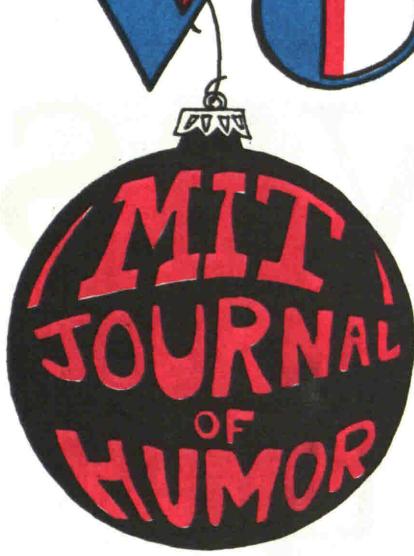
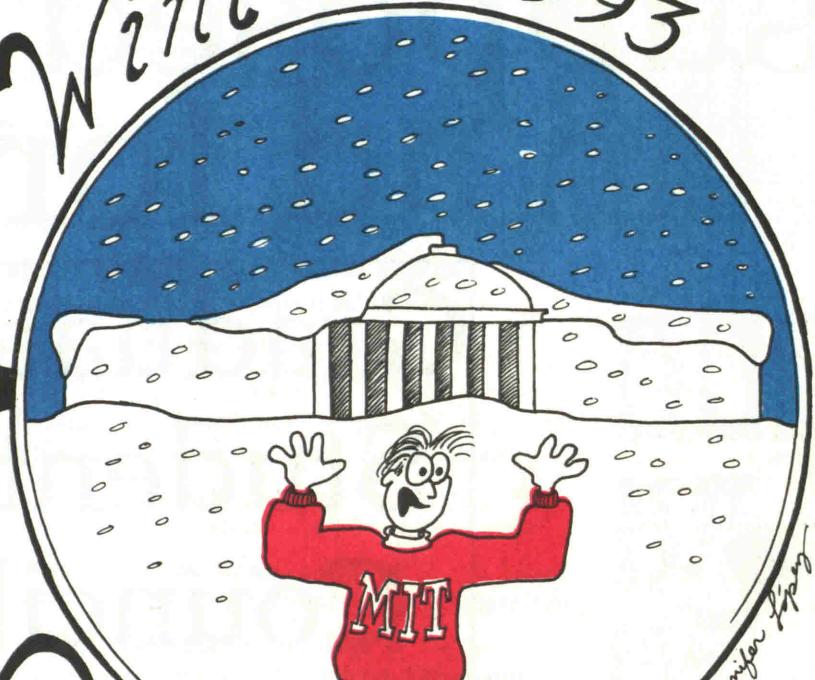


VOODOO



Winter 1993



\$3.00

This was
supposed to be
an ad for the

Graduate
Student
Council

in which I was going to tell you about all the great things the GSC does, like organise trips to the BSO and theatre events, lobby for the interests of Graduate Students at MIT (an increasingly important job now that the administration has decided that 10–20 per cent of us are expendable) and try to encourage communication between graduate students in different departments at MIT, and also between MIT and other institutions. We work to improve the life of graduate students in a number of ways: for example, we designed and implemented the new Safe Ride schedule, so that you know when the bus will come, and we have arranged with the Medical Department to clarify and expand coverage for graduate students when they are off campus. We participate in the various Institutional Committees to make sure that graduate student voices are heard: for example, we have representatives on the Council on Family and Work, the Student Medical Advisory Committee, and the Committee on Privacy, among many many others. We also give away free pizza at just about every meeting. You can always find an ad about the current GSC activities in the Tech on Tuesday on page 3; we take up the bottom half of the page; and you can get in touch with us by sending email to gsc-request@mit, and we'll put you on a mailing list to get news of everything we do.

But I ran out of time!

In "Happy Holidays" VooDoo



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Clowns, childhood flashbacks and more from John Dzenitis.

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Another great installment from Henry Chiu.

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James Fleming's drug-demented he... oh b.f.d. I hate writing these stupid things, and Mr. "Dorkboy" Phlegming didn't get this next installment of his stupid run-on story to me until the last fricking minute, so I have no idea what it's about, the picture is crooked so you have to squint, and I hate his little Freshman ass. Coffee... Goddamn. WILL SOMEONE GET ME SOME COFFEE?

The Controversy over MAPHTA — page 42

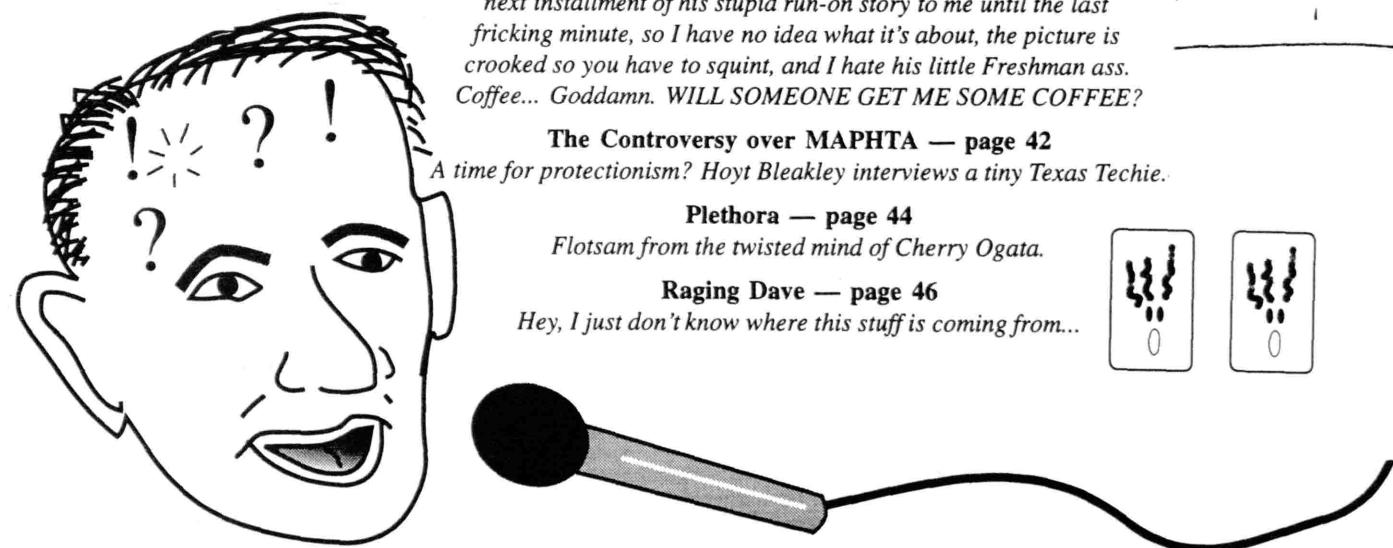
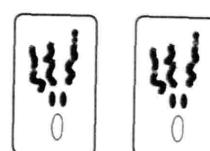
A time for protectionism? Hoyt Bleakley interviews a tiny Texas Techie.

Plethora — page 44

Flotsam from the twisted mind of Cherry Ogata.

Raging Dave — page 46

Hey, I just don't know where this stuff is coming from...



FROM THE PUBLISHER



Volume 75, Number 2

VooDoo Magazine
MIT Room 50-309
77 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02139
(617) 253-4575
voodoo@mit.edu

<i>Publisher</i>	<i>Staff Emeritus</i>	<i>Contributors</i>
Phosphorous	William B. Elmer '22	Alan Blount
<i>Editor-in-Chief</i>	<i>Cover Artist</i>	Wan-Ying Chee
Kent Lundberg	Jennie López	Adam Dershowitz
<i>Business Manager</i>	<i>Staff</i>	Gary L. Dryfoos
Byron Davis	Larry Appleman	Jeremy Godinger
<i>Editors</i>	Brian Bradley	PR Goldstone
Hoyt Bleakley	Jim Bredt	Tony Gray
James Fleming	Jason Bucy	Mark Hurst
<i>Senior Staff</i>	Henry Chiu	Steve Hwang
Raluca Barbulescu	John Dzenitis	Dave Jordan
Courtney Moriarta	Katarina López	Neel Krishanswami
	Cherry Ogata	Jeffrey Poore
	Hani Sallum	Luke Sullivan
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OS/2

MIT Users Group

Next Meeting : Thursday November 18,
in room 2-105, 5:00 pm

Topics : multithreaded programming,
the future of Workplace OS/2

For more information, send mail to :

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or join our public email lists :

os2@mit.edu

os2partners@mit.edu

or look us up in TechInfo :

Computing->User Groups->OS/2



Next Submission Deadline : January 24, 1994.

LETTERS TO VOO DOO

Dear MIT Publicationally-Abled Groups:

Please inform your readers of an omission in our recently published booklet, "Dealing with Harassment at MIT": **It is also harassment to burn harassment booklets.**

Thank you.

Committee Against Harassment and Freedom
Office of the Provost

Consider it done. Thanks for writing!



VooDoo Subscriptions

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77 Mass Ave, Cambridge, MA 02139

Or call 3-4575 to ask how you may qualify for a free interdepartmental subscription to your office or dorm!

Dear Editor:

Do you want to see something really gross? Go into any Athena cluster, take one of the keyboards, hold it upside down about six inches off the desk, and shake it. So far, I've found sesame seeds, fingernail clippings, bread crumbs, scabs, insect carcasses, and a hairy dime.

Cool man,
Bud Melman.

Consider it done. Thanks for writing!

Dear Editor:

Could you kindly tell me whether your mascot, Phosphorous, or "Phos", is male or female?

You see, over the years I've become strangely attracted to him or her. I've finally decided that I'm willing to deal with the problems of a anthra-felina, reala-cartoona relationship, but I'm not sure if I can handle the sexual ambiguity.

Thank you for your kind attention.

Sincerely,
Chris

Consider it done. Thanks for writing!

Dear Editor,

I would like to extend my gratitude to your staff for helping to make my freshman year a remarkable one.

The minute I got here I felt your presence. I thought MIT would be difficult, but I realize that this school is one big joke. It used to be a serious institution. However, with each issue of VooDoo, the students become more infatuated with the idea of humor and its involvement in science and engineering.

And I am grateful to you that I do not have to undergo the pressures of schoolwork. At least not as much as I would at a regular school.

As a matter of fact, MIT has become a bastion of humor. That is the sole reason that people come here (I realize this now).

To my surprise I am also intellectually stimulated by the work here, and the creative approach used by the school to make courses interesting.

This is not to say that work and humor are the only reasons I am enjoying this place. The beautiful campus and my beautiful neighborhood do help me enjoy the stress-free atmosphere.

The women here are amazing! That is the reason I came to this school. I knew it attracted beautiful women from all over the world. But I expected some hideous ones as well. But I just can't find one,

no matter how hard I look.

Thanks to you, I can now see the best four years of my life ahead of me. Well, actually, maybe it's my great roommates. Particularly the one who watches TV twenty-four hours a day. His apathetic attitude is actually a joke. He leads a miserable life so that everyone can laugh at him! Wow!

Another aspect of MIT that I love is the clean dorms, and the fact that my dorm allows pets (roaches). Most schools have policies against this, but not this warm school I have already grown to love.

But I feel bad now. Reflecting on the great time I am having, I realize that there are starving people all over the world. And I am enjoying life so much. MIT's unique feeding system to make sure we don't put on the "freshman fifteen" is so appealing to me, it makes me feel like I am a spoiled little boy who has not seen the harsh nature of the world.

I am going to have to transfer. Actually, I think I'll drop out, become a farmer, and feed the masses. Now I feel better.

Thanks again, VooDoo for giving me the best ten weeks of my life. I am sorry I have to leave you like this, but I am left with no other choice.

Jason Silverman

Uh... consider it done. Err,... thanks for writing?

Dear Phos,

Your mag has reached new heights of hilarity! Your recent spoof, "A Cartoon Guide to the Superconducting Supercollider" was quite the biting satire! Bravo! High time you gave those mercenary physicists and money-grubbing high energy wankers the cuff! Give them all what-for, I say! I was holding my sides as I read your blatantly obvious lies about the SSC providing jobs! As if the average John Q. would even deign to apply to work at such a money-munching factory! The thought that anyone without a congenital or infantile-suffocation-syndrome-related mental disorder of the highest severity, with symptoms running the gamut from compulsive nose-picking to collecting stamps, and a lobotomy scar the size of Heathrow would ever give a soaring rodent's arse about a "Hook moson" or a "hick's Nissan" or

whatever is entirely inconceivable to me, but not I suppose to our local physicists' Jaguar payment!

Oh, and your clever fiction of the U.S. failing its children by sinking the SSC! I believe you wrote, "If Congress kills the SSC, it will only conflict itself on its emphasis in getting children interested in science." Ripping good jest, chaps; we all know the U.S. conflicts itself all the time! Priceless!

My only complaint may be with the artwork. I only hope that in a later issue those vile little children from the Cartoon Guide have their little noggins and gaping mouths and adorable eyeballs smeared ever-so-flat by a Zamboni. I'm sure you'll come through for me. Good show, Phos and company, jolly good show.

Marshall Johnson
Professor of Oceanography

Can anyone say "Freudian Big-Science Envy"? I knew you could.

To the Editor,

It has come to my attention that a mailing in Office of the President envelopes went out to members of the VooDoo staff. I must inform you that this practice is not allowed and that you must immediately return the envelopes to this office.

I'm sure that this was unintentional and that from now on you will purchase materials for future mailings. If you have questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours truly,
Laura B. Mersky
Administrative Assistant to the President.

Actually, Laura, we meant to do it. As an under-funded student group (without a \$4,000 discretionary fund), we are appalled at the wastefulness we find when scrounging through the trash looking for food. We discovered your envelopes on one of these missions and rescued them from their land-fill fate. We are sorry if anyone was misled by our use of recycled stationery. In these tough economic times, it is understandable that students might actually believe that the President's Office had taken to addressing its envelopes in crayon. Remember: Reduce. Reuse. Recycle.



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At Peace with the Circus

by John Dzenitis

I know this doesn't really hold up in court, but let me start by saying, "It wasn't my idea, and it's not my fault." I was looking for something new to do on a Thursday night; I had seen Seinfeld so many weeks in a row that my Kramer imitation was flawless. In fact, I was bursting from room to room in my apartment when the phone rang. The caller happened to be a reliable source of things to do, and when he suggested that I join them and attend "The Greatest Show On Earth," my first thought was, "Great." I suppose that's to be expected, along with "Show" and "Earth." I hadn't been to the circus for many years, however, and I wasn't exactly sure what it was.

"Is the circus the thing with The Bearded Fat Ladies and The Guy With Two Butts?" I asked.

"No, that's the Democratic National Convention. This is the thing where they fire clowns out of cannons."

Well, I thought that was the Republican National Convention, but I decided I was game anyway. I mean, how can you pass up the chance to see some serious and potentially lethal clown pyrotechnics?

As I was jostled along the Mighty, Mighty Green Line towards my destination, I wondered whether the show would start on time, since most of the circus freaks seemed to be riding the T with me. My mind drifted back over the years, back to that fuzzy period when things seemed really big. I think it's called childhood. In my reverie, it was as if I strolled through an art gallery of still scenes from my last circus, although this gallery's price was lower and the work of better quality than most I've seen. I saw my father leading me through the bustling crowd. I saw him refusing to buy me the cool flashing light toy. I could see and feel the gigantic Coca-Cola-brand sugar drink purchased as consolation, ice-cold in my small, warm hands. Next came several scenes of confusing clown activity, then a very sudden, very loud explosion, and I knew that was the end of the circus for me. Somewhere beyond that, more facts were lurking in the dark reaches of my mind, but I could not recall them. I wasn't sure that I wanted to.

I snapped back to reality as the train ground to a stop, and the driver announced, "Hampgrliphm." We raced from the station to the Garden, stopping only long enough for five or six beers at a nearby bar. I had not been to the Boston Garden before. Upon entering it, I couldn't help seeing the irony of "The Greatest Show On Earth" being held in "The Biggest Shithole On Earth". Another rush of nostalgia came when I smelled that familiar circus animal odor, although in this case the odor was probably just left over from the Bruins game the night before. The ticket prices were surprisingly high, but I reasoned that they were only about ten dollars more than a movie, and here we had a chance to see someone die for real. Even with this rationalization, I knew that if I had a child, I would not buy him a flashing light toy in addition to the ticket. Nature or nurture?



I snagged a sugar drink and two balls of cotton candy on my way through the concourse. (A circus-viewer's adrenaline rushes burn thousands of calories, and I didn't want to suffer from low blood sugar.) A beaming man in a red "Bingling Rrothers and Rarnum & Railey Circus" blazer [name changed for legal purposes] handed me a one-page letter entitled, "Genuine Animal Welfare." The letter was some kind of counterattack against radical animal activists that were not in evidence except on the sheet. I imagined them huddled around the load-

ing dock in ninja garb, making final plans to free the 16 Bengal tigers in the heart of Boston. The letter built to a feverish, foaming pitch, crying that these free radicals would, "...even forbid the eating of eggs, drinking of milk, and wearing of wool or silk."

"You're right," I said, eyeing the beaming man's red polyneoprene blazer, "these bastards must be stopped! How do I join?" Actually, I was thinking that I was going to get my money's worth. I reckoned that if they had to issue this letter to patrons who had already committed to the show, there must be some hard-core, dangerous, man-versus-beast entertainment in store. My impatient friends whisked me off towards the music that had begun.

The show was into full swing as we made our way to our seats, if you use a fairly liberal interpretation of "full swing." The cheesy announcer guy (either Fonzie or Potsie from "Happy Days," I can't remember which) was singing and dancing atop a mobile stage. The song was "The Heart of Rock 'n' Roll Is Still Beatin'." To begin with, if this song represents the heart of Rock 'n' Roll, then this beating heart should be torn out of Rock 'n' Roll's chest with our bare hands, we should show it to Rock 'n' Roll before it loses consciousness, take a bite out of it, and flush it down the toilet like the crap it is. (Would I be belaboring the point if I added that the version performed by Potsie and the Circus Orchestra was even worse?)

I found myself back in the food court. I thought that the early beers had sufficiently sedated me, but the introductory fanfare had already proved me wrong. A bathroom break and more supplies were in order. As I stood in line at the urinal, my childhood circus memories returned like unwanted guests, one at a time, drinking my beer and urinating inaccurately. Actually, that turned out to be one of the clowns.

"What are you, some kinda clown?" I asked.

"Fuck you," he slurred.

I think someone once said that clowns were the window to our souls. If that's true, we're all going to hell.

I bought three large beers to settle my nerves, a box of popcorn to keep my blood pressure up, and two Sno-Cups (Boston Harbor ice impregnated with colored sugar, in a 3-D souvenir cup featuring the clown from the bathroom). This cost me more than the ticket had, and as I regained my seat I felt that the circus owed me some amazing spectacles.

Potsie had apparently recovered from his brutal "Heart of Rock 'n' Roll" performance. He would run out into the center ring between performances and announce what we were about to see. He must have been pretty persuasive when he created his position, because the need for an announcer was not apparent to me. For example, nearly everyone would have figured out that there were elephants in the ring even if he didn't say, "Here come the elephants!" Occasionally he expanded his role by trying to get us to shout things back to him. Often-times what we shouted back was not what he had asked to hear.



There must be some theory to scheduling the order of the acts and assigning each act to one of the three rings. The ring farthest from us was the "green" ring, where promising young performers could hone their craft and gain the maturity that center-ring performance demands. The center ring was the "center" ring, obviously for the best performers in the peak of their genius. These are the people that we wanted to become when we thought of running away to join the circus. Closest

to our seats was the "washout" ring, the domain of alcoholic elephant taunters, dizzy tumblers, and sagging acrobats. These are the people that we would have become if we had run away and joined the circus. They were performing for the people who paid the least for their tickets, and they knew it. Worse yet, we knew that they knew it. I'm sure that this "knowing exchange" went on and on, but I'm already confused so I'll stop.

