaia, our heroine, uncharacteristically allows someone to shackle her independence.

To be honest, the conclusion bothered me. I felt it was a remarkable heel turn that contradicted all that came before it, so I scoured the internet for input from other people. Most comments felt like only surface-level thoughts, picking up the obvious feminist themes from Simon, but failing to mention the complexities of Aglaia's character. Her final defeat unmentioned.

Seeking more understanding, I also read Simon's two follow-up graphic novels set in the same world, *Empress Cixtis* and *Boris the Potato Child*. They both carried on Aglaia's story, more so in *Empress Cixtis*, in which she goes to war with a rival queen to save her kingdom's men from being castrated. *Boris the Potato Child* picks up from the end of *The Song of Aglaia*, with our heroine as an indentured servant to the diabolical Boris, gladly making him heaps of french fries daily as he resurrects the ghost of Von Krantz.

If you read *The Song of Aglaia* for yourself, I'd be interested to know your thoughts.





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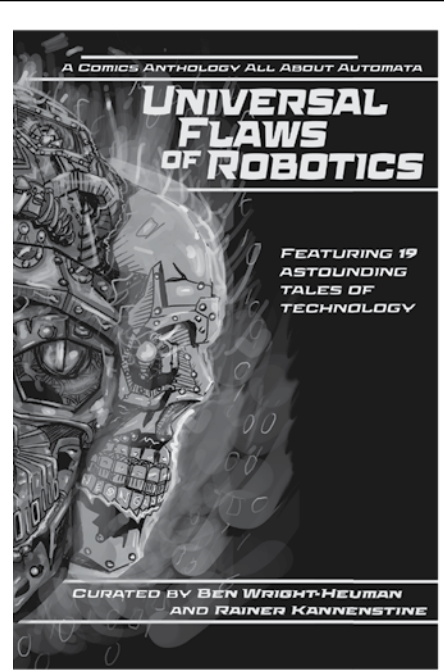
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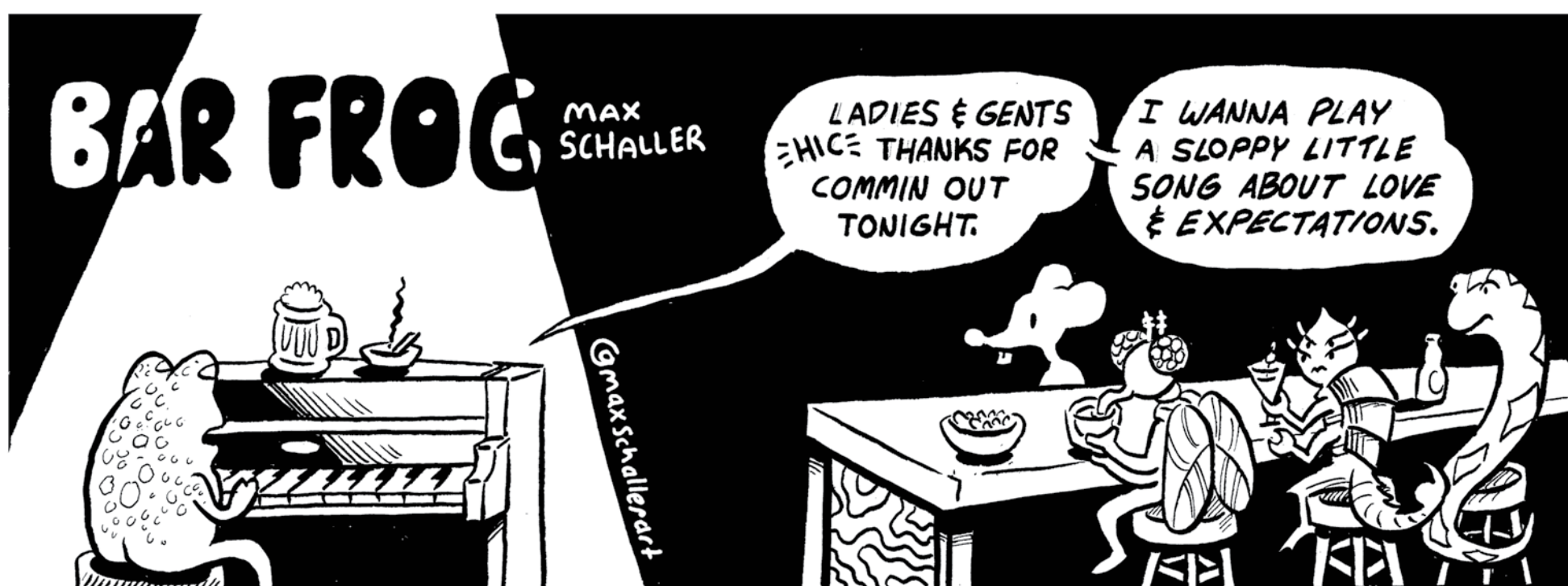
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BUT SHE WAS JUST A PRICKLY  
BUG, SHE COULDN'T HOP FROM  
LOG TO LOG.



