

FROM OFF THE STREETS OF CLEVELAND COMES...

AMERICAN SPLENDOR

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF HARVEY PEKAR



FROM OFF THE STREETS OF CLEVELAND COMES...

AMERICAN SPLENDOR

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF HARVEY PEKAR

STORIES BY HARVEY PEKAR

INTRODUCTION BY R. CRUMB

ART BY

**KEVIN BROWN GREGORY BUDGETT
R. CRUMB GARY DUMM
GERRY SHAMRAY**



**A Dolphin Book
DOUBLEDAY**

NEW YORK LONDON TORONTO SYDNEY AUCKLAND

FOR JOYCE

Thanks to Mike Barson, Bud Plant,
my illustrators who worked so hard,
and all the readers who wrote to me.

A Dolphin Book

Published by **Doubleday**, a division of
Bantam Doubleday Dell Publishing Group, Inc.,
666 Fifth Avenue, New York, New York 10103

Dolphin, Doubleday and the portrayal of two
dolphins are trademarks of Doubleday, a division of
Bantam Doubleday Dell Publishing Group, Inc.

The stories appearing in this collection
have been published previously
in the annual periodical *American Splendor*.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Pekar, Harvey.

American splendor.

From off the streets of Cleveland comes . . .

"A Dolphin book."

I. Title. II. Title: From off the streets of Cleveland comes—American splendor.
PN6727.P44A6 1986 741.5'973 85-20439

ISBN 0-385-23195-4

Copyright © 1976, 1977, 1978, 1979,
1980, 1981, 1982, 1983, 1984 by Harvey Pekar.
Introduction copyright © 1986 by R. Crumb.

All rights reserved

Printed in the United States of America

4 6 8 10 9 7 5

BG

INTRODUCTION

 YEAH, I'VE KNOWN HARVEY PEKAR A LONG TIME...A LONG TIME...SINCE THE FALL OF 1962, WHEN I FIRST LEFT HOME AND WENT TO CLEVELAND, AND SHARED A BASEMENT APARTMENT WITH MY FRIEND MARTY PAHLS. PEKAR LIVED AROUND THE CORNER ON DEERING STREET AT THAT TIME. (NONE OF THESE BUILDINGS ARE STILL STANDING...THE WHOLE NEIGHBORHOOD WAS BULLDOZED IN THE 'SEVENTIES.) HARVEY WAS THE FIRST PERSON I EVER MET WHO I THOT WAS A GENUINE "HIPSTER." I WAS VERY IMPRESSED. HE WAS HEAVILY INTO MODERN JAZZ, HAD BIG CRAZY ABSTRACT PAINTINGS ON THE WALLS OF HIS PAD, TALKED BOP LINGO, HAD SHELVES AND SHELVES OF BOOKS AND RECORDS, AND NEVER CLEANED HIS APARTMENT...AND HE WAS SEETHING, INTENSE, BURNING UP, ALWAYS MOVING, PACING, JUMPING AROUND...JUST LIKE A CHARACTER OUT OF KEROUAC.

TWENTY YEARS LATER, STILL COMING OUT OF HIS SKIN, PEKAR STILL LIVES ON CLEVELAND'S EAST SIDE...THOSE SAME ABSTRACT PAINTINGS ARE NOW COVERED WITH DUST AND GRIME. ACTUALLY, IT TURNS OUT HE'S ONE OF THE MOST STABLE GUYS I KNOW. EVERYONE ELSE FROM THOSE OLD DAYS HAS LONG SINCE FLED, SCATTERED TO OTHER PLACES AND TOWNS, EXCEPT DANNY THOMPSON, SID GOLD, AND HARVEY. CLEVELAND IS A HARD TOWN...I CAME NEAR COMMITTING SUICIDE WHEN I LIVED THERE. I KNEW SEVERAL YOUNG SENSITIVE TYPES WHO DID END IT ALL IN CLEVELAND, THE POET D.A. LEVY BEING THE MOST FAMOUS.

YEAH, HARVEY IS AN EGO-MANIAC; A CLASSIC CASE...A DRIVEN, COMPULSIVE, MAD JEW...WATCHING HIM EAT—HE EATS FASTER THAN ANYONE I'VE EVER SEEN, SHOVELLING IT IN AS IF SOMEBODY HAD A GUN AT HIS HEAD AND WAS THREATENING TO KILL HIM IF HE DIDN'T GET IT ALL DOWN IN TEN SECONDS. IT'S SOMETHING TO SEE, BUT HOW ELSE COULD HE HAVE GOT TEN ALL THOSE COMICS PUBLISHED, WITH ALMOST NO MONEY; IN TOTAL ISOLATION FROM ANY COMIC-PUBLISHING "SCENE" SUCH AS EXISTS OUT HERE IN CALIFORNIA, OR IN NEW YORK; CONSTANTLY BROW-BEATING ARTISTS TO ILLUSTRATE HIS STORIES; HANDLING THE DISTRIBUTION HIMSELF... ONLY AN EGO-MANIAC WOULD PERSIST IN THE FACE OF SUCH ODDS.

BELIEVE ME, I KNOW FROM WHENCE I SPEAK, HAVING BEEN NAGGED AND BULLIED PLENTY BY HIM TO GET THE WORK IN...THE PHONE RINGS...THE DESPERATE YELLING, THREATENING, CAJOLING...AND ILLUSTRATING HIS STORIES IS NOT EASY. THERE'S SO LITTLE REAL COMIC-BOOK-STYLE ACTION FOR AN ARTIST TO SINK HIS TEETH INTO. MOSTLY IT'S JUST PEOPLE STANDING AROUND TALKING, OR JUST HARVEY HIMSELF ADDRESSING THE READER FOR PAGE AFTER PAGE...YOU HAVE TO REALLY SHARE HIS VISION, OR NEED THE FEW BUCKS HE PAYS FOR THIS TEDIOUS LABOR. IF HARVEY WASN'T SO DRIVEN, THERE WOULD NEVER'VE BEEN ANY AMERICAN SPLENDOR COMICS. IT'S NOT AS IF HE'S MADE A LOUSY DIME OFF OF THEM. I'M FAIRLY CERTAIN THAT THE SALES OF HIS COMIC BOOKS HAVE NEVER COVERED THE PRINTING COSTS.

IT'S A SAD FACT THAT YOU CAN'T SELL "ADULT" COMIC BOOKS TO AMERICAN ADULTS, COMIC BOOKS ARE FOR KIDS. ADOLESCENT MALE POWER

FANTASIES, THAT'S WHAT MOST COMIC BOOKS CONTAIN; ESCAPE FANTASIES FOR PIMPY-FACED YOUNG BOYS...YEP. MOST COMIC SPECIALTY SHOPS WON'T EVEN CARRY BOOKS LIKE AMERICAN SPLENDOR. WHY SHOULD THEY? "ADULTS" NEVER GO IN SUCH PLACES, AND SO THE "ADULT" COMICS JUST SIT THERE TAKING UP SPACE ON THE SHELF.

MAYBE A "REAL" BOOK OF PEKAR'S COMICS, LIKE THIS, WILL SELL BETTER THAN THE CHEAP NEWSPRINT COMIC BOOKS. I WONDER IF DOUBLEDAY & CO. KNOWS WHAT THEY'RE GETTING THEMSELVES INTO HERE, BECAUSE, WHILE PEKAR'S WORK IS HIGHLY RESPECTED IN CERTAIN INTELLECTUAL CIRCLES, IT'S DEFINITELY NOT VERY COMMERCIAL.... BUT, WHO KNOWS? WITH DISTRIBUTION IN BIG BOOKSTORE CHAINS...WELL, HE'LL NEVER BE THE NEXT GARFIELD, THAT'S CERTAIN. THE SUBJECT MATTER OF THESE STORIES IS SO STAGGERINGLY MUNDANE, IT VERGES ON THE EXOTIC! IT IS VERY DISORIENTING AT FIRST, BUT AFTER AWHILE YOU GET WITH IT. MYSELF, I LOVE IT...PEKAR HAS PROVEN ONCE AND FOR ALL THAT EVEN THE MOST SEEMINGLY DREARY AND MONOTONOUS OF LIVES IS FILLED WITH POIGNANCY AND HEROIC STRUGGLE. ALL IT TAKES IS SOMEONE WITH AN EYE TO SEE, AN EAR TO HEAR, AND A DEMENTED, DESPERATE JEWISH MIND TO GET IT DOWN ON PAPER... THERE IS DRAMA IN THE MOST ORDINARY AND ROUTINE OF DAYS, BUT IT'S A SUBTLE THING THAT GETS LOST IN THE SHUFFLE... OUR PERSONAL STRUGGLES SEEM DULL AND DRAB COMPARED WITH THE THRILLING, SUSPENSE-FILLED, ACTION-PACKED LIVES OF THE CHARACTERS WHO ARE PUSHED ON US ALL THE TIME IN MOVIES, TV SHOWS, ADVENTURE NOVELS AND...THOSE OTHER COMICBOOKS.

WHAT PEKAR DOES IS CERTAINLY NEW TO THE COMICBOOK MEDIUM. THERE'S NEVER BEEN ANYTHING EVEN APPROACHING THIS KIND OF STARK REALISM. IT'S HARD ENOUGH TO FIND IT IN LITERATURE, IMPOSSIBLE IN THE

MOVIES AND TV. IT TAKES CHUTSPAH TO TELL IT EXACTLY THE WAY IT HAPPENED, WITH NO ADORNMENT, NO GREAT WRAP-UP, NO BIZARRE TWIST, NOTHING. PEKAR'S GENIUS IS THAT HE PULLS THIS OFF, AND DOES IT WITH HUMOR, PATHOS, ALL THE DRAMA YOU COULD EVER WANT...AND IN A COMIC BOOK YET?

USUALLY HE WRITES HIS STORY IDEAS SOON AFTER THE EVENT, WHILE THE NUANCES OF IT ARE STILL FRESH IN HIS MIND. HE ALWAYS HAS A LARGE BACKLOG OF THESE STORIES, WHICH HE CAN CHOOSE FROM TO COMPOSE EACH NEW ISSUE OF AMERICAN SPLENDOR. HE WRITES THE STORIES IN A CRUDELY LAID-OUT COMIC PAGE FORMAT USING STICK FIGURES, WITH THE DIALOGUE OVER THEIR HEADS, AND SOME DESCRIPTIVE DIRECTIONS FOR THE ARTIST TO WORK FROM. THE NEXT PHASE INVOLVES CALLING UP VARIOUS ARTISTS AND HARANGING THEM TO TAKE ON PARTICULAR STORIES.

HARVEY IS OFTEN FRUSTRATED BY THE ARTISTS' LACK OF ABILITY TO BREAK OUT OF THE STANDARD HEROIC COMIC BOOK STYLE OF PORTRAYING CHARACTERS. INDEED, IT IS A CHALLENGING TASK TO DRAW ORDINARY PEOPLE REALISTICALLY, TO GIVE THEM UNIQUE PERSONAL QUALITIES IN A SERIES OF PANELS. ONE ARTIST, GERRY SHAMRAY, WENT ALL THE WAY, TAKING HUNDREDS OF PHOTOS OF PEKAR, HIS WIFE, HIS APARTMENT, THE STREETS OF HIS NEIGHBORHOOD, AND SO ON, AND DRAW FROM THE PHOTOS. ONE OR TWO OTHER ARTISTS HAVE USED THIS METHOD WITH PEKAR'S STORIES. THE RESULTS OF THIS APPROACH ARE VERY SUCCESSFUL, MANY OF THE ARTISTS WHO HAVE WORKED FOR PEKAR OVER THE YEARS (HARVEY HAS BEEN WRITING COMIC STORIES SINCE 1975.) HAVE PUSHED THEIR ABILITIES TO HIGHER LEVELS OF SUBTLETY AND REALISM IN THE STRUGGLE TO CONVEY PEKAR'S IDEAS, OR MAYBE JUST TO GET HARVEY OFF THEIR BACKS — ME INCLUDED!

— R. CRUMB
APRIL, 1985

THE HARVEY PEKAR NAME STORY

STORY BY HARVEY PEKAR

ART BY R. CRUMB

MY NAME HAS BEEN
A MATTER OF SOME
CONCERN TO ME
OVER THE YEARS ...



IT'S AN UNUSUAL
NAME—HARVEY
PEKAR...



"HARVEY" DOESN'T REALLY
GO WELL WITH "PEKAR"—
NOT IN A CONVENTIONAL
SENSE, AT LEAST...



I'VE READ IN VARIOUS
PLACES THAT "HARVEY" IS OF
EITHER CELTIC, GERMANIC, OR
FRENCH ORIGIN....



YET "PEKAR" IS
A SLAVIC NAME...



STRANGELY, I AM NEITHER
CELTIC, GERMANIC, FRENCH
OR SLAVIC...



WHEN I WAS YOUNGER
MY ACQUAINTANCES WOULD
TEASE ME BECAUSE OF
MY NAME...



THEY'D SAY, "HARVEY
PEES IN HIS CAR."



ONCE MY BEST FRIEND
MADE AN ADMITTEDLY WITTY
REMARK ABOUT MY NAME,



HE SAID, "WHAT COMES
AFTER THE DINING CAR?
—THE PEE CAR!"

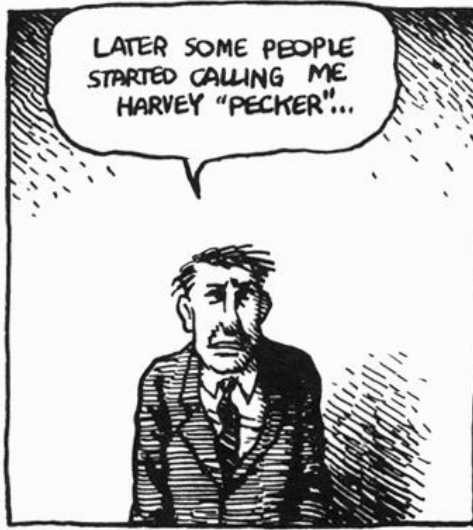


DESPITE THIS
WE REMAINED
FRIENDS...

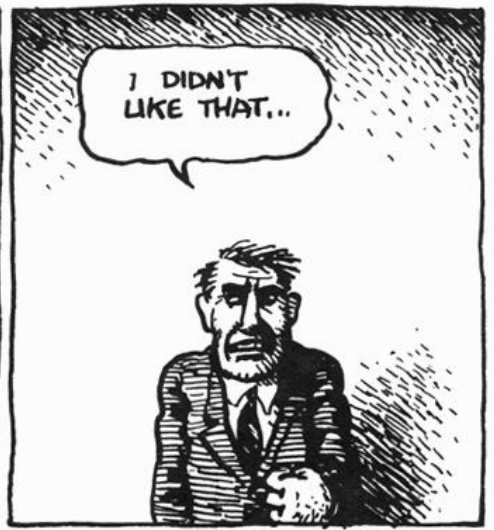




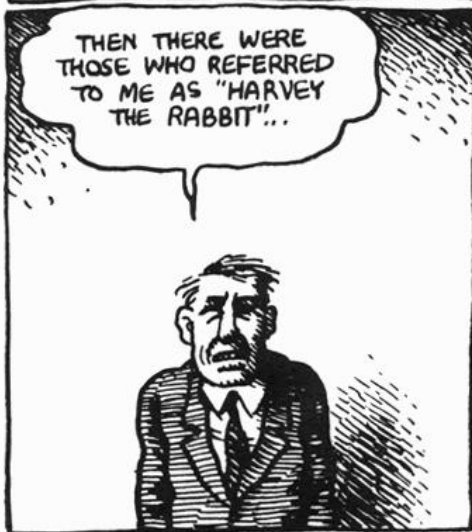
LATER SOME PEOPLE
STARTED CALLING ME
HARVEY "PECKER"...



I DIDN'T
LIKE THAT...



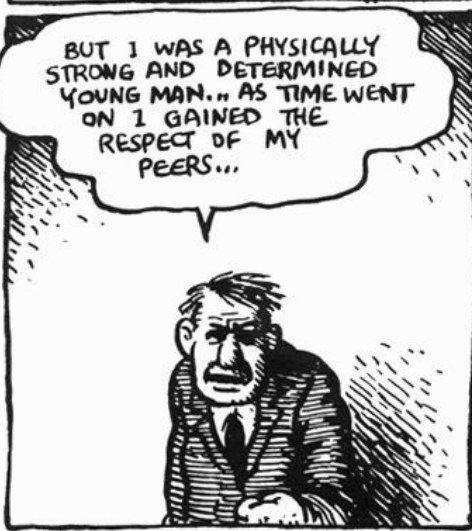
THEN THERE WERE
THOSE WHO REFERRED
TO ME AS "HARVEY
THE RABBIT"...



THEY THOUGHT THEY
WERE BEING QUITE
CLEVER...



BUT I WAS A PHYSICALLY
STRONG AND DETERMINED
YOUNG MAN... AS TIME WENT
ON I GAINED THE
RESPECT OF MY
PEERS...



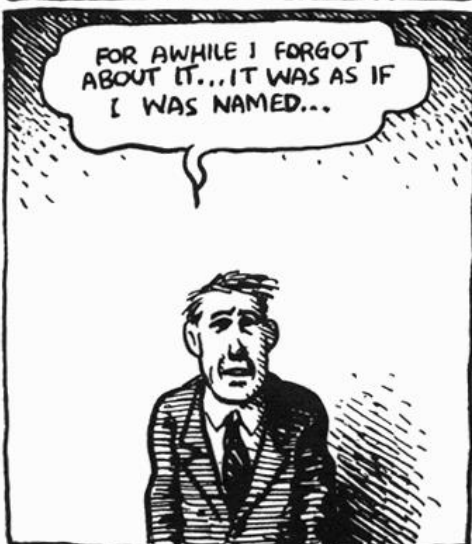
... IN ONE WAY
OR ANOTHER...



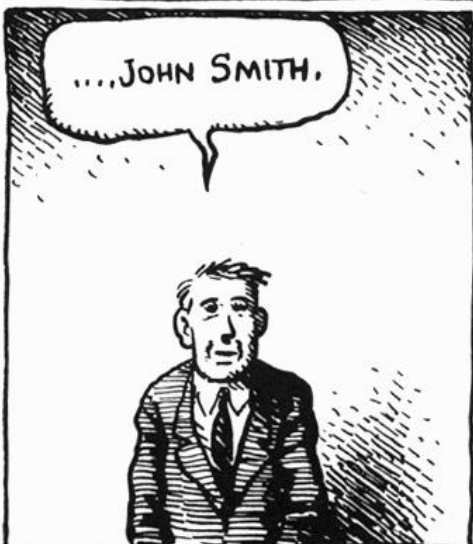
...THEY STOPPED MAKING
NASTY REFERENCES TO
MY NAME...



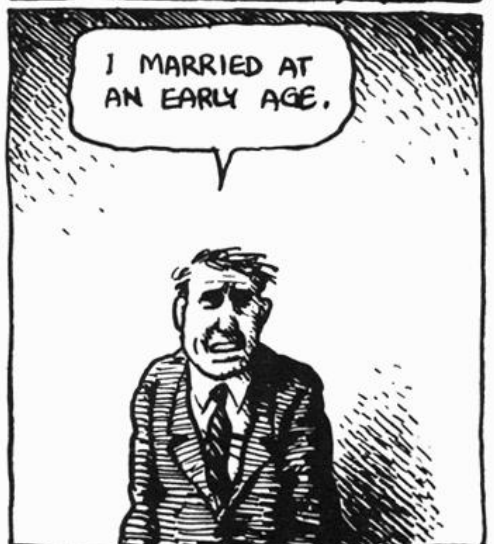
FOR AWHILE I FORGOT
ABOUT IT... IT WAS AS IF
I WAS NAMED...



....JOHN SMITH.



I MARRIED AT
AN EARLY AGE.



MY WIFE, WHO WOULD
ONE DAY BECOME MY
EX-WIFE...



MY WIFE THOUGHT
THAT I HAD AN EXCELLENT
NAME. AND SHE CON-
VINCED ME THAT I
DID.



IT WAS A UNIQUE
NAME, A NAME WITH
CHARACTER.



I WAS MARRIED IN THE
SUMMER OF 1960 AND
PROMPTLY GOT A
TELEPHONE...



THE NEXT SPRING A NEW
PHONE BOOK CAME OUT. IMAGINE
MY SURPRISE WHEN I TURNED TO
MY NAME AND SAW THAT, IN
ADDITION TO ME, ANOTHER
HARVEY PEKAR WAS
LISTED!



I WAS LISTED AS
HARVEY L. PEKAR... MY MIDDLE
NAME IS LAWRENCE... HE WAS
LISTED SIMPLY AS HARVEY
PEKAR—NO MIDDLE
INITIAL...



...THEREFORE, HIS WAS
A PURER LISTING.



BUT I LEARNED TO
ACCEPT IT. EACH YEAR
I WOULD FEEL LESS STRONGLY
AS I SAW THE OTHER
HARVEY PEKAR'S
NAME.



THEN, IN 1966, I
NOTICED THAT A THIRD
HARVEY PEKAR WAS
LISTED IN THE
PHONE BOOK!



THIS FILLED ME WITH
CURIOSITY. HOW COULD THERE
BE THREE PEOPLE
WITH SUCH AN UNUSUAL
NAME IN THE WORLD,
LET ALONE IN ONE
CITY!?



I ONCE GOT A LONG DISTANCE
CALL AT MIDNIGHT FOR A
HARVEY PEKAR. IT WAS A
WOMAN CALLING FROM FLORIDA.
I DIDN'T KNOW HER. SHE HAD
MISTAKEN ME FOR ONE OF
THE OTHER HARVEY PEKARS.



THE CALL CAUSED ME TO WONDER WHAT SORT OF PERSON HE WAS. OF COURSE I HAD NO WAY OF KNOWING...



THEN ONE DAY A PERSON I WORKED WITH EXPRESSED HER SYMPATHY TO ME CONCERNING WHAT SHE THOUGHT WAS THE DEATH OF MY FATHER. I KNEW MY FATHER TO BE ALIVE AND IN GOOD HEALTH AND ASKED HER WHERE SHE'D GOTTEN THE NOTION THAT HE'D DIED.



SHE POINTED OUT AN OBITUARY NOTICE IN THE NEWSPAPER FOR A MAN NAMED HARVEY PEKAR. ONE OF HIS SONS WAS NAMED HARVEY.



THESE WERE THE OTHER HARVEY PEKARS.



SIX MONTHS LATER HARVEY PEKAR JR. DIED.



ALTHOUGH I'D MET NEITHER MAN, I WAS FILLED WITH SADNESS. "WHAT WERE THEY LIKE" I THOUGHT. IT SEEMED THAT OUR LIVES HAD BEEN LINKED IN SOME INDEFINABLE WAY.



THE NEXT YEAR'S TELEPHONE DIRECTORY CONTAINED ONLY MY NAME.



BUT THE STORY DOES NOT END THERE, FOR TWO YEARS LATER ANOTHER HARVEY PEKAR APPEARED IN THE DIRECTORY!



WHAT KIND OF PEOPLE ARE THESE? WHERE DO THEY COME FROM, WHAT DO THEY DO? WHAT'S IN A NAME?



WHO IS HARVEY PEKAR?



END

The Young Crumb Story

Story by
Harvey Pekar
Art by
R. Crumb

BACK IN THE FALL OF 1962, WHEN I WAS STILL A BIG JAZZ RECORD COLLECTOR, I WAS TALKING TO THIS GUY I KNEW ABOUT MEETING ANOTHER COLLECTOR.



YEAH, HARV, THERE'S THIS GUY I WANTCHA T' MEET THAT JUST MOVED INTO TOWN. HIS NAME'S MARTY PAHLS AN' HE'S A BIG COLLECTOR.... HE GOES MOSTLY FOR THE OLDER STUFF

I WAS ALWAYS ANXIOUS TO MEET COLLECTORS OF EARLY JAZZ, BECAUSE I COLLECTED MORE MODERN STUFF AND FREQUENTLY COULD SWAP TRADITIONAL JAZZ '78'S I'D FOUND TO THEM FOR SWING AND BE-BOP RECORDS THEY'D PICKED UP THAT I WANTED.

OH YEAH, A "MOLDY FIG", HUH? I'D DEFINITELY LIKE T' MEET HIM... I C'N MAKE GOOD TRADES WITH THOSE GUYS. I GOT A BIG BUNCH 'A CHOICE 1925-35 RECORDS AROUND THAT I GOT CHEAP FROM SOME GUY WHO WAS BREAKIN' UP HIS COLLECTION. I WANNA KEEP SOME BUT I'D BE WILLIN' T' LET SOME GO... IF THIS GUY'S GOT ANY 1940'S SIDES THAT I NEED MAYBE WE C'N DO SOME DEALIN'...



THERE'S THIS GUY STAYIN' WITH PAHLS THAT JUST GOT IN FROM PHILADELPHIA NAMED BOB CRUMB... HE'S A COUPLA YEARS YOUNGER THAN US... HE COLLECTS, SO YOU C'N MEET HIM TOO...

SURE, THANKS FOR PUTTIN' ME ON TO THESE GUYS, DAVE...

SO, WE WENT TO PAHLS' APARTMENT AND I MET HIM AND CRUMB.

HARV, THIS'S MARTY AND BOB...

HOWYA DOIN'?

HOWYA DOIN'?



AFTER THE INTRODUCTIONS I GOT DOWN TO BUSINESS AND STARTED LOOKING THROUGH PAHLS' RECORDS, TRYING TO FIND SOMETHING I WANTED.

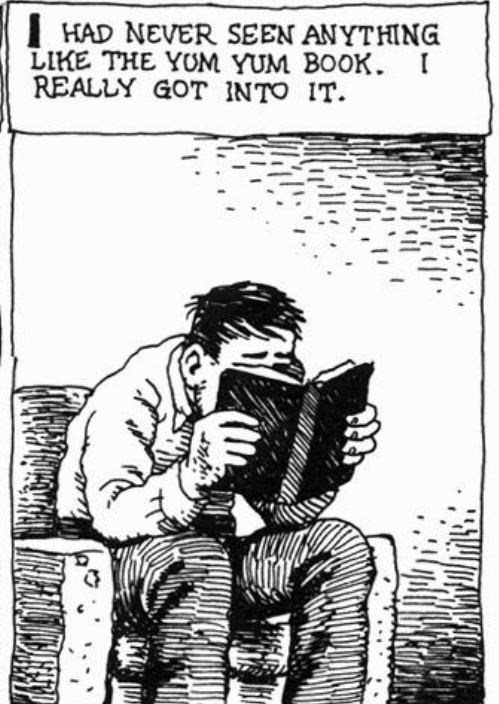
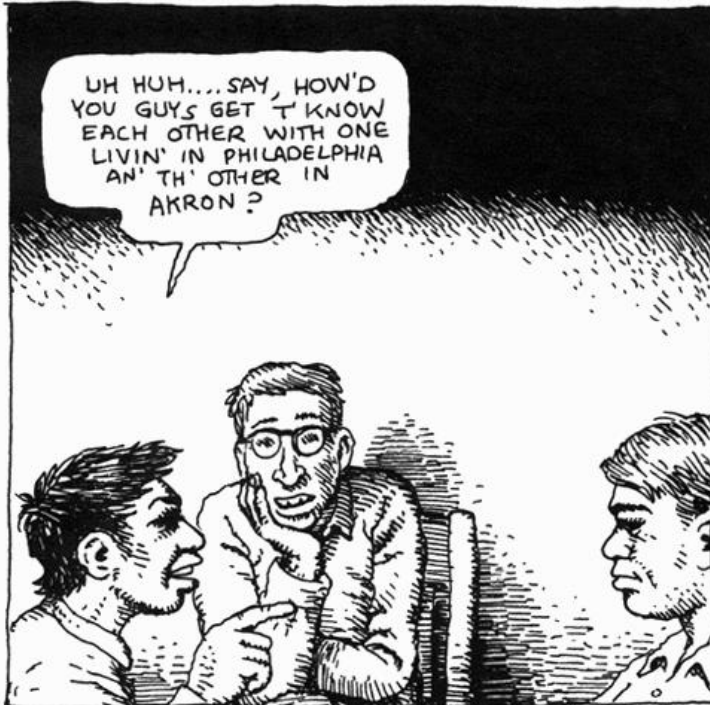


HEY, UH, WHADDAYA WANT FOR THIS JAY MESHAHN THING? IT'S GOT A LAMINATION CRACK IN IT BUT MAYBE I C'N STILL USE IT.

LOOK, Y' GOT ABOUT TEN RECORDS HERE I'D LIKE T' DEAL WITH YOU FOR... HOW 'BOUT IF I BRING SOME CHOICE OLDER STUFF OVER AN' WE MAKE A TRADE?

SURE, WE CAN PROBABLY WORK SOME-THING OUT...







SAY, THIS'S TERRIFIC!
WHAT ARE YOU GOIN' T' DO
WITH THIS WHEN YOU
FINISH IT?



I DUNND... I HADN'T
THOUGHT ABOUT IT... IT'S
JUST AN EXERCISE...



SO, UH, WHADDYU
GONNA DO HERE
WHILE YER IN
TOWN?

WELL, I WAS
THINKING ABOUT
GETTING A JOB.
I'M GOING DOWN
T' AMERICAN
GREETING CARDS
T'MORROW FOR AN
INTERVIEW. I'M
TAKIN' 'EM SOME A'
MY ARTWORK
T' LOOK AT....

I DIDN'T THINK HE'D BE ABLE T' GET ANYTHING AS
AN ARTIST BECAUSE TIMES WERE BAD AN' HE DIDN'T
HAVE MUCH EXPERIENCE, BUT THEY LIKED WHAT
HE SHOWED 'EM AT AMERICAN GREETINGS AN' HIRED
HIM AS A COLOR SEPARATOR.



PAHLS AND CRUMB LIVED IN MY NEIGHBORHOOD
AND WE GOT ALONG WELL SO I USED TO GO OVER
TO SEE 'EM. MOSTLY WE'D TALK ABOUT JAZZ.
AT THAT TIME I KNEW PAHLS ALOT BETTER
THAN CRUMB. CRUMB WAS A PRETTY QUIET,
RETIRING GUY.



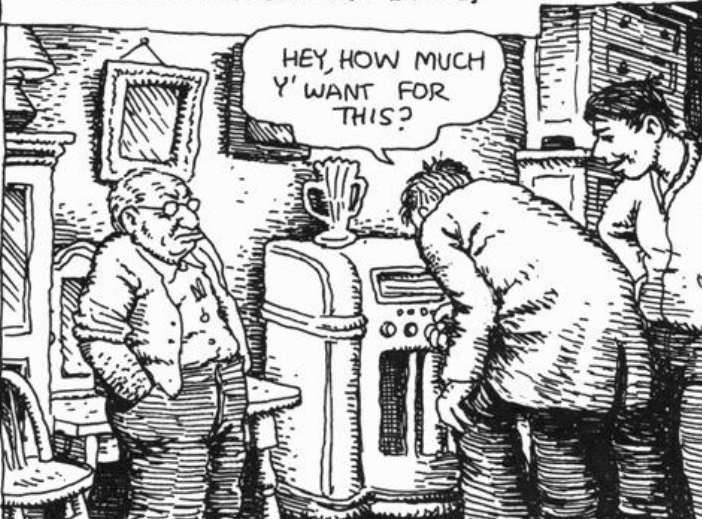
WELL, ONE GUY I
THINK YOU DEFINITELY
OUGHTA LISTEN TO
IS WELL

BUT I REMEMBER CRUMB AND I DID GO JUNK
SHOPPING ONE TIME FOR OLD RECORDS. WE DIDN'T
FIND ANY SIDES, BUT CRUMB DUG THE EXPERIENCE
ANYWAY. WE WENT TO A PART A' TOWN HE WASN'T
FAMILIAR WITH AND HE WAS REAL INTERESTED IN IT.



WELL WHADDYA
KNOW—A WHITE
SLUM...

CRUMB DID WIND UP LOOKING AT ONE A' THEM
BIG OL' CONSOLE RADIOS WITH ALL THEM DIFFERENT
BANDS AN' PUSH BUTTONS IN A USED FURNITURE STORE,
THOUGH. HE REALLY LIKED OLD THINGS... OLD
MUSIC, OLD TOYS... HE THOUGHT THEY HAD MORE
CHARACTER THAN MODERN STUFF.

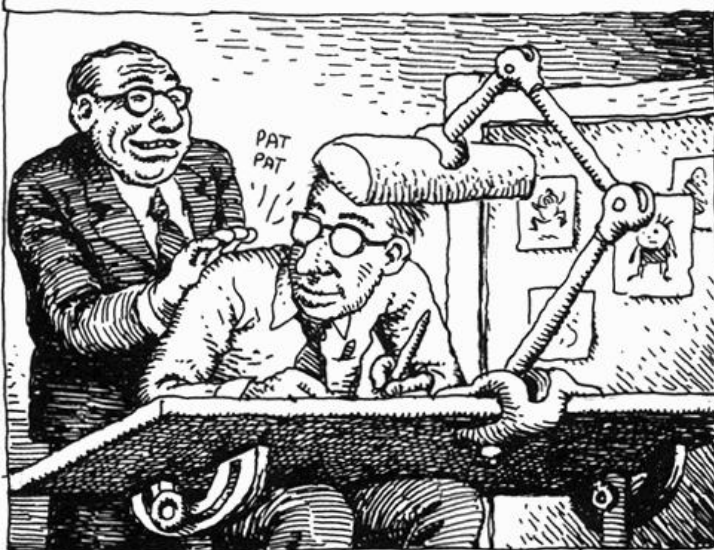


HEY, HOW MUCH
Y' WANT FOR
THIS?

ANYWAY, PAHLS AND CRUMB WERE REALLY INTO COMIC BOOKS. I KNEW SOMETHING ABOUT COMICS TOO, AND THEY GOT ME MORE INTERESTED THAN EVER...



MEANWHILE, CRUMB WAS REALLY MOVING UP THE LADDER AT AMERICAN GREETINGS. HE GOT PROMOTED AND BECAME ONE OF THEIR TOP ARTISTS IN THE "HI-BROW" CARD DEPARTMENT.



PEOPLE IN CLEVELAND STARTED TO GET HIP TO CRUMB'S ARTWORK AND REALLY LIKE IT. AS THEY DID HE STARTED TO COME OUT OF HIS SHELL SOCIALLY AND STARTED HANGING AROUND WITH A BOHEMIAN CROWD.



HE LIVED WITH PAHLS FOR A COUPLE OF YEARS BUT EVENTUALLY GOT HIMSELF A PLACE IN A HUGE APARTMENT WITH SEVERAL OTHER PEOPLE. I REMEMBER HIM TELLING ME HOW PLEASED HE WAS WITH ALL THE SPACE.



ONE OF CRUMB'S ROOMMATES WAS BUZZY LINHART, WHO LATER BECAME A NATIONALLY KNOWN ROCK MUSICIAN. BUZZY HAD A CUTE, CHUBBY GIRLFRIEND NAMED LIZ THAT CRUMB USED AS A MODEL FOR SOME OF HIS CARTOON STUFF, INCLUDING THIS THING HE DID FOR THE AMERICAN GREETINGS BULLETIN CALLED "ROBERTA SMITH, OFFICE GIRL."



CRUMB WAS SO SUCCESSFUL AT AMERICAN GREETINGS THAT THEY ALLOWED HIM A GREAT DEAL OF FREEDOM. HE COULD TRAVEL ALL OVER THE WORLD AND DO WHAT HE WANTED AS LONG AS HE DID HIS WORK AND SENT IT TO THEM. SO HE TOOK OFF, WENT TO EUROPE AND NEW YORK, DID SOME WORK FOR HARVEY KURTZMAN'S "HELP." WHEN HE CAME BACK TO CLEVELAND AGAIN PEOPLE HERE THOUGHT HE WAS A CELEBRITY.



WHEN I FIRST MET CRUMB HE WAS REAL SKY AND PRETTY ILL AT EASE WITH GIRLS. BUT THE FIRST TIME I MET HIM AFTER HE CAME BACK FROM HIS TRAVELS HE WAS MARRIED..... SHE WAS A LOCAL GIRL FROM CLEVELAND HEIGHTS.



HE STAYED AROUND CLEVELAND FOR AWHILE BUT IN JANUARY OF 1967 TOOK OFF FOR SAN FRANCISCO WHERE HE STARTED TO MAKE A NAME FOR HIMSELF AS ONE OF THE NEW "UNDERGROUND" CARTOONISTS. I TOOK A TRIP OUT TO SAN FRANCISCO IN 1968 WITH MY WIFE AND VISITED HIM AT HIS APARTMENT IN THE HAIGHT-ASHBURY DISTRICT.



ALTHOUGH HE WAS NEVER WHAT YOU'D CALL A HIPPIY, HE PICKED UP SOME STUFF FROM THEM. IT WAS WEIRD FOR ME, KNOWING WHAT CRUMB USED TO BE LIKE, TO SEE HOW HE'D LOOSENED UP.



ALTHOUGH HE SETTLED IN CALIFORNIA, CRUMB USED TO LIKE TO TAKE THESE CROSS-COUNTRY TRIPS. WHEN HE STOPPED IN CLEVELAND IN 1970 AND 1971 HE STAYED WITH ME AND MY WIFE.



AT THAT TIME MY WIFE AND I WERE HAVING A LOT OF TROUBLE GETTING ALONG. WE BOTH LIKED CRUMB AND HE BROUGHT US NEWS FROM THE BIG OUTSIDE WORLD, SO IT WAS NICE FOR US WHEN HE'D VISIT.



FINALLY, THOUGH, IT GOT SO MY WIFE AND I COULDN'T STAND LIVING TOGETHER. WE SPLIT AND DECIDED TO GET DIVORCED. THIS REALLY MADE ME FEEL TERRIBLE, SINCE WE'D BEEN TOGETHER FOR A LONG TIME AND HAD SOME GOOD THINGS GOING FOR US. I WAS REALLY LONELY.



I WROTE TO CRUMB ABOUT IT. HE SENT ME BACK AN ENVELOPE CONTAINING A CAPTAIN MARVEL TIE CLIP, A 1941 "YOUR IDEAL LOVE MATE" CARD WITH A PICTURE OF A PLATINUM BLOND ON IT, AND A LETTER THAT BEGAN —

HARVEY:
GOT YOUR LETTER TODAY... HEAVY,
BABY...HEAVY... GETTING DIVORCED...
THAT CAME AS A SURPRISE... I THOUGHT
YOU TWO WERE DOOMED TO BE STUCK
WITH EACH OTHER FOR LIFE... AH WELL,
NOBODY STAYS TOGETHER... BUT NO-
BODY...THE TIME WHEN PEOPLE STAYED
TOGETHER FOR FIFTY YEARS IS RAPIDLY
PASSING, I THINK. BUT YOU'VE DE-
MADE UP BY NOW, PATCHING THINGS
UP, RIGHT?? NO?? YOU ARE GET-
TING DIVORCED?? FAR FUCKIN'
OUT!! FINE UP HERE INTO
ROSE LIKE A G
I W

FOR A COUPLE OF YEARS I HAD BEEN THINKING I COULD WRITE COMIC BOOK STORIES THAT WERE DIFFERENT FROM ANYTHING BEING DONE BY BOTH STRAIGHT CARTOONISTS AND UNDERGROUND CARTOONISTS LIKE CRUMB. NOW, WITH CRUMB AND ARMSTRONG THERE, I STARTED THINKING ABOUT IT AGAIN — IN MORE DETAIL THAN EVER.

THE GUYS WHO DO THAT ANIMAL COMIC AN' SUPER-HERO STUFF FOR STRAIGHT COMICS ARE REALLY LIMITED BECAUSE THEY GOTTA TRY T' APPEAL TO KIDS. TH' GUYS WHO DO UNDERGROUND COMICS HAVE REALLY OPENED THINGS UP, BUT THERE ARE STILL PLENTY MORE THINGS THAT CAN BE DONE WITH 'EM. THEY GOT GREAT POTENTIAL. YOU C'N DO AS MUCH WITH COMICS AS THE NOVEL OR MOVIES OR PLAYS OR ANYTHING. COMICS ARE WORDS AN' PICTURES; YOU C'N DO ANYTHING WITH WORDS AN' PICTURES!



I SHOWED THE STORY TO CRUMB AND ARMSTRONG AND THEY LIKED IT A LOT.



A FEW MONTHS AFTER MY DIVORCE CRUMB VISITED ME AGAIN FOR AWHILE. THIS TIME HE WAS WITH SOME OTHER PEOPLE, INCLUDING BOB ARMSTRONG, A MEMBER OF A STRING BAND CRUMB HAD FORMED, AND A FINE CARTOONIST HIMSELF. WE HAD A GOOD TIME LISTENING TO RECORDS AND TALKING.



ACTUALLY, THERE WERE SOME STORIES I WANTED TO WRITE THAT I HAD THOUGHT ABOUT SO MUCH THAT I HAD JUST ABOUT COMPLETED THEM IN MY MIND. ALL I HAD TO DO WAS WRITE 'EM DOWN ON PAPER. SO THAT DAY WHEN I GOT BACK FROM WORK, I SAT DOWN AN' WROTE ONE OF THE STORIES, USING PANELS, STICK FIGURES AN' WORD AN' THOUGHT BALLOONS.



THAT REALLY ENCOURAGED ME. I SAT AN' WROTE SOME MORE STORIES IN THE NEXT COUPLA DAYS. CRUMB AND ARMSTRONG TOOK A FEW WITH 'EM WHEN THEY LEFT AN' ILLUSTRATED 'EM. THE STORIES GOT PRINTED. THAT GOT ME STARTED.



SINCE THEN I BEEN GETTIN'
MORE A' MY STORIES PUB-
LISHED AN' I REALLY FEEL
GOOD ABOUT THAT. COMICS
ARE SUCH A GREAT
ART FORM!



MAN, JUST IMAGINE, IF
I'D NEVER MET CRUMB
I'D A' NEVER GOTTEN
INTA WRITING COMICS.
THAT JUST GOES T' SHOW
YA...



ON THE OTHER HAND,
THINK A' ALL TH' PEOPLE
I DIDN'T MEET WHO
COULDA GOTTEN ME
INTO STUFF I'M NOT
EVEN THINKIN'
ABOUT NOW...
UH...



MAN, THIS IS WEIRD...
I STARTED T' TELL YA
ABOUT WHAT CRUMB WAS
LIKE B'FORE HE GOT
FAMOUS. THEN I STARTED
TELLIN' YA ABOUT ME...
THEN I STARTED
TALKIN' ABOUT FATE...



WELL, Y' KNOW
HOW IT IS... I
MEAN...
Y' KNOW...

UH,
TAKE IT
EASY



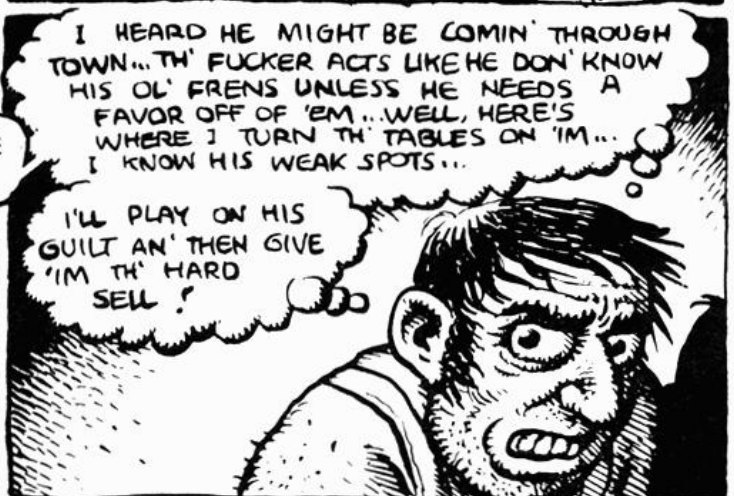
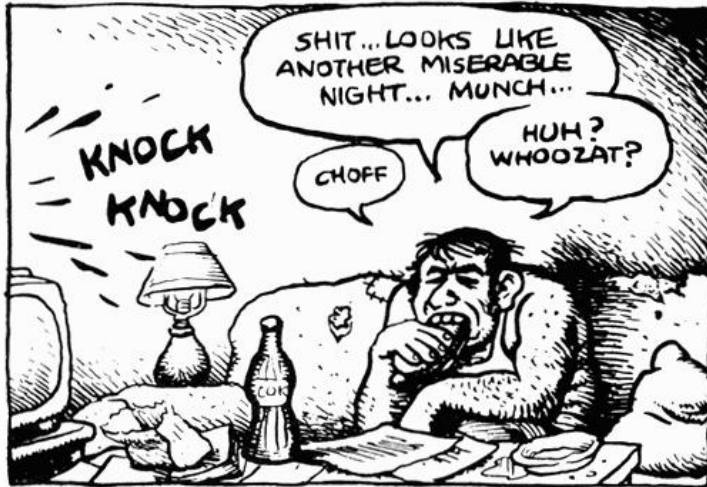
WHEW!

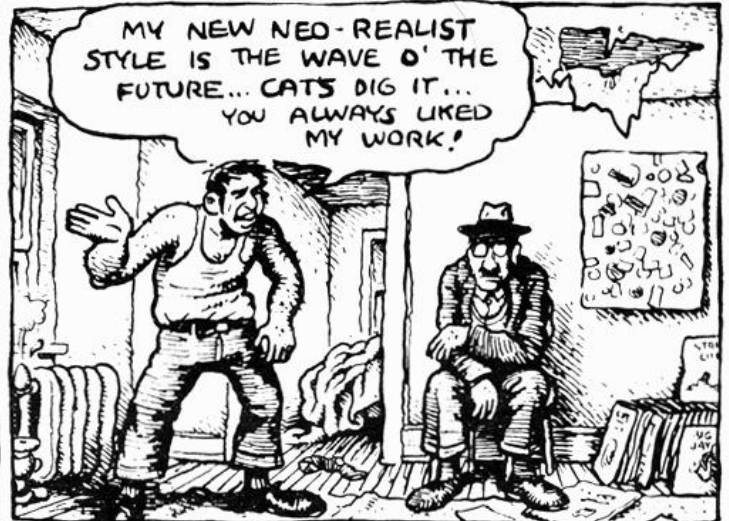


END

A Fantasy

Art by
R. Crumb
Story by
Harvey Pekar





OZZIE NELSON'S OPEN LETTER TO CRUMB

STORY BY HARVEY PEKAR ART BY GARY DUMM

(STORY WRITTEN IN 1972)

I BEEN HEARING ABOUT YOU, MAN. HOW THAT GUY BAKSHI DID THAT FRITZ THE CAT CARTOON AND YOU GOT UPSET BECAUSE YOU DIDN'T LIKE IT AND THOUGHT TH' PUBLIC WOULD BLAME YOU FOR IT.



WELL, LOOK, MAN, IT AIN'T ALL THAT BAD. YOU THINK YOUR PUBLIC IMAGE IS SCREWED UP, RIGHT? WELL, WHAT ABOUT MINE?



WADDY YOU THINK PEOPLE SEE ME AS? I'LL TELL YA. THEY THINK I'M A RICH GUY WHO NEVER WORKS AND LIVES IN A BIG WHITE HOUSE AND WEARS A CARDIGAN ALL THE TIME.



THEY THINK ALL I EVER DO IS ARGUE WITH MY NEXT DOOR NEIGHBOR ABOUT WHO LOANED WHO WHOSE LAWNMOWER AND GET LED AROUND BY THE NOSE BY MY WIFE.