The first real act I saw featured animals running around the rings with people standing on their backs. I guess I should have taken a notebook or had less beer, because I can't remember what kind of animals they were. Dogs would have been too small, and I probably would have noticed elephants, so I think they must have been horses. What I did notice was that we were indeed at the washout ring, because the people on the animals were larger and less mobile than those in the other rings. It takes a special kind of confidence or hopelessness to wear those circus costumes, but to then stand up in the merciless spotlight and be shaken around the ring takes Zen-like unconsciousness. Someone made an unkind statement regarding the relatively close sizes of the draft animal and human butts in the ring. I tried to scold them, but I had a sharp ball of popcorn and colored ice lodged in my throat, and it just sounded like I was laughing.

Our end lost out again on the next performance. At the far end was the second-worst circus act I could think of: Dancing Dogs. At our end was the first-worst: Two Sizes of Running Horses. The one notable aspect of this act was the tremendous kindness and patience of the giant horses towards the tiny horses. As the excitable tiny horses ran between the legs of the giant horses, they would occasionally strike their spiked hairdos against what must be a fairly sensitive area of a giant horse. None of them looked like they enjoyed this, but neither did they raise their huge hooves and mash the tiny horses into pulp. That's control.

The contortionists were quite amazing. I guess you have to be extremely thin to work in this field, because these three women were as thin as rails, albeit very flexible rails. I guiltily regarded my own girth as I polished off my fifth cotton candy ball. The male audience members seemed to be particularly impressed by the contortionists, many of them groaning and grunting with a weird combination of pain, disgust, and respect. In some ways it was a

synopsis of male-female relationships.

I was beginning to feel rather strange. I sensed that the salt, synthetic sugar, and alcohol were fighting for control over my nervous system, and I was getting pretty nervous. Weird prickly clouds formed around me and disappeared, only to reappear in color, then with stereo sound, and finally with driver-side airbag standard. Small packets of spasms rushed from my left toes up across to my right finger tips, and it was only by smashing my head against the seat in front of me that I could get my fingers to unclench. I looked down and saw the giant coke of my childhood in my hands. My father was to my right. When I looked up, it was not the ugly Boston Garden and Potsie that I saw, but the lovely Louisville Freedom Hall and the scariest clown in the world. With a bomb. When it exploded, I yelled, "Nyah!" and threw the icy coke into the air, not directly up, but in a high, narrow parabola that had my father's lap at the other end.



Back in the real world, people were clapping as the trapeze folks came out. I regained some of my composure and clapped along with them, although slightly off-beat. The dark secret of the past circus was looming around the corner, and I didn't want to see it, so I tried to concentrate hard on what was going on. In my opinion, the real hero of the trapeze act is the catcher. This guy continually swings, upside down, waiting to expertly nab the wrists of his brother. Meanwhile, his fancy-pants brother is hanging out on the platform with the two chicks, telling them how stupid the catcher is. It's a cruel world.

How long do you think it takes to erect a cage that will hold 16 Bengal tigers and their "tamer"? If you answered anything over five minutes, you're wrong. (Maybe we should get those guys to finish off that biology building...) The circus used to have a German with fluorescent teeth as the tiger-tamer, but now it was some long-haired

dirtball from Kansas. Here was the real animal cruelty: some of the most powerful, lethal beasts on Earth, accustomed to kicking ass in whatever jungle they wanted, forced to jump up on stuff whenever this guy yelled their names. I'm just a weak human, and I don't want to hang out with a long-haired dirtball from Kansas, let alone jump up on stuff at his call.

Tandor the Tiger was the Mischievous One, which is a standard part in any animal act from dancing dogs to running horses to clowning clowns. The Mischievous One is the animal that growls the most, jumps up last, and makes faces when the trainer has his back turned. Tandor the Tiger acted with incredible sophistication; not only was he mischievous, he was also playing the mischievous part mischievously. He jumped up much too soon or much too late. He performed the entire routine twice while the tamer had his back turned. When the tamer nicked his hand on one of his sequins, however, Tandor became incredibly still. You could see his nose flaring as he breathed in the sweet smell of warm blood ("he" in this case being the tiger, although who can say what the tamer's nose may have been doing). There was a tense minute while Tandor refused all commands and pleas, and then he padded off into his private cage, prematurely ending the tiger show. It was a powerful experience. No one clapped much, I guess because the flimsy Five Minute Cage really made us feel like a part of the action.

The acrobats tried to revive the shaken crowd with audience participation. Just as they were asking for volunteers from the audience, I had another sugar spell. As luck would have it, this one featured spine cramps that forced me to stand ramrod-straight, raise both of my arms, and yell, "yesyesyes yesyesyes yesyesyes!" This was apparently the correct response in their eyes, and they led me to the center ring. The smiling acrobats were jabbering quickly in English, and I couldn't make out what they were saying. They all looked surprisingly like the scary clown from the bomb hallucination. I was positioned in the center of the ring, but the jabbering and gesticulating could not make me understand what was happening. They seemed happy enough when I just stood there.

The lights were extremely hot and bright in the ring, and when I closed my eyes against the sting of the sweat pouring down my face, I saw the past instead of the back of my eyelids. This was not a

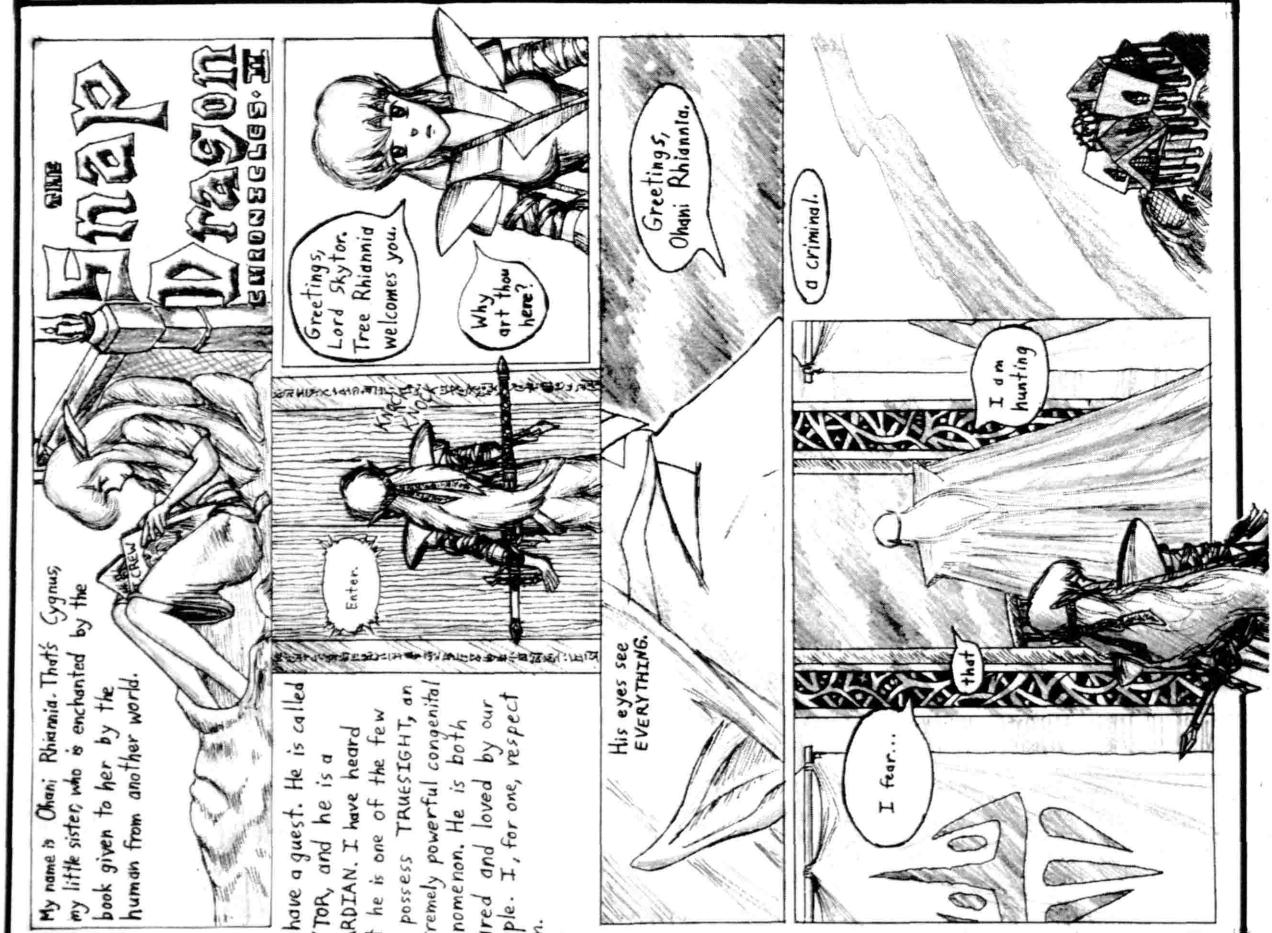
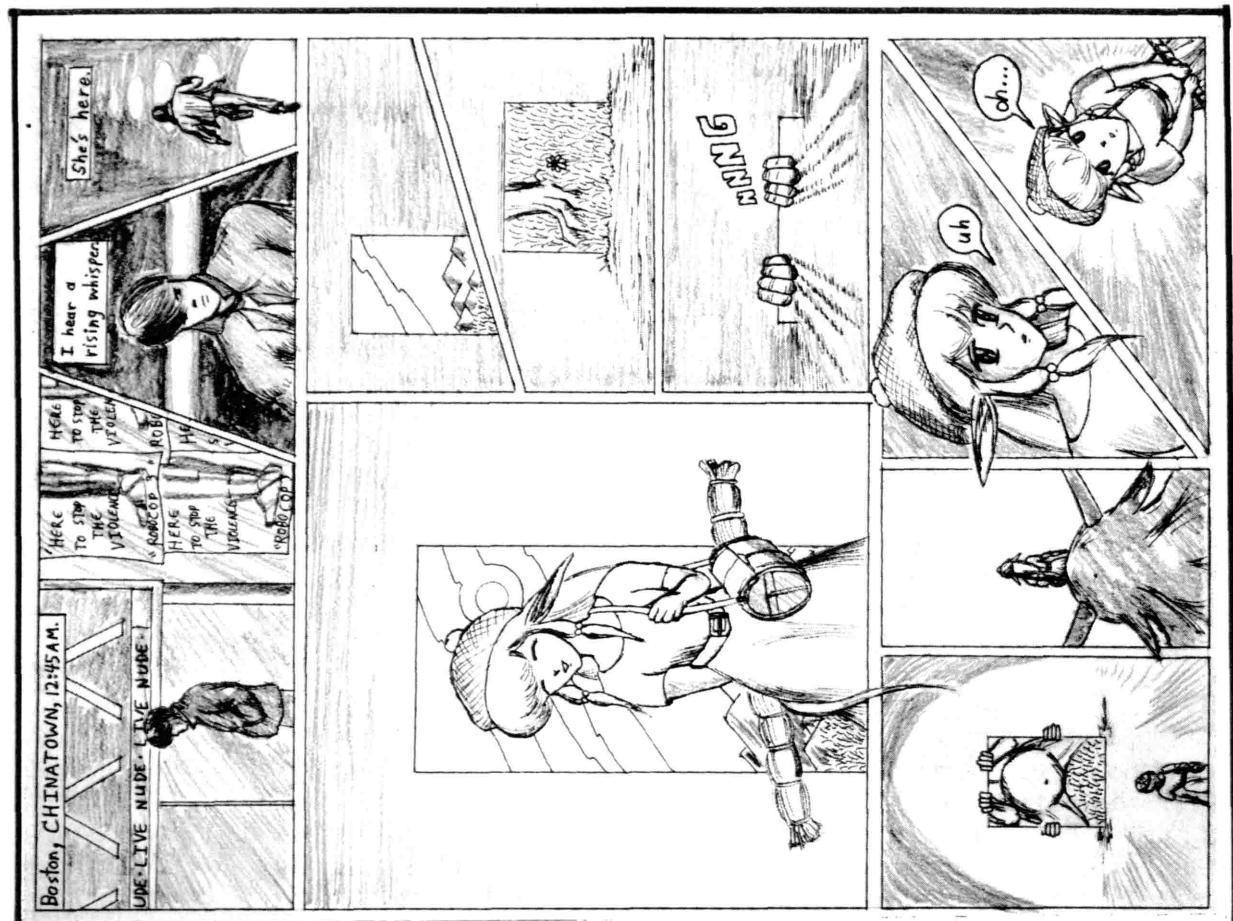
great time for another flashback, but there it was. The explosion ended and the cold drink landed on my father. I was screaming, my father was yelling, and the evil clown was laughing maniacally. I realized that the terror that gripped me froze many of my muscles, but contracted some too, in particular those associated with bladder control or lack thereof. This, then, was the dark secret of that circus, somehow twisted into obscurity by panic and shame. At least I could now face it, and understand it as the response of a terrified child. My memory was sharp and clear; my mind was no longer using forgetfulness to protect me from the trauma. I was finally at peace with the circus.