SO SHE USED HER PRETTY FACE  
TO CHARM A LONELY FROG.



HE GAVE THIS GIRL A RIDE,  
INTUITION HE DID LACK.



CUZ WHEN SHE GOT WHAT  
SHE HAD NEEDED, SHE JUST  
JABBED HIM IN HIS BACK.



BUT NOW SHE'S WITH HER  
OWN KIND, ANOTHER CROOKED  
VENOMOUS HACK!



C'MERE!  
HEY, LET  
ME GO!



YOU'VE GOT GOOD  
TASTE IN MEN,  
I'LL GIVE YA THAT.





## WELL BLOW ME DOWN / CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

Although initially unhappy with the theme and format restrictions *Thimble Theatre* placed on him, Segar did his best to comply with Hearst’s concept. The title turned out to be the key to unlocking his imagination, as it didn’t saddle Segar with a specific character or group of characters to deal with continually. By casting the young cartoonist in the metaphorical role of theatre director, Segar was able to shift characters and themes around at will, innovating and experimenting with his stories.

As the first year progressed, Segar moved the strip away from the satire idea, discarding various elements, including removing the recurring melodrama villain, Willie Wormwood. *Thimble Theatre* slowly morphed into more of a gag-a-day depiction of the daily lives and dysfunctional romance of Ham Gravy and Olive Oyl.

January 14, 1920, saw the debut of another important character in *Thimble Theatre’s* evolution, Olive Oyl’s older brother Castor. While beginning life as a minor character, by 1924, Castor had all but displaced Ham Gravy as the strip’s main protagonist. Segar had cast Castor as his enterprising, ambitious everyman character. As his role increased in the strip, Segar began to add more and more secondary characters to act as foils to his antics. Most notably, his wife Cylinda Oyl, his fighting cockerel Blizzard, and Cylinda’s father, the elderly, moneyed miser I. Canniford Lotts.

While constantly increasing the *Thimble Theatre* cast, the 1920s also saw Segar continually stretching his storytelling muscles, engaging in lengthier, often month-long, storylines. Segar was becoming a master storyteller. He was the first cartoonist to introduce into the comic strip narrative form black comedy, a style of comedy that makes light of a subject matter that is generally considered taboo. He also became known for his masterful use of the rarely seen cliffhanger gag.

By the end of 1923, the strip had effectively changed into a full-blown comedy-adventure strip with Castor Oyl leading Ham Gravy, Olive, and others on various schemes and exploits. It was during one of these adventures that Castor and the gang would hire a sailor who would change everything.

Popeye entered the world in the winter of 1928. Segar had a bad cold and almost didn’t go to work but, wanting to keep ahead of his workload, dragged himself into his studio and cartooned a hilariously ugly, one-eyed sailor. Thus, giving birth to a legend.

Popeye made his debut on January 17, 1929. He was an instant hit, amazing and delighting readers. He even enchanted the intellectual crowd who suddenly found themselves regularly picking up the “horrendous Hearst rags” to see what Segar and Popeye were up to that day. As it was, Popeye’s undaunting optimism despite insurmountable odds seemed to capture the sensibility of the nation deep in the throws of a Great Depression.

Popeye would completely take over *Timble Theatre*, usurping both Ham Gravy and Castor Oyl as the lead. He would even eventually become Olive Oyl’s love interest. By 1931, the strip would be renamed *Thimble Theatre Starring Popeye*. Eventually, the strip would be renamed again to simply *Popeye*, the name under which it continues to run to this day.