LIKE SHE'S ALWAYS SHOWN GETTING ME TO TAKE HER SHOPPING AT THE EMPORIUM OR AT SOME DUMB ANTIQUE STORE, OR HAVING ME CARRY PIES AN' CAKES TO THE WOMEN'S CLUB SOCIAL FOR HER.



NEXT TO HER AN' MY KIDS I LOOK LIKE A JERK, RIGHT? JUST AN AMIABLE CLOWN THAT EVERYBODY USES.



YOU THINK I LIKE THAT?
YOU THINK I DON'T KNOW PEOPLE
ACTUALLY BELIEVE I'M REALLY
LIKE THEY SHOW ME ON T.V.?



MAN, I DON'T DIG IT AT ALL.
NO, SIR! HOW WOULD YOU FEEL
IF YOU WERE A STAR HIGH SCHOOL
ATHLETE, IF YOU PLAYED FIRST
STRING QUARTERBACK FOR RUTGERS
AN' EVERYBODY THOUGHT YOU WERE
A WIMP?



THEN I WAS A SUCCESSFUL BAND-
LEADER IN THE THIRTIES AND EARLY
FORTIES. YOU PROB'LY KNEW THAT
BECAUSE YOU COLLECT RECORDS, BUT
A LOT OF PEOPLE DON'T.



WE HAD A GOOD BAND, MAN. WE
MADE A LOTTA COMMERCIAL SHIT, BUT
WE COULD SWING TOO. EVER HEAR THAT
RECORD OF "RIFF INTERLUDE", THAT
THING THAT BASIE DID, THAT WE MADE
FOR BLUEBIRD? IT WAS GOOD, MAN.



THE COUNT HIMSELF TOLD ME
HE LIKED IT, YEAH, WE WERE
WHITE, BUT WE COULD SWING!



COURSE MAYBE YOU WOULDNA LIKED
WHAT WE DID, BECAUSE I UNDERSTAND
YOU DON'T LIKE SWING BANDS. YOU
GO FOR THAT OLDER STUFF, BUT
WE WERE GOOD.



SO HERE I AM, A FORMER
ATHLETE, A GUY WHO LED A GOOD
BAND, AN' PEOPLE THINK I'M
A NOWHERE JERK.



BUT I'VE LEARNED TO LIVE
WITH IT. YOU KNOW WHY? BE-
CAUSE I MADE A LOT OF
MONEY ACTING DUMB.



O.K., MAYBE YOU'RE NOT INTO MAKING MONEY. YOU MADE 10 GRAND ON THAT FRITZ CARTOON, BUT MAYBE YOU DON'T THINK IT WAS WORTH IT. BUT YOU GAVE YOUR PERMISSION, RIGHT? AN' YOU GOT YOUR MONEY.



SO TAKE YOUR LUMPS LIKE A MAN. DON'T GO AROUND IN "CLEVELAND" MAGAZINE AN' "FUNNYWORLD" AN' THIS MAGAZINE AN' THAT MAGAZINE CRYIN' THE BLUES.



YOU KNOW I'M NOT THAT HOT ABOUT DEMOCRATS - I'M A MONEY MAN - BUT ONE THING HARRY TRUMAN SAID STUCK WITH ME. HE SAID, "IF YOU CAN'T STAND TH' HEAT GIT OUTTA TH' KITCHEN."



JUST REMEMBER, YOU'RE A PUBLIC FIGURE NOW. STUFF LIKE THAT'S GONNA HAPPEN TO YOU. BUT IT'S WORTH IT, RIGHT? PEOPLE ARE ALWAYS BUILDING UP YOUR EGO, BROADS ALL WANNA MEET YOU...



IT'S WORTH IT AIN'T IT?



SO JUST HANG IN THERE AN' SHUT UP. YOU'RE A GOOD BOY. I KNOW YOU WILL.



HOW I QUIT COLLECTING RECORDS AND PUT OUT A COMIC BOOK WITH THE MONEY I SAVED

Story by Harvey Pekar

Art by R. Crumb

EVER SINCE I WAS A KID, IT SEEMS I COLLECTED SOMETHING.



AT ONE TIME IT WAS COMICS, THEN MAGAZINES AND BOOKS ABOUT SPORTS.



THEN, WHEN I WAS SIXTEEN, I STARTED COLLECTING JAZZ RECORDS.



AT FIRST, AND FOR A LONG TIME, IT WAS A HEALTHY THING TO DO.



I LOVED JAZZ, AND LISTENED TO IT CLOSELY AND ANALYTICALLY.



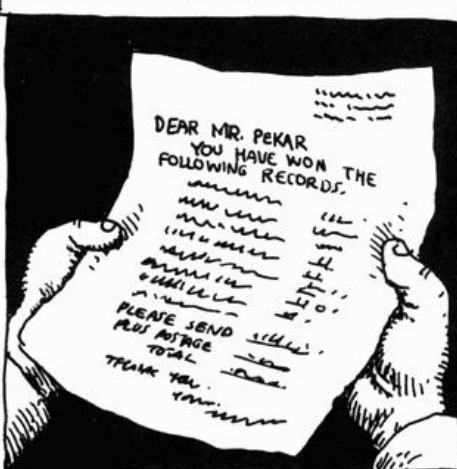
FOR A LONG TIME I COLLECTED IN A RATIONAL WAY. I ONLY BOUGHT RECORDS THAT I ENJOYED LISTENING TO, AND/OR THAT HAD A GREAT DEAL OF HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE.



THEN, FOR SOME REASON, I GOT OBSESSIVE ABOUT IT. I STARTED BUYING RECORDS I KNEW I'D SELDOM IF EVER LISTEN TO JUST FOR THEIR COLLECTOR'S VALUE.



IT GOT WORSE AND WORSE. I STARTED GETTING ALL THESE AUCTION LISTS AND SPENDING FANTASTIC AMOUNTS OF MONEY ON OUT-OF-PRINT L.P.'S.



I WAS SPENDING ALL OF MY MONEY ON RECORDS I JUST FILED AWAY WITHOUT LISTENING TO. I HAD TO THINK TWICE ABOUT BUYING A HAMBURGER OR GOING TO A MOVIE.

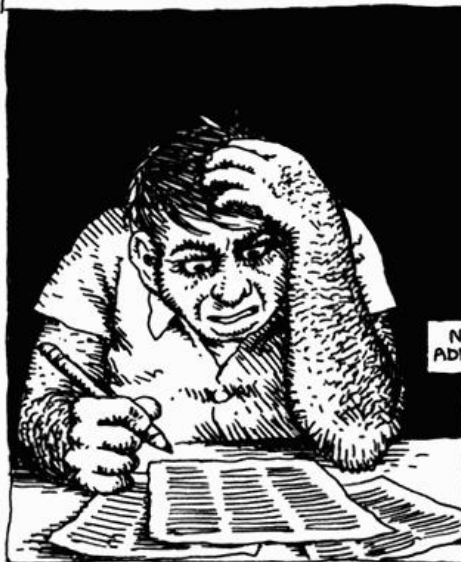


I HUSTLED POP RECORDS THAT I GOT IN ALL SORTS OF WAYS TO PEOPLE AT WORK TO GET EXTRA DOUGH. THAT WAS A TIME-CONSUMING DRAG.

HEY MAN, YOU WANNA BUY THIS NEW DYLAN L.P. FOR TWO DOLLARS?



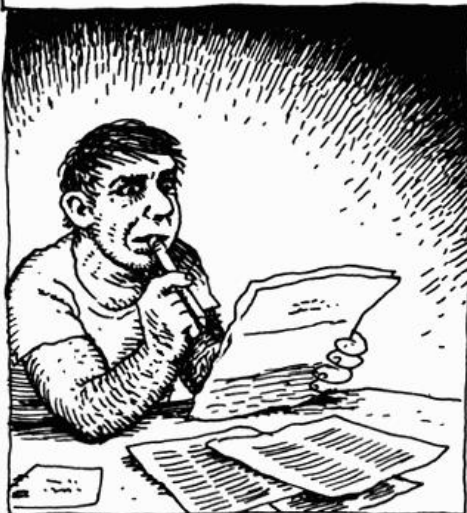
I WAS GOING BLIND GOING OVER ALL OF THE AUCTION AND SALES LISTS I GOT, I SPENT SO MUCH TIME READING THEM.



I BOUGHT SO MANY RECORDS IT WAS CRAZY. I WAS RUNNING OUT OF SPACE FOR THEM.



ONE DAY IN THE SPRING OF '75 I WAS GOING OVER A BUNCH OF AUCTION LISTS. THERE WERE RECORDS ON THEM THAT I WANTED TO BID ABOUT \$600.00 ON WITHIN ABOUT SIX WEEKS.



SOME I WANTED REAL BAD. BUT WHERE WAS I GONNA GET THE BREAD FOR THEM? IT WAS FREAKING ME OUT!



WHILE I WAS THINKING ABOUT IT A BUDDY OF MINE CAME OVER TO ASK ME IF HE COULD BORROW A COUPLE OF RARE JOHN COLTRANE AIRSHOT L.P.s TO PLAY ON HIS COLLEGE JAZZ RADIO SHOW.



CAN YOU SPARE THEM FOR A FEW HOURS? I'LL TAKE GOOD CARE OF THEM AND RETURN THEM RIGHT AWAY.

THIS GUY WAS A REAL GOOD GUY. HE WAS INTO YOGA AND CAME ON SORT OF LIKE A HOLY MAN, BUT HE REALLY WASN'T SELF-RIGHTEOUS. HE WAS A RESPONSIBLE GUY, TOO, BUT I WAS PARANOID ABOUT LENDING OUT MY RECORDS.

SO WE WENT DOWN TO THE STATION TOGETHER. WHILE HE WAS ON THE AIR I STARTED TO BROWSE THROUGH THE STATION'S RECORD LIBRARY.

I RAN ACCROSS ABOUT A HALF-DOZEN L.P.s I DIDN'T HAVE AND EVENTUALLY PLANNED TO GET.



WELL, YOU C'N USE 'EM, BUT I GOTTA COME DOWN TO THE STUDIO WITH YOU WHILE YOU DO IT.



THEY WERE STILL IN PRINT BUT THEY WOULD'VE COST ME AROUND THIRTY BUCKS TO BUY.



I KNEW THAT A LOT OF PEOPLE RIPPED OFF RECORDS FROM THAT STATION.



SO I FIGURED, "FUCK IT, WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE", AND I DECIDED I WAS GONNA STEAL THE SIDES BUT I THOUGHT I'D BE SLICK ABOUT IT...



IT WAS SUNDAY, THE BUILDING WAS DESERTED. SO WHAT I DID, I SNEAKED THE SIDES OUT OF THE STUDIO AND STUCK 'EM IN A BATHROOM.



FIRST I CHECKED THE BATHROOM DOOR TO MAKE SURE IT WOULDN'T LOCK AUTOMATICALLY BEHIND ME SO I COULD GO BACK FOR THE SIDES. IT WAS O.K.



THEN I STUCK THE SIDES IN A BOX OF TOILET PAPER.



THEN I WENT BACK TO THE STUDIO TO BULLSHIT WITH MY BUDDY. I FIGURED I'D TAKE THE COLTRANE RECORDS WHEN HE WAS THROUGH WITH THEM AND SPLIT WHILE HE WAS STILL ON THE AIR.



HE'D SEE ME WALKING OUT OF THE STUDIO WITH ONLY THE COLTRANE RECORDS IN MY HANDS, SO IF THE OTHER SIDES WERE MISSED HE WOULDN'T SUSPECT ME.



I MEAN, THE CAT TRUSTED ME AND I DIDN'T WANT HIM TO KNOW I WAS STEALING. LIKE HE WAS SUCH A MORAL DUDE, Y'KNOW. HE WAS EVEN AGAINST STEALING FROM STORES AND INSTITUTIONS.



SO HE FINISHES PLAYIN' THE COLTRANE SIDES, GIVES 'EM BACK TO ME AN' I SPLIT.

THANKS ALOT, MAN!

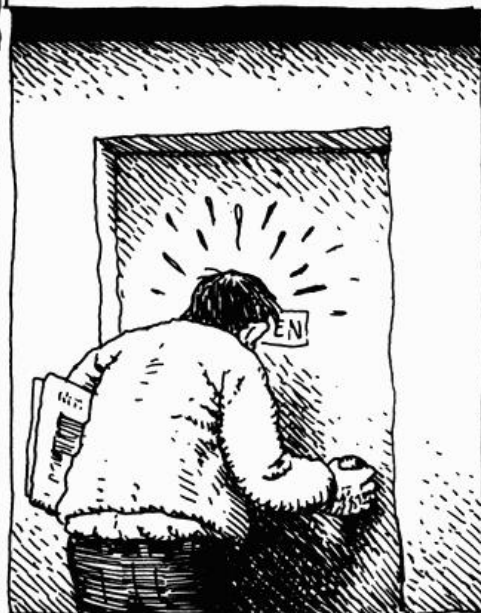
'S O.K. ...UH, LOOK, I GOTTA TAKE OFF NOW...



SO THEN I MAKE IT OVER TO THE BATHROOM TO GET TH' SIDES.



BUT THE DOOR IS LOCKED.



I COULDN'T BELIEVE IT. I HAD TESTED IT BEFORE TO MAKE SURE IT WOULDN'T LOCK ON ME. I YANKED ON IT AGAIN AND AGAIN. IT WAS LOCKED.



THAT BLEW MY MIND. I WAS ALREADY WONDERING ABOUT WHERE I WAS GONNA GET TH' \$600.00 AND NOW I HAD THROWN AWAY ANOTHER \$30.00 WORTH OF SIDES BECAUSE I'D DEvised TOO ELABORATE A PLAN TO RIP THEM OFF.



IF I'D HAVE STUCK THEM IN THE HALL SOME PLACE THEY'D HAVE BEEN O.K. NO ONE WAS GONNA COME ALONG AND SEE THEM. BUT NO, I HADDA GET CUTE AN' STICK 'EM IN A TOILET PAPER BOX IN A BATHROOM.



I WALKED BACK HOME IN A DAZE.

HOW COULD I HAVE BEEN SO STUPID? IT WAS SO EASY TO STEAL THOSE SIDES! NOW I GOTTA COME UP WITH \$30.00 MORE TO BUY THEM SOME DAY... WHAT IF THEY FIND THE SIDES IN THE TOILET PAPER BOX? WILL THEY SUSPECT ME ??



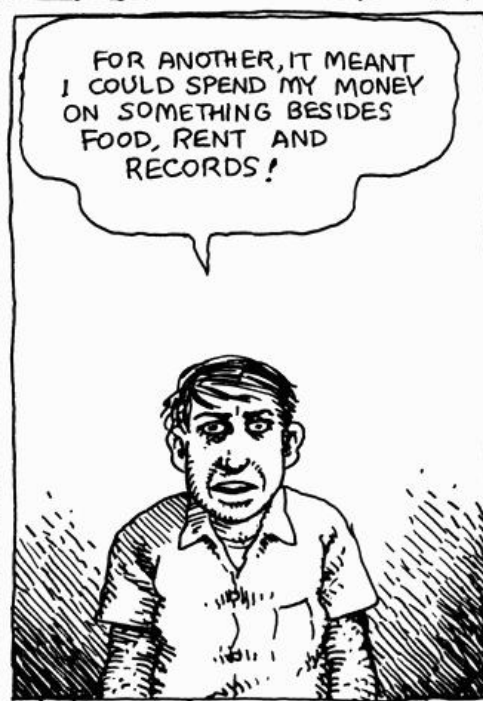
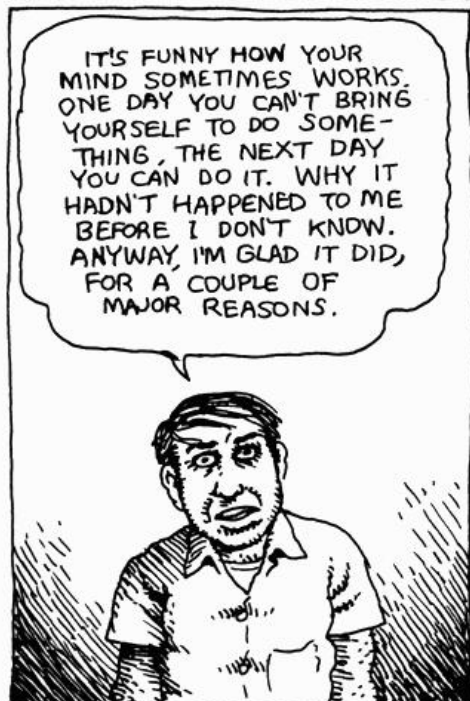
MY HEAD WAS ALL FUCKED UP. I SAT DOWN TO RELAX AND THINK ABOUT MY SITUATION.

THIS RECORD COLLECTING IS DRIVING ME NUTS. IT'S TAKING ALL OF MY TIME AND MONEY.



NO MATTER HOW MANY RECORDS I GET I'M NEVER SATISFIED; I GOTTA GET MORE. I'VE TRIED TO QUIT BUT I CAN'T. WHAT AM I GONNA DO? THIS IS LIKE BEING A JUNKY !!





....SEE, I HAD BEEN WRITING THESE UNDERGROUND COMIC BOOK STORIES SINCE 1972. PEOPLE LIKED 'EM A LOT BUT I WAS HAVING TROUBLE GETTING 'EM PUBLISHED BECAUSE THE UNDERGROUND COMIC PUBLISHERS WERE IN BAD SHAPE FINANCIALLY. THEY WERE PRINTING VERY LITTLE.



ALL THEY WANTED TO HANDLE WERE SURE SELLERS, STUFF BY CRUMB AND SHELTON. IT REALLY BUGGED ME THAT I WAS HAVING SUCH A HASSLE GETTING STUFF PUBLISHED.



SO ANYWAY, I SUDDENLY HAD ALL THIS EXTRA DOUGH SINCE I WASN'T SPENDING IT ON RECORDS AND SINCE I WAS STILL HUSTLING L.P.S AT WORK...



I LIVE REAL SIMPLE AND CHEAP, Y' KNOW. I DON'T HAVE A CAR AND I EAT CHEAP FOOD, LIKE I MIGHT HAVE TWO HOT DOGS AN' SOME POTATO CHIPS FOR SUPPER.



SO I STARTED ASKIN' AROUND, TRYIN' TO FIGURE HOW MUCH IT WOULD COST TO PUBLISH A COMIC BOOK.



SO I FOUND OUT I COULD SAVE UP ENOUGH BREAD IN A YEAR TO PUBLISH ONE...



SO THAT SETTLED IT... I FIGURED, "FUCK IT, I'LL PRINT IT AND IF I LOSE MONEY ON IT, SO WHAT!"



SO I PUBLISHED "AMERICAN SPLENDOR" AN' I'M REALLY GLAD I DID...



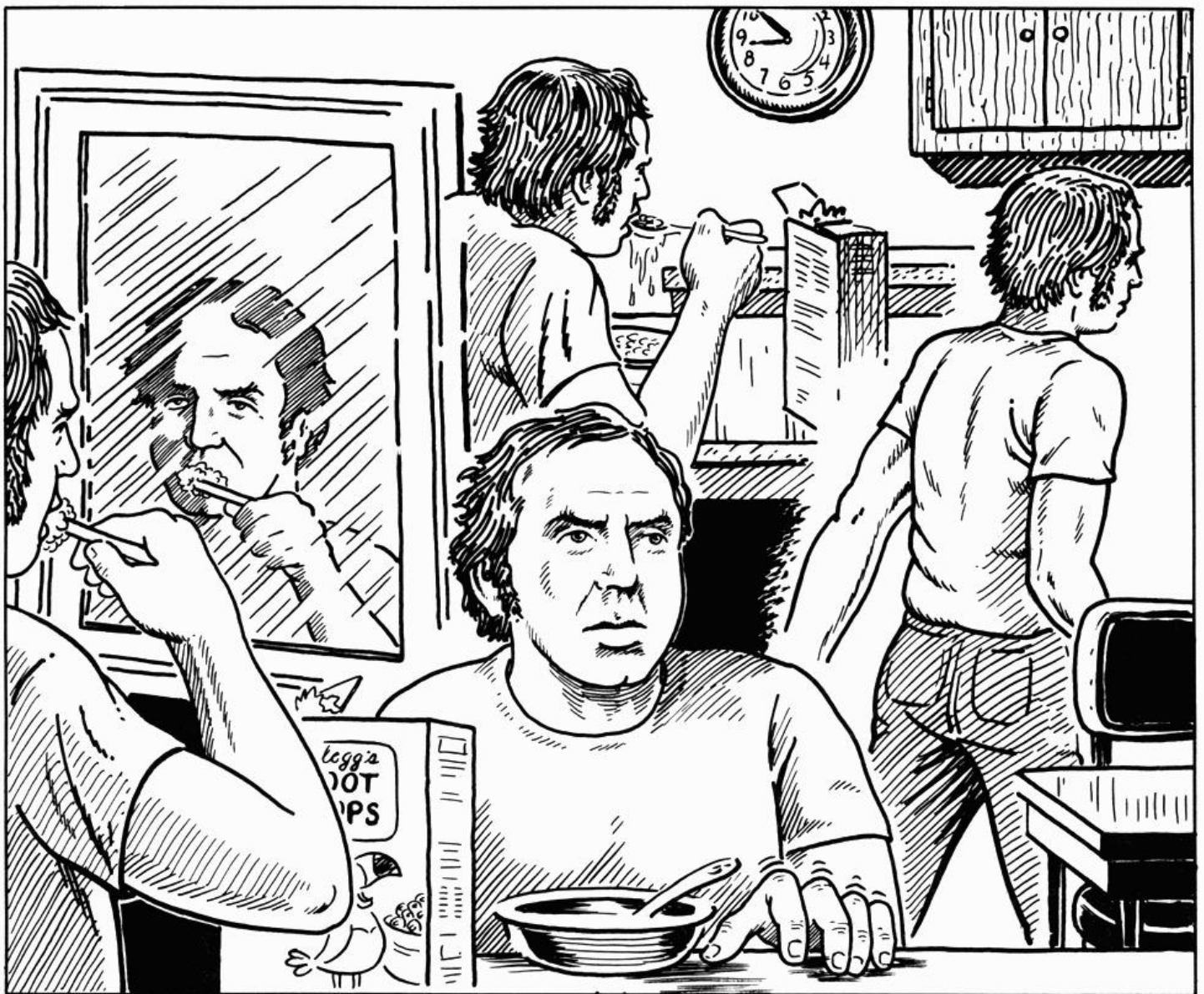
END

The Day Before the Be In

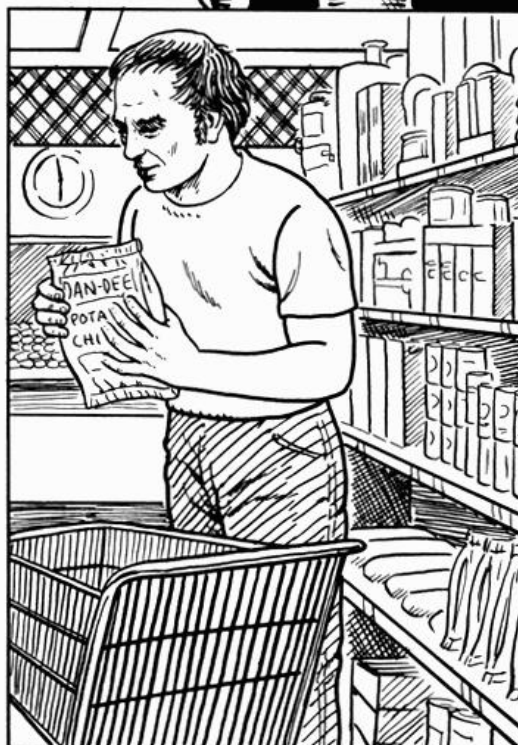
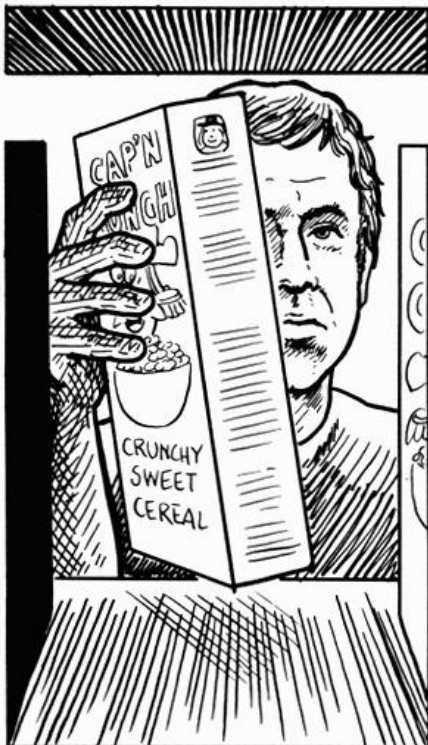
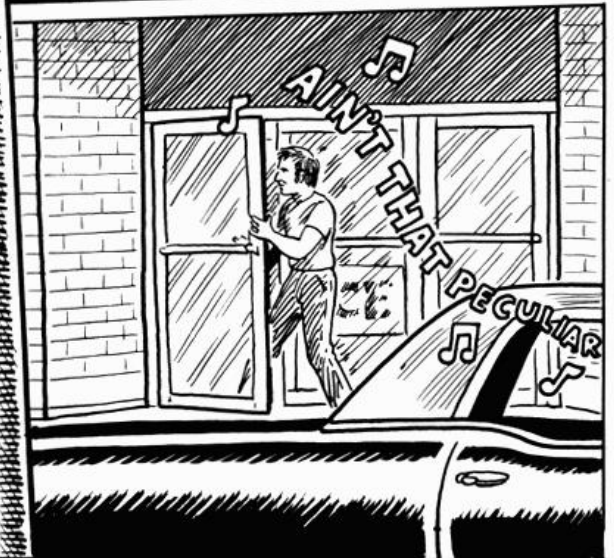
SATURDAY MORNING
SUMMER, 1970

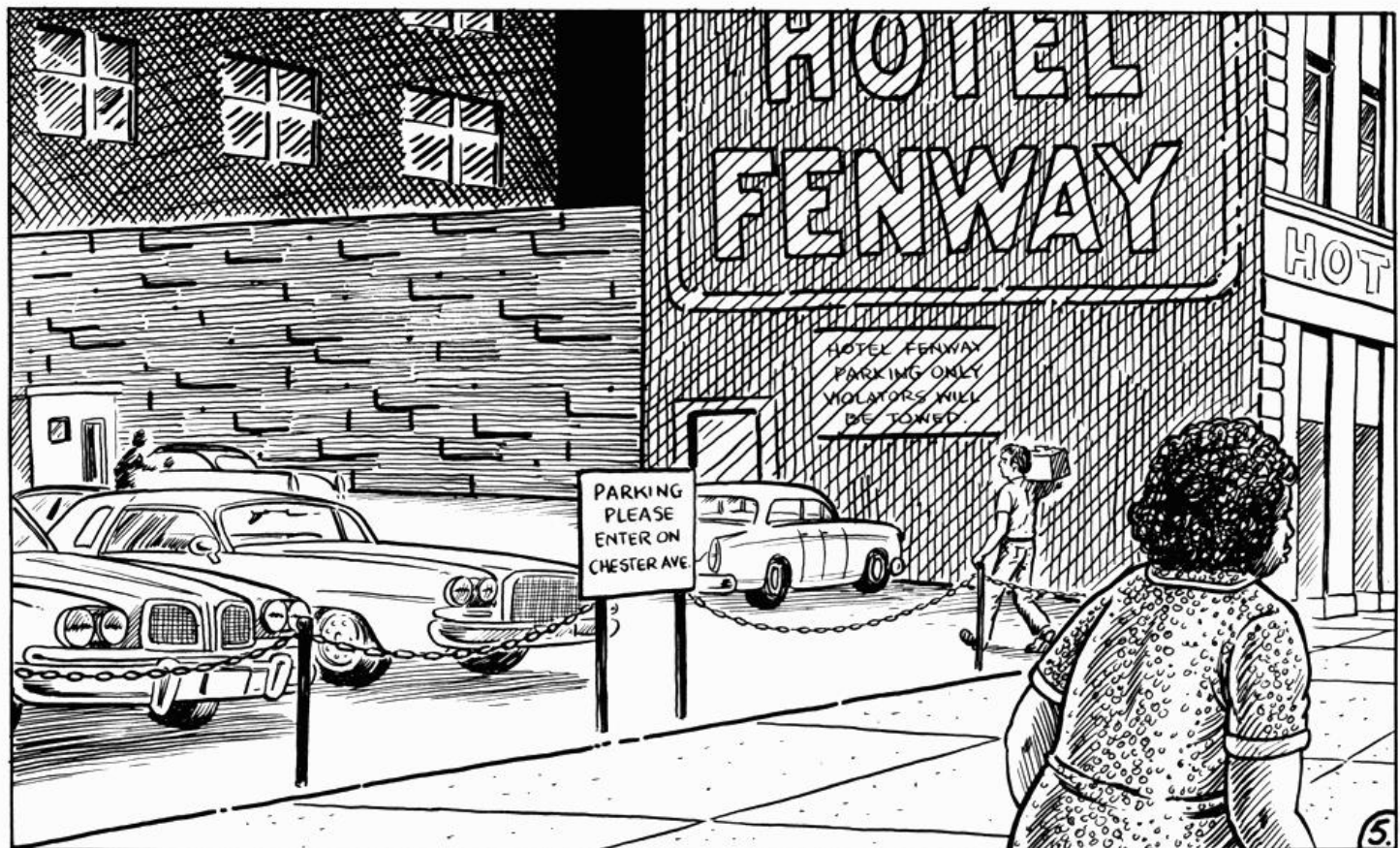
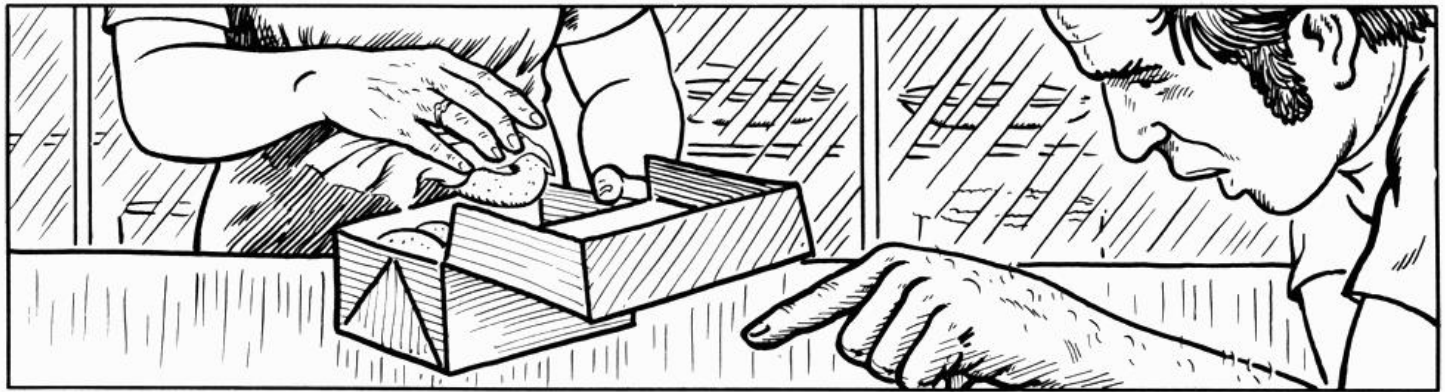
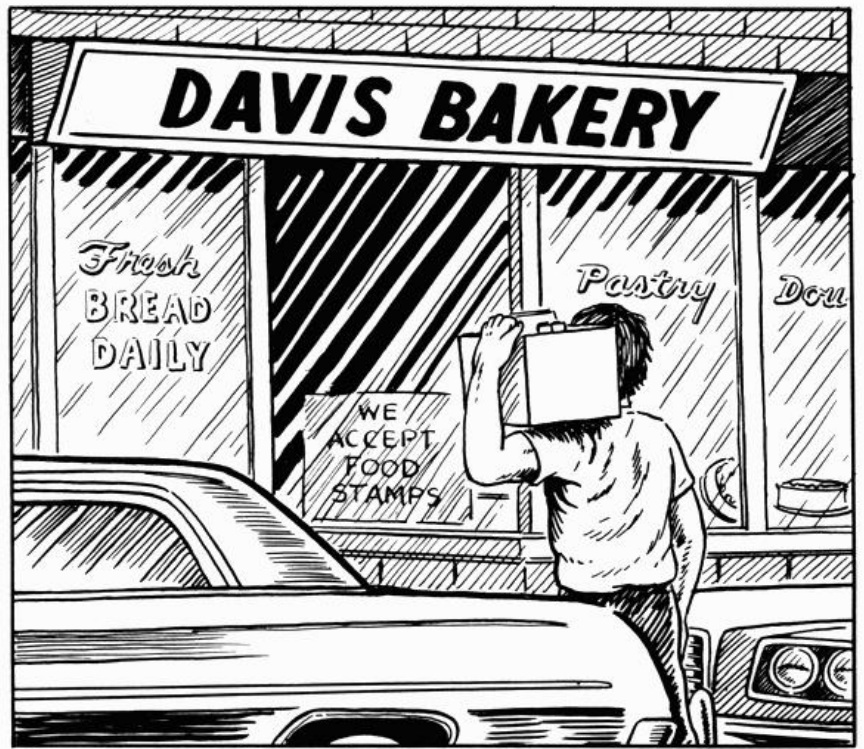
STORY BY HARVEY PEKAR
PENCILS-GREG BUDGETT
INKS-GARY DUMM

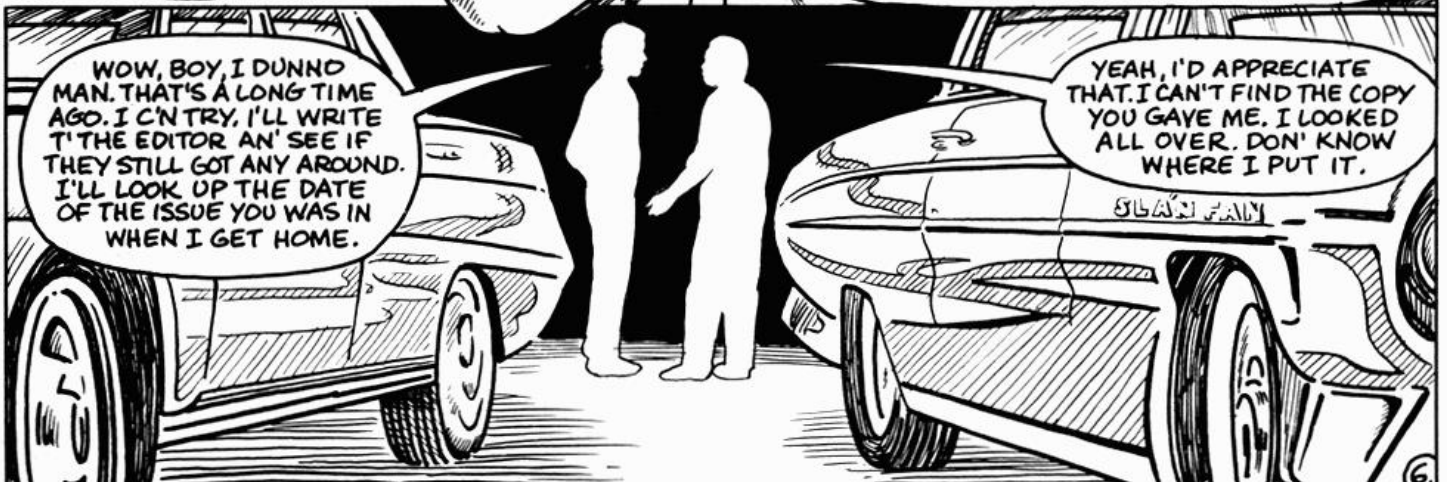
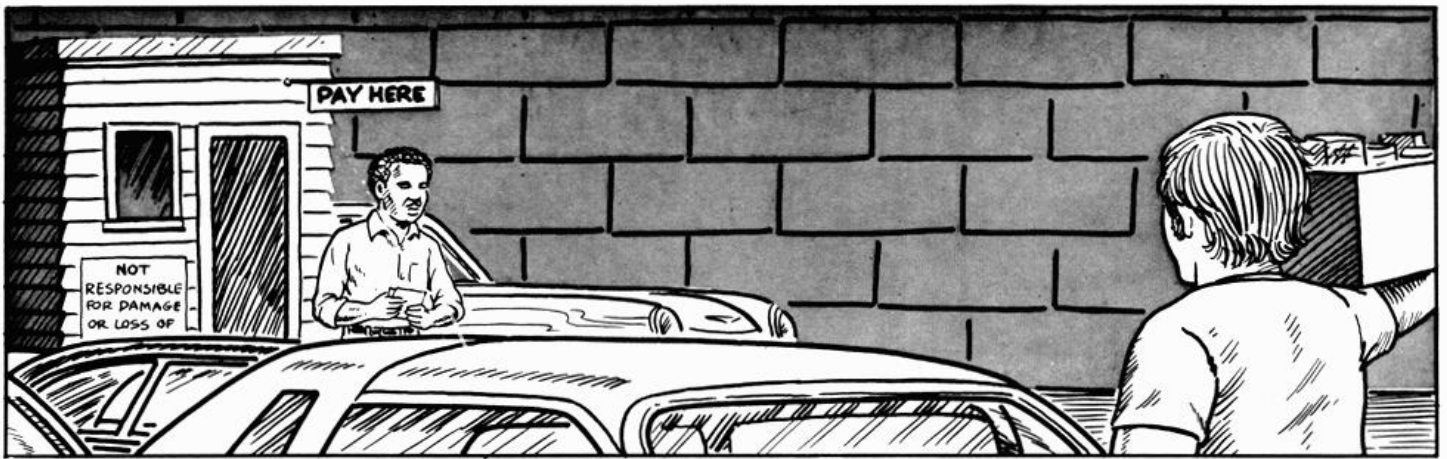


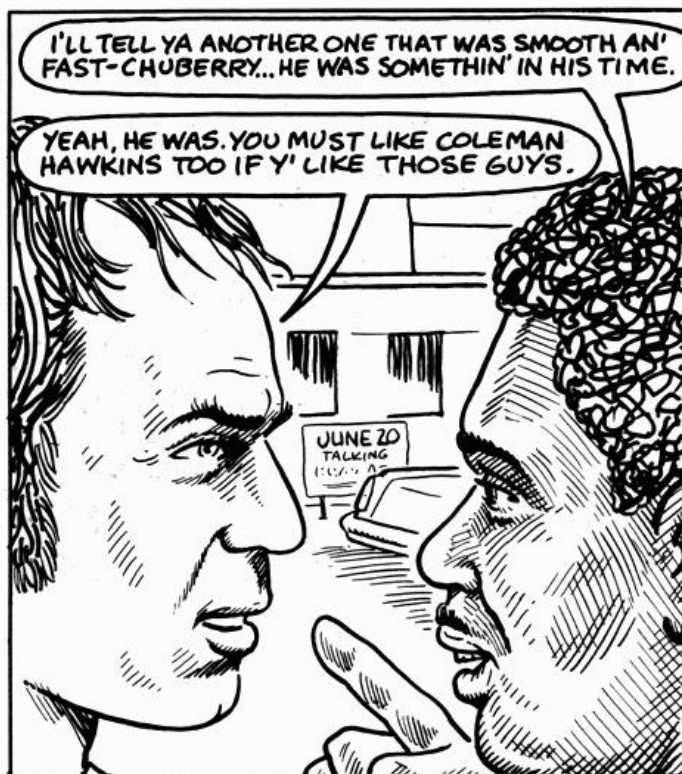




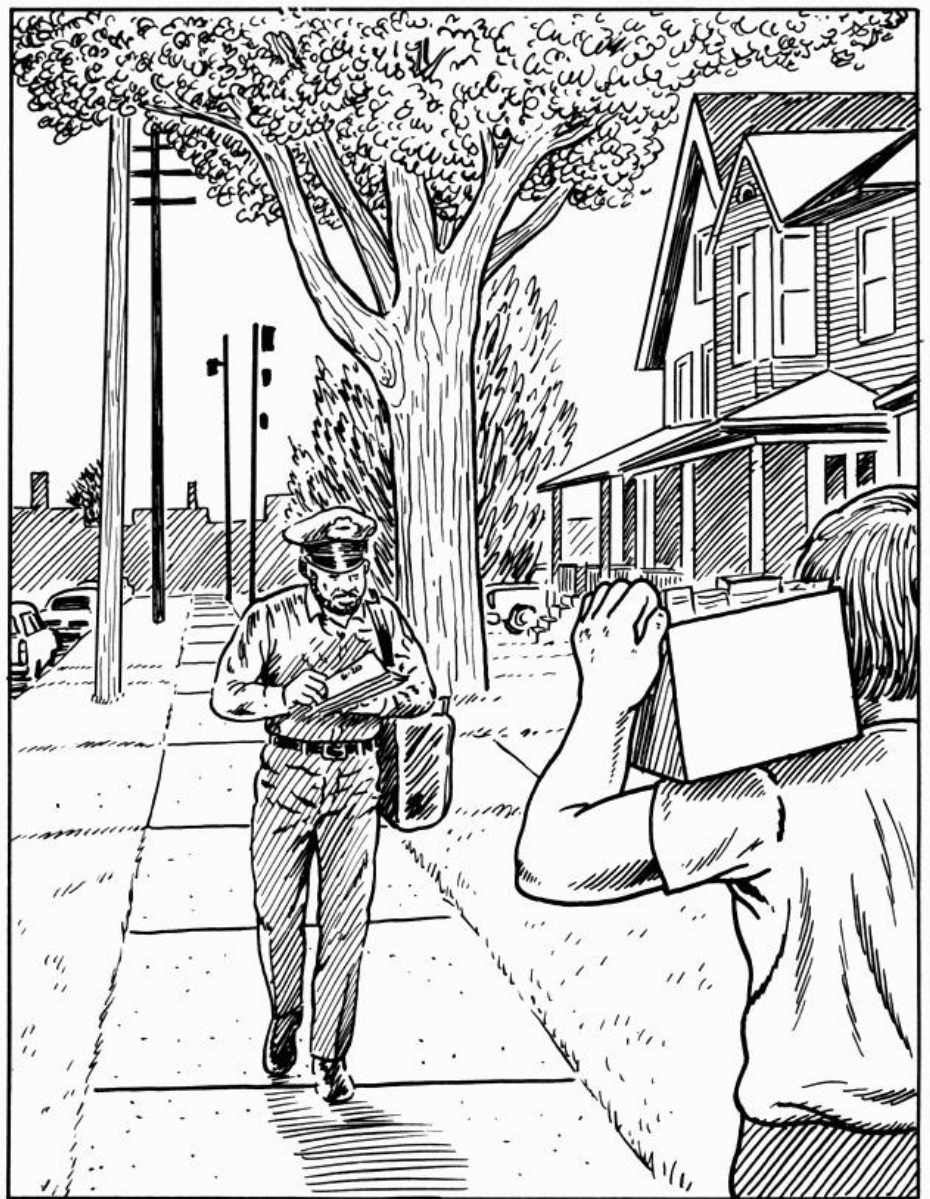














I DID, I DID. HE'S GREAT, BUT HE ALWAYS MAKES TH' SAME KINDA RECORD. HE PLAYS WITH A RHYTHM SECTION AN' NO OTHER HORNS. HE PLAYS TH' SAME KINDSA TUNES- COUPLE BLUES, COUPLE STANDARDS, COUPLE THINGS BASED ON RHYTHM CHANGES. I'VE REVIEWED A BUNCHA HIS RECORDS AWREDDY. WHAT AM I GONNA SAY ABOUT ANOTHER ONE?



THOSE SCHMUCKS SEND ME STUFF NO ONE ELSE WANTS T' REVIEW BECAUSE THEY KNOW I'M SO HARD UP I'LL DO IT. I'M SICKA BEIN' TH' GARBAGEMAN A' THEIR STAFF.



FOR CRYIN' OUT LOUD. A FEW YEARS AGO YOU WANTED TO WRITE FOR THEM SO BAD. NOW YOU DO, AND YOU AREN'T HAPPY. WHAT DOES IT TAKE, ANYWAY?

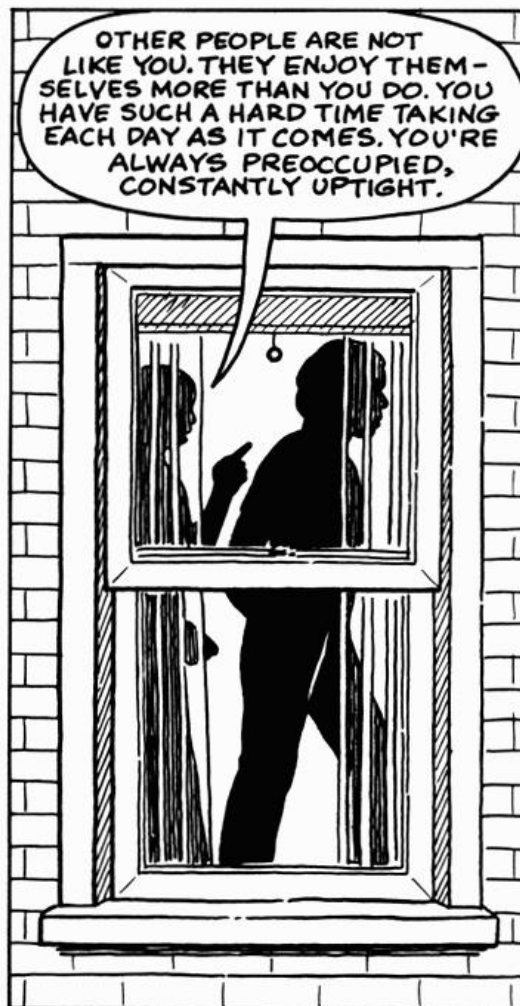


BABY, I KNOW ALL THAT. I KNOW HOW I WANNED T' WRITE FOR THEM BEFORE. BUT IT HASN'T BEEN A FEW YEARS I BEEN WITH 'EM, IT'S BEEN EIGHT, AN' I AIN'T GOIN' NOWHERE.



I KNOW I'M FARTHER ALONG THAN I WAS IN 1962. I KNOW I GOT IT BETTER THAN THE PEOPLE WHO SLEEP ON THE STREET IN CALCUTTA. I GUESS THAT SHOULD MAKE ME FEEL BETTER, BUT IT DON'T. I'M LEARNIN' MORE ALL THE TIME. I WANNA BE ABLE T' WRITE ABOUT WHAT I KNOW.







AWAKING TO THE TERROR OF THE NEW DAY

STORY
BY
Harvey Pekar

Art By

| | | | | | | |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|-----|-----|
| SUN | MON | TUE | WED | THUR | FRI | SAT |
| 1 | 2 | G | R | E | G | |
| B | U | D | G | E | T | |
| 14 | 15 | 16 | G | A | R | Y |
| D | U | M | M | 25 | 26 | 27 |
| 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | | | |

HERE'S OUR MAN TALKING TO HIS
EX-WIFE ON THE PHONE. IT'S WINTER.

...YEH, I'VE
REALLY BEEN
FEELING LONELY
LATELY. REALLY
DESPERATE, Y'KNOW.
I BEEN REALLY
ISOLATED. SOME
A' MY FRIENDS
HAVE LEFT
TOWN...

GEE, THAT'S TOO
BAD. I'M REALLY
CONCERNED ABOUT
YOU. I WISH YOU
COULD GET IT
TOGETHER.