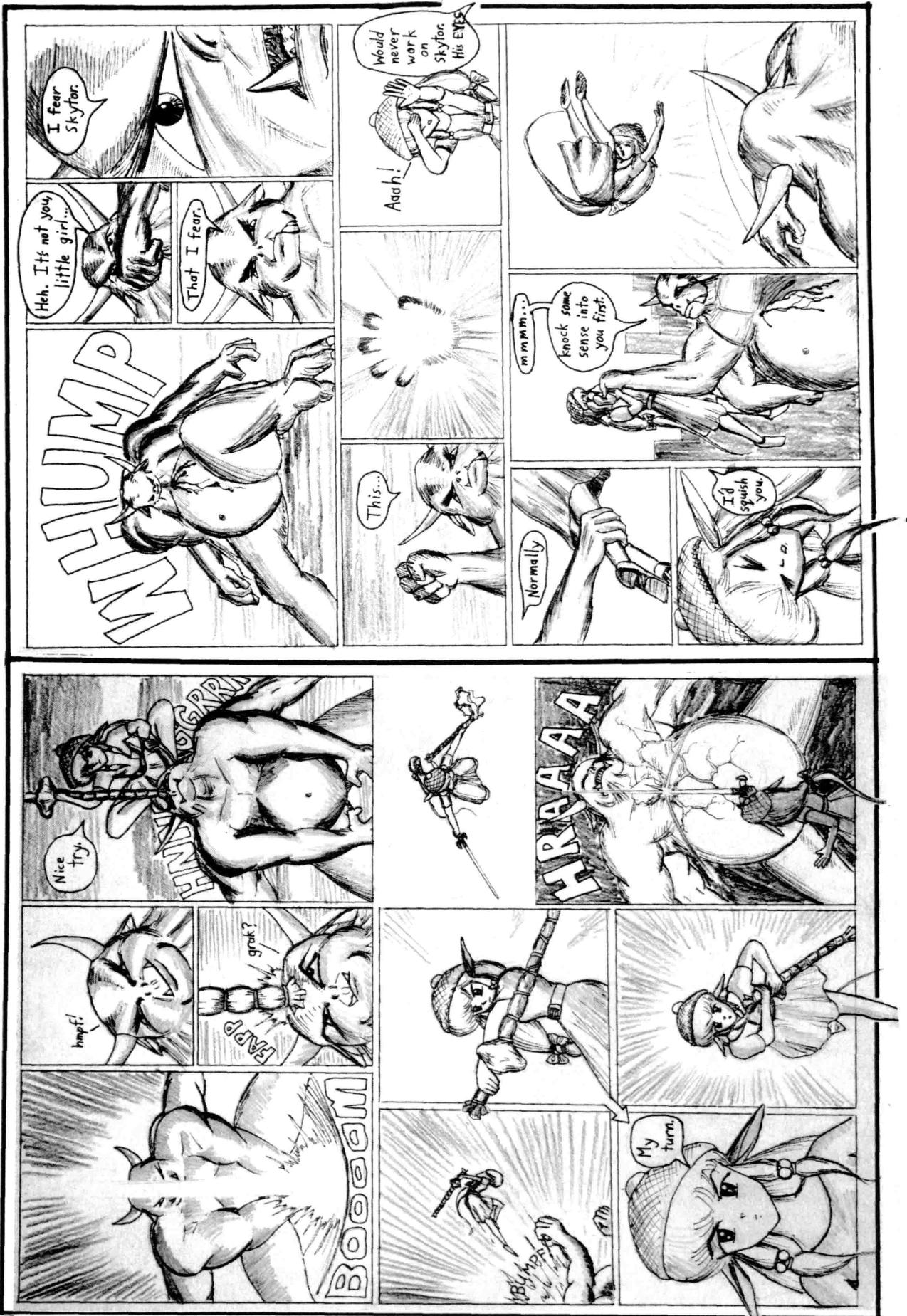


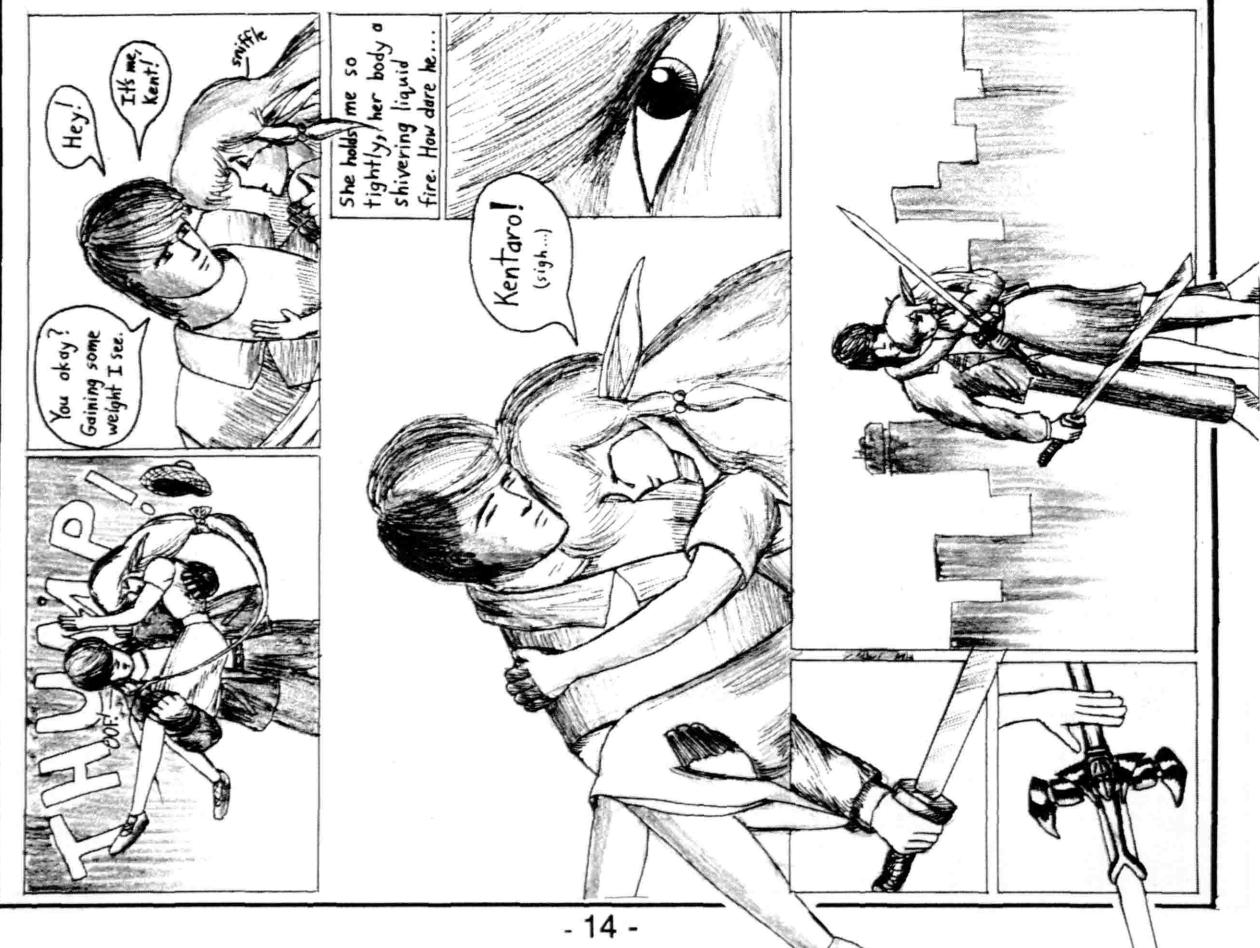
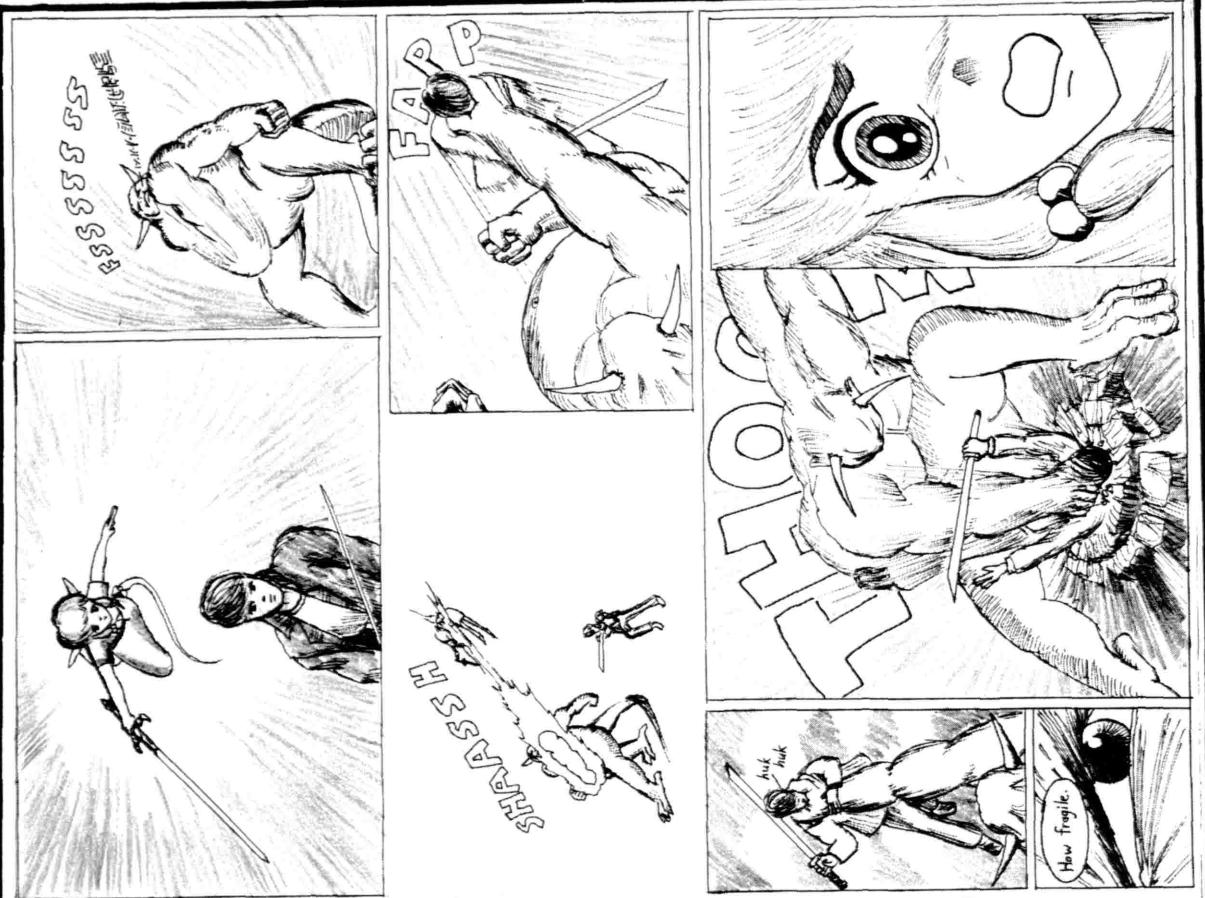
As I opened my eyes, I realized that I was reliving my loss of bladder control in a physical manner as well, this time as an adult, and in the center ring. Potsie noticed that something was wrong and came running from the side of the ring. At the same time, one of the acrobats went sailing in a flip over my head. At least, that's what I think he was trying to do, because I lashed out quite frantically with my 3-D Sno-Cup when I noticed him. The force of the unbreakable plastic tearing off his nose and left cheek really changed his trajectory, and he went flying off into the tiger cages, releasing the latch on Tandor the Mischievous and Bloodthirsty One.

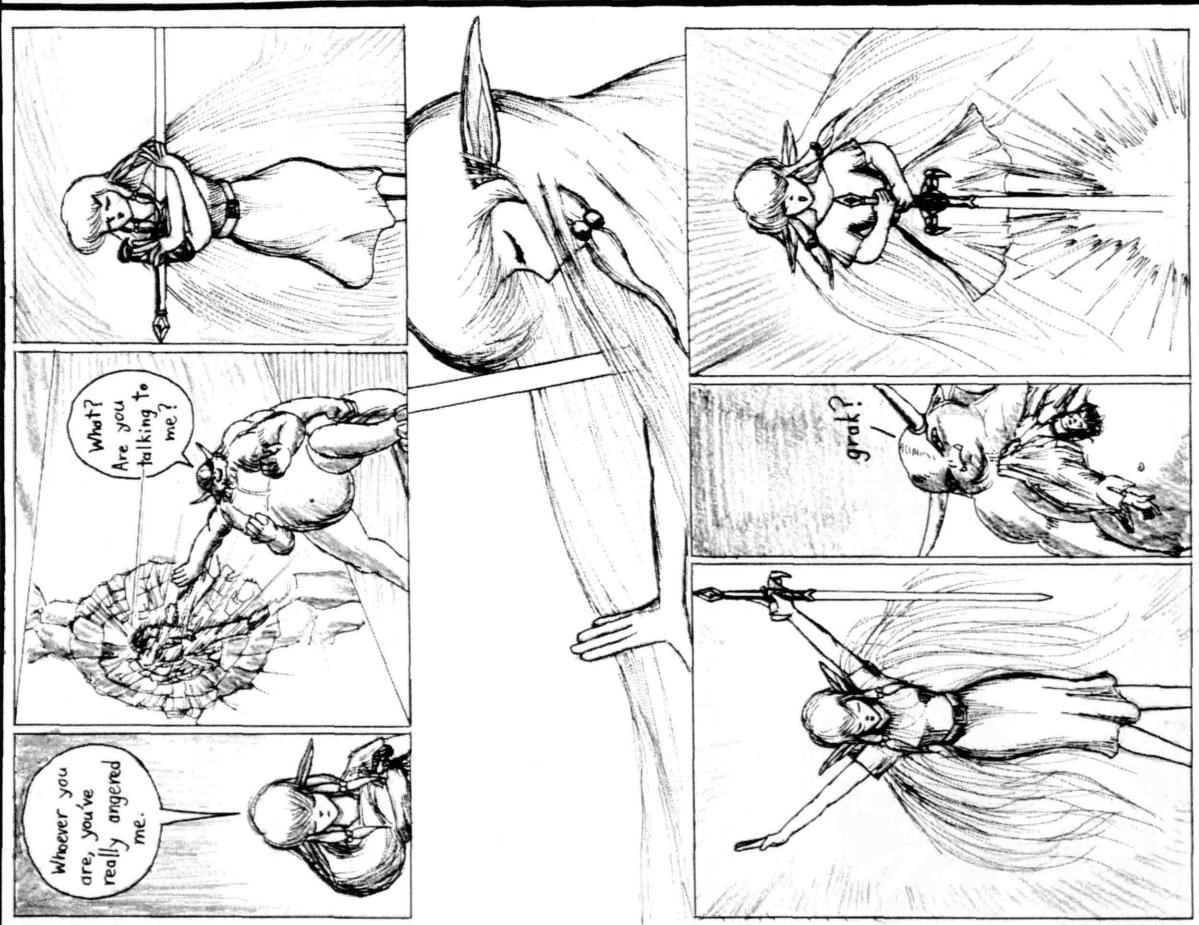
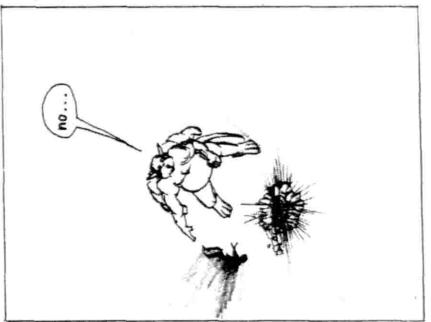
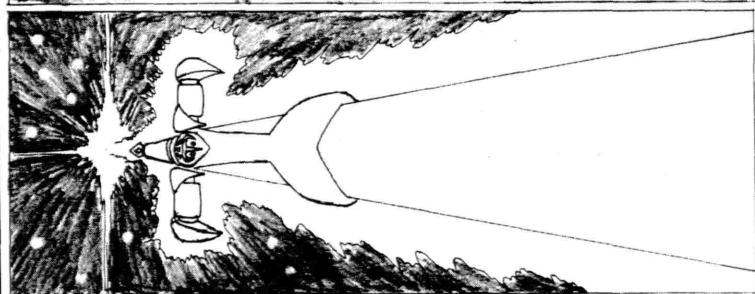
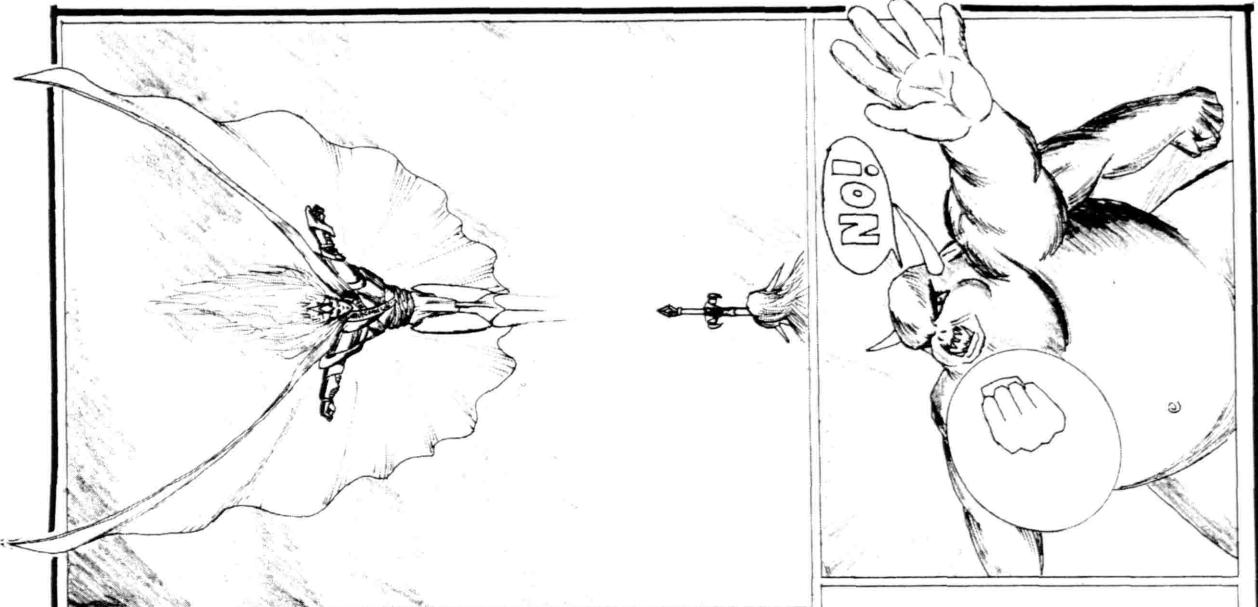
Bengal tigers are so graceful that you don't realize how fast they're moving, but you can kind of guess it from the amount of damage that they're doing.

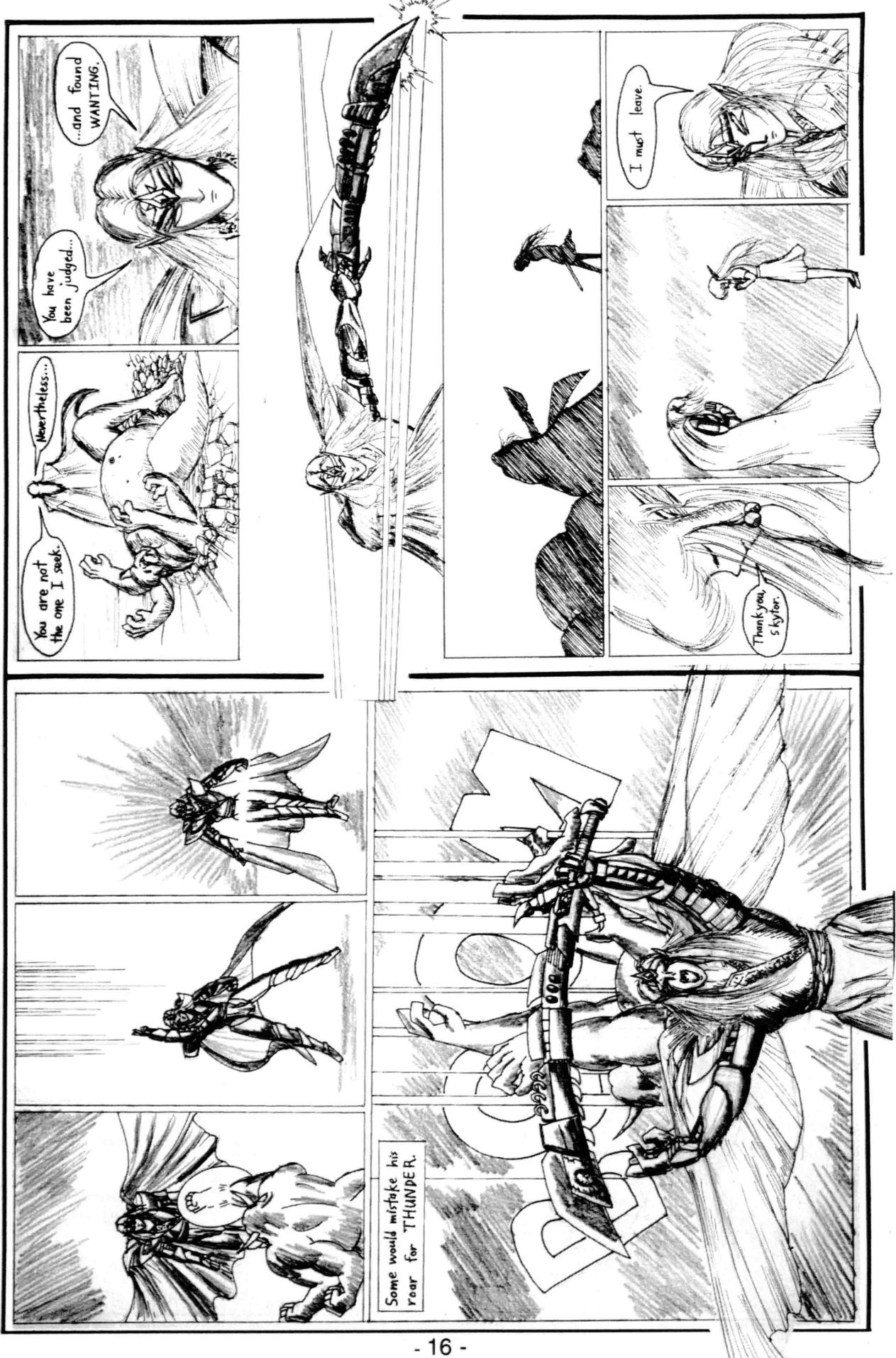
I could go into a lot of details if I remembered them. The details are not really important, though. Let's just say that it was the Greatest Show On Earth.