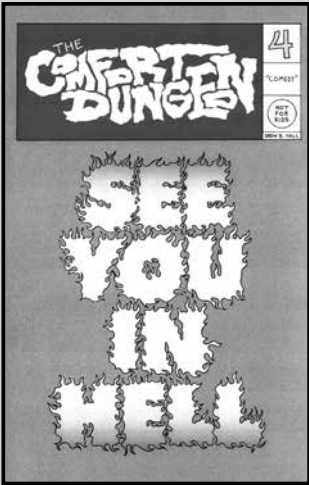
Segar would go on to weave tales starring Popeye until his early death at age 43 on October 13, 1938. His assistant, Bud Sagendorf, would take over the strip after his passing and further the adventures of the sailor with “supker-strenk.” Popeye became known the world over and has been featured in cartoons, movies, toys, games, books, clothes, and more. Not bad for a scruffy, one-eyed sailor, but, in the words of Popeye, “I yam what I yam!”

References:

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- “Me Fren Popeye” by Mort Walker; E.C. Segar’s Popeye: “Well, Blow Me Down!” edited by Kim Thompson
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- “Let Us Now Praise Famous Scoundrels” by Rick Marschall; The Complete E.C. Segar Popeye Vol 2, Sundays, 1932-1934 edited by Rick Marschall
- The Billy Ireland Cartoon Library & Museum

# SCRIBBLER SHOUT-OUTS

A rundown of some current work by area creators



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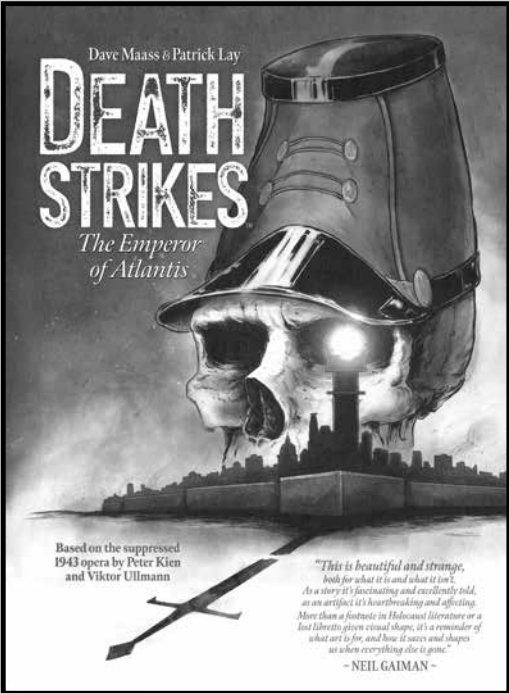
Drew B. Hall

Described as a collection of “goofs, gags, and existential dread,” Comfort Dungeon is the personal anthology comic of Columbus cartoonist Drew B. Hall. Each black-and-white issue includes self-contained short stories and is available at his personal site [dontbeupset.bigcartel.com](http://dontbeupset.bigcartel.com).

### DEATH STRIKES: THE EMPEROR OF ATLANTIS

Dave Maass & Patrick Lay

This graphic novel, written by Dave Maass with art by Columbus’ own Patrick Lay, is based on a suppressed opera written by two men imprisoned within the Terezin concentration camp during World War 2. It takes place in an alternate world in which the fabled city of Atlantis never sank but instead grows into a tyrannical state that declares all-out war on the world, a chilling bit of symbolism of the time. It is available at publisher Dark Horse Comics’ website [darkhorse.com](http://darkhorse.com) or other popular booksellers.



## LOCAL COMIC BOOK STORES

- |                                    |                           |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1 FLYING MONKEY COMICS AND GAMES   | 6 PACKRAT COMICS          |
| 2 DRAGON’S LAIR COMICS AND FANTASY | 7 HEROES AND GAMES        |
| 3 WORLD’S GREATEST COMICS          | 8 CAPITAL CITY COMICS     |
| 4 KRAZZY COMICS                    | 9 SKYLARK TOYS AND COMICS |
| 5 LAUGHING OGRE                    |                           |