YEAH, WELL, THAT'S WHAT I WANTED T'TALK
T'YOU ABOUT. Y'KNOW, I STILL GOT FEELIN'S
FOR YOU, Y'KNOW, AN' I WUZ WONDERIN'
IF MAYBE WE COULD START SEEIN' EACH
OTHER, UH, SORTA ON A EXPERIMENTAL BASIS.

I'M SORRY,
BUT I CAN'T
HELP YOU OUT.
I'M INVOLVED
WITH
SOMEONE
NOW.

WHEN DID
THIS
HAPPEN?

OH, WE
MET EACH
OTHER
ABOUT A
MONTH
AGO AND...

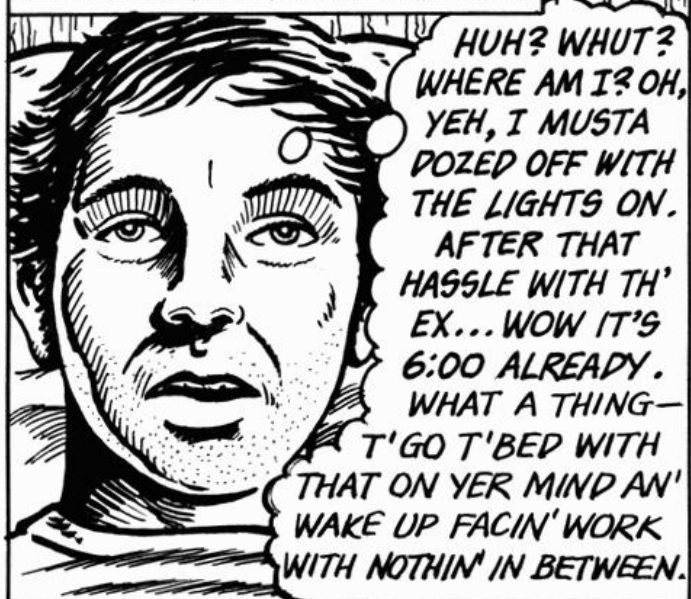
AWRITE, ENUFF, ENUFF. I
SHOULDA KNOWN BETTER THAN
TO CALL. YOU KNOW I STILL
CARE ABOUT YOU BUT YOU
DON'T GIVE A SHIT FOR ME.

THAT'S NOT TRUE. I'M
CONCERNED ABOUT
YOU. I WANT YOU
TO DO WELL. IT'S
JUST THAT...

YEAH,
SURE, I'VE
HEARD IT
BEFORE. WELL,
LEMME TELL YOU
SOMETHIN', YOU LOUSY
BITCH, WITH FRIENDS LIKE
YOU, I DON'T NEED NO ENEMIES...



6:00 A.M. THE NEXT MORNING...



HUH? WHUT?
WHERE AM I? OH,
YEH, I MUSTA
DOZED OFF WITH
THE LIGHTS ON.
AFTER THAT
HASSLE WITH TH'
EX... WOW IT'S
6:00 ALREADY.
WHAT A THING—
T'GO T'BED WITH
THAT ON YER MIND AN'
WAKE UP FACIN' WORK
WITH NOTHIN' IN BETWEEN.

SHIT, I FEEL FUNKY. NO WONDER,
I SLEP' IN MY CLOTHES... WOW,
IT'S COLD. THIS GODDAM CRIB
LEAKS HEAT LIKE A SIEVE.



DAMN, I JUS' WOKE UP AN' I'M
NERVOUS AS HELL. MOST A' TH'
TIME I'M R'LAXED WHEN I GET
UP. TH' WAY I BEEN LIVIN' MIGHT
BE STARTIN' T'GET TO ME, THOUGH.



WELL, BEATIN'
OFF USHULLY
CALMS ME
DOWN. HMM,
LEMME COME
UP WITH
A NICE
FANTASY.



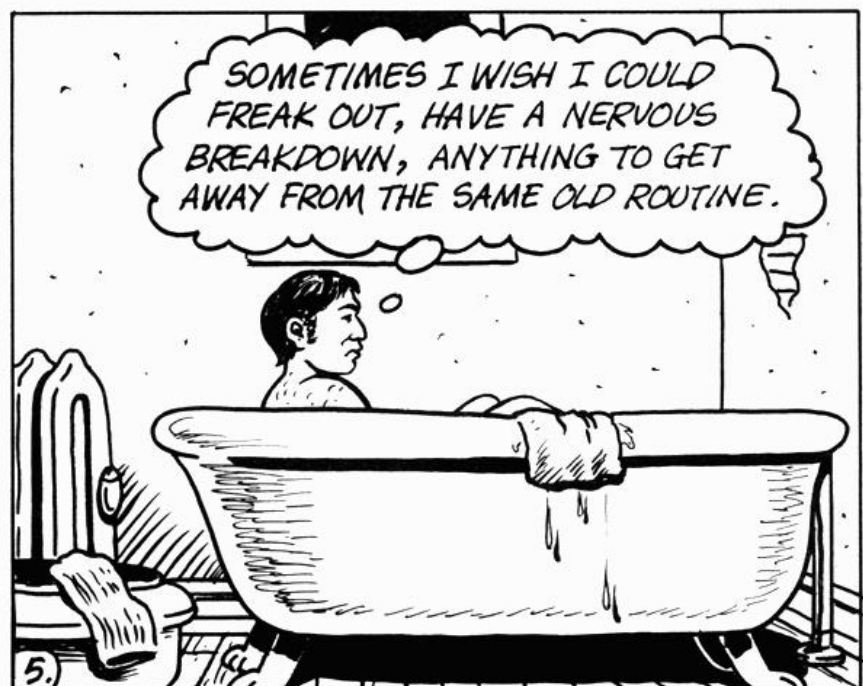
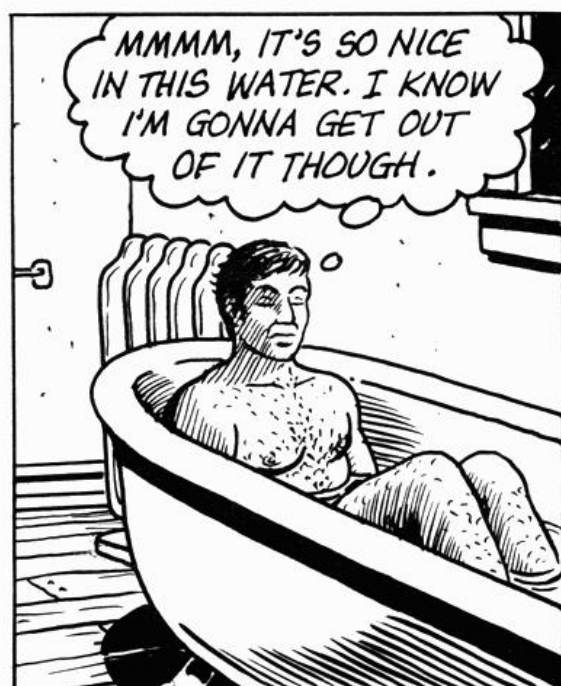
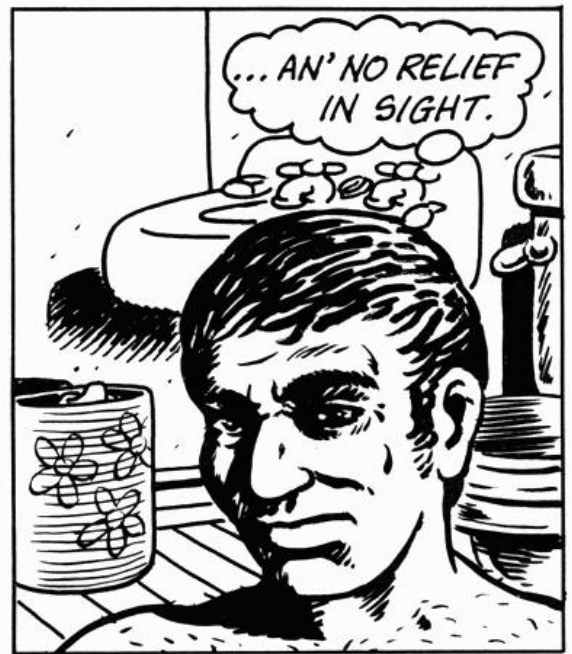
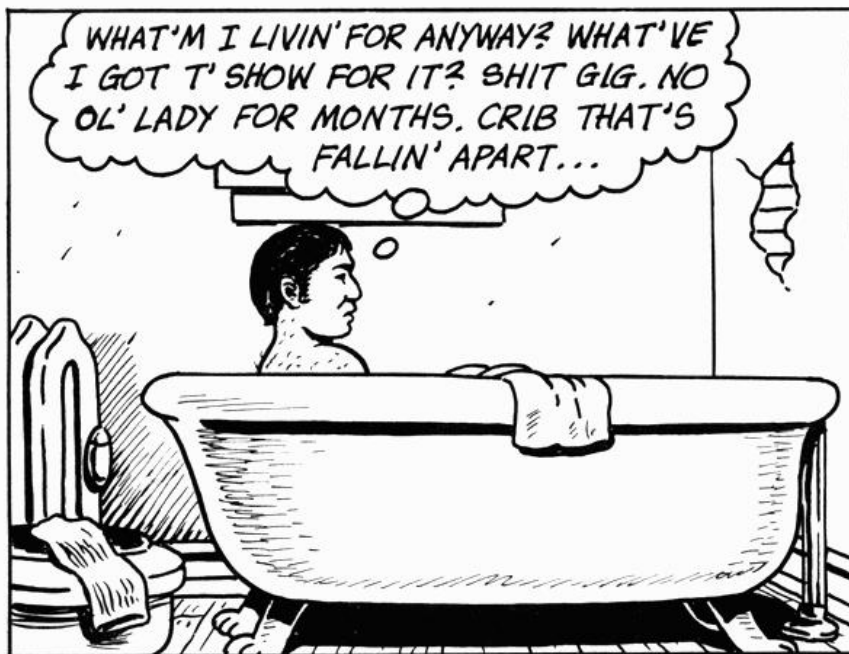
WHO SHOULD I THINK ABOUT? LINDA?
SHE GOT A GOOD BODY. ONNA
OTHER HAND, SHE TREATED ME
LIKE SHIT. FUCK HER, I AIN'T
GIVIN' HER THE SATISFACTION.

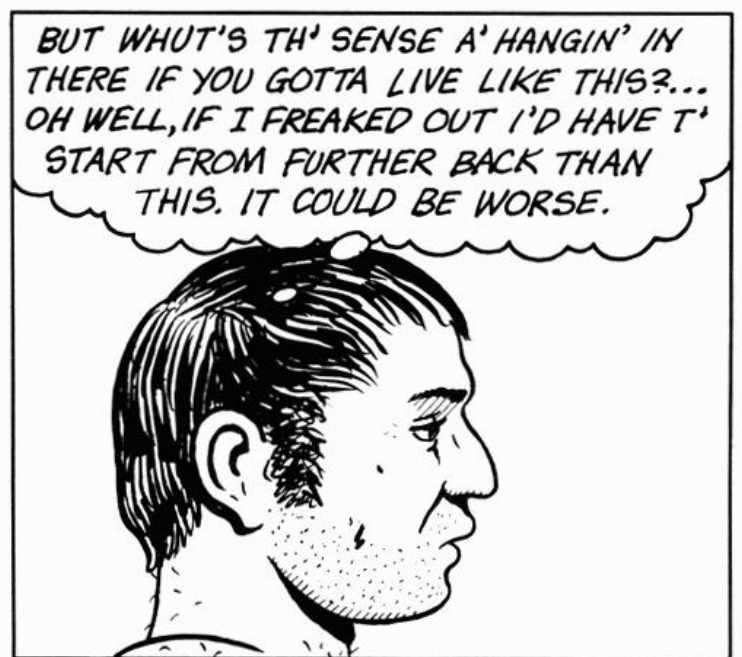


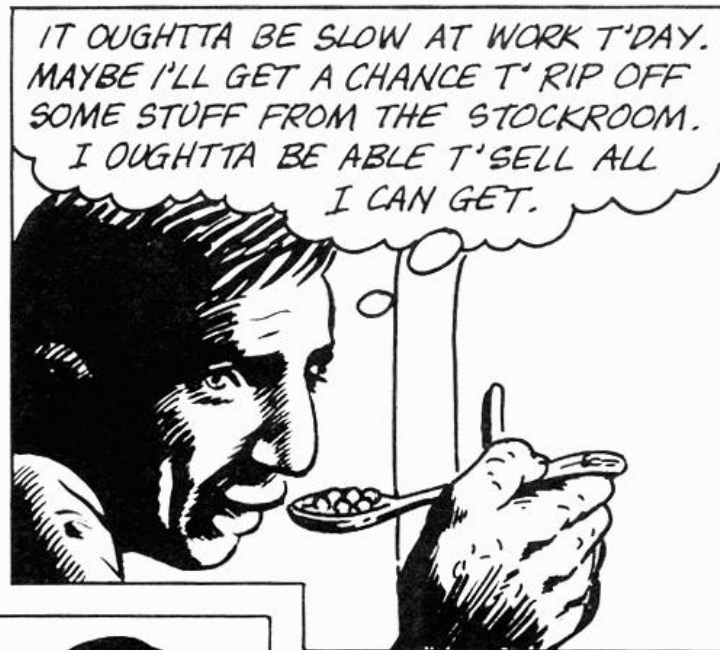
IT AIN'T
RIGHT FOR
ASSHOLE
CHICKS T'
HAVE GOOD
BODIES...
HMM, I'LL
THINK ABOUT
SUSAN. SHE'S
GOOD LOOKIN'
AN' SHE WAS
REAL NICE
T'ME, TOO.
YEH, SHE'LL
WORK.



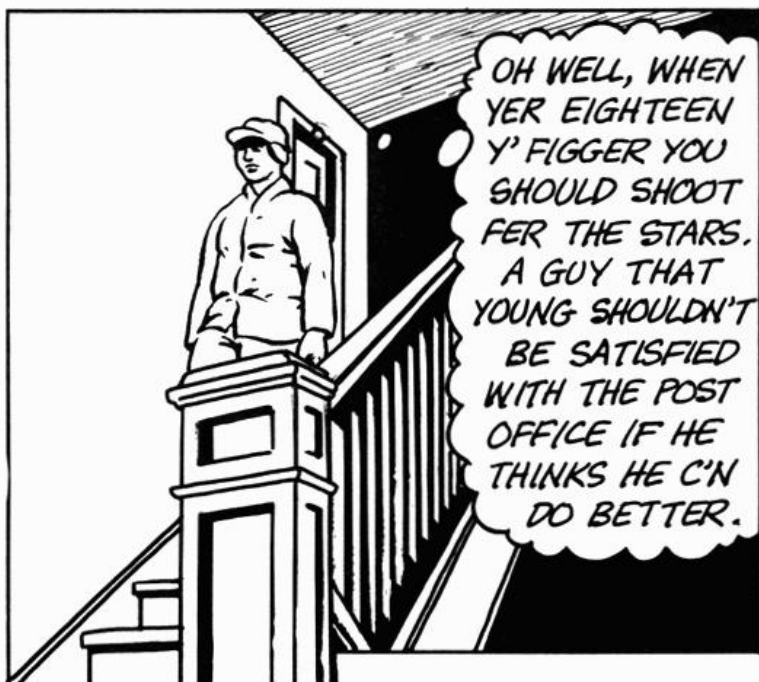








BOY, JUST THINK, I WORKED INNA POST OFFICE RIGHT AFTER I GOT OUTTA HIGH SCHOOL, BUT I QUIT IT. I SHOULDNA DONE THAT. I'VE HAD A LOT WORSE GIGS SINCE. WORKING FOR THE GOVER'MINT WAS O.K. I WAS JUST TOO YOUNG T' APPRECIATE IT.



OH WELL, WHEN YER EIGHTEEN Y' FIGGER YOU SHOULD SHOOT FER THE STARS. A GUY THAT YOUNG SHOULDN'T BE SATISFIED WITH THE POST OFFICE IF HE THINKS HE C'N DO BETTER.

BUT I OUGHTTA CALL UP T'DAY T'SEE IF ANY POST OFFICE OR FEDERAL CLERK'S CIVIL SERVICE TESTS ARE BEIN' GIVEN. IF I COULD EVEN GET A FLUNKY GOVER'MINT JOB, I COULD LIVE WITH IT.



THE GOVER'MINT DON'T PAY A LOT, BUT I COULD LIVE ON WHAT I GOT FROM THEM. I'D HAVE GOOD FRINGE BENEFITS, GUARANTEED RAISES AN' SECURITY. I WOULDN'T HAVE T' WORRY ABOUT GETTIN' LAID OFF.

8.

BOY, IF I COULD GET A DECENT GIG IT WOULD REALLY HELP. SHIT, I SHOULD HAVE THOUGHT ABOUT LOOKIN' INTA THOSE CIVIL SERVICE TESTS EARLIER. HOPE THERE'RE SOME COMIN' UP.



GODDAM THIS WEATHER. WELL, WHEN IT GETS WARMER MAYBE I'LL BE O.K. THE LAST TWO SUMMERS I'VE LATCHED ONTA SOME CHICKS. MAYBE THE NEXT TIME I GET ONE WE'LL LAST INTA TH' WINTER.

WINTER'S O.K. WHEN
Y'GOT A CHICK. SHIT,
ANYTIME'S O.K. WHEN
YOU GOT A CHICK.



IF I C'N GET A DECENT GIG
ANNA CHICK, MAYBE I C'N
GET COOL ENUFF T'GET MY
CHOPS BACK ON MY AXE. IT'D
BE GREAT T'GET BACK INTA
MUSIC-EVEN IN A REHEARSAL
BAND.



LIFE IS ABOUT WOMEN,
GIGS, AN' BEIN' CREATIVE.

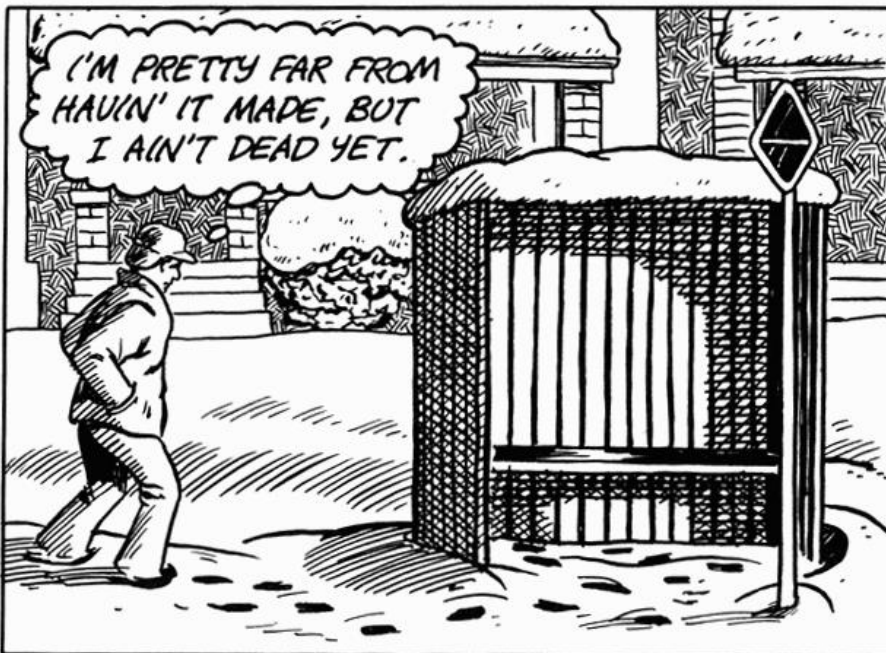
HEY, I'M GETTIN' ALL
WORKED UP THINKIN'
ABOUT MUSIC AN' THE
CIVIL SERVICE JOB AN'
TH' CHICK I HOPE I'LL
GET. HUH, FUNNY, I FELT
LIKE SLITTIN' MY THROAT
WHEN I WOKE UP.



MAYBE I BETTER TRY NOT T'
LET MY EMOTIONS RUN AWAY
WITH ME. I GOTTA
BE REALISTIC.



I'M PRETTY FAR FROM
HAVIN' IT MADE, BUT
I AIN'T DEAD YET.



I GOTTA TAKE THE DAYS ONE AT A
TIME...MAKE A PLAN AN' TRY T'
FOLLOW IT OUT. I MIGHT BE ABLE T'
MAKE IT IF I GET MY ASS IN GEAR.



I'LL CHECK OUT THE GOVER' MINT GIG
SCENE AN' THINK OVER WHERE I STAND
WITH TH' CHICKS I KNOW. MAYBE I'M
OVERLOOKIN' SOMEONE. T'DAY'S THURSDAY,
TOMORRA'S FRIDAY. SATURDAY I C'N
SLEEP LATE.



MAN LOOKS WHEREVER HE CAN FOR HOPE.

Awaking to the Terror of the Same Old Day

HERE'S OUR HERO WALKING DOWN THE STREET TOWARD HOME ON A SUNDAY NIGHT.



STORY BY HARVEY PEKAR
ART BY GREG BUDGETT
& GARY DUMM

IT'S BEEN A BUMMER WEEKEND. ALL HE'S DONE IS HANG OUT ON THE CORNER AND WATCH T.V.

HE THINKS ABOUT STUFF LIKE HOW HIS FIRST STEADY RELATIONSHIP WITH A GIRL IN YEARS BROKE UP A WEEK AGO.



SIGH. I KNEW IT WOULD HAPPEN. WE WEREN'T RIGHT FOR EACH OTHER. BUT NOW I GOTTA FIND SOMEONE ELSE. WHO KNOWS HOW LONG IT'LL BE?

HE THINKS ABOUT THE DAY BEFORE, WHEN ANOTHER LADY, WHO HAD DONE A NUMBER ON HIM AWHILE BACK, CAME UP TO HIM TO SAY GOODBYE.



I'M LEAVING TOWN TOMORROW, BUT I JUST WANT YOU TO KNOW I REALLY ENJOYED THE TIME I SPENT WITH YOU.

I'M REALLY SORRY I COULDN'T SEE YOU MORE, BUT UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES I DIDN'T THINK IT WOULD BE WISE FOR US TO GET INVOLVED. YOU UNDERSTAND DON'T YOU?

UH, I'D LOVE T' STAND HERE AN' LISTEN TO YA BUT I GOTTA GET GOING.

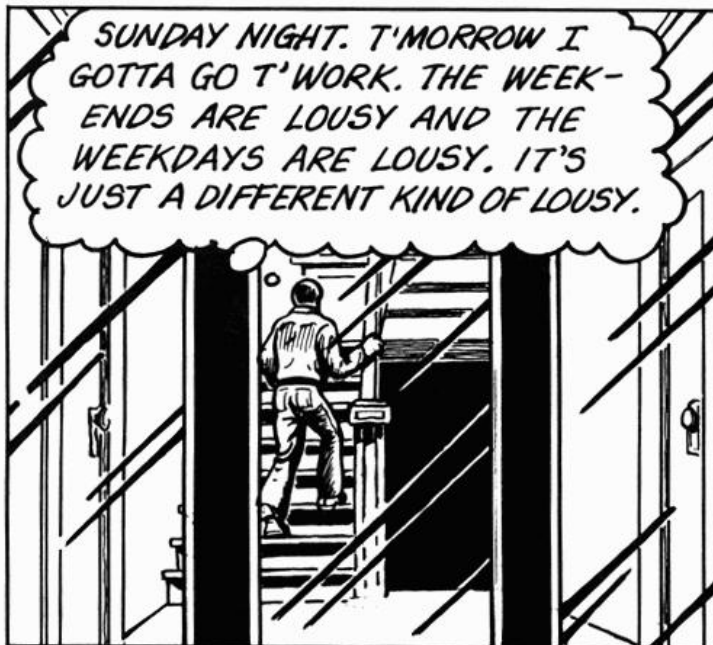




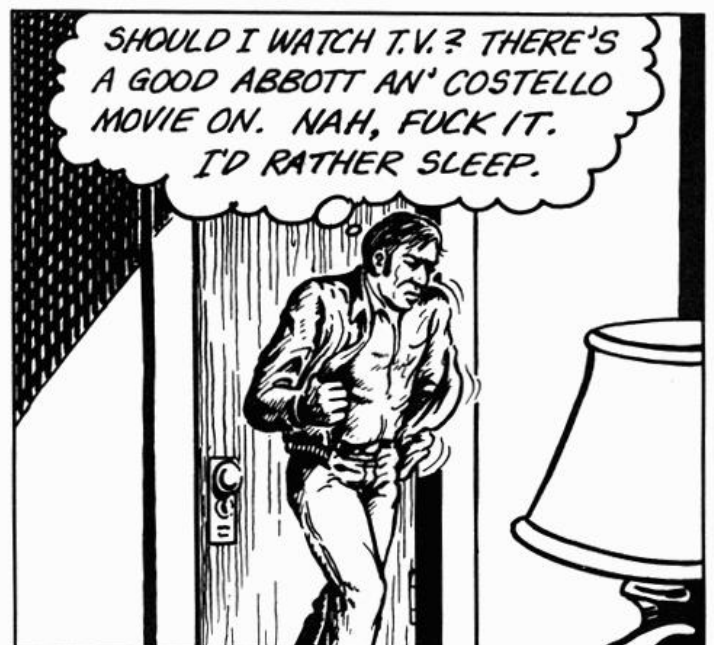
ROTTEN BITCH. SHE WANTED ME TO FORGIVE HER AND TELL HER WHAT A NICE PERSON SHE IS. WHAT FUCKIN' NERVE SHE HAS.



SHE WAS DESPERATE FOR A GUY SO SHE CAME ON TO ME EVEN THOUGH SHE REALLY WANTED A DOCTOR OR SUMP'N. THEN SHE CHANGES HER MIND AND ACTS LIKE SHE DON'T KNOW ME. WHAT A ROTTEN LITTLE FLAKE SHE TURNED OUT TO BE.



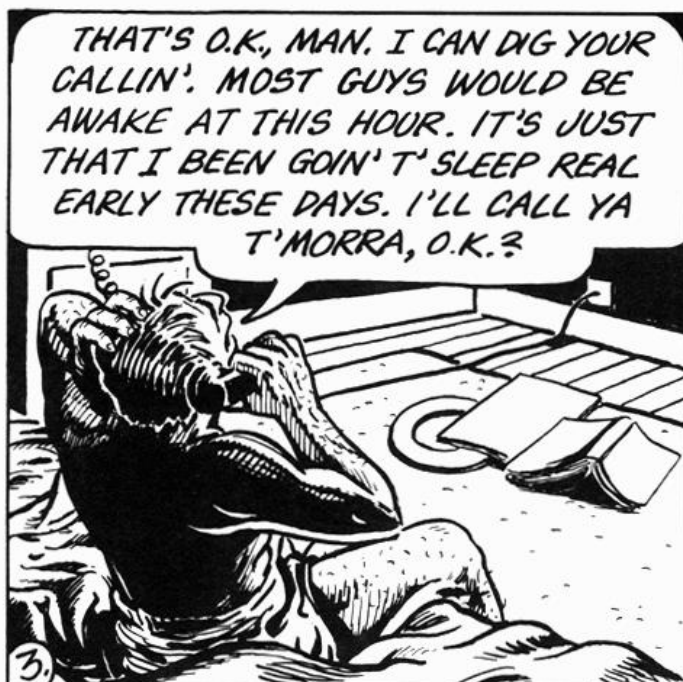
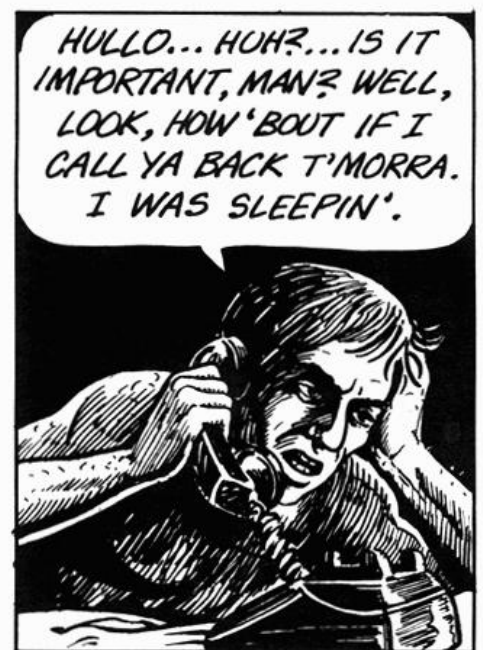
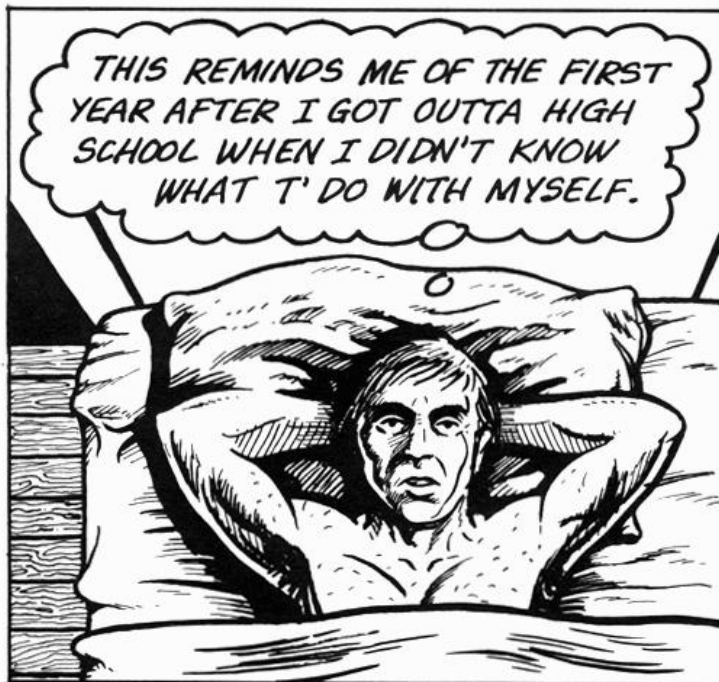
SUNDAY NIGHT. T'MORROW I GOTTA GO T'WORK. THE WEEK-ENDS ARE LOUSY AND THE WEEKDAYS ARE LOUSY. IT'S JUST A DIFFERENT KIND OF LOUSY.



SHOULD I WATCH T.V.? THERE'S A GOOD ABBOTT AN' COSTELLO MOVIE ON. NAH, FUCK IT. I'D RATHER SLEEP.



MAN, I DON'T FEEL LIKE DOIN' NOTHIN' THESE DAYS EXCEPT SLEEP.



BUT THAT'S NOT TRUE.
YOU CAN DREAM WHEN
YOU SLEEP.



OUR MAN STARTS TO DREAM.

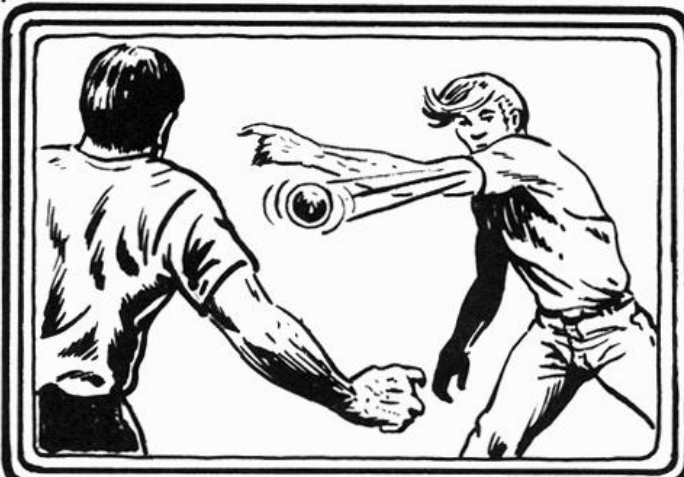


HE IMAGINES HE'S ON A PICNIC
WITH A BUNCH OF PEOPLE,
INCLUDING HIS EX-WIFE.

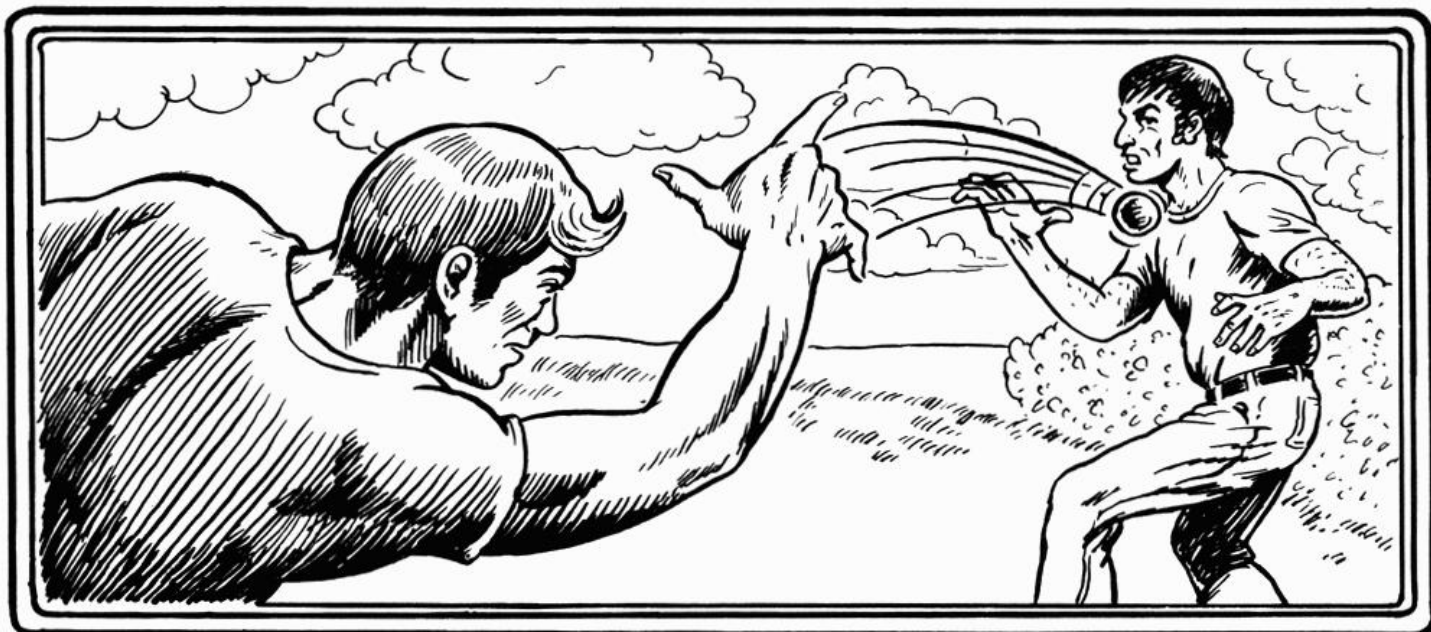
ONE OF HIS OLD SCHOOL TEACHERS
IS THERE AND, EVEN THOUGH THEY'RE
GROWN, SHE WON'T LET THEM GO HOME.



THE LAST ACT IN THE DRAMATIC SHOW
TURNS OUT TO BE TWO GUYS PLAYING
CATCH WITH A LITTLE RUBBER BALL
AND TALKING TO EACH OTHER.



SUDDENLY ONE OF THE GUYS TURNS AND THROWS THE BALL AT OUR MAN.



IT MISSES. HE GRABS THE BALL AND THROWS IT BACK AT THE GUY. IT HITS HIM AND BOUNCES BACK.

HE GRABS IT AND THROWS IT AT HIM AGAIN.



THEN HE TURNS TO THE CROWD FOR APPROVAL. BUT THEY'VE VANISHED EXCEPT FOR HIS EX-WIFE AND SHE HAS HER BACK TURNED TOWARD HIM.



AT THIS POINT HE SUDDENLY AWAKENS.

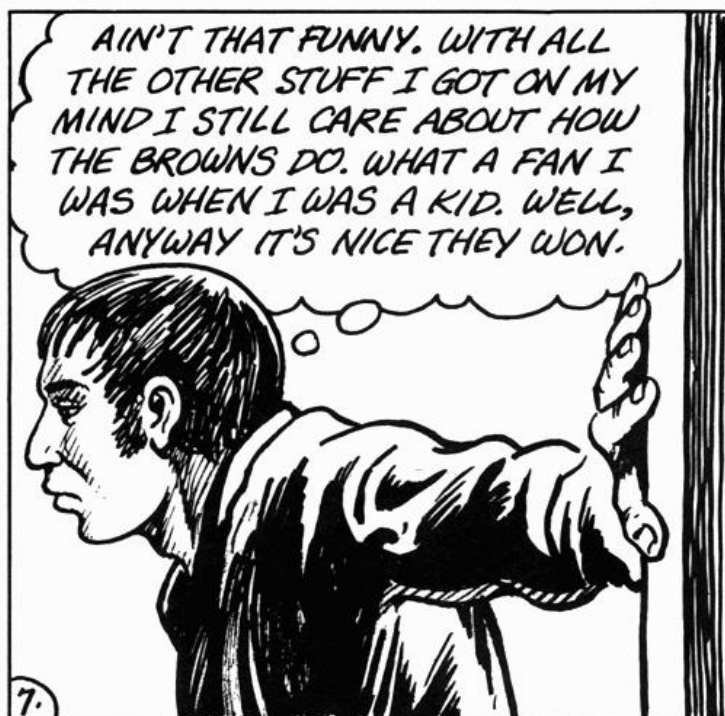


OH, MY GOD! WHAT A DREAM! WHAT'D IT MEAN? I GUESS THAT I'M LONELY.



SIX THIRTY. MIGHT AS WELL GET UP. WHAT A WAY T' START THE WEEK.







A HOUSING INSPECTOR FOUND OUT ABOUT IT AND TOLD 'EM THEY WERE GONNA HAVE TO MOVE, BUT SHE DIDN'T GET ANY KIND OF OFFICIAL NOTIFICATION. THEN LAST FRIDAY HER KIDS AND HER FRIEND'S KIDS GOT KICKED OUT OF SCHOOL BECAUSE THE BOARD OF EDUCATION SAID SHE WASN'T A LEGAL RESIDENT.



HOW COULD THEY DO THAT?

WELL, NORMALLY IT'S HARD FOR A CITY TO EVICT SOMEONE FROM A RESIDENCE. IT'S EXPENSIVE AND TAKES A LOT OF TIME. BUT IN BARBARA'S CASE I GUESS THEY FIGURED THEY COULD GET HER OUT QUICK BY HITTING AT HER THROUGH HER KIDS.

OH MAN, THAT'S AWFUL.

IT SURE IS. SO TODAY BARBARA'S SEEING A LAWYER TO TRY TO GET HER CHILDREN BACK IN SCHOOL. POOR KID, SHE'S HAD IT SO ROUGH LATELY. SHE SURE DOESN'T NEED THIS.

WOW, SOME 'A THESE SUBURBAN CITY OFFICIALS DON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT CRIME OR POLLUTION SO THEY HASSLE DIVORCEES TO KEEP BUSY.

HEY MAN, WHAT'D YA DO LAST WEEKEND?

NOT MUCH. I WENT T' TH' TRACK SATURDAY.

HOW'D Y'DO?

OH, SO-SO. I JUST ABOUT BROKE EVEN.

WELL, IT WAS A NICE DAY ANYWAY. AT LEAST Y'GOT SOME FRESH AIR.

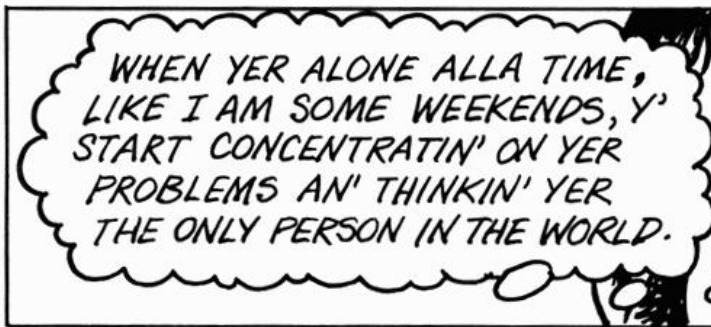
FUCK THE FRESH AIR. I AIN'T GOIN' T' THE TRACK FOR MY HEALTH.



HEY, I FEEL BETTER NOW. I ONLY FEEL NORMALLY LOUSY.



I HATE T'ADMIT IT, BUT WORKIN' SORT OF HELPS ME KEEP FROM GOIN' NUTS.



WHEN YER ALONE ALLA TIME, LIKE I AM SOME WEEKENDS, Y' START CONCENTRATIN' ON YER PROBLEMS AN' THINKIN' YER THE ONLY PERSON IN THE WORLD.



BUT WORKIN' WITH PEOPLE HELPS YA PUT YERSELF AN' YER PROBLEMS IN PERSPECTIVE. STILL, IT'S A SHIT JOB AN' A LOTTA TIMES I FEEL TRAPPED HERE.



WHEW! WHAT CAN YOU DO, MAN? SOMETIMES THINGS SEEM SO HEAVY, OTHER TIMES EVERYTHING SEEMS LIKE A JOKE.

END.

SHORT WEEKEND

A STORY ABOUT THE COSMIC AND THE ORDINARY

IT'S SATURDAY MORNING. HERE'S OUR MAN, THE GUY WITH NO CHICK AND A LOUSY JOB, GOING TO CHECK OUT HIS POST OFFICE BOX. THIS IS THE HIGH POINT OF HIS WEEK.

I AIN'T CHECKED MY BOX OUT INNA WEEK BECAUSE IT'S SO DISAPPOINTING T' GO THERE EVERY COUPLE DAYS AN' NOT GET ANY MAIL. MAYBE T'DAY I'LL GET A REAL SURPRISE. A COUPLE PEOPLE OWE ME LETTERS. I HOPE I HEAR FROM SOMEBODY. OH, MAN, I HOPE.

STORY BY HARVEY PEKAR
ART: GREG BUDGETT
GARY DUMM

© 1978 BY HARVEY PEKAR

U.S.
POST
OFFICE

NOTHIN'.

WELL, WHY WOULD THERE BE ANYTHING? I WAS FIGURIN' THAT SINCE I HADN'T HEARD FROM ANYONE IN SO LONG THAT THE PERCENTAGES WERE WITH ME OF GETTIN' A LETTER FROM 'EM T'DAY. I WAS COUNTIN' ON THE LAW OF AVERAGES.

BUT THINGS CAN GET BAD AND JUST STAY BAD ALL THE TIME LIKE THEY DO FOR SOME A' THOSE POOR PEOPLE IN INDIA...

THE
RAL
PEE

...THEY CAN GET BAD
AND THEN GET WORSE
AND THEN YOU DIE. YOU
GOT NO GUARANTEE THAT
YER LUCK'S GONNA
CHANGE, THAT TH'
BREAKS'LL EVEN UP.



LAW OF AVERAGES? THERE
IS NO SUCH THING AS
THE LAW OF AVERAGES.



I DUNNO, THOUGH. I WANNA
BE HAPPIER BUT MAYBE
I'M PUTTIN' TOO MUCH
EMPHASIS ON HAPPINESS.
HOW LONG DOES HAPPI-
NESS LAST? LIFE IS
SHORT. Y'MIGHT BE HAPPY
FOR AWHILE BUT THEN
Y'GET OLD AN' SICK
AN' Y' DIE.



MAYBE THE GUY WHO'S
HAD A HAPPY LIFE FEELS
WORSE JUST BEFORE HE
DIES THAN TH' GUY WHO'S
HAD A SAD ONE. THE
GUY WITH TH' SAD LIFE
DOESN'T HAVE AS MUCH
TO LOSE.



MAYBE THE THING THAT
COUNTS THE MOST IS
JUST STAYIN' ALIVE.
MAYBE THE MOST suc-
CESSFUL MAN IS THE
GUY WHO LIVES THE
LONGEST.



I WONDER WHAT IT'S LIKE AFTER DEATH. PROB'LY IT'S LIKE IT IS B'FORE BIRTH. IS IT NOTHING? NON-EXISTENCE? THAT'S NOT HARD T'UNDERSTAND, BUT IT'S HARD FOR PEOPLE T'ACCEPT. IT'S HARD FOR THEM TO IMAGINE NOT EXISTING BECAUSE ALL OF THEIR MEMORIES ARE OF THEIR EXISTENCE, NOT NON-EXISTENCE. AN' PEOPLE AIN'T TOO CRAZY ABOUT THE IDEA OF THEMSELVES NOT EXISTING. THEY DON'T THINK ABOUT IT MUCH. SOME DENY TH' POSSIBILITY.



I WONDER IF THERE IS AN AFTERLIFE. PEOPLE ARE TALKIN' A LOT ABOUT IT THESE DAYS. IT SURE WOULD BE NICE T'KNOW WHAT I'M GOIN' THROUGH NOW AIN'T ALL THERE IS TO IT.



WHAT'LL I DO FOR THE REST OF THE DAY? IT'S 10:00 SATURDAY MORNING AN' ALREADY I DON'T FEEL LIKE DOIN' ANYTHING.



MAYBE I'LL GO HOME AN' WATCH SOME KID SHOWS ON T.V. I LIKE SOME OF 'EM.

THIS GUY'S WEEKEND IS OVER. BUT HE'LL TRY AGAIN NEXT WEEK. HE REALLY DOESN'T HAVE MUCH CHOICE.

END

a Compliment

STORY BY HARVEY PEKAR
ART BY R. CRUMB
©1982 by Harvey Pekar



JIVIN' WITH JACK THE BELLBOY AS HE GOES ABOUT...

HUSTLIN' SIDES

STORY BY
HARVEY
PEKAR
ART BY
R. CRUMB

JACK IS A DEMON-
FIEND, OBSESSIVE-
COMPULSIVE JAZZ
RECORD COLLECTOR.
HE HAS TO HAVE EV-
ERY SIDE EVER CUT!

A NEW LIMITED
EDITION DODO MARMA-
ROSA L.P. JUST CAME
OUT... GOTTA GET IT...
GOTTA... GOTTA...
GOTTA...

SPACE FOR
LEASE

RUBBER
STAMPS

PAPER
CLIPS

STAPLES

CURTAIN

OFFICE SUPPLIES

OF COURSE, HIS
HABIT COSTS
HIM HEAVY
BREAD...

AWNT NO USE ASKIN'
WHUT I NEED... I NEED
EVERYTHING, FROM MY
HAT DOWN AN' FROM
MY OVERCOAT IN...

HE DONT MAKE MUCH MONEY ON HIS REGULAR
GIG SO HE'S GOT TO ECONOMIZE...

LOOKS LIKE A PEANUT
BUTTER SAN'WICH CON
PEPSI AGAIN T'NITE...
...SIGH...

DENTAL
COLLECT



CHICKS ARE LUCKY TO GET TH' PRICE OF A
POPSICLE OFFER THIS CAT!

OH JACK, IT'S SO
HOT! CANT WE GET
SOME ICE CREAM
CONES?

O.K. SWEETS,
BUT ONLY ONE
DIP!

ONE NIGHT JACK CONSIDERS HIS UPCOMING
EXPENSES...

HMM... I MIGHT HAVE ABOUT
A HUNNERT AN' FIFTY BUCKS
WORTH A AUCTION WINNINGS
INNA NEXT COUPLA WEEKS...
GOTTA GET THE BREAD TO
COVER 'EM!



HUNDRED-FIFTY BUCKS MIGHT SEEM LIKE A LOT FOR A MAN OF JACK'S MODEST MEANS TO COME UP WITH, BUT HE'S GOT THE SOLUTION.

I REALLY GOT TO PEDDLE A MESS A' SIDES AT WORK THIS WEEK!