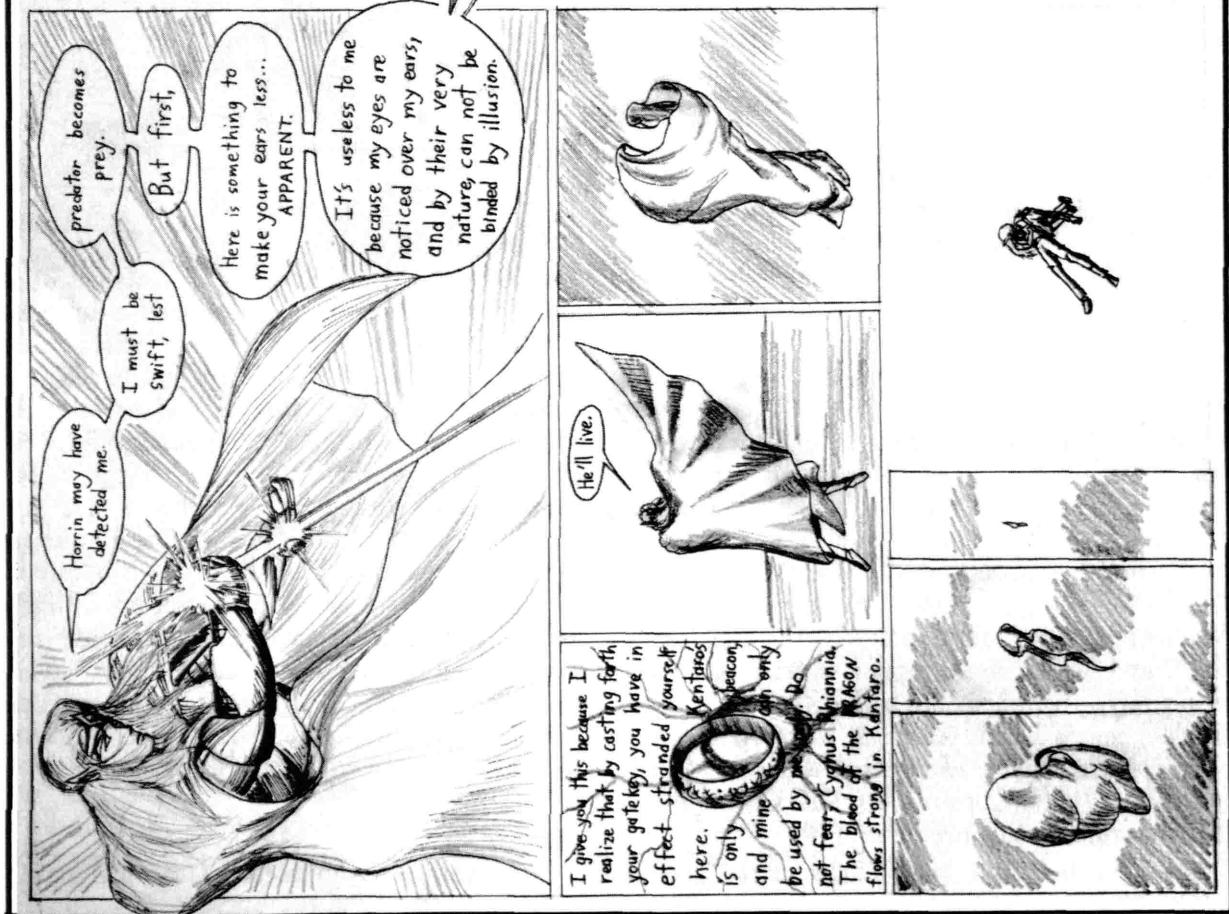
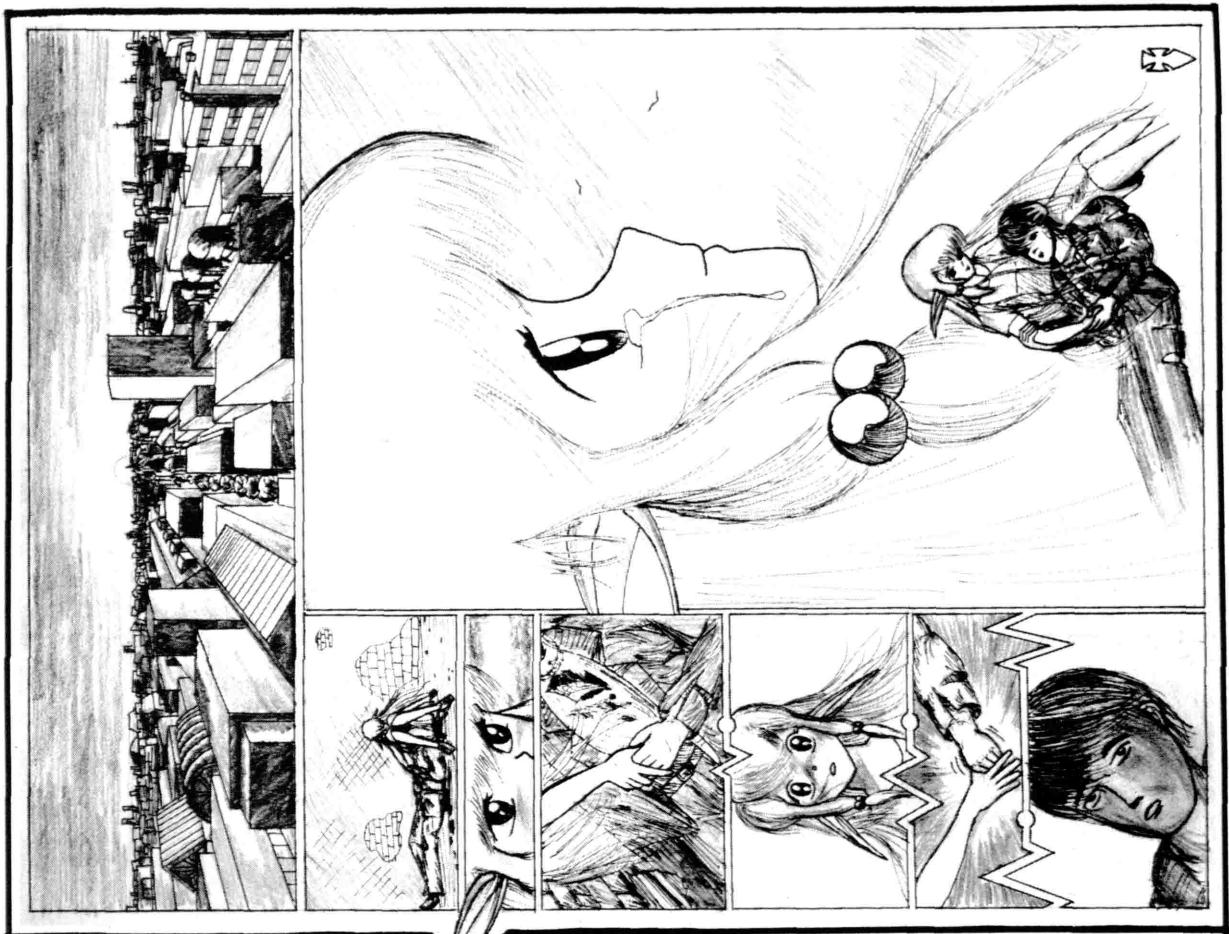












My Old School

by J. Ryan Johnson

"And they shall put on masks of flesh, and walk among you, as men!" — The Reverend Gene Scott, on the End Times.

September 10

On the third day of class, it began. He put a major math problem on the board, and towards the end, as he sped through the calculations with inhuman precision, he inserted what appeared to be a caricature of a pig's head for one of the variables. I was the only one who noticed. I found it amusing, at the time, and thought perhaps he had a bit too much to drink during lunch. Then I realized, he had completed a mind-boggling physics problem involving relativistic quantum motion in less than four minutes, and had made no mistakes, other than the mysterious pig head. I asked the girl sitting next to me about the pig head.

"Pig head? A pig's head? Are you nuts? You aren't like, one of those goons that does LSD down by The Chapel at night, are you? I've heard about you guys..."

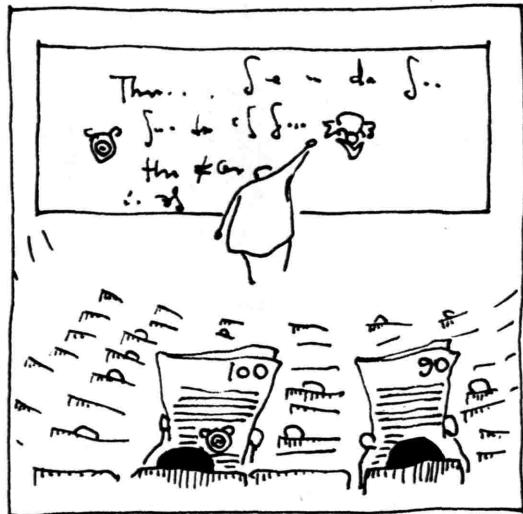
I began to question my own sanity. After all, nobody else had seen it, and I was certainly out of my league, the problems were so densely packed on the board that they lent themselves to hallucinations. I stopped drinking so much coffee before class.

October 3

It happened again! This time, a smiling clown face was drawn securely in the place of the answer for a problem that should have been a partitioned tensor! Gods! It couldn't have been a hallucination. I was well rested, and had solved the problem for myself! I asked the girl next to me for her notes. As surely as I sit here, she had solved the problem for herself, and drawn the selfsame clown's face as the answer. We turned in our notes for the class the next day, before a test. After the test, when her notes were returned, she had gotten a perfect 100 for her answers. I had gotten a 90. The question I missed? The tensor math problem.

There have been art movements in the past

which have tried to so disconcert the human mind as to impose a new reality of the artist's making: Absurdist, situationalist, dadaist; all of these had a point to make, but did so within the confines of art. Things appeared to have branched out into the sciences, now. I labeled my unusual teacher's style "Absurdist Math."



October 15

New and frightening symbols appeared, along with caricatures. I noticed a uniform lack of color in the cheeks of my classmates, and the temperature was always quite cold in the classroom, as if the students had no body heat for the air-conditioning to compensate for. Rather than draw attention to myself, I began to research some of these symbols. At first I had no luck. Then, I picked up a book called *Popular Delusions*, and read a piece on crop circles in England. There, in a full color spread, was a picture of one of the arcane symbols, described as a "hoax, probably perpetrated by farmers to aid tourism." The hairs rose on the back of my neck. Another symbol I found in an equally unusual source: *Morals and Dogma by the Scottish Rite of Freemasons*.

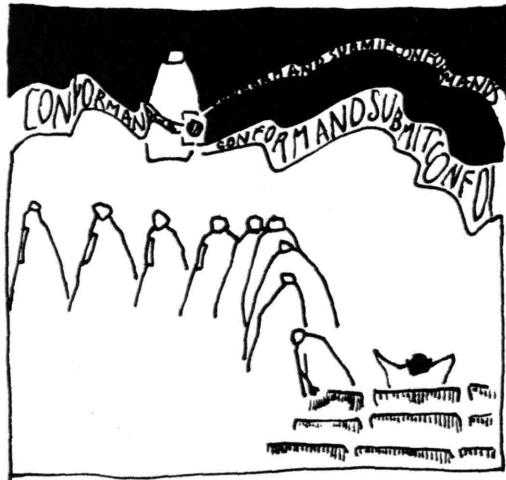
October 29

I examined the notes of the girl next to me

again: Her notes were filled with arcane symbols. Even more frightening, she seemed, at some point, to be using a language entirely foreign to me, a combination of something Arabic and symbols, which resembled to a great degree some of the secret symbols of the Freemasons.

November 4

I have begun to follow her, not out of passionate obsession, which I must admit, was the case as class began. I discovered that she no longer spoke during the day, and seemed not to eat. At night, she would leave her dorm for an hour, get in her car, and drive to some location I could not fathom. Cursed with student poverty, I possessed only a bicycle, and was quickly left in the dust.



November 8

Today, in class, when the students sat down for the test, our curious teacher passed out a blank sheet of paper, upon which the students began to write insane symbology and caricatures. I became frightened. The teacher pulled out a tape recorder, and began to play a tape of a garbled, almost metallic voice reciting "CONFORM AND SUBMIT... CONFORM AND SUBMIT..." over and over. I began to feel faint, and ducked down my head to plug my ears. The students all pinned the sheet of paper to their respective shirts, and began to walk from the classroom, with the teacher in the lead, holding the tape recorder like some vile Pied Piper leading them to their doom. It was hopeless to resist, or call attention to myself, so I stayed in the rear and followed. I had no plan, and was driven as much by curiosity as by unholy terror to do exactly as the tape recorder requested.

We were led to a bomb shelter, in the Building 9 sub-basement. There, a door I had never noticed before, with a push-button combination lock, was opened by our teacher. We were led down an old staircase, made out of welded-together surplus battleship conning-tower ladders. We descended for almost ten minutes, at a quick clip. We emerged into a white chamber, perfectly square, with twenty foot ceilings and nauseatingly flickering fluorescent lights...

The Freemasons were there, in black suits, black shirts, and black ties. They wore the ceremonial fezzes. Only instead of the normal whimsical adornment, an eye of Egyptian design was the only ornament. My stomach lurched like an out-of-whack washing machine, and the bitter taste of bile rose in my throat. I saw the passive students laid out, one by one, on steel examining tables and strapped in. I hid under a table, concealed by the white paper table cloth.

My teacher stood at the head of the tables, the "front" of the room, if you wish, and spoke in the same metallic, garbled voice I had heard on the tape. He seemed different, his face was improbably lumpy in the harsh strobing light. One of the Freemasons came forward subserviently, grabbed his face, and cut it away with a knife! It was then that I saw it was a foam-rubber appliance, to hide a hideous "head" which resembled a grub-worm larvae, white and rippled, with piercing mandibles that one might find on an insect designed to consume carrion....

The Freemasons acted on his alien prompts, inserting glass rods deep into the skulls of the captive students through the right ear. A sickening crack, like the sound of an eggshell cracked on a hard-boiled egg ensued. When withdrawn, the sound of the rod slipping on greasy brain combined with the sickening smell of human blood from the sixty-some students. It was like watching a macabre class for symphony conductors, as the madmen held the rods aloft, and then dipped them down in grotesque unity to black containers which whirred and hummed.

The containers were transferred to a white box next to the hideous grub that was once my teacher. The smell was horrible. I could see a tiny drop of blood beginning to drip from the ear of a student on a slab, above me and to the right. The Freemasons resumed their positions beside the students, and the symphony of torture began again, as they stuck long metal syringes into the ears of the students, and as one unit, removed the syringe, flourished their

hands and inserted gauze into the violated orifice. More garbled instructions came from the hideous grub-thing. The Freemasons bowed to him and left. The grub single-handedly picked up the white box, making it seem weightless, and followed them up the staircase. I was left alone, the only sentient soul left in a room of entranced students. The lights were shut off and I was in total darkness.

I knew it had been an hour and then some, as I had heard the cheery chirping of digital watches twice counting off the time. The noise, once annoying during class, seemed almost joyous, even humorous, as it sprouted from a dozen wrists within seconds of each other, across the room. I reached for the key chain light in my pocket. How my arm ached! I was so intent upon remaining utterly silent that I had not moved one muscle for more than an hour! Assured of my freedom of movement, I switched on the key chain light, and came out from under the table.

It was truly eerie moving about. I knew a light switch was located on the wall next to the staircase, but first I had to guide through a maze of tables and strapped down zombies. My tiny light made ghoulish shadows upon the blank faces. I touched the pale skin of one girl as I passed. It was rubbery and cold, as if she had been sleeping under an air-conditioning vent. Heartbeat? Yes. Her pupils responded to the light, as well. Her ear appeared crusted with a very small amount of blood, which, when scraped away, revealed a pink pearly ear, undamaged by the insertion of the rod. But she was still a zombie, unable to respond to anything... With my curiosity aroused, I discovered she also wore plaid panties under her sorority skirt. I always wondered about that... After all, plaid tops, plaid socks, plaid skirts... I resumed my search for the light switch. After much fumbling and flashlight juggling, I found it. The hum of the fluorescent lights seemed deafening in the somber silence of the room.

I could observe without the raw knot of fear in my stomach now. I felt comfortable in the fact that I was alone. The walls were totally featureless, but above the fluorescent lights on the ceiling, I could see huge glass coils, full of metal filaments, with a bed of semi-translucent foil beneath them. I was at a loss to determine the function at first. As I walked around the room, I noticed in certain areas where the foil was missing, I felt hot and queasy. I grabbed the keys from a nearby student's pocket

and tossed them up towards the coils. After two attempts, I succeeded in getting them stuck on top of one of the behemoths. In a short space, they began to spark, and jump about as if possessed. These were high-frequency microwave coils, beaming signals into the classrooms above! I must not have remained in the building long enough to be affected, as I would only come for the one class, and then leave to do my homework in the park. The poor, dedicated students were brainwashed in short order! An insidious scheme!

I could do nothing for them now. I left everything as I had found it. I shut off the lights and crept uneasily up the creaking metal staircase to the surface, using only the flickering flashlight on my key chain. I knew that the aliens could never explain a mass loss of students, so I felt sure that they would be returned. My proof was the mystical healing of the grievous ear-to-brain wound sustained during the operations. I kept telling myself that, over and over. But what of the tissue removed? What hideous purpose had that achieved? Has an entire class of students been taught this strange Absurdist math, then had a section of their brain removed to service some bizarre bio-computer? And what of the Freemasons? Did they control the hideous grub man? Did they bring him here to serve them, or was it vice-versa?

November 9

I did not return to my classes. I heard the next day that a strange flu had overtaken the campus, and students were reporting such ailments as stiff joints and earaches. The Med Center, as usual, held a magnifying glass to the face of the afflicted, and prescribed generic aspirin. That was the end of that. No disappearances, or reports of strange activity from the police department. All returned to normal.

I am out of school, forever. I can never set foot inside a classroom again, for the fear of seeing terrible symbols mixed in with the calculations on the board. Surely, if it has happened here, it has happened elsewhere. I do not actively search for them, but sometimes, when I sit down with the daily mail, I will see an article in one of the many fringe science magazines I read, discussing strange cases of crop circles, cattle mutilation, or gibbering tales of mass alien abductions made public by people stuck in nuthouses, and I feel the scalp pull tight around the base of my skull. ☺

**Experimental
Form**

PLEASE TYPE, OR PRINT FIRMLY WITH BALL POINT PEN
MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
MID-TERM FRESHMAN PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

Information on these forms may be released outside of MIT only by the student.

ACADEMIC YEAR 1993-94	<input type="checkbox"/> FALL <input type="checkbox"/> SPRING	SUBJECT NUMBER	RECITATION INSTRUCTOR
STUDENT'S NAME (PRINT)		ADVISOR'S NAME, MIT ROOM NO., (PRINT) E-MAIL, PHONE (IF KNOWN)	

INSTRUCTOR'S EVALUATION

In the space below, check off the little boxes so we don't have to actually read the form but can just punch it into a computer or something.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> This student's performance is adequate. | <input type="checkbox"/> This student is soooo pale. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I have never seen this student in recitation. | <input type="checkbox"/> I want some of whatever this student has been smoking. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I have never seen my recitation. | <input type="checkbox"/> If this student shoots me with a disc gun one more time, I'll strangle his/her little twinkie ass. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I still can't find the room my recitation meets in. | <input type="checkbox"/> If this student LaTeXs one more problem set, I'll strangle his/her pale, cathode-ray irradiated, Athena nerd ass. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I couldn't care less where my recitation is. | <input type="checkbox"/> This student has not showered in weeks. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I didn't know I had a recitation. | <input type="checkbox"/> Ditto, and I can't control my lust any longer. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I am unclear on this "recitation" concept... | <input type="checkbox"/> I've never seen a student with a blankee stare. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> This student is doing well on problem sets. | <input type="checkbox"/> This student stares at the board like a deer in headlights. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> This student still thinks the problem sets relate to the tests. | <input type="checkbox"/> This student couldn't write his/her own suicide note. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> This student's class participation is good. | <input type="checkbox"/> What the hell? Does this moron live in <input type="checkbox"/> Baker |
| <input type="checkbox"/> This student is too smart for his/her own good. | <input type="checkbox"/> Runkle <input type="checkbox"/> First-world frat <input type="checkbox"/> Ashdown |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The hatred the other students have for this one is deserved. | or something? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> This student stares at me and drools. | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I stare at this student and drool. | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A check mark in this box means you should DROP MY CLASS IMMEDIATELY so the CEG will spare me. | |

SIGNATURE	ROOM	EXTENSION	E-MAIL	DATE
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STUDENT'S RESPONSE AND SELF-ASSESSMENT

Please check off the little boxes. You want your full \$25,000 a year's worth, don't you?

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> My problem sets always come back sticky. | <input type="checkbox"/> My attendance has been fine. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> This subject is | <input type="checkbox"/> I have never attended my recitation. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> more challenging than at high school. | <input type="checkbox"/> I rarely attend my recitation, because |
| <input type="checkbox"/> less challenging than at my stuffy prep school. | <input type="checkbox"/> my instructor is a clueless undergrad who hasn't showered since August. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> taught better at the state pen. | <input type="checkbox"/> my instructor is a clueless grad student who is too busy being a toadie for the prof to do anything useful in recitation. I know he's a grad student because he wears a sweater wrapped around his shoulders. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> like getting a root canal from an oil rig. | <input type="checkbox"/> my instructor is a clueless professor, who, while brilliant in his/her field, couldn't teach a bear to shit in the woods. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> like getting an enema from an oil rig. | <input type="checkbox"/> my instructor is a clueless professor who says "theeta", "zeeta", "kha-zee", and "zed" with a thick Icelandic accent, and who has a long-dead cochlea and a schizophrenic grader. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> like trying to get Zippy. | <input type="checkbox"/> Why is my TA's office hour at 3am? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> My instructor looks like Zippy. | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> My recitation instructor is | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> helpful. | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> courteous. | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Welcome to Wendy's! | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Would you like fries with that, sir? | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> My TA is helpful in much the same way as the med center diagnosing my mono as an overdose and my overdose as pregnancy. | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A check mark in this box means that I have a contract out on you. YOU'RE GOING DOWN, YOU BASTARD. | |

SIGNATURE	TERM ADDRESS	PHONE	E-MAIL	DATE
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Student Copy: KEEP AS IF IMPORTANT

Instructor Copy: THROW IN ASHTRAY

Advisor Copy: STARE AT, THEN THROW AWAY

UAA Copy: LOSE

VooDoo's Humor Resource Pages

Watch out for traffic and

Roadkill Buffet

*MIT's Comedy
Improv Troupe*

Free shows for the MIT
and College Community.