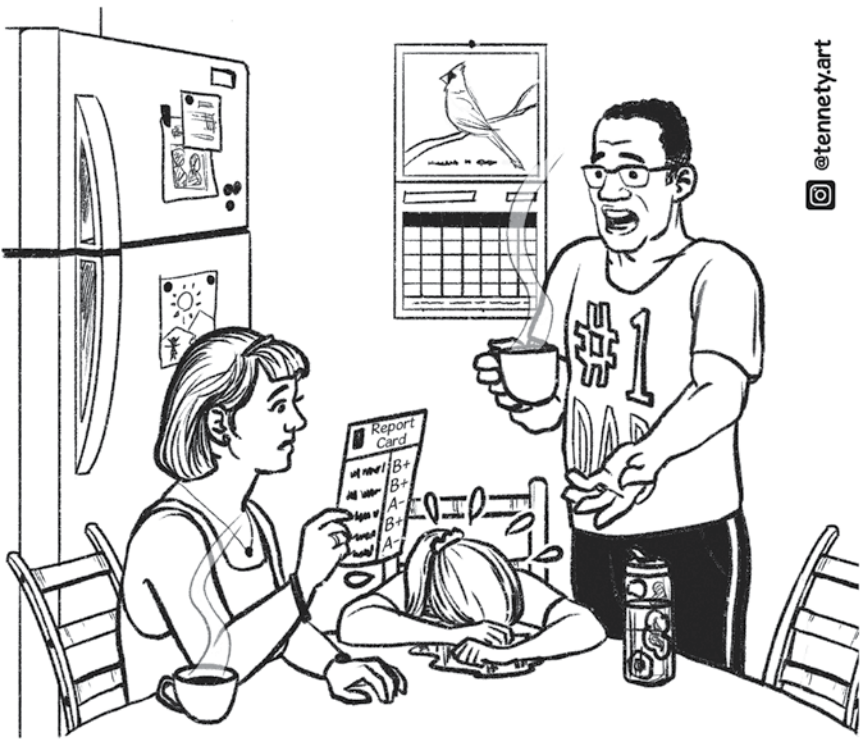
## UPCOMING SHOWS

- FAN EXPO CLEVELAND**  
Friday, March 21 - Sunday, March 23  
Huntington Convention Center  
Cleveland
- COMIC BOOK SHOW**  
Sunday, March 30  
3951 N High St, Columbus
- S.P.A.C.E**  
**(Small Press & Alternative Comics Expo)**  
Saturday, April 26 - Sunday, April 27  
Rhodes Center at the Ohio Expo Center  
717 E 17th Ave, Columbus
- FREE COMIC BOOK DAY**  
Saturday, May 3
- JIM & DAN’S COMIC & TOY SHOW**  
Sunday, June 8  
Wright State University Student Union  
3640 Colonel Glenn Hwy, Dayton
- BUCKEYE COMIC CON**  
Sunday, July 13  
Aladdin Shrine Center  
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# THE FUNNIES

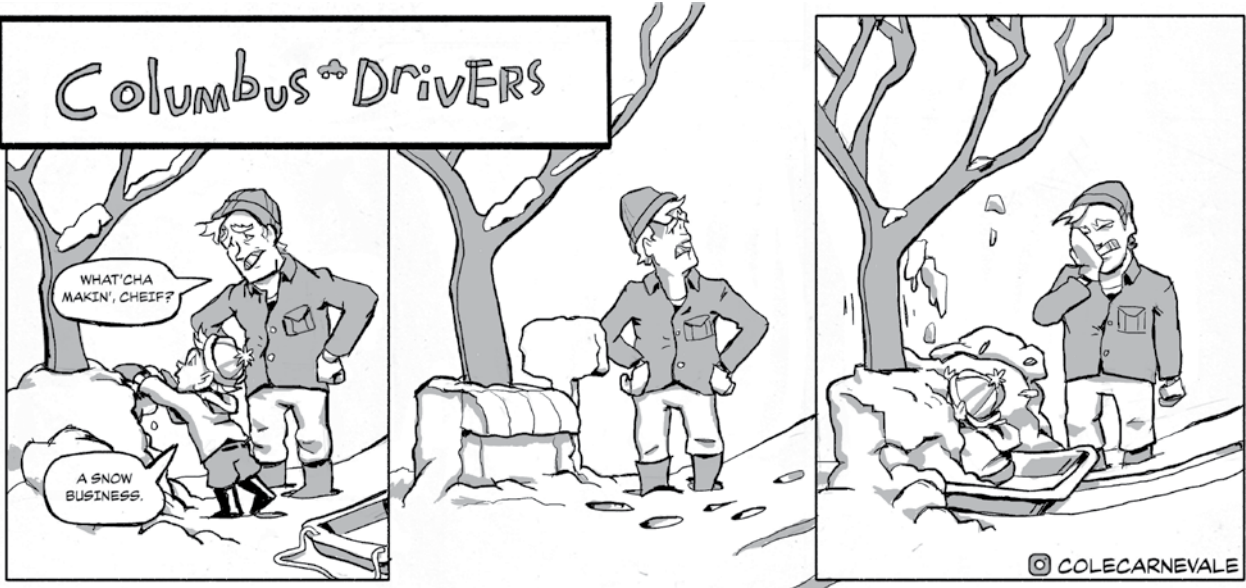
CHANDU TENNETY



@tennety.art

*"It's stressful now, yes, but with better grades she can actually afford the therapy she'll need later on."*