WHERE'M I GONNA GET 'EM?
LEMME CHECK MY INVENTORY...

JACK LOOKS OVER THE STASH OF L.P.'S HE'S BEEN BUILDING UP TO SELL AT WORK...

SHIT, THIS AIN' ENUFF, I GOTTA GET BUSY!!

STACK A' SIDES

HE CONTACTS ANOTHER JAZZ RECORD COLLECTOR...

HEY, ALVIN! HEY, LOOK, MAN, I GOTTA DEAL FOR YA!

OVERHEATED APARTMENT

I BEEN SAVIN' UP SOME CHOICE SIDES FOR YA AN' I WUZ WONDERIN' IF YA'D LIKE T' MAKE A SWAP... YOU OUGHT TO RILLY GO FOR THIS DEAL,

SEE, I KNOW YOU GOT A BUNCH A POPULAR L.P.'S FOR NUTHIN' AWHILE AGO. NOW I GIVE YOU THESE CHOICE JAZZ SIDES AN' YOU GIVE ME THREE POP RECORDS FOR EACH JAZZ SIDE I GIVE YOU. THEN I PEDDLE THE POP SIDES FOR \$2.00 APIECE... WE BOTH MAKE OUT GOOD...

YOU SWAP ME RECORDS YOU DON'T WANT AN' YOU GET SOME GOOD STUFF FROM ME. WUDDYA SAY? ...YEAH.... I THOUGHT YOU'D GO FOR IT. I'LL BE OVER PRETTY SOON TA PICK UP TH' STUFF.

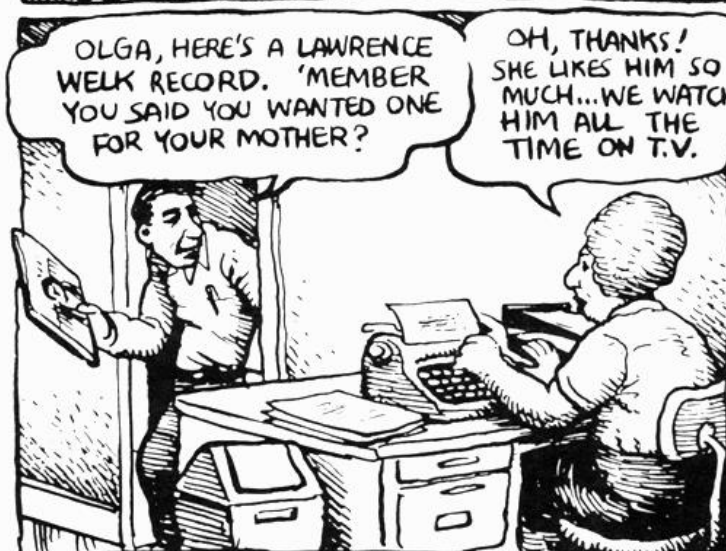
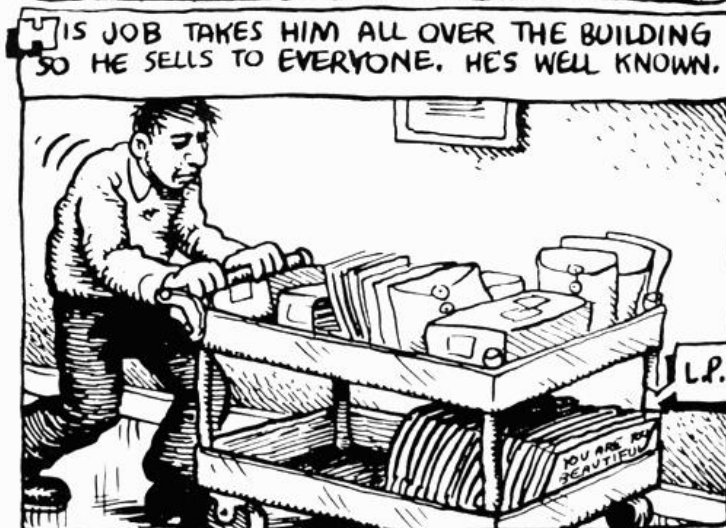
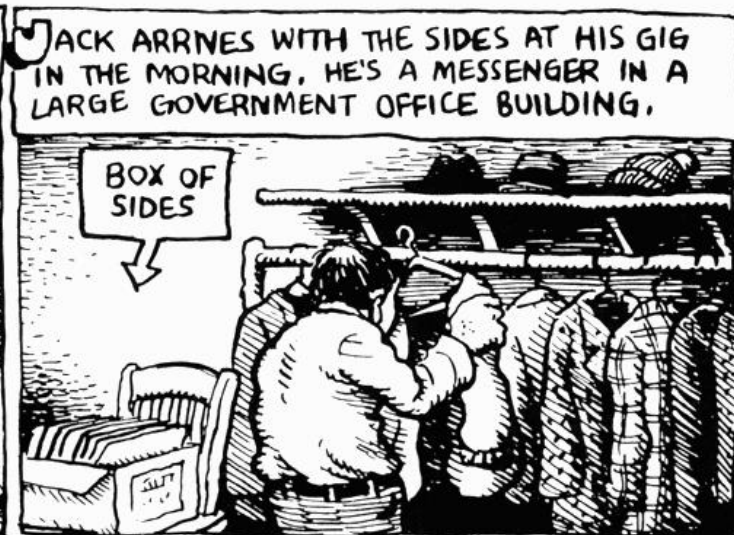
THEN HE GOES T' SEE A BUDDY OF HIS...

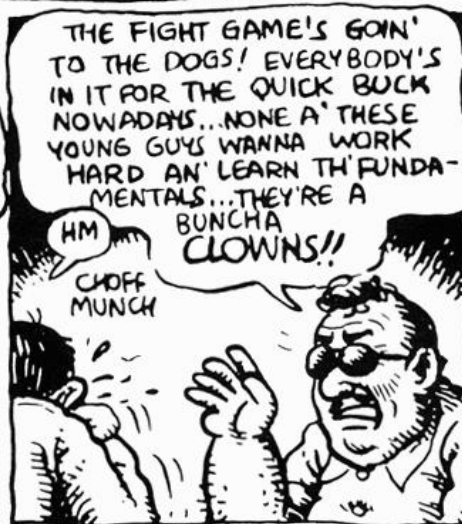
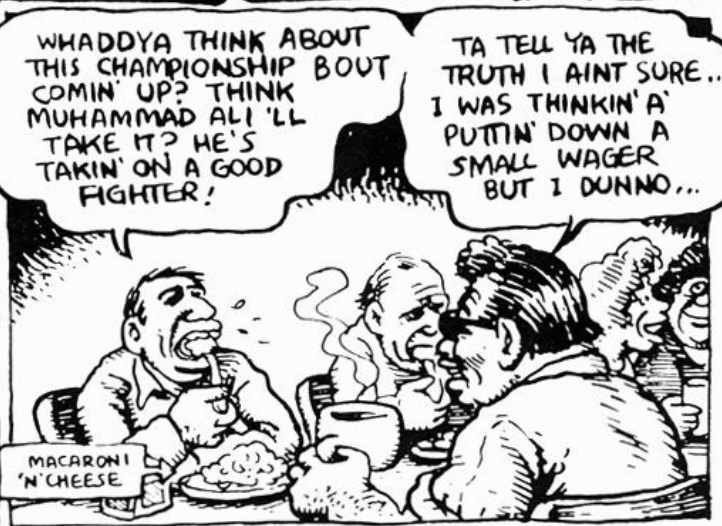
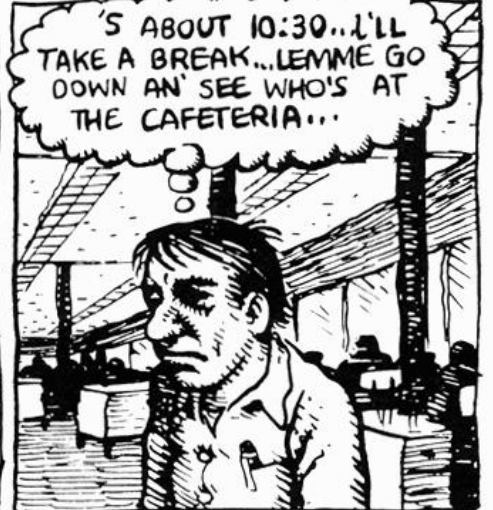
SAY, YOU REMEMBER THOSE SIDES YOU RIPPED OFF WHEN YOU WAS WORKIN' AT THAT RADIO STATION? GOT ANY LEFT?

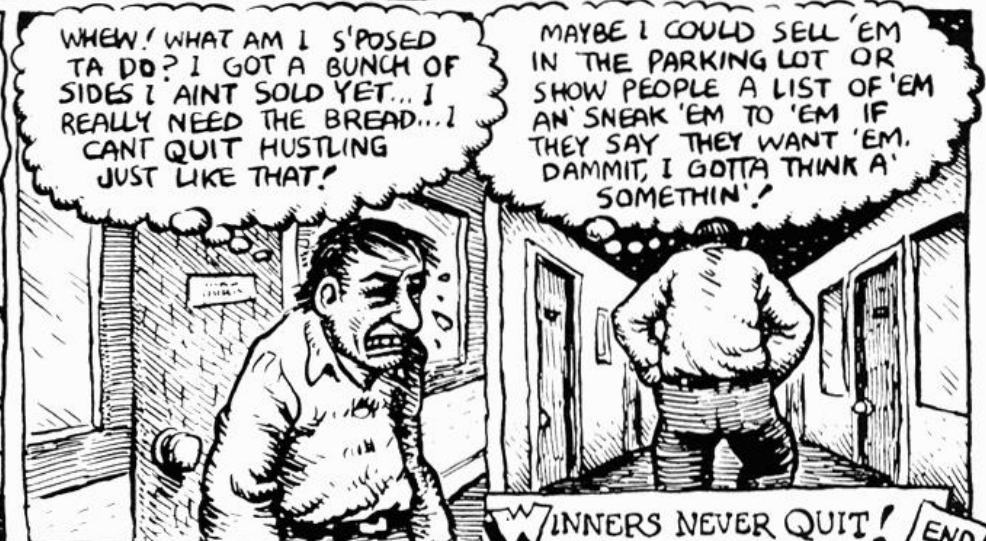
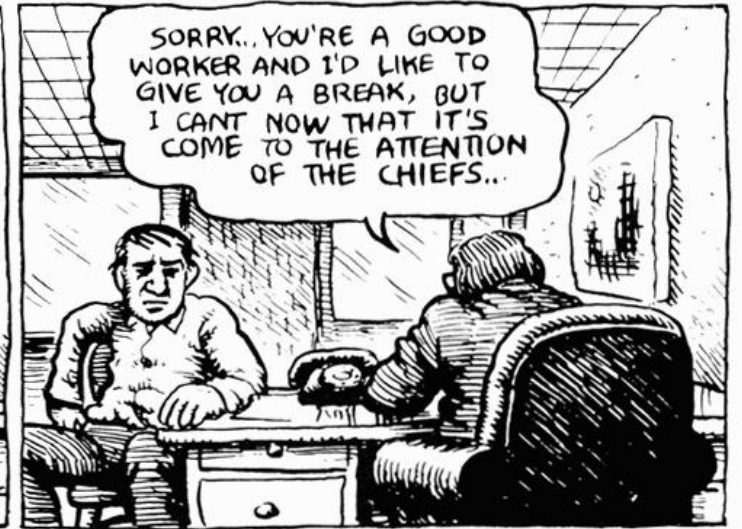
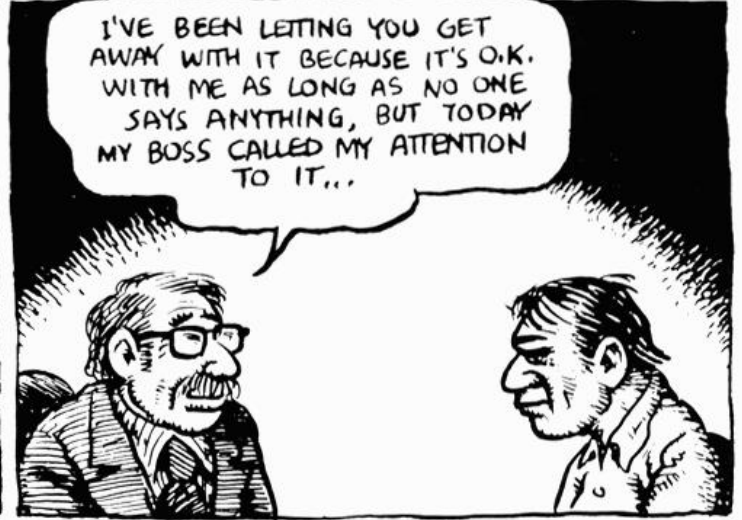
YEAH MAN, I REALLY AINT GOT AROUND TO DOIN' ANYTHING WITH 'EM YET.

WELL LOOK, YOU GOT SOME STUFF IN THERE I C'N HUSTLE. I'LL GIVE YOU A BUCK APIECE FOR 'EM... I'M SURE I C'N USE AT LEAST TWENNY-FIVE OF 'EM... HOW 'BOUT IT?

SOLID, MAN! THEY WERE JUST SITIN' HERE COLLECTIN' DUST ANYWAY!







JACK the BELLBOY and MR. BOATS

STORY BY
HARVEY PEKAR
ART BY
R. CRUMB

HERE'S JACK THE BELLBOY, FLUNKY CLERK and DEMON RECORD HUSTLER, RIDING AN ELEVATOR AT HIS GIG AT A BIG GOVERNMENT OFFICE BUILDING...



AVOID THE REEKING HERD,
SHUN THE POLLUTED FLOCK...



LIVE LIKE THAT STOIC BIRD,
THE EAGLE OF THE ROCK...



HEH
HEH

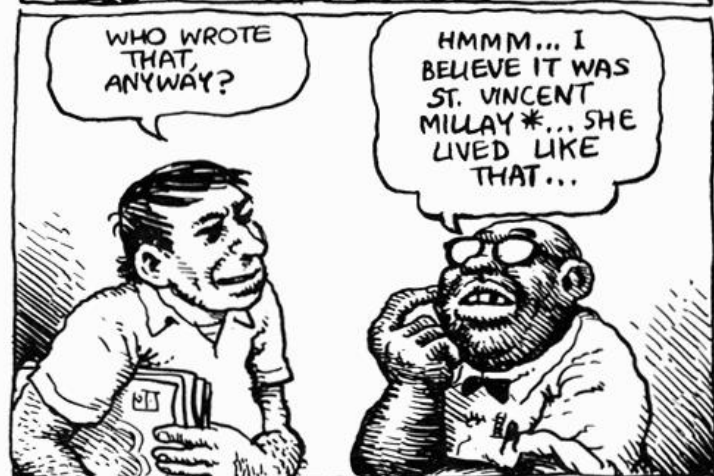
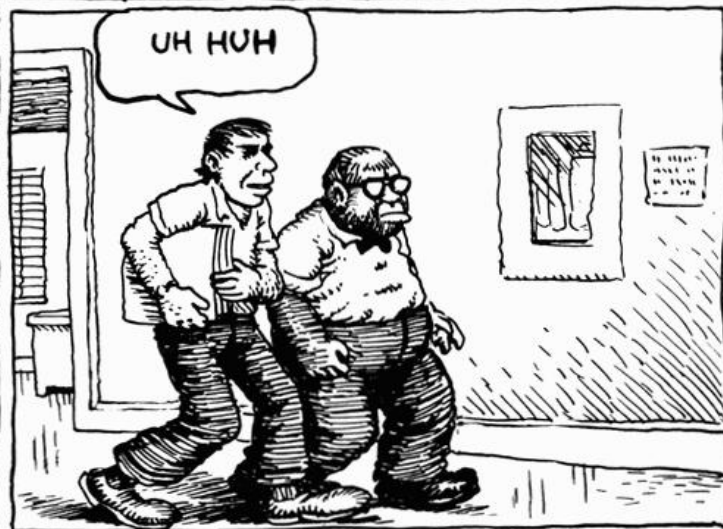
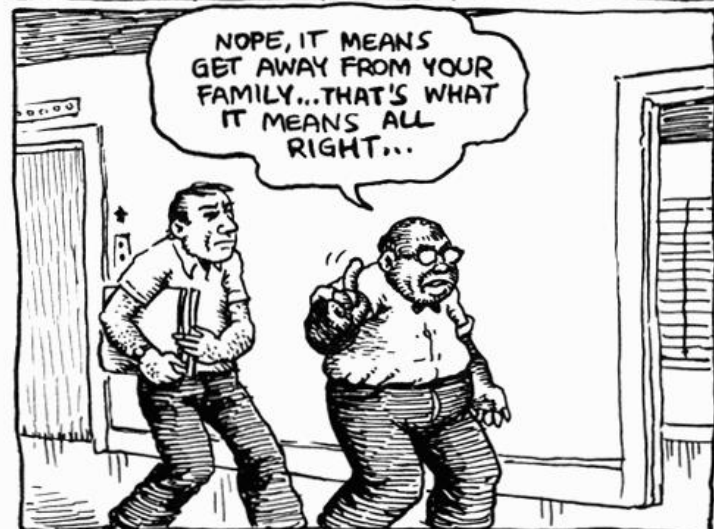
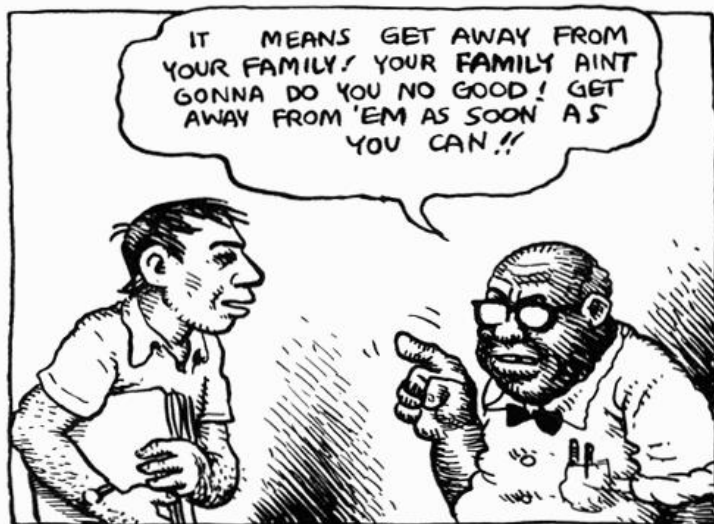
WELL, ALL
RIGHT, MR.
BOATS!



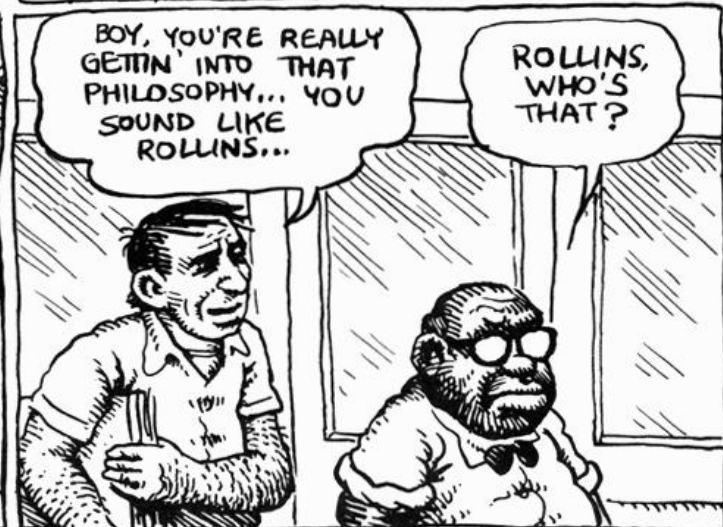
THAT WAS O.K., MR.
BOATS... AVOID THE
REEKING HERD, HUH?

YUP... YOU
KNOW WHAT
THAT
MEANS?

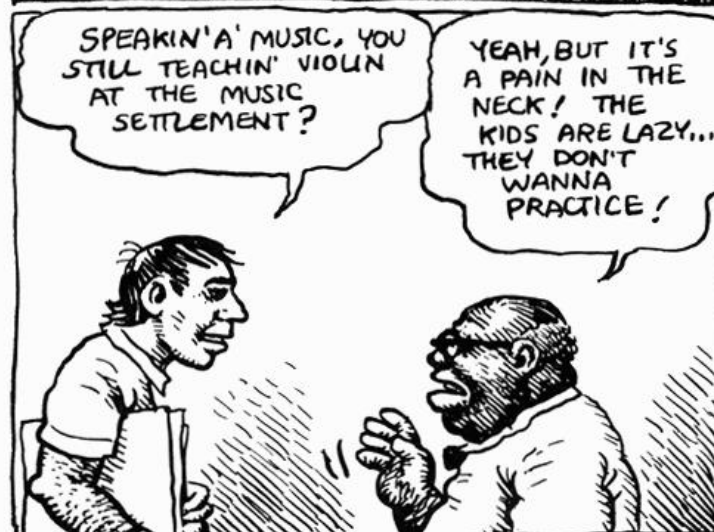
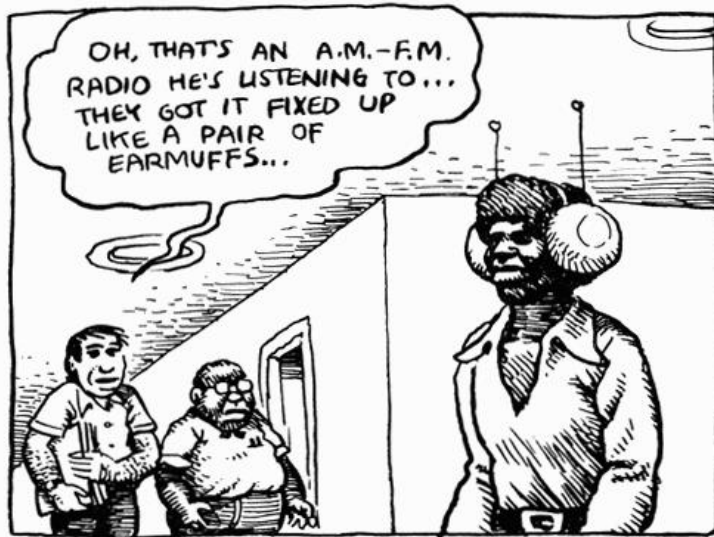


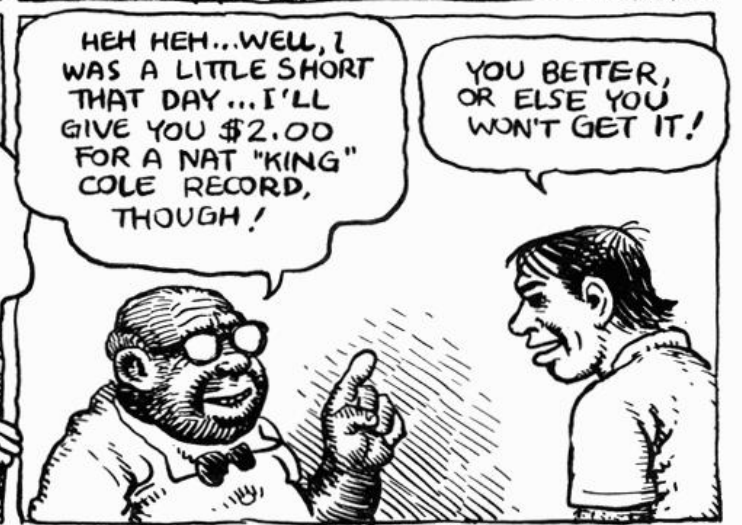
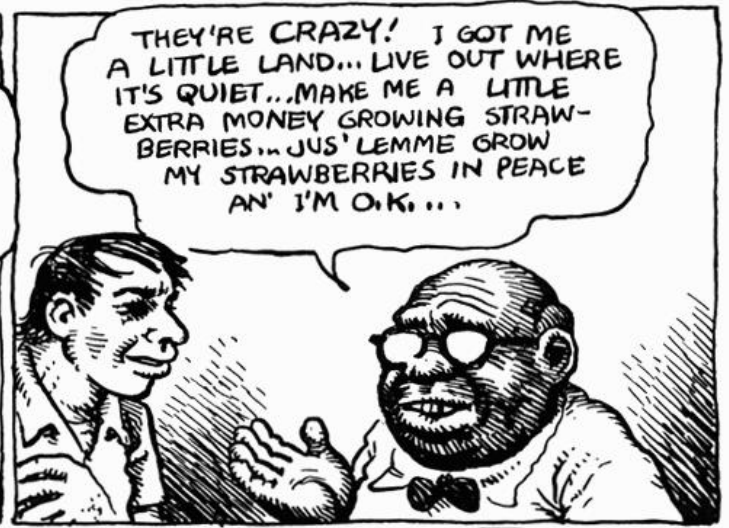
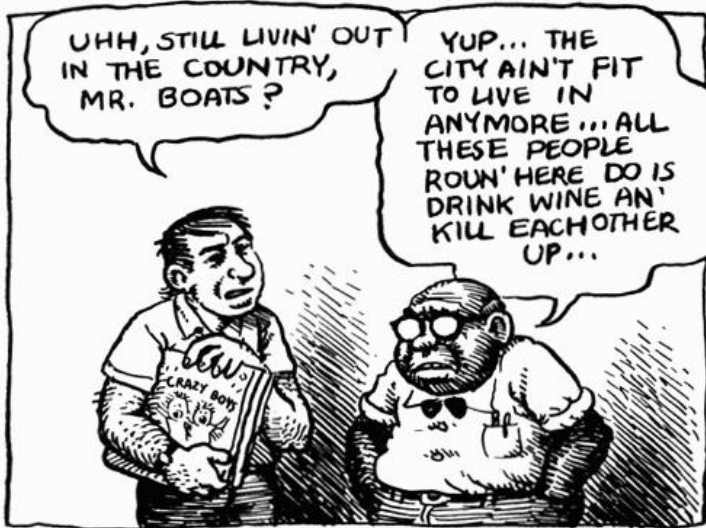


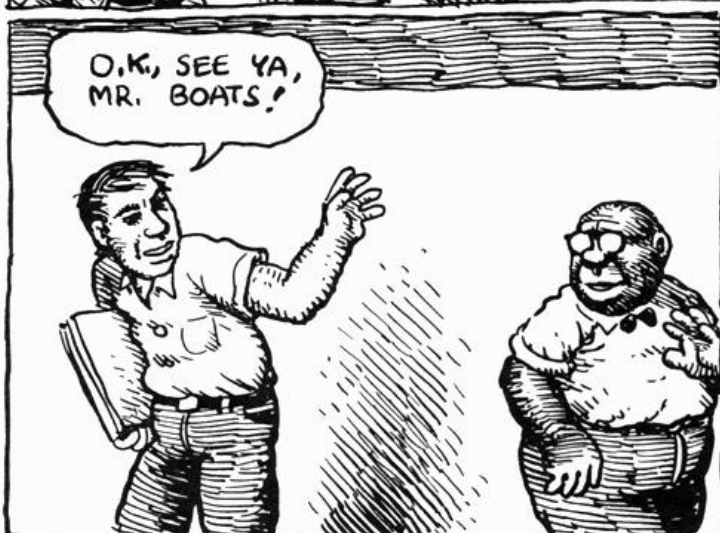
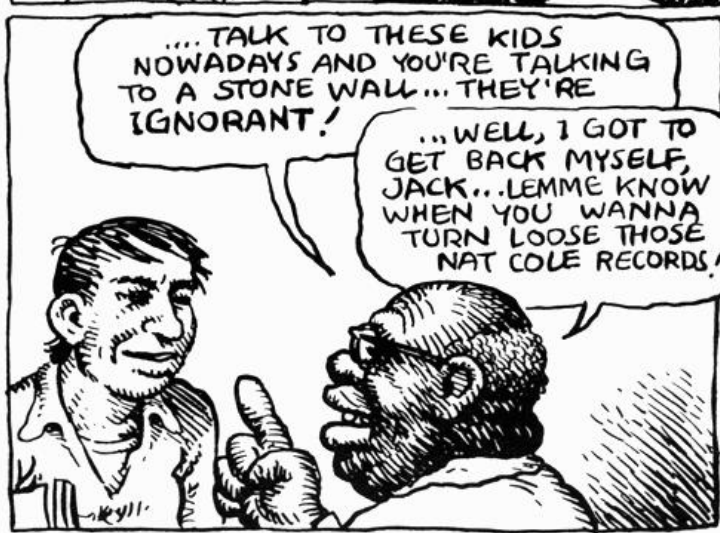
* YEAH, I KNOW, POETRY FANS, IT WAS REALLY ELINOR HOYT WYLIE.











READ THIS

STORY BY HARVEY PEKAR

ART BY GREG BUDGETT & GARY DUMM

BACK ABOUT FIFTEEN YEARS AGO WHEN I WAS REALLY INTO COLLECTIN' JAZZ RECORDS REAL HEAVY, THIS FRIEND A' MINE PUT ME ONTO A GUY I COULD BUY L.P.'S OFFA CHEAP.

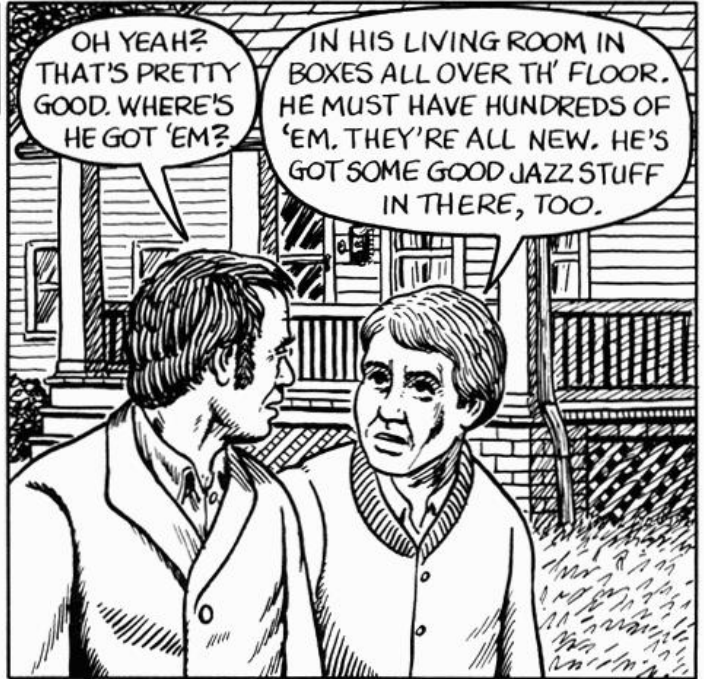
HOW MUCH DO THEY COST?

HE CHARGES \$2.00 APIECE.



OH YEAH? THAT'S PRETTY GOOD. WHERE'S HE GOT 'EM?

IN HIS LIVING ROOM IN BOXES ALL OVER TH' FLOOR. HE MUST HAVE HUNDREDS OF 'EM. THEY'RE ALL NEW. HE'S GOT SOME GOOD JAZZ STUFF IN THERE, TOO.



WHATS A DEAL WITH THIS GUY, ANYWAY? HOW'S HE GET 'EM SO CHEAP? HOW DO YOU KNOW 'IM?

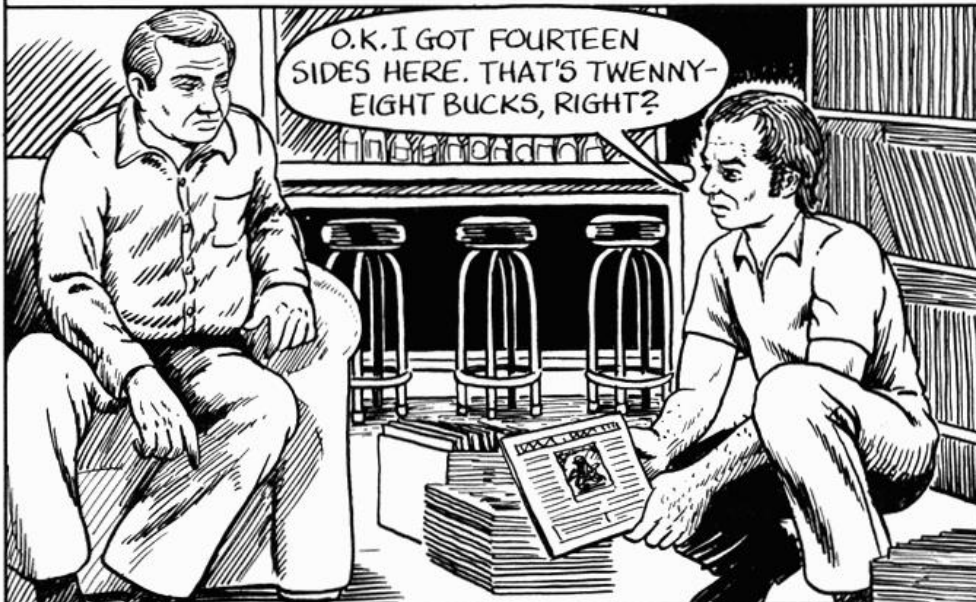


HE RUNS AN AFTER HOURS JOINT OUT OF HIS HOUSE. HE'S A COLLECTOR TOO. I DON'T ASK 'IM WHERE HE GETS HIS SIDES. THEY'RE PROBABLY HOT.



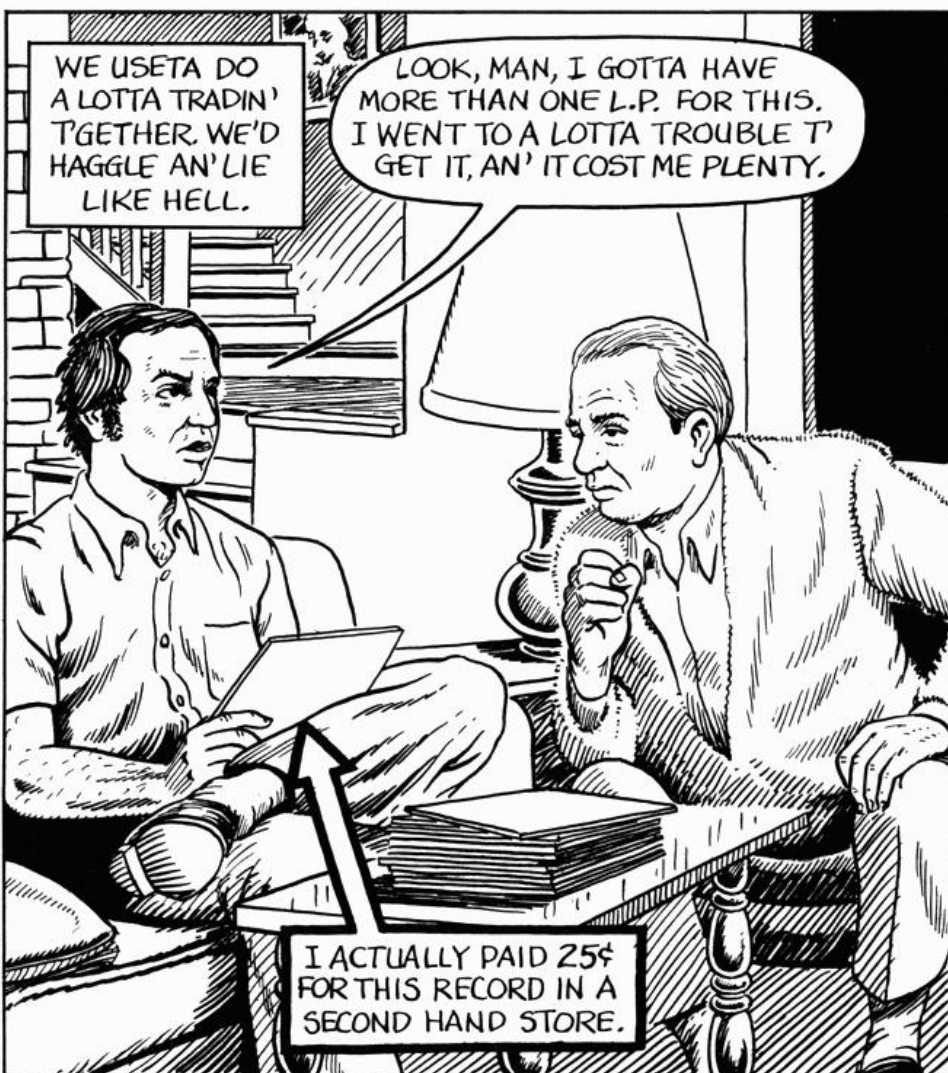
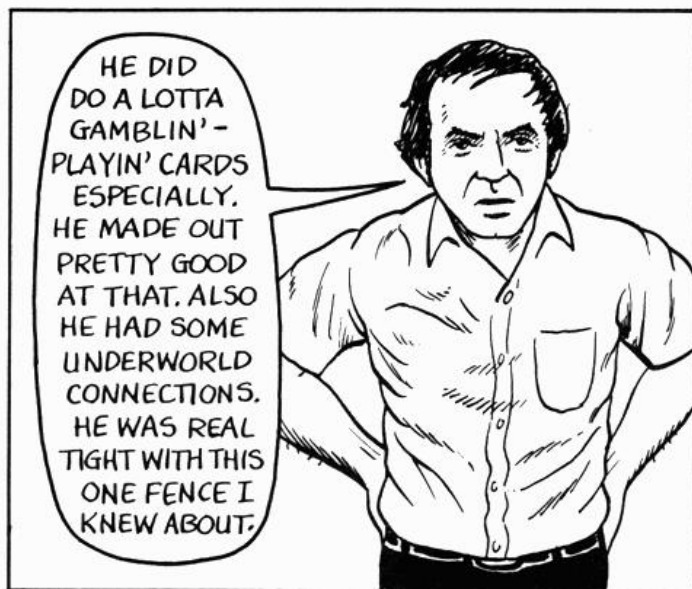
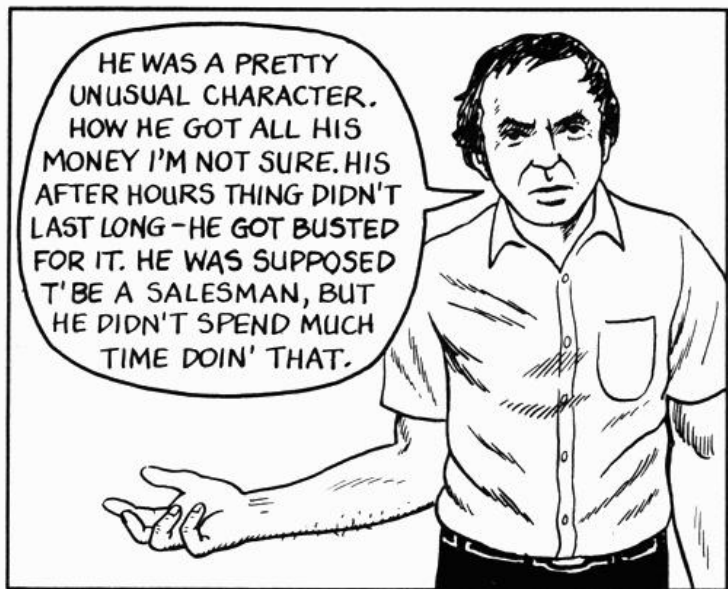
SO I CHECK TH' GUY OUT. HE DOES HAVE SOME GOOD STUFF, 'AN OVER THE NEXT FEW MONTHS I GET A LOTTA RECORDS OFFA HIM.

O.K. I GOT FOURTEEN SIDES HERE. THAT'S TWENNY-EIGHT BUCKS, RIGHT?



AFTER AWHILE I GET TO TRADIN' RECORDS WITH HIM AS WELL AS BUYIN' 'EM, 'AN IN THE PROCESS I GOT TO KNOW 'IM





SO DIG-ONE DAY
AT ABOUT SEVEN O'CLOCK
IN THE MORNING I GET A
CALL FROM HIM. HIS APART-
MENT HOUSE HAD CAUGHT
ON FIRE. HIS RECORDS
WEREN'T BURNED, BUT
THE FIRE MARSHALL HAD
TOLD HIM HE HADPA GET
HIS STUFF OUTTA HIS
PAD IN TWENTY-FOUR HOURS.
THIS WAS SERIOUS BECAUSE
HE HAD A HUGE COLLECTION
WORTH THOUSANDS
A' DOLLARS.



HE HAD
RUN OUT AN'
RENTED A HOUSE
AN' A TRUCK AN'
HE WAS CALLIN'
ME BECAUSE HE
NEEDED SOMEONE
T' HELP HIM PACK
AN' MOVE. HE MUST
NOT A' BEEN ABLE
T' GET HIS BUDDIES
T' HELP 'IM, AN' HE
WAS PRETTY
FRANTIC.



WHAT COULD I DO? I'M NOT TH' NICEST GUY IN THE WORLD, BUT HE WAS IN A BAD SPOT. I WENT
OVER T' HIS PLACE AN' WE PACKED AN' MOVED HIS RECORDS IN ABOUT SIX HOURS.



THE GUY WAS REAL GRATEFUL FOR MY HELP. ACTUALLY I DIDN'T MIND TOO MUCH. IT WAS HARD WORK, BUT IT DIDN'T TAKE UP TOO MUCH TIME.



ANYWAY, ONE DAY, ABOUT A YEAR LATER, IT OCCURS T'ME THAT I GOTTA MOVE MYSELF. I HAD THIS LITTLE APARTMENT FULL OF SO MANY RECORDS THEY WERE CROWDIN' ME OUT.



SO I LOOK FOR A LONG TIME AN' FINALLY FIND THIS NICE BIG PAD T' MOVE INTO. BUT MOVIN' WAS GONNA BE A PROBLEM, BECAUSE I DIDN'T HAVE A CAR.



I CAME UP WITH A GOOD PLAN. I PAID AN EXTRA MONTH'S RENT ON MY OLD PAD (ONLY \$79.50) SO I COULD TAKE MY TIME MOVIN' STUFF FROM IT TO MY NEW ONE. I HAD SEVERAL FRIENDS WITH CARS THAT I'D HELPED MOVE IN THE PAST. I FIGURED I'D ASK EACH OF THEM TO STOP OVER ONCE OR TWICE A WEEK AND TAKE ONE CARLOAD OF STUFF UP. THAT WAY I'D GET A LOT OF WORK DONE AND NOT IMPOSE ON ANYONE THAT MUCH.



BUT THE GUYS WHO I FIGURED WERE MY BEST BUDDIES, WHO OWED ME THE MOST, CRAPPED OUT.

GEE, MAN, I'D LIKE T' HELP YOU, BUT MY BACK'S BEEN KILLIN' ME AN'...

HEY, I'LL DO ALL THE LIFTIN' YOU JUS' GIMME A RIDE.



WELL, SEE, THE SPRINGS ON MY CAR AIN'T TOO HOT AN'...

SHIT, FORGET IT.



A RELATIVE A' MINE DID HELP ME ONCE, BUT IT DIDN'T WORK OUT. HE ALMOST RAN OVER A BOX A' RECORDS WORTH A FEW HUNDRED BUCKS.



THE ONE GUY WHO DID SHOW UP WAS, YOU GUESSED IT, THE CAT I TRADED RECORDS WITH-THE GAMBLER, THE AFTER HOURS JOINT OPERATOR, THE SHADY CHARACTER.



HE SAID HE'D STOP BY A COUPLE TIMES A WEEK AN' HE DID-RIGHT ON TIME. NOT THAT I WAS SUCH A GOOD FRIEND OR ANYTHING, BUT I'D HELPED HIM WHEN HE WAS IN TROUBLE AN' HE WAS RETURNING THE FAVOR. HE KNEW THAT IF Y' OWE SOME-ONE A FAVOR, Y' PAY 'IM BACK, IF ONLY SO HE'LL DO YA ANOTHER FAVOR. HE HAD AN ELEMENTARY SENSE OF SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY THAT SHOULD BE TAKEN FOR GRANTED IN ADULTS, BUT IS ACTUALLY KIND OF RARE.



AN' AFTER THAT TH' GUY ACTUALLY BECAME MORE FRIENDLY.

ME AN' MY BUDDIES GET T'GETHER ON SUNDAY AFTERNOON T' PLAY SOFTBALL AT FOREST HILLS PARK. WHYN'T YA STOP BY IF YA WANNA GET INNA GAME. Y'KNOW, IT'S RELAXED. WE DON'T STRAIN OURSELVES.



THANKS T'HIM AN'
SOME OTHER PEOPLE I
HADN'T COUNTED ON, I
GOT MOVED IN TIME, BUT
THAT AIN'T ALL I WANNA
TELL YA. THERE'S A
LESSON IN THIS.



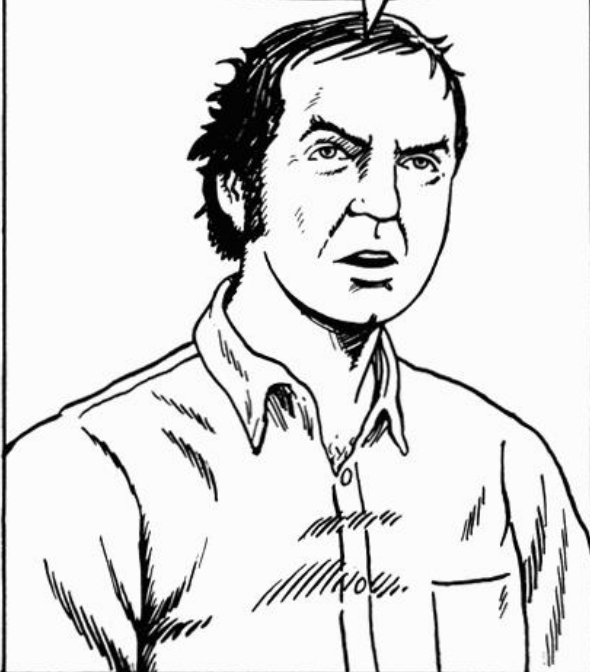
NUTS TO THE SO-
CALLED FRIENDS A'
YERS WHO GRIN IN YER
FACE BUT AIN'T THERE
WHEN YOU NEED 'EM.
PEOPLE LIKE THAT ARE
A DIME A DOZEN.



FRIENDLINESS IS NOT
ONE OF THE FIRST THINGS I
LOOK FOR IN A FRIEND. THE
MOST IMPORTANT THINGS ARE
HONESTY AN' RELIABILITY.
GIMME A SOUR-FACED BUDDY
WHO RETURNS PHONE CALLS,
SHOWS UP WHEN HE'S SUP-
POSED TO, AN' PAYS HIS DEBTS
WHEN THEY'RE DUE.



THIS IS A TOUGH WORLD, FOLKS
WE ALL NEED HELP T' GET BY
SO HELP YER FRIENDS
AN' MAKE SURE THEY HELP YOU
OR KNOW TH' REASON WHY.



UH, AM I
STILL ON?



END

Standing Behind Old Jewish Ladies in Supermarket Lines

STORY BY HARVEY PEKAR

ART BY R. CRUMB

MAN, I REALLY HATE
T'SHOP FOR GROCERIES...
ESPECIALLY WHEN THE
STORE IS CROWDED!



SOMETIMES Y' HAVE T' STAND IN THE
CHECK-OUT LINE FOR SO LONG!



Y' HAVE T' WAIT AN ESPECIALLY LONG TIME
IN MY NEIGHBORHOOD T' GET CHECKED OUT,
BECAUSE SO MANY OLD JEWISH LADIES SHOP
AT THE SUPERMARKET THERE...