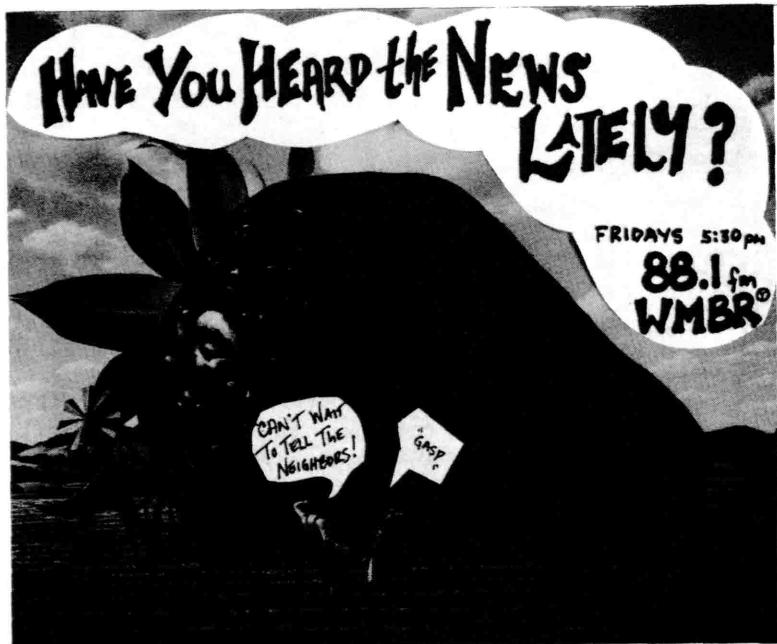
Every semester and IAP.

Despite its drab appearance, despite "blood and concrete" as its official colors, M.I.T. is brimming with humor. Nothing could be funnier. Just think about the Bursar using Macs. Just think about the Registrar requiring everything in triplicate! Ponder the inane, from M.I.T. students stealing "Byte" from the library, to Economics being in the School of Humanities. The RS/6000s look like PCs running Windows on acid thanks to Information Systems, and Cable TV only beat the Internet to the dorms by six months.

Surviving Hell may well depend on your attitude.

Create comedy of your own. Make your friends laugh. Read Dave Barry. Retell jokes you hear. Watch David Letterman. Cite the Weekly World News in your term papers. Support our advertisers (and tell them!). Pick up a felt-tip and draw some cartoons. Sit down at Athena and bang out some prose.

VooDoo is YOUR humor resource. These "Hu-



Boston's "Ultra" Alternative News Source

mor Resource" pages include information about the Ig Nobel Prize Ceremony, the Improvisation Comedy Troupe Roadkill Buffet, and WMBR's "Have You Heard The News Lately?" If you are doing something funny, tell us about it. If your student group did something funny, pen a review and send it along. If you think of something funny, write it up. And, of course, "Ask Phos" is always here to answer your questions.

You don't have to be part of an "official" organization to make M.I.T. a funnier place. Just do it.

But if you do want to be part of an "official" event, this year marks a special occasion for us, our 75th anniversary. VooDoo started in March of 1919, and this Spring we intend to celebrate. We have plans both big and small, and need your help for all of them. And although our takeover of the Christian Science Media Empire was dealt a crushing blow by intellectual property litigation from Lotus and NBC, we still have high hopes of ending this school year with a well publicized bang.

The 1993 Ig Nobel Prize Winners

The winners of the 1993 Ig Nobel Prizes were announced in a ceremony held at MIT in Cambridge, Mass on October 7, 1993. The Prizes honor individuals whose achievements cannot or should not be reproduced. The ceremony was produced, as always, by *The Journal of Irreproducible Results* and The MIT Museum.

Eleven Ig Nobel Prizes were given this year. The winners come from 16 different countries: Australia, Belgium, Canada, England, France, Germany, Ireland, Israel, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, New Zealand, the Philippines, Poland, Spain, Switzerland, and the United States.

A number of dignitaries shared the podium at the ceremony, including Nobel Laureates William Lipscomb (Chemistry, 1976), and Sheldon Glashow (Physics, 1979); Professor emeritus Russell Johnson of Gilligan's Island; and Root canal therapy expert Philip Molloy of Tufts University Dental School.

PSYCHOLOGY : John Mack of Harvard Medical School and David Jacobs of Temple University, mental visionaries, for their leaping conclusion that people who believe they were kidnapped by aliens from outer space probably were — and especially for their conclusion that, in Professor Jacobs's words, "the focus of the abduction is the production of children."

CONSUMER ENGINEERING : Ron Popeil, of RonCo, incessant inventor and perpetual pitchman of late night television, for redefining the industrial revolution with such devices as the Veg-O-Matic, the Pocket Fisherman, the Cap Snaffler, Mr. Microphone, and the Inside-the-Shell Egg Scrambler.

BIOLOGY : Paul Williams, Jr. of the Oregon State Health Division and Kenneth W. Newell of the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine, bold biological detectives, for their pioneering study, "Salmonella Excretion in Joy-Riding Pigs."

ECONOMICS : Ravi Batra of Southern Methodist University, shrewd economist and best-selling author of "The Great Depression of 1990" (\$17.95) and "Surviving the Great Depression of 1990" (\$18.95), for selling enough copies of his books to single-handedly prevent worldwide economic collapse.

PEACE : The Pepsi-Cola Company of the

Phillipines, suppliers of sugary hopes and dreams, for sponsoring a contest to create a millionaire, and then announcing the wrong winning number, thereby inciting and uniting 800,000 riotously expectant winners, and bringing many warring factions together for the first time in their nation's history.

VISIONARY TECHNOLOGY : Presented jointly to Jay Schiffman of Farmington Hills, Michigan, crack inventor of AutoVision, an image projection device that makes it possible to drive a car and watch television at the same time, and to the Michigan state legislature, for making it legal to do so.

CHEMISTRY : James Campbell and Gaines Campbell of Lookout Mountain, Tennessee, dedicated deliverers of fragrance, for inventing scent strips, the odious method by which perfume is applied to magazine pages.

LITERATURE : Awarded jointly to E. Topol, R. Califf, F. Van de Werf, P. W. Armstrong, and their 972 co-authors, for publishing a medical research paper which has one hundred times as many authors as pages.

MATHEMATICS : Robert Faid of Greenville, South Carolina, farsighted and faithful seer of statistics, for calculating the exact odds (8,606,091,751,882:1) that Mikhail Gorbachev is the Antichrist.

PHYSICS : Louis Kervran of France, ardent admirer of alchemy, for his conclusion that the calcium in chickens' eggshells is created by a process of cold fusion.

MEDICINE : James F. Nolan, Thomas J. Stillwell, and John P. Sands, Jr., medical men of mercy, for their painstaking research report, "Acute Management of the Zipper-Entrapped Penis."

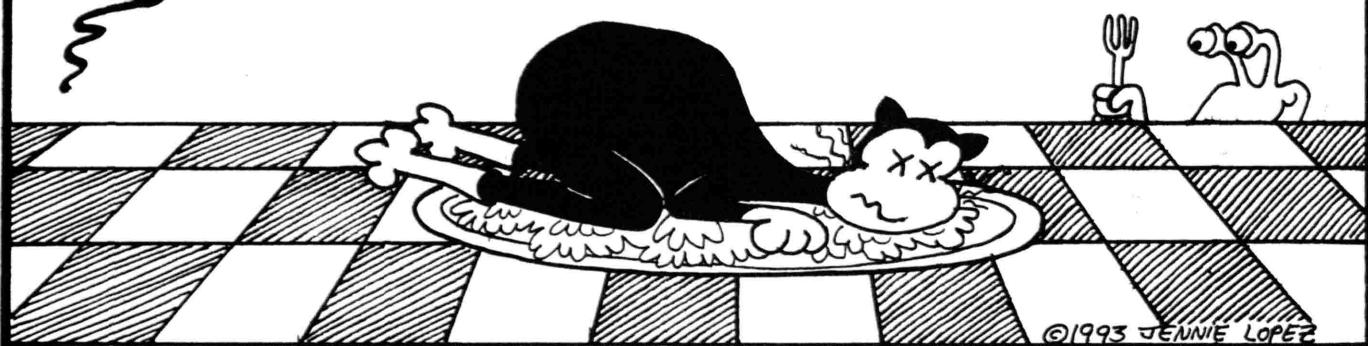
DATES TO MARK ON YOUR CALENDAR :

1. A recording of the 1993 ceremony is scheduled to be broadcast on National Public Radio's "Talk of the Nation Science Friday" on the day after Thanksgiving.

2. Next Year's Ig Nobel Prize ceremony will take place at MIT on Thursday, October 6, 1994.



Ask Phos: HOLIDAY SURVIVAL TIPS



©1993 JENNIE LOPEZ

Phos! My parents are coming to visit me for Thanksgiving. What should I do to entertain them?!

INCOMING!



#1: SHARE THE TRADITIONAL HOLIDAY MEAL.

WELL, I'VE BEEN UP SINCE 5 A.M.
PREPARING THIS MEAL, EVEN THOUGH
I'M SUPPOSED TO BE THE GUEST,



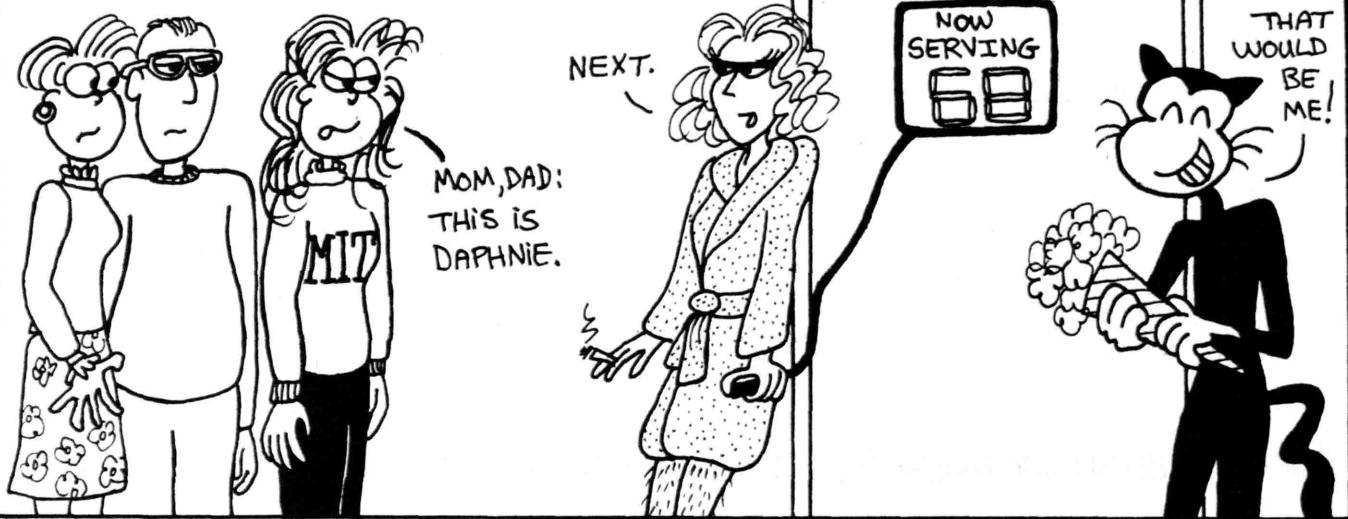
UH....MOM? I'M A
VEGETARIAN NOW.



FOR ZOK A
YEAR, YOU'LL EAT
IT AND LIKE IT!



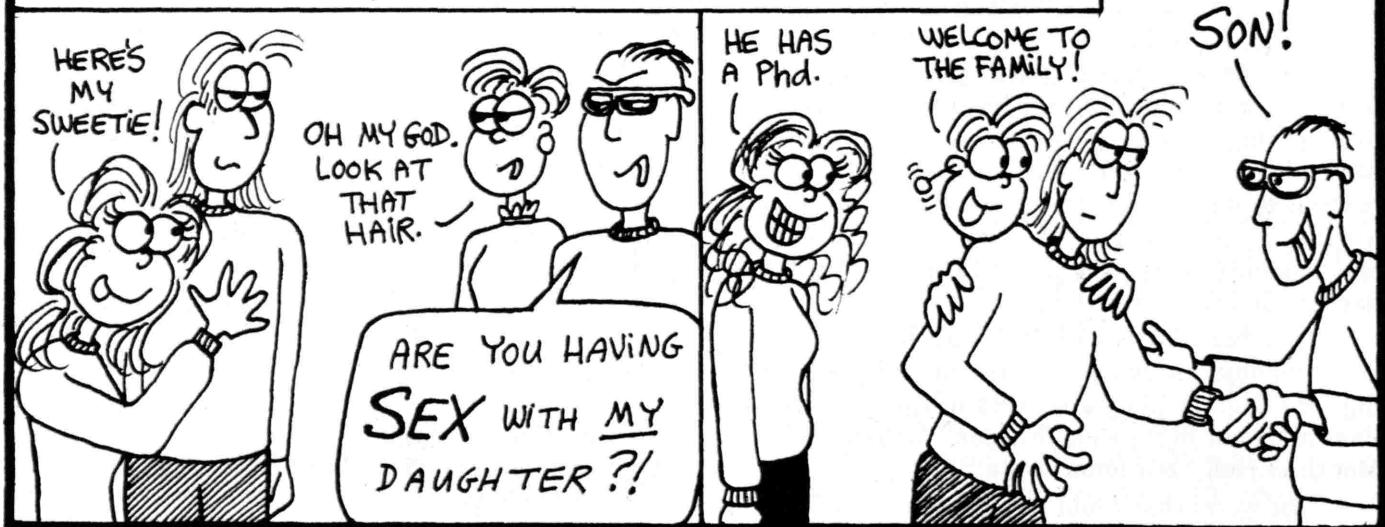
#2: INTRODUCE YOUR PARENTS TO YOUR ROOMMATE.



#3: SHOW YOUR PARENTS THE SIGHTS AND SOUNDS OF BOSTON.



#4: LET YOUR PARENTS MEET YOUR BOYFRIEND.



Paying E. Hemingway A Visit

by Hani Sallum

I materialized outside of the home of Ernest Hemingway on the fifth of June in 1955 at nine in the morning, ready to spend the day interviewing him in field research for the Encyclopedia Intellectica. I was also going to give him a piece of my mind.

I didn't really like field research for the Encyclopedia, but it always paid the rent and gave me something to boast about at parties. It's great to interrupt some know-it-all snob in the middle of a Let-me-tell-you-about-this monologue and mentioning that you had, in fact, written the article he's quoting.

Anyway, I had to interview this sap Hemingway for documented research, and had to make the appointment a year before just to see him. Thank God for time travel. On the other hand, how else would I do the research?

I checked to make sure I had my recording device and walked up the gravel driveway to the main entrance. The front door was made of pure, stained mahogany; with the usual brass lion-head knocking things. Greedy bastard.

Okay, okay, if you haven't noticed, I do hold a grudge against old Ernie. Well, I've read a lot of his work...

Okay, a few of his books...

All right, *one* book. Sue me. I still didn't like his fucking attitude.

I knocked on the disgustingly grotesque lion-head knockers which should have been condemned to corroding at the bottom of one of the Atlantic Abyssal Tracts instead of being plastered onto the mahogany door, and waited. After a few moments, a dark, robed and hooded man opened the door, and suddenly everything around me turned a shade darker. Definitely a bad sign.

I conducted a quick but thorough search of the door and adjacent walls from the place I was standing for a sign or plaque bearing a legend along the lines of "Home of the Grim Reaper," "Death," or "The Mouth of Hell," but found none.

The worst that could have happened, I figured, was that the guys at Processing sent me back in

time to the wrong house. Now, I'm no physicist, but projecting atoms through the continuum can't be that hard. They must have been rushing to finish before the coffee break, that is, of course, if they screwed up — I'm not saying they did — but I don't trust them ever since the thing about the Zulu War and Margaret Thatcher... but I won't get into that.

I turned back to the hooded guy, who I suddenly noticed was about eight feet tall.

"Can I help you?" He said. He enunciated as if each word was a struggle to emit.

"Ahhb... ive ive vaaaaah vahb faa faa..." I started, then straightened myself out. "Ah, yeah. I've got an appointment with Mr. Hemingway for today."

The man looked at me with, as far as I could discern from what was visible of his face, slight distaste, probably because the clothes I was wearing wouldn't be in style for another two hundred and forty years. Not that he was the very model of an impeccable butler. It's kind of hard to have that image when there can be seen small tentacles growing out of your neck.

"Ah, yes." He said, still enunciating. "The reporter." I saw a faint glint under his hood as a ray of light gleamed off of one of his teeth.

A chill ran up my spine so fast that it shot out of the back of my neck, narrowly missing my head.

"Follow me." He said, turned, and moved inside. I followed.

We entered the mansion.

"So, uh... what's your name?" I asked, attempting to mask my unease with small talk.

"Everyone calls me Hooded Screech-of-Death-Capable-of-Instilling-Great-Insanity-From-Impressive-Distances."

My heart stopped beating for a moment to submit a formal request to leave my chest cavity. "Oh... so, what's your real name?" I finally asked.

He turned to look at me. "I just told you. I had parents that remarried several times. Completely by coincidence all the last names went together to form that phrase. It's... strange."

I suppressed the urge to jump through the

nearest window screaming *MY MOTHER IS THE ANTICHRIST!!*

The man turned out to be, after a few more questions, Hemingway's butler. Unfortunately, my initial questioning began him verbalizing some convoluted thought process, resulting a sort of dissertation about one's physical image in relation to their sense of presence.

Now, I'm not a pure, sinless human being, but I felt that I really didn't deserve this. I had a job to do, and I didn't feel that I had to listen to some eight foot tall specter going off on weird tangents I couldn't follow. But, then again he was eight feet tall, and me being my modest 5'10" I opted on keeping my yap shut for the moment.

He got to a point at which he began using himself as an example. By this point I had completely lost his point and where he was in his argument. So naturally this was the point at which he asked me a question.

Now, I really didn't want to answer, but he was the only way I was going to get to Hemingway through the maze of corridors in the unnecessarily expansive, gaudy, overembellished house of one of Literature's most respected talents. Being an asshole and ignoring the guy might not get me to where I wanted to go. Cooperating with a guy who has tentacles coming out of his neck is a really good idea most of the time.

"Oh,... uh, I really can't see much with that hood on..." I said. No sooner than I had said this, he whipped around, pulled the hood back, exposing his face, and smiled evilly; the kind of smile that gave people the impression that life had popped him just a few too many times on the head.

At first glance (second, third, and fourth also), I decided I liked the face a lot better when the hood was between most of it and my eyes.

As I mentioned before, it's hard to uphold the image of an impecable butler if there are tentacles growing out of your neck. This was finally proven true to me upon seeing the butler's full face. Along with the tentacles were a set of flippers. Oh yeah, and a beak coming out of his forehead. Other than that he looked... well, alright. Aside from the tusks.

I thought for a second about how I should reply. I picked one reply out that might not result in the separation of me and my limbs.

"Yeah, well... what can I say?" I answered.

He nodded, put the hood back on, and continued leading me to Ernie, the discussion apparently

over.

After a few more minutes of moving down halls and up flights of stairs in the huge mansion, we finally arrived at Ernie's study.

"Just knock." said the butler.

"Okay, thank you... Hooded... Screech of... great distance, err..."

He gave me a humbling look. "Don't even try." he said. With that, he turned and walked away.

I looked at the door. Nothing special to make a note of. I knocked. An old, annoying voice emanated from behind the door; the kind of voice that resonates in one's spinal column if the conditions are right.

"Come in." it said.

I opened the door. It opened halfway before jarring on a stack of typewritten papers. They were accompanied by other similar stacks of papers; some bound with twine, others loose and scattered.