COLE CARNEVALE

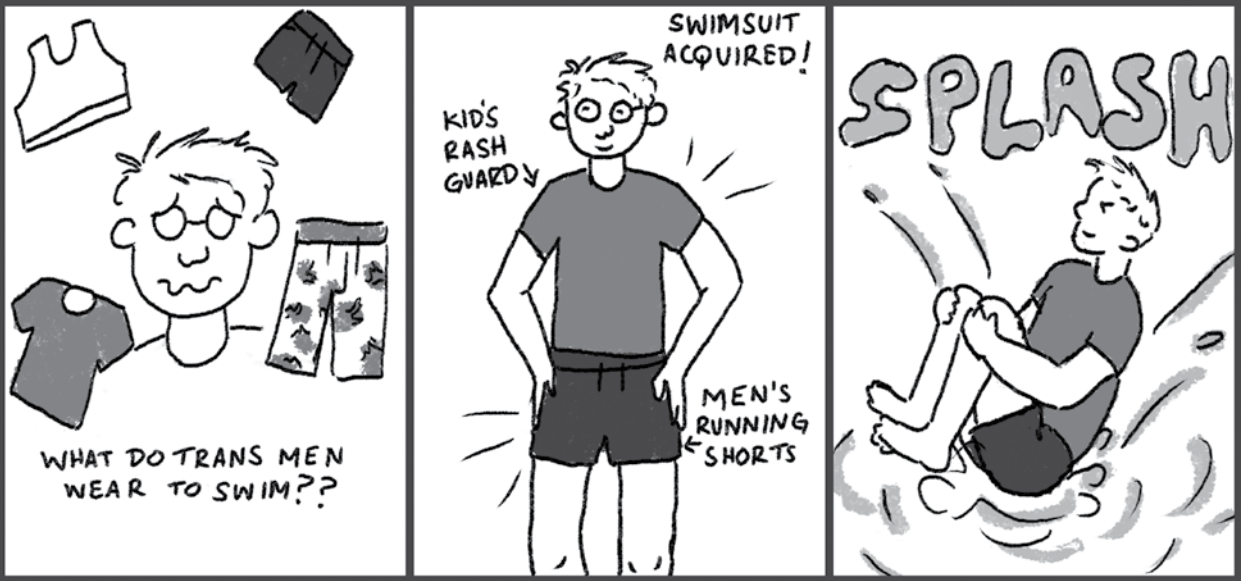


@COLECARNEVALE

FEE THOMAS



LIEF BENNETT



MADYLINE SUBA



ALLISON GEHRING



"Nearly there!"