MAN, THEY ARE REALLY PENNY-WISE! THEY
WILL ARGUE FOREVER WITH A CASHIER ABOUT
WHETHER SHE RUNG THE PRICES UP RIGHT, OR
ABOUT COUPONS, OR ABOUT THE FOOD STAMP
LAWS. GET BEHIND THEM IN A LINE AN' YER
GONNA WAIT A LO-O-ONG TIME!



I'M A YID MYSELF, AN' THE WOMEN
IN MY FAMILY ARE LIKE THAT... BUT I
NEVER GOT USED TO IT... I MEAN, I'M
KINDA CHEAP MYSELF, BUT I
GOT LIMITS!



ANYWAY, WHEN I TAKE
A DAY OFF WORK, I LIKE T'
GET MY GROCERY SHOPPING
DONE... IT AIN'T AS CROWDED
AT TH' STORE ON WEEKENDS...



SO THAT'S WHAT I WAS DOIN' THE OTHER DAY DAY... I WAS SHOPPIN' ABOUT TWO O'CLOCK IN THE AFTERNOON...



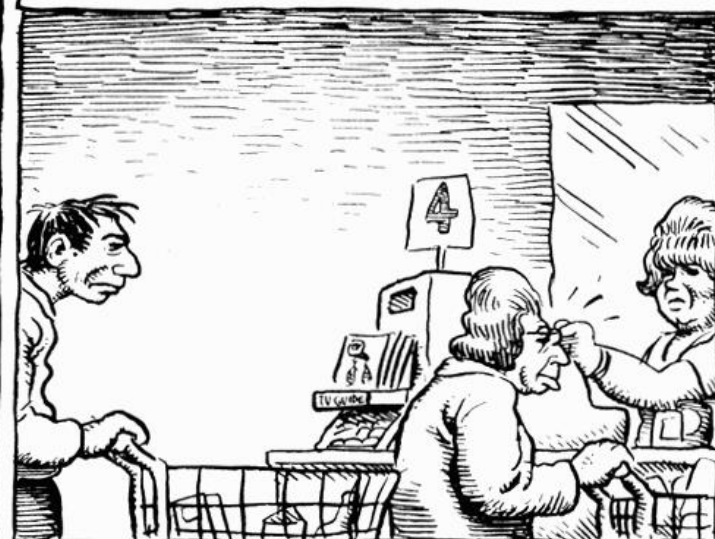
I GOT ALL MY STUFF AN' WENT TO PICK MY CHECK-OUT LINE...



NOW, PICKIN' THE RIGHT CHECK-OUT LINE IS AN ART... THERE'S A LOTTA THINGS YOU GOTTA CONSIDER— THE SPEED AN' EFFICIENCY OF THE CASHIER, THE NUMBER AN' TYPES OF PEOPLE IN LINE, HOW MUCH AN' WHAT KINDA STUFF THEY'RE BUYIN'— IT IS A REAL ART!



SO THAT DAY I HEADED FOR THE SHORTEST LINE... ONLY ONE PERSON IN IT AN' SHE WASN'T BUYIN' MUCH... BUT I WAS TAKIN' A CHANCE BECAUSE SHE WAS AN OLD JEWISH LADY!



PRETTY SOON I COULD SEE I MADE A MISTAKE, SHE STARTED THIS COMPLICATED HASSLE WITH THE CASHIER...

LISTEN, GOILY, DESE GLASSES ARE SIX FOR \$2.00, \$3.50 A DOZEN... YESTERDAY I BOUGHT SIX FOR \$2.00 BECAUSE I COODN'T CARRY TWELF... BUT I WANTED TWELF SO TODAY I'M BUYING SIX MORE... BUT YOU SHOULD ONLY CHARGE ME \$1.50 FOR DEM... IT'S O.K., YOU CAN ESK DE MENEGER...



IT WENT ON AND ON...

I PAID ALREADY TAX ON DEM YESTERDAY!

WELL, YOU'LL HAVE T' SHOW ME YER REGISTER TAPE...



FINALLY I GOT TIRED OF WAITING...



THE CASHIER WAS GOOD... I GOT THROUGH IN NO TIME!



BUT THIS STORY AIN'T OVER... WHEN I GOT HOME I REALIZED THAT I'D FORGOTTEN TO GET A COUPLE A' THINGS I REALLY NEEDED... I HADDA GO BACK...



HEADED FOR ANOTHER LINE THAT HAD SOME GOYISH LOOKING PEOPLE IN IT THAT LOOKED LIKE THEY DIDN'T GIVE A DAMN HOW MUCH MONEY THEY SPENT...



AS I LEFT THE STORE, I LOOKED BACK AT THE OTHER LINE AN' FELT GOOD THAT I'D GOTTEN OUT OF IT... THERE WAS A REGULAR DONNYBROOK GOING ON!



I RAN IN AN' COPPED THE STUFF FAST... THIS TIME THE STORE WAS MORE CROWDED THOUGH. THE EIGHT-ITEMS-OR-LESS "EXPRESS" LINE SEEMED LIKE MY BEST BET, BUT THERE WAS A POSSIBLE SNAG...



THE TROUBLE WITH THIS LINE WAS THAT THE CASHIER FOR IT WAS THE SLOWEST, MOST CARELESS ONE IN THE STORE. WHEN I GOT THERE SHE WAS GABBING WITH ONE OF HER FRIENDS IN LINE...

I WENT TO THAT FASHION SHOW SUNDAY... OH, IT WAS WONDERFUL...

GIRL, AH COULDN'T GO... TELL ME ABOUT IT!



THIS CASHIER DIDN'T PAY ANY ATTENTION TO WHAT SHE WAS DOIN'! I GOTTA ADMIT, THOUGH, THAT THIS HAD WORKED OUT WELL FOR ME IN THE PAST... ONE TIME WHEN MY BILL WAS \$7.50 I GAVE 'ER A TEN-DOLLAR BILL TO COVER IT AN' SHE GAVE ME BACK \$7.50 IN CHANGE. DID I TELL 'ER SHE'D GIVEN ME TOO MUCH? NO SIR! I JUST SPLIT, LAUGHING TO MYSELF!



ANYWAY, I WAS ALSO STANDING IN LINE BEHIND THIS OLD JEWISH LADY... I WAS KINDA NERVOUS ABOUT THAT, BUT SHE SURPRISED ME!

YOU WANT GO AHEAD OF ME? YOU ONLY GOT TWO ITEMS...



I WAS REALLY AMAZED BY HER COURTESY...

NAH, THAT'S O.K... YOU DON'T GOT MORE THAN I DO... BUT THANKS, THAT'S VERY NICE OF YOU...



WOW! THAT'S TH' FIRST TIME A JEWISH LADY WAS NICE TO ME IN A SUPERMARKET! MAYBE SHE'S THE EXCEPTION THAT PROVES THE RULE... SHE'S TALLER THAN MOST OLD JEWISH WOMEN... MAYBE SHE'S A MUTANT!



BUT THEN, AFTER HER BILL HAD BEEN RUNG UP, SHE WENT OVER TO THE SIDE TO STUDY HER CASH REGISTER TAPE... I FIGURED SHE'D CLAIM SHE WAS OVER-CHARGED OR SHORT-CHANGED OR SOMETHING...



AGAIN I WAS SURPRISED... SHE TOLD THE CASHIER SHE'D GOTTEN TOO MUCH CHANGE!

OH MISS... YOU GAVE ME A QUARTER TOO MUCH...



SURPRISINGLY, THE CASHIER WAS SO EMBARRASSED THAT SHE WOULDN'T TAKE BACK THE MONEY AT FIRST... SHE REFUSED TO ADMIT SHE'D MADE A MISTAKE...

YOU MUSTA HAD THAT QUARTER IN YOUR HAND BEFORE I GAVE YOU THE CHANGE, MADAM... I KNOW I ONLY GAVE YOU TWO DIMES...



FINALLY SHE TOOK THE MONEY, TRYING TO ACT LIKE THE OLD JEWISH LADY WAS NUTS!

O.K., IT'S YOUR MONEY... IF YOU WANT TO GIVE IT AWAY THAT'S YOUR BUSINESS...



KNOWING THAT I WAS WATCHING, SHE SNEERED AT THE OLD WOMAN AS SHE WALKED OUT OF THE STORE, AND THEN GRINNED AT ME AS IF TO SAY, "WE BOTH KNOW THAT OLD LADY IS NUTS!" BUT WHAT THAT CASHIER DIDN'T KNOW WAS THAT I KNEW SHE WAS A FUCK-UP!



ANYWAY, THAT WAS ONE OF THE MOST INTERESTING INCIDENTS THAT'S EVER HAPPENED TO ME IN A SUPER-MARKET... MAYBE THE MOST INTERESTING, AS A MATTER OF FACT...

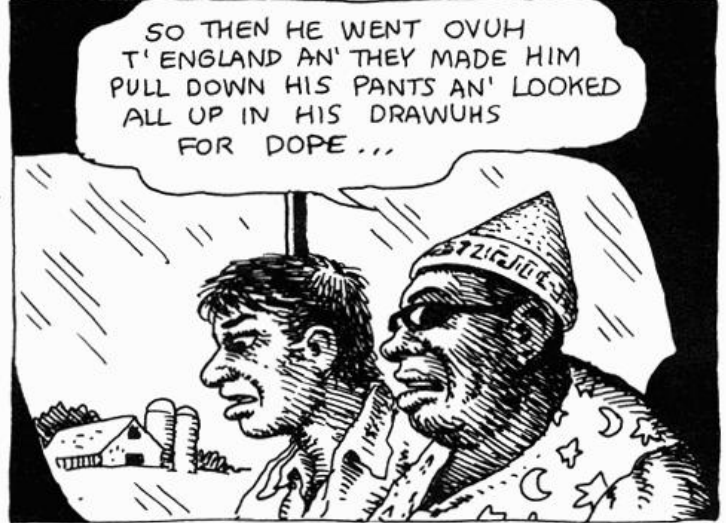
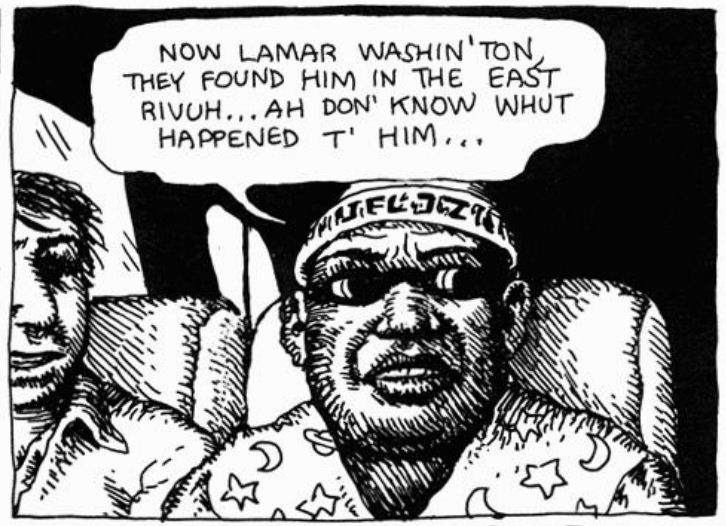


END

Ridin' the Dog

STORY BY
HARVEY PEKAR
ART BY
R. CRUMB





AN ARGUMENT AT WORK

STORY BY HARVEY PEKAR
ILLUSTRATED BY GERRY SHAMRAY

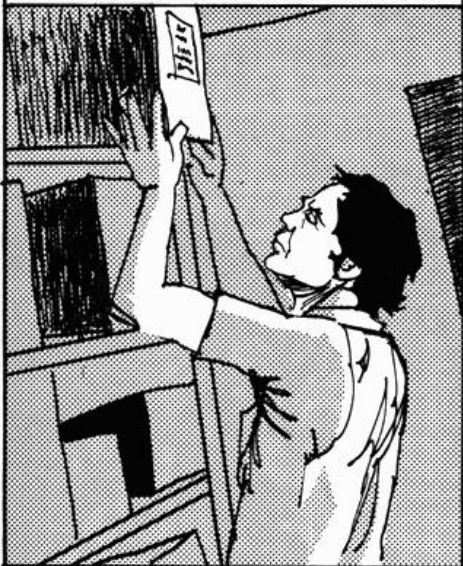
MEET HERSCHEL. A MAN WHO KNOWS
WHAT HE WANTS (HE HOPES).



HERSCHEL HAS PAID SOME DUES. HE'S
GOT A HORRIBLE MARRIAGE BEHIND HIM.



HE'S HAD SOME SHIT
FLUNKY JOBS...



...AND HE'S LIVED IN SOME
SHIT NEIGHBORHOODS.



BUT NOW, IN HIS MIDDLE
THIRTIES, HERSCHEL FINAL-
LY THINKS HE KNOWS
WHAT HE WANTS AND HAS
STARTED TO GO ABOUT
GETTING IT. DIG HOW
HE'S PUTTING IT TOGETHER.



FIRST OF ALL, HE LIVES IN A NEIGHBORHOOD THAT HE REALLY DIGS. THERE'S A NICE MIXTURE OF YOUNG AND OLD PEOPLE IN IT WITH VARIED BACKGROUNDS AND OCCUPATIONS. IT WAS AN OLD JEWISH NEIGHBORHOOD, BUT A HEAVY HIPPIY SCENE DEVELOPED THERE IN THE SIXTIES, WHEN ITS POPULATION DIVERSIFIED.



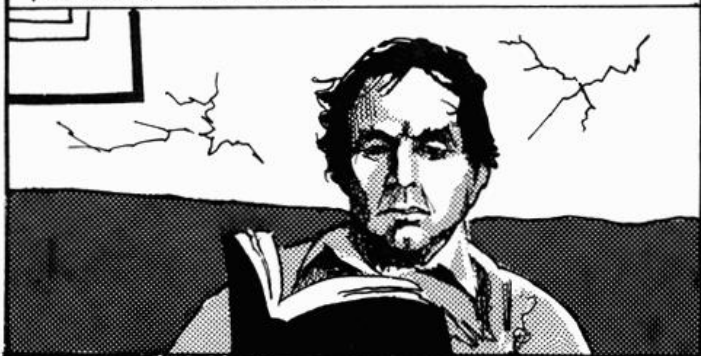
IT'S A REALLY MELLOW SCENE. IT'S A REAL NEIGHBORHOOD. PEOPLE KNOW EACH OTHER, THEY TALK TO EACH OTHER. AFTER LIVING THERE AWHILE, HERSCHEL HAS GOT- TEN TO BE A NEIGH- BORHOOD PERSON- ALITY. HE DIGS IT, DIGS BEING A PART OF THINGS.



NOT ONLY THAT, BUT HE'S LUCKED ON TO A GREAT SIX ROOM PAD AND ONLY PAYS \$125 A MONTH FOR IT. IT'S AIRY AND WELL LAID- OUT. AFTER SOME OF THE RAT HOLES HE'S LIVED IN, HE REALLY APPRE- CIATES IT.



HERSCHEL HAS AN ODD LIFE STYLE. A BUDDY ONCE CALLED HIM A WORKING CLASS INTELLECTUAL. HE'S A SCHOLARLY CAT, BUT THE WAY THINGS WORKED OUT FOR HIM, HE WASN'T ABLE TO GET MUCH FORMAL EDUCATION. HE READS A LOT AND IS A PUBLISHED AUTHOR BUT HAS HAD TO SUPPORT HIMSELF BY WORKING MENIAL GIGS. LONG AGO HE RESIGNED HIMSELF TO THAT



NOW HE'S GOT A FILE CLERK JOB WITH THE GOVERNMENT. IT'S A FLUNKY GIG, BUT BY HIS STANDARDS IT'S GREAT; IT'S CLEAN AND PAYS ENOUGH TO LIVE ON. ABOVE ALL, IT'S SECURE-A CIVIL SERVICE GIG. IN HIS LATE TEENS AND EARLY TWENTIES HERSCHEL HAD BEEN UNEM- PLOYED A FEW TIMES FOR MONTHS AT A TIME AND THE DESPERATION AND FEELING OF USE- LESSNESS THAT HE'D SUFFERED WHEN HE COULDN'T GET A JOB WERE NEARLY TRAUMATIC.



ANOTHER GOOD THING ABOUT HERSCHEL'S JOB IS THAT IT'S SIMPLE AND EASY FOR HIM TO DO. WHEN HE LEAVES WORK HE CAN PUT IT OUT OF HIS MIND



THIS FREES HIM TO THINK ABOUT WHAT'S REALLY IMPOR- TANT TO HIM-HIS WRITING. HE'S BEEN GETTING ARTICLES PRINTED IN NATIONALLY AND INTERNATIONALLY DISTRIBUTED PUBLICATIONS SINCE HE WAS NINETEEN. HE DOESN'T CARE ABOUT MONEY, BUT HE DOES WANT HIS WORK TO BRING HIM PRAISE AND RECOGNITION.



HIS ARTICLES ARE AIMED AT SPECIALIZED AUDIENCES AND ARE USUALLY PRINTED BY PUBLICATIONS THAT PAY LITTLE OR NOTHING. STILL HE TAKES GREAT PRIDE AND SATISFACTION IN HIS WORK. AT FIRST HE WROTE ONLY JAZZ CRITICISM. HIS ARTICLES AND RECORD REVIEWS APPEARED IN LEADING JAZZ PUBLICATIONS IN THE USA, ENGLAND AND CANADA.



LATER, HOWEVER, HE BECAME INTERESTED IN POLITICS, HISTORY, ECONOMICS AND CERTAIN POPULAR ART FORMS AND READ VOLUMINOUSLY ABOUT THEM.



THEN HE STARTED WRITING ABOUT THEM. IT WAS RELATIVELY EASY TO GET HIS ARTICLES ON POPULAR CULTURE PUBLISHED.

AAH GREAT. MY ARTICLE ON BOB AND RAY IS IN THIS ISSUE. THEY'RE REALLY UNDER-RATED, BUT MY ARTICLE SHOWS WHAT A GREAT INFLUENCE ON COMEDY THEY'VE HAD. WOW, I'M SO GLAD I WROTE THIS!



HERSCHEL FINDS IT MUCH MORE DIFFICULT TO GET HIS POLITICAL AND HISTORICAL ARTICLES ACCEPTED. HOWEVER, SINCE HE HAS NO REPUTATION AS A WRITER IN THOSE FIELDS, HE MUST BUCK AN ESTABLISHMENT OF COLLEGE PROFESSORS AND "NAME" JOURNALISTS, WHO EDITORS FAVOR BECAUSE OF THEIR REPUTATIONS.

MOTHER FUCKERS. THIS IS BETTER THAN ANYTHING THEY'VE PRINTED IN SIX MONTHS. BUT THEY TURN IT DOWN BECAUSE THEY NEVER HEARD OF ME. ASSHOLES, I WONDER IF THEY EVEN READ IT!



BUT HE MAKES PROGRESS. HE GETS SOME ARTICLES ON AFRICAN HISTORY ACCEPTED BY A MAGAZINE AIMED AT BLACK READERS. HE'S STILL BITTER ABOUT THINGS IN GENERAL THOUGH.

IT WAS EASIER TO GET THIS STUFF PUBLISHED BECAUSE SO FEW PEOPLE KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT AFRICA IN THIS COUNTRY. DUMBASS COLLEGE HISTORY PROFESSORS HERE MOSTLY LEARN ABOUT TH' WESTERN HEMISPHERE AND EUROPE. THEY DON'T KNOW SHIT OUTSIDE A' THAT.



SOME OF HIS BUDDIES ON THE STREET KNOW ABOUT IT.

HEY HERSCHEL, I DUG YOUR ARTICLE, IT WAS REALLY GOOD!

HEY HERSCHEL THE SUPERSTAR. AWRITE, MAN.



THEN HE MAKES WHAT HE HOPES WILL BE A BIG BREAKTHROUGH. A LARGE LOCAL NEWSPAPER PRINTS AN AMBITIOUS TWO-PART ARTICLE BY HIM IN THEIR SUNDAY MAGAZINE ABOUT WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO THE STUDENT LEFT SINCE 1970. HE EVEN GETS PAID GOOD MONEY FOR IT.



SOME PEOPLE INVOLVED IN THE LEFT WING POLITICAL ORGANIZATIONS HE WROTE ABOUT CONGRATULATE HIM.

HEY THANKS. THAT WAS A FINE ARTICLE.



YEAH, IT REALLY REFLECTS OUR VIEWPOINT ACCURATELY. MOST OF THE STUFF THAT'S BEEN WRITTEN ABOUT US IN THE MASS MEDIA HAS REALLY BEEN DISTORTED.

HERSCHEL IS DIGGING ON THE COMPLIMENTS. HE'S FEELING BETTER ABOUT HIS FUTURE.

IF I CAN GET A FEW MORE ARTICLES LIKE THIS PUBLISHED IT'LL HAVE A SNOWBALL EFFECT. THE MORE Y' WRITE, THE BIGGER YOUR REPUTATION BECOMES, THE

EASIER IT IS TO GET PUBLISHED. EDITORS ARE MORONS; THEY DON'T CARE WHAT Y' WRITE, ALL THEY CARE ABOUT IS IF Y' GOT A REPUTATION.



HERSCHEL GENUINELY ENJOYS WRITING, FINDS GREAT SATISFACTION IN IT AND BELIEVES HIS WORK IS IMPORTANT. BUT HE ALSO SEES IT AS A MEANS TO AN END. HE WANTS PEOPLE TO PRAISE HIM, TO LIKE HIM, TO RESPECT HIM FOR IT.



BUT HE'S GOT A REAL PROBLEM IN THIS AREA. MOST PEOPLE THAT KNOW HIM DO LIKE HIM AND FIND HIM INTERESTING AND ENTERTAINING. BUT HIS LIFESTYLE IS SO DIFFERENT FROM THEIRS THAT HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH THEM IS SUPERFICIAL.



HE DOESN'T FIT INTO ANY CATEGORY. HE REGARDS MOST OF THE PEOPLE HE WORKS WITH AS IGNORANT AND SQUARE AND THEY THINK HE'S NUTS BECAUSE HE DOESN'T OWN A CAR AND DOESN'T WANT TO BUY ONE. HE'S



UNEASY AROUND ACADEMICS, FEELING THAT THEY THINK HE'S CRUDE. HE DOESN'T EVEN FALL INTO THE HIPPIE OR JUNKY OR WINO CATEGORIES.

HE'S HAD AN ESPECIALLY DIFFICULT TIME FORMING A LASTING RELATIONSHIP WITH A WOMAN SINCE THE BREAKUP OF HIS MARRIAGE SEVERAL YEARS AGO. SOMETIMES HE THINKS IF HE COULD FIND THE RIGHT ONE THEY COULD GROOVE ON EACH OTHER AND FORGET ABOUT THE REST OF THE WORLD.



HE DIGS INTELLIGENT WOMEN THAT HE CAN RAP TO ABOUT STUFF LIKE POLITICS AND MUSIC, BUT THEY DON'T WANT TO GO OUT WITH HIM BECAUSE THEY THINK HE'S TOO ECCENTRIC AND LOW CLASS. THEY PREFER DOCTORS AND COLLEGE PROFESSORS.



HI UH, THIS'S HERSCHEL. SAY I WAS WONDERIN' IF YOU'RE NOT DOIN' ANYTHING IF YOU'D LIKE TO GO TO A MOVIE WITH ME NEXT FRIDAY.

THANKS, BUT I'M BUSY. MAYBE SOME OTHER TIME.

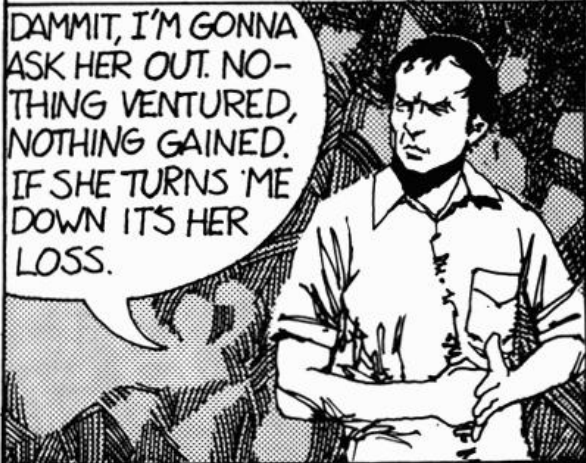
THERE'S A GOOD LOOKING LIBRARIAN AT WORK THAT HE'S HAD HIS EYE ON, THOUGH. SHE'S FAIRLY BRIGHT AND HERSCHEL ENJOYS HER COMPANY. HE'S EATEN LUNCH WITH HER IN THE CAFETERIA SEVERAL TIMES AND SEEMED TO HIT IT OFF WELL. BUT HE'S BEEN AFRAID TO ASK HER OUT BECAUSE HE FIGURED THERE WAS A GOOD CHANCE SHE'D REJECT HIM.



BUT NOW HIS SPIRITS ARE SOARING BECAUSE HE'S FINALLY GOTTEN A POLITICAL ARTICLE PUBLISHED. IT'S EMBOLDENED HIM.

THE NEXT DAY HE GOES TO HER OFFICE THE FIRST THING IN THE MORNING AND HITS ON HER.

DAMMIT, I'M GONNA ASK HER OUT. NOTHING VENTURED, NOTHING GAINED. IF SHE TURNS ME DOWN IT'S HER LOSS.



SAY, HOW'D YOU LIKE T'GO OUT WITH ME SOMETIME?



RIGHT AWAY HE KNOWS SHE WANTS HIM TO KEEP HIS DISTANCE.

BUT HE PERSISTS, GRIMLY PLAYING OUT HIS HAND.

UH, THIS WEEKEND? I'M DOING SOMETHING THIS WEEK-END.

WELL, NOT NECESSARILY THIS WEEKEND. JUST SOMETIME WHEN YOU'RE FREE.



WE'LL SEE.

"WE'LL SEE," WHADDYA MEAN, "WE'LL SEE?"



HE WALKS AWAY FROM HER, KNOWING HE'S BEEN BRUSHED OFF.

OOOH, WHY'D I DO THAT? I KNEW SHE WOULDN'T GO OUT WITH ME.



GRADUALLY, THOUGH, HIS FEELINGS OF HURT ARE DRIVEN AWAY BY RAGE.

LOUSY CUNT. I'M TEN TIMES AS SMART AND KNOWLEDGABLE AS HER OR ANY GUY SHE EVER WENT OUT WITH. SHE GOT A NERVE BRUSHIN' ME OFF.



SHE DIDN'T EVEN HAVE THE GUTS TO GIVE ME A FLAT-OUT NO. "WE'LL SEE," WHAT KINDA CHICKEN SHIT ANSWER IZZAT?



HE'S PREOCCUPIED AT WORK THAT DAY, PERFORMING HIS DUTIES IN A HAZE OF ANGER AND FRUSTRATION.

GODDAM WOMEN. IF THEY THINK A GUY'S BE-NEATH THEM SOCIALLY OR AIN'T RESPECTABLE, THEY DON'T CARE HOW MUCH HE'S GOT ON THE BALL OR HOW NICE HE IS. MOST WOMEN SUCK RESPECTABILITY FROM A MAN LIKE A VAMPIRE SUCKS BLOOD.



FORTUNATELY HE'S PRETTY MUCH HIS OWN BOSS AT WORK SO HE'S LEFT ALONE TO WORK HIS FEELINGS OUT. HE KNOWS HIS JOB, AND HIS SUPERVISORS REALIZE THIS AND PRETTY MUCH LET HIM DO IT HIS OWN WAY. HE'S REALLY TREATED LIKE A PRIVILEGED CHARACTER.



BUT IT'S A BUSY DAY AND HE HAS TO WORK AT A FRANTIC PACE TO KEEP UP WITH WHAT'S HAPPENING. WHEN SOMETHING GOES WRONG IT REALLY BUGS HIM.

WHERE'S MR. SANTORELLI'S FILE? HE WAS IN HERE YESTERDAY AN' I GOTTA GET IT FOR THE CODING SECTION.



I SENT IT BACK ALREADY.



YEAH, YOU'VE TOLD ME YOU'VE SENT BACK OTHER FILES BEFORE AN' I'VE FOUND 'EM LAYIN' RIGHT ON YOUR DESK!



LIKE HELL YOU DO! YOU CAN'T REMEMBER WHAT YOU'RE DOIN' FROM ONE MINUTE TO THE NEXT. YOU SCREW UP MORE THAN ALL THE REST OF THE PEOPLE IN YOUR DEPARTMENT COMBINED.



HERSCHEL KEEPS YELLING AND WORKS HIMSELF INTO A FRENZY. HE REALLY GETS LOUD AND ABUSIVE
AAH, WHY DON'T YOU GO SHIT IN YER HAT!



WHILE HE'S RAGING, ONE OF THE OTHER EMPLOYEES REPORTS HIS BEHAVIOR TO HIS SUPERVISOR. HE NOTICES THIS.

JUST LISTEN TO HIM. YOU CAN PROBABLY HEAR HIM SCREAMING OVER THE PHONE.



HE'S BEEN REPRIMANDED BEFORE ABOUT LOSING HIS TEMPER, AND AS HE WALKS AWAY FROM THE SCENE OF THE HASSLE, HE DOESN'T WANT TO HEAR ANY LECTURES.

I DON'T WANNA HEAR NO SHIT FROM NO GOD-DAM PUNK SUPERVISOR.



HE'S FEELING COCKY BECAUSE OF HIS RECENT WRITING SUCCESS AND ANGRY BECAUSE THE LIBRARIAN TURNED HIM DOWN. HE'S IN NO MOOD TO BE CONTRITE AND RESOLVES THAT THE BEST DEFENSE IS A GOOD OFFENSE.

IF HE HANDS ME ANY CRAP I'LL SHOOT IT RIGHT BACK AT 'IM TWICE AS HARD.



SURE ENOUGH, HIS SUPERVISOR CALLS HIM IN.

HEY, HERSCHEL, C'MON IN FOR A MINUTE, WILLYA? I WANT TO TALK TO YOU.



AWRITE, BUT, IF ITS ABOUT THAT ARGUMENT I HAD WITH THAT BITCH, SHE STARTED IT.

LOOK, YOU'RE A GOOD WORKER. YOU'RE RELIABLE. I APPRECIATE THAT. BUT WHY DO YOU LOSE YOUR HEAD ABOUT STUFF? SO SHE STARTED IT. IF SHE DID, REPORT HER TO ME AND I'LL TAKE CARE OF HER. DON'T GO SCREAMING AT HER LIKE A MANIAC. THEN YOU DON'T HAVE A LEG TO STAND ON.



MAN, WHAT ARE YOU BACKIN' HER UP FOR? WHENEVER SOMEONE COMPLAINS ABOUT ME LOSING MY TEMPER YOU ALWAYS BELIEVE THEM WHY'NT YOU LISTEN TO MY SIDE OF THE STORY ONCE INNA WHILE. WHOSE SIDE ARE YOU ON?



HEY, NOW WAIT A MINUTE. I'VE CONSISTENTLY PRAISED YOU TO OTHER PEOPLE. I'VE GIVEN YOU EXCELLENT PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS. AND ON TOP OF THAT I LET YOU GET AWAY WITH A LOT OF THINGS. I DON'T SAY ANYTHING WHEN YOU SNEAK OUTTA HERE A COUPLE OF MINUTES BEFORE QUITTING TIME. I LET YOU GOOF OFF AND BULLSHIT WITH THE SECRETARIES WHEN YOU GET YOUR WORK DONE EARLY. YOU'RE NOT FOOLING ME. I KNOW YOU'RE DOING IT...



...BUT YOU CAN'T HAVE EVERYTHING YOUR OWN WAY. YOU CAN'T RUN AROUND HERE LIKE A WILD MAN. IF THE DIRECTOR EVER SAW YOU DO THAT YOU COULD BE IN A LOT OF TROUBLE. YOUR JOB COULD BE IN JEOPARDY. HE WOULDN'T CARE HOW GOOD A WORKER YOU WERE.



THEY CONTINUE TALKING HEATEDLY FOR AWHILE.
OH YEAH, WELL... ETC ETC.



HERSCHEL LEAVES THE OFFICE IN A RATHER DEFIANT MOOD.

WELL MAN, I'LL TRY TA CONTROL MYSELF BUT IF SOME DUMB BITCH STARTS SOMETHIN' WITH ME I CAN'T PROMISE YA HOW I'LL REACT.



HE WORKS THE REST OF THE DAY FEELING SULLEN. I'M GETTIN' ARTICLES PUBLISHED ALL OVER THE PLACE ABOUT MUSIC, ABOUT POP CULTURE, ABOUT HISTORY, ABOUT POLITICS, AND I GOTTA PUT UP WITH THESE JERKS.



ON THE WAY HOME FROM WORK, THOUGH, HE CALMS DOWN AND THINKS OVER WHAT'S HAPPENED.

I REALLY COULDA GOTTEN INTO A LOT OF TROUBLE IF THE DIRECTOR'D HEARD ME. IF I BLOW UP AN' LOSE MY TEMPER A FEW MORE TIMES I ACTUALLY MIGHT GET FIRED.



WOW, WHAT WOULD HAPPEN TO ME THEN? I GOT NO SALEABLE SKILLS. I'D HAVE TO GO BACK TO BEING A SHIPPING CLERK IN ONE OF THOSE WHOLESALE WAREHOUSES. I WONDER IF THEY STILL PAY \$1.25 AN' HOUR LIKE THEY DID WHEN I WORKED THERE. THOSE GUYS NEVER HEARDA MINIMUM WAGES.



MAN, I DUNNO IF I
COULD STAND THAT ANYMORE.



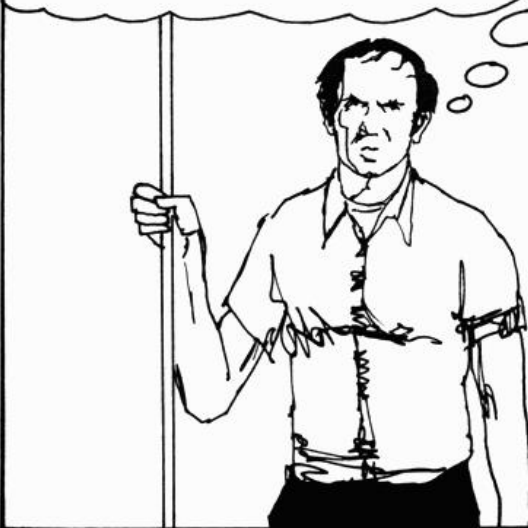
WHAT THE HELL'S WRONG WITH ME? I
WAS GONNA THROW EVERYTHING A-
WAY BECAUSE SOME DUMB BITCH AT
WORK GIVES ME A HARD TIME ABOUT
SOME INSIGNIFICANT ISSUE.



I GOT A GOOD DEAL THERE ALREADY.
I CAN'T EXPECT THOSE PEOPLE TO BE
TREATIN' ME EVEN BETTER BECAUSE
I'M A WRITER. THAT DOESN'T MEAN ANY-
THING T' THEM; THEY DON'T READ.



MAN, MY EGO RAN AWAY WITH ME. I
GOTTA CONTROL MYSELF BEFORE I
WRECK EVERYTHING. WOW!



working man's nightmare

STORY BY HARVEY PEKAR
ILLUSTRATED BY GERRY SHAMRAY



WAIT A MINUTE; WHAT DO I DO FOR A LIVING?

I'M DRESSED O.K...I FELT HAPPY JUST A SECOND AGO, WHAT'S MY JOB?



HE DOESN'T KNOW IF HE'S WORKING OR NOT. BEFORE, WHEN HE WAS TALKING TO THE PEOPLE BACK THERE, HE FELT TERRIFIC, LIKE EVERYTHING WAS GOING RIGHT

THEN HE REALIZES...

THIS IS A DREAM. I KNOW I'VE GOT A JOB, BUT WHAT IS IT? I CAN'T REMEMBER. I'VE GOT TO WAKE UP; I'M SCARED.



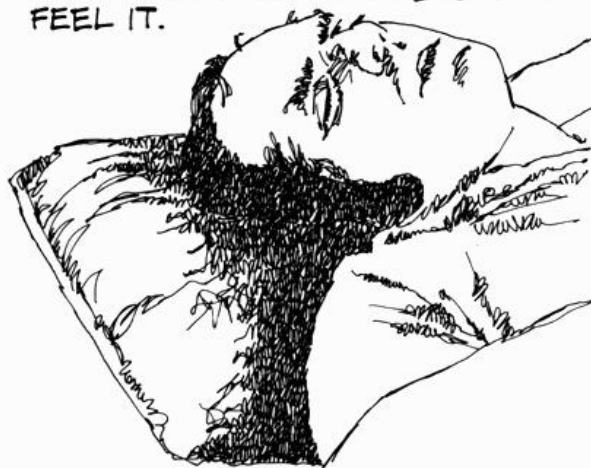
BUT HE CAN'T
MAKE A SOUND.

I'LL TRY TO SCREAM.
THAT'D WAKE ME UP.



MAYBE
I
CAN THROW
MYSELF
OUTTA A
BED

NO GOOD, I CAN'T MOVE. I HAVE NO
POWER OVER MY BODY. I CAN'T
FEEL IT.



POP

UHHN



FREDDY VISITS for the WEEK END

STORY BY HARVEY PEKAR
ART BY R. CRUMB

©1980 BY HARVEY PEKAR



R-RING!

SHIT, I'LL GET IT,



H'LO

HELLO, HAWVIE, THIS'S FREDDY! I JUST GOT IN FROM BROOKLYN!



OH YEH? WHERE ARE YOU AT NOW?

I'M STAYIN' AT THIS GUY SHELDON'S PLACE. HE'S AN EX-RABBINICAL STUDENT THAT USTA GO OUT WITH MY SISTA.



AFTER A FEW MINUTES OF CONVERSATION—

...SO, UH, LOOK, I'LL DROP BY T'MORRA T' SEE YA, HUH?

AROUND SUPPER TIME, I BET!

YEH, WELL, THAT'S A GOOD TIME.



WHO WAS THAT, HONEY?

THAT WAS FREDDY. HE JUS' GOT IN FROM BROOKLYN.

THAT'S NICE, YOU HAVEN'T SEEN HIM IN AWHILE.



YEAH, HE'S ONE A' MY BEST FRIENDS, BUT HE AINT THAT EASY T'PUT UP WITH.



FR ONE THING HE'S KIND OF A CHISELER. LIKE NOW HE'S GOT A DECENT PAYIN' JOB AN' HE'S LIVIN' WITH HIS GIRLFRIEND AN' SHARIN' EXPENSES WITH HER BUT I BET HE TRIES T'MOOCH EVERYTHING HE POSSIBLY CAN!



PLUS TH' GUY AIN'T GOT NO SENSE OF RESTRAINT. HE'LL CRASH OVER YOUR PLACE AN' WHILE HE'S THERE HE'LL BREAK TH' SINK AN' RAID THE ICE BOX CONSTANTLY AN' MAKE SO MUCH NOISE TH' NEIGHBORS'LL GET MAD!



I'M GLAD HE'S STAYIN' WITH SOMEONE ELSE BE-CAUSE THERE'S NO WAY I'D LET 'IM STAY HERE. I'D FEEL GUILTY ABOUT IT, BUT I WOULDN'T LET 'IM STAY.



THE NEXT DAY ABOUT 5:45 P.M.

I KNEW IT! THERE'S FREDDY JUS' B'FORE SUPPER!

BUZZZ!



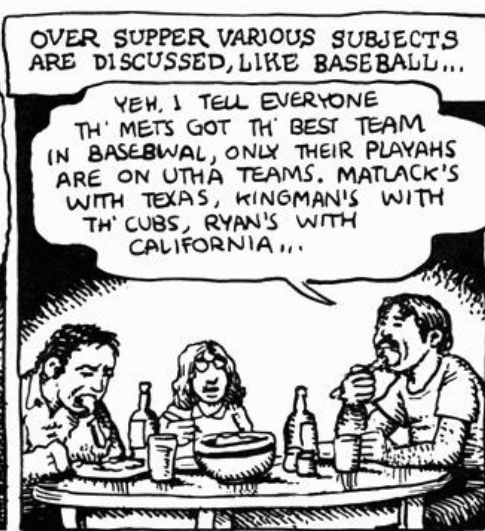
HAWVIE! HOW YA DOIN'!?

HIYA FREDDY! KEEP IT DOWN, WILLYA? THIS HALLWAY ECHOES!



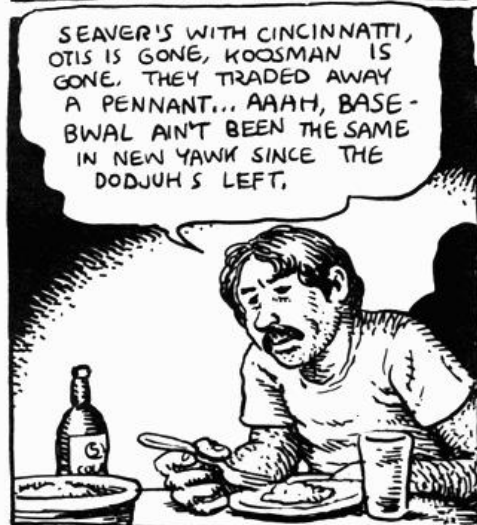
I SEE Y'R JUS' IN TIME FOR SUPPER. YOU AIN'T CHANGED.

HEH HEH, WELL, WHAT CAN I SAY? I'M A STRUGGLING GUY. C'MON, HAWVIE, SHOW SOME HOSPITALITY! I COME ALL THE WAY FROM NEW YAWK T' SEE YA!



OVER SUPPER VARIOUS SUBJECTS ARE DISCUSSED, LIKE BASEBALL...

YEH, I TELL EVERYONE TH' METS GOT TH' BEST TEAM IN BASEBALL, ONLY THEIR PLAYAHS ARE ON UTAH TEAMS. MATLACK'S WITH TEXAS, KINGMAN'S WITH TH' CUBS, RYAN'S WITH CALIFORNIA...

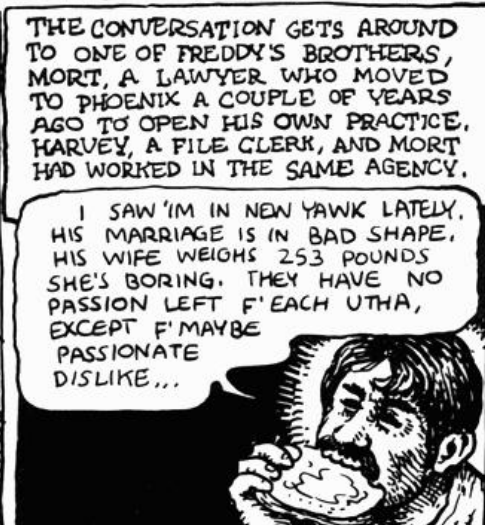


SEAVER'S WITH CINCINNATI, OTIS IS GONE, KOOSMAN IS GONE. THEY TRADED AWAY A PENNANT... AAAH, BASEBALL AIN'T BEEN THE SAME IN NEW YAWK SINCE THE DODJUH'S LEFT.



...AND HIS FAMILY...

THIS GUY SHELDON DIDN'T GET ANYWHERE WITH MY SISTA WHEN HE SAW HER. HE SEEMS BITTA ABOUT IT..



THE CONVERSATION GETS AROUND TO ONE OF FREDDY'S BROTHERS, MORT, A LAWYER WHO MOVED TO PHOENIX A COUPLE OF YEARS AGO TO OPEN HIS OWN PRACTICE. HARVEY, A FILE CLERK, AND MORT HAD WORKED IN THE SAME AGENCY.

I SAW 'IM IN NEW YAWK LATELY. HIS MARRIAGE IS IN BAD SHAPE. HIS WIFE WEIGHS 253 POUNDS SHE'S BORING. THEY HAVE NO PASSION LEFT F' EACH UTHA, EXCEPT F' MAYBE PASSIONATE DISLIKE...



HE TOLE ME HE'D HAD AN AFFAIR WITH A SOCIAL WORKER BACK HERE B'FAW HE LEFT. SHE STILL WORKS IN YOHAW OFFICE AS A MATTER OF FACT. SHE GOES OUT WEST T' SEE HIM EVERY ONCE IN A WHILE. HE SAYS THEY LOVE EACH UTHA...



HE'S GOING CRAZY BECAUSE HE DOESN'T KNOW WHAT T'DO. HE'D LIKE T' LEAVE HIS WIFE BUT HE'S GOT TWO KIDS. HE'S SEEIN' A SHRINK THREE TIMES A WEEK!



DOES HIS WIFE KNOW ABOUT THIS? SHE'LL TAKE HIM FOR EVERY PENNY IF SHE DIVORCES HIM, I KNOW THE TYPE.

YEAH, SHE WOULD... SHE KNOWS ABOUT IT TOO, BUT SHE'D STILL RATHER STAY MARRIED... AFTA ALL, HE'S A LAWYER, AND HE MAKES BIG MONEY NOW. THAT'S A BIG DEAL TO HER. SHE EXPECTS MARRIAGE TO BE LOUSY.



DID HE TELL YOU ANYTHING ABOUT THIS SOCIAL WORKER? DID HE DESCRIBE 'ER?

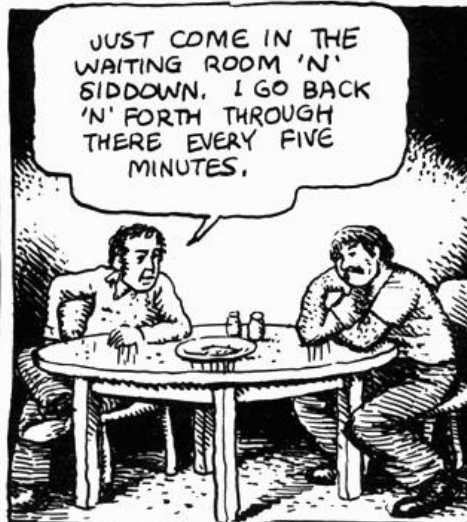
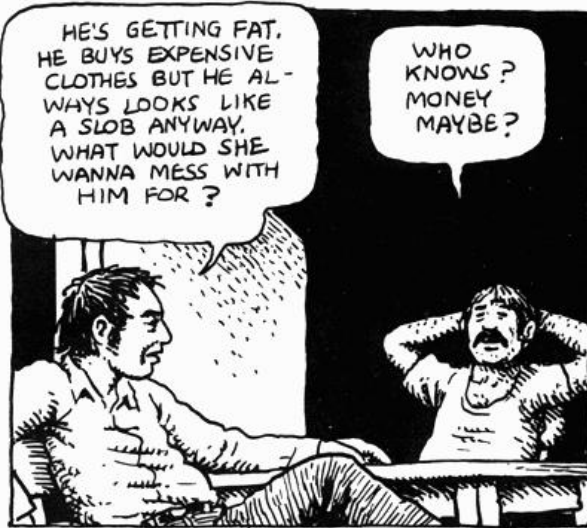
YEAH, HER NAME IS SHARON, SHE'S -

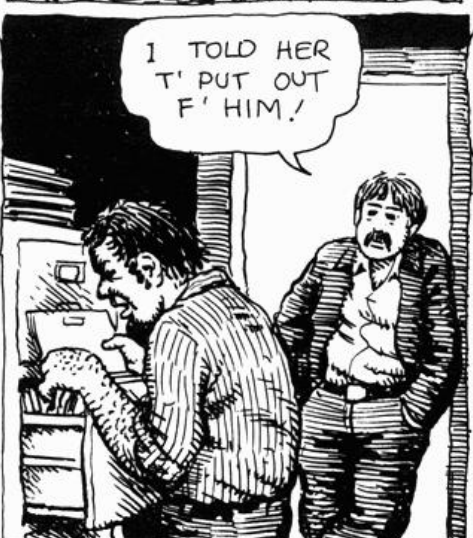
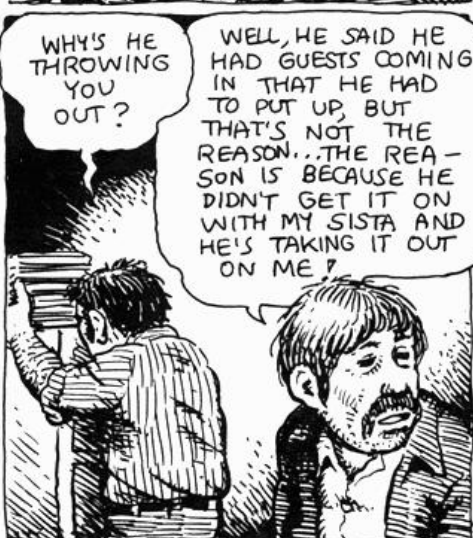


WAIT A MINIT! SHARON! I KNOW A SOCIAL WORKER NAMED SHARON THAT FITS THAT DESCRIPTION PERFECTLY. BUT WHAT WOULD SHE SEE IN YER BROTHER??