"Don't mind the papers, just step over them." Said the voice from beyond my view.

I stepped over the numerous piles to get through the door. I even made an effort to kick at a few of the bound stacks so that they would scatter. To my surprise, the piles of loose papers moved around slightly on their own accord. The bound ones, however, did not. Strange.

I knelt to examine the writing on one of the papers that lay scattered on the floor, moving around slightly. It said:

"Adam, the goodliest man of men since born his sons..."

"A bold, bad man."

"Our colleges ought to have lit up in us a lasting relish, for the better kind of man, a loss of appetite for mediocrities."

"A brave man struggling in the storms of fate..."

"There is still one absolute weapon... that weapon is man himself."

And other passages similar in meaning, stressing the importance of man. Figures. I looked at the top page of one of the bound piles. It said:

"A woman is a sometime thing."

"Women's degradation is in man's idea of his sexual rights. Our religion, laws, customs, are all founded on the belief that woman was made for man."

"There is not a woman in the world the possession of whom is as precious as

that of the truths which she reveals to us by causing us to suffer."

"A woman is always a fickle, unstable thing."

One of the papers from a bound pile I had knocked over read:

"The usual masculine disillusionment is in discovering that a woman has a brain."

No doubt that this was old Ernie's study. I still couldn't get over the strangeness the whole place radiated.

Then it occurred to me. It had happened before.

"Of course!" I said, hitting my forehead with the heel of my hand. "Processing put me in the wrong *universe* again! Those stupid asses!"

I kicked at some of the moving paper-piles.

"I do believe," said the owner of the voice, calmly, in a thick English accent, "that I don't, nor do I want to, know what you are talking about."

"Oh, cut it out," I said, amused, "cut the accent, I know you're from Illinois."

The owner of the voice, an elderly figure sitting in a swivel-chair by an oak desk, sneered, and stood up. He walked over to me and sized me up.

"You that reporter from last year?" he asked.

"Yeah, that's me."

The figure nodded to himself. "Well, for starters, I'm Ernest Miller Hemingway."

"Really?" I asked rhetorically as I entered the physical description of him secretly into the recorder.

"Yeah. Have you had breakfast?" He asked.

"Yeah, before I—"

"Good. Neither have I." He said, and walked past me out the door, beckoning me to follow. I did.

• • •

After a breakfast of Belgian Waffles and Vodka, he showed me through his mansion, garden, and grounds. He went on from ten a.m. to noon talking about himself and how much money he put into his property, all of which I inserted into the recorder.

From noon to four in the afternoon he showed me his Nobel and Pulitzer Prize room, or shrine, which was incredibly dull. I spent most of the time cleaning my fingernails.

At four, we had a late lunch. I took that opportunity to give him the piece of my mind I had

reserved for him.

I sat across from him at a lawn table that offered an unobstructed view of the backyard, which contained over two-hundred pink flamingos.

He was eating a lightly grilled muskrat, French-dip Style. I was amply repulsed. All I could say was that Processing was getting a *big* complaint form from me this month.

"Mr. Hemingway," I started, "can you tell me about some of the connotations in 'A Farewell to Arms,' and if these are similar in respect to any of your other works?"

He paused halfway through a mouthful of muskrat and looked up. He began to speak, stopped, spat out the partially chewed muskrat at the flamingos, and continued. The flamingos seemed indifferent.

"Oh, you read 'A Farewell to Arms,' did you? Good book, I thought. One of my best, I think. It was based on a true story about myself during the war. I was stationed in Northern Italy, and I—"

"Yeah, I know." I interrupted. "You told me about it around eleven this morning. Can you expand on, for me, the character of Ms. Barkley?" I wanted to see if he was as big an asshole as I figured him to be.

"Oh, sure! She was your basic woman... stupid."

Bingo.

"Yeah, okay. Why?" I braced myself.

"Oh, all women are like that." He said, eating another bite of muskrat. "I've been around a bit, you know, I can tell you that. Every woman I've ever met. All body, nothing upstairs. Not that I'm complaining..." He leered.

I was finding it extremely hard not to clock the guy's bearded head right there. It's too bad my strongest assets aren't things I can get paid for.

"Oh, yeah." He went on, stopping momentarily to pick a muskrat bone from between his teeth. "Someone once told me what the perfect woman is and I believe them; a woman who's about waist high, no teeth, and has a flat head you can rest a drink on—"

"Alright, That's It!!" I screamed at him, leaping up from my chair as I did so. This action gave the lawn table a nasty shock which caused the umbrella to spontaneously fold upward with a loud "foomp!" noise.

Ernie, who had been holding the rapidly disappearing muskrat in both hands, was so startled by

my outburst that he launched the muskrat over his head and onto the flamingos in reflex. The flamingos seemed a little less indifferent.

He stood up. "What was *that* all about?!" He shouted.

"It's about *you!* You with your misogynistic bravado and the way you talk about women, and the way you portray them in your books!"

"Well, it's true!!" He retorted.

"No it isn't!! And for that matter I hate your assholier-than-thou attitude too!!"

"Oh, Yeah?! And how many Pulitzer prize-winning books have *you* written lately?"

"That's just my point! All you are is talk. Talk, talk, talk; that's all you do! Maybe if you looked at women a little differently, you might not have to look for a new wife every couple of years!!"

"Hey!! Now that isn't my fault!"

"Oh, don't give me that shit! It's about as likely as the story you were telling me about the nurse in the Italian hospital!"

"I..."

"You probably missed and grabbed someone's enema bag and thought you were getting lucky!"

"Oh, this is a *really* nice attitude!! After I fed you Breakfast and Lunch, too!"

"What Breakfast? I didn't eat!"

"You could have!!"

"No I couldn't!! I saw the waffles you gave me! They were wax! And while you were drinking Vodka, I was looking at a glass of vinegar!!"

"Picky, picky!!"

"Oh, *I'm* picky! What about that checklist for women you were telling me about, you slime?!"

"Okay, okay, so it's hard for a woman to be long-legged and still be waist high, but I can compro- Hey HEY!"

I stopped Ernie mid-sentence by knocking over his lawn table. I pulled out my recorder and pointed at him.

"I hope you're proud of yourself, because you're getting the worst biographical write-up in the history of the Encyclopedia Intellectica! I've done a lot of them, let me tell you! Shelly! Dickens! Pohl! L. Ron Hubbard! And I'll tell you now, I'm going to bury you in so much shit your name will never be associated seriously with literature *ever* again! You're through! I've got you by the balls, and now I'm going to crush them like walnuts!!"

I realized I had gone a little bit off course, not

to mention irrational. I also felt a bit silly. Ernest was peering nervously at me from behind his lawn chair. Apparently I had been a little harsh. No matter.

I straightened myself up, "Good day, Mr. Hemingway," I said coldly, and left.

I walked out the front door after ten minutes of trying to find it, and continued down the driveway. After a moment I stopped, turned around, and headed back toward the mansion.

I ripped one of the grotesque lion-head knockers off of the door and heaved it amongst the flamingos in the backyard. The flamingos were extremely less indifferent this time. In fact, one of them yelled out: "Oh, C'mon!! Give us a break, will you?!"

I continued down the driveway.

My planned twenty-four hour visit with Mr. Hemingway had been cut short to about seven hours. The people at the field research department were going to have conniptions. I didn't care. The meeting, I felt, had been completely successful.

No, not quite... not yet. I went back to the door and ripped the other knocker off the door and signaled Processing to bring me back.

Momentarily I was torn apart into my component bits and pieces then reassembled in the processing lab in the basement of the headquarters of the Encyclopedia Intellectica. Ruth Browning and Paul Brogle were working the console. There were several spilled cups of coffee and various danish crumbs on the equipment. Papers were spread everywhere, odd scribblings of Hamiltonian gibberish all over them and all the chalkboards in the room.

"Hey, you made it back!" Paul Brogle said, spewing crumbs from a blueberry muffin out of his mouth and into a nearby molecular analyzer.

"How did it go?" Ruth Browning asked, dripping coffee onto an exposed hard drive.

I smiled my best PR smile. "Wrong universe, folks.." I said, hefting the brass knocker in both hands, "...again. I..."

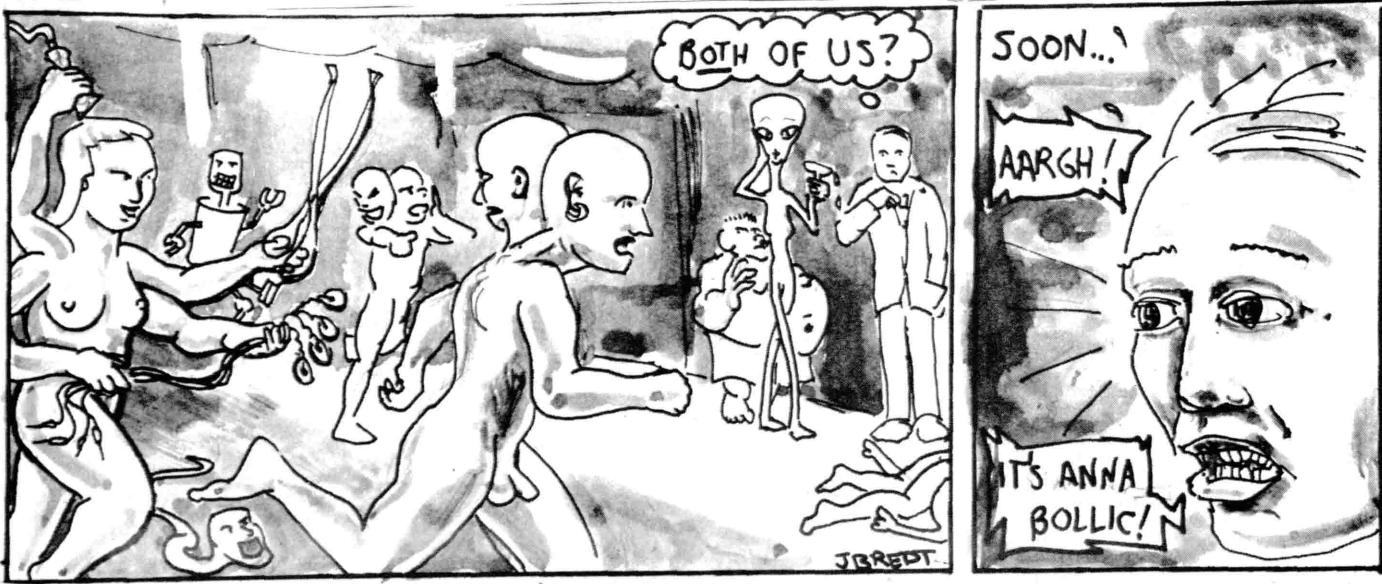
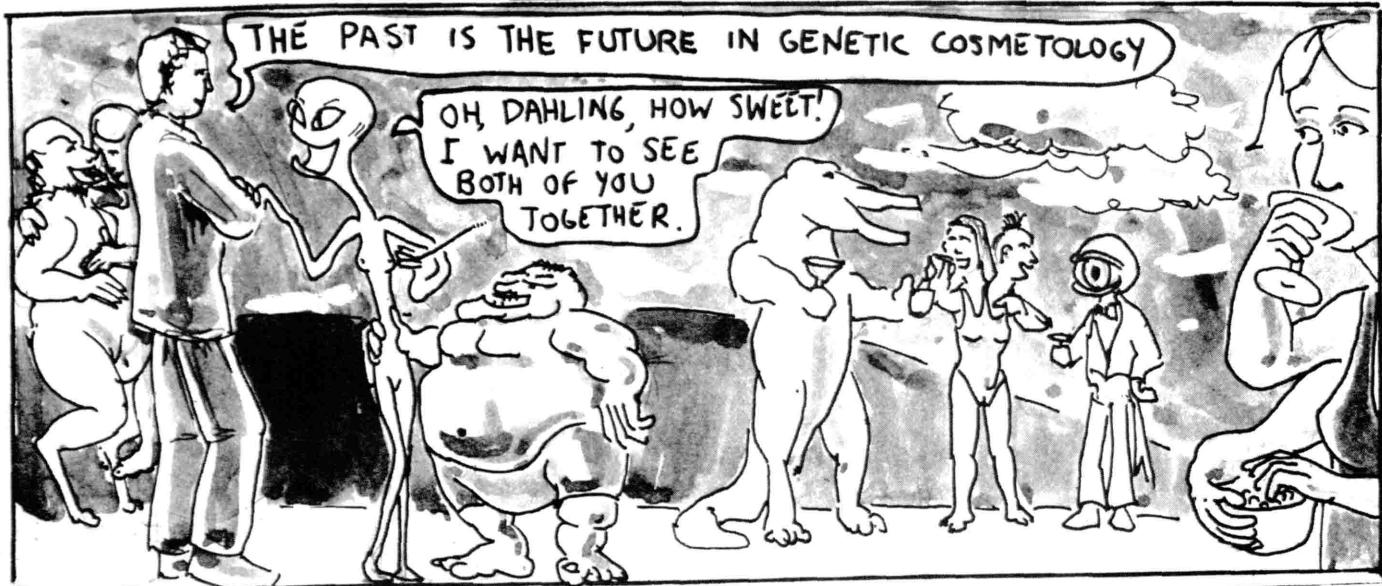
I swung around once, and connected the head of the knocker with the side of Paul Brogle's head. It ricocheted from there nicely onto Ruth Browning's head. They both collapsed to the floor.

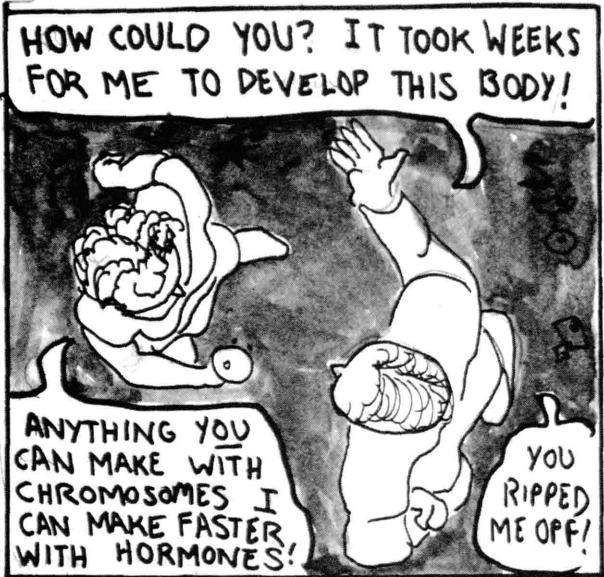
"...HATE this fucking job..." I said, dropping the knocker and heading towards the lab door.

I turned and looked back once at the unconscious bodies behind me. "...but it's got its plus sides." 









Beyond Maximum Horror

by Pete Finkelstein

Atom Bomb #4579B21-X, mounted deep in the bowels of the Spectacularis Intercontinental Ballistic Missile, had been carefully preset to detonate at a height of 500 feet above sea level over Oahu, a remote Pacific island in the obscure Hawaiian chain. The Spectacularis had been launched from Gunderson Island, 300 miles off the coast of the Holy Alliance of American Commonwealths, as part of a test program to investigate the feasibility of delivering nuclear payloads over strategic (rather than tactical, which were a walk in the park) distances. The research and development team nursemaiding the Spectacularis included groups from General Dynamics (accelerometers and gyroscopes), Draper Labs (better accelerometers), Lockheed (fuselage and rocket engines), and Morton-Thiokol (o-rings, gears 'n pulleys, and bearing assemblies). The Spectacularis was scrupulously (nay, lovingly) designed to satisfy an accuracy criterion quantified by a Circular Error Probable (CEP) of 2.5 nautical miles, meaning that in a statistical ensemble of N identically-prepared flights (with N large), over one half of the time the missile would blow its load within a circle of radius 2.5 nautical miles centered upon the designated target. Unfortunately, a small ball bearing in Gyroscope Input Torque Shaft #348Y7-B developed a microfissure due to vibrations suffered upon takeoff. Continuous metal fatigue during the flight eventually caused the ball bearing to disintegrate, and the happily scattered fragments, released from the wearisome bondage of sphericity, froze up the bearings of the shaft. As a result, the gyro blew out with a tired, despairing whine of metal on metal.

The ICBM's once purposeful and manly trajectory degenerated into a lazy, looping, limp-wristed arc which twisted back toward the mainland of the Holy Alliance of American Commonwealths.

• • •

Rich and Tammy Vetterlein had parked their automobile just outside the old, fenced off, aban-

doned Holy Alliance Army Nuclear Atom Bomb Test Grounds in Farleysville, Nevada. The two huddled inside the car, making kissy-poo motions the one to the other. The old Testing Grounds were a spooky-fun makeout venue for the kids in the area, and Rich and Tammy had only been married a month or two. So you can sympathize with their eagerness to explore one another's bodies. A mournful wind blew across the scorched, dead mesas and sent chilly little tendrils through the cracked wind-wing of the grimy black Ford Torino. Tammy shivered and drew her angora sweater tight across her shoulders. Little horsies danced and pranced playfully in patterns embossed on the pink material.

"Honey, it's kind of spooky here. Do you think we're safe?"

Rich gently kissed her forehead, his grey-pink tongue exploring the micro-organisms which thrived in the detritus of her eyebrow, then smiled at her with loving indulgence.

"Of course, honey. As safe as two writhing things in a warm place. The Holy Alliance Army has assured us that the radioactivity in the old Atom Bomb testing sites, Trinity and Mach Ferlingburg, has dropped to safe levels. The half life of Atomicum 97B is only 10.5 years, and it's already been 15 years since the testing was concluded forever. The half life, as you probably learned in Mr. Hallingworth's sophomore chem class, is a quantity (characteristic of a given radioactive substance) which tells how long it will take before half of a statistical ensemble of N identically-prepared people (with N large) will die in excruciating, gut-blowing agony after being exposed to massive doses of the material. So you see, we're beyond total safety, and if you're thinking there's some possibility of dangerous genetic warping from the ambient radiation — leading to a possibly monstrous, apocalyptic birth if I impregnate you here — then I must simply smile at you in loving indulgence."

"Well, if you say so, darling. It IS kind of creepy-fun being out here, just the two of us, at the birthplace of the Device built to rain cleansing fires upon our Nation's enemies. But thank goodness, no

nuclear testing is still going on in the continental Holy Alliance today. We've turned our attention to incinerating little inconsequential islands in the Pacific Ocean."

"Yes, darling. Which is all the more reason to feel totally safe here. Now let's climb in the back seat and... well, you know. Do that thing we do. Like when we were kids."

"Oh, that...!" Tammy said, then blushed prettily.

And as the pair reached a state of profound climax in their sacred act of sexie-poo, the Spectacularis ICBM descended to a height of 500 feet above Ground Zero, 35 miles upwind from them at Mach Ferlingburg. A group of humble shepherds, tending their flocks which grazed in the lush Nevada pasturelands bordering the abandoned military reservation, marvelled at the Dark Star which approached from the West, arced indolently across the sky and descended. They marvelled, their fleshy lower lips trembling in quiet awe, and earned vaporization for their reverence.

The Spectacularis ICBM was only 2400 miles outside its 2.5 nautical mile tolerance (which classified reports of the Draper Lab group would label "marginal satisfaction of the prescribed performance specifications") when the atomic air burst turned the flashlight of businesslike Day (one of those big 5-battery ones, like cops carry) on the drunken vagrant's stupor of Night.