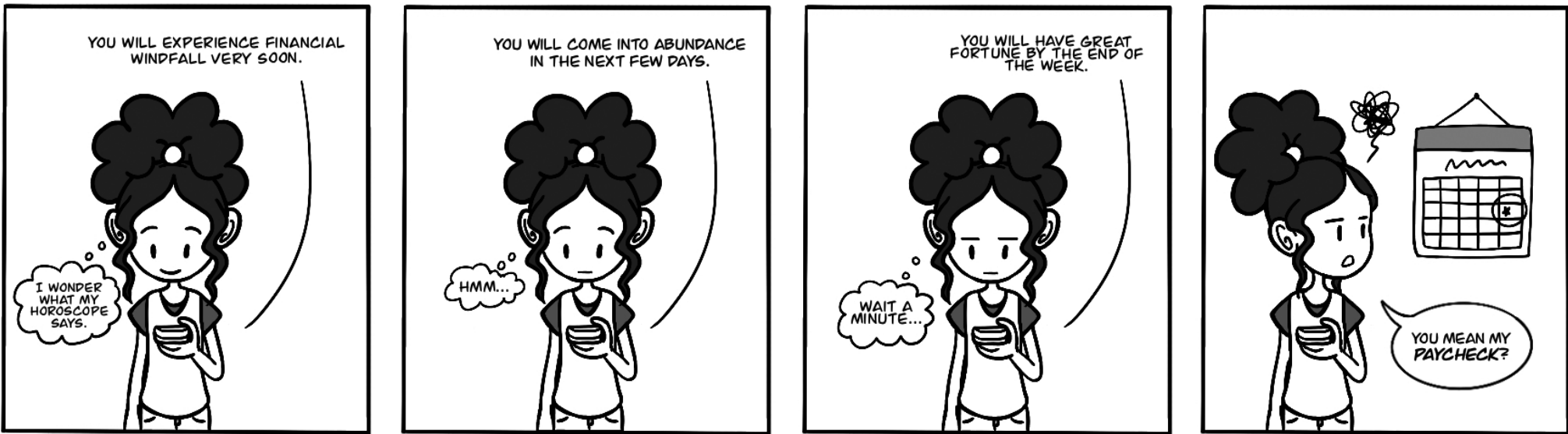
BRI AND LEVI

KENNETH ACHEAMPONG



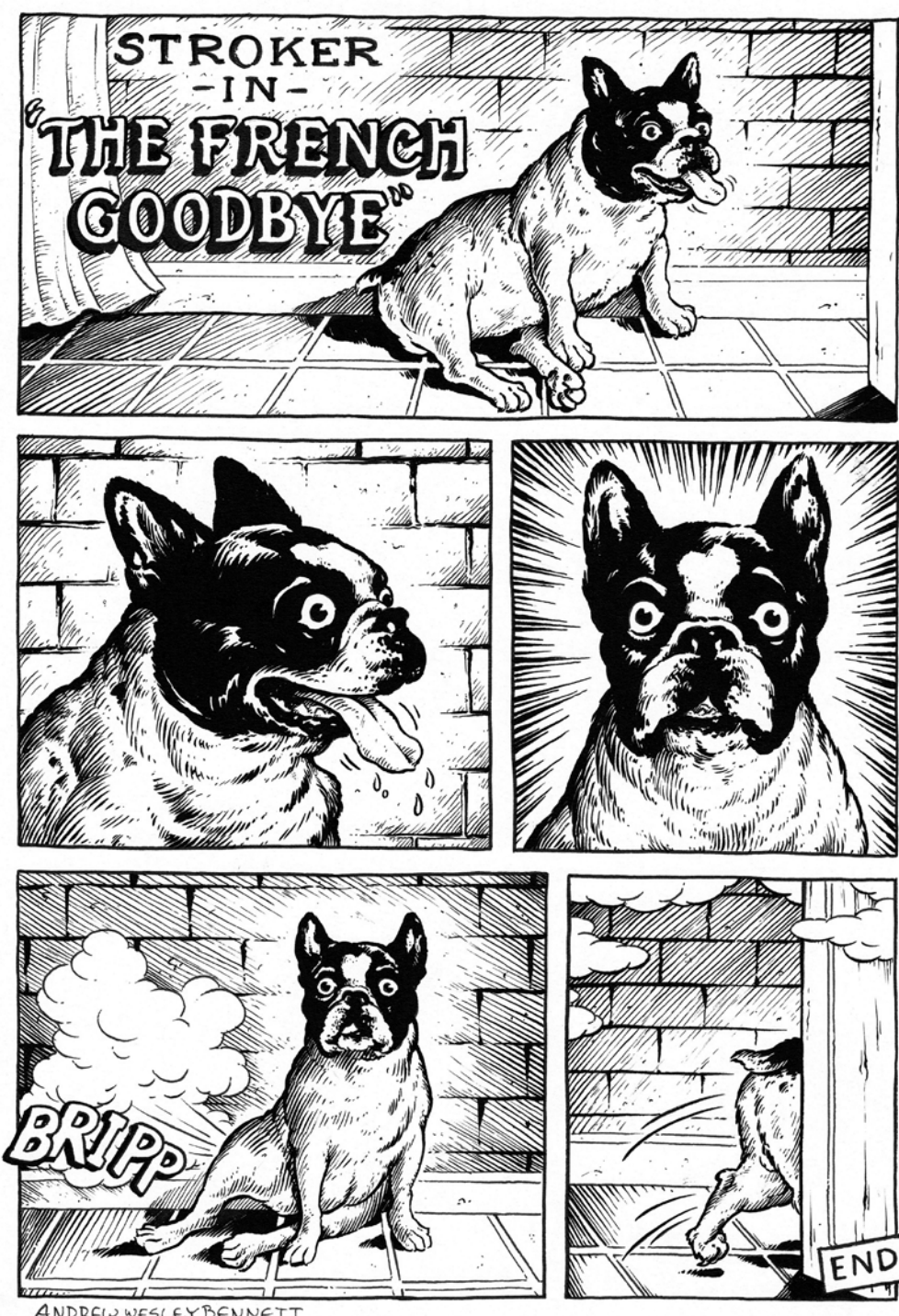