SHE'S ACTIVE, SHE'S INTO BACK-PACKING AN' STUFF LIKE THAT. SHE'S INTO ECOLOGY. SHE'S ACTUALLY INTERESTED IN THINGS. YER BROTHER'S SLUGGISH. ALL HE CARES ABOUT IS MAKIN' MONEY. HIS IDEA OF A STRENUOUS TIME IS TO WATCH A FOOTBALL GAME ON T.V.







FORTY-FIVE MINUTES' LATER

O.K.,
LET'S GO
SHOPPIN'!

WAIT A MINIT,
WAIT A MINIT! I
CAN'T JUST GIVE
YOU MONEY... WHAT
DID YOU EVA DO
F' ME?

Y' SEE THAT?
HE'S COPPIN' OUT!
I KNEW HE COULDN'T
GET OFF THAT
BREAD!

LOOK, LET'S DISCUSS
THIS... LET'S NEGOTIATE...
LOOK, I GOTTA ASK YA
SOMETHING... I NEED
HELP FINDING A PLACE
T' STAY...

Y' SEE? I KNEW HE
HAD AN ULTERIOR
MOTIVE FOR ASKIN'
ME T' MEET HIM!
WHAT'S A MATTER WITH
ALLA THOSE PEOPLE
YOU CHECKED WITH
YESTERDAY?

THEY ALL
REJECTED ME...
THEY ALL GAVE ME
PHONY EXCUSES...

SO WHERE'D
YA STAY?

AH, I BROKE IN ON
SHELDON AGAIN... I TOLD
HIM THAT I MISSED MY
BUS... I INSISTED THAT
HE HADDA PUT ME UP ONE
MORE NIGHT... THERE WEREN'T
ANY GUESTS THERE... HE
LET ME STAY BUT THIS
MORNING HE LEFT A
NOTE SAYIN' I DEFINITELY
HADDA GET OUT.

YOU KNOW WHAT? ALL
THE TIME I WAS THERE
TH' R' FRIGERATA WAS EMPTY,
BUT AFTA I WENT BACK WHEN
HE THOUGHT I WAS GONE HE
FILLED IT UP AGAIN... AFTER
HE SPLIT THIS MORNING I
SCARFED DOWN A LOTTA
HIS FOOD... THAT'LL TEACH
'IM TO LIE TO ME!

HARVEY,
HOW ARE
YOU?

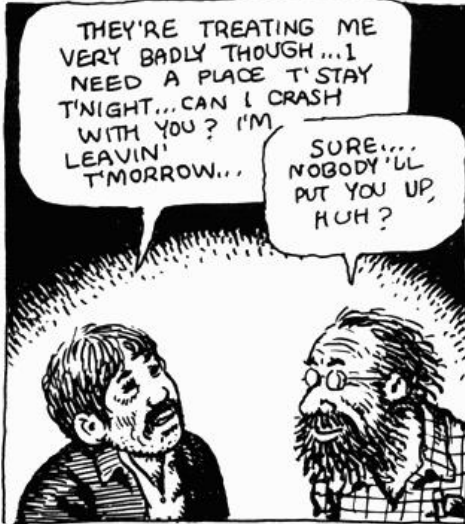
OH,
PRETTY
GOOD...

HOW'RE YOUR
COMIC BOOKS
SELLING?

NOT SO HOT...
I'M HOPIN' THIS
NEXT ONE'LL
DO O.K.,
THOUGH...

LOOK,
HARVEY,
YOU NEED
TO MAKE
YOUR BOOK
APPEAL TO A
WIDER
AUDIENCE!

WHAT ARE YOU
ALWAYS WRITING ABOUT
LOCAL STUFF FOR? PEOPLE
IN NEW YORK DON'T CARE
ABOUT COVENTRY OR KINSMAN...
YOU GOT TO WRITE ABOUT
THINGS OF NATIONAL OR
INTERNATIONAL SIGNIF-
ICANCE!





END

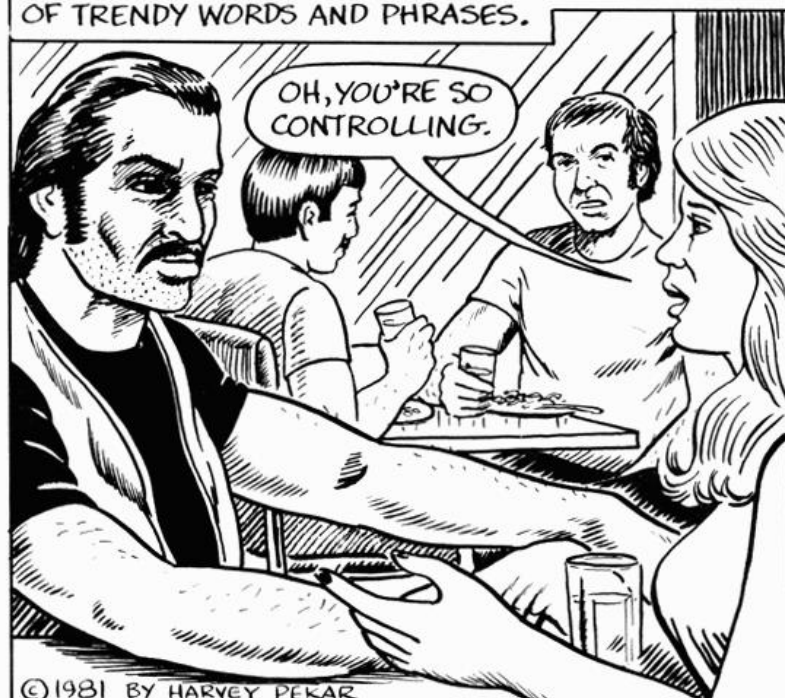
RIPOFF CHICK

SUMMER, 1975.
I'M DESPERATELY
LONELY AND HORNY.
MY BUDDY FREDDY,
VISITING ME FROM
BROOKLYN, AND I GO
INTO A NEIGHBORHOOD
DELICATESSEN.

STORY BY
HARVEY PEKAR
ART BY
GREG BUDGETT
GARY DUMM

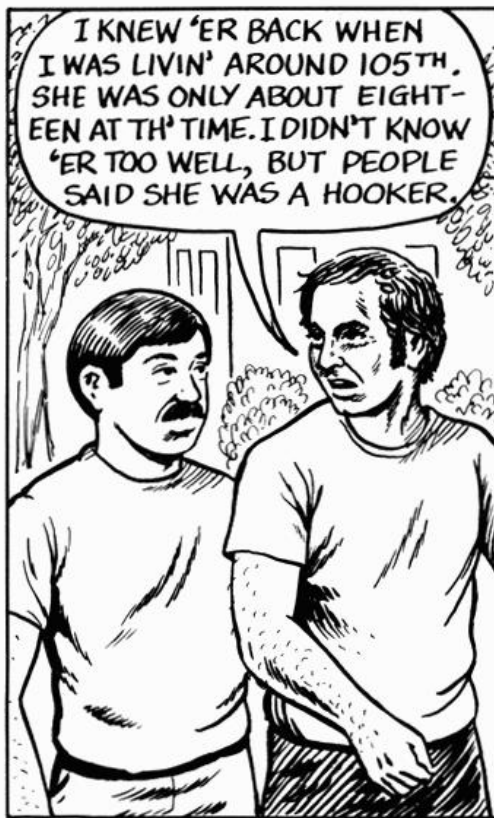


WE'RE SITTING DOWN EATING AND I SPOT A GROUP
AT ANOTHER TABLE. ONE WOMAN, ABOUT THIRTY-
TWO, WHO'S WITH THIS LOCAL PUNK BIKER, IS
FAMILIAR TO ME. HER CONVERSATION WAS FULL
OF TRENDY WORDS AND PHRASES.



I EAVESDROP AND BY THE TIME WE'RE
READY TO LEAVE THE PLACE I'VE FIG-
URED OUT WHO SHE IS.





A COUPLE DAYS LATER I'M IN THE DELICATESSEN AGAIN AN' I SPOT 'ER AT A TABLE. I SIDDOWN AN' REACQUAINT MYSELF. WE GET T' TALKIN' AN' I START TO BRAG, TRYING T' IMPRESS 'ER.



AN' DAMNED IF MY PHONY BRAVADO DIDN'T IMPRESS 'ER. AT THAT POINT I SHOULDA REALIZED THAT ANY WOMAN WHO'D FALL FOR THE JIVE LINE I WAS HANDIN' OUT HADDA HAVE SOMETHIN' SERIOUS WRONG WITH 'ER.



THE NEXT DAY I THOUGHT IT OVER AND CONCLUDED THAT, AS DESPERATE AS I WAS, I'D BEEN A FOOL NOT TO GET HER NUMBER. IT WASN'T IN THE BOOK, SO I CALLED A BUDDY A' MINE T' GET IT. THEN I CALLED HER, T' CHEW TH' FAT. SHE WAS EVEN IMPRESSED WITH THE INGENUITY I'D SHOWN TO BE ABLE T' REACH 'ER. COULD IT BE THAT THIS WAS THE START OF SOMETHING WONDERFUL?



A FEW DAYS LATER SHE AN' I MET ON THE CORNER AN' WE SPENT A REAL LONG TIME WALKIN' AROUND TALKIN'. SHE FILLED ME IN ON SOME THINGS I WAS CURIOUS ABOUT.



SHE HAD AN AFFECTED WAY A' TALKIN'- PUT ON A SLIGHT ENGLISH ACCENT. I ASKED HER ABOUT THAT, WITHOUT LETTING ON THAT I THOUGHT IT WAS PHONY.



LATER ON IN THE EVENING WE MET THESE YOUNG KIDS AN' I GOT HIPPIED T'SOMETHING ELSE ABOUT HER. ALTHOUGH I NEVER FOUND OUT WHETHER SHE WAS INTA SMACK, SMOKING DOPE WAS A BIG THING IN HER LIFE. SHE SPENT A LOT OF TIME RUNNING AROUND TRYING TO SCORE IT.



CARLA STAYED OVER MY PAD WITH ME THAT NIGHT, BUT I DIDN'T PUT A HAND ON 'ER. I FIGURED THAT WITH HER PAST SHE MIGHT RESENT IT IF I THOUGHT I COULD TAKE LIBERTIES WITH HER TOO SOON. SO I SLEPT ON THE COUCH IN THE FRONT ROOM, WHILE SHE SLEPT IN MY BED.



THE NEXT DAY I WENT UP TO THE DELICATESSEN AGAIN WITH FREDDY. CARLA WAS UP THERE WITH THE BIKER. THIS GUY WAS REALLY TRYING T'SOUND LIKE A BADASS.

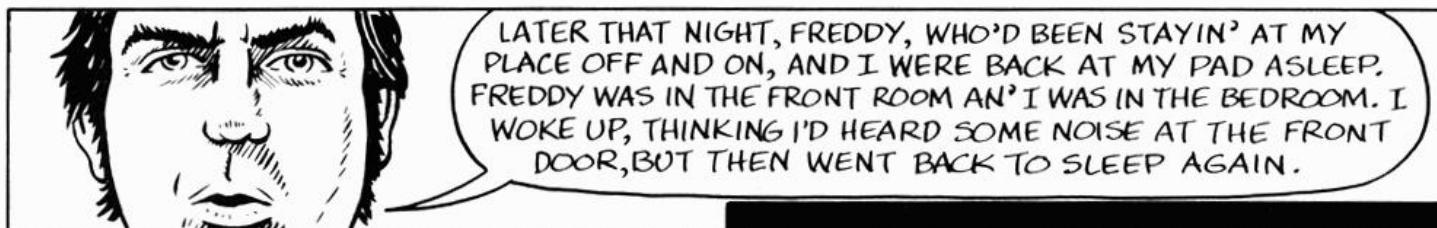


I DECIDED T' PUT HIM ON.



THE GUY WAS SO DUMB HE MIGHT NOT HAVE BEEN SURE I WAS MAKING FUN A' HIM. ANYWAY, HE SAT THERE AND TOOK IT.





LATER THAT NIGHT, FREDDY, WHO'D BEEN STAYIN' AT MY PLACE OFF AND ON, AND I WERE BACK AT MY PAD ASLEEP. FREDDY WAS IN THE FRONT ROOM AN' I WAS IN THE BEDROOM. I WOKE UP, THINKING I'D HEARD SOME NOISE AT THE FRONT DOOR, BUT THEN WENT BACK TO SLEEP AGAIN.

A LITTLE LATER A PHONE CALL WOKE ME UP.

HI, THIS IS CARLA. I WAS AT YOUR PLACE AWHILE AGO, BUT I COULDN'T WAKE YOU UP. CHECK OUTSIDE YOUR DOOR. THERE'S SOMETHING TO EAT.



I GO OUT AN' LOOK AN' THERE'S THIS TAKE-OUT ITALIAN DINNER IN A BAG OUTSIDE THE DOOR.



DAMMIT, FREDDY, WHYN'T YOU WAKE ME UP? I COULDA GOTTEN LAID T'NIGHT. ...OH ME, HOW COULD I MISS AN OPPORTUNITY LIKE THAT?

TAKE IT EASY ...I DIDN'T HEAR ANYTHING...DON'T WORRY, THOUGH, HAWVIE, YOU'LL GET THE PUSSY SOONA AW LATA.



THE NEXT DAY SHE CALLED ME UP AND TOLD ME THAT SHE WAS SCARED BECAUSE SHE WANTED TO STOP SEEING THE BIKER AND HE'D THREATENED HER.

AH, DON'T WORRY ABOUT THAT GUY. HE'S ALL MOUTH. HE WON'T BOTHER YA.



THEN SHE INVITED ME OVER TO HER PLACE FOR DINNER. HER MOTHER WAS OUTTA TOWN. I WAS CHECKING THE PLACE OUT AND I RAN ACROSS A BANJO.



YOU PLAY THIS?

UH, WELL, I'M NOT TOO GOOD AT IT YET. I'M GOING TO TAKE SOME LESSONS.

TAKE LESSONS, SHIT! I'D LIKE T'SEE HER TAKE LESSONS. SHE USES THIS THING FOR A PROP!



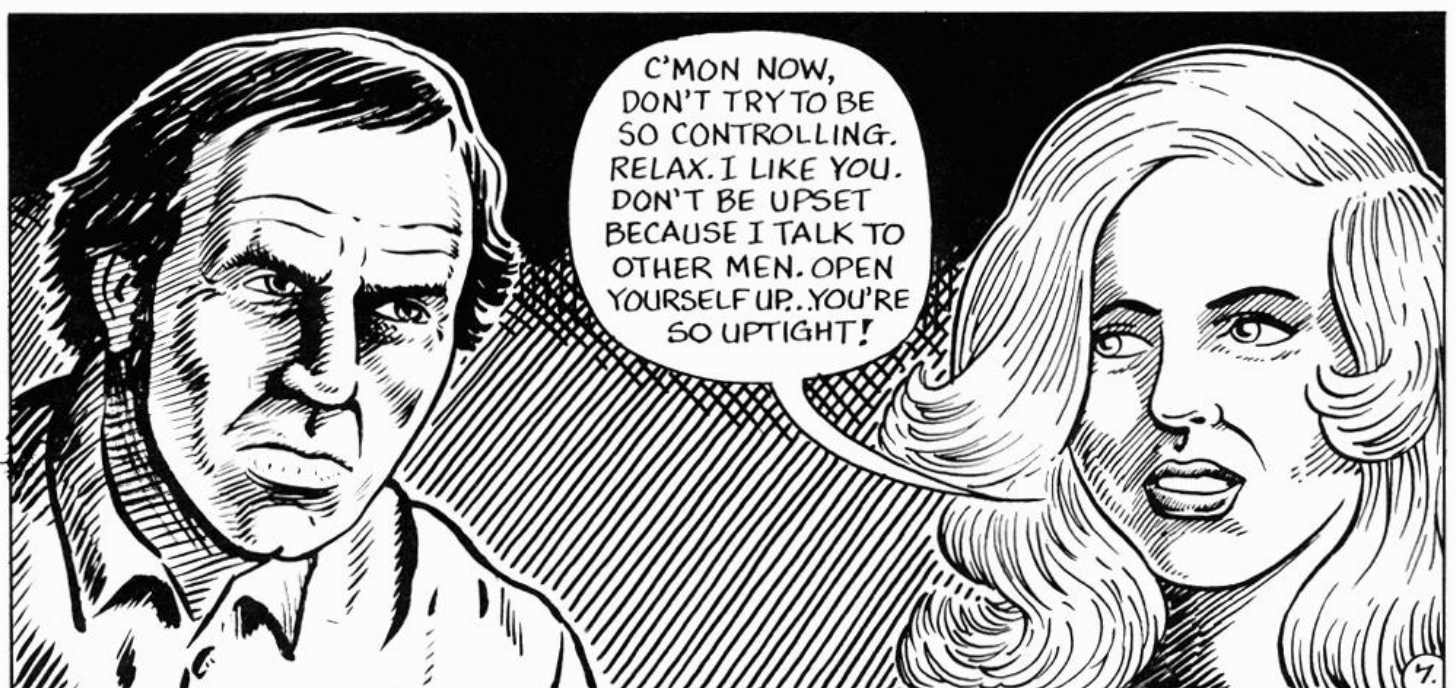
AFTER EATING WE WENT UP T' THIS BAR, WHERE SHE PUT ME THROUGH ALL KINDA CHANGES, RUNNIN' AROUN' TALKIN' T' EVERYBODY BUT ME WHILE I BOUGHT HER DRINKS.



AT THE END OF THE NIGHT...

WHAT'S THE MATTER? I CAN SENSE THAT YOU'RE UPSET.





THE NEXT DAY I TALKED TO A GIRL AT WORK ABOUT WHAT'D GONE ON. HER OLDER SISTER'D BEEN TIGHT WITH CARLA ONCE.

YEAH, SHE DIDN'T SPEND FIVE MINUTES WITH ME ALL NIGHT. THEN SHE GIVES ME THIS E.S.P. SHIT.

WELL, YOU'VE GOT TO EXPLAIN THAT TO HER. THERE'S NO POINT IN YOUR GOING OUT TOGETHER IF YOU DON'T SPEND ANY TIME WITH EACH OTHER.



HEY, BY THE WAY, HOW OLD IS SHE? SHE SEZ SHE'S TWENNY-EIGHT, BUT SHE'S OLDER'N THAT, AIN'T SHE?

WELL, LET ME PUT IT THIS WAY, SHE WAS A YEAR AHEAD OF MY SISTER IN SCHOOL, AND MY SISTER'S THIRTY-ONE.



NOW, DIG, I DON'T WANTCHA TO THINK I'M MAKIN' MYSELF OUT T'BE AN ANGEL IN ALL THIS. I REALLY DIDN'T LIKE CARLA THAT MUCH. I DIDN'T HAVE MUCH IN COMMON WITH 'ER. I KNEW SHE WAS A RIPOFF. WHAT I WANTED FROM HER WAS SEX. ANYTHING ELSE WAS A BONUS...I KNOW, I KNOW, I'M AN ATROCIOUS PERSON. BUT, THAT'S WHAT DESPERATION WILL TURN YA INTA. GOT THAT? O.K., LET'S CONTINUE.



A COUPLA NIGHTS LATER WE SAW A MOVIE AND FINALLY GOT IT ON AFTERWARD. MAN, I FELT SO GOOD.



THAT NIGHT I WAS CRAZY ABOUT CARLA. YOU KNOW HOW THAT IS. I HAD BEEN PLANNING T'GO T'CHICAGO IN A COUPLA DAYS, OVER THE LABOR DAY WEEKEND. SO I ASKED CARLA IF SHE COULD. SHE SEEMED LIKE SHE WANTED TO. I CALLED MY BUDDY IN CHI TO TELL HIM ABOUT IT. I PUT CARLA ON THE PHONE TO TALK TO 'IM.



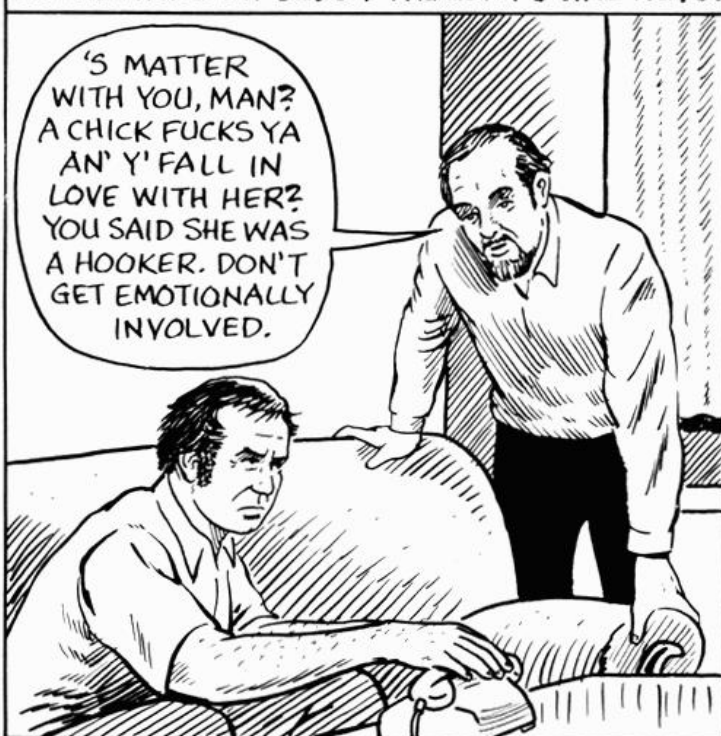
AFTERWARD I TALKED TO 'IM, HE WAS SKEPTICAL ABOUT CARLA.



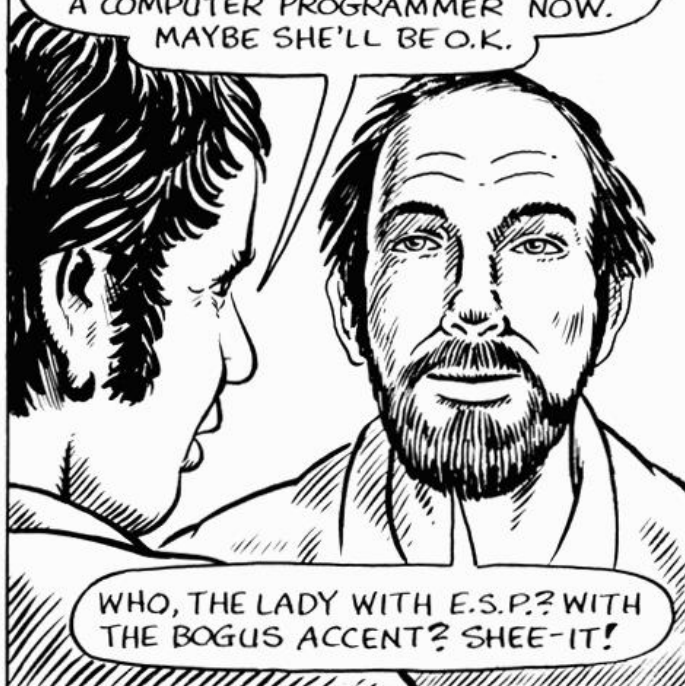
SHE DIDN'T COME TO CHICAGO WITH ME, AS IT TURNED OUT, BUT SHE MOVED OUTTA HER MOTHER'S PLACE AND INTO MY PAD WHILE I WAS GONE. WE WERE GONNA LIVE TOGETHER FOR ABOUT A MONTH UNTIL SHE COULD FIND A PLACE FOR HERSELF.



EVERY DAY I WAS IN CHICAGO I CALLED CARLA UP ON THE PHONE. MY BUDDY THOUGHT I WAS NUTS.



HEY, MAN, DON'T WORRY ABOUT ME. I AIN'T LOOKIN' FOR ANYTHING BUT A PIECE A' ASS FROM 'ER. BUT LOOK, SHE'S A COMPUTER PROGRAMMER NOW. MAYBE SHE'LL BE O.K.



WHEN I GOT BACK FROM CHICAGO THINGS WERE O.K. FOR ABOUT A WEEK. I GOT IN A LOTTA SCREWIN', WE SAW A COUPLE MOVIES, IT WAS O.K.



BUT THEN THEY TURNED SOUR. FIRST, SHE STOPPED COMIN' HOME AFTER WORK. I DON'T KNOW WHERE SHE WENT, BUT USUALLY I'D FIND 'ER BACK UP ON THE CORNER, AROUN' TEN OR ELEVEN O'CLOCK, OFTEN TRYIN' T' SCORE SOME DOPE.



EVEN THOUGH SHE MADE MORE MONEY THAN ME, SHE WAS FOREVER HITTING ON ME FOR BREAD, EVEN FOR PARKIN' TICKETS, WHICH SHE ALWAYS GOT BECAUSE SHE WAS TOO LAZY TO MOVE HER CAR OUTTA THESE ZONES WHERE YOU COULD ONLY PARK FOR A LIMITED TIME.



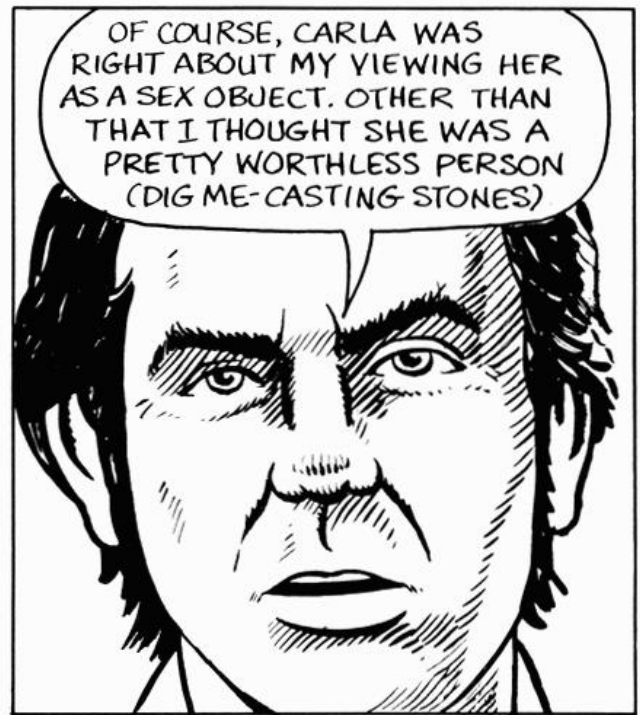
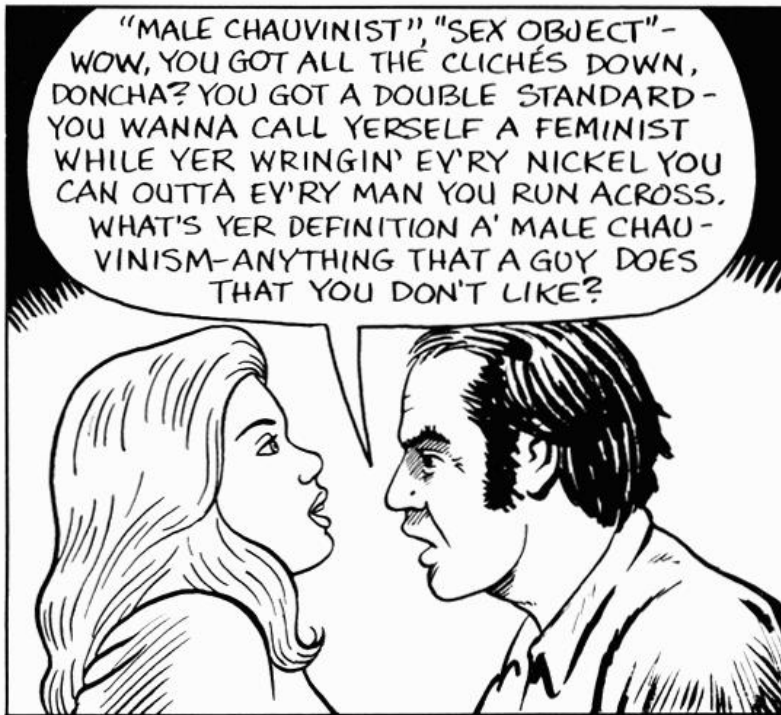
ONE DAY I WAS SUPPOSED T' MEET HER T' GO TO A MOVIE. SHE DIDN'T SHOW, SO I WENT WITH ANOTHER GIRL. THEN I GOT WORRIED THAT I HADN'T WAITED LONG ENOUGH, SO I GAVE THE GIRL I WAS WITH SOME EXCUSE AN' CUT OUT ON HER T' GO BACK HOME. THINGS WERE GETTIN' CRAZY.



IT'S A GOOD THING I DID, THOUGH. CARLA HAD JUST BEEN AT MY PAD AND HAD LEFT THE WATER DRIPPING IN THE BATHROOM SINK WHILE IT WAS STOPPED UP. IT WAS ABOUT TO OVERFLOW. GOD KNOWS WHAT WOULD'VE HAPPENED IN AN HOUR. AND MY LANDLADY LIVED JUST UNDERNEATH ME!



FINALLY, I HAD A CONFRONTATION WITH CARLA ABOUT THE WAY THINGS WERE GOING.



FINALLY, CARLA DID FIND A PLACE FOR HERSELF. I HELPED HER MOVE AND LENT HER SOME BREAD FOR HER FIRST MONTH'S RENT,* WHICH I KNEW I WASN'T GONNA GET BACK. WHY? BECAUSE I WANTED TO STAY ON FAIRLY GOOD TERMS WITH HER, FIGURING I'D GET SOME ASS OUT OF IT.



*SHE SAID HER LANDLORD ADMITTED THAT HE CHARGED A LOT FOR RENT, BUT SAID THAT THIS WOULD INSURE HIS GETTING RESPONSIBLE TENANTS. CARLA SAID SHE AGREED WITH HIS POLICY WHOLEHEARTEDLY. SEVERAL MONTHS LATER SHE GOT EVICTED.

AFTER SHE GOT SET UP AT HER NEW PLACE, SHE INVITED ME OVER FOR DINNER. SO, I GO OVER THERE AND SHE'S NOT HOME. TYPICAL.



ONE GOOD TURN DESERVES ANOTHER

STORY BY HARVEY PEKAR

ILLUSTRATED BY GERRY SHAMRAY ©1982 BY HARVEY PEKAR

7:30 A.M. SATURDAY

HERE'S OUR MAN, WHO'S TOO CHEAP TO BUY A NEWSPAPER, BORROWING HIS NEIGHBORS AND BRINGING IT BACK TO HIS PAD TO READ. HE DOESN'T ASK PERMISSION TO DO THIS, BUT SINCE HE GETS UP TWO HOURS BEFORE THIS GUY HE FIGURES HE CAN GET IT READ AND PUT IT BACK IN PLENTY OF TIME AND NO ONE WILL BE THE WISER.



ONE MINUTE LATER AS HE'S RELAXING, READING THE SPORTS PAGES, HE HEARS A DOOR OPEN AND FOOTSTEPS.



MIGOD, HE'S OUT THERE. HE NEVER GETS UP THIS EARLY. OY VEY! HE'LL WONDER WHERE HIS PAPER IS. I BET HE HEARD ME SNATCHIN' IT.

THE NEIGHBOR IS WALKING UP AND DOWN THE HALL; HE'S BOUND TO SEE THAT THE OTHER TENANTS HAVE GOTTEN THEIR NEWSPAPERS.

HE MUST KNOW I GOT IT. HOW HUMILIATIN'.



OUR MAN CONSIDERS SEVERAL COURSES OF ACTION AND COMES TO A DECISION.

I'LL WAIT ABOUT FIFTEEN MINUTES AN' PUT IT BACK.



BUT AS HE GOES TO REPLACE IT, HIS DOOR MAKES A LOUD NOISE WHICH ECHOES DOWN THE HALLWAY.



BACK IN HIS OWN PAD - REFLECTING ON THE EVENT.



OH WELL, I LEND TH' GUY FOOD ALL TIME.



HE MUSTA HEARD THAT. NOW FOR SURE HE KNOWS I TOOK IT.



END.

LEONARD & MARIE

STORY BY HARVEY PEKAR
ART BY GARY DUMM

I KNOW A GUY NAMED LEONARD THAT'S A BOOK DEALER. HE FINDS RARE BOOKS AND SELLS 'EM. RUNS HIS BUSINESS OUT OF HIS HOUSE. REAL NICE GUY.



HE'S A LOT OLDER 'N' ME, MAYBE ABOUT SIXTY, BUT WE GET ALONG JUST FINE. NO "GENERATION GAP" KIND OF PROBLEMS OR ANYTHING LIKE THAT. SOME PEOPLE GET INTOLERANT WHEN THEY GET TO BE LEONARD'S AGE. BUT LEONARD'S COOL THAT WAY. HE DOESN'T GET DOWN ON YOUNGER PEOPLE OR ANY-ONE ELSE AS LONG AS THEY ACT REASONABLY.



LEONARD'S A BACHELOR AN' I GET THE FEELING HE'S KIND OF A LONELY GUY. HE LIVES NEAR THIS BUILDING I WORK AT AN' SOMETIMES, WHEN I'M TAKIN' A BREAK IN THE LATE AFTERNOON HE'LL COME OVER T' TH' CAFETERIA AT WORK AN' HAVE COFFEE. WE'LL SIT A-ROUND AN' SHOOT THE BREEZE.



HE'S BEEN AROUND A LITTLE BIT AN' HE'S A GOOD STORYTELLER. HE USED TO DEAL CARDS IN LAS VEGAS.

THERE WAS A PIT BOSS IN ONE OF THE CASINOS NAMED SHERLOCK FINEMAN. HIS FATHER WAS A GREAT FAN OF SIR ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE, ETC...



... SO THEN THIS DRUNK GOES UP TO THE COME LINE TO PLACE A BET AND HIS LOWER PLATE FALLS OUT OF HIS MOUTH. LANDS RIGHT ON THE TABLE...



... SO SHERLOCK JUMPS UP AND PUTS HIS UPPER PLATE ON TOP A' THIS GUY'S LOWER, AN' SEZ, "YER FADED."





LEONARD KNEW I WAS INTERESTED IN HISTORY AN' ONCE INNA WHILE HE'D TURN ME ONTO A BOOK HE THOUGHT I'D LIKE...

HERE'S THAT BOOK I TOLD YOU ABOUT, "TESTAMENTS OF TIME", ABOUT SOME OF THE GREAT ARCHEOLOGISTS AND THEIR DISCOVERIES. TAKE IT HOME AN' LOOK IT OVER. Y'MIGHT FIND OUT SOMETHING INTERESTING.



ANYWAY, A LOT OF TIMES I USED TO COMPLAIN TO LEONARD ABOUT HOW I COULDN'T FIND A GIRL FRIEND AND HOW BAD THAT MADE ME FEEL. I USED TO COMPLAIN ABOUT IT ALL THE TIME. BUT HE WAS ALWAYS SYMPATHETIC. HE EVEN TRIED TO HELP ME.

KID, I WISH I COULD HELP YA... Y'KNOW, I'M THINKING MY SISTER MIGHT KNOW A GIRL YOUR AGE, I'LL ASK HER.



LEONARD DIDN'T TURN UP ANYONE FOR ME, BUT I APPRECIATED THE FACT THAT HE MADE AN EFFORT.

ANYWAY, I THOUGHT HE WAS DOING O.K. WITH WOMEN. HE MENTIONED THIS ONE LADY FRIEND OF HIS NOW AND THEN. BUT I FOUND OUT HE REALLY WASN'T THAT TIGHT WITH HER.

NO, I DON'T SEE HER THAT OFTEN. ACTUALLY THERE'S ANOTHER GUY AROUND THAT SHE LIKES MORE THAN ME.



I SUDDENLY REALIZED THAT LEONARD WAS DOING LOUSY WITH WOMEN. THAT MADE ME FEEL BAD. HERE I WAS, BESIEGING HIM WITH MY HARD LUCK STORIES WHEN HE HAD TROUBLES OF HIS OWN.



A COUPLE OF NIGHTS LATER I WAS WALKING DOWN THE STREET AND I STOPPED TO TALK TO THIS WOMAN NAMED MARIE WHO WORKED IN THE BOX OFFICE OF THIS SHOW IN MY NEIGHBORHOOD.



SHE WAS A REALLY FINE PERSON. A WIDOW IN HER FIFTIES WHO'D HAD SOME HARD LUCK BUT DIDN'T LET IT GET TO HER. SHE WAS REAL CHEERFUL, BRIGHT AND INTERESTED IN STUFF. SHE WAS NICE LOOKING TOO; YOUNGER LOOKING THAN HER AGE.



SHE COULD GET ALONG WITH JUST ABOUT ANYBODY. SHE DID A LOT OF STUFF WITH HER NINETEEN YEAR OLD DAUGHTER SO SHE KNEW A LOT OF THE YOUNGER PEOPLE IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD. SHE LIKED THEM AND COULD RELATE TO THEM WELL AND DO IT WITHOUT CHANGING HER STYLE. I MEAN, SHE DIDN'T TRY TO ACT LIKE A KID WHEN SHE WAS RAP-PING WITH THEM, SHE ACTED HER AGE AND GOT OVER JUST FINE. SHE HAD REAL DIGNITY.



ANYWAY, ONE TIME WHEN I WAS TALKIN' TO HER I GOT A BRAIN-STORM.

LOOK, MARIE, YOU'RE NOT GOING WITH ANY GUYS RIGHT NOW, ARE YOU?

NO, WHY?



WELL, I KNOW A GUY THAT I THINK YOU REALLY MIGHT HIT IT OFF WITH. HE'S A BOOK DEALER, SEE. A REAL NICE GUY. PRETTY KNOWLEDGEABLE, SENSIBLE...



I TOLD HER ABOUT LEONARD, AND THEN ASKED HER IF SHE'D BE INTERESTED IN MEETING HIM. IT SEEMED LIKE A NATURAL.

SO, WHADAYA SAY? CAN I INTRODUCE YOU TWO? I THINK YOU'D REALLY GET ALONG WELL.

SURE, HE SOUNDS LIKE A NICE GUY.



NOW I WANNA TELL YA HE AIN'T THE HANDSOMEST GUY IN THE WORLD. HE'S JUST A REGULAR AVERAGE LOOKIN' GUY. I HOPE THAT'S O.K. WITH YOU.

SURE, I'M NOT LOOKING FOR A GLAMOUR BOY.



I WENT AWAY FROM THERE FEELING GREAT. TWO REALLY NICE PEOPLE, BOTH LONELY PROBABLY, AND I HAD A CHANCE TO FIX 'EM UP.

I WAS ALWAYS ASKING PEOPLE FOR FAVORS, ALWAYS TELLING THEM MY PROBLEMS, AND NEVER IN A POSITION TO DO THEM ANY GOOD. HERE WAS MY CHANCE TO SQUARE MYSELF WITH HUMANITY.



NEXT TIME I SAW LEONARD I TOLD 'IM ABOUT MARIE.

YEAH, SHE'S NICE LOOKING AND SHE'S GOT AN' INTERESTING BACKGROUND; HER FATHER USED TO BE THE FOREIGN AFFAIRS COLUMNIST OF THE PLAIN DEALER.



I WAS DELIGHTED WHEN I FOUND OUT THAT LEONARD HAD HEARD OF HER FATHER.

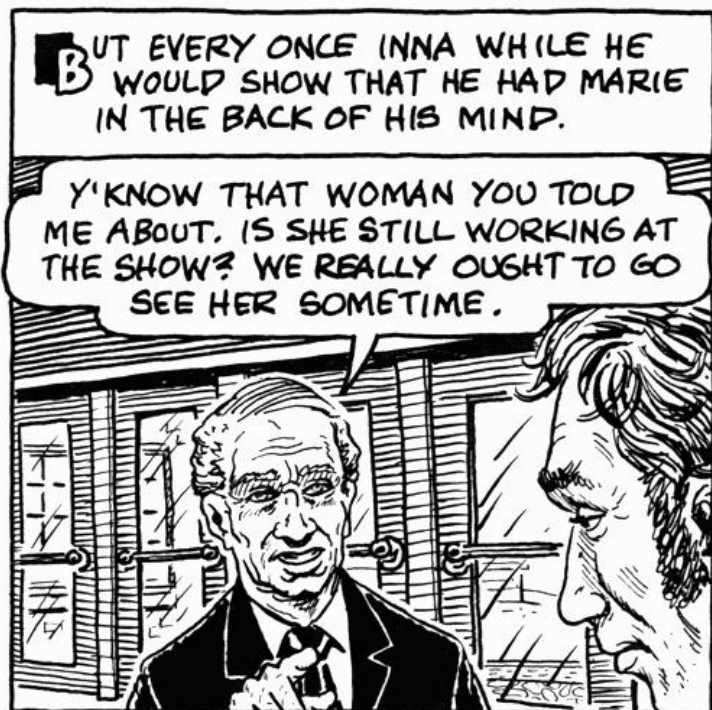
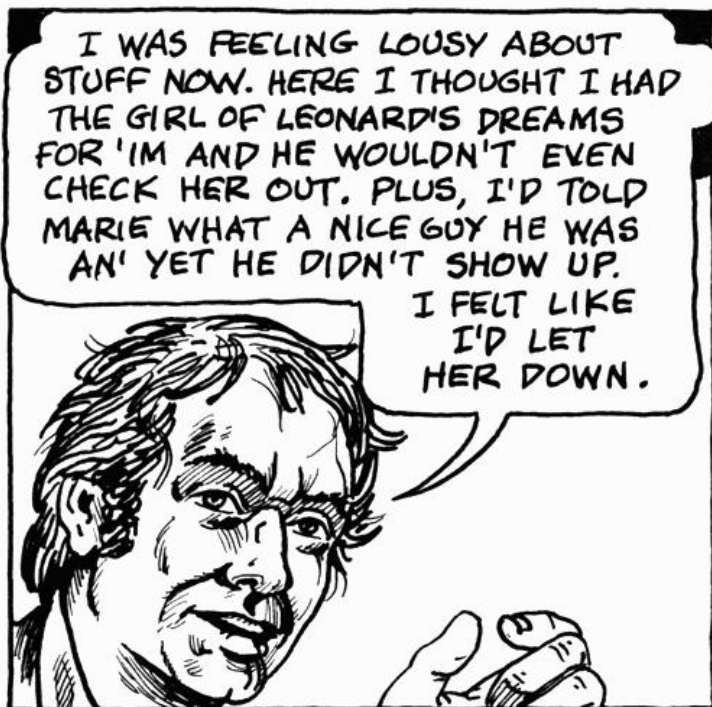
OH, YEAH, BRILLIANT MAN. HE WROTE A FEW BOOKS AND HAD THEM PRINTED PRIVATELY. I HAVE A COUPLE OF 'EM.



SO LOOK, LEONARD, WANNA MEET HER?

YEAH, SHE SOUNDS REAL NICE. MY SCHEDULE'S A LITTLE UNCERTAIN NOW, THOUGH. LEMME GET BACK T'YOU ABOUT WHEN WE SHOULD GET TOGETHER.





SO THEY STARTED TALKING. MARIE WAS REAL NICE AN' POISED, BUT LEONARD SEEMED NERVOUS.

ONLY



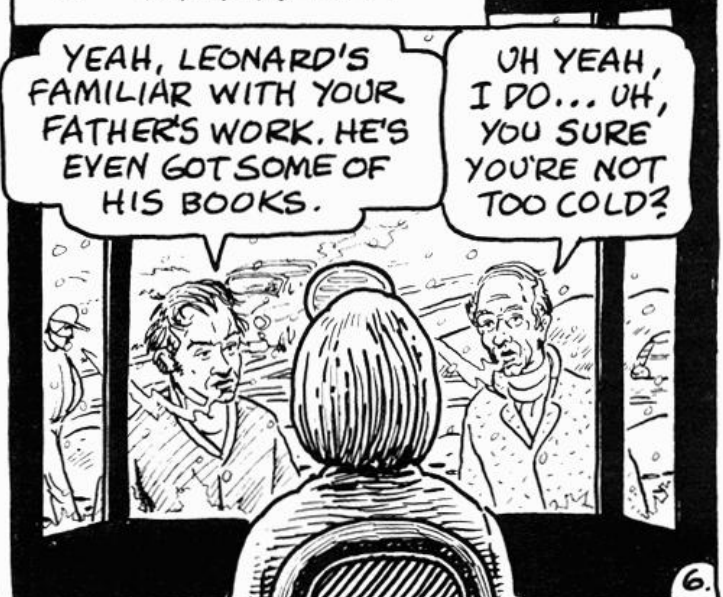
THOUGHT THEY'D HAVE A LOT TO TALK ABOUT, THEY BOTH READ QUITE A BIT, THEY WERE FAIRLY CLOSE TO EACH OTHER IN AGE AND HAD BEEN AROUND. BUT ALL LEONARD COULD TALK ABOUT WAS THE WEATHER.



I'M WATCHING THE WHOLE THING, AMAZED THAT THAT'S ALL LEONARD CAN SAY.



TRIED TO ENLIVEN THE CON-
VERSATION...



THEN, KIND OF ABRUPTLY, LEONARD PUT AN END TO THE CONVERSATION.

WELL, LOOK, I'M SURE YOU DON'T WANT ME TAKING UP YOUR TIME AT WORK HERE WHEN THE WEATHER IS SO BAD. WHY DON'T YOU GIVE ME YOUR PHONE NUMBER AND WE CAN SEE EACH OTHER UNDER MORE PLEASANT CIRCUMSTANCES.



MARIE GAVE HIM HER PHONE NUMBER, BUT I KNEW HE WASN'T GOING TO CALL HER.