• • •

Nine months later, Tammy lay on an operating room table at Nevada General Hospital. Her abdomen was heavy and bloated, the skin stretched taught over... something within. Everyone anticipated a perfectly normal birth, and why shouldn't they? Little babies were born all the time, with not so much as a tip o' the hat to indicate any trouble. Tammy's mom, Doreen, had proudly mailed out pre-birthing cards to all of the relatives. The convenient Hallmark brand cards (which had been hot sellers in the communities surrounding what the federal Alliance disaster relief programs designated "contingency area alpha") had little empty spaces which one filled in with the names of the parties involved. The cards read, "Thank the good Lord, our TAMMY and RICH survived the dangerous, penetrating radiation rays that buffeted their

bodies when the off-course atom bomb blew up. Now TAMMY is heavy with child, and we anticipate a fully natural, healthy, complication-free birth. Our lives will be changing, and we couldn't be happier!"

Tammy was dubious. One night about 5 months into her term, she had suffered an unnerving, disquieting dream. Her dream landscape featured a cold, blasted nightworld which had once teemed with all manner of life. Now nothing grew; no one prospered. Prospered? Hey look, no one could even get it up to draw breath, because (sadly) they were all dead. Some sweeping cataclysm had drained the sweet juice of existence from this once bountiful land. Tammy found herself strolling toward a wooden storage shed with languid, yet curiously relentless and unalterable, steps. The shed stood alone, encompassed by rubble, a rude wooden structure devoid of charm and barren of relief for the eye panting for aesthetic refreshment. She could hear a baby crying. This baby's cry lacked the sweet purity of newborn innocence which makes a normal human infant's delightful screaming and howling such pleasant music to the ears; instead, it sounded discordant and jangling, and a harsh, rasping undercurrent of atonal whining set Tammy's teeth on edge, highlighted as it was by the dead framing silence of night. She entered the shed and stepped across the bare dirt floor. The crying emanated from a crude cupboard mounted on one wall of the shed. She approached the cupboard and opened the door. On the shelf sat a jar of some milky, phosphorescent substance which swirled and churned, alive in the darkness. The baby's cry was coming from the substance in the jar. The substance sensed her presence, and Tammy understood with quiet certainty that the foul turbid putrescence had come from her and sought her warmth, her body — the succulent, untouchable, don't-you-even-think-about-it Body of Woman — to nurture it.

She had struggled to the surface of the dream-pool of sleep, her Porcelana-coated hands stuffed into her mouth to stifle a panicky scream, and had endured a convulsive bout of morning sickness (her first since the second month of pregnancy). And as she gazed into the ivory depths of the toilet hole which gaped in tantalizing invitation before her, she knew in her heart that something momentous, something truly Big Time, was going to attend the ripening of the Seed

couched within her.

Well, finally the big day had arrived. The birth of the Child!

Doctor Benjamin Kincaid stood over Tammy's parted legs, his strong hands caressing the ankles which dangled in a pair of elevated stirrups, ladling out big, steaming bowls of encouragement and support. "Just keep pushing, Tammy! That's a good girl! You're doing fine. We all spend the first nine months of our lives floating in warm amniotic fluid — it's perfectly natural and healthy. Everything's going to come out perfectly normal." Tammy was breathing hard, her cheeks flushed with the effort.

"Are you sure, Doctor? This act of Childbirth feels so... hideous and obscene; it's as if the Dark Things which live beyond the unseen borders of the Cosmos Nocturnus have taken up residence within my womb, transmogrifying that serene chamber of motherhood's sweet caress into a charnel house, a suppurating abattoir tended by the Unnameable Abomination which Stalketh by Night."

"Oh, don't be silly, Tammy. Just keep pushing. You're going through a perfectly normal and healthy period of pre-natal hysteria. We all do; it's Nature's way of keeping us on track during times of trauma. Nurse — sponge please. Thank you."

Push. Push-puff-puff-push.

"Dab my brow, nurse, if you please. Thank you."

Push. Grunt.

"Clamp, please. Thank you."

Push... and torrential release.

"Nurse, shotgun please. Elephant-blasting gauge, if you can manage it."

A spongy appendage wrapped itself around Kincaid's midriff and yanked him toward Tammy's birth canal, where something unspeakable was emerging into the sterile operating room light. A pair of slick, grey, ichor-coated tendrils shot out at blinding speed and sank deep into the doctor's eyes. His head was yanked violently down, his screaming mouth smashed against thighs which he might have found deliciously creamy in happier times, and Baby Vetterlein twisted its thick, ropy umbilical cord around his neck. (Two weeks later, Theresa Lundquist of Hapsburg, North Dakota would read with wide eyes in the "National Informer" trash-tabloid that, as she paraphrased

the lurid headline for her husband Kyle, "Baby strangled doctor with its own navel cord.") A quick surge of lethal pressure followed, and the leathery umbilicus crushed Kincaid's larynx and collapsed the fragile, yielding trachea. The ear-splitting screams of the nurses rang out in the night, shrill, annoying buzz-bombs of sound which impinged like little shock wave water balloons on the ears of several puzzled witnesses in the parking lot three stories below. These same witnesses presently sampled the titillating spectacle of Nurse Ginny Rogers' eviscerated carcass shooting through the window of the operating room and down to the parking lot, assorted bits and pieces of her lower intestinal tract trailing behind and flapping in the wind like gruesome party streamers. (And by the way, just because she was a woman didn't mean she had to be a nurse, or vice versa.) The savage whirlwind of carnage continued until only Tammy remained alive in the operating room, although she was (quite understandably) dazed by the sudden turn of events.

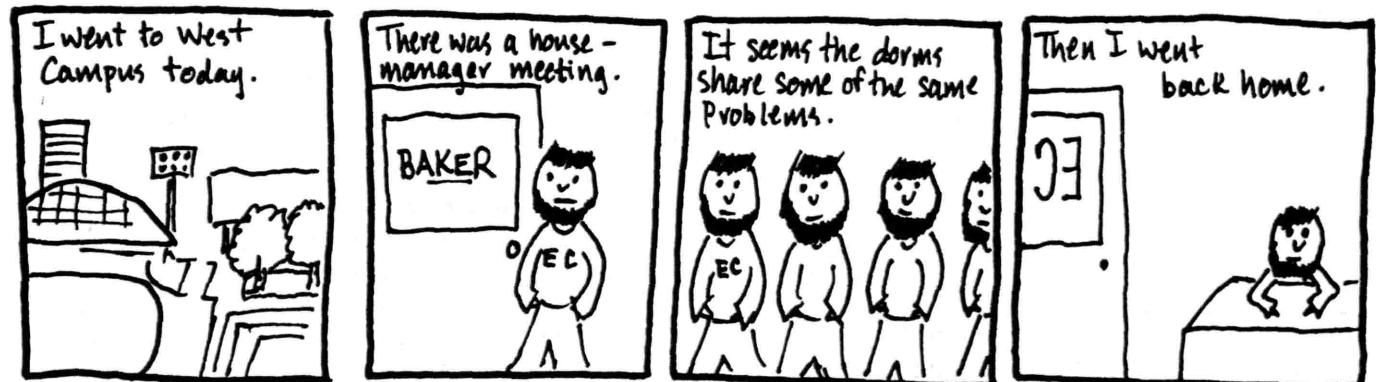
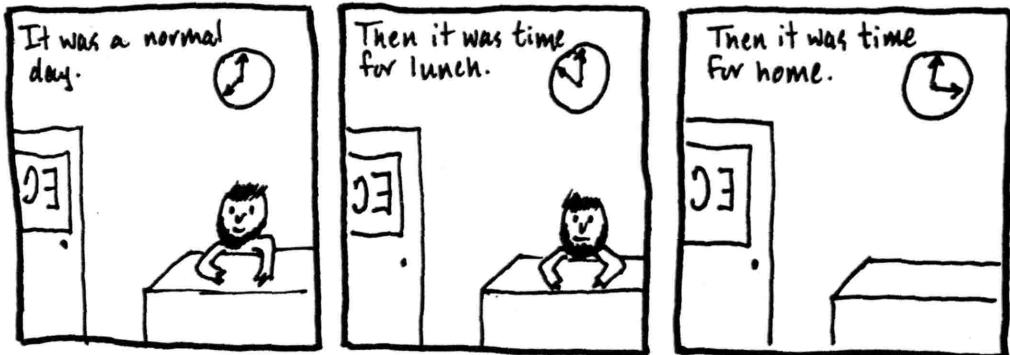
Baby Vetterlein turned from His handiwork and eyed His mother's body with naked hunger. He climbed onto the operating table with wet, slurping tugs of his gelatinous grasping appendages (which not even the most generous of anatomists would have flattered with the name "arms"), approached Tammy's rich flowing founts of nourishment, and supped of the sweet Milk of Life from her swollen pleasure mounds. And as He feasted, savoring the squirting goodness, He informed Tammy of His purpose, His mission.

The Earth had ripened and grown old as it passed through eras which historians have seen fit to label with all-encompassing, over-simplifying, vitality-sapping catch phrases: You had your basic Stone Age, your Bronze Age, your Steam Engine Age, your Cotton Gin age, your Space Age.... And if any of these dusty, pompous historians should survive to write of the coming age of despair and darkness, they would have little trouble encapsulating the events of that time in a convenient sound-bite:

Baby Vetterlein Ascendant.

...to be continued 

ANOTHER
THRILLING...
JACK'S JOURNAL
by Jack.



Long Live the King

by Neelakantan Krishnaswami

The laws of probability suggest that all events, given enough time, must occur. In another time, there is/was/will be a man known by the name of John Fitzgerald Kennedy, who was the President of the United States of America. Furthermore, he was shot by a man who is known to the cognoscenti as the Most High and Royal Galactic Overlord. The reason for this violent and senseless attack, was, as is usual in the male half of the human species, a rivalry for the attentions of a woman. However, this was no ordinary woman, but one so sublimely perfect that even the launching of a thousand ships would not be enough, so beautiful that even global thermonuclear war and the extinction of all multicellular life on Earth could not avenge her loss. Or, so these two titans thought, as overcome as they were by the rushing of pheromones through their respective brains, and the complete loss of rational thought that inevitably follows the radically altered biochemical state known as "love" prevented these two from recognizing their incapacity.

Their long saga begins, of course, at that type of social gathering known as a "birthday party". The Overlord was, at that time, incognito on Earth, patiently gathering the data that would allow him to plot the final end of freedom in the Galaxy. To that end, he had taken up a persona that encouraged the dissolution of established social norms, and who portrayed even the correctional institutes as fun places to hang out. It was because of his prominence that he was invited to this birthday party, for it was in fact the very party that celebrated the anniversary of President Kennedy's birth! He was pleased that the miserable Earthlings recognized his importance, even in disguised form, and he watched the proceedings with a pleased air. His good humor evaporated as he saw the love of his long and brutal life sing the song "Happy Birthday" to the President! His love - love no longer! - had abandoned him for one she thought had greater power! She was false now, and he swore that the man who had brought her to this state would die!

Thus it was that when the President of the United States was making a ceremonial procession through the city in Texas known as "Dallas", that a

shot rang out and his brains were splattered across the seat and all over his companions, and the sorrow of the nation was great. None was more sorrowful than the Overlord's lost love, and her misery was compounded by the fact that she knew who the true killer was, and that none would believe the truth. Oh, yes, she knew, for the Overlord's song "Looks Like an Angel" was a damning confession. But who would believe that the murderer was none other than Elvis Presley? Who would believe - with the exception of readers of certain newsmagazines - that she had had an affair with BOTH the President of the U.S. and the King of Rock and Roll? She went into a severe depression, and within a very few years, she died a broken woman.

The murderer himself was not immune to the effects of his crime. He felt the enormity of his sin, and he wished greatly to die, but he was not brave enough to commit that action. Instead, he went into a tailspin, abandoning musical craftsmanship for cheap instant fame, until he fell so low as to sing "I'm Just Wild About Smorgasboard". He sustained himself during these years on nothing but amphetamines and corn dogs, until his regimen of drugs and junk food wiped out even the memory of his rulership of the entire Galaxy. He made a last, feeble effort to restore himself to his former glory with his "Comeback Special", but that too, soon failed him. He fell into drunken disrepute, and died miserably upon not the throne of the Universe, but upon the throne of indoor plumbing.

These sad events are, nonetheless, all to the good of our poor planet, since the conquest and pilage of Earth cannot begin until the Overlord commands it so. But do not rest too comfortably, since the news of Elvis, Lord of the Galaxy, is racing out to the stars at the speed of light. Once news reaches those alien shores, can they not, with their awesome technologies, restore their leader to life and plunder our world? It might, in fact, be the path of wisdom to proclaim your allegiance to Elvis now, before their armadas arrive. So, goodbye, and peace, love, and Elvis! May he live forever!

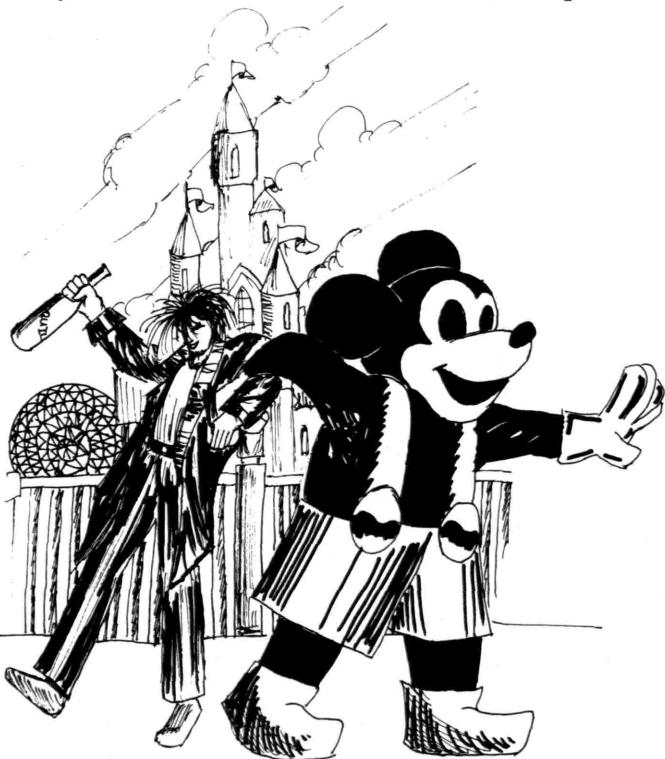


One Night, part IV

by James "Loserboy" Fleming

David heads south in a stolen car after finding a secret message on a box of chocolates saying "MEET MICKEY NOON, 2 DAYS" intended for David's dead ex-lover Jeanine. And I am not a loserboy, scumbag.

There I was, gunning my Porsche down some highway at 110 miles an hour trying to get to Disney World to meet Mickey Mouse at a hotdog stand. Someone had secretly planted crummy music in the tape compartment, no polka, so I had the radio on, full blast, Jamaican iron pan music going in and out of sync with the sound of the windshield wipers.



At least it sounded like the windshield wipers, but they weren't on at all, and it was sunny out. The radio wasn't on either and the music became just a curious pounding in my head and the rhythm of white dashed lines hurtling at me on the road. I vowed not to mix uppers with absynthe again, and popped a few valium to steady my nerves.

After a few hours and several different illegal substances I realized I had no idea where I was go-

ing. I stopped and bought an atlas. I found Florida: it was in the south. I was up north. Furthermore, the sun rises in the east, so I should keep the sun on my, uh, left in the morning, and my right at night. Something like that. To clarify things I drew little pictures of the earth and sun and Florida on the windshield with lipstick I found in my glove compartment. I tried keeping the sun on the correct side and took exits whenever it looked like I was straying too far north. Some might have said I was lost. But I believe no one is ever *really* lost. If you just look around, well, there you are.

On the way I stopped a few times for gas and ate at little shopping mall things on the side of the highway. When all the booze and valium finally got to me I put the seat back in the car, slowed to 80, and closed my eyes for little bits at a time. As long as the dashed lines on the road kept hurtling toward me I knew I was okay.

I made Disney World before noon the second day.

• • •

Disney World was great! I now know why people go there. All these lumpy middle aged people walking around in bright clothing with their little kids. The kids screaming, parents yelling, teen guys and girls in tight muscle shirts and spandex preening and slavering over each other. What a spectacle!

The day was warm, and I was in a good mood as I walked through the crowds. It was a bit too warm for my trenchcoat, but I used it to conceal a bottle of whiskey I was sipping at. With each sip, the warm slippery rim of the bottle tickled my stubble. I wandered around asking people for directions to the hotdog stand. The ones with children avoided me, grabbing their kids away, favoring me with dirty looks. I think they were intimidated by my messy hair, or my boots, or bloodshot eyes. Finally a twelve year old girl in plaid and platforms pointed me at the hotdog stand. "Get a shave," she added.

I went to the hotdog stand. It was noon. Mickey was there, nearby, waving at children.

Eight feet tall, big ears, you know. He looked over at me and waved. I waved back at him and motioned him over with a tip of my bottle.

"Hello Mickey!" I said.

"Hello there!" he said.

Now was my chance. "Jeanine sent me. She couldn't make it."

Mickey pondered a bit then nodded, still waving at passerbys. "Di will be disappointed. Got the stuff?"

I tugged at my coat. "Yeah."

He put his hand out — white gloves, four fingers — and handed me a key. "Usual place, don't be late."

I took the key. "No problem."

"That's right! Have a nice day!" and Mickey strode off in a jolly manner, waving at kids, bouncing around. I looked at the key, a door key, not a locker key, no markings on it save "do not duplicate." I looked around, realized I was going to have to try the key on every door I could find.

Disney world is a big place.

I spent three days, used up all my crystal meth, and took seven photos for tourists. One of them even took one with me, there I am, you can see me in the Jones' photo album, if you know them. I've got my arm around dad, smiling idiotically, a key clutched in my left hand.

I found the door, late one night, the back door of a warehouse out by Epcot. Lock number 1,561. Pushed the key in. Click. It fit! Turned it. Pushed the door open. Darkness. Stepped in, closed the door behind me.

Took two steps in the darkness. Muffled footsteps on carpet. Fished around in my coat. Struck a match.

Suddenly giant lights went on overhead, illuminating a giant ballroom, finely furnished in gold and silk. People were crouching all around me, still as statues, wearing formal party gear.

Suddenly they all leapt up and yelled "Surprise!"

It was a surprise party. For me. A pretty girl in a french maid uniform put a cup of punch in my hand and took my bag away from me.

The man immediately in front of me raised his glass in a toast and cleared his throat theatrically. "To my dear brother! Returned at last! Slay the fatted calf!" and everyone laughed politely and cheered.

I thought, now, finally, I've lost my mind.

• • •

The group fell silent again, looking at me expectantly. The main who had just spoken, spoke again: "Brother! Do you not recognize me? Has it been so long? Take a good look."

I looked at him. Similar build, but an inch taller. Skin golden where mine is simply olive toned. Hair sandy bleached blond and long, pulled back in a pony tail where mine is dark, medium length and messy. The muscles showing on his arms and chest were strong and well defined. Small cleft in his chin. My dimples. My eyes, though a little lighter without the dark circles under them. A good strong nose like mine, his a little more hawklike. White oxford shirt, rolled up sleeves, golden vest, loose fitting slacks, loafers.

He smiled, lowered his head, then looked back at me. "I'm so glad you're back! We can start at once."

Could this be my brother? I felt at once rather small. I puffed my chest out. "Start?"

"You were my best agent once. Brother. We were the perfect team. Don't you recall? You were ... are ... the muscle behind my operation. You were the one who would clean up all the messes, eliminate the competition. Infiltrate foreign governments. You were the best! Espionage, demolition, reverse engineering alien artifacts, you name it!"

I didn't really know what to say. I finished my glass of punch in one gulp then pulled my bottle out of my coat and took a big swig.