GREAT FORTUNE

JORDAN SWINT



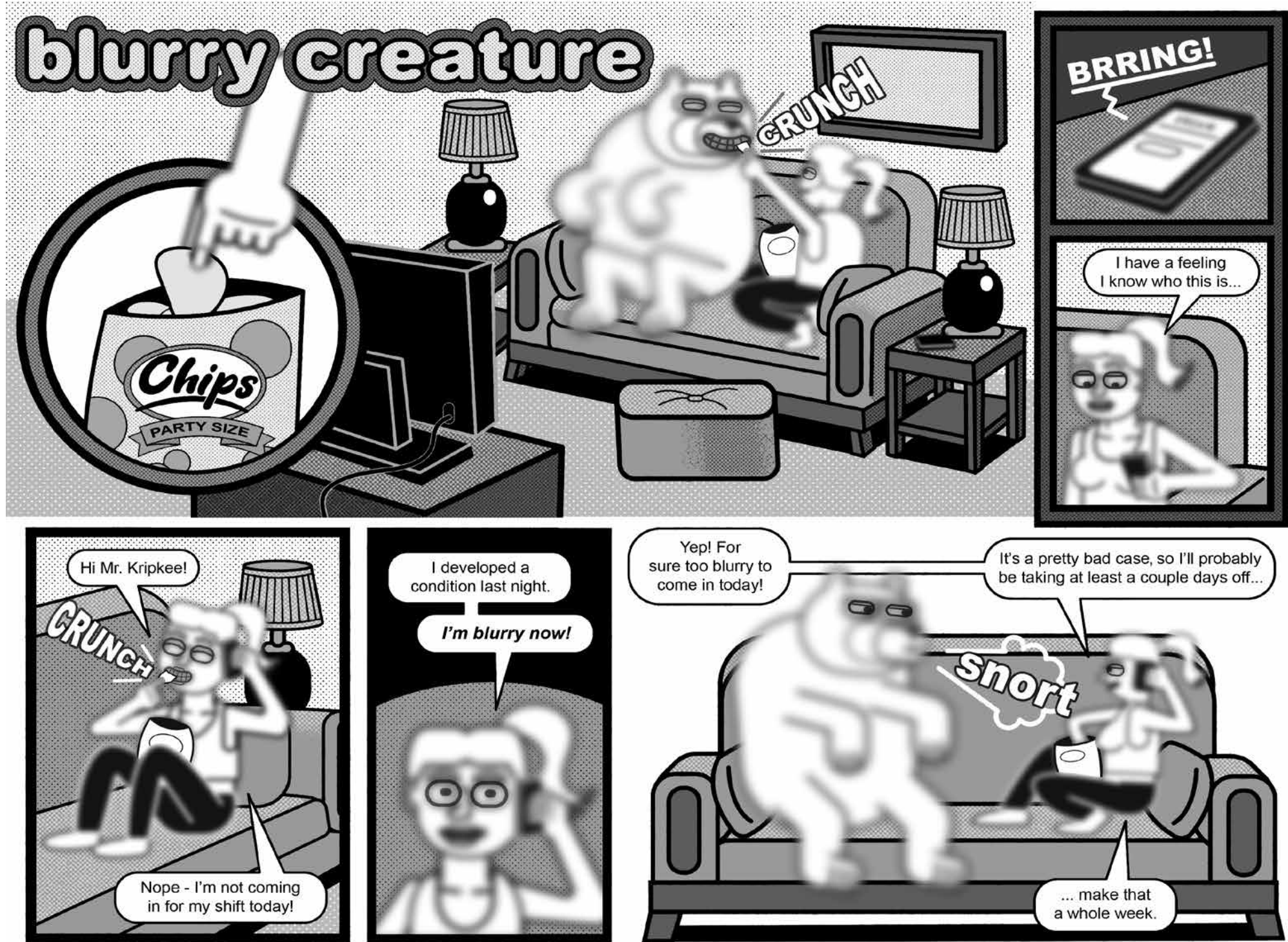
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