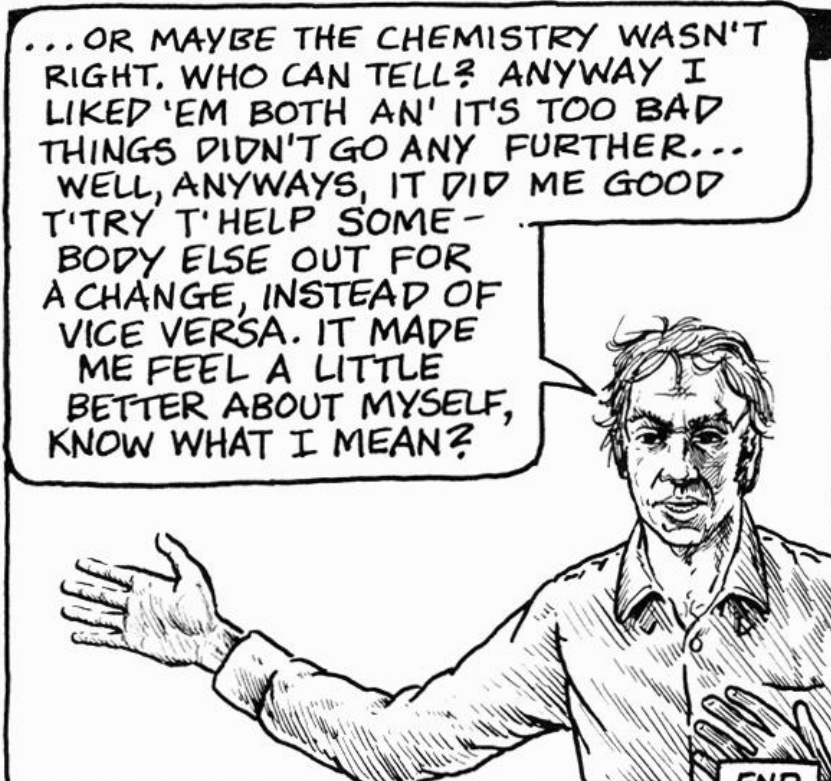
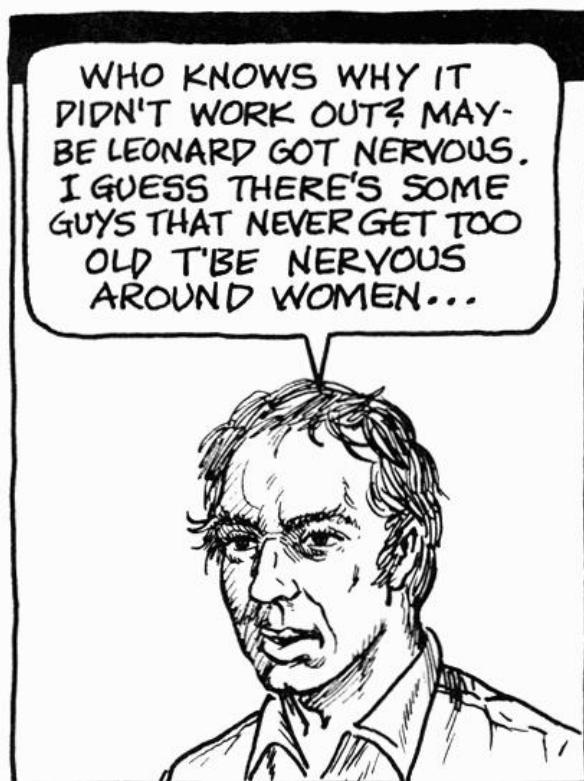


WE WENT TO GET SOMETHING TO EAT AFTERWARD. BOTH OF US KNEW THE EVENING HAD BEEN AN EMBARRASSING WASTE, BUT WE DIDN'T TALK ABOUT IT.



WHO KNOWS WHY IT DIDN'T WORK OUT? MAYBE LEONARD GOT NERVOUS. I GUESS THERE'S SOME GUYS THAT NEVER GET TOO OLD T'BE NERVOUS AROUND WOMEN...

...OR MAYBE THE CHEMISTRY WASN'T RIGHT. WHO CAN TELL? ANYWAY I LIKED 'EM BOTH AN' IT'S TOO BAD THINGS DIDN'T GO ANY FURTHER... WELL, ANYWAYS, IT DID ME GOOD T' TRY T' HELP SOMEBODY ELSE OUT FOR A CHANGE, INSTEAD OF VICE VERSA. IT MADE ME FEEL A LITTLE BETTER ABOUT MYSELF, KNOW WHAT I MEAN?



END

NOAH'S ARK

STORY BY HARVEY PEKAR
ILLUSTRATED BY GERRY SHAMRAY

THAT "IN SEARCH OF NOAH'S ARK'S"
GONNA BE ON T.V. T'NITE. YOU
BETTER LOOK AT IT. IT'D DO
YOU SOME GOOD.

AH, I HEARD IT WAS TRASH. HOW
MANY TIMES YOU SEEN THAT MO-
VIE NOW—ABOUT TEN? WHUDDY YOU
GOT-A FIXATION ON NOAH'S ARK?

MORNING BREAK.

WELL, I THINK TH' WHOLE
BUSINESS IS FASCINATIN'.
THERE WAS SOMETHIN' ON
THAT LEONARD NIMOY
SHOW ABOUT IT—Y'KNOW,
THAT DR. SPOCK OR MR.
SPOCK. THERE'S BEEN A
NUMBER A' REPORTS
THAT PEOPLE HAVE
ACTUALLY CLIMBED UP
THERE AND SEEN IT. IF
THEY COULD PROVE IT
WAS THERE, IT'D VERIFY
THE BIBLICAL STORY. IT'D
BE A GREAT THING F'R
JEWS AND CHRISTIANS
ALIKE—TH' RELIGIOUS
ONES ANYWAY.

WELL WHY DON'T THEY
SEND AN EXPEDITION
UP THERE NOW? THEY
COULD SETTLE TH'
MATTER ONCE AN'
FOR ALL.

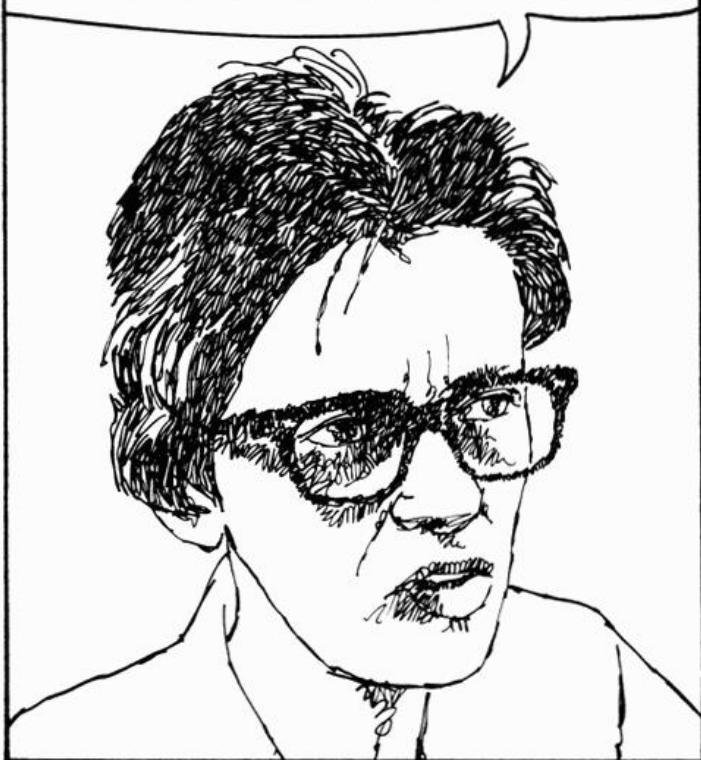
WELL, SOME A THOSE
ATHEISTIC COUNTRIES
OVER THERE DON'T
WANT THE ARK T'BE
DISCOVERED. IF THAT
WAS T'HAPPEN AND
TH' NEWS GOT OUT
IT MIGHT TOPPLE
THEIR GOVERNMENTS.



IF THE ARK IS SUPPOSED TO BE ANY PLACE IT AIN'T IN NO ATHEISTIC COUNTRY. IT AIN'T IN RUSSIA. IT'S SUPPOSED TO BE ON MT. ARARAT, IN TURKEY. TURKEY AIN'T NO ATHEISTIC COUNTRY, IT'S MUSLIM.



WELL, I DON'T KNOW WHAT GOVERNMENT THAT PART A' TH' WORLD IS UNDER NOW. IF Y' WANT T' KNOW MORE ABOUT THAT STUFF TH' PERSON T' ASK IS WILLIAM F. BUCKLEY OR SOMEONE A' THAT ILK. HE'S PECULIAR, BUT HE'S A BRILLIANT MAN.

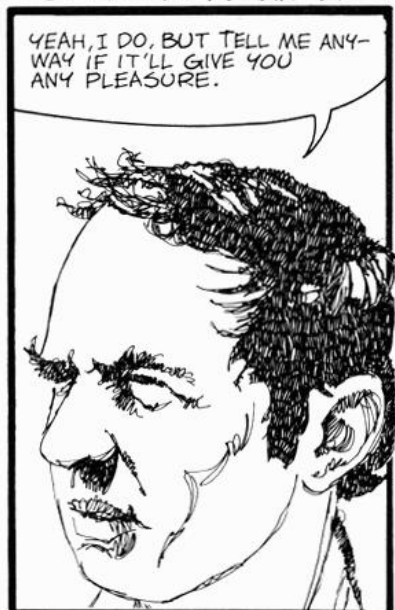


SAY, WOULDJA MIND PUTTIN' YER FEET DOWN? I'M EXPECTIN' TH' BOSS IN ANY MINUTE NOW AN' HE'LL HIT THE CEILING IF HE SEES YOU SPRAWLED OUT LIKE THAT.



Class Antagonism

STORY BY HARVEY PEKAR ILLUSTRATED BY GERRY SHAMRAY



Story BY HARVEY PEKAR

EMIL

Art BY Gary Dumm
+ Greg Budgett

FROM 1959 TO 1971 I LIVED IN AN AREA-YOU COULDN'T EVEN CALL IT A NEIGHBORHOOD-BETWEEN THE CAMPUS OF CASE WESTERN RESERVE UNIVERSITY AND THE BLACK GHETTO. AS TIME WENT ON IT BECAME MORE AND MORE CRIME-RIDDEN AND RUN DOWN. EVENTUALLY THE ROW HOUSE WHERE I LIVED WAS TORN DOWN.

©1980 BY HARVEY PEKAR



I WANT TO TELL YOU ABOUT A GUY WHO, IN THE MIDDLE 60'S, LIVED NEXT DOOR TO ME IN THAT BUILDING.



HIS NAME WAS EMIL. HE WAS ABOUT FIFTY-FIVE YEARS OLD WHEN I MET HIM. HE WAS RUTHENIAN. A RUTHENIAN IS ESSENTIALLY A UKRAINIAN WHO LIVED IN A PLACE IN THE CARPATHIAN MOUNTAIN REGION CALLED RUTHENIA. IT WAS ONCE PART OF THE AUSTRO-HUNGARIAN EMPIRE AND LATER OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA. NOW IT'S PART OF THE U.S.S.R. RUTHENIANS ARE ORTHODOX IN RELIGION, NOT CATHOLIC.

EMIL WAS THE SON OF IMMIGRANT PARENTS. HE WAS AN OLD BACHELOR, A LONER. HE PROBABLY NEVER MARRIED BECAUSE HE WAS AFRAID OF WOMEN. IN SOME WAYS HE WAS PRETTY BACKWARD SOCIALLY.

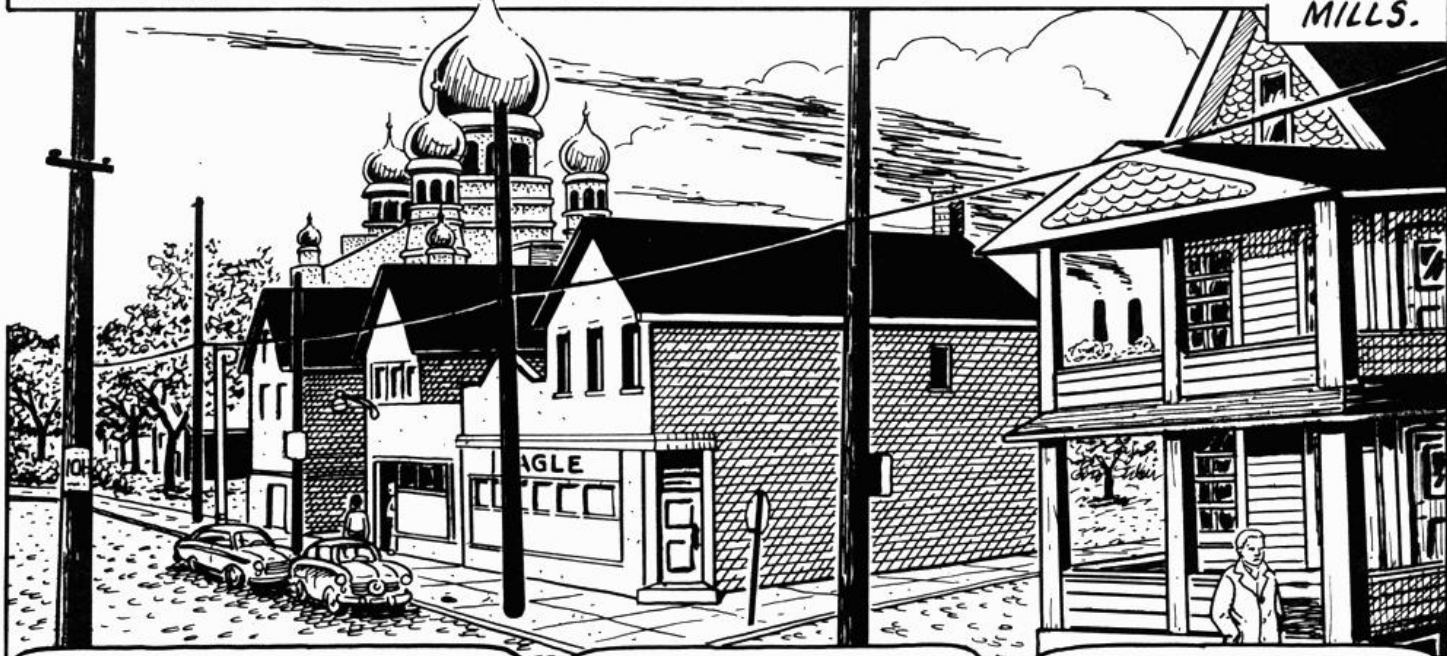


HE WAS A LABORER AT REPUBLIC STEEL. HE'D WORKED THERE SINCE HE WAS A TEENAGER IN THE 1930'S. HE WAS INVOLVED IN THE "LITTLE STEEL" STRIKE OF 1937, DURING WHICH HE WAS SHOT IN THE HAND BY A GUARD WHILE HE WAS ON A PICKET LINE.

HE WAS IN THE ARMY DURING THE SECOND WORLD WAR, BUT AFTER THAT HE WENT BACK TO HIS JOB AT REPUBLIC AND TO LIVING WITH HIS FAMILY.



HE LIVED IN A POOR, WHITE NEIGHBORHOOD OF CLEVELAND BORDERING THE STEEL MILLS.



EMIL TOLD ME THAT WHEN HE WAS A YOUNG MAN HE'D BELONGED TO THE COMMUNIST PARTY. HE WAS NO INTELLECTUAL, BUT I GUESS HE WAS PRETTY IDEALISTIC AT ONE TIME. HE WAS ALSO A MEMBER OF THE NAACP FOR AWHILE.

ANYWAY, FOR SOME REASON EMIL DECIDED TO MOVE AWAY FROM HIS FAMILY AND GET A PLACE OF HIS OWN. HE WAS OVER FIFTY WHEN HE DID THIS.

THE GUY WAS MAKING GOOD MONEY AT REPUBLIC, HE HAD NO EXPENSES TO SPEAK OF, HE COULD HAVE LIVED A LOT OF PLACES.



BUT WHERE HE
CHOSE TO LIVE
WAS IN THE HOUGH
AREA. AT THE
TIME HE MOVED
INTO HOUGH, IT
WAS IN TRANSI-
TION FROM A POOR
WHITE TO A BLACK
NEIGHBORHOOD.
THERE WERE ONLY
A FEW WHITES
LEFT.



NOW EMIL WAS A NAIVE GUY. HE'D LIVED MOST
OF HIS LIFE IN AN ALMOST COMPLETELY WHITE
COMMUNITY. HE WASN'T FAMILIAR WITH
THE RACIAL HATRED THAT EXISTED IN THE
NEIGHBORHOOD HE MOVED INTO.



SINCE EMIL WAS THEN IN
THE NAACP AND BELIEVED IN
THE BROTHERHOOD OF MAN HE
WASN'T PREPARED FOR THE TREATMENT HE GOT.



GIT OUT
D'WAY, MAN.



GIMME
YO'
WALLET.

NOW THAT'S ONE OF THE REAL
TRAGEDIES ABOUT THE RACIAL
CONFLICT IN THIS COUNTRY. IT
JUST GOES ON AND ON. WHITES
UNDOUBTEDLY DESERVE THE
VAST MAJORITY OF THE BLAME.

BLACKS DIDN'T ASK TO GET
YANKED OUT OF AFRICA AND EN-
SLAVED IN THE AMERICAS. THEY
DIDN'T ASK TO HAVE THE FABRIC
OF THEIR SOCIETY TORN APART
AND TO BE SYSTEMATICALLY
DISCRIMINATED AGAINST AFTER
THE CIVIL WAR.



NATURALLY ENOUGH MANY
BLACKS CAME TO HATE WHITES-
ALL WHITES. THEY SOMETIMES
RETLIATED AGAINST WHITES
VIOLENTLY WHEN THEY COULD.
AS THE GENERATIONS WENT
BY ORIGINAL CAUSES WERE
FORGOTTEN, INNOCENT PEOP-
LE WERE, AT TIMES, THE
VICTIMS OF RACIAL HATRED.
AND MANY, NOT REALIZING
WHY THEY SHOULD BE HURT,
ULTIMATELY BECAME
RACISTS THEMSELVES.

EMIL WAS ONE SUCH PERSON.

MY PEOPLE COME T'AMERICA FIFTY YEARS AFTER LINCOLN FREED THE SLAVES. THEY WERE PERSECUTED BY THE AUSTRIANS, THEY WERE POOR. BUT WHEN THEY COME OVER HERE THEY TRIED T'MAKE SOMETHIN' OF THEMSELVES, THEY WORKED HARD, THEY KEP' UP THEIR HOMES.



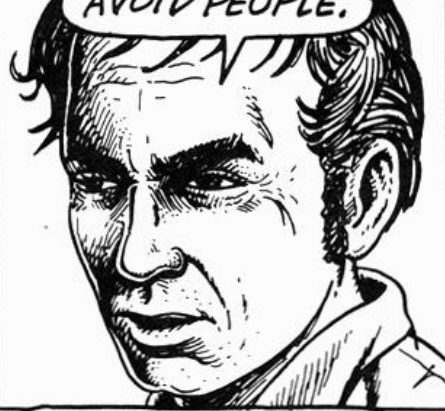
NOW THE BLACK MAN GOT HIS FREEDOM. THE WHITE MAN TRIED TO HELP 'IM. LOOK AT ME, I WAS IN THE NAACP AN' THEY PUSHED ME OFF TH' SIDEWALK. THE BLACK MAN IS BORN STUPID AN' LAZY. HE WANTS T'GIT BY BY STEALIN' AN' GETTIN' ON WELFARE. THE BLACK MAN IS JEALOUS OF THE WHITE MAN. HE WANTS WHAT TH' WHITE MAN GOT BUT HE DON'T WANNA WORK FOR IT. THE BLACK MAN IS RACIST, SO THE WHITE MAN GOTTA BE RACIST TOO.

IT WAS CRAZY, Y'KNOW. HERE WAS EMIL, LIV-IN' IN HATRED AND FEAR OF BLACKS. SO HE MOVES AWAY FROM HOUGH. BUT WHERE DOES HE MOVE TO- MY NEIGHBORHOOD, WHICH IS ALSO DANGEROUS, ALTHOUGH LESS SO THAN HOUGH, AND IN WHICH WHITE PEOPLE, ESPECIALLY OLDER WHITES, ARE LOOKED AT AS TARGETS BY SOME BLACK KIDS.

WHY HE DIDN'T MOVE T'SOME ALL WHITE NEIGHBORHOOD I DON'T KNOW. MAYBE HE DIDN'T EITHER. I OFTEN THOUGHT ABOUT SAYIN', "IF BLACKS UPSET YOU SO MUCH, WHY DON'T YOU GET AWAY FROM THEM COMPLETELY?" BUT I NEVER ASKED HIM THAT, EVEN THOUGH I WONDERED ABOUT IT. I'M NOT SURE WHY I DIDN'T ASK HIM. MAYBE I THOUGHT ANSWERIN' MY QUESTION WOULD EMBARRASS HIM IN SOME WAY, GET HIM TO ADMIT SOMETHING ABOUT HIMSELF HE DIDN'T WANT TO ADMIT.



YEAH, EMIL WAS A WEIRD GUY, A RECLUSE. HE DIDN'T SEEM T'WANT T' HAVE ANY CLOSE FRIENDS. SOMETIMES HE WENT OUT OF HIS WAY TO AVOID PEOPLE.



I'M MOVIN' ALL MY STUFF IN THE BACK ROOM FOR AWHILE AN' I'M GONNA PULL DOWN MY SHADES. IF HE COMES AROUND HERE AN' ASKS ABOUT ME TELL 'IM YOU AIN'T SEEN ME.



I REMEMBER ONE INCIDENT IN PARTICULAR.



HEY, HARVEY, THERE'S THIS GUY NAMED BILL NAGY IN MY SHOP THAT MIGHT COME OUT T'VISIT ME. I DON'T WANNA HAVE NOTHING T'DO WITH HIM. HE'S A DRUNK.

SO THAT'S WHAT EMIL DID. HE SHUT UP HIS HOUSE, MOVED ALL HIS STUFF INTO HIS BEDROOM AN' WOULDN'T ANSWER THE DOOR FOR A FEW WEEKS.



YEAH, HE WAS A REAL LONER. LIKE A LOTTA GUYS WHO AREN'T INTA TOO MUCH, HE WAS A FANATIC SPORTS FAN. HE USETA GO TO FOOTBALL AN' BASEBALL GAMES BY HIMSELF AN' IF THE BROWNS OR INDIANS DID LOUSY HE'D GET REAL UPSET.



HOW'D THE GAME GO?

AH, THEY BLEW IT IN THE LAST INNING. WHAT A BUNCHA BUMS, A BUNCHA CHOKERS.

ONE THING HE REALLY GOT INTO WAS WEIGHTLIFTING. BEING A SLAV HIMSELF, HE REALLY GOT OFF ON THE FEATS OF THE WORLD CHAMPION RUSSIAN WEIGHTLIFTERS. HE IDENTIFIED WITH THEM THE WAY A BLACK KID MIGHT IDENTIFY WITH MUHAMMAD ALI.

YEAH, THAT ZHABOTINSKY IS GREAT, THE STRONGEST MAN IN THE WORLD.

HE LIFTED WEIGHTS HIMSELF. HE'D STARTED WHEN HE WAS ABOUT THIRTY-FIVE. EVEN THOUGH HE WAS A PRETTY OLD GUY, HE HAD A MACHO ATTITUDE ABOUT HIS HEALTH AND STRENGTH. I REMEMBER ONE TIME HE GOT REAL UPTIGHT ABOUT A HERNIA OPERATION HE HADDA HAVE.

HAVIN' A HERNIA AIN'T NUTHIN', IS IT? IT DON'T MEAN YER WEAK, DOES IT?

NAH, DON' WORRY ABOUT IT, EMIL A LOTTA PEOPLE HAVE 'EM. IT'S NOTH-ING.

BECAUSE THE CATHOLIC AUSTRIANS HAD PERSECUTED HIS ORTHODOX RELATIVES, EMIL WAS NOT ONLY ANTI-BLACK BUT ANTI-CATHOLIC.

WHAT IZZAT JAPANESE RELIGION, SHINDOO OR SUMP'N?

SHINTO, EMIL.

YEAH, WELL IT'S LIKE TH' CAT'LIKS - IT'S A FASCIST RELIGION. THE CAT'LIKS WORSHIP ONE MAN, THE POPE A' ROME. YEAH, CAT'LIKS AN' SHINDOO, ITSA SAME. FASCISTS. YEAH.

AS TIME WENT ON RACIAL CONFLICT IN CLEVELAND GOT HEAVIER AND HEAVIER. THERE WERE RIOTS WITH LOOTING AND BURNING. THE NATIONAL GUARD WAS STATIONED IN OUR NEIGHBORHOOD A COUPLE OF TIMES.



IT GOT TO BE TOO MUCH FOR EMIL. HE MOVED. STRANGELY ENOUGH, THE GUY WHO HELPED HIM WAS A BLACK GUY WHO WORKED WITH HIM.



I SAW HIM A COUPLE OF TIMES AFTER THAT. HE SEEMED TO BE PRETTY HAPPY LIVING WHERE HE WAS, EVEN THOUGH IT WAS IN A BASEMENT AND PRETTY SPARSELY FURNISHED.

YEAH, IT'S NICE 'N' QUIET WHERE I LIVE. YEAH, IT'S RIGHT NEXT TO THE POLICE STATION. EVERY TIME I NEED A DRINK A' NICE COLD WATER I C'N JUST GO OVER THERE AN' GET ONE. THEY'RE REAL NICE 'T' ME.



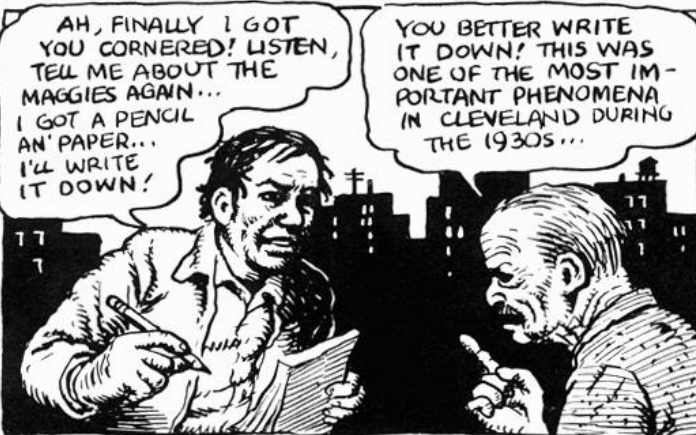
IRONICALLY, EMIL HAD MOVED INTO A POOR NEIGHBORHOOD THAT WAS INTEGRATED BUT WOULD SOON BECOME ALL BLACK. HOW HE HANDLED THAT, WHETHER OR HOW SOON HE MOVED, I DON'T KNOW. I HAVEN'T SEEN HIM FOR YEARS. WONDER WHAT'S HAPPENED TO 'IM. HE USETA TALK ABOUT MOVIN' TO EL PASO WHEN HE RETIRED. MAYBE HE'S THERE.



The Maggies (oral History)

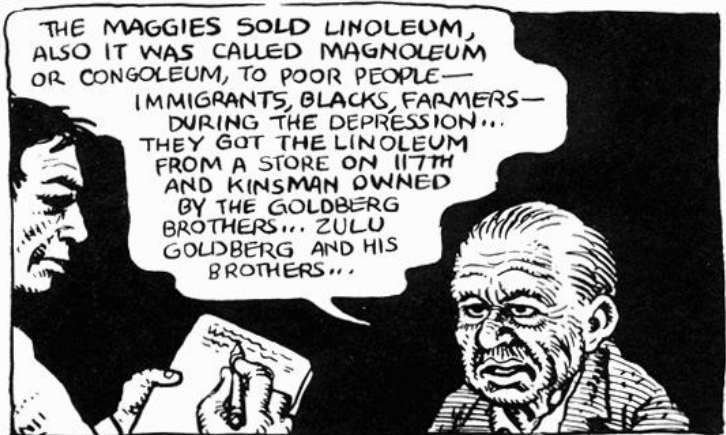
STORY BY HARVEY PEKAR
ART BY R. CRUMB

©1982 BY
HARVEY PEKAR



AH, FINALLY I GOT YOU CORNERED! LISTEN, TELL ME ABOUT THE MAGGIES AGAIN... I GOT A PENCIL AN' PAPER... I'LL WRITE IT DOWN!

YOU BETTER WRITE IT DOWN! THIS WAS ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT PHENOMENA IN CLEVELAND DURING THE 1930S...



THE MAGGIES SOLD LINOLEUM, ALSO IT WAS CALLED MAGNOLEUM OR CONGOLEUM, TO POOR PEOPLE—IMMIGRANTS, BLACKS, FARMERS—DURING THE DEPRESSION... THEY GOT THE LINOLEUM FROM A STORE ON 117TH AND KINSMAN OWNED BY THE GOLDBERG BROTHERS... ZULU GOLDBERG AND HIS BROTHERS...

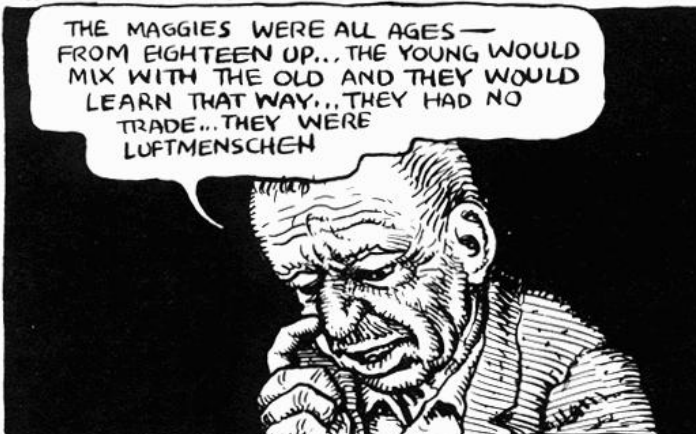


ZULU GOLDBERG? THAT WAS HIS NAME?? WHAT WERE HIS BROTHERS' NAMES—GROUCHO, HARPO, CHICO AND ZEPPU?

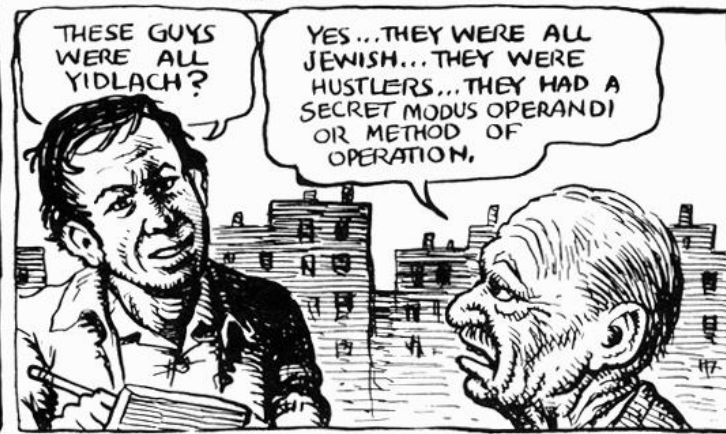


LISTEN—DO YOU WANT TO HEAR THIS OR DO YOU WANT TO EXHIBIT YOUR IDIOTIC SENSE OF HUMOR?!

I'M SORRY I'M SORRY... GO AHEAD!

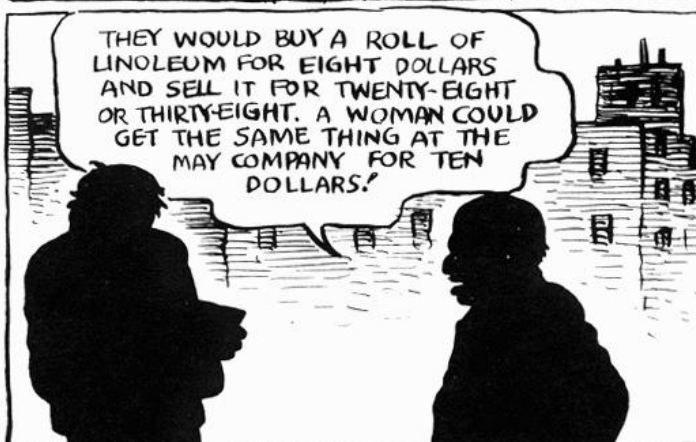


THE MAGGIES WERE ALL AGES—FROM EIGHTEEN UP... THE YOUNG WOULD MIX WITH THE OLD AND THEY WOULD LEARN THAT WAY... THEY HAD NO TRADE... THEY WERE LUFTMENSCHEN

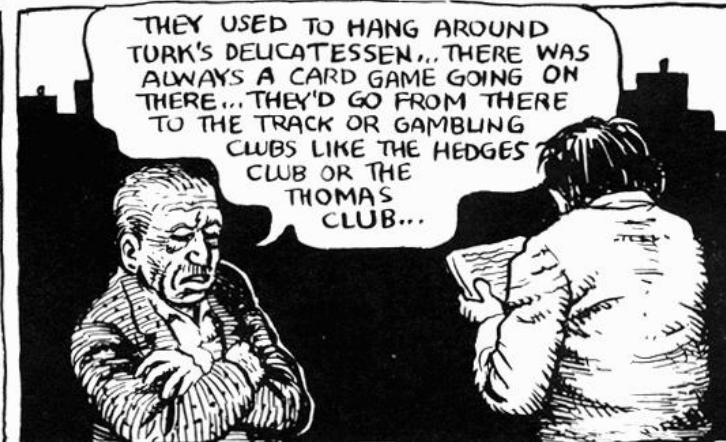


THESE GUYS WERE ALL YIDLACH?

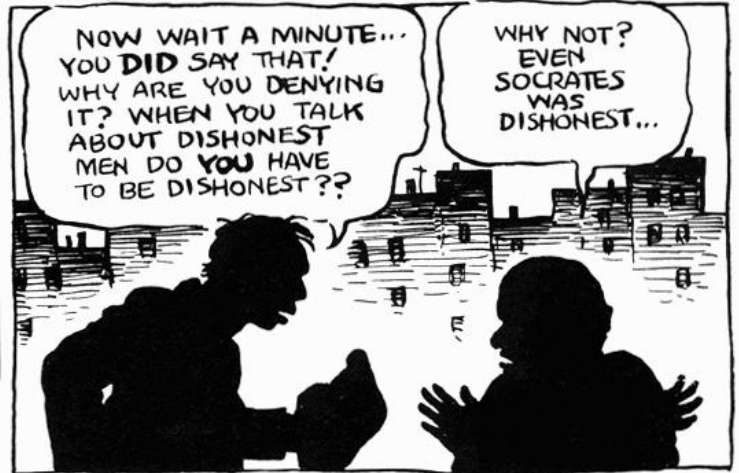
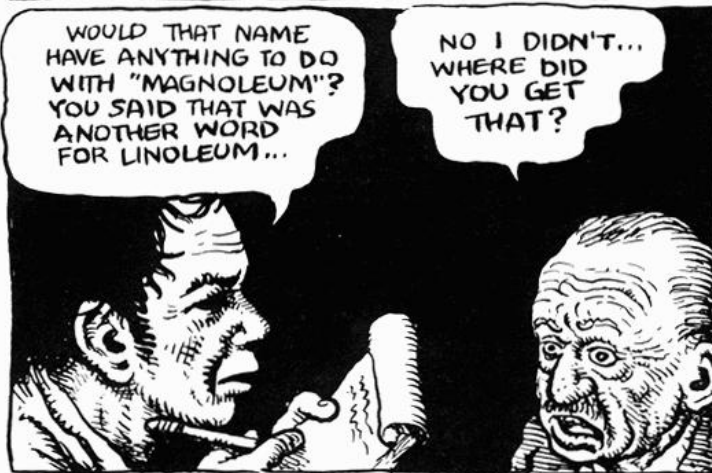
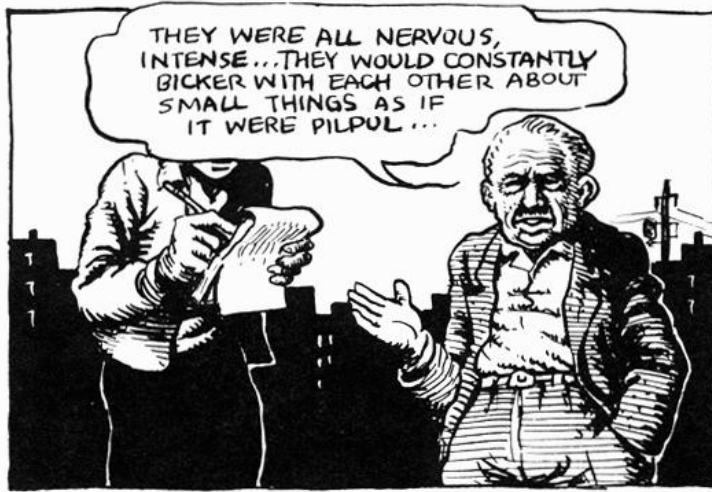
YES... THEY WERE ALL JEWISH... THEY WERE HUSTLERS... THEY HAD A SECRET MODUS OPERANDI OR METHOD OF OPERATION.



THEY WOULD BUY A ROLL OF LINOLEUM FOR EIGHT DOLLARS AND SELL IT FOR TWENTY-EIGHT OR THIRTY-EIGHT. A WOMAN COULD GET THE SAME THING AT THE MAY COMPANY FOR TEN DOLLARS!



THEY USED TO HANG AROUND TURK'S DELICATESSEN... THERE WAS ALWAYS A CARD GAME GOING ON THERE... THEY'D GO FROM THERE TO THE TRACK OR GAMBLING CLUBS LIKE THE HEDGES CLUB OR THE THOMAS CLUB...



KAPARRA

STORY BY HARVEY PEKAR
ILLUSTRATED BY GERRY SHAMRAY

COPYRIGHT © 1980
BY HARVEY PEKAR

I VAS ABOUT SEVENTEEN YEARS
OLD VEN I VENT INTO DEH KEMP.



DEY WERE MARCHING US
IN, AND FOR NO REASON
A GUART HIT ME IN
D' BECK MIT HIS RIFLE.



I TURNED AROUND, I VAS GONNA HIT
'IM, I VAS SO MAT. BUT VUNNA D'
OLDER MEN GREBBED ME; HE KNEW
I VOULD GET KILLED IF I VOULD DO
SUCH A TING.



SO I LOOKED AT DIS GUART AND I SAID TO
MYSELF, "YOU GONNA BE MY KAPARRA."



YOU KNOW VOT MEANS
KAPARRA? A KAPARRA IS
A CHICKEN VOT YOU
SECRIFICE ON DEH DAY
BEFORE YOM KIPPUR
TO GET RID OF YOUR
SINS. YOU SVING DEH
CHICKEN OVER YOUR
HEAD AND DEN YOU
KILL 'IM.



SO JUST DEN I HEARD A SHOT
AND D' GUART DROPS DEAD IN
FRONT OF ME.



A RIFLE VENT OFF ACCIDENTALLY IN DEH TOWER AND HIT DIS GUY.



VEN DAT HEPPENED, I KNEW SOME VAY I VAS GONNA MAKE
IT THROUGH ALIVE.



AMERICAN SPLENDOR ASSAULTS THE MEDIA

I KNOW A GUY WHO KNEW A GUY WHO KNEW A GUY WHO WAS A SENIOR EDITOR OF THE VILLAGE VOICE. HIS WIFE (THE EDITOR'S) GOT SHOWN MY STUFF, LIKED IT, AND WROTE A LONG ARTICLE ABOUT ME WHICH WAS ACTUALLY PUBLISHED. OF COURSE, IF THE WOMAN HADN'T BEEN MARRIED TO AN EDITOR OF THE PAPER I WOULDN'T HAVE HAD A SNOWBALL'S CHANCE IN HELL OF THEM PRINTING ANYTHING ABOUT ME. ENNYWAY, THEY PASSED MY BOOKS AROUND THE VOICE OFFICE AND I GATHER I WAS THE HERO OF THE MONTH THERE. SOMEONE QUOTED THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF AS SAYING ABOUT ME, "CAN WE GET THIS GUY?"

THE ART DIRECTOR CALLED ME UP A COUPLE OF TIMES AND BEGGED ME TO DO A WEEKLY STORY FOR THEM. I REFUSED, PARTLY BECAUSE I DIDN'T THINK I COULD MEET THE DEADLINES, BUT I SAID I'D CONTRIBUTE TO HIM AS OFTEN AS POSSIBLE. HE SAID THAT WAS O.K. I TOLD THE GUYS WHO ILLUSTRATED MY WORK ABOUT THE OFFER AND THEY WERE VERY HAPPY, EXCEPT FOR CRUMB, WHO WAS JADED.

IT WAS A GREAT OPPORTUNITY, GOING FROM PRACTICALLY NO PUBLIC RECOGNITION TO A PAPER WITH A CIRCULATION OF 150,000 OR 200,000, INCLUDING A RELATIVELY HIGH PRO-PORTION OF INTELLECTUALS AND PEOPLE CONNECTED WITH THE ARTS.... IT SEEMED TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE, AND IT WAS! WE WORKED LIKE HELL AND SENT THE VOICE FOUR STORIES IN FOUR WEEKS. IT TOOK TWO MONTHS FOR THE FIRST ONE TO BE PRINTED, TWO MORE FOR THE SECOND, AND THEN NOTHING...

I CALLED THE ART DIRECTOR A FEW TIMES AND HE KEPT ON SAYING THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF COULDN'T SPARE HIM THE SPACE. THAT IS, HE COULDN'T SPARE HIM ABOUT ONE-THIRD OF A PAGE IN A 110-PAGE PAPER!

STORY BY
HARVEY PEKAR
ART BY
R. CRUMB
©1983 by
Harvey Pekar



I DUNNO, I TRIED TO FIGURE OUT WHAT HAPPENED AND I COULDN'T. I WAS SENDING THE VOICE (IN MY OPINION) SOME REALLY FINE STUFF. HOW COULD THEY TURN THEIR BACK ON IT? I TALKED TO THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF THE DAY HE RECEIVED THE FIRST STORY I SENT THE VOICE. IT WAS ONE OF MY BEST SHORT PIECES—ABOUT A MIRACLE THAT HAD HAPPENED TO AN INMATE OF A GERMAN CONCENTRATION CAMP DURING THE SECOND WORLD WAR, AND IT HAD SUPERB ILLUSTRATION BY GERRY SHAMRAY. I BELIEVE THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF WAS BEING HONEST WITH ME WHEN HE PRAISED IT HIGHLY...

I JUST READ IT—I THINK IT'S WONDAFUL!



WHAT REALLY MADE ME MAD WAS THAT WHILE ALL THIS STUFF WAS GOING ON, THE VOICE TOOK ON ANOTHER FULL-TIME CARTOONIST AND HIS WORK REALLY SUCKED! IT WAS REAL COY AND PRECIOUS. HE SEEMED LIKE A TWELVE-YEAR-OLD TRYING TO SHOW HOW SENSITIVE HE WAS. LOOK, I DON'T WANNA SOUND VINDICTIVE, NOT COMPLETELY VINDICTIVE ANYWAY (HEH HEH)... THE VOICE'S OTHER CARTOONISTS ARE FINE. JULES FEIFFER IS VERY IMPORTANT—HE SHOULD LIVE AND PROSPER... STAN MACK'S O.K.... MORE POWER TO 'IM, BUT THIS GUY....



IT DIDN'T MAKE SENSE, EVEN FROM A COMMERCIAL STANDPOINT. LIKE, CRUMB WAS ILLUSTRATING SOME OF MY STORIES. HE HAD WORKED FOR THE VOICE BRIEFLY IN '76 AND QUIT THEM, AND WHEN HE DID THEY CRIED THE BLUES, NO ONE KNOWS ME, BUT HERE I AM BRINGING CRUMB, A HERO OF THE COUNTERCULTURE, BACK INTO THE FOLD. YOU'D HAVE THOUGHT THE VOICE WOULD'VE LOVED THAT, BUT THEY DIDN'T THINK ANY-THING ABOUT IT.

I'M PRETTY PARANOID BUT I COULDN'T BELIEVE THERE WAS ANYONE PLOTTING AGAINST ME. I GUESS WHEN THE VOICE LOST INTEREST IN MY WORK IT WAS CAUSED BY MY BEING OUT OF SIGHT AND CONSEQUENTLY OUT OF MIND. A COUPLE OF MONTHS AFTER I CAME TO THEIR ATTENTION SOMETHING OR SOMEONE ELSE CAME UP, I'D HAD MY DAY IN THE SUN.



YEAH, I KNOW WHAT I'M LETTING MYSELF IN FOR WHEN I COME DOWN ON HIM SO HARD, IT DOESN'T LOOK GOOD TO KNOCK SOMEONE IN THE SAME RACKET. YOU COULD CHARGE ME WITH BEING JEALOUS, OR WITH BEING AN EGOMANIAC. LIKE, "OH MAN, YOU'RE NOT THE ONLY GUY THAT THINKS HE'S HOT STUFF—EVERYBODY'S OUT THERE BLOWING HIS OWN HORN. HE'S GETTING THE BREAD AND EXPOSURE, YOU'RE NOT. TOUGH! MAYBE HE DESERVES IT."

ALL I CAN SAY IS, LOOK AT HIS WORK AND LOOK AT MINE AND LOOK AT SOMEONE ELSE'S AND MAKE UP YOUR OWN MIND WHAT THEY'RE WORTH TO YOU. THERE ARE AS MANY SETS OF STANDARDS AS THERE ARE PEOPLE. IF AN ARTIST IS IN THE RIGHT PLACE AT THE RIGHT TIME AND IS HOOKED UP WITH THE RIGHT AUDIENCE MAYBE HE GETS FAME AND FORTUNE, IF NOT—TOO BAD. IT'S A CRAP-SHOOT. VIRTUE AND EXCELLENCE DON'T AUTOMATICALLY GET REWARDED, ESPECIALLY WHEN PEOPLE CAN'T AGREE ON WHAT THEY ARE.



AFTER DEALING WITH THESE PEOPLE AT THE VOICE I WAS PARTICULARLY MAD. NOT THAT I HADN'T WORKED WITH IRRESPONSIBLE, INCONSIDERATE PEOPLE BEFORE, SOME FAR WORSE THAN ANYONE ON THE VOICE, BUT IT SEEMED SO STUPID FROM ANY ANGLE I LOOKED AT IT—AESTHETIC, ECONOMIC—FOR THEM TO HAVE GIVEN ME THE COLD SHOULDER. I USED TO GET FURIOUS THINKING OF THOSE MEALY-MOULDED CLOWNS, THE ART DIRECTOR AND THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF... AND EXPOSURE IN THE VOICE COULDN'T HELP ME SO MUCH!

TIME PASSED AND OCCASIONALLY SOMEONE WOULD TRY TO GET ME INVOLVED IN ONE PROJECT OR ANOTHER. ONCE IN A WHILE I'D GO ALONG WITH THEM, MAYBE EVEN INVEST TIME AND MONEY, AND THEN EVERYTHING WOULD COME A CROPPER. I WAS EVEN CONTACTED BY A FEW MOVIE PRODUCERS FISHING AROUND FOR MATERIAL!

MOST OF THESE JERKS HAD BEEN HIPPIED TO ME BY THE VOICE ARTICLE. NO OTHER PIECE OF PUBLICITY STIRRED ANY SIGNIFICANT INTEREST IN MY WORK. THERE WAS SOMETHING ABOUT ME IN OUI AND NOBODY EVEN MENTIONED IT.

SO NOW IT'S SEPTEMBER OF 1982. MY SEVENTH BOOK HAS COME OUT A COUPLE MONTHS AGO. IT'S ONE OF MY BEST BUT I'M GETTING VERY LITTLE RESPONSE TO IT. SALES ARE WAY OFF, PARTLY BECAUSE I'VE LOST TWO DISTRIBUTORS AND PARTLY BECAUSE THE ECONOMY'S IN SUCH BAD SHAPE. I GOTTA GET RIDDA SOME A' THESE BOOKS!