He laughed and pointed at my bottle. "Ha! Still drinking! For centuries now! Don't you remember? Don't you remember Bankok? I rescued you from there. You were selling yourself, drinking yourself into a coma. I saved you. Previous to that I found you in China frequenting opium dens, lost in the sweet smelling herbs. Another time in the middle ages, nagging alchemists for whatever concoction they had to try out on you. Rome, drinking, Kush, black lotus. I've always come and pulled you out of it whenever I needed you. This time I found you by tracking the economic fluctuations of liquor stores around the world, categorized by alcohol type. I found your pattern in Boston.

"You always disappear again, sooner or later. You get sick of the world, tired of it, being around all the time, watching ephemeral mortal friends grow old and die. You make friends, get involved. I do

not. I loathe them all, even Hoskins over there.

"Hoskins!"

A muscular balding man in a tuxedo stepped forward. "Yes boss?"

"Step forward please, I'm going to show my brother something."

"Okay." He stepped forward, a foot away from my brother.

My brother lunged suddenly and opened up Hoskin's trachea with his left pinkie fingernail and watched arc after arc of blood shoot across the room in mild artistic appraisal.

"Gurgle!" Hoskins said, and expired.

"Well, I'm saving you again, brother, just like before. We can start up again, you were my best agent, you still can be."

I remembered why I'd come here in the first place and got angry. I took another swig on my bottle. "Jeanine dead, you prick?"

He glanced at Hoskins. "What do you think."

"Bastard."

"Yes, yes, yes, we've been through this all before. I do it everytime. it's the only way to lull you out of your reverie and come seek me. You were wasting your life up there drinking away, indulging yourself in all those little vices of yours."

I thought of Jeanine. Sweet memories of us shooting up together, snorting coke, making love in a deserted laundramat. I took another swig. "The negatives?"

"Forgeries, Jeanine was never down here. We simply planted them in your room. No one ever gave them to you. I just had them put there. Then we killed Jeanine and sent you the chocolates with the note, just to make sure you'd come. Ingenious, no?"

"Couldn't you have called."

He looked puzzled. "What?"

I waved my bottle around in his face. "Called! You know: telephones! Or written a letter. Why the fuck did you have to kill her if all you wanted to do was see me. Reach and touch someone?"

"Hmmm? Oh yes, I suppose I could have called you. We've never really done it that way before though. Its always been like this. What difference does it make? You're here. Classically, the only way to get your attention has been to take your drugs away from you or kill your women. Either we had to kill Jeanine or exterminate every drug dealer in the greater Boston area. While possible, it would

have attracted more attention than I care for at the moment.

"Once, several thousand years ago when I needed you I sent an army to cut down all the black lotus plants in Greece. You were so enraged that you organized every addict in the country into a crack assault team and attacked the Assyrian Empire. They were fully seven hundred miles away and had nothing to do with the lotus, but you wound up reigning over all of mesopotamia, living as God on Earth for over a decade. I was so proud of you I let your girlfriend live."

I tried furiously to collect my thoughts. "So, what we're saying here is that every couple of hundred years, you come along, kill my girlfriend or take my drugs away, leave cryptic clues around and let me chase you down, whereupon you and I work together, I as your agent, until twenty or thirty years goes by and I get sick of it and leave."

"Yes, that is essentially accurate. Do you remember it now?"

"No. I remember nothing. I'll admit that you look like you could be my brother, I'll give you that; but my features are far from unique. I really remember little of my life before 1978. I had a year of electroshock therapy at MacClean's. Wiped out my memory."

"McKlane's? Some fast food psychotherapy place? Is that what they do now adays?"

"Basically. A year. When they finished with me I didn't even know my own name. I couldn't recognize cream of wheat. they made it for me for breakfast. I tried patching the walls with it. They switched me over to frosted flakes. Then I ..."

He looked a bit worried, frowned, then cut me off. "Inanities, brother, inanities. Cream of wheat? I want to speak to you of my plans. What has happened to that keen mind of yours, eh?"

I took another swig and glowered at him, I didn't like him insulting me like that.

Perhaps you just need some rest after your journey. Teresa here will show you to your room. there's a full wardrobe in case you didn't bring one. There will be someone in in the morning to prepare you for breakfast."

"Prepare me?"

...to be continued



The Controversy Over MAPHTA

by Hoyt Bleakley

The MAPHTA (MIT And Precious Harvard, Together Always!) is an ambitious agreement to phase out all registration barriers between the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Harvard University by the year 1995. The agreement was negotiated by the administration of former MIT president Paul Gray and the Harvard president Neil Rudenstine.

The Vest administration has also negotiated certain side agreements which stipulate that each institution must guarantee certain minimum academic and food safety standards, if it's not too inconvenient.

Advocates of the agreement say that its adoption will contribute to the free market of ideas and lower prices on textbooks, thus raising grades and living standards on both campuses. In addition, East Campus residents will be able to take their meals by traveling on the 'T' to Harvard and using one of the cafeterias there. The pro-MAPHTA forces also point to the MIT-Wellesley exchange as an example of a successful academic integration.

Detractors of the MAPHTA agreement believe that Harvard students will come to MIT humanities

classes in search of lower bell-curves and thus higher grades. This will result, they insist, on lower grades for MIT students. Furthermore, Harvard students will be eligible for Athena accounts, exacerbating the present scarcity of workstations. The anti-MAPHTA forces also point to the MIT-Wellesley exchange as an example of a disastrous academic integration.

VooDoo has been fortunate enough to interview MAPHTA's most vocal opponent, the president of the Texas chapter of the MIT Alumni association, Hoss Dubot, on this subject of concern to all Techies.

• • •

VooDoo: Greetings, Mr. Dubot.

Dubot: How are ya?

Fine, sir. We were wondering if you might tell us why you are opposed to the MAPHTA accord?

Well, it's like this, see... Everybody's goin' on about how this MAPHTA is gonna make everybody happy. But look folks, we don't believe in the tooth fairy, ok? Now, this is here... here it is... this is it: MIT's a great institution, but this here MAPHTA thing is bad for the 'Tute.

But, Mr. Dubot, would you please be more specific?

Well, now, if you wouldn't interrupt, I just might.

Please do...

... not gonna interrupt?...

No.

You sure?

Yes.



... Alright, now let's consider how these boys from Harvard operate: Every moment they're not doing legitimate studying they're out there brown-nos-ing somebody. Oh, they call it socializing, but if you believe that, I've got some General Motors stock I'd like to sell you. Now, those of us from MIT are used to being quite... unskilled... in the social

graces, so how are we gonna compete with that?
But, sir...

Now, there you go interruptin' again... Did I cut in
on you?

Well, may I remind you that this is an interview.

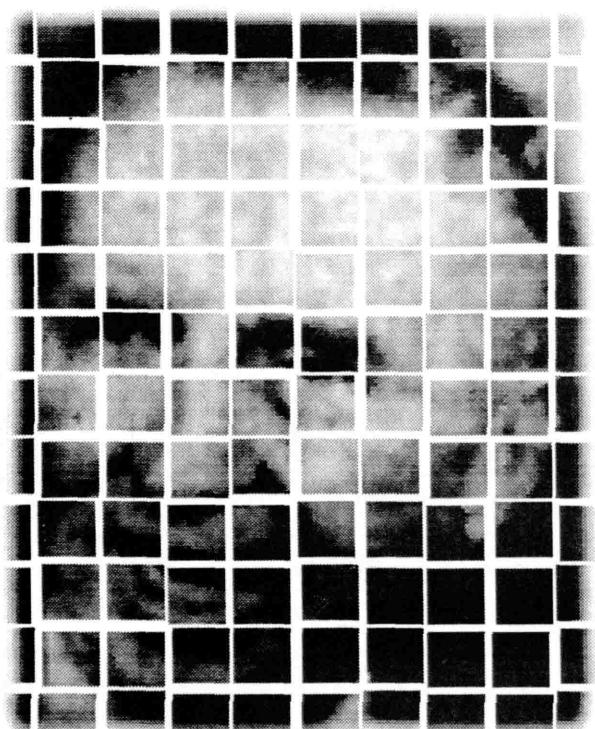
Oh, I see. You're gonna ask me questions. Is that the
way the game is played? Well, fine.

OK, so you just don't like people from Harvard, then?

No... the folks up there are good, decent people, but
they're trapped in a rotten system, alright? Now,
I'm not on about Harvard because I don't like 'em.
I want them to be more like us, but not if it harms
good ol' MIT. As I've said before, I'm just the grain
of sand that irritates the oyster that makes the
pearl, OK? I'm just the pop-up timer that keeps
your Thanksgivin' turkey from turnin' into a lump
a' charcoal.

But how do you respond to the fact that every Nobel-prize-winner on both campuses has endorsed the plan?

Them Nobel-types are fine researchers, don't know a
thing about teachin'. Am I right? Anyway, let's discuss
reality and not some theory that might be
popular in Sweden, ok? When those reg-doors
open, you are gonna hear a giant 'whooshing'



sound of Harvard students coming down here to
take HASS-D's, lookin' for nothin' but low bell-
curves. And they are gonna clean our plate, too.

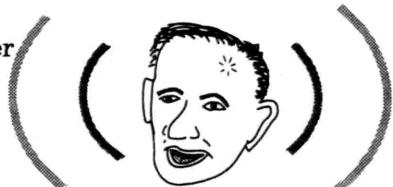
But if that's the case, why haven't all the MIT students gone to Wellesley to take their technical classes?

That's obvious to anybody over age six, so I won't
even waste my time on it. I'm just that little yella'
light that reminds you to go fill up your car, OK?
And we're almost on empty, here, understand? I'm
just that tiny little air bubble that get's in your
blood and gives you a stroke, ok? And we, the stu-
dents, will never let that happen to this great
institute!

Mr. Dubot, thank you for talking with us.

Dubot: Make sure your readers think about this lit-
tle song we sing at the MIT Texan association

"We'll remember
In September
When our Tu-
ition's due!"



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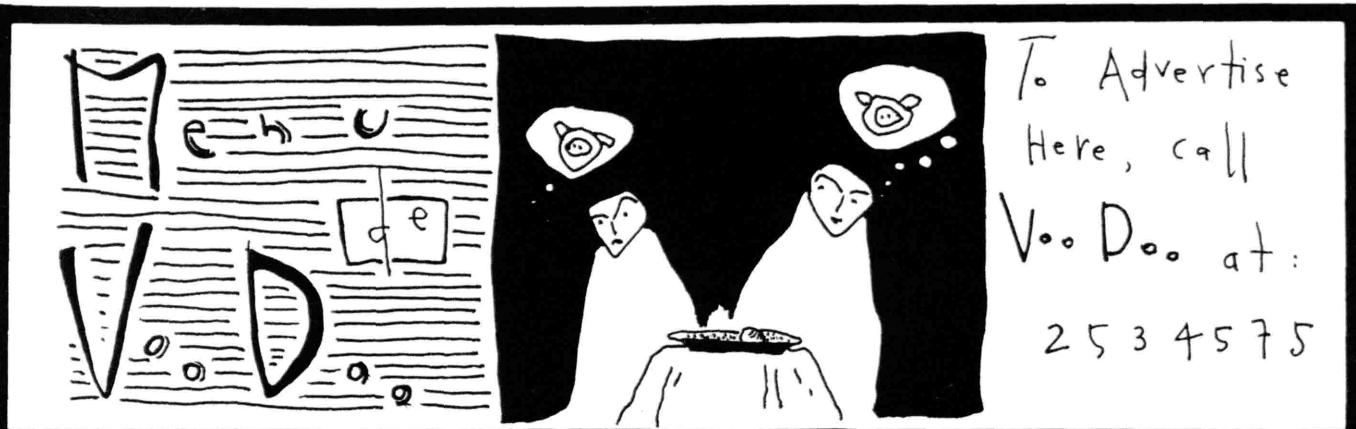
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Raging Dave

By Dave

I just saw Margot Kidder on 48 Hours, a.k.a. Lois Lane from the Superman series I, II, IX...., and I believe I'm ready to barf. The woman has a harelip and appears to be 300 years old. The thought of the man of steel losing his virginity to this skank bag is more than old Dave can bear. However, she did have a few beauty tips that she felt should be shared with her adoring public: 1) Avoid porter cement facials 2) Refrain from obtaining artificial suntans by using a shrink wrap gun 3) And finally by all means avoid Drano laced mouth wash. •*•*•* Hum, sounds like very sound advice to me.

Now before I move on to the main rage festival of this article (by the way, I've planned a very profound and tasty rage fest ... quick hint of what's to come: TS) I need to break form and actually distribute kudos. To the MIT brain trust I wish to bestow upon you a most well deserved Raging Dave salute. Unlike the other pussy Ivy League schools, you stood up to the government on the overlap charges and by all accounts (even though MIT and the other coconspirators are guilty as hell) looks like your going to get away scott (katie) free. Congrats!

Now with that bit of work behind us it is now time to begin our main event. I'm entitling it :

The Tori Spelling Rage Festival

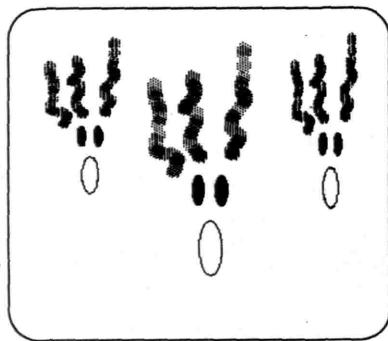
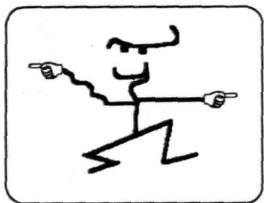
So I'm engaged in my usual Wednesday nite viewing ritual: 90210 Actually, quite a socially redeeming and profoundly important TV experience. And I notice that *Tori* just seems to be getting skinnier and skinnier all the time. In fact in just this one episode she sheds two dress sizes. Now, I'm all for the chicklets keeping themselves nice and trim but for God sakes, *Tori*, what the hell is going

on in your obviously low fat brain. This girl has gone beyond thin and is now in the category of Somalia petite. She appears to be a bag of bones with strangely deformed cleavage. All the result of a daily diet which consists of two grapes, a low fat chito and for dessert half a ju-ju bee. Usually I would not work myself up over such an issue but for those of you in the reading audience who haven't clued in to the impending significance of all this, let me spell it out :

As Tori goes, so goes the rest of the Babes

We have a potential crisis here the magnitude of which has never possibly been seen before. For the females who have somehow lost sight of what is important let me point out the obvious. The point of being female is to maintain trim, fleshy, female body parts. *Tori* as much as we all love you and of course admire your brilliant acting skills, this death warmed over approach to physical beauty is taking things a bit to far.

To illustrate the potential disaster this presents witness the following expressions on the face of Raging Dave and the



Ragettes on a recent voyeur outing. Yes, the expressions you are observing on the faces of Dave and the Ragettes are expressions of horror. We have been viewing the disrobing of a potential babe when in fact she turns out to be a faithful *Tori* follower --- well the rest is simply unspeakable. In order to calm ourselves we ran to our local video store and rented the old TV classic, Charlies Angels. Now one had to enjoy the premise of this fine classic TV show three beautiful women, given assignments remotely from a man they never saw but who always seem to be drinking champagne with yet another beautiful woman

at some undisclosed location. Seems the current PC attitude prevailing across the country would put Hillary and her crowd into the hibbi-jibbis (please excuse the use of PC techno jargon) if such a show ever reared its ugly head again. Nevertheless, a couple hours of Angel therapy and Dave and his buddies are set to face the world again.

©©©©©©©©©©©©
Angels are you all there. Yes Charlie we are all here. I just wanted to tell you what a wonderful job you did on that last case. Thank you Charlie! Oh and Angels one more thing. Yes Charlie Could you please put my gun back in its holster Oh but of course Charlie

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 So I'm watching yet another fine evening program ... ET and find myself doing a double take based on the sort of quotes I'm hearing from Glen Frye ... member of a rag-bag band from the forgettable 70's.

Glen why on God's green earth are you doing a remake of those lame Eagles songs from the 70's using current kiss-up country performers. Well, Leeza, the reason I'm using country western performers is because I'm having difficulty relating to what currently passes for rock these days and the so called artists performing this music if I can be so bold as to call it music.

Um, excuse me Mr. Frye but "I've got a peaceful easy feeling" that the expiration date on your career dates to about 1979. The real reason country bumpkins are recording your tunes has more to do with lack of taste than a conscience decision to revive those great Eagle tunes from the dark past. You had a moment Mr. Frye. It came in a Hotel somewhere in California, but now its over ♫ ♫ ♫ deal with it! Before I continue I'm going to have to take a dancing break since the next rage is extremely important and deals with an issue effecting the quality of life for all of us. ♫♫♫♫♫♫♫♫♫♫♫♫♫♫♫♫ Runaway train never coming back. Runaway on a one way track. Seems like I should be

getting somewhere. Somehow I'm neither here nor there ...

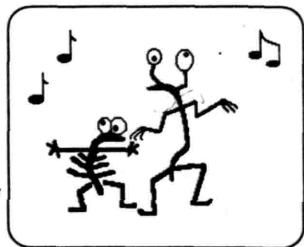
Ah, that felt good

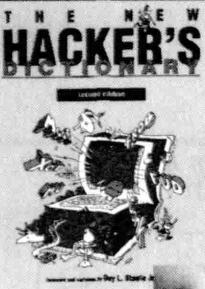
Yes, a little Soul Asylum can be so soothing.

Anyway on with the next important item of flameage which I have entitled:

GERIATRIC PERFORMERS

I'm reading the Globe, (a habit I am deeply ashamed of --- as long as I'm confessing I might as well admit another one of my deep dark secrets --- every now and then I watch Newscenter 5 with Nat and Chet. Of course the horror doesn't end there --- I have found myself having impure thoughts concerning Natalie the Channel 5 News Anchor woman and Abu the little monkey from the recently released Aladdin Video. ®®® I'm currently seeking professional help) and spread out in a full page ad is a dinosaur by the name of Neil Diamond. I personally thought this guy was dead or at the very least I thought his career was dead. But here was this full page ad suggesting one should spend money to see this man in concert. Later that night I hear a review (and I use the term review in the weakest possible sense) that suggested this old man put on a stunning show. What is going on here! Am I on the planet in the 1990's or has some bad "B" movie transported me back in time to the 60's. Why are 300 year olds still allowed to perform. What is wrong with this picture. I recently over heard a conversation between two women complaining about how they were disappointed in the performance of Frank Sinatra ---- Please! He is 3000 years old. He shouldn't be performing he should be embalmed. But most importantly you ladies shouldn't be buying tickets to see him. He's made enough money --- he doesn't need anymore! Anyway, I have raged myself into an insulin deficit, time to go. GGGGGGGG





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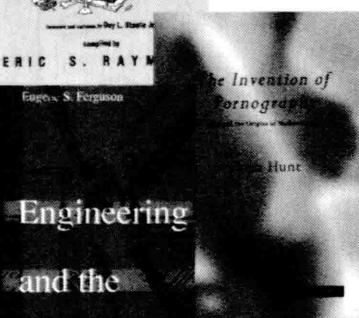
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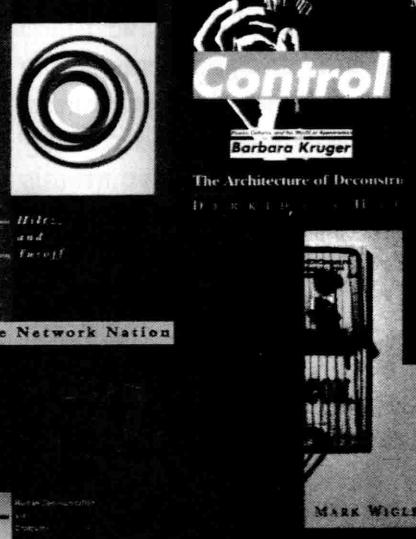


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