SO HE TELLS ME TO SEND A COPY OF MY LATEST BOOK TO THE BOOK DEPARTMENT FOR REVIEW. IN OTHER WORDS, TO GO THROUGH CHANNELS. THAT'S ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE FOR SOMEONE IN MY POSITION TO DO SUCCESSFULLY, THOUGH. HIS WIFE SAYS SHE'LL TALK TO THE ASSISTANT BOOK EDITOR ABOUT ME, SO THERE'S A SLIM RAY OF HOPE. I WRITE TO THE ASSISTANT BOOK EDITOR TO ASK FOR A REVIEW. AMAZINGLY SHE ANSWERS MY LETTER—ONLY A MONTH LATER! HER ANSWER IS VERY ENCOURAGING. SHE SAYS SHE'LL GET SOMEONE TO REVIEW MY BOOK. SHE EVEN ASKS ME TO WRITE FOR THE VOICE AND TO KEEP IN TOUCH.

HER LETTER WITH ACTUAL QUOTE

I think your work is something special. I'll be in touch.



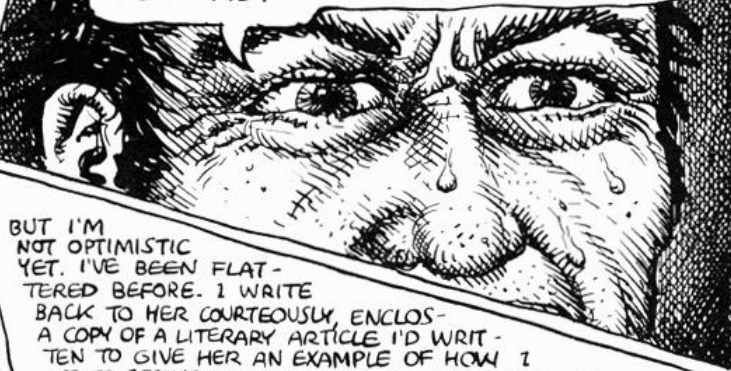
HAWVIE, I THINK YA BOOKS'RE RILLY WORKS A' AHT?



I NEED PUBLICITY.

WHERE AM I GONNA GO? ALL THE OTHER PERIODICALS ARE BLIND TO MY WORK. THE VOICE HAS ABOUT TEN PERCENT VISION IN ONE EYE FOR IT. WHAT CAN I DO? "IN THE COUNTRY OF THE BLIND, THE ONE-EYED MAN IS KING."

I CALL MY CONTACTS AT THE VOICE, THE SENIOR EDITOR AND HIS WIFE WHO WROTE THE FAMOUS ARTICLE ABOUT ME, FOR ADVICE. THE EDITOR SOUNDS ANNOYED. HE DOESN'T WANT TO PILOT AN ARTICLE ABOUT ME THROUGH. HE'S GOT OTHER THINGS TO THINK ABOUT. I CAN'T BLAME HIM. I NEVER DID ANYTHING FOR HIM, AND I'M NOT IN A POSITION TO DO ANYTHING. IT FINALLY OCCURED T'ME THAT HE MIGHTA TAKEN ALOTTA INTEREST IN HIS WIFE'S WRITING ABOUT ME BECAUSE HE WAS CONCERNED ABOUT PROMOTING HER, NOT BECAUSE HE CARED ABOUT ME!



BUT I'M NOT OPTIMISTIC YET. I'VE BEEN FLAT-TERED BEFORE. I WRITE BACK TO HER COURTEOUSLY, ENCLOSE A COPY OF A LITERARY ARTICLE I'D WRITTEN TO GIVE HER AN EXAMPLE OF HOW I WRITE ESSAYS AND CRITICISM. THEN I WAIT. NO REPLY. AFTER A FEW WEEKS I WRITE TO SEE IF SHE'S GOTTEN ANYONE TO REVIEW MY BOOK. STILL NO REPLY. AFTER A COUPLE MORE WEEKS I CALL THE SENIOR EDITOR TO FIND OUT HOW TO GET TO THIS WOMAN. HE SAYS:

DON'T CALL HER. SHE'S KNOWN FOR NOT ANSWERING PHONE CALLS. YOU MIGHT SEND HER A NOTE, THOUGH



WHAT HE SAID LED ME TO BELIEVE THAT SHE PROBABLY LIKED MY WORK BUT WASN'T GOING TO DO ANYTHING FOR ME, AND SHE DIDN'T.

I WAS ENRAGED EVEN THOUGH I INITIALLY DIDN'T THINK THERE WAS MUCH CHANCE OF THE VOICE DOING ANYTHING FOR ME, WHY HADN'T THIS WOMAN IGNORED MY FIRST LETTER INSTEAD OF ANSWERING IT AND GIVING RISE TO SOME FALSE HOPE I COULDN'T COMPLETELY SUPPRESS?



I THINK I KNOW THE ANSWER. SHE HAD GOOD INTENTIONS, BUT GOOD INTENTIONS COME CHEAP. IT'S EASY TO MAKE PROMISES, GIVE ASSURANCES, HER EXECUTION WAS LOUSY, THOUGH. A PERSON WITH GOOD INTENTIONS WHO PROMISES THINGS AND IS TOO LAZY TO COME THROUGH IS OFTEN MORE HARMFUL THAN A MALICIOUS PERSON. A MALICIOUS PERSON IS EASIER TO SPOT. YOU CAN BE ON YOUR GUARD AGAINST HIM. PLUS HE'S INTERESTED ENOUGH IN YOU TO TRY TO HURT YOU. IF YOU CONVERT HIM MAYBE YOU'LL HAVE A FRIEND....

BUT PEOPLE LIKE THE ASSISTANT BOOK EDITOR WHO, I SHOULD POINT OUT, VERY OFTEN HOLD POSITIONS OF POWER, DON'T EVEN CARE ENOUGH ABOUT YOU TO WANT TO HURT YOU. THAT'S WHY THEY'RE SHOCKED WHEN YOU GET ANGRY AT THEM. THEY PROMISE YOU THINGS BECAUSE THEY WANT TO SEEM AGREEABLE. THEY DON'T KEEP THEIR PROMISES BECAUSE IT'S TOO MUCH TROUBLE. THEY KEEP ON BREAKING THEIR WORD BECAUSE THEY'RE SO SELDOM PENALIZED FOR IT. IT'S ACCEPTED BEHAVIOR IN OUR SOCIETY, LIKE BEING FASHIONABLY LATE FOR DINNER. I'M SURE THE VOICE HAS TREATED MANY PEOPLE AS INCONSIDERATELY AS IT HAS ME....



I WAS GONNA WRITE THIS JIVE WOMAN A NASTY LETTER, BUT A GUY AT WORK TALKED ME OUT OF IT...

WADDA YOU WANNA DO THAT FOR? THEY'LL JUST LAUGH AT YOU... THEY'LL THINK YOU'RE A CRANK... THEY DON'T CARE ABOUT YOU...

SO I SUBLIMATED BY WRITING THIS STORY... THAT'S ABOUT WHAT I CAN DO WHEN THINGS BOTHER ME—WRITE STORIES ABOUT THEM....



SPRING, 1982. MY COMIC BOOK IS LOSING MONEY HAND OVER FIST. MY JOB HAS BEEN GETTING ON MY NERVES. I'M FORTY-TWO YEARS OLD, I'VE BEEN WRITING FOR NATIONALLY DISTRIBUTED PUBLICATIONS FOR TWENTY-THREE YEARS AND I'M STILL AN ALIENATED SCHLEP LIKE I WAS WHEN I WAS NINETEEN.



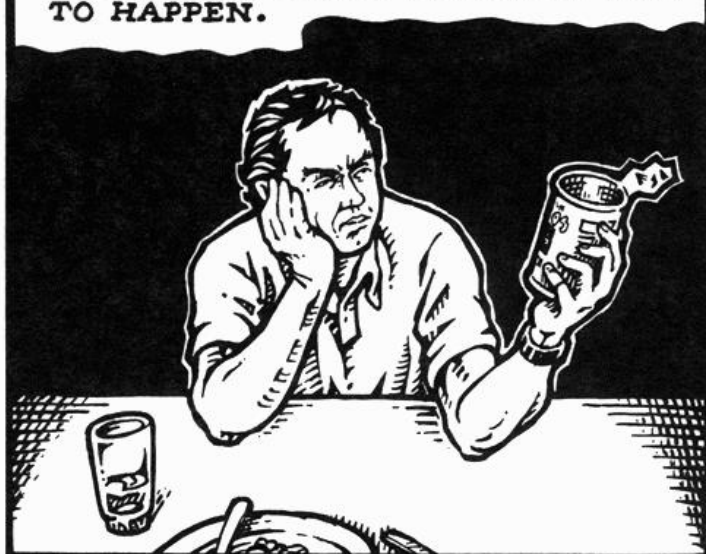
STORY BY: HARVEY PEKAR
ART BY: KEVIN BROWN

Grubstreet, U.S.A.

HOW AM I GONNA GET OUTTA THIS SITUATION? IF I COULD ONLY BREAK EVEN ON MY BOOK AND MEET SOME PEOPLE THAT HAD SOMETHING IN COMMON WITH ME, MAKE A FEW GOOD FRIENDS. THE ONLY WAY TO DO THAT IS T'GET MORE RECOGNITION FOR MY COMIC BOOK WRITING. I GOTTA REACH PEOPLE THROUGH MY STORIES.



BUT HOW WAS I GONNA DO THAT? MY BOOK DIDN'T SELL WELL; HARDLY ANYONE SAW IT. I GOT VERY LITTLE PUBLICITY. I COULDN'T AFFORD TO ADVERTISE. I HAD TO DEPEND ON A LUCKY BREAK, SOMEONE IN A POSITION OF INFLUENCE HAD TO SEE MY WORK AND PUBLICIZE ME OR PRINT MY STORIES IN A LARGE CIRCULATION PUBLICATION. SOMETHING LIKE THAT HAD TO HAPPEN.



THAT WAS A POSSIBILITY, THOUGH. A GUY ON THE "VILLAGE VOICE" ONCE BEGGED ME TO WORK REGULARLY FOR THEM, ALTHOUGH THE DEAL EVENTUALLY FELL THROUGH. AND THREE PEOPLE HAD CONTACTED ME ALREADY ABOUT DOING MOVIES BASED ON MY WORK. THEY'D ALL CRAPPED OUT, BUT MAYBE SOMEONE ELSE WOULD COME ALONG.

LISSEN, I THINK YOUR WORK IS TERRIFIC. MAYBE WE COULD MAKE A TV SERIES OUT OF IT LIKE, UH... "SATURDAY NIGHT LIVE."

"SATURDAY NIGHT LIVE?" HOW IS MY STUFF LIKE "SATURDAY NIGHT LIVE?!"

ME LISTENING TO SOME ASSHOLE HOLLYWOOD PROMOTER



YEAH, I NEEDED OUTSIDE HELP. THEN SOMETHING PROMISING HAPPENED. THE OPERATORS OF A LOCAL FILM FESTIVAL WERE HIGHLIGHTING A MOVIE CALLED "MY DINNER WITH ANDRE." THEY ASKED ME TO CONTACT ONE OF THE CO-WRITERS AND STARS, WALLACE SHAWN, TO HELP GET HIM TO COME TO CLEVELAND TO HYPE THE FLIC BECAUSE HE'D TOLD THEM THAT HE LIKED MY BOOK. I'D HEARD ABOUT SHAWN'S MOVIE AND REALLY WAS INTERESTED IN SEEING IT. SO I WROTE HIM THIS REAL HUMBLE LETTER TELLING HIM HOW I WISHED HE'D COME HERE AND HOW HAPPY I'D BE TO SEE HIM.



I CHECKED UP ON SHAWN A LITTLE.

HIS FATHER'S THE EDITOR OF THE "NEW YORKER."

THE "NEW YORKER?" MAYBE HE'S GOT PUBLISHING CONNECTIONS. SEEMS LIKE HE COULD REALLY DO ME SOME GOOD.

THIS FILM WASN'T SCHEDULED TO BE SHOWN FOR A MONTH. MEANWHILE I GOT SOME FREE TICKETS TO SEE IT FROM THE FESTIVAL PROMOTERS. THEY WERE \$7.00 APIECE. IN CASE SHAWN DIDN'T COME IN I WAS GONNA SELL 'EM AN' THEN SEE THE MOVIE LATER FOR LESS MONEY.

IF I AIN'T ABLE T' SEE THE FLIC I WAS WONDERIN' IF YOU'D LIKE T' BUY THESE TICKETS OFF ME.

OH SURE! I WANT TO SEE IT, BUT I HADN'T GOTTEN AROUND T' GETTING TICKETS YET.

Y'KNOW, IT'S ALREADY A SELLOUT.



WHILE I WAS WAITING TO HEAR WHAT SHAWN WOULD DO, I READ A NOVEL CALLED NEW GRUB STREET BY GEORGE GISSING. IT REALLY SHOOK ME UP. IT TOOK PLACE IN ENGLAND ABOUT 1890 AND WAS ABOUT THE LIVES OF THESE STRUGGLING WRITERS, MOST OF WHICH ENDED TRAGICALLY.

GOD, THESE GUYS CAN'T MAKE ANY MONEY UNLESS THEY WRITE COMMERCIAL CRAP. THEY LIVE HAND-TO-MOUTH, THEY'RE LOOKED DOWN ON BY MIDDLE CLASS AN' UPPER CLASS PEOPLE...



WHY SHOULD I THINK I'LL WIND UP GETTING MORE RECOGNITION THAN THEM? I'M USIN' COMIC BOOKS IN A NEW WAY. IT'S A NEW GENRE THAT HARDLY ANYBODY KNOWS ABOUT. THERE AIN'T A READY-MADE AUDIENCE FOR ME LIKE THERE IS FOR NOVELISTS. AT LEAST PEOPLE KNOW WHAT A NOVEL IS.



AND LOOK AT GISSING. THERE WERE SOME PEOPLE THAT KNEW HE WAS A GREAT WRITER IN HIS TIME BUT LOOK AT HOW PEOPLE TREATED HIM. HE COULDN'T EVEN GET AN EDUCATED WOMAN T'MARRY 'IM. HIS FIRST WIFE WAS A HOOKER AN' HIS SECOND WAS A PRETTY POORLY EDUCATED STONEMASON'S DAUGHTER.



I DON'T WANNA EXAGGERATE, THOUGH. I HAD THE ADVANTAGE OVER THOSE FUNKY VICTORIAN WRITERS IN ONE BIG WAY, SO Y'DON'T HAVE TO FEEL AS SORRY FOR ME AS I DO FOR MYSELF. (HOWEVER, I'D APPRECIATE AS MUCH PITY AS YOU CAN GIVE ME.)

WELL, AT LEAST I GOT A CIVIL SERVICE GIG SO I DON'T HAVE TO WORRY WHERE MY NEXT MEAL'S COMIN' FROM.

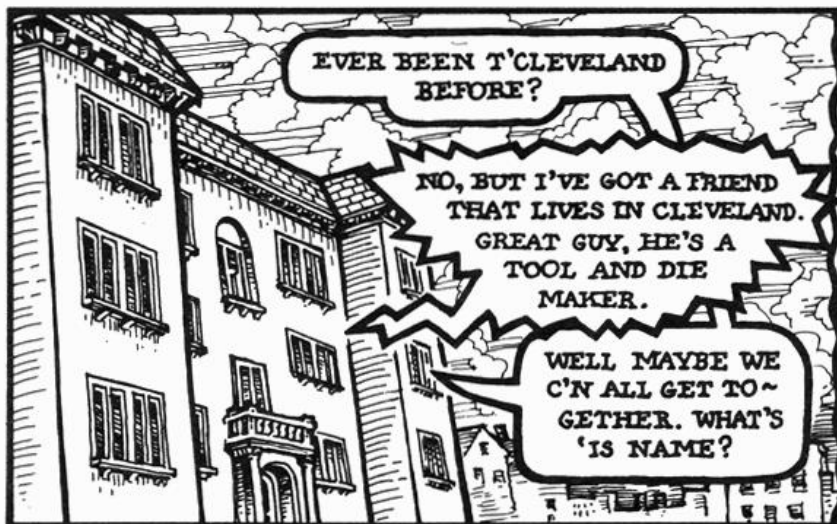


SO ANYWAY, TIME GOES ON AND ABOUT A WEEK BEFORE THE MOVIE IS SCHEDULED SHAWN ACTUALLY CALLS ME.

I'D LIKE TO MEET YOU WHEN I'M THERE. DO YOU HAVE ANY TIME NEXT SUNDAY OR MONDAY?

YEAH, SURE. IF WE CAN'T GET T'GETHER SUNDAY WE C'N GET T'GETHER MONDAY. I GOT A LOT OF VACATION TIME I C'N USE.





WE TALKED T'GETHER FOR AWHILE AN' SET UP A TENTATIVE TIME T'MEET. I TALKED TO JEFF, HIS FRIEND IN CLEVELAND, SO WE COULD CO~ORDINATE OUR SCHED~ULES. I WAS SUPPOSED TO SEE HIM BRIEFLY ON THE SUNDAY NIGHT THE MOVIE PLAYED AND WE WERE SUPPOSED TO HAVE LUNCH AT JEFF'S THE NEXT DAY. JEFF WAS SUPPOSED TO EAT WITH US AND THEN GO BACK TO WORK. I FIGURED I'D HAVE A COUPLE HOURS ALONE WITH SHAWN AFTER THAT WHEN I COULD TALK TO HIM ABOUT MY WRITING.

SO FINALLY SUNDAY NIGHT ARRIVES. I MEET SHAWN IN THE LOBBY T'VERIFY OUR NEXT DAY APPOINTMENT, THEN GO IN T'SEE THE SHOW.



THE MOVIE IS A FILMED CONVERSATION TAKING PLACE IN A RESTAURANT BETWEEN SHAWN AND HIS FRIEND, ANDRE GREGORY. IN THE BEGINNING OF THE FILM, SHAWN INTRODUCES HIMSELF AND I START WONDERING IF HE CAN DO ANYTHING FOR ME. HE WAS POORMOUTHING.



THAT WAS A GOOD MOVIE. I C'N SEE HOW WE RELATE TO EACH OTHER'S WORK. WE BOTH LIKE TO DO THINGS ABOUT PEOPLE TALKING.





THE NEXT DAY I SHOWED UP UP FOR LUNCH AT JEFF'S HOUSE ON THE WEST SIDE IN A POOR BUT PARTLY GENTRIFIED NEIGHBORHOOD.



JEFF'S WIFE, KATHY, ANSWERED THE DOOR.

HI. JEFF ISN'T HOME YET AND WALLY CALLED AND SAID HE'D BE ABOUT FORTY-FIVE MINUTES LATE. C'MON IN AND SIT DOWN. I CAN GET YOU SOMETHING TO EAT NOW IF YOU'RE HUNGRY.



JEFF DECIDED HE WAS GONNA TAKE THE WHOLE AFTERNOON OFF SINCE HE DOESN'T SEE WALLY THAT MUCH. WALLY'S NEVER BEEN TO OUR HOUSE BEFORE.

HMM. IF HE DOESN'T GO BACK TO WORK I MIGHT NOT HAVE MUCH OF A CHANCE TO TALK TO SHAWN.



KATHY WAS A BRIGHT, EASY-TO-TALK-TO PERSON. I HAD A NICE RELAXED CONVERSATION WITH HER.

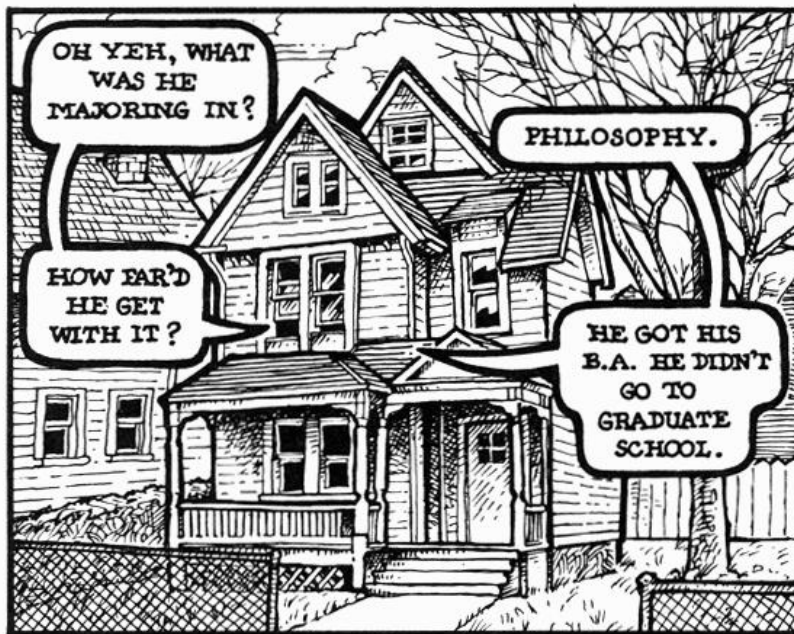
HOW'D YOU MEET JEFF?

OH, THAT WAS DURING THE JOHNSTOWN FLOOD OF 1977. WE WERE BOTH WITH VISTA. I WAS IN CLEVELAND AND HE WAS IN ATHENS, OHIO, AND WE BOTH GOT SENT TO JOHNSTOWN TO HELP OUT.



SO HOW DID JEFF GET TO KNOW WALLY? DID HE MEET 'IM IN NEW YORK?

UH~HUH. JEFF WENT TO THE NEW SCHOOL WITH DEBBIE, WALLY'S GIRL FRIEND, AND THROUGH HER HE MET HIM.



OH YEH, WHAT
WAS HE
MAJORING IN?

PHILOSOPHY.

HOW FAR'D
HE GET
WITH IT?

HE GOT HIS
B.A. HE DIDN'T
GO TO
GRADUATE
SCHOOL.



WELL I SEE
WHERE THE TOOL
AND DIE MAKER
GIG COMES IN
NOW. YOU CAN'T
GET ANY KIND
OF JOB WITH A B.A.
IN PHILOSOPHY
AND TOOL AND DIE
MAKERS MAKE A
LOTTA MONEY-
THEY'RE IN
BIG DEMAND.

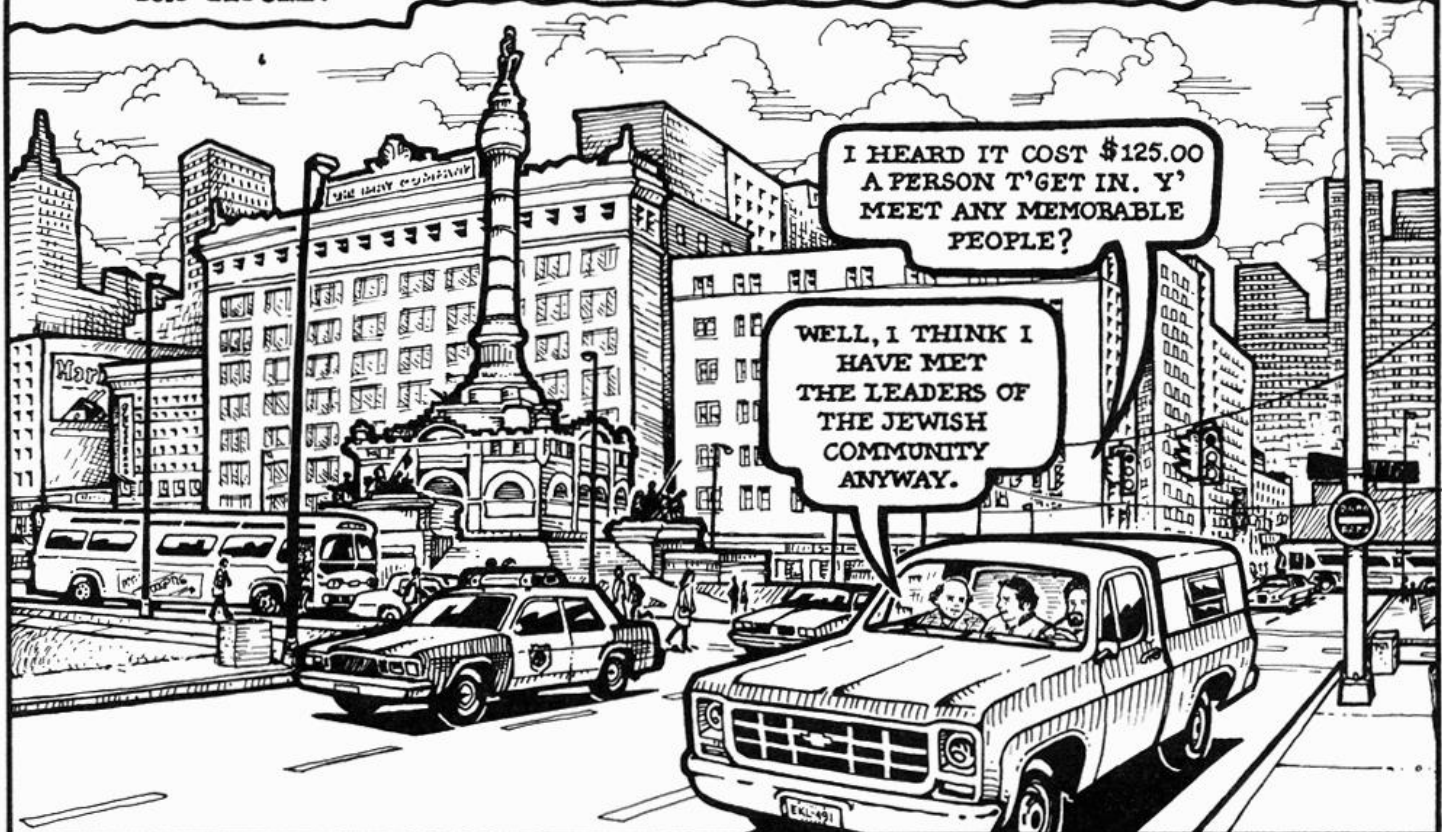
YEAH. JEFF'S GOT
TWO YEARS TO GO TO
GET HIS JOURNEYMAN
PAPERS. WHEN HE
GETS THEM HE FIG-
URES WE CAN MOVE
JUST ABOUT ANYWHERE
AND HE'LL FIND A
GOOD JOB. HE DOESN'T
WANT TO GET STUCK
IN ONE PLACE TOO
LONG.

AFTER AWHILE JEFF CAME BACK FROM WORK. HE WAS GOING TO TAKE THE AFTERNOON OFF
SINCE SHAWN WAS LEAVING AT ABOUT 4:30.



LET'S GO DOWNTOWN AND
PICK UP WALLY, O.K.? HE
SAID HE'D BE WAITING IN
FRONT OF HIS
HOTEL IN ABOUT
FIVE MINUTES.

WE MET SHAWN RIGHT ON TIME. I ASKED HIM ABOUT A PARTY THROWN FOR HIM THE
DAY BEFORE.



I HEARD IT COST \$125.00
A PERSON T'GET IN. Y'
MEET ANY MEMORABLE
PEOPLE?

WELL, I THINK I
HAVE MET
THE LEADERS OF
THE JEWISH
COMMUNITY
ANYWAY.

BACK AT JEFF'S PLACE WE SAT DOWN TO EAT LUNCH. A FRIEND OF JEFF AND KATHY'S JOINED US. I KNEW HER, TOO AND ASKED ABOUT A MUTUAL ACQUAINTANCE WHO WAS LIVING IN NEW YORK.

HOW'S RAY DOIN'?

PRETTY WELL. I SAW HIM A COUPLE OF WEEKS AGO. HE JUST HAD A PLAY PRODUCED.

PLAY? RAY'S WRITING PLAYS NOW? I DIDN'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT THAT.

YOU DIDN'T? WAIT A MINUTE, I'LL SHOW YOU A PROGRAM. HE'S REAL BUSY THESE DAYS.

BOY, RAY'S WRITING PLAYS. WELL, GOOD FOR HIM. HE'S A FINE GUY AN' HE DESERVES A BREAK.

OUR CONVERSATION RANGED OVER A VARIETY OF SUBJECTS. DIG ME HOLDING FORTH BEFORE AN ADMIRING AUDIENCE.

IF WOODY ALLEN WANTS TO DO A SERIOUS MOVIE WHY DOESN'T HE DO SOMETHING SERIOUS ABOUT BROOKLYN? IT'S POSSIBLE TO WRITE SERIOUSLY ABOUT BROOKLYN. HE'S A TALENTED, PERCEPTIVE GUY BUT HE CAN'T WRITE BELIEVABLE WASP DIALOGUE...

... AND WHY WOULD HE OR ANYONE WANNA IMITATE THAT HUMORLESS, DULL-WITTED BERGMAN? I MEAN I GUESS THE GUY'S BEEN AN IMPORTANT FILM MAKER, IN SOME RESPECTS, GIVE 'IM CREDIT FOR THAT, BUT HE'S SUCH A FLODDING, SOPHOMORIC THINKER.



SHAWN TALKED ABOUT HIS FINANCIAL SITUATION A LITTLE. IT SEEMS HE DID NEED MONEY.

THINGS HAVE BEEN PRETTY ROUGH. I'M HAVING TROUBLE WITH MY VISA CARD.

IF HE'S TELLIN' THE TRUTH IT LOOKS LIKE HE'S IN ABOUT THE SAME SHAPE I'M IN. JUST BECAUSE HE MAKES A MOVIE IT DON'T AUTOMATICALLY MAKE HIM RICH ANY MORE THAN IT MAKES ME RICH BECAUSE I PUBLISH A COMIC BOOK.



BECAUSE OF HIS MONEY PROBLEMS HIS GIRLFRIEND HAD TO BARTEND.

I'M MUCH MORE UPTIGHT THAN SHE IS. SOME OF THE PEOPLE IN THAT BAR I FIND INTIMIDATING, BUT SHE SEEMS COMFORTABLE WITH THEM.



SHAWN IS KNOWN PRIMARILY AS A PLAY~WRITE BUT HE'S DONE SOME ACTING, TOO. HE TOLD US ABOUT A LUCRATIVE JOB HE'D JUST TURNED DOWN.

I WAS SUPPOSED TO HAVE PLAYED THE VOICE OF AN ORANGUTAN ON THIS T.V. SERIES. THE MONEY WAS FANTASTIC, BUT THEY WANTED ME TO SIGN A CONTRACT FOR SEVEN YEARS. I JUST CAN'T SEE MYSELF PLAYING AN ORANGUTAN WHEN I'M FORTY~FIVE YEARS OLD.



THEN KATHY BROUGHT UP SHAWN'S GIRLFRIEND AGAIN. IT SEEMS THAT SHE'D HAD A PLAY PRODUCED WHICH KATHY'D SEEN SEVERAL WEEKS BEFORE AND LIKED A LOT.

TELL DEBBIE I REALLY APPRECIATED HER WRITING ABOUT THAT EXPERIENCE. I WENT THROUGH IT MYSELF, SO I COULD IDENTIFY WITH WHAT SHE WAS SAYING. THAT WAS A REAL IMPORTANT TIME FOR ME.





I WAS GETTING MORE AND MORE DEPRESSED. SHAWN WAS BROKE; IT WAS DOUBTFUL WHETHER HE COULD DO HIMSELF A LOT OF GOOD, LET ALONE ME. I STILL WANTED TO TALK ABOUT MY SITUATION WITH HIM THOUGH. MAYBE HE KNEW ABOUT SOMEONE OR SOMETHING THAT COULD HELP ME. SOMEBODY THAT'D WRITE AN ARTICLE ABOUT ME OR PUBLISH MY STORIES.

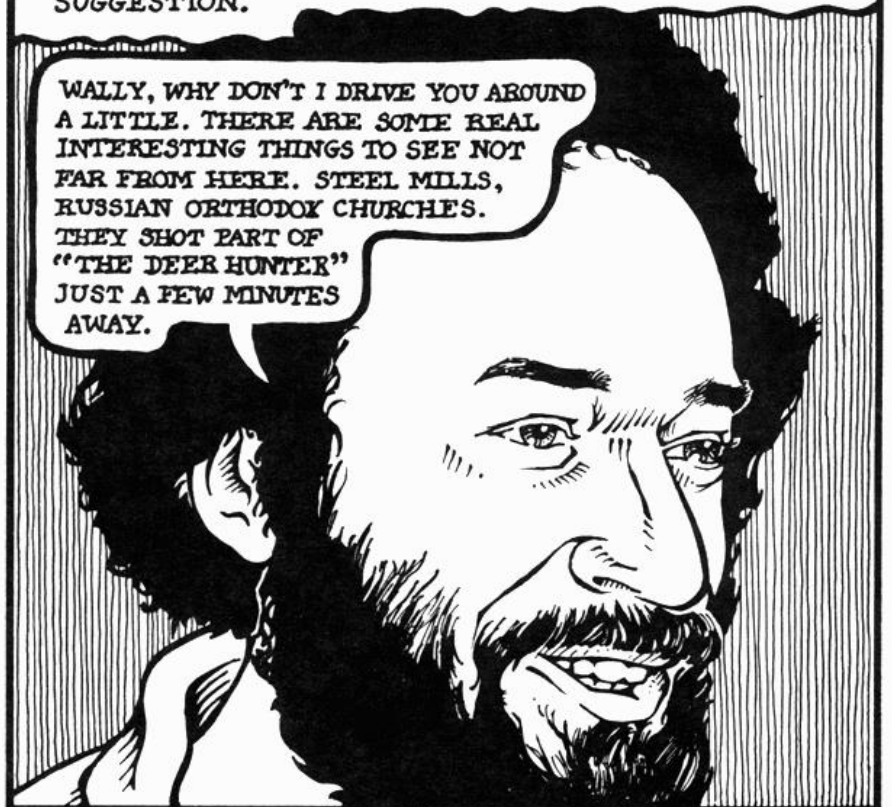


BUT THERE WAS NOTHING I COULD DO. SHAWN WAS THE GUEST, NOT ME. IT WOULD'VE BEEN RUDE AND COUNTERPRODUCTIVE FOR ME TO START ASKING HIM FOR FAVORS OR HUSTLING HIM IN FRONT OF HIS FRIENDS WHEN THEY WERE HAVING A PLEASANT, RELAXED LUNCH. I HADDA GET 'IM ALONE T' TELL 'IM ABOUT MY PROBLEMS, BUT WAS IT EVEN WORTH BOTHERING ABOUT?



TIME WAS RUNNING SHORT. HIS PLANE WAS GONNA LEAVE IN A COUPLA HOURS. THEN JEFF MADE A SUGGESTION.

WALLY, WHY DON'T I DRIVE YOU AROUND A LITTLE. THERE ARE SOME REAL INTERESTING THINGS TO SEE NOT FAR FROM HERE. STEEL MILLS, RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCHES. THEY SHOT PART OF "THE DEER HUNTER" JUST A FEW MINUTES AWAY.



SO I WENT WITH JEFF AND SHAWN WHILE THEY DID SOME SIGHTSEEING. THERE IS SOME REAL INTERESTING NEIGHBORHOOD ARCHITECTURE ON CLEVELAND'S NEAR WEST SIDE, BUT IT WASN'T THE MAIN THING ON MY MIND THAT DAY!



I LOOKED AT THE GRAY SKIES AND THE OLD PEOPLE AND FELT WORSE EVERY MINUTE. I SELDOM GOT THE CHANCE TO MEET A GUY LIKE SHAWN. I'D BEEN PSYCHIN' MYSELF UP WAITIN' T' SEE HIM. AND NOW IT LOOKED LIKE NOTHIN' WAS GONNA COME OF IT.



JEFF WAS GONNA DROP SHAWN OFF AT THE AIRPORT. I COULDA GOT OFF AND WAITED WITH HIM THERE AND MADE MY PITCH, BUT I WAS TOO DEMORALIZED.



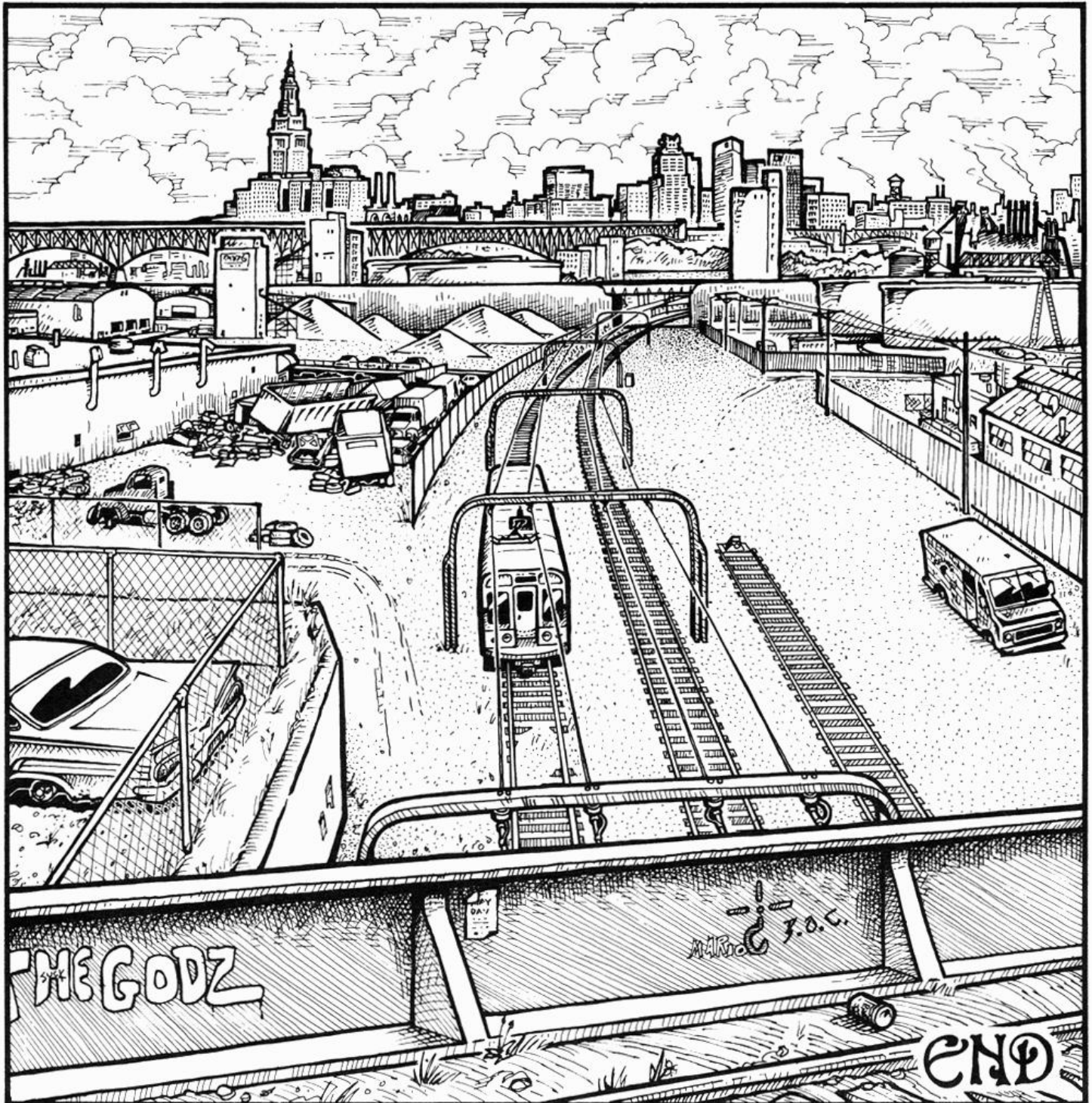
HEY JEFF, WHYN'T YOU LET ME OFF HERE? I'LL JUST CATCH A RAPID AND GO HOME. I GOT SOME THINGS I GOTTA TAKE CARE OF.



WELL, STAY IN TOUCH.

UH, SURE.





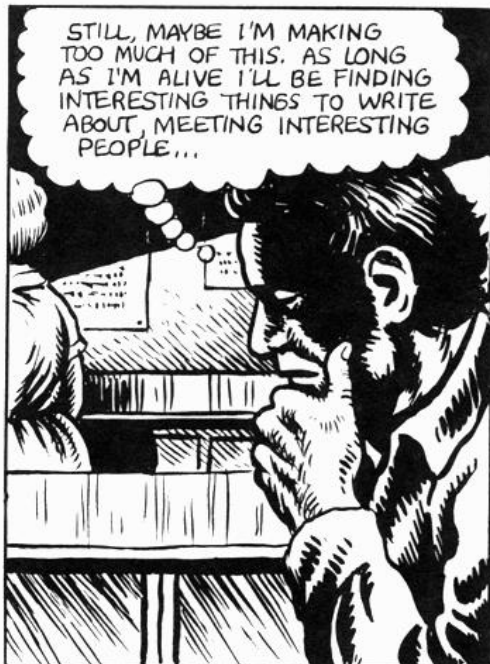
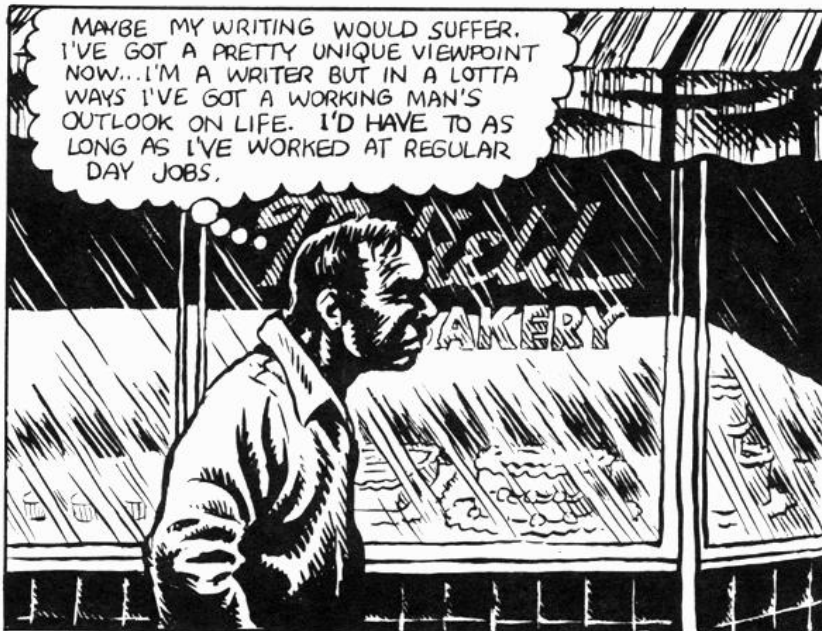
HYPOTHETICAL Quandary

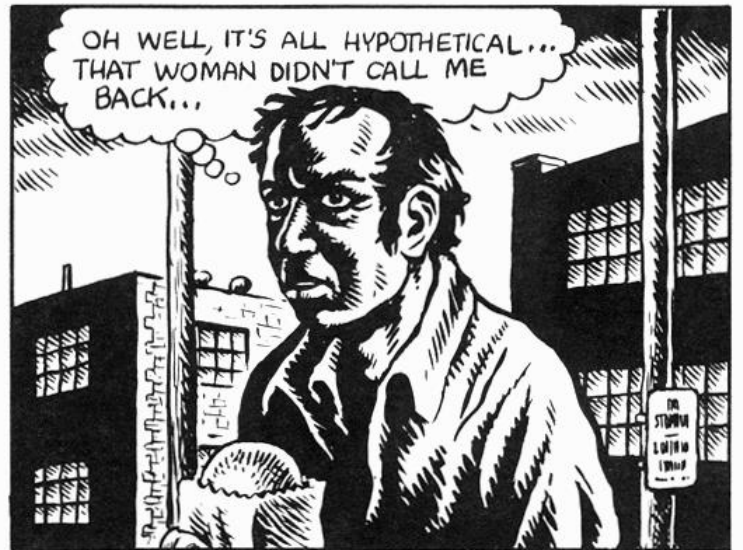
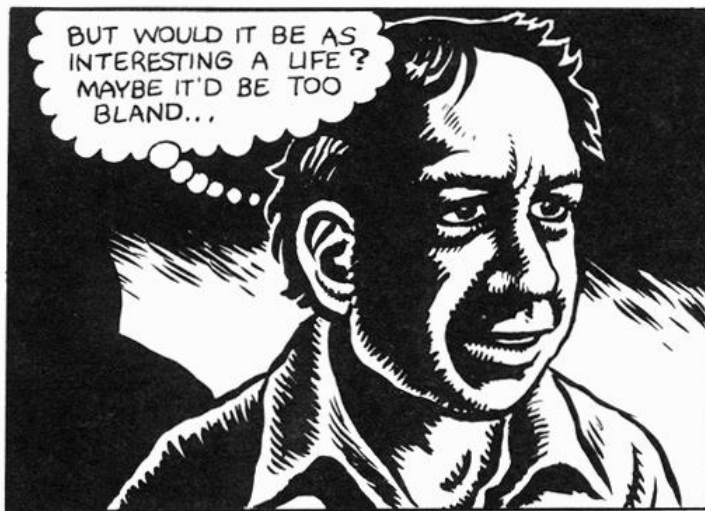
©1984 BY
HARVEY PEKAR

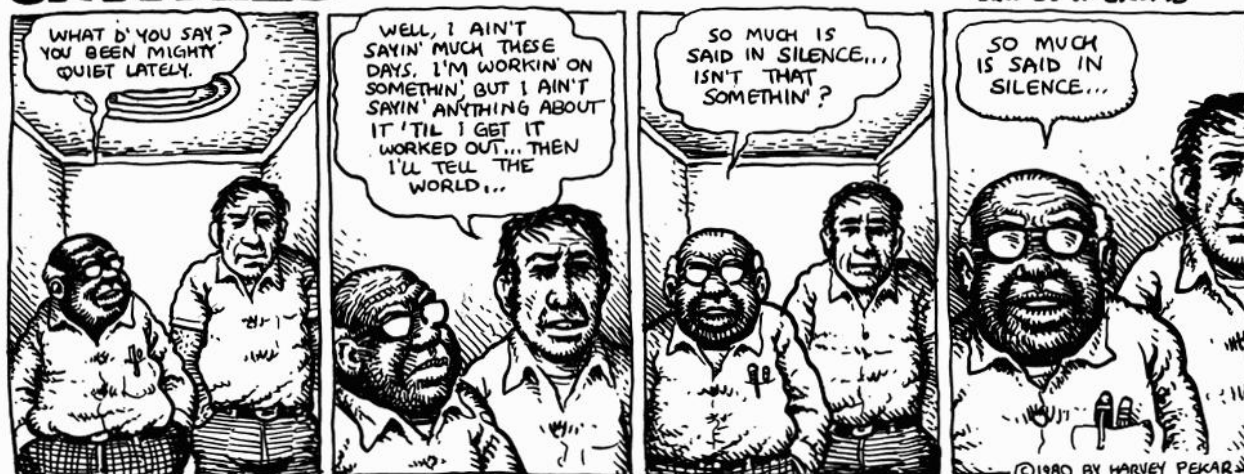
STORY BY HARVEY PEKAR
ART BY R. CRUMB

SUNDAY MORNING







UNTITLEDSTORY BY HARVEY PEKAR
ART BY R. CRUMB

The best of AMERICAN SPLENDOR, the first literary comic book, is represented in this superbly illustrated collection by Harvey Pekar. The stories are both funny and touching, showing the delicate balance of personal relationships and the frustrations of the workaday world. Pekar has been compared to Dreiser, Dostoevsky, and Lenny Bruce. That he is more himself than any of these will not be missed by readers of this omnibus.

"A comic book as good as first-rate fiction."
—Los Angeles *Herald-Examiner*

"As an experiment in form, AMERICAN SPLENDOR is a brilliant undertaking, but it's radiant rather than just a bright idea (!) because of the spirit behind it."
—The *Village Voice*

"In AMERICAN SPLENDOR, Harvey Pekar wrestles the kind of things most comic book heroes wouldn't touch with a laser blaster."
—Cleveland *Plain Dealer*

